An Archaeological Watching Brief at 1230 High Road, Whetstone, Barnet, N20 OLR

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For

Ideal Developments Ltd

October 2012

National Grid Reference: TQ 26472 93828
Planning Ref: B/0247/11
OASIS ID: proarcha1-136168
Site Code: HHR12
PAS Ref:012/12

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FIELDWORK 2nd to 5th October 2012

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Site Code HHR12 PAS Project No: 12/12

Archive Location The archive is currently held by PAS and will be

deposited with Museum of London in due course

under Accession number HHR12

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Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was conducted by PRO Archaeology Services in advance of the construction of a six storey building comprising of ground floor offices and 39 self contained flats on the upper floors, with additional basement parking (Planning Ref: B/0247/11) at 1230 High Road, Whetstone, Barnet N20 0LR.

The watching brief followed a desk based assessment (MoLAS 2008) and involved four site visits during the first week of October 2012. The footprint of the new basement was reduced to the uppermost surface of the natural clay, recorded at varying heights ranging from 94.72m AOD across the eastern side of the site to 94.19m AOD across the western side. A series of modern intrusions, including live services and remnants of the known demolished modern building which previously fronted the High Road were encountered. No archaeological features or finds were discovered.

1. Introduction

PRO Archaeology Services were commissioned by Ideal Developments Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief at 1230 High Road, Whetstone, Barnet N20 0LR (Planning Ref: B/02471/11) prior to the construction of an apartment building comprising of ground floor office space and 39 self contained flats plus an upper roof top plant room. Further underground parking for 45 cars and cycle storage prompted the requirement for archaeological investigation as impact levels would affect any possible surviving archaeology. The archaeological potential was set out in a desk based assessment (Molas 2008).

Following production of the archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for a Watching Brief (PAS 2012), which set out a method of works, consent was given by Kim Stabler (Great London Archaeological Advisor, North West) to commence. An archaeologist was present on site during the initial ground reduction phase to monitor and record any archaeology until the level of natural geology was reached or it was proved the modern intrusions had already disturbed the archaeological horizon.

The site was visited from $2^{nd} - 5^{th}$ October 2012 by Paul Riccoboni (Senior archaeologist), Margaret Taylor-Sutton (Archaeologist) and Liane Peyre (Archaeologist).

2. Site Location and Description

The site is located at 1230-1232 High Road, Whetstone, Barnet, North London (NGR 526472 193828).

1230 High Road, Whetstone, Barnet, London WB Report PAS©

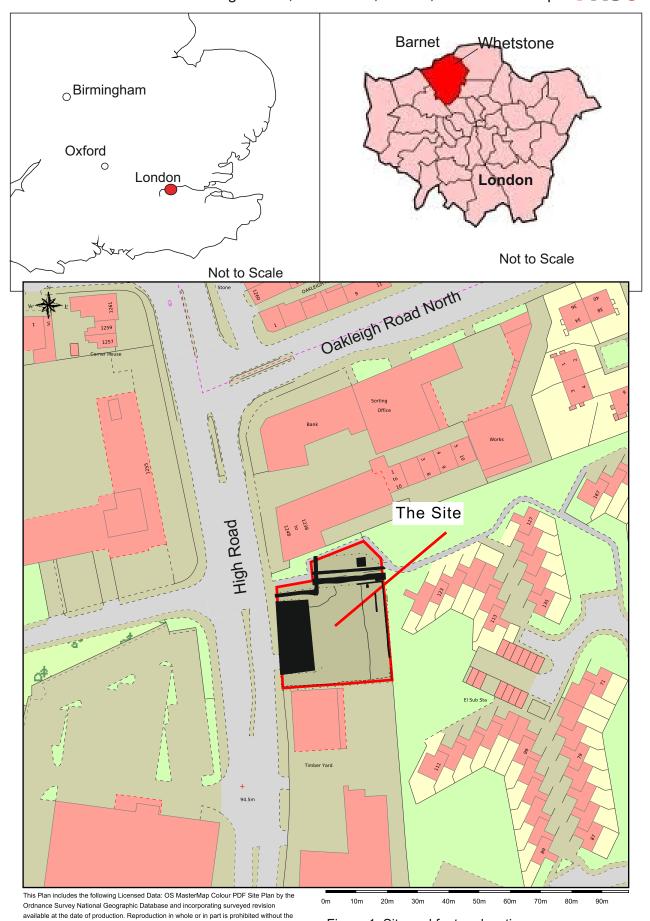


Figure 1: Site and feature location Scale: 1:1250, paper size: A4

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The site is bounded to the north by commercial buildings, with a timber yard to the south and Whetstone High Road immediately to the west.

The site is located within a Local Area of Special Archaeological Significance; Area 18: Totteridge and Whetstone. This area covers the later medieval settlement of Whetstone as defined by Barnet Borough Council. The desk based assessment (MoLAS 2008) highlighted that the site lies outside of the later medieval settlement nucleus which was focused to the north of the site at the junction of High Rd and Totteridge Lane. The site does not contain any Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens or Conservation Areas (PAS 2012).

According to the British Geological Survey Sheet 256 (North London) 1:50 000 the underlying geology is glacial boulder clay overlain by glacial gravel and London Clay. The site is presented on relatively flat ground with a height of 94.19m on natural at the western side to 94.72m AOD on the surface of natural at the eastern side.

3. Planning Background

The Local Planning Authority placed the constraints of an archaeological watching brief during the primary stages of ground reduction to enable suitable investigation of the site. The conditions were outlined as thus;

- 13. The Developer shall afford access at any reasonable time to any archaeologist nominated by the Local Planning Authority, and shall allow that person to observe the excavation and record items of interest and finds. Reason: To enable archaeological investigation of the site.
- 21. No development shall take place within the area indicated until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Reason: To enable archaeological investigation of the site.

4. Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the archaeological investigation are to contribute to heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of the archaeological remains exposed as a result of the excavations in general accordance with the research frameworks set out in the *framework for London Archaeology* (Molas 2003).

Specific aims were;

 to clarify the nature of deposits and assess the potential for prehistoric to late medieval remains of which it was likely to be of a low probability;

- to assess the nature of post-medieval archaeological remains of which it was considered to have a high potential;
- to further clarify the presence of any building foundations or basements on the western half of the site associated to the 19th Century buildings and the extent of the structures recorded to the north of the police station on historic OS maps;
- to ascertain whether the undeveloped eastern half of the site contained any evidence of post-medieval industrial or agricultural activity previously unrecorded and to;
- establish the extent of levelling and truncation across the site.

5. Archaeological and Historical Background

The archaeological potential was detailed in the Desktop Assessment of the site produced by the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) (MoLAS 2008). MoLAS evaluated the archaeological potential of the area and concluded that the site had uncertain, but possibly a low potential for prehistoric, Roman and early – late medieval periods but high potential for post-medieval remains. The following is summarised from the MoLAS desk based study (MoLAS 2008).

Prehistoric (700 000 BC- AD 43)

There is no evidence of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic or Neolithic archaeology within the study area, however the remains of a Bronze Age burnt mound was discovered on the bank of Dollis Brook c. 590m north-west of the site. There is no evidence of Iron Age activity.

Roman (AD 43-410)

Whetstone and Totteridge is located within the hinterland of Londinium, established after invasion in AD 43 (situated approximately within the modern City of London). Three Roman roads are positioned 7km, 7.5km and 3.7km respectively at Watling Street, Ermine Street and a small section of road North of Hendon. There are no findspots of Roman date within the area.

Early Medieval (AD 410-1066)

During this period the site was situated within the parish of Finchley, however there is no archaeological evidence immediate to the site from this era.

Medieval (AD 1066-1485)

The evidence of later medieval occupation in Whetstone was recorded during two archaeological excavations, one in 2001 by Thames Valley Archaeological Services at 1263-1275 High Road. Potential floor surfaces and pottery suggested an occupation phase during 14th-15th century. In 1989 Hendon and District Archaeology Society excavated the rear of 1264 High Road and recorded a 15th century timber building with earlier evidence of iron working at the site. The site lies outside the main later medieval settlement focused to the north of the site.

Post medieval (1485 – Present)

In 2001 Thames Valley Archaeological Services recorded phases of mostly 19th century buildings c.170m north of the site with three possible gravel extraction pits. In 1994 an evaluation by MoLAS uncovered 17th-18th century demolition material and plough soil sealed by 19th century housing.

The area of study was unoccupied until 1851 when the Metropolitan Police and Horse Patrol Station were constructed on the western portion of the site. Upon decommission, two of the four buildings to the north were demolished and one further building constructed, which were again rebuilt in 1896 to facilitate the fire service. The 1935 OS map shows that the fire station had been replaced by a single building and two lavatories. The police station was further extended in 1935 and 1956, however, the building fell into disuse after 1960 with the station being relocated to the corner of High Road and Barnet Lane. By the 1994 OS map it was evident that a new building named 'Watkins House' had been constructed in place of the police station with the public lavatories still in existence to the north, the eastern half of the site continued to be relatively undisturbed and facilitated a tarmac parking area.

6. Methodology

The investigation comprised continuous monitoring of all ground works throughout the programme of ground reduction until archaeology or the uppermost surface of the natural clay was observed.

The modern overburden was carefully removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a wide toothless ditching bucket. The mechanical excavator was used to remove the non-archaeologically significant material in controlled spits of 100mm in order to reveal and limit impact upon the archaeology (if encountered).

At the northern end of the site the ground reduction ceased due to live services being encountered, however natural geology was encountered in all areas around the live services. In all other areas of the site the monitoring continued as specified in the WSI (PAS 2012). Once the natural clay had been observed or the area was clear of archaeology, further reduction to required levels was permitted.

Where appropriate surfaces were inspected, hand cleaned, examined and recorded. Deposits were recorded on standard pro-forma context recording sheets. A plan (Figure 2) was drawn at 1:100. A full black and white, colour (35mm transparency) and digital photographic record of the work was taken and will form part of the site archive.

All recording points were accurately tied into the National Grid and located on the 1:1250 map of the area (Figure 1). Plans indicating the location of all archaeological features encountered were levelled with respect to OD obtained

from a spot height marked on a purchased drawing of High Road. No samples thought suitable for environmental sampling were taken.

The site archive will include all project records and will be prepared in accordance with Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage (UKIC 1990). On completion of the project PRO Archaeology Services will arrange for the archive to be deposited with the Museum of London Archaeological Archive in conjunction with the general standards for archive preparation and deposited with the Museum of London (MOLAS 2009) within a reasonable timeframe (usually six months of completion of the project).

Number of Contexts	13
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	2
Bulk Samples	0
Photographs	36
Bulk finds	0
Registered finds	0
Environmental flots/residue	0

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

7. Results

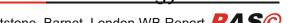
All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material. Numbers not shown in any brackets are masonry features i.e. walls.

General overburden

Sealing natural clay across the eastern side of the site was mid brownish grey silty clay subsoil (02), with frequent brick and other building material, gravels and concrete. Overlying this was topsoil (01) of modern origin and had a similar amount of construction debris. Across the centre of the site overlying the discoloured natural clay was a deposit of c. 0.20m thick dense brick and crush (05) (Fig. 2; Section 3).

Features

The earliest feature uncovered was a sub-rectangular pit [06] (Fig. 2; Section 2) cut into the natural clay (03) towards the eastern side of the site. Measuring 1.1m in length and 0.55m in diameter, the fill (07) consisted of dark blackish grey silty clay with post-medieval brick fragments and two iron nails. This feature was sealed by (05), a fairly compact deposit with dense crushed red brick building material and modern wood inclusions. This was almost certainly the crush deposit laid down as bedding for the tarmac car park which existed over this area.



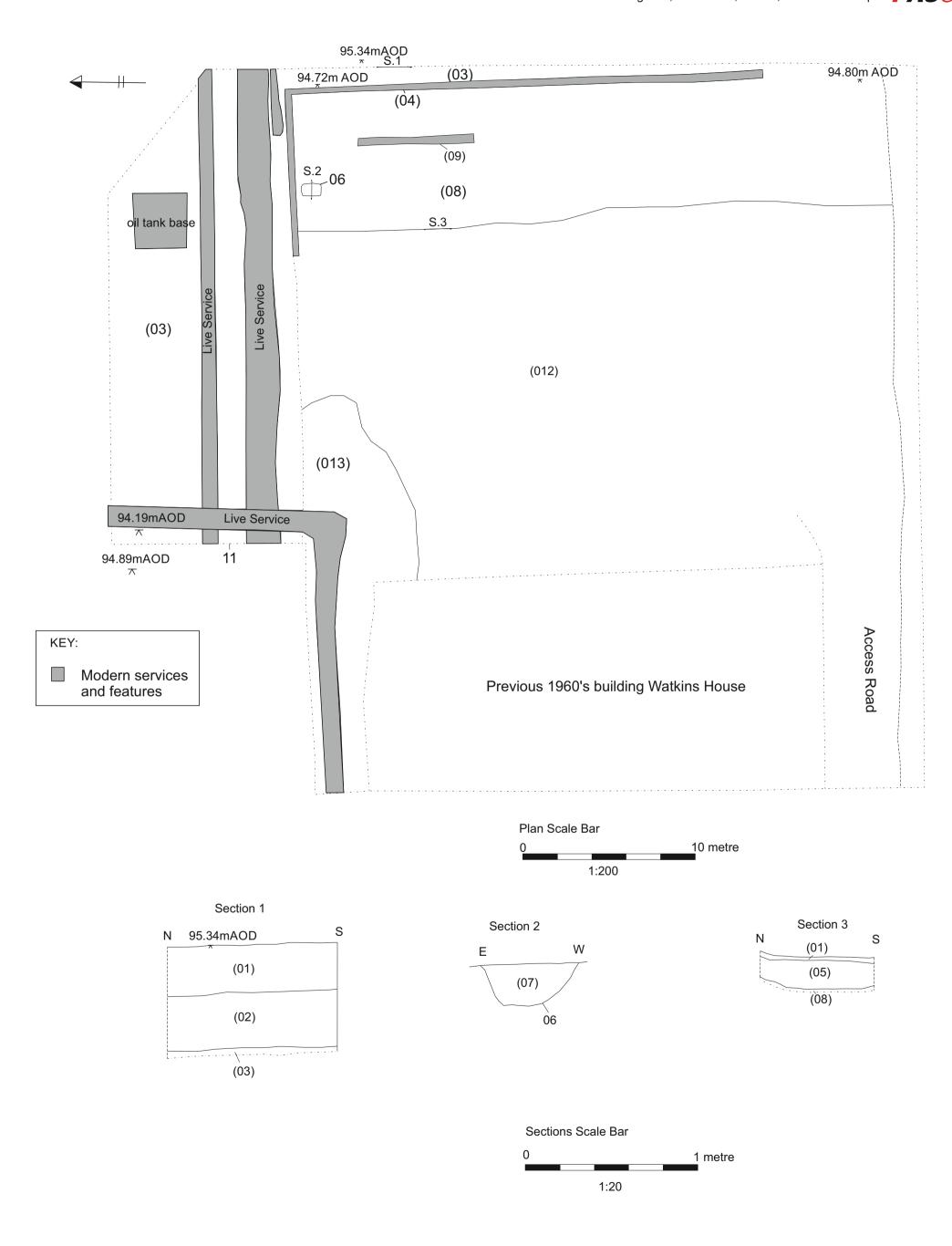


Figure 2; Plan and Sections Paper size: A3 Scales 1:200 & 1:20

A further pit [011] (Fig. 2) was observed in the west facing section in between the two modern services at the northern end of the site. The pit was filled by dark brown grey, slightly friable silty clay (010) with angular flint inclusions. Measuring 0.6m in diameter, [011] was sealed by modern contaminated subsoil (02). Due to the proximity to the modern services and the disturbed nature it is likely this feature was associated to modern construction activities.

Walls

A concrete wall foundation, 04, postulated to be a boundary wall potentially associated to the police station ran parallel and close to the eastern limit of excavation area (Fig. 2).

A potential modern wall footing 09 (Fig. 2) was observed running north south, to the west of 04 and potentially represents a phase of construction associated to the police station.

Contaminated natural

The centre of the study area continued to show high levels of disturbance. The natural geology (03) was reached at the north of the modern service trenches, which graduated southwards into contaminated clay with modern inclusions (08) and (012), slightly more blue grey brown in colour. Towards the west of the centre the natural clay (03) changed in composition to a sandier, gravelly mid yellow clay (013) which was disturbed and contained red brick fragments and various recently modern inclusions such as plastic.

Modern Services

A relatively modern red brick drain was located at the north-west corner of the study area and is likely to have serviced the previous lavatory block and one further modern drain was located to the north-east of the site in between the service pipes. Small, possible field drains or service pipes were observed cut into the natural clay running north-south across the length of the site.

Other disturbance

The westernmost portion of the site did not render any further evidence of *in situ* structures or foundations of the police building, however a frequent amount of red brick material was present pushed into the disturbed natural layer (012). The area was observed until undisturbed/contaminated natural (03) was reached, approximately 0.7m below ground level. The scar of the previous building Watkins House was observed was recorded.

The majority of features across the western half of the site comprised of disturbed or re-deposited natural, modern demolition deposits, post-medieval building material and backfill from previous construction phases and grubbing of footings from demolition contractors. The north-east end of the site was truncated by live services cutting through natural clay running on an east-west orientation,

potentially supplying the industrial estate and housing to the east of the site (Fig. 2).

8. The Finds

No archaeological finds were recovered from the excavations. Two fragments of post-medieval/modern brick and two iron nails were recovered from pit [06]; fill (05), but were not retained.

9. The Discussion and Conclusions

The results of the archaeological watching brief were successful in establishing the aims and objectives set out at the start of the project in the WSI (PAS 2012).

There was no evidence for prehistoric to medieval occupation at the site as in keeping with the outline of potential archaeology suggested in the desk based assessment (MoLAS, 2008).

The natural geology was successfully reached across the extent of the site; this was truncated to the north by live services and a modern rectangular drain. The earliest archaeological feature discovered was pit [06] (Plate 3) near the north east corner of the site, of late post-medieval date. This feature and the natural clay were sealed by a crushed brick deposit observed across the majority of the site; (05). This deposit disturbed the underlying natural; (08) & (012), leaving it discoloured/contaminated blue grey (Plate 1) with a diesel odour. Both (08) & (012) were similar in nature, but varied in extent of contamination and frequency of modern building inclusions pressed into the surface. These deposits were evident across the central area of the site from the east to the west.

Wall 04 was probably the previous boundary wall for the police station or more likely Watkins House car park. It was constructed of concrete and to the west of the wall was the crush deposit (05), not seen to the east of the wall. Feature (09) possibly relates to the old police station or other modern building seen on the 1956 Ordnance Survey map.

Pit [011] was probably a modern feature associated with the gas and electricity service pipes. To the north west of the excavated area was a red brick drain, potentially associated with the previous demolished lavatories.

Aside from one pit, there was no evidence of industrial or agricultural features on the eastern side of the study area.

The subsoil and topsoil across site was equally rich in modern construction debris.

It was clear the level of truncation was higher than initially considered, with virtually no structural remains intact from the previous buildings and little evidence of foundation scars. It was likely that during the modern construction of Watkins House any remnants of post-medieval buildings, such as stables, were removed and levelled leaving no visible archaeological trace.

A confidence rating is high that the best possible results were achieved.

10. Acknowledgements

PRO Archaeology Services would like to thank Ideal Developments for commissioning PRO Archaeology Services to undertake the watching brief. Also thanks are extended to the site staff Margaret Sutton-Smith and Liane Peyre. Thanks are also extended to Kim Stabler the Archaeology Officer at the Greater London Advisory Service for supporting PRO Archaeology Services throughout its first project within the Borough.

Plate 1: Eastern side of site looking north-east showing live services and contaminated natural



Plate 2: Showing modern oil tank base and service looking east (1m scale)





11. Bibliography

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Greater London Advisory Service 2009; Standards for Archaeological Work, London region English Heritage external consultation draft

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MOLAS 2009 General Standards for the preparation of archaeological archives deposited with the Museum of London, MOLAS 2009.

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United Kingdom Institute of Conservation 1990 Guidelines for the preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage

APPENDIX1: Context List

Context No	Trench/Area	Type/deposit/ cut/masonry	Description	Depth (m)	Provisional date
01	WB	Deposit	Topsoil	0.2	Modern
02	WB	Deposit	Subsoil	0.3	Modern
03	WB	Deposit	Natural Clay	-	-
04	WB	Masonry	Wall	-	Post med/modern
05	WB	Deposit	Brick/ clay rich deposit	0.3	Post med/modern
06	WB	Cut	Cut of pit	0.25	Post med/modern
07	WB	Fill	Fill of [06]	0.25	Post med/modern
08	WB	Deposit	Contaminated clay	0.4	Post med/modern
09	WB	Linear	Pipe or wall scar	-	Post med/modern
10	WB	Fill	Modern pit	-	Post med/modern
11	WB	Cut	Modern pit	c.0.4	Post med/modern
12	WB	Deposit	Disturbed Natural	0.2	Post med/modern
13	WB	Deposit	Sandy disturbed natural	-	Post med/modern

APPENDIX 2: HER Summary Form

Identification name and address: 1230 High Road, Whetstone, N20

Site code: HHR12

Summary:

An archaeological watching brief was conducted by PRO Archaeology Services in advance of the construction of a six storey building comprising of ground floor offices and 39 self contained flats on the upper floors, with additional basement parking (Planning Ref: B/0247/11) at 1230 High Road, Whetstone, Barnet N20 0LR.

The watching brief followed a desk based assessment (MoLAS 2008) and involved four site visits during the first week of October 2012. The footprint of the new basement was reduced to the uppermost surface of the natural clay, recorded at varying heights ranging from 94.72m AOD across the eastern side of the site to 94.19m AOD across the western side. A series of modern intrusions, including live services and remnants of the known demolished modern building which previously fronted the High Road were encountered. No archaeological features or finds were discovered.

District/ Unitary: Barnet Parish: London Borough of Barnet

Period(s): Late Post medieval

NGR: 526472 193828

Type of archaeological work: Watching Brief

Date of Recording: 3-5th Oct 2012 Unit undertaking recording: PAS

Geology: London Clay

Title and author of accompanying report:

An Archaeological Watching at 1230 High Road, Whetstone, Barnet

Summary of fieldwork results:

No archaeological features or finds

Location of Archive / Finds: Museum of London Archive Ref: HHR12

Contact at Unit: P Riccoboni Date: 20/05/2012

APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: proarcha1-136168					
Project details					
Project name	1230 High Road, Whetstone, Barnet, London				
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was conducted by PRO Archaeology Services in advance of the construction of a six storey building comprising of ground floor offices and 39 self contained flats on the upper floors, with additional basement parking (Planning Ref: B/0247/11) at 1230 High Road, Whetstone, Barnet N20 0LR. The watching brief followed a desk based assessment (MoLAS 2008) and involved four site visits during the first week of October 2012. The footprint of the new basement was reduced to the uppermost surface of the natural clay, recorded at varying heights ranging from 94.72m AOD across the eastern side of the site to 94.19m AOD across the western side. A series of modern intrusions, including live services and remnants of the known demolished modern building which previously fronted the High Road were encountered. No archaeological features or finds were discovered.				
Project dates	<u>Start</u> : 02-10-2012 End: 05-10-2012				
Previous/future work	No / No				
Any associated project reference codes	HHR12 - Sitecode				
Any associated project reference codes	B/0247/11 - Planning Application No.				
Type of project	Recording project				
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area				
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices				
Monument type	PIT Post Medieval				
Significant Finds	NONE None				
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"				
Prompt	Planning condition				
Project location					
Country	England				

Site location	GREATER LONDON BARNET BARNET 1230 High Road, Whetstone, Barnet, London
Postcode	N20 OPB
Study area	70.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 526472 193828 50 0 50 57 11 N 000 10 24 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 94.19m Max: 94.72m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	PRO Archaeology Services
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	PRO Archaeology Services
Project director/manager	Paul Riccoboni
Project supervisor	Liane Peyre
Type of sponsor/funding body	Private client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Ideal Developments
Project archives Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	Museum of London
Paper Archive ID	HHR12
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Microfilm","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

Project bibliography 1	
	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Publication type	, ,
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief at 1230 High Road, Whetstone, Barnet, London
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Peyre, L
Other bibliographic details	12/12
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