

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION  
AT SITE OF DANE GROUP FACTORY  
14-18, HIGH STREET, STRATFORD**

Site Code: HW-PL 94

Accession Number: LDPEM\ACHW\326

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LEVEL III REPORT

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## **ABSTRACT**

An archaeological excavation was carried out at 14-18, High Street, Stratford, which revealed four possible phases of factory construction dating from the 18th century to the 1950's. It also revealed post-medieval deposits, along with evidence of flooding by the Bow Back River.

## **SITE INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY**

Newham Museum Service was commissioned by The Dane Group to undertake an archaeological excavation at the site of their new factory at 14-18 High Street, Stratford, from December 12th to 21st 1994. This was in accordance with an archaeological condition applied to the planning permission for the construction of a lift shaft (Planning Application No. ). The condition was imposed by Mr. Nigel Pargiter, Planning Officer for the London Borough of Newham, on the advice of Mr. Lawrence Pontin, Planning Officer (Archaeology), Newham Museum Services. The excavation followed a watching brief carried out by the Museum in early October (Truckle, 1994).

The Bow Porcelain Factory was founded c.1747 and, although no precise plans exist for its exact location, it is known to have been bordered by Stratford High Street (formerly Stratford Road), the Bow Back River, Marshgate Lane and Bow Bridge (Gabszewicz, 1982, P14), all of which still exist. This area is currently occupied by The Dane Group Factory to the west and Central House to the east (Figure 1).

The archaeological trench, measuring 2.8m by 2m, was located indoors, in the south-western area of the factory grounds. A Kango breaker was used to remove the layers of the present factory floor, as well as a cobbled surface below. The trench was then hand dug to a total depth of 1.65m from the present floor level, an operation which required shoring after 1.20m. In order to ease access into the trench, the actual area of the excavation was reduced to 1.60m by 1.40m, with wall (9) as a limit to the south.

The site was negotiated and directed by Mr. Ken MacGowan and supervised by the author.

## **PHASE DISCUSSION**

Six phases were identified in Trench 1.

### Phase I

Phase I represents the construction of a southern exterior wall, very likely relating to the original 18th century factory. Its orientation was NE to SW and consisted of red, unfrosted bricks. The size and shape of the bricks contravenes a 1739 law, which standardised dimensions in the London area (Ken Sabel, pers. comm.), thus potentially post-dating the wall. There is no evidence of a cut for the wall; instead, it appears to have been built directly on top of layer (13).

### Phase II

Groups 1.2 and 1.4 of Phase II illustrate a series of dumped deposits. The layers of sand and peat which comprise Group 1.3 suggest evidence of flooding, probably as a result of overflow from the Bow Back River. The presence of two separate layers of organic material suggests a prolonged and repeated water deluge from the river.

### Phase III

Phase III represents the construction of a yellow brick wall, running NW to SE and dating to the 19th century. Its bricks were frosted and some bore the makers' stamp. The cut for the foundation of this wall sliced through the south-western end of the 18th century wall (9), although the cavity between the two abutting walls was infilled with building materials from wall (8) (Figure 2). This wall can also be seen returning into the section in a south-westerly direction.

### Phase IV

The groups from Phase IV primarily represent dumping. A sample was taken from layer (7), which was identified as kaolin, the principle material used in the process of porcelain manufacture. A significant proportion of bottle glass was also present in the deposit. Research carried out on Limehouse porcelain, a fabric compatible with that from the Bow factory, has revealed the use of glass cullet as an ingredient to add stability to the body of the pottery (Freestone, I, in Drakard, 1983 p68-70). The presence of the kaolin and glass deposit at this level in the stratigraphy suggests redepositing, possibly during the construction of the factory at the turn of the 19th century (Phase V). Results of the analysis of the sample by the British Museum are still pending.

### Phase V

Phase V consists of (Group 1.7), which represents the construction of a cobbled factory floor, dating either to the end of the 19th century, or to the beginning of the 20th. The layer of powdered coke (3), which overlies the cobbles, is probably a residue, resulting from the industry within the factory.

## Phase VI

Phase VI is represented by two layers of modern concrete and hardcore make-up which are consistent with the foundations of the present factory. This dates to the mid 20th century.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The structures and deposits revealed by the excavation at the Dane Group Factory suggest a continuous industrial occupation of the site over a period of at least two hundred years. The earliest of these was a red brick wall, dating from the 18th century and present at a depth of 1.15m below the current floor surface. It was identified as a southern exterior wall and is likely to have been related to the Bow Porcelain Factory, founded c.1747. An extended excavation would be necessary to ascertain its exact relationship, considering the paucity of contemporary plans from this area. Two spreads of kaolin, one containing bottle glass, were recovered from the northern side of the wall, substantiating evidence for the manufacture of porcelain in the area.

A sequence of deposits of alternating sand and peat indicate at least one prolonged episode of flooding to the north of the 18th century wall, implicating the Bow Back River as its source. These sediments post-date a 1839 silver sixpence. The remaining dumped layers and lenses in Trench 1 effectively levelled the ground in between the various periods of construction.

A second wall, of yellow frogged brick and dating to the 19th century, was built at an approximate right-angle to the earlier wall, both cutting it and using it as a buttress to strengthen the foundation of the later wall. The depth of this foundation exceeded the depth of the excavation.

The cobbled surface, present at a depth of approx. 0.54m from the present floor surface, may have formed part of a courtyard or loading bay. Although its contemporary industry is unknown, the black layer of residue above it suggests a process which would have involved firing or burning. It is known that the present day factory was set up as a glaziers' in the 1950's (pers. comm. Ted X).

Due to the guidelines set by the proposed lift shaft, the actual area open to excavation was very limited. There is no doubt of the archaeological potential both within and beyond the bounds of the trench and of the value that it could add to the archaeological record for this area.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Drakard, David (Ed), 1993 "Limehouse Ware Revealed", English Ceramic Circle

Gabszewicz, Anton and Freeman, Geoffrey, 1982 "Bow Porcelain", Lund Humphries, London

MacGowan, Ken, 1994 "A Research Design for the Archaeological Excavation at the new Dane and Company Factory"

Truckle, Nick, 1994 "Observations on a Test Pit at 14-18 High Street, Stratford"



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

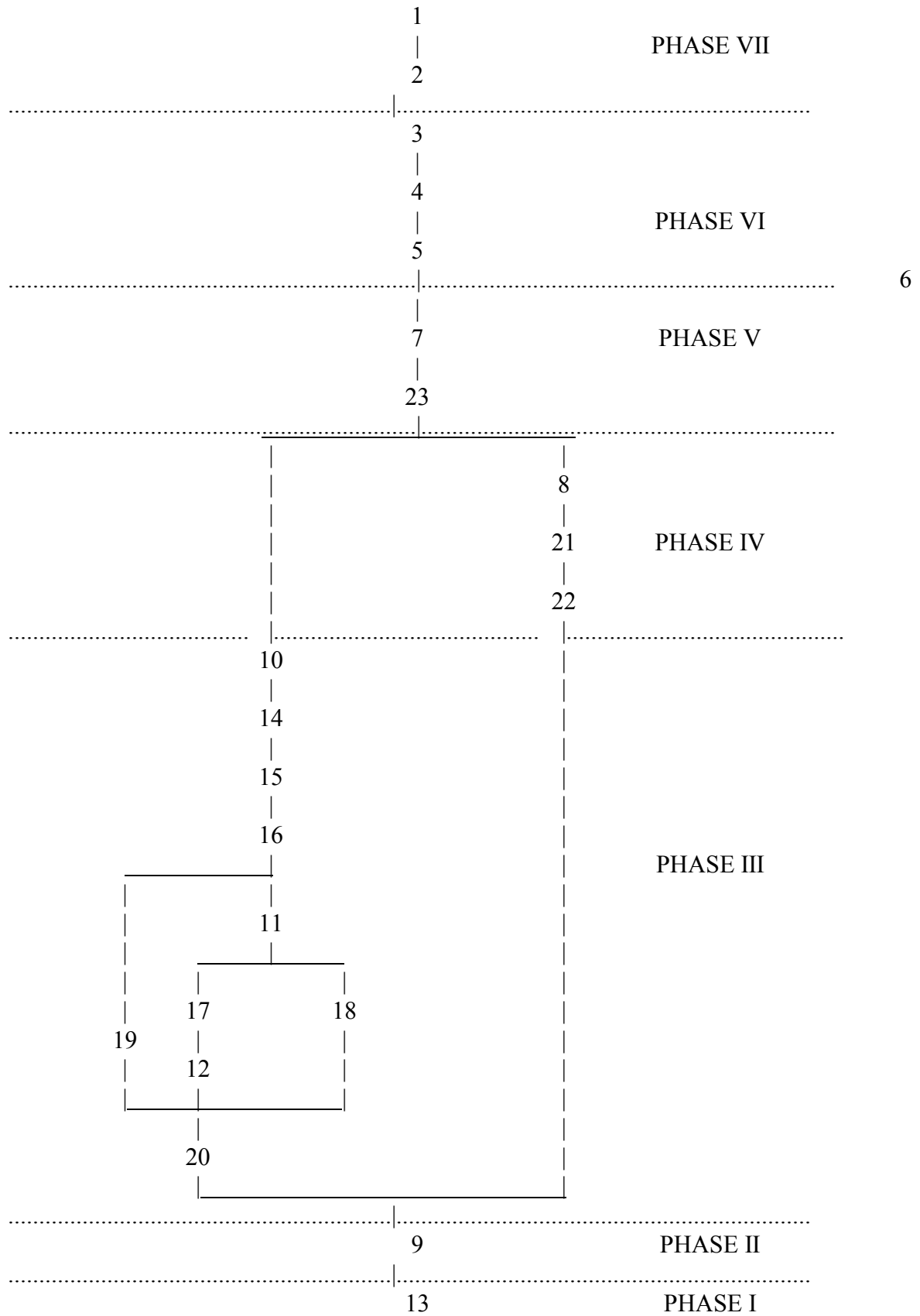
The author and Newham Museum Service would like to thank the Dane Group for kindly funding this project and to John X and Ted Y for their assistance throughout. Thanks also to all the staff on the factory floor for their co-operation.

Thanks also to Mr. Ken MacGowan who negotiated and directed the site and to Mr. Lawrence Pontin, the acting North-East Planning Officer (Archaeology) for his helpful guidelines.

The author would also like to thank Mr. Graham Reed for the illustrations, Mr. Chris Jarrett for the pottery analysis, Mr. Ken Sabel for examination of the building material and Mr. Ian Hanson for his excellent work on site.

**APPENDIX I**

**TRENCH I MATRIX**



## SUMMARY OF GROUPS

### PHASE I

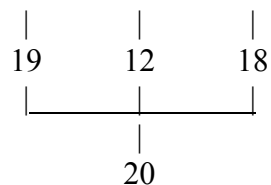
Phase I consists of group 1.1, which represents the construction of a wall, which appears to have been built directly on top of layer (13).

	Levels in metres above Ordnance Datum	
	Maximum height	Minimum height
<u>Group 1.1</u>		
9		
13		
<u>Context</u>		
(9): Wall, red, unfrosted brick	16.15	15.51
(13): Layer, mid yellow brown sandy clay	15.62	----

### PHASE II

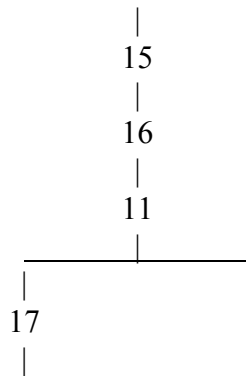
Phase II consists of groups 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4, representing dumped deposits, which were due to a combination of river flooding and ground levelling for subsequent building construction.

#### Group 1.2



(12): Layer, dark brown, clay silt with frequent large fragments of charred wood	15.54	15.45
(18): Lens, creamy white, kaolin/mortar	15.55	15.50
(19): Lens, dark grey brown sandy silt	15.63	15.55
(20): Layer, mid grey brown sandy silt	15.55	15.48

Group 1.3



(15): Layer, dark brown silty peat	15.62	15.51
(16): Layer, light grey brown silty sand	15.65	15.52
(11): Layer, dark brown clayey peat	15.62	15.53
(17): Lens, mid brown grey, silty sand	15.58	15.54

Group 1.4

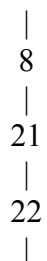


(10): Layer, mid brown silty sand	15.89	15.62
(14): Layer, creamy white mortar	15.75	15.55

**PHASE III**

Phase III consists of Group 1.5, which represents the construction of a wall.

Group 1.5



(8): Wall, yellow frogged brick	16.63	15.96
(21): Fill, mid brown grey, clay silt	15.96	----
(22): Cut, linear, top sharp, side vertical	15.96	----

**PHASE IV**

Phase IV represents a sequence of dumped deposits.

Group 1.6

|  
6  
|  
7  
|  
23  
|

(6): Layer, mid grey brown, silty sand	16.44	16.03
(7): Layer, creamy white, kaolin	16.10	15.85
(23): Layer, mid grey brown, sandy silt	16.04	15.61

**PHASE V**

Phase V consists of Group 1.7, which represents the construction of a floor or road and overlying layer of residue from subsequent work undertaken on its surface.

Group 1.7

|  
3  
|  
4  
|  
5  
|

(3): Layer, black, powdered coke/coal	16.90	16.57
(4): Layer, light grey, granite/concrete	16.57	16.33
(5): Layer, yellow grey, concrete/pebble mix	16.34	16.13

**PHASE VI**

Phase VI represents the floor surface and underlying make-up of the present day factory floor.

Group 1.8

1  
|  
2  
|

(1): Layer, grey white, concrete	17.12	17.08
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(2): Layer, mid brown, silty sand

17.08 16.88

## APPENDIX II

### LEVEL III INDEX

CONTEXT	TRENCH	SECTION	PLAN	GROUP	PHASE
1	1	1,2	--	1.8	VI
2	1	1,2	--	1.8	VI
3	1	1,2	--	1.7	V
4	1	2,4	--	1.7	V
5	1	2,4	--	1.7	V
6	1	2,4	--	1.6	IV
7	1	2,4	7	1.6	IV
8	1	1	8	1.5	III
9	1	2,3	9	1.1	I
10	1	4	--	1.4	II
11	1	--	--	1.3	II
12	1	--	--	1.2	II
13	1	--	--	1.1	I
14	1	4	14	1.4	II
15	1	4	--	1.3	II
16	1	4	--	1.3	II
17	1	--	--	1.3	II
18	1	--	--	1.2	II
19	1	4	--	1.2	II
20	1	4	--	1.2	II
21	1	--	--	1.5	III
22	1	--	8	1.5	III
23	1	2	--	1.6	IV

## APPENDIX III

### SMALL FINDS INDEX

SMALL FIND NO.	CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	LEVEL ABOVE O.D.
1	18	silver sixpence, dated 1839	15.54
2	11	3 Fe nail fragments	
3	11	Fe plate, 3 fragments	
4	11	Fe 'strap', 2 fragments	
5	11	Fe object, 3 fragments	
6	11	2 Fe pintles	
7	11	4 Fe nails	
8	11	strap hinge	
9	11	Fe fragment (on slate)	
10	10	Fe shoe fragment (heel)	
11	16	Fe strip, curved section, with Cu(?) pins, 2 frags	12
16	Fe nail		
13	12	Fe nail	
14	14	2 Fe nails	

### FINDS INDEX

#### CONTEXT (6)

2 sherds of Cream Ware (CREA)	1760-1900
1 sherd of Transfer Printed Ware (NPW)	1780-1900
1 frogged brick fragment (Fabric 3032) with yellow surfaces, 60mm	18thC-20thC
1 frogged brick fragment (Fabric 3032), vitrified	18thC-20thC
1 unfrogged brick fragment (Fabric 3034) with yellow surfaces, 95mm x 63mm	18thC-early 19thC
2 fragments (A&B) of Flemish floor tile (Fabric 2318) A = 36mm    B = 31mm	
1 fragment of clay pipe stem (mouth-piece)	
3 fragments of fine grain laminated, faced, micaceous sandstone, 2 possibly from Reigate area	late Cretaceous
20 fragments of clear window glass	
4 fragments of light green bottle glass	
2 fragments of dark green bottle glass	

3 fragments of ungulate bone  
1 ungulate tooth

CONTEXT (7)

1 fragment of Pan Tile (Fabric 2275)	c1666-19thC
1 fragment of shallow frogged brick, with yellow surfaces and frequent inclusions, 105mm x 70mm	late 18thC-19thC
1 fragment of Dutch paving brick (Fabric 3036)	c1600-early 18thC
8 fragments of dark green bottle glass	1735-1830
1 fragment of light green bottle glass	1735-1830
1 fragment of clear window glass	

CONTEXT (8)

2 whole frogged and stamped yellow bricks (Fabric 3035) 228mm x 105mm x 66mm, regular	late 18thC-20thC
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CONTEXT (9)

1 whole red brick, unfrogged, indented borders (Fabric 3032) 218mm x 100mm x 62-3mm	18thC-early 19thC
1 whole red brick, unfrogged (Fabric 3033, nr 3032) 227mm x 103mm x 63mm	late 17thC-early 19thC

CONTEXT (10)

1 sherd of Border Ware G. (BORDG)	1550-1750?
1 sherd of Post-Medieval Red Ware (PMR)	1600-1800
2 sherds of Transfer Printed Ware (NPW)	1780-1900

6 fragments of clay pipe stem

1 fragment of non-local fine grain laminated sandstone

1 Fe object (SF 10)

7 fragments of ungulate bone

CONTEXT (11)

5 fragments of Lead Treacle Glazed Earthenware	1800-1900
2 fragments of Mocha Ware (MOCH)	1860-1900
2 fragments of White Ware (NWW)	1800-1900
1 fragment of flower pot	1600+

8 fragments of roof tile



1 base of dark green bottle  
3 fragments of dark green bottle glass  
1 fragment of clear window glass  
1 fragment of clear 'lamp' glass

early 19thC

7 Fe nails (SF 2&7)  
3 Fe objects (SF 6&8)  
6 fragments of Fe objects (SF 3,4,5&9)

1 fragment of scorched wood

3 fragments of ungulate bone  
65 bones of Felis familiaris

CONTEXT (12)

1 fragment of Chinese porcelain (CHIN) 1650-1900  
1 fragment of London Stone Ware (LONS) 1670-1900

1 Fe nail (SF 13)

1 ungulate bone

CONTEXT (13)

1 fragment of Canis familiaris bone

CONTEXT (14)

1 fragment of Portland Stone after 1666  
1 fragment of xx brick, shallow frogged (Fabric 3032),  
with few inclusions c1690-1800  
1 fragment of xx brick, shallow frogged (Fabric 3035),  
with frequent inclusions, 100mm x 63mm 18thC-20thC

1 fragment of clay pipe stem

1 fragment of wall plaster

1 fragment of clear window glass

2 Fe nails (SF 14)

CONTEXT (15)

1 fragment of painted wood

CONTEXT (16)

1 Fe object (SF 11)

1 Fe nail (SF12)

1 fragment of painted wood

1 bone of Felis familiaris

CONTEXT (17)

2 fragments of clay pipe stem

1 fragment of clear window glass

CONTEXT (18)

1 silver sixpence (SF 1)

1839

1 fragment of clay pipe stem

4 bones of Felis familiaris

CONTEXT (19)

1 fragment of clay pipe stem