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## **1. ABSTRACT**

An archaeological evaluation took place on the site associated with the proposed redevelopment of the existing Theatre Royal, and the area allocated to the construction of a new Performing Arts Centre at Salway Road, Stratford. The site work was carried out over two days, the 3.4.97 and 7.4.97. Two trenches were excavated revealing 20th century activity and natural gravel. No features of archaeological significance were present.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

2.1 An archaeological evaluation was carried out on the site of the proposed redevelopment associated with the Theatre Royal and the new Performing Arts Centre at Salway Road, Stratford. (See fig. 1). The site work was undertaken by Newham Museum Service on the 3.4.97 and 7.4.97.

2.2 The site comprises of two areas, currently used for car parking, located east and west of Amber Street, and immediately south of Salway Road. A single evaluation trench was excavated in each of these areas.

2.3 The work was commissioned by the London Borough of Newham Leisure Services for submission to the Local Planning Authority (London Borough of Newham) in fulfilment of an archaeological condition on a planning consent. (See Fig. 1 for site location.) The evaluation strategy was outlined in the document "Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation at the Proposed Arts Centre, Salway Road, Stratford, London Borough of Newham." (Turner, 1997).

2.4 The principal aim of the evaluation was to assess whether the area contained evidence for the Roman London to Colchester Road and associated Roman and medieval roadside settlement/activity.

2.5 The threat to any surviving archaeology comes from the foundation works of the proposed redevelopment.

2.6 Newham Museum Service would like to thank the London Borough of Newham Leisure Services Department, Andrew Poole (Site Manager-SISK), Ken Bennett-Hunter (Theatre Royal), Nick Truckle (English Heritage Planning Advisor -North East London). Also thanks to Mark Turner for negotiating and directing the site, Steve Waltho for his advice on Health and Safety, and especially to Paul Thrale for his help and support on site. The work was supervised by the author.

### **3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

3.1 The site lies within an Archaeological Priority Zone as defined on the London Borough of Newham Unitary Development Plan. The geological background consists of relict river terrace gravels, in this case the Taplow Gravel, overlying Woolwich and Reading beds.

3.2 Previous archaeological finds in the area indicate the presence of the London-Colchester Roman Road running through Stratford in the immediate vicinity. This road may have continued in use as late as the 12th century when a new road developed using the new river-crossing at Bow. No sign of this Road was recovered in the investigation of the Salway Road cinema site immediately north of the present development (Hanson, 1996).

3.3 Roman settlement and burial activity is known to have occurred along roads. Later settlement may follow a similar pattern. The proximity of this site to the northern end of Stratford High Street may indicate the potential for remains of the Medieval settlement known to have existed in that area.

3.4 A map of 1746 (Rocque) indicates that the immediate area of Salway Road was occupied by an orchard next to several buildings facing onto Stratford High Street.

3.5 Tenements were built in the area by 1916. The 1950 Ordnance Survey map of the area shows a chemical factory on the north side of Amber Street. Although the nature of the works is not known the Site Investigation Tender Package produced by Whitby and Bird Engineers includes a contamination survey from STATS Geotechnical Ltd. which pinpoints contamination hotspots (see 4.2). By 1982 all buildings on the site had been demolished and the land has since been used for car parking.

## **4.ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

4.1 The methodology was based on the archaeological brief and conformed to the standards set out in Guidance Paper no. 3 (Standard Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork), no. 5 (Archaeological Assessment and Evaluation Reports) and all relevant Health and Safety Regulations.

4.2 STATS Geotechnical Ltd, St. Albans undertook a series of test pits and boreholes in the area and from the results produced a Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Report. The report showed considerable evidence of contamination with arsenic, sulphate and total petroleum hydrocarbons. These contaminants were found within the made ground. The worst of the contamination was apparently restricted to a specific area of the site in the vicinity of the former chemical works. This was also north of the proposed location of trench 2, to the north-east of Amber Street. Health and Safety precautions associated with this type of contamination were adhered to and, where necessary, appropriate PPE worn.

4.3 An archaeological evaluation was deemed necessary as no previous excavations had taken place on the site which lies within an archaeological priority zone.

4.4 Two evaluation trenches, measuring 10m x 2m, were to be located as close as possible to the specification outlined in the Guidance Brief. However, space restrictions and the requirements of the users meant that the location and dimensions of the original trench plan had to be changed slightly. (See Fig. 2)

4.5 Trench 1 was positioned diagonally in NE corner of the Theatre Royal car park, immediately west of Amber Street, and was NE-SW orientated. It was located in such a way in order to avoid the gates and to maintain access to the compound. The trench measured 10m x 2m. Trench 2 was positioned between the contractors offices, to the east of Amber Street, and ran in a N-S direction. The final dimensions of this trench had to be altered because of the projected volume of spoil and severe space restrictions. It measured 7.5m x 2m.

4.6 Trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator (JCB), under archaeological supervision, until archaeological features or natural levels were revealed. Or alternatively that a maximum depth of 1.20m was reached. Ideally the trenches would have been taken down to a greater depth in order to reach natural levels but severe space restrictions meant that the surface area required to step the trenches safely was not available. The trenches were cleaned by hand, where necessary, and any features were examined for dateable material and to determine their nature.

4.7 Of the two trenches only trench 1 reached natural sand and gravel levels, and both exposed extensive 20th century truncation. They were photographed and recorded on pro-forma trench recording sheets

4.8 The site was supervised by Alice Hodgins, and negotiated by Mark Turner on behalf of Newham Museum Service.

## **5. DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS**

5.1 Two trenches were excavated. As no features encountered were of a pre 20th century date, recording was undertaken by means of photography and pro-forma trench recording sheets.

5.2 Trench 1, located in the Theatre Royal car park (see fig. 2), revealed natural sand and gravel at the NE end, at a depth of 6.81m A.O.D. Cutting the gravel, towards the NE of the trench were the remains of a square brick structure, depth 0.75m. This was sitting on a concrete foundation. Within the brick structure was a concrete drain, this appeared to be on a N-S orientation. To the SW of this was a N-S running drain. Overlying the drain and abutting the brick structure was a layer of large, squared cobbles, the surface of which was at a height of 7.21m A.O.D.. All these features were contemporary, and of a 20th century date. The existing tarmac surface, and associated make-up layer of sand, directly overlay the cobbled surface.

5.3 Trench 2, located in the site compound of John Sisk the cinema contractor, to the east of Amber Street, did not expose natural deposits. The trench was excavated to a depth of 1.20m and revealed a series of 20th century dump layers.

5.4 Although natural sand and gravel was revealed at the NE end of trench 1, at a maximum excavation depth of 1.20m, due to space restrictions it was not possible to excavate the rest of this trench to the depth necessary to reveal the extent of truncation to the natural ground. Trench 2, at a depth of 1.20m, revealed only modern make-up layers, natural levels were not reached.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

6.1 Trench 1 reached natural levels of sand and gravel at its NE end but was heavily truncated to the SW by 20th century activity. The deposits exposed in trench 2 consisted entirely of 20th century dump and make-up layers to a depth of 1.20m.

6.2 Both trenches excavated during this investigation revealed a high degree of 20th century truncation by building foundations and dump/ make-up layers. It is therefore probable that there is little chance of archaeological survival in this area.

6.3 The archaeological evaluation at the Salway Road cinema site, immediately opposite, and on the northern side of Salway Road (Hanson, 1996) revealed a similar picture. The evaluation exposed natural fluvial deposits, overlain by a possible plough soil. This had been truncated subsequently by 20th century building and cellar foundations. These buildings had been demolished, levelled and tarmaced over to provide the existing carpark surface.

6.4 Neither the site of the Salway Road Cinema or this site revealed features of Medieval or Roman date. It is these features which the English Heritage archaeological brief designated to be of most interest in the Stratford area.

6.5 As regards the proposed site of the Performing Arts Centre, no archaeological features of significant importance were revealed within the space restrictions imposed on the methodology. It is therefore felt that further archaeological investigation is unnecessary.

## 7. APPENDED INFORMATION

### APPENDIX II BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Turner, M.D.  
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- Chapman & Andre 1771, "A Map of the Country 65 Miles Around London." Plate XVI.
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(London Division) 1992, Archaeological Guidance Papers 3 and 5." London.
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- Hanson, I 1996, An Archaeological Evaluation at the Salway Road Cinema Site, Stratford, London E15. Newham Museum Service
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- STATS Geotechnical  
Ltd. 1996, Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Report for Proposed Performing Arts Centre at Salway Road, Stratford.



APPENDIX II

**GLSMR/RCHME NMR ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FORM**

**1. TYPE OF RECORDING.**

Evaluation  Excavation  Watching brief

**2. LOCATION.**

Borough: Newham

Site address: Salway Road, Stratford E15. London Borough of Newham.

Site name: Salway Road Arts Centre

Site code: SWR 97

**Nat. Grid Refs:** Centre of site: 3890 8455

**Limits** of site: a)NW3888 8456

b)SW3888 8453

c)NE3893 8457

d)SE3893 8456

**3. ORGANISATION.**

Name of archaeological unit: Newham Museum Service

Address: Archaeology and Local History Centre, 31 Stock Street, Plaistow, London E13 OBX.

Site director/ supervisor: Alice Hodgins

Project manager: Mark Turner

Funded by: London Borough of Newham

**4. DURATION.**

Dates fieldwork undertaken: 3.4.97 and 7.4.97

Field work previously notified?

~~YES~~/ NO

Fieldwork will continue?

~~YES~~/ NO/ ~~NOT KNOWN~~

**5. PERIODS REPRESENTED.**

Palaeolithic	Roman
Mesolithic	Saxon (pre-AD 1066)
Neolithic	Medieval (AD 1066 -1485)
Bronze Age	Post-Medieval 
Iron Age	Unknown

**6. PERIOD SUMMARIES.** Use headings for each period (Roman; Medieval; etc.), and continue on additional sheets as necessary.

Post-medieval

Trench 1 of the evaluation revealed evidence of 20th century drainage services associated with the remains of a brick structure and cobbled surface of contemporary date. Trench 2 exposed a series of 20th century make-up layers. No other archaeological features were present.

**7. NATURAL.** (state if not observed; please DO NOT LEAVE BLANK)

Type: sand and gravel

Height above Ordnance Datum: 6.81m. A.O.D.

**8. LOCATION OF ARCHIVES.**

a) Please indicate those categories still in your possession:

Notes	Plans	Photos	Negatives
Slides	Correspondence	Manuscripts (unpub. reports etc.)	

b) All records have been deposited in the following museum:

Archaeology and Local History Centre, 31 Stock Street, Plaistow, London. E13 OBX.

c) Approximate year of transfer: 1997

d) Location of any copies: -

e) Has a security copy of the archive been made? YES/ ~~NO~~

If not, do you wish RCHME to consider microfilming? ~~YES~~/ NO

**9. LOCATION OF FINDS.**

a) In your possession?

NONE

b) All/ some finds have been/ will be deposited with the following museum/ other body: N/A

c) Approximate year of transfer: `1997

**10. BIBLIOGRAPHY.**

Hodgins, A Report on the Archaeological Evaluation at Salway Road, Stratford.  
E15. 1997

**SIGNED:**

**DATE:** 18.4.97

**NAME** (Block capitals): Alice Hodgins

Please return completed form to The Greater London Sites and Monuments Record,  
English Heritage London Region, 30 Warwick St., London W1R 5RD. Tel. 0171 973  
3731