



# C263 ARCHAEOLOGY LATE EAST SUMMARY REPORT

## Standing Building Recording, Watching Brief, Archaeological Evaluation and Targeted Watching Brief

### North Woolwich Portal XSV11

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#### Document History:

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## 1 Summary for London Archaeologist

### NEWHAM

**Crossrail: North Woolwich Portal, Fernhill Street, Albert Road, Factory Road, E16 TQ 4270 8000 MOLA** (David Sorapure, Rachel English, Serena Ranieri, Daniel Harrison, Jason Stewart) standing building recording, watching briefs and evaluation Aug 2011 – Mar 2014 Crossrail XSV11

A late 19th-century railway footbridge, identified as Henley's Footbridge, was built between the site of Henley's Electric Cable works and Fernhill Street. The structure was probably assembled on site, being entirely riveted with the exception of the brackets for the timber steps. It was supported on twelve ornate Tuscan-style cast iron columns. The footbridge was dismantled after recording and re-assembled at the Whitwell and Reepham Heritage Railway in Norfolk. A general watching brief on utilities' diversions centred on Albert Road and Factory Road revealed alluvial deposits and peat beneath modern made ground. No archaeological remains were found within the alluvial deposits, although some fragments of unworked wood were recorded. A subsequent evaluation and watching brief exposed Pleistocene Thames gravels beneath an alluvial sequence, suggesting the presence of a meandering river of possible early Holocene date, formed from interconnecting channels interspersed with higher sand and gravel bars. A sandy island was revealed close to the western side of the portal, gently sloping down to the east. Two large Mesolithic flint assemblages were recovered from there, including broken burnt flints associated with a possible cooking pit. The size and irregularity of many of the flakes suggests that this area was used primarily for testing, quartering and dressing of river cobbles which were subsequently carried elsewhere for further reduction and the production of tools. Although no evidence of timber structures such as platforms or causeways were found, both scatters are likely to represent the remains of short-stay events by mobile human groups exploiting the valley floor. By the time of the Mesolithic/Neolithic transition, the sand and gravel bars were overlain by wood peat before rising sea levels in the Roman or later period inundated the area and formed the estuarine floodplain that existed until the development of the site in the 19th-century. Modern overburden completed the sequence.

## 2 Summary for Britannia

Not required

## 3 Summary for Medieval Archaeology

Not required



## **4 Summary for Post Medieval Archaeology**

CROSSRAIL: NORTH WOOLWICH PORTAL (TQ 4270 8000) Recording of a late 19th-century railway footbridge was undertaken by D Sorapure (MOLA). Identified as Henley's Footbridge, it was built between the site of Henley's Electric Cable works and Fernhill Street. The structure was probably assembled on site, being entirely riveted with the exception of the brackets for the timber steps. It was supported on twelve ornate Tuscan-style cast iron columns. The fact that Eastwood, Swingler & Company won an 1892 contract to supply the Great Eastern Railway with four footbridges suggests that this surviving example would have closely resembled, if not been identical to, the others built as part of the same contract. In appearance the structure was a typical type of wrought iron footbridge which was once commonplace on Britain's railways. The footbridge was dismantled after recording and re-assembled at the Whitwell and Reepham Heritage Railway in Norfolk. **OASIS ID: molas1-111738**

