

London Gateway: Marine Archaeology

DISCARD STRATEGY

WA Ref: 72437
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Introduction

Wessex Archaeology (WA) has been commissioned by London Gateway Port Ltd. (LGPL) to provide archaeological services in respect of marine works in the course of developing London Gateway Port and its associated dredged channel. LGPL is advised by its Archaeological Liaison Officer (ALO), Gill Andrews.

This discard strategy has been developed on the basis of practical experience of the material archive arising from pre-dredge investigations for London Gateway in the period 2001-2008.

The strategy was outlined in Appendix III of *London Gateway: Post-Fieldwork Assessment* (Jan 2010; WA Ref: 72430.02; LG-WSA-ENV-CEP-C7013-ARC-3000 REV 01).

The strategy was confirmed and further developed at a meeting with Southend Museums Service (SMS) on 6 April 2011.

The strategy is consistent with Essex Museums Archaeological Deposition Guidelines (Adopted 24 October 2007).

It is proposed that this strategy be adopted for the material archive arising from dredging (March 2010-ongoing).

Guidance

In general, the following categories of material will be discarded:

- roundwood (NB: the potential to encounter former shoreline structures of archaeological interest constructed using roundwood is negligible);
- fragments of timber with little or no shaping, and small timber fragments which lack distinguishing or identifiable features;
- all planks, both wet and dried-out;
- dried-out framing timbers, unless they are shown to be integral with wet frames that are being retained;
- samples of stone, coal, clinker etc.;
- fragmentary or featureless concretions;
- concreted fastenings (nails etc.) following X-ray;
- obviously modern items (e.g. 33cl beer bottles; plastic items);
- featureless fragments of glass;
- animal bone;
- featureless fragments of fabric.

Items that are comprised of mass ferrous metal, which are likely to pose insurmountable problems in terms of their long-term stability, may also be discarded.

Notes

1. These categories provide general guidance and may be varied on the basis of archaeological judgement. The guiding principle, offered by SMS, is that material to be retained should offer the potential to inform researchers or raise the understanding and awareness of the public, both now and in the future.

2. Material of archaeological interest recovered by dredging for London Gateway, and which is 'wreck', is subject to the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 administered by the Receiver of Wreck (RoW). Decisions about discarding such material are subject to the agreement of the RoW.

3. The majority of material recovered as a result of dredging is collected by WA from London Gateway and transported to our Salisbury premises for initial recording, assessment and stabilisation. Material that is likely to be discarded in accordance with the guidance above will be identified on arrival at WA's premises.

4. Normally, the guidance above will be used by WA to catalogue material that it is proposed to discard. These catalogues will be circulated to SMS, RoW, English Heritage and the Port of London Authority in advance of material being discarded.

5. In the case of bulky items that meet the guidance above, WA may identify it as warranting discard while it is still at London Gateway. In such cases, WA will make sufficient record (including photographs) to catalogue it whilst at London Gateway, and circulate the catalogue accordingly, as above. If the proposal to discard is authorised by SMS and RoW, then WA will pass on instructions about discard to LGPL.

6. With respect to the pre-dredge investigations it should be borne in mind that - due to extremely poor underwater visibility - some material was recovered primarily to establish its character visually on returning to the surface. Such material would not ordinarily have been sampled or otherwise recovered on a terrestrial archaeological site and can be discarded.

7. Some material can be discarded because it is obviously modern and/or likely to belong to the general undiagnostic and unremarkable debris that has rained down along the entire bed of the Thames in the course of its use.

8. Some material lacks distinguishing features and characteristics and will not add to the interpretation of a site, even where the site as a whole is significant. In such cases the assemblage of material that has been recovered will effectively be split between material that warrants archiving and material that it is proposed to discard.

9. Where items are discarded, record sheets/database entries will be reviewed to confirm that a complete and accurate record has been obtained.