

1 ABSTRACT

Between the 27th April and 24th July 2006 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken to observe ground beam excavation for a residential development at 20 Church Street, Old Isleworth, on behalf of CSI Developments Ltd. The ground works undertaken were of limited impact, with only 20th century made ground observed across the area of the site. No significant archaeological remains or finds were identified.

2 INTRODUCTION

Site Location

- 2.1 The site is located in Isleworth, in the London Borough of Hounslow. The site is bounded by an artificially stream called ‘the Duke of Northumberland’s River’ with a weir to the north, the River Thames to the east, Church Street to the west and another property fronting onto Church Street to the south. (Figures 1 & 2). The site is roughly square covering an area of approximately 0.2 hectares, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TQ 1665 7593.

Development Proposals

- 2.2 Planning permission to undertake the development has been granted under the Town & Country Planning Act (1990) (Ref No.: 00262/20/P9). This has been required in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16) issued by the Department of the Environment in 1990 (DoE, 1990).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Geology and Topography

- 3.1 The British Geological Survey map (BGS Sheet 270), indicates that the site is situated in an area of Flood Plain Gravel over London Clay.
- 3.2 The development site is located on the flood plain of the River Thames, on the western river bank, at approximately 3m OD (Ordnance Datum).
- 3.3 Geotechnical investigations, consisting of five boreholes, were conducted on site by Terramech Investigations Ltd (2001). The logs do not demonstrate the nature of, or give much detail about, the upper deposits on the site. It is not possible to identify whether they include horizons of archaeological interest or not, but they suggest that there may have been truncation on the site down to a considerable depth. Beneath the slab and its make up there was:

- BH1 – Brick rubble down to 1.8m; from there clay, brick and gravel down to 3.5m; and gravel below this;
- BH2 - Brick rubble down to 3.7m; and gravelly sand and then gravel below this;
- BH3 – Clay and brick down to 2.9m; and gravelly clay and then gravel below this;
- BH4 – Brick rubble down to 2.8m; from there clay and gravel down to 3.9m; and clayey sandy silt and then gravel below this;
- BH5 – Brick, clay and ash down to 2.7m; from there gravelly clay down to 3.4m; and clayey sandy silt and then gravel below this;

Archaeological Background

- 3.4 The background information relevant to the archaeological potential of the site has been collated from both the Oxford Archaeology (2002) and CgMs Consulting (2005) Desk Based Assessments.
- 3.5 No previous archaeological investigations have been undertaken on the site itself.

Prehistoric (before c.AD 43)

- 3.6 The River Thames was an exceptionally important focus for prehistoric activity, and in particular a very large number of artefacts have been recovered from it and its immediate environs. Many of these artefacts are of high quality, and particular reaches of the river have higher concentrations of them. It is highly likely that these objects were deposited in a ritual context, and it is widely thought that rivers and other watery places had a special significance that made them suitable for ritual deposition. In addition to artefacts made of materials such as metal and stone, and human remains, especially skulls, have been recovered in considerable numbers.
- 3.7 Areas near to rivers would also have been attractive to prehistoric communities, especially before agriculture, because of the resources that were available there.
- 3.8 A large quantity of prehistoric material recovered in the vicinity of the site derives from dredging operations along sections of the River Thames. This includes objects such as Lower Palaeolithic handaxes, and Bronze Age swords and spearheads. Many of these artefacts are thought to have been ritually deposited.
- 3.9 Prehistoric remains have also been recovered from terrestrial deposits, this includes a Neolithic polished axe head found in the area of North Street. Evidence associated with the Bronze Age is also apparent within the local area. Ditch and gully features associated with Bronze Age settlement were identified c. 200m north of the site, adjacent to what was interpreted to be a paleochannel.

- 3.10 At the same location where signs of Bronze Age settlement were identified, further evidence was revealed demonstrating the presence of Iron Age settlement. Ditches, pits and cremations dating to this period were found. Iron Age material has also been discovered at several locations along the River Thames, such as Syon House and Isleworth Ait, which include pottery, coins and socketed axe heads.

Roman (c. AD 43 - 450)

- 3.11 Evidence for Roman activity in proximity to the site is limited. A possible Romano-British farmstead has been identified in the grounds of Syon House, with the remaining evidence being occasional Roman coins from the River Thames.

Anglo-Saxon (c.451-1065)

- 3.12 A village at Isleworth is first recorded in the Domesday Book (1086), implying that it had its origins in the Anglo-Saxon period. The Manor of Gristlesworde had a manor house, two mills and a fishing weir at this time.
- 3.13 The remains of a fish trap of Middle Saxon date has recently been found at Isleworth.
- 3.14 Discoveries of Saxon coins are quite frequent in the area, with several coins being recovered from locations such as Park Road, Twickenham Road, and Syon House.

Medieval (c.1066 - 1485)

- 3.15 Richard, Earl of Cornwall acquired the manor in 1227 and built a new manor house just to the south of the site, near North Street and Church Street. The moat around the manor was 10m wide and up to 6m deep. The manor house and grounds were levelled in the 17th century to facilitate redevelopment of the land.
- 3.16 The historic character of the area is supported by the presence of a 12th century listed church located on Church Street.
- 3.17 In 1414 a large Ecclesiastical establishment was constructed across the river at Sheen, consisting of a Priory with associated out buildings and ancillary structures. This was later demolished in 1539 during the Dissolution.
- 3.18 Medieval finds have also been identified from the Thames, this includes fish traps and coins.

Post-Medieval (c.1485 - modern)

- 3.19 By 1635 cartographic evidence of the area indicates that properties and gardens are already present in the area of the site. This is repeated in Rocque's map of 1746, while the Enclosure map of 1839 demonstrates that the density of housing within the area of the site has intensified.

- 3.20 Ordnance Survey maps of the 19th and 20th century demonstrate a strong continuity in the utilisation site for residential purposes. At intervals there appear to have been alterations to the layout of the properties, in addition to the construction of a warehouse and ancillary buildings in the southern area of site.

4 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

- 4.1 The aims of the Watching Brief were defined as being:
- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.
 - To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
 - To record and sample excavate any archaeological remains encountered.
 - To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological features and deposits.
 - To determine the extent of previous truncations of the archaeological deposits.
 - To enable GLAAS to make an informed decision on the status of the condition on the planning permission, and any possible requirement for further work in order to satisfy that condition.
 - To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation in order to inform the mitigation strategy as part of the planning process.
- 4.2 The specific objectives of the Watching Brief were to:
- Determine the presence of any prehistoric remains related to the sites topographical position next to the River Thames.
 - Determine the presence of any remains of medieval date on the site, especially any buildings or other structures.
 - Determine the presence of any remains of post-medieval date on the site, especially any buildings or other structures.
 - Assess the degree and extent of truncation of earlier deposits by the modern buildings that have occupied the site.
- 4.3 The final aim is to make public the results of the investigation, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 A *Written Scheme of Investigation* was prepared (AOC 2006) detailing the methodologies utilized during the course of the archaeological investigations.
- 5.2 The fieldwork was managed by Ron Humphrey for AOC Archaeology and supervised by the author. The site was monitored by the Kim Stabler of GLAAS (Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service) on behalf of the London Borough of Hounslow.
- 5.3 A unique site code **CIX06** was obtained from the Museum of London.
- 5.4 The focus of the watching brief concentrated on the visual examination and recording of ground beam excavation, associated with the construction of the new residential property.
- 5.5 The excavations were undertaken using a 20 ton 360° excavator fitted with toothless bucket. The excavations reached a maximum depth of 0.50m.
- 5.6 All of the work was carried out in line with Archaeological Guidance Paper (AGP): 3, Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork (English Heritage June 1998); and IFA Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IFA October 1994).

6 RESULTS

Ground Beam Excavation

- 6.1 During the course of the watching brief a series of ground beam excavations were observed. These excavations occurred across the full area of site. The excavations reached a maximum depth of 0.50m, with the same uniform deposit recorded throughout the course of the works. This deposit was identified as a mixed 20th century made ground material, containing frequent fragments of concrete, Ceramic Building Material (CBM), and other modern construction debris.
- 6.2 Natural deposits were not observed during the course of the watching brief.
- 6.3 No finds or features of archaeological significance were identified during the course of the watching brief.

7 FINDS

- 7.1 No finds were recovered during the course of the watching brief.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The watching brief did not identify any archaeological remains in the area occupied by the development at 10 – 30 Church Street, Old Isleworth. The impact of the development was limited, with the disturbance restricted to the top 0.50m of the existing soil profile, which consisted of 20th century made ground. Geotechnical investigations indicate that the made ground deposits present on site are substantial, between 1.80m and 3.70m in depth. This suggests that if archaeological deposits are present on site beyond this depth, that they will remain undisturbed.

9 PUBLICATION

- 9.1 Due to the limited result of the project, publication will be limited to a summary in the London Archaeology Round-up and publication via the Archaeological Data Service OASIS form (Appendix A).

10 ARCHIVE DEPOSTION

- 10.1 The archive, consisting of paper records and digital photographs, will be deposited with the Museum of London.

11 BIBLIOGRAPHY

AOC Archaeology (2006). *10 – 30 Church Street, Old Isleworth, Middlesex- Written Scheme Of Investigation For An Archaeological Watching Brief.*

British Geological Survey (1994) *1:50000 Series. Sheet 270: South London.*

CgMs Consulting (2005). *An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment: Land at 20 Church Street, Old Isleworth, Middlesex.*

English Heritage (1998). *Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork 3.*

Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994). *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Briefs.*

Oxford Archaeology (2002). *20 Church Street, Old Isleworth, London: An Archaeological Desk based Assessment.*

Terramech Investigations (2001). *Site Investigation No. 1861/01 at 20 Church Street – Old Isleworth for Proposed Housing Development.*

Figure 1 Site Location

Figure 2 Detailed Site Location/Trench Location

APPENDIX A OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: aocarcha1-27338

Project details

Project name	20 Church Street, Old Isleworth
Short description of the project	Between the 27th April and 24th July 2006 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken to observe ground beam excavation for a residential development at 20 Church Street, Old Isleworth, on behalf of Capital City Developments. The ground works undertaken were of limited impact, with only 20th century made ground observed across the area of the site. No significant archaeological remains or finds were identified.
Project dates	Start: 27-04-2006 End: 24-07-2006
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	7528 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	CIX06 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country England

Site location	GREATER LONDON HOUNSLOW HOUNSLOW 20 Church Street, Old Isleworth
Postcode	TW7 6BS
Study area	0.20 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 1665 7593 51.4698005305 -0.320366871303 51 28 11 N 000 19 13 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	AOC Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	AOC Archaeology
Project director/manager	Tim Carew
Project supervisor	Tim Carew
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	CSI Developments Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Museum of London

Digital Archive ID	CIX06
Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Images vector', 'Text'
Digital Archive notes	To be held at AOC until ready to archive
Paper Archive recipient	Museum of London
Paper Archive ID	CIX06
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet', 'Miscellaneous Material', 'Report'
Paper Archive notes	To be held at AOC until ready to archive

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	20 CHURCH STREET, OLD ISLEWORTH, MIDDLESEX: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
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