

**WEMBLEY WO4**

**WEMBLEY, LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**  
**REPORT**

National Grid Reference: **TQ 19014 85652**

Site Code: **WEM07**

By: **AOC ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP**

Client: **RPS on behalf of Quintain Estates and Development PLC**

**JUNE 2007**

**National Grid Reference:** TQ 19014 85652

**Site Code:** WEM 07

**On behalf of:** RPS Planning  
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**Timing:** Watching Brief Fieldwork  
20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> June 2007

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## CONTENTS

1	<b>ABSTRACT</b>	1
2	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> Site Location Development Proposals Planning Background	2
3	<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</b> Geology and Topography Archaeological Background	2
4	<b>AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION</b>	3
5	<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	3
6	<b>RESULTS</b>	4
7	<b>FINDS</b>	6
8	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	6
9	<b>PUBLICATION</b>	7
10	<b>ARCHIVE DEPOSITION</b>	7
11	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	7
Figure 1	Site Location	
Figure 2	Detailed Site Location / Test Pit Location Plan	
APPENDIX A	Context Register	
APPENDIX B	OASIS Form	

## 1 ABSTRACT

*On the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> June 2007 an archaeological watching brief on behalf of RPS was undertaken in association with a programme of geo-technical investigations. The archaeological investigations involved the observation and recording of 5 machine excavated geo-technical test pits measuring 3m by 0.6m using a JCB 3CX.*

*The archaeological investigations were commissioned to assess whether former development on the site had disturbed any potential archaeological deposits. All five test pits contained sequences comprising made ground overlying over London Clay. It is thought that horizontal truncation took place prior to the deposition of made ground, removing any previously existing subsoil deposits. The horizontal truncation of deposits is thought to have occurred during development of the site during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Of the deposits observed, none were deemed to possess any significant archaeological value.*

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

### **Site Location**

- 2.1 The site is located directly to the northwest of the new Wembley Stadium, and to the south of Lakeside Way, in the London Borough of Brent (Fig. 1 & 2). The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TQ 19014 85652.

## **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **Geology and Topography**

- 3.1 The underlying geology on site is indicated as being London Clay, with patches of Thames Gravel known in the vicinity. Notable gravel deposits include Dollis Hill Gravel on Wembley Hill to the west of the site, and Lynch Hill Gravels c. 300m east of the stadium (BGS sheet 256).
- 3.2 No previous geo-technical works have been undertaken on W04.

### **Archaeological Background**

#### **Prehistoric**

- 3.3 There are no known remains in the immediate vicinity of Wembley Stadium, although it is suspected that that the Thames terrace gravels, which occur in the area, may potentially contain evidence of an early prehistoric nature.

#### **Saxon / Medieval**

- 3.4 Documentary evidence dating to 825AD indicates that the settlement at Wembley was first referred to as Wemba Lea. The location of this settlement is thought to be located near Wembley Green and Wembley Hill. The medieval village of Tokyngton is thought to have been located to the west of the current Wembley Stadium.

#### **Post-Medieval**

- 3.5 The modern London suburb of Wembley only began to substantially develop in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, motivated by the presence of the main London to Birmingham railway and local tram network. Wembley Stadium itself was constructed in 1922-3 as a multi-purpose sports and entertainment centre for the British Empire Exhibition of 1924-5. It remained a national landmark until its closure and redevelopment in 2000.

#### **Previous Archaeological Investigations**

- 3.6 Between February and March 2005 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by AOC on preparatory works to the Wembley Stadium Piazza,

directly to the east of the Wembley WO4 site (AOC, 2005). During trenching works for service diversions, observations demonstrated that made ground sat directly above London Clay, indicating that significant horizontal truncation of the previous land surface had occurred. No archaeological finds or features were observed during the course of the works (ibid).

#### **4 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

- 4.1 The general aims of the Watching Brief were defined as being:
- To establish the presence/absence of any archaeological remains within the development site.
  - To record and sample excavate any archaeological remains encountered.
  - To enable GLAAS to make an informed decision on the requirement for any further archaeological works on WO4.
  - 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 final aim is to make public the results of the investigation, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

#### **5 METHODOLOGY**

- 5.1 The fieldwork was managed by Ron Humphrey for AOC Archaeology and supervised by the author.
- 5.2 A site code **WEM07** was obtained from the Museum of London as the unique site identity.
- 5.3 The scope of the watching brief involved the examination and recording of 5 test pits excavated during the programme of geo-technical site investigations, undertaken by Soil Mechanics. The test pits were excavated using a JCB 3CX with 500mm wide toothless bucket, and measured approximately 3m by 0.6m.
- 5.4 It was decided that the numbering of the test pits should be kept in line with the numbering system used by the geo-technical engineers. This was done to avoid confusion and for ease of reference between the archaeology and geo-technical data. For this purpose all test pits are prefixed TP.
- 5.5 All of the work was carried out in line with Archaeological Guidance Paper (AGP) 3, Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork (English Heritage 1998); and IFA Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IFA 1994).

## 6 RESULTS

- 6.1 Five geo-technical test pits were excavated in the area WO4 (Fig. 2). Each test pit was approximately 3m by 0.6m, while the depth of the test pits was limited to approximately 3m.

### Test Pit TP401

- 6.2 Surface of Trench = 43.05m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD)

Level (OD)	Depth	Context Number	Description
43.05-42.45m	0.00m	(TP401/01)	Made ground. Loose, brownish grey, large ceramic building material (CBM) and concrete fragments in clayey sandy matrix.
42.45-39.85m (NFE)	0.60-3.20m	(TP401/02)	Natural London Clay. Firm, mid brown, clay.

- 6.3 The earliest recorded deposit was a firm, mid brown clay natural (TP401/02). At its highest it was observed at 42.45m AOD. This was overlain by a 0.60m thick layer of modern made ground (TP401/01).
- 6.4 No finds or features of archaeological significance were identified in Test Pit TP401.

### Test Pit TP402

- 6.5 Surface of Trench = 42.84m AOD

Level (OD)	Depth	Context Number	Description
42.84-40.34m	0.00m	(TP402/01)	Made ground. Firm, brownish grey, clay, frequent demolition debris.
40.34-39.54m (NFE)	2.50-3.30m	(TP402/02)	Natural London Clay. Firm, mid brown, clay.

- 6.6 The earliest recorded deposit was a firm, mid brown clay natural (TP402/02). At its highest it was observed at 40.34m AOD. This was overlain by a 2.50m thick layer of modern made ground (TP402/01).

- 6.7 No finds or features of archaeological significance were identified in Test Pit TP402.

### Test Pit TP403

- 6.8 Surface of Trench = 42.90m AOD

Level (OD)	Depth	Context Number	Description
42.90-42.00m	0.00m	(TP403/01)	Made ground. Loose, brownish grey, large CBM and concrete fragments in sandy clay matrix.
42.00-39.90m (NFE)	0.90-3.00m	(TP403/02)	Natural London Clay. Firm, mid brown, clay.

- 6.9 The earliest recorded deposit was a firm, mid brown clay natural (TP403/02). At its highest it was observed at 42.00m AOD. This was overlain by a 0.90m thick layer of modern made ground (TP403/01).

- 6.10 No finds or features of archaeological significance were identified in Test Pit TP403.

### Test Pit TP404

- 6.11 Surface of Trench = 43.02m AOD

Level (OD)	Depth	Context Number	Description
43.02-42.12m	0.00m	(TP404/01)	Made ground. Firm, dark brown, clay, frequent large fragments CBM and concrete.
42.12-39.72m (NFE)	0.90-3.30m	(TP404/02)	Natural London Clay. Firm, mid brown, clay.

- 6.12 The earliest recorded deposit was a firm, mid brown clay natural (TP404/02). At its highest it was observed at 42.12m AOD. This was overlain by a 0.90m thick layer of modern made ground (TP404/01).

- 6.13 No finds or features of archaeological significance were identified in Test Pit TP404.



## Test Pit TP405

6.14 Surface of Trench = 42.49m AOD

Level (OD)	Depth	Context Number	Description
42.49-40.49m	0.00m	(TP405/01)	Made ground. Firm, dark brown, sandy clay, frequent medium fragments CBM and concrete.
40.49-39.09m (NFE)	2.00-3.40m	(TP405/02)	Natural London Clay. Firm, mid brown, clay.

6.15 The earliest recorded deposit was a firm, mid brown clay natural (TP405/02). At its highest it was observed at 40.49m AOD. This was overlain by a 2.00m thick layer of modern made ground (TP405/01).

6.16 No finds or features of archaeological significance were identified in Test Pit TP405.

## 7 FINDS

7.1 No finds were collected during the course of the watching brief.

## 8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 During the course of the works on site the nature and extent of the archaeological potential was observed, in addition to the associated disturbance of this potential.

8.2 Natural clay was identified in all five of the geo-technical test pits, ranging in height from 40.34mOD to 42.45mOD.

8.3 The sequence of deposits recorded in all five test pits were identical, comprising of modern made ground lying directly above natural, with natural identified as London Clay. The depth of made ground varied in thickness between 0.90m to 2.5m. This variation is attributed to significant horizontal truncation of the previous land surface, followed by the deposition of substantial quantities of made ground containing 20<sup>th</sup> century building debris. It appears that the phase of horizontal truncation removed any possible archaeological horizons, impacting upon the full area of site.

8.4 Over the course of the archaeological investigations at the Wembley WO4 site no archaeologically significant remains or features were observed.

## 9 PUBLICATION

- 9.1 Due to the nature of the project, it is expected that publication will be limited to a summary in the London Archaeology Round-up, and publication via the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) (Appendix B).

## 10 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

- 10.1 On completion of the project the archive, consisting written, drawn and digital records, will be deposited with LAARC.

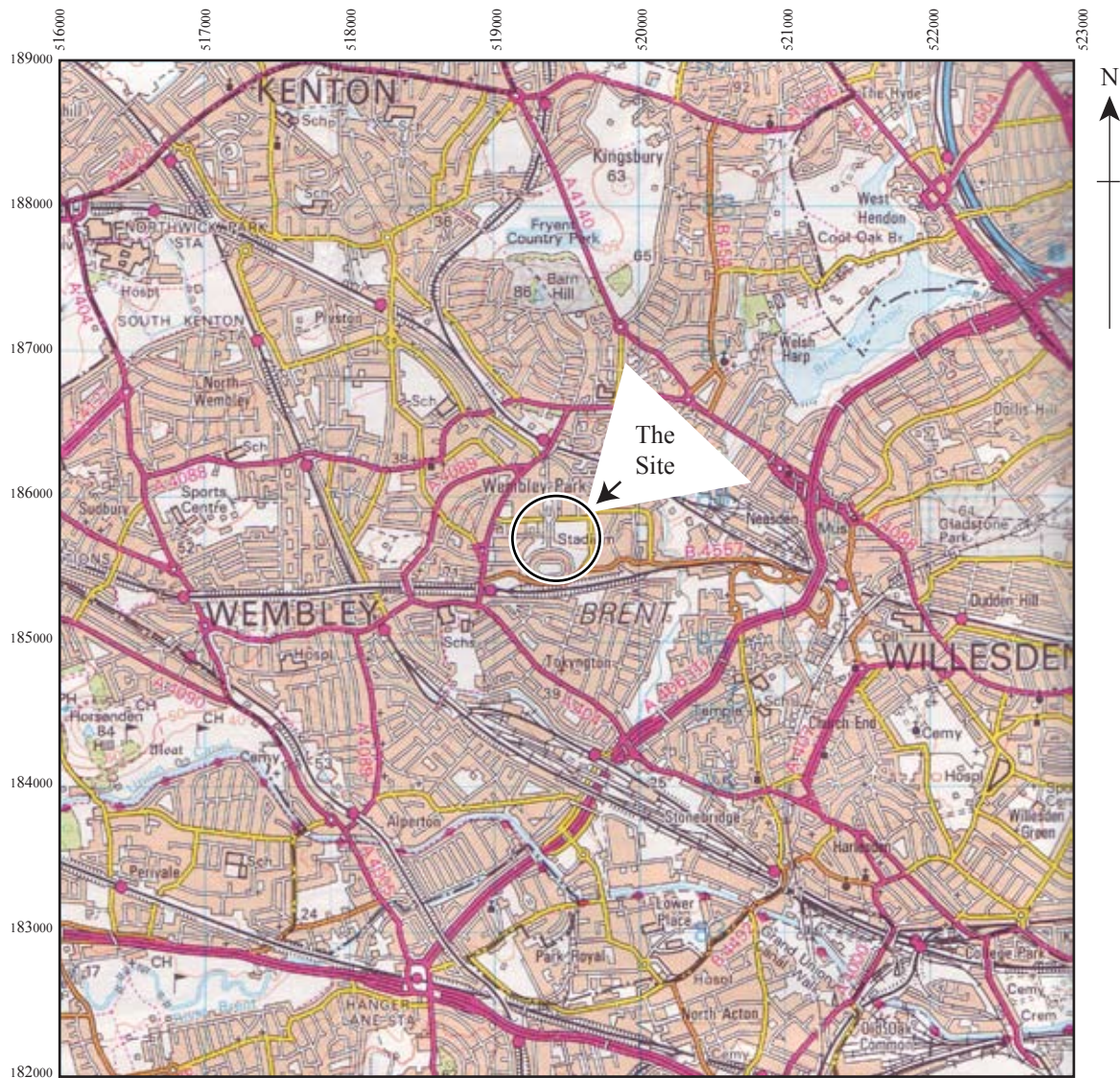
## 11 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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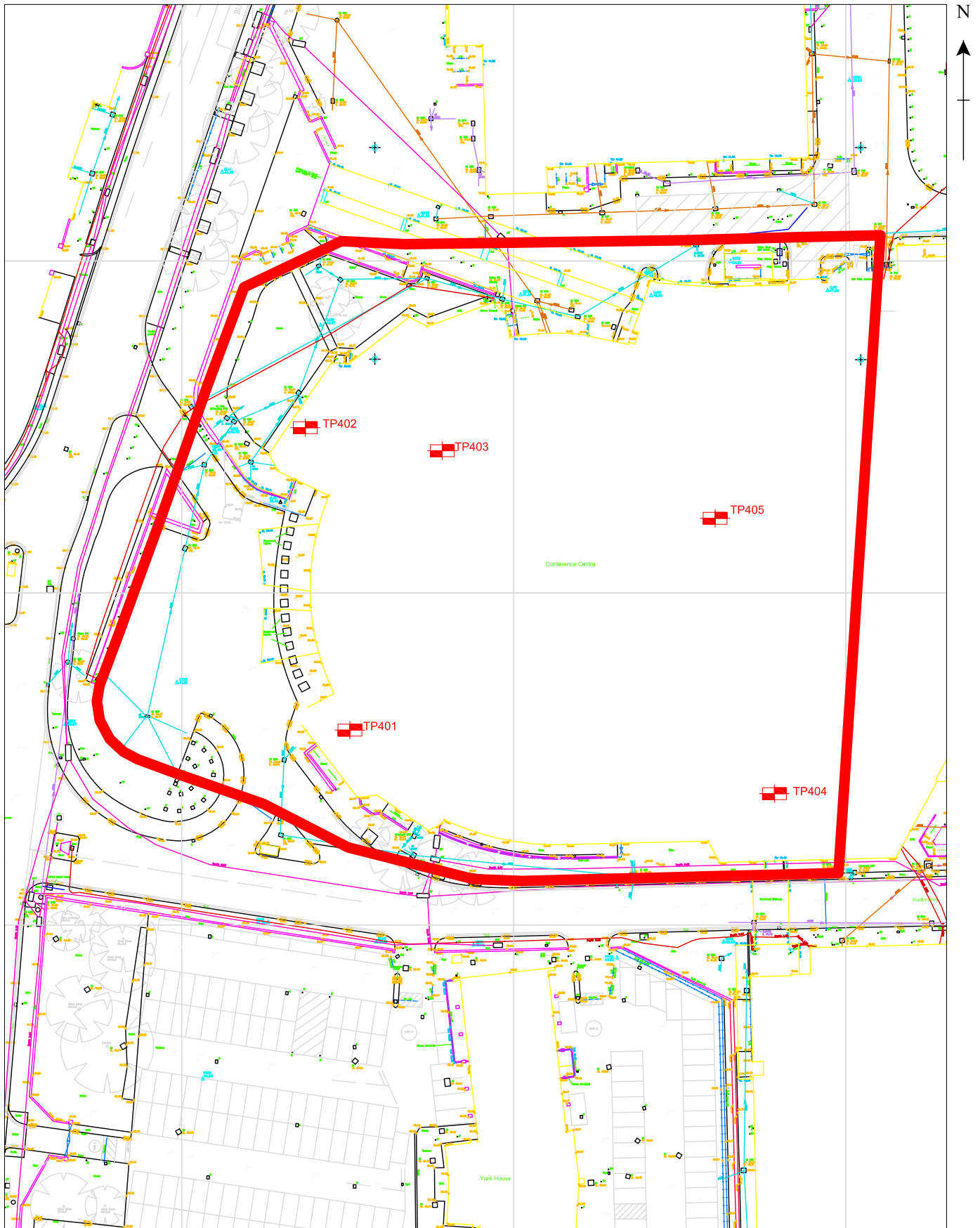
Institute of Field Archaeologists. (1994) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Briefs.*



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**Figure 1:** Site Location



Based on the Plans Produced by Soil Mechanics

20m 0 40m

**Figure 2:** Detailed Site Location/Test Pit Location

1:800

**APPENDIX A - Context Register**

<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Context Description</b>	<b>Length/m</b>	<b>Width/m</b>	<b>Depth/m</b>
TP401/01	Made Ground	3.00	0.60	0.60
TP401/02	Natural	3.00	0.60	2.60+
TP402/01	Made Ground	3.00	0.60	2.50
TP402/02	Natural	3.00	0.60	0.80+
TP403/01	Made Ground	3.00	0.60	0.90
TP403/02	Natural	3.00	0.60	2.10+
TP404/01	Made Ground	3.00	0.60	0.90
TP404/02	Natural	3.00	0.60	2.40+
TP405/01	Made Ground	3.00	0.60	2.00
TP405/02	Natural	3.00	0.60	1.40+

## APPENDIX B - OASIS Form

### OASIS ID: aocarcha1-28040

#### Project details

Project name	Wembley WO4, Wembley
Short description of the project	On the 20th and 21st June 2007 an archaeological watching brief, on behalf of RPS, was undertaken in association with a programme of geo-technical investigations. The archaeological investigations involved the observation and recording of 5 machine excavated geo-technical test pits measuring 3m by 0.6m utilising a JCB 3CX. The archaeological investigations were commissioned to assess whether former development on the site had disturbed archaeological deposits. All five test pits contained sequences comprising made ground lying over London Clay. It is thought that horizontal truncation took place prior to the deposition of made ground, removing any previously existing subsoil deposits. The horizontal truncation of deposits is thought to have occurred during development of the site during the 20th century. Of the deposits observed, none were deemed to possess any significant archaeological value.
Project dates	Start: 20-06-2007 End: 21-06-2007
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	7831 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	WEM07 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Voluntary/self-interest

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON BRENT WEMBLEY Wembley WO4, Wembley
Postcode	HA9 0DH
Study area	3.90 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 19014 85652 51.5566930116 -0.283061139809 51 33 24 N 000 16 59 W Point
Height OD	Min: 40.34m Max: 42.45m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	AOC Archaeology
Project brief originator	RPS (PTE)
Project design originator	AOC Archaeology
Project director/manager	Tim Carew
Project supervisor	Chris Clarke
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Quintain Estates and Development PLC

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive notes	To be held at AOC until ready to archive.
Digital Archive recipient	Museum of London
Digital Archive ID	WEM07
Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Images vector','Text'
Digital Archive notes	To be held at AOC until ready to archive.
Paper Archive recipient	Museum of London
Paper Archive ID	WEM07
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Matrices','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Plan','Report','Section'
Paper Archive notes	To be held at AOC until ready to archive.

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	WEMBLEY WO4, WEMBLEY, LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT- AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Clarke, C.



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