1 ABSTRACT

On the 11th September 2007 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken in association with a programme of geo-technical investigations on behalf of RPS Planning. The archaeological investigations involved the observation and recording of three machine excavated geo-technical test pits, two of which measured 3m by 0.5m (Test Pits 1 and 2), and one 3.8m x 1.0m (Test Pit 3), using a JCB 3CX. Test Pit 3 was moved by 3 meters to the north, due to concrete foundations in excess of 1 metre thick.

The archaeological investigations were commissioned to assess the potential for archaeological deposits to survive. All three test pits contained sequences comprising demolition rubble, redeposited London Clay (made ground) overlying London clay. It is thought that horizontal truncation took place prior to the deposition of the made ground, removing any previously existing subsoil deposits. The horizontal truncation of deposits is thought to have occurred during the development of the site in the early 20th century. The disturbed nature of all the deposits indicates that the potential for archaeological horizons to survive in these areas is very poor.

No significant archaeological remains or finds were identified during the watching brief.

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 1916 8565.

Development Proposals

2.2 The proposed scheme has yet to be fully defined. However, it is proposed that the development would involve the demolition of the previously existing Wembley Conference Centre, and the construction of new entertainment and conference facilities.

2.3 At present, no Planning Application has been submitted regarding the redevelopment of the site. The archaeological investigations undertaken are intended to provide information on the archaeological potential on site.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Geology and Topography

3.1 The underlying geology on site is indicted 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. The British Geological Survey map (BGS Sheet 256).

3.2 Previous work has been undertaken on site, at Wembley W03, reported June 2007 (AOC 2007a), and Wembley W04, reported June 2007 (AOC 2007b).

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 19th century, motivated by the presence of the main London to Birmingham railway and a 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 and June 2007 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 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 status of any future planning application and any possible conditions for further work required if the application is approved.
- 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 aims of the investigation were: to make public the results of the investigation, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The field work was managed by Ron Humphrey for AOC Archaeology and supervised by the author.

5.2 A site code **WKW 07** 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 3 test pits excavated during the programme of geo-technical site investigations, by Soil

Mechanics. All excavation was undertaken using a JCB 3CX fitted with 500mm wide toothless bucket. Two test pits measured approximately 3m by 0.5m in plan, and one 3.8m x 1.0m.

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

Test Pit 1

Surface of trench = to be established

Depth	Context Number	Description
0.00m – 0.50m	(TP501/01)	Demolition rubble (made ground). Mid brown loose silt with building material and crushed concrete.
0.50m – 1.20m	(TP501/02)	Redeposited Natural (made ground). Firm mid brown silty clay with pockets of building material.
1.20m – 1.70m	(TP501/03)	Made ground. Sandy gravel with frequent CBM and occasional concrete pieces.
1.70m – 3.00m NFE	(TP501/04)	Natural London Clay. Very firm mid brown clay with blue grey oxidized streaks, (weathered).

6.1 The earliest deposit identified in Test Pit 1 was a mid brown clay with blue grey oxidized streaks, London Clay (TP501/04). It was overlain by two deposits of made ground (TP501/03) and (TP501/02) to a depth of 1.0m below ground level. They were sealed by a 0.50m thick layer of demolition rubble in a silty matrix (TP501/01).

6.2 No finds or features of archaeological significance were identified in Test Pit 1.

Test Pit 2

Surface of trench = to be established

Depth	Context Number	Description
0.00m – 0.90m	(TP502/01)	Demolition rubble (made ground). Mid brown loose silt with building material and crushed concrete.
0.90m – 1.10m	(TP502/02)	Redeposited Natural (made ground). Firm mid brown silty clay with lenses of building material and gravel.
1.10m – 3.00m NFE	(TP502/03)	Natural London Clay. Very firm mid brown clay with blue grey oxidized streaks and flint fragments, (weathered).

6.3 The earliest deposit recorded was the Natural London Clay (TP502/03). This was sealed by a layer of redeposited natural clay (TP502/02) to a maximum depth 1.10m below ground surface. The test pit was sealed by demolition rubble (TP502/01).

6.4 No finds or features of archaeological significance were identified in Test Pit 2.

Test Pit 3

Surface of trench = to be established

Depth	Context Number	Description
0.00m – 0.40m	(TP503/01)	Demolition rubble (made ground). Mid brown loose silt with building material and crushed concrete.
0.40m - 1.80m	(TP503/02)	Made Ground. Poorly sorted concrete rubble with patches of bricks and clay.
1.80m - 3.0m NFE	(TP503/03)	Natural London Clay. Very firm mid brown clay with blue grey oxidized streaks and flint fragments, (weathered).

6.5 The earliest recorded context was weathered London Clay (TP503/03). This was overlain by a 1.40m thick layer of made ground with brick and clay patches (TP503/02). This was sealed by demolition rubble (TP503/01).

6.6 No finds or features of archaeological significance were identified in Test Pit 3.

7 FINDS

7.1 No finds were collected during the course of the Watching Brief.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The Watching Brief did not identify any archaeological remains. However, it has been demonstrated that the deposit horizons are very disturbed, and the potential for archaeological remains to survive is low.

8.2 Natural London Clay was identified in all geo-technical test pits, ranging in depth from the surface from 1.10m to 2.20m.

8.3 The sequence of deposits was similar in two of the test pits (Test Pits 1 & 2), comprising demolition rubble over redeposited natural sealing the London Clay. Test pit 3 however had a thicker deposit of made ground, suggesting that this pit was in the area of a previous basement.

8.4 It appears that the early 20th century phase of horizontal truncation removed any possible archaeological deposits, impacting upon the whole area of the site.

9 PUBLICATION

9.1 Due to the nature of the results, 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 The archive, consisting of paper records, drawings, and digital photographs, will be deposited with the Museum of London.

11 BIBLIOGRAPHY

AOC Archaeology (2007a). *An Archaeological Watching Brief: Wembley W03, Wembley. London Borough of Brent*. June 2007

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British Geological Survey (1994). *1:50,000 Series, Sheet 256: North London*.

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

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Figure 1 Site Location

Figure 2 Detailed Site Location/Test Pit Location

APPENDIX A - Context Register

Context No.	Context Description	Length/m	Width/m	Thickness/m

APPENDIX B - OASIS Form