

GUNNERSBURY PARK DAIRY, ACTON, LONDON BOROUGH OF EALING

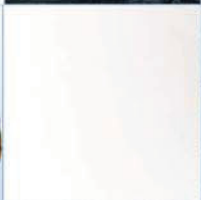
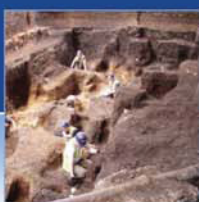
An Archaeological Watching Brief Report

National Grid Reference Number: TQ 1860 7920

AOC Project no: 30340

Site Code: GUP 08

Date: December 2008



Gunnersbury Park Dairy, Acton, London Borough of Ealing

An Archaeological Watching Brief Report

On Behalf of:	Capital Projects and Development London Borough of Ealing 14-16 Perceval House Ealing London W5 2HL
National Grid Reference (NGR):	TQ 1860 7920
AOC Project No:	30340
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Date of Excavation:	12th December 2008
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Date of Report:	December 2008

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Non-Technical Summary

Four geotechnical pits were excavated to determine the character of foundations associated with a toilet block in advance of construction of a new facility. These had the potential to be part of the historic dairy, however on examination, most of the foundations were seen to be based on concrete footings, indicating a late 19th or 20th century date. One wall, recorded in Test Pit 3, seems to be associated with one of the 19th century buildings demolished in 1959 for the construction of a café and a playground.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document presents the results of watching brief following the excavation of four trial pits in the area of a proposed new toilet facility at Gunnersbury Park, on behalf of the London Borough of Ealing.
- 1.2 The site is situated between Acton and Brentford, within a kilometre of the north bank of the River Thames, and is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TQ 1860 7920. The parkland is bound by Gunnersbury Avenue to the east, Popes Lane to the north, Lionel Road North to the west and the M4 and Kensington Cemetery to the south (Figure 1). The area for the new toilet facility is located towards the eastern side of the park, to the east of the large 'Round Pond'.
- 1.3 The area for archaeological recording was focussed around the foundations of a dairy within the estate that was demolished in 1958. It was thought likely that remains of this building, which was built in the Palladian style, may exist next to the current café building, and may be exposed during new groundworks for proposed toilet facilities (Figure 2).

2. Planning Background

- 2.1 Gunnersbury Park is administered by both Hounslow and Ealing Borough Councils. Archaeological advice to the council is provided by the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS), part of English Heritage.
- 2.2 The proposed development is for the construction of a new toilet block. This is to be located by the café and play area providing high quality appropriate visitor facilities that are sensitive to the significance of the Park, whilst being inclusive and responsive to the changing needs of visitors.
- 2.3 The value of the park as a Historic Resource is recognised in its Conservation Management Plan (Blandford Associates 2006). This has highlighted gaps in the known history of the site:
 - The landscape prior to the mid-17th century
 - The work of William Kent
 - Princess Amelia's park
 - The period between 1786 and 1802

3. Geology and Topography

- 3.1 The British Geological Survey (BGS) Map 270 indicates that the site lies on third river terrace of the Thames, with patches of alluvial brickearth in the southern part of the park. This geological horizon is likely to have been affected by landscaping during the life of the park since the 17th century.

4. Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 The following background information is drawn from information supplied by the London Borough of Ealing and other sources referenced in the text and bibliography.

General Background (pre-17th Century)

- 4.2 Gunnersbury is said to be named after a niece of King Canute, one Gunhilda. Few records of the early history of the site remain, but it may have been occupied by Alice Perrers, a mistress of King Edward III (Weinreb & Hibbert 1983).

1650-Modern

- 4.3 Much of the character of Gunnersbury Park in its present form is the result of a series of building and landscaping episodes undertaken in the 17th century. In 1658, a grand Palladian House was built for John Maynard, law advisor to Charles II. Princess Amelia, daughter of George II, later used the house as a summer residence for over 20 years from 1763 to 1786, and her Bath House still stands in the park. It is believed that William Kent worked on the gardens during her occupancy, his work including the Round Pond (Weinreb & Hibbert 1983).
- 4.4 The landscape of the park has several historic features that indicate its classical-influenced style. The building known as the dairy was a Palladian-style building with an arched colonnade and a pitched slate roof. Whether this was a functioning dairy or a folly is currently unproven. This lies to the east of the round pond, and there is a Doric temple. It has four Doric columns topped by a white wooden pediment decorated with ox skulls and garlands. The niches either side of the doorway originally contained classical statues, and owes much to the 18th century garden movements (P2 Architect Interior Designers 2008, Weinreb & Hibbert 1983).
- 4.5 In 1801 the Palladian house was demolished and the estate divided. Two houses were subsequently built in the Regency style; Gunnersbury House and Gunnersbury Park. Nathan Meyer Rothschild bought the park in 1835 and had the orangery and stable range added. In 1860 the Gothic folly tower by the fishing pond was added. The Rothschilds continued in residence until 1917, when part of the estate was sold for building. In 1926, the houses and 186 acres of land were bought by the Boroughs of Acton, Brentford and Chiswick, later transferred to the new Boroughs of Hounslow and Ealing (Weinreb & Hibbert 1983).
- 4.6 The dairy building was demolished in the late 1950s or early 1960s, to enable the construction of a café, the 'Coronation Café'. It had previously been extended to form a toilet block for the public. The toilet block is still extant, but derelict (P2 Architect Interior Designers 2008).

5. Aims of the Investigation

- 5.1 The aims of the watching brief were defined as being:
- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within excavated test-pits.
 - To record any structural foundations present in four test-pits.
 - To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
 - To assess potential for surviving floor level of the supposed dairy building.
 - To determine the extent of previous truncations of the archaeological deposits.
 - To enable the Archaeological Advisor on the significance of the archaeological remains and therefore any potential for further work.
 - To assess the test pits for secure dating evidence.
 - To assess the test pits for quantities of demolition material which may indicate the form or fabric of the dairy building.

- 5.2 The final aim was to make public the results of the investigation, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

6. Methodology

- 6.1 The watching brief comprised the cleaning and recording of four test pits excavated at the four corners of the extant toilet block.
- 6.2 Drawn plans and sections alongside photographic record were produced for each of the four test pits.
- 6.3 The site code **GUP 08** was obtained for the project, and used for all fieldwork.
- 6.4 All test pits were accurately located to the National Grid and their levels calculated using a temporary benchmark with a value of 22.24mOD.
- 6.5 All recording was in accordance with the standards and requirements of the Museum of London's *Archaeological Field Manual* (MoL 3rd edition 1994).
- 6.6 All of the work was carried out in line with:
- Archaeological Guidance Paper (AGP): 3, *Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork* (English Heritage 1998a)
 - Institute of Field Archaeologists – Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (IFA 1994).
- 6.7 A continuous unique numbering system was employed. For each test pit, a block of numbers in a continuous sequence was allocated.
- 6.8 Written descriptions, comprising both factual data and interpretative elements, were recorded on standardised sheets.

7. Results

- 7.1 None of the test pits recorded produced evidence for 18th century buildings or any structure pre-dating the Victorian period.

Test Pit 1

Context	Thickness	Description
100	0.04m	Concrete slabs
101	0.80m	Made ground - Dark brown clay silt. Occasional charcoal and brick
102	0.40m	Concrete footing
103	1.00m	Brick wall
104	0.50m	Concrete footing
105	0.80m	Brick wall
106	0.37m	Concrete footing

- 7.2 Test Pit 1 was located along the NE side of the extant toilet block, at the joining point of two walls with different orientations (Figure 3). It measured roughly 1.20m x 0.80m at base,. The trench exposed the foundations of two walls, [103] and [105], and their stratigraphic relation was determined (Figure 4).

- 7.3 Natural ground was not reached in Test Pit 1. The earlier context encountered was concrete footing [108] on top of which wall [103] was erected. Wall [103] ran in a N-S direction and was constructed of red and yellow stock bricks and cement mortar. The bricks were laid in English bond and rendered in creamy white plaster.
- 7.4 Wall [103] was overlaid by concrete footing [104], which was laid as foundation for brick wall [105]. This was built with red stock bricks and cement mortar. The bricks were laid in Flemish bond.
- 7.5 Foundations of walls [103] and [105] were overlaid by (101) a layer of dark brown clay silt, made ground containing occasional charcoal and brick fragments. Test Pit 1 was sealed by concrete slabs (100).
- 7.6 Building materials and techniques suggest a late 19th – early 20th century date for wall [103].

Test Pit 2

Context	Thickness	Description
200	0.04m	Brick wall
201	0.45m	Made ground - dark brown clay silt. Occasional charcoal and brick
202	1.00m	Brick wall
203	0.10m	Concrete footing for (202)
204	0.10m	Cylindrical ceramic drain
205	0.10m	Concrete support for drain
206	0.04m	Concrete surface
207	0.20m	Modern made ground
208	-	Concrete slabs

- 7.7 Test Pit 2 was located by the north corner of the extant toilet block and measured roughly 1.70m x 1.25m at base (Figure 3).
- 7.8 Natural ground was not encountered in Test Pit 2. The earlier context recorded was [203], the concrete foundation of brick wall [202] (Figure 4). This was built with red and yellow stock bricks and cement mortar. The bricks were laid in English bond. Wall [202] (same as [306]) is the NW wall of the extant toilets block.
- 7.9 The foundations of wall [202] were covered by (201), a layer of made ground which was very similar to (101). This layer was in turn overlaid by [206] a concrete surface which was probably the original surface of the area around the walls (same as [303]).
- 7.10 Surface [206] abuts wall [202] to the SE and the shallow remains of wall [200] to the NW. Wall [200] was built with the same materials and techniques as [202] suggesting the contemporaneity of the two walls. The NW face of wall [200] was partially truncated by concrete [205] which encased a ceramic drain [204].
- 7.11 These features were overlaid by (207), a 20cm thick layer of modern made ground, which was in turn, sealed by a pavement of concrete slabs [208]. Remains of wall [200] were sealed by (207) which suggests that the wall, still in use when surface [206] was built, was demolished before pavement [208] was laid.

Test Pit 3

Context	Thickness	Description
300	0.04m	Concrete edge
301	0.45m	Concrete slabs
302	1.00m	Modern made ground
303	0.10m	Concrete surface
304	0.10m	Made ground
305	0.10m	Brick wall
306	0.04m	Brick wall

- 7.12 Test Pit 3 was located by the west corner of the extant toilet block and measured roughly 1.70m x 1.00m at base,(Figure 3).
- 7.13 The earliest feature recorded in Test Pit 3 were the remains of brick wall [305] running in a NE-SW direction (Figure 4), this was built with red stock bricks (220 x 110 x 80mm) and light grey limey-cement mortar and was 0.50m long and 0.25m wide. The bricks were laid in Header bond. The bottom of the wall was not exposed. Wall [305] runs parallel to wall [306] which is the same as wall [202].
- 7.14 Both wall [305] and [306] were overlaid by (304), a layer of made ground which consisted of loose, light grey sandy, limey silt. This deposit and wall [305] were sealed by [303], a 0.10 m thick concrete surface which abutted wall [306] and was the original pavement around the toilets block (same as [206]).
- 7.15 Surface [303] was overlaid by concrete blocks [300] which were vertically laid to form the edge of the paved area to the NW of the toilets block. Surface [303] was also sealed by modern made ground (302) and concrete slabs [301] (same as (207) and [208] respectively). These last two contexts also abutted edge [300] to the NW and wall [306] to the SE.
- 7.16 Wall [305] seems to be the only feature that predated the construction of the toilets block, the building materials and technique suggests a 19th Century date. The wall was found at foundation level and no remains of the floor level were observed.

Test Pit 4

Context	Thickness	Description
400	0.60m	Stone slabs
401	1.20m (nfe)	Modern Made ground
402	0.10m	Cast iron pipe
403	0.45m	Cut for pipe [402]
404	0.45m	Fill of [403]
405	1.20m (nfe)	Brick wall
406	1.20m (nfe)	Brick wall

- 7.17 Test Pit 4 measured roughly 1.10m x 0.70m at base and was located by the south corner of the extant building. The test pit exposed the foundations of the SW and SE walls of the toilets block (Figure 3).
- 7.18 The two walls, [405] and [406], were built on concrete footings with red stock bricks and cement mortar. The bricks were laid in Flemish bond. Although part of the same building, the two walls were

built at different times (Figure 4). This is suggested by the fact that brick work and concrete footing of wall [406] overlay wall [405]; possibly the original wall was repaired or reinforced by the construction of [206]. The bottom of the wall foundations were not exposed by the trench.

- 7.19 Wall [406] was truncated by [403]; an irregular cut for the housing of cast iron pipe [402]. The truncation was backfilled by (404), which consisted of loose, dark brown sandy silt.
- 7.20 All the features described were overlaid by (401), a layer of modern made ground, which consisted of compacted orange brown silty clay with frequent CBM. Layer (401) was c.1.20m deep but was not fully excavated.
- 7.21 The area of the test pit was sealed by 0.06m thick stone slabs [400].

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 8.1 The aims of the watching brief were to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered; to record any structural foundations present in the four test-pits and to assess the potential for the surviving floor level of the supposed dairy building. No finds or features of archaeological interest were encountered in the test pits.
- 8.2 No remains of the floor level of the so called dairy building were identified during the watching brief. Wall [305] predates the construction of the toilet block, it seems to date to the 19th century and it is probably associated with the remains of the colonnaded building indicated in the historic site analysis prepared by P2 Architect Interior Designers (P2 Architect Interior Designers 2008).
- 8.3 Further works in this particular area of the site are not likely to produce any more significant information than that produced by the watching brief. However, the final decision will rest with the Hounslow and Ealing Borough Councils and GLAAS.
- 8.4 It is recommended that publication of the results of the evaluation will be through a summary in the London Archaeologist field-work round up and the ADS OASIS form (Appendix B). The archive will be deposited at London Archaeological Archive Resource Centre (LAARC), Museum of London.

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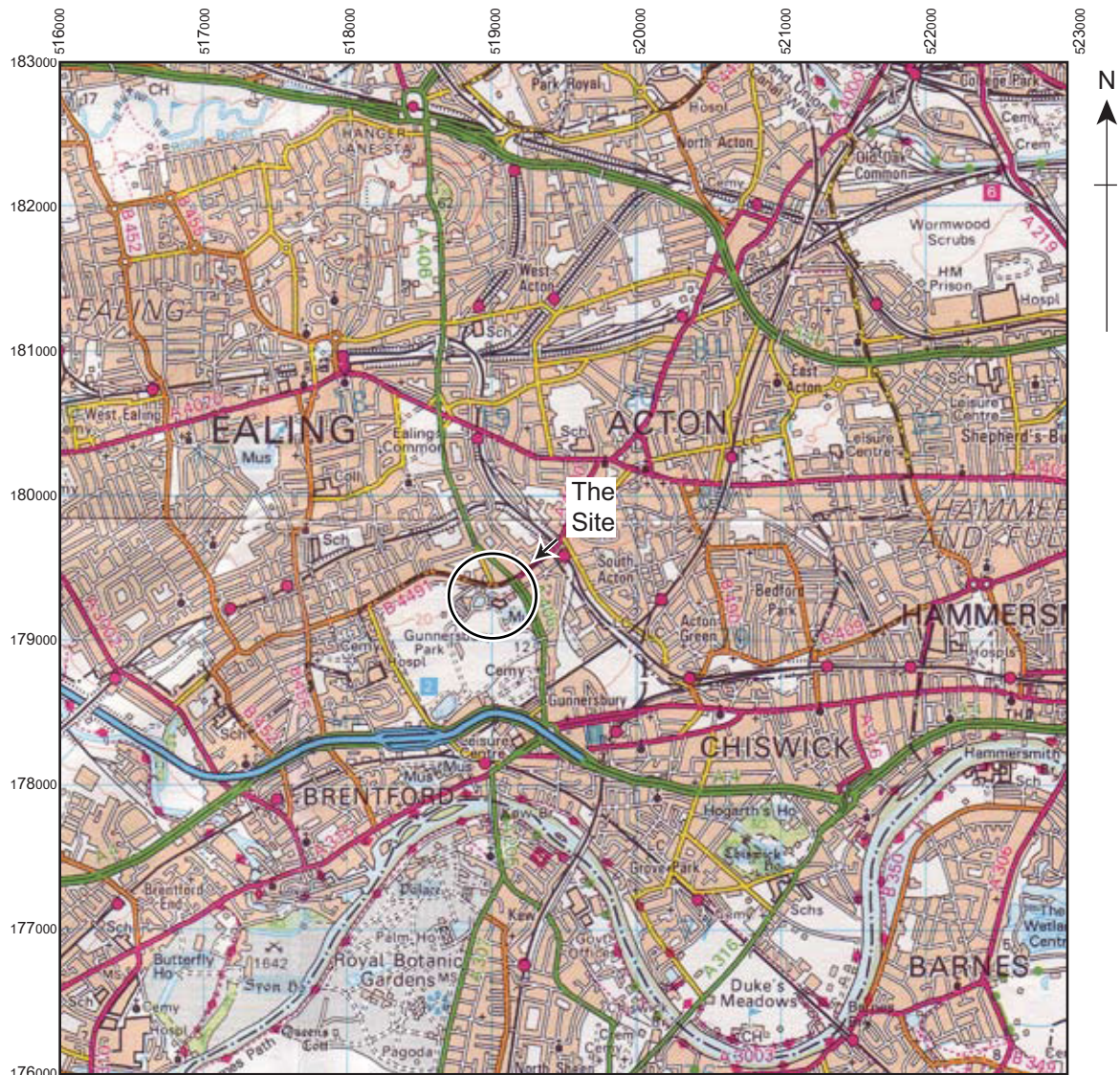
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Figure 1: Site Location

☐ Extent of Figure 3

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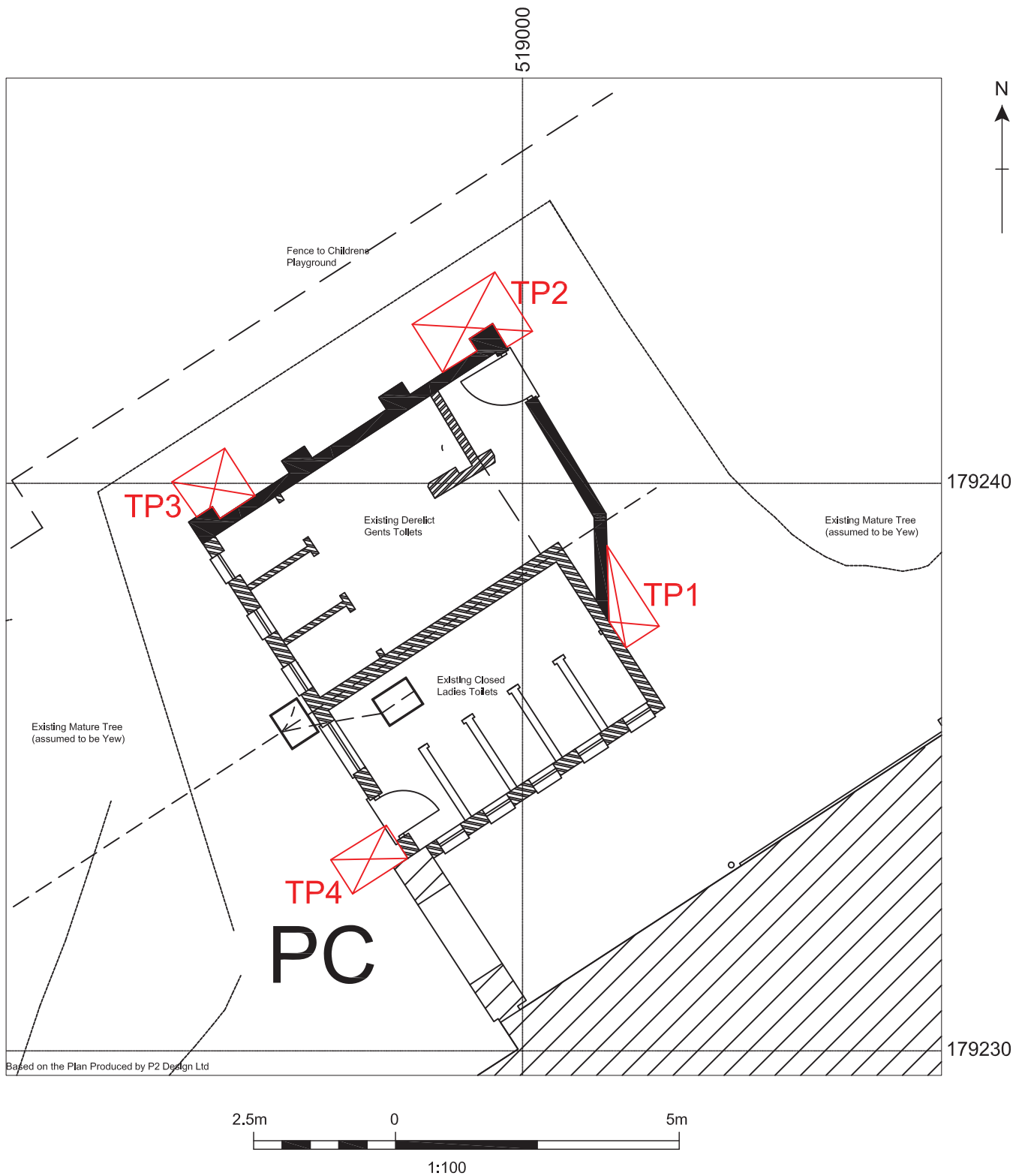


Figure 3: Test Pit Location Plan

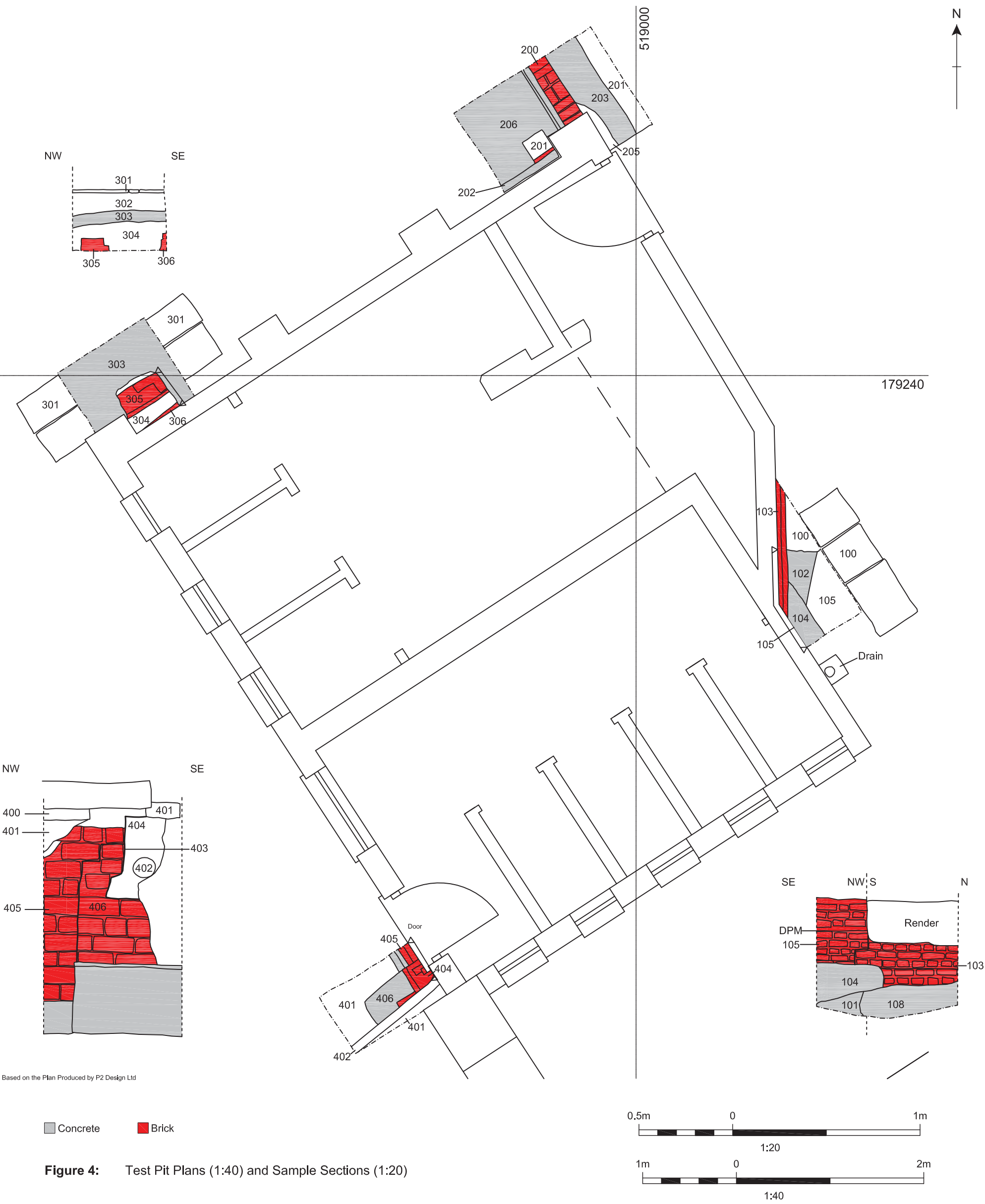


Figure 4: Test Pit Plans (1:40) and Sample Sections (1:20)

Appendices

Appendix A Context Register

Context No.	Context Description	Length	Width	Depth	Plan No.	Section No.
100	Concrete slabs	1.20mx0.80m	0.80m	0.04m	1	1
101	Dark brown Clayish silt, occasional charcoal and bricks.	1.20mx0.80m	0.80m	0.08m	1	1
102	Mid grey concrete	1.20m	0.20m	0.40m	1	1
103	Red and yellow brick (215x110x70mm), cement mortar, English bond rendered in white plaster.	1.00m	nfe	1.00m	1	1
104	Mid grey concrete	0.95m	0.20m	0.50m	1	1
105	Red Brick (220x110x70mm) cement mortar, Flemish bond.	0.50m	nfe	0.80m	1	1
106	Loose concrete adjacent to wall	0.30m	0.10m	0.37m		1
200	Red and yellow brick wall (215x110x70mm), cement mortar, English bond.	0.80m	0.20m	0.40m	2	1
201	Made ground. Dark Brown sandy silt, occasional charcoal and bricks.	1.20m	0.50m	0.45m	2	1
202	Red and yellow brick wall (215x110x70mm), cement mortar, English bond.	1.00m	0.50m	1.00m	2	1
203	Grey concrete footing for 202	1.00m	0.20m	0.10m	2	1
204	Cylindrical ceramic drain	1.20m	0.10m	0.10m	2	1
205	Grey concrete encasing 204	0.50m		0.10m	2	1
206	Grey concrete surface	0.80m	0.80m	0.04m	2	1
207	Made ground. Dark brown sandy silt	1.70m	1.25m	0.20m		
208	Concrete slabs	1.70mx1.25m	1.25m	0.05m		
300	Concrete blocks, flower bed edge	1.10m	0.10m	0.30m	3	3
301	Concrete slabs, surface paving	1.00m	1.00m	0.05m	3	3
302	Made ground. Dark brown grey silty sand frequent CBM and roots	1.10m	1.00m	0.25m	3	3
303	Concrete surface	1.10m	1.00m	0.12m	3	3

304	Made ground. Loose light grey sandy, limey, silt	1.10m	1.00m	0.30m (nfe)	3	3
305	Red stock bricks wall, (220x110x80mm) light grey mortar.	0.50m	0.25m	0.15m (nfe)	3	3
306	Red stock bricks wall, (220x110x80mm) Header bond, hard cement mortar	0.70m	nfe	0.60m	3	3
400	Stone slab, pavement	1.10m	0.70m	0.60m	4	2
401	Made ground. Compacted orange, brown silty clay with frequent CBM	1.10m	0.70m	1.20m (nfe)	4	2
402	Cast Iron pipe	1.10m	0.10m	0.10m	4	2
403	Irregular truncation, cut for 402	0.20m	nfe	0.45m	4	2
404	Loose dark brown sandy silt, fill of 403	0.20m	nfe	0.45m	4	2
405	Red stock brick and cement mortar wall (220x110x80mm). Flemish bond concrete footing	0.40m	nfe	1.20m	4	2
406	Red stock brick and cement mortar wall (220x110x80mm). Flemish bond concrete footing	0.40m	nfe	1.20m	4	2

Appendix B Oasis Form

OASIS ID: aocarcha1-53102

Project details

Project name Gunnersbury Park Dairy

Short description of the project Four geotechnical pits were excavated to determine the character of foundations associated with a toilets block in advance of construction of a new facility. These they were seen to be based on concrete footings, indicating a late 19th or 20th century date.

Project dates Start: 12-12-2008 End: 12-12-2008

Previous/future work No / No

Any project codes associated GUP08 - Sitecode
reference

Type of project Recording project

Site status Conservation Area

Current Land use Community Service 2 - Leisure and recreational buildings

Monument type WALL Modern

Significant Finds NONE

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

Prompt Conservation Area Consent

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON EALING ACTON Gunnersbury park, Dairy

Postcode W5 4NX

Study area 25.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 1860 7920 51.4987869105 -0.291203749260 51 29 55 N 000 17 28 W Point

Project creators

Name of AOC Archaeology Group
Organisation

Project brief Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
originator

Project design AOC Archaeology Group
originator

Project director/manager Andy Leonard

Project supervisor Paolo Guarino

Type of Developer
sponsor/funding
body

Name of Ealing Council
sponsor/funding
body

Project archives

Physical Archive LAARC
recipient

Digital Archive LAARC
recipient

Digital Media 'Database','Images raster / digital photography','Spreadsheets'
available

Paper Archive LAARC
recipient

Paper Media 'Context sheet','Drawing','Matrices','Photograph','Report','Section'

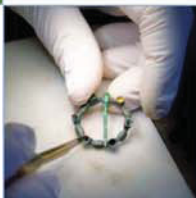
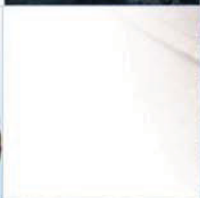
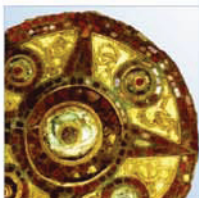
available

Project bibliography 1

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Project bibliography 2

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