

## 1) SUMMARY

*The following report summarises the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken at the Stables Market, Chalk Farm Road, Camden between the 30th September and the 16th October 2002. The Trial Trenches revealed structural elements possibly related to the railway that once occupied the site.*

## 2) INTRODUCTION

The site is located just north of Camden Lock Place in the London Borough of Camden, at NGR TQ 2865 8418. The proposed development covers an area of approximately 2114m<sup>2</sup> and currently comprises part of market stalls related to Camden Market. It is bounded to the north by Camden Viaduct, to the east by Chalk Farm Road, to the south by Camden Lock Place and to the west by a Safeways Supermarket car park.

A condition has been attached to planning consent relating to the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation. Following consultation with English Heritage, advisors to the local planning authority, it was agreed that the results of archaeological observation during geotechnical analysis of the site should be presented to the authority. A Written Scheme of Investigation, which detailed the methodology to be employed was prepared prior to commencing on site work.

## 3) HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The London to Birmingham Railway and associated structures, including Camden Goods Yard Depot were constructed on and around the site from the early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The construction of the railway including a curved retaining wall built in 1837 in the western area of the site and a viaduct built in c.1850 along the northern boundary of the site would have had an enormous impact upon any earlier existing archaeological deposits. In the eastern area of the site a number of buildings were constructed between approximately 1848 and 1875, which would have had an impact upon any existing archaeological deposits. W & A Gilbey's Bottling Works and Warehouse was built upon the site in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was triangular in shape and did not contain any basements. This would have had some impact upon the existing railway structures, potentially partially removing some of these structures. The bottling works were destroyed by fire in the 1980s and later demolished. In the 1980s the site was used as an open-air market associated with Camden Lock Market, which would have very little in the way of physical impact upon the site.

The site has very little in the way of archaeological potential from periods earlier than the post-medieval period, due to the nature of the construction of the railway, the retaining wall and the viaduct. However these structures are of archaeological value themselves due to their connection with the origins of the London and Birmingham Railway Company. Parts of these structures are likely to survive upon the site.

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

The aims of the investigation, as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation, were as follows:

- To observe, evaluate where necessary, and record any archaeological remains exposed during the digging of three Trial Trenches and four Observation Pits.
- To make public the results of the archaeological work.

The work gives the opportunity for the following research questions to be addressed:

- What in the way of buried structures survive upon the site relating to the development of the London and Birmingham Railway in the 19<sup>th</sup> century?
- To locate the foliating retaining wall and the footings of the viaduct.

#### **5) STRATEGY**

The watching brief involved the monitoring of the excavation of three Trial Trenches and four Observation Pits. All excavation was carried out using a tracked mini-digger. A full written and drawn record was completed. Context numbers were allocated to each deposit and sections were drawn where necessary.

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). Catherine Cavanagh of English Heritage (GLAAS) monitored the work.

#### **6) RESULTS**

##### Trial Trench 1

The lowest recorded deposit in Trial Trench 1 was sticky, compact mid greenish grey clay (007), which appeared to be undisturbed. Overlying this was compact dark greenish brown to black silty clay (006) with occasional flecks of charcoal, building material and shell. Overlying this was a 0.13m thick deposit of compacted demolition material consisting of mortar and brick.

Cutting this was a 0.62m thick concrete footing. An extension to the Trial Pit did not reveal any further corners of this structure, so it was unclear whether this was a beam or a pad footing. However, on top of it was a squared sandstone block that was 0.4m thick and measured 1.3m along the one side that was completely exposed. The fact that this sandstone block appeared to be square suggested that this was a pad foundation rather than one end of a beam. This was also supported by the findings in Trial Trench 2.

Overlying this foundation was a mixed deposit consisting of compact gravel, dark brown silt, light brown clay and demolition material (003). Sealing this was a 0.2m

thick deposit of coarse mid yellowish grey sand which was acting as a bedding layer for the york stone slabs (001) which made up the current surface.

### Trial Trench 2

The lowest recorded deposit in Trial Trench 2 was compact mid yellowish brown sticky clay (016). Overlying this was compact dark grey clay (010), which was in turn overlain by a deposit of mixed made ground (009).

These deposits were cut by a 0.7m thick concrete pad (014). The one completely exposed side of the concrete measured 3.5m. Sitting on this concrete pad foundation were two square sandstone blocks. The lower of the blocks was 0.18m thick and the upper of the two was 0.45m thick. These three elements made up a pad foundation. The whole of the foundation had been backfilled with compact mid yellowish brown sticky clay.

Two disused services were recorded at either end of the Trial Trench. A 1.6m thick concrete beam (009), encased a partially exposed redundant gas pipe and was orientated northwest/southeast across the trench.

Sealing this was a 0.3m thick deposit of compact black clinker and gravel (002) which was acting as make up for the concrete slab that sealed the trench and was the existing surface.

### Trial Trench 3

This Trial Trench was dug in two phases due to space restrictions. The first part measured 2.7m by 0.8m and was excavated to a depth of 2.75m, which was the maximum reach of the machine. The second part of the pit was 1.1m by 0.8m. Due to time restraints it was not possible to take this pit beyond 1.6m deep. At this depth, the base of a cobbled surface 005 was revealed (as recorded in the first part of the pit – see below).

The lowest recorded context was what appeared to be compact light brown grey mortar/concrete (010). Due to the depth of the pit it was not possible to investigate this deposit in detail. However it was clearly very compact, roughly level and extended across the base of the entire trench. The deposit was identified from a single fragment that was retrieved from the machine bucket. It is likely that this solid deposit was laid to act as consolidation for soft or unstable ground, and it may be that it was part of a substantial foundation base. Overlying this was a loose waterlogged black deposit (009) consisting of clayey sand with frequent building material inclusions. This deposit smelt strongly of diesel and due to this heavy contamination, none of the building material was collected. This contamination had presumably leached down onto the top of the mortar and collected there. Overlying this was a 1.1m thick deposit of loose mid yellow brown gravel (008), sand and chalk made ground.

Overlying this was a cobbled surface. The lowest element was a 0.1m thick layer of make up (007) for the cobbles, which consisted of compacted chalk and crushed building material. Overlying was a 0.04m thick layer fine greenish yellow sand (006). The cobbles were bedded into the sand. The cobble sets (005) themselves were

roughly squared grey stone and were not bonded together. Sealing these cobbles was a 0.08m thick reinforced concrete slab (004). It is likely that the cobbles were a former surface, probably external, which was subsequently concreted over to strengthen and level up the surface. It is likely that the concrete was an internal floor surface for the bottle factory, which stood on the site.

Overlying the concrete slab was a very compact deposit consisting of mixed hardcore clinker and metal. Above this was a looser mixed deposit consisting of brick, sandy silt and general rubbish. Both these deposits were blackened and were the result of the demolition and levelling of the former bottling factory, which burnt down in 1980. Sealing these was the current surface consisting of stone slabs and cobbles.

#### Observation Pit 1

Not excavated.

#### Observation Pit 2

The stiff yellowy brown clay natural (005) was located 1.4m below the current surface. This was cut by the east-west aligned concrete footings (002) for the existing railway viaduct. The concrete footings were trench built with stepped brick masonry above. Overlying the footings was a 0.6m thick deposit of yellowy brown clay with lenses of gravel and ceramic building material fragments (004). Overlying (004) were three ceramic drain pipes and their associated cuts and backfilling (002) and the existing concrete slab (001).

#### Observation Pit 3

The earliest feature recorded at 1.77m below the current surface was a gravelly concrete floor (005) which was at least 0.3m thick. Built off (005) was red brick pier base (007) with stepped foundations. The pier base was built in a stretcher/header courses and was of a different constructional phase to the overlying yellow brick railway viaduct. Subterranean brick arch (006) had been inserted later by cutting the springers into pier base (007).

Overlying both (005) and (007) was a concreted layer of black coal tar (004) at least 60mm thick. Built over (004) was a 0.24m diameter drain pipe (003) built of red and yellow bricks, running northwest to southeast.

Overlying this was a mixed deposit of clay, silt, gravel and ceramic building material fragments (002) at least 1.8m thick. Above was cobbled surface (001).

#### Observation Pit 4

Observation Pit 4 was excavated against the main wall running along the western limit of the site. The pit was 2.4 by 1 m in size.

The lowest recorded deposits were a series of clay deposits. The lowest of these was compact mid orangey brown clay (005), which was beneath compact dark green brown clay (004) which was in turn beneath compact dark brown clay (003). These

clay deposits were 1.4m thick. These clay deposits had been cut by the stepped wall brick wall foundation (006). Sealing the clay and the brick foundation cut was a 0.5m thick deposit of mixed hardcore, cobbles and compact mid brown sandy clay. This made ground was sealed by the current, 0.2m thick, concrete slab.

Observation Pit 5 was excavated immediately to the south of this pit. However the excavation of this pit was not observed due to its proximity to Pit 4. The pit was observed after excavation and the section revealed the same sequence as described above.

## **7) FINDS**

A few ceramic finds were recovered during the course of the work.

## **8) DISCUSSION**

The footings recorded in Trial Trenches 1 and 2 obviously related to the same structure, although exactly what this structure was is not clear. It seems likely that these pad foundations are related to an earlier railway structure. The size of these, and the unusual construction (single squared sandstone blocks) suggest that they were supporting a fairly substantial structure.

It seems certain that the concrete floor and overlying demolition layers recorded in Trial Trench 3 relate to the glass bottling factory which stood in this part of the site. Of interest was the deeper foundation. Unfortunately it was not possible to define this in any detail, and its exact purpose is unclear, although this may also relate to an earlier railway structure.

## **9) BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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