

## 1 SUMMARY

*In August 2005 an archaeological evaluation and was undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group at 7-11 Hester Road, Battersea on behalf of Hutchinson Whampoa (Europe) Ltd. This was done to assess the impact of the proposed development plan on any surviving archaeological remains.*

*The evaluation consisted of three trenches. Trench 1 yielded no significant archaeological finds. Trench 2 was similar although it contained evidence of the corner of a modern building with a concrete floor. Trench 3 contained no archaeological remains and was heavily contaminated with hydrocarbon petrochemicals.*

*These remains can only be described as being of minimal significance and no further archaeological work is recommended in connection with this development.*

## 2 INTRODUCTION

### Site Location

- 2.1 The site is centered on National Grid Reference (NGR) TQ 2725 7725 south of the River Thames, towards the eastern end of Hester Road at approximately +4.3m OD. The plot is a rectangular-shaped area approximately 400m<sup>2</sup>, lying on the south side of Hester Road, which is currently occupied by a two-storey brick-built commercial property. There is no basement in the existing building. To the north, the site is bounded by Hester Road, to the west by Elcho Street and to the east and south by a variety of properties

### Topography and Geology

- 2.2 There has been no geotechnical survey carried out on the site, however there was a borehole investigation conducted at Albion Wharf, approximately 30m to the north. This revealed made ground up to 5m thick in that area. According to the British Geological Survey Map of South London (Sheet 270) the site is located on, or very close to, an area of geological transition where river brickearths meet alluvium. A gravel outcrop is located nearby to the west of the proposed development site. This area of geological transition is of interest as it may have implications for human activity in the area.

### Planning Background

- 2.3 Initially an archaeological *Desk-based Assessment (DBA)* was carried out revealing the potential archaeological significance of the site (*AOC 2005*). A review of documentary, geological, archival and cartographic sources indicated that the site lies in an area known to have high archaeological potential.
- 2.4 Prior to commencing the evaluation works on site, a Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological evaluation had been prepared to address Condition 4, attached to the planning permission for development for the scheme under the Town & Country Planning Act (1990), , as recommended in *Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning – PPG16*.
- 2.5 The site lies within an Area of Archaeological Priority according to Wandsworth Unitary Development Plan (1994). The evaluation was carried out in accordance with planning policies TBE 12-15 which states the need for full archaeological evaluation in areas containing archaeological remains (Wandsworth Unitary Development Plan (UDP, 2003)

### **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

**3.1** No previous archaeological investigations have been undertaken on the site. However, there have been numerous excavations in the immediate surrounding area and there are numerous entries within the Greater London Sites and Monuments Record (GLSMR) for archaeological features or chance finds within the 250m radius of the site. The full archaeological, historical and cartographic background of the area has been documented in the DBA, the results of which have been summarized by period below.

#### **Prehistoric**

**3.2** The Borough of Wandsworth has been a rich source of early prehistoric material. Numerous Lower Palaeolithic (c500, 000-40,000 BP) hand axes have been found in the glacial gravels throughout the Borough. Mesolithic axes, or Thames picks, have been found at the low tide mark some 60m east of Battersea Bridge, adjacent to the development site, and 400m to the north east of the site, close to Albert Bridge, slightly above the low water mark.

**3.3** The ‘Battersea Shield’, one of Britain’s greatest archaeological treasures and a magnificent example of Iron Age decorative art, was found in the river near Battersea; it had probably been thrown into the river as a ritual offering and is now on display in the British Museum.

**3.4** Investigations along the Thames foreshore have found evidence of Bronze Age submerged forest and peat deposits 100m to the west of the site, on the Chelsea bank of the river.

**3.5** Archaeological investigations approximately 250m to the south-west of the site, at 73-83 Battersea Church Road, uncovered several struck flints, one burnt flint and a redeposited flint blade found within post-medieval plough soils. These discoveries confirm the potential of the area for revealing evidence of prehistoric settlement.

#### **Roman**

**3.6** There is little evidence for Roman occupation in the vicinity of the development area. This paucity of evidence is explained by the location of the Roman settlement of *Londinium* at the site of the modern day City of London, a considerable distance to the north-east of the proposed development area.

#### **Saxon**

**3.7** There have been no finds of Saxon date in the vicinity of the site.

## **Medieval**

- 3.8** The history of the area remains obscure throughout the medieval period. Only one reference is recorded in the GLSMR for Medieval activity in the area. This relates to documentary evidence for fish ponds mentioned in the will of Sir John St John in 1645. The fish ponds were presumably located within Home Park Manor which extended from Westbridge Road and Hyde Lane, approximately 500m to the south-west of the development area. It seems likely that, until the first flood defences were built in 1570, the area was too wet for regular use or occupation.

## **Post Medieval**

- 3.9** Cartographic evidence reveals that during the post-medieval period the site was undeveloped and located within a watermeadow or marshland.
- 3.10** 100m to the west, at the Bus Garage site on Hester Road, 17th-18th century reclamation dumps and banks were recorded during archaeological investigations. The deposits revealed during these works suggest a progressive northward extension of a river bank between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Further archaeological investigations 200m to the east of the proposed site uncovered dumped deposits dated to the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century. These dumps may relate to flood defences constructed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Battersea area.
- 3.11** The first sign of development in the vicinity of the site appears to be of an industrial nature. It is depicted on a map of Battersea Riverside and Park by James Pennethorne dated to 1845. Over the following 20 years development in the Battersea area expanded rapidly, particularly to the west of Battersea Bridge Road. Many industrial buildings sprang up north of the proposed development site along what was then known as George Street, later to become Hester Road. Stanford's Map of 1862 shows that the industrial buildings opposite the proposed development site took the form of chemical works, a timber yard and lead works stretching along the riverfront. However to the south of George Street, the land use was entirely different and included market gardens. The site at this time was used as yard space for the chemical works.
- 3.12** The site itself was built upon for the first time in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century during the ongoing industrialisation of the area that would eventually engulf the remaining areas of market gardens and marshland. The development consisted of several buildings of an industrial nature with associated yard space. Hester Road appears for the first time in 1916. During the 1960s, the small buildings occupying the site were demolished and replaced by two large buildings; these remain upon the site today, and are known as 7-11 Hester Road.

## **4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE INVESTIGATION**

**4.1** The aims of the investigation, as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (AOC 2005), were in the first instance to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. This applied to remains of all periods, and included evidence of past environments.

**4.2** The general aims of the investigation were:

- 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 assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits.
- To determine the presence of any prehistoric artefacts or deposits.
- To determine the presence and nature of archaeological deposits on the site.
- To determine the nature of any alluvial sequences on the site.
- To determine a topographic and environmental profile of the site, to further refine the predictive models of the site.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation subject to any confidentiality restrictions.
- To enable the LPA archaeology advisor to make an informed decision on the status of the Planning Condition

## **5 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

**5.1** The field evaluation comprised the excavation of two trenches measuring 3m x 3m at base and one 10m x 1.8m trench. The two 3m x 3m trenches were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m to the rear of the proposed development, and were centred around the areas of the new piles. It was necessary to enlarge these trenches in order to step in, when depths of over 1.2m were required

**5.2** The proposed development consists of a four-storey office building with a basement toward the Hester Road frontage (Figure 2). This basement is to be excavated to 3.3m below current ground surface. A third trench was therefore to be excavated to the full depth of the proposed basement (3.30m below current

ground level) or the top of the natural sequence, whichever was higher, and measured 10m x 1.8m at base. This trench was to be stepped as necessary to provide safe access.

- 5.3 A site code was assigned to the site, (HEB 05), by the Museum of London archives officers.

## 6 RESULTS

The evaluation work was carried out in a day and a half by one project supervisor and an archaeological assistant, under the overall supervision of Les Capon, Project Officer. A temporary bench mark was set up in the middle of the north side of the site measuring 4.77m OD.

### Phase 1 – Natural Deposits

- 6.1 Phase 1 consisted of natural geological deposits found within the site. This varied at different levels within the three different trenches. In Trench 1, mid brown orange silty clay (1008) was seen lying at 3.80m OD. No archaeology was seen cut into this layer and it was interpreted as natural brickearth. In Trench 3, a clean natural layer of mid grey brown silty clay (3001) was discovered at 3.04m OD and may be interpreted as alluvial clay. This clay was again seen within Trench 2 at 1.88m OD (see (2003)) and overlay (2004), a mid brown yellow compact layer of gravels, possibly natural river gravels.

### Phase 2 – Building construction

- 6.2 In Trench 3 a modern wall (3008) and associated concrete floor surface (3003) were found. Since the top of the wall was 0.66m below the modern ground surface and there was the same thickness of recent demolition on top of it, it seems reasonable to suggest that this represents part of a modern building, possibly a basement, demolished when clearing the site. This trench clearly revealed the corner of this building since the wall and the floor were apparent in the eastern section of the trench, as well as the dumping layers seen in Phase 3. Below the wall and the concrete base, there was a fairly thin layer of dark brown silty clay (3002) which overlay the natural geological layers. It is possible that this had been disturbed by the building activity of the basement. It was similar in appearance to natural clay but contained modern mortar and building debris and therefore must have been associated with the construction.

### Phase 3 - Sequences of dumped and contaminated ground

- 6.3 In all three trenches, a series of dumped layers had been deposited. In Trench 1, deposits (1004) – (1007) contained modern building demolition material and it

may be suggested that these layers were deposited to raise the level of the ground for future development. The other two trenches contained similar sequences.

Trench 3 is similar since on the western side of the wall, a sequence of dumped layers was seen which were recorded as (3011) – (3013). All were brown silty clay layers containing mortar and small flints. Even within the confines of the wall itself and above the concrete floor, there is evidence of dumping seen in the form of (3004) – (3006). It is probable that layers (3011) – (3013) were deposited before (3004) – (3006) since they abut the wall. Above all these contexts lay more dumped layers recorded as contexts (3007), (3014) and (3015). Trench 2 contained a large dumped layer heavily contaminated with highly noxious hydrocarbon residue. This was essentially grey silty clay and may be related to the chemical works which stood on the site after 1862.

## **7 Finds**

- 7.1 No significant archaeological finds were recovered from the site.

## **8 Conclusion**

- 8.1 The conclusions to be drawn from this investigation are that all archaeological remains on the site were clearly modern in date and that no archaeological remains dating from before the 19<sup>th</sup> century were found within the three trenches evaluated. Part of the yard of the 19<sup>th</sup> century chemical works and associated wall foundations may have been found in Trench 2. Naturally formed deposits of alluvial clay, brickearth and river terrace gravels were seen at the bottom of the sequence generally sealed by 1.5m of modern made ground.

## **Recommendations**

- 8.2 From observations made during this evaluation, it is likely that the developer will expose more of the layer contaminated by hydrocarbon residue from the modern chemical works yard formerly on the site. Buildings associated with this yard may be found at foundation level but the superstructure will have been destroyed by the demolition that occurred in the 1960s. The remains of these buildings would be of negligible archaeological importance. Ground reduction on this site will only disturb made and dumped ground of no archaeological significance. No further archaeological work is therefore recommended.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

AOC Archaeology, 2002; *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of 7-11 Hester Road, Battersea.*

AOC Archaeology, 2005; A Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological Evaluation.

Wandsworth Unitary Development Plan; (adopted August 2003).

**APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT REGISTER**

Context No.	Context Description	Length	Width	Depth	Single Ctxt. Plan?	Section No.
1001	Brick floor	Trench	Trench	0.06m	No	1
1002	Concrete slab	Trench	Trench	0.14m	No	1
1003	Make up for slab- gravel and sand with brick inclusions	Trench	Trench	0.24m	No	1
1004	Dumped material; sand, gravel and industrial byproducts	Trench	Trench	0.30m max.	No	1
1005	Dump of clay, inclusions of mortar, CBM and plaster	Trench	Trench	0.10m	No	1
1006	Dump layer- sandy clay, CBM, coke, slag	Trench	Trench	0.40m	No	1
1007	Redeposited clay- with mortar, coke and tile inclusions	Trench	Trench	0.50m max.	No	1
1008	Natural brick earth, silty clay, flecks of charcoal	Trench	Trench	N.F.E.- 0.30m in section	No	1
2001	Made ground-concrete	Trench	Trench	0.75m	No	2
2002	Modern dump-contaminated clay	Trench	Trench	1.70m	No	2
2003	Natural alluvial clay	Trench	Trench	0.80m	No	2
2004	Natural silty gravels	Trench	Trench	0.20m	No	2
3001	Natural compact silty-clay	Trench	Trench	0.08m	No	3
3002	Disturbed silty clay, some charcoal flecks	Trench	Trench	0.15m	No	3
3003	Concrete base	0.40m	1.70m	0.18m	No	3
3004	Dumped demolition material	0.40m	1.70m	0.30m	No	3
3005	Dumped bitumen, and building waste material	0.40m	1.70m	0.18m	No	3
3006	Demolition layer	0.40m	1.70m	0.36m	No	3
3007	Tarmac overlay	Trench	1.70m	0.60m	No	3
3008	Wall of yellow bricks	0.40m	0.20m	0.94m	No	3

3009	Wall foundation, concrete	0.40m	0.20m	0.06m	No	3
3010	Cut for wall	0.40m	0.20m	0.20m	No	3
3011	Dumped silt-clay- with small flint and mortar flecks	Trench	1.10m	0.18m	No	3
3012	Dumped silty clay- with flint inclusions	Trench	1.10m	0.20m	No	3
3013	Demolition material	Trench	1.10m	0.20m	No	3
3014	Demolition material	Trench	1.50m	0.74m	No	3
3015	Dumped concrete mix- with abundant flint	Trench	0.40m	0.70m	No	3
3016	Made ground, demolition material	Trench	Trench	0.30m	No	3



## **APPENDIX 3 – OASIS FORM**

OASIS ID: aocarcha1-9822

### Project details

Add or edit entries

Project name 7-11 Hester road, Battersea

Short description of the project In August 2005 an archaeological evaluation and was undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group at 7-11 Hester Road, Battersea on behalf of Hutchinson Whampoa (Europe) Ltd.. This was done to assess the impact of the proposed development plan on any surviving archaeological remains. The evaluation consisted of three trenches. Trench 1 yielded no significant archaeological finds. Trench 2 was similar although contained evidence of a corner of a modern building with associated concrete floor. Trench 3 contained no archaeological remaining evidence and was heavily contaminated with hydrocarbon petrochemicals.

Project dates Start: 16-08-2005 End: 17-08-2005

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes HEB 05 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial

Monument type WALL Modern

Methods & techniques 'Sample Trenches'

Development type Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Status Incomplete

**Project location**

England

Add or edit entries

Site location GREATER LONDON WANDSWORTH BATTERSEA 7-11 Hester Road, Battersea

Postcode SW11 4AN

Study area 400 Square metres

National grid reference TQ 2725 7725 Point

Height OD Min: 3.70m Max: 3.80m

**Status**

Incomplete

**Project creators**

Add or edit entries

Name of Organisation AOC Archaeology

Project brief originator Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)

Project design originator AOC Archaeology

Project director/manager Mark Beasley

Project supervisor Tom Collie

Sponsor or funding body Developer

Sponsor or funding body (other) Hutchinson Whampoa (Europe) Ltd.

**Status**

Incomplete

**Project archives**

Add or edit entries

Physical Archive Exists? 'No physical archive'

Digital Archive recipient Museum of London

Digital Archive ID HEB 05

Digital Media available 'Database','Spreadsheets','Text'

Paper Archive recipient Museum of London

Paper Archive ID HEB 05

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

Status	Incomplete
Missing Fields	Digital Contents, Paper Contents

**?** **Project bibliography 1**

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript) Add or edit entries **+**

Title An archaeological evaluation report of 7-11 Hester Road, Battersea

Author(s)/Editor(s) Tom Collie

Date 2005

Issuer or publisher AOC Archaeology

Place of issue or publication Twickenham, London

Description Grey literature containing report, context register, matrices and site map

Status	Incomplete
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