Archaeological investigations at 285–389 West End Green, City of Westminster

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Introduction

Between September 2016 and July 2017, Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA) conducted an archaeological excavation and watching brief on land at 285–329 Edgware Road, City of Westminster (Fig 1), which followed on from previous works undertaken by PCA between 2009 and 2011 in the south-west of the site.[1] This article discusses the final phase of the archaeological investigation across the rest of the site.

Following an open area excavation (Figs 2 and 3: Trench 10) and six initial targeted areas of watching brief, the entire northern part of the site, measuring 136m long by 74m wide, was archaeologically monitored during ground-stripping works (Fig 1). Despite modern truncations, the archaeological investigation found evidence for stratified deposits and structures spanning the late 17th to the early 20th century.

Archaeological and historical background

The site is located alongside the south-west side of Edgware Road, which follows the course of a Roman road known as Watling Street. Despite its favourable position, the archaeological investigation did not find any evidence of *in-situ* Roman deposits, which is due probably to the marginal position of the site during the Roman period.[2]

During the medieval period, the site

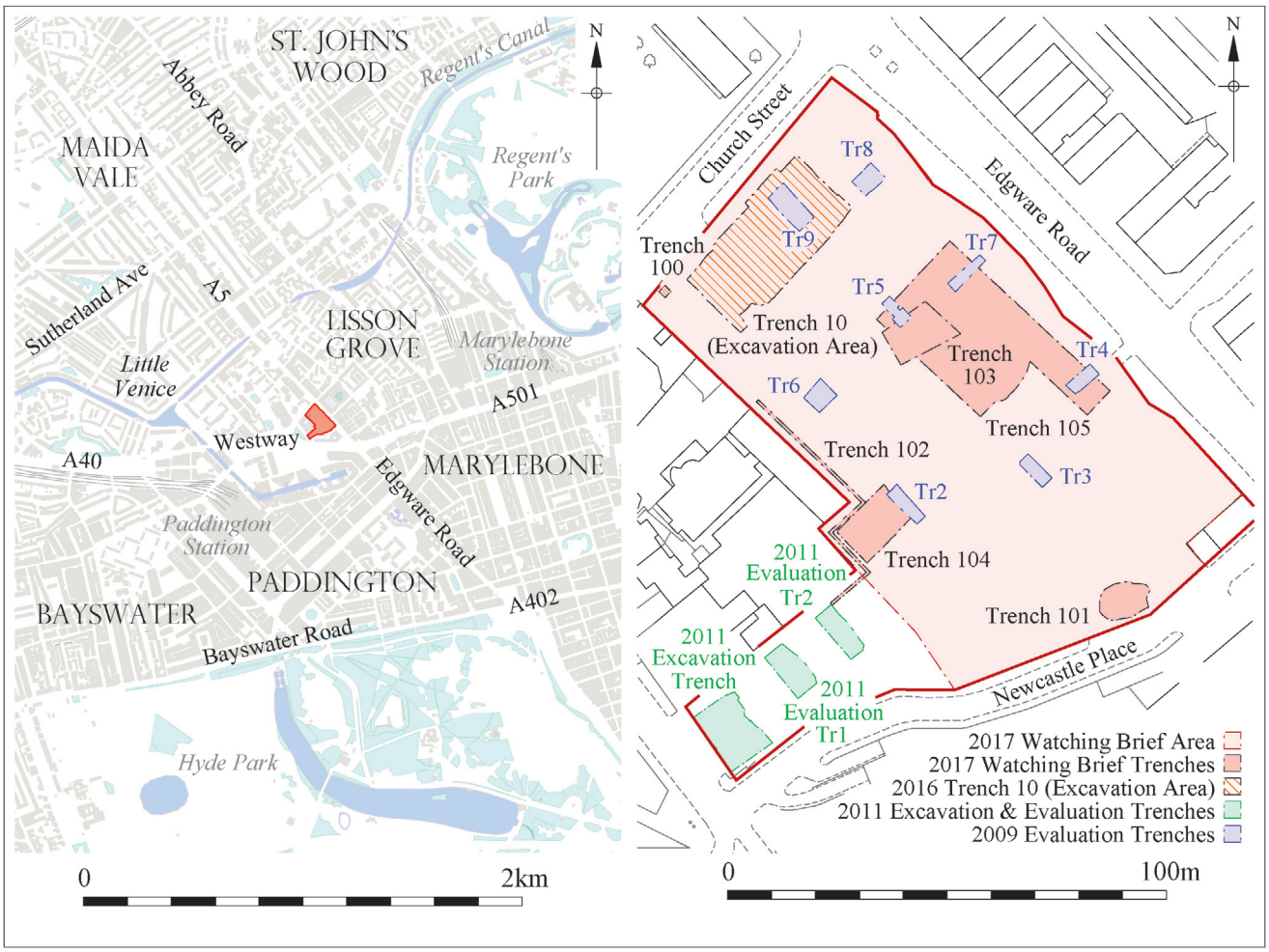

Fig 1: site and trench location

Fig 2: general view of Trench 10, looking north-west

was located within the Manor of Paddington, with Edgware Road defining the north-east limit of the manor[3] and Paddington Green forming part of the manor in use as common waste ground. The Manor of Paddington is first mentioned in a document dated to the late 12th century when the property of the land was transferred to the Almoner of Westminster Abbey, and remained in the Abbey's lordship until the Reformation.[4]

After the Reformation, the Abbey's land was seized by the Crown and in 1550 was conferred on the Bishop of London by King Edward VI.[5] By the early post-medieval period, there was a small settlement, first mentioned in 1582,[6] which remained relatively insignificant with just over 50 households assessed for the Hearth Tax in 1664.[7] By 1670, a chapel located in the north part of Paddington Green, which originally dated to the medieval period, had been replaced by the new church of St James.[8]

The earliest archaeological evidence for the development of Paddington village dated to the post-medieval period. During the evaluation on the site in 2009[9] and 2011,[10] 17th-century quarry pits and gullies were recorded. Of note were two parallel north-west/south-east robber trenches, located in the south-west corner of the site, which were interpreted as being associated with a building dating to the mid- to late 17th century.[11] The recovered finds were indicative of industrial, retail and food manufacture. The finds assemblage was consistent with a middle-class population of the late 17th and 18th centuries and with the description of Paddington Green as 'a rural retreat'.[12]

By the 18th century, the focus of settlement of Paddington Green continued to be St James's Church. Despite expansion of the settlement towards the eastern edge of the green, the land around the village continued to be a rural area, and was yet to be assimilated into London proper, as shown on the earliest surveys such as John Frederick's Paddington estate map of 1742 and Rocque's map of 1746.

From the late 18th and early 19th centuries onwards, the area became increasingly urbanised as shown on the proposed London terminus of the Grand Junction Canal map of 1799.[13] The Paddington branch and basin were opened in 1801 and contributed hugely to the transformation of Paddington from a semi-rural secluded area to a thriving and vibrant suburb of London. The Post Office Annual Directory of 1808 is indicative of the swift development of the area with the north and south banks of the canal terminus lined with warehouses.[14]

An increasing number of businesses attracted by the new commercial character of the area were set up during the 1820s and 1830s in conjunction with the development of the road network which better connected Paddington to the City. In 1829, George Shillibeer capitalised on the need for a modern and reliable way of transport by establishing the first omnibus service,

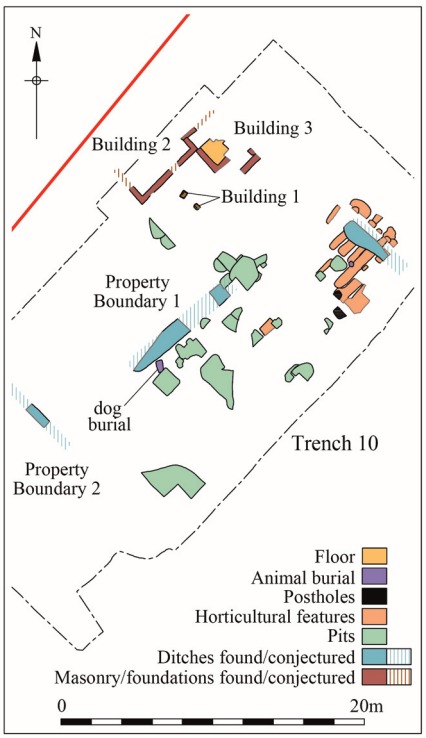

Fig 3: Phase 2 and 3 features

which connected Paddington to Bank.[15]

During the second half of the 19th century, Paddington Green continued to grow in both terms of residential and commercial premises, leading eventually to increasing congestion and conversely making it less attractive for the more affluent. It reached such a point that Edward Walford described some of the properties in Paddington Green as 'grimy looking houses'.[16]

The last significant development of the site occurred after 1914 when the Odeon Theatre was constructed along much of the Church Street frontage, while small industrial units were amalgamated into larger structures in the central part of the site.

The archaeological sequence

Late 17th century to 1800 (Phase 2)

Two north-west/south-east orientated square brick foundations perpendicular to Church Street (Fig 3) represent the only surviving structural elements of a possible property fronting on to Church Street during the 18th century or earlier (Building 1). However, the full extent of this postulated building is unknown. To the south of it, several pits and a cluster of north-east/ south-west orientated bedding trenches represented part of a garden located to the rear. About 5.5m to the south-west, there was a pet dog burial consisting of a small cut feature which contained the articulated remains of a dog partially backfilled with crushed chalk/lime probably to speed up the decomposition process (Fig 4).

Pottery of 17th- and early to mid-18th-century date is present in some quantity, recovered from pits, levelling layers and horticultural features, and is domestic in character. It comprised of the usual range of types encountered in London during this period, namely Surrey-Hampshire border whitewares and redwares (BORDB/G/Y; RBOR/B/G/SLTR), Essex-type post-medieval redwares (PMFR; PMBL), Metropolitan slipware (METS), London-area post-medieval redware (PMR) and London tin-glazed wares (TGWA/C/D/E/G/H/BLUE AND BISC). There were also London stonewares and the first of the mass-produced British refined wares, white salt-glazed stonewares, including the earlier dipped type, and vessels with scratch blue and cobalt decoration. A possible source for some of this material is Building 1, or other contemporary households in the immediate area.

Of some note is a London-area post-medieval redware bird pot, designed to be fixed on to a wall with the intention of harvesting nesting or fledging birds for consumption. The recovery of a bird pot is not unique, and they are often depicted in contemporary engravings where the intention is to create a rural atmosphere.[17] During this period, the area to the south of Building 1 was used as a garden and this find, together with other horticultural items including flowerpots and two glass cloches, supports the description of the area as a rural retreat at this time.[18] The pottery also suggests a degree of affluence with a fairly high proportion of imports, with a number of Chinese porcelain plates and bowls (CHPO BW/BATV/ROSE) and a Westerwald stoneware type 2 chamber pot (WEST CHP2).

Early 19th century to 1840 (Phase 3)

The area occupied by Building 1 (Fig 3) was redeveloped during the first half of the 19th century, when a sequence of levelling layers sealed the area previously occupied by Building 1. They were in turn truncated by the construction trenches for a new building (Building 2). A small garden plot to the south of Building 2 was superseded by new property boundaries (Fig 3: Property Boundary 1) in the form of shallow ditches both parallel and perpendicular to Church Street to the north. Further archaeological evidence for property boundaries was recorded to the south (Fig 3: Property Boundary 2). Property Boundaries 1 and 2 were later replaced by permanent masonry elements during the later 19th-century development of the site.

The development of the site during the first 40 years of the 19th century continued with the construction of Building 3 located immediately to the east of Building 2. Following its construction, the area immediately to the south became the focus of a series of intercutting pits, which reflected the increasing domestic waste resulting from the urban development of the north-western part of the site along Church Street.

A sizeable group of 341 sherds, from an estimated 68 vessels, was recovered from one of the pits, probably deposited during the second quarter of the 19th century. Much of the pottery is comprised of Creamware, Pearlware and English porcelain tea and dinner services including plates of varying size, dishes, tureens, cups, saucers and milk or cream jugs. The rise in production of refined ware industries in England is commensurate with a greatly increased specialisation of form, as social habits became more prescribed and the habit of tea-drinking began to filter down through the classes. The group also produced two Chinese porcelain vessels. A transfer-printed nursery ware mug found from a drain and toy plate from a well, both deposited sometime during the mid- or late 19th century, would suggest that some residents in the area, at least, remained fairly comfortably off.

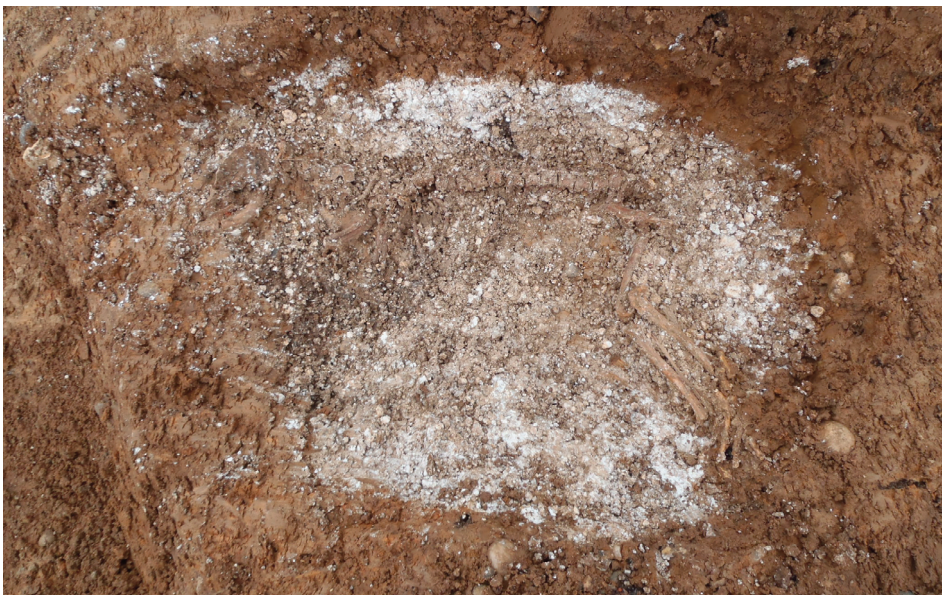

Fig 4: dog burial from trench 10, looking west

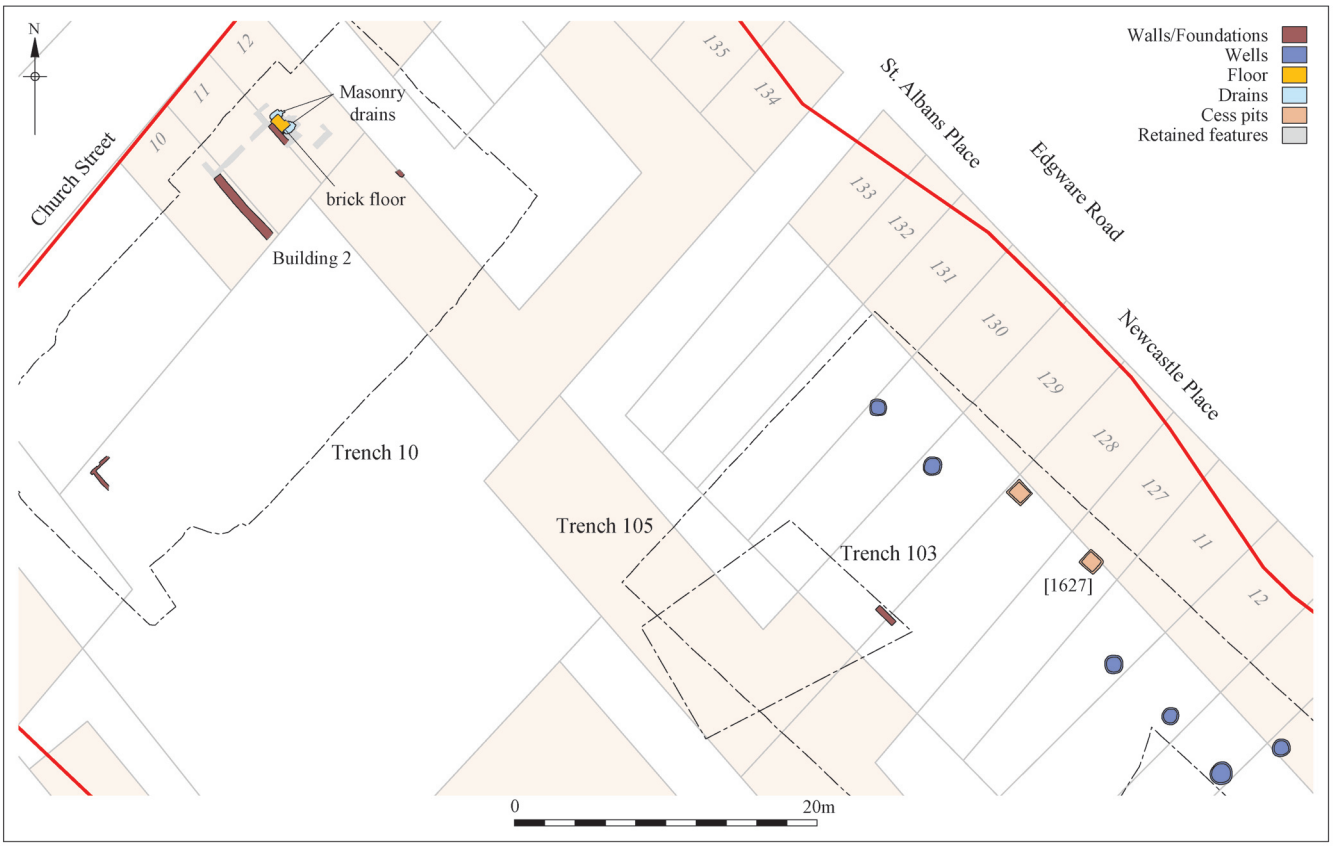

Fig 5: Phase 4 and 5 features overlaid on the Lucas map of 1847

Mid-19th century (Phase 4) (Fig 5)
The development of the south frontage of Church Street continued during the 19th century with the construction of new properties to the west and south of Building 2. Two walls at either end of Trench 10 defined the north-west corners of internal yards and were encroached on by buildings as shown on the Gutch map of 1840 (not illustrated). Further evidence for development during the mid-19th century was recorded in Trench 103 where another wall represented part of the south-west corner of another internal yard, while a brick-lined cesspit to the west of the site and a brick-lined well to the east were also constructed at this time.

Mid-19th century (Phase 5) (Fig 5)
The Gutch and Lucas maps and archaeological evidence shows that between 1840 and 1847 the site underwent a substantial redevelopment. This is most evident alongside the north part of the site (Church Street) and in the eastern part (Edgware Road) where the existing properties were either modified or redeveloped in order to widen both roads. Building 2 was extended to the south-east and a brick floor was inserted in Building 3. A residual dump layer at the rear of Building 2 produced a characteristic copper-alloy shoe buckle of *c.* 1660–1720. It had a drilled frame for a separate spindle; the frame would have been fitted with a chape designed to fix and adjust the shoe strap.[19]

A series of brick-lined wells and cesspits was constructed in the back gardens of properties fronting on to Edgware Road.

A complete needle case of ivory (SF 140), with a tall threaded screw lid but with some damage on the rim of the base, was retrieved from the fill of a cesspit [1627] (Fig 5 and 7). The needle case is elaborately carved in oriental style, incorporating dragons and butterflies; the base also unscrews, although with no visible practical function. Usually described as imported Chinese ivory items, they are still very much collectable items today.[20]

Most pottery from the site dated from the late 18th to mid-19th century, and was recovered primarily from the backfill of pits, cesspits and wells. It is characterised by the factory-made refined earthenware, namely Creamwares and Pearlwares (CREA/ CREA DEV/ CREA OTR/ CREA SLIP/ PEAR/ PEAR BW/ PEAR SLIP/ PEAR TR). Smaller quantities of English hard paste porcelain and transfer-printed earthenwares were also recovered. These became widely available at the end of the 18th century (TPW/ ENPO HP).

Early to mid-19th-century deposits also included these wares, but with later-dated decoration. In addition to the later-dated wares, they included Transfer-printed wares with colour transfers, over-glaze painting or 'flow blue' decoration (TPW4/ TPW6/ TPW FLOW), refined white earthenwares (RFEW PNTD) and yellow ware (YELL/ YELL SLIP).

Late 19th to early 20th centuries (Phase 6) (Fig 6a)
During the second half of the 19th century, further development took place, which included the installation of a new sewer system to satisfy the sanitary provisions of the Metropolitan Commission of Sewers Act, 1848. This was partly in response to public health concerns following serious outbreaks of cholera. Having surveyed London's antiquated sewerage system, the Metropolitan Commissioners of Sewers, together with the Metropolitan Board of Works which replaced them, set about ridding the capital of an estimated 200,000 cesspits, insisting

that all cesspits should be closed and that house drains should connect to a unified sewerage system and empty into the Thames.[21]

By the last quarter of the 19th century, further development took place along Church Street, with evidence of rebuilding at the rear of the properties with walls of at least four buildings recorded (Buildings 4–7), and an additional building (Building 8) to the rear of Building 2. Buildings 2, 3 and 8 were connected to the sewer/drainage system with the construction of a series of brick culverts (Fig 6a: Sewer 1).

An assemblage of small objects offers a glimpse into the households and their inhabitants during the mid- to late 19th century. A complete ivory tooth brush suggests the use of hygiene articles. Small dress accessories are reflected in buttons of bone, shell and glass, along with two glass beads. A button-like disc of lead, with a dished centre and two eyes, may have been used to weigh down the hem of a skirt or a curtain; such items are recorded from the 18th and into the 20th century.[22] Household furnishings can be seen in a flat copper-alloy curtain ring and the head of a porcelain figure, while the broken porcelain arm from a small doll indicates the presence of children.

Early 20th century (Phase 7) (Fig 6b)

In the late 19th–early 20th century, a north-west/south-east cobbled road was laid within Building 4. The cobbled road was identified as part of a garage on the Ordnance Survey map of 1914. At the same time further modification and extension to the sewer system across the site was revealed to the north-east (Fig 6b: Sewer 2) connecting the properties in that area to the existing sewer network.

Finds

The pottery recovered from the site showed very low-level background activity in the medieval and early post-medieval period. As observed during the earlier phase of works, the site had been peripheral to any occupation until the 17th century.[23] Pottery of 17th- and early to mid-18th-century date was present in some quantity, recovered from pits, levelling layers and horticultural features, although some of this was residual. This material was domestic in character and comprised the usual range of types encountered in London during this period.

The greatest quantity of pottery on site dated from the late 18th to mid-19th century, and was recovered primarily from the backfill of pits, cesspits and wells. It probably originated from dwellings constructed on site or in close proximity. These assemblages were characterised by the factory-made, refined earthenware successors to the white salt-glazed stoneware which became widespread throughout London and the rest of the country during this period.

The glass assemblage consisted of 357 fragments (4.979kg), and represented an estimated 191 vessels (ENV), dating solely to the post-medieval period. This is similar to material recovered from the earlier phase of work, which also produced a case bottle and four modern milk bottles, although no horticultural forms (see below) were present.[24] There was quite a diverse range of forms and uses among the glassware recorded from this later phase of archaeological work.

Vessels for an alcoholic use were most frequent and largely consisted of fragmentary wine bottles, although

Fig 6: a) Phase 6 features overlaid on 1872 OS map (left) and b) Phase 7 features overlaid on the 1914 OS map (right)

single examples of shaft and globe (*c*. 1630–80), onion-type (*c*. 1630–1730) and, more frequently, mallet- (*c*. 1725–60) and free-blown cylindrical (*c*. 1740 onwards) and moulded 19th-century cylindrical types occurred. Other drinking forms, also well-represented and mostly of 19th-century date, were more numerous in a Phase 3 pit. Four wine glasses with funnel- and tulip-shaped bowls were recorded: one of the latter examples had acid-etched decoration consisting of a border of small ovals on the rim, above a band of draped discrete ovals and simple leaves. Found with the latter were two tumblers and another two examples of this form were found in a Phase 3 posthole. Two lead crystal rummers were also noted.

Pharmaceutical forms were restricted to mostly free-blown and moulded tubular phials dating to the 18th and 19th centuries. Fourteen moulded bottles were noted, mainly 19th-century examples with different cross-sections, although fragments of earlier bottles, dated to the 16th–17th century, and globular vessels of an 18th-century date were also present. Forms of lighting were represented by composite parts of 19th-century oil lamps, comprising fragments of chimneys and ball shades, found in Phase 6 drains.

Window glass was frequent and distributed throughout the stratigraphy, and included mostly fragments of panes dated to the 18th–19th century. The earliest example was a 16th- to 17th-century natural glass diamond-shaped quarry, for possible use with stained glass, while the latest piece with a ribbed surface dated from *c*. 1888.

Of particular interest are two horticultural bell jars made in olive-green glass, which survive only as hollow rounded knops (handles) attached to the shoulders; these occur in 18th-century dated contexts. Most London excavations usually just produce earthenware flowerpots, but these items demonstrated that there was a higher level of knowledge of and expenditure on horticultural forms in the study area. This might imply, therefore, that some of the window glass could have been used as lean-to cloches or cold frames.

The assemblage of clay tobacco pipes consisted of 494 fragments, of which 109 were bowls and the rest were stems, with the exception of 13 mouth parts. The bowl types date from *c*. 1660 to the late 19th century with an almost continuous run of types recorded, typical of bowl shapes recorded in London and Westminster assemblages.[25] The clay tobacco pipes recovered from this later phase of archaeological work were more diverse than those excavated from the earlier intervention, although two earlier bowls covering the period 1610–1660 were noted and bowl shapes dating to after *c*. 1740 were absent.[26]

Fig 7: ivory needle case (SF 140), 85mm in length, carved in oriental style, incorporating dragons and butterflies

From this phase of work, only a small quantity of bowl types (12.8%) dated to the 17th century and none of these had makers' marks. Eighteenth-century bowls made up the greater part of the assemblage (66.3%), and many of these had makers' marks on the heels or spurs, although present research did not allow for most master pipe-makers to be identified as working locally. Only one spurred late 18th-century damaged bowl had moulded decoration, consisting of the Hanoverian Coat of Arms, but only the family initial H survives.

The 19th-century bowl shapes accounted for 20.9% of the assemblage; these often had makers' marks on the heel/spurs, but it has not been possible to identify any local makers. Two early 19th-century bowls, however, are recorded with moulded fluted decoration and drapes around the rim; this type of design appears to be more common in west London. A small number of late 19th-century bowls were of the 'fancy'-type and included a thorn-type (unstratified), while a stem had 'DERRY' in incuse lettering stamped on both sides along its length. This relates to the influence of Irish-style pipes on British clay pipe manufacture at this time.

Discussion

The lack of archaeological *in-situ* deposits dating to the Roman and medieval period corresponds to the findings from the 2011 excavation.[27] The site was probably located in undeveloped woodland during the Roman period and was later probably agricultural land on the periphery of the well-documented medieval settlement. The presence of residual finds in post-medieval deposits, such as one fragment of Roman CBM and medieval pottery, show that Watling Street and any Roman activity and the medieval manor of Paddington were close-by.

Buildings fronting on Edgware Road lay beyond the limits of excavations so the majority of the archaeological structural remains were associated with Church Street to the north of the site. The earliest archaeological evidence for human occupation was found in the northern part of the site (Building 1) in an area was first developed as early as the 18th century. The archaeological evidence was confirmed by the Rocque map of 1741–5 (not illustrated), which depicted buildings alongside the south side of Church Street. The area to the south of Building 1 was in use as a garden during the 18th century, as was demonstrated by two horticultural glass bell jars and glass panes from possible lean-to garden frames. They perhaps show a higher expenditure on gardening than elsewhere in London.

The presence of a dog burial (see Fig 4) together with a number of cat remains also suggest domestic activity

in this area during this period. An anonymous 18th-century painting shows the Wheatsheaf Inn on the corner of Edgware Road and Church Street and a few buildings along Church Street which appeared rural in character with front gardens on the north side.[28]

Evidence for new property boundaries and for the redevelopment of the northern part during the first half of the 19th century (Buildings 2 and 3) suggests that this area alongside Church Street was widely redeveloped during this period. The presence of a number of rubbish pits immediately to the south-west of Buildings 2 and 3, previously occupied by garden features, confirms a substantial change in land use in this part of the site.

By the mid-19th century the development of the site along Church Street and Edgware Road increased. In the 1840s the need to widen Church Street and Edgware Road required the rebuilding or modification of the existing buildings alongside the two roads. In the eastern part of the site, the only evidence for this was provided by a series of brick-lined wells and cesspits located to the rear of properties fronting on to Edgware Road.

Of note was an ivory needle case (Fig 7) recovered from a cesspit to the rear of 127 Edgware Road (as shown on the Lucas map of 1847 – it was re-numbered 10 St Albans Place in the 1861 Census). The cesspit also contained 19th-century pottery, glass and a clay tobacco pipe dated 1860–80. The 1861 Census records that a widow, Mary Vickers, and her four unmarried daughters, who were all dressmakers, were living at the property and the needle case may well have belonged to one of the sisters.[29]

Several other finds of some quality provided further evidence that some of the inhabitants were relatively well off. These included several Chinese porcelain vessels, the transfer-printed nursery ware mug and a toy plate, together with four wine glasses with funnel- and tulip-shaped bowls, one of which with acid-etched decoration. Additionally a lathe-turned threaded bone tube, expanding at one end, was almost certainly a fragment of 'opera' or 'pocket glasses'.

From a study of the census returns,[30] it would appear that the properties along Edgware Road were larger and higher-status with most of them occupied by shops and businesses, such as a baker, oil and colour man, chemist, hosier, tea-dealer, stationer, woollen draper and fishmonger. There was also a doctor, as well as a music professor at certain times. Many of the shop assistants or apprentices would have lived on the premises and many of the occupiers would have employed servants, with others perhaps making ends meet by taking in lodgers, while the Wheatsheaf Inn, on the corner of Church Street and Edgware Road, and a coffee house, would have been a draw.

The properties along Church Street were more modest with the inhabitants having such professions as bootmaker, railway porter, greengrocer, shirt-maker and schoolmaster, with their families occupying generally smaller premises. There was no need for shop assistants or apprentices and fewer servants were required. Charles Booth's poverty map of 1886–1903 described the properties along Edgware Road as 'middle class/well-to-do' and those along Church Street slightly less well off as 'fairly comfortable, good ordinary earnings'.[31]

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Mark Roughley executed the illustrations and Strephon Duckering the photography.

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