

**THAMES WATER**  
**VICTORIAN WATER MAINS REPLACEMENT WORKS**  
**IN THE VICINITY OF ROMAN ROAD, PARNELL ROAD**  
**AND ANTILL ROAD,**  
**OLD FORD E3**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**  
**DMA FINSBURY PARK 43**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**



September 2011



COMPASS



ARCHAEOLOGY

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## ***Abstract***

*This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken during Thames Water Victorian mains replacement works in the vicinity of Roman Road, Parnell Road and Antill Road, Old Ford E3, London Borough of Tower Hamlets (part of DMA Finsbury Park 43). Archaeological monitoring was undertaken between 19<sup>th</sup> July 2010 and 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2011 in an area defined by English Heritage. Following the monitoring of twelve streets across the defined area it was agreed, in consultation with English Heritage, that no further monitoring was required.*

*The watching brief has in part contributed to our knowledge of the enigmatic Roman settlement and cemetery at Old Ford; which has to date produced considerable quantities of pottery and coins, but little evidence for buildings. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a total of approximately seventy Roman burials have been reported from this area of Bow/Old Ford, including two in stone sarcophagi. During the initial setting up stage of the project, and prior to the commencement of the archaeological watching brief, groundworks took place in the Hewison Road area. During these works a rim sherd from a Roman urn was recovered by Mr Gary Bruin, a local resident, at the northern end of Hewison Road; near the junction of Roman Road and close to the site of recorded Roman burials. The sherd was identified by the British Museum as being of 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century date; other sherds of Roman pottery were also noted at this location.*

*Approximately 1km of trenching was observed across twelve streets during the watching brief; the majority of trenching exposed modern road layers over service deposits and modern made-ground to the level of undisturbed natural sand, silt, clay and gravel. Several areas exposed post-medieval subsoil, which probably predated the 19<sup>th</sup> century development of the general area. These contexts contained some residual finds including several abraded sherds of Roman pottery, the latter mostly located on the northern side of Roman Road. An 18<sup>th</sup> century wig-curler was recovered from trenching on Parnell Road, indicating disturbance of post-medieval deposits by modern service cuts. Rubble indicating World War II bomb damage was also recorded just beyond the western boundary of the study area.*

*No significant archaeological features were recorded during the course of the archaeological watching brief, although some Roman, medieval and post-medieval finds were recovered.*



*Frontispiece:* A selection of the finds from the watching brief works.

Top: Two views of the pedestal base of a Roman jar, dating to the mid 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century (oxidized sandy-ware), found in open-cut trenching on the northern side of Roman Road. Centre left and base: two views of the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century wig-curler recovered from clearance deposits on Parnell Road and centre right: a small transfer printed decorated ceramic base of 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century date, recovered from general clearance deposits (10cm scale).

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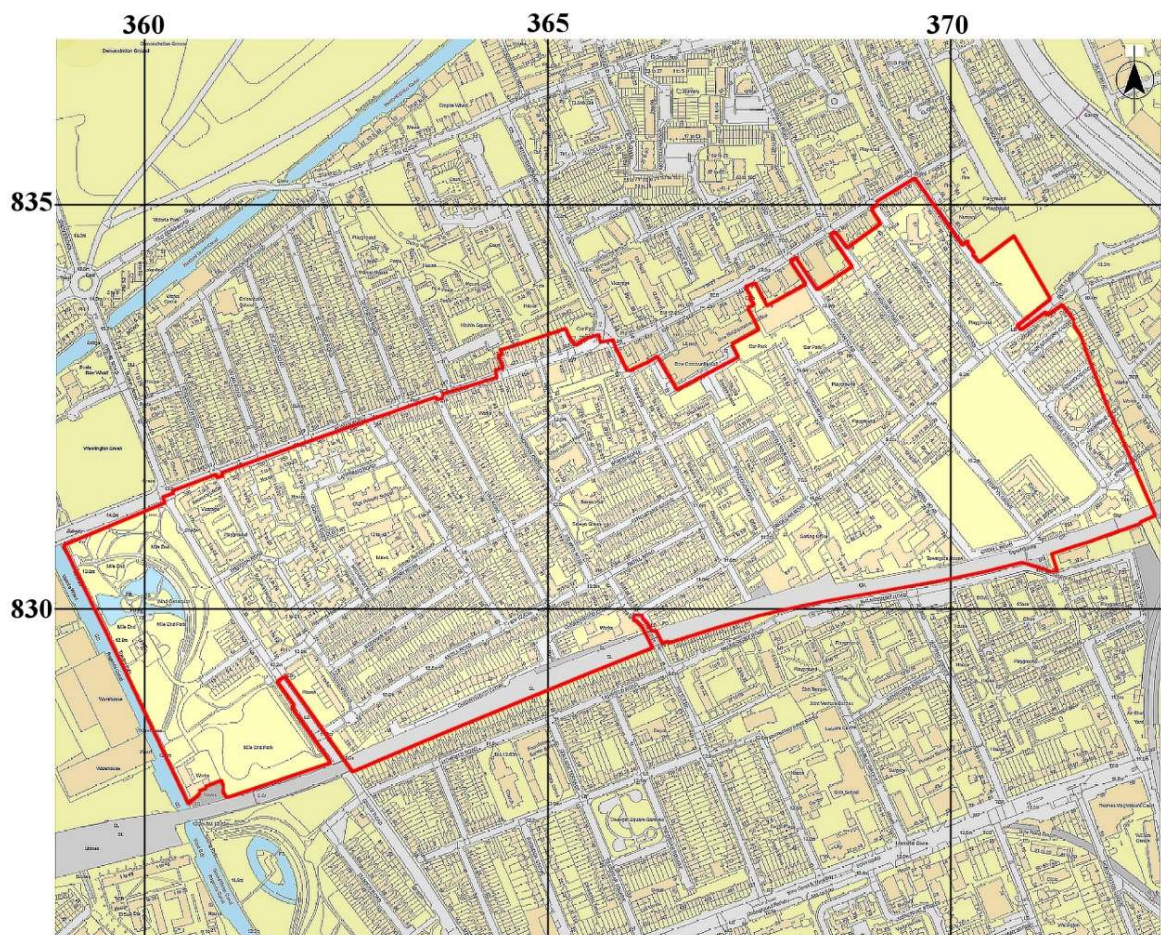
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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken during Thames Water Victorian mains replacement works in the vicinity of Roman Road, Parnell Road and Antill Road, Old Ford E3, London Borough of Tower Hamlets (the northeastern part of District Metering Area: Finsbury Park 43). Archaeological monitoring was undertaken between 19<sup>th</sup> July 2010 and 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2011. DMA Finsbury Park 43 is approximately centred at NGR TQ 3675 8320 (*cf.* Figure 1 below).
- 1.2 Archaeological monitoring was undertaken following preliminary research study by Compass Archaeology and discussions with English Heritage. The Roman settlement and road at Old Ford fall within a borough defined Archaeological Priority Zone (APZ).
- 1.3 Mains replacement works were carried out by Clancy Docwra and Optimise on behalf of Thames Water. Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by staff of Compass Archaeology, and overall management of the project was by Geoff Potter. Compass Archaeology are grateful to Mr Gary Bruin for his assistance with this project.



**Figure 1:** Site location in relation to the current Ordnance Survey map, based on original Thames Water Utilities map (Drawing No: ZFINSB43-XX-100-01).

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## 2. Site Location and Geology

- 2.1 The British Geological Survey (1995, Sheet 256: North London) shows the site overlying Taplow Gravel a (post-diversionary Thames River deposit).
- 2.2 DMA Finsbury Park 43 is bounded to the west by Regent's Canal, to the north along the line of Roman Road, to the east by Parnell Road and by land to the east of Morville Street, and to the south by the West Anglia route railway. Only the northeastern part of the DMA was monitored in order to target the Roman road and Roman settlement (*cf.* Figure 3 below).

## 3. Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 Historically, the Old Ford/Bow area was a cluster of houses and a mill around the location of the ford. It formed part of the medieval parish of Stepney, with a rising population in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3.2 Old Ford, as the name suggests, was the ancient most downstream crossing point of the River Lea. This was part of a pre-Roman route that followed the modern Oxford Street, Old Street, through Bethnal Green to Old Ford and thence across a causeway through the marshes, known as Wanstead Slip (actually in Leyton). The road was upgraded by the Romans in the mid first century and ran from London (Aldgate), through Essex to the Roman *colonia* of Colchester (*Camulodunum*), parts of the road were the first paved Roman roads in Britain. At this time, the Lea was a wide, fast flowing river, and the tidal estuary stretched as far as Hackney Wick.
- 3.3 Evidence of a late Roman settlement at Old Ford<sup>1</sup>, from about the 4th and 5th centuries, and for the earlier Roman road itself have been recorded nearby at Lefevre Road, Appian Way and Parnell Road<sup>2</sup>. The road was one of two major Roman roads that converged on a crossing point of the River Lea at Old Ford. Excavations have discovered a substantial ribbon development along the line of the road, surrounded by fields. Evidence for the cemetery at Old Ford comprises widely scattered burials including several of high status in stone coffins. A communal burial ground was also excavated containing sixty-seven graves. In 1972 three burials were recorded in the Beale Road/Armagh Road area in the form of a stone coffin containing a male and a female inhumation, with another burial nearby. The coffin had a fragment of lead surviving on the lid suggesting it had once been decorated<sup>3</sup>. Burials were also discovered in Saxon Road during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Gullies, ditches, pits, gravel surfaces and assemblages of pottery and other artefacts dating to the late 3rd and 4th centuries mainly represent the putative settlement. Excavations in 2002 at 490 Roman Road, close to St Stephen's Road (TQ 536545 183290) recovered an assemblage of 235 sherds of late Roman pottery, from an estimated 212 vessels within several

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<sup>1</sup> Some sites are discussed here and a further selection of sites from the LAARC database are listed in Appendix V.

<sup>2</sup> H. Sheldon 'Excavations at Lefevre Road, Old Ford, E3' *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* **23**, part 1 (1971) 42–77; H. Sheldon 'Excavations at Parnell Road and Appian Road, Old Ford, E3' *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* **23**, part 2 (1972) 101–147; P. S. Mills 'Excavations at Roman Road/Parnell Road, Old Ford, London E3' *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* **35** (1981) 25–36; C. Maloney 'Fieldwork Round-up 1997' *London Archaeol* **8**, supp. 3(1998) 103–4.

<sup>3</sup> W. J. Owen, I. Schwab and H. Sheldon 'Roman Burials from Old Ford, E3, February and May 1972' *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* **24** (1973) 135–145.



roadside pits and ditches. Two Roman ditches were aligned roughly parallel and perpendicular to the nearby London to Colchester road, and were initially interpreted as either field boundaries or divisions around buildings. However, given the proximity of burials it is equally possible that they formed funerary enclosures or defined plots within the Old Ford cemetery. The settlement at Old Ford has produced considerable quantities of pottery and coins but has, so far, yielded remarkably little evidence for buildings. Moreover, assemblages of butchered animal bone have also been recovered from Roman deposits in the locality and show surprisingly little diversity, being overwhelmingly dominated by cattle. It is also peculiar that burials are found in close proximity to features supposedly representing occupation. The role of the River Lea is important as it was thought to have been used to supply the Roman city *Londinium* with agricultural products and pottery from Hertfordshire and the north. Old Ford was where the goods were transferred to continue their journey into London by wagon. The finds from Old Ford do possibly represent funerary or other ritual activity and the discovery of a damaged statue, possibly of Mercury, in a late 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century ditch fill at Usher Road, has prompted the suggestion that there may have been a Roman shrine at Old Ford<sup>4</sup>.

- 3.4** In 1110 Matilda, wife of Henry I, reputedly stumbled at the ford on her way to Barking Abbey, and ordered a distinctively bow-shaped three-arched bridge to be built over the River Lea. The building of the bridge at Bow did not leave Old Ford as a backwater and the ford continued to be well used, but it was in an isolated and rural area and the local population centre moved to Bow in the medieval period. Old Ford was the site of one of the many water mills in the area that supplied flour to the bakers of Stratforde-atte-Bow, and hence bread to the City. Due to their isolation, residents were given dispensation to worship in the chapel of ease at Stratforde-atte-Bow, later Bow Church, to save the often-difficult journey to the parish church of St Dunstan's at Stepney.
- 3.5** Farming and market gardening prevailed in the district until the 19th century, when Old Ford became a part of the East End conurbation, with large estates of relatively poor houses (*cf.* First Edition OS Map, Figure 2). These were built to serve the new factories on the Lea and the Lee Navigation, and to serve the new railways. A lock and weir now exist on the Lee Navigation, near where the ford used to be. This lies at the end of 'Hackney Cut', an 18th century artificial channel, and the natural channel – known as the Waterworks River – rejoins the channel below the lock.
- 3.6** The North London Railway had a line through the area with a station at Old Ford. The line was badly damaged during WWII and never reopened. The station buildings were demolished in the early 1960s. The railway line is expected to reopen, as part of the Crossrail project<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Wilson, T. 2002 '490 Roman Road, London E3, London Borough of Tower Hamlets', *unpub MoLAS rep* (2002) 17.; Armagh Road (AGH90); J. Filer 'Excavation Roundup 1990: part 2, London Boroughs' *London Archaeol* 6, no. 11 (1991) 308; 271–321 Lefevre Walk Estate (LEK95); C. Maloney 'Fieldwork Round-up 1997' *London Archaeol* 8, supplement 3 (1998) 103–4.

<sup>5</sup> Much of this information is sourced from an on-line search at Wikipedia 'Old Ford', with additional data from documentary sources particularly: Black G, 1979 *The Archaeology of Tower Hamlets*; Kerrigan C, 1982 *A History of Tower Hamlets* and Weinreb B, & Hibbert C, 1993 *The London Encyclopaedia*.



**Figure 2:** Extract from Ordnance Survey 25 inch 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, Sheet 37, surveyed 1862, published 1872, showing the approximate DMA area in green.

#### 4. Archaeological Research Questions

The objectives of the archaeological watching brief were to contribute to knowledge of the archaeology of the area through the recording of any remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks. Particular attention was made to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits. The fieldwork presented an opportunity to address the following general and specific research questions:

- What is the nature and level of the natural ground surface, which may be either alluvium or brickearth over River Terrace Gravel? Does the former include any organic horizons?
- Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, either *in situ* features or residual finds?
- Is there any evidence for Roman activity or finds?
- Is there any evidence for the Roman Road?
- What evidence is there for subsequent medieval or early post-medieval development?
- At what level do archaeological deposits survive in the highways across the area and at what height is natural geology recorded?
- Can the watching brief works inform on the research questions of the Museum of London and English Heritage's 'A Research Framework for London Archaeology' publication 2002 in relation to Roman objectives?

## **5. The Archaeological Programme**

### **5.1 Standards**

The field and post-excavation work was carried out in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (in particular, *Standards and Practice in Archaeological Fieldwork, Guidance Paper 3*) and to the standards of the Institute for Archaeologists (*Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*). A full Member of the Institute undertook overall management of the project.

The recording system followed the procedures set out in the Museum of London recording manual. By agreement the recording and drawing sheets used were directly compatible with those developed by the museum.

### **5.2 Fieldwork**

The archaeological watching brief took place during the contractors' groundworks and involved one or more archaeologists on site as required to monitor the works and to investigate and record any archaeological remains. Close liaison was maintained with the groundworks team to ensure a presence on site as and when necessary.

Where archaeological remains were exposed adequate time was allowed for investigation and recording, although every effort was made not to disrupt the contractors' programme. Where possible, excavation was undertaken using a flat bladed bucket to enable archaeological remains to be cleanly recorded prior to disturbance.

The Client and the representatives of English Heritage were kept advised of the progress of the fieldwork, and in particular any significant finds or remains that may require additional archaeological work.

### **5.3 Methodology**

Archaeological deposits and features were investigated and recorded in stratigraphic sequence, and where appropriate finds dating and environmental evidence recovered.

Archaeological deposits and features were recorded as appropriate on *pro-forma* context or trench sheets, and/or drawn in plan or section generally at scales of 1:10 or 1:20. The investigations were recorded on a general site plan and related to the Ordnance Survey grid. The fieldwork record was supplemented as appropriate by photographic images.

## **6. Post-Excavation Work**

The fieldwork was followed by off-site assessment and compilation of a report, and by ordering and deposition of the site archive.

## **6.1 Finds and samples**

Finds and samples were treated in accordance with the appropriate guidelines, including the Museum of London's *'Standards for the Preparation of Finds to be permanently retained by the Museum of London'*. Finds and artefacts were retained and bagged with unique numbers related to the context record, although some building material was discarded following assessment. Appropriately qualified staff undertook the assessment of finds.

## **6.2 Report procedure**

Copies of this report will be supplied to the Client, English Heritage and the local studies library.

The level of reporting is dependent upon the results of the fieldwork. However, this report includes details of any archaeological remains or finds, an interpretation of the deposits investigated and a site plan located to the Ordnance Survey grid. A short summary of the fieldwork is appended using the OASIS Data Collection Form, and in paragraph form suitable for publication within the 'excavation round-up' of the *London Archaeologist*.

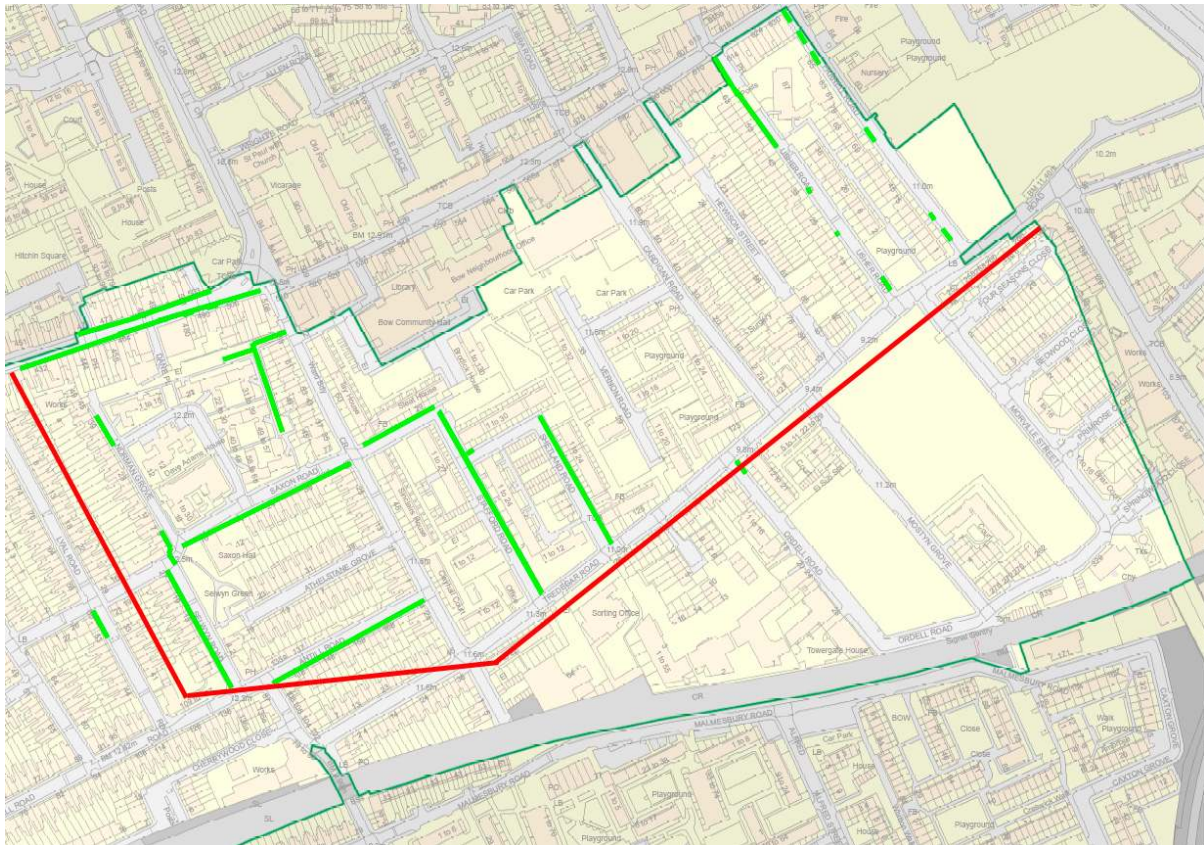
## **7. The Site Archive**

The records from the archaeological project will be ordered in line with Museum of London *Guidelines for the Preparation of Archaeological Archives* and will be deposited in the Museum of London Archaeological Archive. The integrity of the site archive should be maintained, and the landowner will be urged to donate any archaeological finds to the Museum.



## 8. The Archaeological Watching Brief

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken over twelve streets in the area of DMA Finsbury Park 43, in an area defined for monitoring after consultation with English Heritage (*cf.* Figure 3 below). The table after Figure 3 lists the monitored streets and summarises the results of the archaeological watching brief, and should be read in conjunction with Figure 3. It was agreed after consultation with English Heritage that the monitoring undertaken to date constituted sufficient coverage of the area during Thames Water Victorian mains replacement works.



**Figure 3:** Extent of monitoring within DMA Finsbury Park 43 (red), showing English Heritage defined monitoring area (red) and the location of the groundworks (bright green), the area of the DMA is shown in darker green, based on the Ordnance Survey map originally produced by Thames Water Utilities (Drawing No: ZFINSB43-XX-100-01).

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**Table of Streets monitored in DMA Finsbury Park 43**

Street	Extent	Results
Parnell Road	15m	Modern road layers over varying profiles including truncated subsoil with Roman pottery, natural silty clay with gravel.
Roman Road (both sides of the road)	180m	Modern road layers over varying subsoil with Roman and post-medieval finds, natural sand, silt and gravels.
Usher Road	70m	Modern road layers over varying subsoil and made-ground deposits, and natural brickearth, sand and gravels.
Ordell Road	2.5m	Modern road layers over made-ground and natural sand, gravels and clay.
Danes Place (and service road)	80m	Modern road layers over made-ground and varying natural deposits.
Lyal Road/Stanfield Road junction	3.5m	Modern road layers overlying brick rubble.
Antill Road	120m	Modern road layers over made-ground and natural gravel sandy gravels.
Shetland Road	69m	Modern road layers overlying a rubble filled cellar and natural sand clay.
Stafford Road	140m	Modern road layers overlying redeposited sand clay and natural.
Saxon Road	200m	Modern road layers directly over natural in the west, Victorian mains backfill to east.
Norman Grove	35m	Modern road layers over natural deposits.
Selwyn Road	87m	No archaeological finds or features.

### 8.1 Parnell Road (Figures: *Frontispiece* and 4 to 6)

Five launch pits were observed on Parnell Road, totalling 15m of open ground. The exposed sequence of deposits varied along the length of Parnell Road, although modern road layers were generally observed to a depth of between 0.3m and 0.4m below the existing road level. The southernmost pit, at the junction with Tredegar Road, exposed natural silty clay deposits immediately beneath the modern road layers. At the northern end of Parnell Road, at the junction with Roman Road, the modern road layers were observed overlying recent made-ground deposit with brick inclusions (c.0.35m thick), over a lens of brickearth and sandy gravel beneath.

Immediately south of this pit a further trench exposed only modern service backfills, however the backfills contained a redeposited pipe-clay wig curler with an impressed maker's stamp 'WB', identified as mid-18<sup>th</sup> century (the small finds context number [1] was assigned for the purposes of finds processing). Following the introduction of the fashion by Charles II, wig-curlers were used to set the curls on the fashionable wigs worn by the upper classes. It is thought they were made by the pipe-makers as the same clay-fabric was used – WB is a common initial found on examples recovered across Greater London.

Approximately mid-way along Parnell Road a truncated mid-brown sandy silt subsoil with occasional gravel inclusions was exposed at a thickness of 0.25m, below modern road make up. A single sherd of abraded pottery was recovered from this context [2]. The sherd was identified as a coarse sandy grey-ware of Romano-British date but with no identifiable vessel form (*cf.* Appendix II).



**Figure 4:** Trenching on Parnell Road showing modern service deposits [1] from which a wig curler was recovered.



**Figure 5:** Mid-18<sup>th</sup> century wig-curler recovered from groundworks on Parnell Road, see also frontispiece (10cm scale).



**Figure 6:** Trenching on Parnell Road showing probable post-medieval truncated subsoil from which a residual sherd of Roman pottery was recovered [2].

## 8.2 Roman Road (Figures 7 to 12)

Approximately 180m of trenching and pits were observed on both sides of Roman Road between the junctions with Hewlett Road (west) and St Stephen's Road (east). A pit excavated to the west of the junction with Dane Place on the southern side of Roman Road exposed modern road layers to a depth of 0.41m below the existing road surface. Underling this a truncated soil horizon consisting of mid-dark brown sandy clayey silt with pebble and gravel inclusions was exposed at a thickness of 0.33m (assigned context [3] for the purposes of finds identification). The same deposit was exposed to the east of the Dane Place junction, slightly thicker at *c.*0.38m. The deposit produced two pieces of post-medieval ceramic building material, probably peg-tiles dating to the period 1630-1800. A single fragment of burnt flint was also recovered from this deposit. Natural silty sand with gravel was exposed in this area from *c.*0.8m below the existing ground level. The soil horizon identified as context [3] was also observed in several other trial pits along the south side of Roman Road, although no further finds were recovered. The deposit is likely to represent a buried ground surface dating to the early-mid post-medieval period, prior to residential development of the area in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.





**Figure 7:** Section of trenching on Roman Road showing buried soil [3] (1m scale).

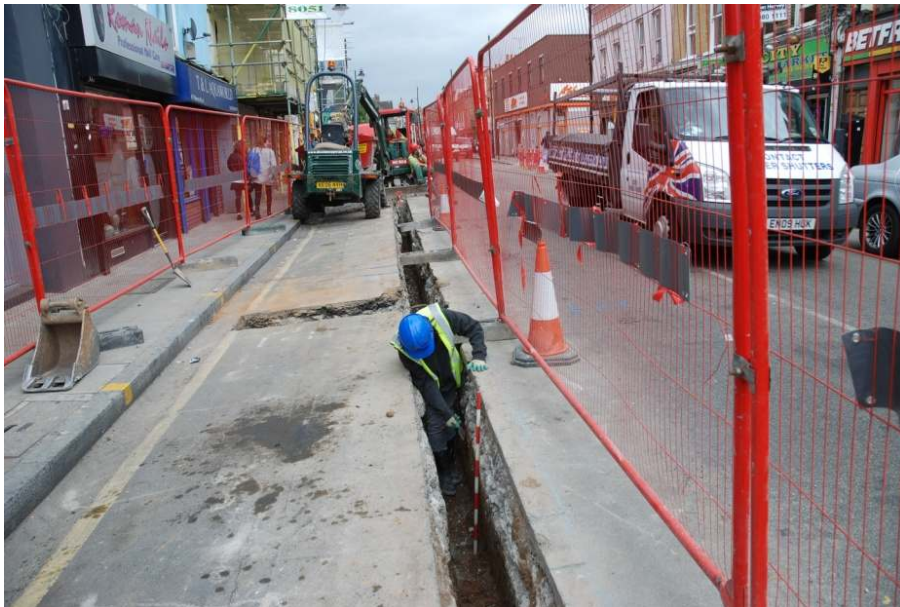
Buried soil was also observed further east from Dane Place, differing in colour and composition (lighter grey fine sandy-silt) and extending between 0.4m and 0.8m in thickness. This deposit (context [4]) produced a single piece of earlier ceramic building material (*c.*1450-1700). Compacted darker sandy silt buried soils were observed further east again (context [5]) from which a very abraded fragment of ceramic building material was recovered; dating of this fragment could not be precise (1180-1800).

On the north side of the road a mid-light orange/brown mixed silty soil was observed directly below modern road levels (*c.*0.45m below the existing ground level) during trenching to the west of Ford Close. This deposit (context [8]) produced a small finds assemblage; a fragment of Roman (AD 50-260) ceramic building material, probably reused as rubble; a small fragment of clay pipe bowl (not datable); and a small fragment of 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD central Gaulish Samian ware, thought to be from a dish (*cf.* Appendix II). Natural gravels were observed in the base of this trench at *c.*0.9m.

A section of open-cut trenching outside Nos. 477 to 503 Roman Road, still on the north side, exposed modern road layers to a depth of 0.42m, and a thin (0.05m) band of mixed orange gravel (context [9]) overlying mid-greyish brown sandy-silt subsoil with gravel, pebbles, charcoal and CBM flecking (context [10]). Context [9] produced a small sherd of early post-medieval ceramic building material (1180-1500). Context [10] produced an undatable fragment of daub, a sherd of mid 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century oxidized sandy-ware, thought to be a body sherd from a jar, and a pedestal base from a jar in a similar fabric was recovered from the underlying context [11] (*cf.* Frontispiece and Appendix II). Natural sandy-silt with gravel [11] was weathered at the upper horizon with flecks of CBM.



**Figure 8:** Trenching on the southern side of Roman Road showing buried soil [4] over natural sand and gravel deposits, this may well relate to the archaeological findings from the nearby site of 490 Roman Road. The silty soil fills an undulation in the natural geology here, which gives the appearance of a pit or ditch, but no dating evidence was available and from the small sample area at the base of the trench it could not confidently be identified as a cut feature (1m scale).



**Figure 9:** Recording stratigraphy on the northern side of Roman Road from Ford Close to No.477.





**Figure 10:** Section of trenching on Roman Road showing subsoil deposit [8] (see Figures 9 and 11 for general views).



**Figure 11:** General view of trenching on the northern side of Roman Road between Nos 477 and 503 Roman Road.



**Figure 12:** Section of trenching on Roman Road (for general view see Figure 11 above) showing deposits [9] [10] and natural [11].

### 8.3 Usher Road (Figures 13 and 14)

Approximately 70m of trenching was observed on Usher Road between the junctions with Roman Road (north) and Tredegar Road (south). At the northern end of Usher Road groundworks exposed modern road layers to a depth of 0.3m overlying layers of recent made-ground for a further 0.7m. A dark-brown silty clay deposit [7] was exposed below with gravel and charcoal inclusions; a single rim sherd of post-medieval redware (1580-1900) was recovered. This deposit is likely to be a buried soil horizon pre-dating the 19<sup>th</sup> century residential development of the area. Natural compact yellow-brown brickearth was exposed at the base of excavations at 1.05m.

At the southern end of Usher Road (immediately north of the Tredegar Road junction) modern road layers were recorded to 0.29m overlying a mid-grey/green subsoil [6] with pebbles and a single clay-pipe bowl with decoration dated to 1610-1640. Natural sand and gravels were recorded to a depth of 1.3m below the existing road level.





**Figure 13:** Section of trenching at the southern end Usher Road showing subsoil [6] over natural gravels (1m scale).



**Figure 14:** Section of trenching near the northern end of Usher Road showing modern road layers over subsoil [7] and natural deposit at base (1m scale).

#### 8.4 Ordell Road (Figure 15)

A single trench measuring 2.5m by 0.9m was located *c.*1.45m from the eastern kerb immediately south of the Tredegar Road junction. The existing tarmac road surface was observed overlying reinforced concrete hardcore to a depth of 0.3m. Compact silty-clay made-ground with occasional pebble inclusions and services were observed to a depth of 0.6m, overlying mid-yellow/brown gravels to 0.8m becoming sandier for the remaining 0.4m. No archaeological finds or features were observed in trenching on Ordell Road.



**Figure 15:** Section of trenching on Ordell Road (1m scale).

#### 8.5 Danes Place and associated service road

Approximately 80m of trenching was observed on Danes Place and the associated service road exposing the modern tarmac road surface overlying concrete hardcore to an average depth of 0.3m. Mixed made-ground deposits and service backfills were observed to a depth of between 0.6m and 0.7m beneath the existing ground surface. Natural deposits varied across the trenching; brickearth was exposed in the eastern areas becoming sandy to the west and clayey to the south. The trenches were excavated to an average depth of 0.95m. No archaeological finds or features were exposed in trenching on Danes Place.

#### 8.6 Lyal Road (Figure 16)

Lyal Road is located just outside the English Heritage defined monitoring area, to the west of the western boundary (*cf.* Figure 3), but is included here as the groundworks exposed a differing sequence to sections observed elsewhere. Modern road layers were exposed to approximately 0.3m below the existing road level, directly overlying



compacted brick rubble to the full depth of excavations at *c.* 1.2m. The rubble is likely to derive from bomb-damage during WWII, subsequently used as ground makeup. The age and layout of the surrounding buildings indicate that a bomb or bombs hit the area at this location and this is supported by the rubble debris encountered in trench.



**Figure 16:** Trenching on Lyal Road at the junction with Viking Close, formerly Stanfield Road.

### 8.7 Antill Road (Figures 17 and 18)

Approximately 120m of Antill Road was observed through the excavation of 14 feeder pits between the junctions with Coborn Road (west) and St Stephen's Road (east). Tarmac and road makeup deposits were exposed to a depth of 0.45m, overlying dumped made-ground (mid-brown/grey silty clay with brick and pebbles) to an average depth of 0.6m. Natural sandy-silty gravels were exposed at the limit of excavations, to a maximum depth of 0.8m. No archaeological finds or features were observed.





**Figure 17:** Trenching on Antill Road looking east from the junction with Coborn Road.



**Figure 18:** General view of trenching on Antill Road at the junction with St Stephen's Road.

## 8.8 Shetland Road (Figures 19 and 20)

A 9m trench was observed at the junction with Stafford Road, excavated to a depth of 1.5m below the existing ground surface. The trench exposed modern road layers overlying a rubble filled cellar to a depth of 0.7m, overlying natural sandy clay to the remaining depth of excavation. A further 60m of pipe-bursting pits were observed running north from the junction with Tredegar Road. Modern road layers were observed overlying 0.7m of redeposited natural sandy clay (presumably upcast from cellar excavations). No archaeological finds or features were observed during groundworks on Shetland Road.



**Figure 19:** Trenching on Shetland Road at the junction with Stafford Road, looking west.





**Figure 20:** Trenching on Shetland Road.

## 8.9 Stafford Road (Figures 21 and 22)

Pipe-bursting pits were observed for the full length of Stafford Road (c.140m) between the junctions with Tredegar Road (south) and Saxon Road (north). Pits exposed modern road layers to an average depth of 0.35m, over redeposited sandy clay, with *in-situ* natural from c.0.7m. No archaeological finds or features were observed.



**Figure 21:** Groundworks on Stafford Road from the junction with Tredegar Road.





**Figure 22:** Trenching on Stafford Road looking towards the junction with Shetland Road.

### **8.10 Saxon Road (Figure 23)**

Open-cut trenching was observed for the full length of Saxon Road between the junctions with Selwyn Road (west) and Stafford Road (east), totalling *c.*200m of open trench. Groundworks between Selwyn Road and St Stephen's Road (western area of Saxon Road) exposed modern road layers to a depth of 0.35m directly overlying natural deposits. The natural deposits exposed a varied geology of sandy silts, clays and gravels in distinct lenses, becoming more compact to the east. East of St Stephen's Road the open-cut trench followed the line of the existing main, exposing 19<sup>th</sup> century backfill to 0.97m. No archaeological finds or features were observed.



**Figure 23:** Section and general view of trenching on Saxon Road.

### **8.11 Norman Grove (Figures 24 to 25)**

Approximately 35m of groundworks were observed along Norman Grove running south from Roman Road to the junction with Saxon Road. Tarmac and road makeup layers were observed to between 0.2m and 0.35m depth, overlying builders sand and rubble made-ground with modern service deposits to approximately 0.55m to 0.74m beneath the existing ground level. Natural silty sand brickearth becoming gravelly with depth was observed to the south, becoming more compact gravel to the north with clay bands. No archaeological finds or features were observed.





**Figure 24:** General view of trenching on Norman Grove, looking south.



**Figure 25:** Section of trenching on Norman Grove.



## 8.12 Selwyn Road

A series of 18 launch pits were observed along the full length of Selwyn Road (c.87m) between Saxon Road to the north and Antill Road to the south. No archaeological finds or features were observed.

## 9. Archaeological Research Questions

The fieldwork presented an opportunity to address the following general and specific research questions:

- What is the nature and level of the natural ground surface, which may be either alluvium or brickearth over River Terrace Gravel? Does the former include any organic horizons? *Deposits varied between sandy/silty brickearth and compact gravels – deposits were generally recorded c.0.75m-1.1m below the existing ground level (beneath modern road layers and surviving subsoil). Trenching on Saxon Road exposed natural deposits immediately below modern road layers, c.0.35m in depth.*
- Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, either *in situ* features or residual finds? *No evidence for prehistoric activity was recorded.*
- Is there any evidence for Roman activity or finds? *Several finds of Roman date were recovered including ceramic building material and pottery – however, these are likely to be residual inclusions in post-medieval deposits and not in-situ finds.*
- Is there any evidence for the Roman Road? *No evidence for the Roman road was recorded, despite examination of trenches and pits along both sides of the present road. Roman finds were limited to a few pot sherds and one piece of ceramic building material on the north side of the road and the large rim sherd recovered from Parnell Road.*
- What evidence is there for subsequent medieval or early post-medieval development? *Surviving subsoil (or buried soils) was recorded in several areas, from which finds of Roman, 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century date were recovered, plus a few pieces of medieval and earlier post-medieval ceramic building material (tile). These soils are likely to be surviving deposits from the pre-19<sup>th</sup> century development of the area.*
- At what level do archaeological deposits survive in the highways across the area and at what height is natural geology recorded? *Subsoil was recorded c.0.3 to 0.45m below modern road levels; natural geology was generally observed 0.75m to 1.1m below the existing ground level, except in one area where natural was observed directly below road levels c.0.35m in depth.*
- Can the watching brief works inform on the research questions of the Museum of London and English Heritage's 'A Research Framework for London Archaeology' publication 2002 in relation to Roman objectives? *No in-situ Roman remains were recorded, a few residual Roman finds were recovered.*

## 10. Summary and Conclusions

- 10.1 Approximately 1km of trenching was observed in the Finsbury Park 43 DMA area, within the English Heritage defined monitoring zone. Monitoring was undertaken across twelve streets and included open cut trenching, trial holes and launch pits for the purposes of pipe-burst and directional drilling.
- 10.2 The majority of trenching exposed modern road layers overlying modern made-ground and service deposits, with natural sand, clay and gravel deposits at the base of excavations. Surviving subsoil was observed in several locations, from which residual Roman finds were recovered as well as a few pieces of medieval and earlier post-medieval ceramic building material (tile) and 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery. The deposits were relatively sterile but probably date from before the 19<sup>th</sup> century residential development of the area. One area exposed significant amounts of building rubble that probably dates from World War II bomb damage.

## 11. Bibliography (see footnotes for excavation reports)

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## APPENDIX I: The Ceramic Building Material

(Susan Pringle)

Context	Fabric	Form	No	Weight	Comments	Date
3	2275	TPA	1	15.5g	Pantile or thick peg-tile.	1630-1850
3	2276	T	1	15g	Peg tile	1480-1800
4	3033	B	1	75g	Flake	1450-1700
5	2271	T	1	11g	Flake, very worn.	1180-1800
8	3006	B	1	34g	Very abraded, brick or tegula, probably reused as rubble.	50-160
9	2271	TP	2	12g	Thin	1180-1500
10	3102	Daub	1	2g	Crumb, no surfaces	?

## APPENDIX II: Roman Pottery

(Katie Anderson, ABCeramics)

A small quantity of Roman pottery, totalling four sherds, weighing 76g was recovered from the watching brief. All of the material was examined and details of fabric, form and date were recorded along with any other information deemed important.

The assemblage comprised a base sherd from a slipped, oxidised sandy jar (68g), a sandy greyware body sherd (2g) and a small sherd from a Central Gaulish Samian dish (6g). The sherd of Samian is the only sherd that can be more closely dated, with a date range of 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

Context	Fabric	No. of sherds	Wt(g)	Form	Date
2	Coarse sandy greyware	1	2	Unknown	RB
10	Oxidised sandy ware	2	68	Jar and unknown body sherd	Mid 1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> AD
8	Central Gaulish Samian	1	6	Dish	2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> AD
-	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>76</b>	-	-

Table 1: All Roman Pottery

All of the sherds were heavily abraded which supports a view that they were residual having come from redeposited/disturbed contexts.



## APPENDIX III: OASIS Data Collection Form

**OASIS ID: compassa1-103542**

### Project details

Project name Thames Water Victorian Water Mains Replacement Works in the vicinity of Roman Road, Parnell Road and Antill Road, Old Ford E3, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, DMA Finsbury Park 43.

Short description of the project Approximately 1km of trenching was observed, exposing modern road layers and made-ground. Post-medieval subsoil was recorded in several areas which produced residual roman material and post-medieval finds. Rubble indicating bomb-damage was recorded in one area. Natural sand, clay and gravel was recorded in all areas.

Project dates Start: 19-07-2010 End: 02-06-2011

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes TXE11 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Residential 1 - General Residential

Current Land use Transport and Utilities 1 - Highways and road transport

Monument type DEPOSIT Post Medieval

Significant Finds POTTERY Roman and Post Medieval

Significant Finds CLAY PIPE Post Medieval

Significant Finds WIG CURLER Post Medieval

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

Prompt Water Act 1989 and subsequent code of practice

### Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON TOWER HAMLETS POPLAR  
Thames Water Victorian Water Mains Replacement Works in the vicinity of Roman Road, Parnell Road and Antill Road, Old Ford E3, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, DMA Finsbury Park 43.

Postcode E3

Study area 1.28 Kilometres

Site coordinates TQ 3675 8320 51.5303022174 -0.03033339405730 51 31 49 N 000 01 49 W Point

### Project creators

Name of Organisation Compass Archaeology

Project brief originator English Heritage/Department of Environment

Project design originator	Compass Archaeology
Project director/manager	Geoff Potter
Project supervisor	Rosie Cummings
Type of sponsor/funding body	Water Utility
Name of sponsor/funding body	Thames Water Utilities

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Museum of London Archive
Physical Contents	'Ceramics'
Digital Archive recipient	Museum of London archive
Digital Contents	'Digital photography','Spreadsheets','Text'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Spreadsheets','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Museum of London Archive
Paper Contents	'Context sheet','Correspondence'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Correspondence','Miscellaneous Material','Photograph','Report','Unpublished Text'

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Thames Water Victorian Water Mains Replacement Works in the vicinity of Roman Road, Parnell Road and Antill Road, Old Ford E3, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, DMA Finsbury Park 43.
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Cummings, R
Date	2011
Issuer or publisher	Compass Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	5-7 Southwark St, London SE1 1RQ
Description	31-page spiral bound report

Entered by	Rosie Cummings (mail@compassarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	20 August 2011

#### **APPENDIX IV: London Archaeologist Summary**

Site Address:	Thames Water Victorian Water Mains Replacement Works in the vicinity of Roman Road, Parnell Road and Antill Road, Old Ford E3, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, DMA Finsbury Park 43.
Project type:	Watching Brief
Dates of Fieldwork:	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2010 – 2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2011
Site Code:	TXE11
Supervisor:	Rosie Cummings
NGR:	TQ 3675 8320
Funding Body:	Optimise for Thames Water Utilities

Approximately 1km of trenching was observed in the Roman Road and Old Ford area of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Modern road layers were exposed overlying post-medieval buried soils, which produced residual Roman material as well as earlier post-medieval and 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century finds. Brick rubble suggesting bomb-damage was observed in one area. Natural sand, clays and gravels were exposed in all areas.



## Appendix V: LAARC database entries for the general area.

The LAARC database has seven positive results for a search of archaeological investigations in the DMA area (and immediate surroundings). These investigations show a distinct pattern of prehistoric and Roman activity in the area<sup>6</sup>:

**Sitecode:** **GDP08**  
Grid: TQ36808320

Phase 1, Gladstone Place, Bow, E3  
Year: 2008

London Archaeologist Round-up 2008: Natural sands and gravels were cut by a number of features and sealed by a layer of subsoil. In the NW and the SE of the site these included a N-S aligned ditch, a gully and three possible postholes, all undated.

**Sitecode:** **ROB05**  
Grid: TQ36688340

568a Roman Road, Bow, E3  
Year: 2005

London Archaeologist Round-up 2005: Several phases of Roman land use and occupation were identified, with the earliest represented by redeposited brickearth and levelling layers which may relate to gravel extraction for the construction of the Roman road.

**Sitecode:** **RBW03**  
Grid: TQ36618331

510-518 Roman Road, Bow, E3  
Year: 2003

'London Archaeologist Round-up 2003': Sections of a Roman road were revealed above the natural gravels, including its foundation, levelling and remnant surface layers.

**Sitecode:** **RMW02**  
Grid: TQ3654083288

490 Roman Road, Bow, E3  
Year: 2002

'London Archaeologist Round-up 2002': Four ditches were revealed above the natural gravels; two were prehistoric or Roman in date, and two were Roman. The Roman ditches contained a substantial amount of pottery and building material.

**Sitecode:** **PNL98**  
Grid: TQ36948368

Lefevre Walk Estate (Phase II), Parnell Road, Old Ford, E3  
Year: 1998

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<sup>6</sup> This data is copied directly from the LAARC database.

See extended entry in 'London Archaeologist Round-up 1998' Summary or Round-up: Natural brickearth in centre of site was cut by 2 butt-ended ditches, probably part of a field boundary, and 3 Neolithic pits, one containing Peterborough ware pottery.

**Sitecode:**

**PRB95**

Grid: TQ3692083556

91-93 Parnell Road, Bow, E3

Year: 1995

'London Archaeologist Round-up 1995': Natural brickearth was cut by a ditch or gully delineating a property boundary and dated to the Roman period.

**Sitecode:**

**HAT94**

Grid: TQ36508350;TQ36658375;TQ37008352;TQ37108322;TQ36458295

Housing Action Trust Voluntary Commission, Monteith Estate, Lefevre Walk Estate, Tredegar Road Estate, Coburn Road (land off), Old Ford, E3

Year: 1994

'London Archaeologist Round-up 1994': Monteith Estate. Possible Roman ploughsoils were revealed close to Old Ford Road. Post-medieval features, some containing 17<sup>th</sup> century pottery and tiles, were recorded across much of the site.