

THAMES WATER

VICTORIAN WATER MAINS REPLACEMENT WORKS IN THE AREA OF WEST INDIA DOCK ROAD

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS
DMA FINSBURY PARK 67

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



July 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 area of West India Dock Road, London Borough of Tower Hamlets (DMA Finsbury Park 67). Archaeological monitoring was undertaken between 12th January 2010 and 19th May 2011. DMA Finsbury Park 67 is approximately centred at NGR TQ 3696 8089.

Approximately 900m of trenching was observed across seven streets within DMA Finsbury Park 67; following initial monitoring it was agreed in consultation with English Heritage that no further archaeological monitoring was required. The majority of trenching exposed modern road layers overlying recent made-ground and service deposits. Deposits of 19th century made-ground were observed in several areas, and three sections of early-late 19th brickwork were exposed in Grenade Street and Gill Street – representing cellar walls and drains. Natural deposits were exposed in several areas – alluvial deposits were exposed generally in the south and east areas, while deposits to the north were generally of clay, sand and gravels.

No significant archaeological finds or features were exposed during the course of the archaeological watching brief.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1** This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken during Thames Water mains replacement works in the area of West India Dock Road, London Borough of Tower Hamlets (DMA Finsbury Park 67). Archaeological monitoring was undertaken between 12th January 2010 and 19th May 2011. DMA Finsbury Park 67 is approximately centred at NGR TQ 3696 8089 (*cf.* Figure 1).
- 1.2** Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by staff of Compass Archaeology, with overall management of the project undertaken by Geoff Potter. Groundworks were completed by Clancy Docwra on behalf of Thames Water Utilities Ltd.
- 1.3** Part of DMA Finsbury Park 67 at the southwest corner falls within a locally designated Archaeology Priority Zone (APZ) (*cf.* Figure 1). A further APZ is located just to the west.



Figure 1: Site location plan showing DMA Finsbury Park 67 and London Borough of Tower Hamlets designated Archaeology Priority Zone, in relation to an original plan by Clancy Docwra (©2009).

2. Site Location and Geology

- 2.1** DMA Finsbury Park 67 is centred on West India Dock Road, bounded to the north by the south side of East India Dock Road and to the west approximately along the line of Three Colt Street. To the south and east the DMA follows an irregular line dictated by local buildings and street patterns.
- 2.2** The British Geological Survey (1995: North London, Sheet 256) shows DMA Finsbury Park 67 mainly overlying Kempton Park Gravel, with a small island of Langley Silt approximately located over Rich Street (slightly northwest of the centre).

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 Early History: Prehistoric to Saxon

There is evidence for prehistoric activity in the area. The Limehouse Link excavation (*LLK24*) produced a small quantity of prehistoric pottery and struck/burnt flint, partly from features cut into the brickearth. Elsewhere alluvium has also been found in association with peat deposits, notably the mid to late Bronze Age Tilbury IV horizon. A layer of peat at least 400mm thick and containing prehistoric struck flint was recorded some 0.5 km to the east, with a surface between *c* -0.75m and +0.50m OD (Limehouse Link project; *LLK90*).

In the Roman period the area seems to have remained low-lying, and in parts probably marshy or periodically flooded, whilst conclusive settlement evidence is confined to areas further to the west.

3.2 Later History: Medieval to the current day

3.2.1 The Riverine Area

At some point in Saxon or medieval times the river was embanked, probably roughly on the line of the present-day Narrow Street (to the east) and recent excavations along Narrow Street for the VMR works (TZB 08) have revealed significant deposits predominantly relating to the post-medieval street layout. Towards the end of the medieval period there are frequent references to repair of the embankment and to associated works. At the same time the limekiln industry developed close to the river that provided transport for raw materials and products: there are references to kilns in 1335 and to wharves in 1438. It is possible that similar deposits may survive in the southern part of the DMA in relation to Limehouse Creek that crossed the DMA in the southern western corner.

In the 16th and 17th centuries there was a significant development of shipbuilding and related trades in this area, with a corresponding expansion of housing and wharves. Subsequently the area was populated by mariners and dock workers. This also involved land reclamation beyond the previous riverfront. Recorded examples of this include a chalk raft or platform at Dunbar Wharf (excavated in 1990 during the Limehouse Link project; site code *LLK26*), and timber structures on Victoria Wharf (code *VIT96*). It is likely that these both originated in the late 16th century.

3.2.2 Later history of the general DMA area

Historic maps also show the development of the area at least from the time of Gascoyne's *Survey of the Parish of Stepney* (1703). Rocque's survey of *c* 1746 gives a similar picture. Also at about this time – 1745 to 1748 – the area to the east of Graves's Dock briefly flourished as the site of the Limehouse porcelain manufactory (site code *LLK26*; published as MoLAS Monograph 6).

Horwood's map of the 1790s and its subsequent 1813 revision show progressive development in the general DMA area. A much more detailed view is given by the

Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25 inch map of 1867-70. Generally the early maps of this area show the majority of the DMA as open land.

This area east of Limehouse is known for its industrial and commercial heritage. The first wharf was built along the Thames in 1348 and limekilns were used for the production of mortar and pottery.

The northern part of the DMA borders Commercial Road, which was laid out in 1802, linking the West India Docks to the City of London. West India Dock Road was also constructed at the same time. There was a toll-house south of Pennyfields, near the junction with King Street.

The eastern part of the DMA (between Birchfield Street and Ming Street) was developed in the early nineteenth century. Just on the edge of the DMA along the north-east side of West India Dock Road, south of Pennyfields was an iron-foundry occupied by a succession of firms manufacturing ships fire-hearths. From *c* 1929 to the late 1950s these premises, rebuilt in 1937, were held by the British Scaling & Painting Company as works and stores for their trade in removing and preventing corrosion on marine boilers and ships. Nos 47 and 49 West India Dock Road were made into workshops in 1875–6 to become part of William Byron Bawn & Company's Byron Tank Works, most of which fronted Castor Street. Wrought-iron tanks and cisterns were made here until *c* 1940. These buildings were cleared in the early 1960s for the erection of Elderfield House in the Birchfield Estate.

The buildings along the section of West India Dock Road south of Pennyfields (Nos 57–67) were known as St Ann's Place in the early nineteenth century. No. 67 was an eighteenth-century house that had been built as part of Back Lane (Ming Street) and in the early nineteenth century it was occupied by Theophilus Westthorp, a ships-rigger. In the 1870s he or his son became a manufacturer of patent machine-picked oakum and antiseptic marine lint. In 1899 Westthorp's Limited moved to No. 59 West India Dock Road, where they had erected an office, showroom and multi-storey warehouse, which they occupied until *c*.1940. This red-brick building had steel joists and its glazed-brick ground-floor elevations had broad windows under moulded four-centred arched heads. Nos 57–71 were cleared in the mid-1960s for part of the Birchfield Estate.

On the south side of West India Dock Road, opposite its junction with Pennyfields, there was a forge, as shown on the 1st edition OS map of 1867-70 (Fig 2).

There was a fire station at the south end of West India Dock Road (on the edge of the DMA). The building was completed in 1868. It was of brick and was three bays wide, with a symmetrical street front. The appliance room was placed in the centre of the building, behind double doors. Residential accommodation was provided on the upper floors. The fire station ceased to be used as such by 1920. In *c*.1970 Crome & Mitchell (nut merchants) were in occupation, and it was demolished in 1987–8 for road improvements.

Adjacent to the fire station was West India Dock railway station, part of the London and Blackwall Railway and built in 1839–40. The station was a two-storey structure with covered platforms at the upper level in a range crossed by another to produce a

cruciform-plan building with elevations of a domestic character. The station closed with the railway line in 1926 and was removed shortly afterwards. In the 18th century a group of Chinese sailors settled along Limehouse Causeway, creating the original Chinatown. They later moved to Soho after heavy bombing during the Blitz, although Ming Street (previously King Street) remains as a legacy.

In the eighteenth century the Blue Posts Tavern stood on the south side of Limehouse Causeway at its junction with Pennyfields and Back Lane (just outside the DMA). Soon after the West India Dock Road had been formed the establishment moved to a new building on the north-east side of that road, south of Back Lane. The Blue Posts public house (No. 73) was a three-storey brick building of three bays. It was extended to the south-east (No. 75) in 1876 with a two-storey block giving a long street frontage. The Blue Posts, with the Railway Tavern and Jamaica Tavern, was well placed to serve labourers and others passing to and from the West India Docks. Charles W. Brown, son of the famous Charlie Brown (see below), displayed half of his father's curio collection at the Blue Posts in the 1930s. It became the Buccaneer shortly before its demolition in 1987–8. Nos 69 and 71 West India Dock Road were two- and three-storey mid-nineteenth-century houses and workshops, occupied by J. Downton & Company, brass-founders and pumpmakers, until the 1920s.

On the corner of Garford Street and West India Dock Road stood the legendary dockland public house, the Railway Tavern, built in *c.*1840. Owned by Charlie Brown and famous for the display of his collection of curiosities from all over the world, the site was eventually demolished in November 1989 for the construction of the Limehouse Link roadway.

South of the Limehouse Causeway and west of Westferry Road, eleven housing blocks (known as the St Vincent estate) were built after 1945, although construction had begun in the late 1930s. The construction of the Limehouse Link road adversely affected the estate and it was demolished between 1990 and 1992.

In the north side of the DMA is the Birchfield estate built by the LCC and the GLC. It stretches from Ming Street as far north as East India Dock Road and westwards from Saltwell Street to West India Dock Road. Apart from one 1920s block, Birchfield House, it was built between 1957 and the mid 1970s in a series of interrelated development schemes: Morant Street, Pennyfields, Perry's Close, and part of the Saltwell Street Scheme. In the centre of the estate is a small open space created as a result of the Turner's Buildings Clearance Area. In general this area suffered from considerable bomb damage during the Second World War¹.

¹ Much of the information in this section is extracted from: Hobhouse, H. (Ed.) 1994 'West India Dock Road', Survey of London: volumes 43 and 44: Poplar, Blackwall and Isle of Dogs, pp. 117-119.

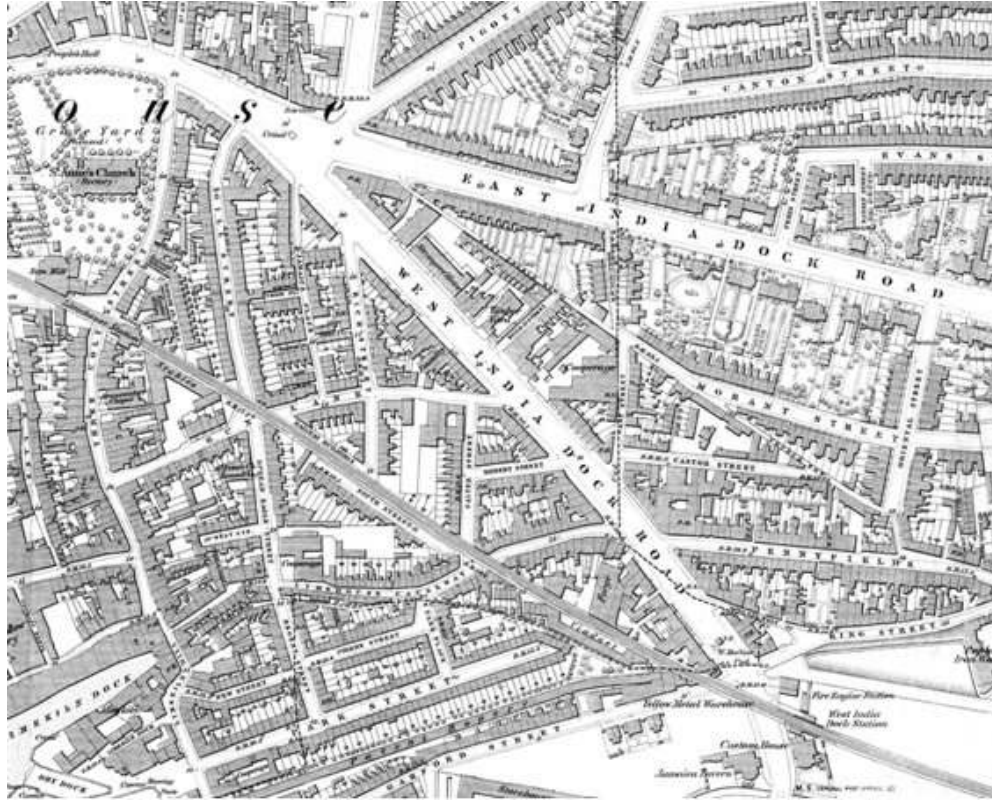


Figure 2: Extract from Ordnance Survey 25 inch 1st Edition, Sheet 37, surveyed 1870, published 1872, showing the approximate area of DMA Finsbury Park 67.

4. Archaeological Research Questions

The objectives of the archaeological watching brief included contributing 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:

- Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, either *in situ* features or residual finds?
- 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 Roman activity or finds?
- Is there any evidence for Saxon or early medieval activity, particularly in relation to land reclamation?
- 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?
- Can the watching brief works inform on the site-specific research questions of local archaeological sites and archaeological priority areas?

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 of Field Archaeologists (*Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*). Overall management of the project was undertaken by a full member of the Institute.

The recording system followed the procedures set out in the Museum of London recording manual. By agreement with MoLA 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 contractors' groundworks, and basically involved one archaeologist on site as required monitoring 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.

The Client and the representatives of English Heritage and the Local Authority 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 photography (35mm colour transparency/ monochrome print/ digital).

6. Post-Excavation Work

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

6.1 Finds and Samples

Had any finds and samples been present they would have been 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 would have been retained and bagged with unique numbers related to the context record, although some material was discarded following assessment. Assessment of finds and samples would have been undertaken by appropriately

qualified staff. No archaeological finds or samples were recovered from this watching brief.

6.2 Report Procedure

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

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 MoL *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.

8. The Archaeological Watching Brief

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken across seven streets within DMA Finsbury Park 67, totalling approximately 900m of coverage. Observed groundworks included both open-cut trenching and launch pits for pipe-burst. Following the completion of monitoring over the seven streets listed in the table below, it was agreed in consultation with English Heritage that no further archaeological monitoring was required. Figure 3 (below) shows the extent of monitoring with DMA Finsbury Park 67 and should be read in conjunction with following table and sections 8.1 to 8.7.

Street	Extent	Observations
West India Dock Rd	330m	Modern road layers and made-ground with 19 th century made-ground deposits in places and occasional exposed silty clay natural.
Birchfield Street	140m	Modern road layers over c. 19 th century made-ground and natural alluvial deposits.
Gill Street	21m	Modern road layers over recent made-ground and services sealing truncated brick cellar wall c. 19 th century.
Salter Street	76m	Modern road layers and recent made-ground over sterile, natural alluvial deposits.
Rich Street	35m	Modern road layers, made-ground and services over sandy-silt natural deposits.
Limehouse Causeway	147m	Modern road layers and disturbed made-ground and service deposits over sterile, natural alluvial deposits.
Grenade Street	160m	Modern road layers, made-ground and services in majority of trenching, two sections of truncated brick walls c. Late 19 th /early 20 th century.

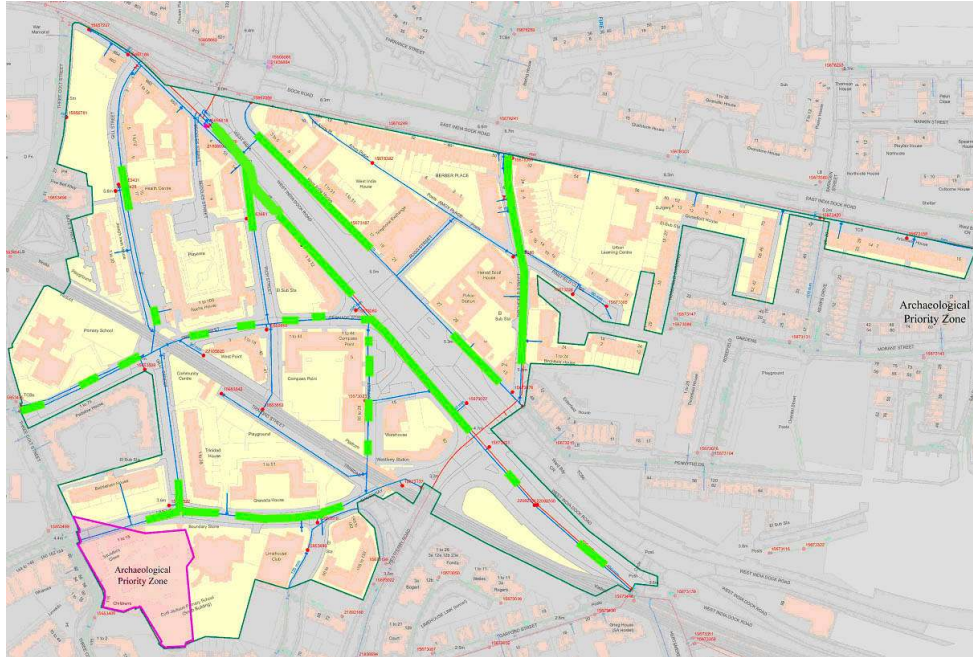


Figure 3: Extent of monitoring (green) within DMA Finsbury Park 67.

8.1 West India Dock Road

Approximately 330m of trenching was observed on West India Dock Road between the junctions with East India Dock Road (northwest) and northwest of Garford Street (southeast). Modern road layers varied in composition but were observed to an average depth of 0.5m below the existing road level. Road consolidation layers included bitumen, crushed stone and concrete at varying thicknesses. Trenching on the north side of West India Dock Road, at the northwest extent of trenching exposed modern road layers directly overlying truncated natural deposits of orange/brown silty clay (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Trenching on the north side of West India Dock Road just south of the East India Dock Road junction.

On the opposite (south) carriageway in this area mid brown silty clay and sand made-ground with pebble inclusions and flecks of brick was observed – this deposit probably represents road consolidation in the later 19th century. Similar deposits were observed in trenches to the southeast, between the junctions with Salter Street and Westferry Road (Figure 5). Modern made-ground and service deposits were observed to the full depth of excavation on the north side immediately north of the Birchfield Street junction (Figure 6). No significant archaeological finds or features were observed during the course of monitoring on West India Dock Road.



Figure 5: Trenching on the south side of West India Dock Road immediately north of the Westferry Road junction.



Figure 6: Trenching on the north side of West India Dock Road, immediately north of the Birchfield Street junction.

8.2 Birchfield Street

Almost the full length of Birchfield Street was monitored (approximately 140m) as a single open-cut trench adjacent to the eastern kerb-line. Tarmac road surfacing over concrete base was observed to an average depth of 0.35m, overlying varying deposits of probable 19th century made-ground. The composition of these deposits varied along the length but was generally firm dark brown/grey sand silt with scattered pebbles, brick fragments and loose mortar. Concentrated areas of crushed and fragmentary brick were seen outside Birchfield House (Figure 7), while to the north of Pinefield Close the deposits were more mixed with lenses of sand and mortar (Figure 8). Outside the south end of Birchfield House, firm dark-grey silt deposits with occasional gravel was observed, probably representing the reworked top horizon of natural alluvial deposits (Figure 9). No archaeological finds or features were observed during monitoring on Birchfield Street.



Figure 7: Trenching outside Birchfield House showing crushed brick deposits.



Figure 8: Mixed 19th century made-ground deposits to the north of Pinefield Close.



Figure 9: Probably reworked alluvial deposits to the south of Birchfield House.

8.3 Gill Street

Two small trenches totalling 11m of open ground were observed on Gill Street, to the north of the Grenade Street junction and approximately mid-way along the northern stretch of Gill Street outside a small alleyway. The existing ground surface consisted of tarmac over concrete base and concrete paving slabs in sand bedding to an average depth of 0.4m. The northern trench exposed only modern services deposits to the full depth of excavation at 1m below the existing ground surface. The southern trench (immediately north of the Grenade Street junction and railway bridge) exposed recent backfill deposits sealing the truncated remains of a brick wall in the centre of the trench (Figures 10 and 11). The brick wall continued beyond the limit of excavation, some of the brickwork retained render suggesting it is the surviving remnant of a 19th century coal cellar. A further 10m of trenching was observed at the south end of Gill Street extending north from trenching on Limehouse Causeway (Figure 12). The tarmac road surface was exposed overlying granite cobbles and a loose mortar mix to a depth of 0.4m, over modern made-ground and sterile alluvial deposits.



Figure 10: Truncated 19th century cellar wall in trenching on Gill Street.



Figure 11: General view of trench north of Grenade St and the railway bridge.



Figure 12: Trenching at the south end of Gill Street.

8.4 Salter Street

The full length of Salter Street was monitored (approximately 76m) in the form of four launch pits evenly spaced and adjacent to the west kerb line between the junctions with West India Dock Road (north) and Limehouse Causeway (south). The granite cobbled road surface was exposed over a sand bedding and compacted base to a depth of 0.45m (Figure 13). Recent made-ground deposits were exposed below, consisting of mid-dark brown/grey silty clay and sand with scattered gravel and occasional brick flecking. Firm mid-dark greyish silt alluvial deposits were exposed to the base of excavations at c.1.6m below the existing ground level. No archaeological finds or features were observed during monitoring on Salter Street.



Figure 13: Launch pit on Salter Street.

8.5 Rich Street

A single trench measuring c. 35m was monitored on Rich Street running south from the junction with West India Dock Road (Figure 14). Modern tarmac and concrete hardcore were exposed to a depth of 0.45m overlying mid-dark brown silty sand with frequent gravel and occasional brick flecking at a thickness of 0.2m. This deposit probably represents surviving 19th century road consolidation truncated by modern road layers. Natural orange/brown sandy-silt with frequent gravel was observed to the remaining depth of excavation at c. 1.1m below the existing ground level (Figure 15). No archaeological finds or features were observed.



Figure 14: General view of trenching on Rich Street.



Figure 15: Section of trenching on Rich Street.

8.6 Limehouse Causeway

Approximately 147m of trenching was observed on Limehouse Causeway between the junctions with Trinidad Street (east) and Three Colt Street (west). Trenching either side of the Gill Street junction exposed modern tarmac overlying concrete base to a depth of 0.4m. Heavily disturbed made-ground deposits including modern service backfills were observed to c. 0.9m overlying sterile alluvial deposits (Figures 16 and 17). Trenching further east exposed the present road base over comparatively thin made-ground and sterile alluvial deposits to 1.1m (Figures 18 and 19).



Figure 16: Trenching on Limehouse Causeway at the junction with Gill Street.



Figure 17: Section of trenching on Limehouse Causeway at the junction with Gill Street.



Figure 18: Elevated view of trenching on Limehouse Causeway at the junctions with Trinidad St and Salter Street.



Figure 19: Section of trenching on Limehouse Causeway.

8.7 Grenade Street

Approximately 160m of Grenade Street was monitored between the junctions with West India Dock Road (east) and Three Colt Street (west), in the form of 8 trenches and launch pits. The majority of trenches exposed the existing tarmac road surface overlying squared cobbles and concrete hardcore, with modern deposits and services to the full depth of excavation at a maximum of 1.6m. Several trenches exposed orange gravels towards the base of excavations, which is likely to be imported backfill. Two sections of 19th century walls were exposed, at the far west end of Grenade Street (Figure 20) and on the west side of the junction with Rich Street (Figure 21). The first section of brick wall (at the junction with Three Colt Street) was exposed in the north facing section approximately 1.05m below the existing ground level. The wall base survived as a fragmentary single course c.0.25m thickness of very bright orange/red bricks with grey mortar. The bricks were too fragmentary for identification but the fabric indicates early 19th century; the wall is probably a heavily truncated base of an early 19th century cellar wall. The second section of brickwork (west of the Rich St junction) was exposed in the south facing section approximately 0.63m below the existing ground level. The wall survived as five courses of very soft bright yellow London stock bricks with a lime and sand bedding material. The wall had a rounded profile suggesting a possible barrel shaped drain c.19th century. The wall overlay a thin dark soil layer onto orange-gravel at the base of excavations – it was unclear whether this deposit represented natural or ballast and no further excavations were possible. The remaining trench consisted of modern service deposits and made-ground.



Figure 20: Truncated brick work in trenching on Grenade Street at the junction with Three Colt Street.



Figure 21: Truncated yellow-stock brick wall in the south facing section of trenching on Grenade Street at the junction with Rich Street.

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? *Clean, grey silty alluvial deposits were generally exposed in the south and east areas of DMA Finsbury Park 67. Orange/brown sandy and gravelly deposits were exposed in the northern areas. Natural deposits were generally observed at c. 0.9m below the existing ground surfaces, in all cases showing truncated and reworked upper horizons. No organic horizons were encountered.*
- 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? *No evidence for Roman activity was recorded.*
- Is there any evidence for Saxon or early medieval activity, particularly in relation to land reclamation? *No evidence for Saxon or early medieval activity was recorded.*
- What evidence is there for subsequent medieval or early post-medieval development? *The only deposits exposed beyond modern road layers and natural were deposits of early-late 19th century made-ground, and three sections of 19th century brick-work.*
- At what level do archaeological deposits survive in the highways across the area? *19th century made-ground and brickwork were exposed below modern road layers c. 0.5 to 0.7m below the existing ground level.*
- Can the watching brief works inform on the site-specific research questions of local archaeological sites and archaeological priority areas? *No significant archaeological finds or features were observed.*

10. Summary and Conclusions

- 10.1** Approximately 900m of trenching was observed over 7 roads in the area of West India Dock Road, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, within the area defined as DMA Finsbury Park 67. Following the initial monitoring period it was agreed, in consultation with English Heritage, that no further archaeological monitoring was required.
- 10.2** The majority of trenches exposed only modern road layers overlying recent made-ground deposits and service backfills. 19th century made-ground deposits were exposed in several trenches, and three sections of early-late 19th century brickwork were recorded on Grenade Street and Gill Street. Natural alluvial deposits were exposed in the south and east areas, while gravels and sand were exposed to the north.
- 10.3** No significant archaeological finds or features were exposed during the course of the archaeological watching brief.

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APPENDIX I: OASIS Data Collection Form

OASIS ID: compassa1-103957

Project details

Project name	Thames Water Victorian mains replacement works in the area of West India Dock Rd, London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Short description of the project	Approximately 900m of trenching was observed during Thames Water mains replacement works in the area of West India Dock Road, London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The majority of trenching exposed only modern road layers overlying modern made-ground and service deposits. Areas of 19th century made-ground were recorded, along with three sections of truncated early-late 19th century brick-work. Alluvial deposits were recorded in the south and east, and natural sand, clay and gravels were recorded to the north.
Project dates	Start: 12-01-2010 End: 19-05-2011
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	TZW10 - 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	WALL Post Medieval
Monument type	DEPOSIT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	N/A None
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 mains replacement works in the area of West India Dock Rd, London Borough of Tower Hamlets (DMA Finsbury Park 67).
Postcode	E14
Study area	0.90 Kilometres
Site coordinates	TQ 3696 8089 51.5098164770 -0.02617268456650 51 30 35 N 000 01 34 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	Geoff Potter
Type of sponsor/funding body	Thames Water Utilities
Name of sponsor/funding body	Thames Water Utilities

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Museum of London archive
Digital Contents	'none'

Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Spreadsheets','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Museum of London Archive
Paper Contents	'none'
Paper Media available	'Map','Miscellaneous Material','Photograph','Report','Unpublished Text'

**Project
bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Thames Water Victorian mains replacement works in the area of West India Dock Rd, London Borough of Tower Hamlets (DMA Finsbury Park 67): An Archaeological Watching Brief
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Entered on	23 June 2011

APPENDIX II: London Archaeologist Summary

Site Address:	Thames Water Victorian mains replacement works in the area of West India Dock Rd, London Borough of Tower Hamlets (DMA Finsbury Park 67).
Project type:	Watching brief
Dates of Fieldwork:	12 th January 2010 to 19 th May 2011
Site Code:	TZW10
Supervisor:	Geoff Potter
NGR:	TQ 3696 8089
Funding Body:	Thames Water Utilities Ltd

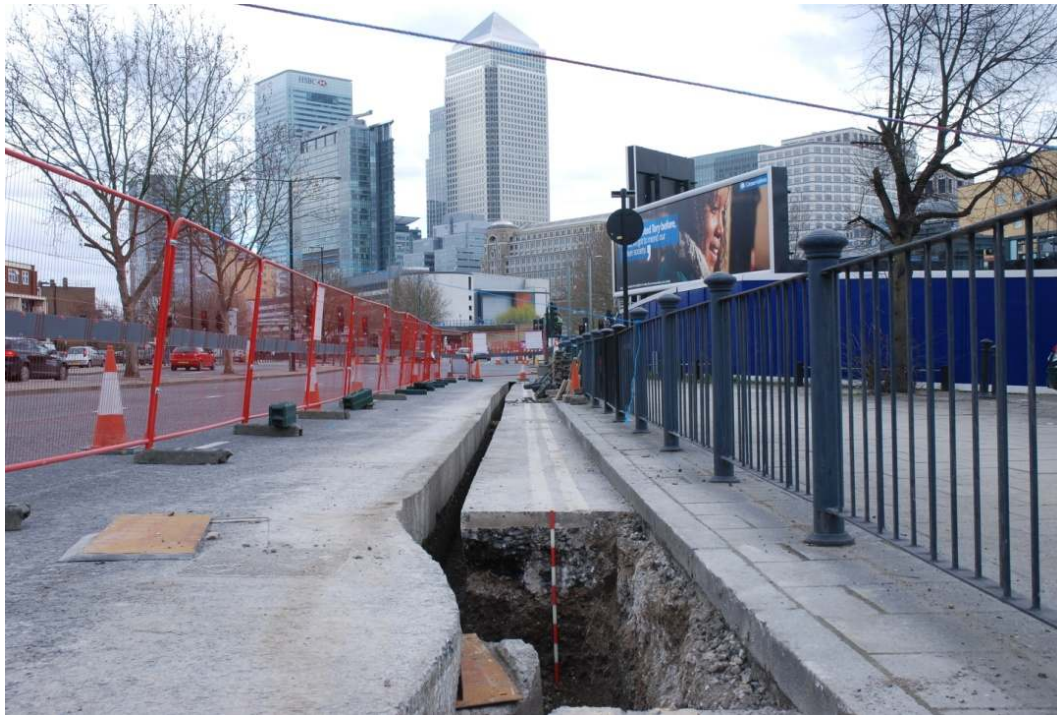
Approximately 900m of trenching was observed during Thames Water mains replacement works in the area of West India Dock Road, London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The majority of trenching exposed only modern road layers overlying modern made-ground and service deposits. Areas of 19th century made-ground were recorded, along with three sections of truncated early-late 19th century brick-work. Alluvial deposits were recorded in the south and east, and natural sand, clay and gravels were recorded to the north.

THAMES WATER

VICTORIAN WATER MAINS REPLACEMENT WORKS IN THE AREA OF WEST INDIA DOCK ROAD

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS
DMA FINSBURY PARK 67

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



July 2011



COMPASS



ARCHAEOLOGY

THAMES WATER
VICTORIAN WATER MAINS REPLACEMENT WORKS
IN THE AREA OF WEST INDIA DOCK ROAD

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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

SITE CODE: TZW10
APPROXIMATE SITE CENTRE NGR: TQ 3696 8089

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July 2011

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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 area of West India Dock Road, London Borough of Tower Hamlets (DMA Finsbury Park 67). Archaeological monitoring was undertaken between 12th January 2010 and 19th May 2011. DMA Finsbury Park 67 is approximately centred at NGR TQ 3696 8089.

Approximately 900m of trenching was observed across seven streets within DMA Finsbury Park 67; following initial monitoring it was agreed in consultation with English Heritage that no further archaeological monitoring was required. The majority of trenching exposed modern road layers overlying recent made-ground and service deposits. Deposits of 19th century made-ground were observed in several areas, and three sections of early-late 19th brickwork were exposed in Grenade Street and Gill Street – representing cellar walls and drains. Natural deposits were exposed in several areas – alluvial deposits were exposed generally in the south and east areas, while deposits to the north were generally of clay, sand and gravels.

No significant archaeological finds or features were exposed during the course of the archaeological watching brief.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1** This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken during Thames Water mains replacement works in the area of West India Dock Road, London Borough of Tower Hamlets (DMA Finsbury Park 67). Archaeological monitoring was undertaken between 12th January 2010 and 19th May 2011. DMA Finsbury Park 67 is approximately centred at NGR TQ 3696 8089 (*cf.* Figure 1).
- 1.2** Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by staff of Compass Archaeology, with overall management of the project undertaken by Geoff Potter. Groundworks were completed by Clancy Docwra on behalf of Thames Water Utilities Ltd.
- 1.3** Part of DMA Finsbury Park 67 at the southwest corner falls within a locally designated Archaeology Priority Zone (APZ) (*cf.* Figure 1). A further APZ is located just to the west.



Figure 1: Site location plan showing DMA Finsbury Park 67 and London Borough of Tower Hamlets designated Archaeology Priority Zone, in relation to an original plan by Clancy Docwra (©2009).

2. Site Location and Geology

- 2.1** DMA Finsbury Park 67 is centred on West India Dock Road, bounded to the north by the south side of East India Dock Road and to the west approximately along the line of Three Colt Street. To the south and east the DMA follows an irregular line dictated by local buildings and street patterns.
- 2.2** The British Geological Survey (1995: North London, Sheet 256) shows DMA Finsbury Park 67 mainly overlying Kempton Park Gravel, with a small island of Langley Silt approximately located over Rich Street (slightly northwest of the centre).

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 Early History: Prehistoric to Saxon

There is evidence for prehistoric activity in the area. The Limehouse Link excavation (*LLK24*) produced a small quantity of prehistoric pottery and struck/burnt flint, partly from features cut into the brickearth. Elsewhere alluvium has also been found in association with peat deposits, notably the mid to late Bronze Age Tilbury IV horizon. A layer of peat at least 400mm thick and containing prehistoric struck flint was recorded some 0.5 km to the east, with a surface between *c* -0.75m and +0.50m OD (Limehouse Link project; *LLK90*).

In the Roman period the area seems to have remained low-lying, and in parts probably marshy or periodically flooded, whilst conclusive settlement evidence is confined to areas further to the west.

3.2 Later History: Medieval to the current day

3.2.1 The Riverine Area

At some point in Saxon or medieval times the river was embanked, probably roughly on the line of the present-day Narrow Street (to the east) and recent excavations along Narrow Street for the VMR works (TZB 08) have revealed significant deposits predominantly relating to the post-medieval street layout. Towards the end of the medieval period there are frequent references to repair of the embankment and to associated works. At the same time the limekiln industry developed close to the river that provided transport for raw materials and products: there are references to kilns in 1335 and to wharves in 1438. It is possible that similar deposits may survive in the southern part of the DMA in relation to Limehouse Creek that crossed the DMA in the southern western corner.

In the 16th and 17th centuries there was a significant development of shipbuilding and related trades in this area, with a corresponding expansion of housing and wharves. Subsequently the area was populated by mariners and dock workers. This also involved land reclamation beyond the previous riverfront. Recorded examples of this include a chalk raft or platform at Dunbar Wharf (excavated in 1990 during the Limehouse Link project; site code *LLK26*), and timber structures on Victoria Wharf (code *VIT96*). It is likely that these both originated in the late 16th century.

3.2.2 Later history of the general DMA area

Historic maps also show the development of the area at least from the time of Gascoyne's *Survey of the Parish of Stepney* (1703). Rocque's survey of *c* 1746 gives a similar picture. Also at about this time – 1745 to 1748 – the area to the east of Graves's Dock briefly flourished as the site of the Limehouse porcelain manufactory (site code *LLK26*; published as MoLAS Monograph 6).

Horwood's map of the 1790s and its subsequent 1813 revision show progressive development in the general DMA area. A much more detailed view is given by the

Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25 inch map of 1867-70. Generally the early maps of this area show the majority of the DMA as open land.

This area east of Limehouse is known for its industrial and commercial heritage. The first wharf was built along the Thames in 1348 and limekilns were used for the production of mortar and pottery.

The northern part of the DMA borders Commercial Road, which was laid out in 1802, linking the West India Docks to the City of London. West India Dock Road was also constructed at the same time. There was a toll-house south of Pennyfields, near the junction with King Street.

The eastern part of the DMA (between Birchfield Street and Ming Street) was developed in the early nineteenth century. Just on the edge of the DMA along the north-east side of West India Dock Road, south of Pennyfields was an iron-foundry occupied by a succession of firms manufacturing ships fire-hearths. From *c* 1929 to the late 1950s these premises, rebuilt in 1937, were held by the British Scaling & Painting Company as works and stores for their trade in removing and preventing corrosion on marine boilers and ships. Nos 47 and 49 West India Dock Road were made into workshops in 1875–6 to become part of William Byron Bawn & Company's Byron Tank Works, most of which fronted Castor Street. Wrought-iron tanks and cisterns were made here until *c* 1940. These buildings were cleared in the early 1960s for the erection of Elderfield House in the Birchfield Estate.

The buildings along the section of West India Dock Road south of Pennyfields (Nos 57–67) were known as St Ann's Place in the early nineteenth century. No. 67 was an eighteenth-century house that had been built as part of Back Lane (Ming Street) and in the early nineteenth century it was occupied by Theophilus Westthorp, a ships-rigger. In the 1870s he or his son became a manufacturer of patent machine-picked oakum and antiseptic marine lint. In 1899 Westthorp's Limited moved to No. 59 West India Dock Road, where they had erected an office, showroom and multi-storey warehouse, which they occupied until *c*.1940. This red-brick building had steel joists and its glazed-brick ground-floor elevations had broad windows under moulded four-centred arched heads. Nos 57–71 were cleared in the mid-1960s for part of the Birchfield Estate.

On the south side of West India Dock Road, opposite its junction with Pennyfields, there was a forge, as shown on the 1st edition OS map of 1867-70 (Fig 2).

There was a fire station at the south end of West India Dock Road (on the edge of the DMA). The building was completed in 1868. It was of brick and was three bays wide, with a symmetrical street front. The appliance room was placed in the centre of the building, behind double doors. Residential accommodation was provided on the upper floors. The fire station ceased to be used as such by 1920. In *c*.1970 Crome & Mitchell (nut merchants) were in occupation, and it was demolished in 1987–8 for road improvements.

Adjacent to the fire station was West India Dock railway station, part of the London and Blackwall Railway and built in 1839–40. The station was a two-storey structure with covered platforms at the upper level in a range crossed by another to produce a

cruciform-plan building with elevations of a domestic character. The station closed with the railway line in 1926 and was removed shortly afterwards. In the 18th century a group of Chinese sailors settled along Limehouse Causeway, creating the original Chinatown. They later moved to Soho after heavy bombing during the Blitz, although Ming Street (previously King Street) remains as a legacy.

In the eighteenth century the Blue Posts Tavern stood on the south side of Limehouse Causeway at its junction with Pennyfields and Back Lane (just outside the DMA). Soon after the West India Dock Road had been formed the establishment moved to a new building on the north-east side of that road, south of Back Lane. The Blue Posts public house (No. 73) was a three-storey brick building of three bays. It was extended to the south-east (No. 75) in 1876 with a two-storey block giving a long street frontage. The Blue Posts, with the Railway Tavern and Jamaica Tavern, was well placed to serve labourers and others passing to and from the West India Docks. Charles W. Brown, son of the famous Charlie Brown (see below), displayed half of his father's curio collection at the Blue Posts in the 1930s. It became the Buccaneer shortly before its demolition in 1987–8. Nos 69 and 71 West India Dock Road were two- and three-storey mid-nineteenth-century houses and workshops, occupied by J. Downton & Company, brass-founders and pumpmakers, until the 1920s.

On the corner of Garford Street and West India Dock Road stood the legendary dockland public house, the Railway Tavern, built in *c.*1840. Owned by Charlie Brown and famous for the display of his collection of curiosities from all over the world, the site was eventually demolished in November 1989 for the construction of the Limehouse Link roadway.

South of the Limehouse Causeway and west of Westferry Road, eleven housing blocks (known as the St Vincent estate) were built after 1945, although construction had begun in the late 1930s. The construction of the Limehouse Link road adversely affected the estate and it was demolished between 1990 and 1992.

In the north side of the DMA is the Birchfield estate built by the LCC and the GLC. It stretches from Ming Street as far north as East India Dock Road and westwards from Saltwell Street to West India Dock Road. Apart from one 1920s block, Birchfield House, it was built between 1957 and the mid 1970s in a series of interrelated development schemes: Morant Street, Pennyfields, Perry's Close, and part of the Saltwell Street Scheme. In the centre of the estate is a small open space created as a result of the Turner's Buildings Clearance Area. In general this area suffered from considerable bomb damage during the Second World War¹.

¹ Much of the information in this section is extracted from: Hobhouse, H. (Ed.) 1994 'West India Dock Road', Survey of London: volumes 43 and 44: Poplar, Blackwall and Isle of Dogs, pp. 117-119.

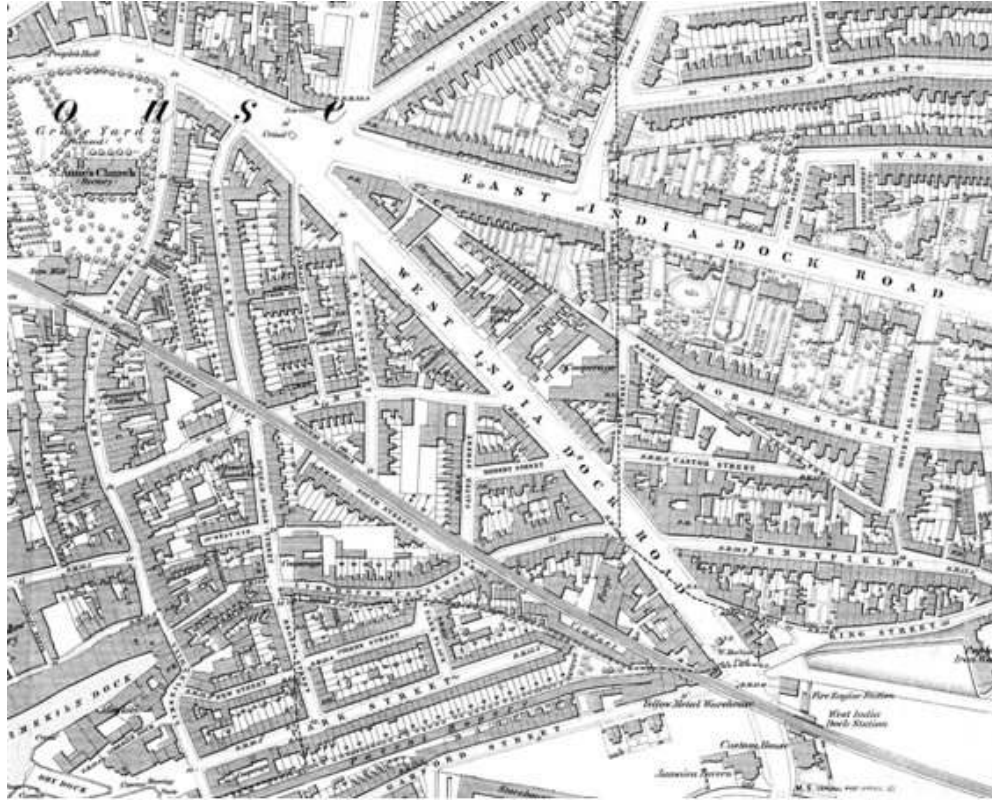


Figure 2: Extract from Ordnance Survey 25 inch 1st Edition, Sheet 37, surveyed 1870, published 1872, showing the approximate area of DMA Finsbury Park 67.

4. Archaeological Research Questions

The objectives of the archaeological watching brief included contributing 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:

- Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, either *in situ* features or residual finds?
- 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 Roman activity or finds?
- Is there any evidence for Saxon or early medieval activity, particularly in relation to land reclamation?
- 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?
- Can the watching brief works inform on the site-specific research questions of local archaeological sites and archaeological priority areas?

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 of Field Archaeologists (*Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*). Overall management of the project was undertaken by a full member of the Institute.

The recording system followed the procedures set out in the Museum of London recording manual. By agreement with MoLA 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 contractors' groundworks, and basically involved one archaeologist on site as required monitoring 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.

The Client and the representatives of English Heritage and the Local Authority 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 photography (35mm colour transparency/ monochrome print/ digital).

6. Post-Excavation Work

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

6.1 Finds and Samples

Had any finds and samples been present they would have been 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 would have been retained and bagged with unique numbers related to the context record, although some material was discarded following assessment. Assessment of finds and samples would have been undertaken by appropriately

qualified staff. No archaeological finds or samples were recovered from this watching brief.

6.2 Report Procedure

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

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 MoL *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.

8. The Archaeological Watching Brief

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken across seven streets within DMA Finsbury Park 67, totalling approximately 900m of coverage. Observed groundworks included both open-cut trenching and launch pits for pipe-burst. Following the completion of monitoring over the seven streets listed in the table below, it was agreed in consultation with English Heritage that no further archaeological monitoring was required. Figure 3 (below) shows the extent of monitoring with DMA Finsbury Park 67 and should be read in conjunction with following table and sections 8.1 to 8.7.

Street	Extent	Observations
West India Dock Rd	330m	Modern road layers and made-ground with 19 th century made-ground deposits in places and occasional exposed silty clay natural.
Birchfield Street	140m	Modern road layers over c. 19 th century made-ground and natural alluvial deposits.
Gill Street	21m	Modern road layers over recent made-ground and services sealing truncated brick cellar wall c. 19 th century.
Salter Street	76m	Modern road layers and recent made-ground over sterile, natural alluvial deposits.
Rich Street	35m	Modern road layers, made-ground and services over sandy-silt natural deposits.
Limehouse Causeway	147m	Modern road layers and disturbed made-ground and service deposits over sterile, natural alluvial deposits.
Grenade Street	160m	Modern road layers, made-ground and services in majority of trenching, two sections of truncated brick walls c. Late 19 th /early 20 th century.

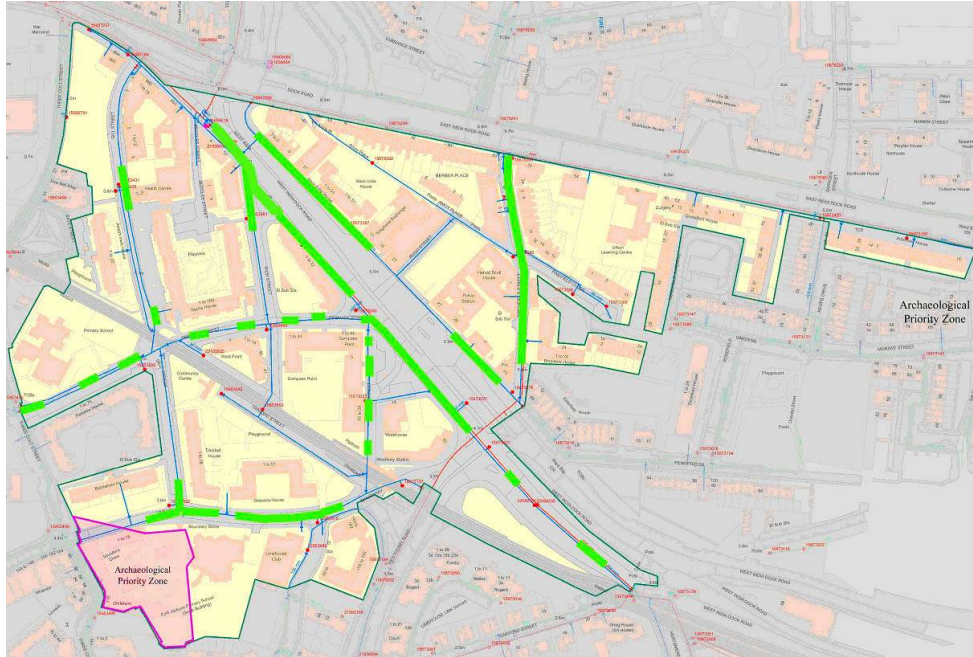


Figure 3: Extent of monitoring (green) within DMA Finsbury Park 67.

8.1 West India Dock Road

Approximately 330m of trenching was observed on West India Dock Road between the junctions with East India Dock Road (northwest) and northwest of Garford Street (southeast). Modern road layers varied in composition but were observed to an average depth of 0.5m below the existing road level. Road consolidation layers included bitumen, crushed stone and concrete at varying thicknesses. Trenching on the north side of West India Dock Road, at the northwest extent of trenching exposed modern road layers directly overlying truncated natural deposits of orange/brown silty clay (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Trenching on the north side of West India Dock Road just south of the East India Dock Road junction.

On the opposite (south) carriageway in this area mid brown silty clay and sand made-ground with pebble inclusions and flecks of brick was observed – this deposit probably represents road consolidation in the later 19th century. Similar deposits were observed in trenches to the southeast, between the junctions with Salter Street and Westferry Road (Figure 5). Modern made-ground and service deposits were observed to the full depth of excavation on the north side immediately north of the Birchfield Street junction (Figure 6). No significant archaeological finds or features were observed during the course of monitoring on West India Dock Road.

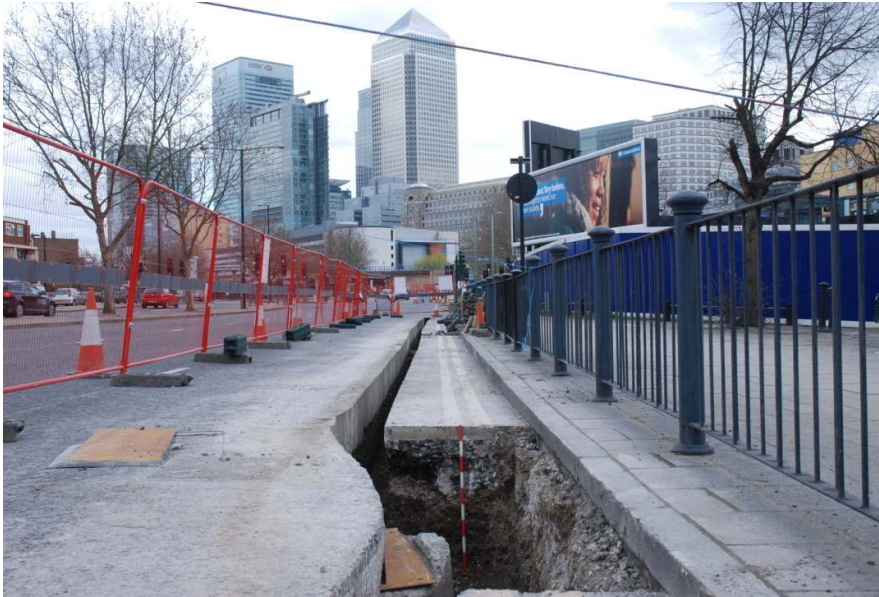


Figure 5: Trenching on the south side of West India Dock Road immediately north of the Westferry Road junction.



Figure 6: Trenching on the north side of West India Dock Road, immediately north of the Birchfield Street junction.

8.2 Birchfield Street

Almost the full length of Birchfield Street was monitored (approximately 140m) as a single open-cut trench adjacent to the eastern kerb-line. Tarmac road surfacing over concrete base was observed to an average depth of 0.35m, overlying varying deposits of probable 19th century made-ground. The composition of these deposits varied along the length but was generally firm dark brown/grey sand silt with scattered pebbles, brick fragments and loose mortar. Concentrated areas of crushed and fragmentary brick were seen outside Birchfield House (Figure 7), while to the north of Pinefield Close the deposits were more mixed with lenses of sand and mortar (Figure 8). Outside the south end of Birchfield House, firm dark-grey silt deposits with occasional gravel was observed, probably representing the reworked top horizon of natural alluvial deposits (Figure 9). No archaeological finds or features were observed during monitoring on Birchfield Street.



Figure 7: Trenching outside Birchfield House showing crushed brick deposits.



Figure 8: Mixed 19th century made-ground deposits to the north of Pinefield Close.



Figure 9: Probably reworked alluvial deposits to the south of Birchfield House.

8.3 Gill Street

Two small trenches totalling 11m of open ground were observed on Gill Street, to the north of the Grenade Street junction and approximately mid-way along the northern stretch of Gill Street outside a small alleyway. The existing ground surface consisted of tarmac over concrete base and concrete paving slabs in sand bedding to an average depth of 0.4m. The northern trench exposed only modern services deposits to the full depth of excavation at 1m below the existing ground surface. The southern trench (immediately north of the Grenade Street junction and railway bridge) exposed recent backfill deposits sealing the truncated remains of a brick wall in the centre of the trench (Figures 10 and 11). The brick wall continued beyond the limit of excavation, some of the brickwork retained render suggesting it is the surviving remnant of a 19th century coal cellar. A further 10m of trenching was observed at the south end of Gill Street extending north from trenching on Limehouse Causeway (Figure 12). The tarmac road surface was exposed overlying granite cobbles and a loose mortar mix to a depth of 0.4m, over modern made-ground and sterile alluvial deposits.



Figure 10: Truncated 19th century cellar wall in trenching on Gill Street.



Figure 11: General view of trench north of Grenade St and the railway bridge.



Figure 12: Trenching at the south end of Gill Street.

8.4 Salter Street

The full length of Salter Street was monitored (approximately 76m) in the form of four launch pits evenly spaced and adjacent to the west kerb line between the junctions with West India Dock Road (north) and Limehouse Causeway (south). The granite cobbled road surface was exposed over a sand bedding and compacted base to a depth of 0.45m (Figure 13). Recent made-ground deposits were exposed below, consisting of mid-dark brown/grey silty clay and sand with scattered gravel and occasional brick flecking. Firm mid-dark greyish silt alluvial deposits were exposed to the base of excavations at c.1.6m below the existing ground level. No archaeological finds or features were observed during monitoring on Salter Street.



Figure 13: Launch pit on Salter Street.

8.5 Rich Street

A single trench measuring c. 35m was monitored on Rich Street running south from the junction with West India Dock Road (Figure 14). Modern tarmac and concrete hardcore were exposed to a depth of 0.45m overlying mid-dark brown silty sand with frequent gravel and occasional brick flecking at a thickness of 0.2m. This deposit probably represents surviving 19th century road consolidation truncated by modern road layers. Natural orange/brown sandy-silt with frequent gravel was observed to the remaining depth of excavation at c. 1.1m below the existing ground level (Figure 15). No archaeological finds or features were observed.



Figure 14: General view of trenching on Rich Street.



Figure 15: Section of trenching on Rich Street.

8.6 Limehouse Causeway

Approximately 147m of trenching was observed on Limehouse Causeway between the junctions with Trinidad Street (east) and Three Colt Street (west). Trenching either side of the Gill Street junction exposed modern tarmac overlying concrete base to a depth of 0.4m. Heavily disturbed made-ground deposits including modern service backfills were observed to c. 0.9m overlying sterile alluvial deposits (Figures 16 and 17). Trenching further east exposed the present road base over comparatively thin made-ground and sterile alluvial deposits to 1.1m (Figures 18 and 19).



Figure 16: Trenching on Limehouse Causeway at the junction with Gill Street.



Figure 17: Section of trenching on Limehouse Causeway at the junction with Gill Street.



Figure 18: Elevated view of trenching on Limehouse Causeway at the junctions with Trinidad St and Salter Street.



Figure 19: Section of trenching on Limehouse Causeway.

8.7 Grenade Street

Approximately 160m of Grenade Street was monitored between the junctions with West India Dock Road (east) and Three Colt Street (west), in the form of 8 trenches and launch pits. The majority of trenches exposed the existing tarmac road surface overlying squared cobbles and concrete hardcore, with modern deposits and services to the full depth of excavation at a maximum of 1.6m. Several trenches exposed orange gravels towards the base of excavations, which is likely to be imported backfill. Two sections of 19th century walls were exposed, at the far west end of Grenade Street (Figure 20) and on the west side of the junction with Rich Street (Figure 21). The first section of brick wall (at the junction with Three Colt Street) was exposed in the north facing section approximately 1.05m below the existing ground level. The wall base survived as a fragmentary single course c.0.25m thickness of very bright orange/red bricks with grey mortar. The bricks were too fragmentary for identification but the fabric indicates early 19th century; the wall is probably a heavily truncated base of an early 19th century cellar wall. The second section of brickwork (west of the Rich St junction) was exposed in the south facing section approximately 0.63m below the existing ground level. The wall survived as five courses of very soft bright yellow London stock bricks with a lime and sand bedding material. The wall had a rounded profile suggesting a possible barrel shaped drain c.19th century. The wall overlay a thin dark soil layer onto orange-gravel at the base of excavations – it was unclear whether this deposit represented natural or ballast and no further excavations were possible. The remaining trench consisted of modern service deposits and made-ground.



Figure 20: Truncated brick work in trenching on Grenade Street at the junction with Three Colt Street.



Figure 21: Truncated yellow-stock brick wall in the south facing section of trenching on Grenade Street at the junction with Rich Street.

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? *Clean, grey silty alluvial deposits were generally exposed in the south and east areas of DMA Finsbury Park 67. Orange/brown sandy and gravelly deposits were exposed in the northern areas. Natural deposits were generally observed at c. 0.9m below the existing ground surfaces, in all cases showing truncated and reworked upper horizons. No organic horizons were encountered.*
- 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? *No evidence for Roman activity was recorded.*
- Is there any evidence for Saxon or early medieval activity, particularly in relation to land reclamation? *No evidence for Saxon or early medieval activity was recorded.*
- What evidence is there for subsequent medieval or early post-medieval development? *The only deposits exposed beyond modern road layers and natural were deposits of early-late 19th century made-ground, and three sections of 19th century brick-work.*
- At what level do archaeological deposits survive in the highways across the area? *19th century made-ground and brickwork were exposed below modern road layers c. 0.5 to 0.7m below the existing ground level.*
- Can the watching brief works inform on the site-specific research questions of local archaeological sites and archaeological priority areas? *No significant archaeological finds or features were observed.*

10. Summary and Conclusions

- 10.1** Approximately 900m of trenching was observed over 7 roads in the area of West India Dock Road, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, within the area defined as DMA Finsbury Park 67. Following the initial monitoring period it was agreed, in consultation with English Heritage, that no further archaeological monitoring was required.
- 10.2** The majority of trenches exposed only modern road layers overlying recent made-ground deposits and service backfills. 19th century made-ground deposits were exposed in several trenches, and three sections of early-late 19th century brickwork were recorded on Grenade Street and Gill Street. Natural alluvial deposits were exposed in the south and east areas, while gravels and sand were exposed to the north.
- 10.3** No significant archaeological finds or features were exposed during the course of the archaeological watching brief.

11. Bibliography

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APPENDIX I: OASIS Data Collection Form

OASIS ID: compassa1-103957

Project details

Project name	Thames Water Victorian mains replacement works in the area of West India Dock Rd, London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Short description of the project	Approximately 900m of trenching was observed during Thames Water mains replacement works in the area of West India Dock Road, London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The majority of trenching exposed only modern road layers overlying modern made-ground and service deposits. Areas of 19th century made-ground were recorded, along with three sections of truncated early-late 19th century brick-work. Alluvial deposits were recorded in the south and east, and natural sand, clay and gravels were recorded to the north.
Project dates	Start: 12-01-2010 End: 19-05-2011
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	TZW10 - 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	WALL Post Medieval
Monument type	DEPOSIT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	N/A None
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 mains replacement works in the area of West India Dock Rd, London Borough of Tower Hamlets (DMA Finsbury Park 67).
Postcode	E14
Study area	0.90 Kilometres
Site coordinates	TQ 3696 8089 51.5098164770 -0.02617268456650 51 30 35 N 000 01 34 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	Geoff Potter
Type of sponsor/funding body	Thames Water Utilities
Name of sponsor/funding body	Thames Water Utilities

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Museum of London archive
Digital Contents	'none'

Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Spreadsheets','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Museum of London Archive
Paper Contents	'none'
Paper Media available	'Map','Miscellaneous Material','Photograph','Report','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Thames Water Victorian mains replacement works in the area of West India Dock Rd, London Borough of Tower Hamlets (DMA Finsbury Park 67): An Archaeological Watching Brief
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	26-page spiral bound report

Entered by	Rosie Cummings (mail@compassarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	23 June 2011

APPENDIX II: London Archaeologist Summary

Site Address:	Thames Water Victorian mains replacement works in the area of West India Dock Rd, London Borough of Tower Hamlets (DMA Finsbury Park 67).
Project type:	Watching brief
Dates of Fieldwork:	12 th January 2010 to 19 th May 2011
Site Code:	TZW10
Supervisor:	Geoff Potter
NGR:	TQ 3696 8089
Funding Body:	Thames Water Utilities Ltd

Approximately 900m of trenching was observed during Thames Water mains replacement works in the area of West India Dock Road, London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The majority of trenching exposed only modern road layers overlying modern made-ground and service deposits. Areas of 19th century made-ground were recorded, along with three sections of truncated early-late 19th century brick-work. Alluvial deposits were recorded in the south and east, and natural sand, clay and gravels were recorded to the north.