

**EAST STREET LIBRARY EXTENSION
168-170 OLD KENT ROAD,
LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK,
SE1 5TY**

A WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

**Site Code: ONT17
Site Location NGR: TQ 33290 78612
Planning Ref: 17/AP/2138**



October 2017

Abstract

Compass Archaeology undertook a watching brief during groundworks at East Street Library, 168-170 Old Kent Road, Southwark, SE1 5TY on the 29th September 2017. The watching brief was commissioned by Southwark Council following advice from the Greater London Archaeological Advisor to Southwark.

The groundworks comprised a borehole and two test pits to investigate the foundations of the existing library building.

The borehole measured 0.2m², the natural Terrace gravels were seen at 0.91mOD and the lowest level reached was -4.09mOD (6.5m).

Pit 1 was located on the SW corner of the library, measuring 0.61m by 0.40m. It was excavated by hand to a depth of 0.78m deep. A small borehole was dug with an auger in the southwestern end of the pit to a depth of c.1.50m (0.92mOD).

Pit 2 was located on the NW corner of the library building, measuring 0.48m by 0.32m. It was fully excavated to 1.05m with an additional investigative borehole dug to 1.5m (0.97mOD).

The stratigraphy visible in the pits was similar, comprising floor tiles and concrete bedding overlying modern made ground. The made ground has been interpreted as rubble resulting from Second World War bombing and subsequent clearance. Finds of ceramic building material (CBM) and glass indicate the deposits date to 1850-1950, commensurate with the above theory.

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document forms a summary of the findings of an archaeological watching brief conducted during groundworks at East Street Library, 168-170 Old Kent Road, London Borough of Southwark, SE1 5TY (fig. 1). The watching brief was a condition of a successful planning application (Ref: 17/AP/2138) to build an extension to the library.

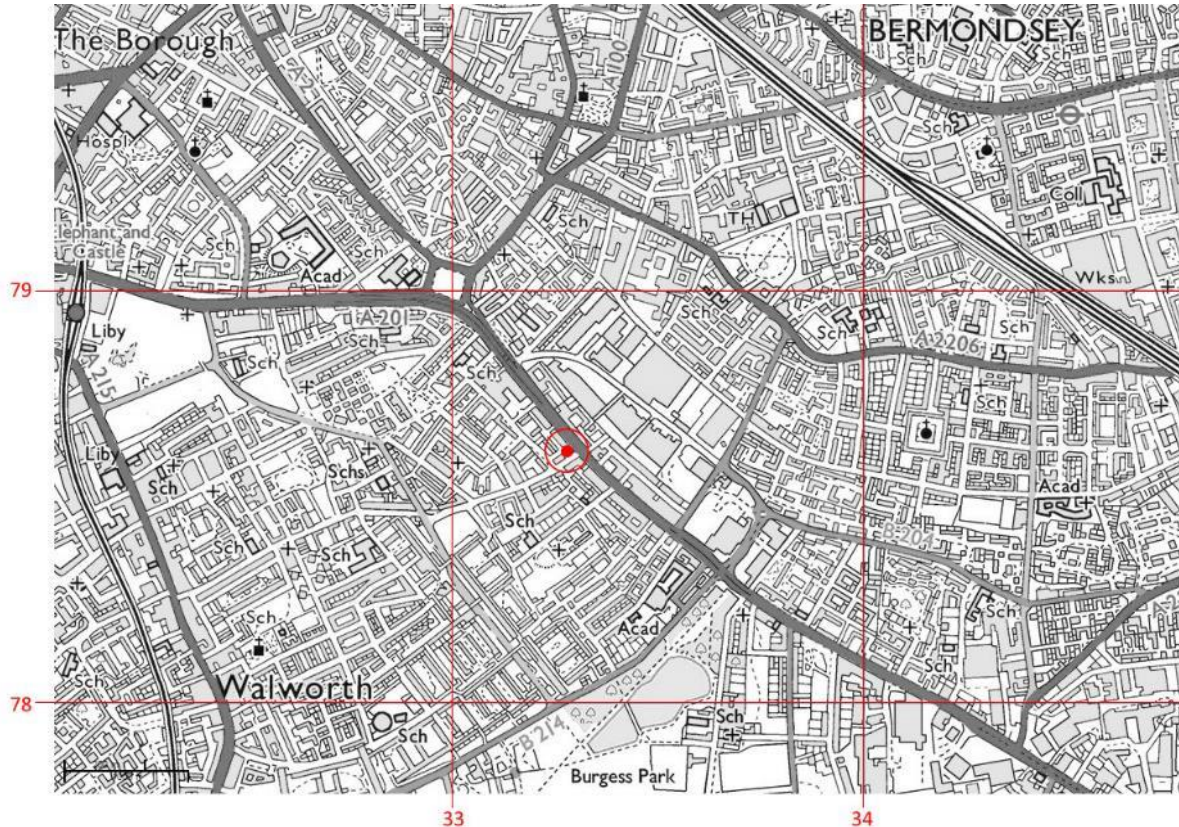


Figure 1: Site location, marked in red. Reproduced from OS data with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of HMSO.

- 1.2 The watching brief was commissioned by Southwark Council following advice from the Greater London Archaeological Advisor to Southwark. The watching brief was deemed necessary due to the site's location within the Old Kent Road North Archaeological Priority Zone, as it presented an opportunity to further knowledge in regards to the archaeological nature of the area.

2 SITE LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.1 The site is located at the eastern end of East Street, at the junction with Old Kent Road. The library covers a single-storey area at the southern end of a large block comprising commercial and residential units. The study site lies to the west of the existing library building, and covers approximately 83 square metres.
- 2.2 According to the British Geological Survey (Sheet 270, South London) the site sits within a large expanse of Kempton Park Gravels, overlying alluvium to the north and bounded by Langley Silt, with pockets of Kempton Park Gravels to the south. An isolated pocket of peat sits to the north-west, towards Elephant and Castle (fig.3).

- 2.3** The site is relatively level, at approximately 2.3 – 2.4mOD, with East Street and Old Kent Road sitting at a similar height.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1** The archaeological and historical background of the site and its environs was discussed extensively in an accompanying Desk Based Assessment (Compass Archaeology 2016) and Written Scheme of Investigation (Compass Archaeology 2017), both commissioned as part of the planning process and shall therefore not be reproduced here. A short overview of the history of the site area will be presented below.
- 3.2** The land on which the site is situated was predominantly marshy during the prehistoric period, though a number of finds along Old Kent Road may imply that its Roman predecessor, the Iter III may have had prehistoric origins. The area was likely heavily frequented during the Roman period due to the existence of the road, with wall foundations, building masonry and pottery fragments dating to the Roman period found along Old Kent Road.
- 3.3** There is little evidence of significant medieval activity in the vicinity of the site, limited to a rubbish pit and agricultural dumps which produced two pot sherds at the northern end of Old Kent Road. The site remained open land for much of the post-medieval period, becoming built up with terraced housing in the 18th century, when East Street was constructed. The area around the site was moderately damaged during the Second World War resulting in extensive clearance and remodelling. The existing East Street Library building was opened in the 1960s.

4 RESULTS

- 4.1** The watching brief took place on 29th September 2017, conducted during groundworks at East Street Library comprising two test pits and a borehole (fig. 2). The two test pits were hand excavated.
- 4.2 Borehole**
- 4.2.1** The borehole measured 0.2m², dug by hand to 0.83m then by mechanical auger to 6.5m deep (-4.09mOD; fig. 3). The borehole was not dug as deep as intended due to the presence of a limestone fault running across the site that they could not drill through.
- 4.2.2** The stratigraphy seen in the borehole comprised paving slabs bedded in yellow sand (0.19m thick) overlying orange sandy gravel (0.25m thick). There was a layer of black silty clay underlying this to the base of the hand-dug section. Some brick fragments and one pot sherd were recovered from this layer, dated to 1650-1900 (Appendix I). The natural was encountered at 0.91mOD (1.5m below surface level), comprising red-brown Terrace gravels.

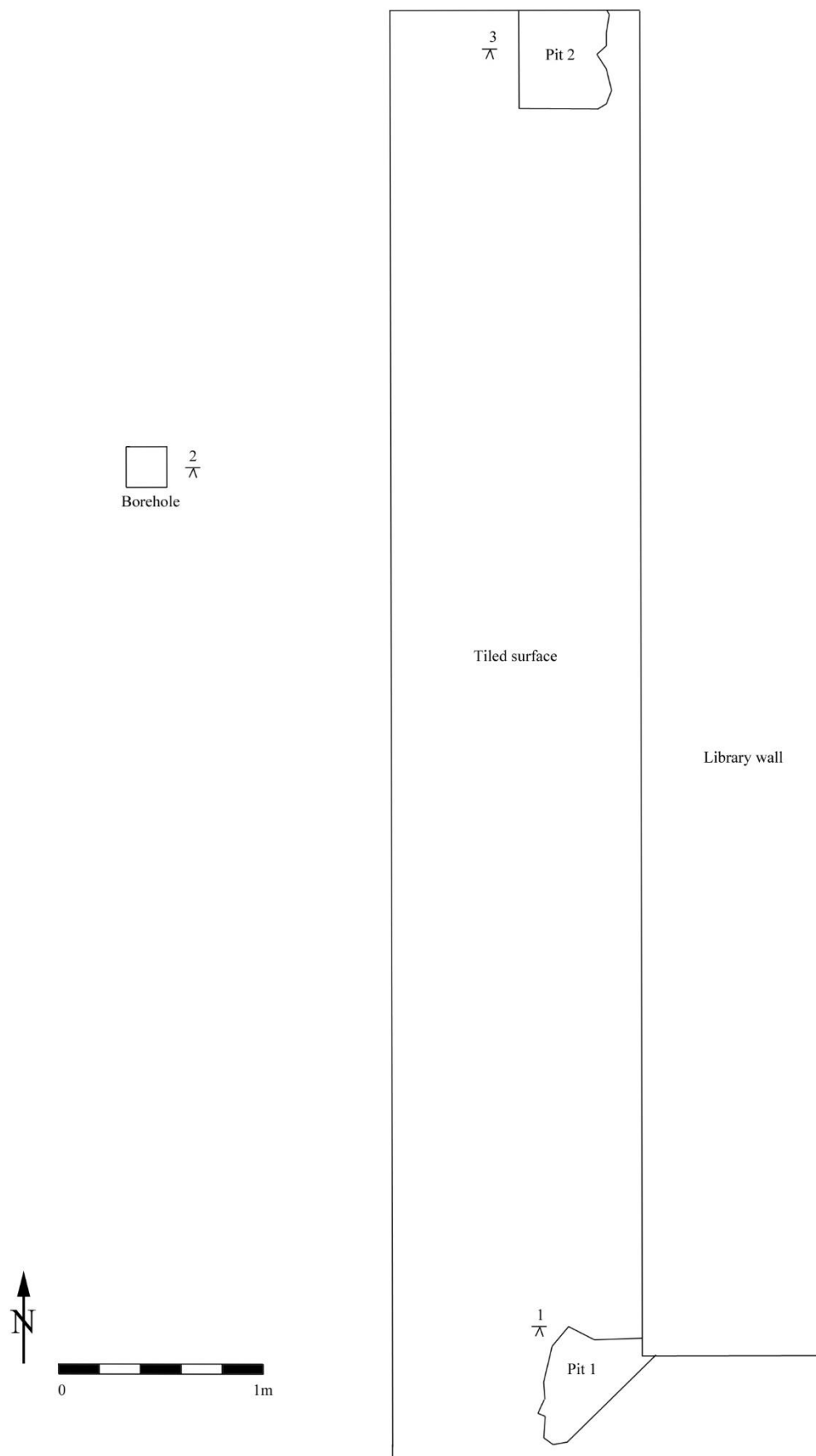


Figure 2: Plan of the groundworks on site. Original drawn at 1:20



Figure 3: Borehole. Scale 0.2m

4.3 Pit 1

4.3.1 Pit 1 was located on the SW corner of the library, measuring 0.61m by 0.40m. It was excavated by hand to a depth of 0.78m deep. A small borehole was dug with an auger in the southwestern end of the pit to a depth of c.1.50m (0.92mOD) to investigate the concrete foundations of the library (fig. 4).

4.3.2 The stratigraphy seen in pit 1 is as follows, listed in stratigraphic order from the surface level down:

Context	Description	Thickness (m)
(1)	Cream coloured square ceramic tile and concrete bedding	0.14
(2)	Brown silty modern made ground with frequent inclusions of brick, stone, concrete, clinker and glass	0.62
(3)	Dark brown silty clay with one small bone inclusion. Composition remains the same but colour gets paler brown further down- visible <0.75m below ground surface	0.75

The natural was not encountered in the pit.

- 4.3.3** Two glass 1/3rd pint milk bottles were recovered from (2), along with some ceramic building material (CBM). These bottles were dated to 1946-1971. The CBM is post-medieval, dating to 1850-1950 (Appendix I).



Figure 4: Pit 1. Scale 0.8m

4.4 Pit 2

4.4.1 Pit 2 was located on the NW corner of the library building, measuring 0.48m by 0.32m. It was fully excavated to 1.05m with an additional investigative borehole dug to 1.5m (0.97mOD) to again investigate the existing library foundations (fig. 5).

4.4.2 The stratigraphy in pit 2 was similar to that seen in pit 1, listed below in stratigraphic order from the surface level down:

Context number	Description	Thickness (m)
(1)	Cream coloured square ceramic tile and concrete bedding	0.17
(4)	Yellow-brown sandy silt with frequent stone and concrete inclusions	0.24
(2)	Brown silty modern made ground with frequent inclusions of brick, stone, concrete, clinker and glass	0.64
(3)	Dark brown silty with no inclusions. Visible <1.05m below ground surface	<0.45

The natural geology was not encountered in the pit.

4.4.3 Some CBM fragments were recovered from (2), dated to 1870-1950 (Appendix I). This date fits with the theory that the deposits are rubble from the terraced houses (built early 1800s), resulting from bomb damage.



Figure 5: Pit 2. Scale 0.4m

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The watching brief gave us the opportunity to answer the following research questions, laid out in the preceding WSI.
- 5.2 Is there any evidence of roadside activity associated with the earlier phases of the Old Kent Road, particularly prehistoric to medieval?

There was no evidence of any roadside activity dating from the prehistoric to the medieval period.

- 5.3 Is there any evidence of the post-medieval redevelopment of the area? What form does this take?

There was limited evidence of the redevelopment of the area in the post-medieval period. The majority of the fill from both pits was modern made ground, context (2), which contained frequent CBM fragments, some showed evidence of burning. The CBM was dated to the 19th and 20th centuries and has been associated with the

destruction of the area during the Second World War. It is likely that this rubble was used to build up and level the ground surface during the construction of the existing buildings.

- 5.4** Can any of the surviving archaeological stratigraphy be attributed to a specific even, e.g. the terraced housing previously on the site, the Second World War bombing or post-war redevelopment?

The made ground, context (2) was likely a result of the Second World War bombing that affectively destroyed the terraced housing that was on the site previously. The CBM fragments and other rubble potentially came from the terraces, left behind by the site clearance after the War and deposited in the 1960s when the existing buildings were constructed.

- 5.5** At what level does archaeology survive at across the site?

The archaeology was visible from approximately 2.10-2.06mOD.

- 5.6** At what level is natural ground present and what form does this take?

The natural ground was only visible in the borehole, seen at a level of 0.91mOD, comprising red-brown Terrace gravels.

6 SOURCES

Compass Archaeology, (2016), *East Street Library Extension 168-170 Old Kent Road, London Borough of Southwark, SE1 5TY: An archaeological Desk Based Assessment*

Compass Archaeology, (2017), *East Street Library Extension 168-170 Old Kent Road, London Borough of Southwark, SE1 5TY: A Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

APPENDIX I: FINDS

CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL by Sue Pringle and Miranda Fulbright

Several fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) were retrieved from context (2) in pits 1 and 2, and three fragments from the black silty fill in the borehole. The vitrification and appearance of burning on many of the fragments would indicate they were damaged as a result of Second World War bombing, something that heavily affected the area around the site. The material recovered was a mix of brick and building tile, probably belonging to the terraced housing that occupied the site before the post-war clearance and re-development.

The assemblage was examined at the Compass Archaeology office and recorded on *pro-forma* record sheets. The table below reproduces these observations.

Key:

PM= post-medieval

L= length, B= breadth & T= thickness

All measurements are given in (mm), all weights in (g)

A	=	Abraded
H	=	Heat-cracked
M	=	Mortar present
Rd	=	Reduced
Ru	=	Re-used
S	=	Sooted
V	=	Vitrified

Context	Context Date	Period	Fabric	Form	Count	Weight	L	B	T	Condition	Comments	Date for type
(2) pit 1	1880-1950	PM	3932?	Brick	1	3057	220	107	68	V	Rectangular frog 170x60x11mm deep, with stamp: 2 linked diamonds with 'O' and 'B' (or R?). Imprint of 2 screw heads in diagonally opposite corners of frog. Weighed wet. Brick has flat surfaces and sharp arises.	1880-1950?
(2) pit 1	1880-1950	PM	?	Brick	1	948	165+	64+	67	S, M	Flake, shallow frog. Weighed wet.	1750-1850
(2) pit 1	1880-1950	PM	3047	Brick	1	1162	155+	117	42	A, M	Wide brick, paving? Lime mortar on broken edge. Weighed wet.	1700-1900
(2) pit 1	1880-1950	PM	3033	Brick	1	3	0	0	0	M	Flake. Shallow frog, weighed wet.	1450-1700
(2) pit 1	1880-1950	PM	3038	Brick	1	38	0	0	0	-	Flake	1850-1950
(2) pit 1	1880-1950	PM	2276	Peg?	1	22	0	0	12	S?	Surface sooted. Slightly concave – possibly pantile but thickness more typical of peg.	1480-1900
(2) pit 2	1870-1950	PM	3032	Brick	2	116	0	0	0	A, Rd, M	2 flakes, flat surfaces and sharp arises	1800-1950
(2) pit 2	1870-1950	PM	3500	Brick	1	75	0	0	0	V, Rd	Very vitrified	1450-1950
(2) pit 2	1870-1950	PM	?	Tarmac?	1	90	0	0	0	Rd	Heavy lump of black tarry material, smells of pitch. Road building material?	1900-2000
(2) pit 2	1870-1950	PM	2276	Peg	1	53	0	0	0	S	Underside sooted	1480-1900
(2) pit 2	1870-1950	PM	2276	Pipe	1	119	0	0	15	-	Extruded terracotta pipe, both surfaces smooth. External diameter c.150mm	1870-1950
(2) pit 2	1870-1950	PM	?	Pipe	2	297	0	0	0	-	Salt-glazed stoneware pipes, a) female rim c.260mm diam. b) male rim, c.140mm diam.	1850-1950
(2) pit 2	1870-1950	PM	3114M	Slab	1	90	0	0	31	A	Fragment Carrara Marble slab, no original edges. Paving slab or furniture?	1650-1950
Borehole	1650-1900	PM	3032	Brick	2	149	0	0	0	Rd, V, M	2 flakes burnt brick	1650-1900
Borehole	1650-1900	PM	2275	Pantile	1	40	0	0	13	S	Thin pantile	1630-1900
Borehole	1650-1900	PM	2276	Peg?	1	7	0	0	0	A, M	flake	1480-1850

MISCELLANEOUS FINDS *by Miranda Fulbright*

Pottery:

One pot sherd was recovered from the black silty fill in the borehole. It has been identified as mass-produced whiteware, dated to 1800-1950, weighing 2g.

Glass:

Context	Form	Count	Weight (g)	Comments
(2) pit 1	Bottle	2	496	1/3 rd pint milk bottles, clear glass. Machine made 20 th century. Embossed on side with 'SAFETY FIRST MILK ASSN' in triangular logo. One has 'A505/AZ 2 .F.G.C' embossed on base.
(2) pit 1	Fragment	1	42	Thick flat fragment of clear glass. 20 th century.

The logo on the milk bottles was used by United Dairies who operated creameries and dairies around the south of England and London, and indicated that the milk was pasteurised (popularised in 1930s). Since the bottles are only 1/3rd pint they have been associated with The School Milk Act, a scheme that was introduced in 1946 to provide free milk to school children. The scheme was ended in 1971, therefore the bottles probably date between 1946 and 1971.



Figure 6: Glass bottles from pit 2. Scale 0.1m

Animal bone:

One fragment of animal bone was retrieved from context (3) in pit 1. The fragmented bone is unidentifiable beyond that it is a long bone shaft fragment, from a small mammal or domestic bird.

APPENDIX II: OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

OASIS ID: [compassa1-297331](#)

Project details

Project name	East Street Library Extension, 168-170 Old Kent Road, Southwark, SE1 5TY
Short description of the project	On the 29th September 2017, Compass Archaeology undertook a watching brief during groundworks to investigate the area ahead of the library extension. Site code ONT17. Two small test pits and a borehole were excavated by hand and mechanical breaker and drill. The borehole reached natural Terrace gravels at 1.5m (0.91mOD) and bottomed at 6.5m (-4.09mOD) due to the presence of a limestone fault. Pit 1 was located on the SW corner of the library, measuring 0.61m by 0.40m and fully opened to 0.78m deep. A small borehole was dug to a depth of c.1.50m (0.92mOD) to investigate the concrete foundations of the library. Pit 2 was located on the NW corner of the library building, measuring 0.48m by 0.32m. It was fully excavated to 1.05m and a borehole dug to 1.5m (0.97mOD) to again investigate the existing foundations. The stratigraphy of both pits was similar, comprising floor tiles with concrete bedding (135-175mm thick) overlying modern made ground with frequent brick, concrete, clinker and glass inclusions. The natural was not reached in the pits.
Project dates	Start: 29-09-2017 End: 29-09-2017
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	ONT17 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 11 - Thoroughfare
Current Land use	Other 11 - Thoroughfare
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON SOUTHWARK SOUTHWARK East Street Library, 168-170 Old Kent Road
Postcode	SE1 5TY
Study area	83 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 33290 78612 51.49022277674 -0.079892112244 51 29 24 N 000 04 47 W Point

Height OD / Depth	Min: 1.5m Max: 1.5m
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Project creators

Name of Organisation	Compass Archaeology
Project brief originator	Senior Archaeology Officer, LB of Southwark
Project design originator	Compass Archaeology
Project director/manager	Geoff Potter
Project supervisor	Geoff Potter
Type of sponsor/funding body	Borough Council
Name of sponsor/funding body	Southwark Council

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Museum of London archaeological archive
Physical Contents	"Ceramics", "Glass", "other"
Digital Archive recipient	Museum of London Archaeological Archive
Digital Contents	"Ceramics", "Glass", "other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Museum of London Archaeological Archive
Paper Contents	"Ceramics", "Glass", "other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Photograph", "Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	East Street Library Extension, 168-170 Old Kent Road, Southwark, SE1 5TY: An archaeological watching brief report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Fulbright, M.
Date	2017
Issuer or publisher	Compass Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	250 York Road, London, SW11 3SJ
Description	A short report detailing the findings of an archaeological watching brief, including photographs, a site plan and finds analysis.
Entered by	Miranda Fulbright (miranda@compassarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	4 October 2017