# THAMES WATER ENGINEERING WORKS IN STOCKLEY PARK, 89 CG – CORWELL LANE, UXBRIDGE, UB8

## LONDON BOROUGH OF HILLINGDON

## AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

**July 2008**

COMPASS ARCHAEOLOGY

# THAMES WATER ENGINEERING WORKS IN STOCKLEY PARK

89 CG – CORWELL LANE, UXBRIDGE, UB8

LONDON BOROUGH OF HILLINGDON

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

SITE CODE: SKX 08

NGR: TQ 8080 81137 (NORTHWEST),
TQ 08360 80891 (SOUTHEAST)

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***Abstract***

*This report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken between 12th February and 28th May 2008 during groundworks in Stockley Park, adjacent to the Harlington Road, in the London Borough of Hillingdon. The groundworks formed part of a Thames Water engineering scheme to resolve both foul and surface water drainage problems in the Corwell Lane area.*

*The works consisted of initial topsoil stripping to form an easement, followed by open cut trenching for a 600mm diameter surface water sewer at depths of between 2m and 3m below the current ground level with eight 1500mm diameter manholes along its course. The section of the scheme archaeologically monitored covers a distance of some 380m within Stockley Park, adjacent to Harlington Road.*

*Stockley Park is an area of high historical importance, excavations in 1985 recovered several Palaeolithic flakes, a single Neolithic flakes and sherds of Fengate Ware. A small unenclosed Iron Age settlement is known to have been situated within the park area, in the form of four circular huts and post-built granary structures. Associated with these features were frequent pottery artefacts, plus other finds including loom weights, metal slag and carbonised cereal grain. Investigation near the junction of Harlington Road and Corwell Lane has produced pottery and a flint scraper of probable Bronze Age date.*

*This area of the Thames Water works in Stockley Park is known historically as the 'horse ride' and excavations revealed mid brown clayey topsoil overlain by dumped deposits containing some wood and brick fragments and other modern inclusions in places. The natural River Terrace Gravel was observed at depths of between 1.2m and 1.8m and ranged from slightly gravely sandy clay to a sandy or very clayey gravel.*

*No archaeological finds or features were recorded during the watching brief and the whole watching brief area had been truncated mineral workings and the area subsequently used for the dumping of twentieth century landfill deposits.*

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## 1. Introduction

**1.1** This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken between 12th February and 28th May 2008, during groundworks as part of the Thames Water engineering works in Stockley Park, adjacent to Harlington Road, in the London Borough of Hillingdon.

**1.2** The scheme ran along Corwell Lane and included a new surface water sewer dug eastwards on the line of Harlington Road. The latter section involved pipe trenching just to the south of the road and within Stockley Park, largely following the existing horse ride. The section of proposed pipe route in Stockley Park was located approximately between TQ 08080 81137 in the northwest and TQ 08360 80891 in the southeast, an overall length of some 380m (*cf.* fig 1).

**1.3** Stockley Park was considered to have particular potential for prehistoric remains, and as a result English Heritage recommended that this part of the scheme should be subject to an archaeological watching brief.

**1.4** The archaeological watching brief was commissioned by Jonathan Taylor, Ecology and Heritage Team Leader at Thames Water Utilities. Kim Stabler at English Heritage monitored the archaeological programme on behalf of the London Borough of Hillingdon. Further assistance was provided by the on-site staff from Barhale, in particular the site agent Bill Mercer, and the engineering team at Thames Water.

## 2. Site Location and Geology

**2.1** The section of proposed pipe route in Stockley Park was located approximately between TQ 08080 81137 in the northwest and TQ 08360 80891 in the southeast. This area is fairly level, between about 41.0m and 42.5m OD, and rising slightly to the northwest. Topographically the site lies between two principal (and roughly north-south) watercourses, the River Colne to the west and the Yeading Brook to the east.

**2.2** A recent borehole survey in this area revealed the natural River Terrace Gravel at depths of between 1.2m and 1.8m (*Structural Soils, Job No. 720467;* July 07). This deposit ranged from slightly gravely sandy clay to a sandy or very clayey gravel.

The natural Terrace was overlain by a generally light brown slightly silty sand to sandy clay, and thence in two areas by a gravely clay. The upper levels here contained some brick fragments and other modern inclusions, and were sealed by some 200mm to 400mm of topsoil and turf.

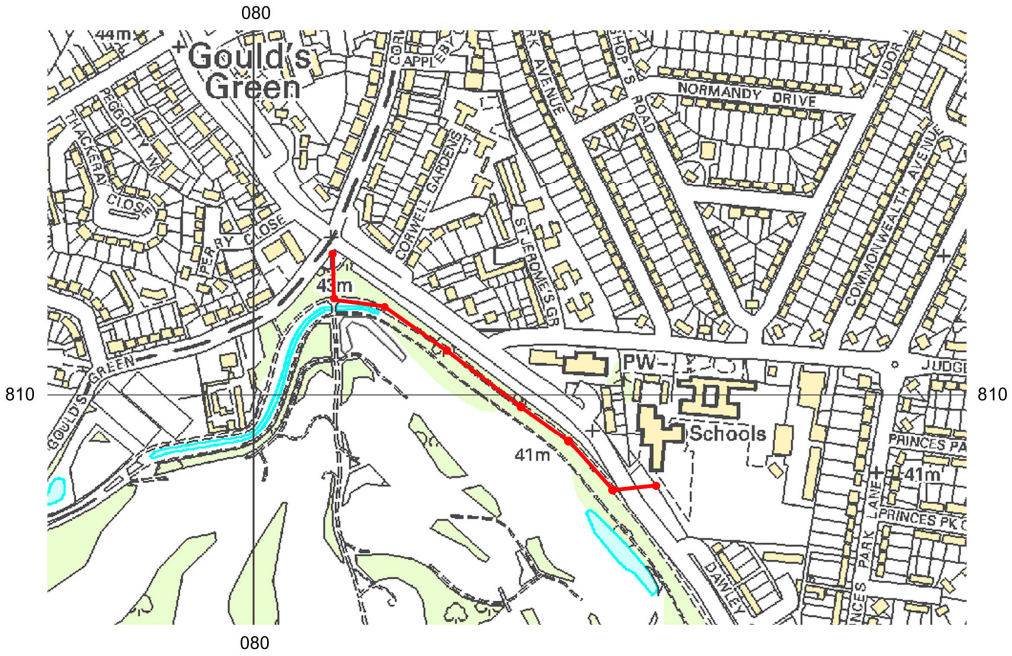


**Fig 1**: Site location based on the current Ordnance Survey map, showing the new sewer line (red).



## 3. Archaeological and Historical Background

**3.1** There are a number of references to prehistoric activity in the site area, likely to be associated with the gravel River Terraces.

Archaeological excavation in 1985 to the south of the present site revealed a wide range of prehistoric evidence (site code SPD85; located at TQ 083 808). There was some Palaeolithic and Neolithic struck flint, as well as pottery (possibly Fengate ware) from the later period. More significant however were the remains of a small unenclosed Iron Age settlement, containing four hut circles and several post-built granary structures. Associated with these features there was frequent pottery, plus other finds including loom weights, metal slag and carbonised cereal grain.

A further investigation near the junction of Harlington Road and Corwell Lane has produced pottery and a flint scraper of probable Bronze Age date (site code GGN94; located at TQ 0803 8112).

**3.2** There does not appear to be much evidence for subsequent (Roman to medieval) activity in the immediate vicinity. Historic maps show the small settlement of Goulds Green immediately to the north, with Harlington Road representing the historic route to Harlington and Cranford (*cf.* Figure 2). The 1806 map also shows that the present site area in Stockley Park lay within open land, although it does indicate a couple of field boundaries crossing the proposed pipe route.

More recently there is evidence for extensive disturbance and gravel extraction within the Park, although it was not known if this extended right to the boundary with Harlington Road. Certainly there was no suggestion of this in BH1 (*cf.* section 2.2 above), which records River Terrace deposits at a depth of 1.2m.


**Fig 2:** 1806 Ordnance Survey map with the trench route marked in green.

## 4. Archaeological Research Questions

The fieldwork presented an opportunity to address several research questions:

- Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, either *in situ* features or residual finds? How does this relate to previous finds in the area?

- Is there any evidence for Roman to early post-medieval activity, and can the nature of this be defined (*eg,* settlement or agricultural land use)?

- Is there any evidence for later post-medieval activity, and what is the nature of this (for example, field boundaries or more recent extraction works)?

## 5. The Archaeological Programme

### 5.1 Standards

The field and post-excavation work was carried out in accordance with English Heritage guidelines (in particular, *Standards and Practices in*

*Archaeological Fieldwork, Guidance Paper 3*). Works also conformed 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 the recording and drawing sheets used were directly compatible with those developed by the Museum.

## 5.2 Fieldwork

### 5.2.1 Attendance

The archaeological watching brief took place during groundworks to the south of Harlington Road and within Stockley Park. Works were monitored so that any surviving archaeological features or finds could be investigated, identified and recorded.

It was understood that the groundworks would include open-cut trench excavation and occasional larger pits for manholes. The proposed depth of excavation (*c* 2m to 3m), in conjunction with the borehole record, indicated that the works would cut through any potential archaeological layers and into the natural River Terrace.

The basic watching brief required one archaeologist on site to monitor works and to investigate any potential archaeological features. It was agreed that if remains were exposed adequate time should be allowed for investigation and recording, although in the event there was no disruption to the works programme.

### 5.2.2 Methodology

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

Potentially, archaeological deposits and features were recorded as appropriate on *pro-forma* trench sheets. 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 &/or digital).

## 6. Post-Excavation Work

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

## 6.1 Finds and Samples

No significant finds or samples were discovered during the course of the watching brief, and thus no finds or samples were retained.

## 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 placed in the Museum of London Archaeological Archive as part of the ongoing programme of archive deposition. Only a paper and digital archive will be deposited. No significant finds were recovered from the watching brief.

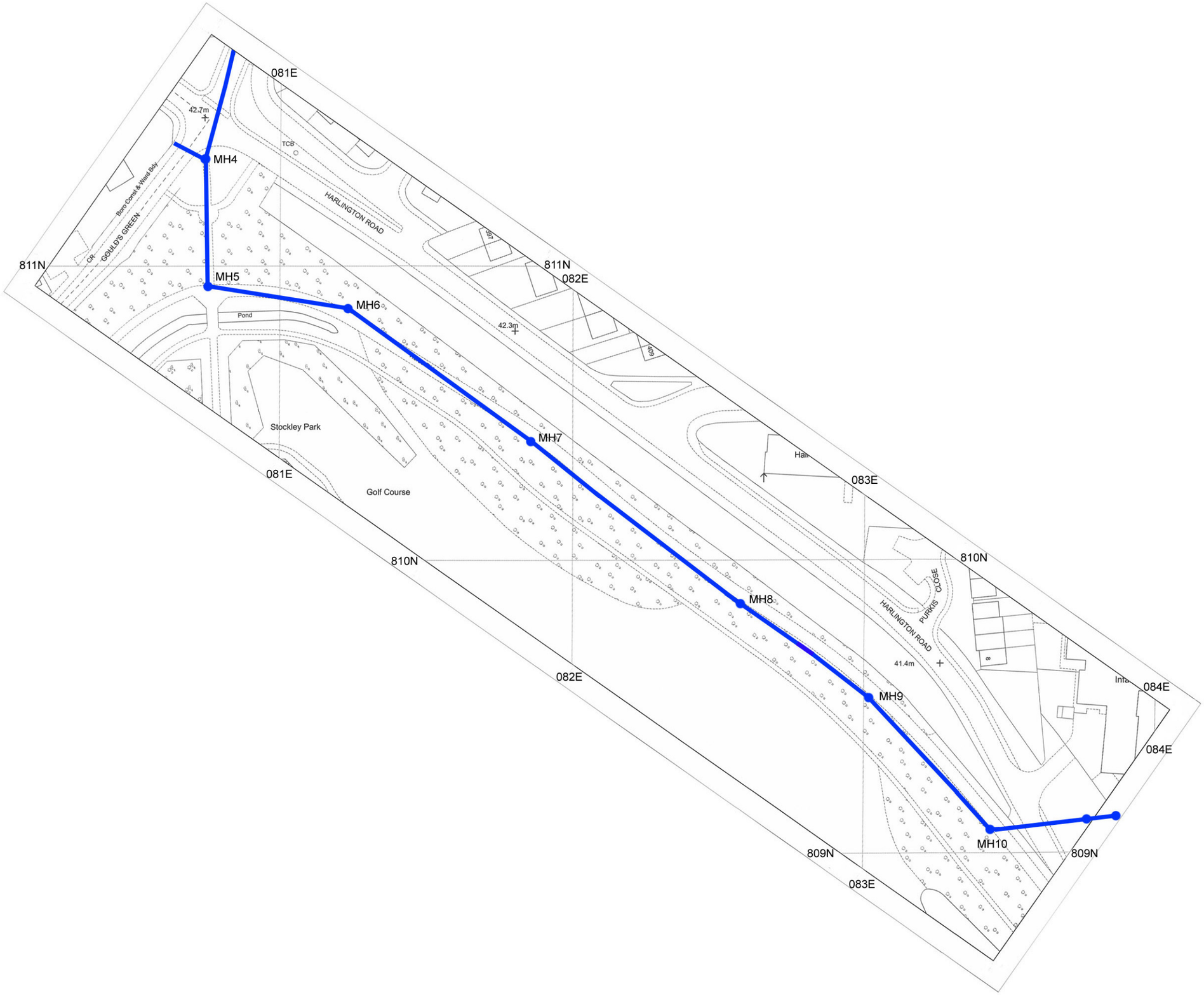


**Fig 3:** Site plan showing the position of the manholes and the new pipe trench in relation to the current OS map.

## 8. The Archaeological Watching Brief

### 8.1 Topsoil Stripping of the Pipe Line Easement

**Fig 4**: General view looking northwest from the area of manhole No.10.

The topsoil stripping works took place along the course of the 'horse ride', which runs along the northeast side of Stockley Park and ends at the entrance onto Goulds Green, near the junction with Harlington Road. The area that was initially stripped was 380m in length and 9m wide. The sewer ran south from the junction between Goulds Green and Harlington Road, south into Stockley Park and then turned southeast along the horse ride that runs parallel to Harlington Road before turning east across the road and ending at manhole No.11 in the grounds of Wood End Juniors and Infants School.

Preliminary stripping of the horse ride revealed a rich friable mid brown organic topsoil which was recorded to a depth of 0.2m, beneath which lay a mid brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecking, modern pottery and flint nodules, moderate CBM (ceramic building material) fragments and frequent small stones and plastic debitage. An irregular brick spread was observed at some points where the depth increased slightly although it did not exceed 0.5m. This

**Fig 5:** General view looking southeast of the 'horse ride' after the completion of the preliminary topsoil stripping.

spread was not structural, but forms part of the on-site dumping that was recorded throughout the site.

## 8.2 Open Cut Trench Excavation

Open cut trenching commenced from the southern end of the horse ride at manhole No.10 (see Fig 3). Construction of the manholes involved excavation of a trench, 3m wide and 4m long on a northeast to southwest alignment, these trenches were then monitored for any archaeological finds or features. A mid brown silty clay deposit with broken brick rubble, CBM and flint gravel inclusions was observed to a depth of 0.55m. This deposit overlay 0.75m of greyish-metallic blue clay dumped landfill deposits. Its colour reflects chemical leaching within the soil as a result of the dumping which took place over time within this area. A variety of dumped materials were observed within this deposit including wooden boards, plastic, modern pottery and broken brick rubble. The grey clay deposit overlay 0.8m of brownish yellow natural clay with flint gravel inclusions to a depth of 2.9m.


**Fig 6**: Two trench boxes north of manhole No.10 with the shored up manhole trench in the foreground.

Extending northwest from manhole No.10 the pipe trench was also excavated to a depth of 3m. The same stratigraphic sequence was observed within all the sections of pipe trench that were monitored. However, as trenching progressed northwards the stratigraphic sequence changed and the upper deposits became increasingly truncated. Between manholes No.7 and 8, the upper deposit had completely disappeared leaving only a grey clay deposit with blue mottling and wood and brick inclusions. Beneath this deposit, at 1.6m lay a yellow natural soil with flint inclusions, which was recorded to the base of the trench, 3m below the current ground level.

**Figs 7 & 8:** East facing section of the north end of the pipe trench, showing the dumped deposits of brick, wood and other refuse material (top) and northeast facing section of the pipe trench from the area around manhole No.8 (bottom).

Towards the northernmost area of trenching, at the site entrance, trenching became shallower. Manhole No.6 was situated immediately south of the northernmost end of the pipe trench, where it turns north towards the junction of Goulds Green and Harlington Road (*cf.* figure 3) and was recorded as measuring 3m in length and 2m in width and excavated to a depth of 3m (*cf.* figure 9). At the apex of the aforementioned corner was the site of manhole No.5 (*cf.* figure 3). Stratigraphically, this area of excavation differed to previous areas and was made up of a brown grey deposit of sand and gravel, beneath which a mixed made ground deposit was visible, made up of broken

brick rubble. At the base of the trench lay a light brown clay deposit with black mottling through it and wood and modern pottery inclusions. This trench was recorded as being 2m wide by 3m in length. However, unlike the previous manhole trenches, manhole No.5 was only excavated to a depth of 1.2m and natural gravel was not encountered (*cf*. figure 10).

**Fig 9:** Area of open cut trenching between manhole No.5 and 6 from the northwest.

**Fig 10:** View of manhole No.5 looking south.

## 9. Summary and Conclusions

### 9.1 Assessment of the results of the watching brief

The archaeological evaluation has provided an opportunity to address the site-specific objectives that were defined within the preliminary Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief. The responses to these are outlined below:

- *Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, either in situ or residual finds? How does this relate to previous finds in the area?*

No evidence for prehistoric activity was observed either *in situ* or residually in the course of this watching brief.

- *Is there any evidence for Roman to early post-medieval activity, and can the nature of this be defined (e.g. settlement or agricultural land use)?*

No evidence for Roman, Saxon, or early medieval activity was observed in the course of this watching brief.

- *Is there any evidence for the later post-medieval activity, and what is the nature of this (e.g. field boundaries or more recent extraction works)?*

Deposits of dumped material were observed beneath the topsoil containing a variety of 19$^{th}$ and 20$^{th}$ century refuse materials such as, plastic, wood, broken brick and sherds of pottery. These deposits presumably occur within the area of previous gravel extraction and represent modern landfill deposits.

### 9.2 Summary of Archaeological Results

No significant archaeological finds or features were exposed during the course of the watching brief. The exposed sequence of deposits observed during the monitoring consisted of topsoil overlying two clay based dumped deposits consisting of late 19$^{th}$ and 20$^{th}$ century refuse material that lay between 0.2m and 1.6m below the original ground surface. Between 1.2m and 1.8m, natural clay and gravel deposits were observed, with frequent flint nodules in some locations. All the deposits derived from the dumping of refuse material over which Stockley Park was created, presumably within a previous gravel extraction pit which had subsequently been used for landfill.

## Appendix I: OASIS Data Collection Form

### OASIS ID: compassa1-46331

**Project details**

| | |
|---|---|
| Project name | Thames Water Engineering works in Stockley Park, 89CG - Corwell Lane, Uxbridge, UB8 |
| Short description of the project | Archaeological watching brief on new sewer works within Stockley Park, Corwell Lane, Uxbridge, London Borough of Hillingdon. The works consisted of initial topsoil stripping and subsequent pipe-trench and manhole excavations through open cut trenching. The section of the scheme archaeologically monitored covers a distance of some 380m within Stockley Park, adjacent to Harlington Road. The sewer pipe was of 600mm diameter and lay in an open cut trench 2.8-3m below the current ground surface with eight 1500mm diameter manholes along its course. No archaeological finds or features were recorded during the watching brief and the whole watching brief area had been truncated by mineral workings and subsequently the area used for the dumping of twentieth century landfill. |
| Project dates | Start: 12-02-2008 End: 28-05-2008 |
| Previous/future work | No / No |
| Any associated project reference codes | SKX08 - Sitecode |
| Type of project | Recording project |
| Site status | None |
| Current Land use | Other 14 - Recreational usage |
| Monument type | NONE None |
| Monument type | NONE None |
| Significant Finds | NONE None |
| Investigation type | 'Watching Brief' |
| Prompt | Water Act 1989 and subsequent code of practice |

**Project location**

| | |
|---|---|
| Country | England |
| Site location | GREATER LONDON HILLINGDON HAYES Thames Water Engineering works in Stockley Park, 89CG - Corwell Lane, Uxbridge, Hillingdon, UB11 |
| Postcode | UB8 |
| Study area | 0.38 Kilometres |
| Site coordinates | TQ 08080 81137 51.5183119388 -0.442119600359 51 31 05 N 000 26 31 W Point |
| Site coordinates | TQ 08360 80891 51.5160468846 -0.438160902222 51 30 57 N 000 26 17 W Point |
| Height OD | Min: 41.00m Max: 42.50m |

## Project creators

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of Organisation | Compass Archaeology |
| Project brief originator | English Heritage/Department of Environment |
| Project design originator | Compass Archaeology |
| Project director/manager | Compass Archaeology |
| Project supervisor | Jonathan Henckert |
| 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 | 'Stratigraphic','Survey' |
| Digital Media available | 'Survey','Text' |
| Paper Archive recipient | Museum of London Archive |
| Paper Contents | 'Stratigraphic','Survey','none' |
| Paper Media available | 'Drawing','Map','Photograph','Plan','Report' |

## Project bibliography 1

| | |
|---|---|
| Publication type | Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript) |
| Title | Thames Water Engineering works, Stockley Park, 89CG - Corwell Lane, Uxbridge, Hillingdon, UB8 |
| Author(s)/Editor(s) | Henckert, J |
| Date | 2008 |
| Issuer or publisher | Compass Archaeology |
| Place of issue or publication | Compass Archaeology |
| Entered by | Jonathan Henckert (mail@compassarchaeology.co.uk) |
| Entered on | 31 July 2008 |

**Appendix II: London Archaeologist Summary**

| | |
|---|---|
| Site Address: | Stockley Park, 89CG – Corwell Lane, Uxbridge, London Borough of Hillingdon, UB8 |
| Project type: | Watching brief. |
| Dates of Fieldwork: | 12 February 2008 – 28 May 2008 |
| Site Code: | SKX08 |
| Supervisor: | Jonathan Henckert |
| NGR: | TQ 8080 81137 (NW),<br>TQ 08360 80891 (SE) |
| Funding Body: | Thames Water Utilities Ltd |

This report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken between 12th February and 28th May 2008 during groundworks in Stockley Park, adjacent to the Harlington Road, in the London Borough of Hillingdon. The works consisted of initial topsoil stripping and subsequent pipe-trench and manhole excavation through open cut trenching. The section of the scheme archaeologically monitored covered a distance of some 380m within Stockley Park, adjacent to Harlington Road and along the line of the 'horse ride'. A trench 2-3m below the current ground surface revealed mid brown clayey topsoil overlain by dumped deposits containing some wood, brick fragments and other modern inclusions. The natural River Terrace Gravel was observed at depths of between 1.2m and 1.8m and ranged from slightly gravely sandy clay to a sandy or very clayey gravel. No archaeological finds or features were recorded: the whole watching brief area had been truncated by gravel extraction and the area subsequently used for twentieth century landfill deposits.