ST JOHN'S WOOD TO EDGWARE ROAD POWER UPGRADE: TRIAL HOLES FOR LONDON UNDERGROUND.

REPORT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING





October 2010

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LONDON BOROUGH OF WESTMINSTER

REPORT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

SITE CENTRE NGR: TQ 271, 818

COMPASS ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED 5-7 SOUTHWARK STREET LONDON SE1 1RQ

Telephone: 020 7403 9660

e-mail: mail@compassarchaeology.co.uk

Author: Emma Jeffery

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Abstract

Eight trial holes were dug in Lisson Street and Bell Street before the construction of a cable-route for a power upgrade for the London Underground. These were all archaeologically monitored from July to September 2010.

Some of these holes had been completely disturbed by modern services and revealed no archaeological remains whatsoever.

Other holes revealed evidence for activity in the area from the late-17th Century. This included a cut feature containing late 17th Century pottery in pit 1, a small ditch-type feature in pit 5, and a brick wall in pit 8. A number of the other pits included 'made ground' layers, with pottery and other finds of early 18^{th} to mid- 19^{th} Century date.

Some pits also revealed evidence for the 'natural' brickearth and, in one case, sand and gravel.

Contents Page

		<u>Page</u>								
1	Introduction	1								
2	Trial Pits									
2.1	Trial Pit 1									
2.2	Trial Pit 2	4								
2.3	Trial Pit 3	5								
2.4	Trial Pit 4	7								
2.5	Trial Pit 5	8								
2.6	Trial Pit 6	10								
2.7	Trial Pit 7									
2.8	Trial Pit 8									
3	Conclusions	14								
4	Bibliography									
Appendix I: Pot Report										
Appendix II: Other Finds										
Appendix III: OASIS Form										
Appendix IV: London Archaeologist Publication Summary										

<u>List of Figures:</u>

		Page
Fron	at Cover – photo of brick wall in pit 8	
1	OS Map with location of pits marked	2
2	Photo of south-western section of pit 1	3
3	Photo of eastern section of pit 2	4
4	Photo of south-eastern section of pit 2	5
5	Photo of base of pit 3	6
6	Photo of base and eastern section of pit 3	6
7	Photo of base of pit 4	7
8	Photo of pit 4, looking west	8
9	Photo of eastern section of pit 5	9
10	Photo of pit 5, looking south-east	9
11	Photo of pit 6	10
12	Photo of pit 7, looking south-east	11
13	Photo of eastern section of pit 7	11
14	Photo of brick wall in pit 8	12
15	Photo of brick wall in pit 8	13
16	Photo of pit 8, looking south-west	13
17	Photo of pit 8, looking south-east	14

St John's Wood to Edgware Road power upgrade: Trial holes for London Underground.

1. Introduction

1.1 A number of trial holes were monitored in Lisson Street and Bell Street in July

— September 2010, following advice from English Heritage. These trial holes
were dug in advance of the construction of a cable-route for a power upgrade
for the London Underground, with the aim of ascertaining where this cable
could be run. These holes were monitored by an archaeologist, and the
appropriate records taken.

The site itself lies within an 'Area of Special Archaeological Priority and Potential', according to the Westminster UDP. This refers to the ancient villages of Paddington and Lillestone, and the proximity of Edgeware Road (a Roman road) to the site.

1.2 The area is in a position where Langley Silt deposits (sandy clay and silt, often known as brickearth) meet Lynch Hill gravel. Prehistoric settlement or activity is often found on this type of geology.

The area itself is on generally flat ground, and is surrounded by major watercourses such as Regent's Canal (constructed $18^{th} - 19^{th}$ Century), the River Westbourne, and the River Tyburn (an historical river).

1.3 Although the geology suggests the potential for prehistoric settlement or activity in the area, such activity appears to have been concentrated mainly to the north and south of the site. Similarly, although Watling Street (the Roman road) ran along Edgeware Road and through Lisson Grove itself, no Roman finds have been uncovered in the area. Furthermore, there is no evidence for any Saxon settlement or activity in the area.

The first mention of the area is in the Domesday Book, when the manor of 'Lilestone' (Lisson Green) is mentioned. This suggests the possible existence of a medieval village, although the place-name 'Lisson Green' does not appear until 1723, with the name 'Lisson Grove' first appearing in 1783.

Rocque's 1746 'Plan of the City of London...and the country near ten miles round' depicts the area as a small village or hamlet in a rural setting. Houses are depicted along Bell Street (named 'Bell Lane') and the west side of Lisson Street. The area appears to have been developed substantially from 1750, such that the road layout on the 1820 Potter Map is the same as it is today. The social history of the area from this date onwards is interesting. It was a relatively affluent community until c.1860. At this date, the City of London was being rebuilt, such that people began to find living in the centre intolerable and moved out. This meant that the poor began to displace the affluent in Lisson Grove, and it became notorious as a slum in the later 19th Century. Eliza Doolittle, in 'Pygmalion', is said to have come from Lisson Grove, and Booth's 1889 Map of Poverty shades the area in dark blue

- ('incapable of looking after themselves') and black ('semi-criminals, a horde of barbarians').
- 1.4 The archaeological programme was commissioned by Clancy Docwra on behalf of London Underground Ltd. Advice on which pits should be monitored was given by John Brown, English Heritage.
- 1.5 A summary of what was uncovered within the pits, find-reports and some photographs, is included within this report. The pits are numbered 1-8 in order of excavation and monitoring.

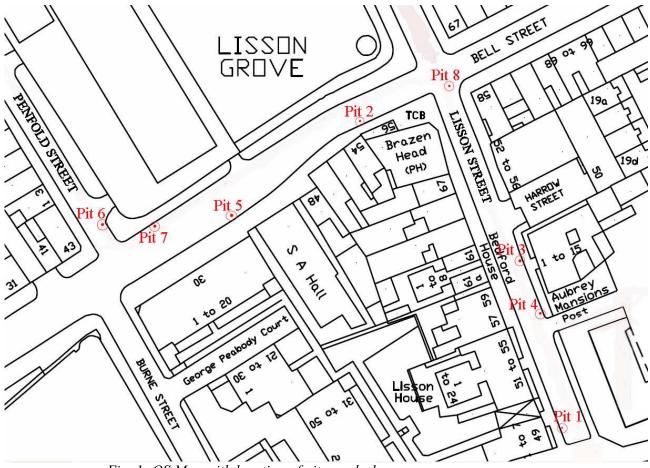


Fig. 1: OS Map with location of pits marked

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2. Trial Pits

2.1. Trial Pit 1:

One small pit, measuring approximately 0.5m square and 1.3m deep, located at the southern end of Lisson Street, was monitored.

A modern road base (tarmac, concrete base) and layer of disturbed ground (mixed soil/loose mortar/brick rubble) was uncovered. Below this was a dark sandy-silt soil horizon, at a depth of about 0.5m and c.0.35m thick, which produced a couple of bits of early 18th Century pottery (context 1, see appendix I). Below this was a thin, c.25mm, gravel layer (possibly a buried surface) which sealed clean sandy gravel to the south-east and an earlier cut feature to the north-west. The cut feature had a fine dark soil fill, with late 17th Century sherds of pottery (context 3, see appendix I). The sandy gravel was presumably disturbed natural soil, and overlay soft clean sand near the base of the pit (the natural).

This pit therefore revealed evidence of earlier activity in this area, in the form of buried surfaces and cut features. The pottery uncovered in and above this pit suggests that this activity was late 17th – early 18th Century in date.



Fig. 2: View of south-west section of pit 1

2.2. Trial Pit 2:

One pit, measuring 1.96m in length, 0.7m in width, and 1.45m in depth, located on the southern side of Bell Street just west of the junction with Lisson Street, was monitored.

This uncovered a modern road-base (tarmac road-surface over concrete base) overlying various east-west service trenches and fills to the northern end of the pit.

Elsewhere, three distinct and relatively clean layers were revealed, which may have been made-ground layers. The first of these was c.90-120mm thick, lay beneath the modern road-surface, and consisted of a dark grey-brown compact sandy-silty earth, with moderate gravel inclusions and occasional ceramic building material flecks. Beneath this, for c.100-170mm, was a lighter midbrown-orange firm clayey gravel mix. A fairly dark-brown-grey silty-clayey mix with frequent gravel inclusions was uncovered beneath this, for c.90-200mm. One oyster shell and two fragments of ceramic building material were uncovered in this layer. The latter appears to be late 16^{th} – early 17^{th} Century in date (see appendix II).

Beneath these made-ground layers was the 'natural' soil - a firm orange-brown clayey-silt, with gravel inclusions. This became slightly sandier and lighter towards the base of the trench.

This pit therefore also revealed evidence for earlier activity, in the form of made-ground layers, and buildings, in the form of ceramic building material fragments.



Fig. 3: View of eastern section of pit 2



Fig. 4: View of the eastern section and southern end of pit 2

2.3 Trial Pit 3:

Another small pit, measuring 1.4m in length, 0.58m in width, and 1.1m in depth, located on the east side of Lisson Street, was monitored.

This revealed a modern road-base (tarmac road surface over concrete base) overlying a light-brown sandy soil with frequent gravel inclusions.

Four reinforced concrete slabs (grouped together in two lots of two) were uncovered running north-south across the base of the trench. These had curved edges to enable them to fit together. They measured approximately 33cm in width, 5cm in depth, and, together, spanned the base of the trench in length. They were then removed, and electric services were uncovered beneath them.

In the eastern section of the trench, a small group of bricks were uncovered. This appears to have been a mix of brick and concrete of 19th Century date, and stretched down to a depth of 1.5m beneath the ground-surface, and back into the section for a distance of approximately 0.3m. The construction presumably forms part of a foundation for a previous building on the site, or a possible coal cellar.

A small piece of timber was uncovered just in front of the bricks, running north-south. This was broken half-way along, such that it only existed in the northern part of the trench. This probably represents shuttering for the adjacent service trench construction.

This pit had therefore been heavily disturbed by the installation of services (under the concrete blocks). Nonetheless, some evidence for earlier activity was uncovered in the form of the bricks.



Fig. 5: View of base of pit 3



Fig. 6: View of base and eastern section of pit 3

2.4 Trial Pit 4:

One pit, measuring approximately 2m in length, 1.2m in width, and 1.65m in depth, located on the eastern side of Lisson Street just south of pit 3, was monitored.

This revealed a modern road-surface (tarmac road-surface over a concrete base) over a mixed and reworked mid-brown soil, with frequent gravel inclusions and occasional ceramic building material inclusions.

This pit had been heavily disturbed by services, with lots of pipe work visible in the pit itself. This meant that the soil in the pit was modern backfill.

Concrete slabs, like those uncovered in pit 3, were found at the base of the trench. These overlay services, and even had "Danger, Electricity" written on them. The cables were clearly a continuation of those in pit 3.

This pit had been completely disturbed by modern services, such that no archaeological evidence was uncovered.



Fig. 7: View of base of pit 4



Fig. 8: View of pit 4, looking west

2.5 Trial Pit 5:

A further small pit measuring approximately 2m in length, 0.38m in width, and 1.5m in depth, located on the southern side of Bell Street outside the property boundary between No.40 and Nos. 10-30, was monitored.

This revealed modern road make-up (a tarmac road-surface over concrete base, c.380mm thick) overlying various made-ground and service layers. The upper layer of this was a grey mixed pebbly silty-layer, measuring approximately 13-15cm in depth. It was probably a service fill related to the pipes uncovered in the northern part of the pit. Beneath this was a mortary brick deposit, measuring approximately 14-18cm, from where a brick sample was taken (see appendix II). This was probably 18th Century in date. Beneath this was a mixed gravelly-silty layer, measuring approximately 18cm in depth, where pieces of tile, bone and early 18th Century pot were uncovered (context 5 – see appendix I).

Beneath this were three deposits, the upper two of which may have been part of the fill of a small ditch which must, therefore, have dated from before the 19th Century, with the bottom one possibly being an alluvium-type deposit. The uppermost of these was a mottled blue-grey silty soil, where pieces of post-medieval tile, glass and brick were uncovered (see appendix II). Beneath this was a clay brickearth type soil, with inclusions of tile, brick and pebbles.

Beneath this was a composite silty deposit, which appears to have waterlain characteristics such as black organic flecking.

The natural soil (brown-orange brickearth with pebble inclusions) was observed at 1.3m beneath the current ground surface.

This pit therefore revealed further evidence for activity from at least the early 18th Century, in the form of made-ground layers and a possible underlying ditch-fill near the southern end of the pit.



Fig. 9: View of eastern section of pit 5



Fig. 10: View of pit 5, looking south-east

2.6 Trial Pit 6:

Trial pit 6 was located on the eastern side of Penfold Street just north of the junction with Bell Street and outside of the entrance to King Soloman Academy. It was abortive, due to the many cables and services found within the pit, so no archaeological monitoring was undertaken.



Fig. 11: View of pit 6 (abortive pit) – photo supplied by Clancy Docwra

2.7 Trial Pit 7:

One small pit, measuring approximately 2.9m in length, 0.83m in width, and 2.23m in depth, located in the northern carriageway of Bell Street just east of the junction with Penfold Street, was monitored.

This revealed modern road make-up (tarmac road-surface and a concrete base, measuring approximately 0.25m in total) overlying various made-ground layers and some services. The top layer was a mixed bricky-clayey-gravelly deposit, measuring approximately 0.35m in depth. This overlay a darker crumbly clayey layer with brick inclusions measuring approximately 0.26m in depth. This overlay a mortary layer, containing tile, brick, glass, clay pipe, and mid-19th Century pot (context 7, appendix I and appendix II), for a depth of 0.53m (with concentrated mortar and finds in the top 0.15m, and a wedge of clay beneath this). A mid-light brown-grey clayey-silty soil fill lay beneath this, and stretched down for 0.85m to the base of the trench and the 'natural' soil.

The 'natural' soil was uncovered at the base of the trench, although it was not present in section. This was yellowy crumbly sandy silt, finely laminated, and was probably a waterlain-deposit.

This pit therefore also uncovered archaeological evidence for activity from at least the mid-19th Century, and some earlier/residual material, in the form of made-ground/infill layers and pieces of pot, brick, clay-pipe, and tile. It appears that the area had been deeply truncated with natural only present at the very base of the pit, although the cause of this is unknown.



Fig. 12: View of pit 7, looking southeast



Fig. 13: View of eastern section of pit 7

2.8 Trial Pit 8:

Another small pit, measuring approximately 0.95m in length, 1.7m in width, and 2.06m in depth, located on the southern side of the junction between Lisson Street and Bell Street, was monitored.

This uncovered modern road make-up (tarmac road-surface over concrete base) overlying a layer of mid-grey-brown mixed redeposited clays and gravels, which was presumably a service-fill, possibly relating to the gas main at the east end of the pit.

Underneath this was part of a brick wall. This was uncovered at approximately 1.08m below the current ground surface, and went down to a depth of 1.54m. Four courses of dry-bonded red-brown wall, consisting of headers over stretchers, were uncovered. The bricks seems to be of probable early 18th Century in date, with many inclusions. The wall was truncated to the west.

The 'natural' soil deposit, a compact mottled orange-brown clayey-gravel, was uncovered underneath the wall, at a depth of approximately 1.54m, and spread to the base of the pit (2.06m).

This pit revealed the first evidence for earlier structures in this area. This took the form of a brick wall, at a depth of approximately 1m beneath the current ground-surface. It is possible that this wall may have been a cellar wall, or part of a brick drain.



Fig. 14: View of brick wall on the south-west side of pit 8



Fig. 15: View of brick wall in pit 8



Fig. 16: View of pit 8 – looking south-west



Fig. 17: View of pit 8 – looking south-east

3. Conclusions:

This archaeological watching brief monitored eight pits in the Lisson and Bell Street area.

Some of these had been completely disturbed by modern services (such as pits 4 and 6) and contained no archaeological evidence.

Other pits revealed evidence for earlier activity. The cut-feature in pit 1 contained late 17th Century pottery-sherds and acts as evidence for definitive activity at this date. Furthermore, the small ditch-type feature which crossed the southern end of pit 5 was of probable 17th Century date. Other evidence was uncovered relating to 18th-19th Century building and development, such as the brick wall uncovered in pit 8, and the foundation in pit 3.

Moreover, pits 1, 2 and 5 revealed probable 'made-ground' layers, reflecting the build-up of land and development. Pottery evidence from pits 1 and 5 suggests that this dated from the early 18th to early 19th Century. Pit 7, in contrast, revealed evidence of deeper truncation of deposits, dating to the mid-19th Century.

No prehistoric, Roman, Saxon or medieval evidence was uncovered in any of the pits. The archaeological evidence uncovered only dates from the late 17^{th} Century onwards and therefore relates to the post-medieval activity in the area. This relates to the development of the area, firstly as a small village, then its substantial development from c.1750. The pottery evidence suggests that much of the evidence uncovered in these pits relates to the affluent period of the area's history (i.e. before the mid- 19^{th} Century), and is supported by the relatively high quality of the pottery uncovered.

Some pits (1, 2, 5, 7, 8) revealed the 'natural' soil. In pits 2, 5 and 8 this seems to have been an orangey-brown brickearth-type soil, with variable gravel. The deeper excavation of pit 7, however, showed signs of a waterlain or alluvium-type deposit, whilst pit 1 revealed sandy gravel and sand at a much higher level.

4. Bibliography:

Compass Archaeology, December 2006, Westminster 4 Academy, The former North Westminster Community School, Penfold Street, NW1 6RX, City of Westminster – An Archaeological Desktop and Impact Assessment

Appendix I: Pottery from Lission Street, Edgware (Site LIU10)

Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 36 sherds with a total weight of 867g. It was all post-medieval, with the bulk of the assemblage dating to the 17th – early 18th centuries. The fabric codes utilized are those of the Museum of London post-Roman type-series (eg. Vince 1985), as follows:

BORDY: Yellow-glazed Border ware, 1550-1700. 1 sherd, 4g. PMR: Post-medieval redware, 1580 – 1900. 8 sherds, 192g. TGW: English tin-glazed ware, 1600-1800. 4 sherds, 11g. ENGS: English stoneware, 1700-1900. 4 sherds, 230g. STSL: Staffordshire slipware, 1650 – 1800. 3 sherds, 210g.

CHPO: Chinese porcelain, 1580 -1900. 2 sherds, 7g.

SWSG: Staffordshire white salt-glazed stoneware, 1720-1780. 3 sherds, 21g.

EYGE: English yellow-glazed earthenware, 1785-1835. 3 sherds, 81g.

CREA: Creamware, 1740-1880. 2 sherds, 8g.

TPW: Transfer-printed ware (underglaze), 1780-1900, 6 sherds, 103g

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

	PN	ИR	BOF	RDY	TC	W	EN	IGS	ST	SL	СН	РО	SW	'SG	CR	EA	EY	GE	TF	PW	
Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
1									1	7			2	16							E18thC
3	4	85	1	4			2	46													L17thC
5	1	42			3	3			1	33	2	7	1	5							E18thC
7	3	65			1	8	2	184	1	170					2	8	3	81	6	103	M19thC
Total	8	192	1	4	4	11	4	230	3	210	2	7	3	21	2	8	3	81	6	103	

The range of fabric and vessel types is typical of sites in London and its environs, and appears entirely domestic in nature. The sherds of English Stoneware appear to be from mugs etc which are copies of contemporary German Stoneware, and is likely to date to the early part of the life of the industry, ie the late 17th century.

One of the sherds of blue transfer-printed white earthenware (TPW) from context [7] has a fragment of a maker's mark of "Elkin and Newbon", a company operating in Longton between 1844 and 1856. The sherd is from a typical product of the manufacturer, a plate with a floral transfer-print, from a series known as 'Botanical Beauties' (Hampson 1982). It dates to around 1850.

Bibliography

Hampson, RS, 1982, *Longton Potters 1700-1865*, Journal of Ceramic History 14, City Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

Vince, AG, 1985 The Saxon and Medieval Pottery of London: A review, *Medieval Archaeology* **29**, 25-93

Appendix II: Other Finds

Brick:

Pit 2 – two fragments from the fairly dark-brown-grey silty-clayey deposit – probably late 16th/early 17th Century in date – approx 52mm thick (Tudor dimensions) – vitrified.

Pit 5 – brick fragment from the mortary brick deposit – probably early 18th Century in date – lots of inclusions (Spanish).

Pit 8 – part of the wall – probably early 18th Century in date – rough with lots of inclusions (Spanish).

Clay Pipe (using Atkinson, D & Oswald, A, 1969, London Clay Tobacco Pipes, Jnl of the Archaeol Assoc. Third Series, vol XXXII):

Pit 7 – three fragments of clay pipe bowl in the mortary layer.

– all three are marked with 'JD' (or 'ID'), this probably refers to John Dearden (and his wife Isabella Dearden) who worked as a pipe-maker at No.78 Great Peter Street from at least the 1790s, and from 1823-1840 at 51 Bell Street. The shape of the three bowls also fit Oswald and Atkinson's typology, with a rounded bowl and small initials. (Atkinson, D & Oswald, A, 1969, London Clay Tobacco Pipes, *Jnl of the Archaeol Assoc*. Third Series, vol XXXII). The three pipes almost certainly date from 1823 – 40.

Glass (using Litherland, G, Bottle Collecting, 1977):

Pit 5 – one fragment of the base of a glass bottle in the mottled blue-grey silty soil – clear/green in colour – quite a sharp raised kick – probably late 18th Century in date.

Pit 7 – four fragments of large glass bottles (two rims and two bases) in the mortary layer – both bases and one rim are dark olive-green in colour, other rim is lighter-green in colour – olive-green rim is flanged, lighter-green rim is laid on – both bases have well-defined rounded kicks - probably late 18th/early 19th Century in date.

Appendix III: Oasis Form

OASIS ID: compassa1-81554

Project details

St John's Wood: Trial holes for London Underground Project name

the project

Short description of Eight trial holes were dug in Lisson Street and Bell Street before the construction of a cable-route for a power upgrade for the London Underground. These were all archaeologically monitored. Some of these holes had been completely disturbed by modern services. Other holes revealed evidence for activity in the area from the late-17th Century. This included a cut feature containing late 17th Century pottery in pit 1, a small ditch-type feature in pit 5, and a brick wall in pit 8. A number of the other pits included 'made ground' layers, with pottery and other finds of early 18th to mid-19th Century date. Some pits also revealed evidence for the 'natural'

brickearth and, in one case, sand and gravel.

Project dates Start: 20-07-2010 End: 20-09-2010

Previous/future

work

No / Not known

Type of project Recording project

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

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

Monument type PIT Post Medieval

WALL Post Medieval Monument type

Significant Finds POT Post Medieval

Significant Finds TILE Post Medieval

Significant Finds **BRICK Post Medieval**

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

Prompt Direction from English Heritage GLAAS **Project location**

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER MARYLEBONE

ST JOHNS WOOD AND MAYFAIR Lisson Street and Bell Street,

St John's Wood

Postcode NW8

Study area 1500.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 5271 1818 50.94223534 0.173918257467 50 56 32 N 000 10

26 E 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

Developer

Name of sponsor/funding

body

London Underground Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive

recipient

Museum of London archaeological archive

Physical Archive ID LIU10

Physical Contents 'Ceramics'

Digital Archive recipient

Museum of London archive

Digital Contents 'other'

Digital Media available

'Images raster / digital photography', 'Text'

Paper Archive recipient

Museum of London Archive

Paper Contents 'other'

Paper Media available

'Context sheet', 'Plan', 'Report', 'Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type

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Author(s)/Editor(s) Jeffery, E

Date 2010

Issuer or publisher Compass Archaeology

Place of issue or publication

5-7 Southwark Street, SE1 1RQ

Description Short report - including OASIS form, OS map, photographs, finds-

report, and short description of each hole.

Entered by Emma Jeffery (emma.jeffery@ukonline.co.uk)

Entered on 19 October 2010

Appendix IV: London Archaeologist Summary

Site Address: Lisson Street and Bell Street, NW8

Project type: Watching brief

Dates of Fieldwork: July – September 2010

Site Code: LIU 10

Supervisor: Geoff Potter

NGR: TQ 271 818

Funding Body: Clancy Docwra Ltd.

Eight trial holes were dug in Lisson Street and Bell Street before the construction of a cable-route for a power upgrade for the London Underground. These were all archaeologically monitored in July to September 2010.

Some of these holes had been completely disturbed by modern services and revealed no archaeological remains whatsoever.

Other holes revealed evidence for activity in the area from the late-17th Century. This included a cut feature containing late 17th Century pottery in pit 1, a small ditchtype feature in pit 5, and a brick wall in pit 8. A number of the other pits included 'made ground' layers, with pottery and other finds of early 18th to mid-19th Century date.

Some pits also revealed evidence for the 'natural' brickearth and, in one case, sand and gravel.