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ST JOHN'S WAR MEMORIAL
Church Row
Hampstead
NW3

London Borough of Camden

An archaeological watching brief report

April 2006

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JNC05

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Archaeology Service

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Site Code: JNC05
National Grid Reference: 526244 185625

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**St. John's Church War Memorial
Church Row
Hampstead**

A report on the watching brief

Site code: JNC05

Author Sian Anthony

Summary (non-technical)

This report has been commissioned by Denis Moloney, of the London Borough of Camden in order to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out at St. Johns Church war memorial, Church Row, Hampstead.

Work to underpin St Johns Church Memorial was monitored between 30th November and 2nd December 2005. Two trenches were excavated in preparation for piling and underpinning the memorial.

A redeposited soil containing disarticulated fragments of human remains was observed in Trench 2. Within this deposit a grave 'footer' was observed in the section of Trench 2. Natural ground was not reached. No articulated burials were encountered.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The watching brief took place at St. John's Church War Memorial, Church Row, Hampstead, hereafter called 'the site'. The site is located on the far north-eastern boundary of St. John's churchyard and forms part of the churchyard wall, fronting on to Church Row (see Fig 1). The centre of the site is at OS National Grid Reference 526244 185625. Modern ground level immediately adjacent to the site is 104.1m OD. The site code is JNC05.

1.2 The planning and legislative framework

The site lies in an Area of Archaeological Importance, as designated by the London Borough of Camden.

1.2.1 *Work in Church of England churches or church grounds*

Archaeological work in and around churches is often, but not always, carried out *outside* the formal LPA processes and the terms of PPG16 and PPG15, as a result of an 'exemption' granted in 1913 to the Church of England from the provisions of State protection to Ancient Monuments. Under current law this exemption is maintained under Section 60 of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* for all buildings in church land excluding 'any building used by a minister of religion, primarily as a residence'¹

Requirements for archaeological works on churches and churchyards have summarised in Guidance Note 1 (ADCA, 2004). This document aims to 'clarify best practice without introducing any new requirements' and seeks to support regulatory authorities by indicating what information and action is expected from parishes and cathedrals when they devise and commission works.

The provisions of the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990* still apply to development proposals to ecclesiastical buildings or work to subsidiary buildings or the setting of the church which involve 'any material change in the use of any building or other land'. Local Authority Planning Consent is still required in these circumstances.

Since the proposed works (the installation of piles and pile caps prior to the re-erection of the War Memorial) are not in pursuance of a *change of use* there is no requirement for any Planning Consent from the Local Authority.

¹ Blair and Pyrah, 1996, 182

1.3 Planning background

The works required consent from the Diocesan Advisory Committee, this was granted (Ref 16.01/05.04 (A2)- provisos on Certificate Ref 16.01/05(A1)) on condition of an archaeological watching brief taking place to monitor the effect on archaeological remains existing within the church or its curtilage.

St John's Church is a listed building (Grade I) under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, this designation covers the surrounds and structures associated with the main building including the war memorial.

English Heritage were consulted as to the need for listed building consent. As the works involved necessary repair that did not harm the special interest or appearance of the listed structure, Listed Building Consent was not required.

The watching brief was carried out as part of the condition recommended by the Diocese and English Heritage.

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Denis Moloney of the London Borough of Camden and produced by the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS). The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA, 2001).

The purpose of the watching brief was to determine whether archaeological remains or features were present on the site and, if so, to record the nature and extent of such remains. A number of more site-specific research aims and objectives are outlined in the following section.

The purpose of the present report is to analyse the results of the excavation against the original research aims, and to suggest what further work, including analysis or publication (if any), should now take place.

1.5 Aims and objectives

The research aims and objectives are:

- What are the levels of natural deposits and how do these compare to adjacent sites?
- What is the nature and significance of the surviving archaeological remains?
- What is the level of truncation in this area?
- Are there any articulated burials located close to the churchyard boundary?

All research is undertaken within the priorities established in the Museum of London's *A research framework for London Archaeology*, 2002.

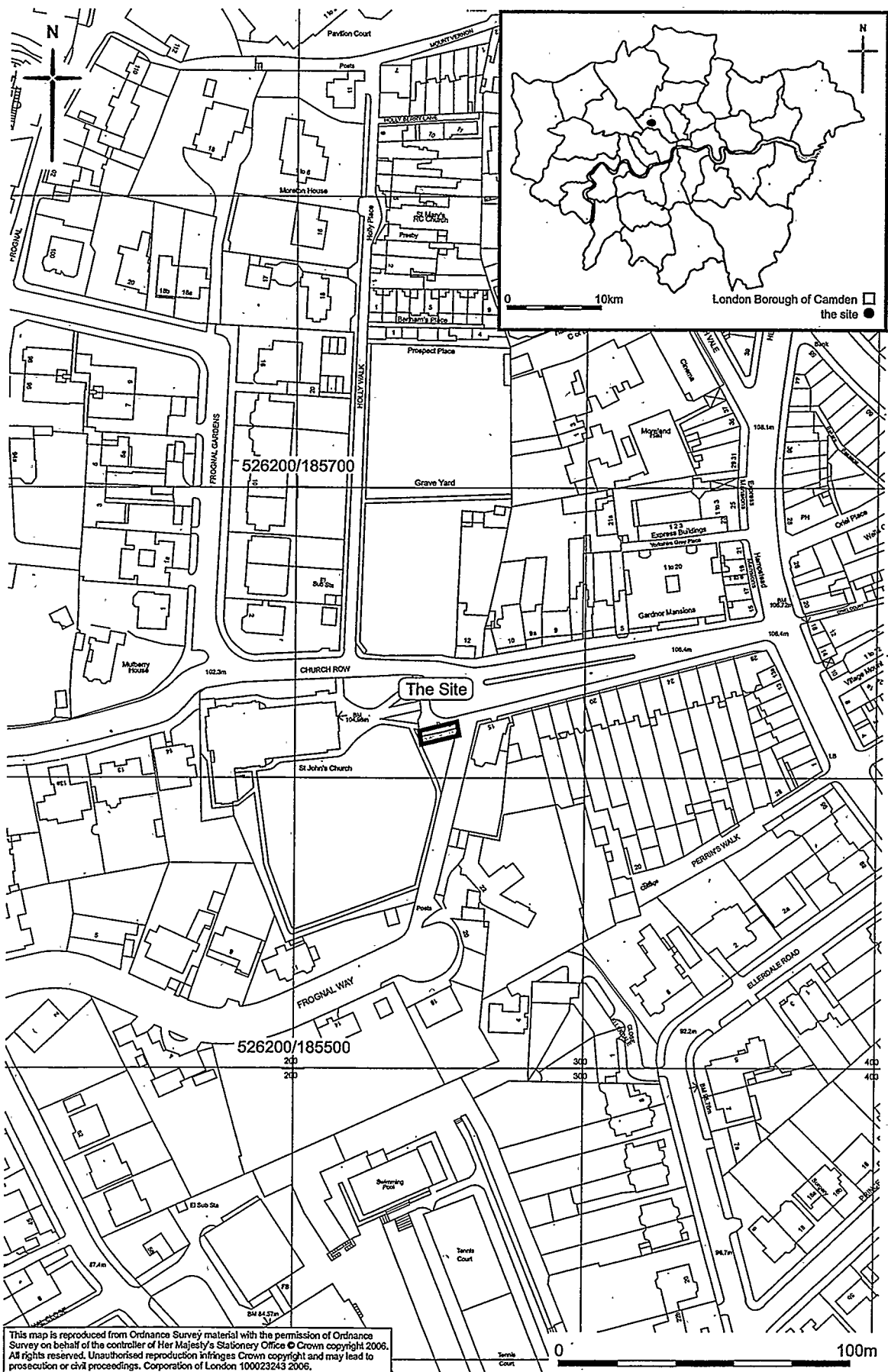


Fig 1 Site location

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Topography

London occupies part of the Thames Basin, a broad syncline of chalk filled in the centre with Tertiary sands and clays. In the City, and in most of London, this Tertiary series of bed-rock consists of London Clay. Above the bed-rock lie the Pleistocene (Quaternary) fluvial deposits of the River Thames arranged in flights or gravel terraces. These terraces represent the remains of former floodplains of the river, the highest being the oldest with each terrace becoming progressively younger down the valley side.

The site lies on the top of the Hampstead Hill at approximately 104.1m OD, sloping down to the south, however the site is level on the northern, paved side of the memorial. The southern side of the memorial lies higher, possibly due to the accumulation of grave soil within the churchyard. The underlying natural is London Clay.

2.2 Prehistoric

A few isolated archaeological discoveries have been made in the vicinity of Hampstead Village². The Hampstead area is likely to have been attractive to prehistoric people because of its commanding view and easy access to water from the various ponds and springs still found on and around the Heath.

2.3 Roman

The area of the site, and the surrounding Hampstead region, in the Roman period is not well known. Hampstead lay some distance from the major Roman road Watling Street running through the London area from west of Londinium towards Brockley Hill (approximately the line of modern day A5).

2.4 Saxon

The manor of Hampstead existed prior to the 1066 Norman Conquest and is first mentioned in Saxon records in 975 when King Edgar granted it to Mangoda, one of his nobles. In 986, Ethelread gifted the manor to the Abbot of Westminster and this grant was confirmed by Edward the Confessor in 1065. The manorial lands at this time comprised of between 500 and 600 acres. Although the place name Hampstead is

² A paleolithic handaxe (GLSMR 081719) was recovered from Hampstead, as well as a Mesolithic flint axe from a property in Reddington Road (GLSMR 081761)

of Saxon origin, no Saxon remains are known to survive above ground in modern day Hampstead.

2.5 Medieval

The manor of Hampstead remained in the possession of Westminster Abbey after the Norman Conquest. In the Domesday book compiled in 1086 the manor is stated to be worth 55 shillings and the inhabitants of Hampstead are estimated as seven (one villein, five boarders and a serf).

A rent assessment dated 1312 gives some information on the village of Hampstead. At that date there were 45 householders in the village and ten families of landless labourers. The 45 householders farmed a total of 290 acres, lands presumably leased from Westminster Abbey. Some land was rented to other religious houses and orders including the Priory of Kilburn, the Knights Hospitalers based at Clerkenwell and the St James Leper Hospital. A chapel existed in the village, almost certainly on the site of the present day parish church.

A study of cartographic evidence shows that occupation of the area in medieval times was mainly limited to the village of Hampstead itself. However, Thomson's account of Hampstead in his 1974 book tells of a medieval hamlet located very near to the development site.

2.6 Post-medieval

The manor of Hampstead was still owned by Westminster Abbey at the time of the 16th century Dissolution of the monastic houses. There are no records of any great development of the estate up to this moment, and it is presumed that at the Dissolution the population was still relatively small and the majority of land in agricultural use.

The earliest detailed map of Hampstead Village is the John Rocque Survey dating from 1746. Earlier maps do show the village and surrounding area but only as a location, and apart from the existence of a church little information can be gained from them. The Rocque survey shows that a moderate size village had grown up around the High Street and Frognal roads.

The parish church, dedicated to St. John, was rebuilt in 1745, and enlarged in 1844.

Church Row consists of a terrace of Georgian houses built to accommodate wealthy merchants and gentry from the city when Hampstead became a popular spa.

2.7 Sites in the vicinity:

CCH92

27 Church Row, Hampstead, NW3

NGR: TQ2635 8561

A watching brief conducted on the rear of this property took place in 1992. Three small test pits were excavated and located layers of archaeological interest.

CRO76

13 Church Row, Hampstead, NW3

NGR: TQ 2610 8560

Excavations by ILAU carried out trial trenches they showed that all archaeological evidence had been removed during post medieval levelling activities.

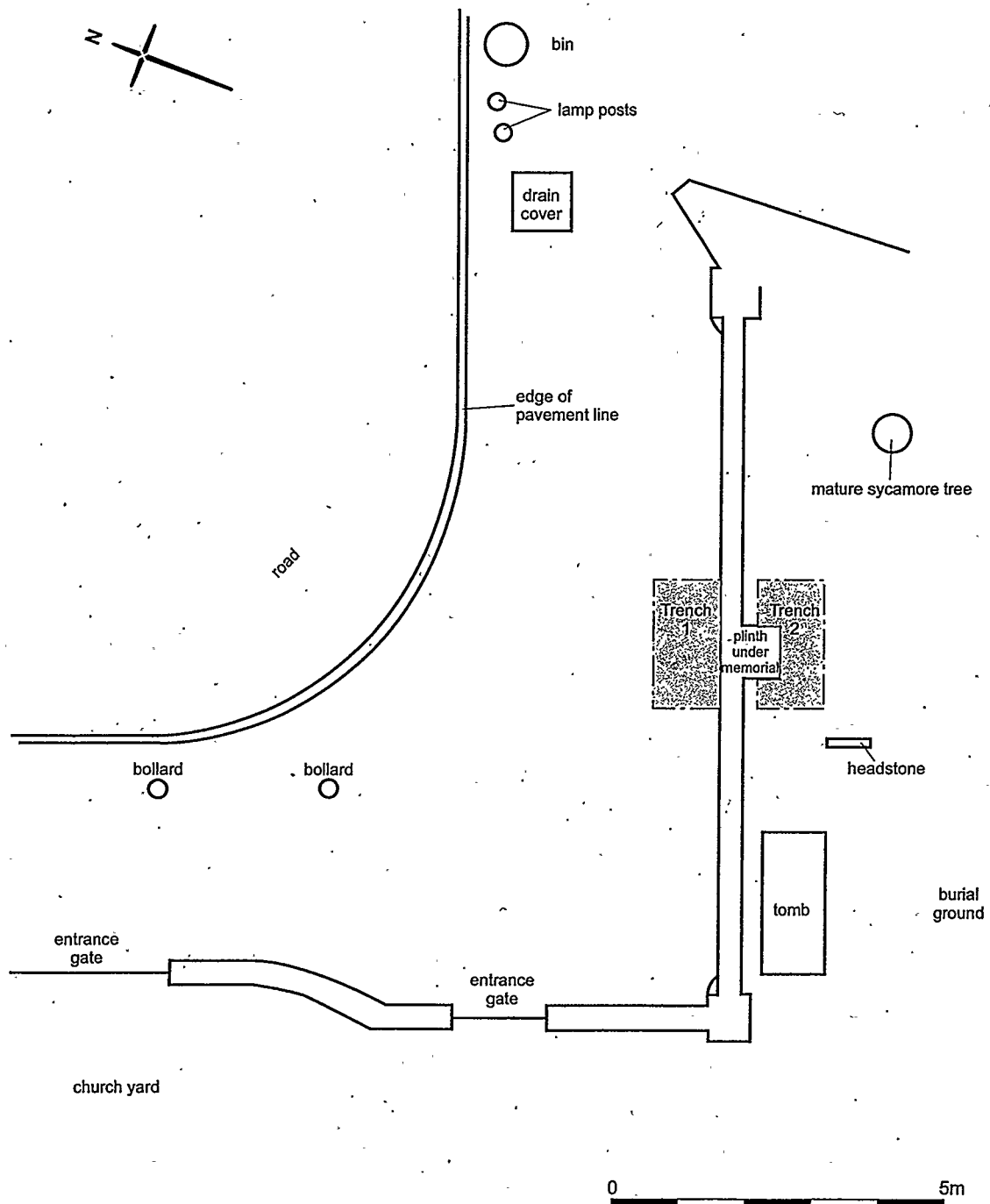


Fig 2 Location of trenches

3 The watching brief

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and recording during the watching brief was done in accordance with the MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual (MoLAS, 1994).

The paving slabs were broken out and cleared by contractors under MoLAS supervision. Trenches were excavated by hand, and monitored by a member of staff from MoLAS.

The locations of the areas of excavation were recorded by offsetting from adjacent standing walls and plotted on to a Survey (Drg. No. 5030438/ST/5000, Atkins Consultants Ltd). This information was then plotted onto the OS grid.

The heights of observations and/or archaeological remains were recorded relative to Ordnance Datum based on OS levels indicated by OS mapping.

Where relevant, sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20; numbered contexts were allocated where appropriate.

The site has produced: 1 trench location plan; 6 context records; 2 1:20 section drawings. The disarticulated human remains recovered from the site were given directly to the care of Ms Judy East, Hampstead Parish Church for reburial.

The site records can be found under the site code JNC05 in the MoL archive.

3.2 Results of the watching brief

In total, two separate interventions (trenches) were made for the purposes of underpinning the plinth of the monument. These have been numbered 1 and 2 (Fig 2). There follows a brief description of the archaeological deposits as recorded.

For all trench locations see Fig 2.

<i>Watching Brief Trench 1</i>	
Location	Church Row pavement, north of the Memorial.
Dimensions	1.32m by 1.28m
Modern ground level/top of slab	104.1m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	103.78m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.2m
Level of base of deposits observed	102.58m OD
Natural observed	N/A

The trench was excavated to enable the underpinning of the wall and plinth of the Memorial. Natural deposits were not observed in this trench. At the base of the trench lay a mixed, redeposited layer of dark brown silty clay [2] containing occasional fragments of red brick and corroded ferrous fragments. This was cut by a block of reinforced concrete, visible in the northern section of the trench, (abutting the brick wall). It reached to the base of the trench at 102.58m OD and is evidence of earlier works on the memorial.

Above this, layers of made ground consisting of sand, gravel and clays lay to a depth of 103.78m OD, directly underneath the paving slabs.

<i>Watching Brief Trench 2</i>	
Location	South of the Memorial, within the churchyard
Dimensions	1.16m by 1.24m
Modern ground level	104.4m OD (E)– 104.24m OD (W)
Base of modern fill	104.08m OD (E)– 104.03m OD (W)
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.45m
Level of base of deposits observed	102.6m OD
Natural observed	N/A

Natural deposits were not reached within this trench. The earliest deposit [3] was a mixed, redeposited layer of dark brown silty clay with sub rounded pebbles, red brick, slate and glass, the similar to context [2]. Within it lay a footer gravestone continuing into the southern trench section. Measuring 0.34m high and with only 0.18m width visible, it was made from limestone with a rounded (shaped) shoulder. There was no carving, or decoration and no grave cut was discernible around it. Small fragments of human bone, including the distal end of a right tibia, scapula blade and assorted small limb bone fragments, were retrieved from context [3]. None were articulated, they were given to the Church for immediate reburial.

The cut for the memorial was dug into context (3) plinth. The foundations of the plinth consisted of ten courses of rough faced brick., placed on wooden supports within a deposit of rubble and small amounts of loose bricks.

A layer of topsoil between 0.32 and 0.21m deep overlay context (3) and this cut.

4 Potential of archaeology

4.1 Original research aims

What are the levels of natural deposits and how do these compare to adjacent sites?

Natural levels were not reached in these trenches.

What is the nature and significance of the surviving archaeological remains?

The deposits excavated contained glass and red brick fragments indicative of a Post-medieval date. The presence of human remains in Trench 2 would indicate the disturbance of burials in the area, possibly present at a greater depth. There was no indication as to what date these deposits were disturbed however. It was not clear whether the grave footer was redeposited, or *in situ* and covered by the subsequent accumulation of burial soils. No grave cuts were visible at these depths.

What is the level of truncation caused by earlier activity in this area?

Considerable truncation is shown on the street (northern) side of the monument probably caused by road and pavement levelling and repair work.

The area of the watching brief was disturbed by the construction of the Memorial. Within the trenches that were monitored, the extent of disturbance was masked by later ground works, when re-enforced concrete was introduced to support the church wall.

Are there any articulated burials located close to the churchyard boundary?

No articulated burials were located.

4.2 Significance of the data

Whilst the remains retrieved are of local significance, there is nothing to indicate that they are of regional or national importance.

5 Publication and archiving

Information on the results of the excavation will be made publicly available by means of a database in digital form, to permit inclusion of the site data in any future academic researches into the development of London.

The site archive containing original records and finds will be stored in accordance with the Museum of London standards within 12 months of the end of the excavation.

In view of the limited potential of the material (Sections 4) and the relatively limited significance of the data (Section 2) it is suggested that a short note on the results of the watching brief should appear in the annual round up of the *London Archaeologist*

6 Conclusions

The results of the watching brief on the underpinning trenches indicate that the construction and later strengthening of the memorial and adjacent wall has disturbed deposits in this area.

The northern paved area may have been truncated during levelling and repair work carried out on Church Row. The southern sides have increased in height from the accumulation of grave soils. Burials may be present in this area, but located lower down in the stratigraphy. The uncovering of a footer stone covered by modern topsoil indicates that this may be the case. Natural levels were not observed during these works.

7 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following for their contributions and help in producing this report: Matt Booth, Atkins Consultants Ltd; Dave Warner and Lee Hamilton of Van Elle for their assistance during the works.

8 Bibliography

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9 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID: molas1-11828

Project details

Project name St. John's Church War Memorial, Church Row, Hampstead

Short description of the project The project involved piling and excavating trenches to enable underpinning of the memorial and associated wall. Four piles of 200mm width were driven north and south of the memorial. Two trenches were excavated north and south of the wall: Trench 1 (north) located made ground layers, reinforced concrete abutting the memorial wall and a redeposited disturbed silty clay. Trench 2 located disturbed topsoil, silty clay with modern brick, slate and glass fragments. A buried footer gravestone was uncovered underneath the topsoil. No graves were located and natural was not seen. Small fragments of residual human bone were given to the Church for immediate reburial.

Project dates Start: 30-11-2005 End: 02-12-2005

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes JNC05 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Other 4 - Churchyard

Monument type WAR MEMORIAL Modern

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

Prompt Faculty jurisdiction

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON CAMDEN HAMPSTEAD St. John's Church War Memorial, Church Row, Hampstead

Postcode NW3

Study area 10.00 Square metres

National reference grid TQ 26244 85625 Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation MoLAS

Project originator brief Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)

Project originator design MoLAS

Project director/manager Ros Aitken

Project supervisor Sian Anthony

Sponsor or funding body London Borough of Camden

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital recipient Archive LAARC

Digital Archive ID JNC05

Paper recipient Archive LAARC

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