

24 KINGSWAY

London
WC2

London Borough of Camden

An archaeological watching brief report

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Archaeology Service

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London
WC2

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An archaeological watching brief report

Site Code: KSY01
National Grid Reference: 530665 181276

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Summary (non-technical)

This report has been commissioned by Rob Hales of Geoffrey Osborne Ltd on behalf of the client London School of Economics and Political Science in order to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out at 24 Kingsway, London WC2.

A total of four geotechnical trial pits were excavated by Geoffrey Osborne Ltd for engineering purposes and monitored by MoLAS on 28th September and 24th November 2005. The trial pits were all located in the single basement area of the existing building.

No archaeological deposits or features were recorded in section in any of the trial pits. Truncated natural brickearth deposits were encountered in two out of four trial pits at 17.63- 17.93m OD.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The watching brief took place at 24 Kingsway, London Borough of Camden, WC2, hereafter called 'the site'. The site is located at the junction between Kingsway and Sardinia Street; Lincolns Inn Fields lies to the rear (the east) of the building (see Fig). The centre of the site is at OS National Grid Reference 530665 181276. The level of the basement slab in the single basement area varied between 18.03 and 18.30m OD. Modern ground level immediately adjacent to the site is 20.80 OD. The site code is KSY 05.

A desk top *Archaeological impact assessment* was previously prepared by MoLAS, which covers the whole area of the site (Lyon, 2005). This document should be referred to for information on the natural geology, archaeological and historical background of the site, and the initial assessment of its archaeological potential.

The site contains no Scheduled Ancient Monuments or listed buildings, but within lies within an Archaeological Priority Zone, as designated by the London Borough of Camden.

1.2 The planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Archaeological impact assessment* (Lyon 2005)

1.3 Planning background

The watching brief was conducted following the recommendations in the *Archaeological impact assessment* (Lyon 2005), which was prepared in support of the planning application. The results of the watching brief will help to determine the need for further works and possible mitigation strategies thereafter.

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Rob Hales of Geoffrey Osborne Ltd on behalf of the client London School of Economics and Political Science 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.

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

1.5 Aims and objectives

The limited nature of the archaeological watching brief made it unreasonable to establish many site-specific research questions. Nevertheless, a few broad site-specific research questions and objectives can be outlined. A complete list of research aims and results can be found in Section 4.1 of this report.

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

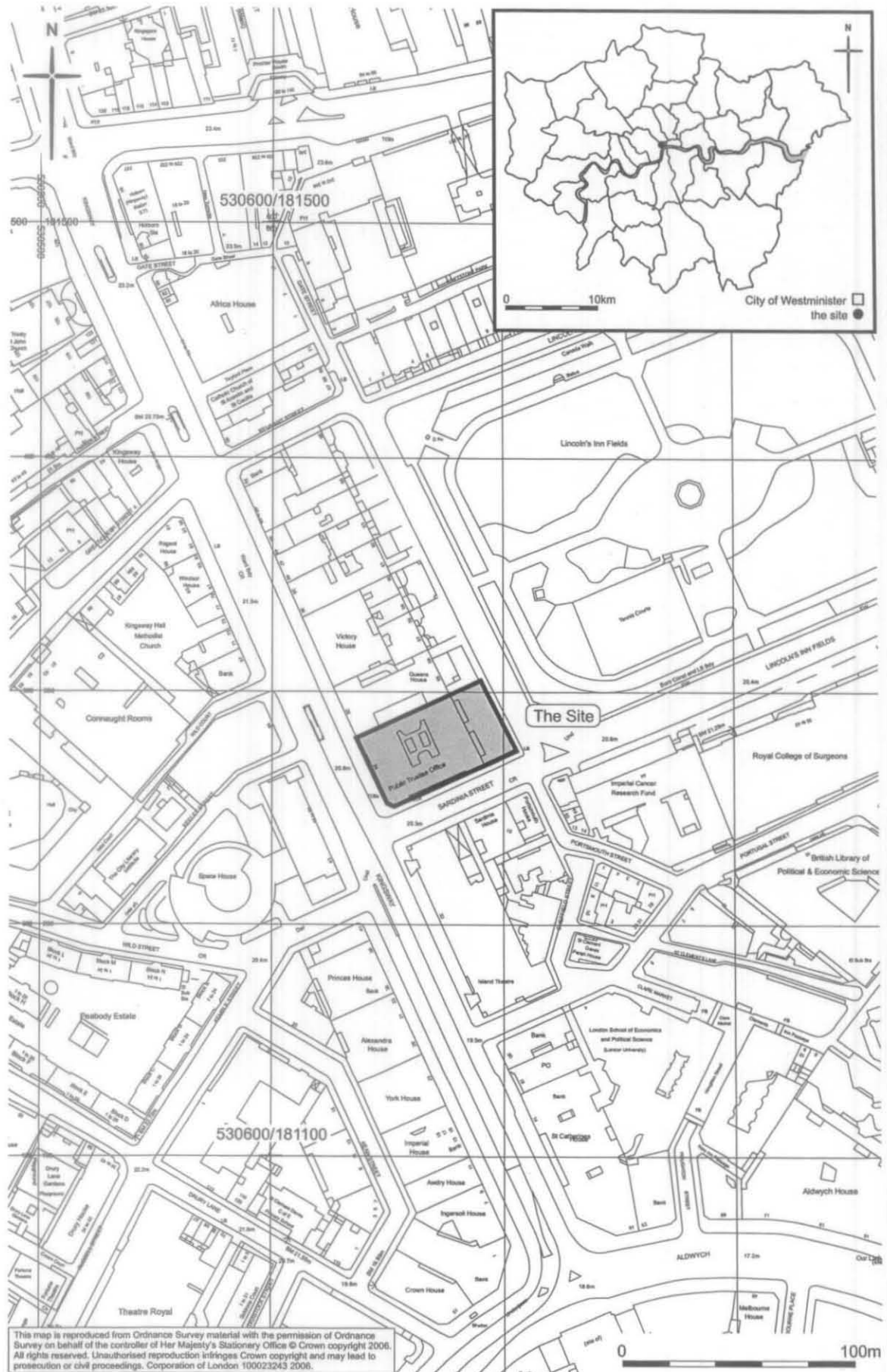


Fig 1 Site location

2 Topographical and historical background

A desk top *Archaeological impact assessment* was previously prepared by MoLAS, which covers the whole area of the site (Lyon, 2005). This document should be referred to for information on the natural geology, archaeological and historical background of the site. A brief résumé follows:

2.1 Geology and topography

Substantial gravel terraces cross the Westminster area in an east–west direction, at *c.* 20.00m OD, known as the Lynch Hill and Hackney phases. These two terraces are probably from the Wolstonian glaciation, *c.* 250,000–150,000 years ago. The Lynch Hill phase in particular is noted for Palaeolithic artefacts, e.g. Acheulian handaxes. These flint implements within the gravels are not normally discovered *in situ*, having been eroded by the Thames from earlier deposits. Below the Covent Garden plateau is a remnant of a younger, lower terrace; probably the Taplow terrace which at *c.* 10.00m OD also dates from the Wolstonian glaciation.

The Hackney terrace is overlain in the study area by a 0.5–2.00m thick capping of a sandy silt termed ‘brickearth’, which formed in the late Devensian stage (32,000–10,000 BP).

At Keeley House to the east of the site, truncated brickearth was discovered between 18.85m OD and 19.75m OD, while terrace gravel was recorded at 18.79m OD. At Bruce House to the south-west of the site, brickearth survived in unbasemented areas up to a height of 18.62m OD. At Alexandra House to the south of the site, truncated brickearth was located at 16.48m OD, whereas at St Catherine’s House truncated brickearth was located at 15.70m OD. A number of palaeochannels were also discovered on the latter site, sloping south-east, perhaps down towards an old water course.

Present street levels along Kingsway rise from 19.5m OD in the south, adjacent to Portugal Street, to 22.75m OD opposite Remnant Street. Along Sardinia Street, street levels fall from 20.6m OD in the east to 20.3m OD in the west. Immediately adjacent to the site, street level is 20.8m OD. The modern street levels broadly reflect the underlying geology of the area.

2.2 Archaeological and historical summary

2.2.1 Prehistoric

A few flint tools were recognised during the construction of Kingsway, 1900–05, evidence of some prehistoric occupation has been found around Covent Garden in the form of artefacts and a few archaeological features. These are generally scattered and point to low intensity activities consistent with farming and routes through the area rather than a formal settlement.

2.2.2 Roman

The site area is situated over a kilometre west of the former walled town and port of Londinium, settled and developed by the Romans between the 1st and 4th centuries.

The site lies in between two Roman roads, one of which ran approximately along the line of Holborn to the north, and the other approximately along the Strand to the south. Evidence for the Roman period in this area is mainly limited to occasional stray finds. Excavations at 55–57 Drury Lane to the south-west, suggest that the area may have contained farms and field systems in this period. Extensive Roman features were discovered to the north-west of the site, at Holborn Town Hall including quarry pits and evidence of industrial and domestic activity. However this indicates a level of Roman activity previously unrecorded on any other site in the area.

2.2.3 Saxon

There is no evidence that the area within the Roman town walls continued to be inhabited after the Roman withdrawal early in the 5th century.

The main focus of the Early and Middle Saxon settlement was a busy trading port further to the west around Aldwych, the Strand, and Covent Garden, in an area known to Bede in the 8th century as Lundenwic.

The site is located in close proximity to a number of archaeological sites, in the area around the Strand and Covent Garden, which have produced evidence of the Middle Saxon trading port of Lundenwic. The Saxon settlement, during the late 7th century and early 8th century, developed into a major seaport engaged in trade with the Continent and other parts of England. The site appears to be located near the eastern edge of the settlement, since there is little evidence for Middle Saxon occupation apart from a scatter of features on nearby sites. This scarcity of finds and features must be due to the fact that these sites were quite truncated, however.

It seems that by about AD 800 Lundenwic was in decline and it was abandoned in the mid 9th century, almost certainly as the result of Viking attacks. Occupation of the City of London was re-established under King Alfred in AD 886.

2.2.4 Medieval

Historic maps indicate that the site was situated in open land in medieval period, as shown on Lobel's reconstructed map of 1520 (Fig 3) and the Agas map of c 1560 (Fig 4). The site lay in 'Purse Field', with a stream immediately to the south and a system of ditches to the north-east. There are references to a common sewer, crossed by three bridges in this area by 1592, which probably marked an earlier stream (Schofield 1995). The site area backed onto orchards belonging to Lincoln's Inn, situated to the east of the site. Lincoln's Inn was one of a number of Inns of Chancery, which were established in association with the development of the legal profession in the area. Establishments to train legal men appear in documents concerning properties in Holborn and Fleet Street from about 1330, though the legal Inns may have been there for a century before that (Schofield 1995).

2.2.5 Post-medieval-modern

In the 17th century Lincoln's Inn Fields were owned by the Crown, William Newton persuaded Charles I to allow him to build 32 houses in the field. These included the

part, or parts, of the north side of the present square, which was known as Newton's Row, by 1650. The streets were completed by the time Morgan's map of 1682 was drawn up.

By the 1880s the area around Aldwych was condemned as a slum, and clearance began. Shortly afterwards Kingsway was constructed and opened in 1905. The buildings were constructed gradually between 1903 and 1922. The current building, the Public Trustee Offices, was built by the Office of Works 1912–15. It occupies the junction between Kingsway and Sardinia Street, the latter of which was built to join Kingsway with Lincoln's Inn Fields in the early 1900s.

3 The watching brief

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and recording during the watching brief was done in accordance with the *Method Statement* (Aitken, 2005) and the MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual (MoLAS, 1994).

The slab was broken out and cleared by contractors. Trenches were excavated by hand by the contractors, and monitored by a member of staff from MoLAS.

The locations of the areas of excavation were recorded by Geoffrey Osborne Ltd.

The heights of observations and/or archaeological remains were recorded relative to existing slab level. Ordnance Datum level information for existing basement slab was supplied by Geoffrey Osborne Ltd.

Where relevant, sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10; numbered contexts were allocated where appropriate.

The site finds and records can be found under the site code KSY05 in the MoL archive.

3.2 Results of the watching brief

In total, 4 separate test pits were excavated for engineering purposes and recorded by MoLAS. They were all located in the single basement area of the existing building. There follows a brief description of the archaeological deposits as recorded.

For all test pit locations see Fig 2

<i>Watching Brief Trench TP01</i>	
Location	South end of single basement area
Dimensions	1.24m by 0.80m
Modern ground level/top of slab	18.30m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	N/A
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	No archaeological deposits were observed
Level of base of deposits observed	17.90m OD
Natural observed	N/A

Excavation of TP01 revealed the presence of a red brick and concrete footing of a modern party wall and further excavation was abandoned.

<i>Watching Brief Trench TP02 (Fig 3)</i>	
Location	South end of single basement area
Dimensions	1.20m by 0.74m
Modern ground level/top of slab	18.30m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	17.90m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	No archaeological deposits were observed
Level of base of deposits observed	17.20m OD
Natural observed	17.90m OD

Natural mid orange clayey brickearth was recorded below the basement slab and rubble make-up at 17.90m OD. The top 0.15m of the brickearth deposit showed some evidence of root action.

<i>Watching Brief Trench TP03</i>	
Location	Southeast corner of the single basement area
Dimensions	0.60m by 0.60m
Modern ground level/top of slab	18.03m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	17.63m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	No archaeological deposits were observed
Level of base of deposits observed	1.09 m below basement slab
Natural observed	0.40 m below basement slab

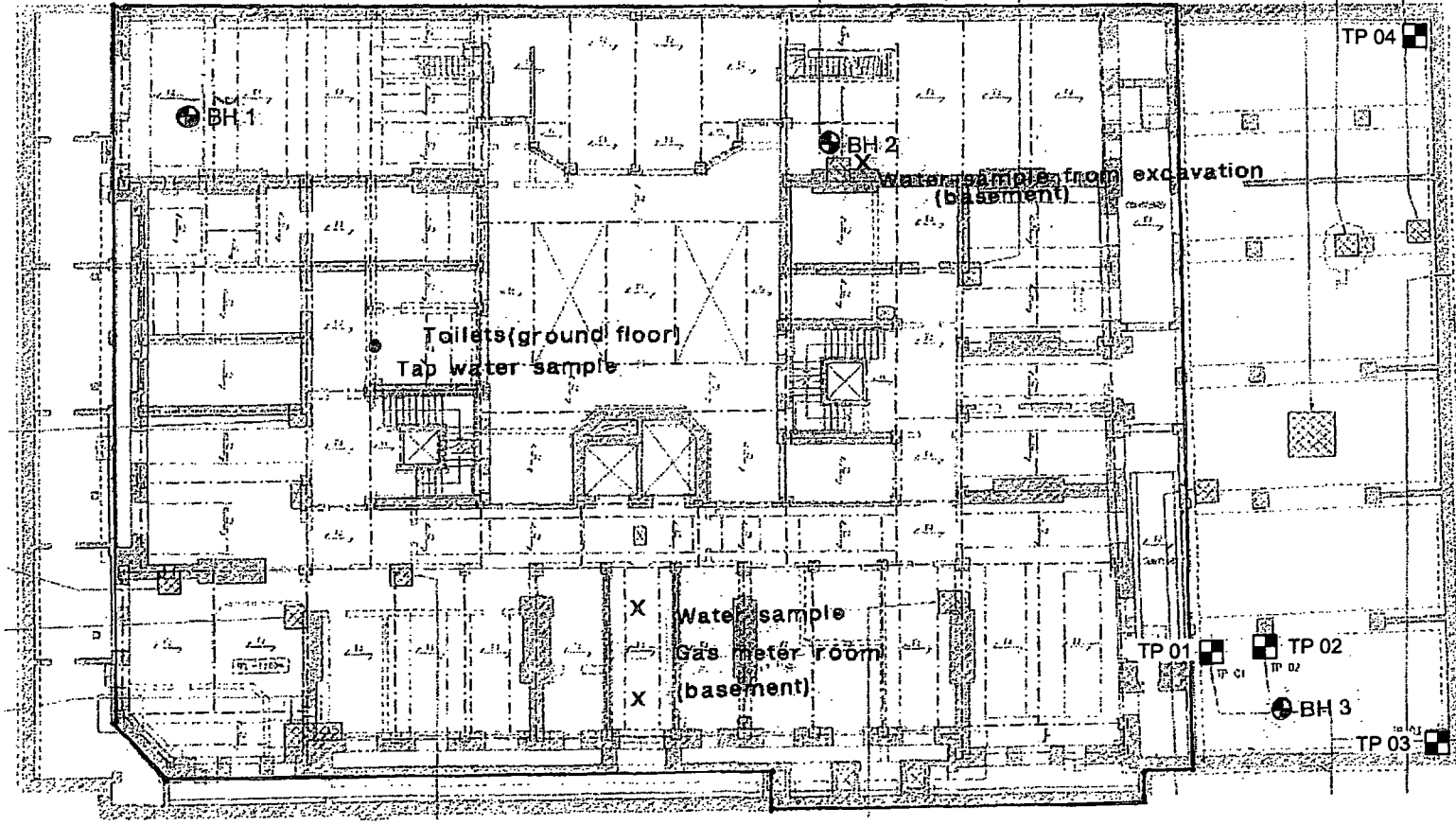
As in TP02 natural mid orange clayey brickearth was recorded, directly below the modern concrete slab and rubble make-up, at 17.63m OD. The top 0.15 m of the brickearth deposit showed some evidence of bioturbation in the form of root action.

<i>Watching Brief Trench TP04</i>	
Location	Northeast corner of the single basement area
Dimensions	1.00m by 0.60m
Modern ground level/top of slab	18.04m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	N/A
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	No archaeological deposits were observed
Level of base of deposits observed	16.84m OD
Natural observed	N/A

Modern made ground deposits consisting of mid reddish yellow to light yellow coarse sand were recorded below modern concrete slab and brick rubble, at approximately 17.51m OD. No archaeological or natural deposits were observed in TP04.



Basement Outline



SARDINIA STREET

Fig 2 Location of trial pits

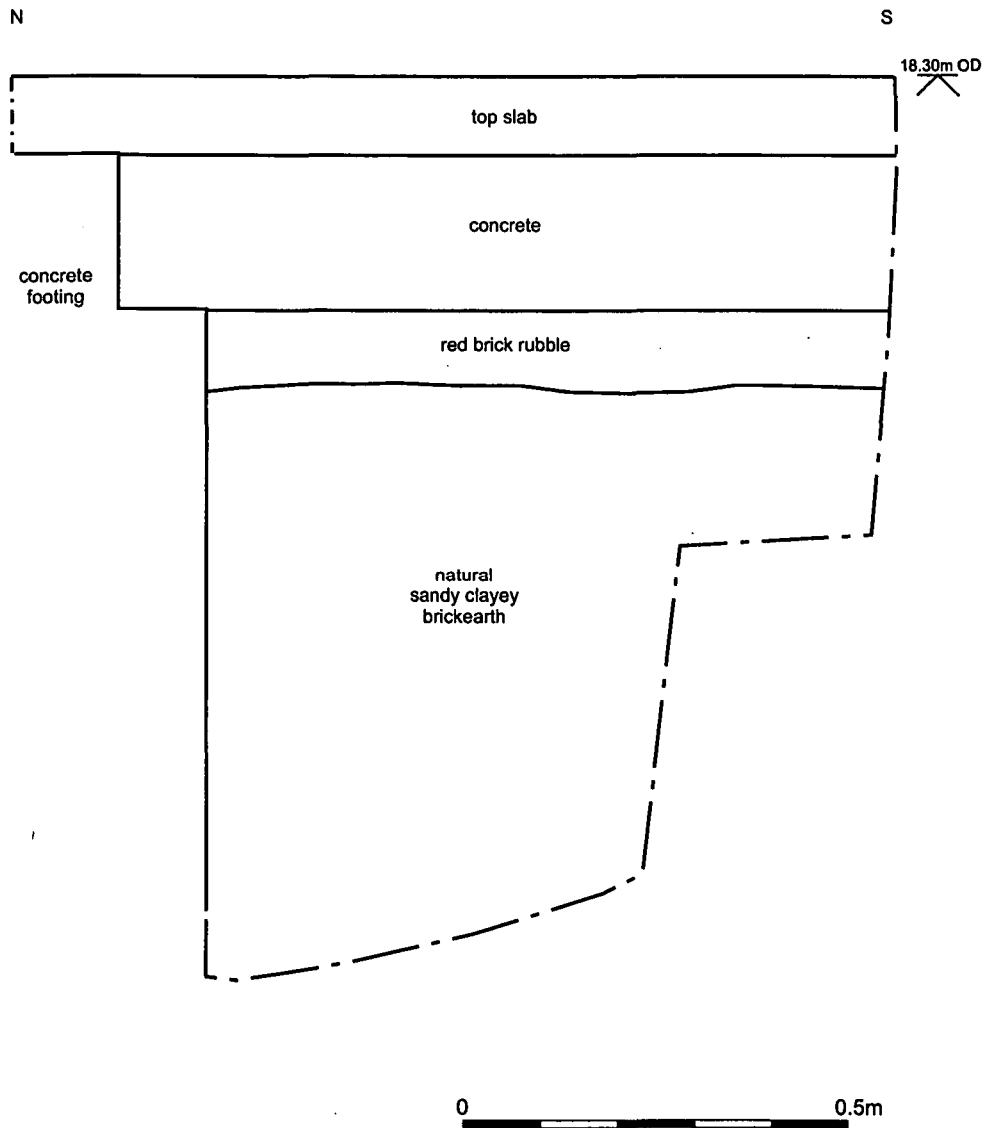


Fig 3 West facing section of TP02

4 Potential of archaeology

4.1 Original research aims

- What is the level of truncation caused by earlier basements in this area? What is the level and nature of natural deposits?

The trial pits monitored were all located in the area of existing single basement. Natural brickearth deposits were observed in trial pits TP02 and TP03 at 17.90m OD and 17.63m OD respectively. The observed brickearth deposits had been truncated by the existing basement as the surface of natural brickearth is thought to lie between 18.50m OD and 19.80m OD in this area. The double basement of the current building is likely to have removed all horizontal archaeological deposits down to natural gravel.

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

No archaeological deposits or features were encountered during the watching brief.

4.2 Significance of the data

The deposits encountered are of limited local significance, with reference to the localised topography.

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 terms of the *Method Statement* (Aitken, 2005) with the Museum of London 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 4.2) 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 trial pits monitored during the watching brief were located in the single basement area of the existing building. Natural brickearth deposits were encountered in two out of four trial pits. It appears that truncated brickearth deposits survive approximately 0.40m below the basement slab (17.63- 17.93m OD) in this area. As the surface of natural brickearth is estimated between 18.50m OD and 19.80m OD in this area, it appears that between 0.60 and 1.90m of the brickearth deposits had been removed by the existing single basement. In the areas of double basement the natural deposits are likely to have been truncated even further.

The truncated nature of the deposits would suggest that the majority of the potential archaeological deposits have been removed by the existing building. However, the possibility of deep cut features, such as wells or pits, surviving elsewhere in the single basement area cannot be totally discounted. It is therefore suggested that any further works to reduce the level of the single basement area be monitored by a competent archaeological organisation.

7 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following for their contributions and help in producing this report:

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9 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID: molas1-13075

Project details

Project name 24 Kingsway

Short description of the project Four geotechnical trial pits excavated for engineering purposes were monitored. The trial pits were all located in the area of existing single basement. Natural brickearth deposits were observed in trial pits TP02 and TP03 at 17.90m OD and 17.63m OD respectively. The observed brickearth deposits had been truncated by the existing basement.

Project dates Start: 28-09-2005 End: 24-11-2005

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes KSY01 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Community Service 1 - Community Buildings

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON CAMDEN HOLBORN 24 Kingsway

Postcode WC2

Study area 2000.00 Square metres

National reference grid TQ 30665 81276 Point

Height OD Min: 17.00m Max: 17.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation MoLAS

Project originator brief MoLAS project manager

Project originator design MoLAS

Project director/manager Ros Aitken

Project supervisor Johanna Vuolteenaho

Sponsor or funding body Geoffrey Osborne Ltd

Project archives

Physical recipient Archive LAARC

Digital recipient Archive LAARC

Digital Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Digital available Media 'Text'

Paper recipient Archive LAARC

Paper Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Paper available Media 'Map','Plan','Section','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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