



MARBLE ARCH HOUSE
Edgware Road
London W2

London Borough of Westminster

Watching brief report

November 2012



**Marble Arch House
Edgware Road
Westminster
London
W2**

London Borough of Westminster

Report on an archaeological watching brief

National Grid Reference: 527657 181117

Sign-off History:

Issue No.	Date:	Prepared by:	Checked/ Approved by:	Reason for Issue:
1	21/11/2012	Portia Askew	Craig Halsey	Client Issue

Graphics:

© Museum of London Archaeology

Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED
tel 0207 410 2200 fax 0207 410 2201 email generalenquiries@mola.org.uk

Summary (non-technical)

This report has been commissioned by the McLaren Group on behalf of the client to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out at Marble Arch House, Edgware Road, London, WC2.

A watching brief was monitored between 20th June and 9th August 2012 during underpinning works, and ground reduction. An earlier watching brief was carried out in June 2011 during excavation of geotechnical pits but no archaeological features were recorded

Natural deposits of gravels were observed sealed by modern rubble. The remains of a late 19th century wall foundation were recorded during underpinning works in the south-eastern part of the site.

Table of contents

1	Introduction	2
1.1	Site background	2
1.2	The planning and legislative framework	2
1.3	Planning background	2
1.4	Origin and scope of the report	2
1.5	Aims and objectives	3
2	Topographical and historical background	4
2.1	Archaeological background	4
3	The watching brief	5
3.1	Methodology	5
3.2	Results of the watching brief	5
4	Potential of archaeology	6
4.1	Original research aims	6
4.2	New research aims	6
4.3	Significance of the data	6
5	Publication and archiving	7
6	Conclusions	8
7	Acknowledgements	8
8	Bibliography	8

List of Illustrations

<i>Front cover: Ground reduction on the site (looking southeast)</i>		
Fig 1	Site location plan	1
Fig 2	Areas of investigation	14
Fig 3	Photograph showing ground reduction on south side of site (looking NW)	15
Fig 4	Photograph showing ground reduction on south side of site (lookingSE)	15



Based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. City of London 100023243 2012.

Scale 1:2,000 @ A4

0 100m

Fig 1 Site location

1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The watching brief took place at Marble Arch House, Edgware Road, Westminster, W2, hereafter called 'the site' (Fig 1). The site is bounded on the west side by Edgware Road, Seymour Street to the south, Seymour Place to the east Hampden Gurney Street and residential buildings to the north (Fig 2). The centre of the site is at OS National Grid Reference 527657 181117. The site is located in a relatively flat area with a gentle slope from north-east to south-west. The modern ground level is at 26.50m OD immediately to the west of the site. The early 20th century basement in the west of the site lies at 23.90m OD. The site code is SEU10.

A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was previously prepared for this watching brief (MOLA 2012). Archaeological watching briefs were carried out during geotechnical investigations in 2010 (MOLA 2010), in May 2011 (MOLA 2011, May) and June 2011 (MOLA 2011, June).

The works involved monitoring pile probing, excavation for pile caps, ground beams and underpinning.

1.2 The planning and legislative framework

The planning and legislative background for the site was summarised in the previous *Archaeological desk-based assessment* (MOLA 2009, section 3). Since planning permission was granted the Government issued the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 (DCLG 2012). Additionally the strategies and policies for the whole of the Greater London area are now contained within the London Plan of the Greater London Authority (GLA July 2011).

1.3 Planning background

Planning permission has been granted for the development of the site. Condition 36 relating to archaeology was attached to the consent.

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by the McLaren Group on behalf of the client and produced by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA). The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute for 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 were established in the preceding *Method Statement* (MOLA 2012), and are outlined in the following section.

The purpose of the present report is to analyse the results of the watching brief 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 following research aims and objectives were established in the *Method Statement* for the watching brief (Section 2.2):

- 1 What was the level of natural topography?
- 2 What are the earliest deposits identified?
- 3 Is there any evidence of cut features on the site such as wells, ditches and pits/quarry pits?
- 4 Does evidence of earlier foundations associated with structures pre-dating the existing buildings survive on the site?
- 5 What are the latest deposits identified?

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

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Archaeological background

A description of the geology, archaeology and history of the site was presented in the previous *Archaeological desk-based assessment* (MOLA 2009). A brief resume is provided here.

The site is located in a relatively flat area at 26.50m OD with a gentle slope from northeast to southwest. Archaeological investigations nearby showed truncated natural sands and gravels at levels between c 24.00m and 25.30m OD.

The nature of possible archaeological survival in the area of the proposed development is summarised here, taking into account the levels of natural geology and the level and nature of later disturbance and truncation.

The location of the site on well drained gravels close to predictable resources of the rivers Tyburn and Westbourne would have made the area ideal for settlement. Antiquarian discoveries of Palaeolithic and later prehistoric implements indicate early human activity in the study area. There is also potential for the discovery of residual Palaeolithic artefacts within the gravels or redeposited in Roman quarry fills.

There is little evidence of Roman activity in the vicinity of the site despite its location close to the projected line of Roman roads, which have not been archaeologically recorded in the area. It is likely that the site lay in open fields or woodland during this period, some distance from a possible settlement centred on a bridge crossing the Tyburn.

The site probably lay in open fields, some distance from the known settlements during the medieval period. Documentary evidence shows that by the early 19th century the site became built up as part of the general 18th and 19th century urban expansion into the areas surrounding London and Westminster. Construction of the existing buildings (the late 18th century terraced houses in the east of the site and the early 20th century building in the west), and in particular their basements, will have removed areas of post-medieval stratigraphy (i.e. floor levels, yard surfaces, etc). However, deep cut features such as ditches, cellars, conduits, cisterns, wells and pits may possibly survive below the truncation level. Nos 62-64 Seymour Street appear to date back to the late 18th century and are considered an important part of the archaeological record.

3 The watching brief

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and recording during the watching brief was done in accordance with the *Method Statement* (MOLA 2012) and the *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS, 1994).

Ground reduction and underpinning works carried out by contractors were monitored by a member of staff from the Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA).

The location of the area of excavation is shown on Fig 2 and was taken from plans supplied by McLaren.

The heights of observations and/or archaeological remains were recorded relative to a basement value of 23.90m OD.

The site has produced one site plan, and 6 digital photographs.

The site records can be found under the site code SEU10 in the MoL archive

3.2 Results of the watching brief

Two interventions were monitored on the site; a series of underpinning holes located on the east side of the site and ground reduction across the western and southern areas of the site (Fig 2).

Watching Brief on Underpinning Holes 1-4	
Location	66-68 Seymour Street
Dimensions	3.20m x 1.50mx 1.50m deep
Basement level	23.90mOD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	0.50m
Level of base of deposits observed	23.40mOD
Natural observed	Gravel over sand 23.40m OD

Watching Brief Ground reduction	
Location	Edgware Road
Dimensions	C 5m x 25m
Basement ground level	23.90m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	N/A
Natural observed	Gravel over sand 23.40m OD

The remains of a late 19th century wall foundation measuring 1.20m long by 1.00m wide by 0.50m deep was recorded in underpinning hole 2 (see fig 2).

4 Potential of archaeology

4.1 Original research aims

- What was the level of natural topography?

Natural sandy clay silt was found to be at its highest in the southwest part of the site at c 35.80m OD sloping gradually down to the southeast where it was at its lowest at 34.66m OD

- What are the earliest deposits identified?

No archaeological deposits were identified.

- Is there any evidence of prehistoric activity on the site?

No prehistoric activity was recorded in the areas observed.

- Is there any evidence of cut feature son the site such as wells, ditches and pits/quarry pits?

No evidence for cut features was found on the site.

- Does evidence of earlier foundations associated with structures pre-dating the existing buildings survive on the site?

The remains of a late 19th century wall foundation were located on the east side of the site and probably relate to one of the terrace houses fronting onto Seymour Street.

- What are the latest deposits identified?

The remains of a robbed out land drain at the eastern end of the haul road.

4.2 New research aims

The absence of any features or identifiable archaeological deposits has generated no new research aims.

4.3 Significance of the data

The archaeological evidence is of local significance and there is nothing to suggest 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 terms of the WSI (MOLA, 2012) with the LAARC (London Archaeological Archive Centre) within 12 months of the end of the watching brief.

In view of the very limited potential of the material (Sections 4) and the relatively limited significance of the data (Section 4.3) 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 evidence from the areas of investigation site indicate that the basements across the site have truncated all significant archaeological deposits with the only surviving elements relating to 19th century foundations of buildings fronting onto Seymour Street.

7 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Dominic Egan and Dan Kirby of the McLaren Group for commissioning this watching brief and the following for their contributions, and help in producing this report; Craig Halsey (MOLA project manager) and Juan Fuldain (MOLA Drawing Office).

8 Bibliography

Dept. of Communities and Local Government 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework*

English Heritage, 1991 *Exploring Our Past, Strategies for the Archaeology of England*

English Heritage, 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)*

English Heritage Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service, 2009 *Archaeological Guidance Papers 1-5*

English Heritage Centre for Archaeology Guidelines, various

Greater London Authority, July 2011 the *London Plan, Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London*

Institute for Archaeologists (IFA), 2001 *By-Laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Institute for Archaeologists* (rev. 2001), *Standard and guidance: watching brief*

Institute for Archaeologists (IFA), supplement 2001, *By-Laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Institute for Archaeologists: Standards and guidance – the collection, documentation conservation and research of archaeological materials*

Knight, H 2011 Marble Arch House, Edgware Road, London W2 – *An archaeological watching brief of geotechnical pts* (MOLA unpub report)

MOLA, 2009 Marble Arch House, Edgware Road, London W2, *An archaeological desk-based assessment*, MOLA unpub report

MOLA, 2010 64 Seymour Street, London W2 – *An archaeological watching brief of geotechnical pts* (MOLA unpub report)

MOLA, May 2011 62-64 Seymour Street, London W2 – *An archaeological watching brief of geotechnical pts* (MOLA unpub report)

MOLA, June 2011 Marble Arch House, Edgware Road, London W2 – *An archaeological watching brief of geotechnical pts* (MOLA unpub report)

MOLA, 2012 Marble Arch House, Edgware Road, Westminster, London W2: *written scheme of investigation for an archaeological watching brief* (unpub MOLA report)

Museum of London, 1994 *Archaeological Site Manual 3rd edition*

Museum of London, 2002 *A research framework for London archaeology 2002*

Thompson, A, Westman A, and Dyson, T (eds), 1998 *Archaeology in Greater London 1965-90: a guide to records of excavations by the Museum of London*, Archaeol Gazetteer Ser Vol 2, London

9 Oasis form

9.1 OASIS ID: molas1-137451

Project details

Project name	Marble Arch House
Short description of the project	A watching brief was monitored between 20th June and 9th August 2012 during underpinning works, and ground reduction. An earlier watching brief was carried out in June 2011 during excavation of geotechnical pits but no archaeological features were recorded. Natural deposits of gravels were observed sealed by modern rubble. The remains of a late 19th century wall foundation were recorded during underpinning works in the south-eastern part of the site.
Project dates	Start: 20-06-2012 End: 09-08-2012
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	SEU10 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	WALL FOUNDATION Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches", "Test Pits"
Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition

Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER WESTMINSTER Marble Arch House
Postcode	W2
Study area	1375.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 27657 81117 51 0 51 30 50 N 000 09 36 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 23.40m Max: 23.40m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	MOLA
Project brief originator	MOLA
Project design originator	MOLA
Project director/manager	Craig Halsey
Project supervisor	Portia Askew
Type of sponsor/funding body	McLaren Group
Name of sponsor/funding body	Mc Laren Group

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Media available	"Diary","Report","Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	M arble Arch House, Edgware Road, Westminster W2
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Askew, P
Date	2012
Issuer or publisher	Museum of London Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED
Description	A4 bound report

Entered by	Portia Askew (paskew@mola.org.uk)
Entered on	13 November 2012

OASIS:

Please e-mail [English Heritage](#) for OASIS help and advice

© ADS 1996-2012 Created by [Jo Gilham and Jen Mitcham, email](#) Last modified Wednesday 9 May 2012

Cite only: <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm> for this page

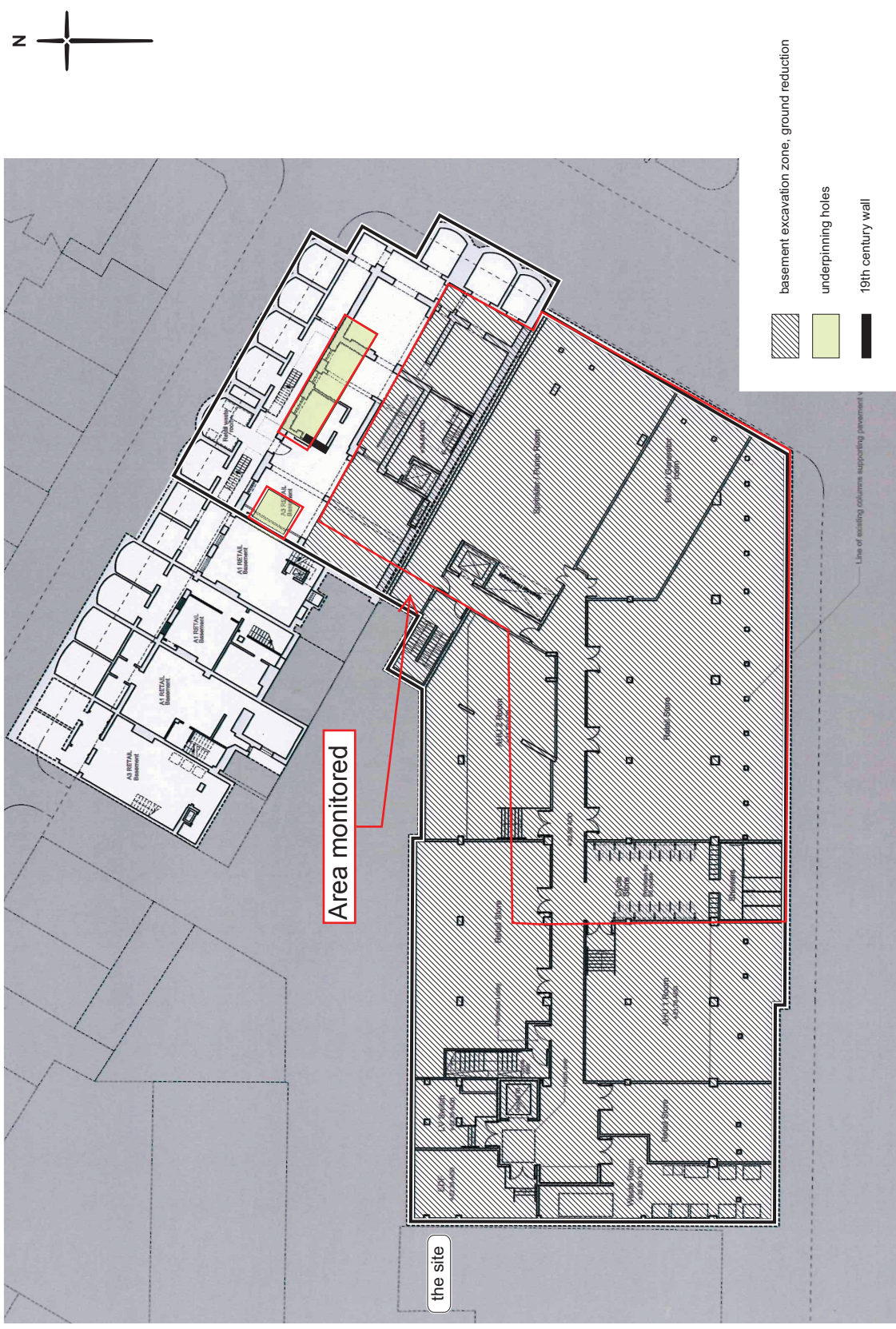


Fig 2 Area of archaeological watching brief



Fig 3 Photograph showing ground reduction on south side of site (looking NW)



Fig 4 Photograph showing ground reduction on south side of site (looking SE)