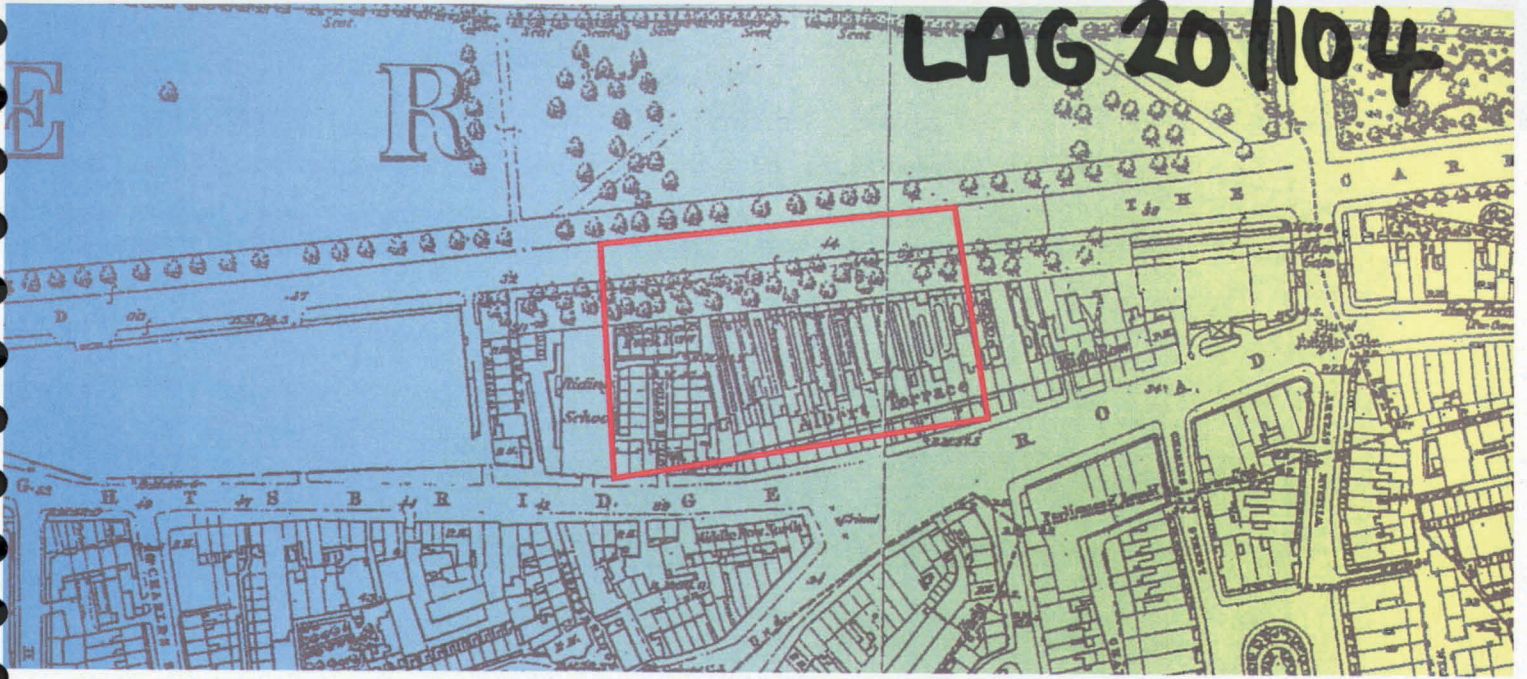


LAG 20/104



BOWATER HOUSE
68 Knightsbridge
London
SW1

City of Westminster

An archaeological evaluation report

September 2006

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SO: SW 78276
MO: M0 100455



MUSEUM OF LONDON
Archaeology Service

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BOWATER HOUSE
68 Knightsbridge
London
SW1

City of Westminster

An archaeological evaluation report

Site Code: KNI06
National Grid Reference: 527708 179735

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Summary (non-technical)

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by the Museum of London Archaeology Service on the site of Bowater House, 68 Knightsbridge, London, SW1. The report was commissioned from MoLAS by APS Project Management.

Following the recommendations of English Heritage geotechnical pits, observation pits and boreholes were archaeologically monitored.

The results of the field evaluation have helped to refine the initial assessment of the archaeological potential of the site. The construction of Bowater House has removed archaeological deposits from within the footprint of the building but it has been demonstrated that some deposits have survived beyond the present building line on the south side, on the Knightsbridge frontage. However, it has been partially demonstrated, that they have been removed by the earlier 19th-century cellared buildings, evidence for which was located in TP1. It has also been demonstrated that natural clay/silts do survive on the Knightsbridge frontage at a height of 9.66m OD and may afford some evidence for palaeosediments relating to a tributary of the Westbourne.

In the light of revised understanding of the archaeological potential of the site the report concludes the impact of the proposed redevelopment southwards, beyond the line of the current footprint, will destroy surviving pre 19th century archaeological evidence and the palaeosediments.

This assessment does not suggest that preservation in situ would be the appropriate mitigation strategy. MoLAS considers that there is no requirement for further archaeological work in the area of the present building's basement. It is suggested that any further mitigation occur in the form of archaeological monitoring (watching brief) during ground reduction in the area of proposed development that fronts onto Knightsbridge.

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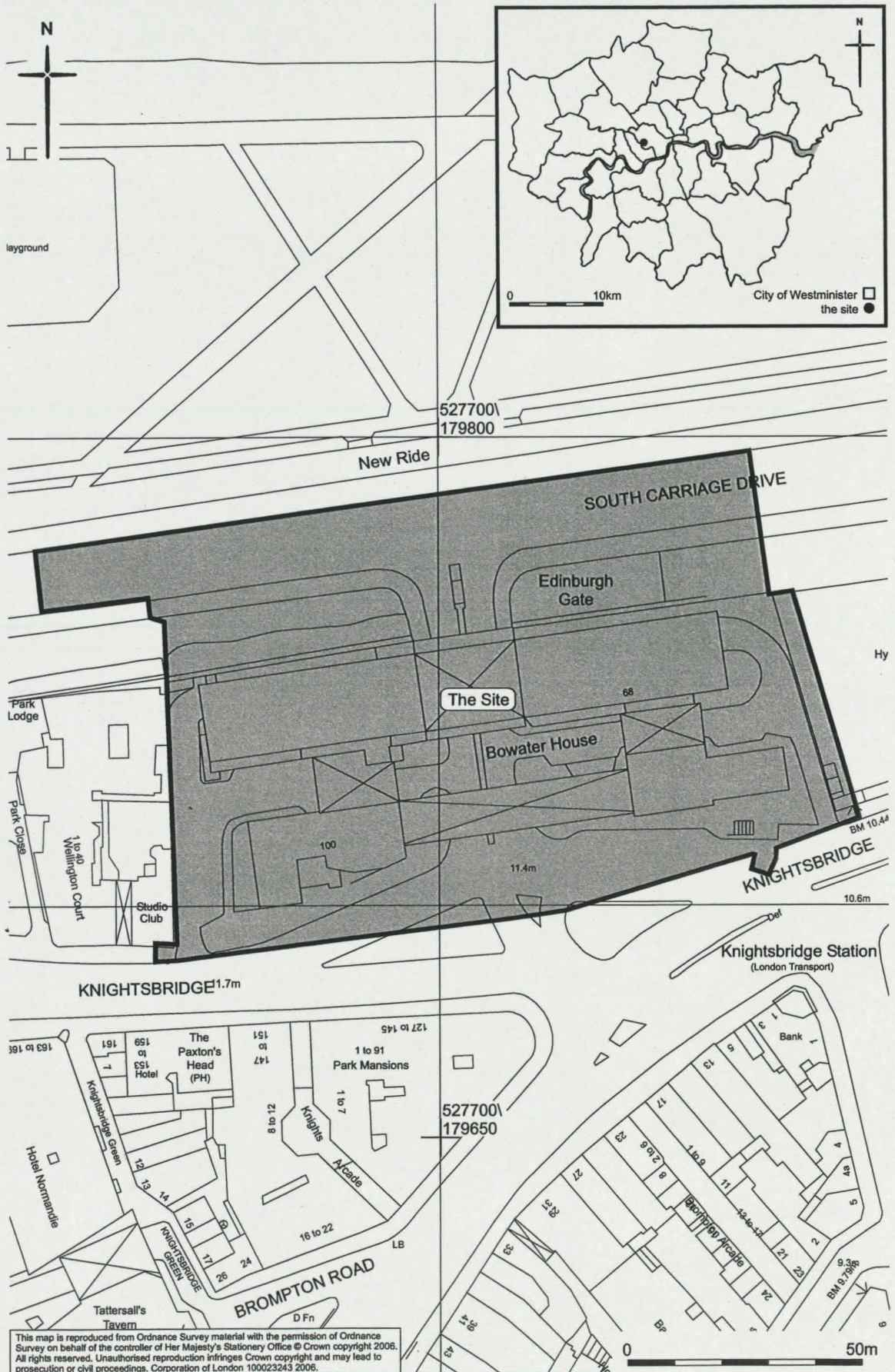


Fig 1 Site location

1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The evaluation took place at Bowater House, hereafter called 'the site'. It is located on the north side of Knightsbridge, London SW1. It is bounded on the east by the Hyde Park Hotel, to the north by South Carriage Drive and to the west by Wellington Court (Fig 1). The Ordnance Survey National Grid reference is 527708 179735. Modern ground levels around the site lie between *c* 11.4m at the south and *c* 12.5m OD at the north. The site code is KNI 06.

An *Archaeological desk-based assessment* was previously prepared, which covers the whole area of the site (MoLAS 2003) The *assessment* document should be referred to for information on the natural geology, archaeological and historical background of the site, and the initial interpretation of its archaeological potential.

An archaeological field evaluation was subsequently carried out on a series of geotechnical pits and borehole during March 2006.

1.2 Planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Method Statement*, which formed the project design for the evaluation (see MoLAS 2006, Section 1.2).

1.3 Planning background

The archaeological evaluation and this report were undertaken on the site to support an application for planning consent.

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by APS Project Management 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).

Field evaluation, and the *Evaluation report* which comments on the results of that exercise, are defined in the most recent English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage, 1998) as intended to provide information about the archaeological resource in order to contribute to the:

- formulation of a strategy for the preservation or management of those remains; and/or

- formulation of an appropriate response or mitigation strategy to planning applications or other proposals which may adversely affect such archaeological remains, or enhance them; and/or
- formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigations within a programme of research

1.5 Aims and objectives

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

The following research aims and objectives were established in the *Method Statement* for the evaluation (Section 2.2):

What is the nature and level of natural topography?

Are any of the deposits found indicative of a palaeochannel, possibly a former tributary of the Westbourne?

What are the earliest deposits identified?

Is there any evidence of Roman activity on the site?

Is there any evidence relating to the development of Saxon and/or medieval Knightsbridge?

What is the nature and extent of any post-medieval deposits on the site?

What are the latest deposits identified?

2 Topographical and historical background

This section is a brief resumé from the earlier *Archaeological desk-based assessment* (MoLAS 2003).

2.1.1 Geology and topography

The Thames Valley contains a number of substantial gravel terraces deposited by the river during successive glaciations *c* 450,000–50,000 years ago. The substantial terraces that cross Westminster in an east-west direction at *c* 17.00m to 20.00m OD are the Hackney and Lynch Hill phases respectively, the latter, forms the plateau of Hyde Park, north of the site. These two terraces are probably from the Wolstonian glaciation *c* 250,000 - 150,000 years ago and the Lynch Hill phase in particular is noted for Palaeolithic artefacts, eg Acheulian handaxes. These flint implements within the gravels are not normally *in situ*, having been eroded by the Thames from earlier deposits. The Lynch Hill and Hackney terraces are overlain by a 0.50 - 2.0m thick capping of a sandy silt termed 'brickearth' which formed in the late Devensian stage (32,000–10,000 years ago).

The sequence of terraces is also crossed by a number of tributaries of the Thames. The Serpentine is a remnant of the Westbourne river system, which crossed Hyde Park from Paddington south-east towards Sloane Square.

To the east of the site, a north–south band of alluvium defines the old route of the Westbourne. The British Geological Survey mapping shows that on the western half of the site, the terrace gravels have been eroded down to the London Clay. This may possibly be part of a palaeochannel that may represent a former tributary of the Westbourne. Although its entire course cannot be accurately predicted, part of this infilled valley appears to originate to the north along that later route of the Westbourne to the north in Hyde Park, and the valley fills here have produced Palaeolithic remains (see below).

2.1.2 Prehistoric

The natural Thames terrace gravels and brickearth in this area have a general background potential for prehistoric artefacts dating from the Palaeolithic through to Iron Ages. Because of their early date, the gravels may contain redeposited Palaeolithic material but any *in situ* evidence is normally later in date and confined to the upper part of the overlying brickearth, where this has survived. There have been some archaeological finds in the vicinity of Hyde Park. Those that are registered are generally isolated finds with little settlement implications.

An archaeological evaluation and watching brief carried out by MoLAS on the east side of Hyde Park in Park Lane revealed a small pit that contained 30 sherds of hand-made prehistoric pottery and a selection of worked flint dated to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age. The pottery included material that may have originated from a collared urn or grooved ware type fabric. The flint material was mainly waste

flakes or debitage from tool production although it did include a fine transverse arrowhead. It is notable that the remains of this pit had survived even though truncated by later post-medieval activity, the upper height of the pit was recorded at 19.16m OD, approximately one metre below the current ground height on that site. It is therefore possible that other prehistoric activity may still exist in the vicinity even if site truncation is evident.

2.1.3 Roman

The site lies some 2km to the west of Londinium, in an area of little known Roman settlement activity. It is likely that the area, which had light, well-drained fertile soils and was within a network of roads with easy access to Londinium, contained farms and field systems at this period. A major Roman road to Silchester runs north of Hyde Park (Oxford Street/Bayswater Road), and a smaller road, Akeman Street, follows the route of Kensington Road/Kensington High Street. The site probably lies between Roman roads in what was probably then a rural, agricultural landscape.

2.1.4 Saxon

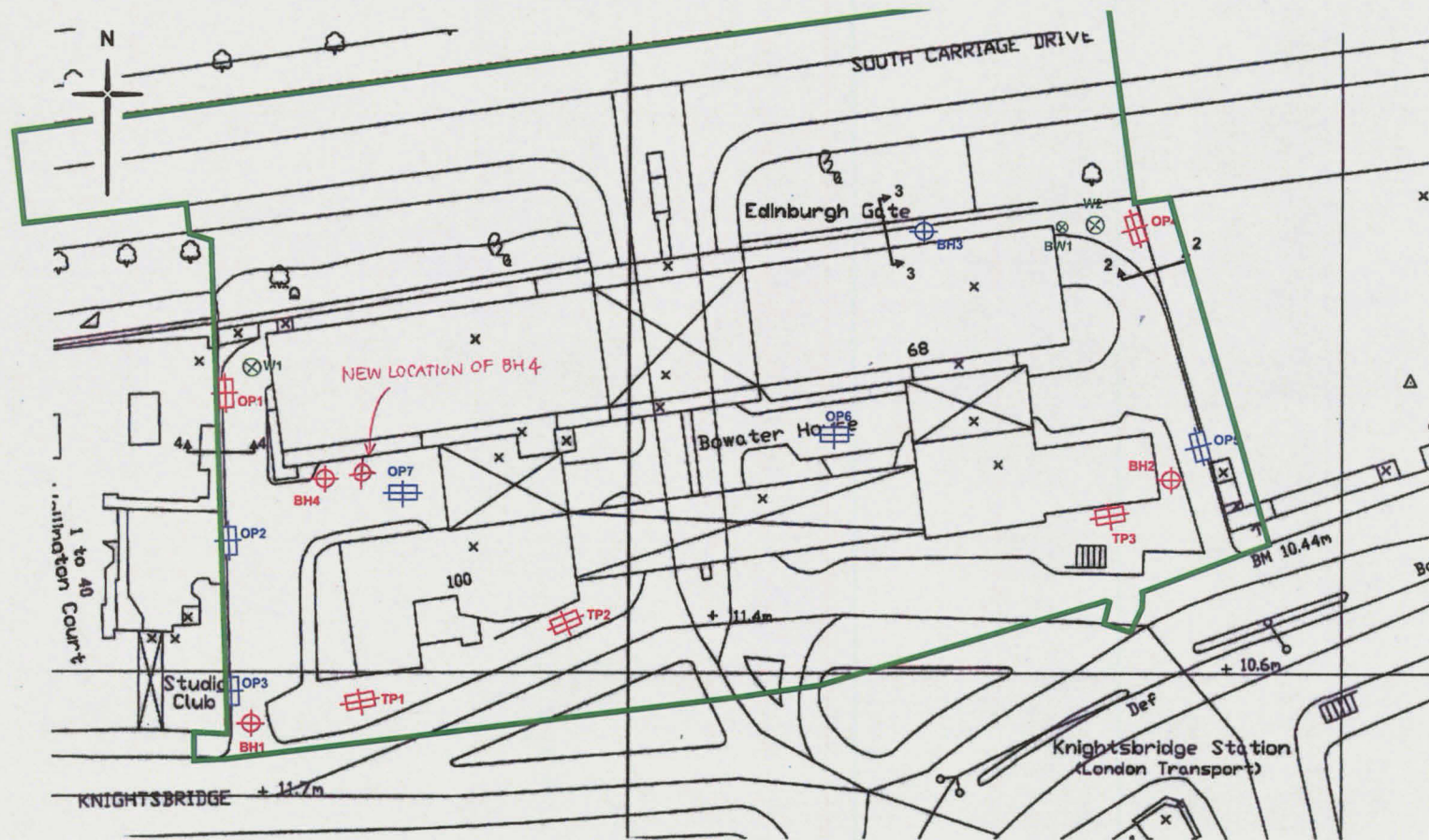
Knightsbridge is thought to date back to the 11th century and takes its name from the bridge that crossed the Westbourne or *Kynesbryrig* (MoLAS, 2003). The name probably originated from the legend that two knights fought to their deaths on it. The Greater Sites and Monument Records locate a Saxon bridge *c* 125m to the east of the site at the junction of Knightsbridge and William Street. Maps indicate a bridge from the 17th century in the village (see front cover) though the location of the bridge may have altered over time.

2.1.5 Medieval

The medieval village of Knightsbridge is thought to have been located to the south of present day Hyde Park on the road to Kensington near the 'knights bridge'. The site was located either within or on the hinterland of the village. Both Knightsbridge and Brompton Road are thought to be medieval routes. Medieval features around the site include the location of a medieval hospital, originally a lazar (leper) house founded by Westminster Abbey, to the east, and a moat to the north a feature probably associated with the former course of the Westbourne.

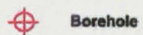
2.1.6 Post-medieval

The earliest large scale map available for consultation, Desmartz's map of 1717 shows the site as lying in fields to the south of Hyde Park on the north side of the road leading to Kensington. The only structure on the site is a small building at the north-west corner of the site. At this date to the north the Serpentine is still a series of pools. By the time of Rocque's map of 1746 the site has been built over and a row of terraces extends along the central and western areas of the site. Horwood's map of 1799 shows a similar layout with terraces stretching between Knightsbridge and a carriage route at the south of Hyde Park. At the west of the site, terraces front a north-south passageway.



KEY

Exploratory Holes Commenced from Ground Level (external)



Observation / Trial pit

Exploratory Holes Commenced from Existing Basement Level (Internal)



Observation / Trial pit

Geothermal Boreholes



Fig 2 Location plan of trial pits, observation pits and boreholes

3 The evaluation

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and monitoring during the evaluation was carried out in accordance with the preceding *Method Statement* (MoLAS 2006), and the MoLAS *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS 1994).

Seven observation pits and four boreholes were excavated on the site. In addition three trial pits were dug in the Knightsbridge pavement (Fig 2). The purpose of these was to provide information on the level and nature of the present foundations.

All investigations were excavated by contractors under MoLAS supervision.

The locations of the evaluation trenches were recorded by Arup's Engineers onto a survey plan titled (Dwg - Underground Services Survey @ 1:100 October 2005, sheet 5 of 6, Job No. PO32 dated 24/10/05 ELS Land Consultants Limited), tied into the OS grid.

A written and drawn record of all archaeological deposits encountered was made in accordance with the principles set out in the MoLAS site recording manual (MoLAS, 1994). Levels were calculated by measuring down from the adjacent current ground level.

The site has produced: 1 trench location plan and 14 trench sheets from the site. The site finds and records can be found under the site code KNI06 in the MoL archive.

3.2 Results of the evaluation

For Location of Investigations see (Fig 2).

3.2.1 Boreholes

<i>Borehole 1 (BH1)</i>	
Location	Southwest corner of building within basement
Dimensions	0.45m deep by 150mm diam
Modern ground level/top of slab	7.29m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	6.84m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	N/A
Natural observed	6.84m OD London Clay

Located in the southwest corner of the building, within the basement, BH1 found London Clay immediately below the concrete slab at 6.84mOD.

<i>Borehole 2 (BH2)</i>	
Location	Southeast corner of site, external to the building
Dimensions	0.45m deep by 150mm diam
Top of basement slab	7.62m OD
Base of slab	7.27m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	5.54m OD
Natural observed	7.24m OD

Borehole 2 found a layer of sandy clay at a depth of 5.20m depth (5.54mOD). Above this lay a thick (1.70m) layer of gravely clay. Above this was the (0.38m thick) concrete floor of the basement in this area.

<i>Borehole 3 (BH3)</i>	
Location	Northeast corner of the site within car park basement
Dimensions	2.70m deep x 150mm diam.
Modern ground level/top of slab	7.25m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	3.50m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	N/A
Natural observed	3.50m OD

The slab was 3.75m thick and this, as with evidence from other trial pits and boreholes in the vicinity indicated that no archaeological survival were present.

<i>Borehole 4 (BH4)</i>	
Location	Northwest corner of the site within car park basement
Dimensions	0.45m deep x 150mm diam.
Modern, top of basement slab	6.61m OD
Base of modern slab	6.24m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	N/A
Natural observed	6.24m OD London Clay

Located in the Northwest corner of the building, within the basement, BH4 found London Clay immediately below the concrete slab at 6.24m OD.

3.2.2 Observation Pits

Observation pits 1, 2, 3 and 4 were rake cores through concrete and did not yield any viable archaeological information.

<i>Observation pit 5 (OP5)</i>	
Location	Southeast corner of the site
Dimensions	
Modern ground level/top of slab	
Base of modern fill/slab	
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	
Level of base of deposits observed	
Natural observed	

At the time of writing this report, permission had not been granted for the work to be carried out on this observation pit.

<i>Observation pit 6 (OP6)</i>	
Location	Central eastern side of the site, within basement
Dimensions	1.50m x 1.50m x 0.50m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	7.21m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	6.92m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	N/A
Natural observed	6.92m OD London Clay

Located in the central eastern part of the building, within the basement, London Clay was present immediately below the concrete slab at 6.92m OD

<i>Observation pit 7 (OP7)</i>	
Location	Central western side of the site, within basement
Dimensions	1.50m x 1.50m x 0.50m deep
Top of slab	7.04m OD
Base of modern slab	6.64m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	N/A
Natural observed	6.64m OD London Clay

Located in the central western part of the building, within the basement, London Clay was present immediately below the concrete slab at 6.64m OD.

3.2.3 Test Pits

<i>Test pit 1 (TP1)</i>	
Location	Knightsbridge frontage (west)
Dimensions	1.90m x 1.10m x 1.93m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	Pavement 11.54m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	11.59m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	0.50m
Level of base of deposits observed	9.81m OD
Natural observed	N/A

Test pit 1 was located on the pavement of Knightsbridge frontage on the west side of the site. The pit revealed a yellow stock brick wall measuring 0.30m wide by 0.50m high (maximum height observed) aligned northeast/southwest on the western side of the pit at a height of *c* 9.61mOD. Above the wall was a 1.33m deep deposit consisting of compact mixed deposit of gravel, redeposited clay and brick rubble at a height of *c* 10.94m OD. Sealing the rubble was a 0.60m depth of concrete rubble makeup for the pavement, at 11.54m OD.

<i>Test pit 2 (TP2)</i>	
Location	Knightsbridge frontage - central
Dimensions	1.80m x 0.60m x 1.30m deep; at west end 2.85m deep
Modern ground level	Pavement 11.20m OD
Base of modern fill	9.66m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	9.66m OD
Natural observed	9.66m OD Buff/yellow alluvial clay/silt

Test pit 2 was located on the pavement of Knightsbridge frontage. The pit revealed Alluvial clay/silt at a height of *c* 9.66m OD, beneath a 1.54m depth of mixed rubble surrounding three modern ceramic pipes, the top of which was recorded at a height of 11.15m OD. The pavement level lies at 11.20mOD.

<i>Test pit 3 (TP3)</i>	
Location	Knightsbridge frontage (east)
Dimensions	<i>c</i> 2.50m x 2.50 x 3m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	Pavement 10.78m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	10.72m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	7.79m OD
Natural observed	N/A

Test pit 3 (TP3) was located on the pavement of Knightsbridge frontage on the east side of the site. Beneath the concrete paving slab were re-deposited, 19th century, sands and gravels (containing clinker). The pit revealed the extension the concrete basement of Bowater House into this area at 1.5m depth in the north of the pit. To the

south, made ground was further excavated to a further depth of 3m through a deposit of yellowish brown clayey sand with occasional brick fragments present.

4 Archaeological potential

4.1 Realisation of original research aims

What is the nature and level of natural topography?

Truncated London Clay was found to lie from 6.84mOD within the basement area of the building. On the Knightsbridge frontage, only one trench, TP2, revealed possible alluvial clay/silt at a height of 9.66m OD.

Are any of the deposits found indicative of a palaeochannel, possibly a former tributary of the Westbourne?

No deposits indicative of a palaeochannel were found on the site.

What are the earliest deposits identified?

The earliest evidence found on the site dates to the late 19th/early 20th century

Is there any evidence of Roman activity on the site?

No evidence for Roman activity was found on the site.

Is there any evidence relating to the development of Saxon and/or medieval Knightsbridge?

No evidence for Roman activity was found on the site.

What is the nature and extent of any post-medieval deposits on the site?

The earliest evidence found on the site dates to the late 19th/early 20th century and is represented by the brick wall found in TP1. This wall may date to the late 19th century and be the remains from one of the tenements forming part of Albert Terrace, that fronted onto Knightsbridge Road (see front cover and Miller, 2003).

What are the latest deposits identified?

The latest deposits represent modern backfill of utility services, as evidenced in TP2 and modern demolition material above the wall in TP1.

4.2 General discussion of potential

The evaluation has shown that the potential for survival of ancient ground surfaces (horizontal archaeological stratification) on the site is very low on the area of the site, where all archaeological and palaeoenvironmental deposits have been destroyed by the construction of Bowater House. To the south of the building, on the Knightsbridge frontage, deposits dating from the 19th century and early 20th centuries were in evidence, along with alluvial clay/silts, suggesting moderate potential for palaeoenvironmental deposits.

4.3 Significance

Whilst the archaeological remains are undoubtedly of local significance there is nothing to suggest that they are of regional or national importance.

5 Proposed development impact and recommendations

The proposed redevelopment at Bowater House, 68 Knightsbridge, London SW1 involves the demolition of the current building and the redevelopment to form both retail and residential units. The basement area will be redeveloped for residential leisure and carparking facilities, extended south beneath Knightsbridge and deepened to form a three level basement.

Previous activity on the site in the form of the existing basement of Bowater House has removed archaeological deposits from within the footprint of the building but it has been demonstrated that some deposits have survived beyond the present building line, on the Knightsbridge frontage and that some have been removed by the earlier 19th-century cellared buildings that formed Albert Terrace.

It has also been demonstrated that natural alluvial deposits survive on the Knightsbridge frontage and may afford some evidence for palaeosediments relating to a tributary of the Westbourne.

The assessment above (Section 5) does not suggest that preservation *in situ* would be the appropriate mitigation strategy. MoLAS considers that there is no requirement for further archaeological work in the area of the present building's basement. It is suggested that any further mitigation occur in the form of archaeological monitoring (watching brief) during ground reduction in the area of proposed development that fronts on to Knightsbridge.

The decision on the appropriate archaeological response to the deposits revealed within Bowater House rests with the Local Planning Authority and their designated archaeological advisor.

6 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank APS Project Management for funding the evaluation and Theerasak Kaewkhluab of Arup's for providing survey plans of the building. Thanks also to Diane Walls of English Heritage.

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8 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

8.1 OASIS ID: molas1-14560

Project details

Project name Bowater House, 68 Knightsbridge

Short description of the project An archaeological evaluation demonstrated that the construction of Bowater House had removed archaeological deposits from within the footprint of the building but it was demonstrated that some deposits had survived beyond the present building line on the south side, on the Knightsbridge frontage. However, it was partially demonstrated, that they had been removed by the earlier 19th-century cellared buildings, evidence for which was located in TP1. It was also demonstrated that natural clay/silts survived on the Knightsbridge frontage at a height of 9.66m OD and may afford some evidence for palaeosediments relating to a tributary of the Westbourne.

Project dates Start: 27-03-2006 End: 30-03-2006

Previous/future work Yes

Any associated KNI06 - Sitecode
project reference
codes

Type of project Field evaluation

Methods & 'Test Pits'
techniques

Development type Mixed retail and residential

Prompt Planning condition

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

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER PADDINGTON
BAYSWATER AND KNIGHTSBRIDGE Bowater House, 68

Knightsbridge, London SW1

Postcode SW1

Study area 6850.00 Square metres

National reference grid TQ 2770 7973 Point

Height OD Min: 9.66m Max: 9.66m

Project creators

Name of MoLAS
Organisation

Project originator brief Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body

Project originator design MoLAS

Project director/manager Ros Aitken

Project supervisor Portia Askew

Sponsor or funding body APS Project Management

Project archives

Paper recipient Archive LAARC

Paper available Media 'Plan','Report'

Paper Archive notes Trench sheets

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title Bowater House, 68 Knightsbridge, London SW1 - An
Archaeological Evaluation Report
Author(s)/Editor(s) Askew, P
Date 2006
Issuer or publisher Museum of London Archaeology Service
Place of issue or publication Museum of London Archaeology Service
Entered by Portia Askew (portiaa@molass.org.uk)
Entered on 26 April 2006

*Please e-mail [English Heritage](mailto:English_Heritage@ahds.ac.uk) for OASIS help and advice
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