



**55–58 ST MARTIN'S LANE
London WC2**

City of Westminster

Evaluation report

March 2014



**55-58 St Martin's Lane
London
WC2**

Site Code SAM14
NGR 530085 180775
OASIS reference molas1-175221

Planning reference 13/07807/FULL
Condition No 6

Report on an archaeological evaluation

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Summary

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by MOLA at 55-58 St Martin's Lane, London WC2. The report was commissioned from MOLA by Fresson & Tee on behalf of the client Shaftesbury Covent Garden Ltd.

The evaluation comprised the investigation of three trial pits in the basement of No 58 St Martin's Lane between 17 and 18 March 2014. The work was conducted in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2014, 05 Feb 2014).

No archaeological deposits or features were found, and the current cellar appears to have truncated natural gravels down to at least 17.49m OD.

The report concludes that any horizontal archaeological stratigraphy that may have once been present on the site in the area to be reduced as part of the redevelopment (i.e. No 58 St Martin's Lane) had been removed along with the surface of the natural geology during the construction of the existing cellar.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was carried out by MOLA at 55-58 St Martin's Lane, London, WC2 ('the site') between 17-18 March 2014 (see Fig 1). This document is the Report on that work.
- 1.1.2 The site comprises 55-58 St Martin's Lane in Covent Garden and is bounded by New Row to the north, properties fronting New Row to the east, a public house to the south and St Martin's Lane to the west. The centre of the site lies at National Grid reference 530085 180775 (Fig 1). The site is currently occupied by the Angel and Crown Public House and shops with accommodation above fronting St Martin's Lane. Modern pavement level near to the site lies at c 20m Ordnance Datum (OD). The existing basement slabs lie at a variety of levels from c 16.50m OD at the west of the site to c 17.70m OD and c 17.20m OD at the east.
- 1.1.3 A *Written Scheme of Investigation* was prepared in advance of this fieldwork (MOLA 2014). This document included information on the natural geology, archaeological and historical background of the site, and the initial interpretation of its archaeological potential.

1.2 Planning background

- 1.2.1 The legislative and planning framework in which the evaluation took place was fully set out in the *Written Scheme of* which formed the project design for the evaluation (see Section 1.2, MOLA 2014). To summarise here:
- 1.2.2 The evaluation was carried out to address the requirements of a condition attached to the planning permission 13/07807/FULL granted by the local authority, City of Westminster. Condition number 6 required that:-
- a) *the applicant must apply to the City of Westminster for approval of a written scheme of investigation for a programme of archaeological work including details of the suitably qualified person or organisation that will carry out the work and that work cannot start until it is approved.*
 - b) *The archaeological work and development must be carried according to the approved scheme. A written report of the investigation and findings must be produced showing the archaeological work and development has been carried out according to the approved scheme and copies of the report sent to English Heritage.*

- c) *No part of the new building to be used until it is confirmed that the archaeological work and development has been carried out according to the approved scheme.*

1.3 Scope of the evaluation

1.3.1 Evaluation is defined by English Heritage as intended to provide information about the archaeological resource in order to contribute to the:

1.3.1.1 - *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*

1.3.1.2 - *formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigations within a programme of research*

1.3.2 An archaeological evaluation is a limited fieldwork exercise designed to test the conclusions of preliminary desk based work. It is not the same as full excavation.

1.3.3 The evaluation was carried out within the terms of the relevant Standard for evaluation specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (IFA, 2009).

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

1.3.5 All work was undertaken within research aims and objectives established in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* for the evaluation (see Section 2.2, MOLA 2014)

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Geology and topology

- 2.1.1 The natural deposits in the area of the site typically consist of a 0.50m to 2.00m thick cap of brickearth deposits sealing sands and gravels of the Hackney Gravels. In the vicinity of the site road heights reflect the north-south slope of the local topography. At the north end of St Martin's Lane close to the junction with Garrick Street the road level is 21.2m OD, whilst to the north of the site this drops to 19.4m and further south adjacent to 47-49 St Martin's Lane to 17.8m OD. The natural topography north of the site at the western end of Long Acre slopes down towards a suggested former watercourse running south towards Trafalgar Square and the Thames, down what is now St Martin's Lane. This stream may have originated in a marshy area at the top of Upper St Martin's Lane.
- 2.1.2 Excavation a At 1-3 Long Acre, c 80m to the north of the site, the gravels survived to a level of between 17.70 and 17.10m OD across the site or 2.6 to 3.2m below ground level, brickearth had been truncated. Street level adjacent to 1-3 Long Acre was 20.30m OD. At 7-8 New Row, c 30m east of the site the gravels were not reached, and had a surface level below 17.69m OD.

2.2 Prehistoric period

- 2.2.1 There is little evidence close to the site for prehistoric activity. Given the extent of later activity including quarrying it is unlikely that any ephemeral features would survive. The discovery of isolated redeposited finds cannot be entirely excluded however. There is, therefore, a low potential for prehistoric remains on the site.

2.3 Roman period

- 2.3.1 The projected route of a Roman road into the city runs to the south of the site roughly along the alignment of the Strand and Fleet Street. Excavations immediately north of this projected road alignment at St Martin in the Fields Church (site code SMD01), c 200m south of the site, unearthed remains of an early Roman building and a large industrial Roman tile kiln dated to the first half of the 5th-century and three Roman burials, one in a limestone sarcophagus, orientated south-west which contained the skeleton was of a male radiocarbon dated to AD 410.
- 2.3.2 Excavations directly in the site vicinity have produced little evidence for Roman features close to the site. The small amount of evidence from surrounding sites tends to be residual such as the retrieval

from deposits at Lading House, 10-14 Bedford Street (site code LHB94), of some residual Roman tile from later features.

2.4 Early medieval/Saxon period

- 2.4.1 London in the period immediately following the collapse of the Roman administration in AD 410 is uncertain, although it is widely believed that London was completely abandoned by the end of the 5th century. However, by the 7th century a new Saxon settlement had been established a few miles upstream around Aldwych and Covent Garden. This was referred to in the 8th century by the Anglo Saxon writer and scholar, the Venerable Bede as *Ludenwic*.
- 2.4.2 Numerous sites in the sites vicinity have provided evidence for Saxon occupation. To the south excavation at the National Gallery (site code NAG87) and St Martin's in the Field Church (site code SMD01) have revealed evidence of Saxon stratigraphy including buildings, ditches, pitting and a well. Burials were also encountered including one of high status, containing a silver ring, a small green glass palm cup and a copper hanging bowl dated to late 6th – early 7th century. To the north of the site investigation at 8-9 Long Acre (site code LGO00) rubbish pits and a barrel-lined well were revealed dated to the Middle Saxon period and contained a loomweight fragment, a fragment of lava quernstone, a bronze object (possibly an ear-scoop) and a sandstone hone. A few sherds of residual Early Saxon pottery were also found, and provide further evidence for 5th or 6th-century settlement in the area.
- 2.4.3 Closer to the site itself, immediately to the east, investigation at 7-8 New Row recorded possible mid-Saxon deposits, including a rubbish pit (site code NER92). Further east investigations at 21-26 Bedford Street (site code BDF89) recorded five pits containing middle Saxon pottery as well as loom weight fragments pieces of burnt daub, quern stone and worked bone cut offs including antler. A ditch of uncertain date was also recorded. In the same year probable Saxon deposits containing Ipswich ware and North French burnished ware were recorded in the road adjacent to 39-40 Bedford Street (site code BDS 89). To the south-east at 10-14 Bedford Street (site code LHB94) five pits dated to the middle Saxon period and which contained pottery, animal bone, burnt clay loomweights and daub were excavated. Similarly to the south-east of the site at 15-16 Bedford Street (site code BDO04) numerous Middle Saxon pits of 7th-8th century date were located one of which contained numerous pieces of worked bone including antler, suggesting the possible location of a nearby workshop. Further to the south-east of the site at the Peabody site Bedfordbury (site code PEA87) excavations revealed a Middle Saxon sequence of occupation deposits capped with 'dark earth'.

2.5 Late medieval period

- 2.5.1 In the medieval period, the area was part of the garden of the Convent of St Peter's, Westminster ('Covent Garden'), first referred to in a document attributed to the reign of King John (1199–1216). The area was circumscribed by Long Acre, St Martins Lane, Drury Lane and a line roughly parallel with the Strand. The garden was divided into orchard, arable, meadow and pasture land, with strips of market gardens owned by the monks. Some of its produce supplied the monastery, and the rest was sold. The garden was leased by the Abbot and convent to a succession of lessees from 1465 until 1536 when it came into Henry VIII's possession at the Dissolution. It is assumed that these activities, consistent with open land and agricultural/market gardening activity, contributed to the accumulation of the soil deposits which overlie the remains of the preceding Saxon town.
- 2.5.2 The main medieval settlements in the area were the village of Charing and along the route of the former Roman road along The Strand. Charing owed its existence to its position at an important junction of The Strand (the road to the City), with the road to Westminster Abbey and Palace and, probably, with a road to the west. Until the reign of Henry VIII, it consisted only of a very small church with a few houses clustered round it.
- 2.5.3 Archaeological evidence for the later medieval period from surrounding site is relatively scarce although opposite the site at 60-62 St Martin's Lane (site code NEO07) monitoring recorded a 15th/17th-century ditch or extraction pit. Excavations at the National Gallery and St Martin's in the Field Church have revealed evidence of medieval activity post-dating Saxon activity however in the direct vicinity of the site little has been recorded. It is likely during the medieval period the site was located in the open fields of the convent garden. The later Agas map, dated to the 1560s, shows the site located in a large walled open area located to the north of St Martin's Church and south of Long Acre which is probably the remnants of the convent garden.

2.6 Post-medieval period

- 2.6.1 After the dissolution of the monasteries the land of Covent Garden was granted to John Russell, 1st Earl of Bedford. The 3rd Earl of Bedford subsequently built Bedford House north of the Strand. Francis Russell became 4th Earl of Bedford in 1627 secured a license for building a number of houses and called in Inigo Jones as his architect.
- 2.6.2 The site remained open land until the early to mid -17th century after which streets in the area were laid out as part of the Bedford Estate Covent Garden development. Faithorne and Newcourt's map of 1658 shows St Martin's Lane Street as built up with buildings all

along both sides of the street including the site with New Row established by his date. Covent Garden Market is shown to the west as an enclosed open area. The market was established in the mid-17th-century and expanded throughout the second half of this century. The site lay to the west of the market and by the mid -18th century the area had been more densely built up. Rocque's map of 1746 shows this and that Goodwins Court, located within the site, was present by this date. Horwood's map of 1799 shows a similar plan with tenements and shops fronting St Martins' Lane and New Row. Late 19th-century maps show the site layout as it appears today.

- 2.6.3 No 58 St Martin's Lane, a Grade II listed building, is described in the English Heritage listings as late 18th or early 19th-century rebuild with mid-19th century and some 20th-century alteration. No 1. New Row is also Grade II listed and incorporated into the Crown and Angel Public House and is described as terrace house and shop, 17th or early 18th-century origin, refronted in the early 19th century.

3 Evaluation methodology

3.1 Field methodology

- 3.1.1 Three trial pits were investigated.
- 3.1.2 The basement slab was broken out and cleared by contractors under MOLA supervision. Trenches were excavated by the contractors, and monitored by a MOLA supervisor.
- 3.1.3 Archaeological investigation was carried out in accordance with the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (MOLA 2014)
- 3.1.4 Trench locations were plotted on plans provided by the client using an 'offset methodology' and subsequently tied to the OS grid by MOLA Geomatics.

3.2 Recording methodology

- 3.2.1 A written and drawn record of all archaeological deposits encountered was carried out in accordance with the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (MOLA 2014).

3.3 Site archive

Number of trench record sheets	3
Number of overall location plans	1
Number of Context sheets	0
Number of photographs	7
Number of Plan sheets	0

4 Results of the evaluation

For trial pit locations see Fig 2.

4.1 Trench A

Location	North wall central basement area
Dimensions	0.90m E/W x 0.75m N/S
Top of modern slab	c 17.69m OD
Slab	0.20m thick
Make-up	0.20m thick
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	N/A
Top of surviving natural observed at	c 17.49m OD
Level of base of trench	c 16.69m OD

4.1.1..Natural was an orange sandy gravel at c 17.49m OD.

4.1.2..There were no archaeological features in this trial pit.



Trial pit A looking north.

4.2 Trench B

Location	South wall central basement area
Dimensions	1.50m E/W x 1.0m N/S
Top of modern slab	c 17.68m OD
Slab	80mm-0.12m thick
Make-up	0.25-0.30m thick
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	N/A
Top of surviving natural observed at	c 17.28-17.43m OD
Level of base of trench	c 17.18m OD

4.2.1 ..Natural was an orange sandy gravel and its height varied between 17.28 and 17.43m OD; this variation is more a product of the level of modern disturbance rather than a change in topography.

4.2.2..There were no archaeological features in this trial pit.



Trial pit B looking east

4.3 Trench C

Location	West wall western basement area
Dimensions	1.0m E/W x 0.80m N/S
Top of modern slab	c 16.51m OD
Slab	50mm thick
Make-up	0.25m thick
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	c 15.85m OD
Top of surviving natural observed at	N/A
Level of base of trench	c 15.85m OD

4.3.1..Natural was not reached in this trial pit.

4.3.2..There was a mixed deposit of silt, concrete fragments and broken glass that was interpreted as recent and may be connected to under pinning of walls in this area of the cellar.

4.3.3..The trial pit was excavated to c 15.85m OD; this was below the level of the cellar wall to the west and the concrete foundation to the south.



Trial pit C looking west

4.4 The site as a whole

4.4.1 There were no archaeological deposits or features in the trial pits, suggesting the current cellar floor had removed everything down to the natural gravel.

4.4.2 The top of the natural gravel was from 17.49 to 17.43m OD. There appears to be more disturbance in the lower cellar to the west, as natural was not reached at 15.85m OD.

5 Archaeological potential

5.1 Answering original research aims

5.1.1 Only the following of the original research aims in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (section 2.2.3 MOLA 2014) can be answered;

- *What was the level of natural topography?*

Natural gravel varied from c 17.49 to 17.28m OD.

- *What are the latest deposits identified?*

The only deposit noted was in trial pit C and appeared to be 20th century (or later) and was associated with the cellar.

5.2 General discussion of potential

5.2.1 The evaluation has shown that the potential for survival of ancient ground surfaces (horizontal archaeological stratification above natural ground) on the site is limited.

5.2.2 There is limited potential for survival of any cut features.

5.3 Significance

5.3.1 The results of this evaluation are only of local importance.

5.4 Assessment of the evaluation

5.4.1 Although relatively small, the trial pits can be considered a far reflection of the amount of survival to be expected in the cellar of No 58 St Martin's Lane, which is the only part of the development to be affected by ground reduction.

6 Proposed development impact and conclusions

- 6.1.1 The proposed redevelopment of the site for residential use with existing parts retained. The only potential archaeological impact would be from the lowering of the basement floor to No. 58 St Martin's Lane and associated works such as underpinning.
- 6.1.2 This ground reduction would impact on any archaeological remains if present, although there is little from the results of the evaluation to suggest that this would be the case.
- 6.1.3 In the light of the results of the evaluation, MOLA considers there would be limited value in further archaeological work during construction works associated with this project.
- 6.1.4 The decision on the appropriate archaeological mitigation to the deposits revealed rests with the Local Planning Authority.

7 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID: molas1-175221

Project details

Project name	55-58 St Martin's Lane
Short description of the project	Three geotechnical trial pits were investigated in the basement of No 58 St Martin's Lane between 17 and 18 March 2014. No archaeological deposits or features were found and the current cellar appears to have truncated natural gravels down to at least 17.49m OD.
Project dates	Start: 17-03-2014 End: 18-03-2014
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	SAM14 – Site code
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 3 - Retailing
Methods & techniques	"Test Pits"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, 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 55-58 St Martin's Lane
Postcode	WC2
Study area	320.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 30085 80775 51.5104111932 -
0.125237098413 51 30 37 N 000 07 30 W
Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 17.28m Max: 17.49m

Project creators

Name of Organisation MOLA

Project brief originator Greater London Advisory Service

Project design originator MOLA

Project director/manager David Divers

Project supervisor Tony Mackinder

Type of sponsor/funding body Client

Name of sponsor/funding body Fresson and Tee chartered surveyors

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Physical Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography"

Paper Archive recipient LAARC

Paper Media available "Notebook - Excavation', ' Research', ' General Notes', ' Plan"

Project

bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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Author(s)/Editor(s)	Mackinder, T
Date	2014
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Fig 1 Site location



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Fig 2 Areas of investigation