



## **40–42 GREENWICH CHURCH STREET London SE10**

Royal Borough of Greenwich

Watching brief report

October 2014



**40-42 Greenwich Church Street  
Greenwich  
London SE10**

Site Code GCH14  
NGR 538290 177715  
OASIS reference molas1-190986

Planning reference 13/1860/F  
Condition Number 31

Report on an archaeological watching brief

**Sign-off History:**

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2	14.10.2014	S.Ranieri	S.Hoad	Second issue following client comments

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## Summary

*This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by MOLA at 40-42 Greenwich Church Street between 18th of August and 3th of September 2014. The report was commissioned from MOLA by Gleeds Management Service Ltd on behalf of the client Greenwich Hospital.*

*In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2014b) a watching brief was carried out during ground work reduction at the rear of the existing buildings to enable its reconstruction using a new footing and new pad foundations to a maximum depth of 1500m.*

*Archaeological remains comprised a variety of medieval and post-medieval make-up/levelling deposits dumped to raise the ground level presumably in preparation for a new phase of building across the site. Cutting through the uppermost deposit was a disturbed mid-late 18th century orange brick-lined feature with a possible drainage function, which was subsequently severely truncated by the construction of the current buildings at 40-42 Church Street dated from 1830s.*

*No natural deposits were reached during the excavation.*

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Site background

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- 1.1.1 An archaeological watching brief was carried out by MOLA at 40-42 Greenwich Church Street ('the site') between 18th of August and 3th of September 2014 (see *Fig 1*). This document is the Report on that work.
- 1.1.2 A desk top Archaeological Assessment (HEA) was previously prepared which covers the whole area of the site and the surrounding Greenwich Market (MOLA 2014a). 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).
- 1.1.3 Further to the condition on Planning Consent a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by MOLA (reference MOLA 2014b). All archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with that WSI.

## 1.2 Planning background

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- 1.2.1 The legislative and planning framework in which the watching brief took place was fully set out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* which formed the project design for the evaluation (see Section 1.2, MOLA 2014b).
- 1.2.2 The following condition (Condition No 31) relating to archaeology was attached to the consent:

*No development (excluding demolition at or above ground level) shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme pursuant to this condition. The archaeological works shall be carried out by a suitably qualified investigating body acceptable to the Local Planning Authority.*

*Reason: in order to safeguard and preserve archaeological remains likely to otherwise be damaged by the development of this site and to ensure compliance with Policies D30 and D31 of the Unitary Development Plan, 2006.*

## 1.3 Scope of the watching brief

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- 1.3.1 An archaeological watching brief is normally a limited fieldwork exercise. It is not the same as full excavation, though individual features may be fully excavated.
- 1.3.2 The watching brief was carried out within the terms of the relevant Standard for watching brief specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (IFA, 2008).
- 1.3.3 All work has been undertaken within the research priorities established in the Museum of London's *A research framework for London Archaeology, 2002*.
- 1.3.4 All work was undertaken within research aims and objectives established in the Written Scheme of Investigation for the watching brief (MOLA 2014b Section 2.2)

## 2 Topographical and historical background

- 2.1.1 A detailed description of the geology, archaeology and history of the site was provided in the earlier Archaeological desk-based assessment (MOLA 2014a). A brief summary of the archaeological potential of the site is provided below:

### 2.2 Topography

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- 2.2.1 The Site is located on relatively level ground within the base of the Thames Valley escarpment; the ground rises sharply 475m to the south of the Site. Just to the west of the Site, is the edge of the slightly higher ground marked by Greenwich Church Street and St Alphege's Church, 60m to the south-west of the Site. The block in which the Site is located slopes slightly down to the south-west, with current ground level recorded at 6.5m Ordnance Datum (OD) at the corner of Nelson Road and King William Walk (south-eastern corner of block) and at 4.8m OD at the corner of College Approach and Greenwich Church Street (north-eastern corner of block). The levels at the entrances to the Site are recorded at 5.3m OD, in the north, on College Approach; at 6.2m OD, in the east, on King William Walk; at 6.4m OD in the south on Nelson Road; and at 5.0m OD, in the west, on Greenwich Church Street. The ground level in the main area of the market is recorded between 5.7–5.9m OD, and the level in Fry's Yard is recorded at 5.6–5.9m OD (MK Surveys, prj 18498, rev 3, date 01/09/13).

### 2.3 Archaeology

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- 2.3.1 The site has low potential to contain archaeological remains dated to the prehistoric period. The site's location on a well-drained gravel terrace close to predictable resources of the River Thames would certainly have been attractive to early settlers, though any traces of prehistoric activity may have been removed by later occupation. Nevertheless, there may be residual prehistoric material within the gravels, or overlying subsoils derived from higher ground. Development on the site possibly from the early medieval period onwards suggests that the survival of prehistoric features is unlikely.
- 2.3.2 The site has a low potential to contain archaeological remains dated to the Roman period. The extent of any Roman presence in Greenwich remains unknown though it is possible that an attractive riverside site may have been utilised by the Romans. Nevertheless, there may be residual Roman material within later deposits – as found at 45 Greenwich Church Street to the west.
- 2.3.3 The site has moderate potential to contain archaeological remains dated to the Saxon period. The site is located in an area thought to be occupied in the Saxon period though it is uncertain what remains might survive below later development. Evidence could include remains of cut features such as pits and ditches and sunken feature buildings.
- 2.3.4 The site has a high potential to contain archaeological remains dated to the medieval period. It is almost certain that the site lay within the thriving later medieval village of Greenwich. Geotechnical test pits excavated within the market site revealed possible later medieval make-up deposits. The full extent and nature of later medieval occupation, is not known in detail, nor is the extent to which remains have survived later, post-medieval, development on the site. Remains of later medieval structures, pits, and other activity may survive.
- 2.3.5 The site has a high potential to contain archaeological remains dated to the post-medieval period. The site is adjacent to the known location of a prestigious mansion

dating to at least the early 16th century. Although the exact layout of Swanne House is not known, its conversion into a brewery survives in plan allowing an indication of its location in relation to the site. Evidence of the history and development of this important mansion and its grounds would be of archaeological interest. Post-medieval make-up and levelling layers, a group of 13 sherds of pottery dating to the 18th and 19th centuries, and an 18th century brick wall were recorded during the excavation of geotechnical test pits to the east of the site. Remains of this period are likely to take the form of the truncated and fragmentary footings, foundations and basements of late 18th or early-19th century buildings, or the bases and backfill of cut features such as quarry pits, cess pits or wells. Although any remains beneath the current basements would be heavily truncated, in other parts of the site more significant archaeology may survive. The Grade II listed buildings within the site itself are of high significance.

- 2.3.6 Ground investigation works were undertaken on the site itself in 2013, comprising three trial pits and one borehole in the unbasemented rear part of the property. These works were not archaeologically monitored, but the report (MRH Geotechnical 2013) indicates that:
- 2.3.7 Exposed foundations were based at depths of between 1–1.98m below slab level.
- 2.3.8 Natural deposits (alluvium/ river terrace deposits) were revealed between 0.60–1.20m below slab level.
- 2.3.9 Made Ground deposits between 0.50m and 1.10m thick were recorded. These are broadly described as ‘brick rubble and clay fill’ and the possibility that they include archaeological material cannot be ruled out.

## 3 The watching brief

### 3.1 Field methodology

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- 3.1.1 Recording of archaeological features was carried out in accordance with the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (MOLA 2014b).
- 3.1.2 The approved development includes the demolition of the existing structures to the ground level at the rear of the existing buildings to enable its reconstruction using new footing and pad foundations with the installation of new services.
- 3.1.3 The slab was broken out and cleared by contractors. The area was subsequently hand excavated by contractors under MOLA supervision to a general depth of 600mm with two additional trenches excavated a further 900mm: Trench A for the new footing, measured 3m by 0.6m and Trench B for the new underpinning foundation, measured 1m by 1m (see Fig 2).
- 3.1.4 Trench locations were recorded on site by MOLA Senior Archaeologist by offsetting measurement from adjacent standing walls. All intervention were plotted on plans provided by the client (Evolve, dwg no 2124/03/101 F) and subsequently tied to the OS grid by MOLA Geomatics.
- 3.1.5 The level of the current ground slab at c. 5m OD has been estimated based on the nearest level on Church Street to the west of the buildings.

### 3.2 Recording methodology

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- 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 2014b).

### 3.3 Site archive

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Number of trench record sheets	2
Number of overall location plans	2
Number of Context (SU) sheets	9
Number of photographs	40
Number of Plan sheets	1
Number of Sections	1



## 4 Results of the watching brief

For watching brief area and section location see *Fig 2*.

For archaeological feature plans see *Fig 3*.

### 4.1 Watching brief area

Location	The rear of the two existing buildings
Dimensions	c.8.5m by 6m by 1.5m
Modern ground level/top of slab	c. 5mOD
Base of modern fill/slab/turf	4.4mOD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	0.9m
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	3.5mOD
Top of surviving natural observed at	N/A
Level of base of trench	c. 3.5m OD

- 4.1.1 The area of excavation was located at the rear of the two existing buildings of 40-42 Greenwich Church Street and was 600mm deep with two additional trenches, A and B, excavated a further 900mm (see *Fig 2* and *Fig 6*).
- 4.1.2 The earliest deposit observed was recorded at c. 3.70m OD at the bottom of Trench A. This was a light greenish-yellow clayey sand with occasional degraded chalk flecks and medium river-worn pebbles [8]. It was sealed by a light greenish-grey silty clay with some occasional orange building material fragments, some chalk flecks and occasional charcoal [7]. These deposits were notable for their relatively clean and sterile composition and are considered to represent medieval or post-medieval make up deposits dumped to raise the ground level across site.
- 4.1.3 Above [7], at c. 4 m OD, was a dark, blackish brown dump-levelling deposit [6] mixed with occasional charcoal, gravel and some spread mortar along with some small fragments of building material. Over this, was a layer of very similar composition [1] interpreted as a being well worked garden or topsoil of post-medieval date (post 17th-century as evidenced by the presence of some pottery fragments which were not retained).
- 4.1.4 Cutting into this deposit along the western extent of the area, was construction cut [3] containing a disturbed rectangular brick lined feature [2] (see *Fig 5*). This, recorded at 4.40m OD, measured 1m by 0.6m and was constructed using shallow frogged orange bricks bonded together with light cream sandy mortar. Although the feature was not completely excavated, a breach was exposed along its east facing section which suggests that it probably had a drainage function. The relatively small thickness of the orange bricks (65mm) allied to the absence of Victorian stock bricks, suggests that the structure could be dated to the mid-late 18th century.
- 4.1.5 Starting from 1830, this was truncated by the construction of 40-42 Church Street yellow stock brick wall foundations [5], which formed the footing for the rear extension of the existing buildings including the buried remains of the partition wall [9] that divided the "site" in to two separated area (see *Fig 3* and *Fig 6* ).
- 4.1.6 Above [2] and abutting the building foundations [5], was a layer of modern made ground which formed the levelling make up for the concrete slab of the outdoor area.

## 5 Archaeological potential

### 5.1 Answering original research aims

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- What is the nature and level of natural topography; how does it compare to adjacent sites?

*No natural deposits were reached during the excavation.*

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

*There are not enough elements to support the existence of truncation caused by earlier basements.*

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

*The existing building foundations at 40-42 Church Street are cut into post-medieval deposits which are part of an undisturbed archaeological sequence of medieval/post-medieval make-up and levelling deposits to raise the ground level, presumably in association with a new phase of building construction within the area. Remains of mid-late 18 century brick lined feature survived, truncated by the construction of the existing buildings dated from 1830s.*

### 5.2 Answering new research aims

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- 5.2.1 The watching brief at 40–42 Greenwich Church Street has not raised any new research aims.

### 5.3 Significance of the data

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

## 6 Publication and archiving

- 6.1.1 The results of the watching brief 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.
- 6.1.2 The site archive containing original records and finds will be stored in accordance with the terms of the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (MOLA 2014b) with the Museum of London within 12 months of the end of the watching brief.
- 6.1.3 In view of the of the limited potential of the material (Sections 5) and the relatively limited significance of the data (Section 5.3) it is suggested a short note on the results of the watching brief should appear in the annual round up of the *London Archaeologist*.

## 7 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Gleeds Management Service Ltd for commissioning the ground work on behalf of the client Greenwich Hospital and Trinity Construction Service for their assistance on site during the watching brief.



## 8 Bibliography

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MOLA 2014a *40–42 Greenwich Church Street, Historic Environment Assessment* (unpub MOL rep)

MOLA 2014b, *40–42 Greenwich Church Street, Written Scheme of Investigation* for an archaeological watching brief, MOLA unpub report

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



Fig 1 Site location



Fig 2 Watching brief area and section location plan



Fig 3 Disturbed brick lined feature (2) and partition wall location plan

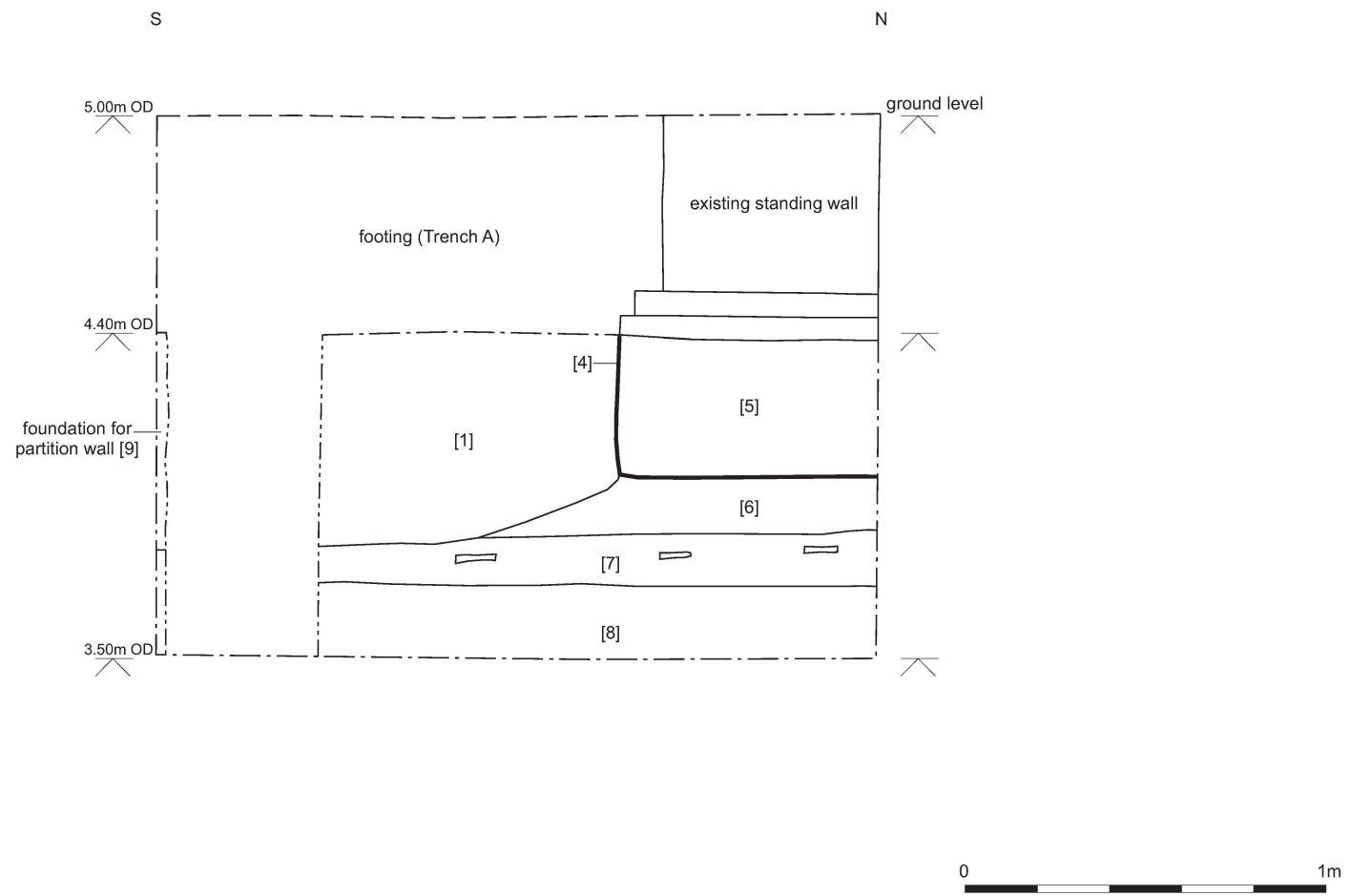


Fig 4 Trench A, east facing section





Fig 5 Disturbed brick-lined feature (2)



Fig 6 Overview of Trench A and B looking south-west, showing remains of the partition wall foundations surviving on the north facing section of Trench A





Fig 7 Trench B looking west

## 9 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

### 9.1 OASIS ID: molas1-190986

#### Project details

Project name	40-42 Greenwich Church Street, SE10
Short description of the project	A watching brief was carried out during ground work reduction at the rear of the existing buildings to enable its reconstruction using a new footing and new pad foundations to a maximum depth of 1500m. Archaeological remains comprised a variety of medieval/post-medieval make-up/levelling deposits dumped to raise the ground level presumably in preparation of a new phase of building across the site. Cutting through the uppermost deposit was a disturbed 18th-19th century orange brick-lined feature with a possible drainage function, which was subsequently severely truncated by the construction of the current buildings at 40-42 Church Street dated from 1830s. No natural deposits were reached during the excavation.
Project dates	Start: 18-08-2014 End: 03-09-2014
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 3 - Retailing
Monument type	DRAIN Post Medieval
Development type	Building refurbishment/repairs/restoration
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON GREENWICH, 40-42 Greenwich Church Street
Postcode	SE10
Study area	51.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 38290 77715 51.4809578715 -0.00826195879754 51 28 51 N 000 00 29 W Point

#### Project creators

Name of Organisation	MOLA
Project brief	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body



originator	
Project design originator	MOLA
Project director/manager	Stewart Hoad
Project supervisor	Serena Ranieri

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#### **Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Archive ID	GCH14
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	GCH14
Digital Media available	"Database", "GIS", "Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	GCH14
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Drawing", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

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