

12–13 BRUTON STREET
London W1J

City of Westminster

Archaeological evaluation report

June 2015



12-13 BRUTON STREET London W1J 6QA

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Report on archaeological evaluation

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Summary

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by MOLA at 12-13 Bruton street, London. The report was commissioned from MOLA by O & H (Bruton Street) Ltd.

In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2015) two evaluation trenches were excavated on the site between 13.5.15 and 22.5.15. Only 1 of the planned 2 boreholes was carried out due to the level of modern intrusions.

Trench 1 revealed only modern truncations and services and heavily truncated natural brickearth was recorded in trench 2. No archaeology or evidence for the River Tyburn (in the form of alluvial or gravel deposits) was uncovered in either of the trenches. The location of trench 2 was shifted slightly due to modern column bases and other intrusions. This, and the evidence from trench 1 suggests that the site has been heavily truncated by the current building.

The evaluation has shown that the potential for survival of ancient ground surfaces (horizontal archaeological stratification above natural ground) on the site is low/negligible. The report concludes that any surviving archaeological remains may be impacted by the redevelopment although they are likely to be highly truncated.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was carried out by MOLA at 12-13 Bruton Street ('the site') between 13.5.15 and 22.5.15 (see *Fig 1*). This document is the Report on that work.
- 1.1.2 A written *Archaeological Assessment* was previously prepared, which covered the whole area of the site (MOLA 2014). This 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.

1.2 Planning background

- 1.2.1 The legislative and Planning framework in which the evaluation took place was fully set out in the *Archaeological Impact Assessment* which formed the project design for the evaluation (see Section 9, MOLA 2014).
- 1.2.2 The evaluation was carried out to fulfil a condition attached to the Planning Consent given by Westminster City council, the Local Planning Authority (Consent reference 14/00789/FULL; Condition number 17).

1.3 Scope of the evaluation

- 1.3.1 Evaluation is defined by Historic England as intended to provide information about the archaeological resource in order to contribute to the:
 - 1.3.2 - 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
 - 1.3.3 - formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigations within a programme of research
- 1.3.4 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.
- 1.3.5 The evaluation was carried out within the terms of the relevant Standard for evaluation specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIFA, 2014).
- 1.3.6 All work has been undertaken within the research priorities established in the Museum of London's A research framework for London Archaeology, 2002.
- 1.3.7 All work was undertaken within research aims and objectives established in the Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation (Section 2.2)

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Topography

- 2.1.1 The topography of the area is directly affected by the underlying channel of the former River Tyburn. The exact historic course of this river is not precisely known although its alluvial fills have been noted at several sites. A culveted channel of the River is thought to run along Bruton Lane to the south of the site. Ground level on the top of the road surface in Bruton Street at the north-western end of the site lies within a range of 17.4m OD and 17.1m OD dropping down from south-west to north-east.
- 2.1.2 The site's location within the River Tyburn and the fact that the course of its channels has shifted over time makes it hard to estimate the level of survival of the top of natural gravels, if any do survive, with any accuracy. Previous investigations in the study area have revealed that in some cases gravels had been removed by the scouring action of the river and its channels, whilst elsewhere surviving natural gravels have been recorded.

2.2 Archaeology

- 2.2.1 A small number of chance finds of isolated Palaeolithic artefacts were made within the general area during the early 20th century, including a Lower Palaeolithic axe claimed to be from Bond Street when found in 1910 (**HEA 14**, c 120m to the east) and five Lower Palaeolithic flint handaxes from the corner of Mill Hill Place and Wimpole Street (beyond the study area c 500m to the north).
- 2.2.2 There have been no significant finds from the Roman or early Medieval periods in the immediate surroundings of the site.
- 2.2.3 During the later medieval period the Tyburn provided an important source of clean water for the City of London. As early as 1236, conduits were constructed to convey water from the Tyburn at a point near Oxford Street to the City. Conduit Street, c 100m to the north-east of the site, was named after a medieval conduit, which tapped into a rising spring across this area in the 15th century.
- 2.2.4 In the post-medieval period London was the headquarters of the Parliamentarians during the Civil War (1642–48), and the Common Council (the City's governing body) undertook a comprehensive scheme for protecting the City, Liberties and outlying parishes against the Royalist forces. This included the construction in 1642–3 of a 17km line of defences, largely comprising ditches and earthen banks, which may have passed around 80m to the north-west of the site, although the exact location of a greater part of the circuit is uncertain (Smith and Kelsey 1996, 125; Sturdy 1975, 336). The development of Bruton Street began in 1736, with most of the buildings on the north side of the street dating from the late 1730s (Bradley and Pevsner 509–10; **HEA 16–27**).

3 Evaluation methodology

3.1 Field methodology

- 3.1.1 Two evaluation trenches c 5.20m by 2.00m were excavated to a depth of 2.00m.
- 3.1.2 The slab was broken out and cleared by contractors under MOLA supervision. Trenches were excavated by machine by the contractors, and monitored by a MOLA supervisor.
- 3.1.3 Archaeological excavation was carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2015).
- 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 2015).

3.3 Site archive

Number of trench record sheets	2
Number of overall location plans	1
Number of Context (SU) sheets	0
Number of photographs	10
Number of Plan sheets	2
Number of Sections	0

4 Results of the evaluation

For trench locations see Fig 2.

4.1 Trench 1

Location	At the front of the building in garage area
Dimensions	5.20m by c 2.00m by 2.00m depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	16.03mOD
Base of modern slab	15.73mOD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	N/A
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	14.03mOD
Top of surviving natural observed at	N/A
Level of base of trench	14.03m OD

- 4.1.1 Natural deposits were not observed in this trench. A large concrete pile slab, a series of drains and associated construction backfill were uncovered from the base of the trench to the concrete slab (see Fig 3). These relate to the current 1980's building on the site. The borehole that was planned for this trench was not carried out due to the high level of modern truncation.

4.2 Trench 2

Location	In the rear of the building
Dimensions	5.20m by 1.90m by 2.00m depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	14.84mOD
Base of modern slab	14.54mOD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	N/A
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	12.84mOD
Top of surviving natural observed at	14.24mOD
Level of base of trench	12.84mOD

- 4.2.1 Natural brickearth was observed in the centre of the trench from 12.84–14.24mOD. Truncating this at the northwest edge of the trench was the construction cut for the concrete pile columns and in the southeast end a modern drain (see Fig 4). Overlying this was c 0.30m of modern backfill rubble which was sealed by the concrete slab to 14.84mOD. Borehole 1 was located in the southwest end of this trench (see Fig 5).

4.3 The finds

- 4.3.1 No finds were recovered from the site.

4.4 Answering original research aims

- 4.4.1 A number of broad objectives and research questions have been identified for this evaluation:
- *What is the nature and level of natural topography?*
Natural brickearth was recorded in trench 2 at 14.24mOD to the base of the trench at 12.84mOD.
 - *What are the earliest deposits identified?*
None.
 - *What are the latest deposits identified?*
None.
 - *What is the extent of modern disturbance?*
The entire area of trench 1 was taken up by disturbances from modern drain pipes and concrete pile slabs. Trench 2 also had a high level of disturbance from modern building activity.
 - *Do any alluvial deposits associated with the valley of the River Tyburn exist, and if so what form do they take?*
None.
 - *Are there any remains associated with the 18th and 19th century development of the area?*
None.

4.5 General discussion of potential

- 4.5.1 The evaluation has shown that the potential for survival of ancient ground surfaces (horizontal archaeological stratification above natural ground) on the site is low/negligible.
- 4.5.2 There is also low potential for survival of cut features.
- 4.5.3 However survival is likely to be extremely limited in certain areas because of modern building disturbance and services.

4.6 Significance

- 4.6.1 Whilst the information gained on the site is of some local significance there is nothing to suggest that they are of regional or national importance.

4.7 Assessment of the evaluation

- 4.7.1 The evaluation has given us evidence as to the nature and level of the natural deposits and the degree of modern disturbance. No archaeological remains or evidence of the River Tyburn were observed.

5 Geoarchaeological augerhole survey

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The methods employed during the drilling of the geoarchaeological augerhole are described in the section below. All geoarchaeological on-site work was carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; MOLA 2015) and the MOLA *Archaeological Site Manual* (Museum of London, 1994).

5.2 Methodology

- 5.2.1 One geoarchaeological augerhole (AH1) was undertaken at 12-13 Bruton Street, London W1 (BUT15) in Trench 2. The augerhole was drilled by a contractor with a terrier rig under the supervision of a MOLA Senior Archaeologist and Senior Geoarchaeologist. The augerhole was drilled to underlying Pleistocene sand and gravel deposits in order to recover a complete sequence of overlying deposits. MOLA surveyors recorded the location of the augerhole.
- 5.2.2 Whilst on site, the core samples from AH1 were cleaned and described, using standard sedimentary criteria, as outlined in Jones et al (1999). This attempts to characterise the visible properties of each deposit, in particular relating to its colour, compaction, texture, structure, bedding, inclusions, clast-size and dip. For each profile the depth and nature of the contacts between adjacent distinct units was noted and an evaluation of the potential for further palaeo-environmental assessment made.

5.3 Results

- 5.3.1 The geoarchaeological evaluation comprised of one successful augerhole (AH1) which was designed to characterise the stratigraphy below trench depth and assess the potential for further palaeo-environmental work. The primary objective of the evaluation was to confirm the extent, nature and significance of any surviving alluvial deposits or remains across the site. The deposit sequence in the augerhole was described and the results are presented below.

12-13 Bruton St (BUT15) AH1 Trench 2						
OD height:	14.54	Easting: 528860			Northing: 180695	
from (m BGL)	to (m BGL)	from (mOD)	to (mOD)	Thickness	Deposit description	Interpretation
0.00	0.30	14.54	14.24	0.30	Void	Void
0.30	0.35	14.24	14.19	0.05	Brick fragment	Modern made ground
0.35	0.55	14.19	13.99	0.20	Soft orangey brown silty sandy clay with occasional root fragments and singular brick fragment	Weathered Langley Silts (Brickearth)

0.55	1.70	13.99	12.84	1.15	Soft becoming very soft orangey brown sandy clay with rare gravel clasts throughout	Langley Silts (Brickearth)
1.70	to unknown depth	12.84	to unknown depth	-	Firm dense granular to medium subangular to subrounded orangey brown gravels	Terrace gravels

Table 1: Augerhole (AH1) results from BUT15

5.4 Discussion

- 5.4.1 The augerhole results for BUT15 indicated that only truncated, weathered Brickearth deposits (Langley Silts) and terrace gravels survived in Trench 2. The Brickearth deposits date to the late Pleistocene and are palaeo-environmentally and archaeologically sterile. However, the Brickearth was weathered and had fine roots within it indicating that truncation would have been minimal and if there were overlying alluvial deposits they probably lay close to the surface of the Brickearth (although now completely removed at this location).
- 5.4.2 The basal deposits, which relate to the Lynch Hill or Hackney Gravel terrace, consisted of yellowy orange gravelly sands. These terrace deposits are Pleistocene deposits dating to approximately 300,000 years ago and form some of the oldest terrace deposits of the Thames.

5.5 Potential of the data

- 5.5.1 This section examines the extent to which the original research questions (relevant to the augerhole investigation) have been answered by the evaluation (MOLA 2015).

- *What is the nature and level of natural topography?*

The natural topography as taken from the level of the Langley silts or Brickearth deposits was found in the augerhole to lie at approximately 14.20m AOD.

- *What are the earliest deposits identified?*

The earliest deposits were the underlying river terrace deposits of the mid to later Pleistocene.

- *Do any alluvial deposits associated with the valley of the River Tyburn exist, and if so what form do they take?*

No alluvial deposits associated with the valley of the River Tyburn were seen in the augerhole or trench sections.

5.6 Significance of the data

- 5.6.1 The lithological work carried out on the core samples from BUT15 indicates that the site has no palaeo-environmental potential as only archaeologically sterile Pleistocene sediments were recovered.

5.7 Publication project: aims and objectives

- 5.7.1 The evaluation has answered the original research questions and no further work is suggested.

6 The site as a whole

- 6.1.1 No archaeology or evidence for the River Tyburn (in the form of alluvial or gravel deposits) was uncovered in either of the trenches. The location of trench 2 was shifted slightly due to modern column bases and other intrusions. This, and the evidence from trench 1 suggests that the site has been heavily truncated by the current building.
- 6.1.2 Assessing the results from all the trenches it appears that only heavily truncated brickearth survives on the site.

7 Proposed development impact and conclusions

- 7.1.1 Taking into account the results in all the trenches it appears that archaeological deposits may not be present on the site. If present, they may have been heavily truncated.
- 7.1.2 The proposed redevelopment at the site involves lowering the floor level by c 2.00m. The impact of this on the surviving archaeological deposits will be to remove or heavily disturb it.
- 7.1.3 The decision on the appropriate archaeological mitigation to the deposits revealed rests with the Local Planning Authority.

8 Acknowledgements

- 8.1.1 The author would like to thank Peter Tomkins of O & H Ltd, Karl Lawrence of KDS Site Investigations Ltd for his cheerful assistance, and providing the necessary attendances for the investigation, and Michael Smith, MOLA project manager.

9 Bibliography

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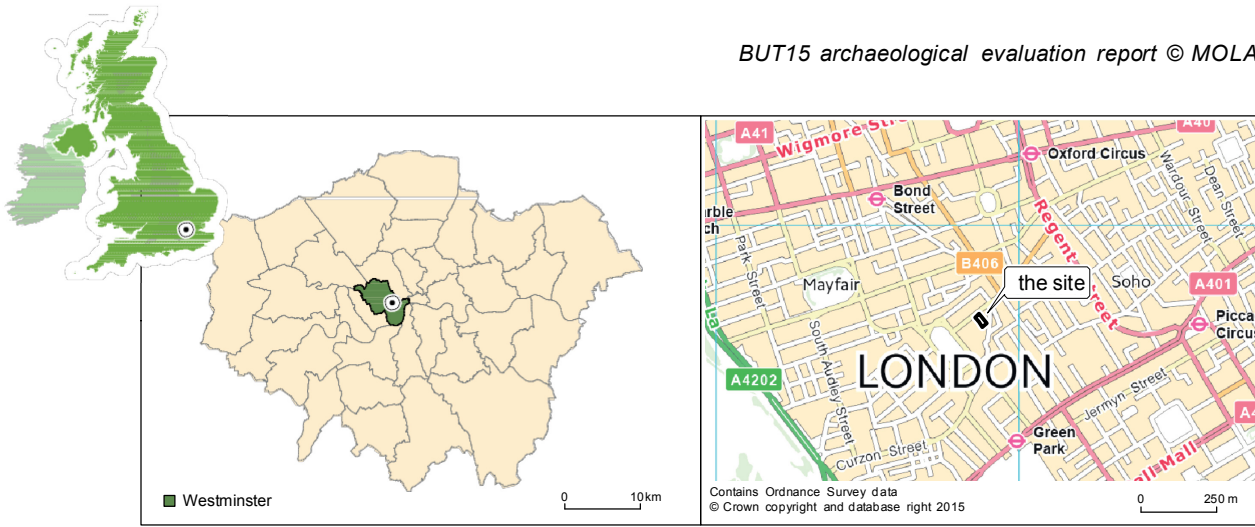


Fig 1 Site location

LACE



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Fig 2 Trench locations

Fig 3 Trench 1 overview, looking east, showing modern intrusions



Fig 4 Trench 2, looking southwest, showing modern intrusions and natural brickearth in the centre of the trench



Fig 5 Core from borehole 1, 0-2m below ground level, showing natural brickearth



10 OASIS archaeological report form

10.1 OASIS ID: molas1-215670

Project details

Project name	12-13 Bruton Street
Short description of the project	In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2014) two evaluation trenches were excavated on the site between 13.5.15 and 22.5.15. Only 1 of the planned 2 boreholes was carried out due to the level of modern intrusions. Trench 1 revealed only modern truncations and services and heavily truncated natural brickearth was recorded in trench 2. No archaeology or evidence for the River Tyburn (in the form of alluvial or gravel deposits) was uncovered in either of the trenches. The location of trench 2 was shifted slightly due to modern column bases and other intrusions. This, and the evidence from trench 1 suggests that the site has been heavily truncated by the current building. One borehole revealed natural brickearth at 14.24mOD.
Project dates	Start: 13-05-2015 End: 22-05-2015
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER WESTMINSTER 12-13 Bruton Street
Postcode	W1J 6QA
Study area	50.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 28874 80685 51.5098803951 -0.142712826813 51 30 35 N 000 08 33 W Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 12.84m Max: 14.24m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	MOLA
Project brief originator	MOLA
Project design	MOLA

originator	
Project director/manager	Michael Smith
Project supervisor	Catherine Godsiffe
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Client

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Media available	"GIS", "Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Media available	"Plan", "Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Evaluation report for 12-13 Bruton Street
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Godsiffe, C
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