

# **An archaeological watching brief report on window samples and geotechnical test pits at Ensign Court, 28 Ensign Street, London E1.**

## **Introduction.**

MOLA undertook an archaeological watching brief on four window samples (WS) and three geotechnical test pits (TP) at Ensign Court, 28 Ensign Street, London E1 (NGR 534211 180714) (Site Code EGN15) on the 20th and 21st of July 2015. All of these interventions were located in the car park to the rear of the development.

## **WS1**

WS1 was located to the southern edge of the car park and fairly central. Natural sand and gravel was found at c 3.25m (c 6.6mOD) below ground level (BGL) and a further 0.5m below this London Clay (c 6.1mOD). Above this to 2m BGL (c 7.85mOD) where a sequence of deposits thought to be fills of a cut feature and generally consisted of mid grey silts with moderate–frequent fine pebbles and sand patches. Above this was a deposit 0.50m thick of light–mid grey brown silty sand with moderate red brick fragments and occasional shell, bone and mortar flecks. Next was a deposit, 0.30m thick, of mid grey brown silty sand with moderate slag, clinker and charcoal and occasional pebbles and brick fragments. Above this, 0.5m thick, was dark brown gritty sandy silt with frequent oyster shell and charcoal. A thin layer of possible slag material was noted above this. Dark grey brown silty clay, 0.15m thick, with occasional charcoal and shell under 0.15m of black ashy clinker were the latest deposits observed. Above this were 0.45m of bedding and the tarmac surface of the car park.

## **WS2**

WS2 was located in the south-east corner of the car park and only sunk to a depth of 1m where a concrete ‘slab’ was found and the window sample was abandoned.

## **WS3**

WS3 located in the north-east corner of the car park and appeared to be through a backfill cellar or basement. The exact depth of this could not be defined accurately due to the auger not holding some of the material. But the base was found cut into natural sands 1.3m above the level of London Clay. Here the tarmac and its make-up was 0.60m thick.

## **WS4**

WS4 was located in the north-west corner of the car park and natural sand and gravel was found at 1.8m BGL (c 7.95mOD) overlain by 0.40m of mid brown grey sandy silt with occasional fine pebbles. Above this was 0.30m of mid–dark grey brown slightly clayey silt sand with moderate–frequent pebbles and moderate charcoal and shell. 0.10m of brown silty clay with buff mortar flecks sealed this. The latest deposit was 0.40m of black ash and clinker with occasional brick fragments. Here the tarmac and its make-up was 0.60m thick.

### **TP1**

TP1 was located in the north-east corner of the site and was dug to find the depth of the foundations of the building to the north of the site. It was 1.4m from the eastern limit of the site and 1.3m long and 0.56m wide, maximum excavated depth 1.45m. Stepped brick footings extended in 0.3m and possible archaeological deposits were seen to the south of these at 1.10m BGL (c 9.45mOD) consisting of mid brown silt with inclusions of pebbles and brick fragments. Sealing this was various layers of concrete.

### **TP2**

TP2 was to be located along the western limit of the site within the car park area but upon excavation just below the slab an electricity cable was found and this location was abandoned and re-located to the south within a bin storage area. It measured 1.10m north–south by 0.50m west–east and had a maximum depth of 1m (c 8.8mOD). The slab and make-up was 0.40m deep over a loose mid brown silty clay with occasional red brick fragments, pebbles, animal bone, small wood fragments and clay tobacco pipe fragments. Observed under the party wall to the west was a brick arch built in yellow bricks.

### **TP3**

TP3 was located in the north-west corner of the site and orientated north–south 1.15m long by 0.70m wide. The stepped brick foundations of the party wall were found to be 0.60m wide so the test pit was extended 0.40m further east in a slot 0.45m wide and 0.55m from the northern edge of the site. The slab and its make-up was 0.50m thick, top at 9.86m OD, and below this along the northern edge of the eastern slot was seen a thin red brick wall and at c 0.60m (c 9.26mOD) from slab level to the south a red brick floor assumed to part a drain. Below this drain was a deposit of mid brown silt with pebbles and brick rubble. The maximum depth of this slot was 1.2m (c 8.66mOD) and the concrete base of the party wall foundation was found at 1.1m (c 8.76mOD) below slab level.

### **Conclusions**

Natural deposits appear to be at c. 2m BGL across the site with horizontal archaeological deposits over these, at least one deep archaeological cut feature was seen in WS1. The brick drain found in TP3 may be related to a 17th-18th century drainage/culvert/flue system excavated by PCA during an archaeological excavation in 2005 at 15 Dock Street just to the west.

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