

100 EAST ROAD  
London  
N1

London Borough of Hackney

An archaeological watching brief report

September 2007



**MUSEUM OF LONDON**

Archaeology Service

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London  
N1

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An archaeological watching brief report

Site Code: ERL07  
National Grid Reference: 532830 182940

Project Manager  
Author  
Graphics

Jo Lyon  
Peter Cardiff  
Kenneth Lymer

**Museum of London Archaeology Service**

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Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED

tel 020 7410 2200 fax 020 7410 2201

email [molas@molas.org.uk](mailto:molas@molas.org.uk)

web [www.molas.org.uk](http://www.molas.org.uk)

## **Summary (non-technical)**

*This report has been commissioned by MACE via Robert West consulting on behalf of JG Shoreditch LLP in order to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out at 100 East Road.*

*Work on four geotechnical pits was monitored on 13 September 2007.*

*19th- and 20th-century made ground was observed in section in all four trenches. Natural ground was not reached during the excavations and the deepest trench was excavated to 2.20m depth below ground surface.*

*No significant archaeological remains were observed during the watching brief and no further archaeological work is recommended.*

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*Front cover: The site in 1893 from Old Ordnance Survey Maps 1893*

*Fig 1 Site location plan*

*Fig 2 Trench locations*

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Site background

The watching brief took place at 100 East Road, hereafter called ‘the site’. The site is located on East Road and is bounded by East Road to the west, Bevendon Road to the south and New North Road to the north (see Fig 1). The centre of the site is at OS National Grid Reference 532830 182940. The level of the slab varied between 18.45m OD and 18.76m OD. Modern ground level immediately adjacent to the site is 18.30m OD. The site code is ERL07.

A desk top *Archaeological assessment* was previously prepared by MoLAS, which covers the whole area of the site (Dawson 2007). 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.

## 1.2 The planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Archaeological desk-based assessment* (see Section 3.3, Dawson 2007)

## 1.3 Planning background

The watching brief was carried out as a condition of planning consent.

## 1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by MACE 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).

The purpose of the watching brief was to determine whether archaeological remains or features were present on the site and, if so, to record the nature and extent of such remains. A number of more site-specific research aims and objectives were established in the preceding desk-based assessment (see 1.3.1), and are outlined in the following section.

The purpose of the present report is to analyse the results of the excavation against the original research aims, and to suggest what further work, including analysis or publication (if any), should now take place.

## 1.5 Aims and objectives

The following research aims and objectives were established in the desk-based assessment for the watching brief (Section 1.3.1):

- What is the level of truncation caused by earlier basements in this area?
- What is the nature and significance of the surviving archaeological remains?
- What are the levels of natural deposits and how do these compare to adjacent sites?

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

## 2 Topographical and historical background

### 2.1 Topography

The site is located on Thames River Terrace Deposits (Anglian to Devensian Hackney Gravels), overlaying London Clay, Thanet sands and chalk at depth (BGS Sheet 256). In places, the gravel is capped by brickearth (also named Langley Silt complex), a fine-grained deposit believed to have been deposited by a mixture of wind and colluvial processes *c* 17,000 BP. Although it may once have covered the gravel terrace, much of it has been removed by quarrying and modern development.

### 2.2 Prehistoric

There are no known sites dated to the Palaeolithic period within the site and study area. The Lower and Middle Palaeolithic (*c* 500,000 to 40,000 BC) saw alternating warm and cold phases and intermittent perhaps seasonal occupation. During the Upper Palaeolithic (*c* 40,000 to 10,000 BC), after the last glacial maximum, and in particular after around 13,000 BC, further climate warming took place and the environment changed from being a treeless steppe–tundra to one of birch and pine woodland. It is probably at this time that this part of England saw continuous occupation. Subsequent erosion has removed many of the land–surfaces on which Palaeolithic people lived and hunted and consequently, most Palaeolithic finds are typically residual (located outside the context in which it was originally deposited), and often discovered during gravel extraction. The SMR records the antiquarian discovery of two Palaeolithic handaxes and an unretouched flake, *c* 400m north-east of the site; another chance discovery concerned a Palaeolithic hand axe recovered in 1896 on City Road *c* 450m south of the site.

There are no known sites or finds dated to the Mesolithic period within the site and study area. The Mesolithic hunter-gather communities of the postglacial period (*c* 10,000–4,000 BC) inhabited a still largely wooded environment. River valleys, such as the Thames *c* 2.3 km to the south and the Walbrook *c* 500m to the south, would have been especially favoured in providing a predictable source of food (from hunting and fishing) and water, as well as a means of transport and communication. Evidence of human activity is largely characterised by finds of flint tools and waste rather than structural remains.

The Neolithic (*c* 4000–2000 BC), Bronze Age (*c* 2,000–600 BC) and Iron Age (*c* 600 BC–AD 43) are traditionally seen as the time of technological change, the establishment of farming and settled communities, and forest clearance occurred for the cultivation of crops and the construction of communal monuments, and with increasing population and pressure on available resources throughout each period. Old Street possibly originated as an Iron Age trackway, which linked Celtic tribal centres



in the northeast and southwest of London (Grimes 1968, 43-45). There are no other known sites or finds dated to these periods within the site and study area.

### 2.3 Roman

There are no known sites or finds dated to the Roman period within the site and study area. The site is located *c* 1.5km to the north of the Roman city of *Londinium*, which was established *c* AD50, and it is therefore likely that it was situated in open land. A Roman spring or well was located on Paul Street, *c* 500m south of the site. It contained many copper coins and other votive offerings. The presence of wells may support the view that the area was crossed by tributaries of the River Walbrook.

The Romans embarked on extensive programme of reclamation and drainage, accompanied by the canalisation of the Walbrook and its tributary streams. This programme is well-attested south of the study area (e.g. around Moorgate) (AGL 2000), where numerous drains and drainage channels, usually timber-lined, and numerous wells, have been recorded, and where industrial activity is evident (Sygrave and Wroe-Brown 2006).

The site lies *c* 450m north of Old Street, which follows the route of an east-west Roman road that passed to the north of *Londinium* and possibly continued east through Bethnal Green to the Roman settlement of Old Ford, crossing the River Lea at Iceland Wharf. Ermine Street, an important route to the north, ran on an embankment along present-day Bishopsgate via Kingsland Road (passing *c* 600m east of the site) and onto Stamford Hill, ultimately leading to York (Margary 1967). There may also have been another north-south road that linked London with Hatfield and passed *c* 700m west of the site, along the route of present-day Central Street and Golden Lane (Miles 2004, 10), although there is no archaeological evidence as yet to confirm this.

### 2.4 Medieval

The main settlement of Shoreditch grew up at the junction of Kingsland Road and Old Street, *c* 600m south-east of the site. It is first mentioned in 1148 as *Scoredich*, which probably means ditch of *Sceorf* or *Scorre*. St Leonard's Church dates to the 12th century (see above about possible earlier origin) and formed the focus of the settlement.

Domesday Book (1086) mentions the hamlets of Hoxton and Haggerton, both included in the parish of Shoreditch. The site fell within the hamlet of Hoxton, which lay in that part of Shoreditch that extended to the north of Old Street (*c* 450m south of the site) and the west of Kingsland Road (*c* 600m east of the site). Hoxton is referred to in Domesday Book as a manor of "three hides" held by the Canons of St Paul's and worth 45s (Weinreb and Hibbert 1995, 410). A description of the area in the 12th century by William Fitzstephen's mentions "the fields for pasture, and open meadows...into which the river waters do flow and mills are turned about... Next lieth a great forest, in which are woody places and for game..." (*ibid*). This description may refer to tributaries of the river Walbrook, one of which possibly crossed the site (AGL 2000, maps 1-11).

Between 1152 and 1158, the Augustinian priory of Holywell was established, *c* 700m south-east of the site. The priory owned a large amount of land in the parish, as did the hospital at St Mary Spital, the Canons of St Paul's and the bishop of London at least until the 14th century (Weinreb and Hibbert 1995, 807). The name may be derived from the presence of wells within the priory's precinct (Sugden and Tyler 2002, 37).

The site of a medieval moated manor has been identified *c* 550m north-west of the site. A MoLAS watching brief and evaluation in 1992 recorded evidence for medieval settlement at Hoxton Market/ Pitfield Street, *c* 250m south-east of the site. It included quarry pits containing medieval pottery. The Roman spring or well located on Paul Street, *c* 500m south of the site, continued to be used during the medieval period.

## **2.5 Post-medieval**

By the 16th century London's population expanded into the countryside and Hoxton developed greatly. Stow wrote in his "Survey of London" (1603) that there were houses along the High Street and along Old Street as far as Golden Lane, south of the site. He also reported that the Walbrook had been largely bridged over or covered and 'houses have been built thereon, so that the course of the Walbrook is now so hidden underground, and thereby hardly known'.

The 17th and 18th century saw increasing expansion, but overall the area where the site is located maintained a rural aspect, known for its market and nursery gardens (Weinreb and Hibbert 1995, 410).

By the 1800s the site area had become more developed as shown by cartographic sources and archaeological evidence. By the 1860s the population for the whole of Shoreditch had reached nearly 130,000 (Weinreb and Hibbert 1995, 410).

By the 1900s the terraced houses that previously occupied the site had been demolished and been replaced by a large building fronting onto East Road; the rest of the site lay in an apparently undeveloped area. The London County Council Bomb Damage Maps of 1939-1945 (not reproduced) show no bomb damage at the site. There was serious damage to the north-east of the site, while the area to the west was not affected by bombing.

By 1980 the western part of the site was occupied by the current building (marked 100 East Road). At the rear of the building, to the east, there is a yard/car park with a warehouse and a water tank.

### 3 The watching brief

#### 3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and recording during the watching brief was done in accordance with the desk-based assessment (MoLAS 2007) and the MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual (MoLAS, 1994).

The slab was broken out and cleared by contractors under MoLAS supervision. Trenches were excavated by machine by the contractors, and monitored by a member of staff from MoLAS.

The locations of the areas of excavation were recorded by offsetting from adjacent standing walls. This information was then plotted onto the OS grid.

The heights of observations were recorded relative to Ordnance Datum by measuring down from ground level.

Numbered contexts were allocated where appropriate.

The site has produced: 7 context records; 1 photograph.

The site finds and records can be found under the site code ERL07 in the MoL archive.

#### 3.2 Results of the watching brief

In total, 4 separate interventions (trenches) were made for the purposes of observing the bottom of the existing modern foundations. These have been numbered 1 to 4 consecutively. There follows a brief description of the archaeological deposits as recorded.

For all trench locations see Fig 2.

<i>Watching Brief Trench 1</i>	
Location	Extreme south east of site
Dimensions	0.60m x 1.47m x 2.20m deep
Modern ground level	18.45m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	18.10m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	2.20m
Level of base of deposits observed	16.25m OD
Natural observed	N/A

The concrete slab was 0.15m thick and overlay 0.20m of Type 1 Aggregate. This sealed 1.85m of made ground [1], consisting of dark grey clayey silt, with moderate mixed pebbles and brick fragments, occasional concrete and metal fragments, and occasional charcoal flecks, brick and decayed timber flecks. Natural was not reached during the excavation.

<i>Watching Brief Trench 2</i>	
Location	Adjacent to east perimeter wall
Dimensions	0.53m x 1.60m x 2.20m
Modern ground level	18.50m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	18.10m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.85m
Level of base of deposits observed	16.30m OD
Natural observed	N\A

The concrete slab was 0.15m thick and overlay 0.20m of Type 1 aggregate. This sealed 1.85m of made ground [2], consisting of dark grey clayey silt, with moderate mixed pebbles and brick fragments, occasional concrete, metal and granite cobble fragments, and occasional charcoal, brick and decayed timber flecks. Natural was not reached during the excavation.

<i>Watching Brief Trench 3</i>	
Location	Eastern part of site
Dimensions	1.90m x 0.85m x 2.55m deep
Modern ground level	18.52m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	17.92m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.95m
Level of base of deposits observed	16.57m OD
Natural observed	N\A

The concrete slab was 0.25m thick and overlay 0.35m of thin dumped deposits of sand, silt and gravel. These sealed a 50mm layer of very dark gritty silt [3] that overlay in situ granite cobbles [4] set in coarse dark greyish yellow slightly silty sand [5]. Each cobble was 0.23m long and 0.13m thick, suggesting an exterior courtyard area. This overlay 1.82m of dark grey clayey silt [6], with occasional mixed fine to medium pebbles, and occasional brick and mortar flecks. Natural was not reached during the excavation.

<i>Watching Brief Trench 4</i>	
Location	Extreme north east of site
Dimensions	1.7 0m x 0.70m x 2.60m deep
Modern ground level	18.76m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	17.33m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	2.17m
Level of base of deposits observed	16.16m OD
Natural observed	N\A

The topmost concrete slab was 0.25m thick with a separate 0.23m thick concrete slab beneath. This sealed a deposit [7] of made ground consisting of mid dark very slightly sandy clayey silt, with occasional brick, tile oyster shell and pipe fragments, and occasional yellow and grey mortar flecks. Natural was not reached during the excavation.

## **4 Potential of archaeology**

### **4.1 Original research aims**

- What is the level of truncation caused by earlier basements in this area?  
*Unknown.*
- What is the nature and significance of the surviving archaeological remains?  
*19th- and 20th-century made ground of low archaeological significance.*
- What are the levels of natural deposits and how do these compare to adjacent sites?  
*Unknown.*

### **4.2 Significance of the data**

No significant archaeological remains were observed during the watching brief and so it is the conclusion of this report that the site has low potential for archaeological survival. MoLAS considers, therefore, that the impact of the proposed development is negligible and recommends that no further work is necessary.

The decision on the appropriate archaeological response rests with the Local Planning Authority and their designated archaeological advisor.

## 5 Publication and archiving

Information on the results of the excavation 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.

The site archive, containing original records, will be stored in accordance with the terms of the desk based assessment (2007) in the Museum of London within 12 months of the end of the excavation.

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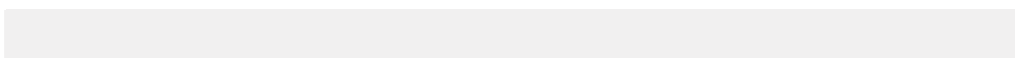
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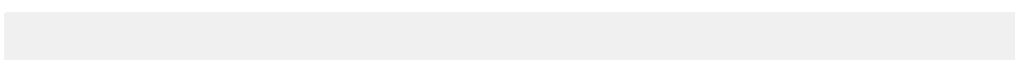
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## 7 NMR OASIS archaeological report form



### Project details

Project name	Watching brief
Short description of the project	Geotechnical watching brief
Project dates	Start: 12-09-2007 End: 12-09-2007
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ERL07 - Sitecode
Type of project	Watching brief
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices
Monument type	WALL Uncertain



### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON HACKNEY HACKNEY 100 East Road
Postcode	N1
Study area	6.44 Square metres



Site coordinates TQ 532830 182940 50.9431073652 0.182116928189 50  
56 35 N 000 10 55 E Point

**Project creators**

Name of Organisation MoLAS

Project brief originator English Heritage/Department of Environment

Project design originator MoLAS

Project director/manager Jo Lyon

Project supervisor P. Cardiff

Type of sponsor/funding body Mace Ltd

**Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists? No

Entered by P. Cardiff (pcardiff@molas.org.uk)

Entered on 18 September 2007

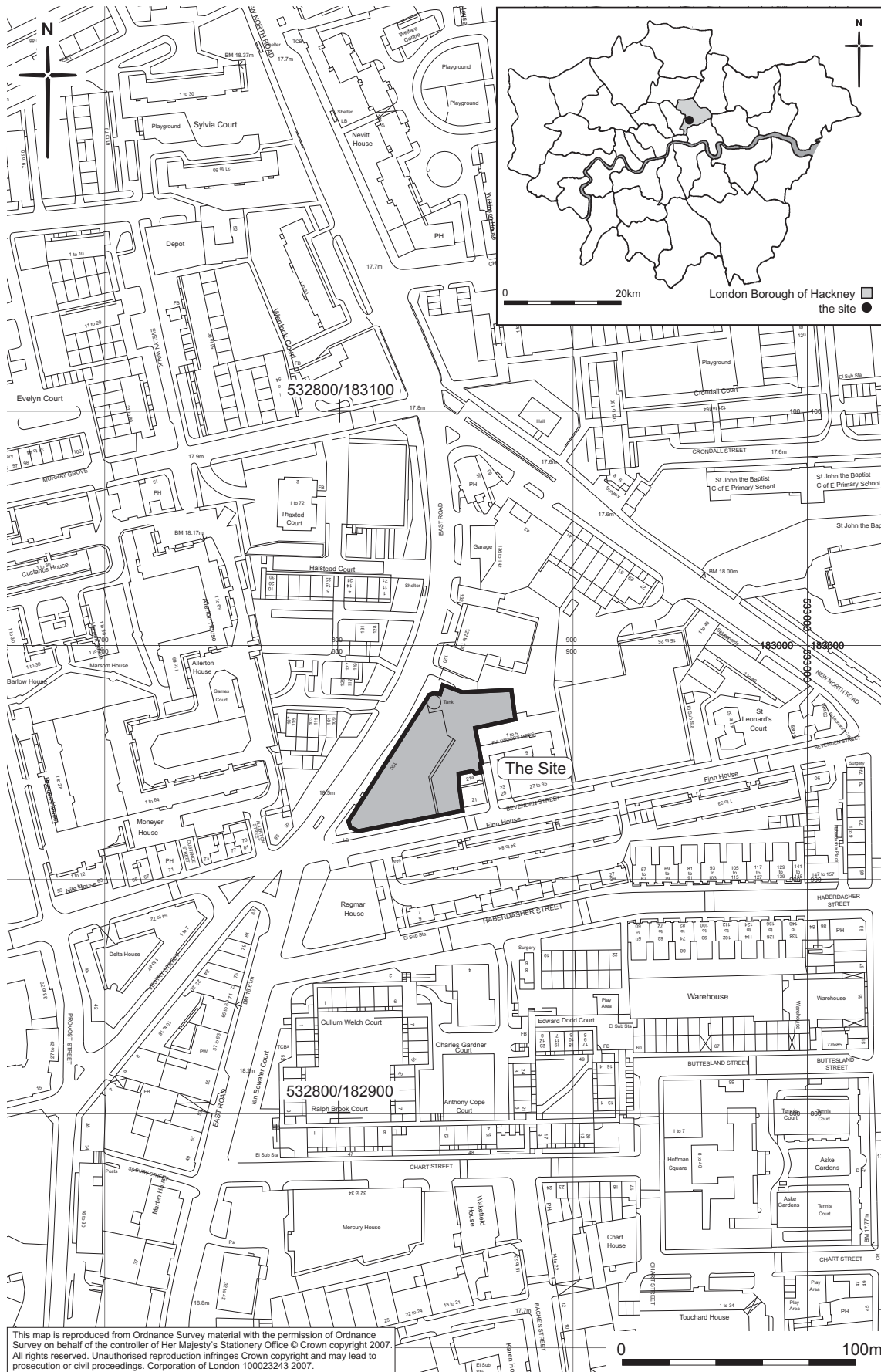


Fig 1 Site location



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0 25m

Fig 2 Trench location