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CRICKLEWOOD BUS GARAGE
329 Edgware Road
London
NW2

London Borough of Brent

Archaeological evaluation report

November 2008

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SLO 80749



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CRICKLEWOOD BUS GARAGE
329 Edgware Road
London
NW2

London Borough of Brent

Archaeological evaluation report

Site Code: CBJ07

National Grid Reference: 523310 186292

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Summary (non-technical)

This report presents the updated results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by the Museum of London Archaeology Service on the site of Cricklewood Bus Garage, 329 Edgware Road, London, NW2. The report was commissioned from Museum of London Archaeology by Cornish Architects on behalf of the client Metroline Ltd.

Two evaluation trenches (Trenches 2 and 3) were excavated in the east-central part of the site in October 2007, followed by a limited mitigation watching brief. In addition, a further archaeological trench (Trench 1), located in the south-central area of the site, was excavated and recorded in September 2008.

The results of the field evaluation have helped to refine the initial assessment of the archaeological potential of the site. The results have shown that both deep and shallow archaeological features cutting into natural clay survived in the eastern part of the site. A flat bottomed Roman ditch, dated to AD 50–400, as well as a shallow posthole of unknown date, were recorded in Trench 3. No archaeological deposits or features were revealed elsewhere on the site, however.

In the light of revised understanding of the archaeological potential of the site the report concludes the impact of the proposed redevelopment is low.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

This report constitutes a revised report for evaluation at the site of Cricklewood Bus Station, 329 Edgware Road, London, NW2, hereafter called 'the site'. The evaluation was conducted in two phases: the first consisting of two trenches excavated during October 2007 and reported in an initial evaluation report (MoLAS 2007c). The second phase of evaluation was conducted during September 2008 and consisted of the excavation of a third trench.

The site comprises existing and recently demolished buildings of the current Bus Garage, and is bounded to the north-east by the Edgware Road. The site is located in a railway triangle and is bounded to the south, north and west by railway embankments. The OS National Grid Ref. for centre of site is 523310 186292. The site code is CBJ07.

The ground level on the Edgware Road rises from c 46.5m Ordnance Datum (OD) on the south side of the site to c 51m OD on the bridge over the railway line on the north side of the site. Ground level on the site itself falls from 47.08m OD at the entrance to the bus garage on Edgware Road to 44.75m OD at the western end of the site (Cornish Architects drawing nos. 0542/TP/102 and 0542/TP/103 Dec 2006).

An *Archaeological desk-based assessment* was previously prepared, which covers the whole area of the site (MoLAS, 2007a). The *assessment* 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.

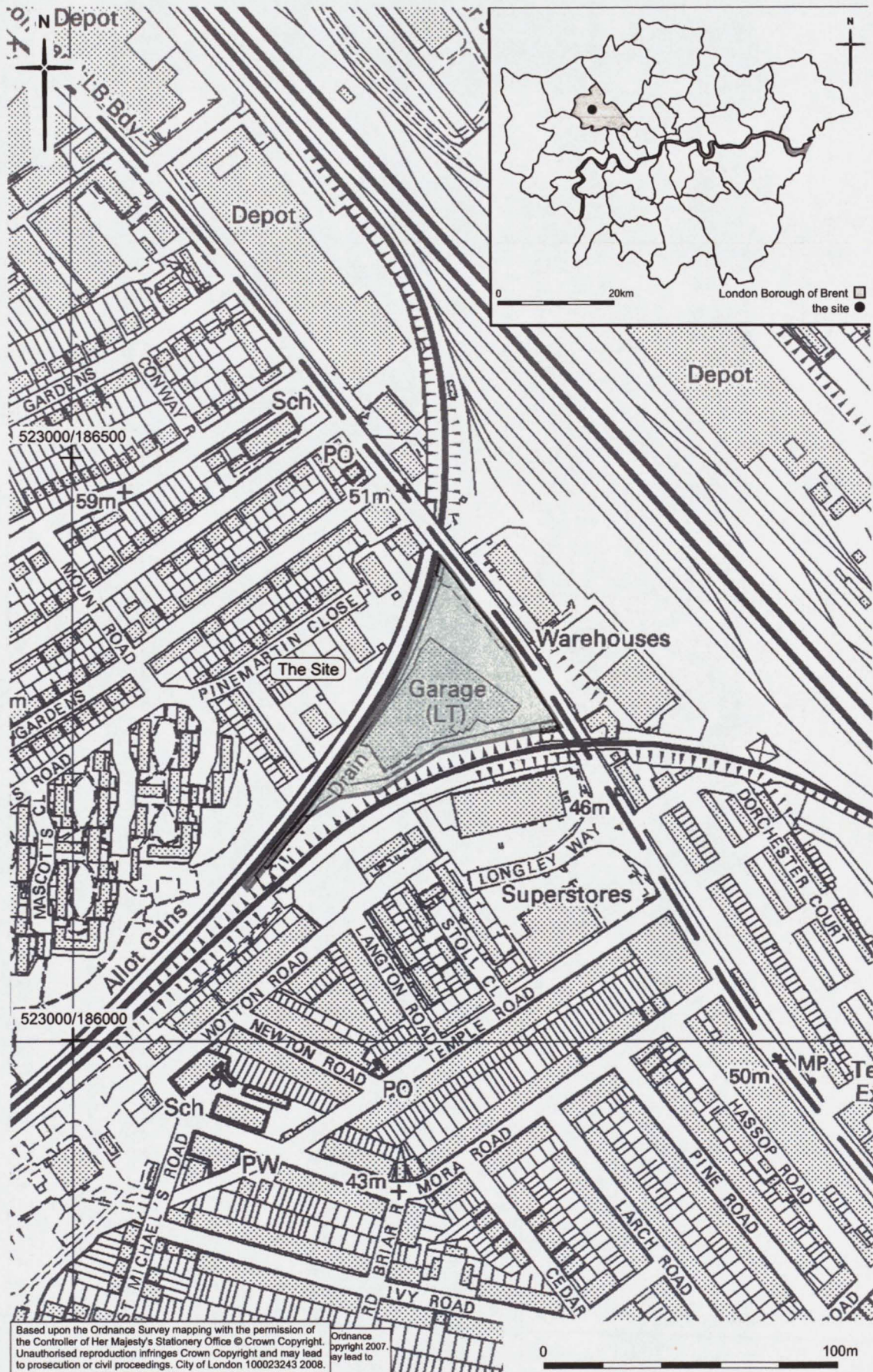


Fig 1 Site location

1.2 Planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Archaeological impact assessment* which formed the project design for the evaluation (see Section 2, MoLAS, 2007a).

1.3 Planning background

This evaluation was carried out in support of a planning application for development on site. An archaeological condition was imposed on the planning application (06/3647). Subsequent to the completion of the evaluation, a further requirement to mitigate by archaeological watching brief was recommended by English Heritage (GLAAS). This involved monitoring of the excavation of a proposed lift pit, located in the north-eastern area of the site.

The site does not contain any scheduled ancient monuments, statutory listed buildings or stand within a conservation area. The site does not lie in an Archaeological Priority Area.

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned from the Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) by Cornish Architects on behalf of the client Metroline Ltd. The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA, 2001).

Field evaluation, and the *Evaluation report* which comments on the results of that exercise, are defined in the most recent English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage, 1998) as intended to provide information about the archaeological resource in order to contribute to the:

- formulation of a strategy for the preservation or management of those remains; and/or
- 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
- formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigations within a programme of research

1.5 Aims and objectives

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

The purpose of the evaluation was to provide information on the location, form, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains, the extent of horizontal truncation and the depth of surviving archaeological deposits. The limited nature of the archaeological evaluation made it unreasonable to establish many specific archaeological research objectives. The archaeological brief was essentially limited to establishing levels and nature of surviving archaeological deposits. Nevertheless, a few broad site-specific research

question and objectives were outlined in the Method Statement (Davis, 2007). They were compiled with reference to the known history of the area and with consideration to previous observations.

A complete list of research aims and results can be found in Section 4.1 of this report.

2 Topographical and historical background

A detailed description of the historical and topographical background of the locality has been provided in the earlier *Archaeological impact assessment* (Knight 2007). A brief summary is presented here.

2.1 Prehistoric period (c 500,000 BC–AD 43)

Two hand axes and a Levallois flake, as well as some unretouched (possibly waste) flakes were recovered c 700m south-west of the site. These were found prior to 1968, and their context was not accurately recorded. However, they pose something of a problem for the geology of the area. Tools which used a prepared core, or Levallois, technique postdate the deposition of the Dollis Hill Gravels by c 300,000 years. Also, where they were discovered is geologically older still, on the weathered surface of London Clay. Such tools must have survived in a silt pocket above or cut into London Clay, or cut into the Gravels and they subsequently eroded out.

Bronze Age cremation urns were recovered approximately c 1.7km to the north-west, near the Brent reservoir. Iron Age remains are not plentiful in Greater London however the Dollis Hill Reservoir site, c 850m to the west, recorded Iron Age features including a length of ditch and a large posthole or pit. The features contained Early Iron Age pottery dated 600–400BC, the first Iron Age finds recorded in Brent (Sankey 2003, 39).

2.2 Roman period (AD 43–410)

At the beginning of the Roman period the site was likely to have been wooded ground adjacent to a military Roman Road but by the 4th century the site may have been part of a large villa estate, the centre of which possibly lay c 850m to the west.

The site is adjacent to the Edgware Road which follows the course of a Roman Road which became known as Watling Street. This main road linked London to St Albans and carried on to Chester. Until the excavation of the Dollis Hill Reservoir site, c 850m to the west, very little Roman activity had been recorded in the area. Late Roman farming and quarries included field ditches and large pits. Building material, millstones burnt grain and domestic pottery indicated the proximity of farm buildings and a resident population (Sankey 2003, 39).

The Roman pottery from the Dollis Hill Reservoir site indicates occupation during the 4th century. The completeness of some vessels and the condition of the pottery in general suggests the source of the material is in the near vicinity.

There were also burnt remains of wheat crop indicating grain processing, threshing and drying, in the vicinity of the site. Quern fragments and burnt grain suggests that flour was made on the premises. The evidence of grain cultivation comes from the late 3rd or 4th centuries. This conforms to the national pattern of agricultural intensification in the final century of Roman rule. Numerous large sand quarries also dated to the late 3rd or 4th centuries. Sand had a variety of uses in construction and its quarrying marks periods of construction in the locality (Sankey 2003, 57).

2.3 Early medieval period (AD 410–1066)

It is likely that the site was open farm land during the early medieval period. Around the 9th and 10th century, the local parochial system began to replace the earlier Saxon Minster system, with formal areas of land centred on nucleated settlement served by a parish church. On the claylands of north-west London, scattered hamlets were established in clearings in woodland, usually on elevated, well drained sites watered by streams and wells, such as at Willesden Green, Harlesden, and Neasden. Kilburn grew up where Watling Street crossed the Kilburn brook and Twyford at a bridging point of the Brent. Church End as a settlement probably followed the building of the church there, and Kensal Green evolved in the early modern period at the junction of Harrow Road and Kilburn Lane (VCH *Middlesex* vii, 177–82).

2.4 Later medieval period (AD 1066–1485)

The site was open farm land belonging to the manor of Oxgate during the later medieval period.

The site was situated on land which once belonged to the prebendary of Oxgate (ibid, 208–16). By the 13th century, the settlement at Oxgate comprised a group of farmhouses and cottages reached by lanes from Edgware Road and Dollis Hill Lane, c 800m north-west of the site. (VCH *Middlesex* vii, 182–204).

On the other side of Watling Street, c 780m to the north-east of the site was the moated manor of Clitterhouse. An excavation of a site at Claremont Road, Hendon Football Club, c 730m to the north-east, in 1997 by Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust, found no evidence of the manor house or moat.

2.5 Post-medieval period (AD 1485–present)

A map of the parish of Willesden published in the mid 19th century (refer to previous assessment MoLAS 2007) shows the site as open farmland crossed by a field boundary.

By the late 19th century the site is part of Lower Oxgate Farm. The OS map of 1865 (MoLAS 2007) shows the site as open farmland crossed by a footpath and drained ditch. A railway line is shown to the north of the site. The Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25" map of 1894 (see also MoLAS 2007) shows that by that time the railway line bordering the southern edge of the site, known as the Cricklewood Curve, had been constructed.

By 1915 the bus garage buildings occupied the majority of the site with the northern and eastern areas adjacent to the Edgware road as open space at the foot of the embankment that had been built to carry the Edgware Road over the railway line to the north. A series of narrow buildings occupied the area to the west of the main building. The Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale map of 1963/1972 (MoLAS 2007) shows tanks on the southern side of the main garage building which are still in place. These are fuel tanks the underground extent of which of not certain. The Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale map of 1963/1972 also shows buildings along the front of the site which have since been demolished.

3 The evaluation

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and monitoring during the evaluation was carried out in accordance with the preceding *Method Statement* (MoLAS, 2007b), and the *MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS, 1994).

The evaluation consisted of three archaeological trenches. Two (Trenches 2 and 3) were excavated in the east-central part of the site. This was carried out in October 2007, in accordance with the contractor's programme. The third trench (Trench 1), excavated and recorded in September 2008, was repositioned after discussion with the contractor and located to the south of the site (Fig 2). Excavation of the proposed lift shaft (also Fig 2) was monitored during a watching brief before the final phase of the evaluation took place.

The modern made ground was cleared by contractors under MOLA supervision. Trenches were excavated by machine by the contractors, and monitored by a member of staff from MOLA.

The locations of evaluation trenches were recorded by MOLA Geomatics Department using real-time, survey-grade Global Positioning System (GPS). This information was then plotted onto the OS grid. Levels were calculated by traversing from a Temporary Bench Mark established on site by the contractors. The value for the Temporary Bench Mark was checked by the MOLA Geomatics Team.

A written and drawn record of all archaeological deposits encountered was made in accordance with the principles set out in the MOLA site recording manual (MoLAS, 1994).

The site has produced: 1 trench location plan; 5 context records; 2 single context plans, 2 section drawing at 1:20; and 16 digital photographs. In addition 1 small bag of finds was recovered from the site.

The site finds and records can be found under the site code CBJ07 in the MOLA archive.

3.2 Results of the evaluation

For trench locations see Fig 2

<i>Evaluation Trench 1; Figures 4 and 5</i>	
Location	South/central area of the site
Dimensions	21m by 2.0m by 3m depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	44m OD
Base of modern slab	43.80m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	No archaeological deposits or features were observed
Level of base of deposits observed and	42.25m OD (modern construction debris truncation)
Natural observed	41.80m OD

Above the clean natural clay, a light brownish-yellow in colour, was a substantially thick (1.4m) layer of contaminated dark brownish-yellow clay. This deposit, recorded at 43.20m OD was possibly natural subsoil, heavily contaminated by years of oil and diesel seeping to the ground, most likely leaking from the large metal tanks buried to the east.

The contaminated clay may represent colluvial deposits overlying the natural clay, but due to extensive staining caused by the contamination, this was inconclusive.

Overlying this clay was a layer of mixed concrete, brick and scrap steel rubble at 43.80m OD, with the remains of a possible clinker floor surface. This debris layer reached a depth of 1.75m below slab level, although its average depth of it was 0.7m.

To the east end of the trench, two metal fuel tanks were found buried 0.5m below slab level. These tanks occupied the first 4m of the trench's eastern end and were found leaking water mixed with diesel.

No archaeological deposits or features were encountered in Trench 1.

<i>Evaluation Trench 2</i>	
Location	East central area of the site
Dimensions	20.40m by 2.0m by 1.40m average depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	44.91m OD (W) – 45.22m OD (E)
Base of modern fill/slab	43.87m OD (east) N/A (west, where truncated by deep modern intrusion)
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	No archaeological deposits or features were observed
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	42.25 m OD (W) 43.87m OD (E)
Natural observed	43.94mm OD

Clean natural clay was recorded at 43.94 m OD below a substantial, up to 1.20m thick, layer of contaminated dark grey clay. The extensive contamination had probably been caused by decades of oil and diesel seeping to the ground, most likely leaking from the ceramic drains running diagonally across the trench approximately 1.0m below present ground surface. The contaminated clay may represent colluvial deposits overlying the natural clay, but due to extensive staining caused by the contamination the identification was not definite.

The western end of the trench was further truncated by a deep modern intrusion filled with redeposited clay and rubble.

No archaeological deposits or features were encountered in Trench 2.

<i>Evaluation Trench 3 (Fig 3)</i>	
Location	East central area of the site, slightly north east of trench 2
Dimensions	22.20m by 2.30m by 1.10m average depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	45.49- 45.61m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	44.66m OD (south) N/A (north, where truncated by modern intrusion)
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	0.97m deep
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	43.69m OD
Natural observed	44.66m OD

Natural clay [5] was recorded approximately 0.90m (44.66m OD) below the modern ground surface in Trench 3. The north end of the trench was further truncated by large deep modern truncation and natural deposits were not reached in that part of the trench.

A substantial, flat bottomed NNE-SSW running ditch [2] was recorded running across the trench at a top height of 44.66m OD. The ditch was 1.50m wide and 0.97m deep and its clayey fill [1] contained pottery of Roman date, AD50-400 (see Appendix I). The fill also contained occasional flecks of charcoal and was subsequently sampled. Another cut feature, a shallow posthole [4], was recorded in the southern end of the trench. The cut measured 0.35m in diameter and 0.10m in depth and its fill [3] contained no diagnostic or datable material.

Both features were sealed by a layer of contaminated clay, which may represent colluvial deposits, although, as with Trench 2, due to discoloration from the contamination any attempt at an interpretation is, at best, tentative.

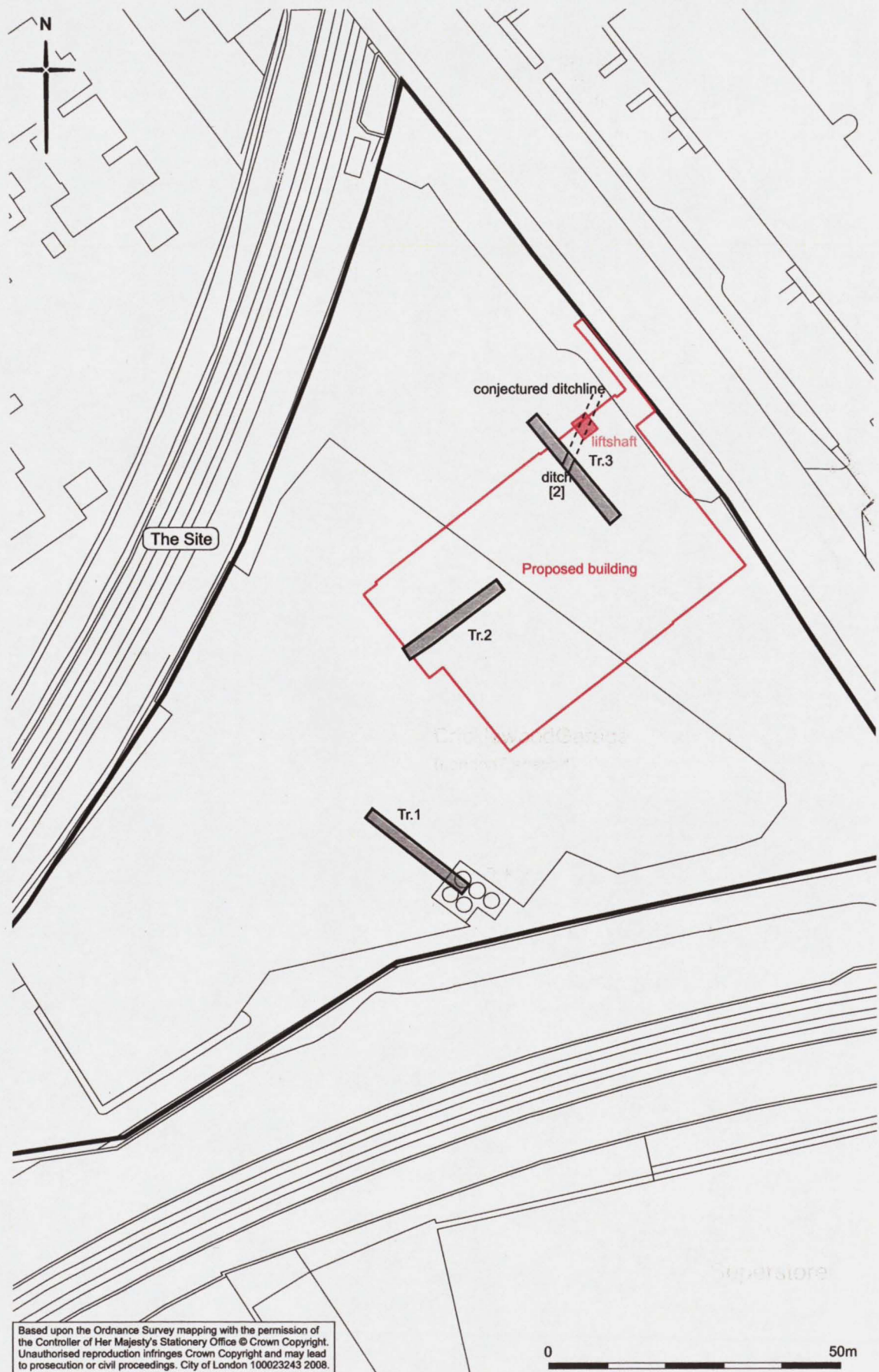


Fig 2 Areas of evaluation and watching brief

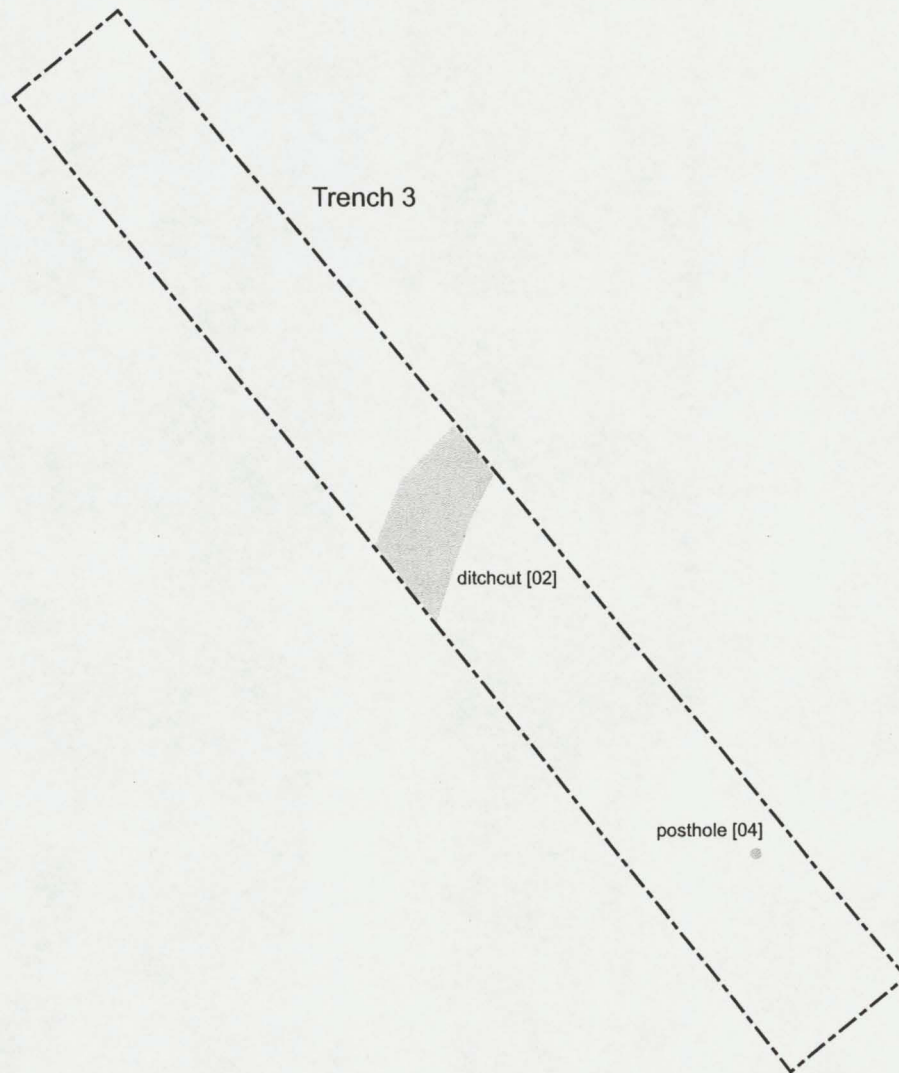


Fig 3 Archaeological features in Trench 3



Fig 4 Trench 1, looking south



Fig 5 Trench 1, west-facing section

3.3 Results of the Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief was carried out on the bulk excavation of the lift pit (Fig 2). The watching brief recorded the surface of the underlying natural clay. No evidence for the continuation of the ditch [2] was observed. Diesel contamination at the upper surface of the clay may have obscured the fill of this ditch, however, and any remains of the colluvial deposits postulated in Trench 3.

3.4 Assessment of the evaluation

GLAAS guidelines (English Heritage, 1998) require an assessment of the success of the evaluation 'in order to illustrate what level of confidence can be placed on the information which will provide the basis of the mitigation strategy'.

In the case of this site three evaluation trenches were located across the central and southern areas of the proposed development to investigate area of impact. This was successfully achieved.

The investigation revealed modern truncation in the form of service trenches, fuel tanks (Trench 1) and deep intrusions, most likely caused by recent concrete removal. The evaluation also established that archaeological features cutting into natural clay survive in the area. The depth of survival also suggests that the horizontal truncation processes for this area appear to be fairly minimal. All trenches evaluated the area of proposed development down to natural deposits.

In consequence, a high degree of confidence may be placed on the evaluation results.

4 Archaeological potential

4.1 Realisation of original research aims

What is the nature and level of natural topography?

Natural clay was encountered at 41.80m OD in Trench 1, 43.94m OD in Trench 2 and 44.66m OD in Trench 3. This reflects a slight slope in the natural terrain from the north of the site, down to the south.

Are there any colluvial deposits present overlying natural London Clays?

Approximately the top 1.0m of the encountered sub-surface deposits were heavily contaminated and discoloured with oils and diesel. And due to the extensive nature of the contamination it was not feasible to positively identify the nature of the deposits overlying the natural clay and the observed archaeological cut features. It is possible that some, if not all, of the contaminated clay deposits represent colluvial deposits, later discoloured with contamination, but may equally represent diesel contamination within the weathered upper surface of the London Clay.

Are there any cut features below the colluvium within the London Clay?

Whilst it cannot be said with certainty that colluvium was identified on site, archaeological features were identified in Trench 3 below a horizon of heavily stained clay. Given the nature of the contamination it is not possible to say with any certainty whether this material does constitute colluvium, or whether the deposit represents stained London Clay. It is possible that the fill of the features recorded extended to the base of the made ground deposits, but was not recognised at this level due to the heavy staining.

What are the earliest deposits identified?

A large, flat bottomed, NNE-SSW running Roman ditch was identified and excavated in Trench 3. A nearby posthole may be contemporary, but dating was inconclusive.

Is there any evidence for in situ Roman remains at the site and if so are the remains associated with the possible nearby Roman Villa?

As mentioned above, a substantial Roman ditch was encountered during the evaluation in Trench 3, which was located in the vicinity of Edgware Road. Edgware Road follows the course of a Roman Road which became known as Watling Street. This main road linked London to St Albans and carried on to Chester. The observed ditch had a flat bottom and very steep regular sides. Considering the alignment of the feature, the ditch may represent a field boundary or drainage ditch rather than having a direct association with either the nearby Roman road or the possible nearby Roman Villa.

Is there any evidence for early medieval settlement at the site?

No archaeological evidence for early medieval settlement was encountered during the evaluation.

Is there any evidence for settlement associated with the Manor of Oxgate?

No evidence for the settlement associated with the Manor of Oxgate was observed on site.

What are the latest deposits identified?

The latest deposits observed comprised the service trenches with ceramic drain pipes encountered in Trench 2. These are likely to have been associated with the recently demolished bus garage buildings.

4.2 General discussion of potential

The evaluation has shown that the potential for survival of ancient ground surfaces (horizontal archaeological stratification) on the site is negligible. However, there is potential for survival of archaeological cut features, such as the substantial Roman ditch recorded during the evaluation. However such survival is likely to be extremely limited in certain areas because of deep modern intrusion and ground contamination. The average depth of archaeological cut features where they do survive is likely to be 0.50–1.0m.

4.3 Significance

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

5 Proposed development impact and recommendations

The proposed redevelopment at Cricklewood Bus Garage site involves demolishing and rebuilding the bus garage building. Foundations for the new garage consist of low density 450mm and 600mm diameter piles with suspended 600mm ground-beams and floor slab. Formation level for pile caps and tie-beams is at 45.40m OD (SDP Consulting Engineers Dwg E06-125-201G), whilst the archaeological horizon recorded lies at 44.66m OD. Accordingly, development impact will consist of the individual pile locations. The single deeper intervention of a lift pit to the north-east of Trench 3 has been monitored. This lay on the projected line of the ditch recorded in Trench 3, and potentially impacted on this feature by 300mm. Watching brief during the construction of the lift pit failed to locate any continuation of this feature. The remaining development area consists of hard standing formed above the identified archaeological horizon.

MOLA considers that the overall impact of the redevelopment on archaeological remains will be negligible.

The decision on the appropriate archaeological response to the deposits revealed within the site rests with the Local Planning Authority and their designated archaeological advisor.

6 Acknowledgements

MOLA would like to thank Cornish Architects for commissioning the report on behalf of Metroline Ltd. Thanks are also due to Neil Sillitoe and James Thomas of Fitzpatrick Ltd for their help and assistance during the fieldwork and Kim Stabler from English Heritage for monitoring the works.

The author would also like to thank MOLA archaeologist Guillermo Molina-Burguera and Lucy Garnsworthy for their hard work on site and the MOLA Geomatics team, Eamonn Baldwin and Sarah Jones.

The site was project managed by Mark Beasley and Al Telfer from MOLA.

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8 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

molas1-32938

Project details

Project name Cricklewood Bus Garage

Short description of the project Two evaluation trenches (Trenches 2 and 3) were excavated in the east-central part of the site in October 2007, followed by a limited mitigation watching brief. In addition, a further archaeological trench (Trench 1), located in the south-central area of the site, was excavated and recorded in September 2008. A flat bottomed Roman ditch, dated to AD 50-400, as well as a shallow posthole of unknown date, were recorded in Trench 3. No archaeological deposits or features were revealed elsewhere on the site.

Project dates Start: 08-10-2007 End: 12-09-2008

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project codes reference CBJ07 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Transport and Utilities 2 - Other transport infrastructure

Monument type DITCH Roman

Monument type POSTHOLE Uncertain

Significant Finds POT Roman

Methods techniques & 'Targeted Trenches'

Development type Large/ medium scale extensions to existing structures (e.g. church, school, hospitals, law courts, etc.)

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Position in the After full determination (eg. As a condition)
planning process

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON BRENT WILLESDEN Cricklewood Bus
Garage,

Postcode NW2 6JP

Site coordinates TQ 523310 186292 50.9463727852 0.168715000978 50 56 46 N
000 10 07 E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 43.87m Max: 44.66m

Project creators

Name of Molas
Organisation

Project brief MoLAS project manager
originator

Project design MoLAS
originator

Project AI Telfer
director/manager

Project supervisor Aleksandra Cetera

Name of Metroline Ltd
sponsor/funding
body

Project archives

Physical Archive LAARC
recipient

Physical Contents 'Ceramics'

Digital recipient Archive LAARC

Digital Contents 'Ceramics','Stratigraphic'

Digital available Media 'Survey','Text'

Paper recipient Archive LAARC

Paper Contents 'Ceramics'

Paper available Media 'Context sheet','Drawing','Plan','Report','Survey ','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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Date 2008

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Place of issue or publication 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London, N1 7ED

Description A4, spiral

Entered by Aleksandra Cetera (acetera@museumoflondon.org.uk)

Entered on 10 November 2008

Appendix I: Note on the Roman pottery

Amy Thorp

Context [1], submitted for spot dating, contains five sherds of Miscellaneous sand-tempered ware (SAND); four sherds are from one vessel. All the pottery is heavily abraded, with unidentifiable body sherds. Without the presence of any datable forms this context can only be generally dated to AD 50–400.