



21/22 GROSVENOR STREET AND
1 AND 2 BROOKS MEWS
London W1

City of Westminster

Archaeological watching brief report

February 2008



MUSEUM OF LONDON

Archaeology Service

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Summary (non-technical)

This report has been commissioned by Hamiltons Architects, on behalf of the client, Alburn (south east) Ltd, in order to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out at 21–22 Grosvenor Street and 21 and 22 Brooks Mews.

Work on the redevelopment of the properties included the installation of a new lift pit and services, and these were monitored between 2nd August and 6th November 2007.

A cast iron furnace was recorded at basement level in the area of 22 Brooks Mews. This was located in the north-eastern corner of the internal courtyard and may have related to a property on the site in either the 18th or 19th century. No other archaeological deposits were recorded. Natural brickearth was observed at 17.30m OD, with natural gravel at c 16.30m OD.

Table of contents

1	Introduction	4
1.1	Site background	4
1.2	The planning and legislative framework	4
1.3	Planning background	4
1.4	Origin and scope of the report	4
1.5	Aims and objectives	5
2	Topographical and historical background	7
2.1	Topography	7
2.2	Prehistoric	7
2.3	Roman	7
2.4	Saxon and medieval	7
2.5	Post-medieval	7
3	The watching brief	8
3.1	Methodology	8
3.2	Results of the watching brief	8
4	Potential of archaeology	13
4.1	Original research aims	13
4.2	New research aims	13
4.3	Significance of the data	13
5	Publication and archiving	14
6	Acknowledgements	15
7	Bibliography	15
8	NMR OASIS archaeological report form	17

List of illustrations

Front cover: Greenwood's map from 1827, showing the location of the site

Fig 1 Site location plan 6

Fig 2 Location of areas of investigation 10

Fig 3 Plan showing location of post-medieval furnace 11

Fig 4 Section from area of new lift pit 12

1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The watching brief took place at 21–22 Grosvenor Street and 21 and 22 Brooks Mews, London, W1, hereafter called ‘the site’. The site comprises the footprint of four properties and is bounded by Brooks Mews to the north, 19–20 Grosvenor Street to the east, Grosvenor Street to the south and 23 Grosvenor Street to the west (see Fig 1). The centre of the site is at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference 528673 180861. The level of the basement slab varied between 17.72m OD and 17.96m OD. Modern ground level immediately adjacent to the site is *c* 21m OD. The site code is GVB07.

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

In addition, a previous *Method Statement* for the watching brief was prepared (MoLAS, 2007).

1.2 The planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Archaeological impact assessment* (see Section 3, MoLAS, 2007).

1.3 Planning background

The archaeological investigation was undertaken as part of a planning condition (No. PT/07/04728/FULL) on the development. The site contains no Scheduled Monuments or Listed Buildings, but 21–22 Grosvenor Street has an English Heritage Blue Plaque on its frontage. Although it does not lie within an Area of Special Archaeological Priority, the site does lie within the Mayfair Conservation Area.

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Hamiltons Architects, on behalf of the client, Alburn (south east) Ltd, 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 *Method Statement* (MoLAS, 2007), 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 *Method Statement* for the watching brief (Section 2.2):

- What is the nature of natural deposits at the site and at what level are they found? If alluvium is present, can an untruncated sequence be used to identify and date the depositional history of the River Tyburn?
- Are any remains or features present which relate to activity at the site prior to its known historic development in the early 18th century?
- Is there any evidence for the construction of the Civil War defences at the site? If so, what form do they take?

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

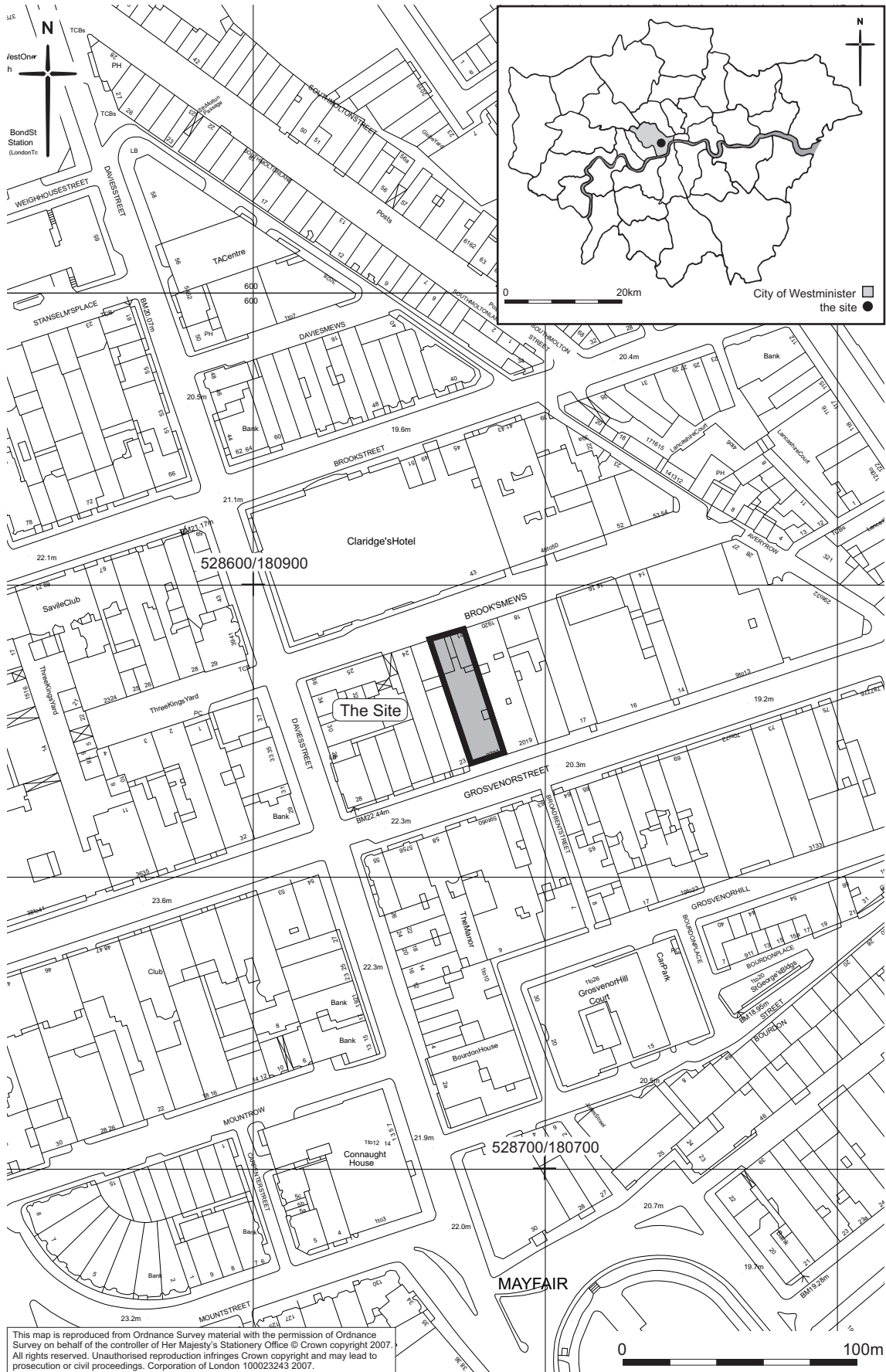


Fig 1 Site location

2 Topographical and historical background

A more detailed description of the geology, archaeology and history of the site was provided in the previous *Archaeological assessment* (MoLAS, 2007). A brief resume is provided here:

2.1 Topography

The site lies on the Thames river gravels (Lynch Hill terrace), but the geology of the area is complicated by the presence of the former Tyburn and Westbourne tributaries. The British Geological Survey map shows a band of alluvial river deposits associated with the River Tyburn valley covering the north-eastern part of the site.

2.2 Prehistoric

Sporadic finds dating to the prehistoric period have been discovered in the Bond street area. These include two Palaeolithic handaxes and a Bronze Age palstave. The route of Oxford Street is thought to follow an Iron Age trackway. From its topographic position, the site could lie on the western bank of the Tyburn, where terrace gravels and/or alluvial sequences from the former river could be present. Evidence of any settlement and land use from the prehistoric period onwards, on and over the terrace gravels could be present.

2.3 Roman

A number of Roman features, such as ditches, have also been recorded in the vicinity of the site. It is thought that a timber bridge crossed the Tyburn near Bond Street station during the Roman period. Oxford Street, to the north of the site, and Park Lane, to the west, existed as roads in the Roman period.

2.4 Saxon and medieval

During the Saxon and medieval periods, it would seem that the area was largely either open fields or pasture, with a likely settlement around the Tyburn Bridge. This land use continued until the late 17th century, when the Grosvenor estate was laid out, becoming part of the City of Westminster.

2.5 Post-medieval

It seems likely that the Tyburn was largely culverted during the late 17th century. Grosvenor Street itself dates from the 1720s to 1730s. The development was built around a planned street pattern, with broad squares of ornamental gardens, such as Berkley and Grosvenor Squares (see Greenwood's map from 1827 on the front cover). In addition, the site falls within the historic parish of St George Hanover Square, which previously lay within the county of Middlesex.

3 The watching brief

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and recording during the watching brief was done in accordance with the *Method Statement* (MoLAS, 2007) and the MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual (MoLAS, 1994).

The slab/ground was broken out and cleared by contractors; service trenches were excavated by hand and by machine by the contractors, and monitored by a member of staff from MoLAS.

The locations of the areas of excavation had already been plotted on to a Basement Survey (Drg. No. 14807/F01 E, Hurst, Peirce and Malcolm Engineers). This information was then plotted onto the Ordnance Survey grid. The heights of observations were recorded relative to Ordnance Datum, which had been transferred to the site by the contractor.

Where relevant, sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10; numbered contexts were allocated where appropriate. The site has produced: one trench location plan; three context records; one 1:10 section drawing; 5 photographs. No finds were recovered from the site.

The site records can be found under the site code GVB07 in the MoL archive.

3.2 Results of the watching brief

Three separate areas of the site were monitored during the archaeological watching brief; these have been marked on a plan of the existing basement as 'underpinning', 'new piles' and 'new lift pit' (see Fig 2). A summary of observations from each area is set out below. The watching brief demonstrated that there had already been severe truncation at the site which had removed most deposits that might have been of archaeological interest.

<i>Underpinning</i>	
Location	Eastern side of site in area of existing internal courtyard and below office (3)
Dimensions	10m (N-S) by 2m (E-W) by 1.20m depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	7.77m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	7.52m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	c 1.0m
Level of base of deposits observed	6.57 m OD
Natural observed	Natural brickearth seen 7.02m OD

A cast iron furnace [2] recorded at the northern end of the underpinning trench (see Fig 3 for location) was the only feature of any interest identified in this area. It was below the modern slab of the internal courtyard floor and cut into natural brickearth.

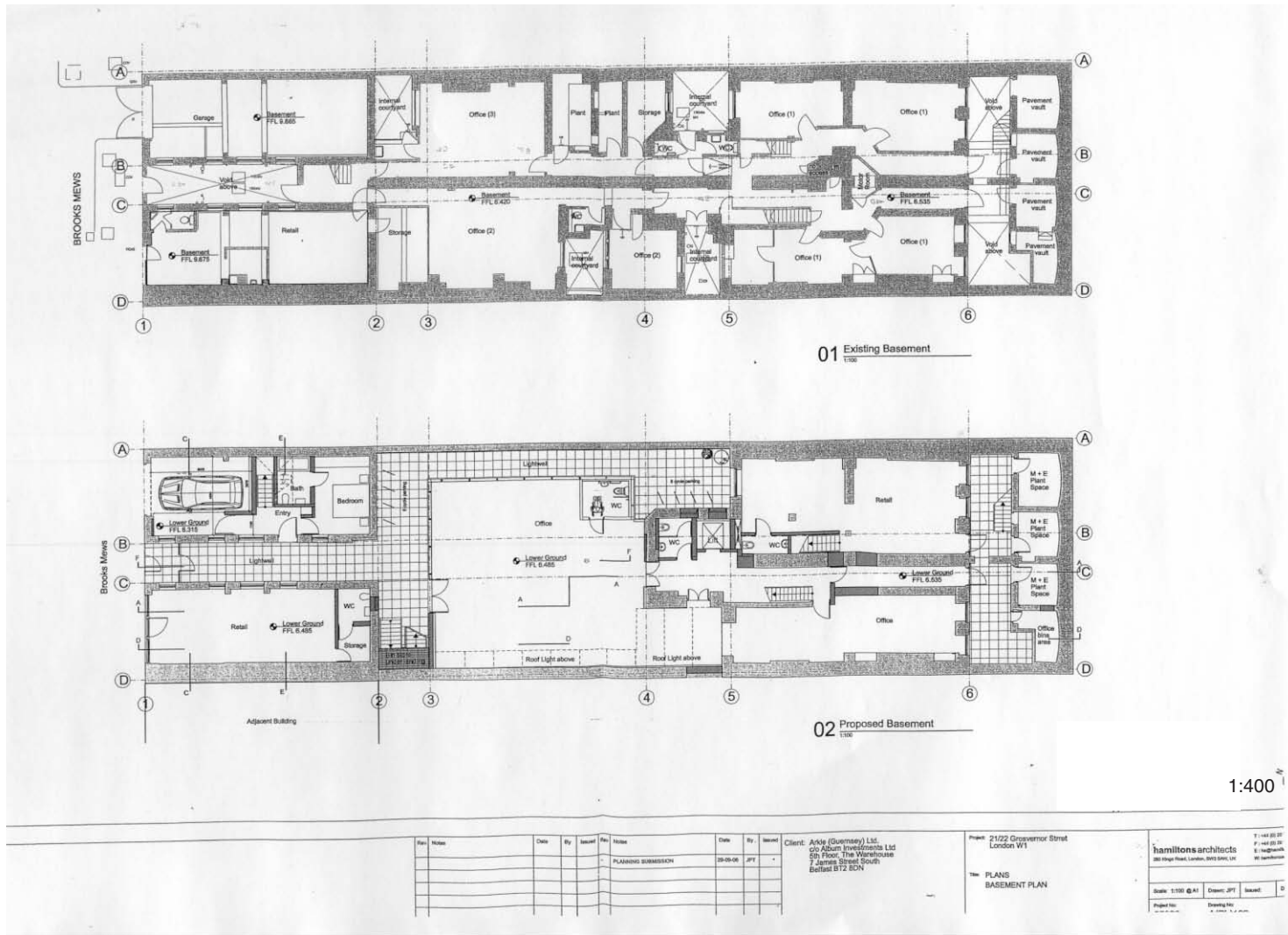
The furnace may have been associated with a kitchen in one of the residential properties on the site in the 18th or, more probably, the 19th centuries. The map shown on the front cover of this report dates to 1827 and may show the property associated with the furnace. If it was not located in a kitchen, it may have been built to control the air flow and collect the soot from a chimney above leading to the ground level, first and second storey fireplaces of the house. It was aligned north-east to south-west and measured 0.28m across, with a total depth of 0.52m. It had a bricked up flue hole, with a small cast iron door below. No other archaeological features were recorded.

<i>New piles</i>	
Location	Centre of site
Dimensions	4m (N-S) by 2m (E-W)
Modern ground level/top of slab	17.80m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	17.30m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	No archaeological deposits seen
Level of base of deposits observed	Approximately 14.0m OD
Natural observed	Natural brickearth at 17.30m OD; natural sand and gravel at 16.30m OD; London Clay at c15.30m OD

In total, 28 separate bores were augered in the central area of the site. These provided useful information on the depth of the natural terrace gravels and the London Clay but no archaeological features or deposits of alluvial material associated with the River Tyburn were encountered in any of the observed bores.

<i>New lift pit</i>	
Location	Centre of site, to south-east of 'new piles'
Dimensions	3m (N-S) x 2m (E-W) x 2m depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	17.80m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	17.30m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	No archaeological deposits seen
Level of base of deposits observed	15.80m OD
Natural observed	Natural brickearth at 17.30m OD; natural sand and gravel at 16.30m OD

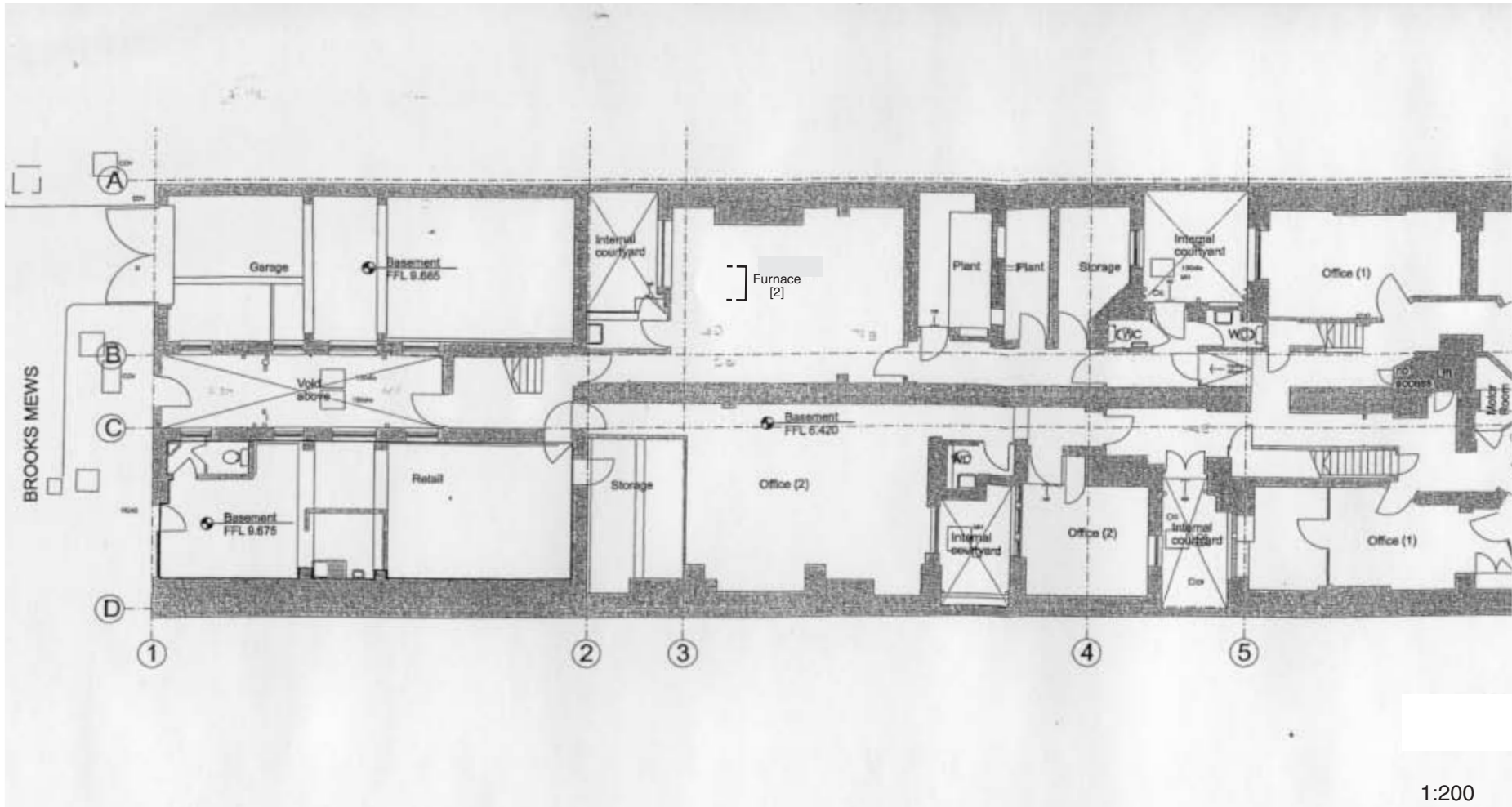
A section showing this sequence of deposits can be seen in Fig 4. It was hoped that the new lift pit would reveal a sequence through alluvial layers, and possibly peat associated with the River Tyburn. However, this type of material was not present with a more typical sequence of brickearth sealing terrace sands and gravels encountered. This suggests that the course of the Tyburn is located further to the east and that Grosvenor Street forms a useful marker for future investigations.



WEST1433WBR08#02

Archaeological watching brief report ©MoLAS 2008

Fig 2 Location of areas of investigation



WEST1433WBR08#03

Archaeological watching brief report ©MoLAS 2008

Fig 3 Plan showing location of post-medieval furnace

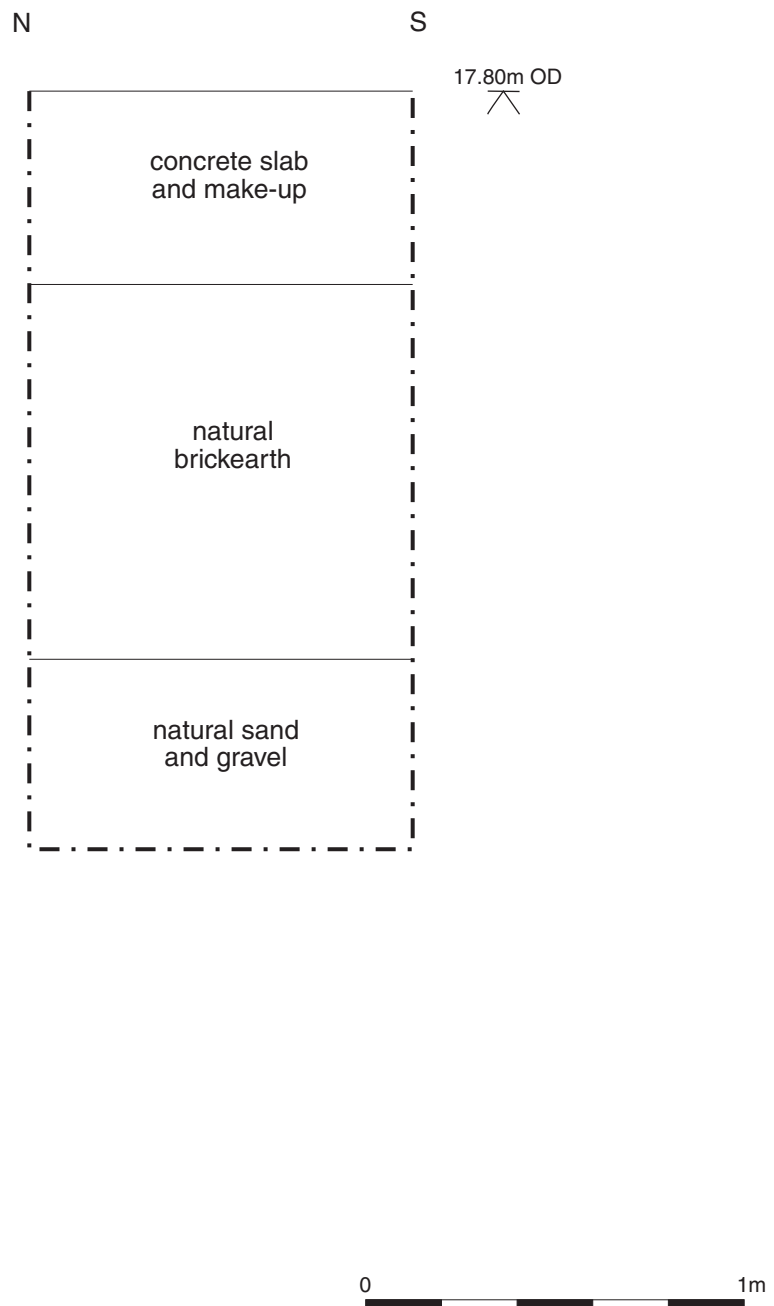


Fig 4 Section from area of new lift pit.

4 Potential of archaeology

4.1 Original research aims

The results from the archaeological watching brief have been matched to the original research aims to further define the potential of the site. As recorded, this potential is considered low.

- What is the nature of natural deposits at the site and at what level are they found? If alluvium is present, can an untruncated sequence be used to identify and date the depositional history of the River Tyburn?

Natural brickearth was recorded at a maximum height of 17.30m OD and a minimum of 17.02m OD. Natural gravel was seen at c 16.30m OD and London Clay at c 15.30m OD. Alluvium was not seen during the watching brief.

- Are any remains or features present which relate to activity at the site prior to its known historic development in the early 18th century?

There were no features found relating to this period. The only feature was a cast iron furnace probably relating to 19th-century property at the site.

- Is there any evidence for the construction of the Civil War defences at the site? If so, what form do they take?

There was no evidence for defences from the Civil War which probably lie slightly to the south of the site.

4.2 New research aims

In light of the results of the archaeological watching brief, there will no new research aims.

4.3 Significance of the data

The watching brief has shown that the potential for ancient ground surfaces (horizontal archaeological stratification) on the site is negligible. In addition, there was no evidence for deposits from the River Tyburn and limited evidence for 18th- and 19th-century construction on the site.

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 and finds will be stored in accordance with the terms of the *Method Statement* (MoLAS, 2007) with the Museum of London within 12 months of the end of the excavation.

In view of the limited potential of the material (Section 4) and the relatively limited significance of the data (Section 4.3) it is suggested that a short note on the results of the watching brief should appear in the annual round up of the *London Archaeologist*. No further work on the limited material collected is recommended.

6 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Alburn (south east) Ltd for funding the project. In particular, thanks to Ian Wilson from Alburn (south east) Ltd and Doina Moss from Hamiltons Architects. Thanks also to Tom Shaw and George on site for their hospitality.

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8 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID: molas1-37233

Project details

Project name 21-22 Grosvenor Street and 21 and 22 Brooks Mews

Short description of the project Work on the redevelopment of the properties included the installation of a new lift pit and services, and these were monitored between 2nd August and 6th November 2007. A cast iron furnace was recorded at basement level in the area of 22 Brooks Mews. This was located in the north-eastern corner of the internal courtyard and may have related to a property on the site in either the 18th or 19th century. No other archaeological deposits were recorded. Natural brickearth was observed at 17.30m OD, with natural gravel at c 16.30m OD.

Project dates Start: 02-08-2007 End: 06-11-2007

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes GVB07 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Conservation Area

Current Land use Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices

Significant Finds FURNACE Post Medieval

Methods techniques & 'Annotated Sketch','Visual Inspection'

Development type Building refurbishment/repairs/restoration

Prompt Planning condition

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

Project location

Country England
Site location CITY OF WESTMINSTER 21-22 Grosvenor Street and 21 and 22
Brooks Mews
Postcode W1
Study area 770.00 Square metres
Site coordinates TQ 28673 80861 51.5115081462 -0.145543692377 51 30 41 N
000 08 43 W Point
Height OD Min: 17.02m Max: 17.30m

Project creators

Name of MoLAS
Organisation
Project originator brief Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District
Archaeologist)
Project originator design MoLAS
Project director/manager Gordon Malcolm
Project supervisor Alison Telfer
Type of Alburn (south east) Ltd
sponsor/funding
body

Project archives

Physical Archive No
Exists?
Digital Archive LAARC

recipient

Digital Archive ID GVB07

Digital available Media 'Survey','Text'

Paper recipient Archive LAARC

Paper Archive ID GVB07

Paper available Media 'Context sheet','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Report','Section','Unpublished Text'

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