



UNITED REFORMED CHURCH  
11 Eden Street  
Kingston  
London

London Borough of Kingston

An archaeological watching brief



MUSEUM OF LONDON

Archaeology Service

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH  
11 Eden Street  
Kingston  
London

London Borough of Kingston

An archaeological watching brief

National Grid Reference: 517995 169164

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**Museum of London Archaeology Service**

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

*This report has been commissioned by R. Durnell & Sons Limited in order to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out at the United Reformed Church, 11 Eden Street, Kingston-upon-Thames*

*Work was monitored on 1st February 2005 during the excavation of a lift pit.*

*The alterations to the western side of the existing church building include the construction of a tower to accommodate a lift. The lift pit is located in an area of a backfilled basement. The basement wall, orientated east–west was 0.4m to the south of the existing church wall and measured 0.5m in width by 1.5m high, and extended beyond the limit of excavation to the east and west. A second wall abutted at a 90° angle and extended beyond the limit of excavation to the south. Both walls were 19th century brick built with very shallow foundations, with no obvious foundation cut. The basement slab was 1.5m below ground level, approximately 6.1m OD and varied in thickness between 0.1m on the west side of pit and 0.15m on the east side of the pit.*

*The basement slab was removed to reveal a layer of dark greenish brown silty clay. This clay layer contained occasional fragments of oyster shell and tile and small fragments of charcoal. Below the dark greenish clay layer was a 0.15m thick layer of dark reddish brown silty clay with frequent gravel, which contained an occasional fragment of tile. There was no clear interface between these two layers. A layer of stained gravel and coarse sand was recorded at 1.9m below ground level (approximately 5.7m OD). The sandy gravel was dark reddish brown which became lighter towards the base of the excavation. The limit of excavation was reached at 2.2m below ground level (approximately 5.4m OD).*

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Site background

The site is situated on the corner of Eden Street and Union Street, in the historic core of Kingston upon Thames. The centre of the site lies at National Grid reference 517995 169164. Modern pavement level near to the site lies at *c* 7.60m OD and ground floor level within the existing building is 7.75m OD.

## 1.2 The planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Method Statement* which formed the project design for the watching brief (see Section 1, MoLAS, February 2005)

## 1.3 Planning background

Planning consent has been granted to construct a tower to accommodate a lift; the erection of glazed lobby area and the provision of a ramp at the United Reformed Church, 11 Eden Street (ref 04/12365/F).

## 1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by R. Durnell & Sons Limited 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*, 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 was the level of natural topography?

What are the earliest deposits identified?

What are the latest deposits identified?

Is there any evidence of the natural channel(s) found on other sites in the vicinity? If so can it be related through finds evidence to a possible use as a votive feature, as seen at 82 Eden Street?

Is there any surviving evidence of Saxon or medieval occupation or activity?

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

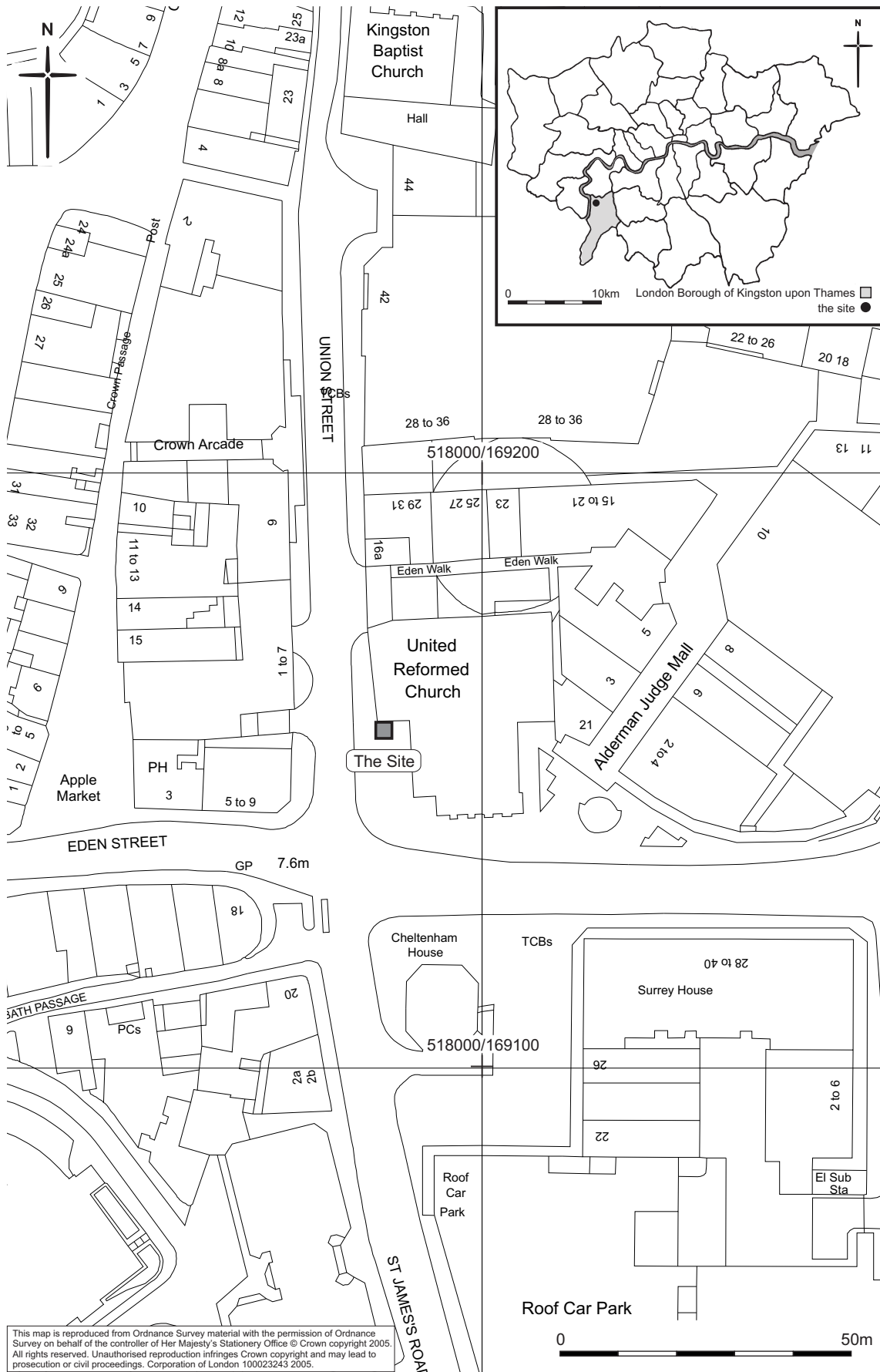


Fig 1 Site location



## 2 Topographical and historical background

### 2.1 Topographical Background

The geology of Kingston is directly related to the vagaries of the River Thames, the changes in its levels and variations in its rate of flow. The underlying gravel and sand deposits of the Reading and Woolwich beds and the London Clay were formations of the Eocene (early Tertiary) Period, laid in a basin or lagoon at least 90,000 years ago. However Kingston's geology and topography was largely shaped by the complex of river gravels laid down as "drift" deposits in the Pleistocene Period during or after the last major age of glaciation (Devensian) some 10–13,000 years ago, forming the Flood Plain Terrace. A mantle of "brickearth" (fine-grained deposits of varying origin) veneers the Flood Plain Terrace, especially between Long Ditton and Kingston.

Changes in climate from the post-glacial to the intervention of man stabilising the course and confines of the Thames contributed to the deposition of alluvium in the area. Archaeological excavations at Eden Walk to the east of the proposed development in Eden Street, suggest the presence of a substantial channel associated with the Thames, with silting from the Neolithic period onwards. A watching brief at the Bentalls Store re-development to the southwest by the Museum of London from 1987-1990 further revealed other areas of this channel and suggested that it continued to silt up and had minor tributaries in the Roman period and was still represented by marshy ground in the Medieval period. This would suggest that areas of higher ground were at times isolated either by channels or marshy ground, particularly to the east of the Thames, possibly in conjunction with the Hogsmill to the south. Penn and Rolls suggest this major channel identified at Eden Walk divided the area containing All Saints Church and the Market from land to the east. It appears therefore, that in the immediate post glacial period the Thames ran through a low lying flood plain with substantial tributaries or braidings crossing to meet it. A smaller channel was recorded at 82 Eden Street during excavations by the then Department of Greater London Archaeology Service (Emery 1989). This silted up channel contained considerable Roman artefacts possibly of a votive nature.

Brickearth deposits have been encountered at an approximate height of 8.0m OD at 70–76 Eden Street, to the east. Natural gravel was encountered at a depth of between 7.50m - 7.80m OD. To the west at the Kingston Magistrates Court Extension, Bath Passage, brickearth deposits were encountered at 5.33m OD, overlying natural gravel at 5.16m OD.

### 2.2 Archaeological background

#### 2.2.1 Prehistoric

A number of flint tools dating to the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods have been discovered in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. In the vicinity of the development, these include, a Palaeolithic flint blade in Penrhyn Road, a flint flake in Thames Street and a Mesolithic microlith in St James Road.

During the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods man led a nomadic existence hunting and gathering. By the Neolithic period farming had been introduced and evidence of such settlement in and around Kingston town centre was discovered at Eden Walk in excavations undertaken in the 1960's and 70's. The excavation revealed a silted up channel containing finds of pottery, worked flint, animal bones and part of a human skull. Recent excavations at the Bittoms by the Museum of London, retrieved Neolithic flint tools and waste flakes from another silted up channel. This site also revealed evidence of Bronze Age activity in the form of a large pit.

By the end of the 5th century BC iron working was introduced into Britain. Iron Age activity was discovered at the "Castle Public House" excavation in Fairfield Road in the form of an early Iron Age ditch and associated finds.

Other unclassified prehistoric finds have been found in the centre of Kingston such as a flint scraper on the Bishops Hall site and prehistoric pottery in Union Street. There have also been a number of prehistoric finds from Palaeolithic hand axes to Bronze Age swords retrieved from the river Thames in the Kingston area.

### **2.2.2 Roman**

Following the Roman invasion in AD 43 new roads and towns were opened up in the south-east of Britain. There is scattered evidence of Roman activity in and around Kingston town centre. Roman finds are present in the Eden Street area, from individual finds such as a single coin to important discoveries such as the recent excavation at the rear of 82 Eden Street by the Museum of London Archaeology Service. This site revealed a small silted up channel (possibly a tributary of the Eden Walk channel) in which approximately 350 Roman coins (dating to the AD 4th century), jewellery and other artefacts had been deposited. The scattered nature of the finds in the channel suggests the site may have been used as a votive area. This may offer some explanation of the Roman altar recorded in a garden in Eden Street, though there is some doubt that this object was recorded *in situ*.

Further evidence of Roman activity has been recorded to the south of the development in the form of Roman pottery retrieved from Phase II of the Eden Walk excavations and four postholes containing Roman pottery and tile at the "Castle Public House" excavation (possibly the only Roman "structural" evidence recorded in the town centre).

To the north-west, in the area around the power station and railway station, Roman finds have been recorded. Roof tile and pottery suggest Roman activity may have been outside the medieval town centre. Roman finds discovered last century included pottery and the remains of a number of skeletons in Canbury Fields suggesting the possibility of a Roman cemetery in the vicinity. An archaeological watching brief conducted by the MoLAS during the re-development of the Bentall's Department store from 1987-90, revealed Roman finds (pottery and building material including a decorated flue tile) in the sedimentary layers of a deep channel. This channel appeared to have begun silting up by the Roman period and was probably a continuation of the channel recorded in the Eden Walk excavation.

### **2.2.3 Saxon/Early Medieval**

Little physical evidence remains today of the important royal Saxon settlement in Kingston. The Saxon chapel of St Mary stood to the south of the parish church of All Saints until it collapsed in 1730 undermined by grave-digging (McCormack & Shipley, 1988). The chapel was excavated in the 1930's and its foundations are marked out in the church grounds.

There are a number of historical references and documents relating to the Saxon period. The earliest reference is that of a great council held in "Cyningestun" in AD 838 (document held in the British Library) where King Egbert presided. Kingston is regarded as an important Saxon royal "vill" or manor, with Surbiton as the south part of its estate and Norbiton as the north. Seven Saxon kings of England are known to have been crowned in Kingston, possibly in St Mary's Chapel, the first being Edward the Elder in AD 900 and the last Ethelred in AD 979.

Archaeological evidence of Saxon activity has been recorded at two Museum of London excavations in Kingston. At the Bittoms a Saxon pit was excavated and at 70–76 Eden Street another pit was found. At earlier Kingston excavations such as the Eden Walk site (Phase II) Saxon features were also recorded.

By the time of the Domesday Survey in AD 1086 Kingston was a royal manor held directly as part of the king's personal estate. The Domesday Survey records Kingston as having a church, five mills, three fisheries and a considerable amount of ploughland.

The Parish church of All Saints is recorded to have Norman stonework in its fabric (McCormack & Shipley, 1988), though it is uncertain that the church referred to in the Domesday Survey is the same structure. More likely it is the earlier Saxon building, St Mary's Chapel. A possible mill site, in Denmark Road close to the Hogsmill may be one of those referred to in the Domesday Survey (McCormack & Shipley, 1988). Kingston's official emblem, three salmon on a blue background, relates the importance to the town of the fisheries mentioned in the Domesday Survey.

Various structures in Kingston are mentioned in historical documents such as a Bishop's Palace, a castle, and palace (referred to as King John's Palace). The Bishop's Palace refers to the Bishops of Winchester who held a palace in Kingston. The "Castle" and King John's Palace are recorded as having been captured by King Henry III in 1264 (Hall/Woodriff, 1981).

### **2.2.4 Medieval**

Numerous archaeological finds and historical references confirm Kingston as an important urban medieval centre well positioned on the Thames in relation to trade. Its strategic placement as the first river crossing upstream of London Bridge and its function as an inland port, transferring goods to and from Surrey and London, enhanced its status. During this period Kingston is referred to as a town rather than a village, reflecting to its trade status and market function. In 1481 a charter officially granting incorporation was established, giving Kingston independent status.

The medieval town was centred around the Parish church and the market place, though other medieval structures such as the extant 14th century Chapel of St Mary Magdelene, occur in the hinterland of the town. High Street, still used today, is thought to have been first built in the late 12th century. A number of late medieval structures still stand around the market place which include part of 14 Market Place (now the Next building) and 23 Market Place, thought to have been first constructed in the 15th century.

There are many individual archaeological finds, for example, an iron dagger found in Fairfield Road and medieval coins discovered in High Street. Others constitute more substantial remains such as the recent excavations by the Museum of London at the Horsefair (John Lewis Department Store re-development site) where a 14th century undercroft and the medieval (13th century) Kingston Bridge were excavated. This 13th century structure may have replaced an even earlier bridge. This river crossing was an important strategic point. Armies often crossed the Thames in Kingston and a number of skirmishes occurred between rival forces. Medieval Kingston bridge was replaced by the present bridge in 1828.

Other archaeological finds indicate industrial activity in the hinterland of the town. These include evidence of the medieval pottery industry. During the medieval period the town was a centre for production of "Surrey White Ware" pottery, (this was also produced in other Surrey locations, for example Cheam and Farnham, though each centre had a distinctive Whiteware type).

Two whiteware pottery kilns are known, one in Union Street, dated to the late 14th century, and the other at 70–72 Eden Street, first discovered in 1968/9 by the Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society, which was also dated to the 14th century. This kiln was not fully excavated and continued into the adjoining northern property. Results of further excavation at 70–76 Eden Street have added another three kilns to this number. Kilns were also present on the Charter Quay site.

### ***2.2.5 Post-medieval***

By the 16th and 17th centuries Kingston had established itself as an important centre for boat-building, tanning, milling, brewing and river barge traffic. It was a flourishing market town, uniquely aided by a charter granted by Charles I in 1628 forbidding the holding of any other market within a seven-mile radius. The town had begun to expand to the east and by the mid 18th century, John Rocque's map shows the extent of development, with the length of London road built up towards Norbiton (then referred to as Norbiton Street).

Following a period of decline in the 18th and early 19th century, the introduction of the railway in the mid 19th century led to an increase in population and development. This development of the town has continued with extensive enlargement this century, ensuring that Kingston has remained an important commercial centre.

## 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, 2005) and the MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual (MoLAS, 1994).

The alterations to the western side of the existing church building include the construction of a tower to accommodate a lift. The excavation of the lift pit at the base of the lift tower was monitored on 1st February 2005.

The backfill was removed and the basement slab was broken out and cleared by contractors under MoLAS supervision.

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

The heights of observations and/or archaeological remains were recorded relative to Ordnance Datum of the known floor level of 7.775m OD.

Numbered contexts were allocated where appropriate. The site has produced: 1 trench location plan; 5 context records; 1 x 1:20 plan. The site finds and records can be found under the site code ESK05 in the MoL archive.



This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright 2005. All rights reserved. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Corporation of London 100023243 2005.

Fig 2 Location of lift pit

### 3.2 Results of the watching brief

There follows a brief description of the archaeological deposits as recorded. For the location of the lift pit see Fig 2.

<i>Watching Brief Lift Pit</i>	
Location	The pit is located on the western side of the church and extended from the corner of the building along the south-facing wall. The northwest corner of the lift pit was 20m to the north of Eden Street and 4m to the east of Union Street.
Dimensions	2.5m x 2.5m
Modern ground level/top of slab	7.6m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	6.1m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.6m below ground level (6m OD)
Level of base of deposits observed	5.7m OD
Natural observed	Top of stained gravel 5.7m OD

The lift pit is located in an area of a backfilled basement. The basement wall [1], orientated east–west and was 0.4m to the south of the existing church wall and measured 0.5m in width and was 1.5m high and extended beyond the limit of excavation to the east and west. A second wall [2] abutted [1] at a 90° angle and extended beyond the limit of excavation to the south (see Fig 3). Both walls were 19th century brick built with very shallow foundations, with no obvious foundation cut. The basement slab was 1.5m below ground level, approximately 6.1m OD and varied in thickness between 0.1m on the western side of [2] and 0.15m on the eastern side of [2].

The basement slab was removed to reveal a layer of dark greenish brown silty clay [3]. This clay layer, which was approximately 0.15m thick, contained occasional fragments of oyster shell and tile and small fragments of charcoal. Below [3] was a 0.15m thick layer of dark reddish brown silty clay with frequent gravel, [4], which contained an occasional small tile fragment. There was no clear interface between [3] and [4]. The top of [4] was recorded at approximately 5.85m OD. A layer of stained gravel and coarse sand, [5], was recorded at 1.9m below ground level, approximately 5.7m OD. The sandy gravel was dark reddish brown which became lighter towards the base of the excavation. The limit of exaction was reached at 2.2m below ground level (approximately 5.4m OD).

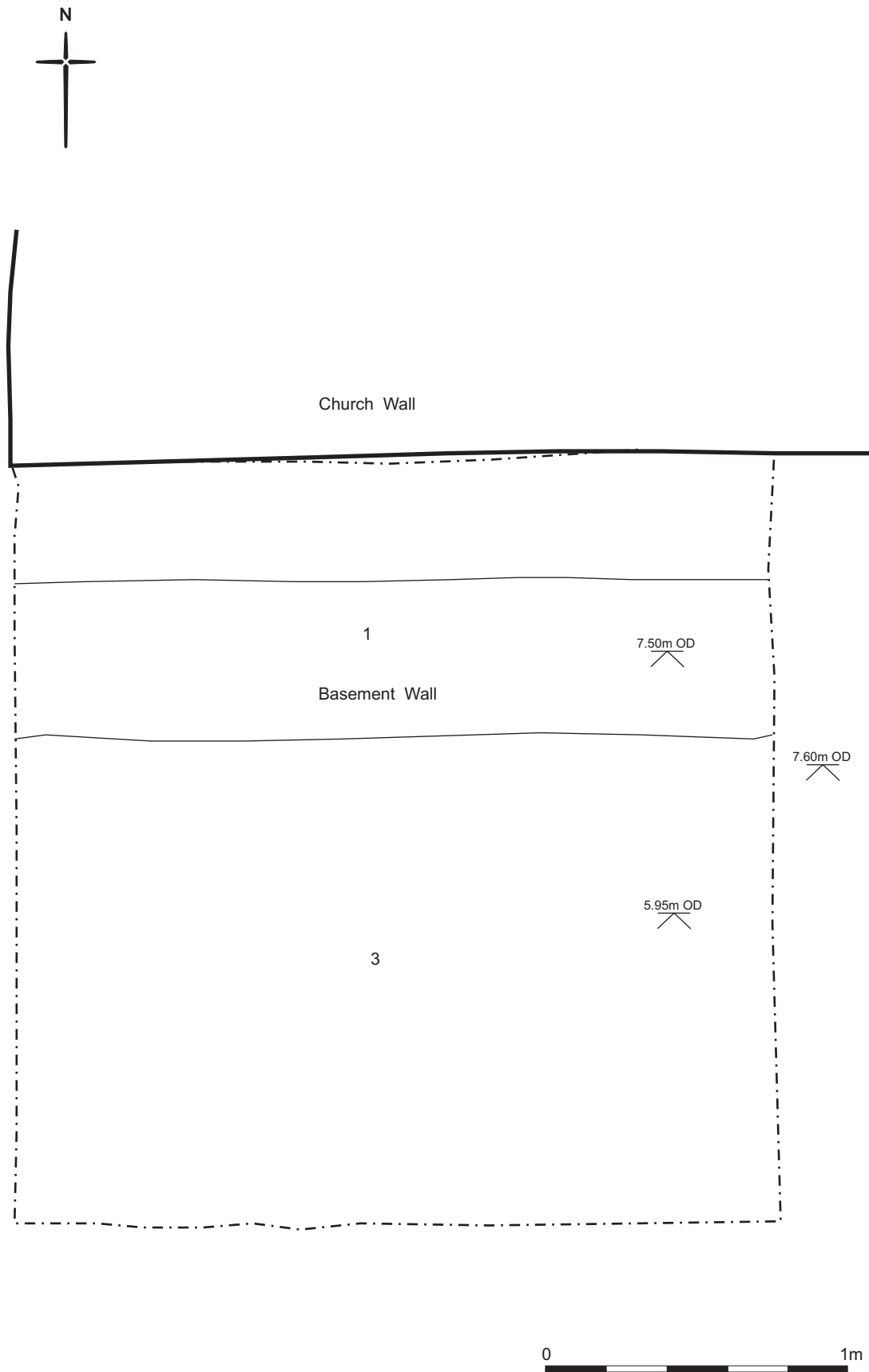


Fig 3 Location of basement walls



## **4 Potential of archaeology**

### **4.1 Original research aims**

- What was the level of natural topography?

The natural topography was recorded at 5.7m OD

- What are the earliest deposits identified?

The dark reddish brown silty clay [4] with frequent gravel contained occasional undated tile fragments. Due to the absence of any dateable material it is not possible to identify the earliest deposits.

- What are the latest deposits identified?

19th century brick basement walls were recorded.

- Is there any evidence of the natural channel(s) found on other sites in the vicinity? If so can it be related through finds evidence to a possible use as a votive feature, as seen at 82 Eden Street?

No evidence of a channel was seen within the lift pit.

- Is there any surviving evidence of Saxon or medieval occupation or activity?

Oyster shell, charcoal fragments and small tile fragments in layers [3] and [4] are evidence of occupation in this area. Although these layers are undated they may date from the medieval period.

### **4.2 New research aims**

The results of the watching brief have not generated any new research aims.

### **4.3 Significance of the data**

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

## 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, 2005) with the Museum of London within 12 months of the end of the excavation.

In view of the limited potential of the material (Sections 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*

## 6 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following for their contributions and help in producing this report: Mr J C Ovendon of R. Durnell & Sons Limited for commissioning the watching brief and Mr P Palmer of R Durnell and Sons Ltd for his help on site.

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### Printable version

**OASIS ID: molas1-6641**

#### Project details

Project name United Reformed Church

Short description of the project

This report has been commissioned by R. Durnell and Sons Limited in order to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out at the United Reformed Church, 11 Eden Street, Kingston-upon-Thames. Work was monitored on 1st February 2005 during the excavation of a lift pit. The alterations to the western side of the existing church building include the construction of a tower to accommodate a lift. The lift pit is located in an area of a backfilled basement. The basement wall, orientated east-west was 0.4m to the south of the existing church wall and measured 0.5m in width by 1.5m high, and extended beyond the limit of excavation to the east and west. A second wall abutted at a 90° angle and extended beyond the limit of excavation to the south. Both walls were 19th century brick built with very shallow foundations, with no obvious foundation cut. The basement slab was 1.5m below ground level, approximately 6.1m OD and varied in thickness between 0.1m on the west side of pit and 0.15m on the east side of the pit. The basement slab was removed to reveal a layer of dark greenish brown silty clay. This clay layer contained occasional fragments of oyster shell and tile and small fragments of charcoal. Below the dark greenish clay layer was a 0.15m thick layer of dark reddish brown silty clay with frequent gravel, which contained an occasional fragment of tile. There was no clear interface between these two layers. A layer of stained gravel and course sand was recorded at 1.9m below ground level (approximately 5.7m OD). The sandy gravel was dark reddish brown which became lighter towards the base of the excavation. The limit of excavation was reached at 2.2m below ground level (approximately 5.4m OD).

Project dates Start: 01-02-2005 End: 01-02-2005

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes ESK05 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Community Service 1 - Community Buildings

Methods techniques	&	'Test Pits'
Development type		Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)
Prompt		Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process		After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country		England
Site location		GREATER LONDON KINGSTON UPON THAMES KINGSTON UPON THAMES UNITED REFORMED CHURCH, EDEN STREET
Postcode		KT1 1HZ
Study area		10 Square metres
National reference	grid	TQ 17995 69164 Point
Height OD		Min: 5.7m Max: 5.7m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation		MoLAS
Project originator	brief	Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)
Project originator	design	MoLAS
Project director/manager		Stewart Hoad
Project supervisor		HEATHER KNIGHT
Sponsor or funding body		UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

### Project archives

Physical recipient	Archive	LAARC
Physical	Archive	Yes

Exists?

Digital recipient      Archive      LAARC

Digital available      Media      'Text'

Digital Exists?      Archive      Yes

Paper recipient      Archive      LAARC

Paper available      Media      'Context sheet','Diary','Map','Plan','Report'

Paper Exists?      Archive      Yes

**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type      Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title      UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Author(s)/Editor(s)      KNIGHT, H

Date      2005

Description      UNPUBLISHED WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Entered by      Stewart Hoad (stewarth@molas.org.uk)

Entered on      15 February 2005

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