

**222 KENSAL ROAD
London W10**

London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Watching brief report

July 2010



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Watching brief report

Site Code: KSL09

National Grid Reference: 524306 182337

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Summary (non-technical)

This report has been commissioned by ISG InteriorExterior plc on behalf of the client Nido Notting Hill Sarl in order to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out at 222 Kensal Road, North Kensington, London, W10 5BN.

Work on new ground reduction was monitored between the 14th April and 18th June 2010 during redevelopment of the former single storey building and four storey industrial sheds into two set back floors of flexible workspace on the existing building and student residential ancillary facilities and accommodation.

Archaeological deposits consisted of a brick culvert, two brick lined wells, and some building foundations, all Post-Medieval. Natural ground was observed at 28.20m OD, and the highest survival of archaeological deposits occurred at 28.20m OD.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The watching brief took place at 222 Kensal Road, North Kensington, London, W10 5BN, hereafter called 'the site'. The site is bounded by Kensal Road to the south, Alderson Street to the west, and the Grand Union Canal to the north (see Fig 1). The centre of the site is at OS National Grid Reference 524306 182337. The level of the basement slab was 29.78m OD. Modern ground level immediately adjacent to the site is 30.12m OD to the north by the canal, sloping down to 28.20m OD to the south on Kensal Road. The site code is KSL09.

A desk top *Method Statement for an Archaeological watching brief* was previously prepared by MOLA, which covers the whole area of the site (MOLA, 2009). 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. This document informed the design for the watching brief which was eventually carried out.

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 2, MOLA, 2009)

1.3 Planning background

The watching brief was carried out in order to discharge the archaeology Condition 11 attached to the planning permission to redevelop the site (**Planning Ref: 09/01388**).

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by DP9 on behalf of the client Nido Notting Hill Sarl and produced by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA). The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute for 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 3.2):

What was the level of natural topography?

What are the earliest deposits identified?

Is there any evidence for the construction of the Grand Union Canal?

Is there any evidence for the pre-war (19th Century) buildings, including the 'workers cottages', and any footings and/or cellars present?

What are the latest deposits identified?

What is the nature of modern truncation?

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

A detailed description of the geology, archaeology and history of the site and surrounding area was provided in the archaeological method statement (MoLA 2009, section 2.4). A brief resume is provided here.

2.1 Topography

The geology of the site is London Clay (BGS sheet 256). The site is flat, with a very slight rise up to the east noted on Kensal Road from 27.9m Ordnance Datum (OD) to the south-west of the site to 28.1m OD to the south-east. The site lies adjacent to the Grand Union Canal (Paddington Branch), on its south side. It is likely that material dug from the canal was used to build up the sides of the canal, and this is probably reflected in the higher level of the towpath immediately north of the site at 30.2m OD (a set of steps provide access from Alderson Street along the western boundary of the site up to the towpath). It is also possible that redeposited Clay is present on the site itself, although its depth and extent is not currently known.

2.2 Prehistoric

The London Clay geology is generally considered to have low potential for early human activity as it would not have been as conducive to settlement and farming as the extensive gravel terraces of the River Thames to the south, and was probably heavily wooded throughout the prehistoric (700,000BC–AD43) period. There are no known sites or finds dates to these periods in the general area.

2.3 Roman

A major Roman road heading westwards to Silchester from the Roman town of *Londinium*, lay along what is now Holland Park Avenue, Nottinghill Gate and Bayswater Road, 2.1km to the south-east of the site. Small, nucleated rural settlements were possibly located off this road but there is currently no evidence for such within the vicinity of the site.

2.4 Saxon

Following the withdrawal of the Roman army from England in the early 5th century AD the whole country fell into an extended period of socio-economic decline. Throughout much of the early medieval (Saxon) period (AD410–1066) the site is likely to have been woodland.

2.5 Medieval

At some point, possibly in the later medieval period (AD1066-1485) it was cleared for farmland. Kensal derives from *Cyningholt*, meaning 'King's wood', whilst an early 11th century charter refers to a grant of 130 acres of woodland on the northern edge of Kensington, in an area later known as the Chelsea Outlands (Denny 1996, 140). The site lay within a detached portion of the medieval manor (and later parish) of St Luke's Chelsea.

2.6 Post-medieval

The closest known settlement was Kensal Green, c 450m to the north-west of the site. Rocque's map of 1746 (not reproduced) is small scale but shows buildings, land

use, roads and main topographic detail. The map confirms the rural nature of the area and shows the site in open pasture, some distance from settlement, to north of 'Kensel Green' road.

In 1801, the Paddington Branch of the Grand Union Canal opened, immediately north of the site. The canal was London's principal link with the rest of the country's canal system (Walker and Jackson 1987, 26). There was further infrastructure development in the mid 1830s with the construction the Great Western Railway line, 265m to the south of the site. Construction of the canal and in particular the railway resulted in rapid suburban development of the area. This included Kensal Town, within which the site is located, which was built in the 1840s. WK Jenkins was responsible for laying out Kensal New Town (VCH *Middlesex* ix, 198–204). The development comprised rows of cottages with front and back gardens. Overcrowding, industrialisation and pollution meant that the new development quickly degenerated into a slum (Weinreb and Hibbert 1995, 435). The area was dominated by the Western Gas Company, 750m to the west of the site, which provided employment but did little to improve the environment.

The Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25" map of 1865 shows the site within Kensal New Town, to the south of the Canal. Eight buildings, probably houses, front Kensal Road in the southern part of the site, with several buildings of unknown nature in the northern part of the site. The centre of the site is open. The map shows a public house immediately west of (outside) the site.

The Ordnance Survey 2nd edition map of 1894 (Fig 3) shows considerable change: all previous buildings have been demolished. The eastern half of the site is open land. The western half is a block of seven small terraced houses/workers cottages. The public house has also been demolished with the creation of Alderson Street, which currently forms the western boundary of the site.

The London County Council Bomb Damage Maps 1939–45 shows the entire site as 'blast damage minor in nature'. By this date the terraced houses in the western half are no longer shown. The existing site comprises light industrial buildings. It is possible that the large building in the eastern half of the site is the same as that shown on the map of 1915.

3 The watching brief

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and recording during the watching brief was done in accordance with the *Method Statement* (MOLA, 2009) and the *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS, 1994).

The slab/ground was broken out and cleared by contractors under MOLA supervision. The area was excavated by machine by the contractors, and monitored by a member of staff from MOLA.

The location of the area of excavation was recorded by offsetting from adjacent standing walls and plotted on to a Basement Survey. This information was then plotted onto the OS grid.

The heights of observations and archaeological remains were recorded relative to Ordnance Datum by measuring from the slab and ground level, which both had pre-recorded Ordnance Datum levels.

Where relevant, sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20; numbered contexts were allocated where appropriate.

The site has produced: 1 area plan; 9 context records; 40 photographs.

The site finds and records can be found under the site code KSL09 in the MoL archive.

3.2 Results of the watching brief

The area of the watching brief measured c.35m by 57m. The basement slab of the existing building was broken out and reduced in advance of piling. There follows a brief description of the archaeological deposits as recorded.

For area plan see Fig 2

<i>Watching Brief Area</i>	
Location	22 Kensal Road (across whole site)
Dimensions	35m by 57m
top of slab	29.78m OD
Base of modern fill	28.53m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	0.70m
Level of base of deposits observed	27.83m OD
Natural observed	28.20m OD

The site was stripped and reduced to 27.68m OD - the formation level for the new building.

In the western half of the site directly beneath the slab was c. 1.25m of demolition rubble, which included red and yellow stock brick, asbestos and glass. Below this rubble was an earlier concrete slab, c. 0.20m thick, that had two parallel yellow stock brick walls [8] running east-west 1.48m apart associated with it. These were

observed and photographed, however due to the frequency of asbestos detailed measurements were not possible.

Beneath the slab at 28.33m OD was c. 0.5m of redeposited clay with mixed soil and red brick fragments [9]. This was possibly a demolition level associated with the buildings seen on the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition map of 1894, however no reliable dating evidence was retrieved. Beneath this deposit at 27.83m OD, in the north-west of the site an east-west/north south running post-medieval brick culvert [1] and brick lined well [2] were recorded (see Fig 4, Fig 5). In the south-west of the site, foundation trenches, containing compacted gravel with occasional fragments of red brick, mortar and glass were exposed [4] and [6]. As the excavation ceased at 27.68m OD these foundations were not investigated to their full depth. Another brick lined well [7], 1.8m deep, was located in the south-east of the area, as with culvert [1] and well [2] (See Figs 4, 5) no associated dating evidence was observed. These features were cut into weathered London clay at 27.83 m OD.

4 Potential of archaeology

4.1 Original research aims

What was the level of natural topography?

Natural weathered London Clay was observed in places at c. 28.20m OD at its highest level.

What are the earliest deposits identified?

A post-medieval, red brick, culvert and two brick lined wells were identified in the north-west area of the site at a depth of 27.83 m OD.

Is there any evidence for the construction of the Grand Union Canal?

No evidence for the canal's construction was identified.

Is there any evidence for the pre-war (19th Century) buildings, including the 'workers cottages', and any footings and/or cellars present?

The culvert and wells [1], [2] & [7] are most likely 19th Century.

The location and orientation of the foundations found in the south-western area of the site, suggests they are associated with the buildings shown in the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition map of 1894 (see Fig 3) rather than the earlier 'workers cottages'.

What are the latest deposits identified?

It is possible that the earlier concrete slab and the parallel yellow stock-brick walls were the basement slab and walls of the furniture workhouse depicted in the Ordnance Survey 4th edition map of 1935 (MOLA, 2009) and would therefore be the latest features on the site.

In the eastern half of the site the most recent basement slab lay directly over modern demolition deposits, which in turn lay over the natural weathered London Clay. This is consistent with the site remaining open ground in this area (as shown on the Ordnance Survey Maps 1865-1915).

What is the nature of modern truncation?

The modern truncation consisted of the most recent basement slab and demolition deposits from earlier buildings to a depth of 28.53m OD. The earlier furniture workhouse buildings and deposits associated with them [8] and [9], are likely to have truncated any earlier remains, including those of the earlier cottages, to the depth of 28.33m OD.

4.2 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* (MOLA, 2009) 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 4.2) 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 Nido Notting Hill Sarl, thanks to Simon Carr, Clyde Nelson and Robert Twine from ISG Interior/Exterior for commissioning the work, also Rob Fitzgerald of ISG and Armory Demolition for their contributions and help, both on-site and in producing this report.

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Thompson, A, Westman A, and Dyson, T (eds), 1998 *Archaeology in Greater London 1965-90: a guide to records of excavations by the Museum of London*, Archaeol Gazetteer Ser Vol 2, London

8 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

Project details

Project name	222 Kensal Road, North Kensington, London, W10 5BN
Short description of the project	A Watching Brief took place at 222 Kensal Road, W10. The site is bounded by Kensal Road to the south, Alderson street to the west, and the Grand Union Canal to the north. The centre of the site is at OS National Grid Reference 524306 182337. The level of the basement slab was 29.78m OD. Modern ground level immediately adjacent to the site is 30.12m OD to the north by the canal, sloping down to 28.20m OD to the south on Kensal Road. Archaeological deposits consisted of a brick culvert, two brick lined wells, and some building foundations, all Post-Medieval. Natural ground was observed at 28.20m OD, and the highest survival of archaeological deposits occurred at 28.20m OD.
Project dates	Start: 14-05-2010 End: 18-06-2010
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	KSL09 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 4 - Storage and warehousing
Monument type	CULVERT Post Medieval
Monument type	FOUNDATION Post Medieval
Monument type	FOUNDATION Modern
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA KENSINGTON 222 Kensal Road, North Kensington, London, W10 5BN
Postcode	W10 5BN
Study area	1995.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 24306 82337 51.5257541977 -0.2079272139 51 31 32 N 000 12 28 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 27.68m Max: 29.78m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	MOL Archaeology
Project brief originator	MoL Archaeology Project Manager
Project design originator	MoL Archaeology
Project director/manager	Ros Aitken
Project supervisor	Sarah Ritchie
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	client Nido Notting Hill Sarl

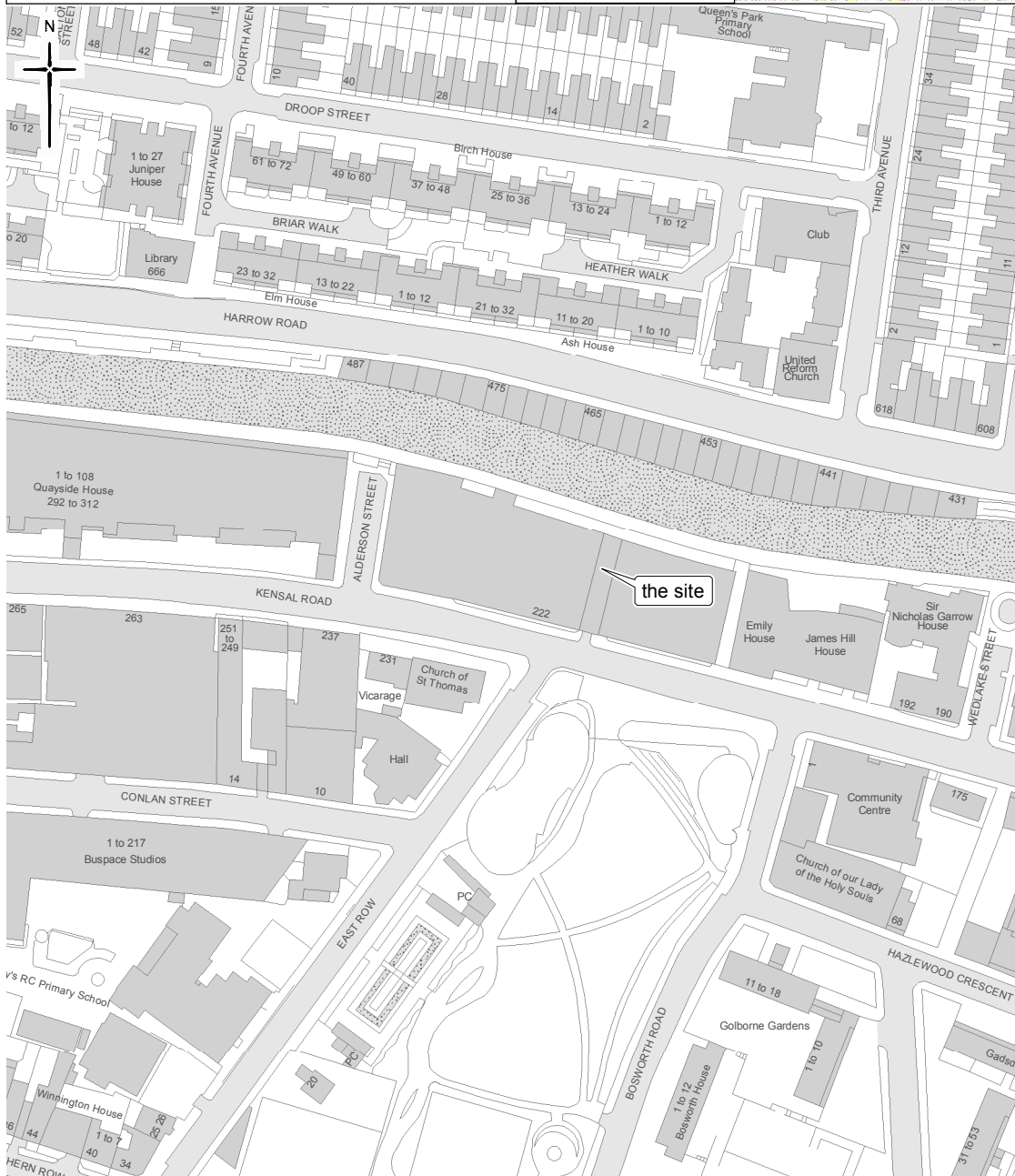
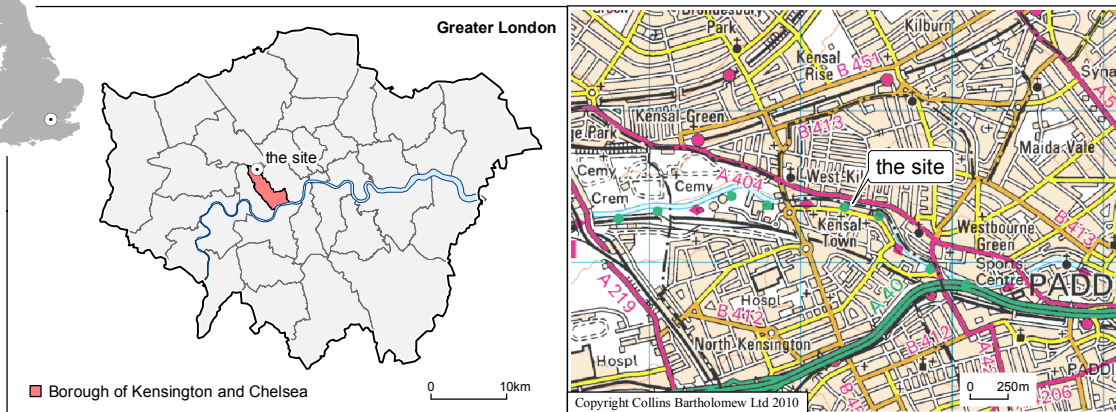
Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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Scale @ A4



Fig 1 Site location

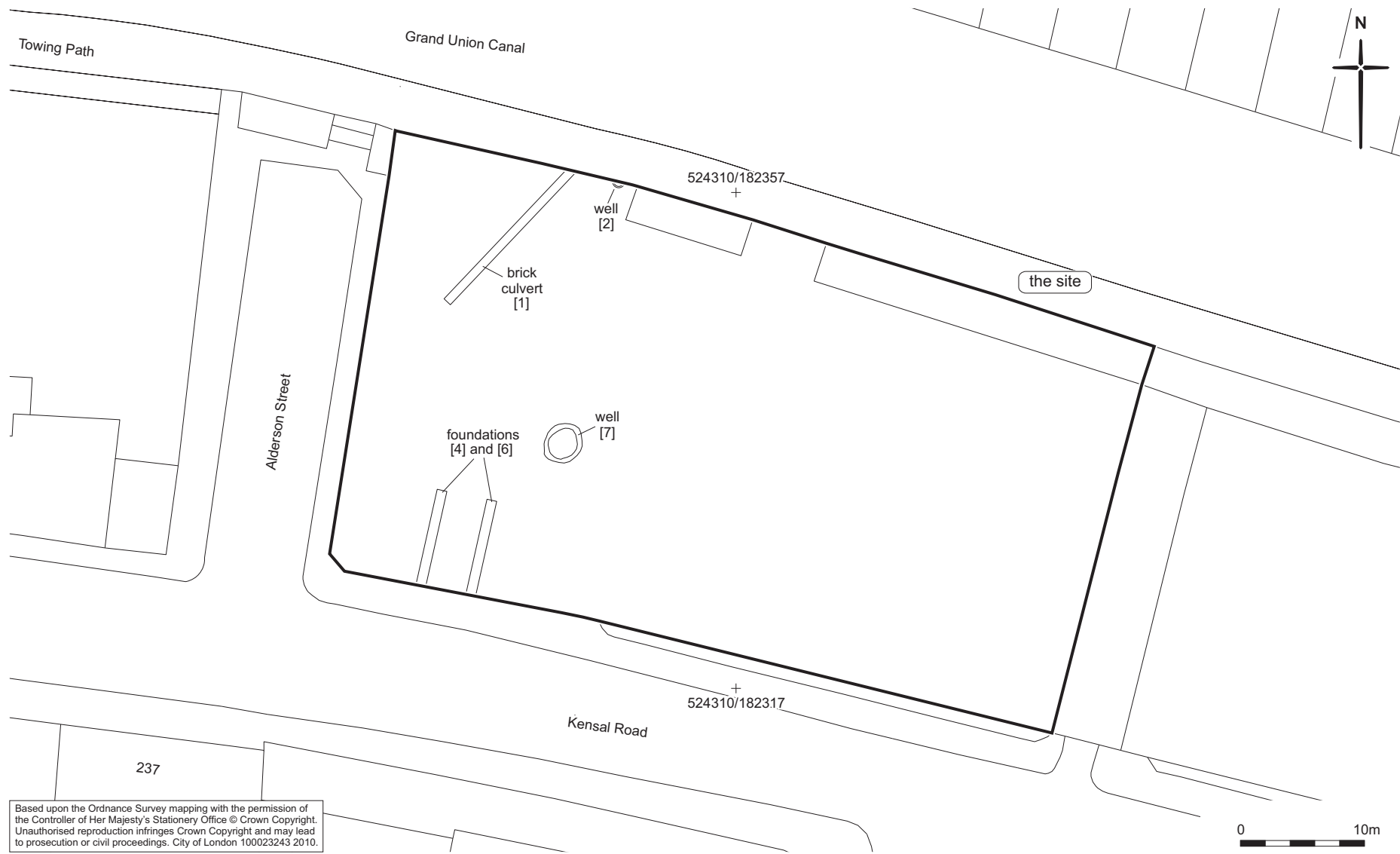


Fig 2 Location of the area investigated with post-medieval features

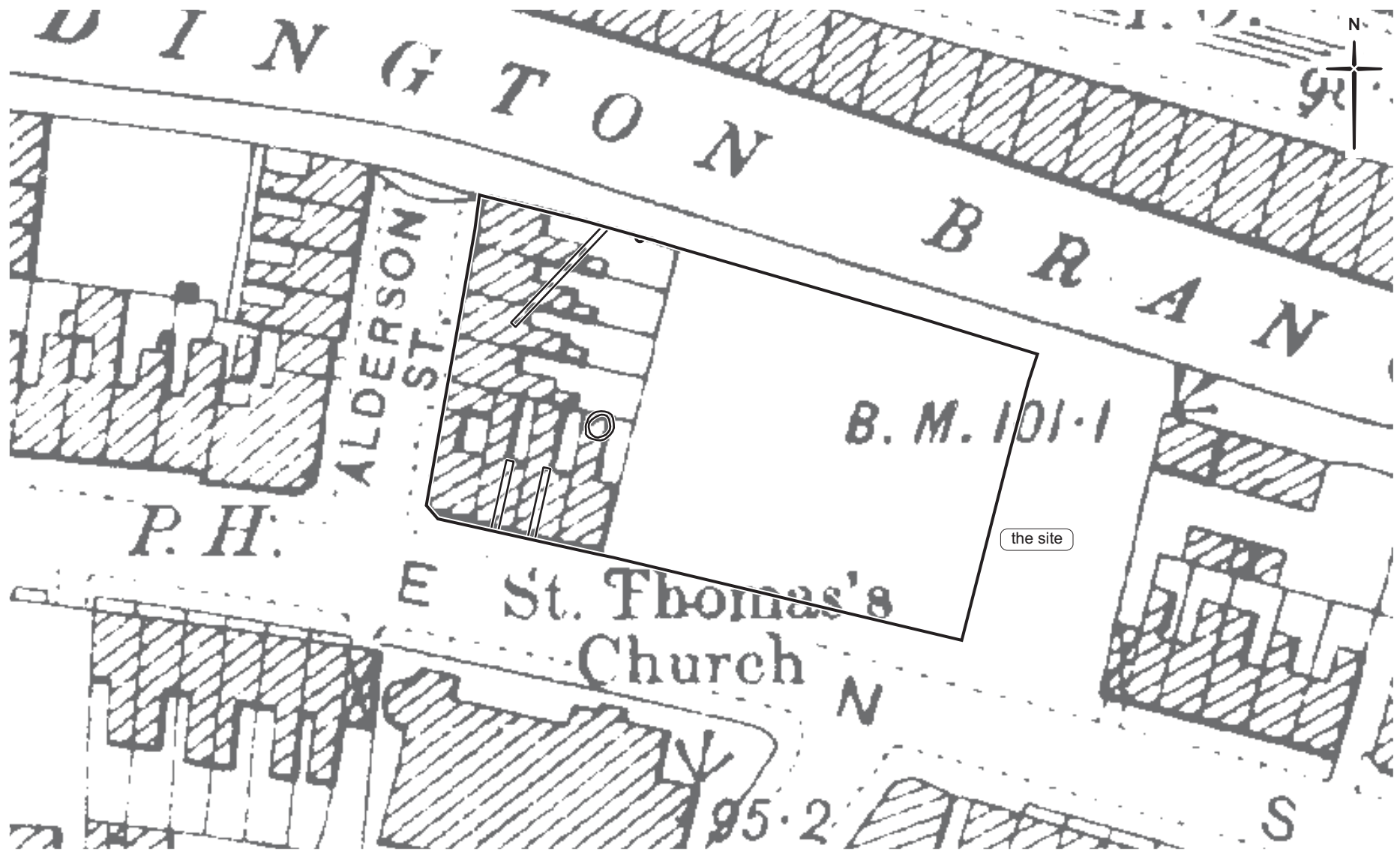


Fig 3 1894 Ordinance Survey map with site outline

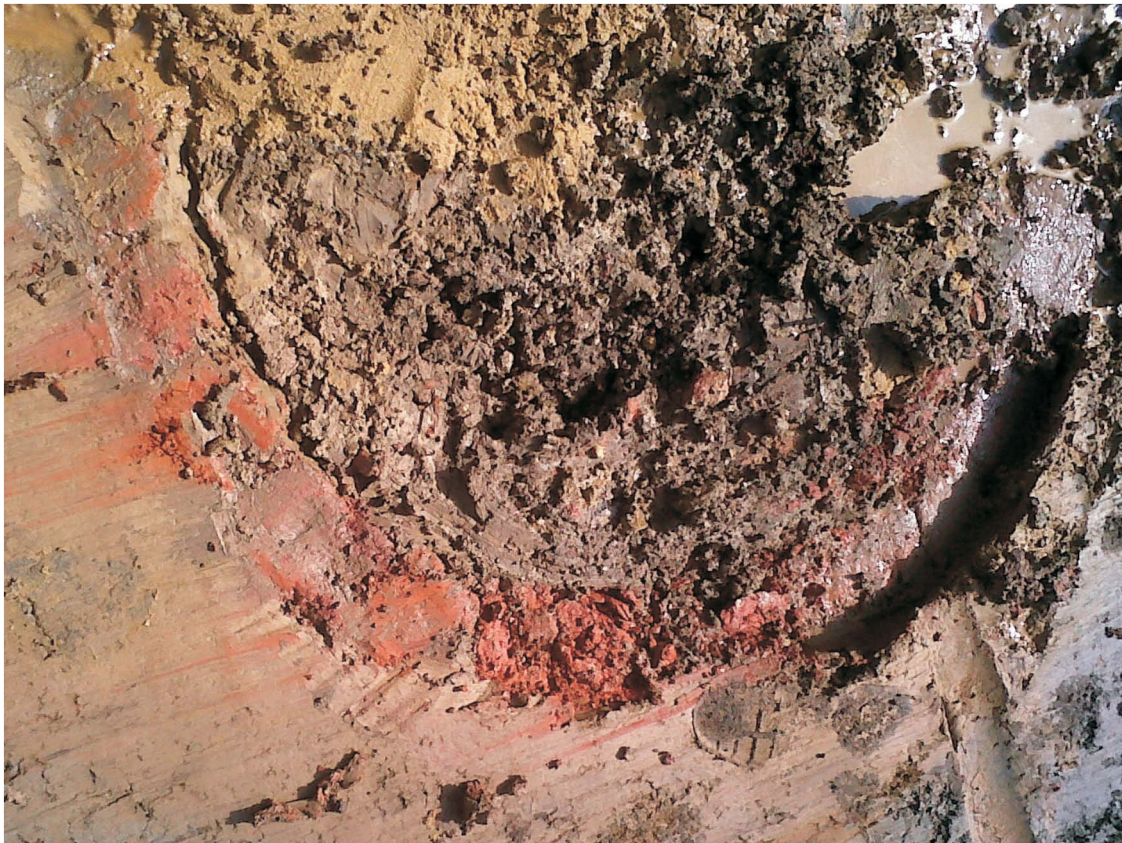


Fig 4 Post-medieval well



Fig 5 Post-medieval culvert