



445 NEW CROSS ROAD London SE13

London Borough of Lewisham

Watching brief report

September 2010

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Watching brief report

Site Code: NXC10

National Grid Reference: 536905 177042

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Summary (non-technical)

The TRK Partnership commissioned the Museum of London Archaeology to carry out a watching brief to monitor groundworks carried out during the rebuilding of 445 New Cross Road, Deptford, London SE14. This building was constructed after 1873 and before 1894-96. Work on the new underpinning holes was monitored between 27th July and 2nd August 2010.

No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the groundworks.

Truncated natural Pleistocene Head deposits were observed approximately 1.5 to 2.0m below the existing floor level, which were overlain by 19th century and modern backfill.

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Front cover: Shops along New Cross Road in 1872, these properties known as Hamilton Terrace were built as houses in c 1854 and then converted into shops in 1871 (Coulter, 1992, 132).

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The watching brief took place at 445 New Cross Road, hereafter called 'the site'. The site is situated along the northern side of New Cross Road (see Fig 1). The centre of the site is at OS National Grid Reference 536905 177042. The site is unbasemented and its floor level is situated at about 10.0m Ordnance Datum (OD), the same level as external ground level.

A desk top *Historic Environment Assessment* was previously prepared by MOLA, which covers the whole area of the site (MOLA 2010). This document should be referred to for information on the natural geology, archaeological and historical background of the site, and the initial assessment of its archaeological potential.

1.2 The planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Historic Environment Assessment* (see 1.1). The site is situated within an area of archaeological priority as defined by the local planning authority (LPA). The watching brief was carried out in fulfilment of a planning condition.

1.3 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by TRK Partnership 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.

1.4 Aims and objectives

The following research aims and objectives were pursued:

- What is the level of truncation caused by the construction of the standing building?
- What is the nature and significance of the surviving archaeological remains?
- What are the levels of natural deposits?

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

In the mid-18th century, the site was part an area of farmland, adjoining the road between Deptford Bridge and New Cross. Following the construction of the London Bridge to Dartford railway in 1836, the area of Deptford surrounding the site was quickly transformed from farmland into part of suburban London. The resulting development was a mixture of industrial premises, shops and terraced housing (see cover). By 1873 the site was a part of a yardway providing access to various premises further north. By 1894-96, the site was occupied by a block of three buildings.

The underlying geology of the site comprises Head (weathered periglacial) deposits of Pleistocene date (BGS sheet 270), derived from the reworking of the underlying terrace gravels. The site is situated c 1.2km to the south-west of the River Thames and c 515m to the west of the Ravensbourne. The Ravensbourne, which rises in Farnborough (Kent) flows north to join the Thames between Deptford and Greenwich, where it is also known as Deptford Creek. Current ground level within the site is approximately the same as the street level on New Cross Road outside the site to the south, c 10m above (OD). Outside the northern boundary of the site the ground slopes down sharply by c 2m.

To the west of the site at 413 New Cross Road (site code NXO09), a natural subsoil horizon has been recorded during archaeological investigations, at c 1.6m below ground level, i.e. at c 7.8m OD. It overlay gravel at c 2.0m below ground level (7.4m OD).



Based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. City of London 100023243 2010.

Fig 2 Testpit locations up against the party wall of 443 New Cross Road

3 The watching brief

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and recording during the watching brief was done in accordance with the *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS, 1994). The locations of the areas of excavation were recorded by MOLA staff offsetting from adjacent standing walls and plotted on to a site plan. This information was then plotted onto the OS grid. Where relevant, sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20; numbered contexts were allocated where appropriate. The site has produced: one trench location plan; one context record and one 1:20 section drawings. No finds were recovered from the site. The site finds and records can be found under the site code NXO10 in the MOL archive.

3.2 Results of the watching brief

The excavation of three separate test pits up against the party wall 443 New Cross Road was monitored. There follows a brief description of the archaeological deposits as recorded. For all trench locations see Fig

<i>Watching Brief Test Pit 1</i>	
Location	Centre of property up against the western party wall
Dimensions	2.70 by 0.85m
Modern ground level	c 10m OD (estimated)
Base of modern deposits	c 7.60m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	Nil
Level of base of deposits observed	c 7.60 m OD
Natural observed	Truncated Head deposits visible in base of test pit

This pit was originally dug to a depth of 1.40m (27/7/10), so only modern material was encountered, later (2/8/10) it was deepened and natural deposits reached. The Head deposits consisted of a mottled light and mid grey, slightly clayey fine to coarse grained sandy gravel. The size of the stones present varied from tiny to large rounded pebbles (less than 100mm long). This material contained no clear banding or grading of deposits and it appears to have been mottled or disturbed by root action.

<i>Watching Brief Test Pit 2</i>	
Location	North-west corner of property up against the western party wall
Dimensions	1.52 by 0.80m
Modern ground level	c 10m OD (estimated)
Base of modern fill/slab	c 8.00m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	Nil
Level of base of deposits observed	c 7.40m OD
Natural observed	Truncated Head deposits were recorded a c 8.00m OD [context 1]

The party wall was constructed of yellow stock bricks (dimensions 9x4x2½ inches) and its base was a marked of single protruding header course (c 8.06m OD). The brick work consisted mainly of very irregular stretcher courses and many of the bricks used were incomplete or broken. The exposed wall face was unpointed. This brickwork was simply seated on the truncated Head deposits [1], except at the northern end of the test pit, where the wall had already been underpinned (Fig 3). The space between the base of the party wall foundations and the former floor level (1.90m depth) was occupied by a uniform mid brown, fine sandy silt, which contained no datable artefacts apart from stock brick fragments identical to those used to construct the party wall. This material looks like wormed sorted top soil. The impression is that this building was not constructed by the usual method of excavating narrow linear trenches along the intended line of the foundation walls. Instead the whole area of the footprint of the building was apparently dug down to the level of the base of the foundation trenches, the walls constructed and then the interior of the building backfilled with redeposited top or garden soil. There is no evidence that the standing building was basemented.

<i>Watching Brief Test Pit 3</i>	
Location	In southwest corner of yard to rear of property
Dimensions	1.45 by 0.50m
Modern ground level	c 10m OD (estimated)
Base of modern fill/slab	c 8.50m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	Nil
Level of base of deposits observed	c 7.40m OD
Natural observed	Head deposits were recorded a c 8.50m OD [context 1]

Ground level was marked a concrete slab, 0.30m thick, below it was a band (0.50m thick) of brick rubble makeup and the backfill of various inter-cutting modern service trenches (foul drains etc). Below the service trenches was a 0.70m thick layer of mid greyish-brown fine to coarse grained sandy silt, containing frequent lenses of brown and orange gravel. This material contained no datable artefacts, but appears to be a levelling dump connected with the construction of the standing building during the last quarter of the 19th century. Below this material were the Head deposits [1] seen in the previous testpits (see above).

As no in-situ subsoil or topsoil horizons were recorded it appears that each of the three observations of this deposit on site have been truncated by activity connected with the construction of the standing building during the last quarter of the 19th century. Significantly the top interface of each of the observations of the Head deposits was marked by a very abrupt boundary, a phenomena which is rarely seen in natural soil horizons due to biological reworking.

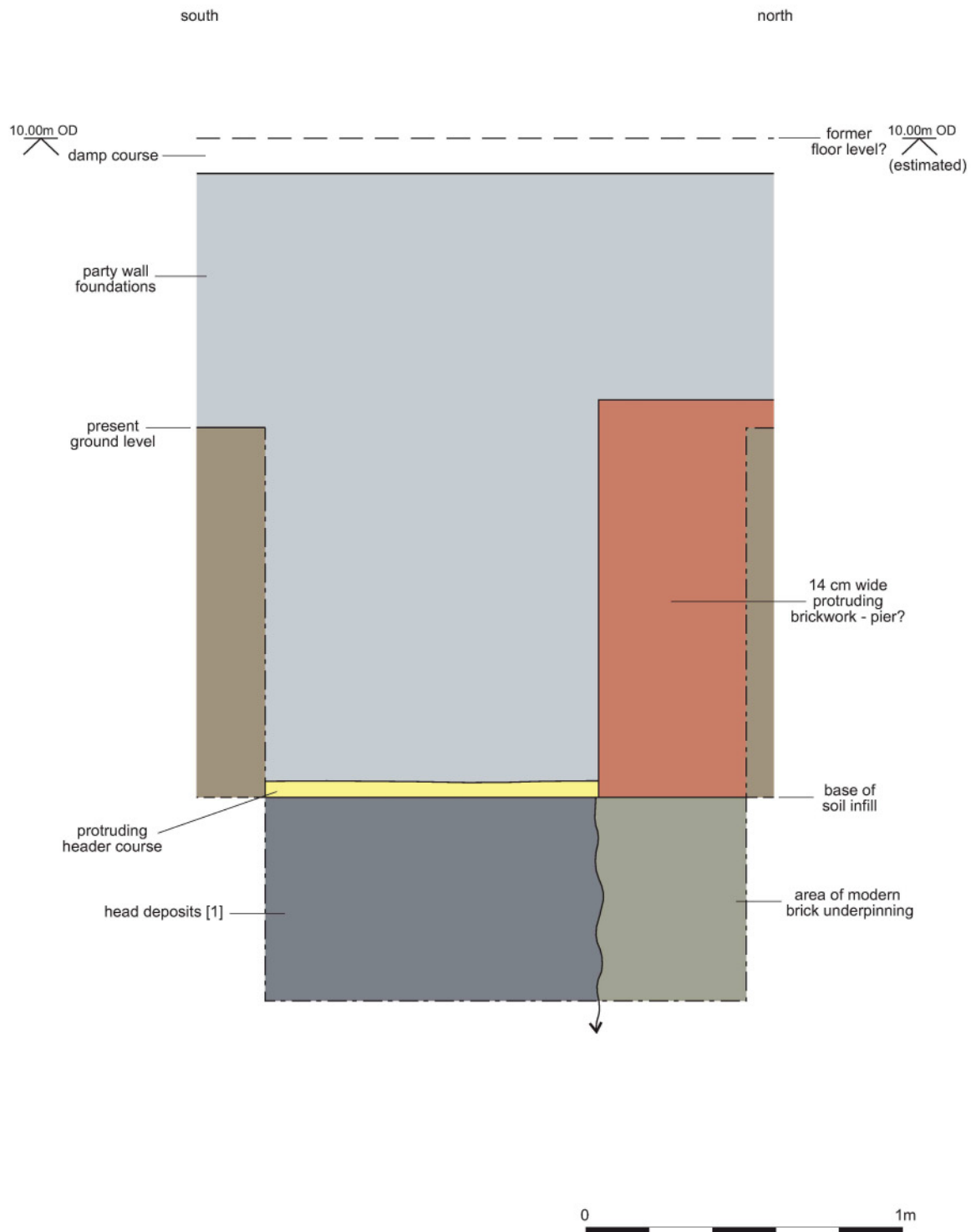


Fig 3 East facing section of Testpit 2

4 Potential of archaeology

The site has no archaeological potential due to the degree of truncation of the earlier landsurface caused by the construction of the standing building during the last quarter of the 19th century.

4.1 Original research aims

What is the level of truncation caused by the construction of the standing building?

It appears that internally there are some 2.0m depth of modern deposits and about 1.50m depth of modern deposits externally.

What is the nature and significance of the surviving archaeological remains?

No archaeological deposits or residual artefacts were present.

What are the levels of natural deposits?

Pleistocene Head deposits were found at c 8.5m OD, these appear to have been truncated by activity connected with the construction of the standing building as no over lying subsoil.

4.2 Significance of the data

Fieldwork has established that the site has no archaeological significance.

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 Museum of London within 12 months of the end of the excavation.

In view of the absence of significant archaeological 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 next annual round up of the *London Archaeologist*.

6 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Riz Khan and the staff of TRK Partnership for their assistance during the fieldwork.

7 Bibliography

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Coulter, J, 1992 *Lewisham and Deptford in Old Photographs (revised edition)*, Stroud

Institute for Archaeologists (IFA), 2001 *By-Laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Institute for Archaeologists (rev. 2001), Standard and guidance: watching brief*

Museum of London, 1994 *Archaeological Site Manual 3rd edition*

8 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID: molas1-81588

? Project details

Project name 445 New Cross Road, Deptford, Lewisham Borough, SE 14

Short description of the project Watching brief to monitor underpinning holes revealed 1-5 to 2.0m depth of deposits of recent date overlying truncated drift geology Head deposits (top circa 8.50m OD) . A Historic Environment Assessment of the property was also undertaken

Project dates Start: 27-07-2010 End: 02-08-2010

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes NXC10 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Site status Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)

Current Land use Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices

Monument type housing Post Medieval

Significant Finds bricks Post Medieval

Significant Finds pipes Modern

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

? Project location

Site location GREATER LONDON LEWISHAM DEPTFORD AND NEWCROSS 445 New Cross Road

Postcode SE 14

Study area 250 Square metres

Site coordinates
 NGR - TQ 536905 177042
 LL - 50.9376981766 0.187664673147 (decimal)
 LL - 50 56 15 N 000 11 15 E (degrees)
 Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 8.0m Max: 8.5m

? Project creators

Name of Organisation MoL Archaeology

Project brief originator (other) TRK Partnership

Project design originator MOL Archaeology

Project Elaine Eastbury

director/manager

Project supervisor Bruce Watson

Type of TRK Partnership
sponsor/funding body
(other)

Name of TRK Partnership
sponsor/funding body

? Project archives

Physical Archive 'No physical archive'
Exists?

Physical Archive LAARC
recipient

Digital Archive 'No digital archive'
Exists?

Paper Archive LAARC
recipient

Paper Contents 'Stratigraphic','Survey'

Paper Media 'Notebook - Excavation, Research, General
available Notes','Plan','Report','Section','Survey ','Unspecified Archive'

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