

**Archaeological Monitoring Report:
New Substation at No. 26, Stewarts Road, Battersea,
Borough of Wandsworth, London SW8 4DQ**

Contractor sitecode: SRBM 16
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Museum sitecode: SWT16

Report prepared for

ADAS UK Ltd.

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Summary

Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out during the excavation for a new access shaft to the new substation at 26 Stewarts Road, Battersea, London. The shaft was excavated within an industrial unit prior to the unit being demolished to allow for the construction of the substation.

An archaeological desk-based assessment compiled for this site identified the site as lying within the palaeochannel of the Battersea channel, a tributary of or part of the historic channel of the River Thames (c.800m to the north). Early prehistoric land surfaces have been encountered in this area, and late Saxon and medieval occupation and industry developed on the south bank of the river.

The excavation of the shaft exposed modern concrete and construction layer overlying the natural geology of river sand and gravels. The archaeological monitoring identified no significant archaeological remains and recovered no artefacts. No further monitoring was undertaken.

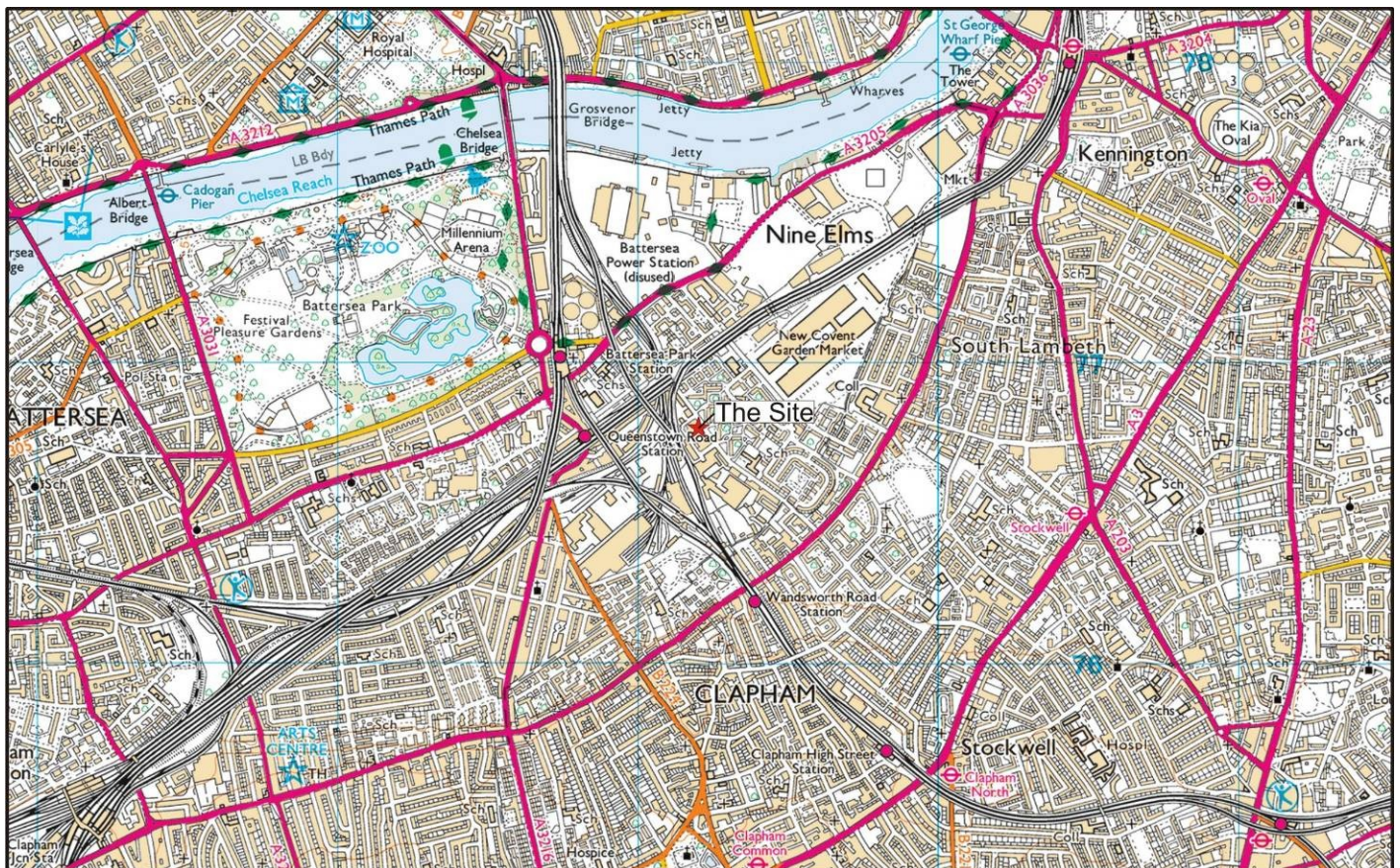


Figure 1: Site location map at scale 1:25,000. Site location is shown in red (OS mapping © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCAS licence no. 100049278).

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd, were commissioned by ADAS UK Ltd. to undertake archaeological monitoring and recording on land at no. 26, Stewarts Road in Battersea in the London Borough of Wandsworth, during the construction of a new sub-station.

The site lay within the Battersea palaeochannel with early prehistoric remains being encountered in the surrounding area. Saxon and medieval occupation and industry is also recorded in the vicinity. Due to the potential for encountering archaeological remains archaeological monitoring was undertaken in association with the project.

The excavations for the new access shaft at the heart of the new substation were monitored, identifying only modern construction and natural deposits. Based on this evidence further monitoring of the groundworks was considered unnecessary.

The archaeological monitoring and recording at the site was completed according to a Written Scheme of Investigation (Savage, 2016), and followed current best practice and appropriate national guidance, which at the time comprised:

- NPPF, National Planning Policy Framework, 2012;
- ClfA Code of Conduct (2014 as revised);
- ClfA Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (2014);
- GLAAS Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Greater London (Historic England, 2015);
- Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE v1.1, 2009, English Heritage).

2.0 Site Location and Description (Fig. 1)

The district of Battersea lies within the London Borough of Wandsworth, on the south side of the River Thames.

The redevelopment site was located on the south-west side of Stewarts Road, approximately 30m outside a portion of the Wandsworth Archaeological Priority Area, which lies to the south-east. The site comprised a former industrial / warehouse unit and associated parking lying on the southwest side of Stewarts Road, surrounded by further industrial units to the west and south-west. A railway line on a viaduct and its associated sidings lies less than 30m to the northwest of the site.

At the time of the monitoring visits the site was occupied by an industrial unit within which the shaft was excavated. The shell of which was retained throughout the excavation of the shaft to provide some limited sound proofing etc. to the domestic residences and other units in the area, however was due to demolition to allow for the construction of the new substation building in a later phase of construction. The shaft lay towards the northeast corner of the existing building, close to Stewarts Road.

National Grid Reference: TQ 29144 76865.

3.0 Topography and Geology

Stewarts Road lies a few metres above Ordnance Datum sea level, on the valley slope of the former Battersea Channel.

The BGS 1:50,000 geological survey records a bedrock geology of London Clay Formation - Clay and Silt formed in the Palaeogene Period in a deep sea environment. On the site itself the survey indicates an overlying geology of Kempton Park Sand and Gravel formed in the Quaternary Period in a river environment (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

The site lies within the region known as the 'Battersea Channel', thought to represent a relict watercourse, potentially an earlier course of the River Thames, which was active from just after the last glacial maximum and ceased to flow after the Mesolithic period. Deep alluvial deposits of prehistoric date may therefore be present on the site.

4.0 Planning Background

The project comes under the Permitted Works and does therefore not require planning permission although the monitoring scheme fulfils obligations to the historic environment as described in Section 38 and Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act 1989.

The project involved the construction of a new substation on land at 26 Stewarts Road, Battersea. The works were phased, including the excavation of a 20m deep shaft c.8m in diameter to provide the feed for the 132Kv / 11Kv substation within the then-existing industrial unit, followed by the demolition of the building and the construction of a new multi-storey complex within the same footprint, including the excavation of a basement excavated to a depth of 3m below the existing ground level with pile foundations for the new building.

5.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The archaeological desk-based assessment carried out for this site (Amec FW, 2016) identified no known archaeological sites, monuments or findspots within the proposed development site, and no records of previous archaeological work having been carried out there. The archaeological and historical development of the 500m radius study area is fully discussed in the ADBA, and is briefly summarised here.

The proposed development site lies within the zone of the Battersea Channel, a relict watercourse over 5km long and some 200m wide, which may represent an earlier course of the River Thames. Two geoarchaeological surveys have been carried out on other sites in Stewarts Road in order to identify the channel deposits. An auger survey carried out at nos. 102-104, Stewarts Road in 2007 recorded made ground to depths of between 1 and 2m below existing ground level, overlying archaeological deposits of Neolithic and Bronze Age date between 2 and 3m below EGL. The survey results suggested that the site, some 250m to the south of the present development site, lay on an area of high ground or an island associated with the Battersea Eyot (a prehistoric island within the Thames fluvial system, located under the modern Battersea Park). A further survey carried out at nos. 120-146, some 360m to the south of the present site, reported a natural change in topography of 2m across the surveyed area, which was interpreted as deriving from a natural slope towards the Battersea Channel. Made ground was also recorded on this site to depths of approximately 2m below EGL, overlying deposits containing Palaeolithic and Mesolithic material. The results of both surveys indicate that archaeologically significant deposits of prehistoric date

may survive at substantial depths – from 1m above to 3m below Ordnance Datum sea level – across the Battersea Channel area (*ibid.*).

The City of London was a major Roman settlement and the history of the Roman occupation there has been extensively documented, but evidence for Roman activity within Battersea is scarce, and is likely to derive from transient communities using the Thames fluvial system for trade and industry. The only Roman remains recorded within the study area were found when works 190m north-west of the site, near Havelock Terrace, encountered Roman coins and inhumation burials within lead coffins (*ibid.*; GLHER refs. MLO17077 and 18527).

Although the first documentary evidence for a manor named ‘*Batrices ege*’ – an Old English name meaning ‘Beaduric’s island’ (Mills, 1993, p.27) – comes from the 7th century AD, and the area had become a cultivated manor by the early 14th century, no Anglo-Saxon, early medieval or medieval remains have been encountered within the study area (Amec FW, 2016).

During the post-medieval period, the area continued to be essentially rural in character, featuring both wind- and water-powered mills and commercially managed osier beds; 18th-century mapping records market gardens approximately 50m to the east of the site, which survived until the 1870s (*ibid.*; fig. 2).

The construction of the railway network in the mid-19th century brought associated increases in industrialisation and population. The present system of railways, passing directly to the west of the site, was constructed in the 1860s to rationalise the so-called ‘Battersea Tangle’ where four railway companies were running trains through the same area; the London, Chatham and Dover Railway maintained a depot directly to the south-west of the proposed development site, which included engineering works, goods sheds, locomotive and coal yards, a paintworks and a smithy, and briefly had its own station at Corunna Road, some 40m to the west of the site (the road is no longer extant). The area became infilled with residential development, largely for the railway’s labour force; the south side of the site was occupied by terraced housing fronting on to Stewarts Road and Corunna Place (*ibid.*; figs. 2 and 3).

During the Second World War, at least eight bombs were dropped within the ADBA study area, three of which fell at Linford Street, 80m to the south of the site. These figures refer only to a census carried out in 1940 and 1941, so it is entirely possible that other bombs went unrecorded, particularly if they failed to explode: a UXO probability report commissioned for this project notes that the site lies within the zone of highest recorded bomb density, in which more than 200 bombs fell per 1000 acres (Amec FW, 2016; LIG, 2016). A combination of clearance of bomb-damaged properties and post-war slum clearance largely redeveloped the area to the east of the railway depot, including the site; the depot itself was reduced in size in the 1950s, and most of the remaining structures had been demolished for redevelopment by 2009. A programme of archaeological monitoring associated with the 2009 redevelopment recorded extensive remains of the 19th century railway depot infrastructure, but concluded that its construction had destroyed any earlier remains (Amec FW, 2016; GLHER ref. ELO11897). The industrial unit at No. 26, Stewarts Road was constructed in 1997 (Amec FW, 2016).

6.0 Methodology

The archaeological monitoring took place in accordance with the WSI prepared by PCAS (Savage, 2016).

The archaeological monitoring comprised the monitoring of excavation of the upper part of the shaft for the new substation. The shaft location had been defined prior to the start of excavations, circular in plan and with a diameter of 8m.



Plate 1: Industrial unit at the time of archaeological monitoring. Access shaft is excavated within the shell of the building.

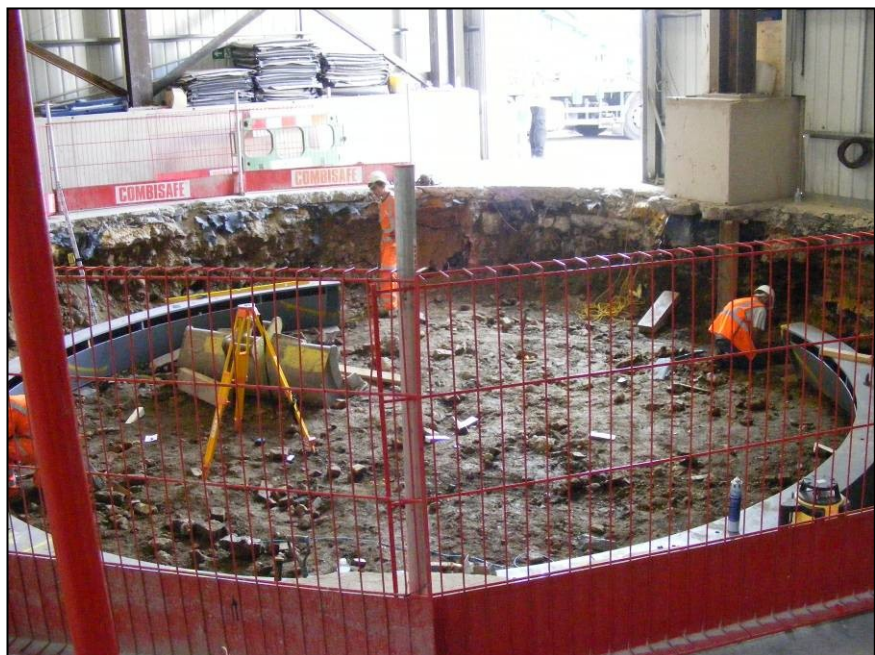
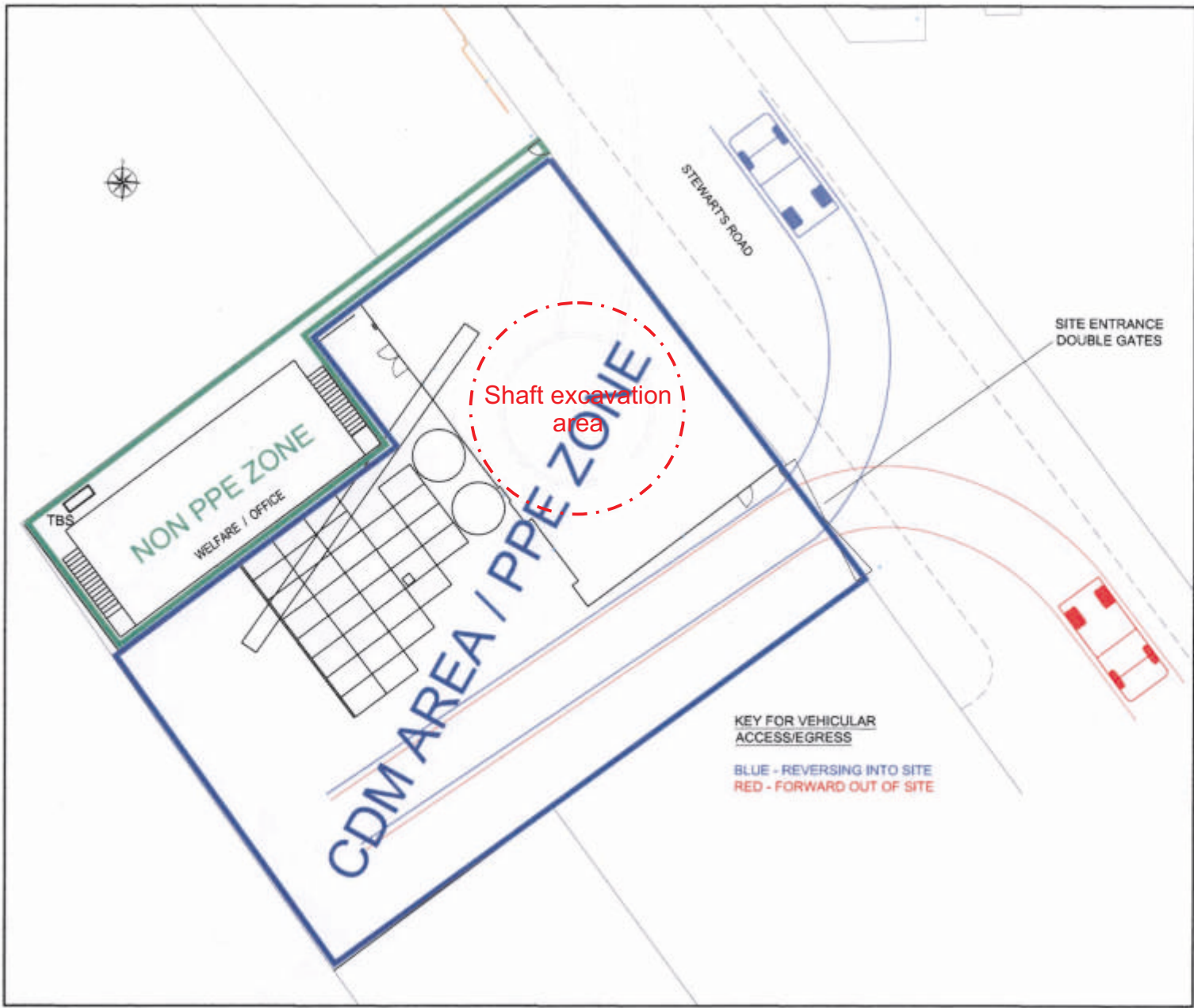
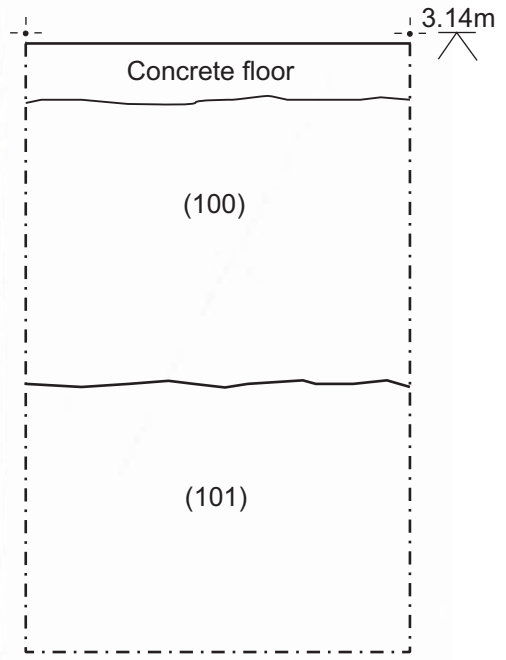


Plate 2: Shaft had been defined prior to the start of the monitoring with shoring already in place.



SITE PLAN ~ SCALE 1:200 @ A3



Representative section. 1:50 @ A4

Rev.	Description	Drawn	Date
CONTRACTOR:  CLARE HOUSE, COPPERMILL LANE, HAREFIELD, MIDDLESEX, UB9 8JZ, ENGLAND, TEL: +44 (0) 1890 823 711		CLIENT:  TITLE: CDM AREA / PPE ZONE STEWART'S ROAD LONDON SW8	
Drawing Number: STEW-CLDO-MS-DR-0060-00050			
SCALE & PAPER SIZE:	STATUS:	DATE:	DRAWN BY:
1:200 @ A3	S2	05/08/16	JM

Figure 2: Plan of works and representative section of shaft excavation.

Excavations were undertaken using a tracked 360 mechanical excavator fitted with a smooth 0.75m bucket. The diameter of the shaft had been defined by shoring which was extended as excavations progressed, which prevented sample sections being drawn of the profile recorded during the works. The mechanical excavator was positioned within the shored excavation area, which prevented clear views in plan of the proceedings, particularly with increasing depth.

All deposits observed were recorded on standard PCAS context recording sheets, and the progress of the groundworks noted on standard PCAS site diary sheets. Sample sections were recorded at a scale of 1:20. A digital photographic record was maintained throughout and a selection of these images are reproduced in this report.

The monitoring took place between 15/09/16 and 23/09/16 and comprised five separate site visits by Archaeologist M. Rowe.

7.0 Results (Fig. 2)

Within the shaft two horizons were recorded. The upper horizon consisted of the existing concrete floor of the building, with modern make-up layers beneath this. Horizon (100) is a mix of demolition material, hardcore and soil identified as 20th century material. This was encountered to a depth of 2.25m below the existing ground level (EGL recorded at 3.14m OD).

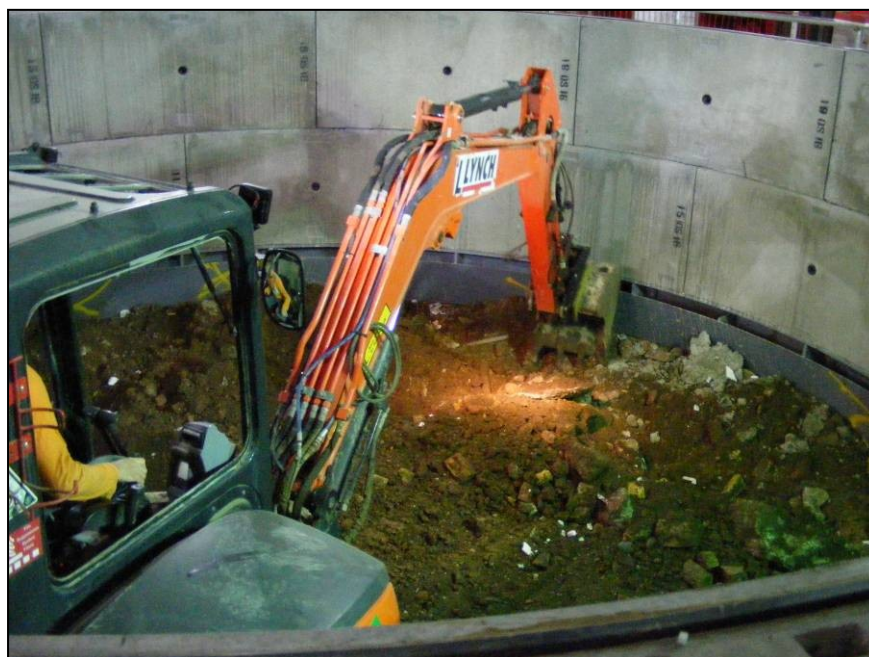


Plate 3: Excavating through the modern make up layer (100) of mixed soils and demolition material.

Beneath this was a light yellow brown mixed sand and gravel deposit (101). The gravels were small – medium sized water-worn pebbles, and interpreted as river terrace deposits. This deposit was identified to a depth of c.4m below EGL, at which level the water table was encountered, appearing to continue to an increasing depth.



Plate 4: Exposing the top of the sand / gravel layer (101).

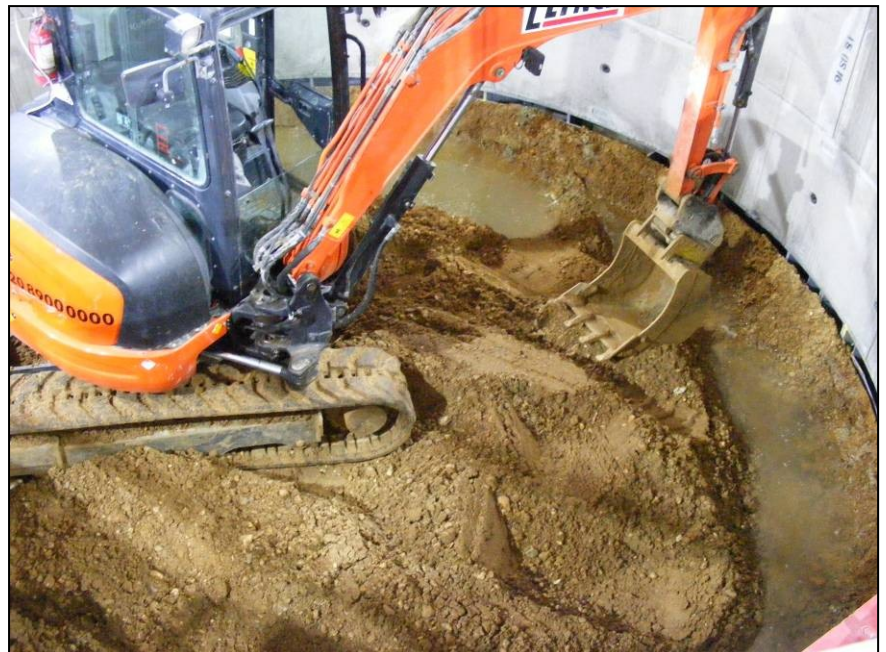


Plate 5: Encountering the water table at c. 4m below EGL.

In discussion with the Archaeologist for ADAS UK Ltd. it was decided that no further archaeological monitoring was required for this project.

8.0 Conclusion

The archaeological monitoring did not identify any significant archaeological horizons. Modern hardcore and construction / demolition material directly overlay the natural geology to a depth of more than 2m below existing ground level towards the centre of the building where modern construction impacts were anticipated to be lesser. The presence of the river terrace deposits confirms the presence of the Battersea river channel active at the end of the last glacial period.

9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

The archaeological monitoring identified no significant archaeological activity, identifying only natural geology and modern material. The methodology employed resulted in little or no delay to the planned sequence of construction works.

10.0 Acknowledgements

PCAS Ltd would like to thank ADAS UK Ltd. for commissioning this work.

11.0 Site Archive

The project archive is currently held at the offices of PCAS Ltd. in Saxilby, Lincolnshire while being prepared for deposition. The prepared archive will be deposited (anticipated December 2016) at the London Archaeological Archives and Research Centre (LAARC) under the museum assigned sitecode SWT 16. A unique accession number will be assigned at the time of archive deposition.

12.0 References/Bibliography

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<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Type	Description
100	Layer	Existing concrete floor and modern make up / hardcore. Mix of demolition material and soil, all post-war material. 2.25m deep.
101	Layer	Natural geology. Mixed light yellow brown sand and gravel, small – medium sized water worn pebbles. ≥1.75m thick.

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View 2	2	Alison Lane	alison@pre-construct.co.uk	19 October 2016

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