



Albion Yard Car Park (Whitechapel Station)

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





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QUALITY ASSURANCE

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Figure 1 Site and Trench location

Plate 1: West face of Trench 1 showing general sequence of deposits with post medieval soil at the base.

Plate 2: West face of Trench 2 showing pillar base possibly related to the Albion Brewery.

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Crossrail Ltd to undertake a general watching brief to monitor and record two machine-dug trenches at the Albion Yard car park, within the area of the former Albion Brewery, Whitechapel. The trenches were dug as part of ground investigation work to evaluate deposits that would be impacted by the rerouting of services in advance of construction of the Cambridge Heath Road Shaft. The total length of trenching amounted to 15 m.

The results of the work suggest that the car park area has been built up to some degree using demolition rubble from the brewery. Some truncation of the underlying ground surface appears likely by outbuildings of the former brewery. Below these levels archaeological deposits, including post medieval soils, may be preserved.

If it can be confirmed that these soil deposits are undisturbed and do not represent backfilled material into former brewery basements it remains a possibility that more detailed undisturbed archaeological deposits may be preserved at a greater depth than those recorded.

At the present depth of excavation it is considered unlikely that any significant archaeological deposits or features will be threatened by rerouting of services in this area of the Cambridge Heath Road Shaft site.

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Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned by Crossrail Ltd and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Dennis Kelly in this regard.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Phil Harding, who also compiled this report, and Jon Milward. The illustrations were prepared by Will Foster. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Damian De Rosa.

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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 This document reports on the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Wessex Archaeology on behalf of Crossrail (the Client) during ground investigation works in Albion Yard Car Park (hereafter the Site).
- 1.1.2 The Site, which lies within the area of the former Albion Brewery, Whitechapel (centred on National Grid Reference 534910, 181935), is now located within the proposed Whitechapel Station Crossrail portal and specifically within the Cambridge Heath Road Shaft and Worksite sub-site (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.3 Mitigation measures were required at the Site in the form of a general watching brief (GWB) to monitor ground investigation works by EDF Energy for the re-location of existing utilities. This work is part of the Enabling Works phase being undertaken across the Whitechapel Station Crossrail portal
- 1.1.4 The archaeological work to monitor the groundworks was undertaken from the 8th to 12th February 2010.
- 1.1.5 The methodology of how the work would be undertaken was set out in a Method Statement (WA Ref. 72214.01), produced by Wessex Archaeology and submitted to Crossrail, prior to the fieldwork commencing.
- 1.1.6 All work was undertaken according to established procedures, and the following guidelines and documentation:
- Crossrail Generic Written Scheme of Investigation (Document no. CR-PN-LWS-EN-SY-00001).
 - Crossrail Whitechapel Station, Detailed Desk Based Assessment. Doc No. CR-SD-WHI-EN-SR-00001
 - Crossrail Whitechapel Station, Site-Specific Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation. (Document no. CR-SD-WHI-EN-SY-00001).
 - *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008),
 - *Management of Archaeological Projects* (EH 1991)
 - *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MORPHE) (EH 2006).
 - GLAAS Archaeological Guidance Papers (EH 1998 and 2009 (Draft))

2 THE SITE, LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1.1 The Site fronts onto the Mile End Road, one of the principal routes eastwards out of London. The Site is located within the residential car park of the former entrance block to the former Albion Brewery, which was converted in to flats in the 1990s (**Figure1**)
- 2.1.2 Ground level across the Cambridge Heath Shaft area is consistent at around 111.50m Above Tunnel Datum (ATD) (11.50m above Ordnance Datum (aOD)) . The results of preliminary borehole data within the area indicated that varying degrees of truncation have occurred to archaeological deposits. 'Made ground' possibly consisting in part of archaeological deposits, was recorded to approximately 107.50m ATD (7.50m aOD) which overlay River Terrace Deposits (RTD) and residual pockets of alluvium, beneath which is the London Clay at 105.40m ATD (5.40m aOD).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1 A Detailed Desk-based Assessment (DBA) of the Whitechapel Station site (Crossrail 2008) identified a potential for archaeological remains relating to the Albion Brewery within the area of the Cambridge Heath Shaft and worksite.
- 3.1.2 This brewery complex formerly extended across the majority of the area, beneath what is now the current Sainsbury's car park to the north of the Site. The brewery was closed in 1979 and the entrance block (333-335 Whitechapel Road) was converted into flats in the 1990s. The Site of the watching brief lies within the car park area of the flats and to the rear of the Blind Beggar public house (**Figure 1**). It was considered that the extensive basements of the brewery will have removed archaeological deposits predating the construction of the brewery, nevertheless areas of alluvium and RTD may survive below the level of the basement floors.
- 3.1.3 The DBA identified a number of areas of archaeological potential including:
- Archaeological remains from the Roman period relating to the London to Colchester Roman road to the south of the Site, which follows the line of the modern day Whitechapel Road. The potential however was considered to be low.
 - Possible burials relating to the Great Plague of 1665, when the parish of St Dunstons Stepney acquired c.1.25 acres of waste land on the north side of Whitechapel Road near Stonebridge, for the use as an emergency burial ground.
 - The remains of sunken gardens, which are indicated on historic mapping from 1703.
 - Post-medieval remains relating to the urbanisation of the area along the line of Whitechapel Road and Cambridge Heath Road comprising housing and the Albion Brewery, which cartographic evidence indicates was in existence by at least 1819.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Aims and scope

- 4.1.1 The overall objectives of the investigation were to establish the nature, extent and state of preservation of any surviving archaeological remains that may be impacted upon by the development.
- 4.1.2 These are detailed in the *Whitechapel Station Site-Specific Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation* (Crossrail 2009), to which reference should be made.

5 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

5.1 Methodology

- 5.1.1 Prior to the commencement of fieldwork, a unique Site Code **CXC10** was obtained from London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) of the Museum of London (MoL) for the archaeological work at the Site.

5.2 General Watching Brief

- 5.2.1 The GWB was undertaken to monitor the excavation by EDF Energy of two trenches, one measuring 8m, the other 4 m long, each c.0.70-0.90m wide and a maximum 1.2 m deep. The trenches were necessary to evaluate the nature of subsurface deposits that would be excavated to divert existing services away from the site of the Cambridge Heath Road Shaft and worksite (**Figure 1**).
- 5.2.2 The archaeologist was charged to inspect all intrusive groundworks. Non-archaeologically significant deposits, including modern made ground and demolition deposits, were removed by the contractors under archaeological supervision.
- 5.2.3 All work was undertaken, under constant archaeological supervision, using a rubber tracked mini-digger fitted with a toothless grading bucket, 0.60 m wide. Surface tarmac was cut with a disc cutter and areas of concrete, where they were present at the southern end of trench 2, were broken using a standard concrete breaker.
- 5.2.4 Written descriptions of the work were maintained accompanied by a digital photographic record. The digital photographic record was maintained to document not only the nature of the individual trenches but also to place them in the general context of the Site as a whole.
- 5.2.5 Trench locations (**Figure 1**) were recorded on an annotated plan to place them in relation to more permanent topographical features.
- 5.2.6 On completion of the excavation both trenches were backfilled and fully reinstated by the groundwork contractors.

6 RESULTS

6.1 Trench 1

- 6.1.1 Trench 1 measured eight metres long, and was aligned north to south, approximately three metres east of an off-set in the rear, northern, boundary wall of the Blind Beggar public house (**Figure 1**).
- 6.1.2 The section (**Plate 1**) showed that the modern tarmac surface of the car park (**101**) overlay brick/demolition rubble (**102**) to a depth of approximately 0.85m, which in turn overlay a concrete floor (**103**).
- 6.1.3 The base of a modern single skin brick wall (**104**), aligned east to west, was noted at the north end, laid directly on the concrete. This wall probably formed part of a partition or boundary wall within the area/structure contained by the concrete wall.
- 6.1.4 The concrete was punctured in one place by a machine-dug test pit, to a further depth of 0.35m. The test pit demonstrated that the concrete floor overlay a dark grey clay-rich soil (**105**), mixed with some brick rubble.
- 6.1.5 This very disturbed deposit is most probably a post medieval soil horizon, but may also represent backfilled material. The results of the test pit excavation were sufficient to satisfy the aims of the ground investigation works but were of insufficient extent to provide informative results of any undisturbed archaeological deposits or features.

6.2 Trench 2

- 6.2.1 Trench 2 (**Plate 2**), which measured only four metres long, was aligned parallel to and approximately five metres west of Trench 1. It was also 'stepped-out' approximately 1 m north of the boundary wall of the 'Blind Beggar' public house (**Figure 1**).
- 6.2.2 The modern car park tarmac and concrete surface (**201**) overlay a deposit of brick rubble and modern refuse (**202**). The presence of relatively large quantities of modern refuse suggests that these deposits may relate to the redevelopment of the Albion Brewery in the 1990s.
- 6.2.3 The made-up ground overlay a concrete screed surface (**203**), with a man-hole cover, at a depth of approximately 0.78 m, thereby replicating almost exactly the sequence observed in Trench 1.
- 6.2.4 The concrete surface overlay an earlier phase of made-up ground (**204**), of similar composition to layer **202**, and approximately 0.34 m thick. This demolition deposit sealed an earlier concrete floor (**205**) onto which was fixed a cast iron pillar base, set on a raised slab, and which may well have formed an internal roof or basement support of an outbuilding related to the Albion Brewery.

7 FINDS

7.1.1 No artefacts were recovered from Trenches 1 and 2.

8 ENVIRONMENTAL

8.1.1 No archaeological deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified.

9 CONCLUSIONS

9.1.1 The results of the excavations through the modern car park surface have demonstrated variations in the sequences of deposits between these two closely spaced trenches.

9.1.2 The deposits appear to document archaeological activity on the Site relating to the construction of the brewery in the early 19th century and to its redevelopment for residential purposes in the 1990s. The lower of the two concrete floor surfaces in Trench 2 contained a pillar base and probably lay within a building of the Albion Brewery.

9.1.3 This lower floor surface was absent in Trench 1, suggesting that the eastern wall of the building may have been aligned along the projected line of the eastern tenement boundary wall of the Blind Beggar public house.

9.1.4 It is probable that this floor surface, and that overlying it, were laid on, or close to the, former old ground surface and that the present surface represents subsequent build-up of the area using demolition rubble from the brewery to create the car park. In any event it seems possible that archaeological deposits, including post medieval soils are present in Trench 1 below the concrete floor.

9.1.5 The very limited extent of penetration through the concrete floor in Trench 1 suggests that, if these soil deposits are undisturbed and do not represent backfilled material, then basements of the former brewery are absent in this part of the Site. From this it remains a possibility that earlier undisturbed archaeological deposits may be preserved at a greater depth.

9.1.6 In summary the results of the archaeological work undertaken in conjunction with the ground investigation works at the Albion Yard Car Park have not ruled out the possibility that archaeological deposits may survive below the depths recorded; however at the present level of excavation it is unlikely that any significant archaeological deposits or features might be threatened by rerouting of services in the area of the Cambridge Heath Road Shaft and work site.

10 ARCHIVE

10.1 Preparation and Deposition

10.1.1 The complete project archive comprises an A4 ring bound folder with context record sheets, photographic register, Risk Assessment and various background documentation. There is an accompanying archive of photographs in colour digital format. The entire archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology where they are held under the Museum of London Site Code **CXC10** and Wessex Archaeology project code 72214. The completed archive for all stages of work will be deposited with The Museum of London under Site Code **CXC10**

10.2 Copyright

10.2.1 Wessex Archaeology shall retain full copyright of any report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved. Excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of the report by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the specification. Any document produced to meet planning requirements may be copied for planning purposes by the Local Planning Authority.

10.3 Security Copy

10.3.1 In line with current best practice, on completion of the project a security copy of the paper records will be prepared, in the form of microfilm. The master jackets and one diazo copy of the microfilm will be submitted to the National Monuments Record Centre (Swindon), a second diazo copy will be deposited with the paper records at the Museum, and a third diazo copy will be retained by Wessex Archaeology.

11 REFERENCES

Crossrail 2008, Whitechapel Station, Detailed Desk Based Assessment. Doc No. CR-SD-WHI-EN-SR-00001

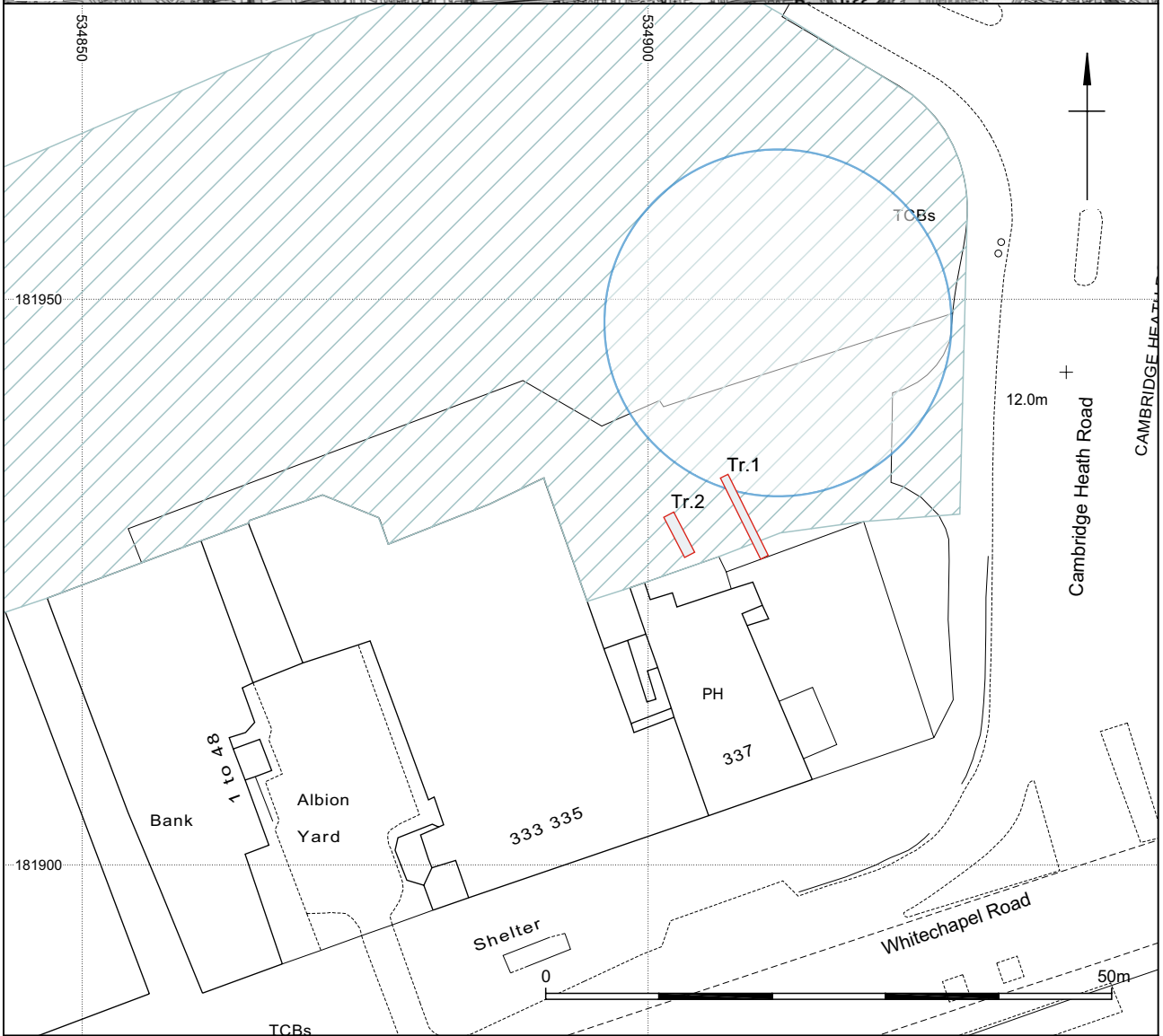
Crossrail, 2009, (Version 6) Whitechapel Station. Site Specific Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation. Doc No.: CR-SD-WHI-EN-SY-00001

Wessex Archaeology 2010 *Crossrail, Albion Road Car Park (Whitechapel Station) Method Statement for a General Watching Brief*. WA Project No.: 72214.01 MoL Site Code: CXC10

Appendix 1- Table of trench context descriptions

Trench 1		
Context	Description	Depth (m)
101	Modern tarmac surface with thin layer of foundation material below.	0-0.10
102	Modern make-up, brick rubble demolition material, electricity cable, wood plastic etc.	0.10-0.85
103	Concrete floor/raft. Present across entire extent of trench	0.85-0.95
104	Single skin brick wall base, aligned E-W, laid directly on 103	
105	Dark grey silty clay with fragments of brick rubble. Material of uncertain origin, assumed post medieval soil horizon but could be backfilled deposit.	0.95-1.25+

Trench 2		
Context	Description	Depth (m)
201	Car park surface make-up. Northern end of trench has tarmac on top of concrete, southern end does not.	0-0.20
202	Made ground. Rubble deposit comprising of mainly broken bricks (London stock) and pieces of concrete. Modern refuse in deposit suggests this is only around 20-30 years old. Equivalent of 102	0.20-0.70
203	Pre existing surface. Screed slab with a man-hole cover located towards the centre of the trench. As 103	0.70-0.78
204	Made ground. Rubble deposit mixed with a small amount of soil. Similar to 202.	0.78-1.12
205	Pre existing surface. Screed slab (excavation halted at this point). Possibly floor of former brewery building.	1.12+
206	Pillar base. At north end of trench. Constructed on top of 205. Comprises a raised slab with an iron pillar base bolted onto it.	0.88-1.12



<p>Watching Brief Trenches ▭</p> <p>Crossrail works area ▨</p> <p>Cambridge Heath Rd. Shaft </p>	<p>Reproduced from the 2000 Ordnance Survey 1:25000® map with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright, Wessex Archaeology, Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP4 6EB. Licence Number: 100028190. Digital data reproduced from Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright 2010 All rights reserved. Reference Number: 100020449. This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.</p>		
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Site and Trench location

Figure 1



Plate 1: West face of Trench 1 showing general sequence of deposits with post medieval soil at the base



Plate 2: West face of Trench 2 showing pillar base of possibly related to Albion Brewery

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