

# PHOENIX PLACE (SOUTH) London EC1A

London Borough of Camden

Archaeological Statement

July 2016



**Phoenix Place (South)  
London EC1A**

**Archaeological Statement**

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*Fig 2 Proposal drawing of ground floor showing area of basement beneath (Ref K15-0248-ASK106, Rev E, 11.05.2015, calfordseaden)*

# Executive summary

*This document forms the Archaeological Statement for the Phoenix Place (south) site, EC1A 1BB in the London Borough of Camden. A Community Right to Build Order (CRtBO) has been granted to Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum, for redevelopment of the site. The planning consultants for the development are Maddox Associates.*

*There are no designated structures or remains on the site, which is currently a brownfield site occupied by a car park. The proposed CRtBO submission generated by the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum comprises the demolition of existing buildings and construction of 125 flats as well as commercial space, some of which will be retained for community use by Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum, built in a series of linked multi-storey buildings including a lower ground floor/basement. The number of storeys is proposed to increase with the distance from the historic section of Mount Pleasant. Associated landscaping, services and parking and works to the surrounding public highway are also proposed.*

*Given a clear statement from Historic England about the validity of earlier assessments and the need for the Archaeological Statement to focus on potential impacts, this document does not restate previous detailed research. This report assesses the impact of the proposed scheme on buried heritage assets (archaeological remains). Buried heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals comprise:*

- **Paleoenvironmental remains (River Fleet).** *The river has been a managed watercourse for some two thousand years and it was culverted in the 19th century. Limited archaeological investigations and geotechnical investigations have found evidence of deep river alluvium of medium significance, laid down on the site by the river.*
- **London's English Civil War Defences.** *Map evidence indicates that the defensive ditch and rampart, created in 1642-43, probably ran through the Mount Pleasant area although their precise location and survival is uncertain. GLHER projections indicate that the line of the defence works passed either across the Phoenix Place site or close by and 'Fort Number 9' (Wakefield or Pindar Fort) is thought to be immediately east of the site at Mount Pleasant Sorting Office. If present on the site remains of these defences would be of medium heritage significance.*
- **Foundry.** *Remains of 18th-19th century brass foundry and cartridge works on the site, of low heritage significance.*

*There is low potential for prehistoric to medieval remains on the site although isolated prehistoric, Roman and medieval artefacts have been found nearby.*

*The site does not lie within an archaeological priority area and there have been limited past archaeological investigations on the site, which recorded the presence of river alluvium deposits and post-medieval to industrial period rubbish dumping dating from AD1670-1846. There was some truncation of the site by house cellars and the construction of industrial buildings during the 18 and 19th centuries.*

*The proposed scheme with (assumed) piled foundations, a basement to a formation level of 10.8m OD and lift pits to an assumed impact level of 10.3m OD would extend into both archaeological deposits and undated made ground, which may also contain archaeological remains. Piling for foundations would remove any archaeological remains within their footprint, reducing their significance to nil.*

*Although the site has potential to contain remains of the Civil War defences, paleoenvironmental remains and post-medieval to industrial archaeological remains, it is unlikely that the local authority would require further preliminary site-specific archaeological investigation of the site either pre- or post-determination of planning consent. It is likely, however, that an archaeological watching brief would be requested during foundation construction and excavation for the basement, which would ensure that any archaeological assets were not removed without record. Provision should be made for archaeological recording of post-medieval or Palaeolithic remains and any evidence of the Civil War defences if required.*

*Any archaeological work would need to be undertaken in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) and could be carried out under the terms of a standard archaeological planning condition set out under the granting of planning consent.*

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Origin and scope of the report

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- 1.1.1 MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) has been commissioned to provide an archaeological statement in advance of proposed development at Phoenix Place (south), (National Grid Reference 531000, 182200: Fig 1). The scheme comprises the demolition of existing buildings and construction of residential flats as well as commercial space, some of which will be retained for community use by Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum, built in a series of linked multi-storey buildings including a lower ground floor/ basement. The number of storeys is proposed to increase with the distance from the historic section of Mount Pleasant. Associated landscaping, services and parking and works to the surrounding public highway are also proposed. The lower ground floor / basement is proposed to have a formation level of 10.8m OD with lift pits extending to 10.3m OD.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological statement assesses the impact of the proposed scheme on buried heritage assets (archaeological remains) at Phoenix Place south (hereafter referred to as the 'site'). This report deals solely with the archaeological implications of the development and does not cover possible built heritage issues.
- 1.1.3 Under the 'Copyright, Designs and Patents Act' 1988 MOLA retains the copyright to this document.
- 1.1.4 Note: the information in this document is, to the best knowledge of the author and MOLA, correct at the time of writing. Further archaeological investigation, more information about the nature of the present buildings, and/or changes to proposals for redevelopment may require changes to all or parts of the document.

## 1.2 Designated heritage assets

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- 1.2.1 The site does not contain any nationally designated (protected) heritage assets, such as scheduled monuments, listed buildings or registered parks and gardens.
- 1.2.2 The site does not lie within a conservation area or archaeological priority area as defined by LPA ([www.camden.gov.uk](http://www.camden.gov.uk)). The designated viewing corridor for View 2A.1 Parliament Hill Summit to St Paul's Cathedral passes through the site ([www.camden.gov.uk](http://www.camden.gov.uk)).

## 1.3 Aims and objectives

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- 1.3.1 The aim of the statement is to:
- confirm that the information in relation to archaeology contained in the historic environment record for the neighbourhood area has been reviewed;
  - assess the likely impacts upon the significance of the assets arising from the proposals;
  - set out the findings from that review for the area to which the order proposal relates;
  - explain how the findings have been taken into account in preparing the order proposal;
  - provide recommendations for mitigation aimed at reducing or removing completely any adverse impacts upon buried heritage assets and/or their setting.

## 2 Methodology and sources consulted

- 2.1.1 For the purposes of this report the documentary sources, including results from archaeological and geotechnical investigations and reports on the site, were examined in order to review the nature, extent, preservation and significance of any buried heritage assets found to be present within the site or its immediate vicinity.
- 2.1.2 The following sources were consulted:
- MOLA Desk-based Assessment for the Mount Pleasant Mail Centre, July 2005
  - Waterman EIA addendum reporting on the results of a geoarchaeological (borehole) evaluation on the site in 2014.
  - Architectural drawings (calfordseaden, 2015).
  - Letter (CLO20036) from Sandy Kidd, Principal Archaeology Advisor for Historic England's Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS), dated 10.06.2016.
  - Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, Section 22 (2).
- 2.1.3 A full bibliography and list of sources consulted may be found below.

## 3 Site location, topography and geology

### 3.1 Site location

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- 3.1.1 The site is at Phoenix Place and Mount Pleasant in London (NGR 531000, 182200: Fig 1). It forms the south-west corner of the larger Mount Pleasant development site. The site is orientated north-west – south-east and is bounded by Gough St to the south-west, neighbouring buildings to the north, Phoenix Place to the north-east and Mount Pleasant to the south. The site lay within the county of Middlesex prior to being absorbed into the administration of the Greater London Borough of Camden.
- 3.1.2 The site is located approximately 1km north of the modern Thames waterfront. The site is within the Fleet valley and the river, now largely subterranean, rises several kilometres to the north at Hampstead Heath and Highgate, flowing southwest to join the Thames at Blackfriars.

### 3.2 Topography

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- 3.2.1 Topography can provide an indication of suitability for settlement, and ground levels can indicate whether the ground has been built up or truncated, which can have implications for archaeological survival (see section 5.2).
- 3.2.1 The site, currently a car park, has a building / structure is located in the northern part of the site and limited soft landscaping is found within the car park. The site lies on a south facing slope down to street level on Mount Pleasant at 13.7–13.8m OD. Levels of 12.1–12.09 were recorded during the 2104 geotechnical investigation on the site (Waterman).

### 3.3 Geology

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- 3.3.1 Geology can provide an indication of suitability for early settlement, and potential depth of remains.
- 3.3.2 The site lies on a former terrace of the Thames occupied by the Hackney Gravels. The site is mapped by the British Geological Society as lying at a point where the River Fleet cuts down through the Hackney Gravel to expose the London Clay bedrock (1:50,000 Sheet 286 North London 2006) and alluvium associated with the River Fleet is found on the site also.
- 3.3.3 A report from 2014 on geotechnical boreholes on the site (Waterman) recorded the top of natural gravel at 6.6m OD (5.5mbgl) within the site (QBH2, Fig 1). As ground levels may differ the levels in m OD are of most relevance.
- 3.3.4 In boreholes QBH2 and QBH3 a horizon of Alluvium was recorded, composed of sandy silt or silty, sandy clay (Fig 1). This was generally between 1.0 and 2.4m thick, the surface lying at between 8.1 and 8.6m OD on the site. The Alluvium most likely represents in-channel (fluvial) deposition during the Holocene. The Alluvium overlay Gravel in QBH2.
- 3.3.5 The Alluvium was overlain across the site by a considerable thickness of Made Ground between 3.5m and 4.5m thick. A borehole at the south end of the site (QBH1, Fig 1), was excavated by machine as there were problems with rubble, containing glass, metal and industrial waste, collapsing into the borehole. Around 4.5mbgl (8.4m OD) of modern made ground was recorded in this location (Waterman, 2014). QBH2 contained 3.3mbgl (to 8.8m OD) of modern made ground and QBH3 contained 4.0mbgl (to 8.1m OD) of undated made ground.
- 3.3.6 It is useful to differentiate between modern made ground, containing identifiably modern inclusions such as concrete and plastic (but not brick or tile), and undated made ground, which may potentially contain deposits of archaeological interest. This differentiation was not apparent in the geotechnical report as it was commissioned for engineering purposes. In all likelihood, the undated made ground comprises post-medieval to industrial dump deposits, with some potential for earlier remains below that. These geotechnical works indicate that the natural geology falls southwards along the course of the Fleet (Waterman, May 2014).

## 4 Archaeological investigations

### 4.1 Overview

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- 4.1.1 In 2005 an archaeological Watching Brief of the excavation of 12 geotechnical trial pits was carried out for the Mount Pleasant Post Office development by MOLA (Site code FDR05) and at least three of these pits (TP308, TP310, TP311) were on the present site (MOLA, 2005, 64-69).
- 4.1.2 TP308, measuring 09.m x 3.0m, was located in the north western sector of the site. At that time 0.8m of modern made ground, comprising rubble and concrete slab, was recorded overlying 2.6m of archaeological deposits at 11.5–13.1m OD. These deposits continued below the base of the pit and natural was not reached. Three layers of archaeological dump deposits were recorded containing clay pipe and pottery dating to AD1670–1740.
- 4.1.3 TP310, measuring 0.8 x 3.6m, was located along the west side of the site. At that time below 0.6m of modern made ground comprising rubble and concrete slab was recorded overlying 1.6m of archaeological and possibly natural deposits at 11.6–8.6m OD. The upper archaeological layers contained clay pipe and pottery dating to AD1670–1846. The lower layers of undated made ground may have been archaeological or natural. The top of confirmed natural gravel was recorded at 10.1m OD overlying London Clay at 8.8m OD.
- 4.1.4 TP311, measuring 1.1 x 2.2m, was located just west of QBH1 in the south of the site (Fig 1). Modern rubble fill of 2.5m in thickness was found to reach at least 11.6m OD, interpreted as a backfilled cellar. This result is confirmed by the more recent geotechnical works in this area (QBH1, Waterman, 2014).
- 4.1.5 Archaeological desk-based assessments carried out on the site indicate the area was subject to major dumping episodes throughout the post-medieval period. Given the nature of the above pits current understanding of the archaeology on the site is limited but the watching brief confirmed the conclusions in the assessment and geotechnical reports.

## 5 Statement of significance

### 5.1 Introduction

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- 5.1.1 The following section discusses past impacts on the site: generally from late 19th and 20th century developments which may have compromised archaeological survival, eg, building foundations or quarrying, identified primarily from earlier reports giving information on the likely depth of deposits. It goes on to consider factors which are likely to have compromised asset survival.

### 5.2 Factors affecting archaeological survival

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#### *Natural geology*

- 5.2.1 Based on geotechnical data, the level of natural geology within the site is as follows:
- Current ground level on the site lies at 12.1–12.9m OD sloping southwards
  - The top of Alluvium lies at 8.1–8.6m OD
  - The top of untruncated Gravel lies at 6.5m OD (5.6mbgl) towards the centre of the site
- 5.2.2 Between the top of the natural and the current ground level is modern made ground and undated made ground. The latter may potentially contain remains of archaeological interest.

#### *Past impacts*

- 5.2.3 Archaeological survival potential varies across the site with the area of QBH1 in the south of the site being heavily truncated by brick cellars, which both archaeological and geotechnical investigations show have been backfilled with rubble to a depth of at least 4.5mbgl.
- 5.2.4 Deep deposits of Alluvium survive in places on the site, as recorded in the other two boreholes, although the Alluvium is likely to be truncated by industrial activity such as the foundry factory and terraced housing seen on historic mapping of the site during the 19th century.

#### *Likely depth/thickness of archaeological remains*

- 5.2.5 Up to 2.6m of archaeological deposits were recorded during the watching brief on the site (MOLA, 2005).

### 5.3 Archaeological potential and significance

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- 5.3.1 The nature of possible archaeological survival in the area of the proposed development is summarised here, taking into account the levels of natural geology and the level and nature of later disturbance and truncation discussed above.
- 5.3.2 Previous archaeological assessment reports have shown that there is low potential for Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon remains, a moderate potential for palaeoenvironmental remains, for post-medieval remains such as possible Civil War defences and for the survival of eighteenth to twentieth century buildings' footings (such as from the Phoenix Foundry). These industrial remains are of low heritage significance although the geo-archaeological assessment confirmed the presence of moderately significant palaeoenvironmental deposits laid down by the Fleet River (Waterman, 2014) and the Civil War defences remains, if present would also be of medium significance.

# 6 Impact of proposals

## 6.1 Proposals

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6.1.1 The proposed development is a mixed commercial and residential scheme with associated services and landscaping. It is assumed the basement's concrete slab is to be 0.5m in thickness giving a formation level of 10.8m OD and for the lift pits an impact level of 10.3m OD (Lower ground floor plan, ASK105, Rev D; ground floor plan, ASK111, Rev E, 11.05.2015, calfordseaden). No information such as engineering details, pile type, size and layout was available at the time of writing.

## 6.2 Implications

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6.2.1 The identification of physical impacts on buried heritage assets within a site takes into account any activity which would entail ground disturbance, for example site set up works, remediation, landscaping and the construction of new basements and foundations. As it is assumed that the operational (completed development) phase would not entail any ground disturbance there would be no additional archaeological impact and this is not considered further.

6.2.2 Demolition of the existing structure on site and any works carried out as part of the initial site set up, including the installation of site fencing and welfare facilities, are assumed for the purposes of this report to cause ground disturbance to a maximum depth of 0.5mbgl. This would have a limited impact into modern made ground only and would have no archaeological impact.

6.2.3 The construction of a series of multi storey buildings with a lower ground floor / basement to a formation level of 10.8m OD on the site would extend into archaeological deposits and undated made ground which potentially contains remains of archaeological interest, and would entirely remove any remains to this depth within their footprint. In all likelihood the undated made ground is of post-medieval and 18th-19th century date and remains of mainly of low heritage significance would be affected. However remains of the Civil War defences, if present, on the site could be truncated or removed by the proposed scheme, reducing their significance to low or nil.

6.2.4 The proposed lift pits in the basement would extend to a depth of 1.5m below the foundation slab formation level to 10.3m OD. This would remove any archaeological remains that might have survived the basement excavation within the pit footprint to this depth.

6.2.5 Details of the proposed foundation type were not available at the time of writing, although given the scope of the scheme it is assumed piled foundations would be required. Any archaeological remains within the footprint of each pile would be removed as the pile is driven downwards. The severity of the impact would therefore depend on the pile size, type and pile density. Where the piling layout is particularly dense, it is in effect likely to make any surviving archaeological remains, potentially preserved between each pile, inaccessible in terms of any archaeological investigation in the future. Augered piles/continuous flight auger (CFA) piles would minimise the impact upon possible archaeological remains whereas vibro-compacted piles may cause additional impact through vibration and deformation of fragile surrounding remains, in particular at the level of the water table.

6.2.6 The insertion of pile caps and connecting ground beams, along with the excavation of a pile guide trench, typically extend no more than 1.0–1.5mbgl and would remove any archaeological remains within the footprint of these works to this depth.

6.2.1 Any archaeological remains would be entirely removed within the footprint of the proposed basement, to a depth of 10.8m. There may be additional impacts from piling beneath the basement (see above).

## 7 Conclusion and recommendations

- 7.1.1 The Phoenix Place site has been subject to an archaeological desk-based assessment and geo-archaeological borehole survey in connection with a previous redevelopment scheme, which has provided an indication of the site's archaeological potential.
- 7.1.2 Made ground of industrial/modern date is 4.0m or deeper across most of the site and overlies alluvium in the largely infilled valley of the Fleet. There is no indication of well-preserved organic deposits (peat) and the depth of the pre-modern layers would make further investigation prior to development logistically difficult.
- 7.1.3 Possible Civil War defences dating to the 17th century may be present on the site. Known archaeological remains dating to the post-medieval period, paleoenvironmental remains and industrial remains of a factory are likely to be present on the site.
- 7.1.1 Archaeological survival varies across the site, with cellars or basements present in many of the terraced houses which fronted the roads. The area of the site with the foundry factory may also be truncated.
- 7.1.2 The proposed scheme with (assumed) piled foundations, a basement to a formation level of 10.8m OD and lift pits to an assumed impact level of 10.3m OD would extend into both archaeological deposits and undated made ground, which may also contain archaeological remains. The basement will not extend into alluvium but this will be impacted by piled foundations.
- 7.1.3 Although the site has potential to contain remains of the Civil War defences and post-medieval to industrial archaeological remains, in light of the relatively small and localised area of proposed impact, it is unlikely that the local authority would require further preliminary site-specific archaeological evaluation of the site either pre- or post- determination of planning consent. It is likely, however, that an archaeological watching brief would be requested during foundation construction and excavation for the basement, which would ensure that any archaeological assets were not removed without record. Provision should be made for recording of post-medieval or Palaeolithic remains and any evidence of the Civil War defences if required.
- 7.1.4 Any archaeological work would need to be undertaken in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) and could be carried out under the terms of a standard archaeological planning condition set out under the granting of planning consent.

## 8 Planning Background

### 8.1 Site Planning Background

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- 8.1.1 The site was originally part of a larger development for Mount Pleasant Post Office.
- 8.1.2 As part of the consultation process for the current scheme, Sandy Kidd, Principal Archaeology Advisor for Historic England's Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) wrote to Maddox Associates (10.06.2016), advising on the archaeological background to the site and requesting an Archaeological Statement in support of the Order, in line with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
- 8.1.3 The requirement for an Archaeological Statement is set out in section 22 (2). It says that "archaeology statement" means a document which —
- (a) confirms that the information in relation to archaeology contained in the historic environment record for the neighbourhood area has been reviewed;
  - (b) sets out the findings from that review for the area to which the order proposal relates; and
  - (c) explains how the findings have been taken into account in preparing the order proposal.
- 8.1.4 The letter confirmed that the previous studies and the conclusions drawn from them provide a sound basis from which to address the first two issues in the statement, (a) and (b).
- 8.1.5 Part (c) is addressed above in discussing the impact of the proposals with recommendations and conclusions.

## 9 Bibliography

### 9.1 Published and documentary sources

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CIfA [Chartered Institute for Archaeologists] Dec 2014a, *Standards and guidance for commissioning work or providing consultancy advice on archaeology and the historic environment*, Reading.  
GLA [Greater London Authority], March 2015 *The London Plan. Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. Consolidated with Alterations Since 2011*  
GLAAS [Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service], 2014: *Standards for Archaeological Work London Region*.

### 9.2 Other Sources

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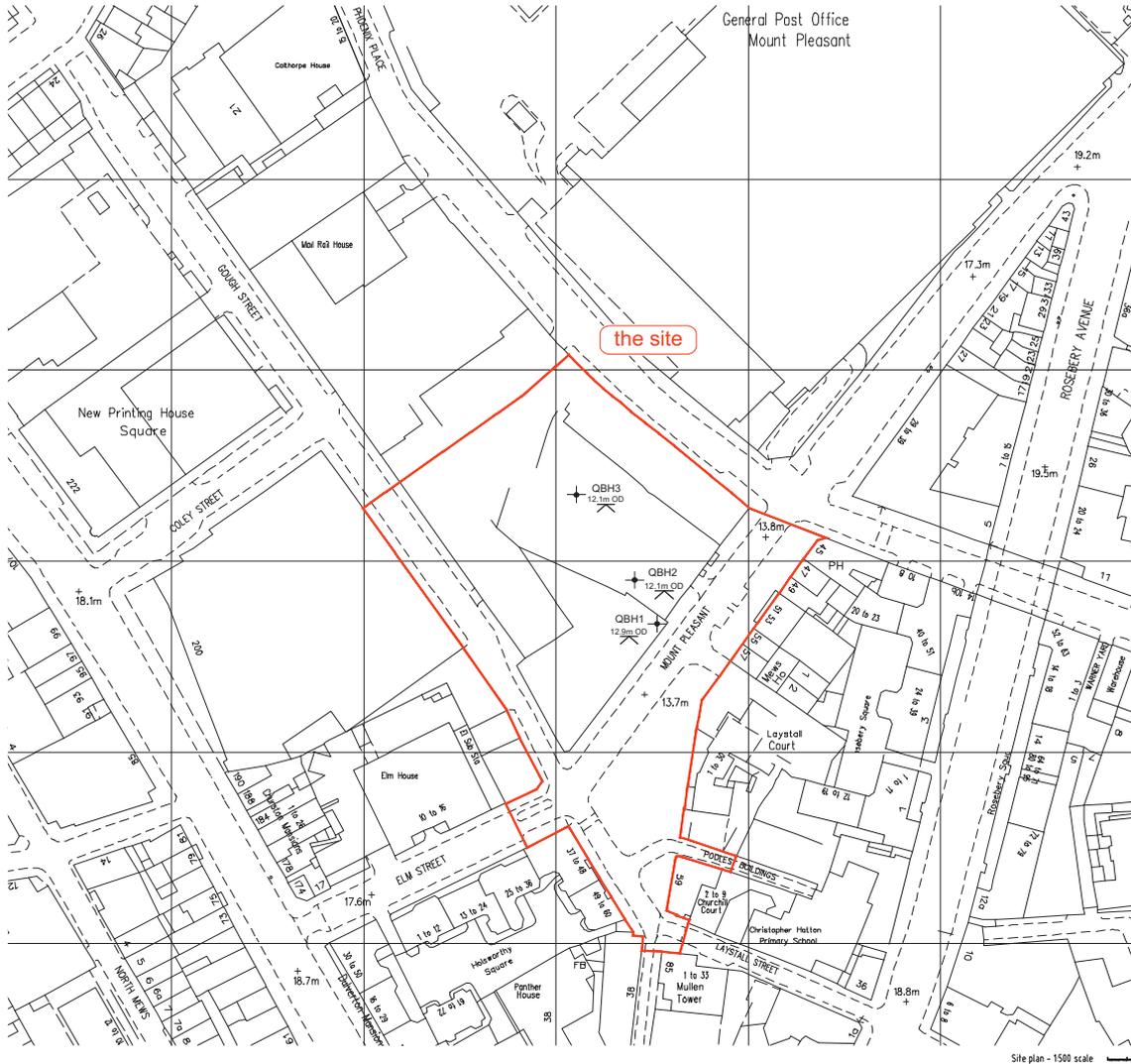
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*Engineering/Architects drawings/documents*

Geotechnical works: Mount Pleasant, London, Environmental Assessment Chapter 12: Archaeology – Addendum, May 2014, Waterman Energy, Environment & Design Limited. Calfordseaden drawings, 2015.



KEY

- borehole approximate locations
- site outline

Fig 1 Site location and existing plan with approximate borehole locations (Ref K15-0248-ASK100, Rev B, 11.05.2015, calfordseaden)

