



ENGLISH HERITAGE



## The Battersea Channel Project, Nine Elms: *exploration of the buried prehistoric landscape*

**Action:** Seek endorsement of this over-arching Brief from Lambeth and Wandsworth Borough Council's Planning Departments.

### Over-arching Archaeological/Geoarchaeological Brief



Figure 1: Some of the current developments within the planning process.  
Red line denotes Battersea Channel Project area.

## **1** Introduction

1.1 Over the past few years there has been a series of sites for re-development which has acted as the catalyst for change in east Battersea and Nine Elms. A key factor was the decision by the United States government to relocate their embassy to Nine Elms, giving viability to the long—discussed Northern Line extension.

1.2 The Nine Elms Vauxhall Partnership produced an *Opportunity Area Planning Framework* for Vauxhall Nine Elms Battersea. The 250ha Opportunity Area supported by TfL, Lambeth and Wandsworth Borough Councils plus English Heritage was approved by the GLA in 2012. The **Battersea Channel Project** 200ha area overlaps with c79% of this Opportunity Area. The cluster of new developments provides an opportunity to undertake geoarchaeological modelling on a landscape scale and so relate the archaeological evidence to its context.

## 2 Background

2.1 Historically, the course of the River Thames has shifted significantly since it was thrust into the modern Thames Valley as a result of glacial activity in north London nearly half a million years ago. At times over this long history, the course has shifted and indeed cut and re-cut a series of channels along its course.

2.2 Geoarchaeological projects in the Thames Valley such as the work on the Jubilee Line Extension and the A13 development have shown that archaeological remains are extensively associated with the valley side, but also the sand islands which formed part of the river channel system. These are particularly associated with prehistoric remains of hunter gatherer camps, early farming settlements and exploitation of the rich wetland environment. These locations are also associated with some of the richest remains to come from the London Thames, such as the Iron Age Shield found in the Thames near Chelsea Bridge in 1857. (*The Battersea Shield* (I M Stead, The British Museum Press, 1985)

2.3 Detailed modelling of landform and environmental conditions provides great opportunities to understand how London has developed, but particularly, where archaeological remains are likely to survive, both as a result of good preservation and also by having been attractive to humans in the first place.

2.4 The Battersea channel is a preserved relic feature, surviving below the streets in a southern arc south of the gravel high on an area that includes Battersea Park, from Plantation Wharf on the west, to Elm Quay in the east (see Figure 3). The channel has been observed and studied over the last 20 years, but fieldwork in 2006 provided baseline interpretation which can now be built upon. (see *The Battersea Channel: a former course of the River Thames?*, Mike Morley with contributions by AOC Archaeology Group and MoLA, *London Archaeologist* 12 (7), 175-181)

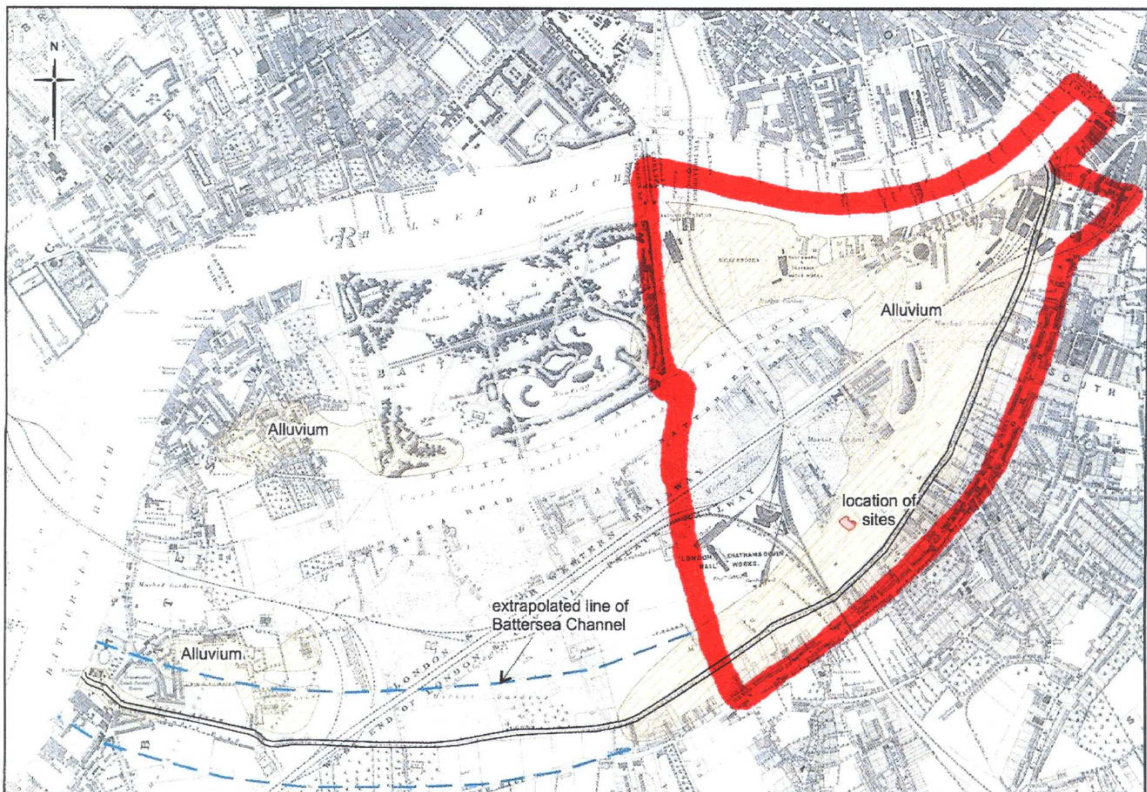


Figure 2: Extract from Stanford's 1862 map showing sewer route with dashed blue line and red hatched yellow shading overlay to denote the possible course of the Battersea Channel and in faint red outline the location of the Stewart Road site investigated in 2006. Thick red line denotes Project area.

2.5 Recent archaeological work has shown that the eyots within the channel as well as its margin contains high potential for possible Mesolithic, Neolithic and Iron Age cultural evidence as well as important environmental and tidal river data.

### **3 Project Aims**

3.1 Individual archaeological projects aim to create an understanding of the environment of the land involved through field evaluation, excavation and reporting. Often this is too small to make particularly meaningful insights into the past; both an end in itself, but more specifically, to identify areas of higher potential for the survival of archaeological remains within a development area that can then be targeted following the evaluation stage of a project to mitigate the impact of development.

3.2 In the current situation within the Battersea/Nine Elms area, an unparalleled opportunity to look at a large tranche of land has arisen, to bring together the archaeological aspects of the individual developments. This requires co-operation between the archaeological organisations contracted to the developments, and their clients. A clear brief is therefore required to avoid the opportunity being missed.

3.3 A preliminary list can be generated of some of the current developments that would be of interest to the Battersea Channel, Nine Elms Project. Other sites will be added over time:

- **Battersea Crest** - *Sleaford Street management Company & Dairy Crest*
- **Battersea Gardens (Gasholder site)** – *St James Group Ltd*
- **Battersea Park East** – *Taylor Wimpey Central London & Addition Land*
- **Battersea Power Station** – *BPS Development Company*
- **Chelsea Bridge Wharf** – *St James Group Ltd*
- **Christie's Site, 40-42 Ponton Road** - *Bellway*
- **Embassy Gardens** – *Ballymore Group*
- **Market Towers, 1 Nine Elms Lane** – *Wanda One (UK) Ltd*
- **New Bondway** – *McLaren Group*
- **New Covent Garden Market** – *CGM Authority / VINCI & St Modwen (VSM)*
- **Nine Elms Parkside** – *Royal Mail Group*
- **Nine Elms Point** – *Sainsbury Supermarket Ltd & Barrat London*
- **Nine Elms Vista (Marco Polo House)** – *Berkeley Group*
- **Northern Line Extension** – *Transport for London*
- **U.S. Embassy** – *U.S. Government*
- **Vauxhall Square** – *Vauxhall Cross Ltd (CLS Holdings plc)*

## **4 Requirements**

### Stage 1: June-July 2014

4.1 A detailed research design and method statement for geoarchaeological work will need to be drawn up by the archaeological practices currently engaged with the above listed sites and approved by English Heritage and the local planning authorities. This should include:

- Research questions
- Background research of historic borehole and archaeological data
- Fieldwork techniques of sampling and logging
- Software and approach to modelling geoarchaeological and geotechnical data derived from fieldwork and obtained from other sources such as the British Geological Survey
- Types of palaeoecological study to be used
- Radiocarbon and other forms of scientific dating to be used, and how samples will be obtained, processed and laboratories to be used
- Presentation of results, reporting, dissemination and archiving.

4.2 This method statement will need to be signed up to by all archaeological practices involved in the developments identified as forming part of this project.

4.3 The research design and method statement should be submitted for approval by 1 August 2014

4.4 The above will be reviewed at an annual meeting of the Project practices.

### Stage 2: August 2014 – August 2017

4.5 Over the following three years the scope of the project will be continuously reviewed as to which development sites have been advanced and therefore have potential to contribute data.

### Stage 3: August 2017- March 2018

4.6 A stock take will need to be conducted to identify the sites that are to be included.

4.7 A stock take will need to be conducted to identify the geoarch/geotech material from the wider area within the study zone to provide a context for the specific site works.

4.8 The form and scope of the anticipated publication will be determined at the start of this stage.

4.9 The above will be reviewed at a closed seminar of those Practices involved.

## **5 Resources**

### **Stage 1: desk-based geoarchaeological deposit model & detailed research design**

5.1 A desk-based geoarchaeological deposit model for the project area will need to be developed. A team of geoarchaeological specialists will assemble all available historic stratigraphic data, from geoarchaeological, archaeological and geotechnical sources, and agree upon the methodology for producing 2D and 3D models of the sub-surface architecture of the Holocene floodplain deposits.

5.2 The outcomes of the deposit modelling exercise will be as follows:

- The production of a predictive tool that can be used by the English Heritage Archaeology Advisor and archaeological/geoarchaeological consultants/practices in advance of individual site developments
- The development of a set of procedures for deposit modelling that will be used by individual geoarchaeological teams throughout the course of the project
- The preliminary identification of landscape features with potential for the recovery of significant archaeological/geoarchaeological remains (e.g. gravel eyots and former channels)
- The identification of areas in which more stratigraphic data is required to inform the deposit model.

5.3 The resultant models and raw dataset will be circulated to all interested parties for use throughout the project. The model will be updated on a 1 year cycle.

5.4 The deposit model will form a fundamental component of the Battersea Channel detailed research design, together with consideration of former palaeoenvironmental investigations and data held on the English Heritage Historic Environment Record for Greater London. The detailed research design is to be written by a team of archaeologists and geoarchaeologists, and will include:

- research questions for the project area as a whole, and
- the techniques/approach that will be taken on all archaeological and geoarchaeological / palaeoenvironmental investigations throughout the course of the project, thus ensuring parity between individual sites and archaeological practices.

### **Stage 2: archaeological & geoarchaeological/palaeoenvironmental investigations**

5.5 Archaeological and geoarchaeological/palaeoenvironmental investigations at each site will proceed following standard guidelines. However, as outlined above, the approach taken for each of these stages will be agreed during Stage 1 to maintain parity between sites. Thus, any individual development project will consist of one or more of the following stages:

- desk-based assessment
- project design
- fieldwork
- assessment
- analysis
- archiving.

5.6 An annual seminar held by English Heritage will occur 6 months following the date of the annual cycle to update the project wide deposit model as stated in paragraph 5.3. The seminar will enable the findings from each site to be shared between archaeological practices, and for the refined project strategy to evolve.

### Stage 3: publication

5.7 The contents/type of publication will be under consideration from the outset of the project. It is anticipated that the publication will be in the form of a monograph / book and that this will contain chapters on findings from selected individual sites, but primarily on themes specific to the project. At this stage, it is not possible to state exactly what these 'specific themes' will be, but sections on the following would be anticipated:

- landscape
- vegetation
- hydrological, and
- cultural history, plus
- consideration of the original research questions.

5.8 The format and content of the publication will be reviewed throughout the course of the project, and as the work on individual sites is completed. The regular seminars outlined in Stage 2 will also enable the project strategy to evolve and for discussion of how the drafting and editing of individual chapters will be divided between archaeological practices.

## **6 Planning Condition**

6.1 For the Battersea Channel Project to work it is essential that it works at the individual development site level and without adding time to the development programme or requiring unreasonable demands upon resources. The key to the project success will be for the potential of a site to be considered at the earliest opportunity as well as being fully considered at the post-site work assessment stage.

6.2 *In respect of existing planning permissions with condition*, when the post-excavation assessment is produced, it will need to include consideration as to what work needs to be undertaken to complete all remaining/outstanding study and research including the updating of the deposit model as well as the vehicle for publication. It will therefore be a requirement that the Battersea Channel Project publication is identified. At that point, resources required to complete the work can be identified and agreed. This will mean that the usual publication vehicles would not also be required for the material relevant to the Project.

6.3 It is therefore imperative for great care to be taken when considering the possible satisfying of conditions, with most material will be submitted as documentation towards satisfying the planning condition.

6.4 *In respect of planning permissions yet to occur*, with the assumption that a desk-based assessment will include a consideration of all available geotechnical survey data for the site, and that it has been submitted as part of the planning application, the following condition wording is recommended if no further pre-determination work/consideration is recommended:

Condition A) No development other than demolition to existing ground level shall take place until the applicant (or their heirs and successors in title) has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological evaluation site work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority in writing and a report on that evaluation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing.

B) Under Part A, the applicant (or their heirs and successors in title) shall implement a programme of archaeological investigation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation.

C) Under Part A, the applicant (or their heirs and successors in title) shall implement a programme of archaeological mitigation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation.

D) The site investigation and post-investigation assessment will be completed prior to one year post the completion date of the development as defined by the borough building regulation officer, in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under Part (A), and the provision for analysis, publication via the **Battersea Channel Project** report and dissemination of the non-Battersea Channel Project archaeological results and archive deposition has been secured.

Informative A) Written schemes of investigation will need to be prepared and implemented by a suitably qualified archaeological practice in accordance with English Heritage Greater London Archaeology guidelines. The document must be approved by the planning authority before any on-site development related activity occurs.

B-C) It is anticipated that a series of stages of archaeological site work will be required with the former informing the nature and scope of the latter.

D) The **Battersea Channel Project** is defined by the English Heritage over-arching brief supported 10 June 2014.

6.5 Only Section D of the archaeology condition will remain after the completion of the archaeological site work stages.

6.6 Advice will be submitted by the English Heritage Archaeology Advisor as to which sites within the Project zone require this specific condition wording through the normal process of planning application consultation and in line with National Planning Policy Framework practice guide.

6.7 The Project zone of Battersea/Nine Elms from which planning applications will be considered for inclusion can be seen from Figure 3.

## **7 Project Board**

7.1 It is recommended that a Project Board is established to oversee the effective progress of the project.

7.2 The Project Board should consist of representatives of the London Boroughs of Lambeth and Wandsworth, and from English Heritage: the Greater London Archaeological Advisor to those boroughs, Science Advisor and Inspector of Ancient Monuments.

7.3 The Project Board should meet at least once each year of the project.

**End Note: During the life of the project, 'English Heritage' will change to 'Historic England'**

Figure 3:

The whole of the map extract is **The Battersea Channel Project** area.  
The Lambeth / Wandsworth borough boundary is denoted by the red line.



### ***BCP: Nine Elms***



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