

Old Dock Timbers, Liverpool

Condition Survey Report

December 2006



Oxford Archaeology North



GROSVENOR

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
1. OLD DOCK BRACING TIMBERS.....	3
1.1 Timber Storage and Condition	3
1.2 Timber Groups	3
2. RECOMMENDATIONS	6
2.1 Timber Selection for Conservation.....	6
PLATES.....	8
FIGURES	9

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The report was compiled by Vix Hughes, Andy Lane, Caroline Raynor and the drawings were by Christina Robinson. Jamie Quartermaine edited the report.

1. OLD DOCK BRACING TIMBERS

1.1 Timber Storage and Condition

- 1.1.1 Timbers recovered from Trench 117 (2004), the works at north-east corner of the Old Dock (2004), Trench 135 (Jan 2005) and Site 16i (July-Aug 2006) are now stored within the area that is referred to as Site 17, where Williamson's grave is located. The site is in use as a lay down area and a car park, off Paradise Street, south of the new bus station (LA6a). The majority of the timbers were moved from the rear of the GWR Museums building in Liverpool using mechanical means on 4th September 2006. During the transfer of the timbers they were checked to determine their current state and condition.
- 1.1.2 On the 14 Dec 2006 the timbers were checked again to determine their level of preservation, the results are set out below. The timbers have suffered an increase in deterioration due to the adverse weather conditions and the external nature of the storage area. This has been compounded by rodents tearing the plastic sheeting used to protect the timbers combined with the recent strong winds and exposing some of them to the elements. However the level of deterioration from September to December 2006 has been relatively moderate due to the damp conditions, reducing the drying out of the wood. The damp conditions have lead to an increase in the bark rotting and the infestation of insects which are present in the majority of the timbers. Some damage to the timbers was observed from the initial move from the museum and subsequent moving within the compound.
- 1.1.3 The timbers are part of a bracing support for the wall, and their typical configuration is shown in Plate 1, and comprise a Horizontal Brace that extends out from the wall, and then passes between two Vertical Props and is secured by a horizontal Cross Joint Brace. The condition and function of all of the timbers is defined below in Table 1.

Object Number	Timber function	State of Timber (Sept 2006)	State of Timber (Dec 2006)	Salvageable
9576	Cross joint / T-halving	Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
9578	Cross joint/ T-halving	Fair	Fair – Poor	✗
9598	Vertical prop	Poor	Poor	✗
9612	?	Poor	Poor	✗
9613	Cross joint /T - halving	Fair	Fair – Poor	✓
9614	Cross joint / T-halving?	Poor	Poor	✗
9628	Vertical prop	Poor	Poor	✗

9629	Vertical prop	Poor	Poor	✗
9630	Vertical prop?	Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
9631	Part of horizontal brace?	Poor	Poor	✗
9632	Vertical prop	Fair	Fair – Poor (Damaged)	✗
9648	Vertical prop	Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
9649	Vertical prop	Poor	Poor	✗
9650	Part of cross joint/ T-halving	Poor	Poor	✗
9651	Part of cross joint/ T-halving	Poor	Poor	✗
9752	Cross joint / brace?	Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
9753	Vertical prop	Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
9754	Vertical prop	Fair	Fair	✓
9755	Vertical prop	Poor	Poor	✗
9878	?		Fair – Poor	✓
9986	Elm drain	Poor	Poor	✗
10700	Vertical prop	Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10701	Elm drain?	Poor	Poor	✗
10704	Vertical prop	Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10705	Vertical prop	Poor	Poor	✗
10706	Cross joint / T-halving	Poor	Poor	✗
10707	Vertical prop	Poor	Poor	✗
10708	Cross joint/brace?	Poor	Fair	✓
10709	Horizontal brace	Poor	Poor	✗
10710	Vertical prop	Poor	Poor	✗
10711	Cross joint/ brace	Fair	Fair	✓
10712	Cross joint/ brace	Poor	Poor	✗
10713	Cross joint/ brace	Fair	Fair	✓
10714	Vertical prop	Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10715	Vertical prop	Poor	Poor	✗
10716	Horizontal brace	Poor	Poor	✗
10750	?	Extreme mould	Very Poor	✗
10751	Horizontal brace	Poor	Very Poor	✗
10752	Cross joint / brace	Poor	Poor (Damaged)	✗
10761	Drain	Poor	Poor	✗
10762	Vertical prop	Poor	Poor	✗
10763	Horizontal brace	Poor	Poor	✗
10783	Part of vertical prop	Poor	Poor	✗
Site 16i				
10819	Horizontal brace	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10820	Vertical prop	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10821	Vertical prop	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10822	Cross joint /brace	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10823	Cross joint/ brace?	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10824	Cross joint/ brace	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10825	Part of cross joint / T-halving?	Fair - Poor	Poor	✗
10826	?	Fair - Poor	Poor	✗

10827	Horizontal brace	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10828	Cross joint/ brace	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10829	Vertical prop?	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10830	Vertical prop	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10831	Vertical prop	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10832	Vertical prop	Fair - Poor	Poor	✗
10833	Horizontal brace?	Fair - Poor	Poor	✗
10834	Vertical prop	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10838			Fair – Poor	✓
10923		Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10927	Cross joint/ brace	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10928	Horizontal brace		Fair – Poor	✓
10929	Vertical prop	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10930	Horizontal brace	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10931	Horizontal brace	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10932	Cross joint./ brace	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10933	Vertical prop	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10934	Vertical prop	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10935	Cross joint/ brace	Fair - Poor	Fair – Poor	✓
10936	Horizontal brace			
10937	Cross joint / brace		Fair	✓
10938	Vertical prop		Fair	✓
10939	Vertical prop		Fair	✓
10965	Vertical prop		Fair	✓
10966	Cross joint/ brace		Fair	✓
10967	Cross joint /brace?		Fair – Poor	✓
10969	Vertical prop		Poor	✗
10970	Vertical prop		Poor	✗
10971	Vertical prop		Poor	✗

Poor = timbers are dried, surfaces are extremely cracked, fragments are flaking off, there may be visible mould

Fair = timbers retain some level of moisture, some surface drying evident,

Good = timbers retain full moisture level, show no signs of biological contamination, surfaces are reasonable, overall small level of deterioration

Excellent = no visible signs of any change in state since removed from the ground

✓ = timber in a salvageable condition

✗ = timber not suitable for preservation

Table 1: Timber Condition

1.2 Timber Groups

- 1.2.1 If at all possible it would be preferred that any timbers conserved are part of a single group comprising a Horizontal Brace, a Cross Joint Brace and one or two Vertical Props. The groups are labelled A to R, and their component timbers are defined in Table 2.

Timber Group	Timbers within group	Context	Location
A	9576, 9598, 9578	1489	Area B
B	9612, 9613, 9614	1489	Area B
C	9628, 9629, 9630, 9631, 9632	1489	Area B
D	9648, 9649, 9650, 9651, 9652	1489	Area B
E	9753, 9752, 9754, 9755	1489	Tr117
F	9986	1407	Area C
G	10704, 10705, 10700, 10707, 10708, 10709a, 10709b, 10710	679	TrFx
H	10711, 10712, 10713, 10714, 10715, 10716, 10750	2055	Tr H
I	10751, 10752	2059	TrFx
J	10761, 10762, 10763	2060./2099	TrJ/J2
K	10967, 10968, 10969, 10970, 10971	2670	16i
L	10936, 10937, 109038, 10939	2665/2666	16i
M	10819, 10820, 10821, 10822	2617	16i
N	10825, 10826	2617	16i
O	10829, 10830, 10831	?	16i
P	10927, 10928, 10929	2664	16i
Q	10930	2663	16i
R	10931, 10932, 10933, 10934	2659	16i

Table 2: Timber Groups

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Timber Selection for Conservation

- 2.1.1 In general it is recommended that the timbers recovered from the later excavations on Site 16i be preserved, and this comprises timbers 10923 onwards (with the exception of 10969-70) along with some of the earlier timbers illustrated in the photographs below which appear to be in a stable state.
- 2.1.2 A complete non complex 'set' of timbers is made up of three components, the main horizontal brace a cross joint/ brace and two vertical props or stakes. The best surviving examples of the main Horizontal Brace timbers were 9576, 10830 and 10928. The best Cross Brace timbers were 10708, 10711 and 10713 being of

a Fair to Fair-Poor category and timbers 10700, 10714, 10821 and 10933 were the best surviving Vertical Props.

- 2.1.3 The best surviving timbers do not conveniently correspond to a single group, and it is therefore necessary to select the best examples of each timber type from different groups, which could then be placed together as a representative sample. It is recommended that this sample comprise Horizontal brace 10928, Vertical props 10700 and 10714 as well as cross brace 10713 which is of particular interest due to its iron fixings. All but one of these timbers were retrieved from Site 16i. Timbers 10928, 10714 and 10713 were all retrieved from the north of the dock wall, with timber 10700 coming from TrFX on the east side of the dock wall. The relative measurements of the timber are all reasonably close and therefore are a good approximation of the original groups excavated to date, and are relatively compatible

Plates

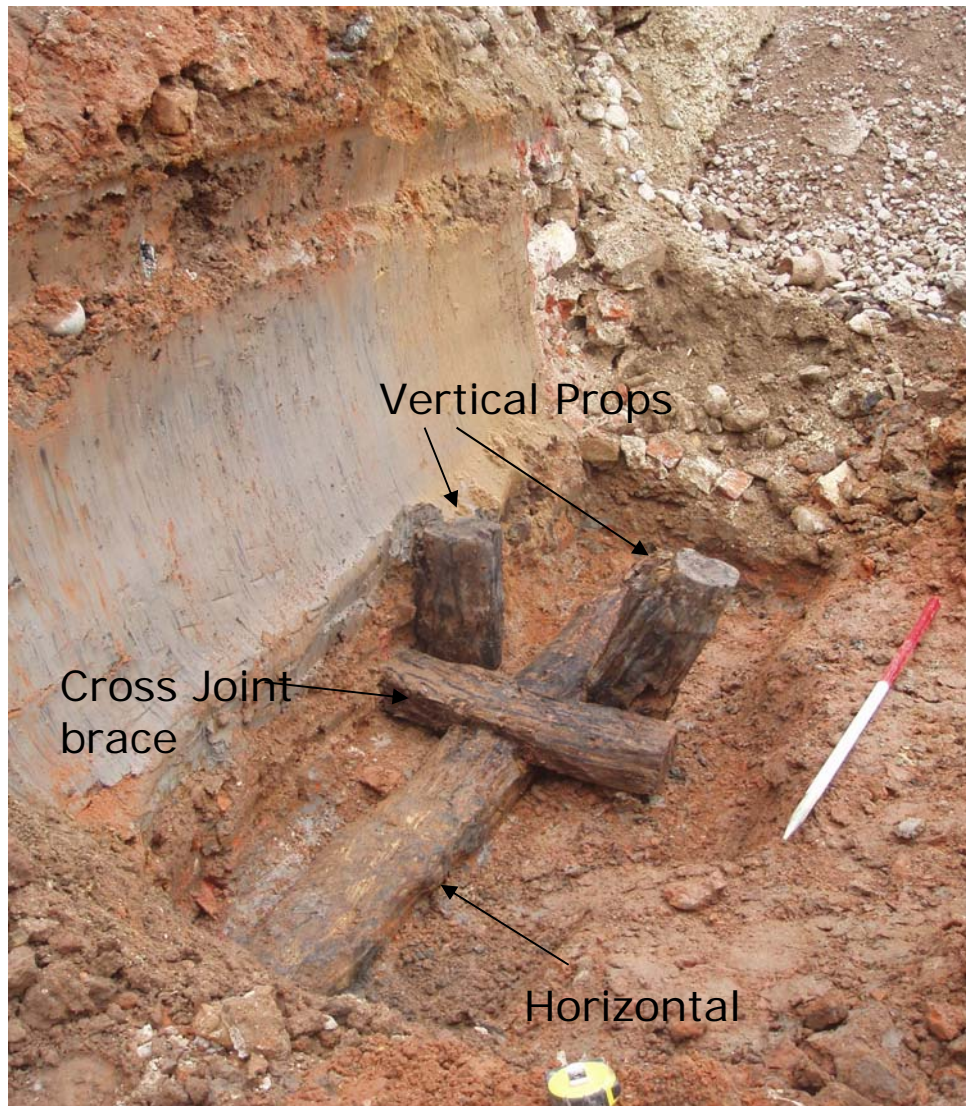


Plate 1: Typical arrangement of wall bracing timbers



Plate 2: Timbers in their current storage at Site 17 (Dec 2006)

Timbers in Poor Condition



Plate 3: Timber 9649 in poor condition



Plate 4: Timber 10709 affected by severe fungal growth



Plate 5: Timber 10710 in poor condition



Plate 6: Timber 10716 in poor condition



Plate 7: Timber 10751 in a very poor condition



Plate 8: Timber 10752 in poor condition and damaged



Plate 9: Timber 10833 in very poor condition



Plate 10: Timber 10969 in poor (cracked) condition

Salvageable Timbers



Plate 11: Timber 9576 in a Fair-Poor condition



Plate 12: Timber 9648 in a Fair-Poor condition



Plate 13: Timber 9878 in a Fair-Poor condition



Plate 14: Timber 10700 in a Fair-Poor condition



Plate 15: Timber 10708 in a Fair condition



Plate 16: Timber 10711 in a Fair condition



Plate 17: Timber 10713 in a Fair condition



Plate 18: Timber 10714 in a Fair-Poor condition



Plate 19: Timber 10821 in a Fair-Poor condition



Plate 20: Timber 10830 in a Fair-Poor condition



Plate 21: Timber 10927 in a Fair-Poor condition



Plate 22: Timber 10928 in a Fair-Poor condition



Plate 23: Timber 10933 in a Fair-Poor condition



Plate 24: Timber 10934 in a Fair-Poor condition

Figures

Figure 1 Location of Old Dock Timbers

