Using a project design, preferably from a completed project with which you have had direct involvement, critically assess the extent to which the design successfully delivered a contextualised research design, appropriate methodology, effective project management and communication within and beyond the project team, and a suitable outcome in terms of publication and archive.

A project, being defined as a "temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result," (Project Management Institute 2012, 8) within the world of archaeology refers to the realisation of archaeological research. Temporary projects are the main, if not the only, work a commercial unit will undertake due to the nature of developer-funded archaeology as a result of PPG16 and NPPF which introduced and subsequently entrenched the 'polluter pays' policy in regards to heritage and development (HM Government 1990, 2012). This essay seeks to evaluate the success of a particular project regarding the process of conducting the project and the delivery of a final product. The project chosen for this discussion is a site located in London at 48 Church Street, West Ham and was excavated by L-P: Archaeology in early 2008 (Dufton and Williams 2009, 8); this project was managed using MAP2 (Dufton and Williams 2009, para.1.9).

In regards to project design the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) provides a good summary of existing archaeological and historical knowledge, however this summary is based entirely on what was written in the Desk-Based Assessment (Hunt 2008, 7) and no further research or fact-checking was undertaken. Although this would generally be considered an inadequate response the DBA was conducted by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) who, at the very least in this specific instance, are diligent in their approach to archaeological research. They consulted a variety of sources including the Greater London Sites and Monuments Record (SMR; now the Greater London Historic Environment Record – GLHER), Newham Archive, and the British Library alongside others for relevant documentary evidence. Although presently Local Planning Authorities are required to "maintain or have access to a historic environment record" (HM Government 2021, para.192), this was not the case

when both the pre-application archaeological research and the subsequent fieldwork was carried out. At the time this project was carried out the transformation from SMR to HER's had begun, however it was still in its early phases (Gilman 2004, 14) and in London the HER did not yet exist and the SMR was responsible solely for the mapping and cataloguing of known archaeological sites and find spots, and statutorily listed buildings (English Heritage 1999) meaning that non-designated heritage assets, namely buildings, or other such unknown or unreported archaeological assets or events may not have been identified. Due to this any archaeological background for the site is limited by what has been officially recorded and may not be reflective of the true archaeological potential of the site. However, as MOLA had almost a monopoly over archaeological contracts within the Greater London Area they have a good understanding of archaeology and archaeological investigative work within the area and have used their previous work around this site to inform their assessment of archaeological potential within their DBA (MOLAS 2006, para.2.1.3). Overall, the WSI included an adequate summary of the known archaeology in the surrounding area and also the likelihood of archaeology being present within the site boundary putting the project design into a research context.

In line with the recommendations set forth in MAP2 (Andrews 1991, para.4.8), the WSI included the identification of research questions that cover a broad range of periods and themes which, furthermore, included revised aims and objectives from the evaluation of the site and also included several aspects highlighted in the Research Framework for Archaeology London (Hunt 2008, para.6.1). The research framework sets out a series of priorities for archaeological research conducted in the Greater London Area, separated by period and overarching theme (Nixon *et al.* (Eds) 2002, 8). Generally, it appears that the project design has identified relevant aims and objectives for the project, several of which are directly correlated with those set out within the research framework; one such aim promoted as a Medieval priority, was targeted at visualising what London (and the surrounding area which would later become London) would have looked like to the inhabitants and visitors (Hunt 2008, para.6.5.7; Nixon *et al.* (Eds) 2002, 59). Although the research design has identified several questions, many of these seem overambitious for a commercial unit, and do appear to go above the original scope of the project. One such example is "Studying

rural housing before 1400 and the impact of the Black Death" (Hunt 2008, para.6.5.8; Nixon *et al.* (Eds) 2002, 63). In order to fully answer this question a London-wide research project would have been needed to be carried out, and while it is true that this site could have contributed to answering this question, beyond an assessment and analysis of the evidence for housing on this site in particular, the client would not have wanted to fund that research as it outside of the scope of the project. Overall, the WSI set out both clear and specific aims and objectives based on the known archaeology of the site and surrounding area as well as what had been deemed an archaeological priority for London within the research framework and provided a contextualised research design; although other aims and objectives could have been included, some of those that had been included were extensive and overambitious for the scope of the project and would have been more suited to a London-wide research project rather than a site-specific one.

In terms of methodology, the project design states that an open area excavation would be carried out with all features being investigated and recorded, with all finds being collected including unstratified finds from spoil heaps. This methodology includes both written and digital recording of archaeological features. The chosen methodology is appropriate for the research questions stated in the research design for several reasons. The first is that it enables the features to be fully exposed (within the confines of the site boundary) and recorded in plan in order to further inform the excavation strategy. Recording the features in plan, whether pre-excavation or post-excavation, also contributes to some of the aims in the research design, namely those regarding the layout, nature, character and distribution of medieval and post-medieval structures and related features (Hunt 2008, sec.6). For the excavation and recording of archaeological features and the subsequent assessment and analysis of the finds collected, the methodology is appropriate for achieving the other aims and objectives set out in the project design. Overall, the methodology as set out in the WSI has been appropriately selected to achieve the research questions.

The WSI has provided a reasonable level of mitigation regarding potential issues with the implementation of the proposed excavation strategy. One such example of

this is that the archaeology was presumed to be deeper than 1.95m meaning that in order to excavate the archaeology safely a 2m strip surrounding the site was left out of the excavation area so that the area could be stepped (Hunt 2008, para.7.9-7.10). In addition to this, paragraph 7.10 (Hunt 2008) states that should it be revealed that significant archaeology continues into this 2m barrier, a meeting will be called to discuss options regarding excavating this barrier. While this was proved to not be necessary it was a possibility, and as such this clause in the WSI implemented the mechanism as to how this decision could have been carried out if required. On the other hand, the WSI sets out the three distinct areas of excavation as an absolute (Hunt 2008, sec.5), which while this is usually the case as the area has to be approved by the planning archaeologist, it was not the case for this project; the WSI left no mechanism as to how to go about changing this; though communications between the project manager and the client appear to suggest that the decision to change the areas of excavation in order to facilitate continuous access of plant machinery were left to the archaeological unit and did not involve English Heritage (acting on behalf of GLAAS) nor the client (Dufton 2008b). On the whole, the WSI had certain measures in place to accommodate for any issues or changes in approach, however some things were not accounted for, leading to the archaeologists on site to make a decision regarding the zones being excavated without consulting the client or the planning archaeologist. The WSI made no arrangement for internal or external commitment outside of measures for extenuating circumstances such as those mentioned above. The WSI states that a weekly progress summary will be sent to the client and English Heritage (Hunt 2008, para.13.2) which was followed through for the duration of the fieldwork (Dufton 2008b, 2008a, 2008c, 2008f, 2008d, 2008e) but not for the post-excavation phase, other than budget agreements (Dufton 2008g, 2008k, 2008h). There was also no provision made for communication between team members which is not necessarily poor project management as there was likely an internal communications policy in place it would be good practice to state this in the WSI. Overall, the project design sets out a good approach to project management and communication which the project team successfully carried out.

In terms of dissemination and archiving, the assessment report has been submitted to the client and OASIS; the report provides a clear summary of the results of the excavation alongside the specialist assessments of the artefacts and ecofacts collecting during the excavation, corresponding to the intended content set out in the WSI (Hunt 2008, sec.11.3; Dufton and Williams 2009). While the report lists each of the original research aims and objectives, it merely serves as an indicator that this Site could contribute to answering these research questions should further study take place rather than addressing how the project has answered these questions (Dufton and Williams 2009, sec.19). Regarding project management it can be said that the project has not in fact achieved the goals it set out to do as these questions remained unanswered; though, as mentioned above, this is likely due to several of these questions being overambitious and outside of the cope for a site-specific research design. The finds assessments were carried out by external specialists and they were not sent a copy of the project design nor a list of the research questions (Anderson 2008; Dufton 2008i, 2008j, 2008l; Russ 2008), meaning that irrespective of intent, the specialist assessments could only be a standardised approach and focused primarily on what the object is and when it was made/used rather than an assessment or analysis into how they contribute to the research questions. Overall, it cannot be said that the project answered all of the research questions it set out to answer; the sheer number of questions that the project sought to answer were overambitious and many of them were broad and would involve assessing assemblages from several sites and compiling the data to analyse patterns which would have been beyond the original scope of the project and the client likely would not have been willing to fund this. The Updated Project Design sets out an analysis stage of post-excavation work which would conclude with publication in the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society (LAMAS) journal, however per communications between the project manager and the client most the of the finds analysis was carried out in the assessment phase in an attempt to streamline the analysis and publication stage (Dufton 2008g, 2008k). This article for publication has been submitted and is awaiting approval from the journal editor (Tierney 2022); the timeline for submission for publication was approximately nine months from an approved start date with allowances for specialist availability (Dufton 2009, para.5.2.2). This timeframe has not been kept to, partially due to the resignation of both the Project Manager and the Project Officer and the subsequent

mismanagement of the project; the lengthy time between the UPD being produced and the subsequent publication were not a result of a poor project design but external factors.

In conclusion, the project had been a moderate success. In terms of the original scope for the fieldwork and the subsequent report the project has been a success; the fieldwork was completed on time and the report presented the findings in a clear and concise manner. While the project has been moderately successful there are areas where it has been less successful; in essence the project had been overambitious in the research questions it sought to answer and then could not deliver these answers within the scope of the project. While the project has been submitted to the HER, the report has not been uploaded onto the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) which was not a part of the original scope of the project but is good practice in the current day, nor has the archive been deposited with LAARC which is a clear indication of a complete project. If I were the planning archaeologist for this site, I would be pleased the fieldwork had been completed and the relevant reports submitted to sign off on the conditions for planning permission, though I would not be impressed with the length of time between the fieldwork being completed and the archive being deposited.

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