

Archaeologists Unearth Moscow's Oldest Road

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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"View of 17th-century Moscow" drawing by Apollinary Vasnetsov

Moscow's oldest road, thought to date back to the 12th century, has been unearthed in the city's central Zaryadie district, archaeologists said Wednesday.

The road is believed to have connected the old Kremlin and a wharf on the Moscow River, Leonid Belyayev, a department head from the Russian Academy of Sciences' archaeology institute, told The Moscow Times.

"We were very lucky to have reached the road. The district is full of the city's infrastructure lines and old archaeological excavation sites," Belyayev said.

As it is seen by archaeologists, the road consists of several layers of wooden pavements, he said. So far archaeologists have uncovered most of the 17th-century layer and in some spots have dug deeper to the late 15th century. The deepest layers are thought to date back to the

12th century, given that the Kremlin was established then, said Belyayev.

The road known as Velikaya ("The Large One") is not named on old city plans, Belyayev said, but it is mentioned in city chronicles.

The Zaryadie district, located between the Kitai-Gorod metro station and the Kremlin, is believed to be the oldest part of Moscow. In the 1930s and 1940s most of the district was demolished to clear the ground for a number of Soviet architectural projects, most of which were never completed. In the 1960s the massive Rossiya Hotel was built in the center of the district.

After the demolition of the hotel in 2006, archaeological excavations started, but the future of the district remained unclear until 2012, when a competition to remodel the former Rossiya grounds was won by design firm Diller Scofidio + Renfro, which also designed New York's celebrated High Line park.

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