

**LAND AT ESSEX HALL, 313 BILLET ROAD, LONDON E17**  
**LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST**  
**PHASE 1 DEVELOPMENT (SURE START)**  
**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

April 2005





LAND AT ESSEX HALL, 313 BILLET ROAD, LONDON E17

LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST

PHASE 1 DEVELOPMENT (SURE START)

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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Project 296

### ***Abstract***

*Archaeological evaluation of a site at Essex Hall, 313 Billet Road, London E17, took place in two phases in February and April 2005. The evaluation was carried out as part of the planning process prior to development of a new Sure Start facility.*

*The area has potential for prehistoric to post-medieval remains. Of particular significance is evidence relating to the later 16<sup>th</sup> century and subsequent development of Essex Hall. Part of the Hall survived until the 1930s just to the west of the present site, although much reduced in size: Ordnance Survey plans show that the building faced east, with a wide drive leading towards the present Sinnott Road.*

*Two trial trenches were dug by hand in the northwestern part of the proposed development footprint, and subsequently three trenches excavated by machine to the east of the present building. All five trenches were recorded to the level of natural River Terrace sand and gravel, at a depth of between 0.65m to 1.10m.*

*The southern hand-dug trench revealed a substantial brick foundation, running north-south with a return or junction to the west near the northern limit of excavation. Dating of the brick and of pottery from the underlying soil indicates that this may well form a part of the Elizabethan house, although a later (early to mid 17<sup>th</sup> century) date is also possible. The size of the foundation – over 800mm wide and of similar depth – suggests an external wall, perhaps the eastern face of an original wing.*

*No other structural remains were found. The second hand-dug trench exposed a soil profile dating from the mid 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, overlain by modern imported topsoil. This area evidently represents open land – garden or lawn –outside the historic house, and is recorded as such from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

*The machine-dug trenches produced very few dateable finds, although in two areas the buried soil profile was similar to that described above. In the central trench there was a layer of clean gravel, which is probably part of the drive leading to Essex Hall as recorded on earlier OS plans.*

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*NB. Figures 1, 2 & 20 based on a plan supplied by the LB of Waltham Forest  
Figure 13 based on a Topographical Survey by Laser Surveys, Drawing No. L 2909/1*

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1** This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation at Essex Hall, 313 Billet Road E17 (Fig 1). The site forms a Local Authority Social Services and Day Care Centre, consisting of a one- to three-storey 1970s building with adjacent car parking and access on three sides. The proposed Phase 1 redevelopment is located in the southeastern part of the site and comprises a new Sure Start unit within a footprint of approximately 550 sq. metres (Fig 1).

The evaluation fieldwork was undertaken by Compass Archaeology in two phases, between the 16<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> February and 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> April 2005.

- 1.2** The site has potential for archaeological remains from prehistoric to post-medieval date, and particularly in relation to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and later development of the former Essex Hall. There may also be some evidence for a medieval manor house.
- 1.3** English Heritage has advised that an archaeological evaluation should be undertaken as part of the planning process, prior to the redevelopment of the site.

A *Written Scheme of Investigation* was produced in relation to the Phase 1 (Sure Start) development (*Compass Archaeology*, 20 January 2005). This proposed the two-stage programme as described above: two hand-dug trial trenches within the central courtyard, and a machine-dug evaluation trench (subsequently divided into three parts) within the eastern car park. The following document describes the investigation and results of both stages of evaluation.

## **2. Acknowledgements**

The archaeological evaluation was commissioned by Mr Muhammad Syed on behalf of the London Borough of Waltham Forest. We are also grateful to the staff of Essex Hall for their interest and support during the fieldwork.

David Divers (English Heritage Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service) monitored the project on behalf of the Borough.

Information on the background to the site was provided by the Archive and Local History Library at the Vestry House Museum.

## **3. Background**

### **3.1 Location and topography**

The site is located on fairly level ground at about 20.5m OD, at the top of Higham Hill and overlooking the eastern side of the Lea Valley. It is approximately centred at National Grid Reference TQ 3584 9065.

The British Geological Survey (*North London Sheet 256. Solid & Drift Geology, 1993*) indicates that the site overlies a fairly recent River Terrace Deposit (Taplow Gravel). This in turn seals the much older London Clay, which is exposed on the valley slope to the west of the site.

This is borne out by a recent geotechnical investigation (*Ground Engineering November 2004: Ref. C.9798*). Boreholes revealed between c 0.4m to 2.3m of made ground,

overlying a River Terrace Deposit consisting of gravel with some layering of slightly sandy/gravelly clay. The weathered solid London Clay was recorded at a depth of between 2.3m and 3.5m.

## **3.2 Archaeology and history**

- 3.2.1** The site has some potential for prehistoric remains. Evidence of mainly Mesolithic to later prehistoric date is documented along the line of the Lea Valley and on the adjacent higher ground: past finds include some *in-situ* evidence as well as a number of discrete artefacts recovered during works on the river and reservoirs.

There is little evidence for Roman to earlier medieval activity in proximity to the site, and the potential for finds is consequently slight.

- 3.2.2** A substantial house, known as Higham Hall and latterly as Essex Hall, was built on the site during the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The exact date of construction is uncertain – according to the earliest source consulted (anon. *History of Essex, 1771*) at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign (*c* 1560), but some later references give the year 1596. It is recorded that this house replaced an earlier structure known as *Benstedes*, on the same site or nearby, and that it remained the manor house of Higham Benstead until the 1760s.

The Elizabethan house underwent a series of alterations, in the 1680s, possibly in the 1730s and during its use as a school in the earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century. By 1930 the surviving structure was in poor repair and was finally demolished in 1933/4.

The location of the later Essex Hall is recorded on several 19<sup>th</sup> and earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century surveys, and has been superimposed onto the present-day plan (Fig 2). Successive Ordnance Survey maps as well as the earlier *Plan of the Parish of Walthamstow* of 1822 shows the same general layout for the main house.

However, the 1771 *History of Essex* describes a building with nearly 100 feet of frontage and 76 feet deep, which is much larger than the house shown on Figure 2 (about 54 feet by 45 feet). Evidently a large part of the structure had been lost by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, although the actual date is uncertain – the 1771 account also describes three storeys, but it is recorded elsewhere that the upper storey was removed in the 1680s.

The recent geotechnical investigation also suggested that the house originally extended into the area of the present central courtyard: three hand-augered boreholes recorded made ground onto brickwork at depths of between 1.15m and 1.40m, with investigation terminated at this level.

- 3.2.3** Later Ordnance Survey maps show that Billet Road was laid out at about the same time as demolition of the old house (*c* 1934), so more or less establishing the present site boundary. The site itself appears to have remained vacant until the early 1950s, when fourteen detached houses (possibly prefabs) were constructed. These had disappeared by 1968 and the site appears to have remained vacant until the present building was constructed, probably by 1978.



## **4. Aims and objectives of the evaluation**

### **4.1 Archaeology and planning**

The proposed Phase 1 development envisages construction of a new two-storey Sure Start unit, within a footprint of approximately 550 sq. metres in the southeastern part of the site (Fig 1). Currently this area is partly open car park, and partly occupied by a single-storey building including offices and a kitchen. At the northeastern end of this structure there is also a basement boiler room.

An archaeological evaluation was recommended by English Heritage as part of the planning process, to take place before the commencement of development.

### **4.2 The archaeological brief**

The accepted brief for archaeological evaluation is to determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance, and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed redevelopment (English Heritage, *Model Brief for an Archaeological Evaluation*). This will provide a basis on which decisions can be taken as to the need for any further archaeological action (eg, preservation *in situ* or further archaeological investigation).

The general methodology is set out in DOE Planning Policy Guidance 'Archaeology and Planning' No.16, November 1990 (PPG16).

### **4.3 Archaeological research questions**

The evaluation presented an opportunity to address the following research questions, defined in the preliminary Written Scheme:

- Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, overlying or cut into the natural Terrace gravel? How does this relate to other finds made in the area, which cover a range of dates through to later prehistoric?
- Is there any evidence for later (Roman to earlier post-medieval) activity, and can the nature of this be defined? In particular, is there any evidence for development of the site preceding the documented 16<sup>th</sup> century construction of Essex Hall?
- What evidence is there for post-medieval activity or land use, and can this be meaningfully related to Essex Hall? Does this include any evidence for the much larger Elizabethan House that is recorded in the 18<sup>th</sup> century?

## 5. Evaluation methodology

5.1 Prior to the fieldwork a *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Field Evaluation* was produced (CA, 20 January 2005). The evaluation was carried out in accordance with English Heritage guidelines (in particular, *Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork*, 1998) and those of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (*Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluations*).

5.2 The evaluation comprised a total of five trial trenches, all located within the area of proposed development as shown on Figure 1:

- Two hand-dug trenches in the existing central courtyard, on an approximate east-west alignment just over 5m apart. Both trenches were set out to measurements of 2.0m by 1.2m in plan, although Trench 2 was extended to 2.45m in response to the findings that were made during the evaluation.
- Three machine-dug trenches in the car park on the eastern side of the present building, each set out to a width of 2m and respectively 2m, 3m and 4m in length.

The trenches were numbered consecutively from 1 to 5, the hand-dug trenches (1 & 2) forming the first phase of evaluation and the machine trenches following some two months later.

5.3 Following initial clearance and excavation the exposed surfaces and sections were investigated by the on-site archaeologists, and finds dating evidence recovered. Deposits and features were recorded on *pro forma* context sheets [nos. 1-19] and by scaled plans and sections, supplemented by 35mm photography.

Levels taken during the evaluation were derived from an OSBM located on the northwest corner of No. 12 Sinnott Road, value 21.35m OD. Trial trenches 1 and 2 were located on the site plan that forms the basis for Figures 1 and 2, and trenches 3-5 on the *Topographical Survey* from which an excerpt is taken for Figure 13. These drawings were in turn related as a 'best fit' to the Ordnance Survey grid.

At the conclusion of each phase of fieldwork the trenches were backfilled either by hand or by machine with removed spoil.

The records from the evaluation have been allocated the site code: ESX05 by the Museum of London Archaeological Archive.

## 6. The archaeological evaluation

### 6.1 Summary of the findings

All the trenches were dug from a level of about 20.65m OD. Trenches 1 and 2 were located within the enclosed courtyard, respectively cutting through an existing earth border and concrete slab path. Trench 1 produced a straightforward sequence of soil horizons but Trench 2 revealed a substantial brick foundation [8] that clearly relates to the historic Essex Hall.

Trenches 3, 4 and 5 were cut through the tarmac surface and rubble base of the car park on the eastern side of the present building. In trenches 3 and 5 the underlying soil profile was similar to that of Trench 2, but in Trench 4 the buried topsoil was replaced by a thick layer of gravel [16] which is probably part of the former entrance drive to Essex Hall.

Natural silty sand and gravel [5] was encountered in all the trenches at a depth of between 0.65m and 1.10m (*c* 19.55m to 20.05m OD). In most areas this was overlain by a more or less sterile subsoil [4], [11], [15], *etc.*

### 6.2 List of deposits and features by context

Context	Trench	Description	Interpretation
1	1	Mid greyish brown sandy clay/silt with gravel and occasional tile, pot & glass frags. (not kept)	Imported topsoil, possibly from previous development <i>c</i> 1970s
2	"	Firm dark grey-brown silty sand with moderate gravel & tile frags., plus occ. brick, mortar, charcoal & pot frags.	Buried topsoil; may also have been truncated ( <i>cf.</i> levels in TP 2)
3	"	Firm mid grey-brown silty sand with occasional gravel, tile /mortar frags., and one potsherd	Intermediate layer: subsoil/base of topsoil
4	"	More friable mid to light brown silty sand with occasional gravel, very rare mortar frags. & one potsherd	Subsoil/ weathered top of natural
5	All	Mottled mid greyish brown silty sandy gravel, becoming lighter orange-brown mixed sand & gravel. Gravel medium-fine, generally <60mm	Natural River Terrace deposit, to some extent weathered and/or reworked at upper level
6	2	Mid to dark greyish brown sandy clay silt with frequent CBM & mortar flecks plus a few larger roof tile & pot frags.	Thin redeposited layer; uncertain date but directly overlain by recent path construction
7	"	Mid brownish-grey sandy silt with occ. gravel and frequent brick/mortar frags.	Fill of small cut feature, not closely dated
8	"	Substantial brick structure, regularly laid & mortared at uppermost level over brick rubble base	Brick foundation, the main part aligned north-south and assumed to be the base for an external wall

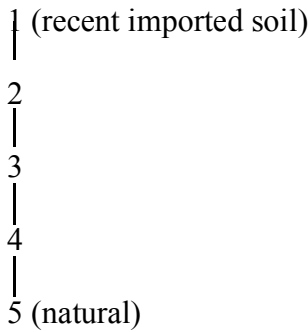
Context	Trench	Description	Interpretation
9	2	Mid yellowish-brown sandy silt with frequent brick & mortar frags.	Backfill over truncated brickwork in the northwest corner of the trench, not closely dated
10	"	Fairly friable mid brown sandy silt with occ. medium gravel and a few CBM, mortar, charcoal & pot frags.	Reworked subsoil; may include the base of a truncated topsoil
11	"	Firm mid grey-brown silty sand with frequent mixed gravel, otherwise sterile	Clean subsoil/ weathered top of natural
12	"	Cut containing brickwork [8]	Wall foundation trench
13	"	Dark brownish grey slightly sandy silt with occasional brick, mortar, coal/ charcoal & pot frags.	Fill of fairly recent cut in southwest corner of trench
14	3	Firm dark brownish grey sandy silt with frequent gravel, some CBM + mortar flecks & one potsherd	Buried topsoil. Overlain by 1970s development but unknown if also truncated. Appears similar to [2] to northwest & [18] to south
15	"	Firm mid greyish brown silty sand with occasional pebbles & a few CBM/ mortar flecks. Becomes darker to north	Subsoil; apparently reworked where deeper & darker to the north. Similar to [17] & [19]
16	4	Compact orange-light brown silty sandy gravel	Probably make-up for the drive to the pre-1933 Essex Hall: overlain by 1970s development & may have been truncated
17	"	Mid brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles; generally clean but some fine CBM, mortar & chalk frags. in top 50mm	Subsoil, overlain & possibly disturbed/ truncated by drive construction [16]
18	5	Firm dark grey-brown sandy clay-silt with moderate fine gravel & CBM frags, occ. mortar & charcoal flecks & one potsherd	Buried topsoil. Overlain by 1970s development and appears to be truncated to the south
19	"	Firm mid brown sandy silt with moderate gravel, plus occ. charcoal & CBM flecks	Subsoil, similar to [15] & [17]

**NB.** Pottery finds were retained from contexts [2] to [4], [6], [10], [13], [14] and [18]

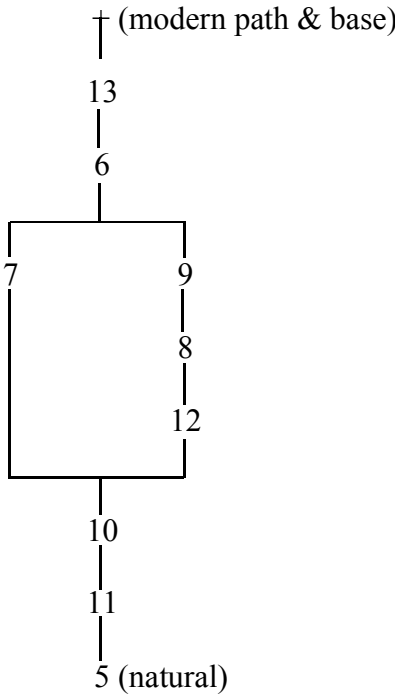
Brick samples were retained from context [8] (two each from the upper coursed wall & from the rubble base).

**6.3 Matrices to show stratigraphic relationship of contexts**

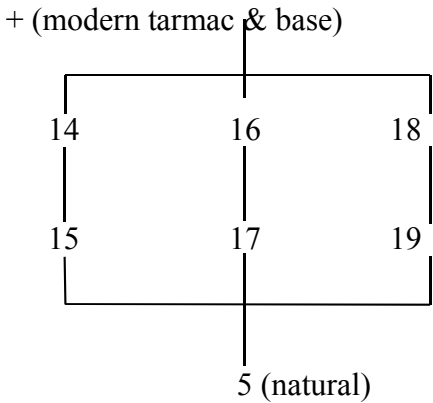
**6.3.1 Trench 1**



**6.3.2 Trench 2**



**6.3.3 Trenches 3 to 5**



## 6.4 Trench descriptions

### 6.4.1 Trench 1 (*Figures 3-6*)

The lowest deposit exposed was a medium flint gravel with some silty sand [5]. This represents the top of the natural River Terrace deposit, identified by the Geological Survey as Taplow Gravel (3.1 above). The gravel was exposed in plan as a fairly level deposit over the whole base of the trench, at about 20.06m OD, although not excavated to any depth.

The natural gravel was overlaid by a simple buried soil profile slightly less than 500mm thick, comprising subsoil [4], intermediate layer [3] and topsoil [2]. A few finds were produced by the lower two layers, including three pottery sherds dating broadly to the later 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Appendix I). Significantly more finds were recovered from context [2], with included pottery of mainly 19<sup>th</sup> century date. There was also some earlier, potentially 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century, material. It is assumed that these finds were deposited over a considerable period of time and reworked within a cultivated soil. There were also a number of small fragments of ceramic building material (roof tile and occasional brick), plus three short (<34mm) lengths of clay pipe stem, but nothing particularly diagnostic.

The former topsoil [2] was sealed and possibly truncated by some 200mm of imported soil [1], which is probably contemporary with the present buildings (*ie*, 1970s). The deposit contained a few fragments of recent pottery and glass which were not retained.

Trench 1 produced specific no evidence for the Elizabethan or later house, and it is presumed that this must always have always been within an open (*ie*, garden) area. Historic maps certainly indicate that this was the case from the 1820s onward.

### 6.4.2 Trench 2 (*Figs 7-12*)

The findings in the southern trial trench (TR 2) were quite different. Once again the lowest deposit was a clean natural gravel, although here nearly 0.5m deeper (*c* 19.55m OD). The gravel was only exposed in one area but did not appear to have been truncated, and was sealed by a thick (*c* 380mm) layer of sterile subsoil [11].

Layer [11] was overlain by a reworked but fairly clean and slightly thicker subsoil [10]. This deposit was present both to the east and west of the later wall foundation cut [12], was up to 450mm thick, and clearly originated as a contiguous layer. The context produced occasional fragments of ceramic roof tile though the only diagnostic finds came from the western area, in the form of late 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century pottery (Appendix I). Overall this suggests a date for the context of *c* 1550-1600, and thus quite closely contemporary with the construction of the Elizabethan house.

The cut [12] contained a substantial brick wall base [8], built on the same alignments as the historic house (see Fig 2). The main section of the wall ran north-south, though to the north it either turned a corner or formed a junction to the west. A small (*c* 0.3m<sup>2</sup>) exploratory hole just outside the main trial trench failed to resolve this, although hand-auger boreholes undertaken during previous soil investigation just to the northwest do suggest that the wall continued (see concluding para. 3.2.2). Indeed, it is suggested that there may be a lower floor level or cellar in this area.

The main body of the north-south wall was just over 0.8m wide and of similar depth. The four uppermost surviving brick courses were regularly laid, the top two in soft mortar and those below set dry in an orange-brown sand. Beneath this level the foundation was composed of a jumble of broken and/or reused brick, unmortared and without much obvious coursing. Examination of brick samples from each section of the wall indicates a date broadly consistent with the recorded construction of Essex Hall (c 1560 or 1596; Appendix II).

Two of the brick samples from the foundation level were also moulded, and were evidently manufactured to form a decorative surround to a door, window or similar opening (Fig 10). As such the sample may well represent an original feature of the Elizabethan house, these particular bricks having been broken and discarded during construction.

No building is recorded in the area of Trench 2 by Coe's *Plan of the Parish of Walthamstow* of 1822 or by subsequent OS plans. Throughout this period and until the final demolition of the Hall the land appears to have been open garden or lawn bordering the entrance drive (Fig 2). However, there was no sign of a reworked/cultivated soil: the brickwork was found almost directly below the modern path base and sealed only by a shallow mixed layer [6], so it is clear that deposits have been recently and quite heavily truncated in this area.

It is uncertain whether context [6] derives from the original wall demolition or from subsequent area truncation. The extent of the layer beyond the wall and across the whole trench suggests the latter, whilst the few finds span the period from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Appendix I). This context also produced one residual sherd of Roman sand-tempered ware.

Context [6] sealed two localised deposits [7] and [9] that are seen in section (Fig 11), but which produced no closely dateable finds. It was overlain by the modern clinker path foundation, and to the southwest by a fill [13] which yielded a few sherds of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery and one 1930 halfpenny.

#### **6.4.3 Trench 3 (Figures 13 to 15)**

The clean natural sand and gravel [5] was exposed at about 19.70m OD. The deposit was cut to the south and east by two adjoining linear features that are almost certainly modern service trenches. The features originated at a much higher level and contained some fragments of concrete within their fills.

Directly overlying the clean natural was a layer which had evidently undergone some reworking or weathering, consisting of a 'dirty' slightly silty sandy gravel up to c 300mm thick (recorded as the upper part of [5]). This was covered by a silty sand subsoil [15], which also appeared to have been reworked and was much deeper in some areas than others (c 150mm to 400mm). No dateable finds were recovered from either layer, although occasional flecks of ceramic building material and mortar were observed within the subsoil.

Sealing the subsoil was a probable buried topsoil [14], typically about 150mm thick but possibly truncated by later development. The layer contained scattered mortar and

ceramic fragments ( $\leq 20\text{mm}$ ) plus occasional glass, although there was only one identifiable piece of pottery – a sherd of creamware, *c* 1740-1830 and quite possibly residual in this context (Appendix I).

Two layers of mixed sand and rubble covered the soil layer [14]. Both of these contained modern material (polystyrene & plastic-coated wire), and they evidently form a base – probably from the 1970s – for the overlying tarmac surface.

#### **6.4.4 Trench 4 (*Figures 16 & 17*)**

Trench 4 did not contain any modern service trenches, and deposits were reduced to expose a fairly uniform natural surface [5] at or just below 19.90m OD. As in Trench 3 some areas of clean sand and gravel were overlain by an apparently reworked or weathered layer, of sterile but slightly darker and more silty material.

The natural deposits were sealed by sandy silt subsoil [17] about 200mm thick. The upper part of this context contained some small and more or less undated fragments of ceramic building material, chalk and mortar, and was overlain by a compact layer of clean silty sandy gravel [16]. This latter was quite clean, and appeared to be redeposited natural.

It is likely that [16] represents a make-up deposit for the entrance drive to the former Essex Hall. This feature is shown on a series of maps from the 1860s to 1930s and appears to cross the line of Trench 4 (*cf* Fig 2). Although the extent of the gravel was not exposed it is also probable that construction of the drive truncated the previous soil profile, with [16] thus laid into broad but shallow trench.

It is probable that [16] was truncated in the 1970s by the overlying levelling and foundation for the present tarmac surface. Although the gravel formed a fairly uniform layer about 150mm thick it did not have any obvious usage surface. Moreover, there was no evidence for an overlying layer associated with the houses that are known to have stood on the site in the 1950s, when this area appears to have been a back garden. Instead clean gravel was directly overlain by a thin layer of silty sand containing flecks of modern polystyrene.

#### **6.4.5 Trench 5 (*Figures 18 & 19*)**

The sequence of deposits here was similar to that in Trench 3, with natural sand and gravel [5] sealed by a clean sandy silt subsoil [19] and thence a probable buried topsoil [18]. The top of the natural was at about 19.85m OD, but although there were some greyish silty patches did not include the distinct horizon of reworking or weathering noted elsewhere.

The upper soil horizon [18] contained small fragments of ceramic building material, and more occasional charcoal and mortar, but only one probably residual potsherd (creamware, *c* 1740-1830). The surface of [18] was overlain and truncated to the south by construction levels for the present tarmac car park. An east-west service trench that crossed the centre of Trench 5 had also been cut from this level and was sealed by the overlying rubble base.



## 7. Conclusion and assessment of the results

7.1 The archaeological evaluation has provided an opportunity to review the site-specific objectives that were defined within the Written Scheme (4.3 above). The responses to these are outlined below:

- *Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, overlying or cut into the natural Terrace gravel? How does this relate to other finds made in the area, which cover a range of dates through to later prehistoric?*

There was no evidence for any prehistoric activity on the site, nor any residual finds.

- *Is there any evidence for later (Roman to earlier post-medieval) activity, and can the nature of this be defined? In particular, is there any evidence for development of the site preceding the documented 16<sup>th</sup> century construction of Essex Hall?*

There was no evidence for any Roman or subsequent activity, with the exception of one residual sherd of Roman pottery that was broadly dated to AD 40 to 400. Apart from this the earliest finds were probably of mid 16<sup>th</sup> century or slightly later date (in contexts [4] and [10]), and thus broadly contemporary with the construction of the Elizabethan house. Nor were there any buried soil horizons that could be of a potentially earlier date, and deposits with 16<sup>th</sup> century material directly overlay sterile natural subsoil or gravel.

The very few pottery finds of early date (c 1480-1600), plus occasional undiagnostic roof tile fragments, *could* derive from activity preceding the later 16<sup>th</sup> century Hall, but there is certainly no conclusive evidence for this.

- *What evidence is there for post-medieval activity or land use, and can this be meaningfully related to Essex Hall? Does this include any evidence for the much larger Elizabethan House that is recorded in the 18<sup>th</sup> century?*

There was significant evidence for later (mid 16<sup>th</sup> century+) landuse and development within Trench 2. Investigation revealed a substantial brick wall base [8] that may well represent part of the Elizabethan construction, although a slightly later (pre-1666) date is also possible.

The width and depth of the north-south section of brickwork both indicate an external wall, perhaps the eastern wall of a former wing of the house. A further though probably slightly less substantial wall ran off to the west, whilst the previous geotechnical investigation within the present courtyard suggests that the main wall may also have continued northward. Deposits to the east of the wall were fairly clean and suggest that there may have been further building or perhaps an external path in this area.

The finds and soil profile in Trench 1 both indicate an open area, probably cultivated garden or lawn outside the historic house. Later maps show that this was certainly the case in the 19<sup>th</sup> and earlier 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. A similar picture was seen in Trenches 3 and 5, with buried soil and subsoil horizons below the modern car park, although there were very few associated finds.

The sequence in Trench 4 was broadly comparable to that of the adjacent trenches, although the buried topsoil was replaced by a layer of compact gravel. This is probably part of the former entrance drive to Essex Hall as recorded on OS maps between the 1860s and early 1930s, although there was no direct dating evidence.

- 7.2** The evaluation has therefore revealed significant structural remains associated with the Elizabethan Essex Hall, located within the western part of the proposed redevelopment. The trenches in the eastern part of the site revealed a simple sequence of deposits and very few finds, suggesting that this area has always been open land. There is also quite a large area to the north and west of Trench 3 that is already basemented within the existing building (*cf.* Fig 13).

The substantial brick foundation that was found in Trench 2 lies some 9m to the east of the position of Essex Hall as recorded by 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century maps. The foundation is more or less parallel with the known eastern frontage, and forms a corner or junction with a further wall base that runs back on a line with the northern side of the Hall.

It is not known how far the brick wall foundation continues to the south, although previous geotechnical investigation indicates that there are further remains to the northeast. It is possible that these remains form part of an original wing, with a corresponding feature to the south.

Based on the above remarks it is possible to define an area of maximum archaeological potential, comprising approximately the eastern quarter of the proposed Phase 1 redevelopment footprint. This is outlined on Figure 20.

## **Appendix I. Assessment of the post-medieval pottery**

*Nigel Jeffries (Museum of London Specialist Services)*

### **1. Introduction**

The post-medieval pottery from the archaeological evaluation consists of 30 sherds from up to 25 vessels (weighing 262 grammes), and was principally recovered from six contexts in trial trenches 1 and 2. The assemblage has been quantified using the MoLSS post-medieval London type-series. Following standard MoLSS conventions the spot dating has been recorded on paper and the results entered below. Tabulated presentations of fabric occurrence by context and expansions for the codes used are found at the end of this document (tables 1 to 4). The assemblage was from small-sized groups (contexts yielding less than 30 sherds) and is stored in one standard shoe-sized box.

One sherd of Roman pottery was found in context [6]. This proficiently made wheel-thrown fabric is not of a well-known type and source and has therefore been identified as SAND (dating between AD 40-400). It was also found alongside later post-medieval pottery and has therefore to be residual.

This assessment aims to evaluate the character and the date range of the assemblage, determine any questions that the material has the potential to address and to identify any areas of further work.

### **2. Post-medieval pottery fabric and forms (c 1500-1900)**

TPQ/TAQ date range (s) by frequency of context: 1550-1600 (context [10]), 1550-1700 (context [4]), 1570-1700 (context [6]), 1740-1830 (contexts [14] & [18]), 1805-1900 (context [3]), and 1807-1840 (contexts [2] & [13])

Only a few rim and base forms were found and the post-medieval assemblage therefore consists of small-sized (often laminated) body sherds from highly fragmented vessels. The date range (as indicated by context frequency) suggests that the main period of landuse occurred between the mid 16<sup>th</sup> to late 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, or is limited to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The most frequent ware types are discussed and can be divided into the following broad categories: Surrey/Hampshire Border wares, local coarse redwares, and industrial finewares.

#### **2.1 *Surrey/Hampshire Border wares***

Three sherds from the 17<sup>th</sup> century whiteware products of the Surrey/Hampshire Border industry (BORDG and BORDY) were found in contexts [4] and [10]. This industry, essentially a later continuation of the medieval Surrey whiteware industry, supplied London in a range of utilitarian wares between the mid 16<sup>th</sup> until early 18<sup>th</sup> century, and represents a common find in London area assemblages during this period.

#### **2.2 *Local coarse red earthenwares***

Seven sherds of post-medieval London area redwares were found on the site (PMRE, PMSRY and PMR), mostly from contexts [2] and [10] and constituting some 25% of the pottery by sherd count. The 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century coarsewares found include one worn sherd of early post-medieval redware (PMRE) and one of slipped redware (PMSRY),

thought to be made around the London area between c 1480 and 1600/1650 (although production centres and kilns sites have yet to be identified). Later London area redware products (PMR) were also found. PMR was made between c 1580 and 1900 either at Woolwich, where a kiln was uncovered in 1974, or at Lambeth and Deptford, where production is strongly suggested by the large quantities of PMR manufacturing waste recovered (Nenk 1999, 237).

### **2.3 Industrial finewares**

Industrial finewares describe a range of mass-produced, durable, refined earthenwares produced from the later 18<sup>th</sup> century, initially at factories in the Midlands area. Fourteen sherds, constituting nearly 50% of the overall assemblage, are mostly either refined whiteware (REFW), blue transfer-printed whiteware (TPW2) or pearlware (PEAR TR2).

## **3. Discussion of further potential and recommendations**

All the pottery (with one exception) is post-medieval in date, and the fabrics and forms are consistent with the sort of material recovered from sites of this date and from 'open area' horizontal stratigraphy. All the groups appear to have accumulated over a prolonged period of time and not as part of a more rapid sequence of rubbish disposal.

The pottery has some local significance in that the sherds recovered from contexts [6] and [10] from Trial trench 2 date to the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century and can therefore be associated with the Elizabethan house that occupied the area. However, the small size of the remaining sample and the unexceptional nature of the sherds severely limits the potential of the pottery. The assemblage therefore serves to establish a chronology for the site, characterise the deposits from which it was recovered, and provide an indication of the range of material that may be yielded by further archaeological work.

It is recommended that no further work is necessary and no vessels require any conservation or illustrative work.

## **4. Bibliography**

Nenk, B, with a contribution by Hughes, M, 1999 'Post Medieval Redware Pottery of London and Essex', in *Old and New Worlds, Historical/Post-medieval Archaeology Papers from the Societies Joint Conferences at Williamsburg and London 1997*, (eds G Egan & R L Michael), 235-245

Table 1: Pottery fabric and form occurrence by context (ENV = estimated no. of vessels; includes a single Roman sherd)

Context	Trench	Context size	Period	Fabric	Form	Decoration	Sherd count	ENV	Weight (G)	Condition	Date-range	TPQ-TAQ	Comments
2	1	S	PM	FREC	JUG		1	1	7	S	1550-1700	1807-1840	
2	1	S	PM	PEAR TR2	POTLID	WILL	1	1	7		1807-1840	1807-1840	
2	1	S	PM	PEAR TR2	CUP	WILL	1	1	3		1807-1840	1807-1840	Scalloped rim
2	1	S	PM	PEAR TR2	PLATE	WILL	1	1	5		1807-1840	1807-1840	
2	1	S	PM	PMR	BOWL DEEP		1	1	26		1580-1900	1807-1840	
2	1	S	PM	PMR	BOWL		2	2	26	L	1580-1900	1807-1840	Laminated
2	1	S	PM	PMR	MUG		1	1	23		1580-1900	1807-1840	
2	1	S	PM	PMR	BOWL		1	1	22		1580-1900	1807-1840	
2	1	S	PM	REFW	JUG		2	1	14		1805-1900	1807-1840	Rim
2	1	S	PM	TPW2	DISH SERV	WILL	3	1	13		1807-1900	1807-1840	
3	1	S	PM	REFW	JAR		2	1	9	L	1805-1900	1805-1900	Laminated
4	1	S	PM	BORDY	SKIL		1	1	10		1550-1700	1550-1700	Foot
6	2	S	PM	BORDG			1	1	16		1550-1900	1570-1700	Rim
6	2	S	PM	TGW			1	1	2	L	1570-1846	1570-1700	Laminated glaze
6	2	S	R	SAND	JAR		1	1	58			1570-1700	Base - residual
10	2	S	PM	BORDG	JUG		1	1	4		1550-1700	1550-1600	
10	2	S	PM	PMFR	PORR	GLIE	2	1	10		1550-1700	1550-1600	
10	2	S	PM	PMRE	BOWL/DISH	UNGL	1	1	25		1480-1600	1550-1600	
10	2	S	PM	PMSRY	JUG RND		1	1	15		1480-1650	1550-1600	
13	2	S	PM	CREA			1	1	4		1740-1830	1807-1840	
13	2	S	PM	LONS	JUG/JAR		1	1	9		1670-1900	1807-1840	
13	2	S	PM	PEAR TR2	PLATE		1	1	2		1807-1840	1807-1840	
14	3	S	PM	CREA			1	1	6		1740-1830	1740-1830	
18	5	S	PM	CREA	?BOWL		1	1	4		1740-1830	1740-1830	Rim
<b>Total</b>							<b>30</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>262</b>				

Table 2: Fabric expansions for the post-medieval pottery (by sherd count and ENV)

Fabric	Fabric expansion	Origin	Sherd count	% of sherd count	ENV	% of ENV
BORDG	Surrey/Hampshire border whiteware with green glaze	BORD	2	6.9	2	8.3
BORDY	Surrey/Hampshire border whiteware with yellow glaze	BORD	1	3.4	1	4.2
CREA	creamware	INDF	3	10.3	3	12.5
FREC	Frechen stoneware	IMP	1	3.4	1	4.2
LONS	London stoneware	STON	1	3.4	1	4.2
PEAR TR2	pearlware with type 2 blue transfer-printed decoration (stipple and line)	INDF	4	13.8	4	16.7
PMFR	post-medieval fineware	FINE	2	6.9	1	4.2
PMR	London area post-medieval redware	COAR	5	17.2	5	20.8
PMRE	London area early post-medieval redware	COAR	1	3.4	1	4.2
PMSRY	London area post-medieval slipped redware with clear yellow glaze	COAR	1	3.4	1	4.2
REFW	refined whiteware	INDF	4	13.8	2	8.3
TPW2	transfer-printed ware with type 2 decoration (stipple and line)	INDF	3	10.3	1	4.2
TGW	English tin-glazed ware	DELF	1	3.4	1	4.2
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>29</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 3: Ware type expansions for the post-medieval pottery (by sherd count)

Ware	Ware expansion	Sherd count	% of sherd count
BORD	Surrey/Hampshire border wares	3	10.3
COAR	coarse red earthenwares	7	24.1
DELF	unspecified English tin-glazed wares	1	3.4
INDF	industrial finewares	14	48.3
IMP	imported wares	1	3.4
FINE	Essex finewares	2	6.9
STON	stonewares	1	3.4
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>29</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 4: Form expansions for the post-medieval pottery (by ENV)

Form	Form expansion	ENV	% of ENV
BOWL	bowl	3	12.0
BOWL DEEP	deep bowl	1	4.0
BOWL/DISH	bowl or dish	1	4.0
CUP	cup	1	4.0
DISH SERV	serving dish	3	12.0
JAR	jar	2	8.0
JUG	jug	2	8.0
JUG RND	rounded jug	1	4.0
JUG/JAR	jug or jar	1	4.0
MUG	mug	1	4.0
PLATE	plate	2	8.0
PORR	porringer	1	4.0
POTLID	pot lid	1	4.0
SKIL	skillet	1	4.0
UNID	unidentified	4	16.0
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## **Appendix II. Building materials assessment**

*Ian M. Betts (MoLSS)*

### **1. Methodology**

The building material has been recorded using the standard recording forms used by the Museum of London. This has involved fabric analysis undertaken with a x10 binocular microscope. The fabric numbers used as those in the Museum of London fabric reference collection.

The information on the recording forms has been added to an Excel database. All the bricks were retained after analysis.

### **2. Material**

Five brick samples were recovered from a substantial brick wall foundation (context [8]). Two samples were obtained from the upper surviving part of the wall, the remainder from a lower portion comprising an unmortared foundation.

#### **2.1 Lower bricks**

Two types of brick are present. The first is a complete brick in a sandy version of local London-area brickearth type 3046 (bordering on London area fabric 3065). This is a deep red colour as are the other two bricks collected from this part of the structure. The brick measures 223mm x 101-104mm x 50-52mm in size and has slightly warped during firing. The brick size would suggest a 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century date, which would be broadly consistent with both possible dates for the construction of Essex Hall (*c* 1560 or 1596).

The other two bricks are rather more interesting, as they have been made in an especially shaped mould prior to firing (Fig 10). Each brick has part of one corner replaced by a cutaway area. Such bricks are fairly common in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries but shaping was more frequently done after the bricks were fired and had been mortared into position.

The moulded brick from Essex Hall are in a more normal version of fabric 3046 and measure 104mm in breadth by 53-58mm in thickness. They would have been made to line some sort of opening, such as a door, window or archway.

#### **2.2 Upper bricks**

Two brick samples were retained, both of which are orange-red in colour. They measure 226-227mm x 103-104mm x 54-58mm in size, and one has indented borders in the upper surface suggesting that they are of pre-1666 date. Again, these could be related to the later 16<sup>th</sup> century construction of Essex Hall, but the marked difference in colour suggests that they arrived as part of a separate brick batch. Whether they are contemporary with the lower bricks is uncertain, but they are of similar size, suggesting that they are probably similar in date.



### 3. Discussion

The date of the bricks recovered suggests that the wall foundation may be part of the original structure of Essex Hall. However, it should also be noted that bricks were frequently reused in later structures and the moulded bricks are unlikely to be in their original position, unless they were broken examples which were discarded without ever being set around an opening. In fact this is quite possible, as unlike the other foundation sample these bricks have no trace of mortar. The presence of moulded bricks does however hint at the decorative appearance of Essex Hall.

### 4. Further work

No further specialist input is required, although it is recommended that the bricks are discussed in any future publication report which should also illustrate the two moulded examples.

Table 5: Detail of the building material record

context	fabric	corners	weight (g)	length	breadth	thickness	number	comments
8	3046	4	2300	226	104	55	1	Upper Brick, worn top surface, orange-red colour
8	3046	4	2300	227	103	57	1	Upper Brick, indented borders, orange-red colour
8	3046	2	1600		104	57	1	Lower Brick, moulded shape, deep red
8	3046	1	400			53	1	Lower Brick, moulded shape, deep red
8	3046	4	2000	223	103	51	1	Lower Brick, 3046 near 3065, slightly warped, deep red



Fig 1 Site outline and location of the evaluation trenches (1 to 5) in relation to the proposed redevelopment footprint

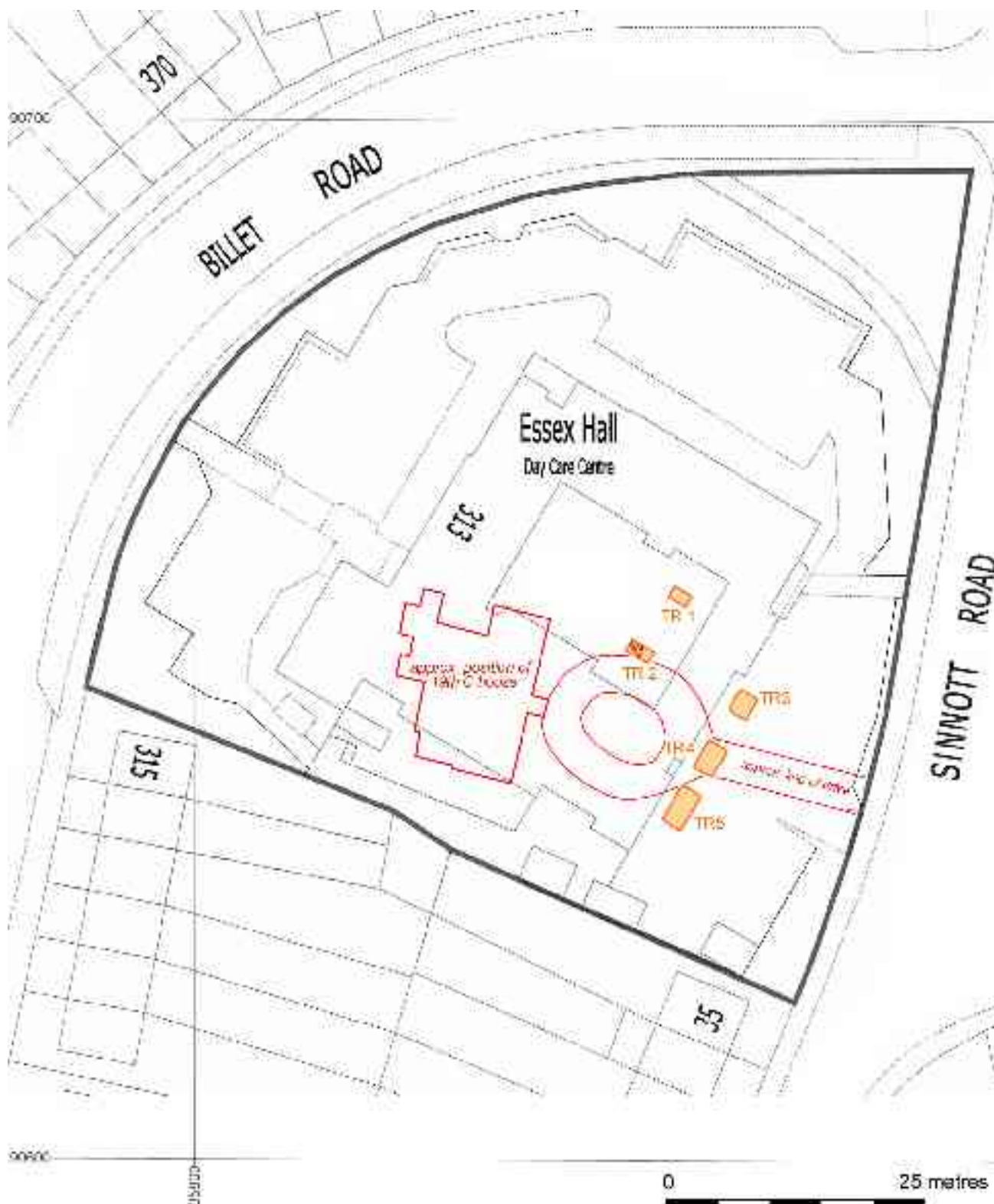


Fig 2 Location of the trenches in relation to the last-surviving part of the historic house and entrance drive, demolished c 1933

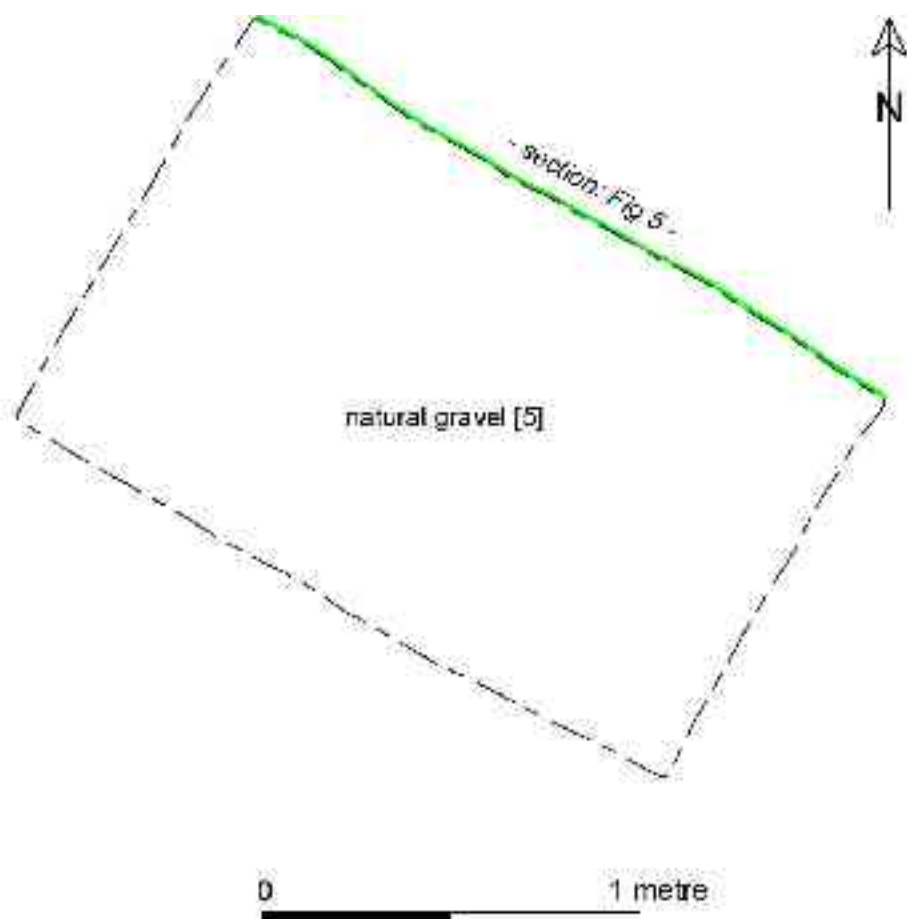


Fig 3 Plan of trial Trench 1, showing location of drawn section (*Fig 5*)



Fig 4 View of Trench 1, looking northeast (*50cm scale*)



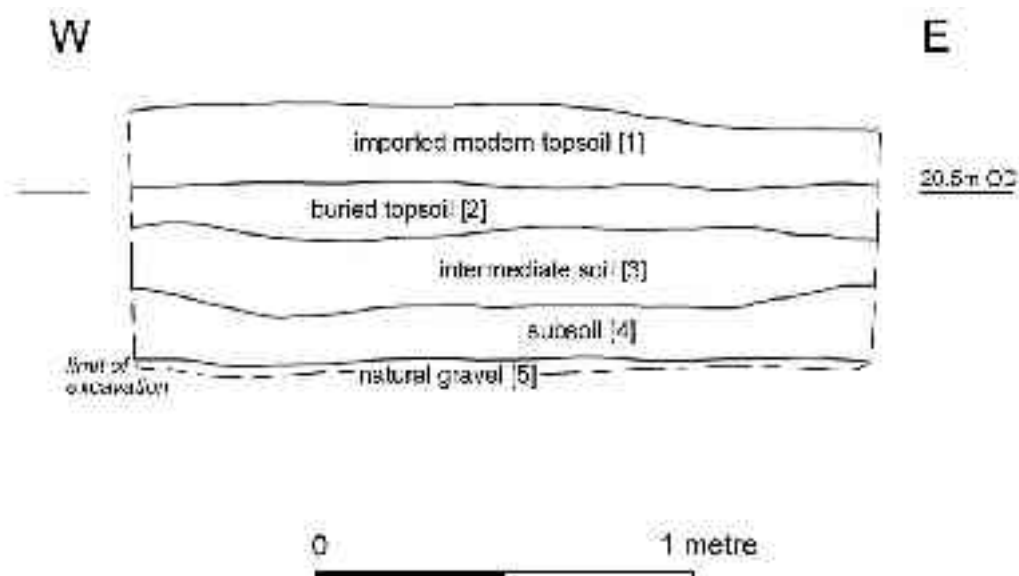


Fig 5 South-facing section of Trench 1 (*for location see Fig 3*)



Fig 6 View of deposits shown in Figure 5

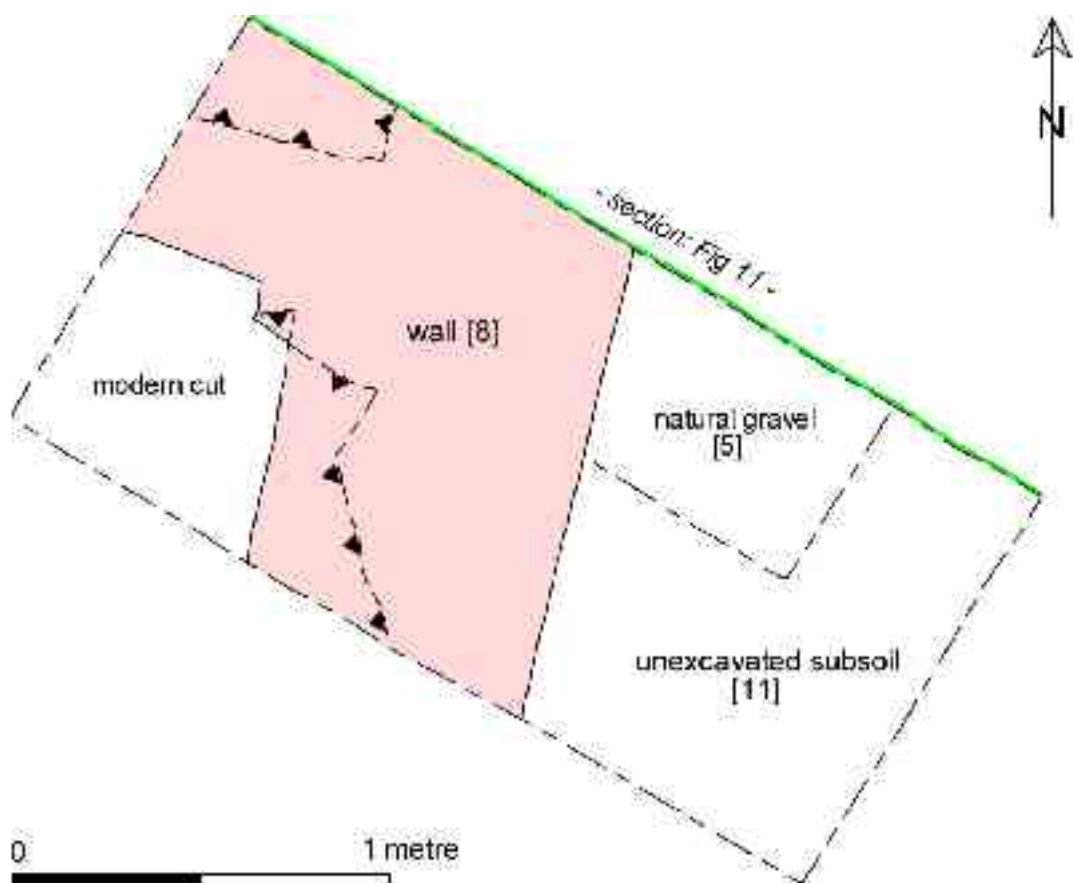


Fig 7 Plan of Trench 2, showing the principal features and location of drawn section (*Fig 11*)



Fig 8 View of Trench 2, looking northwest (*50cm scale*)





Fig 9 Further view of Trench 2, looking east (*20cm scale*)



Fig 10 Reconstruction of a moulded brick removed from the lower part of the wall foundation [8]

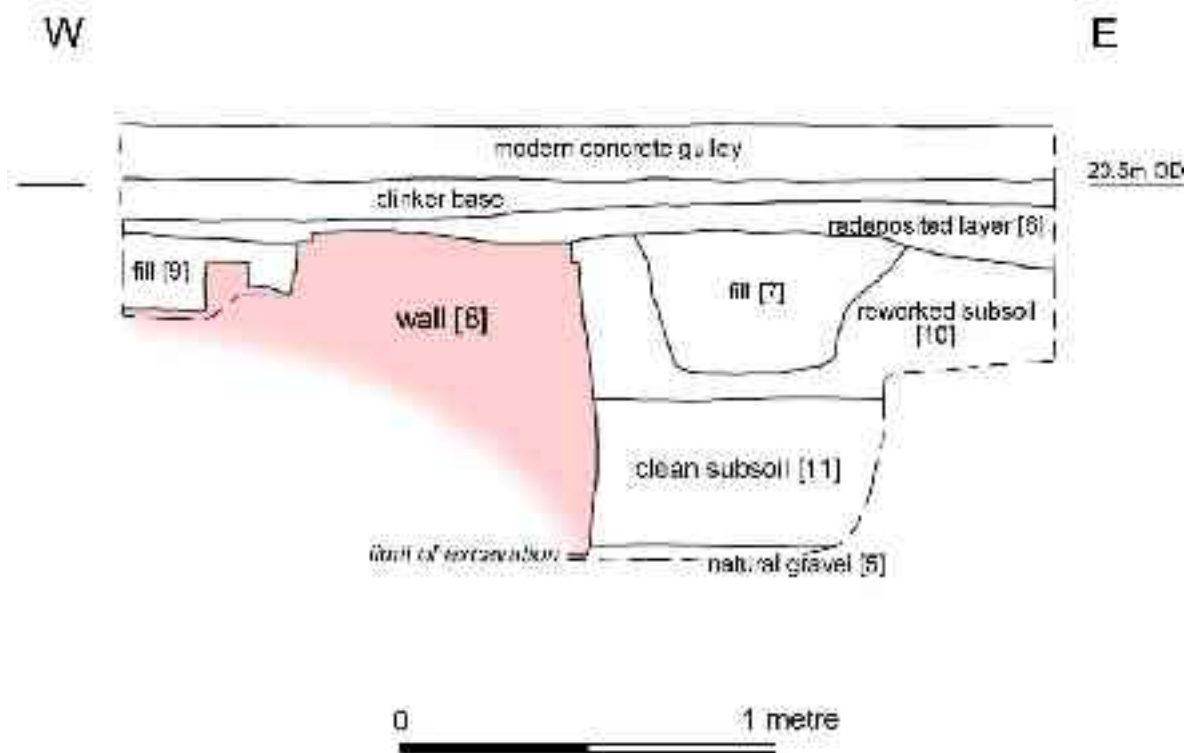


Fig 11 South-facing section of Trench 2 (*for location see Fig 3*)



Fig 12 View of Trench 2 from above looking north, and including deposits shown in Figure 11 (*20 cm scale*)



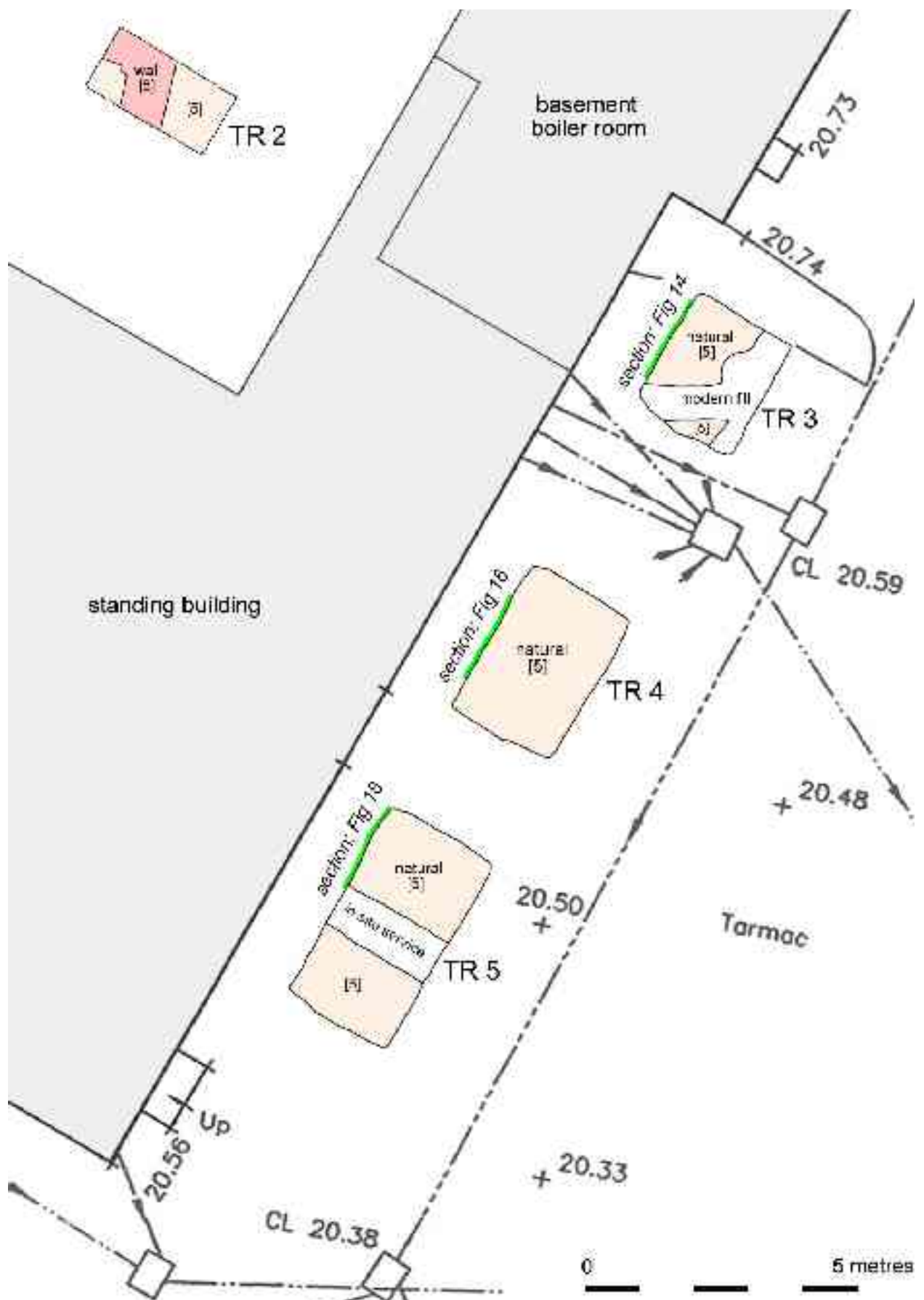


Fig 13 Plan of trenches 3-5, showing modern services and location of drawn sections (*Figs 14, 16 & 18*)

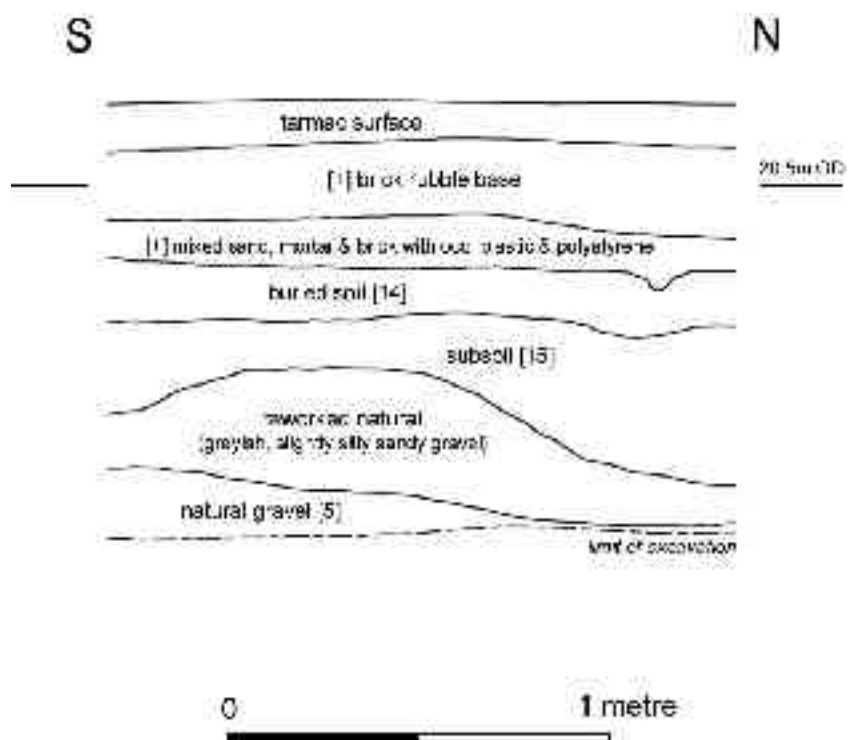


Fig 14 East-facing section of Trench 3 (*for location see Fig 13*)



Fig 15 View of deposits shown in Figure 14 (*50cm scale*)

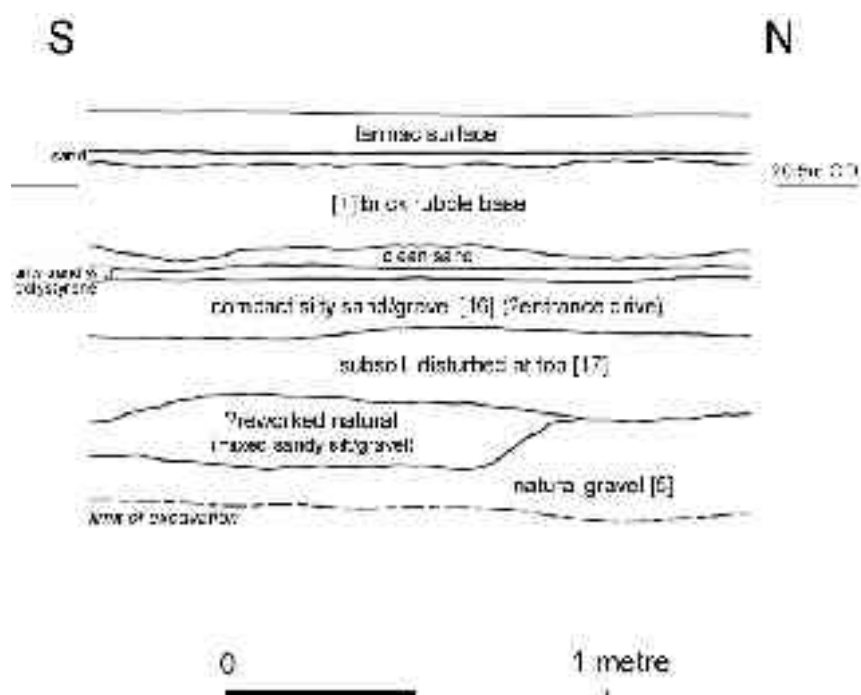


Fig 16 East-facing section of Trench 4 (*for location see Fig 13*)



Fig 17 View of deposits shown in Figure 16 (*50cm scale*)



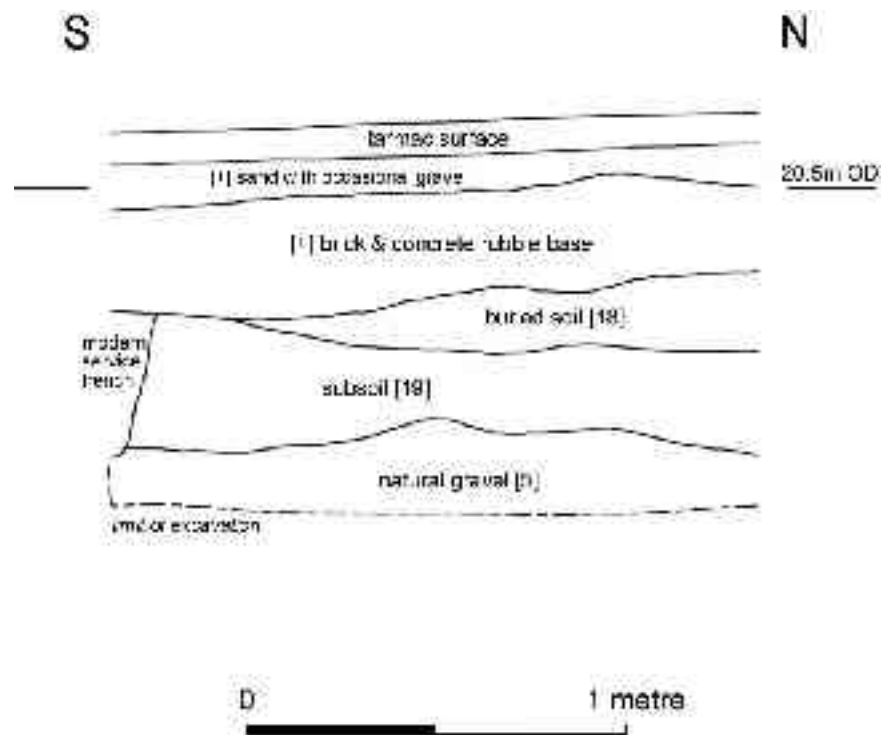


Fig 18 East-facing section of Trench 5 (*for location see Fig 13*)



Fig 19 View of deposits shown in Figure 18 (*50cm scale*)

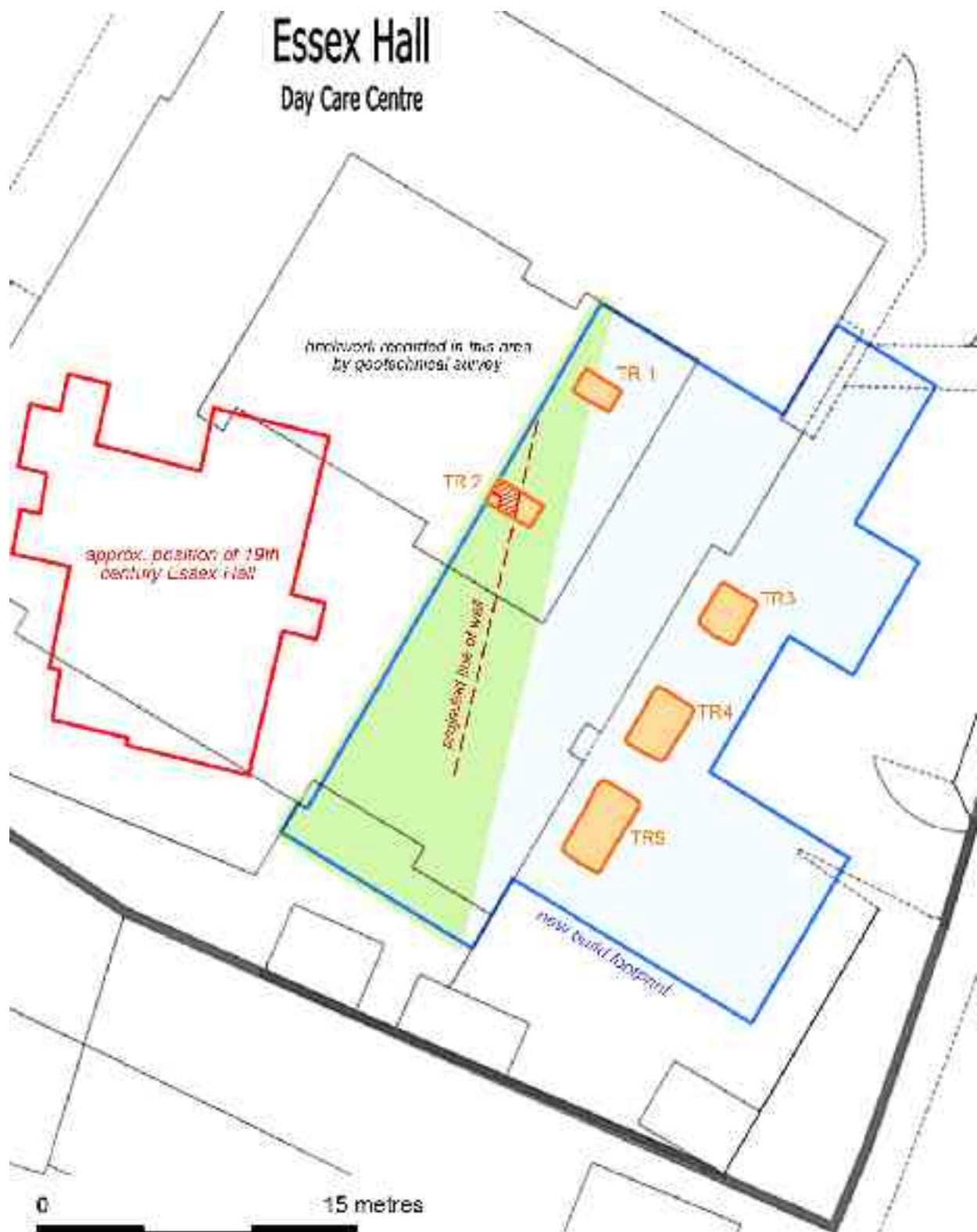


Fig 20 Area of high archaeological potential (shaded green), based on the results of the evaluation