

18-20 Reginald Square Deptford London



Archaeological Evaluation Report



October 2006

Client: Birkby Construction Ltd

Issue N^o: 1
OA Job N^o: 3375
NGR: TQ 3724 7703

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Date: 16th October 2006

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Date: 17th October 2006

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OA HEAD OF
FIELDWORK.

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SUMMARY

In September 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at 18-20 Reginald Square, Deptford (NGR TQ 3724 7703) on behalf of Birkby Construction Ltd. The work followed demolition of existing buildings ahead of the proposed construction a four storey residential block. The evaluation revealed Victorian brick drains and soakaways to the west of the site, and considerable depths of made ground overlying a Victorian soil horizon to the east. No significant archaeological deposits were revealed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In September 2006 OA carried out a field evaluation at 18-20 Reginald Square Deptford London (NGR TQ 3724 7703), on behalf of Birkby Construction Ltd, where it is proposed to construct a four storey residential block following the demolition of existing buildings. As part of the pre-planning process the site was subject to a desk-based assessment (DBA - OA 2006a). Following discussions with Mark Stevenson, Archaeology Advisor for Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS), Oxford Archaeology (OA) produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) outlining how the archaeological requirements of the site would be met (OA 2006b).

1.1.2 Prior to the evaluation the area of proposed development contained a number of run down small business premises of brick with concrete render and associated yards. At the back the buildings run up against the properties along the east side of Deptford High Street. To the south of the site is the Admiralty Close development of recent flats. On the north side are a few more older yards and garages. Most of Reginald Square is occupied by later 20th-century flats. The whole area is relatively flat at c 5.5 m OD and is 0.05 hectares in area.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 Reginald Square lies on the first gravel terrace of the River Thames and its tributary, the River Ravensbourne. The Thames lies c 1 km to the north and the Ravensbourne 200 m to the east. The underlying geology is the Woolwich and Reading Beds (now Lambeth Beds) of sands and gravels.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk study (OA 2006a), the results of which are summarized below. The site itself has not previously been subject to any archaeological investigations.

1.3.2 Between 1989 and 1992, archaeological work was carried out by South East London Archaeological Unit (SELAU) in the garden of the Dover Castle Inn on Deptford

Broadway, c 50 m south of the proposed development (Gaimster and Gaimster 1997). The work found evidence for continual occupation from the Iron Age onwards, including the site of a possible Anglo-Saxon cemetery and some evidence of earlier prehistoric activity. Further work was carried out by AOC Archaeology Group in 2003 following the demolition of the Dover Castle itself.

1.3.3 Excavations on the site of the Odeon Cinema, Deptford Broadway in 1988 and 1992 found 17th - 19th-century pits and a number of brick lined tanks dating to the latter period. No archaeological sites or finds from the prehistoric period have been identified within the area of proposed development.

1.3.4 The results of the DBA (OA 2006) are presented below.

Prehistoric

1.3.5 At the Dover Castle Inn site Neolithic flint flakes and an Iron Age pit containing a saddle quern were found. The Iron Age material suggested an occupation site.

1.3.6 Archaeological investigations by MoLAS (Museum of London Archaeological Service) in connection with the Docklands Light Railway, Ravensbourne Park in 1996 uncovered a palaeochannel of the River Ravensbourne and Neolithic/Bronze Age flint. Subsequent work in the same area c 350 m south of the proposed development, found a possible prehistoric burnt mound.

1.3.7 Prehistoric flint was also recorded in a watching brief by PCA (Pre-Construct Archaeology) in 1999, 350 m north-east of the area of proposed development. The only other recorded prehistoric find from the vicinity of the site is a stray find of a Palaeolithic tool on New Cross Road, 300 m west of the site.

Roman Period (43 AD-410 AD)

1.3.8 The line of Roman Watling Street, the road from Dover to London, is believed to have crossed the River Ravensbourne at Deptford and then followed the modern Deptford Broadway, passing c 60 m south of the area of proposed development (Margary 1967, 55). The Dover Castle Inn excavations found evidence for Roman occupation on the north side of Deptford Broadway, within 50 m of the site. A Roman building with a tessellated floor was found near the corner of Deptford Broadway and Deptford High Street during sewerage work in 1886, also c 50 m from the area of proposed development. A probable Roman stone coffin was found in Vanguard Street, south of Deptford Broadway and c 220 m south of the site, in 1868.

Anglo-Saxon (AD410-1066)

1.3.9 It is known from documentary sources that a Saxon settlement grew up around the crossing point on the River Ravensbourne, the 'deep ford' during this period. Evidence for it was found at the Dover Castle Inn site when two inhumation burials were uncovered. It is believed these may be from a cemetery. The graves were dated to the 7th-8th century and have parallels with graves from other cemeteries in East

Kent (Gaimster and Gaimster, 1997, 4). Middle Saxon cemeteries are rare in London, with only those at Greenwich Park and Coulsdon recorded outside the area of Lundenwic, Saxon London.

Medieval (AD 1066-1550)

- 1.3.10 During the medieval period a separate focus for settlement grew up around St Nicholas Church, which lies *c* 700 m north of the area of proposed development. By at least 1345-6 there was a wooden bridge over the River Ravensbourne at Deptford. There were a number of wharves next to the bridge and a hermitage at its eastern end.
- 1.3.11 Although no evidence for later medieval activity has been found within the area of proposed development, Deptford Broadway, 50 m to the south, was occupied during this period and settlement evidence was recovered from the Dover Castle Inn site. The Christopher Inn, later the Dover Castle was an important hostelry from the 14th century. The site of a medieval mill has also been identified on Deptford Broadway, *c* 200 m north-east of the area of proposed development. Excavations at the site of the former Deptford kilns, *c* 450 m to the north-east also found some medieval material. The stone coffin found in Vanguard Street in the 19th century may also date to this period.
- 1.3.12 The northern part of Deptford increased in prominence following the establishment of the Royal Naval Dockyard by Henry VIII in 1513. Although it is likely that there was some development along Church Street and Butt Lane (now Deptford High Street), which linked the two centres, Roque's map of 1746 suggests that most of the surrounding area remained undeveloped.

Post-medieval (AD1550-1990)

- 1.3.13 The earliest available historic map showing the area of proposed development is Roque's map of London, 1746. The map shows Butt Lane, Deptford Broadway and Church Street, the roads surrounding the area of proposed development, lined with buildings with a small yard behind. The area between is laid out as fields and market gardens and Reginald Square is shown with rows of trees, probably an orchard.
- 1.3.14 Trinity House established the Trinity Almshouses on Church Street, 500 m north-east of the site in 1670, and they survived until 1877. The expansion of Deptford also led to the formation of a separate parish, St Paul's, with the Grade I listed church opening in 1730. Roque's map also shows the new waterworks, which opened in 1701, *c* 400 m south-east of the site (Green Deptford Walk, 2006), and a toll house on Deptford Bridge. The New Cross Turnpike Trust had been established in 1718 (Greenwich Industrial History Society, Issue 18).
- 1.3.15 By the late 19th century Deptford had been engulfed by the London suburbs. The developments to the north of Reginald Road are said to have been occupied by the poor, while around Deptford Broadway were properties for those in regular work. The Broadway had developed into a significant shopping area by the end of the century (Steele 1993, 86). Bacons map of 1888 shows two railway lines, the London

to Greenwich line having opened in 1836 (Steele, 1993, 66). Butt Street appears as Deptford High Street following the name change in 1825.

Modern (AD1900-)

- 1.3.16 Very few changes took place in the vicinity of the area of proposed development before World War II, although some of the buildings on the north side of Deptford Broadway were rebuilt, including Peppercorn's Grocery. Deptford suffered heavy bombing during World War II and in 1944 a V1 rocket landed in Reginald Square, to the east of the area of proposed development. The 1955 Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 Map shows that Amelia Terrace and the terraces on either side of what had been Reginald Place had been demolished, the space then occupied by a number of prefabs which remained until the 1970s. Some redevelopment of the rear of the properties along Deptford High Street and Broadway had taken place by that stage and the existing buildings on the area of proposed development had been built. The existing buildings are first shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 Map of 1990.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 The general aims of the evaluation were to establish the presence/absence of any archaeological remains within the proposed development area, and to determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains that may affect further need for mitigation during the construction process.
- 2.1.2 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological deposits and features and to make available the results of the investigation.
- 2.1.3 Specifically the evaluation aimed to investigate the survival of Iron Age and Roman features, and whether the Anglo-Saxon cemetery, revealed to the south, extended into the site.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of three trenches measuring a total of 15 m. Trench 1 to the east of the site measured 5 m; Trench 2 to the west of the site measured 6 m and Trench 3 in the centre of the site measured 4 m. All trenches were orientated west-east as the limited area available did not allow the mechanical excavator to access north-south trench locations. Subsequently Trench 2 was rotated 180 degrees from its envisaged orientation. Trench 3 was moved to the south of its original position as hard standing required to access the developer's welfare facilities needed to remain *in situ*. Trench 1 was not moved.
- 3.1.2 The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 21 tonne 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 2 m wide toothless bucket. All trenches were CAT scanned for services prior to excavation.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All archaeological features were planned and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Finds

- 3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context. Finds of special interest were given a unique small find number.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

- 3.4.1 No significant archaeological features were encountered, as a result no palaeoenvironmental samples were taken during the course of the investigation.

3.5 Presentation of results

- 3.5.1 The trenches will be described sequentially with a description of deposits encountered and their respective dates. A table of deposit types, dimensions and descriptions forms Appendix 1.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 4.1.1 Soils were generally gravelly, derived from the Lambeth Beds. Ground water was not reached during the course of the investigation. The made ground encountered to the east of the site was fairly unstable.

4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

- 4.2.1 No pre-Victorian archaeological deposits were identified during the investigation. A series of Victorian brick built drains and soakaways were located to the west of the site, and a Victorian soil horizon was uncovered to the east.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of deposits

Trench 1

- 5.1.1 Trench 1 was orientated west-east and measured 5 m in length. The trench was excavated to a safe depth 1.2 m below current ground level (3.85 m OD). Following consultation with Mark Stevenson (GLAAS) a sondage was excavated at the western end to locate the depth of the natural gravels.

- 5.1.2 The gravels (102) were located *c* 1.6 m below current ground level, at 2.8 m OD. The sondage uncovered a layer of dark greenish brown loam up to 0.38 m thick (101), which overlay 102 and contained large quantities of Victorian pottery. This possible Victorian garden soil was sealed by a thick layer of made ground containing modern bricks and demolition debris (100).

Trench 2

- 5.1.3 Trench 2 was orientated west-east and measured 6 m in length. Natural gravels (208) were identified *c* 0.3 m below current ground surface, at 5.13 m OD. A brick drain ran in a west-east direction along the centre of the trench (202 and 205). The bricks measured 0.23 m by 0.1 m by 0.7 m, and were red or yellow and generally unfrogged. The drain ran into a vaulted brick soakaway at the extreme south-east of the trench. A second soakaway, also brick, had a circular shape and was located to the south of the trench; the infill (206) contained Victorian pottery. A more recent ceramic drain ran parallel to the trench along the northern edge.

Trench 3

- 5.1.4 Trench 3 was orientated west-east and measured 4 m in length. The trench was excavated to a safe depth, up to 1.3 m below current ground level (3.4 m OD). The only deposit encountered was the modern made ground (100) identified to the east within Trench 1.

5.2 Finds

- 5.2.1 Pottery was recovered from two deposits, the garden soil at the base of the sequence within Trench 1 (101), and the fill of the circular brick soakaway within Trench 2 (206). The assemblage was scanned by John Cotter (OA), and identified as Victorian in date. A brick was sampled from drain structure 202, this too proved to be of Victorian date. After analysis for dating the finds were not retained.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 6.1.1 To the west (Trench 2) the site seemed relatively undisturbed with natural geology reached close to the existing ground surface, and sloping down slightly to the east. To the east of the site there appeared to have been considerable truncation with natural gravels reached *c* 2.3 m lower in Trench 1. The truncation may be related to landscaping associated with the Victorian soil horizon in Trench 1. The base of the Victorian soil horizon was, where encountered, horizontal indicative of a landscaping process rather than natural sloping. All finds were recovered in sufficient quantity to suggest that they were in no way intrusive to their associated deposits. Trenches 1 and 3 were too deep, and the sides too unstable to safely enter, or reduce below the levels reached. It is possible that archaeological features were sealed by the made ground or the Victorian soil horizon, where encountered, although no evidence (such as residual finds) was uncovered to support this.
- 6.1.2 Some truncation of the Victorian soil horizon was evident, a result of the footings of the recently demolished buildings, and their subsequent grubbing out. A conversation with the demolition contractor revealed that he had removed wall footings from as deep as an estimated 3 m below the current ground surface to the east of the proposed development area.

6.2 Overall interpretation

- 6.2.1 All the archaeological deposits and features encountered during the investigation were of Victorian date. The degree of possible truncation to the east of the site was not anticipated by the Desk Based Assessment. It is possible that earlier archaeological deposits survive in the central and eastern areas of the proposed development area, but at a depth unsafe to evaluate without considerable ‘mucking away’ of overburden from the site; spoil storage areas within the confines of the development area were inadequate in size.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench	Ctxt No	Type	Width (m)	Thick . (m)	Comment	Finds	No./ wt	Date
1	100	layer	trench	1.25	modern made ground	none retained		modern
1	101	layer	sondage	0.38	Victorian soil horizon	pot		Victorian
1	102	layer	sondage	-	natural gravels	-		
2	200	cut	0.8 m	0.3 m +	cut for brick drain	-		Victorian
2	201	Fill	0.8 m	0.3 m +	fill of 200	none		Victorian
2	202	drain	0.23 m	-	brick drain	brick		Victorian
2	203	cut	0.8 m	0.3 m +	cut for brick drain	-		Victorian
2	204	fill	0.8 m	0.3 m +	fill of 203	-		Victorian
2	205	drain	0,23 m	-	brick drain	-		Victorian
2	206	fill	1.3 m	-	soakaway infill	pot		Victorian
2	207	layer	trench	0.3 m	overburden sealing gravels	none retained		modern
2	208	layer	trench	-	natural gravels	-		
3	300	layer	trench	1.3 m +	modern made ground	none retained		modern

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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Steele J, 1993, *Turning the Tide: The History of Everyday Deptford*

OA 1992, *OA Fieldwork Manual (1st Edition, ed. D Wilkinson)*

OA 2006a, 18-20 Reginald Square, Deptford, London, Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

OA 2006b, 18-20 Reginald Square, Deptford, London, Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Field Evaluation

APPENDIX 3 GLSMR/RCHME NMR ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FORM**1) TYPE OF RECORDING**

Evaluation

2) LOCATION

Borough: Lewisham

Site address: 18-20 Reginald Square, Deptford

Site Name: Reginald Square

Site Code: RIQ06

Nat. grid Refs:

centre of site: TQ 3724 7703

Limits of site: N 537230 177050 S 537230 177030

E 537250 177040 W 537210 177040

3) ORGANISATION

Name of archaeological company: Oxford Archaeology

Address: Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 OES

Site director/supervisor: Gerry Thacker Project manager: Andrew Norton

Funded by: Birkby Construction Ltd

4) DURATION

Date fieldwork started 26-09-06 Date finished: 27-09-06

Fieldwork previously notified? YES/NO

Fieldwork will continue? NO

5) PERIODS REPRESENTED

Post-Medieval,

6) PERIOD SUMMARIES

Victorian

7) NATURAL

Type: gravels

Height above Ordnance datum: 5.13 to 2.8 m

8) LOCATION OF ARCHIVES

- a) Please provide an estimate of the quantity of material in your possession for the following categories:

Notes	10	Plans	2	Photos	30
		Negative	15		
Slides	15	Correspondence		MScripts (unpub reports, etc)	none
Bulk finds	none	Small finds	none	Soil samples	none
		Other	none		

- b) The archive has been prepared and stored in accordance with MGC standards and will be deposited in the following location: tba

- c) Has a security copy of the archive been made?: NO

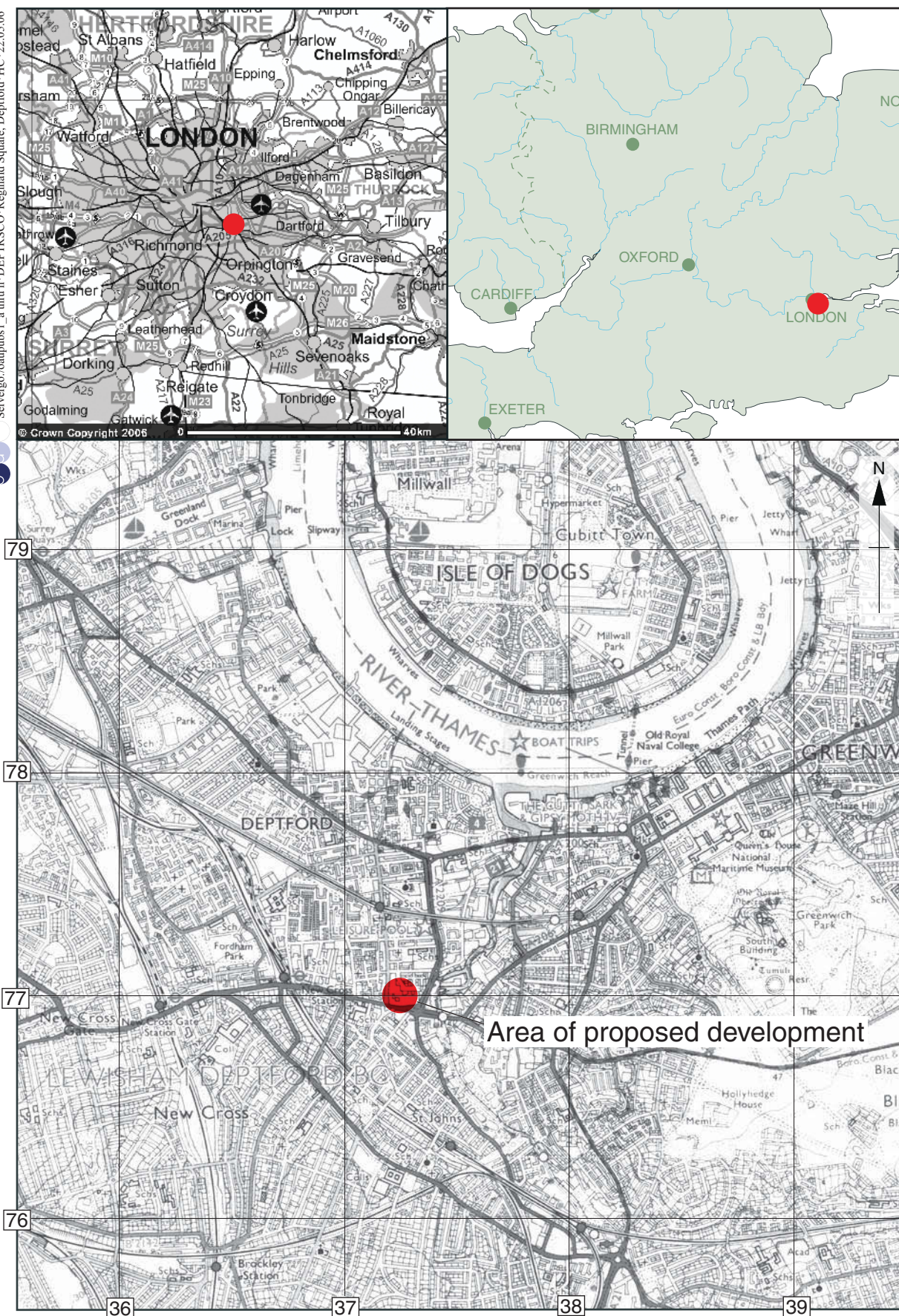
10) BIBLIOGRAPHY

See Appendix 2

SIGNED:

DATE: 16.10.06

NAME : Andrew Norton



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location

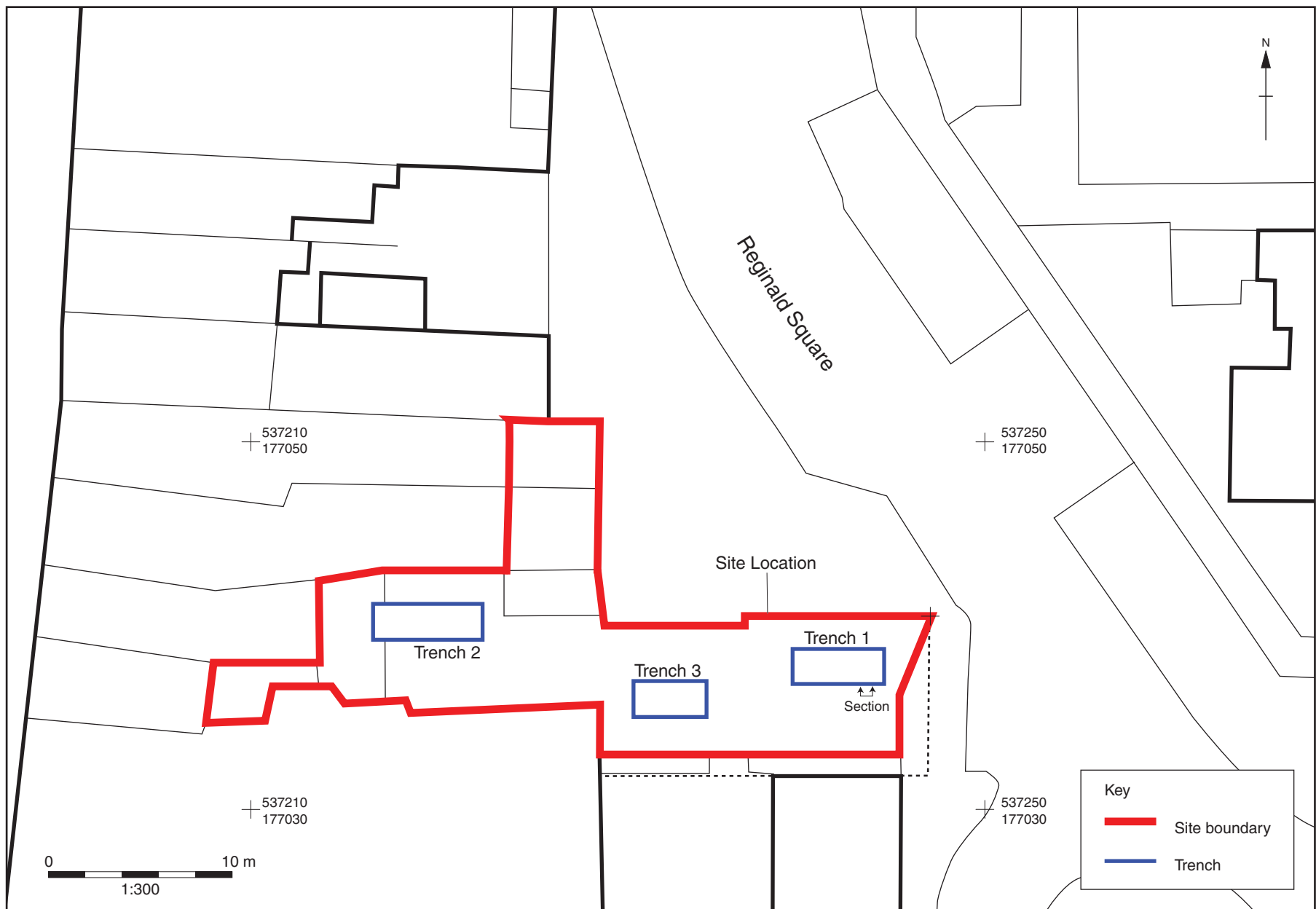
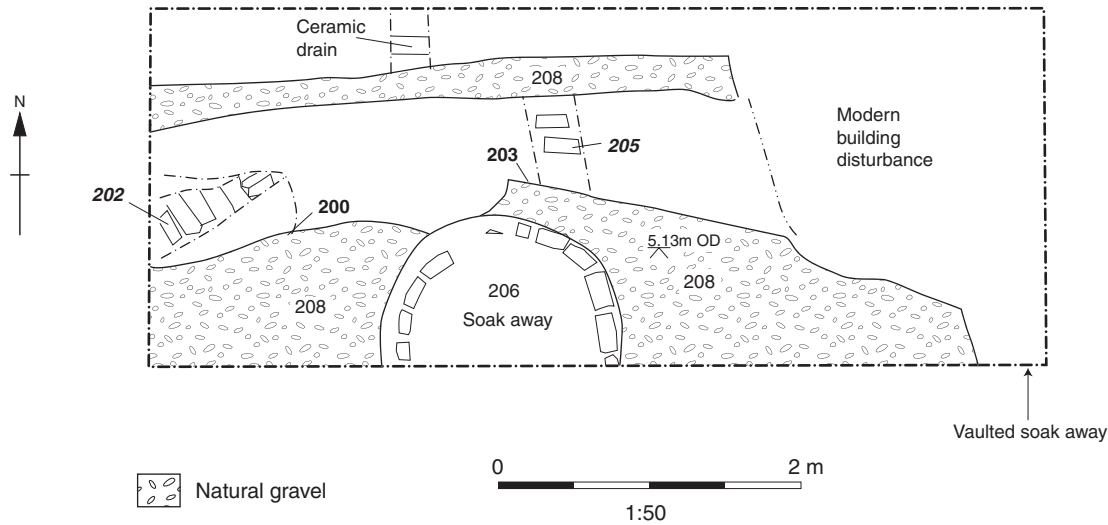


Figure 2: Trench location plan

Trench 2 plan



Trench 1 section

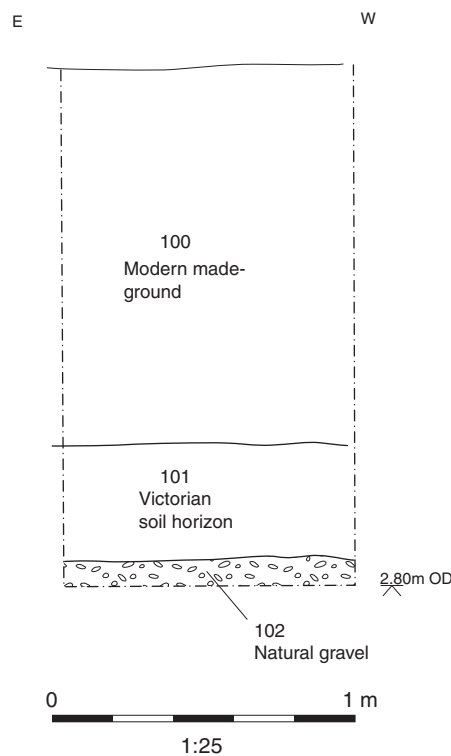


Figure 3: Trench 2 plan; Trench 1 section



Section line and number



Section through feature not illustrated with section drawing



Limit of excavation



Sondage / Interior limit of excavation



Fill line and number



Cut line and number



Structure number



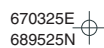
Unclear boundary



Hachures indicate inclination of slope inside excavated feature



Levels



Grid point



Continuation line (trench edge continues)



Charcoal



Clay



Clay nodule



Stones



Ceramic building material

b

Bone

p

Pot



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