

**LAND TO THE REAR OF 19 LYFORD ROAD, SW18**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF WANDSWORTH**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

December 2004

**COMPASS**



**ARCHAEOLOGY**



LAND TO THE REAR OF 19 LYFORD ROAD, SW18

LONDON BOROUGH OF WANDSWORTH

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SITE CODE: LYF04

SITE CENTRE NGR: TQ 27045 73685

PLANNING REFERENCES: 2003/4880 & 2004/2406

ENGLISH HERITAGE REF: LAG 032/350

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Project 294

## ***Abstract***

*Archaeological evaluation of land to the rear of 19 Lyford Road, SW18, took place in late November 2004. The evaluation was carried out as part of the planning process prior to a proposed residential development.*

*This area has potential for prehistoric remains. Palaeolithic worked flint has been recovered locally from Wandsworth Common, and evidence of later prehistoric activity is recorded on the lower Terraces of the Wandle Valley to the west.*

*18<sup>th</sup> century maps show the site area to be within the Common. By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the land had been divided up and appears as woodland or orchard, and subsequently as nursery. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the site was divided between several residential gardens, but had not undergone further development.*

*Two evaluation trenches, 10m and 20m in length by 1.5m in width, were opened within the proposed development footprint. No archaeological remains were found: there was a straightforward sequence of deposits across the site, with fairly shallow topsoil and subsoil horizons (c 0.5m) overlying weathered natural River Terrace Deposits.*

*A few late post-medieval finds were noted within the upper soil horizon of each trench, principally earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery and glass deposited during the period of garden use. There was no obvious evidence for mid 19<sup>th</sup> century horticulture, for example contemporary pottery or clay pipe finds or deeper-cut planting trenches.*

*Clean natural gravelly sand was exposed in each trench at a depth of about 0.75m. Examination of this deposit and the overlying weathered horizon did not produce any evidence for the prehistoric activity that is recorded elsewhere in the area.*

*Given the lack of any significant findings it is suggested that no further archaeological measures should be undertaken in relation to the proposed developments.*

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1** This report presents a summary of archaeological evaluation of land to the rear of 19 Lyford Road, London Borough of Wandsworth (Fig 1: site approximately centred at National Grid Reference TQ 27045 73685).

The evaluation fieldwork was undertaken by Compass Archaeology on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November 2004.

- 1.2** Archaeological assessment was required as part of the planning process, prior to residential development on the site (LB. of Wandsworth Planning Refs. 2003/4880 & 2004/2406).
- 1.3** It was considered that the site had potential for archaeological remains, particularly those of prehistoric date for which there are a number of local references. In later periods the area appears to have lain with open Common land, and certainly appears as such on 18<sup>th</sup> century maps.
- 1.4** English Heritage advised that an archaeological evaluation should be undertaken as a condition of planning consent, prior to development. It was recommended that this should consist of two trial trenches, measuring 20m by 1.5m and 10m by 1.5m in plan, to be located within the proposed development footprint.

## **2. Acknowledgements**

The archaeological evaluation was commissioned by Mr Alex Wingate of Lyford Investments Ltd.

Diane Walls (English Heritage Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service) monitored the project on behalf of the London Borough of Wandsworth.

Assistance in making arrangements for the evaluation and during the fieldwork was given by Adrian Fowler (Alison Brooks Architects) and Alastair Tweedie (Cobalt Green Construction).

## **3. Background**

### **3.1 Location and topography**

The site is located on fairly high but level ground at about 31m OD, some 1.25km to the east of the River Wandle. The British Geological Survey (Sheet 270, 1998) indicates that the site overlies a fairly recent River Terrace Deposit (Lynch Hill Gravel). This and adjacent Terraces form an extensive deposit in the area.

The proposed development covers a more or less rectangular plot of land with sides of about 40m by 25m. The plot lies to the rear of an established Bowling Green, with an access road to the north (Fig 2). At time of evaluation the site was open, having been recently cleared of undergrowth.

## **3.2 Archaeology and history**

Although the site is relatively small it had not been previously developed, and was thus considered to have reasonable potential for archaeological remains.

**3.2.1** The site is located within an area of documented prehistoric activity. Palaeolithic flint artefacts have been found on the high ground of Wandsworth Common, and there is evidence for later prehistoric activity along the line of the Wandle Valley to the west.

**3.2.2** Historically the site formed open land on the western side of Wandsworth Common. This is shown by Rocque's map of 1746 and Milne's *Survey* of 1800, with the western boundary of the Common more or less on the line of the present Lyford Road.

The Ordnance Survey First Edition (2": mile) survey of 1804-6 indicates that the site had recently been developed as woodland or orchard. The OS 25-inch map of 1868 gives a similar picture, although the slightly earlier (1862) Stanford Map shows a more intensively cultivated nursery or allotments.

**3.2.3** By 1894 houses had been constructed on the western side of Trinity Road and the site area incorporated within the back gardens of three of these properties. The only development shown by contemporary maps are two small sheds or greenhouses, plus one larger glasshouse on the northern boundary.

There appears to have been little change in site use up to the present day, although it appears that the area became disused and overgrown from the 1990s.

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

### **4.1 Archaeology and planning**

The proposed development comprises the construction of either one or two residential properties on the site, together with associated access and services (Fig 2; Planning Refs: 2003/4880 & 2004/2406).

The planning permissions that have been granted by the London Borough of Wandsworth include archaeological conditions in accordance with Council policies TBE 14 and TBE 15. An archaeological evaluation of the site was recommended by English Heritage as part of this process, to take place before the commencement of development.

Drawings have been supplied by the project architect to show the site location, layout and proposed 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), or for no further action.

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



In addition, a site-specific *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation* was produced (English Heritage Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service, Sept. 2004). This document proposed two trial trenches to be dug within the new build footprint, measuring respectively 10m and 20m in length by 1.5m in width.

#### **4.3 Archaeological research questions**

The evaluation presented an opportunity to address the following research questions, as defined in the preliminary Written Scheme of Investigation (*Compass Archaeology, October 2004*):

- Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, overlying or cut into the natural gravel? How does this relate to other finds made in the area, including Palaeolithic artefacts from the present Wandsworth Common and later prehistoric remains from the Wandle Valley?
- Is there any evidence for later (Roman to earlier post-medieval) activity, and can the nature of this be defined?
- What evidence is there for post-medieval land use or other activity, and does this bear out the recorded late 18<sup>th</sup> to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century land use (woodland &/or orchard and nursery)?

## 5. Evaluation methodology

5.1 The *Written Scheme of Investigation* was produced and agreed prior to the fieldwork. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with English Heritage guidelines (including *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 two trial trenches located within the area of the proposed development. The trenches were laid out on approximate east-west and north-south alignments as shown on Figure 2, and measured c 10m and 20m in length by 1.5m in width.

The trenches were opened by a mechanical excavator (JCB 3CX) using a toothless bucket and working under archaeological supervision. Recent deposits and undifferentiated soil horizons were removed to a general depth of about 0.8m. Thereafter the exposed surfaces and sections were investigated by hand, recorded and photographed by the on-site archaeologists.

At the conclusion of the field evaluation the trenches were backfilled by JCB with removed spoil.

5.3 The deposits exposed in the evaluation were primarily recorded on scaled plans and sections, supplemented by 35mm photography. Individual deposits were described on the drawings but not separately contexted.

Levels taken during the evaluation were derived from an OSBM located on the northwest (front) corner of No. 21 Lyford Road, value 32.03m OD. A TBM was established on a concrete base just to the south of the evaluation area, value 31.17m (see Fig 3).

The evaluation trench positions were located onto the existing site plan by taped measurement. These were in turn related as a 'best fit' to the Ordnance Survey grid derived from the 1:1250 plan. The OS coordinates to nearest metre for the local evaluation trench grid (Fig 3) are as follows:

Trench 1 - west point: 27043 73671 // east point: 27052 73677

Trench 2 - north " 27038 73695 // south " 27049 73678

The records from the evaluation have been allocated the site code: LYF04 by the Museum of London Archaeological Archive. An ordered and indexed site archive will be compiled in line with the MoL *Guidelines* and will be deposited in the Museum of London Archive.

## **6. The archaeological evaluation**

### **6.1 Summary of the findings**

The two evaluation trenches were dug from a more or less level surface, at or just below 31m OD. In the absence of any significant remains machine excavation was generally to the top of the clean natural River Terrace Deposit, removing the overlying soil horizons and also the weathered and possibly disturbed surface of the natural.

The revealed sequence was quite straightforward and more or less uniform across the site, with fairly shallow topsoil and subsoil horizons overlying natural gravelly sand. There was some variation in the thickness of the respective deposits and in the clarity of interfaces, with the layers in Trench 2 somewhat more clearly defined, but overall no significant change.

### **6.2 Trench 1 (*Figs 4-6*)**

The lowest deposit exposed in the trench was a compact clean sand with some mainly rounded medium-fine gravel, representing the top of the natural Lynch Hill River Terrace. The top of this deposit was exposed at about 30.15m OD, or *c* 0.8m below present ground level, and was overlain by a shallow greyish-buff horizon which had undergone some weathering and root disturbance. There was some lensing of mixed gravel/silty material, particularly near the eastern end of the trench.

The natural was overlain by a subsoil of slightly silty sand with some gravel inclusions and a few larger pebbles, about 0.25m thick. This merged into a darker and quite homogeneous silty sand topsoil with frequent root inclusions, to form a combined soil profile up to 0.6m thick.

During machine excavation of the topsoil one small (*c* 0.75m diam.) pit was exposed, containing a fill of mixed soil with some earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery and bottles. There were also one or two finds of similar date from the surrounding topsoil, plus occasional small and abraded fragments of ceramic building material (brick and/or tile), but no other features or finds.

### **6.3 Trench 2 (*Figs 7-10*)**

Trench 2 presented a very similar sequence to that described above, with one shallow cut feature exposed during excavation near the northern end.

The surface of the natural sand was fairly level and at a comparable height to that in Trench 1, with a marked concentration of silty gravel lensing towards the southern end of the trench (*ie*, in the area closest to that in Trench 1).

The weathered surface of natural was sealed by subsoil and topsoil horizons of similar overall thickness to those in Trench 1, although with slightly more localized variation (see Fig 9). The topsoil produced a few late 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century finds, mainly pottery plus several bottles from the single cut feature near the northern end of the trench, as well as some less closely dateable fragments of ceramic roof tile. There was one sherd of brown-glazed moulded stoneware (*c* 1850-1900) from the subsoil horizon near the southern end of the trench.

## 7. Assessment of the results of the evaluation

The archaeological evaluation has provided an opportunity to address the site-specific objectives which were defined within the preliminary *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 gravel? How does this relate to other finds made in the area, including Palaeolithic artefacts from the present Wandsworth Common and later prehistoric remains from the Wandle Valley?*

There was no evidence for any prehistoric activity on the site, nor were any isolated artefacts recovered.

- *Is there any evidence for later (Roman to earlier post-medieval) activity, and can the nature of this be defined?*

There was no evidence of any Roman, Saxon or medieval activity or land use. Cartographic evidence shows that in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century the area lay within the open and presumably uncultivated land of Wandsworth Common (3.2.2 above).

- *What evidence is there for post-medieval land use or other activity, and does this bear out the recorded late 18<sup>th</sup> and mid 19<sup>th</sup> century land use (woodland &/or orchard and nursery)?*

The only post-medieval evidence was that represented by a few late 19<sup>th</sup> century or later finds, recovered from the topsoil in both trenches and from two small pits and presumably related to the garden development of the site. There was no apparent evidence for recorded early/mid 19<sup>th</sup> century tree-planting or horticulture, for example contemporary pottery or clay pipe finds or deeper-cut pits or trenches.

## 8. Conclusions and recommendations

- 8.1** The archaeological evaluation did not reveal any significant features or finds. The trenches exposed a straightforward sequence of deposits across the site, with fairly shallow topsoil and subsoil horizons (c 0.5m) overlying natural River Terrace Deposits.

The only artefactual evidence was represented by a few late post-medieval finds, almost exclusively from the topsoil and from three small pits and presumably associated with gardening activity from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. These are only of value in confirming the date of these quite recent deposits and have not been retained.

There were no earlier finds or features, and although superficially weathered or disturbed the natural Terrace Deposits were quite sterile.

- 8.2** In view of these findings it is suggested that no further archaeological measures should be undertaken in relation to the proposed developments.

## 9. References

British Geological Survey, 1998 *England & Wales. Sheet 270. South London. Solid and Drift Geology 1:50 000*

Milne T, 1800 *Survey of Wandsworth & District*

Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 1804-6 *Surveyors' Drawings of the London Area, 2": mile, OSD 127 / Serial No. 83*

Ordnance Survey, 1868–1935 *Twenty-five inch series maps*

Stanford 1862 *Library Map of London*

Rocque J, 1746 *An exact Survey of the City's of London and Westminster.... with the country near 10 miles round.* Repr. Margary H (ed.), 1971

Weinreb B, & Hibbert C, 1983 *The London Encyclopaedia*



Fig 1 Site location relation to the 1:1250 Ordnance Survey map

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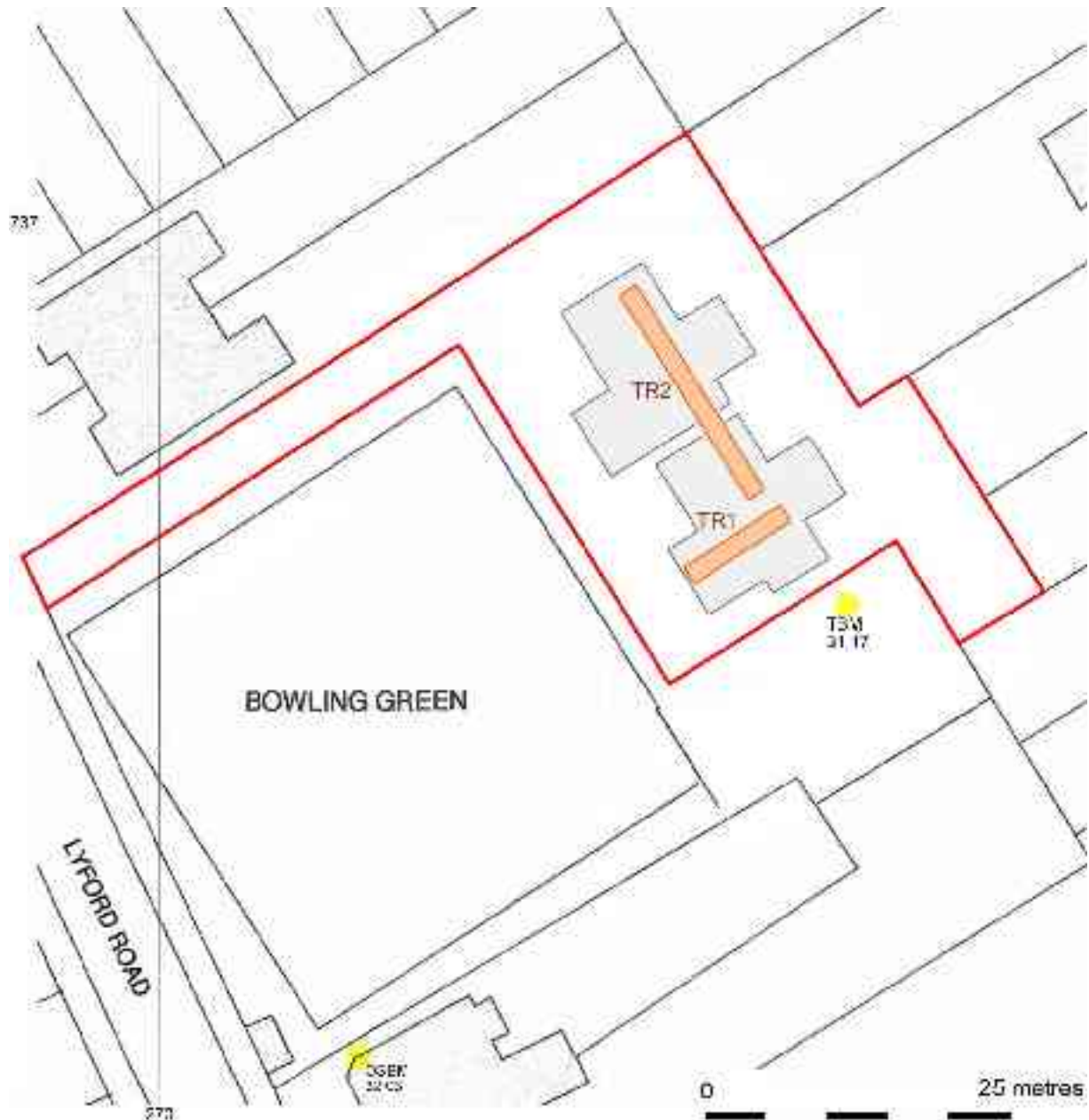


Fig 2 Location of the evaluation trenches (TR1 & 2) in relation to the proposed redevelopment footprint (Planning Ref. 2004/2406)

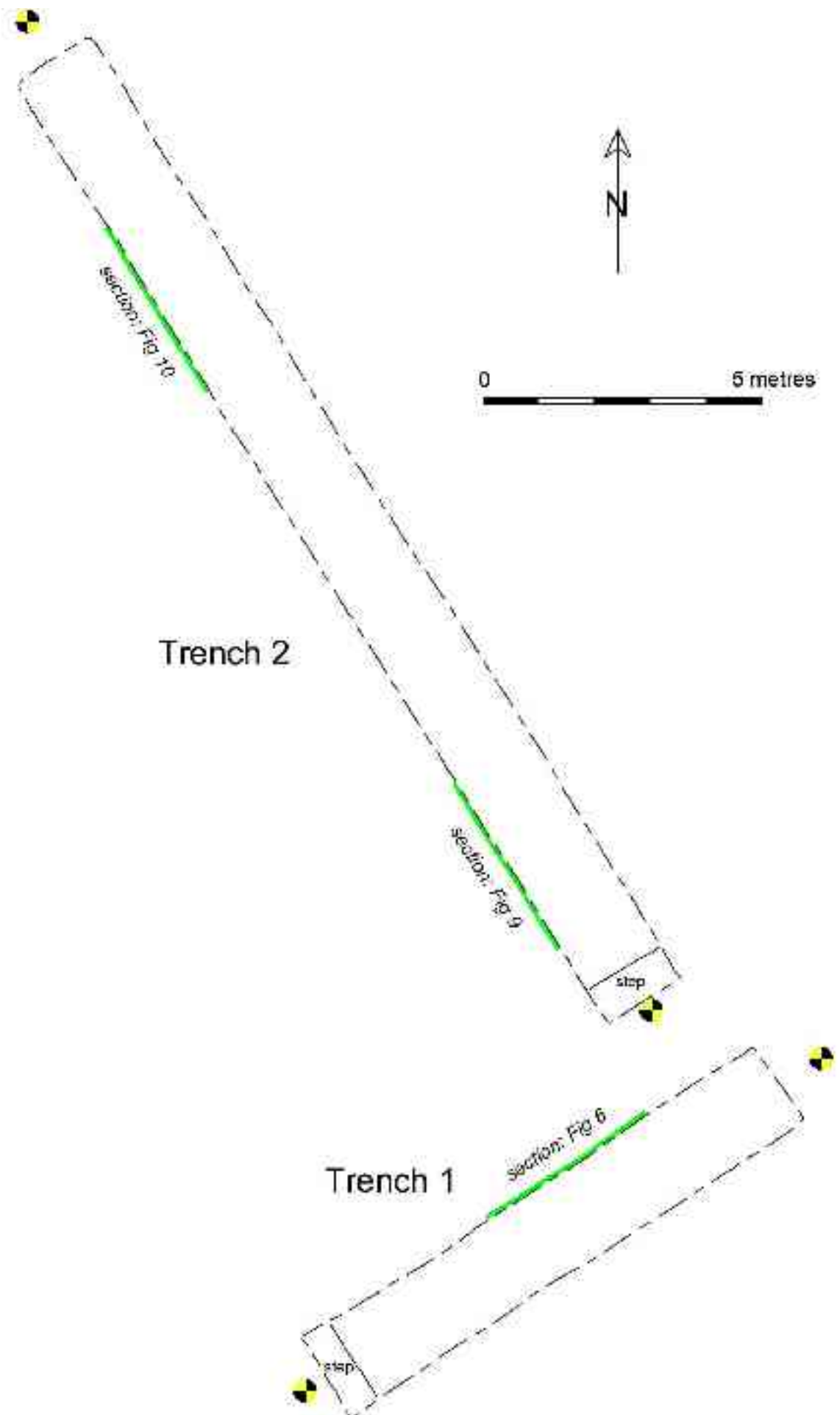


Fig 3 1:100 plan of the evaluation trenches, showing local grid points and location of drawn sections





Fig 4 General view of Trench 1 looking east and showing the surface of the natural River Terrace Deposit (*0.5m scale*)



Fig 5 Oblique view of Trench 1 looking northeast

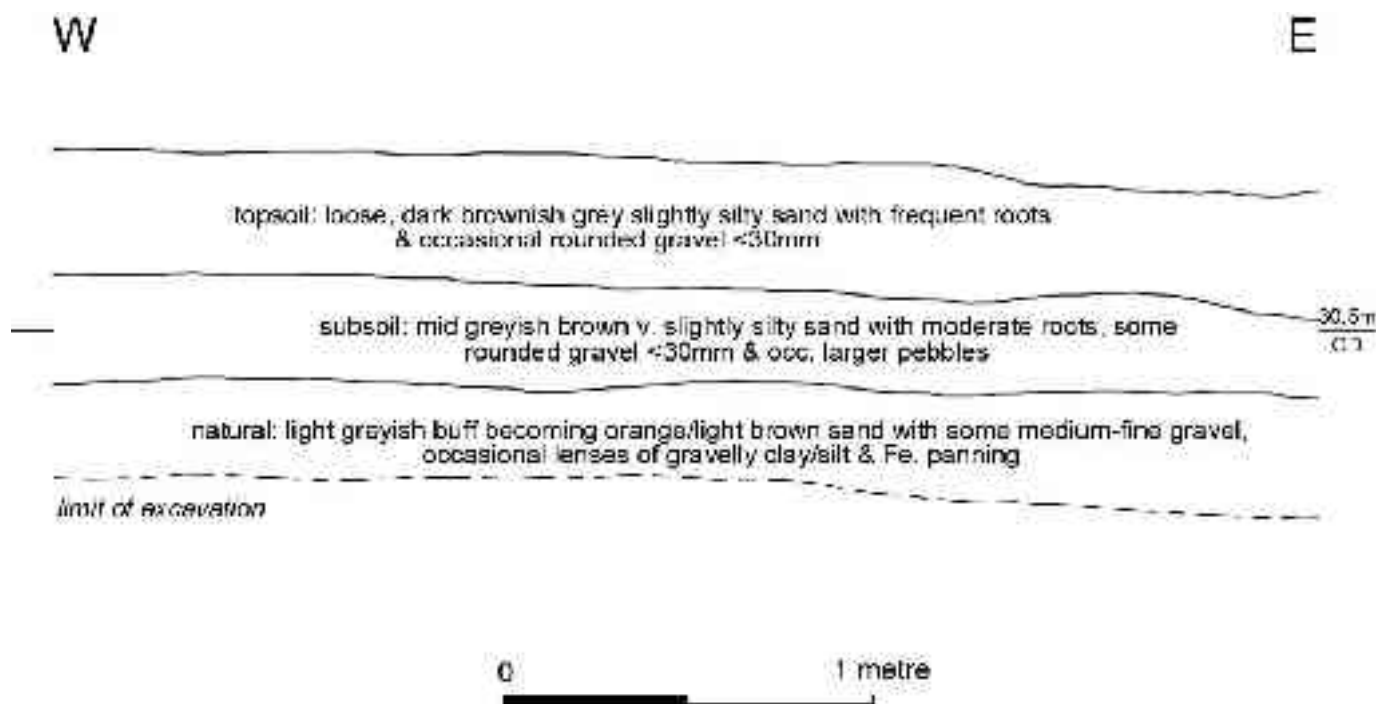


Fig 6 Drawing and photograph of part of the northern section of Trench 1, located on Figure 3 (0.5m scale)





Fig 7 General view of Trench 2 looking north (*0.5m scale*)



Fig 8 Oblique view of Trench 2 looking northwest

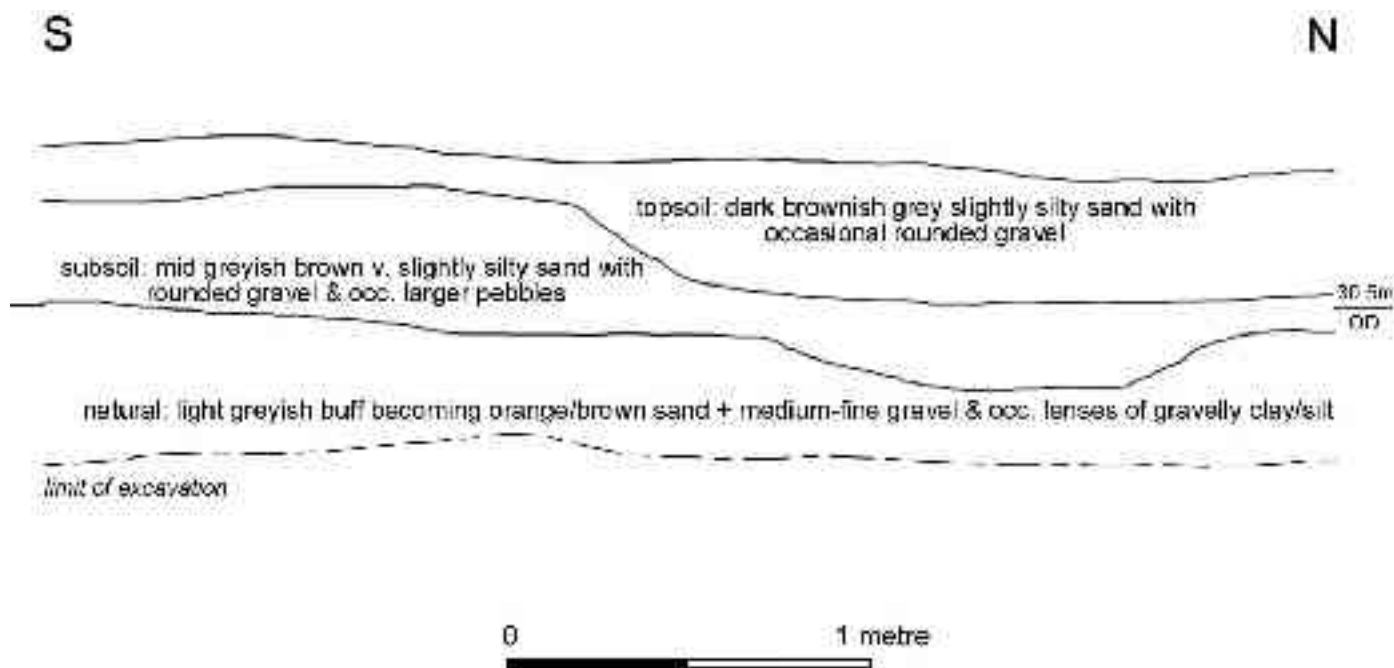


Fig 9 Southern end of Trench 2: drawing and photograph of part of the western section, located on Figure 3 (0.5m scale)



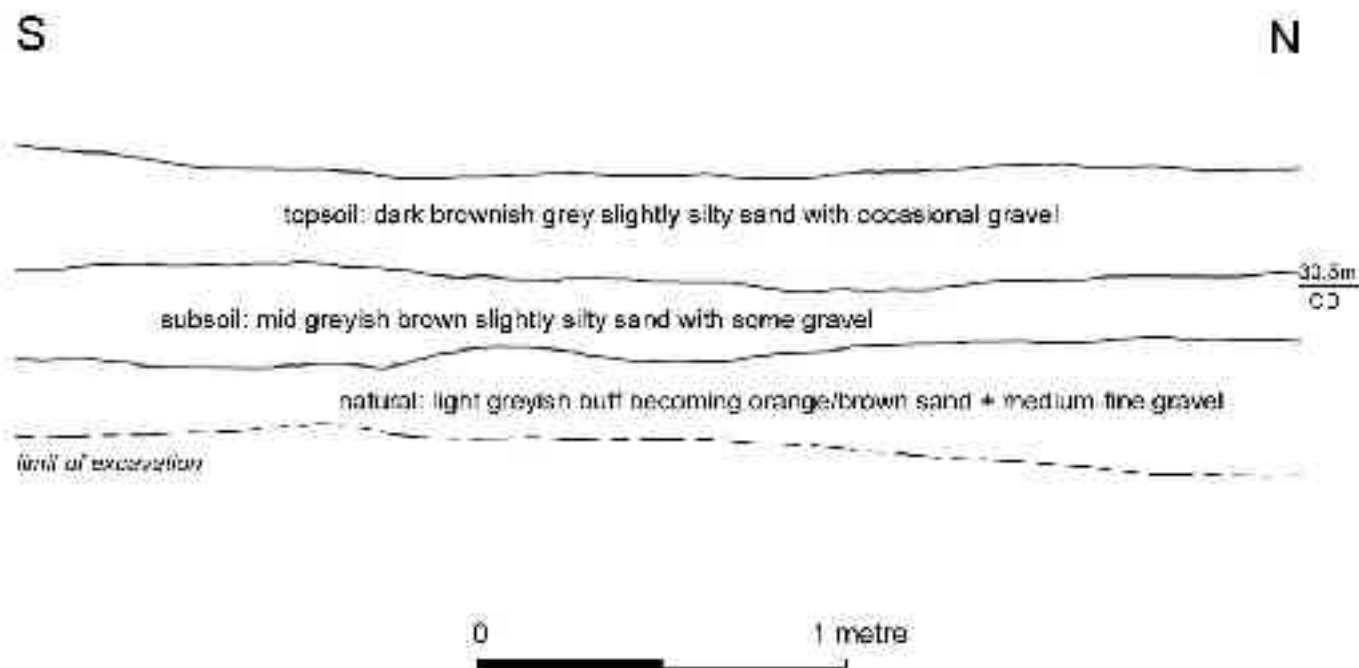


Fig 10 Northern end of Trench 2: drawing and photograph of part of the western section, located on Figure 3 (*0.5m scale*)

## **Appendix II. London Archaeologist summary**

Site address:	Land to rear of 19 Lyford Road SW18, London Borough of Wandsworth
Project type:	Evaluation
Dates of fieldwork:	25 <sup>th</sup> to 26 <sup>th</sup> November 2004
Site code:	LYF04
Supervisor/Project Manager:	Geoff Potter
NGR:	TQ 27045 73685
Funding body:	Lyford Investments Ltd.

### **Summary**

Two trenches were opened within the redevelopment footprint.

There were no archaeological remains: the trenches exposed a simple soil profile some 0.5m deep that yielded occasional recent finds, mainly earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery and glass. There was no evidence for earlier activity, and subsoil overlay superficially weathered but sterile natural Terrace Deposits, predominantly sand with some gravel.