1-4 BARLEY MOW PASSAGE

CHISWICK, W4 4PH

LONDON BOROUGH OF HOUNSLOW

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEST PIT INVESTIGATION

SITE CODE: BMJ04

SITE CENTRE NGR: TQ 20781 78442

LB. OF HOUNSLOW PLANNING REF: 00074/1-4/P5

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1. Introduction

1.1 This following report describes the findings of an archaeological test pit investigation on the north side of Barley Mow Passage, Chiswick, London Borough of Hounslow (Fig 1). Compass Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the investigation by Mike Hutchinson of Mills Whipp Projects Limited.

1.2 It is proposed to erect a two-storey restaurant with basement on the site. The archaeological investigation was required as a condition of planning consent (LB of Hounslow Reference: 00074/1-4/P5; Condition 10).

1.3 The site was considered to have some potential for archaeological remains. It lies close to the projected line of the Roman road from London to Silchester, which roughly follows the present Hammersmith Road and Chiswick High Road before continuing through Brentford.

It appears that post-medieval development of the site area took place from the late 18th century. The Rocque map of c. 1746 indicates that the land was open although intensively cultivated.

1.4 The site itself is roughly rectangular in plan, with overall dimensions of about 15m east-west by 8m north-south. The surrounding land surface is quite level with a natural drift geology indicated as River Terrace sands and gravels, overlain in part by brickearth.

1.5 The on-site investigation was carried out on Wednesday 24th November 2004. A single test pit was dug under archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical excavator, the exposed deposits then being examined, recorded and dating evidence recovered. The pit was located on a 1:150 Site survey plan and related as a 'best fit' to the Ordnance Survey grid.

2. The test pit investigation

2.1 The test pit was located in the centre of the site and measured approximately 3.0m by 1.8m in plan (Fig 2). The pit was cut from a present ground surface at c. 5.85m OD, and was up to 1.65m deep.

2.2 Natural River Terrace deposits were present to a level of just over 4.90m OD and consisted of a fairly shallow brickearth-type layer over interleaved silty/sandy gravels and further brickearth (Fig 3).

2.3 The natural surface was overlain by a fairly solid orange-brown sandy clay/silt. This layer contained occasional post-medieval finds, including a few sherds of commonly occurring mid 18th to 19th century pottery: undecorated salt-glazed stoneware, creamware and refined white earthenware, plus one abraded sherd of post-medieval redware. There was also one piece of clay tobacco pipe stem, 89mm in length and located directly above the interface with the natural brickearth (Fig 4).

The character of this deposit and the sharp interface with natural suggest that it represents made ground over a previously truncated surface, rather than a reworking of *in situ* material. Further evidence is provided by the generally unabraded condition of the finds, notably the pipe stem seen in Figure 4.

2.4 The presumed made ground layer was overlain by a possible usage surface, represented by a thin band of loose grey-brown silty sand with pebbles. This in turn was sealed by further layers of mixed sand/silt with varying quantities of gravel, fragmented brick and mortar (Fig 3). There was no other dating material but all are likely to be of 19th or early 20th century date.

2.5 The lower deposits described in 2.4 above were cut by three brick wall bases, of probable late 19th century or later date. Two of these were joined and formed the eastern and northern sides of the test pit; a third and less substantial north-south base near the western end of the test pit appears to represent a later addition.

The two north-south wall bases were recorded in section and can be related to wall lines shown on the pre-demolition OS plan (Figs 1 & 3).

2.6 A concrete slab represented the highest surviving surface, overlying rubble at the western end of the pit. To the east was a layer of yellow silty sand, presumably the bedding for a surface that had been removed during recent demolition.

3. Summary and conclusion

The investigation did not reveal any significant archaeological remains. The deposits and features that were exposed relate to the development of the site since the late 18th or early 19th century, mainly in the form of a series of made ground layers. There were a few later post-medieval finds which will not be retained.

There was no evidence for any earlier activity, including reworked soil horizons produced by previous cultivation of the site, and the natural surface appeared to have been truncated by subsequent development.

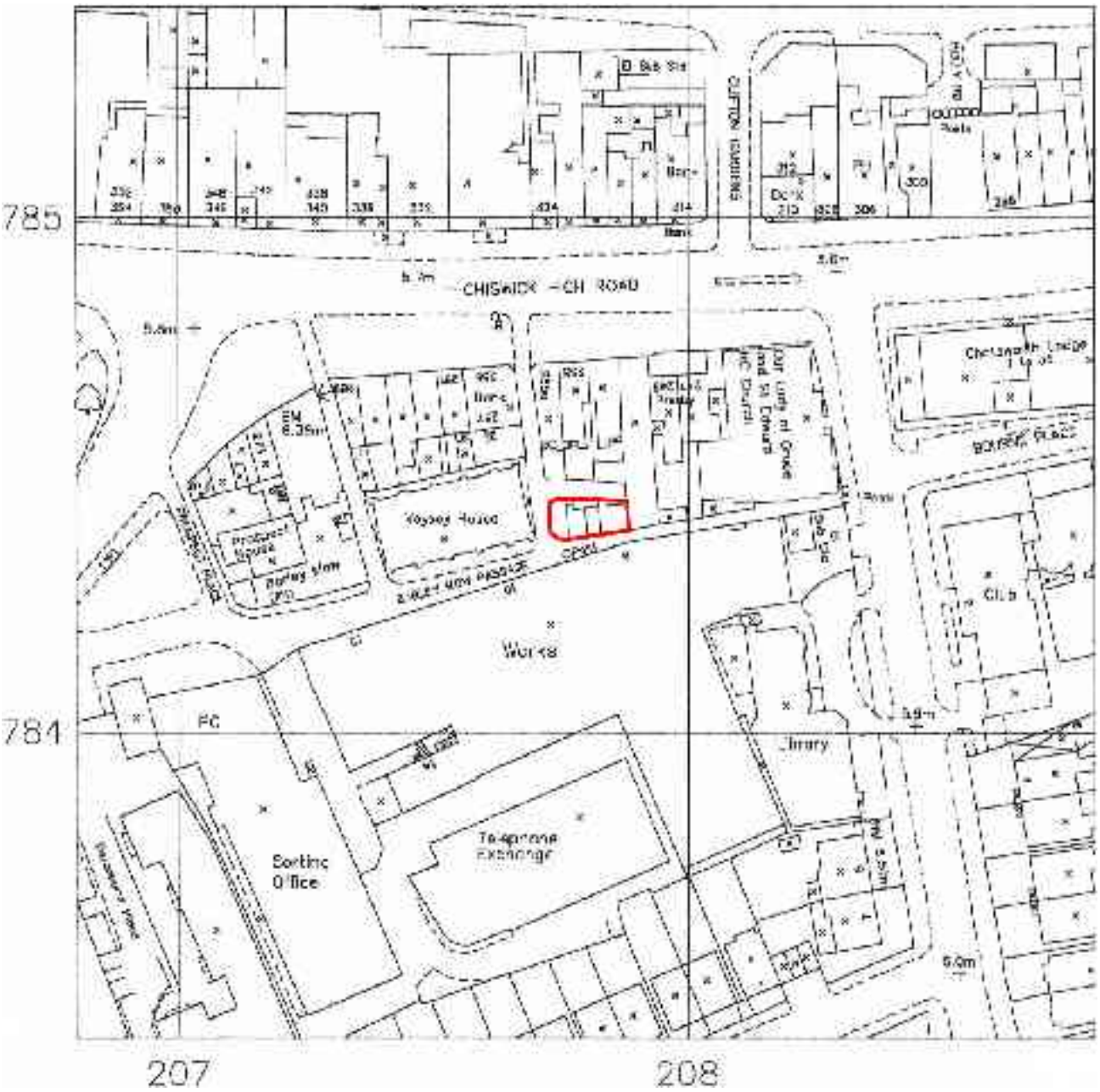

Fig 1 Site location in relation to the Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map

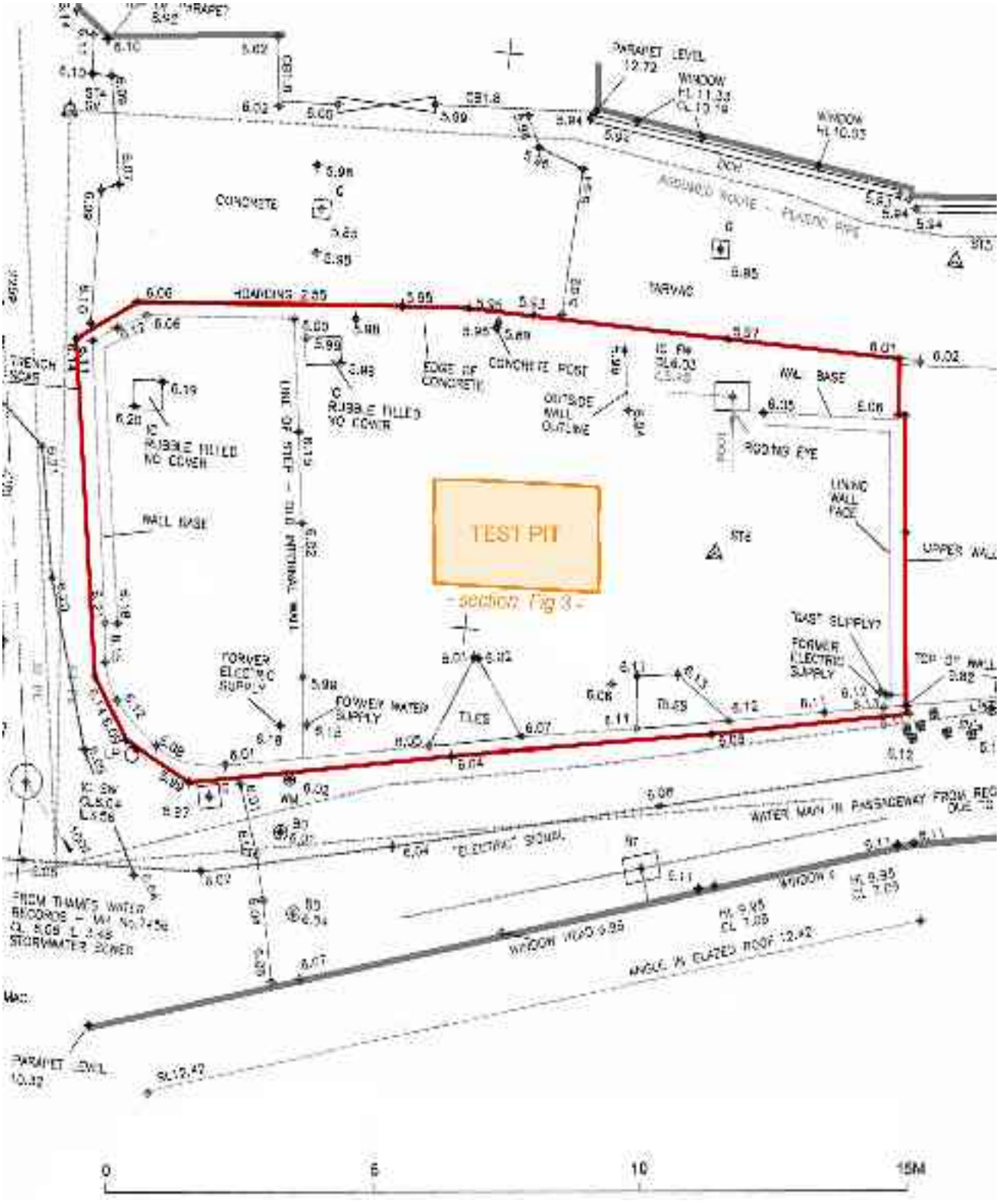

Fig 2 Location of the archaeological test pit in relation to the site survey

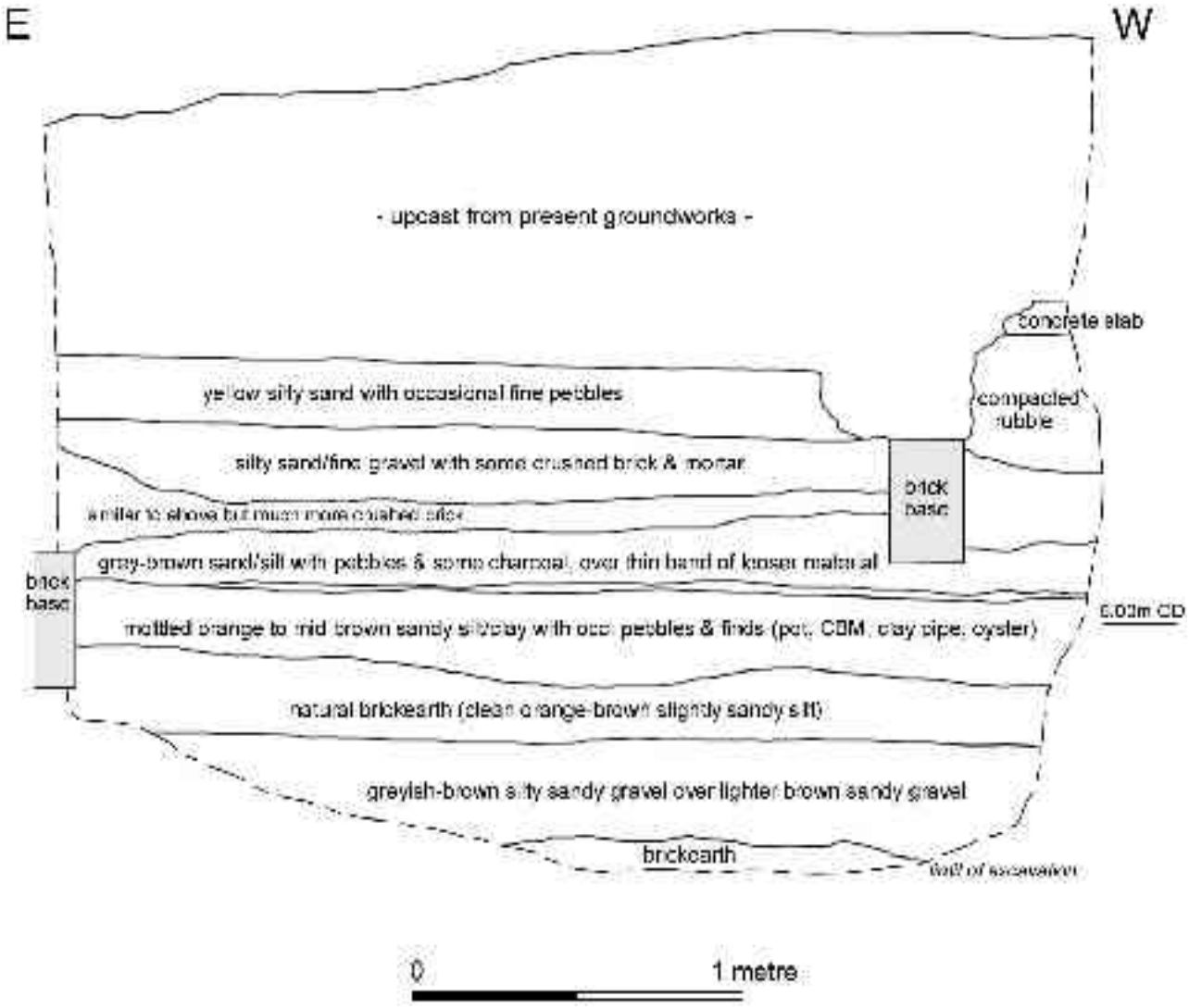

Fig 3 Drawing and photograph of the southern section of the test pit *(0.5m scale in photo.)*

Fig 4 Detail of the central part of Figure 3. The interface between natural brickearth and the overlying deposit lies at the top of the 0.5m scale, and is also marked just to the right by a piece of clay pipe stem