

An Archaeological Evaluation at the former Wandle School, 330 Garratt Lane, Earlsfield, London Borough of Wandsworth

Site Code: WGL05

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 259 730

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September 2005**

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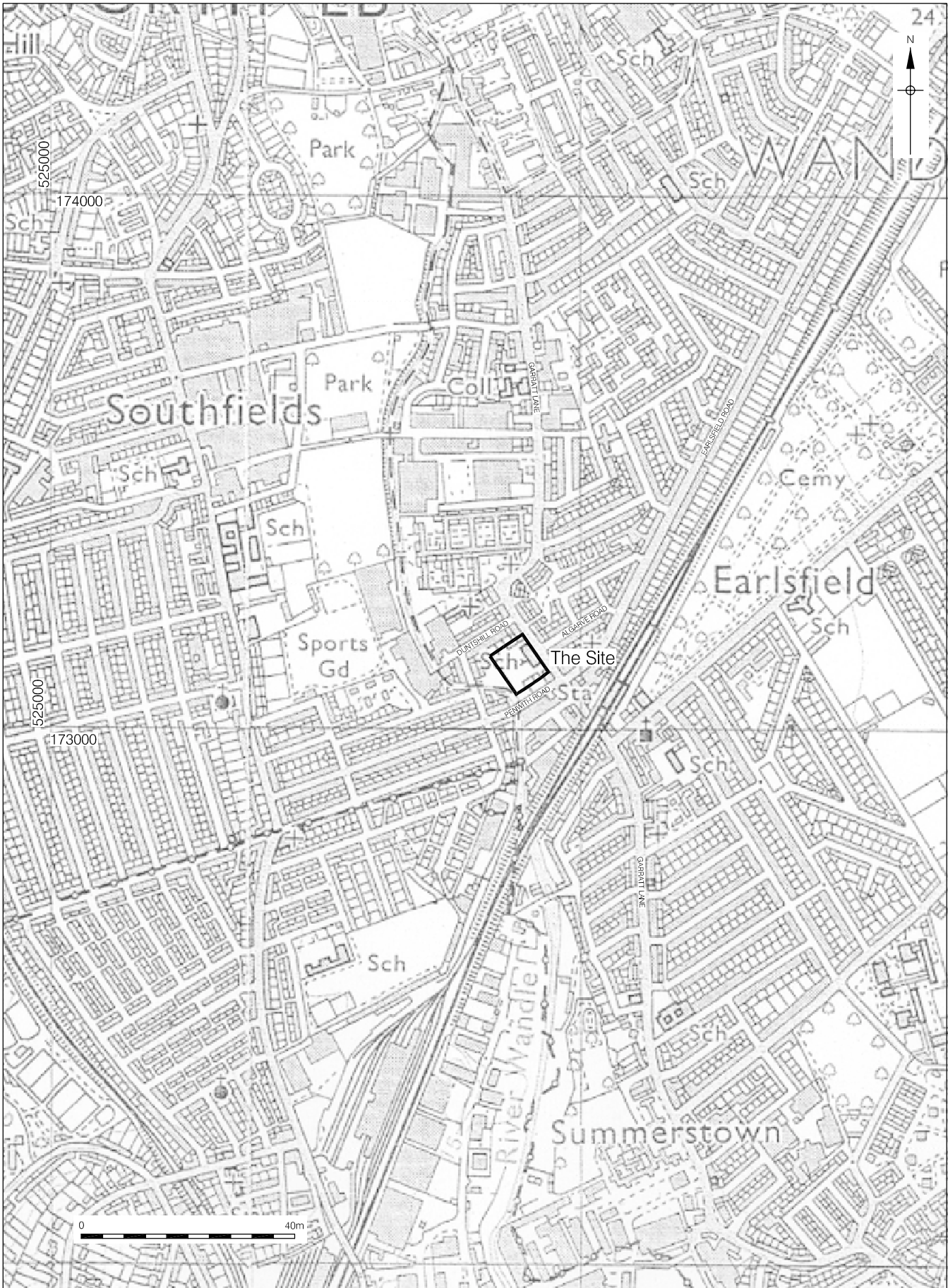
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1 ABSTRACT (Figs. 1 & 2)

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological investigation undertaken in advance of the development of the former Wandle School, 330 Garratt Lane, Earlsfield, London Borough of Wandsworth for residential buildings. The site is centred at National Grid Reference TQ 259 730.
- 1.2 The archaeological investigation consisted of three evaluation trenches located within the footprint of the proposed development and an archaeological watching brief conducted on below ground works in the central area of the site.
- 1.3 The evaluation found evidence for natural clay, gravels and alluvial deposits across the site with the uppermost horizon being encountered at heights ranging between 8.49m OD in the central area of the site to 8.01m OD in the southwest corner. Spot heights taken on the natural deposits indicated a distinct downward slope in the natural topography, from the east to the southwest, existed on site, reflecting the natural course of the River Wandle.
- 1.4 The presence of accumulated silts, sealing the natural horizon and probably relating to periods of flooding prior to the culverting of the River Wandle, in addition to the absence of archaeological features and artefacts, either in situ or residual, strongly suggest that the site remained largely undeveloped prior to the late 19th century.

2 INTRODUCTION (Figs. 1 & 2)

- 2.1 An archaeological field evaluation and watching brief were undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd between 12th and 16th September 2005. The archaeological investigations assessed land formerly comprising Wandle School, 330 Garratt Lane, Earlsfield, London Borough of Wandsworth.
- 2.2 The commissioning client was CgMs Consulting on behalf of Barratt West London. The field evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd under the supervision of Joanna Taylor and the project management of Tim Bradley.
- 2.3 The site is bounded to the northwest by properties fronting Duntshill Road, to the northeast by Garratt Lane, to the southeast by properties fronting Penwith Road and to the southwest by allotment gardens and the River Wandle.
- 2.4 A late 19th century building, formerly in use as Wandle School, occupies the eastern area of the site whilst the land in the vicinity of the existing building currently consists of tarmac surfaces.
- 2.5 A temporary benchmark (10.00m OD) had been transferred to the site by the contractor.
- 2.6 The completed archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records will be deposited at the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) under the site code WGL05.



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Figure 1
Site Location
1:10,000



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Figure 2
Trench and Watching Brief Location
1:1000

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In November 1990 the Department of the Environment issued Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) "Archaeology and Planning", providing guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains.
- 3.2 In considering any planning application for development, the local planning authority will be guided by the policy framework set by government guidance, in this instance PPG16, by the current Development Plan Policy and by other material considerations (for full details of the London Borough of Wandsworth Development Plan Framework see Hawkins 2004).

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 Published geological records indicate the site to lie at the boundary of recent alluvium associated with the River Wandle and Kempton Park Gravels, both of which are underlain by London Clay.
- 4.2 A comprehensive geo-technical investigation has been undertaken. Patchy deposits of alluvium (sterile alluvial clay) and Kempton Park gravel were identified across the site, probably lying in hollows in the underlying London Clay. Elsewhere alluvium and Kempton Park gravels were absent with only the London Clay being present
- 4.3 Modern fill was present across the site at a thickness ranging between 0.70m to 1.50m.
- 4.4 The River Wandle, flowing from north to south, is located to the southwest of the site. The Wandle is canalised at this point and flows through a concrete channel, the level of the water being c.2m below the level of the site.
- 4.5 The ground level of the site ranges between c.9.20m OD and 8.90m OD.
- 4.6 The site is occupied by buildings and tarmac surfaces associated with the sites former use as Wandle School.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 As part of the Desk-Based Assessment (DBA), compiled in 2004, a complete check of the Greater London Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) in a 750m radius of the site was conducted to assess its archaeological potential. The following is a summary of that assessment (See Hawkins 2004).

5.2 Prehistoric

5.2.1 A number of Late Pleistocene or Early Holocene water channels eroded into the London Clay were recorded at 533 Garratt Lane during a watching brief in 1993. Whilst flint tools of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic date have been found in the Earlsfield area, with the exception of a Palaeolithic hand-axe and Mesolithic Tranchet axe both from Merton Road, their precise provenance is largely unknown.

5.2.2 A Bronze Age flint knife and a perforated stone hammer were found at Merton Road during the late 19th century and a Bronze Age leaf shaped spearhead was found at Coresham Way on the west bank of the River Wandle.

5.2.3 The SMR search found no evidence for Iron Age activity within the vicinity of the site and the potential for finding archaeological deposits of all Prehistoric dates was defined as low.

5.3 Roman

5.3.1 Low status rural settlements have been identified along the Wandle Valley at Mitcham, Croydon, Merton and Beddington and possible votive offerings have been recovered from the River Wandle itself (Pooley 2001). However, no finds or features of Roman date are known in the 750m radius of the site and the potential for Roman deposits on site was defined as low.

5.4 Saxon/early medieval

5.4.1 No finds or features of Saxon or medieval date are known in the 750m radius of the site and the potential for recovering deposits of these dates on site was defined as low.

5.5 Late medieval/post-medieval

5.5.1 The map regression for the site indicated that it was comprised of agricultural land until the late 19th century.

5.5.2 Whilst the Ordnance Survey of 1893 shows the site as undeveloped, by 1916 buildings associated with the establishment of Wandle School are shown as present.

- 5.5.3 The 1936-39 Ordnance Surveys show little change to the site, however later maps indicate that the site was badly damaged during World War II bombing raids which closed the school until 1952.
- 5.5.4 The damaged buildings were demolished in 1952 and new ancillary buildings were added. Further additions were made to the school between 1953 and 1972 and the buildings were further modified between 1972 and the present.
- 5.5.5 The school appears to have dramatically declined in the late 20th century and was assessed as the worst primary school in England in 2000. The school closed in 2004.
- 5.5.6 The archaeological potential for the late medieval and post-medieval periods was defined as very low.

5.6 Recent Archaeological Work

- 5.6.1 Recent archaeological work within the vicinity of the study site at Burmestar Road (BUD92), 533 Garratt Lane (GLA93), 224 Garratt Lane (GTL94), 196 Garratt Lane (GAL92), Strathville Road (SVR94), 333 Merton Road (MRA00), Siward Park (OCO01), 32-60 Burr Road (BUJ02), Duntshill Mill (DHR00), St Andrews Court, Waynflete Street (SDO03) and 151 Penwith Road (PWE01) found no evidence of significant archaeological activity and only natural, late post-medieval and modern deposits were recorded.

6 METHODOLOGY (Fig. 2)

- 6.1 The archaeological investigations consisted of three evaluation trenches and a watching brief on below ground works in the central area of the site. All of the areas of investigation were located within the footprint of the proposed development.
- 6.2 The evaluation trenches were excavated to the following dimensions:
- Trench 1 was sub square in plan and measured 4.25m N/S x 6.40m E/W x 1.10m max. depth
 - Trench 2 was orientated N/S and measured 15.00m N/S x 1.60m E/W x 0.65m max. depth
 - Trench 3 was orientated E/W and measured 15.00m x 1.60m x 0.75m max. depth
 - The Watching Brief Area was located centrally to the site and excavation continued to a depth of 1.70m
- 6.3 The positions of services were checked before locating the trenches on the ground.
- 6.4 The removal of ground level surfaces and subsequent mechanical excavation were undertaken utilising a JCB type mechanical excavator fitted with a flat bladed ditching bucket under archaeological supervision.
- 6.5 Mechanical excavation continued through undifferentiated deposits in spits of no greater than 200mm until either significant archaeological, or natural, deposits were encountered.
- 6.6 Following fill clearance, all faces of the trench that required examination were cleaned using appropriate hand tools. All investigation of archaeological deposits was by hand, with cleaning, examination and recording both in plan and section.
- 6.7 Recording on site was undertaken using the single context recording system as specified in the Museum of London Site Manual. Plans were drawn at a scale of 1:20 or 1:50, and full or representative sections at a scale of 1:10. Contexts were numbered sequentially and recorded on *pro-forma* context sheets.
- 6.8 The site was given the code WGL05
- 6.9 Trenches were fenced off during the excavation to protect the archaeology and the public.

7 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE (Figs. 2 & 3)

7.1 Trench 1

- 7.1.1 A light brownish yellow, naturally deposited silty sandy gravel layer [2] was the earliest deposit encountered in Trench 1. The deposit extended throughout the eastern half of the trench and was encountered at a height of 7.90m OD.
- 7.1.2 To the west of this horizon, and post-dating it, was a firm, light brownish yellow, silty clay layer [1]. The deposit extended throughout the western half of the trench and was encountered at 8.01m OD.
- 7.1.3 Sealing the natural horizons was a firm/friable, mid grey brown, sandy silty clay subsoil [11] within which were occasional fragments of charcoal/coal. The c.0.50m thick deposit was seen to extend throughout the trench and was encountered between 8.54m OD and 8.40m OD.
- 7.1.4 The subsoil was sealed by a loose, dark greyish brown, sandy silty clay topsoil [12] within which were frequent CBM, coal and mortar flecks and frequent flint pebbles. The c.0.55m thick deposit was seen to extend throughout the trench and was encountered at 8.99m OD.
- 7.1.5 The remainder of the trench was constituted by root disturbance associated with trees located immediately to the south of the trench and a 20th century brick foundation situated in the southeast of the trench. The underlying deposits were sealed by a tarmac surface was 9.10m OD.

7.2 Trench 2

- 7.2.1 A mid yellowish grey, naturally deposited silty clayey gravel layer [16] was the earliest deposit encountered in Trench 2. The deposit was present at the northern end of the trench and was encountered between heights of 8.46m OD and 8.34m OD.
- 7.2.2 To the south of this horizon, and post-dating it, was a soft, mid yellow grey, naturally deposited sandy silt layer [17]. The deposit extended throughout the southern and central parts of the trench and was encountered at 8.39m OD.
- 7.2.3 At the northern end of Trench 2 a 0.10m deep naturally formed undulation [15] in the natural horizon was present. The undulation was filled by a soft, light grey, naturally deposited silty clay fill [14] which was encountered at 8.46m OD.
- 7.2.4 The natural horizon was sealed by a soft, mid brownish grey, sandy silt subsoil [13] within which were occasional flint pebbles. The 0.06m thick layer was seen to extend throughout the trench and was encountered at heights ranging between 8.63m OD and 8.58m OD.
- 7.2.5 The remainder of the trench was constituted by an E/W aligned 20th century concrete foundation, a 0.20m thick layer of crushed brick encountered at 8.78m OD, a 0.05m thick

tarmac surface encountered at 8.83m OD, a 0.15m thick layer of sand and asphalt encountered at 8.98m OD and a secondary 0.05m thick tarmac surface. The height of the secondary tarmac surface and thus the height of the current ground surface in the vicinity of Trench 2 was 9.03m OD.

7.3 Trench 3

7.3.1 A mid brownish orange, naturally deposited clayey gravel layer [4] was the earliest deposit encountered in Trench 3. The deposit was present in the eastern part of the trench and was encountered at a height of 8.10m OD.

7.3.2 At the eastern end of Trench 3 a naturally formed NE/SW a channel/undulation [5] truncated the earlier natural horizon. The channel/undulation was filled by a firm, mid brownish blue orange, naturally deposited silty clay [3] which was encountered between 8.26m OD and 8.10m OD.

7.3.3 The natural horizon was sealed by a firm, mid greyish yellow, silty sand subsoil [6] which contained occasional CBM fragments and moderate flint pebbles. The c.0.40m thick deposit was seen to extend throughout the trench and was encountered between 8.70m OD and 8.46m OD.

7.3.4 The remainder of the trench was constituted by two N/S orientated services and two modern cut features, both of which contained diesel contaminated fills, located at the eastern and western ends of the trench. These were sealed by a 0.20m thick layer of redeposited clay encountered at 8.66m OD, a 0.05m thick tarmac surface encountered at 8.71m OD, a 0.10m thick layer of sand and asphalt encountered at 8.81m OD and a secondary 0.05m thick tarmac surface. The height of the secondary tarmac surface and thus the height of the current ground surface in the vicinity of Trench 3 was 8.86m OD.

7.4 Watching Brief Area

7.4.1 As a consequence of the depth of the area of investigation, detailed recording of the deposits encountered in watching brief was not possible and the natural and archaeological sequence was recorded from ground level.

7.4.2 A firm, mid pinkish orange, naturally deposited silty clay layer [10] was the earliest deposit encountered in the watching brief. The deposit was present throughout the area of investigation and was encountered at a height of 8.19m OD.

7.4.3 The horizon was sealed by a loose, mid pinkish orange brown, naturally deposited silty gravel layer [9]. The layer was c.0.15m thick and was encountered at 8.34m OD.

7.4.4 Overlying the earlier natural deposit was a firm, mid pinkish brown, naturally deposited silt layer [8] which contained occasional flint pebbles. The layer was c.0.25m thick and was encountered at 8.57m OD.

- 7.4.5 The natural horizon was sealed by a firm, dark pinkish brown, sandy silt subsoil [6] .The c.0.11m thick deposit was seen to extend throughout the area of investigation and was encountered at 8.68m OD.
- 7.4.6 Much of the area of investigation was constituted by the levelled remains of late 19th/20th century brick foundations associated with the former Wandle School, the construction of which had severely impacted on the underlying horizons. The remainder of the area of investigation was constituted by a c.0.44m thick layer of brick rubble and two c.0.05m thick tarmac surfaces separated by a 0.05m thick layer of dumped sand and asphalt. The height of the second tarmac surface and thus the height of the current ground surface in the vicinity of the watching brief was 9.17m OD.

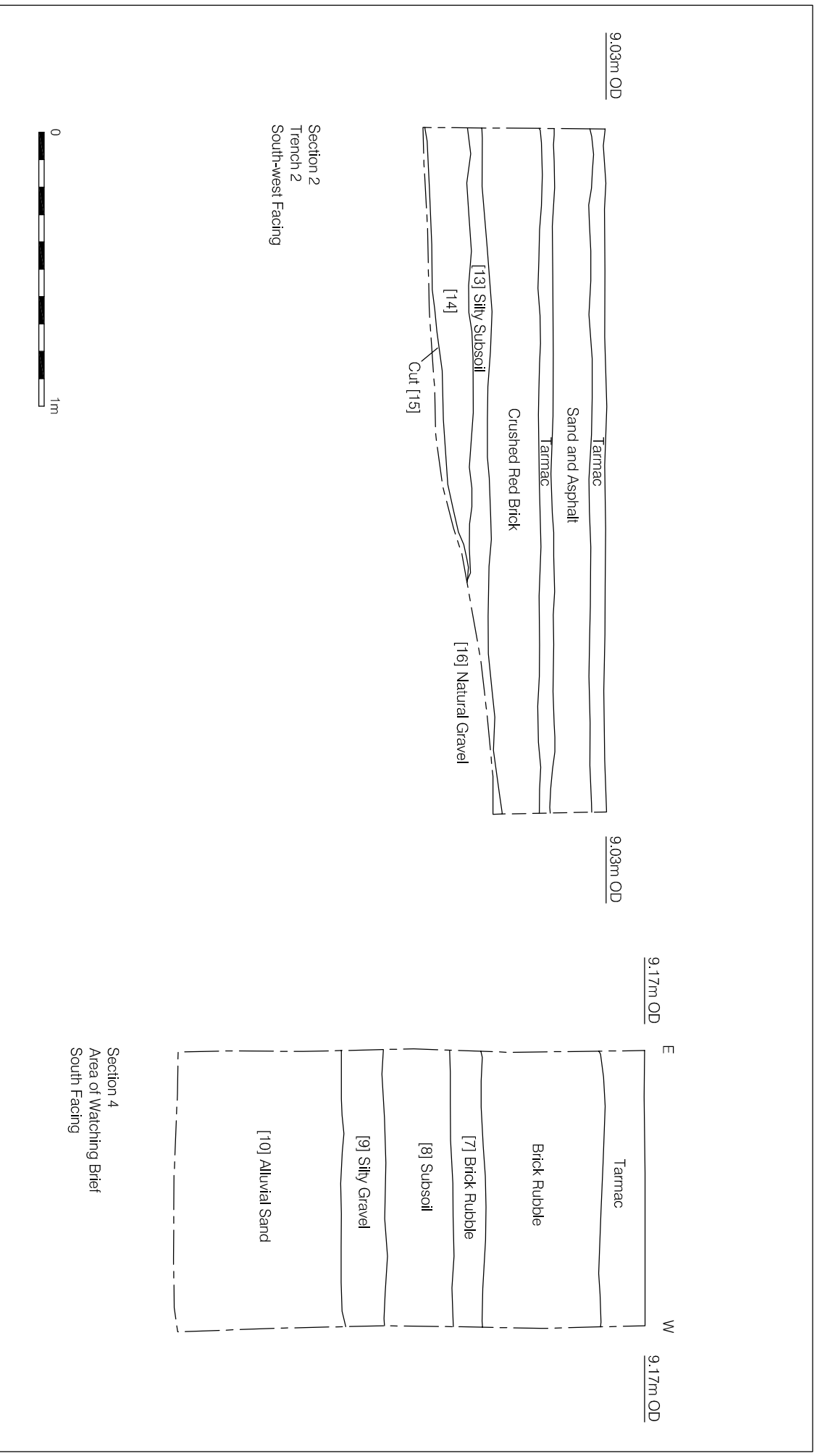


Figure 3
Sections 2 and 4
1:20

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The evaluation found probable evidence for London Clay at a height of 8.19m OD during a watching brief on below ground works in the central area of the site. Excavation of the evaluation trenches ceased at the uppermost natural horizon and as a consequence this deposit was not encountered elsewhere on site.
- 8.2 Naturally deposited Kempton Park gravels were found in all areas of investigation at heights ranging between 8.46m OD - 8.34m OD in the west and central areas of the site, 8.10m OD in the north and 7.90m OD in the southwest of the site.
- 8.3 Undulations in the natural horizon, infilled by naturally accumulated silts, were present in Trenches 2 and 3, whilst naturally accumulated silt layers dating to the same phase of deposition were present in the watching brief and Trenches 1 and 2. The height of these deposits ranged between 8.49m OD – 8.46m OD in the west and central areas, 8.26m OD in the north and 8.01m OD in the southwest of the site. No archaeological features were seen to truncate the natural horizon.
- 8.4 The natural horizon was sealed by a sandy silt subsoil horizon in all of the areas of investigation. The deposit reflects episodes of natural accumulation most probably accumulated during times of flooding prior to the culverting of the River Wandle. No archaeological features were seen to truncate the subsoil horizon.
- 8.5 Evidence for a late 19th/ 20th century phase of construction on site was present in the form of brick foundations in the watching brief and evaluation Trenches 1 and 2. The remainder of the trenches were constituted by modern root disturbance, services, 20th century made ground deposits and two phases of tarmac surfaces, the uppermost of which represents the current ground surface on site.
- 8.6 The presence of accumulated silts, probably relating to periods of flooding prior to the culverting of the River Wandle, in addition to the absence of archaeological features and artefacts, either in situ or residual, strongly suggest that the site remained largely undeveloped prior to the late 19th century.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hawkins, D. 2004. Archaeological Desk Based Assessment: Land at the former Wandle School, 330 Garratt Lane, Earlsfield, London, SW18 4EJ. CgMs: Unpublished Report.

Pooley, A. 2001. An Archaeological Watching Brief at 151 Penwith Road, Earlsfield, London Borough of Wandsworth. Pre-Construct Archaeology: Unpublished Report.

10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 10.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank CgMs Consulting for commissioning the work on behalf of Barratt West London.

- 10.2 The author would like to thank Aiden Turner and Will Johnston for their work on the evaluation, Lisa Lonsdale for the logistics and Adrian Nash for the illustrations. Furthermore, the author would like to thank Tim Bradley for his project management and editing.

Appendix 1: CONTEXT REGISTER

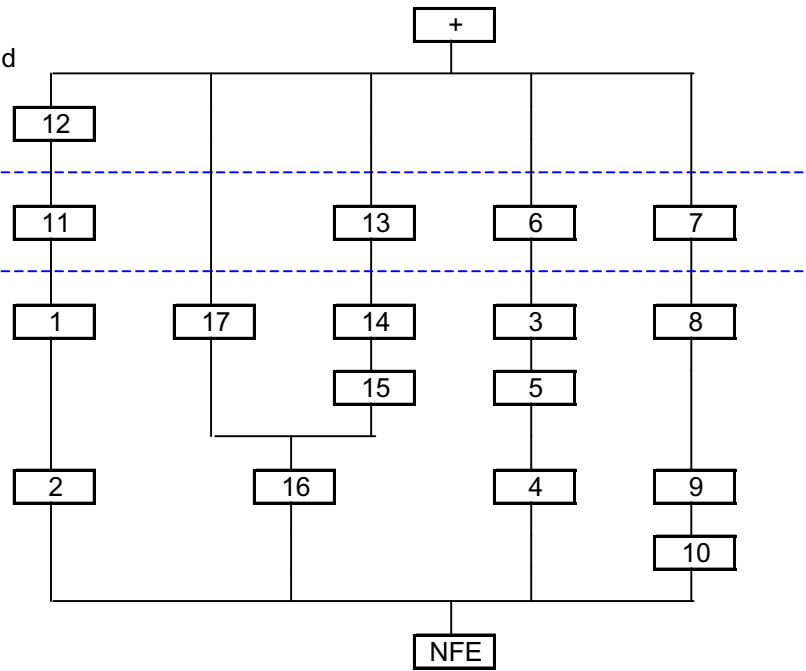
Context Number	Trench	Plan Number	Section Number	Phase	Type	Description	Highest	Lowest
1	Tr1	Tr1	S1	1	Layer	Firm, light brownish yellow, silty clay, occ pebbles	8.01	
2	Tr1	Tr1	S1	1	Layer	Compact, light yellow brown, silty sandy gravels	7.9	
3	Tr3	Tr3	S3	1	Fill	Firm, mid brown blue orange, clay, occ gravel - Fill of [5]	8.26	8.1
4	Tr3	Tr3	S3	1	Layer	Loose, mid brown orange, clayey gravel	8.1	
5	Tr3	Tr3		1	Cut	Eastern edge in plan of natural channel?	8.1	
6	Tr3		S3	2	Layer	Firm, mid grey yellow, silty sand, occ CBM, mod pebbles	8.7	8.46
7	WB1		S4	2	Layer	Firm, pink brown, silt, occ pebbles	8.59	
8	WB1		S4	1	Layer	Firm, mid pink brown, silt, occ pebbles	8.49	
9	WB1		S4	1	Layer	Loose, mid pink orange brown, silty gravel	8.34	
10	WB1	WB1	S4	1	Layer	Firm, mid pink orange, silty sand	8.19	
11	Tr1		S1	2	Layer	Firm/friable, mid grey brown, sandy silty clay, occ coal flecks	8.54	8.4
12	Tr1		S1	3	Layer	Loose, dark grey brown, silty sandy clay, freq CBM, coal, mortar flecks and gravel	8.99	
13	Tr2		S2	2	Layer	Soft, mid brown grey, sandy silt, occ gravel	8.63	8.58
14	Tr2	Tr2	S2	1	Fill	Soft, light grey, silty clay - Fill of [15]	8.46	
15	Tr2	Tr2	S2	1	Cut	Natural undulation	8.46	8.36
16	Tr2	Tr2	S2	1	Layer	Compact, mid yellow grey, silty clayey gravels	8.46	8.34
17	Tr2	Tr2		1	Layer	Soft, mid yellow grey, sandy silt, occ pebbles	8.39	8.34

Appendix 2: SITE MATRIX

Phase 3:
19th c made ground

Phase 2:
Subsoil

Phase 1:
Natural deposits



Appendix 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-10279

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Investigation of land at the former Wandle School, Earlsfield, London Borough of Wandsworth
Short description of the project	The archaeological investigation consisted of three evaluation trenches located within the footprint of the proposed development and an archaeological watching brief conducted on below ground works in the central area of the site. The investigation found evidence for natural clay, gravels and alluvial deposits across the site. Spot levels on the natural deposits indicated that a downward slope in the natural topography, from the east to the southwest, existed on site reflecting the natural course of the River Wandle. The presence of accumulated silts relating to periods of flooding prior to the culverting of the River Wandle, in addition to the absence of archaeological features and artefacts, either in situ or residual, suggest that the site remained largely undeveloped prior to the 19th century.
Project dates	Start: 12-09-2005 End: 16-09-2005
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	WGL05 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Building refurbishment/repairs/restoration
Development type	Housing estate
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON WANDSWORTH WANDSWORTH Land at the former Wandle School, 330 Garratt Lane, Earlsfield, London Borough of Wandsworth

Study area	100.00 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 259 730 Point
Height OD	Min: 8.49m Max: 8.01m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	CgMs Consults Ltd
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Duncan Hawkins
Project director/manager	Tim Bradley
Project supervisor	Joanna Taylor
Sponsor or funding body	Barratt West London

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Investigation on land at the former Wandle School, Earlsfield, London Borough of Wandsworth
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Taylor, J
Date	2005
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	London

Entered by	Joanna Taylor (jtaylor@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	19 September 2005

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