

**SURREY HOUSE, 20 LAVINGTON ST;
LONDON BOROUGH OF
SOUTHWARK SE1 0NZ**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF**



DECEMBER 2010

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

SURREY HOUSE, 20 LAVINGTON ST; LONDON
BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK SE1 0NZ

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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**SURREY HOUSE, 20 LAVINGTON ST; LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK
SE1 0NZ
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF,**

**Site Code: LVN 10
Central NGR: TQ 32087 80160**

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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited during a geotechnical site investigation at Surrey House, 20 Lavington Street, Southwark SE1 0NZ. The work was commissioned by Gifford on behalf of the client, Citizen M Hotels.
- 1.2 The watching brief monitored the excavation of three test pits on site; planned further pits were aborted. Three boreholes were installed and from these window samples were retrieved. These were opened by the geotechnical contractor in their laboratories and Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd monitored this work to record the full sequence of the samples.
- 1.3 The watching brief identified four phases archaeology at the site, comprising of fluvial gravels, prehistoric peats and alluvial peaty-clay, a late prehistoric transgression and lastly late post-medieval to modern made ground.
- 1.4 The only deposit suggestive of possible prehistoric activity is a thin layer of burnt gravels with a fire-cracked appearance, although this may have been redeposited. The presence of significant peat deposits, combined with the relative lack of deep alluvial/ fluvial deposits suggests that the site may have been located at the edge of a river channel. No evidence for Roman or medieval activity was identified.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd were commissioned to undertake an archaeological watching brief during a geotechnical site investigation at Surrey House, 20 Lavington Street; London Borough of Southwark SE1 0NZ.
- 2.2 The site is currently occupied by Surrey House in the north and a warehouse in the south of the site with external hard-standing separating the two properties (Gifford 2010). The site is bordered to the north by Lavington Street, to the east by a property fronting Southwark Street, to the south by Great Guildford Business Square and to the west by St. Ives House fronting to Ewer Street. It is centred at NGR TQ32078015.
- 2.3 The work was commissioned by Gifford; on behalf of Citizen M Hotels. Chris Mayo managed the project for Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd; the fieldwork was supervised by Guy Seddon and Aidan Turner. Christopher Constable, Senior Archaeology Officer for the London Borough of Southwark, monitored the works on behalf of the LPA.
- 2.4 The work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation, approved by the London Borough of Southwark (Mayo 2010).
- 2.5 The on-site recording work, which monitored the excavation of three test-pits, was undertaken on 1st November 2010. Off-site work, during which PCA archaeologically recorded window samples retrieved from boreholes, was undertaken on 24th November 2010.
- 2.6 Previously WSP have prepared a briefing note (2009a) and a Desk-Based Assessment (2009b) which researched the heritage potential of the site.
- 2.7 The completed archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records will be deposited with the London Archaeology Archive Resource Centre (LAARC) under the site code LVN10.



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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:10,000 at A4



3 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

3.1 National Guidance: Planning Policy Statement 5

3.1.1 In March 2010 the Department of the Environment issued Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) "Planning for the Historic Environment", providing guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains.

3.1.2 In short, government policies provide a framework which:

- Protect Scheduled Ancient Monuments;
- Protect the settings of these sites;
- Protect nationally important un-scheduled ancient monuments;
- Has a presumption in favour of in situ preservation;
- In appropriate circumstances, requires adequate information (from field evaluation) to enable informed decisions; and
- Provides for the excavation and investigation of sites not important enough to merit in situ preservation

3.1.3 In considering any proposal for development, the local planning authority will be mindful of the policy framework set by government guidance, in this instance PPS5, of existing development plan policy and of other material considerations.

3.2 Regional Guidance: The London Plan

3.2.1 The relevant Strategic Development Plan framework is provided by the London Plan, published February 2004. It includes the following policy of relevance to archaeology within central London:

Policy 4B.15 Archaeology

The Mayor, in partnership with English Heritage, the Museum of London and Boroughs, will support the identification, protection, interpretation and presentation of London's archaeological resources. Boroughs in consultation with English Heritage and other relevant statutory organisations should include appropriate policies in their UDPs for protecting scheduled ancient monuments and archaeological assets within their area.

3.3 Local Guidance: Archaeology in Southwark and the Unitary Development Plan

3.3.1 The study aims to satisfy the objectives of the London Borough of Southwark, which fully recognises the importance of the buried heritage for which they are the custodians. The Borough's 'Southwark Plan' (adopted in July 2007), and the draft Archaeology Policy, contains policy statements in respect of protecting the buried archaeological resource.

3.3.2 The proposed development of the site is subject to the Council's Archaeology Policies and

justifications:

Policy 3.19 Archaeology

Planning applications affecting sites within Archaeological Priority Zones (APZs), shall be accompanied by an archaeological assessment and evaluation of the site, including the impact of the proposed development. There is a presumption in favour of preservation in situ, to protect and safeguard archaeological remains of national importance, including scheduled monuments and their settings. The in situ preservation of archaeological remains of local importance will also be sought, unless the importance of the development outweighs the local value of the remains. If planning permission is granted to develop any site where there are archaeological remains or there is good reason to believe that such remains exist, conditions will be attached to secure the excavation and recording or preservation in whole or in part, if justified, before development begins.

Reasons:

Southwark has an immensely important archaeological resource. Increasing evidence of those peoples living in Southwark before the Roman and medieval period is being found in the north of the borough and along the Old Kent Road. The suburb of the Roman provincial capital (Londinium) was located around the southern bridgehead of the only river crossing over the Thames at the time and remains of Roman buildings, industry, roads and cemeteries have been discovered over the last 30 years. The importance of the area during the medieval period is equally well attested both archaeologically and historically. Elsewhere in Southwark, the routes of Roman roads (along the Old Kent Road and Kennington Road) and the historic village cores of Peckham, Camberwell, Walworth and Dulwich also have the potential for the survival of archaeological remains. PPG16 requires the council to include policies for the protection, enhancement and preservation of sites of archaeological interest and their settings.

3.3.3 The Site lies within an Archaeological Priority Area, identified in the London Borough of Southwark Development Plan (2007) as the Archaeological Priority Zone for Borough, Bermondsey and Rivers.

3.3.4 There are no Conservation Areas, Registered Battlefields or Registered Historic Parks and Gardens or Listed Buildings within the study a 500m radius of the centre of the Site.

3.4 Research Objectives

3.4.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation outlined the following primary objectives:-

- To determine the palaeotopography of the site. Can it be confirmed that the site lies on the Bankside Channel and off of higher, drier ground?
- To determine the presence or absence of Roman activity.

- To establish the presence or absence of medieval activity.
- To establish the presence or absence of post-medieval activity at the site.
- To establish the extent of all past post-depositional impacts on the archaeological resource.

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

4.1 Geology

- 4.1.1 The Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales) Sheet 270 for South London indicates that the site is underlain by Kempton Park Terrace gravels. The River Terrace gravels are in turn underlain by the London Clay. The gravel terrace is blanketed by extensive deposits of alluvial clay and peat.

4.2 Topography

- 4.2.1 The modern south bank of the River Thames lies approximately 400m to the north of the site.
- 4.2.2 The area of the site is relatively flat, at an unknown height above Ordnance Datum. It was known to have been a badly drained, marshy area for the majority of the historical period.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 Previously WSP have prepared a briefing note (2009a) and a Desk-Based Assessment (2009b) which researched the heritage potential of the site. The latter document drew the following conclusions:

The Archaeological Desk-based Assessment has recovered evidence relating to the use of the Site from the Post Medieval period onwards. The evidence suggests that the activity from this point (the public baths and washhouse) is inconsistent with the broad activity of the wider area (the industrial units and warehouses), though prior to this the Site area may have been used for rope and cloth making. The public baths and washhouse will have had an impact on earlier deposits of an uncertain degree, though it is likely that early Post Medieval features will have been subject to greatest truncation.

The Site is surrounded by evidence of the Post-Medieval (including evidence for industrial facilities of wide ranging nature), although no evidence suggests that built structures were ever present within the Site.

The lack of known archaeological sites or finds pre-dating the Post-Medieval period (excluding the Roman period) may be as a result of later activity removing any such remains, or alternatively an indication that very little archaeological activity has ever been present. The latter is supported by evidence suggesting that the Site was within an area which became periodically difficult to utilise because of alluvial transgression.

The potential for archaeological remains of Prehistoric, Early Medieval or Medieval date to be present within the Site is considered to be low due to the lack of available archaeological evidence for the period. This is as a result of post-medieval activity and also earlier natural processes which have resulted in both the deposition of peat and layers of alluvium, which will have been severely damaged or destroyed any archaeological remains that may have been present in the case of the former or insulated them from easy discovery by deposition of depths of material above them.

- 5.2 It has also been noted by Gifford (2010) that *“Historical maps indicate that the site was occupied by a large engineering works / iron foundry from pre-1879 with redevelopment occurring pre 1900 and again in the 1910's and 1950's. By 1970, the works in the north of the site is cleared and the current site layout is shown. Surrounding land uses included a rail depot, print and engineering works and a vinegar distillery.”*
- 5.3 Previous research locates the site within the conjectured course of the Bankside Channel (Cowan et al 2009). The locale of the site is noted as being below low water level, and approximately 100m to the NW of the nearest conjectured location of higher ground.

6 METHODOLOGY

6.1 The excavation of six test pits was designed for the geotechnical investigation. However, as the work was begun it was quickly realised that the test pits, which only had an intended depth of 1.0m, would only impede upon modern made ground and service runs. The full archaeological monitoring of these pits was therefore downgraded, so that only Test Pits 1 and 2 were subject to a watching brief.

6.2 The Test-Pits had the following dimensions:

TP number	Max Dims	Max depth of pit
TP1	0.8m by 0.8m	1.0m
TP2	0.9m by 0.9m	1.0m

6.3 The pits were broken out and excavated by hand under archaeological supervision.

6.4 Three Boreholes (1-3) were executed as planned and the closed window samples extracted from them were opened under laboratory conditions with archaeological monitoring to record the sequence.

6.5 All deposits were recorded on pro forma log sheets. Plans were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and elevations at 1:10. A photographic record was also kept of all the trenches in digital format. Samples were taken of any archaeologically significant artefacts found in the core samples.

6.6 Topographic information was unavailable for the site at the time of fieldwork and report writing, and therefore the heights of deposits are given only as measurements below ground level (BGL).

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

7.1 Phase 1 Fluvial Gravels

- 7.1.1 Natural Gravels. The natural deposits underlying the sequence were logged by Concept Site Investigations, a geo-environmental and geo-technical contractor. These deposits were described as 'medium density grey gravels'.
- 7.1.2 Concept Site Investigations recorded that these deposits were approximately 2.5m thick in Borehole 1, to 13.4m thick in Borehole 3. They were encountered at a depth of 6.95m BGL in Borehole 1 and 5.95m BGL in Borehole 3
- 7.1.3 This deposit was interpreted as being of fluvial origin and would be indicative of a high energy fluvio-glacial or fluvio-marine environment.

7.2 Phase 2 Prehistoric Peats

- 7.2.1 The deposits overlying the natural gravel deposits were logged by PCA in the Concept Site Investigations laboratory. The first archaeological horizon was recorded as bands of fibrous peat and peaty silty clay.
- 7.2.2 These deposits are represented by contexts [5] to [8] in BH1, context [14] in BH2 and contexts [18] to [21] in BH3. They were encountered at a depth of 3.75m BGL (BH1), 3.95m (BH2) and 4.00m BGL (BH3).
- 7.2.3 Peat rich lenses frequently contained twigs and small brushwood. Occasional fragments of larger pieces of wood were observed, but it is unclear whether these were worked or the product of the decay of larger pieces of timber.
- 7.2.4 These deposits, with their high content of twigs and brushwood, are indicative of a 'fen carr' wet woodland. This may have been formed on the edge of one of the many islands or 'eyots' which have been surmised in this location. These were the product of the Thames river channel being highly braided in this area. For these conditions of preservation to be maintained, this environment would have been exposed to a high water table, with frequent annual inundations from the river.
- 7.2.5 The peat bands varied in thickness from 0.47m to 2.34m.
- 7.2.6 Alternating between layers of peat were layers of brownish grey alluvial silt clay indicating frequent ingressions of a more sustained nature, as would be expected in a tidal river. These deposits often had a slightly humic or peaty nature, suggesting that the ingressions were relatively brief in nature.
- 7.2.7 The peaty clay bands ranged in thickness from 0.20m to 2.05m
- 7.2.8 The end of this period is marked by a distinctive deposit observed in BH 1. This deposit consisted of a thin lens, no more than 30mm thick, of fire cracked flint gravel [4] The gravels were sub –rounded in appearance and around 5mm diameter in size. These were surrounded by a deposit of very fine carbonic silt, possibly degraded charcoal. However this deposit also appeared graded or washed which suggests it may have been modified by water.
- 7.2.9 It is not clear that these deposits were the product of a fire in situ; or whether they were

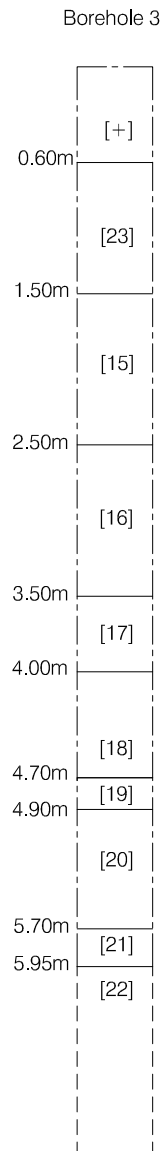
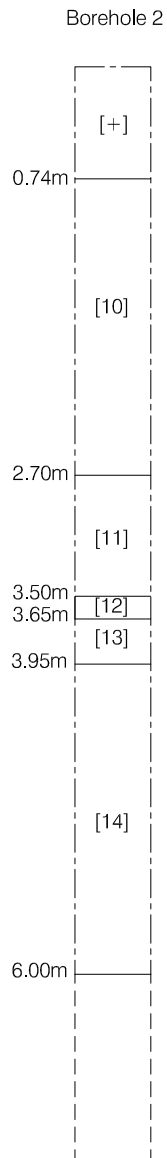
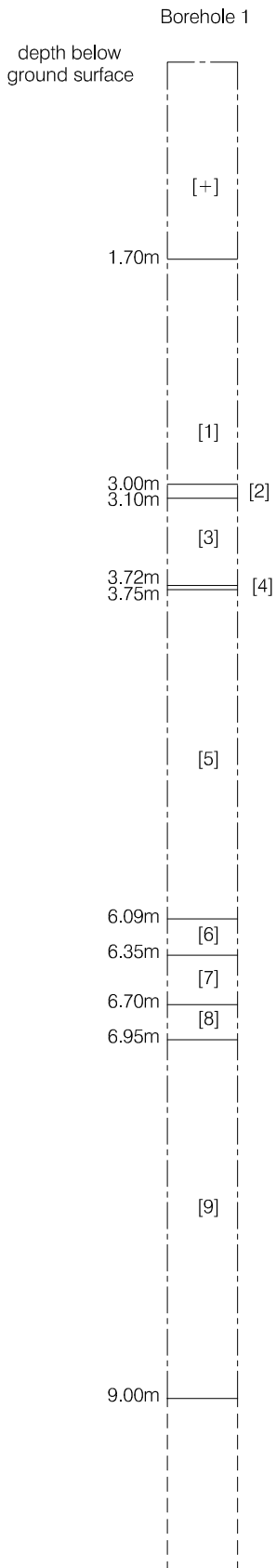
redeposited in some way.

7.3 Phase 3 Late Prehistoric Transgression

- 7.3.1 Towards the top of peat sequence there is a notable layer of grey alluvial silt clay. This deposit appeared to be free of the organic component observed in ingressions below, suggesting that a transgression ended the peat development. This deposit was recorded as [3] in BH 1, [13] in BH 2 and [17] in BH 3.
- 7.3.2 This deposit seems to indicate that the 'Fen Carr' environment was ended by a more substantial ingressions of water. It cannot be determined from these observations alone as to whether this represents a purely local event or symptomatic of a wider change in sea levels. However, these deposits may be consistent with a similar horizon reported as sealing the prehistoric peats in the late pre Roman period (Cowan et al 2009).
- 7.3.3 These deposits were interpreted as being alluvial. They were between 0.62m thick in BH1 and 0.3m thick in BH2, and were encountered at a depth of 3.1m BGL in BH1, 3.65m BGL in BH2 and 3.5m BGL in BH3.
- 7.3.4 Post-medieval CBM found within [17] is suspected to be intrusive, probably forced into the sample through the percussive action of the drill.
- 7.3.5 In BHs 1 and 2 a new land surface was observed at the top of the sequence, shown by the re-emergence of peaty deposits [2] and [12]. This conjecture is supported by the observation of fine, black, decayed rootlets penetrating down into the upper surface of the underlying alluvium [3] in BH 1.

7.4 Phase 4 Post-Medieval to Modern

- 7.4.1 The layers overlying the above sequence consisted of deposits which are considered to date from the late post-medieval to the modern period.
- 7.4.2 Layer [1] in BH1 at 1.7m BGL consisted of grey gravelly clay with ash and brick fragments.
- 7.4.3 In BH 2, a deposit of firm grey brown clay [11] was overlain by dark brown silty sand with brick, concrete and occasional shell fragments [10], recorded at 0.74m BGL.
- 7.4.4 In BH3 a layer of firm dark grey clay [15] at 1.5m BGL was sealed by brown clayey sand with frequent brick and concrete fragments [23] at 0.6m BGL.
- 7.4.5 These deposits were overlain by modern make-up (also observed within Test Pits 1 and 2) followed by concrete slabs and asphalt surfacing.



0 2m
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Figure 3
Sections 1 -3 from Boreholes 1-3
1:50 at A4

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The watching brief identified four phases archaeology at the site.
- 8.2 **Phase 1** consisted of fluvial gravels. This deposit was interpreted as being of fluvial origin and would be indicative of a high energy fluvio-glacial or fluvio-marine environment.
- 8.3 **Phase 2** consisted of prehistoric peats and alluvial peaty-clay. These deposits are indicative of a period of 'fen carr' wet woodland alternating with alluvial deposition from frequent inundations from the river. These deposits may have been formed on the edge of one of the many islands or 'eyots' which have been surmised in this location. These may have been the product of the Thames river channel being highly braided in this area. These conditions suggest a high water table, with annual flooding.
- 8.4 **Phase 3** consisted of a late prehistoric transgression. This is suggested by a band of grey alluvial silt clays observed at similar depths in all three boreholes. This deposit appears to be free of peat, unlike the earlier alluvial deposits, suggesting a more significant inundation.
- 8.5 **Phase 4** consisted of late post-medieval to modern made ground. These appear to have consisted of a mixture of sand and clays containing brick and concrete fragments.
- 8.6 The only deposit suggestive of possible prehistoric activity is a thin layer of burnt gravels with a fire-cracked appearance [4]. However this deposit also appeared graded or washed which suggests it may be redeposited.
- 8.7 The presence of significant peat deposits, combined with the relative lack of deep alluvial/ fluvial deposits suggests that the site may have been located at the edge of a river channel.
- 8.8 No evidence for Roman or medieval activity was identified.
- 8.9 Late post-medieval CBM was recovered from the upper deposits of BH 3 ([16] and [17]). It is likely that some late post medieval deposits may be preserved in situ on the site, or though these could equally be redeposited during more recent construction activity. Late post medieval materials recorded in Context [17] and [8] are suspected to be intrusive, the result of the percussive drilling process.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Gifford for commissioning the work on behalf of Citizen M Hotels. In particular we extend our thanks to Phil Emery of Gifford.
- 9.2 We also thank Christopher Constable of Southwark Council for monitoring the work.
- 9.3 The author would like to thank the staff of Concept Site Investigations for their assistance in the laboratory, Jennifer Simonson for the CAD work and Chris Mayo for project management and editing.

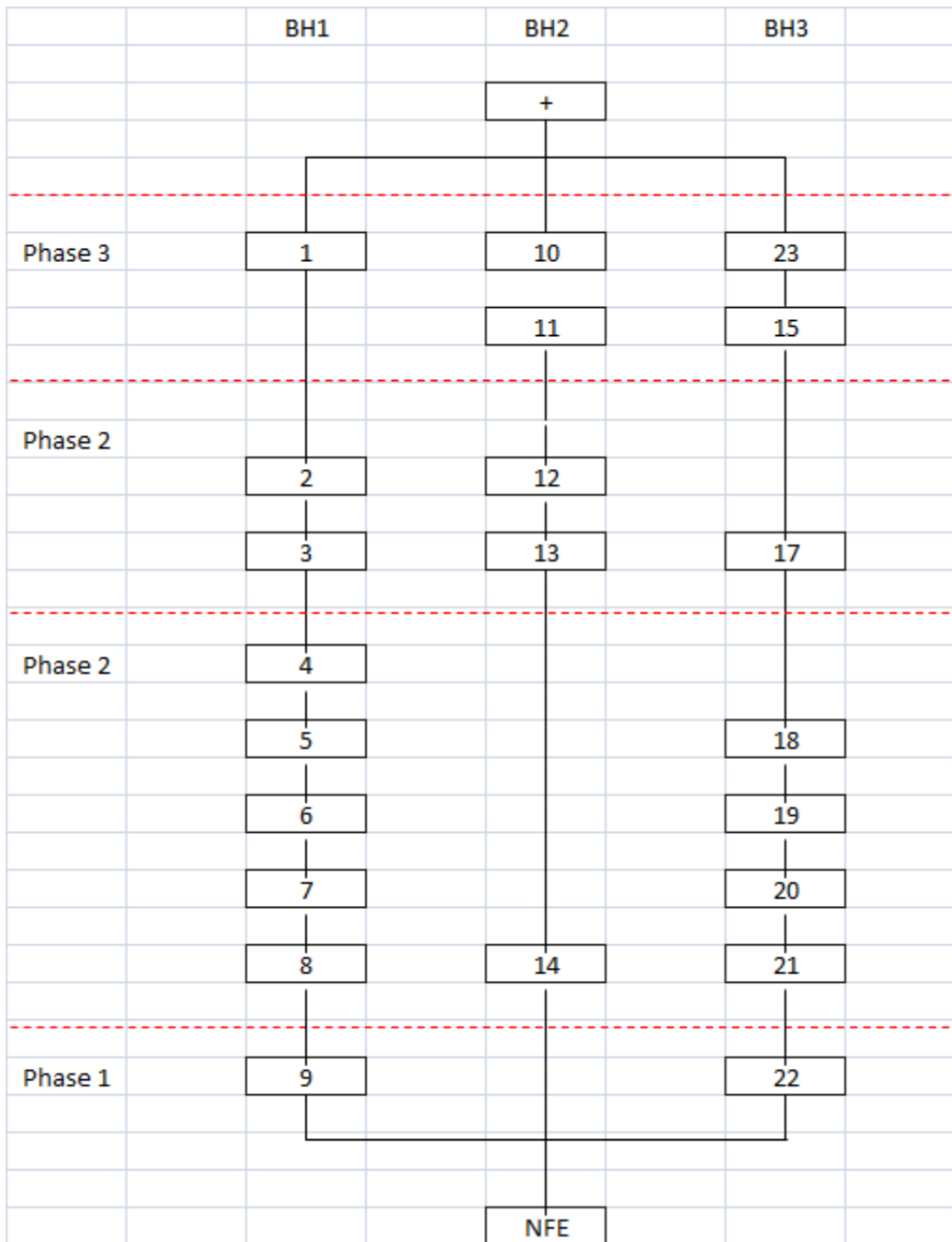
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11 APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Cont. No.	BH No.	Type	Description	Interpretation	Thickness (m)	Depth (m BGL)
1	1	Layer	Grey gravelly CLAY with ash and brick frag.	Made Ground	1.6	1.7
2	1	Layer	Fibrous PEAT	Peat	0.1	3
3	1	Layer	Silty CLAY, black organic rootlets	Alluvium	0.62	3.1
4	1	Layer	Burnt GRAVELS, <5mm sub-ang; black charcoal/silt matrix	Possible fire	0.03	3.72
5	1	Layer	Silty clay fibrous PEAT, frequent twigs and wood frag.	Peat	2.34	3.75
6	1	Layer	Silty CLAY, light brownish grey	Alluvium	0.26	6.09
7	1	Layer	Fibrous PEAT	Peat	0.35	6.35
8	1	Layer	Silty CLAY, light brownish grey, slightly peaty	Alluvium	0.25	6.7
9	1	Layer	Medium density grey GRAVEL	Fluvium	2.55	6.95
10	2	Layer	Dark brown silty SAND with brick, concrete & occa. Shell frag.	Made Ground	1.96	0.74
11	2	Layer	Firm, greyish brown CLAY with occa. fine to med. gravel	Alluvium	0.95	2.7
12	2	Layer	Fibrous PEAT, frequent twigs/brushwood and wood frag.	Peat	0.15	3.5
13	2	Layer	Silty CLAY, light grey	Alluvium	0.3	3.65
14	2	Layer	Dark brown Fibrous PEAT, occa. twigs	Peat	2.05	3.95
15	1	Layer	Firm, dark grey CLAY	Alluvium	1	1.5
16	1	Layer	Dark brown silty SAND, slightly peaty, mod. brick	Made Ground	1	2.5
17	1	Layer	Silty CLAY, light grey	Alluvium	0.5	3.5
18	1	Layer	Fibrous PEAT, occa. twigs	Peat	0.47	4.23
19	1	Layer	Silty clay fibrous PEAT, greyish brown, occa. twigs	Peat	0.2	4.7
20	1	Layer	Silty CLAY, mid grey, slightly peaty	Peat	0.8	4.9
21	1	Layer	Fibrous PEAT, occa. twigs	Peat	0.25	5.7
22	1	Layer	Medium density grey GRAVEL	Fluvium	n/a	5.95
23	1	Layer	Brown clayey SAND with gravel, concrete and brick frag.	Made Ground	0.9	0.6

12 APPENDIX 2: MATRIX



13 APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-88893

Project details

Project name	20 Lavington St.
Short description of the project	The watching brief consisted of the recording and logging of deposits observed in test pits and boreholes excavated from within the footprint a proposed development at the site of the former Surrey House, 20 Lavington St; London Borough of Southwark. The watching brief concentrated on the observation and recording of core samples as they were extruded in the laboratory for geo-technical purposes. Pre-historic peats and alluvial deposits were identified from the core samples.
Project dates	Start: 01-11-2010 End: 24-11-2010
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	LVN 10 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices
Monument type	PEAT DEPOSITS Early Prehistoric
Monument type	ALLUVIAL DEPOSITS Late Prehistoric
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Investigation type	'Test-Pit Survey', 'Watching Brief'

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON SOUTHWARK SOUTHWARK Surrey House, 20 Lavington Street
Postcode	SE1 0NZ
Study area	3000.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3207 8015 51.5043325116 -0.09688056634410 51 30 15 N 000 05 48 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.
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Project design originator	Chris Mayo
Project director/manager	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	Guy Seddon and Aidan Turner
Type of sponsor/funding body	Consultant
Name of sponsor/funding body	Gifford

Project archives

Physical Archive	LAARC
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recipient	
Physical Contents	'Ceramics'
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Images vector','Spreadsheets','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Plan','Section','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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Entered on	10 December 2010

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