

197 BALHAM HIGH ROAD

BALHAM

LONDON SW17

LON BOROUGH OF WANDSWORTH

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

BHZ 06

MARCH 2006

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

197 Balham High Road
Balham
London SW17
London Borough of Wandsworth

Archaeological Evaluation

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited Project Code			K1124
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Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved

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**An Archaeological Evaluation at 197 Balham High Road, Balham, London
Borough of Wandsworth**

Site Code: BHZ 06

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 2840 7298

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Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, March 2006**

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March 2006**

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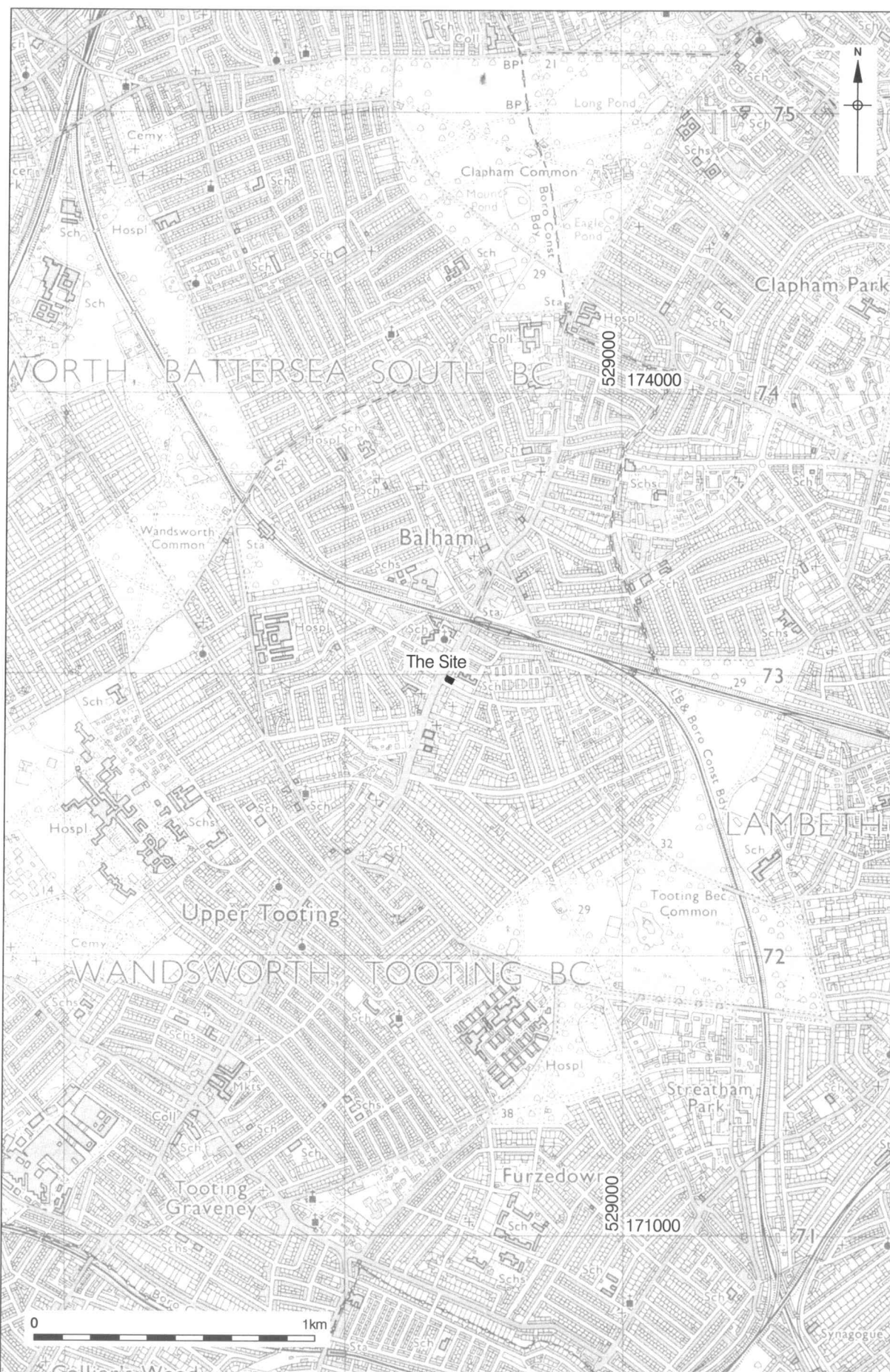
1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken on land at 197 Balham High Road, Balham, London Borough of Wandsworth. The evaluation took place on 27th February 2006.
- 1.2 Two trenches were excavated. Trench 1 was 3m x 1.8m and Trench 2 was 14m x 1.8m. The areas in which the trenches were positioned had been partially concreted over to form a car park. A timber building, which functions as a Scout hut, had been erected in the north-central portion of the site.
- 1.3 Both trenches were reduced until natural Boyn Hill Gravel was reached.
- 1.4 Neither trench showed any evidence of Roman roadside activity and neither contained any archaeological deposits pre-dating the 19th century.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. on land at 197 Balham High Road, Balham, London Borough of Wandsworth, in advance of a proposed redevelopment of the site. The evaluation was conducted on 27th February 2006 and was commissioned by Cherwell Languard Developments.
- 2.2 The site is bounded by Elmfield Road to the south, Balham High Road to the east, residential and commercial properties fronting Balham High Road to the north and residential properties fronting Elmfield Road to the west.
- 2.3 The National Grid Reference of the site is TQ 2840 7298.
- 2.4 The site was given the code BHZ 06.
- 2.5 The site had previously been the subject of an Archaeological Desktop Assessment assessment¹, which determined a low potential for uncovering prehistoric remains, a moderate potential for locating Roman remains as the site is located adjacent to Stane Street, the major Roman road that ran from London to Chichester. There was low to moderate potential for medieval finds and moderate to high potential for post-medieval remains. The site would appear to be occupied by fields up to the mid 18th century. A large late Georgian/early Victorian villa with extensive gardens was established on the site by 1840. Possible agricultural features or garden features associated with the house were expected to be present on the site.
- 2.6 The project was monitored by Diane Walls, English Heritage GLAAS, project managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology by Jon Butler and supervised by the author.

¹ Lythe, R. 2005



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey 1:25,000. Crown Copyright 1993.

Figure 1
Site Location
1:20,000

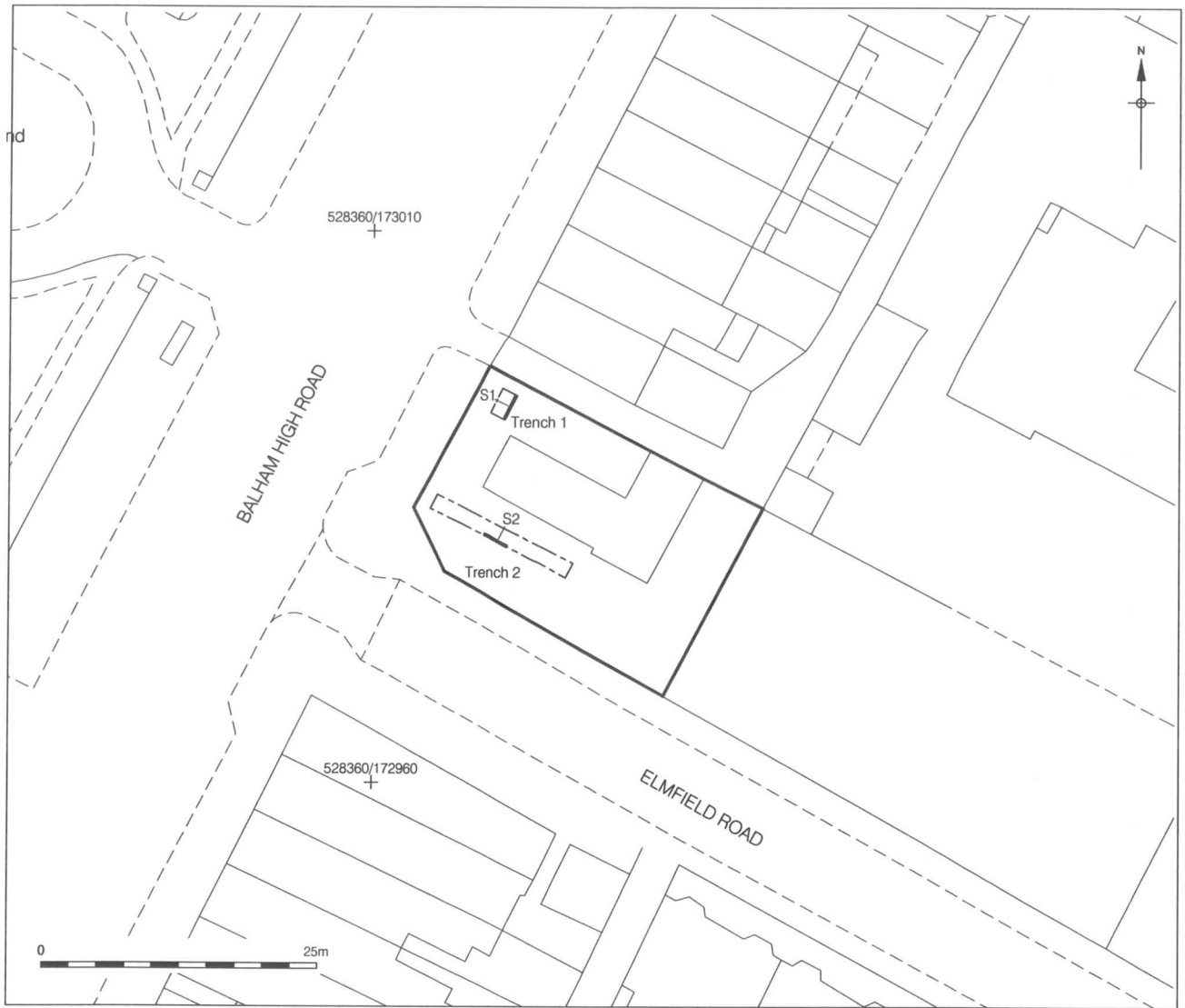


Figure 2
Trench Location
1:625

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 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
- Provides for the excavation and investigation of sites not important enough to merit in situ preservation

3.3 In considering any proposal for development, the local planning authority will be mindful of the policy framework set by government guidance, in this instance PPG16, of existing development plan policy and of other material considerations.

3.4 The site is located within an archaeological priority area as defined in the London Borough of Wandsworth Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The archaeological study aims to satisfy the objectives of the London Borough of Wandsworth, which fully recognises the importance of the buried heritage for which they are custodians. The following policies towards archaeology are contained within the UDP:

Policy TBE 14

Where development involving ground disturbance is proposed in Archaeological Priority Areas, the Council will require developers to make provision for archaeological investigation. Normally the submission of an archaeological evaluation report will be requested prior to determination. Archaeological investigation may also be required elsewhere in sites of archaeological potential.

Policy TBE 15

In appropriate cases, the Council may also require preservation *in situ*, or excavation. The recording and publication of results will normally be required.

3.5 Condition 7 of the draft planning consent states:

"No development shall take place until archaeological investigations have been undertaken upon the site by an investigation body to be nominated by the council. The investigations shall be carried out in accordance with a detailed scheme to be approved in advance by the local planning authority in order that the archaeological remains that may exist on the site can be investigated"

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

4.1 Geology

4.1.1 The British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series indicates that the site lies upon Boyn Hill Gravel, which overlies London Clay².

4.1.2 Natural gravel was found in the base of both trenches, 2.35m below ground level at a depth of 24.39m OD to the north of the site in Trench 1 and 2.4m below ground level at a depth of 24.49m OD to the south of the site in Trench 2. This reflects the results of a geotechnical survey of the site, which suggested that the natural gravel was between 2.4m and 2.5m below ground level³.

4.2 Topography

4.2.1 The site is generally flat at a height of c. 26.5m OD.

² British Geological Survey, 1994

³ Quarrell, 2005

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

5.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

The archaeological desk based assessment indicates a low potential for prehistoric periods, a moderate potential for the Roman period, a low to moderate potential for the medieval period and a moderate to high potential for the post-medieval period⁴.

5.2 PREHISTORIC

The SMR search revealed several prehistoric find spots in the area. A Palaeolithic hand axe was found in the general Balham area and some lithic remains were recovered at Lochinvar Street. A stream thought to date to this period was also found during an evaluation at St James's Hospital, Sarsfield Road. A Mesolithic scraper, a Neolithic ovate flint implement and a Neolithic scraper were also recovered from the same excavation⁵.

5.3 ROMAN

The Roman Road of Stane Street is recorded as running along the present day line of Tooting High Street, Upper Tooting Road, Balham High Road and Balham Hill. A layer of disturbed, mortared flint and gravel was also recorded at Balham High Road. This was interpreted as possibly being part of Stane Street. Another road was also located on Tooting Bec Common. A Roman pavement together with some Roman bricks were recorded as being located under a house on Park Hill Estate c.1km to the south of the present site, which may be part of a small Roman villa. The SMR states that a Roman burial ground is reputedly situated within a copse of hawthorn on Tooting Bec Common, although this information is far from definite⁶.

5.4 SAXON AND MEDIEVAL

Balham was not mentioned in the estate charter of 693, but it is mentioned in its revision of 957. The name has Saxon roots, which may refer to a meeting place. No medieval remains have been found in the immediate vicinity of the site⁷. However, an archaeological excavation at 74-80 Upper Tooting Road, c.1km to the south, revealed a medieval refuse pit dating to the 11th/12th century together with possible boundary ditches and a clay extraction pit dating to the period 1270 –1350⁸.

⁴ Lythe, R. 2005

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ Leary, J. & Sabel, K. 2001

5.5 POST-MEDIEVAL

Up to at least the middle of the 18th century the site lay within agricultural land⁹. However, archaeological investigations have revealed some post-medieval remains in the surrounding area. A single 18th century pit containing fragments of tin-glazed pottery and clay pipe stems were recorded at 219-221 Balham High Road and a post-medieval ditch and 18th century boundary ditch, cess pit, foundation and posthole were found at 74-80 Upper Tooting Road¹⁰. By 1840, a large residential property had been constructed on the subject site¹¹.

⁹ Lythe, R. 2005

¹⁰ Leary, J. & Sabel, K., 2001

¹¹ Lythe, R. 2005

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 In accordance with the specification¹², the trenches were arranged to fully investigate the presence or absence of significant archaeological remains across the site.
- 6.2 Originally two trenches measuring 10m and aligned east-west from the western frontage of the site were proposed. However, following information received regarding a geotechnical investigation that there was up to 2.5m of made ground, it was decided following consultation with Diane Walls of English Heritage, that there was not sufficient room for such a deep trench to the north of the site. It was therefore decided to limit the size of Trench 1 to 3m long and 1.8m wide and enlarge Trench 2 to 14m long and 1.8m wide.
- 6.3 The trenches were excavated using a JCB type machine, under archaeological supervision, fitted with a ditching bucket. Excavation by machine was undertaken in spits until natural gravels were reached.
- 6.4 The base of each trench and the sections could not be hand cleaned prior to recording due to health and safety constraints. The trenches were both over 2.5m deep and could not be stepped due to lack of space. They were therefore too dangerous to enter and had to be recorded from the top.
- 6.5 All recording systems adopted during the investigations were fully compatible with those most widely used elsewhere in London, that is those developed out of the Department of Urban Archaeology Site Manual, now published by the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS 1994). Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated and exposed were entered onto pro-forma recording sheets. All plans and sections of archaeological deposits were recorded on polyester based drawing film, the plans being drawn at a scale of 1:20 or 1:50 and the sections at 1:10. The OD height of all principal strata were calculated and indicated on the appropriate plans and sections. A full photographic record of the investigations were also prepared, including both black and white prints and colour transparencies on 35mm film.
- 6.6 Levels on the trenches were taken off a Temporary Bench Mark (TBM) established on the site with a value of 26.89m OD. The TBM was traversed in from a benchmark located on a residential property situated on the northeast corner of Balham Park Road and Balham High Road, which had a value of 25.96m OD. The trenches were surveyed

¹²Butler, J., 2006

in using 30m tapes and a plan detailing the outline of the Scout Hut. They were then tied into the Ordnance Survey grid.

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL PHASE DISCUSSION

7.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

Two trenches were excavated on the site. The land forming the site was generally flat, at a level of c. 26.5m OD. Both trenches were sealed by concrete, which overlay 19th century make-up layers, which in turn overlay natural terrace gravel. Trench 2 also contained a 19th century yellow brick culvert.

7.2 TRENCH 1

Trench 1 measured 3m north-south and 1.80m east-west.

7.2.1 Phase 1 – Natural Gravel

The earliest deposit encountered in Trench 1 was [4], a loose, mid brownish-red, silty sandy gravel. The layer covered the entire base of the trench at a level of 24.39m OD. It was interpreted as being Boyn Hill Gravel.

7.2.2 Phase 2 – 19th Century

Sealing [4] was layer [3], a firm, mid brownish grey, silty clay, 0.74m thick, the top of the deposit being at a level of 25.09m OD. This was sealed by layer [2], a loose, mid reddish brown, silty sand, 0.5m thick, the top of the deposit being at a level of 25.09m OD. Sealing this layer was [1], a loose, light brownish yellow silty sand, 0.5m thick, the top of the deposit being at a level of 26.06m OD. The layers were 3m north-south and 1.80m east-west, and were recorded in section only (see figure 3). They all contained fragments of red and yellow fabric brick and were therefore interpreted as being post-medieval made ground, probably dating to the 19th century.

7.2.3 These deposits were sealed by late 20th century made ground and concrete.

7.3 TRENCH 2

Trench 2 measured 1.8m north-south and 14m east-west.

7.3.1 Phase 1 – Natural Gravel

The earliest deposit encountered in Trench 2 was [11], a loose, mid brownish-red, silty sandy gravel. The layer covered the entire base of the trench at a level of 24.49m OD. It was interpreted as being Boyn Hill Gravel.

7.3.2 Phase 2 – 19th Century

Sealing [11] was layer [10], a firm, mid brownish grey, silty clay, 0.6m thick, the top of the deposit being at a level of 24.95m OD. This was sealed by layer [9], a loose, mid reddish brown, silty sand, 0.7m thick, the top of the deposit being at a level of 26.54m OD. Sealing this layer was [8], a loose, light brownish yellow silty sand, 0.55m thick, the top of the deposit being at a level of 26.04m OD. The layers were 1.8m north-south and 14m east-west, and were recorded in section only (see figure 3). The layers all contained fragments of red and yellow fabric brick. They were therefore interpreted as post-medieval made ground, probably dating to the 19th century.

Truncating layer [8] was construction cut [7], a linear truncation with steeply sloped sides, orientated north-south. The cut was 1.8m north-south, 1.75m east-west and 1.9m deep, the top being at a level of 26.04m OD. A brick culvert, context [6], was observed in the base of the cut at a level of 24.24m OD. The culvert was constructed from yellow, unfrogged, header bonded bricks. It was sealed by backfill [5], a firm, mid greyish brown sandy silt. The culvert was thought to date to the 19th century.

- 7.3.3 The 19th century deposits were sealed by late 20th century made ground, concrete and tarmac.

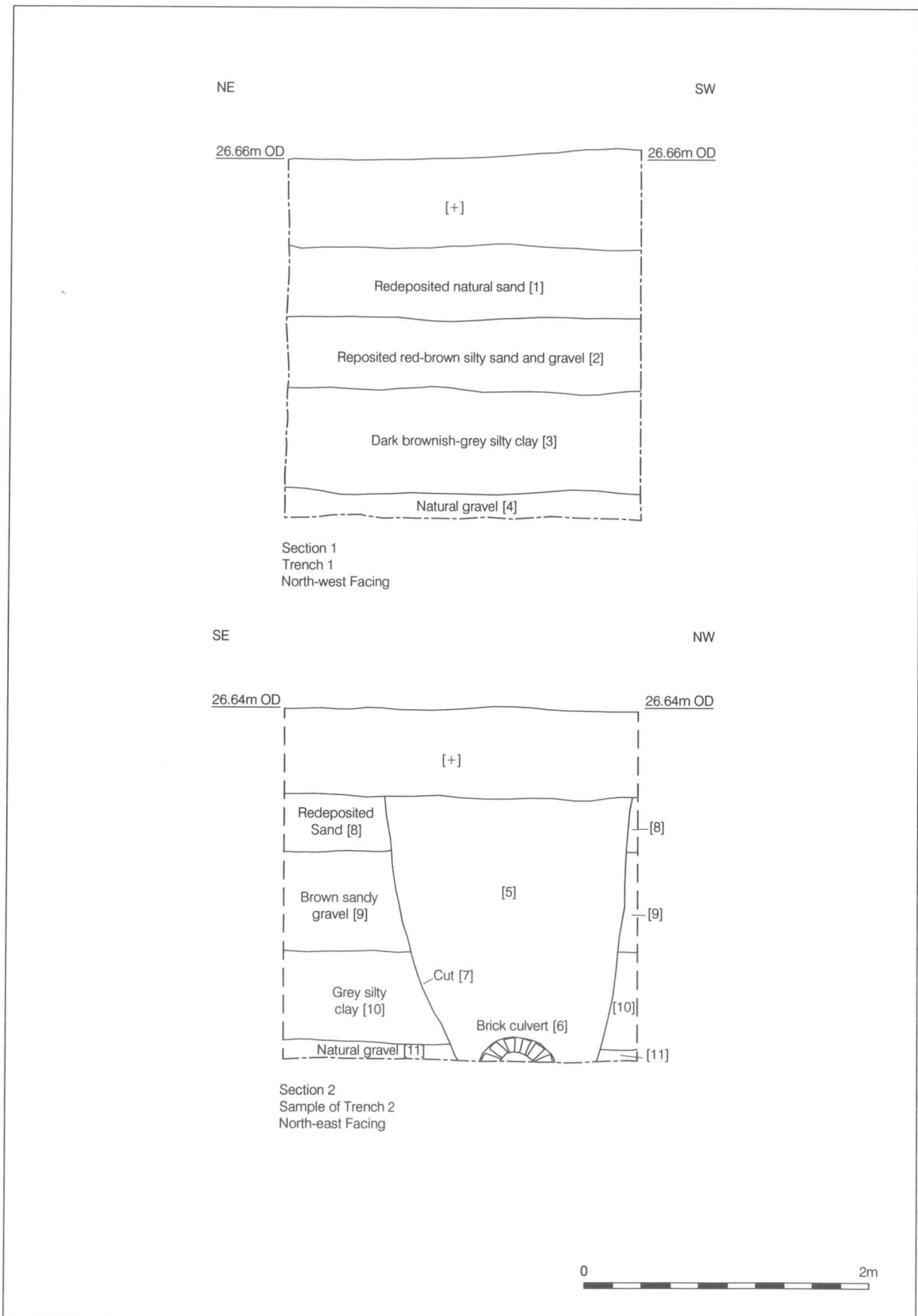


Figure 3
Sections 1 and 2
1:40

8 INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The principal objective of the archaeological evaluation was to determine the presence or absence of archaeological activity of any period.
- 8.2 The earliest evidence of human activity at the site dates to the 19th century and consists of a brick culvert truncating made ground.
- 8.3 The evaluation has confirmed that there are no significant archaeological deposits and features predating the 19th century on the site. Natural gravel, interpreted as Boyn Hill Gravel, was found in the base of both trenches.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Cherwell Languard Developments for funding the archaeological study.
- 9.2 The author would also like to thank Adrian Nash for the illustrations and Jon Butler for his project management and editing.

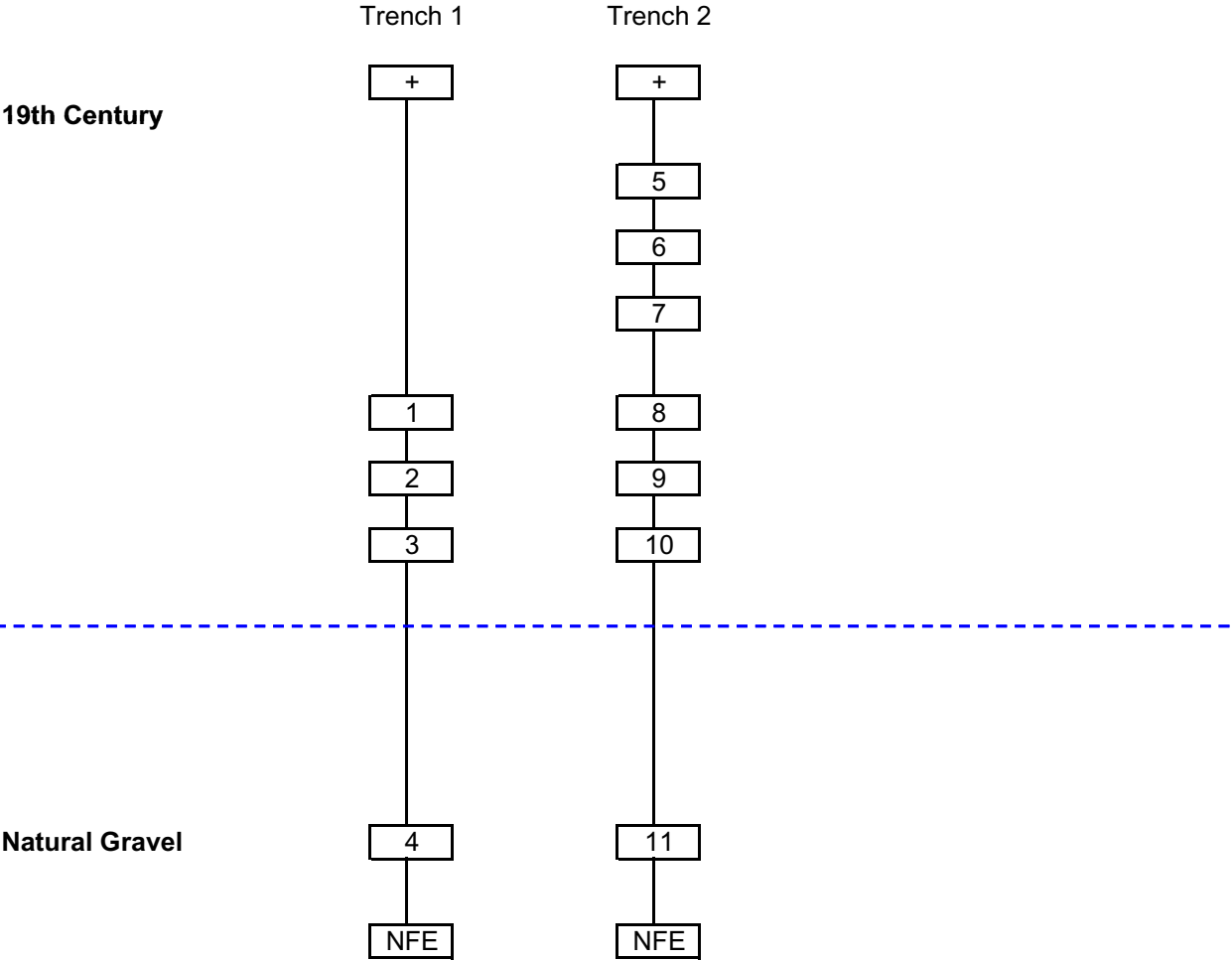
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Appendix 1- Context Index

Context	Plan No.	Section No.	Sample No.	Photo	Phase	Trench No.	Type	Description
1	*	1	*	Y	2	1	layer	19th century made ground
2	*	1	*	Y	2	1	layer	19th century made ground
3	*	1	*	Y	2	1	layer	19th century made ground
4	1	1	*	Y	1	1	layer	Natural Gravel
5	2	2	*	Y	2	2	fill	Backfill of [7]
6	2	2	*	Y	2	2	masonry	19th century brick culvert
7	2	2	*	Y	2	2	cut	construction cut for [6]
8	2	2	*	Y	2	2	layer	19th century made ground
9	*	2	*	Y	2	2	layer	19th century made ground
10	*	2	*	Y	2	2	layer	19th century made ground
11	2	2	*	Y	1	2	layer	Natural Gravel

Appendix 2- Site Matrix



APPENDIX 3- OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

[List of Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Log out](#)

1.1.1 Printable version

1.2 OASIS ID: preconst1-13202

Project details

Project name	197 Balham High Road
Short description of the project	An Archaeological evaluation to investigate the presence or absence of archaeological remains at 197 Balham High Road, Balham, London Borough of Wandsworth. Two trenches were positioned on the site and reduced in spits until natural Boyn Hill Gravel was reached. Neither trench contained any evidence of archaeological activity predating the 19th century.
Project dates	Start: 27-02-2006 End: 27-02-2006
Previous/future work	No / No
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	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON WANDSWORTH TOOTING 197 Balham High Road

Postcode	SW17 7XX
Study area	520.00 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 2840 7298 Point
Height OD	Min: 26.73m Max: 26.63m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Pre-Construct Archaeology
Project design originator	Jon Butler
Project director/manager	Jon Butler
Project supervisor	Rebecca Lythe
Sponsor or funding body	Cherwell Languard Developments

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Evaluation at 197 Balham High Road, Balham, London Borough of Wandsworth
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Lythe, R.
Date	2006
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology

Place of issue or
publication Brockley, London

Description A4 book, blue cover, ring bound.

Entered by Rebecca Lythe (rlythe@pre-construct.com)

Entered on 28 February 2006

2 OASIS:

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