



DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

36 – 38 HIGH STREET
HIGH BARNET
LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET

WATCHING BRIEF

Quality Control

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**An Archaeological Watching Brief at 36-38 High Street, High
Barnet, London Borough of Barnet**

Site Code: HSZ 06

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 2473 9641

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Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, June 2006**

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June 2006**

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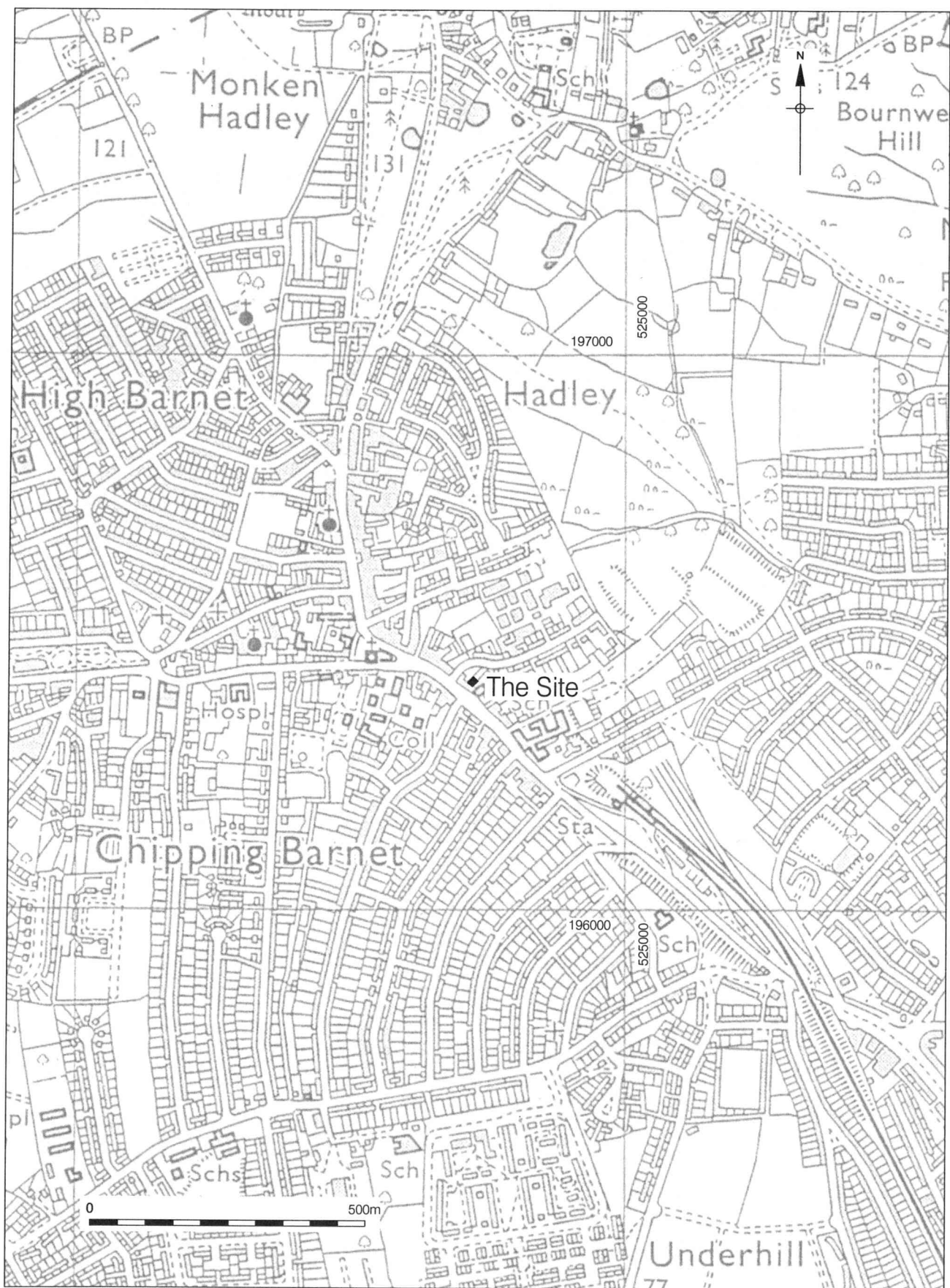
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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief commissioned by Lal Khajuria at 36-38 High Street, High Barnet, London Borough of Barnet (fig 1). The site is centred on National Grid Reference TQ 2473 9641. The watching brief involved ground reduction and the excavation of foundation trenches for flats at the rear of shops on the High Street. The site was previously a grassed garden area associated with first floor flats above the current businesses. The watching brief took place on the 19th-24th May 2006 and was monitored by Jon Crisp of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.
- 1.2 Natural sands were recorded across the site. A series of four medieval chalk walls were seen to form the eastern corner of a structure associated with an unseen building facing onto the High Street.
- 1.3 The medieval walls were truncated by a possible post-medieval cellar. A post-medieval soak-away and a well were also observed; the remains were sealed by subsoil and garden soil.

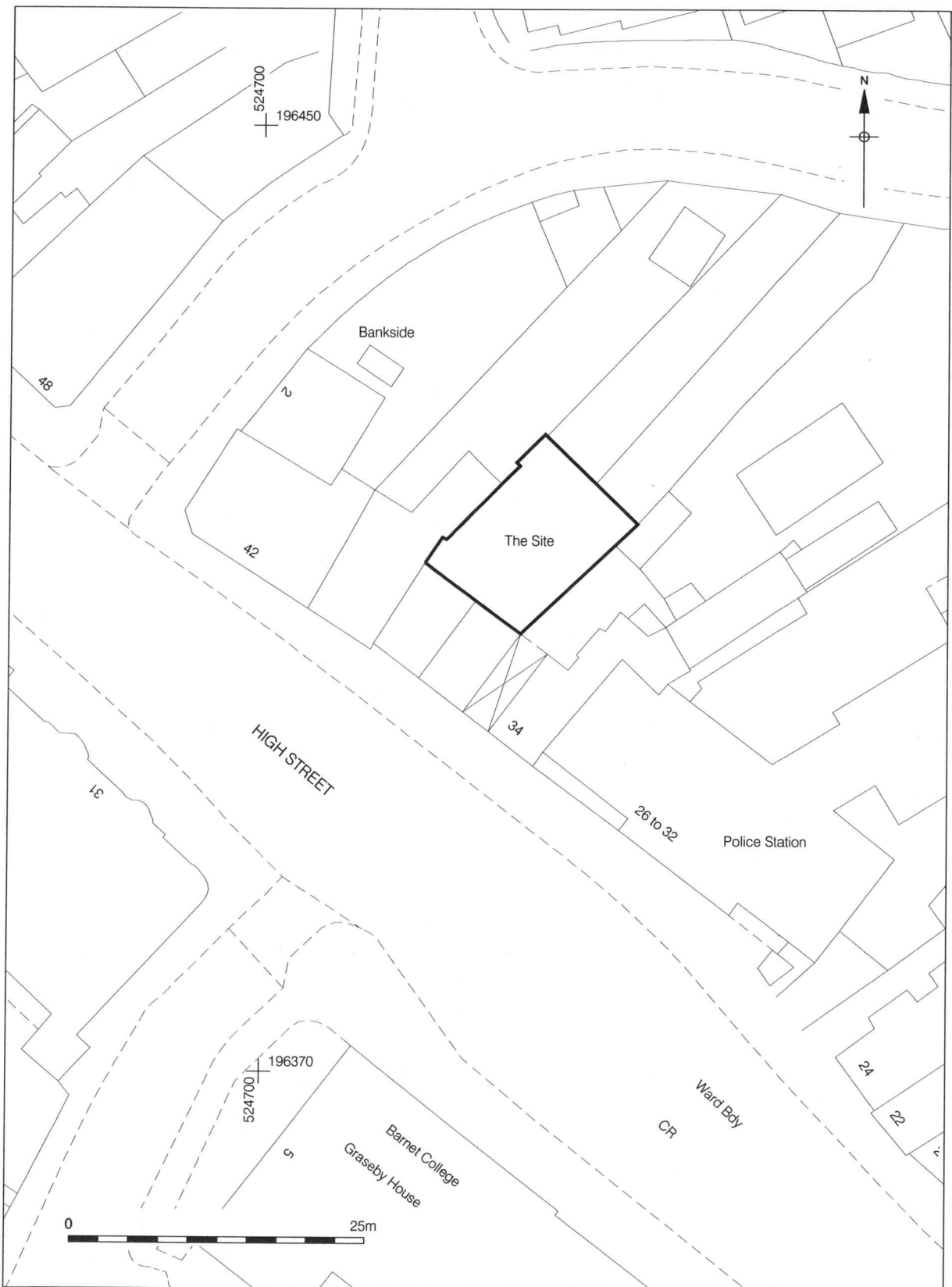
2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd on land at 36-38 High Street, High Barnet, London Borough of Barnet, between 19th and 24th May 2006. The work was commissioned by Lal Khajuria prior to a residential development. The fieldwork was supervised by the author, project managed by Chris Mayo and monitored by Kim Stabler of English Heritage on behalf of the LPA.
- 2.2 The site is situated on the crest of a hill and is bounded by High Street shops to the west and rear gardens to the north and south. A small parking area and driveway leads to Park Road to the east. The site area is approximately 140m².
- 2.3 The project consisted of the monitoring of ground reduction, underpinning and foundation trenches excavated by a mechanical digger.
- 2.4 The completed archive comprising written and drawn records will be deposited at the Museum of London under the site code HSZ 06.



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Figure 1
Site Location
1:10 000



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Figure 2
Site Location
1:500

3 GEOLOGICAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The site lies between geological deposits of London clay to the east and Stanmore gravel to the west (Darton 2001). Sand with occasional gravel areas were observed at a height of approximately 124.90m OD. At the base of the foundation trenches sand was still being excavated to a height of approximately 123.90m OD.
- 3.2 The current ground surface is relatively flat with a height of approximately 125.77m OD.
- 3.3 Evidence for prehistoric activity in the area is limited to nineteen flint cores and other objects which have previously been recorded at the Queen Elizabeth Girl's School about 100m to the east of the site – the precise date of these artefacts is unknown, however.
- 3.4 To the northwest of the site, evidence of a bricked-up Roman well has been recorded at the Bull Inn (68 High Street), and a 'Roman' wall was recorded at the same site with a 'glazed' jug – these artefacts were later reinterpreted as being Late Medieval in date. Genuine but residual Roman material has also been recorded at 58 High Street (Miller 2005).
- 3.5 The site is thought to have lain in pasture or woodland during the early medieval period, and no finds or features have been recorded in the area.
- 3.6 'Chipping Barnet' is thought to have formed as a small market town between 1100 and 1400 and the site is likely to have been located within the historic core of this settlement. Whilst the structural elements associated with activity fronting the High Street is likely to be situated further to the west, the site may have been occupied by ancillary buildings for example pits and wells (Miller 2005).
- 3.7 Further north on the Great North Road, the Battle of Barnet, a major battle of the Wars of the Roses, was fought in 1471.
- 3.8 The High Street frontages are shown to have been fully built up by 1766, and the Tithe Map of 1840 shows buildings occupying the west and south of the site, a pond to the north and open areas to the east. Additional alterations and the construction of further ancillary buildings can be seen throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The purpose of the watching brief was to monitor all groundworks and ensure that any archaeological remains were recorded and interpreted prior to residential development. Excavation was carried out by mechanical digger using a toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision.
- 4.2 All material excavated was observed and stratigraphic changes and features were recorded until natural deposits were penetrated.
- 4.3 Site levels were calculated from the ground floor level of the shop fronting the site. This had a value of 125.76m OD.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

5.1 Phase 1: Natural

- 5.1.1 At the formation level of the construction area (approx. 124.85m OD) a soft light grey/green sand with occasional grey gravel areas was encountered (10). This was particularly visible to the north-east where the natural was not truncated. Identical geology was also observed at the base of the foundation trenches at approximately 123.85m OD.

5.2 Phase 2: Late Medieval Structure (Figure 3 and 4, Plates 1 and 2))

- 5.2.1 In the southwest of the site a series of walls [1], [2], [3] and [4] were exposed. It is likely they formed four sides of a rectangular structure, albeit heavily truncated with the western and southern sides partly beneath the existing properties to the south and west of the site. They comprised a chalk and flint nodule core with a roughly dressed chalk face in [2] and [3]. Walls [1] and [4] also contained Kentish Ragstone and were bonded with a very firm, yellow, sandy mortar as opposed to the loose, light grey sandy mortar in [2] and [3]; this variation may be caused by the heavy truncation of the upper levels of walls [2] and [3]. The internal space formed by the four walls covered an area of 4.25m by 2.85m, whilst the external dimensions were at least 5.50m by 3.40m. Walls [1] and [4] were 0.80m high and 1.20m high respectively surviving to an upper height of 125.06m OD; [2] and [3] were both 0.50m high. Walls [2] and [3] were found within a rectangular construction cut [5], the silty-sand backfill [6] of which contained pottery dating to c. 1340 – 1450.

5.3 Phase 3.1: 16th-17th Century Repair of Structure (Figure 3)

- 5.3.1 Evidence for the maintenance of the structure was seen on wall [2]; a line of bricks [15] 1.50m long, 1 brick wide and probably representing a repair, was found on its internal side. The bricks have been dated to the 16th-17th century. Possibly in phase with the repair of the structure was a small section of bricks [16] less than 0.6m long and 0.1m wide. Although undated, this likely represents a post-medieval arrangement within the medieval structure.

5.4 Phase 3.2: Disuse of Structure

- 5.4.1 The internal area within the medieval walls, wall [2] and above wall [16] was filled by a deposit of silty sand [14] with evidence of cess material. A thin, crystallised layer of

cess was also seen on the internal faces of walls [1] and [4]. Deposit [14] probably represents the deliberate backfilling of the rectangular structure following its disuse.

5.5 Phase 3.3: Post-Medieval Structure

- 5.5.1 To the north of the medieval structure the lower courses of a rectangular brick wall [7] were observed. Investigation of the brickwork showed it was two courses in width and survived up to four courses high at a height of approximately 125.10m OD, the lower course consisting of a layer of tile. The wall measured 4.0m north-south and had an east-west return at its northern end, 2.4m long bordering a total area. The southern end of wall [7] had been built so that it abutted the external face of [3]. The wall probably represents the footings of an exterior building. The interior was backfilled with post-medieval rubble and mortar debris [11], representing made ground for an internal surface, now removed.

5.6 Phase 3.4: 18th-19th Century Levelling

- 5.6.1 Covering the majority of the archaeological remains was a mixed brown layer (9) containing 18th-19th century domestic and building debris. This layer was particularly evident in the north-east of the site and averaged 0.50m in thickness.

5.7 Phase 3.5: 19th-20th Century Features

- 5.7.1 Layer (9) was truncated by cuts for two late 19th/early 20th century features. The first was a 9 metre deep brick soak-away [12]. It consisted of a domed top with a small opening and four lead pipes protruding from its interior, which widened to 1.50m in diameter. The second feature was a circular, brick lined well [13] revealed to the north-east of the site also measuring 1.50m in diameter. It had been backfilled at the top with 20th century glass.
- 5.7.2 The entire site was covered with a layer of very dark, loose, humic garden soil (8) containing 20th century debris.

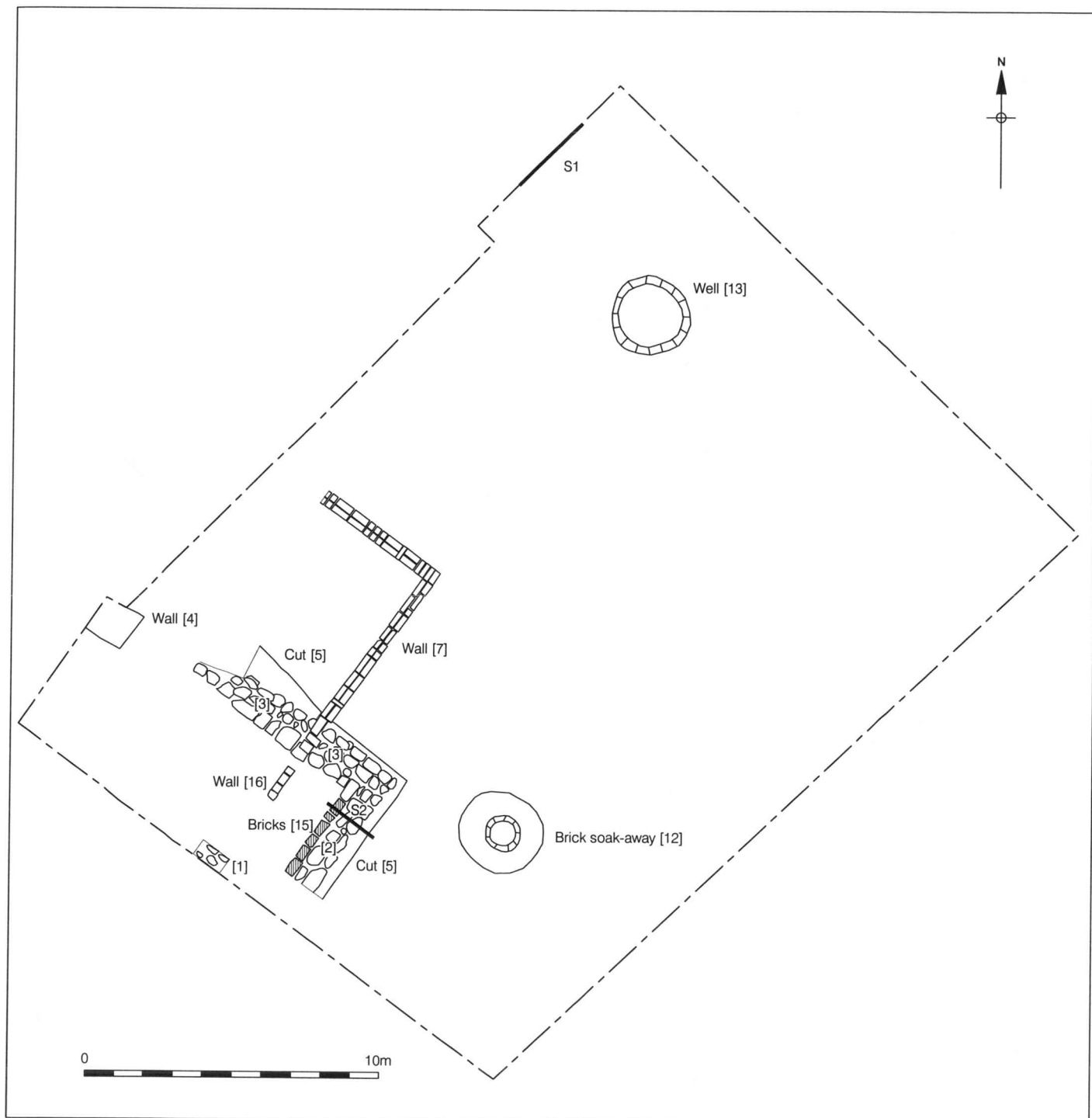


Figure 3
Plan of the Site
1:100

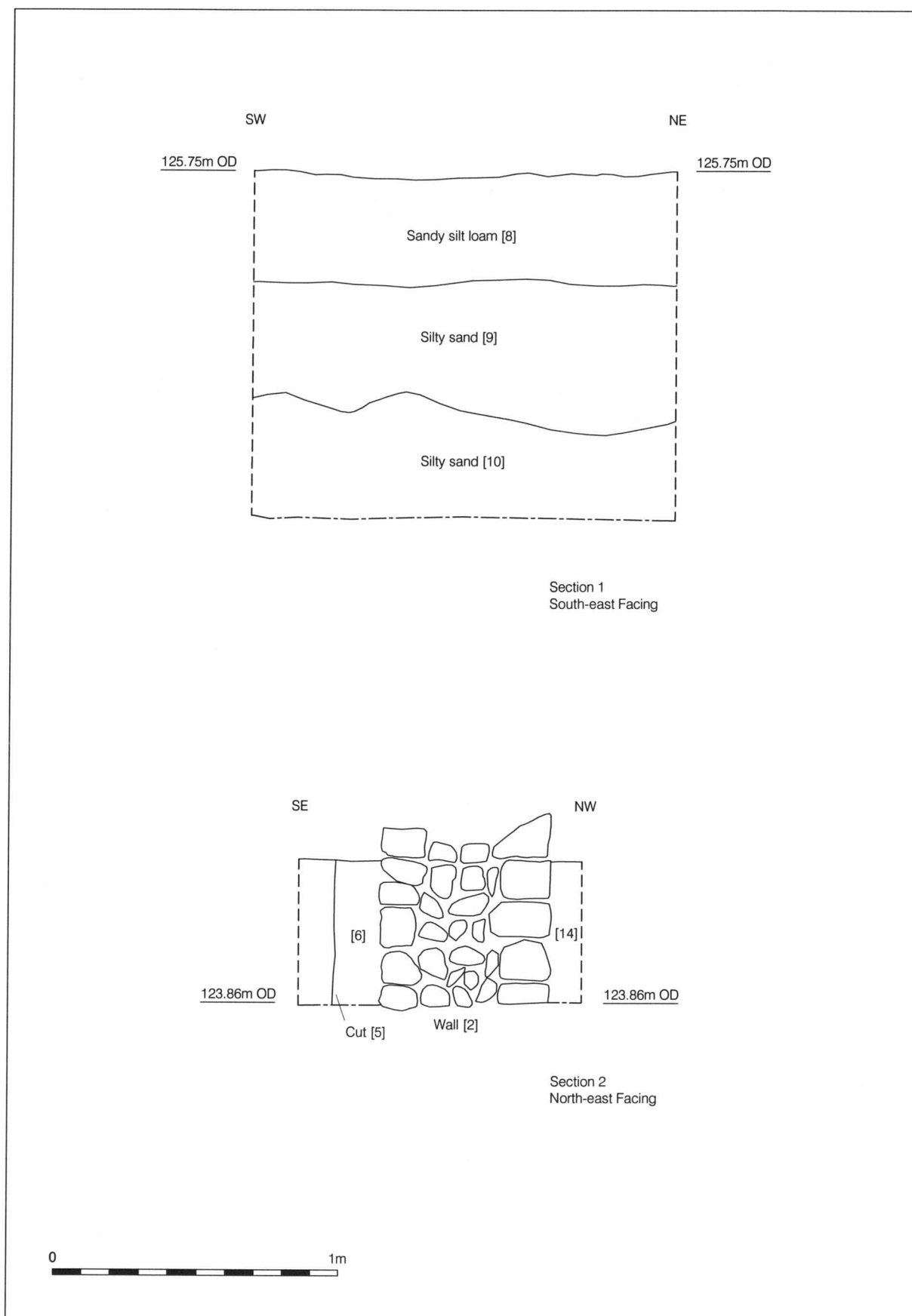


Figure 4
Sections 1 and 2
1:20

PLATES 1 AND 2

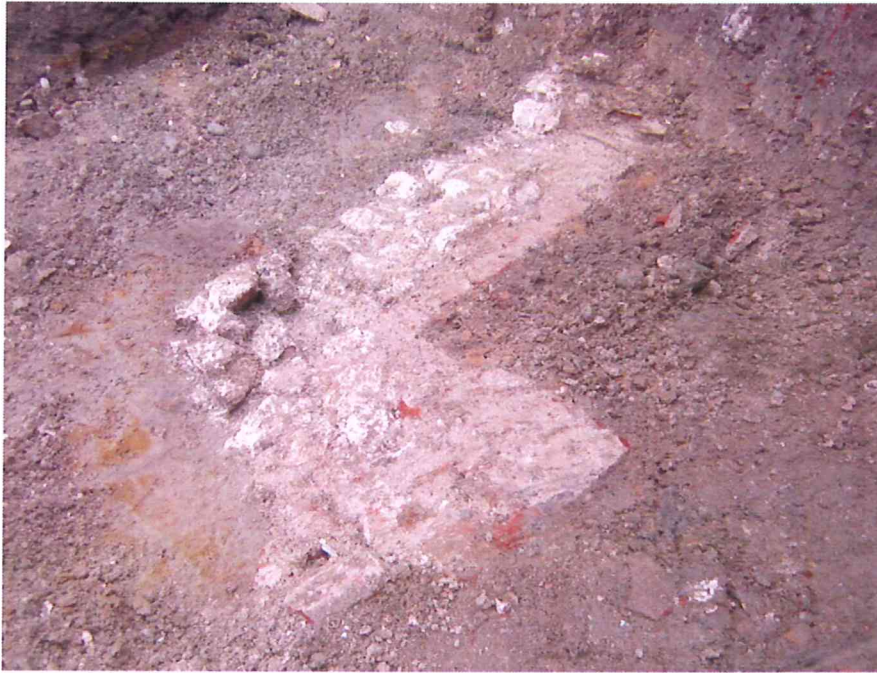


Plate 1: Walls [2] and [3]



Plate 2: Walls [1] and [3]

6 INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The watching brief found evidence for natural sand and gravels across the site at an upper height of 124.90m OD.
- 6.2 No features or artefacts of pre-medieval date were observed on the site.
- 6.3 The remains of a medieval cesspit were revealed in the southwest of the site. Pottery from the construction cut dated this structure from the mid-14th to mid-15th century. It was presumably installed to the rear of a building fronting onto the High Street. It appears that the cesspit was maintained until at least the 16th century before its disuse. The masonry surviving beneath the existing building was of a higher standard than that exhibited in the construction of the two projecting walls forming the rectangular structure. Although probable that this difference is the result of previous disturbance, it is also possible that walls [1] and [4] are the remains of an earlier building associated with the medieval street front, and that cruder walls [2] and [3] were added onto the better built ones in the later medieval period (Plates 1 and 2).
- 6.4 The rectangular brick structure [7] may provide evidence of earlier post-medieval activity associated with High Street buildings that would have been in existence during the 16th – 17th century.
- 6.5 Later 19th and 20th century activity on the site was exhibited by a brick soak-away and a well. These were likely associated with the buildings that still stand at the front of the site.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Lal Khajuria for commissioning the work and kindly funding it. Thanks also to Kim Stabler of GLAAS for monitoring the project.

- 8.2 The author would like to thank Tiva Montalbano for on site assistance, Adrian Nash for the illustrations and Chris Mayo and for project management and editing.

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Context No.	Type	Description
1	Wall	Medieval Wall NW/SE
2	Wall	Medieval Wall NE/SW
3	Wall	Medieval Wall NW/SE
4	Wall	Medieval Wall NE/SW
5	Cut	Construction Cut
6	Fill	Construction Cut Backfill
7	Wall	Post-Medieval Brick Wall
8	Layer	Topsoil
9	Layer	Subsoil
10	Natural	Natural Sand on Site
11	Fill	Rubble Fill of [7]
12	Masonry	Brick Soak-away
13	Masonry	Brick Well
14	Fill	Backfill Inside Medieval Building
15	Masonry	Brick Repair
16	Masonry	Brick Arrangement

APPENDIX 2: OASIS REPORT FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-15393

Project details

Project name	36-38 High Street, High Barnet
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in advance of residential development behind shops fronting the High Street. The remains of a fairly substantial, chalk and stone walled, medieval building were revealed partly beneath the existing High Street shops. A possible early post-medieval brick cellar was also encountered. The later post-medieval period was represented by a brick soak-away and a well.
Project dates	Start: 19-05-2006 End: 24-05-2006
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	HSZ06 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	WALLS Medieval
Monument type	WALLS Post Medieval
Monument type	WELL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Medieval
Significant Finds	BRICK Uncertain
Methods & techniques	'Targeted Trenches','Visual Inspection'
Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON BARNET BARNET 36-38 High Street, High Barnet
Postcode	EN5
Study area	140.00 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 2473 9641 Point
Height OD	Min: 124.70m Max: 124.95m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Pre-Construct Archaeology

Project design originator	Gary Brown
Project director/manager	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	Jon Crisp
Sponsor or funding body	Lal Khajuria

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Contents	'Ceramics'
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Digital Media available	'Images raster','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic','Survey'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Diary','Photograph','Plan','Section'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	The London EncyclopediaAn Archaeological Watching Brief at 36-38 High Street, High Barnet, London Borough of Barnet
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Crisp, J
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