

**1 CURTAIN PLACE
LONDON BOROUGH OF HACKNEY**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

PCA REPORT NO: R11493

SITE CODE: CRT13

MAY 2013




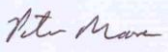
PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

**1 CURTAIN PLACE,
LONDON BOROUGH OF HACKNEY**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Quality Control

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**Land at Albis House, 1 Curtain Place, London Borough of Hackney, EC2A 3AN
An Archaeological Evaluation**

Report Number: R11493

Site Code: CRT 13

Central NGR: TQ 3332 8250

Local Planning Authority: London Borough of Hackney

Commissioning Client: Gold Section Homes

Written/Researched by: Paw Jorgensen
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September 2013**

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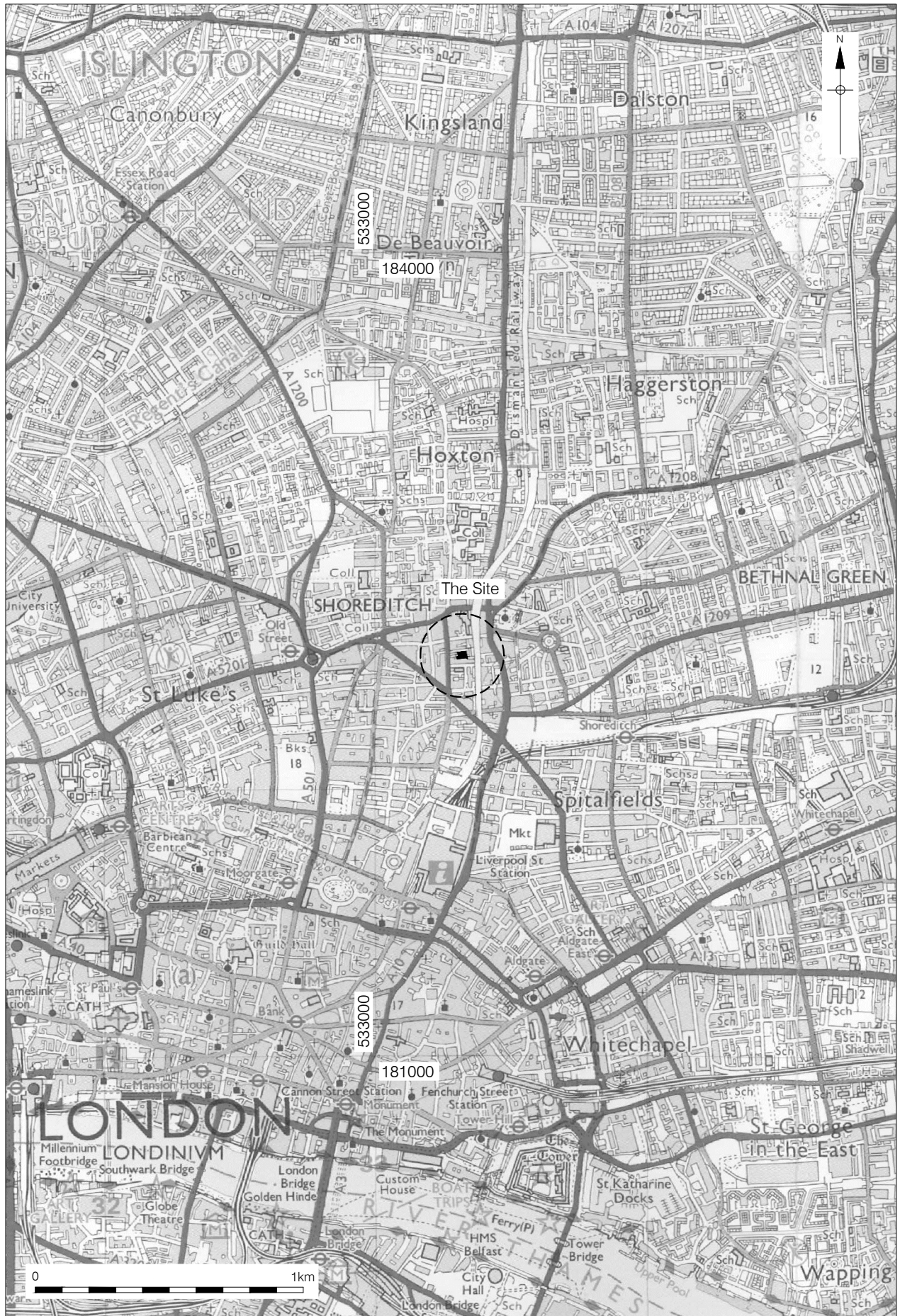
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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited on land at 1 Curtain Place, London Borough of Hackney (centred at NGR: TQ 3332 8250). The evaluation was carried out between 29th August and 4th September 2013 and was commissioned by Gold Section Homes.
- 1.2 The archaeological evaluation entailed the excavation of a single, shored, trench measuring 2.5m x 2.5m in plan. In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (Moore 2013) the trench was located within the footprint of the proposed building. The location of the trench had to be altered slightly due to the unexpected presence of a live sewer in the northern end of the trench.
- 1.3 Natural terrace gravel was identified approximately 2.05m below ground level. This was overlain by a deposit of alluvial clay, which in turn was sealed by a layer of reworked alluvium of an early post-medieval date.
- 1.4 The reworked alluvium had been truncated by a series of 19th century concrete and brick footings and associated services. Surrounding these and making up the upper 1.70m of the stratigraphic sequence were layers of made ground dating to the very late 19th/ early 20th century.
- 1.5

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Gold Section Homes to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land next to Albis House, 1 Curtain Place, London Borough of Hackney, EC2A 3AN (centred at NRG: TQ 3332 8250)(Figure 1). The work was carried out between 29th August and 4th September 2013 and required the excavation of a single trench measuring 2.5m x 2.5m in plan (Figure 2). Excavation of the trench was supervised by Paw Jorgensen and was project managed by Peter Moore, both of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited. Adam Single of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) monitored the work on behalf of the London Borough of Hackney.
- 2.2 An archaeological watching brief had previously been carried out (Moore 2013) at the site on the taking of the upper levels of a geotechnical borehole, the results of which were compared with previous window samples. This work found deep modern made ground over a soft yellow-brown silty clay over sandy-gravel. The evaluation described in this report aimed at examining the surface of the natural and alluvial deposit above it for an indication of human activity.
- 2.3 To the north and west the site was bordered by commercial properties while to the east and south sides of the site were delimited by blocks of flats. The site is located within an Archaeological Priority Area as defined by the London Borough of Hackney.
- 2.4 The completed archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records will be deposited with the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre under the unique site code CRT13.



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Figure 1
Site Location
1:20,000 at A4

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 In March 2012, The Department for Local Communities and Local Government published National Planning Policy Framework (replacing Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment). Chapter 12, “Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment”, provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation preservation and investigation of Heritage Assets. In short, government guidance provides a framework which:

- Protects designated Heritage Assets (which include World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas)
- Protects the settings of these designated assets
- Has a presumption in favour of in-situ preservation of designated and other nationally important archaeological assets
- In appropriate circumstances requires adequate information (from field evaluation) to enable informed decisions, and
- Provides for the excavation and investigation of archaeological assets whose significance can be realised and public appreciation of the asset can be enhanced.

3.2 In considering any proposal for development, the planning authority will be mindful of the policy framework set by the above government guidance, by current Development Plan policy and by other material considerations.

3.3 The relevant Strategic Development Plan framework is provided by ‘The London Plan’ (July 2011). It includes the following policy relating to archaeology within central London:

POLICY 4B.14 ARCHAEOLOGY

THE MAYOR, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ENGLISH HERITAGE, THE MUSEUM OF LONDON AND BOROUGHES, WILL SUPPORT THE IDENTIFICATION, PROTECTION, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF LONDON’S ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES. BOROUGHES 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.

3.4 The relevant local policy is provided by the London Borough of Hackney's Core Strategy, adopted in 2010. It contains the following policy statement regarding the Historic Environment:

Core Strategy Policy 25: Historic Environment

All development should make a positive contribution to the character of Hackney's historic and built environment. This includes identifying, conserving and enhancing the historic significance of the borough's designated heritage assets, their setting and where appropriate the wider historic environment.

3.5 Because of the low to moderate archaeological potential of the site, a trial trench evaluation was required in order to determine the nature of any future archaeological mitigation that might be necessary prior to redevelopment. A previous geotechnical borehole carried out in July 2013 was the subject of an archaeological watching brief. The archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (Moore, 2013) and the results are presented in this report.

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

4.1 Geology

4.1.1 The superficial deposits overlying the London Clay have been recorded on the by the British Geological Survey as sand and gravel belonging to the Hackney Gravel Member of the Maidenhead Formation. These 6-10m thick deposits represent terrace aggradations during the Wolstonian Age and locally contain lenses of silt, clay or peat (BGS, 2013).

4.1.2 A geotechnical borehole to the southeast of the excavation area encountered sandy gravel at approximately 12.67m OD. This was overlain by a *circa* thick deposit of yellowish brown silty clay described as either 'brickearth' or alluvium (Moore, 2013). The current investigation recorded the height of the natural gravel at a slightly higher level, 12.98m OD.

4.2 Topography

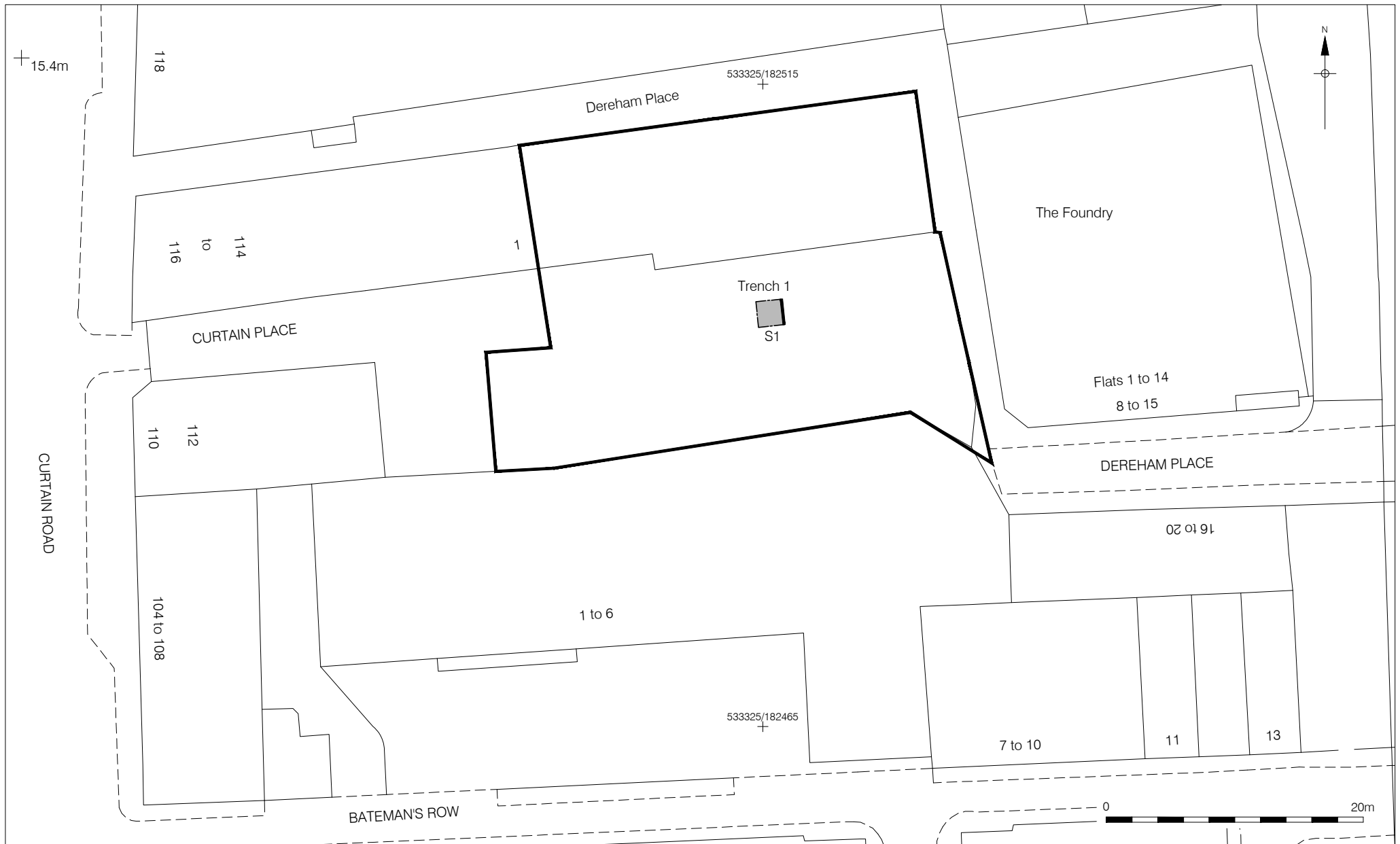
4.2.1 The topography within the site is mostly flat with a surface level of approximately 15.02m OD. This was likely a result of the levelling of fluctuations of the natural terrain in order to provide a level construction surface for the buildings now existing on the site. The stratigraphic sequence recorded within the aforementioned borehole supports this theory. According to the borehole log the upper 2m of the ground consisted of modern made ground. This was consistent with the findings of the current investigation.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

5.1 A Heritage Statement has been prepared for the site based on the existing desktop assessments and previous archaeological investigations in the immediate vicinity (Moore, 2012). This had determined that the site was located within marginal land outside the precincts of the Holywell Priory. According to the Heritage Statement the area immediately surrounding the site was not developed until the later post-medieval period and the archaeological potential for the site was therefore determined to be low- to moderate. If present, the archaeological deposits were thought to have suffered a high level of truncation. This was based on the results of a watching brief carried out during the sinking of a geotechnical borehole southeast of the trench. The current investigation proved this hypothesis to be true. A full summary of the historical and archaeological background for the site can be found in the Heritage Statement.

6 METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The archaeological evaluation entailed the excavation of a shored trench measuring 2.5m by 2.5m in plan. It was excavated to the top of the natural terrace gravels where after a 0.55m deep sondage was excavated into the natural deposits in order to confirm that these were indeed the natural terrace gravels. The trench location was set out by the principle contractor who also carried out the CAT scanning prior to and during the excavation.
- 6.2 At a depth of approximately 0.80m below ground level a live sewer aligned along a roughly east-west axis was encountered in the northern end of the trench. It was therefore decided to move the trench circa 1m south of its proposed location in order to avoid the live sewer.
- 6.3 Due to the anticipated depth of the trench of approximately 2.30m shoring was installed after the excavation had reached 1.20m below ground level. In order to adequately shore the trench 4m long interlocking steel sheet piles were installed along the inside edge of three of the sides of the trench and timber planks were used to shore the remaining side. Hydraulic frames were used to brace the steel sheets and timber planks in order to secure the shoring. A visual inspection of the shoring was carried out prior to entering the trench and the pressure of the hydraulic frames was checked daily.
- 6.4 The excavation of the trench was carried out using a tracked mechanical JCB 360° excavator fitted with a flat bladed grading bucket. Excavation progressed in spits of approximately 100mm and under constant archaeological supervision.
- 6.5 When archaeological deposits were reached these were cleaned both in plan and section and examined using hand tools. Recording of the deposits was then carried out on *pro forma* context sheets using a standard single context recording system. Trench plans were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and sections at 1:10; both plans and sections were drawn on polyester based drawing sheets (permatrace). A full digital photographic record was made. Finds were collected according to standard retrieval methods as outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Moore, 2013).
- 6.6 A surveyed Temporary Bench Mark (T.B.M.), with the value of 15.02m OD, was established near the southwest corner of the trench using GPS equipment. Levels of archaeologically relevant strata were taken from this T.B.M using a dumpy level.



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Figure 2
Trench Location
1:400 at A4

7 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

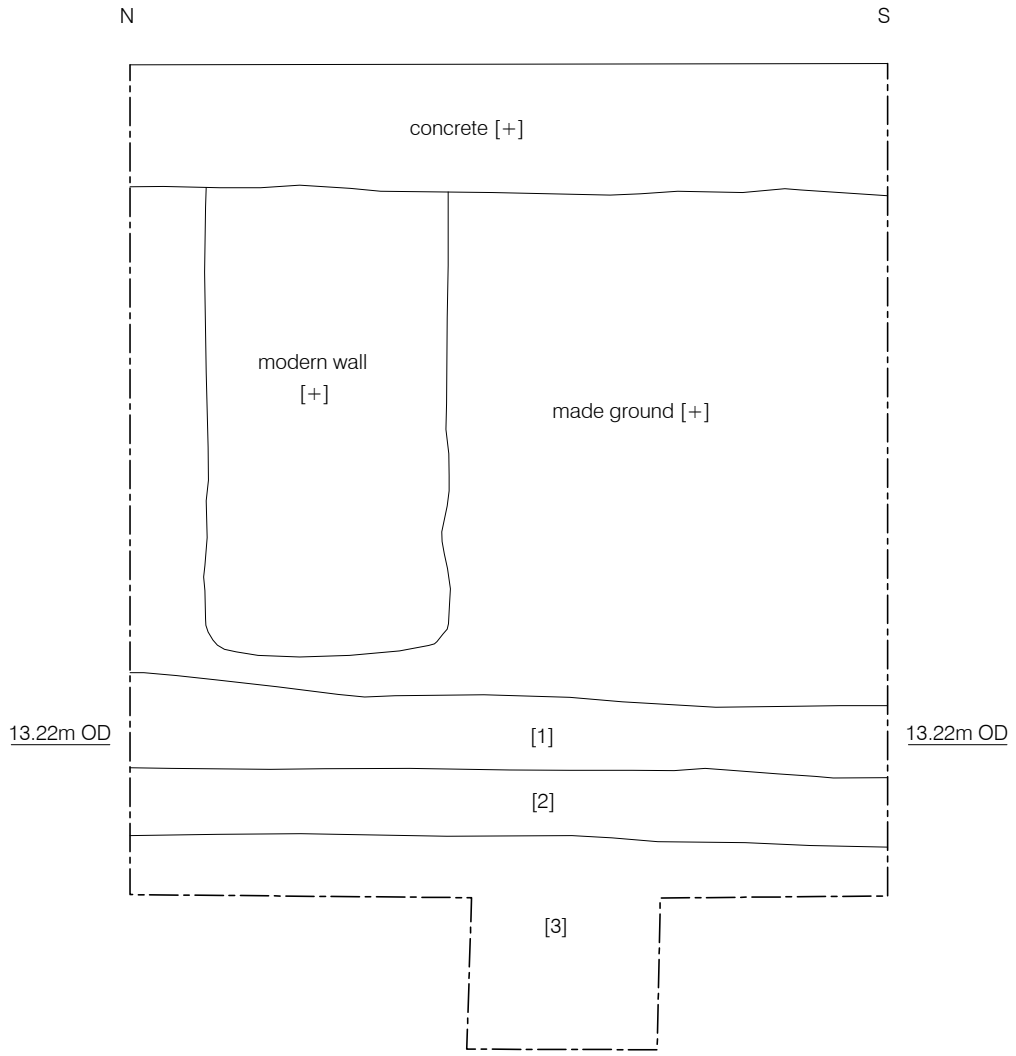
7.1 Natural (Figure 3)

7.1.1 The earliest deposit encountered during the archaeological evaluation was a layer of loose reddish brown clayey gravel, [3], becoming sandier with depth. It continued beyond the limits of the trench in all directions and was not excavated to its full depth. A sondage excavated in the eastern part of the trench confirmed that the thickness of the deposit exceeded 0.56m. In the northeast corner of the trench it was first seen at 12.98m OD. From here the top of the deposit sloped down towards the west where, in the northwest corner of the trench, it was recorded at 12.89m OD.

7.1.2 Sealing the gravel deposit was a 0.18m thick alluvial layer of soft sandy clay, [2], varying in colour from mid-brown to yellowish brown. It contained occasional small sub-angular flint pebbles, but no other discernible inclusions. Like the underlying gravel the alluvial deposit extended beyond the limits of the trench in all directions. The alluvial deposit was first encountered at a height of 13.16m OD.

7.2 Post-Medieval (Figure 3)

7.3 Overlying the alluvial deposit was similar deposit, [1], although it had clearly been reworked. It comprised a 0.25m thick layer of soft mid-brown slightly sandy clay with frequent small unsorted sub-angular and sub-rounded flint pebbles as well as occasional charcoal and brittle coal fragments. Three sherds of pottery and one worn sherd of peg tile were recovered from the layer with a group date of 1480 – 1600. Like the underlying deposits this also extended beyond the limits of the excavation in all directions and is interpreted as an early Post-Medieval disturbance (horticulture?) of the horizon below. At the highest point it was measured at 13.41m OD. The top of the deposit had been truncated by the 19th century concrete and stock brick footings and associated drainage pipes, which were covered by 1.7m of made ground, to a concrete surface at 15.02m OD.



Section 1
Trench 1
West Facing



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Figure 3
Section 1
1:20 at A4

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The original research design proposed that the evaluation would try to address the following objectives:

- To establish the nature of those deposits which may be “brickearth”, whether it has been laid down in the last few millennia and whether there is any archaeological activity cut into it or sealed by it

The current investigation established that the possible “brickearth” deposit was in fact a deposit of alluvial clay. No cultural materials were produced by the deposit and it was therefore not possible to determine its date of deposition. No archaeological features were sealed by, or cut into the alluvial deposit.

- To establish the presence and nature of any Roman activity as has been found nearby.

No Roman material, features or deposits were encountered during the evaluation.

- To establish the presence of any medieval activity associated with, but external to, the nearby Holywell Priory.

The evaluation did not encounter any deposits, features or finds of medieval date.

8.1.1 A single layer dated to the early post-medieval period was recorded during the investigation and represented a disturbance, possibly by horticulture, of the underlying alluvium. Although it survived to a thickness of 0.25m the top of the layer showed signs of significant truncation caused by the construction of concrete footings and associated drains belonging to a now extinct building. It is likely that these elements were related to the redevelopment of the area south of Norfolk Gardens (now Dereham Street) and east of Union Place (now the west end of Curtain Place) between 1978 and 1896. A comparison of the 1878-80 and 1896 1:1056 Ordnance Survey maps of the area (not reproduced here).

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Carlton James and Gary Porter of Gold Section Homes for commissioning the work, the project team, especially Tom Westwood and Stephen Staines, for their help and support during the project, and Adam Single of English Heritage Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) for monitoring the work on behalf of the London Borough of Hackney.
- 9.2 The author would like to thank John Joyce for his work on site, Jennifer Simonson for the illustrations, Chris Jarrett and Bernie Seddon for the finds spotdating, and Peter Moore for his project management and for editing this report.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Moore, P., 2013, 'Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Albis House, 1 Curtain Place, London Borough of Hackney, EC2A 3AN', unpublished report by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited.

Plates

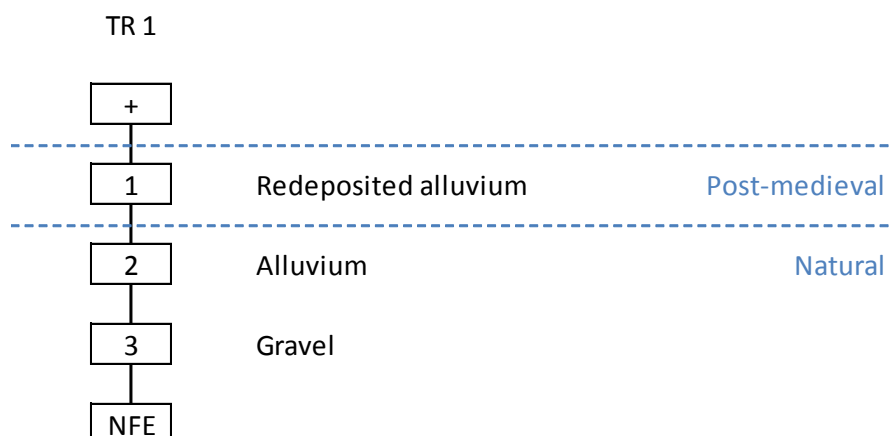


Plate 1: Trench overview at the level of the natural gravel [3], facing east.

Appendix 1: Context Index

| Context | Trench | Type | Description |
|---------|--------|-------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | TR 1 | Layer | Reworked alluvium, horticulture? |
| 2 | TR 1 | Layer | Alluvium |
| 3 | TR 1 | Layer | Natural gravel |

Appendix 2: Site Matrix



Appendix 3: OASIS Form

OASIS ID: preconst1-158603

Project details

| | |
|--|---|
| Project name | Albis House, 1 Curtain Place, Shoreditch |
| Short description of the project | Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited was commissioned to excavate a single evaluation trench measuring 2.5m x 2.5m in plan. This was excavated to the top of the natural gravel at approximately 2.2m below the current ground level. Sealing the natural gravel was a layer of alluvial clay (undated) overlain by a deposit of reworked alluvium. The latter was of post-medieval date. Late 19th century redevelopment of this part of the site had caused truncation to the reworked alluvium and resulted in the removal of the overlying deposits. |
| Project dates | Start: 29-08-2013 End: 04-09-2013 |
| Previous/future work | Yes / Not known |
| Any associated project reference codes | CRT 13 - Sitecode |
| Type of project | Field evaluation |
| Site status | Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area |
| Current Land use | Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices |
| Current Land use | Other 15 - Other |
| Monument type | REWORKED ALLUVIUM Post Medieval |
| Monument type | ALLUVIUM Uncertain |
| Significant Finds | POTTERY Post Medieval |
| Significant Finds | CBM Post Medieval |
| Methods & techniques | "Targeted Trenches" |
| Development type | Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.) |
| Position in the planning process | Pre-application |

Project location

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Country | England |
| Site location | GREATER LONDON HACKNEY HACKNEY Land at Albis House, 1 Curtain Place, London Borough of Hackney, EC2A 3AN |
| Postcode | EC2A 3AN |
| Study area | 6.25 Square metres |
| Site coordinates | TQ 3332 8250 51 0 51 31 30 N 000 04 40 W Point |
| Height OD / Depth | Min: 12.89m Max: 12.98m |

Project creators

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Name of Organisation | Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited |
| Project brief originator | Adam Single |
| Project design originator | Peter Moore |
| Project director/manager | Peter Moore |
| Project supervisor | Paw Jorgensen |

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body Gold Section Homes

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient LAARC
Physical Contents "Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient LAARC
Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets","Text"
Paper Archive recipient LAARC
Paper Media available "Context sheet","Matrices","Plan","Report","Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title An Archaeological of Land at Albis House, 1 Curtain Place, London Borough of Hackney, EC2A 3AN
Author(s)/Editor(s) Jorgensen, P.
Date 2013
Issuer or publisher Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Place of issue or publication London
Description Unpublished client report

Entered by Paw Jorgensen (pjorgensen@pre-construct.com)
Entered on 5 September 2013

Appendix 4: Finds Spotdating

Chris Jarrett & Bernie Sedden

Context

[1] - 1 sherd Early Post-Med Redware, pipkin (?) handle, 1480 – 1600

- 1 sherd London Area Post-Med Slipped Redware with green glaze, 1480-1650
- 1 sherd Early Borderware, 1480-1550
- 1 fragment worn peg tile 1180-1500

Date of group 1480 - 1600

PCA

PCA SOUTH

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