

**An Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Ipswich House, St Norberts
Road, Honor Oak Park, London Borough of Lewisham**

Site Code: IPH 06

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 3585 7495

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Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, July 2006**

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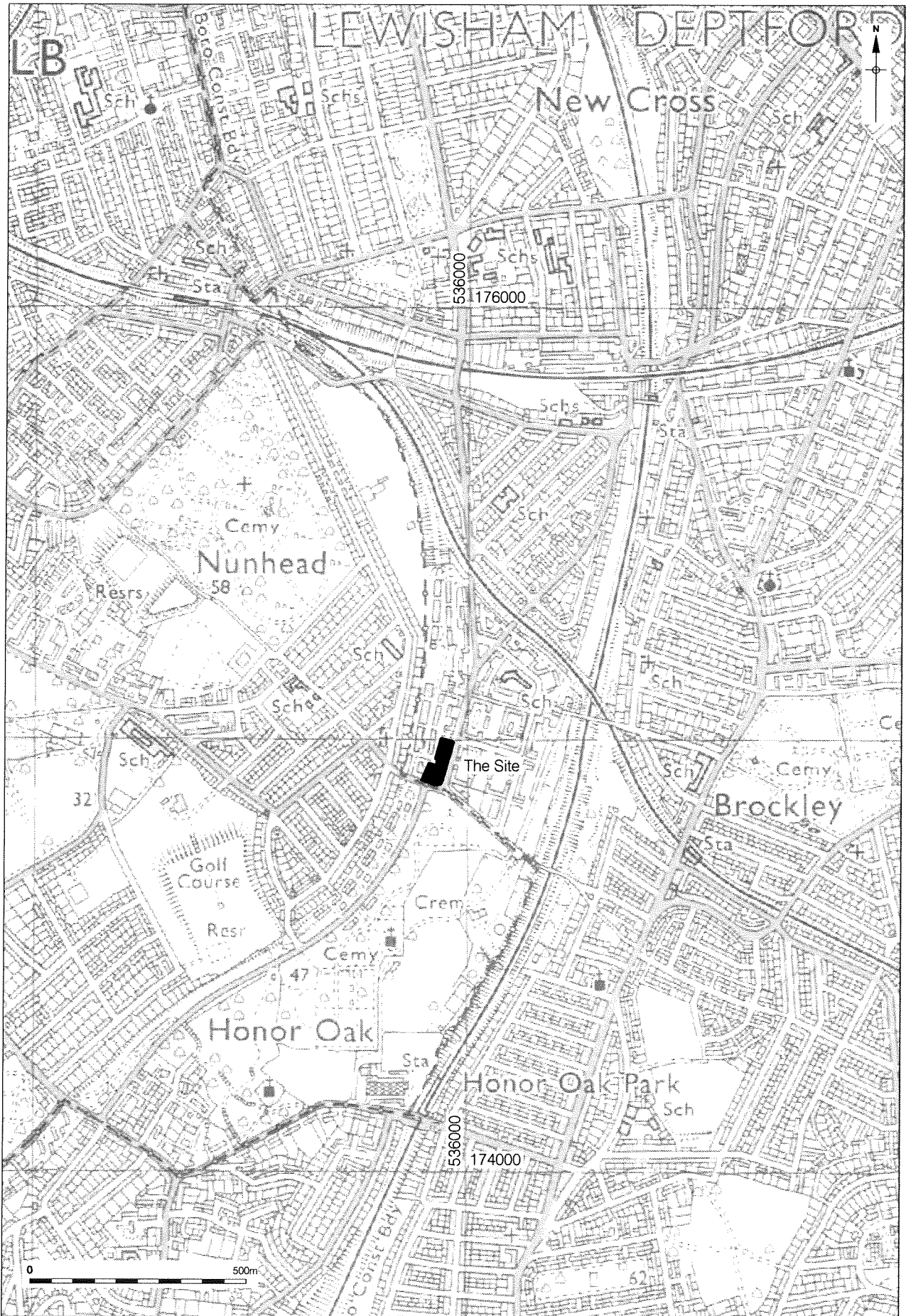
1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited of land at the former site of Ipswich House, St Norberts Road, Honor Oak Park, London Borough of Lewisham.
- 1.2 Three trenches were excavated across the site in advance of development of the land into residential property. In each of the trenches, topsoil consisting of modern demolition material combined with silty clay was removed to reveal natural, undisturbed, orange-brown clay deposits. No archaeological deposits or features were observed in any trench.

2 INTRODUCTION

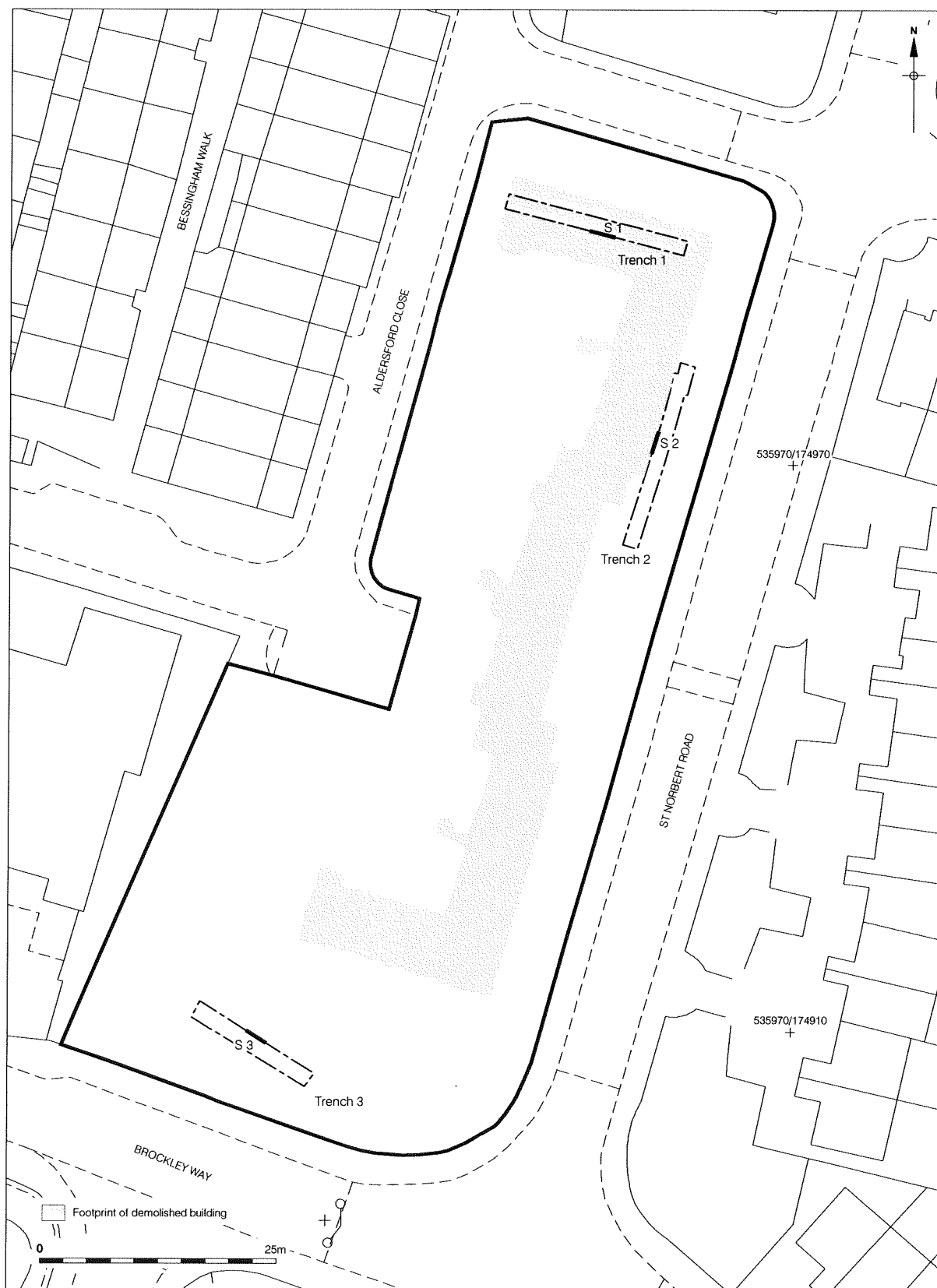
- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited of land at the former site of Ipswich House, St. Norberts Road, Honor Oak Park, London Borough of Lewisham in advance of construction of new residential property.
- 2.2 The evaluation was conducted between the 26th and 28th June 2006 and was commissioned Mansell Construction Services Ltd on behalf of the Family Housing Association. The work was undertaken following English Heritage (GLAAS) guidelines.¹
- 2.3 The excavations were undertaken on the site of the former Ipswich House, a local authority housing block built some time in the 1930's. It is bordered to the east by St. Norberts Road, to the south by Brockley Way, the north by an access road, Aldersford Road and the three-storey Jordan House and the west by a continuation of Aldersford Close and a day centre.
- 2.4 The National Grid Reference of the site is TQ 3585 7495.
- 2.5 The site was assigned the code IPH 06.
- 2.6 The evaluation was supervised by Richard Humphrey and assisted by John Crisp with the surveying undertaken by Jeremy Rogers. The project was managed by Gary Brown for Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited.

¹ English Heritage, Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service, "Archaeological Guidance Papers: 1 Written Schemes of Investigation; 2 Desk-Based Assessments; 3 Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork in London; Archaeological Reports; 5 Evaluations", Revised June 1998.



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Figure 1
Site Location
1:12,500



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Figure 2
Detailed Site Location
1:625

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Archaeological and Historical Background together with the potential for the survival of remains on the site are covered in detail within the Desk Based Assessment written by Gary Brown, March 2006².
- 3.2 The site is located in an area that appears from cartographic and documentary evidence to have been unoccupied until the 1930's, although a railway embankment bordered the west side of the site and a footpath the south border since at least the mid-19th century. There is a shortage of chance finds and discoveries from previous archaeological interventions in the vicinity for all periods, although there is a noted higher potential for the Roman era. The absence may have more to do with a lack of archaeological interventions than an absence of buried heritage within the vicinity of the site.
- 3.3 Evidence from prehistoric settlement in the area is restricted to two Palaeolithic implements making the archaeological potential for this period to be considered low.
- 3.4 A section of the London-Lewes road was recorded at Nash Road, close to the subject site. The road is projected to run north-westwards through the estate and therefore it is considered that the archaeological potential for this period is moderate. It is noted that the road was not located during recent investigations close to the junction of Nash and Turnham Roads³.
- 3.5 There is no evidence for Saxon activity in the area so the archaeological potential for this period is considered to be low.
- 3.6 In 1182 there is a reference to *Brocole* (Brockley). No finds of Medieval date have been found in the designated area, though a short-lived Premonstratensian monastery was constructed in the 12th century on land given by Henry II before they moved to Bayham Abbey in Essex.

² Archaeological Desk Based Assessment for land at the former site of Ipswich House, St. Norberts Road, Honor Oak Park, London Borough of Lewisham. Gary Brown, Pre-Construct Archaeology, March 2006.

³ Taylor, 2002

- 3.7 Several farms were located in the study area during the post-medieval period, notably one of 98 acres owned by the Earl of St. Germans whose farmhouse was demolished in 1870 (MLO 1966).
- 3.8 The advancement of the railways in the 19th century brought homes and businesses to rural Kent, although the study area remained undeveloped. In 1896 the area to the north was known as London Playing Fields and to the south part of the Honor Oak and Forest Hill Golf Club. This had changed by 1938 by the development of the Honor Oak Estate including Ipswich House.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The evaluation was conducted according to the method statement prepared by Pre-Construct Archaeology⁴. The fieldwork was designed to assess the presence or absence of significant archaeological remains, which may require further investigation.
- 4.2 A JCB type mechanical excavator fitted with a flat ditching bucket was used under archaeological supervision to remove unproductive soils down to the highest archaeological horizon. A total of three trenches were opened across the study site (figure 2).
- 4.3 The features identified within the trenches were then cleaned by hand. Investigation was limited to identifying the extent and nature of the deposits and to recover dating evidence. This was conducted by the excavation of slots through features and by half sectioning.
- 4.4 The features were assigned individual context numbers. Drawings were made in plan and a representative section of each trench was also made.
- 4.5 A temporary benchmark (value 36.38m OD) was traversed onto the site from an Ordnance Survey Bench mark on the north-west corner of Jordan House (value 34.34m OD).
- 4.6 The trench locations were surveyed in using a Total Station Theodolite and located to OS data.

⁴ A Method Statement for an Archaeological Evaluation of land at the former site of Ipswich House, St. Norberts Road, Honor Oak Park, London Borough of Lewisham. Prepared by Gary Brown, Pre-Construct Archaeology, March 2006

5 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 5.1 Prior to commencement of work the subject site was a largely open area, clear of structures and slab. There was, however, a large spoil heap consisting of demolished material situated in the south-eastern corner of the study area.
- 5.2 The British Geological Survey 1:50,000 series Sheet 270, 'South London' indicates that the site lies on London Clay
- 5.3 The topography of the site slopes down gently from south to north (approximately 39.16m OD to 34.83m mOD) and from west to east.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

6.1 The following section offers a brief description of each of the trenches excavated and the deposits recorded. Trenches were positioned outside the footprint of the former building and took account of the numerous live services still extant at the site.

6.2 Trench 1

6.2.1 This trench was aligned east-west and measured 19.50m in length. It was positioned away from the footprint of the demolished Ipswich House, at the northern end of the site, in order to investigate an area of undisturbed land. Heavily disturbed topsoil [5] extended to a depth of 33.51m OD at the western end of the trench. This was not dug any deeper as it was considered a safety risk as outlined in the Risk Assessment prepared by June 2006⁵.

6.2.2 Towards the east end of the trench, approximately 0.40m of topsoil was removed to reveal natural clay deposits [6], present at a level of 34.42m OD.

6.2.3 No archaeological features were observed.

6.3 Trench 2

6.3.1 Trench 2 was aligned north-south and measured 20.00m in length. A live gas main line was detected at the southeastern end of the trench, running north-south close to the trench edge. It was therefore repositioned approximately 0.30m to the west and excavation continued. Disturbed topsoil [3] that contained demolition material ranging in thickness from 0.30m to 0.50m was removed to reveal natural orange-brown clay [4] at a height of 35.36m OD. The footprint of the demolished Ipswich house was observed running along the western edge of the trench.

6.3.2 An east-west running service trench was also observed to be cut into the natural clay

6.3.3 No archaeological features were observed.

6.4 Trench 3

6.4.1 This trench was aligned east west and measured approximately 16.00m, being slightly reduced from the planned 20m length due to its proximity to the day centre to

⁵ Ipswich House, London Borough of Lewisham, London. Archaeological Evaluation Health and Safety Method Statement & Risk Assessment, Frank Meddens June 2006

the west and the spoil heap to the east. Disturbed topsoil [1] approximately 0.40m deep was removed to reveal natural undisturbed clay [2] at a height of 38.08m OD.

6.4.2 A modern service trench ran north-south through the trench towards the western end

6.4.3 No archaeological features were observed.

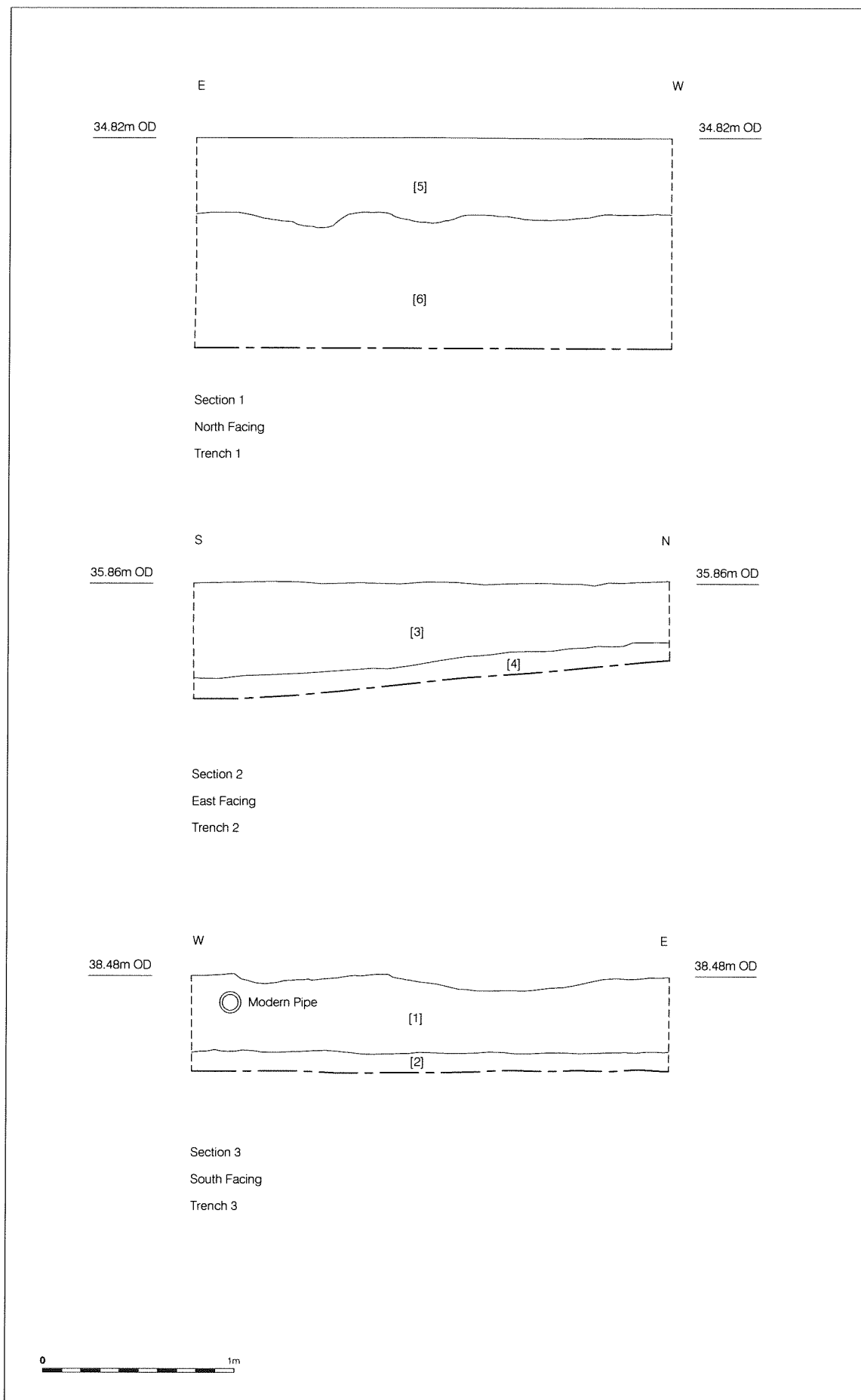


Figure 3
Sections 1, 2 & 3
1:30

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The evaluation conducted at Ipswich House shows that the site is likely to be devoid of archaeological deposits from the late prehistoric through to the post-medieval period
- 7.2 Modern made ground consisting of clay combined with red and yellow brick was found to directly overlie natural clay deposits.
- 7.3 No archaeological material was observed that suggested that the path of the London-Lewes Roman road crossed or was located close to the site.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Mansell Construction Services Ltd for generously funding this project. Thanks in particular to Warren Terry of MCSL for continued assistance throughout the project. The author would like to thank the field staff, Hayley Baxter for the illustrations, Frank Meddens for the Health and Safety statement, Lisa Lonsdale for logistic support and Gary Brown for his project management and editing.

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Type	Trench	Comments
1	Layer	3	Topsoil
2	Natural	3	Natural
3	Layer	2	Topsoil
4	Natural	2	Natural
5	Layer	1	Topsoil
6	Natural	1	Natural

APPENDIX 2: OASIS ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-16609

Project details

Project name An Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Ipswich House, St Norberts Road, Honor Oak Park, London Borough of Lewisham

Short description of the project This report details the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited of land at the former site of Ipswich House, St Norberts Road, Honor Oak Park, London Borough of Lewisham. Three trenches were excavated across the site, in advance of development of the land into residential property. In all of the trenches, topsoil consisting of modern demolition material combined with silty clay was removed to reveal natural, undisturbed orange-brown clay deposits. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Project dates Start: 26-06-2006 End: 28-06-2006

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes IPH 06 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed

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 Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON LEWISHAM LEWISHAM AND BLACKHEATH
Ipswich House

Postcode SE4 2LD

Study area 0.50 Hectares

National grid
reference TQ 3585 7495 Point

Height OD Min: 34.42m Max: 38.44m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Project brief originator Pre-Construct Archaeology

Project design originator Gary Brown

Project director/manager Gary Brown

Project supervisor Richard Humphrey

Sponsor or funding body Mansell Construction Services Ltd.

Entered by Richard Humphrey (richardhumphrey1980@hotmail.com)

Entered on 17 July 2006

OASIS:

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