

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION AT
2-46 SEDGWICK STREET,
HOMERTON,
LONDON BOROUGH OF HACKNEY**

DECEMBER 2006

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

2-46 SEDGWICK STREET,
HOMERTON,
LONDON BOROUGH OF HACKNEY

EVALUATION

Quality Control

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**An Archaeological Evaluation at 2 - 46 Sedgwick Street, Homerton,
London Borough of Hackney**

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 3576 8500

Site Code: SXS 06

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Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, December 2006

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December 2006**

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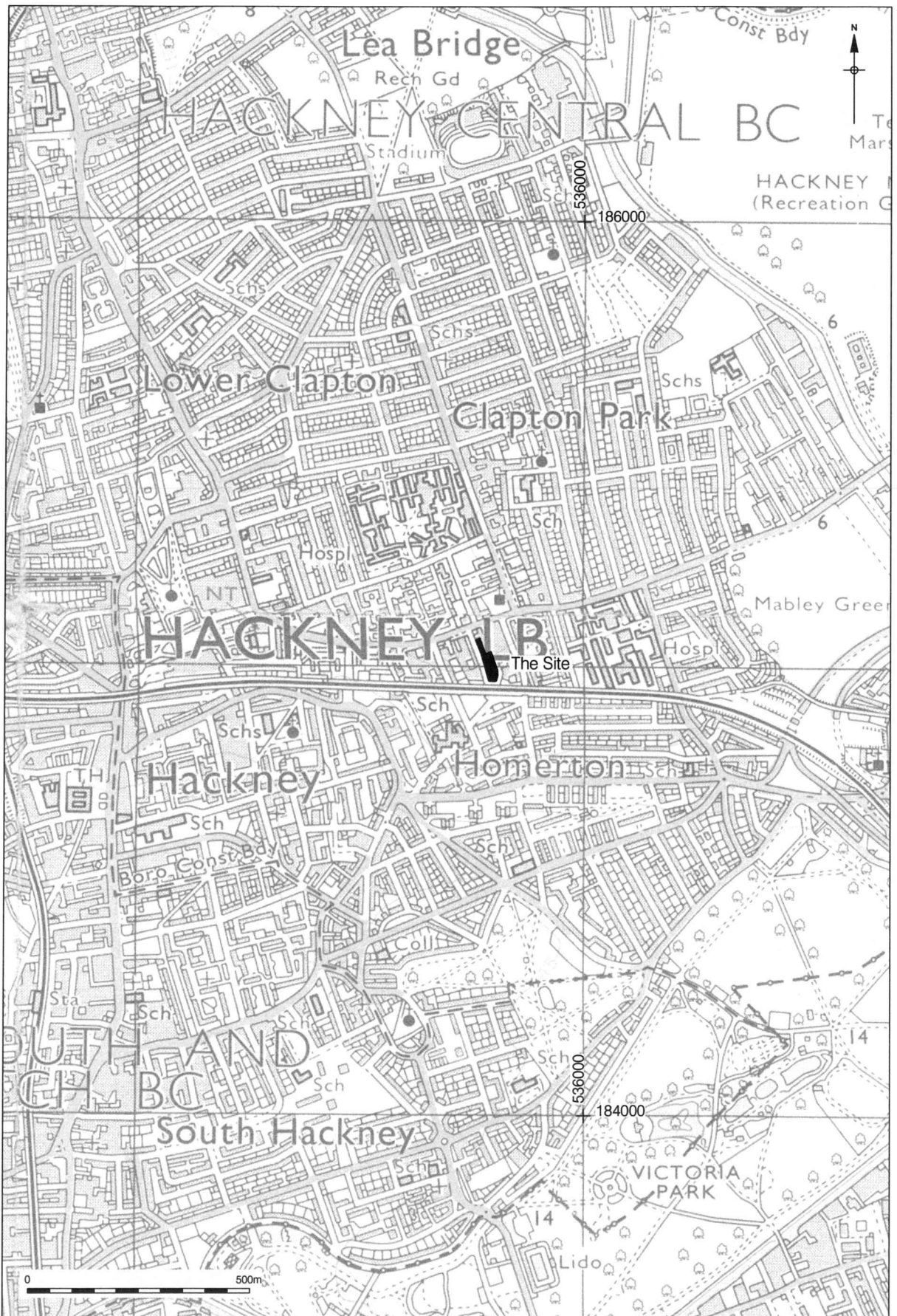
1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd at 2-46 Sedgwick Street, Homerton, London Borough of Hackney. The central National Grid Reference for this site is TQ 3576 8500, the field evaluation was undertaken between 20th and 22nd November 2006 and the commissioning client was Fiona Wall of Countryside Properties.
- 1.2 The archaeological programme consisted of two trial trenches, which were to provide comprehensive coverage of the north-western part of the site. A previous geotechnical study of the site had shown the southern area to be both heavily truncated and contaminated by groundworks likely to have been associated with the construction of the railway in the 19th century. The evaluation was targeted away from the southern area based on these considerations, as agreed in advance with David Divers of GLAAS.
- 1.3 The earliest deposits encountered were natural sand and gravels.
- 1.4 Little in the way of archaeological deposits were found on site, both trenches revealing modern truncations, presumably associated with the light industrial structures and warehouses that previously stood on the site. However a pit of post medieval date was revealed in one trench. Later features included the masonry foundation of a 19th century building.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd between 20th and 22nd November 2006 in advance of a housing development at 2-46 Sedgwick Street, Homerton, London Borough of Hackney (Figure 1). The site lies on land formerly occupied by light industrial structures and warehouses. It is bordered to the north by properties that front onto both Sedgwick Street and Mackintosh Lane, to the east by Mackintosh Lane, and to the south and west by Sedgwick Street. The archaeological evaluation involved the excavation and recording of two trial trenches for the purpose of providing comprehensive coverage of the north-western part of the site (Figure 2). The southern part of the site had been shown by geotechnical work to be truncated and contaminated by the 19th century construction of the railway¹.
- 2.2 The commissioning client was Fiona Wall of Countryside Properties. The archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd under the supervision of James Langthorne and the project management of Chris Mayo. The evaluation was monitored by David Divers of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS).
- 2.3 Prior to the evaluation work, Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd conducted an archaeological Desktop Assessment of the site (Divers 2004). This concluded that the site had: a low to moderate potential for early prehistoric remains; a low potential for later prehistoric remains; a low to moderate potential for Roman remains; a moderate potential Saxon remains; a moderate to high potential for medieval remains; a high potential for post-medieval remains. In 2005 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd undertook an evaluation of the neighbouring site on Mackintosh Lane. This revealed two undated features, mid to late post-medieval plough marks and 19th and 20th century structural remains.
- 2.4 The evaluation followed a method statement (Mayo 2006) approved by Mr Divers.
- 2.5 The completed archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records will be deposited with the London Archaeological Archive Resource Centre.
- 2.6 The site was allocated the site code: SXS 06.

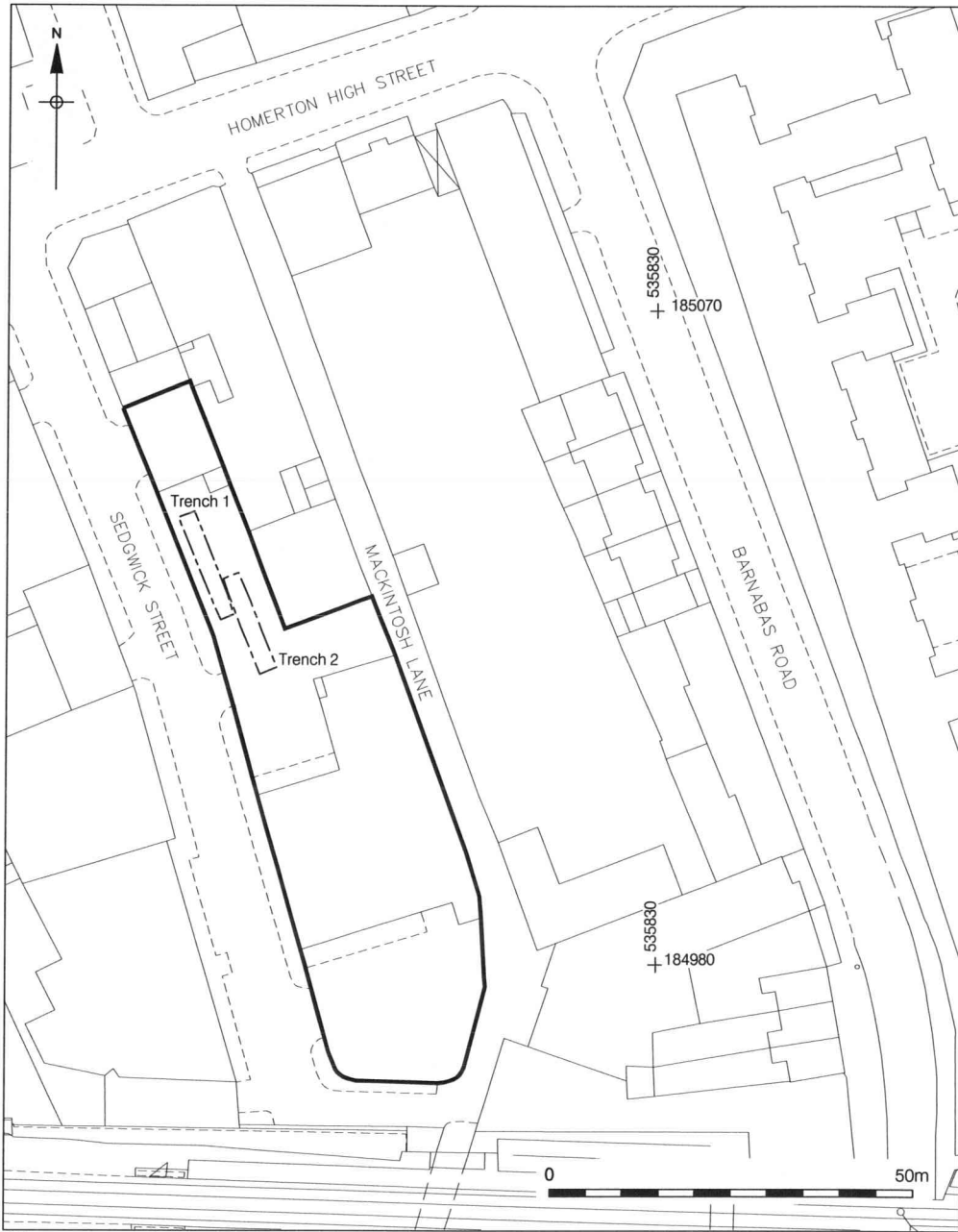
¹ The geotechnical report for the site was provided to Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd by Countryside Properties Ltd. The report was written by Ellis and Moore Consulting Engineers (report reference no. C9849, dated January 2005).



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey 1:25,000. Crown Copyright 1987.

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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:12,500 at A4



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Figure 2
Trench Location
1:1,000 at A4

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 ARCHAEOLOGY IN HACKNEY AND THE UDP

3.1.1 The evaluation aims to satisfy the objectives of the London Borough of Hackney, which fully recognises the importance of the buried heritage for which they are the custodians. The Borough's deposited draft 'Unitary Development Plan', 1995, contains policy statements in respect of protecting the buried archaeological resource.

3.1.2 The proposed development is subject to the Council's Archaeology Policy:

3.2 ARCHAEOLOGY

EQ29 Archaeological Heritage

IN THE AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRIORITY SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AND ELSEWHERE AS NECESSARY THE COUNCIL WILL NORMALLY REQUIRE:

(A) PRIOR ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING FOR THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF DEVELOPMENT (IF NECESSARY BASED UPON A PRELIMINARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE EVALUATION PRIOR TO A PLANNING DETERMINATION); AND

(B) FOR SITES REQUIRING IN SITU PRESERVATION, SUITABLE DESIGN, LAND USE AND MANAGEMENT; OR

(C) FOR SITES NOT REQUIRING IN SITU PRESERVATION, AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION AND PRESENTATION TO THE PUBLIC OF ANY FINDS

Justification

The archaeological Heritage of Hackney is considerable and includes the internationally important Palaeolithic site between Stamford Hill/ Upper Clacton, Medieval and Elizabethan remains in South Shoreditch as well as dozens of smaller sites throughout the Borough. The Council will use its available powers to ensure that such remains are not needlessly destroyed. The preservation of this valuable education and cultural asset is a legitimate objective against which the needs of development must be carefully balanced and assessed in line with Government advice. The physical preservation in situ of important sites will be sought, where desirable and feasible. Preservation by record (excavation) is a second best option and developers should not expect to obtain planning permission for archaeologically damaging development merely because they arrange for the recording of sites.

The Council encourages developers to consider the archaeological aspects of a development site as early as possible in order to reduce uncertainty and conflict and will itself seek professional advice on assessing the archaeological importance and potential of a site. Where appropriate the Council will require an archaeological statement (a written assessment) and/or an archaeological field evaluation (on site

assessment by trial work) before a decision on the application is taken. The policy will apply, particularly, in areas of archaeological priority but may be applied elsewhere, on the advice of English Heritage, should the archaeological evidence suggest that this would be appropriate.

The case for in situ preservation will be assessed on an individual basis, weighing the importance of the remains against the needs for development. Where presentation to the public of the preserved in situ remains is desirable and feasible, the Council will require the development design to accommodate this objective.

Where the preservation of known archaeological remains in situ is not justified, the Council will require that no development takes place on site until archaeological investigations have been carried out by an investigating body, to be approved by the Council; such investigations shall be in accordance with a detailed scheme to be approved in writing in advance by the Council.

Investigations should be undertaken a professionally qualified archaeological organisation or consultant. Developers are urged to contact at an early stage English Heritage who maintain the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and advise on the archaeological potential of sites both within and outside areas of archaeological priority.

3.1.3 The proposed development lies within an Archaeological Priority Zone as defined by the Borough's UDP.

3.1.4 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Listed Buildings on site.

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

4.1 Geology

- 4.1.1 The natural geology of the site consists of floodplain gravels, specifically Taplow gravels, which overlie London Clay.
- 4.1.2 A geotechnical survey of an adjacent site on the eastern side of Mackintosh Lane revealed made ground between 1.0m - 3.2m thick overlying sands and gravels (Divers 2004).

4.2 Topography

- 4.2.1 The site lies to the south of Homerton High Street which is at an approximate height of 16m OD. The ground slopes towards the south from here towards Wick Road, this roughly parallels the course of the Hackney Brook, a now culverted tributary of the River Lee which lies about 1km the east of the site.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The archaeological and historical background to this site has been laid out in full in the Desk Based Assessment (Divers 2004). The following is a summary of the periods represented in that document.

5.1 Prehistoric

5.1.1 Palaeolithic activity is known in Hackney to the south of the site, on Wick Road, where six handaxes and a retouched flake were discovered during the Victorian period.

5.1.2 Little or no evidence exists for any later prehistoric period.

5.2 Roman

5.2.1 Physical evidence of the Roman period includes fragments of pottery found at Springfield and Homerton and a residual tile in a Saxo-Norman quarry pit excavated at Link Street. Additionally an 18th century source alludes to a Roman road surface and coins on Homerton High Street, though this has been debunked to some degree recently.

5.3 Saxon / early Medieval

5.3.1 The settlement of Homerton was first recorded in 1343 under the name Humberton, which owes its origin to a Saxon place name that translates as 'farm of Hunburh', 'Hunburh' being a woman's name.

5.3.2 In addition to the Saxo-Norman quarry pit on Link Street mentioned above, archaeological evidence for the period includes pottery sherds found at Hackney Hospital.

5.4 Medieval

5.4.1 Homerton developed as a linear settlement, Humberton, and was referred to as a hamlet by 1363. Some of the area surrounding the site appears to have been under

cultivation: ploughsoil has been found beneath Sutton House, a 16th century building, and medieval pottery, dating from AD1200-1450, has been discovered at Hackney Hospital. These sherds were redeposited in later ploughsoils.

5.4.2 The chalk and flint foundations of a building dating to the late 14th / early 15th centuries were found at 2-16 Link Street during excavations that also revealed ditches and a sluice, for water management within the Hackney Brook area, dating to the late medieval period.

5.5 Post Medieval

5.5.1 The site lies in an area to the rear of housing that front onto Homerton High Street and, in part, is shown as gardens on the John Rocque's map of 1745. Several surrounding side roads can be seen on the map, one of which occupies the same position as Mackintosh Lane, and is meant to lie along part of an ancient footpath that stretched from Lea Bridge to Bethnal Green.

5.5.2 The tithe map of St John in Hackney, 1843, shows several individual buildings to the north of the site, all of which front onto Homerton High Street, but no buildings to the rear.

5.5.3 By 1870 the site was divided between two properties that fronted onto Homerton High Street with an open area, possibly parkland, to the south. This can be seen on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of the time.

5.5.4 Sedgwick Street first appears on the Ordnance Survey map of 1893. This street comprised a terrace of small houses, some of which occupied the western half of the site with adjoining gardens to the east.

5.5.5 The Ordnance Survey map of 1950 shows that the southern end of Sedgwick Street no longer existed. This is probably the result of WWII bomb damage.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The excavation of two trenches was outlined in the Method Statement prepared by Chris Mayo of Pre-Construct Archaeology (2006). The fieldwork was designed to assess the presence or absence of significant archaeological remains, which may require further investigation.
- 6.2 All trenches were excavated with a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-bladed ditching bucket in spits of approximately 100mm, under the supervision of an archaeologist. Both trenches measured 15.00m (north-south) by 2.00m (east-west). Once archaeological or natural deposits were encountered, machining was stopped to enable archaeologists to clean with hand tools as necessary and record any remains.
- 6.3 All deposits were recorded on pro forma context sheets, trench plans being drawn at a scale of 1:20 and the sections at a scale of 1:10. The locations of the trenches were surveyed by hand from fixed landmarks in the surrounding area. A photographic record was also kept of all the trenches in both black and white print and colour slide. Finds were collected according to standard retrieval methods.
- 6.4 A temporary benchmark was set up on the site with a value of 15.82m OD, which was transferred from an Ordnance Survey benchmark located on the southern face of St. Barnabas Church, on Homerton High Street at a height of 17.00m OD.

7 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

7.1 Phase 1 - Natural

7.1.1 The earliest deposit encountered in both trenches was natural sand and gravels, referred to as [7] in Trench 1 and [13] in Trench 2. A loose deposit, consisting of light-mid yellowish brown sandy gravel, it was encountered at a height of 14.66m OD in Trench 1 and 14.45m OD in Trench 2.

7.2 Phase 2 - Sterile layer/ Subsoil

7.2.1 Overlying the natural sandy gravel in both trenches was a layer of very sterile material, referred to as [6] in Trench 1 and [12] in Trench 2. It was a firm but friable, mid greyish brown, silty sand with occasional flecks of chalk and moderate to frequent small to medium sized sub-rounded and rounded flint pebbles. It was encountered at a height of 14.91m OD in Trench 1 and 14.90m OD in Trench 2 and was between 0.25m and 0.39m thick. No datable material was recovered from this layer. The conclusion is that this layer was subsoil.

7.3 Phase 3 - Post-Medieval Pit

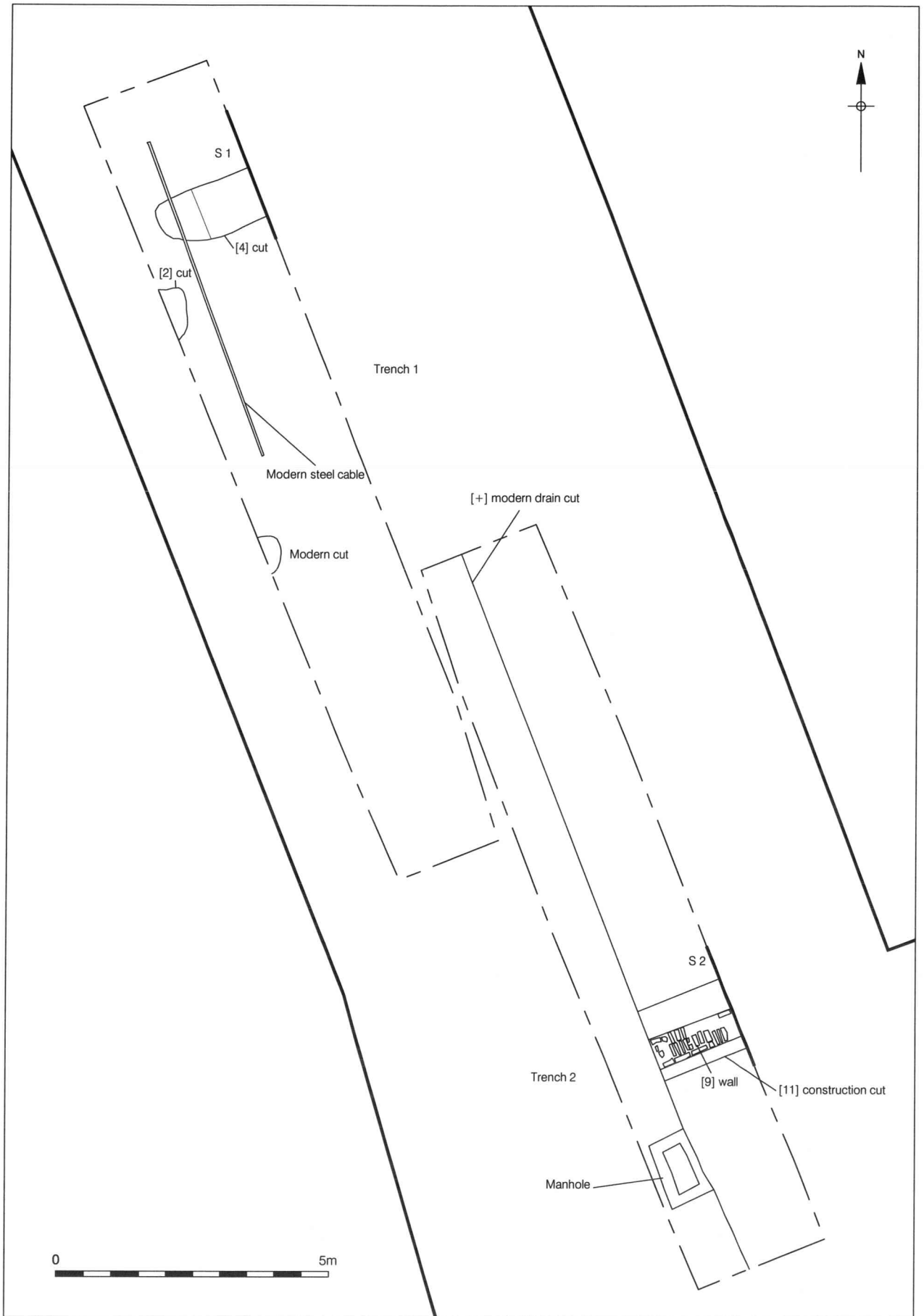
7.3.1 Cutting the subsoil, [6], in Trench 1 was the eastern edge of an apparently square shaped pit [2] measuring 0.93m north-south by 0.40m east-west with a maximum depth of 0.26m. The fill, [1], of this pit was a soft, dark brownish grey, sandy silt with occasional inclusions of small flint pebbles and chalk flecks in addition to moderate inclusions of CBM fragments. A small piece of clay tobacco pipe stem was also found within the fill. The feature was encountered at a height of 14.88m OD. This feature could potentially pre-date the construction of Victorian housing on the site.

7.4 Phase 4 - 19th / 20th Century

7.4.1 Cutting the subsoil, [12], in Trench 2 was an east-west aligned linear construction cut, [11]. Measuring 1.38m north-south by 1.35m east-west and with a maximum depth of 0.26m it was encountered at a height of 14.76m OD. The construction cut [11] was truncated at its west end by the cut for a modern concrete drain [+]. The backfill, [10], of the cut [11] was a firm and sticky dark grey slightly silty clay in which occasional

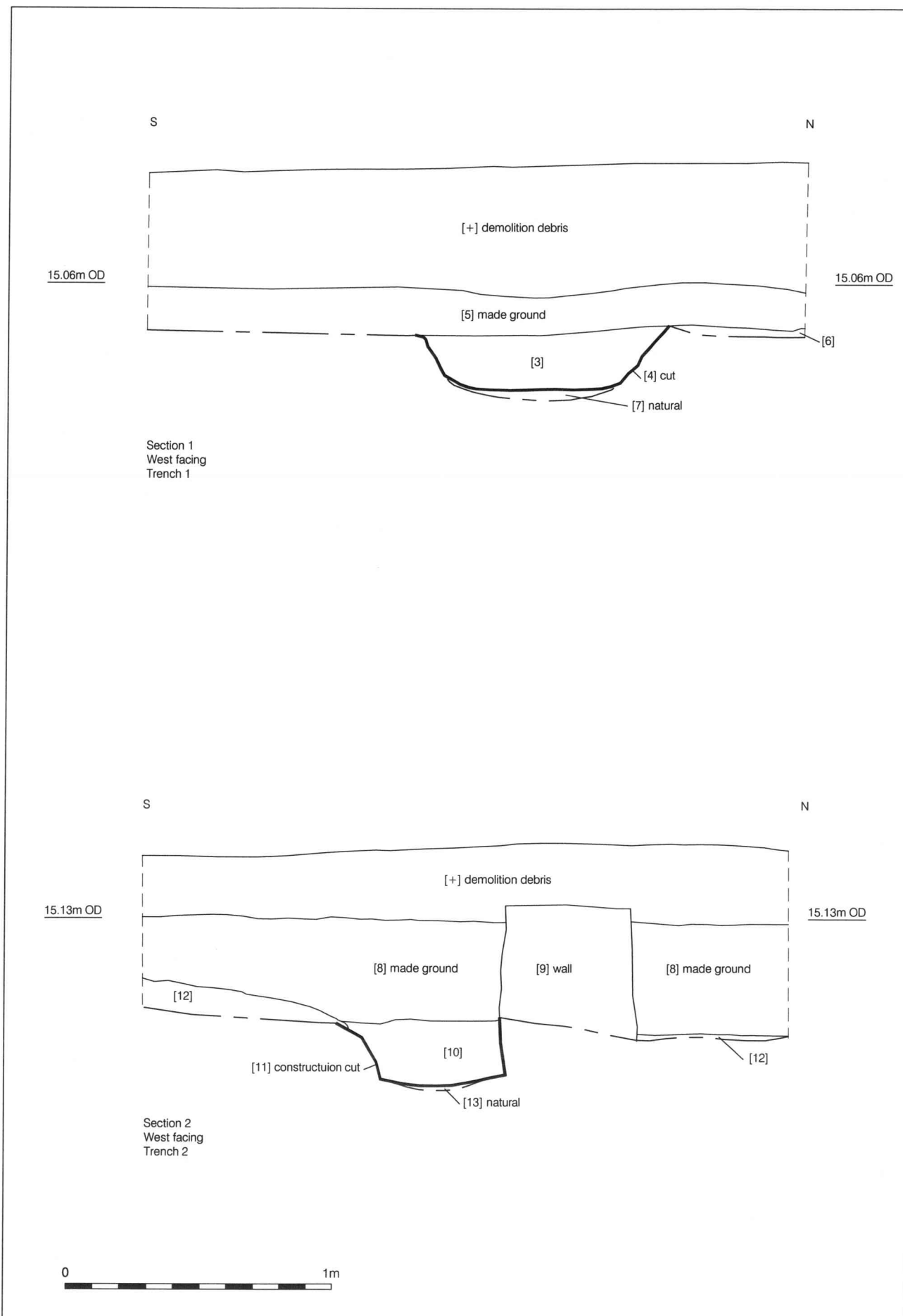
inclusions of brick and mortar fragments, charcoal flecks and small sub-rounded flint pebbles were found.

- 7.4.2 The construction cut [11] was dug to accommodate a wall foundation, [9]. This foundation was constructed of unfrogged red brick and was in such a badly degraded condition that the original coursing of the masonry was unclear and brick sampling was rendered impossible. The foundation was 0.53m wide by 1.35m long and survived to a maximum height of 15.18m OD. Although no datable evidence was recovered from the backfill of the construction cut [10] it is presumed that this wall foundation was constructed as part of the terraced housing which occupied this part of the site from 1893 onwards.
- 7.4.3 Within Trench 1 the subsoil [6] was also cut by a much more modern linear feature [4], in addition to the post-medieval pit [2]. Measuring 0.90m north-south by 1.82m east-west and with a maximum depth of 0.26m, the cut, [4], was encountered at a height of 14.88m OD. This linear cut was the western extent of a much longer feature that butt ended in Trench 1. Cut [4] was backfilled with a soft, dark brownish grey, sandy silt, [3], which included occasional small pebbles and chalk flecks but also modern pot, brick, tarmac, and CBM fragments. This evidence led to the conclusion that the linear feature was modern and probably originally a service trench.
- 7.4.4 Sealing all of these features in both trenches was a layer of 20th century made ground, referred to as [5] in Trench 1 and [8] in Trench 2. It was a fairly firm but friable, mid greyish brown sandy silt which included moderate small sub-rounded flint pebbles and occasional modern brick and tarmac fragments, as well as charcoal flecks. It varied between 0.18m and 0.38m thick and was encountered at a height of 15.07m OD in Trench 1 and 15.15m OD in Trench 2.
- 7.4.5 Into this layer a modern drain [+] had been cut in Trench 2 and a small pipe [+] in Trench 1. All deposits were sealed by various dumps of demolition rubble [+], which had a combined thickness of 0.60m in Trench 1 and 0.30m in Trench 2 and were encountered at a height of 15.58m OD in Trench 1 and 15.57m OD in Trench 2.



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Figure 3
Trenches 1 & 2
1:100 at A4



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Figure 4
Sections 1 & 2
1:50 at A4

8 TRENCH SUMMARY

8.1 Trench 1 (Figures 3 and 4)

8.1.1 Trench 1 revealed natural sandy gravels [7] overlain by subsoil [6], which was cut by a possible post-medieval pit [2] and a modern service trench [4]. These features were sealed by modern ground [5], which in turn was sealed by dumps of demolition material [+] and cut by a modern pipe [+].

8.2 Trench 2 (Figures 3 and 4)

8.2.1 Trench 2 revealed natural sandy gravels [13] overlain by subsoil [12], which was cut by a construction cut [11] for a late 19th/ early 20th century wall foundation [9]. This deposit was sealed by modern made ground [8], dumps of demolition material [+] and was cut by a modern concrete drain [+].

9 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Discussion

- 9.1.1 Both evaluation trenches revealed natural deposits consistent with the predicted underlying terrace gravels.
- 9.1.2 Post-medieval activity was identified in Trench 1, this being the western edge of a pit, which was probably dug prior to the construction of housing on the site in the late 19th century.

9.2 Conclusions

- 9.2.1 It has been clearly shown by the evaluation that the north-western area of the site has been at least partially truncated both by housing dating from the late 19th century and by later light industrial / warehouse buildings which existed on the site just prior to recent demolition.
- 9.2.2 No archaeological remains earlier than late post-medieval were seen on site.

10 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 10.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Fiona Wall of Countryside Properties for commissioning the work, David Divers of English Heritage GLAAS for monitoring the work and Erith Construction for all their help on site.
- 10.2 The author would like to thank Chris Mayo for project managing the site and editing this report, Dave Harris for the illustrations, and Mike Bazley for his work on site.

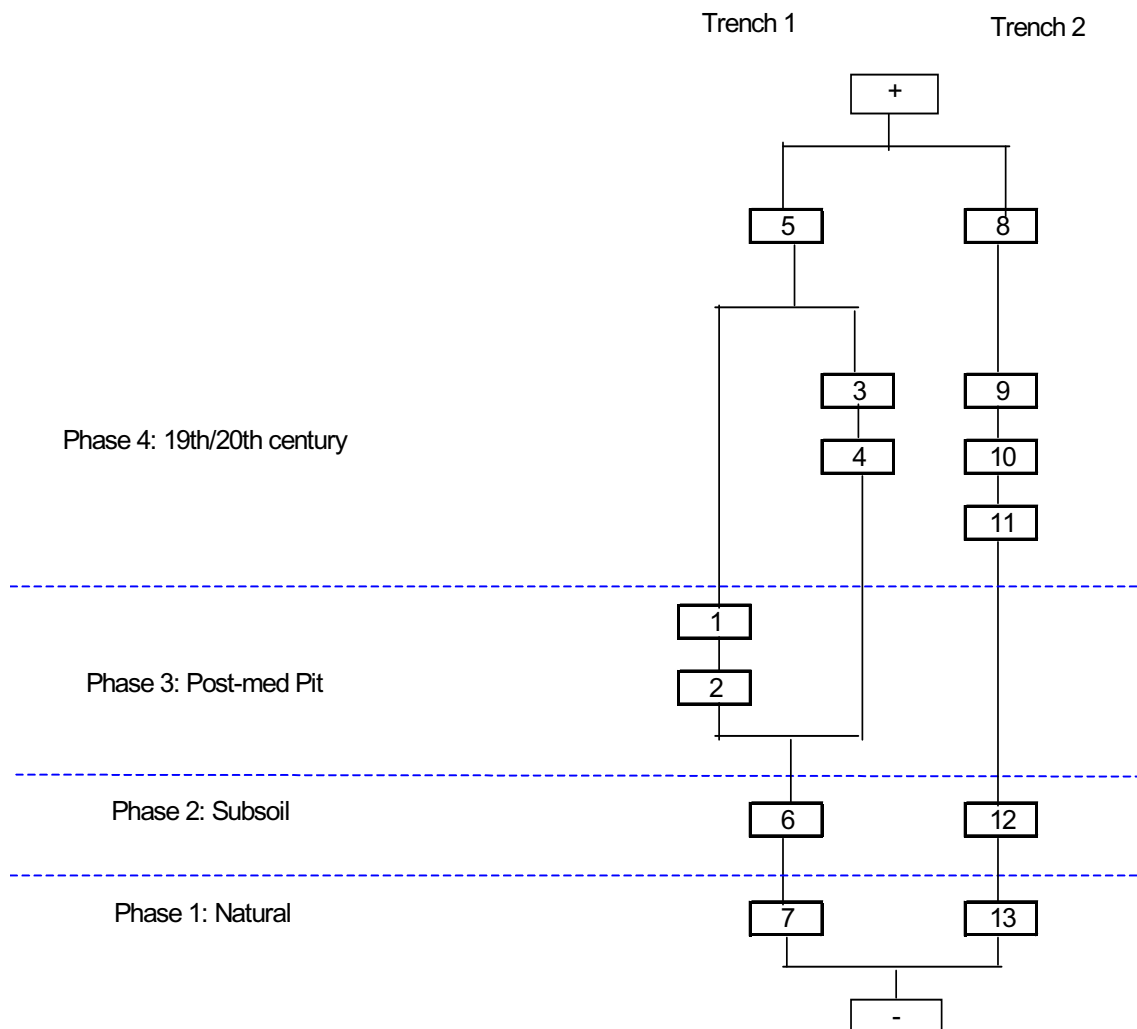
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Hawkins, N. 2005 'An Archaeological Evaluation of Mackintosh Lane, Homerton, London Borough of Hackney', unpub rep for Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Mayo, C. 2006 'A Method Statement For An Archaeological Evaluation at 2-46 Sedgwick Street, Homerton, London Borough of Hackney', unpub rep for Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

APPENDIX 1: SITE MATRIX



APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context	Type	Description	Trench
1	Fill	Silty fill of pit [2]	1
2	Cut	Post-Medieval Pit	1
3	Fill	Silty fill of modern service trench [4]	1
4	Cut	Modern Service Trench	1
5	Layer	Modern Made Ground	1
6	Layer	Subsoil	1
7	Natural	Natural sandy gravels	1
8	Layer	Modern Made Ground	2
9	Masonry	Brick Wall Foundation	2
10	Fill	Backfill in construction cut [11]	2
11	Cut	Construction cut for wall foundation (9)	2
12	Layer	Subsoil	2
13	Natural	Natural sandy gravels	2

APPENDIX 3: OASIS REPORT FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-20728

Project details

Project name	2-46 Sedgwick Street, Homerton, London Borough of Hackney
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation at 2-46 Sedgwick Street, Homerton, London Borough of Hackney consisting of two trial trenches which were to provide comprehensive coverage of the north west part of the site. This was the only part of the site archaeological deposits were likely to be encountered as geotechnical testing had revealed that the remaining area of the site had been heavily impacted during the 19th century, probably due to the construction of the railway line to the south. The earliest deposits encountered were natural sands and gravels. Little in the way of archaeological deposits were found, only a post-med pit, and the remains of a degraded brick wall foundation probably dating from the late 19th/early 20th centuries. The bulk of the site had been truncated by modern deposits.
Project dates	Start: 20-11-2006 End: 22-11-2006
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	SXS 06 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 4 - Storage and warehousing
Monument type	BRICK WALL FOUNDATION Modern
Monument type	PIT Post Medieval
Monument type	SERVICE TRENCH Modern
Significant Finds	CLAY TOBACCO PIPE Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON HACKNEY HACKNEY 2-46 Sedgwick Street, Homerton, London Borough of Hackney
Postcode	E9
Study area	1188.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3576 8500 51.5470441136 -0.04187135066460 51 32 49 N 000 02 30 W Point
Height OD	Min: 14.45m Max: 14.66m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
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Project brief originator	Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service
Project design originator	David Divers
Project director/manager	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	James Young Langthorne
Type of sponsor/funding body	Countryside Properties
Name of sponsor/funding body	Fiona Wall

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Archive ID	SXS 06
Physical Contents	'Ceramics'
Physical Archive notes	Clay tobacco pipe and pot.
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Digital Contents	'none'
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	SXS 06
Paper Contents	'Metal','none'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Drawing','Map','Matrices','Plan','Report','Section','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Evaluation at 2-46 Sedgwick Street, Homerton, London Borough of Hackney
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Langthorne, J.
Date	2006
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	A4 Softcover unpublished report.

Entered by	archivist (archive@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	24 November 2006