

**LAND AT POPLAR BUSINESS PARK,
ASPEN WAY, POPLAR, LONDON E14
9RL**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
PHASE I**

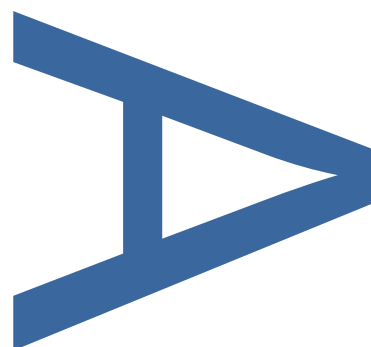
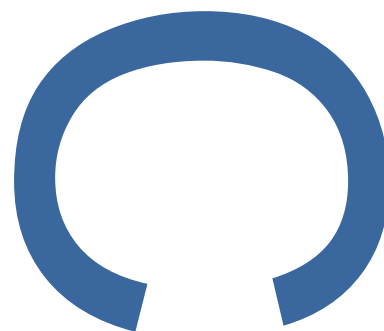
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**PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBERS:
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PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY



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**LAND AT POPLAR BUSINESS PARK, ASPEN WAY,
POPLAR, LONDON E14 9RL**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION: PHASE I

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LAND AT POPLAR BUSINESS PARK, ASPEN WAY, POPLAR, LONDON E14 9RL
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION: PHASE I

Site Code: ASP15

Local Planning Authority: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Planning Application Numbers: PA/11/03375; PA/15/00579

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 3811 8066

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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results of the first phase of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited on land at Poplar Business Park, Aspen Way, Poplar, London E14 9RL (Figure 1). The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of the client, Telford Homes Plc.
- 1.2 Phase I of the project was undertaken between 23rd March and 2nd April 2015, and saw the excavation of three trenches.
- 1.3 Alluvial clays and silts which had been exposed in the late 18th or 19th century period were found to the maximum depth which could be excavated, approximately 3.9m. These were capped by a humic deposit of preserved top soil, moist likely early 19th century in date, which was in turn sealed by 19th century made ground, associated with the use of the site as a railway coal depot. These deposits were overlain by modern strata.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation forming Phase 1 of the sites development was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (PCA) at Poplar Business Park, Aspen Way, Poplar, E14 9RL in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (Figure 1). The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of the client, Telford Homes Plc.
- 2.2 The site as a whole is sub-rectangular in plan, aligned east to west, and measures approximately 155m long by between 75m in width. The site is occupied by the buildings of the Poplar Business Park comprising three blocks of low rise industrial and business units surrounded by surface parking. It is bounded by The Docklands Light Railway and Aspen Way (A1261) to the south, residential blocks to the east and north and The Docklands Light Railway to the west, and is centred at TQ 38104 80670.
- 2.3 Development at the site is permitted by planning consent granted by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets under application numbers PA/11/03375 and PA/15/00579. The site is subject to a standard condition, number 28 (see Chapter 3).
- 2.4 The Phase I evaluation was supervised by the author, Aidan Turner, and the site was project managed by Tim Bradley of PCA. The work was undertaken following an approved Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by PCA (Bradley 2015), and the site works were monitored by John Gould of Historic England's Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS), on behalf of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
- 2.5 This report details the results of the Phase I archaeological evaluation, which investigated three trenches (Trenches 1-3) located in the western third of the site (Figure 2), between 23rd March and 2nd April after demolition of the westernmost business unit. The Phase I site was centred at TQ 3811 8066 (538110,180660).
- 2.6 The site has been the subject of an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (Hawkins 2014) which contains a full background to the site. The extreme north of the site is located within an Archaeological Priority Area as defined by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets in their Unitary Development Plan.
- 2.7 Upon approval of this report and the discharge of the archaeological condition the entire site archive will be deposited at the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre under the site code ASP15.

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.1.1 In March 2012 the Department for Communities and Local Government issued the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), replacing Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) 'Planning for the Historic Environment' which itself replaced Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) 'Archaeology and Planning'. It provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the investigation and preservation of heritage assets.
- 3.1.2 In considering any planning application for development, the local planning authority will be guided by the policy framework set by government guidance, in this instance NPPF, by current Unitary Development Plan policy and by other material considerations.

3.2 Regional Guidance: The London Plan

- 3.2.1 The over-arching strategies and policies for the whole of the Greater London area are contained within the Greater London Authority's London Plan (July 2011) which includes the following statement relating to archaeology.

Policy 7.8: Heritage assets and archaeology

Strategic

- A London's heritage assets and historic environment, including listed buildings, registered historic parks and gardens and other natural and historic landscapes, conservation areas, World Heritage Sites, registered battlefields, scheduled monuments, archaeological remains and memorials should be identified, so that the desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance and of utilising their positive role in place shaping can be taken into account.
- B Development should incorporate measures that identify, record, interpret, protect and, where appropriate, present the site's archaeology.

Planning decisions

- C Development should identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate.
- D Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.
- E New development should make provision for the protection of archaeological resources, landscapes and significant memorials. The physical assets should, where possible, be made available to the public on-site. Where the archaeological asset or memorial cannot be preserved or managed on-site, provision must be made for the investigation, understanding, recording, dissemination and archiving of that asset.

LDF preparation

- F Boroughs should, in LDF policies, seek to maintain and enhance the contribution of built, landscaped and buried heritage to London's environmental quality, cultural identity and economy as part of managing London's ability to accommodate change and regeneration.
- G Boroughs, in consultation with English Heritage, Natural England and other relevant statutory organisations, should include appropriate policies in their LDFs for identifying, protecting, enhancing and improving access to the historic environment and heritage assets and their settings where appropriate, and to archaeological assets, memorials and historic and natural landscape character within their area.

3.3 Local Policy: Archaeology in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets

- 3.3.1 The relevant local policy as defined by the borough unitary development plan is outlined in the following passages:-

ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANCIENT MONUMENTS

DEV42 DEVELOPMENT WHICH ADVERSELY AFFECTS NATIONALLY IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS, INCLUDING SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS, WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED.

DEV43 DEVELOPMENT WHICH AFFECTS ANY LOCALLY IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OR REMAINS, INCLUDING INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY, MAY BE PERMITTED DEPENDING UPON:

- 1 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS;
- 2 THE NEED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT;

AND

- 3 MEASURES PROPOSED FOR THE PROTECTION, ENHANCEMENT AND PRESERVATION OF THE SITE AND THE INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE REMAINS TO THE PUBLIC.

DEV44 THE PERMANENT PRESERVATION IN SITU OF NATIONALLY IMPORTANT REMAINS WILL NORMALLY BE REQUIRED. PRESERVATION OF OTHER REMAINS WILL BE A PREFERENCE, SUBJECT TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE REMAINS AND THE NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE. WHERE PRESERVATION IS NOT APPROPRIATE, EXCAVATION AND RECORDING MAY BE REQUIRED. DEVELOPMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES SHOULD ADOPT SUITABLE DESIGN, LAND USE AND SITE MANAGEMENT TO ACHIEVE THESE ENDS.

(also)

- 5.62 Tower Hamlets has a long and rich history. Archaeological remains are an important source of evidence of this history from Roman times to the recent industrial past. One of the principle sources of archaeological evidence is the development of sites, but this evidence is easily destroyed in the development process. The Council therefore wishes

- to ensure that development involving groundworks in areas which may contain archaeological remains makes early and specified allowance for the investigation of the archaeological potential of the site before groundworks for the development is allowed to proceed. The Council's preference will be to seek and maintain any finds and remains in situ. The Council will seek the guidance of English Heritage and the Museum of London in determining the importance of archaeological remains.
- 5.63 The Council is concerned to see that sites which may be of interest are properly investigated and records made of any finds before development takes place. It is important the Borough's archaeological heritage is made accessible to the public as an educational, recreational and tourist resource. The Council will therefore support and promote measures which protect and conserve sites and which will allow the public access to sites with archaeological remains to the extent that this is compatible with the protection of the remains.
- 5.64 The Council will seek professional archaeological advice from English Heritage or a professionally qualified archaeological organisation or consultant as appropriate and expect applicants to do the same when proposing development which could affect archaeological remains. It is important that developers have properly assessed and planned for the implications of their proposals in terms of scheduling time and resources for investigations to be carried out of the site. Proposals for investigation should be built into the development programme at an early stage in the process. Supplementary Planning Guidance on Archaeology and Development, outlines the preferred procedure for investigation before development takes place. An archaeological assessment is normally a desktop evaluation of existing information on the development site, commissioned from a professional archaeological body or consultant. Sources may include historic maps, written sources, previous finds, archaeological fieldwork and geographical surveys. An archaeological evaluation is in contrast field based, but, as distinct from a full archaeological excavation, is normally a small scale and rapid operation, entailing ground survey and limited trial trenching. It should, nevertheless, be carried out by a professionally qualified archaeological organisation or individual. An evaluation of this kind helps to define the character and extent of surviving archaeological remains in the area of a proposed development, and thus to indicate the weight that ought to be attached to their preservation.
- 5.65 Archeologically important areas are found throughout the Borough as shown on the Proposals Map. There are also records of numerous finds which may indicate areas of potential. The Council will consult with English Heritage and the Museum of London in the designation of areas of archaeological importance and will consult them about any areas of potential. Proposals which fall within these areas will be subject to policy DEV 42 to 66.
- 5.66 Areas which are of particular archaeological importance are:
- The Tower of London and surrounding area;

- The areas in Wapping shown on the Proposals Map. Parts of Wapping have revealed important finds and it is probably the richest part of the Borough in terms of known archaeological sites, including industrial archaeology sites;
- The site of the medieval hospital of St. Mary's between Bishopsgate and Spitalfields Market;
- A Roman road and cemetery in the Mansell Street area;
- A Roman settlement and road at Old Ford;
- A Cistercian Abbey and plague cemetery at the Royal Mint site.

5.67 Areas of potential include:

- evidence of prehistoric occupation in the Stepney Green area;
- the Lee Valley may include well preserved objects; and
- the possibility of Roman occupation in the Poplar High Street area.

3.4 Site Specific Planning Constraints and Background

3.4.1 The extreme north of the site is located within an 'Archaeological Priority Area' as defined by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the development area.

3.4.2 Development of the whole site is permitted by planning consent granted by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets under application number PA/11/03375. This permission included a condition relating to archaeological works as follows:

28 No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The detailed proposals shall be in the form of an archaeological project design in accordance with the appropriate English Heritage Guidelines.

A site specific Written Scheme of Investigation (Bradley 2015) was submitted under application number PA/15/00579 pursuant to the discharge of the archaeological condition. The Written Scheme of Investigation designed a three phase approach to dealing with the archaeological works at the site; this approach had been agreed by the Archaeology Advisor to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, John Gould of GLAAS, with the client's archaeological consultant, Duncan Hawkins of CgMs Consulting.

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 As reported within the desk-based assessment (Hawkins 2014), the site is just on the southern slope of the edge of the Kempton Park gravel formation terrace. The level of the terrace falls sharply across the site as proved by an adjacent archaeological evaluation.
- 4.2 The site is for the most part flat and landscaped with tarmac road surfaces and block paving. Existing ground level was found to be around 3.3m AOD.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The following archaeological and historical background is summarised from the site specific desk-based assessment (Hawkins 2014).

5.1 Prehistoric

- 5.1.1 Part of a mammoth tusk from the site of the Blackwall Tunnel (HER Ref: 080732/00/00 – MLO 195, TQ 3860 8055) represents the only Palaeolithic find in the area of the site, and thus a low archaeological potential for this period was identified.
- 5.1.2 A single Mesolithic find, a tranchet axe is recorded from 'Poplar' though the precise find spot is now unknown (HER Ref: 080737/00/00 – MLO 199, TQ 3770 8080). Overall a low archaeological potential for this period was identified.
- 5.1.3 A moderate archaeological potential for the Neolithic period was identified based upon the discovery of extensive remains of a Neolithic elm and fir forest associated with human remains, faunal remains and artefacts from the West India Dock Site, a neolithic burial and possible associated settlement at Yabsley Street and a number of Neolithic axes from the River Thames within 750m of the site.
- 5.1.4 Fire cracked flint and a sherd of probable Bronze Age pottery is recorded from Culloden Street (HER Ref: 083181/00/00 – MLO 0639, TQ 3740 8130), while a Bronze Age hearth with associated artefacts is recorded from Yabsley Street (HER Ref: MLO75384, TQ 3844 8040). Overall the assessment identified a moderate archaeological potential at the study site for the Bronze Age.
- 5.1.5 No evidence of Iron Age activity or occupation is represented within a 750m radius of the study site, and therefore a low archaeological potential was considered for the site.

5.2 Roman

- 5.2.1 Although Poplar High Street has been suggested as a Roman Road, previous archaeological investigation along the High Street has revealed no evidence for this. The HER records only one Roman find in the area, therefore a low archaeological potential was expected at the site.

5.3 Anglo Saxon, Early Medieval, Late Medieval, Post-medieval and Modern

- 5.3.1 No finds of the Anglo Saxon or Early Medieval periods are recorded within a 750m radius of the study site, and therefore the desk-based assessment did not anticipate their presence.
- 5.3.2 The village of Poplar developed to the north of the site during the late medieval period. At this time, the study site would have lain south of the built area of the village in an area of marsh pasture and gardens. The site continued in this form until the early nineteenth century as is shown in John Rocque's map of 1745 the Ordnance Survey of 1799 Horwood's map of 1795-1819 and Greenwood's map of 1827
- 5.3.3 By 1870 the site principally comprised of part of a coal depot and this is how the site remained

until 1982. Subsequently the site was developed with the Poplar Business Park and attained its current form

- 5.3.4 An archaeological evaluation conducted in 2006 immediately east of the Poplar Business Park (Lythe 2006) revealed the edge of the gravel terrace falling sharply from north to south. Evidence for massive ground raising in the post-medieval period was identified together with the walls and floors of ancillary buildings spanning the 18th and early 19th century. Evidence for land raising to form the coal yard was identified, together with the walls and floors of ancillary buildings spanning the 18th and early 19th century. Evidence for land raising to form the coal yard was identified, together with evidence for bomb damage and subsequent twentieth century levelling (HER Ref: ELO 6955, TQ 38250 80700). In all probability an identical archaeological sequence was expected on the current site.

6 METHODOLOGY

6.1 In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (Bradley 2015), three trenches were arranged in the Phase I area of the site, the westernmost third, in order to fully investigate the underlying drift geology and the presence or absence of significant archaeological remains (Figure 2).

6.2 The trenches as excavated had the following dimensions:

Fieldwork Phase	Trench	N-S	E-W	Max depth (BGL)
1	1	16.50m	5.90m	3.80m
	2	17.70m	7.40m	3.90m
	3	35.85m	6.45m	2.64m

6.3 The trenches were excavated with a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-bladed bucket under the supervision of an archaeologist. Excavation progressed through modern materials and archaeological layers until the top of the alluvial deposits was identified. The trenches were stepped at a gradient of approximately 1:1 to reach the required depth. In Trench 1 the alluvial deposits were investigated for another metre with a narrow ditching bucket. In Trench 2 the alluvium was dug into for a further 0.55 to 0.85m in depth. These exploratory excavations confirmed the theory that the alluvium was of post-medieval origin.

6.4 All recording systems adopted during the investigations were fully compatible with those most widely used elsewhere in London, those developed out of the Department of Urban Archaeology Site Manual and presented in PCA's Operations Manual 1 (Taylor 2009). Individual descriptions of all archaeological and geological 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 at scale of 1:20 and the sections at 1:20. The OD heights of all principle strata were calculated and indicated on the appropriate plans and sections. A photographic record was also kept during the works in colour/monochrome slide and digital formats.

6.5 The trenches were surveyed using a GPS surveying system and tied into the Ordnance Survey Grid. A temporary benchmark was also established using the GPS in the northern portion of the site, which had a value of 3.32m OD.

6.6 The complete archive produced during the evaluation, comprising written, drawn, photographic records and artefacts will be deposited with LAARC, identified by site code ASP15.

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

7.1 Summary

7.1.1 The character of this site consisted almost entirely of post-medieval made ground overlying a marsh pasture layer reclaimed from recently deposited riverine alluvium. The made ground appears to be associated with the development of the site as a railway marshalling yard and coal depot in the mid nineteenth century. These were capped with 20th century ground made ground deposits, a concrete foundation slab and areas of tarmac and block paving, associated with the construction of the business park in the early 1980's.

7.2 Phase 1: Alluvium

7.2.1 The earliest deposit encountered in Trench 1 was firm, light blue grey, silt clay, [9], observed at a level of between +0.39m OD and +0.41m OD. The layer was interpreted as river alluvium, and is indicative of low energy levels in the fluvial system; it is presumed to cover underlying river terrace gravels. The blue colour of the deposit suggests deposition in anoxic conditions, typical of slow moving water. Very occasional fragments of red brick were observed in the uppermost portions of this deposit, suggesting that it had been worked or exposed during the late 18th or 19th centuries.

7.2.2 A very similar deposit formed the base of Trench 2. This was described as a firm, light blue grey, silt clay, [16]. The top of this deposit was observed at a level of +0.11m OD, rising to +0.71m OD at the northern end of the trench. Very occasional fragments of red brick were observed in the uppermost portions of this deposit, suggesting it is of relatively recent origin.

7.2.3 This deposit was also observed in Trench 3, layer [22], between heights of +0.71m OD and +0.79m OD. Here it appeared slightly darker in colour and more frequent post-medieval artefacts, pottery and ceramic building material (CBM), were identified. These mostly appeared to have been washed around in the river for some time as they typically had an abraded appearance, with any sharp edges worn off. The finds implied a date in the 18th or early 19th century (Appendices 4-6).

7.3 Phase 2: Late 18th to 19th Centuries

7.3.1 The river deposits were then overlain by a series of deposits indicative of the sites reclamation from wetland to form marginal agricultural land in the late 18th to 19th centuries.

7.3.2 In Trench 1 the river silts were overlain by a thin (0.1m) sandy deposit [8], possibly produced by a small flood or high tide, around the time of the land reclamation. Its' surface was at +0.50m OD.

7.3.3 In Trench 3 the riverine alluvial deposits appeared to have a thin layer of crushed brick [21] dumped directly onto them, probably to consolidate the land surface. This deposit was encountered at depths of between 0.75m and 0.85m AOD.

7.3.4 In all three trenches these deposits and the underlying river silts, were covered by a thin, humic,

silt-clay deposit which has been interpreted as the land surface when the site comprised an area of open grassland during the late 18th or 19th centuries. This land, although by its nature marginal, as it was no doubt waterlogged and vulnerable to flooding, would have formed a valuable agricultural resource for grazing stock. The horizon was recorded as context [7] in Trench 1, as context [13] in Trench 2 and as context [20] in Trench 3. In the northernmost part of the site it was very thin (0.10m and 0.15m thick in Trenches 1 and 3 respectively) while it became noticeably thicker towards the southern end of Trench 3, increasing to 0.55m here. This may represent a natural slope in the topography towards the river. The surface of this horizon was between +0.65m OD ([7]) and +0.97m OD ([20]).

- 7.3.5 In Trench 2 an attempt to manage this landscape was seen in the form of a ceramic field drain [14] in cut [15]. The surface of the cut was at +0.59m OD and the pipe was approximately 0.2m in diameter.

7.4 Phase 3: Late 19th to 20th Centuries

- 7.4.1 The extensive, if relatively thin, deposits which formed the Phase 2 horizon were capped with a series of much thicker deposits, which were interpreted as being made up ground, associated with the area being used as a railway marshalling yard and coal depot.
- 7.4.2 These dumped deposits consisted of a mixture of sandy gravels and sandy clay gravels of a variety of colours. They varied in both thickness and composition. In Trench 1 they were formed by contexts [3], [4], [5] and [6]; in Trench 2 by contexts [10], [11] and [12]; and in Trench 3 they were described as contexts [17], [18] and [19]. Their components and dimensions are summarised in Appendix 2.
- 7.4.3 The deposits were cut by a series of service trenches, one of which was recorded in Trench 1 as contexts [1] and [2] This was also interpreted as being late 20th century in origin and probably associated with the sites continuing use as railway land until the early 1980s. Many of these services were in the form of power cables which, presumably, were laid between the tracks. This suggests that the track bed was at a similar ground level as the existing site and they were removed when the coal depot was redeveloped as business units. Otherwise little remains were found of the use of the site for railway purposes, implying that the site was thoroughly cleared in the 1980s.

8 TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

8.1 Trench 1

- 8.1.1 PHASE 1: The earliest deposit encountered in Trench 1 consisted of a firm, light blue- grey, silt clay [9], which was naturally formed alluvial material the surface of which had been worked or exposed during the post-medieval period. The deposit was investigated with a narrow ditching bucket for a depth of approximately 1m, in the northern end of the trench. It was encountered at depths of between +0.39m and +0.41m OD.



Plate 1: Trench 1, Recording, looking southwest

- 8.1.2 PHASE 2: Layer [9] was sealed by a 0.10m thick layer of loose, light green grey, gravelly sand [8]. This was interpreted as having being formed during a river flooding event immediately prior, or after land reclamation in the area. It was encountered at a height of +0.50m OD, and was overlain by a layer [7] of soft, dark purple brown, humic clayey silt, which contained occasional pottery and CBM fragments. This was interpreted as a buried topsoil, having being formed after

land reclamation in the area and representing the sites use as an area of marsh pasture between the 18th and 19th centuries. It was recorded at +0.65m OD.

- 8.1.3 PHASE 3: The above were overlain by made ground layers [3], [4], [5] and [6], associated with the sites development as a railway coal depot in the mid nineteenth century. A pottery sherd recovered from the lowest of these, [6], was dated between 1760 and 1830. The uppermost deposit [3] was at +2.24m OD, and they had a combined thickness of approximately 1.6m. The made ground was cut by a service trench [2], filled with [1]. This was considered to be late 20th century in origin and probably associated with the sites continuing use as railway land until the early 1980s.

8.2 Trench 2

- 8.2.1 PHASE 1: The earliest deposit encountered in the base of Trench 2 consisted of a firm, light blue-grey, silty clay [16]. This was interpreted as an alluvial deposit which had been worked or exposed in the post-medieval period, as it contained fragments of CBM at its surface. It sloped downwards towards the south and was encountered at heights between +0.11m and +0.73m OD.



Plate 2: Trench 2, showing Made ground, Preserved Soil and Alluvial layers, looking south

- 8.2.2 PHASE 2: The alluvial clay was overlain by made ground [13] which contained pottery dating it to the 19th century. It varied in thickness from 0.10m to 0.53m, deepening to the south. It was interpreted as a buried topsoil or made ground horizon, representing the sites use as an area of marsh pasture during the later post-medieval period. It was found between +0.57m and +0.85m OD, and was cut by a field drain [14] & [15]. This presumably represents an attempt to improve the drainage in the area during its use as pasture.



Plate 3: Trench 2, looking south

8.2.3 PHASE 3: The above was overlain by made ground deposits [10], [11] and [12] which had a combined thickness of approximately 2.30m from an upper height of +2.75m OD. This was interpreted as being made ground associated with the sites development as a railway coal depot in the mid nineteenth century.

8.3 Trench 3

8.3.1 PHASE 1: The earliest deposit encountered in the base of Trench 3 consisted of a firm, light blue- grey, silt clay [22]. This was interpreted as being alluvium, yet it contained frequent amounts of abraded post-medieval materials, including pottery and brick fragments, at its surface which was between +0.71m and +0.79m OD.

8.3.2 PHASE 2: The alluvium was overlain by a made ground [21] beneath a buried topsoil [20]. The latter was found between +0.85m and +0.95m OD. The phase represents land reclamation by means of imported, dumped material beneath soil relating to the sites use as an area of marsh

pasture. Dating from both layers places them in the 19th century.

- 8.3.3 PHASE 3: Deposits of made ground [17], [18] and [19] had a combined thickness of approximately 1.0m and were found at upper heights ([17]) between +1.79m and +1.83m OD. They were associated with the sites development as a railway coal depot in and from the mid nineteenth century. These deposits were in turn overlain by a 1.3m thick layer of modern made ground, consisting of extremely well compacted crushed concrete materials topped with a layer of block paving.



Plate 4: Trench 3, showing Made ground and Alluvium, looking south

9 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 The character of this site consisted of riverine alluvium which had been exposed or worked at its surface in the 18th or 19th centuries prior to being consolidated with the deposition of made ground, in order to consolidate the wetland and create usable pasturage in the 19th century. This was manifested by a buried topsoil horizon. Then, from the second half of the 19th century, the site was given over to a railway depot, and made ground deposits associated with this activity were seen in all trenches. This was capped with 20th century ground made ground deposits, a concrete foundation slab and areas of tarmac and block paving, associated with the construction of the business park in the early 1980's.
- 9.2 Upon completion of all subsequent phases of the archaeological work and the discharge of the archaeological condition, the site records will be archived at the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre under the site code ASP 15. Until then it will be stored at PCA's headquarters at Brockley, London.
- 9.3 The results of the archaeological investigation will be published as an entry in the *London Archaeologist* 'Round Up'.

10 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 10.1 PCA would like to thank Duncan Hawkins of CgMs Consulting for commissioning this project on behalf of Telford Homes Plc., who kindly funded it.
- 10.2 We also thank John Gould of GLAAS for monitoring Phase I of the works on behalf of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
- 10.3 PCA thanks the ground work contractors Costyn for their assistance during Phase I
- 10.4 The author would like to thank Rosie Banens for her hard work on-site, John Joyce for logistics, Rik Archer for survey, Tim Bradley for project management and Chris Mayo for editing this report.

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Bradley, T. 2015 'Land At Poplar Business Park, London Borough of Tower Hamlets: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Investigation', unpublished report for PCA

Hawkins, D. 2014 'Archaeological Desk Based Assessment: Land at Poplar Business Park, Aspen Way, Poplar, London E15 0BG, unpublished report for CgMs Consulting

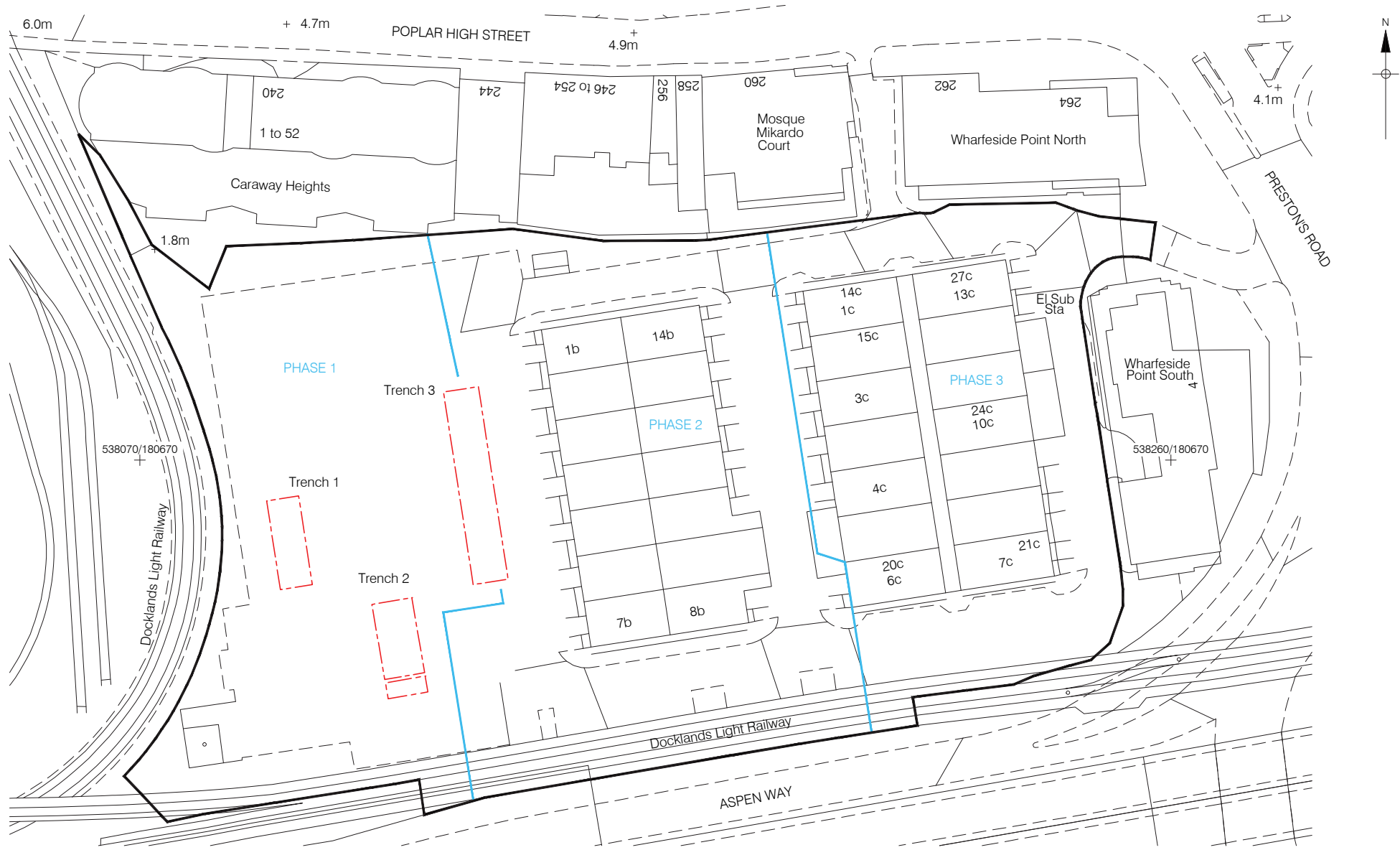
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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:20,000 at A4



0 50m

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Figure 2
 Trench Location
 1:1,000 at A4

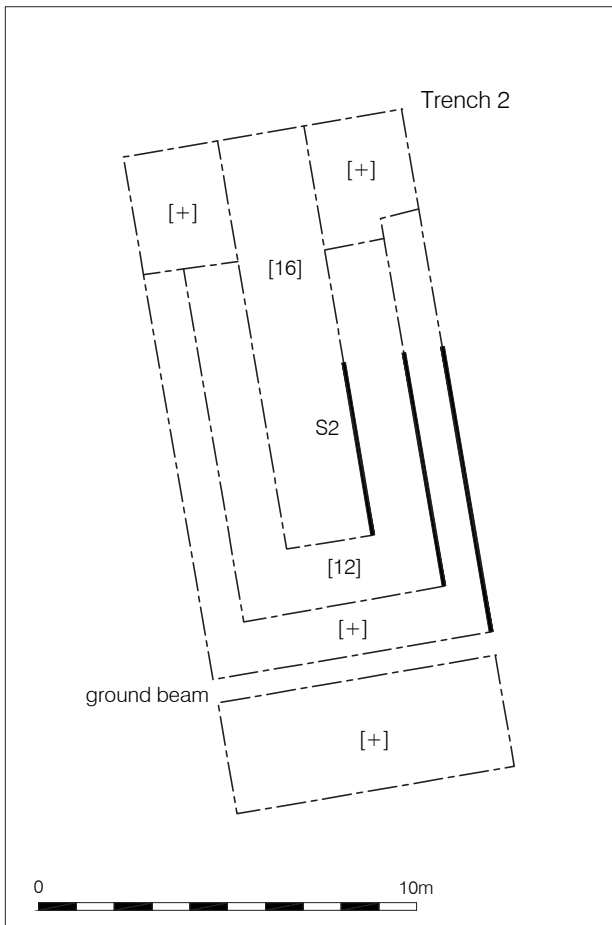
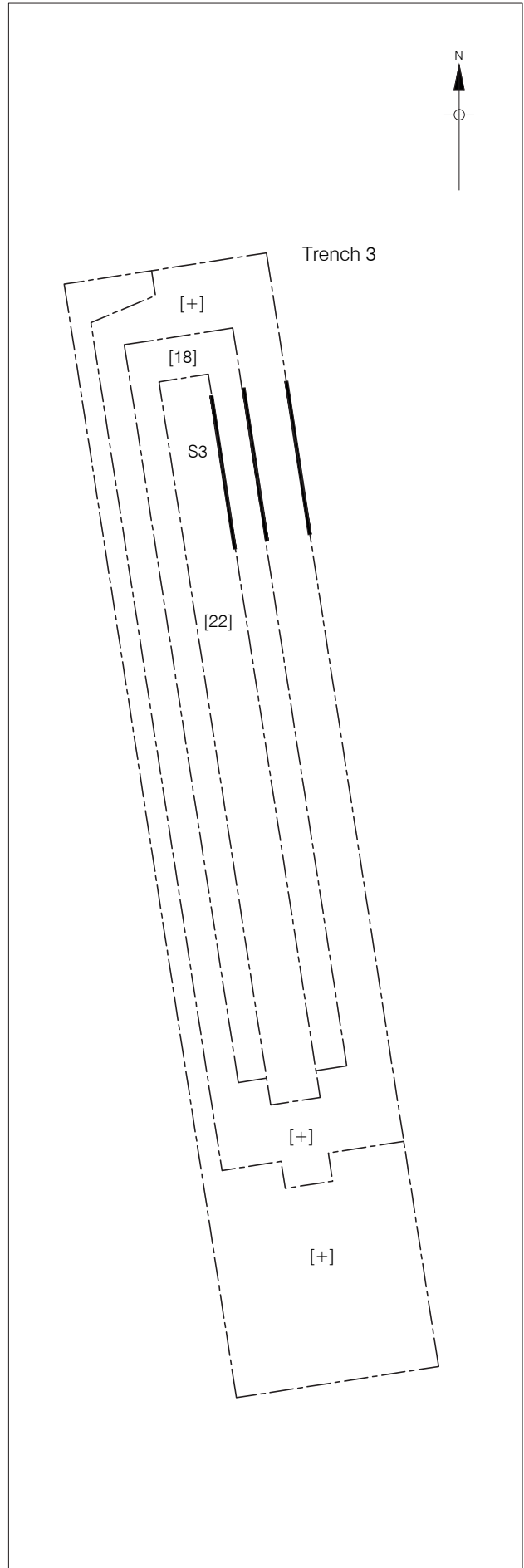
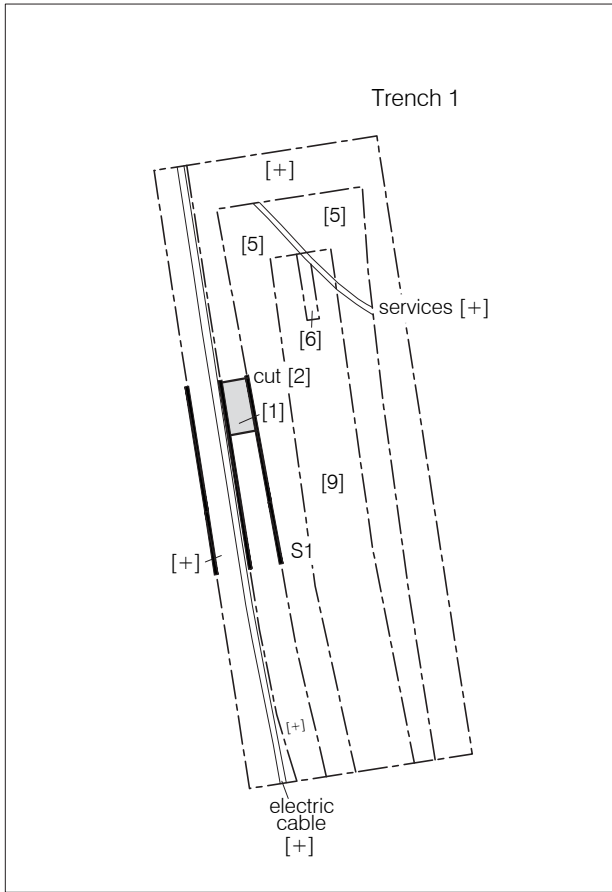
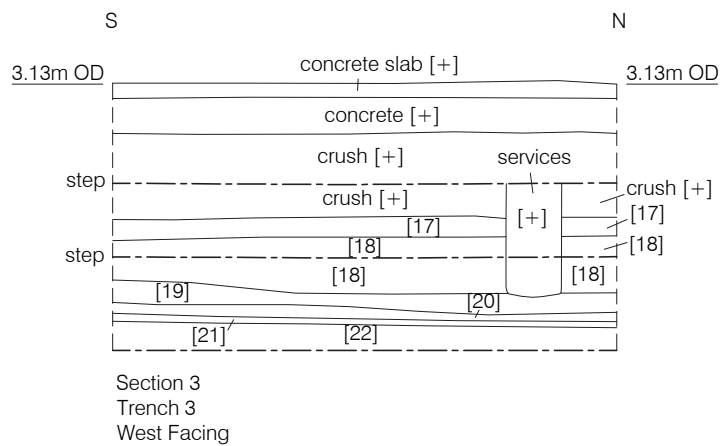
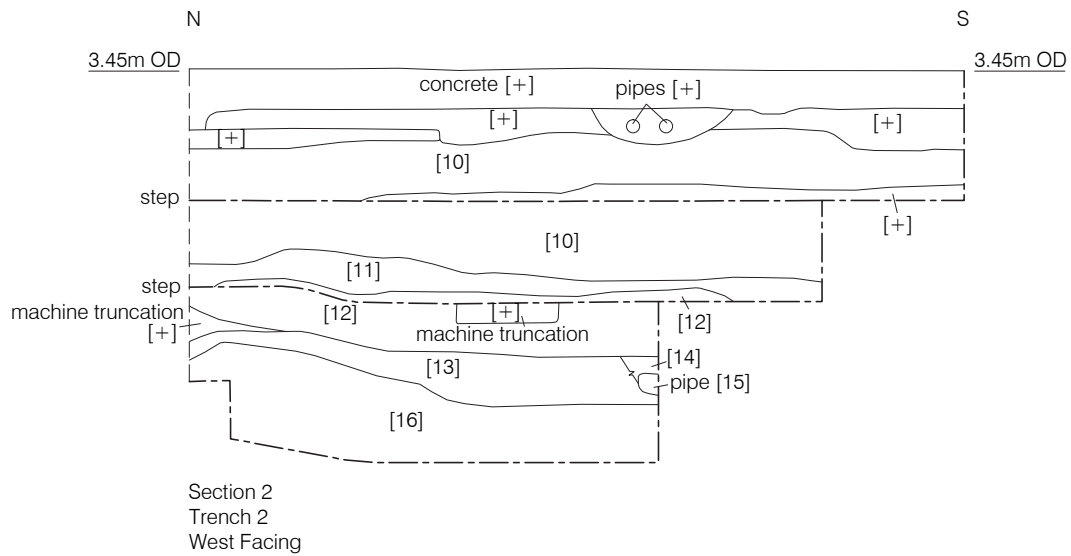
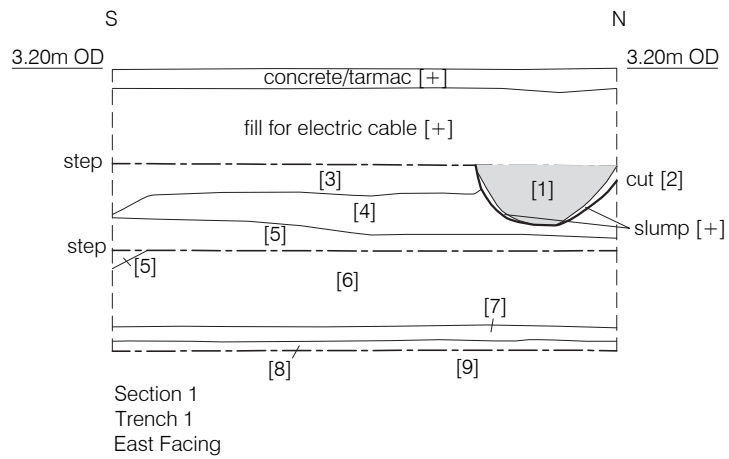


Figure 3
Plan of Trenches 1 - 3
1:200 at A4



APPENDIX 1: OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-208445

Project details	
Project name	Land At Poplar Business Park, Aspen Way, E14 9RL: Archaeological Evaluation: Phase I
Short description of the project	Phase I of the project saw the excavation of three trenches. Alluvial clays and silts which had been exposed in the late 18th or 19th century period were found to the maximum depth which could be excavated, approximately 3.9m. These were capped by a humic deposit of preserved top soil, moist likely early 19th century in date, which was in turn sealed by 19th century made ground, associated with the use of the site as a railway coal depot. These deposits were overlain by modern strata.
Project dates	Start: 23-03-2015 End: 02-04-2015
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	ASP15 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	PA/11/03375 - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	PA/15/00579 - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Site status	None
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CTP Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM 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 TOWER HAMLETS POPLAR Poplar Business Park, Aspen Way, Poplar
Postcode	E14 9RL
Study area	5352.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3811 8066 51.5074688788 -0.00970002426533 51 30 26 N 000 00 34 W Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Project brief originator	Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)
Project design originator	Tim Bradley
Project director/manager	Tim Bradley

Project supervisor	Aidan Turner
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Telford Homes Plc.

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Archive ID	ASP15
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	ASP15
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Images vector", "Spreadsheets", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	ASP15
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Miscellaneous Material", "Notebook - Excavation', 'Research', 'General Notes', "Plan", "Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land At Poplar Business Park, Aspen Way, E14 9RL: Archaeological Evaluation: Phase I
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Turner, A.
Other bibliographic details	PCA R12077
Date	2015
Issuer or publisher	Pre Construct Archaeology Limited
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	A4 grey literature client document with PCA covers

Entered by	Chris Mayo (cmayo@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	22 April 2015

APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Site Code	Context No.	Type	Description	Trench No.	Plan No.	Section	Dimensions N-S (m)	Dimensions E-W (m)	Depth / Thickness (m)	Highest Level (mOD)	Lowest Level (mOD)	Phase	Sample	Findings
ASP15	1	Fill	Hard, dark blackish brown, clayey silt gravel	TR1	TR1	1	1.4m	N/A	0.6m	2.24m	N/A	3		
ASP15	2	Layer	Concave cut filled by [1]	TR1	TR1	1	1.4m	N/A	0.6m	2.24m	1.64m	3		
ASP15	3	Layer	Loose, mid yellow, gravelly sand	TR1	TR1	1	>6.5m	>3.25m	0.5m	2.24m	N/A	3		
ASP15	4	Layer	Firm, dark blackish grey, silty clay, occa stones	TR1	TR1	1	>9.8m	>3.25	0.6m	2.1m	1.76m	3		
ASP15	5	Layer	Firm, light greenish grey, silty clay	TR1	TR1	1	>9.75m	>3.25	0.34m	1.74m	1.50m	3		CBM
ASP15	6	Layer	Soft, light brownish grey, clayey gravel	TR1	TR1	1	>9.75m	1.6m	0.75m	1.4m	1.22m	3		POT
ASP15	7	Layer	Soft, dark purple brown, clayey silt, occa CBM frag. V. occa pot frag	TR1	TR1	1	>9.75m	1.6m	0.15m	0.65m	N/A	2	<1>	POT
ASP15	8	Layer	loose, light greeny grey, gravelly sand	TR1	TR1	1	>9.75m	1.6m	0.10m	0.50m	0.50m	2		
ASP15	9	Layer	Firm, light bluey grey, silt clay	TR1	TR1	1	>9.75m	1.6m	>1.00m	0.41m	0.39m	1		CBM

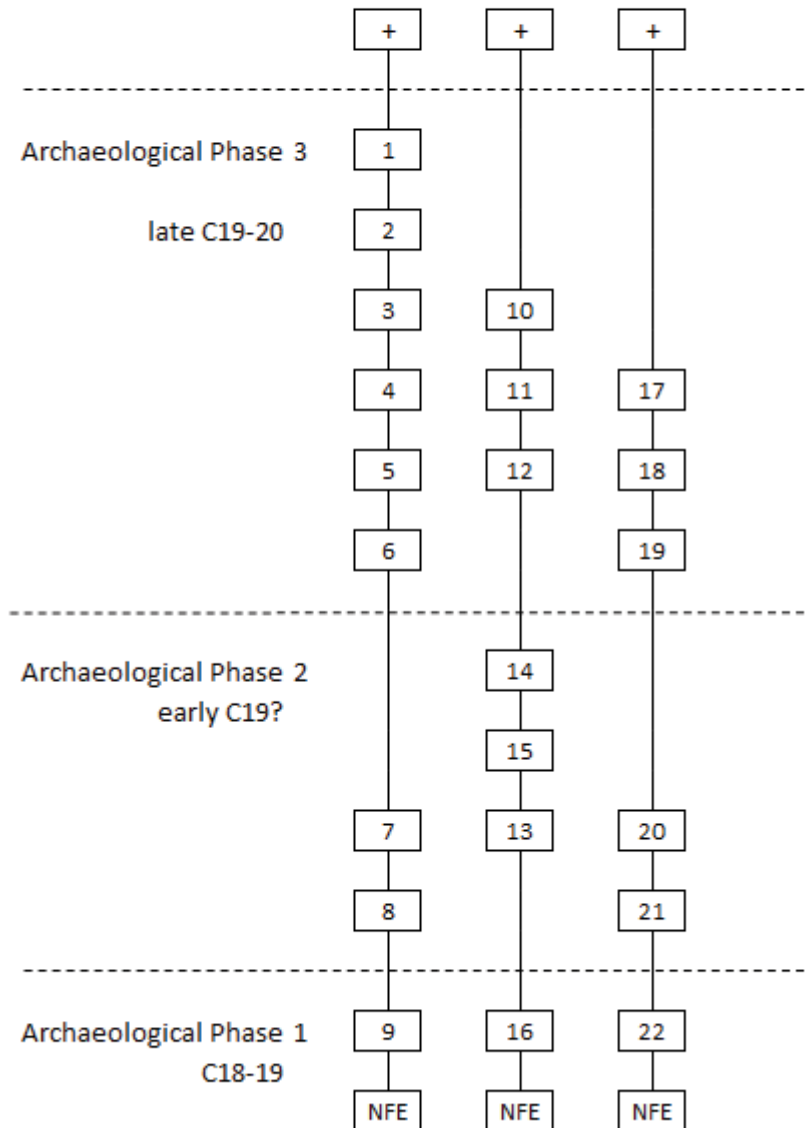
Site Code	Context No.	Type	Description	Trench No.	Plan No.	Section	Dimensions N-S (m)	Dimensions E-W (m)	Depth / Thickness (m)	Highest Level (mOD)	Lowest Level (mOD)	Phase	Sample	Findings
ASP15	10	Layer	Loose, mid brownish yellow, silt sand, occa. flint gravels	TR2	TR2	2	>4.2m	>5.3m	0.4m	1.77m	1.53m	3		
ASP15	11	Layer	Firm, mid greyish yellow brown, clayey sand mod. flint gravels	TR2	TR2	2	>6.28m	>5.3m	0.44m	1.65m	1.38m	3		
ASP15	12	Cut	Firm, light yellowish brown silty clay occa. CBM frag	TR2	TR2	2	>5.2m	>5.3m	0.68m	1.36m	1.15m	3		
ASP15	13	Fill	Firm, dark greyish brown, humic silty clay. V occa CTP, gravel & twigs	TR2	TR2	2	>4.66m	>2.25m	0.53m	0.85m	0.57m	2	<2>	POT, CBM
ASP15	14	Fill	loose dark blackish brown sandy clayey silt	TR2	TR2	2	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.42m	0.41m	2		POT
ASP15	15	Pipe	Linear, edges uncertain, contains ceramic pipe	TR2	TR2	2	0.36m	>0.20m	0.38m	0.59m	0.21m	2		
ASP15	16	Layer	Firm, light bluish grey, silty clay	TR2	TR2	2	>4.66m	>2.25m	>>1.00m	0.73m	0.11m	1		
ASP15	17	Layer	Hard, dark blackish brown, clayey silt gravel, occa cbm and timber frags	TR3	TR3	3	>18.4m	>3.5m	0.20m	1.83m	1.79m	3		

Site Code	Context No.	Type	Description	Trench No.	Plan No.	Section	Dimensions N-S (m)	Dimensions E-W (m)	Depth / Thickness (m)	Highest Level (mOD)	Lowest Level (mOD)	Phase	Sample	Findings
ASP15	18	Layer	Loose, mid brownish yellow, gravelly sand	TR3	TR3	3	>18.4m	>3.5m	0.3 -0.55m	1.61m	1.59m	3		
ASP15	19	Layer	Firm, dark brownish grey, gravelly clay. Occa CBM frags	TR3	TR3	3	>18.4m	>1.6m	0.20m	1.19m	1.04m	3		
ASP15	20	Layer	Soft, dark purple brown, humic clayey silt, occa CBM frag	TR3	TR3	3	>18.4m	>1.6m	0.12m	0.97m	0.85m	2	<3>	CPT, POT
ASP15	21	Layer	Compact , mid brownish red, crushed & weathered brick, freq CBM frag	TR3	TR3	3	>18.4m	>0.8m	0.06m	0.85m	0.75m	2		CBM
ASP15	22	Layer	Firm, mid bluish grey, silty clay	TR3	TR3	3	>18.4m	>1.6m	>>0.3m	0.79m	0.71m	1		CBM, CPT, POT

APPENDIX 3: SITE MATRIX

Evaluation Phase I

Trench 1 Trench 2 Trench 3



APPENDIX 4: POTTERY ASSESSMENT

By Chris Jarrett, PCA

Introduction

A small sized assemblage of pottery was recovered from the site (one box). The pottery dates exclusively from the post-medieval period. None of the sherds show evidence for abrasion and the majority of the pottery was probably deposited fairly rapidly after breakage: one or two sherds may be residual. The fragmentation of the pottery consists entirely of sherd material and some forms could be identified. Pottery was recovered from six contexts and individual deposits produced small sized (fewer than 30 sherds) groups of pottery.

All the pottery (thirteen sherds/12 ENV/849g, none of which are unstratified) was examined macroscopically and microscopically using a binocular microscope (x20), and entered on a database, by fabric, form, decoration, sherd count and estimated number of vessels (ENV's). The classification of the pottery types follows the standard Museum of London Archaeology (2007) typology. The pottery is discussed as a spot dating index.

Spot dating index

Context [6], spot date: 1760-1830

- Creamware (CREA), 1760-1830, one sherd, 1 ENV, 119g, form: chamber pot

Context [7], spot date: 1580-1900

- London-area post-medieval redware (PMR), 1580-1900, one sherd, 1 ENV, 39g, form: unidentified

Context [13], spot date: 1830-1900

- English stoneware with Bristol glaze (ENGS BRST), 1830-1900, sherd, 1 ENV, 4g, form: unidentified

Context [14], spot date: 1580-1900 (?18th -19th century)

- London-area post-medieval redware (PMR), 1580-1900, three sherds, 2 ENV, 492g, form: sugar cone mould
- London-area post-medieval redware (PMR), 1580-1900, one sherd, 1 ENV, 132g, form: syrup collecting jar

Total: four sherds, 3 ENV, 624g

Context [20], spot date: 1805-1900

- Refined whiteware with under-glaze painted decoration (REFW PNTD), 1805-1900, 1 sherd, 1 ENV, 5g, form: flared bowl decorated with a blue glazed combed band.

Context [22], spot date: 1630-1680 (probably 18th -19th century)

- London-area post-medieval redware (PMR), 1580-1900, three sherds, 3 ENV, 18g, form: unidentified
- London-area post-medieval redware (PMR), 1580-1900, one sherd, 1 ENV, 16g, form: jar
- London tin-glazed ware with blue- or polychrome-painted decoration and external lead glaze (TGW D), 1630-1680, one sherd, 1 ENV, 24g, form: charger, decorated in a geometrical pattern with a blue and yellow design on white. Possibly residual.

Total: five sherds, 5 ENV, 58g

Significance, potential and recommendations for further work

The pottery is of little significance locally and consists of typical pottery types found in the London region. The occurrence in context [14] of sugar refining wares (sugar cone moulds and a syrup collecting jar) is in keeping with a location on the Thames. The only potential of the pottery is to date the contexts it was recovered from. There are no recommendations for further work.

APPENDIX 5: CLAY TOBACCO PIPE ASSESSMENT

By Chris Jarrett, PCA

Introduction

A small sized assemblage of clay tobacco pipe was recovered from the archaeological work: three fragments found in two contexts. The condition of the material is in a good condition and indicates that it was deposited soon after being discarded. The material consists of only two stems and a nib or mouth part, which could only be broadly dated to the mid 18th-19th century. The clay tobacco pipe assemblage is discussed as a spot dating index.

Spot dating index

Context [20], spot date: c.1730-1910

- One thin stem with a fine bore
- One nib with a bevelled end and a red wax coating

Context [20], spot date: c.1730-1910

- One thin/medium thickness stem and a medium bore

Significance, potential and recommendations for further work

The clay tobacco pipe assemblage is of no significance and consists of poorly datable stems and a nib. The only potential of the material is to broadly date the contexts it was found in. There are no recommendations for further work.

APPENDIX 6: CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL ASSESSMENT

By Kevin Hayward, PCA

Quantification and Spot-Dating

Context	Fabric	Form	Size	Date range of material		Latest dated material		Spot date	Spot date with mortar
9	3032R	Post great fire brick	1	1664	1900	1664	1900	17700-1900	No mortar
21	3032R	Narrow post great fire brick unfrogged	1	1664	1900	1780	1900	1780-1900	No mortar
22	2586; Local silty fabric	Peg Tile Fine moulding sand; Pan tile nib	2	1180	1850	1630	1850	1700-1850	No mortar

Review

This small building material assemblage (4 fragments c0.5kg) from ASP15 consists entirely of 18th and 19th century brick and roofing tile. The exception possibly being some earlier post medieval peg tile from [22].

Roofing Tile also consists of a nib of curved pan tile common from 1630-1850 [22]. The brick is typical of Regency / Victorian era narrow post great fire frogged bricks would have only been in circulation following the brick tax brought about by government legislation after 1780.

1776	Brick size regulation Act: took effect July 1777, first blanket national legislation. Min. size of bricks at 8 ½ x 4 x 2 ½ ". Last legislation on sizes until the 20 th century, remained in force until the 19 th century	216 x 101.5 x 63.5	Parliament (Act)
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Recommendations

The building material assemblage very much reflects the later post medieval development of this site and none of the material is of intrinsic interest – all should be discarded. No further work.

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