

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

Site Name

SUNFIELDS METHODIST CHURCH, BANCHORY ROAD,  
LONDON BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

Type of project

EVALUATION

Quality Control

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Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved

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**An Archaeological Evaluation at Sunfields Methodist Church, Banchory  
Road, London Borough of Greenwich**

**Site Code: SFI 06**

**Central National Grid Reference: TQ 4068 7724**

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Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, January 2007**

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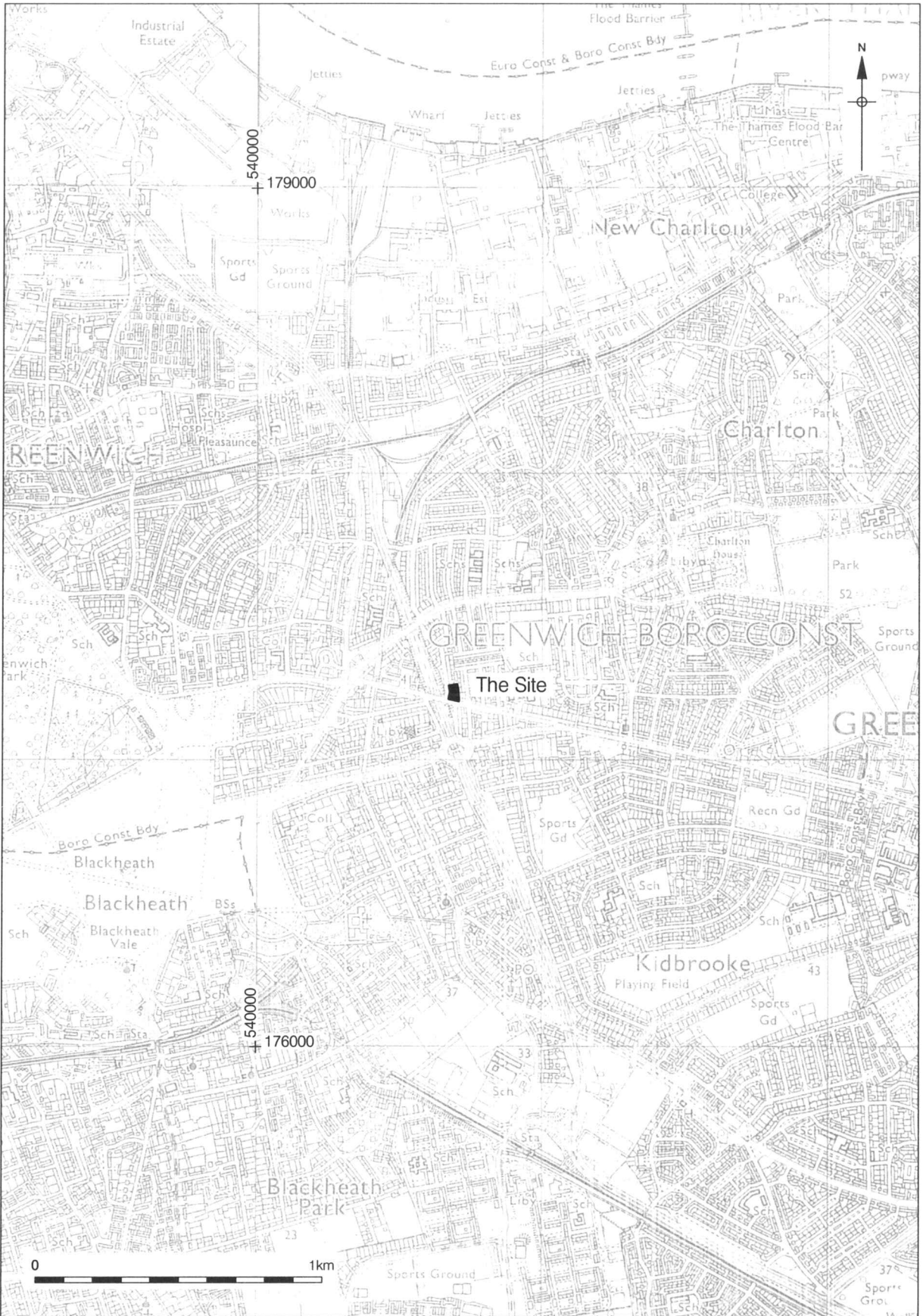
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# 1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited of land at Sunfields Methodist Church, Banchory Road, London Borough of Greenwich, in advance of the redevelopment of the site for a new church with residential units.
- 1.2 An archaeological desktop assessment had previously been compiled for the site, which identified a moderate potential for revealing evidence of the Roman Road that may pass close to the site.
- 1.3 Three evaluation trenches were excavated and showed the natural soil to be gravel. Above this a subsoil deposit was recorded as having been ploughed during the post-medieval period. A large expanse of the area in the southeast corner of the site had been stripped of the subsoil and the underlying natural sand and gravel. The ground was subsequently made up with loose gravel and it is possible that the quarried material was sifted to extract the sand and the resulting gravel put back. Several mid 19<sup>th</sup> century walls were revealed which almost certainly belonged to the first development of the site, a pair of semi-detached houses later incorporated into the church complex.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

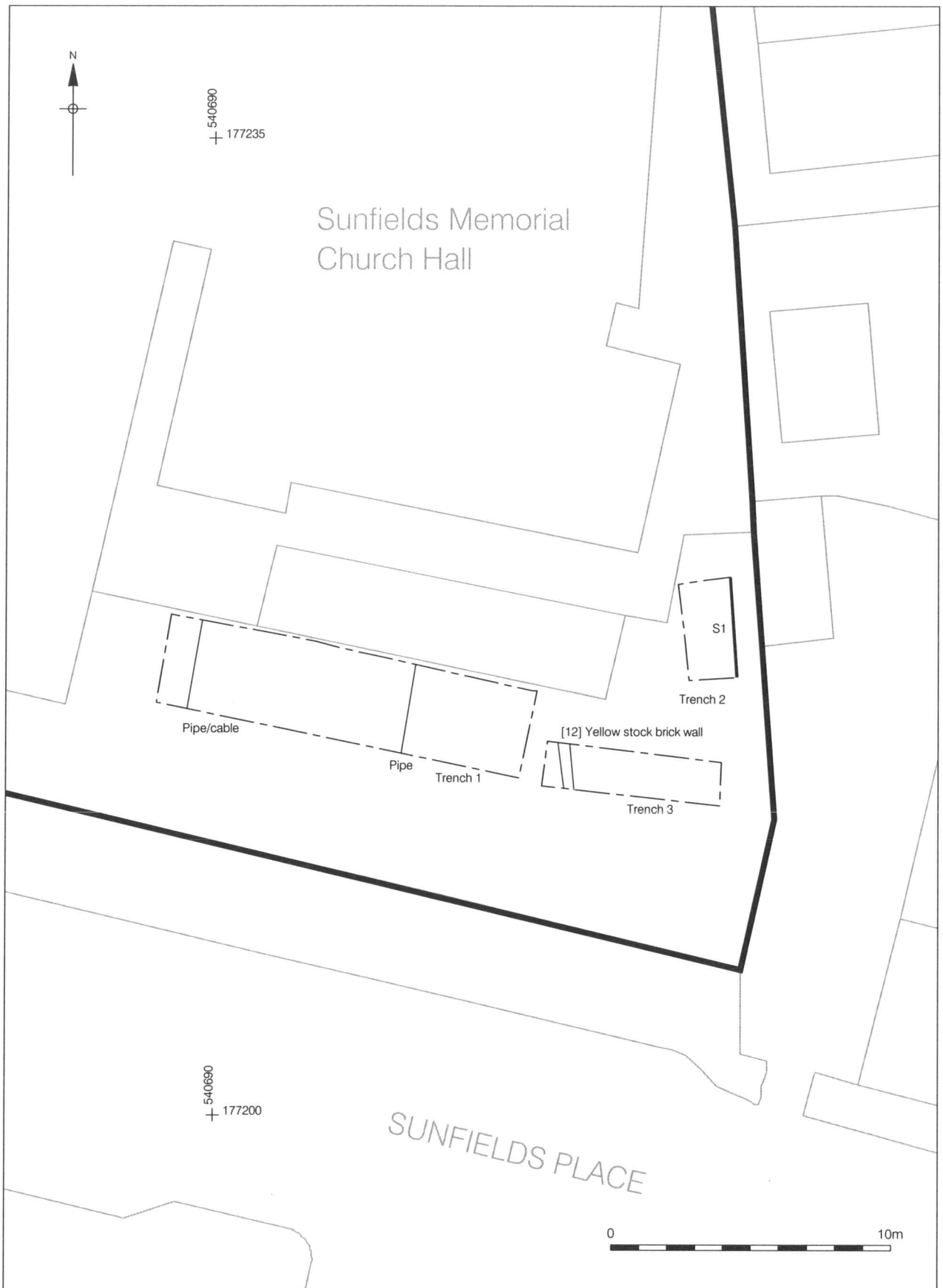
- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at Sunfields Methodist Church, Banchory Road, London Borough of Greenwich (Figure 1), in advance of the redevelopment of the site for a new church with residential units. The work followed the production of an archaeological desk-based assessment (Holden, 2004), which suggested a moderate potential for archaeology associated with the nearby Roman road.
- 2.2 The evaluation was conducted between the 13<sup>th</sup> December and 15<sup>th</sup> December 2006 and commissioned by Paul Wright of BPTW on behalf of the Sunfields Methodist Church. It consisted of the excavation of three trenches (Moore 2006) on the southern and eastern sides of the property using a mechanical excavator under archaeological supervision (Figure 2).
- 2.3 The National Grid Reference of the site centre is TQ 4068 7724.
- 2.4 The site was assigned the unique code SFI 06.
- 2.5 The evaluation was supervised by the author and project managed by Peter Moore for Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited.



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Figure 1  
Site Location  
1:20,000 at A4



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Figure 2  
Trench Locations  
1:200 at A4

### **3 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND RESEACH OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 Planning background**

3.1.1 This study aims to satisfy the objectives of the London Borough of Greenwich, which fully recognises the importance of the buried heritage for which they are the custodians. In November 1990 the Department of the Environment issued Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) 'Archaeology and Planning'. It provided guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains.

3.1.2 The advice states 'the desirability of preserving an ancient monument and its setting is a material consideration in determining planning applications whether that monument is scheduled or unscheduled. Developers and local authorities should take into account archaeological considerations and deal with them from the beginning of the development control process' (paragraph 18).

3.1.3 It also states 'where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, are affected by proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation' (paragraph 8).

#### **3.2 Archaeology in Greenwich and the Unitary Development Plan (UDP)**

3.2.1 The study aims to satisfy the objectives of the London Borough of Greenwich, which fully recognises the importance of the buried heritage for which they are the custodians. The Borough's deposited second draft 'Unitary Development Plan' 2004 contains policy statements in respect of protecting the buried archaeological resource.

3.2.2 The proposed development of the site is subject to the Council's Archaeology Policy:

##### **Archaeology**

**D29a** At identified sites of known archaeological remains of national importance, including scheduled monuments, there will be a presumption in favour of the physical preservation of the remains in situ and to allow for public access and display. For sites of lesser importance the Council will seek to preserve the remains in situ, but where this is not feasible the remains should be either investigated, excavated and removed from the site, or investigated, excavated and recorded before destruction. Appropriate conditions/legal agreements may be used to ensure this is satisfied.



**D29b** The Council will expect applicants to properly assess and plan for the impact of proposed developments on archaeological remains where they fall within 'Areas of Archaeological Potential' as defined on the constraints Map 10. In certain instances preliminary archaeological site investigations may be required before proposals are considered. The Council will seek to secure the co-operation of developers in the excavation, recording and publication of archaeological finds before development takes place by use of planning conditions/legal agreements as appropriate.

*Reason*

6.49 PPG16 gives guidance on how archaeological remains should be preserved or recorded. It recommends that UDPs should include policies for the protection, enhancement and preservation of sites of archaeological interest and of their settings, as well as a map defining where these policies apply. The Borough's archaeological heritage represents a local community asset which is desirable to preserve and utilise both as an educational and recreational resource. The objectives of new development can often conflict with the need to preserve, or to remove and record such remains. Potential developers should be alerted early on in the planning process of likely remains so as to secure their preservation. The support of local archaeological groups is essential to this process. The potential for discovery of significant remains in large areas of the Borough is high, whilst the opportunity to record and preserve such finite resources is usually restricted to none occasion.

6.50 The Council will also:

- i. Pursue land use policies which are sensitive to the potential threat development can pose to archaeological remains and adopt a flexible approach to the design of new development in areas where the preservation of archaeological remains is paramount.
- ii. Encourage co-operation amongst landowners, developers and archaeological groups by promoting the principles laid down in the British Archaeologists and Developers Liaison Group Code of Practice.
- iii. Encourage developers to allow an appropriate level of archaeological investigation where significant remains are unexpectedly discovered during construction, and if applicable make provision for the preservation or recording of such finds by a recognised archaeological organisation.

### 3.3 **Research Objectives**

- Establish the presence of any archaeological sites in the area, with particular regard to any of sufficient importance to require preservation in situ.
- To determine the location, form, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains, irrespective of period, liable to be threatened by the proposed development.
- Specifically to determine the presence or otherwise of any evidence of the Roman Road and its route/drainage features.
- Specifically to determine the presence or otherwise of any evidence of activities or settlement associated with the Roman Road.

- 3.4 Mark Stevenson, English Heritage, Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS), monitored the archaeological works on behalf of the London Borough of Greenwich.
- 3.5 There were no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the footprint of the development.

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 The following section is summary of the results detailed in the desktop assessment (Holden, 2004).

### **4.2 Prehistoric**

4.2.1 No entries of prehistoric date are recorded in the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) within 500m of the site.

### **4.3 Roman**

4.3.1 The site is close to the Roman thoroughfare known as Watling Street, which connected the ports on the Kent coast with London. However, the exact position of the road between Shooters Hill to the east and Southwark to the west is a matter of some dispute.

4.3.2 It is believed that the road crossed the Thames at a point now occupied by Westminster and although following the alignment from Shooters Hill points directly to that position, the course would have to deviate to avoid the bend in the river at Greenwich. The alignment of this deviation is, as yet, unknown. The two most likely outcomes are a subtle deflection through Greenwich Park and crossing Deptford Creek or that the course ran farther south, crossing the River Ravensbourne where the watercourse is narrower, and following what is now the Old Kent Road.

4.3.3 Despite many years of research this elusive section of an important road has not been tied down and any evidence to support either case is desperately sought after.

### **4.4 Saxon and Medieval**

4.4.1 No evidence for Saxon or medieval material within the study area was returned from the SMR search.

#### 4.5 **Post-Medieval**

- 4.5.1 The map regression undertaken during the course of the research for the desktop assessment shows that historically the site is unlikely to have been developed until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century when a pair of semi-detached houses were constructed on the southern part of the site. By the late-19<sup>th</sup> century, a Sunday School occupied the northern part of the site, associated with the Baptist Chapel on Bedford Place (later Sunfields Place).
- 4.5.2 By 1916 the Methodist Chapel was constructed on the site by the Lamplough brothers as a memorial to their parents ([rylibweb.man.ac.uk](http://rylibweb.man.ac.uk)). Shortly afterwards the houses to the south were converted and a new construction was built in the centre of the site. A bomb strike during the Second World War caused substantial damage to the church buildings and it was not until the late-1950's or early-1960's that repairs and rebuilds were carried out.

## **5 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

### **5.1 Geology**

5.1.1 The British Geological Survey (Sheet 271 1:50,000 series) indicates that the site is likely to be underlain by the Harwich formation of sand and flint. 750m to the south the site this formation is overlain by London Clay and 500m to the north the underlying Lambeth Group sand and clay gravels and Thanet Sands become prevalent.

5.1.2 No geotechnical information from the site was available at the time of writing.

### **5.2 Topography**

5.2.1 The site is positioned at c.45m OD with decreases in height as the land slopes towards the River Thames, 2 km to the north, and towards the west where 2.5km away, the River Ravensbourne flows northwards into Deptford Creek. There is a slight slope to the south as the land approaches Kid Brook and the Quaggy River, subsidiaries of the Ravensbourne. To the east, the land rises up to form Shooters Hill, which reaches its summit at c.125m.

## 6 METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The fieldwork was conducted according to the Method Statement (Moore, 2006) which set out the project background, aims methodologies to be used during the fieldwork and post-excavation stages.
- 6.2 The excavation of three trenches was agreed with Mark Stevenson, GLAAS, advisor to the Greenwich Borough Council. Due to logistical restraints imposed by the standing church buildings and fly-tipping, the excavation of the trenches was confined to the open land on the south and eastern sides of the church complex.
- 6.3 Under archaeological supervision, a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat ditching bucket was used to remove tarmac and overburden down to the highest archaeological horizon or the top of the natural sequence, whichever was the highest.
- 6.4 The features identified within the trenches were cleaned and investigated by hand. Investigation was limited to identifying the extent and nature of the deposits and to recover dating evidence.
- 6.5 Archaeological features (stratigraphical layers, cuts, fills, structures) were recorded as necessary in plan and in section using standard recording methods. A photographic record using 35mm colour transparencies and black and white negative mediums was also made as appropriate.
- 6.6 The levels of the deposits relating to Ordnance Datum were calculated using the bench mark located on the northern side of the northernmost property on the east side of Reynolds Place, value 46.24m OD
- 6.7 The work was undertaken following English Heritage (GLAAS) Guidelines (English Heritage 1998), and IFA standards (IFA 1993).

## 7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

### 7.1 Summary

7.1.1 The restraints imposed by the extant buildings resulted in three trenches being excavated within the open space to the south and east of the church bounded to the south by Old Dover Road and to the east by the adjacent properties.

7.1.2 Natural sand and gravel overlain by subsoil was exposed to the east of the area whilst across the central part the subsoil had been removed and the natural truncated to some 2m below ground level. The subsequent ground level had been made up with loose gravel and a building of yellow stock brick on a concrete foundation was constructed. Following the demolition of this structure, the resulting material was used as hardcore across the area for a layer of bituminous hardstanding.

### 7.2 Trench 1 (Figure 2)

7.2.1 This trench measured 13.2m by 3.4m, cut from a height of between 44.67m OD and 45.14m OD and was aligned east-west. The lowest deposit reached was a compact light reddish brown sand and gravel (<60mm) [5], present at the eastern end of the trench at a depth of 43.10m OD. This natural material was exposed at the base of an excavation through loose mid reddish brown slightly sandy gravel (<100mm) [4]. This deposit was c.1.7m thick and is likely to have been redeposited. While this sequence has been interpreted as the result of quarrying activity the edges of this activity were outside the trench and are therefore surmised. Cut into this deposit was an east-west orientated wall, built of yellow stock brick laid upon a concrete foundation [3]. This probably represents a wall from the semi-detached houses constructed on the site in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Across the trench was a layer of brick rubble up to 0.50m thick [2] that probably came from the demolition of the buildings following a bomb strike in the Second World War. This was capped with bituminous hardstanding [1]

### 7.3 Trench 2 (Figures 2 & 3)

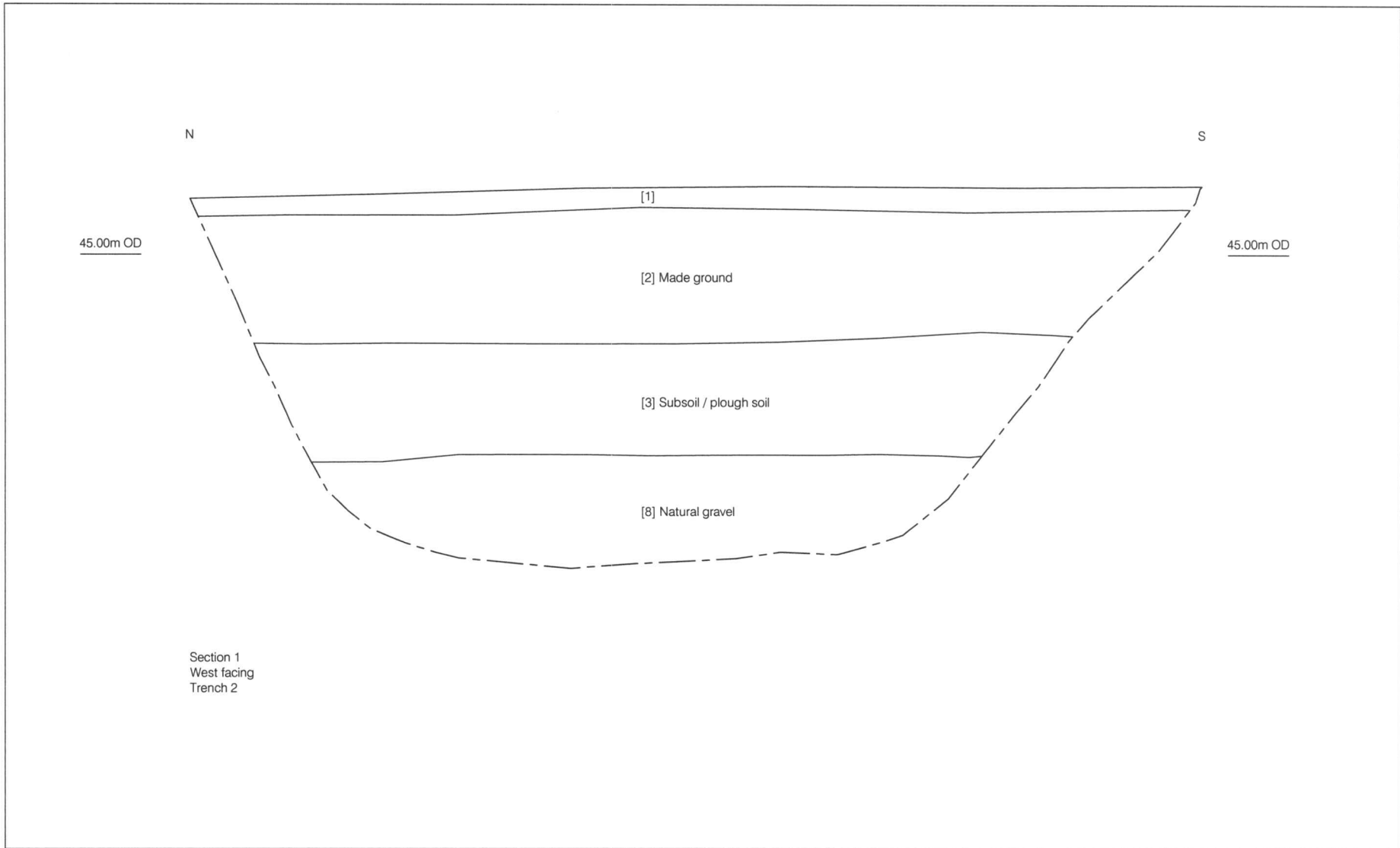
7.3.1 This trench measured 3.50m by 1.75m cut from a height of between 45.04m OD and 44.57m OD and was aligned north-south. Natural light reddish brown sand and gravel [8] was exposed at 44.32m OD and was overlain by a 0.40m thick deposit of loose light greyish brown silty sand and gravel, flecked with charcoal and ceramic building

material [7]. This subsoil was probably the result of ploughing and cultivation prior to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century development of the site. Brick rubble [6] and the bituminous hardstanding [1] completed the sequence.

#### 7.4 **Trench 3** (Figure 2)

7.4.1 This trench measured 6.2m by 1.6m, cut from a level of between 45.14m OD and 45.20m OD and was aligned east-west. The natural gravel [11] was exposed at 44.31m OD with the subsoil [10] above surviving to 44.59m OD. At the western end of the trench a yellow stock brick wall, built on a concrete foundation, was exposed [12]. This is likely to be the eastern end of the building associated with [3] in Trench 1.





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Figure 3  
Section 1  
1:20 at A4

## 8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The evaluation comprised the excavation of three trenches positioned close to the Old Dover Road, which is suspected to follow the alignment of the major Roman Road known as Watling Street. No evidence for this feature was recorded nor was any contemporary evidence for roadside activity or settlement present. This lack of evidence from the Roman period could indicate that the deflection of the Roman road around the bend in the River Thames at Greenwich takes a more southerly route.
- 8.2 Above the natural gravel, a subsoil deposit was recorded that was probably ploughed during the post-medieval period as the area is known to have been used for agriculture since at least the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century.
- 8.3 The evidence from the excavations suggests that a large expanse of the area in the southeast corner of the site was stripped of the subsoil, and the natural sand and gravel removed. The ground was subsequently made up with loose gravel, and it is possible that the quarried material was sifted to extract the sand and the resulting gravel put back.
- 8.4 The walls of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century date that were revealed are almost certainly those belonging to the first development on the site, a pair of semi-detached houses, that were later converted to become a part of the church complex and were ruined by a bomb strike in the Second World War.

## 9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Paul Wright of BPTW for commissioning the work on behalf of the Sunfields Methodist Church, and Mark Stevenson for his archaeological advice and monitoring of the evaluation. Thanks are also extended to Ted Goalen of Sunfields Methodist Church for his advice and for providing access to the church.
- 9.2 The author would like to thank Tony Baxter for his work on site and Lisa Lonsdale for her logistical support. Thanks also to Dave Harris for producing the drawings and to Peter Moore for his project management and editing.

## 10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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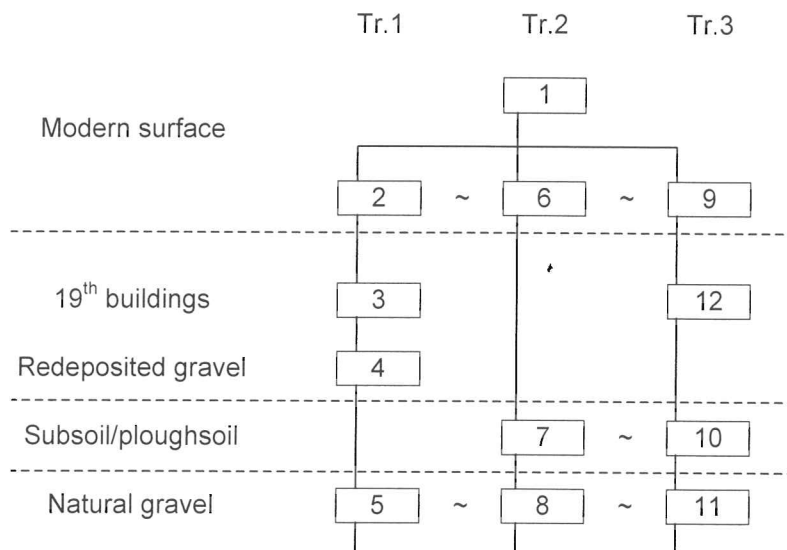
<http://rylibweb.man.ac.uk/data1/dg/methodist/bio/biol.html>

## APPENDIX 1: STRATIGRAPHIC INFORMATION

### Context Descriptions

Context	Type	Trench	Description	Highest	Lowest
1	Layer	1, 2 & 3	Bitumen surface	45.22	44.67
2	Layer	1	Brick rubble	45.04	44.57
3	Masonry	1	Brick wall	44.96	44.75
4	Layer	1	Redeposited gravel	44.78	44.25
5	Layer	1	Natural gravel	43.10	
6	Layer	2	Brick rubble	45.14	45.14
7	Layer	2	Subsoil/ploughsoil	44.70	
8	Layer	2	Natural gravel	44.32	44.28
9	Layer	3	Brick rubble	45.10	45.04
10	Layer	3	Subsoil/ploughsoil	44.59	
11	Layer	3	Natural gravel	44.31	44.28
12	Masonry	3	Brick wall	45.01	

### Matrix



## APPENDIX 2: OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: ENGLAND

[List of Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

10.2.1 Printable version

10.3 OASIS ID: preconst1-21539

### Project details

Project name Sunfields Methodist Church, Greenwich

Short description of the project An archaeological evaluation consisting of three trenches was undertaken in December 2006 primarily to establish the presence or otherwise of the Roman Road Watling Street that is thought to pass by in the vicinity. Only post-medieval agricultural and modern building activities were encountered.

Project dates Start: 12-12-2006 End: 15-12-2006

Previous/future work Yes / No

Any associated project reference codes SFI 06 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Other 3 - Built over

Monument type PLOUGHSOIL Post Medieval

Methods & techniques 'Sample Trenches'

Development type Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)

Prompt Planning condition

Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

#### Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON GREENWICH GREENWICH Banchory Road, Greenwich

Postcode SE3

Study area 2100.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 4068 7724 51.4760982942 0.02594816485820 51 28 33 N 000 01 33 E Point

Height OD Min: 43.10m Max: 44.32m\*

#### Project creators

Name of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Organisation

Project brief originator      English Heritage

Project design originator      Peter Moore

Project director/manager      Peter Moore

Project supervisor      Stuart Holden

Type of sponsor/funding body      Church

Name of sponsor/funding body      Sunfields Methodist Church

**Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists?      No

Digital Archive recipient      LAARC

Digital Contents      'Stratigraphic'



Digital Media available	'Spreadsheets','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic','Survey'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Correspondence','Drawing','Manuscript','Matrices','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section','Unpublished Text'

**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Evaluation at Sunfields Methodist Church, Banchory Road, London Borough Greenwich
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Holden, S
Date	2007
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	Unpublished client report

Entered by Peter Moore (pmoore@pre-construct.com)

Entered on 15 January 2007

## 11 OASIS:

Please e-mail [English Heritage](#) for OASIS help and advice

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