ACTON GARDENS, PHASE 4, SOUTH ACTON ESTATE, ACTON

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY: LONDON BOROUGH OF EALING





JULY 2015 REPORT NO.12155

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

ACTON GARDENS, PHASE 4, SOUTH ACTON ESTATE, ACTON, LONDON BOROUGH OF EALING

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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Acton Gardens, Phase 4, South Acton Estate, Acton, London Borough of Ealing:

An Archaeological Evaluation

Local Planning Authority: London Borough of Ealing

Planning Application Number: P/2012/0708

Site Code: AGD15

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 1975 7947

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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd at Acton Gardens, Phase 4, South Acton Estate, Acton, London Borough of Ealing in advance of redevelopment a part seven to nine storey high apartment building containing 107 units (33 no. 1-bedroom, 46 no. 2-bedroom, 25 no. 3-bedroom, and 3 no. 4-bedroom flats); associated private and semi-private amenity space, refuse / recycling and bicycle stores; a single-storey substation; 18 off-street car parking spaces and 19 on-street car parking spaces; provision of a public open space of approximately 4,900 sq.m; the closure of Hanbury Road and reconfiguration of the public highway to the east of its current position and the construction of a new north-south street between Bollo Bridge Road and Osborne Road. The investigation took place between 6th-8th July 2015. The work was commissioned by Countryside Properties and monitored by Mr Sandy Kidd, Greater London Archaeology Advisor Service (GLAAS) who provide advice to the London Borough of Ealing.
- 1.2 The evaluation comprised five trenches that varied in length between 3.20 and 20.00m in length and all were 1.80m wide. Trenches were excavated under constant archaeological supervision and extended to a depth at which archaeological horizons or sterile geological deposits were observed.
- 1.3 The results of the archaeological evaluation indicated that the natural topography of the site, as represented by the heights of naturally deposited sandy silt and silty sand found in all five trenches, had been significantly impacted by development of the site during the 19th and 20th centuries for housing. This conclusion was supported by the natural deposits being sealed by modern made ground with no subsoil or garden soil deposits seen in any of the trenches.
- 1.4 No archaeological features or deposits relating to prehistoric, Roman, medieval or early-mid postmedieval deposits were encountered during the archaeological investigation.
- Modern features including wall foundations, concrete slabs, a culvert base and concrete covered services were found in four of the trenches. All of these structures related to the 19th and 20th century housing that previously occupied the site.

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2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted between 6th-8th July by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) at the Phase 4 site, Acton Gardens, South Acton Estate, London Borough of Ealing in advance of redevelopment (Figure 1). The site is centred at TQ 1975 7947.
- 2.2 The evaluation was commissioned by Countryside Properties and was monitored by Sandy Kidd, GLAAS. The evaluation was supervised by James Langthorne and project managed by Gary Brown. All work was undertaken following the appropriate English Heritage (1991, 2008) and GLAAS (2015) guidelines.
- 2.3 The boundaries of the site were defined by Bollo Bridge Road to the south, the Phase 5 Acton Gardens site to the west, Osborne Road to the north and the Phase 3.2 Acton Gardens site to the east. Hanbury Road runs north-south through the centre of the site. The Phase 4 site covered an area of approximately 9600 square metres.
- 2.4 The site has previously been the subject of an archaeological Desk Based Heritage Assessment (T O'R 2011) that suggested a modest potential for Palaeolithic, Bronze Age and Roman periods and a high potential for the late post-medieval period.
- 2.5 The Written Scheme of Investigation (Brown 2015) stated that the evaluation would comprise three trenches all of which were to measure 20m x 1.8m. Two trenches were to be located in an open area west of Hanbury Road and the third close to the boundary with the Phase 3.2 site in the east. In the event, due to on-going site logistics (demolition), it was not possible to excavate the eastern trench. Following correspondence with Mr Kidd it was agreed to further sample the area west of Hanbury Road. In the event the archaeological evaluation consisted of five trenches varying between 3.20m and 20.00m in length and 1.80m wide..
- 2.6 The evaluation aimed to address the primary objectives as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Brown 2015). These were as follows:
 - To determine the natural topography and geology of the site, and the height at which it survives;
 - To establish the presence or absence of prehistoric activity, in particular of the Palaeolithic-Bronze age eras;
 - To establish the presence or absence of Roman activity;
 - To establish the presence or absence of medieval activity;
 - To establish the presence or absence of post-medieval activity at the site;
 - To establish the presence or absence of 19th and 20th century domestic and industrial activity at the site;
 - To establish the nature, date and survival of activity relating to any archaeological periods at the site:
 - To establish the extent of all past post-depositional impacts on the archaeological resource.
- 2.7 The complete archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records and artefactual material will be deposited at LAARC under the site code AGD15.

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3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The evaluation for Acton Gardens, Phase 4 was set up under the planning regulations that were current in 2013, specifically the National Planning Policy Framework, the London Plan and those criteria required by the London Borough of Ealing. These have been detailed in the Desk Based Heritage Assessment (T O'R 2013).
- 3.2 The study site lies within an Archaeological Interest Area as identified by the London Borough of Ealing.
- 3.3 The following planning condition was attached to the granting of consent (LB Ealing planning reference: P/2012/0708):
 - 20. No development shall commence on any Phase or Development Zone (as relevant) until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological mitigation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation for that phase/development zone, which shall be submitted and approved by the local planning authority.
 - No development or demolition shall take place other than in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation. The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation, and the provision for analysis, publication and dissemination of the results and archive deposition has been secured.

Reason: Heritage assets of archaeological interest may survive on the site. The planning authority wishes to secure the provision of archaeological investigation and the subsequent recording of the remains prior to development, in accordance with Section 12 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework; policy 7.8 of the London Plan 2011; policy 1.1(h) of Ealing's adopted Development (or Core) Strategy 2012; and policy 4.9 of the adopted Ealing Unitary Development Plan 'Plan for the Environment' (2004)

In accordance with the condition a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared for the fieldwork by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (Brown 2015) and approved by GLAAS.

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4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 The solid geology of the site is shown on the British Geological Survey Geological Map (Sheet 270, South London, Solid and Drift Edition) as London Clay deposits. Overlying the London Clay is drift geology defined as Head in the south and Black Park Gravel to the north (Brown 2015).
- 4.2 A previous excavation, Phase 3.2 of Acton Gardens, took place immediately to the east of the current site defined natural deposits as brownish grey clay approximately 1m below ground level (Webster 2014).
- 4.3 The site was situated on uneven undulating ground. Levels across the site ranged from approximately 14.55-14.18m OD
- The river Brent formerly flowed approximately 120m north of the site until the early 20th century when its alignment was shifted 150m to the north when the river was altered for use as a canal (Brown 2015).

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5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The following background detail has been summarized from the Desk Based Heritage Assessment (T O'R 2011):
- There have been a number of finds of prehistoric origin, including several Palaeolithic findspots and possible burial and enclosure sites dating to the Bronze Age, in the vicinity of the Acton Gardens Estate. The Bronze Age elements are attributed as an Archaeological Interest Area. As a result the archaeological potential for the site was considered to be moderate.
- The Roman period was represented by two findspots, a settlement encountered during investigations at Acton Shopping Centre and the presence of the Roman road, Akeman Street, which ran along the course of the current Chiswick High Road to the south. Therefore it was thought that the site had a low-moderate potential.
- A scarcity of evidence of medieval activity had been encountered within the vicinity of the Acton Gardens site. However it was considered that the focus of the early medieval settlement of Acton would probably have centred at the location of the 12th century Berrymead Priory, currently under the Salisbury Street car park and later shifted to two hamlets, Church Acton to the north and Acton Green to the south, with the major focus being at Horn Lane. The potential for archaeological remains dating to the medieval period was therefore low.
- The site was principally developed during the 19th century to provide low cost housing for workers in the local brick working and laundry industries. There may be buried remains of these properties, such as foundations or basements. Archaeological potential for post-medieval activity, particularly regarding the foundations of earlier structures, was considered to be high as a result.

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6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the general methodology set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Brown 2015).
 - 6.2 The original methodology required three trenches of dimensions 20.00m by 1.80m to be excavated at the site; two in the western part of the site and one in the eastern part. However upon arrival at the site it was clear that no trenches could be located in the eastern part due to the presence of trees with Tree Protection Orders and large amounts of demolition material. Therefore it was determined to excavate five trenches in the western part of the site to provide as full a survey of the area as was possible (Figure 2). The dimensions and orientation of each of the trenches are tabulated below:

Trench	Orientation	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)
1	NW-SE	20.00	1.80	1.05
2	NE-SW	19.05	1.80	1.26
3	N-S	3.20	1.56	1.03
4	E-W	4.56	1.80	0.95
5	N-S	7.70	1.80	1.05

- A 5 tonne machine fitted with a flat bladed grading bucket was used under constant archaeological supervision to remove overburden down to the highest archaeological or natural horizon. The features and deposits identified within the trenches were then cleaned and investigated by hand. Investigation was limited to identifying the extent and nature of the deposits and to recover dating evidence. The archaeological deposits were assigned individual context numbers and recorded onto pro-forma sheets and recorded in plan and section as appropriate using the Museum of London single context recording system. Upon completion of the trench excavations, 1: 20 or 1:50 scale plan drawings were made as well as 1:10 scale section drawings. Heights of deposits in relation to Ordnance Datum were also recorded. A digital photographic record was made.
- 6.5 Trench locations were recorded by EDM which was also used to establish a temporary benchmark on site at a height of 14.67m OD.

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6.3

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

7.1 TRENCH 1

7.1.1 Trench 1 was located at the northern end of the site (Figures 2, 3 & 7).



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking north-west (1m scale)

Phase 1

7.1.2 The earliest deposit recorded in the base of Trench 1 was a layer of naturally deposited firm mid yellow brown sandy silt [3]. It was encountered at a maximum height of 13.66mOD. This layer was cleaned and examined for any potential archaeological activity with no such evidence being observed.

Phase 2

- 7.1.3 Overlying the natural sandy silt [3] were two structural features, [4] and [5]. Structural feature [4] was located in the centre of the trench and comprised four wall foundations integrated into a concrete slab. The walls were orientated east-west and were composed of red frogged brick and concreted light grey cement in an English bond. Structure [4] encompassed an area of 9.70m north-west to south-east by 1.80m north-east to south-west and was 0.10m thick. It was encountered at a maximum height of 13.95m OD.
- 7.1.4 Structural Feature [5], located at the north-west end of the trench, was the truncated base of modern culvert constructed of unmortared red frogged brick in a north-south alignment. Culvert [5] measured 1.34m north-south by 0.28 east-west by 0.07m deep and was recorded at a maximum height of 13.89m OD.

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- 7.1.5 Sealing structures [4] and [5] was a 0.82m thick layer of modern made ground composed of firm but friable mid brown grey clay silt with frequent brick and concrete rubble, moderate coal flecks, sub-rounded and rounded pebbles, occasional tarmac and metal fragments and very occasional tile fragments [2]. This layer was encountered at a maximum height of 14.41m OD.
- 7.1.6 Made ground [2] was ultimately overlain by a 0.16m thick layer of very loose mottled dark brown to mid grey brown clay silt topsoil with frequent small rounded pebbles and root activity, and occasional CBM fragments [1]. Topsoil [1] was found at heights varying between 14.38-14.55m OD.
- 7.2 TRENCH 2
- 7.2.1 Trench 2 was situated in the southern part of the site (Figures 2 & 4).



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking north--east (1m scale)

Phase 1

7.2.2 The earliest deposit encountered in Trench 2 comprised fairly firm mid orange brown silty sand [15] at heights that varied between 13.13-13.25m OD. This naturally deposited silty sand was cleaned and examined for any potential prehistoric or later archaeological activity with no such evidence being observed.

7.2.3 Several masonry and concrete structures were seen to rest on or truncate natural silty sand [15]. These included concrete slab [16], two concrete services [17] and [19] within construction cuts [18] and [20] respectively, and wall foundations [21] and [22]. The alignments and dimensions of these modern structures are summarized in the table below:

Context	Orientation	Length (m)	Width (m)	Height (m OD)
16	N/A	2.85	1.80	13.15
17	N-S	2.15	0.38	13.10
19	E-W	2.03	0.50	13.12
21	E-W	1.97	0.28	13.35
22	N-S	1.20	0.28	13.38

7.2.4 Wall foundations [21] and [22], located at the north-eastern end of the trench, were both constructed of purple blackened brick and concreted light brownish grey cement in a header bond and were likely to be part of the same structure.

Phase 3

7.2.5 Sealing all of the structures in Trench 2 was a 0.85m thick layer of modern made ground [14] of a similar description to that in Trench 1 that reached a maximum height of 14.00m OD. Made ground [14] was in turn overlain by a 0.22m thick layer of topsoil [12] that was seen at heights varying between 13.97-14.18m OD.

7.3 **TRENCH 3**

7.3.1 Trench 3 was the northern trench situated between Trenches 1 and 2 in the central part of the site (Figure 2).

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Plate 3: Trench 3, looking south (1m scale)

7.3.2 Natural silty sand [30] was recorded in Trench 3 at a maximum height of 13.71m OD. It was characterised as being fairly firm mid orange brown silty sand with occasional root activity. This layer was examined for any potential prehistoric or later activity with no such evidence observed.

Phase 2

7.3.3 No phase 2 activities were observed.

Phase 3

- 7.3.4 Sealing weathered natural silty sand [30] was a 0.54m thick layer of modern made ground composed of fairly firm but friable mottled mid grey brown with orange brown patches clay silt with moderate brick and concrete rubble, sub-rounded and rounded pebbles and occasional coal flecks and tarmac fragments [29]. It was recorded at a maximum height of 14.24m OD.
- 7.3.5 Modern made ground [29] was subsequently sealed by a 0.20m thick layer of topsoil [28] that was recorded at heights between 14.29-14.42m OD.

7.4 **TRENCH 4**

7.4.1 Trench 4 was the eastern trench positioned between Trenches 1 and 2 in the central part of the site (Figures 2 & 5).



Plate 4: Trench 4, looking west (1m scale)

7.4.2 Natural firm, mid yellow brown sandy silt [11], was encountered at a maximum height of 13.48m OD in Trench 4. This layer was cleaned and examined for any potential archaeological activity with no such evidence being observed.

Phase 2

- 7.4.3 Truncating natural sandy silt [11] were two intersecting wall foundations composed of frogged red and yellow stock brick and light whitish grey cement, [9], which lay within construction cut [10]. One wall foundation was orientated east-west for 2.80m, while the other ran 1.80m north-south and both were 0.35m wide. Structure [9] was recorded at heights between 13.44-13.57m OD.
- 7.4.4 Abutting structure [9] was a floor surface fragment built of red and yellow frogged stock brick [12]. It measured 0.40m north-south by 0.50m east-west by 0.07m deep and was encountered at a maximum height of 13.53m OD.
- 7.4.5 As well as containing wall foundation structure [9] construction cut [10] was also backfilled by firm but friable dark grey brown silty sand with occasional CBM and mortar flecks. A copper alloy damaged naval button was recovered from this deposit.

Phase 3

7.4.6 All these structures were overlain by a 0.73m thick layer of modern made ground [7] of a similar description to Trenches 1 and 2 which reached a maximum height of 14.23m OD.

- 7.4.7 All deposits in Trench 4 were finally sealed by a 0.16m thick layer of topsoil [6] that was seen a heights varying between 14.35-14.45m OD.
- 7.5 TRENCH 5
- 7.5.1 Trench 5 was the southern trench situated between Trenches 1 and 2 in the central part of the site (Figures 2, 6 & 7).



Plate 5: Trench 5, looking north (1m scale)

7.5.2 The earliest deposit encountered in Trench 5 was naturally deposited firm mid yellow brown sandy silt [27] that was recorded at a maximum height of 13.10m OD. This layer was cleaned and examined for any potential archaeological activity with no such evidence being observed.

Phase 2

7.5.3 In the south-eastern corner of the trench was a wall foundation composed of red frogged brick and light whitish grey cement [25] that lay within construction cut [26]. Foundation [25] was orientated north-south and measured 1.20m by 0.24m wide and was over 0.07m deep. It was recorded at a maximum height of 13.48m OD.

Phase 3

- 7.5.4 Structure [25] was subsequently sealed by a 0.90m thick layer of modern made ground [24] composed of firm but friable dark brown grey rubble and silt with occasional coal, concrete and slate flecks and fragments. This layer was recorded at a maximum height of 14.00m OD.
- 7.5.5 Made ground [24] was ultimately overlain by topsoil [23] which was encountered between 14.05-14.33m OD.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- The natural deposits found during the Acton Gardens, Phase 4 investigation comprised firm mid yellow brown sandy silt in Trenches 1, 4 and 5 with fairly firm mid orange brown silty sand being apparent in Trenches 2 and 3. The topography of the natural deposits varied significantly across the site reaching a maximum height of 13.71m OD in Trench 3 and a minimum height of 13.10m OD in Trench 4. The conclusion was that the variation in heights of the natural geology was the result of terracing and other impacts on the site from the 19th century onwards. This interpretation was supported by the natural deposits being sealed by modern made ground with no subsoil or garden soil deposits seen in any of the trenches.
- 8.2 No archaeological features or deposits relating to prehistoric, Roman, medieval or early-mid postmedieval deposits were encountered during the archaeological investigation.
- 8.3 Modern structures including wall foundations, concrete slabs, a culvert base and concrete covered services were found in all of the trenches with the exception of Trench 3. All of these structures would have related to the 19th and 20th century housing that previously occupied the site. The modern made ground that currently backfills the structures was probably a result of the demolition of those properties given the amount of rubble within its matrix.
- 8.4 Once the project is deemed complete, the completed archive comprising all site records from the fieldwork will eventually be deposited with LAARC under site code AGD15.

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9 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Countryside Properties, and Gary Martin in particular, for commissioning the works and Lee Jones for facilitating the site set up. Thanks also to Sandy Kidd of GLAAS for monitoring the project.
- 9.2 The author would like to thank Richard Krason, Rick Archer and Patric Cavanagh for their assistance on the project, Hayley Baxter for the figures and Gary Brown for project management and editing this report.

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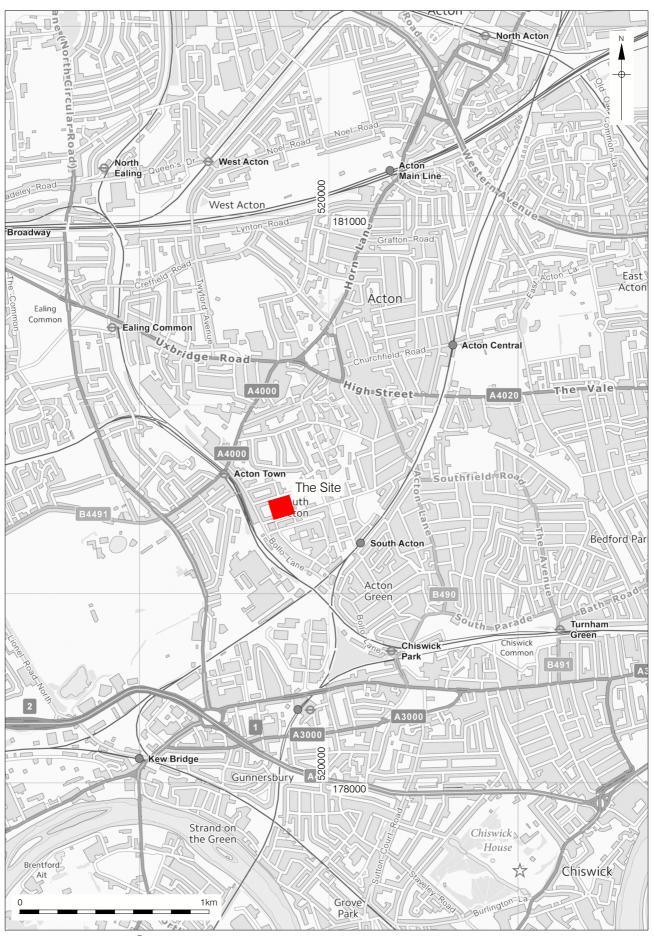
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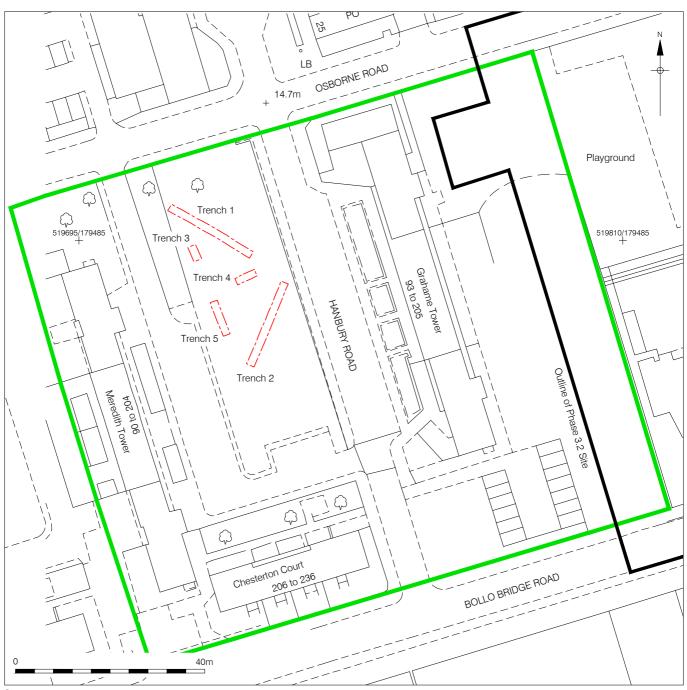
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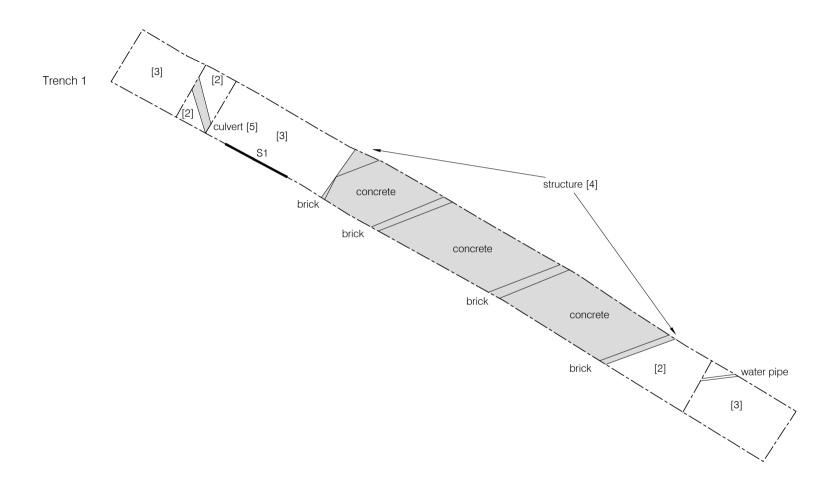
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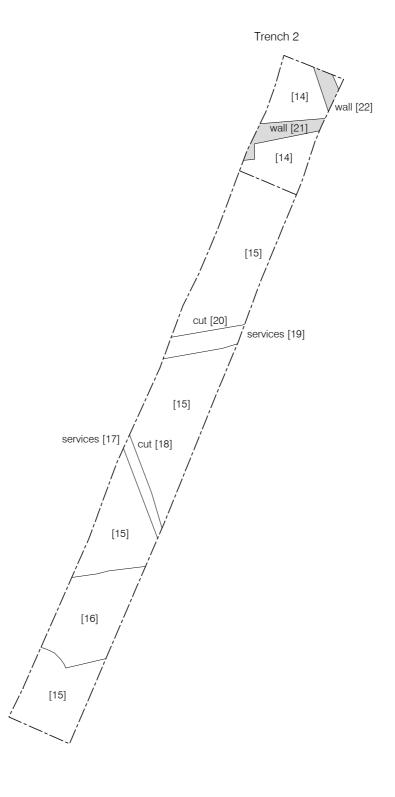
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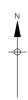


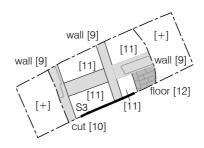




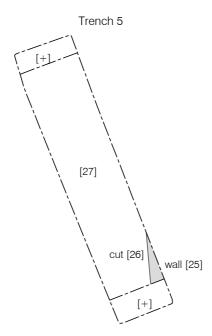




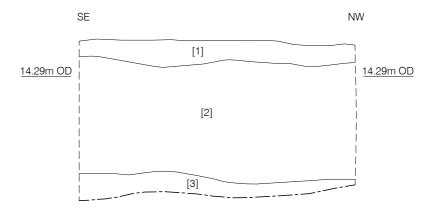




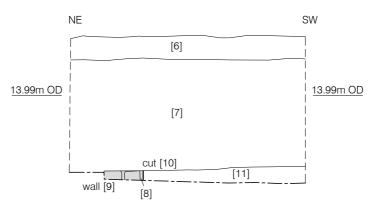
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Section 1 Trench 1 Northeast Facing



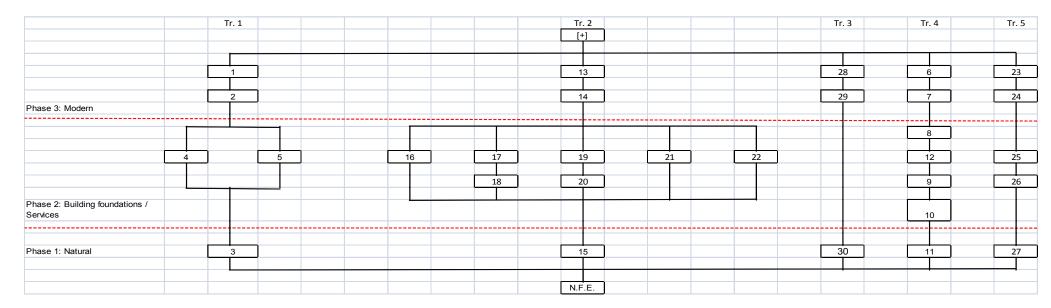
Section 3 Trench 4 Northwest Facing

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Context No.	Туре	Trench	Comments	Phase
1	Layer	1	Topsoil	3
2	Layer	1	Made Ground	3
3	Layer	1	Natural	1
4	Structure	1	Concrete and brick structure	2
5	Masonry	1	Base of culvert	2
6	Layer	4	Topsoil	3
7	Layer	4	Made Ground	3
8	Fill	4	Backfill in construction cut [10]	2
9	Masonry	4	Wall foundation	2
10	Cut	4	Construction cut containing foundation [9]	2
11	Layer	4	Natural	1
12	Masonry	4	Brick floor surface	2
13	Layer	2	Topsoil	3
14	Layer	2	Made Ground	3
15	Layer	2	Natural	1
16	Structure	2	Concrete slab	2
17	Fill	2	Concrete services in [18]	2
18	Cut	2	Construction cut for [17]	2
19	Fill	2	Concrete services in [20]	2
20	Cut	2	Construction cut for [19]	2
21	Masonry	2	Wall foundation	2
22	Masonry	2	Wall foundation	2
23	Layer	5	Topsoil	3
24	Layer	5	Made Ground	3
25	Masonry	5	Wall foundation	2
26	Cut	5	Construction cut for [25]	2
27	Layer	5	Natural	1
28	Layer	3	Topsoil	3
29	Layer	3	Made Ground	3
30	Layer	3	Natural	1

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APPENDIX 2: STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



APPENDIX 3: OASIS ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FORM

10.1 OASIS ID: preconst1-217434

Project details

Project name Acton Gardens, Phase 4, South Acton Estate, Acton, London Borough of Ealing

the project

Short description of An archaeological evaluation consisting of five trenches. The results of the archaeological evaluation indicated that the natural topography of the site, as represented by the heights of naturally deposited sandy silt and silty sand found in all five trenches, had been significantly impacted by development of the site during the 19th and 20th centuries for housing. This conclusion was supported by the natural deposits being sealed by modern made ground with no subsoil or garden soil deposits seen in any of the trenches. No archaeological features or deposits relating to prehistoric, Roman, medieval or early-mid post-medieval deposits were encountered during the archaeological investigation. Structures including wall foundations, concrete slabs, a culvert base and concrete covered services were found in four of the trenches. All of these structures would have related to the 19th and 20th century housing that previously occupied the site.

Project dates Start: 06-07-2015 End: 08-07-2015

Previous/future

work

Yes / Not known

Any associated

project reference

codes

AGD15 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Residential 1 - General Residential

Monument type WALL FOUNDATIONS Post Medieval

Monument type WALL FOUNDATIONS Modern

Monument type **CULVERT Modern**

Monument type **CONCRETE SLABS Modern**

Monument type CONCRETE SERVICES Modern

Monument type **BRICK FLOOR Modern** Monument type MADE GROUND Modern

Monument type CONSTRUCTION CUTS Modern

Significant Finds POTTERY Modern

Significant Finds BRICK SAMPLES Post Medieval

Significant Finds BRICK SAMPLES Modern

Significant Finds CLAY TOBACCO PIPE Post Medieval

Significant Finds button Post Medieval

Methods & "Sample Trenches"

techniques

Development type Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)

Prompt Planning condition

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

planning process

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON EALING ACTON Acton Gardens, Phase 4, South Acton

Estate

Postcode R3 8RQ

Study area 9600.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 1975 7947 51.5009708797 -0.274550844341 51 30 03 N 000 16 28 W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 13.10m Max: 13.71m

Project creators

Name of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Organisation

Project brief Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

originator

Project design Gary Brown

originator

Project Gary Brown

director/manager

Type of sponsor/funding

body

Countryside Properties

Project archives

Physical Archive

LAARC

recipient

Physical Archive ID AGD15

Physical Contents "Ceramics", "Metal"

Digital Archive

recipient

LAARC

Digital Archive ID AGD15

Digital Contents "other"

Digital Media

"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"

available

Paper Archive

LAARC

recipient

Paper Archive ID AGD15

Paper Contents "other"

Paper Media

"Context sheet", "Diary", "Matrices", "Plan", "Section", "Unpublished Text"

available

Project

bibliography 1

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