

**An Archaeological Evaluation at 123 Denmark Hill,  
Camberwell, London Borough of Southwark, SE5**

**Site Code: DMK 07**

**Central National Grid Reference: TQ 3279 7594**

**Written by Andrew Sargent  
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, March 2007**

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March 2007**

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## **1 ABSTRACT**

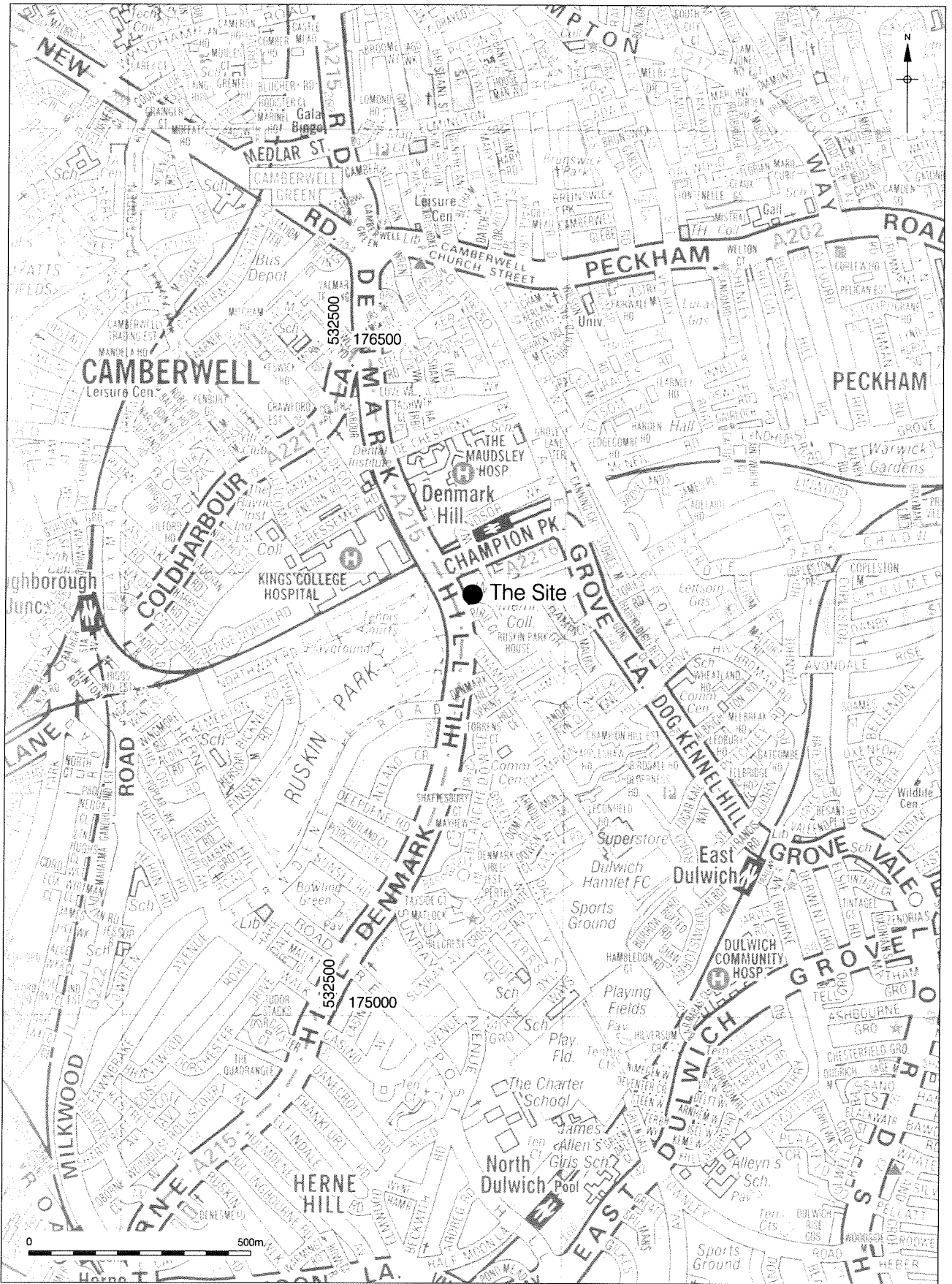
- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological field evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology at 123 Denmark Hill, London Borough of Southwark. The central National Grid Reference is TQ 3279 7594. The evaluation was undertaken between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2007. The commissioning client was Croft Homes Ltd.
- 1.2 The evaluation comprised eight trenches located within the footprint of the proposed development, five measuring 2m by 2m, two 4m by 2m, and the last 3m by 2m.
- 1.3 The evaluation identified London Clay at varying heights across the site. This was truncated by the construction and service cuts for a 20<sup>th</sup> century building, recently demolished. The site was sealed by two phases of 20<sup>th</sup> century made ground, the first of which may represent redevelopment within the structure, whilst the second represents its recent demolition. The site itself had originally been created by cutting an artificial terrace into the north-facing hillside, during which any archaeological remains present at its location will have been destroyed.
- 1.4 No archaeological features or deposits were located at the site.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report details the working methods and results of a limited archaeological field evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> March 2007. The evaluation was undertaken at 123 Denmark Hill, Camberwell, London Borough of Southwark, on land that is to be redeveloped as mixed residential and commercial accommodation. The site does not lie within an Archaeological Priority Area. The report was commissioned by Croft Homes Ltd.
- 2.2 Pre-Construct Archaeology was originally invited to undertake a watching brief during piling exercises at the site. However, following discussions between PCA and the client, it was deemed more archaeologically appropriate to undertake a limited evaluation/watching brief. The mitigation programme thereby established was for 8 mechanically excavated trial pits, each approximately 2m by 2m. These were to be excavated in accordance with PPG 16 and local policies, in order to assess the nature, extent and date of any archaeological remains encountered, and to locate any areas where archaeological deposits have been truncated (Brown 2007).
- 2.3 The site is bounded by Denmark Hill to the west, 121 Denmark Hill to the north, an open grassed area to the east, and Pirie Close to the south (see Figure 1). Overall, it measures approximately 30m north-south by a maximum of 8m east-west, tapering slightly to the south, and covering an area of approximately 200m<sup>2</sup>.
- 2.4 The National Grid Reference of the site is TQ 3279 7594.
- 2.5 The site was designated the code DMK 07.
- 2.6 The evaluation was supervised by the author, project managed by Gary Brown and was monitored by the Southwark Archaeological Officer.

### 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The evaluation initially comprised 8 trenches measuring approximately 2m by 2m. Trenches 1 and 5 were extended approximately 2m northwards and southwards respectively, due to the presence of a concrete slab. Trenches 1, 2 and 3 were spaced from north to south respectively along the eastern boundary of the site; Trenches 4 and 5 were located south centrally and north centrally respectively; and Trenches 5, 6 and 7 were spaced from south to north respectively along the western boundary of the site (see Figure 2). All were excavated in accordance with the specifications outlined in the method statement for the site (Brown 2007).
- 3.2 Excavation of the trenches was undertaken using a JCB mechanical digger. All of the trenches were excavated in spits with a toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision.
- 3.3 Machining was halted once natural clayey soils (London Clay) had been located within each trench; the trenches were subsequently cleaned using appropriate hand-tools. The depth below ground level to the natural geology was between 0.5m and 1.5m, varying according to the degree of truncation across the site. No deposits and features earlier than 20<sup>th</sup> century were identified. All trenches were photographed and recorded using the single context recording method, and pro-forma context and planning sheets. Plans and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:50 and 1:10 respectively where appropriate.
- 3.4 A temporary benchmark was transferred onto site from an Ordnance Survey Benchmark with a value of 32.71m OD, located on the northwest corner of 222-241 Ruskin Park House to the south of the site.



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Figure 1  
 Site Location  
 1:12,500 at A4

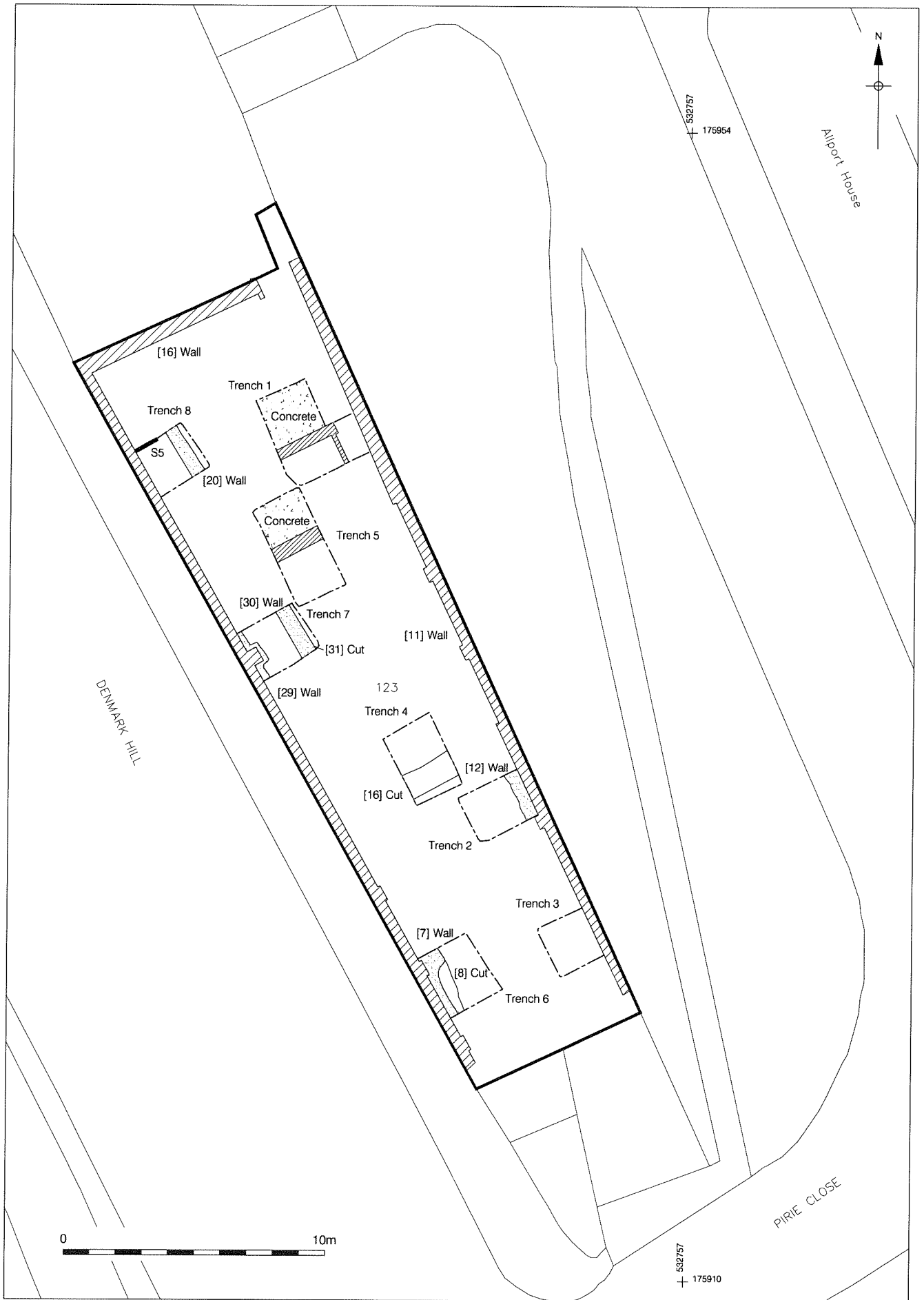


Figure 2  
Trench Location  
1:200 at A4

## **4 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE**

### **4.1 TRENCH 1 (see Figure 2)**

Trench 1 was located toward the northeast corner of the site, on its eastern boundary, and measured approximately 4m north-south by 2m east-west by 1.80m deep at its deepest point. It was extended northwards due to the presence of a concrete slab in its original location, which proved impossible to remove. The earliest deposit encountered in the trench was greyish mid brown clay [24] at a height of 21.48m OD, identified as natural London Clay. This was overlain by mid brown sandy clay [23] at a height of 21.88m OD, which contained moderate amounts of fragmentary CBM. This deposit abutted the wall that bounded the concrete slab to the south. The trench was sealed by loose mid orangey brown clayey sand [1] at a height of 22.98m OD, containing large amounts of fragmentary CBM and concrete. This latter deposit derived from recent demolition work.

### **4.2 TRENCH 2 (see Figure 2)**

Trench 2 was located toward the southeast corner of the site, on its eastern boundary, and measured approximately 2m square by 0.80m deep. The earliest deposit recorded was mid brown clay with pale grey mottling [13] at a height of 23.35m OD, identified as natural London Clay. This was partially truncated to the east by the stub of a concrete slab [12], extending from the brick wall [11] that forms the eastern boundary of the site. The slab was abutted by pale to mid brown sandy clay [10], overlying the London Clay at a height of 23.45m OD, and containing moderate amounts of fragmentary CBM. The trench was sealed by loose mid orangey brown clayey sand [1] at a height of 24.05m OD, containing large amounts of fragmentary CBM and concrete. This latter deposit derived from recent demolition work.

### **4.3 TRENCH 3 (see Figure 2)**

Trench 3 was located in the southeast corner of the site, and measured approximately 2m square by 1m deep. The earliest deposit recorded was mid brown clay [3] with pale grey mottles at a height of 22.81m OD, identified as natural London Clay. This was overlain by pale to mid brown sandy clay [2], containing moderate



amounts of fragmentary CBM, masonry and concrete, which sealed the trench at a height of 23.71m OD.

#### **4.4 TRENCH 4 (see Figure 2)**

Trench 4 was located in the just south of the centre of the site, and measured approximately 3m north-south by 2m east-west by 0.90m deep. The earliest deposit recorded was pale to mid brown clay with pale grey mottling [17] at a height of 23.34m OD, identified as the natural London Clay. This was truncated in the southern part of the trench by a linear cut aligned east-west, approximately 1m wide and 0.25m deep (cut from a height of 23.34m OD down to 23.09m OD). The cut was backfilled with a mix of fine clinker and crushed CBM [15], and probably represents a robbed out partition wall or the make-up for a routeway within the 20<sup>th</sup> century building that recently occupied the site. This feature and the natural clay through which it cut were overlain by mid brown sandy clay [14] at a height of 23.64m OD, containing large amounts of fragmentary CBM and concrete. The trench was sealed by loose mid orangey brown clayey sand [1] at a height of 23.84m OD, again containing large amounts of fragmentary CBM and concrete. This latter deposit derived from recent demolition work.

#### **4.5 TRENCH 5 (see Figure 2)**

Trench 5 was located just north of the centre of the site, and measured approximately 4m north-south by 2m east-west by 0.90m deep. It was extended southwards due to the presence of a concrete slab in its original location, which proved impossible to remove. The earliest deposit recorded in the trench was pale to mid brown clay with pale grey mottling [26] at a height of 22.59m OD, identified as natural London Clay. This was overlain by mid brown sandy clay [25] at a height of 23.19m OD, which contained moderate amounts of fragmentary CBM and concrete. This deposit abutted the wall that bounded the concrete slab to the north. The trench was sealed by loose mid orangey brown clayey sand [1] at a height of 23.39m OD, containing large amounts of fragmentary CBM and concrete. This latter deposit derived from recent demolition work.

#### **4.6 TRENCH 6 (see Figure 2)**

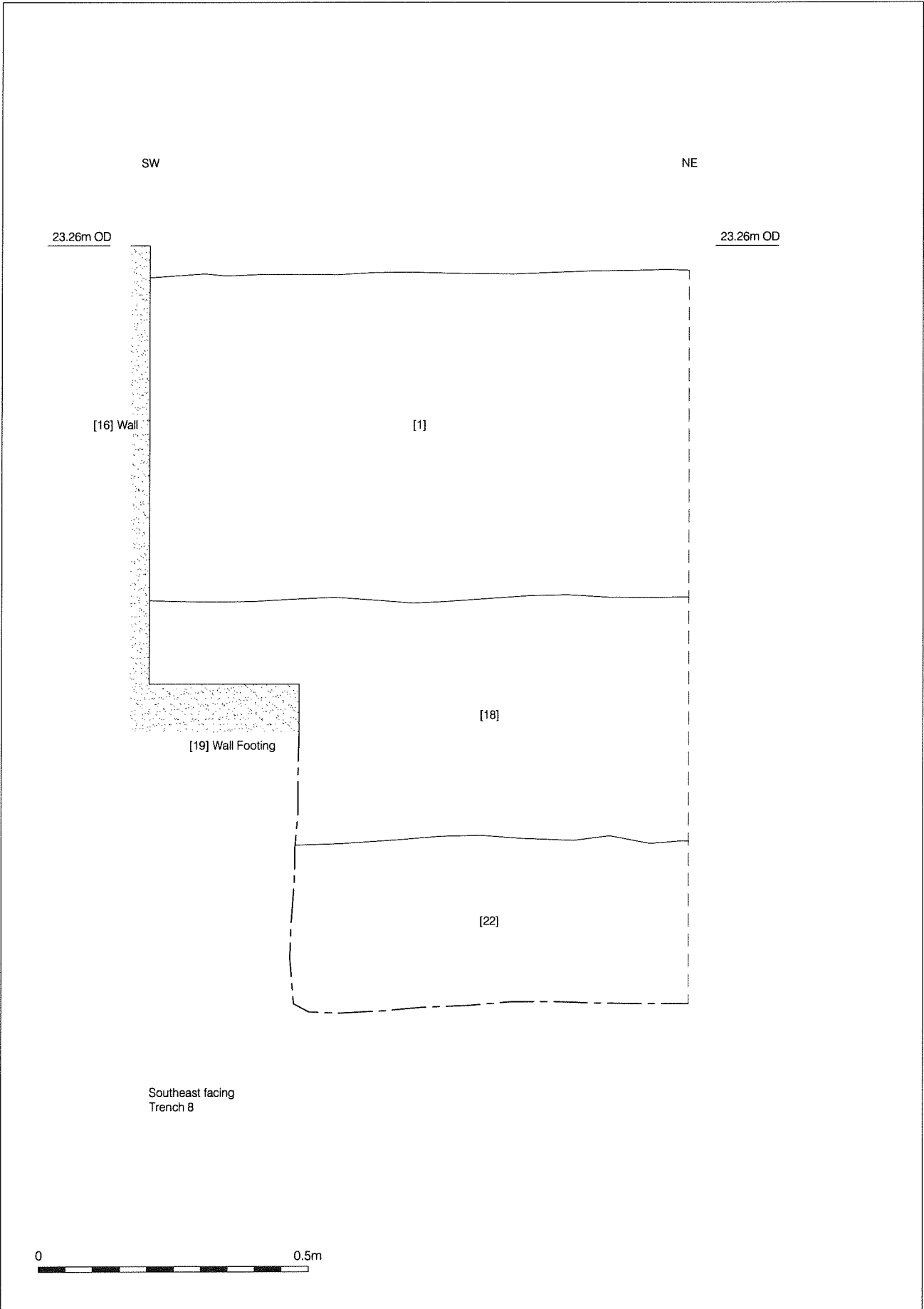
Trench 6 was located toward the southwest corner of the site, on its western boundary, and measured approximately 2m square by 2.10m deep. The earliest deposit recorded was mid brown clay with grey mottling [9] at a height of 22.92m OD, identified as natural London Clay. This was truncated by a linear cut [8] aligned north-south, its eastern side cut from a height of 22.92m OD down to a level step 0.25m wide at 22.62m OD, then continuing vertically down beyond the limit of excavation at 22.47m OD. This formed a construction cut for the concrete foundation [7] that provided support for brick wall [6], comprising the western wall of the 20<sup>th</sup> century building that recently occupied the site. Part of the wooden shuttering used to form the foundation survived along the vertical side of the cut, separating the foundation itself from the upper step of the cut, which was backfilled with additional concrete [5]. This set of features was overlain and abutted on the east by a layer of mid brown sandy clay [4] at a height of 23.47m OD, containing moderate amounts of fragmentary CBM and concrete and occasional gravel. The trench was sealed by loose mid orangey brown clayey sand [1] at a height of 24.12m OD, containing large amounts of fragmentary CBM and concrete. This latter deposit derived from recent demolition work.

#### **4.7 TRENCH 7 (see Figure 2)**

Trench 7 was located just north of the midpoint of the western boundary of the site, and measured approximately 2m square by 0.80m deep. The earliest deposit recorded was greyish mid brown clay [32] at a height of 22.77m OD, identified as natural London Clay. This was truncated in the west of the trench by a concrete foundation [29] supporting the eastern wall [6] of the 20<sup>th</sup> century building that recently occupied the site. In the eastern half of the trench the clay was truncated by a north-south cut [31], approximately 0.50m wide, descending vertically from 22.77m OD and continuing beyond the limit of excavation at 22.73m OD. This was filled by concrete surrounding a cast metal service pipe [30]. These features were overlain and abutted by a layer of mid brown sandy clay [28] at a height of 23.23m OD, containing moderate amounts of fragmentary CBM and concrete. The trench was sealed by loose mid orangey brown clayey sand [1] at a height of 23.53m OD, containing large amounts of fragmentary CBM and concrete. This latter deposit derived from recent demolition work.

#### 4.8 TRENCH 8 (see Figures 2 and 3)

Trench 8 was located towards the northwest corner of the site, and measured approximately 2m square by 1.40m deep. The earliest deposit recorded was pale to mid brown clay with pale grey mottling [22] at a height of 22.16m OD, identified as natural London Clay. This was truncated in the west of the trench by a concrete foundation [19] supporting the eastern wall [6] of the 20<sup>th</sup> century building that recently occupied the site. In the eastern half of the trench the clay was truncated by a north-south cut [21], approximately 0.50m wide and 0.20m deep, descending vertically from 22.16m OD to 21.96m OD. This was filled by concrete surrounding a cast metal service pipe [20]. These features were overlain and abutted by a layer of mid brown sandy clay [18] at a height of 22.61m OD, containing moderate amounts of fragmentary CBM and concrete. The trench was sealed by loose mid orangey brown clayey sand [1] at a height of 23.21m OD, containing large amounts of fragmentary CBM and concrete. This latter deposit derived from recent demolition work. The section drawn in this trench is reproduced in Figure 3, and is considered representative of the sequence found across the site.



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Figure 3  
Section 5  
1:10 at A4

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 All of the trenches exposed natural deposits, in all cases comprising London Clay. This deposit varied in height across the site, from between 22.81 and 22.91m OD at the southern end of the site, rising to a maximum of approximately 23.35m OD in the south central region, and thereafter falling gradually from 22.77m OD in the north central region to 22.16m OD at the northern end of the site, but with a noticeable minimum at 21.48m OD in Trench 1, towards the northeast corner of the site on its eastern boundary. The site appears to have been formed by cutting a terrace into the surrounding north-facing hillside, and thus the height of the London Clay across the extent of the site is solely artificial, representing the degree to which the natural deposits were cut away to create the building plot.
- 5.2 A layer of sandy clay containing demolition material was recorded overlying the clay across the entire site. In the southern half of the site this deposit maintained a fairly constant height between 23.45 and 23.71m OD. In the north central region of the site the deposit was recorded at heights between 23.19 and 23.23m OD, whilst towards the northern end of the site it was lower still, reaching a minimum of 21.88m OD in Trench 1. The deposit may date to recent demolition work, although there is a possibility that it represents an earlier phase of redevelopment involving the building that recently occupied the site.
- 5.3 All trenches excepting the southernmost, Trench 3, were sealed by loose clayey sand containing much demolition material, which represents the recent demolition of the previous building on the site.
- 5.4 No archaeological features or artefacts dating to earlier than the 20<sup>th</sup> century were identified on the site. Indeed, the position of the site on an artificial terrace cut into the hillside suggests that any archaeological deposits at this location were destroyed during this original episode of construction work. It is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work is required on this site.

## **6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 6.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology would like to thank Croft Homes Ltd for commissioning the evaluation through their agents, Michael Sierens Associates. PCA is grateful to Croft Homes for providing all necessary plant and welfare.
  
- 6.2 The author would like to thank Gary Brown for project management and editing, and Dave Harris for the CAD illustrations.

## 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brown, Gary. 2007. *Method Statement for a limited Archaeological Evaluation at 123 Denmark Hill, London Borough of Southwark*. Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. Unpublished Report

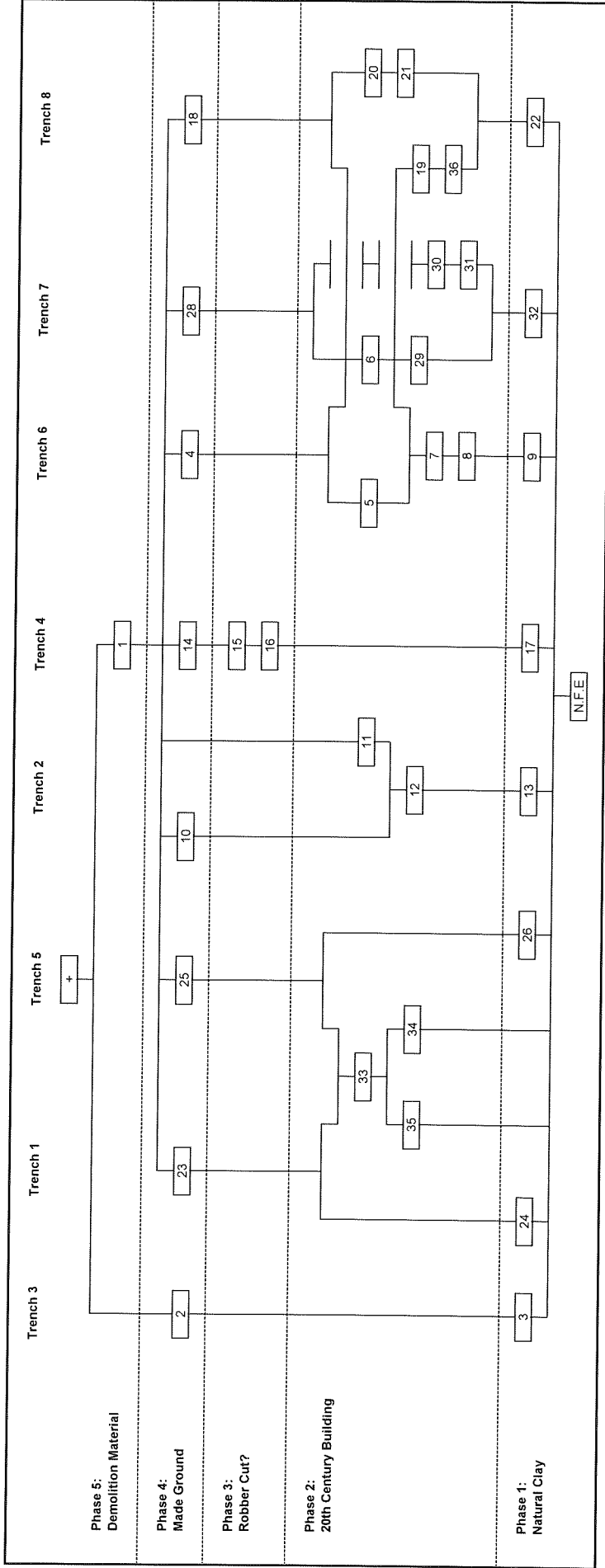
## Appendix 1: Context Index

Site Code	Context No.	Plan	Section / Elevation	Type	Description	Date	Phase	Photos No.
DMK 07	1	Site Plan	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8	Layer	Made ground inc. demolition material	21st Century	5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
DMK 07	2	None	1	Layer	Made ground inc. demolition material	20th century	4	None
DMK 07	3	Site Plan	1	Layer	Natural clay	Natural	1	None
DMK 07	4	None	2	Layer	Made ground inc. demolition material	20th century	4	1
DMK 07	5	Site Plan	2	Fill	Concrete backfill of [8]	20th century	2	1
DMK 07	6	Site Plan	2, 5, 8	Masonry	W wall of 20th century building	20th century	2	1
DMK 07	7	Site Plan	2	Masonry	Concrete foundation for [6]	20th century	2	1
DMK 07	8	Site Plan	2	Cut	Construction cut for [7]	20th century	2	1
DMK 07	9	Site Plan	2	Layer	Natural clay	Natural	1	1
DMK 07	10	None	3	Layer	Made ground inc. demolition material	20th century	4	2
DMK 07	11	Site Plan	3	Masonry	E wall of 20th century building	20th century	2	2
DMK 07	12	Site Plan	3	Masonry	Concrete foundation for [11]	20th century	2	2
DMK 07	13	Site Plan	3	Layer	Natural clay	Natural	1	2
DMK 07	14	None	4	Layer	Made ground inc. demolition material	20th century	4	3
DMK 07	15	Site Plan	4	Fill	Clinker/CBM backfill of [16]	20th century	3	3
DMK 07	16	Site Plan	4	Cut	Robber cut?	20th century	3	3
DMK 07	17	Site Plan	4	Layer	Natural clay	Natural	1	3
DMK 07	18	Site Plan	5	Layer	Made ground inc. demolition material	20th century	4	4
DMK 07	19	None	5	Masonry	Concrete foundation for [6]	20th century	2	4
DMK 07	20	Site Plan	None	Fill	Cast iron pipe with concrete surround	20th century	2	4
DMK 07	21	Site Plan	None	Cut	Cut for [20]	20th century	2	4
DMK 07	22	Site Plan	5	Layer	Natural clay	Natural	1	5
DMK 07	23	None	6	Layer	Made ground inc. demolition material	20th century	4	5
DMK 07	24	Site Plan	6	Layer	Natural clay	Natural	1	6
DMK 07	25	None	7	Layer	Made ground inc. demolition material	20th century	4	6
DMK 07	26	Site Plan	7	Layer	Natural clay	Natural	1	7
DMK 07	27	Site Plan	8	Cut	Construction cut for [29]	20th century	2	7
DMK 07	28	None	8	Layer	Made ground inc. demolition material	20th century	4	7
DMK 07	29	Site Plan	8	Masonry	Concrete foundation for [6]	20th century	2	7
DMK 07	30	Site Plan	None	Fill	Cast iron pipe with concrete surround	20th century	2	7
DMK 07	31	Site Plan	None	Cut	Cut for [30]	20th century	2	7



Site Code	Context No.	Plan	Section / Elevation	Type	Description	Date	Phase	Photos No.
DMK 07	32	Site Plan	8	Layer	Natural clay	Natural	1	7
DMK 07	33	Site Plan	None	Masonry	Concrete slab	20th century	2	None
DMK 07	34	Site Plan	None	Masonry	Brick wall	20th century	2	None
DMK 07	35	Site Plan	None	Masonry	Brick wall	20th century	2	None
DMK 07	36	Site Plan	5	Cut	Construction cut for [19]	20th century	2	4

# APPENDIX 2: SITE MATRIX



## APPENDIX 3: OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

### 2.7 OASIS ID: preconst1-24952

#### Project details

Project name 123, Denmark Hill

Short description of the project This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological field evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology at 123 Denmark Hill, London Borough of Southwark. The central National Grid Reference is TQ 3279 7594. The evaluation was undertaken between 7th and 8th of March 2007. The commissioning client was Croft Homes Ltd. The evaluation comprised eight trenches located within the footprint of the proposed development, five measuring 2m by 2m, two 4m by 2m, and the last 3m by 2m. The evaluation identified London Clay at varying heights across the site. This was truncated by the construction and service cuts for a 20th century building, recently demolished. The site was sealed by two phases of 20th century made ground, the first of which may represent redevelopment within the structure, whilst the second represents its recent demolition. The site itself had originally been created by cutting an artificial terrace into the north-facing hillside, during which any archaeological remains present at its location will have been destroyed

Project dates Start: 07-03-2007 End: 08-03-2007

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes DMK 07 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed

Methods & techniques 'Sample Trenches'

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

Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	Not known / Not recorded
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON SOUTHWARK CAMBERWELL AND DULWICH 123 Denmark Hill
Postcode	SE5 8RX
Study area	200.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3279 7594 51.4663260529 -0.088095209105 51 27 58 N 000 05 17 W Point
Height OD	Min: 21.48m Max: 23.35m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Pre-Construct Archaeology
Project design originator	Pre-Construct Archaeology
Project director/manager	Gary Brown
Project supervisor	Andrew Sargent
Type of sponsor/funding body	Croft Homes Ltd

Name of sponsor/funding body	Croft Homes Ltd
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	DMK 07
Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Spreadsheets','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	DMK 07
Paper Contents	'none'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Photograph','Plan','Section','Unpublished Text'
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Evaluation at 123 Denmark Hill, London Borough of Southwark, SE5
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Sargent, A
Date	2007
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology

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