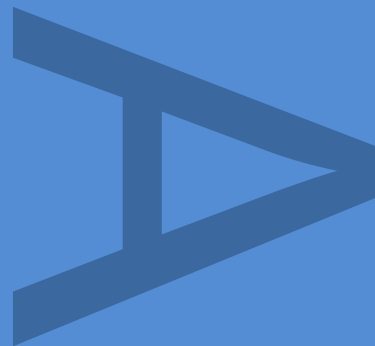


**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION OF LAND AT  
BEAR LANE,  
LONDON BOROUGH OF  
SOUTHWARK**

**APRIL 2007**

**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY**



**DOCUMENT VERIFICATION**

**LAND AT BEAR LANE,  
LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

Quality Control

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**An Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Bear Lane, London Borough of Southwark**

**Site Code: BLZ 07**

**Central National Grid Reference: TQ 3180 8020**

**Written and Researched by Stuart Holden  
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, April 2007**

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April 2007**

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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 Bear Lane, London Borough of Southwark.
- 1.2 The archaeological work was implemented in advance of the proposed development of a nine-storey building.
- 1.3 Five trenches were excavated across the site, three within the building present across the northern area and two in the open yard to the south. In each of the trenches, the lowest deposit reached was the natural gravel, which was overlain by peat and alluvium. In four of the trenches post-medieval walls relating to 19<sup>th</sup> century structures were present in the made ground exposed beneath the modern concrete slabs.

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

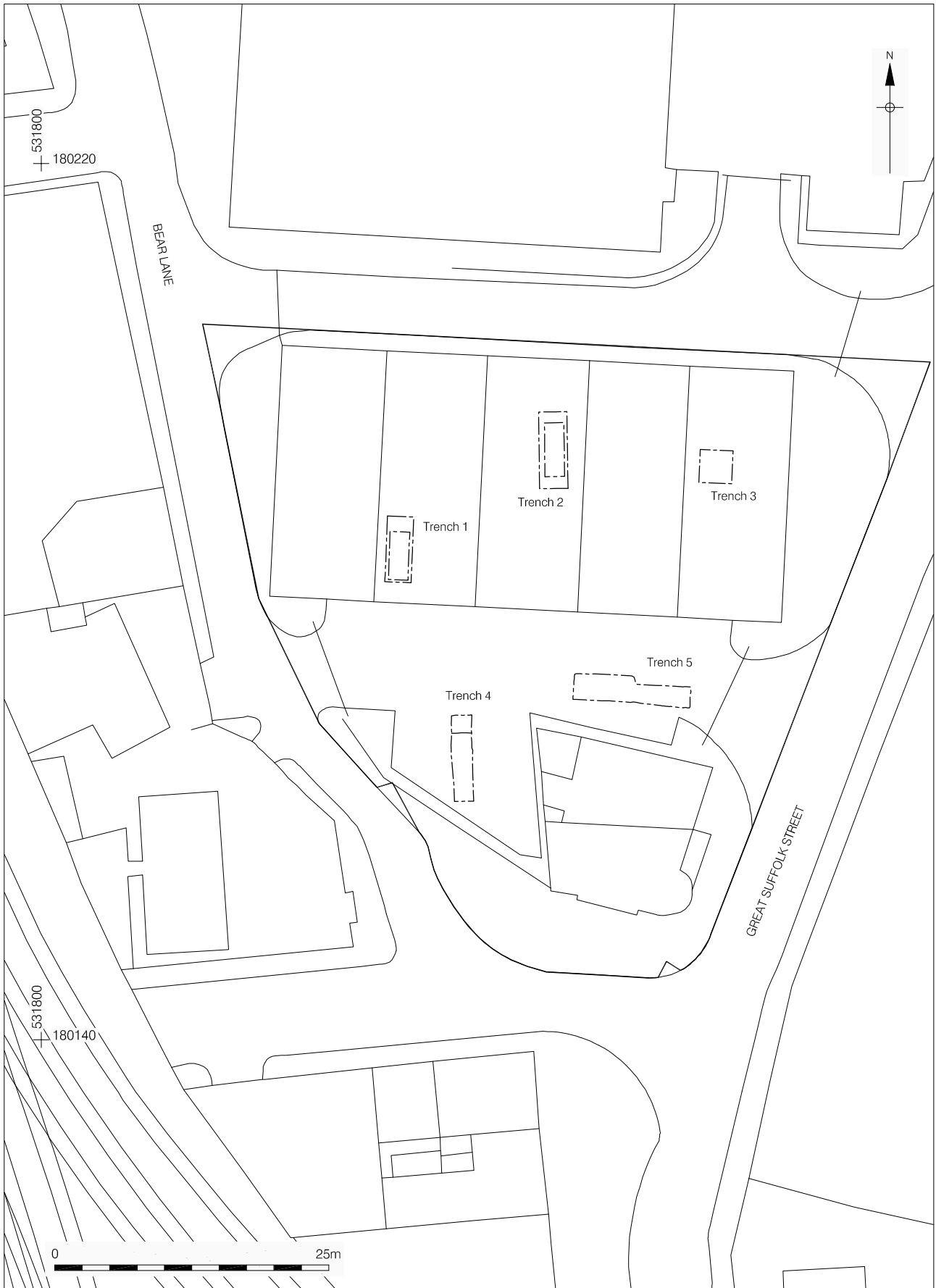
- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. of land at Bear Lane London Borough of Southwark (Figure 1), in advance of a proposed development.
- 2.2 The evaluation was conducted between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> March 2007 and was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Galliard Homes. The evaluation followed specifications which had been approved by the Senior Archaeology Officer for Southwark Council (Gailey 2007 and Mayo 2007).
- 2.3 The excavation of five trenches using a mechanical excavator under archaeological supervision was undertaken on the site (Figure 2). Where structural elements relating to 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings were present, these were recorded before excavation continued to until the natural gravel was attained.
- 2.4 The central National Grid Reference of the site is TQ 3180 8020.
- 2.5 The site was given the unique code BLZ 07.
- 2.6 The evaluation was supervised by Stuart Holden and assisted by Phil Frickers, Jem Rogers and Jo Taylor with the project managed by Chris Mayo for Pre-Construct Archaeology.



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Figure 1  
Site Location  
1:20,000 at A4



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Figure 2  
Trench Locations  
1:500 at A4



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

#### **3.1 Planning Background**

3.1.1 The study aims to satisfy the objectives of the London Borough of Southwark, 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).

3.1.2 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 Southwark**

3.2.1 The site is located within the Archaeological Priority Zone of Borough, Bermondsey and Rivers as defined in the London Borough of Southwark's Unitary Development Plan.

3.2.2 The Council's Archaeology Policy is as follows (taken from the Southwark Plan, revised draft adopted in March 2007):

##### **Policy 3.19 – Archaeology**

Planning applications affecting sites within Archaeological Priority Zones, as identified in Appendix 7, shall be accompanied by an archaeological assessment and evaluation of the site, including the impact of the proposed development. There is a presumption in favour of preservation in situ, to protect and safeguard archaeological remains of national importance, including scheduled monuments and their settings. The in situ preservation of archaeological remains of local importance will also be sought, unless the importance of the development outweighs the local value of the remains. If planning permission is granted to develop any site where there are

archaeological remains or there is good reason to believe that such remains exist, conditions will be attached to secure the excavation and recording or preservation in whole or in part, if justified, before development begins.

### **Reasons**

Southwark has an immensely important archaeological resource. Increasing evidence of those peoples living in Southwark before the Roman and medieval period is being found in the north of the borough and along the Old Kent Road. The suburb of the Roman provincial capital (Londinium) was located around the southern bridgehead of the only river crossing over the Thames at the time and remains of Roman buildings, industry, roads and cemeteries have been discovered over the last 30 years. The importance of the area during the medieval period is equally well attested both archaeologically and historically. Elsewhere in Southwark, the routes of Roman roads (along the Old Kent Road and Kennington Road) and the historic village cores of Peckham, Camberwell, Walworth and Dulwich also have the potential for the survival of archaeological remains.

PPG16 requires the Council to include policies for the protection, enhancement and preservation of sites of archaeological interest and of their settings.

## **3.3 Research Objectives**

3.3.1 The objectives of the evaluation were to define the character and extent of the archaeological remains, and thus indicate the weight that ought to be attached to their preservation or mitigation. On the basis of the archaeological deposits found in the immediate vicinity it is unlikely that preservation in situ will be an issue at this site, but the evaluation will provide information useful for making an informed and reasonable planning decision regarding any further mitigation.

3.3.2 The following research aims were addressed in the specification (Mayo 2007):

- To establish the palaeotopography of the site.
- To establish the presence or absence of prehistoric activity.
- To establish the presence or absence of Roman activity.
- To establish the presence or absence of medieval and post-medieval activity.
- To establish the extent of past post-depositional impacts on the archaeological resource

3.4 Chris Constable, Senior Archaeological Planning Officer for the London Borough of Southwark, inspected and monitored the archaeological works.

3.5 There were no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the footprint of the development.

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

4.1 An archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (Gailey, 2005) was compiled prior to the commencement of the evaluation. The results of this document is summarised below with additional material from other sources.

### **4.2 Palaeolithic-Environmental**

4.2.1 An evaluation by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd to the south of the site, at South Point, Blackfriars Road, revealed a post-medieval sequence overlying the alluvial fills of a palaeochannel cutting the natural gravel (Darton and Taylor 2002). The channel was aligned roughly north-south, and was filled with clay and peat. Studies of the peat revealed that it had been formed during the Middle Holocene (or possibly earlier) and that flooding of the surface of the peat occurred from the Iron Age onwards (Branch 2002).

### **4.3 Prehistoric**

4.3.1 It is known that during the post-glacial times of the Holocene Period, the area now occupied by north Southwark was littered with islets of sand and gravel separated by braided channels of the River Thames. The River Thames would have provided predictable food sources in addition to a means of transportation and communication, whilst the soils upon the islets would have been fertile and well drained.

4.3.2 There is plentiful archaeological evidence for activity during the Mesolithic period upon two of the larger islets, the Bermondsey and Horsleydown Eyots, situated to the east of the subject site. However, no such activity has been located within 250m of the subject site. A known eyot is located to the north of the site at Hopton Street where late-Neolithic/early-Bronze Age artefacts have been recovered and evidence for cultivation recorded.

4.3.3 The site would have been positioned over a wetland area during the later prehistoric periods and peat formations have been recorded in the vicinity, in particular at South Point (BKA 02) where up to 4m of peat, interlaid with bands of alluvium, have been recorded. To the north of the subject site, at Bankside 123, timber trackways, and jetties have been recorded. In summary, the geoarchaeological evidence from surrounding investigations suggests that the site lies within the Bankside channel floodplain and that further evidence of the marshland could be recorded.

#### **4.4 Roman**

4.4.1 The migration of the Thames farther north left the area of Southwark as isolated sand islets, occasionally subjected to flooding. This marginal land became occupied during the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD with a major Roman town and a programme of reclamation began filling the channels between the eyots. Some artefacts and deposits of Roman date have been recorded in the area that suggest that the subject site was located on the outskirts of the town on marginal land possibly used for agriculture but subject to flooding.

#### **4.5 Saxon**

4.5.1 In Saxon times Southwark was an important trade centre; however, no records exist for material of this date recovered in the immediate vicinity.

#### **4.6 Medieval**

4.6.1 Land reclamation continued during the medieval period and the waterfront of Southwark became a centre of industrial activity with mills and wharves being developed. The subject site is likely to have been arable land associated within the estate of the Paris Garden Manor

#### **4.7 Post-Medieval and Modern**

4.7.1 Further revetting of the river wall and building up of the land around Southwark continued through the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In 1730 the White Hart Public House was established to the south of the site and other buildings lined Bare Lane and Gravel Lane as shown on Rocque's map of 1747.

4.7.2 In the early- to mid- 19<sup>th</sup> century the Blakely Ordnance Company occupied the site, which was subsumed into the Armstrong Mitchell and Co gun manufactory by 1873. The buildings associated with these works, and its successors remained on the site until the 1980 at which time the site was cleared and the industrial units present on the site at the time of the fieldwork were constructed.

## 5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 The fieldwork was designed to assess the presence or absence of significant archaeological remains, which may require further investigation.
- 5.2 The Specification (Gailey 2007) and Method Statement (Mayo 2007) outlined the excavation of five trenches, as agreed with the Senior Archaeology Officer for Southwark Borough Council.
- 5.3 Under archaeological supervision, a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat ditching bucket was used to remove soils of no heritage value down to the highest archaeological horizon. The features 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.
- 5.4 During the course of the evaluation, and following on-site discussion with Chris Constable of Southwark Council, it was decided to investigate the sites' alluvial sequence by means of a machine dug sondage to the level of the gravel, hence allowing the stratigraphy, heights and potential of the alluvium to be evaluated. The depth and size of these sondages prohibited inspection by hand.
- 5.5 All archaeological features (stratigraphical layers, cuts, fills, structures) were recorded in plan and in section using standard recording methods. A photographic record using 35mm colour transparencies and digital mediums was made as appropriate.
- 5.6 A temporary benchmark (value 3.37m OD) was traversed onto the site from the Ordnance Survey Benchmark, located to the south of the site, on the White Horse public house (value 3.87m OD).
- 5.7 The work was undertaken following English Heritage (GLAAS) guidelines (English Heritage 1998) and those contained in the *Southwark Archaeology Policy and Supplementary Planning Guidance* (Southwark Council undated).
- 5.8 Following the completion of the archaeological investigation, the trenches were backfilled using the excavated material.

## **6 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

- 6.1 The British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series Sheet 256 (North London) indicates that the site is underlain by Alluvium lying over Kempton Park Gravels. Both of these deposits were observed within each of the five trenches, the gravel varying in height from -1.94m to -1.04m OD.
- 6.2 The centre of the site is located approximately 375m to the south of the southern bank of the River Thames with current ground level at a height of approximately 3.47m OD.

## 7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

### 7.1 Summary

7.1.1 The evaluation recorded six phases of activity, shown below in Table 1.

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Phase 6
Gravel	Peat	Alluvium	Made ground	19th century buildings	Modern buildings

Table 1: Phases

7.1.2 Within each trench, excavation continued until the natural gravel was reached. This was overlain by peat and alluvium, followed by made ground. In four of the trenches, post-medieval structures were also recorded.

### 7.2 Natural sequence (Phases 1-3)

7.2.1 In each of the five trenches, the same sequence of gravel, peat and alluvium was recorded. Table 1 shows the heights at which each of these principal deposits was recorded in each trench.

		Alluvium	Peat	Gravel
	Top of trench	Phase 3	Phase 2	Phase 1
Trench 1	3.47m	[24] 1.79m	[25] -0.23m	[26] -1.43m
Trench 2	3.47m	[16] 2.07m	[17] 0.07m	[18] -1.73m
Trench 3	3.46m	[41] 1.36m	[42] 0.16m	[43] -1.04m
Trench 4	3.36m	[1]/[2] 1.65m	[28] -0.89m	[29] -1.94m
Trench 5	3.27m	[10]/[11] 2.24m	[30] -0.88m	[33] -1.84m

Table 2: Showing levels of principal deposits related to Ordnance Datum and the assigned context number

### 7.3 Made ground (Phase 4)

7.3.1 Made ground was recorded in each of the trenches varying from c. 0.75m-1.75m in thickness. This was laid down to consolidate the land making it suitable for occupation.

### 7.4 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings (Phase 5)



- 7.4.1 In four of the trenches structural elements of demolished buildings were revealed. These are most likely to date to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and are shown on the 1873 Ordnance Survey map, reproduced in Figure 4. It possible that some of these elements originated in the late-18<sup>th</sup> century as some buildings are depicted on the site on Roque's map of 1747 and Horwood's map of 1792-99.
- 7.4.2 Within Trench 1 a one-brick thick wall [12] of 19<sup>th</sup> century date was recorded running north-south and returning to the west at its southern end. Running north-south within the structure was a half-brick thick wall [37] of unknown purpose. Positioned to the outside of this corner, one quadrant of a circular structure [35] was also recorded. This had a diameter of c.1.6m, built as a half-brick thick wall and likely to be a soakaway, intimated by the presence of a brick-built conduit [34] leading to it from the wall, to the north. To the west of the soakaway, the limited remains of a rough floor surface [36] were present.
- 7.4.3 At the southern end of Trench 1, soakaway [35] was truncated by a concrete foundation, probably associated with the arms manufactory, whilst a gravel filled cut [20] was recorded at the western side of the trench.
- 7.4.4 Towards the northern end of Trench 2, a one and a half-brick thick 19<sup>th</sup> century wall [27] ran east-west across the trench.
- 7.4.5 At the southern end of Trench 4, a one and a half brick thick wall [6] ran northwest-southeast across the trench, this wall represented the northern side of a basement to a 19<sup>th</sup> century building. Spurring off to the south, a one brick thick dividing wall was also encountered. A concrete floor [45] was laid within the basement.
- 7.4.6 At the eastern end of Trench 5 a one brick thick wall [31] ran east west, returning south at the western end. In the centre of the trench a single square cut timber post [32] was recorded driven into the alluvium. This had brick fragments surrounding the top of it, suggesting that it had been used as a foundation pile.
- 7.5 **Modern (Phase 6)**
- 7.5.1 Some brick structures and deposits were encountered that are of little intrinsic archaeological significance.

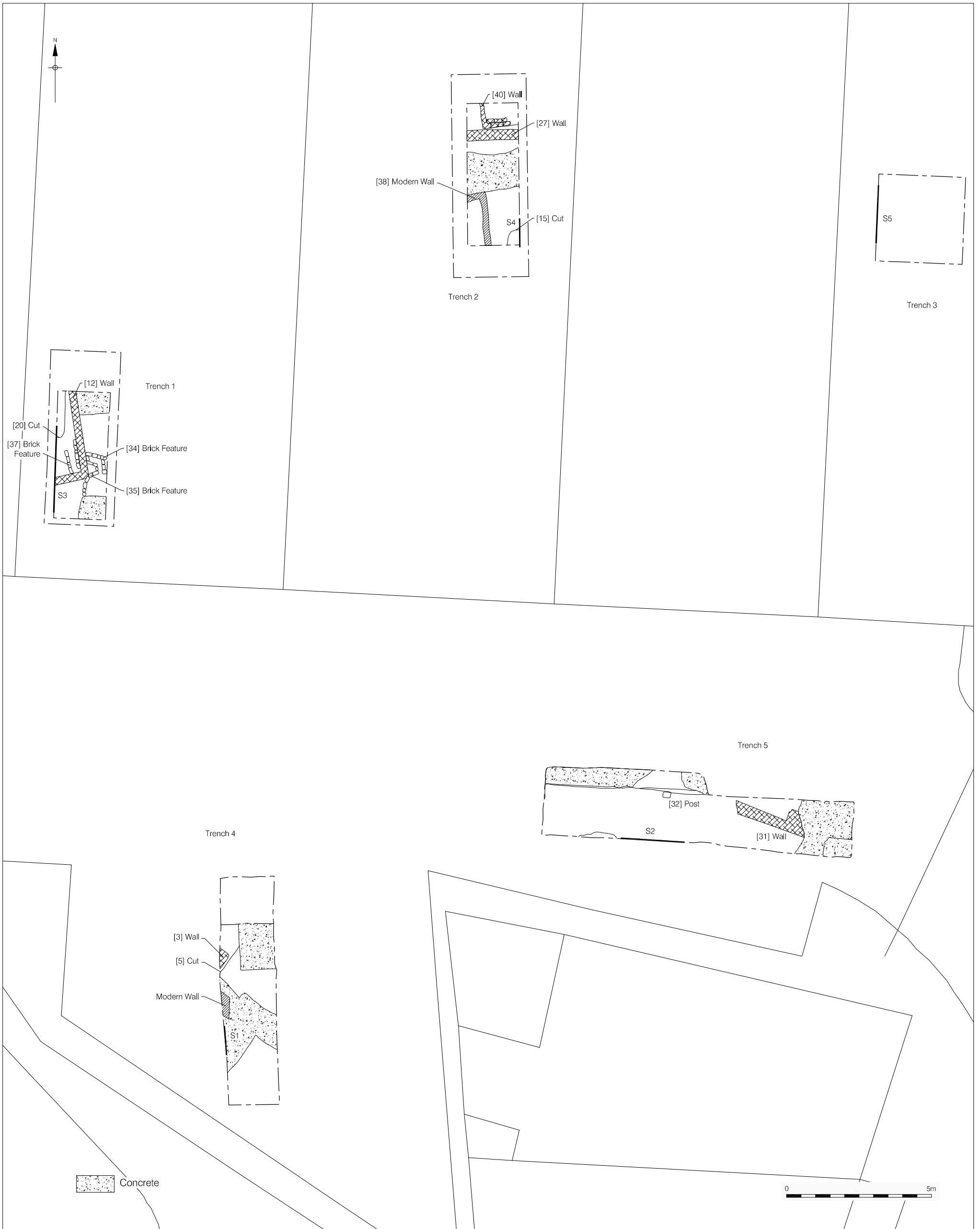


Figure 3  
Trench Details  
1:125 at A4

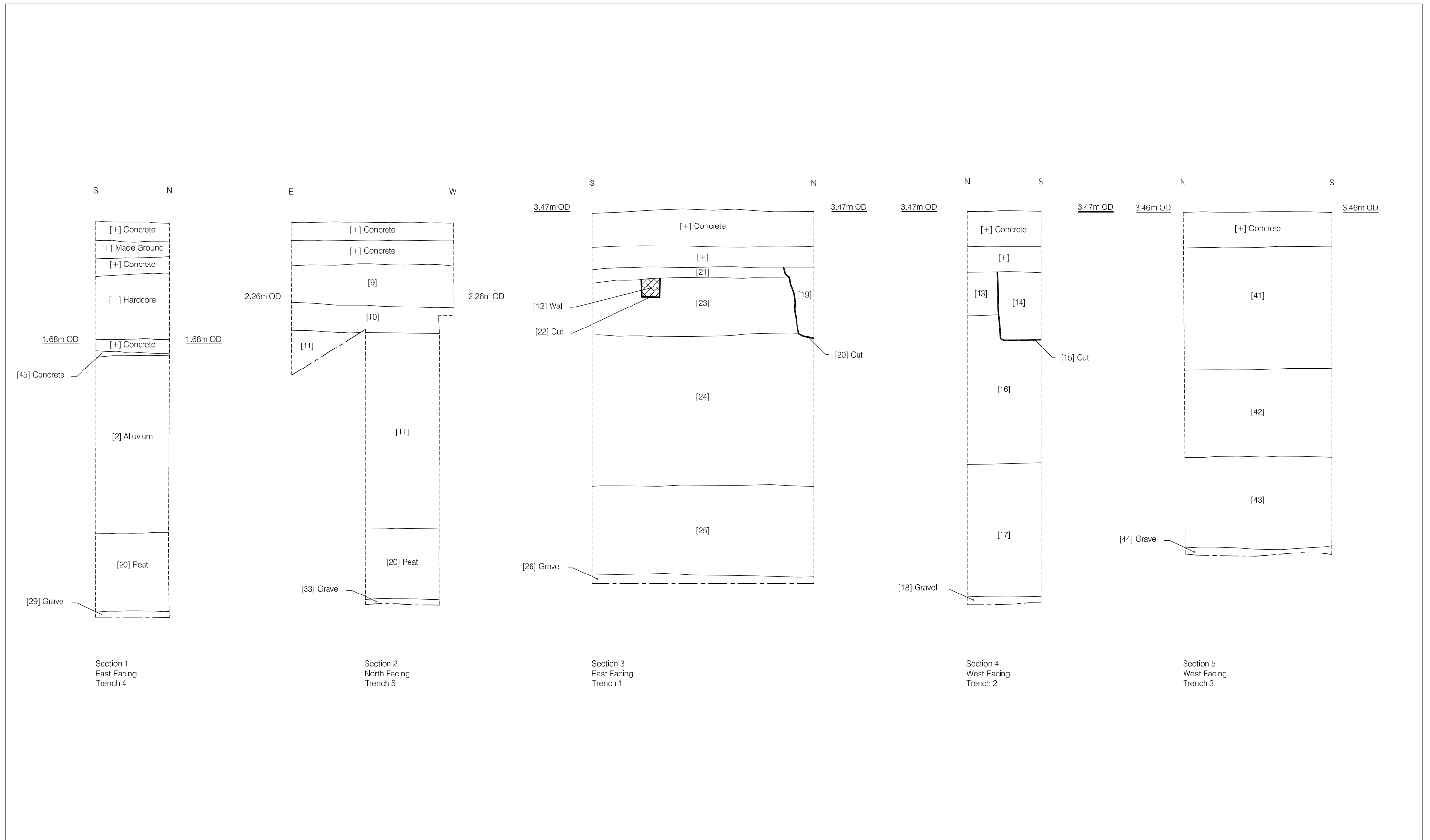


Figure 4  
Sections  
1:50 at A3

## **8 CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 Although it was not possible to accurately record the sequence of peat and alluvial deposits within the scope of the evaluation due to health and safety constraints, the levels at which they were present across the site were established. English Heritage's Archaeological Science Advisor, Jane Sidell, suggested that taking monolith and bulk samples at a later stage in the redevelopment would be preferable to undertaking borehole analysis as a part of the evaluation. This will be conducted by means of a watching brief during the construction ground reduction with archaeo-environmental sampling of significant deposits.
- 8.2 No evidence for human activity earlier than post-medieval was observed during the course of the evaluation.
- 8.3 The evidence for post-medieval activity on the site was limited to that of land consolidation in the form of made ground layers and of 19<sup>th</sup> century structures (possibly late-18<sup>th</sup> century) that are recorded on cartographic sources.

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Suzanne Gailey of CgMs Consulting, for commissioning the work on behalf of Galliard Homes. We also thank also Robin Hawkins of Galliard Homes for his assistance in executing the work. Thanks to Chris Constable of Southwark Council for monitoring the evaluation.
- 9.2 The author would like to thank Phil, Jem and Jo their work on site, and Dave Old of O'Connell Plant Hire for his excellent work. Dave Harris produced the drawings and Chris Mayo undertook the project management and editing.

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## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Site code	Context No.	Plan	Section	Type	Description	Date	Phase
BLZ 07	1	4	-	Layer	Alluvium		3
BLZ 07	2	4	1	Layer	Alluvium		3
BLZ 07	3	4	1	Masonry	Wall	19 <sup>th</sup>	5
BLZ 07	4	4	1	Fill	Backfill	19 <sup>th</sup>	5
BLZ 07	5	4	1	Cut	Construction cut	19 <sup>th</sup>	5
BLZ 07	6	4	1	Masonry	Wall	19 <sup>th</sup>	5
BLZ 07	7	4	1	Masonry	Foundation	19 <sup>th</sup>	5
BLZ 07	8	4	-	Cut	Construction cut	19 <sup>th</sup>	5
BLZ 07	9	-	2	Layer	Made ground	Post-med	4
BLZ 07	10	5	2	Layer	Alluvium		3
BLZ 07	11	5	2	Layer	Alluvium		3
BLZ 07	12	1	3	Masonry	Wall	19 <sup>th</sup>	5
BLZ 07	13	2	4	Layer	Made ground	Post-med	4
BLZ 07	14	1	4	Fill	Backfill	Modern	6
BLZ 07	15	-	4	Cut	Cut	Modern	6
BLZ 07	16	-	4	Layer	Alluvium		3
BLZ 07	17	-	4	Layer	Peat	Late-prehistoric	2
BLZ 07	18	-	4	Layer	Gravel	Natural	1
BLZ 07	19	1	3	Fill	Backfill	Modern	6
BLZ 07	20	1	3	Cut	Cut	Modern	6
BLZ 07	21	-	3	Layer	Made ground	Modern	6
BLZ 07	22	-	3	Cut	Construction cut	19 <sup>th</sup>	5
BLZ 07	23	-	3	Layer	Made ground	Post-med	4
BLZ 07	24	-	3	Layer	Alluvium		3
BLZ 07	25	-	3	Layer	Peat	Late-prehistoric	2
BLZ 07	26	-	3	Layer	Gravel	Natural	1
BLZ 07	27			Masonry			
BLZ 07	28	-	1	Layer	Peat	Late-prehistoric	2
BLZ 07	29	-	1	Layer	Gravel	Natural	1
BLZ 07	30	-	1	Layer	Peat	Late-prehistoric	2
BLZ 07	31	5	-	Masonry	Wall	19 <sup>th</sup>	5
BLZ 07	32	5	-	Timber	Post	19 <sup>th</sup>	5
BLZ 07	33	-	2	Layer	Gravel	Natural	1
BLZ 07	34	1	-	Masonry	Drain	19 <sup>th</sup>	5
BLZ 07	35	1	-	Masonry	Soakaway	19 <sup>th</sup>	5
BLZ 07	36	1	-	Masonry	Floor	19 <sup>th</sup>	5
BLZ 07	37	2	-	Masonry	Wall	19 <sup>th</sup>	5
BLZ 07	38	1	-	Masonry	Wall	Modern	6
BLZ 07	39	1	-	Fill	Backfill	Modern	6
BLZ 07	40	1	-	Masonry	Backfill	Modern	6
BLZ 07	41	-	5	Layer	Made ground	Post-med	4
BLZ 07	42	-	5	Layer	Alluvium		3

---

Site code	Context No.	Plan	Section	Type	Description	Date	Phase
BLZ 07	43	-	5	Layer	Peat	Late-prehistoric	2
BLZ 07	44	-	5	Layer	Gravel	Natural	1
BLZ 07	45	4	1	Masonry	Floor	19 <sup>th</sup>	5



## APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-25484

### Project details

Project name	Bear Lane, Southwark
Short description of the project	An evaluation comprising 5 trenches was undertaken that revealed a sequence of gravels overlain successively by peat and alluvium followed by made ground. 19th century structures were also recorded.
Project dates	Start: 05-03-2007 End: 16-03-2007
Previous/future work	Yes / Yes
Associated project reference codes	BLZ 07 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 4 - Storage and warehousing
Monument type	PEAT FORMATION Late Prehistoric
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON SOUTHWARK SOUTHWARK Bear Lane
Postcode	SE1 0UH
Study area	1930.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3180 8020 51.5048450589 -0.100750259972 51 30 17 N 000 06 02 W Point
Height OD	Min: -1.94m Max: -1.04m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	CgMs Consulting
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	CgMs Consulting
Project director/manager	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	Stuart Holden

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Name of sponsor/funding body Galliard Homes

**Project archives**

Physical Archive recipient LAARC

Physical Contents 'Ceramics'

Digital Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Media available 'Spreadsheets', 'Survey', 'Text'

Paper Archive recipient LAARC

Paper Media available 'Context sheet', 'Matrices', 'Photograph', 'Plan', 'Section', 'Survey'

**Project bibliography**

**1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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Date 2007

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Description Unpublished client report

Entered by S Holden (sholden@pre-construct.com)

Entered on 21 March 2007

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