

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at 459-463 New Cross Road, London
Borough of Lewisham, SE14 6TA**

Site Code: NCL07

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 3018 8317

Written and Researched by Paw Jorgensen

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, March 2008

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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological watching conducted during groundworks at 459-463 New Cross Road, London. The watching brief was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, and took place in November 2007 and February 2008.
- 1.2 The watching brief followed an approved Written Scheme of Investigation, which was issued by CgMs Consulting. The excavation of underpinning pits and ground reduction for the construction phase was monitored.
- 1.3 The underpinning pits revealed a general sequence of gravel, brickearth, alluvial sand, brickearth, and made ground, although in Trench 2 the upper alluvial sequence had been truncated by basement activity. No archaeological features or finds were revealed during the watching brief.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 An archaeological watching brief during groundworks at 459-463 New Cross Road, London Borough of Lewisham, was undertaken in November 2007 and February 2008 by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (Figure 1).

2.2 The site was located on the north side of New Cross Road and was centred at National Grid Reference TQ 368 770 (Figure 2). It was bounded to the east and west by commercial and residential properties. New Cross Road and Baildon Street formed the southern and northern boundaries respectively.

2.3 The work was commissioned by Sally Dicks of CgMs Consulting and was monitored by Mark Stevenson of English Heritage on behalf of the London Borough of Lewisham. The project was managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology by Chris Mayo and supervised by the author.

2.4 A unique site code, NCL07, was assigned to the site by the Museum of London.



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey 1:25,000. Crown Copyright 2001.

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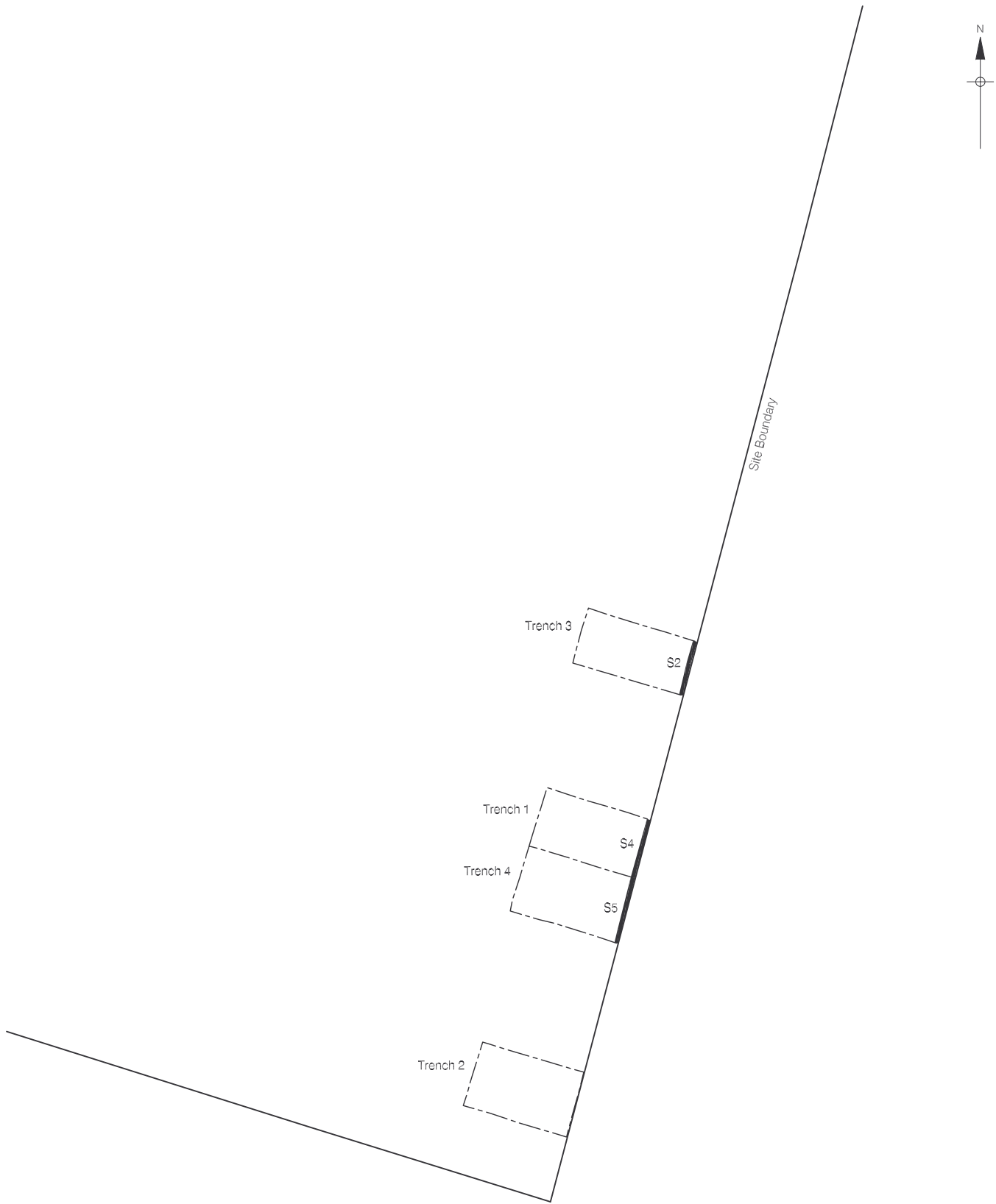
Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:20,000 at A4



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Figure 2
Trench Location
1:625 at A4



0 5m

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Figure 3
Section Location
1:100 at A4

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Planning permission (Ref. APP/C5690/A/06/2027880) for the demolition of 459-463 New Cross Road, London and the construction of two 6-storey basemented developments comprising retail units with flats above was granted by Lewisham Borough Council.
- 3.2 The study aims to satisfy the objectives of London Borough of Lewisham, which fully recognises the importance of the built and buried heritage for which they are the custodians. The London Borough of Lewisham Unitary Development Plan (adopted July 2004) contains policy statements in respect of protecting the historical and archaeological resources.

URB 21 Archaeology

The Council will promote the conservation, protection and enhancement of the archaeological heritage of the Borough and its interpretation and presentation to the public by:

(a) requiring applicants to have properly assessed and planned for the archaeological implications where development proposals may affect the archaeological heritage of a site. This may involve preliminary archaeological site evaluations before proposals are determined;

(b) advising where planning applications should be accompanied by an evaluation within Archaeological Priority Areas as shown on the Proposals Map. This should be commissioned by the applicants from a professionally qualified archaeological organisation or archaeological consultant;

(c) encouraging early co-operation between landowners, developers and archaeological organisations, in accordance with the principles of the British Archaeologists and Developers Liaison Group Code of Practice, and by attaching appropriate conditions to planning consents, and/or negotiating appropriate agreements under S106;

(d) encouraging suitable development design, land use and management to safeguard archaeological sites and seeking to ensure that the most important archaeological remains and their settings are permanently preserved in situ with public access and display where possible and that where appropriate they are given statutory protection;

(e) In the case of sites of archaeological significance or potential where permanent preservation in situ is not justified, provision shall be made for an appropriate level of archaeological investigation and recording which should be undertaken by a recognised archaeological organisation before development begins. Such provision shall also include the subsequent publication of the results of the excavation;

(f) seeking to ensure their preservation or record in consultation with the developer In the event of significant remains unexpectedly coming to light during construction; and

(g) in the event of the Scheduling of any Ancient Monuments and Sites of National Importance, ensuring their protection and preservation in accordance with Government regulation, and to refuse planning permission which adversely affects their sites or settings.

Reasons

The Council wishes to protect its archaeological heritage and to ensure that any important remains are preserved and in suitable cases effectively managed as an educational, recreational tourist resource. Archaeological remains are a community asset and they provide a valuable picture of the history and development of the local area as well as London as a whole. They are a finite and fragile resource, vulnerable to modern development. The Council endorses the DETR's advice as set out in PPG 16 (1990), and that of English Heritage (Development Plan Policies for Archaeology 1992) upon which this Policy has been based.

The requirements of this Policy generally come into force when extensive redevelopment is proposed involving excavation or foundation work, which may disturb or expose relatively undisturbed remains below the level of current building development. Schedule 3 'Areas of Archaeological Priority' explains the significance of the various designated Areas of Archaeological Priority, and gives an indication of the type and age of archaeological remains that might be discovered.

- 3.3 Additionally, Mark Stevenson, the Archaeological Advisor to London Borough of Lewisham at English Heritage, requested proactive observation and recording during groundworks on Block C and B while on Block A an archaeologist would only be required to attend site at key stages during the excavation of ground beams and lift pits.

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 Geologically the site is situated within the London Basin, a syncline underlying London and a large area of southeast England and southeastern East Anglia (Sumbler 1996). The Institute of Geological Sciences (IGS 1979) shows the solid geology of the site as Eocene deposits of London Clay forming the London Basin. A block of Palaeozoic rocks forming the London Platform underlies most of the basin. The basin is predominantly drained by the river Thames and its tributaries (Sumbler 1996).
- 4.2 The British Geological Survey map 270 of the area (1:50,000 series) indicates that the study site is underlain by Head deposits, defined as silt, sand, and clay with variable gravel overlying London Clay.
- 4.3 Prior to the study the ground surface on the site was roughly level with a spotheight in the centre of New Cross Road, southwest of the study site, of 9.14m above Ordnance Datum (OD). The topography of the site suggests that it drains east towards Deptford Creek approximately 600m west of the site. No natural watercourses occur in the immediate vicinity of the site.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

5.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

- 5.1.1 The archaeological and historical background of this site has largely been based on an earlier archaeological desk based assessment document prepared by CgMs Consulting (Dicks 2007b).

5.2 PREHISTORIC (450,000 BC – AD 43)

- 5.2.1 There have been very few finds dating to the prehistoric period recorded from the area. Excavations at 7 Deptford Broadway identified a small pit which contained a saddle-quern and a flint blade (GLSMR MLO76306 at TQ 372 770). A piece of saddle-quern and a flint blade were also recovered from a pit recorded during excavations at the site of the former Dover Castle Public House on Deptford Broadway (GLSMR MLO8421 at TQ 3725 7698). Both pits dated to the Iron Age (600 BC to AD 43).

5.3 ROMAN (AD 43 – 410)

- 5.3.1 The study site lies immediately north of New Cross Road, which follows a suggested alignment for Watling Street, the Roman road from Dover, Canterbury, and Richborough to London. Artefacts and features presumably associated with settlement along the Roman road were recovered from sites along Deptford Broadway. The archaeological evidence found at said sites suggests that the study site lies within the western periphery of a Roman settlement centred around Deptford Broadway west of Deptford Creek (Dicks 2007b).

5.4 Anglo Saxon and Medieval

- 5.4.1 The site is located in the town of Deptford within the London borough of Lewisham. The name Lewisham is purportedly the evolution of the Saxon Levesham. Deptford however is first mentioned in the Domesday Book as Depeford meaning deep ford. The name is derived from the place where Watling Street, the Roman road from

London to Dover, crossed the river Ravensbourne at what is now Deptford Bridge (Lewis 1848).

5.4.2 Following the Norman conquest the manor of Deptford was given by William the Conqueror to Gilbert de Magimot, who is said to have built a castle there (Lewisham Council 2004). In 1191 the manor was bequeathed to Alice de Chesney, who gave it to the Knight's Templars. The property was later recover by her son Geoffrey II de Say by giving them the manor of Saddlescombe in exchange (Lysons 1796). In the late 12th century the manor passed to the Says family providing the alternative name Sayes Court.

5.4.3 References to fishermen and fisheries along the water waterways of Deptford exist from the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries; it is probable that fishing was the initial basis of the local economy during this time. During the early 15th century shipbuilding had started in the area slowly shifting the economy base away from fishing (Lewisham Council 2004).

5.4.4 Excavations at the site of the former Dover Castle Public House produced evidence dense and continuous settlement along Deptford Broadway from at least the time of the Norman conquest (Lewisham Council 2004). During excavations at 7 Deptford Broadway two human burials accompanied by grave goods dated to the 6th century were recorded. Additionally, in 1868 a male skeleton encased within a stone coffin with a cruciform lid was recorded on land off Vanguard Street. It was initially thought to be of Roman date however it could quite possibly have been of medieval date (Dicks 2007b).

5.5 POST-MEDIEVAL (AD 1485 – 1750)

5.5.1 Rocque's Map of 1747 shows the study site occupied by market gardens on the north side of New Cross Road. For much of the 18th century and part of the 19th, this part of South London was primarily used as market gardens (Thatcher 1982). Thomas Milne's Land use map dated 1800 shows the southern part of the study site occupied by properties and the northern part of the study site occupied by market gardens (Dicks 2007b).

- 5.5.2 Rocque's Map of 1833 shows the study site occupied by residential properties on the north side of New Cross Road (Dicks 2007b).
- 5.5.3 The 1st edition Ordnance Survey shows the study site bound to the north by Baildon Street and occupied by two large residential properties and a smaller terraced property with front and rear gardens (Dicks 2007b).
- 5.5.4 The 2nd edition Ordnance Survey shows the front gardens had been developed. The 1890 Post Office Directory for Blackheath, Lee, Lewisham and Greenwich contains entries for W.T. Hunt auctioneers and registrar of births, marriages and deaths at No. 459 and 461 and Mc Clellan A.W at No. 463. These entries confirm that the single-storey buildings constructed to the front were shops (Dicks 2007b).
- 5.5.5 Bomb Damage Maps prepared by the London County Council c.1946 shows the western most building coloured light red ('Seriously damaged: but repairable at cost') (Dicks 2007b).
- 5.5.6 The 1925 Post Office Directory and the 1956 London Directory contain entries for No. 459, 461 and 463 New Cross Road which record The Times Furnishings Company occupying the 3 properties. The 1948 Ordnance Survey shows an extension to the rear of the shops, which may have provided additional furniture storerooms (Dicks 2007b).
- 5.5.7 The 1978 Ordnance Survey shows little change to the remainder of the study site (Dicks 2007b).
- 5.5.7 During the 1980's the late 19th century the shop buildings fronting New Cross Road were demolished and replaced (Dicks 2007b).

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The initial stage of the watching brief monitored the excavation of a series of underpinning pits along the eastern and western boundaries of the site in November 2007. Then, in February 2008, archaeological monitoring resumed to oversee the bulk reduction of the site to formation level within a proposed basement at the frontage with New Cross Road, and for access routes at the rear of the property.
- 6.2 The objective of the watching brief was to identify, record, and retrieve any archaeological remains uncovered during the development programme.
- 6.3 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated and/or exposed were entered onto pro-forma recording sheets. All plans and sections of archaeological deposits were recorded on polyester based drawing film, the plans being drawn at a scale of 1:20 and the sections at 1:10. A single context recording system was used.
- 6.4 Levels AOD were measured and temporary bench marks (TBMs) were established at eastern and western boundaries of the site. The depths of the deposits identified during the investigation were measured from the ground surface and then deducted from the nearest TBM.
- 6.5 Underpinning pits were photographed and their stratigraphic sequences recorded during excavation. Due to the depth of the pits steel shoring sheets were installed along the north and south edges in order to prevent the sides from collapsing.

7 SUMMARY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

7.1 Summary

7.1.1 The excavation of underpinning pits 1, 3 and 4 revealed a sequence of gravel, brickearth, alluvial sand, brickearth, and made ground. Trench 2, which was excavated in the southeast corner of the site, comprised gravel overlain by brickearth and basement backfill. No archaeological features or finds were identified during the watching brief

7.2 Trench 1

7.2.1 Trench 1 was located along the eastern boundary of the site. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 2.88m (4.86m OD). The earliest deposit consisted of a 0.50m thick layer of yellowish brown moderately compact gravel [8], observed at a maximum height of 5.36m OD. Directly above it was a 0.88m thick natural deposit of brickearth [7] observed at a maximum height of 6.24m OD. Overlying the brickearth was a 0.30m thick naturally deposited layer of light grey alluvial/colluvial sand [6] with a maximum height of 6.54m OD. Another natural brickearth deposit [5] overlaid the alluvial/colluvial sand [6]. Deposit [5] survived to a maximum height of 7.39m OD. Overlying deposit [5] was a 0.35m thick layer of made ground [+] surviving to a height of 7.74m OD. All deposits observed in Trench 1 extended beyond the limits of the excavation.

7.3 Trench 2

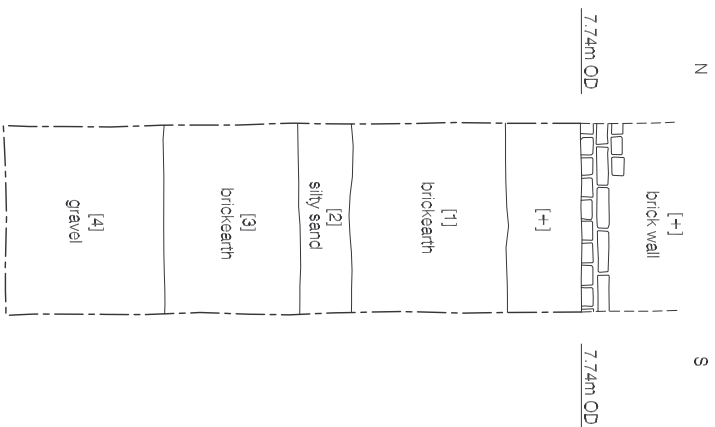
7.3.1 Trench 2 was located along the eastern boundary of the site near the southeast corner. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 3.30m (4.74m OD). The earliest deposit observed consisted of a 0.87m thick layer of yellowish brown moderately compact gravel [14]. It was observed at a maximum height of 5.61m OD. Directly above it was a 1.58m thick natural deposit of brickearth [13] observed at a maximum height of 7.19m OD. Overlying deposit [13] was a 1.95m thick layer of made ground/basement backfill [+] surviving to a height of 9.14m OD. All deposits observed in Trench 2 extended beyond the limits of the excavation.

7.4 Trench 3

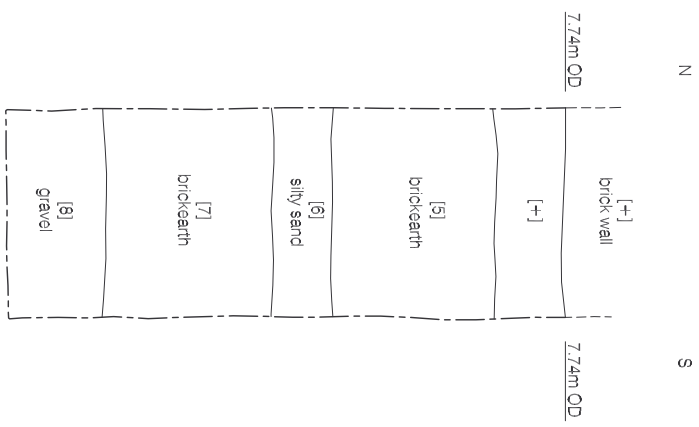
7.4.1 Located along the eastern boundary of the site Trench 3 was excavated to a depth of 2.99m (4.75m OD). A 0.82m thick layer of moderately compact yellowish brown gravel [4] continuing below the terminal depth of the trench was observed at a maximum height of 5.57m OD. Deposit [4] was overlain by a 0.70m thick layer of brickearth [3] with a maximum height of 6.27m OD. Overlying the brickearth was a 0.27m thick naturally deposited layer of light grey alluvial/colluvial sand [2] with a maximum height of 6.54m OD. Another natural brickearth deposit [1] overlaid the alluvial/colluvial sand [2]. Deposit [1] survived to a maximum height of 7.34m OD. Overlying deposit [1] was a 0.40m thick layer of made ground [+] surviving to a height of 7.74m OD.

7.5 Trench 4

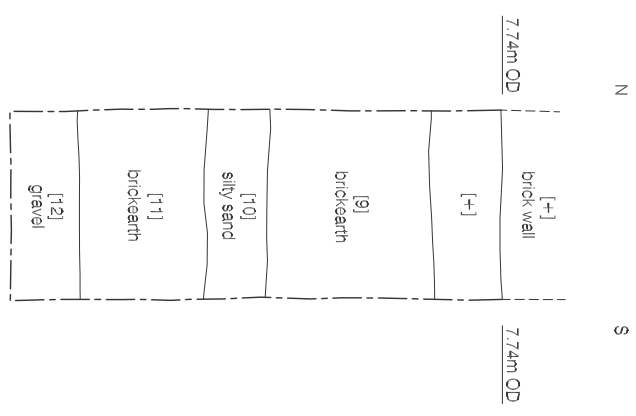
7.5.1 Trench 4 was also located along the eastern boundary of the site. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 2.58m (5.16m OD). The earliest deposit observed consisted of a 0.37m thick layer of yellowish brown moderately compact gravel [12]. It was observed at a maximum height of 5.53m OD. Directly above it was a 0.65m thick natural deposit of brickearth [11] observed at a maximum height of 6.18m OD. Overlying the brickearth was a 0.32m thick naturally deposited layer of light grey alluvial/colluvial sand [10] with a maximum height of 6.50m OD. Another natural brickearth deposit [9] overlaid the alluvial/colluvial sand [10]. Deposit [9] survived to a maximum height of 7.40m OD. Overlying deposit [9] was a 0.34m thick layer of made ground [+] surviving to a height of 7.74m OD. All deposits observed in Trench 4 extended beyond the limits of the excavation.



Section 2
West-facing
Trench 3



Section 4
West-facing
Trench 1



Section 5
West-facing
Trench 4



Figure 4
Sections 2, 4 & 5
1:40 at A4

8 INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The excavation of underpinning pits on the site revealed a stratigraphic sequence comprising river terrace gravels at 5.57m to 5.36m OD overlain by a series of colluvial deposits at 7.40m-7.34m OD. During the late 19th century several buildings were constructed on the site. These were demolished in the 1980s and replaced. The made ground depositions are likely a result of the demolition of the late 19th century and/or late 20th century buildings. Underpinning pits excavated in the southern portion of the site showed evidence of basemented buildings in form of thick deposits of 20th century backfill and heavy truncation of the natural brickearth. Historic maps and documentation record basemented buildings fronting New Cross Road throughout the 19th-20th centuries. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered during the study.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Sally Dicks of CgMs Consulting for commissioning the project. The work was monitored by Mark Stevenson of English Heritage on behalf of the London Borough of Lewisham.
- 9.2 The author would like to thank Chris Mayo for his project management and the grounds crew for their on-site co-operation. Additional thanks go out to Alexis Haslam of Pre-Construct Archaeology for monitoring the last stage of the works on site. Hayley Baxter produced the illustrations.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

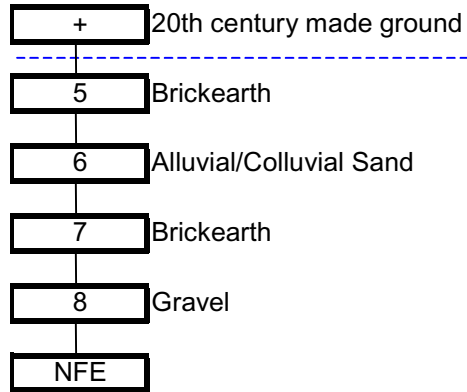
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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

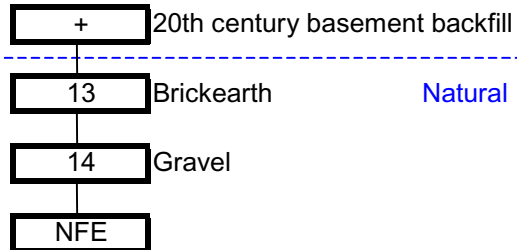
Context No	Trench No	Section No	Phase	Type	Description
1	3	2	1	Layer	Brickearth.
2	3	2	1	Layer	Alluvial/Colluvial sand.
3	3	2	1	Layer	Brickearth.
4	3	2	1	Layer	Natural gravel.
5	1	4	1	Layer	Brickearth (same as (1)).
6	1	4	1	Layer	Alluvial/Colluvial sand (same as (2)).
7	1	4	1	Layer	Brickearth (same as (3)).
8	1	4	1	Layer	Natural gravel (same as (4)).
9	4	5	1	Layer	Brickearth (same as (1)).
10	4	5	1	Layer	Alluvial/Colluvial sand (same as (2)).
11	4	5	1	Deposit	Brickearth (same as (3)).
12	4	5	1	Layer	Natural gravel (same as (4)).
13	2		1	Layer	Brickearth (same as (1)).
14	2		1	Layer	Natural gravel (same as (4)).

APPENDIX 2: SITE MATRIX

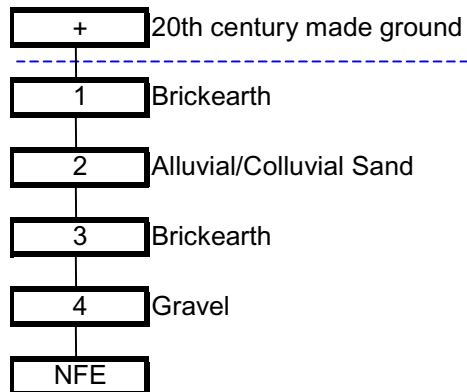
Trench 1



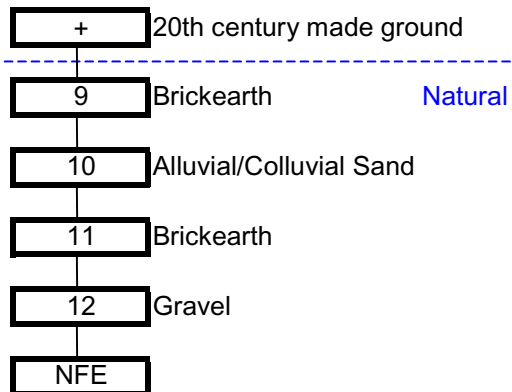
Trench 2



Trench 3



Trench 4



APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-39308

Project details

Project name	459-463 New Cross Road
Short description of the project	Monitoring of excavation of underpinning pits, ground beams and lift pits at 459-463 New Cross Road, London, SE14. No archaeological features were identified nor any artefacts recovered from the site.
Project dates	Start: 19-11-2007 End: 14-03-2008
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON LEWISHAM DEPTFORD AND NEWCROSS 459-463 New Cross Road, London, SE14
Postcode	SE14 6TA
Site coordinates	TQ 368 770 51.4748952089 -0.02998510659450 51 28 29 N 000 01 47 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
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Project brief originator CgMs Consultants Ltd

Project design originator Sally Dicks

Project director/manager Chris Mayo

Project supervisor Paw Jorgensen

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Contents 'none'

Digital Media available 'Text'

Project Bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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Author(s)/Editor(s) Jorgensen, P

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