An Archaeological Watching Brief at 52 Borough High Street, London Borough of Southwark

Site Code: BRQ08
National Grid Reference: TQ 3254 8008

Written and Researched by Joanna Taylor
Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Project Manager: Gary Brown

Commissioning Clients: Don Riley on behalf of St Margaret Hill Properties (UK) Ltd

Contractor: Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd,
Unit 54
Brockley Cross Business Centre
96 Endwell Road
Brockley
London
SE4 2PD

Tel: 020 7732 3925
Fax: 020 7732 7896

Email: gbrown@pre-construct.com
Website: www.pre-construct.com

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1 ABSTRACT

1.1 This document details the results and working methods of an archaeological watching brief commissioned at 52 Borough High Street, London Borough of Southwark. The watching brief was a voluntary commission and took place outside of the remit of PPG16. The work was commissioned by Don Riley on behalf of St Margaret Hill Property (UK) Ltd. The archaeological watching brief, which was unrelated to a planning application, observed and, when possible, recorded the archaeological strata removed during groundworks undertaken between the 5th and 6th August 2008. The site was centred at National Grid Reference TQ 3254 8008

1.2 The archaeological watching brief was located in an area of known archaeological potential and demonstrated that numerous phases of stratified archaeological deposits dating to the pre-Roman, Roman, post-Roman and post medieval period exist on site. The works were not undertaken to fulfil a planning condition, and it is not clear whether further archaeological work will be undertaken at this site, but no further work will derive from this exercise. Pottery recovered indicated that the sequence investigated date between mid 1st and late 2nd century.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 An archaeological watching brief was commissioned by Don Riley on behalf of St Margaret Hill Properties (UK) Ltd at 52 Borough High Street, London Borough of Southwark. The archaeological watching brief, undertaken by the author on behalf of Pre-Construct Archaeology, observed the mechanical removal of c.1.40m of stratified archaeological deposits dating to multiple periods in the heart of historic Southwark. The archaeological watching brief exercise was not undertaken as a condition attached to a planning application but rather at the bequest of the developer. To date no planning application has as yet been submitted to Southwark Council. The watching brief consisted of the observation and, where possible, the recording of the rapid removal of a stratified archaeological sequence between the 5th and 6th of August 2008. The site was centred at National Grid Reference TQ 3254 8008

2.2 The watching brief has demonstrated that post medieval, post-Roman, multiple phases of Roman and pre-Roman deposits existed in the areas observed. Much of the post-Roman archaeology was observed in section where walls of a previous basement have been removed. Some post-medieval, but considerably more *in situ* Roman stratigraphy survives immediately below the previous slab. A summary record of this stratigraphy has been recorded at the point of impact and dates to mid 1st – late 2nd century.

2.3 A temporary Ordnance Datum Benchmark was not transferred to the site and as such the height of all archaeological deposits has been extrapolated from the existing concrete slab present across the extent of the site. The concrete slab is of recent deposition and as such its Ordnance Datum height is unknown.

2.4 The completed archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records and artefactual material will be deposited at the Museum of London under the site code BRQ08.

Figure 1
Site Location
1:12,500 at A4

3 BACKGROUND TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

3.1 To date a planning application has not been submitted to Southwark Council with regards future redevelopment at 52 Borough High Street, London Borough of Southwark. As a consequence planning conditions related to Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16), which would have required a full and comprehensive archaeological appraisal of the site did not apply. Pre-Construct Archaeology were invited by the client, St Margaret Hill Properties (UK) Ltd, to conduct an archaeological watching brief on the removal of archaeological strata durinf the preparation of foundation trenches.

3.2 PPG16 "Archaeology and Planning" exists to providing guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains placed at risk during the modification of a site, e.g. redevelopment or change of use. However, there was no requirement to respect advice contained in PPG16 as a planning application has not been made and therefore no condition applied at the subject site.

3.3 The watching brief comprised a single trench measuring approximately 7m x 2m. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.4m.

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY (Fig 12)

4.1 The natural topography of Southwark is typified as a series of variably sized, sandy islands separated by a network of channels, the extent and nature of which have altered through time as a consequence of fluctuating sea levels. The fluctuation of the sea levels, and the extent of land above water has been much discussed and extrapolated. Detailing the debate is unnecessary for this report and it is considered sufficient to state that regardless of differing sea levels through time the tidal nature of the River Thames and its associated channels, would have ensured that during high tide the area of island land remaining above sea level would have been significantly reduced. Whilst this would have been a limiting factor with regards occupation and settlement, the marshland environment created within the tidal range would have provided significant economic attractions at low tide.

4.2 The adjacent site of 15-23 Southwark Street has been reported upon (Cowen 1992) and it is germane to reproduce the detailed assessment of that site:

"The site of 15-23 Southwark Street lies n the floodplain gravels of the Thames, the surface of which has been found to vary considerably in height across north Southwark from +2m OD down to *c.*-1mOD. The sequence of flood plain gravel in the north Southwark area appears to be complex, involving a number of buried channels, and probably changes in the river regime resulting in the periodic deposition of sands and clays. The height of the gravel at the site is unknown but its top at the nearby site of 5-7 Southwark Street was c.-1m OD.

Overlying parts of the flood plain gravels are layers of sand. Large scale erosion of these has left areas of high sand banks up to a height of +1.8m OD separated from each other by braided channels of the Thames.

The site lies on the south edge of the most northerly sand island in Southwark. The southern limit of the island may be defined by the course of a natural stream, revetted in the Roman period , the south side of which lay some 60m to the south of the site. The north side of the stream probably lay just off of the limits of the excavation. The height of the sand was +1.12m OD sloping down to the southeast corner of the site [ie closer to 52 Borough High Street] to +0.80m OD."

4.3 At the nearby site of 51-53 Southwark Street gravels were recorded at -0.30m OD with the top of a sand bar at c.+0.50 mOD (Killock, 2005a, 30)

4.4 At the time of conducting the archaeological watching brief the site was typified as flat and present at c. 2.60m below the ground level immediately to the south of the site boundary.

4.5 The ground level of the site is comprised of a recently lain concrete slab, the height of which is not known.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A Desk-Based Assessment, which would usually form the primary phase of archaeological assessment has not been undertaken for the subject site. However, the author of this document has recently compiled an 'Archaeological and Historical Background' for a site located a short distance to the south of the study area (in Killock forthcoming), which as a general consideration of the archaeological and historical background of Southwark is paraphrased in this report. This will be complimented by Cowan's conclusions for the adjacent site.

5.1.2 However, the archaeological and historical background detailed in this report should by no means be considered a comprehensive appraisal of the archaeological and historical background, nor potential, of the study site. Instead it should be viewed as a general demonstration of the archaeological and historic importance of this part of Southwark on a local and national scale.

5.2 Prehistoric

5.2.1 The prehistoric landscape

5.2.1.1 During the prehistoric periods the area of land now occupied by Southwark was typified as a series of variably sized, sandy islands separated by a network of channels, the extent and nature of which altered through time as a consequence of fluctuating sea levels. The fluctuation of sea levels, and the consequent implications for human land use throughout different archaeological periods, has been much debated, discussed and extrapolated and will continue to be so for the imaginable future. Detailing the debate is unnecessary for this report and it is considered sufficient to state that regardless of differing sea levels through time the tidal nature of the River Thames and its associated channels, would have ensured that during high tide the area of land remaining above sea level would have been significantly reduced. Whilst this would clearly have been a limiting factor with regards defined occupation and settlement, the marshland environment created within the tidal range would have provided significant economic attractions and it is probable that any prehistoric communities in the vicinity would have exploited the island landscape at low tide (AOC 1998; Sidell et al 2002, 7).

5.2.1.2 Proposed topographic models have sought to depict the Southwark landscape during the prehistoric period, particularly the late Iron Age. These topographic models suggest that the study site is located on the southern edge of the northern island, with Southwark Street Channel either crossing the southern part of the site or located

immediately to the south. Understandably predicted topographic models of natural, archaeological and historic landscapes should be treated with caution and indeed archaeological investigations within Southwark in recent years, suggest that there is still some way to go before the topographic landscape of the Southwark area during the prehistoric, and later, periods can be reached (Watson 2006; Douglas forthcoming).

5.2.2 Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age

5.2.2.1 Whilst evidence for in situ prehistoric archaeology in Southwark is rather sparse, significant quantities of residual prehistoric material (struck flints and pottery) has been found on numerous excavations. Whilst little analysis of the struck flint has been undertaken it is probable that the assemblages contain material dating to throughout the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age periods, potentially representing a far greater exploitation of the landscape then immediately apparent (Barry Bishop *pers. comm.*).

5.2.3 Iron Age

5.2.3.1 Iron Age material is also largely absent from the archaeological record in Southwark, however, unlike the earlier prehistoric periods this is unlikely to be a consequence of an absence of identification (Barry Bishop *pers. comm.*). Instead, it is probable that changes to climatic conditions, which are considered to have been favourable to human exploitation prior to the Iron Age, had by now rendered the area less attractive (MoL 2000, 124). Put simply, during the Iron Age it is probable that previously low-lying areas of land had become heavily waterlogged and usage of the Southwark area was largely abandoned (MoL 2000, 128).

5.2.3.2 Whilst evidence of Iron Age activity does exist on the northern island, it is by no means extensive and it would appear that prior to the Roman Conquest in AD43 Southwark was little utilised and, along with the area now defined as the City of London on the north bank, lay on the periphery of the late Iron Age tribal areas.

5.3 Roman

5.3.1 Introduction

5.3.1.1 The Roman Conquest in AD43 initiated a "fundamental transformation of the cultural landscape of the London area" and what was initially a "modest trading settlement" subsequently developed into the most important town in Roman Britain (MoL 2000, 120). Whilst many Roman towns were founded in centres of Iron Age power, e.g. Colchester, Chichester etc, it is possible that the peripheral nature of land now occupied by the City of London and Southwark in the late Iron Age period (see

above) may have ensured the area was essentially neutral and ultimately, whether by chance or through planning, contributed to Roman London's subsequent development and importance within the province.

5.3.1.2 For many years studies of Roman London focused on the importance of the north bank settlement (e.g. the City) treating Southwark as simply a suburb located on the south bank. However, since the 1940's until the present day, numerous excavations conducted in Southwark have greatly contributed to an understanding of the south bank settlement, necessitating that preconceptions and assumptions regarding its role, status and integration within *londinium* be addressed (MoL 2000, 120, 128, 147; Yule 2005, 86).

5.3.1.3 Whilst the development of the Southwark area throughout time and space is hugely complex a very generalised summary of development throughout the Roman period on the south bank is listed below (Cowan 2003, 82-83; Drummond-Murray et al 2002, 149). These points are discussed in more depth throughout the chapter:

- AD50-AD60/1: Military road construction. Clay and timber buildings established alongside street frontages to river crossing, early settlement possibly destroyed during Boudiccan revolt
- Late 1st- early 2nd century: Wide scale land reclamation and rapid construction of clay and timber buildings
- Mid 2nd century: Period of consolidation. Masonry structures built.
- 3rd and 4th centuries: Rate of construction declined, however most buildings larger and constructed of masonry. Large areas appear to be open ground as evidenced by "dark earth" deposits.

5.3.2 The post-conquest settlement

5.3.2.1 Roman occupation in Southwark is currently accepted as beginning around AD50 and is initially thought to have developed as a consequence of the construction of military roads, including Watling Street (London-Canterbury-Dover) and Stane Street (London-Chichester), which fed in from the south before converging at the Thames crossing (MoL 2000, 125). The convergence of roads would have created an attractive location for roadside settlement to develop, with the associated occupants able to capitalise on the abundant trading opportunities that would have been facilitated.

5.3.2.2 Whilst the military involvement in constructing the road network is little doubted, the role of the military in Southwark beyond the establishment of the communication infrastructure is less clear and it is probable that a mixture of military and civilian

endeavour characterised its early development (Yule 2005, 86; Cowan 2003, 81). That said, it has been presumed that during the Claudian Invasion a major fort would have existed to the south of the Thames crossing where troops would have gathered before advancing to Colchester (Sheldon 1978, 28; 2000, 130-131; Merrifield 1965, 35), with the implication that the south bank settlement was established before the north bank. However, whilst military equipment and unusually high quantities of Claudian coins have been found in early Roman deposits within Southwark, no evidence of marching camps or garrison forts have as yet been identified. In addition, evidence from excavations in the City of London strongly suggest that both the north and south banks were developed contemporaneously when the river crossing was established (MoL 2000, 125, 147; Yule 2005, 86; Cowan 2003, 81; Drummond-Murray et al 2002, 14).

5.3.2.3 The construction of the roads would have required large quantities of material and widespread quarrying and tree clearance must have been undertaken in the vicinity of the roads during the mid 1st century. Evidence of mid 1st century quarrying has been found at a number of Southwark sites (Drummond-Murray et al 2002, 14) and the use of dumped sand and gravel, possibly representative of excess and waste material left over from road construction, has been identified as "common practice" during early Roman land reclamation in Southwark (Killock 2005a, 31).

5.3.2.4 As has already been discussed (see above) the natural Southwark topography is comprised of a number of islands and channels with topographical models suggesting that the site is located on the southern edge of the north island with Southwark Street Channel either crossing the south of the site, or located just to the south. However, the fast pace of modern redevelopment, and thus, necessitated archaeological investigation, has ensured that the predicted topography of the landscape is constantly being addressed and updated. As an example, recent investigations at Tabard Square and St George's Church in the south of Southwark demonstrated that contrary to topographic predictions the sites were not located within or on the edge of channels but instead on raised, e.g. habitable, land (Watson 2006, 1-2). Despite the ever-changing understanding of the topography of mid 1st century Southwark, broadly speaking it would nonetheless appear that initial development was confined around the approach roads to the river crossing with expansion elsewhere limited by the presence of river channels, intertidal mudflats and the Thames foreshore (MoL 2000, 127, 147).

5.3.2.5 In AD60 the north bank settlement was devastated in the Boudican revolt and whilst it remains unclear to what extent, if any, this event impacted on the south bank settlement it is thought probable that a bridge existed by this date which would have

facilitated easy access to the southern settlement. In the decade after the construction of the roads, occupation, in the form of clay and timber buildings, had been undertaken along the Southwark street frontages of the approach to the river crossing (Drummond-Murray et al 2002, 51) and evidence of mid-late 1st century burnt horizons, found during excavations along Borough High Street, would appear to substantiate the claim that the Boudican revolt impacted on Southwark. However, the extent of the possible conflagration is unknown and may yet prove to represent an isolated area of destruction potentially associated with early Roman industrial activity as opposed to the documented historical event (Drummond-Murray et al 2002, 40; 46).

5.3.3 Late 1st century/2nd century development

5.3.3.1 From the late 1st century, water levels appear to have receded, land between the islands was steadily reclaimed (MoL 2000, 127, 147), channels were revetted and the settlement expanded across the previously tidal mudflats (MoL 2000, 133; Drummond-Murray et al 2002, 54). The revetted channels would have provided additional trade routes into Southwark and the remains of a "river lighter" boat within Guys Channel and channel frontage jetties at Hunt's House, both to the east of Borough High Street, attest to the usage of the waterways at this time (MoL 2000, 133; Taylor-Wilson 2002, 7). Given the proximity of the main approach road to the bridge head, e.g. the precursor of Borough High Street, and the proximity of Southwark Street, the study site would have clearly been located in an attractive area when approaching and leaving Roman London by road and waterway.

5.3.3.2 A wealth of evidence exists for the multiple types of buildings, e.g. clay and timber, cellared, timber and masonry, and use, e.g. butchers, metal-workers, bakers, markets, warehouses and residential, established in Southwark throughout various different phases of the Roman period (Drummond-Murray et al 2002, 149; Hammer 2003, 13). In addition, evidence for large, high status masonry buildings, possibly connected with civic or military function, have been found. On the north island at 15-23 Southwark Street, a large courtyard building, dated to AD74 is known, whilst at Winchester Palace, to the north-west of Borough High Street, archaeological evidence has been found for a large apsidal building dating to the early 2nd century (Yule 2005, 86). It is thought possible that the latter may represent the house of a high ranking imperial official or wealthy individual suggesting that administration of Roman London may have been "split between different branches, based on the north and south banks" (Yule 2005, 86).

5.3.4 3rd and 4th century decline

5.3.4.1 Archaeological evidence suggests that during the 4th century Southwark contracted with settlement confined to the core around the bridgehead and waterfront on the north island (MoL 2000, 147) whilst away from this area large parts of the settlement reverted to "open spaces" as evidenced by "dark earth" deposits sealing earlier occupation horizons on many sites (MoL 2000, 146).

5.3.4.2 Whilst it is possible that a "large linear feature" in Tooley Street, containing 4th century fills, may represent part of a "ditch and bank" defensive feature on the eastern side of the settlement (MoL 2000, 131) it would appear that, unlike the settlement on the north bank which was encircled by a defensive wall and ditches, Southwark was not equipped with defences during the late Roman period.

5.4 Saxon

5.4.1 Post Roman

5.4.1.1 Archaeological evidence for continuity of occupation between the late Roman, early and middle Saxon periods in Southwark is largely absent both within the vicinity of the site, and the area as a whole. With the exception of a coin dating to the 6th century, found at King's Head Yard in 1881, and the possibility that elements of the building complex found at the Winchester Palace site may have survived into the post-Roman period, archaeological evidence of early or middle Saxon date is largely absent (Watson et al 2001, 56; Yule 2005, 78). As such, it is suggested that in much the same way the north bank walled settlement was abandoned, with a new focus of occupation centred around the Strand, so too was the south bank settlement (MoL 2000, 191).

5.4.2 Late 9th - early 10th century

5.4.2.1 It is possible that during the late 9th or early 10th century a *burh* was established in Southwark for the walled settlement on the north bank was reoccupied and, if a bridge existed connecting it to Southwark, the southern bridgehead would inevitably have required protection against Viking attacks. The Burghal Hidage, compiled c.911-919, detailed a *burh* named *Suthringa geweorche,* (variously translated as 'the southern work' or 'the work of the southern people' or the '[defence] of the men of Surrey'), which is proposed to refer to Southwark (Sheldon 1978, 48; Vince 1990, 86-87; MoL 2000, 191; Watson et al 2001, 53; Clark 2000, 218-219). However, the location of the *burh* is largely hypothesised and indeed *Suthringa geweorche* may in fact refer to a late Saxon settlement in Kingston (MoL 2000, 191). With the exception of a residual 9th century coin found at St Thomas Street, archaeological evidence does not exist to support or facilitate a wider discussion of the nature and extent, if

any, of Saxon occupation in Southwark during the 9th and early 10th centuries (Watson et al 2001, 53, 56).

5.4.3 Late 10th – 11th century

5.4.3.1 It is thought possible that an attack on London in 994 may have initiated a rebuilding of the bridge and, in turn, the fortification of Southwark (Watson et al 2001, 53). The earliest reference to the existence of Southwark's defences are detailed in the 'Great saga of St Oluf' which took place in 1014 and was documented by *Snorri Sturluson* two centuries later in c.1220. A translation reads:

"On the other side of the river is a great trading place which is called '*Suðviriki*' (Southwark). There the Danes had, with great care, dug large ditches [and made a wall and a road on the inside] of wood, stone and turf, and had a great army there.... There were bridges over the river between the city and '*Suðviriki*', so wide that it was possible for [two] carriages to bypass [each other]. On the bridge[s] downstream were built fortifications, strongholds as well as parapets up to a level over a man's waist." (Hagland 2001, 232).

5.4.3.2 It is also postulated that an Æthelred II (978-1016) mint bearing the signature SUDByrig, previously attributed to Sudbury in Suffolk, may have been located in Southwark (Carlin 1998, 13). Documentation of a raid by King Cnut in 1016, records that the bridgehead was avoided by digging a channel for the ships through the low-lying marshes and creeks of southern Southwark (Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, 148-149). However, no archaeological evidence of this historical event exists and the location and course of the channel is unknown. Whilst minimal archaeological evidence exists for the defensive settlement, what does is concentrated around the bridgehead itself a short distance to the north of the study site (Watson et al 2001, 56).

5.4.3.3 The Domesday Survey of 1086, which can be considered pertinent to the earlier 11th century, lists Southwark as an un-manorialised port settlement without a direct lord. The majority of the settlement appears to have been largely confined to the high ground around the bridgehead with rights to the local tolls held by Edward the Confessor and the Earl of Godwin (Watson et al 2001, 57).

5.5 Medieval

5.5.1 During the medieval period, and in much the same way as witnessed during the Roman period, the development of Southwark was dictated by both topographical limitations and the existence of important trade routes into London from the south and southeast (Carlin 1998, 18). The population developed an eclectic demographic with

residents from all over Europe listed in medieval records (Carlin 1998, 149). Numerous occupational groups are listed within medieval Southwark (bakers, millers, cooks, traders, barbers, timber mongers, metalworkers, tailors, carpenters, sawyers etc) and Southwark was particularly famous, or infamous, for its inns, prisons and brothels many of which were referenced by authors of the day including Chaucer in the Canterbury Tales (MoL 2000, 212; Carlin 1998, 169-171, 191, 209; Knight 2002, 12).

5.5.2 Martha Carlin's book on 'Medieval Southwark' (1996, xviiii) describes Southwark in the medieval period thus:

"Medieval Southwark was a chimera. It was a suburb of London, but outside the city's jurisdiction; a parliamentary borough without a charter of incorporation; a group of autonomous manors sharing a communal name (Southwark) and reputation (bad); a haven of criminals and forbidden practices within sight of the royal court and law courts of Westminster.

To modern scholars, medieval Southwark usually has been seen as a minor but colourful adjunct of London; the home of Tabard Inn, the Bankside brothels, and later of the Globe and other theatres. To the Londoners of its own day, medieval Southwark was a headache. It was an asylum of undesirable industries and residents, a commercial rival, an administrative anachronism and a perpetual jurisdictional affront."

5.5.3 Southwark itself was something of an "administrative jungle" during the medieval period owing to its division between five manors, one of which was held by the crown whilst the other four were in ecclesiastical hands (Carlin 1998, 102). Religious institutions played an important role in the development of Southwark throughout the medieval period being responsible for "religious activity, promoters of learning and culture, *foci* and administrators of local charity, purchasers and employers of local goods and services and landlords of hundreds of local residents." (Carlin 1998, 67).

5.5.4 By the 12th/13th century the settlement was one of growth and prosperity, a prosperity which was not unnoticed by the City of London and the following centuries, through to the 1800's, were characterised by a series of struggles to assert and retain control of the south bank settlement (Carlin 1998, 121).

5.6 Post-medieval

5.6.1 In much the same way as the medieval period, post-medieval Southwark had something of a reputation both with regards the diversity of its population and also the

liveliness of its society. Crime in Southwark, facilitated by its numerous narrow streets and alleyways, is well documented and in 1723 an Act of Parliament was passed to clear the criminals from the area. Indeed, activities not tolerated on the north bank flourished in Southwark, notably "pottery production and tanning", with immigrant communities from the Low Countries contributing "to the development of the area by bringing with them new ideas and new skills" (Knight 2002, 21).

5.6.2 Assessment of structural and artefactual evidence from Southwark indicates that numerous industries were carried out including brush making, tenter-frame production, clay pipe, stoneware and delft ware manufacture, metalworking, glassmaking and tanning (MoL 2000, 275). In many ways the location of industries, particularly during the 17th and 18th centuries was influenced by the preponderance of available space with easy expansion facilitated by the proximity of open marshland and fields. As an example Britton's (1986) study of London delftware describes 16 major potteries south of the river, all but two of which were in Southwark or Lambeth with only 2 potteries known on the north bank (MoL 2000, 275).

5.6.3 Despite the strength of industry throughout the post-medieval period the presence of traded items, which feature heavily in the assemblages of post-medieval Southwark sites, attest to the continued importance of Southwark's location at the centre of trade routes in and out of London (Knight 2002, 17-19).

5.6.4 Cowan (1992, 183-4) concludes that the excavations at the adjacent site of 15-23 Southwark Street:

> "... have revealed a sequence of Roman buildings including some high status structures apparently connected with a civic or military function. Taken with discoveries of substantial stone buildings and evidence for military occupation at other sites in north Southwark these findings challenge the traditional interpretation of Southwark as a low status suburb of Londinium and suggest that at least parts of the civil and military administration were sited on the south bank of the river.
>
> There is some evidence for pre-Roman use of this and other sites in north Southwark, but as yet data is insufficient to indicate how substantial or permanent occupation may have been. It is therefore unclear whether those responsible for the earliest Roman activity in the area were in any way influenced by pre-existing structures.

It has often been suggested that it was the Roman army that was responsible for the initial infrastructure works and ground preparation in Roman Southwark; for example building the roads and consolidating the bridgehead crossing. At 15-23 Southwark Street, there is evidence for activity perhaps in the mid 1st century in the form of coins of AD 45/50-65. The presence of a *dolabra* sheath guard in a late Iron Age / early Roman context suggests the presence of the army.

[It has] also [been] suggested that the army may have made use of north Southwark as a base for transport and distribution of supplies in the pre-Flavian period. This hypothesis is supported by finds of military equipment and a high number of irregular Claudian coins on north Southwark sites during the pre-Flavian period. These are most commonly found on sites where the army were present in this period. Comparison of the coin distribution shows that it is similar to those from coastal or estuarine supply bases.

In addition to the *dolabra* sheath guard, at least nine other items of military equipment were found at 15-23 Southwark Street. On the basis of these and 16 irregular Claudian coins, [it has been suggested] that there were was a military presence on the site itself. There is no clear evidence for the function of the earliest roman buildings at 15-23 Southwark Street which dated to AD 60-74, but their small size and simple construction suggest that if they had a 'military' use it would most likely have been as residences for personnel involved in distribution, or as stores or outhouses.

Later in the 1st century AD masonry buildings were constructed on the site, also at Winchester Palace, where there was a large building with a raised floor possibly used for storage. These large early masonry buildings are in marked contrast to their contemporary clay and timber counterparts, and imply a higher status of military, official or public function. There may have been a physical connection between the two masonry buildings in the form of a road.

It has been suggested that one of the masonry buildings may have been a *mansio* providing accommodation for the *cursus publicus* (imperial postal service) and other government officials. It was so positioned so as to be at the southern approach to the Roman city close to the junction of two major roads. Although it has only a few of the characteristics of a *mansio* further remains of this complex, which should aid interpretation are being investigated at the time of writing.

[Two further buildings] appear to represent the continued use of the first masonry building in the later Roman period, perhaps still functioning as a *mansio*. That

these buildings were of high status is indicated by the presence of hypocausted rooms and mosaics. These buildings produced large quantities of high quality building material such as glass *tesserae*, mosaics, exotic marbles and hypocaust tiles.

At Winchester Palace a building complex dating from the early 2nd to 4th centuries incorporated a heated suite of rooms and a large bathhouse. A 3rd century inscription lists military personnel, suggesting a continued military or administrative role for buildings on this site. The Courage Brewery sites revealed a large masonry courtyard building possibly supplied with its own cultic cellared building, which suggests the presence of a Romanised elite.

It would thus appear that during most of its history, this area of Roman Southwark served not only as a residential and commercial area, but also as a district where important administrative or military functions were being carried out outside the walled city.

By the mid 4th century however inhumations were being placed in the former settlement, indicating that it had contracted perhaps to a small enclave around the bridgehead. The coin loss pattern for excavated sites in north Southwark peaks in the AD 340's and declines thereafter- although this is based on a relatively low number of coins. Additionally the reworking of late Roman stratigraphy into dark earth deposits at this and other sites results in a paucity iof evidence for this period. How far the settlement continued into the 4th century, therefore, is unclear."

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

6.1 The archaeological watching brief consisted of the observation and, where possible, the recording of stratified archaeological deposits removed during the undertaking of groundworks at 52 Borough High Street, London Borough of Southwark.

6.2 In its initial state, as detailed in the site specific 'Method Statement', the archaeological watching brief consisted of the monitoring of a "single trench, 7m long, 2m wide and 1.4m deep" orientated on a N-S alignment in the central south of the site (Brown 2008). However, due to the height of the unprotected section, which formed the southern boundary of the site (c.2.60m), it was only possible to archaeologically monitor and record c.5m of the trench length to a depth of 1.40m. The removal of the remainder of the trench to a depth of 1.40m was observed from beyond the sites southern boundary (see below).

6.3 A JCB type machine, utilising a flat-bladed ditching bucket, undertook mechanical excavation of the archaeologically recorded part of the trench. Mechanical excavation continued through distinct, differentiated and significant archaeological deposits in 100mm spits until the pre-defined depth of excavation (1.40m below slab level) was achieved.

6.4 During the mechanical removal of the archaeological sequence finds were collected when possible. When collected, the finds were bagged and labelled by the machine spit depth from which they were obtained, e.g 0.20m - 0.40m; 0.40m - 0.60m etc, in an attempt to obtain a more archaeologically meaningful result. The spit calculation was taken from the underside of the modern basement slab.

6.5 Having watched the mechanical removal of c.1.00m depth of 'soft' archaeology, archaeological timbers were encountered at c.1.20m below the existing ground slab. The attendant archaeologists were permitted to record the trench at this level prior to the project depth of 1.40m being attained.

6.6 Recording of the trench was undertaken using a variation of the single context recording system specified in the Museum of London Site Manual. Multi-context plans of three separate machine horizons were drawn at a scale of 1:20, and a full section of the trench was drawn at a scale of 1:10. Contexts were numbered sequentially and recorded on *pro-forma* context sheets.

6.7 As mentioned above, the removal of the southern 2m of the trench was impossible to observe in close proximity due to the presence of an unprotected, 2.60m high section.

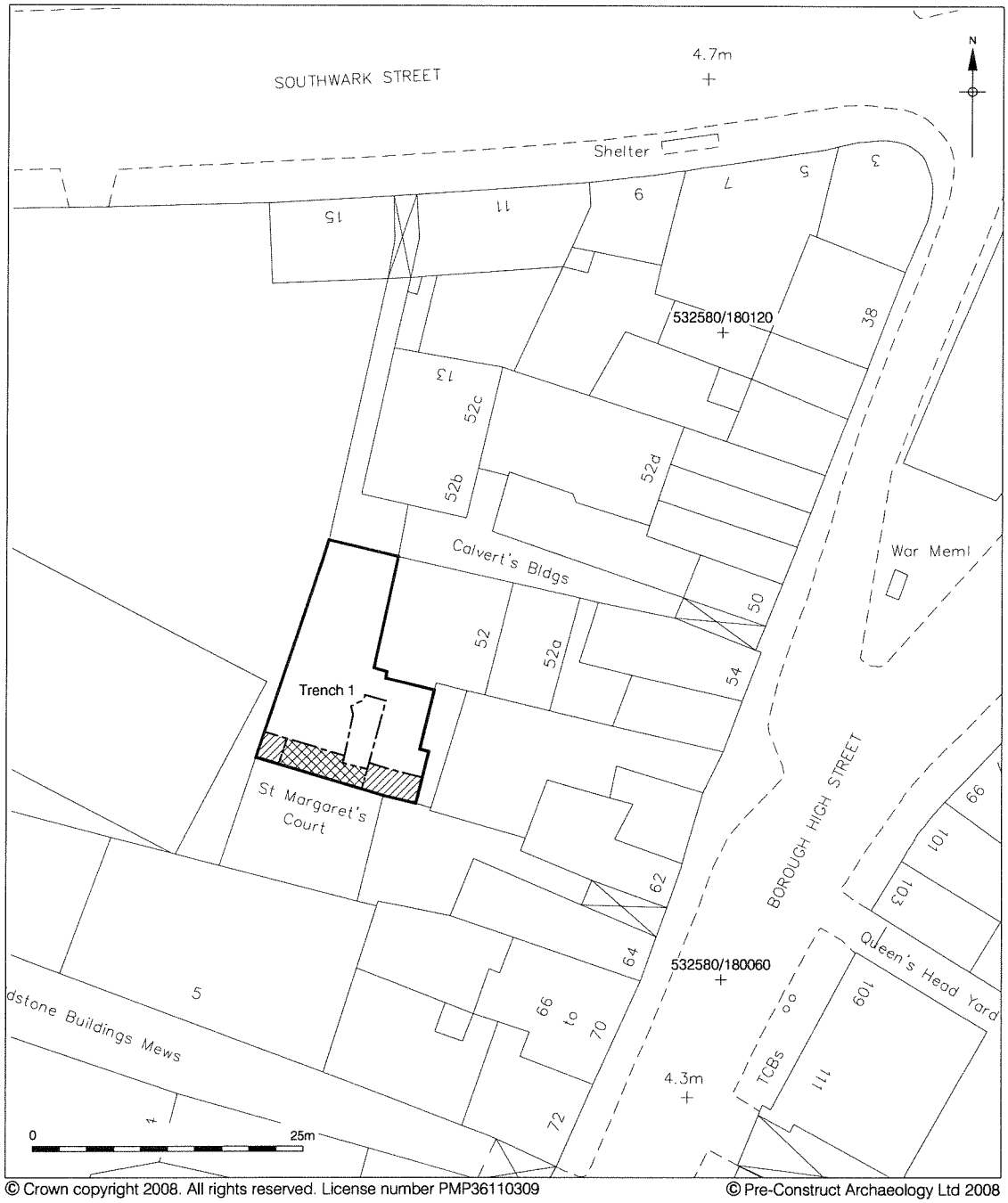
The mechanical removal of these deposits, using a toothed bucket, was observed from beyond the southern and western site boundaries and little could be ascertained regarding the archaeological sequence. With the exception of a plan detailing the archaeological deposits present immediately below the concrete slab, which included the structural remains of a 17th/18th century building, no further records, aside from location, were compiled for the southern part of the trench.

6.8 Whilst attendant on site, the archaeologists witnessed the remainder of the southern part of the site be removed to a depth of c.1.40m below the ground slab. Once again given site conditions and the nature of removal, it was impossible to discern what type of archaeology was being removed. As a consequence, with the exception of locating the area, no archaeological record could be compiled.

6.9 The locations of all areas of below groundwork were located through triangulation. A photographic record detailing, amongst others, archaeological survival and site conditions was also kept.

6.10 A temporary Ordnance Datum Benchmark was not transferred to the site and as such the depth of all archaeological deposits was extrapolated from the existing concrete slab present across the extent of the site. The concrete slab is of recent deposition and as such its Ordnance Datum height is unknown.

6.11 The site was given the code BRQ08.



Machined out, observed but impossible to record
Machined out, no observation

Figure 2
Trench Location
1:625 at A4

7 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The following description of the stratigraphy details the main characteristics of each context and its position in the phased stratigraphic matrix. Further information regarding the contexts, e.g. soil descriptions, dimensions, depth below ground slab etc, can be found in Appendix 1 if not cited in the text.

7.2 Phase 1: Possible pre-Roman

7.2.1 The earliest deposits encountered on site were a number of clayey, peaty, silt deposits [28], [29], [30]/[33] and [32] encountered between 1.02m and 1.40m beneath the existing basement slab. The deposits appear to be representative of alluvial deposition and it is proposed that they represent the alluvial infills of a channel, the sides, base and plan of which were not exposed during the watching brief. If the contexts do represent channel infills it is possible that they are evidence of the Southwark Street Channel crossing the southern part of the study site.

7.2.2 No cultural material was retrieved from the deposits and their date of deposition is unknown aside from that they pre-date the Phase 2a Roman activity.

7.3 Phase 2a: Roman

7.3.1 Sealing the uppermost alluvial deposit was a 0.32m thick, firm, light green yellow, silty clay layer [14] present in the northern part of the trench at a depth of 0.89m below the existing slab level. It is proposed that the layer may represent a floor slab deposited above a defunct channel, however, as a consequence of the nature of the recording exercise this suggestion is impossible to confirm.

7.3.2 Apparently driven through the possible floor slab, and potentially associated with it, were eight degraded timbers, [16], [17], [20], [21], [22], [23] [24] and [25], and two post voids containing fragments of degraded timber, [18] and [19]. It is possible to distinguish both north-south (contexts [16]-[20]) and north-east/south-west (contexts [21]-[23]) alignments that may suggest two sub-phases of activity are present. Again, the nature of the recording exercise has ensured that few interpretations can be applied to the archaeology attributed to Phase 2a.

7.4 Phase 2b: Roman

7.4.1 Truncating the possible floor slab to its south was a south-west-west/north-east-east aligned linear feature [26], probably representative of a ditch. Only the northern side of the ditch was encountered during the watching brief, with its southern edge located in the area of site which has subsequently been machined away (see methodology). The ditch, which had gradual sides and a concave base, was encountered at 0.89m below the existing slab level.

7.4.2 Contained within the ditch was a peaty, organic primary fill [27] indicative of natural accumulation and two poorly sorted secondary fills, [11] and [12], indicative of deliberate infilling/dumping/waste disposal. It is possible that the finds attributed to machine spits 0.80m-1.00m originated from the latter deposits. Context [11] contained a single pottery fragment dated to AD 50-300.

7.5 Phase 2c: Roman

7.5.1 Sealing the earlier deposits at the northern end of the trench was a soft, mid green yellow, slightly silty sand layer [13] partially overlain by an almost identical soft, light brown yellow, sand horizon [10] which sealed the earlier deposits at the southern end of the trench. The horizon was encountered at c.0.65m below the current basement slab and probably represents the use of waste material, left over from gravel extraction, as a levelling layer. Single fragments of pottery were recovered from contexts [13] and [10], but both unhelpfully can be no more closely dated than AD 50-400.

7.5.2 Overlying the dumped sand horizon, and encountered throughout the trench, was a soft, light green yellow, silty sand layer [15] which itself was overlain by a soft mid yellow green brown, sandy clay silt horizon [9]. The latter of the two deposits was encountered at 0.55m below the existing ground level and it is thought probable that both deposits represent accumulated occupation debris. A single pottery fragment was recovered from [9] and is dated AD 70-120. Pottery dated AD 50-120 was recovered from spit unit 0.80m-1.00m, but could equally have derived from the underlying deposit. Tile recovered from this deposit has a similar date range of AD 50-160, and a fragment of red/pink painted (?cinnabar) is indicative of well decorated building/s in the vicinity.

7.5.3 Sealing the earlier horizon was a friable, mid yellow green brown, silty sand layer [8] overlain by a friable, mid green grey, silty sand layer [5]/[7]. The latter deposit was encountered at 0.20m below the existing ground level and it is proposed that the

deposits represent a mixture of dumping and soil accumulation, possibly representative of late Roman dark earth deposits.

7.6 Phase 3: Post-Roman

7.6.1 Truncating the possible late Roman horizon at the southern end of the trench, and only recorded in plan, was a possible ditch [4] orientated south-west-west/north-east-east. The ditch contained a soft, dark grey brown, sandy silt fill [3] within which no cultural material was seen.

7.7 Phase 4: Post-medieval

7.7.1 Also located at the southern end of the trench, immediately beneath the existing concrete slab, were the remains of the north eastern corner of a brick structure [2] potentially dating to the 17th/18th century. The structure was contained within construction cut [6] and whilst two courses remained in situ its height was significantly greater when viewed in the section of sites southern boundary, whereon it stood to c.1.50m above the existing basement slab. The internal space was fill by a firm, mid grey brown, sandy silt infill [1] from which various fragments of pottery were retrieved. A brick sample from the wall [2] suggests original manufacture AD 1450-1700, but the use of Roman cement indicated a secondary use after AD 1790. Pottery recovered from [1] suggests an 18th century date.

7.8 Phase 5: 21st century

7.8.1 The remainder of the trench, as recorded in section was comprised of a 0.20m thick concrete slab which is thought to have been deposited in extremely recent times. It is not known what was removed before its deposition.

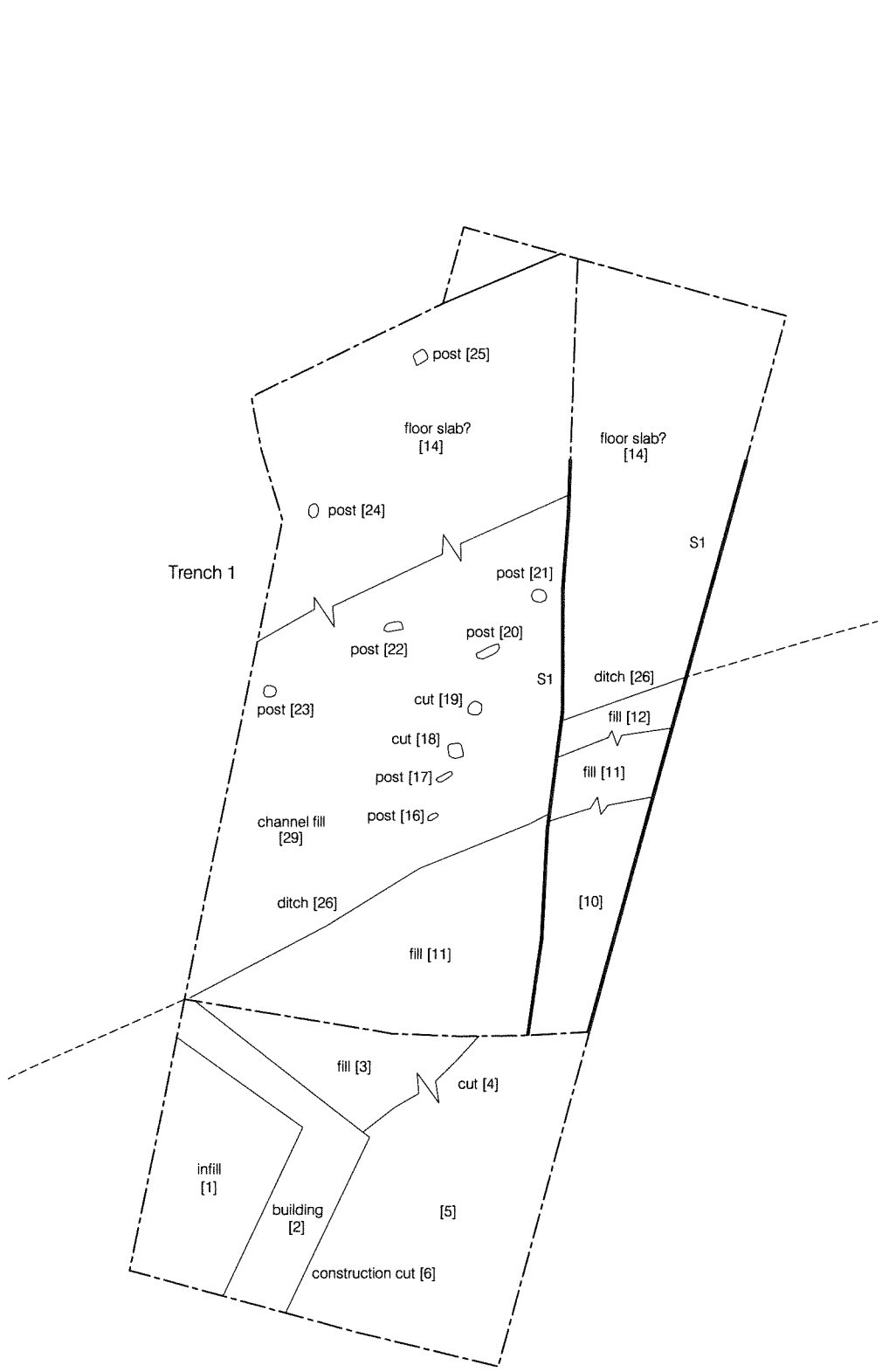
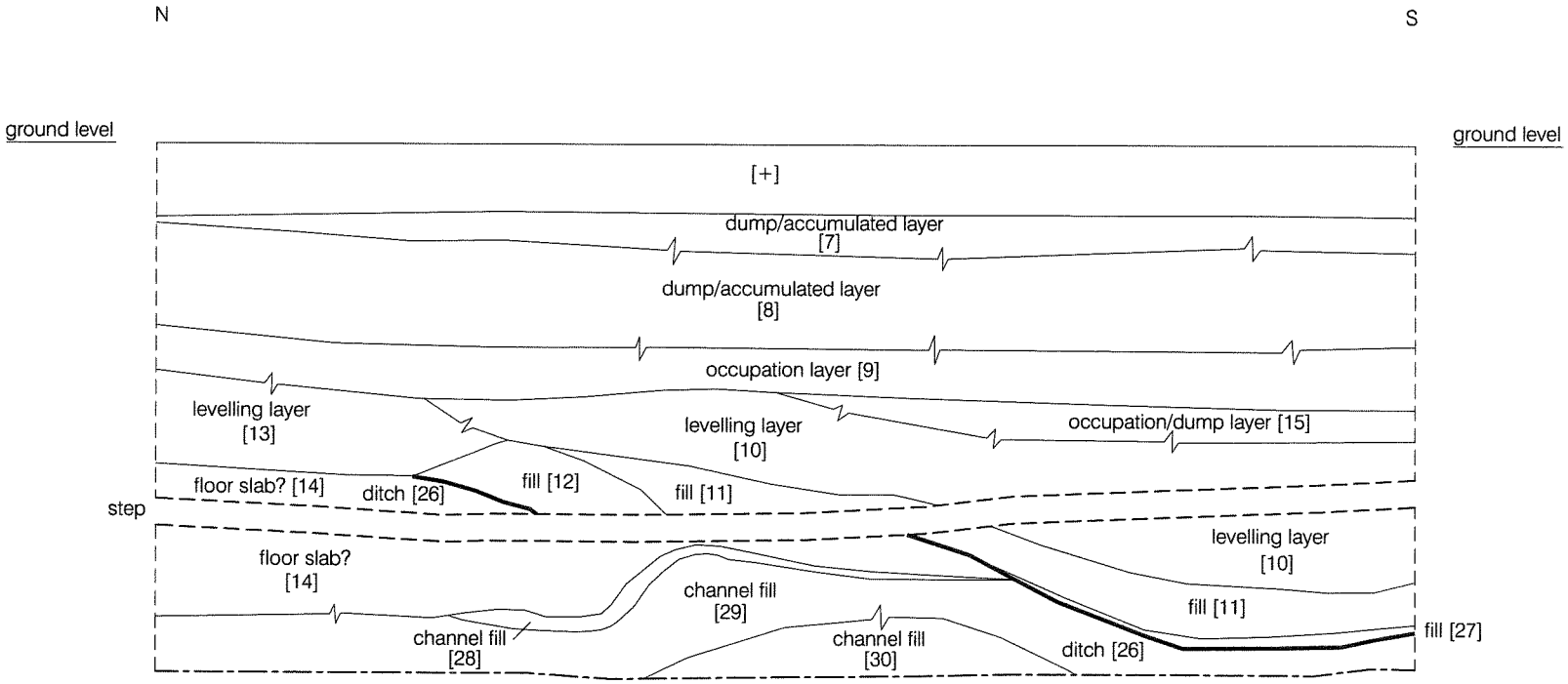


Figure 3
Plan of Trench 1
1:40 at A4



Section 1
Trench 1
West Facing

0 1m

Figure 4
Section 1
1:20 at A4

8 INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The watching brief has demonstrated the presence of post-medieval, post-Roman, multiple phases of Roman and pre-Roman deposits existed in the areas, but within such a confined space, and within the restrictions of a watching brief it is difficult to fit the findings into a greater archaeological understanding of what has been recorded.

8.2 However the trench has, beyond demonstrating presence or absence has shown that considerable thicknesses of important archaeological strata remain at and around the subject site. It was also possible to demonstrate some level of anaerobic conditions, as evidenced by the survival of timber posts, but the fact that some posts were considerably decayed also indicates that conditions are changing.

8.3 As with large areas of north Southwark the early topography appears to be one of sand islands. A ditch was recorded towards the south of the trench, but this could in fact have been part of a stream channel, possibly modified, in the early Roman period. Dumps and a possible floor slab sealed the ditch, but the constraints of the exercise, limit the interpretation. Evidence in section indicates that a significant late Roman and post-Medieval sequence exists at levels above which the watching brief took place. However, it was not possible to determine whether elements of a high status building, such as a *mansio* are present at the subject site.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

9.1 The author would like to thank Dougie Killock for his assistance on site, Jon Butler for the support provided during the course of the site work and the compilation of the report and Gary Brown for project managing the fieldwork and post excavation. In addition, gratitude is expressed to Willy the machine driver for assistance in the course of these works. Thanks are also extended to Mr Riley and to St Margaret Hill Properties (UK) Ltd for the voluntary commission of this exercise

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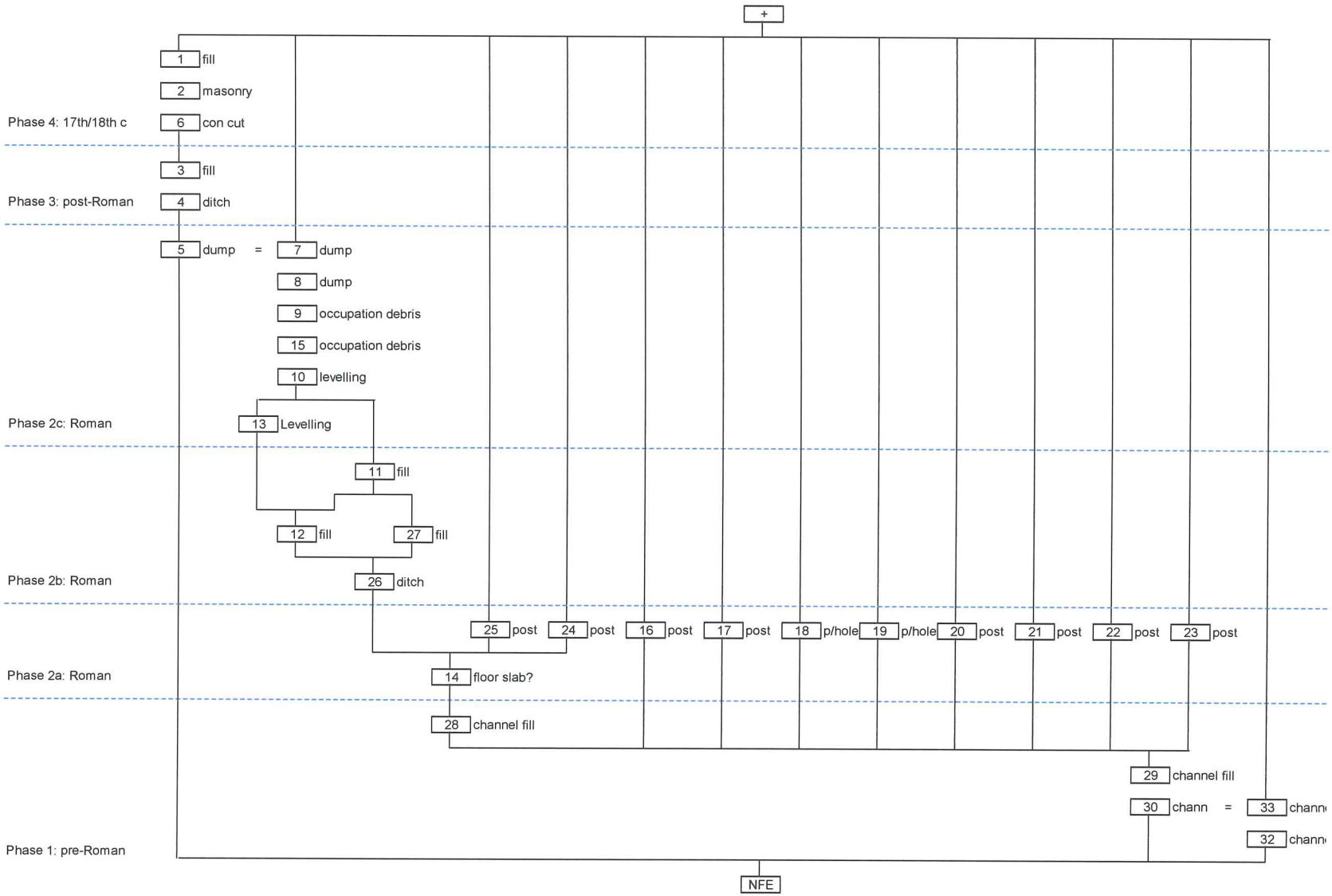
APPENDIX 1: SITE REGISTER

Context	Plan	Section	Trench	Description	Phase	Interpretation	N-S	E-W	Depth	Below GL
1	multi 1	n/a	WB Trench	Fill of [2]	4	Firm, mid grey brown, sand silt	1.14	0.82	0.08	0.2
2	multi 1	n/a	WB Trench	Structure within [6]	4	N/S and E/W orientated brick structure	1.32	1.32	0.08	0.2
3	multi 1	n/a	WB Trench	Fill of [4]	3	Soft, dark brown grey, sandy silt	0.98	1.12	0.4	0.2
4	multi 1	n/a	WB Trench	Ditch?	3	Linear, sides and base NP	0.98	1.12	0.4	0.2
5	multi 1	n/a	WB Trench	Dump/accumulated layer = [7]	2c	Friable, mid green grey, silty sand	2.1	1.3	n/a	0.2
6	n/a	n/a	WB Trench	Construction cut for [2]	4	Square, sides and base NP	1.32	1.32	0.08	0.15
7	n/a	S1	WB Trench	Dump/accumulated layer = [5]	2c	Friable, dark green grey, silt sand	3.4	n/a	0.1	0.2
8	n/a	S1	WB Trench	Dump/accumulated layer	2c	Friable, mid yellow green brown, silty sand	3.4	n/a	0.26	0.3
9	n/a	S1	WB Trench	Occupation layer	2c	Soft, mid yellow green brown, sand clay silt	3.4	n/a	0.16	0.55
10	multi 1	S1	WB Trench	Levelling Layer	2c	Soft, light brown yellow, sand	2.65	n/a	0.26	0.65
11	multi 1	S1	WB Trench	Fill of [26]	2b	Soft, mid green grey brown, sand silt	2.4	1.2	0.14	0.8
12	multi 1	S1	WB Trench	Fill of [26]	2b	Firm, light brown yellow, silty clay	0.7	2.5	0.2	0.8
13	n/a	S1	WB Trench	Levelling Layer	2c	Soft, mid green yellow, silty sand	0.9	2.5	0.26	0.63
14	multi 1	S1	WB Trench	Floor slab?	2a	Firm, light green yellow, silty clay	1.4	2.5	0.32	0.89
15	n/a	S1	WB Trench	Dump/occupation layer	2c	Soft, light green yellow, silt sand	1.7	2.5	0.1	0.72
16	multi 1	n/a	WB Trench	Timber plank?	2a	Plank fragment, possibly displaced	0.042	0.006	0.05	1.2
17	multi 1	n/a	WB Trench	Timber post	2a	Rectangular, driven SW-NE	0.072	0.045	0.09	1.2
18	multi 1	n/a	WB Trench	Posthole	2a	Round, steep sides, pointed base	0.09	0.075	0.13	1.2
19	multi 1	n/a	WB Trench	Posthole	2a	Round, steep sides, pointed base	0.07	0.07	0.1	1.2
20	multi 1	n/a	WB Trench	Timber post/plank?	2a	Wedge' shaped, driven, E/W aligned	0.03	0.15	n/a	1.2
21	multi 1	n/a	WB Trench	Timber post	2a	Rectangular, driven S/E-N/W	0.1	0.08	0.22	1.2
22	multi 1	n/a	WB Trench	Timber post	2a	Square?, driven S/E-N/W	0.07	0.07	0.17	1.2
23	multi 1	n/a	WB Trench	Timber post	2a	Shape not evident, driven S/E-N/W	0.02	0.025	0.15	1.2
24	multi 1	n/a	WB Trench	Timber post	2a	Round, driven S/N	0.045	0.045	0.1	1.2
25	multi 1	n/a	WB Trench	Timber post	2a	Round, driven vertically	0.06	0.06	0.05	1.2
26	multi 1	S1	WB Trench	Ditch	2b	Linear, gradual sides, concave base, orientated SWW-NEE	1.8	2.5	0.4	0.89

27	n/a	S1	WB Trench	Fill of [26]	2b	Soft, dark red brown, silty humic peat	1.1	n/a	0.03	1.05
28	n/a	S1	WB Trench	Fill of channel?	1	Soft, mid red brown, silty peat	1.55	n/a	0.05	1.02
29	multi 1	S1	WB Trench	Fill of channel?	1	Stiff, light grey, clay silt	3.4	1.05	0.2	1.04
30	n/a	S1	WB Trench	Fill of channel? = [33]	1	Stiff, mid yellow green brown, clay silt	1.2	n/a	0.16	1.2
31	void	void	void	void	void	void	void	void	void	void
32	multi 2	n/a	WB Trench	Fill of channel?	1	Stiff, mid grey, clay silt	4.2	1.9	n/a	1.4
33	multi 2	n/a	WB Trench	Fill of channel? = [30]	1	Stiff, mid yellow green brown, clay silt	0.7	1.9	n/a	1.4


+
1 fill
2 masonry
Phase 4: 17th/18th c
6 con cut
3 fill
Phase 3: post-Roman
4 ditch
5 dump = 7 dump
8 dump
9 occupation debris
15 occupation debris
10 levelling
Phase 2c: Roman
13 Levelling
11 fill
12 fill
27 fill
Phase 2b: Roman
26 ditch
25 post
24 post
16 post
17 post
18 p/hole
19 p/hole
20 post
21 post
22 post
23 post
Phase 2a: Roman
14 floor slab?
28 channel fill
29 channel fill
30 chann = 33 chann
32 chann
Phase 1: pre-Roman
NFE

APPENDIX 3

52 BOROUGH HIGH STREET ROMAN POTTERY SPOT DATES

Context	Comments	Spot Date
+, Sect 1, 0-0.2m	3 X AMPH, 1 X VRW 1B3, 1 X ?ERSB 9A, 7 X OTHER SAND	AD70-100
+, Sect 1, 0.2-0.4m	2 X LOXI 9A, 2 X VRW, 1 X GAUL, 1 X LOMI	70-120
+, Sect 1, 0.4-0.6m	1 x VRW MORT, 1 X BAETE, 1X AMPH, 1X AHSU, VRW 1B2, 1 X SESH, 1 X SAMCG?, 1 X OXID	70-120/160
+, Sect 1, 0.6-0.8M	1 x ?SAMSG	50-150
+, Sect 1, 0.8-1m	5 X GAUL, 2 X BAETE, 1X SAMLG	AD50-120
+, Sect 1, General	4 x GAUL, 1 X BAETE, 2X VCWS, 1 X LOEG, 1 X SAND	AD70-120
11	NGGW?, JAR	AD50-300
9	1 X LOXI	70-120
13	1 X AMPH	50-400
10	1 x SAND	50-400

APPENDIX 4 POST-ROMAN POTTERY

Unstratified

Pottery type	Code	Form	Date range	No. of sherds
Plain refined white earthenware	REFW	Jar, cylindrical	1805-1900	2
Refined white earthenware, with sprigged decoration	No code	Plate, tea	1805-1900	1
Rockingham-type war	ROCK	Tea pot	1800-1900	1
Transfer-printed refined whiteware	TPW	Plate, meat	1780-1900	1
Transfer-printed refined whiteware with 'flow blue' decoration	TPW FLOW	Jug	1830-1900	1

Context [1]

Spot date: 18th century

Pottery type	Code	Form	Date range	No. of sherds
English tin-glazed ware	TGW	Plate	1570-1846	1
Frechen stoneware	FREC	Bartman	1550-1700	1
Rhenish Tiel-type greyware	RHGR	-	900-1100	1
Surrey-Hampshire border redware	RBOR	Bowl, flared	1550-1900	1

Context [1]

Spot date: 1550-1700

Pottery type	Code	Form	Date range	No. of sherds
Surrey-Hampshire border whiteware with yellow glaze	BORDY	Dish flared	1550-1700	1

CLAY TOBACCO PIPES

Unstratified

Part	Bowl type	Bowl date	Initials	No. of fragments	Comments
Bowl	AO29	1840-1880	? W	1	Stamped on the back, 'WILLIAMS, KENT STREET': either William Williams (1), 1822-58, or William (Maurice) Williams (2), 1841-64.
Bowl	AO29	1840-1880		1	Heel missing, oak leaf and acorn borders
Bowl	?	19th century		1	Badly damaged
Stem		19th century		9	

APPENDIX 5

52 BOROUGH HIGH STREET – BUILDING MATERIAL SPOT DATES

Context	Comments	Spot Date
+, Sect 1, 0.2-0.4m	Imbrex silty fabric 3018 reused Roman Tile fabric 2459a	AD100-120 AD50-160 Latest Date 100-160
+, Sect 1, 0.4-0.6m	Reused Roman Tile Eccles fabric 2454 Reused Imbrex 3006 Reused Roman Tile 3004 x 2 Reused Tegula iron oxide fabric 3023 unusual flange profile 7 undercut inside face - cut off profile B	AD50-80 AD50-160 AD50-160 AD50-120 Latest Date 50-160
+, Sect 1, 0.6-0.8M	Imbrex *3006* fabric, Tegula *3006* fabric Roman Tile Eccles fabric *2454*	AD50-160 AD50-80 Latest Date 50-160
+, Sect 1, General	Roman Tile Reduced silty fabric 3018	AD100-120 Latest Date 100-120
2	Reused Stock 3033 moulded thin brick 55m thick reused using Roman cement patented after 1790	Brick manufactured 1450-1700 reused 1790-1900 Latest Date 1790-1900
9	Painted Wall Plaster red/pink cinnabar ? pigment Abraded and reused Roman Tile fabric 2459a	Red/pink wall plaster common 1st/2nd century pigment AD50-160 Latest Date AD50-200

APPENDIX 6: OASIS REPORT

OASIS ID: preconst1-46745

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at 52 Borough High Street, London Borough of Southwark
Short description of the project	The watching brief was conducted at the bequest of Don Riley on behalf of St Margaret Hill Property (UK) Ltd. The archaeological watching brief, which was unrelated to a planning application, observed and, when possible, recorded the archaeological strata removed during groundworks undertaken between the 5th and 6th August 2008. The archaeological watching brief demonstrated that numerous phases of stratified archaeological deposits dating to the pre-Roman, Roman, post-Roman and post medieval period exist on site.
Project dates	Start: 05-08-2008 End: 06-08-2008
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	BRG08 – Site code
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Monument type	TIMBERS Roman
Monument type	HORIZONTAL STRATIGRAPHY Roman
Monument type	DITCH Roman
Monument type	DITCH Early Medieval
Monument type	STRUCTURE Post Medieval

Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Voluntary/self-interest

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON SOUTHWARK SOUTHWARK 52 Borough High Street, London Borough of Southwark
Study area	14.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 532546.9/180086.4; 532548.9/180086.4; 532544.9/180080.1; 532547.2/180079.5

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Gary Brown
Project design originator	Gary Brown
Project director/manager	Gary Brown
Project supervisor	Joanna Taylor
Type of sponsor/funding body	Don Riley, on behalf of St Margaret Hill Properties (UK) Ltd

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief at 52 Borough High Street, London Borough of Southwark
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Taylor, J
Date	2008
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	London
Entered by	Joanna Taylor (jtaylor@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	8 August 2008

OASIS:
Please e-mail English Heritage for OASIS help and advice