DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

236-252 HIGH STREET, STRATFORD, LONDON BOROUGH OF NEWHAM E15 2JA

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AND EVALUATION

Quality Control

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STRATFORD,

LONDON BOROUGH OF NEWHAM

E15 2JA

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING

BRIEF AND EVALUATION

OCTOBER 2008

An Archaeological Watching Brief and Evaluation at 236-252 High Street, Stratford, London Borough of Newham E15 2JA

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 3855 8393 Site Code: HIJ08 Planning Application Number: 07/03127/LTGDC

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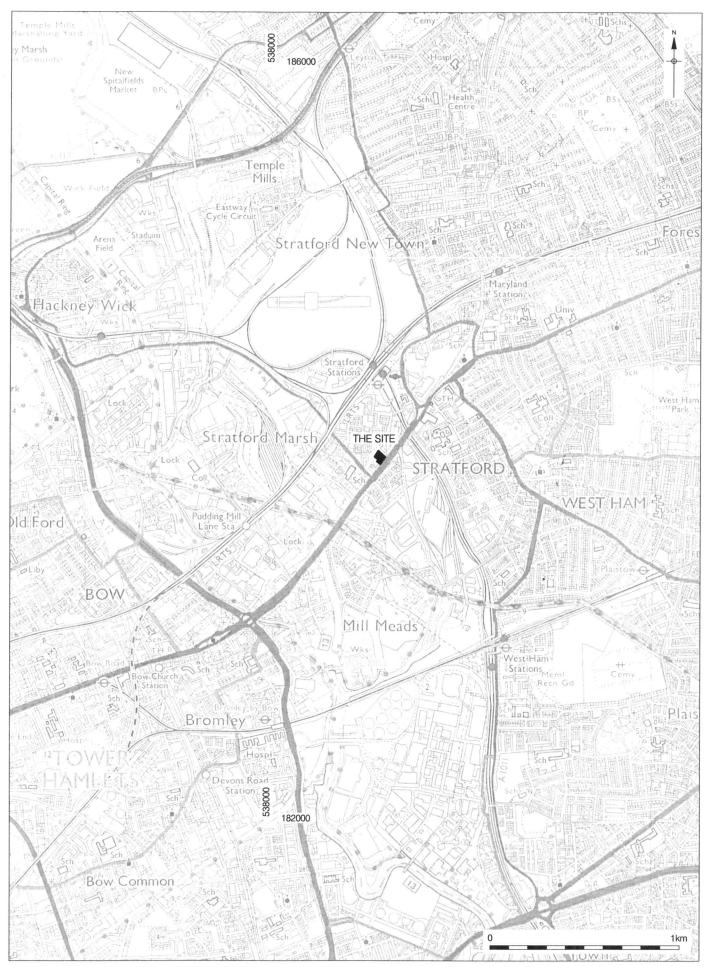
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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological watching brief and evaluation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd on land at 236-252 High Street, Stratford, E15 2JA within the London Borough of Newham (Figure 1). The central National Grid Reference for this site is TQ 3855 8393. The watching brief elements of the work were undertaken discontinuously between 28th July and 22nd August. The field evaluation was undertaken between 25th-29th August and 22nd-25th September 2008. The commissioning client was Wates Living Space.
- 1.2 The archaeological programme consisted of two trial trenches (Figure 2), which were to determine the archaeological potential of the site, in particular any features associated with prehistoric activity (Mayo 2008). The work was monitored on behalf of the London Borough of Newham by David Divers of English Heritage.
- 1.3 The earliest deposit encountered in both trenches was natural sand and gravels. No archaeological deposits were visible in either Trenches 1 or 2; this led to the conclusion that any and all archaeological deposits had been truncated by 20th century building works.

2 INTRODUCTION

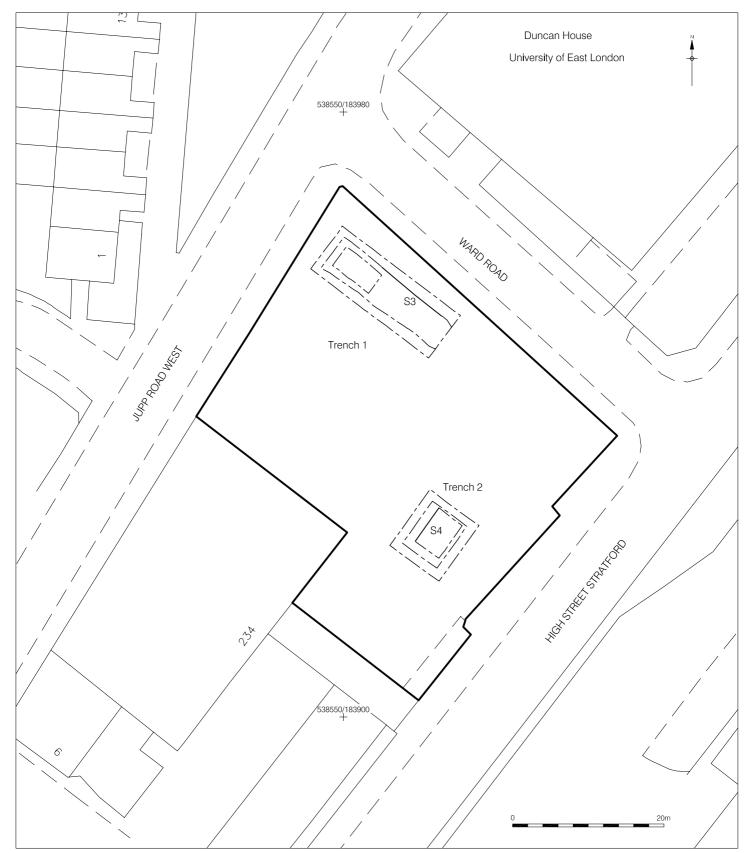
- 2.1 An archaeological site investigation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd in advance of redevelopment of land at 236-252 High Street, Stratford, London Borough of Newham. The study site covers an area of approximately 2000 square metres. The site was to be subject to an evaluation; however, due to the quantity and complexity of previous foundations in the upper horizons of the site, these were removed in the areas of the evaluation trenches only prior to work commencing, and this work was monitored as a watching brief. Once clear of obstructions, the archaeological evaluation involved the excavation and recording of two trial trenches, which were to determine the archaeological potential of the site (Figure 2).
- 2.2 The site has most recently been occupied by light-industrial and warehouse structures, the usage of which had left contaminants in the ground. Additionally, suspected bomb strikes during WWII required an ordnance survey prior to the excavation of evaluation trenches.
- 2.3 The evaluation revealed natural strata directly beneath made ground deposits, suggesting that the construction of the previous buildings at the site had truncated the underlying soils.
- 2.4 The commissioning client was Wates Living Space. The watching brief was undertaken by Neil Hawkins and James Langthorne, both of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, while the latter also supervised the evaluation. The project was managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd by Chris Mayo, and was monitored by David Divers of English Heritage.
- 2.5 The completed archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records will be deposited with the Museum of London LAARC under the unique site code HIJ08.



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Figure 1 Site Location 1:20,000 at A4



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Figure 2 Trench Location 1:500 at A4

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The study aims to satisfy the objectives of the London Borough of Newham, which fully recognises the importance of the buried heritage for which they are the custodians. The Borough's deposited draft 'Unitary Development Plan' 2001 contains policy statements in respect of protecting the buried archaeological resource.
- 3.2 The proposed development is subject to the Council's Archaeology Policy:

ARCHAEOLOGY: INVESTIGATION, EXCAVATION AND PROTECTION

- **Para. 3.114** "Archaeological remains often provide the only evidence of the Borough's past. These are a finite and fragile resource very vulnerable to modern development and land use. The archaeology of the Borough is a community asset which should be preserved and the needs of the development balanced and assessed against this. Early considerations of and consultation on archaeological issues will maximise preservation in accordance with 'PPG 16 Archaeology and Planning'. The destruction of such remains should be avoided if possible and either left in situ if the remains are of national, or particular local interest, or excavated and recorded prior to development where remains are of lesser importance. Site layouts designed to retain archaeological features intact will be considered favourably by the Council."
- **Para. 3.124** "The Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS-part of English Heritage) provide impartial advice to Newham Council. Sites of potential archaeological importance, to which this policy relates, can be defined as any site within and Archaeological Priority Area (APA). APAs are defined by GLAAS as areas having particular interest or value (please refer to Map EQ6), or as sites where it can be reasonably shown from existing sources of information (most notably the Greater London Sites and Monuments Record) that some remains of archaeological importance may survive. For further information please refer to the SPG Note No. 19 'Archaeological Code of Practice'. An archaeological assessment (either a desktop or a primary field investigation) will normally be required for any development involving a site more than 0.4 acres within an APA. The Council will also require such an assessment for smaller sites within the APAs, and sites outside the APAs, where this is clearly justified by the archaeological sensitivity of the site. Developers should undertake early consultation with the Council, and recognised archaeological organisations, to avoid uncertainty and later delays."
- POLICY EQ43: THE COUNCIL WILL PROMOTE THE CONSERVATION, PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE OF THE BOROUGH. DEVELOPERS OF SITES OF POTENTIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE WILL BE REQUIRED TO PRODUCE A WRITTEN REPORT, AS PART OF THE APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION, ON THE RESULTS OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT CARRIED OUT BY OR FIELD EVALUATION Α SUITABLY QUALIFIED ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTRACTOR; AND WHEN REMAINS OF IMPORTANCE ARE IDENTIFIED, THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK PRESERVATION OF THE REMAINS IN SITU. ON OTHER IMPORTANT SITES, WHERE THE BALANCE OF OTHER FACTORS IS IN FAVOUR OF GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION BY MEANS OF THE IMPOSITION OF CONDITIONS ON THE GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION, AND POSSIBLY BY LEGAL AGREEMENTS, THE COUNCIL WILL ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE PROVISION IS MADE FOR THE PROTECTION, EXCAVATION AND RECORDING OF REMAINS, AND THE SUBSEQUENT PUBLICATION OF THE RECORDS OF EXCAVATION, PROVIDING A WRITTEN ACCOUNT OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION, INCLUDING RECORDS OF FINDS.

- **Para. 1.125** The council will promote co-operation between land owners, developers and archaeological organisations in accordance with the British Archaeologists' and Developers' Liaison Group Code'.
- 3.3 The site lies within an Archaeological Priority Area, as defined in the London Borough of Newham UDP. However there are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Listed Buildings on the site.
- 3.4 The client has been granted full planning permission for redevelopment of the site under planning application number 07/03127/LTGDC. The permission included a condition requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work (Mayo 2008).

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

4.1 Geology

- 4.1.1 The 1:50 000 Geological Survey (Sheet 256, North London) defines the geology of the site as alluvium overlying Taplow River Terrace Gravel.
- 4.1.2 Geotechnical investigations undertaken on the site by Site Analytical Services in June 2007 concluded that the southern part of the site was formed by 2.6m of made ground, which contained concrete and brick rubble, overlying a 1.0m thick layer of alluvial clay, which sealed terrace gravel (Site Analytical Services Ltd. 2007). The northern part of the site comprised approximately 2.6m of made ground overlying the terrace gravel.
- 4.1.3 Boreholes on site indicated further layers of clay beneath the river terrace gravel. The clay deposits were recorded as containing 'occasional fossil shell debris'.

4.2 Topography

- 4.2.1 The closest watercourses to the site are the Waterworks River, a branch of the River Lea, approximately 0.5km to the west of the site and the Channelsea River which flows immediately to the east of the site.
- 4.2.2 The site slopes from south-east to north-west and varies in height between 4.56m OD in the southern part of the site and 3.84m OD in the northern part.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

5.1 The archaeological and historical background for the area of Stratford the site lies within is laid out in full in a Desktop Assessment by Sadarangani et al (2003). The following is a summary of the relevant parts of that document.

5.2 Prehistoric

- 5.2.1 There are very few prehistoric findspots within the vicinity of the study site. However during excavations at the Stratford Market Depot, to the south-east of 236-252 High Street, a degree of prehistoric continuity was recorded, specifically from the Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age periods. The Stratford Market site, located as it was on terrace gravels, would have proved a prime area from which prehistoric peoples could exploit surrounding marshland resources either on a permanent or seasonal basis. Certainly features dating to the Iron Age at the Stratford Market Depot appear to be fairly substantial and possibly may have had a degree of religious/ritual significance both of which are indicative of a long-term permanent settlement.
- 5.2.2 The Stratford Market Depot site indicates the potential for evidence of prehistoric features such as trackways or drainage features associated with the exploitation of Stratford's floodplain/marshland environment.

5.3 Roman

5.3.1 The Roman road from London to Colchester ran east-west through Stratford from Old Ford to Romford Road. It has been postulated that the road was originally constructed as a causeway or bridge across the tidal creeks and marsh though this has yet to be confirmed. Although the conjectured route for the Roman road crosses both Carpenters Road and Warton Road it is considered that evidence of Roman activity will only be found within 100m of either side of the road itself, such as the settlement encountered during the excavations at Stratford Market Depot. Therefore it was considered that there was a low potential for Roman activity at 236-252 High Street.

5.4 Saxon and Medieval

5.4.1 Major medieval sites, such as Stratford Langthorne Abbey, are some distance away from 236-252 High Street. However a possible Saxon or medieval water pipe made of elm was recorded in close proximity to the site (TQ 3859 8394), which is indicative of water-management or milling. It was concluded that there was some potential for traces for activity of this kind to still be extant on the site.

5.5 Post-Medieval

5.5.1 The current High Street in Stratford is based along the line of the successor to the Roman road. This post-medieval route provided the focus for the developing Stratford and historic maps show that continual occupation of the site occurred, at the very latest, from the 18th century onwards. The current street plan surrounding the site on its north and west sides is a 20th century development.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The excavation of the two trenches was outlined in the Method Statement for an Archaeological Evaluation (Mayo 2008). However, before the evaluation could begin, it was realized that there were substantial *in situ* concrete foundation s from the previous building which had not been expected and were in the way of the evaluation trenches. With the approval of David Divers at English Heritage, these obstructions were removed, the excavations monitored as a watching brief.
- 6.2 The general aim of the evaluation was to assess the presence or absence of significant archaeological remains and to investigate potential geoarchaeological deposits at the site, requiring the excavation of deep stepped trenches.
- 6.3 The trenches were stepped and excavated with a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-bladed ditching bucket in spits of between 100mm and 200mm, under the supervision of an archaeologist. Their relative dimensions are shown below:

Trench Number	Length at top (m)	Width at top (m)	Max. Depth (m)
1	19.50	7.50	3.12
2	9.00	8.00	3.29

- 6.4 All deposits were recorded on pro forma context sheets. Plans were drawn at a scale of 1:50 and sections at 1:10. A photographic record was also kept of all the trenches in black and white, colour slide and digital formats. Bulk samples were taken in both trenches and column samples were taken in Trench 2. Only artefacts of a modern date were observed during the evaluation; however, none of these were kept due to their negligible heritage value and the contaminated nature of the surrounding soils.
- 6.5 OS benchmarks upon manholes located on Jupp Road West and the pavement of the High Street immediately beyond the western and eastern boundaries of the site were used for levelling within the trenches. These benchmarks were at heights of 3.80m OD and 5.22m OD respectively.

7 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

7.1 Phase 1: Natural

- 7.1.1 The earliest deposit seen in both trenches was natural sand and gravel (referred to as [10] in Trench 1 and [17] in Trench 2). It was a loose, light-mid orange grey/brown mixture of sand and gravel with occasional-moderate iron staining, occasional pea grit and occasional shell fragment inclusions. This deposit was encountered at a height of 1.86m OD in Trench 1, and 1.34m OD in Trench 2.
- 7.1.2 Sealing the natural sand and gravel in Trench 1 were firm, mid-light grey-greenish brown interleaving bands of clay, sand and gravel with occasional iron staining. This layer [9] appeared to be a leached natural deposit, reaching a maximum height of 1.94m OD and having a maximum thickness of 0.34m.
- 7.1.3 As in Trench 1 the natural sand and gravel was overlain by successive naturally deposited layers in Trench 2, [13], [14], [15], and [16]; however these layers were of a much more defined character than [9] in Trench 1. Directly sealing the natural sand and gravel [17] was a 0.48m thick layer of loose mid grey brown sandy silty clay with frequent pea grit inclusions [16]. This deposit reached a height of 1.70m OD. Overlying [16] was a 0.53m thick layer of friable light orange brown silty sand with moderate small sub-rounded and rounded gravel inclusions and a sizeable lens of yellow grey sand [15]. This layer reached a height of 1.99m OD.
- 7.1.4 Atop [15] was a 0.26m thick layer of compact, mid blackish grey, slightly silty clay [14]. This layer probably formed due to natural drainage of the marshland in the vicinity of the site allowing a horizon of grass or reeds to form. It reached a height of 2.14m OD and was sealed by layer [13].
- 7.1.5 Layer [13] was a 0.39m thick layer of compact, light grey silty clay with occasional pea grit inclusions and moderate iron staining: a leached alluvial clay. It reached a maximum height of 2.49m OD.

7.2 Phase 2 – Modern

- 7.2.1 Sealing the natural layers in both trenches were modern deposits.
- 7.2.2 Within both trenches a fairly soft, mid grey-orange brown layer of slightly silty clay, referred to as [3] in Trench 1 and [12] in Trench 2, overlay [9] and [13] respectively. In Trench 1 this deposit was 0.87m thick and reached a height of 2.73m OD, while in Trench 2 it was 0.50m thick and reached a height of 2.62m OD. It was concluded that this layer was redeposited natural clay due to the occasional brick and CBM flecks that were seen within its matrix.

7.2.3 Cut into [3] in Trench 1 were two modern features, [6] and [8], presumably the result of earlier foundation works on the site. The primary fills of both of these features, [5] and [7] respectively, consisted of firm dark grey silty clay with frequent shell fragments and gravel, and occasional charcoal and brick inclusions. Cut [6] also had a secondary fill, [4], a loose, orange brown silty sand with occasional brick fragments and gravel. Both cuts were only observed in section, their relative dimensions are summarised in the table below:

Cut	Length (NW-SE)	Depth	Maximum Height
[6]	2.30m	0.58m	2.25m OD
[8]	0.75m	0.76m	2.25m OD

- 7.2.4 At the southern end of Trench 1 a 0.21m thick layer of loose, mid yellow grey sand with occasional gravel and brick inclusions, [2], was also seen to seal the redeposited clay [3]. This deposit reached a height of 2.77m OD.
- 7.2.5 All deposits in both trenches were subsequently sealed by a thick layer of firm but friable mottled mid grey brown silty clay with frequent brick, mortar, and concrete fragments, occasional timber, metal and glass fragments, and moderate gravel inclusions. Modern pottery sherds were also seen in this layer but, due to the risk of contamination, none of this material was retained. This made ground was referred to as [1] in Trench 1, where it was 1.09m thick and reached a height of 4.45m OD. In Trench 2 it was recorded as [11] and was up to 2.13m thick, reaching a height of 4.56m OD.
- 7.2.6 These made ground deposits had all been deposited during the 20th century.

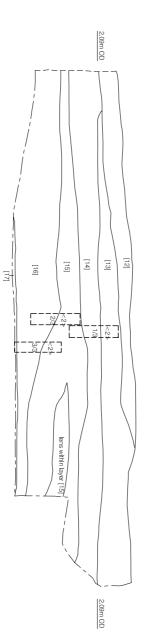
8 TRENCH SUMMARY

- 8.1 Trench 1 (Figures 2 & 3; Plate 1)
- 8.1.1 Trench 1 revealed natural gravels [10] sealed by leached interleaving bands of clay, sand and gravel [9] overlain by modern redeposited clay [3]. This redeposited clay was cut by modern features [6] (filled by [4] and [5]) and [8] (filled by [7]) and also overlain by redeposited sand [2]. Both features and the redeposited sand were sealed by modern made ground [1].
- 8.1.2 No discrete archaeological features were seen in Trench 1.
- 8.2 Trench 2 (Figures 2 & 3, Plate 2)
- 8.2.1 Trench 2 revealed natural gravels [17] overlain by naturally deposited sandy silty clay [16] sealed by natural sand and gravel [15], which was overlain by two successive layers of alluvial clay [14] and [13]. The alluvial clay [13] was in turn overlain by modern redeposited alluvial clay [12], which was ultimately sealed by modern made ground [11].
- 8.2.2 No discrete archaeological features were seen in Trench 2.



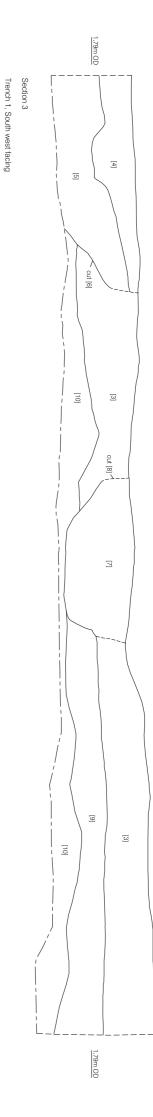








WS



WN

Plate 1: Section in Trench 1



Plate 2: Section in Trench 2



9 INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Interpretation

- 9.1.1 Both trenches revealed natural deposits that were consistent with the underlying geology of this area. The terrace gravels showed a gentle fall from NW to SE towards the Channelsea River. Pre-backfilling testing of the gravel in Trench 2 proved it to be at least 1.0m thick.
- 9.1.2 The terrace gravels were overlain by alluvial deposits consistent with a marshy environment in close proximity to a river. The alluvial deposits were all clayey in nature, with no evidence for any survival of organic remains such as peat.
- 9.1.3 Nothing from any period preceding the 20th century was found in the trenches.

9.2 Conclusions

- 9.2.1 The evaluation revealed no archaeological deposits at the site, and no geoarchaeological deposits felt to warrant further investigation. It is not proposed that any further work is undertaken with the environmental samples which were taken.
- 9.2.2 It is considered that construction activities at the site in the 20th century had caused widespread truncation to the underlying strata, as suggested by the presence of made ground directly above the natural sequence.

10 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 10.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Wates Living Space for commissioning the work, particularly Laurence Baxter, Tony Unsworth and Eamon Shanahan. We also thank David Divers of English Heritage for monitoring the work.
- 10.2 The author would like to thank Chris Mayo for project managing the site and editing this report, Josephine Brown for the illustrations, Lisa Lonsdale for Logistics, and Neil Hawkins, Mike Bazley and Gosia Trelka for their site work.

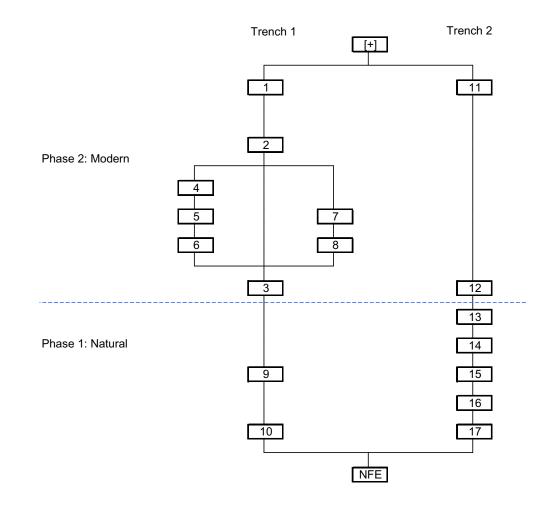
11 **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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- Sadarangani, F., Branch N., Green, C., Sabel K. and Brown, G. 2003 Archaeological & Built Heritage Desktop Assessment: Lower Lea Valley Stratford-Thameside. PCA Unpublished Report.
- Site Analytical Services Ltd. 2007 236- 252 High Street , Stratford, London E15 2JA: Report on a Ground Investigation. Unpublished Report.

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Site Code	Context No.	Plan	Section / Elevation	Туре	Description	Date	Phase
HIJ08	1	N/A	S1 & S2	Layer	Made Ground	Modern	2
HIJ08	2	N/A	S1 & S2	Layer	Redeposited sand	Modern	2
HIJ08	3	Trench 1	S1, S2 & S3	Layer	Redeposited clay	Modern	2
HIJ08	4	N/A	S3	Fill	Secondary fill of [6]	Modern	2
HIJ08	5	N/A	S3	Fill	Primary fill of [6]	Modern	2
HIJ08	6	N/A	S3	Cut	Modern cut	Modern	2
HIJ08	7	N/A	S3	Fill	Fill of [7]	Modern	2
HIJ08	8	N/A	S3	Cut	Modern cut	Modern	2
HIJ08	9	N/A	S3	Layer	Leached sand and gravel	N/A	1
HIJ08	10	Trench 1	S3	Layer	Natural gravel	N/A	1
HIJ08	11	Trench 2	S6	Layer	Made Ground	Modern	2
HIJ08	12	Trench 2	S4, S5 & S6	Layer	Redeposited clay	Modern	2
HIJ08	13	N/A	S4 & S5	Layer	Alluvial clay	N/A	1
HIJ08	14	N/A	S4 & S5	Layer	Alluvial clay	N/A	1
HIJ08	15	N/A	S4 & S5	Layer	Silty sand and gravel	N/A	1
HIJ08	16	N/A	S4 & S5	Layer	Sandy silty clay	N/A	1
HIJ08	17	Trench 2	S4	Layer	Natural gravel	N/A	1

APPENDIX 2: SITE MATRIX



APPENDIX 3: OASIS REPORT FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-49024

Project details	
Project name	Archaeological evaluation at 236-252 High Street, Stratford, LB Newham E15 2JA
Short description of the project	An evaluation consisting of two trial trenches. The earliest deposit encountered in both trenches was natural sand and gravels. No archaeological deposits were visible in either trench; this led to the conclusion that any and all archaeological deposits had been truncated by modern building works.
Project dates	Start: 25-08-2008 End: 25-09-2008
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HIJ08 - 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	MADE GROUND Modern
Monument type	CUT/PIT Modern
Monument type	CUT/PIT Modern
Monument type	ALLUVIAL CLAY None
Monument type	NATURAL SAND AND GRAVEL None
Significant Finds	N/A None
Methods & techniques	'Environmental Sampling', 'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, 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 NEWHAM STRATFORD 236-252 High Street
Postcode	E15 2JA

Study area	2000.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3855 8393 51.5367483582 -0.00207725030246 51 32 12 N 000 00 07 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 1.21m Max: 1.86m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project design originator	Chris Mayo
Project director/manager	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	James Young Langthorne
Type of sponsor/funding body	Wates Living Space
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Archive ID	HIJ08
Physical Contents	'Environmental'
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	HIJ08
Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	HIJ08
Paper Contents	'none'
Paper Media available	'Section','Unpublished Text','Context sheet','Map','Matrices','Photograph','Plan'
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Evaluation at 236-252 High Street, Stratford, London Borough of Newham E15 2JA
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Langthorne, J. Y.
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