

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION (PHASE 1) AT GLADSTONE
PLACE, ROMAN ROAD, BOW, LONDON E3 5EU**

Site Code: GDP 08

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 368 832

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November 2008**

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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of Phase 1 of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at Gladstone Place, Bow, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, London E3 5EU. The central National Grid Reference for the site is TQ 368 832. The Phase 1 evaluation was undertaken between the 8th and 15th of November 2008. The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Circle Anglia.
- 1.2 The Phase 1 evaluation consisted of six trenches. Five of these, Trenches 1-5, were located in the car park to the south and west of the standing supermarket building. Trench 6 was located in a separate walled compound which had formerly formed the loading bay to the south of the standing building adjacent to Cardigan Road. The Phase 2 evaluation will involve the excavation of two additional trenches within the footprint of the extant supermarket building following demolition.
- 1.3 The location of the Phase 1 trenches was based on the specification produced by CgMs Consulting. Four of the six trenches were relocated in order to avoid disturbing service pipes or cables which cross the site. However, with the exception of a very short stretch of Trench 2, the extent of the trenching remained unaltered and the revised locations attempted to embrace the full footprint of the area under investigation.
- 1.4 Archaeological features and deposits were observed in four of the trenches. In Trench 2 these consisted of intercutting pits, one of which contained a fragment of Roman pottery. A small cluster of ephemeral features consisting of a shallow ditch and a group of severely truncated postholes was evident in Trench 3; no dating evidence was recovered from these. A truncated fragment of a gully or small ditch was evident in Trench 5 - no dating evidence was recovered from this feature. A substantial ditch containing a large sherd of medieval pottery was found in Trench 6. The remaining trenches contained natural deposits consisting principally of loose orange sand, some more consolidated gravel deposits and compact yellowish brown clay. Trenches 1 and 4, particularly the latter, showed evidence of very large modern intrusions of a size consistent with the existence of underground structures. However, no walls demonstrating the previous existence of basements were evident and map regression did not suggest that these areas would have been impacted by below-ground building.
- 1.5 These results show that the best archaeological survival was found in the area to the south of the standing building adjacent to Cardigan Road. The substantial north-south aligned ditch contained a sherd of medieval pottery dated 1170-1350 AD and ceramic

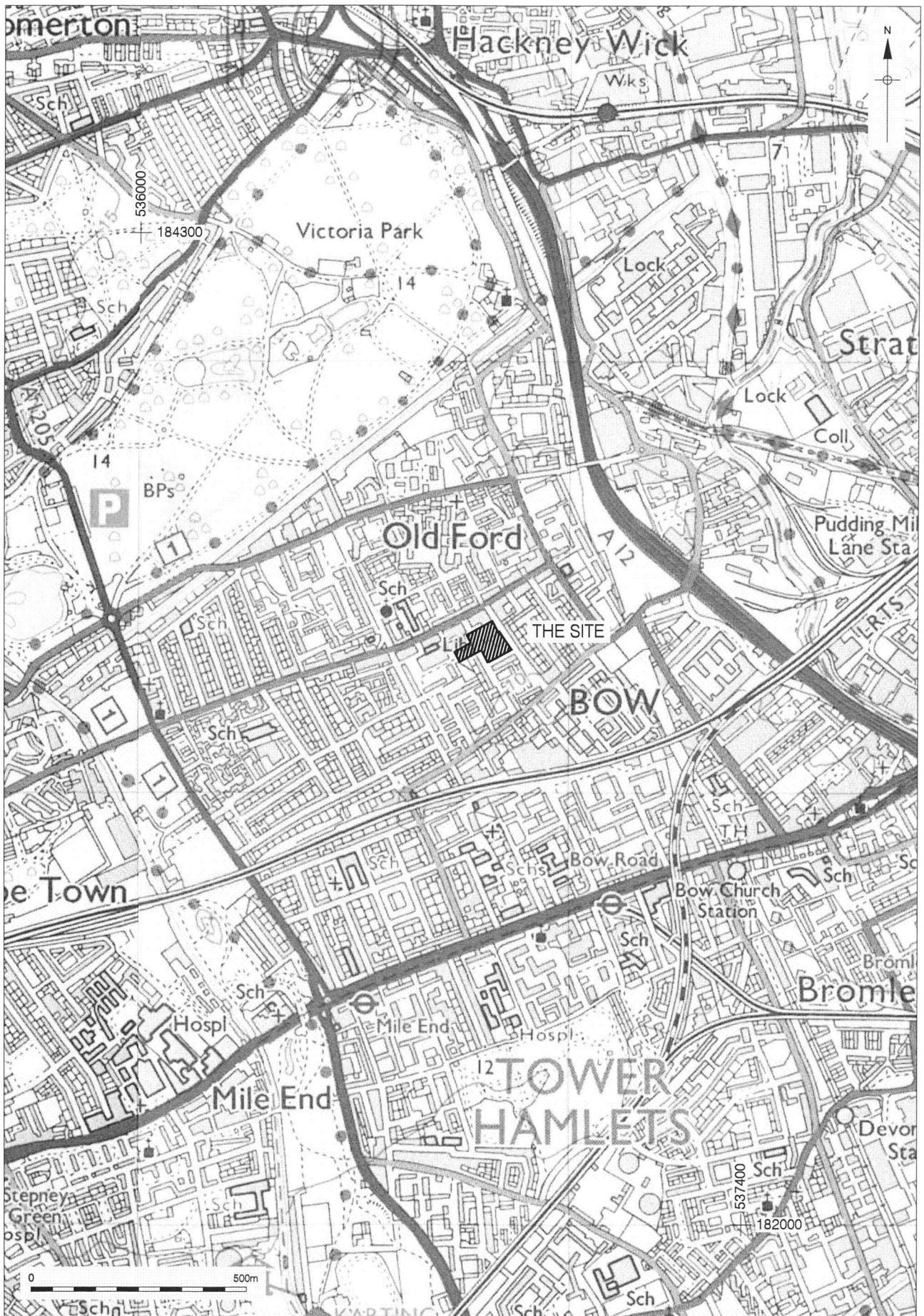
building materials from both the Roman and possibly medieval periods. The archaeological remains unearthed in Trenches 2 and 3 were limited, but the fragment of Roman pottery dated 120-400 AD recovered from the heavily truncated pit in Trench 2 suggested that some activity dating to the Roman period had taken place to the southwest of the standing building. The complete absence of cultural material in the features recorded in Trench 3 and the similarity of their fills to the surrounding natural deposits makes their importance difficult to assess. The fragment of the linear cut feature evident in Trench 5 was more clearly defined than the features evident in Trench 3 but was also devoid of artefacts that might have indicated the period in which this feature was first excavated.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd on the car park and loading bay areas to the south and west of a former Safeway supermarket accessed from Gladstone Place which leads off Roman Road, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, London E3 5EU (Fig. 1). The evaluation was conducted between the 3rd and 11th of November 2008 and was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Circle Anglia.
- 2.2 The site is located in the immediate vicinity of the present-day Roman Road which closely follows the line of the Roman road that linked London and Colchester.
- 2.3 The evaluation consisted of six trenches located in the car park to the south of the former Safeway supermarket (Fig. 2). The archaeological evaluation followed the methodology laid out in the specification¹. The only exception to this concerned the trench locations which were adapted to take account of services indicated on the available service plans.
- 2.4 The site had previously been the subject of an archaeological Desk Based Assessment which considered the archaeological potential for most periods to be low with the exception of the Roman period which was most likely to be represented².
- 2.5 The evaluation was project managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd by Tim Bradley and supervised by the author. David Divers of English Heritage, GLAAS, monitored the site.
- 2.6 The completed archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records will be stored by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd until their eventual deposition in the London Archaeological Archive and Resource Centre (LAARC).
- 2.7 The site was given the unique site code GDP 08.

¹ Dicks 2008b

² Dicks 2008a



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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:12,500 at A4



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Figure 2
 Trench Location Plan
 1:625 at A4

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 The site is in an area classified as an 'Area of Particular Archaeological Importance' in the Tower Hamlets Unitary Development Plan 1998. Although the UDP is currently being replaced by the Local Development Framework the policies contained in the UDP remain in force.

3.2 Tower Hamlets has made strong commitments to its archaeological heritage and its policy statements are reproduced below:

DEV 42 Developments that adversely affects nationally important archaeological remains, including scheduled ancient monuments, will normally be refused.

DEV 43 Development which affects any locally important archaeological site or remains, including industrial archaeology, may be permitted depending upon:

- 1 The importance of the archaeological remains;
- 2 The need for the development; and
- 3 Measures proposed for the protection, enhancement and preservation of the site and the interpretation and presentation of the remains to the public.

DEV 44 The permanent preservation in situ of nationally important remains will normally be required. Preservation of other remains will be a preference, subject to the importance of the remains and the need for development of the site. Where preservation is not appropriate, excavation and recording may be required. Development of archaeological sites should adopt suitable design, land use and site management to achieve these ends.

DEV 45 Proposals involving ground works in areas of archaeological importance or potential, shown on the proposals map, or concerning individual sites notified to the council by English Heritage or the Museum of London will be subject to the following requirements:

- 1 Within areas of archaeological importance applicants will need to demonstrate that the archaeological implications of the development have been properly assessed. A written assessment (archaeological statement) based on the professional advice of an approved archaeology consultant or organisation should be submitted as part of the documentation required for a complete planning application.

- 2 Within areas of archaeological importance the council may request, where development is likely to affect important archaeological remains, that an archaeological field evaluation of the site is carried out before any decision is made on the planning application;
- 3 Where the preservation of archaeological remains in situ is not appropriate, the council will seek to ensure that no development takes place on the site until archaeological investigation, excavation and recording has taken place by an approved archaeological organisation
- 4 In appropriate cases the Council will seek to ensure that adequate opportunities are afforded for the archaeological investigation of sites, before and during demolition and development. Suitable provision should be made for in situ preservation of remains (DEV44) and finds in the original location, or for removing them to a suitable place of safekeeping.

3.3 The UDP continues by stating:- Tower Hamlets has a long and rich history. Archaeological remains are an important source of evidence of this history from Roman times to the recent industrial past. One of the principle sources of archaeological evidence is the development of sites, but this evidence is easily destroyed in the development process. The Council therefore wishes to ensure that development involving groundworks in areas which may contain archeological remains makes early and specified allowance for the investigation of the archaeological potential of the site before groundworks for the development is allowed to proceed. The Council's preference will be to seek and maintain any finds and remains in situ. The Council will seek the guidance of English Heritage and the Museum of London in determining the importance of archaeological remains. The Council is concerned to see that sites which may be of interest are properly investigated and records made of any finds before development takes place. It is important the Borough's archaeological heritage is made accessible to the public as an educational, recreational and tourist resource. The Council will therefore support and promote measures which protect and conserve sites and which will allow the public access to sites with archaeological remains to the extent that this is compatible with the protection of the remains.

The Council will seek professional archaeological advice from English Heritage or a professionally qualified archaeological organisation or consultant as appropriate and expect applicants to do the same when proposing development which could affect archaeological remains. It is important that developers have properly assessed and planned for the implications of their proposals in terms of scheduling time and resources for investigations to be carried out of the site. Proposals for investigation should be built into the development programme at an early stage in the process.

Supplementary Planning Guidance on Archaeology and Development, outlines the preferred procedure for investigation before development takes place. An archaeological assessment is normally a desktop evaluation of existing information on the development site, commissioned from a professional archaeological body or consultant. Sources may include historic maps, written sources, previous finds, archaeological fieldwork and geographical surveys. An archaeological evaluation is in contrast field based, but, as distinct from a full archaeological excavation, is normally a small-scale and rapid operation, entailing ground survey and limited trial trenching. It should, nevertheless, be carried out by a professionally qualified archaeological organisation or individual. An evaluation of this kind helps to define the character and extent of surviving archaeological remains in the area of a proposed development, and thus to indicate the weight that ought to be attached to their preservation. Archeologically important areas are found throughout the Borough as shown on the Proposals Map. There are also records of numerous finds which may indicate areas of potential. The Council will consult with English Heritage and the Museum of London in the designation of areas of archaeological importance and will consult them about any areas of potential. Proposals which fall within these areas will be subject to policy DEV 42 to 66.

Areas which are of particular archaeological importance are:

- The Tower of London and surrounding area;
- The areas in Wapping shown on the Proposals Map. Parts of Wapping have revealed important finds and it is probably the richest part of the Borough in terms of known archaeological sites, including industrial archaeology sites;
- The site of the medieval hospital of St. Mary's between Bishopsgate and Spitalfields Market;
- A Roman road and cemetery in the Mansell Street area;
- A Roman settlement and road at Old Ford;
- A Cistercian Abbey and plague cemetery at the Royal Mint site.

Areas of potential include:

- evidence of prehistoric occupation in the Stepney Green area;
- the Lee Valley may include well preserved objects; and
- the possibility of Roman occupation in the Poplar High Street area.

Archaeological sites acknowledged as of national importance and afforded statutory protection by virtue of their inclusion on the Schedule of Ancient Monuments are as follows;

- The Tower of London

- Tower Hill West
- Section of London Wall running from Tower Hill Underground Station to Tower Hill
- Priory and Hospital of St. Mary Spital, Spitalfields

Standing structures, which are of Industrial Archaeological significance, which are also included on the Schedule are ;

- Bonner Hall Bridge, Regent's Canal
- Three Cold Bridge, Gunmaker's Lane
- Parnell Road Bridge

3.4 The Tower Hamlets UDP mirrors advice contained in the Department of the Environment document, "Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology an Planning (PPG 16)." This document identifies the need for early consultation in the planning process to determine the impact of construction schemes upon buried archaeological deposits.

3.5 Following the production of a Desk Based Assessment³, which outlined the archaeological potential of the site, Mr David Divers, English Heritage, GLAAS decided that an evaluation should be carried out to determine the extent of archaeological survival. CgMs Consulting prepared a written scheme of investigation for the site which was approved by Mr Divers prior to the beginning of the evaluation⁴.

3.6 The aims of the evaluation were:

- To determine, as far as reasonably practicable, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains
- To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features encountered.
- To clarify the impact of 19th/20th century developments and hence assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits.
- To clarify the presence and character of Roman settlement evidence on the site.

³ Dicks 2008a

⁴ Dicks 2008b

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 The British Geological Survey Sheet 256 (North London: 1994) shows that the underlying drift geology of the study site comprises Taplow Gravels, consisting of 'Post-diversionary Thames River Terrace Deposits; gravel, sandy and clayey in part'.
- 4.2 No site-specific geotechnical information was available although monitoring devices within boreholes were evident in the car park during the course of the evaluation. Recent archaeological work by MoLAS on an adjacent site to the north, ROB 05, identified brickearth deposits between 11.37 and 11.52m OD⁵.
- 4.3 A variety of natural deposits were encountered during the evaluation. These consisted of interleaving bands of fine, often loose, sands; coarser sands with fine gravel and light yellowish brown clay. No natural brickearth capping sealing these deposits was evident in any of the areas examined although a silty reworked subsoil was evident above the natural layers in some trenches.
- 4.4 The maximum heights recorded on the natural deposits in the western part of the site were 11.26m OD in Trench 1 and 11.34m OD in Trench 2. In Trench 3, located in the north of the central part of the area, natural deposits were recorded at or below 11.33m OD. Immediately to the south of this in Trench 4 the height of the natural deposits ranged from 11.32m OD in the north to 11.40m OD in the south. The values recorded in Trench 6, located in the eastern part of the site just south of the standing building, were between 11.15 and 11.20m OD. To the south of this in Trench 5 the highest level taken on the natural deposits was 11.12m OD.
- 4.5 The modern topography of the site shows virtually no slope from east to west but a slight slope from north to south. There is no reason to believe that this does not reflect the natural topography of the area which would lead to the conclusion that the surface of the natural deposits had been truncated in some areas, particularly the western part of the site. Developed subsoils capping the natural gravels were by no means evident in each trench and Trenches 1 and 4 had clearly been subjected to extensive modern interventions that had impacted the surface of the natural deposits.
- 4.6 The tarmac surface of the car park was recorded at 12.16m in the most northern part of the site investigated, Trench 1. The surface was almost level in the western part of the car park beyond what had once been Vernon Road. The surface of the tarmac was recorded at 12.18m adjacent to Trench 2 which was located in the southern part of that area. In the central area of the site the surface of the tarmac sloped from

⁵ Vuolteenaho, J 2005

12.21m OD adjacent to Trench 3 to 12.06m OD at the southern part of Trench 4. Further to the south and east the surface was recorded between 11.91 and 11.74m adjacent to Trench 5. The highest level recorded on the concrete hard standing that formed the approach to the former loading bays on the eastern part of the site was 12.26m OD, Trench 6 extended east-west through this area.

- 4.7 Watercourses, both manmade and natural, are found on three sides of the site within a radius of 750 metres. To the west the Regents Canal runs roughly northwest to southeast between Mile End and Victoria Parks before continuing to the northwest. To the north the Hertford Union Canal runs southwest to northeast linking the Regents Canal and the River Lea. The latter forms the most imposing topographical feature in the area. The main branch of the river follows a meandering north-south course less than 500m to the east of the site. The crossing of this river by the Roman road provided a natural focus for a settlement in the area. The later medieval crossing which superseded this was located further to the south in Bow and it is probable that the area around the site was referred to as Old Ford following the adoption of this new route.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

5.1. General Background

- 5.1.1 The archaeological background to the site has been covered in the Desk Based Assessment⁶ and it is not proposed to reproduce all of the research contained in that document. Some detail is given regarding the prehistoric and Roman periods as features dating to these periods were most likely to be represented on the site.

5.2 Prehistoric

- 5.2.1 An increasing body of evidence is emerging for the existence of prehistoric settlements of various periods in the Old Ford area. Most of this derives from the series of excavations carried out during the building and subsequent regeneration of the Lefevre Walk Estate which is located immediately to the east of Parnell Road and lies less than 300m to the east study site. At 271-321 Lefevre Walk Estate, Parnell Road, LEK 95, the recovery of pre-Roman artefacts from the re-deposited natural brickearth that formed part of the Roman road's make-up indicated that prehistoric deposits had probably been destroyed by the construction of the Roman road. A possibly prehistoric ring-shaped enclosure was also recorded and the excavation of a cluster of post-built structures and pits to north of site revealed only pre-Roman artefacts⁷. More precise evidence of pre-Roman occupation was evident in a subsequent phase of excavation on the same estate, PNL 98. 3 Neolithic pits were recorded, one of which contained a Peterborough ware bowl, perhaps a ritual deposit. A curving butt-ended ditch containing a complete pot dating to the Middle or Late Bronze Age was also evident as were a series of rectilinear enclosures and several pits some of which contained near complete Late Iron Age vessels⁸. At 91-93 Parnell Road, PRB 95, the natural brickearth was cut by post-holes and gullies dated to the late Bronze Age. These were tentatively interpreted as evidence of settlement⁹.
- 5.2.2 Further excavations carried out for Lefevre Walk Phase 3, LFW 01, demonstrated that a transitional late Iron Age and Roman settlement probably existed in the area on either side of the London-Colchester Road¹⁰. A range of postholes, possibly on a linear alignment, and the remains of a possible clay wall and occupation layer were revealed above the natural brickearth. The pottery recovered from the larger postholes, dated LIA to 55AD, suggested that a Late Iron Age/Early Roman structure

⁶ Dicks 2008a

⁷ <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/laarc/catalogue/siteinfo.asp?id=2263&code=LEK95>

⁸ <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/laarc/catalogue/siteinfo.asp?id=3952&code=PNL98>

⁹ <http://www.pre-construct.com/Sites/Summary95/PRB95.htm>

¹⁰ Leary, J., 2002

existed on the site. A deposit dated to the 1st-2nd century AD sealed these features¹¹.

5.3 Roman

5.3.1 Roman Road, immediately north of the study site, follows the line of the Roman road from London to Colchester¹².

5.3.2 Chance finds, particularly burials, have been recorded to both the north and south of the Roman Road over the course of the last century as a result of infrastructure projects such as railway cuttings and water maintenance.

5.3.3 The full significance of the Roman settlement at Bow began to become apparent once systematic excavations began to be carried out in the area. The first of these was conducted at Lefevre Road in 1969, LFR 69. Evidence of a fourth century settlement south of the road was revealed along with possible evidence of earlier settlement activity. The structure of the road itself was also examined and shown to consist of a three-track highway where the southern side was later raised to the level of the centre, the agger consisted of a central core formed of cemented gravel¹³.

5.5.4 Further excavation by the same team off Parnell Road and Appian Road in 1971 revealed Roman burials and late Roman pits and ditches. A further section of the road itself was examined and shown to be of similar construction to that seen in 1969-70 with the exception of the agger which was formed of clay. Some evidence of settlement was evident in the form of gravel surfaces found adjacent to the southern limits of the road. The coins recovered from the layers sealing these surfaces demonstrated that the settlement continued to be occupied into the late 4th and early 5th centuries¹⁴.

5.5.5 A 65m stretch of the main Roman road incorporating the southern and northern margins of the road zone was revealed at 271-321 Lefevre Walk Estate, LEK 95¹⁵. Pottery dating evidence broadly confirmed a date of construction to the mid 1st century. At 91-93 Parnell Road, PRB 95 a further stretch of the northern road zone was investigated. The roadside areas had been utilised for a variety of purposes throughout the Roman period. Numerous boundary ditches were recorded. The majority of these were at right angles to the line of the road and dated to the last

¹¹ <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/laarc/catalogue/siteinfo.asp?id=5386&code=LFW01>

¹² Margary 1955

¹³ Sheldon, H 1971

¹⁴ Sheldon, H 1972

¹⁵ Taylor-Wilson, R 1996

century of Roman occupation¹⁶. Evidence of iron smithing activity dating to between the 2nd and 3rd century was recorded at both sites. Fragmentary remains of roadside clay and timber buildings of mid-late 3rd century date and a small inhumation cemetery dated to the 4th century were also recorded at LEK95.

- 5.5.6 Further evidence of the roadside settlement was recovered during excavations at the Lefevre Walk Estate Phase II, Parnell Road PNL 98. Roman activity was recorded across the site. Post holes and possible beam slots probably represented the remains of a clay and timber buildings with associated structures dating to the 1st century. A complex series of ditches indicated a field boundary dating from the 1st century which continued in use until the 4th century, with a drainage sump in the northeast corner of the boundary. To the north of the eastern area of the site a number of postholes and post pits probably represented Roman fence lines. Fourth century deposits and late 4th-early 5th century pitting, recorded to the east of the site, may have been associated with the roadside settlement known to have existed to the south¹⁷.
- 5.5.7 Excavations undertaken slightly closer to the site in 1990 at 72A Armagh road-91-93 Parnell Road, revealed early Roman gravel extraction pits, presumably for the construction of the London to Colchester road. The quarries were backfilled on the construction of the first structures, represented by a series of post-holes and ditches which may also have been property boundaries. Occupation may have been agricultural, on the evidence of ploughsoil, and a more substantial building was indicated by groundbeams supporting wattle and daub walls. This building might have been an open-ended barn fronting onto the road¹⁸.
- 5.5.8 Excavation between Armagh Road and Libra Road in July to November 1991, BOD 91, revealed a Roman cemetery related to the settlement at Old Ford, to the north of the conjectured line of the Roman road from London to Colchester. 67 grave cuts were found, 48 aligned east-west and 19 north-south. Acidic soil limited bone survival, and no grave goods were found. Most inhumations were buried in wooden coffins¹⁹. These inhumations are almost certainly associated with the settlement found slightly further to the east.
- 5.5.9 An archaeological evaluation at 568a Roman Road, ROB 05, immediately north of the study site recorded several phases of Roman occupation. The features including a substantial wooden structure with a mortar floor, boundary ditches and rubbish pits. The features were concentrated to the north of the site The trenches within the

¹⁶ Taylor-Wilson, R 1995

¹⁷ Douglas, A 1999

¹⁸ Pitt, K 1990

¹⁹ <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/laarc/catalogue/siteinfo.asp?id=1169&code=BOD91>

southern part of the site nearest to the northern boundary of the study site were devoid of Roman features. However, the absence of features in this area was more likely to be the result of post-medieval and modern disturbance than an indication of the true extent of the Roman occupation²⁰.

²⁰ Vuolteenaho. J 2005

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 All of the trenches were stripped of hard standing, composed of tarmac, with the exception of Trench 6 which was covered by a substantial depth of reinforced concrete, and modern overburden using a 360° mechanical excavator. In Trenches 1 and 4 very large portions of the area investigated had been impacted by deep modern intrusions. The proportion of these intrusions were consistent with there having been below-ground structures in these areas but no basement walls were extant. All of the trenches showed evidence of a very heavily compacted layer composed of mixed soil and demolition debris. This deposit, located immediately below the tarmac and its associated make-up, almost certainly represented the intervention of heavy machinery during the demolition and levelling of the site prior to the establishment of the car park. In some areas this demolition/levelling horizon sealed the surviving natural deposits indicating that any subsoils or horticultural soils that may once have existed had been stripped from the area. All machine reduction was undertaken under archaeological supervision. Subsequent investigation of trenches used hand tools only.
- 6.2 Each trench measured 15m by 2m with the exception of Trench 4 which was 20m long. An area 3m in length at the western end of Trench 2 was not machined to the top of the archaeological deposits in order to avoid disturbing a modern service trench which might have held a communications cable. Archaeological features were revealed in four of the six trenches opened, although only two features produced any dating evidence. Trenches were located using baselines or outlines which were located by a professional surveyor and tied into the National Grid.
- 6.3 Phased 'Harris Matrix' stratification diagrams have not been produced for individual trenches as the complexity of the archaeological sequences did not warrant this.
- 6.4 Recording on site was undertaken using the single context recording system as specified in the Museum of London Site Manual. Representative plans and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate. Contexts were numbered sequentially and recorded on pro-forma context sheets. Where referred to in the text context numbers are given in square brackets, i.e. pit [36].
- 6.5 All trenches, and where appropriate individual features, were photographed using black and white print, colour slide and digital formats.
- 6.6 Three temporary bench marks (TBMs) were established on the site. Trenches 1-5 were served by TBMs 1 and 2 with values of 12.02 and 13.28m OD. Trench 6 was served by TBM 3 which had a value of 12.02m OD. All three of the values were

established by transferring a level from a spot height located at the western end of Anglo Road. The value of the spot height was 11.60m OD.

6.7 The site was given the unique site code GDP 08.

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION

7.1 Negative Trenches

- 7.1.1 No archaeological deposits or features were found in Trenches 1 or 4. Trench 1 was located in the northwest of the site whilst Trench 4 traversed the central area diagonally from northeast to southwest (Fig. 2). Both of these trenches were heavily truncated. No natural or archaeological deposits were evident for seven metres of the fifteen metre length of Trench 1 as a massive modern intrusion had destroyed any putative archaeological levels in the western half of the trench. The full depth of the modern intrusion was not reached but it exceeded 1.66m in the west end of Trench 1. The natural deposit evident in the east end of the trench, layer [19], consisted principally of very loose orange sand with bands of fine gravel and clay. This deposit was sealed by post-medieval layers which implies strongly that its surface had been truncated. The highest level recorded on the natural deposits in this trench was 11.26m OD.
- 7.1.2 A similar situation was evident in Trench 4 where a massive modern intrusion c 11m in width occupied the majority of the southern part of the trench. The deposit filling this feature, [46], spread out horizontally from the intrusion and formed a layer that sealed the surface of the natural deposits evident in the southern part of the trench. This again suggested that the surface of the natural sands and gravels had been truncated in this area. The fill of the modern intrusion did not appear to differ appreciably from the heavily compacted rubble levelling deposit that lay immediately below the make-up layers covered by the tarmac car park surface. No attempt was made to discover the full depth of this intrusion as it had clearly destroyed any possibly archaeological remains within its footprint. As excavated the feature exceeded 1.20m in depth, as measured from the modern tarmac surface.
- 7.1.3 The natural deposits seen in this area consisted of loose orange sand and gravel. The sand was loose in some areas but more compact and mixed with gravel toward the north end of the trench. The highest levels recorded on the surface of these deposits were 1.33m OD in the north and 11.41m OD in the south. The apparent slope upward toward the south clearly demonstrates that surface of these deposit has been impacted by modern intrusions as the natural topography of the area is defined by a gentle but consistent slope to the south.

7.2 Trenches Containing Undated Features

- 7.2.1 Trench 3 was located in the northern part of the car park immediately to the south of the standing building and to the north of Trench 4. A group of cut features was evident in the western half of the trench (Fig. 3). The largest of these consisted of a shallow north-south aligned ditch [14]. This feature measured 1.50m wide by 0.39m deep and extended beyond the limits of excavation to both the north and south. No artefacts were recovered from the fill of this feature and even small inclusions such as flecks of charcoal that might indicate nearby human activity were absent. The highest level recorded on the ditch was 11.33m OD.
- 7.2.2 Three possible post-holes, [29], [31] and [33], were recorded to the west of the ditch. Of these postholes [31] and [33] were very shallow, c 0.08m deep, and might represent no more than a localised disturbance in the surface of the loose sandy natural layer [34]. Posthole [29] was a little more convincing, the fill of this feature consisted of a deposit very similar to the subsoil, [11], that sealed the cut features and natural sands and gravel in this area.
- 7.2.3 Although no finds were recovered from these cut features the presence of the developed subsoil/horticultural soil horizon, [11], which sealed them suggested that the area around Trench 3 had not been subjected to modern truncation or disturbance. The total lack of cultural material obviously precludes dating; a best guess might be that these features are more likely to be prehistoric than belong in a later archaeological period.
- 7.2.4 Two further cut features, [2] and [6], were recorded in Trench 3. A small fragment of a possible linear cut [6] was evident in the central part of the trench. This feature extended beyond the limits of excavation to the south, as recorded it measured 0.50m north-south and was 0.25m deep. No finds were recovered from the fill of this 'ditch' and it was not felt that this was without doubt a genuine archaeological feature, some localised modern disturbance was evident to the east of this feature
- 7.2.5 An very shallow -irregularly shaped 'cut' [6] was excavated in the east end of Trench 3. This feature contained no cultural material and the fill was also devoid of inclusions such as charcoal that might be indicative of human intervention. The feature may at best have represented a treethrow or might simply have represented a slight depression in the gravel.
- 7.2.6 Trench 5 was located in the southeast corner of the car park and was aligned northwest to southeast (Fig. 4). Modern intrusions, particularly sewer pipes of various

epochs, had impacted heavily on this area. A fragment of a curvilinear cut [59] was evident in the central part of the trench. The gully had been truncated to the north and east by pipe trenches and extended beyond the limit of excavation to the south. As seen the gully measured 0.90m wide by 0.32m deep. No artefacts were recovered from the fill [58] which consisted of a mid greyish sandy silt not dissimilar to the subsoil [63] which sealed the feature and the natural sands and gravels in this area.

7.2.7 It is extremely difficult to evaluate the significance of the gully. The absence of cultural material clearly means that no precise date can be assigned to it, there is however no reason to believe that the gully represents a modern intervention. This assumption is supported by the stratigraphic sequence in this area where the modern pipe trenches had truncated the developed subsoil [63] which in turn sealed the fill of the gully [58]. The highest level recorded on the gully was 11.10m OD.

7.2.8 The surface of the natural deposits recorded as layer [64] in Trench 5 sloped from north to south. The highest level taken on the sands and gravels was 11.12m OD. The lowest height, recorded adjacent to a modern intrusion in the south, was 10.75m OD although some horizontal truncation may have taken place in this area.

7.3 Trenches Containing Dated Archaeological Features

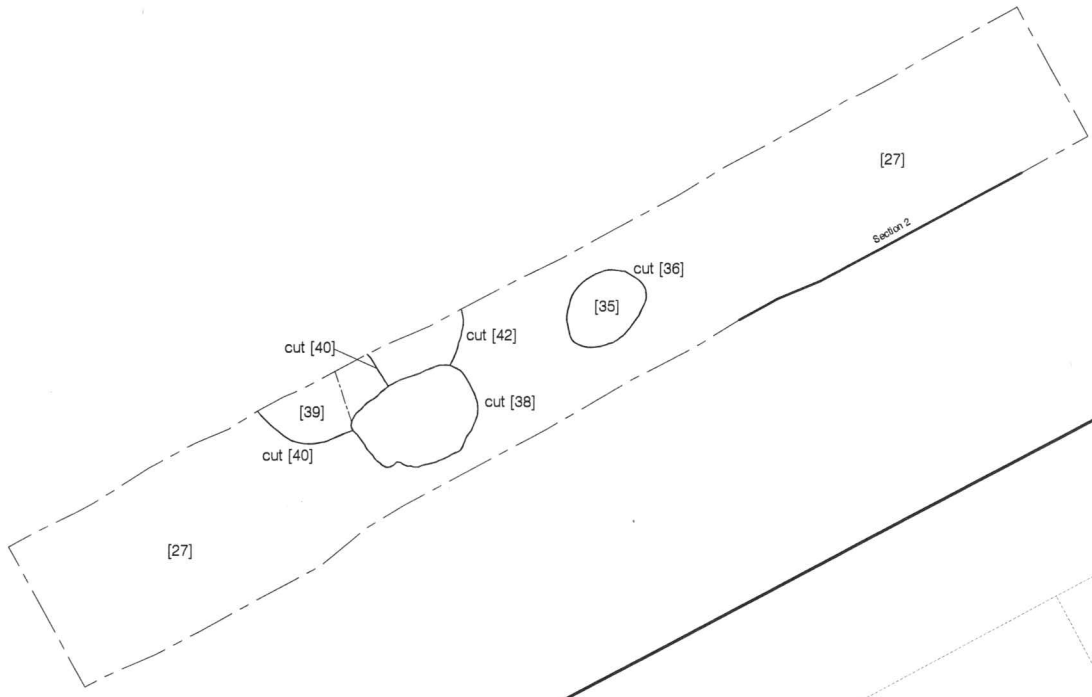
7.3.1 Trench 2 (Fig. 3) was located in the southern part of the western extension of the car park, to the west of what had once been Vernon Road. Very loose natural sands and gravels truncated by some modern pits, and very possibly horizontally, were evident in the eastern half of the trench. The highest level recorded on the natural sands and gravels was 11.36m OD

7.3.2 Three intercutting pits were recorded in the western half of the trench. The latest of these was apparently pit [38] which contained no dating evidence but truncated pit [40] which gave every indication of dating to the C19th or 20th centuries. The fill, [39], of pit [40] consisted principally of clinker and ash which probably derived from a coal fire.

7.3.3 Both of the modern pits described above truncated pit [42] which also extended beyond the limit of excavation to the north. As recorded the pit measured 0.64m north-south by 1.58m east-west and was 0.28m deep. The only dating evidence recovered from this feature was a rim fragment of a black burnished ware bowl dated 120-400 AD. The pottery sherd was not abraded and did not appear to have been displaced from the point where it had originally been discarded.

- 7.3.4 Pit [42] provided an isolated example of Roman survival in the western area of the site. The western end of Trench 2 could not be machined to the level at which archaeological features might have been revealed due to the presence of a modern, possibly live, service trench in this area. However, the remainder of Trench 2 revealed no further archaeological features and none were evident in Trench 1, although that had been heavily truncated.
- 7.3.5 The largest and best defined archaeological feature discovered during the evaluation was a shallow north-south aligned ditch [50] that passed through the western part of Trench 6 (Figs. 4 & 5). The trench ran east-west to the south of the loading bay located on the eastern side of the standing building adjacent to Cardigan Road. The ditch extended beyond the limits of excavation to both north and south and was truncated on the eastern side by a modern pipe trench. However, virtually the full width of the feature was apparent in the north where it measured 2.10m, the maximum depth of the feature was 0.54m. Only one fragment of pottery was recovered from the fill [49] but the large body sherd was easily recognisable as a medieval form produced in Hertfordshire between 1170 and 1350. Fragments of ceramic building material were also recovered from the fill and although some were small, abraded and not diagnostic others were clearly residual Roman forms.
- 7.3.6 No further archaeological features were evident in Trench 6. The ditch may have defined a field boundary and would have been roughly perpendicular to the line of the Roman road. The top of the ditch was recorded at a maximum height of 11.10m OD. Natural deposits consisting of orange sand gravel and a high proportion of clay were evident throughout the remainder of the trench. The highest levels recorded on the natural deposits ranged from 11.22m OD to 11.15m OD.

Trench 2



Trench 3

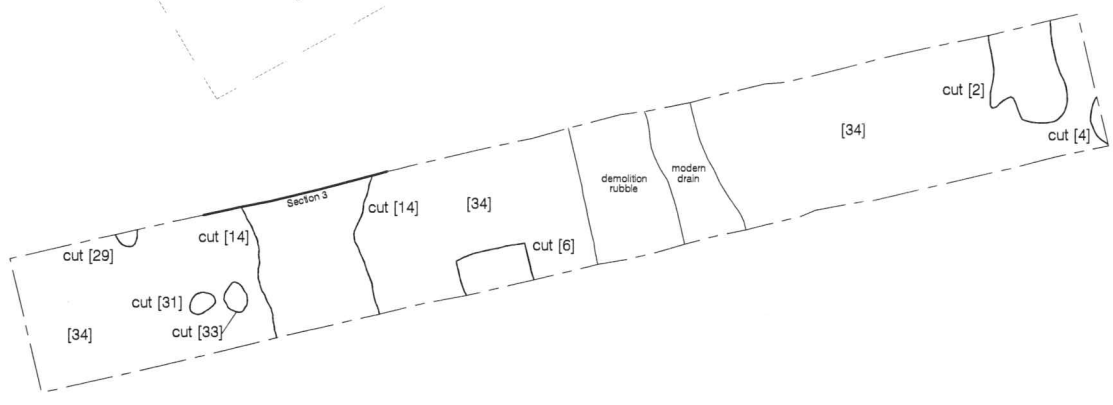
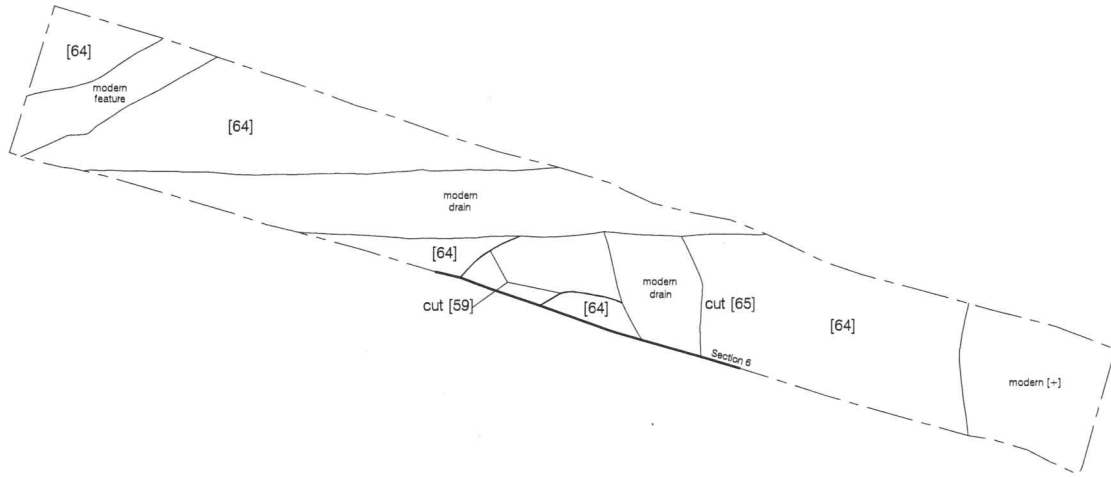


Figure 3
Plans of Trenches 2 and 3
1:100 at A4

Trench 5



Trench 6

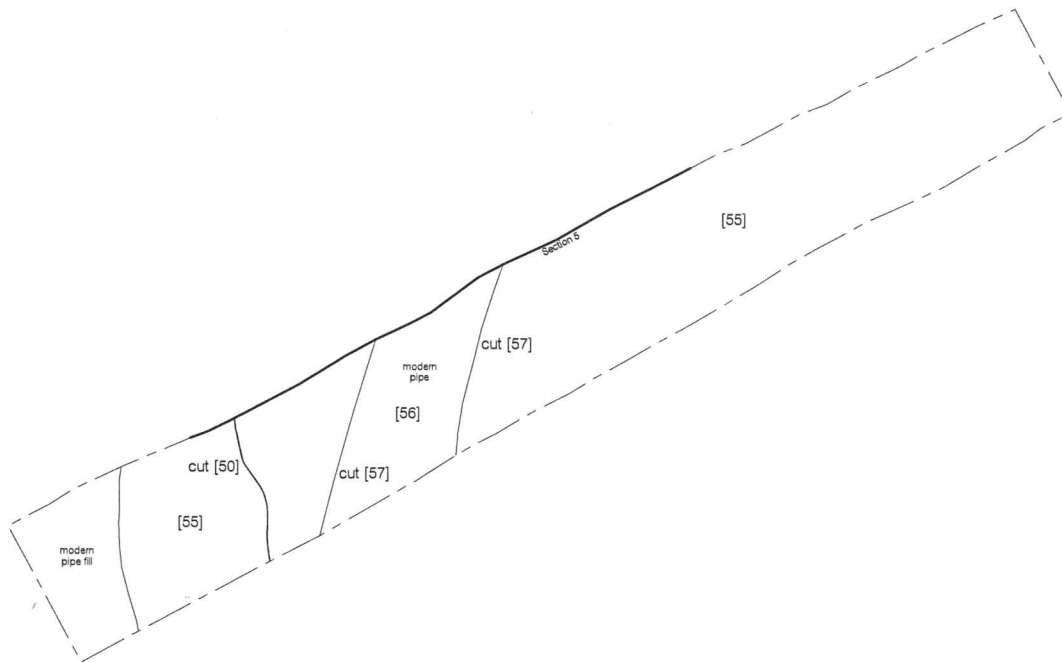
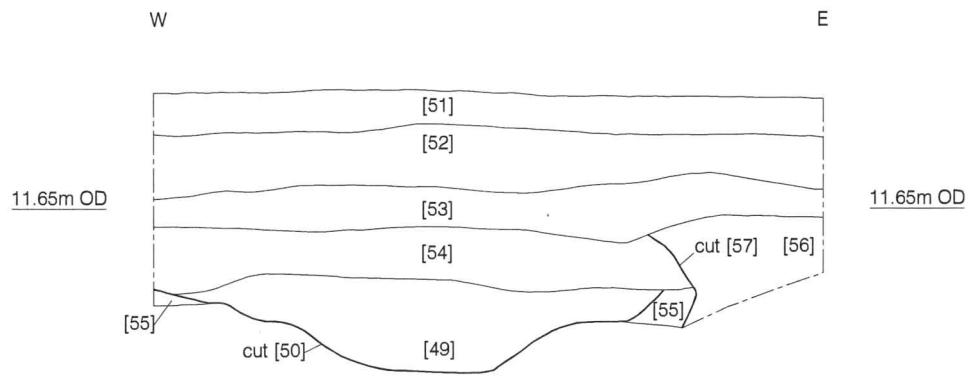


Figure 4
Plans of Trenches 5 and 6
1:100 at A4



Section S5
Trench 6
South Facing



Figure 5
Section 5 in Trench 6
1:40 at A4

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The Phase 1 evaluation revealed that features dating to the Medieval and Roman periods were present along with a larger group of features that could not be dated. The clearest evidence of archaeological survival came from Trench 6, located to the south of the loading bay on Cardiagan Road, where a substantial medieval ditch passed from north to south and continued beyond the limits of the excavated area. This ditch was not evident in Trench 5 which was located to south of Trench 6. A large fragment of pottery provided the best dating evidence for the ditch which was open between 1170 and 1350.
- 8.2 The only feature that contained evidence of the known Roman occupation in the area was a heavily truncated pit recorded in Trench 2 which was located in the western part of the site. The full extent of the pit was not visible as, apart from modern truncations, it extended beyond the limits of the excavation. The absence of more extensive evidence of Roman occupation was something of a surprise. In part this may reflect the frequency of modern truncations but no Roman material was recovered from residual contexts with the exception of the medieval ditch described above.
- 8.3 A concentration of cut features ranging from a shallow ditch to small postholes was evident in Trench 3. None of these could be dated due to the absence of artefacts and none of the deposits filling these features contained any evidence of human activity in any form. The true archaeological importance of these features is therefore extremely hard to demonstrate.
- 8.4 A small ditch or gully was also evident in Trench 5. This feature was not dated due to the absence of cultural material within its fill. It may have once continued beyond its recorded northern limit but modern intrusions occupied the remaining width of the trench in this area and any putative northern extension of this feature would lie beyond the limits of excavation.

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10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 10.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank CgMs Consulting who commissioned the work on behalf of Circle Anglia and in particular Sally Dicks who acted as consultant for the client. Thanks also to David Divers who monitored the site for English Heritage, GLAAS.

- 10.2 The author would like to thank Tim Bradley for project managing the evaluation and editing the report and Mark Roughley for the illustrations. Thanks go to Chris Jarrett and James Gerrard who spot-dated the ceramics and Kevin Hayward who examined the ceramic building materials. Thanks also to Lisa Lonsdale who provided logistic support to the evaluation and organised machine hire. The evaluation was surveyed by Aiden Turner assisted by Lisa Lonsdale, both are thanked for their help. Thanks also to Rob Nicholson and his team for processing the finds.

- 10.3 Thanks are also offered to Al and his team who helped gain access to the site and controlled the car parking. The author would like to thank Nik, Darren and John who drove their machines with considerable skill. Last but certainly not least thanks are given to the excavation staff Jim Heathcote, Emily Bates and Sophie White for their hard work and enthusiasm.