



# CORALIE ACHESON: ASSESSMENTS AND RISKY ARCHAEOLOGY

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It may sound strange to anyone not involved in archaeology or construction but heritage is considered to be a risk when looking to develop a site. My job is to identify 'risky' archaeology before a planning application is made. To that end I spent this afternoon creating a map of all the known archaeology in an area of west central London (a nice bit shall we say) to see what else had been found nearby, and tracing the history of the site back through four centuries of maps.

It turns out the site was arable farmland until relatively recently, some distance from Roman or medieval London, and not part of any of the outlying villages which today form part of Greater London. The maps show that it began to be developed in the 18th century, as wealthy types started to build big town houses. For some time there was a coffee shop on the site, a function it still has today, two hundred years later.

Using this information, and comparing it to surveys of the current buildings we are able to build up a likely prediction of what might survive on the site, and how significant it might be. And that was my 'day of archaeology'.