

# 16 Asylum Road Archaeology

## Written Scheme of Investigation

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# 16 Asylum Road Archaeology

## Written Scheme of Investigation

LAARC site code: TBC

Event type: Watching Brief

Site Address: 16 Asylum Road, LONDON,  
SE15 2RL

Site location: London Borough of  
Southwark

Planning Application Ref: LBS Registered  
Number 10-AP-0776

### *Executive non- technical summary*

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A planning application for two new houses has been approved subject to conditions. The site lies partially within an archaeology priority zone as defined by the Southwark Plan. A desk based assessment and site investigation has concluded there is a low potential for significant archaeological remains. A watching brief is therefore recommended as appropriate mitigation to be carried out when construction commences.

## Projects Status Report Version Control

### Prepared By:

Document Owner(s)	Project/Organization Role
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1.0	24 Feb 2012	JJC	Issued for client approval
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### 1. Site location information

The development site is located in the London Borough of Southwark, South East London and occupies the western half of the garden of 16 Asylum Road Peckham (post code SE15 2RL) (Figure 1).

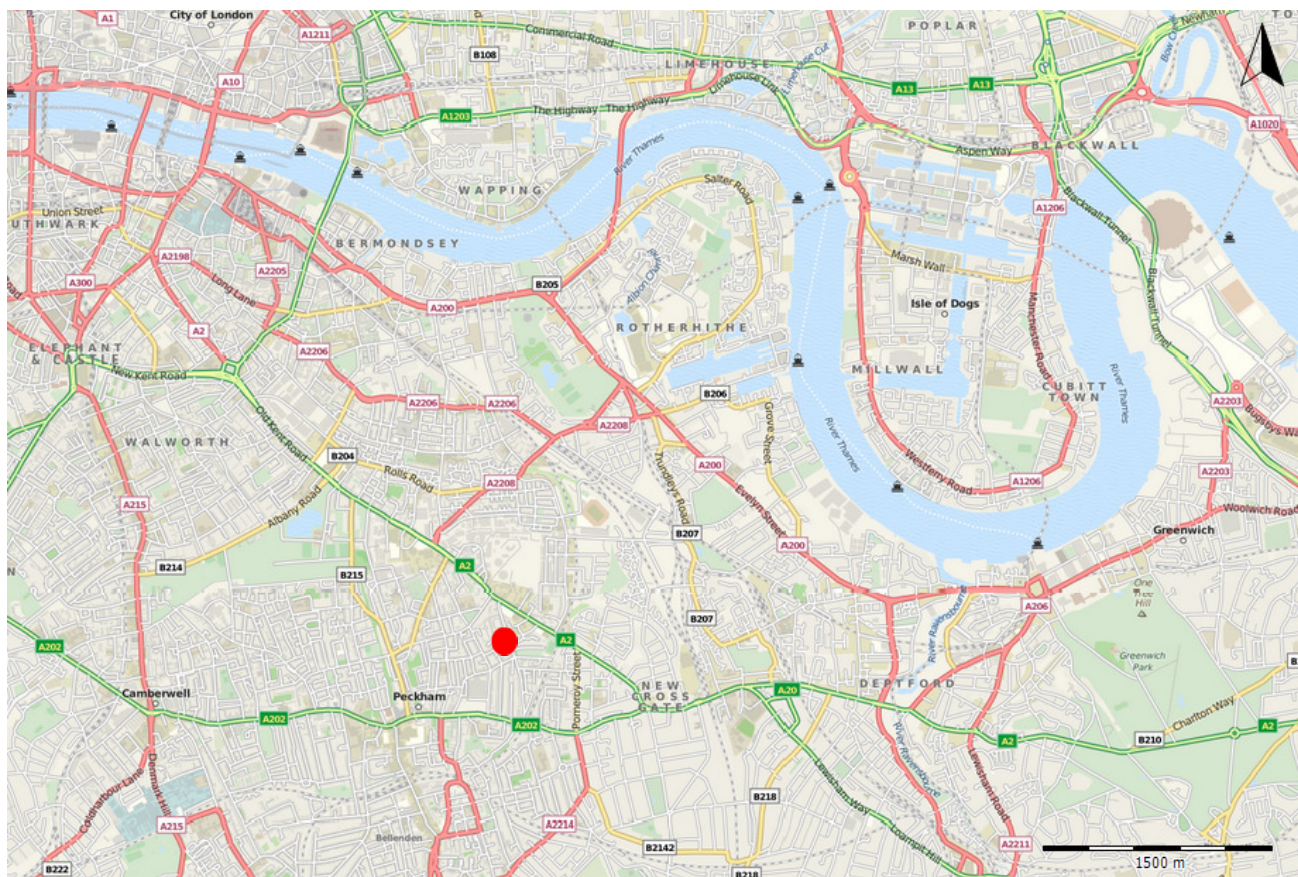


Figure 1 Site Location (red dot) MapQuest OpenStreetMaps Tiles: (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, CC-BY-SA. Tiles Courtesy of MapQuest (<http://www.mapquest.com>).

### 2. Context of the project

The site lies partially within an archaeological priority zone (Figure 2) designated due to it being the possible route of a Roman Road that is documented to pass down the east side of Asylum Road (Davis 1935, LBS 2007).



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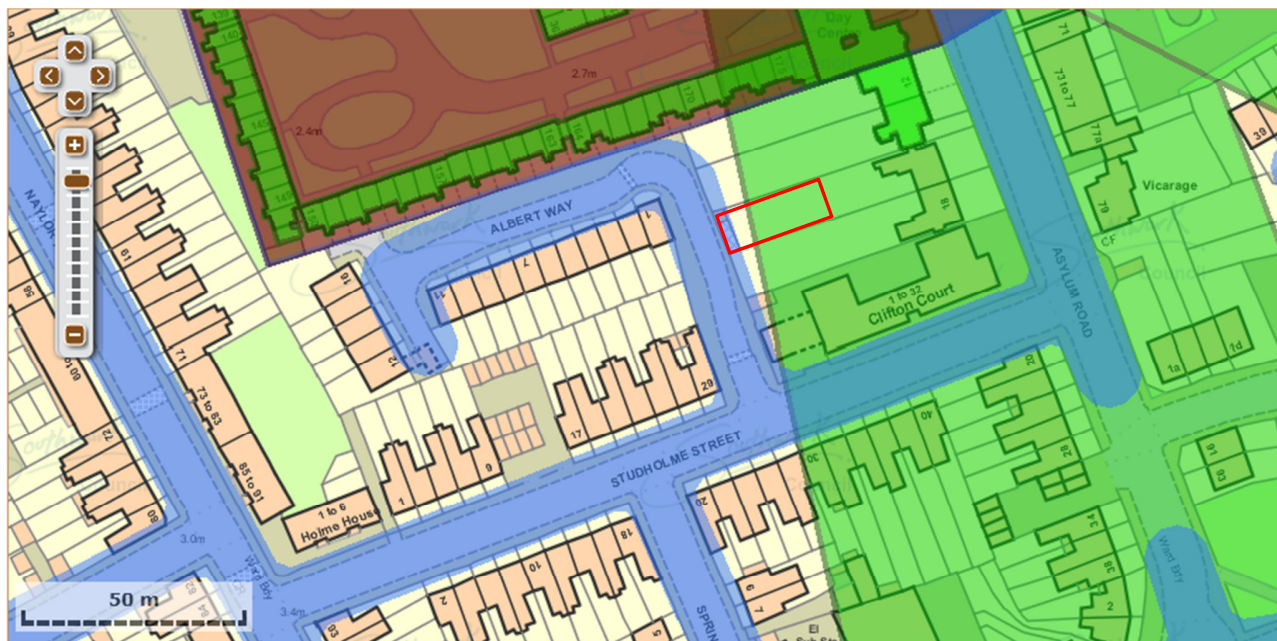


Figure 2 Site (red outline) in relation to London Borough of Southwark Archaeological Priority Zone (APZ): London to Lewes Road (Green shaded area) (Map extract from LBS Southwark Maps)

### 3. Planning background

Planning permission for two houses has been granted subject to conditions. Conditions concerning archaeology are:

**9** No development shall take place within the proposed development site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological evaluation works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in writing.

Reason: In order that the Local Planning Authority may be satisfied as to the details of the programme of works for the archaeological evaluation in accordance with policy 3.19 'Archaeology' of the Southwark Plan (July 2007).

Response: A desk based assessment, site visit and monitoring of geotechnical trial pit has been completed and is reported in this Written Scheme of Investigation. No further site evaluation is appropriate or feasible due to access constraints, current land use and evidence for previous landuse.

**10** No development shall take place within the proposed development site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological mitigation works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to the planning authority and approved in writing.

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Reason: In order that the Local Planning Authority may be satisfied as to the details of the programme of works for the archaeological mitigation in accordance with policy 3.19 of the Southwark Plan (July 2007).

Response: A watching brief in accordance with this Written Scheme of Investigation shall be carried out during topsoil stripping to ensure that any archaeological remains are recorded in accordance with Southwark Plan policies, SPG and the standards listed in Section 9 below.

**11** Within six months of the completion of archaeological site works the applicants will supply an assessment report detailing the proposals for post-excavation works, publication of the site and preparation of the archive and this document has been submitted to the planning authority and approved in writing and that the works detailed in this assessment report shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with any such approval given.

Reason: In order that the Local Planning Authority may be satisfied as to the details of the post-excavation works, publication and archiving to ensure the preservation of archaeological remains by record in accordance with policy 3.19 of the Southwark Plan (July 2007).

Response: Once the watching brief is complete reporting commensurate with the findings shall be prepared in accordance with Southwark Plan policies, SPG, and the standards listed in Section 9 below.

**12** No development shall take place within the proposed development site until the applicant has produced a detailed scheme showing the complete scope and arrangement of the foundation design and all ground works, which have been submitted to the planning authority and approved in writing. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with any such approval given.

Reason: In order that the Local Planning Authority may be satisfied as to the details of the foundations and groundworks accord with the programme of archaeological mitigation works to ensure the preservation of archaeological remains by record and in situ in accordance with policy 3.19 of the Southwark Plan (July 2007).

Response: As shown on the application plans basements are an integral part of the approved development. Preservation of any significant archaeological remains shall be achieved by record. External to the basement areas any significant archaeological remains may be preserved in-situ subject to their depth, type and their relationship to the drainage, utility and landscaping requirements of the development.

Southwark Plan (2007) Policy 3.19 Archaeology
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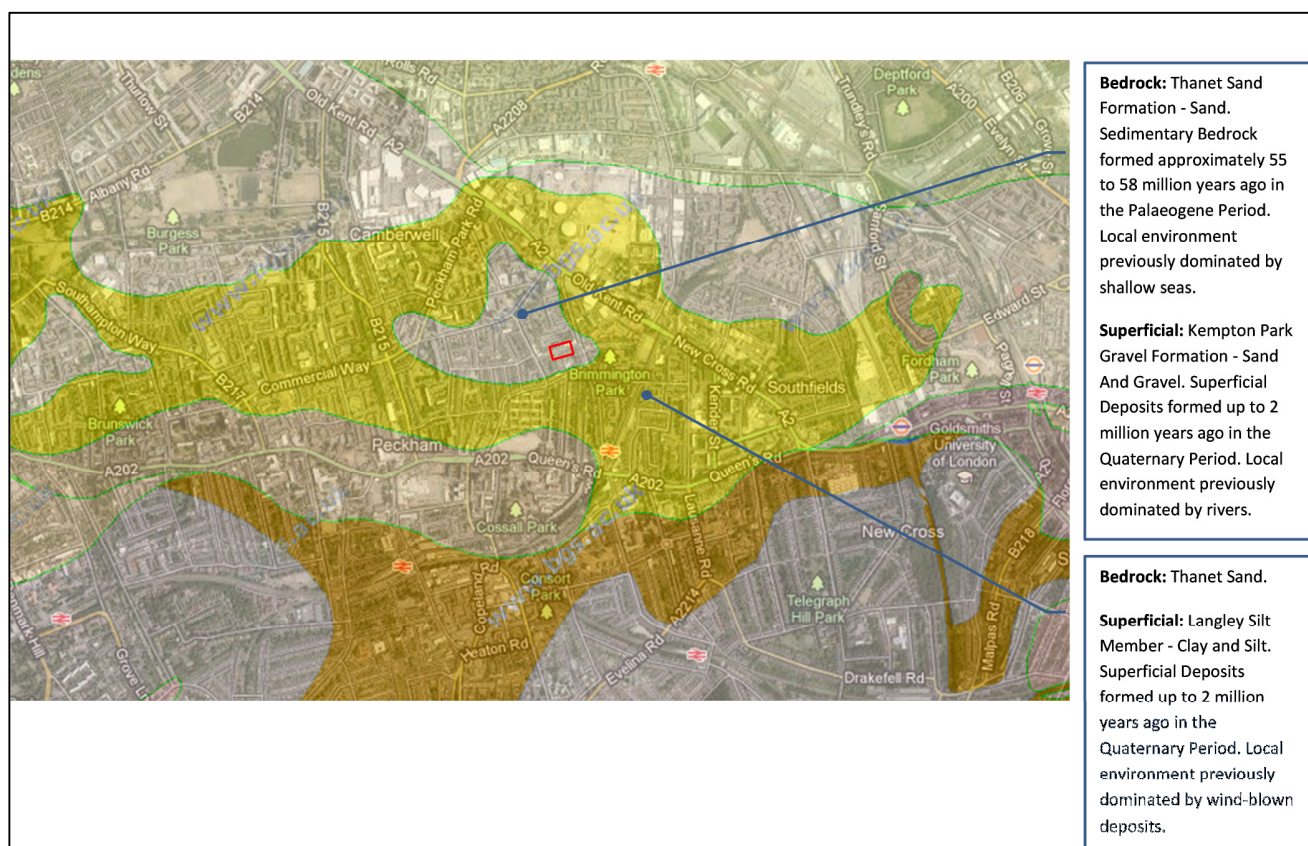
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313. Planning applications affecting sites within Archaeological Priority Zones (APZs), as identified in Appendix 8, shall be accompanied by an archaeological assessment and evaluation of the site, including the impact of the proposed development. There is a presumption in favour of preservation in situ, to protect and safeguard archaeological remains of national importance, including scheduled monuments and their settings. The in situ preservation of archaeological remains of local importance will also be sought, unless the importance of the development outweighs the local value of the remains. If planning permission is granted to develop any site where there are archaeological remains or there is good reason to believe that such remains exist, conditions will be attached to secure the excavation and recording or preservation in whole or in part, if justified, before development begins.

### 4. Geological and topographical background

The site lies within the southern Thames basin. As recorded by the British Geological Survey, the bedrock is Palaeogene Thanet Sand. The superficial geology is Quaternary Kempton Park sand and gravel with localised Langley Silt (Figure 3).





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Figure 3 Geology map and unit descriptions. Source: British Geological Survey [www.mapapps.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.mapapps.bgs.ac.uk). Site is red outline.

The Site lies within the vicinity of the former River Peck Valley. Barton (1982) maps the River Peck as running along the western side of Asylum Road and then turning eastwards, to run towards the junction of The Old Kent Road and Ilderton Road. This would suggest that the Site is located on the west side of the former river tributary (Figure 4). However other research suggests a course further to the west of Asylum Road and sitings of alluvial deposits within the vicinity (see SDH97 and ASY93 Figure 6) would seem to support a more westerly course (Figure 5).

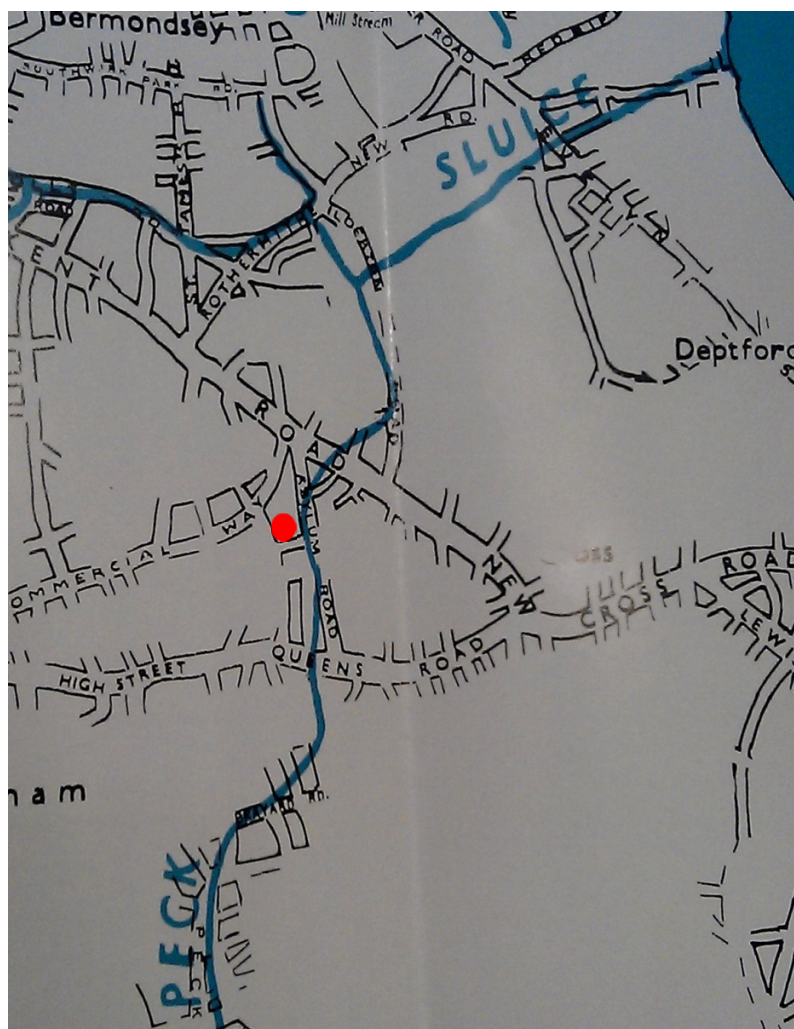


Figure 4 Former Course of the River Peck as mapped by Barton 1982 (Site is red dot)

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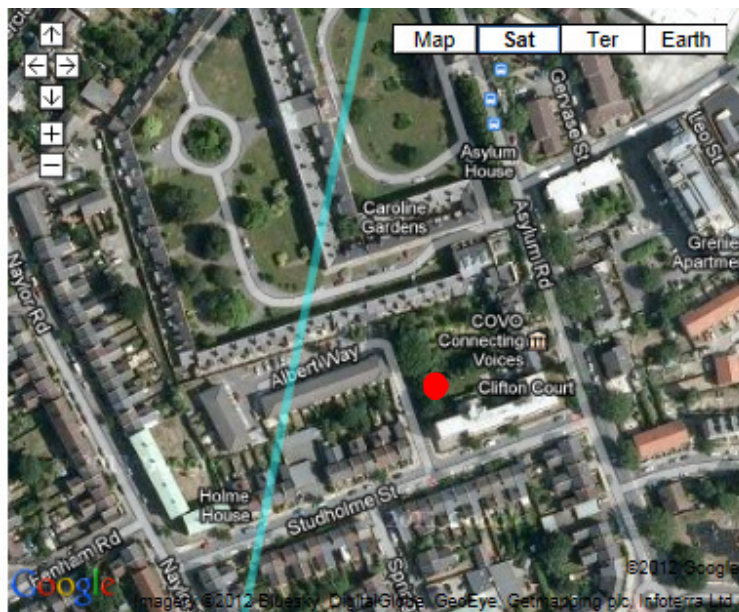


Figure 5 Former Course of the River Peck as mapped by Paul Cox  
([http://londonist.com/2009/01/lost\\_rivers\\_from\\_above\\_the\\_peck](http://londonist.com/2009/01/lost_rivers_from_above_the_peck)) (Site is red dot)

## 5. Archaeological and historical background

### 5.1 Historic Map Evidence

Historical map analysis (Appendix 1) indicates that prior to development of the Site in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century AD (see 1894 map) there was widespread use the locality for market gardens (see 1830 and 1842 map extracts). This former landuse is well attested in the garden of 16 Asylum road where up to 500mm of dark garden soil has been recorded directly overlying weathered natural silty-clay brickearth (Langley Silt). No further development has taken place on the site since the construction of 16 Asylum Road (see 1951, 1972, 1996 and 2003 map extracts).

### 5.2 Previous Excavation Evidence

The Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER) and London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) record several previous excavations in the vicinity of 16 Asylum Road (Figure 6). Excavations by Davis (1935) were undertaken at Nos. 79 and 115 Asylum road during his tremendous excavation campaign to test the pioneering research by I.D Margary (Sussex Archaeological Collections, Vols. LXXIII and LXXIV) and James Graham (Surrey Archaeological Collections, Vol. XL), to map and prove the course of the Lewes to London Roman road.

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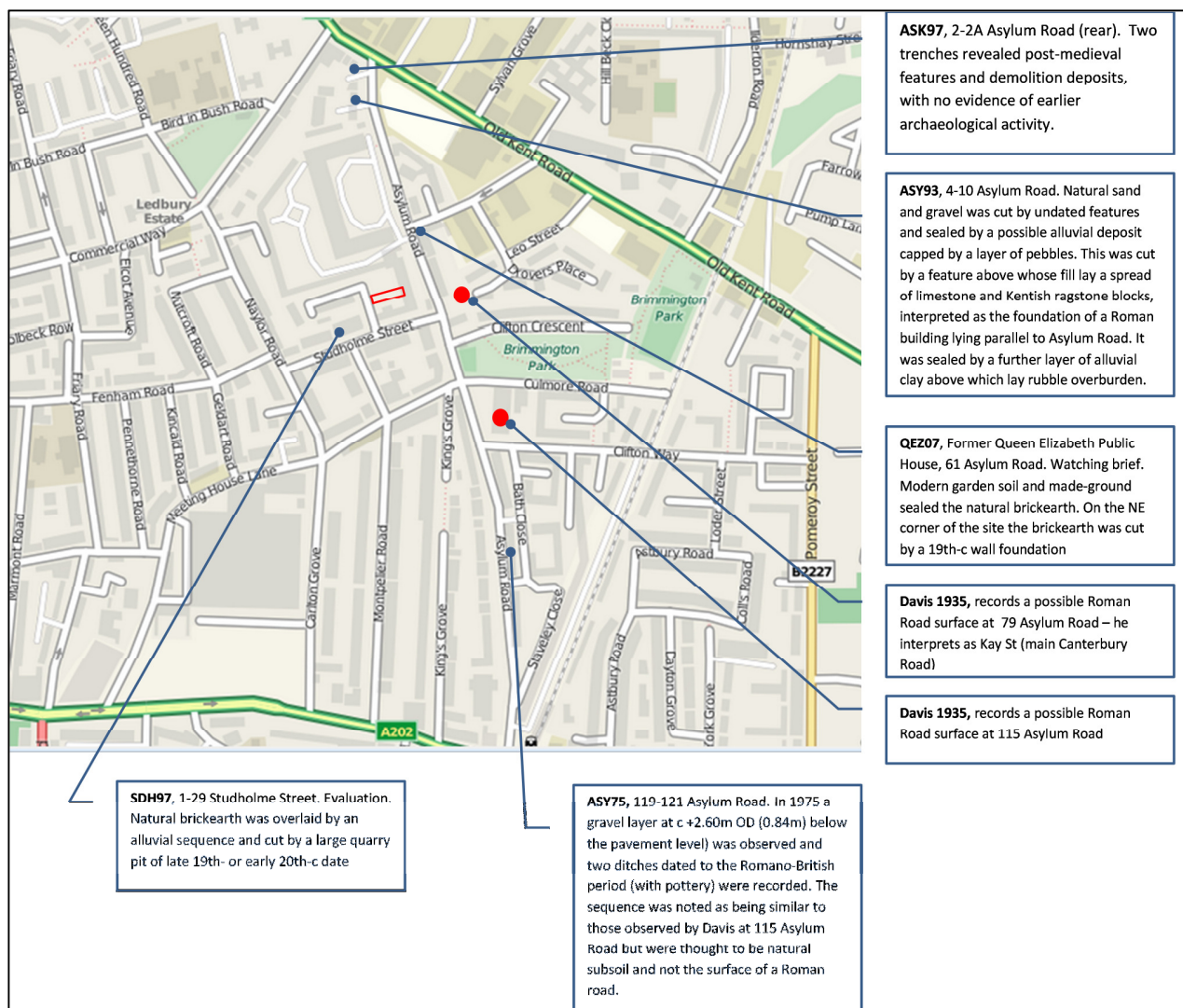


Figure 6 Previous excavation evidence relevant to the Site

Davis is left in no doubt about the authenticity of his discovery of the Roman road which he identified in the back yards of Nos. 79 and 115 Asylum Road and he produced section drawings to demonstrate metaled surfaces under laid by a sand and gravel cobble foundation (Figure 7; Figure 8; Figure 9; Figure 10). However, caution is needed as the sequence is also fairly typical of the brickearth over lying Kempton park gravel recorded as several other nearby sites and the two close by sites also don't appear to share a common construction sequence, a fact that Davis attributes to the features at 79 Asylum Road as being part of the main Canterbury road (Kay Street). Blatherwick (1993) also



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reserves judgment on Davis' interpretation. Certainly Davis failed to find any dateable finds despite the extensive nature of his investigations.

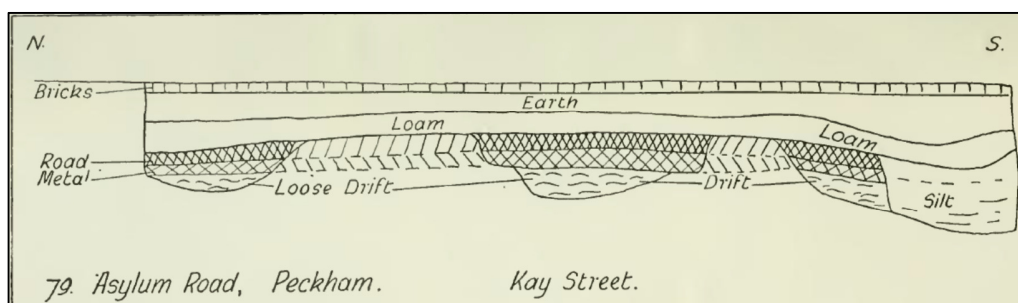


Figure 7 Section drawing 79 Asylum Road (Davis 1935)

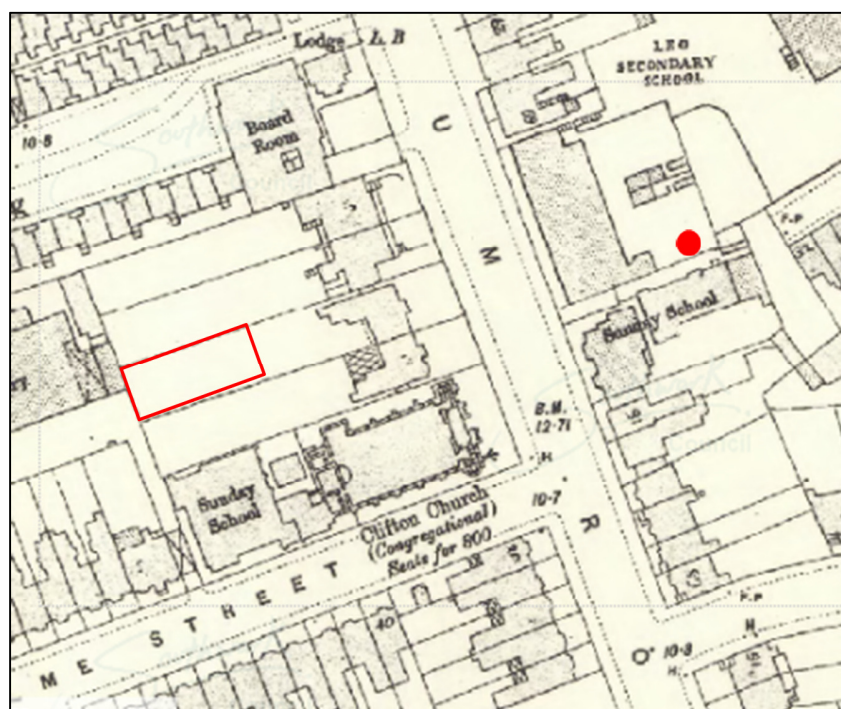


Figure 8 Estimated location of Davis' trench at 79 Asylum Road (1930's OS map)



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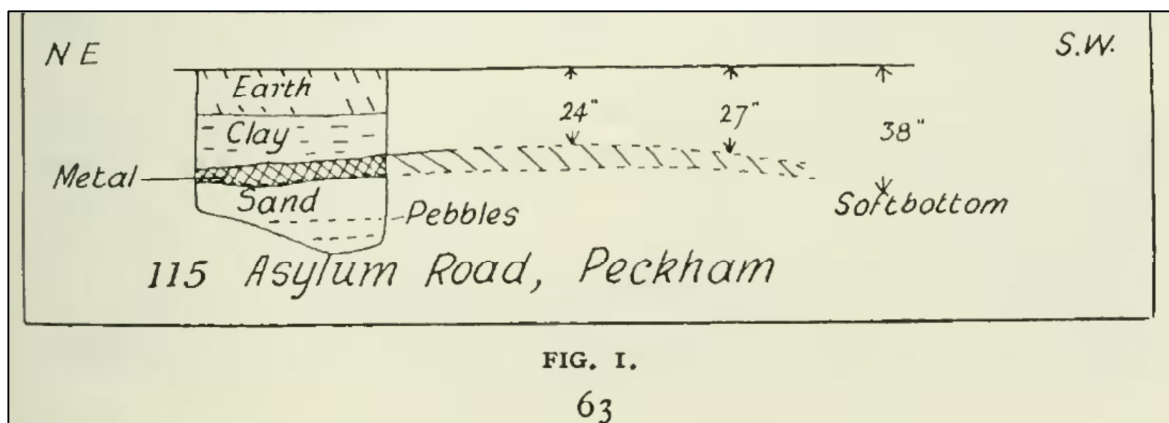


Figure 9 Section drawing 115 Asylum Road (Davis 1935)

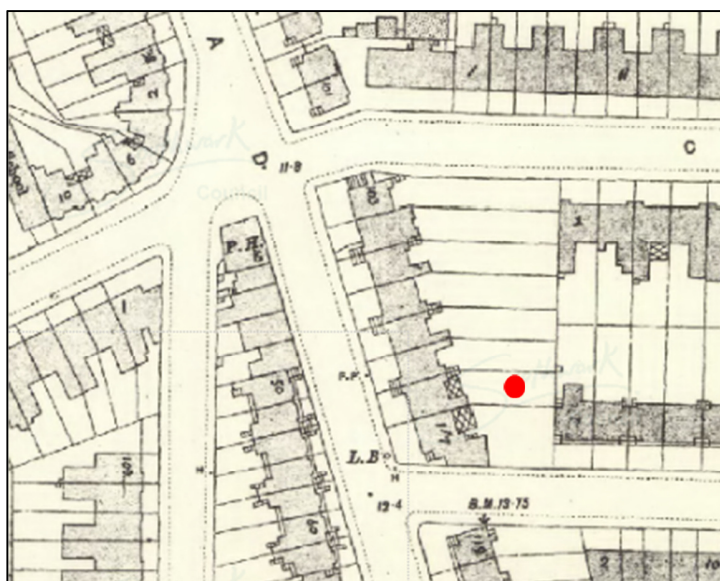


Figure 10 Estimated location of Davis' trench at 115 Asylum Road (1930's OS map)

An excavation during redevelopment at Nos. 119-121 Asylum Road in 1975 (ASY75, Figure 6) does report discovery of two ditches dated by inclusion of Romano-British pottery sherds (Hammerson 1975). There is no suggestion that they were related to the Roman road and in any case Davis' model shows that the road diverts from Asylum Road to the south west at a point north of this location (Figure 11). Significantly, this is the only dated Roman evidence so far discovered in the vicinity of Asylum Road despite several further investigations described below.

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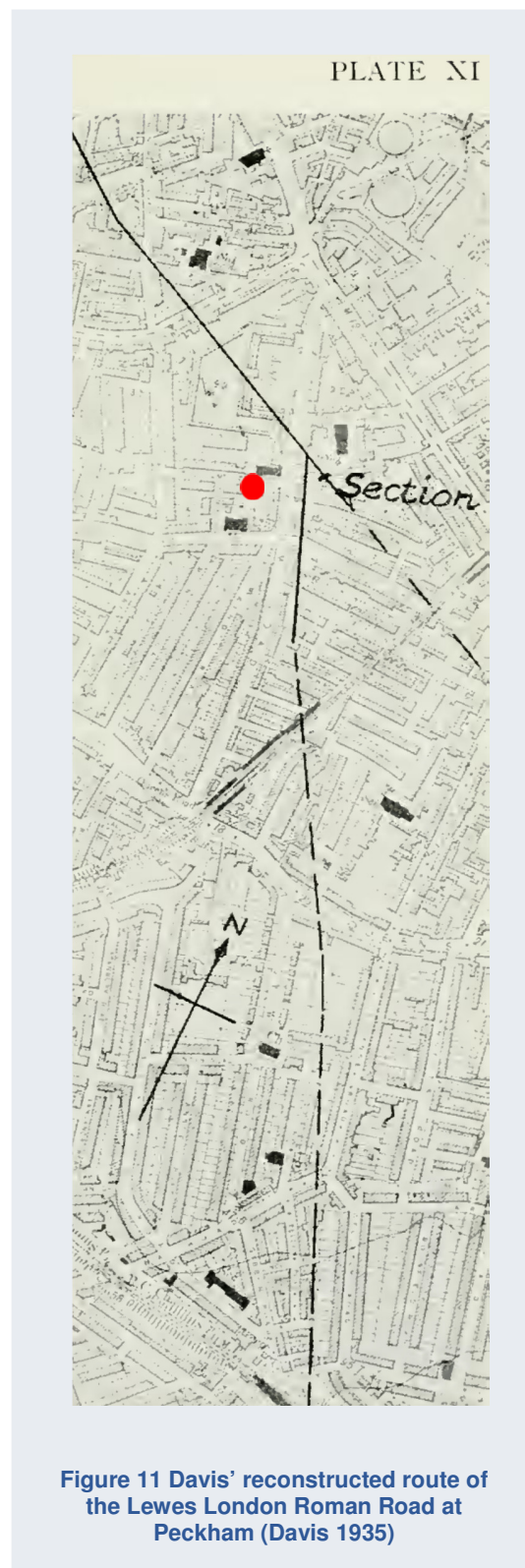
Blatherwick (1993) reports a possible Roman building during evaluation excavations in advance of housing redevelopment at Nos. 4-10 Asylum Road (ASY93, Figure 6). Although no datable finds were recovered charcoal and daub included with associated deposits are indicative of cultural occupation. The site was also reported as being associated with alluvial deposits possibly associated with the River Peck floodplain. The limestone and Kentish ragstone (a favoured Roman building material) linear spread could be associated with a roadway, roadside structure or other building. However the limited extent of the investigation and lack of datable artefacts and clear structural evidence means that the finds remain of uncertain provenance.

Three further investigations (ASK97, SDH97 and QEZ07, Figure 6) have all failed to identify any significant archaeological evidence despite their proximity to the previously described finds.

### 5.3 Site visit and geotechnical site investigation

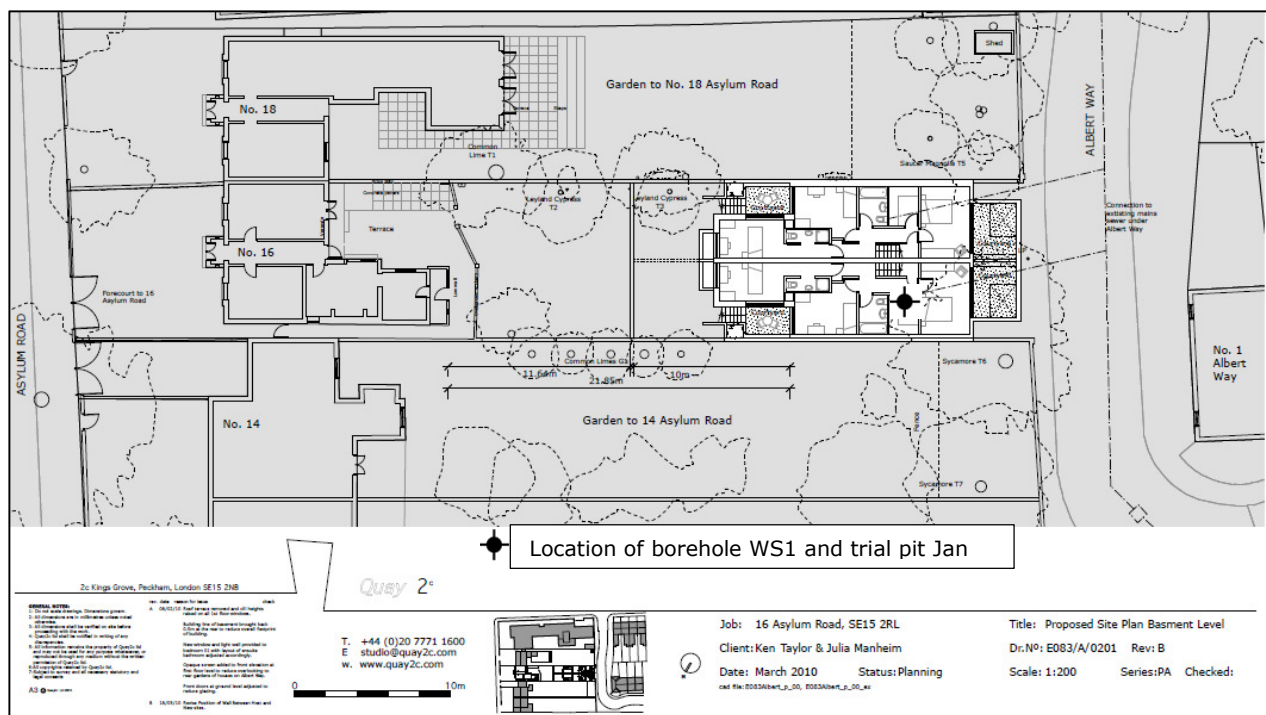
A site assessment and watching brief on geotechnical works has been completed by Jay Carver (MIFA) on 23 January 2012. The Site is approximately 10m wide by 25m in length (Figure 12) and occupies the far western half of the existing garden. The site is currently divided by a boundary fence to the east and a large brick wall forms the boundary with Albert Way on the east (Figure 13). There is currently no access other than by foot via a narrow passage through No. 16 Asylum Road.

There is some evidence for previous landscaping within the garden. Truncation is present in the centre of the plot and the upcast has been spread at the west end to create a large raised bed. There are also two derelict sheds at the west end of the plot. The entire site is overgrown.

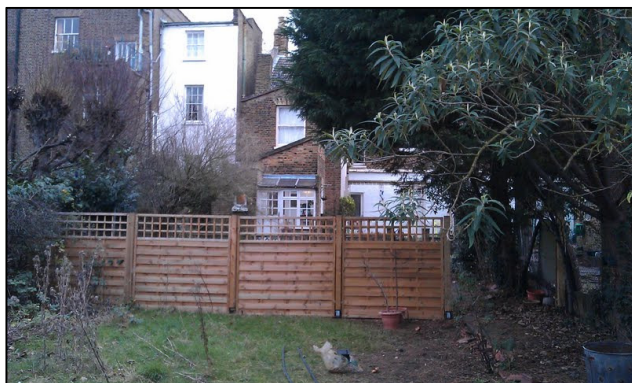


**Figure 11 Davis' reconstructed route of the Lewes London Roman Road at Peckham (Davis 1935)**

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**Figure 12 Proposed development at 16 Asylum Road. Two new houses are shown in white. Existing is in grey.**



**Figure 13 The plot: left towards eastern boundary with No 16 Asylum Road; right towards brick boundary wall (rear). landscaping in middle and background.**

A geotechnical borehole (WS1) and hand excavated trial pit 300mm x300mm in plan was monitored under an archaeology watching brief by the author on 23 January 2012. A deep garden topsoil of c.0.5m depth directly overlay the firm dark brown grey silty clay (Brickearth – Langley Silt). The topsoil contained Victorian and 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery, clay pipe, and brick fragments (Figure 14). The Brickearth was observed to a depth of 1.0m and was observed to be homogenous with no evidence for cultural inclusions. The borehole record (Appendix 2) indicates the Brickearth to be 1.5m in thickness overlying Kempton Park orange sand and gravel. Comparison with other



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nearby borehole logs viewed on the BGS website indicates that the sequence is typical for the area (Appendix 2).

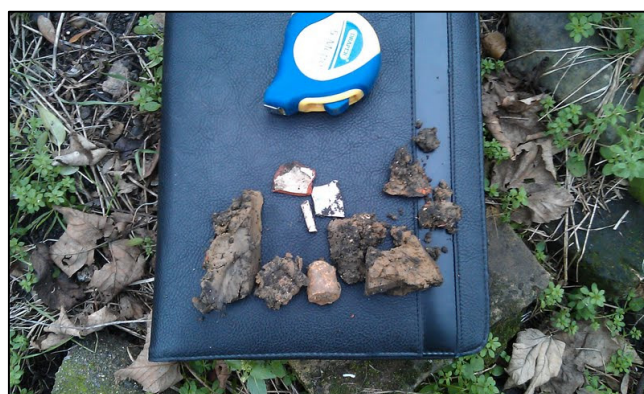


Figure 14 Excavation of trial pit for WS1 (left) finds from topsoil (right)

### 6. Scope of proposed work

Consideration of the desk-based assessment and site investigation work described above concludes that there is a low potential for the discovery of significant archaeological remains at the Site. The possible line of the Lewes London Roman Road has been mapped on the east side of Asylum Road at least 50m to the east of the Site. Significant road side activity (as possibly recorded at Nos. 4-10 Asylum Road for example) is not likely to extend so far from the road alignment. A road-side model for Roman occupation in the area has been proposed by Warhurst (1994) suggesting that a Vicus (an unplanned Roman civilian settlement) may have developed on the main Canterbury Road (Watling Street – now the Old Kent Road) at Peckham. Indeed, the crossing point of a stream (the River Peck?) and junction of two Roman Roads would provide the context for such a settlement. However such a site would generate a significant assemblage of cultural finds and the investigations made to date in the vicinity of the Site demonstrate a particular



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lack of this evidence. Additionally there is no alluvium recorded on the Site to indicate that the site would provide significant data on the identification of the course of the River Peck.

In order to mitigate the possible impact of the development on archaeological remains and meet the planning conditions, an archaeological watching brief shall be carried out when the site access is created and the topsoil removed. This will provide an opportunity to observe the surface of the Brickearth and record any archaeological deposits or features that may be present.

### *7. Programme of work*

A registered organisation and or member of the Institute of Archaeologists shall be commissioned to undertake the watching brief. The access and ground works will be programmed to begin in the summer period of 2012, although there is currently no fixed start date. It is likely that the watching brief shall be conducted over 1 or 2 days as the topsoil is excavated and removed from the site.

### *8. Site specific research aims and objectives*

- Is any evidence present for the Roman occupation of the area?
- Is any evidence present for the historical course and palaeo-environmental data for the River Peck?

### *9. Standards and Methods*

#### *9.1 Standards*

The watching brief shall be undertaken in accordance with:

The specification included at Appendix 3

GLAAS Standards for Archaeological Work (External Consultation Draft -Jul 2009)

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/glaas-standards-for-archaeological-work/>

IFA Standards and guidance: watching brief, Last updated: 28 October 2008

[http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/node-files/ifa\\_standards\\_watching.pdf](http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/node-files/ifa_standards_watching.pdf)

(LBS 2007) London Borough of Southwark, CDEN25 Strategic approach to planning for archaeology in Southwark

[http://www.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/file/4978/cden25\\_strategic\\_approach\\_to\\_archaeology](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/file/4978/cden25_strategic_approach_to_archaeology)

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(LBS n.d) Draft Southwark archaeology policy and supplementary planning guidance  
[http://www.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/346/archaeology\\_in\\_southwark](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/346/archaeology_in_southwark)

### 9.2 Field methodology

A qualified archaeologist shall closely monitor the topsoil strip that will be undertaken by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat toothed bucket in order that a clear visibility of the surface of the natural Brick earth is achieved.

The recording system employed shall be the Museum of London Archaeological Site Manual 1994 edition. A photographic, drawn and written record of the work and any finds shall be made by the archaeologist.

Collection and discard policies for artefacts shall be in accordance with Museum of London guidelines.

A site specific sampling strategy for environmental deposits and ecofacts shall be developed in the archaeologists' method statement if such deposits are encountered.

The archaeologist shall provide arrangements in the method statement for the immediate conservation of artefacts.

On completion of the fieldwork a report commensurate with the findings and in accordance with the standards listed at 9.1 shall be prepared and submitted to the client and copies made available to the GLHER, and the LBS Archaeologist within 2 months of its completion.

The report shall be illustrated with a photographic and drawn record of the works related to the ordnance survey grid and ordnance datum levels.

Publication and dissemination proposals shall be commensurate with the significance of the finds. As a minimum a summary report shall be prepared for the London Archaeologist annual round up and for the LAARC. An OASIS form shall be submitted to the GLHER.

No public outreach proposals are proposed. This will be reviewed if finds of exceptional local interest are revealed.

Copyright on the reported information shall remain with the client. However it is not anticipated that any reasonable request for reproduction would be withheld. A copy of the watching brief report shall be placed for public access with the GLHER within 2 months of the completion of the reporting.

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The project archive shall be prepared in accordance with Museum of London guidelines and deposited within 6 months of the completion of the fieldwork. If the archive includes any assemblages to be retained Transfer of Title will be requested from the landowner to the Museum of London.

### 9.3 Monitoring procedure

The archaeological watching brief shall be supervised by the consultant archaeologist appointed by the architect. The LBS archaeologist shall be contacted at least 2 weeks prior to commencement of the works in order that they may inspect the watching brief works if they wish. The consultant archaeologist shall keep the LBS archaeologist informed of progress and results via telephone and or email.

## 10. Contractors Method Statement

The appointed archaeologist shall prepare a method statement in response to this written scheme of investigation to include:

- A Museum of London site code
- Details of site personnel, support staff and specialists, including CVs where appropriate
- The Health and Safety Plan and Site-Specific Risk Assessment including emergency responses
- A Quality Assurance Plan;
- The Archaeology Contractor's IT capability and proposed use of IT
- The Archaeology Contractor's methods for Archaeological Science;
- The method for survey and level records
- The field recording methods to be used
- The safe method of working whilst excavating in trenches or pits including any temporary works required;
- The Archaeology Contractor's requirements and specification for services and facilities and attendances required to be supplied by the main contractor
- The retention and disposal policies for samples and artefacts recovered during the work;
- The method for excavating and recording inhumations and cremations
- The method for preparation of the required reports, archive and all associated deliverables;
- The procedures for assessment of potential for analysis (post excavation assessment); analysis and publication proposals;
- The method for preparation of the digital dataset, digital drawings, and digital report deliverables;

## 11. References

(Barton 1982) N. Barton. The Lost Rivers of London (1982).

(Blatherwick 1993) Simon Blatherwick, A Roman building and gravel surface at 4-10 Asylum Southwark, London SE15 London Archaeologist Volume 7 pp 73-76

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(Davis 1935) B. F. Davis 'The Roman Road from West Wickham to London' Surrey Archaeological Collections 43 (1935) 60-83

(Hammerson 1975) M. Hammerson Asylum Road, Peckham ASY75. Museum of London Site Archive (1975).

(LBS 2007) London Borough of Southwark, CDEN25 Strategic approach to planning for archaeology in Southwark

(LBS n.d) Draft Southwark archaeology policy and supplementary planning guidance

(Warhurst 1994) Rosemary Warhurst, A Roman vicus in Peckham? London Archaeologist Volume 7 pp229-231

The London Archaeological Archive and Recourse Centre (LAARC) was accessed on line

The Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER) was accessed on line

12. *Appendix 1 Historic Maps*

13. *Appendix 2 Geology and Geotechnical records*

14. *Appendix 3 Specification for watching brief*