

111-121 Fairfield Road, London Borough of Tower Hamlets: An Archaeological Evaluation Report

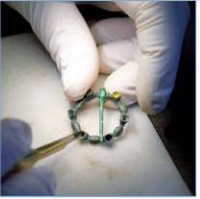
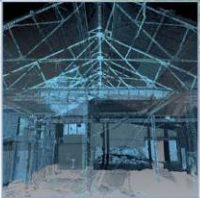
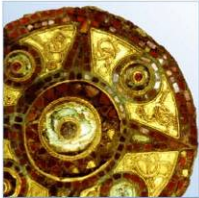
Planning Reference No: PA/15/01422

National Grid Reference Number: TQ 37205 83287

AOC Project No: 33306

Site Code: FLD16

Date: October 2016



AOC
Archaeology
Group

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111-121 Fairfield Road, London Borough of Tower Hamlets: An Archaeological Evaluation Report

On Behalf of: IPE Developments
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National Grid Reference (NGR): TQ 37205 83287

AOC Project No: 33306

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Date of Fieldwork: October 2016

Date of Report: October 2016

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Non-Technical Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group, on behalf Fairfield Bow Ltd on 11th October 2016, 111-121 Fairfield Road, London Borough of Tower Hamlets; National Grid Reference NGR TQ 37205 83287. The work consisted of a Single Trench Measuring 14m x 2.65m excavated by a 3 tonne excavator machine with a 1.8m bucket

Trench 1 exposed a series of natural deposits of sand and gravel in a sondage. No Palaeolithic material was uncovered. Overlying the natural was a made ground deposit truncated by a modern service pipe. No archaeological features were observed.

Due to the lack of significant archaeological deposits encountered, it is recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork be undertaken. The results of the evaluation will be summarised for inclusion in the London Archaeology Round-up and published via the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) website. On completion of the project, the archive, consisting of paper records, drawings, digital photographs, will be deposited with the LAARC, Museum of London.

1 Introduction

Site Location

- 1.1 This document details the results of an archaeological evaluation at 111-121 Fairfield Road, London Borough of Tower Hamlets; National Grid Reference TQ 37205 83287 (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The site covers a sub- rectangular piece of land measuring approximately 448sqm. It is located on the western side of Fairfield Road; bounded by commercial units to the northeast and southwest with residential properties to the southwest and northeast.
- 1.3 The site is occupied by a 20th century building on hard standing The development comprises the demolition of the existing building and the erection and erection of a five storey block comprising 20 self contained flats.

Planning Background

- 1.4 The local planning authority is the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH). Archaeological advice to the council is provided by John Gould, Archaeological Advisor for Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS).
- 1.5 The site is located directly opposite the Fairfield Conservation Area and an Old Ford Roman settlement Archaeological Priority Area, as designated by LBTH. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Battlefields, Registered Park and Gardens or World Heritage Sites within close proximity to the site.
- 1.6 The archaeological condition relating to the planning application (Application Reference: PA/15/01422) reads as follows (Condition 11):
 - A) No development shall take place until the applicant (or their heirs and successors in title) has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority in writing.
 - B) No development or demolition shall take place other than in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under Part (A).
 - C) The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under Part (A), and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of the results and archive deposition has been secured.

Reason: Heritage assets of archaeological interest may survive on the site. The planning authority wishes to secure the provision of appropriate archaeological investigation, including the publication of results, in accordance with Section 12 of the NPPF and in accordance with policy SP10 of the Tower Hamlets Core Strategy 2010.
- 1.7 A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was produced in July 2016 (AOC 2016) and approved by Historic England. The detailed WSI was designed in accordance with current best archaeological practice and local and national standards and guidelines:
 - Historic England – Archaeological Assessment and Evaluation Reports (Guidelines) (HE 2015a).

- Historic England – Archaeological Guidance Paper 3: Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork (HE 2015b).
- Historic England – Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation (HE 2015c).
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists – Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation (CIfA 2014a).

1.8 The work consisted of a single archaeological evaluation trench, within the extant building on site, in order to inform the local planning authority on the character of any archaeological remains as part of the relevant planning condition (Figure 2).

Geology and Topography

1.9 The British Geological Survey map (BGS 2014) indicates that the site is underlain by bedrock geology of London Clay, overlain by superficial deposits of the Taplow Gravel Formation.

1.10 The site lies on the west side of the Lea Valley where the meandering streams and channels have formed a wide plain. The site is relatively flat at a height of c.9.5mOD.

1.11 No geotechnical information for the site is currently available.

2 Archaeological and Historical Background

2.1 The following information is extracted from the archaeological desk based assessment for 213-215 Bow Road (*Heritage Collective 2013*) and 123 Fairfield Road Watching brief report (AS 2012).

Prehistoric Periods (c.500,000 BC – AD 43)

2.2 Evidence for the Upper and Lower Palaeolithic period in London is limited largely to isolated artefacts that have been retrieved out of context. Evidence from the Lea Valley suggests little direct habitation until the Neolithic period. Excavations associated with the Olympic Stadium have found evidence of stream channels associated with the River Lea from the Neolithic period, whilst peat deposits and silted-up water channels have been uncovered as part of Neolithic landscape to the north of the site.

2.3 Neolithic finds are recorded within a kilometre of the site, but only as isolated finds. The most significant of these are a flint dagger and a stone axe.

2.4 Evidence for later settlement within the Lea Valley to the north shows that the higher ground above Hackney, Leyton and Walthamstow marshes was occupied and utilised during the Bronze and Iron Age with small settlements, probably farmsteads. However, only a single entry from the HER relates to these periods close to the site: recording that a Bronze tanged spearhead was recovered from the River Lea, underneath the Bow Bridge.

Roman Period (AD 43 – AD 410)

2.5 The main Roman settlement in the area was that of the Roman city of London (*Londinium*), approximately 4km to the south-west of the site. The site lies south of the Roman road from London to Colchester which crosses the River Lea to the north at Old Ford. Roadside settlement along major routes such as these are common in the Roman period. The road has been identified at sites in Parnell Road, Armagh Road and Lefevre Street but little settlement evidence has been found along this section and it is likely that this area was predominantly rural.

2.6 Evidence from Romano-British activity has been uncovered at 72a Armagh Road including a substantial Roman building represented by ground beams supporting wattle and daub walls (GLHER

MLO25800). Whilst inhumation burials have been uncovered along Saxon Road, Armagh Road and Morville Street to the northwest of the site.

Early Medieval (AD 410 – AD 1066) and Medieval Periods (AD 1066 – AD 1536)

- 2.7 The main area of Saxon occupation in the London area was the establishment of Lundenwic, a 7th century Middle Saxon port and trading settlement west of the Roman city, 10km to the west of the site. There is little known occupation from this period in the local area.
- 2.8 The medieval period saw expansion of existing settlements and the establishment of many new villages. The settlement at Bow, or Stratford-le-Bow as it was initially called, originated in the 12th century, with the construction of the Bow Bridge over the River Lea. Queen Matilda, wife of Henry I, was thought to have commissioned the construction of the Bow Bridge in 1110, after a troubled crossing at the Old Ford, to the north. The bridge was the first stone arched bridge in England and became the main route from London to Essex. Although Bow Bridge was subsequently reconstructed in the 19th century, elements of the medieval bridge survive underneath.
- 2.9 It is thought that the Old Ford had a watermill at 'Algodesmelle' (GLHER MLO11248) and two fulling mills in the medieval period (MoLAS 2000). Medieval occupation has been observed in field boundaries Morville Street (GLHER MLO23822) and Ruston Street.

Post-medieval - present (AD 1536 - present)

- 2.10 The site lay within the Hundred of Ossulstone. The remaining entries on the Greater London HER relate to post medieval features and finds, many of which are buildings.
- 2.11 The HER records list a variety of areas of archaeological remains that are associated with the rapid development of the surrounding area in 17th and 18th century. This includes the creation of the porcelain works in 1730 on the eastern bank of the River Lea. This was a fairly large complex including kilns and warehouses.
- 2.12 Post medieval land use has been identified at Lefevre Walk and Parnell Road, whilst 18th and 19th century structures have been observed along Ruston Street.
- 2.13 The site was most recently occupied by the Eastway Business Centre, a two-storey modern block with flat roof and roller doors.

3 Aims of the Investigation

- 3.1 The aims of the evaluation were defined as being:
- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.
 - To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
 - To record and sample excavate any archaeological remains encountered.
 - To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological features and deposits.
 - To determine the extent of previous truncations of the archaeological deposits.
 - To enable the archaeological advisor to GLAAS to make an informed decision on the status of the condition, and any possible requirement for further work in order to satisfy that condition.

- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation.

3.2 The specific aims of the evaluation were defined as being:

- Establish the extent of modern disturbance.
- Determine the presence/absence of Roman activity.
- Determine the presence/absence of medieval activity.

3.3 The final aim was to make public the results of the investigation, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

4 Results

Trench 1

Table of the stratigraphic sequence

Context No	Depth	Top of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
001	0.15m	8.95m – 8.80m	Concrete Floor
002	0.20m	8.80m – 8.60m	Made Ground, Modern Rubble
003	0.40m	8.60m – 8.20m	Made Ground
006	0.29m	8.20m – 7.91m	Mixed Gravel natural
007	0.50m	7.91m – 7.41m	Sandy Natural
008	>0.80m	7.41m	Orange Sand and Gravel natural

- 4.1 Trench 1 was located inside 111-121 Fairfield Rd, prior to above ground demolition. Due to space restrictions the trench measured 14.0m long by 1.80m at base.
- 4.2 The lowest deposit identified in Trench 1 was naturally lain brownish yellow sand and gravel (008), observed at the base of a sondage (Plate 1). The gravel was small rounded stones. The surface of this deposit lay at 7.41mOD, and was excavated to a depth of 0.80m, to determine whether Palaeolithic material was present. The gravel was overlain by a second natural deposit, of banded soft pale yellow and yellowish brown sand (007) that was up to 0.50m thick. A third naturally lain deposit above this was 0.29m depth of banded sand and gravel (006), varying from yellowish brown to brownish yellow in colour. This was the uppermost geological horizon, and lay at 8.20mOD (Plate 2).
- 4.3 The sand and gravel sequence was sealed by a deposit of dark greyish brown clayey sand with frequent inclusions of brick rubble and medium sized gravel (003). This was 0.40m thick and had a sharp interface with the gravel, representing a deposit of made ground. The made ground was cut through by a service trench [005] at the southern end of the site measuring 0.81m deep and up to 0.75m wide. A ceramic pipe was laid in the base and the trench backfilled with mixed brown and brownish yellow sandy gravel with occasional brick inclusions (004) (Plate 3).
- 4.4 The filled pipe trench and made ground was covered over by 0.20m depth of loose hardcore (002), and concrete (001), which formed the floor of the recent building, at c8.95mOD.



Plate 1 Showing Southern Sondage



Plate 2, Trench, Looking North



Plate 3, Section Showing Truncation at South end of Trench.

5 Finds

- 5.1 No finds were collected during this investigation, due to the service trench being modern and the deposits beneath it were natural.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The evaluation successfully characterised both the stratigraphic sequence and the archaeological potential of the site. There is no clear evidence of archaeological activity on the site in spite of the proximity to the Roman Crossing of the Lea and the medieval centre of Bow and the crossing at Bow Bridge. This may be because the site was never occupied, but it is most likely that later building work has removed all visible evidence.
- 6.2 The only feature present on the site is the modern ceramic service pipe that runs across the southern end of the trench. The material of the pipe, the nature of the fill and the horizon in which it is cut from indicate that this is a modern and not an archaeological feature.
- 6.3 Due to the lack of archaeological deposits encountered it is recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork be undertaken. The final decision in regards to the requirement for further archaeological fieldwork lies with John Gould of the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS), part of Historic England.

7 Publication and Archive Deposition

- 7.1 Due to the nature of the results at this stage of the archaeological investigation, publication is expected to be limited to a summary in the London Archaeologist fieldwork round-up and publication via the Archaeological Data Service (ADS).
- 7.2 On completion of the project, the site archive will be deposited with LAARC. Until this time the archive will be retained at AOC's premises.
- 7.3 The archive will be prepared in accordance with 'Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage' (UKIC 1990) and 'Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation' (Brown & AAF 2007) and the local guidance from

LAARC. On completion of the project, the Developer/Landowner will discuss arrangements for the archive to be deposited with the Museum of London.

7.4 A digital copy of the report will be lodged in association with the online OASIS form (Appendix B).

8 Bibliography

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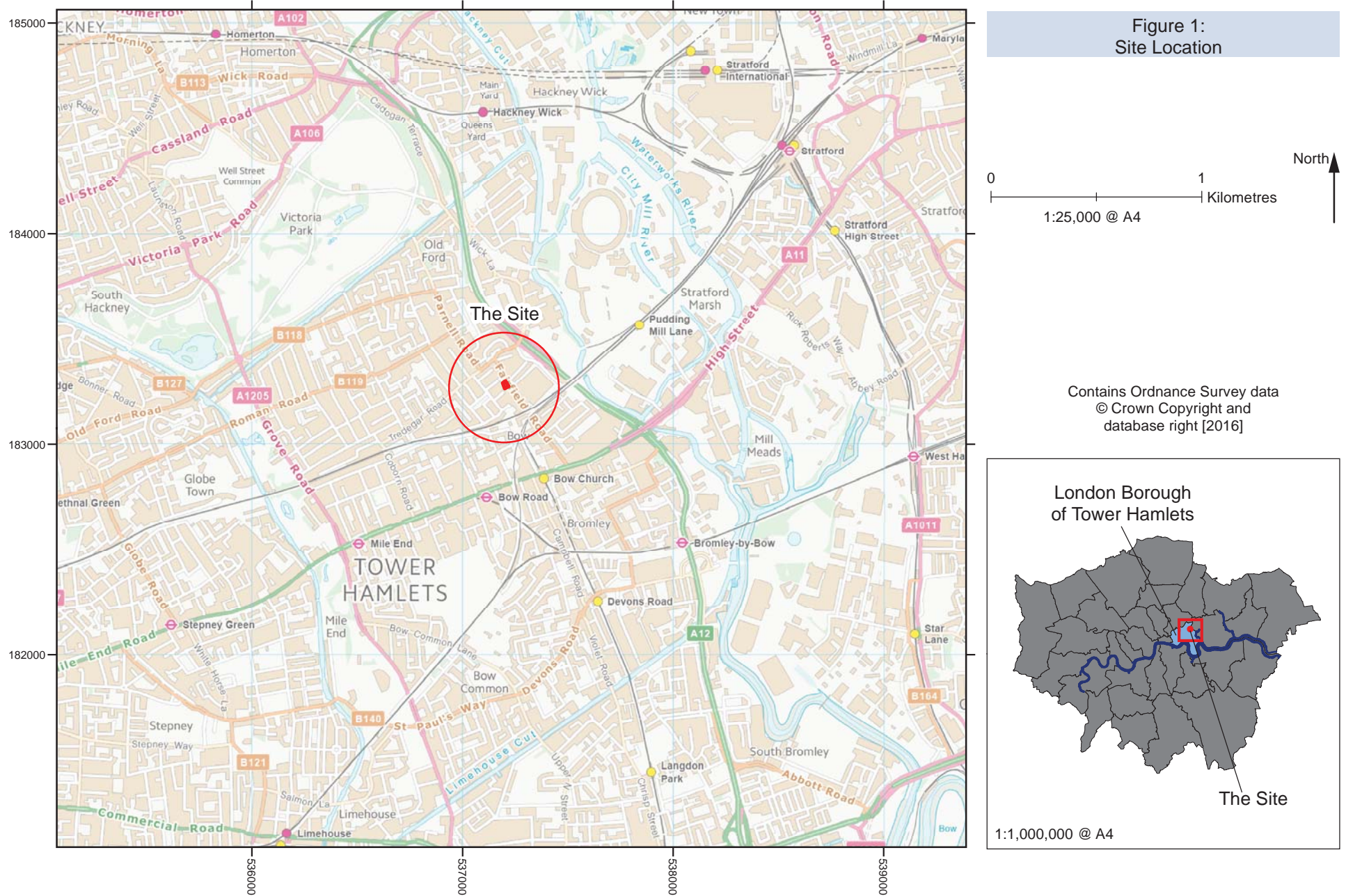
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111-121 FAIRFIELD RD, LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS:
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT



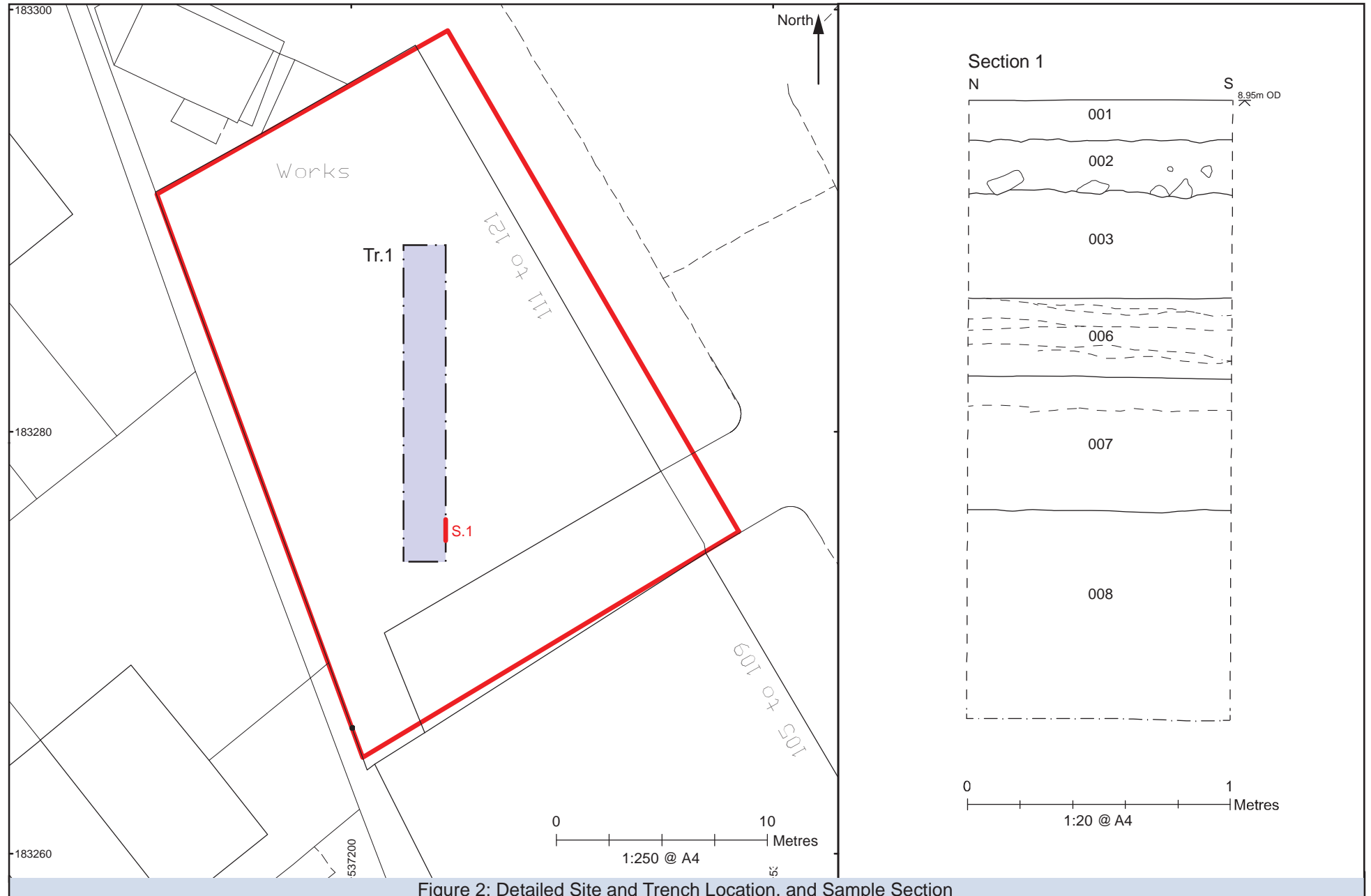


Figure 2: Detailed Site and Trench Location, and Sample Section

Appendices

Appendix A – Context Register

Context	Description	Length	Width	Depth
001	Concrete Floor	14.00m	2.65m	0.15m
002	Made Ground, Modern Rubble	14.00m	2.65m	0.20m
003	Made Ground	14.00m	2.65m	0.40m
004	Fill of modern Drain Truncation	2.65m	0.81m	0.75m
005	Cut of Modern Drain Truncation	2.65m	0.81m	0.75m
006	Mixed Gravel natural	14.00m	2.65m	0.29m
007	Sandy Natural	2.10m	1.30m	0.50m
008	Orange Sand and Gravel natural	2.10m	1.30m	>0.80m

Appendix B – OASIS Form

OASIS ID: *aocarcha1-256211*

Project details

Project name	111-121 Fairfield Road
Short description of the project	Archaeological evaluation revealed geological deposits and modern truncation
Project dates	Start: 12-10-2016 End: 13-10-2016
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	FLD 16 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	33306 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON TOWER HAMLETS BOW 111-121 Fairfield Road
Postcode	E3 2QA
Study area	448 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 37205 83287 51.531298966545 -0.021710576935 51 31 52 N 000 01 18 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 8.2m Max: 8.21m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	AOC Archaeology
Project brief originator	AOC Archaeology Group
Project design originator	AOC Archaeology Group
Project director/manager	Catherine Edwards
Project supervisor	Suzie Westall
Type of sponsor/funding body	developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	IPE Developments

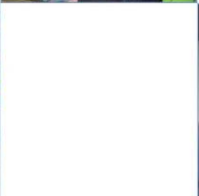
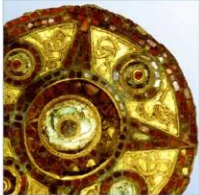
Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive recipient	n/a
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	FLD 16
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Digital Archive notes	held at AOC until transfer
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	FLD 16
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Plan", "Report", "Section", "Unpublished Text"
Paper Archive notes	held at AOC until transfer

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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