

Land At Water Lane / Vicarage Road
Kingston Upon Thames
London

Archaeological Excavation Report
Site Code WVL 06



**LAND AT WATER LANE / VICARAGE ROAD
KINGSTON UPON THAMES**

Archaeological Excavation Report

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Laing Homes to undertake an archaeological excavation at Water Lane / Vicarage Road in Kingston Upon Thames during October 2006.

A previous evaluation undertaken earlier in 2006 by Pre-Construct Archaeology had indicated the possible presence of a palaeochannel, suggested to be part of the east arm of the River Hogsmill. The principal purpose of this excavation was therefore to examine and record this palaeochannel and obtain appropriate samples.

Excavation revealed that under modern and post-medieval deposits lay brickearths and other alluvia over Pleistocene river terrace gravels. Although ephemeral alluvial features of undetermined Holocene date were noted, the channel in question was not present within the Site.

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Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the excavation by CgMs Consulting, and would like to thank Duncan Hawkins of CgMs for his helpful assistance.

The fieldwork was undertaken by David Norcott and Andreas Pecin. The illustrations were prepared by Martin Norris. This report was compiled by David Norcott and the project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Nick Truckle.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology were commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological excavation at Water Lane / Vicarage Road in Kingston Upon Thames (hereafter 'the Site') during October 2006.

1.1.2 Previous archaeological research and fieldwork have shown the study area to be located in an area of high archaeological potential. An evaluation by Pre-Construct Archaeology in April 2006 (CgMs & Pre-Construct 2006) indicated the probable presence of a palaeochannel, possibly part of the east arm of the River Hogsmill and likely of Roman and early post-Roman date. This was found to be sealed by Post-Medieval and modern horizons.

1.1.3 The principal purpose of this excavation was to examine the suspected palaeochannel, as laid out in the proposal for field excavation (CgMs 2006).

1.2 The Site: Location, Topography and Geology

1.2.1 The Site is located on land between Water Lane and Vicarage Road, Kingston Upon Thames, and is centred on NGR 517900 169500. The Site was relatively level throughout, and although empty at the time of excavation had previously been employed as a car park.

1.2.2 The Site is mapped as lying upon alluvium and river Brickearths, with underlying river terrace gravels mapped as outcropping just to the west (British Geological Survey 1981).

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Palaeochannel

2.1.1 The principal purpose of this excavation was to examine the suspected palaeochannel by:

- Obtaining and recording a section across it
- Retrieving appropriate environmental samples that could be used to investigate whether the channel was tidal in nature
- Obtaining absolute dates via radiocarbon dating

2.2 Other archaeology

2.2.1 Deposits of obviously modern date were to be removed with minimal recording, whilst any post-medieval and earlier archaeological deposits were to be recorded in advance of removal.

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1.1 The Excavation Strategy is outlined in the Project Proposal (CgMs 2006) and methodology is therefore presented here in a summarised form.
- 3.1.2 Two trenches were proposed, each measuring 7.5m x 20m at ground level and progressively stepped to reach a maximum depth of 3.6m. Due to practical issues, these trenches were shortened (after consultation with CgMs) to 18m for Trench 1 and 12m for Trench 2 (**Figure 1**).
- 3.1.3 The trenches were excavated using a 21 tonne 360 degree mechanical excavator. Modern concrete, tarmac and rubble were removed using a toothed bucket in conjunction with a concrete breaker. Once these were removed a toothless ditching bucket was used to remove material in spits in order to allow observation of any archaeological deposits.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Trench 1

- 4.1.1 The trench section is illustrated in **Figure 2**.
- 4.1.2 Concrete/tarmac and rubble associated with the latest phase of surfacing were recorded to a depth of c.0.5m (7.52-6.92m above Ordnance Datum aOD).
- 4.1.3 Beneath this lay (**113**), a c.1m thick layer (6.92-6.0m aOD) consisting of mixed modern detritus (brick rubble, 19th/20th century pottery) with some possible post-medieval finds, including fragments of clay pipe. Within this layer were partially intact modern (frogged) brick walls and single thickness brick floors, almost certainly associated with the brewery previously occupying the site. This layer was removed by machine after rapid sketch recording.
- 4.1.4 From 6.0m to 4.82m aOD were recorded water-lain deposits which consisted of redeposited Pleistocene brickearth (**109**) and interleaved sands and silts. These were contained within intercutting but ephemeral channel features [**105, 106**] of uncertain Holocene date. The upper surface of **109** was quite 'dirty' and contained occasional finds of animal bone - this represents intrusive material entering by means of disturbance and/or bioturbation.
- 4.1.5 Into the upper surface of these layers (6.0m aOD) were cut two post-medieval / early modern pits [**102 & 103**] and two modern features [**101 & 104**]. **102** and **103** contained fragments of clay pipe. These were not observed in plan due to very extensive disturbance by numerous large concrete pilings, but were recorded in section and the finds examined (but not retained).
- 4.1.6 From 4.82m to 4.20m aOD and below a series of layered sands and gravels were recorded representative of river terrace deposits of Pleistocene date.

4.2 Trench 2

- 4.2.1 Trench 2 was initially positioned 8m to the west, but on removal of surface layers a flooded modern cellar/pump room c.2m deep and filled with scrap metal was revealed. The trench was relocated just past the eastern extent of this cellar.
- 4.2.2 In the event further modern cellar rooms were found to extend eastwards into the new trench position. These structures had caused widespread disturbance of earlier features and had removed the majority of post medieval deposits within the trench footprint.
- 4.2.3 Rapid flooding from adjacent cellars combined with unstable trench sides made formal recording of this trench impossible - however some remaining intact areas of brickearth were observed to overlie Pleistocene gravels at a similar depth to Trench 1, once more indicating the absence of the suspected channel.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 Modern and post-medieval features similar to those described in the previous evaluation were found. The anticipated palaeochannel was absent from the trenches however, with what had been interpreted as a palaeochannel fill ('dirty' brickearth containing occasional artefacts) being shown to be the upper surface of a brickearth containing intrusive archaeological material.

6 THE ARCHIVE

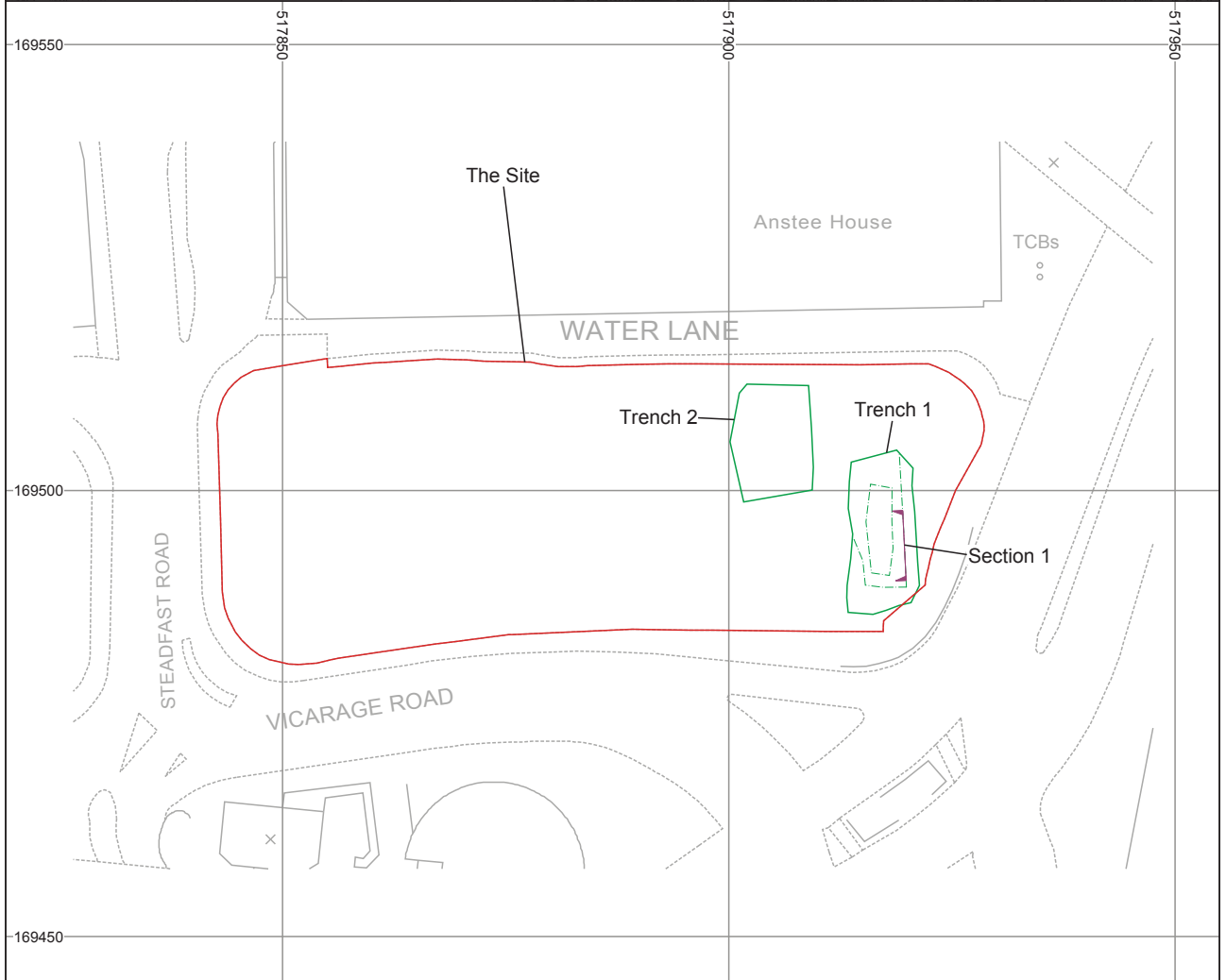
- 6.1.1 The project archive, consisting of an A4 ringbinder and a collection of photographs (digital, colour slide and black & white), is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology at Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire under the project code 64300.


7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales), 1981, *South London: Sheet 270 Solid and Drift Edition*, Ordnance Survey

CgMs & Pre-Construct Archaeology 2006, *Summary of the first part of an archaeological evaluation: Land at Water Lane / Vicarage Road, Kingston Upon Thames*, unpublished client report, CgMs Consulting, London

CgMs 2006, *Proposal for an Archaeological Field Excavation: Land at Water Lane / Vicarage Road, Kingston Upon Thames*, unpublished client report, CgMs Consulting, London

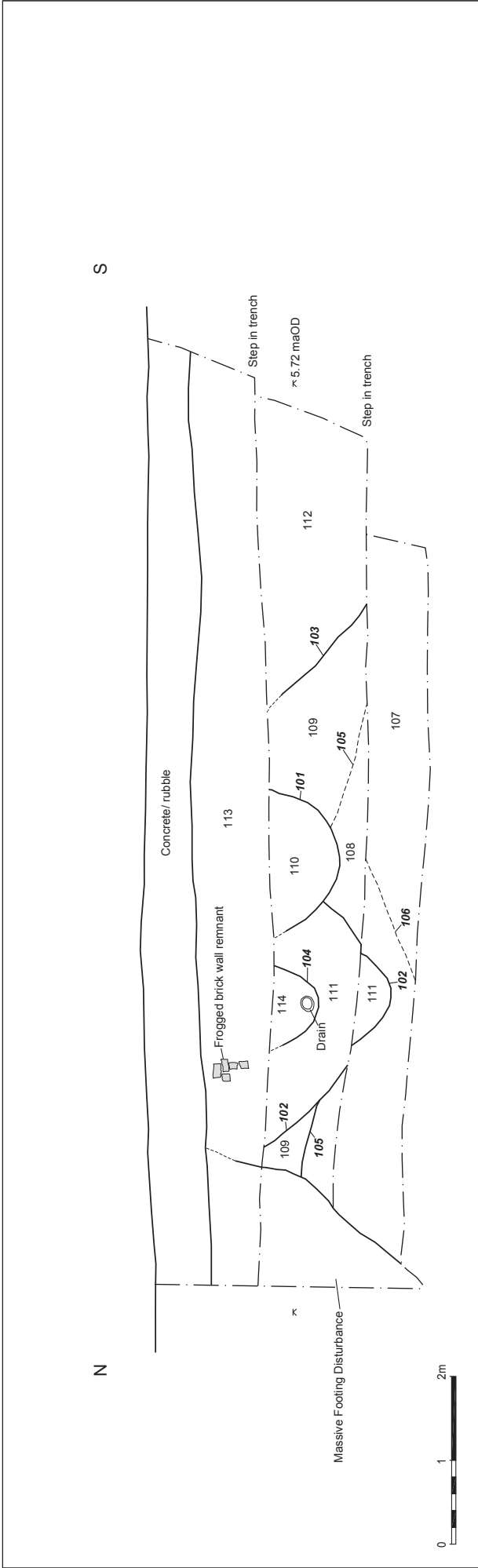


 Steps in trench	Reproduced from the 2001 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Explorer® map with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright, Wessex Archaeology, Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire. SP4 6EB. Licence Number: 100028190. Digital data reproduced from Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright 2006 All rights reserved. Reference Number: 100020449. This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.			
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Site and trench location plan

Figure 1





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West facing section in Trench 1

Figure 2



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