



Giffin Street Regeneration London Borough of Lewisham Greater London

Archaeological Evaluation Report





**GIFFIN STREET REGENERATION PHASE 1
LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
GREATER LONDON**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Lewisham Borough Council to undertake an archaeological evaluation of a c. 0.85Ha area of land at Giffin Street in the London Borough of Lewisham, centred on NGR: 537295, 177301. The site is located within an Archaeological Priority Area (APA2) as defined in the Borough's Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map of 2004.

The proposed development includes the demolition of existing structures on the site and the construction of a new school building. The fieldwork comprised the machine excavation of three evaluation trenches totalling 125m² in extent. A fourth evaluation trench was planned, but was not excavated for reasons of public health and safety. The fieldwork was undertaken between the 19th and 25th of January 2009.

No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts predating the Modern period (1800 – present) were recorded from the archaeological evaluation. A single small brick structure of late nineteenth or early twentieth century date was recorded in Trench 2 and Trench 3 contained a surface of re-used railway sleepers. The remainder of the deposits recorded were made-ground deposits consisting of redeposited sand and gravel mixed with assorted building rubble and other material; the made-ground deposits were present across the site to a depth in excess of at 1.20m. It appears likely that 20th century development has resulted in the severe truncation of any archaeological structures or deposits which may have been present on the site.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Lewisham Borough Council and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Matthew Smith of CgMs for his help. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Mark Stevenson (GLAAS) for his advice and comments, and Phillipa Lau Brown of Lewisham Borough Council for advice and assistance on site.

The fieldwork was conducted by Chris Ellis and Cornelius Barton. This report was compiled by Cornelius Barton with figures prepared by Kitty Brandon. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Nick Truckle.

GIFFIN STREET REGENERATION PHASE 1 LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM GREATER LONDON

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of Document

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological evaluation of a c. 0.85Ha area of land at Giffin Street in the London Borough of Lewisham (**Figure 1**), hereafter referred to as 'the Site'. The fieldwork comprised the machine excavation of three evaluation trenches totaling c.124m². The fieldwork was undertaken between the 19th and 23rd January 2009. This report describes and summarises the results of the archaeological evaluation of the Site.

1.2 The Site

1.2.1 The Site comprises a sub-rectangular parcel of land, centred on NGR: 537295, 177301, at Giffin Street, Deptford. The Site is bounded to the south by Giffin Street, to the west by Council buildings and Deptford High Street, to the north by Mechanics Path and to the east by Deptford Leisure Centre (**Figure 1**). The Site is currently in use as a public car park.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 The Site lies within an Archaeological Priority Area (APA2) as defined in the Lewisham UDP. Prior to the redevelopment of the Site, an archaeological evaluation was recommended by the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) the Archaeological Advisors to the London Borough of Lewisham.

1.3.2 The proposed development includes the construction of a school building with attendant services. The evaluation followed an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation (CgMs 2008b) following discussions with Mark Stevenson of GLAAS. The WSI was produced to detail the objectives, methods and resourcing of the archaeological evaluation which is intended to inform any subsequent archaeological work on the Site that may be necessary.

1.4 Geology and Topology

1.4.1 The underlying geology of the Site consists of Kempton Park river terrace sand and gravels, overlying Thanet Beds of silty fine sand (BGS sheet 270 1:50000 series, South London). The Site lies approximately 200m west of Deptford Creek. The Site is on a slight gradient of land sloping east toward the creek, from c.6.2m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at the west to c.5.3m AOD at the east.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This section is based upon the desk-based assessment of the Site carried out by CgMs Consulting in 2006 (CgMs 2008a). This assessment not only included the Site itself but also a wider 'Study Area', which comprised a radius of 250m, centred on the Site. A number of sites and findspots of archaeological significance are recorded in the study area, but none within the Site boundary.

2.2 Prehistoric (500,000 BC – AD 43)

2.2.1 Despite a number of archaeological interventions in Lewisham, there is little evidence for in-situ prehistoric activity in the immediate vicinity of the study site. Within the Study Area a small number of struck flints have been located; these include Palaeolithic implements at Deptford Broadway and undated struck flints at Deals Gateway and Blackheath Road.

2.2.2 There is some palaeoenvironmental evidence within the vicinity of the Study Area consisting of peat deposits found at Broadway Fields. The peat deposits were associated with burnt and struck flints thought to be of Neolithic and Bronze Age date.

2.2.3 Archaeological work at 7 Deptford Broadway revealed the only known prehistoric cut feature in the Study Area; a pit containing a fragment of saddle quern and a stuck flint blade thought to be Iron Age in date.

2.3 Roman (AD 43 – 410)

2.3.1 The extent of features and finds within the Study Area indicate that Deptford may have been the location of a Roman settlement. A Roman Road is listed as running through the Study Area on its course from Southwark to Greenwich. A report from c. 1866 identified a portion of tessellated floor and massive brickwork found 30ft beneath Deptford High Street.

2.3.2 Excavations in 1989 at Deptford Broadway revealed the presence of two pits and two ditches both containing Roman pottery. It is suggested that the ditches could form elements of an enclosure. Further investigations by AOC in 2003 within the area at 7 Deptford Broadway revealed no new archaeological features of this date.

2.3.3 A 17th century find of a 'Janus' like two headed sculpture and Roman Gateway were located at St Thomas Watering Place. A stone coffin and inhumation were found at Vanguard Street, at the south of the study area in 1868 and were thought to be of Roman origin.

2.4 Anglo-Saxon (410 – 1066 AD)

2.4.1 Two graves representing the Saxon period were found during excavations at 7 Deptford Broadway. One is an adult female accompanied by grave goods of 6th century date. Grave goods included glass beads, gold-wire ring and a pendant seemingly placed on the chest and an arm bracelet placed near the knees. The other burial seems to be of an adult male, interred without any grave goods.

2.4.2 An investigation re-evaluating and extending into the area of Saxon burials (AOC 2003), revealed no new features of this period.

2.5 Medieval (1066 – 1499)

2.5.1 In the Medieval period Deptford appears to have two settlement centres, one based around St Nicholas Church, north-west of the Study Area, and the other within and south

of the Study Area at Deptford Broadway. Excavations at 7 Deptford Broadway revealed medieval settlement type features including a 'horse shoe' shaped bread oven, a sandstone and flint wall, a ditch and a pit.

- 2.5.2 Other medieval evidence within the Study Area includes a wooden bridge, located across Deptford Creek and known to have existed from at least 1345-6. A second site of a late medieval hermitage built at the east end of Deptford Bridge is also known.

2.6 Post Medieval and Modern

- 2.6.1 An abundance of Post Medieval entries including buildings, tenements, drains, ditches and pits are listed in the SMR (Sites and Monuments Record). Most relevant to the Site was the 1989 excavations at Giffin Street. The excavations reported that the Post Medieval period was represented, but fails to list in what form.
- 2.6.2 Excavations at the Odeon Cinema site revealed 47 features, the majority of which were truncated by the construction of the cinema. The features represented areas of undeveloped back land and gardens thought to be associated with buildings on the main frontage. The features were mainly domestic rubbish pits with occasional brick lined tanks.
- 2.6.3 Early maps show the study site to lie upon open land between the frontages of Church Street to the east and Butt Lane to the west (CgMs 2008, Fig 2, Fig 3 and Fig 4). In 1774 Giffen Street was a road linking Butt Lane and Church Street. South of Giffen Street parallel roads, Effingham Street and Frankham Street were laid out by 1778 but not developed until later due to a slump in the housing market (RCHME 1998).
- 2.6.4 The Crumley Map of 1833 (CgMs 2008, Fig 5) shows part of the Site under a former name of 'Griffin Street', which has clearly become 'Giffin Street' and that the southern part of the Site now contains a row of terraced housing. The open land behind Giffin Street is bordered east, by Church Street, and west, by the High Street, and to the north by the railway.
- 2.6.5 The detail of the First Edition Ordnance Survey clearly shows the density of terraced housing to the south of Giffin Street (CgMs 2008 Fig 6). The Second and Third Edition Ordnance Survey Maps show no subsequent change apart from Regent Street being renamed Frankham Street.
- 2.6.6 Later maps indicate that the terrace of houses at the south side of the Site remained in place until at least 1951 (CgMs 2008 Fig 10). The central area of the Site has been redeveloped at least twice during the 20th century.
- 2.6.7 Following the desk based assessment the archaeological potential of the Site for archaeology of any period was thought to be moderate (CgMs 2008, 14).

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1.1 The principal aims and objectives of the evaluation as specified in the agreed Project Specification (CgMs 2008) were to establish whether any archaeological remains exist in the area, with particular regard to any which are of sufficient importance to require preservation in situ.
- 3.1.2 The evaluation aimed to determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, form, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains, irrespective of period, liable to be threatened by the proposed development. An adequate representative sample of all areas where archaeological remains are potentially

threatened should be studied, and attention should be given to sites and remains of all periods (inclusive of evidence of past environments).

3.1.3 The evaluation sought to clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusions and hence assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits and any surviving structures of archaeological significance. Within these parameters, the evaluation of the Site presents an opportunity to address the following objectives:

- 1) To establish the presence or otherwise of any archaeological remains, and to define the date and nature of such activity.
- 2) To establish the environmental context of any archaeological remains, together with any earlier and/or later activity.
- 3) Evaluate the likely impact of past land use and development.
- 4) Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

4 EVALUATION STRATEGY

4.1 Trial Trenching

4.1.1 It was originally proposed to evaluate the Site through the excavation of four trenches, three measuring 25 x 2m in extent and one 10 x 2m. However, due to concerns regarding public safety, and after consultation with Mark Stevenson of GLAAS, it was decided to omit one of the larger trenches (Trench 1), and only trenches 2 - 4 were excavated (**Figure 2**). The trenches were excavated by a JCB excavator under continual archaeological supervision, using a bladed ditching bucket.

4.1.2 All excavation was conducted in compliance with the standards outlined in the relevant GLAAS Guidance Papers and the Institute For Archaeology *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* (2001).

5 RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section summarises the primary findings of the evaluation. A detailed summary of the stratigraphic sequence and deposit descriptions are listed in the trench summary table in **Appendix 1**. Trenches were generally dug to a maximum of 1.20m

5.2 Natural deposits

5.2.1 The natural geology (**309**) was encountered at 1.85m below ground level (4.15m aOD) – Section 3, **Figure 2**. It was characterised by yellowish-brown coarse sand with patches of well-sorted rounded coarse chert gravel (<60mm). The deposit was only encountered in Trench 3, in a test-pit dug specifically for the purpose.

5.3 Site Formation Sequence

5.3.1 Overlying the natural gravel was a sequence of dump deposits (**201-206**, **301-308** and **401-402**) which have been built up over the natural geology (**Figure 2**; **sections 1-3**). The deposits consisted of mixed silty sands and gravels mixed with a variety of building rubble and other debris, including glass, plastic, fabric, coal and clinker. All the deposits found above the level of the natural were clearly of modern origin.

5.4 Trench 2

- 5.4.1 The only built structure encountered on the Site consisted of a square brick construction (**207**) in the western end of Trench 2 (see **Plate 1**). The bricks were deeply frogged, securely mortared and of late 19th or 20th century manufacture.
- 5.4.2 The remainder of the deposits in Trench 2 consisted of made ground as detailed above. The western end of the trench contained a layer of concrete slab at a depth of 1.10 – 1.20m (see **Plate 2**).

5.5 Trench 3

- 5.5.1 Trench 3 contained a surface of 20th century origin consisting of a layer of tightly-packed wooden railway sleepers bedded in tar and gravel (see **Section 3** and **Plate 3**). Below this surface were further made-ground deposits to a depth of 1.85m, overlying natural sand and gravel at 4.41m AOD. There were no archaeologically significant remains present.

5.6 Trench 4

- 5.6.1 The area of Trench 4 was also severely disturbed, due to work associated with the construction of the adjoining leisure centre to the east. A concrete slab 0.25m thick was present at the north end of the trench, rendering full excavation of the trench at this end impractical. To the south of the slab, made-ground deposits were again present to a depth in excess of 1.20m (see **Section 4** and **Plate 4**).

5.7 Discussion

- 5.7.1 No remains of archaeological significance were present in any of the trenches. It appears that the Site area has been built up to a considerable depth above ground level; the level of Mechanic's Path immediately to the north (see **Figure 1**) lies approximately 2m lower than the north end of the Site area, and comparison with surrounding streets confirms that the Site has been raised. Natural gravel was only recorded within a Test Pit in Trench 3 but the fact that modern made ground directly overlay the natural suggests that the historic ground surface has been truncated in this area of the Site.

6 FINDS

- 6.1.1 Five fragments of post-medieval clay pipe were recovered from deposit **206** in Trench 2. The presence of modern material in the same deposit indicted that the pipe-fragments were residual, and since the fragments were of little or no intrinsic significance they were noted but have not been retained.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL

- 7.1.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were present

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1.1 No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts pre-dating the modern period (1800–present) have been recorded from the archaeological evaluation of the Site. All of the deposits which overlie the natural gravels and alluvium to a depth of c. 1.85m from the present ground surface (c. 6.2 – 5.3m AOD) contain a very small assemblage of exclusively post-medieval material of 17th to early 19th century or modern date (1799 – present).

8.1.2 It appears that the Site area has been built up to a considerable depth above natural levels. The build-up is most likely due to demolition and leveling of earlier developments, particularly the 19th century terraces to the south of the Site and the original council depot buildings.

9 THE ARCHIVE

9.1.1 The project archive from the present fieldwork has been compiled into a stable, fully cross-referenced and indexed archive in accordance with Appendix 6 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (2nd Edition, English Heritage 1991). The archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology, London, under the project code **GIF09 (WA 70970)**. The full list of the contexts of this archive is detailed in **Appendix 2** of this report. The project archive will be deposited with the Museum of London in due course.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

BGS 1981, *Solid and Drift 1:50 000 series Sheet 270: South London*.

CgMs Consulting, 2008a, *Archaeological Desk Based Assessment: 118 Putney Bridge Road, London SW15*. Unpublished client report (July 2008).

CgMs Consulting, 2008b, *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation: Giffin Street Regeneration, Lewisham, London*. Unpublished client report (September 2008).

English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects* (2nd Edition)

IFA 2001 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations*

11 APPENDIX 1 – TRENCH SUMMARY TABLE

All archaeological deposits/features shown in **bold**.
 All (+) indicate deposits/features not fully excavated.
 'Depth' equals depth from present ground surface.

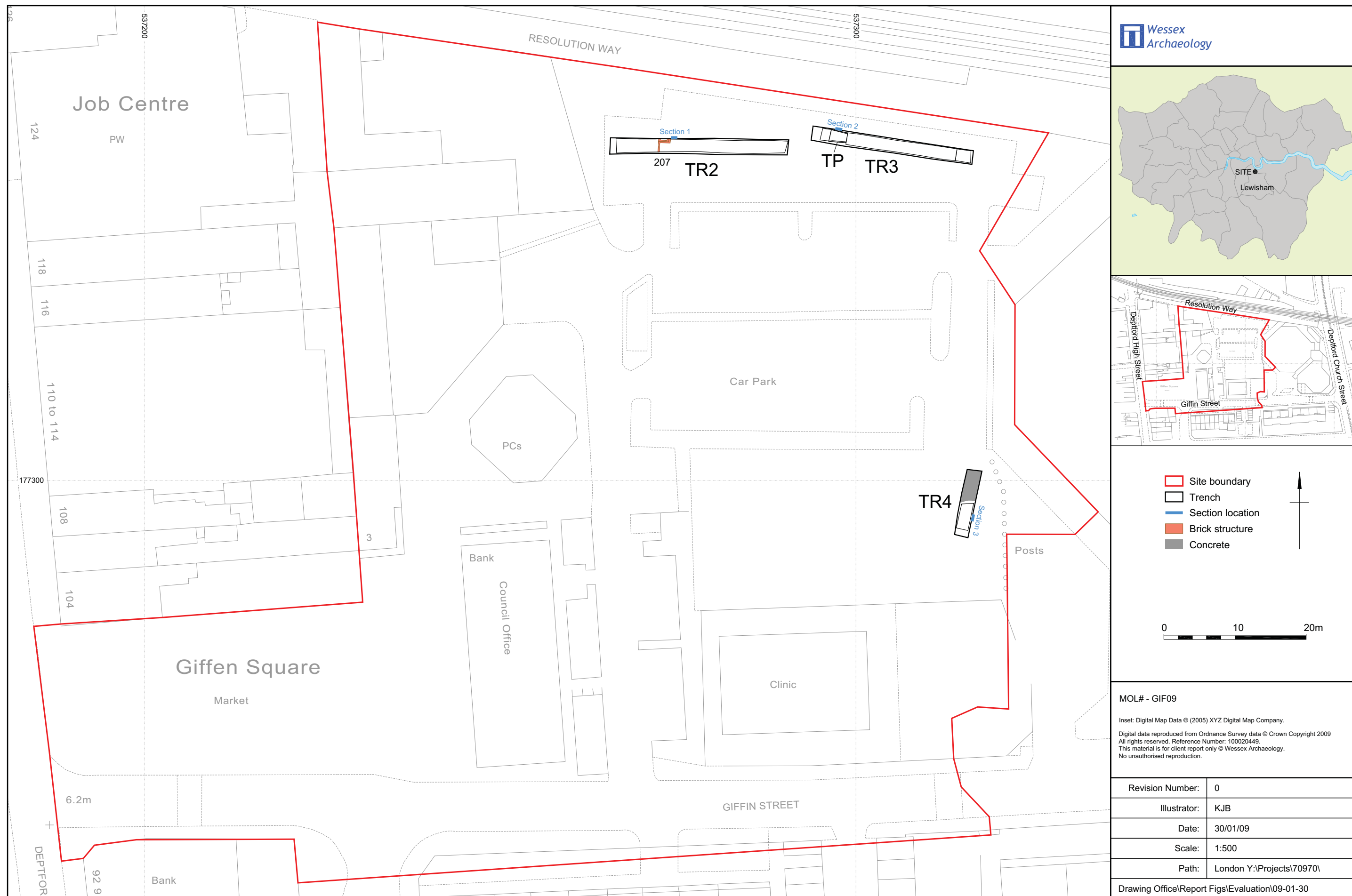
Trench 2	Co-ordinates: 537265.4, 177346.9 / 537290.5, 177347.0 Ground Level (m AOD): 6.31	Dimensions: 25.02m x 2.10m Max.depth: 1.22m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
200	Modern tarmac cap	0.00 – 0.19
201	Mixed brick rubble with concrete, building debris, rubbish etc- made ground	0.19 – 0.72
202	Roughly-laid brick surface; yard floor or similar. 20 th century	0.72 – 0.79
203	Dark grey mix of oil, tar and building rubble- levelling layer/made ground	0.79 – 0.89
204	Dark grey-brown sandy clay with oil, fine gravel/coarse sand and brick rubble- made ground	0.89 – 0.99
205	Thin band of reddish-pink crushed brick – demolition deposit possibly associated with destruction of 207	0.99 – 1.01
206	Mid grey-brown sandy silt with brick fragments, coal, clay pipe etc. Contaminated natural remnant of garden soil.	1.01 – 1.22+
207	Square structure of red and yellow brick, late 19 th or early 20 th century origin	0.90 - 1.22+
208	Modern concrete surface	0.90 - 1.00

Trench 3	Co-ordinates: 537293.8, 177348.9 / 537316.4, 177345.3 Ground Level (m AOD): 6.26	Dimensions:22.79m x 1.93m Max.depth: 2.40m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
300	Modern tarmac cap	0.00 – 0.23
301	Mixed brick and rubble- made ground	0.23 – 0.42
302	Mid grey-brown silt with brick fragments – made ground	0.42 – 0.46
303	Crushed brick and hardcore layer- made ground	0.46 – 0.56
304	Tarmac layer	0.56 – 0.74
305	Laid surface of wooden railway sleepers bound with tar	0.74 – 0.96
306	Tar and rubble- bedding for 305	0.96 – 1.01
307	Mixed tarmac, concrete and rubble layer – made ground	1.01 – 1.15
308	Dark yellow-brown coarse gravel with patches of yellow silty sand and brick fragments– made ground	1.15 – 1.85
309	Strong, light yellow-brown coarse chert gravel – natural	1.85 – 2.20+

Trench 4	Co-ordinates: 537316.7, 177301.4 / 537314.7, 177292.2 Ground Level (m AOD): 4.74	Dimensions:9.46m x 2.06m Max.depth: 1.20
Context	Description	Depth (m)
400	Tarmac cap	0 – 0.15
401	Modern 'scalpings'- bedding layer for tarmac	0.15 – 0.52
402	Disturbed ground- mid grey-brown gritty coarse sand matrix with common sub rounded chert gravel, containing coal, plastic, cloth, timber, brick rubble etc. Also contains patches of orange-brown sand which may be redeposited natural. Continues beneath slab 403 .	0.52 – 1.20+
403	Concrete slab below 400 present at northern end of trench; too thick to break through.	0.26 – 0.52

12 APPENDIX 2 – ARCHIVE INDEX

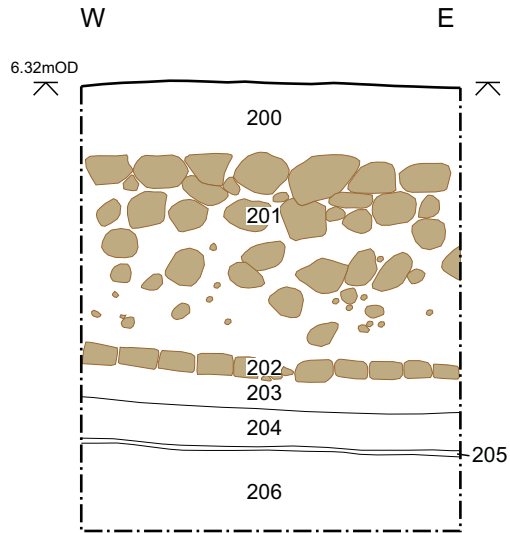
File No.	NAR Cat.	Details	Format	No. Sheets
1	-	Index to Archive	A4	1
1	A	Client Report	A4	14
1	A	Client Report	A3	1
1	F	Project Specification (Inc Desk-based assessment)	A4	74
1	B	Day Book (photocopy)	A4	7
1	B	Trial Trench Record	A4	3
1	B	Graphics Register	A4	1
1	B	Site Graphics	A4	3
1	B	Site Survey notes	A3	1
1	D	Photographic Register	A4	3
FINDS	NONE			



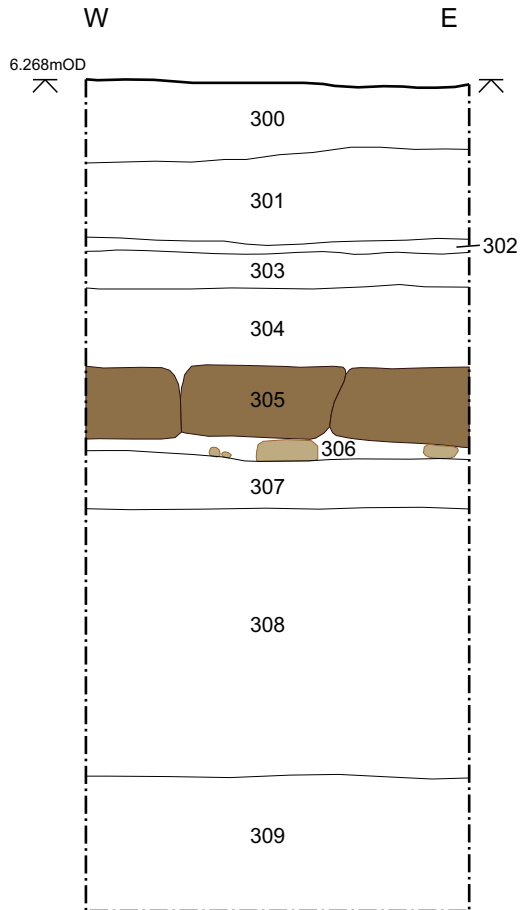
Site location and trench plan

Figure 1

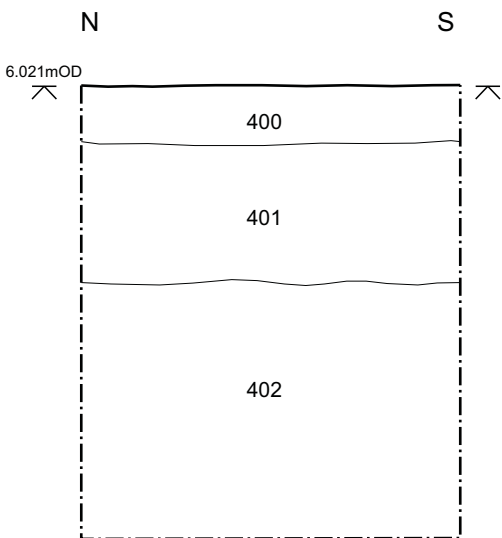
Section 1



Section 2



Section 3



- Brick/rubble
- Railway sleepers

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Sections 1-3

Figure 2



Plate 1: Modern brick structure Trench 2 (207) from south



Plate 2: Trench 2 from west showing slab (208) and made ground (206)



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Plate 3: Test-pit dug through railway sleepers in Trench 3 showing sleepers (305) and made ground (307) and (308) from south



Plate 4: Trench 4 from south

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