

Sutton Archaeological Services

Evaluation Report

on

**20-22 Deptford High Street,
London. SE8 4AF
DPF 07: (TQ 3721 7704)**

for

Equitable Services Ltd

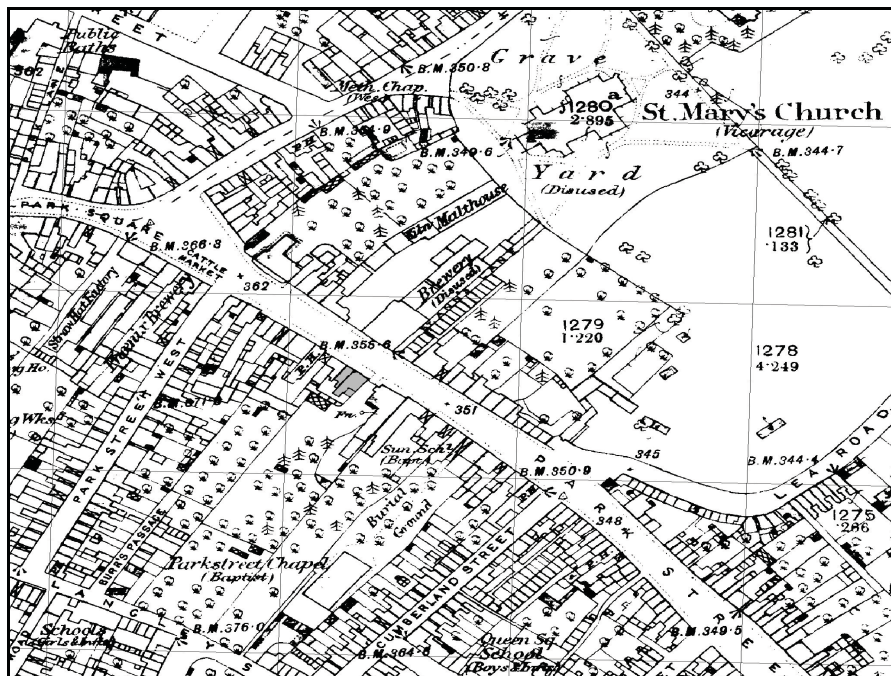


Fig. 1

1880 Ordnance Survey map

Evaluation Report

on

20-22 Deptford High Street,

London. SE8 4AF

London Borough of Lewisham

DPF 07: (TQ 7721 7704)

by

J. G. PERRY: September 2007

Summary

Sutton Archaeological Services (SAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at 20-22 Deptford High Street, London. SE8 4AF between 13th and 17th September, 2007.

The site lay in an area of archaeological importance as defined in London Borough of Lewisham's Unitary Development Plan. Research by Sutton Archaeological Services for the research design indicated that there was Medieval and Post-Medieval archaeology and/or activity in the surrounding area.

2 trenches were excavated across the site revealing concrete, above made ground which overlayed sub-soil and the natural sand and gravel.

No Medieval or Post-Medieval archaeology was found, but we did recover a 19th century cellar filled with Ceramic Building Material (CBM), clay pipe stems, pottery, ironwork glass and oyster shells all belonging to the 19th century or later.

We suggest that no further archaeological monitoring or intervention is needed and that the archaeological condition in the planning consent has been fulfilled. The decision to discharge the archaeological condition, however, rests with the local planning authority on the advice of the Archaeological Officer at English Heritage

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Introduction

This report relates to the proposed development at 20-22 Deptford High Street, London. SE8 4AF.

Equitable Services Ltd (the Developer) has commissioned Sutton Archaeological Services (SAS) to carry out an archaeological evaluation and any subsequent archaeological work that may be necessary

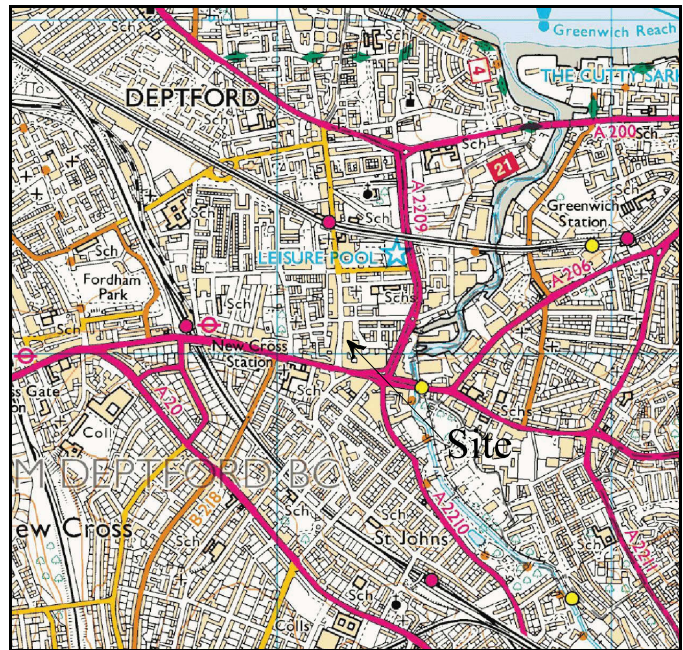


Fig. 2 Site location © Crown Copyright MC/98/38

Location: The site lies at the southern end of Deptford High Street in the London Borough of Lewisham. Evelyn Road and the River Thames lie to the north, with Deptford Church Street and Deptford Creek lying to the east. Cross Road (A2) lies to the south, with Comet Street to the west.

Topography: Deptford lies on the south side of the Thames and the west side of Deptford Creek valleys. The land slopes from the north to south with the area of the site at a height of between 6.8m aOD.

Geology: The site lies over glaciofluvial sand and gravel deposits over London Clay, with alluvial deposits near to the two rivers.

Planning background

The building was until recently used as a church and the first and second floors of the rear part of the building have been demolished.

The present scheme is for the construction of a three storey extension to the rear, together with alterations to the elevations incorporating balconies/terraces and the conversion and change of use of the first and second floors to provide a college on the ground floor, 10 one bedroom and 1 two bedroom, self-contained flats, 1 one bedroom and 1 three bedroom self-contained maisonettes together with refuse and cycle storage facilities.

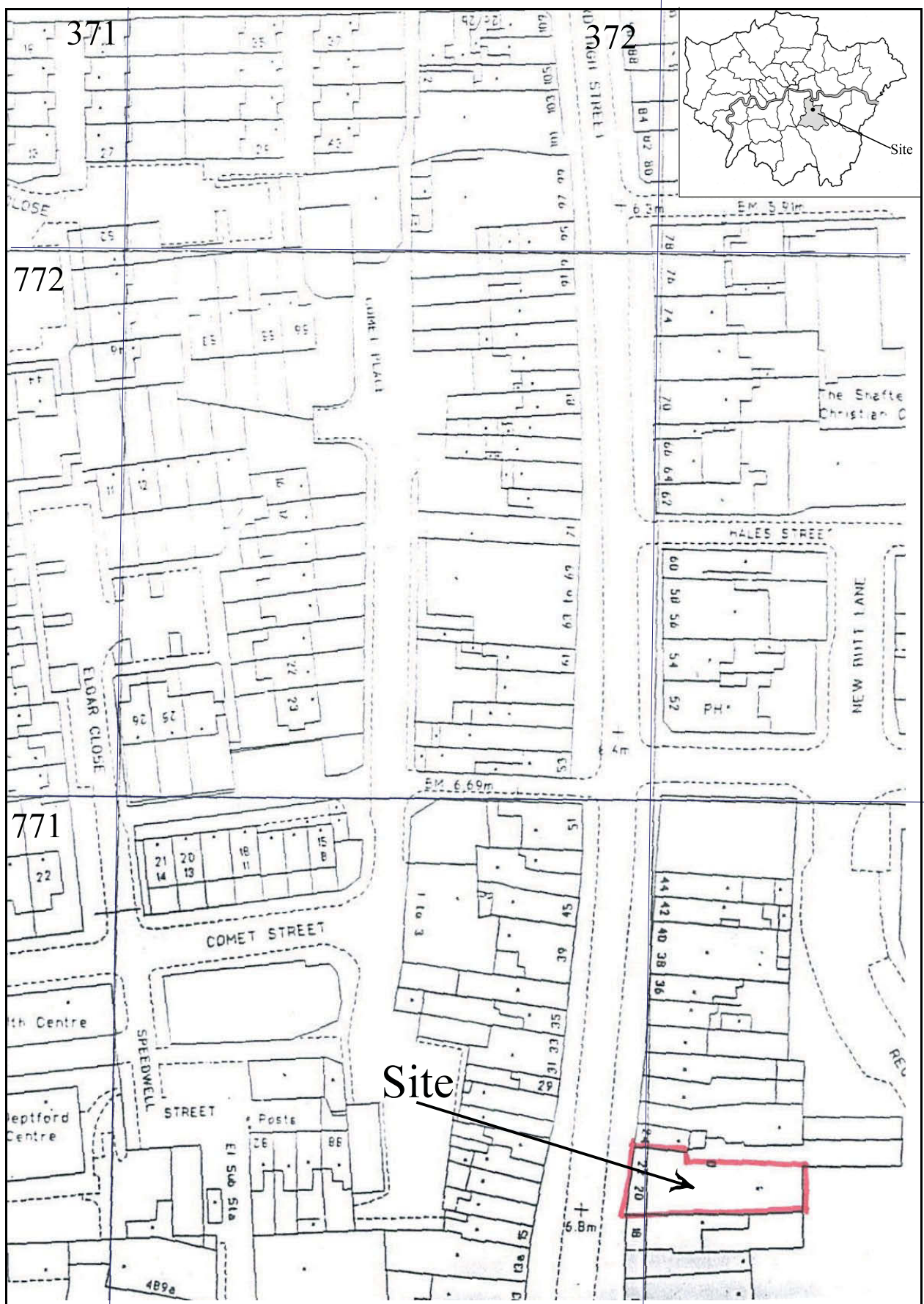


Fig. 3

Site location plan

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Planning permission was approved by the London Borough of Lewisham and an archaeological condition under PPG 16¹ was included in planning decision DC/06/62534/X dated 10th August 2006:

1 No development shall take place on the site until the applicant, or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation. which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Archaeological discussion

There is some evidence for Roman and Medieval settlement and/or activity in the Deptford area. The main Saxon, Medieval and Post-Medieval settlement lies in London.

Before the evaluation, the potential for Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon settlement in the area of the site seemed low, though stray finds from these periods may turn up. There is, however, a low to medium potential for Medieval and Post-Medieval activity in the area of the site.

Prehistoric: There is some Prehistoric activity in the area of the site, probably associated with Deptford Creek and the Thames. A single struck flint from a deposit of burnt flint, sandstone and charcoal was revealed in an alluvial deposit in Brookmill Road. It is possible that this represents the edge of a burnt mound along Deptford Creek.

Pre-evaluation evidence suggested there was a low potential for Prehistoric archaeology on this site.

Roman: There is Roman activity in the surrounding area with a Roman road running along what is now Deptford Broadway. A Roman ditch, originally found in 1989 and 1992, was re-located in 1993 on Deptford Broadway.

Pre-evaluation evidence suggested there was a low potential for Roman archaeology on this site.

Saxon: There is some Saxon activity in the area of the site with burial being found in the area of Deptford Broadway.

¹ Department of the Environment: *Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning*, HMSO, 1990.

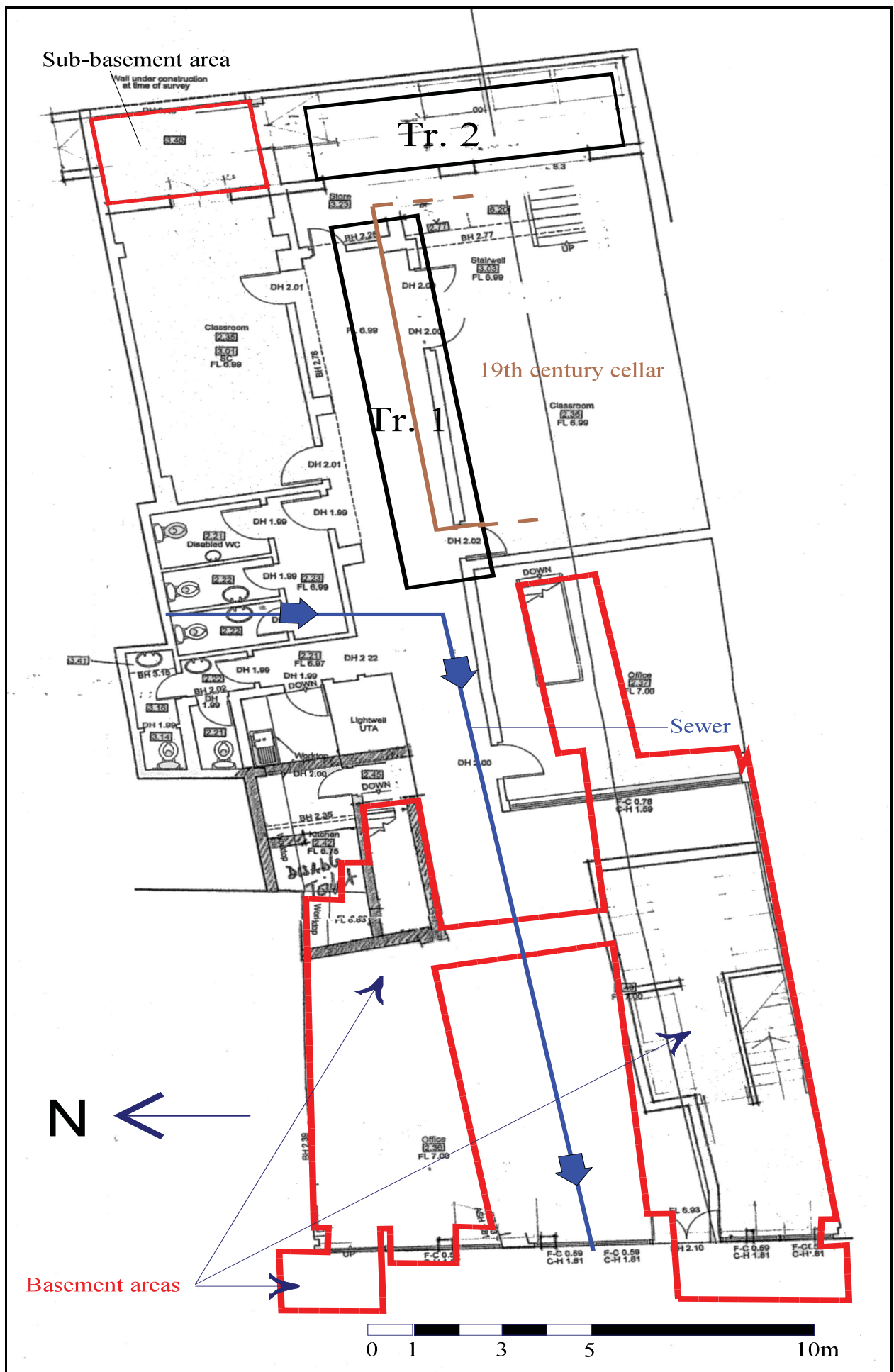


Fig. 4

Trench location plan

Pre-evaluation evidence suggested there was a low potential for Saxon archaeology on this site.

Medieval to Modern: Deptford was a small shipbuilding town on the pilgrim route from London to Canterbury. Henry VIII designated Deptford as his principle Royal Naval Dockyard it grew into one of the largest towns in England, with its population rising to over 10,000 people. Writing in 1703, John Evelyn notes the great increase in the population of Deptford since the 1623 Deptford map was made, commenting that, "the Town is in 80 yeares become neere as big as Bristoll". In the early 18th century Deptford had become a large and rather independent community. Deptford High Street developed from the south to the north in a rather piecemeal fashion between the 17th and 18th centuries. The High Street still preserves several artisan's houses dating from 1680 alongside Georgian buildings and later additions, with the site probably being developed in the post 1760 period. Deptford waters eventually became too shallow for larger vessels that were being built in the 18th century and the Dockyard moved downstream, though it remained the victualling yard for the Navy. New and smaller industries came to Deptford and today most major industry has departed from this part of the Thames and Deptford has no big employers left.

Pre-evaluation evidence suggested there was a low to medium potential for Medieval to modern occupation and activity on the site.

Research objectives

In May 2007 Sutton Archaeological Services produced its research design. Based on our brief assessment of the evidence, we formed the objectives to look for signs of Medieval and later occupation and activity on the site, and if found to determine their extent, date, condition and significance.

The Institute of Field Archaeologists has defined the purpose of a field evaluation as follows.

“The purpose of field evaluation is to gain information about the archaeological resource within a given area or site (including its presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality), in order to make an assessment of its merit in the appropriate context, leading to one or more of the following:

- the formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource
- the formulation of a strategy to initiate a threat to the archaeological resource

the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research.”

Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations, IFA, 2001

Archaeological proposals

Usually, where development may destroy archaeology, an evaluation is undertaken to identify the presence or absence, extent, character, quality and date of any threatened deposits and, where necessary, to develop an appropriate mitigation strategy.

SAS proposed excavate 2 x 10m x 2m trenches, with a third 10m x 2m contingency.

Archaeological methodology

Standards: SAS carried out the archaeological evaluation in accordance with

- our research design dated May 2007. See below for changes we made to the location of trenches 1 and 2.
- the Institute of Field Archaeologists’ Code of Conduct, Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangement in Field Archaeology, Standards and Guidance for Field Evaluations
- the archaeological guidance papers issued by English Heritage.

Control: All excavation work was done under the control of the archaeologists on site.

Trenches: We dug 2 trenches as shown on fig 4. The original position of trench 1 was located to the south of the building, between two cellars. When the site debris was cleared, it was found that a live sewer ran along part of the projected position of the trench. Trench 1 was therefore moved 4m northwards. The moving of trench 1 meant that trench 2 also had to be repositioned northwards. It was then found that there was a sub-basement in the north-west corner of the site, so the length of trench 2 was shortened by several metres.

We broke open the trenches with a mini digger, using a wide-bladed (1.50m+) smooth-edged ditching bucket, with the concrete being broken up by a pneumatic drill.

Non-archaeological deposits: In each trench we removed by machine, in level spits of no more than 10-15 cm, the concrete, made ground and subsoil deposits. Work continued removing all overburden until we reached the first significant archaeological layer (or the natural deposits), at which point all machine work ceased in that trench. (We excavated up to 50cm into the natural to make sure we had reached true natural and not re-deposited material.) In this way we excavated the trench without finding any archaeological deposits.

Site records: We recorded all features as we proceeded, by written records, plans, sections and photographs. In all, we recorded 10 contexts - numbered [001] to [010] - in a single context recording system. The site was recorded in accordance with the Fieldwork Methodology in our research design, and using the Museum of London's recording system.

Levels: All levels were taken from the developers site survey (06/635/02) dated Nov 20046 and related to an OSBM located on Comet Street value 6.69m aOD.

Backfilling: After excavating and recording we backfilled the trenches and roughly levelled the ground, leaving surplus spoil on site.

Evaluation results

Trench 1

Due to the instability of the sections, particularly context **008**, the sides of the trench kept collapsing. No attempt was made to enter the trench and all records were made from the surface.

Trench 1 was located in the central part of the site and oriented roughly north (6.99) to south (7.00m aOD). Context **006** was the concrete slab, which covered the whole trench and was 43cm thick at the southern end, but only about 19cm at the northern end.

Below **006** was a made ground, a loose, dark brown sandy silt **[007]** (north: 6.56m aOD to south: 6.79m aOD), containing 10% brick rubble modern, as well as fragments of glass, metal, animal bone, pot and wood. The deposit extended across the whole trench to a depth of between 36cm to 66cm.

Running down the centre of the trench were the walls of a 19th century brick cellar. The cellar was filled with a loose, whitish to dark grey ash deposit **[008]** (6.18m aOD), containing 10% brick rubble,

as well as large quantities of 19th century pot sherds and fragments of animal bone, wood, glass, oyster shells, clay pipe and metal. The deposit extended across the eastern side of the trench to a depth of about 52cm.

The cellar had cut into a sub-soil deposit, a friable medium brown clayey silt **[009]** (west: 6.20m aOD to east: 5.67m aOD), containing fine to small flint pebbles. No finds were recovered from this context.

The natural sand and gravel **[010]** (5.61m aOD) was below **004** and extended across the whole of the trench. Only small areas to the natural could be revealed at any one time, due to the instability of the sections.

There were no archaeological features and the only finds were:

- fragments of 19th century pottery
- 19th to 20th century bricks
- 19th to 20th century animal bone, glass, metal and wood
- 19th century clay pipe stems
- oyster shells

Trench 2

Due to the instability of the sections, particularly context **003**, the sides of the trench kept collapsing. No attempt was made to enter the trench and all records were made from the surface.

Trench 2 was located in the northern part of the site and oriented roughly east to west (6.99m aOD). Context **001** was the concrete slab, which covered the trench to a depth of about 19cm.

Below **001** was a made ground, a loose, dark brown sandy silt **[002]** (6.80m aOD), containing 10-20% brick rubble modern, mainly half to whole bricks, along with fragments of pot, animal bone, glass, metal and wood. The deposit extended across the whole trench to a depth of about 59cm.

The next context was another made ground deposit, a loose, medium brown to grey sandy silt [003] (6.21m aOD), containing 10% brick rubble modern, as well as fragments of pot and dumps of ash. The deposit extended across the whole trench to a depth of about 46cm.

A sub-soil deposit lay below 003, a friable medium brown clayey silt [004] (5.75m aOD), containing fine to small flint pebbles. No finds were recovered from this context.

The natural sand and gravel [005] (5.55m aOD) was below 004 and extended across the whole of the trench. Only small areas to the natural could be revealed at any one time, due to the instability of the sections.

There were no archaeological features and the only finds were:

- fragments of 19th century pottery
- 19th to 20th century bricks
- 19th to 20th century animal bone, glass, metal and wood

Assessment and interpretation

The evidence from the SAS preliminary research indicated that there was Medieval and later archaeology and/or activity in the surrounding area

2 trenches were excavated across the site revealing concrete, above made ground which overlayed sub-soil and the natural sand and gravel.

The two cellars at the front of the building, the sewer, sub-basement and 19th century cellar truncated most of the site. The upper made ground deposits [002 and 007] probably represent the demolition of 19th century building that once occupied the site. Where the sub-soil did survive, no finds were made.

Archaeological Potential

Following the evaluation our revised view is that this site has no potential for archaeological remains of any period other than 19th century and later.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Our findings set out above lead us to conclude that the proposed development did not threaten to destroy any archaeological remains of national, regional or local importance, deserving further investigation or preservation.

We suggest that no further archaeological monitoring or intervention is needed and that the archaeological condition in the planning consent has been fulfilled. The decision to discharge the archaeological condition, however, rests with the local planning authority on the advice of the Archaeological Officer at English Heritage.

Publications and dissemination

The evidence is not worthy of publication but a note on the evaluation will be placed in the *London Archaeologist's* round-up and a copy of the report lodged in the local library.

Archive

The resulting archive, including all of the finds, will be donated by the developer and deposited with the Museum of London when the final report has been completed.

	Trench 2	Trench 1
Concrete	001	006
Made ground/Brick Rubble	002	007
Made ground/19th cellar	003	008
Sub-soil	004	009
Natural Clay/gravel	005	010

Fig. 5

Context matrix



Plate 1 Tr. 1: Looking east



Plate 2 Tr. 1: showing cellar



Plate 3 Trench 2: east end

