

Sutton Archaeological Services

Watching Brief Report

on

Wallington County Grammar School

Croydon Road,
Wallington, Surrey, SM6 7PH
WCI 07: (TQ 28765 65040)

for

Wallington County Grammar School



Fig. 1 John Rocque's Map of Surrey (1768)

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London Borough of Sutton
WCI 07: (TQ 28765 65040)

by

J G PERRY: July 2009

Summary

Sutton Archaeological Services (SAS) carried out an archaeological brief at Wallington County Grammar School, Croydon Road, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 7PH between 23rd June and 16th July, 2009

The site lay in an area of archaeological importance as defined in London Borough of Sutton's Unitary Development Plan. The evidence from the SAS previous evaluation showed there was a Roman ditch and possibly other activity in the surrounding area.

The watching brief only revealed turf and topsoil above the subsoil deposits. The underlying deposits, including the Roman ditch, were not disturbed.

Other than the underlying Roman ditch below the new Sports Hall, there were no archaeological features and the only finds were some large fragments of burnt flint, a flint core and a fragment of Medieval or Post-Medieval tile. These finds are consistent for the area as shown by a watching brief undertaken in Beddington Park, just to the north of the site, where lots of burnt and struck flint was recovered.

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.

CONTENTS

Summary	i
Contents	ii
Illustrations and Plates	iii
Introduction	1
Planning background	1
Archaeological discussion	2
Research objectives	4
Archaeological proposals	5
Archaeological Methodology	6
Watching brief results	7
Access road	7
Sports Hall	7
Assessment and Interpretation	8
Archaeological potential	8
Conclusions and recommendations	8
Publications and dissemination	9
Archive	9

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1	John Rocque's map of Surrey (1768)	cover
Fig. 2	Site location	1
Fig. 3	Site Location plan	2
Fig. 4	Development plan, previous archaeological work and Roman ditch	6

PLATES

Plate 1	Access road construction	10
Plate 2	Access Road	10
Plate 3	Typical trench	10
Plate 4	Brick rubble platform	10

Introduction

This report relates to the proposed development at Wallington County Grammar School, Croydon Road, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 7PH.

Wallington County Grammar School (the developer) has commissioned Sutton Archaeological Services (SAS) to carry out a watching brief and any subsequent archaeological work that may be necessary.

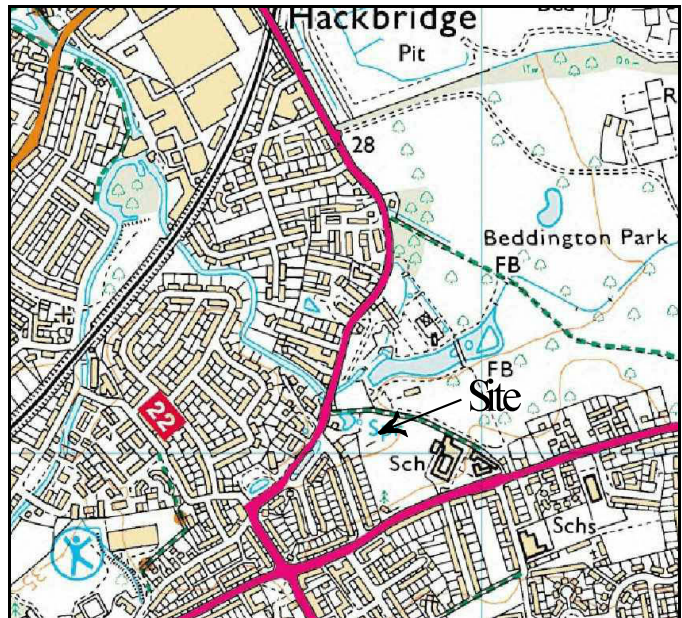


Fig. 2 Location Plan

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Location: The site is situated in the London Borough of Sutton, 3 km east of Croydon and 3 km west of Sutton. It is in a mostly residential area to the south of Beddington Park and the river Wandle. To the west is London Road and to the east are houses, flats and Carew Manor and St Mary's Church. Croydon Road lies to the south

Topography: The site lies on the southern side of the Wandle valley at the bottom of the dip slope of the North Downs. The land is fairly flat *c.* 34 - 35m aOD.

Geology: The underlying geology consists of Thanet Sand, clay and upper chalk.

Planning background

The proposed development is part of the school playing fields to the west of Wallington County Grammar School. The development consists of the construction of a detached building to provide a sports hall and fitness suite with ancillary accommodation and provision of new emergency access via Croydon Road. An existing sports pavilion was demolished.

A planning application (D2008/60133) was made to the London Borough of Sutton, and, as the site lay within an area of high archaeological importance, an archaeological condition under PPG 16¹ was included in the planning approval dated 22nd October 2008:

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

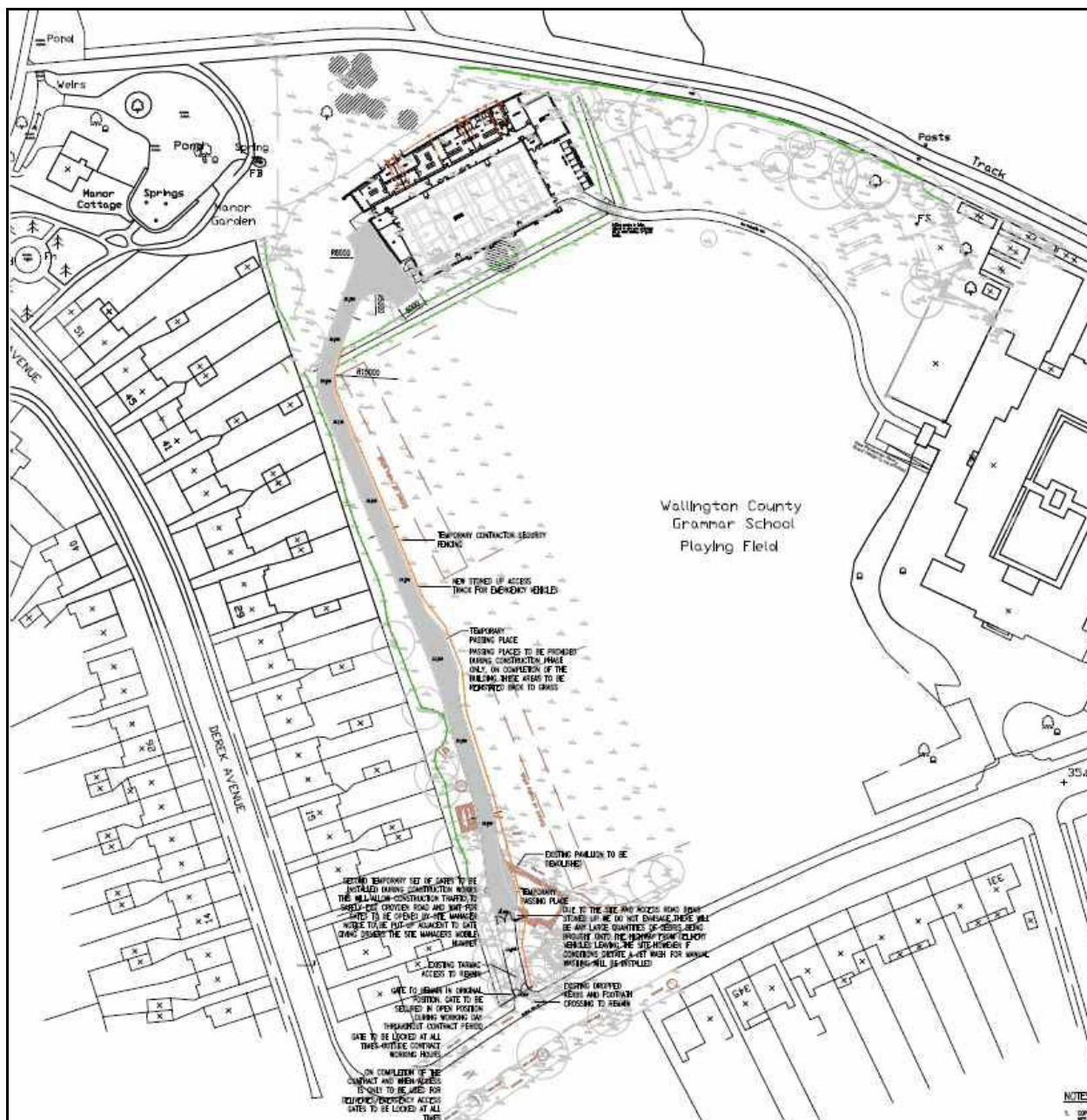


Fig. 3

Site Location Plan

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(14) No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme for investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme pursuant to this condition. The archaeological works shall be carried out by a suitably qualified investigating body acceptable to the Local Planning Authority. Reason: To ensure that there is an opportunity to properly investigate and record information on this site, which is considered to be of high archaeological interest.

Archaeological discussion

The surrounding area is very rich in the archaeology of all periods, although there is very little detailed knowledge of any early settlements except the Beddington Prehistoric and Roman Villa site.

Prehistoric: There have been many scattered finds of flint and stone artefacts as well as faunal remains of the Palaeolithic (pre-10,000 BC) and Mesolithic (c. 10,000-4,500 BC) in the Beddington and Wallington area. Most of these have come from the Wandle valley sands and gravels, particularly on the Thames Water land at the Beddington Sewage Farm, as well as a few from the chalk of the North Downs dip slope². Several areas of Mesolithic flint scatters have been found in the area, with a ditch contained Mesolithic to Late Bronze Age flints in a ditch at Strawberry Lodge. Traces of Bronze Age occupation and artefacts have been found to the north-west and north on the Beddington sewage farm³, the London Carriers site in Beddington Lane⁴, and at Beddington Infants School⁵. Bronze Age artefacts have been recovered in Aldwick Road and a fragment of a Bronze-Age axe was found in Beddington Park⁶. There have also been several finds of Bronze Age metal hoards along the Wandle, with the nearest in Beddington Park. Traces of field systems tentatively dated to this period have also been found over a wide area, but mainly on the Beddington sewage farm. A large area of Bronze Age occupation was found at the Westcroft site, possibly of ritual significance.

The remains of an Early Iron Age to Late Iron Age settlement, enclosing ditch, and possible field boundaries, were discovered beneath the Beddington Roman Villa⁷. Early Iron Age pottery was found at Aldwick Road to the east and an enclosure near Wallington High School for Boys⁸. An Iron Age hut circle was found in Burleigh Avenue and in West Street, Carshalton Iron Age occupation preceded a later Roman Villa. A watching brief along the line of a new cycle track in Beddington Park finished close to the proposed development site, but no Prehistoric features or finds were made.

The potential for Prehistoric archaeological and activity is considered low to medium.

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- ² Adkins, L. 1980 Settlement patterns in the area around Beddington, Carshalton and Wallington: an outline of the evidence, in *THE PAST - OUR FUTURE*, Beddington, Carshalton and Wallington Archaeol Soc, **4**, 8-12
- ³ Adkins, L, Adkins, R, & Perry, J G 1986 'Excavations at Prehistoric and Roman Beddington, 1984-85', *London Archaeol*, **5**, no.6 (1986), 152-7.
- Adkins, L, Adkins, R, & Perry, J. G. 1987 'Excavations at Beddington 1984-87: the Final Interim', *London Archaeol*, **5**, 13 (1987), 349-52.
- ⁴ Bird, D. G., Crocker, G, & McCracken J. S. 1992 Archaeology in Surrey 1990, *Surrey Archaeol Coll*, **81**, 166.
- ⁵ pers. comm. Simon Mason, MOLAS.
- ⁶ Adkins, L. 1985 A Bronze Age Axe from Beddington Park, *Surrey Archaeol Coll*, **73**, 143.
- ⁷ Adkins, L, Adkins, R, & Perry, J G *op. cit.*
- ⁸ Laws A & Wooldridge, M. 1980 Excavations at Wallington High School for Boys, in *THE PAST - OUR FUTURE*, Beddington, Carshalton and Wallington Archaeological Society. **4**, 18-22.

Roman: A Roman site is known at Beddington Roman Villa, where traces of occupation from the 1st to 4th century is known. Another villa, similar to Beddington, is known in West Street, Carshalton where occupation is also recorded from the 1st to 4th century. During the evaluation stage a small north to south ditch was found.

The potential for Roman occupation and activity is considered high.

Saxon: A Saxon cemetery was discovered in 1871 just north of the Wandle, below what is now Crispin Crescent and Mallinson Road. A further three burials came to light in 1875 at Park Farm near to Carew Manor⁹. A Saxon brooch was found in Beddington Park¹⁰ and Saxon pottery has been identified close to Carew Manor itself¹¹. St Mary's Church is thought to be of Saxon origin and Beddington is mentioned in a number of early Saxon documents. It is known that the Bishop of Winchester died in Beddington in the late 9th century.

The potential for Saxon occupation and activity is considered low.

Medieval to Post-Medieval: The evidence for Medieval settlement in and around Beddington is focussed on the village centre in the area of Guy Road and Church Path, to the east. Quantities of Medieval pottery have been found in Hilliers Lane. By the 13th century the Carew family had secured property in Beddington, which formed the basis of an estate of more than 3000 acres when it was finally dispersed in 1859. Although their first recorded ownership of the land comes in 1820 when the parish was enclosed, it is likely that Carew ownership extended back at least into the later Medieval period. There was a Medieval moat site at Carew Manor that later became an important Tudor mansion of the Carew family.

There is therefore a low potential for Medieval and Post-Medieval occupation on the site

Research objectives

In June 2009 Sutton Archaeological Services produced its research design. Based on our brief

⁹ Perry, J. 1980 Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Beddington, in *THE PAST - OUR FUTURE*, Beddington, Carshalton and Wallington Archaeological Society. **4**, 23-8.

¹⁰ Adkins, L & Adkins, R. 1985 A Saxon Brooch from Beddington Park, *Surrey Archaeol Coll*, **76**, 144.

¹¹ *Pers. comm.* John Phillips.

assessment of the evidence, we formed the objectives to look for signs of Post-Medieval occupation and activity on the site, and if found to determine their extent, date, condition and significance.

The Institute for Archaeologists has defined the standard for a watching brief as follows.

“An archaeological watching brief will record the archaeological resource during development within a specified area using appropriate methods and practices. These will satisfy the stated aims of the project, and comply with the *Code of conduct*, *Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology*, and other relevant by-laws of the IfA:

The purpose of a watching brief is:

- to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works
- to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard

A watching brief is not intended to reduce the requirement for excavation or preservation of known or inferred deposits, and it is intended to guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

The objective of a watching brief is to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on a site.

Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs, IfA, September 2001

Archaeological Proposals

Usually, where development may destroy archaeology, an archaeological investigation 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 to undertake an archaeological watching brief where the three proposed foundation trenches cut the alignment of the Roman ditch.

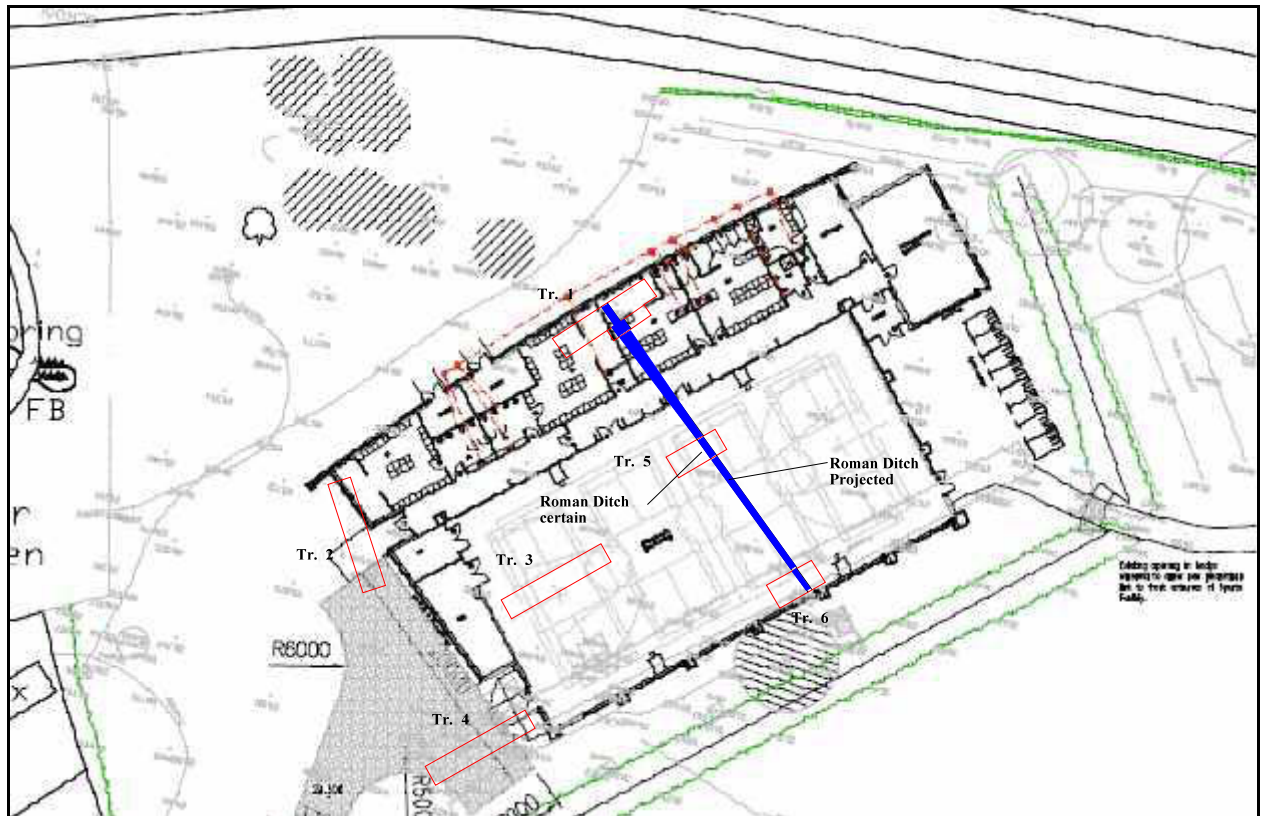


Fig. 4 Development plan, previous archaeological work and Roman ditch

Archaeological methodology

Standards: SAS carried out the archaeological watching brief in accordance with:

- our research design dated June 2009.
- the Institute for Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangement in Field Archaeology.
- the archaeological guidance papers issued by English Heritage.

Control: All excavation work was done under the control of the archaeologists on site. The trench and open areas were broken out with a number of 360° excavators, using a smooth-edged ditching bucket and a toothed bucket where appropriate.

Non-archaeological deposits: we removed by machine, in level spits of no more than 10-15 cm, the turf, topsoil, sub-soil deposits. Work continued removing all overburden until we reached the first significant archaeological layer or the limit of excavation at which point all machine work ceased. In this way the areas were excavated without finding any archaeological deposits.

Site records: We recorded all features as we proceeded, by written records, plans and photographs.

In all, we recorded 2 contexts - numbered [001] to [002] - 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.

Watching brief results

Access Road

The road started from the south-west corner of the school grounds and was constructed along the western edge of the school's playing fields. The construction of the road consisted of the removal of the turf and topsoil (to a maximum depth of 30cm) and the laying of a terran fabric. This was followed by the deposition of brick rubble for the road's surface. The topsoil deposits were removed and placed in a dumper truck and removed to another part of the site. The soil and revealed surface was scanned for finds and archaeological features. The spoil heaps were also scanned to recover finds missed during the stripping process, both visually and with a metal detector. The topsoil [001] was a friable, medium brown silty sand, containing occasional small to large fragments flint pebbles.

There were no archaeological features of any period and the only finds, other than some fragments of modern CBM and plastic items, was a fragment of Medieval or Post-Medieval peg tile, a possible flint core and four large fragments of burnt flint.

Sports Hall

The sports hall was constructed on strip foundations. This consisted of removing the turf, topsoil and part of the subsoil to a total depth of 25-30cm, followed by the raising of a brick rubble platform across the footprint of the Sports Hall. The depth of the rubble platform was about 30cm in the south-east of the building to over 1m at the western end. A series of foundation trenches was then cut through the rubble base, of which three cut the line of the Roman Ditch. The base of the foundation trench was lined with about 30cm of cement. A series of cages made of iron reinforcing rods were placed in the trenches, which were then filled with concrete.

The northern and southern foundation trenches were next to evaluation trenches 1 and 6 respectively. The third foundation trench crossed the line of the ditch between evaluation trenches 1 and 5, but only went to a depth that was about 40-50cm above the Roman ditch.

The foundation trenches to the east of the Roman ditch were cut in an area not covered in the

evaluation stage These trenches were monitored and their sections examined. There were no archaeological features or finds of any period found during this process.

Assessment and interpretation

The evidence from the SAS evaluation showed there was a Roman ditch and possibly other activity in the surrounding area.

The watching brief only revealed turf and topsoil above the subsoil deposits. The underlying deposits, including the Roman ditch, were not disturbed.

Other than the underlying Roman ditch below the new Sports Hall, there were no archaeological features and the only finds were some large fragments of burnt flint, a flint core and a fragment of Medieval or Post-Medieval tile. These finds are consistent for the area as shown by a watching brief undertaken in Beddington Park, just to the north of the site, where lots of burnt and struck flint was recovered.¹²

Archaeological Potential

Following the watching brief our revised view is that this area still has some potential for archaeological remains of the Roman period.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Our findings set out above lead us to conclude that the development did not 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

¹² PERRY, J.G. 2005 Watching Brief Report on Beddington Park Cycle Path, Beddington, Surrey, SM6, (BPP 04). Unpl. Sutton Archaeological Services

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 watching brief will be placed in the *London Archaeologist's* round-up.

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.



Plate 1 Access road construction



Plate 2 Access road



Plate 3 Typical trench

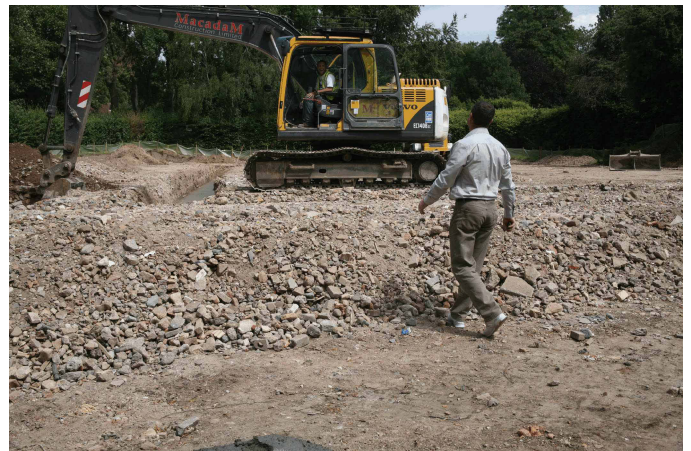


Plate 4 Brick rubble platform



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