

Sutton Archaeological Services

Evaluation Report

on

Packington Square Estate,

Phase 2

Islington,

London, N1.

PSI 07: (TQ 3220 8350)

for

Rydon Construction Ltd

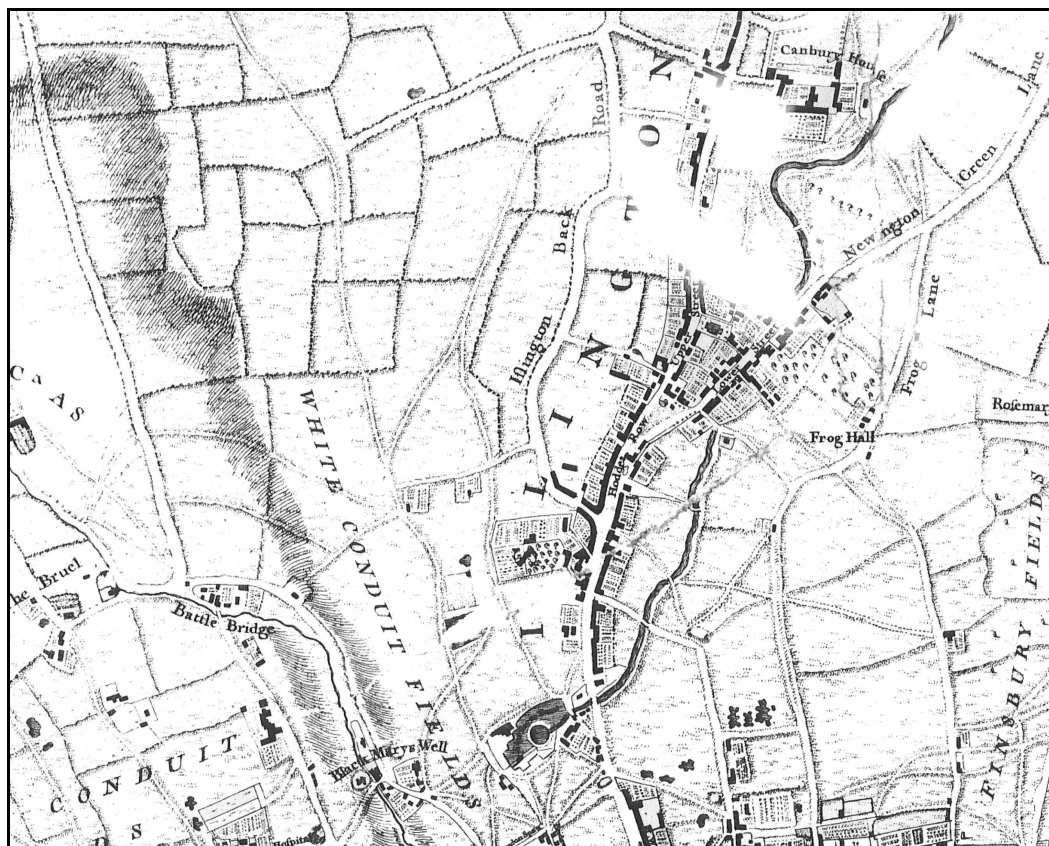


Fig. 1

John Rocque's map of London 1741-5



Dir: JEFFREY G. PERRY: BA(Hons), MIFA.

Evaluation Report

on

Packington Square Estate,

Phase 2

Islington,

London, N1.

London Borough of Islington

PSI 07: (TQ 3220 8350)

by

J G PERRY: March 2010

Summary

Sutton Archaeological Services (SAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation during the Phase 2 development at the Packington Square Estate, Islington, London, N1 between 15th and 17th March 2010.

The site lay in the London Borough of Islington. They approved planning permission for redevelopment and included an archaeological condition under PPG 16 in the decision. Research by Sutton Archaeological Services for the research design indicated that there was little prospect of any archaeology and/or activity in the surrounding area.

Five trenches were excavated across the site revealing various contexts including tarmac, made ground, the remains of 19th century subsoil, all over the natural sand and gravel. The evidence from the five trenches showed that most of the original ground deposits had been removed down to the natural sand and gravel. The removed deposits had been replaced by made ground, when the reduced areas were landscaped.

There was no evidence for archaeology, other than modern, in the five trenches and the only finds were modern CBM and pottery dating from the 19th century.

We suggest that no further archaeological monitoring or intervention is needed in Phase 2 and that the archaeological condition in the planning consent for this phase 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. The decision will be made when the archaeology on all phases has been completed.

CONTENTS

Summary.	i
Contents.....	ii
Illustrations and Plates.....	iii
Introduction.	1
Planning background.	1
Archaeological & historical background.....	3
Research Objectives.....	5
Archaeological proposals.....	6
Archaeological Methodology.....	6
Evaluation results.....	8
Trench 5.....	8
Trench 6.....	9
Trench 7.....	9
Trench 8.....	9
Trench 9.....	10
Assessment and Interpretation.....	10
Archaeological potential.	11
Conclusions and recommendations.....	11
Publications and dissemination.....	11
Archive.....	12

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1	John Rocque's map of London (1741-5).....	cover
Fig. 2	Site location.....	1
Fig. 3	Site Location plan.....	2
Fig. 4	Packington Square: development and phasing plan.....	4
Fig. 5	Phase 2: Trench location plan.....	7

PLATES

Plate 1	Trench 5: south section.....	13
Plate 2	Trench 6: west section.....	13
Plate 3	Trench 7: south section.....	13
Plate 4	Trench 9: east section.....	13

Situation

This report relates to the site of the proposed Phase 2 development at the Packington Square Estate, Islington, London, N1.

Rydon Construction Ltd (the developers) has commissioned Sutton Archaeological Services (SAS) to carry out an archaeological evaluation and any subsequent archaeological work that may be necessary for Phase 2.

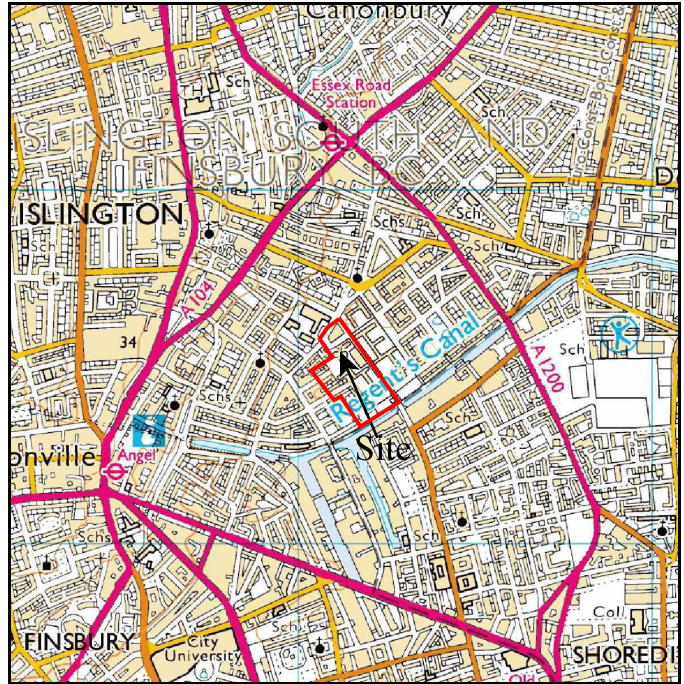


Fig. 2 Location Plan © Crown Copyright MC/98/38

Location: The site is a large, roughly rectangular area situated in Islington, in the south-eastern part of the London Borough of Islington. The site is just to the north side of the Regents Canal, a branch of the Grand Union canal. Prebend Street lies to the north, with Bevan Street and Rector Street to the east. Allingham Street and Dame Street lie to the west

Topography: The site lies on the north side of the Thames valley, in an area predominantly consisting of residential properties and is surrounded by terraced and multi-storey dwellings. Shops are also located nearby. The land slopes from Prebend Street in the north (22.2m aOD) to the south-west end of Arlington Avenue (20m aOD). The area of the site lies at a height of about 2m below the surrounding the estate roads.

Geology: The underlying geology consists of Taplow Gravels over London Clay, and in some areas with Brickearth over the gravel.

Planning Background

The proposed development area is occupied by an array of five storey blocks of flats, separated by areas of car parking, hardstanding, landscaping, open spaces and playgrounds.

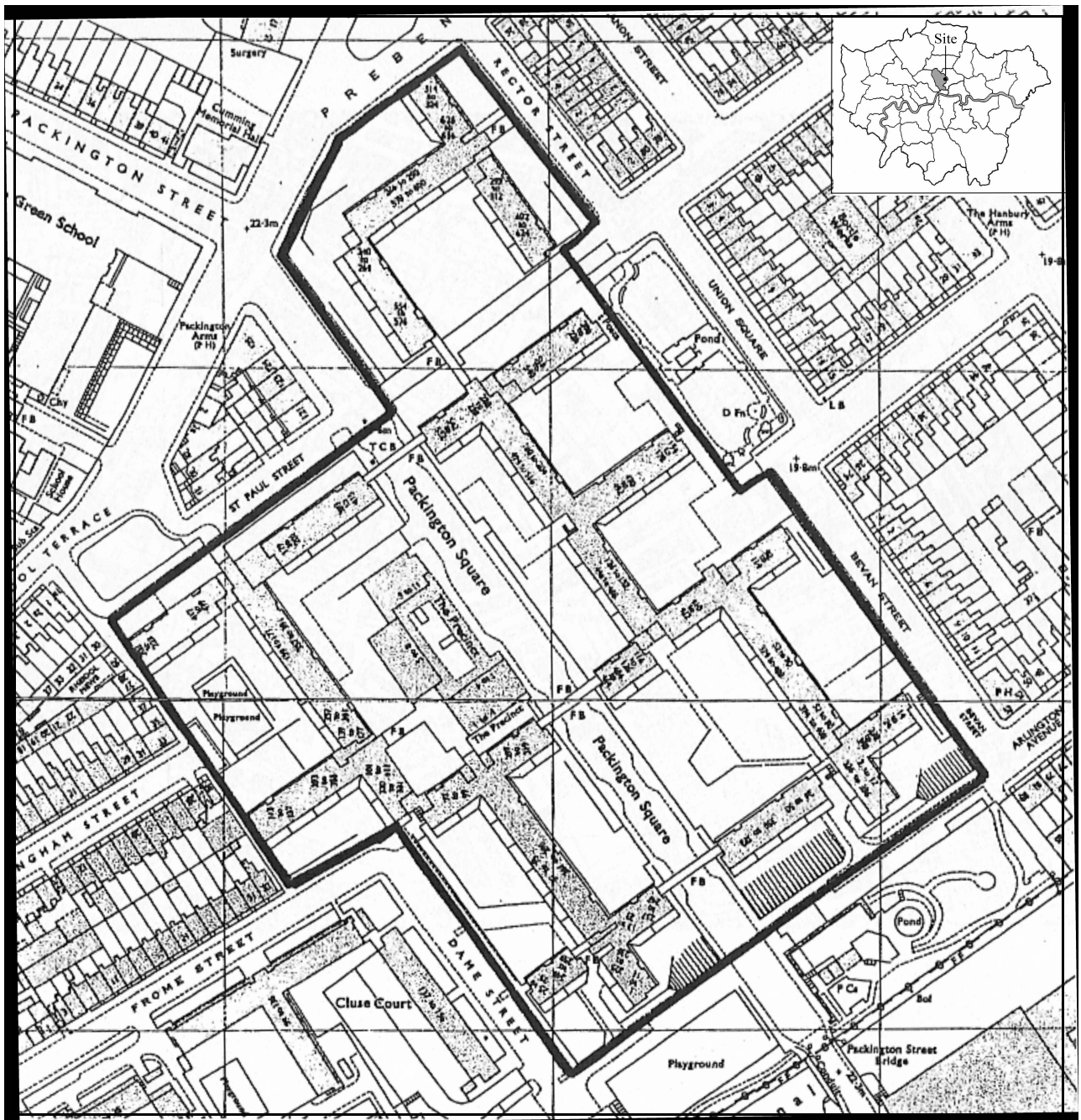


Fig. 3 Site Location Plan (© Crown Copyright MC/98/38)

Planning permission was approved by the London Borough of Islington, and an archaeological condition under PPG 16¹ was included in the planning decision P081704 dated 10 February 2009:

- 51 *No development shall take place on each separate Phase until the applicant, their agent or successors in title has secured the implementation of a program of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme for investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The investigations shall be carried out for: a) Phase 2, b) Phase 3, c) Phase 4, d) Phase 5 and e) Phase 6*

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

There is to be a phased demolition and development of the estate over a period of about eight years for the building of 1 to 8 storey buildings (some with basements) for 521 x 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 bedroom affordable flats, maisonettes and houses, as well as 301 x 1 and 2 bedroom market housing flats for private sale. The development also includes 800sqm of retail space, a 290 sqm community centre and an outdoor recreation facility, a 3 storey workshop, single storey youth centre together with an adventure playground, open spaces, gardens, car parking and new roads. A complete development plan is shown in fig. 4, along with the six phases.

This evaluation report only covers Phase 2 of the development. Further reports will be issued to cover the remaining phases as they are completed.

Archaeological and Historical Background

The available archaeological, historical and cartographical evidence suggests there was little Prehistoric or Roman activity or occupation in the Islington area. By the late Saxon period Islington was only a small village. Islington seems to have remained as small village throughout the Medieval and that Post-Medieval periods. It was only in the 19th century that Islington was fully developed.

Taking the evidence as a whole, before the evaluation, the potential for Prehistoric, Roman, Saxon, Medieval and Post-Medieval settlement and activity around the site seems low. The sparsity of evidence for settlement and activity in the area of the site may be a result of a lack of archaeological investigation, rather than a lack of activity or settlement.

Prehistoric

The lack of any evidence of Prehistoric activity, other than Neolithic hand axes, imply that this was an unimportant area during this period. The Neolithic axes may imply that bands of itinerant hunters were penetrating northwards up the river valleys.

Pre-evaluation evidence suggested there was not significant Prehistoric occupation around the site and therefore the potential for any Prehistoric archaeology on site is considered low.

Roman

There is little Roman material from Islington. The road is not proven, though the tombstone, if its original findspot was *in situ* may relate to a roadside burial.

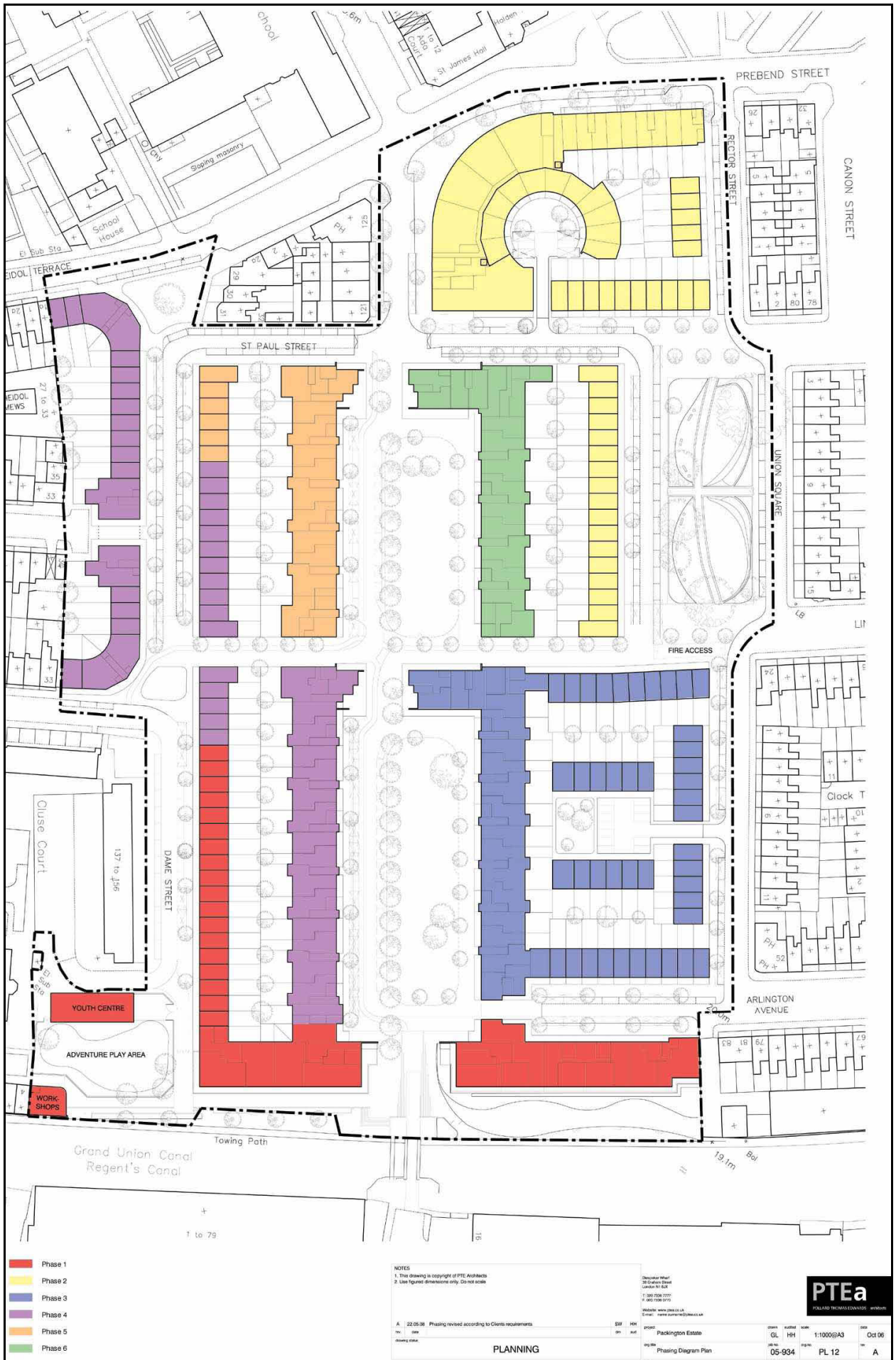


Fig. 4

Packington estate: development plan and phases

Pre-evaluation evidence suggested there was too little information to be precise, so there is only a low potential for Roman archaeology on this site.

Saxon

The Saxon settlement was probably concentrated around St. Mary's Church, which was the site of the early manor-house. It is unlikely that remains of this period could be present on the site.

Pre-evaluation evidence suggested there was only a low potential for Saxon archaeology.

Medieval and Post-Medieval

As with the Prehistoric to Saxon periods, the nature of any Medieval activity around the site remains undefined. Islington was probably a small settlement at the junction of two roads throughout the Medieval period.

In the Post-Medieval period Islington probably expanded along the Upper and Lower Roads. This is the picture shown by the maps. Islington expanded in the late 19th century.

Pre-evaluation evidence suggested there was only a low potential for Medieval and Post-Medieval archaeology.

Research objectives

In September 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 any Prehistoric, Roman, Saxon, Medieval and Post-Medieval 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 to excavate 9, 15m x 2m trenches around the Phase 2 development area.

Archaeological methodology

Standards: SAS carried out the archaeological evaluation in accordance with

- our research design dated September 2007. See below for changes we made to trenches 5, 7, 8 and 9.
- 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 5 trenches as shown on fig 5. Trench 5 was moved 5m to the south and trench 7 moved 3m to the south, to enable two play areas to be dismantled and re-used. The alignment of trench 8 was changed to try and avoid some services and trench 9 was moved about 10m to the south to avoid blocking an access route. Following the negative results from trenches 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 it was decided, after consultation with English Heritage, not to excavate the remaining 4 trenches.

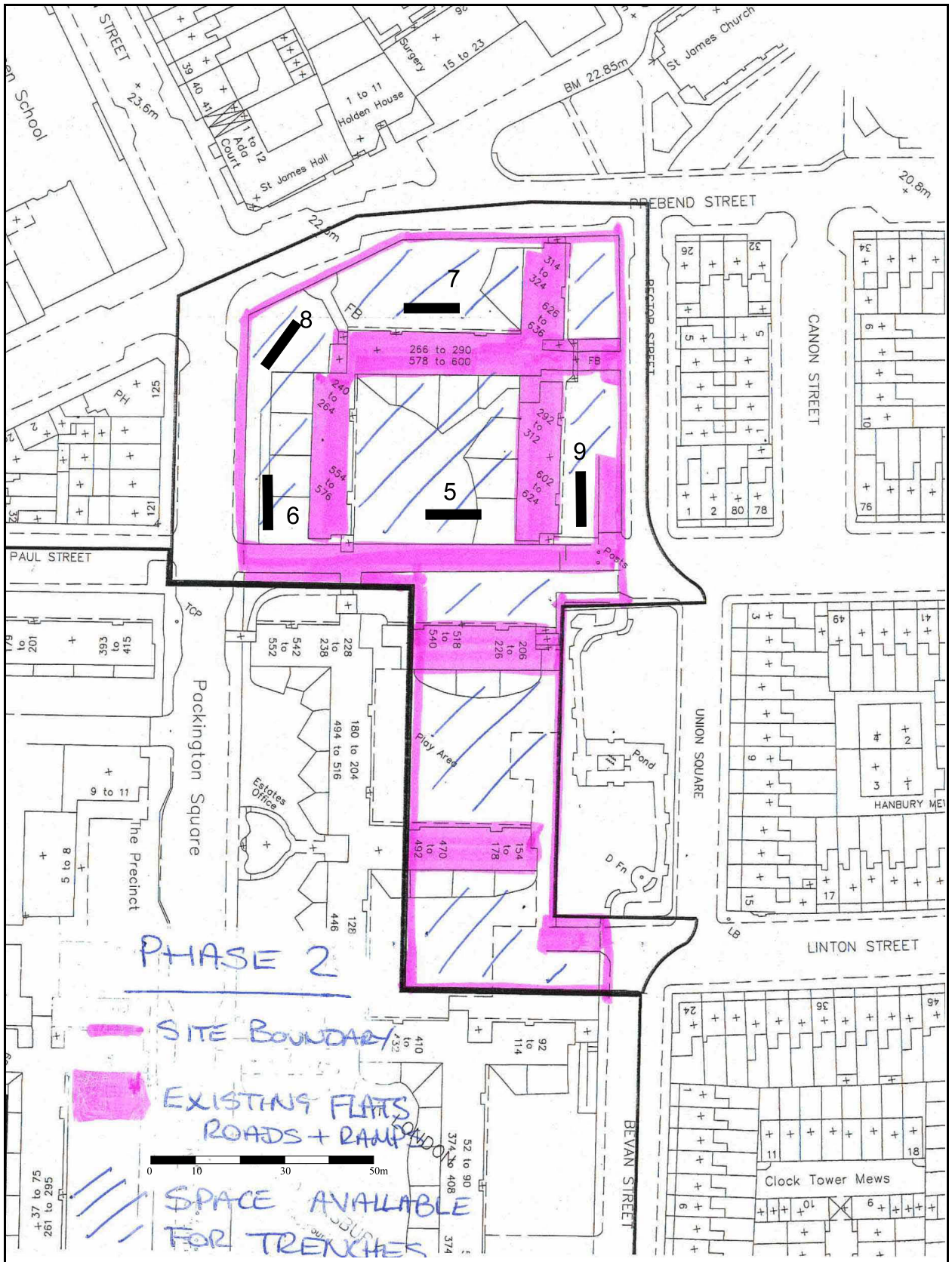


Fig. 5 Phase 2 trench location plan

We broke open the trenches with a 360° excavator, tracked machine, using a 2m smooth-edged ditching bucket and a breaker where appropriate.

Non-archaeological deposits: In each trench we removed by machine, in level spits of no more than 10-15cm, the made ground deposit. 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 30cm 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 15 contexts - numbered [024] to [038] - 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 initially taken from the developers site survey,.

Backfilling: After excavating and recording the trench was backfilled and all spoil left on site.

Evaluation results

Trench 5

Trench 5 was 15m x 2m and situated in the northern part of the estate, surrounded on three sides by blocks of flats. It was excavated immediately to the south of a children's playground, being aligned west to east. The playground area was in a depression, with part of the trench area sloping down to the level of the playground. The first context was a friable, orangish to dark brown clayey silt [024](west: 19.47m aOD to east: 18.68m aOD), containing 10-15% medium to large bricks and occasional large fragments of concrete. It covered the trench to a depth of between 0.65m to 1.20m.

Below 024, in the western part of the trench was what looked like an old 19th century garden type soil, a friable to soft, very dark brown clayey silt [025](west: 18.27m aOD to east: 18.13m aOD), containing moderate small to medium flint pebbles, fragments of 19th century pottery and clay pipe stems. At the western end of the trench, the context was 0.51m deep, reducing to almost nothing in the central part of the trench. The eastern part of the context having been truncated during the development of the 1960's council flats.

The natural sand lay beneath both contexts **024** and **025** and was a loose, olive to orangish brown medium sand, containing 20-30% fine to large flint pebbles (west: 17.75m aOD to east: 18.06m aOD).

Trench 6

Trench 6 was 15m x 2m and excavated in the gardens of the ground floor flats in block 554 to 576 and was aligned north to south. The first context was a friable, medium to dark brown clayey silt [**027**](north: 19.11m aOD to south: 19.03m aOD), containing occasional medium to large bricks and fragments of concrete. It covered the trench to a depth of between 0.98m to 1.17m.

The natural sand lay beneath both context **027** and was a friable, olive to orangish brown medium sand, containing 20-30% fine to large flint pebbles (north: 17.94m aOD to south: 18.05m aOD).

Trench 7

Trench 7 was 15m x 2m and was the northerly of the five trenches and was in an area bounded on one side by Prebend Street. It was excavated immediately to the south of a children's playground, being aligned west to east. The first context was a made ground deposit, probably laid down during the landscaping of the area. It was a friable, orangish brown silty sand [**029**](west: 19.33m aOD to east: 19.49m aOD), containing 20-30% small to large flint pebbles. It covered the trench to a depth of between 0.89m to 0.99m.

A further deposit of made ground lay below **029**. It was a very soft, dark brown to black silty clay [**030**](west: 18.54m aOD to east: 18.50m aOD), containing frequent small to large flint pebbles and medium to large brick fragments. All of the brick in context **030** were of 19th century date which probably came from the demolished 19th century houses that once occupied the southern side of Prebend Street. It covered the trench to a depth of between 0.89m to 0.99m.

Below the made ground was the natural sand and gravel, a loose, light orangish brown silty coarse sand, containing 30-40% very fine to large flint pebbles [**031**](south 18.10m aOD to north: 17.89m aOD).

Trench 8

Trench 8 was 15m x 2m and alight roughly north-east to south west. It was excavated in an area of open ground at the junction of Packington Square and Prebend Street, an area which had already been churned up by tracked excavators and had some soil removed. During the course of the excavation

several main services were revealed and the alignment of these services were also explored. The shape of the trench was therefore slightly irregular

The first context was a made ground deposit being a friable to soft, dark brown sandy clay [037](west: 18.41m aOD to east: 18.62m aOD), containing 10-20% small to large flint pebbles, occasional medium to large bricks and occasional fragments of concrete. The context covered the trench to a depth of between 42cm to 61cm. It also contained fragments of metal and several sherds of 19th century pottery.

The final context was the natural sand and gravel, a loose, light orangish brown silty coarse sand [038](west: 17.99m aOD to east: 18.20m aOD).

Trench 9

Trench 9 was 15m x 2m and aligned north to south. It was excavated in a tarmacked courtyard by some garages on the eastern side of block 602 to 624, facing Rector Road.

The first context was the tarmac surface [034] (north: 18.66m aOD to south: 18.64m aOD) between 0.19m and 0.21m deep. Below the tarmac was a deposit of made ground, a medium to dark brown silty clay [035](north: 18.45m aOD to south: 18.45m aOD) containing 10% to 15% medium to large bricks and frequent small to large flint pebbles. It covered the trench to a depth of between 0.45m to 0.49m. An old metal gas main ran along the western edge of the trench.

The final context was the natural sand and gravel, a loose, light orangish brown silty coarse sand [036](west: 18.00m aOD to east: 17.96m aOD).

Assessment and interpretation

The evidence from the SAS preliminary research indicated that there was little potential for Prehistoric, Roman, Saxon, Medieval and Post-Medieval archaeology and activity in the surrounding area.

Five trenches were excavated across the site revealing various contexts including tarmac, made ground, the remains of 19th century subsoil, all over the natural sand and gravel. The evidence from the five trenches showed that most of the original ground deposits had been removed down to the

natural sand and gravel. The removed deposits had been replaced by made ground, when the reduced areas were landscaped.

There was no evidence for archaeology, other than modern, in the five trenches and the only finds were modern CBM and pottery dating from the 19th century.

Archaeological potential

Following the evaluation our revised view is that this site has no potential for archaeological remains of any period.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Our findings set out above lead us to conclude that the proposed development will 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 in Phase 2 and that the archaeological condition in the planning consent for this phase 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. The decision will be made when the archaeology on all phases has been completed.

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.

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 Trench 5: south section



Plate 2 Trench 6: west section



Plate 3 Trench 7: south section

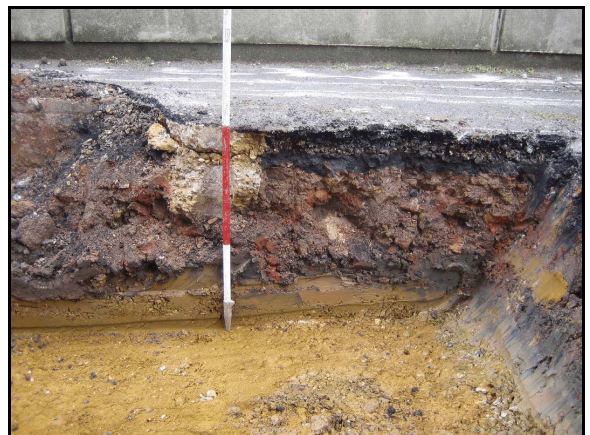


Plate 4 Trench 9: East section



© *Sutton Archaeological Services 2010*