

Sutton Archaeological Services

Evaluation Report

on

47-49 Denham Crescent,

Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3NA.

DNE 10: (TQ 27682 68047)

for

Rydon Construction Ltd



Fig. 1 John Rocque's map of London 1741-5

Research Design

for an archaeological evaluation

on

47-49 Denham Crescent,

Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3NA.

London Borough of Merton

DNE 10: (TQ 27682 68047)

by

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Summary

This report relates to the proposed development at 47-49 Denham Crescent, Mitcham, CR4 4LZ.

Planning permission was approved by the London Borough of Merton and an archaeological condition under PPS 5 was included in the planning decision 09/P2248 dated 25th June 2010.

The proposed development area is currently occupied by a pair of semi-detached house, set in large gardens. These are to be demolished and replaced by 6, four bedroom semi detached houses with accommodation over 2 storeys and the roof space including a pair of properties adjacent to 45 Denham Crescent with a new road providing access to four semi detached properties at the rear of the site.

Three trenches was excavated across the site revealing top and sub-soil and the natural sand and gravel. Except for four fragments of burnt flint, the only archaeology found was dated to the 19th to 20th century.

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

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Introduction

This archaeological assessment relates to the site of the proposed development at the 47-49 Denham Crescent, Mitcham, CR4 4LZ.

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

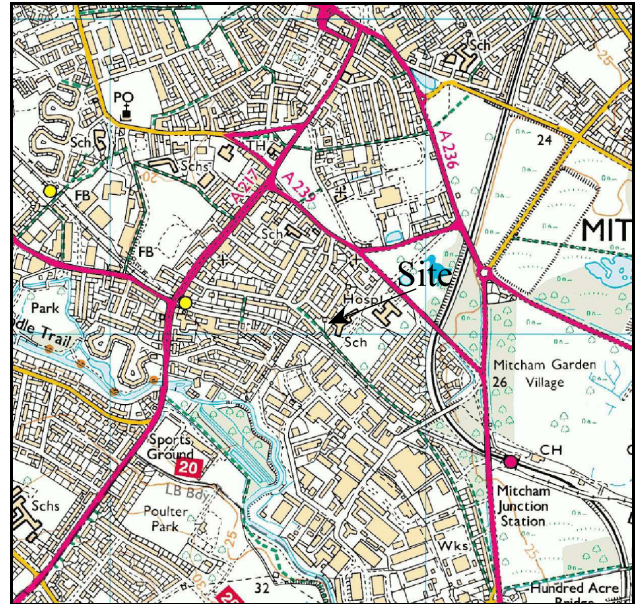


Fig. 2 Location Plan © Crown Copyright MC/98/38

Location: The site is roughly a kite shaped area situated at the southern end of Denham Close. The Cricket Green lies to the north, with Cranmer School and Mitcham Common and Golf Course to the east. London Road lie to the west and the Wimbledon to Croydon Tramway and river Wandle lie to the south.

Topography: The site lies on the North side of the Wandle valley, in an area consisting of residential properties. The land slopes from Mitcham Common in the north-east (25m aOD) to the south-west, with the area of the site lying at a height of about 22m aOD.

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

Planning background

The proposed development area is currently occupied by a pair of semi-detached house, set in large gardens. These are to be demolished and replaced by 6, four bedroom semi detached houses with accommodation over 2 storeys and the roof space including a pair of properties adjacent to 45 Denham Crescent with a new road providing access to four semi detached properties at the rear of the site (fig. 4).

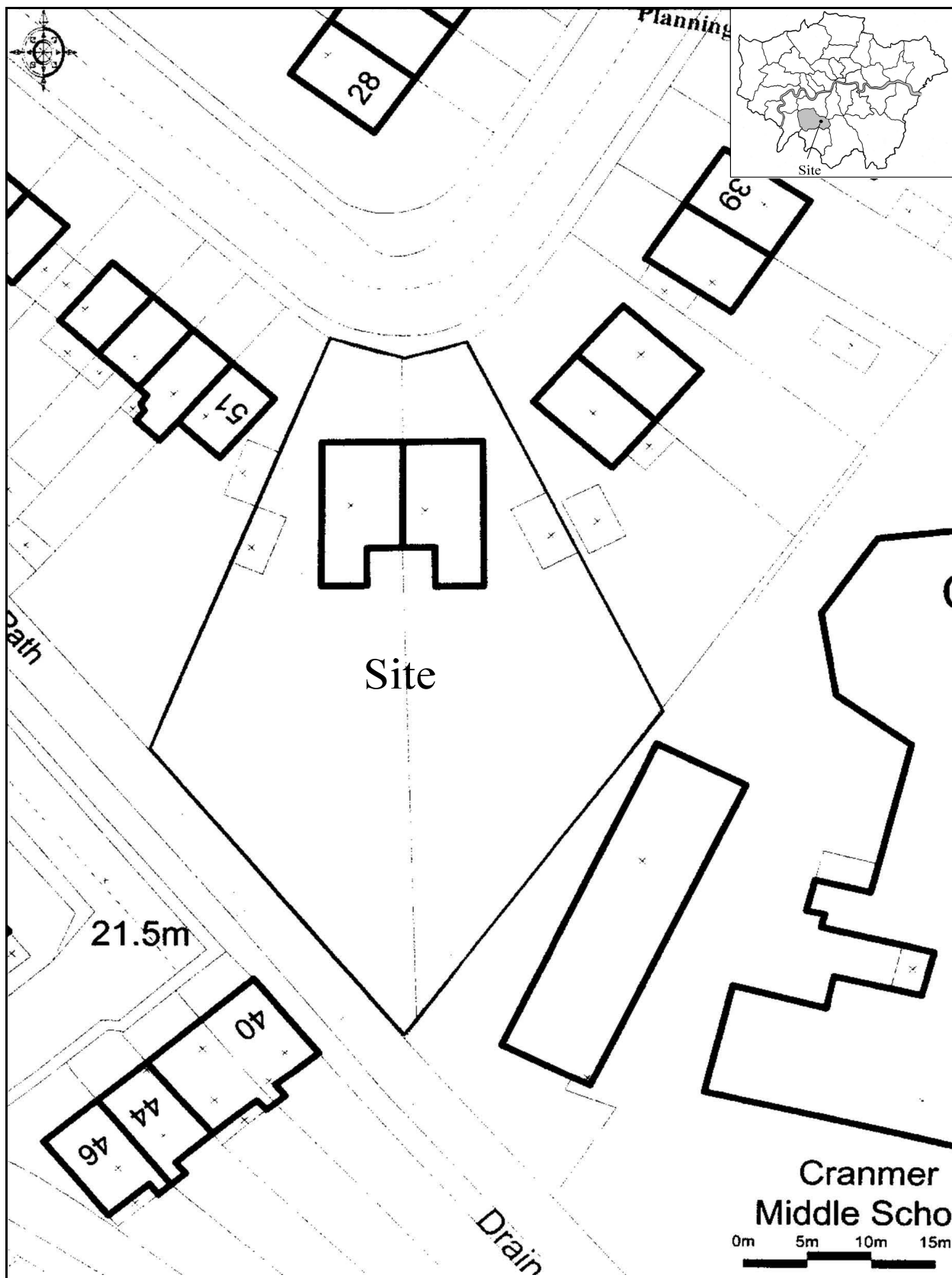


Fig. 3 Site Location Plan (© Crown Copyright MC/98/38)

Planning permission was approved by the London Borough of Merton and an archaeological condition under PPS 5¹ was included in the planning decision 09/P2248 dated 25th June 2010:

¹ Department for Communities and Local Government: *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment*, TSO, 2010.

10 No development shall take place within the site until the implementation of a programme of archaeological work has been secured in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The archaeological works shall be carried out by a suitably qualified investigating body acceptable to the Local Planning Authority.

Archaeological discussion

There is plenty of evidence for human occupation and activity in the area for all periods.

Prehistoric: The Mitcham area would have been an attractive area for settlement, with light soils enabling clearance and agriculture together with an abundance of water. There is, however, only one Palaeolithic find recorded in the research area and none from Mesolithic to Neolithic periods. Some Bronze Age material has been found across the research area, suggesting there is some occupation in the Mitcham area. Several Iron Age coins, including a gold stater, are known from the area, but no known settlement evidence. Iron Age settlements are known further away at Pollards Hill to the north and at Beddington Sewage Farm to the south.

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

Roman: There have been numerous Roman finds from Mitcham that suggest Roman activity in the research area. Much of this activity has been to the west, between Church Road and the Wandle. While there is also some activity to the south and north, but none near the site. If there was a Roman settlement it is likely to have been to the west, in the same area where later Saxon and Medieval activity is also known.

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

Saxon: There is no evidence for Saxon occupation or activity in the immediate area around the site. There is, however, an important early Saxon cemetery in the Ravensbury Park area to the south-west and any associated settlement is likely to be between Church Road and the Wandle, where Saxon activity has been documented. This is the same area where Roman and Medieval activity has also

been found. The Domesday settlement is thought to be in the Upper Green area, with the hamlet of Witford in the Lower Green area, possibly to the north or west of the site.

Pre-evaluation evidence and the lack of any definitive evidence makes the potential for Saxon archaeological low.

Medieval: The Domesday evidence indicates a reasonable population in the area, but the suggested settlement is thought to be in the Upper Green Area, well away from the site. The exploitation of the river Wandle resources would have been very profitable and a mill(s) would have been in use throughout the Medieval period and later. The location of the Church close to the Wandle and the Medieval activity in that area suggests some sort of activity, possibly a settlement. Is this the site of Witford? Closer to the proposed site there is a little Medieval activity, with a suspected moated site in the Canons area. This area around the site, however, was most likely part the common 'waste' or heath, used as rough grazing for animals

Pre-evaluation evidence suggested there was a low to moderate potential for Medieval archaeological settlement and activity on this development.

Post-Medieval to Modern: Mitcham appears to have developed as a dual focal village, with one centre around the Lower Green, Cricket Green and Church Road area and the other around the Upper Green area. John Rocque's map of Mitcham (fig. 1) shows the site as agricultural land in the mid 18th century.

The first detailed evidence for estates and land-holding comes from the estate of Sir Julius Caesar Adelmare, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1606 and Master of the Rolls in 1616, who died in 1636. His estate lies just to the west of the site. Sir Julius owned a mansion just to the north of Mitcham Hall, where he entertained Queen Elizabeth I in 1598 *with as much pomp and ceremony as he could afford*². The house had come into Sir Julius's possession in 1596 on his marriage to Alice Dent. Following Alice's death in 1614 the property presumably passed to her eldest daughter Mary, who married Sir Henry Savile in 1607. The Saviles disposed of *the capital messuage* to one Richard

² Montague, E. N. and Turner, W. A., 'The Residence of Sir Julius Caesar Adelmare in Mitcham', *Surrey Archaeol Coll*, **LXVII**, (1970), 85-94.

Broughton for £900 in an indenture dated 20th March 1623³. In February 1654 the same *mansion house* was sold by Thomas Hopkins to Robert Cranmer for £1,600⁴.

The archaeological potential of the site can therefore be described as low to moderate for this period.

Research objectives

In November 2010 Archaeological Services produced its research design. Based on our brief assessment of the evidence, we formed the objective to look for signs of 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 Potential

Taking the evidence as a whole, before the evaluation, the potential for Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon occupation and activity was considered low. There was, however, a low to moderate potential for Medieval and Post-Medieval occupation and activity on the site.

³ Minet Library, deed 3112.

⁴ Surrey Record Office, Mitcham Deed 599.

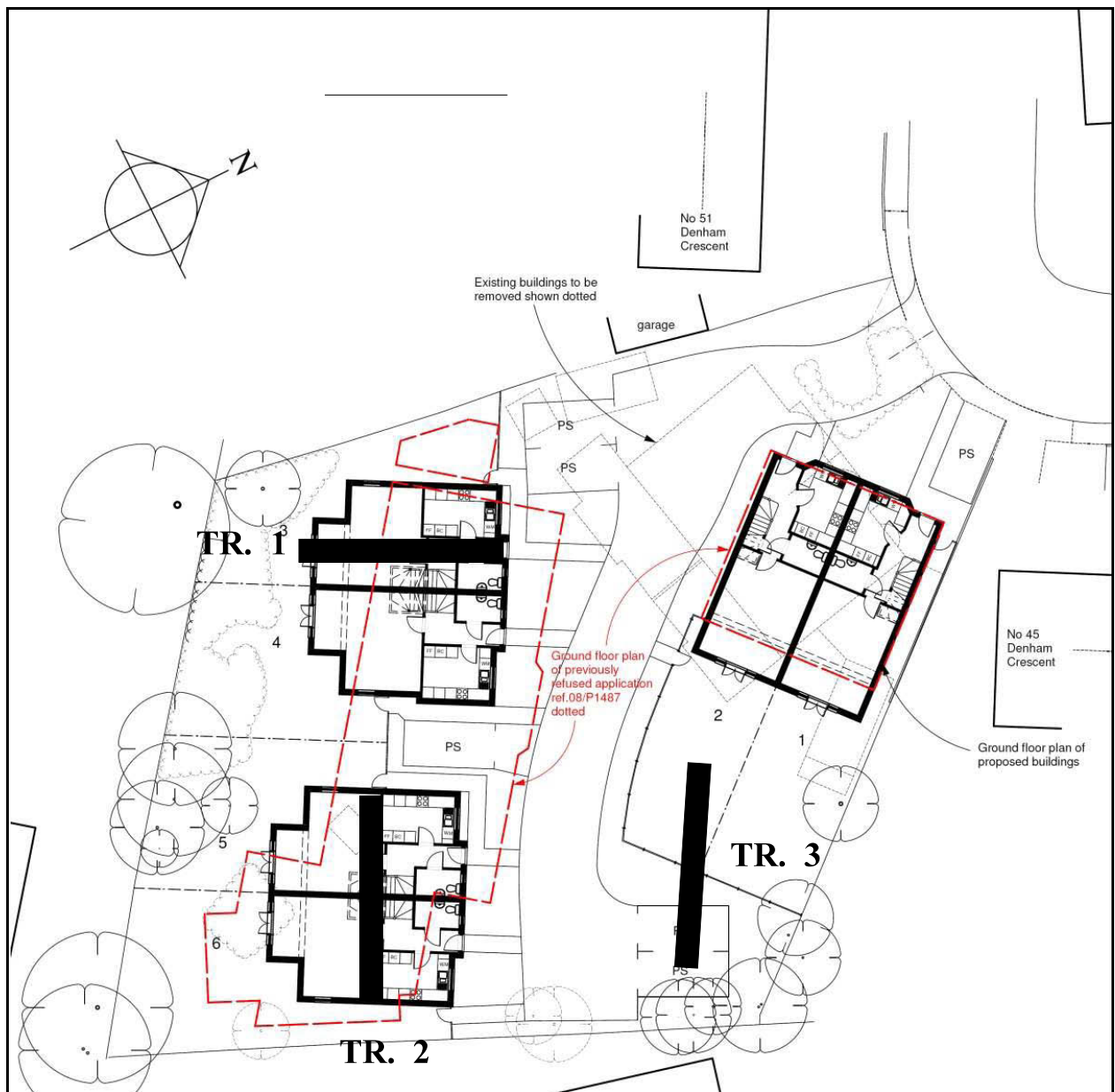


Fig. 4 Development and trench location plan

The main potential for archaeology was for the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods where we hope to find evidence of settlement and activity. Evidence from this type of site could provide information on the development of Mitcham and agriculture during these periods. Pottery from these periods could also help refine and develop the local ceramic sequence⁵.

⁵ Greater London Archaeology Research Framework (2002), p. 23-5.

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 a suitable mitigation strategy or design measures to protect the archaeology. If significant remains are encountered then further investigation will be needed to mitigate the impact of development, and the scope of that work will be detailed in another Research Design. SAS proposed excavate 3 x 10m x 1.8m trenches.

Archaeological methodology

Standards: SAS carried out the archaeological evaluation in accordance with

- our research design dated November 2010: see below for the change in trench locations
- 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 3 trenches as shown on fig 4. Trench 3 was realigned due to a garden wall on a concrete foundation.

We broke open the trenches with a JCB site Master, using a smooth-edged bucket.

Non-archaeological deposits: In each trench we removed by machine, in level spits of no more than 10-15 cm, the tarmac, top 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 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 other than 19th to 20th century.

Site records: We recorded all features as we proceeded, by written records, plans, sections and photographs. In all, we recorded 11 contexts - numbered [001] to [011] - 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 an Ordnance Survey spot height, value 21.40m aOD, at the junction of Mitcham Park Road and Bramcote Avenue.

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

Evaluation results

Trench 1

Trench 1 was 11m long and located in the western part of the site and was oriented roughly north (21.54m aOD) to south (21.57m aOD). Context **001** was the turf and topsoil, which covered the whole trench and was 8-10cm thick. Several fragments of modern CBM were recovered from the context.

The subsoil lay below **001**, a friable to very soft, medium to dark brown sandy clay **[002]** (north: 21.46m aOD to south: 21.47m aOD), containing occasional small to large flint pebbles. A sherd of 19th to 20th century pot and several fragments of modern CBM were recovered.

The natural deposits **[003]** (north: 20.82m aOD to south: 20.83m aOD) lay below **002**, a friable, light orangish brown medium sand, containing 30-40% fine to large flint pebbles. It extended across the whole of the trench. The matrix was not consistent, with areas of mixed sand and pebbles, while other areas had almost pure sand or mostly pebbles.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was 10m long and located in the southern part of the site and was oriented roughly east (21.80m aOD) to west (21.76m aOD). Context **004** was the turf and topsoil, which covered the whole trench and was 8-12cm thick. Several fragments of modern CBM and some 19th to 20th century pot were recovered.

The subsoil lay below **001**, a friable to very soft, medium to dark brown sandy clay silt **[005]** (east: 21.69m aOD to west: 21.66m aOD), containing occasional small to large flint pebbles. A sherd of

19th to 20th century pot, some modern iron rods and several fragments of modern CBM were recovered.

A large roughly circular pit [006] lay below 005, cutting into the natural below. It was filled with a similar soil to 005, a friable, dark brown sandy clay [007] (top: 21.32m aOD), containing 10-20% medium to large fragments of concrete and 10% CBM fragments.

The natural deposits [008] (east: 21.95m aOD to west: 20.86m aOD) lay below 005, a friable, light orangish brown medium sand, containing 30-40% fine to large flint pebbles. It extended across the whole of the trench. The matrix was not consistent, with areas of mixed sand and pebbles, while other areas had almost pure sand or mostly pebbles.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was 11.50m long and located in the western part of the site and was oriented roughly (east: 21.59m aOD to west: 21.58m aOD). Context 009 was the turf and topsoil, which covered the whole trench and was 9-11cm thick. A fragment of clay pipe stem was found.

The subsoil lay below 009, a friable to very soft, medium to dark brown sandy clay [010] (east: 21.47m aOD to west: 20.50m aOD), containing occasional small to large flint pebbles. Several sherds of 19th to 20th century pot (willow pattern), several fragments of modern CBM and four fragments of burnt flint were recovered.

The natural deposits [011] (east: 21.05m aOD to west: 20.98m aOD) lay below 010, a friable, light orangish brown medium sand, containing 30-40% fine to large flint pebbles. It extended across the whole of the trench. The matrix was not consistent, with areas of mixed sand and pebbles, while other areas had almost pure sand or mostly pebbles.

Assessment and interpretation

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

Three trenches were excavated across the site revealing top and sub-soil and the natural sand and gravel.

Except for four fragments of burnt flint, the only archaeology found was dated to the 19th to 20th 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 does 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.



Plate 1 Tr. 1: looking south



Plate 2 Tr. 1: west section



Plate 3 Tr. 2: looking east



Plate 4 Tr. 2: south section



Plate 5 Tr. 3: looking east



Plate 6 Tr. 3: east section



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