

# *Sutton Archaeological Services*

## **Watching Brief Report**

on

**170-176 Grange Road**

London, SE1 3BN.

GNZ 10: (TQ 33528 79714)

for

*Vision Homes Limited*



**Fig. 1** John Rocque's map of London (1746)

# Watching Brief Report

on

## **170-176 Grange Road**

London, SE1 3BN.

London Borough of Southwark

GNZ 10: (TQ 33528 79714)

By

J G Perry October 2010

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## Summary

Sutton Archaeological Services (SAS) carried out an archaeological watching brief at 170-176 Grange Road, London, SE1 3BN between 27<sup>th</sup> April and 20<sup>th</sup> August 2010.

The site lay in an area of archaeological importance as defined in the London Borough of Southwark's Unitary Development Plan. Southwark's Archaeological Officer had advised the borough that an archaeological condition under PPS 5 should be included in planning approval 06-AP-1293 dated 8th February 2010.

The site is at present a piece of open ground, the previous buildings on the site having been demolished. The proposed development is for a five storey building, with a part basement, for a series of commercial units on the ground floor and 33 residential units on the first to fourth floors. There will also be associated residential parking and other facilities.

Taking the evidence as a whole, the potential for Prehistoric, Roman and Post-Medieval settlement and activity in the area of the development seemed medium. There was a low potential for Saxon and Medieval occupation in the area of the site. Because of the potential for archaeology in the development area, SAS proposes to monitor all groundwork excavation during the groundworks stage of construction.

All intrusive operations were observed across the site revealing made ground, a sandy silt above the natural sand and gravel. Looking at the evidence from all four archaeological investigations, this site has been more or less destroyed, particularly in the eastern side. The concrete stanchion found by the DGLA would not have been an isolated structure. There would have been others though no trace was found in any of the subsequent investigations. This implies the site had been partially 'de-bouldered', that is turned over to remove any intrusive structures. This probably happened in the 1990s. This conclusion is confirmed by the later SAS observations, which shows deep made ground over natural in most of the eastern part of the site, evidence seen in the strip and sewer trenches.

The western side appears to have suffered less with the silty sand deposit surviving along the western and southern edges. The deposit appeared to be waterlain and only contained 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century CBM and a single abraded sherd of Roman Greyware. It was probably a cultivated soil and may represent the remains of the orchard shown on Rocque's map.

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 Southwark Council.

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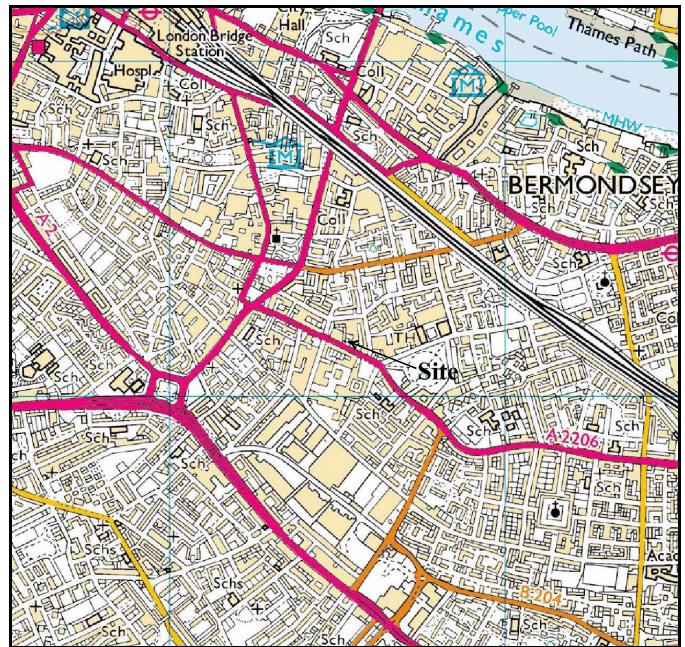
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## Introduction

This report concerns the proposed development at 170-176 Grange Road, London, SE1 3BN.

Vision Homes Limited (the Developers) have commissioned Sutton Archaeological Services (SAS) to carry out a watching brief and any subsequent archaeological work that may be necessary. The archaeological works are to be carried out post determination under the above planning condition.



**Fig. 2** Site Location © Crown Copyright MC/98/38

**Location:** The site is situated in the northern part of the London Borough of Southwark, lying between Tower Bridge Road to the west and Southwark Park Road to the east. Abbey Street lies to the north, along with the main railway to London Bridge Station and the river Thames. The Old Kent road lies to the south.

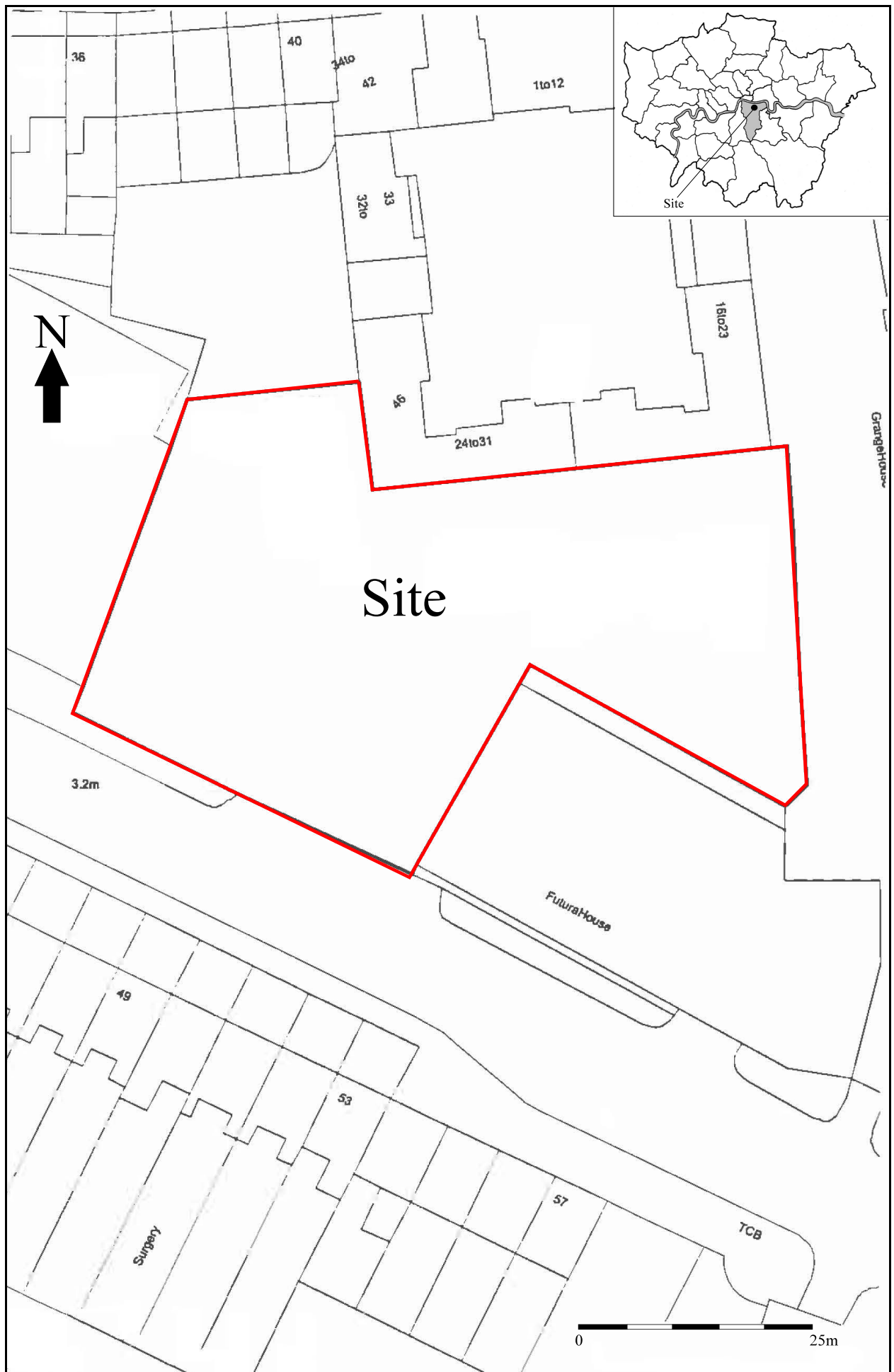
**Topography:** The site lies on fairly flat ground to the south of the old Bermondsey Island. Ground levels around the site are about *c.* 3m OD.

**Geology:** The basic geology of the area consists of Pleistocene river terrace gravels overlain with river deposited sediments. From previous archaeological work on site there is modern made ground deposits overlying the natural gravel.

## Planning background

The site was a piece of open ground, the previous buildings on the site having been demolished. The current development is for a five storey building, with a part basement, for a series of commercial units on the ground floor and 33 residential units on the first to fourth floors. There will also be associated residential parking and other facilities.





**Fig. 3**

Site location Plan

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The site lies in an area of archaeological importance as defined in the London Borough of Southwark's Unitary Development Plan. Southwark's Archaeological Officer has advised the borough that an archaeological condition under PPS 5<sup>1</sup> should be included in planning approval 06-AP-1293 dated 8th February 2010:

- 7 *No development shall take place within the proposed development area until the applicant, or their agents or their 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 the planning authority and approved in writing.*

## Archaeological Discussion

The area around the site has produced abundant evidence of Prehistoric and Roman activity. There is also Medieval evidence in the area from the nearby Bermondsey Abbey and its' associated establishments. In the Post-Medieval period the area was used for market gardens and later the area was known for its' tanning industry.

***Prehistoric to Roman:*** Excavations on the site by the old DGLA in 1989<sup>2</sup> found a pit containing quantities of Late Iron Age to early Roman material (Trench A) and a series of linear trenches containing Roman finds (Trench B). This evidence suggested some form of agricultural use during this period. It has been suggested that Grange Road may follow the alignment of a Roman Road<sup>3</sup>. There is, as yet, no evidence to support this theory and it is doubtful as the main Roman Road (Watling Street) lies just to the south.

Other archaeological work on site by PCA in 2003 and MoLAS in 2007<sup>4</sup> failed to located any Late Iron Age to early Roman material, other than residual finds, though several small undated gullies in MoLAS's Trench 1 were thought to be Roman. There is, however, no evidence to support this. Pre-

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

<sup>2</sup> Department of Greater London Archaeology 1989 170-170 Grange Road, Bermondsey, SE1, unpl rpt. and GLHER ref: 091284-6

<sup>3</sup> Daykin, A. 2008 170-176 Grange Road, London, SE1. *An Evaluation Report*. Unpl. Rpt MoLAS

<sup>4</sup> Pre-Construct Archaeology: GGW03, Test Pits 1 to 10  
Museum of London Archaeology Service: GGX07, Trenches 1 and 2

watching brief evidence suggested there was a medium potential for Prehistoric to Roman archaeology on this site.

**Saxon:** Other than placename evidence there is no Saxon archaeology in the immediate area of the site.

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

**Medieval:** The main Medieval evidence come from Bermondsey Abbey, a Cluniac Priory established as an English Benedictine monastery in 1082 and converted into an Abbey in the late fourteenth century. Although the site lies close to the Abbey, no evidence for Medieval activity has been found on site.

The area was most likely used for agricultural purposes during this period. Pre-watching brief evidence suggested there was a low potential for Medieval archaeology on this site.

**Post-Medieval:** The immediate area around the site probably continued in use as agricultural land, which by the time of Rocque was market gardens. Tanning was also a large industry in the area and in 2007 MoLAS found a pit full of horn cores (Trench 1), a by product of tanning<sup>5</sup>. Traces of 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings were also found on site (Trenches 1 and 2).

Pre-watching brief evidence suggested there was a medium potential for Post-Medieval archaeology on this site.

## **Research objectives**

In July 2010 Archaeological Services produced its research design. Based on our brief assessment of the evidence, we formed the objectives to look for signs of Prehistoric, Roman and Post-Medieval occupation 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.

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<sup>5</sup> 168-169 Grange Road (GNS03) and 8-9 Grange Road (GNA02),



**Fig. 4** Development plan

“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 Potential**

Taking the evidence as a whole, before the archaeological work, the potential for Prehistoric, Roman and Post-Medieval settlement and activity in the area of the development seemed medium. There was a low potential for Saxon and Medieval occupation in the area of the site.

For the Prehistoric and Roman periods, we hoped to find evidence such as pits and linear features associated with the agricultural use of the land, that may have been part of a field system related to a nearby settlement. It was also possible to find evidence for occupation, though the main area of occupation, certainly in the Roman period, was in the Borough High Street area, to the north-west. Evidence from this type of site could provide information on the development of settlements and agricultural during the Iron Age to Roman transition. Pottery could also help refine and develop the local ceramic sequence.

Evidence from Post-Medieval occupation could help define what industries there were on site, such as tanning. An analysis of animal debris could give information on what animals were being slaughtered and whose hides were used for tanning. The Post-Medieval occupation the site could provide information on how the suburbs developed. Objectionable industries such as tanning may have declined during the later development of an area and replace by domestic housing or other more acceptable commercial and industrial concerns<sup>6</sup>.

## **Archaeological Proposals**

Usually, where development may destroy archaeology, an watching brief is undertaken to identify the presence or absence, extent, character, quality and date of any threatened deposits and, where

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<sup>6</sup> Greater London Archaeology Research Framework (2002).

necessary, to develop a suitable mitigation strategy or design measures to protect the archaeology. If significant remains were encountered then further investigation would be needed to mitigate the impact of development, and the scope of that work would be detailed in a further Research Design.

Because of the potential for archaeology in the development area, SAS proposed that all groundworks should be observed until it was apparent that all archaeology likely to be impacted by the development has been recorded.

### **Archaeological methodology**

***Standards:*** SAS carried out the archaeological evaluation in accordance with:

- our research design dated April 2010.
- the Institute for 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.

***Non-archaeological deposits:*** In each trench (strip or ground beam) we removed by machine, in level spits of no more than 10-15 cm, the made ground and demolition 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. (Where possible we excavated up to 25cm to 30cm into the natural to make sure we had reached true natural and not re-deposited material.) In this way we excavated the trenches 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 3 contexts - numbered [001] to [003] - 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 on site temporary benchmark.

## Watching Brief results

The watching brief was carried out in four stages:

- I) watching the boring of the piles and noting finds that were revealed which might give an indication of any archaeology below ground, to be investigated later
- ii) watching the connecting ground beam trenches between the various piles
- iii) watching the strip foundation trenches for the commercial units
- iv) watching the lift shaft pit and service trenches for the drainage.

### *Piling Operation*

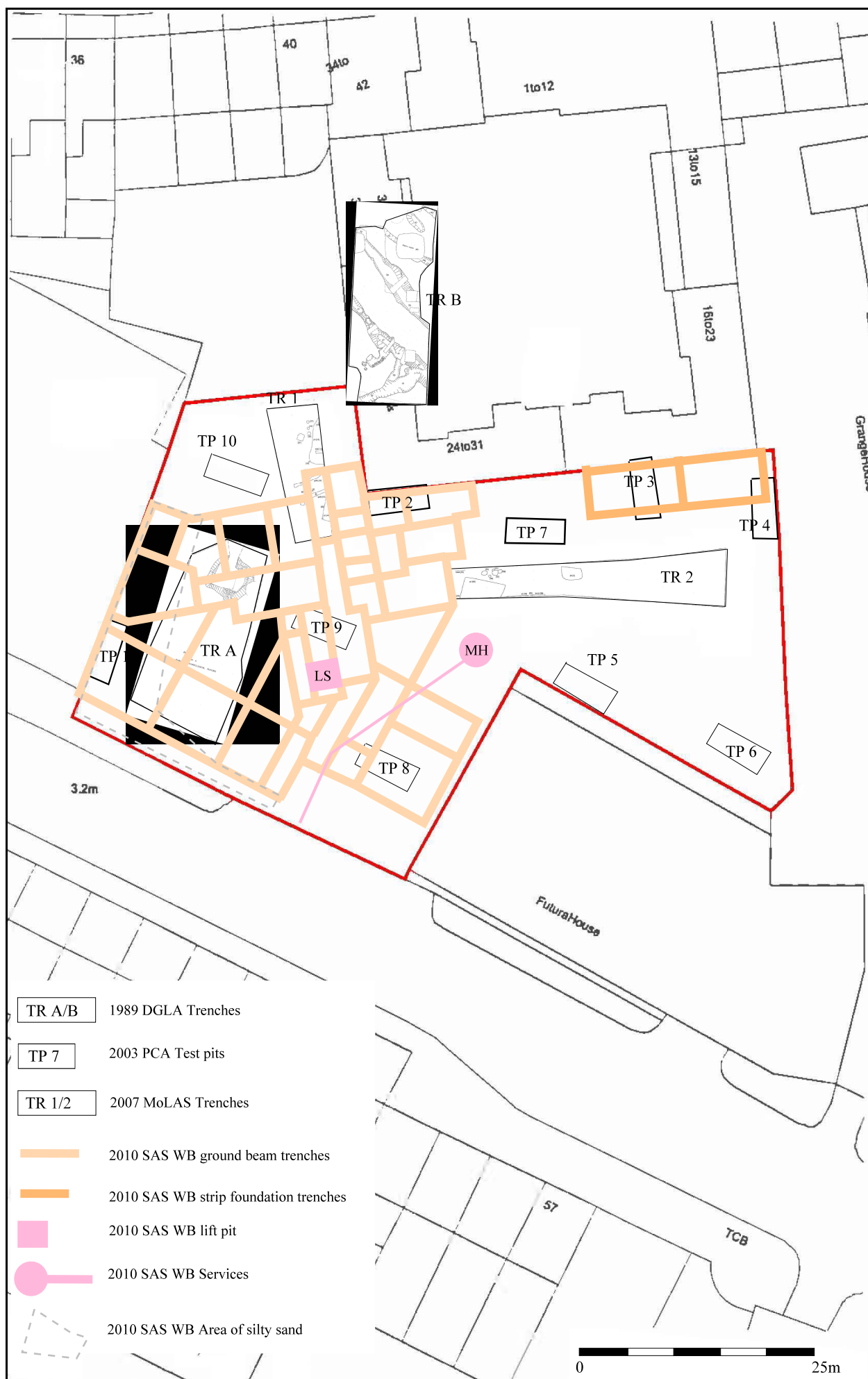
The information obtained during this stage gave an indication of the underlying strata and spatial distribution of finds, though little evidence as to depth. Three contexts were revealed, consisting of modern made ground and demolition debris [001], over a dark greyish brown sandy silt [002] which in turn overlaid the natural sand and gravel [003]. The ground levels across the site varied from 3.26m aOD (west) to 3.41m aOD (east). It was noted that the sandy silt [002] occurred at the western side of the site and along the south boundary, fronting on Grange Road.

The majority of the finds consisted of fragments of 19<sup>th</sup> century and later CBM, though a small quantity of fragments of a red fabric CBM were also recorded. These appeared to be from 18<sup>th</sup> century bricks. Small fragments of pipe stems and 19<sup>th</sup> century and later pottery were also recovered. The finds were completely random and gave no indication of underlying archaeological features.

### *Ground beam trenches*

Following the piling operation, the individual piles were linked together and a blinding layer of about 6cm of concrete laid in the trenches, before they were filled with reinforcing rods and concrete.

Context **001** was a made ground deposit, consisting of a friable dark brown sandy clay. It contained about 10-15% small to large 19<sup>th</sup> century and later brick fragments and frequent small to large flint pebbles. Fragments of 19<sup>th</sup> and later century pottery were recovered from the context, as well as fragments of modern iron, glass and plastic. At the western end of the site the made ground was between 0.70m to 0.76m thick, but increased to 2.45m at the eastern end of the site.



**Fig. 5** Archaeological work and results at Grange Road (1989-2010)



Below the made ground at the western and southern sides of the site was mid greyish brown sandy silt [002] (top between 2.52m (W) and 2.54m aOD (E)), containing occasional medium fragments of 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century brick and small to large flint pebbles. This context was only bottomed in a few places, giving a depth of between 0.70m to 0.76m. As this was an *in situ* deposit, the base of the trenches were reduced to see if they cover any earlier deposits. The silty sand overlaid the natural sand and gravel and no earlier deposits were discovered. The only find, other than the CBM was an abraded sherd of Roman Greyware.

The natural sand and gravel [003] lay below the sandy silt at the western part of the site and the made ground at the eastern part of the site. It was an orangish brown medium sand (top between 1.25m (W) and 0.96m aOD (E)) containing 20-25% small to large flint pebbles and moderate cobblesize flint pebbles.

#### *Commercial units*

The strip foundations were located in the north-east corner of the site. Only two contexts were revealed the made ground (top between 3.38m (W) and 3.41m aOD (E)) overlying the natural sand and gravel [003] (top between 1.01m (W) and 0.96m aOD (E)). The eastern part of the site had been more heavily truncated with the depth of the made ground being between 2.40m to 2.45m. Other than 19<sup>th</sup> century and later brick fragments there were no finds.

#### *Lift shaft pit and service trenches*

Three same three contexts were revealed as found in the ground beam trenches. They consisted of modern made ground and demolition debris [001], over a dark greyish brown sandy silt [002] which in turn overlaid the natural sand and gravel [003]. Again the only finds were 19<sup>th</sup> century and later brick fragments and clay pipe stems.

### **Assessment and interpretation**

The evidence from the SAS preliminary research indicated that there was Prehistoric, Roman and Post-Medieval archaeology and activity in the surrounding area, though the potential for all other periods was considered low.

All intrusive operations were observed across the site revealing made ground, a sandy silt above the natural sand and gravel. The previous archaeological work on the site had given mixed results,

making it difficult to interpret the overall results. The DGLA excavated two large areas, one on the current site (Trench A) and another trench (Trench B) just to the north of the site. Trench A only revealed one feature a large pit, that had been partly destroyed by a large modern concrete stanchion. The remainder of the trench was negative.

In 2003 PCA excavated a series of ten large test pits, some around the edges of the site and some away from the edge. The object of the test pits was to examine the foundations of the adjacent buildings and see what the stratigraphy was in other areas. In terms of archaeology, this was a limited exercise. The test pits did not reveal any archaeology and gave similar results to the current SAS work.

In 2007 MoLAS excavated 2 large trenches (Trenches 1 and 2) revealing evidence of Post-Medieval activity in both trenches, evidence that was absent in both of the earlier (DGLA and PCA) investigations and the later SAS observations. Trench 1 was in the northern part of the site, close to where DGLA's trench B was located. No evidence (other than residual pottery) of Roman occupation or activity was found, though a Roman ditch was on an alignment towards Trench 1 and the excavator thought that several undated features may have been Roman. Trench 2 also found no Roman occupation or activity, but did reveal heavy truncation towards the eastern end of the site. Evidence of this truncation was also found by SAS.

Looking at the evidence from all four archaeological investigations, this site has been more or less destroyed, particularly in the eastern side. The concrete stanchion found by the DGLA would not have been an isolated structure. There would have been others though no trace was found in any of the subsequent investigations. This implies the site had been partially 'de-bouldered', that is turned over to remove any intrusive structures. This probably happened in the 1990s. This conclusion is confirmed by the later SAS observations, which shows deep made ground over natural in most of the eastern part of the site, evidence seen in the strip and sewer trenches.

The western side appears to have suffered less with the silty sand deposit surviving along the western and southern edges. The deposit appeared to be waterlain and only contained 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century CBM and a single abraded sherd of Roman Greyware. It was probably a cultivated soil and may represent the remains of the orchard shown on Rocque's map.

## **Archaeological Potential**

Following the watching brief, our revised view is that the 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 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 on the eastern area of the site and that the archaeological condition in the planning consent has been fulfilled for this part of the site. The decision to discharge the archaeological condition on a partial basis, however, rests with the local planning authority on the advice of the Archaeological Officer at Southwark Council.

## **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 when the final report has been done.

## **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** Contexts 001 and 002



**Plate 2** Ground beam trenches

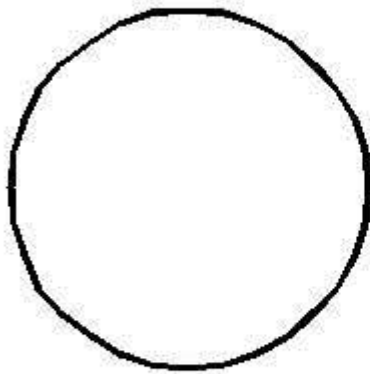


**Plate 3** Strip trenches



**Plate 4** Strip trenches: contexts 001 and 003





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