

**No.51 Grange Road, London Borough of
Southwark, SE1 3BH**

An Archaeological Evaluation



April 2013



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Southwark, SE1 3BH

An Archaeological Evaluation

Planning reference: 09/AP/0031

Site Code: GGE13

NGR (Centre): TQ 33510 79120

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Abstract

Between 19th and 22nd April 2013 an archaeological evaluation was conducted in the rear garden of No.51 Grange Road, London Borough of Southwark, following the extension of an existing semi-basement.

The evaluation pit did not reach the depth of the 19th century, and earlier, land surface. The exposed stratigraphy illustrated that a huge amount of earthmoving and build-up of ground occurred during the construction of the mid-19th century terraces, of which No. 51 Grange Road is but one. It can be assumed that the creation of the new semi-basement did not therefore have an adverse effect on any buried archaeological deposits as the evaluation pit was excavated to below the depth of the new floor level.

Only residual evidence of earlier cultures was recovered from during the evaluation, including single sherds of Romano-British greyware pottery and medieval Kingston-type ware, and some earlier examples of 17th century pottery, delftware tiles and clay tobacco pipes. This said, it is probable that earlier deposits are still buried beneath the made ground encountered and that earlier soil horizons or archaeological features may survive, to be found in any future, deeper excavations in the area.

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Fig.2 base plan extracted from Southwark Council, Southwark Historic Mapping website

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The following document comprises a summary of an archaeological evaluation conducted in the rear garden of No.51 Grange Road, London Borough of Southwark, SE1 3BH, (Ref.no.09/AP/0031). The evaluation comprised of a single test pit dug between 19th and 22nd April 2013 by Compass Archaeology.
- 1.2 The trial pit was dug in the raised area of garden as close to the extension as possible and measured approximately 2m x 2m at the base. The pit was hand dug to reach the lower construction levels of the extension.
- 1.3 The works were commissioned by Mr. O.Redjeb, following recommendations by Dr.Chris Constable, Senior Archaeology Officer for Southwark Council.



Fig.1: Site location with evaluation pit outlined in red

2 Site location, topology and geology

- 2.1 The site faces onto the southern side of Grange Road, surrounded to the east and west by adjoining terraced houses, (No.49 and No.53 respectively), of similar size and style, and to the south by the grounds of the Alaska factory, (see fig.1).
- 2.2 The site lies within an area of two Archaeological Priority Zones as designated by Southwark Council, Bermondsey Lake to the south of Grange Road, and Borough, Bermondsey, Riverside on the northern boundary along Grange Road. The whole site lies within the Conservation Area of Bermondsey Street. The Scheduled Ancient Monument, (SAM) of Bermondsey Abbey is situated to the northwest of the site. The nearest Listed buildings are 44 and 45 Grange Road, to the west, which date to c1800 and retain many of their original architectural features. However No.51 is not within the boundary of the SAM and is not listed, and as such no SAM or Listed Buildings are affected by the new extension, (see figs.2 and 3).



Fig.2: *Extracted image of the site, (red), in relation to Bermondsey Street Conservation Area, (brown), and the Archaeological Priority Zones of Borough, Bermondsey & Riverside, (top-right green), and Bermondsey Lake, (bottom-left green). Extracted from Southwark Council website.*

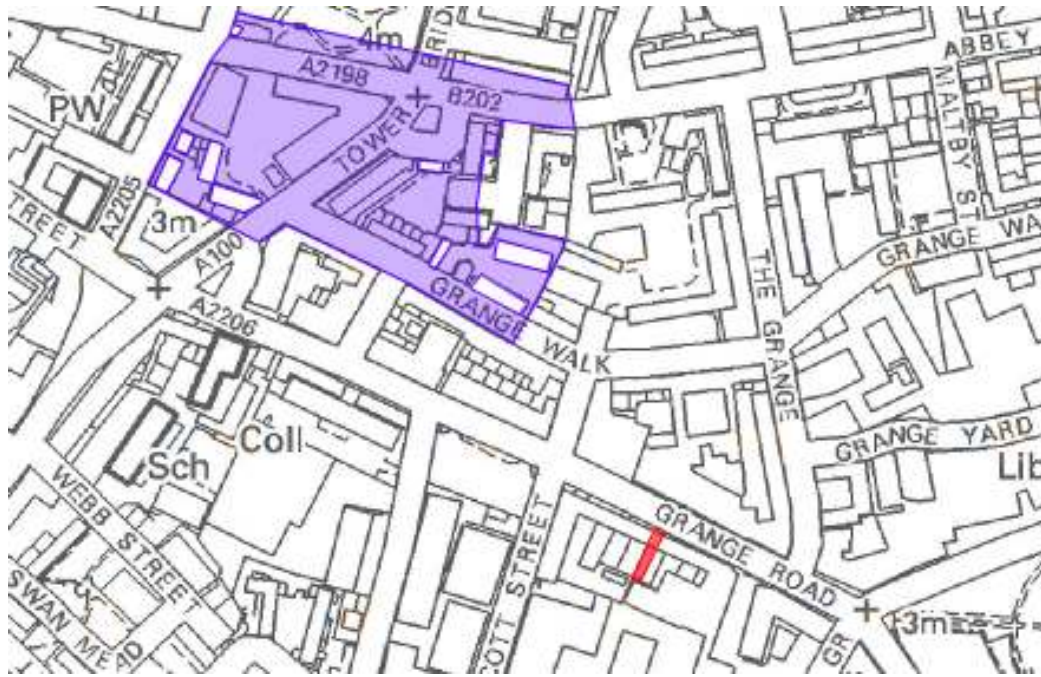


Fig.3: The site, (red), in relation to the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Bermondsey Abbey, (blue).

2.3 The British Geological Survey places the site within an area of Pleistocene river terrace gravels (Kempton Park Gravel) overlain by Holocene fluvial sediments. Water action at the end of the last glaciation (12,000 years ago or later), had cut into the surface of the gravel to define the Bermondsey Eyot, which was an island approximately 2km square at the time of the Roman conquest. The site lies towards the eastern end of the historic eyot, and on the basis of previous archaeological investigations, it was anticipated that the height of the surface of the natural sand and gravel would be between c1.35mOD and 2mOD.

3 Archaeological and historic background¹

3.1 Early history (Prehistoric – Medieval)

The site is situated on the ancient Bermondsey eyot, which was thought to have been utilised by prehistoric communities. Sites on the gravels around Grange Walk to the north and along Grange Road itself have produced prehistoric features and evidence of settlement in the form of isolated flint tools and flakes, as well as Iron Age ditches, pits and pottery, at the site of the Alaska Works on the junction of Grange Road and Bacon Grove to the southeast of No.51. This evidence has been found to be below 1mOD.

The Roman road of Watling Street ran some 800m to the south of the site, connecting the southern end of Roman Southwark with Canterbury. Evidence for Roman occupation in the form of large quantities of pottery at 133-142

¹ Much of the information in section 3 has been discussed at length in the WSI for this evaluation and so only the more relevant aspects of the site's history are discussed.

Grange Road, and building remains at the junction of Bacon Grove and Grange Road, has been found. In January 2012, on the junction of Fendall Street and Grange Road, to the immediate northwest of No.51, several garden plots were identified, by the presence of horticultural soils containing Roman finds.

The name Bermondsey is thought to derive from the Saxon name Beormund and 'eye', meaning island, in this case the eyot that perhaps still defined the landscape, however no activity of this date has been found in the immediate vicinity of No.51.

According to the Domesday Book, (1086), Bermondsey was part of a royal manor belonging to King William and consisted of a settlement and farmland. There was also a new church – St Saviour's, around which Bermondsey Priory was founded in 1082 by Aylwin Child. It is likely that No.51 fell within the estate grounds of the Abbey. Although the extent of medieval roads in the vicinity of the site is unknown, Grange Road *is* known to be an ancient route, leading from Bermondsey Abbey to the northwest of the site to the monastic farmlands, (or Grange), in which the site probably lies. Bermondsey became one of the principal religious houses in the country and was elevated to the status of Abbey in 1399. It continued to own most of the land around it until its dissolution in 1538 by Henry VIII.

Southwark was often seen as an ancillary to the City of London and as such was often the abode of the less pleasant trades. As early as 1392, a proclamation gave butchers a place in Southwark to dump their refuse, and so the link with leather working as a by-product of the butchers' trade can be made. The raw materials needed for tanning leather were also close at hand; water from the tidal streams, (notably the Neckinger stream), and oak bark from the woods south of London. Numerous tanneries, calico-makers and breweries were established during this period.

3.2 Post Medieval

The presence of the medieval Abbey had promoted growth along the major routes of Bermondsey Street and Tower Bridge Road and this continued into the 17th and 18th centuries as more land fell into private hands.

The area around No.51 Grange Road appears to have been left largely undeveloped until the mid 19th century. Most early cartographic sources depict the area as being open field with minimal roadside development, (see fig.4).

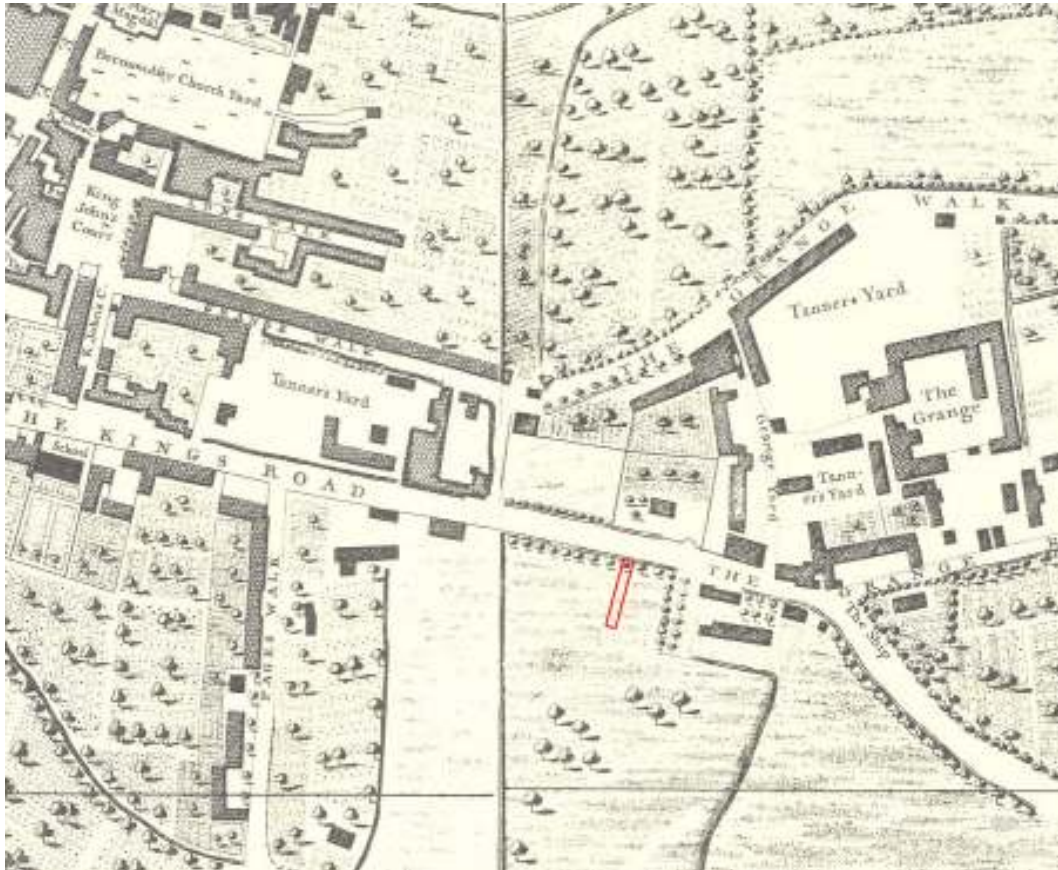


Fig.4: Extract from Rocque's map of 1744-46. The site is shown in open ground south of 'The Kings Road', modern day Grange Road.

Residential development took place from the early 19th century but this development was only completed in the middle of the century. The coming of the railway in 1836 gave rise to the construction of terraced residential properties and much of the earlier housing stock was replaced, hence Nos.44/45 Grange Road's listed status, and Grange Road's inclusion in the Bermondsey Street Conservation Area, (see fig.5).



Fig.5: Extract from the First Edition OS map, (1872), showing the site much as it exists today, sandwiched in to the terraces which grew up in the early 19th century. The evaluation site is surrounded by numerous tanneries, and the garden backs onto a yard associated with the Alaska factory; a Seal skin dressing and drying centre.

4 Archaeological research questions

The objectives of an archaeological evaluation include contributing to knowledge of the archaeology of the area. Particular attention was made to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits. The fieldwork presented an opportunity to address the following general and specific research questions:

- Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, and what is the nature of this?
- Is there any evidence for Roman settlement / activity on the gravel 'eyot', and what is the nature of this?
- Is there any evidence for Saxo-Norman activity (pits, buildings, etc), before the construction of Bermondsey Abbey?
- Is there any evidence for the medieval Bermondsey Abbey? Does this relate to the monastic farm after which Grange Road is named?
- Is there any evidence for the later post-medieval development of the area, with a focus on industrial buildings, waste materials or warehouses, (tanneries etc)?
- At what level do archaeological deposits survive in the highways across the area?

- At what level do natural deposits and flood deposits survive across the area?
- Can the archaeological works inform on the site-specific research questions of local archaeological sites and archaeological priority areas?

5 Methodology

5.1 Fieldwork

The field evaluation and post-excavation work was carried out in accordance with English Heritage guidelines (in particular, *Standards for Archaeological Field Evaluation*, July 2009) and to the standards of the Institute for Archaeologists. Overall management of the project was undertaken by a full Member of the Institute.

A single evaluation pit measuring 2m by 2m at the base was excavated. The pit was dug as close as was practical and safe to the rear extension as possible, (see fig.17).

The excavation involved two archaeologists on site to conduct the groundworks and to investigate and record the archaeological remains. The Senior Archaeology Officer for Southwark Council, Dr.Chris Constable, was advised beforehand of the on-site start date and likely end date.

Archaeological deposits were investigated by hand and recorded as appropriate. All archaeological deposits and features were investigated and recorded in stratigraphic sequence, and where appropriate, finds dating and environmental evidence recovered.

Archaeological remains were recorded on *pro-forma* sheets and drawn in plan and section, at scales of 1:10 or 1:20. The investigations were recorded on a general site plan, and related to the Ordnance Survey grid. The fieldwork record was supplemented as appropriate by photography (35mm &/or digital).

The trench was excavated down to the depth of the excavated semi-basement as part of the new development.

5.2 Post-excavation work and reporting

The fieldwork was followed by off-site assessment, compilation of a report, and by deposition of the site archive.

Assessment of finds and samples was undertaken by appropriately qualified staff. Material was treated in accordance with the appropriate guidelines, including the Museum of London's '*Standards for the Preparation of Finds to be permanently retained by the Museum of London*'. Finds and artefacts were retained and bagged with unique numbers related to the context record, although modern ceramic building material was discarded once an appropriate record was made.

Copies of the report will be supplied to the Client, and Southwark Council and Local Studies Library.

A short summary of the fieldwork has been appended to this report using the OASIS Data Collection Form, and in paragraph form suitable for publication within the 'excavation round-up' of the *London Archaeologist*.

The site archive

The watching brief records has been ordered in line with MoL *Guidelines for the Preparation of Archaeological Archives* and will be deposited in the Museum of London Archaeological Archive under site code GGE13. The integrity of the site archive should be maintained, and the landowner will be urged to donate any archaeological finds to the Museum.

6 The archaeological evaluation

- 6.1** The fieldwork was conducted between the 19th and 22nd April, with backfilling of the pit, taking place on the 23rd.



Fig.6: *Evaluation pit facing west. (1m scale)*

- 6.2** The exposed stratigraphic sequence was very simple. Approximately 360mm-400mm of black, rich-loamy, topsoil, (1), containing frequent roots and small rounded pebbles overlay a thick deposit of made ground, (2), present to the base of the trench and beyond. The made ground was excavated for a depth of 1.34m, (1.89mOD), and comprised a series of dumps of different material observed as tip-lines in section. These included compacted grey-brown silts overlying loose crushed-mortar rich material, over a lens of thick yellow-brown clay sealing a strong brown clay-silt. All of these dumps containing a similar mix of crushed ceramic building material; small to medium sized

gravely pebbles; pottery; glass; clay tobacco pipe and small amounts of animal bone. Several large iron strips, possible barrel hoops, were also found at various levels within the dumps, but not retained. These hoops may have come from barrels associated with local brewing or tanning industries. Numerous bits of ceramic garden edging tiles were found within the deposit. These were decorated with an interlacing lattice-style design and were probably later 19th century in origin; an example from an early 20th century catalogue can be seen in fig.10 below.



Fig.7: *Miscellaneous 19th century finds; a toothbrush head, padlock casing, blue medicine bottle, and other glass vessel fragments, all found within context (2), (10cm scale)*



Fig.8: Assorted pottery recovered from Context 2, (10cm scale)



Fig.9: Redware 'dog dish' and small jar recovered from Context 2, (10cm scale)



Fig.10: Brown salt-glazed stoneware garden edging found during the evaluation. The example in the catalogue is an example of James Stiff's work. He once worked for Doulton and Watts. (10cm scale in left hand photo)



Fig.11: Blacking bottle, which once held blacking liquid used for polishing shoes and the lid for a toothpaste jar, both of later 19th century in origin. (10cm scales)



Fig.12: Northeast section through the evaluation pit facing southeast, (1m scale)

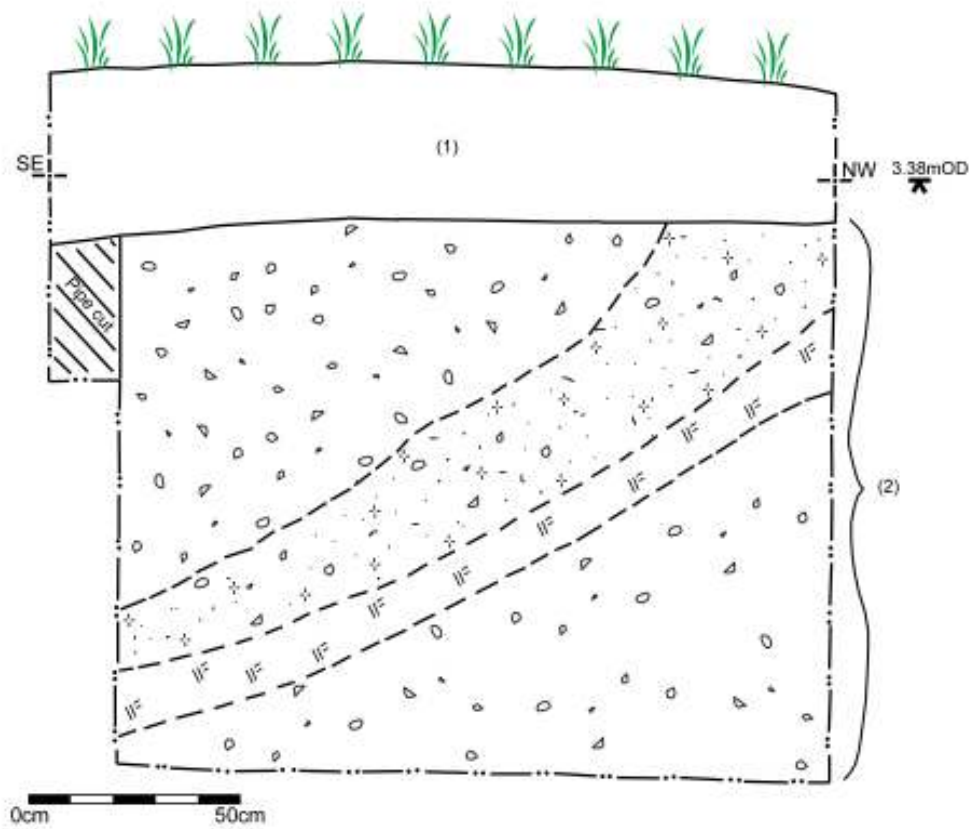


Fig.13: Northeast facing section through evaluation trench showing tip-lines associated with 19th century dumping in the area of terraced houses

The significant depth of made ground was surprising, but can perhaps be explained relatively easily. It would appear the whole area around the terraces on this side of Grange Road were constructed above the original (19th century) ground level, and the 'semi-basements' effectively created by dumping large quantities of rubble and excavated earth around them, building up the ground to its present level some 1.5m higher.

In fact as the trench was dug to the approximate formation level of the building and no earlier surface was found. It may be that some build-up of the ground had occurred *before*, (or as part of,) construction.



Fig.14: *Southeast section through the evaluation trench facing northwest, (1m scale)*

It is not known exactly where the material was derived from, but probably locally and created during the massive development of the mid-later 19th century. Much of the residual material, including pottery, is abraded and appears to be of earlier 17th century date. It may have come partly from the demolition of earlier housing stock which once stood in the vicinity of Grange Road, hence the mix of earlier sherds of pottery within a largely 19th century associated context.

Two pieces of struck flint recovered from the deposits have been interpreted as originating as building dressing, showing signs of rough knapping, (herzian cones / mishits), rather than useable prehistoric tools which would have shown signs of better craftsmanship². This view would correspond with the interpretation of the material deriving at least in part from demolition rubble.

² Pers.comm. Jon Cotton

A single sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from context (2), again representing residual material within the made ground. This pottery was Romano-British greyware most common in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, but in some places, continued in use until the 4th century. Its presence is possible evidence of nearby Roman activity, as found across the way on Fendall Street, (see section 3.1), but without being *in situ* is of little real archaeological value.



Fig.15: *Sherd of Romano-British greyware pottery found deep within Context 2, (10cm scale)*

The most interesting finds within the dumped material were two fragments of polychrome delftware tiles. These tiles were decorated with a rose in garter-style motif in traditional blue and white, with additional elements of the design picked out in green, orange-brown and yellow. Other examples of such tiles showing near identical designs have been found in Rotherhithe (Platform Wharf), and Southwark (Pickleherring), and are held in the Museum of London archive under accession numbers A22937 and 79.51/3 respectively. Based on these two examples the tile fragments are dateable to between 1618-1663.



Fig.16: *Fragments of early 17th century polychrome delftware tiles probably produced locally, (10cm scale)*

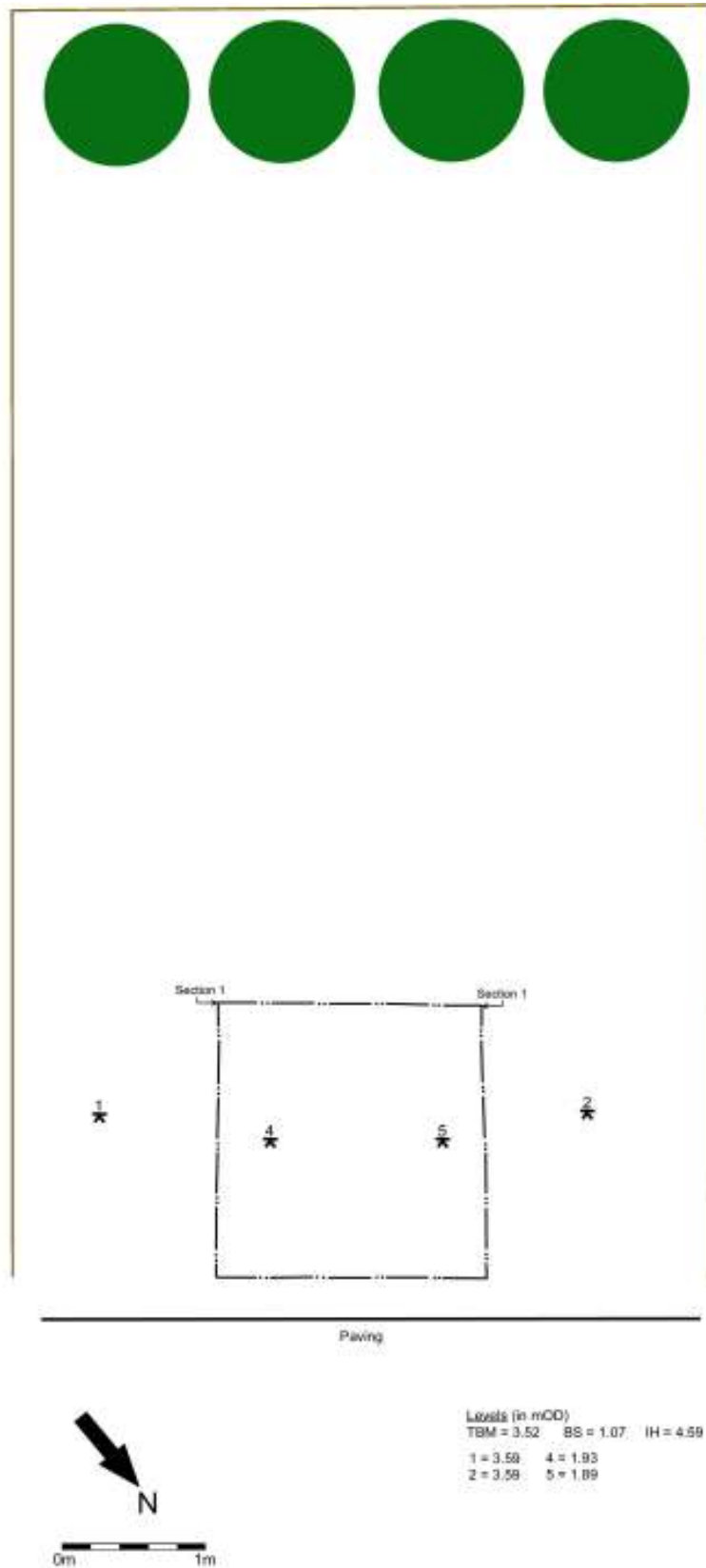


Fig.17: Location of evaluation pit in relation to rear (southwestern), boundary of No.51 Grange Road.

7 Conclusion

In the event the evaluation pit did not reach the depth of the mid 19th century, or earlier, land surface. The exposed stratigraphy illustrated that a huge amount of earthmoving and build-up of ground had occurred during, (or closely preceding), the construction of the mid-19th century terraces, of which No.51 Grange Road is but one. It can be assumed that the creation of the new semi-basement has not had an adverse effect on any buried archaeological deposits as the evaluation pit was excavated to below the depth of the new floor level.

Only residual evidence of earlier cultures was recovered from during the evaluation, including single sherds of Roman and medieval pottery, and some earlier examples of 17th century pottery, delftware tiles and clay tobacco pipes. This said, it is probable that earlier deposits are still buried beneath the made ground encountered and that earlier soil horizons or archaeological features may survive, to be found in any future, deeper excavations in the area.

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