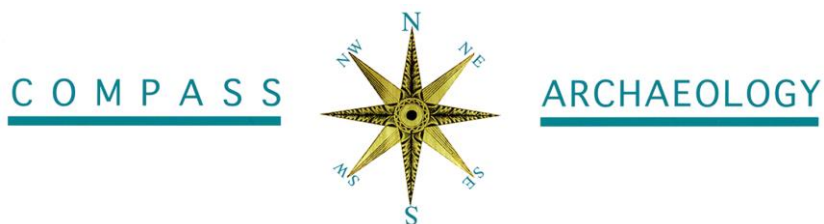


**ROMAN ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL,
ROMAN ROAD, LONDON BOROUGH OF
NEWHAM, E6 3SQ**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



November 2013



ROMAN ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL, ROMAN ROAD,
LONDON BOROUGH OF NEWHAM, E6 3SQ

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SITE CODE: RMN13

SITE CENTRE NGR: TQ 41970 82280

PLANNING REF: 13/01561/LA3

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November 2013

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Abstract

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the site of Roman Road Primary School, London Borough of Newham, before the expansion of the school involving the construction of three major new buildings. This evaluation was carried out following the compilation of a desk-based assessment of the site, which highlighted the potential for early (prehistoric and Roman) remains to be uncovered. English Heritage then recommended a pre-development trial trench evaluation to be carried out on the site.

The evaluation uncovered no finds, features or deposits, of archaeological significance. The exposed stratigraphy simply consisted of modern playground / grass surface, overlying a dump of brick and concrete rubble (associated with the 20th century development of the site), over a thin band of dark grey silty-clay (an earlier subsoil), over the natural orange clay deposit.

The only feature of interest was the culverted stream exposed in the eastern part of trench 3. This stream ran along the eastern edge of the site until the mid-20th century, when the site was developed and stream culverted within a concrete pipe.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1** This report presents a summary of archaeological trial trenching carried out on land at Roman Road Primary School, London Borough of Newham (approximately centred at NGR TQ 41970 82280). The proposed development is concentrated in the eastern part of the school grounds, which is positioned at the western end of Roman Road, to the north of the A13 and between Plaistow and East Ham (figs.1+2). The proposed development involves the construction of three major new buildings, extensions to other parts of the school, some ‘canopy’ buildings, and landscaping (fig.9) (Planning Ref: 13/01561/LA3).

Compass Archaeology undertook the fieldwork on the 28th and 29th October 2013.

- 1.2** The site had the potential to provide evidence for early, i.e. Bronze Age or Roman, activity. The lack of more recent development on the site enhanced the potential for earlier archaeological remains to survive.
- 1.3** Following the compilation of a desk-based assessment of the site, English Heritage advised that an archaeological evaluation should be undertaken. It was advised that this should consist of a *c* 4% sample of the area – this took the form of three trenches, spread evenly around the area of the proposed development.

A Written Scheme of Investigation detailing the trenching, including the location of the trial trenches within the redevelopment footprint, was produced (Compass Archaeology, September 2013).

2. Acknowledgements

The archaeological evaluation was commissioned by Ben Leissi (London Borough of Newham). Thanks to Neilcott Construction Ltd for their assistance on site, and to Roman Road Primary School for their assistance throughout. Further thanks to Adam Single (English Heritage GLAAS) for monitoring the fieldwork.

3. Background

3.1 Location and topography

The site is positioned some 250m to the north of the River Thames, to the north of the A13, and between Plaistow and East Ham. It is positioned at the western end of Roman Road, bounded by the ‘Greenway’ to the north (which follows the line of the Northern Outfall Sewer), Brampton Manor Academy to the west, Roman Road and Roman Road Playing Fields to the south, and residential properties to the east (figs.1+2).

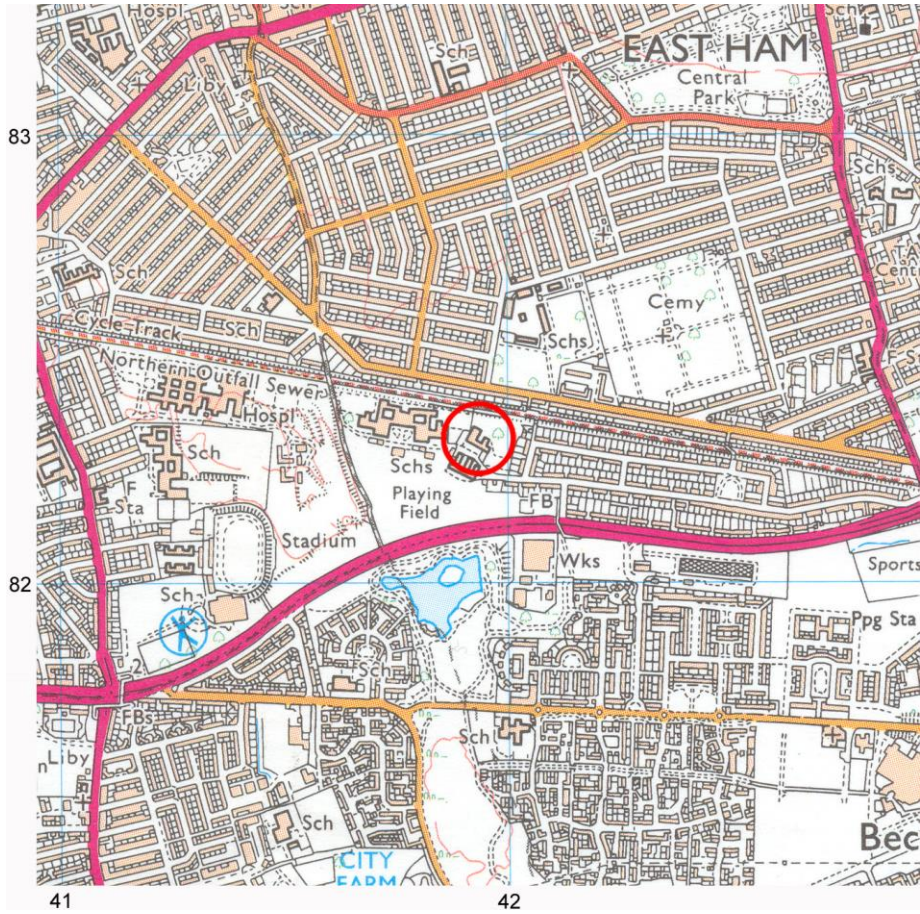


Fig.1: Site location, highlighting the whole school site

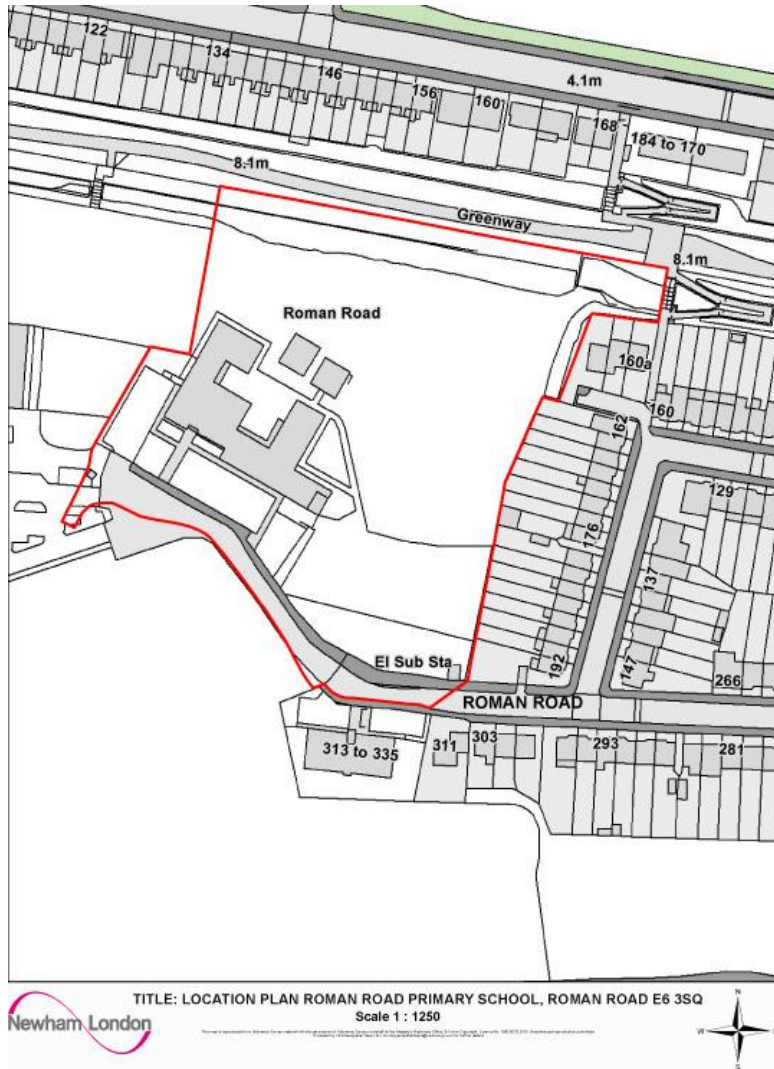


Fig.2: Plan of the school

TITLE: LOCATION PLAN ROMAN ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL, ROMAN ROAD E6 3SQ
Scale 1 : 1250

The buildings are constructed on broadly level ground, at around 4.3 – 4.5mOD. There are, however, some variations in the ground-level across the site, with a general slope down in the ground-level from west to east (c4.8m at the western end of the site, sloping down to c3.3mOD in the eastern part). Furthermore, the far eastern part of the site is lower than the rest of the site (around 1.6mOD), because of the historic stream which ran along here. There are also two large mounds within the site area – one in the north-western corner, and one in the western part of the site.

The geological map (British Geological Survey 1998) indicates that the site lies on Taplow Gravels (a River Terrace Deposit), overlying London Clay. It is positioned just to the north of the alluvial deposits (mainly sand, silt, and clay).

Geotechnical investigations were carried out on the site by Site Analytical Services Ltd in November 2012, and consisted of one borehole and two test pits (dug to 1m in depth), just to the east of the present buildings. These uncovered ‘made ground’ deposits (a clayey silty-sand) up to 0.7m thick (this is presumed to be modern made-ground deposits dumped when the area was developed in the 20th century), overlying sandy-silt clay deposits (stretching down to 1.8m beneath the present ground-surface), overlying sandy gravels (stretching down to 5.6m beneath ground-surface), overlying London Clay. This supports the picture provided by the British Geological Survey, of gravels overlying London Clay deposits, with a smattering of alluvium over this.

3.2 Archaeology and history

3.2.1 Prehistoric to Saxon

Some evidence for prehistoric activity, most notably Bronze Age activity, has been found in the vicinity of the site. In particular, the Prince Regent Lane site on the A13 uncovered evidence for a mid-later Bronze Age settlement on the gravel terraces, plus Bronze Age features on the alluvium. This suggests that there was some exploitation of the marshland in this period, and that the site’s position on gravel terraces overlooking this marshland may have acted as a suitable place from where to undertake this activity (and a possible location for settlement).

3.2.2 Roman

It seems likely that this area was utilized, in the form of small settlements and agricultural activity, during the Roman period. There is also some indication of more intensive activity, in the form of a possible Roman cemetery close to the site.

3.2.3 Saxon – Medieval

There does not appear to be any significant or substantial activity in the vicinity of the site during the Saxon or medieval period, with settlement being focused at East Ham and Plaistow.

3.2.4 Post Medieval

The site appears remained open, used for arable farming, with a stream down its eastern extent, and it being positioned just to the north of the marshes, until the late 19th / early 20th century (figs.3-6). The Northern Outfall Sewer was constructed in

the later 19th century, along the northern boundary of the site (fig.6), and the Isolation Hospital was then constructed in the early 20th century directly to the west of the site (fig.7). The area then suffered from heavy bombing during the Blitz, before the construction of buildings to form a 'halfway house' in the aftermath of the war (fig.8). These are the only buildings to have been constructed on this site before the present buildings in the 1970s.

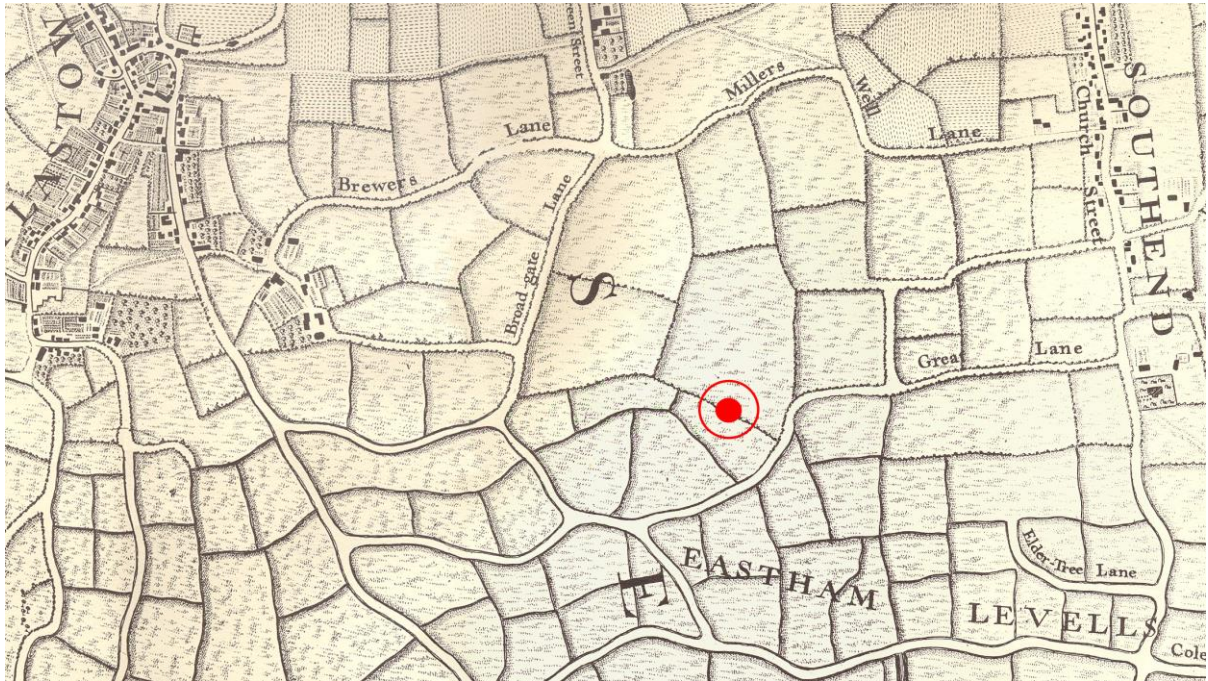


Fig.3: Rocque's 1744-46 Map, with site marked



Fig.4: Andre and Chapman's 1777 Map, with site marked



Fig.5: Map of East Ham by Peter le Neve, 1800, with site marked

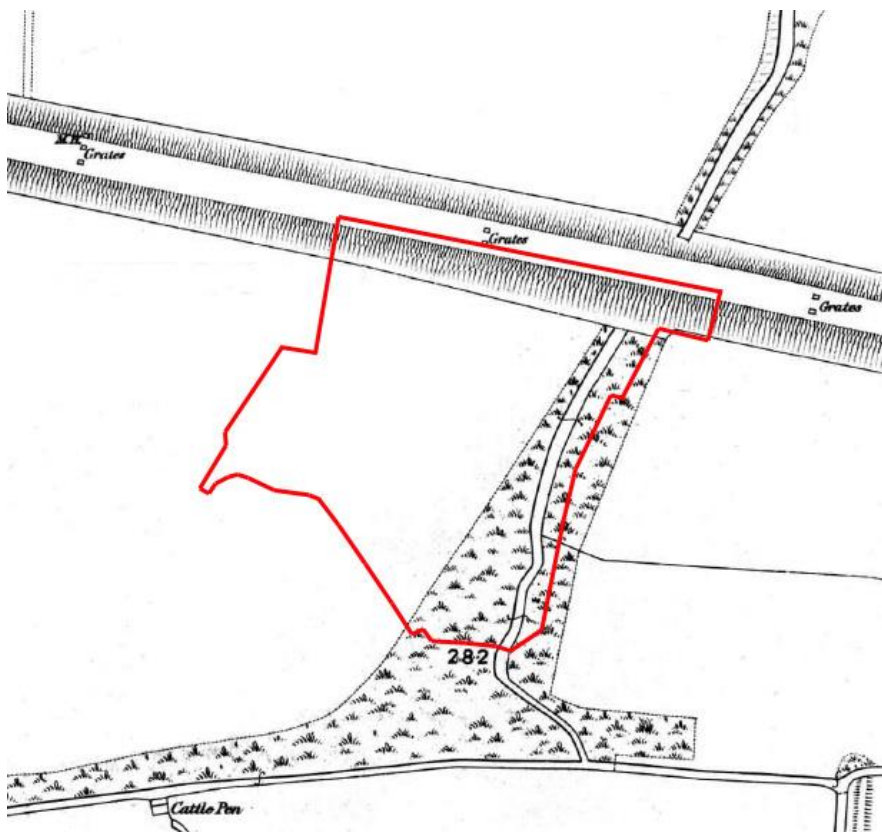


Fig.6: 1863-7 OS Map, with site marked

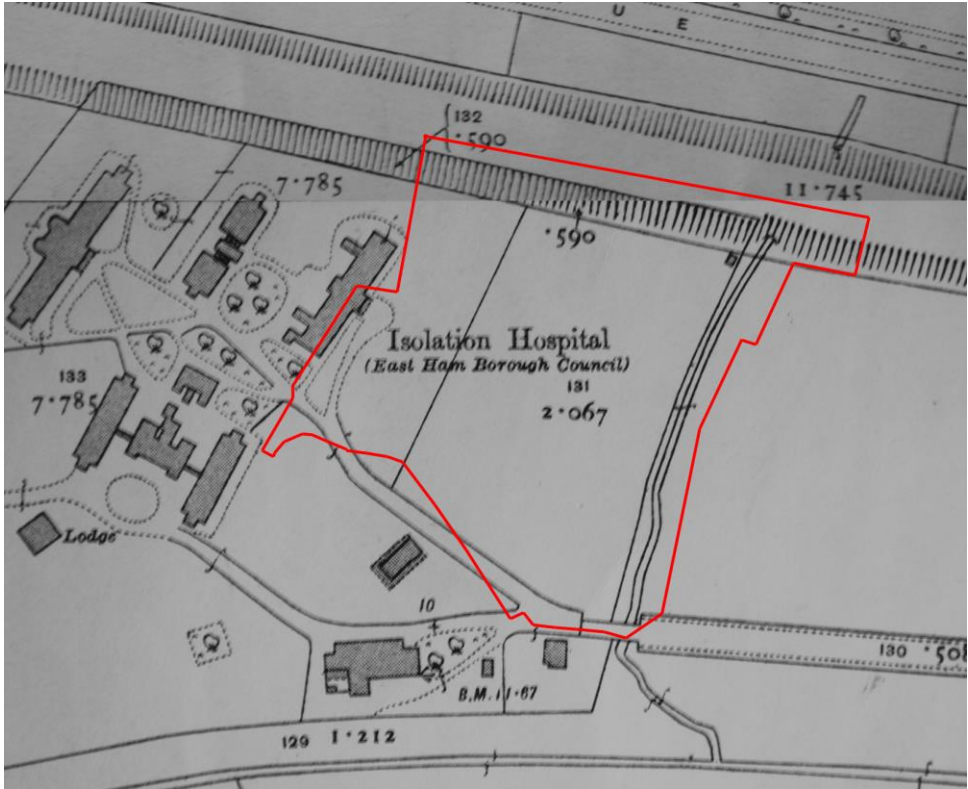


Fig.7: 1919 OS Map, with site marked

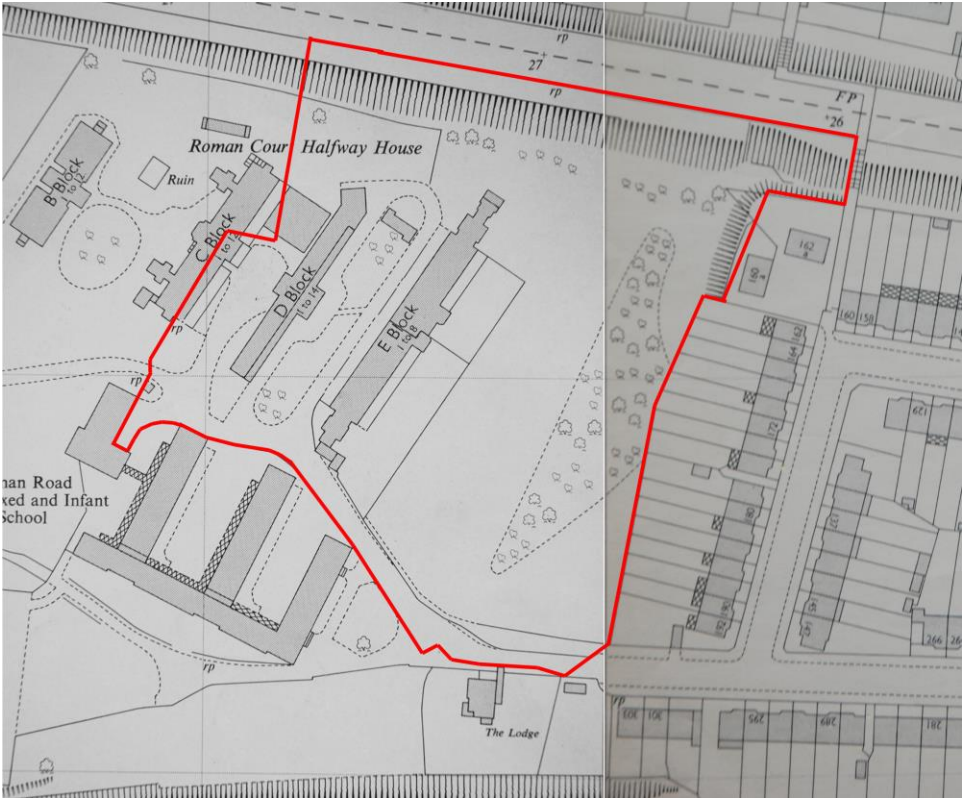


Fig.8: 1958 OS Map, with site marked

4. Aims and objectives of the archaeological evaluation

4.1 The proposed development

The proposed redevelopment involves the construction of three main buildings in the eastern part of the site, plus an extension to the north of the present school, and another small block to the west of this (the areas in red on fig.9 show the areas of this new build). This new build will consist of approximately 1630 square metres. The excavations for the foundations for the exterior walls of these new buildings will consist of trenches *c*450mm wide, and *c*1m deep. Trenches will also be dug for the foundations for the interior walls – these will also be *c*450mm wide, but only *c*750mm deep.

There will also be some ‘canopy build’ - areas with roofs connecting different parts of the site, and not such substantial structures (shaded in blue on fig.9). These will cover an area of approximately 320 square metres, and will be positioned in the areas between the new buildings in the eastern part of the site. The groundworks for the construction of the ‘canopy build’ areas will consist of pads – 750mm by 750mm, and 750mm deep.



Fig.9: Plan of the proposed new development

An archaeological evaluation was recommended by English Heritage, following the compilation of a desk-based assessment (Planning Ref: 13/01561/LA3).

The protection of archaeological sites is a material planning consideration. An initial evaluation should be designed to provide all parties, particularly the Local Planning Authority, with sufficient material information upon which to base informed decisions, incorporating adequate heritage safeguards. Where an evaluation produces positive results safeguards will be applied; these would normally consist of either design modifications to preserve archaeological remains *in situ* or, where this is not achievable, archaeological rescue excavation in advance of development.

4.2 Archaeological research questions

The site presented an opportunity to address several research questions, as defined in the preliminary Written Scheme of Investigation (*Compass Archaeology, September 2013*):

- Is there any evidence for prehistoric, particularly Bronze Age, activity in the site-area? What does this suggest about how the marshland and gravel terraces were exploited in prehistory?
- Is there any evidence for Roman activity in the site-area, and of what form, i.e. settlement or burial?
- Is there any evidence for any later (post-medieval) activity on the site?
- At what levels do any archaeological or geological deposits survive across the area?

5. Methodology

5.1 The fieldwork and post-excavation work was carried out in accordance with the English Heritage guidelines (in particular, *Standards for Archaeological Work*, July 2009) and those of the Institute for Archaeologists. Overall management of the project was undertaken by a full member of the Institute. The Written Scheme was produced prior to the start of fieldwork.

Fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the Construction (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations. All members of the fieldwork team had valid CSCS Cards (Construction Skills Certificate Scheme), and wore hi-vis jackets, hard-hats, and steel-toe-capped boots as required.

5.2 The work comprised of three trenches located in the area of the proposed development (fig.10). Trench 1 measured 14m in length by 2m in width; trench 2 measured 10m in length by 2m in width; and trench 3 measured 12m in length by 2m in width. This covered an area of approximately 72m².

Initial clearance of the trial trenches was undertaken by a mechanical excavator (JCB using a ditching bucket and working under archaeological supervision). Modern topsoil / hard-standing and undifferentiated subsoil was removed to reveal the natural deposits, c0.9m beneath the modern ground-surface. Excavation continued to c1.1m beneath the ground-surface (as the foundations for the proposed

new building are believed to be c1m deep), to ensure that any archaeological features within the natural deposits which may be affected by the development were recorded. The exposed natural deposits were then cleaned, recorded, and photographed by the archaeologists.

- 5.3** The deposits and features exposed in the trenches were recorded on *pro-forma* sheets by written and measured description, and drawn in plan (scale of 1:20) and section (scale 1:10). The recording system used followed the MoL Site Manual for on-site work. By agreement the recording and drawing sheets used were directly compatible with those developed by the Museum. The fieldwork record was supplemented by photography as appropriate. Levels were derived from the existing site survey.

The trench positions were located to features on the site survey by taped measurement, with the resultant plan in turn related as a 'best fit' to the Ordnance Survey grid as derived from the 1:1250 map.

The records from the work have been allocated the site code: RMN13. An ordered and indexed site archive will be compiled in line with the MoL *Guidelines* and will be deposited in the LAARC.

6. The archaeological evaluation

6.1 Summary of the findings

Three trial trenches were dug from the present ground-surface (between 2.03mOD in the south-eastern part of the site, and 3.24mOD in the northern part of the site). Excavation was to between 1.05 and 1.3m beneath modern ground-surface, removing modern deposits and reaching the natural deposits.

The stratigraphy in all trenches consisted of the modern playground / grass surface, overlying dumps of brick and concrete rubble (presumably associated with the 20th century development of the site, either the construction of the Halfway House or the current school buildings themselves). This overlay a thin band of dark grey clay-silt (the earlier subsoil), directly overlying the natural clay-silt deposits (observed between 0.9m and 1.1m beneath the modern ground-surface; 1.05-2.3mOD). The only feature of interest observed was the culverted stream in trench 3, which ran along the western boundary of the site and which was culverted between 1919 and 1958 – probably after the destruction of World War II and alongside the construction of the Halfway House.

The following sections discuss each trench individually, and include photographs, plans, and sections.



Fig.10: Plan showing trench locations

6.2 List of recorded contexts

Context	Description	Interpretation
1	Mid-brown friable silty deposit, with roots, pebbles, etc	Topsoil (trench 1)
2	Made-ground deposit, consisting of brick rubble, concrete, pebbles, etc, within a loose grey silty matrix, 400mm thick	Modern dumped deposit (trench 1)
3	Dark grey clay-silt, 150mm thick	Subsoil / upper natural deposit (trench 1)
4	Clean orange silty-clay	Natural deposit (trench 1)
5	Tarmac and tar aggregate base, 300mm thick	Modern playground surface (trench 2)
6	Brick and concrete rubble, 450mm thick	Modern dumped deposit (trench 2)
7	Tar-like shingle, 50mm thick	Modern dumped deposit (trench 2)
8	Dark grey clay-silt with some pebbles, 100mm thick	Subsoil / upper natural deposit (trench 2)
9	Clean orange silty-clay	Natural deposit (trench 2)
10	Tarmac and tar aggregate base, 300mm thick	Modern playground surface (trench 3)
11	Brick and concrete rubble, 500mm thick	Modern dumped deposit (trench 3)
12	Tar-like shingle, 100mm thick	Modern dumped deposit (trench 3)
13	Dark grey clay-silt, with some pebbles, 200mm thick	Subsoil / upper natural deposit (trench 3)
14	Orange clay with pebbles	Natural deposit (trench 3)
15	Large pipe / culvert (1.55m in width) running north-south across eastern end of trench	Possible culverted stream (trench 3)
16	300mm band of grey clay-silt either side of pipe / culvert	Cut for culvert (trench 3)

6.3 Trench 1

Trench 1 was positioned in the northern part of the development footprint, aligned approximately north – south. It measured 14m in length by 2m in width, and was excavated to *c*1.05m in depth (*c*2mOD).

The turf and topsoil (a mid-brown silty deposit) (context 1) was observed across the whole trench, for *c*0.35m in thickness. This overlay a modern dumped deposit (context 2), *c*0.4m thick, and consisting of brick rubble, concrete, and pebbles, set within a loose grey silty matrix. This is believed to be a relatively modern made-ground deposit, possibly used to level the site in the mid-20th century when the ‘Halfway House’ was being constructed in this area, or associated with the 1970s construction of the school. This overlay a relatively sterile dark clay layer (context 3), which was 0.15m thick and is believed to be the subsoil, presumably when the area was open fields. This overlay the clean natural orange silty-clay (context 4), observed *c*0.9m beneath the modern ground-surface (*c*2.25mOD).

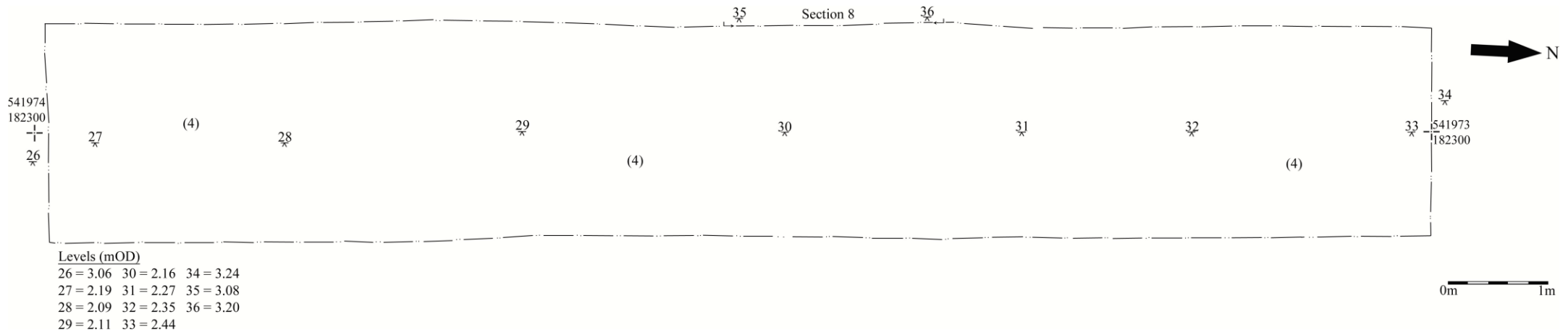


Fig.11: Plan of trench 1



Fig.12: *Trench 1, looking north*



Fig.13: *Trench 1, looking south*

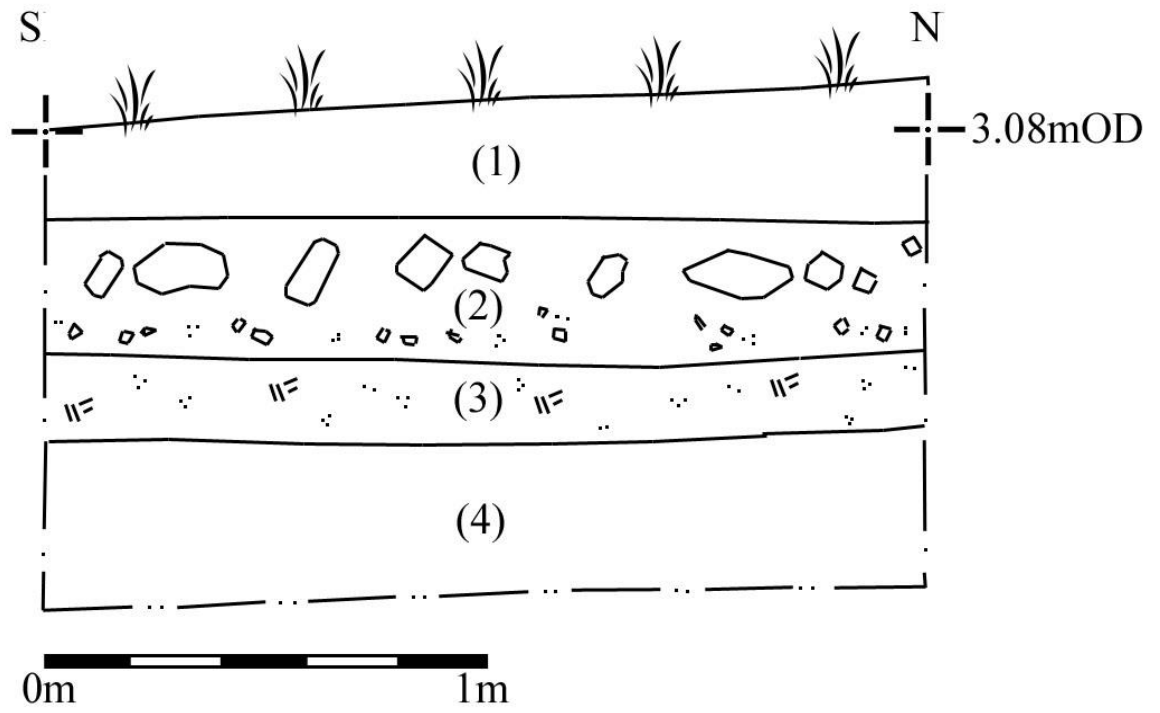


Fig.14: *Section in trench 1*



Fig.15: *Photo of section in trench 1*

6.4 Trench 2

Trench 2 was positioned in the south-western corner of the development footprint (on the western side of the main playground), and was aligned roughly northeast – southwest. It measured 10m in length by 2m in width, and was excavated to *c*1.05m beneath the modern ground-surface (*c*2.05mOD).

The existing tarmac playground surface, and bed of loosely compacted tar aggregate (context 5), was *c*0.3m thick. This overlay a deposit of dumped brick and concrete rubble (context 6), set within an orange-brown clay matrix, *c*0.45m thick. This is presumably similar to context 2 observed in trench 1 – a modern dump of material used to level the site either in relation to the construction of the Halfway House in the mid-20th century or 1970s construction of the school. Within this a 1943 halfpenny and a piece of pottery which has suffered under strong heat, possibly from bomb damage when the site was bombed during WWII – this supports assertions that this dump of material is mid–later 20th century in date. This overlay a thin (50mm) layer of tar-like shingle (context 7), also believed to be a modern dumped deposit associated with the 20th century development of the site. This overlay a 100m-thick band of dark grey clay-silt, the same as observed in trench 1 (context 3), and believed to be the subsoil when the area was fields. This overlay the clean natural orange silty-clay deposit (context 9), observed *c*0.9m beneath the modern ground-surface (*c*2.3mOD).

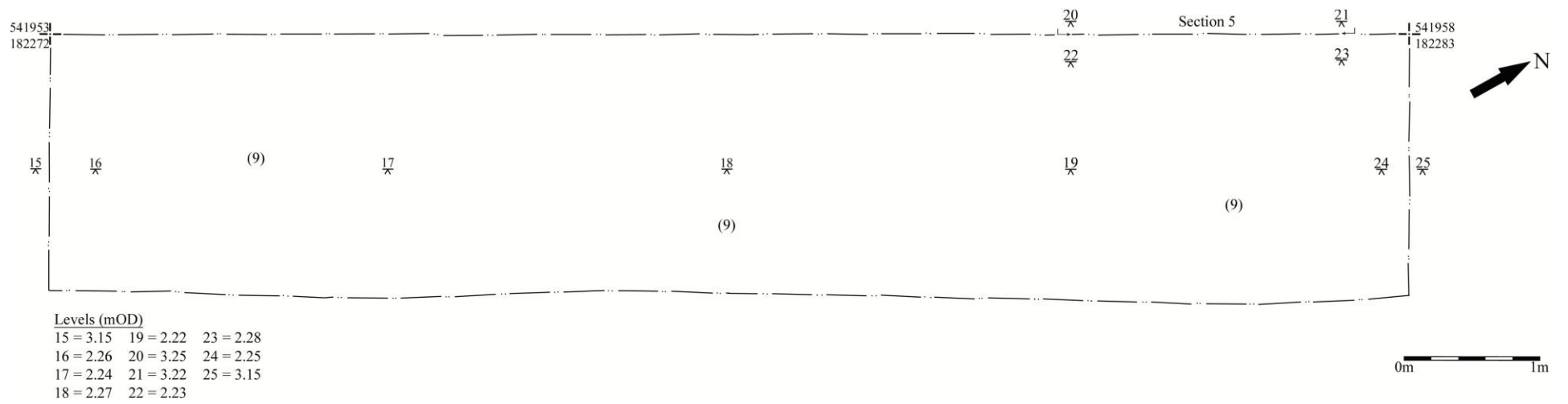


Fig.16: *Plan of trench 2*



Fig.17: *Trench 2, looking north-east*

Fig.18: *Trench 2, looking south-west*



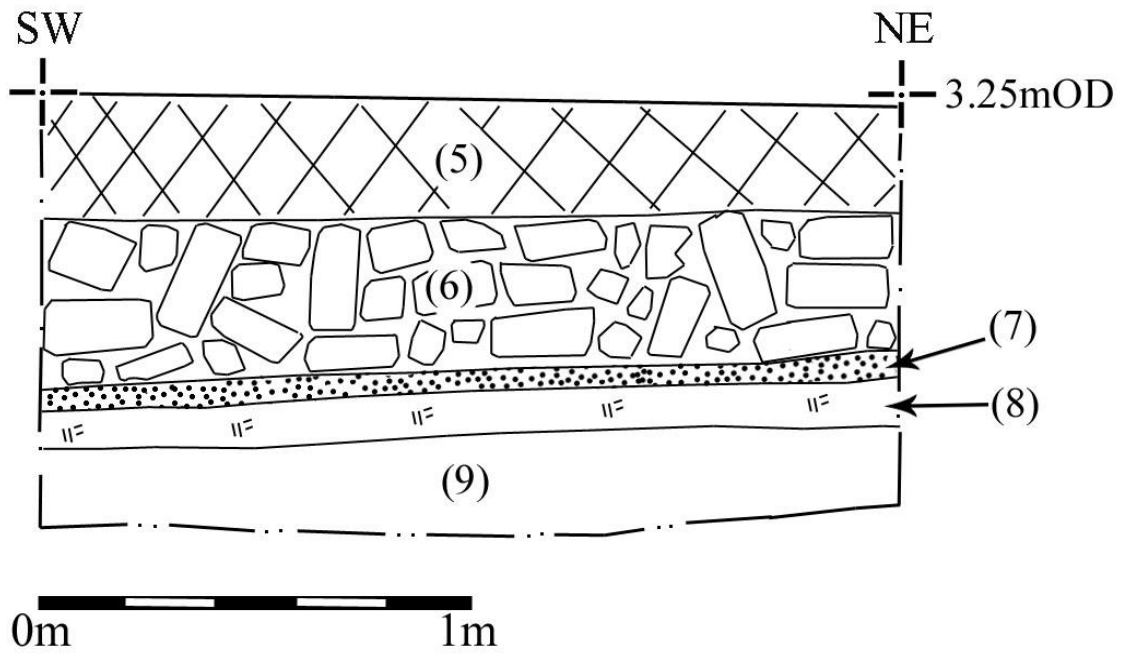


Fig.19: Section in trench 2



Fig.20: Photo of section in trench 2

6.5 Trench 3

Trench 3 was positioned in the south-eastern corner of the proposed development footprint, in the southern part of the playground. This measured approximately 12m in length, by 2m in width, by 1.3m in depth (c0.85mOD).

The modern tarmac playground surface, and tar aggregate base (context 10) was c0.3m thick. This overlay a deposit of brick and concrete rubble, mixed into a yellow clay matrix, for 0.5m in thickness. This is the same as contexts 2 and 6 – modern dumped deposits associated with the 20th century development of the site. This overlay a 100m band of tar-like shingle (context 12) – another modern dumped deposit like context 7. This overlay c200m of dark grey clay-silt (context 13) – the subsoil when the area was in use as open fields. This overlay the natural orange clay deposit (context 14), observed c1.1m beneath the modern ground-surface (1.05mOD). The deeper depth of the natural in this area is accounted for by the fact that there was a stream in this area, such that the land was naturally lower here.

Interestingly, what is believed to be the culverted stream which once ran along the eastern side of the site was observed in this trench. This was within a large segmental concrete pipe (c1.5m in diameter), which was aligned north-south across the eastern end of the trench (context 15). The cut for this was also observed – c0.3m either side of the exposed upper section of pipe, with grey clay-silt within it (context 16). The top of the pipe was approximately 0.9m below the present surface of the playground (c1.2m OD).

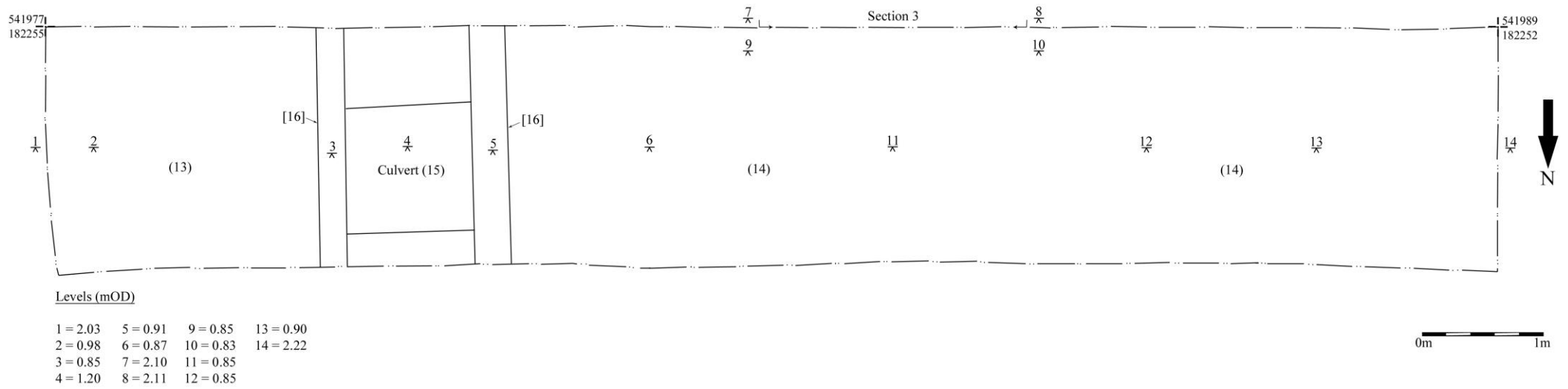


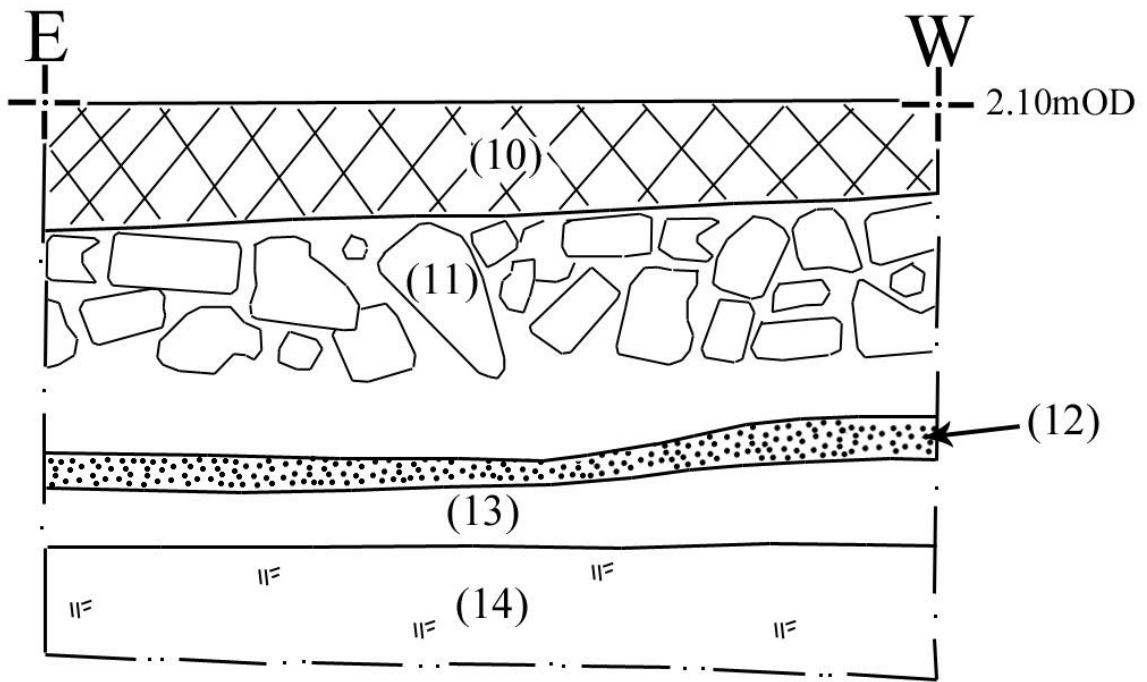
Fig.21: Plan of trench 3



Fig.22: Trench 3, looking east



Fig.23: Trench 3, looking west



0m 1m
 Fig.24: Section in trench 3



Fig.25: Photo of section in trench 3, the concrete pipe assumed to contain the culverted stream to left of frame

7. Assessment of the results of the evaluation

The archaeological evaluation has provided an opportunity to address the site-specific objectives that were defined within the preliminary *Written Scheme* (4.2 above). The responses to these are outlined below:

- Is there any evidence for prehistoric, particularly Bronze Age, activity in the site-area? What does this suggest about how the marshland and gravel terraces were exploited in prehistory?

No evidence for any prehistoric activity was uncovered in this evaluation. It is possible that there was some prehistoric activity in this area, but that the evidence for this may be at deeper depths.

- Is there any evidence for Roman activity in the site-area, and of what form, i.e. settlement or burial?

No evidence for any Roman activity was uncovered in this evaluation.

- Is there any evidence for any later (post-medieval) activity on the site?

The only evidence for post-medieval activity on the site is associated with the relatively late, 20th century, development of the site. This primarily consists of the dumps of brick and concrete rubble, which were presumably used to level the site in association with the mid-20th century construction of the 'Halfway House' or the 1970s development when the current school buildings were constructed; and the culverted stream.

- At what levels do any archaeological or geological deposits survive across the area?

The top of the natural deposits (a sterile orange silty-clay) was observed at between 0.9 and 1.1m beneath the modern ground-surface (between 1.05mOD and 2.3mOD). Above this was a small layer of probable earlier subsoil, sealed by a substantial dump of brick and concrete rubble (between 0.4 and 0.5m thick), directly sealed by the modern playground surface / grassed areas.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 This evaluation uncovered no archaeological finds, features, or deposits. The stratigraphy simply consisted of the modern playground / grass surface, overlying dumps of brick and concrete rubble (presumably associated with the 20th century development of the site, either the construction of the Halfway House or the current school buildings). This overlay a thin band of dark grey clay-silt (the earlier subsoil), directly overlying the natural clay-silt deposits. The only feature of interest observed was the culverted stream which ran along the eastern boundary of the site, and which was culverted between 1919 and 1958 alongside the construction of the Halfway House.

In view of these results it is suggested that no further archaeological measures need be undertaken in relation to the proposed redevelopment and associated planning condition.

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Appendix I: OASIS Form

OASIS ID: [compassa1-163015](#)

Project details

Project name	Roman Road Primary School
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the site of Roman Road Primary School, London Borough of Newham, before the expansion of the school involving the construction of three new buildings. This evaluation was carried out following the compilation of a desk-based assessment of the site, which highlighted the potential for early (prehistoric and Roman) remains to be uncovered. English Heritage then recommended a pre-development trial trench evaluation to be carried out on the site. The evaluation uncovered no finds, features or deposits, of archaeological significance. The exposed stratigraphy simply consisted of modern playground / grass surface, overlying a dump of brick and concrete rubble (associated with the 20th century development of the site), over a thin band of dark grey silty-clay (an earlier subsoil), over the natural orange clay deposit. The only feature of interest was the culverted stream exposed in the eastern part of trench 3. This stream ran along the eastern edge of the site until the mid-20th century, when the site was developed and stream culverted.
Project dates	Start: 28-10-2013 End: 29-10-2013
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	RMN13 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Monument type	CULVERTED STREAM Modern
Significant Finds	POT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	COIN Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	Between deposition of an application and determination

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON NEWHAM NEWHAM Roman Road Primary School
Postcode	E6 3SQ
Study area	72.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 41970 82280 51 0 51 31 22 N 000 02 36 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 1.05m Max: 2.30m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Compass Archaeology
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Project brief originator	English Heritage/Department of Environment
Project design originator	Compass Archaeology
Project director/manager	Geoff Potter
Project supervisor	Emma Jeffery
Type of sponsor/funding body	Borough Council
Name of sponsor/funding body	Newham Borough Council

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Museum of London Archive
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Museum of London archive
Digital Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Museum of London Archive
Paper Contents	"Ceramics"
Paper Media available	"Correspondence", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Roman Road Primary School: Archaeological Evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Jeffery, E
Date	2013
Issuer or publisher	Compass Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	5-7 Southwark Street, London, SE1 1RQ
Description	Report detailing the results of the evaluation. Includes photographs, plans, sections, and descriptions and interpretations.
Entered by	Emma Jeffery (emma@compassarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	30 October 2013

Appendix II: London Archaeologist Round-Up

Site Address:	Roman Road Primary School, London Borough of Newham, E6 3SQ
Project type:	Evaluation
Dates of fieldwork:	28 th – 29 th October 2013
Site code:	RMN13
Site Supervisor:	Emma Jeffery / James Aaronson
NGR:	TQ 41970 82280
Funding body:	Borough Council

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the site of Roman Road Primary School, London Borough of Newham, before the expansion of the school involving the construction of three new buildings. This evaluation was carried out following the compilation of a desk-based assessment of the site, which highlighted the potential for early (prehistoric and Roman) remains to be uncovered. English Heritage then recommended a pre-development trial trench evaluation to be carried out on the site.

The evaluation uncovered no finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance. The exposed stratigraphy simply consisted of modern playground / grass surface, overlying a dump of brick and concrete rubble (associated with the 20th century development of the site), over a thin band of dark grey silty-clay (an earlier subsoil), over the natural orange clay deposit.

The only feature of interest was the culverted stream exposed in the eastern part of trench 3. This stream ran along the eastern edge of the site until the mid-20th century, when the site was developed and stream culverted.

Appendix III: Finds Report

Context 6: One 1943 halfpenny.

Context 6: Pottery – one piece of later post-medieval pottery which has suffered under intense heat, possibly from bomb damage during WWII (*pers comm* Paul Blinkhorn).