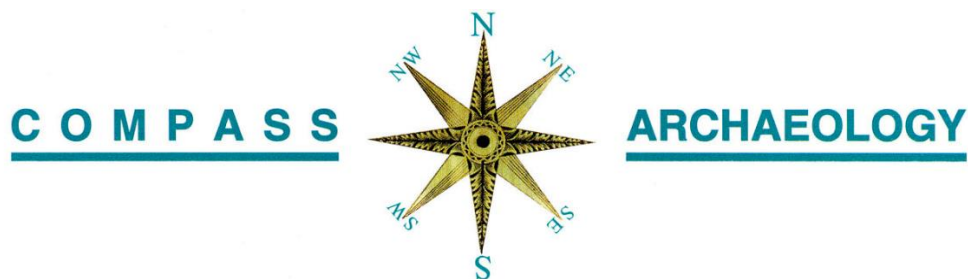


**ABBOTTS PARK FLOOD ALLEVIATION  
PROJECT, LEYTON, E10 6JE  
LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**DECEMBER 2014**



ABBOTTS PARK FLOOD ALLEVIATION PROJECT  
LEYTON, E10 6JE  
LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST

An Archaeological Watching Brief

NGR: TQ 3823 8762 (approx. centre)

Site code: APF14

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December 2014

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## ***Abstract***

*Between March and August 2014 Compass Archaeology conducted an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with flood alleviation works around Abbots Park and Fletcher Lane in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The watching brief was prompted due to the works programme taking place on the edge of the archaeological priority zone of Low Leyton; a 12<sup>th</sup> century medieval settlement, with some evidence of prehistoric activity as well.*

*In the event no archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief. Natural geology was encountered from with 0.40m below the modern ground surface, consisting of layered brickearth, gravels and sand.*

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*Figs.2 & 4 reproduced and modified from original drawings sent by Client*

# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following report forms a summary of the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Compass Archaeology Ltd between the 14<sup>th</sup> March and 13<sup>th</sup> August 2014 during the construction of new foul sewers and an attenuation tank in Fletcher Lane, Abbots Park Road, Leigh Road and Abbots Park, Leyton, London Borough of Waltham Forest, E10 6JE (fig. 1).
- 1.2 The watching brief was commissioned by Optimise (Water) LLP on behalf of Thames Water after recommendations from Mike Lang Hall, (Archaeological Advisor to Optimise), and English Heritage, due to sections of the work falling within potentially archaeologically sensitive areas. Further assistance was given by Shane Longworth (Environmental Advisor, Optimise).
- 1.3 Archaeological monitoring was carried out during contractors' groundworks. The archaeological remains were investigated by hand, with recording and recovery of dating evidence as appropriate.

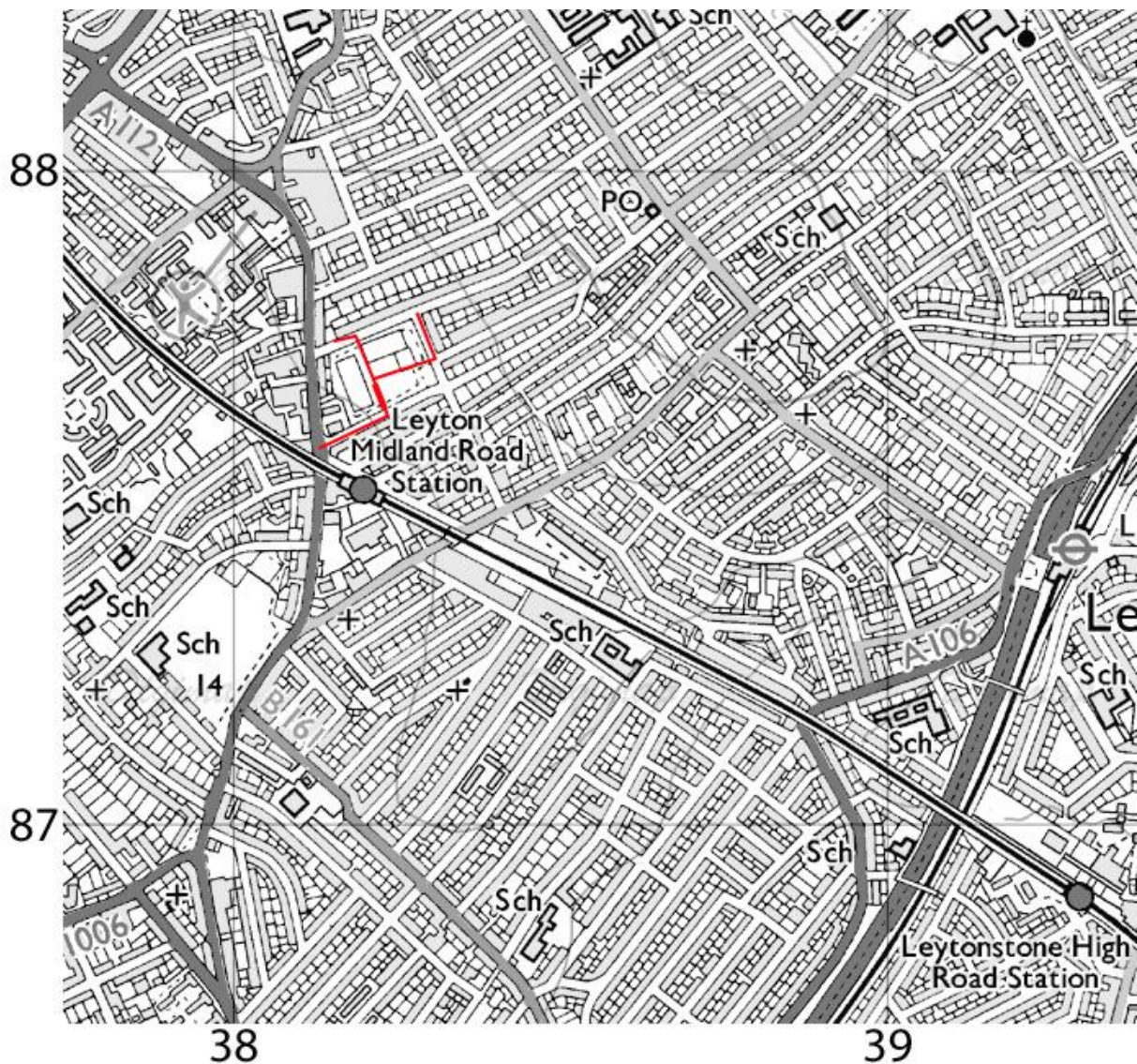


Fig.1: Location of the watching brief area



**1.4** The groundworks including the digging of an open-cut trench measuring approximately 225-300mm wide by up to 2m deep, for a total distance of c475m. This included 140m along Fletcher Lane, c50m along Abbots Park Road, c83m along Leigh Road as far as Lyndhurst Road, and c203m of directional drilling through Abbots Park to a new storage tank. These works formed part of an ongoing programme of improvement works by Thames Water. In the event only the most archaeologically sensitive areas flagged up in the WSI, (Compass Archaeology, 2014), were monitored along Fletcher Lane and within Abbots Park, (fig.2).

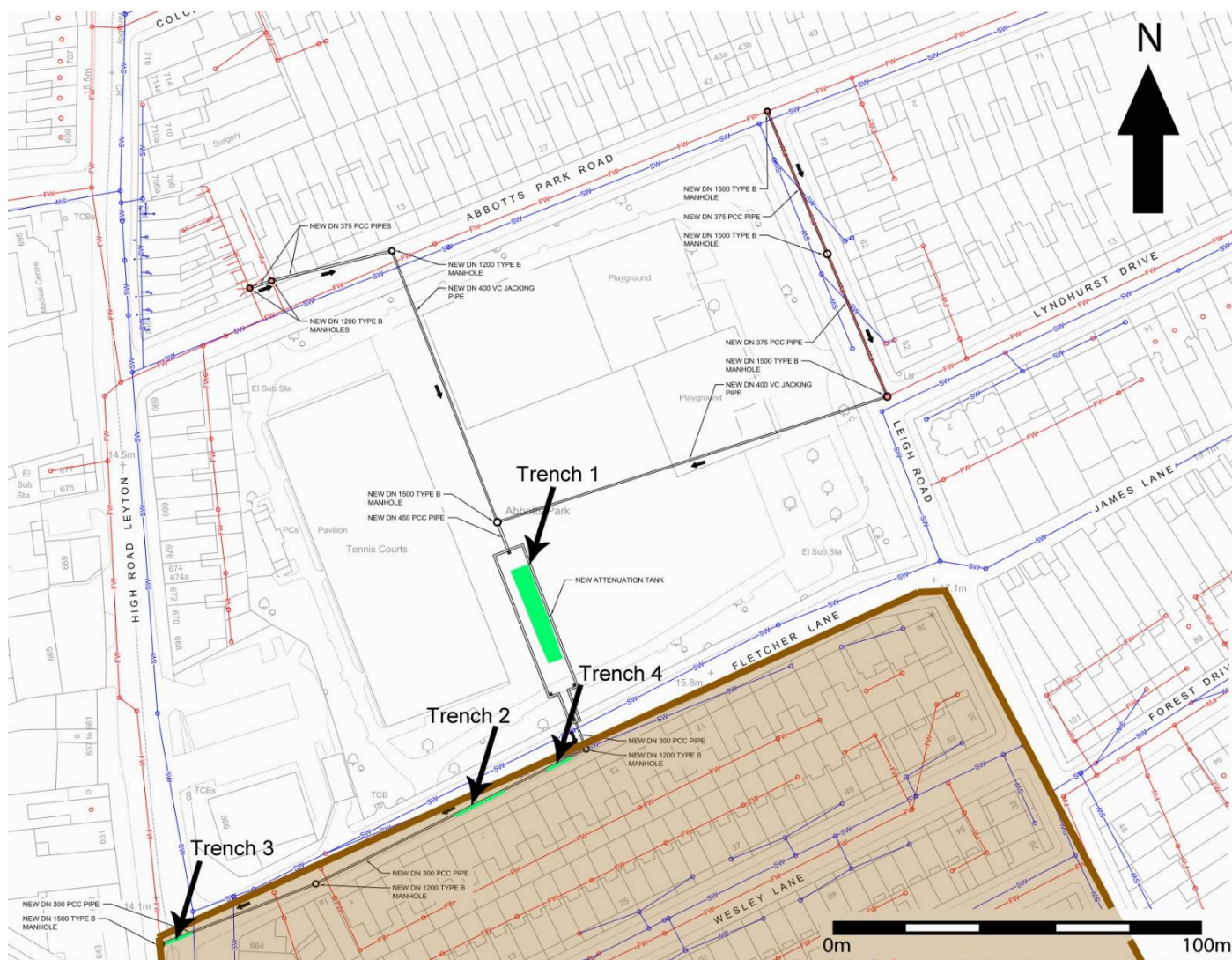


Fig 2: Plan showing groundworks and observed trench locations, (green) in relation to the Archaeological Priority Zone of Low Leyton, (brown shaded area)

## **2 SITE LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

- 2.1** The watching brief site lies within the London Borough of Waltham Forest. Fletcher Lane and Abbots Park Road are aligned roughly NE-SW and join with Leigh Road at the northeast end and High Road Leyton at the southwest end. The roads are lined with semi-detached properties and separated by Abbots Park. The site is approximately centred on NGR TQ 3823 8762.
- 2.2** According to the British Geological Survey, (Sheet 256: North London), the site overlies an area of London Clay, surrounded by Taplow Gravels to the southwest and Lynch Hill Gravels to the northeast.
- 2.3** The site lies at between 14.1mOD at the southwest end of the road and 17.1mOD at the northeast end, with a relatively shallow slope between the two points. The land rises to the northeast to form a spur of slightly higher ground rising from out of the Lea Valley.
- 2.4** The southwestern area of the groundworks, on Fletcher Lane, falls within the designated Archaeological Priority Zone of Low Leyton, (fig.2).

*Low Leyton: Area of medieval settlement with St. Mary the Virgin Church dating from the 12th century. There is also evidence for prehistoric activity and settlement, particularly from the Bronze Age, on the gravel terrace, which overlooks the Lea valley to the west.*

The site does not lie within any conservation area, neither are there any listed buildings or scheduled monuments nearby which would be affected.





Fig.3: Groundworks in relation to the underlying geology

### **3      ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1    *Prehistoric***

Numerous early palaeochannels have been found crossing the Lea Valley area, presumably once draining into the main river and forming earlier routes, as well as alluvial clay deposits. With the deforestation that accompanied more concentrated human habitation, soil was washed down into the valley, and its associated marshlands, creating a fertile environment attractive to early farmers.

Evidence for a Bronze Age enclosed settlement has been excavated at Leyton Orient Football ground in Brisbane Road, (c1.2km southwest of Fletcher Lane), and on Oliver Road where a Late Iron Age palisaded enclosure, fence-lines and post-hole structures were identified. Similar evidence of Iron Age occupation has been found at George Mitchell School Playing Fields, c400m to the southwest of the site. This included post and stake-holes, scatters of burnt flint and a possible hammerstone / pestle, cut by later, post-medieval pits, ditches and ploughmarks.

A decorated Bronze Age gouge was apparently found in Abbots Park in 1929, and is displayed in the local Museum.

#### **3.2    *Roman***

The main road from London to Colchester passed through Leyton, and an offshoot, leading to Dunmow has also been identified in several sections through Leyton. The most pertinent example is during works on the Beaumont Road Estate in 2004 when a metalled surface flanked by ditches was recorded. This road appeared to have been reused and sealed, (including the ditches either side), by a more compacted gravel surface suggesting considerable use for a prolonged period. Numerous other Roman paths and trackways are believed to survive in the locality of the watching brief, including Fletcher Lane itself. These trackways themselves may have succeeded earlier prehistoric routes.

#### **3.3    *Saxon***

Leyton is mentioned no less than six times in the Domesday Survey of 1086. It is not immediately clear which entry refers to the area of the proposed groundworks. It lay within the Saxon Hundred of Beacontree in the County of Essex.

The name Leyton derives from the name of the nearby River Lea and the Saxon suffix ‘tun’, meaning settlement. The settlement was located on the edge of the Saxon Kingdoms of Wessex, Mercia, East Anglia and Kent, and later fell within the area conquered and ruled by the Vikings known as the Danelaw.

A string of Manor Houses on the east side of the Lea Valley were established during the Saxon period and these held estates stretching west into the marshlands of the river valley, (suitable for seasonal grazing), and east into the belt of Epping Forest.

### 3.4 *Medieval*

Leytonstone remained a largely agricultural settlement throughout the medieval period with the marshland and woods being exploited for livestock such as cattle and pigs. Much of the land was held by the Medieval Abbey of Stratford Longthorne from the early 1200s. Abbey Park north of the site commemorates this longstanding connection.

In 1492 part of the Abbey lands were leased off to create a new estate based around Forest House. The land was granted to John More of London, Stock Fishmonger, for three consecutive terms of 99 years (Temple 1957, 5).

Fletchers Lane at this point was known as Forest Lane; not after the house but rather as it led towards Epping Forest. The road is mentioned earlier in 1484. Leyton High Road, to the west of the site formed the focus of the medieval settlement, with a pattern of ribbon development forming.

### 3.5 *Post-medieval*

Up until the early-20<sup>th</sup> century Leyton retained its essentially rural character. The land was farmed either in strips or in large open fields increasingly producing goods for London markets. This is reflected in the presence of agricultural soils and ditches found during archaeological excavations in the vicinity of the watching brief, eg. 606-638 High Road Leyton in 2008.

Several larger properties with private gardens were established along Leyton High Road belonging to Sir John Phillipps, Sir John Strange and Esquire Soresby. Forest House continued to grow in size and was occupied by numerous families including Sir Charles Goring, royalist during the Civil War, and James Houblon, of French Huguenot descent, who was at one time Director of the East India Company and the Levant Company too. The name James lane probably refers to this individual.

It was not until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the area of James Lane, (as Fletcher Lane was then known), was subject to any development at all, up until this time remaining agricultural land. In 1877 the Mary Fletcher Methodist Church and school was built on the corner of High Road and James Lane, to commemorate the first female preacher of Wesleyan Methodism who was born at Forest House, Mary Bosanquet (1739-1815).

Small pockets on land either side of James Lane and facing onto High Road Leyton were developed as small clusters of cottages in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The same was true for the rest of Leyton, it was not until the early 1900s that the urbanisation of the area began in earnest.

The land on the north side of James Lane was a recreation ground from at least the 1890s, and it was not until the 1919 OS map that the terraces on the south side of James Lane are depicted.

Leyton suffered considerably during the Blitz and at least 8 high explosive bombs hit adjacent roads to Fletchers Lane.

The Mary Fletcher Methodist Church was closed in 1969 and demolished in 1971. Apart from this the layout of the street has changed little since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Once the church was gone the connection with Mary Fletcher was preserved by changing the street name from James Lane to Fletcher Lane. The site of the Church and its school have since been redeveloped as a petrol station.

#### **4      ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The general aim of the archaeological watching brief was to record the extent and nature of any archaeological deposits exposed as a result of excavating the pipe trenches and attenuation tank. The specific objectives of the archaeological watching brief were to contribute to heritage of the area through any archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations and were defined in the WSI, (Compass Archaeology 2014) as below:

- Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, either *in situ* features or residual finds?
- Is there any evidence for Roman activity or finds?
- What evidence is there for subsequent medieval or early post-medieval development?
- At what level do archaeological deposits survive across the watching brief area?
- At what depth is natural geology recorded and what form does it take?

## **5 METHODOLOGY**

### **5.1 Standards**

**5.1.1** The field and post-excavation work was carried out in accordance with English Heritage guidelines, (in particular, *Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service: Standards for Archaeological Work 2014*). Works also conformed to the standards of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, (*Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs 2013*). Overall management of the project was undertaken by a full Member of the Institute.

**5.1.2** Fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the Construction (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations. All members of the fieldwork team held valid CSCS Cards, (Construction Skills Certificate Scheme), and wore hi-visibility jackets, hard-hats, and steel-toe-capped boots as required during the watching brief. All members of the fieldwork team also followed the contractors' health and safety guidelines.

### **5.2 Fieldwork**

**5.2.1** The archaeological watching brief took place during groundworks associated with the flood alleviation works. An archaeologist was present during these works as appropriate; monitoring any excavations and investigating and recording any archaeological remains.

Excavation of several lengths of open-cut trenching along Fletcher Lane, were monitored, (labelled TR 2-4 on Figure 2), measuring a total of approx. 30m in length. This trenching varied in width from between 1.05m to 1.08m and was dug to as much as 4.14m deep. The area of the attenuation tank, c27.85m long and 4.95m wide was observed in Abbots Park to a depth of c0.75m.

**5.2.2** Adequate time was allowed for investigation and recording of the groundworks and exposed deposits, although every effort was made not to disrupt the development programme.

**5.2.3** Archaeological deposits and features were investigated and recorded in stratigraphic sequence, and finds dating evidence recovered. Archaeological contexts were recorded on *pro-forma* sheets by written and measured description, and drawn in plan and section, generally at scales of 1:10 or 1:20. The investigations were recorded on a general site plan and related to the Ordnance Survey grid. Levels were taken on any archaeological features or deposits derived from the nearest Ordnance Datum Benchmark.

The fieldwork record was supplemented as appropriate by digital photography.

**5.2.4** Adam Single of English Heritage, (in his capacity as Archaeological Advisor to the London Borough of Waltham Forest), was advised of the on-site start date, and along with the Client was kept informed of progress.

### **5.3 Post-excavation**

- 5.3.1** Assessment of finds were undertaken by appropriately qualified staff, (see appendix I). Finds were 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'*.
- 5.3.2** All identified finds and artefacts were retained and bagged with unique numbers related to the context record, although certain classes of building material were discarded once an appropriate record had been made.

### **5.4 Report and Archive**

- 5.4.1** Copies of this report will be supplied to the Client, and English Heritage GLAAS. 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.
- 5.4.2** This report contains a description of the fieldwork plus details of any archaeological remains or finds, and an interpretation of the associated deposits. Illustrations have been included as appropriate, including a site plan located to the OS grid.

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

- 5.4.3** There is no provision for further analysis or publication of significant findings. Should these be made the requirements would need to be discussed and agreed with the Client and with the English Heritage Team.
- 5.4.4** Assuming that no further work is required, an ordered indexed and internally consistent archive of the evaluation will be compiled 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 APF14. The integrity of the site archive should be maintained, and the landowner will be urged to donate any archaeological finds to the Museum.



## 6 RESULTS

**6.1** The archaeological watching brief consisted of two main parts. The first was the monitoring of ground reduction associated with the construction of an attenuation tank in the area of Abbotts Park, (11<sup>th</sup> June 2014), the second was the monitoring of three separate lengths of trenching for a new foul sewer along Fletcher Lane, (5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> August, 13<sup>th</sup> August 2014). Trench locations are plotted on Figure 4 below.

Although several clearly defined layers were observed during the watching brief, none produced any clear evidence of human occupation. No archaeological features, except an individual pit containing modern plastic, were encountered. Apart from some mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century to early-20<sup>th</sup> century pottery sherds (plus one small and residual 18<sup>th</sup> century sherd) no finds were discovered within investigated layers.

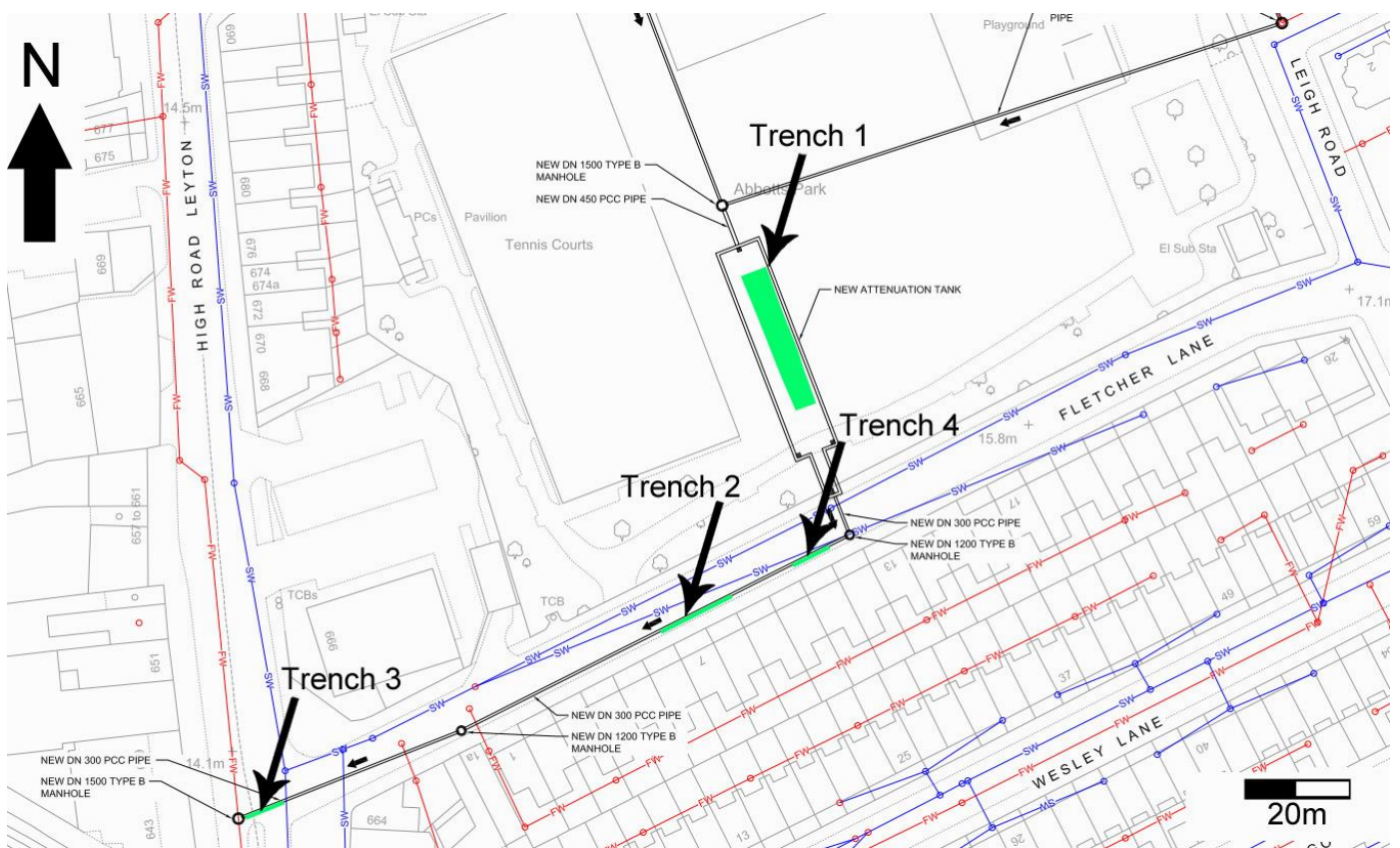


Fig.4: Location of Trenches 1-4

## 6.2 List of recorded contexts

Context	Found in Trench	Description	Interpretation
1	1	Loose grey silty deposit with roots and organic matter.	Topsoil
2	1, 2 and 4	Loose yellowish brown brickearth.	Natural
3	1	Loose orange sandy silt.	Natural
4	2	Loose, grey silty deposit with tar, plastic, glass, ash and charcoal.	Fill of the feature [5].
5	2	E-W rectangular cut, unexcavated.	Modern feature
6	2 and 4	Strongly cemented four layers of tarmac and gravel.	Road makeup
7	2 and 4	Loose orange sand deposit.	Natural
8	2 and 4	Loose gravel deposit.	Natural
9	3	Greyish brown deposit.	Backfill of the previous activity

## 6.3 Trench 1

Trench 1 was situated within the eastern half of the proposed water storage tank, aligned northwest-southeast, and measured approximately 27.85m in length by 4.0-4.95m in width. This open area was excavated to a depth of 0.5-0.7m beneath the existing grassed surface, (ground surface levels 15.59-15.71m OD).

The existing topsoil was comprised of a loose grey silty deposit with roots and organic matter, (context 1). This was c0.40-0.50m thick. Beneath it was a natural loose yellowish-brown brickearth, (context 2). Approximately 20m from the northwest end of the trench the brickearth ended and continued further to the southeast end of the trench as a loose orange sandy deposit, (context 3). This was interpreted as a natural variation within the underlying geology as indicated by the BGS, (see section 2.2). Both natural layers sterile, with one exception. There was a modern feature cut into the brickearth oriented east-west and forming a rectangular cut (context 5), 1.5m long by 0.90m wide, containing a loose grey silty fill with plastic, tar, burnt glass, ash and charcoal (context 4). This was left unexcavated.

A handful of pottery sherds, modern glass fragments, one fragment of peg tile (dated c1550-1800), a length of clay pipe stem and a small almost complete pottery vessel were collected from the topsoil, but were considered residual with little archaeological value; their presence being merely archaeological 'background noise'.



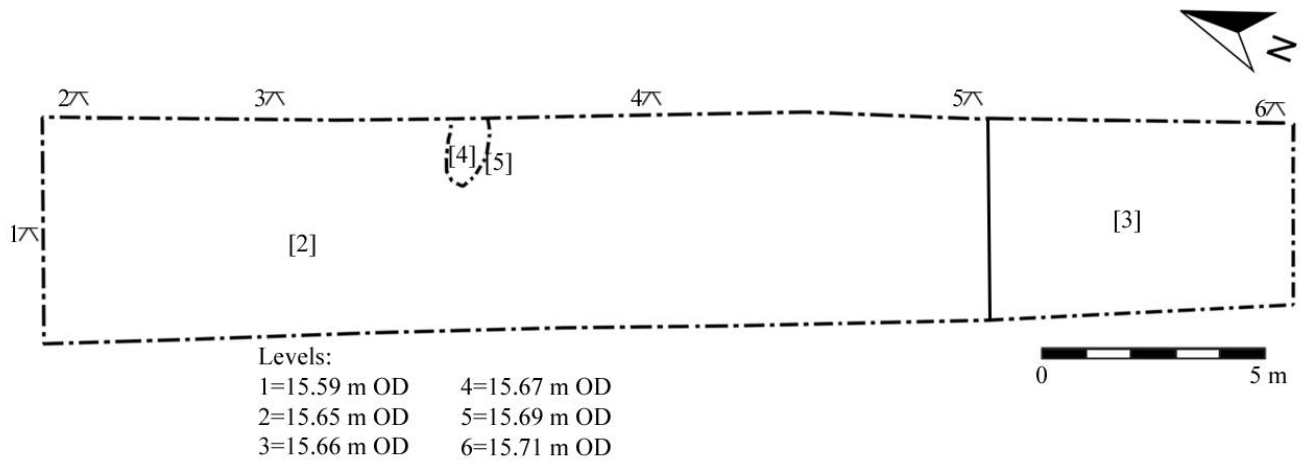


Fig.5: Plan of Trench 1



Fig.6: Trench 1 facing S, (left), and facing N, (right; 1m scale)



Fig.7: *Post-medieval pottery collected from the topsoil around Trench 1 (0.10m scale). All mid 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century, apart from a small sherd of Staffordshire white salt-glazed stoneware of c 1720-1780 at top left*

#### 6.4 Trench 2

Trench 2 was observed being dug in Fletcher Lane, for a length of 15 m. Its width was 1.05 m, and it was excavated to a depth of c4m beneath modern ground surface, (ground surface levels being at 14.98-15.01mOD). Its' alignment was northeast-southwest.

The uppermost deposit observed was a modern road makeup, (context 5), some 0.68m thick, consisting of two strongly cemented layers of tarmac and two of gravel. These overlay truncated, but sterile, natural brickearth deposits (context 2), which was at least 1.62m thick. This overlay loose natural layer of sand, some 1.3m thick, and beneath it there was a natural layer of loose gravel. This was uncovered in a sondage 0.4m deep before reaching the bottom of the trench.

No archaeological features or finds were recorded.



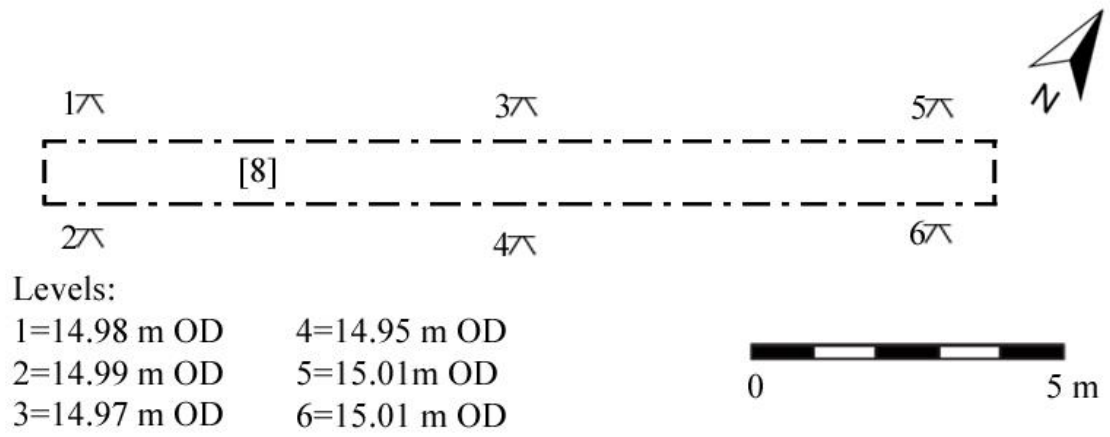


Fig.8: Plan of Trench 2



Fig.9: Trench 2, section facing NW showing road makeup and natural brickearth beneath (1m scale)





Fig.10: Trench 2, NE end section facing SE, (left); and facing NW, (right)



Fig.11: Trench 2, safety box



## 6.5 Trench 3

Trench 3 was observed when the safety box was already installed. It was situated on the southern side of the junction between Fletcher Lane and High Road Leyton. It measured approximately 7m in length by 1.05m in width and was around 3m deep. The stratigraphy visible in this trench was made of a single compact greyish-brown deposit, (context 9), that had been used as backfill material for previous construction activity, (most likely the existing sewer pipe).

No archaeological remains, or finds were observed within this trench.



Fig.12: Trench 3, showing safety box and extension of the trench, facing W



Fig.13: *Trench 3, showing the modern fill of the trench*



## 6.6 Trench 4

Trench 4 was observed being excavated with the use of safety boxes in Fletcher Lane, for a length of 8m. It was 1.08m wide, and was excavated 4.14m beneath the modern ground surface, (ground surface levels being 15.17-15.28mOD). Its' alignment was northeast-southwest.

The exposed stratigraphy was exactly the same as in Trench 2. The uppermost deposit of modern road makeup, (context 5), some 0.67m thick overlying truncated but sterile natural brickearth deposits, (context 2), some 1.62m thick. This in turn overlay a loose layer of sand, c1.3m thick and an additional layer of loose gravel. This lower deposit was uncovered in a sondage 0.54m in depth before reaching the base of the trench.

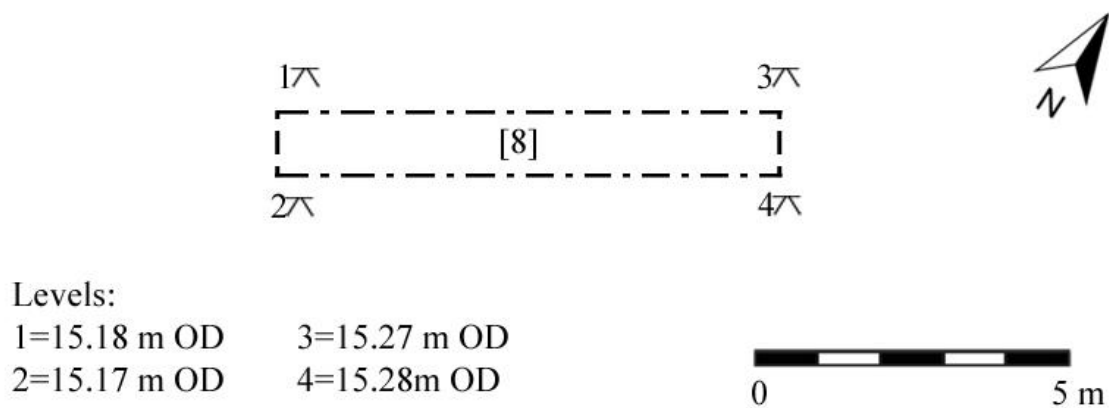


Fig.14: *Plan of trench 4*



Fig.15: *Trench 4, section, facing NW*



Fig.16: *Trench 4, SW end*

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

In the event no archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief. Only residual sherds of later post-medieval pottery were recovered from the topsoil around Trench 1 within Abbots Park. Natural geology was encountered from with 0.40m below the modern ground surface, consisting of layered brickearth, gravels and sand.

## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## **APPENDIX I: Pottery from Abbots Park, Leyton (Site APF14) by Paul Blinkhorn**

The pottery assemblage comprised 17 sherds with a total weight of 347g. It all occurred in a single context (1) and was all of late 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> date, other than a single small sherd of 18<sup>th</sup> century material. It was recorded using the conventions of the Museum of London Type-Series (eg. Vince 1985), as follows:

HORT: Horticultural Earthenwares, 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century. 1 sherd, 7g

REFW: Refined Whiteware, 1800-1900. 10 sherds, 313g

SWSG: Staffordshire white salt-glazed stoneware, 1720-1780. 1 sherd, 2g.

TPW: Transfer-printed Whiteware (underglaze), 1830-1900. 5 sherds, 25g.

The entire assemblage appears to be of a domestic nature, and is mainly tablewares.

### **Bibliography**

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## APPENDIX II: OASIS ONLINE DATA COLLECTION FORM

**OASIS ID: *compassa1-197246***

### Project details

Project name	Abbotts Park Flood Alleviation Project: An Archaeological Watching Brief
Short description of the project	Between March and August 2014 Compass Archaeology conducted an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with flood alleviation works around Abbotts Park and Fletcher Lane in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The watching brief was prompted due to the works programme taking place on the edge of the archaeological priority zone of Low Leyton; a 12th century medieval settlement, with some evidence of prehistoric activity as well. In the event no archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief. Natural geology was encountered from with 0.40m below the modern ground surface, consisting of layered brickearth, gravels and sand.
Project dates	Start: 11-06-2014 End: 13-08-2014
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	APF14 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Other 11 - Thoroughfare
Current Land use	Other 14 - Recreational usage
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	POT SHERDS Post Medieval
Significant Finds	PEG TILE Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Water Act 1989 and subsequent code of practice



### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON WALTHAM FOREST LEYTON Abbots Park and Fletcher Lane
Postcode	E10 6JE
Study area	170.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3823 8762 51.5699888633 -0.00523818879839 51 34 11 N 000 00 18 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 0.40m Max: 4.14m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Compass Archaeology
Project brief originator	English Heritage GLAAS
Project design originator	Compass Archaeology
Project director/manager	Geoff Potter
Project supervisor	Honza Horak
Type of sponsor/funding body	Optimise (Water) LLP

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Museum of London archaeological archive
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Museum of London Archaeological Archive
Digital Contents	"other"

Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Museum of London Archaeological Archive
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Map", "Plan", "Unpublished Text"

## Project bibliography

### 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Abbotts Park Flood Alleviation Project, Leyton, E10 6JE: An Archaeological Watching Brief
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Aaronson, J and Horak, H
Date	2014
Issuer or publisher	Compass Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	5-7 Southwark Street, Southwark, SE10 1RQ
Description	Short report of the results of the watching brief. Includes archaeological and historical background, details of the methodology used, photographs and descriptions of monitored works, and brief conclusions reached.

### **APPENDIX III: LONDON ARCHAEOLOGIST SUMMARY**

Site address:           Abbotts Park Flood Alleviation Project, Leyton, E10 6JE  
Project type:           Watching brief  
Dates of fieldwork:   14<sup>th</sup> March – 13<sup>th</sup> August 2014  
Site code:             APF14  
Site supervisor:       Honza Horak  
NGR:                  TQ 3823 8762 (approx. centre)  
Funding body:         Optimise (Water) LLP

Between March and August 2014 Compass Archaeology conducted an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with flood alleviation works around Abbotts Park and Fletcher Lane in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The watching brief was prompted due to the works programme taking place on the edge of the archaeological priority zone of Low Leyton; a 12<sup>th</sup> century medieval settlement, with some evidence of prehistoric activity as well.

In the event no archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief. Natural geology was encountered from with 0.40m below the modern ground surface, consisting of layered brickearth, gravels and sand.