

LAND AT 20-28 STAINES ROAD, HOUNSLOW, TW3

LONDON BOROUGH OF HOUNSLOW

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SITE CODE SIZ 07

SITE CENTRE NGR TQ 13540 75500

PLANNING REF P/2006/0197

COMPASS ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED

5-7 SOUTHWARK STREET

LONDON SE1 1RQ

Telephone: 020 7403 9660

Facsimile: 020 7403 9661

e-mail: [mail@compassarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:mail@compassarchaeology.co.uk)

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## *Abstract*

*This report details the results of an archaeological evaluation that took place on land at 20-28 Staines Road, London Borough of Hounslow, between the 30<sup>th</sup> January and the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2007. The work was carried out as part of the planning process prior to the construction of a new hotel.*

*A previous desk based assessment concluded that there was a low to moderate potential for finds from the Roman and Medieval periods and a high potential for finds from post-medieval and later periods.*

*The evaluation consisted of 2 trenches measuring 1.6m wide by 20m in length covering a total area of 64 square metres. The trenches were excavated by JCB down to the level of the natural Taplow Terrace Deposits (brickearth over sand and gravel).*

*The evaluation produced two post-medieval features consisting of a possible 16<sup>th</sup> century field drain or field boundary ditch and a later post-medieval brick lined drain. There was no other significant features or finds. A simple sequence of deposits within both trenches reflected the development of the site from the early 1800's to the present day.*

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Figure 2 reproduced from the relevant Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright (Compass Archaeology Ltd, 5-7 Southwark Street, London SE1 1RQ, licence no. AL 100031317)

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1** This report details the results of an archaeological evaluation that took place on land at 20-28 Staines Road, Hounslow, London Borough of Hounslow, TW3. The development proposes the construction of a five storey hotel with associated access and car parking (Planning ref: P/2006/0197).
- 1.2** The site is located to the southwest of the medieval village of Hounslow and immediately to the south of the line of the Roman road between London and Silchester. The development area occupies a plot between Staines Road and Grove Road, centered on NGR TQ 13540 75500, and is currently open and in use as a ground-level car park.
- 1.3** The site was considered to have potential for archaeological remains, in particular of post-medieval date. The historical and archaeological background has been considered in a previous desk-based assessment (*Heritage Network, May 2006*).
- 1.4** English Heritage (GLAAS) advised that archaeological field evaluation of the site should be undertaken as a condition of planning consent. This advice was set out in the Project Design (*Heritage Network, January 2007*). In accordance with standard practice, a total sample area of 64 square metres was proposed for excavation, representing a sample of over 5% of the area considered to have archaeological potential.
- 1.5** The archaeological evaluation was carried out between January 30<sup>th</sup> and February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2007. This consisted of machine clearance of two trenches each measuring 1.6m wide by 20m in length, followed by hand investigation, recording of deposits and remains and the recovery of dating and environmental evidence.

## **2. Acknowledgements**

The evaluation was commissioned by The Heritage Network on behalf of their clients Cubitt Building Interiors Ltd.

## **3. Site location and geology**

- 3.1** The redevelopment covers an approximately rectangular plot of land bound by Staines Road to the north and east and Grove Road to the south, approximately centred at NGR TQ 13540 75500.
- 3.2** The site is located on level ground that was open and in use as a car park prior to the evaluation. The geology of the site consists of brickearth over sands and gravels of the Taplow Terrace Deposits (Terrasearch, 1989).

## **4. Archaeological and historical background**

The background to the site has been described in the desk-based assessment, and is briefly summarised below.

- 4.1** The present site lies within the Thames Valley, on river gravels to the north of the Old River, an area likely to have attracted prehistoric activity. Despite this, very little evidence for prehistoric activity has been recorded in the vicinity of the site. A

number of Palaeolithic flint implements are known from a field to the south of Osterley Park, approximately 700m to the northeast. A hoard of late Neolithic/Bronze age metal and stone artefacts was also discovered in the same field in 1864. Bronze and Iron Age artefacts were also recorded in the same area. Roman, Saxon and early medieval references are also scarce, although the site is close to the line of the Roman London to Silchester road.

- 4.2 Evidence for medieval gravel quarrying has been recorded during archaeological investigations in the vicinity of the study area. There is much evidence for post-medieval activity in the vicinity of the site. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Hounslow village had extended as far as Staines Road, and cartographic evidence from that period shows that the site lies within the property boundaries of houses developed at that time.
- 4.3 The assessment concluded that based upon available evidence the site had a relatively low potential for archaeological remains, although noting that features of late medieval or post-medieval date may be present on site.

## 5. Aims and objectives of the evaluation

### 5.1 The archaeological brief

The accepted brief for archaeological evaluation is to determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance, and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed redevelopment (English Heritage, *Model Brief for an Archaeological Evaluation*).

Thus the objective will be to establish information on as many of the research questions as possible, whilst primarily answering the terms of the brief which is to provide information on which decisions can be taken as to the need for any further archaeological action (*eg*, preservation *in situ* or archaeological rescue excavation), or for no further action.

### 5.2 Archaeological research questions

The site presents an opportunity to address a number of research questions. These include both general issues and specific queries highlighted in the project design (*Heritage Network*, January 2007).

- Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, either *in situ* or residual, and does this provide any understanding of the origins and development of settlement in Hounslow?
- Is there any evidence for settlement growth and development in Hounslow during the Roman and Medieval periods?
- What evidence is there for agricultural activity in the post-medieval period? Also, is there evidence that the site lay within the boundaries of properties fronting onto Staines Road and Grove Road during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries?

## **6. Methodology**

- 6.1** Initial clearance of the trial trenches was undertaken by a JCB excavator working under archaeological supervision. Present ground, underlying made ground/demolition layers and subsoil deposits were removed by machine down to the level of the natural Taplow Terrace deposits.

Following initial machine clearance archaeological deposits and features were selectively excavated and recorded in stratigraphic sequence.

- 6.2** Archaeological contexts were recorded on *pro-forma* sheets by written and measured description, and where necessary drawn in plan and/or section. The trench positions were recorded onto the general site plan, and related with appropriate accuracy to the Ordnance Survey grid. Levels were derived from an OS Bench Mark (value 21.89m OD) located on the Bell public house, Staines Road.

The recording system used follows the MoL Site Manual for on-site work. By agreement the recording and drawing sheets used are directly compatible with those developed by the Museum. The fieldwork record was supplemented by photography.

- 6.3** The fieldwork records have been allocated the site code: SIZ 07 by the Museum of London Archaeological Archive. An ordered and indexed site archive will be compiled in line with the MoL *Guidelines* and will be deposited in the Museum of London Archive.
- 6.4** The objective of the evaluation was to define the character, extent and significance of potential remains, and to recover dating and environmental evidence, rather than to fully excavate.

## **7. The archaeological evaluation**

The evaluation consisted of two trenches each measuring 1.6m wide by 20m in length, covering a total area of 64 square metres. These trenches were located across the site as shown in Figure 2.

In each trench a broadly similar sequence of deposits was revealed. This consisted of the present ground surface of tarmac and hardcore overlying made ground, levelling and demolition layers that in turn overlay and truncated a grey/brown clay subsoil layer (C1). The lowest deposit exposed was a dark yellow clay with patches of sand and gravel below the subsoil. This represented the top of the natural Taplow Terrace Deposits (C2).

### **7.1 Trench 1 (Figs 3-5)**

Trench 1 was located in the centre of the site running in an east-west direction (Fig 3), measuring 1.6m wide by 20m in length. The trench was excavated from a pre-excavation level of 21.53m OD. The present ground surface, made ground and subsoil layers were removed by machine to expose the natural Taplow Terrace Deposits (C2).

The exposed profile was approximately 1.4m thick. The natural clay and gravels of

the Taplow Terrace deposits were exposed at a fairly level 20.04m OD across the trench. Overlying the natural deposits was a clean grey/brown clay subsoil layer (C1) approximately 0.4m thick. Overlying – and presumably truncating – the subsoil was a series of demolition and made ground/levelling layers beneath the present tar ground surface with a combined thickness of 1m.

The trench contained no significant features or finds. The tarmac and hardcore deposits represent the current usage of the site as a car park, while the made ground and demolition layers represent how the site was developed from the early 1800's to the present day. The trench contained a modern drain encased in concrete at the eastern end of the trench, which probably serviced the now demolished cinema that was located at the northern end of the site.

The natural deposits within Trench 1 contained large amounts of gravel, and excavations carried out in the late 1980's on nearby Douglas Road identified late medieval gravel quarries.

## **7.2 Trench 2 (Figs 6-13)**

Trench 2 was located approximately 30m south of Trench 1, running in a north-south direction. The trench measured 1.6m wide by 20m in length. The present ground surface prior to excavation was recorded at 20.86m OD at the southern end of the trench, sloping to 21.27m OD at the northern end.

The present ground surface, made ground deposits and subsoil layer was removed to expose the natural Taplow Terrace Deposits (C2). This was recorded at 20.16m OD at the south of the trench, sloping to 19.86m OD at the north end. The exposed profile was broadly similar to that of Trench 1. Overlying the natural was a dark grey clay subsoil (C1) some 0.35m thick. This was truncated and overlain by demolition, made ground and levelling layers sealed by hardcore and tarmac of the present ground surface. These deposits had a combined thickness of 0.7m, giving an overall trench profile some 1.05m thick.

The trench contained two features, a linear ditch and a brick lined drain, of an early and later post-medieval date respectively. The linear ditch [6] was located roughly in the centre of the trench, running in an east-west direction. Its principal measurements were 0.85m wide by 0.35m deep. In profile, the ditch had sides sloping at roughly 45 degrees down to a slightly rounded base. The ditch was filled by contexts (C4) and (C5). The lower fill, (C5), was a light grey clay approximately 0.15m thick. It is likely that the ditch was in open use, probably in a drainage capacity. Indeed, the gully shaped profile of the base suggests water once flowed through the ditch before silting up with (C5). It is likely that the ditch was then deliberately backfilled with (C4), a greyish brown sandy clay some 0.2m thick. This layer produced a single sherd of post-medieval pottery dating from AD 1480 - 1600, which would support evidence for post-medieval agricultural activity recorded during archaeological investigations in the vicinity of the site.

The second feature recorded in Trench 2 was an arched, brick lined drain (C3). Located at the southern end of Trench 2, the drain ran in a northwest-southeast direction, continuing beyond the western and southern limits of excavation. The drain was approximately 0.6m wide with a height of 0.25m, and in profile had an arched



roof with a slightly concave base. Approximately 3.5m of the drain was visible in the trench.

The drain was constructed from coarse red (and occasionally yellow) stock brick with a slight frog, average dimensions 221 x 105 x 65mm. It is unlikely that these were manufactured before c 1800, and they probably date to the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the bricks were of a poor quality with irregular dimensions, probably factory seconds. In others a shallow concave frog was scored by about four deeper impressions across the line of the brick, to an overall depth of about 10mm. The bricks were bound by a loose, sandy, pale yellow lime mortar. A construction cut [C7] was dug to facilitate construction of the drain. It was backfilled with a brown sandy clay (C8) containing occasional brick and tile. The drain was probably constructed around the time the area was developed for the first time in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as map evidence from 1819 shows the site as undeveloped agricultural/open land.

There were no other significant features or finds. The deposits recorded in profile represent the initial development of the site during the 19<sup>th</sup> century up to the present day.

## **8. Assessment of the results of the archaeological evaluation**

The archaeological evaluation gave the opportunity to address the research questions posed in section 5.1 above. Those questions are reiterated below, followed by the findings.

- *Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, either in situ or residual, and does this provide any understanding of the origins and development of settlement in Hounslow?*

There was no evidence of either *in situ* or residual activity during the evaluation.

- *Is there any evidence for settlement growth and development in Hounslow during the Roman and Medieval periods?*

There was no evidence of Roman or medieval activity on the site. There was no previous evidence of Roman activity recorded in the vicinity of the site, while cartographic evidence shows the study area remained in open use but with some development in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Evidence of medieval gravel quarrying has been recorded in the vicinity of the site, and the large quantities of natural gravel visible in Trench 1 support these findings.

- *What evidence is there for agricultural activity in the post-medieval period? Also, is there evidence that the site lay within the boundaries of properties fronting onto Staines Road and Grove Road during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries?*

The linear ditch [C6] within Trench 2 produced pottery dating to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The ditch may have acted as an agricultural drainage/field boundary ditch, and it certainly appears to have been in open use before it silted up and was subsequently backfilled.

Based on cartographic evidence, the site was indeed within the boundaries of properties representing the development of the site in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although

evidence of back garden subsoil and topsoil from that period has for the most part been removed by later development, the brick lined drain (C3) located at the south of Trench 2 probably serviced properties located in the vicinity of the site in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **9. Conclusion**

The site contained no significant feature or deposits. The sequence of made ground, levelling layers and demolition deposits recorded in the profile of both trenches reflects how the site has been developed and redeveloped since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Trench 2 produced two post-medieval features. The earlier of the two features was linear ditch which may have functioned as a field boundary ditch or an agricultural field drain. The ditch contained a single sherd of 16<sup>th</sup> century pottery. The later feature forms part of a brick-lined drain, probably dating to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Fig 1 Site location

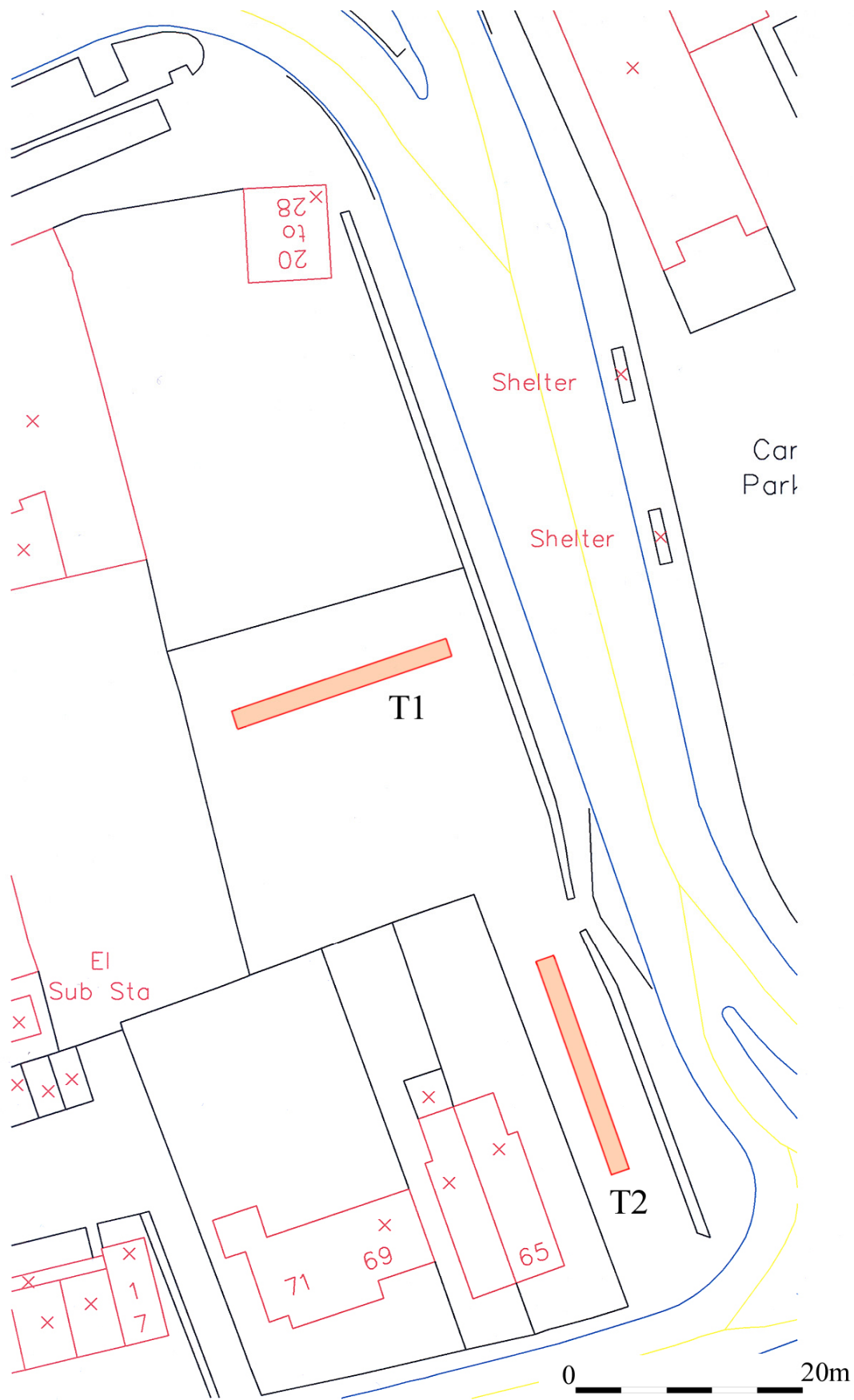


Fig 2 View of evaluation trenches 1 & 2 in relation to the 1:1250 Ordnance Survey Map



Fig 3 View of Trench 1 looking east



Fig 4 View of north facing section of Trench 1, approximately midway along the excavation

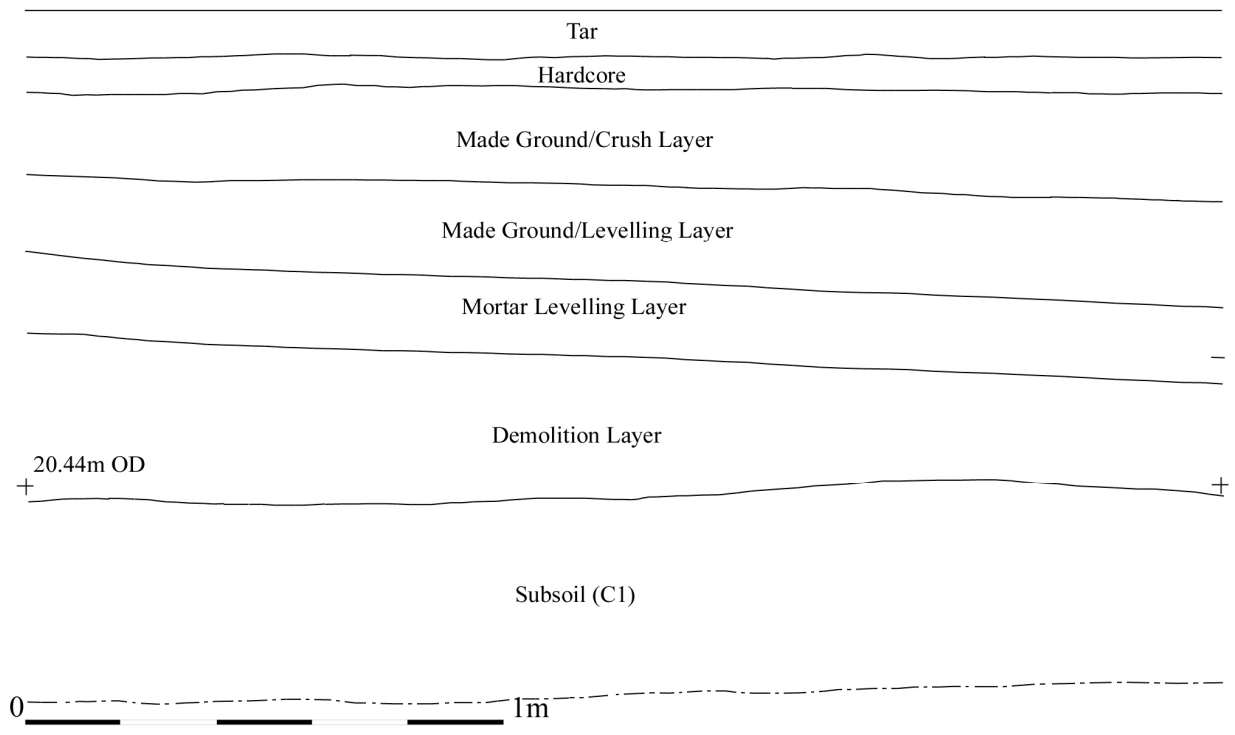


Fig 5 Detail of deposits shown in fig 4



Fig 6 View of Trench 2 looking north



Fig 7 View of east facing section of Trench 2, just to the south of the midpoint of the excavation

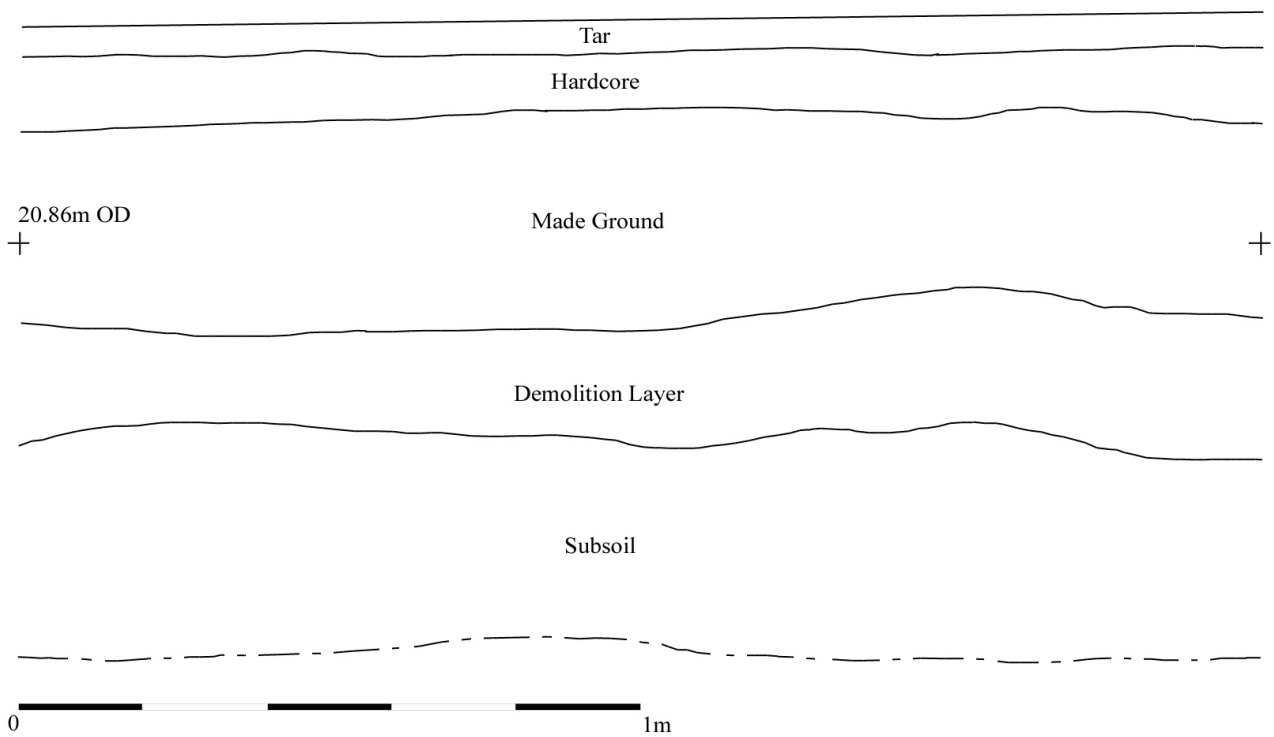


Fig 8 Detail of deposits shown in fig 7

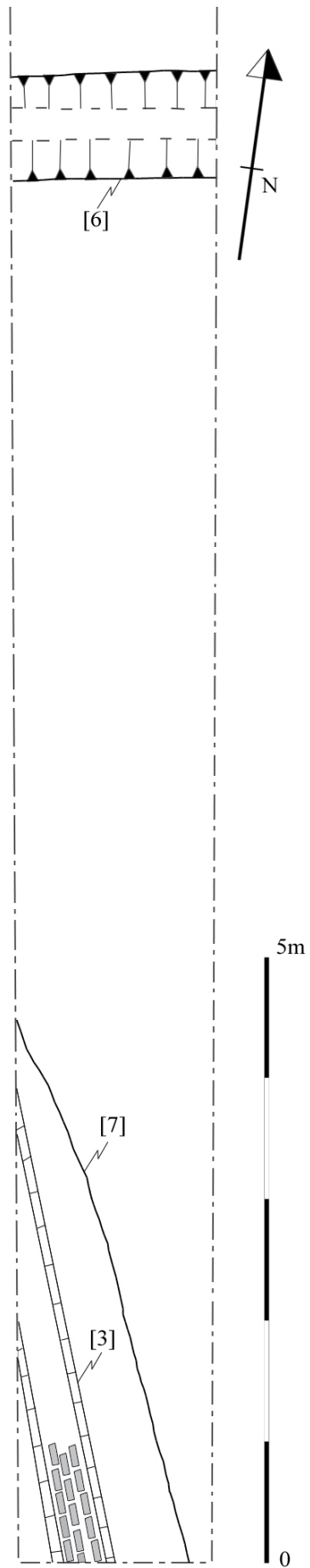


Fig 9 Detail of features within southern half of Trench 2





Fig 10 View of linear ditch [6] looking west



Fig 11 View of west facing section of linear ditch [6]

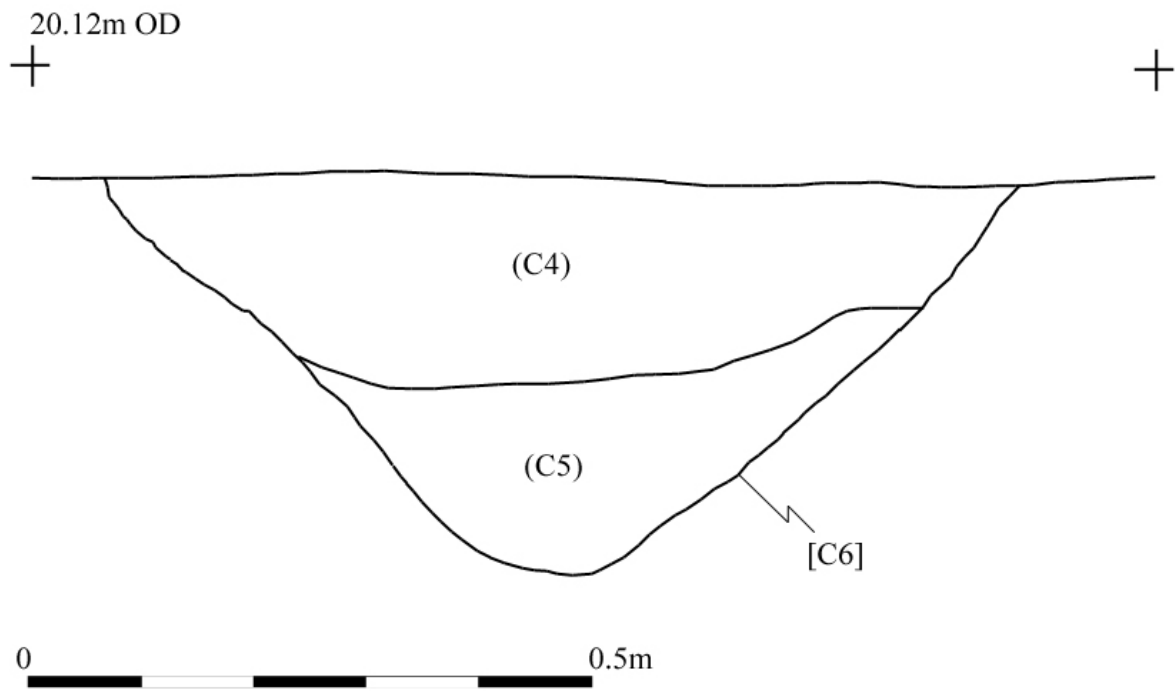


Fig 12 Detail of deposits within ditch [6] shown in fig 11



Fig 13 View of post-medieval drain (3) looking west

## Appendix I

# OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

### Project details

Project name	20-28 Staines Road, Hounslow
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation consisting of 2 trenches each measuring 1.6m by 20m. The trenches were excavated by JCB down to the level of the natural Taplow Terrace Deposits (brickearth over sand and gravel). Trench 1 contained no significant finds or features. Trench 2 contained a post-medieval (early 19 <sup>th</sup> century) arched brick lined drain, and a linear ditch measuring 0.95m wide by 0.35m deep. The ditch contained a single sherd of 16 <sup>th</sup> century pottery
Project dates	Start: 30-01-2007 End: 02-02-2007
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	SIZ 07 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	P/2006/0197 - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Transport and Utilities 3 - Utilities
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Monument type	DRAIN Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Test Pits'
Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)
Development type	Hotel
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON HOUNSLOW HOUNSLOW 20-28 Staines Road
Postcode	TW3
Study area	64.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 13540 75500 51.4665690045 -0.365265807147 51 27 59 N 000 21 54 W Point
Height OD	Min: 20.02m Max: 20.16m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Compass Archaeology
Project brief originator	The Heritage Network
Project director/manager	Geoff Potter
Project supervisor	Colin Reid
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Cubitt Building Interiors Ltd

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Museum of London archive
Physical Contents	'Ceramics'
Digital Archive recipient	Museum of London archive
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Museum of London Archive
Paper Contents	'Ceramics'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet', 'Drawing', 'Map', 'Miscellaneous Material', 'Notebook - Excavation', 'Research', 'General Notes', 'Photograph', 'Plan', 'Report', 'Section'

### Project bibliography 1

Title	20-28 Staines Road, Hounslow, TW3
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Reid, C
Date	2007
Issuer or publisher	Compass Archaeology / The Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Compass Archaeology
Description	A4 in-house developer report, spiral bound

## **Appendix II**

### **Pottery from 20 -28 Staines Road, Middlesex**

*Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised a single sherd of Cistercian Ware weighing 18g. The ware type is encoded as CSTN in the Museum of London fabric series, and dated AD1480-1600.

The sherd is from the rim of a tyg (a tall, multi-handled cup) which is a typical product of the tradition, and common at late medieval and early post-medieval sites in most parts of England (eg Crossley 1990). It had an original rim diameter of 120mm, and is 5% complete. It is good condition, with no evidence of abrasion, and is likely to be the result of primary deposition.

## **Appendix III London Archaeologist Summary**

20-28 Staines Road, Hounslow, TW3  
TQ 13540 75500. CA (Colin Reid). Evaluation, January/February 2007  
Cubitt Building Interiors Ltd. SIZ 07

### **Summary**

An archaeological evaluation consisting of 2 trenches each measuring 1.6m by 20m. The trenches were excavated by JCB down to the level of the natural Taplow Terrace Deposits (brickearth over sand and gravel). Trench 1 contained no significant finds or features. Trench 2 contained an early 19<sup>th</sup> century arched brick lined drain, and a linear ditch measuring 0.85m wide by 0.35m deep. The ditch contained a single sherd of 16<sup>th</sup> century pottery.

### **Bibliography**

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Crossley, D, 1990          | <i>Post-Medieval Archaeology in Britain</i> Leicester University Press                     |
| The Heritage Network, 2007 | <i>20-28 Staines Road Hounslow. Desk-based Archaeological Assessment</i>                   |
| Terasearch, 1989           | <i>Site Investigations at 20-28 Staines Road, Hounslow, Middlesex. Report No. S.39/634</i> |