

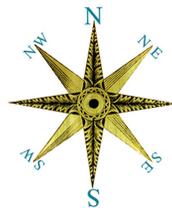
**TS BENBOW, 243 COMMONSIDE WEST, MITCHAM**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON CR4 4HA**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

October 2007

**C O M P A S S**



**ARCHAEOLOGY**



TS BENBOW, 243 COMMONSIDE WEST, MITCHAM

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON CR4 4HA

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SITE CODE: CJM07

SITE CENTRE NGR: TQ 28033 68543

PLANNING APPLICATION No: 07/P1050

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## **Abstract**

*Archaeological evaluation of a site facing onto Commonside West, Mitcham, took place in early October 2007. The evaluation was carried out as a condition of planning consent, prior to development of a new Sea Cadets' Hall (Application No. 07/P1050).*

*The site had potential for archaeological remains of prehistoric to post-medieval date, and is in an Archaeological Priority Area as defined by the LB of Merton UDP. Historic maps show that this area was developed by the 1740s, and that subsequently there were several cottages within the site boundary. These were ultimately destroyed by wartime bombing.*

*Two trial trenches covering an area of just over 40 sq. metres were opened within the redevelopment footprint. These did not reveal any major remains, although there was considerable evidence in the northern part of the site for two later 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century semi-detached cottages. A series of brick footings and fireplace bases related to a building some 9.2m by 7.5m in plan, with a further wall marking the position of a rear outhouse. These structures appear on plans after 1847, and subsequent photographic evidence shows a two-storey building that was at least partly timber-framed and weatherboarded. The archaeological remains suggest that only the central dividing wall and integral chimney stacks were carried up in brick, with the remaining construction of timber on brick footings.*

*Within the central and southern part of the site mid 20<sup>th</sup> century truncation had removed any evidence for historic buildings. However, a small group of post-medieval pottery suggests that there was some activity in the later 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, with a typical mixture of utilitarian and fine wares. There were also a few pieces of clay tobacco pipe within the cottage construction, including one item tentatively dated to c.1805.*

*There was no evidence for any earlier activity, and excavation generally exposed the natural River Terrace sandy silt/clay and gravel.*

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

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1** This report presents a summary of archaeological evaluation of land on Commonsides West, on the eastern side of Mitcham, London Borough of Merton. The work took place as part of the planning process for a new Sea Cadets' Hall plus associated facilities and access, to replace the previous derelict structure (Planning Application No. 07/P1050).

The evaluation fieldwork was undertaken by Compass Archaeology on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> October 2007.

- 1.2** Although the site is relatively small it is located in an area with potential for a range of archaeological remains, from prehistoric to post-medieval date. It is also in an Archaeological Priority Area as defined by the LB Merton UDP: this covers the whole of central Mitcham as well as the Common to the east.

Historic map evidence showed that this area was developed by the 1740s, and that subsequently there were several small cottages – predominantly timber-framed – within the modern site boundary.

- 1.3** English Heritage advised that an archaeological evaluation of the site should be undertaken as a condition of planning consent, prior to development and consisting of a minimum of two 10m by 2m trial trenches.

A subsequent Written Scheme detailed the evaluation, including the location of the trial trenches within the proposed redevelopment footprint.

## **2. Acknowledgements**

The archaeological evaluation was commissioned by Mr Tim Godsmark of Godsmark Architecture, on behalf of MWL Developments.

Further assistance prior to and during the fieldwork was given by Mr Tony Edwards of Acorn Groundworks.

## **3. Background**

### **3.1 Location and topography**

The site occupies a rectangular plot of land measuring some 34m north-south by 19m east-west, to the east fronting onto Commonsides West and centred at National Grid Reference TQ 28033 68543 (Figure 1). The surrounding land surface is fairly level, at about 23.8m OD, although with a slight fall to the north and west. The previous building on the site had been demolished immediately prior to the field evaluation.

The British Geological Survey (Sheet 270, 1998) indicates that the site overlies natural River Terrace Deposits (described as gravel, sandy and clayey in part). The area appears to be very close to a boundary between two Terraces – Taplow Gravel to the northwest and Hackney Gravel to the southeast.

A recent soil investigation (Southern Testing, Oct. 2006; *Ref: J9006*) revealed a natural sequence of London Clay sealed by fine to coarse sandy gravel and thence by sandy or very sandy clay with occasional gravel. This last was *c* 0.4m to 1.2m thick, and overlain by made ground some 1.3m to 1.5m below modern ground level. The made ground comprised clayey sand to very sandy clay with ash and other inclusions, becoming more gravelly with depth.

## **3.2 Archaeology and history**

**3.2.1** There has been a range of archaeological finds in Mitcham, from prehistory onwards. However, there do not appear to be any early references in the immediate site vicinity: the nearest prehistoric and Roman remains (flint waste flakes & pottery) are recorded some 250m to 500m to the north, from Commonsides East and Upper Green.

**3.2.2** The name Mitcham appears in AD 727, and the Domesday survey of 1086 records that there were two settlements: *Mikleham* to the north and *Whitford* to the south (Weinreb & Hibbert 1983, 521). This division is reflected in the present-day layout of the village around the Upper and Lower Greens; however, the parish church of St Peter & St Paul appears to be the only medieval foundation, suggesting that the two settlements were combined by the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

**3.2.3** There is no immediate medieval evidence for the site area – the nearest lies about 250m to the southwest, in the possible moated monastic farmstead underlying the Canons. However, Rocque's map of London of *c* 1746 (& also subsequently that of Surrey) show an apparently well-established development along the western side of Commonsides West. A similar picture is given by the Surveyors' drawing of 1804-6 for the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition (2 inch: mile) Ordnance Survey.

**3.2.4** The Mitcham Tithe map of 1847 is more detailed, and defines several plots with cottages, gardens and yards appear in the central and northern parts of the present site. A similar picture is given by the Ordnance Survey 25-inch maps of 1867 and 1895 (*cf.* Figure 3), although by these dates there had also been development at the southern end of the site. A photograph taken from the southeast *c* 1910 gives some impression of these buildings (Figure 14; Montague 1991, Fig 105). The southernmost cottage (dating to between 1847 and 1867) is of two storeys, largely weatherboarded with a double-gable roof. The northernmost pair of cottages is only just visible but apparently of similar construction, whilst the central and narrower building may be a one-storey structure with a single-pitched roof at right angles to the road.

The OS maps of 1913 and 1932 show little change in the site. However, the cottages appear to have been destroyed by wartime bombing – the Borough Engineer's shows a strike immediately to the west (*ibid*, Fig 154). The timber buildings noted above would clearly have offered little resistance to either incendiary or HE bombs.

The 1953 Ordnance Survey map shows the site empty and open to the west, and it appears that no other development preceded the recently demolished single-storey Sea Cadets' Hall.

## **4. Aims and objectives of the evaluation**

### **4.1 Archaeology and planning**

The proposed development comprises *Erection of a two storey Sea Cadets' hall together with ancillary office and stores, boundary fences and landscaping* (LB of Merton Planning Application No. 07/P1050). The planning permission included a standard archaeological condition (No. 8).

An archaeological evaluation of the site prior to redevelopment was been recommended by English Heritage as part of the Local Authority planning process, to form a condition of the planning consent.

### **4.2 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*). This will provide a basis on which decisions can be taken as to the need for any further archaeological action (*eg*, preservation *in situ* or further archaeological investigation), or for no further action.

The general methodology is set out in DOE Planning Policy Guidance 'Archaeology and Planning' No.16, November 1990 (PPG16).

In addition, a site-specific *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation* was produced (English Heritage Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service, July 2005). Following discussions the proposed number of trial trenches was amended to give three smaller but slightly wider trenches whilst retaining the same overall coverage.

### **4.3 Archaeological research questions**

The evaluation presented an opportunity to address several research questions, as defined in the preliminary Written Scheme of Investigation (*Compass Archaeology, August 2007*):

- Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, and what is the stratigraphic context and date range?
- Is there any evidence for Roman, Saxon or medieval activity, and can the nature of this be defined – for example, agriculture or settlement?
- What evidence is there for post-medieval activity, and does this include finds or remains earlier than the cartographic record of the mid 18th century?
- What remains survive from the buildings recorded by the 1847 Tithe and subsequent maps, and what is the likely construction date?

## **5. Evaluation methodology**

- 5.1** The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the English Heritage guidelines (including *Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork*, 1998) and those of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (*Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluations*). The Written Scheme was produced prior to the start of fieldwork.
- 5.2** The evaluation comprised two trial trenches at right angles and located within the area of proposed development, as shown on Figure 4. The trenches were nominally 2m wide and 10m in length, and covered an area of *c* 40 square metres at the level of potential archaeology or natural – approximately 6% of the total site area.

The trenches were opened by a 360° mechanical excavator using a toothless bucket and working under archaeological supervision. Recent deposits and undifferentiated soil horizons were removed to a depth generally between 0.6m and 0.8m. Thereafter the exposed surfaces and sections were investigated by hand, recorded and photographed by the on-site archaeologists.

- 5.3** The deposits and features exposed in the evaluation were recorded on *pro-forma* context sheets (excluding recent material) and by scaled plan and section, supplemented by 35mm and digital photography. Levels were derived from an OSBM located on a brick pier at the northwest corner of the Sports Ground which lies behind and to the west of the site, value 22.76m OD.

The evaluation trench positions were located to the existing site boundaries 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 evaluation have been allocated the site code: CJM07 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. The archaeological evaluation (Fig 5 & 6)

### 6.1 Summary of the findings

The evaluation trenches were dug from the surface left by previous demolition. Excavation was generally to the top of the clean natural River Terrace Deposit, removing modern fills and disturbed material, although some overlying deposits were left *in situ* in Trench 1 where it was clear that these related to the adjacent brick structural remains.

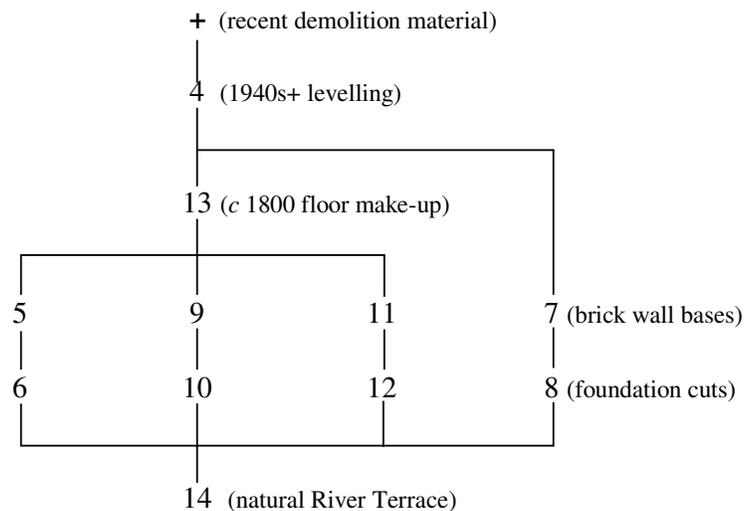
In general the sequence was quite straightforward, with fairly recent truncation having clearly removed much of the evidence for previous activity.

### 6.2 List of recorded contexts:

Context	Trench	Description	Interpretation
+	Both	Mixed deposits; generally darker brown-grey soil with variable amounts of building rubble	Very recent demolition material and disturbed made ground
1	2	Mid green to brownish grey sandy silt with pebbles plus very occasional brick/ tile frags. & potsherds	Reworked subsoil, 18 <sup>th</sup> century but apparently truncated by 1940s or later clearance/levelling of the site
2	“	Firm light brown very sandy silt with occasional pebbles/gravel	Sterile subsoil merging to natural
3	“	Firm light brown to orange-yellow lenses of silty sand and gravel	Natural River Terrace Deposit, same as [14]
4	Both	Compact dark grey sandy silt with charcoal, scattered brick rubble & occasional glass frags.	Levelling of site, following wartime bombing or as part of later reconstruction
5	1	Solidly mortared E-W brick wall foundation (c 350mm thick) with integral chimney bases on either side. Up to six courses (420mm) extant	Central dividing wall between two semi-detached cottages
6	“	Linear cut into natural surface [14], 100mm to 200mm deep	Foundation cut for wall base [5]
7	“	N-S mortared brick wall foundation, up to 250mm thick though heavily disturbed. Maximum five courses extant to south	Front (E-facing) wall of property plus southeast corner
8	“	Shallow linear cut to level of natural surface [14]	Cut for wall base [7]
9	“	N-S mortared brick wall foundation, 240mm thick & up to 220mm (three courses) high	Rear (W-facing) wall of property
10	“	Shallow linear cut to natural surface [14]	Cut for wall base [9]

Context	Trench	Description	Interpretation
11	1	N-S mortared brick wall foundation, 240mm thick & 310mm (four courses) high.	Front (E-facing) wall of an outhouse, to rear of the main building
12	“	Linear cut to level of natural surface [14]	Cut for wall base [11]
13	“	Firm mid orange/brown silty clay & gravel. Frequent charcoal, brick & loose mortar fragments, v. occasional pot, clay pipe, chalk & oyster shell. Thickness up to 400mm	Floor make-up deposit within the building formed by wall bases [5], [7] & [9], mainly present to the west
14	“	Firm orange/light brown sandy to silty clay and gravel	Natural River Terrace Deposit, same as [3]

### 6.3 Trench 1 (Figs 7 to 15)



Trench 1 was dug on an east-west alignment and measured approximately 10.0m by 2.2m in plan, widening to a maximum of c 3.5m to the extreme eastern end. A separate small pit some 0.5m square was also dug just to the south. The trench was about 0.65m to 0.8m deep.

**6.3.1** The Natural River Terrace deposit [14] was exposed within the western and eastern parts of the trench, mainly where the ground was more heavily disturbed by recent activity. The deposit was typically a mixed silty clay and gravel, becoming sandier in places and with an extant surface level of about 22.9m to 23.0m OD.

**6.3.2** The main feature of the trench was a series of brick wall foundations [5], [7], [9] and [11]. Collectively these form part of the pair of semi-detached cottages and outhouses that appear on historic maps between 1847 and the 1930s (*cf.* section 3.2.4; Figure 3). Associated with the wall bases were the shallow foundation cuts [6], [8], [10] and [12] and the compacted floor make-up [13].

It is likely that the first element of the cottages to be constructed was the central east-west dividing wall [5], with its associated fireplace bases and foundation cut [6]. The wall survived to a maximum of six courses in height and was more substantial than the adjacent north-south bases, being some 350mm thick and cut into the surface of the underlying natural [14] by *c* 100mm to 200mm. The fireplace bases were only fully exposed on the southern side of the wall, although limited investigation established that the similar or identical features were also present to the north. Within the trench it was also clear that the rear (western) fireplace base was more substantial than that to the east – at 1.8m overall it was some 420mm wider, and its base one course (*c* 70mm) deeper. Presumably this served for cooking as well as heating.

The adjacent north-south walls [7] and [9] formed the front and rear lines of the cottage. These were clearly less substantial than the central wall [5]: 240mm to 250mm thick and with bases two courses higher, built more or less at the level of the natural silty gravel rather than cut into it. To the east there was a slight gap between [5] and the adjacent north-south (front) wall [7], whilst to the west [5] abutted but was not directly bonded into the rear wall [9].

From these observations it is evident that the walls [7] and [9] formed a subsequent stage of construction, although clearly part of the same event as [5]. The brick fabrics and sizes were also very similar, although the sample bricks from wall [9] were slightly redder in hue and so perhaps part of a separate batch (see also below 9.2).

The third north-south wall base [11] lay just over 2m to the west of [9], with up to four courses *in situ*, and evidently formed the external facing wall of an outhouse or washhouse, once again some 240mm thick and founded at the level of the natural deposit [14]. Although there was no direct stratigraphic relationship the bricks were also very similar to those from other parts of the main structure [5], *etc.* However, the mortar was noticeable lighter in colour – probably indicative of a separate phase within the single construction.

**6.3.3** Within the footprint of the building (and where not disturbed by later activity) the natural surface [14] was overlain by a compacted silty clay deposit with gravel, building rubble and charcoal inclusions [13], clearly shown in Figure 9. This appears to be a make-up layer for the internal floor, laid down after previous deposits had been removed to the level of natural and following construction of the brick wall bases. The extant thickness was up to 400mm, and the context contained occasional fragments of pottery and clay tobacco pipe that collectively suggest a later 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century date for the structure (*cf.* sections 7 & 8 below).

**6.3.4** The surviving structural remains and historic sources together provide good evidence for the nature of the standing building, which evidently formed a pair of two-storey semi-detached cottages. It is likely that each had four rooms (two on each floor), plus an outhouse to the rear. Although the brickwork itself is not closely dateable it is consistent with the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (*cf.* section 9).

The overall depth of the building between the external faces of wall bases [7] and [9] was *c* 7.5m. A small exploratory hole outside the main trench also revealed the southern end of the front wall [7] and the southeast corner of the cottages. This was located some 4.6m from the centre line of wall [5], giving an estimated overall width

for the structure of *c* 9.2m. The location and dimensions of the footings closely coincide with the historic map record, as for example derived from the 1895 OS plan and superimposed on the evaluation plan (Figure 6).

It is likely that the central wall base [5] was built up in brick to eaves level – forming a major load-bearing wall and also additional support for the two pairs of chimneys. However, the other brick bases probably supported a timber-frame construction. This conclusion is based partly on the design (foundation depth and thickness) of the walls, and partly on the historic photograph that is reproduced here as Figure 14 (*cf.* also 3.2.4 above): although only the northeast corner of the building is visible it is two storey and clearly weatherboarded at its upper level. There are also close analogies with other historic buildings in the area: a good example (though with a solid brick front wall) are the semi-detached cottages which previously stood at 54-56 Church Road, Mitcham (Compass Archaeology 2003).

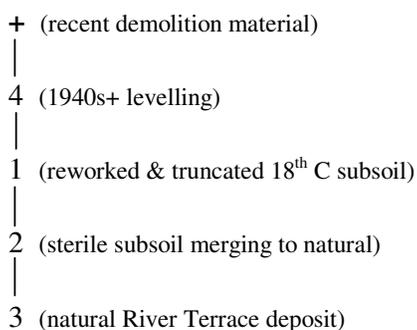
It is likely that the ancillary building to the rear represented by wall base [11] was single-storey and also timber-framed, although no direct evidence for this survives. However, as with the main build the recorded remains fit closely to the historic map evidence (*cf.* Figure 6).

**6.3.5** The brick wall bases and associated floor make-up were all clearly truncated, and overlain by a much more recent deposit containing frequent charcoal and building rubble [13]. It is recorded that the site was bombed in the early 1940s and that the cottages were destroyed (Montague 1991 & 3.2.4 above), and clearly this horizon relates to clearance and levelling of the site either then or after the war and as part of the redevelopment.

The eastern part of the building was had also been further disturbed by the construction of the recently demolished building, and specifically by a substantial north-south concrete footing that continued into Trench 2.

The surface of [13] was disturbed and overlain by present demolition debris, although probably previously capped by the concrete floor slab of the former building.

## 6.4 Trench 2 (Figs 16 to 19)



Trench 2 was dug on a north-south alignment, measuring *c* 9.7m by 2.0m in plan (widening slightly to the north), and was approximately 0.8m deep.

**6.4.1** Natural River Terrace silty sand and gravel [3] was exposed throughout the length of the trench. The only exception occurred along the eastern section (and extending some 0.3 to 0.5m into the trench) where all earlier deposits were cut away by a north-south trench for the concrete strip footing of the previous building (*cf.* Figure 5). The natural surface was otherwise fairly level, at a height of *c* 23.1m OD (slightly higher than in Trench 1) and some 0.7m below present ground level.

**6.4.2** The natural was overlain by a sterile sandy silt [2], which was interpreted as the weathered top of natural/subsoil interface, and thence by a darker reworked soil horizon [1] that contained occasional fragments of ceramic building material and pottery. The potsherds have been broadly dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and no earlier than 1720 (see section 7. below).

The soil horizon [1] was clearly truncated and sealed by a dark compact deposit that was taken to form a simple continuation of context [4] in Trench 1. Once again this layer contained frequent charcoal and building rubble, and is assumed to postdate the wartime bombing of the site (*cf.* 3.2.4 above). However, it is not known whether it closely followed this event or relates to the post-war development of the recently demolished building.

**6.4.3** There was no sign of the east-west aligned building that is recorded in this area on mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and later maps (*cf.* Figures 3 & 6) – presumably due to the wartime or post-war truncation. However, it is reasonable to assume that the underlying deposit [1] is undisturbed. Moreover, the finds that were recovered from this context came exclusively from the area subsequently overlain by the east-west building. On this basis the earliest possible date for the construction must be in the 1720s, and probably later.

There was also no evidence for the southernmost historic building, which map evidence dates to between 1847 and 1867 and whose projected northwest corner fell just within the southern end of the trench (*cf.* Figure 6).

## 7. The post-medieval pottery

*Paul Blinkhorn*

### 7.1 Introduction

The pottery assemblage comprised 10 sherds with a total weight of 78g. It was entirely post-medieval, with the ware types present suggesting that there was activity at the site in the later 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was recorded utilizing the Museum of London fabric codes (*eg.* Vince 1985, 38), as follows.

### 7.2 Fabrics and forms

PMR: Post-medieval redware, 1580-1900. 4 sherds, 39g.

CHPO: Chinese porcelain, 1580-1900. 1 sherd, 7g.

TGW: English tin-glazed ware, 1600-1800. 2 sherds, 19g.

SWSG: Staffordshire white salt-glazed stoneware, 1720-1780. 3 sherds, 13g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabrics is typical of sites of the period in London and its immediate hinterland, comprising a mixture of utilitarian earthenwares and fine wares associated with display and dining.

*Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type*

Context	PMR		TGW		CHPO		SWSG		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
1	3	33	1	18	1	7	1	10	E18th C
13	1	6	1	1	-	-	2	3	E18th C
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	

### 7.3 Potential & significance of the data

The pottery has no further potential and is only of significance within the context of the site, in providing dating evidence for the associated deposits and features. The assemblage is consistent with the domestic occupation that is evidenced by map references and surviving structures.

## 8. The clay tobacco pipe

- 8.1** Three items were recovered from context [13] in Trench 1: two stem fragments and a single fragment from the base of a pipe bowl, including the spur and about 24mm of adjacent stem.
- 8.2** The stem fragments are both likely to be of 18<sup>th</sup> century date and are itemised as follows:

Context	Length & bore (mm)
13	62 x 1.8
"	37 x 1.8 to 2.0 (hole slightly elliptical)

- 8.3** The single fragmentary bowl can be tentatively identified as a type dated by Atkinson and Oswald in their London typology to *c* 1780–1820, with a thin brittle bowl and flat-based spur (type AO27; Atkinson & Oswald 1969, 179-80).

This item also has the maker's initials **IG** clearly moulded in relief on the sides of the spur. Although reference to local listings has not revealed a definite source it is likely that the origin is London rather than Surrey (Higgins 1981, 214). There are numerous London makers with these initials but the majority are of mid 17<sup>th</sup> to mid 18<sup>th</sup> century date: thus the most probable candidate is one John Go(o)dwin, who is noted in 1805 (Oswald 1975, 137).

- 8.4** The tobacco pipe has no further potential; however, the marked bowl fragment is clearly of value in dating the associated context and adjacent building and will be retained.

## 9. The brick samples from Trench 1

### 9.1 Introduction

A series of brick samples were taken from the *in situ* building remains in Trench 1. Two or three bricks were removed from each of the three wall bases forming the main structure [5], [7] and [9], and a further two bricks from the separate base at the western end of the trench [11]. The general characteristics and dimensions are noted in the Table below.

### 9.2 Fabric description

Context	Sample no.	Dimensions (mm)	Comments
[5]	1	228 x 111 x 63	Hard sandy fabric with scattered fine flints & occasional larger flints. Orange colour
		227 x 110 x 60	“ ” ”
		224 x 107 x 64	Fabric as above but darker & duller red colour with some purple/grey patches
[7]	2	225 x 107 x 63	Hard sandy fabric with inclusions & orange coloration, visually identical to [5]
		224 x 108 x 61	Fabric as above but darker & duller red colour with some purple/grey patches
[9]	3	223 x 107 x 60	Fabric as above but reddish-orange colour
		222 x 106 x 60	“ ” ”
[11]	4	227 x 108 x 60	Hard sandy fabric with inclusions & orange coloration visually identical to [5]
		226 x 109 x 60	“ ” ”

All the bricks were very similar in size and fabric, the most obvious difference being in coloration – although three of the sample groups contained at least one brick of the same fairly bright orange hue. The two bricks from the rear house wall [9] were slightly redder in colour and also overall *very* slightly smaller, although this simply indicates a different batch. As has been described, the central, front and rear walls were not structurally contiguous, and slight changes in brick type would therefore be quite likely.

None of the bricks were frogged, nor was any example of this observed on site. The absence is not diagnostically significant, insofar as frogged and unfrogged bricks can be found within a single structure. Unfrogged bricks are more likely to occur in secondary locations – as here, in internal walls or wall bases – and may be regarded as slightly inferior to the frogged bricks in areas such as external façades.

The brick samples were generally well formed, all with fairly sharp arrises, although occasionally larger flint inclusions had caused the surface to distort and crack. Several of the stretcher faces also had longitudinal pressure marks, caused when the still-soft bricks were stacked (‘skintled’) with others for secondary drying.

### **9.3 Dating**

Although not closely dateable the bricks are of a broadly 18<sup>th</sup> century type, with the relative sharpness and consistency of form suggesting a date in the mid to later part of this period. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century their manufacture was superseded (although not entirely replaced) by the familiar yellow-brown London Stock. It is reasonable assume that all the bricks were purchased specifically for building the house, either together or within a short space of time.

### **9.4 Potential and significance**

The bricks provide a broad date for the building in Trench 1, although this can be refined by pottery and more particularly by the clay pipe. They also indicate that the wall bases were constructed as parts of a single event, including the detached structure [11] to the west. The samples have no further potential or significance, and no other work is required.

## 10. 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* (4.3 above). The responses to these are outlined below:

- *Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, and what is the stratigraphic context and date range?*

There was no evidence for any prehistoric activity on the site, nor were any residual artefacts recovered.

- *Is there any evidence for Roman, Saxon or medieval activity, and can the nature of this be defined – for example, agriculture or settlement?*

There was no evidence of any Roman, Saxon or medieval activity or land use. It is possible that this area lay outside the contemporary settlement.

- *What evidence is there for post-medieval activity, and does this include finds or remains earlier than the cartographic record of the mid 18th century?*

The small pottery assemblage recovered in both trenches suggests that there was activity at the site in the later 17<sup>th</sup> to early 18<sup>th</sup> century, although there were no finds exclusively earlier than mid 18<sup>th</sup> century cartographic record. Moreover, the structural remains that were recorded appear to be of later 18<sup>th</sup> century date (as described below), and it was within this context that some of the pottery was actually found.

- *What remains survive from the buildings recorded by the 1847 Tithe and subsequent maps, and what is the likely construction date?*

Trench 1 revealed substantial evidence for the northernmost pair of cottages that are recorded between 1847 and c 1940. This included brick footings and fireplace bases as well as floor make-up. Overall it is possible to reconstruct the plan of a building some 9.2m wide by 7.5m deep, with an outhouse about 2m to the rear. This also closely coincides with the documented outline and location on the OS 25-inch series.

The combination of extant remains and documentary records also give an indication of the standing building: this was two-storey, and apart from the central wall probably timber-framed and weatherboarded over brick footings. This contained two semi-detached cottages, each of which probably had four rooms (two on each floor), plus an outhouse to the rear.

The construction date is not recorded but the combination of brick type, pottery and clay tobacco pipe suggests that this took place in the later 18<sup>th</sup> or very early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. In summary the development sequence appears to have been as follows:

- i) Clearance of overburden within the proposed footprint to the natural surface [14].
- ii) Construction of the central wall and fireplace bases [5] within a slightly deeper cut.
- iii) Construction of the surrounding wall bases [7], [9] as well as those outside the evaluated area (& possibly also [11] to the west).
- iv) Deposition of the made ground deposit [13] to form a floor base within the building.

Trench 2 did not produce any evidence for the building recorded after 1847. The ground had evidently been truncated by wartime or post-war clearance, although it is also likely that the structure shown here was less substantial than that in Trench 1. It was certainly smaller, and the photograph of *c* 1910 (Figure 14) suggests that it may have been single-storey.

## **11. Conclusions and recommendations**

- 11.1** The archaeological evaluation did not reveal any very significant remains, although it did produce considerable evidence for a pair of later 18<sup>th</sup> /early 19<sup>th</sup> century semi-detached cottages.

The cottages were located within the northern part of the site. A series of brick footings and fireplace bases related to a building overall some 9.2m by 7.5m in plan, with a further detached brick wall marking the position of a rear outhouse. These structures are clearly shown on mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and later plans, up to their destruction by wartime bombing. The combination of archaeological and photographic evidence also establishes that the main building was of two-storeys, and probably timber-framed and weatherboarded over the brick footings. Only the central dividing wall with its chimney stacks is likely to have been carried up in brick: each side of this were two rooms with fireplaces, and presumably two further rooms above.

The evaluation trenches also revealed extensive mid 20<sup>th</sup> century disturbance and truncation, following the wartime destruction of the historic buildings. This had removed the contemporary ground surface and much of the floor make-up of the *in situ* cottages, as well as all evidence for structures within the central and southern part of the site.

There were relatively few finds from the evaluation. A small group of post-medieval pottery (10 sherds; 4 ware types) suggests that there was activity here in the later 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, although some of this was residual within a later context. The fabrics comprised a mixture of utilitarian earthenwares and fine wares, typical of sites of the period. There were also a few pieces of clay tobacco pipe within the cottage construction levels, including one piece tentatively ascribed to a maker who is recorded in 1805.

There was no evidence for any earlier activity on the site, either *in situ* features or residual finds. The natural River Terrace sandy silt/clay and gravel was exposed throughout most of Trench 1 and the whole of Trench 2, except where cut away by modern foundations.

- 11.2** In view of these results it is recommended that no further archaeological measures should be undertaken in relation to the proposed redevelopment and planning condition.

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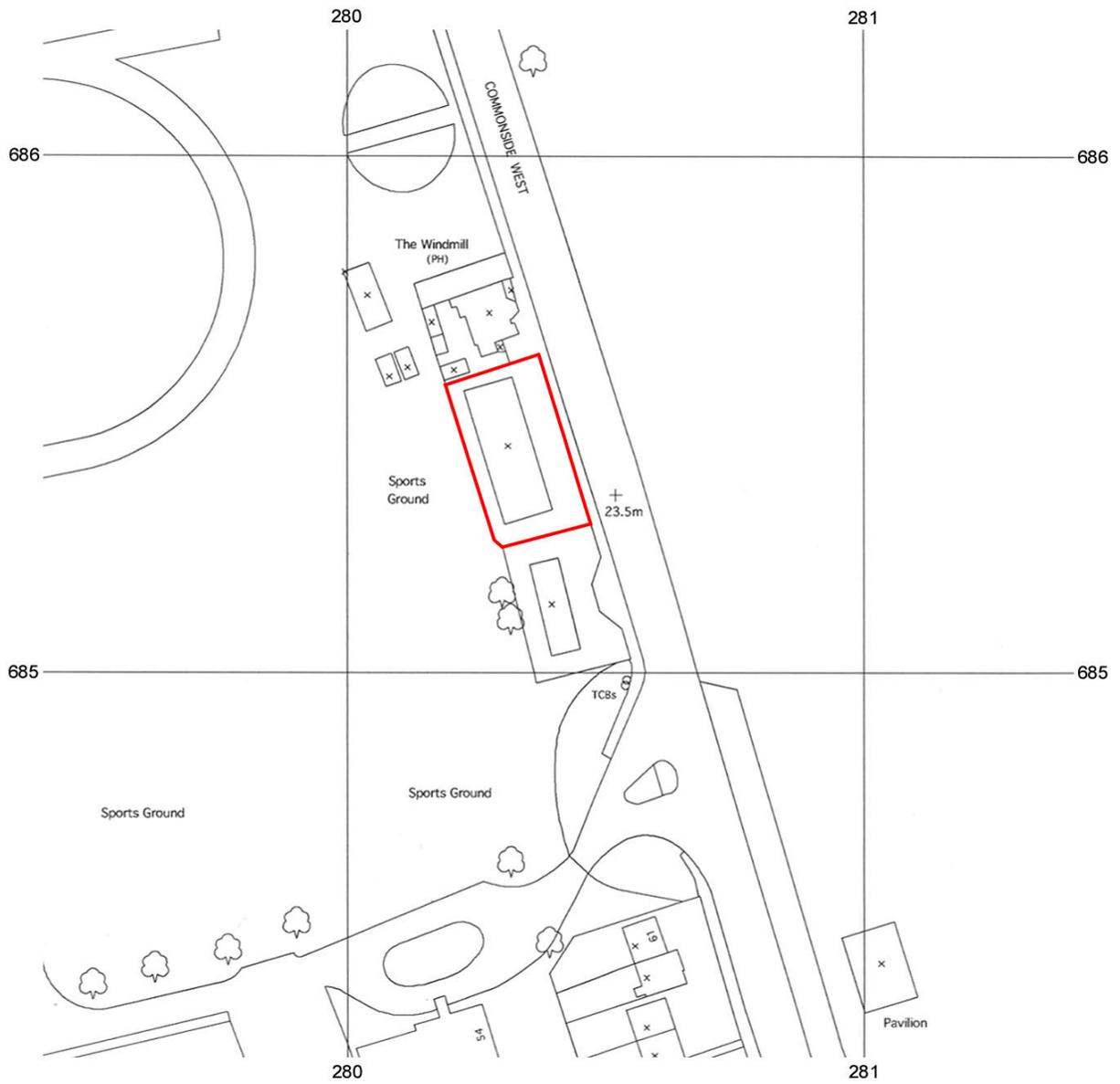


Fig 1 The site location and former building outline in relation to the 1:1250 Ordnance Survey map

*Reproduced from the OS map with the permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of HMSO. ©Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Compass Archaeology Ltd., London SE1 1RQ, licence no. AL 100031317*

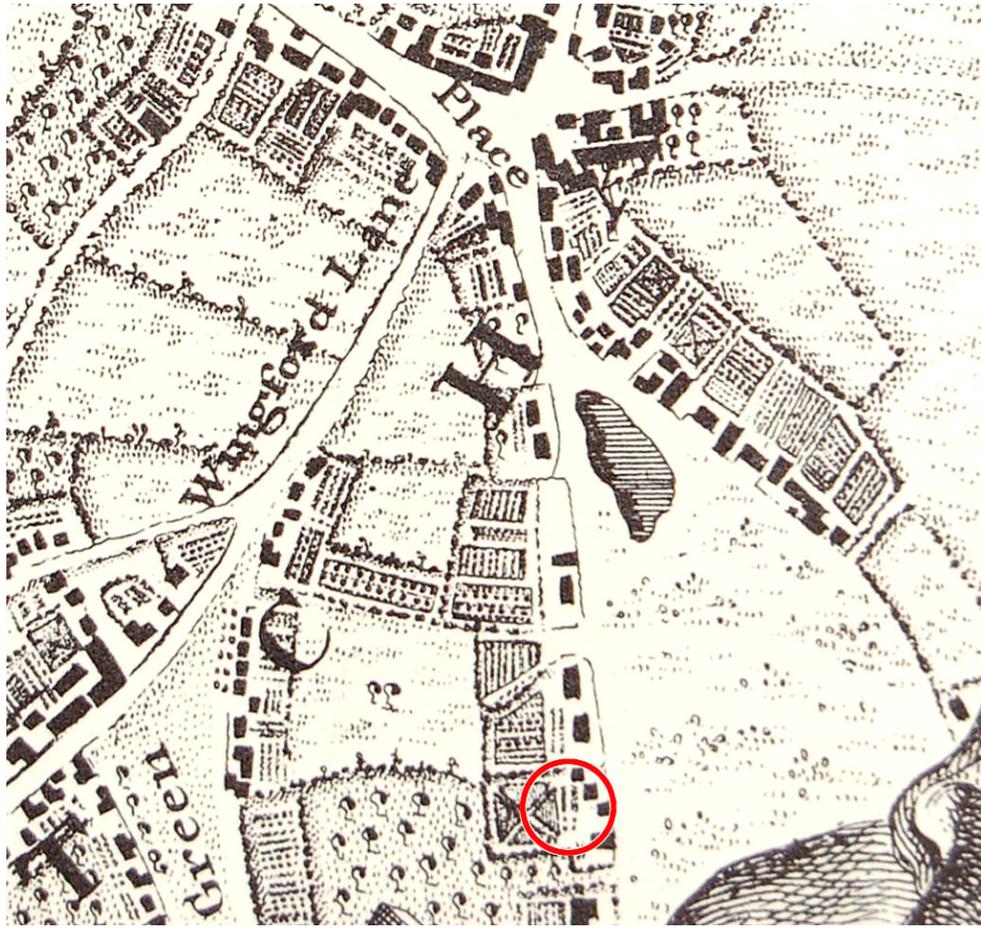


Fig 2 The approximate site location in relation to Rocque's map of c 1746

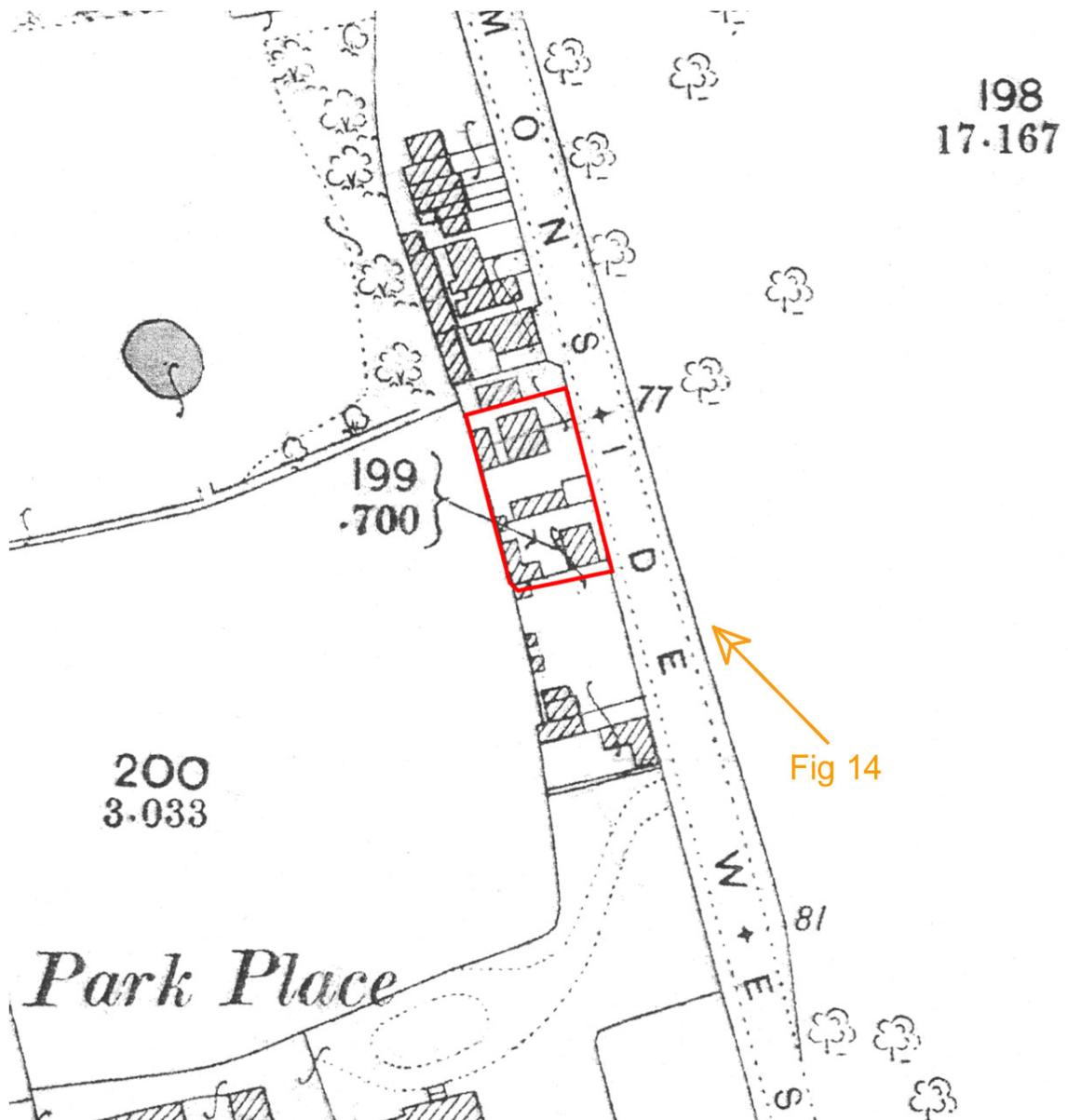


Fig 3 The site outline in relation to the Ordnance Survey 25-inch Second Edition map of 1895, showing the former cottages and other buildings and covering approximately the same area as Figure 1

The plan also shows the direction of view taken in Figure 14

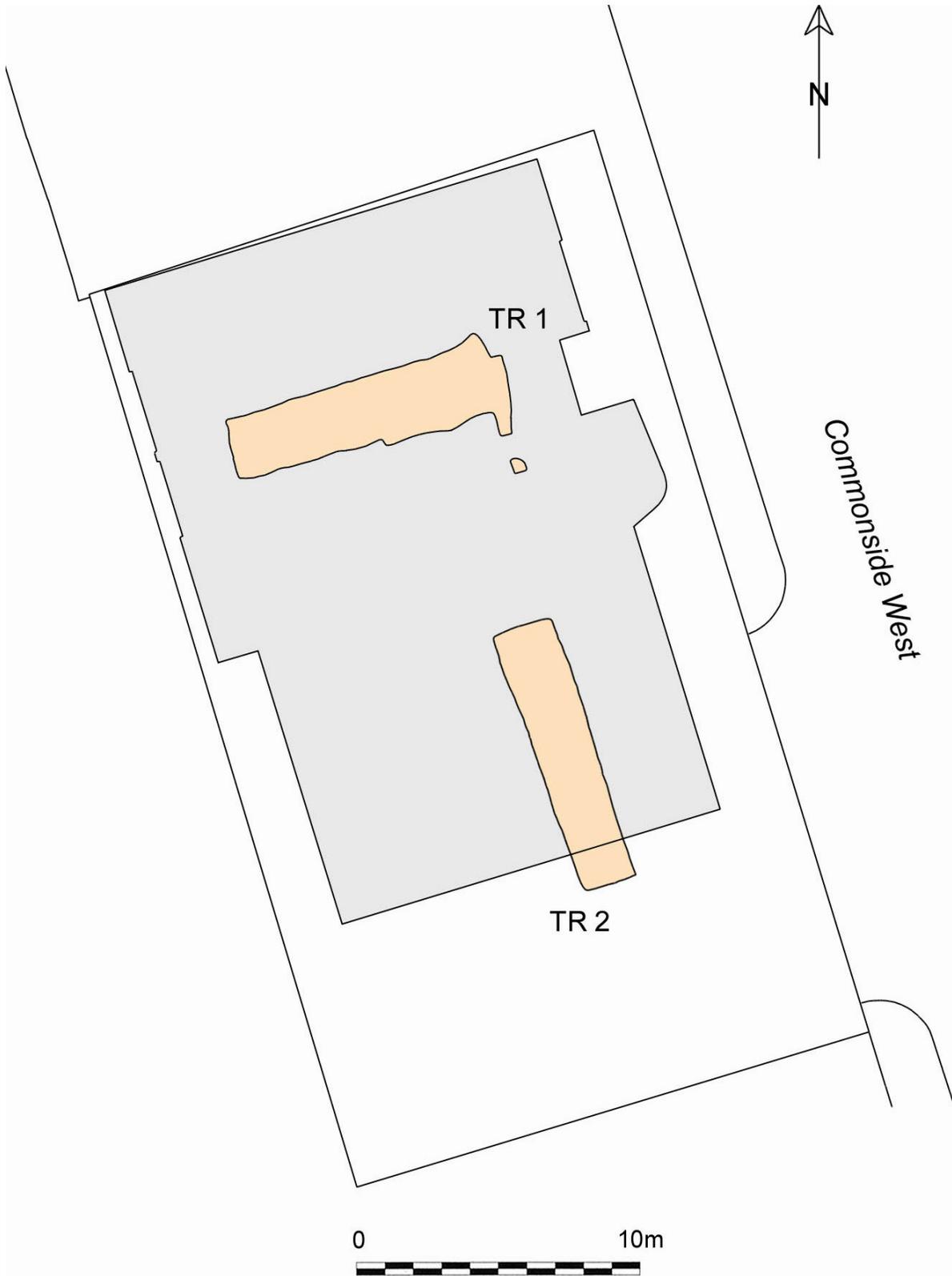


Fig 4 Plan showing the evaluation trenches (TR1 & 2) in relation to the new building footprint (shaded grey)

*Based on a Ground Floor Plan by Godsmark Architecture*



Fig 5 Plan showing the location of the evaluation trenches (TR1 & 2), plus the drawn section (Figure 18) and line of modern truncation within Trench 2

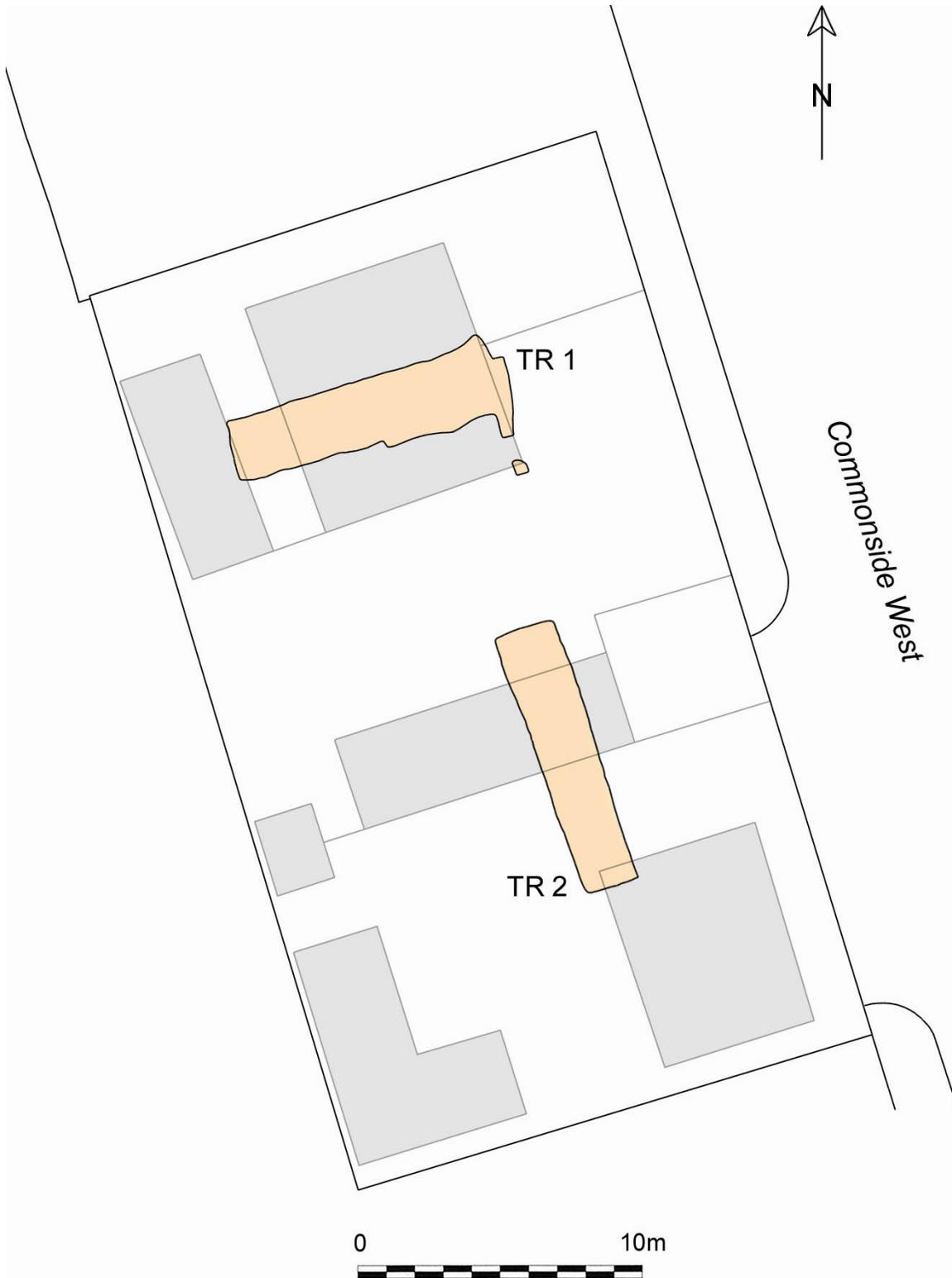


Fig 6 Plan showing the evaluation trenches in relation to buildings and property divisions on the 1895 OS map (*cf.* Figure 3)

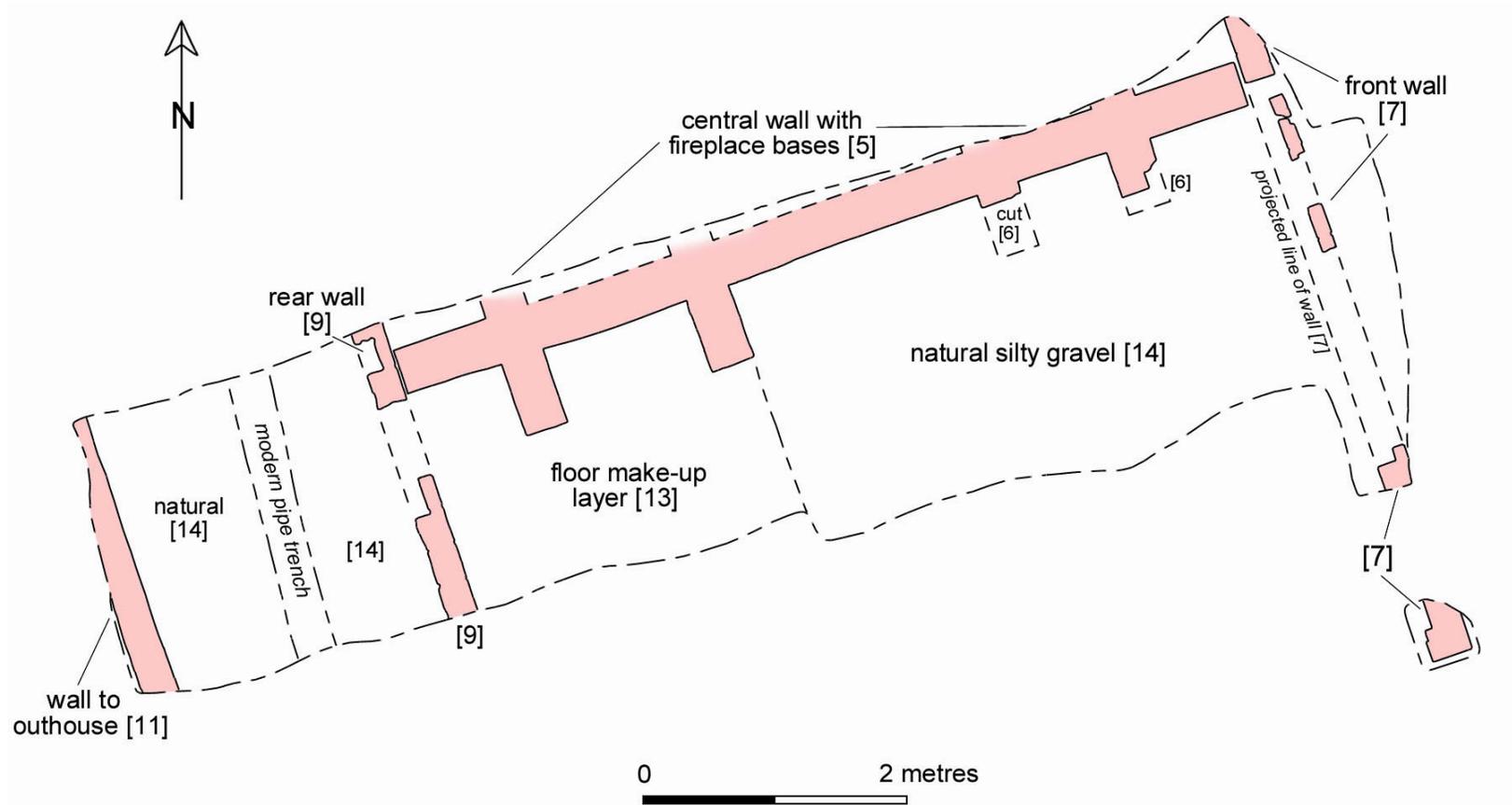


Fig 7 Plan of Trench 1, showing the component brick wall bases of the late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century cottage. The principal structure is the central east-west wall [5], with attached fireplace bases for rooms to the north and south



Fig 8 View of Trench 1 looking northeast and showing the brick foundations, the rear wall [9] in the foreground and the 1m scale lying within the adjacent fireplace base [5]



Fig 9 Detailed view of the rear fireplace base, looking north. The crushed rubble and burnt material in the foreground forms part of the primary floor make-up [13] (0.5m scale)



Fig 10 General view of Trench 1 looking southeast, with clearance for Trench 2 taking place to the rear



Fig 11 Trench 1, looking eastwards from the rear to front of the brick cottage foundations  
(1m scale)



Fig 12 Trench 1, looking approximately from the southeast corner of the cottage and with remnants of the front wall [7] in the foreground



Fig 13 Trench 1, looking westwards from the front to rear of the brick foundations, with the central wall and fireplace bases [5] on the right (*1m scale*)



Fig 14 View of the site *c* 1910, looking northwest from the other side of Commonsie West (*cf.* Fig 3). The building recorded in Trench 1 is just visible in the centre of the frame (highlighted in red). To the extreme left is a single storey structure that probably crossed Trench 2, although not found in the investigation



Fig 15 A similar view taken during the evaluation, showing the foundations in Trench 1 to the left and the bow front of The Windmill public house still visible to the right



Fig 16 Trench 2 looking south, with natural sand and gravel [3] at the base and a modern cut overlain by loose backfill to the left (*1m scale*)



Fig 17 Trench 2 looking southwest, showing the natural surface and deposits in the east-facing section (*0.5m scale*)

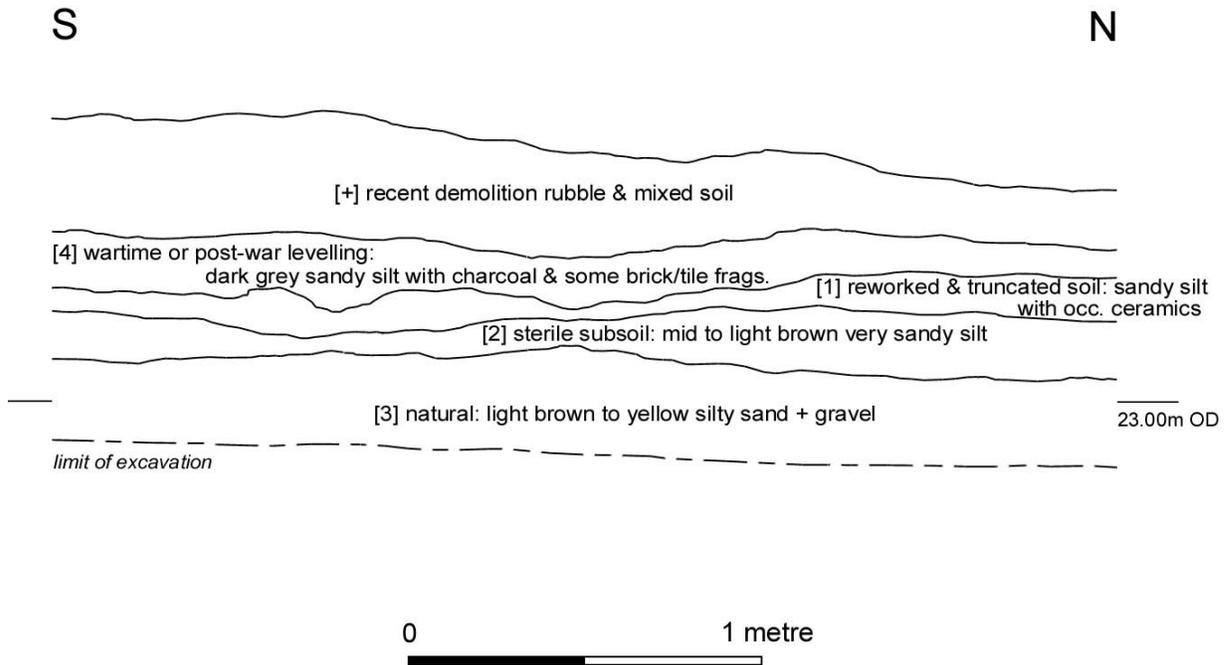


Fig 18 Drawing of part of the east-facing section of Trench 2. See Figure 4 for location



Fig 19 View of the section area shown above (0.5m scale). This also coincides with the line of the 19<sup>th</sup> century building illustrated in Fig 6, although no trace of this survived on site. However, the dark deposit left by wartime destruction is clearly visible at the top of the scale

## Appendix I. OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: compassa1-33448

### Project details

Project name	TS Benbow, Commonside West, Mitcham
Short description of the project	The northern part of the site produced evidence for two later 18th /early 19th century semi-detached cottages, which are shown on plans after 1847 and up to their destruction by wartime bombing. A series of brick wall bases related to a building some 9.2m by 7.5m in plan, with a further wall base marking the position of an outhouse. Photographic evidence shows that the main building was of two-storeys, and probably timber-framed and weatherboarded over brick footings with only the central wall and chimney bases carried up in brick. Within the central and southern parts of the site mid 20th century truncation had removed any evidence for historic structures. However, a small group of post-medieval pottery suggests some activity in the later 17th and early 18th centuries, with a typical mixture of utilitarian and fine wares. There was no evidence for any earlier activity, and excavation generally exposed the natural River Terrace sandy silt/clay and gravel c. 700mm below modern ground level.
Project dates	Start: 03-10-2007 End: 04-10-2007
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	CJM07 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	BRICKWORK Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CLAY PIPE Post Medieval

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON MERTON MITCHAM TS Benbow, 243 Commonside West
Postcode	CR4 4HA
Study area	640.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 28033 68543 51.4009408339 -0.159222362687 51 24 03 N 000 09 33 W Point
Height OD	Min: 22.90m Max: 23.10m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Compass Archaeology
Project brief originator	English Heritage/Department of Environment
Project design originator	Compass Archaeology
Project director/manager	Geoff Potter
Project supervisor	Geoff Potter
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Museum of London archaeological 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','Stratigraphic','Survey'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Map','Plan','Report','Section'

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	TS Benbow, 243 Commonside West, Mitcham, LB of Merton. An Archaeological Evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Potter, G.
Date	2007
Issuer or publisher	Compass Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Compass Archaeology
Description	A4 spiral bound report
Entered by	Geoff Potter (mail@compassarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	2 November 2007

## **Appendix II. London Archaeologist summary**

TS Benbow, 243 Commonside West, Mitcham CR4 4HA. TQ 28033 68543. CA (Geoff Potter). Evaluation. October 2007. MWL Developments. CJM 07

### **Summary**

In the northern part of the site there was evidence for two later 18<sup>th</sup> /early 19<sup>th</sup> century semi-detached cottages, which are shown on plans after 1847 and up to their destruction by wartime bombing. A series of brick wall and fireplace bases related to a building some 9.2m by 7.5m in plan, with a further wall base marking the position of an outhouse. Photographic evidence shows that the main building was of two-storeys, and probably timber-framed and weatherboarded over brick footings with only the central wall and chimney stacks carried up in brick.

Within the central and southern parts of the site mid 20<sup>th</sup> century truncation had removed any evidence for historic structures. However, a small group of post-medieval pottery suggests some activity in the later 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, with a typical mixture of utilitarian and fine wares.

There was no evidence for any earlier activity, and excavation generally exposed the natural River Terrace sandy silt/clay and gravel.