

No. 5 THE GREEN, WIMBLEDON VILLAGE, SW19 5AZ

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

November 2007

COMPASS



ARCHAEOLOGY

No. 5 THE GREEN, WIMBLEDON VILLAGE, SW19 5AZ

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SITE CODE: GNB07

SITE CENTRE NGR: TQ 2373 7112

PLANNING APPLICATION No: 07/P0991

COMPASS ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED

5-7 SOUTHWARK STREET

LONDON SE1 1RQ

Telephone: 020 7403 9660

Facsimile: 020 7403 9661

e-mail: mail@compassarchaeology.co.uk

Author: Katie Johnson

November 2007

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Project: mert 004

Abstract

An archaeological evaluation of a site in the garden of No. 5 The Green, Wimbledon Village took place early November 2007. The evaluation was carried out as a condition of planning consent, prior to the excavation of a new basement, which is to be added to the rear of the existing early 20th century house (Application No. 07/P0991).

The site had potential for archaeological evidence of prehistoric, medieval and later activity. Historic map evidence showed that the site lay on the edge of the developed Village, and in the 18th century it appeared to have formed a pound for holding livestock from the adjacent Common. The site was situated in an Archaeological Priority Area as defined by the London Borough of Merton Unitary Development Plan.

A single trial trench was excavated; this covered approximately 18 square meters. This was positioned adjacent to the existing property of No. 5 The Green, and within the proposed basement footprint. This trench did not reveal any significant archaeological remains. The previous soil profile had been truncated to the level of natural sand and gravel throughout the trench area. The latter was encountered at a depth of approximately 900mm in relation to the present ground surface.

A series of dumped and reworked deposits overlaid the natural and were evidently contemporary with the construction of the present house (No. 5 The Green) in the early 20th century (between 1896 and 1908 from photographic records¹ and cartographic evidence²). There was evidence for a cut feature at the northwestern end of the trench. However, this was of recent date and most likely also contemporary with the construction of the house.

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.

¹ Milward 1989, 9

² Ordnance Survey 1895

Contents		page
1	Introduction	1
2	Acknowledgements	1
3	Background	
3.1	Location and topography	1
3.2	Archaeology and history	3
4.	Aims and objectives of the evaluation	
4.1	Archaeology and planning	5
4.2	The archaeological brief	6
4.3	Archaeological research questions	6
5	Evaluation methodology	6
6	The archaeological evaluation	
6.1	Summary of the findings	9
6.2	List of recorded contexts	9
6.3	Trench 1	13
7	Assessment of the results of the evaluation	14
8	Conclusions and recommendations	15
9	Bibliography	16
Appendices		
I	OASIS Data Collection Form	17
II	London Archaeologist summary	18

Figures		page
1	Site location in relation to the OS 1:1250 map	2
2	View of the site before the evaluation began, looking southeast	3
3	The site outline in relation to the 1 st Edition O S 25-inch map of 1865	5
4	Plan of the site, showing the extent of the new basement and the location of the evaluation trench	8
5	Plan of the trench in relation to No. 5 The Green	11
6	The southwest facing section, showing contexts in sequence from top to bottom	12
7	The southwest facing section	12
8	The evaluation trench, looking north	14

Fig 1 Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map with permission of the HMSO. ©Crown Copyright 2006. All rights reserved. Compass Archaeology Ltd, London SE1 1RQ; licence no. AL 100031317

Fig 4 Based on an Existing Site Plan by Weldon Walshe No. 780 /P /001 A

1. Introduction

- 1.1** This report presents a summary of archaeological evaluation of land at No.5 The Green, in Wimbledon Village, SW19 5AZ in the London Borough of Merton. The site was located with Wimbledon Common immediately to the west and the historic Village centre to the east (Figure 1). The proposed development area is approximately centred at NGR TQ 2373 7112. The work took place as part of the planning process for excavation of a new basement for the existing property of No. 5 The Green (Planning Application No. 07/P0991).

Compass Archaeology undertook the evaluation fieldwork on the 7th November 2007.

- 1.2** Although the site is relatively small it is located in an area with potential for a range of archaeological remains, prehistoric, medieval and later. It is also in an Archaeological Priority Zone as defined by the London Borough of Merton Unitary Development Plan: this covers the whole of Wimbledon Village and Wimbledon Common.

Historic map evidence shows that the site lay on the edge of the developed Village, and in the 18th century it appears to have formed a pound for holding livestock from the adjacent Common.

- 1.3** As a result of the basement extension's potential impact on archaeological remains, English Heritage advised that an archaeological evaluation of the site should be undertaken as a condition of planning consent, prior to development. It was advised that this should consist of a single trial trench in the area of the proposed basement extension.

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

2. Acknowledgements

The archaeological evaluation was commissioned by Mr David Corbett of Finnan Developments Limited.

3. Background

3.1 Location and topography

The site occupies a plot of land measuring approximately 27m northwest to southeast by 35m southwest to northeast. The proposed development area is approximately centred at NGR TQ 2373 7112. The site is located on level ground at or just above about 54m OD, with Wimbledon Common immediately to the west and the historic Village centre to the east. The position of the site is shown in figure 1 below.

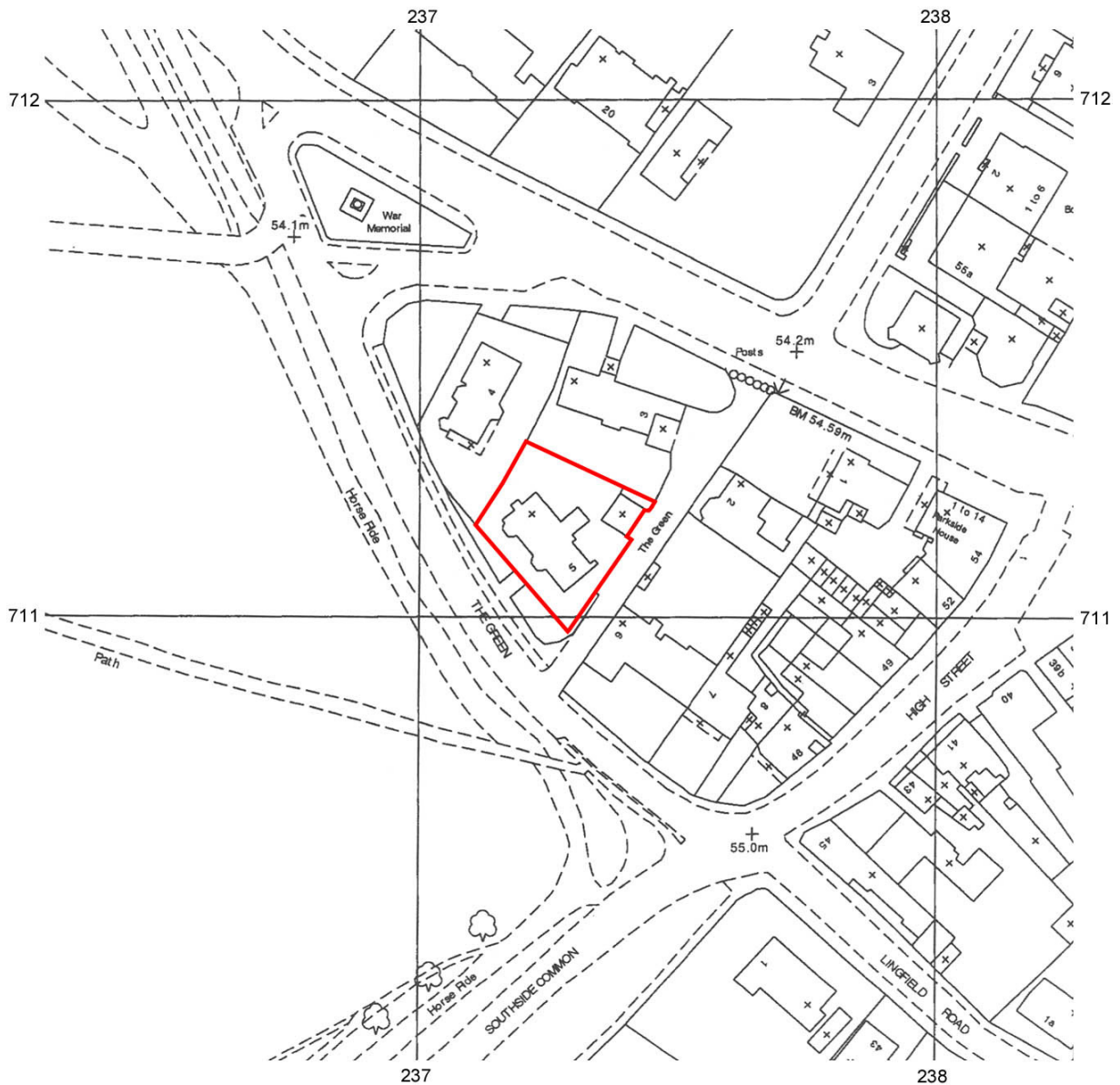


Fig. 1 Site location in relation to the OS 1:1250 map

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The British Geological Survey³ indicates that the site overlies a natural ground surface of Black Park Gravel. This forms an extensive deposit over Wimbledon Hill and covers the much older London Clay that is exposed on the hillsides. Nearby observations at Eagle House encountered natural gravels at a depth of approximately 0.8m.

³ British Geological Survey 1998, *South London. Sheet 270*



Fig. 2 View of the site before the evaluation began, looking southeast, No. 5 The Green is situated on the right side. The evaluation trench was located immediately to the left of the platform jutting out from the centre of the building

3.2 Archaeology and history

3.2.1 There has been a range of archaeological finds in Wimbledon Village, from prehistory onwards. Prehistoric evidence includes some Palaeolithic material but there is more evidence from the Mesolithic to Bronze Age periods⁴. Investigation at Chester House on the western side of the Common produced 184 pieces of struck flint, including a fine EBA barbed-and-tanged arrowhead⁵.

3.2.2 There have been very few Roman finds in the area and Wimbledon Village appears to be of Saxon origin, with 10th century references to the place name *Wimbedounyng* or *Wunemannedun*⁶. Archaeological investigation has produced evidence for settlement between c AD 900 and 1100, including some nearby finds to the rear of Claremont House and Eagle House⁷.

However, there is little documentary evidence for occupation before the 13th century, and archaeology has produced relatively few later medieval finds. It is possible that settlement declined after the Norman Conquest and only recovered towards the end of the medieval period.

⁴ (e.g., Phillips 1967: 33; Needham in Bird & Bird 1987: 132).

⁵ Potter 1993: 127

⁶ Milward 1983: 7

⁷ MoLAS 1992; Potter 1997: 45ff

3.2.3 In the early 18th century the Pound – an enclosure for holding livestock that had strayed off the Common – was moved from a location in the centre of the Village to the top of the Green, which appears to have included the present site⁸ (see figure 3). Cartographic support for this is provided by Rocque’s *Survey* of 1746 and by Corris’s plan of 1787. The first of these maps shows a fairly large square plot with some form of structure on the western side, whilst the latter gives a similar outline that appears to be subdivided across the centre (east-west). It is likely the southeastern boundary of the Pound was close to the line of the access road now known as The Green.

Subsequently the Pound was moved further to the north. On Lee & Pickering’s Tithe Map of 1850 the area is quite open, although the Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1865 shows several small enclosures that may reflect continued use for livestock. The land was developed between the Ordnance Surveys of *c* 1895 and 1911, the latter map showing the present house in more or less its present form. The front of the building is also clearly visible on a photograph of 1908⁹.

⁸ Milward 1989: 11

⁹ *ibid*: 9



Fig. 3 The site outline in relation to the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1865, and covering the same area as Figure 1

4. Aims and objectives of the evaluation

4.1 Archaeology and planning

The proposed development involves the excavation of a basement and other changes to the rear of the property (London Borough of Merton Planning Application No: 07/P0991). The internal dimensions of the basement will be approximately 10m by 12m and the depth to finished floor level will be about 3.6m.

An archaeological evaluation of the site has been recommended by English Heritage as part of the Local Authority planning process, and accordingly forms a condition of the planning consent (No. 3).

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 (*e.g.*, 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).

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, October 2007*):

- Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, and how does this relate to other finds recorded in the area?
- Is there any evidence for Saxon or earlier medieval activity, and can the nature of this be defined – for example, settlement or agriculture?
- Is there evidence for later medieval and earlier post-medieval land use, including any indication of renewed activity from the 15th century? What light does this throw on the development of the Village?
- Can any later post-medieval remains be related to the historic map evidence, in particular for a pound on the site in the 18th and earlier 19th centuries?

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 of a single trial trench located within the area of proposed basement footprint as shown in figure 4 below. The trench was approximately 2m wide and 9m in length, and covered an area of *c* 18 square metres at the level of potential archaeology or natural.

The trench was opened by a standard JCB excavator using a ditching bucket and working under archaeological supervision. Recent deposits and undifferentiated soil horizons were removed to a depth of approximately 0.9m. 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 (scale of 1:20) and section (scale 1:10), supplemented by 35mm and digital photography. Levels were derived from an OSBM located on the southern wall at the pavement edge on the High Street opposite the junction with Marryat Road, which lies just to the northeast of the site. This OSBM had a value of 54.59m OD.

The evaluation trench position was located to the existing building (No 5 The Green) 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: GNB07 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.

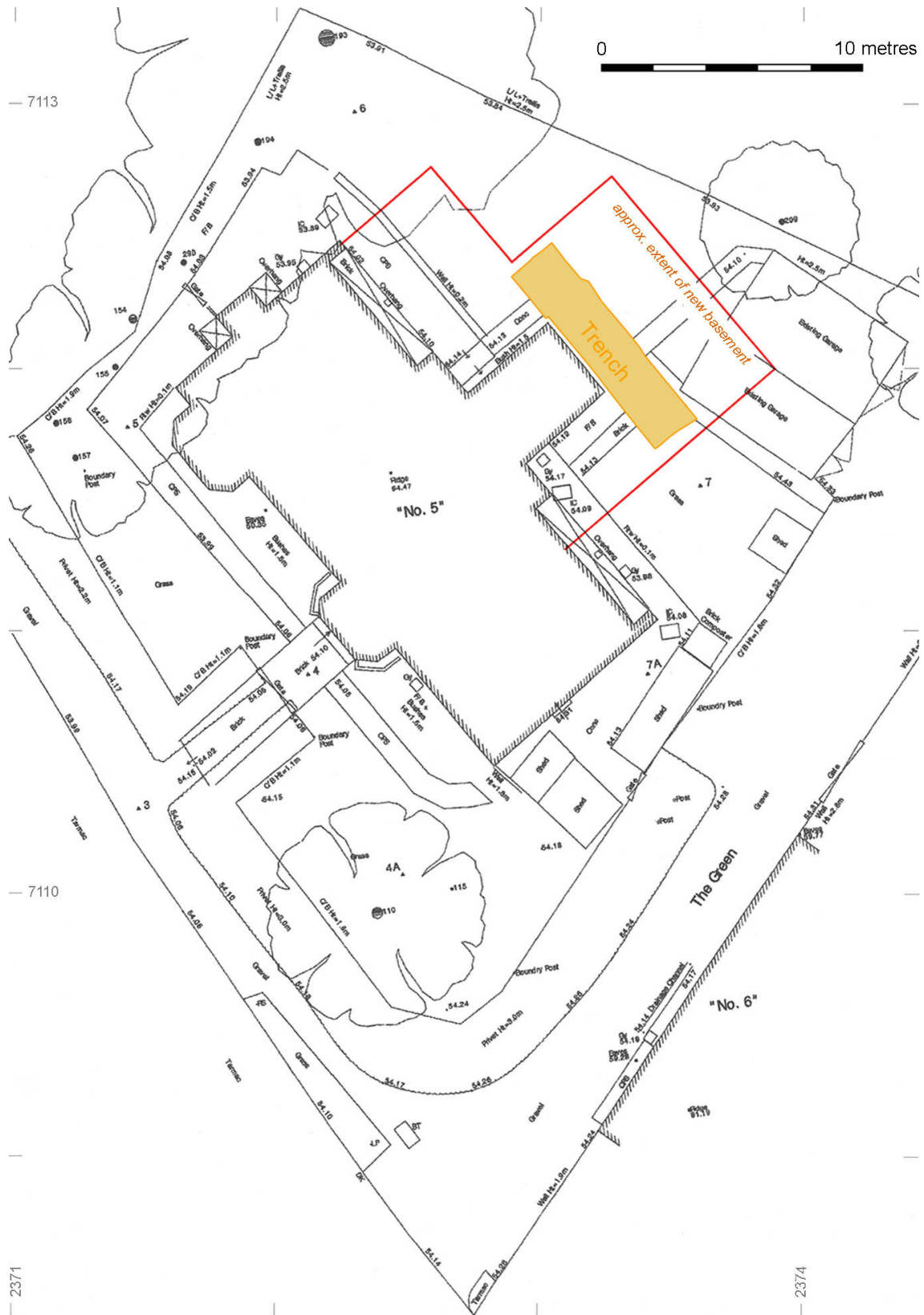


Fig. 4 Plan of the existing site and building of No. 5 The Green, with the extent of the new basement marked and the location of the evaluation trench

6. The archaeological evaluation (Fig 5 & 6)

6.1 Summary of the findings

The evaluation trench was dug from the present ground surface of a garden lawn. Excavation was generally to the top of the clean natural Black Park Gravel, removing modern fills and disturbed material. A plan of the trench can be seen in figure 5 below.

In general the sequence was quite straightforward, with the soil profile wholly truncated and replaced by a series of dumped deposits of topsoil and clay, overlying disturbed natural before coming down onto clean natural gravels. This section can be seen in figure 6 below and in the annotated scaled drawing in figure 7 below.

6.2 List of recorded contexts:

Context	Description	Interpretation
1	Deposit Friable dark grey sandy silt with light brown flecks with occasional medium-fine pebbles, occasional flints and occasional ceramic building material (CBM).	Imported topsoil dumped over a previous dump deposit (context 2).
2	Deposit Firm light orange clay with darker grey and sandy mottles. Inclusions include comprise occasional chalk fragments (<50mm length), occasional medium-fine pebbles, occasional CBM and occasional blue tile.	Imported dumped clay deposit.
3	Deposit Compact fine silty sand mix, with natural gravels. Colour varies from mid brown to mid grey with occasional CBM fragments and flecks, and occasional charcoal.	Disturbed natural from general construction of buildings in the area of the site (including construction of No. 5 The Green).
4	Deposit Compact gravels with coarse sand and silty clay. This varies to medium compaction with depth. Mid orange to dark orange in colour, but is increasingly lighter with depth.	Natural deposit (Black Park Gravel).

5	<p>Cut</p> <p>Assumed linear cut (extends beyond trench edge in all directions) in SW to NE orientations. Measured >1.9m (length) x >500mm (width) x 900mm depth.</p> <p>Sharp top break of slope, with sides angled 60° concave with a sharp break of slope at base, which gently slopes.</p>	<p>Cut for modern feature, assumed to be contemporary with the construction of No 5 The Green and nearby buildings.</p>
6	<p>Deposit</p> <p>Fairly firm, mid grey-brown slightly silty sand with large percentage of CBM and general building rubble.</p> <p>Other inclusions: larger CBM fragments, frequent slate, frequent loose mortar, moderate tarmac and bitumen, occasional modern blue tile (as in context 2) and occasional modern pot.</p>	<p>Fill of feature [5], contemporary with building construction and with the clay layer of context 2, as indicated by similar blue tile inclusions.</p>

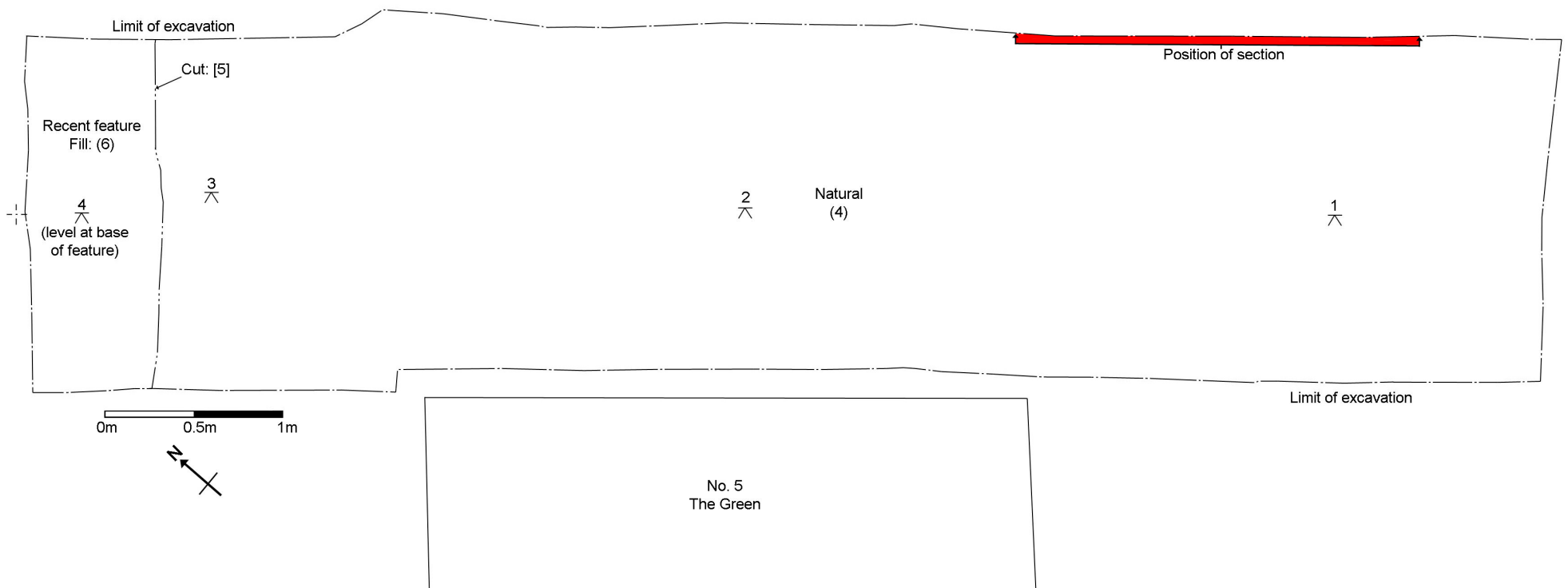


Fig. 5 Plan of the trench in relation to No. 5 The Green, drawn originally at a scale of 1:20



Fig. 6 The south west facing section, showing contexts in sequence from top to bottom: (1), (2), (3) and (4)

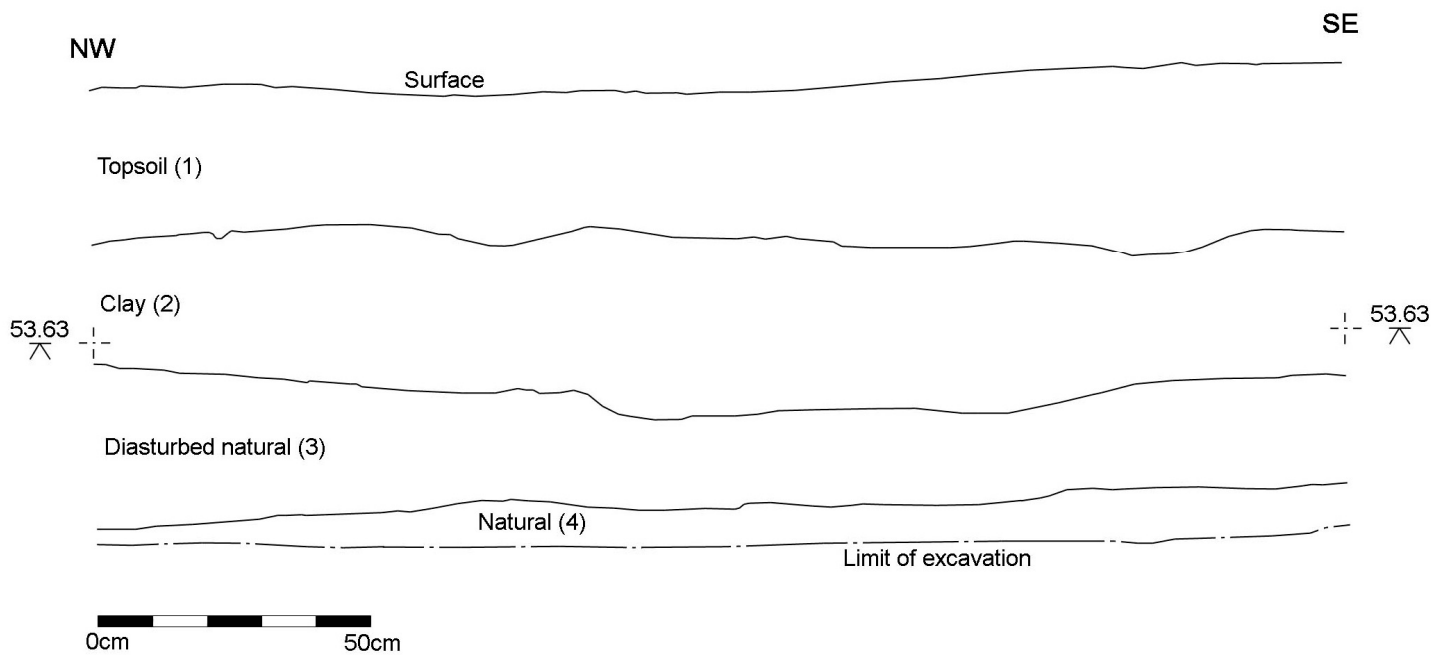
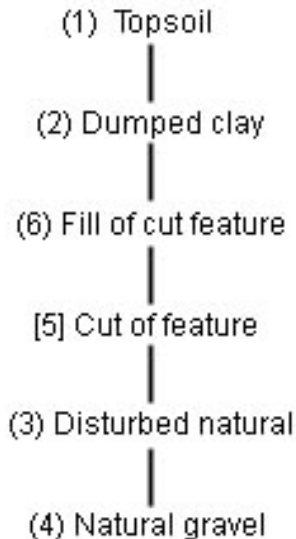


Fig. 7 The southwest facing section, drawn at a 1:10 scale, the location of this section is shown in figure 5 above

6.3 Trench 1

Trench Harris Matrix



The trench was dug on a north west - south east alignment and measured approximately 9m by 2m in plan. The trench was approximately 0.9m deep.

- 6.3.1** The natural Black Park Gravel deposit (4) was exposed within the entire extent of the trench. This was first encountered at a depth of just less than 0.8m below the modern ground surface level. The deposit was typically composed of compact to medium mid orange gravels, which became lighter and sandier with depth.
- 6.3.2** Above the natural was a layer of disturbed natural (3), with much the same makeup as the natural (4) itself and again covered the whole extent of the trench. It differed in terms of inclusions, having fragments and flecks of ceramic building material (CBM) and occasional charcoal. It is thought that this represents intensive ground stripping covering the whole of the northern part of The Green area ahead of the construction of the houses that now stand on The Green (including No. 5) in the early 20th century.
- 6.3.3** Stratigraphically above this was the construction cut [5] for a feature seen only in the northwestern end of the trench. This extended into the trench approximately 0.5m and crossed the width of the trench in southwest to northeast orientation. This cut into the disturbed natural (3) and extended down into the upper 800mm of the natural (4); it was sealed by a layer of dumped clay (2). The cut had sharp breaks of slope at both the top and the bottom, had 60° concave sides and had a gently sloping base. It is possible that this cut represents the cut for a service related to the construction of No. 5 The Green during the first decade of the 20th century.
- 6.3.4** The cut [5] was filled with fairly firm slightly silty sand, with a large amount of CBM and general building rubble (6). Together with this were inclusions of larger fragments of CBM, frequent slate, frequent loose mortar, moderate tarmac and bitumen lumps, occasional modern pot and fragments of blue tile. This last inclusion is like that found in context (2), which suggests these layers are

contemporaneous, and so again deposited at the time of the construction of the houses on The Green.

6.3.5 The feature fill was sealed by a layer of clay with sandy mottles (2), not natural to the site at this shallow depth; this covered the full extent of the trench. It is therefore more likely that this layer was imported from elsewhere and dumped over the construction area of The Green in the early 20th century. This light orange-brown layer (with darker mottles) had occasional chalk fragments measuring no more than 50mm, medium to fine pebbles and occasional CBM inclusions. As previously noted, blue tile inclusions were strikingly similar to those in the fill (6) of the cut feature at the northwestern end of the trench, suggesting the likelihood of their contemporaneity.

6.3.6 The topsoil (1) was a thick layer of dark grey (with light brown flecks) sandy silt with medium to fine pebbles, occasional naturally broken flints and occasional CBM inclusions. This topsoil was not formed *in situ* as entirely overlaid the dumped clay (2). Also the thickness of up to 350mm could not have developed in the 100-year period since the construction of No. 5 The Green and the garden.



Fig. 8 The evaluation trench, looking north. The cut feature is visible at the far northwest of the trench

7. Assessment of the results of the evaluation

The archaeological evaluation has provided an opportunity to address the site-specific objectives that were defined within the preliminary *Written Scheme* (4.3 above). The responses to these are outlined below:

- *Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, and how does this relate to other finds recorded in the area?*

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

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

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

- *Is there any evidence for later medieval and earlier post medieval land use, including any indication of renewed activity from the 15th century? What light does this throw on the development of the Village?*

There was no evidence for later medieval or earlier post medieval land use on the site.

- *Can any later post-medieval remains be related to the historic map evidence, in particular for a pound on the site in the 18th and earlier 19th centuries?*

There was no evidence from the later post-medieval development of the site that could be related to historic map evidence.

This evaluation produced no evidence that could be used to answer the research questions posed above. The site was intensively truncated in the early 20th century during the construction development of houses on The Green. This truncation leaves the question of whether this area did once contain archaeology and has subsequently been truncated by recent activity, or whether no archaeology was ever on the site, unanswered.

8. Conclusions and recommendations

- 8.1** The archaeological evaluation did not reveal any significant archaeological remains, revealing only activity related to the construction of the present building, and those around the site on The Green in the early 20th century. Modern truncation related to this construction work has destroyed any possible archaeological potential that may once have been situated here.

There was no evidence for any earlier activity on the site, either *in situ* features or residual finds. The natural Black Park Gravel was exposed throughout the trench with the exception of the northeast end where the modern cut feature truncated the upper part.

- 8.2** 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.

9. Bibliography

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Weldon Walshe. Drawn by L.P. 2006 Site Plan as Existing No. 780 /P /001 A

Appendix I. OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

OASIS ID: compass1-34055	
Project details	
Project name	No. 5 The Green, Wimbledon Village
Short description of the project	This single trench did not reveal any significant archaeological remains. There was evidence for a cut feature at the northwestern end of the trench. However, this was of recent date and most likely to be contemporary with the construction of the house (No. 5 The Green) in the early 20th century. The exposed southwest facing section revealed a truncated soil profile (also at the time of construction of the house) and a series of dumped and reworked deposits above the natural. Natural sands and gravel were encountered at depth of approximately 900mm below the present ground surface.
Project dates	Start: 07-11-2007 End: 07-11-2007
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	GNB07 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON MERTON WIMBLEDON AND MERTON No. 5 The Green
Postcode	SW19 5AZ
Study area	945.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 2373 7112 51.4250605201 -0.220156121424 51 25 30 N 000 13 12 W Point
Height OD	Min: 53.31m Max: 53.34m
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	Katie Johnson
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

Project archives	
Digital Archive recipient	Museum of London archive
Digital Archive ID	GNB07
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Museum of London Archive
Paper Archive ID	GNB07
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Map','Plan','Section','Unpublished Text'
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	No. 5 The Green, Wimbledon Village, SW19 5AZ London Borough of Merton. An Archaeological Evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Johnson, K.
Date	2007
Issuer or publisher	Compass Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Compass Archaeology
Description	A4 spiral bound report
Entered by	Katie Johnson (mail@compassarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	13 November 2007

Appendix II. London Archaeologist summary

No. 5 The Green, Wimbledon Village, SW19 5AZ. TQ 2373 7112. CA (Katie Johnson). Evaluation. November 2007. Finnan Developments Ltd. GNB07

Summary

This single trench did not reveal any significant archaeological remains. There was evidence for a cut feature at the northwestern end of the trench. However, this was of recent date and most likely to be contemporary with the construction of the house (No. 5 The Green) in the early 20th century. Elsewhere the previous soil profile had been entirely truncated to the level of natural, evidently also at the time of construction of the house. A series of dumped and reworked deposits above the natural were also revealed in section. Natural sands and gravel were encountered at depth of approximately 900mm below the present ground surface.