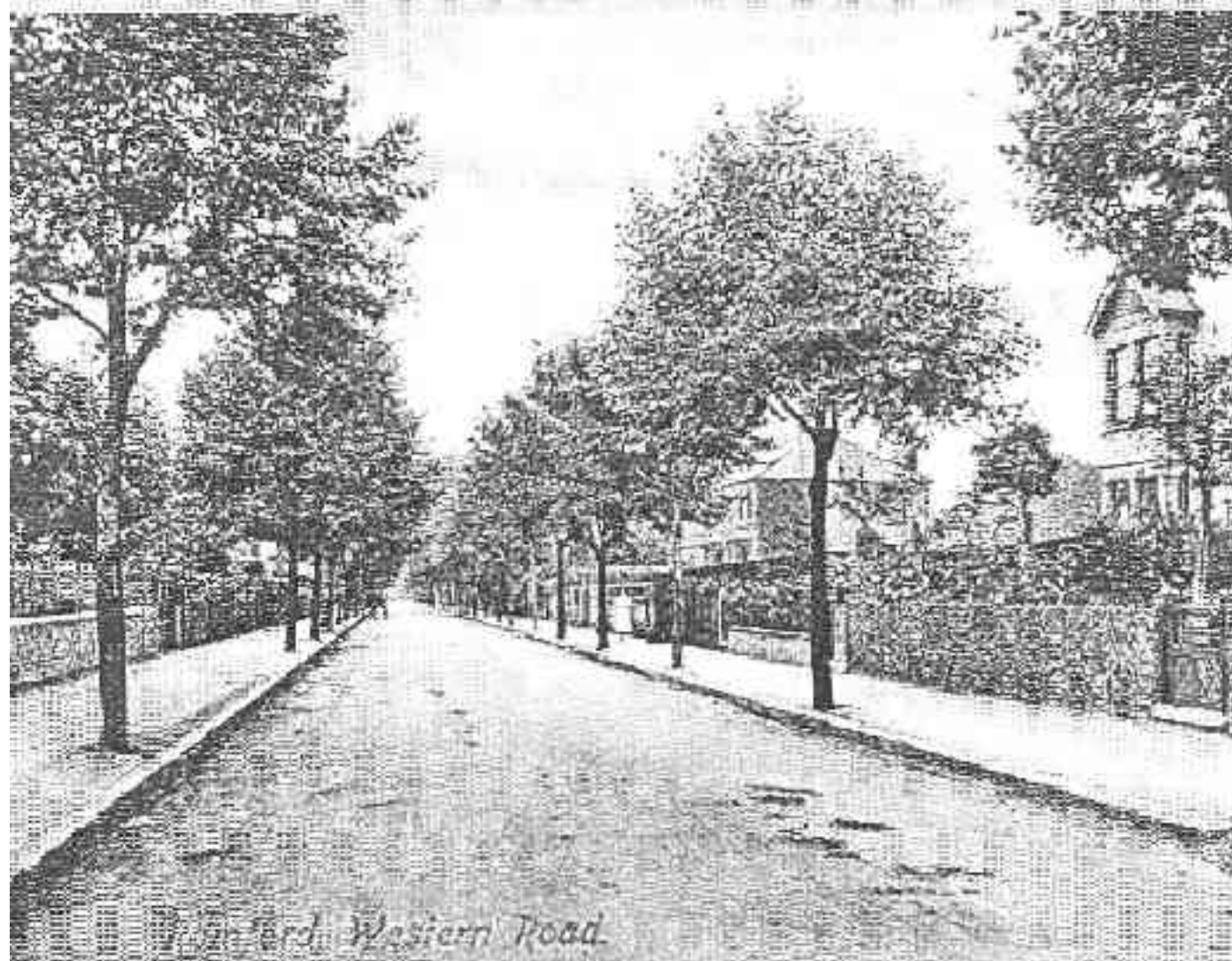




HERITAGE NETWORK



10-14 WESTERN ROAD
Romford, RM1

ELN540

Archaeological Evaluation Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hilderson, BA MIFA

**10 – 14 WESTERN ROAD
Romford, RM1**

Project: HN540
Site Code: WRF05
NGR: TQ 51430 88695
LPA ref.: P1509/03

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Prepared on behalf of FSI Services Ltd

by

Geoff Potter, MA MIFA

Report no. 303

August 2005

© The Heritage Network Ltd

11 FURMSTON COURT, LETCHWORTH HERTS. SG6 1UJ
TEL: (01462) 685991 FAX: (01462) 685998

Abstract

Archaeological evaluation of land to the south of Western Road, Romford, London Borough of Havering, took place in July 2005. The evaluation was carried out as part of the planning process prior to commercial and residential redevelopment of the site (Planning ref. P1509.03). The area has potential for Roman remains, although it was evidently outside the medieval settlement and was not developed until the mid 19th century.

Three evaluation trenches were opened, covering a total area of just over 60 square metres. No significant archaeological remains were found: there was a simple sequence of deposits and features, reflecting the development and use of the site from the 1850s to the present day. To the north the site was severely truncated by building foundations and disused services, whilst to the south associated cultivation had left reworked soil horizons with some 19th century finds, but no earlier material.

Natural deposits were exposed in each trench, in some areas overlain by a sterile weathered horizon. The natural itself ranged from sandy gravel to a firm sandy silt-clay, reflecting a probable division between the Hackney Gravel Terrace to the north and an earlier Head deposit to the south.

Given the lack of any significant findings it is suggested that no further archaeological measures should be undertaken in relation to the proposed development.

Contents	page
1 Introduction	1
2 Aims and objectives of the evaluation	
2.1 The archaeological brief	1
2.2 Archaeological research questions	2
3 Evaluation methodology	2
4 The archaeological evaluation	
4.1 Summary of the investigation	3
4.2 Trench 1	3
4.3 Trench 2	3
4.4 Trench 3	4
5 Assessment of the results of the evaluation	5
6 Conclusion and recommendations	6
 Appendices	
I OASIS Data Collection Form	17
II London Archaeologist summary	19

Figures	page
1 Site outline in relation to the 1:1250 Ordnance Survey map	7
2 Site location in relation to <i>A Plan of Romford District... under the Public Health Act</i> . Surveyed in 1853 by Edward Gotto	8
3 Site location in relation to the Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1920, and covering the same area as Figure 2	9
4 Location of the evaluation trenches and drawn sections in relation to the site boundary and adjacent features	10
5 General view of Trench 1, looking southwest and showing the exposed surface of the natural sandy/clayey silt	11
6 Part of the northwestern section of Trench 1, located on Figure 4	12
7 View of the deposits shown in Figure 6	12
8 General view of Trench 2 looking northwest towards Western Road	13
9 Part of the northeastern section of Trench 2, located on Figure 4	14
10 Trench 2: view of the deposits shown in Figure 9	15
11 General view of Trench 3, looking northeast and showing the surface of the natural gravel	15
12 Part of the southeastern section of Trench 3, located on Figure 4	16
13 View of the deposits shown in Figure 12	16

1. Introduction

- 1.1** This report presents a summary of archaeological evaluation of land running between Western Road and Slaney Road, London Borough of Havering. The plot is roughly L-shaped, with overall dimensions of approximately 50m north-south by 30m east-west (Figure 1: site approximately centred at National Grid Reference TQ 51430 88695).

The evaluation fieldwork was undertaken by Compass Archaeology between the 21st and 26th July 2005, and was commissioned by The Heritage Network on behalf of their clients ESL Services Ltd.

- 1.2** Archaeological assessment of the site was required as a condition of planning consent prior to redevelopment of the site (London Borough of Havering Planning ref. P1509.03). The proposed development envisages a mixed scheme of flats and offices plus car parking.
- 1.3** The British Geological Survey (*Romford. Sheet 257, 1996*) indicates that the site overlies Head (variable pebbly sandy clay), with a fairly recent River Terrace Deposit (Hackney Gravel) immediately to the northwest. The present ground surface is at just over 17.0m OD, although there is a slight topographical slope southward towards the small canalised stream that is recorded on Figure 1 as *Black's Brook*.
- 1.4** It was considered that the site had potential for archaeological remains, particularly those of Roman date for which there are a number of local references in the Greater London Sites and Monuments Record.

In later periods the area appears to have lain in open land to the south of the medieval town. It certainly appears as such on maps in the first half of the 19th century, for example the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey, published 1805, and the *Plan of Romford District...* of 1853 (Figure 2).

By the time of the 2nd Edition OS of 1862-73 a number of buildings had been established on the south side of Western Road. Within the present site only the central plot (No. 12) is shown to have a standing building on the 6-inch map of 1895-97, but by 1914 all three were developed with sizeable gardens to the rear (Figure 3). At the time of the evaluation the eastern two plots had been cleared and surfaced with compacted rubble to form a temporary car park, leaving a surviving but vacant building at No. 10.

- 1.5** The scope of the evaluation was agreed following discussions between The Heritage Network and the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service of English Heritage. The Project Design (*Heritage Network HN540, July 2005*) proposed a sample area of 60m², representing 5% of the overall site area of approximately 1,200m². The final location of the trial trenches was to be determined by circumstances on site.

2. Aims and objectives of the evaluation

2.1 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*). 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).

2.2 Archaeological research questions

The evaluation presented an opportunity to address several research questions, as defined in the preliminary Project Design:

- the origins and development of settlement in Romford;
- the influences on settlement growth and development during the Roman period;
- the transition to the Post-Roman period.

3. Evaluation methodology

3.1 The *Project Design* was produced and agreed prior to the commencement of fieldwork. The evaluation was also carried out in accordance with 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*).

3.2 The evaluation comprised three trial trenches located within the area of the proposed redevelopment. The trenches were laid out as shown on Figure 4, with Trench 2 at right angles to Trenches 1 and 3, and measured between 7.5m and 19.5m in length by 1.6m to 2m in width (an overall area of about 62 sq. metres).

The trenches were opened by a mechanical excavator (JCB 3CX) working under archaeological supervision and using a breaker, toothed and ditching buckets. Recent deposits, foundations and undifferentiated soil horizons were removed to a general depth of between 0.9m to 1.1m. Thereafter the exposed surfaces and sections were investigated by hand and recorded.

At the conclusion of the fieldwork the trenches were backfilled by machine with removed spoil.

3.3 The evaluation record was primarily by scaled plan and section, supplemented by 35mm photography. Individual deposits and features were described on the drawings but not separately contexted. The trenches were located by taped measurement, and were in turn related to an enlarged extract of the 1:1250 Ordnance Survey plan (Figure 4).

Levels taken during the evaluation were derived from an OSBM located on the northeast corner of Romford Station, facing onto South Street, value 15.58m OD. A TBM was established on the western side of the evaluation site, value 17.39m.

The records from the evaluation have been allocated the site code *WRF05* 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.

4. The archaeological evaluation

4.1 Summary of the investigation (*Figure 4*)

The evaluation trenches were dug from a more or less level surface at just above 17m OD. In the absence of any significant remains machine excavation was generally to the top of the clean natural Head or River Terrace Deposits, removing the overlying made ground and soil horizons as well as the weathered upper level of the natural. The maximum depth was about 1.2m, decreasing to the north.

The revealed sequence was quite recent and straightforward, the principal distinction across the site being between cultivated/reworked soil horizons to the south and a series of building remains, disused services and made ground deposits in the north. The natural deposits also underwent a change in this direction, from predominantly clay-silt to sandy gravel.

4.2 Trench 1 (*Figures 5-7*)

The lowest deposit exposed in the trench was a compact sandy/clayey silt with occasional patches of sandy medium to fine gravel, and apart from some root traces quite sterile. This deposit was recorded at about 16.2m OD – some 1.0m below present ground level – and probably represents the top of the natural Head deposit as recorded by the Geological Survey (1.3 above).

There was a sharp interface between the natural and the overlying layer of darker silty sand with gravel, some 200mm thick and evidently produced by cultivation following development of the site in the mid/late 19th century. The layer contained fairly frequent flecks and small pieces of clinker and coal, plus occasional fragments of ceramic building material (brick/roof tile). There were also a few potsherds, including blue and white transfer-printed ware (1807-60, found at the base of the deposit) and English hard paste porcelain (*c* 1780-1900). This layer forms a subsoil and reflects a general reworking and truncation of previous soil horizons.

The subsoil was overlain by a buried topsoil of dark grey silty sand with scattered pebbles, together forming a soil profile at least 600mm thick. The upper layer included occasional small fragments of coal/clinker and brick/roof tile. Two sherds of refined white earthenware (1800-1900), one piece of modern wall tile and one piece of glass were also recorded.

Sealing the soil profile was a compacted layer of rubble and demolition material up to 400mm thick. This formed the present temporary car park surface and was of very recent origin.

4.3 Trench 2 (*Figures 8-10*)

Within the southern part of the trench the natural surface was comparable to that in Trench 1, *ie.*, a sterile sandy silt-clay with occasional patches of silty sandy gravel, but to the north this was replaced by a homogeneous sandy medium/fine gravel. There was no distinct line between the two areas, but it is assumed that the former is mainly a Head deposit whilst the later represents the edge of the later Hackney Gravel Terrace (*cf.* 1.3 above). Levels also rose slightly from north to south, from about 16.4m to 16.7m OD.

The overlying deposits in Trench 2 were also divided on a north-south line, but more clearly defined and related to the previous development of the site. To the south the sequence was broadly similar to that in Trench 1, although there was also a primary layer of fairly light brownish silty sand and gravel up to 400mm thick. This did not produce any finds and is interpreted as weathered natural, perhaps derived from an original continuation of the overlying River Terrace.

Sealing this weathered deposit was a soil profile comprising a silty sand subsoil with frequent pebbles overlain by a darker grey sandy silt buried topsoil. The profile was about 400mm to 500mm thick, and so similar to although rather shallower than that in Trench 1. Both deposits yielded very occasional fragments of ceramic building material, pottery and glass, and the upper layer also contained scattered pieces of coal and clinker. The pottery from both layers included sherds of blue and white transfer-printed ware (1807-60) and flowerpot, plus one piece of clay pipe stem from the subsoil.

The southern part of the trench also contained one cut feature, just over 1.0m square in plan and backfilled with loose soil and modern building rubble. This was only excavated to the level of the adjacent natural.

The northern part of Trench 2 – just over half the total length – contained a substantial wall foundation and two disused drains, and had been heavily disturbed by these developments. The wall foundation ran along the eastern side of the trench for nearly 11 metres, and was left *in situ* with a corresponding offset in the line of the trench (see Figure 4). The base was of solid concrete cut into the natural at about 16.5m OD, overlain by yellow stock brickwork that was stepped up to a surviving width of *c* 240mm (= one brick's length). At the southern end there was a corner and return into the eastern section of the trench.

This wall base clearly forms part of the western side of the building formerly at No. 14 Western Road, and is dated by map evidence to the period 1895-1914 (1.4 above). Within the adjacent area of the trench were two parallel ceramic drains, both cut at least to the level of the natural gravel and with the western drain also including a concrete base and brick-lined inspection chamber to the south. The eastern drain issued from the wall base itself.

Much of the natural surface in the northern part of Trench 2 was thus truncated by modern activity, and there was no real survival of any originally overlying soil horizons. All the deposits and features noted above were overlain (as elsewhere on site) by a compacted and very recent layer of rubble and demolition material that formed the present site surface.

4.4 Trench 3 (Figures 11-13)

The natural surface here comprised a slightly silty sand and medium/fine gravel, much like that in the northern part of Trench 2 and presumably part of the same River Terrace Deposit. Levels were also similar, at about 16.6m OD and 0.8m below the present ground surface.

The natural was overlain by a layer of sterile mid brown silty sand and gravel up to 500mm thick. This is probably comparable to the primary deposit observed towards the

southern end of Trench 2 and interpreted as weathered natural derived from the River Terrace.

The remaining sequence within Trench 3 comprised fairly recent concrete and brick foundations and drains, which had removed all previously overlying deposits at least to the level of the weathered natural.

The western part of the trench lay within the area of a recently demolished building, mainly represented by a reinforced concrete floor slab. Immediately to the north was a concrete wall foundation with overlying brickwork, which turned at right angles across the trench before continuing along the southern section (as shown in Figure 12). These remains can be dated from map evidence to between 1939 – when the plot is shown as empty – and 1960, and so replaced the original 19th development for which no evidence was found.

The northeastern end of Trench 3 was stepped northward to avoid a brick-lined inspection chamber. A number of disused services were found in this area, including drains running west and northwest from the chamber and in all cases cut to the level of or into the natural gravel. At the eastern extremity of the trench was a yellow stock brick base over a concrete foundation, which almost certainly forms a continuation of the wall noted within the northern half of Trench 2 (and thus dating to c 1900).

The uppermost level of the trench comprised recent compacted rubble and demolition material some 200mm to 300mm thick to make up the present site surface.

5. Assessment of the results of the evaluation

The archaeological evaluation has provided an opportunity to address site-specific objectives that were defined in the Project Design (2.2 above). The responses to these are outlined below:

- *the origins and development of settlement in Romford;*

There was no evidence for any activity on the site prior to the 19th century, nor were any discrete artefacts recovered. Reference to historic maps has demonstrated that this area was open at least until the 1850s, and although it may have been cultivated would have been well outside the medieval settlement.

- *the influences on settlement growth and development during the Roman period;*

There was no evidence of any Roman or other early activity or land use.

- *the transition to the Post-Roman period.*

In view of the lack of evidence it may be that the site lay outside the sphere of activity in Roman and later periods. However, the evaluation has also shown that the site has been significantly disturbed and truncated by modern activity, including both buildings and cultivation.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

- 6.1** The archaeological evaluation did not reveal any significant features or finds. The trenches exposed a simple sequence of deposits and features, basically reflecting the development and use of the site from the mid 19th century to the present day. To the north the ground was heavily truncated by a number of structural remains and disused services. In the southern part of the site associated cultivation and other gardening activity had produced reworked soil horizons with some dateable finds, but had left few earlier deposits *in situ*.

There were no earlier finds or features. The finds that are noted above are only of value in confirming the date of related and quite recent soil horizons, and have not been retained.

The natural surface of the site was somewhat disturbed to the north but did exhibit a gradual fall to the southeast in line with the expected topography, towards the canalised stream known as *Black's Brook*. The character of the natural also reflects a probable north-south change from River Terrace Deposits to Head, as indicated by the Geological Survey.

- 6.2** In view of the evaluation findings it is suggested that no further archaeological measures should be undertaken in relation to the proposed development.

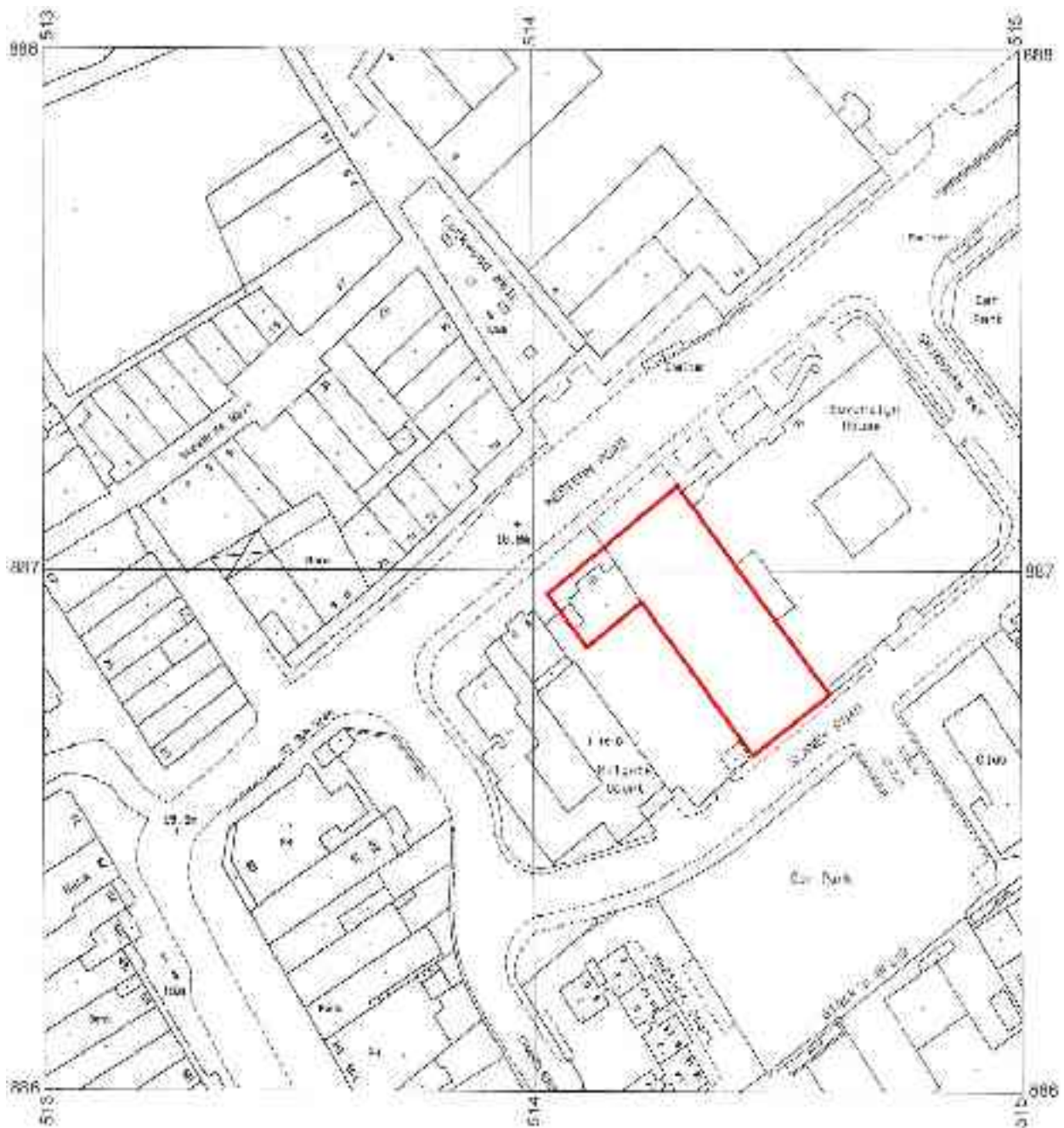


Fig 1 Site outline in relation to the 1:1250 Ordnance Survey map

*Reproduced from the 2002 OS 1:1250 map with permission of the HMSO. ©Crown Copyright. All rights reserved.
Compass Archaeology Ltd., London SE1 1SG, licence no.AL 100031317*

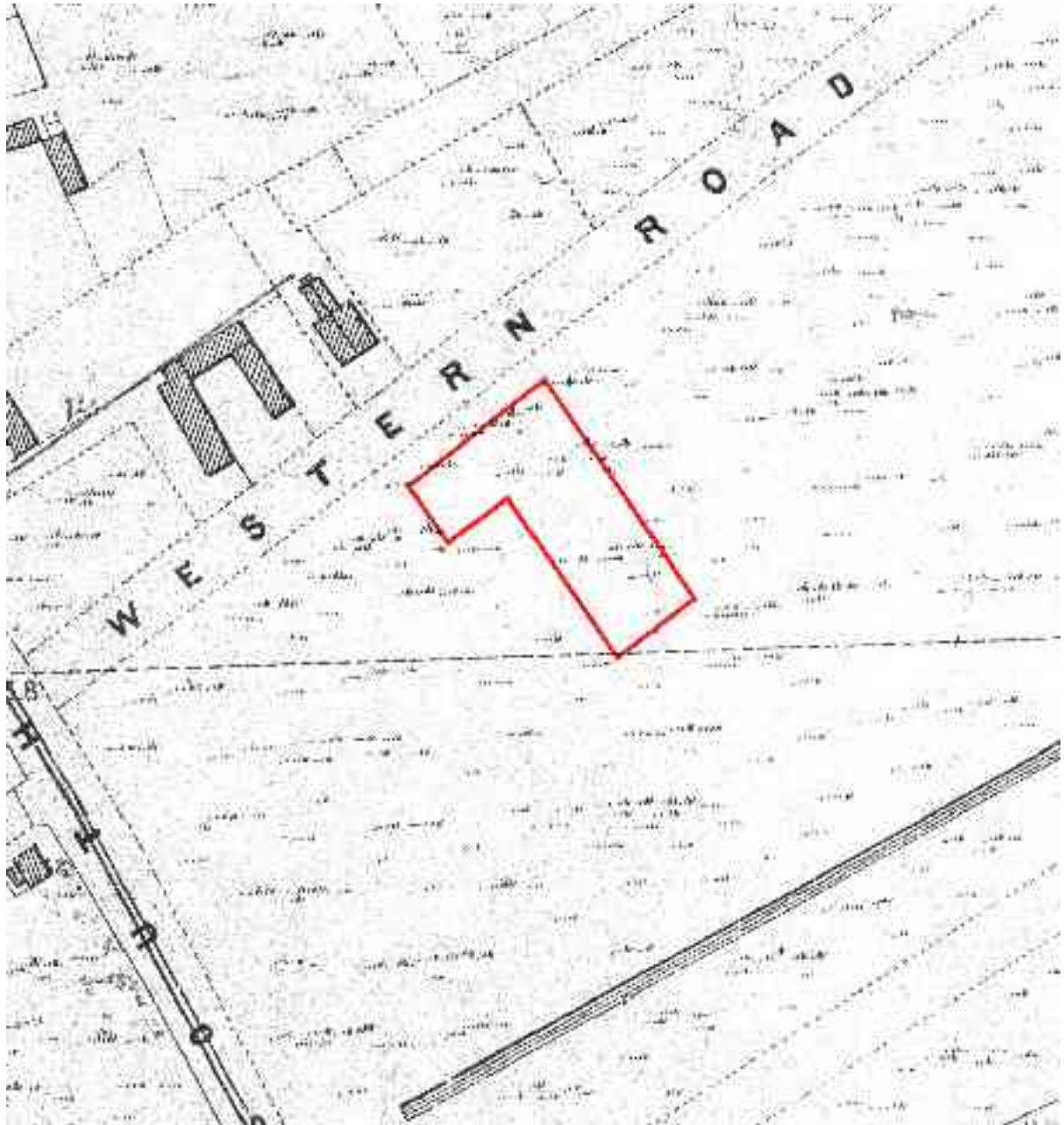


Fig 2 Site location in relation to *A Plan of Romford District.... under the Public Health Act.*
Surveyed in 1853 by Edward Gotto

Excerpt from a map held by the Central Library, Romford

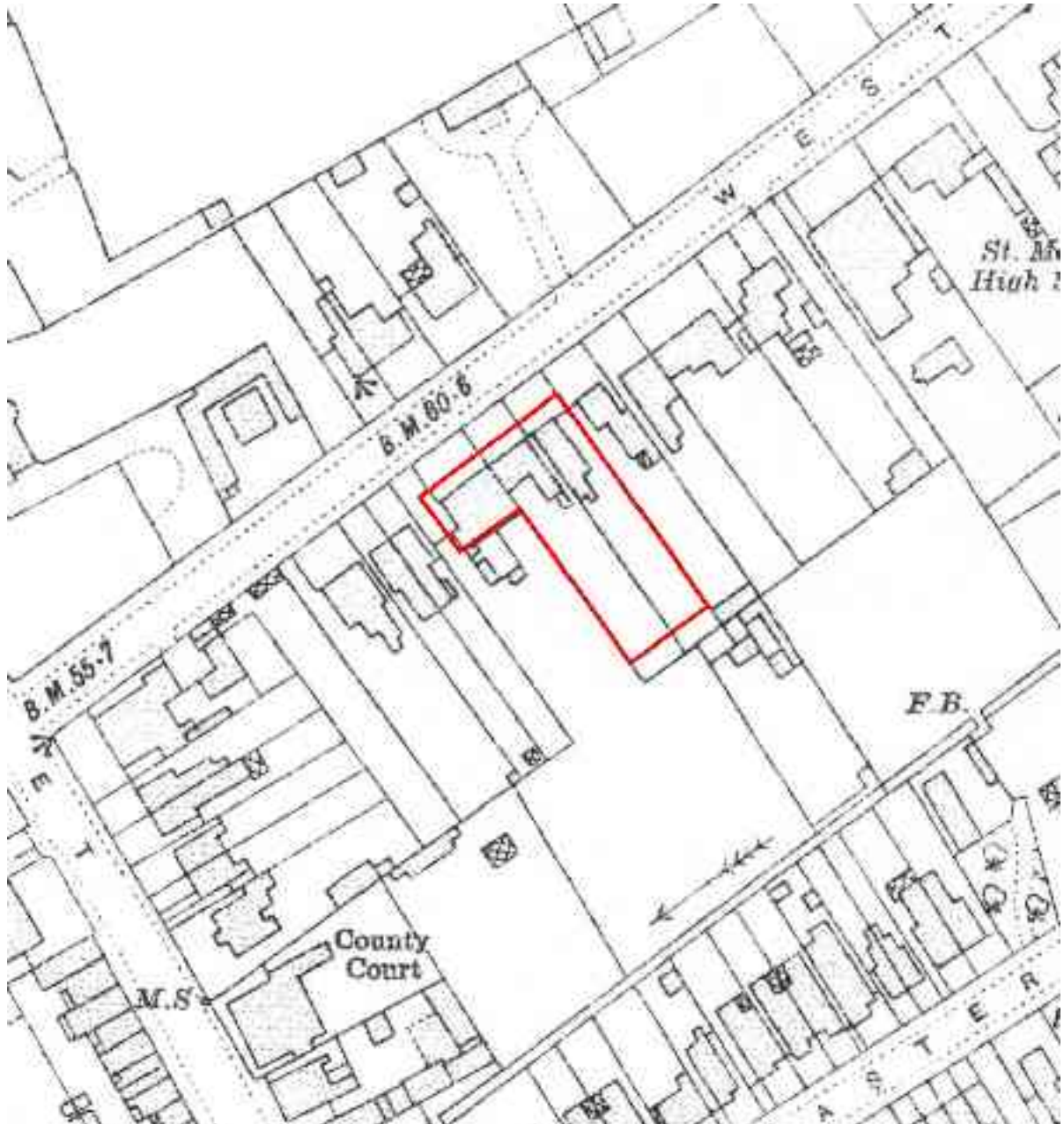


Fig 3 Site location in relation to the Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1920, and covering the same area as Figure 2 (*Sheet N LXXIX.10, surveyed 1914-15*)

Excerpt from a map held by the Central Library, Romford

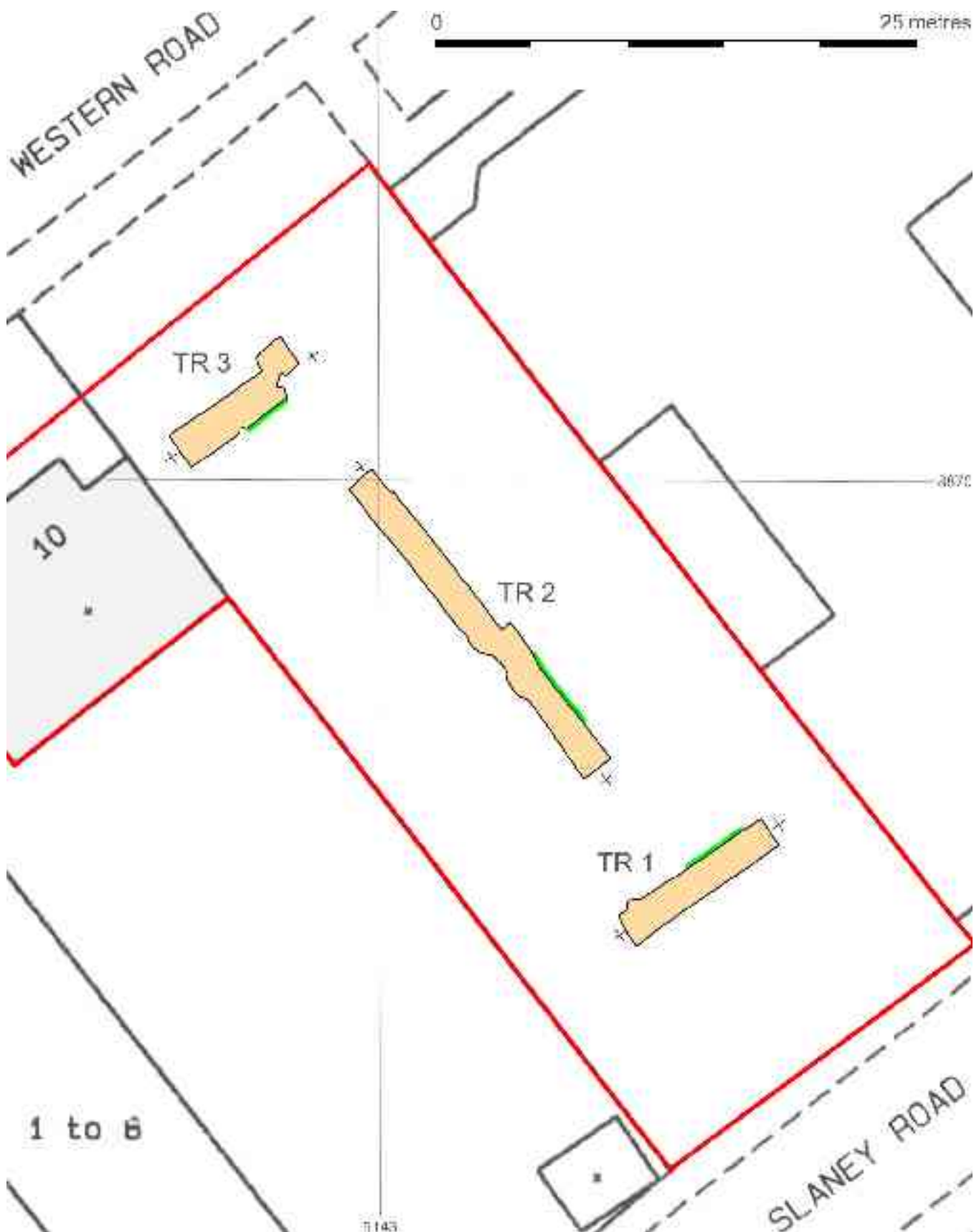


Fig 4 Location of the evaluation trenches (TR1-3) and drawn sections (marked green) in relation to the site boundary and adjacent features

Base reproduced from the Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map with permission of the HMSO. ©Crown Copyright. All rights reserved.
Compass Archaeology Ltd., London SE1 1SG, licence no. AL 100031317



Fig 5 General view of Trench 1, looking southwest and showing the exposed surface of the natural sandy/clayey silt (*0.5m scale*)

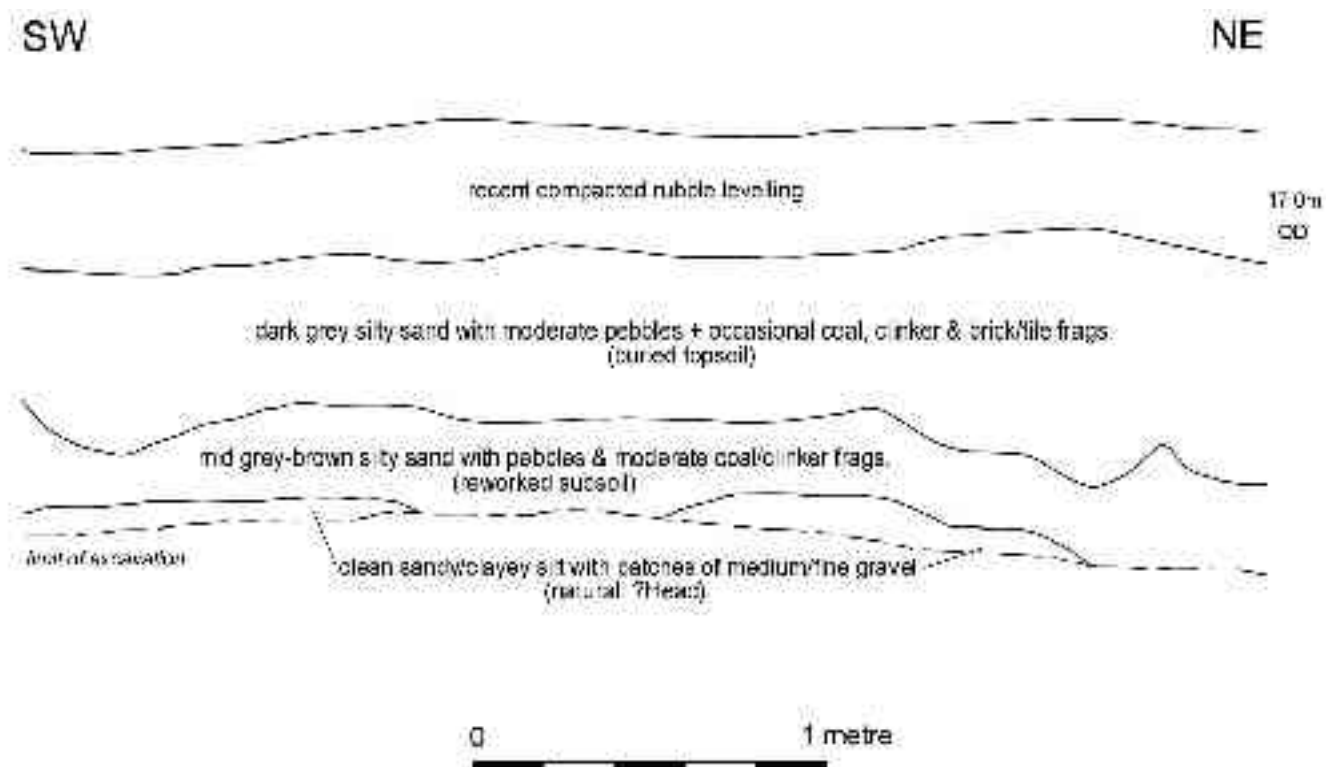


Fig 6 Drawing of part of the northwestern section of Trench 1, located on Figure 4



Fig 7 View of the deposits shown in Figure 6



Fig 8 General view of Trench 2 looking northwest towards Western Road (*0.5m scale*)

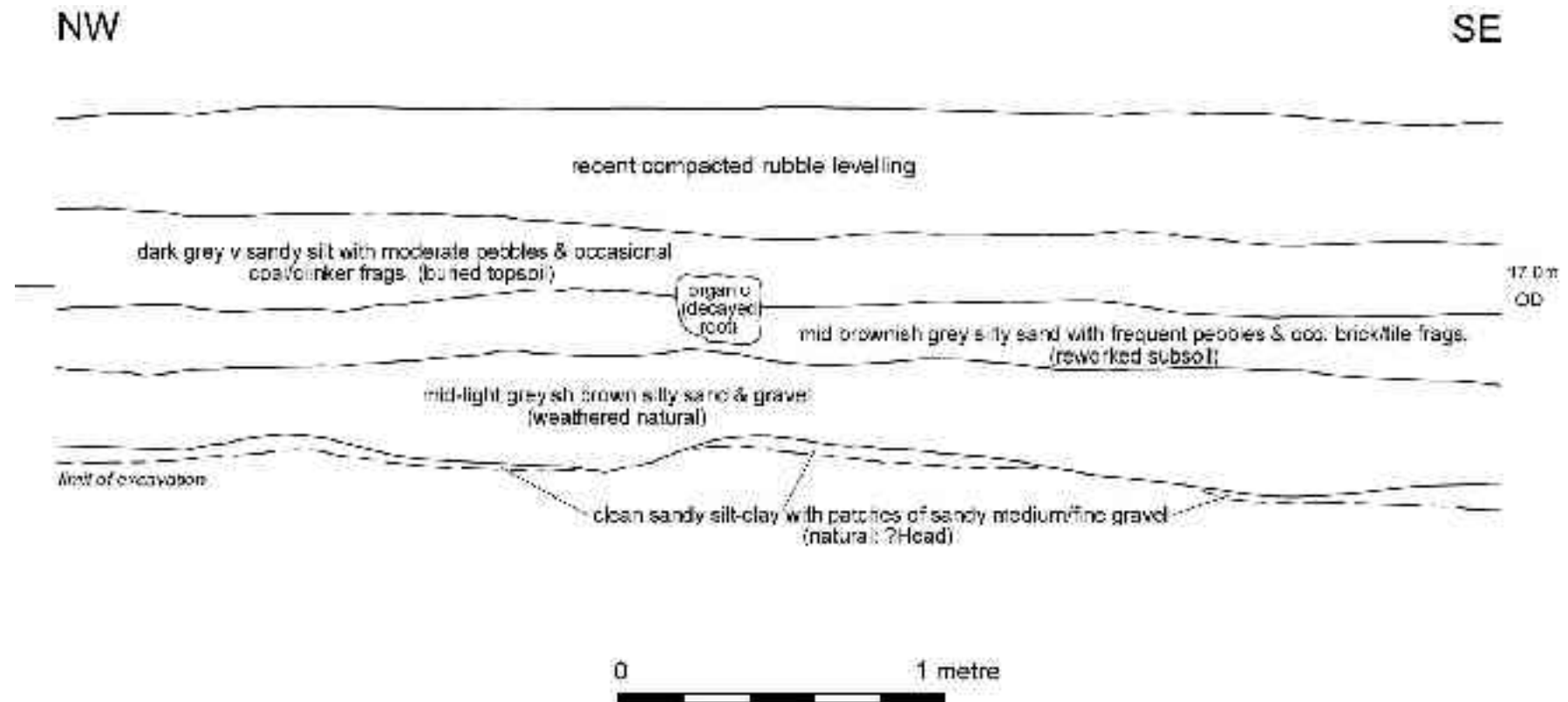


Fig 9 Drawing of part of the northeastern section of Trench 2, located on Figure 4



Fig 10 Trench 2: view of the deposits shown in Figure 9



Fig 11 General view of Trench 3, looking northeast and showing the surface of the natural gravel (*0.5m scale*)

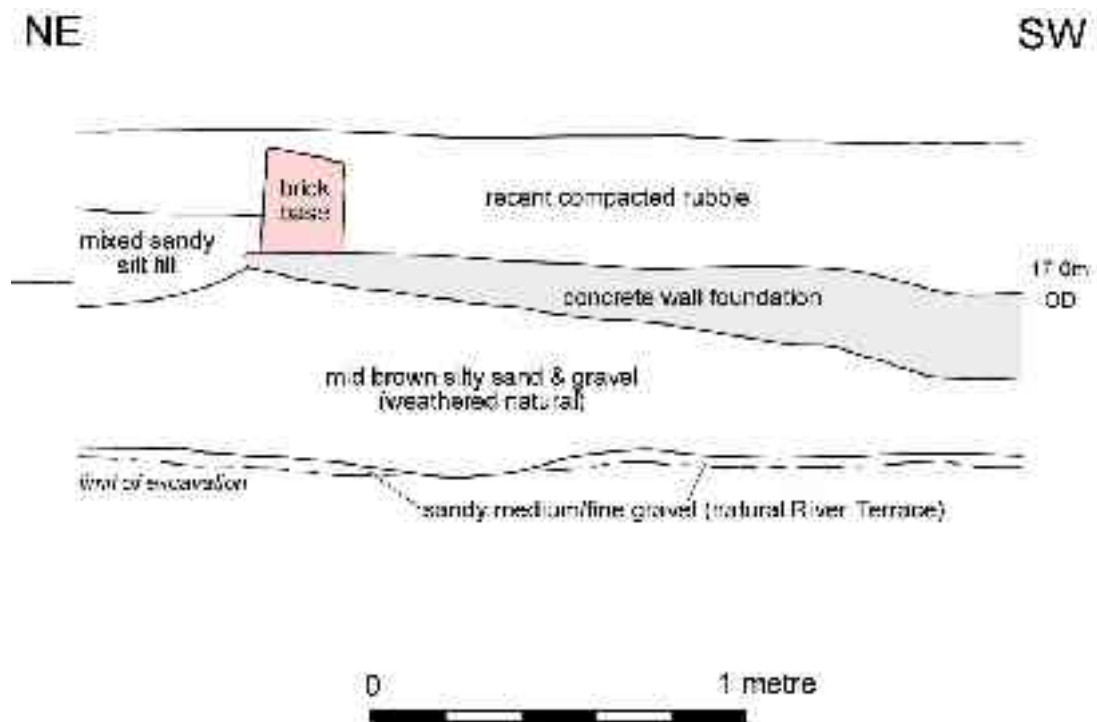


Fig 12 Drawing of part of the southeastern section of Trench 3, located on Figure 4



Fig 13 View of the deposits shown in Figure 12 (0.5m scale)

Appendix I. **OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM**

[List of Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Log out](#)

[Printable version](#)

OASIS ID: compassa1-9551

Project details

Project name	10-14 Western Road, Romford RM 1, London Borough of Havering.
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation was carried out by Geoff Potter of Compass Archaeology. This took the form of three trenches c. 7.5m to 19.5m in length. The only surviving evidence related to later 19th and 20th century development, overlain by recent demolition material and compacted rubble. The northern part of the site contained several brick and concrete foundations and drains, and was heavily disturbed. To the south was a worked soil profile, clearly associated with the previous back gardens. These features and deposits overlay a natural surface ranging from sandy gravel to sandy silt-clay. The Geological Survey suggests the first of these is River Terrace material and the second an earlier Head deposit.
Project dates	Start: 21-07-2005 End: 26-07-2005
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	WRF 05 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	P1509.03 - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Current Land use	Other 15 - Other
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (e.g. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON HAVERING ROMFORD 10-14 Western Road, Romford
Postcode	RM 1
Study area	1200.00 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 51430 88895 Point
Height OD	Min: 16.20m Max: 16.60m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Compass Archaeology
Project brief originator	English Heritage/Department of Environment
Project design originator	Compass Archaeology
Project director/manager	Compass Archaeology
Project supervisor	Geoff Potter
Sponsor or funding body	The Heritage Network Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Museum of London archaeological archive
Physical Archive ID	WRF 05
Digital Archive recipient	Museum of London archive
Digital Archive ID	WRF 05
Digital Contents	'Stratigraphic', 'Survey'
Digital Media available	'Survey', 'Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Museum of London Archive
Paper Archive ID	WRF 05
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic', 'Survey'
Paper Media available	'Map', 'Microfilm', 'Photograph', 'Plan', 'Report', 'Section', 'Survey'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Evaluation at 10-14 Western Avenue, Romford RM 1, London Borough of Havering.
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Potter, G.
Date	2005
Issuer or publisher	Compass Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Compass Archaeology
Description	Compass Archaeology in-house developer report, A4, spiral bound.
Entered by	Geoff Potter (mail@compassarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	5 August 2005

Appendix II. London Archaeologist summary

10-14 Western Road, Romford RM1. TQ 51430 88695. CA (Geoff Potter). Evaluation. July 2005. The Heritage Network Ltd. WRF05

Summary

There were no archaeological remains: the only evidence related to later 19th and 20th century activity, overlain by recent demolition material and compacted rubble. The northern part of the site contained several foundations and drains and was heavily disturbed. To the south was a worked soil profile, clearly associated with the previous back gardens.

The natural ranged from sandy gravel to sandy silt-clay: the Geological Survey suggests the first of these is River Terrace material and the second an earlier Head deposit.