

**Archaeological Evaluation Report
Land at Devon Wharf, Leven Road, Poplar
London Borough of Tower Hamlets**

NGR: TQ 384 815

Phase 1

Planning Ref: PA/09/00109

**ASE Project No: 5985
Site Code: DWF 13**

**OASIS id: archaeol6-153674
ASE Report no: 2013157**

By Ian Hogg

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June 2013

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs on behalf of their client to undertake an archaeological evaluation on the land at Devon Wharf, Leven Road, Poplar, London Borough of Tower Hamlets in advance of the redevelopment of the site.

In this, the first phase of the works, a single archaeological trench was excavated measuring 10m x 1.8m in size.

As had been agreed with English Heritage and the local planning authority, the trench was only excavated to the required depth for the foundations. Only 20th century made ground deposits were encountered up to 1.63m below ground level. Natural deposits were not reached. Two boreholes were also attempted to ascertain the thickness of the made ground but these were unsuccessful.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of The Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA) at the Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of their client to undertake the first phase of an archaeological evaluation in advance of development of land at Devon Wharf, Leven Road, Poplar, London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TQ 384 815 and its location is shown in Figure 1.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The following information is drawn from an archaeological desk-based assessment undertaken for the site (AOC, 2007) and recommendations by the English Heritage Science Advisor.

1.2.2 Although no geotechnical work has been carried out, investigations in the surrounding area give an indication of likely deposits within the site. To the south west of the site at the junction of Oban Street and Leven Road London Clay was encountered at a depth of c.6.00m below ground level which was overlain by 2.00 - 4.80m thick layer of Kempton Park Gravel. This was then overlain by up to 1.70m of alluvium (PCA in AOC 2007). Also encountered within associated evaluation trenches was a possible palaeochannel with peat-rich floodplain deposits overlying the gravels.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning permission has been granted by Tower Hamlets Borough Council for the demolition of the existing buildings and for the construction of a six and an eleven storey building to provide 7 affordable B1 units and 66 residential units together with 12 car parking spaces, riverside walkway and public forecourt. (Planning Ref: PA/09/00109) to which has been attached a condition relating to archaeology:

“No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme pursuant to this condition. The archaeological work shall be undertaken by a suitably qualified investigating body acceptable to the Local Planning Authority.”

Reason: So that the local authority may record and preserve any archaeological remains that may be present on site.”

1.3.2 As stated above, a desk based assessment was previously prepared (AOC 2007). A Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological evaluation was also prepared (CgMs 2013) in accordance with the planning condition and approved by the Adam Single of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) on behalf of the local planning authority. All work was

undertaken in accordance with this document at with the relevant standard and guidance documents of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2009) GLAAS (GLAAS 2009) and English Heritage (English Heritage 2008).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The aims of the evaluation as listed in the WSI (CgMs 2013) are:

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains and deposits with palaeoenvironmental potential within the footprint of the proposed development
- To determine the survival, extent and minimum depth below modern ground level of any such remains
- To determine the nature and significance of any archaeological and geoarchaeological deposits
- To enable the archaeology advisor at GLAAS to make an informed decision as to the requirement for any further archaeological work at the site in order to fulfil the archaeology planning condition

1.4.2 More specific research aims and objectives with reference to the research framework for London archaeology (MOL 2002) are:

- *P1 Understanding environmental change, especially climate change, with respect to behavioural implications for the past*
- *TL2 Understanding the relationship between landscape, river and settlement*
- *P3 Understanding what London looked like, with reference to geomorphological mapping of key feature types such as river channels and channel/dry land interface*
- *TL2 Understanding London's hydrology and river systems and tributaries*

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report details the results of the archaeological evaluation carried out on the site on the 24th June 2013 and has been prepared in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (CgMs 2013). The work was carried out by Ian Hogg (Archaeologist) and was managed by Andy Leonard (fieldwork) and Jim Stevenson (post-excavation).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The following archaeological background is drawn from the Written Scheme of Investigation (CgMs 2013). For a full account of the archaeological background of the site and area, the reader is referred to that document.

Prehistoric

- 2.2 The geology of the surrounding area indicates the possibility for surviving prehistoric deposits. The Kempton Park Gravels were laid down in the Wolstonian period (380-130kya) which have the potential to yield Lower Palaeolithic remains.
- 2.3 The evaluation carried out by PCA dated the peat deposits to the mid-late Bronze Age and within this were areas of possible buried land surface. These drier islands within the wetland, represented by the peat, are well known to have been a focal point for prehistoric activity. There are 5 entries in the SMR within a 500m radius of the site mainly relating to the dated peat sequence discussed above (PCA in AOC 2007).

Roman

- 2.4 The site lies some 3km to the east of *Londinium* but the hinterland of the Roman town was peppered with small nucleated settlements, typically built up along roads which would act both as markets and as producers for the capital. There is little to suggest Roman activity specifically at the site but its waterfront location suggests there is potential for remains from all periods.

Medieval

- 2.5 The site is situated within the historic parish of Bromley St Leonard. During the Saxon period it is suggested that Bromley was originally part of the manor of Stepney. A new manor was created here when St Leonard's priory was built in the 10th century. There were two manors at Bromley, Upper and Lower, the latter known as Bromley Hall. It is likely the site was in the lands associated with the Lower manor.
- 2.6 The site was situated on an area of ground known as Bromley Marsh, which suggests the floodplain of Lea was prone to flooding. This indicates that until the 19th century drainage schemes the site was relatively unaltered during the Saxon and Medieval periods.

Post-medieval

- 2.7 The development of this area occurred mainly in the late 19th-early 20th century as shown on Ordnance Survey mapping. The site is shown on the map of 1948-49 however Devon Wharf is listed in Kelly's Post Office London Directory in 1926 with two companies listed as Yorke, Stoneham and Jones Ltd and Byron Cartage Company. By 1930 Yorke had been replaced by Wiggin-Sanke, a builder's merchant and both companies were superseded by Devon Wharf Ltd by 1940. Two channels were also identified in PCA's evaluation, interpreted as marsh drainage features.

- 2.8 By 1975 Devon Wharf Ltd had been replaced by J.Spurling Ltd. The current occupiers, Chilton Transport Ltd are first listed in 1991.
- 2.9 There are six listed building entries within a 500m search radius of the site. To the west of the site, along Brunswick Road, is Bromley Hall, which dates from the 16th to 18th century and is Grade II* listed and Poplar Public Library, which dates to 1904 and is Grade II listed.
- 2.10 Further south situated along St. Leonards Road is the Grade C listed St. Leonards Church which dates to 1864-65, and Balfron Tower and Carradale House which are modern blocks of flats (26 storey and 11 storey respectively) designed by the architect Erno Goldfinger in the 1960s. A war memorial dated to 1914 – 1919, is also situated in this area.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 One trial trench (Phase 1, Trench 2 on Figure 2) was mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision using a machine fitted with a flat-bladed ditching bucket. Excavation was undertaken in spits of no more than 0.10m.
- 3.2 All trenches were scanned using a Cable Avoidance Tool prior to excavation.
- 3.4 Two attempts were made to reach natural deposits using a hand auger, neither attempt was successful due to the density of the material in the made ground.
- 3.5 All deposits were recorded using ASE standard recording sheets.
- 3.6 Trenches were located and tied in to the Ordnance Survey.

3.7 Archive Quantification

Number of Contexts	10
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	1
Bulk Samples	None
Photographs	3 digital photographs
Bulk finds	None
Registered finds	None
Environmental flots/residue	None

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Trench 2

- 4.1.1 Trench 2, located in the centre of the site, was aligned south-west to north-east and measured 10.00m x 1.80m. The trench was 1.62m deep at the south-western end and 1.53m deep at the north-eastern end. Natural deposits were not reached and the excavation ceased at the depth required for the proposed foundations. Two boreholes were attempted at either end of the trench but neither of these was successful in reaching the natural deposits either.
- 4.1.2 The earliest deposit observed was loose, mixed, orange silty clay and dark grey rubbly sand made ground [2/010], observed between 2.13m and 2.39m AOD. The loose made ground was overlain by dark grey silty clay with occasional brick inclusions [2/009], this deposit was between 0.25m and 0.55m thick. This deposit was overlain by two further made ground deposits [2/007] and [2/008]; [2/007] was observed throughout the northeast and centre of the trench, it consisted of mid orange sandy clay with occasional CBM and charcoal inclusions, it measured between 0.42m and 0.65m in thickness. Made ground [2/008] was observed at the south-western end of the trench and consisted of dark grey gravelly clay with frequent CBM inclusions, it was 0.63m thick. These two deposits were overlain by dark blackish grey sandy clay made ground [2/006] between 0.21m and 0.60m thick.
- 4.1.3 The made ground deposits were overlain by a dark grey rubbly sand levelling deposit [2/005] between 0.10m and 0.22m thick. The levelling deposit was overlain by a reinforced concrete surface [2/004] between 0.12m and 0.33m thick. The concrete was overlain in the east of the trench by a cobbled surface [2/003]; this surface was constructed from granite blocks measuring 250mm in length, 120mm in width and 110mm in thickness, they were set in stretcher bond, no bonding material was observed. The cobbles were sealed by the make up deposit for a ramp [2/002], this consisted of loose rubble in a yellow sand matrix and was between 0.23m and 0.25m thick. The ramp surface itself [2/001] consisted of concrete between 0.08 and 0.10m thick.
- 4.1.4 No archaeology was observed in the trench.

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
2/001	Layer	Concrete surface	3.90	1.80	0.08-0.10
2/002	Layer	Make up deposit	3.90	1.80	0.23-0.25
2/003	Layer	Cobbled surface	7.90	1.60	0.11
2/004	Layer	Concrete surface	10.00	1.80	0.12-0.33
2/005	Layer	Made ground	10.00	1.80	0.10-0.22
2/006	Layer	Made ground	10.00	1.80	0.21-0.60
2/007	Layer	Made ground	8.10	1.80	0.42-0.65
2/008	Layer	Made ground	1.90	1.80	0.63
2/009	Layer	Made ground	8.10	1.80	0.25-0.55
2/010	Layer	Made ground	10.00	1.80	0.05-0.10

Table 2: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 This phase of the evaluation revealed modern made ground deposits up to a depth of 1.63m below ground level. The natural deposit was not observed despite two borehole attempts using a hand auger. The made ground was probably deposited to raise the ground level sufficiently above ground water levels.
- 5.2 No palaeoenvironmental remains were encountered and no structural remains related to the wharf were recorded.
- 5.3 The made ground was sealed by modern concrete and cobbled surfaces.

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English Heritage 2008. *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE), Project Planning Notes 3 (PPN3): Archaeological Excavation.*

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Museum of London 2002 *A Research Framework for London Archaeology*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank CGMS Consulting for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Adam Single of GLAAS for his guidance and monitoring. The evaluation was directed by Ian Hogg. The author would like to thank all archaeologists who worked on the evaluation; Justin Russell who produced the figures for this report; Andy Leonard who project managed the fieldwork and Jim Stevenson who project managed the post-excavation process.

HER Summary Form

Site Code	DWF 13					
Identification Name and Address	Land at Devon Wharf, Leven Road, Poplar					
County, District &/or Borough	London Borough of Tower Hamlets					
OS Grid Refs.						
Geology	Kempton Park Gravels					
Arch. South-East Project Number	5985					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval. 24-06-2013	Excav.	WB.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	CGMS Consulting					
Project Manager	Andy Leonard					
Project Supervisor	Ian Hogg					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other None		
<i>Summary</i>						
<p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs on behalf of their client to undertake an archaeological evaluation on the land at Devon Wharf, Leven Road, Poplar, London Borough of Tower Hamlets in advance of the redevelopment of the site.</i></p> <p><i>In this, the first phase of the works, a single archaeological trench was excavated measuring 10m x 1.8m in size.</i></p> <p><i>As had been agreed with English Heritage and the local planning authority, the trench was only excavated to the required depth for the foundations. Only 20th century made ground deposits were encountered up to 1.63m below ground level. Natural deposits were not reached. Two boreholes were also attempted to ascertain the thickness of the made ground but these were unsuccessful.</i></p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-153674

Project details

Project name	Land at Devon Wharf, Leven Road, Poplar
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs on behalf of their client to undertake an archaeological evaluation on the land at Devon Wharf, Leven Road, Poplar, London Borough of Tower Hamlets in advance of the redevelopment of the site. In this, the first phase of the works, a single archaeological trench was excavated measuring 10m x 1.8m in size. As had been agreed with English Heritage and the local planning authority, the trench was only excavated to the required depth for the foundations. Only 20th century made ground deposits were encountered up to 1.63m below ground level. Natural deposits were not reached. Two boreholes were also attempted to ascertain the thickness of the made ground but these were unsuccessful.
Project dates	Start: 24-06-2013 End: 24-06-2013
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	DWF 13 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	5985 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Monument type	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON TOWER HAMLETS POPLAR Land at Devon Wharf, Leven Road

Postcode E14 0LL
Study area 1800.00 Square metres
Site coordinates TQ 384 815 51 0 51 30 53 N 000 00 18 W Point

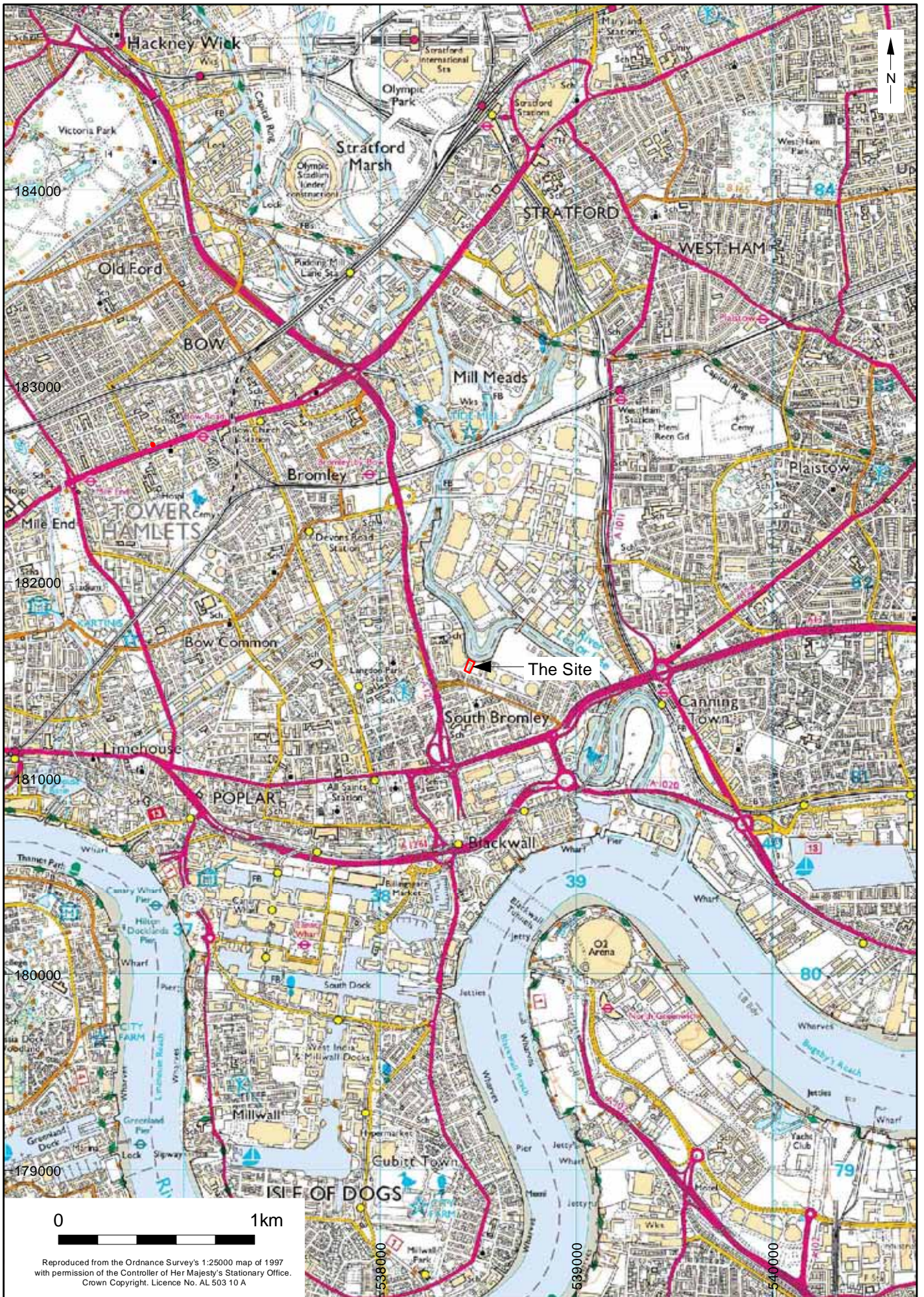
Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator GLAAS
Project design originator CgMs Consulting
Project director/manager Andy Leonard/Jim Stevenson
Project supervisor Ian Hogg
Type of sponsor/funding body CgMs Consulting

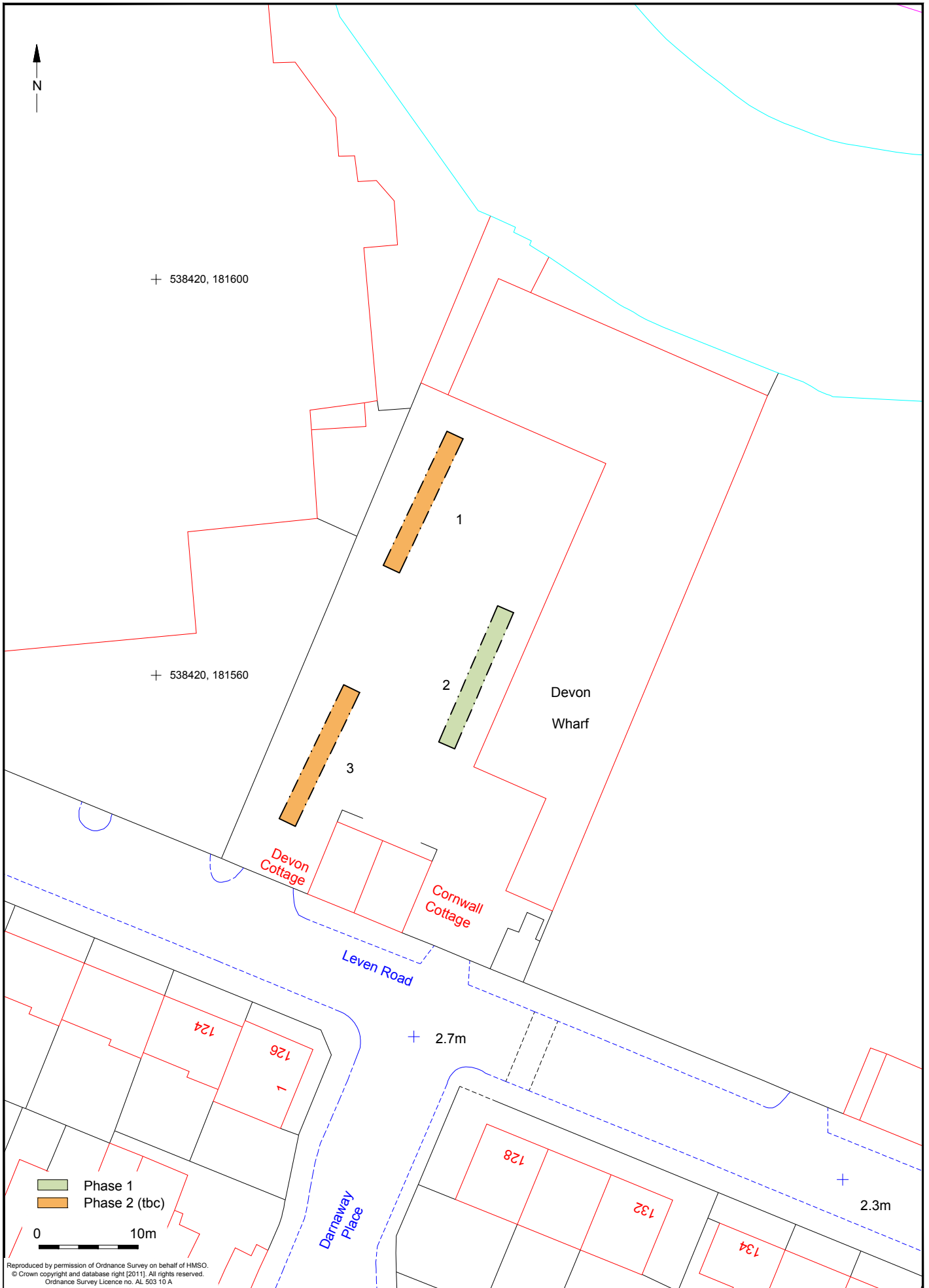
Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive recipient LAARC
Digital Contents "Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient LAARC
Paper Contents "Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available "Context sheet","Plan","Report","Unpublished Text"

Entered by Ian Hogg (ian.hogg@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on 25 June 2013



© Archaeology South-East		Devon Wharf, Tower Hamlets		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 6019	June 2013	Site location		
Report Ref: 2013157	Drawn by: JLR			



© Archaeology South-East		Devon Wharf, Tower Hamlets	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 5985	June 2013	Trench location	
Report Ref: 2013157	Drawn by: JLR		



Trench 2

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