

**Suttons Wharf North, Palmers Road, Tower Hamlets
An Archaeological Evaluation Report (SUS 06)**

(TQ 359 829)

By

Jon Sygrave

Project No. 2413

June 2006

**Archaeology South-East
1 West Street
Ditchling
East Sussex
BN6 8TS**

**Tel: 01273 845497
Fax: 01273 844187
Email: fau@ucl.ac.uk**

Archaeology South-East

Archaeology South-East is a division of the University College London Field Archaeology Unit one of the largest groupings of academic archaeologists in the country. Consequently, Archaeology South-East has access to the conservation, computing and environmental backup of the college, as well as a range of other archaeological services.

The Field Archaeology Unit and South Eastern Archaeological Services (which became Archaeology South-East in 1996) were established in 1974 and 1991 respectively. Although field projects have been conducted world-wide, the Field Archaeology Unit retains a special interest in south-east England with the majority of our contract and consultancy work concentrated in Sussex, Kent, Greater London and Essex.

Based in the local community, the Field Archaeology Unit sees an important part of its work as explaining the results to the broader public. Public lectures, open days, training courses and liaison with local archaeological societies are aspects of its community-based approach.

Drawing on experience of the countryside and towns of the south east of England the Unit can give advice and carry out surveys at an early stage in the planning process. By working closely with developers and planning authorities it is possible to incorporate archaeological work into developments with little inconvenience.

Archaeology South-East, as part of the Field Archaeology Unit, is a registered organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists and, as such, is required to meet IFA standards.

Abstract

Archaeology South East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd on behalf of their client to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Suttons Wharf North, Palmers Road, London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The work was carried out in advance of the proposed redevelopment of the site for residential housing between the 30th May and 1st June 2006.

Five trenches were excavated within the footprint of the existing warehouses and two under an awning covering the northern portion of the site. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded on the site.

The site had been affected by truncation associated with previous industry and the ground throughout was contaminated. The underlying natural gravel was observed at c 12.55-12.04m OD.

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
1.1	<i>Planning Background</i>	<i>1</i>
1.2	<i>Aims and Objectives.....</i>	<i>1</i>
2	Archaeological Background	3
3	Archaeological Methodology	4
4	Results	5
4.1	<i>Stratigraphy</i>	<i>5</i>
4.2	<i>The Finds</i>	<i>6</i>
5	Discussion.....	7
6	Recommendations	8
7	Acknowledgements.....	9
8	References	10
9	Appendix	11

FIGURES

Fig. 1	Site Location
Fig. 2	Trench Location

PLATES

Plate 1	Trench 1 oblique
Plate 2	Trench 2 section
Plate 3	Trench 3 section
Plate 4	Trench 4 section
Plate 5	Trench 4 oblique
Plate 6	Trench 5 section
Plate 7	Trench 6 oblique
Plate 8	Trench 7 plan

1 INTRODUCTION

Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit, was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd, on behalf of their client, to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Suttons Wharf North, Palmers Road, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, hereafter referred to as 'the site'. The work was carried out in advance of the proposed redevelopment of the site for residential housing between the 30th May and 1st June 2006.

The site is bounded to the north by industrial units, to the west by Meath Gardens, to the east by the Grand Union Canal and to the south by a railway line. A warehouse and large covered forecourt currently occupy the site.

The modern ground surface across the site was recorded between 13.55m OD (adjacent to Trench 2) to 13.04m OD (adjacent to Trench 6). Natural gravel was observed between 12.04m OD (Trench 1) to 12.55m OD (Trench 2).

A Method Statement was prepared by ASE, with reference to a Specification prepared by CgMs Consulting Ltd, and submitted to CgMS Consulting Ltd who forwarded the document to the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS) for approval. GLAAS act as the archaeology monitoring body on behalf of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Jon Sygrave and Dominic Perring between the 29th May and 1st June 2006. The project was managed by Darryl Palmer (Senior Project Manager).

1.1 Planning Background

The site lies within an Archaeological Priority Zone as defined by Tower Hamlets Borough Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP). A previous Desk Based Assessment (CgMs 2003) concluded that there was a high potential for remains associated with the main Roman Road to Colchester, which is known to have passed through the site. As a result of the site's archaeological potential, the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service of English Heritage (GLAAS) recommended that an archaeological condition be attached to planning consent. This report outlines the results of a Stage 1 Archaeological Evaluation, carried out on the site as part of that planning condition.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The Aims and Objectives of the evaluation were laid out in the *Specification* (CgMS 2006) and are reproduced below.

- To establish whether any archaeological sites exist in the area, with particular regard to any which are of sufficient importance to require preservation in situ.

- The evaluation should aim to determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, form, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains, irrespective of period, liable to be threatened by the proposed development. An adequate representative sample of all areas where archaeological remains are potentially threatened should be studied, and attention should be given to sites and remains of all periods (inclusive of evidence of past environments).
- The evaluation should also seek to clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusions and hence assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits and any surviving structures of archaeological significance.
- Within these parameters, the evaluation of this site presents an opportunity to address the following objectives:
 - To establish the presence or otherwise of Roman activity and to define the date and nature of such activity.
 - To establish the environmental context of any Roman activity.
 - Evaluate the likely impact of past land use and development.
 - Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.
- Where physical preservation is likely to be considered as a mitigation option, the primary factors affecting the present state of preservation and the direct and indirect affect of the proposed development should also be considered.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

For a full discussion of the site's archaeological background please refer to the preceding Desk Based Assessment (CgMs 2003).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

The trench layout was agreed prior to the evaluation between CgMs Consulting Ltd and GLAAS (David Divers) and was designed to provide a representative sample of the redevelopment area (see Figure 2). The evaluation consisted of seven trenches: two 20m by 1.2m and five 10m by 1.2m. The precise location and extent of the trenches was affected by on site conditions, changes to the trenches were agreed with CgMs Consulting Ltd (Duncan Hawkins) who subsequently agreed them with the GLAAS monitor (David Divers).

The trenches were broken out and excavated using a 3CX JCB. After the concrete slab was broken the excavator was fitted with a smooth grading bucket and the trenches were excavated through undifferentiated topsoil and modern made ground in spits of no more than 0.25m until archaeological deposits or the top of the underlying natural sediments was reached. Care was taken so that archaeological deposits were not damaged due to over machining. Trenches were excavated to a maximum depth of 3m due to health and safety.

Due to the presence of contaminants on the site, and the depth of excavation, all trenches were recorded from the surface.

All recording was undertaken in accordance with accepted professional standards according to the UCLFAU Fieldwork Manual (draft) and the Method Statement (ASE 2006).

The spoil from the excavations was inspected by the archaeologist in order to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest.

A photographic record of the trenches was kept, and has been incorporated into this document.

The trenches were levelled in relation to a nearby bench mark.

The trenches were measured to known points and reproduced on a site plan in relation to the Ordnance Survey (see Fig 2).

Trench record sheets were filled out for each trench and measured sketch sections produced.

An on line OASIS form was filled out for the site a copy of which is reproduced as an appendix to this document.

The archive is presently held at the Archaeology South East office in Ditchling and will be offered to a suitable museum (LAARC) in due course. All finds are the property of the landowner, but will be donated to a suitable museum.

4 RESULTS

The site is presented by trench.

4.1 Stratigraphy (Fig 2)

Trench 1

Trench 1 was located in the south west of the site within the warehouse. The trench was only excavated to 4.2m (agreed with CgMs Consulting Ltd) in length due the noise caused by the breaking and health and safety issues on a neighbouring building site. The modern ground surface adjacent to Trench 1 was recorded at 13.54m OD. The sequence of deposits in the trench were as follows:

Depth from surface	Description
0 - 0.5m	reinforced concrete
0.5m - 1.5m	dark grey highly contaminated 19 th /20 th century made ground
1.5m>	dark greenish grey sub angular gravel <50mm in sand matrix (natural)

Trench 2

Trench 2 was located in the west of the site within the warehouse. The trench measured 1.2m by 10m and the adjacent ground surface was recorded at 13.55m OD. The sequence of deposits in the trench were as follows:

Depth from surface	Description
0 - 0.5m	reinforced concrete
0.5m - 1m	19 th /20 th century made ground
1m>	dark greenish grey sub angular gravel <50mm in sand matrix (natural)

Trench 3

Trench 3 was located in the centre of the site within the warehouse. The trench measured 1.2m by 10m and the adjacent ground surface was recorded at 13.37m OD. The sequence of deposits in the trench were as follows:

Depth from surface	Description
0 - 0.5m	reinforced concrete
0.5m – 2.5m	19 th /20 th century made ground

Trench 4

Trench 4 was located in the centre of the site within the warehouse. The trench measured 1.2m by 10m and the adjacent ground surface was recorded at 13.37m OD. The 500mm thick concrete slab sealed a deposit of 19th/20th century made ground, which in turn sealed a brick footing, recorded crossing

the trench from east to west, 4m to the north of the trenches southern limit. To the south of the footing, natural gravel was recorded at 1.2m from the surface, whilst to the north of the footing the 19th/20th century made ground was recorded to a depth of 2.5m before the trench was abandoned.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was located in the south of the site within the warehouse. The trench measured 1.2m by 10m and the adjacent ground surface was recorded at 13.40m OD. The sequence of deposits in the trench were as follows:

Depth from surface	Description
0 - 0.5m	reinforced concrete
0.5m – 1.2m	19 th /20 th century made ground
1.2m>	dark greenish grey sub angular gravel <50mm in sand matrix (natural)

Trench 6

Trench 6 was located in the north of the site under the covered forecourt. The trench measured 1.2m by 18m and the adjacent ground surface was recorded between 13.04m OD in the south and 13.17m OD in the north. The sequence of deposits in the trench were as follows:

Depth from surface	Description
0 - 0.5m	reinforced concrete
0.5m - 3m	19 th /20 th century made ground

Trench 7

Trench 7 was located in the north of the site under the covered forecourt. The trench measured 1.2m by 20m but was abandoned due to the presence of a mains electricity cable, which ran its whole length.

4.2 The Finds

No finds were recovered from the site.

5 DISCUSSION

The archaeological evaluation showed that the site had been truncated by previous activity. Trenches 1, 2, 5 and the southern half of 4 contained natural gravel deposits which survived to between 12.55m OD (Trench 2) and 12.04m OD (Trench 1). No archaeological deposits were recorded above the natural gravel and no cut features were recorded within it. Trenches 3, 6 and the northern half of 4 were situated in an area of greater disturbance, possibly within a large basement area to the north of the footing recorded within Trench 4. No archaeological or natural deposits were recorded in these trenches and 19th/20th century made ground was recorded between 10.17m OD (Trench 6) and 10.87m OD (Trench 4).

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the paucity of archaeological deposits on the site, and the truncation to the underlying natural deposits, no further work is recommended at this time.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology South-East would like to thank CgMs Consulting Ltd (Duncan Hawkins) for commissioning the work and the staff of Galliford Try for their on site assistance.

8 REFERENCES

ASE 2006 Method Statement for an Archaeological Evaluation, Suttons Wharf North, Palmers Road, Tower Hamlets ASE unpub report

CgMs 2003 Desk Based Archaeological Assessment of Suttons Wharf North, Palmers Road, Tower Hamlets CgMs unpub report

CgMs 2006 Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation Suttons Wharf North, Palmers Road, Tower Hamlets CgMs unpub report

9 APPENDIX

9.1 OASIS Form

9.2 OASIS ID: archaeol6-15482

Project details

Project name	Suttons Wharf
Short description of the project	Negative evaluation in the area of Old Ford, Tower Hamlets. Specifically looking for evidence of the London to Colchester Roman Road
Project dates	Start: 29-05-2006 End: 01-06-2006
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	SUS06 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	2413 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 4 - Storage and warehousing
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON TOWER HAMLETS BETHNAL GREEN Suttons Wharf
Postcode	E2
Study area	1.22 Hectares
National grid reference	TQ 3590 8290 Point
Height OD	Min: 12.04m Max: 12.55m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Consultant
Project design originator	consultant
Project director/manager	Darryl Palmer
Project supervisor	Jon Sygrave
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting

Project archives

Physical Archive	LAARC
------------------	-------

recipient	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic','Survey'
Paper Media available	'Photograph','Plan','Report','Unpublished Text'
Entered by	jon sygrave (jonsygrave@yahoo.co.uk)
Entered on	8 June 2006

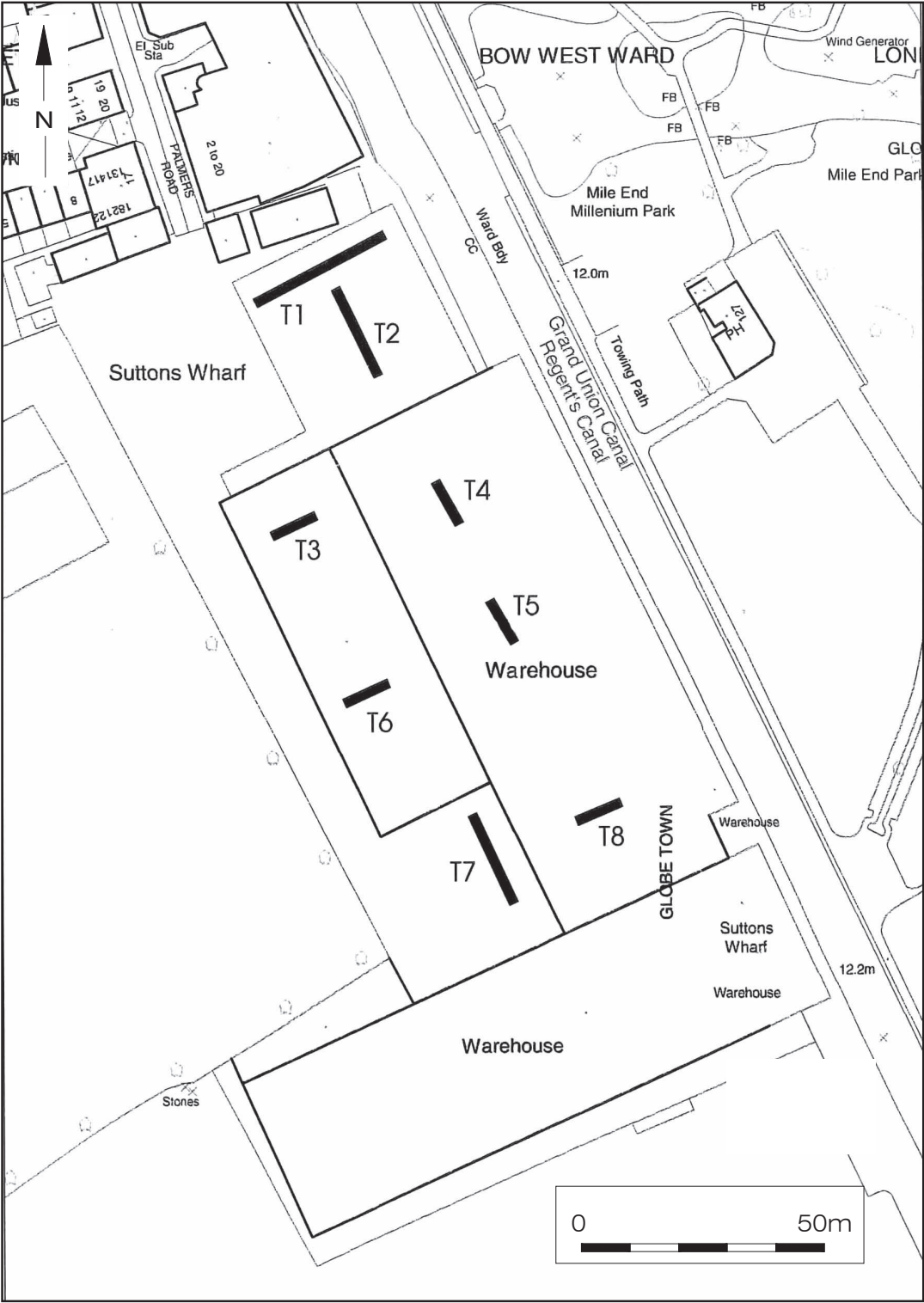
87
86
85
84
83
82
81
80
79
78
77



33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40

© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST		Sutton Wharf, Tower Hamlets	Fig. 1
Ref: 2413	March 2006	Site Location	

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey's 1:50000 map of 1996 with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. Crown Copyright. Licence No. AL 503 10 A



© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST		Sutton Wharf, Tower Hamlets	Fig. 2
Ref: 2413	March 2006	Trench Location @ 1:1250	

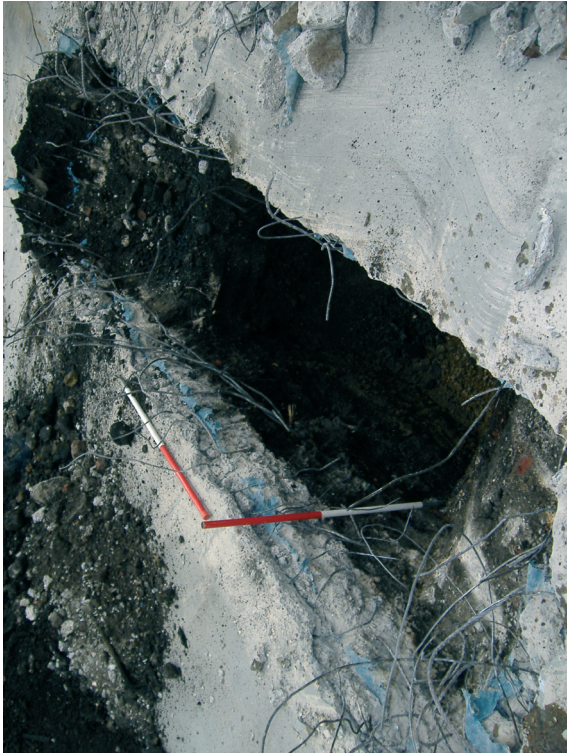


Plate 1: Trench 1 oblique

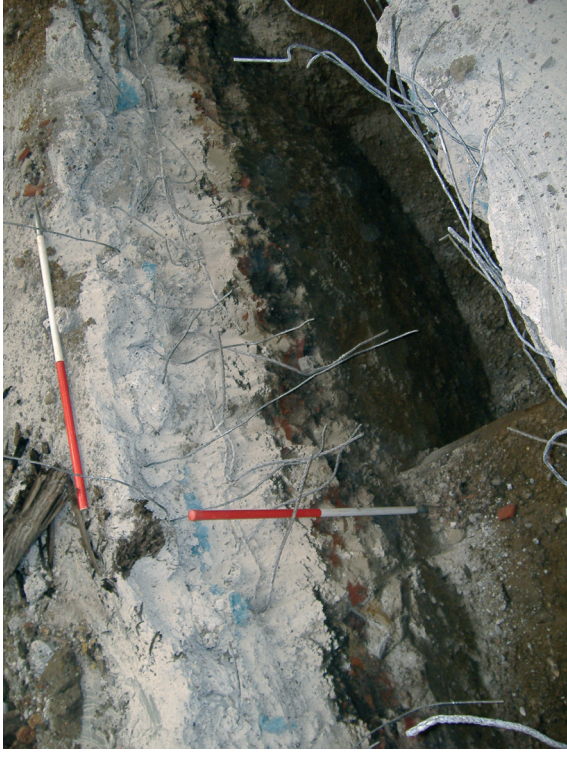


Plate 2: Trench 2 section



Plate 3: Trench 3 section

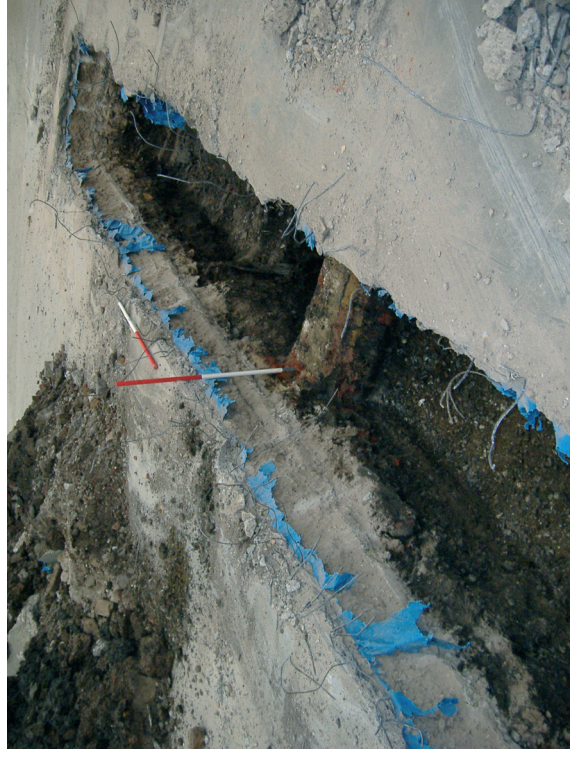


Plate 4: Trench 4 oblique

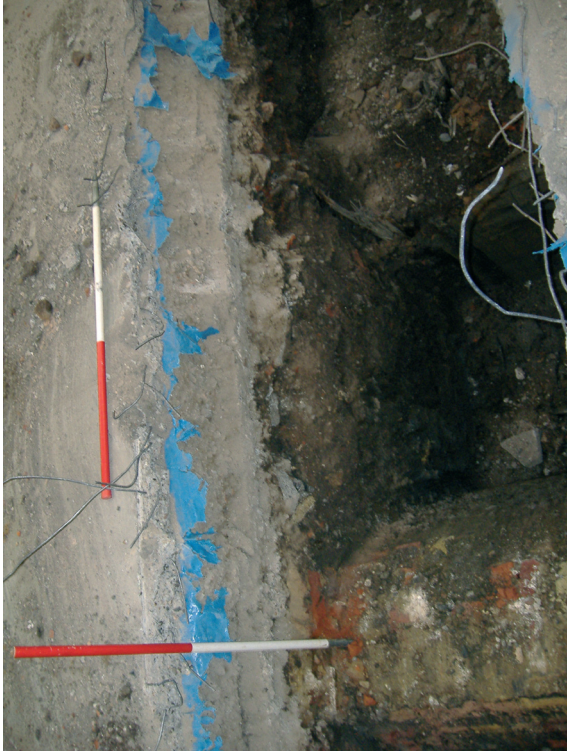


Plate 5: Trench 4 section



Plate 6: Trench 5 section



Plate 7: Trench 6 oblique



Plate 8: Trench 7 plan