

An Archaeological Evaluation on land at
Melon Road, Peckham,
London Borough of Southwark

NGR: TQ 3406 7673

Planning Ref: 12/AP/3040

Prepared for Antic Ltd

ASE Project No: 6194

Site Code: MEL 13

ASE Report No: 2013183



By Trevor Ennis

July 2013

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OASIS No: archaeol6-155787**

Prepared by

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July 2013

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Antic Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Melon Road, Peckham, London Borough of Southwark, in advance of mixed use development comprising a public house with self-contained dwellings above. A single evaluation trench was excavated through the less-disturbed northern half of the site within the basement area of the proposed new public house.

Natural deposits (orange brown clay, silt and gravel) survived relatively undisturbed in the base of the evaluation trench at an approximate height of 5.85m OD. The natural geology was sealed by c. 0.60m of topsoil and subsoil. The topsoil was truncated by an east/west brick wall of likely 19th century date. This showed evidence of two phases of construction/repair. Two modern post-holes were also identified. The structural evidence was sealed beneath c.0.55m of modern build-up for a tarmac surface.

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Front Cover Image: Trench 1 looking northwest

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) were commissioned by Antic Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Melon Road, Peckham, London Borough of Southwark (Figure 1, NGR: TQ 3406 7673).

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey 1:50,000 scale geological mapping available online (BGS 2013), the natural bedrock geology of the site comprises Palaeocene clay, silt and sand of the Lambeth Group. Superficial Interglacial Lacustrine deposits of clay and silt have also been recorded.

1.2.2 The site is a roughly rectangular parcel of land located on the western side of Melon Road close to its junction with Peckham High Street (A202). It is bound by Melon Road to the east and by mixed use housing/commercial properties on all other sides. It sits at an altitude of 7m OD and is roughly level with a concrete and tarmac surface and an extant electricity substation in the southeast corner. At the time of the fieldwork, several piles of soil and general rubbish were present in the southern half of the site.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning permission has been granted by the London Borough of Southwark for the construction of a three storey building providing a mixed use development comprising a public house at ground and basement level with four self-contained dwellings above (Ref. No.:12/AP/3040). In support of the planning application an archaeological Desk Based Assessment had previously been prepared (ASE 2012). Having considered that document, the Senior Archaeology Officer at Southwark Council attached the following condition (17) to the planning consent:

'Before any work hereby authorised begins, excluding demolition, the applicant shall secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological evaluation works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.'

REASON

In order that the applicants supply the necessary archaeological information to ensure suitable mitigation measures and/or foundation design proposals be presented in accordance with Chapter 12, paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy 12 or the Core Strategy 2011 and saved policy 3.19 of the Southwark Plan 2007'.

1.3.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the archaeological evaluation was subsequently prepared by ASE (2013) and approved by the Senior Archaeology Officer at Southwark Council. All archaeological work was undertaken in accordance with this document and the various standards and

guidance set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2009) and the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service's Archaeological Guidance Papers No.'s 3 – 4 (GLAAS 1998a and b).

- 1.3.3 There were two further conditions relating to archaeological mitigation and post excavation work (18 & 19). If archaeological remains were encountered during the evaluation any further work would be subject to a separate Written Scheme of Investigation relating directly to those conditions.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The aims of the evaluation, as set out in the WSI, were:

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains 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 deposits
- To fulfil the requirements, and obtain the discharge of, Condition 17.
- To enable the Senior Archaeology Officer at Southwark Council to make an informed decision as to the requirement for any further archaeological work at the site in accordance with Conditions 18 and 19.

- 1.4.2 With reference to the research framework for London (Museum of London 2002) consideration will be given to how the results of the evaluation might contribute to the following framework objectives:

Medieval

- Addressing a regional understanding of rural development through synthesis and comparison with other regions' (M5, para 6)
- Creating baseline surveys of the form and development of settlements to enable the analysis of the emerging metropolis" (M5, para 8)

Post-medieval

- Identifying the changes in house design and construction during the period, and considering what social and economic origins and effects these changes had on urban life (L2, para 1)
- Contributing to our understanding of the creation of the London suburbs and the meanings and values of domestic as well as public gardens (L2, para 7)

1.5 Scope of Report

- 1.5.1 This report details the results of the archaeological evaluation carried out between the 10th and 12th of July 2013. The work was carried out by Trevor Ennis with assistance from Samara King. The fieldwork was managed by Andy Leonard and the post-excavation process by Jim Stevenson

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The following archaeological background is summarised from detailed information set out in the archaeological Desk Based (ASE 2012).

2.2 Prehistoric and Roman

2.2.1 The site is generally considered to have low potential for prehistoric and Roman remains.

2.3 Medieval

2.3.1 Peckham formed a small rural hamlet in the larger parish of Camberwell and is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as Pecheham. The historic centre lay along what is now Peckham High Street, centred at the crossroads at the junction with Rye Lane. There are twelve medieval sites listed on the GLHER within the vicinity of the site. Of most relevance is an evaluation undertaken to the rear of 1-83 Peckham High Street in 1990, immediately adjacent to the site (HER Nos. MLO 9199-9200, 9226). The report on that work states that, a pit, ditch and other features dating to the 12th century, and a series of postholes dating to the 14th century were encountered.

2.3.2 Historic maps indicate that the site was occupied by several phases of buildings dating from the 19th century. The southern half of the site was built on by the 1830s and a terrace of two storey houses was built in the northern half by 1874. The southern half of the site was cleared after wartime bomb damage and replaced by an electricity sub-station (still extant) and a public toilet (demolished). The houses in the northern half of the site were demolished sometime after 1979.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Excavation

- 3.1.1 One trench measuring 7m x 1.8m was mechanically excavated within the footprint of the proposed development in the northern half of the site (Fig. 1). The location was chosen as it was within the basement area of the proposed new public house and in the half of the site less likely to be disturbed by 19th and 20th century development.
- 3.1.2 The trench was excavated under archaeological supervision by a JCB fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Small spits were removed down to the top of archaeological structures and deposits which were manually cleaned. The sections of the trench were cleaned to observe and record stratigraphy.

3.2 Recording and Site Archive

- 3.2.1 All encountered deposits, features and finds were recorded according to accepted professional standards (IfA 2009) in accordance with the WSI (ASE 2013). Contexts and trenches were recorded using *pro-forma* ASE record sheets. Trenches were laid out using GPS planning technology and this data was used to locate detailed trench plans which were hand drawn at a scale of 1:20. Sections were hand drawn at scale of 1:10. A full photographic record was made.
- 3.2.2 Prior to the commencement of fieldwork, the site code MEL 13 was obtained from the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) and will be used as the unique site identifier for all records. The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at the LAARC in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	6
No. of files/paper record	1 file
Plan and sections sheets	2
Photographs	12 digital
Bulk finds	1 box

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Trench 1 (Figures 2, 3 and 4)

- 4.1.1 Trench 1 was aligned north-north-west/south-south-east and was up to 1.10m deep. The removed overburden has been assigned a single context number, [09]. It consisted of 0.15m of tarmac and red crushed stone make-up material above a 0.40m thick layer of brownish grey silty rubble containing a variety of very modern finds including bricks, carpet, shoes and plastic bags, which were not retained. Beneath, in the northern half of the north-east facing section (Fig 3, Section 1), a deeper area of mortar-flecked silt with similarly modern finds appeared to represent a robbed-out foundation c. 2.2m long by 0.4m deep which had been noted extending 0.30m into the trench during machining.
- 4.1.2 The modern deposits sealed [08], a 0.50m thick deposit of dark brownish grey clayey silt containing flecks of both charcoal and coal and which was more akin to a buried topsoil rather than a subsoil. Separating this from the underlying natural deposits was, [07], a 0.10m of lighter brownish grey subsoil. Natural deposits, [010], were exposed in the base of the trench at an approximate height of 5.85m OD and consisted of orange brown clay, silt and gravel.
- 4.1.3 In the base of the trench was an oval cut, [03], was recorded. Its fill, [04], contained the decomposing remains of a timber post of probable 20th century date. In the north-west corner of the trench was a shallow undated depression [01] up to 0.15m deep that was essentially just a dip in the overlying subsoil. A small patch of modern disturbance was noted to its west.
- 4.1.4 By chance the south end of the trench finished exactly against the remains of an east/west brick wall [05/06], which overlay the buried topsoil deposit, [08] (Figures 3 and 4). This wall was aligned east north east/west south west and was in excess of 1.8m long and 0.64m high. Before the trench was backfilled, the overburden was stripped from above the wall to ascertain its width. The wall had a surviving width of 0.24m but was originally wider and had been truncated to the south by a concrete slab (Figure 4).
- 4.1.5 The bottom half of the wall, [05], was constructed from regularly coursed unfrogged bricks firmly bonded by an off-white sandy lime mortar (Figure 3, Section 2). A brick sample from [05] could be broadly dated to the 18th to 19th centuries. The coursing appeared to be broadly that of English Garden Wall Bond with three courses of stretcher bricks below one course of headers. The upper half of the wall, [06], was by contrast a much poorer affair. It was constructed mostly of header bricks with occasional stretchers loosely bonded by damp dirty sandy brown mortar. One of the bricks sampled from [06] showed signs of a rudimentary frog and bricks from these courses were considered to be more likely of 19th century date.
- 4.1.6 Part of the eastern side of the top of the wall, [06], was truncated by a modern post-hole with a still in-situ timber post and a backfill of crushed brick. The insertion of the post had left a corresponding bulge below in the lower half of the wall, [05].

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Max. Depth m
01	Cut	Depression	1.8m+	1.17m+	0.15m
02	Fill of 01	Orangey grey silty clay	1.8m+	1.17m+	0.15m
03	Cut	Post-hole/disturbed area	0.98m	0.64m	0.09m+
04	Fill of 03	Mixed grey/brown, dark greyish brown clay silt & decomposed wood	0.98m	0.64m	0.09m+
05	Brick wall	4/5 courses, off-white sandy lime mortar	1.8m+	0.24m+	0.40m
06	Brick wall	3 courses, dirty sandy brown mortar	1.8m+	0.24m+	0.24m
07	Subsoil	Mid brownish grey clayey silt			0.1m
08	Topsoil	Dark brownish grey clayey silt			0.50m
09	Modern Overburden	Tarmac and associated make-up and rubble layers			0.55m
010	Natural geology	Orange brown clay, silt and gravel			-

Table 2: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Ceramic Building Material (CBM) by Luke Barber

- 5.1.1 Two sample bricks were retained from context [06], the upper courses of the wall uncovered in Trench 1. Both are complete red/purple bricks which are notably crudely formed but well fired. The smaller brick measures 212 x 100 x 61mm and contains notable calcareous flecking. The larger brick measures 226 x 94-100 x 65mm and although of similar colour is characterised by a moderate tempering of iron oxides/slag to 3mm and very rare flint. This example also has a very slight depression on its upper side that may represent an early frog. All in all a 19th- century date is probable for these bricks but an earlier post-medieval date cannot be ruled out.
- 5.1.2 The brick sample recovered from context [05], representing the lower courses of the same wall, consists of a bonded clump consisting of two complete and several fragments of red frogless bricks laid in an off-white sandy lime mortar with common chalk aggregate to 4mm. The bricks are mixed: at least one slag-tempered red/purple brick is present (similar to that from [06]) but the others are more typically orange/red and tempered with sparse fine sand, sparse flint pebbles to 20mm, chalk to 10mm and rare iron oxides to 4mm. A general 18th- to 19th- century date is likely.
- 5.1.3 The bricks are of no intrinsic interest and have therefore been discarded.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Discussion

- 6.1.1 No archaeological remains relating to the medieval development of Peckham were identified nor any earlier evidence of prehistoric or Roman settlement activity. Apart from modern disturbances, the only archaeological feature of significance was the brick wall located at the very southern end of the evaluation trench.
- 6.1.2 The lower four courses of the wall [05], were well-constructed and represent the original phase of construction at foundation level. The brick of the wall foundation has been broadly dated to the 18th-19th centuries. The upper courses of the wall, [06], were of poorer construction and would appear to represent a later episode of repair or rebuilding in the 19th century. The wall was aligned with a kink in the wall that borders the western side of the site and is likely to mark the limit of a former building or property. No associated floor surfaces were identified.
- 6.1.3 Historic mapping evidence in the Desk Based Assessment for the site (ASE 2012) indicates that the site was developed post-1831. By 1842 a building had been constructed in the southern half of the site with most of the northern half developed by 1874. It is probable that the wall relates to one (or both?) of these episodes of building.
- 6.1.4 The wall and the possible robbed foundation both truncated the buried topsoil deposit but did not penetrate the underlying subsoil nor the natural deposits in the base of the trench which remained relatively undisturbed. The overburden was twice as deep as that encountered at the site at nearby 1-83 Peckham High Street due mainly to the thick layer of rubble and rubbish sealing the topsoil.

6.2 Conclusions

- 6.2.1 The evaluation has established the probable absence of archaeological remains of medieval or earlier date within the northern half of the proposed development. This absence was not due to truncation as natural geological deposits survived relatively undisturbed in the base of the trench, in part due to less intense development in this half of the site and in part to protection from the 1m+ depth of overburden.
- 6.2.2 Evidence from the Desk Based Assessment suggested that the southern half of the site was likely to have been more disturbed by 19th and 20th century development as well as service runs associated with the extant electricity substation and former toilet block. Archaeological remains are therefore less likely to survive in this area.
- 6.2.3 The results of the evaluation are unlikely to contribute to the identified medieval and post-medieval objectives in the research framework for London (Museum of London 2002).
- 6.2.3 Overall, the impact of the proposed development on the archaeological

record appears negligible given the probable low level of archaeological remains within the development area.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank Antic Ltd for commissioning the work and Dr Chris Constable, Southwark Council Archaeologist, for his guidance and monitoring.

APPENDIX 1: HER Summary Form

Site Code	MEL 13					
Identification Name and Address	Land at Melon Road, Peckham, London Borough of Southwark					
County, District &/or Borough	London Borough of Southwark					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 3406 7673					
Geology	Palaeocene clay, silt and sand					
Arch. South-East Project Number	2013183					
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. 10/07/13- 12/07/13	Excav.	WB.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Antic Ltd					
Project Manager	Andy Leonard					
Project Supervisor	Trevor Ennis					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	19th century & Modern		
<p>Summary</p> <p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Antic Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Melon Road, Peckham, London Borough of Southwark, in advance of mixed use development comprising a public house with self-contained dwellings above. A single evaluation trench was excavated through the less-disturbed northern half of the site within the basement area of the proposed new public house.</i></p> <p><i>Natural deposits (orange brown clay, silt and gravel) survived relatively undisturbed in the base of the evaluation trench at an approximate height of 5.85m OD. The natural geology was sealed by c. 0.60m of topsoil and subsoil. The topsoil was truncated by an east/west brick wall of likely 19th century date. This showed evidence of two phases of construction/repair. Two modern post-holes were also identified. The structural evidence was sealed beneath c.0.55m of modern build-up for a tarmac surface.</i></p>						

APPENDIX 2: OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-155787

Project details

Project name Melon Road, Peckham

Short description of the project Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Antic Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Melon Road, Peckham, London Borough of Southwark, in advance of mixed use development comprising a public house with self-contained dwellings above. A single evaluation trench was excavated through the less-disturbed northern half of the site within the basement area of the proposed new public house. Natural deposits (orange brown clay, silt and gravel) survived relatively undisturbed in the base of the evaluation trench at an approximate height of 5.85m OD. The natural geology was sealed by c. 0.60m of topsoil and subsoil. The topsoil was truncated by an east/west brick wall of likely 19th century date. This showed evidence of two phases of construction/repair. Two modern post-holes were also identified. The structural evidence was sealed beneath c.0.55m of modern build-up for a tarmac surface.

Project dates Start: 10-07-2013 End: 12-07-2013

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes MEL13 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference codes 6194 - Contracting Unit No.

Type of project Field evaluation

Monument type WALL Post Medieval

Significant Finds NONE None

Methods & techniques "Sample Trenches"

Development type Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, 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 SOUTHWARK CAMBERWELL AND DULWICH Land at Melon Road, Peckham, London Borough of Southwark

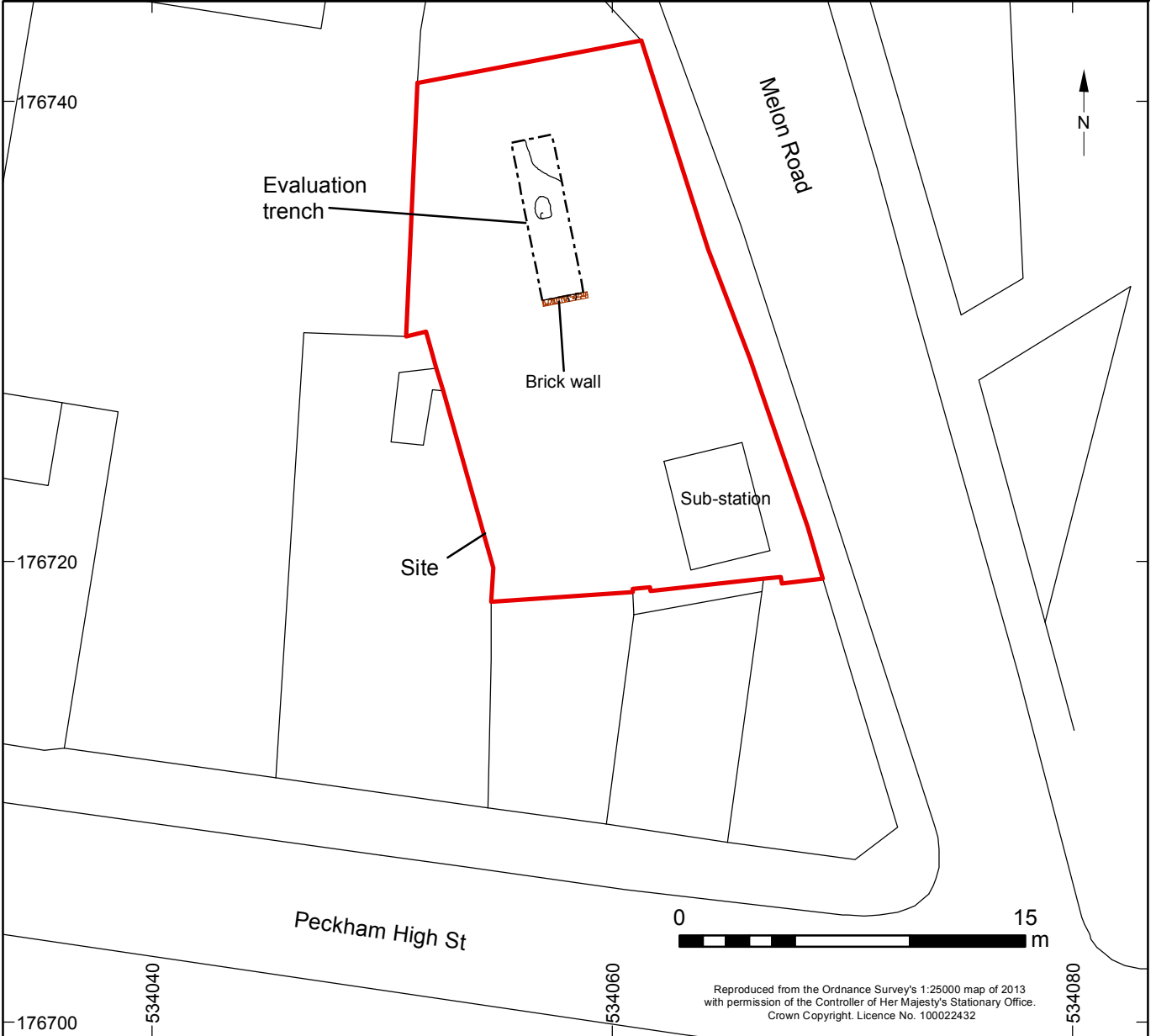
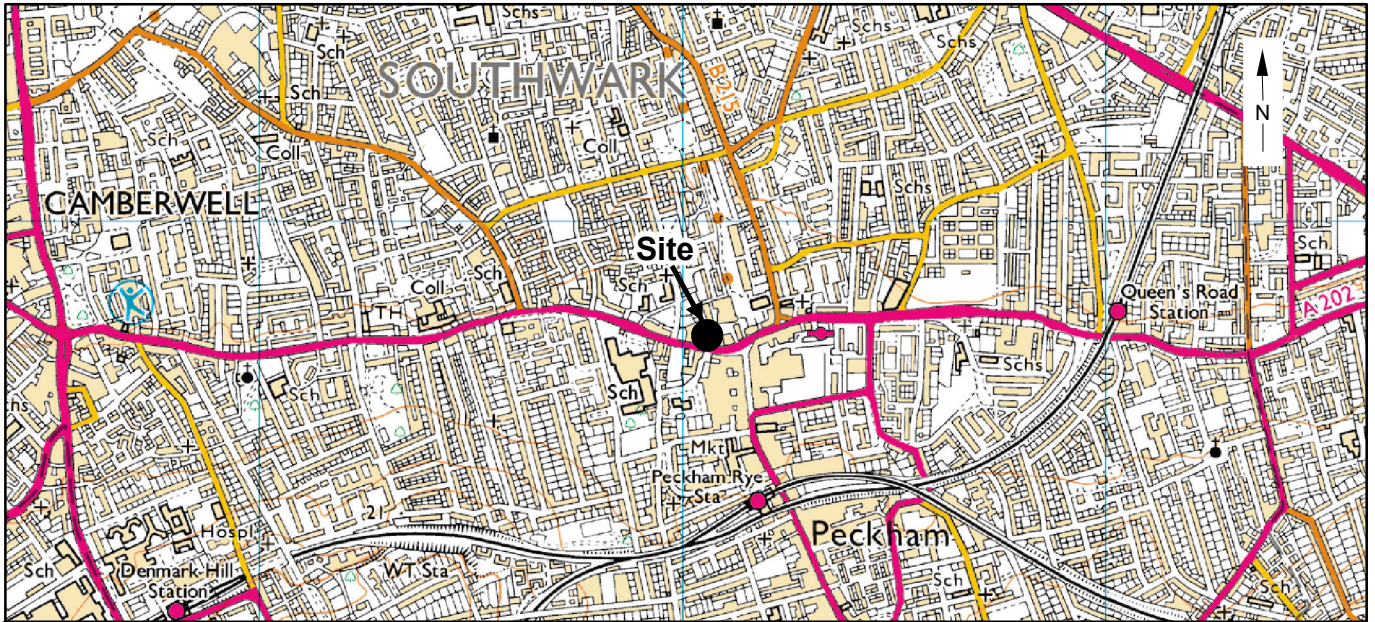
Postcode SE15 5QW

Study area 20.00 Square metres

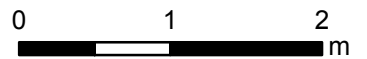
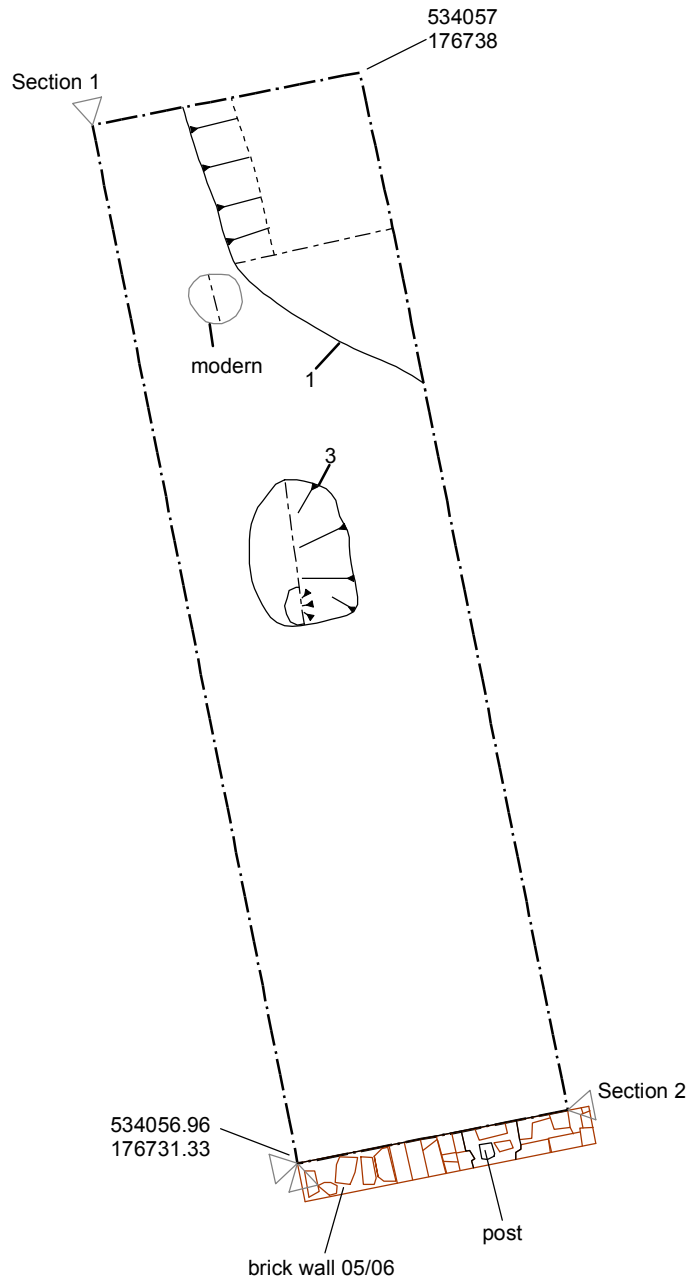
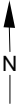
Site coordinates TQ 3406 7673 51 0 51 28 23 N 000 04 10 W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 6.00m Max: 7.00m

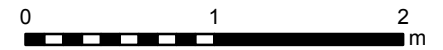
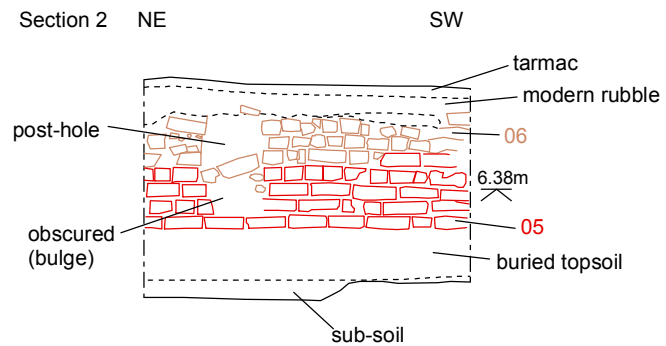
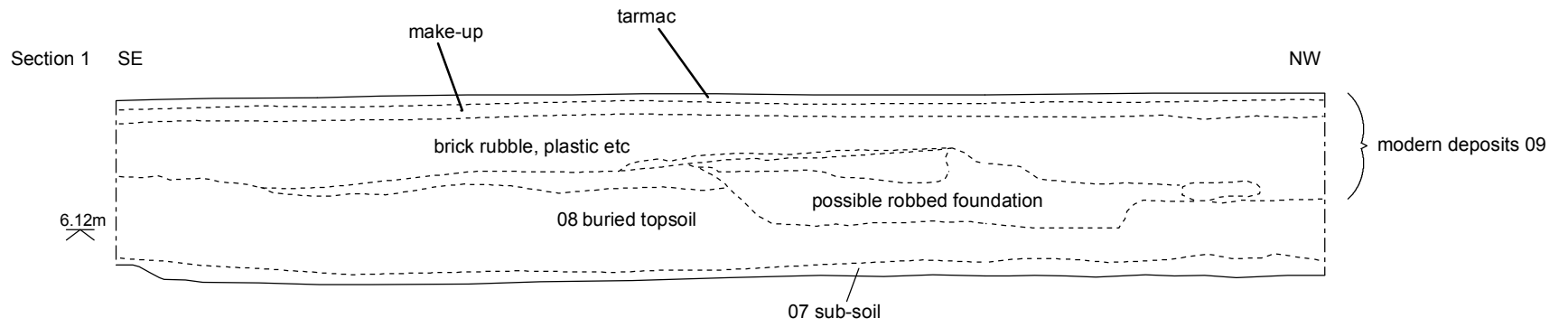
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Southwark Council
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard
Project supervisor	Trevor Ennis
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Antic Ltd
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Notebook - Excavation", ' Research', ' General Notes', "Plan", "Section"
Project bibliography	
1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Evaluation on land at Melon Road, Peckham, London Borough of Southwark
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Ennis, T
Other bibliographic details	2013183
Date	2013
Issuer or publisher	Archaeology South-East
Place of issue or publication	Portslade
Description	Grey literature PDF with 4 figures
Entered by	Anna Doherty (anna.doherty@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	26 July 2013



© Archaeology South-East		Melon Road, Southwark	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 6194	July 2013	Site location	
Report Ref: 2013183	Drawn by: APL		



© Archaeology South-East		Melon Road, Southwark	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 6194	July 2013	Evaluation trench	
Report Ref: 2013183	Drawn by: APL		



© Archaeology South-East		Melon Road, Southwark	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 6194	July 2013	Sections 1 & 2	
Report Ref: 2013183	Drawn by: APL		



Wall 05/06 looking south



Wall 05/06 in plan showing modern post

© Archaeology South-East		Melon Road, Southwark	Fig. 4
Project Ref: 6194	July 2013	Photographs	
Report Ref: 2013183	Drawn by: JLR		

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