

An Archaeological Evaluation at 38 King Street, Covent Garden City of Westminster

NGR: 530240 180890

Planning Ref: 12/08003/FULL

ASE Project No: 6495 Site Code: KGS13

ASE Report No: 2013341 OASIS id: archaeol6-167273

Catherine Douglas
With contributions by Gemma Ayton and Trista Clifford
Illustrations by Rob Cole

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Academy Consulting Solutions Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation at 38 King Street, Covent Garden, City of Westminster (Figure 1, NGR: 530240 180890).

The underlying geology comprised Brickearth and was encountered at a depth of 18.90m OD in Test Pits 2 and 3. An early post-medieval deposit containing disarticulated animal bone was identified in Test Pit 2. A thick fill deposit prevented the natural substrate from being reached in Test Pit 1. No archaeological features relating to Lundenwic were encountered during the evaluation although potential exists for stratified remains to be present within the location of the proposed basement area in the northwest of the site, albeit in truncated form.

CONTENTS

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- 2.0 Archaeological Background
- 3.0 Archaeological Methodology
- 4.0 Results
- 5.0 The Finds
- 6.0 Discussion and Conclusions

Bibliography Acknowledgements

HER Summary Sheet OASIS Form

FIGURES

Figure 1: Site Location

Figure 2: Trial pit location showing existing basement

Figure 3: Trial pits 1-3 photographs and Trial Pit 2 section

TABLES

Table 1: Table 1: Quantification of site archive

Table 2: List of Recorded Contexts from Trial Pit 1

Table 3: List of Recorded Contexts from Trial Pit 2

Table 4: List of Recorded Contexts from Trial Pit 3

Table 5: Quantification of finds

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) was commissioned by Academy Consulting Solutions Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation at 38 King Street, Covent Garden, City of Westminster (Figure 1, NGR: 530240 180890).

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey 1:50,000 mapping (BGS 2013) the site is situated on Hackney Gravel Formation. This represents the former floodplain of the River Thames. The gravels are frequently capped by Brickearth – also known as Langley Silt – of which there is a known deposit *c*. 200 m northeast of the site. (ASE 2013a)

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 It is proposed to redevelop the site (ref: 12/08003/FULL) for retail space at basement, ground and first floor levels, with retail office accommodation above. As part of this work it is anticipated that further excavation will be required to a depth of c. 1.20m 1.35m below the existing basement slab. Additionally the basement will be extended beneath the footprint of what is presently 16 Floral Street, at the northwest end of the existing site, and incorporated into the 38 King Street development. This extension will be an 'L' shaped space c. 6m northwest-southeast by up to 5.5m northeast-southwest. The area is currently capped by a ground floor at c. 21.80mOD. (ASE 2013a)
- 1.3.2 A Desk-Based Assessment (ASE 2013b) was prepared for the site in November 2013. That document identified high potential for the survival of Saxon and post-medieval deposits, with deep-cut features likely to exist within the existing basement and possibly deeply stratified remains in the northwest extension area. Consequently it was concluded in consultation with the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS) that a second phase of investigation, by test pitting, be undertaken to establish the presence or absence of this material.
- 1.3.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the evaluation was prepared by ASE and submitted to GLASS in November 2013. All works were carried out in accordance with the IFA standards and guidance (IFA 2001) and the GLAAS Archaeological Guidance Papers No's 3 5 (GLAAS 1998). Any variations to the scope of work were agreed with the GLAAS archaeology advisor prior to implementation.

1.4 Research Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The objective of this phase of work as stated in the WSI (ASE 2013a) was to demonstrate the presence or absence of any archaeological remains within the footprint of the proposed development (or potential survival), specifically

with regard to the Saxon and post-medieval periods.

- 1.4.2 Further general aims outlined in the WSI (ASE 2013) included:
 - 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 enable the archaeology advisor at GLAAS to make an informed decision as to the requirement for any further archaeological work.
- 1.4.3 This phase of work was deliberately designed to avoid unnecessary excavation of archaeological remains which will be better understood during a mitigation phase. However, specific research aims and objectives that may be considered for future work, with reference to the research framework for London archaeology (MoL., 2002) are:
 - S3 Understanding the size and character of Lundenwic, in relation to the wider region (para 1)
 - S4 Addressing the gap in the 9th century in the ceramic dating typologies of Lundenwic and Lundenburgh to understand the process of transition between the two settlements (para 7)
 - S6 Defining the role of women in the social and economic organisation of both urban and rural life. Whether they were present in Lundenwic at all as been questioned previously (para 9)

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report presents the results from the archaeological work carried out between the 12 - 13th December 2013. The excavation was directed by Catherine Douglas, managed by Andy Leonard (fieldwork) and Jim Stevenson (Post-Excavation).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND 2.0

2.1 **Desk Based Assessment**

2.1.1 The following information is drawn from the Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (ASE 2013a) and is not repeated in full. For the complete background refer to the Desk-Based Assessment.

2.2 **Prehistoric**

2.2.1 The area surrounding the site has so far yielded sporadic evidence for prehistoric activity, mainly consisting of isolated finds. Although one probable prehistoric settlement site is known c. 160m to the southeast of the site, most evidence for this period is likely to have been removed by later activity.

2.3 Roman

2.3.1 The site is located 1.5km from the Roman city of Londinium, from which main Roman roads ran west several hundred metres to the north and south of the site. However, only isolated Roman finds have been found in the vicinity of the site, in redeposited contexts.

2.4 **Anglo Saxon**

The site encompasses the northern part of the middle Anglo-Saxon settlement of Lundenwic, the population and economic centre of London from the 7th to the 9th centuries AD. Rich archaeological evidence for buildings, industrial activity, traded good, pits and road surfaces has been found immediately adjacent to the site on Floral Street and King Street. This material is of central importance for our understanding of the development of London and of the emergence of, and links between, similar trading settlements ('wics') across England and northwestern Europe in the early medieval period.

2.5 Medieval

Following the abandonment of Lundenwic in the mid-9th century, the Covent Garden area was used for agricultural purposes until its enclosure by the Convent of St Peter as a market garden. The archaeological evidence for this medieval activity is likely to be limited and little evidence for it has been encountered near the site.

2.6 Post-medieval

Covent Garden was rapidly and intensively developed from the mid-17th century onwards, for which the surrounding area has yielded substantial evidence.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY 3.0

3.1 **Archaeological Methodology**

- A site code (KGS 13) was obtained from the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) and used as the unique site identifier for all records.
- 3.1.2 An initial site visit was made on 09/12/13 to investigate the geotechnical pits currently open on site. Brickearth was identified underlying made ground and sealed by a concrete slab forming the floor.
- 3.1.3 Three trial pits measuring 2m x 2m were excavated as shown on Figures 2 and 3. Trial Pit 1 was located within the area of the proposed basement extension, at ground floor level. Trial pit 2 was located within the existing basement at the south of the site, and Trial Pit 3 was located at the centre of the site in the basement. Test pit 3 was moved 3m northeast, where a geotechnical pit revealed the natural substrate underlay the concrete slab.
- The trial pits were broken out by hydraulic hammer and hand excavated using mattocks and shovels. They were excavated through undifferentiated topsoil and modern made ground in shallow spits until archaeological deposits were encountered or the top of the underlying natural sediments reached. Excavation of Trial Pit 1 ceased before the underlying natural sediments were encountered to comply with health and safety regulations. Only the south-western half of Trial Pit 1 was excavated for health and safety reasons.
- 3.1.5 Any exposed archaeological features/deposits were cleaned by hand and recorded in plan and section, with a view to leave any deeply stratified archaeological remains in situ to be excavated during a later mitigation stage.
- 3.1.6 All hand excavation was carefully undertaken and followed the stratigraphy of any encountered archaeological layers, features and/or deposits.
- All excavated archaeological features; layers and/or deposits were planned, photographed and recorded utilising the assigned Museum of London site code. Sections of excavated archaeological contexts were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and all site drawings have been digitised.
- 3.1.8 A full digital photographic record was maintained throughout the duration of the project.

3.2 Site Archive

3.2.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at the London Archaeological Archive Research Centre in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	7
No. of files/paper record	1 File
Plan and sections sheets	1 Section
Bulk Samples	0
Photographs	12
Bulk finds	1 Bag
Registered finds	0
Environmental flots/residue	0

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 **RESULTS**

4.1 Trial Pit 1 (Figure 3)

Trial Pit 1 measured 2m x 2m. The southwest half of the pit was excavated to a depth of 0.80m below the floor surface level, (21.18m OD). A small sondage was then excavated by a further 0.50m to a maximum depth of 20.68m OD. The northeast side of Trial Pit 1 was left in situ. The contexts encountered in Trial Pit 1 have been summarised in Table 2 below.

Context	Туре	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness	Height AOD	m
					m		
[1/01]	Layer	Concrete Slab	>2.00	>2.00	0.20	21.98	
[1/02]	Layer	Demolition fill	>2.00	>2.00	>1.10	21.78	

Table 2: Trial Pit 1 list of recorded contexts

- 4.1.2 The natural substrate was not encountered in Trial Pit 1. A layer of demolition fill material, [1/02] was encountered, comprising a silt deposit with large quantities of brick, concrete and loose building material inclusions. This extended beyond the length and width of the trial pit. The depth of the demolition material extended beyond the level at which excavation ceased, 20.68m OD.
- The demolition material [1/02] was immediately overlain by the concrete slab [1/01] forming the ground floor of the office room, at a level of 21.98m OD.

4.2 Trial Pit 2 (Figure 3)

Trial Pit 2 measured 2m x 2m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.65m below the basement ground surface level, (18.50m OD). The Brickearth present in the base of the pit was then excavated by a further 0.10m in a small sondage to a depth of 18.40m OD. All contexts encountered in Trial Pit 2 have been summarised in Table 3 below.

Context	Туре	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m	Height AOD	m
[2/01]	Layer	Made Ground	>2.00	>2.00	0.33	19.15	
[2/02]	Layer	Clay Deposit	>2.00	>2.00	0.32	18.82	
[2/03]	Layer	Brickearth	>2.00	>2.00	-	18.50	

Table 3: Trial Pit 2 list of recorded contexts

- 4.2.2 Brickearth geology [2/03] was encountered 0.65m below the basement ground surface level, at a level of 18.50m OD.
- The Brickearth was overlain by a compact clay deposit [2/02], 0.32m thick, and containing occasional charcoal nodules. Two small pieces of CBM, of probable post-medieval date, and a fragment of burnt clay were identified within this deposit, along with a small assemblage of animal bone.
- 4.2.4 Layer [2/02] was overlain by a layer of loose concrete made ground, [2/01], which was in turn overlain by the concrete slab forming the basement floor.

4.3 Trial Pit 3 (Figure 3)

4.3.1 Trial Pit 3 measured 2m x 2m and was excavated to a depth of 0.25m below the basement ground floor level, or 18.90m OD. All contexts encountered within Trial Pit 3 have been summarised in Table 4 below.

Context	Туре	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m	Height AOD	m
[3/01]	Layer	Concrete Slab	>2.00	>2.00	0.25	19.15	
[3/02]	Layer	Brickearth	>2.00	>2.00	-	18.90	

Table 4: Trial Pit 3: List of Recorded Contexts

4.3.2 Brickearth geology [3/02] was encountered at 18.90m OD in Trial Pit 3. This was overlain by the concrete slab [3/01] measuring a thickness of 0.25m and forming the basement floor. No finds were encountered within Trial Pit 3.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A small number of finds was recovered from a single context at 38 Kings Street Covent Garden (Table 5).

Context	СВМ	Wt (g)	Bone	Wt (g)	F. clay	Wt (g)
2/001	2	14	26	644	1	8

Table 5: Quantification of finds

5.1 The CBM by Trista Clifford

5.1.1 Two fragments of CBM weighing 14g were recovered from [2/001]. A small flake from a well fired red brick in a find sandy fabric with sparse iron rich inclusions was recovered together with a fragment of roofing tile in a coarse coloured quartz tempered fabric with coarse moulding sand. A post-medieval date is probable.

5.2 The fired clay by Trista Clifford

5.2.1 A single fragment of fired clay weighing 8g was recovered from [2/001]. The fabric is fine and micaceous with pockets of coarse sand inclusions. The fragment is undiagnostic of form or function and is not inherently dateable.

5.3 Animal Bone by Gemma Ayton

- 5.3.1 The evaluation produced a small assemblage of animal bone from context [2/001]. A total of 23 fragments of bones were recovered, the majority of which have been identified as cattle. A single pig tibia has also been identified. The elements represented amongst the cattle assemblage include the humerus, scapula and pelvis. There is no evidence of butchery, burning, gnawing or pathology on the bone.
- 5.3.2 Due to the size of the assemblage it holds no potential for further analysis although it should be retained.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.0.1 The objective of the archaeological evaluation was to demonstrate the presence or absence of any archaeological remains within the footprint of the proposed development (or potential survival), specifically with regard to the Saxon and post-medieval periods.

Trial Pit 1

6.0.2 No archaeological remains or features were encountered within Trial Pit 1. Demolition fill material was identified, which extended beyond the limit of excavation at 20.68m OD. Given the loose nature of the material, combined with the amount of building material inclusions it is probable that this material is the result of a demolition episode, subsequently used to backfill a preexisting basement.

Trial Pit 2

6.0.3 A post-medieval deposit [2/02] was encountered within Trial Pit 2, which contained animal bone and a small quantity of CBM and burnt clay. Possibly this deposit is the result of trample associated with the original construction of 38 King Street in the 18th century. There was no evidence for cut features or artefacts relating to Anglo-Saxon *Lundenwic*, or any other period.

Trial Pit 3

6.0.4 No archaeological finds or features were encountered in Trial Pit 3. Brickearth was identified immediately underlying the concrete slab at 18.90m OD. Given that middle Anglo-Saxon archaeology has been recorded nearby at 19.25 m OD and to a depth of at least 18.55 m OD, it is possible that Middle Anglo-Saxon archaeology has survived at this level in other parts of the site, despite the absence of archaeology in Trial Pit 3.

6.1 Conclusions

- 6.1.1 No archaeological features relating to the Middle Anglo-Saxon town of *Lundenwic* were encountered during the evaluation. However, Brickearth was identified in both Trial Pits 2 and 3.
- 6.1.2 With the exception of an early post-medieval deposit, no archaeological features were encountered during the evaluation.
- 6.1.3 The deposit model presented in the DBA (ASE 2013) shows that untruncated Brickearth at 35 King Street and Cubitt's Yard lies between 19.25mOD and 19.75mOD. Although Brickearth during the evaluation at 38 King Street has been identified at a much lower depth (18.50-18.90mOD) this is likely to be the result of truncation derived from the construction of the buildings' basement rather than because this is its original natural horizon.
- 6.1.4 Although Brickearth was not proven in Trial Pit 1, the material encountered would suggest the pit is located within a (previously unknown) backfilled

basement. If one assumes that the slab of any such basement will be a minimum 2m below ground level it is reasonable to extrapolate that any surviving archaeology and/or natural deposit will have been removed to a depth of at least 19.98mOD (2m below the ground slab level of 21.98mOD).

6.1.5 Based on the untruncated Brickearth deposits at Cubitts Yard and 35 King Street it is reasonable to surmise that there is potential for archaeological remains to survive in some stratified format to a thickness of between 0.23m-0.73m in the currently un-basemented part of the site around Trial Pit 3. The remainder of the site (within the footprint of the existing basement) is unlikely to contain any archaeological remains other than deep cut features due to the horizontal truncation of Brickearth deposits of up to 1m across the rest of the site.

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HER Summary Form

Site Code	KGS 13					
Identification Name and Address	38 King Sti	38 King Street, Covent Garden				
County, District &/or Borough	City of Wes	City of Westminster				
OS Grid Refs.	TQ3024 80	089				
Geology	Hackney G	ravel Forma	tion capped	by brickearth	1	
Arch. South-East Project Number	6495	6495				
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. 12-13 th Dec 2013	Excav.	WB.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Academy (Consulting S	olutions			
Project Manager	Andy Leon	ard				
Project Supervisor	Catherine I	Catherine Douglas				
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Possible A	S but not e	ncountered

Summary

Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Academy Consulting Solutions Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation at 38 King Street, Covent Garden, City of Westminster (Figure 1, NGR: TQ 3024 8089).

The underlying geology comprised brickearth encountered at a depth of 18.90m OD in Test Pits 2 and 3. An early Post-Medieval deposit containing disarticulated animal bone was identified in Test Pit 2. A large deposit of made ground prevented the natural substrate from being reached in Test Pit 1. No archaeological features relating to the Middle Anglo-Saxon town of *Lundenwic* were encountered during the evaluation. However, potential for survival of deeply stratified Saxon archaeology does remain within the currently unbasemented area around Trial Pit 3.

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-167273

Project details

Project name 38 King Street, Covent Garden, City of Westminster

Short description of the project

Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Academy Consulting Solutions Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation at 38 King Street, Covent Garden, City of Westminster (Figure 1, NGR: TQ 3024 8089). The underlying geology comprised brickearth encountered at a depth of 18.90m OD in Test Pits 2 and 3. An Early Post-Medieval deposit containing disarticulated animal bone was identified in Test Pit 2. A large deposit of made ground prevented the natural substrate from being reached in Test Pit 1. No archaeological features relating to the Middle Anglo-Saxon town of Ludwic were encountered during the evaluation, however Middle Anglo-Saxon archaeology is known to have survived at this level at sites in close proximity to 38 King Street, so the possibility of Middle-Saxon archaeology existing in other parts of the site cannot be ruled

Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the

out.

Project dates Start: 12-12-2013 End: 13-12-2013

Previous/future

work

No / Yes

Type of project Research project

Current Land use Industry and Commerce 3 - Retailing

Significant Finds TOWN: LONDINIUM Roman

Significant Finds TOWN: LUDWIC Early Medieval

Investigation type "Test-Pit Survey"

Prompt Research

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER CITY OF

WESTMINSTER 38 King Street

Study area 35.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 3024 8089 51 0 51 30 41 N 000 07 22 W Point

Height OD /

Depth

Min: 18.50m Max: 18.90m

Project creators

Name of Organisation

Archaeology South-East

Project brief originator

Academy Consulting Solutions Ltd

 originator

Project Andy Leonard

director/manager

Project supervisor Catherine Douglas

Consultant

Type of

sponsor/funding body

Name of

Academy Consulting Solutions Ltd

sponsor/funding

body

Project archives

Physical Archive Museum of London

recipient

Physical Contents "Animal Bones"

Digital Archive recipient

Museum of London

Digital Media available

"Images raster / digital photography"

Paper Archive recipient

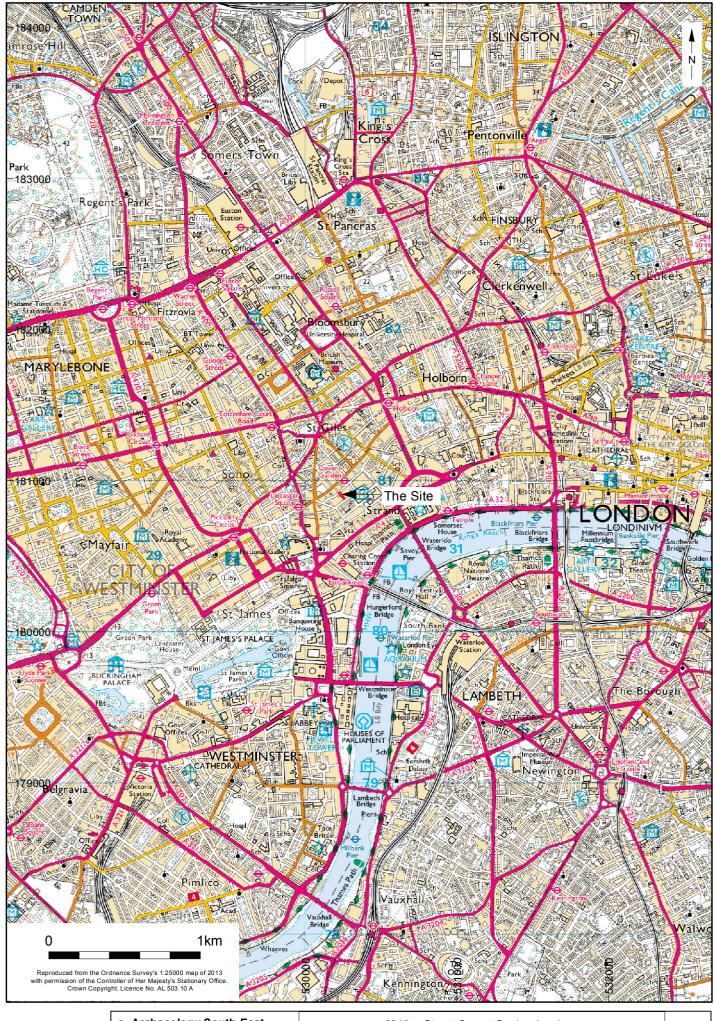
Museum of London

Paper Media available

"Context sheet","Drawing","Map","Report","Section"

Entered by Catherine Douglas (catherine.douglas@ucl.ac.uk)

Entered on 20 December 2013

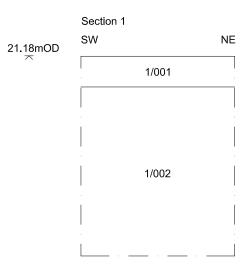


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Project Ref: 6495	December 2013	Site location	Fig. 1	
Report Ref: 2013341	Drawn by: RHC	Site location		

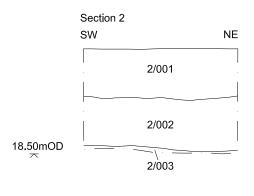


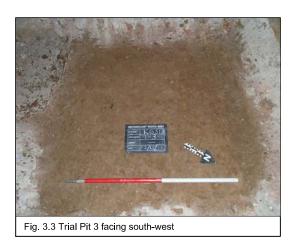
© Archaeology So	outh-East	38 King Street, Covent Garden		
Project Ref: 6495	December 2013	Trial pit location showing existing basement	Fig. 2	
Report Ref: 2013341	Drawn by: RHC	That pit location showing existing basement		

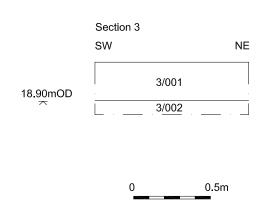












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Project Ref. 6495	December 2013	Trial Pits 1-3 photographs and sections	Fig. 3	
Report Ref: 2013341	Drawn by: RHC	That Fits 1-5 photographs and sections		

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