

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
55 Pitfield Street
Hackney
London, N1**

NGR: TQ 3301 8285

Planning Ref: 2012/1945

**ASE Project No: 7763
Site Code: PIT12**

**ASE Report No: 2015386
OASIS id: archaeol6-226998**

By Stephen White

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
55 Pitfield Street
Hackney
London, N1**

NGR: TQ 3301 8285

Planning Ref: 2012/1945

**ASE Project No: 7763
Site Code: PIT12**

**ASE Report No: 2015386
OASIS id: archaeol6-226998**

By Stephen White

Prepared by:	Stephen White	Archaeologist	
Reviewed and approved by:	Dan Swift	Project Manager	
Date of Issue:	October 2015		
Revision:			

**Archaeology South-East
Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex
BN41 1DR**

**Tel: 01273 426830
Fax: 01273 420866
Email: fau@ucl.ac.uk**

Abstract

Archaeology South-East were commissioned by MDA Consulting on behalf of their client, Garfwich Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land at 55 Pitfield Street in the London Borough of Hackney. The field work took place between the 5th and 14th of October, 2015.

No significant archaeological features, deposits or find were recorded. The work consisted of the reduction of the ground level on site to c. 2.00m below that of the old concrete slab level. Natural Hackney gravels were observed across all of the site at a depth of c. 1.60m below slab level. One small area of brick floor was recorded which is thought likely to be the base of a post-medieval cess pit. Various modern walls were also observed.

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Archaeological Background**
- 3.0 Archaeological Methodology**
- 4.0 Results**
- 5.0 Discussion and Conclusions**

Bibliography
Acknowledgements

HER Summary
OASIS Form

TABLES

Table 1: Quantification of site archive
Table 2: List of recorded contexts

FIGURES

Figure 1: Site location
Figure 2: Watching brief area
Figure 3: Location and photos of brick floor observed in the watching brief
Figure 4: General site photos

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by MDA Consulting on behalf of their client, Garfwich Ltd, to undertake an archaeological watching brief at 55 Pitfield Street, Hackney, N1, NGR TQ 3301, 8285 (Figure 1).

1.1.2 The site was bound by Pitfield Street to the east, and residential properties to the north, west and south. The site measured approximately 500 square metres.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The British Geological Survey indicated that the site was situated on Hackney Gravel deposits (Digimap, 2011).

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning permission for the erection of three screen cinema and 18 residential units with basement was granted by Hackney Borough Council subject to conditions (Ref: 2012/1945).

1.3.2 Condition 8.1.11 of the planning permission states:

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 in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

1.3.3 Following consultation with Adam Single at the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS) an archaeological evaluation by trenching was undertaken at the site (ASE 2012). Two small trenches were excavated within the footprint of the proposed development and in both structural remains were discovered, most probably relating to the former picture house that was situated on the site. Having considered the report on the evaluation (*ibid.*), GLAAS recommended that an archaeological watching brief be maintained during ground works on the site to preserve by record any further remains exposed during those works.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The general aims of an archaeological watching brief are:

- To define, insofar as possible, the date, character, form and function of any archaeological features observed on site
- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the footprint of the proposed development and to preserve by record any such remains
- 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

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report details the results of the archaeological watching brief carried out between the 5th and 14th of October, 2015 and has been prepared in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2015). The work was carried out by Steve White (Archaeologist).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 The following information is drawn from the evaluation report (ASE 2012).

2.2 Historical and Archaeological Background

2.2.1 Six archaeological interventions have been undertaken within the area, although no archaeological features earlier than post-medieval period have been identified. Elsewhere in the area are numerous Listed Buildings and 17 Desk-based Assessments.

2.2.2 Beyond the immediate area, sporadic finds of early prehistoric lithics have been recovered from the Hackney gravels, and later prehistoric occupation is known. In the Roman period the area lay within the vicinity of Moorfields Marsh, created by the blocking of the River Walbrook and its tributaries during the late Roman consolidation of Londinium's defences. Typical finds from the area included quarry pits, inhumation burials and cremations.

2.2.3 Little Anglo-Saxon activity is attested in the wider area although reclamation of the marsh began in the medieval period. Medieval evidence of quarrying and dumping in particular, together with agricultural activity and/or land division may be found.

2.2.4 The entire area was developed during the 18th century. An archaeological watching brief some 200m to the north-west of the current site, (Map No 5) at East Road found only 19th and 20th century deposits.

2.3 Recent Archaeological Investigation

2.3.1 During the 2012 evaluation (ASE 2012) on the site two trenches were excavated. These revealed the Hackney Gravels at some depth below ground level (at between 16.50mOD and 15.85mOD). Cut into the gravels were two pits of 17th/18th century date, as well as a 18th/19th century boundary wall and later masonry features related to the old picture theatre.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

3.1.1 The archaeological fieldwork consisted of the monitoring of the ground reduction work on site (Figure 2). The ground was reduced c. 2.00m below the previous slab level.

3.2 Fieldwork Constraints

3.2.1 A live sewer pipe was observed to run east-west through the central part of site, and has now been incorporated into the current development plan. This meant that the central strip was not excavated to depth, instead remaining approximately 0.60m above the natural level in a strip c 2.00m wide running the length of site.

3.3 The Site Archive

3.3.1 ASE informed the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) before the commencement of fieldwork that a site archive would be generated. The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at the LAARC in due course.

Number of Contexts	5
No. of files/paper record	5
Digital photos	52

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

Figures 2 - 4

4.1 Ground reduction monitored between the 5th and 14th of October

- 4.1.1 No significant archaeological features, deposits or find were recorded.
- 4.1.2 During the course of the ground reduction works, the natural geology Hackney Gravels [WB003] was exposed across the site. In the far north-east of site it was truncated by cut [WB005] for a small brick floor surface ([WB004]). Based on the depth of the truncation, it is thought that this may have been the base of a cess pit. This was sealed by make-up layer [WB002] which was in turn overlain by modern demolition rubble [WB001].
- 4.1.3 Over the course of the watching brief various modern walls were observed. It is believed that these related to the cinema demolished prior to the evaluation (ASE 2012).

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
WB001	Layer	Made ground	Site	Site	0.70-0.90
WB002	Layer	Made ground	Site	Site	0.70-0.90
WB003	Layer	Natural	Site	Site	>0.40
WB004	Masonry	Brick floor	2.60	2.40	0.10
WB005	Cut	Construction cut	2.60	2.40	0.15

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Stratigraphic Sequence

- 5.1.1 Natural geology, Hackney Gravels, was observed across the entirety of the site.

5.2 Conclusions and considerations of research aims

- 5.2.1 To define, insofar as possible, the date, character, form and function of any archaeological features observed on site.

The archaeological features observed during the course of the watching brief appeared to be late post-medieval in date, as well as the more modern walls and associated features.

- 5.2.2 To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the footprint of the proposed development and to preserve by record any such remains.

Archaeological features were observed, but only of a very recent date. Owing to the amount of truncation it seems likely that the later features had removed any potential earlier archaeology.

- 5.2.3 To determine the survival, extent and minimum depth below modern ground level of any such remains.

Natural deposits were observed at 1.60m below ground level across site. This seemed the result of late post-medieval and modern action on site.

- 5.2.4 To determine the nature and significance of any archaeological deposits.

The archaeological remains observed were severely limited in their significance, either being the base of a post-medieval pit or modern wall remnants.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archaeology South-East 2015. *Archaeological Watching Brief: Written Scheme of Investigation*

Archaeology South-East 2012. *Archaeological Evaluation Report: 55 Pitfield Street, Hackney, N1*. ASE Report no: 2012230, project 5532

ClfA, 2001 *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA), 2014c. *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*.

Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service. 2015, *Standards for Archaeological Work*

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

MoLAS 1994. *Site Manual for Archaeological Fieldwork*

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank MDA Consulting on behalf of their client, Garfwish Ltd for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and John Gould, the GLAAS advisor for his guidance and monitoring. The watching brief was monitored by Steve White. The author would like to thank Justin Russell who produced the figures for this report. Andrew Leonard managed the excavations, Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift the post-excavation process.

HER Summary

Site Code	PIT12					
Identification Name and Address	An Archaeological watching Brief at 55 Pitfield Street					
County, District &/or Borough	LB Hackney					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 3301 8285					
Geology	Hackney Gravel					
Arch. South-East Project Number	7763					
Type of Fieldwork			Watching Brief			
Type of Site			Deep Urban			
Dates of Fieldwork			5/10/15-14/10/15			
Sponsor/Client	MDA Consulting on behalf of their client, Garfwish Ltd					
Project Manager	Andrew Leonard					
Project Supervisor	Steve White					
Period Summary						
			PM	Modern		
<p>Summary</p> <p><i>Archaeology South-East were commissioned by MDA Consulting on behalf of their client, Garfwish Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land at 55 Pitfield Street in the London Borough of Hackney. The field work took place between the 5th and 14th of October, 2015.</i></p> <p><i>No significant archaeological features, deposits or find were recorded. The work consisted of the reduction of the ground level on site to c. 2.00m below that of the old concrete slab level. Natural Hackney gravels were observed across all of the site at a depth of c. 1.60m below slab level. One small area of brick floor was recorded which is thought likely to be the base of a post-medieval cess pit. Various modern walls were also observed.</i></p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-226998

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at 55 Pitfield Street, Hackney, N1
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East were commissioned by MDA Consulting on behalf of their client, Garfwish Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land at 55 Pitfield Street in the London Borough of Hackney. The field work took place between the 5th and 14th of October, 2015. No significant archaeological features, deposits or find were recorded. The work consisted of the reduction of the ground level on site to c. 2.00m below that of the old concrete slab level. Natural Hackney gravels were observed across all of the site at a depth of c. 1.60m below slab level. One small area of brick floor was recorded which is thought likely to be the base of a post-medieval cess pit. Various modern walls were also observed.
Project dates	Start: 05-10-2015 End: 14-10-2015
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	PIT12 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	FLOOR Post Medieval
Significant Finds	N/A None
Methods & techniques	"Sample 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 HACKNEY HACKNEY 55 Pitfield Street
Postcode	N1
Study area	500 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3301 8285 51.528377629574 -0.082324240626 51 31 42 N 000 04 56 W Polygon

Height OD / Depth Min: 15.4m Max: 16m

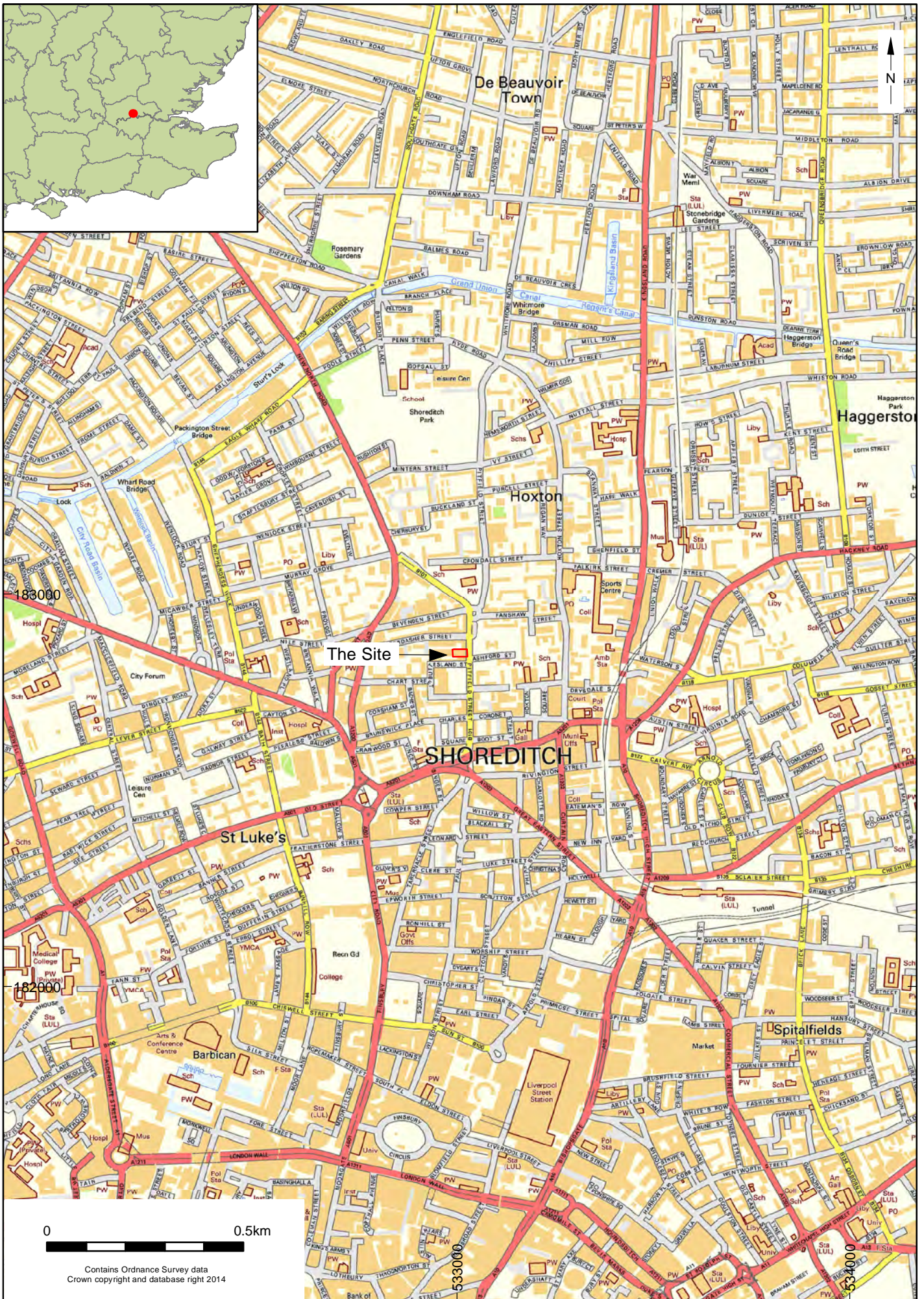
Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	MDA Consulting
Project design originator	ASE
Project director/manager	Andrew Leonard
Project supervisor	Steve White
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	MDA consulting

Project archives

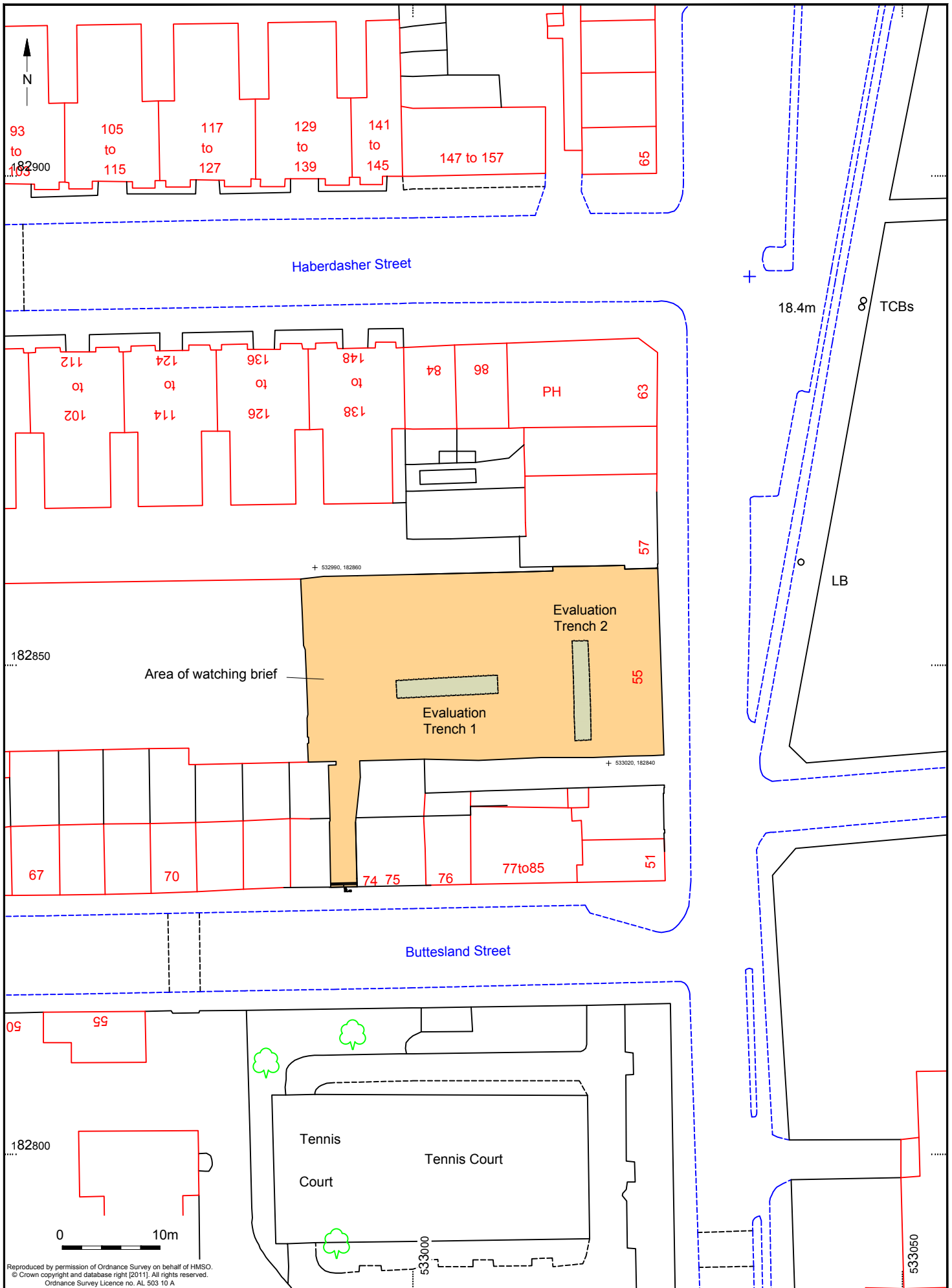
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Archive ID	PI12
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	PIT12
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic", "Survey"
Digital Media available	"GIS", "Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	PI12
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic", "Survey"
Paper Media available	"Correspondence", "Notebook - Excavation", ' Research', ' General Notes', "Report"

Entered by	Steve White (stephen.white@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	19 October 2015



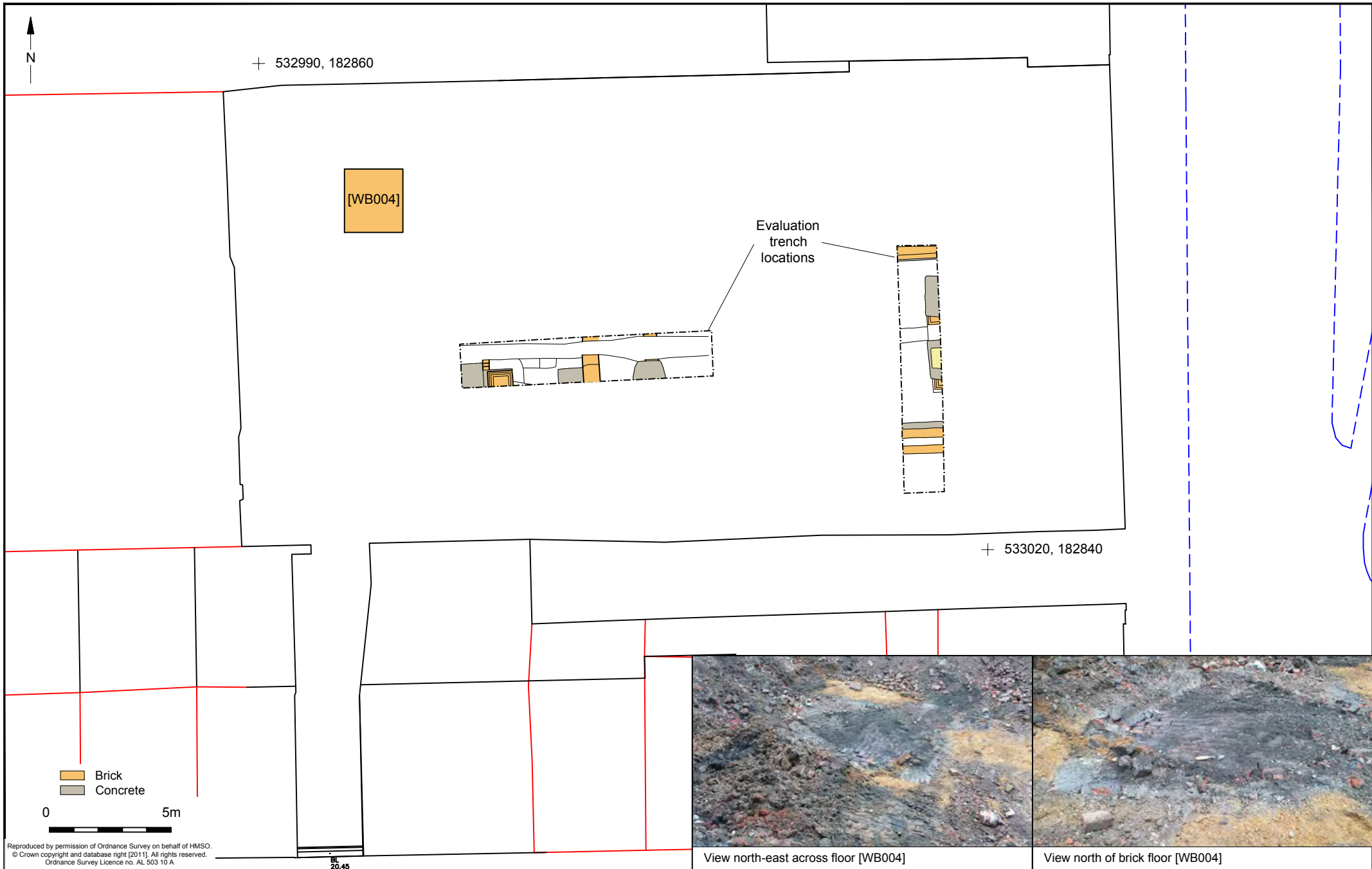
© Archaeology South-East		55 Pitfield Street, Hackney	
Project Ref: 7763	October 2015	Site location	
Report No: 2015386	Drawn by: DJH		

Fig. 1



Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO.
 © Crown copyright and database right (2011). All rights reserved.
 Ordnance Survey Licence no. AL 503 10 A

© Archaeology South-East		55 Pitfield Street, Shoreditch	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 7763	October 2015	Watching brief area	
Report Ref: 2015386	Drawn by: DJH		



Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO.
 © Crown copyright and database right [2011]. All rights reserved.
 Ordnance Survey Licence no. AL 503 10 A

© Archaeology South-East		55 Pitfield Street, Shoreditch		Fig. 3
Project Ref: 7763	October 2015	Location and photos of brick floor observed during watching brief		
Report Ref: 2015386	Drawn by: DJH			



View north-west across site



View east across site



View north-east across site

Sussex Office

Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex BN41 1DR
tel: +44(0)1273 426830
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
www.archaeologyse.co.uk

Essex Office

27 Eastways
Witham
Essex
CM8 3YQ
tel: +44(0)1376 331470
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
www.archaeologyse.co.uk

London Office

Centre for Applied Archaeology
UCL Institute of Archaeology
31-34 Gordon Square
London WC1H 0PY
tel: +44(0)20 7679 4778
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
www.ucl.ac.uk/caa

