

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

S O U T H

**126A Asylum Road, Peckham,
London Borough of Southwark**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Felicity Howell

Site Code: ASM12

(TQ 3496 7684)

**126A Asylum Road, Peckham,
London Borough of Southwark**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr John O'Shea

by Felicity Howell

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

SiteCodeASM12

October 2012

Summary

Site name: 126A Asylum Road, Peckham, London Borough of Southwark

Grid reference: TQ 3496 7684

Planning reference: 10-AP-3584

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 10th July to 3rd October 2012

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Felicity Howell

Site code: ASM12

Summary of results: A buried soil horizon was recorded beneath modern made ground throughout most of the site, apart from the north-west corner, where there had been some truncation in the late 19th or 20th century. No finds or features of archaeological interest were revealed during the watching brief.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Museum of London in due course, with accession code ASM12.

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

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126A Asylum Road, Peckham, London Borough of Southwark An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Felicity Howell

Report 11/135

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 126A Asylum Road, Peckham, London Borough of Southwark (TQ 3496 7684) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by the property's owner, Mr John O'Shea of 15 Williamson Court, Borrett Close, London, SE17 3JE.

Planning permission (10-AP-3584) has been gained from the London Borough of Southwark for the construction of a new residential property on the site. The permission was subject to a condition (3) relating to archaeology, which required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work prior to the commencement of groundworks. Dr Chris Constable, Senior Archaeology Officer with Southwark Council, advised that this should take the form of a watching brief, to be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5, 2010), and the Borough Council's policy on archaeology. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by the Southwark Council Archaeological Officer, Dr Chris Constable. It is acknowledged that PPS5 has now been superseded by the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF, 2012). The fieldwork was undertaken by Felicity Howell and Sean Wallis between 10th July and 3rd October 2012 and the site code is ASM12. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Museum of London in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site lies on the west side of Asylum Road, just to the north west of Queen's Road Station (Fig. 1). The site is roughly L-shaped in plan, and is accessed from Asylum Road (Fig. 2). It is currently occupied by a narrow building which most recently functioned as a car mechanics garage. Most of the external walls of the building are to be retained within the new development. The site is relatively flat and lies at a height of approximately 5m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey, the site is located close to the boundary of two geological deposits, with brickearth being recorded to the north and alluvium to the south (BGS 1981). However, the underlying geology revealed during the watching brief consisted solely of mid orange brown brickearth.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location close to the suggested route of the Roman road from London to Lewes (Margary route no.14), which was built to serve the corn producing regions to the south of London, and the iron working areas of the Weald. It is believed to have left Watling Street (Margary route 1c and the present Old Kent Road) close to Peckham, and went in a south-easterly direction towards Nunhead (Margary 1955; Vince 2001). A Roman ditch system has been recorded at Asylum Road, to the north of the present site (MoLAS 2000). The site is located between the historic settlements of Peckham and Hatcham, which grew up along the west and east banks of the River Peck, respectively. The river was largely culverted in the first half of the 19th century, and historic maps indicate that the area around the site was open ground until it was developed in the later part of that century.

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the watching brief were to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This was to include the monitoring of footing trenches, along with any areas of ground reduction. Sufficient time was to be allowed within the developer's and groundworker's schedules to record any archaeological features revealed.

Results

Over the course of the watching brief, the footing trenches for the new structure were excavated (Fig. 3). In general the footing trenches were between 0.45m and 0.60m wide and varied in their eventual depth, due to the design requirements of the new development. At the western end of the site a brick floor and concrete slab had been removed to reveal a deposit of 20th-century made ground. The made ground varied in depth, but was up to 0.60m thick, and generally lay above a buried soil horizon, up to 0.2m thick (Fig. 4). The only area where the buried soil was not encountered was the north-west corner of the building, where truncation dating from the late 19th or early 20th century was recorded (Pl. 1). This truncation had cut into the natural geology, which consisted of mid orange brown silty clay (brickearth).

The stratigraphy recorded throughout the rest of the building was similar, although the depth of made ground beneath the concrete slab was generally less, averaging at about 0.25m (Pl. 2). Once again, a buried soil horizon was recorded immediately above the underlying brickearth natural geology, apart from those areas where it had been removed by the existing footings and various service runs.

No archaeological features were revealed during the watching brief, and the late 19th and 20th century material observed in the buried soil and truncated area in the north-west corner were retained on site.

Finds

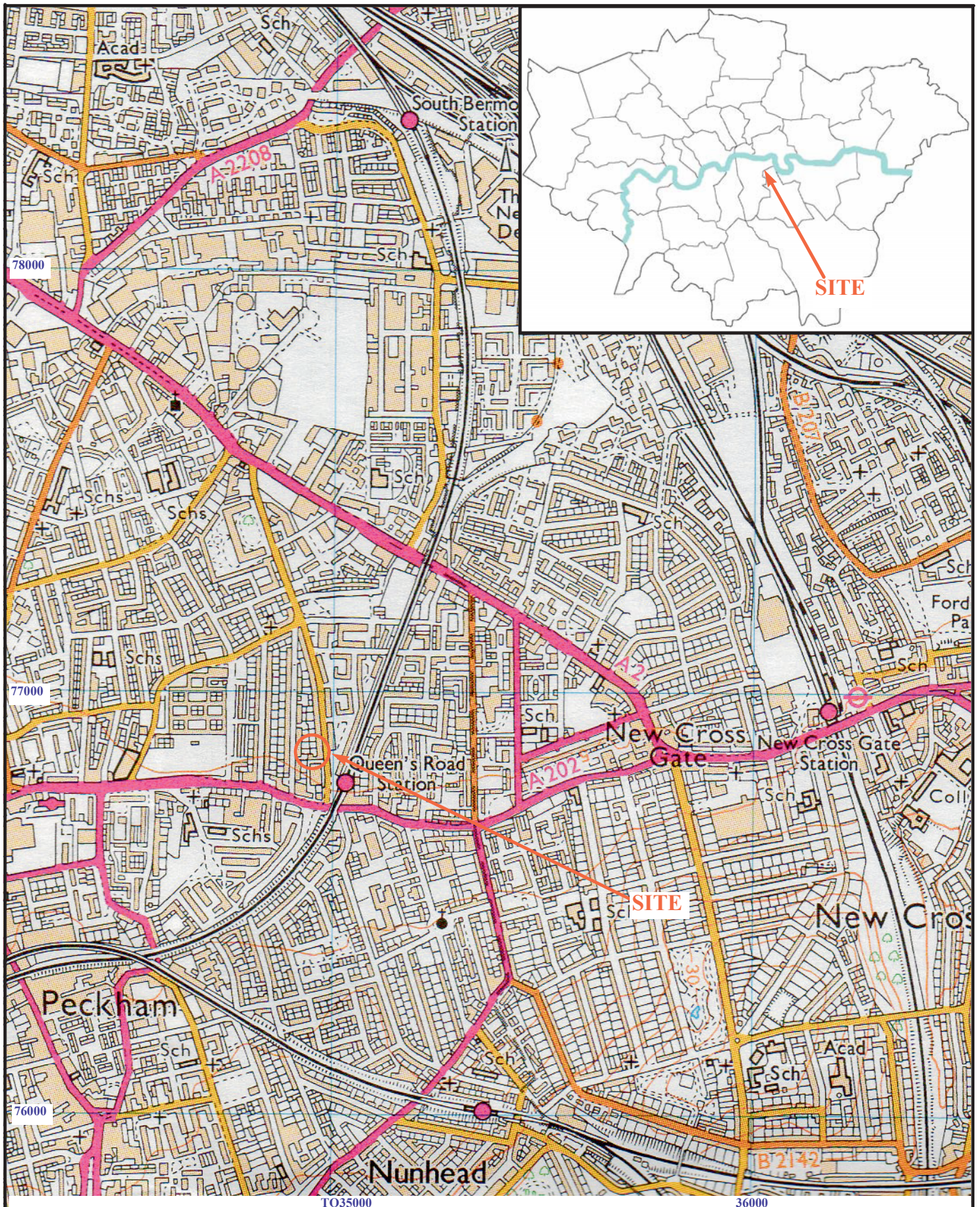
Sherds of late 19th or early 20th century pottery were observed within the buried soil horizon and the area of truncation in the north-western corner of the site. These were retained on site.

Conclusion

The watching brief at 126a Asylum Road successfully examined those parts of the site which were to be most affected by the new development. No archaeological finds or features were encountered and, apart from an area of late 19th or early 20th century truncation in the north-west corner of the site, the ground beneath the existing building appears to have been relatively undisturbed in the past.

References

- BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 270, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Margary, I D, 1955, *Roman Roads in Britain*, London
- MoLAS, 2000, *The archaeology of Greater London; an assessment of archaeological evidence for human presence in the area now covered by Greater London*, Museum of London Archaeology Service monograph
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department of Communities and Local Government, London (TSO)
- PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, Department of Communities and Local Government Planning Policy Statement 5, London (TSO)
- Riches, C, 2011, *The Times Atlas of London*, London
- Vince, A, 2001, *Roman Roads of Surrey*, Midhurst



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Figure 1. Location of site within Southwark and London.
Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 161 at 1:12500
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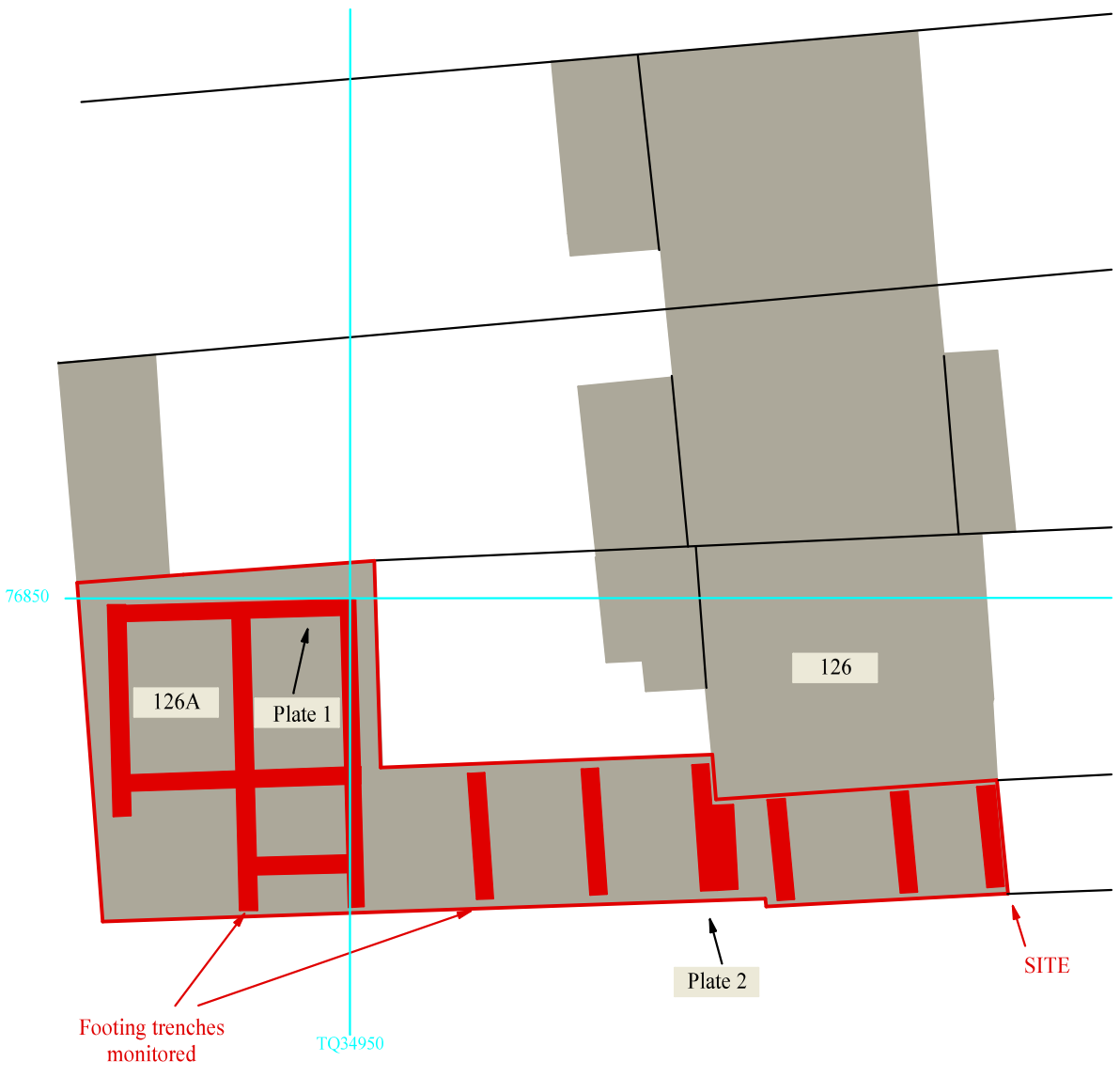


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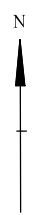
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site

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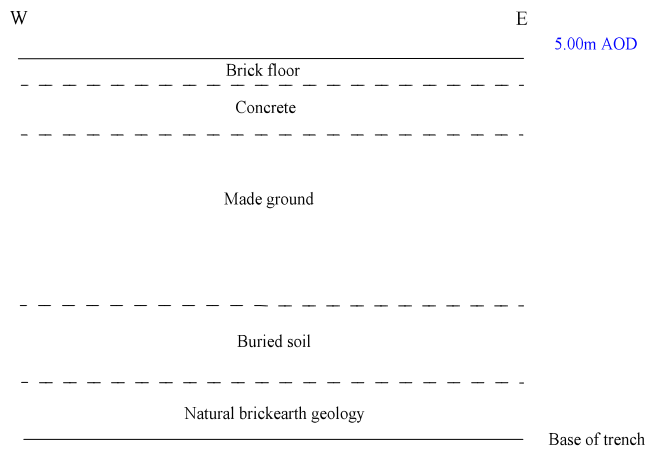


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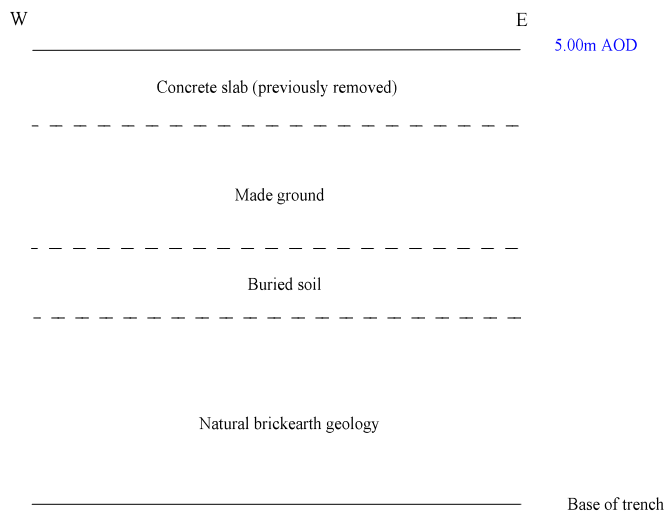
Figure 3. Location of areas monitored.



Footing trench at west end



Footing trench at east end



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Figure 4. Representative sections.





Plate 1. Corner of northern footing trench, looking north, Scale: 0.5m.



Plate 2. Central wider footing trench, looking north, Scale: 0.5m.

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Plates 1 and 2 (locations shown on Fig. 3).

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC
↓	↓



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