

Archaeological Evaluation Report

ATHLONE HOUSE HIGHGATE

For CgMs Consulting

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L~P:ARCHÆOLOGY

Archaeological Evaluation Report

ATHLONE HOUSE HIGHGATE

Client: CgMs Consulting

Local Authority: London Borough of Camden

NGR: 527682, 187461

Planning App: Pre-Application

Author: Barbora Brederova

Doc Ref: LP2597L-AER-v1.2

Site Code: AHN17

Date: November 17

L-P:ARCHAEOLOGY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Figures

Table of Plates

Table of Appendices

Abstract

1. Introduction
2. Site Background
3. Aims
4. Methodology
5. Results
6. Finds
7. Discussion
8. Summary and Conclusions
9. Archive

Sources Consulted

Figures

Appendices

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1 - Site Location - General

Figure 2 - Site Location - Detail

Figure 3 - Trench Locations

Figure 4 - Two parallel furrows [2] in Test Pit 4

Figure 5 - Representative Sections

Figure 6 - Plan and a Representative Section of Trenches 2 and 3

TABLE OF PLATES

Plate 1 - Tennis court with associated drainage

Plate 2 - South facing section of Trench 3

Plate 3 - Two parallel furrows [2] in Test Pit 4

TABLE OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Oasis Form

Abstract

Archaeological evaluation works were carried out on land at Athlone House, Highgate, London. The evaluation was implemented in order to progress the discharge of the archaeological planning condition. It was carried out by L-P: Archaeology. This report summarises the process and results of the work. It has been prepared by Barbora Brederova of L - P : Archaeology on behalf of CgMs Consulting.

The evaluation objective was to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains on the site, with particular regard to any which would have been of sufficient importance to require preservation in situ. No such remains were identified.

Archaeological remains of low significance were present in one of the trenches, comprising of two shallow gullies dated to the Post Medieval period.

It is recommended that no further fieldwork is required.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report has been prepared by Barbora Brederova of L - P : Archaeology on behalf of CgMs Consulting. The fieldwork was carried out by Barbora Brederova (Project Officer) and John Layt (Surveyor) of L - P : Archaeology in October 2017. The Project Manager was Guy Hunt.
- 1.2. This document sets out the results of an archaeological evaluation on the grounds of Athlone House, Highgate, London, N6, hereafter referred to as 'the site' (FIGURE 1, FIGURE 2). The site is centred on National Grid Reference 527682, 187461. The size of the site is approximately 3.3 hectares.
- 1.3. The site code allocated by the Museum of London is AHN17.
- 1.4. The work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CgMs Consulting (2017).
- 1.5. L - P : Archaeology wish to thank the following people for their help and support during this project: Richard von Kalinowski-Meager of CgMs Consulting for commissioning and supporting the project.

2. Site Background

2.1.PLANNING

2.1.1. It is proposed to re-develop the grounds of Athlone House, Highgate, London for residential purposes.

2.1.2. Planning ref 2016/3587/P includes the following condition relating to archaeology:

Prior to the commencement of development, a programme of archaeological investigation including the details of the suitably qualified investigating body to carry out such archaeological works as required shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall then only take place in accordance with such details as have been approved.

Reason: Important archaeological remains may exist on this site. Accordingly the Council wishes to secure the provision of archaeological investigation and the subsequent recording of the remains prior to development in accordance with the requirements of policy CS14 of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policy DP25 of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

2.1.3. Communications with the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) Officer for the London Borough of Camden have indicated the need for further archaeological mitigation works associated with the likely impact of the redevelopment proposals, in the form of evaluation, in order to progress the discharge of the above planning condition.

2.1.4. This document describes work carried out in accordance with the agreed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared in accordance with relevant government policy guidelines, in order to support the application (CGMS CONSULTING 2017). It details a programme of archaeological evaluation, with the aim of clarifying the presence/absence, date, condition and character of any archaeological remains surviving on site was conducted.

2.2.GEOLOGY

2.2.1. The WSI states that the site's underlying geology is identified as London Clay

(CGMS CONSULTING 2017).

2.2.2. The results of the evaluation confirmed the presence of deposits of orange yellow silty clay. The surface of the natural geology frequently appears naturally disrupted by rooting activities or oxidised due to the presence of water.

2.3. TOPOGRAPHY

2.3.1. The site is located on a hill that slopes from east to west, and from north to south. The peak of the rise is at c. 112.45m AOD. Southwestern corner of the site represents the lowest point, at c. 93.12m AOD, and the west limit of the site is at c. 96.59m AOD.

2.4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.4.1. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by the CgMs Consulting in support of the application. It included a search for entries within 750m of the site (CGMS CONSULTING 2017).

2.4.2. The results of the DBA were summarised in the WSI the following summary of the results from the DBA are included here for the convenience of the reader.

PREHISTORIC

2.4.3. The study site has been identified as having a potential for the prehistoric periods, as a result of the identification of residual artefacts within a defined study area.

ROMAN

2.4.4. There are no sites or finds dated to the Roman period discovered in the vicinity of the site.

EARLY MEDIEVAL AND MEDIEVAL

2.4.5. Archaeological evaluation in 2005 immediately to the east of the existing site boundary revealed brick foundations together with an unidentified below ground brick structure with a central iron ring (CGMS CONSULTING 2017).

POST MEDIEVAL AND MODERN

- 2.4.6. The site remained in heathland during the 18th century. By the 1860s, it became a part of the Fitzroy Estate, and by 1862 it was a ground for two residential properties and a landscape garden.
- 2.4.7. The existing building was constructed in 1871, as Cean Wood Towers. Following a succession of ownerships the house was converted into a hotel during World War One, and after a return to private ownership was used by the Air Ministry from 1942, and afterwards as a nurses school, followed by further hospital use until recently.
- 2.4.8. The layout of the garden in the 1870s was attributed to Edward Milner and James Pulham, with planting from the 1920s attributed to Gertrude Jekyll (CGMS CONSULTING 2017).

3. Aims

3.1. The general aim of the evaluation was to establish whether any archaeological sites exist within the site, with particular regard to any which are of sufficient importance to require preservation *in situ*.

3.2. The specific aims of the evaluation, as specified in the WSI (CGMS CONSULTING 2017), were:

- ◆ to determine the presence, nature and significance of any surviving archaeological remains of any period liable to be threatened by the proposed development;
- ◆ 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;
- ◆ to advance our knowledge of the archaeology of the region through the application of appropriate scientific dating techniques;
- ◆ to understand the impact of development since the eighteenth century;
- ◆ to provide sufficient information to devise a methodology for further archaeological mitigation (if necessary).

4. Methodology

4.1. For a full description of the archaeological methodology please refer to the WSI (CGMS CONSULTING 2017).

4.2. A series of trial trenches and test pits were excavated in order to target specific areas of proposed development (FIGURE 3):

Trench 1 = 20m x 1.8m (targeting the proposed new garden house)

Trench 2 = 20m x 1.8m (targeting proposed ground source heat pump arrangement)

Trench 3 = 20m x 1.8m (targeting proposed ground source heat pump arrangement)

Trench 4 = 20m x 1.8m (targeting proposed fountain)

Test pits 1-6: 2m x 2m (targeting proposed new service runs)

4.3. The trenches were excavated by means of a mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket. All mechanical excavation was conducted under the supervision of Barbora Brederova.

5. Results

- 5.1. Archaeological remains of low significance were present in one test pit. All other test pits and trenches revealed no significant archaeological remains.
- 5.2. Deposit numbers are given in (parentheses) and cut numbers in [square brackets]. All heights are quoted in metres above Ordnance Datum (m OD). The trench location plan is illustrated in FIGURE 3.
- 5.3. The general stratigraphic sequence observed across the grassland in the conservation area was topsoil directly overlying natural geology. In the carpark area next to the standing building, various demolition and modern make-up layers overlie natural geology and are covered either by lawn, tarmac or concrete.
- 5.4. The natural geology, consisting of a yellowish orange silty clay (4), was present at 99.57m - 112.08m OD.
- 5.5. Mostly there were clear interfaces between the deposits, topsoil and natural. Given the characteristics of the geology it is highly unlikely that any archaeological deposits were present but not recorded.

TRENCH 1

- 5.6. Trench 1 (20m x 1.8m) was located on the west side of the site on a roughly north south alignment. No features of archaeological significance were present in this trench. Natural clay (4) was recorded at 99.57m OD. Seven modern drains of no archaeological significance were identified. They extend in parallel in a north-west south-east direction and are associated with the construction of the existing tennis court. The drains are 0.2m wide and the distances between them are 2.80m. Their likely purpose is to prevent water flooding the landscaped location of the tennis court at the bottom of the sloping grounds. In order to create a space for the tennis court, the area has been lowered down by 2.58m, from 102.26m to 99.68m OD, and terraced.



Plate 1 - Tennis court with associated drainage

TRENCH 2

5.7. Trench 2 (20m x 1.8m) was located on the east side of the site on a north-east south-west alignment. No significant archaeological features were identified. A thick layer of redeposited natural, a likely levelling deposit, was present in the south section of the trench. Construction rubble within the deposit appeared to be of a 20th century production. The central section of the trench was truncated by a large modern drain cut extending from east to west and also appears in Trench 3. Within Trench 2 natural clay (4) was recorded between 111.71m and 111.15m OD (FIGURE 6).

TRENCH 3

5.8. Trench 3 (20m x 1.8m) was located to the east of trench 2 and was on a north-east south-west alignment. No archaeological remains have been identified in this trench. It consisted of stony make-up deposits directly overlying natural clay. The centre of the trench was truncated by modern drain cut of east west orientation. The cut is 5.8m wide and more than 1.2m deep with a clay drain pipe at the depth of 1.2m. Natural clay (4) was recorded between 112.08m OD and 111.99m OD (FIGURE 6).

TRENCH 4

5.9. Trench 4 (20m x 1.8m) was located to the south of trenches 2 and 3 and was on a north-east south-west alignment. No significant archaeological remains have been identified. The trench was truncated by two modern drains of north-west south-east direction, and a modern service pipe of north south direction. The trench revealed various modern make-up deposits overlying garden soil (6) that was situated above natural geology (4). Natural geology (4) was recorded between 111.64m OD and 111.37m OD (FIGURE 5).



Plate 2 - South facing section of Trench 3

TEST PIT 1

5.10. Test Pit 1 (2m x 2m) was located to the east of Trench 1, on a terrace above the tennis court. Apart from a residual sherd of a prehistoric pottery recovered from the interface between topsoil (5) and natural deposit (4), no archaeological remains were present in the trench. The 0.2m thick topsoil (5) directly overlaid natural clay (4) at 102.90m OD.

TEST PIT 2

5.11. Test Pit 2 (2m x 2m) was located to the east of Test Pit 1. The trench revealed no archaeological remains and finds. A 0.2m thick topsoil (5) directly overlaid natural clay (4) at elevation between 105.55m OD and 105.75m OD (FIGURE 5).

TEST PIT 3

5.12. Test Pit 3 (2m x 2m) was located to the east of Test Pit 2. The trench revealed no archaeological remains and finds. A 0.25m thick topsoil (5) directly overlaid natural clay (4) at elevation between 107.00m OD 107.10m OD.

TEST PIT 4

5.13. Test Pit 4 (2m x 2m) was situated to the east of Test Pit 3. Beneath the 0.15m thick topsoil (5) is 0.2m deep levelling deposit (1). It is associated with two underlying parallel gullies [2] that extend in east west direction, towards the bottom of the slope. Due to their orientation and the fact that they don't contain organic materials, it can be assumed that these do not represent plant bedding or similar. The fill of the gullies (3) closely resembles natural, which suggests that they were manually backfilled. Fragments of glass and clay tobacco pipe recovered from levelling deposit (1) date the gullies to the Post Medieval period. They are dug directly into natural clay (4) that reaches the height of 109.30m OD in this trench (FIGURE 4).



Plate 3 - Two parallel furrows [2] in Test Pit 4

TEST PIT 5

5.14. Test Pit 5 (2m x 2m) was excavated 66m to the north-east of Test Pit 4, to the west of Trench 2. It revealed no significant archaeological remains. A more than 1.2m deep modern demolition deposit directly overlies natural geology (4). The interface between these two deposits gently slopes down eastwards, which suggest the possibility that the rubble is situated within a cut. The top of natural clay (4) reaches 113.00m OD in the west section and 112.53m OD in the east section (FIGURE 5).

6. Finds

- 6.1. All finds, having been assessed on site as mid 19th century or later, were discarded on site.
- 6.2. Levelling deposit (1) associated with two gullies [2] located within Test Pit 4 revealed fragments of Post Medieval tobacco pipe and glass.
- 6.3. Test Pit 1 produced a Prehistoric pottery sherd with no associated archaeological deposits.

7. Discussion

- 7.1. The residual Prehistoric pottery sherd recovered from Test Pit 1 coincides with the habitation and utilisation of the Thames Valley during the Bronze and Iron Ages (CGMS CONSULTING 2017). The sherd is not associated with an archaeological context, thus more detailed interpretation is not possible.
- 7.2. Similarly, it is not possible to draw a precise interpretation of the two parallel furrows recorded in Test Pit 4 to the west of the standing building. Most likely, they do not represent garden features, and they are not depicted on any of the London's historical maps. It therefore might be assumed that the furrows were in use for only a short period of time and/or were not visible on the surface of the grassland.
- 7.3. The topography of the land reveals substantial landscaping, which became also evident from the archaeological investigation of the trenches. The western limit of the land was terraced in order to construct the tennis court and stone garden features. A series of drains serve this low area to keep it dry from rain water. The top of the hill to the east of the standing building has been levelled up in order to create a flat surface. The trenches revealed various modern levelling deposits with drains serving the house sloping down to the south and east.

8. Summary and Conclusions

- 8.1. The ground of Athlone House, Highgate, London was proposed for redevelopment for residential use.
- 8.2. In order to determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains on site an archaeological evaluation was undertaken.
- 8.3. A low level of archaeological remains of low significance have been found in the evaluation. These include two parallel gullies and a Prehistoric pottery sherd with no other associated archaeological remains and one residual sherd of Prehistoric pottery.
- 8.4. The remains on the site do not require preservation *in situ*.
- 8.5. Based on these results, further fieldwork is not recommended on the site in order to mitigate against the impact of the development.

9. Archive

9.1. The paper archive consists of:

3 x Photographic Register

1 x CDR digital Images

1 x Context Register

6 x Context Sheets

9 x Trench Sheets

9.2. The archive is to be deposited with the Museum of London under code AHN17.

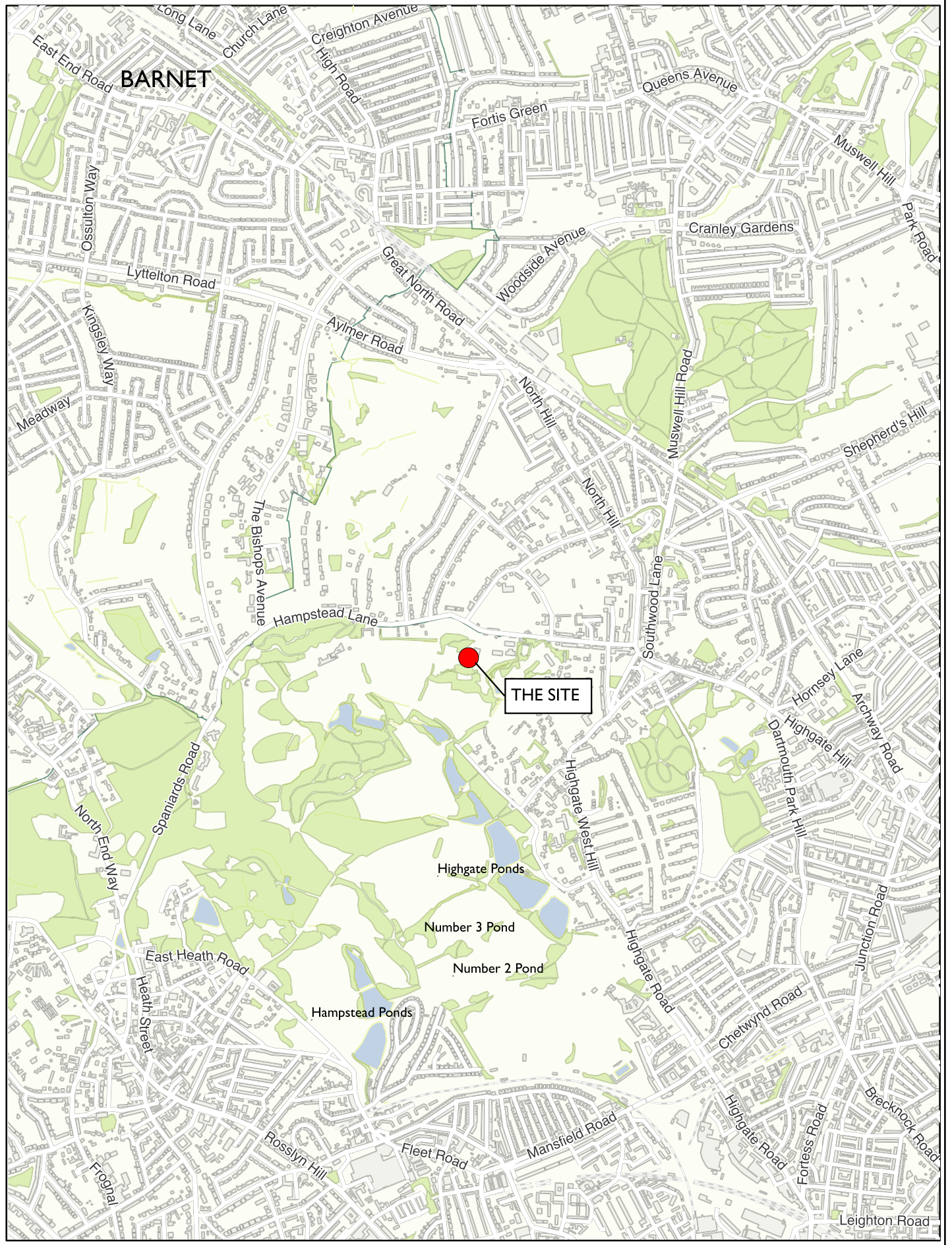
SOURCES CONSULTED

BIBLIOGRAPHIC

CgMs CONSULTING, 2017. *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation: Land at Athlone House, Hampstead Lane, Highgate, London, N6*. London: CgMs Consulting.

FIGURES

FIGURE I // Site Location - General



PROJECT // 2597L - Athlone House

DESCRIPTION // Site Location

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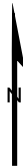
DOC REF: LP2597L-AER-v1

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FIGURE 2 // Site Location - Detail



0 100 m



PROJECT // 2597L - Athlone House

DESCRIPTION // Site Location - Detail

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FIGURE 3 // Trench Locations



0 50 m



PROJECT // 2597L - Athlone House

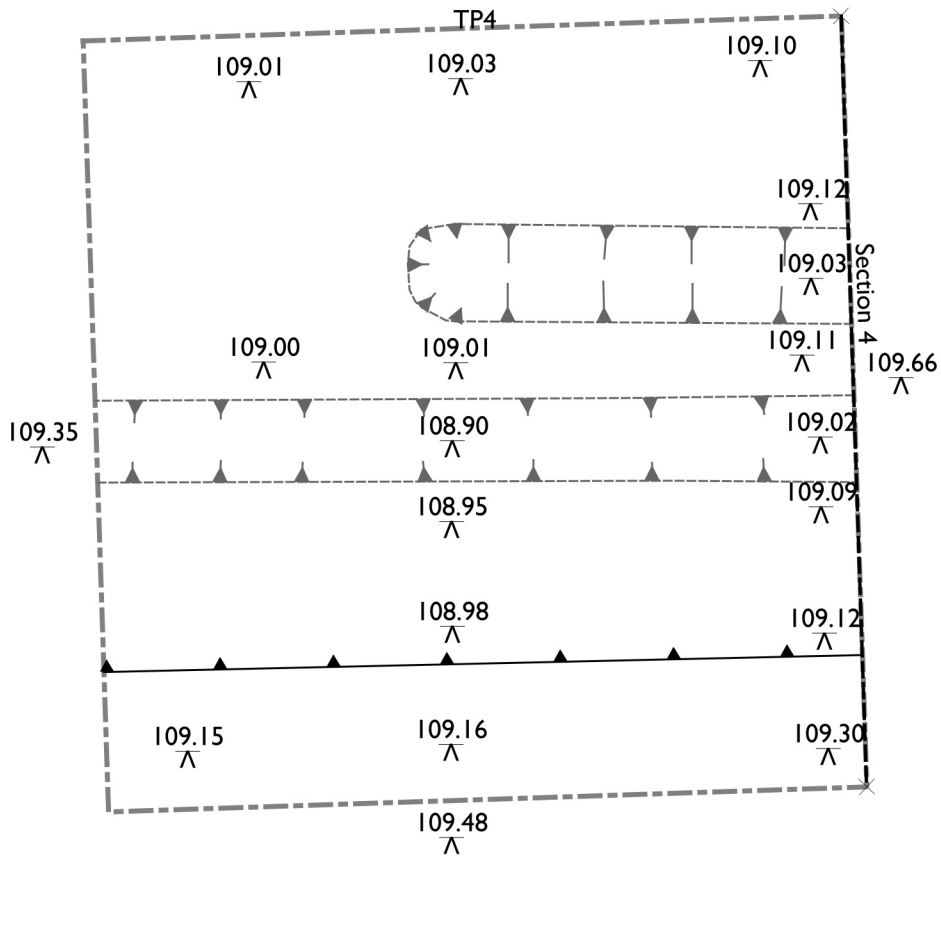
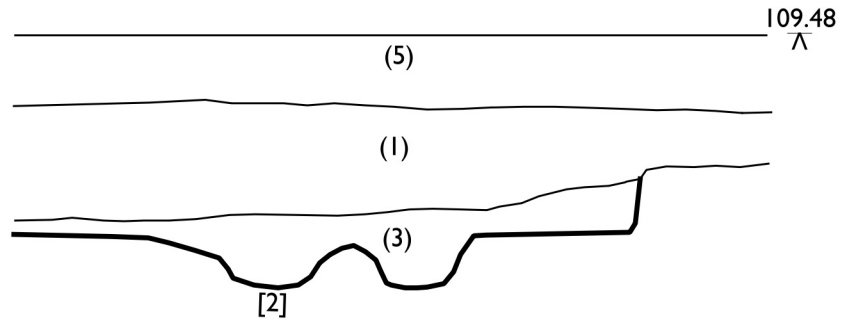
DESCRIPTION // Trench Locations

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Section 4, West Facing



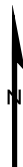
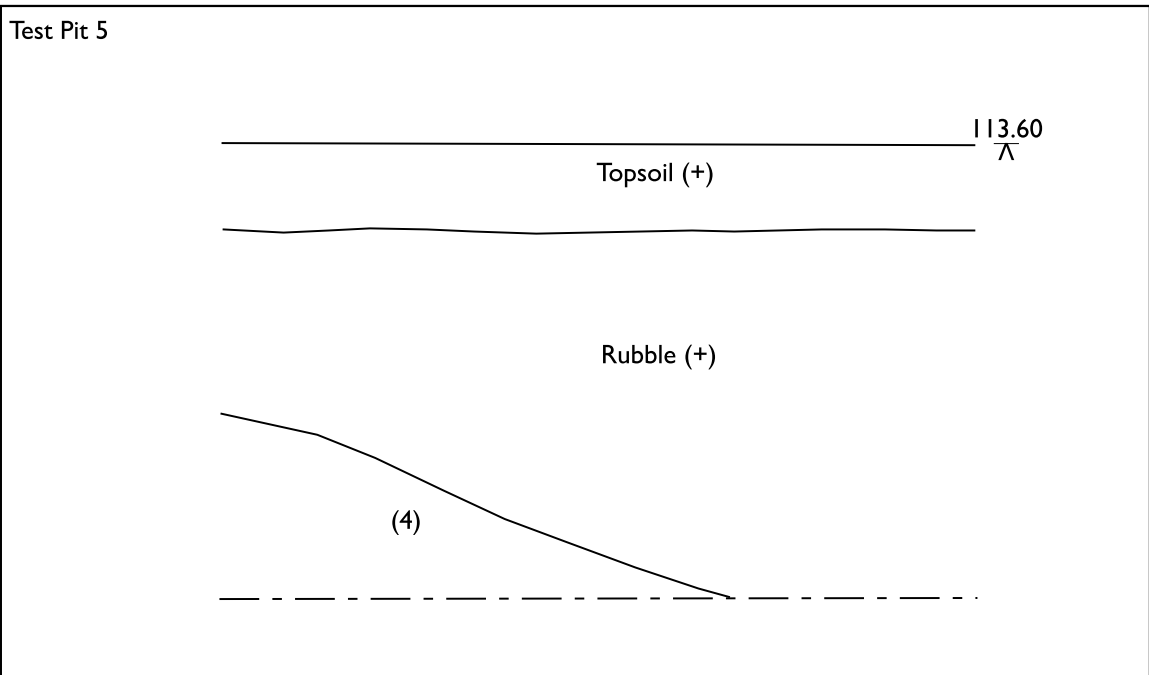
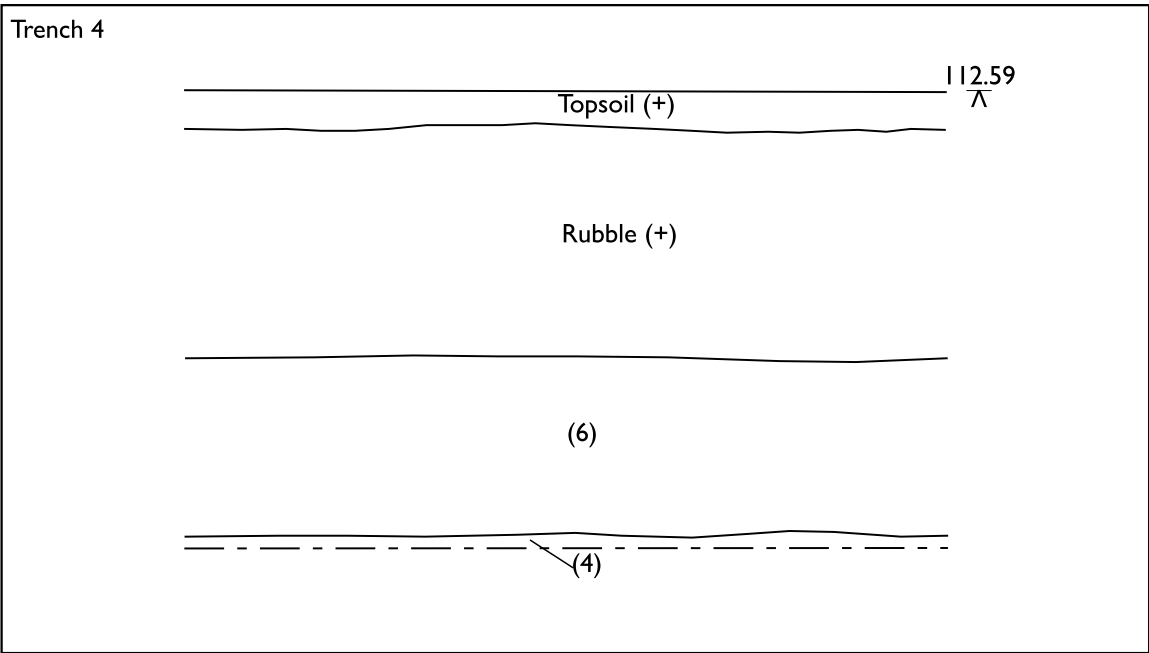
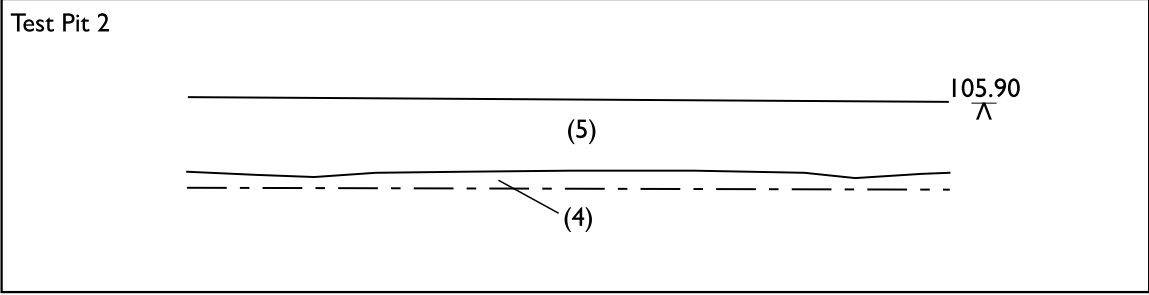
PROJECT // 2597L - Athlone House

DESCRIPTION // Gullies [2] in Test Pit 4

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PROJECT // 2597L - Athlone House

DESCRIPTION // Representative Sections

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APPENDIX I

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OASIS ID: Iparchae1-300612

Project details

Project name	Athlone House, Highgate
Short description of the project	Archaeological evaluation works were carried out on land at Athlone House, Highgate, London. The programme was implemented in response to an archaeological condition on the planning permission. Archaeological remains of low significance were present in four of the trenches, these consisted of a residual Prehistoric pottery and two Post-Medieval gullies.
Project dates	Start: 23-10-2017 End: 30-10-2017
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	AHN17 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	2597L - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Conservation Area
Site status (other)	Area of Archaeological Research
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	GULLIES Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches","Test Pits"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	Pre-application

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CAMDEN HAMPSTEAD Athlone House, Highgate
Postcode	N6
Study area	3.3 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 527682 187461 50.947307336163 0.174983619098 50 56 50 N 000 10 29 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 99.58m Max: 112.08m

Project creators

Name of Organisation L - P : Archaeology

Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body

Project design originator CgMs

Project director/manager Guy Hunt

Project supervisor Barbora Brederova

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient L - P : Archaeology

Digital Contents "Survey"

Digital Media available "Database","GIS","Images raster / digital photography"

Paper Archive recipient Museum of London

Paper Archive ID AHN17

Paper Contents "other"

Paper Media available "Context sheet","Drawing","Matrices","Plan","Report","Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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OASIS:

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