

Archaeological Evaluation Report

55-57 TOWER BRIDGE ROAD BERMONDSEY

For 5557 TBR Ltd

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L~P:ARCHÆOLOGY

Archaeological Evaluation Report

55-57 TOWER BRIDGE RD BERMONDSEY

Client: 5557TBR Ltd

Local Authority: London Borough of Southwark

NGR: 533124, 179164

Planning App: 15/AP/4391

Author: C. Barton

Doc Ref: LPI878L-AER-v1.2

Site Code: TOR16

Date: May 2016

L-P:ARCHAEOLOGY

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Abstract

This report contains the results of an Archaeological Evaluation carried out at 55 - 57 Tower Bridge Road, Bermondsey, SE1 4TL within the London Borough of Southwark by L - P : Archaeology between the 17th and 18th March 2014 on behalf of 5557 TBR Ltd. The site code allocated for the evaluation was TOR16.

The site lies in an Archaeological Priority Zone, within an area that would have been bordering the Bermondsey Eyot. The area has a generally high archaeological potential for Prehistoric and Post Medieval palaeoenvironmental material. The site and immediate area were not significantly developed until the later Post Medieval period. The Local Planning Authority therefore imposed a condition on the planning consent for the redevelopment of the site.

The objectives of the evaluation were to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains on the study site and where present to characterise these.

The truncated remains of a late 19th century drain were recorded in one of the trenches. No other archaeological remains were identified during the works. The site was covered in a thick deposit of mid 20th century building rubble.

No further archaeological works are likely to be required on the site.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This archaeological evaluation report has been prepared by Cornelius Barton on behalf of 5557 TBR Ltd.
- 1.2. The site is located at 55 - 57 Tower Bridge Road, Bermondsey, London, SE1 3LP (hereafter “the site”) (SEE FIGURE 1 & FIGURE 2) in the London Borough of Southwark (LBS). The site is centred on National Grid Reference 533124, 179164.
- 1.3. Fieldwork was carried out by L - P : Archaeology on 1st July 2016 and was supervised by Cornelius Barton.
- 1.4. The site code allocated by the Museum of London is TOR16.
- 1.5. The evaluation consisted of the excavation of two trenches, one measuring 12m by 2m, the other 13m by 2m (SEE FIGURE 3). The work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Audrey Charvet of L - P : Archaeology (CHARVET, 2016) and submitted to Southwark Council in advance of works.

2. Site Background

2.1.PLANNING

2.1.1. Full planning consent has been granted by LBS for redevelopment of the site. The application reference is 15/AP/4391.

2.1.2. The consent was granted subject to conditions, of relevance in this case are:

CONDITION 3

Before any work hereby authorised begins, the applicant shall secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological evaluation works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation 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 Strategic Policy 12 – Design and Conservation of the Core Strategy 2011, Saved Policy 3.19 Archaeology of the Southwark Plan 2007 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

CONDITION 4

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

Reason: In order that the details of the programme of works for the archaeological mitigation are suitable with regard to the impacts of the proposed development and the nature and extent of the archaeological remains on site in accordance with Strategic Policy 12 – Design and Conservation of The Core Strategy 2011, Saved Policy 3.19 Archaeology of the Southwark Local Plan 2007 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

2.1.A Written Scheme of Investigation was produced in response these conditions. The works described in this document constitute an evaluation as required in condition 4. Based on the results further mitigation is considered unnecessary.

2.2.GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.2.1. The British Geological Survey GeoIndex shows the site to be located on bedrock of Lambeth Group clay, silt, sand and gravel with superficial deposits of clay, silt and sand (BRITISH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, 2014).
- 2.2.2. The site is situated within the lower Thames Valley and is located approximately 1 km south of the River Thames in Bermondsey.
- 2.2.3. Previous archaeological and geotechnical investigation for the area surrounding the site have allowed some modelling of the palaeo-topography of Bermondsey, which consisted of numerous low lying gravel islands or “eyots” that were separated by braided channels, mudflats and marshes (MADIGAN, 2014A)
- 2.2.4. The results obtained from the neighbouring archaeological sites at Rephidim Street and Hartley's Jam Factory suggest that the site was positioned on the edge of a wetland environment, probably on a gravel island or peninsula known as Bermondsey Eyot form the dry mainland to the west and south (COWIE AND CORCORAN, 2008, P. 161). As a consequence the Pleistocene gravel is presumably overlain by riverine sediments of Holocene date.
- 2.2.5. The slab level was measured at 2.8m AOD.

2.3.ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.3.1. A desk based assessment was written for the planning application of the adjacent property, number 49 (HIGGS, 2013).
- 2.3.2. In summary, the DBA identified potential for heritage assets within the area of the study site from several periods:
 - During the Prehistoric periods the site was situated within a dynamic marshy landscape that was prone to seasonal flooding. The site is on the border of a gravel island. Scatters of worked flint have been found within the vicinity of the site suggesting some occupation throughout the early Prehistoric period.

- It is situated some distance from the known centres of known Roman, Early Medieval, and Medieval centres of activity which occupied the drier land to the north of the site. Historic documents first mention an abbey on the Bermondsey Eyot in the 8th century AD suggesting occupation to the north of the site (near Bermondsey Square). The site was probably seasonal marshland during this periods and was reclaimed from the marsh in subsequent centuries.
- Cartographic evidence suggests the area around the site remained fairly rural in character in the mid 18th century. After which the surrounding area expanded rapidly with a growth of industry and the need for residential properties to house the work force.

2.3.3. Two archaeological evaluations and archaeological building recording were also undertaken by L - P : Archaeology to the south of the site. The first took place at the adjacent property (51-53 Tower Bridge Road) and the second at 49 Tower Bridge Road. The evaluation at 49 Tower Bridge Road located archaeological deposits related to the tanning industry and was thus subject to mitigation by Watching Brief.

2.3.4. Previous research on the adjacent properties revealed that the site originally lay on the west side of Bermondsey New Road and has been occupied by residential buildings since the 1780s (MADIGAN, 2015).

2.3.5. The site was part of an original terrace of 21 houses set back from the road by long front gardens. These appear in their original shape on Horwood's Map of London (HORWOOD 1819) and were subject to some variation during the late 19th century (ORDNANCE SURVEY 1893) and the beginning of the 20th century (ORDNANCE SURVEY 1950), following the conversion of Bermondsey New Road to Tower Bridge Road and the construction of the front shops (MADIGAN, 2015).

2.3.6. The archaeological evaluations at 49 and 51-53 Tower Bridge Road shown that despite their location on the border of the Bermondsey Eyot, no significant Prehistoric and Early Historic evidence were discovered within the footprint of the projects. The area remains fairly rural until the construction of the terraced

house and the growth of the nearby tanning industry.

- 2.3.7. Therefore, the results of the evaluation at 51-53 Tower Bridge Road shown a sequence of Post Medieval deposits mainly early-to-mid 19th century in date (MADIGAN, 2014B). These remains are most likely garden features (with buried garden path and soil) associated with the previous phase of development which consisted of truncated building or wall foundations and a drainage feature. These were found buried under a modern make up layer laid at the turn of the 20th century when the front shop were built.
- 2.3.8. At number 49, the sequence was very similar to the above with Post Medieval deposits related to a buried soil horizon. The remains of a Post Medieval drainage system, a possible tanning related barrel pit, two lines of post holes and a drainage ditch were also discovered. These were overlaid by an extensive early 21st century rubble which occupied the entire site at the top of the sequence (MADIGAN, 2016).

3. Aims

3.1. The general aims of the evaluation were:

- ◆ To determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits or remains.
- ◆ To assess the character, date, location and preservation of any archaeological remains on the site.
- ◆ To assess the nature and extent of any previous damage to archaeological remains on the site.
- ◆ To assess the anticipated impact of the development proposals on any surviving archaeological remains.
- ◆ To collect enough information to allow a suitable mitigation strategy to be devised, if required. Any such strategy could consist of further fieldwork followed by a programme of post excavation analysis, reporting and possible publication and dissemination.

3.2. The specific aims of the evaluation were:

- ◆ To test for the presence of Prehistoric remains on the study site. In particular remains that may relate to the dynamic Early Holocene environment, human activity associated with the exploitation of the marshland.
- ◆ To test for the presence of activity related to Roman or Medieval agriculture or land management.
- ◆ To identify remains relating to the Post Medieval development of the site.

4. Methodology

- 4.1. For a full description of the archaeological methodology please refer to the WSI (CHARVET, 2016), which set out the detailed fieldwork methods employed during the evaluation as well as the recording and archival standards applied.
- 4.2. The WSI proposed the excavation of two machine excavated trenches. Due to the presence of buried services one of the trenches was moved southeast of the originally proposed location. It is not considered likely that moving the trenches affected the results of the evaluation.

5. Results

5.1. Deposit numbers are given in (parentheses) and cut numbers are given in [square brackets]. Masonry context numbers are underlined. “Same as” contexts are expressed with an equals sign, thus: (123)=(234). All heights are quoted in metres above Ordnance Datum (m OD). Measurements of distance are given in metres (m) and measurements of finds given in millimetres (mm).

5.2. During the evaluation, 8 context numbers were issued and recorded using the specified pro-forma recording sheets.

5.3. The basic stratigraphic sequence across the site consisted of three layers of mixed modern building rubble and soils (1001)=(2001), (1002)=(2002) and (1003)=(2003) overlying a clean clay deposit (1004)=(2004). The clay deposit was investigated by means of a sondage in the northwest end of Trench 2, and proved to be the top of the drift geology.

5.4. Results are presented here in numerical order by Trench.

5.5. TRENCH 1



Plate 1: Northeast facing section Trench 1, 1.2m scale

5.5.1. There were no significant archaeological remains in this trench. Below the make-up deposits the clay deposit (1004) was present at a depth of 1.25m.



Plate 2: Trench 1 from Northwest, 1x1.2m Scale

5.5.2. There were no finds from Trench 1.

5.6. TRENCH 2

5.6.1. Trench 2 was dug in the northeastern plot of the site on a similar alignment to Trench 1. The stratigraphic sequence was similar to that in Trench 1.

5.6.2. In the top of the clay the remains of a linear cut [2005] were visible. [2005] ran on an east-west alignment and measured 0.38m wide by 0.15m deep. The cut was filled with a mixed deposit of dark silt and rubble, containing animal bone, modern CBM and glazed pottery of late 19th century origin. This was noted but not retained.

5.6.3. At the north-west end of the trench a sondage was dug into the clay to check that it was a natural deposit. The clay was present to a depth of 2.25m, with mottling and gravel patches consistent with a clean geological deposit, and did not appear redeposited.



Plate 3: Clean natural clay in Trench 2

5.7. DISCUSSION AND SIGNIFICANCE

5.7.1. The site contains a sequence of modern make-up deposits.

5.7.2. The only archaeological feature recorded during the evaluation was a 19th century drain. No further remains of significance are likely to be present on the site.

6. Finds

6.1. The only finds recovered were of late 19th or 20th century date. The material was noted but not retained.

7. Summary and Conclusions

- 7.1. A site at 55-57 Tower Bridge Road is approved for redevelopment. The redevelopment involves the erection of a four storey building on pile foundations.
- 7.2. The evaluation established that the site contains a sequence of modern make-up deposits overlying the top of the drift geology. The only archaeological feature present was a 19th century drain.
- 7.3. The archaeological deposits found on the study site are of low significance, and have been fully recorded. No remains of regional or national significance were found during evaluation.
- 7.4. It is recommended that no further work is required at this stage and that the planning condition be discharged forthwith.

8. Archive

8.1. The paper archive consists of:

- ◆ 1 x Drawing Register
- ◆ 1 x Drawing Film
- ◆ 1 x Photographic Register
- ◆ 2 x Trench Sheets
- ◆ 1 x CD of digital images

8.2. There is no finds archive.

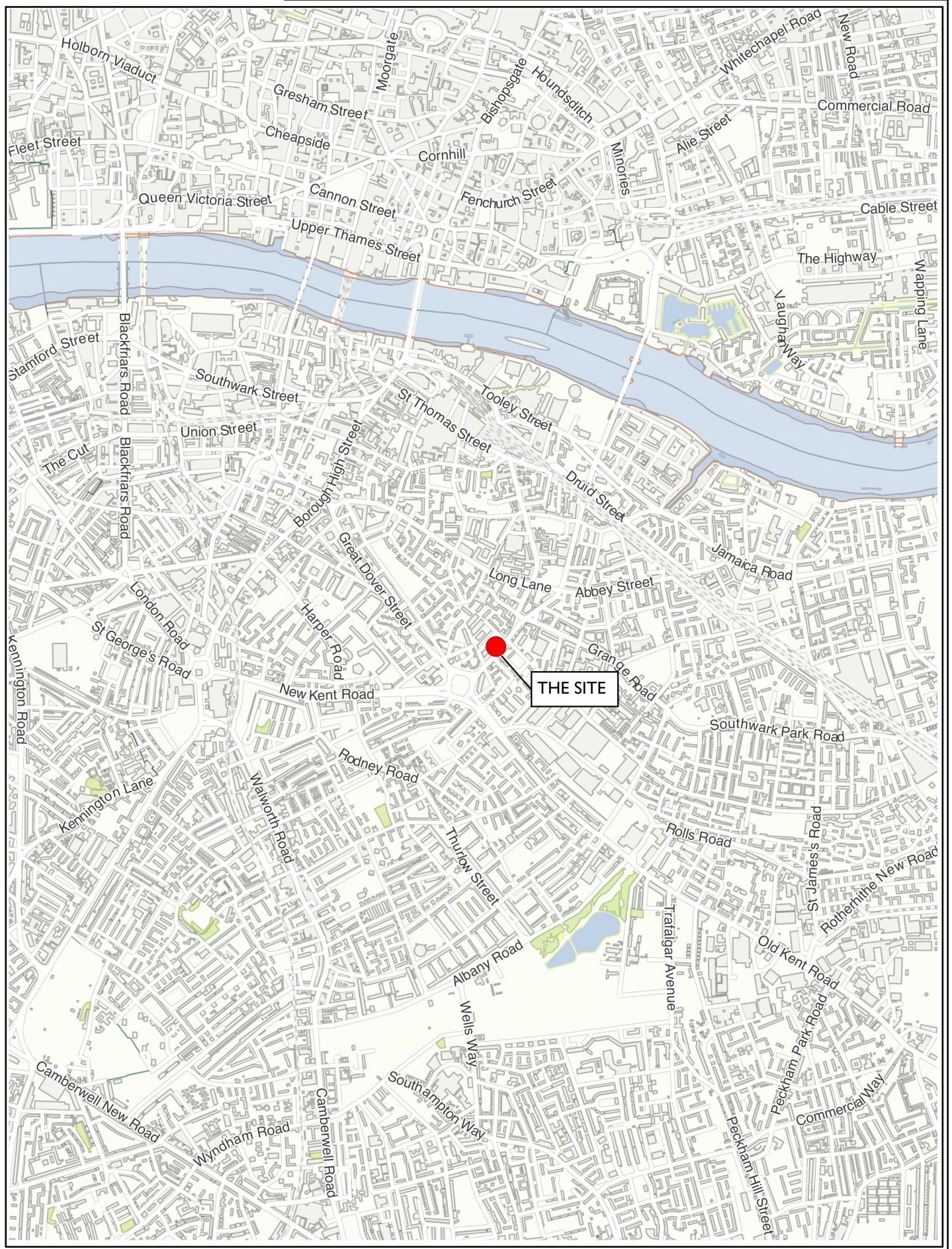
8.3. The archive is to be deposited at the Museum of London.

SOURCES CONSULTED

- British Geological Survey, 2014. British Geological Survey GeoIndex [WWW Document]. URL <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/>
- CHARVET, A., 2016. Written Scheme of Investigation 55-57 Tower Bridge Road (Client report No. LP1878L-WSI-v2.4). L - P: Archaeology, London.
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- MADIGAN, K., 2014A. Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation at 51-53 Tower Bridge Rod, Bermondsey (Unpublished Archive Report No. L1715L-WSI-v4.4). L - P: Archaeology, London.
- MADIGAN, K., 2014B. Archaeological Evaluation Report: 51-53 Tower Bridge Road (AER No. LP1715LB). L - P: Archaeology, London.
- Ordnance Survey, 1950. OS Map of London.
- Ordnance Survey, 1893. OS Map of London.

FIGURES

FIGURE I // Site Location - General



0 500 m



PROJECT // 1878L - 55-57 Tower Bridge Road, SE1

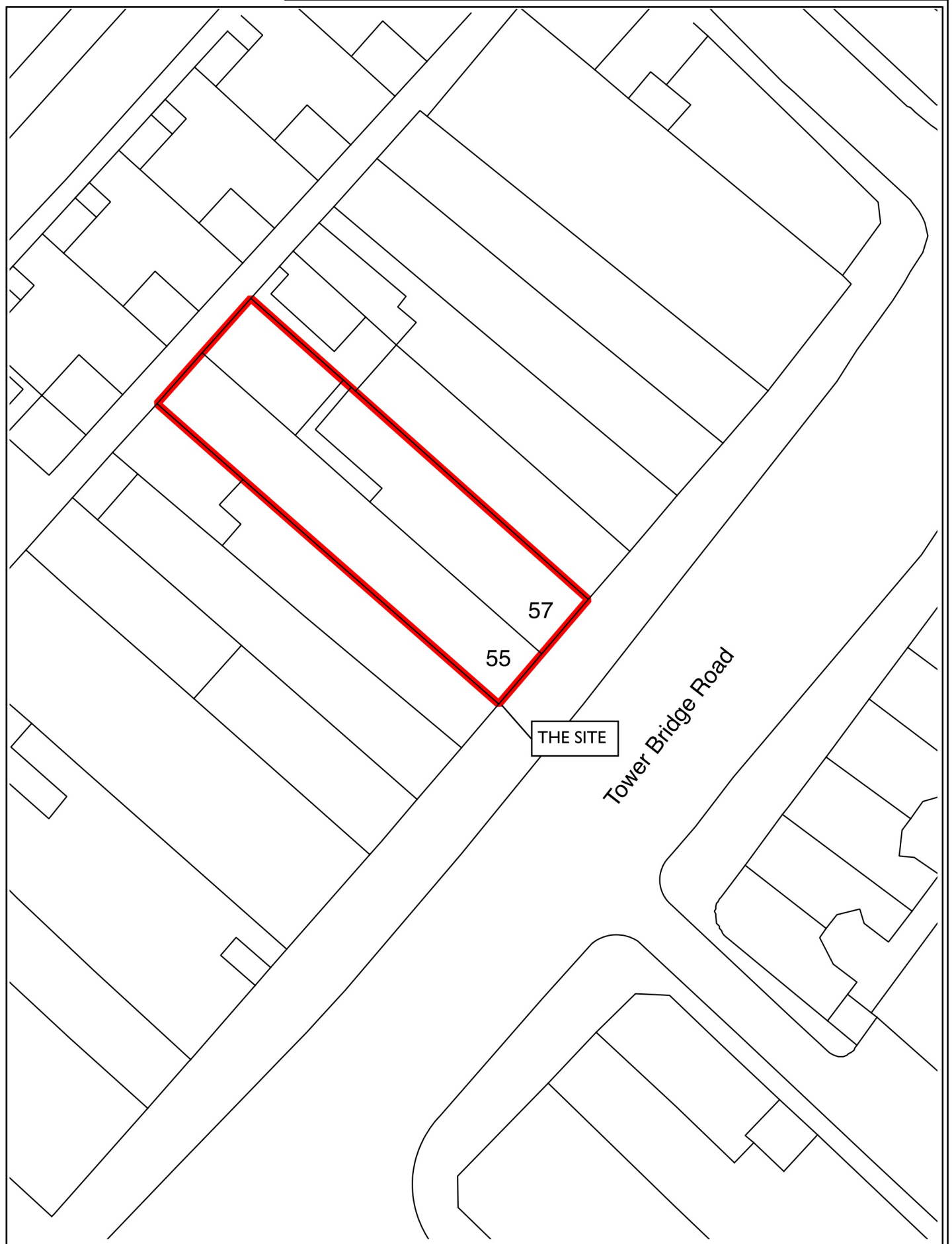
DESCRIPTION // Site Location

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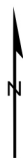
DOC REF: LPI878L-AER-v1.2

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FIGURE 2 // Site Location - Detail



0 10 m



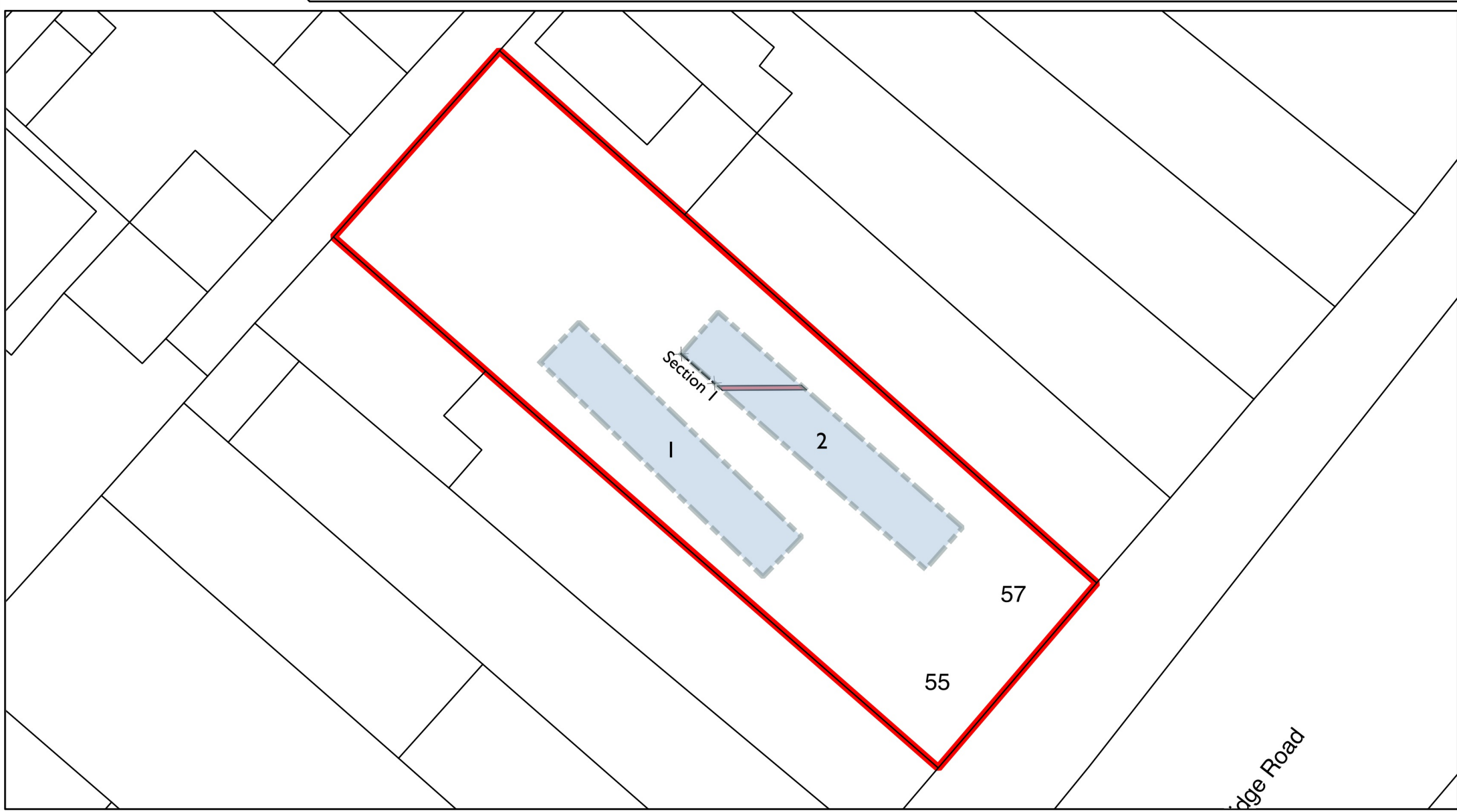
PROJECT // 1878L - 55-57 Tower Bridge Road, Bermondsey

DESCRIPTION // Site Location - Detail

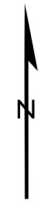
DOC REF: LPI1878L-WSI-v1.2

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FIGURE 3 // Trench Location and Plan



0 10 m



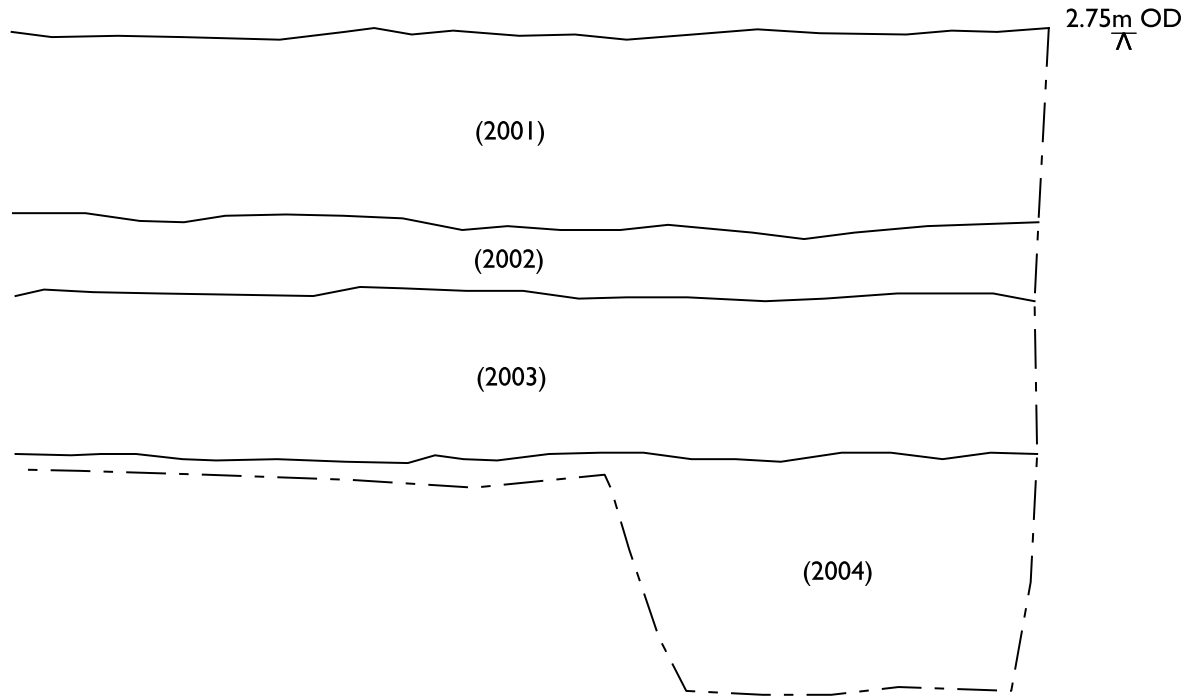
PROJECT // 1878L - 55-57 Tower Bridge Road, SE1

DESCRIPTION // Trench Location and Plan

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0 2 m



PROJECT // 1878L - 55-57 Tower Bridge Road, SE1

DESCRIPTION // Section I

North-East Facing Section of Trench 2

DOC REF: LP1878L-AER-v1

Figure List:

FIGURE 1 - SITE LOCATION GENERAL

FIGURE 2 - SITE LOCATION DETAIL

FIGURE 3 - TRENCH LOCATIONS AND PLAN

FIGURE 4 - SECTION

Appendix List:

APPENDIX 1 – OASIS FORM

APPENDIX 1: FINDS ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM