



PLANTAIN PLACE,
21–23 Crosby Row
London
SE1 1YM

London Borough of Southwark

A watching brief report

September 2005



MUSEUM OF LONDON

Archaeology Service

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A watching brief report

Site Code: CBF05
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Summary (non-technical)

This report has been commissioned by Plantain Place Holdings Limited in order to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out at Plantain Place, 21–23 Crosby Row, London SE1.

The site lies in an Archaeological Priority Zone over a former river channel and/or marshy area with a high potential for prehistoric, Roman and geoarchaeological data. The reclamation of the boggy ground took place in the 16th–17th centuries, and the area was developed from the 18th century onwards, which includes the standing 19th-century buildings on the site.

A watching brief was carried out on contractors excavations, most of which were no more than 2m deep and revealed a post-medieval grey-black silty garden soil layer dating to the late 18th–early 19th century.

Part of a brick cellar was also recorded, the backfill of which was dated to the 19th century.

The existing buildings have caused very little truncation which would suggest good preservation of earlier deposits under the post-medieval strata.

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Fig 1 Site location plan

Fig 2 Location of drawn sections

Fig 3 Typical section through deposits

Selection of site photographs

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The watching brief took place at Plantain Place, 21–23 Crosby Row, London SE1, hereafter called ‘the site’. The site lies on the western side of Crosby Row and the northern side of Plantain Place and 19 Crosby Row, and is bounded to the north by 25 Crosby Row, and to the west by properties on the northern arm of Plantain Place (see Fig 1). The Ordnance Survey National Grid reference is 532720 179780. Within this report the property is known as ‘the site’.

A desk top *Archaeological impact assessment* was previously prepared by MoLAS, which covers the whole area of the site (Elsden 2005). This document should be referred to for information on the natural geology, archaeological and historical background of the site, and the initial assessment of its archaeological potential.

1.2 The planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Archaeological impact assessment* (see Section 2, Elsdon 2005).

1.3 Planning background

The site has existing planning consent (planning case no. TP/1149-21, granted on 8th September 2004), and this assessment has been commissioned as a matter of ‘due diligence’ by the client Plantain Place Holdings Limited. No archaeological conditions have been attached to the consent. The site lies in an Archaeological Priority Zone defined by the London Borough of Southwark.

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by MacDonald Egan and produced by the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS). The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA, 2001).

The purpose of the watching brief was to determine whether archaeological remains or features were present on the site and, if so, to record the nature and extent of such remains.

1.5 Aims and objectives

The site lies in an Archaeological Priority Zone defined by the local authority.

This *Archaeological impact assessment* has shown that the site lies over a former river channel and/or marshy area with a high potential for geoarchaeological data contributing to reconstructions of the landscape and waterscape in this area. It also has a moderate potential for prehistoric activity, such as brushwood or timber structures at the margins of the marshy area, and a low potential for Roman revetment and associated activity. There is high potential for evidence of land raising and reclamation of the boggy ground in the 16th to 17th centuries, and the increasing encroachment of occupation from the 18th century onwards, which includes the standing mid 19th-century buildings on the site.

The existing buildings have caused only localised truncation of earlier remains.

The impact of the proposed development, however, is limited to the partial removal of post-medieval deposits within the footprint of ground reduction for a bathroom and drainage works. The *Archaeological impact assessment* (Elsden 2005) recommended that any contractors foundation or service excavations should be closely monitored by an archaeological organisation via a watching brief.

2 Topographical and historical background

The time-scales used in this report are as follows.

Palaeolithic	<i>c</i> 450,000–12,000 BC
Mesolithic	<i>c</i> 12,000–4000 BC
Neolithic	<i>c</i> 4000–2000 BC
Bronze Age	<i>c</i> 2000–600 BC
Iron Age	<i>c</i> 600 BC–AD 43
Roman	AD 43–410
Saxon	AD 410– <i>c</i> 1000
Medieval	<i>c</i> AD 1000–1500
Post-medieval–modern (including industrial)	<i>c</i> 1500–present

2.1 Topography

The area of the site would have lain within a tidal creek or channel, lying between the higher ground to the west and east of the site.

Estimations of the depth of potential archaeological or geoarchaeological deposits on the site can be suggested at –1.6m OD, as at Bowling Green Place immediately to the north-west of the site, natural gravels were present at –1.56m OD.

2.2 Prehistoric

It appears likely that the site lay in the channel at this period, but there is a high potential for geoarchaeological deposits, such as peat and channel silts, that would produce data contributing to the reconstruction of the prehistoric through to medieval landscape and ‘waterscape’ of this locality. In addition, there may be prehistoric activity, such as Bronze Age brushwood or timber structures, at the edge of the channel or its marshy margins.

2.3 Roman

The site lies to the east of the main Roman Southwark settlement, concentrated on Borough High Street and it appears likely that the site lay in Guy’s channel at this period, but there is potential, based on parallels from nearby sites, that timber revetments and other associated channel activity, such as fish traps, might have extended into the western end of the site.

2.4 Saxon and medieval

It is likely that Saxon and medieval deposits on the site would be confined to those representing silting within the channel, and its gradually drying out as boggy land, although there is a low potential for later medieval land raising or reclamation.

2.5 Post-medieval

Archaeological remains from the post-medieval period have been recorded in the immediate vicinity, and there is a high potential for evidence of land raising and ditches reclaiming the boggy ground in the 16th to 17th centuries, and the increasing encroachment of occupation from the 18th century onwards.

Faithorne and Newcourt's map of 1658 indicates that the site lay in marsh or fields at this time and was not developed until *c* 1746 when two buildings were constructed on the site. The latest remains include the standing 19th-century buildings on the site.

3 The watching brief

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and recording during the watching brief was done in accordance with the MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual (MoLAS, 1994).

The slab/ground was broken out and cleared by contractors and contractors excavations were monitored by a MoLAS archaeologist.

The locations of the areas of excavation were recorded by developer survey plotted on to a Survey Drg. No. Duggan/Morris 003 A.

Where relevant, sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20; numbered contexts were allocated where appropriate.

The site finds and records can be found under the site code CBF05 in the LAARC.

3.2 Results of the watching brief

For all section locations see Fig 2

Natural deposits were not reached.

Within the main ground reduction area (Fig 2) two sections were recorded on two separate visits made on the 20/07/05 and 22/07/05.

Section 1

The base of the reduced area was at 2.20m OD and the base deposit was a dark grey fine silt, with few inclusions, like a garden soil or dark earth, which contained only occasional ceramic building material flecks and occasional fragments of red brick up to a height of 2.74m OD.

Above this was a layer of building debris of mortar lumps and red brick and tile fragments up to a height of 2.80m OD.

Above this was a layer of a dark grey silt with occasional fragments of yellow stock brick and 19th century pottery up to a height of 3.14m OD.

Above these was concrete slab up to a height of 3.30m OD.

Section 2

The base of the reduced area was at 2.10m OD and the base deposit was a black silty sand which contained brick fragments, coal, shell, slate and clay pipe and pottery up

to a height of 2.70m OD. There was also a lead pipe. The clay pipe was dated to pre-1710 and the pottery consisted of two sherds of late creamware dated to the late 18th–early 19th century and a sherd of Hampshire/Surrey borderware dated from the 16th–early 18th century.

Above this was a dark grey sandy silt and occasional fragments of yellow stock brick and the layer was considered to be of 19th century date up to a height of 3.14m OD.

Above these was concrete slab up to a height of 3.30m OD.

Further visits were undertaken to monitor drain runs on 29/07/05, 5/8/05, 11/8/05, 19/8/05, 25/8/05 and two further sections were recorded.

Section 3

The base of the drain run was at 1.23m OD and the base deposit was a grey-black silt which contained few inclusions except occasional brick fragments up to a height of 2.57m OD.

Above this was a dark grey-black sandy silt and occasional pebbles up to a height of 3.04m OD. Above these was concrete slab up to a height of 3.30m OD.

Section 4

The base of the drain run was at 1.64m OD and the base deposit was a black silty sand which contained brick fragments and oyster shell, and a sherd of tin-glazed pottery 'Delftware' dated to the late 18th/early 19th century. This layer was at a height of 2.60m OD. There was also a lens of crushed white mortar at the very base of the drain cut.

Above this was yellow stock brick rubble and above this was concrete slab up to a height of 3.30m OD.

A further visit was undertaken to monitor a manhole on 13/9/05 and one section was recorded.

Section 5

Towards the front of the building on Crosby Row a manhole was dug measuring 2m by 1m by 1.60m.

The manhole revealed a cellar of the standing building. Only the south wall of the cellar was visible under the standing building's partition wall and part of the cellar floor was revealed. Both were of red bricks measuring 212mm by 98mm by 67mm and the wall was bonded with lime mortar but not the floor. The floor was divided by a brick partition wall, only one brick high and one brick wide but on the west side of the partition wall the bricks on the floor were aligned east–west at were at a slighter higher level than on the east side of the partition wall where the bricks were aligned north–south. It is unlikely that the partition wall stood to any height as it was too

narrow to withstand any weight and it might have formed a bay within the cellar for different goods or stores.

The floor was at a height of 1.80m OD. Much of it was truncated by the insertion of a modern pipe. The backfill of the cellar consisted of black silt with occasional 19th century pottery sherds and a lens of grey crushed mortar up to 2.86m OD where it was overlain by the concrete slab up to 3.30m OD.

4 Potential of archaeology

The *Archaeological impact assessment* has shown that the site lies over a former river channel and/or marshy area but this was not reached during the contractors excavations, most of which were no more than 2m deep.

Most of the sections recorded showed a general post-medieval grey-black silty garden soil layer with a few inclusions. Pottery from within this generally suggested that the date of this silty layer was dated to the late 18th–early 19th century. It was monitored at *c* 1.20m OD from its deepest recorded point up to about 2.60m OD and was overlain by a dumped deposit of 19th century date up to 3.14m OD.

Part of a brick cellar was also revealed, the backfill of which was dated to the 19th century. The existing buildings have caused only localised truncation which would suggest good preservation of earlier deposits.

5 Publication and archiving

Information on the results of the excavation will be made publicly available by means of a database in digital form, to permit inclusion of the site data in any future academic researches into the development of London.

The site archive will be stored in accordance with the LAARC within 12 months of the end of the excavation.

A short note on the results of the watching brief should appear in the annual round up of the *London Archaeologist*.

6 Conclusions

The watching brief has revealed post-medieval deposits of late 18th–early 19th century date and part of a 19th century cellar. The existing buildings have caused very little truncation which would suggest good preservation of earlier deposits under the post-medieval strata.

The author would like to thank the client Plantain Place Holdings Limited for commissioning the work.

7 Bibliography

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8 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

8.1 OASIS ID: molas1-10198

Project details

Project name PLANTAIN PLACE, 21–23 CROSBY ROW, London SE1

Short description of the project The site lies in an Archaeological Priority Zone over a former river channel and/or marshy area with a high potential for prehistoric, Roman and geoarchaeological data. The reclamation of the boggy ground took place in the 16th - 17th centuries, and the area was developed from the 18th century onwards, which includes the standing 19th-century buildings on the site. A watching brief was carried out on contractors excavations, most of which were no more than 2m deep and revealed a post-medieval grey-black silty garden soil layer dating to the late 18th early 19th century. Part of a cellar floor dating to the 19th century was also found.

Project dates Start: 20-07-2005 End: 30-09-2005

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes CBF05 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Site status Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)

Current Land use Residential 1 - General Residential

Monument type CELLAR Post Medieval

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

Prompt General structure plan/local plan/minerals plan guidance

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON SOUTHWARK BERMONDSEY
ROTHERHITHE AND SOUTHWARK PLANTAIN PLACE, 21–23
CROSBY ROW

Postcode SE1

Study area 0.10 Hectares
 National reference grid TQ 3272 7978 Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation MoLAS
 Project originator brief City/Nat. Park/District/Borough archaeologist
 Project originator design MoLAS
 Project director/manager Derek Seeley
 Project supervisor Carrie Cowan
 Sponsor or funding body Plantain Place Holdings Limited

Project archives

Physical recipient Archive LAARC
 Physical Exists? Archive No
 Digital recipient Archive LAARC
 Paper recipient Archive LAARC

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
 Title Plantain Place, 21-23 Crosby ROW: An archaeological watching brief
 Author(s)/Editor(s) Cowan, C
 Date 2005

Issuer or publisher MoLAS

Place of issue or
publication London

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Entered on 14 September 2005

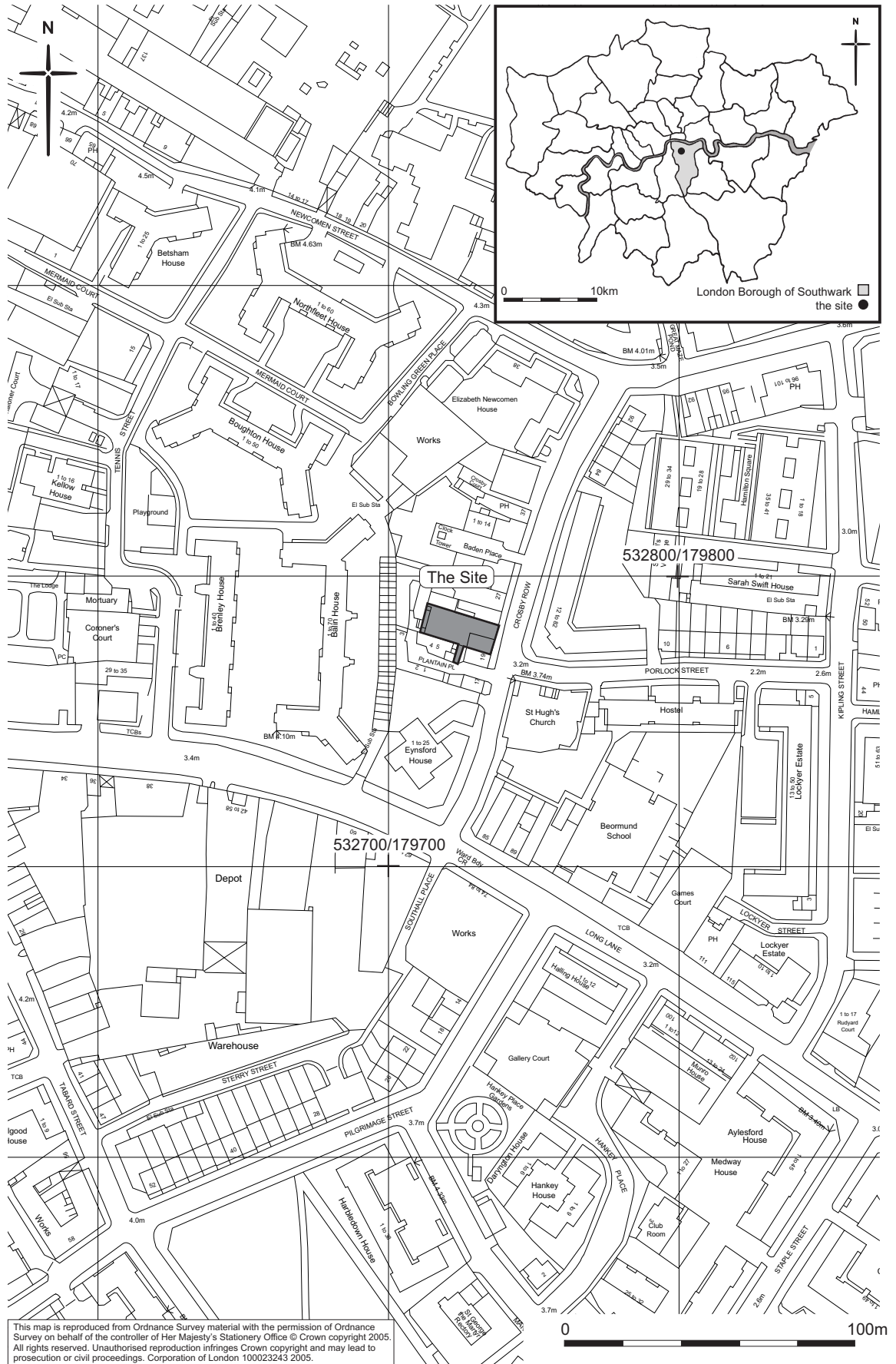


Fig 1 Site location

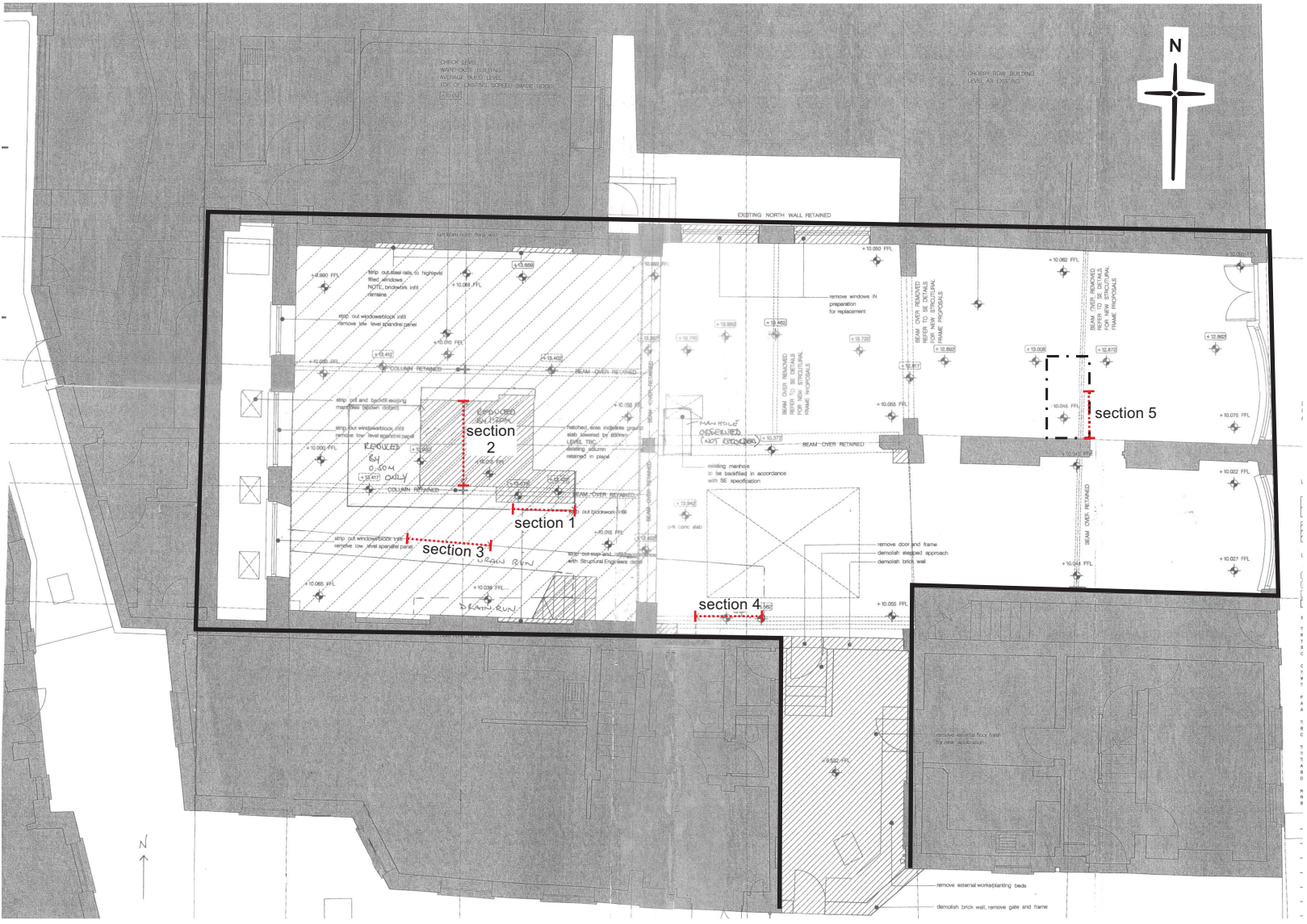


Fig 2 Location of drawn sections

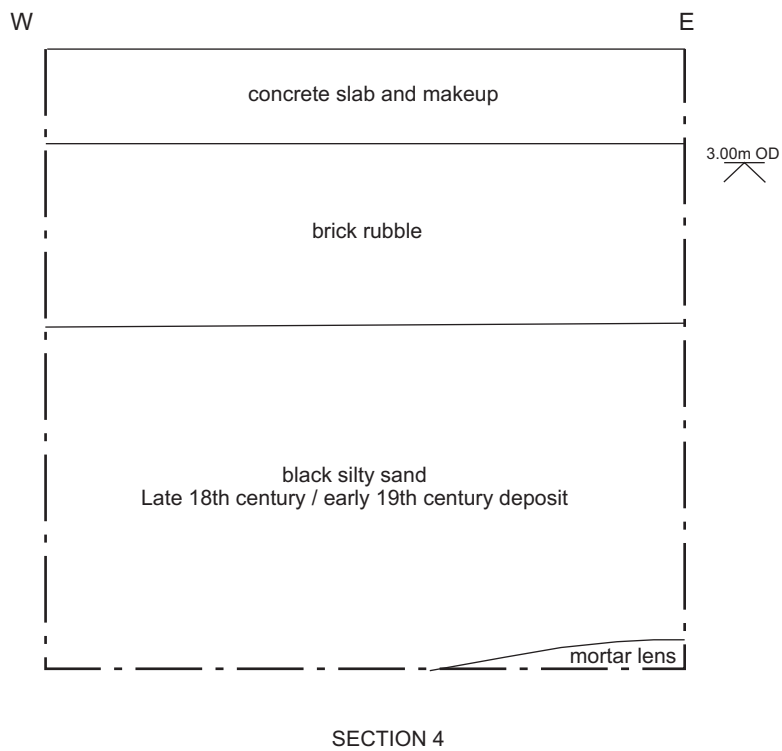
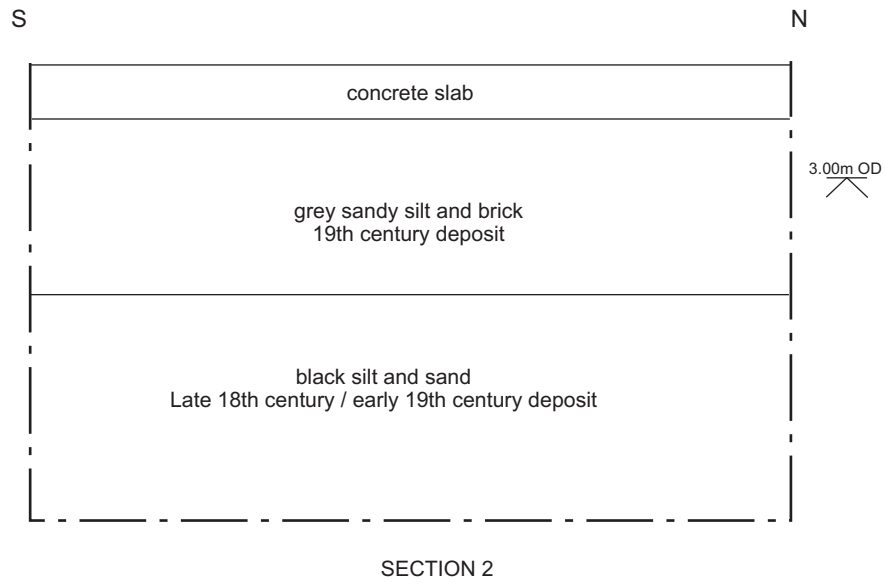


Fig 3 Sections 2 and 4



General view: digging the drains



Section 1



Section 3



Section 4



Part of the cellar floor



Part of the cellar floor