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EAST HAM METHODIST CHURCH
High Street South
East Ham
London
E6

London Borough of Newham

An archaeological evaluation report

February 2006

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MUSEUM OF LONDON

Archaeology Service

EAST HAM METHODIST CHURCH
High Street South
East Ham
London
E6

London Borough of Newham

An archaeological evaluation report

Site Code: EMC05
National Grid Reference: ~~542815 182817~~
542806 182818

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Summary (non-technical)

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by the Museum of London Archaeology Service on the site of East Ham Methodist Church, London, E6 3RT. Haynes and Smith Ltd commissioned the report from MoLAS.

Three trenches were excavated through to archaeologically sterile natural deposits. A field drain and quarry, probably 18th century in date, were exposed. Also excavated was a 19th-century rectangular feature and drain of a similar date. No medieval or earlier remains were exposed.

The proposed development is without deep basements, and foundations and drains are not considered a threat to important archaeological remains. Consequently, no further archaeological investigations of this site are recommended.

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Cover Methodist Church soon after its construction

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The evaluation took place at East Ham Methodist Church, London, E6 3RT, hereafter called 'the site'. It is bounded by East Ham High Street to the west and Vicarage School to the east, No.s 177 and 189 High Street South and East Ham Conservative Club. The centre of the site lies at National Grid reference 542815 182817. Modern pavement level near to the site lies at c 3m OD. The site code is EMC05.

1.2 Planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Method Statement* that formed the project design for the evaluation (see Section 1.2.1, Lakin 2006).

1.3 Planning background

Application Number: P/O5/0612 Full Planning Permission was granted with the following condition:

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 by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme approved pursuant to this condition. The archaeological works shall be carried out by a suitably qualified investigating body acceptable to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: Important archaeological remains may exist on the site. Accordingly the planning authority wishes to secure the provision of archaeological investigation and the subsequent recording of the remains prior to development in accordance with the guidance and model condition set out in PPG16.

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Haynes and Smith Ltd 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).

Field evaluation, and the *Evaluation report* which comments on the results of that exercise, are defined in the most recent English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage, 1998) as intended to provide information about the archaeological resource in order to contribute to the:

- formulation of a strategy for the preservation or management of those remains; and/or
- formulation of an appropriate response or mitigation strategy to planning applications or other proposals which may adversely affect such archaeological remains, or enhance them; and/or
- formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigations within a programme of research

1.5 Aims and objectives

All research is undertaken within the priorities established in the Museum of London's *A research framework for London Archaeology*, 2002

The following research aims and objectives were established in the *Method Statement* for the evaluation (Section 2.2):

What is the nature and level of natural topography ?



What are the earliest deposits identified?

What are the latest deposits identified?

Are any remains present indicating use of the site in the prehistoric period?

Do any traces of Roman or later roadside activity survive?

KEY

-  extent of trench
-  brickearth
-  quarry
-  banded sand and gravel

A horizontal scale bar with alternating black and white segments. The left end is labeled '0' and the right end is labeled '5m'.

R:\Project\newh\1110\fig04

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Topography

The site lies at the edge of a gravel terrace overlooking the Thames Floodplain. Terrace Gravels (Roding River Gravels?) were observed at 1.46m OD at the neighbouring Vicarage Infant School, above sand at 0.43m OD. The gravels were covered by a layer of brickearth with gravel to 1.67m OD (VEL02, Mayo 2002,14).

2.2 Palaeolithic

Evidence of human activity in Britain begins around 700,000BP (before present) and the remains of human ancestors (*Homo Heidelbergensis*) from 500,000BP. Stone tools have been recovered from nearby (Greater London Sites and Monuments Register – SMR – No.s 060575 and 061625). They may be Neanderthal (from around 40,000BP) and it is ^{disputed} as to whether a contemporary surface lies buried beneath Late Glacial gravel, and whether a possible surface relates to the sand recorded at 0.43m OD at the Infants School.

2.3 Neolithic and Bronze Age

There are no post-glacial hunter-gatherer (Mesolithic) remains in the vicinity of the site. The neighbouring Infants School uncovered a drainage ditch at 1.67m OD, aligned WNW–ESE. Its fill contained a retouched flint scraper of Neolithic or Bronze Age date (broadly 4000–750BC) and burnt daub. The daub implies a nearby building, or even bronze-casting mould fragments. It should perhaps be noted more struck flint was found in disturbed brickearth with later Medieval pottery and so it is possible that this was a residual artefact in a relatively sterile later fill. Nonetheless, this ditch and associated stakehole (fence?) remains one of the few potential Prehistoric structures on the gravel terrace. It complements Prehistoric remains within floodplain alluvium, which include Bronze Age trackways at Beckton, at Woolwich Manor Way (site GWB02, dated to 1500BC) Newham Way and Evelyn Dennington Road and a cooking site and possible settlement at the Prince Regent Community School (PRG97).

2.4 Iron Age

The site lies on the opposite bank and downstream of an important Iron Age town and port at Uphall Camp 250m from the site on the opposite side of the Roding. Excavations in 1960 and again in the early 1980s revealed “four post granaries” rectangular and circular buildings, enclosures and ditches. The town stood over 19.4 hectares, had elements of centralised planning. An Iron Age coin and “currency bar” or iron ingot (060200 and 060204) found just south of Central Park should be seen as remains of the burgeoning commerce and exchange around the port.

2.5 Roman

The line of the High Street is thought to have been established as a route to the riverside at Woolwich in Roman times. It is probably significant that Little Ilford Church has Roman building material in its construction and some pottery was found nearby and Roman coffins were reported from St Mary Magdalene's (060207) south of the site, on the edge of the alluvium. Rodwell notes that there are large numbers of churches in the neighbouring Chelmsford diocese incorporating Roman building material, and thought to be built on, or adjacent to Roman villas (1977, 91). Coins and an urn are also reported from the excavation of the Royal Docks¹.

Roman roadside activities – drainage ditches, graves and gravel quarries – could be predicted for the site.

2.6 Medieval

The area between the Lea and Roding was previously called Hamme, a Saxon name recorded in AD 958 meaning riverside water meadow. It was Danish territory prior to the Norman conquest and previously belonged to Danelaw king Guthrum (also called Athelstan) who won it in battle against Alfred the Great in 878. By the time of the Domesday Book (1086) Hamme consisted of four manors; the eastern one, later to become East Ham, held by Robert Gernon. The others were West Ham, Little Ilford and a small estate at North Woolwich owned by Westminster Abbey, securing the river crossing for the crown, also called East Ham in the Domesday Book. East and West Ham were later to pass into the Montfichet family holdings, the founders of Stratford Langthorne Abbey.

A pit on the Infants School site, dug 800mm from 1.76m OD, dated by three pottery sherds in its fill to 950–1150. The excavator remarks that this was the earliest securely dated feature from the site (Mayo 2002, 16). A 2nd drainage ditch, aligned NW–SE (the projected line of which goes through the Methodist church site), had 106 sherds of pottery dated 1050–1150. Gullies ran into the ditch from the south and west and there were a series of contemporary pits in this side also. Later, 15th-century, pottery filled the packing of a large post-setting (a "post-pit) found at the southern edge of the trench. This would indicate a structure such as a barn, which may have been large enough also to have elements within the current Methodist Church site.

2.7 Post-medieval

The huge growth in trade and urban population in the 16th century did little more than stimulate agricultural production in East Ham. The main effect locally would have been the transfer of responsibility for maintenance of river defences from the church to the Commissioners of Sewers. East and West Ham remained rural villages with a sprinkling of rural retreats for the rich and powerful (such as Boleyn's Tower, Upton Park). The Chapman Andre map of 1777 (Fig 2) shows a dispersed settlement along the High Street with several foci, including the Vicarage. It remained much the same until the railway led to its incorporation into a "greater" London and the Royal Docks were dug in the middle of the 19th century.

¹ <http://www.royaldockstrust.org.uk/rdhist.htm> accessed 01/02/2006

Date Houses Population

1861	497	2,858
1881	1,930	10,706
1891	5,818	32,718
1901	17,937	96,018
1911	25,694	133,487
1921	27,478	143,304
1931	29,602	142,394

The table above illustrates the massive growth that the combined effect of rail and docks had on East Ham population (Evans 1993). A Methodist Chapel was built in 1883 to cater for this burgeoning population and a Primitive Methodist Connexion meeting typical of industrial labouring communities of that time. The Church was built in 1885 and nestled between Milton Lodge and Lucy's Fruit Farm.

Many small sites and archaeological observations along the line of the High Street have exposed 19th-century soils. A series of 19th-century pits and features of unknown purpose on the Infants School site were found below 1.74m OD. A ditch parallel to the medieval ditch but further south was succeeded by a tiled field drain.

3 The evaluation

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and monitoring during the evaluation was carried out in accordance with the preceding *Method Statement* (Lakin 2006), and the MoLAS *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS 1994).

Three trenches were excavated measuring 2–3m x 15m (approx). Trench 1 was aligned E-W and was excavated within the area of the former Methodist Church. Trench 2 lay within the former church hall and was broadly N–S, as was Trench 3 in the garden to the rear of the property. The trenches were excavated by a 360° mechanical excavator under the direction of a MoLAS archaeologist.

The locations of evaluation trenches and grid pegs were recorded by offset survey to features on the OS 1:1250 map. Levels were recorded by an open traverse to an OS bench mark in Vicarage Lane.

A written and drawn record of all archaeological deposits encountered was made in accordance with the principles set out in the MoLAS site recording manual (MoLAS, 1994).

The site archive includes a digital trench and site location plan, 3 trench plans and record sheets and 16 context sheets. No finds were retained.

The site records can be found under the site code EMC05 in the MoL archive.

3.2 Results of the evaluation

For trench locations see Fig 3.

<i>Evaluation Trench 1</i>	
Location	West of three trenches
Dimensions	15m x 3m
Modern ground level	2.57m OD
Base of modern fill	1.8m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	0.35m
Level of base of deposits observed	1.45m OD
Natural observed	1.8m OD

At the west end of the trench natural brickearth was exposed at 1.8m OD [8]. A large quarry [7] was dug through the brickearth to the underlying banded sands and gravels [9] (exposed in a smaller area of *sondage*). The quarry was filled with dull orange-brown silt [6] with some coal ash and oyster shells and had the base of an

18th-century wine bottle. Dug into the quarry backfill was a rectangular feature 2m x 0.6m x 0.3m deep [5]. It was filled with oyster shell and had some transfer-printed willow-pattern pottery [4], later than 1780. Nearby, a drain trench [3] filled with dark grey silt and similar transfer-printed pottery [2] led to a brick trap or manhole [1].

<i>Evaluation Trench 2</i>	
Location	Middle of three trenches
Dimensions	16m x 3m
Modern ground level	2.38m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	2.06m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.4m
Level of base of deposits observed	0.65m OD
Natural observed	2.06m OD

The south end of the trench was excavated through the diagonally banded tip-lines of post medieval quarry backfill [13]. A limited area was dug through to expose banded sands and gravels [10] at 0.65m OD, the level to which they had been truncated by quarry [12]. The edge of the quarry was found as a vertical face dug through yellow-orange-brown natural brickearth with very frequent heavily mineralised roots [11] at 2.06m OD. The trench alignment was adjusted to miss further post-medieval drains and the top of natural brickearth hand-cleaned. A few ephemeral 19th-century features were noted but not recorded. A "T" shaped grey silt filled land drain [14] with a fragment of soft red brick in its fill cut through the brickearth. The fragment of brick could be as early as 17th-century but is likely to be 18th- or 19th-century in date. No earlier features were observed. Because of the proximity of this area to the features recorded on the infants' school (VEL02), the area was reduced to 1.6m OD and cleaned by hand again. This was to eliminate the possibility that archaeologically sterile brickearth had been redeposited above earlier remains, obscuring their presence. No further archaeological remains were observed. The north end of the trench was truncated by modern foul drainage.

<i>Evaluation Trench 3</i>	
Location	East of three trenches
Dimensions	19.5m x 3m
Modern ground level	2.64m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	1.9m-2m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	none
Level of base of deposits observed	1.43m OD
Natural observed	2.06m OD

The trench was curved to avoid obstructions and trees. Light yellow sandy brickearth [16] was exposed at 2m OD. The brickearth was hand cleaned and no features were observed dug into it. A deeper *sondage* was dug at the north end of the trench to expose banded sands and gravels [15] at 1.43m OD. The lower gravels exposed throughout the site [15] [10] and [9], were diagonally banded or cross-bedded sands and gravels, which is taken to be indicative of Roding rather than Thames gravel.

3.3 Assessment of the evaluation

GLAAS guidelines (English Heritage, 1998) require an assessment of the success of the evaluation 'in order to illustrate what level of confidence can be placed on the information which will provide the basis of the mitigation strategy'. In the case of this site a considerable area was examined from across the site and the trenches are considered to have adequately sampled the potential development area. The evaluation was inspected by D Divers (English Heritage) and D Lakin (MoLAS) whilst excavations were open. Comparison with the neighbouring VEL02 site indicate that there were large areas beneath the infants' school that were similarly without archaeological remains.

4 Archaeological potential

4.1 Realisation of original research aims

What is the nature and level of natural topography ?

A thin layer of brickearth from 2m OD covered Roding gravels at 1.4m OD, broadly late-Glacial in date.

What are the earliest deposits identified?

Potentially land drain [14] could be 17th-century but it is much more likely to be 18th- or even 19th-century and similar to quarry [7].

What are the latest deposits identified?

Rectangular feature [5] and drain [3] with manhole [1] were 19th century.

Are any remains present indicating use of the site in the prehistoric period?

No

Do any traces of Roman or later roadside activity survive?

No

4.2 General discussion of potential

The evaluation has shown that remains earlier than the 17th century are unlikely on this site. Post-medieval remains that do survive have little potential to add to studies of the area.

4.3 Significance

Details of natural topography and post-medieval quarries on this site are of local significance only.

5 Proposed development impact and recommendations

The proposed redevelopment includes a replacement Methodist church and 2-storey houses. The impact of this on the surviving subsurface deposits will be to excavate foundations to natural deposits and deep drainage and service trenches. This will marginally effect later post-medieval cut features.

The assessment above (Section 3.3) does not suggest that preservation *in situ* would be the appropriate mitigation strategy and that no further archaeological investigations are required at this site.

The decision on the appropriate archaeological response to the deposits discussed above rests with the Local Planning Authority and their designated archaeological advisor.

6 Bibliography

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7 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID: molas1-12693

Project details

Project name	East Ham Methodist Church
Short description of the project	An evaluation revealed an 18th-century quarry dug into natural brickearth from 2m OD and gravels from 1.4m OD
Project dates	Start: 25-01-2006 End: 30-01-2006
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	EMC05 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Current Land use	Other 3 - Built over
Monument type	QUARRY Post-medieval
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON NEWHAM EAST HAM East Ham Methodist Church
Postcode	E6
National grid reference	TQ 4282-8282 Point 42806 82818
Height OD	Min: 1.80m Max: 2.00m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	MoLAS
Project brief originator	English Heritage/Department of Environment
Project design originator	MoLAS
Project director/manager	David Lakin
Project supervisor	David Sankey
Sponsor or funding body	Haynes and Smith
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Media available	'Text'
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Media available	'Context sheet', 'Plan', 'Report', 'Unpublished Text'
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	East Ham Methodist Church: an archaeological evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Sankey, D.
Date	2006
Issuer or publisher	Museum of London
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	A4 ringbound report
Entered by	David Sankey (DSankey@museumoflondon.org.uk)
Entered on	2 February 2006

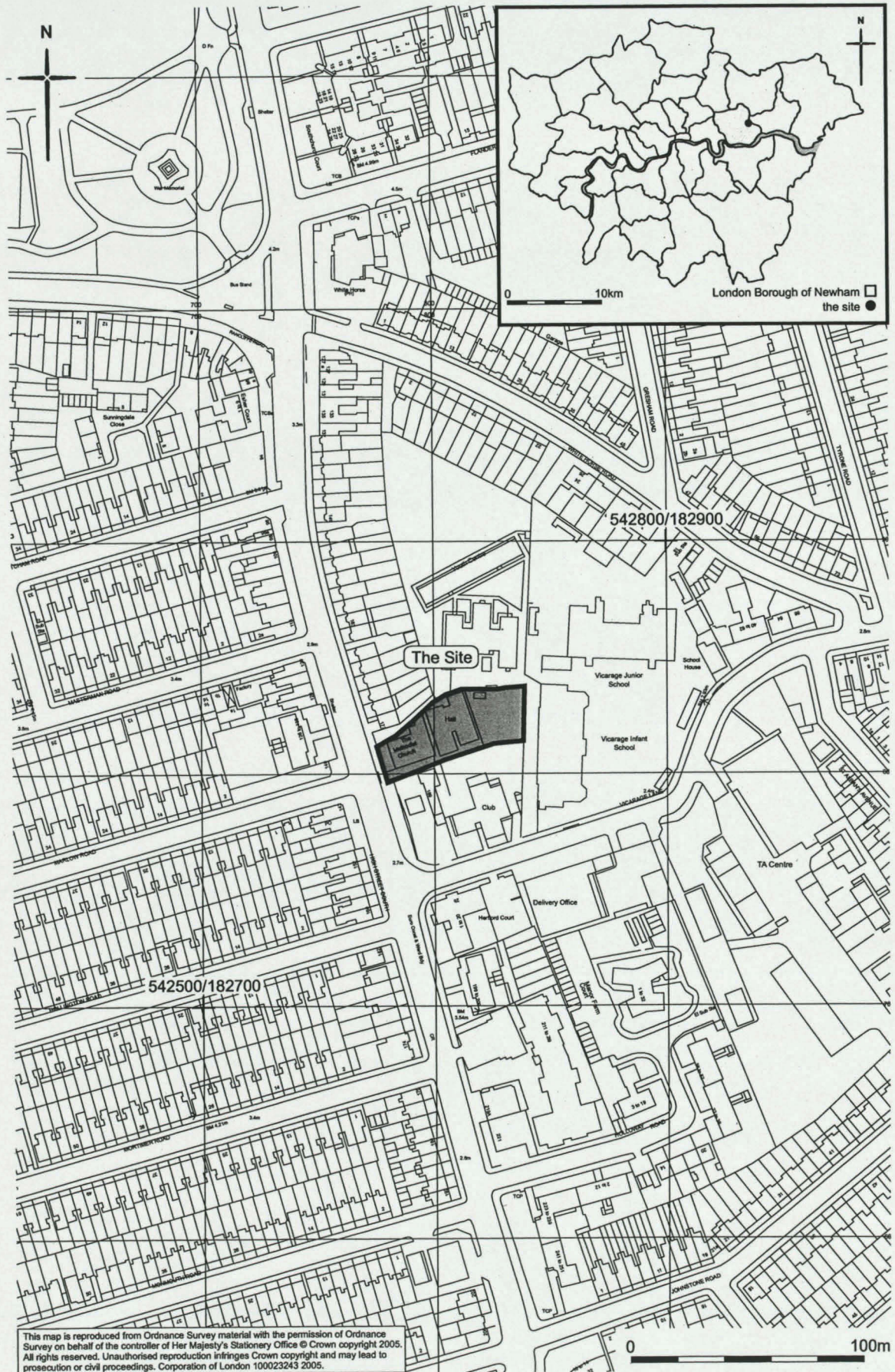


Fig 1 Site location

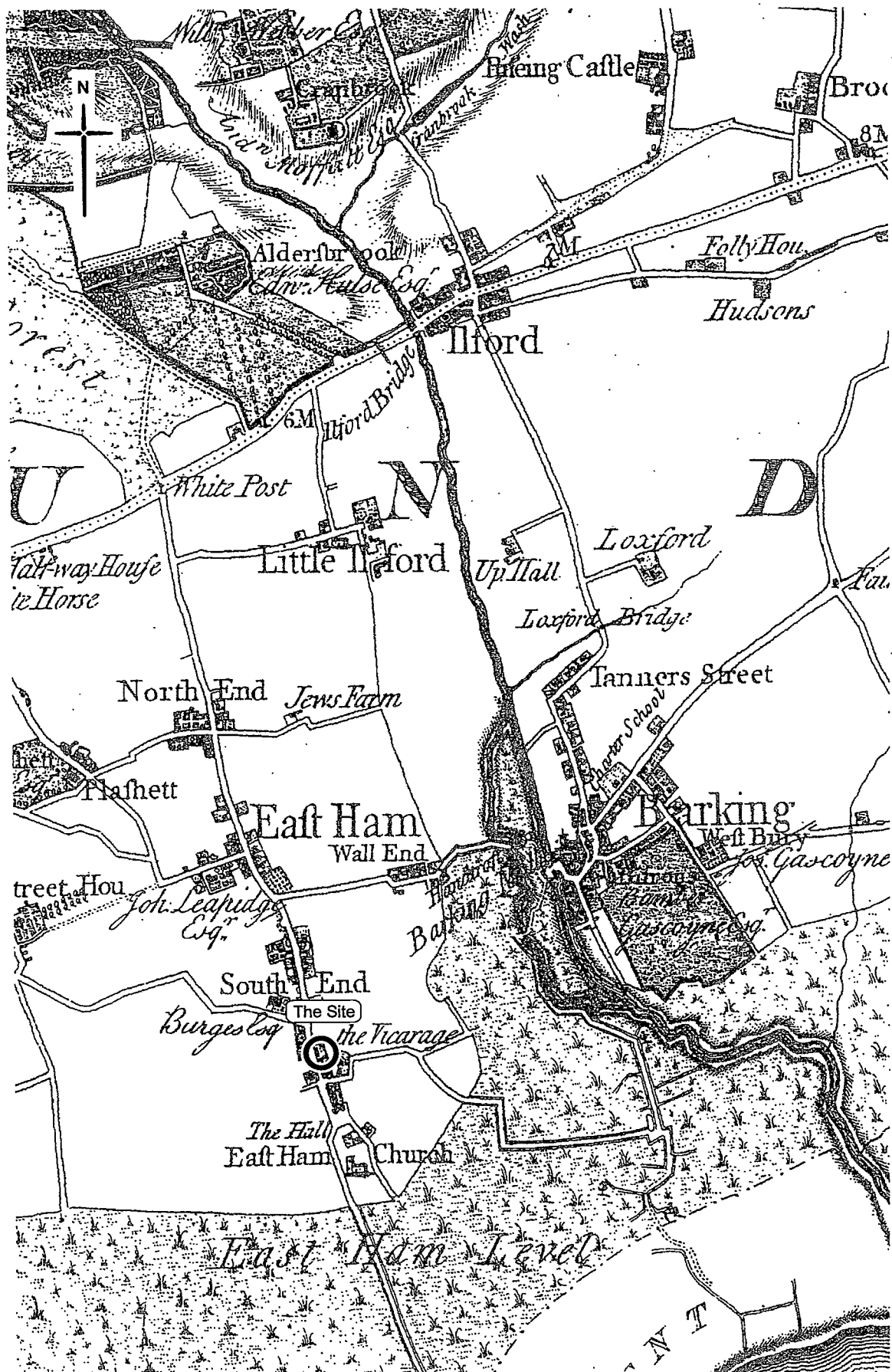


Fig 2 Chapman and Andre map, 1777

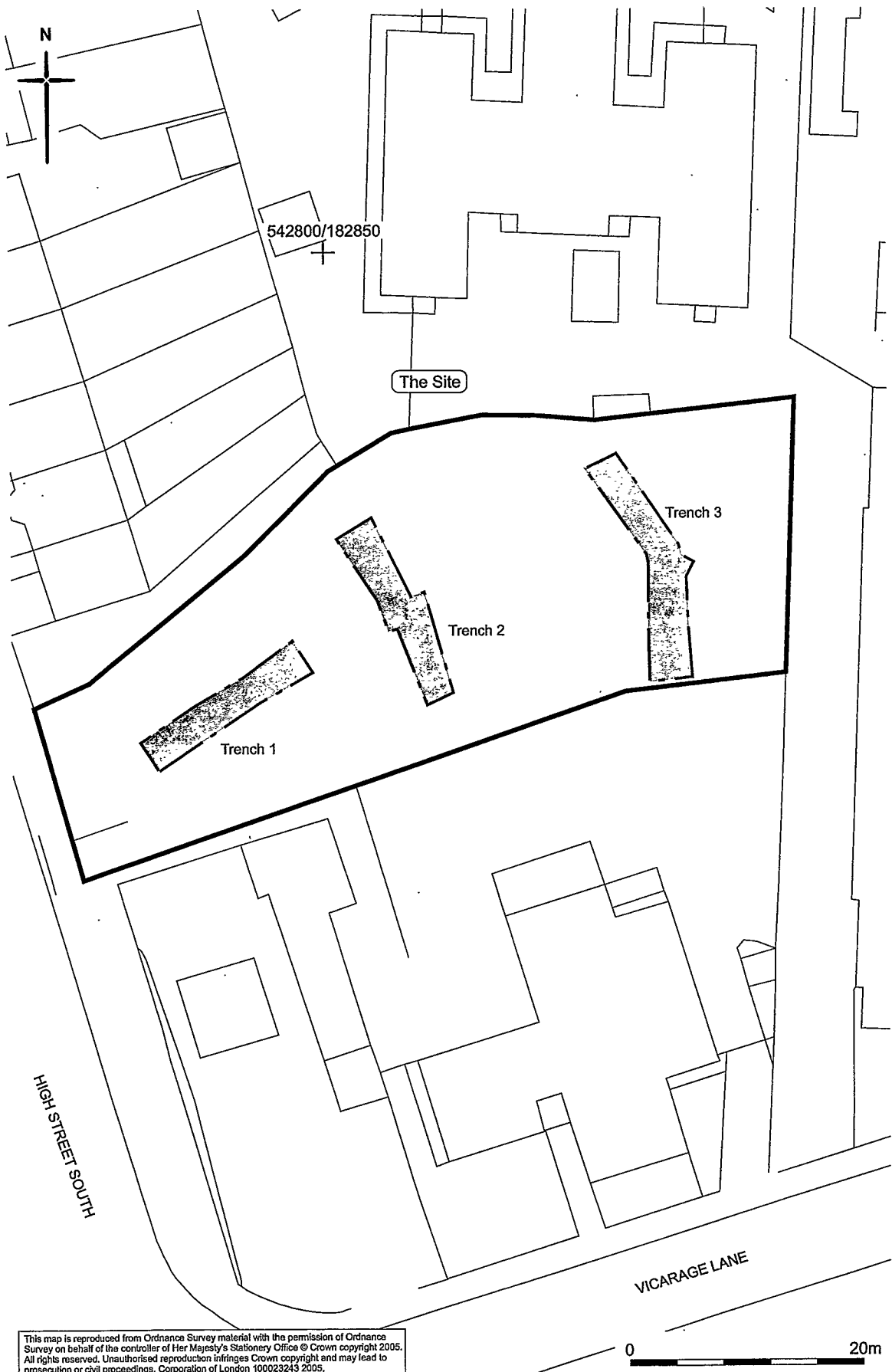


Fig 3 Trench location