



LAND ADJACENT TO 17 CHURCH TERRACE  
London  
SE13

London Borough of Lewisham

An archaeological watching brief report

December 2006



**MUSEUM OF LONDON**

Archaeology Service

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Site Code: CHV06  
National Grid Reference: 539180 175615

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## **Summary (non-technical)**

*This report has been commissioned by Michael Kemp in order to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out at land adjacent to 17 Church Terrace, London SE13.*

*Work on inspection and geotechnical trenches was monitored between 29th and 30th November 2006.*

*Deposits comprised only recent made ground over topsoil and garden bedding of probable 19th century date. Natural subsoil, probably colluvium, was at an average level of 0.5m below ground surface. No archaeological features were seen and only a few fragments of 19th century pottery were noted.*

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Site background

The watching brief took place at land adjacent to 17 Church Terrace, London SE13, hereafter called 'the site'. The site is located at on the east side of Church Terrace, lying south of Heath Way House and north of 17 Church Terrace (Fig 1). The centre of the site is at OS National Grid Reference 539180 175615. The ground level at the site was at approximately 30m OD. The site code is CHV 06.

An *Archaeological desk based assessment* was previously prepared by MoLAS, which covers the whole area of the site (Askew 2006). 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

Planning permission for development at the site has been granted, subject to an archaeological watching brief.

## 1.3 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Michael Kemp 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. The purpose of the present report is to analyse the results of the excavation against the original research aims, and to suggest what further work, including analysis or publication (if any), should now take place.

## 1.4 Aims and objectives

The Watching Brief set out to examine the following aims and objectives:

- What is the level of truncation caused by earlier development in this area?
- What is the nature and significance of the surviving archaeological remains?
- What are the levels of natural deposits and how do these compare to adjacent sites?

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

## **2 The watching brief**

### **2.1 Methodology**

All archaeological excavation and recording during the watching brief was done in accordance with the MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual (MoLAS, 1994). The trench was excavated by the contractors, and monitored by a member of staff from MoLAS.

The locations of the areas of excavation were recorded by the MoLAS site archaeologist offsetting from adjacent standing walls and plotted on to the OS grid. The meagre finds recovered were not retained. The site records can be found under the site code CHV06 in the MoL archive.

### **2.2 Results of the watching brief**

The site is roughly 16m square and surrounded by brick walls on all sides. Those on the west and north being low walls, with an entrance at the northern end of the west wall. Four adjacent modern, post-war, brick garages occupy the north-east corner of the site, opening to the west. Remains of an east-west brick wall appeared to separate the garages from open ground to the south.

A trench was dug for the purposes of ascertaining the presence and extent of tree roots in relation to Tree Preservation Orders. The trench was in the form of a crescentic E that reflected the shape of the western half of the foundation plan. One borehole was sunk in the northern part of the existing trench (Fig 2).

The trench measured a maximum of 13m east-west, by 5m north-south. It was dug to an average depth of 0.9m below the concrete slab that forms the surface of the site. The section and base of the trench was examined in a number of places in order to reveal any stratigraphic sequence or archaeological features.

The basal deposit within the trench comprised a homogenous mid brown silt. This deposit contained occasional sub rounded flint pebbles (measuring an average of 20mm). This material is characteristic of a subsoil that is natural in origin but may be colluvial in deposition. It lay at an average of 0.5m below ground surface. Only in one area (the centre of the straight east-west line of the trench) was a thin, 70mm, lens of peagrit gravel revealed over this subsoil which may also have been natural.

Throughout the trench the subsoil had been sharply truncated by a redeposited layer of mixed sand and silt. Pottery and clay tobacco pipe fragments were present at this interface though one piece lay within the subsoil. This material was an average of 0.2m thick and overlain by a topsoil of dark silt. Brick and tile fragments lay within the bedding and the topsoil. A concrete slab, 90mm thick, overlay this though in the central straight east-west trench line there was a deposit of brick and concrete rubble overlying a truncated topsoil. The concrete slab formed the ground surface of the northern half of the site, adjacent to the garages, albeit being broken in many places.

### 2.3 Bore Hole results

Ground surface	concrete, topsoil, light clay/gravel fill,
0.50m	compacted gravely silt
1.6m	firm mottled orange / light green slightly silty clay
4.7m	yellow sand
6.4m	firm mottled orange / light green slightly silty clay
6.8m	similar, with slight gravel
8m	stiff grey locally silty clay

results the same to 10m.

### 2.4 Conclusions

Documentary evidence suggests that the site had been open ground for most of its life, probably used as agriculture or pasture land (Askew, 2006). Development in the area began in the mid 19th century. The site originally formed a formal garden attached to the north side of 17 Church Terrace (Askew, 2006, Fig 6).

The archaeological investigation entirely confirms this scenario. Natural subsoils had been sharply truncated and the overlying sand and silt is consistent with an introduced horticultural bedding overlain with topsoil.

A fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem which was recovered from the subsoil could only be roughly dated to the 18th or 19th centuries. The four fragments of domestic pottery that were largely found over the subsoil could be dated to the first half of the 19th century and are consistent with development in the middle of the century. The brick and tile fragments were of 19th and 20th century date.

No archaeological features or finds of any significance were present at the site. The site seems to have been barely used until minor landscaping in mid 19th century.

### **3 Potential of archaeology**

#### **3.1 Original research aims**

- What is the level of truncation caused by earlier development in this area?  
Probable truncation of the natural subsoil was most likely caused by mid 19th century landscaping.
- What is the nature and significance of the surviving archaeological remains?  
Strata at the site are most likely associated with mid 19th century landscaping. They are of no archaeological significance.
- What are the levels of natural deposits and how do these compare to adjacent sites?  
Natural deposits recorded comprise a subsoil that it most likely to be colluvial. Further natural strata were recorded in the geotechnical bore hole investigation. The evidence from this site is similar to the two nearest archaeological investigations; (Askew, 2006, DBA nos 1 and 2).

#### **3.2 New research aims**

In the light of the negative results of the investigation, no further research aims are envisaged.

#### **3.3 Significance of the data**

The evidence from the investigation is of limited local significance in respect of the topographic findings.

### **4 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.

In view of the limited potential of the material and the limited significance of the data it is suggested that a short note on the results of the watching brief should appear in the annual round up of the *London Archaeologist*.



## **5 Acknowledgements**

The Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) would like to thank Mr Michael Kemp for commissioning this report. The author would also like to thank Southern Drilling Services for providing results of the bore hole drilling.

## **6 Bibliography**

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Museum of London, 2002 *A research framework for London archaeology 2002*

## 7 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

### Project details

Project name Church Terrace SE13 watching brief

Short description of the project A semi circular trench was dug to examine tree roots. Archaeological examination revealed natural subsoil 0.5m below the surface. This was truncated by a sandy silt , most likely a horticultural bedding itself overlain by a topsoil. The site surface was a concrete slab. A few fragments of 19th century domestic pottery were found at the interface of the bedding and the subsoil.

Project dates Start: 29-11-2006 End: 30-11-2006

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes CHV06 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Site status None

Current Land use Other 13 - Waste ground

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

Prompt Planning condition

### Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON LEWISHAM LEWISHAM AND BLACKHEATH land adjacent to 17 Church Terrace, London SE13

Postcode SE13

Study area 256.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 39180 75615 51.4618662966 0.00372072025998 51 27 42 N  
000 00 13 E Polygon

Height OD Min: 29.00m Max: 29.50m

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**Project creators**

Name of MoLAS  
Organisation

Project brief Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District  
originator Archaeologist)

Project design MoLAS  
originator

Project director/manager Robin Nielsen

Project supervisor JMC Bowsher

Type of Developer  
sponsor/funding  
body

Name of Michael Kemp  
sponsor/funding  
body

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**Project archives**

Physical Archive No  
Exists?

Digital Archive LAARC  
recipient

Paper Archive LAARC  
recipient

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**Project  
bibliography 1**

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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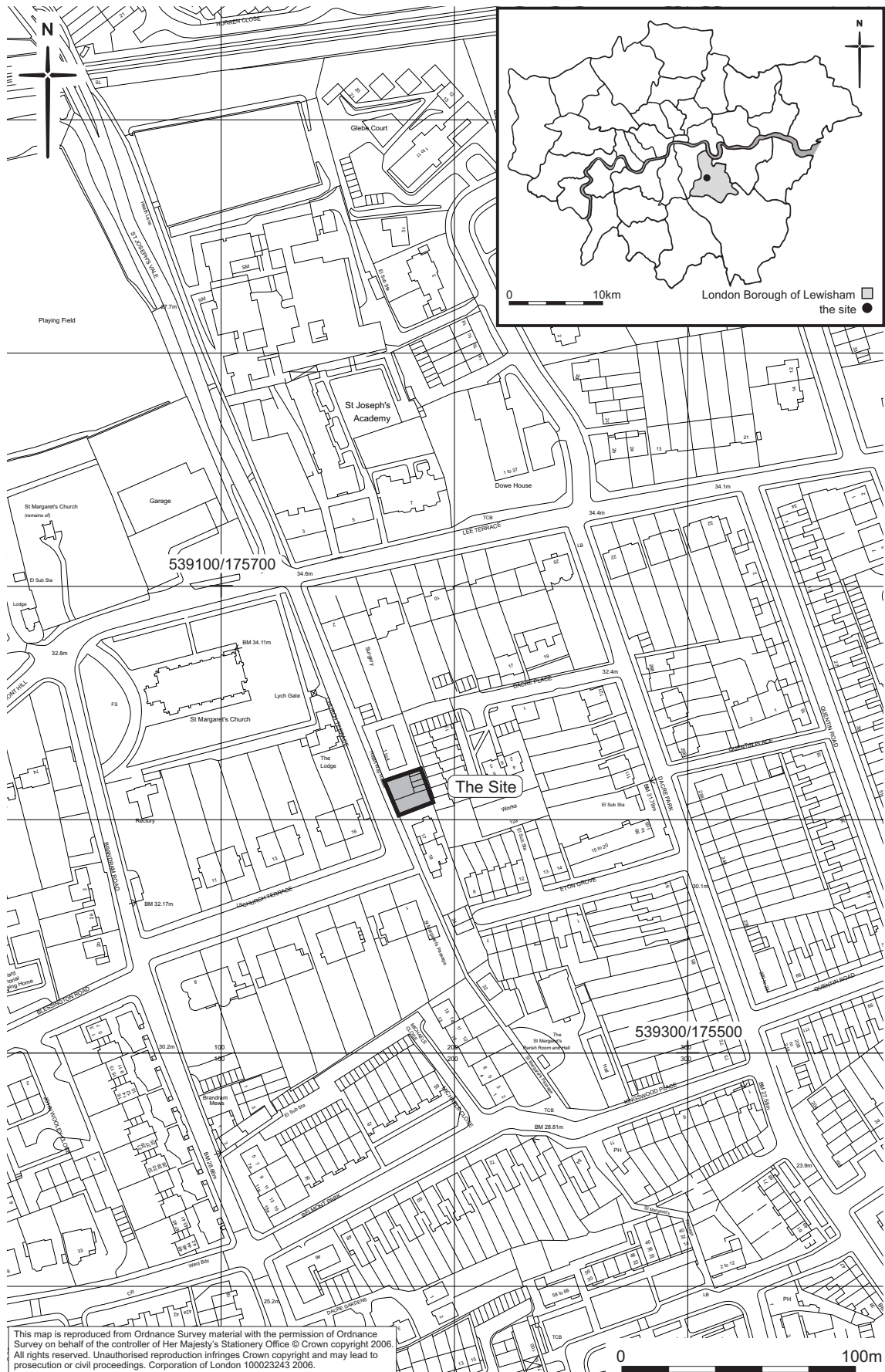


Fig 1 Site location

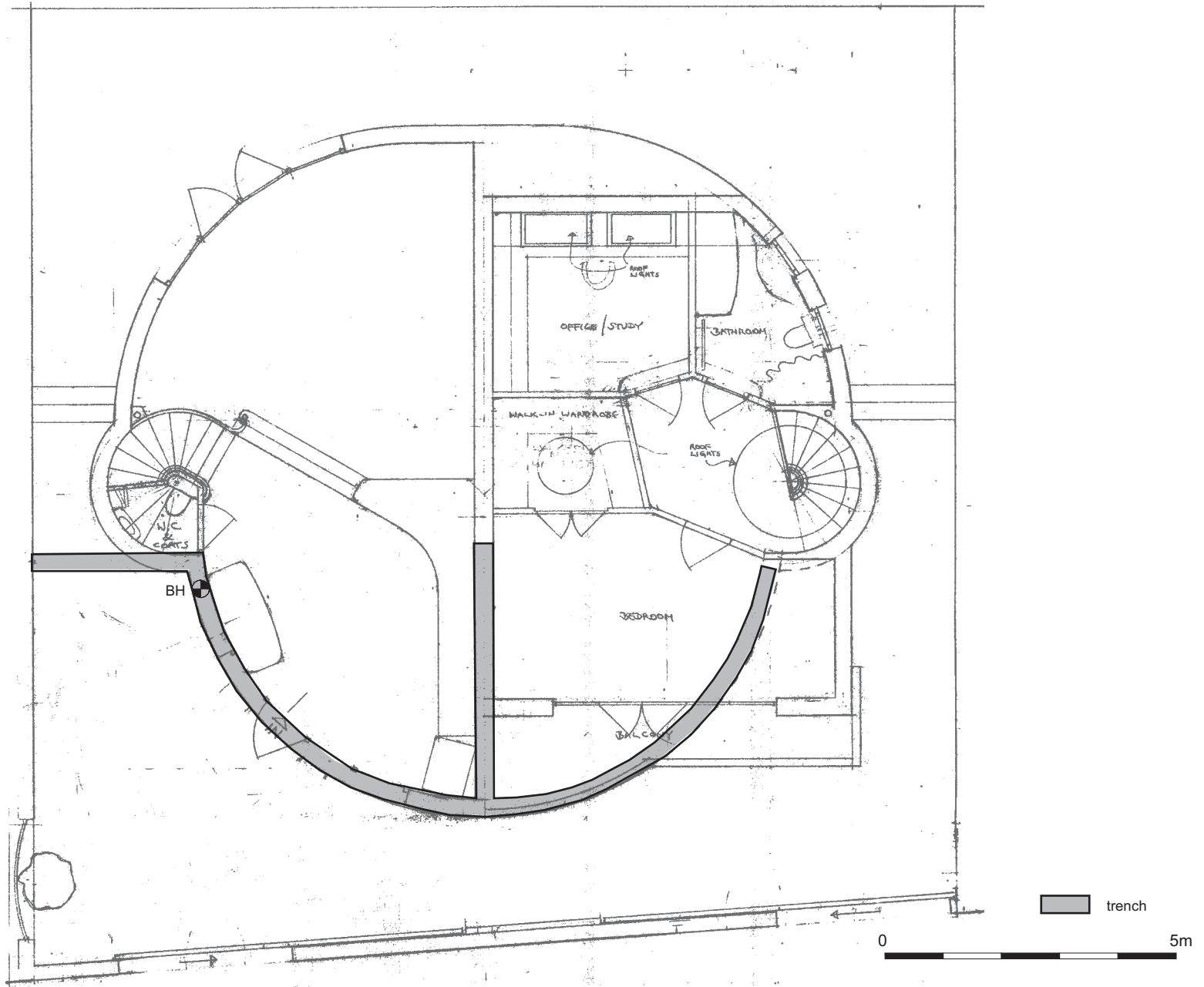


Fig 2 Trench location