



**840 OLD KENT ROAD
(Aldi Extension)
London
SE15**

London Borough of Southwark

An archaeological watching brief report

August 2006



MUSEUM OF LONDON

Archaeology Service

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Site Code: OLN06
National Grid Reference: 535100 177350

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A report on the watching brief

Author Graham Spurr

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Summary (non-technical)

This report has been commissioned from the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) by The Harris Partnership on behalf of their client Aldi Stores Ltd in order to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out during ground work for the extension of the Aldi store at 840 Old Kent Road, London SE15. The new extension is being built over part of the car park.

Work on foundation trenches was monitored in July 2006. Modern, probably 20th century, deposits were recorded in section in three foundation trenches. Natural ground was observed at around 2m OD, and the highest survival of modern fill occurred at 2.6m OD.

The results of the Watching brief indicate that the site has low archaeological potential.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The watching brief at 840 Old Kent Road was commissioned from the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) by The Harris Partnership on behalf of their client Aldi Stores Ltd. The proposed development involves the extension of the store to west, which requires the lifting of an area of existing tarmac and localised excavation for new foundations and service trenches. The approximate level of the tarmac surface was 3mOD. The Museum of London site code is OLN06.

The site is situated on the south side of the Old Kent Road, approximately 50m to the north-west of the London Bridge to Peckham Rye railway line and immediately south-east of Leo Street. (see Fig 1). The centre of the site lies at National Grid reference 535100 177350.

The site was the subject of a previous archaeological evaluation, run as a training excavation by Birkbeck College, under the site code LEO96. This document informed the *Method Statement* (Jackson, 2006) for the watching brief.

1.2 The 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 watching brief.

1.3 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by The Harris Partnership on behalf of their client Aldi Stores 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).

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. A number of more site-specific research aims and objectives were established in the preceding *Method Statement* and are outlined in the following section.

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, if any, should now take place.

1.4 Aims and objectives

The research questions identified in the Method Statement were:

- Is there any variation in the level of natural geology from that seen in 1996?
- Is there any evidence for features earlier than the 19th century?

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

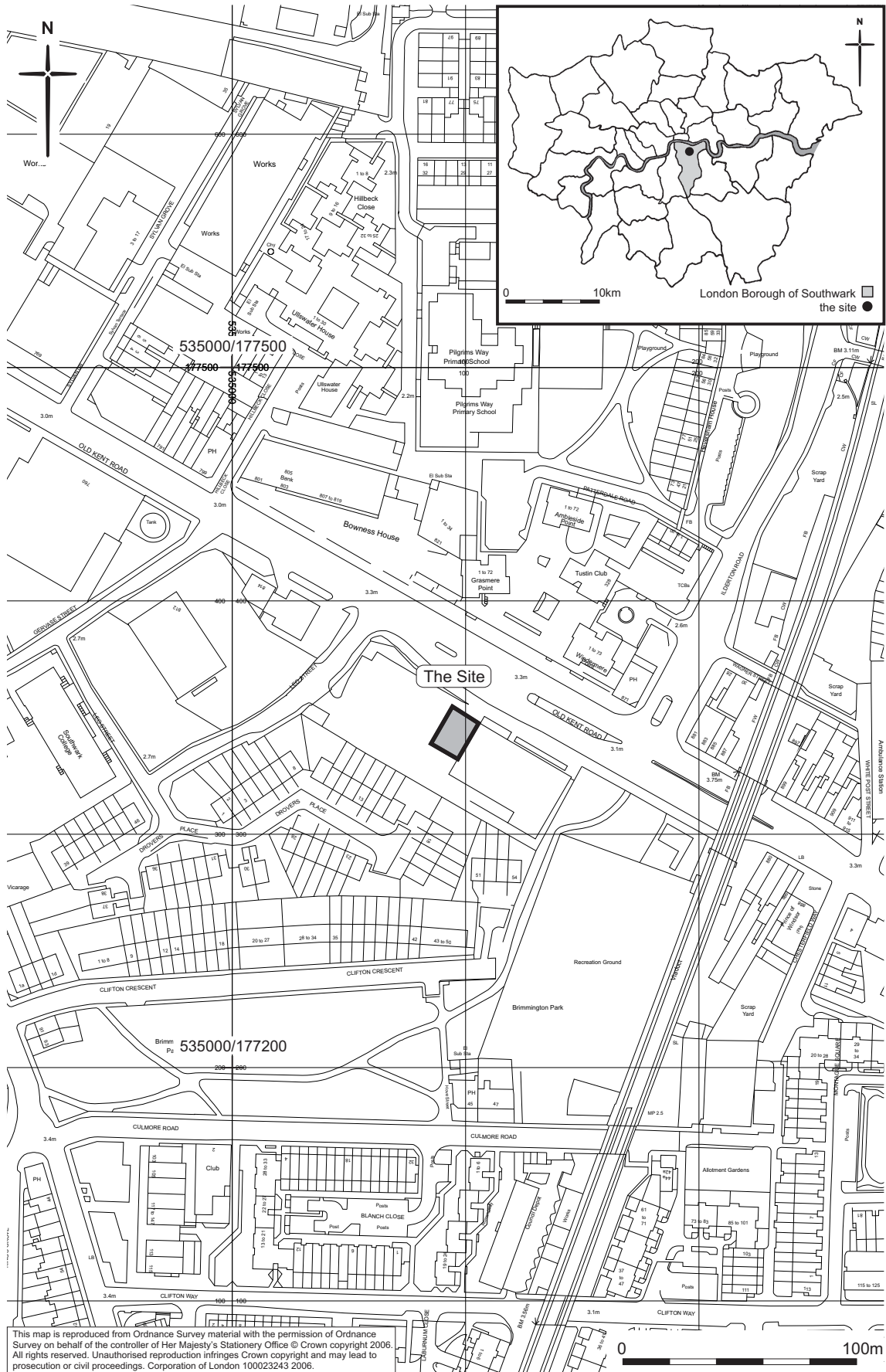
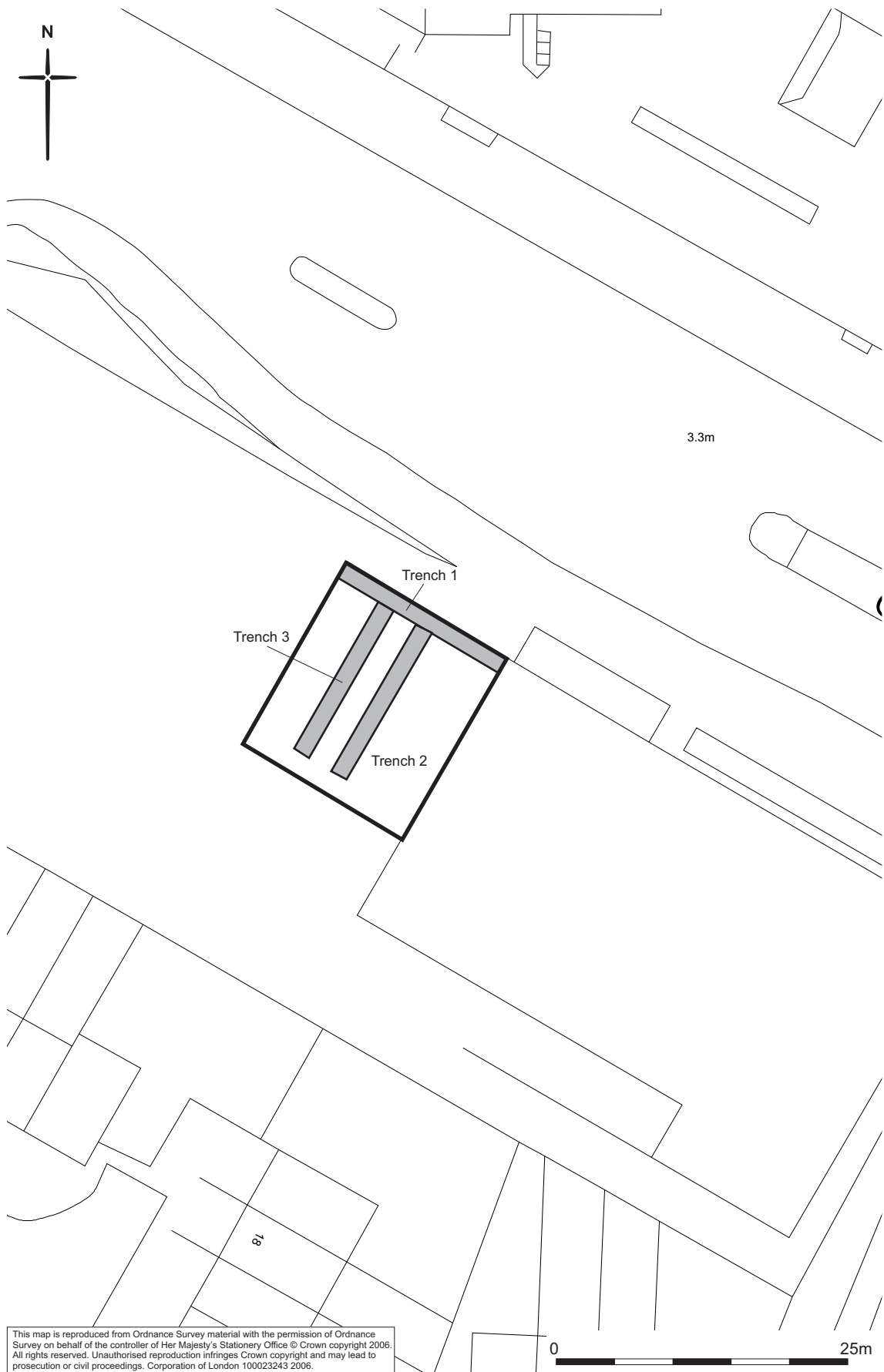


Fig 1 Site location

2 Topographical and historical background

- The site is located on the edge of a Pleistocene gravel terrace (BGS sheet 256), with the Thames alluvial floodplain to the north of the site, on the opposite side of Old Kent Road.
- The natural deposits recorded at LEO96 consisted of sands and gravels beneath a ploughed soil deposit. Natural sand was recorded at a relatively even level of 1.80m across the site (1.2m below modern ground level).
- Recent archaeological work in the area has produced evidence for prehistoric and Roman settlement. A wooden trackway was uncovered at Bramcote Grove 300m to the north of the site. To the south of the Old Kent Road, several sites have produced worked flints, pottery, and remains of prehistoric pits and ditches. However no evidence for prehistoric activity was found during the LEO96 evaluation.
- The Old Kent Road is thought to follow the line of Roman Watling Street. A stretch of the Roman road was excavated at the B&Q site in 1990 roughly 1km to the northwest. Once again, no evidence for the Roman road or any Roman occupation was recovered during the LEO96 evaluation.
- The earliest archaeological evidence for human activity on the site dated from the 16th-18th centuries in the form of residual, abraded pottery in the plough soil. 18th century maps show the area as being predominantly rural with occasional buildings along the Old Kent Road.
- The first evidence for occupation on the site dates from the early 19th century. Most of the archaeological features seen in 1996 consisted of the remains of 19th century brick terraces, garden features and WWII Anderson shelters.



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Fig 2 Trench locations

3 The watching brief

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and recording during the watching brief was done in accordance with the *Method Statement* (MoLAS, 2006) and the MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual (MoLAS, 1994).

The ground was broken out and cleared by contractors under MoLAS supervision. Trenches were excavated by machine by the contractors, and monitored by a member of staff from MoLAS.

The locations of the areas of excavation were recorded by offsetting from adjacent standing walls and plotted on to a Site Survey. This information was then plotted onto the OS grid.

The heights of observations and/or archaeological remains were recorded relative to Ordnance Datum.

Where relevant, sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20.

The site has produced 3 sections drawn at a scale of 1:10 (see Fig 3).

The site finds and records can be found under the site code OLN06 in the Museum of London archive.

3.2 Results of the watching brief

In total, three separate interventions (trenches) were recorded when dug for the purposes of new foundations and services. These have been numbered 1-3 consecutively. There follows a brief description of the archaeological deposits as recorded.

For all trench locations see Fig 2

<i>Watching Brief Trench 1</i>	
Location	NW-SE axis along NE boundary
Dimensions	1m x10m
Modern ground level/top of slab	3m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	2.5m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	0.7m
Level of base of deposits observed	1.8m OD
Natural observed	1.8m OD

<i>Watching Brief Trench 2</i>	
Location	NE – SW axis across centre of site
Dimensions	1m x10m
Modern ground level/top of slab	3m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	2.6m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	0.6m
Level of base of deposits observed	2m OD
Natural observed	2m OD

<i>Watching Brief Trench 3</i>	
Location	NE – SW axis W of trench 2
Dimensions	1m x10m
Modern ground level/top of slab	3m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	2.6m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	0.6m
Level of base of deposits observed	2m OD
Natural observed	2m OD

In all trenches the ‘archaeological deposits’ were represented by 20th century made ground consisting of mottled dark grey brown and mid orange sandy silt with frequent brick fragments, occasional glass and metal. These were all considered fill deposits probably dating from the construction of the Aldi car park in 1996.

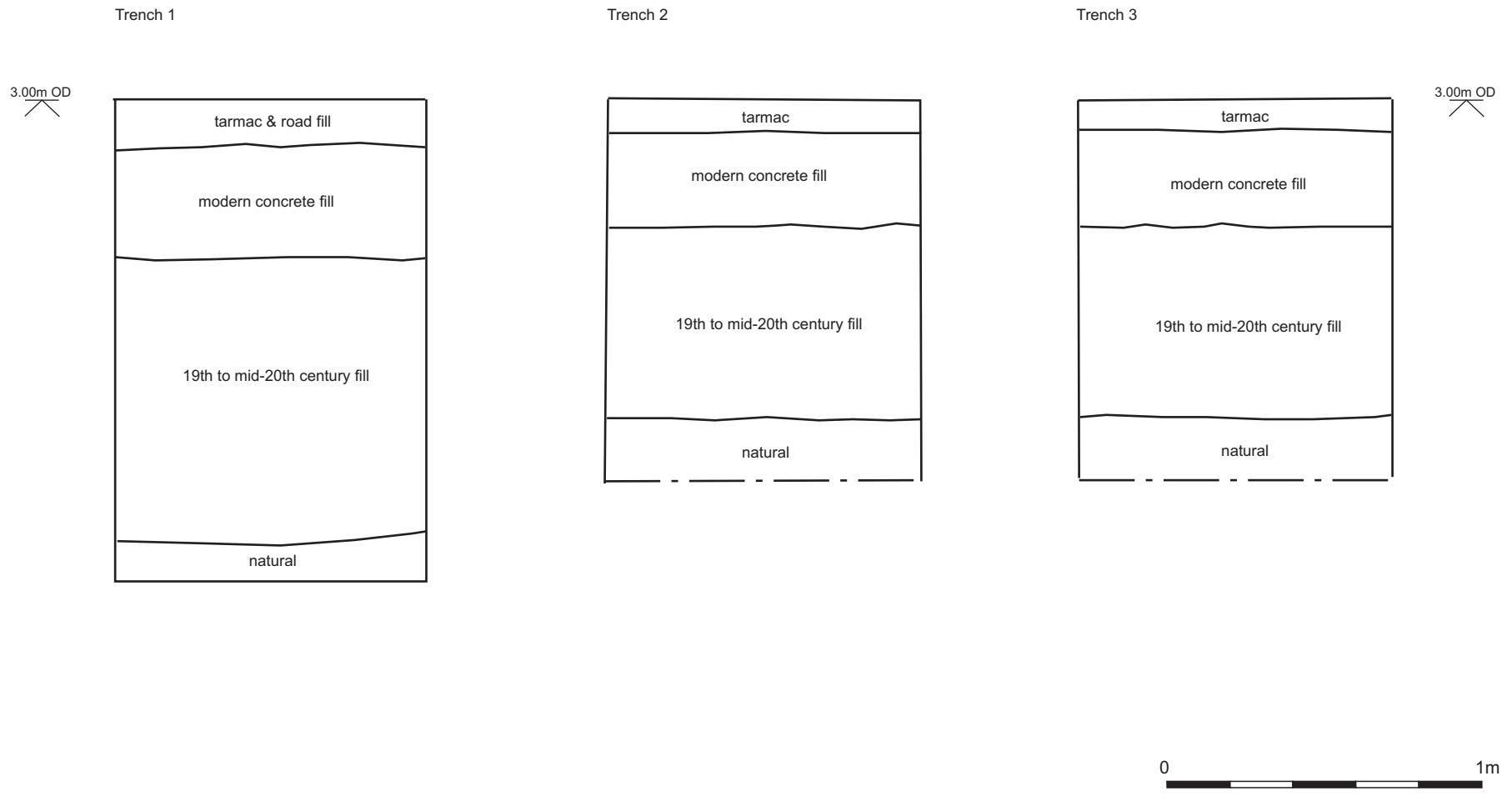


Fig 3 Trench sections

4 Potential of archaeology

4.1 Original research aims

The following research aims were proposed in the archaeological evaluation report (Jackson, 2005):

Is there any variation in the level of natural geology from that seen in 1996?

There is little variation in the level of natural geology from that seen in 1996 with levels on average around 2mOD.

Is there any evidence for features earlier than the 19th century?

There is no evidence for features earlier than the 20th century.

4.2 New research aims

No new research aims are proposed.

4.3 Significance of the data

The remains are of local significance confirming that any original ground surfaces, ploughsoils, etc. were disturbed during construction of the Aldi car park in 1996.

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 research.

The site archive containing original records and finds will be stored in accordance with the terms of the *Method Statement* (MoLAS, 2006) with the Museum of London within 12 months.

In view of the limited potential of the material (Sections 4) and the relatively limited significance of the data (Section 4.3) 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*.

6 Conclusions

The nature of the deposits seen at 840 Old Kent Road indicates that the site now has low archaeological potential. The fills seen are considered to be made ground deposits of 20th century date.

7 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Paul Quin of R.G. Carter Ltd for his on site assistance and The Harris Partnership for commissioning this report:

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