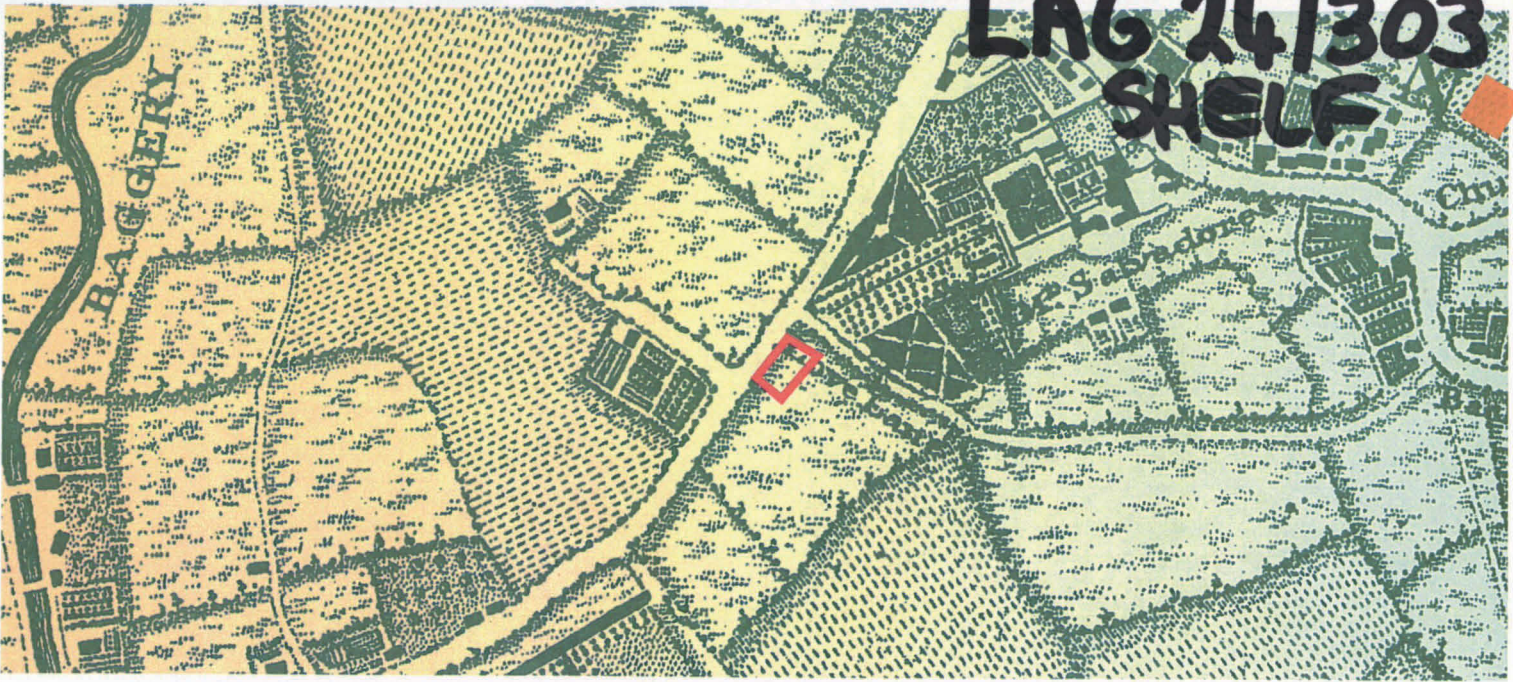


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1-11 HIGH STREET
Colliers Wood
London
SW19

London Borough of Merton

An archaeological evaluation report

December 2004



MUSEUM OF LONDON

Archaeology Service

Oe

1-11 HIGH STREET
Colliers Wood
London
SW19

London Borough of Merton

An archaeological evaluation report

Site Code: HCW04
National Grid Reference: 527030 170736

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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 1-11 High Street, Colliers Wood, London, SW19. The report was commissioned from MoLAS by Goldcrest Homes.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken within seven evaluation trenches, of which, five measured 15m by 2m and two measured 2.50m by 1.10m. These trenches were excavated to reveal any evidence of Roman activity associated with the Roman Road "Stane Street", the route of which is located to the west of the site along the current High Street. The original course of the River Graveney was also investigated.

The results of the evaluation revealed the natural sand and gravel overlying clay. Much of the natural had been truncated by previous land-use. The surface was recorded between 12.87m (trench 1) and 13.89m OD (trench 2).

Within trenches 3, 6 and 7, located towards the western part of the site, a Roman ditch was uncovered. This was aligned north-east-south-west, following the line of the route of "Stane Street". Recovered from the fill were a number of pottery sherds from a single 4th-century Roman flagon.

To the west of the ditch, within trench 3, successive layers of gravel and silt were noted, which may represent the truncated surface of the Roman Road lying a little further to the west.

Within the north-western part of the site was the possible location of the River Graveney. This is denoted by a shallow drop in the natural clay by some 700mm, the depression infilled with a slightly organic brown silt. This silt contained a sherd of Roman amphora, but also 19th-20th century brick. To the east was a course yellow sand containing very small shells which may represent alluvial flood deposit associated with the river.

A 20th-century brick soak-away was recorded at the eastern end of trench 2. The remaining trenches were truncated to natural with no further evidence of archaeological features.

The results of the field evaluation have helped to refine the initial assessment of the archaeological potential of the site. In the light of revised understanding of the archaeological potential of the site the report concludes the impact of any redevelopment will have a limited affect upon the underlying archaeology.

1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The evaluation took place at 1-11 High Street, Colliers Wood, London, SW19, hereafter called 'the site'. It is bounded to the north by Robinson Road, to the east by Park Road, to the west by the High Street Colliers Wood and to the south by existing buildings. The Ordnance Survey National Grid reference is 527030 170736. Ground level immediately adjacent to the site lies between 13.80m OD to the west and 14.60m OD to the north. The site code is HCW04.

A desk-based *Archaeological Assessment* was previously prepared, which covers the whole area of the site (Casson, L, 2004). The *assessment* document should be referred to for information on the natural geology, archaeological and historical background of the site, and the initial interpretation of its archaeological potential.

The site does not contain any Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Listed Buildings, but does lie within an Archaeological Priority Zone. There have been no archaeological investigations on the site, but a small number in the vicinity.

1.2 Planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Method Statement* which formed the project design for the evaluation (Hoad, 2004).

1.3 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Goldcrest Homes 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

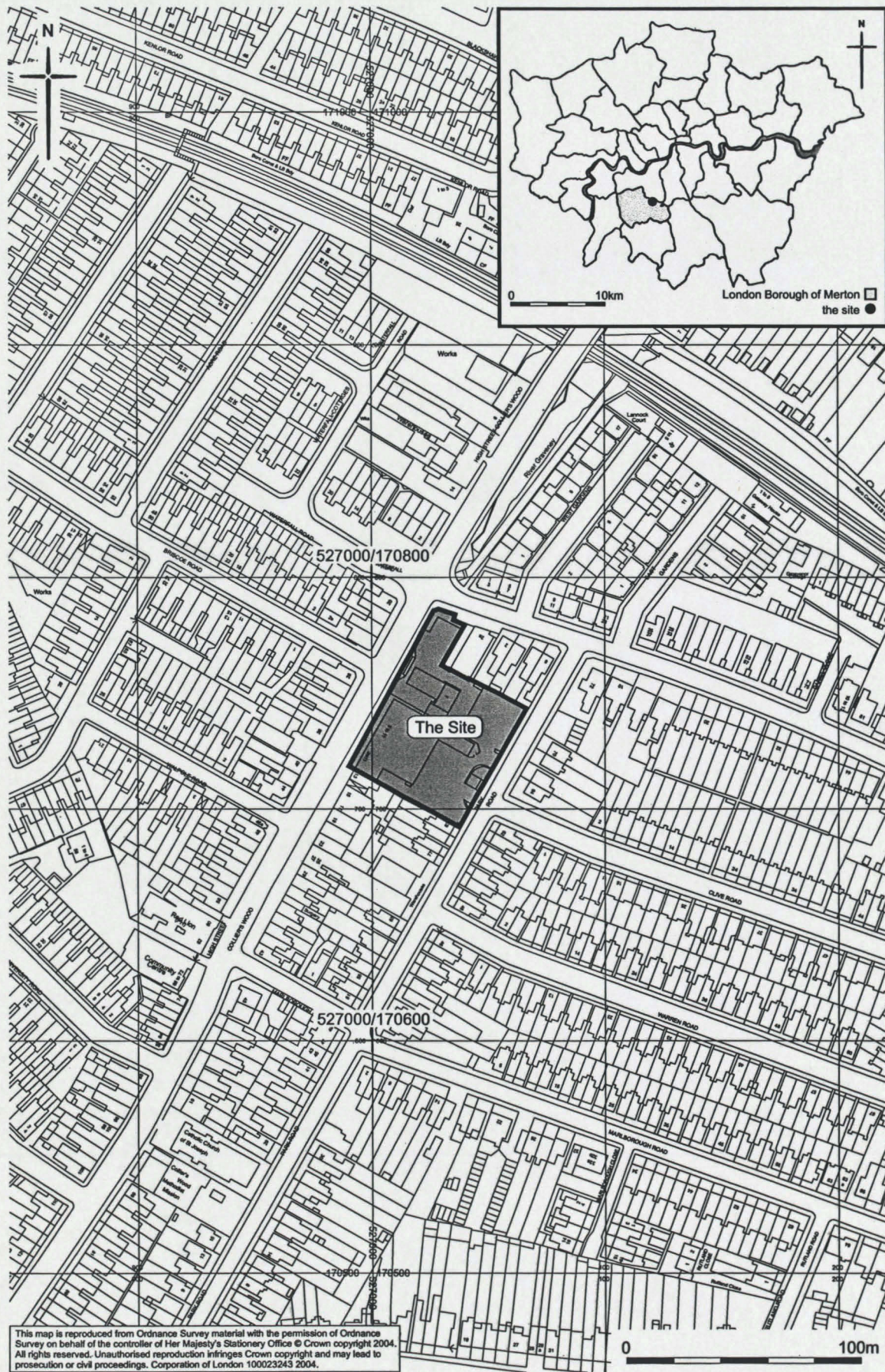


Fig 1 Site location

1.4 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:

What is the nature and level of natural topography?

Is there any evidence of the former course of the River Graveney on the site?

Are there any prehistoric remains on the site?

Is there any evidence for the Roman road known as Stane Street, or features, such as graves / burials that might be associated with it?

Is there evidence for medieval remains on the site associated with occupation along the High Street?

2 Topographical and historical background

3 Background: archaeological and historical

3.1 Introduction

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 |

3.2 Geology and topography

London occupies part of the Thames Basin, a broad syncline of chalk filled in the centre with sands and clays. Above this 'bed-rock' lie the fluvial deposits of the River Thames arranged in flights or gravel terraces. These terraces represent the remains of former floodplains of the river.

The London Borough of Merton lies mainly above Thames gravel terraces and London Clay. However, to the northwest of the borough, the area beneath Wimbledon Common and Village the underlying geology consists of Claygate Beds. The Claygate Beds are Pleistocene, dating from the last post-glaciation period, possibly as recent as 13,000 years ago. This deposit can be up to 15 metres thick, and comprises predominantly mixed sands and clays.

The geological deposits have been eroded by streams and water channels. To the west of the borough is the Beverley Brook, which runs along the western edge of Wimbledon Common and down through New Malden to Kingston. The River Wandle, a tributary of the Thames, to the east of Wimbledon, runs past the site at approximately 1500m to the west, joining the Thames at Wandsworth. The height of the land in the borough decreases steadily towards the north, then rises dramatically at Wimbledon Common.

3.2.1 Palaeolithic: c 450,000 BC - c 10000 BC

Evidence of palaeolithic human activity prior to 10000 BC is sparse in the Merton area, however there have been several finds in the vicinity of the site. The closest findspot was to the north of the site where a flint core (SMR No 030811), flake (SMR No 030809) and two unspecified artefacts of the period (SMR No's 030808, 030810) were recovered. At Fountain Road, Wandsworth palaeolithic animal remains were found (SMR No 0315490) alongside an implement (SMR No 020716) and an unspecified occupation layer (SMR No 031539).

3.2.2 Mesolithic: c 10000 BC - c 4300 BC

No artefacts of Mesolithic date have yet been recovered in this general area, but it is suggested that riverside Mesolithic occupation perhaps not dissimilar to that found on the Colne valley at Uxbridge might remain sealed by later alluvial deposition within the path of the River Wandle.

The Wandle Valley peats may be related to peats and humic clays found in the valley bottoms of a number of Thames tributaries (eg, the Colne, the Lea and the Kennet), dating to the early Flandrian period. The formation of these swamps may be associated with a rise in sea level after the end of the Devensian glaciation, causing a rise in the base river levels of these tributaries. At a number of investigated valley sites, Mesolithic artefacts resting on gravels or alluvial clays were overlain by peat or organic clays.

3.2.3 Neolithic: c 4300 BC - 1800 BC

Although there is little evidence for Neolithic activity in the area surrounding the site, the period is represented to the north in Tooting with the presence of an axe (SMR No 031194) and an unspecified implement (SMR No 031195).

3.2.4 Bronze Age: c 2000 BC - 650 BC

Evidence of Bronze Age activity in the immediate vicinity of the site is indicated by a dagger (SMR No 031262) found in Tooting.

3.2.5 Iron Age: c 650 BC - AD 43

The closest remains dating to the Iron Age period were found on the Maybury Street site at St Georges Hospital in Tooting in the form of a pit (SMR No 021643) and ploughmarks (SMR No 021644).

3.2.6 Roman: AD 43 - c 400

The impact of the Roman period upon the site hinges upon the line of Stane Street, the major Roman thoroughfare from London to Chichester.

The road follows High Street Colliers Wood in a south-westerly direction to the point where the High Street curves west to cross Merton Bridge. It continues southwest from the turn in High Street Colliers Wood then across the site of the scheduled ancient monument of Merton Priory and the Wandle, and then continuing onwards to the southwest.

Areas of the road were revealed to the south of the site during excavations on the High Street Colliers Wood beside Priory Road. It was about 8m to 9m wide and was constructed from both local and imported material such as flint, gravel and sand. The southernmost roadside ditch was found and contained 1st to 3rd century pottery. The road itself was flat with slightly raised banks along either side leading to the roadside ditches. This is unusual, in that generally Roman roads are cambered or have an *agger* to allow for drainage. However, the type of construction found at Colliers Wood seems plausible when crossing a low-lying area close to the river. The raised banks could have acted as water defences within the marshland environment, and the road itself may actually have formed a causeway through across the low ground.

Roman coins and pottery have been found along the line of the road and burials have been discovered to the south of the site, in South Mitcham and on the site of the former Deen City Farm, Phipps Bridge.

3.2.7 Saxon: c AD 400 – 1066

During the Saxon period Merton was known as 'Meretone, Meretun or Merton' meaning either 'the farm by the pond' or 'Maera's homestead'.

Early documentary evidence suggests that the boundaries of the Merton estate have changed little in a thousand years. On the east side Merton is bounded by Mitcham and Tooting; on the south by Mitcham and Morden; on the north by Wimbledon, and on the west by Kingston and Malden.

No evidence of Saxon settlement has so far been uncovered close to the site, however residual Saxon artefacts, including chaff-tempered ware and a 'concentration' of eight Saxon antler artefacts (combs, needle, pin, offcuts) were found in 12th and 13th century deposits at the Merton Priory excavations.

3.2.8 Medieval: 1066 - c 1538

During the 12th century Merton Priory was established on the banks of the River Wandle. The priory was built in 1117 by Gilbert, Sheriff of Surrey, and received the manor of Merton from Henry I in 1121. Thomas Becket, later archbishop of Canterbury, and Walter de Merton, founder of Merton College Oxford, were both educated at Merton Priory.

Major excavations of this site, from the 1970's to the early 1990's, including excavations by the Museum of London's Department of Greater London Archaeology, have revealed a large part of the plan of the monastic complex including the majority of the multi-phase church, the chapter house, infirmary, part of the cloister, possible domestic buildings, a large hall or barn and a mill. A total of 712 medieval inhumations have been excavated.

The priory was surrendered to the crown in 1538 on the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII. Most of its buildings were demolished and the building material used for construction of the Palace of Nonsuch in Cheam.

The main focus of medieval activity is concentrated upon Merton Priory, but other evidence of activity has been found near to the site. On the Maybury Street site at St George's Hospital, a medieval pit was uncovered (SMR No 021646) along with a water channel (SMR No 021647), and a medieval fishpond (SMR No 031368) was found on Franciscan Road.

3.2.9 Post-medieval

Major developments took place in Colliers Wood in the post medieval period and 17th-18th century industries flourished along the banks of the River Wandle. Calico printing, silk works, iron, copper and snuff milling were all taking place in the locality.

The main industry at Merton Abbey (the area around the old Merton Priory complex) was calico printing, and along with Mitcham the area became a major centre for textile printing and dyeing in England. The textile industry continued during the 19th century, and William Morris, who leased works at Merton Abbey in 1881, continued production as Morris & Co. until 1940. In 1904 Arthur Liberty set up a print works on the site of an earlier calico printing works. Liberty & Co. Ltd occupied the site until 1972. This is now a market and craft workshop known as 'Merton Abbey Mills'.

Due to the expanding industrial output of the area, the Surrey Iron Railway was established in 1803 and ran from Wandsworth to Croydon, Merstham and Godstone. It passed through Colliers Wood to the south west of the site running through Wandle Park, crossing the High Street and on to Mitcham. With the expansion in new railway companies, with their steam locomotives, the Surrey Iron Railway lost much of their traffic and closed in 1846.

One notable resident of Merton was Lord Nelson who shared Merton Place with Lady Emma and Sir William Hamilton. Nelson purchased Merton Place in 1801, an early 18th century house, which stood in 70 acres of picturesque grounds either side of Merton High Street. The house was located on the south side of the High Street with a brick tunnel running under Merton High Street connected both properties. Nelson lived at Merton Place until his death at Trafalgar in 1805; Lady Hamilton lived there for a further three years until it was sold in 1808. The property stood empty for a number of years before it was demolished c.1840.

John Roque's map of 1746 (front cover) is one of the earliest maps, which shows the location of the site. At this time the site is located within open fields. This is still the case in 1816 as seen on the Village London Atlas.

Stanfords Library map of London and its suburbs, published in 1862 shows that by the mid 19th century the land use has remained unchanged. The Village London Atlas of 1876 again shows open fields or farmland, however, by now the route of the Wimbledon to Tooting section of the Ludgate Hill to Wimbledon (1868) railway line is shown.

A revision of the Village London Atlas in 1904 does not show any detailed change in land use, however, the map in general shows that more roads and streets had been constructed and the area is becoming more urban in character.

The most notable change can be seen on the Ordnance Survey map of 1919. The surrounding road system has settled into the form, which still exists today, with the same divisions of blocks of buildings. The area is now intensely urban and most plots of land are occupied by terraced housing.

The plot on which the site lies appears to contain four houses in the northwest corner, structures which still exist today. The remainder of the area is occupied by warehouses or workshops.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1934 indicates that the general layout of the site is unaltered. The land use appears very similar, although one of the buildings to the east can now be identified as a hall and there are numerous small workshops or garages in the south.

A recent Ordnance Survey map from 1989 confirms that the layout of the site has remained constant, and it is known from documentary sources that in recent years the site has been occupied by a boat builders yard, garages and general engineering works.

4 The evaluation

4.1 Methodology

The archaeological evaluation was carried out in accordance with the preceding *Method Statement* (MoLAS, 2004), and the *MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS, 1994).

A total of seven evaluation trenches were excavated on the site. Five of these formed part of the original method statement. A further two trenches were subsequently excavated on the advice of Robert Whytehead (archaeological advisor to the borough) in order to reveal the extent of a Roman ditch revealed during the excavation of trench 3.

The measurements for each trench is as follows:

| | |
|----------|----------------|
| Trench 1 | 15m by 2m |
| Trench 2 | 15m by 2m |
| Trench 3 | 15m by 2m |
| Trench 4 | 15m by 2m |
| Trench 5 | 15m by 2m |
| Trench 6 | 2.20m by 1.10m |
| Trench 7 | 2.50m by 1.10m |

The positions of the trenches were located using a Total Station Theodolite and datalogger. A 360° mechanical excavator was employed to excavate the modern deposits to the top of the archaeological horizons under MoLAS supervision. Once the latest significant horizon had been reached, deposits and features were selectively hand excavated and recorded by the on-site archaeologists, with the application of additional techniques where appropriate (eg, environmental sampling).

A MoLAS Senior Archaeologist monitored the work and recorded any archaeological remains revealed in the appropriate manner (plans, sections, field notes and/or pro-forma 'context sheets'). Observations were then transformed onto the Ordnance Survey National Grid and heights measured in metres above Ordnance Datum, by direct measurement from verified Ordnance Survey control points.

All important archaeological features were photographed in both black and white and colour media. All recording was carried out to the format and standards detailed in the Museum of London Archaeological Recording Manual.

The site has produced: 1 trench location plan; 19 context records; 5 section drawings at 1:20 and photographs.

The site records can be found under the site code HCW04 in the MoL archive.

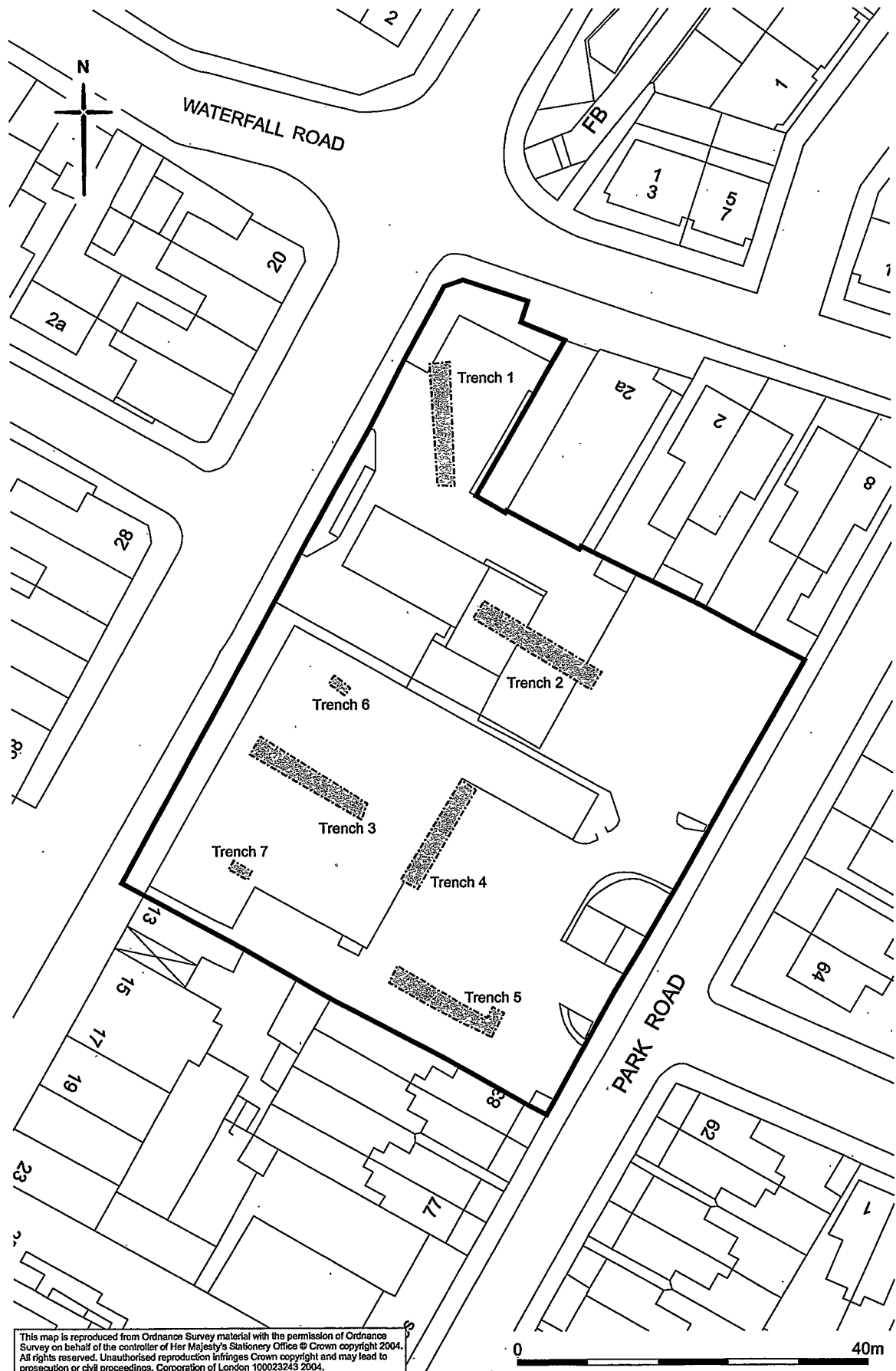


Fig 2 Trench location

4.2 Results of the evaluation

Trench 1

Trench 1 measured 15m by 2m and was located in the north-western part of the site. The natural clay was reached at 12.87m OD. Overlying the natural, within the southern end of the trench, was a 200mm thick layer of coarse yellow sand [14] containing very small shells. The surface of the natural was recorded at 13.07m OD.

Within the northern part of the trench was the possible course of the River Graveney. This is noted by a shallow drop in the natural clay of some 700mm with the base recorded at 12.27m OD. Filling the feature was a slightly organic brown silt [8]. This silt contained a sherd of Roman amphora, but also 19th-20th-century brick. Overlying this fill was a brown-orange sand [13]. The top was recorded at 13.20m OD.

Covering the entire trench was a 600mm thick layer of grey sand and gravel [12], recorded at 13.60m OD. Running northwest-southeast across the trench were the wall foundations to a modern building. Between these walls and generally covering the entire trench was a 700mm thick layer of dark brown clay silt containing brick and concrete [11]. The surface of the upper brick and concrete make-up layer was recorded at 14.06m OD.

Trench 2

Trench 2 measured 15m by 2m and was located within the north-eastern part of the site. The surface of the natural sand was recorded at 13.89m OD. Beneath the sand was the natural clay recorded at 13.39m OD. The majority of the trench was truncated to the natural clay.

Recorded in section was a 400mm thick layer of mid grey clay with occasional medium sized stones [17]. This was at a height of 13.87m OD. Within the south-eastern part of the trench was a 20th-century brick soak-away. It measured 1.50m in diameter and was constructed from red frogged brick [16]. It was filled with a black gravel fill [15] which was recorded at a height of 13.69m OD.

Overlying the entire trench was a 1.20m thick (at the north-western end) layer of modern make-up comprising a dark brown clay silt with brick and concrete. The modern ground surface was recorded at 14.14m OD.

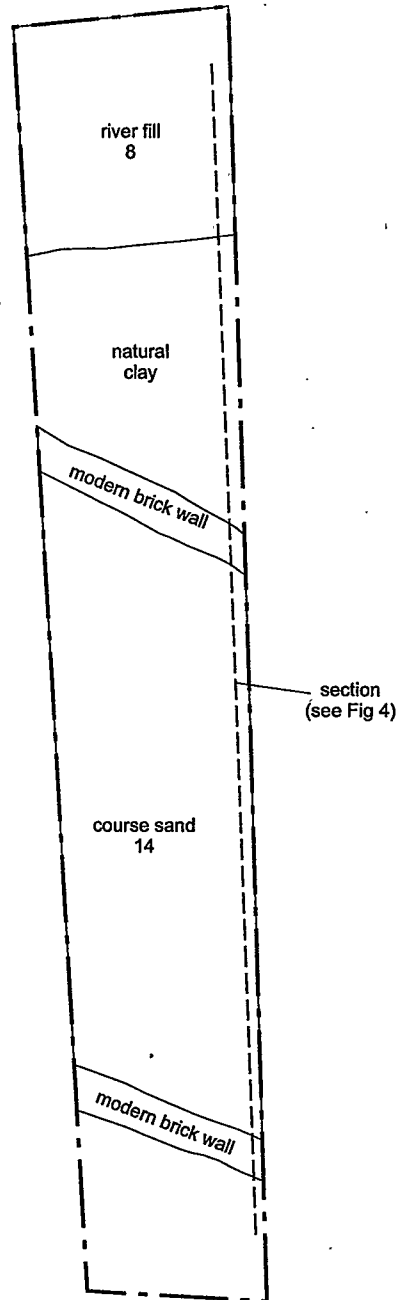
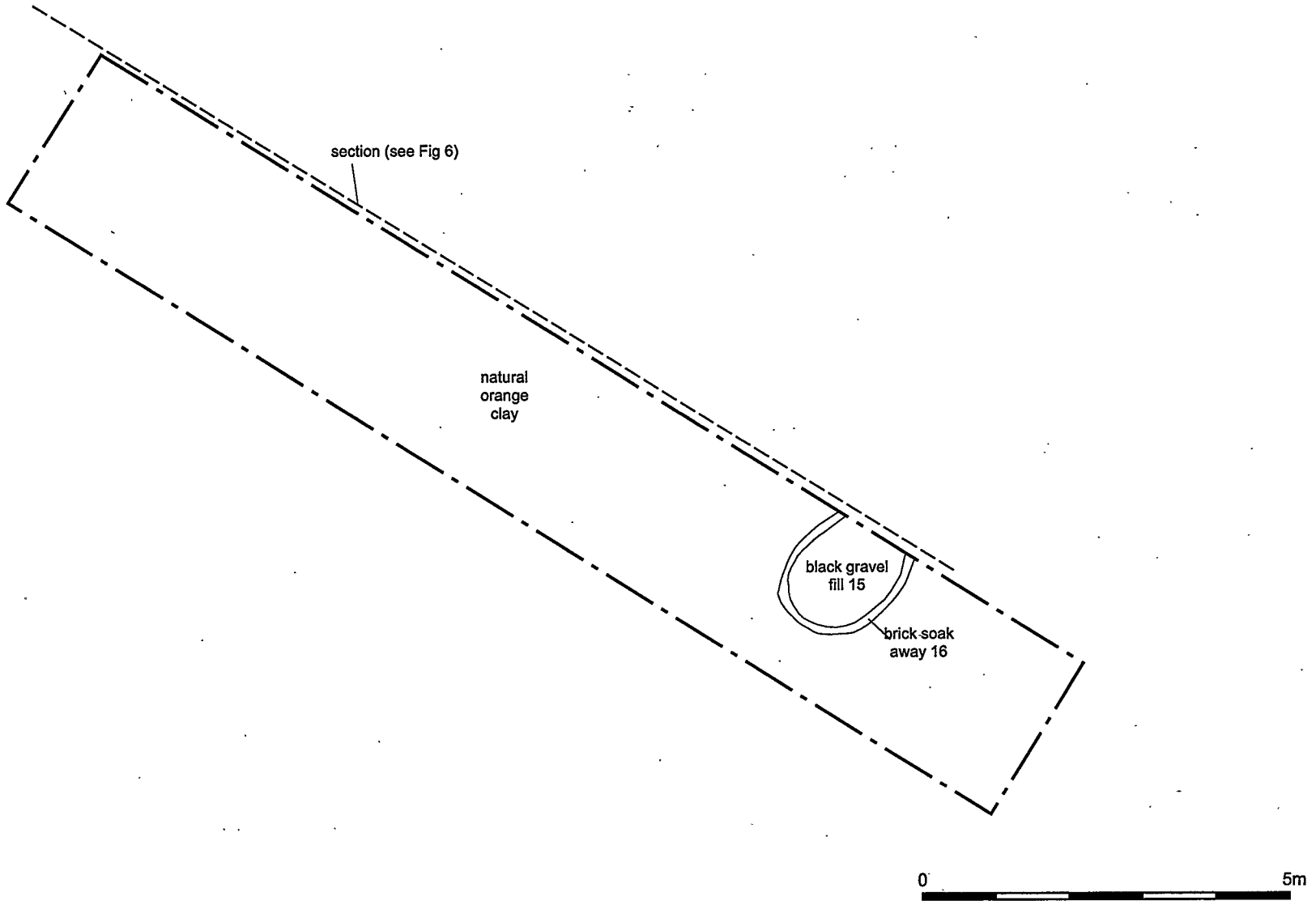


Fig 3 Plan of trench 1



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Fig 5 Plan of trench 2

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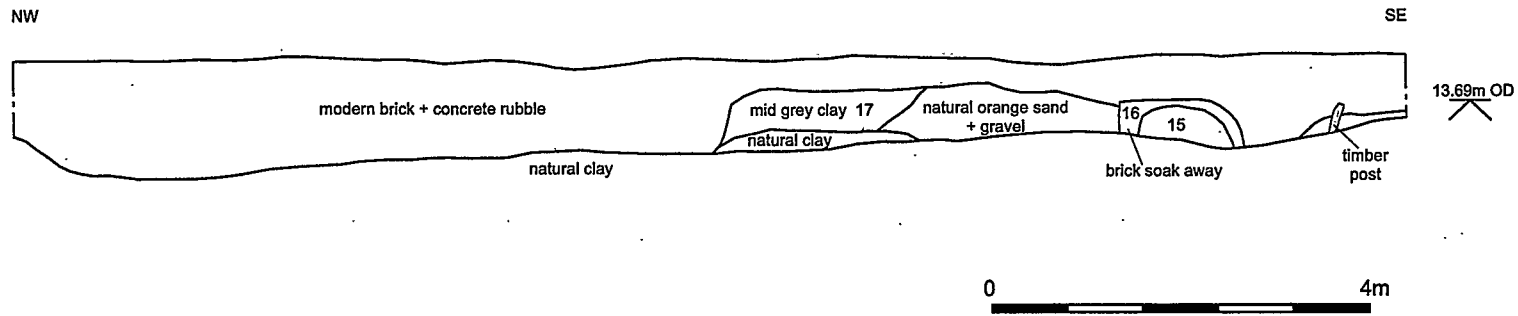


Fig 6 South-west facing section of trench 2

Trench 3

Trench 3 measured 15m by 2m and was located within the western part of the site. The natural sand and gravel was reached at 13.44m OD (in the eastern part of the trench). Within the western part of the trench was a northeast-southwest aligned Roman ditch. The ditch measured 2m in length (to the limits of excavation) by 800mm wide by 500mm deep. The ditch was cut with shallow sloping sides leading to a concave rounded base [3] at 13.04m OD. It was filled with a blue clay mixed with medium sized gravel at the base, and contained a blue-orange clay which formed the upper fill [2]. Recovered from the fill were twenty-two sherds from a single flagon of New Forest colour coated ware pottery dating to c.AD 300-70. Also recovered from a bulk soil sample were occasional 'waterlogged' seeds, eg. goosefoots (*Chenopodium* spp.), a plant of disturbed ground and waste places. The surface of the ditch was recorded at 13.57m OD.

Within the western part of the trench were successive layers of gravel. The earliest was a mixed brown clay and gravel [6]. Further west was a brown-orange sandy silt and gravel [4], which was overlain by a blue-grey sandy silt within occasional gravel [5]. The surface was recorded at 13.40m OD. Overlying the above feature was the brick and concrete make-up layer. The modern ground surface was recorded at 13.93m OD.

Trench 4

Trench 4 measured 15m by 2m and was located within the centre of the site. The natural clay was reached at 13.40m OD. The majority of the trench was truncated through the natural clay to a depth of 12.79m OD. Overlying the natural was the modern brick and concrete make-up. The surface of the trench was recorded at 13.91m OD.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was located within the southern part of the site and measured 15m by 2m. The natural sand and gravel was uncovered between 13.58m (east) - 13.45m OD (west). The natural was truncated by a modern drain running along the southwestern part of the trench and a gas pipe running along the northeastern part of the trench. The surface of the trench was recorded at 14.11m (east) - 13.67m OD (west).

Trench 6

Trench 6 measured 2.50m by 1.10m and was located in the western part of the site. This trench was excavated to reveal the extent of the Roman ditch within trench 3. The natural sand and gravel was reached within the western part of the trench at 13.26m OD. The ditch was recorded crossing the trench in a northeast-southwest direction. The exposed part of this ditch measured 1.40m wide by 300mm deep. The ditch had shallow sloping sides leading to a concave rounded base [10] recorded at 13.06m OD. It was filled with a blue clay [9]. Recovered from the fill was a piece of roof tile. The top of the ditch was recorded at 13.35m OD. Overlying the ditch was the modern made-ground, the surface of which was recorded at 13.85m OD.

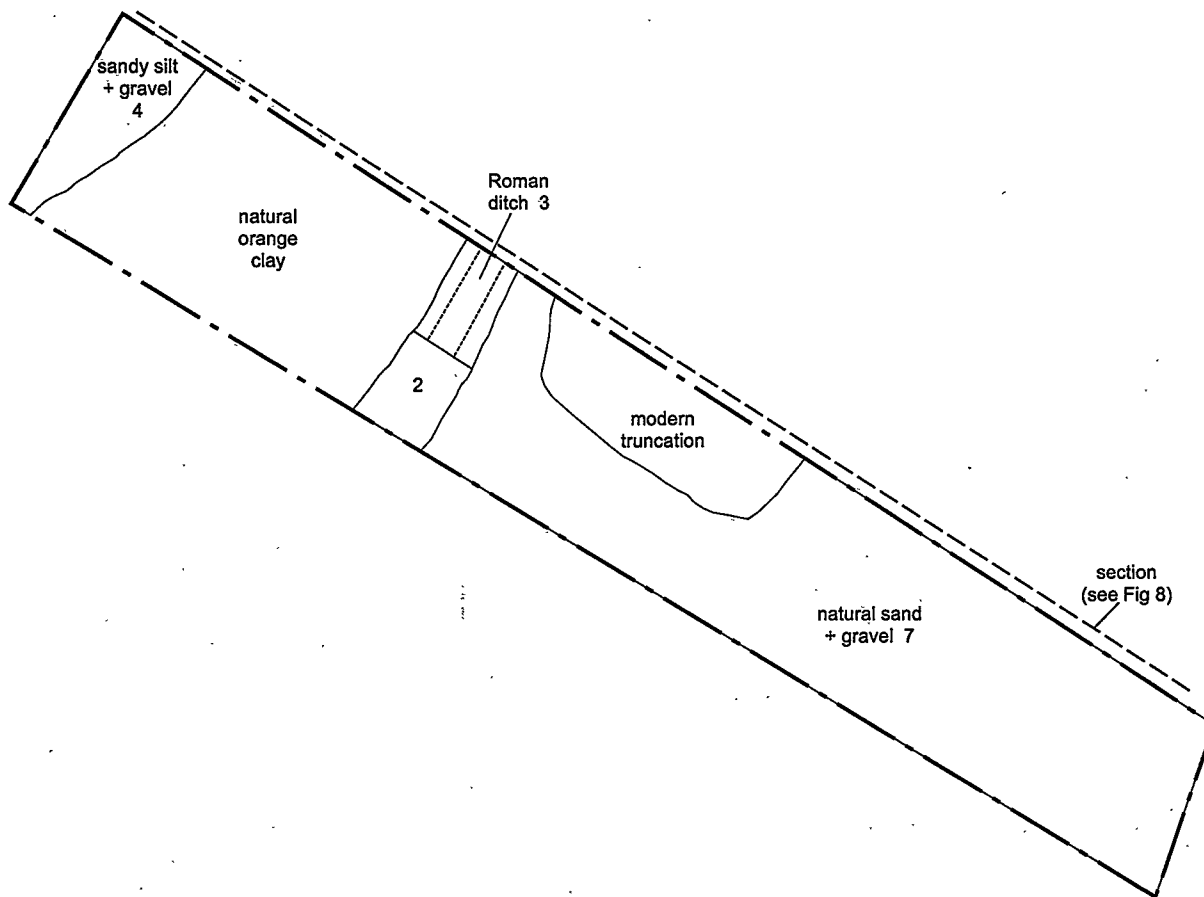


Fig 7 Plan of trench 3

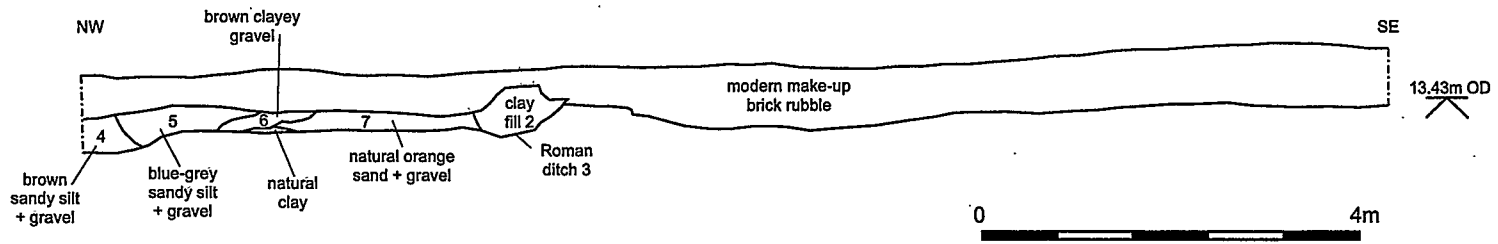


Fig 8 South-west facing section of trench 3

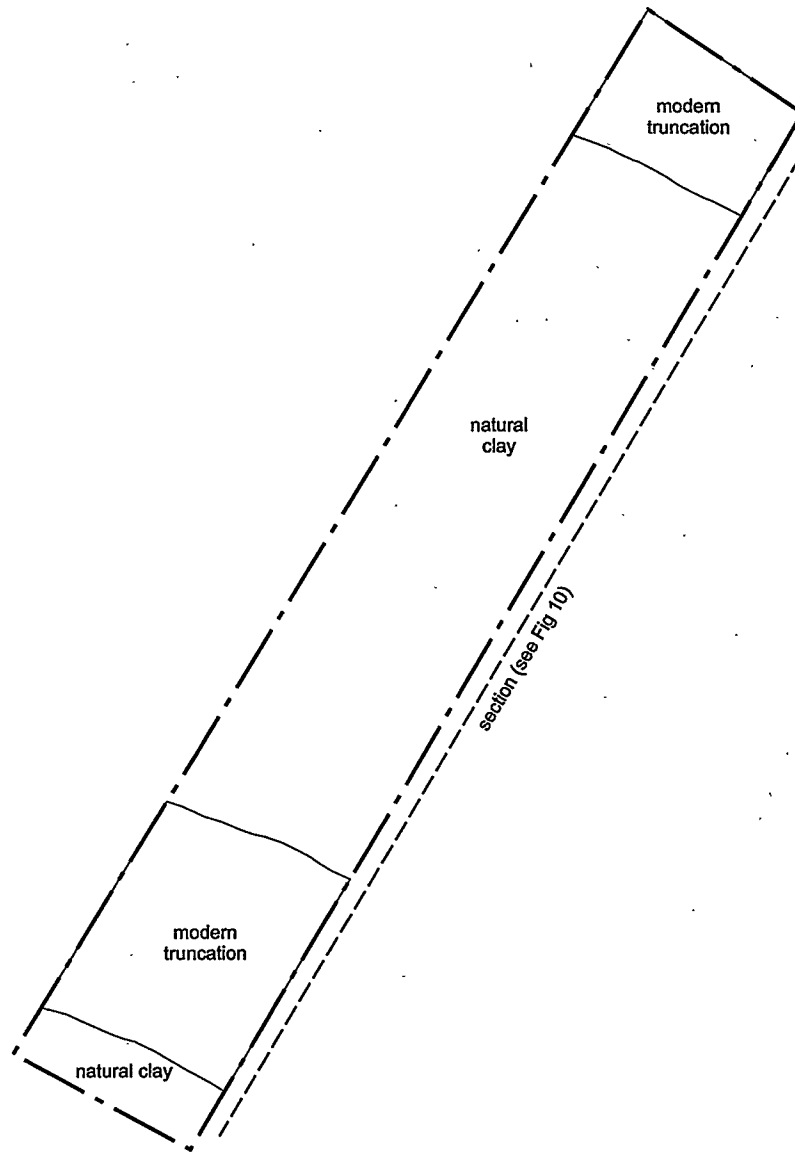


Fig 9 Plan of trench 4

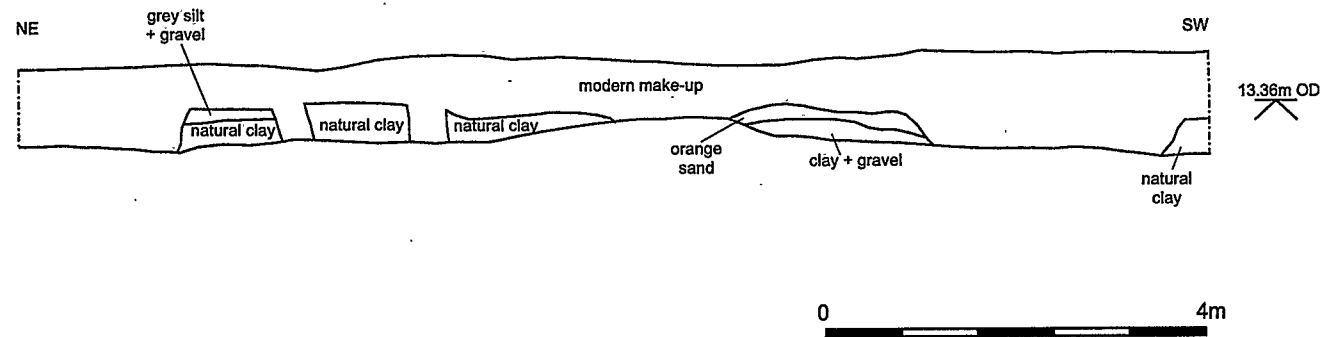


Fig 10 North-west facing section of trench 4

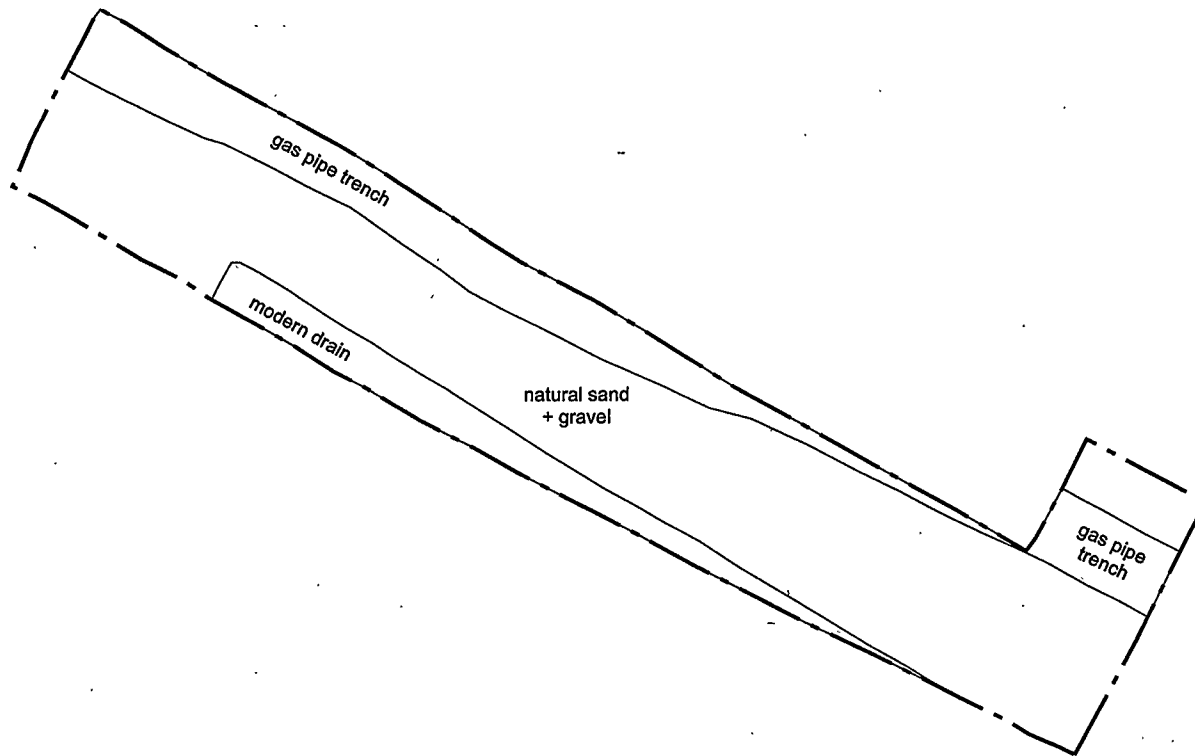


Fig 11 Plan of trench 5

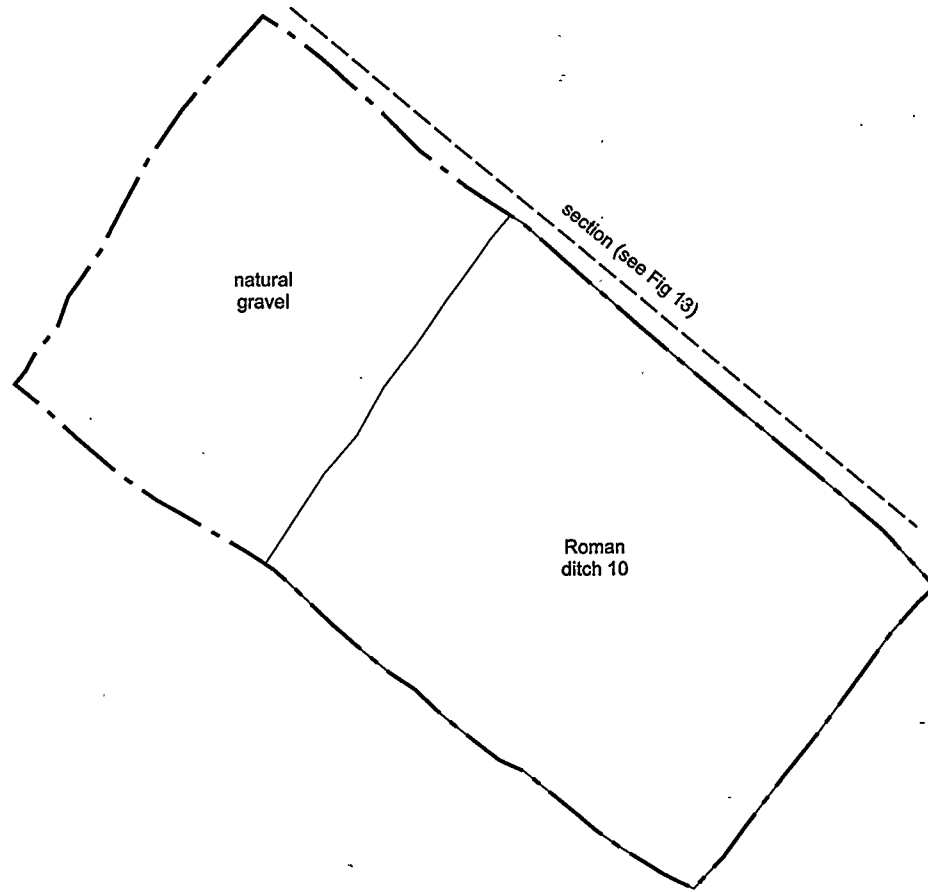


Fig 12 Plan of trench 6

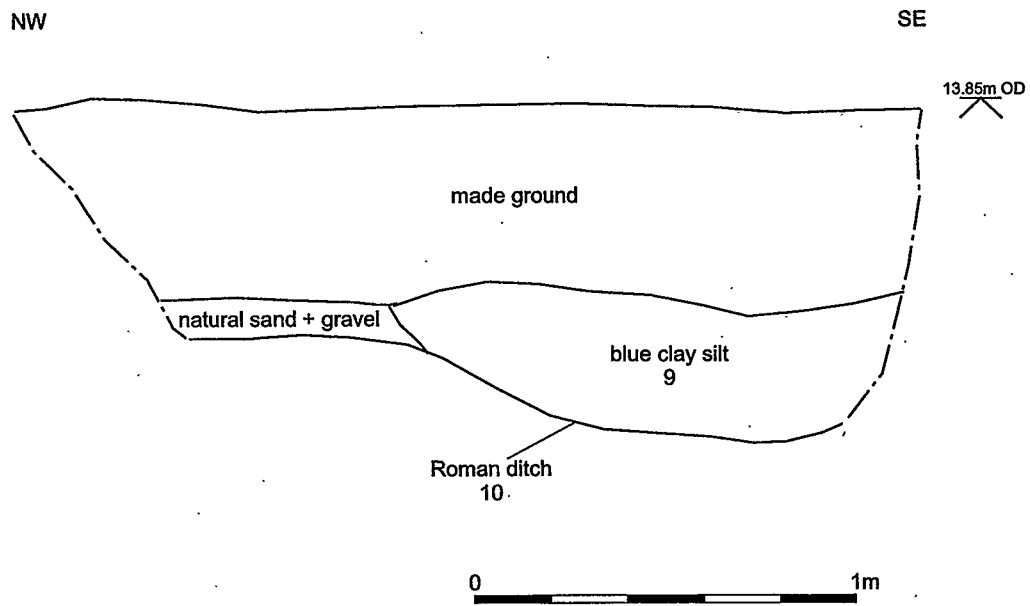
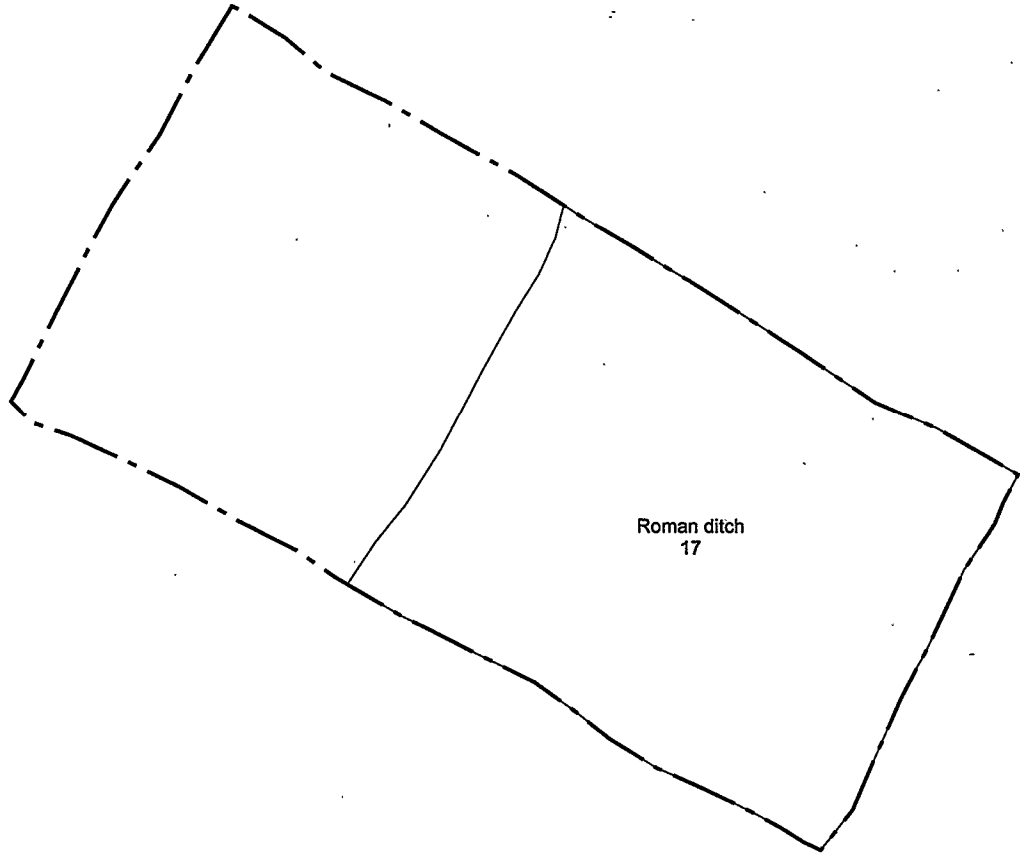
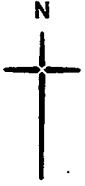


Fig 13 South-west facing section of trench 6



24



Fig 14 Plan of trench 7

Trench 7

Trench 7 measured 2.50m by 1.10m and was located within the southwestern part of the site. This trench was located to reveal the extent of the Roman ditch found within trench 3. The ditch was observed to cross the trench in a northeast-southwest direction. Due to ground water flooding only the line of the ditch was recorded.

5 Finds and environmental summaries

5.1 The Roman pottery - Charlotte Thompson

Introduction

A total of 23 sherds of Roman pottery from two contexts were recovered from this site. The condition of the sherds is generally poor, although the sherds themselves are of a good size.

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Roman pottery | 23 sherds. Total 0.414kg |
| Ceramic building material | 1 piece. Total 0.032kg |

Table 1: Pottery and building material count

Methodology

The pottery was recorded to current MoLAS standards on proforma sheets and entered onto the Oracle database. The sherds were recorded by fabric, form, decoration and condition, and were quantified by sherd count and weight.

Fabric and forms

Twenty-two of the sherds, all from context [2], are from a single flagon of New Forest colour coated ware. The flagon is globular bodied and has a long narrow neck with a flange half way up, beneath which, a single narrow handle was attached to the body. The sherds are very abraded and so the original colour coat does not survive, although there are traces of a brown/red coating in the shallow horizontal grooves around the body which could be painted decoration, but is more likely to have been the colour coating. There are streaks clearly visible on the exterior of the body sherds indicating that the clay is probably the product of a mixture of a white and a red clay. There are similar vessel forms from this production centre that have been dated c. AD 300–70 (Fulford 1975, 46).

The sherd from context [8] is an amphora sherd: it is unusual as it is wide mouthed with a flat bead and curved rim, very much like a mortarium, but the neck narrows sharply. The fabric is hard with a dense matrix and ill-sorted moderate to common sub-angular medium to very coarse red glistening inclusions; sparse angular medium black inclusions and sparse medium limestone. No parallel for the form or the fabric has been found, so the provenance and dating cannot be established.

A single, abraded sherd of ceramic building material weighing 32g was recovered from context [9], which is likely to be of Roman date.

Analysis of potential

The small and abraded nature of the assemblage means that it has limited potential although it can broadly contribute to the Research Aim for the Roman period. The amphora sherd from [8], if petrologically examined, should indicate from where the vessel was imported.

Significance of the data

The pottery is of local significance, and the flagon is unusual: there is just one other instance of New Forest colour coated ware on the database, and this was from Guildhall Yard (GYE92).

5.2 The Botanical Remains - John Giorgi

Introduction/methodology

During excavations at the site, one environmental bulk soil sample was collected for the recovery of biological remains from a Roman roadside ditch fill [2]. The aim of the assessment was to establish the level of preservation, the item frequency and species diversity of any plant material and the potential for information on possibly human activities in the area, the nature of the local environment and the interpretation of the sampled features.

The sample was ten litres in size and entirely processed using a modified Siraf flotation tank with sieve sizes of 0.25mm and 1mm for the recovery of the flot and residue respectively. The flot and residue were dried. The sample residue was dried and sorted for biological and artefactual remains. The flot was scanned using a binocular microscope and the item frequency and species diversity of all biological remains was recorded using the following rating system of 1 to 3.

Frequency: 1 = 1-10 items; 2 = 11-50 items; 3 = 50+ items

Diversity: 1 = 1-4 species; 2 = 5-7 species; 3 = 7+ species

The plant remains (Table 2 and Table 3)

The sample produced only a very small flot (less than 5ml) with the botanical remains consisting of occasional 'waterlogged' seeds, eg. goosefoots (*Chenopodium* spp.), a common and high seed producing plant of disturbed ground and waste places, occasional flecks of wood and charcoal and a few rootlets. This material (with the exception of the charcoal flecks) is almost certainly intrusive given the soil conditions at the site.

Faunal remains

There were a few insect fragments in the sample. This material is also probably intrusive given the soil conditions at the site.

Artefactual remains

There were no finds in the sample.

Summary

There were virtually no botanical remains in the sample and almost all of these remains were intrusive.

Analysis of potential

Botanical samples

The botanical remains in the sample have no potential in providing information on economic/human activities and the local environment of the area. The sample consisted virtually entirely of flint gravel.

Significance of the data

The plant remains have no significance.

| | | | | | CHD | WLG | |
|--------|---------|------|------|----|------|------|--|
| | | Proc | Flot | | Wood | Seed | |
| Sample | Context | Vol. | Vol. | Pr | A D | A D | Comments |
| 1 | 2 | 1 | 50 | F | 1 1 | 1 1 | OCC SEEDS, ROOTS, FLECKS WOOD/CHARCOAL |

Table 2: Botanical remains in the samples

| Context | sample | Process | Constituent | Abundance | Diversity | comment |
|---------|--------|---------|-------------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| 2 | 1 | F | WLG WOOD | 1 | 1 | FLECKS |
| | 1 | F | WLG ROOTS | 1 | 1 | |
| | 1 | F | WLG SEEDS | 1 | 1 | CHE |
| | 1 | F | CHD WOOD | 1 | 1 | FLECKS |
| | 1 | F | INV BEETLES | 1 | 1 | |

Table 3: Biological remains by context

6 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 at 1-11 High Street Colliers Wood the archaeology is defined as representing the Roman period. The ditch revealed within trenches 3, 6 and 7 appears to have been backfilled in the 4th century and is likely to form the eastern roadside ditch of "Stane Street". The gravels recorded to the west of the ditch may represent the truncate remains of the surface of "Stane Street" or alternatively the foundation gravels associated with the edge of the road.

To the north is the original location of the River Graveney. Little of the original deposits survive *in-situ*, however a silt layer lying within the channel contained a sherd of Roman amphora. This deposit also contained 19th-20th-century brick indicating that it had been truncated. Alluvial sand was recorded to the south indicating flood deposits.

The majority of the site had been truncated to the level of the natural sand and gravel during the demolition of the former standing buildings. Any evidence of archaeological features within the eastern portion of the site would have been severely truncated.

7 Archaeological potential

7.1 Realisation of original research aims

What is the nature and level of natural topography?

The natural topography comprised truncated sand and gravels overlying clay. Generally the natural was recorded at c.13.40m OD.

Is there any evidence of the former course of the River Graveney on the site?

The former course of the River Graveney was recorded within trench 1. Here, the river was around 700mm deep. It appears that the river was infilled during the early 20th century.

Are there any prehistoric remains on the site?

There is no evidence of prehistoric remains on the site.

Is there any evidence for the Roman road known as "Stane Street", or features, such as graves / burials that might be associated with it?

The road itself may be represented by the series of gravel layers recorded within the western end of trench 3. To the east of these was the possible roadside ditch. Pottery recovered from the ditch indicated that it was backfilled in the 4th century.

Is there evidence for medieval remains on the site associated with occupation along the High Street?

There is no evidence of medieval remains on the site.

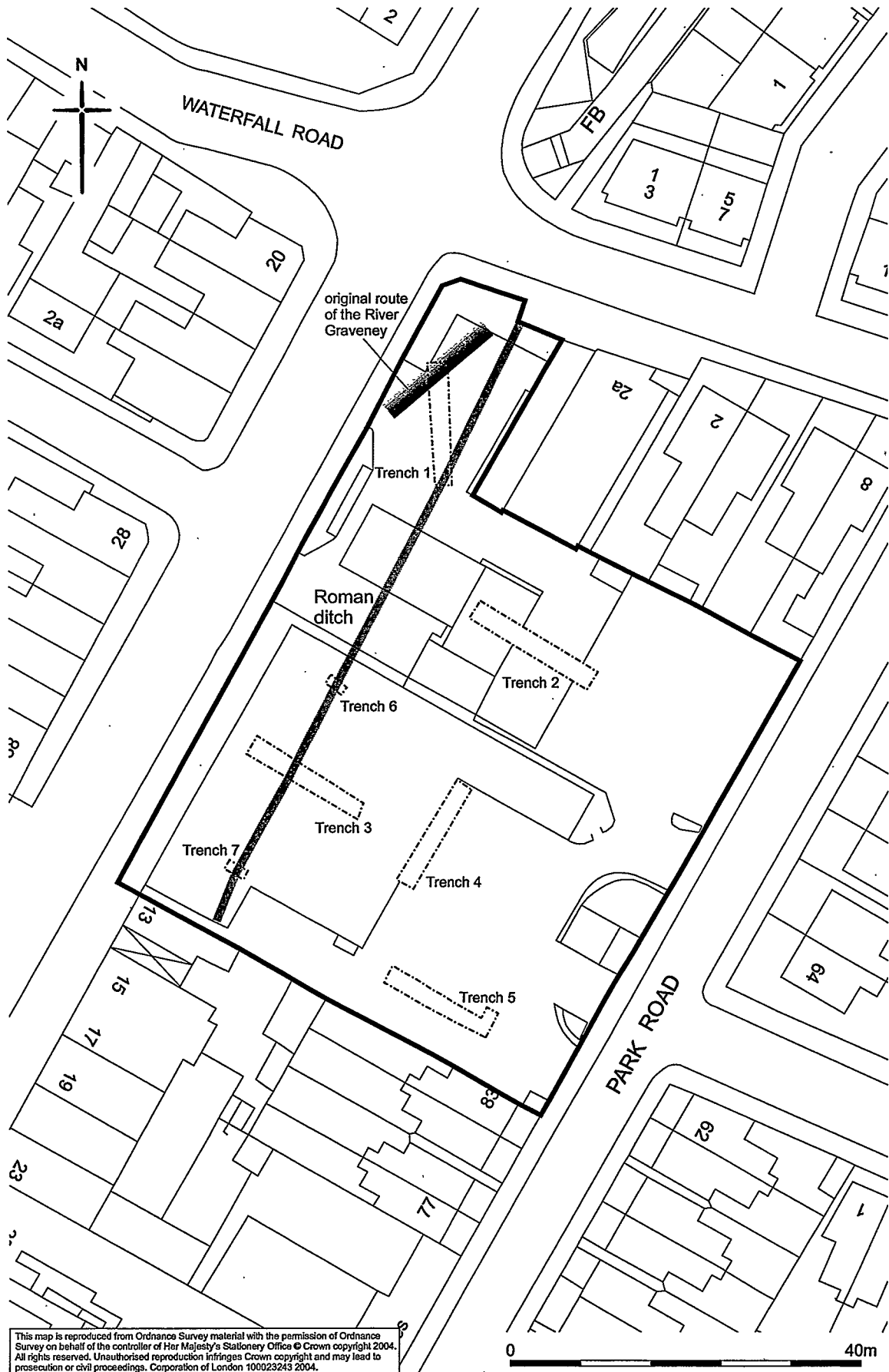
7.2 General discussion of potential

The evaluation has shown that the potential for survival of ancient ground surfaces (horizontal archaeological stratification) lies within the western part of the site, close to the present High Street. Within this area the Roman ditch was discovered and this part of the site has the potential of revealing more of the ditch. Gravels for the possible road surface were also found within this area of the site.

The remainder of the site has been truncated down to and beyond the natural sand, gravels and clay. The average depth of archaeological deposits where they do survive is likely to be 350mm below the modern ground surface.

7.3 Significance

The archaeological remains are of local significance. The Roman ditch helps in locating the alignment of the Roman road through Colliers Wood and helps in the dating and construction techniques of the road within this part of Greater London.



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Fig 15 Plan showing the location and alignment of the Roman ditch discovered within trenches 3, 6 and 7

8 Proposed development impact and recommendations

The proposed redevelopment at 1-11 High Street, Colliers Wood comprises the construction of a four storey mixed residential and commercial unit. The proposed development consists of a row of properties fronting onto the High Street, with two separate blocks to the rear, on Park Road, separated by an access road. An area for car parking has been designated in the centre of the site.

Any redevelopment on the site will have limited impact upon the archaeological remains. This impact is confined to the western part of the site along the conjectured line of the Roman roadside ditch and the associated gravel deposits. Due to the shallow nature of the archaeological remains the ditch and gravel deposits are likely to be affected by any site reduction or removal of modern make-up layers within this area.

The decision on the appropriate archaeological response to the deposits revealed within the archaeological evaluation trenches rests with the Local Planning Authority and their designated archaeological advisor.

9 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the site staff Richard Hewett and Ian Atkins for their help during the evaluation. MoLAS would like to thank Colin Brown of Goldcrest Homes for his help during the archaeological evaluation.

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11 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID: molas1-5732

Project details

Project name 1-11 High Street, Colliers Wood

Short description of the project

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken within seven evaluation trenches, of which, five measured 15m by 2m and two measured 2.50m by 1.10m. The results of the evaluation revealed the natural sand and gravel overlying clay. Much of the natural had been truncated by previous land-use. Within trenches 3, 6 and 7, located towards the western part of the site, a Roman ditch was uncovered. This was aligned north-east-south-west, following the line of the route of "Stane Street". Recovered from the fill were a number of pottery sherds from a single 4th century Roman flagon. To the west of the ditch, within trench 3, successive layers of gravel and silt were noted, which may represent the truncated surface of the Roman Road lying a little further to the west. Within the north-western part of the site was the possible location of the River Graveney. This is denoted by a shallow drop in the natural clay by some 700mm, the depression infilled with a slightly organic brown silt. This silt contained a sherd of Roman amphora, but also 19th-20th century brick. To the east was a course yellow sand containing very small shells which may represent alluvial flood deposit associated with the river.

Project dates Start: 29-11-2004 End: 03-12-2004

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes HCW04 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Other 13 - Waste ground

Mon Type *DITCH Roman*

Significant Finds POTTERY Roman

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON MERTON WIMBLEDON AND MERTON 1-11
High Street, Colliers Wood

Postcode SW19

Study area .33 Hectares

National reference grid TQ 27030 70736 Point

Height OD Min: 12.87m Max: 13.44m

Project creators

Name of Organisation MoLAS

Project originator brief MoLAS project manager

Project originator design MoLAS

Project director/manager Stewart Hoad

Project supervisor David Saxby

Sponsor funding body or Goldcrest Homes

Project archives

Physical recipient Archive LAARC

Physical Exists? Archive Yes

Digital recipient Archive LAARC

Digital Exists? Archive Yes

Paper recipient Archive LAARC

Paper available Media 'Context sheet','Drawing','Matrices','Plan','Section'

Paper notes Archive n/a

Paper Exists? Archive Yes

Entered by David Saxby (daves@molas.org.uk)
Entered on 5 January 2005