

**316-322 CAMBERWELL NEW ROAD**  
**London**  
**SE5**

London Borough of Southwark

Report on the watching brief

**May 2010**



**316–322 CAMBERWELL NEW ROAD**  
**London**  
**SE5**

London Borough of Southwark

A report on the watching brief

Site code: CVN10  
National Grid Reference: 532400 176790

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## Summary (non-technical)

*This report has been commissioned by by Grangewalk Homes Ltd in order to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out at 316-322 Camberwell New Road, London SE5.*

*Work on the removal of petrol tanks from the site was observed on 23rd February, 2010 prior to redevelopment of the site of conversion of the former petrol station to commercial and residential use.*

*Natural brickearth was observed at c 3.70m to 3.90m OD generally 0.50m to 0.70m below the ground level. The brickearth was overlain by a post-medieval or modern cultivated or garden soil observed in one section at the south of the site. This isolated deposit most probably relates either to the post-medieval agricultural soil on the site prior to its development or to garden soils associated with the 19th century properties located at the east of the site prior to its development as a petrol station. The remainder of the sections recorded revealed natural brickearth directly overlain by modern deposition. Along the Camberwell New Road frontage borehole records indicate 1.4 metres of made ground, indicating the presence of semi basements to properties that previously occupied the street frontage. The MOL Archaeology site code for the site is CVN10.*

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*Fig 1 Site location plan*

*Fig 2 Location of petrol tank excavation trench and sections*

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Site background

The watching brief took place at 316-322 Camberwell New Road, London SE5 hereafter called 'the site'. The site is situated on the south side of Camberwell New Road, bounded by buildings fronting Warner Road to the east and by buildings fronting Camberwell New Road to the west (see Fig 1). The centre of the site lies at National Grid reference 532400 176790. The site was previously occupied by a petrol station. Modern pavement level near to the site lies at c 4.4m OD at the junction of Camberwell New Road and Warner Road just to the east of the site.

Southwark council has designated a number of Archaeological Priority Zones (APZ) in the Borough. The site lies within the Camberwell Archaeological Priority Zone as defined by Southwark Council.

A desk top *Archaeological impact assessment* was previously prepared by Pre-Construct Archaeology, which covers the whole area of the site (Pre-Construct Archaeology 2007). 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.

Subsequently a *Method Statement* for the watching brief was prepared by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) in December 2009 (MOLA 2009).

### 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* which formed the project design for the watching brief (see Section 1.2, MOLA 2009)

### 1.3 Planning background

Archaeological monitoring on the site was required under the archaeological planning condition placed on the development.

### 1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Grangewalk Homes Ltd and produced by MOLA. The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute for 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, including analysis or publication (if any), should now take place.

## 1.5 Aims and objectives

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

What was the level of natural topography?

What are the earliest deposits identified?

What are the latest deposits identified?

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

## **2 Topographical and historical background**

### **2.1 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 site is located towards the southern edge of the Flood plain gravels of the River Thames, close to the boundary with two further drift deposit groups: brickearth overlying the Flood plain gravels, and an area of river alluvium extending eastwards from Camberwell Green. To the south of the Flood plain gravels, the ground rises gently into low hills (corresponding to modern Denmark Hill), formed of London Clay, capped with terrace gravels.

The nearest watercourse to the site was reputedly a stream, which arose near Denmark Hill. The stream crossed Coldharbour Lane, ran for about a mile along the western side of Camberwell Road before turning east at Walworth Bridge to eventually conjoin with a stream known as Earl's Sluice in the Old Kent Road. However, to date there has been no firm archaeological evidence for the stream.

The natural ground surface has been recorded on a number of sites in the vicinity, though with varying degrees of truncation. Of those closest to the site, at the former Walworth Bus Garage, a possible natural brickearth deposit was recorded on the southern limit of the site at c 3.53m OD and the top of natural gravel at c 3.32m OD. At 319 Camberwell New Road, natural gravel was recorded at 3.77m OD. Approximately 250m to the south-east of the study site, at the Odeon Cinema, natural gravel was observed at a maximum height of 7.10m OD. Taking into account the evidence of immediately adjacent sites, it is probable that natural deposits are likely to be found at similar levels. Modern street level adjacent to the site slopes down from south-west to north-east, and lies at 3.8m OD along Camberwell Station Road and closer to the site at 4.4m OD along Warner Road.

### **2.2 Prehistoric**

No prehistoric material has been found in the immediate area of the site.

### **2.3 Roman**

There is no known Roman settlement in the immediate area of the site. However, Roman pottery was found in a number of cut features sealed by cultivation soil during an evaluation to the north of Camberwell Green in 1991. This, together with a feature interpreted as a clay wall footing on the same site, hints at a possible Roman presence in the Camberwell area.

The noted antiquary Sir John Evelyn recorded in his diary of 1685 that an urn full of bones had recently been dug up while repairing a highway in Camberwell. He thought it to be of Roman origin.



## 2.4 Saxon

The church of St Giles, located immediately to the east of the site, was founded during the Anglo-Saxon period and is recorded in the Domesday Book as standing among cornfields, meadows and woodland.

## 2.5 Medieval

The earliest record of human settlement in Camberwell occurs in the Domesday Book where it is called *Ca'brewelle* and is described as a manor of some value. It was held by Haimo the Sherriff (of Kent) and its assets included eight ploughs, sixty-three acres of meadows and woodland worth sixty hogs. Later documents refer to Camberwell as *Camwell* or *Camerwell*. The name 'Cam' may have come from an old Celtic word meaning crooked. The theory generally accepted is that a well, or a medicinal spring, was used by invalids; hence 'the well of the crippled or crooked'. The church was rebuilt in stone in 1152 by William de Mellent, Earl of Gloucester and Lord of the Manor of Camberwell, and was probably about this time dedicated to St Giles, the patron saint of cripples and mendicants.

From Haimo, the manor descended to the Clares, Earls of Gloucester, but eventually passed to the Duke of Buckingham, after which the manor became known as Camberwell Buckingham. In 1583, part of the manor was bought by the Bowyer family; who established a large house located towards Camberwell Grove. From 1291 there was also a manor in the area called Milkewell, possibly closer to the study site; the estates lay partly in Lambeth and partly in Camberwell parishes. By 1609 the estates included the manor, six messuages, eight cottages and five barns. However, no evidence has been found of the manor house and its precise location is uncertain. In 1415, Camberwell was the scene of triumphal entry into London of Henry V on his return from France after the victory of Agincourt and in 1416 witnessed a state visit by the Emperor of Germany.

## 2.6 Post-medieval

Camberwell was still a village surrounded by fields in the 18th century and became a well-established market garden area. The rural nature of the village can be seen on John Rocque's map of 1746, which shows some linear development along the main street, with open fields and gardens dominating the landscape. The settlement focus lay to the east of the study site, and included a village green – Camberwell Green (which still exists), where the annual Camberwell Fair was held. The first record of a fair is in 1279, and it continued until 1855. The village began to expand in the late 18th/early 19th century. Houses appeared at first along the main roads but even as late as the mid-19th century, the Camberwell district still contained much pasture land. A plan of the parish of St Mary Lambeth dated 1824, although not detailed, shows that the area of site lay beyond the built-up areas at this time. Camberwell Grove became the site of many late Georgian houses, including Grove House which formed the centre to the Camberwell Tea Gardens. The tithe map of 1837 shows the linear development surrounded by the field system. The population of Camberwell in 1801 was just over 7,000 but by 1871 it had grown to almost 112,000.

Britton's map of c 1840 shows the general area of the site still undeveloped, but lacks detail. Dewhurst's map of the parish of St Giles, dated 1842, does not include the area of the site, which for the most part lay beyond the parish boundary. However, some houses with land to the rear are shown on a part of Londonderry Road that probably lay in the southern extremity of the site (the road here is perhaps mistakenly shown on a different alignment to subsequent maps); McLeod's brewery was located

to the south. This suggests that the eastern frontage of the site was built up by this time. Stanford's map of 1862 indicates a row of houses fronting onto Londonderry Road (now Warner Road) on the eastern limit of the site, with gardens and fields to the rear, and a scatter of buildings in the northern part of the site. The area to the south of the site was taken up by industrial buildings, including the brewery. By 1862, the railways had reached Camberwell and the same map shows the newly built tracks of the London, Chatham and Dover Railway adjacent to the western site boundary. At this time, a road to the north of the railway track was known as Warner Road and the land beside the new railway was still undeveloped. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1870 shows the site now occupied by large properties set back from Camberwell New Road with gardens and outbuildings to the rear. These properties remained on the site until the early 20th century when some were removed and by the mid 20th century the site now housed a garage building and only two Victorian terraces remained at the west of the site, these were removed in the 1970s to make way for the petrol filling station recently demolished 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 *Method Statement* (MOLA 2009) and the *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS, 1994).

The slab/ground was broken out and cleared by contractors. Removal of petrol tanks at the south-east of the site was carried out by the contractors and the standing section left by the excavation were recorded by a MOLA Senior Archaeologist where possible within health and safety constraints.

The locations of the area of excavation were recorded by MOLA Senior Archaeologist offsetting from adjacent standing walls and plotted on to a Site Survey (Drg. No. 3345 SO1 Rev 1 Texaco Ltd).

The heights of observations and/or archaeological remains were recorded relative to Ordnance Datum level (4.4m OD) at the junction of Camberwell New Road and Warner Road.

Where relevant, sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20; the site has produced: a trench location plan; three 1:20 section drawings; site notes and 11 digital photographs.

The site finds and records can be found under the CVN10 in the MoL archive.

#### **3.2 Results of the watching brief**

In total, one large trench for the removal of the petrol tanks was investigated and sections at selected areas drawn. A brief description of the archaeological deposits as recorded follows.

For the location of the petrol tank excavation trench and sections locations (S1, S2 etc) see Fig 2.

##### **Section 1**

This section located at the northern most edge of the petrol tank excavation was located next to a relatively modern manhole complex. The area appeared generally disturbed and the section showed a deposit of clayey gravel that was probably redeposited, dipping to the east from c 3.80m OD to 2.60m OD. This deposit was probably associated with the construction of modern manholes at the northern corner of the trench. This was overlain by modern fill up to c 1m in depth at the east which was overlain by a 0.20m tarmac layer. The remains of a modern pipe were located in the centre of the section.

##### **Section 2**

Section 2 was located on the southern edge of the petrol tank excavation trench. In this section natural brickearth was observed at c 0.70m below the ground level or 3.70m OD. This deposit became greyer with depth. This deposit was overlain by c 0.30m modern disturbed deposits and c 0.20m tarmac.

### **Section 3**

Section 3 was located on the south-west edge of the petrol tank excavation trench. Natural brickearth was observed at c 3.70m to 3.90m OD generally 0.50m to 0.70m below the ground level. Brickearth was overlain by a post-medieval or modern cultivated or garden soil observed in one section at the south of the site. This deposit was overlain by c 0.30m modern disturbed deposits and 0.20m tarmac. This section is shown in Fig 3.

Although natural terrace gravels were not observed by MOLA staff but were seen by contractors at c 4.5m below the existing ground level or c 0m OD.

## **4 Potential of archaeology**

### **4.1 Original research aims**

*What was the level of natural topography?*

The brickearth was recorded in section at approximately 0.50m to 0.70m below current ground level at c 3.70m to 3.90m OD. Natural terrace gravels were not observed by MOLA staff but were seen by contractors at c 4.5m below the existing ground level or c 0m OD.

*What are the earliest deposits identified?*

The earliest identifiable deposit was a localised 0.20m thick band of grey brown silty soil observed above natural brickearth in Section 3 at the south of the site. Health and safety constraints did not allow for the detailed study of this deposit but it appeared to be a small area of either garden or agricultural soil in a localised area at the south of the site.

*What are the latest deposits identified?*

Apart from modern deposits the deposit discussed above was the latest deposit observed after the removal of the petrol tanks.

### **4.2 New research aims**

The results of the watching brief have not raised any additional research aims.

### **4.3 Significance of the data**

Whilst the archaeological remains are undoubtedly of local significance there is nothing to suggest that they are of regional or national importance. Nevertheless, the results of the project provided further information about the topography of this part of Southwark, which is certainly of local interest. This data might be incorporated in any future mapping projects. It is also noted that the depth of the brickearth on the site reached up to a considerable depth of c 4m.

## 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 containing original records and finds will be stored in accordance with the terms of the *Method Statement* (MOLA 2009) with the Museum of London within 12 months of the end of the watching brief.

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

Natural brickearth was observed at c 3.70m to 3.90m OD generally 0.50m to 0.70m below the ground level. This deposit appears to be of considerable depth possibly up to c 4m deep. At the south of the site a small localised area of probable garden or agricultural soil was observed in section. This isolated deposit most probably relates either to the post-medieval agricultural soil on the site prior to its development or to garden soils associated with the 19th century properties located at the east of the site prior to its redevelopment as a petrol station. This appears to be the only part of the site where intact archaeological surfaces survive. Across the central part of the site there was up to 0.7m of modern fill directly overlying brickearth, indicating earlier soil horizons had been removed and a borehole record close to the street frontage indicates 1.4m of made ground over brickearth, suggesting the properties that formerly fronted onto Camberwell New Road had semi-basements and all archaeological deposits would have been removed during the construction.

The archaeological and historical remains are considered to be of limited local importance. MOL Archaeology considers the remaining archaeological deposits have been fully characterised by the watching brief and little additional useful information can be gained by further field investigation. The shallow nature of the archaeological deposits and their close proximity to the modern ground surface has resulted in their removal during previous phases of redevelopment during the 19th/20th centuries. However the decision on the appropriate archaeological response to the deposits revealed by the watching brief rests with the Local Planning Authority, their designated archaeological advisor and/or the developers appointed archaeological consultant.

## 7 Acknowledgements

MOLA would like to thank Grangewalk Homes Ltd for commissioning this report and Paul Adams (QDS) for his assistance.

## 8 Bibliography

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## 9 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

**OASIS ID: molas1-74407**

### Project details

Project name 316-322 Camberwell New Road, London, SE5

Short description of the project Work on the removal of petrol tanks from the site was observed prior to redevelopment of the former petrol station to commercial and residential use. Natural brickearth was overlain by a post-medieval or modern cultivated or garden soil observed in one section at the south of the site. This isolated deposit most probably relates either to the post-medieval agricultural soil on the site prior to its development or to garden soils associated with the 19th century properties located at the east of the site prior to its development as a petrol station. The remainder of the sections recorded revealed natural brickearth directly overlain by modern deposition.

Project dates Start: 23-02-2010 End: 23-02-2010

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes CVN10 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Site status Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)

Monument type SOIL Post Medieval

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

Prompt Archaeology Priority Zone

### Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON SOUTHWARK CAMBERWELL AND DULWICH 316-322 Camberwell New Road

Postcode SE5 7

Study area 1300.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 32400 76790 51.4740570543 -0.093388556201 51 28 26 N 000  
05 36 W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 3.70m Max: 3.90m

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**Project creators**

Name of Organisation MOL Archaeology

Project brief originator MoL Archaeology Project Manager

Project design originator MOL Archaeology

Project director/manager Derek Seeley

Project supervisor Pat Miller

Type of sponsor/funding body Client

Name of sponsor/funding body Grangewalk Homes Ltd

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**Project archives**

Physical Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Archive recipient LAARC

Paper Archive recipient LAARC

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**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title 316-322 Camberwell New Road, London SE5, Report on the watching brief

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Date 2010

Issuer or publisher MOL Archaeology

Place of issue or publication London

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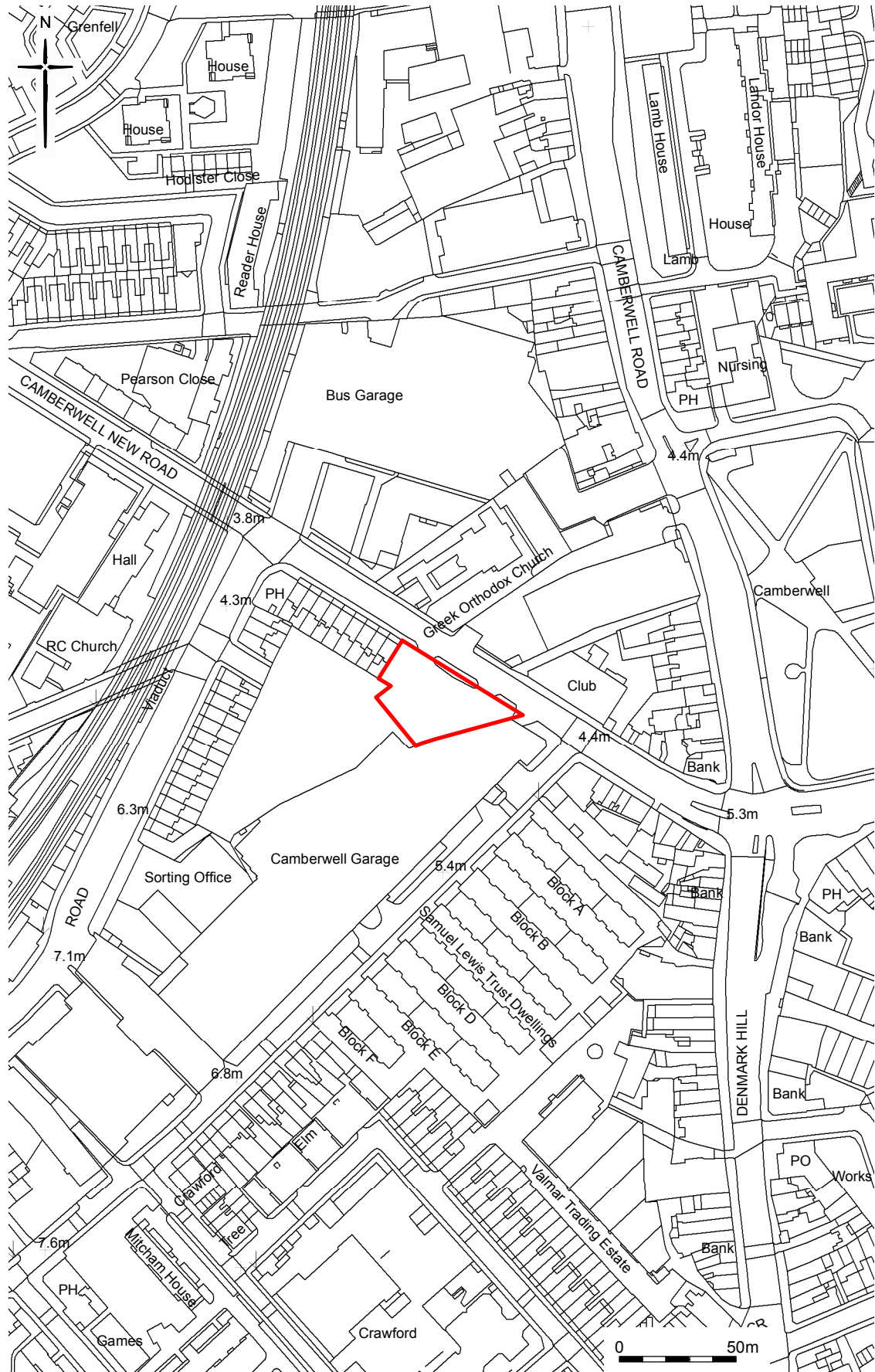


Fig 1 Site location

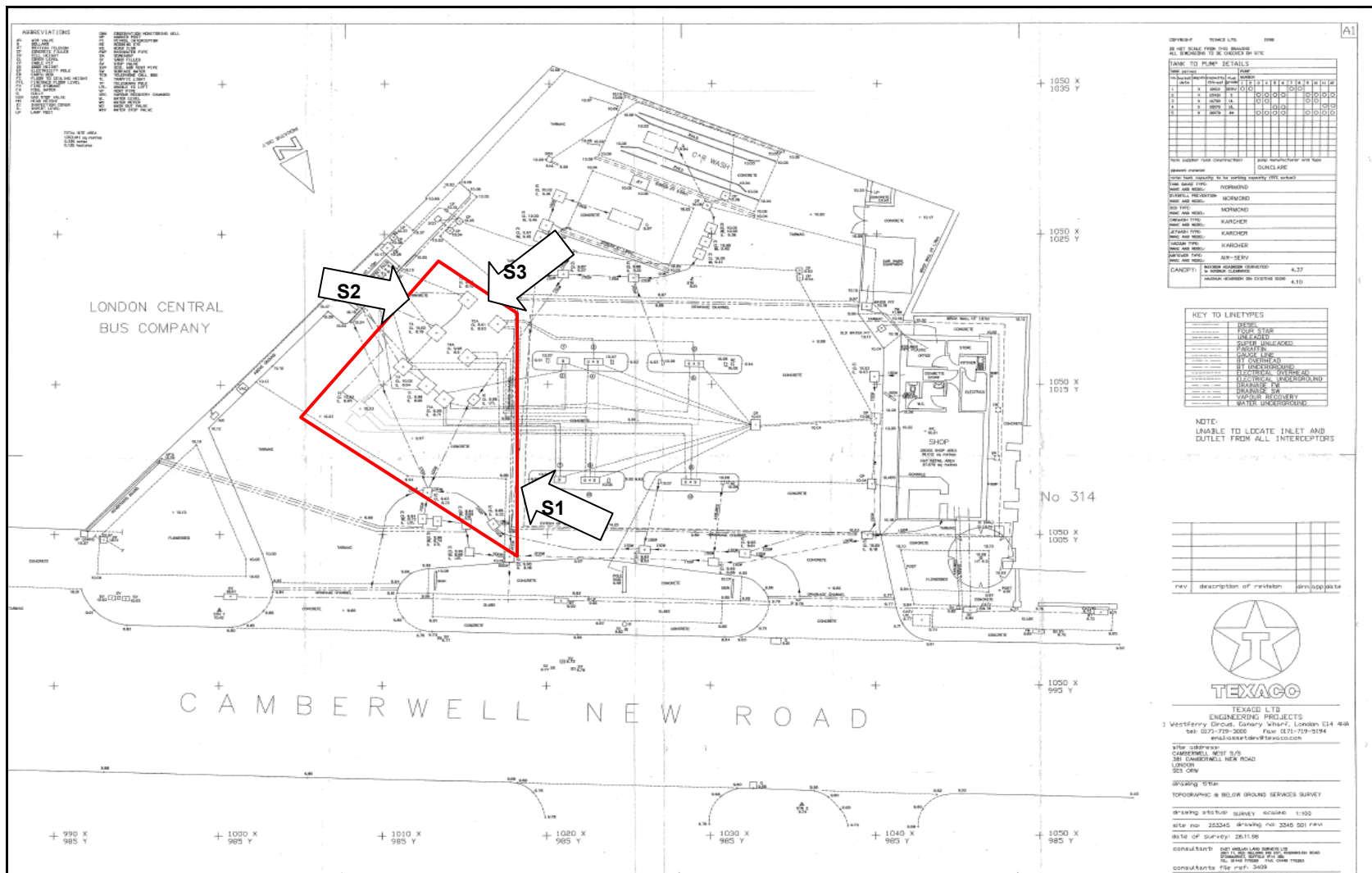


Fig 2 – Location of petrol tank excavation trench and sections

S

N

4.40m OD

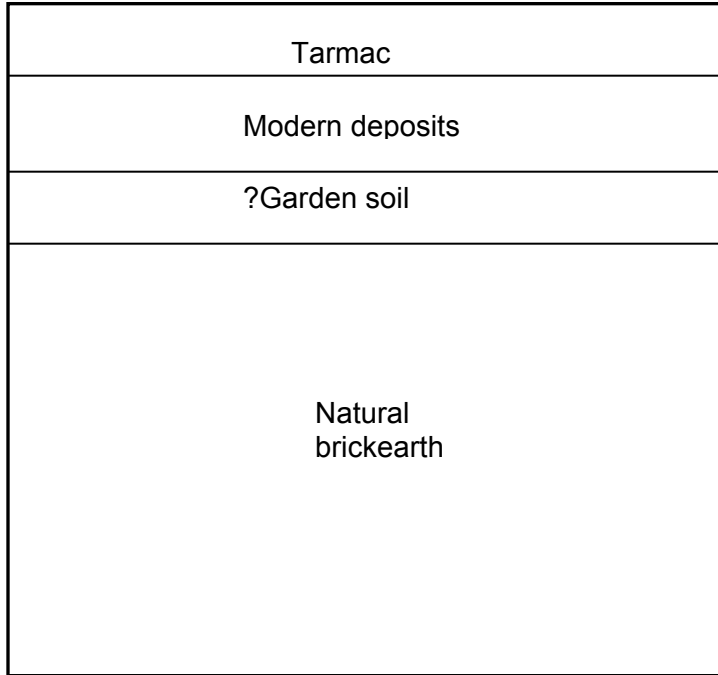


Fig 3 – Section 3, east facing section, scale 1:20