

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT:

### TRIAL TRENCHING AT 16–22 BROWNHILL ROAD, CATFORD, LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

Planning Reference: Pre-application

NGR: TQ 37901 73706

AAL Site Code: CABR 16

Museum of London Site Code: BHL16

OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-257010



Report prepared for the Frankham Consultancy Group

By

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Report Number AAL 2016101

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Allenarchaeology



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*Cover image: Trench 2 looking north, scales 2m and 1m*

## Executive Summary

- Allen Archaeology Limited were commissioned by Frankham Consultancy Group to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land at 16–22 Brownhill Road, Catford, London Borough of Lewisham, in advance of a planning application for a mixed used development.
- The site is archaeologically sensitive, lying in an area of archaeological interest and potential, with known prehistoric activity to the southwest and a medieval priory to the north.
- An early 20<sup>th</sup> century wall and robber cut was identified during trial trenching towards the southern end of the proposed development area and is likely to represent the north wall of a building which first appears on the 1916 OS map. Natural geological layers were encountered 0.35m below the current ground surface.
- No finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified and it is therefore likely that the proposed development will not impact upon any significant archaeological remains.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited (AAL) was commissioned by Frankham Consultancy Group to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land at 16–22 Brownhill Road, Catford, London Borough of Lewisham, in advance of a planning application for a mixed-use development.
- 1.2 All fieldwork and reporting conformed with current national guidelines as set out in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 'Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluations' (CIfA 2014), the English Heritage document 'Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment' (English Heritage 2006), local guidance in 'Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Greater London' (GLAAS 2015) and a specification prepared by this company (AAL 2016).
- 1.3 The site is archaeologically sensitive, lying in an area of archaeological interest and potential with known prehistoric activity to the southwest and a medieval priory to the north.

## 2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The proposed development site is located in Catford, in the administrative district of the London Borough of Lewisham (Figure 1). It is located 8km southeast of central London and 2.2km southwest of Lewisham. The site is approximately 0.1ha in area and presently occupied by a former Co-operative Store building and associated car parking. The site is centred at NGR TQ 37901 73706.
- 2.2 The bedrock geology comprises sedimentary bedrock belonging to the Thames Group, overlain by superficial deposits consisting of sand and gravel having been deposited by rivers during the Quaternary period (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>)

## 3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 A planning application is to be submitted for the alteration and conversion of the existing building for residential and commercial use and for the construction of a block of 10 self-contained flats. An archaeological desk-based assessment has previously been undertaken for the site (AAL 2015), and identified an archaeological potential for the proposed development area. As such, a programme of intrusive trial trenching was requested in order to provide further information concerning the archaeological potential of the site, and to provide the planning authority with sufficient information to allow for the determination of the application and to establish any appropriate mitigation measures that may be required.
- 3.2 The approach is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012) which states that '*Where a site on which development is proposed includes...heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.*' (para. 128).

## 4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 A desk-based assessment has been prepared for the site (AAL 2015), which highlights and discusses a number of archaeological sites in the vicinity of the proposed development. A brief summary of the results of this assessment is set out below.

- 4.2 Prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site is represented by a ditch of possible prehistoric date recorded 200m to the southwest of the site, and a number of flint flakes found 800m to the northwest.
- 4.3 There is no physical evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity in the area, and Catford is not recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086, falling within the manor of Lewisham. A small medieval priory was documented just to the north of the site, but no physical evidence of its presence has been recorded. It is likely that the site lay in agricultural land, beyond the focus of settlement, throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods, until the surrounding area was gradually subsumed by extensive residential and commercial development in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## 5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 The trial trenching methodology entailed the excavation of two trenches, each measuring 10m long by 1.6m wide (Figure 2). The fieldwork was undertaken by a team of two experienced field archaeologists over a period of two working days, Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> and Friday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016.
- 5.2 The trenches were accurately located using a survey grade GPS. In each trench the existing ground surface, subsoil and underlying non-archaeological deposits were removed in spits no greater than 100mm in thickness using a wheeled back hoe excavator with a smooth ditching bucket. The process was repeated until the first archaeologically significant or natural horizon was exposed, with all further excavation of archaeological deposits carried out by hand. Machine excavation was monitored at all times by an experienced field archaeologist.
- 5.3 A full written record of the archaeological deposits was made on standard recording sheets and context recording sheets. Archaeological deposits were drawn at an appropriate scale (usually 1:20 or 1:50). Full colour photography formed an integral part of the recording strategy, with scales, an identification board and directional arrow included as appropriate.
- 5.4 Each deposit, layer or cut was allocated a three digit unique identifier (context number), and accorded a written description. A summary of these are included in Appendix 1. Three digit numbers within square brackets represent cut features (e.g. ditch [116]).

## 6.0 Results

### *Trench 1*

- 6.1 Trench 1 was located 15m from the southern end of the site and was aligned roughly east to west. The earliest deposit encountered was orange brown sandy gravel, 104, identified as the natural geology. This was sealed by a 0.40m thick layer of light orange clay with occasional pebbles, 103, which is also considered to be geological. In turn, this was sealed by a 0.16m thick, very dark grey, silty clay layer of made ground, 102, which was overlain by a 0.20m thick layer of tarmac, 101.



*Plate 1: South-facing representative section of Trench 1, scales 1m*

### **Trench 2**

- 6.2 Trench 2 was located to the south of Trench 1 and was aligned roughly north to south. The earliest deposit encountered was an orange brown, sandy gravel, 206. This was sealed by a 0.50m thick layer of light brown silty clay, 205, which was overlain by very dark grey, silty clay, 204, that measured 0.20m thick.
- 6.3 This deposit was truncated by construction cut [208]; a 1.55m wide and 0.47m deep cut that contained within it a concrete footing and a red brick wall, 207, which was aligned roughly east to west. It was backfilled on its southern and northern sides with deposits of early modern construction debris, 209 and 211 respectively. The wall projected 0.25m beyond the top of the construction cut and abutted a 0.20m thick layer of yellowish light brown sand and gravel on its southern side, 203, and a 0.24m thick layer of concrete on its northern side, 210. Lying directly above layer 203 was a 0.05m thick layer of reinforced concrete. This also butted up against the southern side of the wall. Tarmac, 201, sealed the entire trench.



*Plate 2: Trench 2 looking northwest, scale 1m*

## **7.0 Discussion**

7.1 The only cut feature found during trial trenching were located in the centre of Trench 2. Wall 207 comprised a 0.30m thick concrete footing with the remains of a 0.41m high red brick wall atop, indicating that this was a load-bearing wall, most probably the exterior north wall of a building which appears in the south of the site on the 1916 and 1948 OS maps (AAL 2015).

## **8.0 Conclusions**

8.1 The earliest deposits encountered during trenching represent superficial geological layers of sand and gravel, at a depth of 0.35m below the current ground surface. All overlying deposits relate to the construction of early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings and to later, associated activity. The evidence suggests a negligible archaeological potential for the proposed development area.

## **9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology**

9.1 The trial trenching methodology was appropriate to the nature and extent of the proposed development and has identified a negligible archaeological potential.

## **10.0 Acknowledgements**

10.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank Frankham Consultancy Group for this commission.

## **11.0 References**

AAL, 2015, *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment: 16-22 Brownhill Road, Catford, London Borough of Lewisham*, Allen Archaeology Limited Report Number 2015179

AAL, 2016, *Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching: 16-22 Brownhill Road, Catford, London Borough of Lewisham*, Allen Archaeology Limited

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Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, London: Department for Communities and Local Government

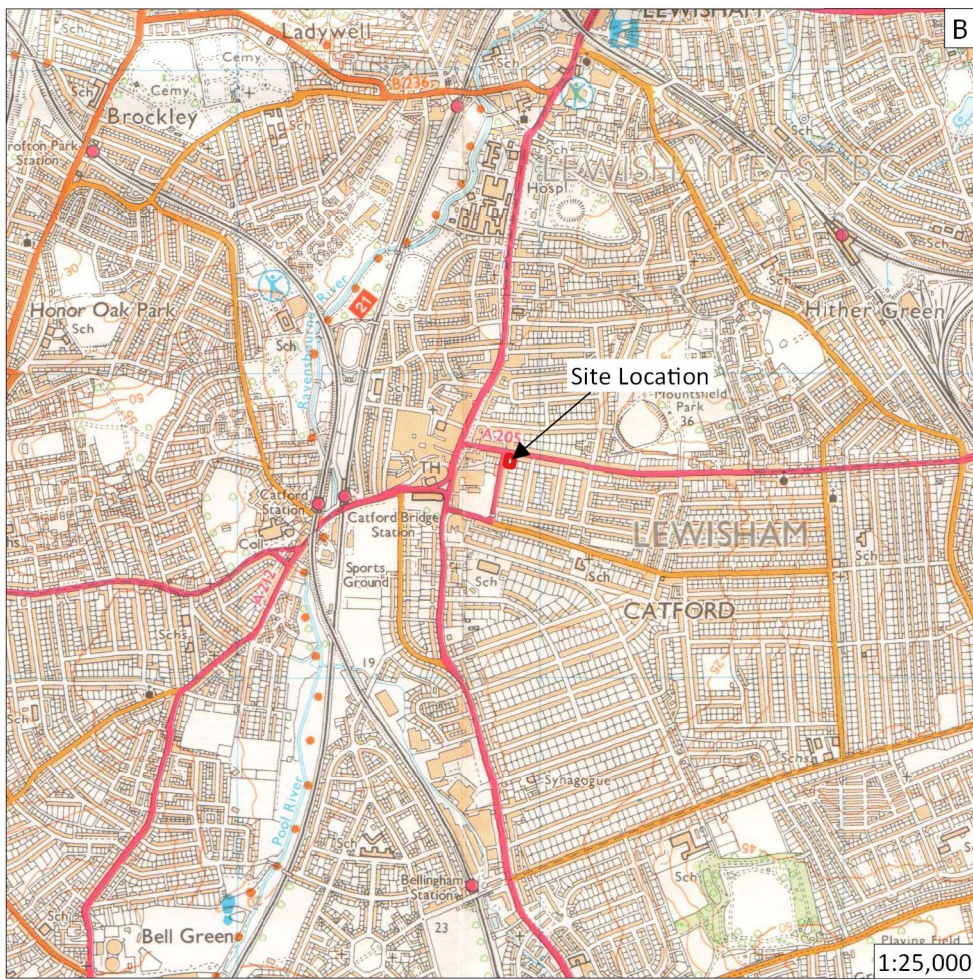
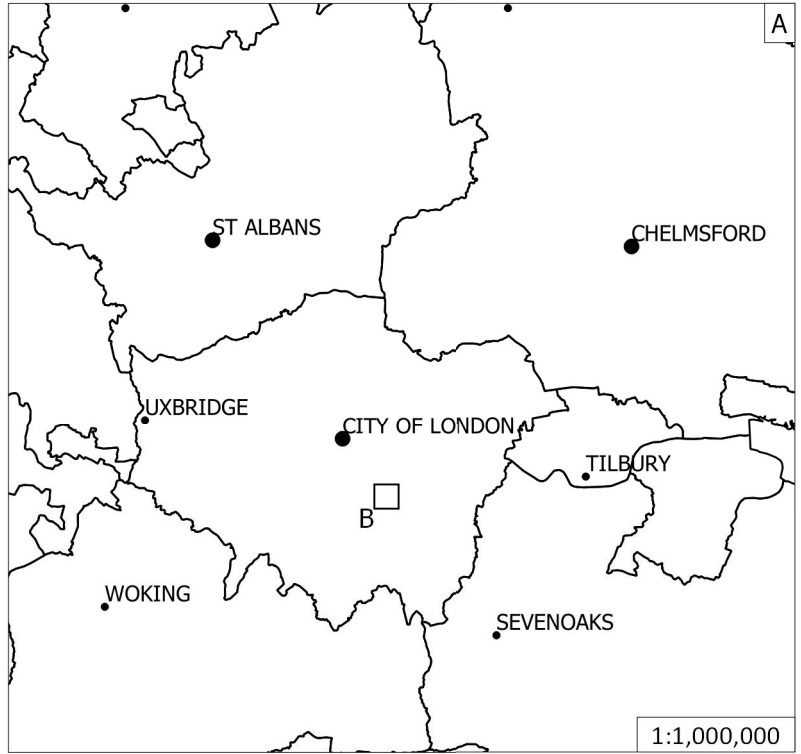
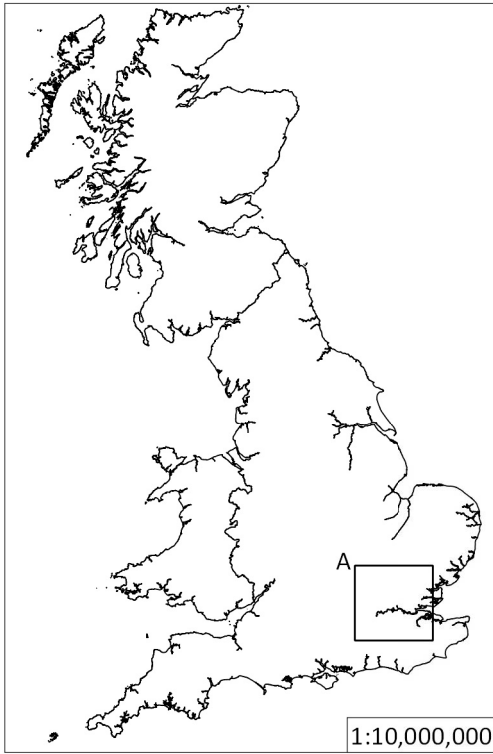
English Heritage, 2006, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide*, Swindon: English Heritage

GLAAS, 2015, *Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Greater London*, Historic England



## Appendix 1: Context Summary List

Trench	Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)	Interpretation
1	101	Layer	Hard, very dark grey tarmac; seals 102	0.20m thick	Tarmac surface
1	102	Layer	Compact, very dark grey silty clay with occasional brick and pipe fragments; sealed by 101, seals 103	0.16m thick	Made ground
1	103	Layer	Compact, light orange clay with occasional pebbles; sealed by 102, seals 104	0.40m thick	Subsoil
1	104	Layer	Friable, mid orange brown sandy gravel; sealed by 103	N/A	Superficial geology
2	201	Layer	Hard, very dark grey tarmac; seals 202 and 210	0.03m thick	Tarmac surface
2	202	Layer	Hard, light grey concrete slabs; sealed by 201, seals 203	0.05m thick	Floor surface
2	203	Layer	Friable, light yellowish brown sand with gravel; sealed by 202, seals 211	0.20m thick	Foundation layer for surface 202
2	204	Layer	Compact, very dark grey silty clay with occasional brick and pipe fragments; cut by [208], seals 205	0.20m thick	Made ground
2	205	Layer	Compact, light brown silty clay; sealed by 204, seals 206	0.50m thick	Subsoil
2	206	Layer	Friable, mid orange brown sandy gravel; sealed by 205	N/A	Superficial geology
2	207	Structure	Hard, light grey concrete and mid orange bricks; sealed by 209 and 211, seals [208]	0.50m wide 0.75m deep	Structural footings within construction cut [208]
2	208	Cut	Linear shape in plan, E-W oriented with steep concave into vertical sides and flat base; sealed by 207, cut into 204, filled by 207, 209 and 211	0.50m wide 0.75m deep	Construction cut
2	209	Fill	Friable, gravelly sand with moderate mortar and stone fragments; sealed by 210, seals 207, fill of [208]	0.23m thick	Deliberate backfill of construction cut [208]
2	210	Layer	Hard, light grey concrete; sealed by 201, seals 209	0.25m thick	Concrete layer
2	211	Fill	Friable, gravelly sand with moderate mortar and stone fragments; sealed by 203 and 210, seals 207, fill of [208]; sealed by 203, seals 207, fill of [208]	0.23m thick	Deliberate backfill of construction cut [208]

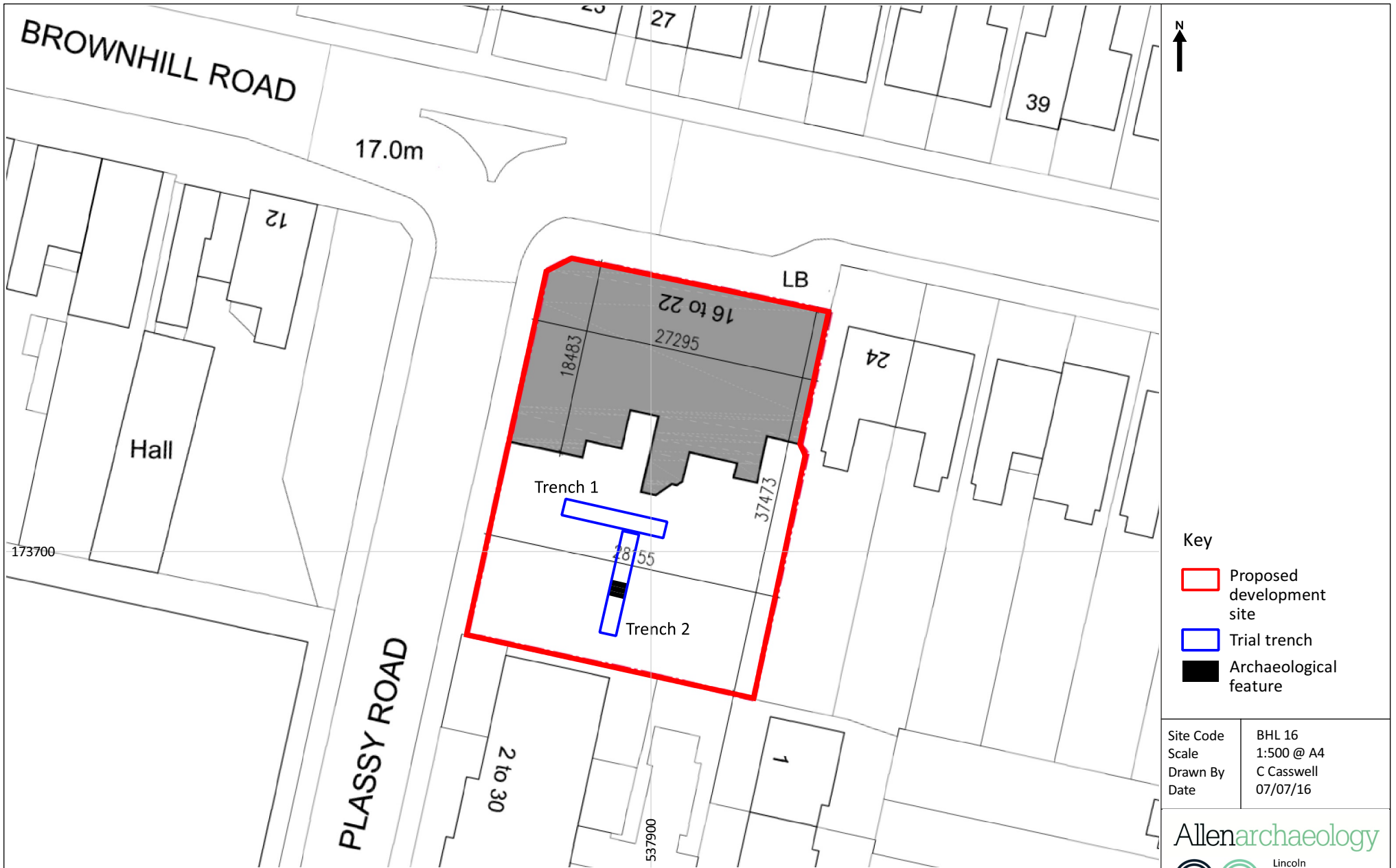


**Figure 1:** Site location outlined in red

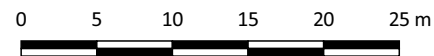
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Site Code	CABR 15
Scale	1:25,000 @ A4
Drawn by	J Johnson
Date	03/11/15

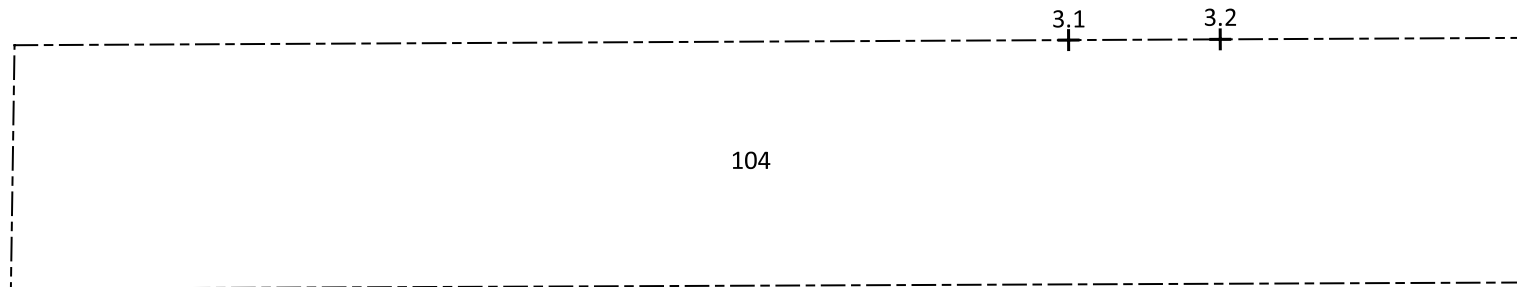
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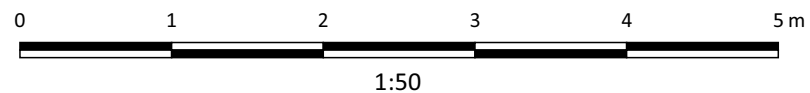
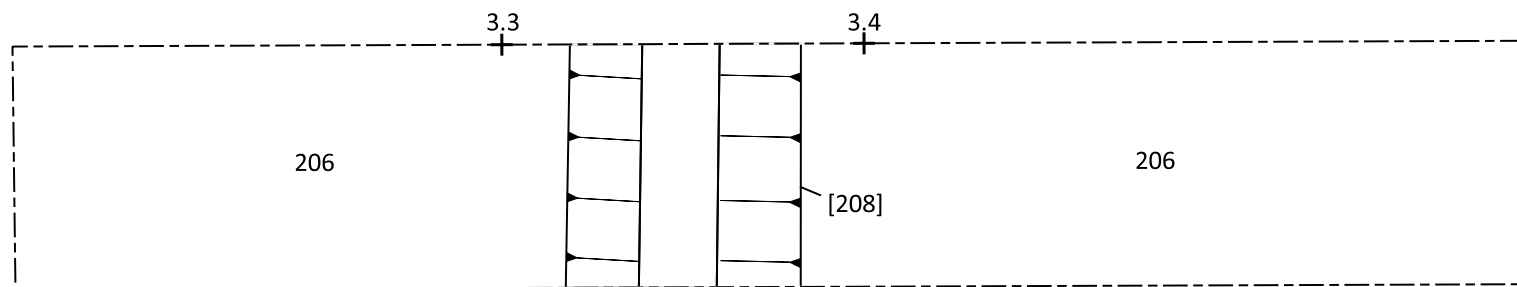
**Figure 2:** Location of evaluation trial trenches within the proposed development site



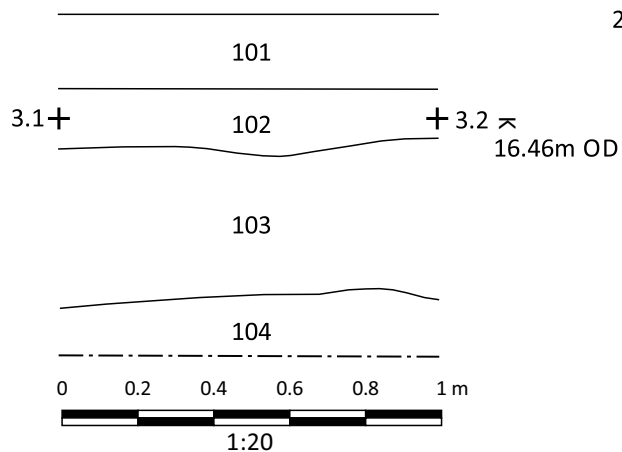
Trench 1



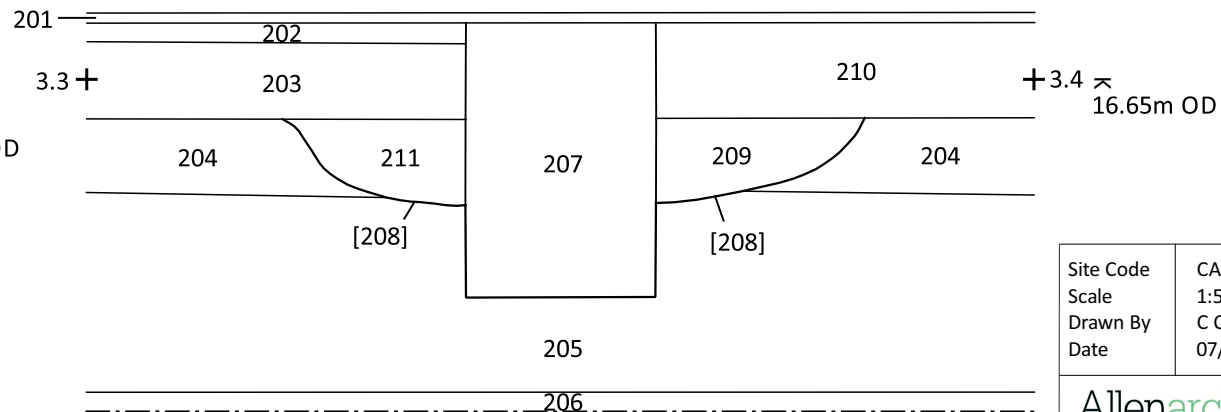
Trench 2



South-facing section



East-facing section



Site Code	CABR 16
Scale	1:50 & 1:20 @ A4
Drawn By	C Casswell
Date	07/07/16

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Figure 3: Plans and sections of Trenches 1 and 2



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