

Great West Quarter
(GWQ)
Hounslow
London



Archaeological Evaluation Report



January 2007

Client: CgMs Consulting

Issue N^o: 1
OA Job N^o: 3491
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**Great West Quarter, Great West Road,
Hounslow, London**

NGR TQ 180 782

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SUMMARY

In December 2006, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Great West Quarter, Great West Road, Hounslow, London (NGR TQ 180 782). The work was undertaken on behalf of CgMs Consulting in advance of redevelopment of the site. The evaluation revealed natural clay overlain by successive soil layers of probable agricultural origin. A few 18th century pottery sherds and fragments of building material were recovered from the buried agricultural soil levels. A single modern feature containing iron sheeting was encountered in Trench 4. Several modern brick walls and associated tarmac and modern services were also identified at various locations across the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 Between the 11th and 14th December 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation on behalf of CgMs Consulting at Great West Quarter, Great West Road, Hounslow, London (NGR TQ 180 782). The work was carried out in respect of a planning application for mixed residential and commercial development (Planning Application 00505/P/P59) by Barratt Homes West London. The site is to be redeveloped with alterations to existing buildings and a variety of new residential and service facilities constructed.

1.1.2 Planning Permission was granted subject to an archaeological condition requiring an archaeological evaluation of the site prior to development. A *Specification* for the evaluation was prepared by CgMs Consulting based on a desk-based assessment of the archaeological potential of the site (CgMs 2006). The development site is situated at Great West Quarter, Great West Road, Hounslow and is *c* 5 hectares in area.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on River Gravels over London Clay at *c* 20 m OD. The Great West Road and the M4 bound the site to the north, Ealing Road is situated to the west, Clayponds Lane is to the east and a Network railway line passes south of the site (Fig. 1).

1.2.2 The former Glaxo headquarters complex that includes Wallis House, offices, factory buildings and surface car parking areas occupied the site at the time of the evaluation.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk-based study (CgMs 2006), the results of which are summarised below. The site itself has produced no archaeological evidence although several known sites and findspots with archaeological remains are recorded adjacent to the development site.

- 1.3.2 Mesolithic material recorded in the vicinity of the site includes antler axes and picks. Late Mesolithic and Neolithic flintwork have been identified at Green Dragon Lane to the east and at the former Brentford Gasworks site, Kew Bridge Road. Bronze Age finds include votive offerings of Bronze Age weaponry recovered from the River Thames and pottery from North Road. Excavations at the former Brentford Gasworks revealed evidence for a mid-late Iron Age settlement including a field system, roadway, pits and postholes.
- 1.3.3 The Gasworks site also produced evidence for an extensive Roman field system on slightly different alignment to its Iron Age predecessor. The Roman Road from London to Silchester is believed to broadly follow a line approximately 30 m north of Brentford High Street.
- 1.3.4 No Saxon or medieval remains are known within a 500-km radius of the site, which is located beyond the historic core of Brentford and is believed to have been agricultural hinterland until the end of the 19th century. The 1839 Ealing Tithe Map depicts the site as being two fields recorded as market garden plots. Buildings appear to have been constructed on the site from the late Victorian period onward, beginning with the Ealing Road School.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

The aims of the evaluation in accordance with the *Specification* were:

- 2.1.1 To determine or confirm the general nature, condition and extent of any remains present and confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.
- 2.1.2 To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present and determine the likely range, quality and quantity of any artefactual evidence present.
- 2.1.3 To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in such evidence may be present.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of five trenches (Fig. 2) positioned approximately in accordance with the *Specification*. Alterations to - and constraints placed upon - the proposed location of the trenches are detailed below (see section 4). Changes were agreed with CgMs during the course of the fieldwork.
- 3.1.2 A breaker was employed to assist in the removal of the existing hard-standing tarmac and concrete. The overburden was removed under constant archaeological supervision by a JCB fitted with a toothless bucket.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 Due to soil contamination by modern contaminants, especially within Trenches 1, 4 and 5, hand-cleaning of trenches was kept to a minimum and the natural soil at the base of each trench was graded with the machine bucket to enable identification of any cut features. Within Trench 4, a potential archaeological feature (that transpired to be modern - see below) was investigated using a hoe, thus avoiding the need to enter the trench. As a minimum, a 2 m sample section of each trench was drawn at a scale of 1:10, showing the overburden and trench depth and a 1:50 plan of each trench was made showing the extent of the natural.
- 3.2.2 All trenches were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Levels are referenced to the site survey (Drawing No: 0666OSFIX). Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Finds

- 3.3.1 A small quantity of post-medieval finds were recovered from layers in Trenches 1 and 2 and bagged by context. See Table 1 below for details.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 4.1.1 The site is located on the partially demolished site of the former Glaxo Headquarters. All trenches were positioned on existing hard-standing surfaces and away from the footprint of the recently demolished structures. A fence marking the demolition zone prevented the full length of Trench 2 from being excavated.
- 4.1.2 Within the north-west part of the site, the presence of car storage areas meant that Trenches 4 and 5 had to be reduced in length. Presumed live services and other utilities also had a bearing on the total length of trench that could be investigated. The water table was not reached in any of the trenches.

4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

- 4.2.1 No archaeological deposits or features were identified.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Trench Descriptions

Trench 1

- 5.1.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 2; Fig 3) was orientated approximately east-west, located within a tarmac car park in the south-east quadrant of the site and measured 30 m in length. Natural (106), a clean medium brown clay, was reached at a depth of 1 m - 1.08m and remained level along the length of the trench at 10.14 m - 10.15 m above local

datum. No features were found cutting the natural, which was overlain by a brown mottled silty clay (105) some 0.4 m thick with occasional flecks of red brick or tile. Also recovered from this layer were several fragments of post-medieval roofing tile and a sherd of 18th century pottery. Layer 105 was overlain by 104, a dark brown sandy silt (104), 0.07 m thick that probably represented a buried topsoil of recent date.

- 5.1.2 This former topsoil was partially overlain by two concrete slabs (103), at least 0.3 m thick and totalling 15.5 m in length. Both slabs had been cut through the underlying soils into the natural clay and no attempt was made to remove the slabs. To increase the investigation area, it was decided to excavate a southward extension at the east end of the trench. The extension was 6.5 m in length but revealed the same sequence of soil layers to the base of the trench. The concrete slabs were overlain by gravel/hardcore hogging (101, 102) that supported the present tarmac car park.

Trench 2

- 5.1.3 Trench 2 (Fig. 2; Fig 3) was orientated approximately north-south and was located within the tarmac area to the west of Trench 1. Site constraints meant that that the maximum length of trench that could be excavated was 24 m. The presence of live cables and water pipes reduced the length of the trench available for detailed investigation to 14.5 m.
- 5.1.4 Natural (204), a medium brown fine sandy clay, was reached at a depth of 0.97 m or 10.34 m (above local datum). No features were found cutting this level. This was overlain by a clean medium brown sandy silt (203) with flecks of brick.
- 5.1.5 Two sherds of 18th century pottery and fragments of post-medieval roof tile were recovered from this deposit that was overlain by a 0.26 m thick dark brown silt (202) containing modern ceramic building materials and glass fragments. This layer probably represents a buried topsoil. Gravel hardcore/hogging and mixed rubble (201) supported the tarmac.

Trench 3

- 5.1.6 The trench was orientated approximately north-south was located to west of Trench 2, adjacent to an existing access road (Fig. 2). The trench measured *c* 31 m in length.
- 5.1.7 Natural at the base of the trench comprised a brown sandy clay (305) that was reached at a depth of *c* 1.05 m or 10.43 m above local datum. No features were found cutting this level. This was sealed by a brown silt layer (304) containing occasional brick fragments which, in turn, was sealed beneath a dark brown silt layer (303) with brick fragments. This appears to represent a buried topsoil of relatively modern date.
- 5.1.8 Above the level of soil 303 and following the machined removal of recent demolition rubble (300), a series of seven modern brick walls (302) were revealed that crossed the trench from east to west (Fig. 2). Each wall was 0.22 m in width, constructed in

brick and supported by concrete foundations; the walls were equally spaced 2.72 m apart.

- 5.1.9 The last remaining 9 m of the trench contained several concrete-capped drains and other modern services. Excavation was largely confined to the areas between the brick walls, where a buried tarmac surface (301) was revealed contemporary with the brick walling and sealing soil 303 below.

Trench 4

- 5.1.10 Trench 4 was orientated approximately east-west and located within an existing car park/storage area to the north-west of the site (Fig. 2). Due to the constraints imposed by the parked cars, a maximum length 15.8 m was opened.
- 5.1.11 The natural (403) consisted of a brown silty clay and was encountered at a depth of 0.52 m or 10.41 m above local datum. Cutting the natural close to the west end of the trench was part of a small circular feature (404) filled with a dark stained soil. Sample excavation with a hoe revealed the feature to be shallow and filled with a large fragment of iron sheeting of recent date - the iron was not retained.
- 5.1.12 Above the natural was a dark brown silt (402) 0.18 m thick that contained occasional fragments of brick. Due to potential contamination the layer was not closely examined but the deposit may represent the disturbed upper horizon of natural, or a mixed former topsoil layer. Gravel hardcore make-up (401) supported the tarmac (400). A narrow modern brick wall (405) crossed the trench towards its west end.

Trench 5

- 5.1.13 The trench (Fig. 2; Fig 3) was orientated approximately north-south and was located in a confined area immediately to the east of Trench 4. The maximum length of trench available for machining was 14.7 m, although the presence of extant drains, services and a concrete footing at the north end of the trench reduced its workable length to *c* 7 m.
- 5.1.14 Below the existing concrete surface (500) and supporting make-up (501) was a dark brown silty soil (502), approximately 0.2 m in thickness. This was very similar to layer 402 in Trench 4 and may represent disturbed natural or a mixed former topsoil. The underlying natural (503) comprised clean brown silty clay and was revealed at a depth of 0.55 m or 10.41 m above local datum.

5.2 Finds

- 5.2.1 These were scanned by finds specialist John Cotter of OA. Five fragments of post-medieval roofing tile were recovered from layers 105 and 203.
- 5.2.2 A single sherd of 18th century local pink/red local coarse earthenware from a large storage or flower pot was recovered from layer 105.

- 5.2.3 Two sherds from an 18th century Staffordshire type/coned slipware vessel, probably a cup, were recovered from layer 203. The other finds are listed below (Table 1) and require no further comment.

Table 1: Table of finds by context

Ctx	Material	Nos. sherds/pieces	Date
105	Ceramic building material	3	Post-medieval
105	Pottery	1	C18th
203	Ceramic building material	2	Post-medieval
203	Pottery	2	C18th
203	Animal bone	1	-
203	Shell	2	-

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

- 6.1.1 The presence of modern services and foundations across much of the area investigated limited the potential for archaeological survival. Within the areas not previously impacted upon by modern structures the evaluation has demonstrated that archaeological features were absent.
- 6.1.2 Soil layers predating the 20th century survive in Trenches 1, 2 and 3 and suggest use of the site as agricultural farmland during the post-medieval period. A few sherds of 18th century material hint at activity of this date in the general area, but the finds may have been imported during manuring of the fields in this period or later.
- 6.1.3 There was no evidence of deep ploughing likely to have truncated features. The only potential feature (404) contained a modern piece of iron sheet, probably driven in from the recent ground surface. It remains possible that towards the north-west of the site (at least within the area of Trenches 4 and 5) modern terracing for the extant car park may have removed any potential archaeological features.
- 6.1.4 Traces of modern brick walling, buried tarmac surfaces and modern services are testimony to use of the site in the 20th century.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctx No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>No./wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
Trench 1								
	100	Layer		0.07	Tarmac	-		
	101	Layer		0.15	Hogging	-		
	102	Layer		0.48	Gravel makeup	-		
	103	Layer		>0.30	Concrete slab	-		
	104	Layer		0.07	Buried topsoil?	-		
	105	Layer		0.40	Subsoil	Pottery CBM		C18/p-med
	106	Layer			Clay natural	-		
Trench 2								
	200	Layer		0.07	Tarmac	-		
	201	Layer		0.43	Make-up	-		
	202	Layer		0.25	Buried topsoil?	-		
	203	Layer		0.26	Subsoil	Pottery CBM		C18/p-med
	204	Layer			Sandy natural	-		
Trench 3								
	300	Layer		0.62	Made ground	-		
	301	Layer			Tarmac	-		
	302	Struct	0.22		Brick walls on concrete	-		
	303	Layer		0.18	Buried soil	-		
	304	Layer		0.18	Subsoil	-		
	305	Layer			Sandy natural	-		
Trench 4								
	400	Layer		0.20	Concrete	-		
	401	Layer		0.12	Made Ground	-		
	402	Layer		0.20	Subsoil?	-		
	403	Layer			Natural clay	-		

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctx No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>No./wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
	404	Layer			Modern feature	-		
	405	Struct	0.30		Brick wall on concrete	-		
Trench 5								
	500			0.06	Concrete	-		
	501			0.30	Made ground	-		
	502			0.20	Buried topsoil?	-		
	503				Natural clay	-		

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

CgMs 2006, Great West Quarter, *Great West Road, Hounslow: Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation* CgMs (unpublished report)

OAU 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (1st edition, August 1992, ed. D Wilkinson)

7) NATURAL

Type: **River Gravel over London Clay**Height above Ordnance datum: **c 20 m OD**

8) LOCATION OF ARCHIVES

- a) Please provide an estimate of the quantity of material in your possession for the following categories:

NOtes 30	PLans 6	PHotos 50	Ngtives 50
SLides 50	Correspondence 10	MScripts (unpub reports, etc) 2	
BULK finds 1 box	SMall finds 0	SOil samples 0	
Other 0			

- b) The archive has been prepared and stored in accordance with MGC standards and will be deposited in the following location: **Museum of London**
- c) Has a security copy of the archive been made?: **YES**

10) BIBLIOGRAPHY

See Appendix 2 Bibliography and references

SIGNED: 

DATE: 11th January 2007

NAME **STEVE LAWRENCE**

APPENDIX 3 GLSMR/RCHME NMR ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FORM

1) TYPE OF RECORDING

5 x Trench Evaluation

2) LOCATION

Borough: **Hounslow**
Site address: **Great West Quarter, Great West Road, Hounslow, TW8 0QY**
Site Name: **Great West Quarter (GWQ)**
Site Code: **EGH06**
Nat. grid Refs:
centre of site: **TQ 1800 7822**
limits of site: **N 18100/78260 S 18100/78220**
E 17900/78220 W 18240/78220

3) ORGANISATION

Name of archaeological unit/company/society: **Oxford Archaeology**
Address: **Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 OES**

Site director/supervisor: **Steve Teague AIFA**
Project manager: **Steve Lawrence**
Funded by: **CgMs Consulting**

4) DURATION

Date fieldwork started: **11/12/06** Date finished: **14/12/06**
Fieldwork previously notified? **YES**
Fieldwork will continue? **NO**

5) PERIODS REPRESENTED

Post-medieval

6) PERIOD SUMMARIES

Post-medieval and modern soil horizons and modern make-up layers beneath present ground surface and modern.

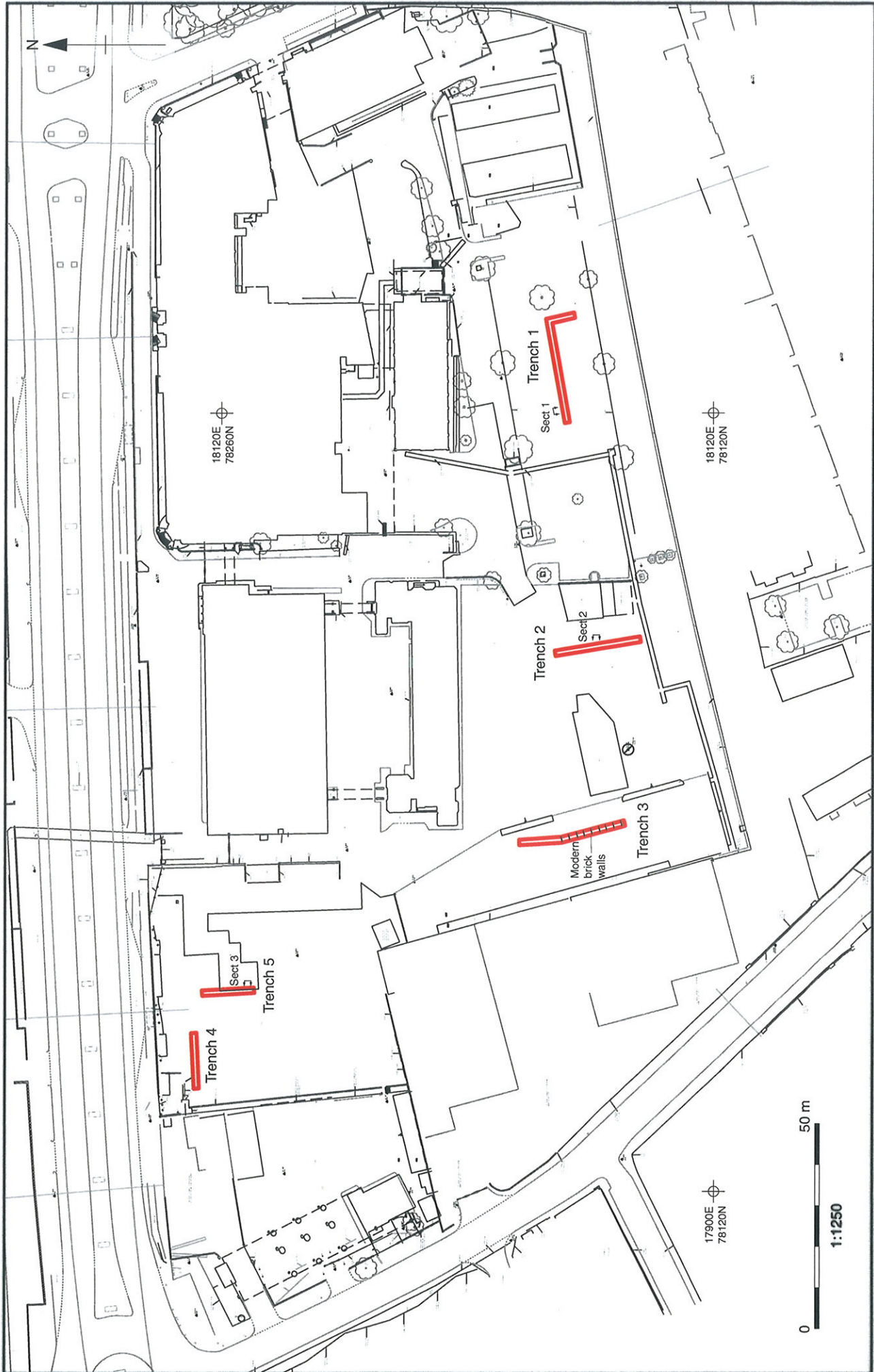
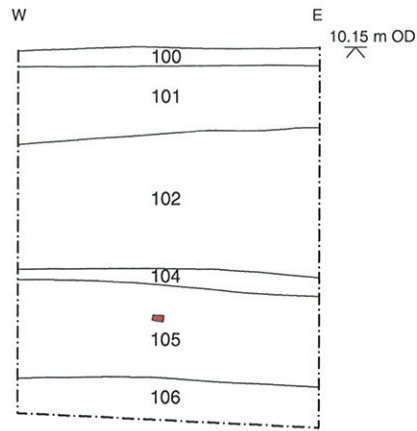


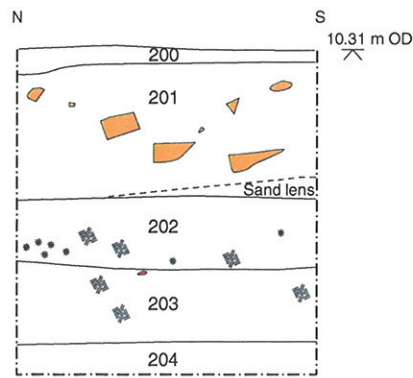
Figure 2: Trench locations



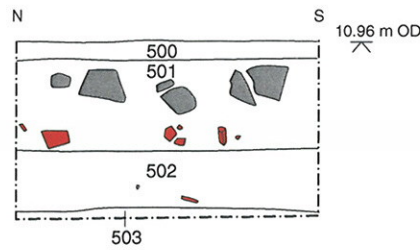
Trench 1
Sample section 1



Trench 2
Sample section 2



Trench 5
Sample section 3



KEY

- Brick
- Brick/ CBM
- Block of concrete
- Shell
- Chalk



Figure 3 : Sample sections; trenches 1, 2 and 5



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