

Samuel Lewis Dwellings Dalston Lane, Hackney

Second Phase Archaeological Evaluation 1995
Museum of London Site Code: DAS95

NGR TQ 3426 8510

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

February 1995

SAMUEL LEWIS DWELLINGS, DALSTON LANE, HACKNEY

SECOND PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 1995

MUSEUM OF LONDON SITECODE: DAS95

**A report on the evaluation undertaken between 16/01/95 and 20/01/95
at the Samuel Lewis Dwellings, Hackney.**

NGR TQ34268510

Oxford 10/02/95

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1

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook an evaluation in the Borough of Hackney on behalf of the Samuel Lewis Housing Trust in January 1995. Four trenches were excavated between the two eastern-most housing blocks, in advance of proposed demolition and subsequent redevelopment.

Trench locations were restricted by a complex network of service runs, but are likely to represent a satisfactory 4.5 % sample of the archaeology that may be present within the development area.

The only structural information identified during the evaluation was two red-brick walls seen in section in trench 2 (204 and 205). The walls were constructed from moulded red-brick bonded by a solid cement based mortar. These were clearly not load bearing walls and are likely to be associated with a pre-existing outhouse or garden feature. Layers 207 and 304 have been tentatively ascribed as post-medieval plough/garden soil. Layer 304 contained five sherds dated between the 18th and 19th century. This interpretation would be consistent with the phase one evaluation carried out by MOLAS where brickearth was overlain by post-medieval plough/garden soil. Two sherds of Roman colour coated whiteware and a sherd of modern flower pot were identified within a layer 402.

2

INTRODUCTION

The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook an evaluation in the Borough of Hackney on behalf of the Samuel Lewis Housing Trust between the 16th and 20th of January 1995. Four trenches were excavated between the two eastern-most housing blocks, in advance of a second phase of development. Cartographic sources show a group of buildings on the site which may represent the documented medieval and post-medieval manor.

The aim of the evaluation was to provide an assessment of the nature, location, extent, significance and date/period of all archaeological deposits encountered, and to offer a provisional interpretation.

3

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The site of the second phase of development is situated within the grounds of the Samuel Lewis Trust Dwellings at NGR TQ34268510, and comprises a rectangular area of approximately 6400 square metres (figure 1). The Trust Dwellings are bounded by Dalston Lane to the south, Waylands Avenue to the east and Greenarce Court to the west. Fencelines to adjacent residential properties backing Montague Road define the northern boundary. The site is situated in the parish of Dalston in the Borough of Hackney (figure 1).

Four NW/SE-aligned rectangular blocks of flats run parallel through the site, and are separated by a tarmac concourse used for residential parking. The buildings were constructed by the Samuel Lewis Trust in 1924.

The natural geology within the proposed development area is Gravel overlain by brickearth. No geotechnical borehole survey had been carried out in the phase II development area.

4 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Cartographic sources indicate that a post-medieval manor house and refuge for destitute females was located on the site before the construction of the Samuel Lewis Dwellings (figure 3). An archaeological evaluation in advance of the phase I development carried out by the Museum of London Archaeological Services (MOLAS) found a pond-like feature with a fence-line at one end, which was filled by marshy or pond deposits dated between the 17th and 19th centuries. Elsewhere natural brickearth was identified overlain by post-medieval plough/garden soil.

5 METHODOLOGY AND STRATEGY

Four trenches of varying length (10 x 2, 8 x 2, 4 x 2 and 6 x 2m) were excavated within the area of the second phase development (figure 2). The positioning and size of the trenches was restricted by the complex service runs associated with the Trust Dwellings, but represented a 4.5 % sample of the development area. Excavation was carried out in two phases to ensure emergency assess to the site at all times, since trenches were laid out within the concourse between residential blocks.

The trenches were excavated by a JCB Sitemaster using a 1.5 m toothless ditching bucket down to the first significant archaeological horizons or in their absences to natural subsoil. The resulting surfaces were cleaned, planned, levelled, and photographed; where applicable a sample section was excavated through the fills of features. The finds strategy complied with the Carver finds retrieval strategy; a sample of finds from the overburden was kept for analysis, and all finds were kept from hand excavated contexts of potentially significant deposits. It was agreed that should palaeoenvironmental deposits of interest be located then advice on sampling would be sought from MOLAS Environmental Section. Recording was carried out in accordance with English Heritage's London Region Archaeological Guidance Paper: 3 (Standards and Practices in Archaeological fieldwork) Nov. 1992 and the OAU field manual (edited David Wilkinson 1992).

To comply with health and safety regulations and to ensure that the trench would in no way be hazardous, no excavation continued beyond a depth of 1.2 metres.

DESCRIPTION OF ARCHAEOLOGY

6.1 Trench 1

A mid-reddish brown silty clay (107) natural brickearth was identified at the extent of excavation, a depth of 17.35 m OD (1.2 m below ground surface (BGS)). This was overlain by a mid-brown silty loam (106) which was 0.35 m thick at the south-eastern end, but decreased in thickness towards the north-western end where it had a depth of 0.15 m; exhibiting a slope from SSE to NNW (figure 4). A dark grey silty loam (105) overlay 106 and was observed throughout the trench. Layers 105 and 106 were relatively free of inclusions and contained pottery dated between the 19th and 20th centuries. A thin layer of mid-brown sandy loam (104) overlay layer 105 and was observed at the south-eastern end of the trench. A mixed layer which predominantly comprised a tenacious mid-reddish brown silty clay (103) was stratigraphically above 104 and spread the length of the trench. Layer 103 was overlain by a layer of hardcore (102), below a concrete slab (101), which was subsequently overlain by the present tarmac surface (100).

6.2 Trench 2

A mid-reddish brown silty clay (208), natural brickearth, was identified at the extent of excavation, a depth of 17.17 m OD. This was overlain by a brown silty clay (207), 0.4 m thick which spread the length of the trench. Layer 207 was cut by a circular pit, which had a depth of 0.15 m and had been truncated. The fill of pit 210, a light grey silty clay (209) contained one sherd of glazed post-medieval pottery dated between the 17th and 19th centuries. Two red-brick walls (204 and 205) overlay layer 207 and had six and five surviving courses of moulded red-brick respectively. No construction cuts were identified, although the profile of layer 207 below, suggests that it had been landscaped prior to their construction (figure 4). A greyish brown clayey sand (206) which contained demolition debris and gravel overlay walls 204 and 205, and represents backfill and levelling. Layer 206 was cut by a square shaped vertical sided, flat based pit (203) filled by clinker and building debris (202). Fill 202 and layer 206 were overlain by a concrete slab (201), below the present tarmac surface (200).

6.3 Trench 3

A mixed flinty gravel within a clayey silt matrix (307) was identified at the base of a sondage at the NNW end of trench 3 at a depth of 17.23 m OD. This was overlain by a mid-reddish brown silty clay (306), natural brickearth. The overlying sequence of deposits lay flat on the brickearth and were visible without variation through the extent of the trench.

Natural brickearth (306) was overlain by a mid-brown clayey silt (305), disturbed brickearth. This was overlain by a mid-brownish clayey silt (304) which contained a small percentage of gravel and charcoal. Five sherds of pottery were found within layer 304, and were dated between the 18th and 19th century. A dark grey clay (303) overlay layer 304 and contained brick fragments and glass. A thin (0.12 m thick)

layer of tarmac (302) was above layer 303, representing a previous ground surface. A concrete slab (301) overlay layer 302 and was below the present tarmac ground surface (300).

6.4 Trench 4

A mid-reddish brown sandy silt (404), was identified at the extent of excavation, 17.61 m OD. Unlike the natural silty clay identified in trenches 1, 2, and 3 (107, 208, and 306), this deposit was friable and containing a faction of fine-grained sand. Layer 404 was overlain by a mid-reddish brown silty clay (403); a disturbed natural, 0.36 m thick. A dark greyish-brown silty clay (402) overlay layer 403 and contained brick fragments, gravel and charcoal. Three sherds of pottery were found within layer 402, two sherds of Roman colour coated whiteware and a sherd dated to the 20th century. A layer of demolition debris (401) which contained concrete and red-brick overlay layer 402 and was below the present tarmac surface (400).

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 The only structural information identified during the evaluation was two red-brick walls seen in section in trench 2 (204 and 205). The walls were constructed from moulded red-brick bonded by a solid cement based mortar. No construction cuts were visible, although layer 207 below appeared to have been landscaped prior to the walls construction. These were clearly not load bearing walls and are likely to be associated with a pre-existing outhouse or garden feature. A reliable date for walls was not established, but it is likely that they would be dated between the 19th and 20th century.

7.2 Natural gravel was identified at the base of a sondage in trench 3 at a depth of 17.23 m OD, elsewhere excavation stopped when natural brickearth was encountered. The depth of natural brickearth varies across the site. Deeper stratigraphy was identified in trench 1 which is situated close to the Samuel Lewis Dwelling flats, where brickearth was identified at a depth of 17.42 m OD. It is likely that the natural has been truncated in trench 1 during ground works for the construction of the Trust Dwellings carried out in the 1920's. This corresponds with dating evidence from layer 106 which overlies the brickearth and contains 20th century pottery, and suggests that all stratigraphic units identified in trench 1 are 20th century in date. Brickearth identified in trenches 2, 3 and 4 varies between a depth of 17.61 m OD identified in trench 4 and 17.89 m OD identified in trench 3. If the depths of disturbed natural identified in trenches 3 and 4 (305 and 403) are taken into consideration there is not a great variation.

7.3 Layers 207 and 304 have been tentatively ascribed as post-medieval plough/garden soil. No pottery was identified in layer 207, although this layer was cut by a shallow pit which contained one sherd of pottery dated between the 17th and 19th centuries. Layer 304 contained five sherds dated between the 18th and 19th century. This interpretation would be consistent with the phase one evaluation carried out by MOLAS where brickearth was overlain by post-medieval plough/garden soil.

7.4 Two sherds of Roman colour coated whiteware and a sherd of modern flower pot were identified within a layer 402 which contained fragments of brick. Although the Roman pottery is residual it does suggest that there is Roman activity within the area.

Rob Early
Oxford Archaeological Unit
10 February 1995

APPENDIX 1 SUMMARY OF STRATIGRAPHY

| Context Nos. | Type of Context | Depth (m) | Level (OD) Top | Comments |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| 100 | Deposit | 0.15 | 18.72 | Tarmac Surface |
| 101 | Deposit | 0.15 | 18.67 | Concrete Slab |
| 102 | Deposit | 0.2 | 18.47 | Make-up |
| 103 | Deposit | 0.3 | 18.32 | ?Make-up |
| 104 | Deposit | 0.15 | 18.16 | ?Make-up |
| 105 | Deposit | 0.38 | 18.04 | Post-medieval Garden soil |
| 106 | Deposit | 0.37 | 17.7 | Post-medieval Garden soil |
| 107 | Deposit | Unknown | 17.42 | Natural Brickearth |
| 200 | Deposit | 0.05 | 18.76 | Concrete Slab |
| 201 | Deposit | 0.26 | 18.69 | Make-up |
| 202 | Fill | 0.80 | 18.51 | Fill of modern cut |
| 203 | Cut | | 18.51 | modern square cut |
| 204 | Wall | 0.60 | 18.51 | ?garden/outbuilding wall |
| 205 | Wall | | 18.51 | ?garden/outbuilding wall |
| 206 | Fill | 0.4 | 18.51 | Make-up |
| 207 | Deposit | 0.4 | 18.25 | ?post-medieval Garden soil |
| 208 | Deposit | | 17.71 | Natural Brickearth |
| 209 | Deposit | 0.15 | 17.79 | Fill of an irregular cut |
| 210 | Cut | 0.15 | 17.79 | Irregular cut |
| 300 | Deposit | .06 | 18.79 | Concrete slab |
| 301 | Deposit | 0.2 | 18.69 | Make-up |
| 302 | Deposit | 0.12 | 18.49 | ?Dumped deposit |
| 303 | Deposit | 0.18 | 18.35 | ?Dumped Deposit |
| 304 | Deposit | 0.14 | 18.23 | Post-medieval Garden soil |
| 305 | Deposit | 0.2 | 18.09 | Disturbed Brickearth |
| 306 | Deposit | 0.7 | 17.89 | Superficial Natural: Brickearth |
| 307 | Deposit | Unknown | 17.23 | Natural Gravel |
| 400 | Deposit | 0.06 | 18.61 | Tarmac Surface |
| 401 | Deposit | 0.3 | 18.51 | Make-up |
| 402 | Deposit | 0.3 | 18.3 | ?Dumped deposit |

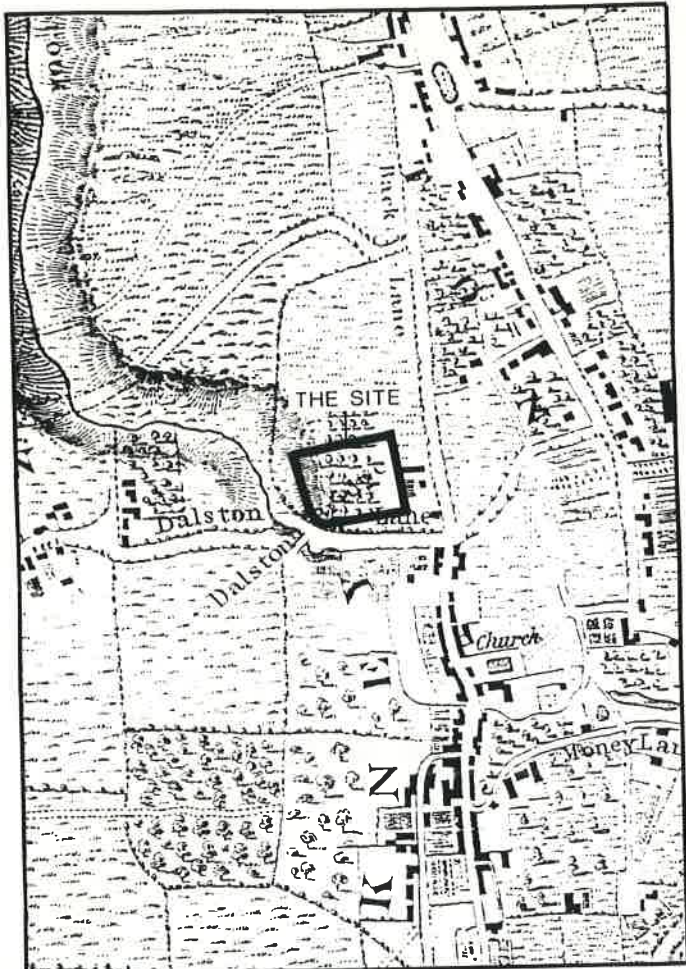
| | | | | |
|-----|---------|---------|-------|--------------------|
| 403 | Deposit | 0.36 | 18.01 | Disturbed Natural |
| 404 | Deposit | Unknown | 17.61 | Natural Brickearth |



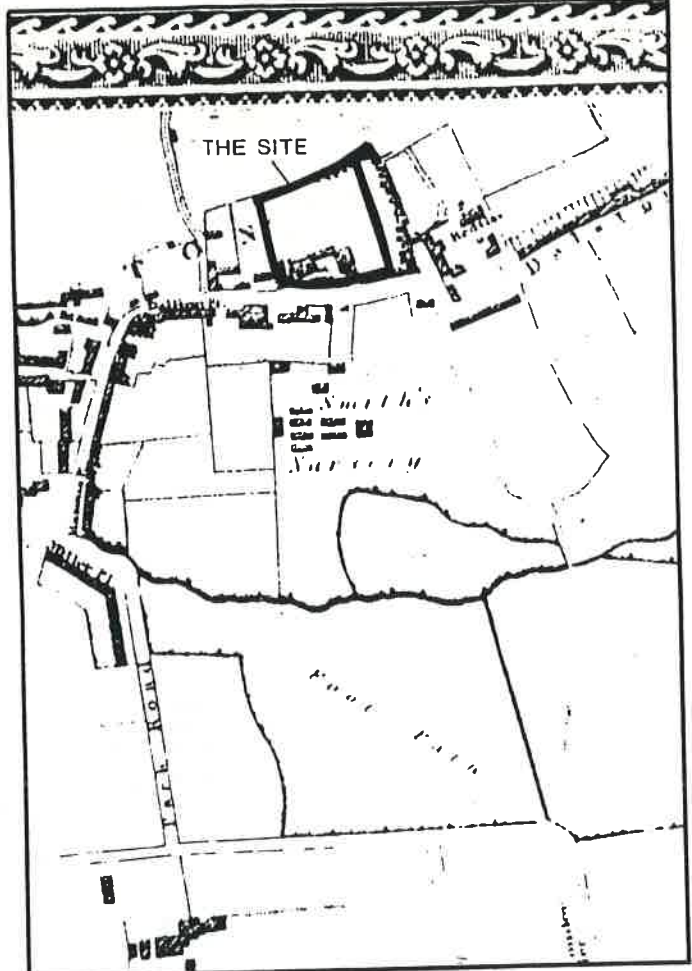
Based on the Ordnance Survey's 1:1250 map of 1993 with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown copyright

Site location

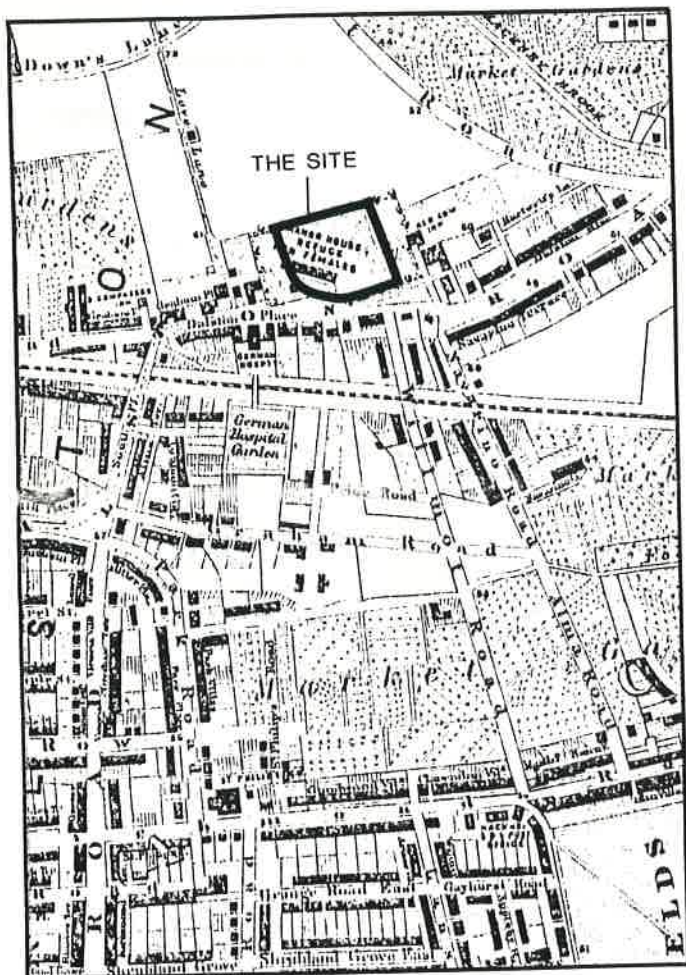
figure 1



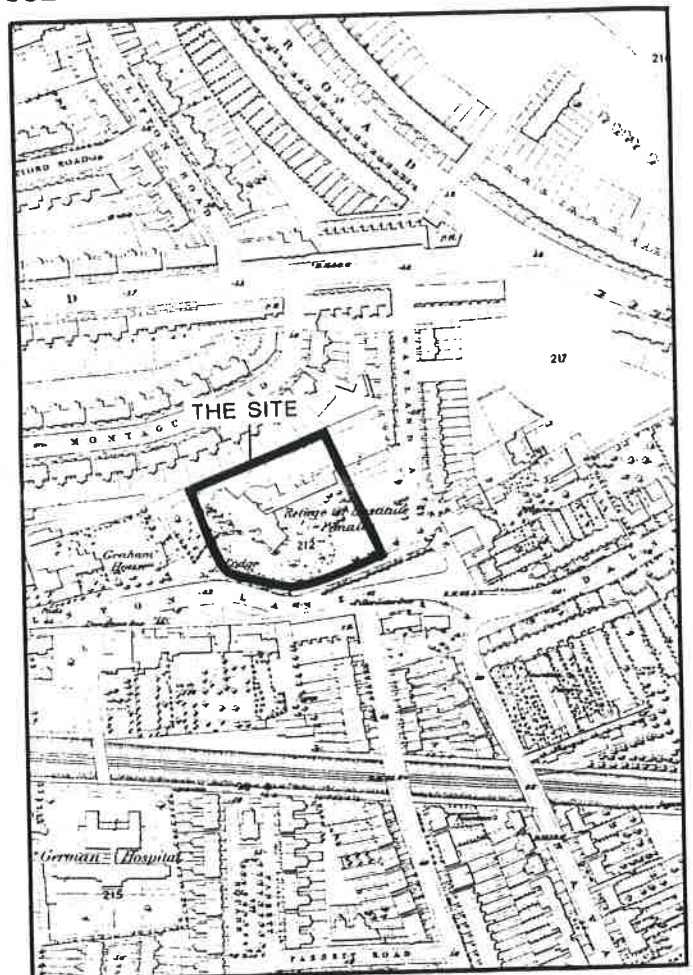
1745 and Later Hackney North



1827 Greenwood 8" to 1 mile

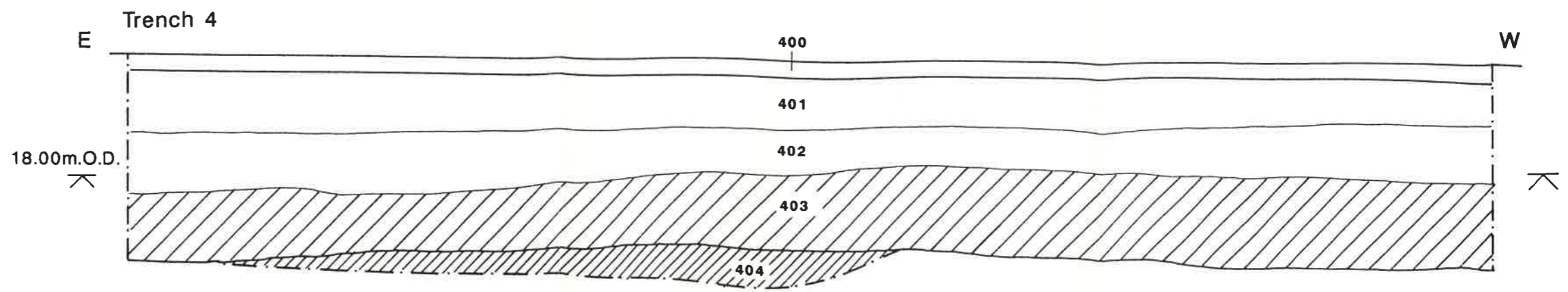
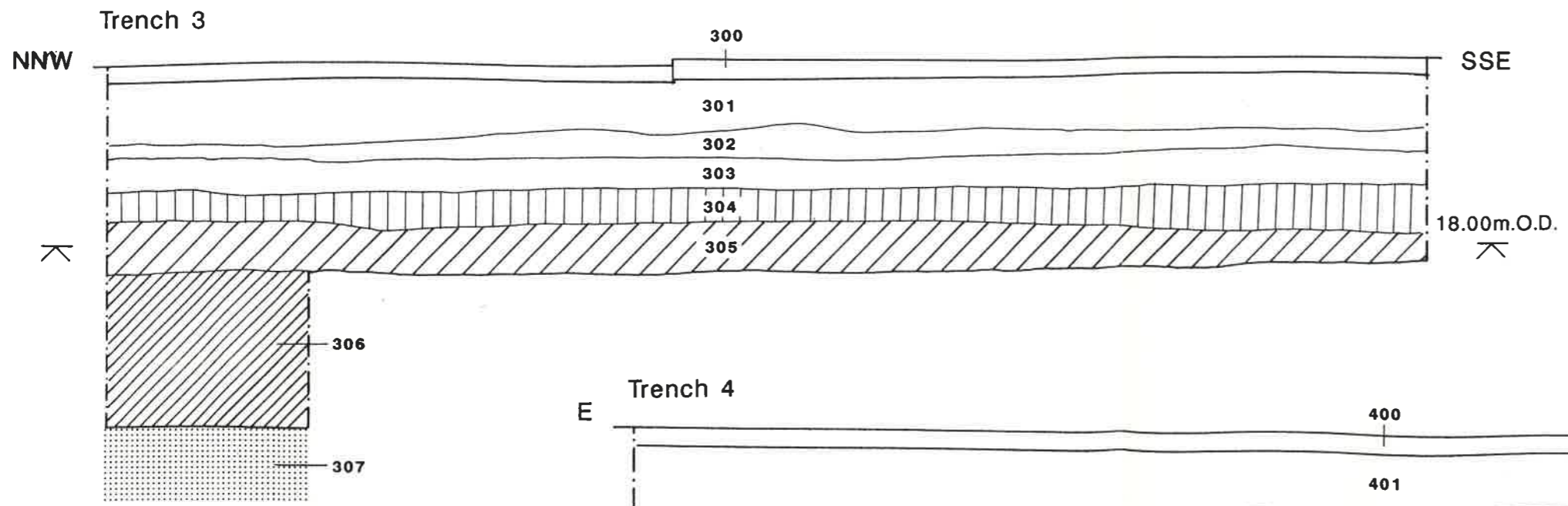
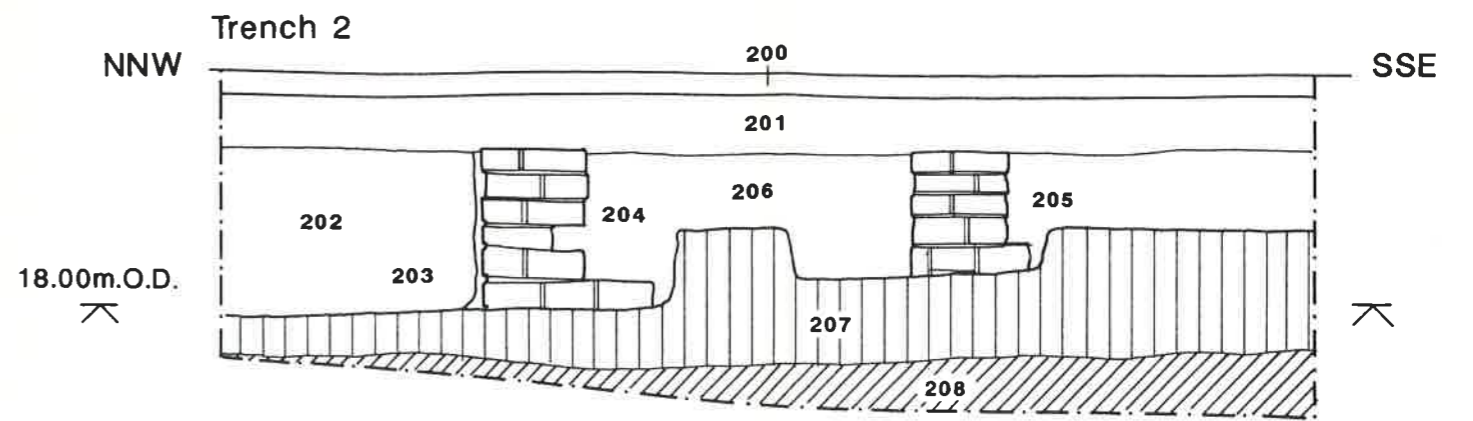
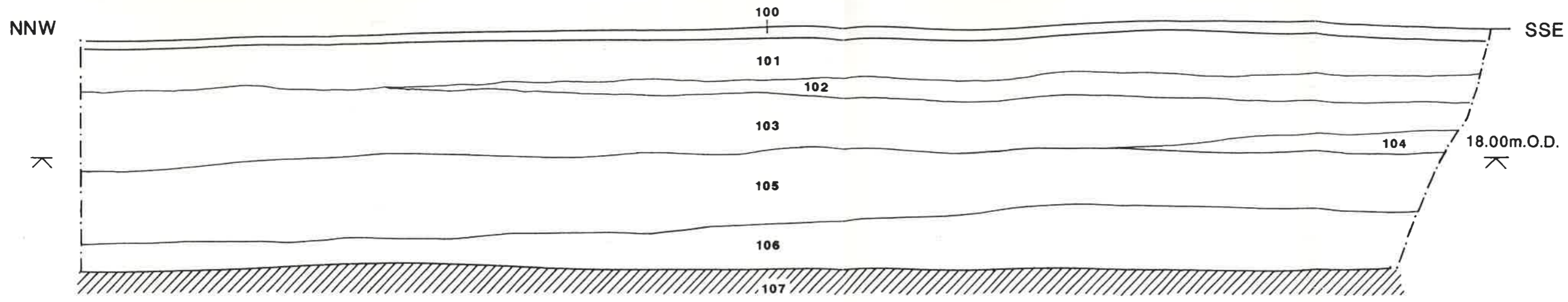


1862 Stanford 8" to 1 mile



1870 Godfrey edition OS 1870 Dalston

figure 3







-  Post medieval garden soil
-  Disturbed brickearth
-  Natural brickearth
-  Natural gravel

figure 4

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