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FIRST PREMISE LTD

**18 – 21 High Street, Deptford Broadway, Lewisham,
London**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

NGR TO374 769

**Oxford Archaeological Unit
September 1999**

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NGR TO374 769

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18 – 21 High Street, Deptford Broadway, Lewisham, London

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Summary

An archaeological evaluation undertaken prior to the redevelopment of nos 18 – 21 High Street Deptford Broadway, Lewisham confirmed that the deposits above the natural gravel consisted of made ground, specifically post-medieval dumping and levelling. No significant archaeological deposits or artefacts were identified.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

- 1.1 The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned by First Premise Ltd to undertake an archaeological field evaluation on the site of a proposed redevelopment of nos 18 – 21 High Street, Deptford Broadway, Lewisham, London (NGR TO 374 769). As the site lies in an area of archaeological potential, the evaluation was requested by K Whittaker of English Heritage (GLAAS), on behalf of the London Borough of Lewisham. The evaluation brief was set by, and the OAU's subsequent Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) agreed with K Whittaker prior to the commencement of the work.

2. Topography and Geology

- 2.1 The site is essentially flat, and lies on the north side of Deptford Broadway, backing onto Reginald Square. The geology is Thames river terrace deposits overlying Upper Chalk.

3 Historical and Archaeological Background

- 3.1 Settlement is known to have existed in the vicinity of the fording point of the nearby Ravensbourne since the prehistoric period (Phillpotts *C Deptford Creek Archaeological desk based assessment*, dated August 1997). Development of the adjacent property (Dover Castle Public House) allowed archaeological investigation, which revealed remains spanning the period of the Iron Age to the 19th century. Of particular importance were two Anglo-Saxon burials and other late-Saxon and medieval pits and ditches (Gaimster D and Gaimster M *Excavations on Deptford Broadway 1989 and 1992: a reassessment of the artefactual evidence*).
- 3.2 In addition the (listed) standing buildings on the frontage of the development site occupy narrow plots which suggest a continuity with original medieval land division (*18 – 21 Deptford Broadway, Deptford, London SE 8: a historical survey*, Marden & Knight draft report Nov 1997).

4 Borehole Survey

- 4.1 A borehole survey of the development area was conducted by RSA Geotechnics Ltd (*Ground Investigation Report No. 6879. February 1999*). This broadly established an average depth of made ground of approximately 2.7 m depth overlying river terrace deposits of silty sand and/or gravel. It was noted that the made ground contained fragments of brick throughout its depth.

5 Aims of the evaluation

- 5.1 The aims of the evaluation were to determine the presence/absence, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains under threat by the proposed development.

6 Methodology (Fig. 2)

- 6.1 Two trenches were proposed, sited to target the areas of proposed invasive development. Given the results of the borehole survey (see above) the second trench was accorded a contingency status (in agreement with K Whittaker), to be excavated only if the first trench produced significant archaeological remains.

- 6.2 The excavation was undertaken using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket, the overburden being removed down to the first significant archaeological horizon or natural gravel, whichever was encountered first. The exposed stratigraphy was manually cleaned and recorded, in accordance with standard OAU practice (Wilkinson 1992). For Health & Safety reasons, the depth of the excavation precluded close visual examination of the lower deposits *in situ*, but this was not considered to have compromised their interpretation.

7. Finds

- 7.1 The machined material was examined for finds during the excavation. Obviously modern finds were noted but not retained.

8 RESULTS

8.1 General

- 8.1.1 The trench was machined to the depth of the natural gravel as no archaeological horizon of significance was encountered. After consultation with K. Whittaker, it was agreed that a second trench was not required.

Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

- 8.1.2 The natural geology consisting of flinty gravel (8) was exposed at a level of 2.20 m below ground level (2.17 m OD). This was overlaid by a thin (0.10 m) layer of dark grey sandy silt (7), which in turn was sealed by a 0.60 m deep layer of light grey silty sand. This contained inclusions of large pebbles and

occasional small pieces of brick. The surface of layer 6 was uneven, the depressions being filled by a dark orange-grey silty sand (5), which contained quantities of brick and tile fragments. Layer 4, a mix of dark brownish grey silty sand and gravel up to 0.60 m deep, sealed both layers 5 and 6. Some fragments of brick and tile were also recovered from this layer. A make-up layer (3), consisting of coarse orange sand up to 0.30 m deep, overlay layer 4, and was itself overlain by layer 2, a levelling or make-up layer, up to 0.50 m deep, of coarse chalk rubble. The final deposit in the sequence was layer 1, a mix of concrete and brick demolition rubble.

9 Finds

9.1 No significant archaeological finds were recovered from the excavated deposits.

10 Environmental Data

10.1 The deposits revealed during the excavation were determined to have no significant potential for the preservation of environmental data.

11 CONCLUSION

11.1 The evidence clearly indicates that any deposits dating to before the post-medieval period have been totally truncated, and the area progressively levelled up with dumped layers of material. These layers (6,5 and 4), judging by their gravel and sand content, may well have derived from dredging, although all but the lowest deposits had been contaminated to varying degrees by building debris. Only a vestigial remnant of natural alluviation – layer 7 – remained immediately over the gravel terrace natural (8).

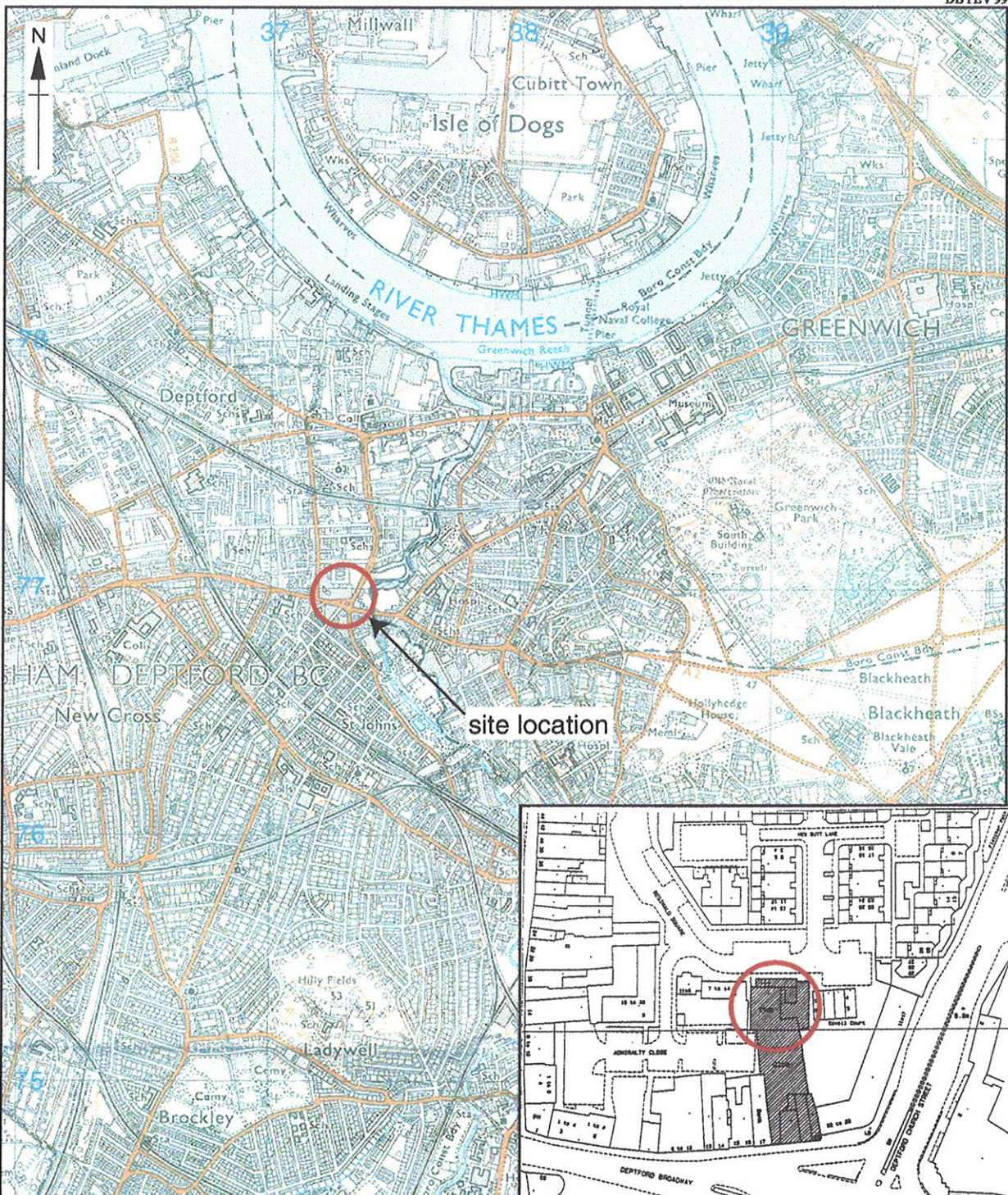
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Wilkinson D 1992 *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual* (Second Edition)

APPENDIX 1

Table of Archaeological Contexts

CONTEXT	TYPE	DEPTH (M)	FINDS	COMMENTS
1	Layer	<0.8	CBM	Demolition + modern levelling
2	Layer	<0.5	-	Chalk make-up
3	Layer	<0.3	-	Sandy make-up
4	Layer	<0.6	CBM	Gravel/sand dumping
5	Layer	<0.3	CBM	Silty sand
6	Layer	<0.6	CBM	Loose sandy gravel
7	Layer	0.1	-	Sandy silt alluvium?
8	Layer	>0.2	-	Flinty gravel natural



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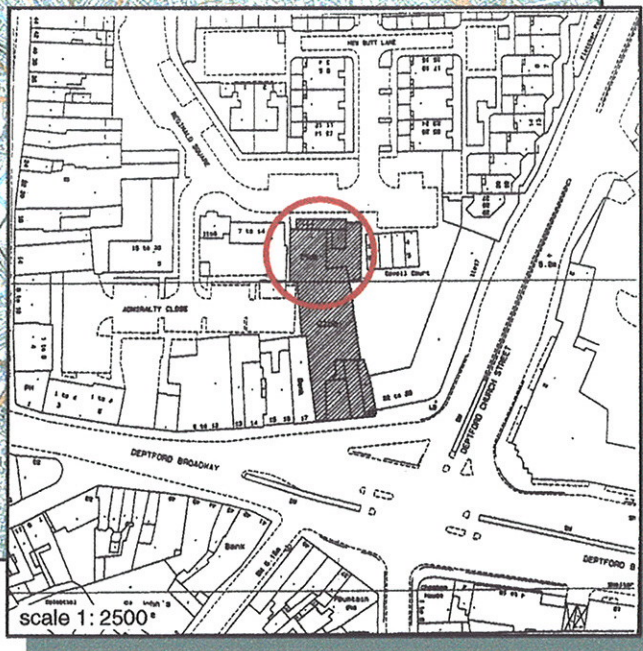


figure 1: site location

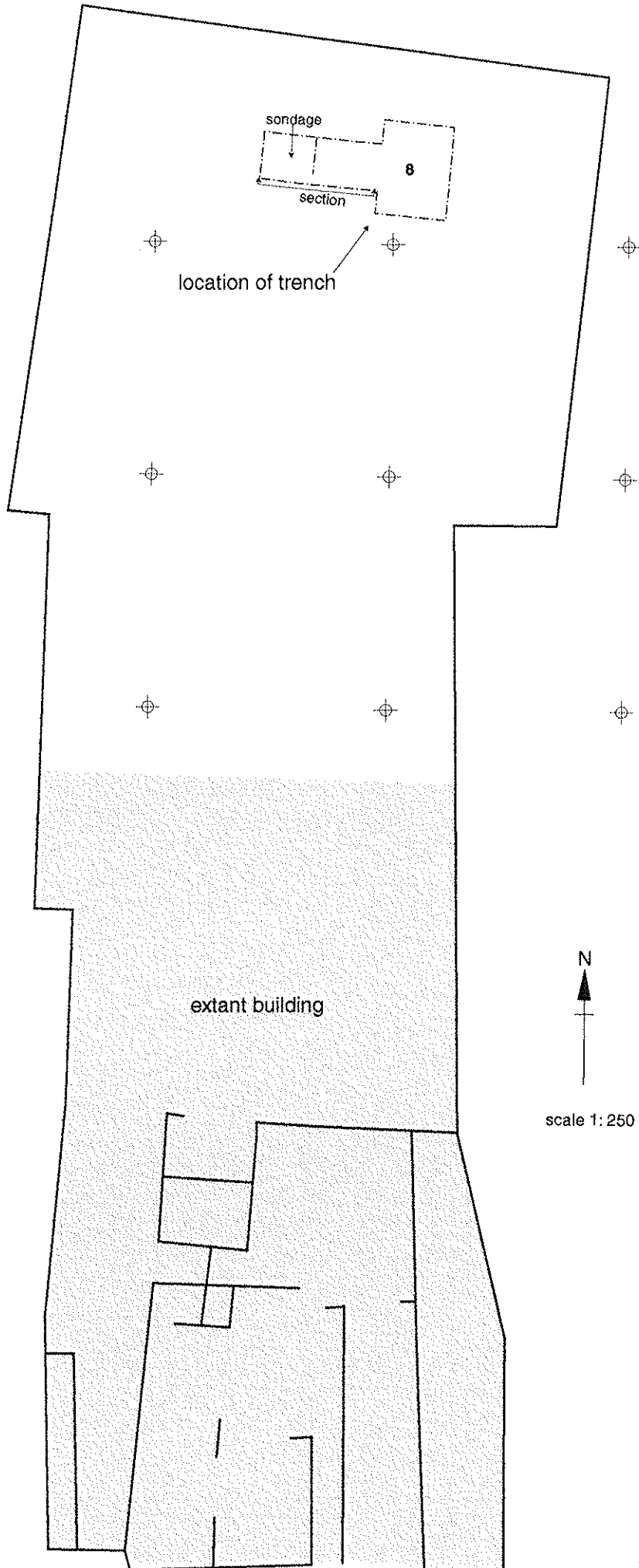


figure 2: trench location

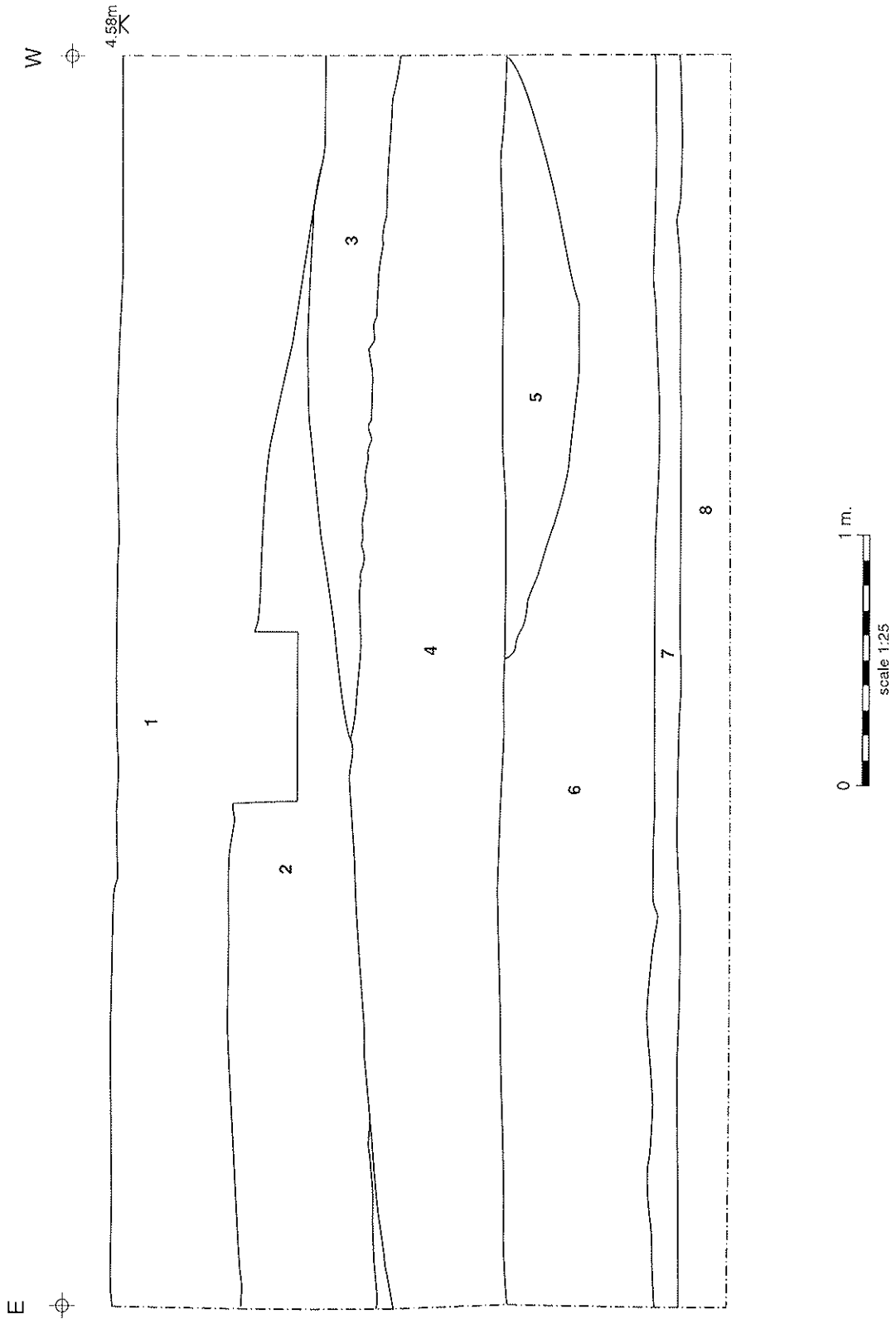


figure 3 : trench section



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