

Rokeby School Newham London



Archaeological Evaluation Report



July 2008

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SUMMARY

Between 15th and 19th July 2008, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at the new site for Rokeby School, Newham, London on behalf of Laing O'Rourke. The evaluation consisted of five trenches and revealed no features or layers of archaeological significance.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In July 2008, OA carried out a field evaluation at the new site for Rokeby School, Newham, London on behalf of Laing O'Rourke. The work was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation set by Faber Maunsell and approved by the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS). The development site is situated in Newham, close to the Barking Road (A124), and is 1.5 hectares in area. The site is centered on NGR TQ 399 818 (Figure 1).

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on gravel overlain by silt, clay and peat horizons (Holocene floodplain sequence) at a height of between 1.5 and 2m above OD. The site is developed and has been in use as a school (Cumberland School) and is currently in the process of demolition.

1.3 Archaeological background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk study (Pre-Construct Archaeology 2003a) which concluded that the potential for the survival of significant archaeological features is predominantly limited to the Prehistoric and Post-Medieval periods.

1.3.2 In addition to this, an archaeological evaluation (Pre-Construct Archaeology 2003b) was undertaken in the southeast corner of the site (Figure 2) which revealed possible Roman drainage ditches, a natural channel, and a cremation burial. Following on from this further excavation of the area (Wessex Archaeology 2004) revealed more of the natural channel along with a Post-Medieval ditch. No further cremation burials were found.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

2.1.1 The principal objective of the evaluation was to determine the quality, character, date and extent of any archaeological remains present on the site.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of 5 trenches (Figure 2). Trenches 1 and 5 each measured 15m in length and were 2m wide whilst trenches 2, 3 and 4 were all 20m long and 2m wide.
- 3.1.2 The area of the site where trench 5 was located contained trees and dense vegetation. This resulted in the need to reduce trench 5 from its original proposed length of 20m to its current length of 15m due to health and safety concerns.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 Prior to the commencement of archaeological excavation on site the trenches were located and laid out using a Leica GX 1250 GPS. Wooden stakes were placed to mark the end of each trench. The height, recorded as metres above ordnance datum, was also ascertained for the top of each wooden stake and recorded to facilitate the taking of levels in the trenches during their subsequent recording.
- 3.2.2 The trenches were excavated under close archaeological supervision using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. The overburden was removed to the first archaeological horizon or to undisturbed natural geology, whichever was encountered first. The trenches were then cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All archaeological features were planned and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All features were photographed using digital photography and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Description of Trenches

- 4.1.1 No features or deposits of archaeological significance were revealed during the evaluation. A brief description of the stratigraphic sequence contained in each trench is provided in the following section and illustrated in Figure 3.

Trench 1

- 4.1.2 Trench 1 measured 15 by 2m. It was excavated to an average depth of 1.25m where the natural brickearth was encountered. The brickearth (105) was a light brown sandy silt. It was overlain by a soft mid brown silty clay alluvium (104) with a thickness of 0.33m. This was overlain by a gravel make-up layer (103), 0.66m thick, and a 0.2m thick brick rubble layer (102). Above this, and forming the current ground surface in this area of the site, was a 0.06m thick layer of tarmac (101).

Trench 2

- 4.1.3 Trench 2 measured 20 by 2m. It was excavated to an average depth of 0.86m where natural brickearth (206) was encountered. A mid brown silty clay alluvium (205) overlay this, with an average thickness of 0.28m. Above this was a slightly diesel contaminated layer of bluey grey silty clay alluvium (204) which was 0.18m thick. Overlying (204) were three modern make-up layers consisting of a mixed gravel and asphalt (203), brick rubble (202) and a mixed gravel and hardcore material (201), with a combined average thickness of 0.4m.

Trench 3

- 4.1.4 Trench 3 measured 20 by 2m. It was excavated to an average depth of 1.16m where natural brickearth (302) was encountered. This was overlain by a mixed layer of rubble, dark brown silty clay and redeposited natural material with large concrete and metal inclusions (301).

Trench 4

- 4.1.5 Trench 4 measured 20 by 2m. It was excavated to an average depth of 1.11m where natural brickearth (405) was encountered. This was overlain by two layers of alluvial material. (404), a light brown silty clay, 0.25m thick and (403), a dark brown sandy silt, 0.27m thick. Above this was a mixed make-up layer of brown silty clay and brick fragments (402) which was 0.53m thick and sealed by a tarmac layer (401), 0.06m thick.

Trench 5

- 4.1.6 Trench 5 measured 15 by 2m. It was excavated to an average depth of 1.9m where natural gravel (505) was encountered. This was overlain by a mixed layer of brown gravel and modern stone and brick fragments (504), 0.2m thick. Above this was a layer of loose frogged bricks (503) which was 1.2m thick. This is likely to represent an episode of relatively recent demolition on the site. Overlying (503) was context (502), a 0.2m thick compact leveling layer consisting of gravel and crushed brick hardcore. This was sealed by a layer of dark grey brown sandy silt (501), 0.3m thick.

4.2 Finds

4.2.1 No finds were recovered during the course of the evaluation.

4.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

4.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the evaluation.

5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1.1 Despite the relatively high potential for both Prehistoric and Post-Medieval archaeological remains suggested by the desk based study (Pre-Construct Archaeology 2003a) and the presence of a cremation burial in the south-east corner of the site (Pre-Construct Archaeology 2003b), no significant features or layers were found during the course of the evaluation.

5.1.2 The lack of archaeological features surviving within the confines of the evaluation trenches could in part be due to later disturbance, as recent demolition and make-up layers were observed in all of the trenches, with modern disturbance/intrusion seen to a considerable depth in places. However, trenches 1, 2 and 4 contained alluvial layers which were relatively undisturbed and would have overlain or incorporated any archaeological features had they been present.

5.1.3 It therefore seems likely that the archaeological features seen in previous archaeological works in the area (Pre-Construct Archaeology 2003b and Wessex Archaeology 2004) were isolated and confined to the south-east corner of the site.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt 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>
1								
	101	Layer		0.06	Tarmac			
	102	Layer		0.2	Make-up			
	103	Layer		0.66	Make-up			
	104	Layer		0.33	Alluvium			
	105	Layer			Archaeological Natural			
2								
	201	Layer		0.08	Make-up			
	202	Layer		0.14	Make-up			
	203	Layer		0.18	Make-up			
	204	Layer		0.18	Diesel contamination			
	205	Layer		0.28	Alluvium			
	206	Layer			Archaeological Natural			
3								
	301	Layer		1.16	Mixed			
	302	Layer			Archaeological Natural			
4								
	401	Layer		0.06	Tarmac			
	402	Layer		0.53	Make-up			
	403	Layer		0.27	Alluvium			
	404	Layer		0.25	Alluvium			
	405	Layer			Archaeological Natural			
5								
	501	Layer		0.3	Topsoil			
	502	Layer		0.2	Make-up			
	503	Layer		1.2	Demolition			
	504	Layer		0.2	Make-up			
	505	Layer			Archaeological Natural			

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|--|
| Pre-Construct Archaeology | 2003a | <i>An Archaeological Desktop Assessment of Land at Cumberland School, Alexandra Street, London Borough of Newham.</i>
(Unpublished) |
| Pre-Construct Archaeology | 2003b | <i>An Archaeological Evaluation at Cumberland School, Alexandra Street, London Borough of Newham.</i>
(Unpublished) |
| Wessex Archaeology | 2004 | <i>Cumberland School Sports Hall, Barking Road, Canning Town, London Borough of Newham E16.</i>
(Unpublished) |

APPENDIX 3 GLSMR/RCHME NMR ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FORM

1) TYPE OF RECORDING

5 Trench Evaluation

2) LOCATION

Borough: Newham

Site address: 190 Barking Road, Newham. E16 4DD

Site Name: Rokeby School Newham Site Code: ROQ 08

Nat. grid Refs: TQ 399 818 centre of site.

3) ORGANISATION

Name of archaeological unit/company/society: Oxford Archaeology

Address: Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 OES

Site director/supervisor: Neil Lambert Project manager: Ken Welsh

Funded by: Laing O'Rourke

4) DURATION

Date fieldwork started 15/07/08 Date finished: 18/07/08

Fieldwork previously notified? YES

Fieldwork will continue? NO

5) PERIODS REPRESENTED

Post-Medieval

6) PERIOD SUMMARIES

The evaluation revealed no features or layers of archaeological significance

7) NATURAL

Type: Light brown sandy silt, brickearth or river gravel.

Height above Ordnance datum: 0.3m

8) LOCATION OF ARCHIVES

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

NOtes	0	PLans	5	PHotos	31	NGtives	31
SLides	0	Correspondence	0	MScripts (unpub reports, etc)	0		
BUlk finds	0	SMall finds	0	SOil samples	0		
OTHer Sections	5	Digital photos	38				

- 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?: NO

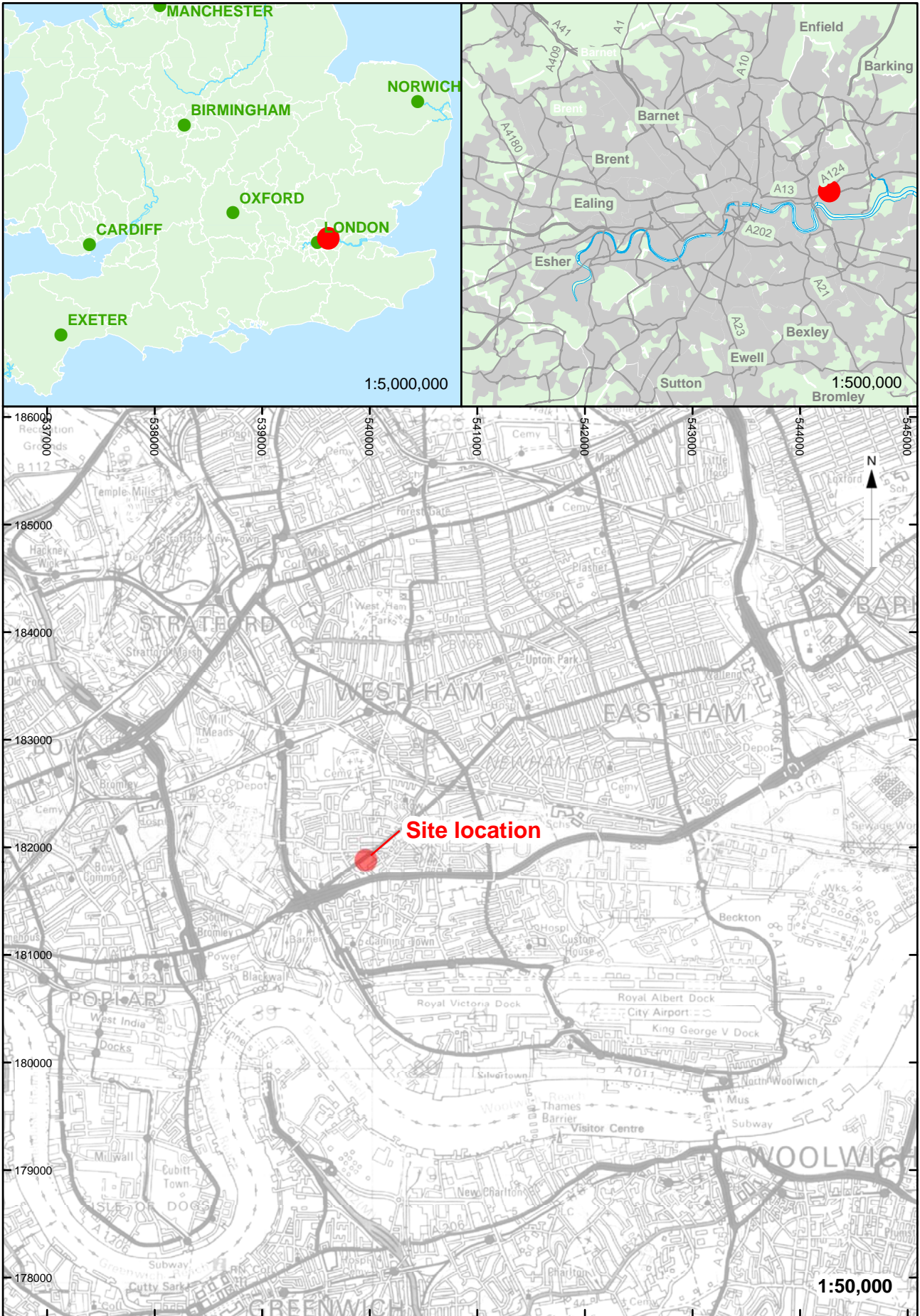
10) BIBLIOGRAPHY

See Appendix 2 Bibliography and references

SIGNED:

DATE:

NAME Ken Welsh



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Figure 1: Site location

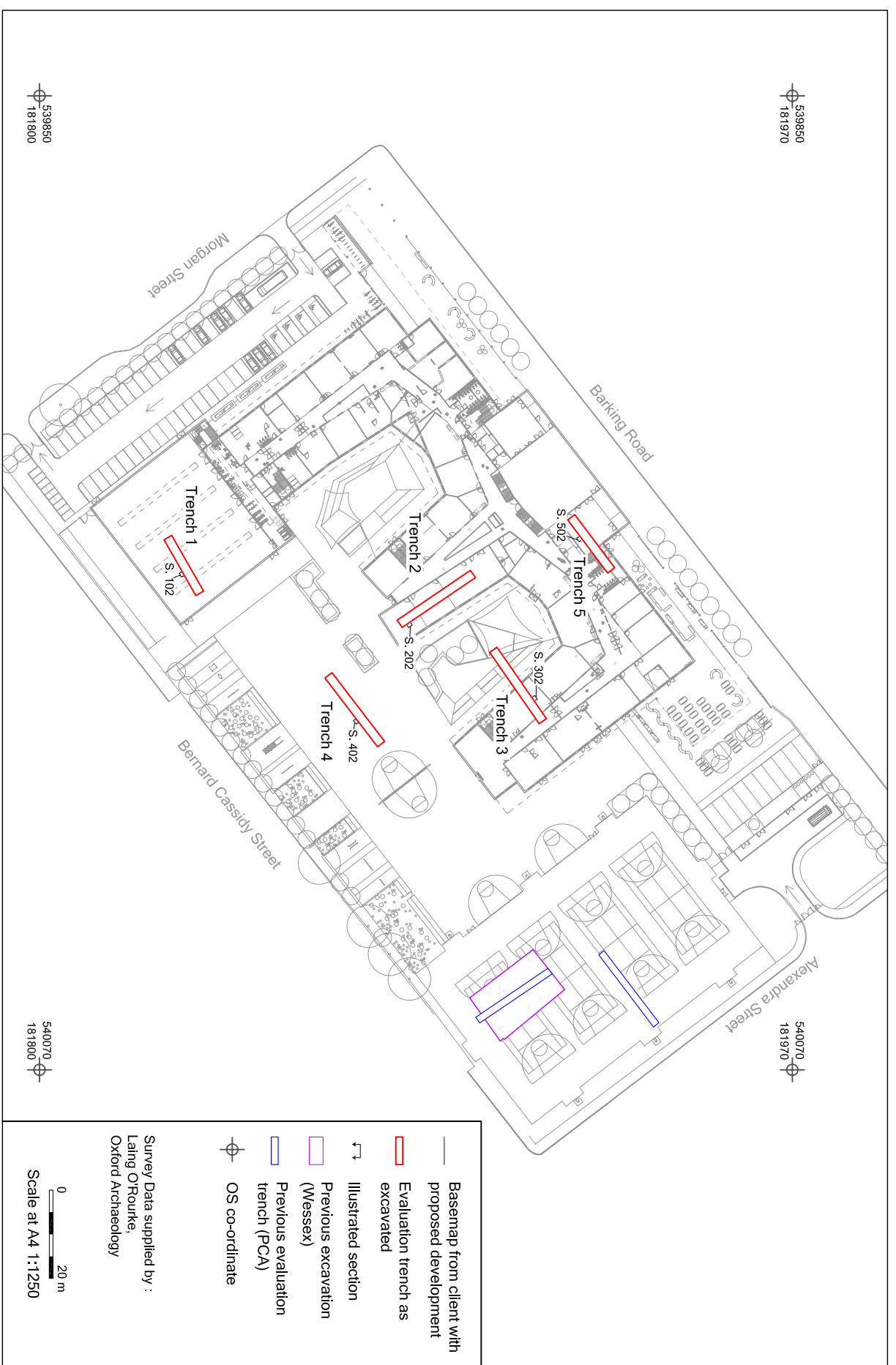


Figure 2: Trench location plan
Rokeby School, Newham

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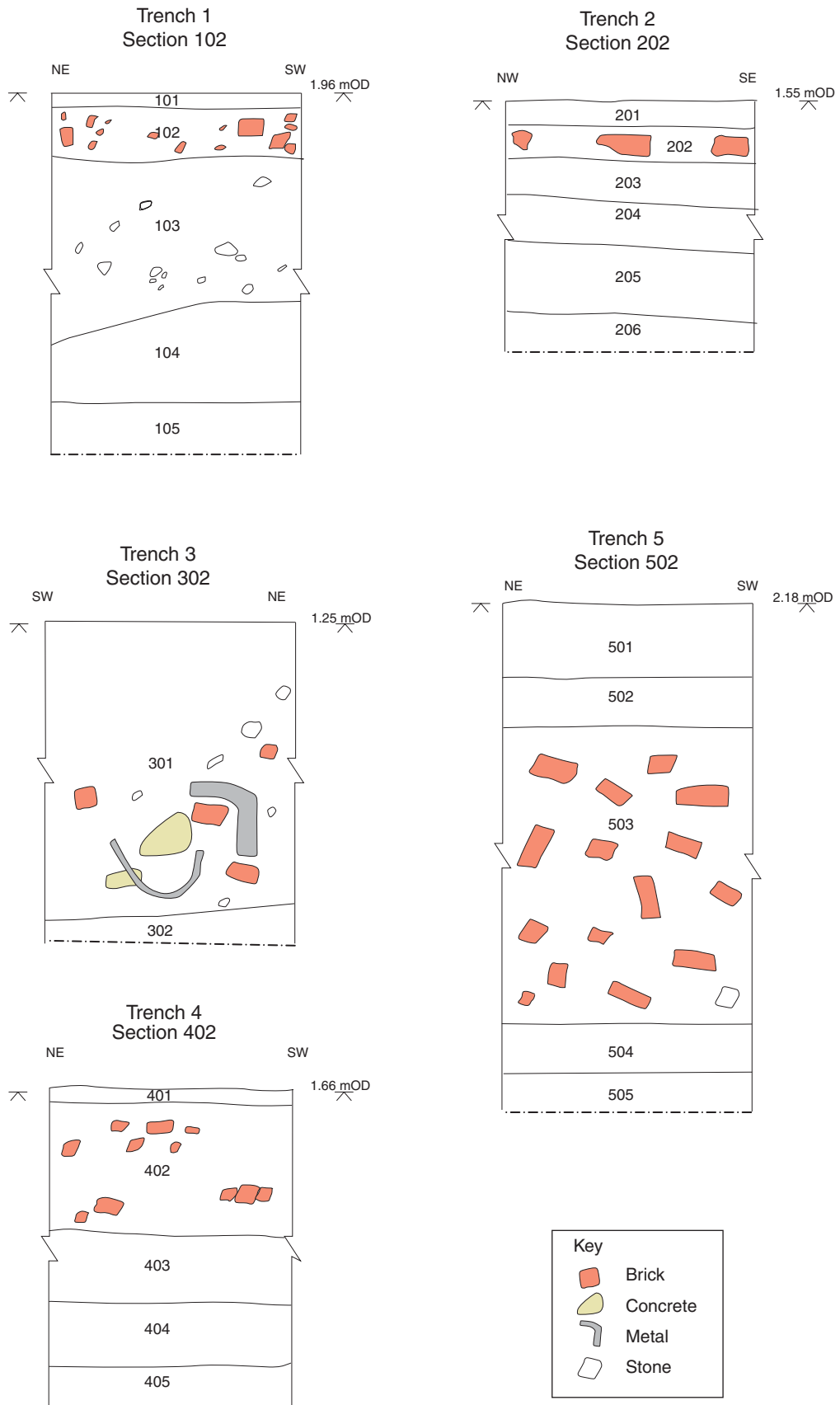


Figure 3: Sections



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