

Fig 24 Archaeological sites within the vicinity of the site

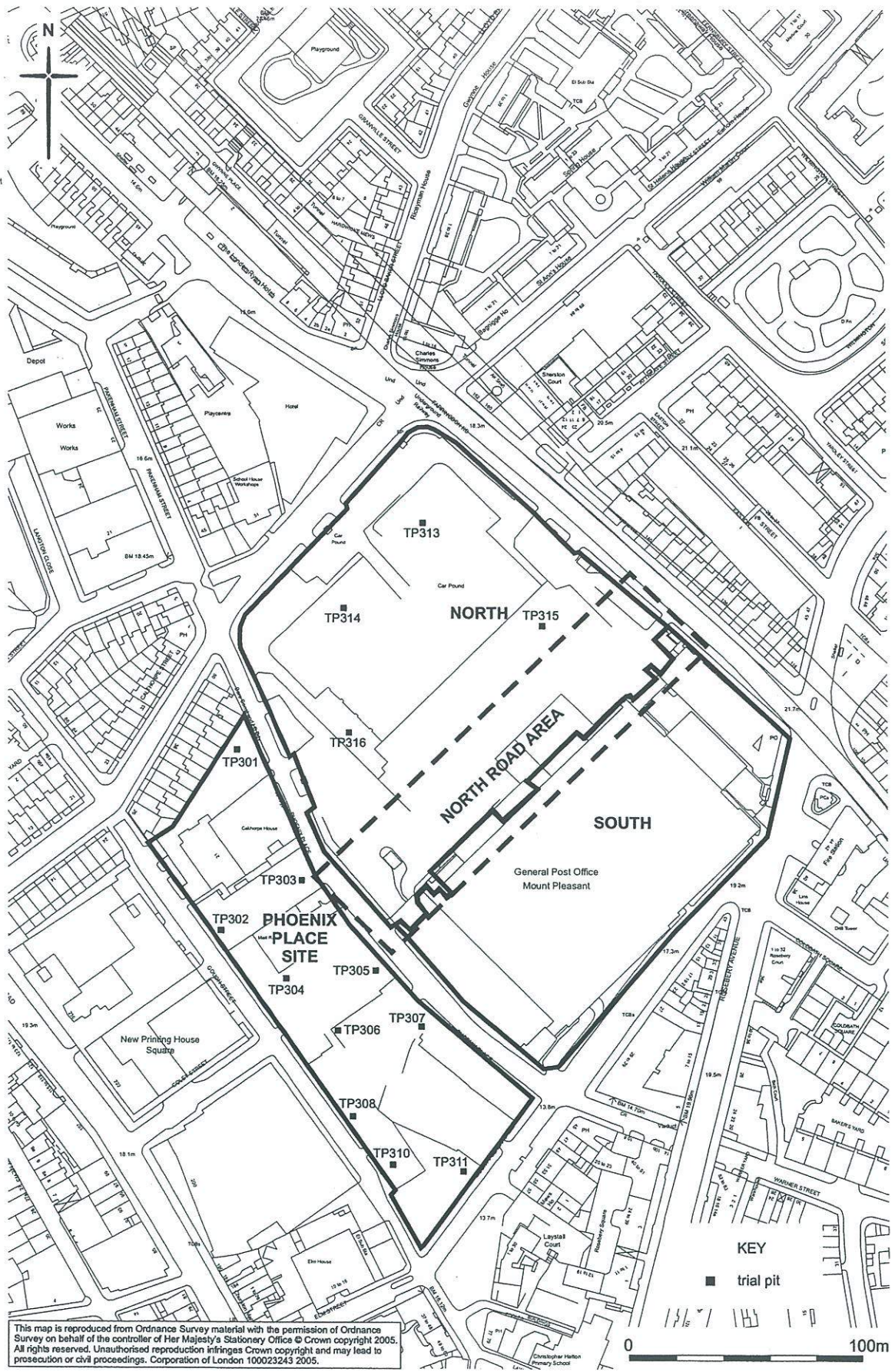
3.5 Recent archaeological watching brief at the Mount Pleasant Mail Centre

A total of 12 geotechnical trial pits were excavated during the watching brief (see Fig 25 for trial pit locations) at the Mount Pleasant Mail Centre, Farringdon Road, London EC1 (Site code FDR05)

Trial Pit 301 (Fig 26)

<i>Watching Brief Trial Pit TP301</i>	
Location	West/Northwest corner of the Phoenix Place
Dimensions	Approximately 0.90m by 3.0m
Modern ground level/top of slab	18.43m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	1.95m below present ground level (16.48m OD). Northwestern end of the trial pit is further truncated by modern concrete.
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	2.45m
Level of base of deposits observed	4.40m below present ground level (14.03m OD)
Natural observed	N/A

Archaeological deposits were encountered at approximately 1.95m below the present ground level beneath concrete slab and modern rubble overburden. The northwest end of the trial pit was further truncated to at least 2.2m below ground level by concrete, which was not fully exposed during the excavation. The observed archaeological deposits consisted of series of dumped rubbish deposits ([1], [2], and [3]). The latest [1] comprised of dark grey silty sand with frequent demolition rubble and building materials as well as flecks of coal and household rubbish. Pottery from this deposits has been dated to between 1780 and 1900. Below [1], at approximately 2.4m below present ground surface, a thick deposit [2] of dark grey clay with lenses of ashy coal and building material was recorded. This layer also contained pottery, which is 19th century in date. The earliest of the observed archaeological deposits (at approximately 3.9m below ground level) consisted of mid brown sandy clayey silt deposit [3] with frequent oyster shell, animal bones and other domestic refuse. Included amongst the domestic refuse was late 18th century pottery. The trial pit was excavated to the depth of 4.4m below present ground level. Natural deposits were not reached in TP301.



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Fig 25 Trial pit locations

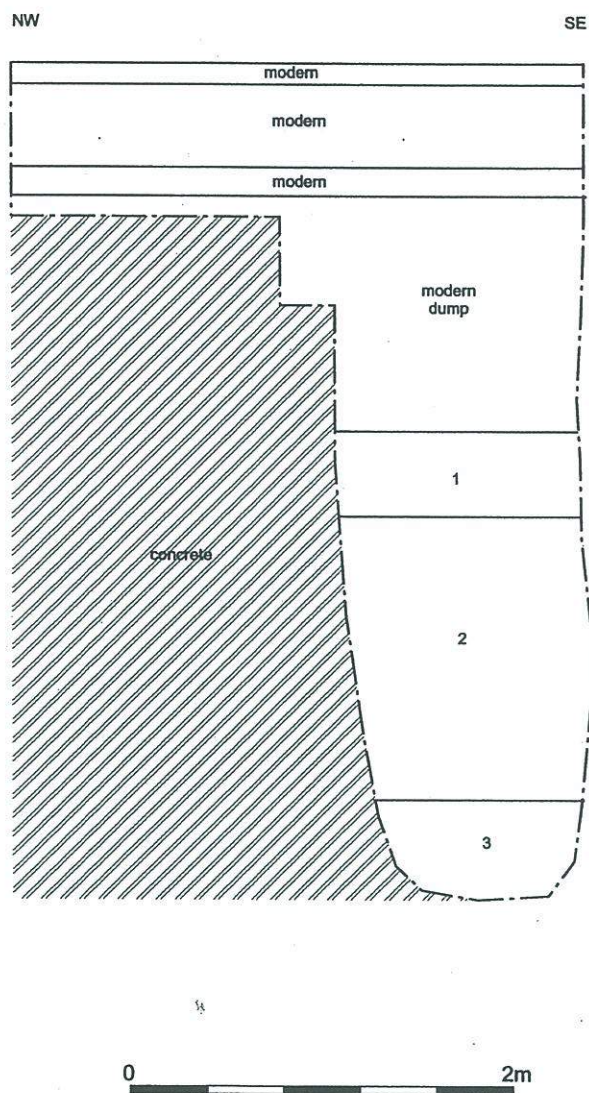


Fig 26 Northeast facing section, TP301

Trial Pit 302 (Fig 27)

<i>Watching Brief Trial Pit TP302</i>	
Location	Western area of the site
Dimensions	Approximately 1.10m by 3.70m
Modern ground level/top of slab	17.49m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	2.80m below present ground level (14.69m OD)
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.90m
Level of base of deposits observed	4.10m below present ground level (13.39m OD)
Natural observed	N/A

Archaeological deposits were encountered at approximately 2.8m below the present ground level and were truncated on top by a trench for clay drainage pipes running across the length of the trial pit. The earliest deposits encountered consisted of waterlogged grey gravels in sandy silt matrix [5] at approximately 3.6m below ground level. It is possible that the gravel deposit represents natural river gravels. However, due to wet conditions the identification was not definite. Ground water filled the trial pit at 3.6m and the lowest depth reached was 4.1m below present ground level. The gravel deposit was overlain by mid greyish brown soft silty sand [4] and gravel with flecks of ceramic building material and domestic refuse. Pottery found in layer [4] dates from between 1630 and 1700.

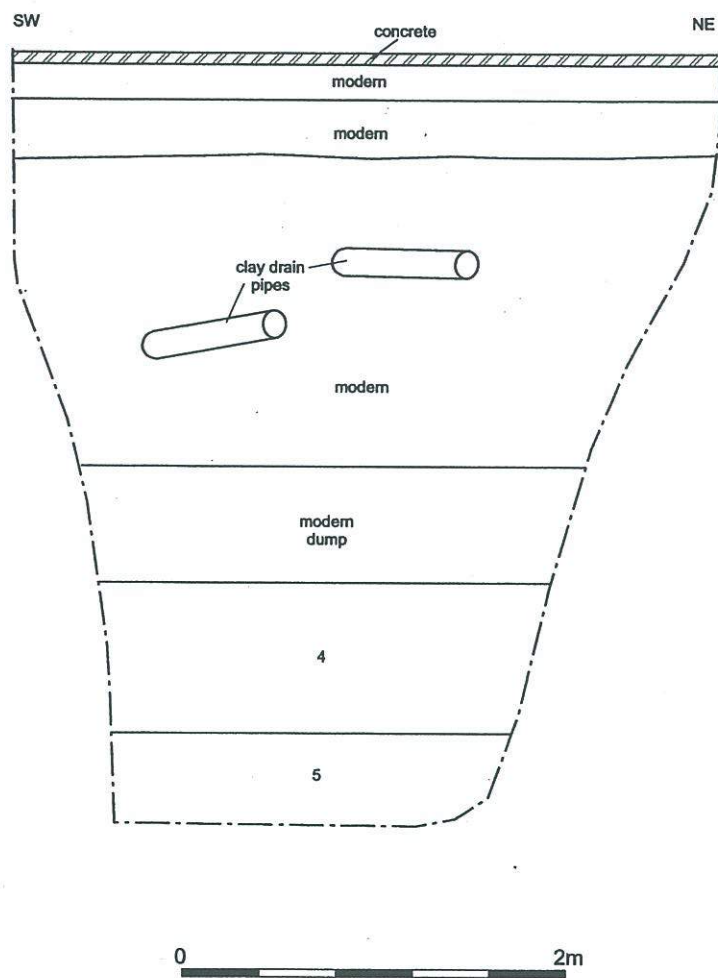


Fig 27 Southeast facing section, TP302

Trial Pit 303 (Fig 28)

<i>Watching Brief Trial Pit TP303</i>	
Location	Western area of the site
Dimensions	Approximately 1.20m by 2.80m
Modern ground level/top of slab	16.80m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	3.60m below present ground level (13.2m OD)
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	0.50m
Level of base of deposits observed	4.10m below present ground level (12.7m OD)
Natural observed	N/A

At the northern end of the trial pit a modern brick wall, orientated northeast – southwest, was encountered below the concrete slab and rubble make-up at 0.25m below the ground level. The wall was constructed with both yellow and red bricks with greyish beige mortar. The base of wall was observed to be at 1.5m below ground level except at the northeast corner where it seemed to step in deeper and was not fully exposed. Deposits to the south of the wall consisted of series of brick rubble and mortar deposits. These deposits were interpreted as deliberate rubble dumps backfilling a possible basement area. Below the rubble backfill, at approximately 3.6m below ground level, a deposit of dark greyish brown clayey silt [33] with abundant mortar and rubble inclusions was observed. Pottery found in layer [33] was manufactured at some time between 1775 and 1830. The lowest depth reached was 4.1m below ground level. Natural deposits were not observed this trial pit.

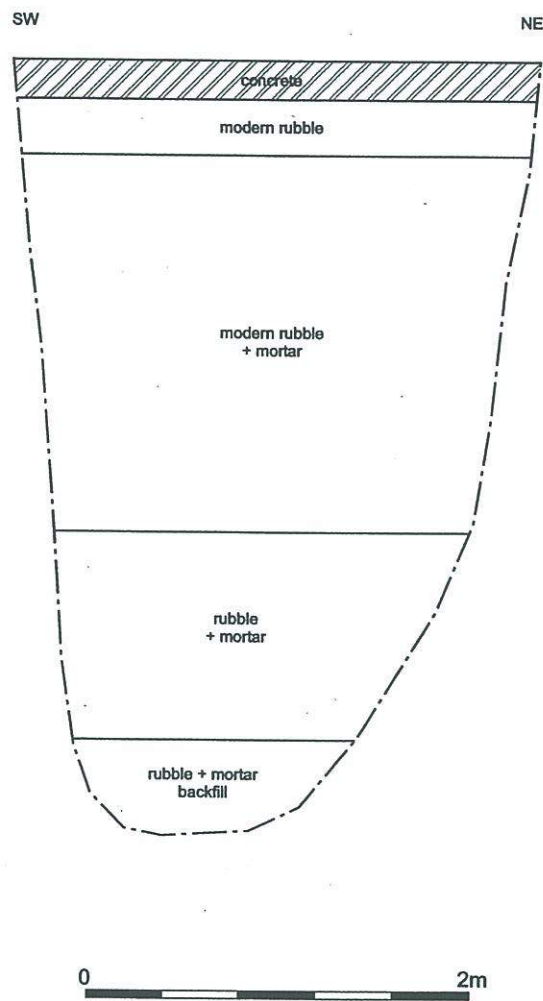


Fig 28 Southeast facing section, TP303

Trial Pit 304 (Fig 29)

<i>Watching Brief Trial Pit TP304</i>	
Location	Western area of the site
Dimensions	Approximately 1.0m by 3.0m
Modern ground level/top of slab	16.69m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	1.10m below present ground level (15.59m OD)
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.10m
Level of base of deposits observed	4.00m below present ground level (12.69m OD)
Natural observed	2.30m below present ground level (14.39m OD)

A dump layer [6] containing building materials and general household rubbish was observed below modern rubble make-up and concrete slab at approximately 1.1m below ground level. Pottery found within this layer dates from the late 18th or 19th century. Below this dump, at approximately 2.3m below ground level, a firm plastic orangey brown silty clay deposit [7] was observed and preliminarily interpreted as a layer of natural clayey brickearth. At approximately 3.4m below ground level mid orange sandy gravel [8], with occasional clayey brickearth inclusions, was encountered and identified as natural terrace gravels. The base of the trial pit was 4m below ground level.

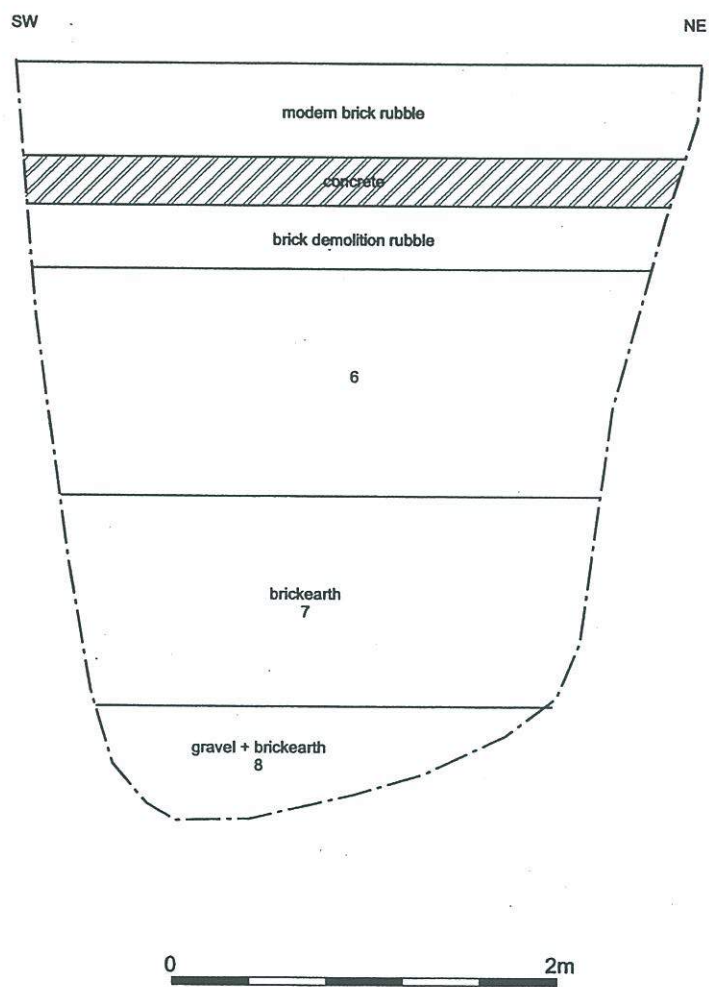


Fig 29 Southeast facing section, TP304

Trial Pit 305 (Fig 30)

<i>Watching Brief Trial Pit TP305</i>	
Location	Western area of the site
Dimensions	Approximately
Modern ground level/top of slab	17.62m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	N/A
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	4.00m below present ground level (13.62m OD)
Natural observed	N/A

A light to mid grey rubble and mortar dump/ backfill deposit [9] was encountered below modern concrete slab and make-up at approximately 1.1m below present ground level. The deposit became slightly more clayey towards the base. This deposit extended beyond the limit of excavation, which was 4m below ground level. Clay tobacco pipes found within this dump deposit have been dated to between 1710 and 1740 and pottery fragments have been dated to between 1780 and 1840.

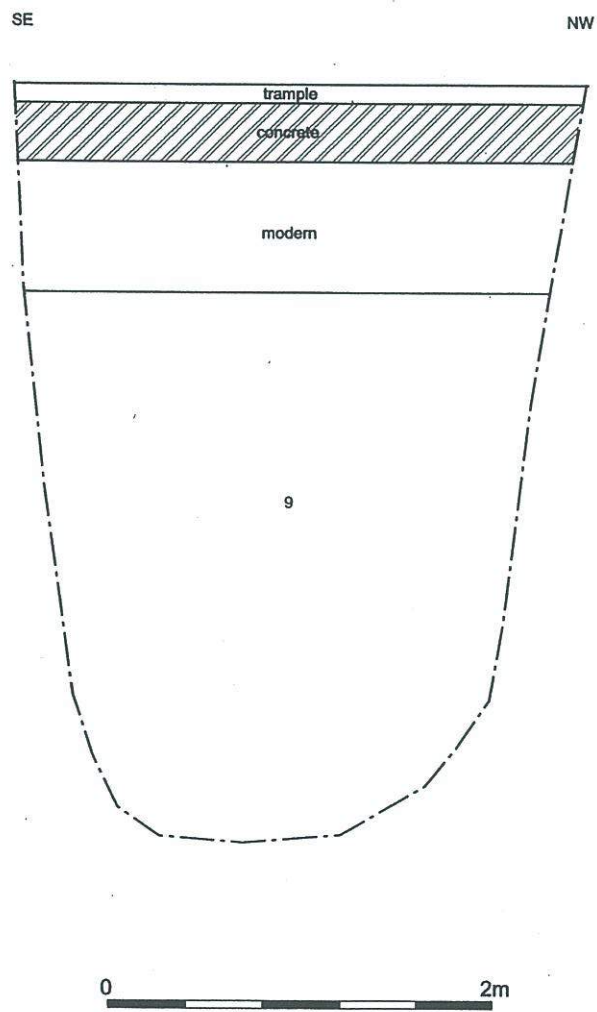


Fig 30 Northeast facing section, TP305

Trial Pit 306 (Fig 31)

<i>Watching Brief Trial Pit TP306</i>	
Location	South/Southwest area of the site
Dimensions	Approximately 0.90m by 3.0m
Modern ground level/top of slab	14.81m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	0.60m below present ground level (14.21m OD)
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	3.85m
Level of base of deposits observed	4.45m below present ground level (10.36m OD)
Natural observed	N/A

A series of refuse dumps ([10], [11], [12], [13] and [34]) were encountered below modern concrete slab and rubble make-up at approximately 0.6m below ground level. The latest dump [10] consisted of mid grey sandy silt and clay deposits with domestic refuse and bands of organic and ashy deposits as well as lenses of demolition material. Below [10], at approximately 1.7m below present ground level, a similar dumped deposit [11] was recorded and it overlay a 0.2m thick ashy deposit [12]. It is possible that the ashy deposit was dumped deliberately in order to disguise the smell. Layer [11] contained pottery fragments that have been date from between 1780 and 1830. Below [12], at approximately 3.00m below ground level, a rubbish dump layer, rich in organic materials and general refuse was encountered. Fragments of clay pipe found within layer [13] have been dated to 1680 to 1710 and pottery found within this layer was manufactured between 1807 and 1830. The earliest deposit recorded in TP306 consisted of dark greyish brown sandy silt [34] with gravel and domestic waste at approximately 4.00m below ground level. Pottery from layer [34] has been dated to between 1580 and 1750. The base of the trial pit was 4.45m below ground level.

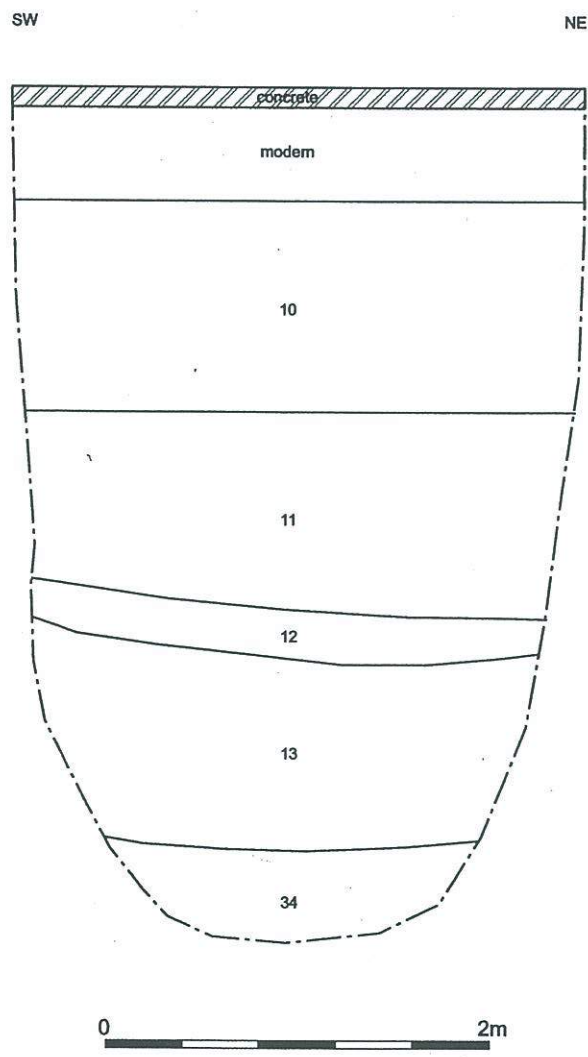


Fig 31 Southeast facing section, TP306

Trial Pit 307 (Fig 32)

<i>Watching Brief Trial Pit TP307</i>	
Location	Southern area of the site
Dimensions	Approximately 0.90m by 4.0m
Modern ground level/top of slab	12.21m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	1.40m below present ground level (10.81m OD). West side truncated further by concrete
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.20m
Level of base of deposits observed	3.70m below present ground level (8.5m OD)
Natural observed	2.60m below present ground level (10.61m OD)

A modern brick wall with concrete footing, running roughly north-south, was encountered beneath the tarmac surface and concrete slab in TP307. The top of this wall lay at 0.4m below ground surface and the base of the 0.2m thick concrete footing lay at 1.4m below ground level. Areas both sides of the wall had been backfilled with brick rubble. The western half of the trial pit was further truncated by modern concrete. The top of the concrete was at 1.4m below ground level and its full extent and depth is not known however the concrete block was still observed at 2.6m below ground level.

Archaeological deposits observed in TP307, at approximately 1.4m below ground level, consisted of waterlogged and organic dark, silty rubbish dumps with abundant domestic waste and cess ([14] and [15]). Pottery found within layer [15] has been dated from the mid 18th century. These deposits overlay what appeared to be natural grey clay deposits [15] and [16]. They were observed at 2.60m and 3.40m below ground level respectively. Natural terrace gravels were exposed below the clay deposits at 3.7m below ground level. The base of the trial pit was 3.7m below ground level but ground water filled the trial pit at 2.3m.

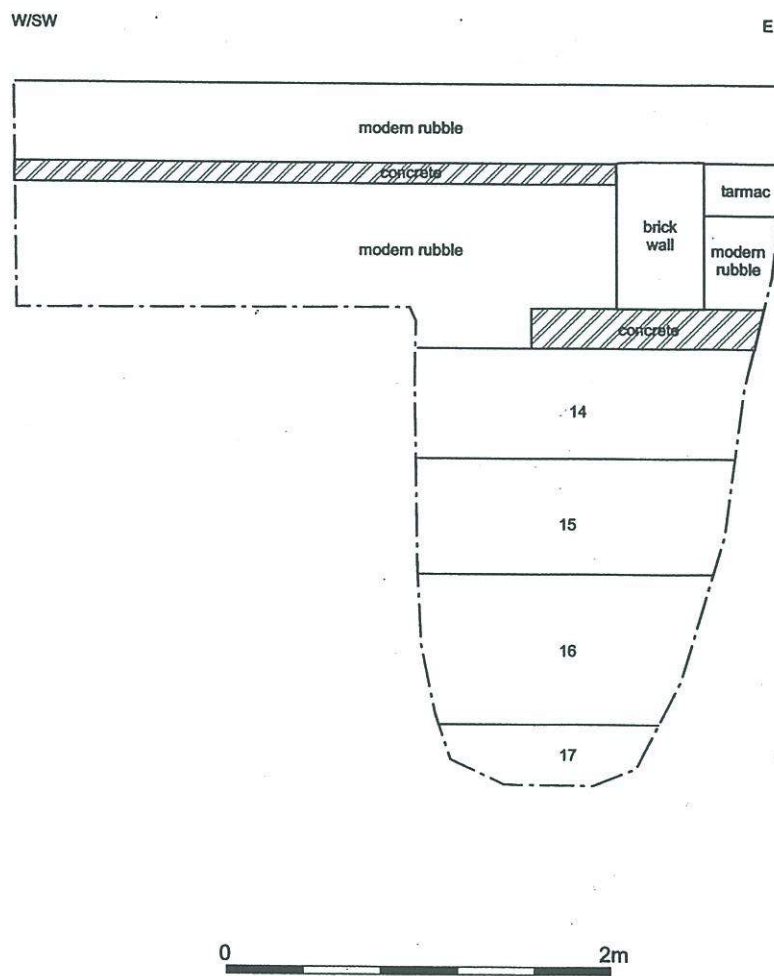


Fig 32 South facing section, TP307

Trial Pit 308 (Fig 33)

<i>Watching Brief Trial Pit TP308</i>	
Location	South/Southwest area of the site
Dimensions	Approximately 0.90m by 3.0m
Modern ground level/top of slab	14.91m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	0.80m below present ground level (13.11m OD) northwestern end truncated further by modern concrete
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	2.60m
Level of base of deposits observed	3.40m below present ground level (11.51m OD)
Natural observed	N/A

The northwest end of the trial pit was heavily truncated by modern concrete. The top of the concrete was recorded below modern rubble and concrete slab at 0.8m below ground level. Although the full extent and depth of the concrete was not exposed, it was still visible at 2m below ground level. Archaeological deposits were encountered approximately 0.8m below ground level in the southwestern half of the trial pit. These consist of series of rubbish dumps ([19], [20] and [21]). The earliest observed dump [21], at 2m below ground level, consisted of very smelly dark brown sandy silt with abundant organic content and bands of coal ash as well as general refuse material. This was capped by a 0.3m thick deposit of mottled orangey clayey silt [20], presumably deposited to cover the rotting smell. Layers [20] and [21] contained fragments of clay pipe and pottery. The clay tobacco pipes from layer [21] have been dated to 1700 to 1740 and the pottery from layer [20] has been dated to between 1670 and 1700. The latest of the rubbish deposits, at 0.8m below ground level, was a dump of dark brown sandy silt [19] with bands of ashy material and domestic waste. The lowest depth reached in TP308 was 3.4m below ground level, which was the depth at which groundwater was encountered.