

**Copland Community School,
High Road, Wembley,
London Borough of Brent**

Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

Prepared on behalf of

**ENVIRON UK
5 Stratford Place
London
W1C 1AU**

By

Wessex Archaeology (London)
Unit 701
The Chandlery
50 Westminster Bridge Road
London
SE1 7QY

Report reference: 53635.01

July 2003

**Copland Community School,
High Road, Wembley,
London Borough of Brent**

Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
	1.1 Project Background	1
	1.2 Site location, topography, geology and hydrology	1
2	PLANNING AND LEGESLATIVE BACKGROUND	2
	2.1 National planning guidance.....	2
	2.2 Local planning guidance.....	2
	2.3 Statutory and local designations.....	2
3	METHODS.....	4
	3.1 Aims and Objectives	4
	3.2 Research.....	4
	3.3 Site Visit	4
4	RESULTS.....	5
	4.1 Introduction.....	5
	4.2 Anglo-Saxon & Medieval (AD 410 – 1499).....	5
	4.3 Post-Medieval (AD 1499 - 1799)	5
5	ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL	7
	5.1 Introduction.....	7
6	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS.....	8
	6.1 Introduction.....	8
	6.2 Mitigation and recommendations.....	8
7	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	9

APPENDIX 1 – Gazetteer of sites mentioned in the text

APPENDIX 2: LandMark/Ordnance Survey Maps of the Site and its Vicinity

Figure 1: *Site location, indicating Study Area and data from the London Sites & Monuments Record.*

Figure 2: *Proposed Development Plan (after Environ 2002)*

Figure 3: *John Rocque's map of 1745*

**Copland Community School,
High Road, Wembley,
London Borough of Brent**

Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

Summary

Wessex Archaeology (London) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological Desk-based Assessment of land presently occupied by and associated with the Copland Community School and Technology Centre, High Road, Wembley, London Borough of Brent.

The School's governing body is developing planning proposals for construction of a new school complex on playing fields south of the existing buildings and for drainage improvements and refurbishment of the remaining playing-fields.

It is additionally intended that the existing school site and street-frontage be re-developed for accommodation and leisure use.

This Assessment has gathered and synthesised archaeological and historical information from a range of readily available, publicly accessible sources, and is intended to form a baseline report on the known and potential archaeological resource within the Copland School Site, and a surrounding area of c.500 metres.

The Assessment has indicated that there is potential within the Site for Late Saxon or Medieval remains associated with High Road, or the settlement of *Wemba Lea*. Additionally, there may be evidence associated with a Post-Medieval House (Wembley House) and Farm (Dairy Farm). The potential of the Site to contain remains of Prehistoric, Roman or Earlier Anglo-Saxon date cannot presently be quantified.

Wessex Archaeology though noting that the site is not designated as an APA or SAI by Brent Borough Council would consequently recommend that the potential archaeological impact of the proposed development should be further assessed and/or mitigated for. This would be secured by way of appropriately worded conditions attached to planning consent.

The resultant works would be best undertaken initially by archaeological observation of geotechnical investigation to assess the extents and depths of truncation caused by the existing school buildings, the creation of the present upper playing field within the proposed footprint of the new school buildings and the creation of the lower playing field where proposed drainage works would occur. Such a programme should aim to determine the presence, location, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains, and inform any requirement for further work.

Acknowledgements

This Assessment was commissioned by Environ UK Limited, and Wessex Archaeology is particularly grateful to *John Towner* in respect of this.

Wessex Archaeology would like to acknowledge the assistance and co-operation of Barry Taylor (GLSMR).

The Author would like to express appreciation for the assistance of the staff of the Brent Archive.

Research and compilation of this Assessment was undertaken by Mike Trevarthen (*Project Officer*), and Illustrations were prepared by Rob Goller. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology (London) by Lawrence Pontin (*Senior Project Manager*).

Copland Community School, High Road, Wembley, London Borough of Brent

Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (London) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological Desk-based Assessment of some 9.66 ha of land occupied by and associated with the Copland Community School and Technology Centre (centred on NGR 51875 18515, hereafter ‘the Site’. **Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 Existing school buildings date from the early 1950’s and cost-estimates for refurbishment and modification indicate that they are beyond economically viable repair. The School’s Governing body is consequently developing a planning application for demolition of existing structures and construction of a new school complex on playing fields south of the existing buildings (**Figure 2**).
- 1.1.3 The remaining playing fields, which suffer from seasonally poor drainage, will be drained and refurbished.
- 1.1.4 It is additionally proposed to re-develop the existing school site and street-frontage as private apartments, retail units and a health club, along with two blocks of affordable housing and a day nursery (Environ 2002, 13-15, 24).

1.2 Site location, topography, geology and hydrology

- 1.2.1 The Site is located just to the east of Wembley town centre, and comprises a north-south aligned strip of land immediately south-west of the junction of Cecil Avenue and Wembley High Road. The majority of the Site is bounded to the east and west by domestic housing, and its southern limit respects the present course of Wembley Brook.
- 1.2.2 The majority of the Site, comprising the present playing field area is relatively level, with its southern end at 33.37 metres above Ordnance Datum (aOD). Land in the northern part of the Site rises to 49.69 metres aOD at the High Road.
- 1.2.3 The Site lies on Palaeocene and Eocene London Clay. Small localised outliers of Anglian–Devensian Lynch Hill Gravels and older Anglian Dollis Hill Gravels occur to the south-east, and Flandrian alluvium is mapped in the old channel of Wembley Brook. This watercourse has probably been diverted and the old course lies partially buried beneath made-ground associated with recent railway construction (British Geological Survey 1994).
- 1.2.4 The playing field area is subject to poor drainage, and is wet for substantial parts of the year. Wembley Brook drains north-west – south-east past the Site’s southern edge, feeding into the River Brent to the south-east.

2 PLANNING AND LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

2.1 National planning guidance

- 2.1.1 The Department of the Environment published its *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16) in 1990. This sets out the policy of the Secretary of State on archaeological remains on land, and provides many recommendations that have subsequently been integrated into Local and Unitary Development Plans. It acknowledges the potentially fragile and finite or irreplaceable nature of such remains (*para. 6*), and sets out the desirability of preservation of archaeological remains and their settings as a material consideration within the planning process (*para. 18*).

In addition, *Para. 19* states:

“ in their own interests... prospective developers should in all cases include as part of their research into the development potential of a site... an initial assessment of whether the site is known or likely to contain archaeological remains.”

Para. 25 adds:

“Where planning authorities decide that the physical preservation in-situ of archaeological remains is not justified in the circumstances of the case and that development resulting in the destruction of the remains should proceed, it would be entirely reasonable for the planning authority to satisfy itself, before granting planning permission, that the developer has made appropriate and satisfactory provision for the excavation and recording of the remains. Such excavation and recording should be carried out before the development commences, working to a project brief prepared by the planning authority and taking advice from archaeological consultants.”

2.2 Local planning guidance

- 2.2.1 The *Brent Replacement Unitary Development Plan, Revised Deposit 2001* also contains policies and explanatory text relating to management of archaeology and the wider historic environment.
- 2.2.2 Explanatory paragraph 3.10.25 states

“The council considers that the archaeology of the Borough is a community asset as an educational, recreational and tourist resource: its preservation is a legitimate objective, against which the needs of development must be balanced and assessed. The destruction of such remains should be avoided wherever possible and should never take place without prior archaeological assessment, (which may include excavation) and record.”

2.3 Statutory and local designations

- 2.3.1 The Site does not contain areas protected by Statute, and is will not have a significant bearing upon any areas designated as or containing:
- Scheduled Monuments
 - Listed Buildings
 - Conservation Areas

- 2.3.2 The Site does not contain or comprise any Archaeological Priority Area (APA) or Site of Archaeological Importance (SAI), as defined by the *Brent Replacement Unitary Development Plan, Revised Deposit 2001*.

3 METHODS

3.1 Aims and Objectives

- 3.1.1 The aim of this Desk-Based Assessment was to investigate, as far as is reasonable and practicable, the nature and extent of any known or potential archaeological resource within the Site boundary. In order to assess the Site's potential in a wider context, a Study Area has been defined, comprising an area with a radius of 500 metres from Site centre (Figure 1).
- 3.1.2 A number of publicly accessible sources of primary and synthetic information were consulted during its preparation. These are detailed below.

3.2 Research

Greater London Sites and Monuments Record (GLSMR)

- 3.2.1 The Greater London Sites and Monuments Record is compiled and maintained by English Heritage at Saville Row, London, and is a register of all known archaeological and historic sites and findspots within the Greater London Boroughs.
- 3.2.2 The GLSMR was consulted for all information it holds regarding the Site and Study Area. Archaeologically relevant entries are plotted in Figure 1 and tabulated as Appendix 1.
- 3.2.3 It should be noted that the GLSMR reports a backlog in accessioning information (B.Taylor, pers. Comm) and that not all archaeologically relevant data may yet be available. For the purposes of this Assessment, no attempt has been made to address any unaccessioned material.
- 3.2.4 GLSMR references have been cited in this report only where they add significantly to the understanding of the areas's development or the Site's direct archaeological potential. Full GLSMR listings form part of the project archive. A gazetteer of sites mentioned in the text is presented as **Appendix 1**.

Cartographic sources

- 3.2.5 A map regression exercise conducted in order to establish historic land-use and development of the Site.
- 3.2.6 The Ordnance Survey 25", 6" and 1:10 000 map sequence for the Waterloo area was commissioned as a specialist report from Landmark, and the results are presented as **Appendix 2**.
- 3.2.7 Non-Ordnance Survey maps were consulted at the Brent Archive.

Published sources

- 3.2.8 Published synthetic material was consulted at the Brent Archive and at Wessex Archaeology's own library.

3.3 Site Visit

- 3.3.1 A Site walkover was carried out on 7th July 2003. No access to the school or its grounds was possible, and no photographic record could be made. However, the Site was viewed from publicly accessible areas, and observations made regarding its general aspect, character, condition and setting.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 No archaeological sites or findspots have been noted which can be demonstrated to predate the Medieval period, although an undated alluvial deposit is noted by the GLSMR (**WA1**)

4.2 Anglo-Saxon & Medieval (AD 410 – 1499)

- 4.2.1 Wembley Green (**WA2**) first recorded as '*Wemba Lea*' in AD 825 when, at the Council of Cloveshore, the Archbishop of Canterbury acquired the Manor of Harrow from King *Cenulf*'s daughter as recompense for injustices inflicted on him by *Cenulf*. The place-name probably means 'Wemba's Clearing', and obliquely references the thickly wooded nature of the area at the time.
- 4.2.2 Wembley developed slowly from a small Late Saxon settlement or landholding into a small township by AD 1212, and has variously been known as *Wambely* (1259) and *Wembely* (1507), first becoming the modern *Wembley* in 1535 (Elsley 1953, 39; Kraithman 1971; Victoria County History 1971, 190-91; GLSMR).
- 4.2.3 Wembley High Road (**WA3**, formerly Harrow Road) is also believed to have formed a late Saxon or Medieval routeway, forming an important link between London and the Kentish ports, and the midlands and north (Elsley 1953,3).
- 4.2.4 Within the Study Area, the presumed site of the Chapel of St, Michael, Tonkynton (**WA4**) has remained unconfirmed, although scoops and shallow features of Medieval date were recorded in trial excavations.
- 4.2.5 Medieval origins are also suggested by the GLSMR for Wembley House (**WA5** see below).

4.3 Post-Medieval (AD 1499-1799)

- 4.3.1 Wembley House is mentioned as early as 1510, (GLSMR, Victoria County History 1971, 190-91) and it is possible that Dairy Farm (sometimes 'Wembley Manor') may be of similar antiquity.
- 4.3.2 Post-medieval ground-raising deposits (**WA6**) were also noted at Wembley Hill Road, sealing undated alluvium.
- 4.3.3 The approximate site of a former windmill is noted on a map of 1673 (**WA7**).
- 4.3.4 The maps of John Rocque present the earliest accessible detailed representation of the Site and its surroundings. Rocque's map of 1745 (**Figure 3**) clearly indicates Wembley Green, graphically illustrating Wembley Hill and Harrow Road to the south.
- 4.3.5 Within the northern part of the Site, buildings are shown fronting onto the southern side of Harrow Road, and amongst these must lie Wembley House and Dairy Farm. A footpath is illustrated south of these buildings, leading eventually to Aperton, and this routeway remains a landscape feature to the present day. A small pond is indicated to the south-west. Rocque indicates land within the Site as enclosed, contrasting with the remnant Medieval open field systems which lay to the south.

- 4.3.6 The Revd H.W.R. Elsley, writing in 1953, comments on the absence of a parish church, summarising Wembley and its landscape before the 20th century thus:

“..it consisted of broad acres, pleasant pastures watered by many streams, extensive waste and commons, and a hamlet or two isolated from the world at large, owing allegiance in spiritual and secular affairs to authority on the hill of Harrow.”

- 4.3.7 The London to Birmingham Railway opened in 1837, and a railway station at Wembley was built in 1844, although this made little immediate difference to the area (Victoria County History 1971,191, Weinreb & Hibbert 1993). OS 25” maps of 1880/1894 still illustrate an essentially rural landscape. Buildings and yards forming Dairy Farm and Wembley House lie south of Harrow Road, and Wembleyhill Farm lies to the north. Several orchards are shown, and land is enclosed with hedges, which include mature trees.
- 4.3.8 In 1894, Wembley was created an Urban District (Elsley 1953, 1). The 1894 OS 25” maps the former Dairy Farm is mapped as Rhampore House, although no change in building layout is evident. To the east, a series of houses and gardens have been carved out of agricultural land and at the eastern end of these, a smithy is indicated. To the south, an isolated *pavilion* has been erected. This suggests that the Site was already being used for sport by this date.
- 4.3.9 The rapid impact of Wembley’s Urban District status is evident by 1914. A substantial railway cutting has been sunk through the flanks of Wembley Hill and all around the Site grids of new roads (demonstrating incomplete, ongoing development of terraced housing) are shown, setting the basic layout of modern Wembley. Wembley house remains intact at this date, as does Rhampore house, although all trace of Dairy Farm has been swept away, replaced by more domestic housing along the south of Harrow Road. The southern parts of the Site are noted formally as *Athletic Ground*.
- 4.3.10 In 1924, Wembley hosted the British Empire Exhibition, which led to construction of Wembley Stadium and, in the 1930s, the Empire Pool and Wembley Arena. These factors provided further stimulus for town development, and the OS 25” map of 1935/36 illustrates that Wembley was fully subsumed into suburban London. For the first time, a school is shown immediately south-east of Wembley House, beneath what is now the Copland School. Wembley was created a Borough in 1937 (Elsley 1953, 3).
- 4.3.11 By 1958, Harrow Road has been re-named High Road, and Copland County Secondary School has replaced both Wembley House and the earlier school-buildings. Thereafter, the topography and layout of the Site remain relatively unaltered to the present day, although immediately to the north. Larger buildings (Brent House, Elizabeth House) replace housing that formerly fronted High/Harrow Road prior to 1971.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Proximity of the Site to Wembley High Road (Formerly Harrow Road), believed to have medieval (or earlier) antecedents, and to the Late Saxon landholding and medieval settlement of '*Wemba Lea*' suggest that there is potential for further remains of similar date to be adversely impacted by the proposed re-development scheme.
- 5.1.2 There is limited potential for building remains and associated archaeological evidence from the 16th century onwards to survive in the northern part of the Site, along the much re-developed High Road frontage.
- 5.1.3 The potential of the re-development to encounter remains of pre-medieval date cannot presently be assessed.

6 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 The principal elements of the development proposal are summarised above and are illustrated in **Figure 2**. Proposals are presented in greater technical detail in Environ 2002.

Private housing building

- 6.1.2 This will comprise a multi-storey building with piled foundations. The design incorporates a two-level basement, which requires sheet-piling to accommodate mass excavation.
- 6.1.3 It should be anticipated that demolition and clearance of existing school buildings and construction of the Private Housing Building will entail total or substantial destruction of any surviving archaeological deposits, and within the basement area there will be total destruction of any surviving archaeological remains.

Other construction impacts

- 6.1.4 Adverse archaeological impacts may result from a range of peripheral and temporary construction activities. Creation of temporary construction compounds, accesses, haul-roads, storage and fuelling areas, perimeter and internal fencing, temporary services or below-ground diversions, repeated tracking of heavy or wheeled plant, excavation of borrow-pits and stockpiling of mass- soils or substrata *etc.* can all damage fragile remains, sometimes beyond recovery. Due consideration should be given to the below-ground impact of all such activities, whether through physical ground-reduction, compaction, soil mixing or intrusion (wheel-rutting, *etc.*).

6.2 Mitigation and recommendations

- 6.2.1 Although not designated as an APA or SAI by Brent Borough Council, it is likely that, in line with national planning guidance, further archaeological investigation of the Site would be recommended by English Heritage, archaeological advisors to Brent Borough Council.
- 6.2.2 Within the existing school area, nearest Wembley High Road, and the upper and lower playing fields it is initially recommended that information from **geotechnical investigation** should be assessed to determine the extent and depth of truncation caused by the existing school buildings and prior landscaping. Such a programme should contribute to a predictive statement regarding the likely locations of areas of surviving archaeological potential, against which re-development proposals can be compared and the need (or otherwise) for further archaeological investigation assessed.

Elsley, Revd. H.W.R. 1953, *Wembley Through the Ages*. Wembley, Wembley News.

Kraithman, D. 1971 *The Growth of Industrialisation of the Wembley (Middlesex) Area 1800-1939*. Phillipa Fawcett College, unpublished. Brent ref. 03511334

Victoria County History of the Counties of England (1971) *A History of the County of Middlesex*. Published for the Institute of Historical Research. Oxford, OUP.

Weinreb, B. & Hibbert, C. (Eds.) 1993 *The London Encyclopaedia* Revised Edition. London & Basingstoke, PaperMac (McMillan).

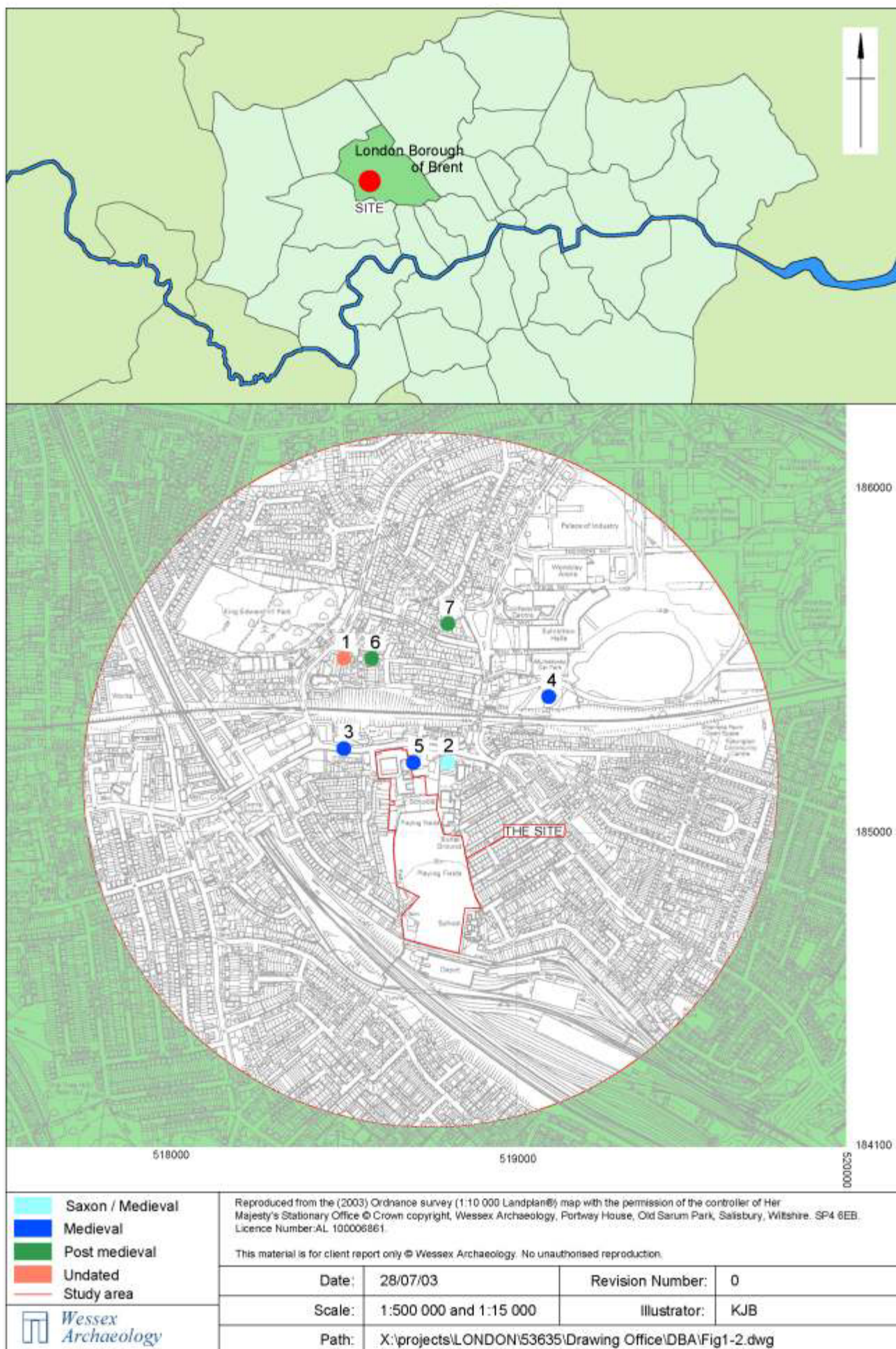
Appendix 1: *Gazetteer of sites mentioned in the text*
(see figure 1)

Periods are: UND Undated
 SAX Anglo-Saxon
 MED Medieval
 PMED Post-Medieval

WA No.	Source	OS prefix	Easting	Northing	Period	Description
1	GLSMR 054663/00/0	TQ	1850	8550	UND	Undated alluvial deposits, 1998, site code WMY98 (see also WA6).
2	GLSMR 051052/00/0	TQ	1880	8520	SAX MED	Late Saxon and Medieval settlement of Wembley Green.
3	Elsley 1953				MED	High Road, Formerly Harrow Road.
4	GLSMR 051042/00/0 050935/00/0 052721/00/0 052814/00/0	TQ	1909	8539	MED	Various investigations in vicinity of supposed site of the Free Chapel of St. Michael, Tonkynton.
5	GLSMR 051054/00/0	TQ	1870	8520	MED	Wembley House, Chief home of the Page family, major local landowners. Recorded in 1510.
6	GLSMR 054664/00/0	TQ	1858	8550	PMED	Post-medieval ground-raising deposits (see also WA1).
7	GLSMR 054798/00/0	TQ	1880	8560	PMED	Approximate site of former windmill, mapped in 1673.

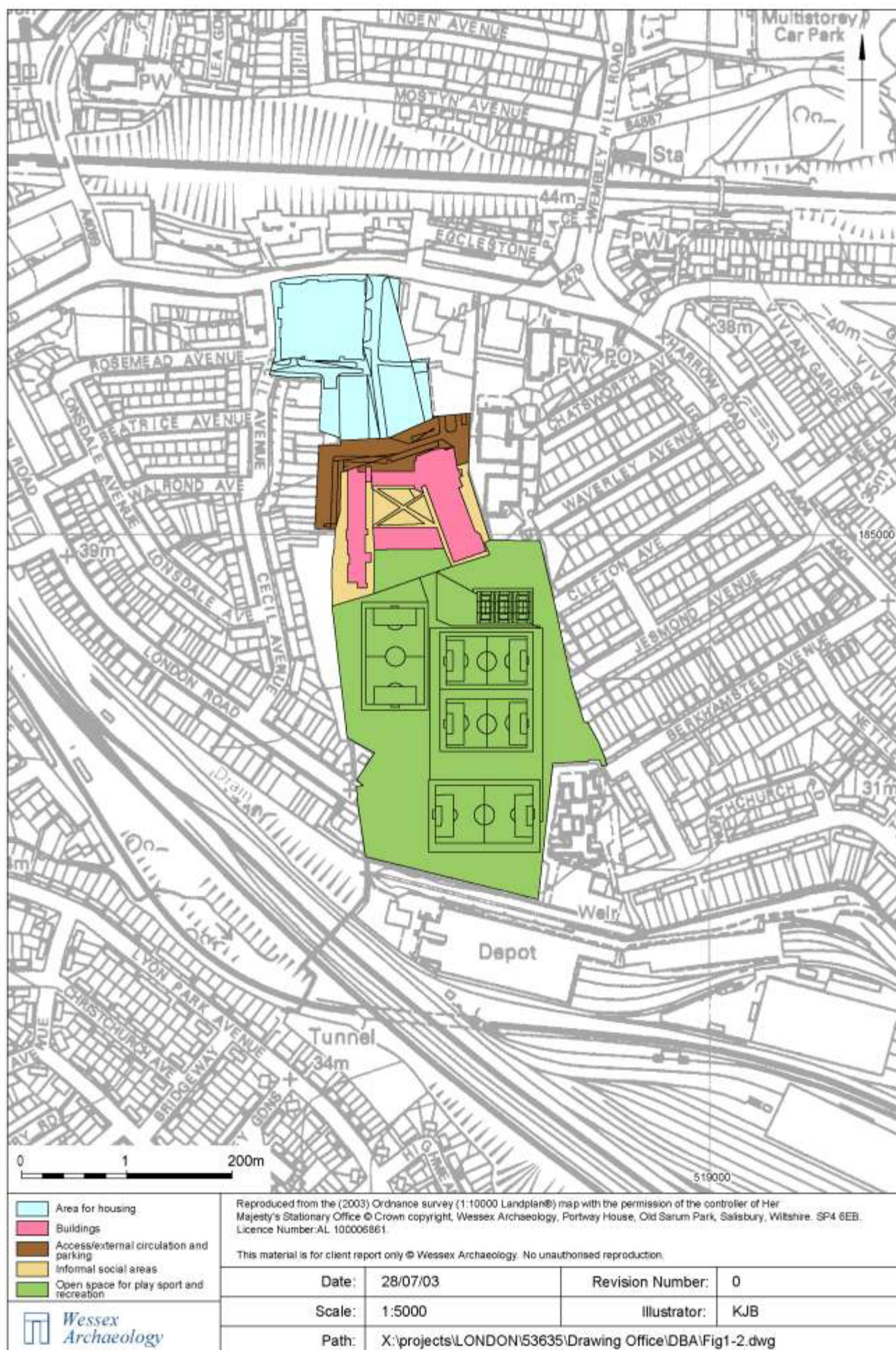
Appendix 2: LandMark/Ordnance Survey Maps of the Site and its Vicinity

Dates	Map Type
1880/94	OS
1896	OS
1914	OS
1935/6	OS
1957/8	OS
1971	OS
1968/82/83	OS



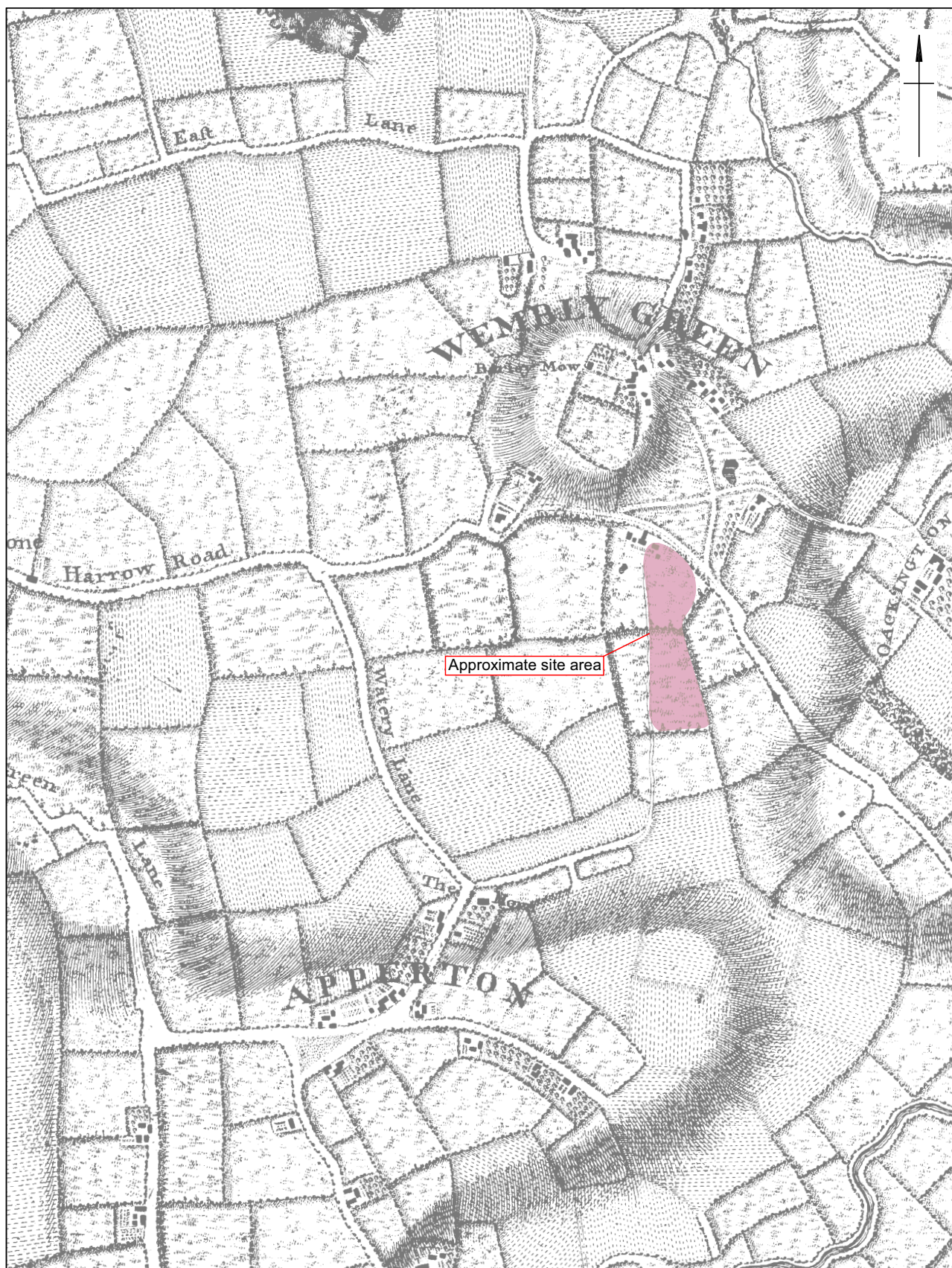
Site location showing study area and archaeological sites / findspots

Figure 1



Proposed development plan

Figure 2



This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.



Date:	28/07/03	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	1:5000 approx	Illustrator:	KJB
Path:	X:\projects\LONDON\53635\Drawing Office\DBA\Fig3.dwg		



THE TRUST FOR WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY LTD.

Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB

Tel: (01722) 326867 Fax: (01722) 337562

E-mail: info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk

Registered as an archaeological organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists

Registered Charity No. 287786. A company with limited liability registered in England No. 1712772