



Land at Hotspur Street, Kerrin Point London Borough of Lambeth

Archaeological Test Pit Evaluation





**Land at Hotspur Street, Kerrin Point,
London Borough of Lambeth**

Archaeological Test Pit Evaluation

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Land at Hotspur Street, Kerrin Point, London Borough of Lambeth

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Figure 1 Location of Test Pits
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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Barratts East London to carry out a programme of archaeological test pitting on the land at Hotspur Street, Kerrin Point, London Borough of Lambeth (hereafter, 'the Site'). The Site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 531150 178500).

The work was undertaken in order to ascertain whether the Site had been utilised as a Baptist Cemetery as suggested by a document drawn up in the 1930s. Three Test Pits were excavated in the only accessible area in the vicinity of the postulated burial ground. All of the Test Pits revealed a sequence of modern made ground which when viewed together with available geotechnical evidence suggests that the Site has been subject to massive truncation in the recent past.

No evidence of human remains or other archaeological deposits or artefacts was present.

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The fieldwork was undertaken by Stephen George and Rebecca Fitzpatrick with assistance from Lawrence Pontin. This report was compiled by Stephen George and Nick Truckle and the illustrations were prepared by Kitty Brandon and Ken Lymer. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Nick Truckle.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Barratts East London to carry out a programme of archaeological test pitting on the land at Hotspur Street, Kerrin Point, London Borough of Lambeth (hereafter, 'the Site'). The Site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 531150 178500 (Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 The Site is currently occupied by a mix of hard standing, grassed areas and games courts. Due to landforming, landscaping and terracing, the Site is now at several different levels and subdivided by numerous retaining and enclosure walls.
- 1.1.3 Formerly the Site was in part occupied by a substantial tower block Kerrin Point. This was demolished following a gas explosion in 1998. Site clearance of earlier buildings and the construction and subsequent demolition of this building is likely to have removed any underlying archaeological remains from the buildings footprint.
- 1.1.4 It is proposed to redevelop the Site and replace the existing 1960s high rise Tower blocks with predominately terraced housing with associated community facilities.
- 1.1.5 The Site is located to the north of an Archaeological Priority Zone as defined in the Borough's Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map. Following discussions with the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service a Desk-based Archaeological Assessment was produced for the Site by CgMs Consulting (Hawkins, 2007).
- 1.1.6 The Desk-based Assessment concluded that although the Site had moderate potential for archaeological remains dating from the Roman and Late medieval periods, the redevelopment of the Site in the 20th Century would have had a highly destructive impact on any buried deposits. This conclusion was reinforced by a geotechnical investigation that demonstrated that the Site was underlain by made ground to a depth of 2.75m (Hawkins, 2007).
- 1.1.7 However, during the research for the Desk-based Assessment a legal document dating from c.1930 was discovered that states that the Site was originally purchased for use as a burial ground, serving a Baptist Chapel 400m west of the Site. There is however no documentary or cartographic evidence to suggest the Site was ever actually used for

burial. Because of the possibility that the Site could contain early modern burials it was decided to carry out a programme of archaeological test pitting to determine the presence or absence of human remains.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The Site is located between Hotspur Street and Kennington Road within the Kerrin Point Estate (Figure 1) and occupies a relatively flat area lying between 3.6m and 2.9m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 1.2.2 The underlying natural geology recorded in the area of the Site consists of Kempton Park gravels overlying London Clay (British Geological Survey 1:50,000 series England and Wales Sheet 270).
- 1.2.3 A comprehensive Geotechnical Investigation revealed made ground to a depth of 2.75m. Natural in this area, where un-truncated, is usually present at a depth of 0.50m (Hawkins, 2007).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The Desk-based Assessment has demonstrated that the Site can be shown to have had a low archaeological potential for the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods and a moderate archaeological potential for the Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age. Finds from these periods were however likely to be residual and encountered in very small quantities.
- 1.3.2 The archaeological potential of the study Site for the Roman period was defined as having been moderate to good. Evidence of land division, agricultural activity and residual finds were most likely to have been represented.
- 1.3.3 The archaeological potential of the study Site for the Anglo Saxon and early medieval period was defined as having been low.
- 1.3.4 All available evidence indicates that the study Site lay to the north of the late Medieval Kennington Palace which was located on the south side of Black Prince Road, itself a late medieval roadway. The study Site would have comprised of agricultural or horticultural land at this period, though a tree planted approach to the palace 'The Prince's Walk' passed through the extreme south of the Site.
- 1.3.5 The Site was principally developed out of agricultural and horticultural land in the period c.1800-1872. Site stripping and the cutting of footings and services will have had a severe and widespread archaeological impact.

- 1.3.6 The study Site was partly redeveloped between 1872 and 1894-96 to form a new street pattern. Demolition, clearance and the construction of new buildings (with the cutting of footings and services) is likely to have had a severe and widespread archaeological impact.
- 1.3.7 The western third of the Site was largely redeveloped between 1910 and 1936 to construct a large garage complex. Site clearance, the construction of this building and its subsequent demolition is likely to have removed any underlying archaeological remains from the buildings footprint.
- 1.3.8 The cumulative impact of past development, demolition, site clearance and redevelopment is likely to have been such that significant archaeological remains are most unlikely to survive.

2 AIMS

- 2.1.1 The principle aims of the test pitting were to:
- Provide an adequate record of the extent, condition, and date of any previously unknown archaeological remains.
 - Determine if the Nineteenth century Baptist cemetery extended as far as the study area.

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1.1 Three test pits were excavated within an extended raised bed that provided the only accessible area on the postulated site of the cemetery.
- 3.1.2 The pits were excavated using a jcb type mechanical excavator using a small toothless bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Excavation was to be undertaken to natural geological deposits or the top of the first recognisable significant archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.
- 3.1.3 In the event the depth of made ground was such that the pits were excavated to a depth of c. 2 metres below ground level. Because of the constraints of the Site it was impossible for the reach of the jcb to exceed this depth and the nature of the made ground suggested that truncation of potential deposits was severe and therefore the principle aim of the work had been satisfied.
- 3.1.4 The test pits and their soil profiles were recorded in plan and section, located on a detailed Site plan related to Ordnance Survey,

photographed and described using Wessex Archaeology's standard *pro forma* recording system.

3.1.5 The work was undertaken on the 25th October 2007.

4 RESULTS

4.1.1 Three trial pits were located within the only accessible open area in the vicinity of the postulated Baptist cemetery.

4.1.2 Below a 0.20m deep layer of turf/topsoil each of the test pits was characterised by a homogenous layer of modern made ground consisting of a mix of dark brown sandy clay, with ceramic building material and brick and concrete rubble to a depth of 1.9 to 2.0 metres in Test Pits 1 and 3.

4.1.3 Test Pit 2 was the only location where material was exposed below the made ground. A light to mid yellow sandy gravel, probably the truncated remains of the natural Kempton Park gravel, was exposed 1.30m below the surface. No features or finds were present.

5 FINDS

5.1.1 No archaeological features or deposits were identified and no artefacts were collected from within the Test Pits.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL

6.1.1 No material suitable for environmental analysis was demonstrated to be present within the Test Pits.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1.1 The archaeological test pits revealed that the ground in the immediate area had been heavily disturbed in the mid to late twentieth century to a depth of at least 1.90 metres, with no evidence of archaeological remains on the Site.

7.1.2 The results of the earlier Geotechnical Investigation indicated massive and widespread ground disturbance, across the entire Site (Hawkins, 2007). This is consistent with the Site's development in the nineteenth century, partial redevelopment in the early twentieth century, and demolition clearance and comprehensive redevelopment in the late twentieth century. This picture is re-inforced by the current archaeological work and would indicate that if the area had been utilised as a burial ground then it is highly unlikely that any evidence of the burials would have survived the wholesale redevelopment of The Site since the 1960s.

8 ARCHIVE

8.1 Preparation and Deposition

- 8.1.1 The project archive comprises a ring bound file that contains a watching brief attendance form, the risk assessment, the method statement, site location plans, a written record of the watching brief, test pit record sheets and a digital photographic record sheet. This archive is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's office building under the site code 67640, but will ultimately be deposited for permanent storage with the Museum of London

9 REFERENCES

British Geological Survey, 1:50,000 series England and Wales Sheet 270

Hawkins, D, 2007 Land at Kerrin Point off Kennington Road, London SE11: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment. Unpublished client report



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Location of test pits

Figure 1



Plate 1: Test Pit 1



Plate 2: Test Pit 2



Plate 3: Test Pit 3

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