



56–58 ARTILLERY LANE
London
E1

London Borough of Tower Hamlets
An archaeological evaluation report

August 2006



MUSEUM OF LONDON

Archaeology Service

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London
E1

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An archaeological evaluation report

Site Code: ARI06

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Summary (non-technical)

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by the Museum of London Archaeology Service on the site of 56-58 Artillery Lane, London, E1. The report was commissioned from MoLAS by Nick Tyson on behalf of the client Alex Sainsbury Esquire.

Following the recommendations of English Heritage two evaluation trenches were excavated on the site

The results of the field evaluation have helped to refine the initial assessment of the archaeological potential of the site. The evaluation has established the survival of post-medieval dumped deposits on the site. In addition a small section of post-medieval wall was located that was believed to be 18th century in construction.

In the light of the revised understanding of the archaeological potential of the site the report concludes the impact of the proposed redevelopment would be to remove post-medieval deposits and some structural remains from the 18th century. The report recommends that a further watching brief may help us understand the development of the properties during the post-medieval period.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The evaluation took place at 56-58 Artillery Lane, hereafter called 'the site'. The evaluation trenches were located in the lower ground floor extension to the rear of the properties. The site is bounded to the north by Artillery Lane and to the south by Frying Pan Alley. The site lies within an archaeological priority zone as defined by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The properties are 18th century in date: No. 56 is Grade I listed and No.58 Grade II. The OS National Grid Ref. for the centre of site is 533540 181655. The level of the ground floor slab varied between 13.44 and 13.47m OD. Modern pavement level on the corner of Artillery Lane immediately adjacent to the site is 13.42m OD. The site code is ARI06.

1.2 Planning and legislative framework

1.2.1 Planning Policy Guidance (PPG16)

The London Borough of Tower Hamlet's *Unitary Development Plan* (UDP) was adopted in 1998. The policies set out in this document determine the position of archaeology as a material consideration in the planning process and incorporate recommendations from the Department of the Environment's *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG 16). Tower Hamlet's policies for archaeology are as follows:

POLICY DEV40: Development which adversely affects nationally important archaeological remains, including Scheduled Ancient Monuments, will not normally be permitted

POLICY DEV41: Planning powers will be used to protect and preserve the archaeological heritage, including the industrial archaeological heritage of the Borough. Wherever possible, interpretation and presentation of the remains to the public will also be sought

POLICY DEV42: The Council will normally require the permanent preservation of important remains in their original location. Suitable foundation designs, mitigation strategies, land use and site management to achieve this will be encouraged.

POLICY DEV43: Proposals involving groundworks in areas of archaeological importance or potential shown on the Proposals Map, or concerning individual sites notified to the Council by English Heritage or the Museum of London, will be subject to the following requirements;

Within Areas of Archaeological Importance, applicants will need to demonstrate that the archaeological implications of the development have been properly assessed. A written assessment (Archaeological Statement) based on the professional advice of an approved archaeological consultant or organisations should be submitted as part of the documentation required to complete a planning application.

Within Areas of Archaeological Importance the Council may request that an archaeological evaluation of the site is carried out before any decision is made on the planning application.

Where the preservation of archaeological remains in situ is not appropriate, the Council will use conditions to ensure that no development takes place on the site until archaeological investigation, excavation and recording has taken place by an approved archaeological organisation.

In appropriate cases, planning agreements will be sought to ensure that adequate opportunities are afforded for the archaeological investigation of sites before and during demolition and development. Suitable provision should be made in situ for preservation of remains (Dev 42) and finds in the original location, or for removing them to a suitable place for safe keeping.

The Council has designated eight Areas of Archaeological Importance in the borough. The present site lies within one of these Areas.

1.3 Planning background

Planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of the rear of the property and the refurbishment of the Grade I listed building. A condition was attached to the planning permission requiring an archaeological investigation of the site.

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Nick Tyson on behalf of the client Alex Sainsbury Esq and produced by the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS). The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA, 2001).

Field evaluation, and the *Evaluation report* which comments on the results of that exercise, are defined in the most recent English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage, 1998) as intended to provide information about the archaeological resource in order to contribute to the:

- formulation of a strategy for the preservation or management of those remains; and/or
- formulation of an appropriate response or mitigation strategy to planning applications or other proposals which may adversely affect such archaeological remains, or enhance them; and/or
- formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigations within a programme of research

1.5 Aims and objectives

All research is undertaken within the priorities established in the Museum of London's *A research framework for London Archaeology*, 2002. the following research aims were established prior to the excavation

- What is the nature and extent of the surviving archaeological deposits?
- Is there any evidence of the survival of structural features such as walls from the construction of the houses in the 18th century?
- Is there any evidence for the use of the site prior to the construction of the houses on the site?

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Topography

The site lies in an area of Langley Silt more commonly known as brickearth. This is a recent geological deposit laid down by wind and possibly river action towards the end of the final Ice Age about 26,000 to 13,000 BC. The untruncated level of brickearth in this area (it has frequently been quarried away in antiquity) is around 11.3m to 12m OD. This overlies a gravel terrace of the Thames known as the Taplow terrace, which is a relatively terrace that was cut and deposited by the river between about 120,000 and 26,000 BC. The level of Taplow gravels is about 10 to 10.5m OD. The area around the development site is fairly flat with Street level at around 13.4m OD adjacent to the site, 13.9m OD in Brushfield Street to the north, and at 13.7m OD in Strype Street to the south.

2.2 Prehistoric

Little prehistoric evidence from the area has come to light. Most of the prehistoric evidence found in the area has consisted of isolated finds. A few prehistoric flint artefacts, redeposited in later contexts, were found during excavations to the at 250 Bishopsgate (STE95) and a Neolithic polished flint hand-axe was found in a residual context, during excavations at 280 Bishopsgate and the Spitalfields Ramp (SRP98).

2.3 Roman

The site lies north of the Roman city and to the east of the former line of Ermine Street, which was the through road from the north of London to London Bridge and thence to Southwark. Roman law forbade the burial of the dead within the city walls and it has long been known that areas alongside the roads out of settlements were used as burial grounds.

Roman burials have been recorded on numerous occasions during extensive excavation of the Spitalfields area to the north of the development site. Roman burials were recorded as early as 1935 at Eden House on Spital Square by Frank Cottrill. Roman burials have also been found at 12-14 Folgate Street (site code: FLG82), the Central Foundation Girls School (site code: SPT85), Stothard Place (site code: STO86), 282-294 Bishopsgate (site code: BOS 87), 250 Bishopsgate (Site code STE95), 280 Bishopsgate and the Spitalfields Ramp (site code: SRP98) and at Broadgate (site code: BGB98).

Close to the Roman street frontage of Ermine Street, Roman ditched enclosures have been found, suggesting that some areas were not used for burials but were defined for other purposes. There is clear evidence that areas close to Ermine Street, were quarried for natural subsoils (brickearth and gravel) during the early Roman period.

Roman quarry pits were identified during excavations at 27-33 Artillery Lane (ART76).

Finds groups of particular interest from excavations at nearby Spitalfields include painted wall plaster and glass-working waste. Roman wall plaster was recovered in some quantity from an area of 250 Bishopsgate, and within backfill of a well at 280 Bishopsgate and the Spitalfields Ramp (SRP98). The extent of building material recovered may be indicative of the demolition of substantial masonry buildings either close to the development site or within the city, or of mausolea within the Roman cemetery.

2.4 Saxon

No evidence of Saxon occupation has been found in the area nor have any residual artefacts been found.

2.5 Medieval

During the medieval period the whole of the Spitalfields area lay within the Manor of Norton Folgate and was in the ownership of the Bishop of London. The earliest evidence of occupation found in the area is of a substantial water supply system, immediately to the east of Bishopsgate, which was probably laid out in the 11th or 12th century. This consisted of two lines of ditches feeding into large square pits, which acted as silt traps. These ditches ran through fields that were probably used for grazing animals brought down to London for slaughter. Crofts lay alongside Bishopsgate, stretching back to a field to the east known as Lollesworth Field. Excavations in the area have produced widespread evidence of quarrying for the natural subsoils in particular for brickearth, which was used for making tiles.

In *c.*1197 a group of London merchants founded the Priory and Hospital of St Mary-without-Bishopsgate on land purchased from the Bishop of London. The initial precinct was a small area centred on Spital Square, but this was massively increased in 1235 when the establishment was refounded. A new church and infirmary were built and the precincts stretched from west to east from the modern day streets of Bishopsgate to Nantes Passage and from south to north from Artillery Passage to Fleur-De-Lis Street.

The cemetery of the 1197 hospital lay to the south of the infirmary, whilst the cemetery of the refounded hospital lay to the west of the new infirmary. By the late thirteenth century the cemetery had moved to an area to the south of the church, although this area may have been already in use for the burial of canons and benefactors. A chapel and charnel house was built in the cemetery *c.*1320, which was dedicated to St Mary Magdalen, and a pulpit lay nearby from which sermons were preached at Easter (Stow 1987, 151). Over 10,000 skeletons including burials in mass burial pits have now been excavated from the monastic cemetery.

By the later 14th and 15th centuries there were also a number of houses for wealthy residents scattered around the precincts. Excavations of the area to the immediate south of the cemetery have produced evidence of tenemented buildings.

The development site lies to the immediate southeast of the outer precinct of the medieval priory which lay on the opposite side of Artillery Lane. Excavation of the outer precinct in Area 1 of SRP98 immediately north of Brushfield Street, suggests this southern area of the outer precinct consisted largely of open fields subdivided by boundary ditches. Prior to this the area had been extensively quarried. Some evidence of medieval quarry pits were identified during excavations at 27-33 Artillery Lane (ART76) to the east of the development site.

In 1539 the priory and Hospital was dissolved under the orders of Henry VIII along with England and Wales other monastic houses. The lands were sold off and the religious buildings put beyond use.

2.6 Post-medieval

After the dissolution the southern extent of the former medieval precinct, was used by the Honourable Artillery Company until 1658 when they moved to Bunhill Fields, and by the 'Gunner's of the Tower'. The site lies close to the location of the southern extent of the Artillery Ground. A shooting range was located to the east of the Artillery ground with a platform for guns at the southern end. The rest of the southern end of the artillery ground was occupied by buildings with gardens on their northern side. A large area of the Artillery ground has been excavated during the Spitalfields excavations including the Master Gunner's House and other buildings at the north end of the Artillery ground (SRP98). The Artillery Ground was finally closed in 1682 when the area was sold off for housing development. The southern side of Artillery Lane appears to have already been built up by this time. Ryther's map of 1640 and Fairthorne and Newcourt's map of 1658 both show some development in the vicinity. The Ogilby and Morgan map of 1672 already shows the development of properties to the south east of the Artillery ground. In the 17th and 18th centuries Artillery Passage was usually known as Smock Alley and the eastern extent of Artillery Lane as Raven Row although it was also sometimes known as Smock Alley or Artillery Street or Lane. The map appears to show the site of no's 56-58 Artillery Lane as occupied by a small building to the east adjacent to a larger building occupying most of the site. In the early 18th century Thomas Wilkes a citizen and Weaver of London appears to have held the lease on sites including 56-58 Artillery Lane. Thomas Wilkes began a program of rebuilding shortly before his death in 1711. The Survey of London Volume XXVII suggests Nos 56-58 were built circa 1713-1716 and that the two houses appear to have been built as a pair with equal frontages and identical plans. Each of the houses contains a basement cellar and four storeys. In the mid 18th century the fronts of the two houses were rebuilt and the embellishment of the first floor rooms undertaken. No 56 Artillery Lane has the finest mid Georgian shop front surviving in London, dating to about 1757. It is known that from 1782-1799 No 56 was occupied by a silk weaver Thomas Blinkhorn., It was subsequently a grocers shop under various ownerships from 1813-1935. The history of ownership of No 58 was similar from 1783 to 1935: it was variously occupied by a grocer and tea dealer, a firm of silk and satin dressers, used as a glass warehouse and then owned by a firm of cigar makers. The development site lies to the rear of the two properties which was subjected to a 1970's refurbishment extending to the north side of Frying Pan Alley.

3 The evaluation

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and monitoring during the evaluation was carried out in accordance with the preceding *Method Statement* (MoLAS, 2006), and the *MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS, 1994).

Two evaluation trenches were excavated within the 1970's lower ground floor extension to the properties. The slab was broken out by contractors prior to the arrival of the archaeologists on site. All deposits were subsequently hand excavated by the archaeologists.

The locations of the evaluation trenches were plotted by MoLAS onto a ground floor survey provided by the client. This information was then plotted onto the OS grid. Levels were calculated by transfer from the ordinance survey benchmark of 13.77m OD in Artillery Passage.

A written and drawn record of all archaeological deposits encountered was made in accordance with the principles set out in the MoLAS site recording manual (MoLAS, 1994).

The site has produced: 1 trench location plan; 5 1:20 trench plans, 9 context records; and 2 section drawings at 1:20. In addition a single box of finds was recovered from the site.

The site finds and records can be found under the site code ARI 06 in the MoL archive.

3.2 Results of the evaluation

For trench locations see Fig 2.

<i>Evaluation Trench 1</i>	
Location	Lower ground floor
Dimensions	1m x 1.8m x 1.3m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	13.47m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	13.17m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	0.7m
Level of base of deposits observed	12.17 m OD
Natural observed	N/A

A sequence of post-medieval dumped deposits was located in the trench. In the base of the trench a dark grey brown sandy silt deposit [6] was located which contained, animal bone oyster shell and fragments of mortar. Only the upper horizon of this deposit was observed and no dating evidence was retrieved from it. The upper horizon of this deposit was at 12.20m OD. Overlying [6] was 40 mm depth of a levelling deposit [5] of crushed post-medieval brick fragments and mortar mixed with sandy silt matrix. This levelling deposit was sealed by 0.34m depth of a fairly loose dark grey brown sandy silt [2] fragments of post-medieval brick, oyster shell and animal bone. Four clay tobacco pipe bowls and two sherds of post medieval pottery were retrieved from this context dating to the late 17th Century. This deposit was overlain by more post-medieval dumping [1], containing fragments of brick and tile as well as animal bone. Part of a Delft tile was retrieved from this context as well as several sherds of late 17th-century pottery as well as a single clay tobacco pipe bowl. To the south [1] was sealed by a rough concrete slab of 80mm thickness. On the northwest side of the trench the post medieval sequence of deposits was truncated by the construction cut [4] for a brick wall [3] which appeared to be fairly modern in construction. The top of this wall was located at 12.53m OD. This wall was fairly loosely built and did not appear to extend beyond 0.3m westwards. This wall was abutted by a protruding concrete foundation at the north end of the trench which had removed all archaeological deposits. A modern concrete foundation forming part of the 1970's extension ran along the east side of the trench. The full depth of this foundation was not easy to establish as it was vertical down to a depth of 0.68m below the slab and then sloped in to a depth of at least 0.8m below the slab. Some concrete overspill from this foundation was also present on the east side of the trench. The construction of this foundation appeared to have removed most but not necessarily all of the archaeological deposits on this side of the trench. On the west side of the trench at the top of the sequence, 0.3m depth of rubble formed a basis for a reinforced concrete slab, 0.3m thick.

<i>Evaluation Trench 2</i>	
Location	Lower ground floor
Dimensions	1.5m x 1m x 1.3m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	13.44-13.46m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	13.16m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	0.16m
Level of base of deposits observed	12.16 m OD
Natural observed	N/A

In the base of Trench 2, 0.74m length of brick wall [7] was observed on the east side. The top of this wall was truncated at 12.28m OD, 1.17m below the existing slab. The wall was just one brick wide and constructed of red brick of 63mm thickness bonded with a loose grey silty mortar. It is possible the wall may have formed part of an 18th-century brick cesspit. On the east side of the wall a deposit [8] of dark grey brown sandy clay silt appeared to have been dumped up against the wall. A single sherd of pottery dating to the late 16th-17th Century was retrieved from this context. On the west side of the wall a fairly loose deposit of sandy silt [9] was located from which a few sherds of pottery dating to the late 17th century were retrieved. It was not possible

to establish clearly the relationship of this deposit to wall [7]. The level of disruption by modern activity was much greater than in Trench 1. On the south side of the trench the southern end of wall [7] was truncated by thin brick walls infilled with sand which appeared to be a modern service. A modern concrete column was located just outside the southwest corner of the trench and concrete foundations extended north and east of this truncating all deposits down to a depth of at least 1.2m below the slab on the southern and western sides of the trench. Over the rest of the trench, up to 0.8m of modern deposits containing demolition material overlay the archaeological sequence. This dumping was overlain by 0.3m depth of concrete and brick rubble as seen in Trench 1, which supported the concrete and rebar slab which was again 0.3m thick.

3.3 Assessment of the evaluation

GLAAS guidelines (English Heritage, 1998) require an assessment of the success of the evaluation ‘in order to illustrate what level of confidence can be placed on the information which will provide the basis of the mitigation strategy’. In the case of this site the evaluation has provide a good estimation of the likely extent of archaeological survival down to 1.3m below the existing slab.

4 Archaeological potential

4.1 Realisation of original research aims

- What is the nature and extent of the surviving archaeological deposits?

Post-medieval dumped deposits were shown to survive in both trenches. These deposits contained artefactual evidence including tile pottery and clay tobacco pipes as well as ecofactual evidence such as animal bone. Pottery from the late 16th – late 17th century was retrieved from a number of contexts. In Trench 2 a deposit was backfilled inside a length of post medieval brick wall. This may have been evidence of backfilling of material within a cesspit.

- Is there any evidence of the survival of structural features such as walls from the construction of the houses in the 18th century?

A single piece of wall was found in Trench 2, which appeared to be of 18th-century construction and which may have been the remains of a cesspit wall, to the east of the alignment of the boundary between the two properties.

- Is there any evidence for the use of the site prior to the construction of the houses on the site?

Apart from artefactual material, there was no clear evidence of how the site was used prior to the 18th century.

4.2 General discussion of potential

The evaluation identified the potential for the survival of post-medieval dumped deposits and walls on the development site. The evaluation has also identified that in less truncated areas the archaeological stratigraphy is likely to survive at approximately 0.6m below the existing floor slab and that any excavations involving ground reduction below that depth have the potential to destroy material of archaeological interest.

4.3 Significance

Whilst the archaeological remains are of some local significance there is nothing to suggest that they are of regional or national importance.

5 Assessment by EH criteria

The recommendations of the GLAAS 1998 guidelines on *Evaluation reports* suggest that there should be:

‘Assessment of results against original expectations (using criteria for assessing national importance of period, relative completeness, condition, rarity and group value)’ (Guidance Paper V, 4 7)

A set of guidelines was published by the Department of the Environment with criteria by which to measure the importance of individual monuments for possible Scheduling. These criteria are as follows: *Period*; *Rarity*; *Documentation*; *Survival/Condition*; *Fragility/Vulnerability*; *Diversity*; and *Potential*. The guidelines stresses that ‘these criteria should not...be regarded as definitive; rather they are indicators which contribute to a wider judgement based on the individual circumstances of a case’.¹

In the following passages the potential archaeological survival described in the initial Assessment document and Section 3.2 above will be assessed against these criteria.

Criterion 1: period

The results of the evaluation were limited to evidence from the post-medieval period.

Criterion 2: rarity

There is nothing to suggest that any of the likely archaeological deposits are rare either in a national or regional context.

Criterion 3: documentation

There are no surviving documentary records for remains in the area from the Roman period. Whilst there may be considerable contemporary documentation for the later medieval period from *c* 1300 most of this is not likely to be of relevance to the evaluation. Some cartographic evidence from the post-medieval period is relevant to the understanding of the development of the site during this period. There are substantial amounts of documentary evidence for the development and ownership of the two properties.

Criterion 4: group value

None of the likely archaeological deposits are associated with contemporary single Monuments external to the site.

Criterion 5: survival/condition

Where present structural and artefactual evidence survives in fairly good condition.

¹ Annex 4, DOE, Planning and Policy Guidance 16, (1990). For detailed definition of the criteria see that document. Reference has also been made to Darvill, Saunders & Startin, (1987); and McGill, (1995)

Criterion 6: fragility

Whilst deposits, structures and artefactual material will clearly be damaged and removed during construction work. There was no evidence for the survival of any features or deposits that would require specific measures of conservation.

Criterion 7: diversity

As the evaluation dealt only with a limited depth of excavation there was little diversity in the range of period represented, with only material from the post-medieval period encountered.

Criterion 8: potential

The development site has some potential to provide information from the post-medieval period which may be relevant to the understanding of urban development in the area and of specific relevance to 56-58 Artillery Lane which is some of the finest surviving 18th century housing in the area.

6 Proposed development impact and recommendations

56-58 Artillery Lane are Grade 1 Listed buildings within an archaeological priority zone as defined by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The proposed redevelopment at 56-58 involves groundworks in the area of the 1970's building to the rear of the properties. The evaluation has shown that this will involve the destruction and removal of post medieval deposits and may involve damage to surviving features such as walls dating to the post-medieval period.

The assessment above (Section 5) does not suggest that preservation *in situ* would be an appropriate mitigation strategy. MoLAS considers that a watching brief on development of the site would enable the recording of any post medieval features such as walls and cesspits and may provide valuable information relevant to the post-medieval development of the properties.

The decision on the appropriate archaeological response to the deposits revealed within the evaluation rests with the Local Planning Authority and their designated archaeological adviser.

7 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the client Alex Sainsbury and Nick Tyson for commissioning the work and assistance on site. The author would also like to thank Chris Thomas project management and Ken Lymer for the illustrations. Jacqui Pearce for initial dating of the pottery.

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9 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

9.1 OASIS ID: molas1-16959

Project details

Project name 56-58 Artillery Lane, London E1

Short description of the project Two evaluation trenches were excavated in the 1970's extension to the rear of 56-58 Artillery Lane. Evidence of post-medieval dumped deposits and an 18c brick wall were located. The trenches were restricted to a depth of 1.2m. The houses themselves are important 18c properties with No 56 having a fine 18c shop front.

Project dates Start: 17-07-2006 End: 17-07-2006

Previous/future work No / Yes

Any associated project reference codes ARI06 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Listed Building

Current Land use Residential 1 - General Residential

Current Land use Other 15 – Under Renovation

Monument type WALL Post Medieval

Significant Finds POT Post Medieval

Significant Finds WALL Post Medieval

Methods & 'Targeted Trenches'
techniques

Development type Building refurbishment/repairs/restoration

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Position in the Not known / Not recorded
planning process

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON TOWER HAMLETS TOWER HAMLETS 56-58 Artillery Lane, London E1

Postcode LONDON E1

Study area 60.00 Square metres

National reference grid TQ 33540 81655 Point

Project creators

Name of MoLAS
Organisation

Project originator brief MoLAS project manager

Project originator design MoLAS

Project director/manager Chris Thomas

Project supervisor Andrew Daykin

Sponsor or funding body Nick Tyson

Project archives

Physical Archive LAARC

recipient

Physical Contents 'Ceramics'

Digital recipient Archive LAARC

Digital Contents 'Survey'

Paper recipient Archive LAARC

Paper Contents 'Ceramics'

Paper available Media 'Context sheet','Map','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Report','Section','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title 56-58 Artillery Lane, London E1

Author(s)/Editor(s) Daykin A

Date 2006

Issuer or publisher MoLAS

Place of issue or publication MoLAS

Description Standard evaluation report

Entered by A Daykin (adaykin@molas.org.uk)

Entered on 31 July 2006

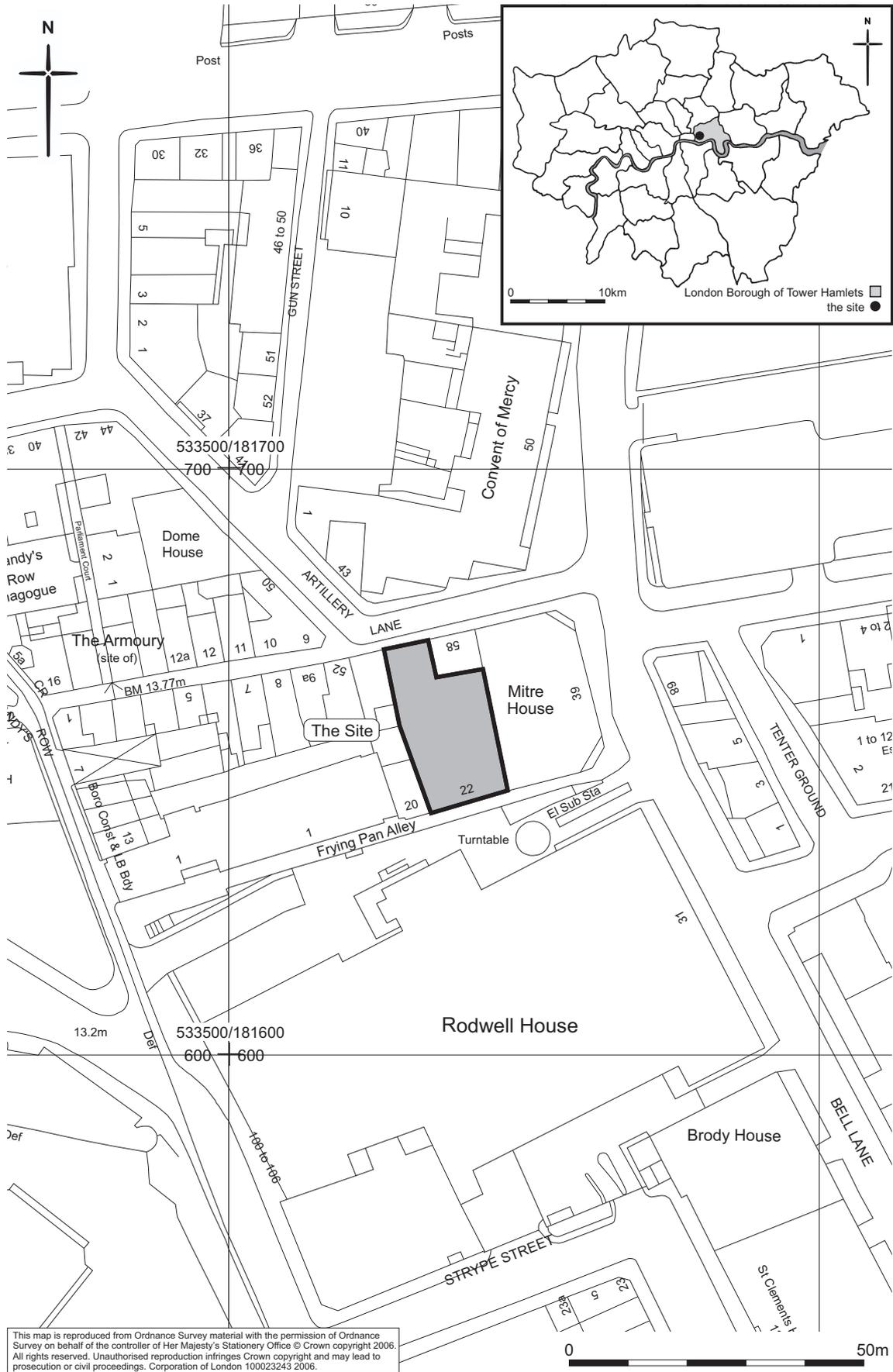
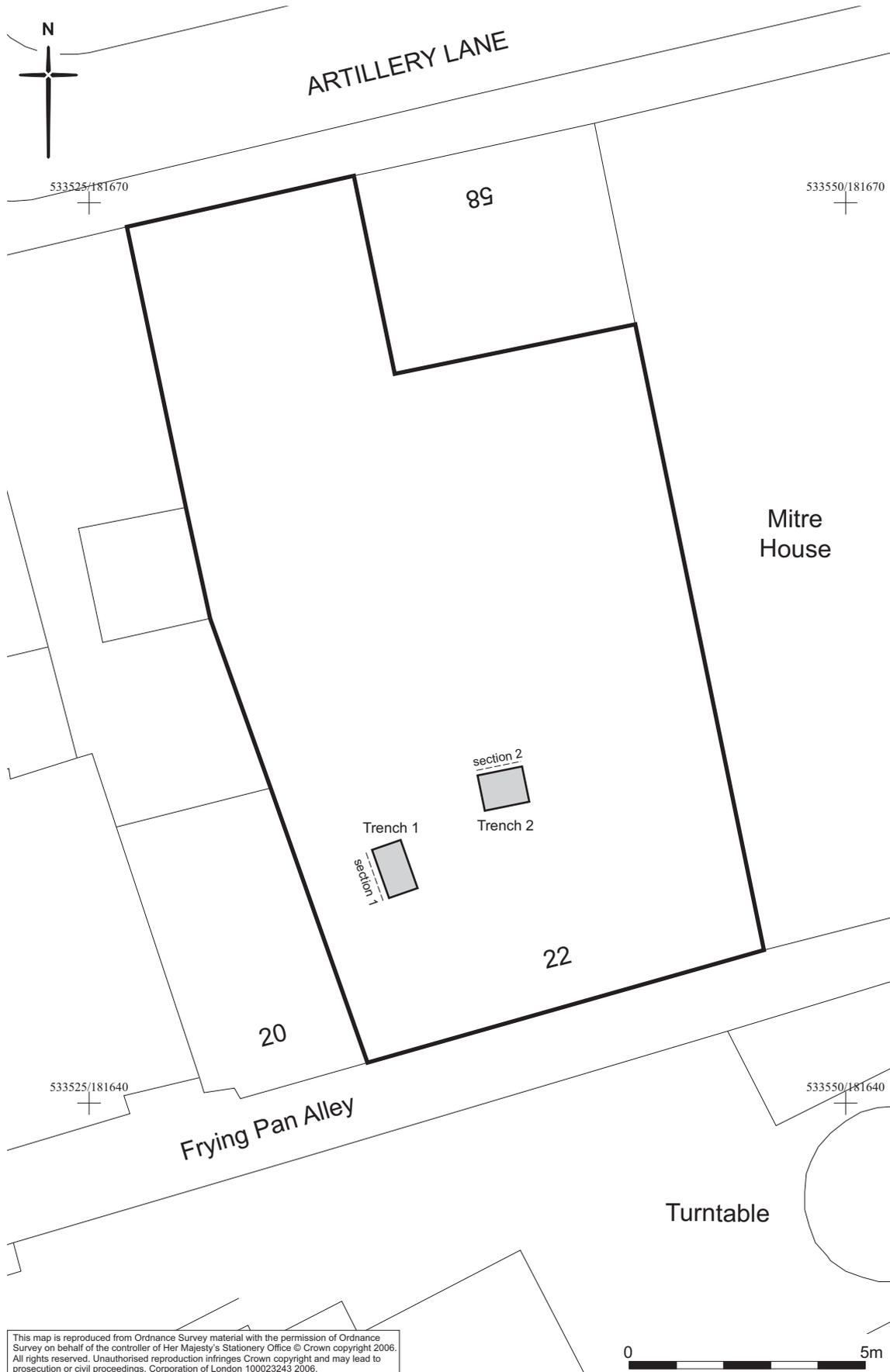


Fig 1 Site location



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Fig 2 Location of evaluation trenches

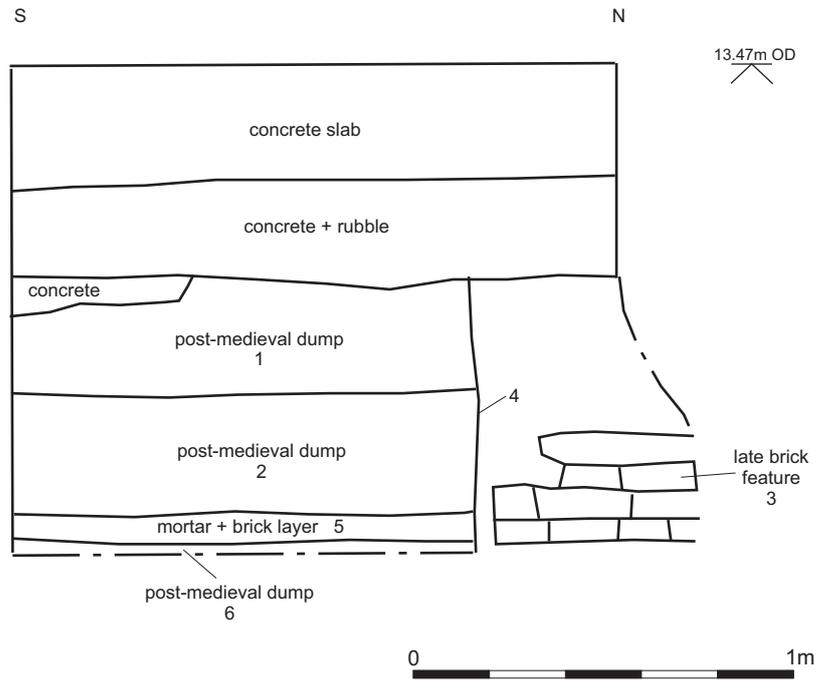


Fig 3 Section 1 in Trench 1

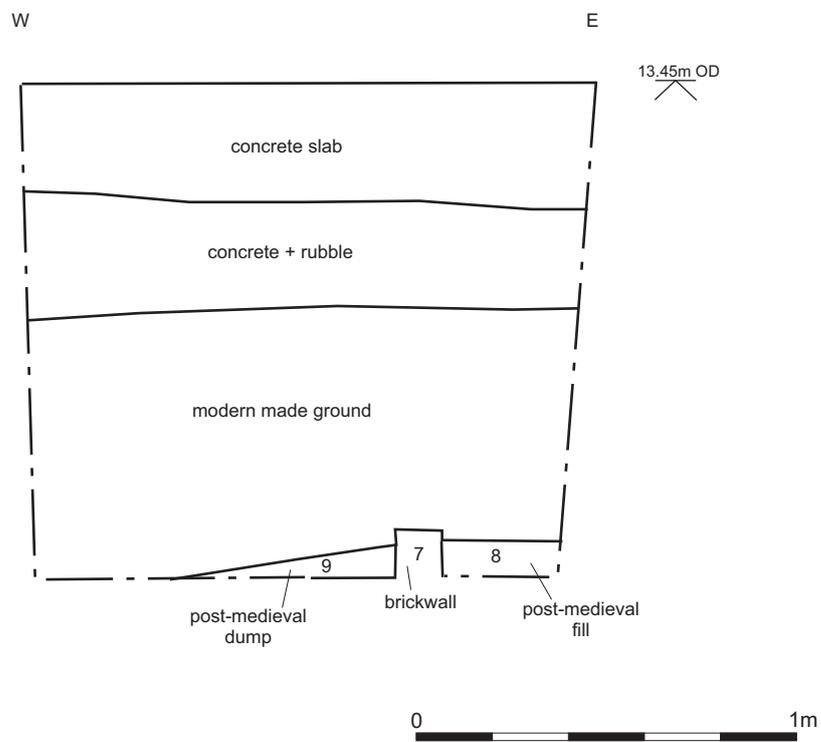


Fig 4 Section 2 in Trench 2