

**191 OLD MARYLEBONE ROAD
London NW1**

City of Westminster

Report on an archaeological watching brief

2021



**191 Old Marylebone Road
London
NW1 5DZ**

Site code OMR21
NGR 527400 181758
OASIS reference molas1-502247

Planning reference: 17/04194/FULL
Condition number: 15

Report on an archaeological watching brief

Sign-off History:

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Summary

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by MOLA at the site of 191 Old Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5DZ, by Tower Eight, on behalf of their client.

In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2018) underpinning was monitored between 9th February and 22nd March 2021. Only natural Pleistocene river terrace gravels were exposed, no archaeological remains were observed, and no finds were recovered.

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Fig 2 Location of underpinning

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

- 1.1.1 An archaeological watching brief was carried out by MOLA at 191 Old Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5DZ ('the site') between 9th February and 22nd March 2021 (*Fig 1*).
- 1.1.2 An Historic Environment Assessment was prepared earlier (MOLA 2017). This document should be referred to for information on the natural geology, archaeological and historical background of the site (and the initial assessment of its archaeological potential).
- 1.1.3 Further to the condition on Planning Consent a Written Scheme of Investigation for Watching Brief was prepared (MOLA 2018). All archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with that WSI.

1.2 Planning background

- 1.2.1 The watching brief was carried out to fulfil a condition attached to the Planning Consent given by Westminster City Council (reference 17/04194/FULL; Condition number 15).

1.3 Scope of the watching brief

- 1.3.1 An archaeological watching brief is normally a limited fieldwork exercise. It is not the same as full excavation, though individual features may be fully excavated.
- 1.3.2 The watching brief was carried out within the terms of the relevant Standard for watching brief specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (CIFA, 2014).
- 1.3.3 All work has been undertaken within the research priorities established in the Museum of London's A research framework for London Archaeology, 2002.
- 1.3.4 All work was undertaken within research aims and objectives established in the Written Scheme of Investigation for the watching brief (Section 2, MOLA 2018).

2 Topographical and historical background

- 2.1.1 A detailed description of the geology, archaeology and history of the site was provided in the earlier Archaeological desk-based assessment (Section 4 MOLA 2017,). A brief resume is provided here (references have been kept in for consistency):

Geology and Topography

- 2.1.2 The predicted level of natural geology within the site was follows:

- Current ground level lies at approximately 30.0m OD.
- The top of untruncated gravel/brickearth was predicted to lie at approximately 28.0–29.0m OD.

Archaeological potential

- 2.1.3 *The site has a low potential to contain prehistoric remains.* The natural geology of the site, along with the presence of nearby water sources, would have been conducive for early settlement and farming. However, despite several past archaeological investigations having been carried out in the study area, only a single Palaeolithic hand-axe is known to have been discovered. The Lynch Hill Gravels have the potential for rare in situ Palaeolithic artefacts contained within fine grained sandy lenses within the gravels, however, this is low, and their presence is impossible to predict.
- 2.1.4 *The site has a low potential to contain Roman remains.* Despite the suitability of the site for settlement and farming, and its location close to a major Roman road, no known finds or features dating to the Roman period have been discovered within the site or study area.
- 2.1.5 *The site has a low potential to contain medieval remains.* As the site was situated close to the early medieval village of Lillestone, there is some potential for the remains of evidence of cultivation. Remains of cultivation would be of low significance, as derived from their evidential value. Cartographic evidence suggests that during the later medieval period, the site was focus of the manor house which appeared to survive until the 18th century. However, the impact of construction of the 19th century basement, as well as the present basement across the site, is likely to have truncated or entirely removed such remains. Structural remains of the Manor House would be of moderate significance, as derived from their evidential value.
- 2.1.6 *The site has a very limited potential to contain post-medieval remains.* The site was the focus of three phases of development; the first being the demolition of the pre-18th manor house and construction of John Harcourt's manor house, the second being the demolition of Harcourt's manor house and the construction of a purpose-built hospital along with its various stages of expansion, and the third is the demolition of the hospital and the construction of the existing building. A single level basement, which covered the footprint of the building, was dug during the second phase, and was also extended beyond the building footprint. The construction of the basement is likely to have removed all remains of any previous building, particularly the later medieval manor house, if located on the site. Structural remains of the 19th century hospital would be of low significance, as derived from their evidential value

3 The watching brief

3.1 Field methodology

- 3.1.1 The ground was broken out and cleared by contractors. Areas were excavated by hand by the contractors and monitored by a member of staff from MOLA. Excavation was in strips of varying size (<1.0m in corners and <1.5m elsewhere) in a “hit and miss pattern” with alternate underpins opened at any one time. The slab was broken sufficient to allow excavation to take place. Underpins were dug to 24.99m and sufficiently far beneath the cellar wall to support it.
- 3.1.2 Archaeological observations were recorded in accordance with the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (MOLA 2018). Observations were made by Senior Archaeologists on the occasions when alternate underpins were open before new structures were cast in concrete.
- 3.1.3 Observations were offset surveyed to the existing basement wall and related via a digital survey of the basement and a topographic survey of site surroundings to features observed on the OS 1:1250 “Master map” digital mapping. Levels (in metres above Ordnance Datum, m OD) are related to digital survey levels (Topographic Survey Sheet 2, Dwg P751/T/02 and Basement Plan, Dwg P751/B/02, both March 2016, Point 2 Surveyors Ltd, and “Underpinning at Basement Level”, Project 13873, Dwg SK-UP1 rev A, SimpsonTWS 2020)

3.2 Recording methodology

- 3.2.1 A written and drawn record of all archaeological deposits encountered was carried out in accordance with the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (MOLA 2018).

3.3 Site archive

Number of trench record sheets	0
Number of overall location plans	1 digital
Number of Context (SU) sheets	0
Number of photographs	4
Number of Plan sheets	0
Number of Sections	0
Notes on “Underpinning at Basement Level” drawing	1

4 Results of the watching brief

4.1 Underpinning holes

Location	North-west and south-west basement perimeter walls
Dimensions	Individual U-pins <2m x 1m-1.5m x 2m deep. Total length 37m x <2m x 2m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	26.8m OD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	None
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	24.8m OD Approx.
Top of surviving natural observed at	Above level of observations
Level of base of trench	24.8m OD Approx.

- 4.1.1 Horizontally bedded course orangey-yellow sand with small river-worn pebbles was observed in all exposures. They were interpreted as Pleistocene river terrace deposits. There were no archaeological remains, deposits, or prehistoric finds recorded within the gravels.



Photo 1 U-pin hole, looking west



Photo 2 U-pin hole, looking west

4.2 The finds

4.2.1 There were no finds.

5 Archaeological potential

5.1 Answering original research aims

5.1.1 Research aims were addressed as follows:

- Only natural terrace gravels were exposed.
- It is possible that Langley Silts Complex Brickearth survives beyond the basement, to the north-west of the site.
- No archaeological deposits (“earliest” and “latest”) were observed.
- Modern basements have removed all potential archaeological deposits. There is the potential for archaeological remains outside the basement, to the north-west of the site.

5.2 Significance of the data

5.2.1 The data is of local significance only.

6 Publication and archiving

- 6.1.1 The results of the watching brief will be made publicly available by means of a database in digital form, to permit inclusion of the site data in any future academic research into the development of London.
- 6.1.2 The site archive containing original records and finds will be stored in accordance with the terms of the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (MOLA 2018).
- 6.1.3 In view of the limited potential of the material (Sections 5) and the relatively limited significance of the data (Section 5.2) it is suggested that a short note on the results of the watching brief should appear in the annual round up of the *London Archaeologist*.

7 Bibliography

Archaeological Archive Forum, 2011 *Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation transfer and curation*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, (CIFA), 2014 *By-Laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, Standard and guidance: watching brief*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, (CIFA), 2014 *By-Laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, Standard and guidance: the creation, compilation deposition and transfer of archaeological archives*

Historic England Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service, 2015 *Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Greater London*

MOLA, 2017 191 Old Marylebone Road, London, NW1, Historic environment assessment, MOLA unpub report

MOLA, 2018 191 Old Marylebone Road, London, NW1, Written scheme of investigation for an archaeological watching brief, MOLA unpub report

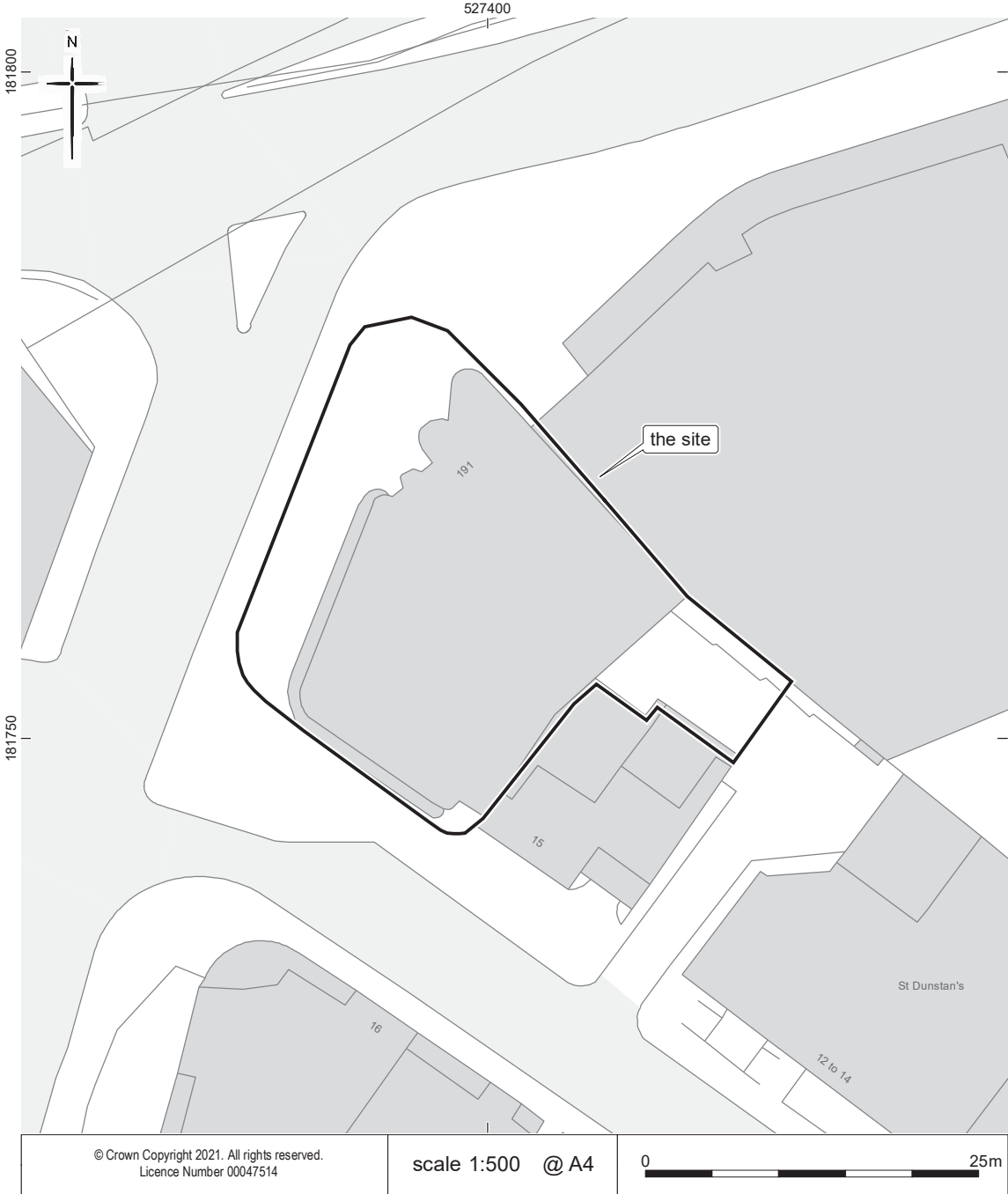
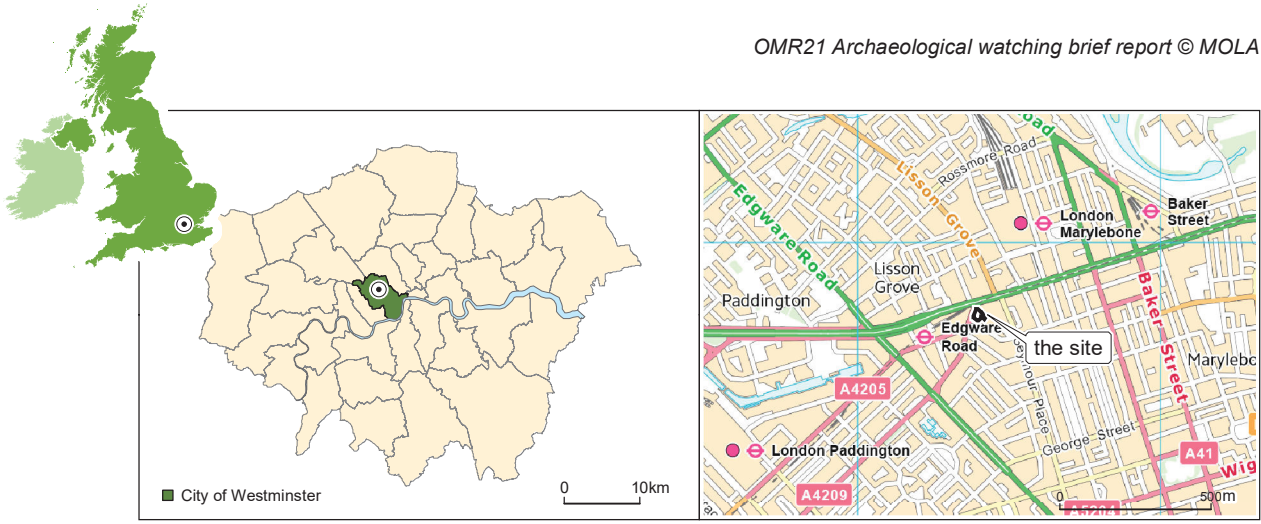


Fig 1 Site location

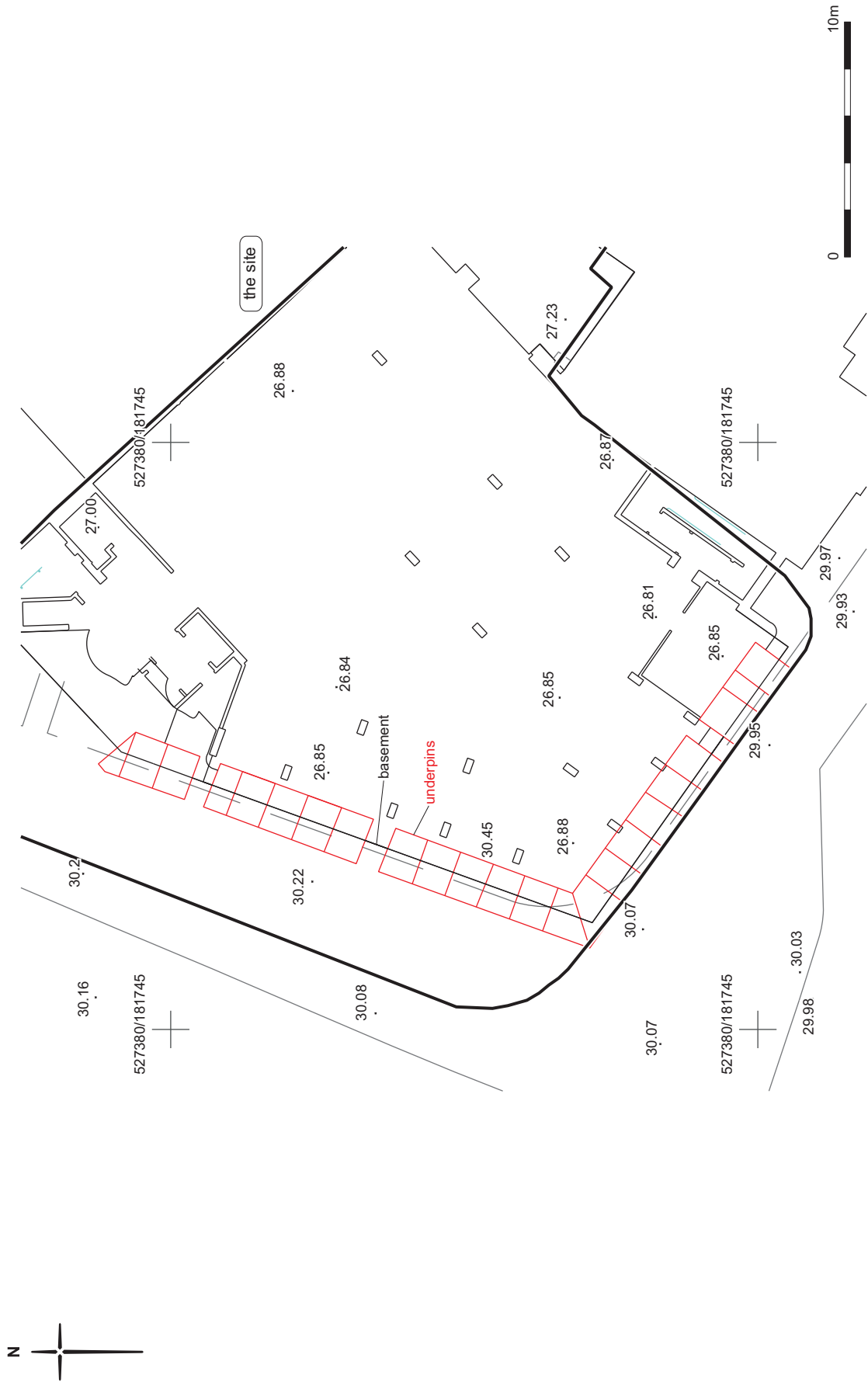


Fig 2 Location of underpinning

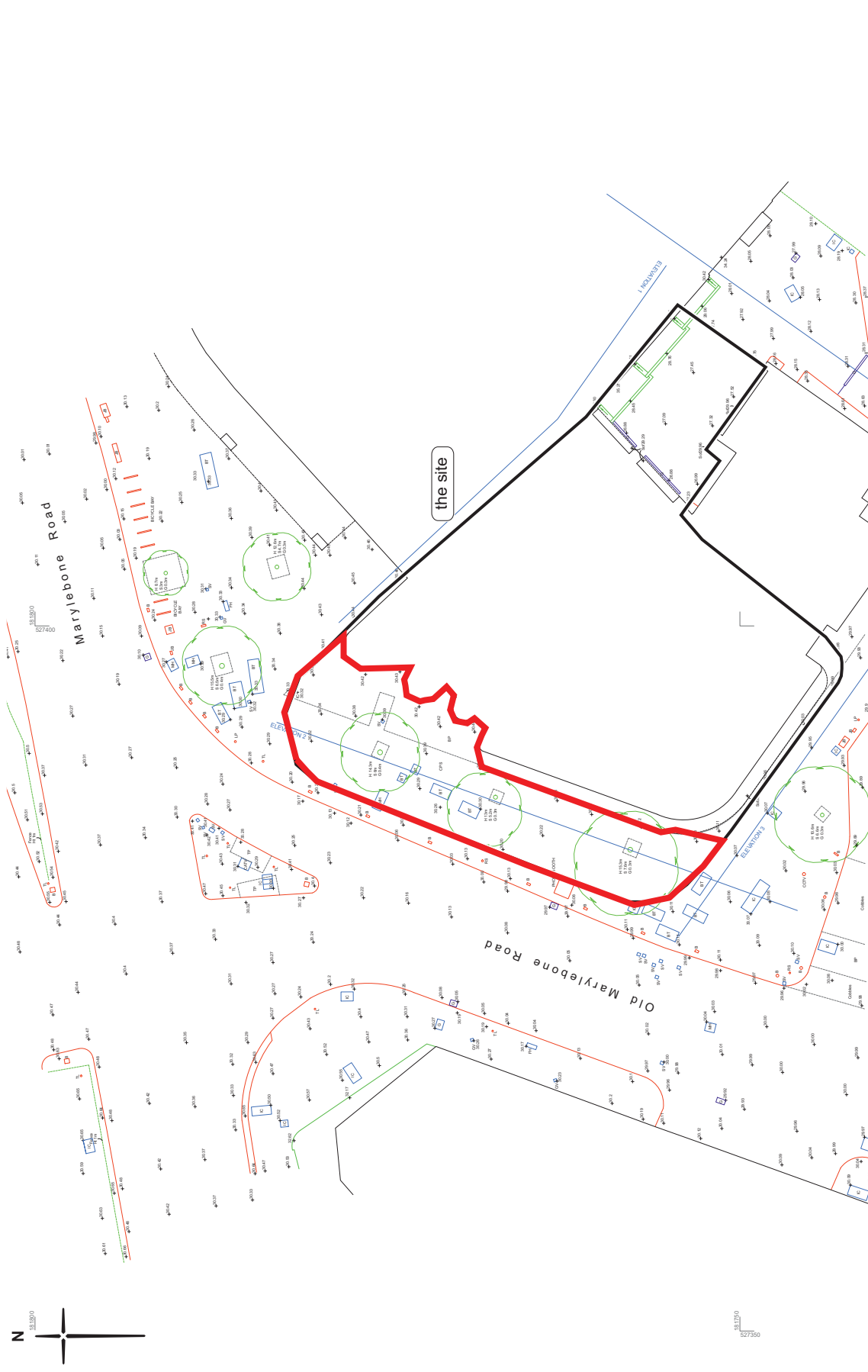


Fig 3 - Archaeological interest area

Archaeological interest area



8 OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID (UID)	molas1-502247
Project Name	Field Observation (Monitoring) at 191 Old Marylebone Road
Activity type	Field Observation (Monitoring)
Project Identifier(s)	OMR21
Planning Id	17/04194/FULL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	MOLA
Project Dates	19-Feb-2021 - 22-Mar-2021
Location	191 Old Marylebone Road NGR : TQ 27400 81758 LL : 51.5203812036457, - 0.165159198965784 12 Fig : 527400,181758
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Greater London District : Westminster Parish : Westminster, unparished area
Project Methodology	Underpinning of an existing basement (re-used) was observed as alternate "hit and miss" underpinning holes. Only natural Pleistocene river terrace gavels were observed. No archaeological remains
Project Results	There is scope for archaeological remains to survive within the site boundary in areas that have not been excavated or disturbed. The existing basement has truncated natural Pleistocene river terrace gravel. There is a theoretical possibility for Palaeolithic tools to be found within the gravel, particularly associated with silt pockets, but none were observed in this limited exposure
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