



55 Baker Street  
London  
W1

An Archaeological Evaluation Report

September 2005



MUSEUM OF LONDON

Archaeology Service

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London  
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An Archaeological Evaluation Report

Project Manager  
Author

Sophie Jackson  
Isca Howell  
Rachel Howcroft and  
Sophie Lamb

**Museum of London Archaeology Service**

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Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED

tel 020 7410 2200 fax 020 7410 2202

email [molas@molas.org.uk](mailto:molas@molas.org.uk)

## **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 55 Baker Street, London W1. The report was commissioned from MoLAS by London & Regional.*

*The evaluation was undertaken in support of two applications submitted by London & Regional; the first for piling works (PT/05/05090/FULL) and the second for alterations and extensions to the existing building, including enabling works beneath existing basement (PT/05/05091/FULL).*

*The evaluation has shown the existing basement would have removed any archaeological remains in this area of the site. However a short length of late 18th century wall, which appears to have been part of the Life Guards stables, was found on the Rodmarton Street frontage.*

*In the light of revised understanding of the archaeological potential of the site the report concludes that no further archaeological work will be required beneath the existing basement level.*

*There is some potential for archaeological remains outside the existing basement, away from deep service trenches, along the Rodmorton Street frontage. Any future groundworks in this area should be monitored to record evidence of the remains of 18th century foundations.*

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Site background

The evaluation took place at 55 Baker Street, hereafter called 'the site'. The site is bounded by Baker Street to the east, Blandford Street to the south, Rodmarton Street to the west, and Dorset Street to the north (Fig 1). The centre of the site lies at National Grid reference 528000 181600. Modern pavement level near to the site lies at *c* 25m OD. The existing basement slab lies at a level of *c* 21.30m OD. The site code is BKQ 05.

A desk-top *Archaeological impact assessment* was previously prepared, which covers the whole area of the site (Cowan 2004) The *assessment* document should be referred to for information on the natural geology, archaeological and historical background of the site, and the initial interpretation of its archaeological potential.

An archaeological field evaluation was subsequently carried out on 9 test-pits in August 2005.

## 1.2 Planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Method Statement*, which formed the project design for the evaluation (Malcolm 2005, section 1.2).

## 1.3 Planning background

The evaluation was undertaken in support of two applications submitted by London & Regional; the first for piling works (PT/05/05090/FULL) and the second for alterations and extensions to the existing building, including enabling works beneath existing basement (PT/05/05091/FULL).

## 1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by London and Regional 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 and objectives were established in the *Method Statement* for the evaluation (Malcolm 2005, section 2.2):

- What is the nature and level of natural topography?
- What are the date and nature of any archaeological deposits identified?
- Is there any evidence for deposits associated with the River Tyburn, or one of its tributaries?
- Are the areas adjacent to the ramps less truncated than the remainder of the site?

## **2 Topographical and historical background**

### **2.1 Topography**

Modern street level outside the site is at 24.2m OD. It has been estimated that the natural gravel on the study site is at a height of *c* 21.4 up to 22.2m OD. Natural features on the site might include former watercourses associated with the Tyburn river.

### **2.2 Prehistoric**

Several isolated Palaeolithic artefacts were found in the vicinity during the 18th and 19th centuries.

### **2.3 Roman**

Although the site is close to the known route of a Roman road, aligned along the present Edgware Road, it is not immediately adjacent and would have lain in open fields.

### **2.4 Saxon**

It is unlikely that any Saxon material will be found on the site.

### **2.5 Medieval**

The site lies to the southwest of the medieval village of Marylebone, probably in open fields. The Tyburn river flowed in the vicinity during this period and if any associated watercourses exist on site then preserved organic deposits and artefacts might also be present. There may also be evidence of previous water control in the form of weirs or timber revetments.

### **2.6 Post-medieval**

The site remained undeveloped until the late 18th century. Horwood's map of 1799 shows the site occupied by small houses and the Life Guards stables (see front cover). In 1834 the Baker Street Bazaar was founded on the site by, amongst others, Madame Tussard, who made a permanent home there until 1884 when the waxworks moved to their present site.



### 3 The evaluation

#### 3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and monitoring during the evaluation was carried out in accordance with the preceding *Method Statement* (Malcolm 2005), and the MoLAS *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS 1994).

Nine test pits were excavated.

The slab/ground was broken out and cleared by contractors. Trenches were excavated by machine by the contractors, and monitored by a member of staff from MoLAS.

The locations of evaluation trenches were recorded by contractors, Expedition (Dwg No SK024), with the exception of Test pits 10 and 11, which were offset from the adjacent building and plotted on to the geotechnical plan (Dwg No SK024).

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). Levels were calculated from adjacent spot-heights on the engineer's plan (supplied by DP9; -01.dwg)

The site has produced 2 trench location plans 9 trench record sheets, 7 context records and 1 plan at 1:20. No finds were recovered from the site.

The site records can be found under the site code BKQ 05, which will be presented to the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) within 12 months of the date of this report.

#### 3.2 Results of the evaluation

For test pit locations see Fig 2.

<i>Test pit 1</i>	
Location	Southeast corner of the basement
Dimensions	3.00m by 2.10m
Top of slab	21.25m OD
Base of modern	20.80m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	19.60m OD
Natural observed	20.80m OD

The test pit measured 3.00m x 2.10m and was machine excavated to a depth of 1.65m, or 19.60m OD.

The test pit exposed 0.90m of a friable mid yellowish red clay [2], interpreted as the upper oxidised levels of the London Clay.

The clay was overlain by 0.30m of a light orangeish brown gravel [1], interpreted as natural Terrace Gravels. The gravel was only seen on the east side of the test pit.

These deposits were capped by the 0.45m of concrete slab to the floor level at 21.25m OD.

<i>Test pit 3</i>	
Location	Central part of the site towards Baker Street
Dimensions	2.10m by 1.90m
Top of slab	21.35m OD
Base of modern	20.85m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	19.70m OD
Natural observed	20.85m OD

The test pit measured 2.10m x 1.90m and was machine excavated to a depth of 1.65m, or 19.70m OD.

The test pit exposed 1.15m of a friable mid yellowish red clay [2], interpreted as the upper oxidised levels of the London Clay.

This deposit was capped by the 0.50m of concrete slab to the floor level at 21.35m OD.

<i>Test pit 4</i>	
Location	Central part of the site towards Rodmarton Street
Dimensions	2.30m by 1.50m
Top of slab	21.25m OD
Base of modern	20.90m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	19.65m OD
Natural observed	20.90m OD

The test pit measured 2.30m x 1.50m and was machine excavated to a depth of 1.60m, or 19.65m OD. This pit was inspected instead of Test pit 5 as demolition was taking place in that area.

The test pit exposed 1.25m of a friable mid yellowish red clay [2], interpreted as the upper oxidised levels of the London Clay.

This deposit was capped by the 0.35m of concrete slab to the floor level at 21.25m OD.

<i>Test pit 6</i>	
Location	Northwest part of site within former plant

	room
Dimensions	3.10m by 1.70m
Top of slab	21.27m OD
Base of modern fill	19.67m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	19.67m OD
Natural observed	19.67m OD

The test pit measured 3.10m x 1.70m and was machine excavated to a depth of 1.60m, or 19.67m OD.

The test pit exposed friable mid yellowish red clay [2], interpreted as the upper oxidised levels of the London Clay, at the base of the test pit. This was overlain by 1.10m of modern fill to 20.77m OD.

These deposits were capped by the 0.50m of concrete slab to the floor level at 21.27m OD.

<i>Test pit 7</i>	
Location	Northeast corner of site
Dimensions	1.50m by 1.10m
Top of slab	21.36m OD
Base of modern	20.71m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	19.76m OD
Natural observed	20.71m OD

The test pit measured 1.50m x 1.10m and was machine excavated to a depth of 1.60m, or 19.76m OD.

The test pit exposed 0.95m of a friable mid yellowish red clay [2], interpreted as the upper oxidised levels of the London Clay. This was overlain by 0.30m of modern fill to 21.01m OD.

These deposits were capped by the 0.35m of concrete slab to the floor level at 21.36m OD.

<i>Test pit 8</i>	
Location	Between TP3 and TP7 towards Baker Street frontage
Dimensions	2.40m by 1.50m
Top of slab	21.33m OD
Base of modern	20.43m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	19.83m OD
Natural observed	20.43m OD

The test pit measured 2.40m x 1.50m and was machine excavated to a depth of 1.50m, or 19.83m OD.

The test pit exposed 0.60m of a friable mid yellowish red clay [2], interpreted as the upper oxidised levels of the London Clay. This was overlain by 0.35m of modern fill to 20.78m OD.

These deposits were capped by the 0.55m of concrete slab to the floor level at 21.33m OD.

<i>Test pit 9</i>	
Location	Near Dorset Street frontage between TP6 and TP7
Dimensions	2.90m by 1.20m
Modern ground level/top of slab	21.36m OD
Base of modern	Not seen
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	19.86m OD
Natural observed	N/A

The test pit measured 2.90m x 1.20m and was machine excavated to a depth of 1.50m, or 19.86m OD.

The test pit exposed 1.00m of modern fill to 20.86m OD. Modern intrusions were seen on the south, east and west sides

These deposits were capped by the 0.50m of concrete slab to the floor level at 21.36m OD.

<i>Test pit 10</i>	
Location	Romarton Street entrance (north side)
Dimensions	1.25m by 1.25m
Modern ground level	24.89m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	24.34m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.00m
Level of base of deposits observed	23.39m OD
Natural observed	23.39m OD

The test pit measured 1.25m x 1.25m and was hand excavated to a depth of 1.50m, or 23.39m OD.

At the base, the top surface of a gravel deposit [7] was observed, provisionally interpreted as natural. This was overlain by 0.20m of firm light brown sandy silt [6], interpreted as a sub-soil. The sub-soil was sealed by 0.25m of loose black silt [5], described as make up/dump/accumulation. The black deposit was cut [4] by an unfrogged dark red brick wall [3], aligned northwest–southeast (see Fig 3). It was severely truncated to the north by a modern pipe but survived to ten courses high in the southeast corner. The location and orientation of the wall suggests it is part of a building shown on the Horwood map of 1799 and part of the Life Guards stables (see front cover). Brick rubble, probably from recent demolition, was observed either side of the wall to 24.34m OD.

These deposits were sealed by 0.50m of made ground to pavement level at 24.89m OD

<i>Test pit 11</i>	
Location	Romarton Street entrance (south side)
Dimensions	1.25m by 1.25m
Modern ground level/top of slab	24.75m OD
Base of modern	Not seen
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	23.55m OD
Natural observed	Not seen

The test pit measured 1.25m x 1.25m and was hand excavated to a depth of 1.20m, or 23.55m OD.

Only modern deposits were observed.

### 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 it is certain that there are no archaeological deposits surviving anywhere in the basement. However it proved difficult to find spaces on the Rodmarton Street frontage for the test pits due to the proximity of high voltage cables at the top of the ramps.

## 4 Archaeological potential

### 4.1 Realisation of original research aims

- What is the nature and level of natural topography?

*The top surface of a gravel deposit [7] was observed in Test pit 10, on the Rodmarton Street frontage, at 23.39m OD. However this is only a provisional interpretation because of the limited area observed. No other relatively untruncated areas of natural were observed on the site. Truncated gravel was recorded in the basement at 20.80m OD, just above oxidised London Clay.*

- What are the date and nature of any archaeological deposits identified?

*Two archaeological deposits were identified: a subsoil [6] and a make up [5]. The sub-soil was not dated but the make up was probably associated with wall [3]. Cartographic evidence and spot-dating of the bricks indicate a late 18th century date for the make up. The only archaeological deposits observed were in Test pit 10.*

- Is there any evidence for deposits associated with the Tyburn river, or one of its tributaries?

*There was no conclusive evidence for deposits associated with the Tyburn river, or one of its tributaries.*

- Are the areas adjacent to the ramps less truncated than the remainder of the site?

*Whilst no test pits directly evaluated these areas, the evidence from Test pit 10 indicates that total truncation of archaeological cannot be assumed.*

### 4.2 General discussion of potential

The evaluation has shown potential for the survival of archaeological deposits on the Rodmarton Street frontage, although this is only likely in small pockets.

### 4.3 Significance

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

## **5 Proposed development impact and recommendations**

The proposed works will involve the partial demolition of the current building and the extension and alteration of the existing building including works to extend the existing basement.

There will be no impact on archaeology from construction work below the existing basement. There may be some limited impact outside the existing basement walls on the Rodmarton Street frontage, in the vicinity of Test pit 10, and potential deposits at the top of the two ramps (see Fig 4).

No further archaeological work will, be required in the basement. Ground reduction along the Rodmarton Street frontage could be monitored under archaeological watching brief conditions to record any further remains of 18th century brick foundations.

The decision on the appropriate archaeological response rests with the Local Planning Authority and their designated archaeological advisor.

## **6 Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank Andrew Farqhanson of Erith and Sam Hine of DP9 for their assistance during the evaluation. Rachael Howcroft is duly acknowledged for her assistance with the figures for this report, as part of her work experience.

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## 8 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

**OASIS ID: molas1-10168**

### Project details

Project name 55 Baker Street

Short description of the project The evaluation has shown the existing basement would have removed any archaeological remains in this area of the site. However a short length of 18th century wall, which appears to have been part of Life Guards stables, was found on the Rodmarton Street frontage.

Project dates Start: 24-08-2005 End: 08-09-2005

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes BKQ 05 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Other 2 - In use as a building

Monument type WALL Post Medieval

Methods & techniques 'Test Pits'

Development type Building refurbishment/repairs/restoration

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER MARYLEBONE ST JOHNS WOOD AND MAYFAIR 55 Baker Street

Postcode W1

Study area 1.00 Hectares

National reference grid TQ 28000 81600 Point

Height OD Min: 23.00m Max: 24.00m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation MoLAS

Project originator brief English Heritage/Department of Environment

Project originator design MoLAS

Project director/manager Gordon Malcolm

Project supervisor Isca Howell

Sponsor or funding body London and Regional

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient LAARC

Physical Archive ID BKQ 05

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Archive ID BKQ 05

Digital available Media 'Survey','Text'

Paper Archive ID BKQ 05

Paper Media 'Context sheet','Correspondence','Drawing','Report'

available

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**Project**

**bibliography**

Publication type      Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title                      55 Baker Street London W1

Author(s)/Editor(s)    Howell, I

Date                        2005

Issuer or publisher     MoLAS

Place of issue or  
publication              London

Description              Unpublished MoLAS report

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Entered by                Isca Howell (Iscah@molas.org.uk)

Entered on                12 September 2005



Fig 1 Site Location

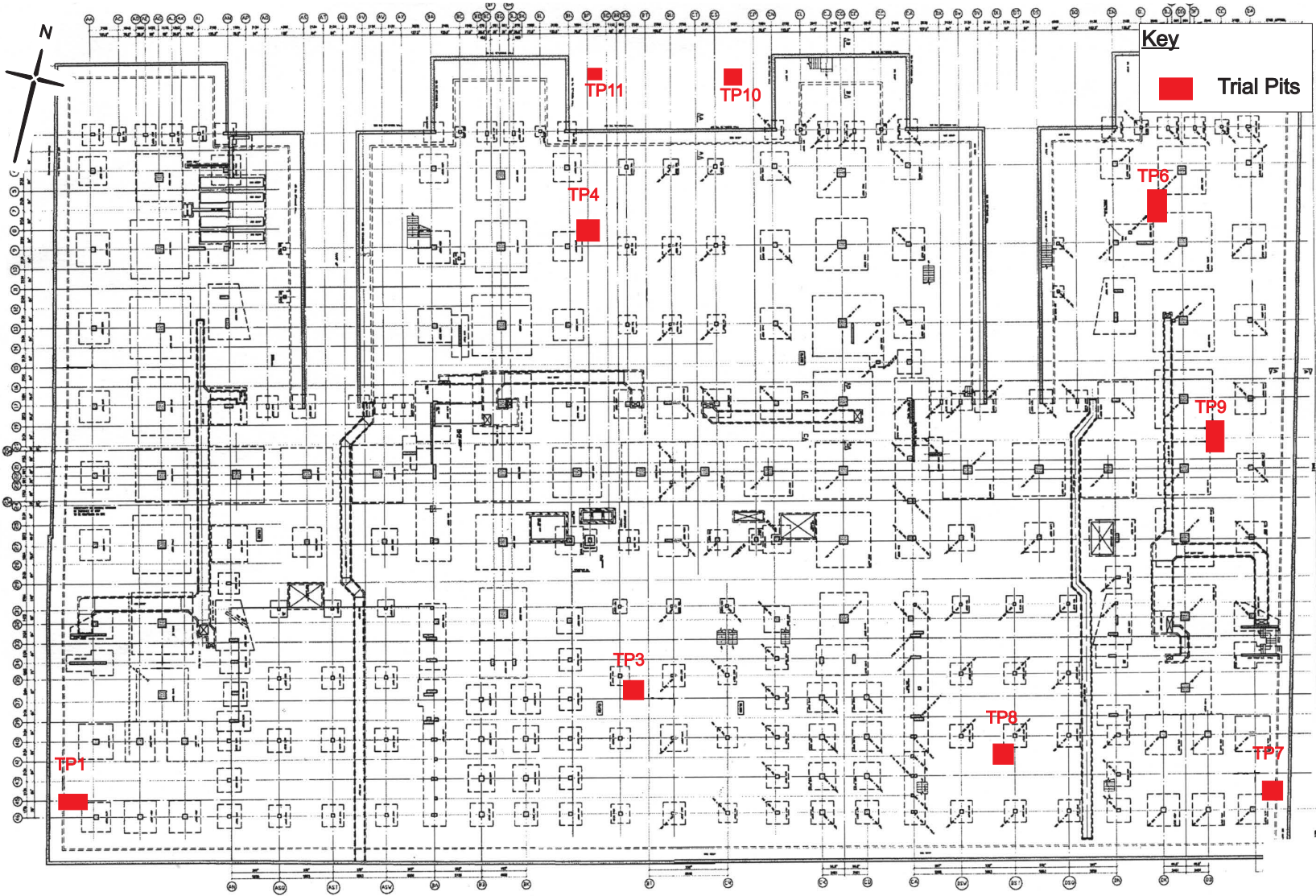


Fig 2 Location of Test Pits

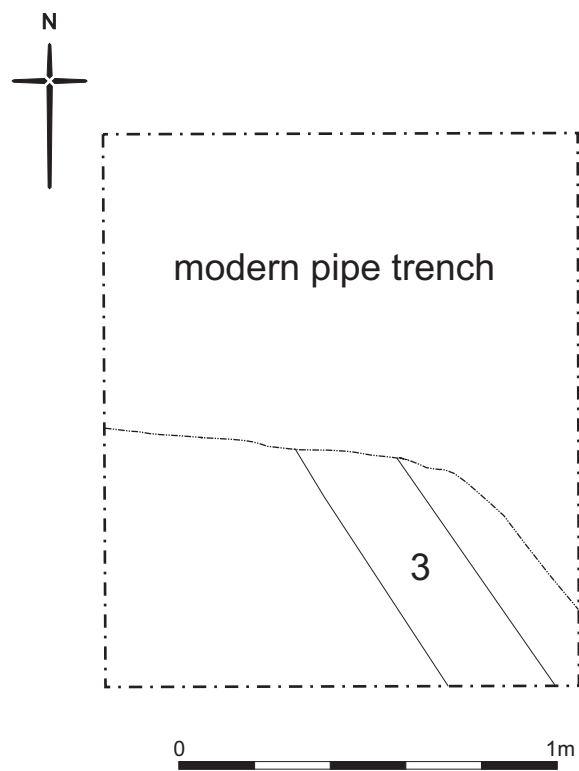


Fig 3 Plan of Test Pit 10

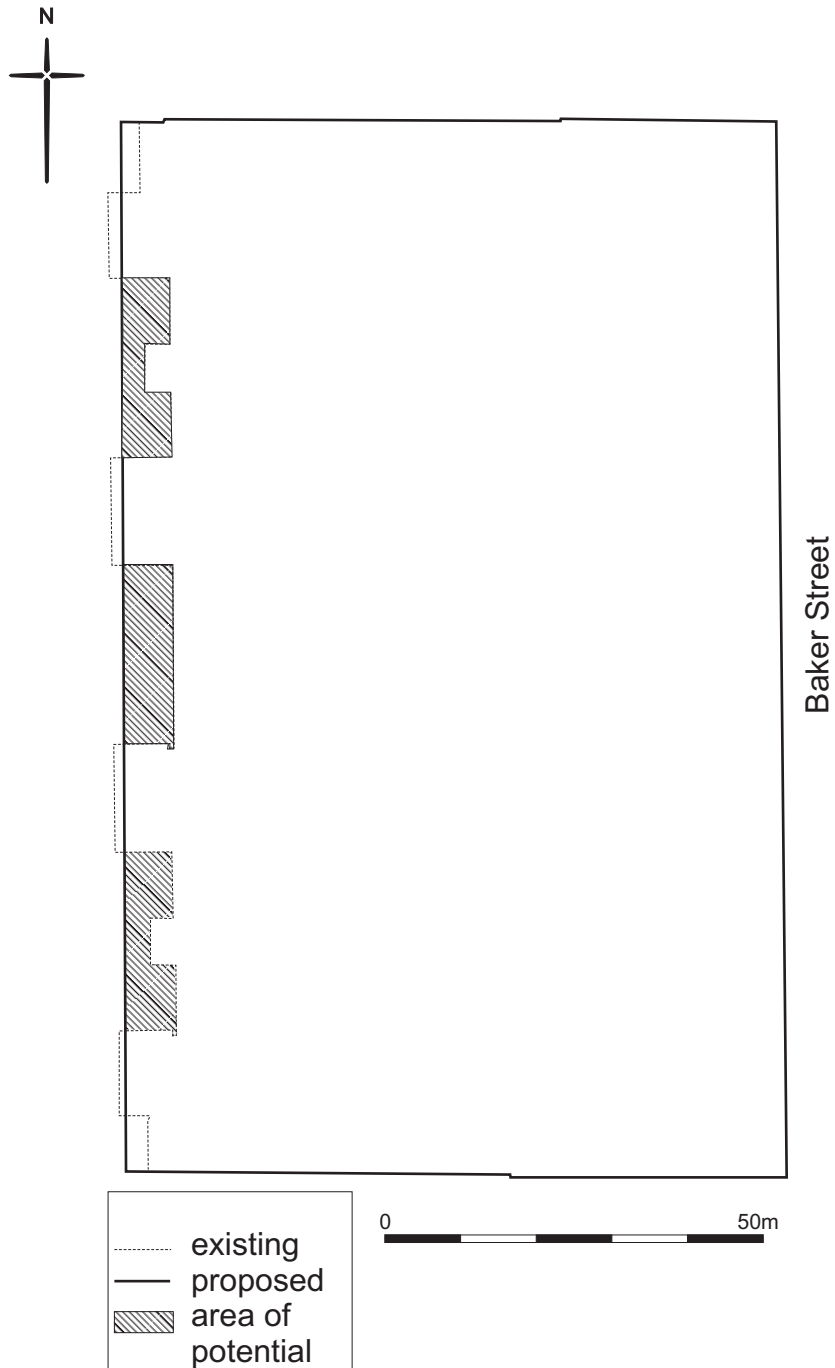


Fig 4 Areas of Potential Impact