



77 SOUTH AUDLEY STREET
London W1K

City of Westminster

Evaluation report

March 2012



77 South Audley Street London W1

Site Code STA11

Report on an archaeological evaluation

Sign-off History:

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Summary (non-technical)

This report presents the preliminary results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) on the site of 77 South Audley Street, London W1. The report was commissioned from MOLA by Rodeo Developments Limited.

Following the recommendations of the Archaeology Advisor at English Heritage GLAAS placed a condition (Condition15) that required an archaeological field evaluation, in total four evaluation trenches were proposed, of which only two on the north side of the site revealed in situ archaeological remains. Natural gravel was recorded on the northern side of the site sloping down towards the east. Above the gravel buried topsoil, represented the top of rural open land predating post-medieval urban development and could be medieval in date. Tiswell's map of 1585 shows this part of Westminster to be open meadows.

A single course of a red brick wall, possibly of 17th/ 18th century date, aligned ESE/WNW had survived in one of the trenches and represent the earliest evidence for post-medieval development on the site. Further development was evidenced by an east -west wall dated to the mid 19th century and a brick pier base on late 19th/early 20th century.

The final results of the field evaluation will help to refine the initial assessment of the archaeological potential of the site.

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Site background

The evaluation took place at 77 South Audley Street, London W1, hereafter called 'the site' (Fig 1). It is bounded by properties fronting onto Deanery Street to the west and north, by South Audley Street to the east and by Deanery Mews and a property fronting South Audley to the south. The OS National Grid Ref. for centre of site is 528410 180360. The level of the basement slab lies at 22.30m OD. Modern ground level immediately adjacent to the site is 24.30 OD. The site code is STA11.

A desk-top *Archaeological (impact) assessment* was previously prepared, which covers the whole area of the site (MOLA 2007). In 2011 an Update addendum (MoLA 2011) was written to inform on changes in the planning policy and add further archaeological data pertaining to investigations within the immediate vicinity of the site (Section 1.3); of the latter criteria, the most relevant of these, being 49 Park Lane (PKJ07) c 35m to the southwest. 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.

The archaeological field evaluation was subsequently carried out on a series of test-pits within the existing building in February 2012.

1.1 Planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Method Statement (MoLA 2012) and Archaeological impact assessment Update addendum (MoLA 2012)* which formed the project design for the evaluation (see Section 1, MoLA, 2012).

1.2 Planning background

The planning proposal consists of the demolition of the existing office building and the construction of a five and six storey residential unit and a seven-storey commercial property with basement. The original façade of 77 South Audley Street is to be retained. The desk-based assessment (MoLA 2007) and update addendum (MoLA 2011) formed the initial stage of archaeological investigation in relation to the planning process in order that the local authority could formulate an appropriate response in light of any identified archaeological resource.

The evaluation forms the second stage of archaeological investigation and will test the veracity of the information contained with the desk-based assessment. The results from the evaluation enable the local planning authority to make an informed decision in respect of an appropriate mitigation strategy for any significant archaeological remains on the site.

1.3 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Rodeo Developments Limited and produced by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA). The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute for 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.

1.4 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 (Section 2.2):

- What is the nature and level of natural topography?
- What are the earliest deposits identified? Do any prehistoric, Roman or medieval field boundaries or drainage ditches survive below the existing basement?
- Is there any evidence for structures pertaining to London's Civil War defences?
- Do 18th- and 19th-century foundations or quarry pits exist on the site?

2 Topographical and historical background

Information regarding the topographical and historical background can be found in the Archaeological desk-based assessment (MoLA 20070 and Update addendum (MoLA 2011).

3 The evaluation

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and monitoring during the evaluation was carried out in accordance with the preceding *Method Statement* (MOLA, 2012), and the *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS, 1994).

Evaluation trenches 3 and 4 were excavated on the southern side of the site

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

The locations of evaluation trenches were recorded by MOLA offsetting from adjacent standing walls and plotted on to a Basement Survey (Drg. No. 11/2428 by Concept Site Investigations at a scale of 1:100).

A written and drawn record of all archaeological deposits encountered was made in accordance with the principles set out in the MOLA site recording manual (MOLAS, 1994). Levels on the basement floor were calculated by a traverse from a known Bench Mark, value 24.68m OD in Hill Street to the northeast.

The site has produced: 4 trench sheets; 1 location plan; 1 context sheet; 2 section drawings at 1:20. No finds, to date have been recovered from the site.

The site finds and records can be found under the site code STA11 in the MoL archive.

3.2 Results of the evaluation

For trench locations see(**Error! Reference source not found.**).

<i>Evaluation Trench 1</i>	
Location	Northern area of the site
Dimensions	4.00m by 2.00m by 1.50m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	22.27m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	21.87m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.05m
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	20.82 m OD
Natural observed	Gravel 21.00-20.82m OD

Trench 1 was located within the northern part of the site and measured 4m by 2m and up to 1.45m deep at the western end (Fig 2). Above the natural gravel, 0.70m thick sandy silt was recorded, that appeared to be evidence for a “topsoil” indicating a rural pre-urban nature of the site and could be of Roman or medieval date, although no dating evidence was found during excavation of the deposit (Fig 4). Cutting through the “topsoil”, at the east end of the site was the remains of a mid 19th century wall aligned east-west, truncated by 20th century construction activity (Fig 5). At the west end of the trench, a stepped brick wall/stanchion base, dated to the early 20th century was recorded.

<i>Evaluation Trench 2</i>	
Location	Central eastern area of the site
Dimensions	2.00m by 2.00m by 0.75-1.73m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	22.27m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	21.60m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.00m
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	20.92 m -20.52m OD
Natural observed	Gravel 20.92 (W) sloping down to (E)-20.52 OD

Trench 2 was located within the central eastern area of the site and measured 2m by 2m and up to 1.73m deep on the northern side (Fig 5). Above the natural gravel a mixed pale sandy colluvial deposit, 0.10-0.20m thick, was recorded and produced a few fragments of friable animal bone. This was overlain by 0.70-1.00 m thick sandy silt that appeared to be evidence for “topsoil” indicating the rural pre-urban nature of the site and could be of Roman or medieval date; although no dating evidence was found during excavation of the deposit (Fig 6). Cutting through the “topsoil”, at the

east end of the site was the remains of a red brick wall aligned WNW/ESE (see *front cover*). A single course of brickwork comprising half bats set directing into the underlying soil (no mortar bonding) was recorded.. Given the alignment of the wall and its construction, it may be 17th or 18th century in date.

<i>Evaluation Trench 3</i>	
Location	Southwest area of the site
Dimensions	2.00m by 2.00m by 1.50m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	22.27m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	20.80m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	None
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	20.80 m OD
Natural observed	N/A

Trench 3 was located in the southwest corner of the site. It was originally to measure 4m north-south by 2m east-west, but was reduced to 2m by 2m, however the slab at the north end of the trench was found to be over 1.50m deep. Immediately to the south of trench 3, a turning circle was present, indicating that some considerable extent of this area was taken up with concrete foundations for the structure. As such it warranted no further excavation. No archaeological remains were found to survive.

<i>Evaluation Trench 4</i>	
Location	Central south area of the site
Dimensions	1.80 by 1.90 by 2.04m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	22.27m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	22.10m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.73m deep
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	20.37m OD
Natural observed	N/A

Trench 4 was located against the southern external wall within the building. Below the slab the deposits encountered consisted of modern rubble and natural iron panned sand. The rubble fragments were quite varied and consisted of Victorian yellow stock bricks, 20th century frogged London bricks, 1930 glazed tile fragments, broken York paving slabs and the occasional fragment of asbestos. Mixed with the rubble was natural dark orange sand, some of which was seen in large iron-panned lumps. At a depth of 1.30m below the basement slab a concrete pier base was recorded on the southern side of the trench and evidently the base for a column observed immediately to the east of the trench. The rubble observed was interpreted as construction backfill associated with the present building. No archaeological remains were found to survive

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'.

4 Archaeological potential

4.1 Realisation of original research aims

- *What is the nature and level of natural topography?*

Natural gravel was recorded in trenches 1 and 2, on the northern side of the site and recorded at 21.00m OD, at its highest sloping down to the 20.52 in the east.

- *What are the earliest deposits identified? Do any prehistoric, Roman or medieval field boundaries or drainage ditches survive below the existing basement?*

The earliest deposit identified appears to be pre post-medieval in date and consist of a colluvial deposit underlying a buried topsoil. Bone was present, although no dating evidence was found in association with the fragments. No prehistoric, Roman or medieval field boundaries or drainage ditches were recorded on the site.

- *Is there any evidence for structures pertaining to London's Civil War defences?*

No evidence for Civil War defences were found during the evaluation.

- *Do 18th- and 19th-century foundations or quarry pits exist on the site?*

No evidence for 18th and 19 foundations or quarry pits were found on the site.

4.2 General discussion of potential

The evaluation has shown that the potential for survival of ancient ground surfaces (horizontal archaeological stratification) on the site is high on the northern part of the site. One of the earliest maps of this part of Westminster was drawn by Tiswell in 1585 (Survey of London Vol XXXII) and shows extensive areas of meadowland. This appears to have survived in pockets across the site and has the potential to yield evidence for prehistoric, whilst there is probably low potential for Roman occupation. The presence of the walls has the potential to map the first indications of urban post-medieval development of the area.

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.

Fig 1 Areas of evaluation

Fig 2 Plan of surviving archaeological remains in Trench 1

Fig 3 Section through the archaeological sequence in Trench

Fig 4 Photograph of part of a mid 19th century wall in Trench 1 (viewed from the west)

Fig 5 Plan of surviving archaeological remains in Trench 2

Fig 6 Section through the archaeological sequence in Trench 2

5 Proposed development impact and recommendations

The proposed redevelopment at 77 South Audley Street involves deepening of the lower ground floor down to levels ranging between 20.80 and 21.60m OD. The lowest depths reached within evaluation trenches 3 and 4 were 20.80m and 20.49m OD, at the same level and below the proposed new basement level.

In trenches 1 and 2, to the north, archaeological deposits were found to survive to a height of between 21.60m and 21.87m OD. Any ground reduction to 20.80m would destroy both the archaeological deposits and brick structures.

6 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Rodeo Developments Limited for funding the evaluation, Squibb Group for site attendance, and Diane Abrams of English Heritage.

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8 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

8.1 OASIS ID: molas1-119957

Project details

Project name 77 South Audley Street, London W1

Short description of the project Four trenches were evaluated in the basement of the building, only two of which, on the north side of the site revealed in situ archaeological remains. Natural gravel was recorded on the northern side of the site at c 21.00m OD sloping down to 20.52m OD on towards the east. Above the gravel a sandy silt, similar to topsoil, represented the top of rural open land predating post-medieval urban development and could be Roman or medieval in date. .At the base of the deposit at the junction with the gravel, very friable fragments of animal bone were present, though they are undated as no dateable finds were found in conjunction with it. It was noticeable that very small fragments of red tile/brick were occasionally found within the soil. A single course of a red brick wall, possibly of 17th/18th century date, aligned ESE/WNW had survived in one of the trenches and represent the earliest evidence for post-medieval development on the site. Further development was evidenced by an east -west wall dated to the mid 19th century and a brick pier base on late 19th/early 20th century.

Project dates Start: 20-02-2012 End: 02-03-2012

Previous/future work Yes / Not known

Any associated project reference codes STA11 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices

Monument type BRICK WALLA Post Medieval

Monument type BURIED SOIL Medieval

Significant Finds NONE None

Methods & techniques	'Targeted Trenches'
Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER CITY OF WESTMINSTER 77 South Audley Street
Postcode	W1K 1JG
Study area	670.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 28 80 51.5039228227 -0.155550253208 51 30 14 N 000 09 19 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	MOLA
Project brief originator	MoL Archaeology Project Manager
Project design originator	MOLA
Project director/manager	Beliz Tecirli
Project supervisor	Portia Askew
Type of	Rodeo Developments Limited

sponsor/funding
body

Name of
sponsor/funding
body Rodeo Developments Limited

Project archives

Physical Archive
Exists? No

Digital Archive
recipient LAARC

Digital Media
available 'Images raster / digital photography','Survey','Text'

Paper Archive
recipient LAARC

Paper Media
available 'Context sheet','Diary','Drawing','Manuscript','Notebook -
Excavation',' Research',' General
Notes','Plan','Report','Section','Survey ','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

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Date 2012

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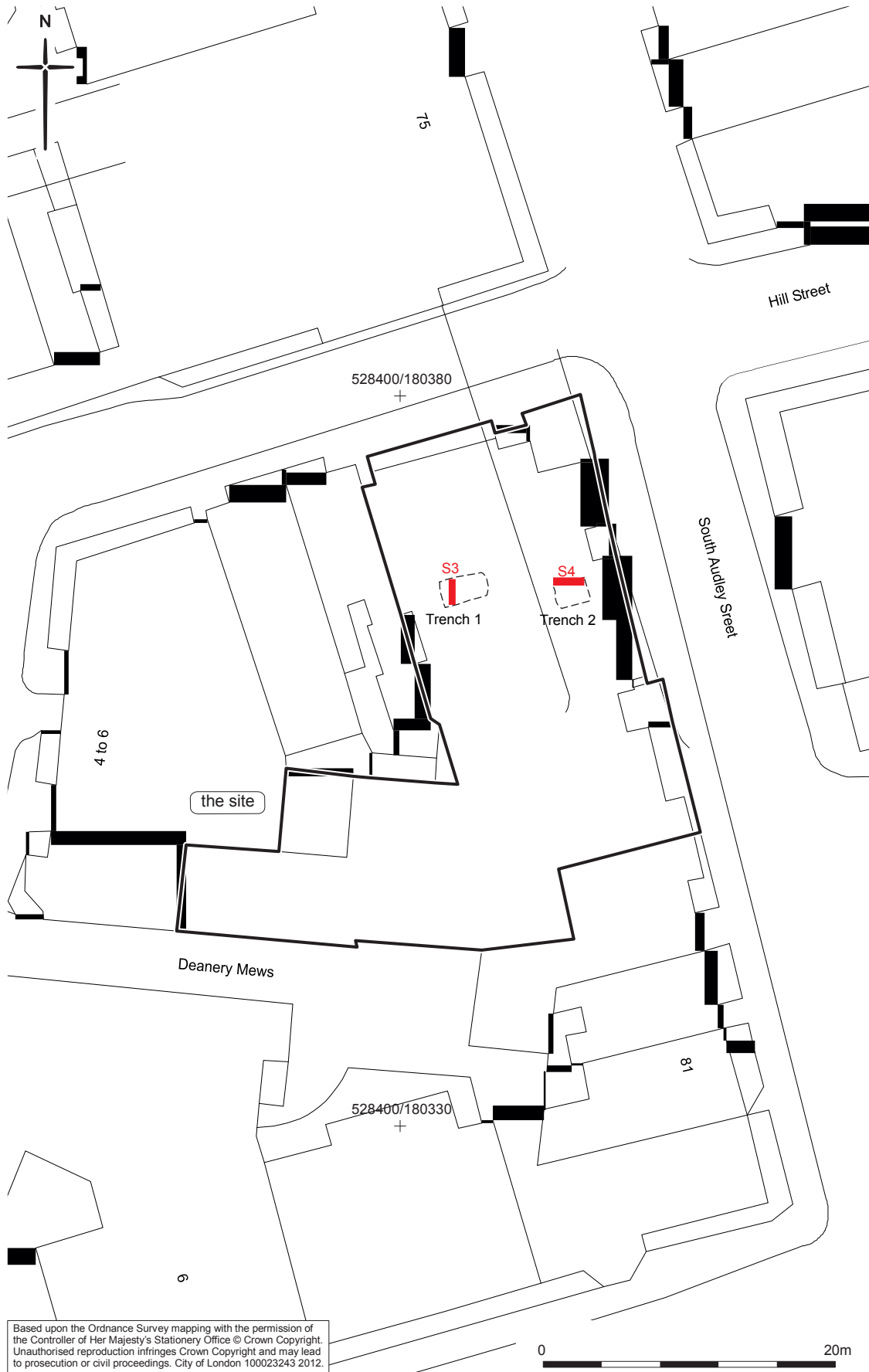
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Entered on 7 March 2012

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2006



Fig 1 Site location



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Fig 2 Areas of evaluation

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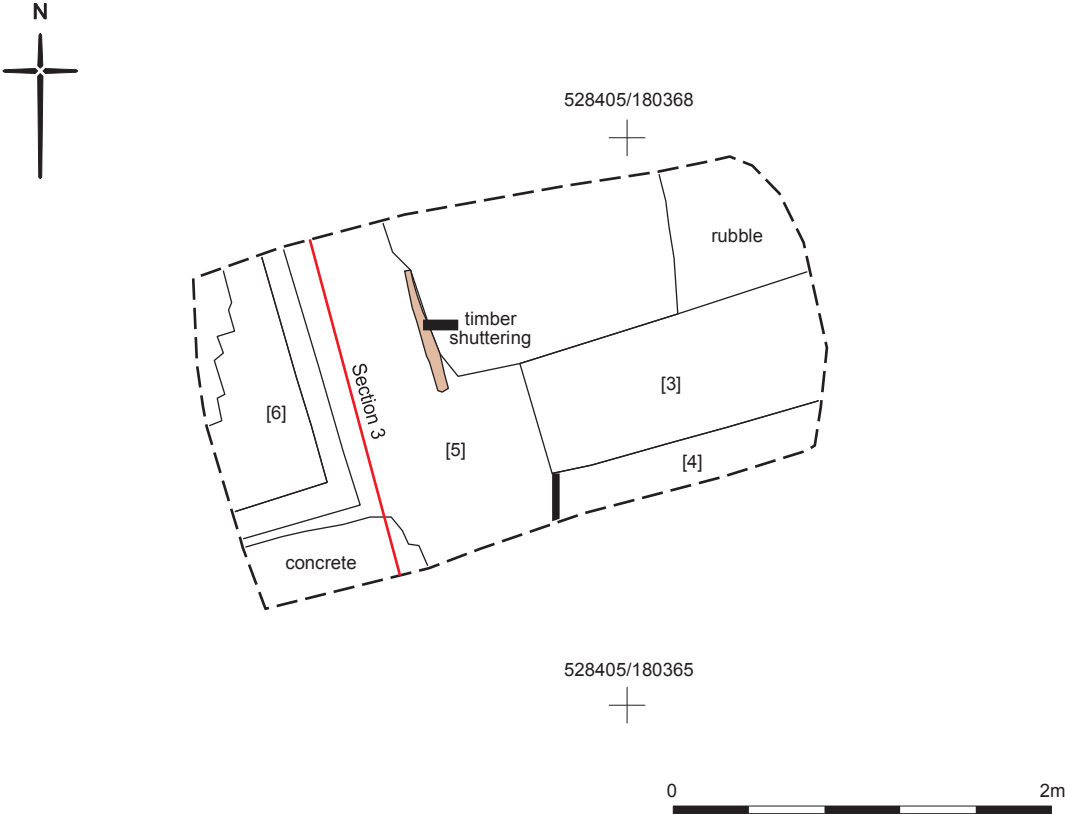


Fig 3 Plan of the archaeological remains in Trench 1

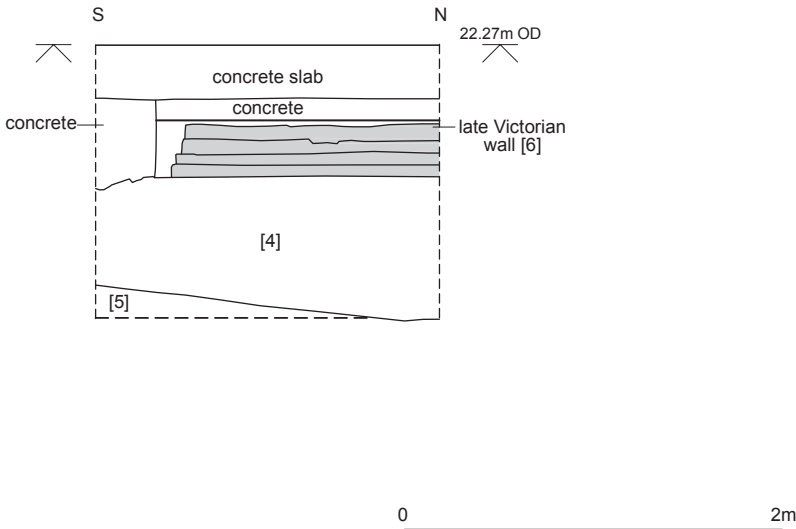


Fig 4 Section through the archaeological sequence in Trench 1



Fig 5 Photograph of part of a mid 19th century wall in Trench 1 (viewed from the west)

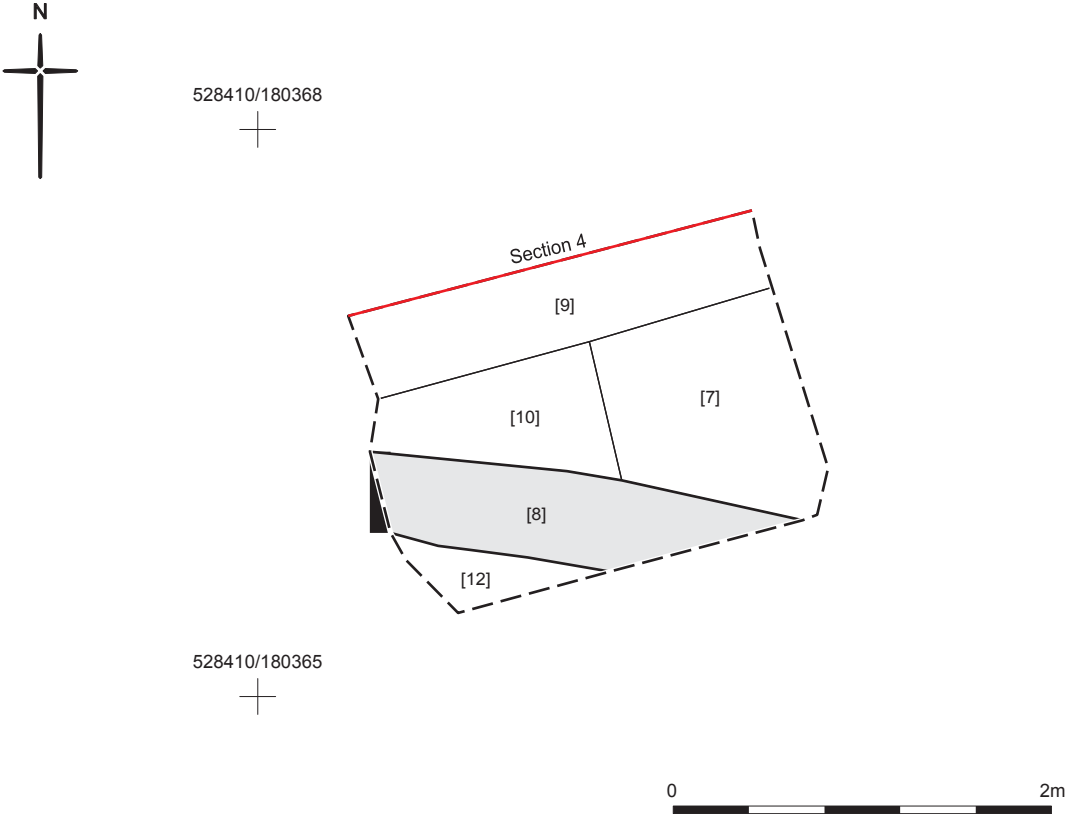


Fig 6 Plan of the archaeological remains in Trench 2

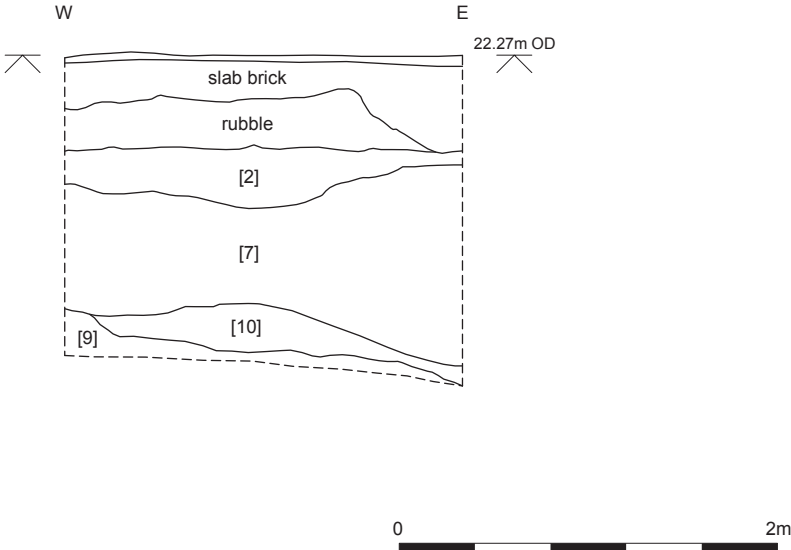


Fig 7 Section through the archaeological sequence in Trench 2