

**PEABODY ESTATE
St John's Hill
London
SW11**

London Borough of Wandsworth

Report on an archaeological evaluation

November 2012



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**PEABODY ESTATE
St John's Hill
London
SW11**

Site Code PBY12

Report on an archaeological evaluation

Sign-off History:

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Summary (non-technical)

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) on the site of the Peabody Estate, St John's Hill, London, SW11. The report was commissioned from MOLA by Gleeds Cost Management Ltd on behalf of the Peabody (Services) Limited.

The archaeological field evaluation was carried out on 13th November 2012, one evaluation trench was excavated in the south of the estate (centrally for the Phase 1 redevelopment). A north/south Victorian wall foundation probably associated with the Royal Freemasons' School, which occupied the site from 1853 to 1934, was recorded in the west of the trench and post-medieval garden or plough soil deposits overlay the subsoil and terrace gravels.

The results of the field evaluation have helped to refine the initial assessment of the archaeological potential of the site. At the south of the site where the evaluation trench was located no archaeological significant deposits were encountered. In light of this revised archaeological understanding of the site, the report concludes that the proposed redevelopment will not impact any archaeological deposits in this area of the site.

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Fig 4 1894 Ordnance Survey map

*Fig 5 The Masonic School for Girls, 1909 (the site of the current Peabody Estate).
Taken from Boutflower Road (Richard Milson©2005)*

Fig 6 Trench 1 looking south-west

Fig 7 Section through deposits in Trench 1 looking south

1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The evaluation took place at the Peabody Estate, St John Hill, London SW11 in the London Borough of Wandsworth, hereafter called 'the site'. The scheme proposed is a mixed-use redevelopment comprising residential units of four to twelve storeys high, proposed retail/office units, new community facilities, open spaces and basement and ground level for car parking. An archaeological evaluation of the site was required under the archaeological planning condition placed on the development (Planning Application No. 2012/1258; Condition 38) and was undertaken in conjunction with a standing building survey, which will be covered under a separate report.

The Peabody Estate lies on the south-eastern side of St John's Hill and is partially separated from St John's Hill by a railway cutting, though there is an access to the north-west corner of the site onto St John's Hill. The site is bounded by Strath Terrace to the south-west, Boutflower Road to the south and Comyn Road and Ecksten Road to the east. The north of the site is bounded by St Johns Hill Road and the Territorial Army centre, with residential properties to the east and southeast. The Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference for the centre of site is 527140 175180 (Fig 1). Modern ground level immediately adjacent to the site where the evaluation trench was located was recorded at c 16.50m OD. The site code for the site is PBY12.

A desk-top *Historical Environmental Assessment* was previously prepared, which covers the whole area of the site (MOLA March 2012). 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. A *Standing Buildings Survey* was carried out on the site by MOLA in October and has now been issued.

The archaeological field evaluation was carried out on 13th November 2012. An evaluation trench was excavated in the south of the site near the Strath Terrace entrance to the estate (Fig 2) as part of the archaeological works required for the proposed Phase 1 redevelopment. This report details the results of that evaluation.

1.2 Planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Historical Environment Assessment* (see Section 9, MOLA March 2012).

1.3 Planning background

An archaeological evaluation on the site was required under an archaeological planning condition placed on the development Planning Application No. 2012/1258; Condition 38.

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Gleeds Cost Management Ltd on behalf of the Peabody (Services) 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

1.5 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 (MOLA October 2012, Section 2.2):

- What is the nature and level of natural topography?
- Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity on the site?
- Is there any evidence for agricultural or gardening activity taking place on the site prior to its development in the mid-19th century?
- What evidence is there for the 19th-century buildings on the site, as shown on historic maps?
- What evidence is there for landscaping and terracing on the site?
- What are the earliest deposits identified?
- What are the latest deposits identified?

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Topography and geology

The site lies c 870m south east of the modern River Thames. Historic maps show a small north-south watercourse following the line of Falcon Road/St John's Road c 125m to the east of the site.

Current general ground level around the site lies at 12.0m–17.0m OD and slopes down from the west to east. The site has been terraced to provide level surfaces for the individual buildings and therefore the ground level within the site varies.

The eastern half of the site overlies London Clay, which extends to the north and south of the site (BGS sheet 270). The western half overlies the Hackney Gravels of the Thames. This gravel deposit has produced many Lower Palaeolithic implements in the past and has a potential for in situ Lower Palaeolithic material.

2.2 Prehistoric

The gravel terrace, on which the western half of the site is located, is one of the oldest and highest gravel terraces in London and has produced many Lower Palaeolithic implements in the past. It has the potential for extremely rare but important in situ material of Lower Palaeolithic date. The gravels would have provided fertile and well drained soils suitable for early farming, and along with nearby natural watercourses would have made the area ideal for early settlement.

An evaluation was carried out in 1993 (SJH93), 550m west of the site at St John's Hospital, which revealed a shallow prehistoric pit, containing a small amount of burnt flint and waste flakes, and also a long blade of Mesolithic or early Neolithic date was found. There have been several isolated finds of flint flakes, blades and axe heads dating from the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic periods, in the site vicinity.

2.3 Roman

The site lay some distance from any known Roman settlements or major roads. The nearest Roman road passed 2km south-east of the site. The lack of finds, other than a Roman coin 625m north-west of the site, suggests little activity in the Roman period, although this might be explained by the lack of archaeological investigation in the past.

2.4 Saxon and medieval

The site's location on the western edge of Battersea manor, close to the boundary with the parish of Wandsworth, and between Wandsworth and Clapham Commons, indicates that it was peripheral, and it is not known to have been a focus for settlement. This is reaffirmed by map evidence from 1746, which shows the site in open fields. There is little potential other than for boundary or drainage ditches or evidence of agricultural use.

2.5 Post-medieval

Historic maps suggest that the site remained within open fields throughout the post-medieval period, until the mid/late 19th century. The earliest map consulted, Rocque's map of 1746, shows the site within an extensive area of cultivated ground

likely to be market gardens, see front cover. The Ordnance Survey map of 1819 shows that in the early 19th century the site was still situated in open land. In 1853, the area covered by the present site was purchased by the Freemasons in order to build a school for girls. The Ordnance Survey map of 1868 (Fig 3) shows the Royal Freemasons' School in the south-eastern part of the site. The formal gardens of the school lie to the north, south and east. Within the northern half of the site are three large residential properties, fronting onto Wandsworth Road (now St John's Hill).

The Ordnance Survey map of 1894 (Fig 4) shows that the Royal Freemasons' School had been expanded substantially to the east, with a new wing that almost doubled the size of the original school building. An infirmary is to the north of the main building, and a small lodge beside the entrance to the south. The latter is still extant within the site. It is a small, brick built, two-storey building (the upper floor being the attic) with three black timber and white infilled gable ends. A photograph of the front of the school is shown in Fig 5.

The 1894 map shows the former open fields to the east of the site have now been developed for rows of terraced housing, and the current streets laid out. The footbridge over the railway tracks has been replaced with a road bridge to Strath Terrace. The three separate houses in the northern part of the site appear to have been substantially altered or demolished completely to form additional school buildings.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1916 shows no change within the southern half of the site. In the northern half, the school building has been demolished and replaced by an entirely new building on a north-south alignment. Some minor damage was done to the school by anti-aircraft fire in 1917, and in 1918 the junior girls moved to a new junior school in Weybridge in Surrey. In June 1934 the school and its remaining pupils moved from Clapham to Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire where it remains today.

The present Peabody Estate was built on the site between 1935 and 1936 with four and five storey tenement blocks surrounding courtyards. The Peabody Trust, founded in 1862 by the American banker George Peabody, began to build housing estates in the 1860s, acquiring large sites. The current housing estate dates to 1936 and is of some limited local historic interest, representing a style of public housing architecture unique to Peabody itself.

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 October 2012), and the *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS, 1994).

One evaluation trench (Trench1) was excavated in the southern area of the site near the Strath Terrace entrance to the estate (Fig 2).

The ground was broken out and cleared by contractors under MOLA supervision. Trenches were excavated by machine by the contractors, and monitored by a member of staff from MOLA until relevant archaeological deposits were encountered and then excavated by hand.

The location of the evaluation trench were recorded by MOLA offsetting from adjacent standing walls and plotted on to a site survey (Hawkins/Brown Drg. No. SK_010/ Rev A dated June 2008 titled Existing site services and further survey). This information has been plotted onto the OS grid.

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 were calculated by using the know levels next to the trench that were shown on the site survey.

The site has produced: a trench location plan; a trench sheet, four context records; a section drawing at 1:10; and sixteen digital photographs.

The site finds and records can be found under the site code PBY12 in the MoL archive.

3.2 Results of the evaluation

For the trench location see Fig 2, images of the trench are shown on Fig 6 and Fig 7.

<i>Evaluation Trench 1</i>	
Location	Southern area of the site near the Strath Terrace entrance to the estate
Dimensions	8m by 3m by up to 1.20m depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	16.56m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	16.25m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	0.45m deep
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	15.80 m OD
Natural observed	Natural subsoil at 15.80m OD and terrace gravel at 15.30m OD

Trench 1 was located at the south of the site and measured c 8m east/west by c 3m north/south. The trench was machine excavated through deposits until a light orange-brown silty sand [2] with inclusions of gravel was encountered at a level of c

15.80m OD, this was interpreted as the subsoil and was a relatively clean deposits. A sondage through the deposit was excavated in the centre of the trench another c 0.50m down to reveal the terrace gravel at [4] at a height of c 15.30m OD.

Above the natural subsoil was a 0.30m thick deposit of dark brown, silty clay with inclusions of small fragments of ceramic building material, clay pipe stems and occasional animal bone fragments. This appears to be a post-medieval plough or garden soil.

At the west end of the trench was located a large north/south aligned wall foundation comprised of Victorian stock bricks and a hard lime mortar. This is probably the remains of foundations of the school that was located on the site prior to the construction of the estate.

Various services cut the trench, primarily disused drains and cast iron services pipes cut through garden soil [1] and above this deposit was a relatively thick layer of concrete and its formation deposits subsequently overlain by the existing tarmac.

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 targeted evaluation has produced results that will contribute to a number of the original research aims (see Section 4.1)

The depth of the natural deposits was established in this area of the site and whether these were truncated by possible landscaping and terracing on the site. Possible foundations associated with Victorian buildings shown on previous mapping were revealed and deposits thought to be associated with agricultural activity on the site were recorded in section.

4 Archaeological potential

4.1 Realisation of original research aims

What is the nature and level of natural topography?

A light orange-brown silty sand with inclusions of gravel was encountered at a level of c 15.80m OD, this was interpreted as the natural subsoil and was a relatively clean deposits. A sondage through the deposit was excavated in the centre of the trench another c 0.50m down to reveal the terrace gravel at a height of c 15.30m OD.

Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity on the site?

No evidence of prehistoric activity was encountered on the site.

Is there any evidence for agricultural or gardening activity taking place on the site prior to its development in the mid-19th century?

Above the natural subsoil was a 0.30m thick deposit of dark brown, silty clay with inclusions of small fragments of ceramic building material, clay pipe stems and occasional animal bone fragments. This appears to be a post-medieval plough or garden soil and may relate to the site usage as fields/market gardens in the 18th and 19th century.

What evidence is there for the 19th-century buildings on the site, as shown on historic maps?

A school occupied the site from 1853 to 1934, and included several late 19th-century outbuildings, an infirmary and a lodge. At the west end of the trench was located a large north/south aligned wall foundation comprised of Victorian stock bricks and a hard lime mortar. This is probably the remains of foundations of the school that was located on the site prior to the construction of the estate. Nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey mapping would suggest Trench 1 overlay the structure of the Royal Freemasons' School or later additions to this building and the foundation relates to the school building which sat at the south of the site.

What evidence is there for landscaping and terracing on the site?

No obvious evidence of landscaping or terrace was observed in the evaluation trench. However the presence of subsoil in the base of the trench would suggest that this area of the site has not been heavily terraced or landscaped.

What are the earliest deposits identified?

The earliest deposit on the site was the subsoil deposit [2] that lay between the plough/garden soil and the natural terrace gravels. This deposit did not appear to contain any finds although had some interface with the plough soil above it.

What are the latest deposits identified?

The latest deposit was the garden or plough soil layer across the trench which contained occasional inclusions of clay tobacco pipe stems, 18th and 19th-century pottery sherds and small fragment of ceramic building material such as tile and brick. Working of this deposit would appear to date to the 18th and 19th century or possibly slightly earlier.

4.2 General discussion of potential

The evaluation has shown there is potential for the survival of post-medieval deposits on the site and possibly 19th-century structural features in other areas of the site. These features however are of a relatively recent nature and are not considered to be of high archaeological significance.

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 redevelopment at the site involves a mixed-use redevelopment scheme comprising residential units of four to twelve storeys high, proposed retail/office units, new community facilities and open spaces. The proposal includes a basement car park located beneath the southern and central areas of the proposed development along with a limited amount of parking at grade. The impact of this on the surviving deposits will be to remove deposits across the site. These however are not considered to be of high archaeological significance.

Based on the results of the recent evaluation, MOLA recommends that no further archaeological work is carried out on the Phase 1 development site. The decision on the appropriate archaeological response to the deposits revealed during the evaluation rests with the Local Planning Authority and their designated archaeological advisor.

6 Acknowledgements

MOLA would like to thank Gleeds Cost Management Ltd for commissioning the investigation on behalf of Peabody (Services) Limited. MOLA would specifically like to thank Mark Stevenson of the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service at English Heritage (archaeological advisor to the London Borough of Wandsworth) for his comments and assistance.

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8 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

9 OASIS ID: molas1-137589

Project details

Project name	Peabody Estate, St John's Hill, London, SW11
Short description of the project	The archaeological field evaluation was carried out on 13th November 2012 at the Peabody Estate prior to redevelopment of the site. An evaluation trench was excavated in the south of the site. Within the trench a north/south Victorian wall foundation, probably associated with the Royal Freemasons' School which occupied the site from 1853 to 1934, was recorded in the west of the trench. Post-medieval garden or plough soil deposits overlay the subsoil and terrace gravels which were recorded at a height of 15.30m OD.
Project dates	Start: 13-11-2012 End: 13-11-2012
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	PBY12 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	WALL Post Medieval
Monument type	GARDEN/PLOUGH SOIL Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
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 WANDSWORTH WANDSWORTH Peabody Estate, St John's Hill, SW11
Postcode	SW11 1U
Study area	10000.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 2714 7520 51 0 51 27 39 N 000 10 10 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 15.30m Max: 15.30m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	MOLA
Project brief	MoLAS project manager

originator	
Project design originator	Louise Davies
Project director/manager	Stewart Hoad
Project supervisor	Pat Miller
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Peabody (Services) Limited

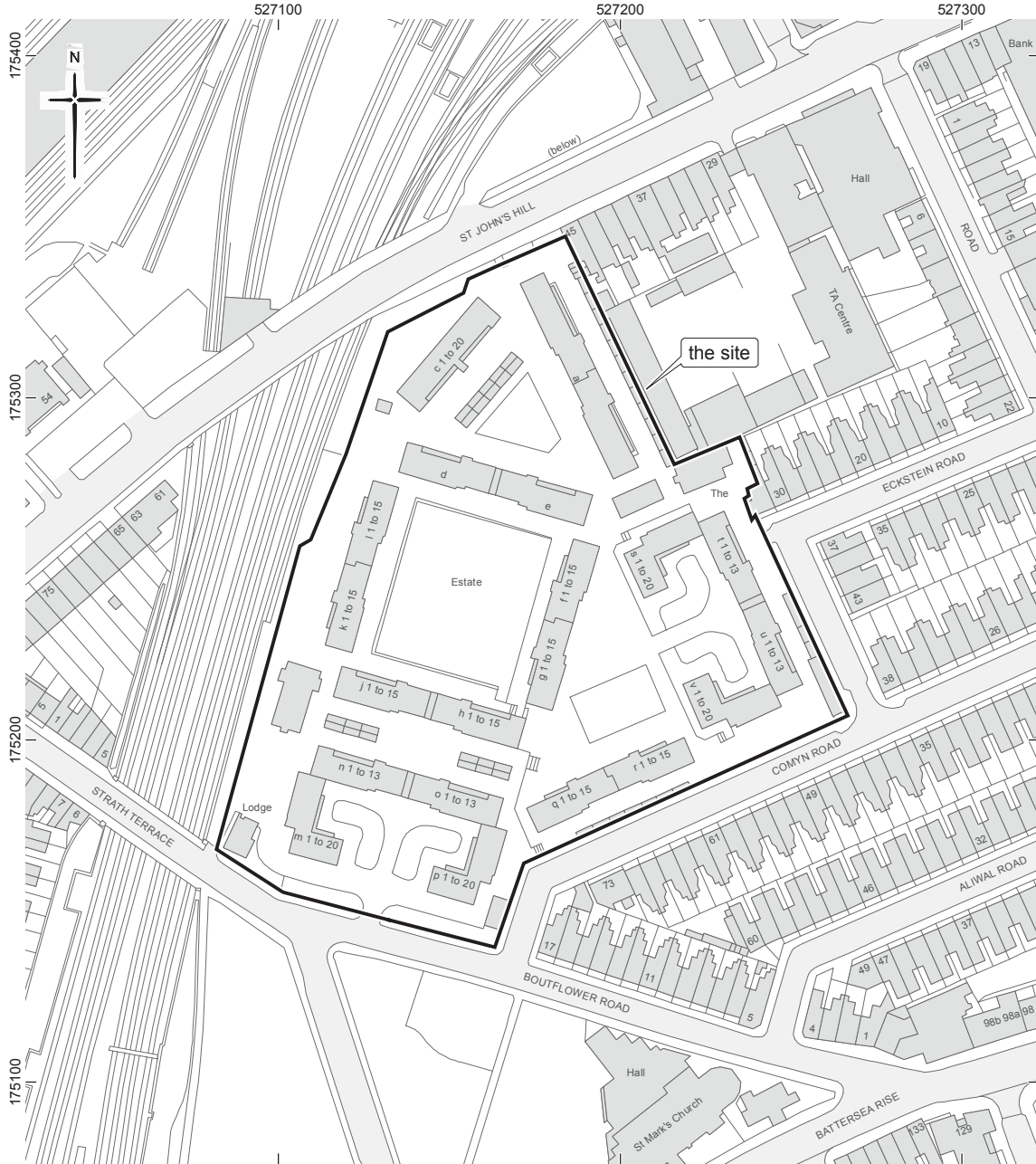
Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC

Project bibliography 1

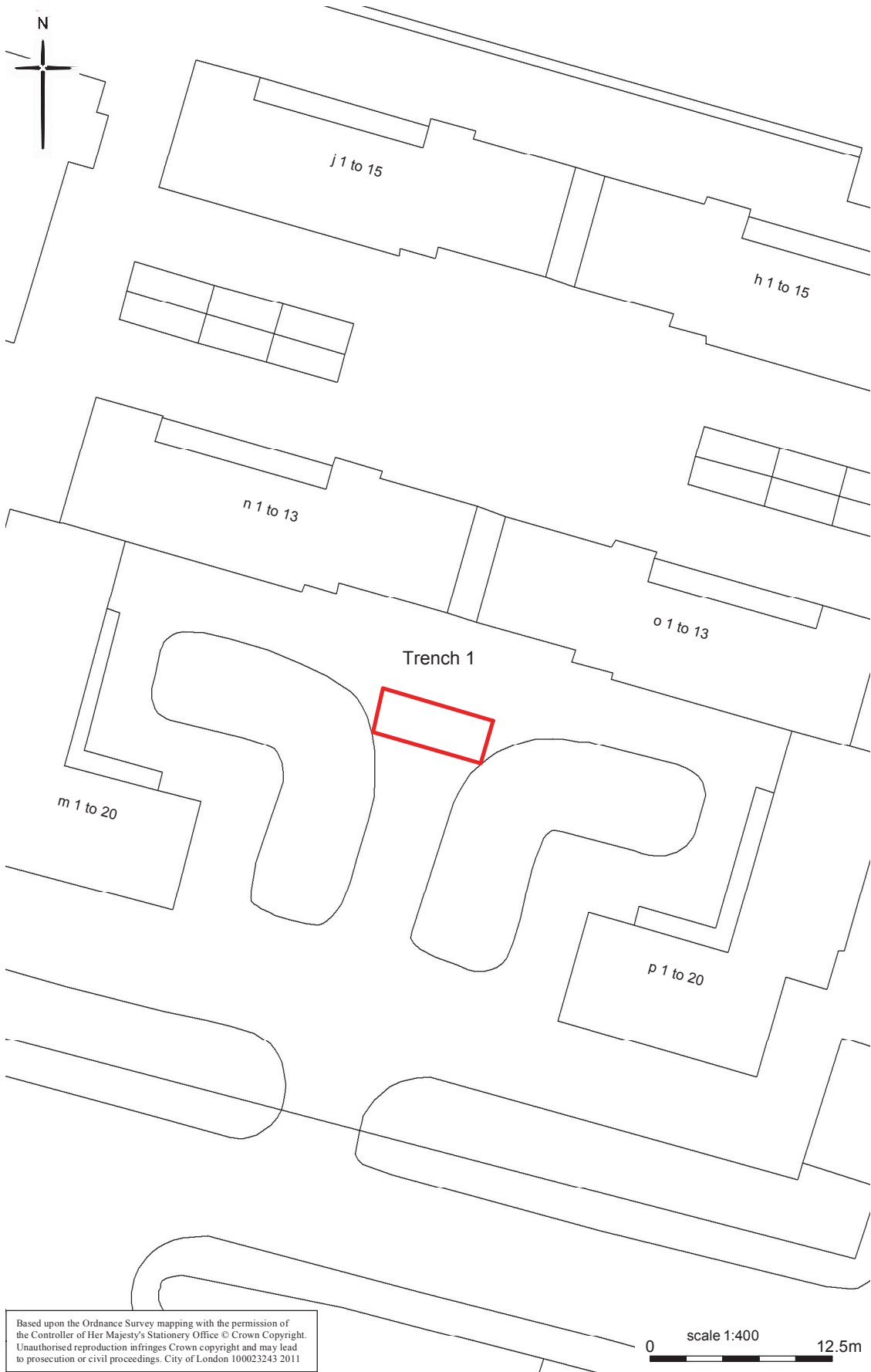
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Peabody Estate, St John's Hill, London SW11, London Borough of Wandsworth, A report on the evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Miller, P
Date	2012
Issuer or publisher	MOLA
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Description	A4 client report detailing results of evaluation on the site

Entered by	Pat Miller (pmiller@mola.org.uk)
Entered on	14 November 2012



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Fig 1 Site location



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Fig 2 Location of evaluation trench

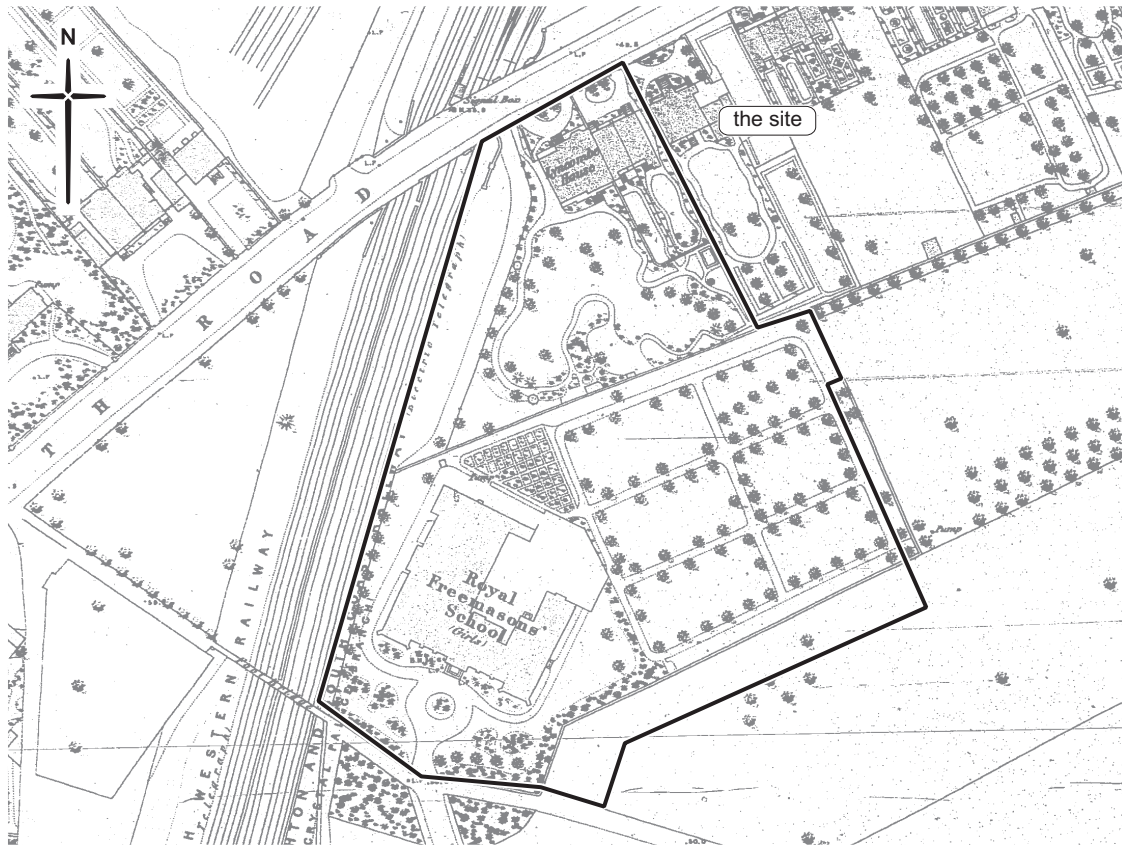


Fig 3 1868 Ordnance Survey map

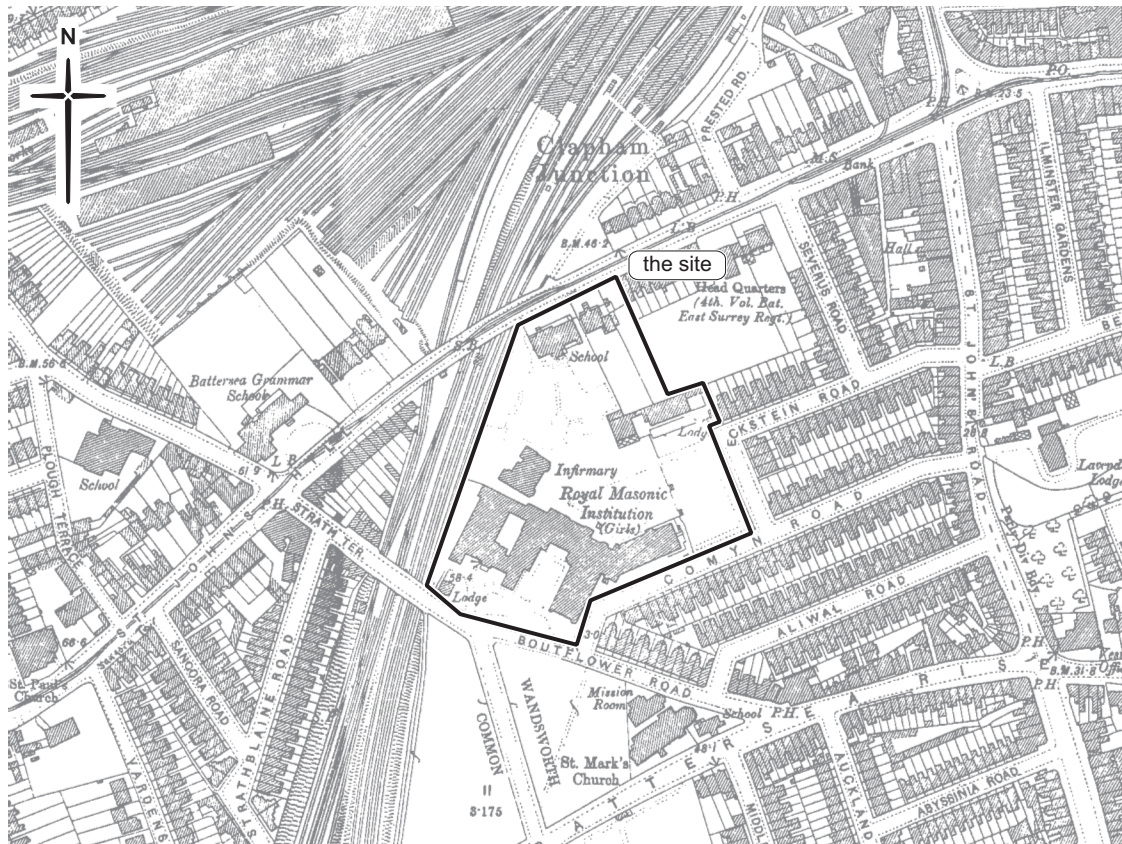


Fig 4 1894 Ordnance Survey map



Fig 5 The Masonic School for Girls, 1909, taken from Boutflower Road (Richard Milson©2005)



Fig 6 Trench 1 looking south-west



Fig 7 Section through deposit in Trench 1 showing garden soil [1] and subsoil [2]