



**KINGSTON UNIVERSITY**  
**Roehampton Vale Campus**  
**London**  
**SW15**

London Borough of Wandsworth

An archaeological evaluation report

August 2006



**MUSEUM OF LONDON**

**Archaeology Service**

KINGSTON UNIVERSITY  
Roehampton Vale Campus  
London  
SW15

London Borough of Wandsworth

An archaeological evaluation report

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National Grid Reference: 5216747 172413

Project Manager  
Author  
Graphics

Stewart Hoad  
Andy Daykin  
Kenneth Lymer

**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 2201

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

web [www.molas.org.uk](http://www.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 Kingston University, Roehampton Vale Campus, London borough of Wandsworth, London SW15. The report was commissioned from MoLAS by Kingston University on the advice of Ove Arup and Partners Ltd.*

*Following the recommendations of English Heritage a single trench was excavated on the site. This was originally conceived as three trenches and comprised of a long shallow excavation down the centre with wider and deeper excavations at each end*

*The results of the field evaluation have helped to refine the initial assessment of the archaeological potential of the site.*

*In the light of revised understanding of the archaeological potential of the site the report concludes the proposed redevelopment is unlikely to remove or destroy deposits of archaeological interest other than a sequence of natural alluvial deposits. The report recommends that the evaluation has provided a sufficient overview of the archaeological potential of the site and that no further archaeological work on the site is necessary.*

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Site background

The evaluation took place at Kingston University, Roehampton Vale Campus London SW15 hereafter called 'the site'. It is located in the car park to the east of the University buildings and is bounded by the A3 Roehampton Vale to the northwest, residential housing to the northeast and an open car park to the southeast. The OS National Grid Ref. for centre of site is 521647 172413. Modern pavement level immediately adjacent to the site is 10.50m OD. The site code is RHV06.

A Geotechnical desk study of the site was previously written by Ove Arup & Partners Ltd (January 2006). Three geotechnical pits were subsequently monitored by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, and a watching brief report produced (March 2006) under the Site Code KUR06.

The site lies within an archaeological priority zone, and is close to two regulated parks and gardens, Richmond Park to the north and Wimbledon Common to the east.

## 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 (see Section 1.2 MoLAS, 2006).

## 1.3 Planning background

The archaeological investigation was undertaken in response to a planning condition by the local planning authority.

## 1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Kingston University on the advice of Ove Arup & Partners Ltd 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 (Section 2.2):

- What are the earliest deposits identified?
- What are the latest deposits identified?
- Is there any evidence of ecofacts within the alluvial deposits and if so what can they tell us about past activity, land use and the environment?



## **2 Topographical and historical background**

### **2.1 Topography**

The Roehampton Vale campus is situated towards the bottom of the slope down to the Beverly Brook, a tributary that flows north into the River Thames, some 4km to the north. Road level on Roehampton Vale slopes down from 10.60m OD adjacent to the site to 10.30m to the west. The Geological survey Sheet 270 for South London indicates that the site is positioned upon a narrow band of Kempton Park Gravel with Head deposits present c 100m to the east, and alluvium immediately to the west. From the result of earlier fieldwork on the site the general sequence of deposits comprised London Clay at 7.50m OD, overlain by c1.0m of sand and gravel. Excavations at 116-126 Roehampton Vale (RVL97) revealed the survival of a shallow alluvial sequence associated with the Beverly Brook.

### **2.2 Prehistoric**

Isolated finds of flint artefacts and assemblages dating through the Palaeolithic to Neolithic periods have been found across Wimbledon Common, Richmond Park and Putney Heath. A Bronze Age axe was recovered from Wimbledon Common and a palstave from 'near to *Caesar's Camp*', an earthwork enclosure located 1.5km to the southeast of the site that is likely to be an Iron Age univallate hillfort.

### **2.3 Roman**

The A3 (Roehampton Vale) is along the alignment of the Roman road known as Stane Street. Coin hoards have been recovered from the area of *Caesar's Camp*.

### **2.4 Saxon**

There is no evidence for Saxon activity in the area and no finds from this period have been recovered from the vicinity of the site.

### **2.5 Medieval**

The development site is opposite Richmond Park, which lies to the north side of Roehampton Vale. Richmond Park is a Royal Park whose association with Royalty began with Edward (1272-1307), when the area was known as the Manor of Sheen. The village of Roehampton is first recorded as Hampton or East Hampton in the 14th century.

### **2.6 Post-medieval – pre C19th**

Richmond Park was first enclosed in 1637 to provide hunting grounds close to Richmond Palace and Hampton Court. In 1649 the park was given to the City of

London by the Commonwealth government in return for support in the Civil War. It was then given back to Charles II in 1660. During the 17th and 18th centuries Roehampton was established as an elegant and attractive London suburb and by the beginning of the 19th century it was adorned by country houses and villas.

## **2.7 Nineteenth and twentieth centuries**

The development site is shown on the 1868 OS map as an open field with cottages nearby to the west and north. Two linear features possibly ponds or quarry pits are shown to the east of the site. The most southerly of these features is still shown on the 1938 OS map. This map shows the first evidence of building development on the site with structures within the area of the present campus building. The 1952 OS map shows buildings to the west of the site with tennis courts in the area of the proposed development. To the south of the site a drain is shown leading to Beverly Brook. By the OS map of 1984 buildings and tennis courts have been demolished and the 1991 OS map of the site shows the newly constructed Smiths Factory in the area of the University campus. Excavations at 116-126 Roehampton Vale in 1997 (RVL 97) revealed the remains of a post-medieval watercourse pre-dating the late 19th century.

## 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).

A single evaluation trench was excavated in the area of the proposed development in the northwestern part of the car park to the east of the University Campus.

The asphalt surface of the car park was broken by a machine under MoLAS supervision. The trench was then excavated by machine down to a depth of 2m at either end and 1.2m down the centre, with hand inspection of horizons by MoLAS archaeologists.

The locations of evaluation trenches were recorded by MoLAS offsetting from adjacent standing walls and plotted onto a 1:250 drawing supplied by Ove Arup. This information was then plotted onto the OS grid by geomatics staff from MoLAS.

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 a temporary benchmark transferred from the OS benchmark of 10.93m on the northwest corner of No 127 Roehampton Vale.

The site has produced: 2 trench location plans; 10 context records; 2 section drawings at 1:20 and 1 section drawing at 1:40; and 27 photographs. In addition a small bag of finds was recovered from the site. A monolith environmental sample was also taken from the site.

The site finds and records can be found under the site code RHV06 in the MoL archive.

### 3.2 Results of the evaluation

<i>The Evaluation Trench (see Fig 2)</i>	
Location	Northwest of campus car park
Dimensions	30m x 2-8m and 1.2-2m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	10.54-10.61m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	9.47-9.64m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	0.7m
Level of base of deposits observed	8.63 m OD
Natural observed	Gravel 8.83-8.95 OD or N/A

The trench layout was prescribed for specific purposes related to the layout of the proposed building, the availability and access of space, temporary works, and also with the strategic objective of the trenches being so located that they helped with mitigation objectives.

In plan the evaluation trench had two areas of 4.6m x 8m at either end of a connecting trench 14m in length. The central area of the trench was excavated to a depth of 1.2m whereas the areas at either end of the trench were initially excavated to the same depth and subsequently, reduced to a depth of 2m below the modern ground surface.

#### 3.2.1 *Natural deposits*

Natural gravel [8] was uncovered at either end of the trench. The natural gravel was overlain by a blueish grey alluvial deposit [5] and [10] of approximately 0.2m thickness. At the northern end of the trench a variation in the natural deposits was observed [6], consisting of a pale yellow grey clay, interpreted by the MoLAS geoarchaeologists as a natural deposit. Above [10] and [5] a greenish orange brown alluvial deposit was observed [4] and [9], most of this deposit appeared to be undisturbed, but there was some gravel within the upper horizon of [9] which appeared to be redeposited. The top of the natural alluvial sequence was identified at approximately 9.2m–9.4m OD.

#### 3.2.2 *Man made formations*

At the northern end of the trench layer [4] was overlain by a small dump of redeposited post-medieval brick crush [3], this was sealed by a dark deposit of reworked alluvium [2] which also extended over the southern end of the trench. This deposit was 0.3m–0.4m thick. The upper horizon of this reworked alluvium was identified at approximately 9.5m–9.9m OD. Context [2] contained brick and coal fragments as well as six sherds of pottery all of which were dated to post 1840. The alluvial sequence was sealed by 0.8m depth of modern made ground underlying 0.2m depth of Type 1 gravels forming the basis for the tarmac car park surface which was 60–80mm 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 provided a good assessment of the archaeological potential of the site and it can be reasonably assumed that the stratigraphic sequence shown in the evaluation trench is likely to be characteristic of the site as a whole. At either end of the trench excavation was taken down to natural gravel and the water table whilst along the centre of the trench excavation was taken down to the top of a reworked alluvial deposits.

## **4 Archaeological potential**

### **4.1 Realisation of original research aims**

- What are the earliest deposits identified?

The earliest deposits identified were alluvial deposits which may be Pleistocene in origin.

- What are the latest deposits identified?

Other than modern made ground the earliest deposits identified were of reworked alluvium containing late post-medieval pottery dated to post AD1840.

- Is there any evidence of ecofacts within the alluvial deposits and if so what can they tell us about past activity, land use and the environment?

The monolith sample taken from the south end of the trench showed minimal potential for the survival of ecofactual evidence within natural alluvial deposits. The alluvial deposits did show evidence of a dry land surface on the site which combined with the location of the site showed good potential for the use of the site during the prehistoric period, however no evidence of any such activity was found during the evaluation.

### **4.2 General discussion of potential**

The evaluation has shown that there is a potential for the survival of a natural alluvial sequence within the trench. However potential for the survival of ecofactual material such as pollen is thought to be minimal. The evaluation trench demonstrated no potential for the survival of archaeological deposits or cut features within the trench. Cartographic evidence shows the presence of two ponds or pit like features during the 19th century, however one of these features is outside the site outline and the other is outside the footprint of the proposed extension to the campus. There is no

cartographic evidence for development on the site prior to 1938. The potential for the recovery of artefactual material from the site is low.

### **4.3 Significance**

The location of a natural alluvial sequence within the evaluation trench is of some local interest in relation to the analysis of similar sequences in the region.

## 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’.

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 most interesting aspect of the site was geological, in that there was some survival of a natural alluvial sequence possibly dating to the Pleistocene period. Some dating evidence was obtained from reworked alluvium, which contained pottery from the 19th century.

### *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 some documentation for the later medieval period from c 1300 no archaeological finds from this period were recovered. Carotgraphic evidence from the post-medieval period may help to understand the development of the site, but is unlikely to be specifically relevant to anything found during the evaluation.

### *Criterion 4: group value*

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

### *Criterion 5: survival/condition*

No archaeological features survived on the site. A natural alluvial sequence survived undisturbed at the base of the stratigraphic sequence although this had low potential for the survival of ecofactual material.

*Criterion 6: fragility*

Experience from other sites has shown that isolated and exposed blocks of stratigraphy can be vulnerable to damage during construction work. The proposed development would destroy some evidence of the natural alluvial sequence. Nothing found on the site requires any specific measures for conservation or preservation in situ.

*Criterion 7: diversity*

There was very little diversity in the nature of the deposits found.

*Criterion 8: potential*

The site has the potential to contribute to our understanding of the development of the natural sequence in the area. The site has shown very little potential for the recovery of artefactual or ecofactual material of archaeological interest.



## **6 Proposed development impact and recommendations**

The proposed redevelopment at Roehampton Vale campus involves the construction of an extension northeast of the existing main building. This extension will comprise three storeys and the development will involve groundwork's adjacent to existing structures. There is no evidence from the evaluation that this will impact on surviving archaeological features and deposits although it will remove a natural sequence of alluvial deposits. These deposits however appear to have minimal potential for the survival of ecofactual material of geoarchaeological interest.

MoLAS considers that this evaluation has been sufficient to determine the archaeological potential of the site and recommends that no further archaeological fieldwork is required.

## 7 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Alice Bradbury of Ove Arup & Partners Ltd and Kingston University for commissioning the report. The author would also like to thank Craig Halsey MoLAS Geoarch for the environmental work.

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## 9 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

### 9.1 OASIS ID: molas1-16915

#### Project details

Project name Kingston University, Roehampton Vale Campus, London SW15

Short description of the project As the result of a planning condition a single evaluation trench was excavated in the car park adjacent to the University building. Some remains of a natural alluvial sequence were found during the excavation. A monolith sample of this sequence was taken although it was found to be poor in ecofactual material. The only other deposits of any archaeological interest were reworked alluvial deposits containing post-medieval pottery.

Project dates Start: 03-07-2006 End: 21-07-2006

Previous/future work Yes / No

Any associated project reference codes KUR06 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference codes RHV06 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Community Service 1 - Community Buildings

Monument type POT Post Medieval

Significant Finds POT Post Medieval

Significant Finds DEPOSIT Post Medieval

Methods & techniques	'Environmental Sampling','Targeted Trenches'
Development type	Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)
Development type	extension to university campus
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 Kingston University Roehampton Vale London SW15
Postcode	SW15
Study area	240.00 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 21647 72413 Point
Height OD	Min: 8.83m Max: 8.95m

**Project creators**

Name of Organisation	MoLAS
Project brief originator	Consultant
Project design originator	MoLAS
Project director/manager	Stewart Hoad
Project supervisor	Andrew Daykin

Sponsor or funding body Kingston University

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient LAARC

Physical Contents 'Ceramics','Environmental'

Digital Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Contents 'Survey'

Paper Archive recipient LAARC

Paper Contents 'Ceramics','Environmental','Survey'

Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Diary','Drawing','Notebook - Excavation','Research',' General Notes','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section'

### Project bibliography 1

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## 10 Appendix 1 Geoarchaeological Report

### 10.1 Introduction

A site visit was made by the MoLAS geoarchaeologist on the 20th July 2006. The purpose of the visit was to examine and sample the alluvial deposits exposed within the excavated trench. According to the mapped geology of the area (BGS Solid and Drift geology map no. 270) the site lies just at the interface of the alluvial floodplain and an earlier terrace of the Beverley Brook. The Beverley Brook rises from the south towards New Malden and reaches a confluence with the Thames near Barnes. The channel cuts through outcropping Eocene deposits of London clay and Claygate beds to the east and west, which are capped by head deposits and earlier gravel terrace units.

The alluvial sequence was examined in two sondages excavated in the northern and southern ends of the trench. The recorded sequence is described below.

### 10.2 Results

#### *10.2.1 Trench 1, southern sondage*

The basal deposits consisted of a loose mid greenish grey medium sandy gravel with sub-rounded, and sub-angular fine to medium gravel (context [8]). The unit occurred at c. 9.46m OD and measured c. 0.20m in thickness. The upper 0.05m of the unit consisted of a predominately fine to medium sand with noticeably less gravel inclusions than the lower part. The gravels displayed a gentle slope in gradient towards the northern part of the trench.

The gravels are likely to be Late Pleistocene in date and were probably deposited in a cold climate braided river environment. The upper sand unit suggests a gradual reduction in the energy of the fluvial regime depositing these finer minerogenic deposits.

The gravel unit was overlain by a soft mid orangey brown medium sandy clay with some silt within the matrix, and occasional oxidised iron-stained root channels (contexts [9] and [10]). The deposit generally became less sandy up through the profile. The unit occurred at c. 9.7m OD and measured c. 0.20m in thickness. Towards the base of the unit frequent light grey mottling was present (recorded as context [10]).

This unit is derived from alluvial deposition probably through processes of overbank flooding. However within this unit dry soils are likely to have formed. This is evident from the iron-stained oxidised appearance of the deposit and the presence of root channels. The mottled grey/orange colour of the lower part of the unit forms as a result of the initially waterlogged gleyed soil, becoming gradually oxidised as the ground conditions become drier. Such deposits would have formed suitably dry land

surfaces for occupation to occur. Small flecks of brick were also present within this deposit, although these are likely to have been brought down the soil profile through root action.

This deposit was overlain by a thin lense of gravel c. 0.04m in thickness, which consisted of fine to medium rounded and sub-rounded gravel clasts in a mid brown clay silt matrix. This deposit appears to represent redeposited gravel, which marks the limit of the relatively undisturbed natural sequence and the overlying sequence of redeposited alluvium.

The redeposited alluvium (context [2]) consisted of a firm mid brown clay silt with moderate quantities of brick and coal fragments. The unit measured c. 0.02m in thickness and occurred at c. 10m OD. This layer was overlain by a further c. 1.05m of modern made ground.

The undisturbed natural sequence (context [8] to [10]) was sampled by monolith {1}.

### ***10.2.2 Trench 1, northern sondage***

The deposits within the northern part of the trench were in general very similar to the deposits recorded within the southern part. The sequence consisted of the floodplain gravels overlain by alluvial deposits and sealed by redeposited alluvial material. The thickness of these deposits varied across the trench, sloping gently down to the north.

The basal deposits in the northern part of the trench consisted of a loose bluish greenish grey medium sandy gravel with fine to medium sub-rounded, rounded and sub-angular gravel clasts (context [8]). The unit occurred at c. 8.97m OD. This unit is a continuation of the gravel unit identified at the southern end of the trench.

Above the gravels a soft mid greyish blue clay silt, with some sand within the matrix, and occasional iron stained root channels was recorded (context [5]). The unit measured c. 0.26m thick and occurred at c. 9.10m OD. This unit forms a continuation of context [9] and [10] although the deposit contains far less sand within the matrix and has a more gleyed appearance.

This unit was deposited under the same conditions as the alluvial unit recorded in the southern part of the trench. However the post-depositional processes appear to be different in this part of the trench. Although this unit is also likely to have formed an essentially dry soil horizon, the greyer colour of the deposit suggests that the deposit remained under semi-waterlogged conditions allowing little oxidisation of the unit to occur.

As with the southern part of the trench, the boundary between the undisturbed natural and the overlying redeposited alluvium was marked by a thin lense of gravel. The unit consisted of a loose mid greyish brown medium rounded, sub-rounded and sub-angular gravel in a clay silt matrix. This unit measured c. 0.04m in thickness.



The redeposited alluvium consisted of a firm light greyish brown silty clay with occasional brick, charcoal and coal fragments (context [4]). The unit measured c. 0.12m in thickness and occurred at 9.2m OD. This was overlain by another unit of redeposited alluvium (context [2]), which consisted of a firm mid grey silty clay with occasional fragments of brick and coal. Another 1.10m of modern made ground overlay the redeposited alluvium.

This profile was not sampled by monolith as the sequence formed a continuation of that observed within the southern part of the trench. In addition little more than 0.4m of the natural sequence survived in this area.

### 10.3 Conclusion

Given the landscape position of site, the gravel units observed within the base of the trench are likely to be part of the earlier Pleistocene terrace recorded on the BGS mapping of the area. The overlying finer minerogenic deposits of the sands and clays may also be Pleistocene in date and represent a general slackening of the fluvial regime.

Following the downcutting of the Beverly Brook channel towards the end of the last glacial period to its present floodplain, this earlier higher terrace would have formed a terrestrial soil horizon suitable for occupation during the Holocene. Therefore it is possible that archaeological features may be cut through the natural sequence at this location. A similar sequence to this with associated prehistoric features has recently been identified within the Lea Valley at Warton Road (Halsey, *in prep*). On this site dry soil horizons formed over an earlier low terrace, which were subsequently inundated by alluvial overbank flooding sometime after the Roman period. An upper alluvial clay sequence similar to Warton Road may have existed on this site, but no longer survives due to modern truncation.

A significant quantity of redeposited alluvium rich in post-medieval debris has been dumped over the truncated natural sequence. The truncation may be due to quarrying to extract the alluvial clays, or as a result of construction activity.

### 10.4 Potential

The recorded sequence is unlikely to preserve pollen to a high degree as the deposits all appear to be fairly well oxidised and minerogenic in nature. The sequence also appears fairly disturbed by root action, which would lead to contamination of the pollen profile. Therefore the profile has very low potential for reconstructing the past environment.

The landscape position of the site and the dry land surface that the deposits represent does suggest that the site may contain archaeological features. The location of the site adjacent to an active channel and its associated resources would have made the area attractive to early prehistoric people.

## 10.5 Recommendations

It is not recommended that any further palaeoenvironmental work be carried out on the monolith sample taken, as pollen survival is likely to be minimal and heavily disturbed within these deposits.

C. Halsey 21/07/06

## 10.6 Bibliography

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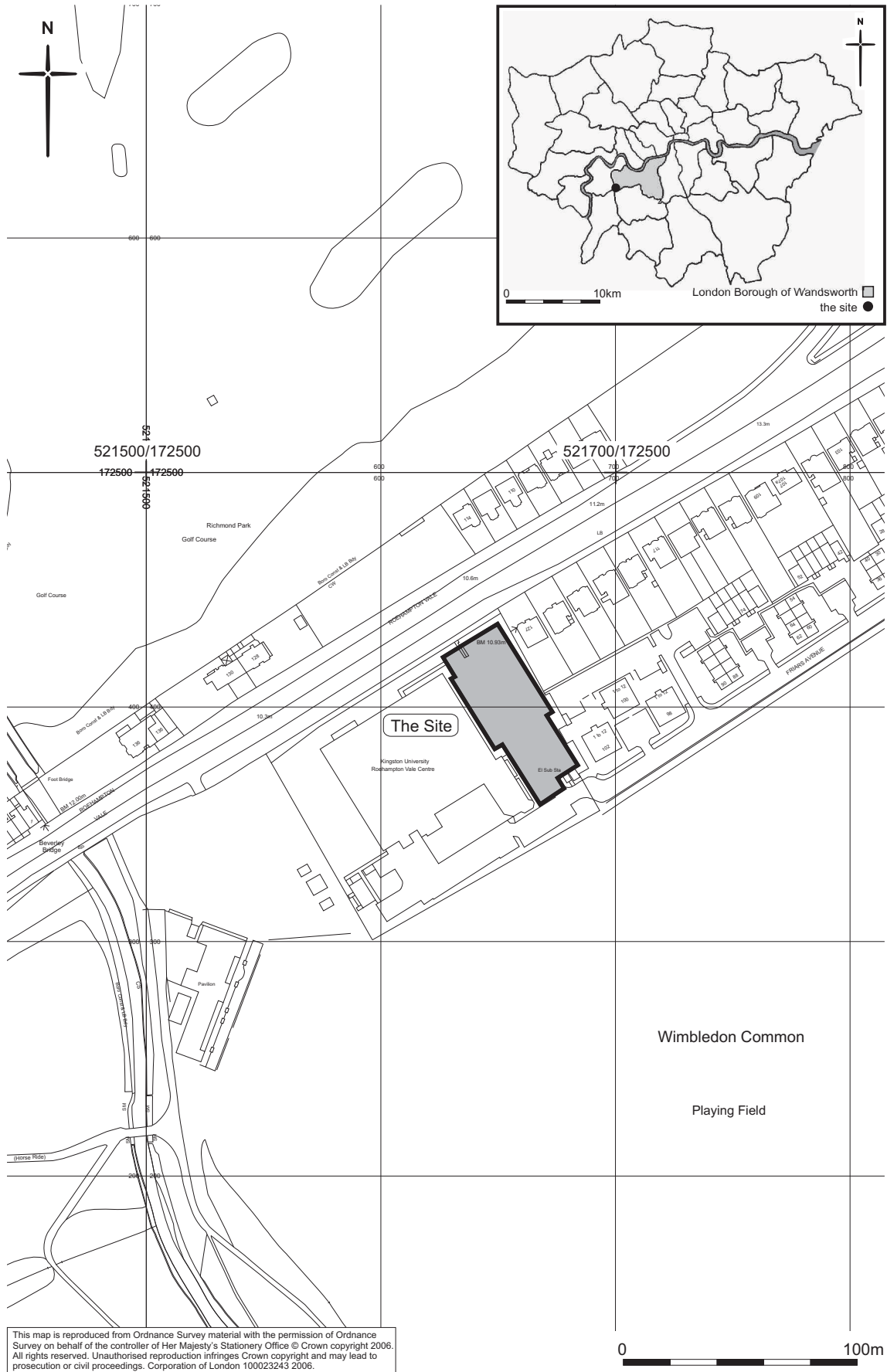


Fig 1 Site location

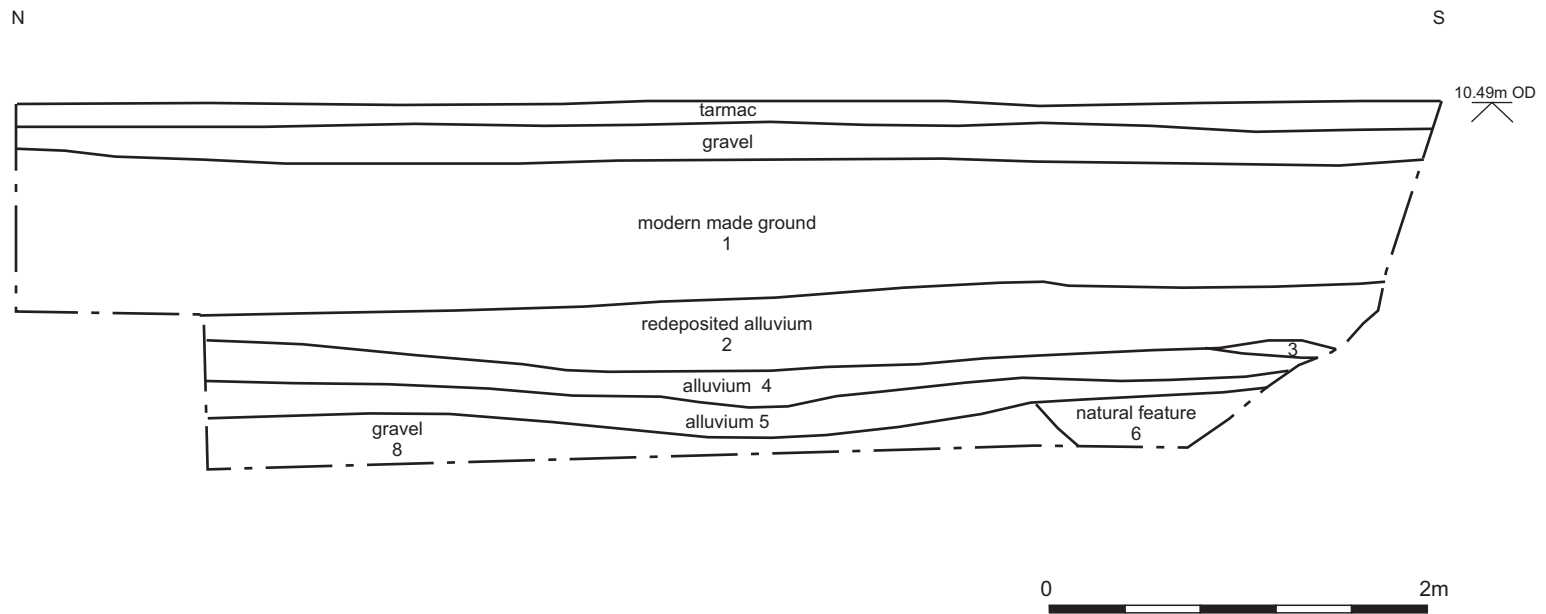


Fig 3 Section 1 (north end of trench)

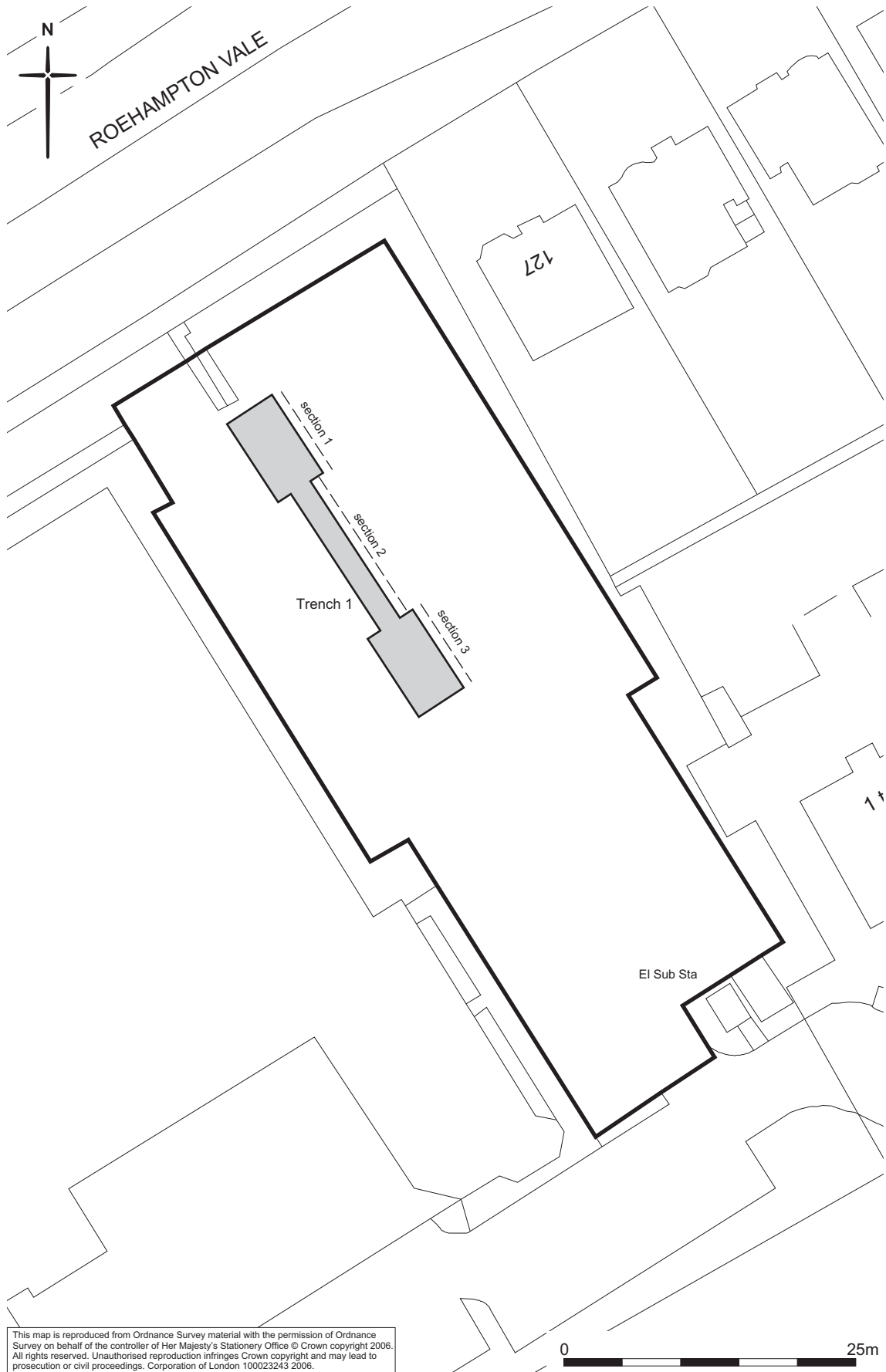


Fig 2 Location of evaluation trenches

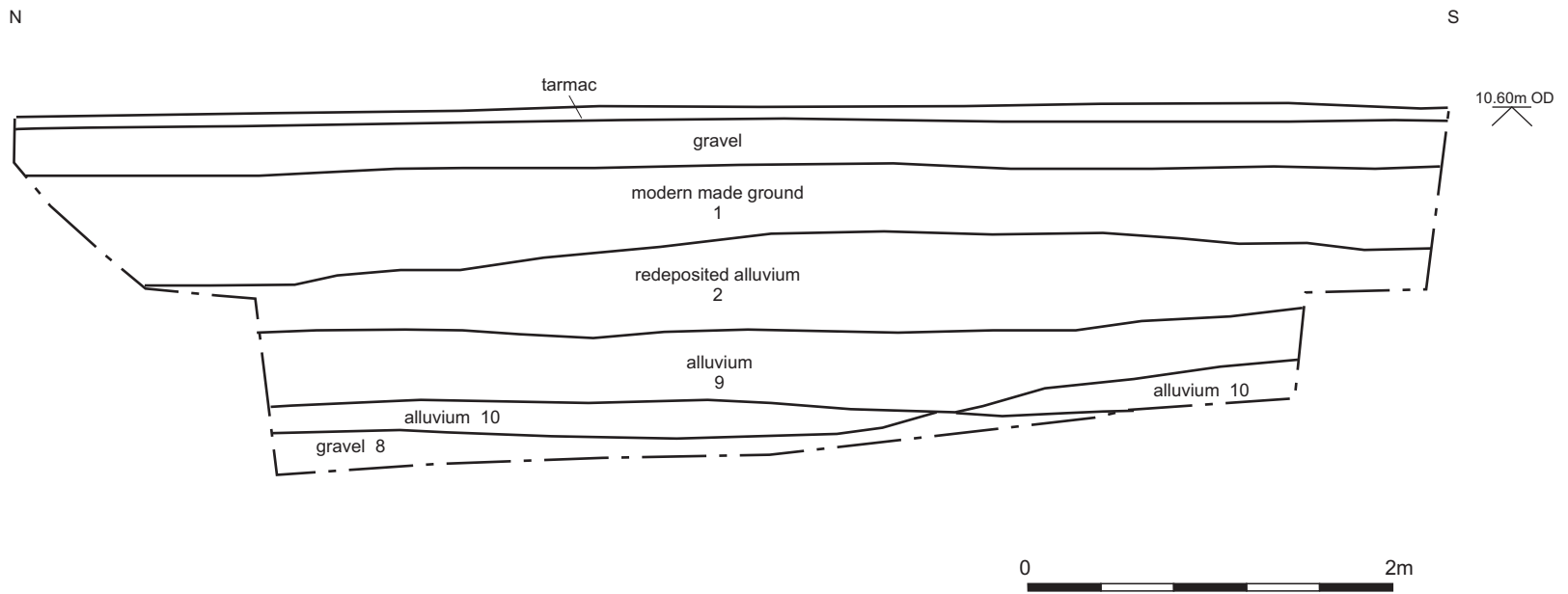


Fig 4 Section 3 (south end of trench)