



**RIVER PLATE HOUSE
7–11 Finsbury Circus
London EC2**

City of London

Post-excavation assessment

May 2014



**River Plate House
7-11 Finsbury Circus
London EC2**

Site code FIN13

NGR 532835 181705

OASIS reference: molas1-170646

Planning reference: 12/00811/FULMAJ
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Post-excavation assessment

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Executive summary

This report is intended to inform the reader of the results of the excavation at 7–11 Finsbury Circus, London, EC2. The report was commissioned from MOLA by Stanhope plc.

Following the results of the evaluation on the site in 2013 and the recommendations of the *Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)*, the excavation targeted the area around the evaluation Test Pit 4, located in the southeast part of the building.

The proposed area for excavation was found to be heavily truncated by modern construction trenches. However, a complete sequence survived of Roman, medieval and early post-medieval deposits.

The earliest deposits overlying the natural gravels were sterile gravelly brickearth and fine silts which may have been waterlain. Stream deposits have been recorded on the site previously and it is possible that a tributary of the Walbrook ran on or near to the site.

Both deposits were capped by a thin but compacted metallated gravel surface defined at 9.17m OD, which may represent an area of external hard standing, surface or perhaps even road.

The gravel surface was capped by a stiff mid grey clay which in turn was overlain by soft and friable organic peaty silt. The composition of these deposits suggests that they are waterlain, indicating flooding and the formation of the marsh deposits that accumulated in this area during the late Roman and medieval periods. The site was used as an open space and from the Tudor period it was increasingly reclaimed with dumps of earth, raising the surface level in order to dry out the area. The sandy silt dumps overlying the marsh may represent this ground-raising activity in the early post-medieval period.

The latest activity identified on the site was a straight-sided pit broadly dated to 17th and 18th centuries. During this time, contemporary maps and views indicate that the site would have lain in an area of open fields known as Moor Fields, which served as work and recreational space for Londoners.

Due to the small-scale of the fieldwork and the limited nature of the results this report concludes that the site is of local significance, contributing to the understanding of the Upper Walbrook valley in Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods and no further work is required. The analysis of the finds and of most other classes of records and material has already been completed and requires no further work.

The report is written and structured in a particular way to conform to the standards required of post-excavation analysis work as set out in *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991).

Contents

1	Introduction.....	4
2	Topographical, historical and archaeological background	6
3	Original research aims	9
4	Site sequence: interim statement on fieldwork	10
5	Quantification and assessment	12
6	Potential of the data.....	18
7	Significance of the data.....	20
8	Publication/dissemination.....	20
9	Acknowledgements	20
10	OASIS archaeological report form.....	21
11	Bibliography.....	24

List of illustrations

Front cover: View of the excavation area, showing the extent of archaeological survival between the concrete truncations; looking east.

Fig 1 Site location	26
Fig 2 Trench location plan	27
Fig 3 The site overlain on Ogilby and Morgan's map of 1676	28
Fig 4 Plan showing the extent of archaeological survival and evaluation TP 4	29
Fig 5 Plan of the gravel surface	30
Fig 6 Removing the alluvial clay to expose the gravel surface <i>looking east</i>	30
Fig 7 Plan of the post-medieval deposits	31

Tables

Table 1 Stratigraphic archive	12
Table 2 Finds and environmental archive general summary	12
Table 3 Building material	13
Table 4 Contents of animal bone archive	15
Table 5 Hand-collected and wet-sieved animal bone	17

1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The excavation took place at River Plate House, 7–11 Finsbury Circus, London, EC2 (Fig 1). The site is located on the north side of Finsbury Circus and is bounded by Eldon Street to the north, Finsbury Circus House to the east, Finsbury Circus to the south, and Britannic House and South Place Mews to the west. The National Grid Reference for the centre of the site is 532835 181705. At the time of the excavation, the site had been occupied by River Plate House, an office building constructed in the 1980s which has now been demolished. The site is being developed to create a nine storey office development. Modern pavement level near to the site lies at c13.9m OD. The site code is FIN13.

1.2 Planning background

The legislative and planning framework in which the excavation took place was fully set out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* which formed the project design for the work (see Section 9, MOLA, 2012). To summarise here:

The excavation was carried out to fulfil a condition attached to the Planning Consent given by the City of London (Consent reference 12/00811/FULMAJ; Conditions number 9).

Details of the consented development are available at: <http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-applications/view-planningapplications/Pages/default.aspx>

1.3 Scope of the excavations and report

The excavation was located in the southeast corner of the basement, in the sub-basement shelf (Fig 2), and in the only area on the site determined to contain archaeological remains by the evaluation (MOLA 2013). A watching brief was also maintained during excavations adjacent to the excavation area where there was some potential for archaeological remains to survive. The overall aim of the archaeological work was to determine the extent of survival and to excavate the archaeological deposits which would be removed by construction of the new building. This report considers the significance of the fieldwork results (in local, regional or national terms) and makes appropriate recommendations for any further action, commensurate with the results.

Despite the small scale of the excavation, it produced a full and coherent archaeological sequence over the natural, dating from the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods. No archaeological remains were recorded during the watching brief outside the excavation area.

Geographically, the area of the site is defined by the Walbrook valley and its tributaries. In the Roman period, the site area was located c 165m north of the Roman city wall, at the western end of a known burial ground, referred to as the Northern Cemetery. For the Roman and medieval periods, there is a growing corpus of knowledge from excavations at nearby sites including 18-31 Eldon Street, 16-18 Finsbury Circus (ENS03), Spitalfields (SRP98) and more recent excavations at Finsbury Circus (XRZ10). The quantity of relevant documentation increases from the

early post-medieval period, particularly in the form of contemporary maps which illustrate the development of the Moorfields.

1.4 Circumstances and dates of fieldwork

The basement slab was broken out between December 2013 and January 2014 taking longer than expected due to the thick reinforced concrete floor slab which became progressively thicker closer to the sub-basement. The archaeological excavation took place from 13/01/2014 – 17/01/2014 with two members of staff.

The archaeological deposits were fully excavated and recorded in plan in accordance with the methodology set out in the *WSI* (section 6.1, MOLA 2013) which detailed a controlled excavation followed by a watching brief on the ground reduction of the surrounding area.

The watching brief in the areas adjacent to the excavation was conducted during late August and early September 2014.

1.5 Organisation of the report

The principles underlying the concept of post-excavation assessment and updated project design were established by English Heritage in the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (MAP2), (1991). More recent English Heritage guidance has emphasised the need for this stage to be seen as 'brief and transitional', the document being intended to 'sum up what is already known and what further work will be required to reach the goal of a well-argued presentation of the results of recording and analysis' ie acting as a 'gateway' to further analysis and eventual publication (EH, 1999 VI/1)

The report below summarises the archaeological and historical background to the site (section 2) and lists the original research aims outlined in the *WSI* (section 3). It describes the discoveries made on the site during the archaeological excavation (section 4) and details the work undertaken for the assessment of the site archive (section 5). It correlates the initial observations made in the evaluation and the excavation to answer the original research aims (section 6) and discusses the wider significance of the site (Section 7) and sets out how the results should be disseminated (Section 8).

2 Topographical, historical and archaeological background

The Historic Environment Assessment (MOLA, 2012), and the Archaeological Evaluation report (MOLA, 2013) set out the results of an environment assessment and archaeological field evaluation which have been carried out on the site to date.

The reports should be read for the results of these investigations, although they can be summarised as follows:

2.1 Topography

The underlying surface geology consists of Thames Terrace Gravels with overlying brickearth. Previous archaeological work on the site and in the area indicated that the pre-Roman natural ground surface would have been at between 9–10m OD, with localised stream channels cutting shallow channels across the area.

The site lies in the upper Walbrook valley. The course of the Walbrook, a former tributary of the Thames, ran north-east to south-west c1780m south-east of the site, and one of its tributaries may have crossed the northern edge of the site (Barton, 1992) in the Roman and early medieval periods.

Previous archaeological work on the site and in the area indicates that the pre-Roman natural ground surface would have been at between 9m to 10m OD, with localised stream channels cutting shallow channels across the area.

Archaeological investigations on the site in 1987 (site code RIV87) recorded natural deposits in a series of trenches and test pits. In the northern part of the site, gravel deposits (possibly eroded by stream activity) were recorded at between 8.80–9.10m OD; in the centre of the site, brickearth was defined at 9.10–9.40m OD with the underlying gravels at 8.80–9.10m OD; and along the southern edge of the site gravels (possibly truncated) were recorded at 9.40–9.70m OD.

Outside the site to the south-east, archaeological investigations at 16–18 Finsbury Circus (ENS03) recorded natural sands and gravels sloping from north to south, from 10.0m OD to 8.30m OD. The brickearth on the site showed evidence for naturally formed silted-up stream-beds cutting into it to depths of c 8.50m OD. To the north of the site, in Eldon Street (ELD11), a watching brief recorded natural ground at up to 9.80m OD, overlain by a sequence of archaeological deposits 5m in depth to 13.00m OD.

2.2 Archaeology

Archaeological investigations have produced very little evidence of Prehistoric remains in the vicinity of the site. A few fragments of Late Iron Age pottery were found in gravel and sand deposits during the 1987 excavation on the site.

In the southern part of the site where underpinning holes were excavated in 1987, tributaries of the Walbrook which cut channels in the gravels and became in turn infilled with silts, recorded in areas A, D-H on the site waterlogged black silts and organic material underlay a later Roman dumping sequence, with evidence of a 1.2m wide V-shaped channel filled with waterlogged deposits, cut into brickearth and gravel. This is possible evidence of a Roman channel cut to divert or drain one of the

Walbrook tributaries. The evidence suggests that the channel was man-made with several phases of recutting.

Burials and cremations were starting to take place in the area during the 2nd century AD (MoLAS, 2007, 32–3). Archaeological investigations on the north side of Finsbury Circus have found evidence of the use of the site and the land to the east for burials. The Upper Walbrook cemetery area lies within the Northern Cemetery which is known to have extended from immediately outside the wall to at least the modern Spitalfields area.

In the north-western part of the site, in 1987, the remains of three inhumations truncated by deep foundations, and a cremation, were recorded within the brickearth overlying the natural gravel. Associated with one of the burials was a Verulamium Region White Ware pottery flask probably dating to the mid-to-late 2nd century AD. These remains were found at c 9.10–9.50m OD.

During the excavations on the site in 1987 a cobbled and metalled surface consisting of gravel and coarse ragstone and chalk blocks with broken red tiles was found at c 9m OD. A slight camber on the surface may indicate a road aligned north-west to south-east and an estimated 5m in width – and was overlain by redeposited brickearth. Further evidence of a road, running east-west and probably dated to after AD 120, has been found to the south-east of the site at 15–17 Eldon Street. The road was composed of a layer of gravel at least 3.25m wide and laid directly on ground that was wet and marshy.

The construction of a wall around the north side of Londinium c AD 200 may have restricted the flow of the Walbrook, causing water to back-up in the extra-mural area, including the site. The archaeological investigations within the site in 1987 recorded a fibrous organic marsh deposit approximately 0.20m thick containing freshwater snails which had formed over the brickearth to c 9.5–10.0m OD. Similar deposits have been recorded across the area which probably represents the build-up of Roman and medieval marsh deposits. The cemetery appears to have gone out of use in the 3rd century AD.

By the early-15th century, attempts were being made drain and consolidate the area (Tames 1999, 23). One method was to dump waste from the City on to the land. Archaeological investigations in the site in 1987 found evidence of such dumping, recorded at levels between 10.0–11.0m OD. These deposits included a range of later medieval artefactual remains including pottery and pieces of leather shoes. In 1606, the drainage of the area was largely resolved when engineers raised the level of the whole area by 3 to 4ft (c 1m), by stacking dry rubbish consolidated with grass, trees and shrubs (Tames 1999, 24). Gravelled walks were laid out across the open fields, known as Moor Fields (to the south) and Middle Moor Fields and Upper Moor Fields (to the north). By the mid-17th century, Moor Fields (where the site is located) had been laid out with more formal walks dividing quartered lawns edged by lines of trees and fencing as soon on Ogilby and Morgan's map of 1676 (Fig 3). By the end of the 18th century, Upper Moor Fields on the north side of South Place had been laid out as streets of terraced houses surrounding gardens, as shown on Horwood's map of 1799 (not reproduced).

The architect and surveyor George Dance the Younger had conceived the idea of an oval 'amphitheatre' for the redevelopment of the Moor Fields estate in 1802, but it was only after Bethlehem Hospital was demolished in 1815 that the Circus was started. The new Finsbury Circus is shown in Greenwood's map of 1824–6 (not

reproduced). Terraced houses fronted the Circus in the south-eastern part of the site, with gardens to the rear. There were also buildings in the northern part of the site, fronting South Place and South Place Mews.

In 1926 the Unitarian Chapel in the north-eastern part of the site was closed and further redevelopment took place for offices: the façade to South Place of this date has been retained (Bradley and Pevsner 1997, 493). The current River Plate House was constructed in 1987–90 to a design by the Kenzie Lovell Partnership (Bradley and Pevsner 1997, 493).

2.3 Museum of London Archaeology team

In the document below the following terms should be understood:

Museum of London Archaeology is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company registration number 07751831 and charity registration number 1143574. Registered office: Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED.

Project Manager - MOLA office based manager who was the client's principal point of contact and who has overall responsibility for the project budget and delivery.

Site Supervisor - MOLA site based manager who was responsible for the direction of the field team. Site supervisors on larger sites will tend to be Project Officers in grade, whilst on other sites they will be Senior Archaeologists. On some sites there may be both a Project Officer and/or one or more Senior Archaeologists.

Archaeologists - MOLA excavation staff responsible on site for archaeological excavation.

Health and Safety Manager – The MOLA manager with sole responsibility for site inspections, reporting and issuing of recommendations for the Site Supervisor and Project Manager to implement. Reports directly to MOLA CEO.

3 Original research aims

All research was/is undertaken within the priorities established in the Museum of London's *A research framework for London Archaeology, 2002*

Specific research aims were also established in the Written Scheme of Investigation or Project Design for the excavation (Section 2.2):

Natural topography and the prehistoric environment

- What is the nature and level of natural topography?
- Does the fibrous organic marsh deposit extend into this area?

Roman

- What is the nature of the gravel surface identified during the evaluation
- Is there further evidence for the possible Roman road identified in the 1987 excavation?
- Is there any evidence for Roman land or water management, such as drainage channels?
- Is there any evidence for Roman burials within the site?

Medieval

- Is there any evidence of late medieval drainage and land consolidation, as seen during excavations of the site in 1987?

Post-medieval

- Is there any evidence for remains of the Unitarian Chapel on the site?
- What are the latest deposits identified?

4 Site sequence: interim statement on fieldwork

4.1 Introduction

All archaeological excavation and monitoring were carried out in accordance with the preceding Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA, 2013).

The extent of archaeological deposit survival was less than anticipated due to truncation by construction trenches for concrete piles to the north and south and for the sub-basement to the west which significantly reduced the area of excavation (see cover; Fig 2)

The site records can be found under the site code FIN13 in the MoL archive. Contexts numbers (allocated to deposits and features during fieldwork) are shown in square brackets and subgroup numbers (assigned during the post-excavation process to groups of related contexts) are shown in round brackets (sgp).

4.2 Natural and topography

London Clay was not exposed during the excavations. Natural terrace sands and gravels (sgp 9) extended across the base of the trench at c 9.04m OD sloping down sharply to the east (to 8.89m OD) and more gently to the west (to 8.7m OD). The uneven surface of the natural may indicate the influence of water and indeed the overlying layers may have been deposited alluvially. These were a sterile firm gravelly brickearth layer (sgp 7), 0.20-0.30m thick with a surface level of 9.11m OD which overlay the gentler slope. The dip in the natural to the east was filled with a moderately soft, fine, grey silty grey soil (sgp 8) c 40mm thick which contained occasional small sub-angular pebbles. Neither contained any anthropogenic material and both appear to have been naturally deposited, possibly by a stream crossing the site.

4.3 Roman

Both deposits were capped by a thin, 50mm thick, heavily compacted metalled gravel and mortar surface (sgp 6) with a top level of c 9.15m OD (Fig 5, Fig 6). It extended to the south where it was recorded in Test Pit 4 of the evaluation (MOLA 2013). Overall, it measured 1.5m east-west by 2.8m north-south but unfortunately it was truncated on all sides so its full extent is unknown and its purpose remains unclear. It could represent hardstanding or possibly a road leading into the Northern cemetery.

The gravel surface was laid over an uneven area of ground for which no compensation was made, resulting in it slumping into the underlying soft spots to the east. The gravel surface was capped by a layer of stiff mid grey silty clay (sgp 5) which survived to a depth of 0.12m. The deposit contained occasional charcoal flecks, frequent sub-angular pebbles, animal bone (cattle), tile and brick fragments and occasional abraded pottery fragments dated AD 120–250. Although it is unclear whether this deposit was deliberately laid or waterlain due to flooding of the area, this phase represents the abandonment of the underlying surface and activity in the immediate area (Fig 6).

4.4 Medieval

The clay was in turn overlain by a 70mm thick, friable, dark brown and organic, peaty silt layer (sgp 4) which contained occasional cattle and pig bone and very occasional

pottery fragments (dated AD 120–250). Although no medieval pottery was recovered, the characteristic composition of this deposit strongly suggests that it is a marsh deposit identical to the organic silt [4] recorded in the evaluation Test Pit 4 (MOLA 2013) and the fibrous, organic deposit containing freshwater snails reported in the 1987 excavations on the site. The accumulation of fine clays and marsh appears to represent the gradual formation of the marshland during the late Roman and medieval periods that developed into the Moorfields area.

4.5 Post-medieval

The marsh deposits were overlain by firm mid grey sandy silt deposit (sgp 3). This dump layer contained occasional oyster shell, frequent white lime flecks, animal bone, including an element from a calf, and occasional fragments of tile and pot dated AD 1580–1700. The layer survived to a thickness of 0.25m with a surface level of 9.71m. Comparison with similar deposits recorded previously on the site suggests it may represent land reclamation deposits with material brought from outside.

These layers were cut by a square, vertical sided pit, possibly a cesspit, measuring c 1m wide and 0.70m deep (sgp 2, Fig 7). It was filled with moderately firm mid grey sandy silt (sgp 1) which contained occasional charcoal flecks and oyster shells and is broadly dated to the 17th and 18th centuries from the pottery and cbm fragments (dated AD 1580–1800) recovered from the backfill.

5 Quantification and assessment

5.1 Post-excavation review

The following tasks have been completed:

- Completion of checking of site archive – plans, sections, context sheets, environmental sheets & registers
- Site context matrix checked and inputted onto BONN
- Subgrouping of contexts completed, annotated on context matrix and descriptions inputted onto Oracle
- Subgroup matrix created on BONN
- Selected plans digitised and checked
- Sections located
- All provisional ceramic dating done
- Work on finds, environmental material completed to assessment level
- Archive quantification
- Authorship of site summary and OASIS form
- All photographs cross referenced and indexed

5.2 The site archive and assessment: stratigraphic

Table 1 Stratigraphic archive

Type	Description	Quantity	Notes
Contexts	Excavation	18	Excavation (9) Evaluation (9)
Plans	'A4' 1:20 (no. of sheets)	12	Excavation (9) Evaluation (3)
Sections	'A4'	3	Excavation (3) Evaluation (1)
Matrices	Context and subgroup		Digital and paper copies
Photographs	Digital	Colour (40)	Excavation (23) Evaluation (17) (includes duplicate images)

5.3 Site archive and assessment: finds and environmental

Table 2 Finds and environmental archive general summary

Category	Description	Weight
Building material	6 pieces of ceramic building material (all discarded after assessment)	0.24kg
Roman pottery	7 sherds	91kg
Post-medieval pottery	2 sherds	25kg
Animal bone	Estimated 14 fragments	0.397kg

5.4 The building material

By Ian M. Betts

5.4.1 Introduction/methodology

All the building material has been recorded using the standard recording forms used by the Museum of London. This has involved fabric analysis undertaken with a x10 binocular microscope. The information on the recording forms has been added to an Oracle database.

Table 3 Building material

Material	Count	Count as % of total	Weight (kg)	Weight as % of total
Roman ceramic	2	33.3	0.03	14.29
Medieval ceramic	3	50.0	0.2	81.6
Post-med ceramic	1	16.7	0.01	4.08
Total	6		0.24	

5.4.1.1 Roman ceramic building material

5.4.1.1.1 FABRICS

Early Roman fabrics

Fabric group 2815, fabric 2454

5.4.1.1.2 FORMS

From a possible waterlain clay over a road (context [14]) is what appears to be an abraded rectangular tessera. From the same context is an abraded roofing tile or brick. The associated pottery is of AD120–250 date.

5.4.1.2 Saxon building material

None.

5.4.1.3 Medieval ceramic building material

5.4.1.3.1 FABRIC

2271

5.4.1.3.2 FORM

Peg roofing tile

There are fragments of glazed medieval peg tile from a primary pit fill (context [10]) and post-medieval dumping (context [12]). At least one is of standard London-area two round peg hole type.

5.4.1.4 *Post-medieval ceramic building material*

5.4.1.4.1 FABRICS

Tudor fabrics
2271, 3038

5.4.1.4.2 FORMS

Peg roofing tile
Fabric 2271

A peg tile with a uniform 13mm thickness from a primary pit fill (context [10]) is probably of 1480–1800 date, although it could possibly be earlier. This is of two round nail hole type.

5.4.2

Assessment work outstanding

None.

5.5 The Roman pottery

By Amy Thorp

5.5.1 *Introduction*

All stratified Roman pottery was spot-dated from the site; this comprised 7 sherds from 4 contexts. The sherd size is small and several show evidence of noticeable abrasion on all surfaces. Post-medieval sherds are also present in two contexts suggesting the Roman material is likely to be residual.

5.5.2 *Methods*

The pottery was spot-dated using current Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) methods and standards. It has been quantified by sherd count, weight, estimated number of vessels (ENV) and the data entered into the Oracle database.

5.5.3 *Summary*

The seven Roman sherds retrieved from the site originate from just four contexts and those that are datable to specific periods are limited to just two vessels. Context [10] contained two sherds of unsourced sand-tempered wares (SAND) which are dated to the whole Roman period (AD 50–400). Context [12] is dated AD 120–400 by a single sherd from a black-burnished ware 1 shallow simple dish (BB1 5J) and also contained a single sherd from a probable amphora (unsourced). Finally contexts [13] and [14] contain three abraded sherds from the same black-burnished-style ware jar with acute lattice decoration (BBS 2 AL) which dates these deposits to AD 120–250. The material is likely to be residual and/or redeposited given its abraded condition. However, it should be noted that with the existence of burials in this area, black-burnished ware vessels are not unexpected as jars in particular were commonly used as accessory vessels or cremation urns for burials.

5.5.4 Assessment work outstanding

None

5.6 The post-Roman pottery

By Nigel Jeffries

5.6.1 Methodology

The pottery from this site was examined macroscopically, using a binocular microscope (x 20) where appropriate, and recorded on paper and computer, using standard Museum of London codes for fabrics, forms and decoration. The numerical data comprises sherd count (SC), estimated number of vessels (ENV) and weight (by grammes) and was entered onto the ORACLE database.

5.6.2 Post-medieval (c 1500–1900)

5.6.2.1 Summary/Introduction

The two post-medieval sherds retrieved from the site originate from just two contexts ([10] and [13]). Both are small-sized body sherds in redware fabrics (MOL fabrics PMR and PMFR) common to excavations in the City of London and its immediate environs and supply a chronology of after c1580 to this noted landuse.

5.6.3 Assessment work outstanding

None

5.7 The animal bone

By Alan Pipe

Table 4 Contents of animal bone archive

	Weight (g)	Fragments	Boxes
Animal bone (hand-collected)	195	7	1 standard archive box (boxed with finds)
Animal bone (wet-sieved)	202	7	(boxed with hand-collected animal bone)

5.7.1 Introduction/methodology

This report identifies, quantifies and interprets the animal bone from contexts [10] - [14], derived from pit fill [10] and unspecified external contexts [12] - [14]. Hand-collected animal bone from [10], [12] and [14] and wet-sieved animal bone from samples [12] {1}, [13] {2} and [14] {3} was recorded directly onto the Museum of London Archaeology Oracle animal bone assessment database in terms of weight (kg), estimated fragment count, species, carcass-part, preservation, modification,

and the recovery of epiphyses, mandibular tooth rows, measurable bones, complete long bones, and very young sub-adult age groups. The assemblage was not recorded as individual fragments or identified to skeletal element. All identifications referred to the MOLA reference collection; and Schmid 1972. Fragments not identifiable to species or genus level were generally allocated to an approximate category, particularly 'large mammal' and 'medium mammal' as appropriate. Each context and sample assemblage was then grouped with available dating and feature description.

Table 5 below gives a summary of the hand-collected context groups and wet-sieved sample groups in terms of weight (kg), estimated fragment count, preservation, faunal composition, modification and the recovery of evidence for ageing, stature and very young sub-adult animals.

5.7.2 Summary, post-medieval

This assemblage provided 0.397 kg, estimated 14 fragments, of moderately- and well-preserved hand-collected and wet-sieved animal bone with a maximum fragment size generally between 25 and 75 mm. The hand-collected bone produced 0.195 kg, estimated seven fragments; the wet-sieved assemblage produced 0.202 kg, estimated seven fragments.

The bulk of the hand-collected bone derived from adult and juvenile ox (cattle) *Bos taurus* and cattle-sized fragments but with a single calcaneum (heel) fragment of pig *Sus scrofa* from external deposit [13] {2}. There was no recovery of sheep/goat *Ovis aries/Capra hircus*, dog *Canis lupus familiaris*, horse *Equus familiaris*, poultry, game or fish. There was no recovery of amphibians or very small mammals. There was no recovery of human bone.

There were no foetal, neonate or infant animals and only one recovery of a juvenile animal, a calf, represented by an unfused distal metatarsal (hind-foot) from [12] {1}. No context or sample groups were identified as 'exotic' or 'important'. Cattle were represented by elements of the upper and lower hind-leg, skull and hind-foot; respectively areas of good, moderate and poor meat-bearing quality. There was no evidence of butchery, working, burning, gnawing, pathological change or any other modification.

The group produced very limited evidence for age at death of the major domesticates with no mandibular tooth rows and only three epiphyses; there were no measurable or complete limb long bones.

5.7.3 Assessment work outstanding

There is no outstanding assessment work.

Table 5 Hand-collected and wet-sieved animal bone

SUBGR OUP	CONTEXT	SAMPLE	PARENT CXT	FEATURE	PRES	WT (kg)	cattle	sheep/goat	pig	dog	poultry	lmam	mmamm	smam	vs mam	bird	fish	amphibian	epiphyses	mandible	measurable	complete	butchery	pathology	burnt	gnawed	worked	SUMMARY
1	10	0	11	pit	good	0.075	Y es	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
3	12	0	12	external	good	0.1	Y es	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	innominate skull/tibia/calf metatarsal
3	12	1	12	external	good	0.1	Y es	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
4	13	2	13	external	moderate	0.1	0	0	Y es	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	calcaneum
5	14	0	14	external	moderate	0.02	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	long bone
5	14	3	14	external	moderate	0.002	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
TOTAL						0.397	3	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	

Lmam mammal, large (cattle, horse, red deer)
 Mmamm mammal, medium (sheep, goat, pig, dog, fallow deer)
 Smamm mammal, small (cat, hare, rabbit)
 vs mamm mammal, very small (mouse, rat)

6 Potential of the data

6.1 Realisation of the original research aims

Natural topography and the prehistoric environment

- What is the nature and level of natural topography?

A limited area of (possibly truncated) sandy gravel lay at 9.04m OD. The surface of the gravels was very uneven which may indicate the influence of water or erosion by a stream. Waterlogged black silts were recorded on the site during the 1987 excavations and it is likely that tributaries of the Walbrook ran across or close to the site.

- Does the fibrous organic marsh deposit extend into this area?

Waterlain clays overlain by an organic, fibrous marshy layer extended over the Roman gravel surface suggesting that the initial flooding of the area started in the Roman period and continued into medieval and early post-medieval times.

The construction of the masonry wall around Londinium has traditionally been seen as a cause of the development of the extra-mural Moorfields marsh. The wall has a construction date of between AD 190 and 225 and the channelling of the Walbrook streams through culverts in the wall have been seen as causing a backing up of water, with the resultant formation of marshland, and the abandonment of the area. This model is broadly confirmed by the remains excavated on the site.

Roman

- What is the nature of the gravel surface identified during the evaluation

Only a small area of the metalled gravel surface survived which together with the section discovered in evaluation TP4 measured 50mm thick by 1.6m east-west by 2.8m north-south though it was not possible to determine its full extent. The purpose of the deposit remains unclear, though its composition suggests it is an area of external hardstanding, surface or perhaps even of road. The gravel was laid directly onto an area of uneven ground and no compensation was made for the poor ground. A similarly constructed east-west orientated road was recorded during excavations at 16-18 Finsbury Circus and 18-31 Eldon Street (ENS03) to the east of the site. Although there is nothing to suggest they are part of the same road, it does reinforce that such poorly built roads were laid to the north of the city wall.

- Is there further evidence for the possible Roman road identified in the 1987 excavation?

No further evidence was found for this road. However the metalled gravel surface described above may be a contemporary road surface.

- Is there any evidence for Roman land or water management, such as drainage channels?

No further evidence was found for Roman land or water management.

- Is there any evidence for Roman burials within the site?

No further evidence was found for Roman burials during the excavation.

Medieval

- Is there any evidence of late medieval drainage and land consolidation, as seen during excavations of the site in 1987?

No further evidence of later medieval drainage was found during the excavation.

Post-medieval

- Is there any evidence for remains of the Unitarian Chapel on the site?

The chapel is located in the north-eastern part of the site and so no further evidence for it was found during the excavation which was located in the south-eastern part of the site.

- What are the latest deposits identified?

The latest deposits identified in the excavation were post-medieval dump deposits sealing the marsh may well be evidence of later, 17th century land reclamation and a vertical sided pit, possibly a cesspit (sgp 2) broadly dated to the 17th and 18th centuries from the pottery and cbm recovered from the fills.

6.2 General discussion of potential

Due to the limited extent of the archaeology, the site is considered to have limited potential. The nature of the Roman gravel surface is unclear though similar findings from nearby sites may suggest that the extra-mural hinterland was served by small roadways built to specifically serve the cemetery. This section of gravel surface may contribute to a greater understanding and to the layout of the extra-mural *Londinium*, in the Upper Walbrook valley area.

The site produced a limited profile of the medieval marsh deposits and early post-medieval reclamation that defines the Moorfields area. It therefore has little potential to contribute to our understanding of the development of these processes.

The potential of the recovered dateable finds, including Roman and post-medieval pottery and the building material is limited to dating given the small quantity of material. The hand-collected and wet-sieved assemblage has only very limited potential and the wet-sieved sample groups provide no evidence for the consumption of fish or wild game. In view of the absence of amphibians and small mammals from the samples, there is no potential for interpretation of local habitats.

7 Significance of the data

The discovery of a possible Roman road outside the city wall in the western fringes of the Northern cemetery is of local significance, adding to our knowledge of this poorly understood area. Overall, the Roman finds have limited local significance as the abraded nature of the Roman tile and pottery recovered from the clays is consistent with the waterlain nature of the deposits.

The two sherds of post-medieval pottery have limited significance beyond providing dating evidence for the two contexts and landuse it was found in. Likewise, the hand-collected and wet-sieved animal bone is of only very limited local significance in terms of meat diet, reflecting consumption of beef and pork. There is no wider significance or significance in terms of interpretation of local activity, habitats or conditions.

8 Publication/dissemination

In view of the limited potential of the material (Section 6) and the relatively limited significance of the data (Section 7) this report concludes that further analysis and research are not required.

The results of the excavation will be initially disseminated via this report. Information on the results of the archaeological evaluation will be made publicly available by means of a database in digital form, to permit inclusion of the site data in any future academic researches into the development of London. A short summary of the results of the work will be submitted to the Greater London HER and NAR (using the appropriate OASIS archaeological report form, included in this report: section 8), and for publication in the 'Excavation Round-up' of the *London Archaeologist* and other period-based archaeological journals as appropriate.

9 Acknowledgements

The author and MOLA would like to thank Forbes MacPherson of Stanhope plc, for commissioning the archaeological excavation and this assessment report. We would also like to thank Kathryn Stubbs, City of London, Assistant Director Historic Environment.

The author would like to thank John Chesters and Matt Fairbrother from Lend Lease and Damien Flatley and the staff at Cantillion for their assistance during the excavations.

The excavation was supervised by the author and Paolo Guarino, with the field assistance of Robert Hartle. The watching brief was undertaken by Alison Telfer.

Survey was provided by Mark Burch and Raoul Bull of the MOLA Geomatics team and photographic support was by Maggie Cox. The fieldwork was managed by MOLA Project Manager David Divers.

10 OASIS archaeological report form

10.1 OASIS ID: molas1-170646

Project details

Project name	River Plate House
Short description of the project	The excavation area was located in the south-east part of the basement and was found to be heavily truncated by modern construction trenches on all sides, leaving a small island of in situ deposits. Overlying the natural gravels were a sterile gravelly brickearth and a fine sandy silt which may be waterlain, perhaps deposited by a stream or tributary of the Walbrook. Both deposits were capped by a thin but compacted metalled gravel surface defined at 9.17m OD. its purpose is unclear but appears to be an area of external hardstanding or perhaps even of road. This was overlain by a stiff mid grey clay which in turn was overlain by soft and friable organic peaty silt. The composition of these deposits suggests that they are waterlain, indicating flooding and the formation of the marsh deposits that accumulated in this area during the late Roman and medieval periods. The site was used as an open space and from the Tudor period it was increasingly reclaimed with dumps of earth raising the surface level in order to dry out the area. Sandy silt dumps overlying the marsh may represent this ground- raising activity. These deposits were cut by a pit, the backfill contained pottery of 18th century date and represents the latest activity identified on the site.
Project dates	Start: 13-01-2014 End: 17-01-2014
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	molas1-157709 - OASIS form ID
Any associated project reference codes	RIV87 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Monument type	HARD STANDING Roman
Monument type	MARSH Roman
Monument type	MARSH Medieval
Monument type	RECLAMATION Post Medieval
Monument type	PIT Post Medieval

Significant Finds	POT Roman
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Roman
Significant Finds	TILE Roman
Significant Finds	POT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	PEG TILE Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Full excavation"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF LONDON CITY OF LONDON River Plate House, 7-11 Finsbury Circus
Postcode	EC2
Study area	2400.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3285 8170 51.5180798377 -0.0850633764288 51 31 05 N 000 05 06 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 8.70m Max: 9.04m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	MOLA
Project brief originator	City of London
Project design originator	MOLA
Project director/manager	David Divers
Project supervisor	Antonietta Lerz
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Stanhope plc

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Archive ID	FIN13

Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	FIN13
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	FIN13

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	River Plate House, 7-11 Finsbury Circus, London EC2. Post-excavation assessment
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Lerz, A
Date	2014
Issuer or publisher	MOLA
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	Unpublished, spiral bound A4 report

Entered by	A Lerz (alerz@mola.org.uk)
Entered on	4 February 2014

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Fig 1 Site location



Fig 2 Trench location plan

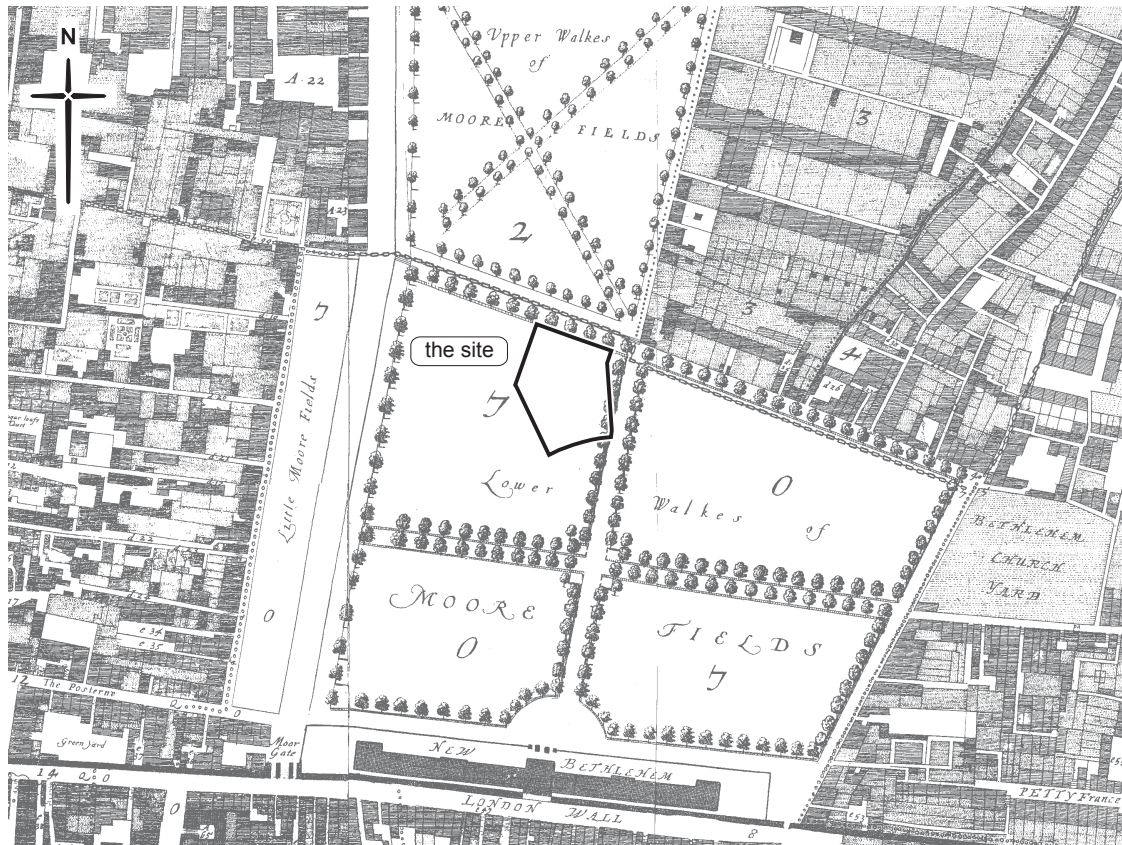


Fig 3 The site overlain on Ogilby and Morgan's map of 1676

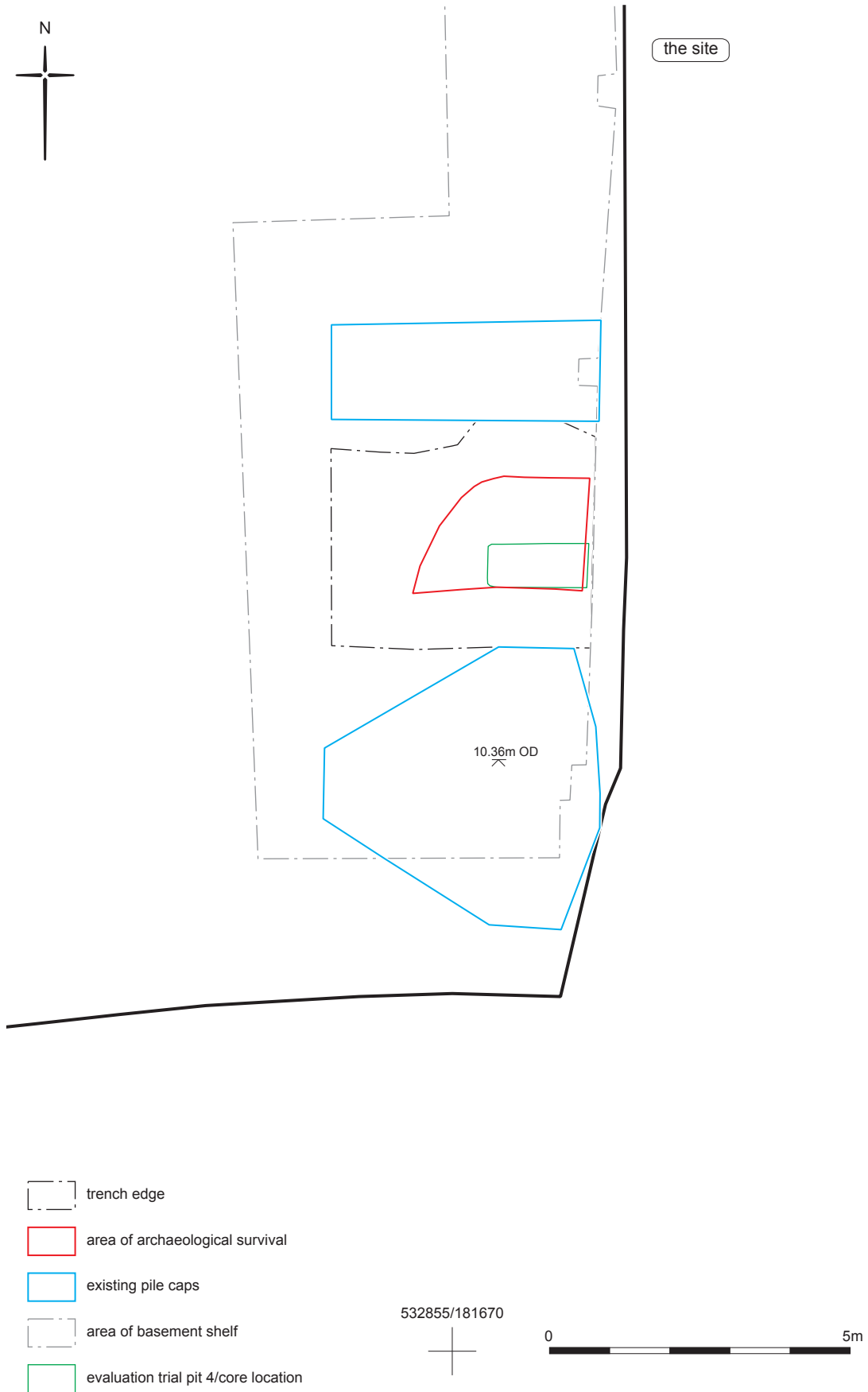


Fig 4 Plan showing the extent of archaeological survival and evaluation TP 4

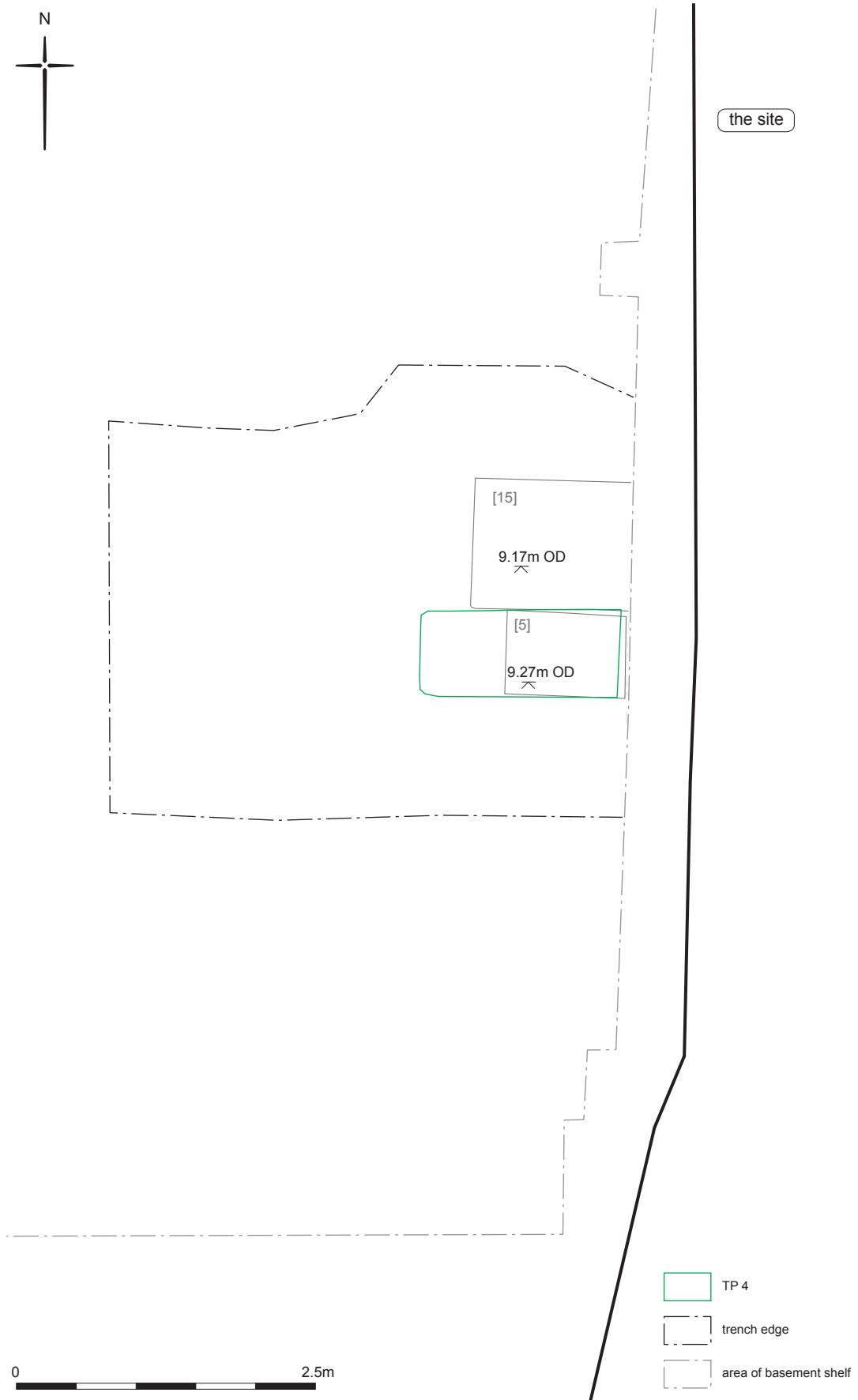


Fig 5 Plan of the gravel surface



Fig 6 Removing the alluvial clays to expose the gravel surface, looking east

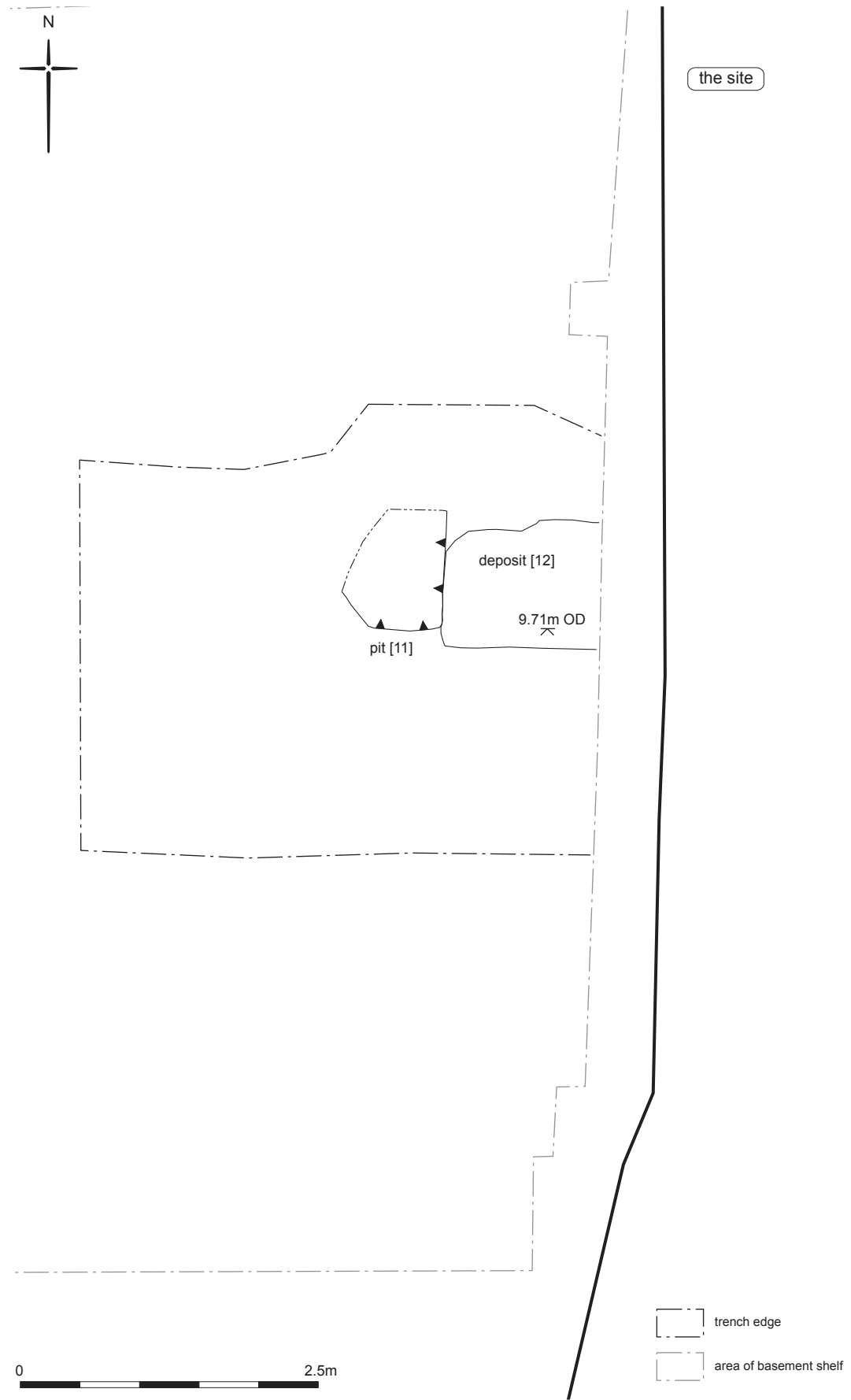


Fig 7 Plan of post-medieval deposits