

KENSINGTON ROW - PHASE 1

Warwick Road

London W14

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Watching brief report

April 2014



**Kensington Row – Phase 1
Warwick Road
W14 8PS**

Site Code KSG14
NGR 524733 178871
OASIS reference molas1-175804

Planning reference PP/12/05112

Report on an archaeological watching brief

Sign-off history:

Issue No.	Date:	Prepared by:	Checked/ Approved by:	Reason for Issue:
1	08-04-14	Tony Mackinder	Craig Halsey	First issue for comment

Graphics: Judit Peresztegi

© MOLA 2014

Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED tel 0207 410 2200

email generalenquiries@mola.org.uk

Summary

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by MOLA at Kensington Row - Phase1, Warwick Road, London W14. The report was commissioned from MOLA by the client St Edward Homes Ltd.

In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2014 dated 10-03-2014) a watching brief was carried out on the site in March 2014.

Three trenches were investigated. Within these two brick walls belonging to a building and several deposits of archaeology interest were found. These probably relate to the late 19th century coal depot seen on the Ordnance Survey map of 1871.

Natural sand and gravel varied from 4.20m OD in the north east to 3.60m OD in the south west. This undulation in the gravel topography probably results to the infilled Counter's Creek lying to the south west of site.

Contents

1	Introduction.....	5
1.1	Site background	5
1.2	Planning background.....	5
1.3	Scope of the watching brief	5
2	Topographical and historical background.....	6
2.1	Topography	6
2.2	Archaeology	6
3	The watching brief.....	8
3.1	Field methodology	8
3.2	Recording methodology.....	8
3.3	Site archive.....	8
4	Results of the watching brief.....	9
4.1	Trench 1	9
4.2	Trench 2	10
4.3	Trench 3	11
5	Archaeological potential	13
5.1	Answering original research aims	13
5.2	Answering new research aims	13
5.3	Significance of the data	13
6	Publication and archiving	14
7	Acknowledgements	15
8	NMR OASIS archaeological report form.....	16
9	Bibliography.....	19

List of figures

Front cover: Ordnance Survey map 1871 showing the coal depot

Fig 1 Site Location	20
Fig 2 Areas of investigation	21
Fig 3 Ordnance Survey map 1952	22
Fig 4 Trench 3 section 1	23

1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

- 1.1.1 An archaeological watching brief was carried out by MOLA at Kensington Row – Phase 1, Warwick Road W14 ('the site') on 24 March 2014 (see Fig 1). This document reports on the investigation.
- 1.1.2 The site comprises an area of open ground following recent demolition, and is bounded by Warwick Road to the east, railway lines to the west, buildings to the south and a construction site to the north. The centre of the site lies at National Grid reference 524733 178871. Modern pavement level near to the site lies at c 5.4m OD.
- 1.1.3 The site is being developed to create a mixture of private and affordable residential units with associated car parking. The development received planning permission, but no archaeological condition was applied to the development consent. The client (St Edward Homes Ltd) has however, requested that a watching brief be conducted so as to conform to 'best practice' as a conscientious developer.

1.2 Planning background

- 1.2.1 The legislative and planning framework in which the watching brief took place was fully set out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* which formed the project design for the evaluation (see Section 1.2, MOLA 2014).
- 1.2.2 No archaeological planning condition has been attached to the planning permission for this site (planning ref: PP/12/05112)

1.3 Scope of the watching brief

- 1.3.1 An archaeological watching brief is normally a limited fieldwork exercise. It is not the same as full excavation, though individual features may be fully excavated. The watching brief was limited to an area to the north east of the current railway line (see Fig 2).
- 1.3.2 The watching brief was carried out within the terms of the relevant Standard for watching brief specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (IFA, 2009).
- 1.3.3 All work has been undertaken within the research priorities established in the Museum of London's *A research framework for London Archaeology*, 2002.
- 1.3.4 All work was undertaken within research aims and objectives established in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* for the watching brief (Section 2.2, MOLA 2014)

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Topography

- 2.1.1 The ground slopes down gently to the south towards the River Thames located 2.1km to the south-east of the site. It falls more steeply to the west towards Counter's Creek, a small tributary of the Thames that was canalised in the 19th century. Warwick Road along the eastern side of the site lies at c 5.4m OD.
- 2.1.2 The underlying geology consists of Kempton Park Gravels (British Geological Survey sheet 270), a gravel terrace formed by the Thames during the Mid Devensian glacial period (c 110,000 to 40,000 years ago). In places the gravel terrace is capped with brickearth (Langley Silt Complex), a fine-grained silt believed to have accumulated by a mixture of processes (eg wind, slope and freeze-thaw) mostly since the Last Glacial Maximum around 17,000 years ago.

2.2 Archaeology

Prehistoric period (800,000 BC–AD 43)

- 2.2.1 The evidence for prehistoric activity (comprising the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic periods) is very sparse in the Kensington area as a whole. No prehistoric material has been recovered from the immediate vicinity of the site.

Roman period (AD 43–410)

- 2.2.2 During the Roman period the site lay within the rural hinterland of the Roman city of Londinium, c 8km to the east of Kensington. The main road from Londinium to Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester) lies beneath modern Holland Park Avenue and Notting Hill Gate. It has also been suggested that a subsidiary Roman road, 'Akeman Street' underlies Kensington Road/Kensington High Street and Hammersmith Road, c 200m to the north of the site.
- 2.2.3 Small nucleated settlements, typically located along the major roads leading to the capital, acted both as markets and as producers to the capital. These hinterland settlements appear to have followed the general socio-economic trends that characterise the Roman period; a period of prosperity in the early 2nd century followed by a general decline in the late 2nd– early 3rd century and a brief revival in the 4th century (MoLAS 2000, 150).

Early medieval (Saxon) period (AD 410–1066)

- 2.2.4 Kensington and Chelsea may originally have formed a single land holding with Chelsea (Weinreb and Hibbert 1995, 148). Our knowledge of the area in the years between the withdrawal of the Roman civil and military administration in AD 410 and the Norman Conquest of 1066 is extremely limited. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that in AD 785 a Church Synod was held in Cealchythe, which is thought to be Chelsea.

However, place name evidence can be inconclusive, so a positive identification with Chelsea is not certain.

- 2.2.5 Place names in the Domesday Book (AD 1086) provide one guide to the extent of late Saxon settlement. The site lay within the manor (estate) of Kensington (Chenesitone), and was held prior to the Norman Conquest (1066) by Edwin, a nobleman of Edward the Confessor (Williams and Martin 1992, 366). The main settlement in the manor is thought to have been in the area of the present church of St Mary Abbots, 1.2km to the north-east of the site (HER ref. 081643; Weinreb and Hibbert 1995, 435).
- 2.2.6 Throughout this period the site probably lay within a rural landscape of open fields and occasional farmsteads. Saxon features, dating to at least the 8th century AD have been recorded in the vicinity of Earls Terrace, c 285m to the east (ETR97). The archaeological investigation recorded Saxon pits, postholes and cultivation soils, overlying an earlier Roman ditch.

Later medieval period (AD 1066–1485)

- 2.2.7 By 1086 Aubrey de Vere held the Kensington manor (estate) for the Bishop of Coutances. The manor comprised meadow, pasture, woodland, and even vineyards (Williams and Martin 1992, 366). There was also a priest, though no mention of a church or chapel is made. The de Veres became Earls of Oxford, and the manor house, one of many of the Earl's residences at which manorial courts would have been held, was at Earls Court (hence the name), c 800m to the south-east of the site (Weinreb and Hibbert 1995, 254).

Post-medieval period (AD 1485–present)

- 2.2.8 During the 16th century Kensington's reputation as a centre for market and nursery gardening for the ever-growing City of London became established. This industry continued into the 19th century when pressure of development made the area too valuable as building land. The area of rising ground between Kensington High Street and Notting Hill became a focus for the construction of large mansions in the relative countryside but still within easy reach of Westminster and the City during the 17th century. The site lay beyond the periphery of the settlement, within arable land as shown on Rocque's map of 1746 (not illustrated).
- 2.2.9 In 1828 Counter's Creek was converted into a canal in order to stimulate local trade and commerce. To this end it was widened to 100 feet, and was designed to take vessels of up to 100 tons. A basin 200 feet by 400 feet was created at its northern end just south of Counter's Bridge. It had been hoped that it would generate revenue of £2,500 per annum but this figure was never attained. With the coming of the railways, many canals were no longer seen as an economic means of transporting goods. In 1839, only 23 years after it was completed, the Kensington Canal was drained and used for the West London Extension Railway. The site was situated on the coal depot for the railway (see OS map 1871).

- 2.2.10 Post-1945 the site was occupied by a number of buildings of a Territorial Army centre that included a three-storey block of flats (Warwick House) built c 1952 as married soldiers' quarters (Survey of London 1986, 287) (see OS map 1952).
- 2.2.11 The site was latterly occupied by the four-storey West Kensington Telephone Exchange, erected in 1962 to the designs of G. R. Yeats of the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works (Survey of London 1986, 287).

3 The watching brief

3.1 Field methodology

- 3.1.1 The trenches were excavated by a tracked machine provided by the contractors, working under MOLA supervision. The deposits were removed in a series of spits.
- 3.1.2 The trenches were recorded according to the *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS, 1994).
- 3.1.3 Trench locations were plotted on plans using an 'offset methodology' and subsequently tied to the OS grid by MOLA Geomatics.

3.2 Recording methodology

- 3.2.1 A written and drawn record of all archaeological deposits encountered was carried out in accordance with the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (MOLA 2014).

3.3 Site archive

- 3.3.1 The following records were taken;

Number of trench record sheets	3
Number of overall location plans	1
Number of Context sheets	5
Number of photographs	20
Number of Plan sheets	0
Number of Sections	1

4 Results of the watching brief

4.1 Trench 1

Location	Parallel to railway lines
Dimensions	20m (NW-SE) x 2.10m x 1.50m deep
Ground level	c 5.40m OD
Modern deposits	0.50m thick
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	N/A
Top of surviving natural observed at	c 3.60m OD

4.1.1 No archaeological features were recorded in this trench. The natural consisted of a grey brown clayey sand encountered at c 3.60m OD. This was overlain by a 0.50m thick gravel deposit that included some bricks. This was sealed by a 0.40m thick deposit of black silt that included some loose wooden railway sleepers.

4.1.2 All these deposits are likely to date to the late 19th century when the site was a coal depot that was served by railway lines.



Photo 1 Trench 1 looking NW

4.2 Trench 2

Location	Parallel to northern boundary
Dimensions	20m (SW-NE) x 2.10m x 1.50m deep
Ground level	c 5.40m OD
Modern deposits	0.40m thick
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	N/A
Top of surviving natural observed at	c 4.0-4.20m OD

4.2.1 No archaeological features were recorded in this trench. The natural consisted of a yellow clayey sand at c 4.00 to 4.20m OD. In places the natural was overlain by a 0.20m thick brick rubble layer. However, most of the trench was sealed by a 0.20m deposit of black silt that was sealed by a further 0.20m thick deposit of gravel. These deposits date to the late 19th century when the site was a coal depot.



Photo 2 Trench 2 looking NE

4.3 Trench 3

Location	See Fig 2
Dimensions	20m (NW-SE) x 2.10m x 1.50m deep
Ground level	c 5.40m OD
Modern deposits	0.40m thick
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	1.0m
Top of surviving natural observed at	c 4.0-4.10m OD

- 4.3.1 Natural was recorded at c 4.00 to 4.10m OD and consisted of a orange clayey sand. The natural was overlain by a 0.80m thick deposit of brown grey clay [4] that included very occasional brick fragments and oyster shells.
- 4.3.2 Two parallel brick walls, [2] and [3], 6.50m apart, ran north east to south west across the trench (see photo 4 and Fig 4). The bricks appear to be late 19th century in date. There was no evidence of a floor associated with these walls, although the area between the walls was infilled with a dump [1] comprised of bands of orange gravel and black silt. The building is probably associated with the coal depot and can still be seen on the 1952 OS map (see Fig 3). The remainder of the trench was sealed by a 0.20m deposit of black silt that was sealed by a further 0.20m thick deposit of gravel.



Photo 3 Trench 3 looking NW



Photo 4 Trench 3 brick wall [2] looking E

5 Archaeological potential

5.1 Answering original research aims

5.1.1 The extent to which the research aims raised in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Section 2.2.4, MOLA 2014) have been answered is addressed below.

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

5.1.2 Natural consisted of clayey sand that varied from 4.20m OD in the north east to 3.60m OD in the south west. This change in topography is probably related to the former Counter's Creek that was canalised and then infilled in the 19th century.

- *Are there any alluvial deposits on the site?*

5.1.3 There were no alluvial deposits on the site.

- *What are the latest deposits identified?*

5.1.4 The latest deposits identified were dumps and brick walls that probably relate to the 19th century when the site was a coal depot that was served by railway lines.

- *What is the extent of modern disturbance?*

5.1.5 There is a large amount of modern disturbance relating to the 20th century buildings constructed after the coal depot fell out of use.

5.2 Answering new research aims

5.2.1 No new research aims were identified.

5.3 Significance of the data

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

6 Publication and archiving

- 6.1.1 The results of the watching brief 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.
- 6.1.2 The site archive containing original records and finds will be stored in accordance with the terms of the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (MOLA 2014) with the Museum of London within 12 months of the end of the watching brief.
- 6.1.3 In view of the limited potential of the material (Sections 4.3.1) and the relatively limited significance of the data (Section 5.3) it is suggested that a short note on the results of the watching brief should appear in the annual round up of the *London Archaeologist*.

7 Acknowledgements

7.1.1 The author would like to thank the client St. Edward Homes Ltd, and in particular Dr Oluwakemi Bashorun, who commissioned the watching brief and this report; also Nick Francis of Laing O'Rourke for assistance on site. Geomatics was by Mark Burch at MOLA.

8 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID: molas1-175804

Project details

Project name	Kensington Row - Phase 1
Short description of the project	Three trenches were investigated in a watching brief; two brick walls belonging to a building and several deposits were found. These probably relate to the late 19th century coal depot seen on the Ordnance Survey map of 1871. Natural sand and gravel varied from 4.20m OD in the north east to 3.60m OD in the south west probably as a result of the now infilled Counter's Creek lying to the south west of site.
Project dates	Start: 24-03-2014 End: 24-03-2014
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	KSG14 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices
Monument type	BRICK WALL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	'best practice' as a conscientious developer

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA KENSINGTON Kensington Row Phase 1, Warwick Road
Postcode	W14 8PS
Study area	5500.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 24733 78871 51.4945072777 -0.20300097621 51 29 40 N 000 12 10 W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 3.60m Max: 4.20m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	MOLA
Project brief originator	Client
Project design originator	MOLA
Project director/manager	Stewart Hoad
Project supervisor	Tony Mackinder
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	St Edward Homes Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Kensington Row - Phase 1, Warwick Road W14
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Mackinder, T
Date	2014
Issuer or publisher	MOLA
Place of issue or	London

publication

Description A4 client report

Entered by Tony Mackinder (tmackinder@mola.org.uk)

Entered on 26 March 2014

OASIS:

Please e-mail [English Heritage](#) for OASIS help and advice

© ADS 1996-2012 Created by [Jo Gilham and Jen Mitcham, email](#) Last modified
Wednesday 9 May 2012

Cite only: <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm> for this page

9 Bibliography

DCLG [Department of Communities and Local Government], 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework*

Williams, A and Martin, G H (eds) 2002 *Domesday, A complete translation* eds.
London: Penguin Books

English Heritage, 1991 *Exploring Our Past, Strategies for the Archaeology of England*

English Heritage, 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)*

English Heritage Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service, June 2009
Archaeological Guidance Papers 1-5

Institute for Archaeologists (IFA), 2008 *By-Laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Institute for Archaeologists, Standard and guidance: watching brief*

Institute for Archaeologists (IFA), supplement 2008, *By-Laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Institute for Archaeologists: Standards and guidance – the collection, documentation conservation and research of archaeological materials*

MOLA 2014 *Kensington Row – Phase 1 Warwick Road, W14 written scheme of investigation for a watching brief*

Museum of London, 1994 *Archaeological Site Manual 3rd edition*

Museum of London, 2002 *A research framework for London archaeology 2002*

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Core Strategy (adopted 8th December 2010)

Survey of London: volume 42 - Kensington Square to Earl's Court 1986
Hermione Hobhouse (General Editor)

Weinreb B and Hibbert C (eds), 1995 *The London Encyclopaedia*. Macmillan.
London

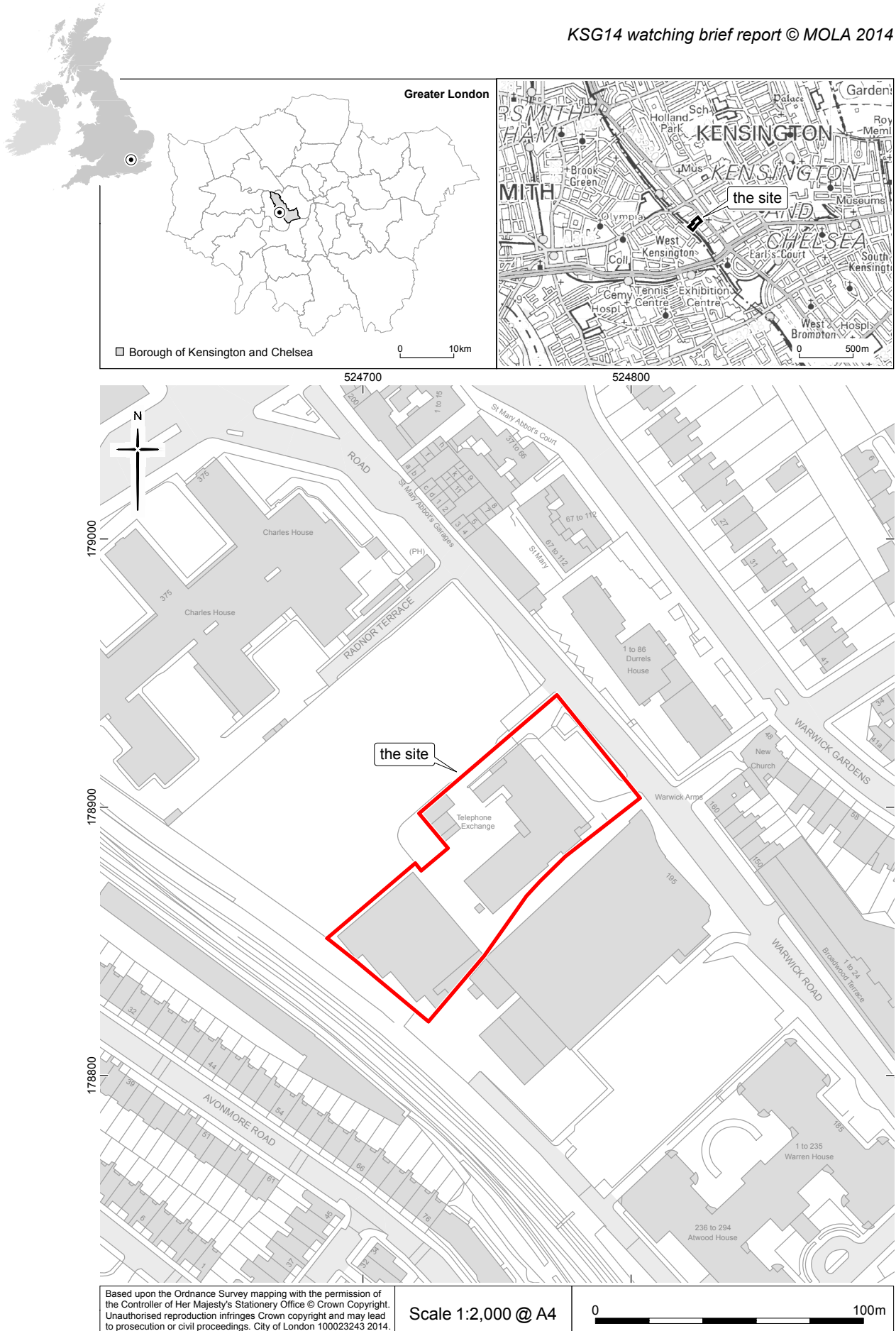


Fig 1 Site location



Fig 2 Areas of investigation

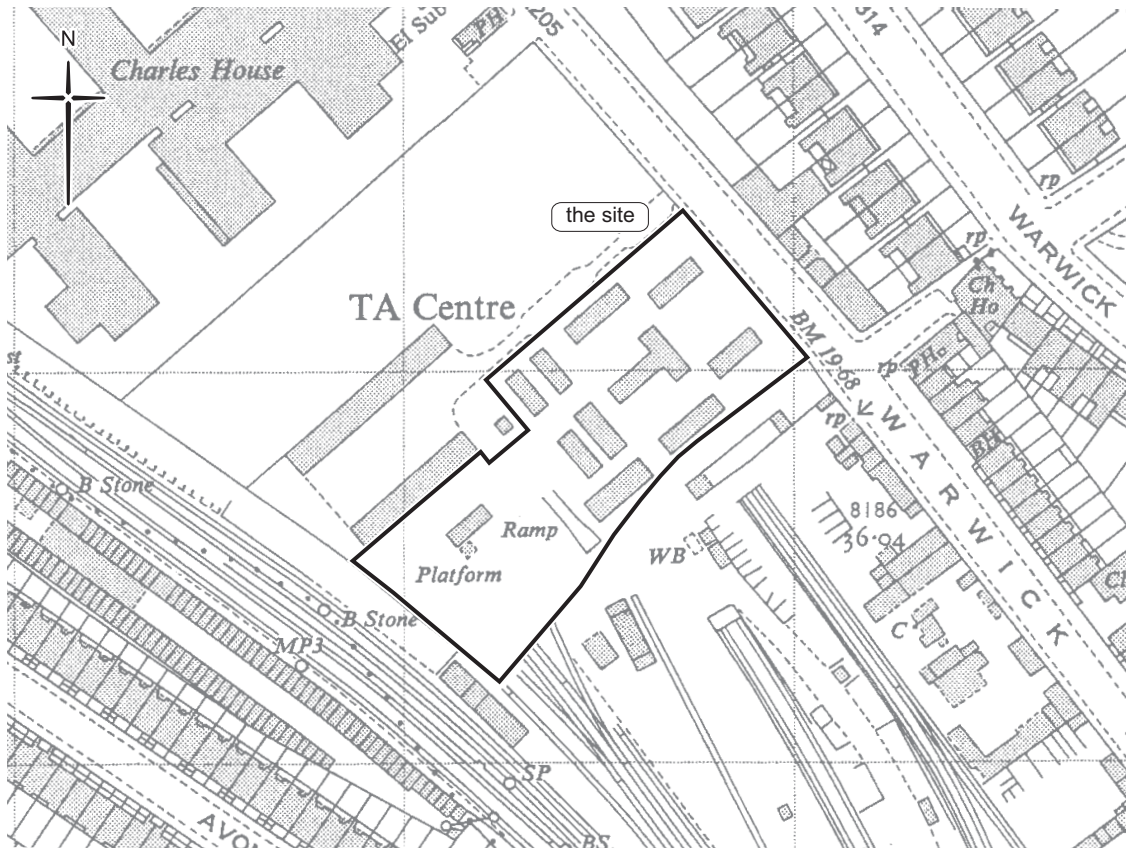


Fig 3 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale map of 1952 (not to scale)

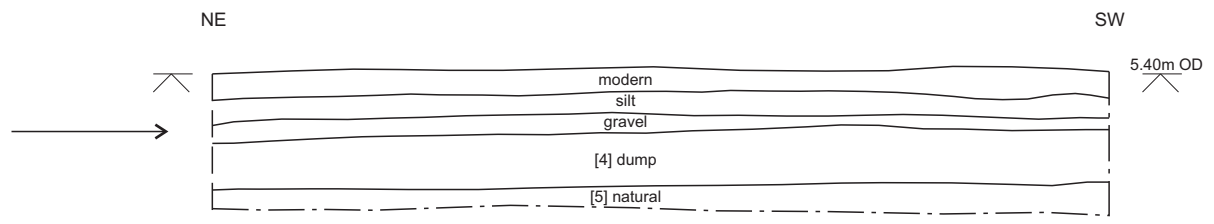
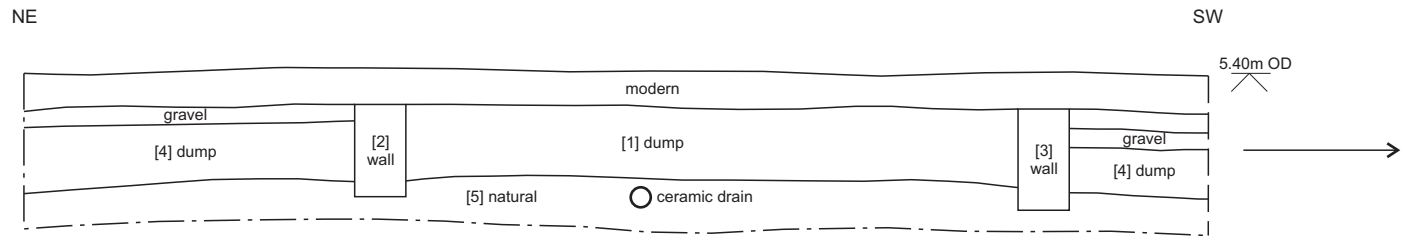


Fig 4 Trench 3 section 1