

2-6 NORTHBURGH STREET AND 32-41 DALLINGTON STREET London EC1V

London Borough of Islington

Watching brief report

June 2014



**2–6 Northburgh Street and 32–41 Dallington Street
London
EC1V 0AY**

Site Code NTB14
NGR 531920 182313
OASIS reference molas1-180228

Planning reference P2013/4472/FUL
Condition Number 5

Report on an archaeological watching brief

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Summary

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by MOLA on geotechnical pits at 2–6 Northburgh Street and 32–41 Dallington Street, London EC1. The report was commissioned from MOLA by Cyril Leonard on behalf of Northburgh House Ltd.

In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2014) a watching brief was carried out on the site during the excavation of engineer test pits and 6 window samples between 20 and 21 May 2014.

The site is located within the north-eastern corner of the Charterhouse monastic precinct.

Natural sand and gravel was recorded at c 2.40m to 2.80m below the modern ground level and generally was capped by 0.20m to 0.30m of brown clay.

Post-medieval dumps, a brick wall, a floor of Doulton blue engineering bricks and several York stone floors were found. The floors may relate to the 'Varnish, Japan & White lead works' indicated on the 1871 OS map (MOLA 2013, Fig 10 HEA report).

Contents

| | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 1 | Site Background | 1 |
| 1.1 | Site background | 1 |
| 1.2 | Planning background | 1 |
| 1.3 | Scope of the watching brief | 1 |
| 2 | Topographical and historical background..... | 2 |
| 2.1 | Geology | 2 |
| 2.2 | Archaeology | 2 |
| 3 | The watching brief | 4 |
| 3.1 | Field methodology | 4 |
| 3.2 | Recording methodology | 4 |
| 3.3 | Site archive..... | 4 |
| 4 | Results of the watching brief..... | 4 |
| 4.1 | Window sample pit 1 | 5 |
| 4.2 | Window sample pit 2 | 5 |
| 4.3 | Window sample pit 3 | 6 |
| 4.4 | Window sample pit 4 | 7 |
| 4.5 | Window sample pit 5 | 8 |
| 4.6 | Window sample pit 6 | 9 |
| 4.7 | Test pit 10 | 10 |
| 4.8 | Test pit 11 | 10 |
| 4.9 | Test pit 12 | 11 |
| 4.10 | Test pit 13 | 11 |
| 4.11 | Test pit 14 | 11 |
| 4.12 | Test pit 15 | 12 |
| 4.13 | Test pit 17 | 12 |
| 4.14 | Soakaway pit | 13 |
| 4.15 | The finds | 14 |
| 5 | Archaeological potential | 14 |
| 5.1 | Answering original research aims | 14 |
| 5.2 | Significance of the data | 15 |
| 6 | Publication and archiving | 15 |

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 7 | NMR OASIS archaeological report form..... | 16 |
| | Acknowledgements..... | 18 |
| | Bibliography | 19 |

List of Illustrations

Front cover: 1871 OS map

| | | |
|-------|-------------------------|----|
| Fig 1 | Site Location | 20 |
| Fig 2 | Areas of investigation | 21 |
| Fig 3 | Section Window Sample 1 | 22 |
| Fig 4 | Section Window Sample 2 | 23 |
| Fig 5 | Section Window Sample 3 | 24 |
| Fig 6 | Section Window Sample 4 | 25 |
| Fig 7 | Section Window Sample 5 | 26 |
| Fig 8 | Section Window Sample 6 | 27 |

1 Site Background

1.1 Site background

- 1.1.1 An archaeological watching brief was carried out by MOLA at 2–6 Northburgh Street and 32–41 Dallington Street, London EC1 ('the site') between 20 and 21 May 2014 (see Fig 1). This document is the Report on that work.
- 1.1.2 A desk top *Archaeological Assessment* (HEA) was previously prepared which covers the whole area of the site (MOLA 2013). This document should be referred to for information on the natural geology, archaeological and historical background of the site (and the initial assessment of its archaeological potential).
- 1.1.3 Further to the condition on Planning Consent a *Written Scheme of Investigation* was prepared by MOLA (MOLA 2014).

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 watching brief (see Section 1.2, MOLA 2014). To summarise here:
- 1.2.2 The watching brief was carried out to fulfil a condition attached to the Planning Consent given by the Local Authority (Consent reference P2013/4472/FUL Condition number 5).

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.
- 1.3.2 The watching brief was limited to areas of window samples and engineers test pits (See Fig 2).
- 1.3.3 The watching brief was carried out within the terms of the relevant Standard for watching brief specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (IFA, 2008).
- 1.3.4 All work has been undertaken within the research priorities established in the Museum of London's *A research framework for London Archaeology*, 2002.
- 1.3.5 All work was undertaken within research aims and objectives established in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* for the watching brief (Section 2.2) under site code NTB14.

2 Topographical and historical background

A detailed description of the geology, archaeology and history of the site was provided in the earlier Archaeological desk-based assessment (MOLA 2013, sections 3.3, 4 and 8). A brief resume is provided here:

2.1 Geology

- 2.1.1 The drift geology in the vicinity of the site consists of Thames river terrace deposits known as the Hackney Gravels (British Geological Survey, 1:50,000 series, England and Wales sheet 256, 1994). This is locally overlain by 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 17,000BP

2.2 Archaeology

- 2.2.1 There is scant evidence for activity on the site before the medieval period.
- 2.2.2 The site lay just outside the medieval City of London. Goswell Road, immediately to the east of the site, and St John Street, 170m to the west, are assumed to have been in existence by the 12th century.
- 2.2.3 Much of the area was likely to have been in arable use, as well a place of recreation, described at the end of the 12th century as 'pleasant fields and pasture, with flowing streams, and springs and mills. Also by the 12th century, monasteries and other religious houses were being set up on the open land around the city.
- 2.2.4 During 1348 and 1349, two cemeteries were founded in the area, in response to the overcrowding of city churchyards because of the Black Death. One was established in a field known as St. John's Meadow or Whitewellbeach. Now generally known as the Pardon Churchyard, the cemetery remained in use until the 17th century. The boundaries of the Pardon Churchyard and the site of its chapel were mapped as they existed in 1654/5 and 1687. Together with other documentary evidence, this suggests the northern extent of the Pardon Churchyard, as overlaid on modern mapping, lay 70m to the south of the site at Great Sutton Street.
- 2.2.5 In 1370, Sir Walter Manny founded the London Charterhouse, a Carthusian monastery on land encompassing the Pardon churchyard. Archaeological investigations at St. John Street, 135m to the west of the site uncovered a substantial ditch, some 1.5m deep and 4.3m wide which possibly represents part of the boundary of the precinct and suggests that it was not walled north of the Pardon churchyard. By 1392 the two final strips of land had been acquired and it is within these two, that the site lies, at the north-eastern extent of the precinct.

- 2.2.6 In 1537, during the Dissolution, the Charterhouse precinct was surrendered to the Crown, and then passed through several hands during the 16th century. Map evidence from this period shows a densely built up London with the Charterhouse lying to the north-west of the city walls. The whole of the former Charterhouse precinct appears to be ringed by a wall though development is still concentrated to the south away from the site. There are a few buildings east of the Pardon Chapel. Fields occupy the northernmost part of the estate.
- 2.2.7 Archaeological investigations at 1–7 Dallington Street, immediately to the north of the site, and at 148–180 St John Street, 50m to the west, recorded plough soil post-dating the Dissolution. Layers of dumped domestic material, with lenses of peat were recorded during excavations at Great Sutton Street 60m to the south west of the site indicating that the fields were being used as sites for refuse disposal by the local population.
- 2.2.8 The site was depicted as an orchard on a map of 1658.
- 2.2.9 By 1676, the surrounding area had been built upon, particularly the areas fronting on to the roads, many of which are arranged around central courtyards.
- 2.2.10 By 1739 the entire area had been built upon. All the buildings shown on the 1676 map appear to be extant, coloured red to signify dwellings. The yards of these buildings are coloured green, signifying workshops, sheds and other industrial buildings.
- 2.2.11 In 1760, an Act of Parliament obtained to redevelop the entire Charterhouse estate meant the site as considerably less built up, with larger buildings suggesting some kind of industrial activity. Some of the buildings within the central parts of the site may be mews or stables.
- 2.2.12 Throughout the 19th century the area became gradually more industrial, with complaints in 1832 regarding the noise and pollution, including the run off from slaughterhouses. A new sewer system was put in, some streets widened, the poorest housing pulled down and rental value raised tenfold, but sub-standard, overcrowded housing and noxious industries continued. This state of affairs continued throughout the remainder of the 19th century (see front cover) and into the 20th century.
- 2.2.13 During the Second World the northern side of the site suffered ‘total destruction’ or were ‘damaged beyond repair’. Damage to buildings towards the centre of the site ranged from ‘damaged beyond repair’, to general non-structural blast damage. Buildings along south escaped with only minor blast damage.
- 2.2.14 In 1961–2 the existing buildings at 33–41 Dallington Street and 2–6 Northburgh Street were built as a speculative warehousing venture.

3 The watching brief

3.1 Field methodology

- 3.1.1 The slab was broken out for 6 window sample pits and test pits by the contractors and each pit was excavated to the required depth using a small machine.
- 3.1.2 Each pit and the window samples was recorded in accordance with the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (MOLA 2014).
- 3.1.3 All locations were plotted on a plan (Archer Architects LLP drawing no 5106.4/01/100) provided by the client, 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

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Number of overall location plans | 1 |
| Number of Context sheets | 40 |
| Number of photographs | 17 |
| Number of Plan sheets | 0 |
| Number of Sections | 7 |

4 Results of the watching brief

For all locations see

Fig 2, the test pit numbers follow an earlier sequence and the soakaway pit was not numbered.

4.1 Window sample pit 1

See Fig 3

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| WS 1 | |
| Location | See Fig 2 |
| Dimensions | 0.80 by 0.80 by 1.20 deep |
| Modern ground level/top of slab | unknown |
| Modern slab | 0.15m thick plus 0.10m of make up |
| Recorded archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any) | 1.50m thick |
| Top of surviving natural observed at | 2.60m below ground level |

- 4.1.1 Natural sand and gravel [9] was observed at 2.60m below ground level.
- 4.1.2 This was overlain by 0.90m of brown clayey silt [8] and 0.50m of black clayey silt [7], both are post-medieval deposits.
- 4.1.3 They were sealed by a 19th century brick floor [6] 1.10m below ground level.
- 4.1.4 There was a further 0.85m of modern rubble over this floor.



WS pit 1 looking south

4.2 Window sample pit 2

See Fig 4

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| WS 2 | |
| Location | See Fig 2 |
| Dimensions | 0.80 by 0.80 by 1.20 deep |
| Modern ground level/top of slab | unknown |
| Modern slab | 0.15m thick plus 0.15m of make up |
| Recorded archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any) | 2.55m thick |
| Top of surviving natural observed at | 2.85m below ground level |

4.2.1 Natural sand and gravel [5] was observed at 2.85m below ground level. This was sealed by a 0.25m thick brown clay deposit [4] that may also be natural.

4.2.2 A post-medieval deposit [3] was sealed by a York stone floor [2] 0.80m below ground level. Above this was a fire debris deposit [1] with charcoal and burnt bricks.



WS pit 2 looking east

4.3 Window sample pit 3

See Fig 5

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| WS 3 | |
| Location | See Fig 2 |
| Dimensions | 0.80 by 0.80 by 1.20 deep |
| Modern ground level/top of slab | unknown |
| Modern slab | 0.20m thick plus 0.10m of make up |
| Recorded archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any) | 2.10m thick |
| Top of surviving natural observed at | 2.40m below ground level |

- 4.3.1 Natural sand and gravel was observed at 2.40m below ground level. This was sealed by a 0.30m thick brown clay deposit [16] that may also be natural.
- 4.3.2 This was overlain by a black clayey silt deposit [15].
- 4.3.3 A brick wall [14] was recorded aligned NE to SW. To its north side was a sticky yellow clay [13] that was partly cut away by a possible pit [12].
- 4.3.4 At 0.55m below ground level there was a York stone floor [11] that was sealed by a demolition dump [10].



WS pit 3 looking north

4.4 Window sample pit 4

See Fig 6

| | |
|---|---------------------------|
| WS 4 | |
| Location | See Fig 2 |
| Dimensions | 0.80 by 0.80 by 1.20 deep |
| Modern ground level/top of slab | unknown |
| Modern slab | 0.25m thick |
| Recorded archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any) | 1.65m thick |
| Top of surviving natural observed at | 1.90m below ground level |

- 4.4.1 Natural sand and gravel was observed at 1.90m below ground level. This was sealed by a 0.30m thick brown clay deposit [23] that may also be natural.
- 4.4.2 This was overlain by a post-medieval deposit [22] and a York stone floor [21] at 0.40m below ground level.



WS pit 4 looking north

4.5 Window sample pit 5

See Fig 7

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| WS 5 | |
| Location | See Fig 2 |
| Dimensions | 0.80 by 0.80 by 1.20 deep |
| Modern ground level/top of slab | unknown |
| Modern slab | 0.30m thick plus 0.20m of make up |
| Recorded archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any) | 1.60m thick |
| Top of surviving natural observed at | 2.70m below ground level |

- 4.5.1 Natural sand and gravel was observed at 2.70m below ground level. This was overlain by a 0.20m thick brown clay deposit [28] that may also be natural.
- 4.5.2 This was sealed by three post-medieval deposits; [27], [26] and [25]. There was a further 0.60m of modern deposits.



WS pit 5 looking west

4.6 Window sample pit 6

See Fig 8

| | |
|---|---------------------------|
| WS 6 | |
| Location | See Fig 2 |
| Dimensions | 0.80 by 0.80 by 1.20 deep |
| Modern ground level/top of slab | unknown |
| Modern slab | 0.20m thick |
| Recorded archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any) | 2.70m thick |
| Top of surviving natural observed at | 2.90m below ground level |

4.6.1 Natural sand and gravel was observed at 2.90m below ground level. This was overlain by a 0.20m thick brown clay deposit that may also be natural.

4.6.2 This was sealed by post-medieval deposits; [31] and [30].



WS pit 6 looking west

4.7 Test pit 10

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| TP10 | 0.70m x 0.90m x 1.60m deep |
| Location | See Fig 2 |
| Dimensions | |
| Modern ground level/top of slab | unknown |
| Modern slab | 0.30m thick |
| Recorded archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any) | 1.30m thick |
| Top of surviving natural observed at | Not seen |

4.7.1 Natural was not observed.

4.7.2 A 1.30m thick deposit of brown clay and bricks [20] appeared to be archaeology disturbed by the modern brick wall.

4.8 Test pit 11

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| TP11 | |
| Location | See Fig 2 |
| Dimensions | 0.60m x 0.90m x 1.50m deep |
| Modern ground level/top of slab | unknown |
| Modern slab | 0.15m thick |
| Recorded archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any) | 0.45m thick |
| Top of surviving natural observed at | ?1.30m below ground level |

4.8.1 A sand and gravel deposit [19] was observed at 1.30m below ground level but this seems a little high compared with the nearby WS1 (2.60m below) so it may be a redeposited natural deposit.

4.8.2 This was sealed by a 0.40m thick clay and brick deposit [18].

4.8.3 There was a further 0.70m of modern concrete in this test pit.

4.9 Test pit 12

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| TP12 | |
| Location | See Fig 2 |
| Dimensions | 1.30m x 1.40m x 1.70m deep |
| Modern ground level/top of slab | unknown |
| Modern slab | 0.20m thick plus 0.10m of make up |
| Recorded archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any) | 1.40m thick |
| Top of surviving natural observed at | Not seen |

4.9.1 Natural was not observed.

4.9.2 There was a 0.90m thick black clayey silt deposit [34], that was similar to [25] in nearby WS5.

4.10 Test pit 13

| | |
|---|---------------------------|
| TP13 | |
| Location | See Fig 2 |
| Dimensions | 0.90m x 2.0m x 2.20m deep |
| Modern ground level/top of slab | unknown |
| Modern slab | 0.30m thick |
| Recorded archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any) | 1.90m thick |
| Top of surviving natural observed at | Not seen |

4.10.1 Natural was not observed.

4.10.2 There was a 1.90m thick clay and brick deposit [40] but the presence of concrete fragments suggests this is back fill to the modern wall.

4.11 Test pit 14

| | |
|---|---------------------------|
| TP14 | |
| Location | See Fig 2 |
| Dimensions | 3.0m x 0.80m x 0.50m deep |
| Modern ground level/top of slab | unknown |
| Modern slab | 0.30m thick |
| Recorded archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any) | n/a |
| Top of surviving natural observed at | Not seen |

4.11.1 Natural was not observed.

4.11.2 The presence of a concrete beam meant that only disturbed deposits were observed in this test pit.

4.12 Test pit 15

| | |
|---|---------------------------|
| TP15 | |
| Location | See Fig 2 |
| Dimensions | 1.0m x 1.40m x 1.50m deep |
| Modern ground level/top of slab | unknown |
| Modern slab | 0.30m thick |
| Recorded archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any) | 1.20m thick |
| Top of surviving natural observed at | Not seen |

4.12.1 Natural was not observed.

4.12.2 There was a 0.50m thick black clayey silt deposit [38] that is similar to [25] in nearby WS5. This was sealed by a 1.10m thick deposit [37] of bricks and mortar.



TP15 looking east

4.13 Test pit 17

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| TP17 | |
| Location | See Fig 2 |
| Dimensions | 1.20m x 1.20m x 1.80m deep |
| Modern ground level/top of slab | unknown |
| Modern slab | 0.20m thick plus 0.10m of make up |

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Recorded archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any) | 1.50m thick |
| Top of surviving natural observed at | Not seen |

4.13.1 Natural was not observed.

4.13.2 There was a 1.50m thick deposit [39] of clay, bricks and mortar that is probably backfill to the modern building.



TP17 looking south

4.14 Soakaway pit

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Soakaway pit | |
| Location | See Fig 2 |
| Dimensions | 1.20m x 1.40m x 1.40m deep |
| Modern ground level/top of slab | unknown |
| Modern slab | 0.15m thick plus 0.25m of make up |
| Recorded archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any) | 1.0m thick |
| Top of surviving natural observed at | Not seen |

4.14.1 Natural was not observed.

4.14.2 A black clayey silt deposit [36] was observed towards the bottom of this pit, that is similar to [30] in WS6 and [25] in WS5. This was overlain by a 0.90m thick demolition deposit [35] of silty mortar with brick and tile fragments.



Soakaway pit looking west

4.15 The finds

No finds were recovered.

5 Archaeological potential

5.1 Answering original research aims

For the original research aims see MOLA 2014 section 2.2.5

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

Discounting TP11, sand and gravel was found at between 1.90m (WS4) and 2.90m (WS6) below ground level, although the average level is between 2.40 and 2.80m below ground level. This is capped by 0.20m to 0.30m of brown clay that is also probably natural.

- *What are the earliest deposits identified? In particular any remains or finds that predate the medieval period.*

All the dump deposits, a brick wall, a brick floor and several York stone floors found are post-medieval in date.

- *Is there any evidence for the boundary of the Charterhouse precinct?*

There is no evidence for the precinct boundary.

- *What activities on the site can be defined for the medieval period?*

No medieval activities can be identified.

- *What is the date for the earliest post-medieval development on the site?*

Although no dating was recovered, the occasional pipe stems, and brick and tiles fragments suggest activity in the 17th and 18th century.

- *Can the types of industrial activity on the site be identified?*

No industrial activity can be identified but the stone floors may suggest warehouses and a 'Varnish, Japan & White lead works' is indicated on the 1871 OS map (MOLA 2013, Fig 10 HEA report).

- *What is the extent of modern disturbance?*

Modern disturbance appears to be limited to the test pits next to the modern building.

5.2 Significance of the data

- 5.2.1 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 5) and the relatively limited significance of the data (Section 5.2) 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 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID: molas1-180228

Project details

Project name 2-6 Northburgh Street and 32-41 Dallington Street,
London EC1V 0AY

Short description of the project An archaeological watching brief was carried out on engineer test pits and 6 window samples. Natural sand and gravel was at c 2.40m to 2.80m below ground level and generally was capped by 0.20m to 0.30m of brown clay. Dumps, a brick wall, a floor of Doulton blue engineering bricks and several York stone floors were found, all are post-medieval in date. The floors may relate to the 'Varnish, Japan & White lead works' indicated on the 1871 OS map

Project dates Start: 20-05-2014 End: 21-05-2014

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes NTB14 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Site status None

Current Land use Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices

Monument type BRICK WALL Post Medieval

Monument type STONE FLOOR Post Medieval

Investigation type "Watching Brief"

Prompt Planning condition

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON ISLINGTON ISLINGTON 2-6
Northburgh Street and 32-41 Dallington Street, London

Postcode EC1V 0AY

Study area 2250.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 31920 82213 51.522908866 -0.0982685990041 51
31 22 N 000 05 53 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation MOLA

Project brief originator GLAAS

Project design originator MOLA

Project director/manager Stewart Hoad

Project supervisor Tony Mackinder

Type of sponsor/funding body Client

Name of sponsor/funding body Northburgh House Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Physical Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Archive recipient LAARC

Paper Archive recipient LAARC

Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Plan", "Section", "Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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London EC1V 0AY

Author(s)/Editor(s) Mackinder, T

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MOLA 2013 *Historic environment assessment for 2–6 Northburgh Street and 32–41 Dallington Street, EC1V* OAY unpub MOLA report 16-10-2013

MOLA 2014 *Written scheme of investigation for an archaeological watching brief for 2–6 Northburgh Street and 32–41 Dallington Street, London EC1V* OAY unpub MOLA report 09 April 2014



Fig 1 Site location



Fig 2 Areas of investigation

ISL1243WB14#02

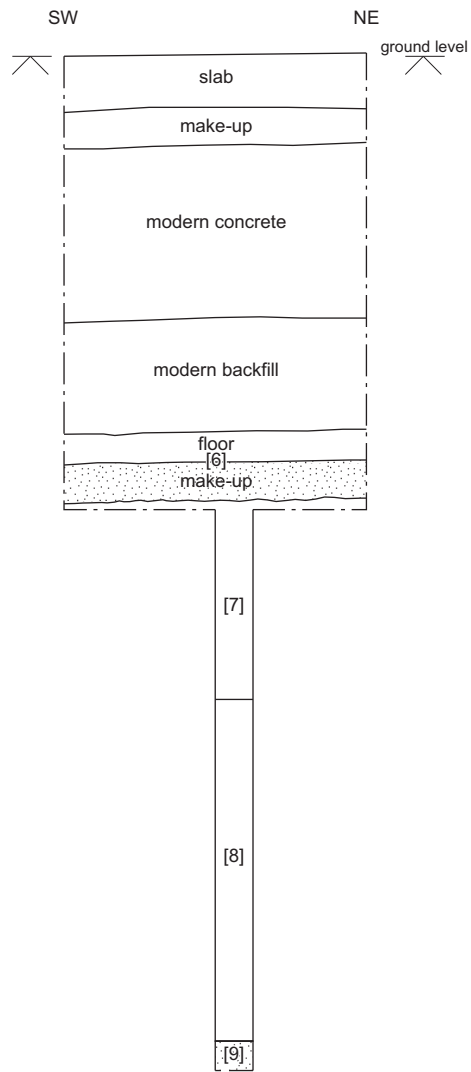


Fig 3 Window Sample 1

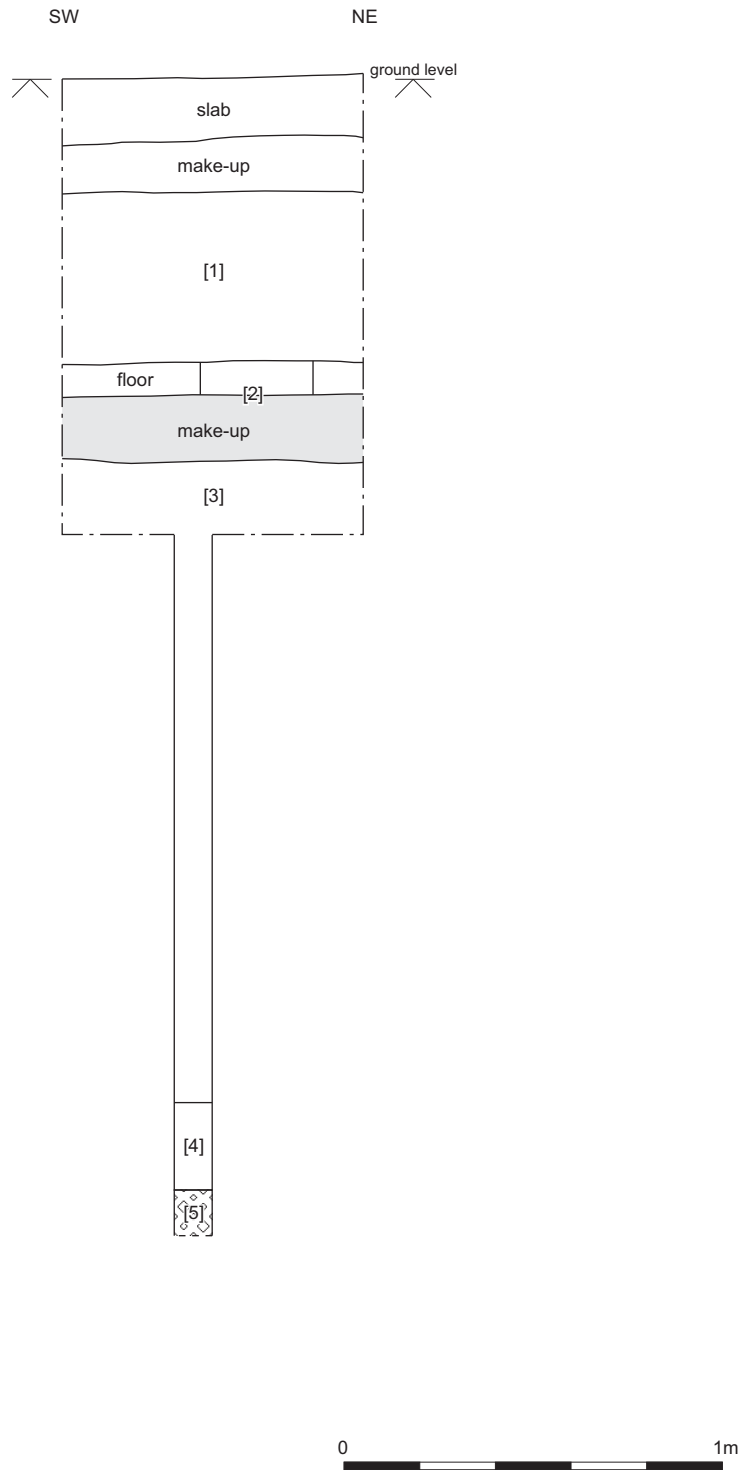


Fig 4 Window Sample 2

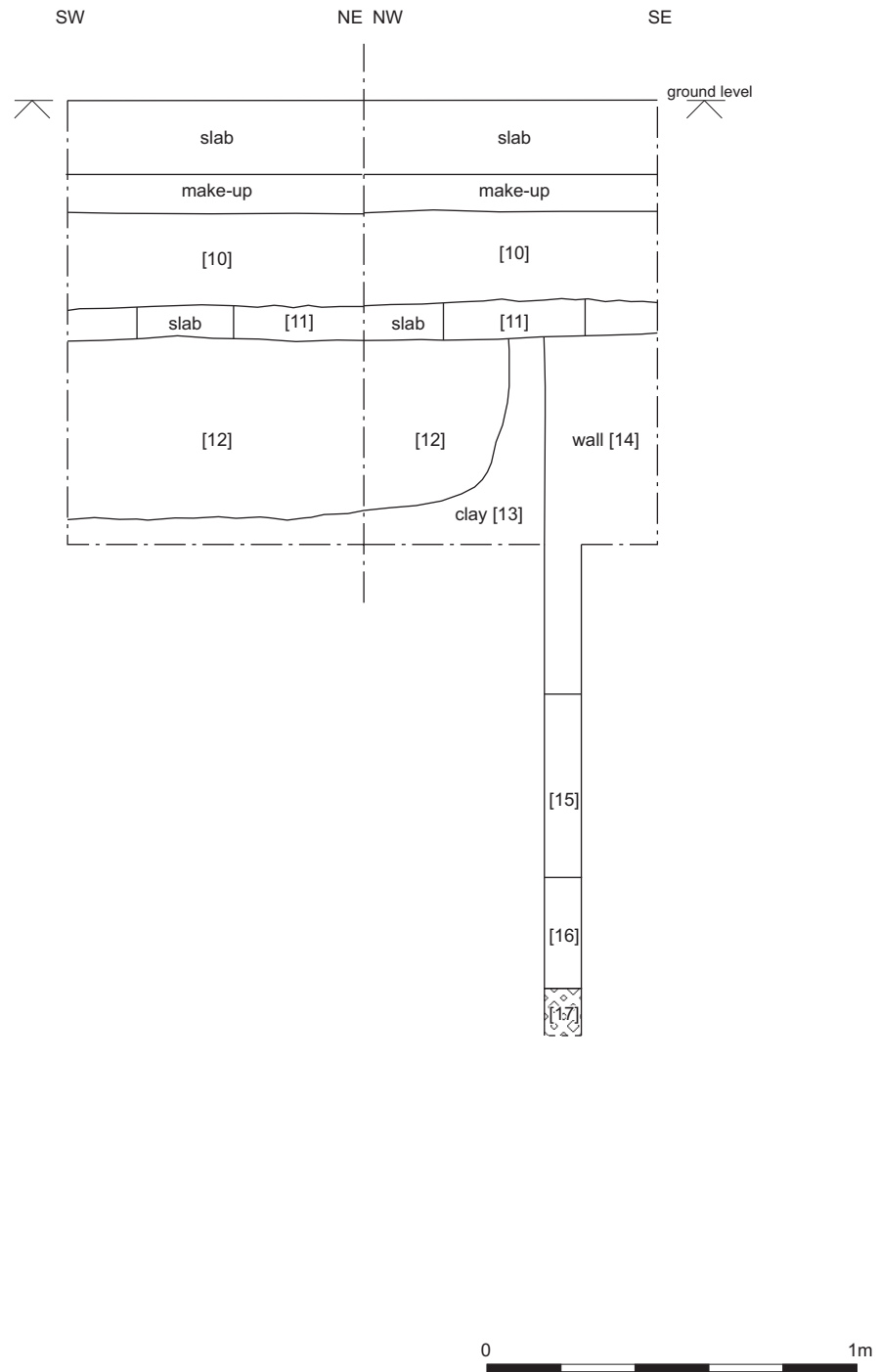


Fig 5 Window Sample 3

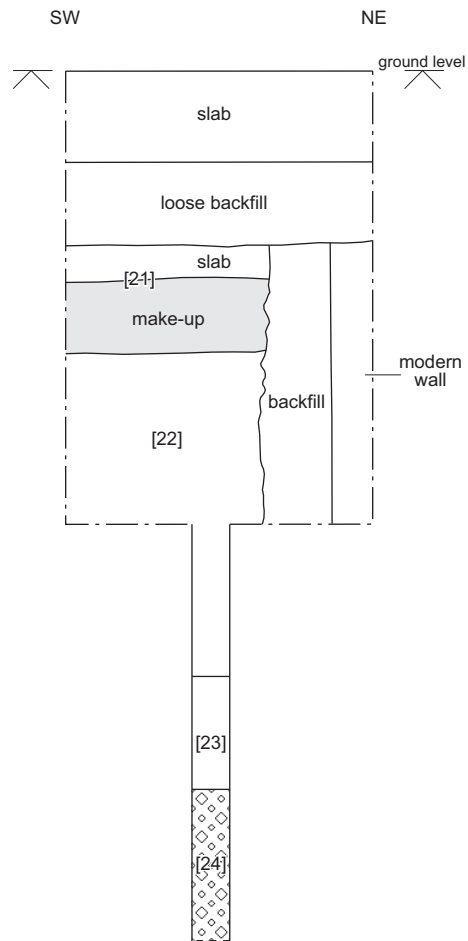


Fig 6 Window Sample 4

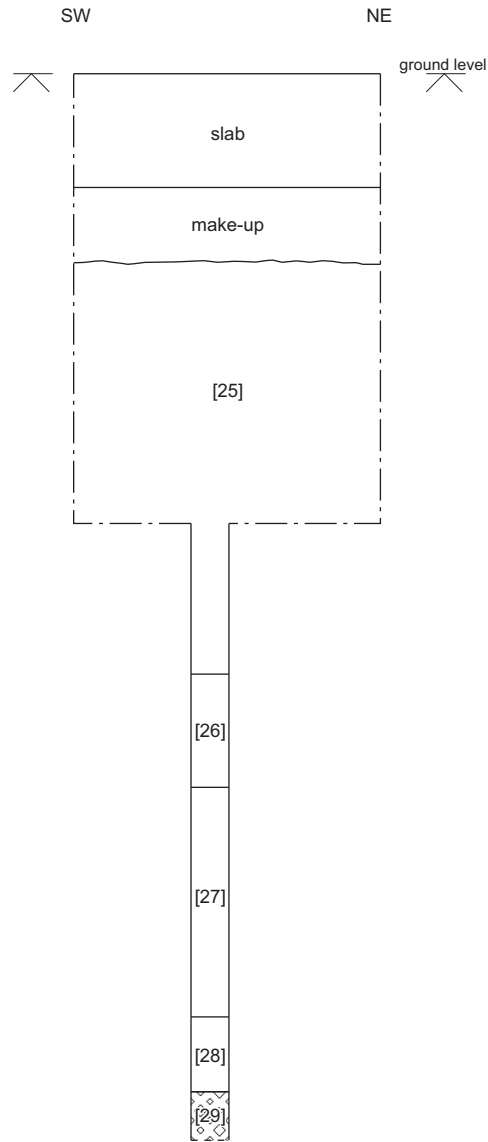


Fig 7 Window Sample 5

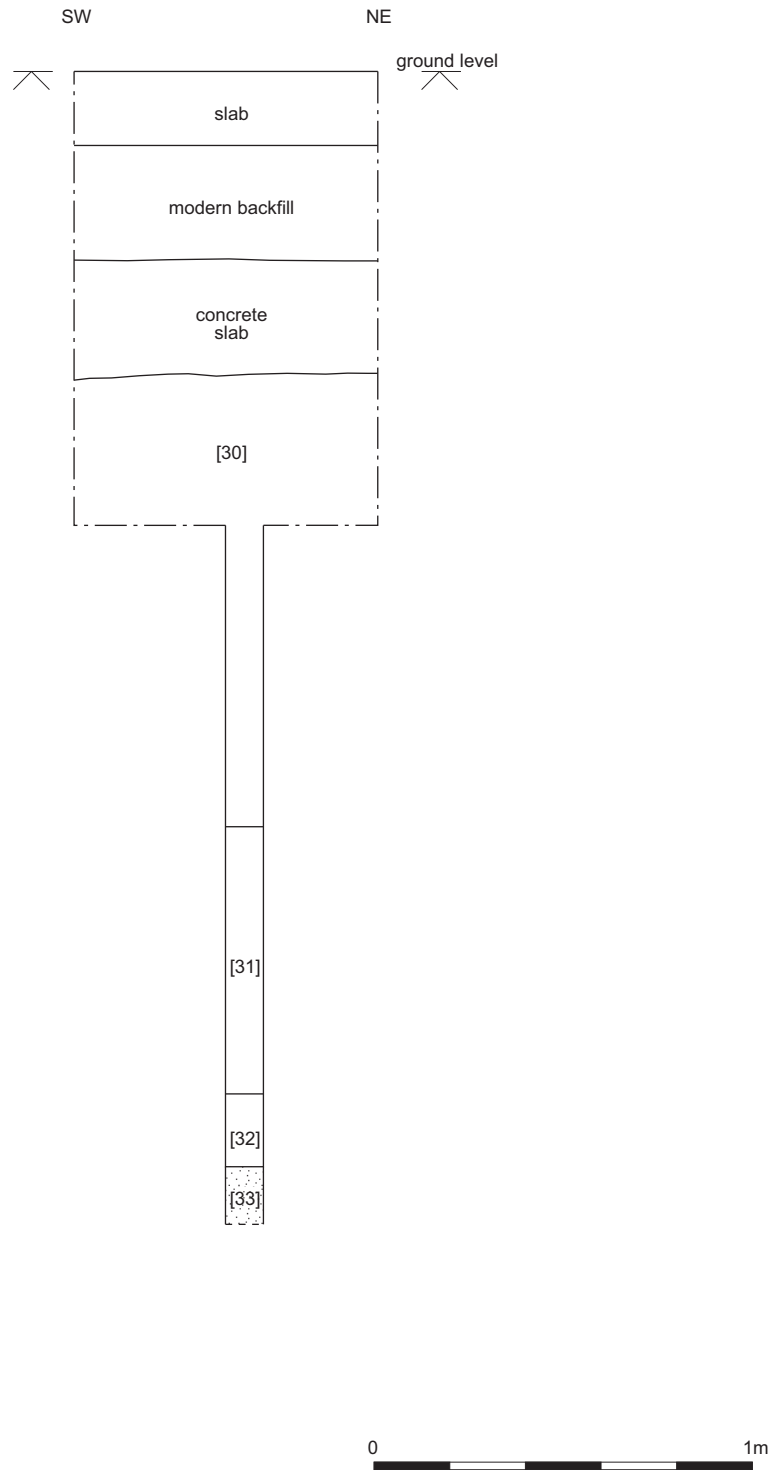


Fig 8 Window Sample 6