

51–54 FENCHURCH STREET London EC3

City of London

Evaluation report

September 2014



51–54 Fenchurch Street London EC3

Site Code FCH14
NGR 533295 180957
OASIS reference molas1-189289

Report on archaeological evaluation

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Summary

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by MOLA at 51–54 Fenchurch Street, EC3. The report was commissioned from MOLA by Rider Levett Bucknall.

In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2014a) two evaluation trenches were investigated on the site between 30/07/14 to 08/08/14.

The truncated remains of 1st century Roman buildings were found. In TP1 there was a brickearth sill and floor deposits that were sealed by demolition deposits. In TP3 there was a robbed out wall and floor deposits. Several deep pits of medieval date and containing animal bone were also found. Natural gravels were recorded at 10.38m OD in TP1 and at 10.70m OD in TP 3.

The report concludes that Roman to post-medieval archaeological remains survive in the single basement area of the current building and may be impacted by any new redevelopment.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was carried out by MOLA at 51–54 Fenchurch Street, EC3 ('the site') between 30/07/14 and 08/08/14 (see Fig 1). This document is the Report on that work.
- 1.1.2 The site (NGR 533295 180957) is bounded by Fenchurch Street to the north, Mark Lane to the east, the east-west aligned part of Star Alley to the south, and 50 Fenchurch Street to the west.
- 1.1.3 A written *Historic Environment Assessment* was previously prepared, which covered the whole area of the site (MOLA 2014). This document should be referred to for information on the natural geology, archaeological and historical background of the site, and the initial interpretation of its archaeological potential.

1.2 Planning background

- 1.2.1 The legislative and planning framework in which the evaluation took place was fully set out in the *Historic Environment Assessment* (Section 9, MOLA 2014) which formed the project design for the evaluation.
- 1.2.2 The evaluation was carried out as pre-condition fieldwork.

1.3 Scope of the evaluation

- 1.3.1 Evaluation is defined by English Heritage as intended to provide information about the archaeological resource in order to contribute to the:
 - *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*
- 1.3.2 An archaeological evaluation is a limited fieldwork exercise designed to test the conclusions of preliminary desk based work. It is not the same as full excavation.
- 1.3.3 The evaluation was carried out within the terms of the relevant Standard for evaluation 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 evaluation (Section 3, MOLA 2014a)

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Topography and geology

- 2.1.1 The site is located on the Taplow Gravel terrace and in places this is capped by clayey silt, termed 'Brickearth' (or Langley Silt Complex). This was laid down around 17,000 BP as wind-blown deposits, and subsequently redeposited by water. According to British Geographical Survey (BGS) a band of brickearth overlies the gravel across the northern third of the site.
- 2.1.2 The top of untruncated brickearth was predicted to lie at c 11.0m–12.0m OD (c 3.0m–3.5m below ground level/mbgl), and the top of gravel predicted to lie at c 10.0m–11.0m OD (c 4.0m–4.5mbgl) (MOLA 2014).
- 2.1.3 The site is located c 400m to the north of the River Thames, and c 140m to the west of a former tributary of the Thames known in the medieval period as the 'Lorte-burn'.

2.2 Archaeology

Prehistoric period (800,000 BC–AD43)

- 2.2.1 Relatively little evidence of prehistoric activity or settlement has been discovered within the City, and finds of this period are usually occasional and residual (outside the context in which they were originally deposited). A single prehistoric find of a Neolithic flint axe was found c 12m to the north-west of the site in 1912.

Roman period (AD43–410)

- 2.2.2 Within approximately a decade of their arrival in AD43 the Romans had established a town on the banks of the Thames where the City of London and Southwark now stand. *Londinium* flourished in the 1st and early-2nd centuries and was finally abandoned following the Roman withdrawal from Britain in the early-5th century.
- 2.2.3 The area surrounding the site in the Roman period is well understood. The main east-west gravel roadway across the City, extending from the Cornhill area eastwards, ran c 65m to the south of the site. Nearby evidence indicates that the site formed part of an area which was continuously occupied from the mid-1st century to the 4th century. In the early-1st century, the site appears to have lain just outside the eastern limit of the city and may have been part of an area used to carry out cremation burials. Its location in close proximity to the main east-west road through the city makes it likely that it was occupied for at least part of this period by buildings and/or associated features such as yards, cess and rubbish pits, or was used for quarrying. By the 3rd and 4th centuries, the immediate area of the site was characterised by large, high-status buildings.

Early medieval (Saxon) period (AD410–1066)

- 2.2.4 Following the withdrawal of the Roman army from England in the early-5th century AD the south-east of the country fell into an extended period of socio-economic decline.
- 2.2.5 The main focus of the early and mid-Saxon settlement was a busy trading port to the west around Aldwych, the Strand, and Covent Garden, in an area known to Bede in the 8th century as *Lundenwic*. During the 9th century, repeated raids by Viking raiders, led to the King Alfred ordering the re-occupation of the City of

London in AD 886.

- 2.2.6 Evidence uncovered within the immediate vicinity of the site suggests that the area had been reoccupied and was developed by at least the 10th/11th century.

Later medieval period (AD1066–1485)

- 2.2.7 By the late-12th century the site lay immediately to the north of the church of All Hallows, Staining, the earliest record of which dates to c 1177.
- 2.2.8 Considering the evidence uncovered from nearby excavations, and the site's location along the main road of *Alegatestrete*, it is likely that it was occupied by roadside buildings and associated wells and cess pits. Significantly, what survives from the later medieval period in the study area has tended to be limited to deeply cut features.

Post-medieval period (AD1485–present)

- 2.2.9 During the Tudor period, national economic factors led to the population of London quadrupling in size, though the medieval layout of the City did not change significantly.
- 2.2.10 Although the Church of All Hallows Staining survived the Great Fire of 1666 it collapsed in 1671, but was soon rebuilt in 1674.
- 2.2.11 All Hallows Staining was demolished c 1870, leaving only the tower standing. Parts of the graveyard having already been built over.
- 2.2.12 Survival of 18th and early-19th century archaeological remains is generally poorer than for earlier periods due to truncation caused by later development, however, deeply cut remains, including pits, cesspits, wells and foundation walls have been discovered in nearby investigations.
- 2.2.13 The London County Council (LCC) bomb damage maps of 1939–45 show widespread, severe WWII bomb damage to the area. The site was re-developed with the present building, 'Norwich Union House' being constructed between 1951 and 1956.

3 Evaluation methodology

3.1 Field methodology

- 3.1.1 Two evaluation trenches were excavated; a third was scheduled but because of site constraints was not investigated.
- 3.1.2 The slab was broken out and cleared by contractors under MOLA supervision; the trenches were excavated by hand when archaeological deposits were reached.
- 3.1.3 Archaeological excavation was carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2014a)
- 3.1.4 Trench locations were surveyed on site and plotted on plans 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 2014a).

3.3 Site archive

Number of trench record sheets	0
Number of overall location plans	1
Number of Context (SU) sheets	15
Number of photographs	
Number of Plan sheets	8
Number of Sections	0

4 Results of the evaluation

4.1 TP 1

Location	Kitchen area (inside building)
Dimensions	2.60m (E/W) x 1.60m (N/S)
Top of modern slab	12.28m OD
Base of modern deposits	11.78m OD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy	c 1.4m (by auger)
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	11.18m OD
Top of surviving natural observed at	c 10.38m OD (by auger)
Level of base of trench	11.28m OD

- 4.1.1 Natural was not reached in this test pit but an auger hole suggests gravel was encountered at c 10.38m OD (c 2.50m below ground level).
- 4.1.2 There was a Roman building comprising a brickearth sill [10] at 11.70m OD that was aligned northwest to southeast with a series of adjacent floor deposits. These floor deposits [7] were excavated to 11.28m OD but continued below this level. An auger hole suggests this deposit continues for another 0.30m to c 11.0m OD.
- 4.1.3 The building was sealed by a 0.10m thick demolition deposit [6] of burnt brickearth and charcoal fragments; this was sealed by a 0.20m thick layer of brickearth with plaster fragments [5].
- 4.1.4 To the south the building was truncated by a pit [4]. This pit appeared to be Roman in date and was excavated to 11.18m OD but was not bottomed.
- 4.1.5 In summary, based on the auger holes, the archaeological deposits in this test pit are at least 1.40m deep.

4.2 TP 2

- 4.2.1 Currently this test pit has not been dug due to vibration constraints.

4.3 TP 3

Location	Courtyard area (outside building)
Dimensions	2.40m (E/W) x 1.60m (N/S)
Top of modern slab	12.10m OD
Base of modern deposits	11.70m OD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy	c 1.40m (by auger)
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	10.90m OD
Top of surviving natural observed at	c 10.70m OD (by auger)
Level of base of trench	11.58m OD

- 4.3.1 Natural was not reached in this test pit but an auger hole suggests gravel was at c 10.70m OD.
- 4.3.2 A straight sided cut [15] aligned northeast to southwest appears to be a robbing cut where a Roman masonry wall was removed. This cut was not bottomed at 10.90m OD.
- 4.3.3 There was a further cut [11] and a layer [13]; both appear to be Roman in date.
- 4.3.4 In the southwest corner of the test pit was a rubbish pit [12] that contained animal bone and may be medieval or post-medieval in date. This pit was not bottomed at

10.90m OD but an auger hole suggests the fill continued for c 0.60m to c 10.30m OD.

4.3.5 In summary, based on the auger holes, the archaeological deposits in this test pit are at least 1.0m deep, with cut features up to 1.40m deep.

4.4 The finds

4.4.1 The finds are summarised below;

Context	Material	Sherds/ Fragments	Date	Brief Comments
2	ANIMAL BONE	26		Cattle, sheep/goat, pig, no poultry, game or fish. Cattle include frags of vertebra and rib upper and lower foreleg and foot bones and toe joints all probably from fully adult animals. 1 foot frag is charred Clear evidence of butchery on roughly 50% of bones Sheep/goat includes a few frags from the head, lower foreleg, rib and foot all probably from adult animals. Pig 2 lower jaws both from juvenile pigs probably in 2nd year Mix of post consumption and primary processing waste of beef, mutton and pork
2	CBM	2	120-250	1 tegula, 1 imbrex
2	MEDIEVAL POTTERY	6	1270-1350	Plus Saxo-Norman frags
2	ROMAN POTTERY	9	50-100 1st century	
3	CBM	1	120-250	tess
3	ROMAN POTTERY	1	50-160	
5	ROMAN POTTERY	1	50-400	
6	ROMAN POTTERY	10	55-100	Part of ovoid beaker, and South Gaulish Samian
7	CBM	4	50-160	2 teg, 2 imbrex
7	ROMAN POTTERY	28	50-100	Potential L Neroian/early Flavian, good sized sherds and good condition
8	ANIMAL BONE	4		From cattle and sheep/goat. Cattle includes a horn core from an adult short horn and a hind foot bone again adult – primary processing waste Sheep/ goat frag of adult upper jaw and a frag of sub adult thoracic

				bone mix of processing and consumption
8	ROMAN POTTERY	3	50-100	All same vessel
9	ANIMAL BONE	2 bags		<p>1# Incomplete skeleton of adult dog comprising ribs, vertebra and forelegs c 50 frags plus small group of bird and other mammal bones consists of 2 frags of goose lower jaw ie beak, a single adult chicken humerus, single frag pig humerus (upper foreleg), and a frag heavily charred horse hoof joint</p> <p>2# c 80 frags mainly dog see above, with substantial groups of cattle, sheep/goat and pig, dog includes vertebra, skull, foreleg cattle includes frags horn core, skull, vert, and lower hind leg charring on the vertebrae sheep/goat includes lower jaw, lower foreleg, lower hind leg hind foot with one frag horn core that is chopped probably to allow removal of horn for further working pig includes only upper and lower foreleg butchery marks on at least 25% of bones single charred frag of cat upper foreleg</p> <p>no juveniles, or tool marks so no purposeful working</p>
9	CBM	1	1180-1400	peg tile
9	ROMAN POTTERY	11	200-400	Possibly 3rd century, potential CAM 306 bowl
9	POST ROMAN POTTERY	10	1050-1150	Saxo-Norman
9	ROMAN CBM	7	100-160	4 tess, 2 tegula, 1 brick
13	ROMAN POTTERY	4	50-400	
14	CBM	1	50-160	tegula
14	ROMAN POTTERY	5	50-300	
14	POST ROMAN POTTERY	1	1050-1150	
9<1>	CERA-TILE	1	100-160	Combed box flue tile

- 4.4.2 Pottery is mainly Roman but also includes several fragments of Saxo-Norman (1050-1150) and a large fragment dated 1270-1350.
- 4.4.3 Ceramic building material includes several tesserae and a fragment of combed box flue tile, both suggestive of high status Roman buildings.
- 4.4.4 Animal bone was found in several Saxo-Norman pits and includes fragments of cattle, sheep/goat and pig. It is evidence of both post-consumption and primary processing. Dog bones in one pit are probably from the same animal.

4.5 The site as a whole

- 4.5.1 Assessing the results from all the test pits, and dating evidence where it exists, the main conclusion is Roman to post medieval deposits survive on the site.
- 4.5.2 In both test pits there was evidence of Roman clay and timber buildings and their demolition, this included a wall robbing cut found in TP3.
- 4.5.3 The top of the natural gravels was recorded through augering at a level of 10.38m OD in TP1 and 10.70m OD in TP 3.
- 4.5.4 A medieval rubbish pit (not bottomed) found in TP3 is over 0.80m deep.
- 4.5.5 There was no evidence of burials associated with the burial ground of the church of All Hallows Staining lying to the south of the site.

5 Archaeological potential

5.1 Answering original research aims

- 5.1.1 The following research aims (section 3, MOLA 2014) can be answered;
- *Identify the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.*
Roman, medieval and post-medieval deposits survive on site, with the highest survival recorded at 11.78m OD in TP 1
 - *Identify the extent of any modern disturbance.*
The modern slab deposits were 0.50m thick in both test pits and there is a high degree of other truncation (ground beams and bases) particularly inside the building
 - *Identify the depth of the natural deposits.*
Natural deposits were recorded at 10.38m OD in TP1 and 10.70m OD in TP 3.

5.2 General discussion of potential

- 5.2.1 The evaluation has shown that the potential for survival of ancient ground surfaces (horizontal archaeological stratification above natural ground) on the site is high.
- 5.2.2 There is also potential for survival of deep cut features such as pits.
- 5.2.3 However survival is likely to be extremely limited in certain areas because of truncation associated with the basement of the current building.
- 5.2.4 The depth of archaeological deposits and cut features where they do survive is approximately 1.4m.

5.3 Significance

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

5.4 Assessment of the evaluation

- 5.4.1 There is a high level of confidence in the results of the test pits to show the type of archaeology, its level of truncation and its depth in the single basement area of the current building.
- 5.4.2 In the case of this site, the highest archaeology was found at 11.78m OD in TP1 and continued below 10.90m OD in TP3.

6 Proposed development impact and conclusions

- 6.1.1 Taking into account the results in all the test pits it appears that archaeological deposits will survive in the area of the current single basement. It is assumed there is no survival in the area of the current double basement.
- 6.1.2 The proposed redevelopment at the site involves the demolition of the existing building within the site footprint and the construction of a new ten-storey building which would include two basement levels; an upper (first) basement covering the entire site footprint, and a lower (second) basement in the north-eastern part of the site, covering c 25% of the total site area. The impact of this on the surviving archaeological deposits in the current single basement area would be to remove them.
- 6.1.3 In the light of the results of the evaluation MOLA considers that the remaining archaeological deposits should be excavated archaeologically in advance of any further ground reduction.
- 6.1.4 The decision on the appropriate archaeological mitigation to the deposits revealed rests with the Local Planning Authority.

7 Acknowledgements

- 7.1.1 The author would like to thank the following specialists for their contributions to this report; Ian Betts (ceramic building material), Nigel Jeffries (post-Roman pottery) Alan Pipe (animal bone), Amy Thorp (roman pottery), also to Mark Burch geomatics).

8 Bibliography

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MOLA unpub report

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

9 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID: molas1-189289

Project details

Project name	51-54 Fenchurch Street
Short description of the project	Two evaluation trenches were investigated. The truncated remains of 1st century Roman buildings were found, comprising a brickearth sill and floor deposits that were sealed by demolition deposits. Elsewhere there was a robbed wall. Several deep pits of medieval date were also found. Natural was not reached.
Project dates	Start: 30-07-2014 End: 08-08-2014
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	FCH14 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices
Monument type	BUILDING Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Test Pits"
Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	Between deposition of an application and determination

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF LONDON CITY OF LONDON 51-54 Fenchurch Street
Postcode	EC3
Study area	725.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 33295 80957 51.5112971266 -0.078933910729 51 30 40 N 000 04 44 W Point

Project creators
 Name of Organisation MOLA
 Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
 Project design originator MOLA
 Project director/manager Laura O'Gorman
 Project supervisor Tony Mackinder
 Type of sponsor/funding body Client
 Name of sponsor/funding body Rider Levett Bucknall (UK)

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient LAARC
 Physical Contents "Animal Bones", "Ceramics"
 Digital Archive recipient LAARC
 Paper Archive recipient LAARC
 Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Matrices", "Plan"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
 Title 51-54 Fenchurch Street, EC3
 Author(s)/Editor(s) Mackinder, T
 Date 2014
 Issuer or publisher MOLA
 Place of issue or publication London
 Description client report

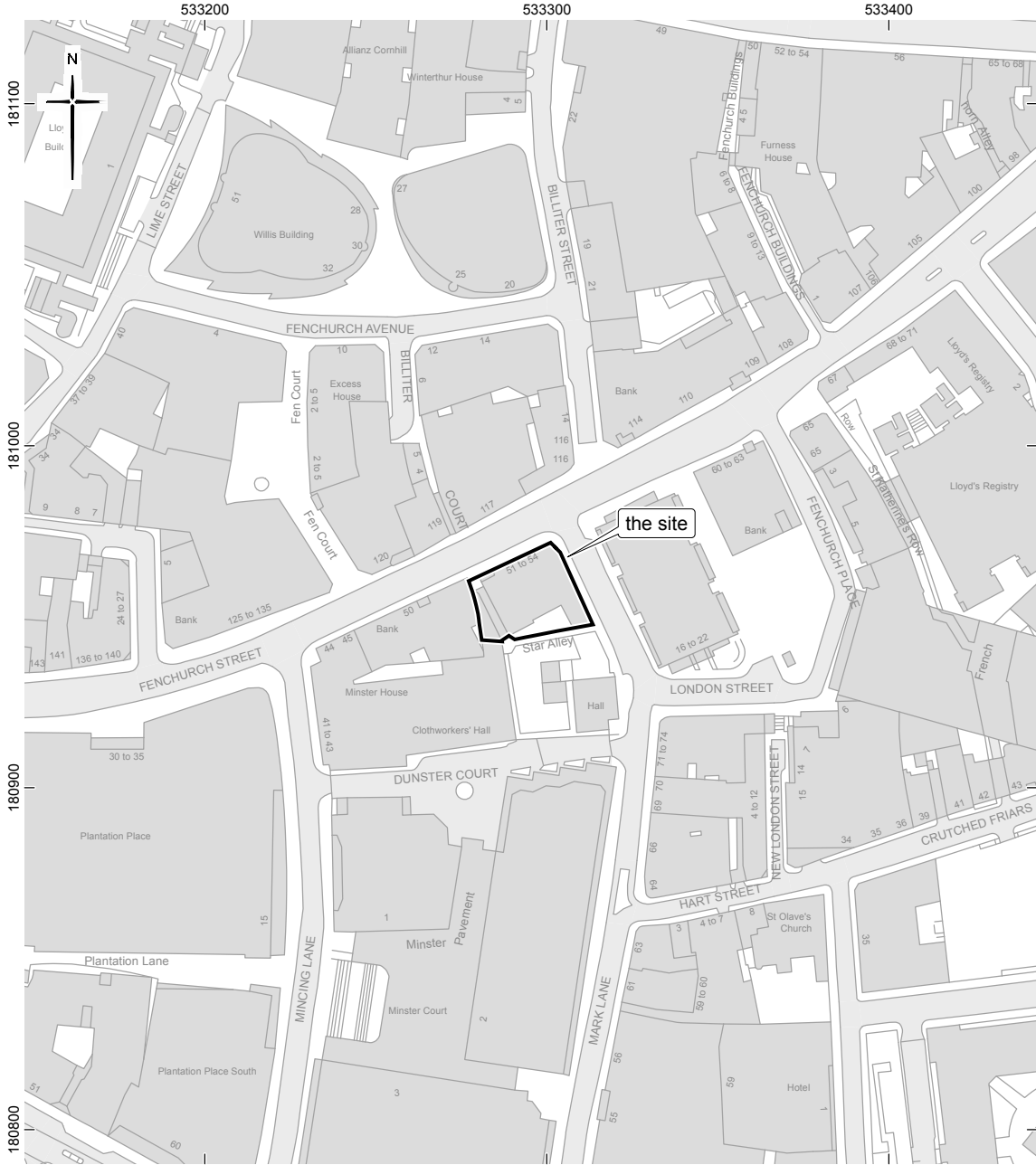
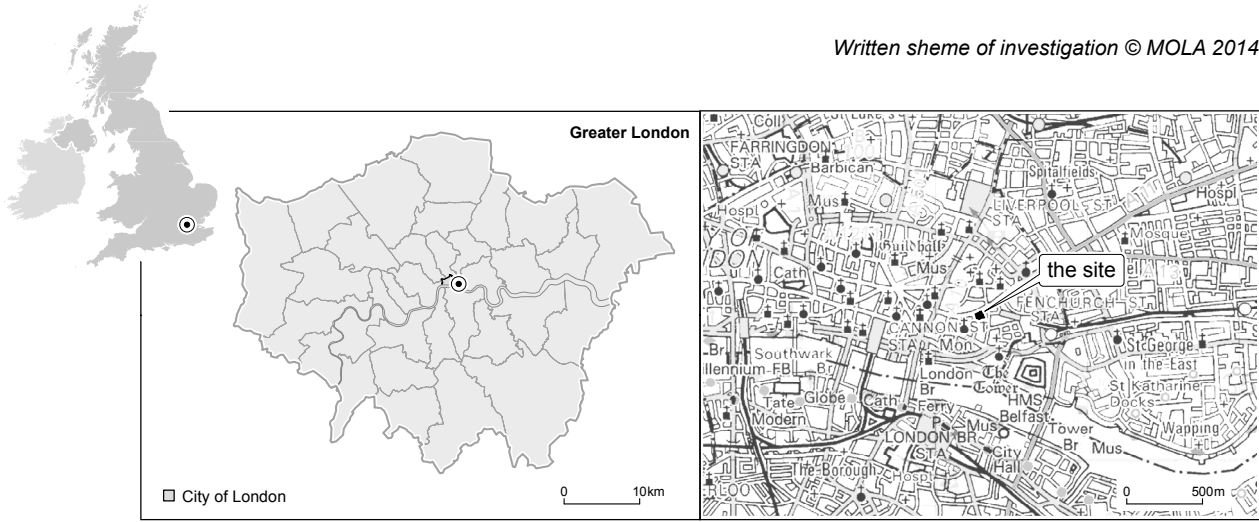
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Scale 1:2,000 @ A4

0 100m

Fig 1 Site location



CITY127ZEV/RHEA14#02

FCH14 evaluation report © MOLA

Fig 2 Areas of investigation

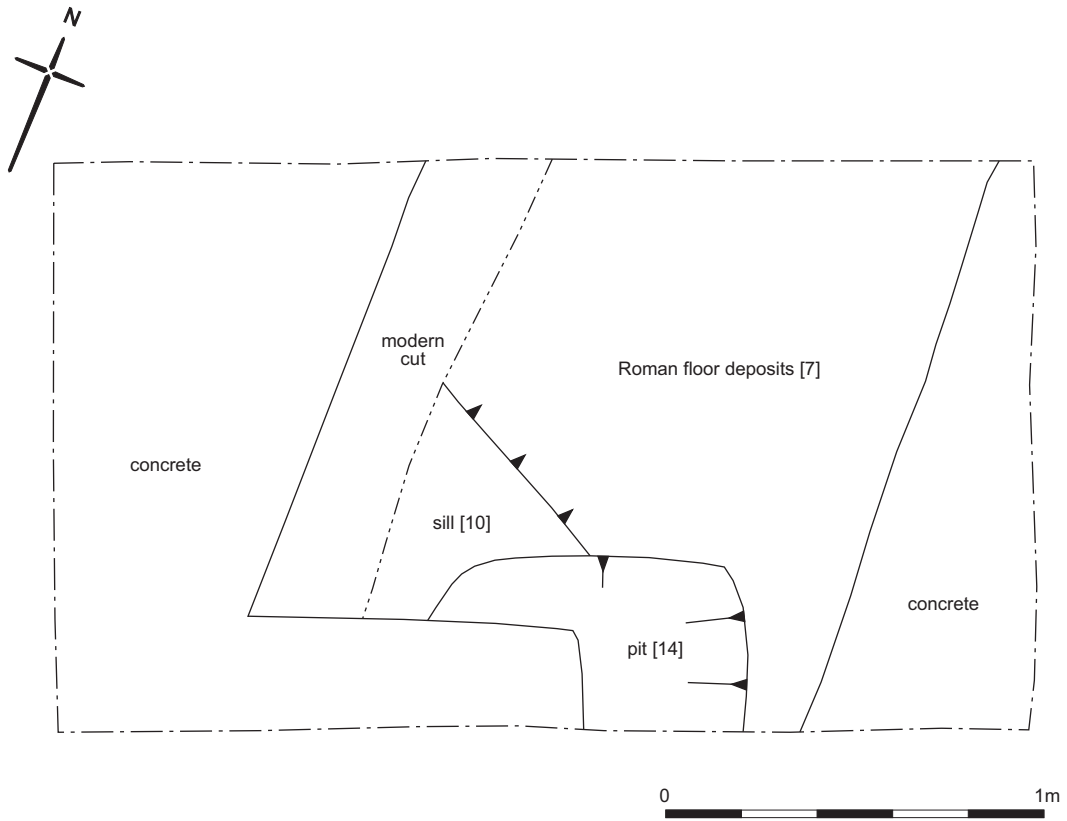


Fig 3 TP1

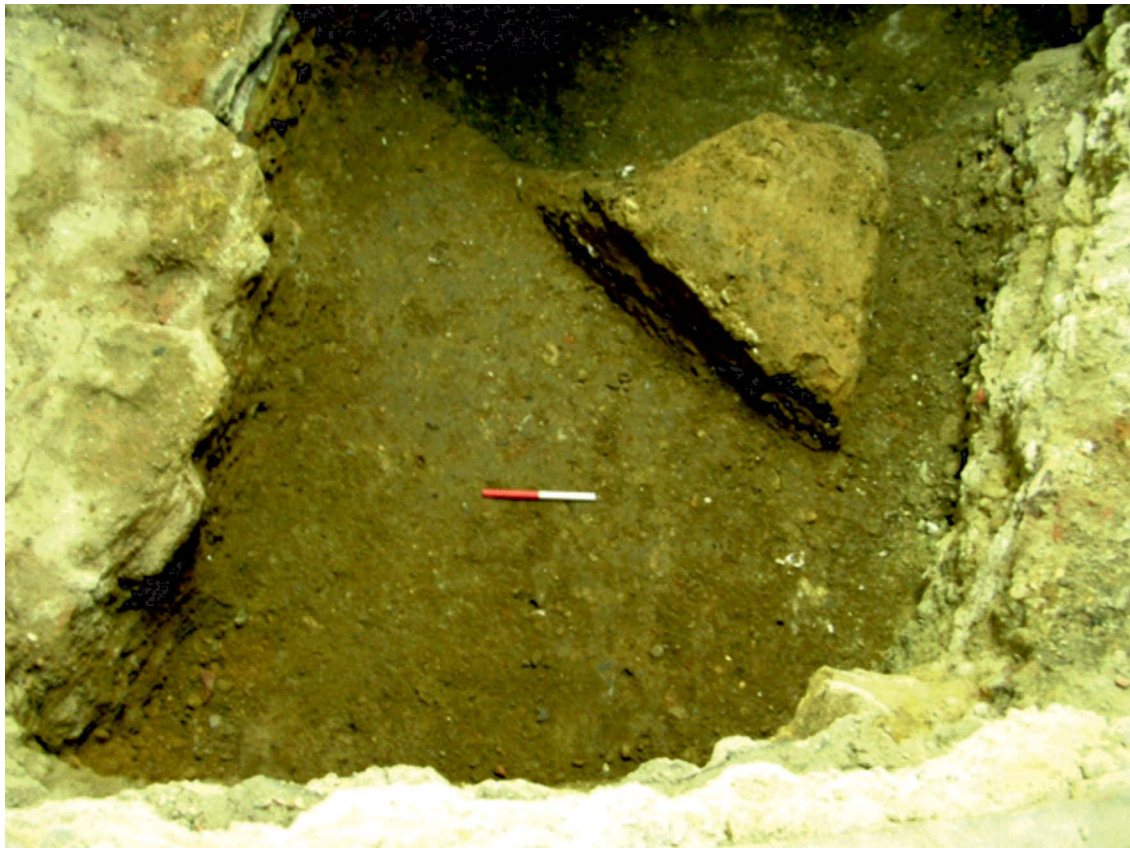


Fig 4 TP1 looking south with remains of brickearth sill

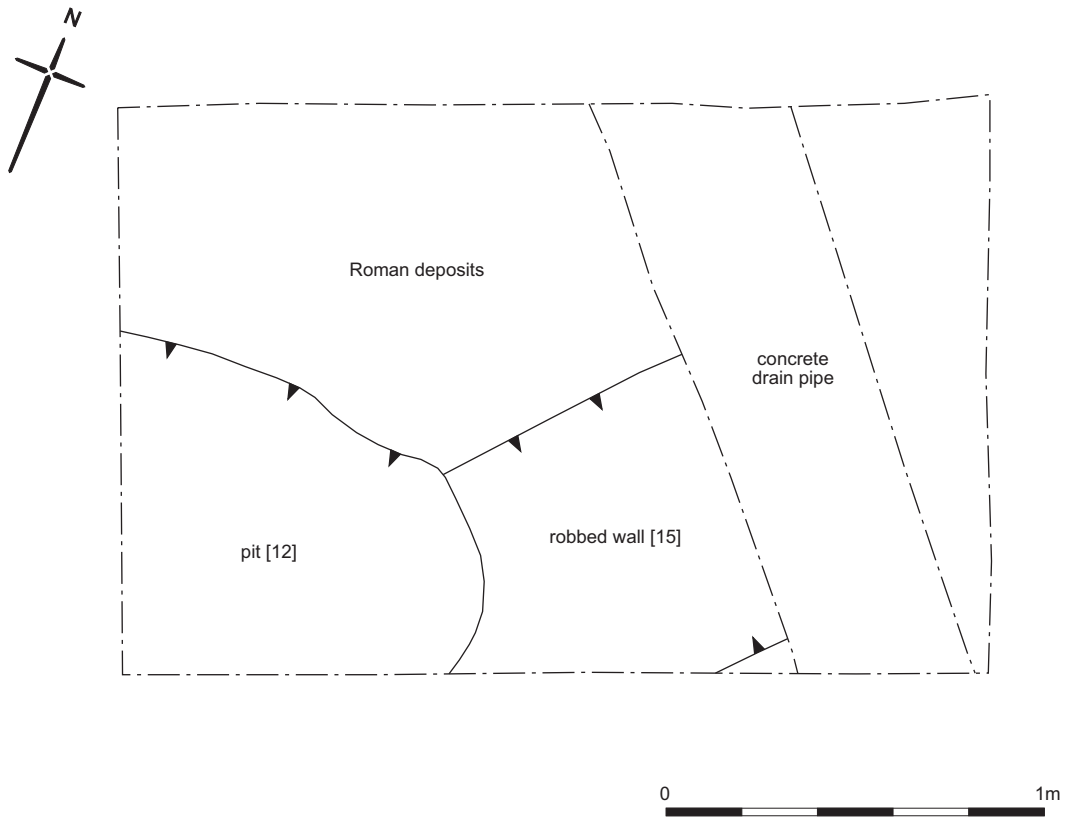


Fig 5 TP3



Fig 6 TP3 looking east showing Roman deposits truncated by pits