



COMMUNITY CENTRE AND ESTATE OFFICE
Avondale Square, Old Kent Road
London SE1

London Borough of Southwark

Watching brief report

April 2015



**COMMUNITY CENTRE AND ESTATE OFFICE
Avondale Square
Old Kent Road
London SE1**

Site Code AVS15
NGR 534090 178120
OASIS reference molas1-209271

Planning reference 13/AP/1892
Condition Numbers 7-9

Report on an archaeological watching brief

Sign-off History:

Issue No.	Date:	Prepared by:	Checked/ Approved by:	Reason for Issue:
1	17/04/2015	Sadie Watson	Derek Seeley	First draft

Graphics: Juan Jose Fuldain

Summary

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by MOLA at Avondale Square, London SE1. The report was commissioned from MOLA by Osborne on behalf of the client the City of London.

In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2014) a watching brief was carried out on the site between 16th-20th March 2015.

No archaeological deposits or features were observed on the site, due to truncation by the previous buildings on the site. Modern (mid-late 20th century) walls extended below ground level to depths of 1.40m. A small area of redeposited alluvium was observed in the north-west corner of the main area at 0.90m OD. Truncated natural silty sand was observed in the northern part of the main excavation area at 0.80m OD.

Contents

Summary	2
Contents	3
1 Introduction	4
2 Topographical and historical background	5
3 The watching brief	6
4 Results of the watching brief	7
5 Archaeological potential	8
6 Publication and archiving	9
7 Acknowledgements	10
8 Bibliography	11
9 OASIS archaeological report form	15

List Of Illustrations

Front cover The site on John Rocque's map of 1746	
<i>Fig 1 Site Location</i>	12
<i>Fig 2 Area of watching brief</i>	13
<i>Fig 3 Photograph showing truncation by modern buildings, view to south</i>	14

1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

- 1.1.1 An archaeological watching brief was carried out by MOLA at Avondale Square ('the site') between 16th-20th March 2015 (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 2012). 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). All archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with that WSI.

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 *Archaeological impact assessment* which formed the project design for the evaluation (see Section 9, MOLA 2012).
- 1.2.2 The watching brief was carried out to fulfil a condition attached to the Planning Consent given by the London Borough of Southwark (Consent reference 13/AP/1892; Condition numbers 7-9).

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 carried out within the entire footprint for the new development, as identified on the site plan (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 (CIFA, 2014).
- 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).

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1.1 A detailed description of the geology, archaeology and history of the site was provided in the earlier Historic environment assessment (MOLA 2012). A brief resume is provided here:

2.2 Topography

2.2.1 Kempton Park Gravel formation deposits may be expected to lie immediately below any made ground or garden or agricultural soil on the site. This part of Southwark was a low-lying marshy area in prehistoric times and numerous small streams flowed through it, including the former Earl's Sluice, and rivers Neckinger and Peck. In 1987, an archaeological evaluation at the site of the Bricklayers Arms c. 2 km north-west of the site revealed part of a large lake beside another of the former streams (Duffield's Sluice). This is now known as the 'Bermondsey Lake' and in the early Holocene (post-glacial period), it occupied much of the area of what is now eastern Bermondsey.

2.3 Archaeology

2.3.1 Mesolithic and Neolithic struck flints have been found on several sites locally, indicating possible flint working sites on the edge of the prehistoric Bermondsey Lake along with a possibly prehistoric enclosure ditch from Ossory Road.

2.3.2 The Old Kent Road is known to follow a major Roman road, Watling Street, which was constructed in the mid-1st century AD. Many of the sites along the side of the Old Kent Road have produced evidence of minor rural activities, such as drainage ditches and quarrying. Roman inhumation burials have been found occasionally beside the road.

2.3.3 There are no sites or finds dated to the early medieval period (AD410 - 1066) within the site or study area. The stream subsequently named the Earl's Sluice marked the physical boundary between the parishes of Bermondsey and Camberwell.

2.3.4 During the later medieval period (AD 1066 - 1485), the site would have been part of the agricultural land of the manor(s) of Peckham and Camberwell.

2.3.5 A charitable trust established in the late 13th century called the Bridge House Estates acquired the area of the modern Avondale Square, and the land has remained the property of the City of London through the agency of the Bridge House Estates ever since.

2.3.6 The site continued to be undeveloped agricultural land for the early part of the post-medieval period (AD 1485 onwards).

2.3.7 The site was not built up until the late 19th century, with terraced houses shown on contemporary maps (Fig 8 in MOLA 2012).

2.3.8 Avondale Square sustained widescale and repeated damage during the Second World War, and was later occupied by "prefabs", prefabricated homes, brought in as temporary houses immediately after the war.

2.3.9 The major redevelopment of the Square took place in the early 1960s, with the Community Centre built 1962-7.

3 The watching brief

3.1 Field methodology

- 3.1.1 The slab was broken out and cleared by contractors under MOLA supervision. The excavation area was excavated by machine by the contractors, and monitored by a member of staff from MOLA.
- 3.1.2 Archaeological recording of sections was carried out in accordance with the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (MOLA 2014).
- 3.1.3 The excavation area was located 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 2014).

3.3 Site archive

Number of trench record sheets	0
Number of overall location plans	1
Number of Context (SU) sheets	0
Number of photographs	5
Number of Plan sheets	0
Number of Sections	1
	7

4 Results of the watching brief

For area locations see *Fig 2*

For a photograph of the area see *Fig 3*.

4.1 Excavation area

Location	Centre of site (Avondale Square)
Dimensions	20m by 70m by 4m depth (depth on average)
Modern ground level/top of slab	2.30mOD
Base of modern fill/slab/turf	0.90mOD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	None seen
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	N/A
Top of surviving natural observed at	0.90mOD
Level of base of trench	-2m OD

- 4.1.1 There was extensive modern truncation across the entire excavation area, caused by the construction of the Community Centre in 1962-7. The foundations were constructed from yellow bricks with concrete beams above. Running through the site on a north-south alignment were further walls of yellow and grey bricks, presumably additional foundations along the lines of internal walls within the demolished Community Centre. The ground below (and surrounding) these foundations was made up of loose brick rubble (see *Fig 3*).
- 4.1.2 A small area of redeposited alluvium was seen in the northwestern corner of the main excavation area at 0.90m OD. Below this and elsewhere across the area natural silty sands were observed at a truncated height of 0.80m OD. No archaeological features or deposits were observed.
- 4.1.3 No additional archaeological monitoring of drainage runs was deemed necessary as they will be located within the main building footprint. A sewer heading excavation proposed to link the new drainage system with the main heading below the access road to Avondale Square has also been altered to relocate within the footprint, due to requirements of safe access for emergency vehicles into the Estate.

5 Archaeological potential

5.1 Answering original research aims

- 5.1.1 This section assesses the degree to which the individual research aims raised in the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2014, Section 2.2) have been answered and might repay further work ie publication.
- 5.1.2 *What is the nature and level of natural topography?*
Natural silty sands were observed at a truncated height of 0.80m OD in the northern part of the main excavation area.
- 5.1.3 *What are the earliest deposits identified?*
The earliest deposits identified was redeposited alluvium, seen in the northwestern corner of the main excavation area at 0.90m OD.
- 5.1.4 *Is there any evidence of prehistoric activity on the site?*
There was no evidence of prehistoric activity on the site.
- 5.1.5 *Is there any evidence of Roman activity on the site?*
There was no evidence of Roman activity on the site.
- 5.1.6 *When was the site first developed?*
The watching brief did not elucidate this further, as the structural remains observed were all very modern in date and relate to the 1962-7 development of the Community Centre.
- 5.1.7 *What are the latest deposits identified?*
The latest deposits identified were not of significant archaeological interest. They consisted of basement walls and foundations from the previous building on site, dated to 1962-7.
- 5.1.8 *What is the extent of modern disturbance?*
- 5.1.9 The modern disturbance extended to 0.90m OD from the ground level slab at 2.30m OD: a total depth of 1.40m.

5.2 Answering new research aims

- 5.2.1 The original research aims detailed within the Written Scheme of Investigation (MoLA 2014, Section 2.2) have been answered within this report. Due to the low significance of the archaeology it is not thought necessary to determine any new research aims for this project.

5.3 Significance of the data

- 5.3.1 The redeposited alluvial deposit exposed on the site is not significant. The observation of truncated natural enables this data to be incorporated into knowledge of the local area but is not intrinsically significant.

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, and Southwark in particular.
- 6.1.2 The site archive containing original records will be stored in accordance with the terms of the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (MOLA 2014) with the Museum of London Archaeological Archive within 12 months of the end of the watching brief.
- 6.1.3 In view of the limited potential of the material (Sections) 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 following for their contributions and help in producing this report: Michael and his team on site for their assistance during the fieldwork. MOLA would like to thank Osborne for commissioning the work.

8 Bibliography

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, (CIFA), 2014 *By-Laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, Standard and guidance: watching brief*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, (CIFA), 2014 *By-Laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, Standard and guidance: the creation, compilation deposition and transfer of archaeological archives*

English Heritage, 1991 Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)

English Heritage Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service, 2014 Standards for archaeological Work

MOLA, 2014, Written Scheme of Investigation for Community Centre and Estate Office, Avondale Square, MOLA unpub report

MOLA, 2012, Historic Environment Report for Community Centre and Estate Office, Avondale Square, MOLA unpub report

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

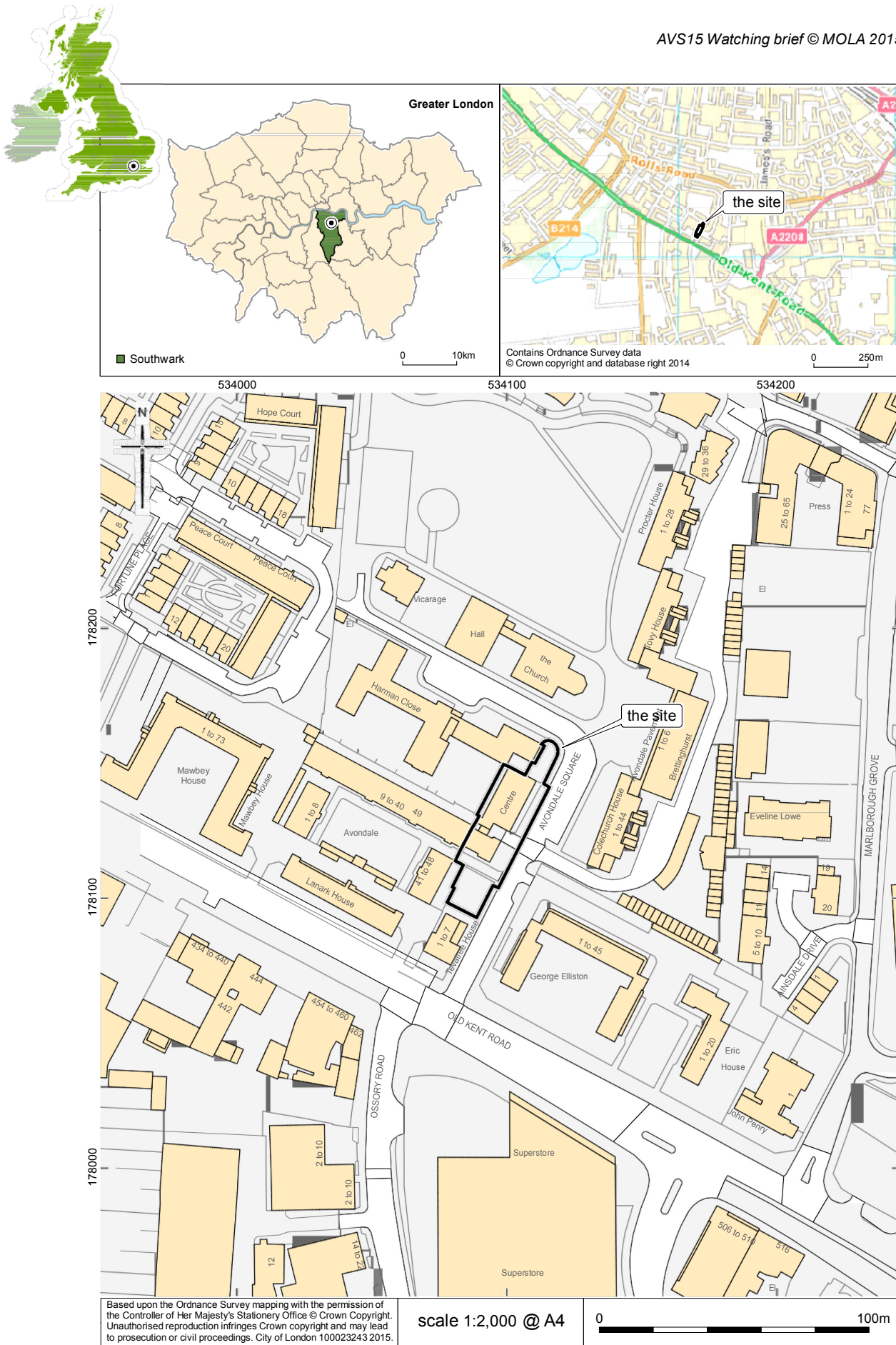


Fig 1 Site location

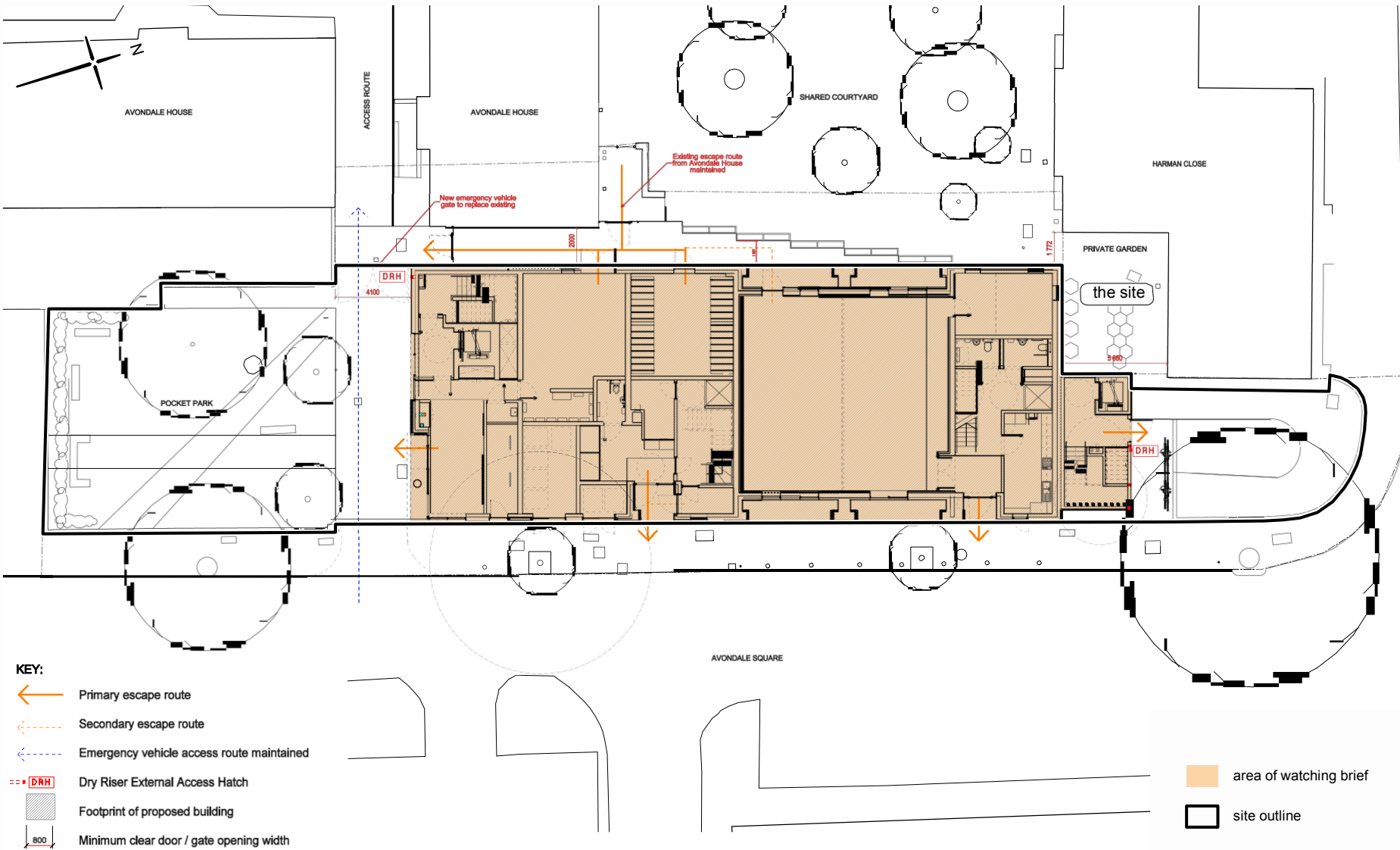


Fig 2 Area of watching brief



Fig 3 Photograph showing truncation by modern buildings, view to south

9 OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID: molas1-209271

Project details

Project name Avondale Square
 Short description of the project Watching brief on redevelopment of community centre, within Avondale Square estate, Old Kent Rd, London SE1
 Project dates Start: 16-03-2015 End: 20-03-2015
 Previous/future work No / Not known
 Type of project Recording project
 Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
 Current Land use Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
 Monument type N/A None
 Significant Finds N/A None
 Investigation type "Watching Brief"
 Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country England
 Site location GREATER LONDON SOUTHWARK CAMBERWELL AND DULWICH
 Avondale Square
 Postcode SE1 5PD
 Study area 1056.00 Square metres
 Site coordinates TQ 534090 178120 50.9387421201 0.183706247365 50 56 19 N 000
 11 01 E Point
 Height OD / Depth Min: -2.00m Max: 0.80m

Project creators

Name of Organisation MOLA
 Project brief originator Osborne
 Project design originator Osborne
 Project director/manager Derek Seeley
 Project supervisor Sadie Watson
 Type of sponsor/funding body City of London
 Name of sponsor/funding body City of London

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
 Digital Archive Exists? No
 Paper Archive recipient LAARC
 Paper Contents "Stratigraphic"
 Paper Media available "Diary", "Map", "Notebook - Excavation", "Research", "General Notes", "Plan", "Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
 Title Community Centre and Estate Office, Avondale Square, London SE1: An archaeological watching brief report.
 Author(s)/Editor(s) Watson, S
 Date 2015

Issuer or publisher MOLA
Place of issue or publication London
Description A4 report, with figures

Entered by Sadie Watson (swatson@mola.org.uk)
Entered on 20 April 2015