



**BSKyB 1  
Harlequin Avenue  
Multi-Storey Car Park 1, Development Parcel C  
London**

London Borough of Hounslow

Archaeological investigation report

November 2015



**BSKYB 1 Harlequin Avenue,  
Multi-Storey Car Park 1  
Development Parcel C  
Brentford  
London**

Site Code HQN07  
NGR 516110 177900  
OASIS reference molas1-222955

Planning reference 00558/A/P25  
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A report on an archaeological investigation

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Graphics: Judit Peresztegi

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Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED tel 0207 410 2200  
email [generalenquiries@mola.org.uk](mailto:generalenquiries@mola.org.uk)

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Registered office: Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED

## Summary

*This report presents the results of an archaeological investigation carried out by MOLA at the BSkyB multi-storey car park at Harlequin Avenue in Brentford. The report was commissioned from MOLA by Bourne Construction Engineering Limited on behalf of the client, Sky.*

*In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2015) a single trench was excavated on the site on 11–13 August 2015. The trench was extensively truncated (disturbed) by modern intrusions, but a deposit of reworked subsoil was identified and archaeologically excavated by MOLA. The deposit produced a single sherd of Roman pottery and several friable fragments thought to have been daub of contemporary date, implying either a Roman date for the soil or Roman activity in or near the vicinity of the site.*

*The archaeological excavation demonstrated that no earlier archaeological features underlay the subsoil deposit.*

*The truncated top of natural sands and gravels lay at 20.69m OD.*

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*Fig 1 Location of B SkyB site, showing areas of previous archaeological investigations*

*Fig 2 Location of Trench 1*

*Fig 3 Plan of Trench 1*

*Fig 4 Trench 1 from above. Looking west*

*Fig 5 Trench 1, looking south*

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Site background

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- 1.1.1 An archaeological investigation was carried out by MOLA at the B SkyB multi-storey car park, Harlequin Avenue in Brentford ('the site') on 11–13 August 2015 (Fig 2). This document is the Report on that work.
- 1.1.2 Ove Arup has prepared a report that should be referred to for detailed information on the natural geology, archaeological and historical background of the site (Ove Arup 2007), although this is summarised in this document (Section 2).
- 1.1.3 Brickearth deposits were recorded during both these phases of work, but no archaeological deposits or features were identified and no archaeological artefacts were recovered.

## 1.2 Planning background

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- 1.2.1 The legislative and Planning framework in which the evaluation took place was set out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* which formed the project design for the evaluation (MOLA 2015, Appendix 1).
- 1.2.2 The archaeological investigation was commissioned in response to recent construction works on the site and following the advice of the archaeological advisers to the Local Planning Authority, Historic England (The Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service, GLAAS). Archaeological monitoring was not carried out during the main phases of construction work at the site, and the aims of this investigation were to assess and record archaeological deposit survival within available areas of the site.

## 1.3 Previous archaeological investigations on the site

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- 1.3.1 There have been a number other phases of archaeological work within the Sky Masterplan redevelopment area. These are shown on Figure 1, and listed below:
- In the east of the site, an archaeological trial trench evaluation exercise was undertaken (site code HQN07; MOLA 2007). Brickearth deposits were recorded, but no archaeological deposits or features were identified and no archaeological artefacts were recovered.
  - In a land parcel in the north of the site, a watching brief was undertaken during groundworks associated with the development of the area (site code HQN07; MOLA 2008). Brickearth deposits were recorded here also, but no archaeological deposits or features were identified and no archaeological artefacts were recovered.
  - In land to the north of the site, 22 geotechnical test pits were monitored in 2012 (site code GNY12; MOLA 2013). No archaeological deposits were identified.
- 1.3.2 All other areas on Figure 1 have not been subject to any previous archaeological investigation.

## 1.4 Scope of the archaeological investigation

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- 1.4.1 The archaeological investigation was carried out within the terms of the relevant standard for archaeological excavation as specified by the Chartered Institute for

Archaeologists (CifA 2014).

- 1.4.2 All work has been undertaken within the research priorities established in the Museum of London's Research Framework for London Archaeology, 2002, and within the research aims and objectives established in the approved Written Scheme of Investigation for the archaeological investigation (MOLA 2015, 6–7).

## 2 Topographical and historical background

### 2.1 Topography

- 2.1.1 The geological and topological background to the site is set out in the Ove Arup Written Scheme of Investigation (Ove Arup 2007, 2–3).
- 2.1.2 In summary: The topography of the site ranges from 14.5m OD in the North part of the site to 23.3m OD at the South. The central area lies at around 20.0m OD on average. The River Brent and the Grand Union Canal are located approximately 150m to the north of the site boundary.
- 2.1.3 The general geological sequence is likely to comprise Langley Silts (Brickearth) underlain by Taplow Gravel, River Terrace Deposits. These Pleistocene (Quaternary) fluvial deposits of the River Thames are arranged in flights of gravel terraces and represent the remains of former floodplains of the river. The sandy and clayey gravels are in turn underlain by the London Clay Formation. At depth the London Clay is underlain by the Lambeth Group, Thanet Sands and Upper Chalk respectively.
- 2.1.4 Deposits of modern (made) ground vary in thickness between 0.11m to 2.8m across the site. The brickearth deposits are discontinuous across the site and range in thickness between 0.2m and 2.5m.

### 2.2 Archaeology

- 2.2.1 The archaeological and historical background is set out in the Ove Arup Written Scheme of Investigation (Ove Arup 2007, 3–6), and is summarised below.
- 2.2.2 There are a number of prehistoric sites and finds spots around the site, including Palaeolithic flints (HER no. 2184) and animal remains (HER no. 2148) (450,000–12,000 BC). Immediately north of the site, a heavy concentration of calcinated flints has been interpreted as a possible prehistoric occupation site (HER no. 2211). To the west, a small ring work may be a Bronze Age ring ditch (HER no. 1950) (2,000–600 BC). Bronze Age artefacts have also been found to the south and west (HER no. 2189).
- 2.2.3 There are few Roman (AD 43–410) remains near the site. Field boundaries east of the site may date to this period. The Great West Road is on the line of the main road from London to Silchester and Cirencester. An antiquarian find of a Roman coin was made south of the site (HER no. 2615).
- 2.2.4 A 15th century conduit built of ashlar and timber was found to the southeast of the site (HE no. 68855), probably linking a conduit house at Syon Hill to Syon Abbey which was founded in the medieval period (1066–1485), 1km away. Wyke House in Syon Lane, built in the late 18th century, lies to the west of the site, with other post-medieval remains (1485–present).
- 2.2.5 As previously mentioned the wider (Masterplan) redevelopment site has been subject to previous archaeological investigations. An archaeological evaluation was carried out by MOLA adjacent to the eastern section of the site in October 2007 (MOLA 2007). Four evaluation trenches and nineteen site investigation (SI) trial pits were excavated. No archaeological deposits were recorded during this investigation, although undisturbed natural brickearth was recorded implying a low potential for archaeological deposit survival in the localised area.
- 2.2.6 This work was followed by an archaeological watching brief carried out by MOLA to the north of the site in July 2008 (MOLA 2008). This phase of work produced no archaeological features, although a redeposited natural substrate was recorded and

interpreted as an intact subsoil, again implying at least an outlying potential for archaeological deposit survival within these areas.



## 3 The archaeological investigation

### 3.1 Field methodology

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- 3.1.1 One trench was excavated measuring 15m by 2m by 1m deep.
- 3.1.2 The ground was cleared by contractors under MOLA supervision and the trench was cleaned and archaeological deposits excavated by hand.
- 3.1.3 The archaeological investigation was carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2015).
- 3.1.4 The location of the trench was 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

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- 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 2015).

### 3.3 Site archive

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Number of overall location plans	3
Number of Context (SU) sheets	3
Number of photographs	45
Number of Plan sheets	2

## 4 Results of the archaeological investigation

### 4.1 Trench 1

Location	On the west edge of the site, to the west of the multi-storey car park
Dimensions	15m by 2m by 1m deep
Modern ground level	21.55m OD
Base of modern turf	21.05m OD
Thickness of archaeological stratigraphy above natural	Up to 0.45m thick
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	20.24m OD
Top of surviving natural observed at	20.69m OD
Level of base of trench	20.46m OD

- 4.1.1 The archaeological investigation consisted of a single trench near the west boundary of the site (Fig 2). The ground sloped down gently from north to south. The trench was machine excavated to the first significant archaeological horizon or natural deposit and then carefully hand-cleaned (Fig 3).
- 4.1.2 Natural deposits [001] comprised sand and gravels (Fig 4, Fig 5). This was sealed by a layer of silty clay [002], up to 0.45m thick, in the central part of the trench. This deposit lensed out over the natural to the north, extended into the west section and was truncated by modern intrusions to the south and east. It was 7.25m long and extended the width of the 2m wide trench. Layer [002] has been interpreted as subsoil that had been partially reworked by later agricultural activity (ploughing). This deposit was fully removed by hand-excavation producing a single sherd of Roman pottery and some small fragments of a fired friable ceramic material that are thought to be daub. The daub is undatable, but given the pottery sherd may also be of Roman date.
- 4.1.3 There was considerable modern truncation (disturbance) evident within the trench and almost all of the southern 7m had been removed by utilities trenches (see also Fig 3). Two other significant modern intrusions [003] truncated much of the east side of the trench. The modern backfill of these service trenches were excavated by hand by MOLA to recover any residual archaeological material, but none was found.

### 4.2 The finds

A single sherd of Roman pottery, part of a small domestic jar (Fiona Seeley, pers. comm) was recovered from subsoil layer [002]. Small fragments of a crumbly red material, found in the same layer, are thought to be daub also of Roman date (Ian Betts pers comm).

## 5 Archaeological potential

### 5.1 Answering original research aims

5.1.1 The research aims in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (MOLA 2015, 6–7) can be answered as follows:

- What is the nature and level of natural topography? *The likely truncated top of the sand and gravel natural was recorded at 20.69m OD.*
- What are the earliest deposits identified? What are the latest deposits identified? *The only archaeological deposit identified was a layer of silty clay [002], up to 0.45m thick, in the central part of the trench. This deposit was probably subsoil that had been partially reworked by agricultural activity in antiquity. A single sherd of Roman pottery and some small fragments of probable daub were recovered.*
- What is the extent of modern disturbance? *Modern disturbance was extensive and was recorded over an area of 24m<sup>2</sup> of the 30m<sup>2</sup> trench (ie 80% by area). The truncation consisted partly of deeply cut features for services. In addition, in places, modern (recent) deposits directly overlay the natural ground, suggesting the original ground level had been reduced and then levelled up with modern material.*
- Localised deposits of undisturbed natural brickearth were recorded during the archaeological evaluation in 2007, are there any deposits within this trench to suggest archaeological deposit survival potential? *Although layer [002] seemed to have been reworked – presumably by agricultural activity that incorporated the single sherd of pottery and probable daub – the layer [002] was brickearth-like in nature. As such, layer [002] is comparable with the brickearth identified in the earlier investigations (MOLA 2007, MOLA 2008).*
- If any archaeological deposits are encountered within the trench, is there a requirement for further archaeological mitigation works within the site? *There is limited scope to do further work within the application area covered by this report, as the proposed multi-storey car park building has been completed. Given the potential for archaeological deposit survival at the site of Roman date, further work across the Sky site may be required in response to the proposed redevelopment of the wider site area. Further archaeological evaluation or archaeological mitigation where appropriate, would refine the current understanding of the archaeological potential of the site.*

### 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.

5.2.2 Layer [002] suggests there was agricultural activity (eg ploughing) in the area of Trench 1 although this activity is not securely dateable. The presence of the domestic Roman pottery within the soil implies either a contemporary date for the soil or Roman activity in the vicinity of the site

## 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 with the London Archaeological Archive and Resource Centre (LAARC) within six months of issuing the report (MOLA 2015, 4).
- 6.1.3 In view of the limited potential of the material (Section 5) and the relatively limited significance of the data (Section 5.2) it is suggested that a short summary of the results of the investigation will be submitted to the Greater London HER and NAR (using the appropriate OASIS archaeological report form) and for publication in an appropriate academic journal.

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

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MOLA, 2013 BSKYB Grant Way, Brentford TW7, London Borough of Hounslow, *Watching brief report* January 2013, unpublished client report (authors: Tim Braybrooke and Rob Hartle)

MOLA, 2007 BSKYB Harlequin 1 Harlequin Avenue, Brentford, London, TW8, London Borough of Hounslow, *an archaeological evaluation report, HNQ07* unpub MOL report (author: Aleksandra Cetera)

MOLA, 2008 BSKYB Harlequin 1 Harlequin Avenue, Brentford, London, TW8, London Borough of Hounslow, *an archaeological watching brief report, HQN07* unpub MOL report (author: Peter Cardiff)

Museum of London, 2002 *A research framework for London archaeology 2002*  
Ove Arup, 2007 *BSKYB Harlequin One, Archaeology Written Scheme of Investigation*, unpublished Ove Arup report (author: Helen J Glass)

## 8 OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID: molas1-222955

### Project details

Project name	BSkyB 1 Harlequin Avenue, Multi-Storey Car Park 1, Brentford, London TW8
Short description of the project	One 15m by 2m trench was excavated on the west perimeter of this large site. The trench was largely truncated by modern intrusions. The top of the truncated natural sands and gravels lay at 20.69m OD. A 0.45m thick deposit of reworked subsoil yielded a sherd of Roman pottery and probable daub.
Project dates	Start: 11-08-2015 End: 13-08-2015
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HQN07 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices
Monument type	FIELD Roman
Significant Finds	CONTAINER JAR Roman
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON HOUNSLOW BRENTFORD BSKyB 1 Harlequin Avenue, Multi-Storey Car Park 1, Brentford, London TW8
Postcode	TW8
Study area	100000 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 16110 77900 51.487619525576 -0.327491005178 51 29 15 N 000 19 38 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 20.46m Max: 20.69m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	MOLA
Project brief originator	Ove Arup and Partners

Project design originator	MOLA
Project director/manager	Simon Davis
Project supervisor	Antony Francis
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Sky

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**Project archives**

Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Archive ID	HQN07
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	HQN07
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	HQN07

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**Project bibliography**

1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	B SkyB 1 Harlequin Avenue, Multi-Storey Car Park 1, Development Parcel C, Brentford, London TW8
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Francis, A.
Date	2015
Issuer or publisher	MOLA
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	unpublished client report

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Entered on	8 September 2015



Fig 1 Location of the BSkyB site, showing areas of previous archaeological investigations



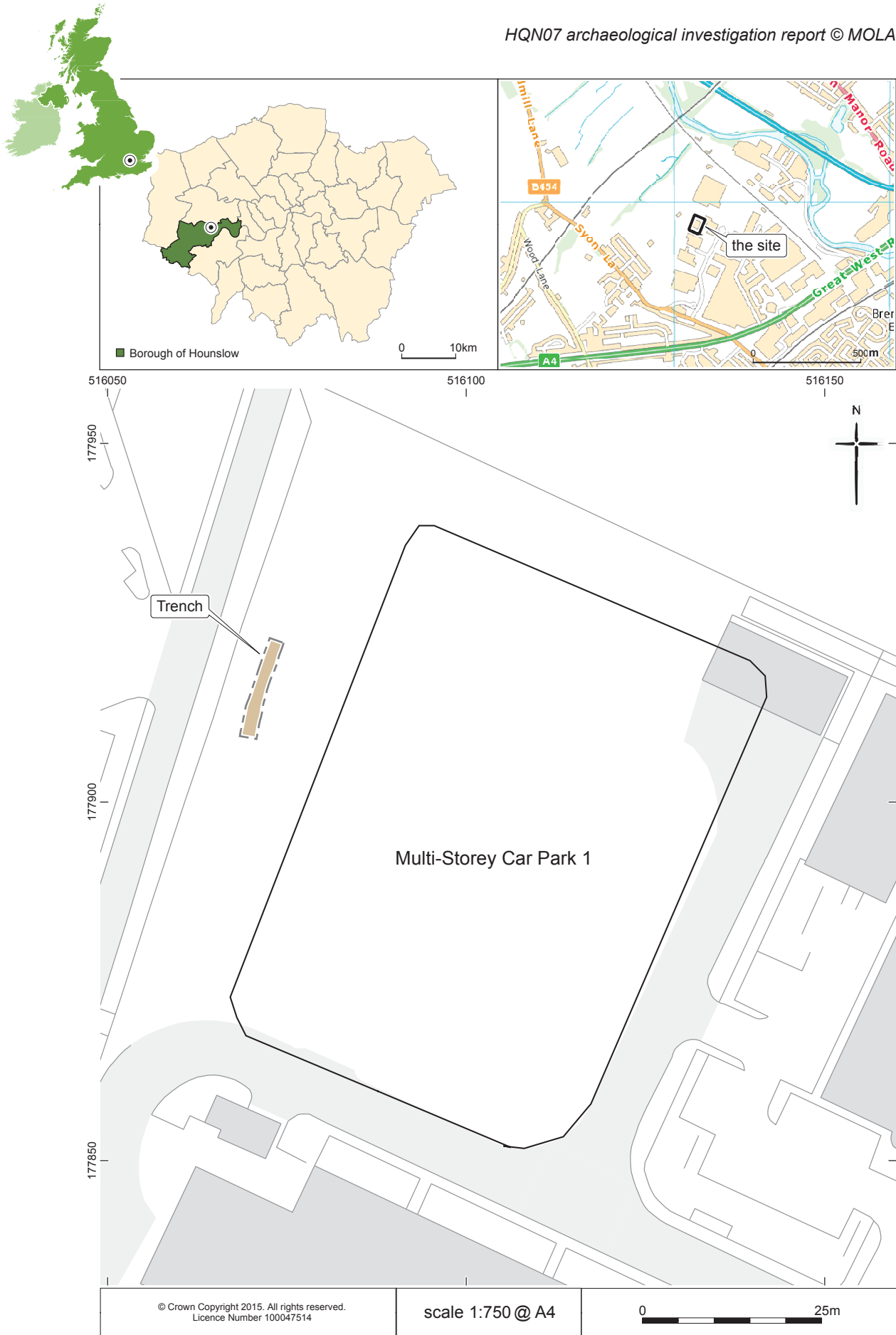


Fig 2 Trench location

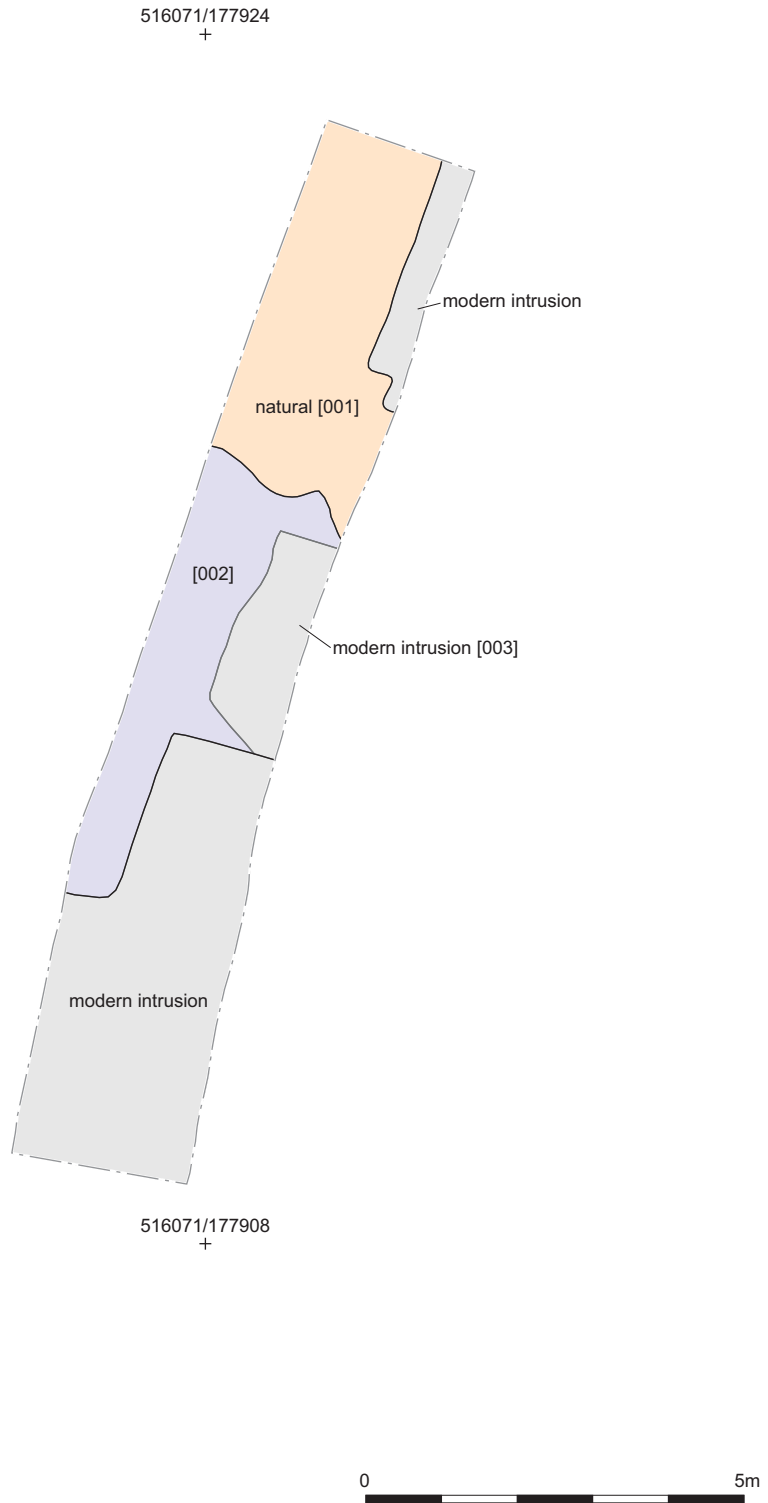


Fig 3 Plan of Trench 1



Fig 4 Trench 1, from above. Looking west



Fig 5 Trench 1, looking south