



**MONTROSE HOUSE**  
**Montrose Place**  
**Belgravia**  
**London**  
**SW1**

City of Westminster

An archaeological evaluation and watching brief report

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**MUSEUM OF LONDON**

**Archaeology Service**

MONTROSE HOUSE  
Montrose Place  
Belgravia  
London  
SW1

City of Westminster

An archaeological evaluation and watching brief report

Site Code: MCE06  
National Grid Reference: 528400 179540

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**Montrose Place**  
**Belgravia**  
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**SW1**  
City of Westminster

A report on the excavation  
and watching brief

Site code: MCE 06

*Author Sylvia Kennedy*

## Summary (non-technical)

*This report has been commissioned by Hamilton Associates Architects Ltd on behalf of the client Montrose House LLP in order to set out the results of the excavation and watching brief carried out at Montrose House, Montrose Place, London SW1.*

*Archaeological work and monitoring occurred between 12/01/07 and 28/01/07. Excavation took place on the northern half of the site (Areas A and B) whilst, a watching brief was carried out in the southern half.*

*Natural brickearth was revealed at a maximum height of 6.32m OD.*

*No archaeological features were seen within and it was overlain by a post-medieval soil horizon to c 6.50m OD. This was in turn covered by successive 19th-century dump layers containing a considerable quantity of building rubble.*

*A very similar sequence of deposits was observed in the section running parallel to the pavement of Montrose Place, spanning excavation Areas A and B. No archaeological features were observed in the brickearth, but the overlying post-medieval soil horizon was cut by two probable quarry pits. These pits had been backfilled with 19th century debris.*

## Table Of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Site background	1
1.2	Planning and legislative framework	1
1.3	Planning background	1
1.4	Origin and scope of the report	2
1.5	Research aims and objectives of excavation	2
1.5.1	<i>Natural topography and the prehistoric environment</i>	2
1.5.2	<i>Prehistoric</i>	2
1.5.3	<i>Medieval</i>	2
1.5.4	<i>Post-medieval</i>	3
<b>2</b>	<b>Topographical and historical background</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>The excavation and watching brief</b>	<b>3</b>
3.1	Methodology	3
3.2	Results of the excavation and watching brief	4
<b>4</b>	<b>Potential of archaeology</b>	<b>7</b>
4.1	Realisation of original research aims	7
4.1.1	<i>Natural topography and the prehistoric environment</i>	7
4.1.2	<i>Prehistoric</i>	7
4.1.3	<i>Medieval</i>	7
4.1.4	<i>Post-medieval</i>	7
4.2	General discussion of the archaeology	7
4.3	Significance of the data	8
<b>5</b>	<b>Publication and archiving</b>	<b>9</b>

<b>6</b>	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>NMR OASIS archaeological report form</b>	<b>12</b>
7.1	OASIS ID: molas1-23521	12

## **Figures**

*Front cover: Detail from Horwood's map of 1799*

Fig 1	Site location	15
Fig 2	Areas of investigation showing modern intrusions	16
Fig 3	Section 13 in Areas A and B	17

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Site background

The excavation and watching brief took place at Montrose House, Montrose Place, Belgravia, hereafter called 'the site'. The site is located on the north side of Montrose Place, bounded to the east by No 3 Montrose House and gardens to the rear of Chapel Street. To the north the site is bounded by an area to the rear of properties on Headfort Place and to the west by a site adjoining 10 Montrose place. The OS National Grid Ref. for centre of site is 528400 179540. Ground level on site was at approximately 7.8m OD. Modern pavement level immediately adjacent to the site is 8.00m OD. The site code is MCE 06.

A desk-top *Archaeological (impact) assessment* was previously prepared, which covers the whole area of the site (MoLAS, 2005). The *assessment* 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.

A field evaluation was also carried out and an *Evaluation report* written on the results of this exercise (MoLAS, 2006). This document, and the previous *Assessment*, informed the design for the excavation and watching brief which was eventually carried out (*Method Statement for an archaeological excavation and watching brief*, MoLAS, 2006).

## 1.2 Planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Archaeological impact assessment* (see Section 2, MoLAS, 2005).

## 1.3 Planning background

Planning Consent was given to the proposed redevelopment on 08/12/2005 date (Planning Application no: 05/06617/FULL). The following Condition (Condition 10) relating to archaeology was included:

*Condition 10: You must apply to us for approval of a Written Scheme of Investigation for a programme of archaeological work. You must not start work until we have approved what you have sent us. You must then carry out the archaeological work and development according to this approved scheme.*

*Reason: To avoid damage to any archaeological remains on site, as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, DES 18 of our Unitary Development Plan, DES 11(B) of our Replacement Unitary Development plan (Second Deposit version) and DES 11 (B) of our Pre-Inquiry Unitary Development Plan. (R32AA).*

## **1.4 Origin and scope of the report**

This report was commissioned by Hamilton Associates Architects Ltd on behalf of the client Montrose House LLP and produced by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA). The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA, 2001).

The report details the results of the excavation and watching brief carried out on the site in January 2007.

## **1.5 Research aims and objectives of excavation**

All research is undertaken within the priorities established in the Museum of London's *A research framework for London Archaeology, 2002*

The following research aims and objectives were established in the *Method Statement* for the excavation (Section 2.2). These were compiled after consultation with appropriate specialists, and in particular with consideration of the results of previous archaeological investigations both on the site and on other sites in the area.

### **1.5.1 Natural topography and the prehistoric environment**

1. *At what depth does the untruncated surface of natural gravels and brickearth subsoil survive?*

### **1.5.2 Prehistoric**

1. *What evidence is there for Prehistoric deposits remaining on the site?*
2. *Are there deposits present that may relate to the pit found during the evaluation and dated to the Bronze Age?*
3. *Is there any evidence for human cremations or other burial types on the site? If so, what date are they?*
4. *If present, how do the remains contribute to our understanding of the Prehistoric period in the wider vicinity?*

### **1.5.3 Medieval**

5. *Is there any evidence for medieval deposits existing on the site?*
6. *If so, what is the character and nature of the medieval remains? How was the area of the site used during the medieval period?*
7. *What evidence is there for the presence of the medieval soil horizon as found at the evaluation phase?*



### 1.5.4 Post-medieval

8. *What is the nature and extent of the Post –medieval archaeology on the site?*
9. *If found, do any of the surviving structures relate to any of those seen on Ordnance Survey and other historic maps of the area?*

*Is there any further evidence for the Public House that once stood on the site?*

## 2 Topographical and historical background

A detailed description of the geology, archaeology and history of the site was provided in the earlier *Archaeological (impact) assessment* (MoLAS 2005) and a brief resume was provided in the Method Statement (MoLAS 2006) and thus will not be repeated here.

## 3 The excavation and watching brief

### 3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and recording was done in accordance with the preceding *Method Statement* (MoLAS, 2006) and the MoLAS *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS, 1994).

The areas were initially broken out and cleared by the contractors, and subsequently excavated by MOLA staff.

The locations of the areas of excavation were recorded by MoLAS surveying team and the information was then plotted onto the OS grid. The watching brief covered the rest of the site.

The heights of observations and/or archaeological remains were recorded relative to Ordnance Datum via a traverse from a survey point (Station 52, Lee Draper for Robert McAlpine) set up adjacent to the site. Station 52 (8.03m OD) was established from an OS benchmark on the corner of Headfort Place and Chapel Street (8.96m OD).

Where relevant, sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20; numbered contexts were allocated where appropriate.

The excavation and watching brief has produced: one trench location plan; 4 context records; one section drawing at 1:20; and 8 photographs.

The site finds and records can be found under the site code MCE06 in the MoL archive.

### **3.2 Results of the excavation and watching brief**

Areas A and B were subject to an excavation, Area C was monitored during the groundworks. For locations see Fig 2. A brief description of the findings follows below.

### *Excavation Area A*

Area A was located on the northern side of site and measured approximately 10 x 18m. Deposit survival occurred on the eastern side only. Banded terrace gravels were seen at 5.40m OD, underlying natural brickearth which was present between 6.19 and 6.32m OD. No archaeological features were observed at this level. A blueish grey clayey soil horizon (likely to be post-medieval in origin) overlay the brickearth at 6.50m OD. This was covered in turn by 1m thick 19th-century dump layers containing a considerable quantity of building rubble. The remaining 0.5m to present ground level on site consisted of modern disturbance associated with the present groundworks.

The western side of Area A revealed deep modern intrusions which had removed any potential archaeological deposits or features. A small strip (6 x 1m) of truncated natural brickearth remained in between these intrusions at 5.84m OD, no features were seen within it. A machine-dug sondage through the eastern intrusion revealed natural gravel and the remains of a concrete pile associated with the former Montrose House at 5.48m OD. The western intrusion carried on into Area B and will be discussed below. These intrusions contained concrete fragments and re-bars to confirm their recent origin.

### *Excavation Area B*

Area B was located immediately southwest of Area A (being, in fact, an extension of it) and measured approximately 11 x 6m. Machining down to the potential archaeological levels revealed the continuation of the deep modern intrusions seen in Area A. The small area of natural seen in the western side of Area A continued south for another 5m into Area B. It was truncated from above and to the east, west and south sides by the modern intrusions. The height of this natural brickearth lay between 6.11 and 5.58m OD, the gravel inclusions within becoming more frequent the lower the deposit. A machine-dug sondage through the intrusions revealed their bases to be at *c* 4.00m OD. At this level it was also possible to observe the circular holes left after the removal of the piles associated with the former Montrose House. These holes contained modern backfill and continued to a depth of 3.00m OD.

Whilst these modern intrusions had destroyed any potential archaeology it was possible to observe some deposits and features in the east facing section (see Figs 2 and 3) which ran parallel to the pavement of Montrose Place. The same sequence was seen as on the eastern side of Area A: i.e. brickearth at 6.20m OD, overlain by the post-medieval soil horizon at 6.43m OD. This deposit was cut by two pits to the north and south. The pits were backfilled with 19th century building debris and are likely to be quarry pits dug for the extraction of clay – Rocque's map of 1747 shows the area of the site adjacent to a brick kiln. The remains of a stock brick wall at 6.90m OD was also seen in this section, probably aligned roughly east–west. It is likely to have been associated with the residential housing on the site in the Victorian period.

*Watching Brief Area C*

The southern area of the site was subject to a watching brief which revealed truncated natural at 5.50m OD. This was overlain by modern backfill and redeposited 19th century debris to 8.00m OD, i.e ground level on site.

## **4 Potential of archaeology**

### **4.1 Realisation of original research aims**

#### ***4.1.1 Natural topography and the prehistoric environment***

Natural terrace gravels were seen at 5.40m OD. Overlying these untruncated brickearth was observed in the eastern side of Area A and in the section between Areas A and B only. It was at a depth of between 6.06 and 6.32m OD.

#### ***4.1.2 Prehistoric***

There is no evidence of Prehistoric deposits on the site.

No deposits that may relate to the Bronze Age pit found during the evaluation were seen.

There is no evidence for human cremations or other burial types on the site.

#### ***4.1.3 Medieval***

There is no evidence for medieval deposits on the site.

The possible medieval soil horizon found at the evaluation phase was not seen during the excavation or watching brief.

#### ***4.1.4 Post-medieval***

Between modern intrusions it was possible to observe a post-medieval soil horizon overlying the natural brickearth. Two pits filled with 19th century rubble were observed cutting into this layer. These are likely to be quarry pits associated with brick production that occurred in the area in the 18th century.

No further evidence was found for the Public House that once stood on the site but a stock brick wall seen in section only is likely to have been associated with Victorian housing on the site.

### **4.2 General discussion of the archaeology**

Archaeological deposits and untruncated natural brickearth survived in the northeastern corner of site. This area contained the Bronze Age ritual deposit found during the evaluation. The fact that no other features were found in this area during the excavation suggests that was an isolated deposit.

Very little can be added to the interpretation of the site for the post medieval period that was not already discovered in the previous evaluation. The presence of the stock brick wall and the backfilled quarry pits confirm evidence from the historic maps but

the piling and their subsequent removal would have destroyed additional possible features if present.

### **4.3 Significance of the data**

Whilst the few archaeological remains encountered during this excavation and watching brief are undoubtedly of local significance there is nothing to suggest that they are of regional or national importance.

## 5 Publication and archiving

Information on the results of the excavation will be made publicly available by means of a database in digital form, to permit inclusion of the site data in any future academic research into the development of London.

The site archive containing original records and finds will be stored in accordance with the terms of the *Method Statement* (MoLAS, 2006) with the Museum of London within 12 months of the end of the excavation.

In view of the limited potential of the material (Section 4) and the relatively limited significance of the data (Section 4.3) it is suggested that a short note on the results of the excavation should appear in the annual round up of the *London Archaeologist*.

## 6 Bibliography

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## 7 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

### 7.1 OASIS ID: molas1-23521

#### Project details

Project name Montrose House, Montrose Place, Belgravia

Short description of the project All archaeological work and monitoring occurred between 12-01-07 and 28-01-07. Excavation took place on the northern half of the sit whilst, a watching brief was carried out in the southern half. An area in the northeast corner remained undisturbed and revealed natural brickearth at a maximum height of 6.32m OD. No archaeological features were seen within and it was overlain by a post-medieval soil horizon to c 6.50m OD. This was in turn covered by successive 19th-century dump layers containing a considerable quantity of building rubble. A very similar sequence of deposits was observed in the section running parallel to the pavement of Montrose Place, spanning excavation Areas A and B. No archaeological features were observed in the brickearth, but the overlying post-medieval soil horizon was cut by two probable quarry pits. These pits had been backfilled with 19th century debris.

Project dates Start: 12-01-2007 End: 28-01-2007

Previous/future work Yes / No

Any associated project reference codes MCE06 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Site status None

Current Land use Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed

Monument type PIT Post Medieval

Monument type PIT Post Medieval

Monument type WALL Post Medieval

Investigation type 'Part Excavation','Watching Brief'

Prompt Planning condition

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**Project location**

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER CITY OF WESTMINSTER Montrose House

Postcode SW1

Study area 600.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 528400 179540 50.9401697696 0.175672625086 50 56 24 N 000 10 32 E Point

Height OD Min: 6.06m Max: 6.32m

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**Project creators**

Name of Molas  
Organisation

Project brief English Heritage/Department of Environment  
originator

Project design MoLAS  
originator

Project Ros Aitken  
director/manager

Project supervisor Sylvia Kennedy

Name of Montrose House LLP  
sponsor/funding  
body

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**Project archives**

Physical Archive LAARC

recipient

Physical Contents 'Ceramics'

Digital Archive LAARC  
recipient

Digital Contents 'Survey'

Digital Media 'Survey'  
available

Paper Archive LAARC  
recipient

Paper Media 'Context  
available sheet', 'Matrices', 'Photograph', 'Plan', 'Report', 'Section', 'Unpublished  
Text'

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**Project  
bibliography 1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title Montrose House, Montrose Place, Belgravia

Author(s)/Editor(s) Kennedy, S

Date 2007

Issuer or publisher MoLAS

Place of issue or London  
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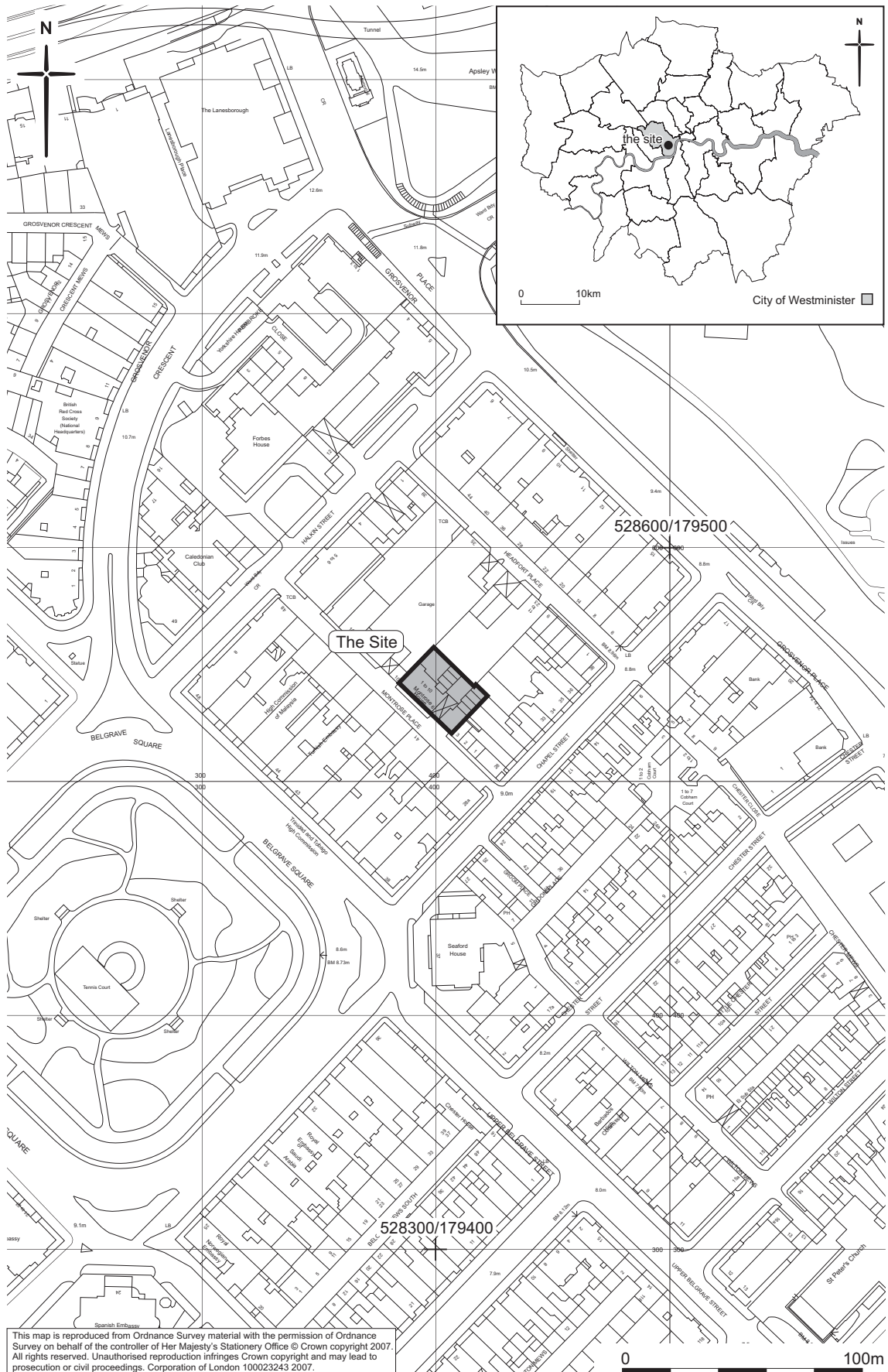


Fig 1 Site location



Fig 2 Areas of investigation showing modern intrusions

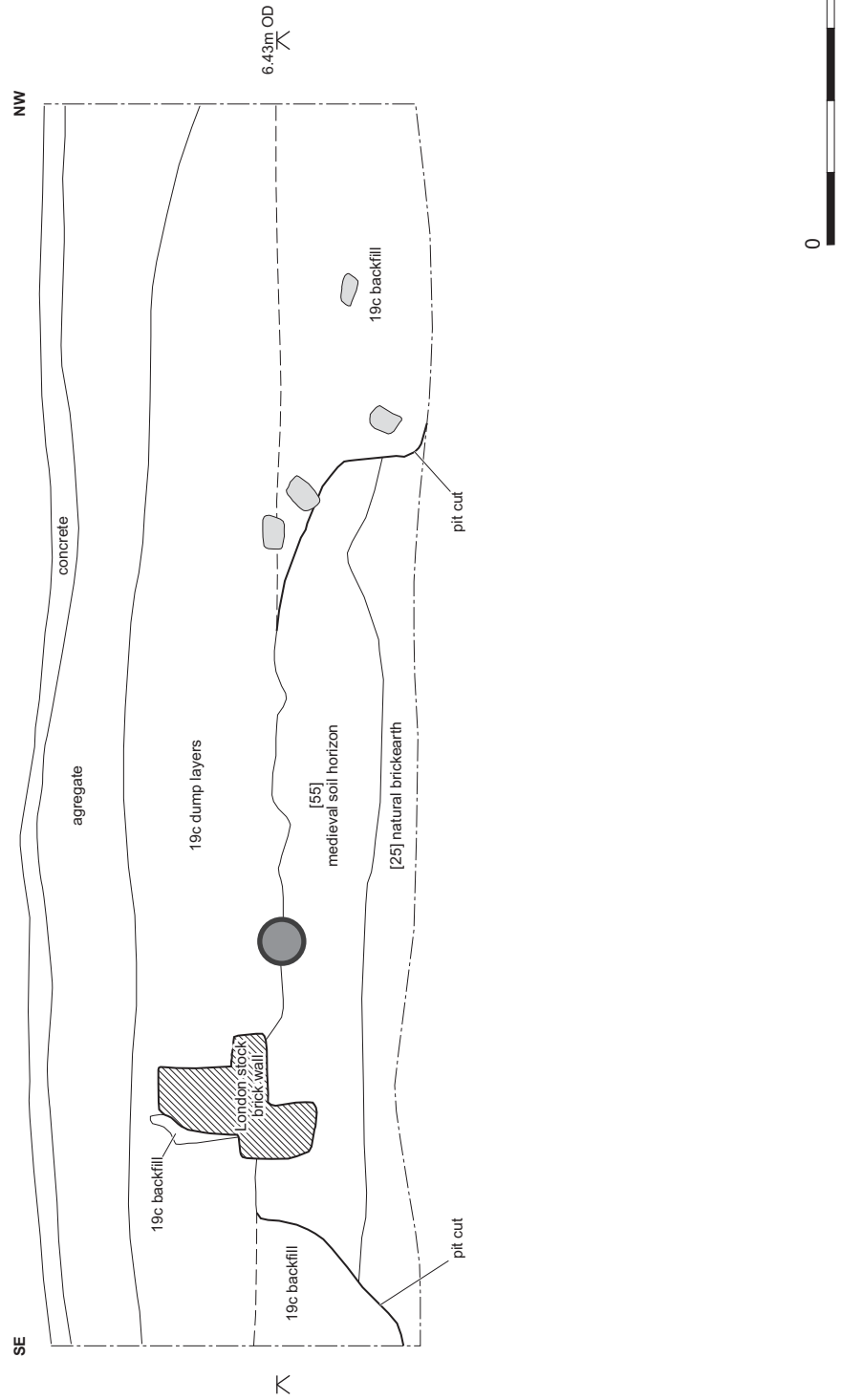


Fig 3 Section 13 in Areas A and B