



## 21 MOORFIELDS

London EC2

City of London

Report on an archaeological watching brief

September 2018



**21 Moorfield  
London  
EC2**

**City of London**

**Watching brief report**

Site Code MOO16  
NGR 532645 181680  
OASIS reference 328659

Planning reference 14/01179/FULEIA  
Condition number 15

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## Summary

*This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by MOLA at 21 Moorfields, London, EC2. The report was commissioned from MOLA by Bilfinger on behalf of the client Land Securities.*

*In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2015) a watching brief was carried out on the site between 9th August 2016 and 30th the July 2018.*

*Nine pile probing trenches in total were monitored and no archaeological deposits were recorded. Heavily truncated natural gravel was found between 6.55m OD and 7.89m OD and overlain with modern bedding for the construction of foundations, and slabs ranging between 0.30m to 1.70m deep and associated with the late 20th century building on the site.*

*No archaeological remains were found to survive in the areas under investigation.*

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Site background

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- 1.1.1 An archaeological watching brief was carried out by MOLA at 21 Moorfields, London EC2 ('the site') between 9th August 2016 and 30th July 2018 (see Fig 1). This document is the Report on that work.
- 1.1.2 Further to the condition on Planning Consent a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by MOLA (MOLA 2015). All archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with that WSI.

## 1.2 Planning background

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- 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* (MOLA 2015) and the revised scope written in 2016 (MOLA 2016).
- 1.2.2 The watching brief was carried out to fulfil a condition attached to the Planning Consent given by the City of London (Consent reference 14/01179/FULEIAI; Condition number 15).

## 1.3 Scope of the watching brief

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- 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 terms of the relevant Standard for watching brief specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (CIFA, 2014).
- 1.3.3 All work has been undertaken within the research priorities established in the Museum of London's A research framework for London Archaeology, 2002. research framework as appropriate.
- 1.3.4 All work was undertaken within research aims and objectives established in the Written Scheme of Investigation for the watching brief (Section 2).

## 2 Topographical and historical background

### 2.1 Topography

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- 2.1.1 The site is bounded to the west by Moor Lane, to the north by New Union Street, to the east by Moorfields and to the south by Fore Street and buildings fronting Fore Street. Modern pavement level near to the site lies at c 14m OD at the east and south, dropping to c 13.6 at the west and between c 11m (lower ramp area) and 12.8m at the north.

### 2.2 Archaeology

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- 2.2.1 A full resume of the historical and archaeological background of the area can be found in the *Heritage Desk-based Assessment (Waterman 2014)* and should be referred to.
- 2.2.2 The area of the proposed work does not contain any designated heritage assets; however the site lies within the City of London, the whole of which is considered to be an area of archaeological importance. The potential archaeological interest of the site is its location on the western fringe of the Walbrook Valley, within an area of Roman burials, which were followed by the formation of the Moorfield Marshes in the late Roman period, and subsequently various industrial activities in the post-medieval period.
- 2.2.3 Previous archaeological excavation directly to the east and the south of the site at Moor House (Butler 2006) has recorded multi-period occupation including possible Roman burials; however, three trial pits (see Fig 2) evaluated at the northern end of the site in 1997 revealed that no archaeological deposits survived within the trial pit footprints, due to them being truncated by the construction of the existing basement (site code MLF97; MoLAS 1997). Similar results were also confirmed by recent boreholes conducted in 2016 at the southern end of the site. Modern made ground was observed directly onto truncated natural geological deposits of gravel/London Clay. No archaeological deposits were observed (MOLA, 2016).

## 3 The watching brief

### 3.1 Field methodology

- 3.1.1 Investigation and recording of features was carried out in accordance with the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (MOLA 2015).
- 3.1.2 The slab was broken out, cleared and then hand excavated by the contractors. Due to the presence of asbestos in the areas of the pile obstruction clearance, MOLA staff were not present during the ground reduction. As the pit was not deemed safe to enter, the senior archaeologist recorded the features from the top (MOLA 2016)
- 3.1.3 Pile and trench locations were drawn up in advance of the work on site with plans submitted in CAD and PDF form by MACE to MOLA. The relevant plan (Ref: 4095\_RRBG\_ZZ\_00\_DR\_S 910000) used for the site work was also used in conjunction with a plan submitted by Wilkinson Eyre Architects (Ref: Level B1 plan, 1:250 scale, Drawing and Cad File number 00873-P-0099). These plans were used by the MOLA Geomatics Team to tie the site to the OS grid.
- 3.1.4 Where referenced in this report (eg 7.75m OD'), levels relate to OS Ordnance Datum and were calculated by an adjacent spot height on a levels data plan provided to us by Mace Ltd, (Ref: Moorgate station, Surveyed and drawn by Plowman Craven , scale 1:100, dated September 2013, Drawing No 31671-1430-EX-00DRG-G-00005 & 00006, Issue: Aprov7) .
- 3.1.5 Because of the nature of the fieldwork it was not possible to accurately measure/calculate OD levels. A tape was dropped from the top of the slab and calculated below the slab level. .

### 3.2 Recording methodology

- 3.2.1 A written and drawn record of the deposits encountered was carried out in accordance with the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (MOLA 2015).

### 3.3 Site archive

Number of trench record sheets	9
Number of overall location plans	1
Number of Context (SU) sheets	0
Number of photographs	14
Number of Plan sheets	0
Number of Sections	0

## 4 Results of the watching brief

For trench locations see Fig 2 and Fig 3.

### 4.1 Pile probing trench 2

Location	North-eastern corner of the site
Dimensions	3.0m by 3.0m by 2.0m depth
Modern top of slab	9.59m OD
Base of modern slab	9.29m OD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	1.50m
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	N/A
Top of surviving natural observed at	7.69m OD
Level of base of trench	7.59m OD

- 4.1.1 Natural sand and gravel was recorded at 7.69m OD and heavily truncated by the construction of the basement, as evidenced by the overlying 1.20m deep limestone and concrete levelling.
- 4.1.2 The top of was recorded at 8.89m OD and was sealed by c 0.40m of crush and concrete. This formed the base of the 0.40m deep basement slab, whose surface lay at 9.59m OD.
- 4.1.3 No archaeological deposits survived within the footprint of the trench.



Photo 1 View of Pile probing trench 2 (looking north)



## 4.2 Pile probing trench 4

Location	North-eastern corner of the site
Dimensions	3.0m by 3.0m by 2.0m depth
Modern top of slab	8.30m OD
Base of modern slab	8.15m OD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	N/A
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	N/A
Top of surviving natural observed at	6.90 – 7.30m OD
Level of base of trench	6.30m OD

- 4.2.1 Truncated natural gravel was observed at its highest at 7.30m OD overlying London clay at 6.30m OD. This was sealed by a modern, black gravelly layer of made ground c 1.25m thick.
- 4.2.2 The top was recorded at 8.15m OD and was overlain by the basement concrete slab at 8.30mOD.
- 4.2.3 No archaeological deposits survived within the footprint of the trench.



Photo 2 View of Pile probing trench 4 (looking east)

### 4.3 Pile probing trench 6

Location	North-eastern corner of the site
Dimensions	3.0m by 3.0m by 2.0m depth
Modern top of slab	8.38m OD
Base of modern slab	8.18m OD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	N/A
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	N/A
Top of surviving natural observed at	7.38m OD
Level of base of trench	6.38m OD

- 4.3.1 Truncated natural gravel was recorded at 7.38m OD. This was sealed by a modern, black gravelly layer of made ground c 0.80m deep, that was overlain by the concrete basement slab, 0.20m deep. The top of was recorded at 8.38m OD.
- 4.3.2 No archaeological deposits survived within the footprint of the trench.



Photo 3 View of Pile probing trench 6 (looking northwest)

## 4.4 Pile probing trench 8

Location	Northern side of the site
Dimensions	2.90m by 3.10m by 2.0m depth
Modern top of slab	8.25m OD
Base of modern slab	8.10m OD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	N/A
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	N/A
Top of surviving natural observed at	7.00m OD
Level of base of trench	6.25m OD

- 4.4.1 This trench was secured with a timber shoring, so there was a restrictive view of the sections exposed.
- 4.4.2 Natural clay was recorded between 6.65 – .6.70m OD overlain by natural gravel at 7.00m OD. This had been severely truncated by the existing building basements to the south, and by the modern retaining wall foundation to the north; it was sealed by c 0.40m of modern ballast. Above this was c 0.80m of modern brick rubble, overlain by the basement concrete slab, whose surface lay at 8.25m OD.
- 4.4.3 No archaeological deposits survived within the footprint of the trench.

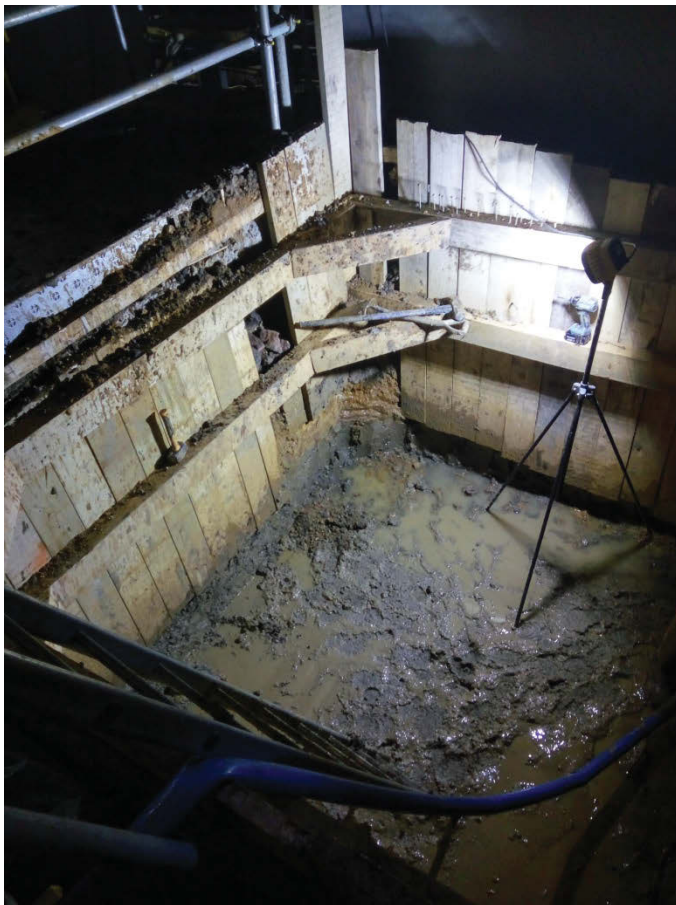


Photo 4 View of Pile probing trench 8 (Looking southwest)

## 4.5 Pile probing trench 9

Location	Central southern side of the site
Dimensions	4.2m by 3.0m by 2.2m depth
Modern top of slab	c 9.50m OD
Base of modern slab	7.74m OD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	N/A
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	N/A
Top of surviving natural observed at	7.74m OD
Level of base of trench	7.30m OD

- 4.5.1 Truncated natural gravel was observed at 7.74m OD. Above this, a modern, black gravelly make-up of c 0.30m of thickness was overlain by a concrete footing, 0.60m thick, which in turn was sealed by the basement concrete slab recorded at 9.50m OD.
- 4.5.2 No archaeological deposits survived within the footprint of the trench.



Photo 5 View of Pile probing trench 9 (looking north)

## 4.6 Pile probing trench 10

Location	Northern side of the site
Dimensions	3.6m by 3.6m by 2.0m depth
Modern top of slab	8.33m OD
Base of modern slab	7.33m OD. Top level of concrete box at the base of the trench
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	N/A
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	N/A
Top of surviving natural observed at	N/A
Level of base of trench	6.33m OD

- 4.6.1 At the time of the site visit, a concrete box was in place at the base of the trench obscuring the full sight of the trench sections up to 7.33m OD.
- 4.6.2 Above this level, modern backfill was recorded to the north and the east of the trench measuring c 0.80m in thickness. This was truncated to the south by the existing basement slab which was c 0.90m thick with the top observed at 8.33m OD.
- 4.6.3 No natural deposits were observed within the trench; however they were likely to have been severely truncated by the existing basement.
- 4.6.4 No archaeological deposits were observed within the visible footprint of the trench.



Photo 6 View of Pile probing trench 10 (looking north)

## 4.7 Pile probing trench 12

Location	Northern side of the site
Dimensions	3.0m by 3.0m by 2.0m depth
Modern top of slab	8.25m OD
Base of modern slab	7.95m OD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	N/A
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	N/A
Top of surviving natural observed at	6.45m OD
Level of base of trench	6.38m OD

- 4.7.1 Truncated natural gravel was recorded at 6.45m OD. This was sealed by a layer of modern made ground 0.90m deep, that was overlain by concrete, 0.90m thick. This, in turn was overlain by the basement slab, 0.30m deep, the top of which was recorded at 8.25m OD.
- 4.7.2 No archaeological deposits survived within the footprint of the trench.



Photo 7 View of Pile probing trench 12 (looking northwest)

## 4.8 Pile probing trench 13

Location	South-western side of the site
Dimensions	3.0m by 3.0m by 2.0m depth
Modern top of slab	9.30m OD
Base of modern slab	8.10m OD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	N/A
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	N/A
Top of surviving natural observed at	7.60m OD
Level of base of trench	7.30m OD

- 4.8.1 Truncated natural sand and gravel was recorded at 7.30m OD. This was sealed by a layer of modern made ground 0.50m deep, that was overlain basement slab, 1.20m deep, the top of which was recorded at 9.30m OD.
- 4.8.2 No archaeological deposits survived within the footprint of the trench.



Photo 8 View of Pile probing trench 13 (looking southwest)

## 4.9 Pile probing trench 14

Location	North-western side of the site
Dimensions	3.0m by 3.0m by 2.0m depth
Modern top of slab	9.45m OD
Base of modern slab	7.75m OD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	N/A
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	N/A
Top of surviving natural observed at	7.75m OD
Level of base of trench	7.45m OD

- 4.9.1 Truncated natural gravel was recorded at 7.75m OD. This was overlain by the basement slab, 1.70m deep, the top of which was recorded at 9.345 OD.
- 4.9.2 No archaeological deposits survived within the footprint of the trench.



Photo 9 View of Pile probing trench 14 (looking north)



## 5 Archaeological potential

### 5.1 Answering original research aims

5.1.1 The limited nature of the proposed works and the watching brief upon them made it unreasonable to establish many specific archaeological research objectives. Nevertheless a few research questions were outlined:

5.1.2 **What is the extent of modern disturbance?**

Modern disturbance by the construction of the present building was found in all of the pile probing trenches, evidenced by the presence of concrete slabs ranging from 0.50m to 1.70m thick, overlying modern levelling dumps.

5.1.3 **What is the nature and level of natural topography on the site, have these deposits been truncated?**

Natural gravel was located in all but one of the trenches and found to be heavily truncated by the modern building to between 6.45m OD at its lowest on the north side of the site to 7.89m OD on the south side.

5.1.4 **Does any evidence of a stream channel run through the site? If present can these be associated with similar features seen at the Moor House excavations to the south?**

No evidence for a stream channel was found in the pile probing trenches on the site.

5.1.5 **What are the earliest deposits identified?**

The earliest untruncated deposit recorded on the site was London Clay, seen in pile probing trenches 4 and 8 on the north-eastern side of the site, both at 6.70m OD, and overlain by truncated natural gravel.

5.1.6 **If present, what is the nature, and date, of the Roman activity on the site, how does it compare with that in the surrounding area?**

No evidence for Roman activity was found in the pile probing trenches on the site.

5.1.7 **Is there any evidence of Roman burials present on the site?**

No evidence for Roman burials was found in the pile probing trenches on the site.

5.1.8 **If evidence of burials are present can they clarify the differences, if any, between the nearby extra mural cemeteries and individual burials recorded close to the site?**

No evidence for Roman burials was found in the areas investigated on the site and as such this question cannot be answered.

5.1.9 **Does any evidence of marsh deposits survive on this site? And if present at what date, and by under which environmental conditions, did the marsh develop?**

No evidence of marsh deposits was recorded in the pile probing trenches on the site.

**5.1.10 How, and when, was the marsh reclaimed, by drainage and/or and dumping (land raising and consolidation)?**

No evidence for the marsh was found in the pile probing trenches on the site and as such this question cannot be answered.

**5.1.11 Is there any evidence for activities carried out in Moorfields following reclamation of the marsh?**

No evidence for activities carried out in Moorfields following the reclamation of the marsh was found in the pile probing trenches on the site.

**5.1.12 When was the site first developed?**

The earliest evidence for development recorded pertains to the late 20th century and associated with the modern building on the site.

**5.1.13 Is there any evidence of late medieval/post-medieval development surviving on the site? What are the latest deposits identified?**

No evidence for late/medieval/post-medieval development was found to have survived in the pile probing trenches. The latest deposits identified are of late 20th century date and pertain to the modern building on the site.

## **5.2 Answering new research aims**

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5.2.1 No further research aims have been raised.

## **5.3 Significance of the data**

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5.3.1 No archaeological remains were found in the areas monitored during the watching brief. The only significance lies with the information on the heights of the truncated natural deposits, the information for which can be added to the data for future reference in comparison with other sites in the area.

## 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 2015) and revision in the Health and Safety Risk Assessment and Method Statement (MOLA 2106) 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 5) 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: Land Securities for funding the watching brief; Serena Ranieri, MOLA Senior Archaeologist who carried out the work of monitoring and recording on the site, and contributed to this report.

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Fig 1 Site location

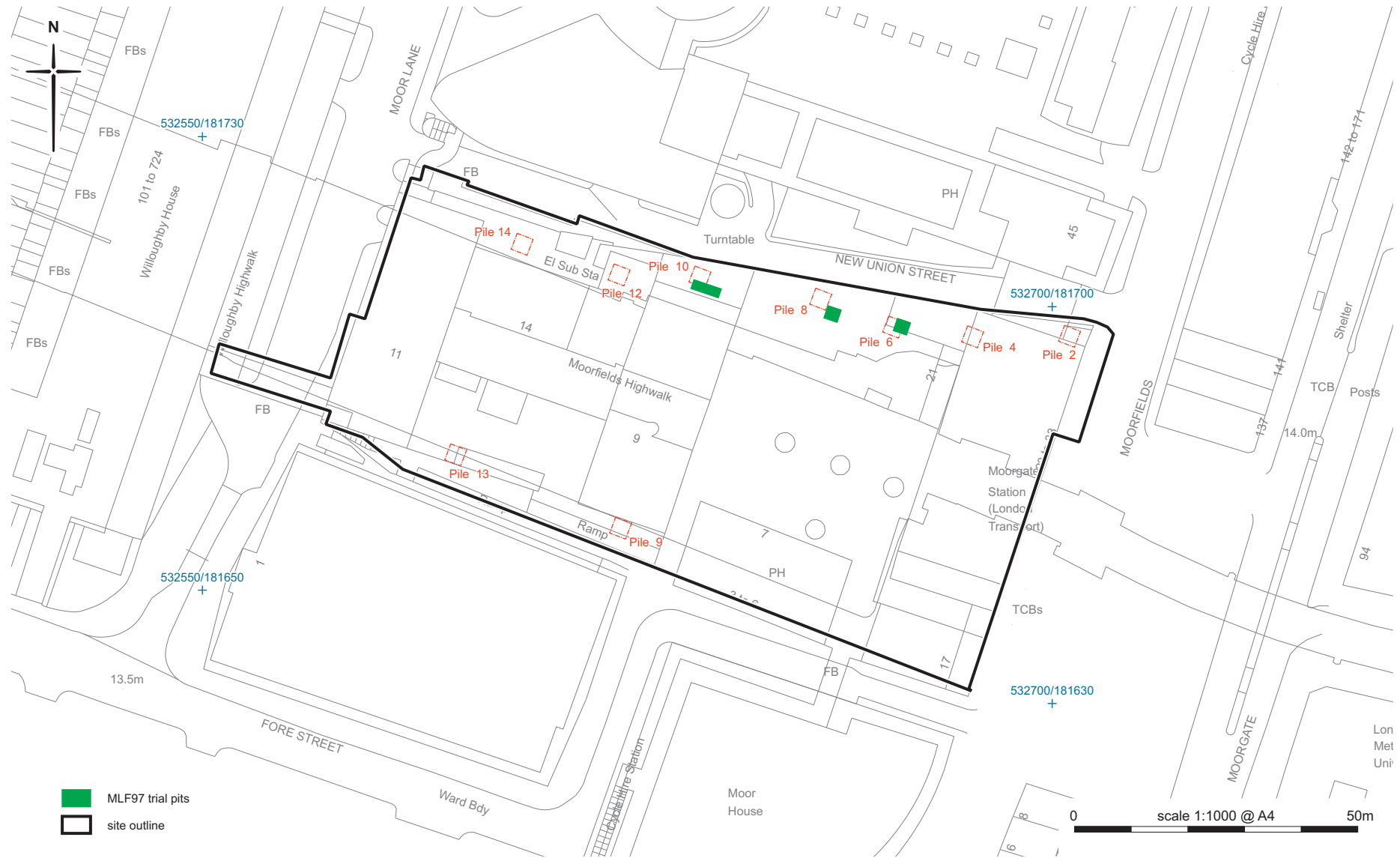
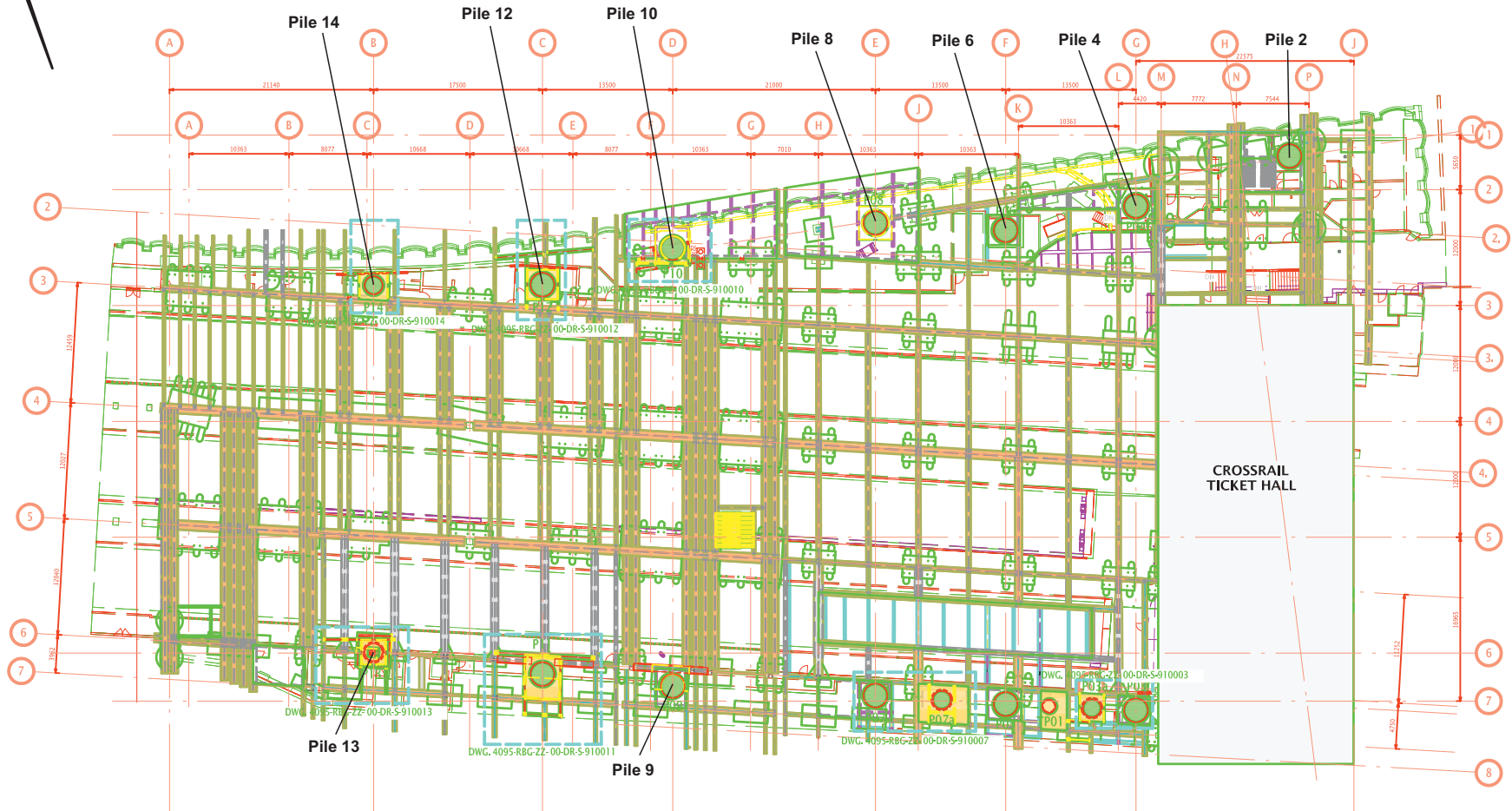


Fig 2 Pile and trial pit location plan





CITY1004WB18#03

Fig 3 Pile locations on client plan (4095-RBG-ZZ-00-DR-S-910000)

## 9 OASIS archaeological report form

### 9.1 OASIS ID: molas1-328659

#### Project details

Project name	21 Moorfields, London EC2
Short description of the project	A watching brief on several pile probing trenches in the basement. Heavily truncated natural gravel was recorded. No archaeological deposits were recorded.
Project dates	Start: 09-08-2016 End: 30-07-2018
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	MLF97 - Sitecode
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None

#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF LONDON CITY OF LONDON 21 Moorfields, London EC2
Postcode	EC2
Study area	4450 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 32 81 51.511988292457 -0.097570417814 51 30 43 N 000 05 51 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 6.45m Max: 7.89m

#### Project creators

Name of Organisation	MOLA
Project brief originator	MOLA
Project design originator	Nicholas Elsdon
Project director/manager	Nicholas Elsdon
Project supervisor	Serena Ranieri
Type of sponsor/funding body	Land Securities

Name of sponsor/funding body Land Securities

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Museum of London Archaeological Archive

Digital Archive ID MOO16

Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"

Paper Archive recipient Museum of London Archaeological Archive

Paper Archive ID MOO16

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media available "Report","Survey ","Unpublished Text"

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