

ETON COURT  
Meadow Lane  
Eton  
SL4

County of Berkshire

Archaeological watching-brief report

November 2007



**MUSEUM OF LONDON**

Archaeology Service

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## **Summary (non-technical)**

*This report has been commissioned by Quantic Associates in order to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out at Eton Court, Meadow Lane, Eton Berkshire, SL4 6BY.*

*Work on new lift pit was monitored on the 5th and 6th November. Archaeological deposits consisting of late 19th century dump deposits were recorded in section within the footprint of the lift pit. Natural ground was not observed. The highest survival of archaeological deposits occurred at 20.00m OD.*

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*Front cover: James Keiller & Sons Dundee Marmalade jar, identical to a jar recovered from the lift pit*

*Fig 1 Site location*

*Fig 2 Lift pit location*

*Fig 3 South facing section*

*Fig 4 West facing section*

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Site background

The watching brief took place at Eton Court, Meadow Lane, Eton Berkshire, hereafter called 'the site'. The site is located at Eton Court, bounded by a car park to the north, Meadow Lane to the west, shops fronting the car park to the east and Turks Head Court to the south (see Fig 1). The centre of the site is at OS National Grid Reference 49660 17741. The level of the ground floor car park slab is 21.91m OD. Modern ground level on Eton High Street to the east of the site is 21.40m OD. The site code is BR-ECM07.

A Method Statement for an archaeological watching brief was previously prepared by MoLAS (MoLAS, 2007). 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.

## 1.2 The planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Method Statement* which formed the project design for the watching brief (see Section 1.2, MoLAS, 2007)

## 1.3 Planning background

Archaeological monitoring on the site was required under the archaeological planning condition placed on the development (Ref: 07/00334).

## 1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Quantic Associates and produced by the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS). The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA, 2001).

The purpose of the watching brief was to determine whether archaeological remains or features were present on the site and, if so, to record the nature and extent of such remains. A number of more site-specific research aims and objectives were established in the preceding *Method Statement*, and are outlined in the following section.

The purpose of the present report is to analyse the results of the excavation against the original research aims, and to suggest what further work, including analysis or publication (if any), should now take place.

## 1.5 Aims and objectives

The following research aims and objectives were established in the *Method Statement* for the watching brief (Section 2.2):

- What was the level of natural topography?
- What are the earliest deposits identified?
- Is there any evidence for prehistoric remains?
- Are there any medieval deposits present on site, if so what is the character and nature?
- What is the character and nature of any post-medieval deposits, if present, on site?
- What are the latest deposits identified?
- What is the character and nature of the modern truncation on site?

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

## 2 Topographical and historical background

### 2.1.1 Site location, topography and geology

Eton is situated on the north bank of the Thames, opposite the town of Windsor, at c. 20.3m AOD over drift geology, Shepperton Gravel, of the Anglian, a lower flood plain formation. The site is identified as being of archaeological potential due to its location within the historic core of Eton. The total site area is approximately 0.9ha (O'Donoghue, 2007).

### 2.1.2 Prehistoric period (c 500,000BC – AD43)

There are no known sites or finds dating to the prehistoric period within the site. The topography and geology of the area, close to the major transport/communications route of the Thames Valley, would have been conducive to early settlement. This area shares the same topography and geology as that of South Field, March Field and Manor Farm to the west and north. These areas are associated with extensive crop-marks and prehistoric finds. Further to the west excavations at Eton Rowing Lake, Downey, revealed numerous prehistoric features and flint artifacts dating to the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age. Despite this, only isolated artefacts have been recovered from the river to the south of the site.

### 2.1.3 Roman period (AD43-410)

There is no evidence for any Roman activity in the vicinity of the site though it is possible that Clewer to the west was known to them as *Clivore*. There are no known Roman roads or major settlements in the area.

### 2.1.4 Medieval period (AD410-1485)

There is no reference to Eton in the Domesday Book and there is currently little documentary evidence available for the history of Eton before the 13th Century.

There was a major Saxon site, a royal residence, at Kingsbury (Old Windsor) to the west. Excavations in the 1950s established that the Kingsbury site had been occupied since about 700 AD. In the late Saxon period, the current castle mound was known as Clewer Hill and there may have been a hamlet known as Orton to the east of the hill. Windsor Castle is thought to have been founded during or just after the Conquest. It was certainly in existence by 1068, but did not become an important royal residence for some years. Early Norman kings preferred to continue to use the late Saxon palace at Old Windsor, outside which a substantial town had developed. New Windsor did not take over this role until 1110, when Henry I held his Easter Court there.

It is currently thought that Medieval Eton extended from Windsor Bridge to Baldwin's Bridge, with further development taking place along the High Street from 1440 with the establishment of Eton College (OAU 1997).



A 15th century building remains standing at 47-49 the High Street (O'Donaghue, 2007).

## 3 The watching brief

### 3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and recording during the watching brief was done in accordance with the *Method Statement* (MoLAS, 2007) and the MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual (MoLAS, 1994).

The ground floor tarmac and slab was broken out and cleared by contractors under MoLAS supervision. A single pit was excavated by machine by the contractors, and monitored by a member of staff from MoLAS.

The locations of the area of excavation were recorded by offsetting from adjacent standing walls and plotted on to a ground floor plan (Drg. No. D02.03, Quantic Associates). This information was then plotted onto the OS grid.

The heights of observations and/or archaeological remains were recorded relative to the ground floor height of 20.91m OD.

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

The site has produced: 1 trench location plan; 2 x 1:20 multi context plans, 3 context records; 4 x 1:10 section drawings. The finds from the site were not retained.

The analysis phase of post-excavation was based around the creation of a phased matrix of the contexts observed below modern disturbance.

The site finds and records can be found under the site code BR-ECM07 in the MoL archive.

### 3.2 Results of the watching brief

The excavation of a lift pit as an extension to the current access area was observed and recorded. There follows a brief description of the archaeological deposits as recorded.

<i>Watching Brief Lift Pit</i>	
Location	Adjacent to standing structure in the north-eastern area of the ground floor car park at Eton Court
Dimensions	2.4m by 2.9m by 1.6m in deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	21.91m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	21.45m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.15m
Level of base of deposits observed	Deposits extend beyond the limit of excavation
Natural observed	N/A

The base of the pit was at 1.6m below ground level (*c* 19.30 m OD). At this level a sticky dark greenish yellow sandy silt [3] was observed. The exact extent of this deposit is not known as it extends beyond the limit of excavation although it was found to be at least 0.25m thick in the central area of the pit. It contained occasional small flecks of chalk, charcoal and cbm (ceramic building material) and moderate fragments of animal bone and occasional small gravel pebbles.

This was sealed by a 0.45m thick layer of loose dark brown clayey sandy silt [2] which extended beyond the limit of excavation to the north, south and east. It contained frequent fragments of cbm, moderate fragments of late 19th century pottery, occasional fragments of animal bone, oyster shell, clay pipe stem, glass, ceramic flower pot, ash and clinker and one large piece of worked Kentish rag stone. The stone roughly was roughly cuboid and measured 0.7m x 0.4m x 0.3m and faced at one end.

The pottery included fragments of a white glazed candle stick and egg cup, fragments of blue and white transfer printed plates, transfer printed marmalade jars with the inscription 'James Keiller & Sons Dundee Marmalade. Grand Medal of Merit Vienna 1875 - Only Prize Medal for Marmalade London 1861' and transfer printed anchovy paste lids with the inscription 'Anchovy Paste. An Excellent Relish for Breakfast, Luncheon &c.'. This deposit was sealed by 0.25m thick dark brownish black loose sandy silt [1] with 20% cbm fragments and frequent mortar fragments.

The top of this deposit was recorded at *c* 20.00m OD. Above this was a brick masonry rubble foundation which appeared to be part of the same structure as a concrete station base in the northwestern corner. A further concrete foundation was located in the southeastern corner of the pit. The masonry foundation, concrete foundation and the station base were sealed by a loose dark grey brown sandy silt which contained frequent cbm fragments. This appeared to be a make-up layer for the

construction of the current structure and was in turn sealed by a gravel levelling layer for the current floor slab.

## 4 Potential of archaeology

### 4.1 Original research aims

- What was the level of natural topography?

Natural was not observed in the lift pit.

- What are the earliest deposits identified?

The earliest deposit was an undated layer of sticky dark greenish yellow sandy silt below 19th century dump deposits.

- Is there any evidence for prehistoric remains?

There is no evidence of prehistoric remains.

- Are there any medieval deposits present on site, if so what is the character and nature?

There are no remains dateable to the medieval period.

- What is the character and nature of any post-medieval deposits, if present, on site?

A 0.45m thick 19th century dump deposit was recorded at *c* 20.00m OD. This was a layer of loose dark brown clayey sandy silt which extended beyond the limit of excavation to the north, south and east. It contained frequent fragments of cbm, moderate fragments of late 19th century pottery, occasional fragments of animal bone, oyster shell, clay pipe stem, glass, ceramic flower pot, ash and clinker and one large piece of worked Kentish rag stone. Above this was another dark brownish black loose sandy silt dump deposit which was 0.25m thick and contained cbm and mortar fragments.

- What are the latest deposits identified?

Above the dump deposits were 20th century structural remains.

- What is the character and nature of the modern truncation on site?

The dump layer [2] was cut by 20th century concrete station base and was truncated by concrete and brick foundations of the current Eton Court.

### 4.2 New research aims

Due to the limited depth of watching brief and nature of the archaeological deposits no new research aims have been raised.

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

Whilst the 19th century dump deposits 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 researches 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, 2007) with the Reading Museum. Museum of London within 12 months of the end of the excavation.

In view of the limited potential of the material (Sections 4) and the relatively limited significance of the data (Section 4.3) it is suggested that a short note on the results of the watching brief should appear in the annual round up of the Berkshire Archaeological Journal.

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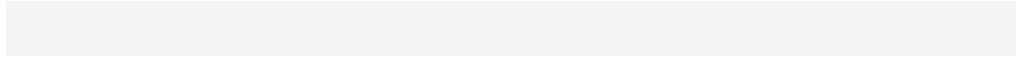
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Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan (Incorporating Alterations adopted in June 2003)



## 7 NMR OASIS archaeological report form



### Project details

Project name Eton Court

Short description of the project Work on new lift pit was monitored on the 5th and 6th November. Archaeological deposits consisting of late 19th century dump deposits were recorded in section within the footprint of the lift pit. Natural ground was not observed. The highest survival of archaeological deposits occurred at 20.00m OD.

Project dates Start: 05-11-2007 End: 06-11-2007

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes BR-ECM07 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices

Monument type DUMP DEPOSITS Post Medieval

Significant Finds TRANSFER PRINTED DOMESTIC POTTERY Post Medieval

Methods techniques & 'Test Pits'

Development type Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Position in the Not known / Not recorded  
planning process

### Project location

Country England  
Site location BERKSHIRE WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD ETON Eton Court  
Postcode SL4 6BY  
Study area 7.00 Square metres  
Site coordinates SU 9660 7741 51.4868897793 -0.608559292760 51 29 12 N 000  
36 30 W Point

### Project creators

Name of MoLAS  
Organisation  
Project originator brief Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory  
body  
Project originator design MoLAS  
Project director/manager Rosalind Aitken  
Project supervisor Heather Knight  
Type of Developer  
sponsor/funding body  
Name of Quantic Associates  
sponsor/funding body

### Project archives

Physical Archive No  
Exists?

Digital Archive No  
Exists?

Paper Archive Reading Museum  
recipient

Paper Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Paper Media 'Context sheet','Drawing','Map','Notebook - Excavation',  
available Research',' General Notes','Plan','Report','Section'

**Project  
bibliography 1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)  
Title Eton Court, Meadow Lane, Eton - A watching brief report  
Author(s)/Editor(s) Knight, H,  
Date 2007  
Issuer or publisher MoLAS  
Place of issue or MoLAS  
publication  
Description watching brief report

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Entered on 13 November 2007

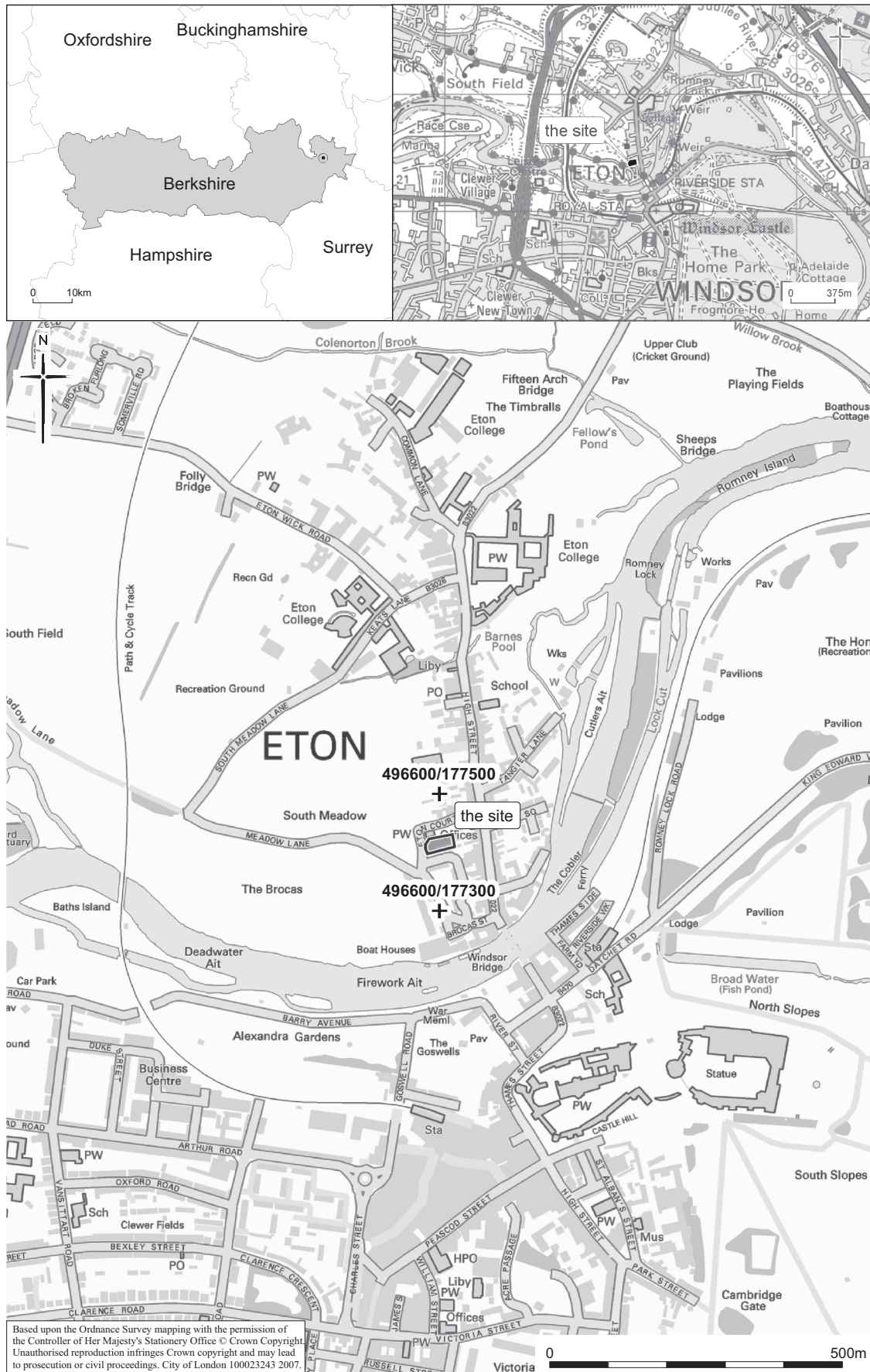


Fig 1 Location map

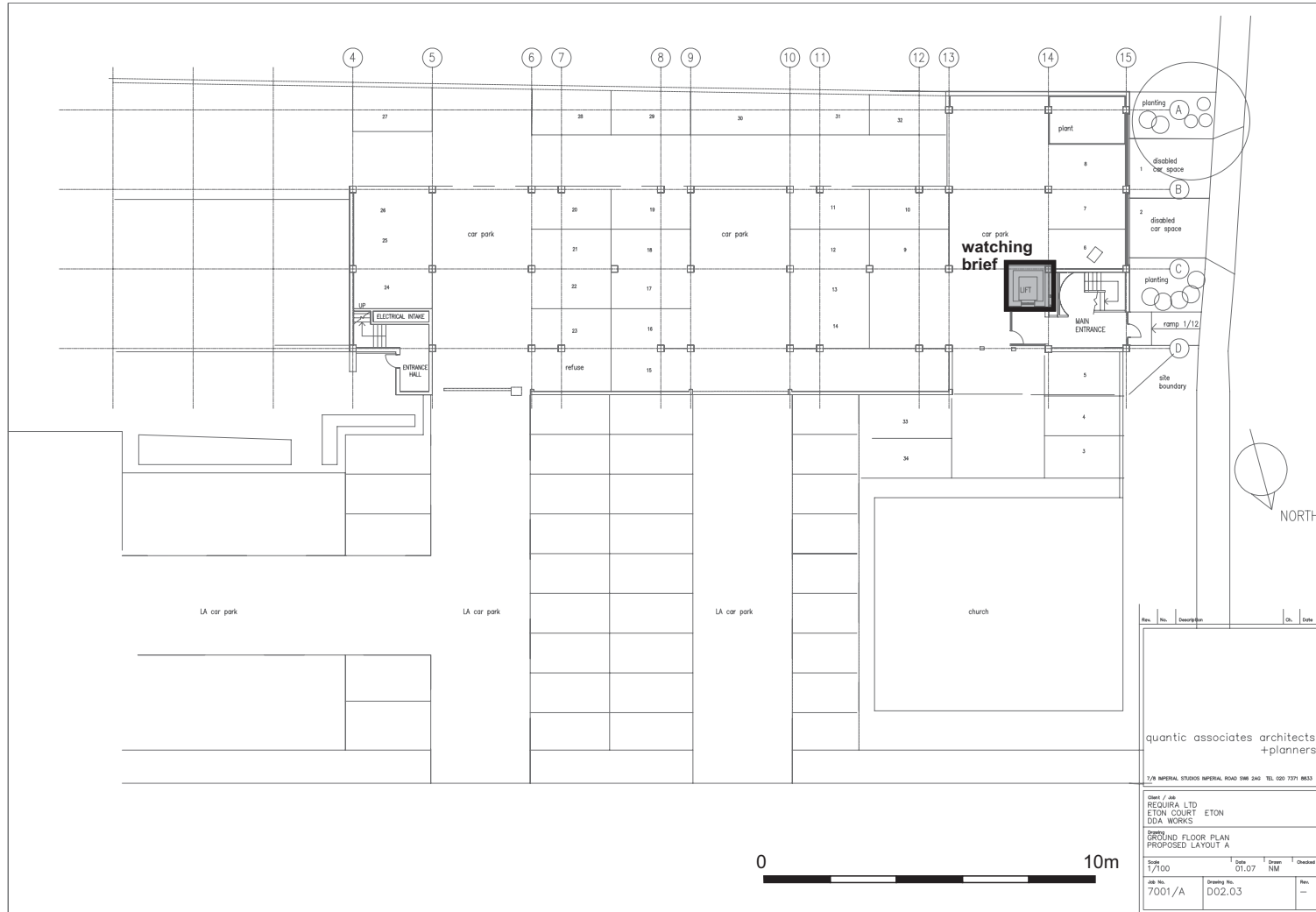


Fig 2 Lift pit location

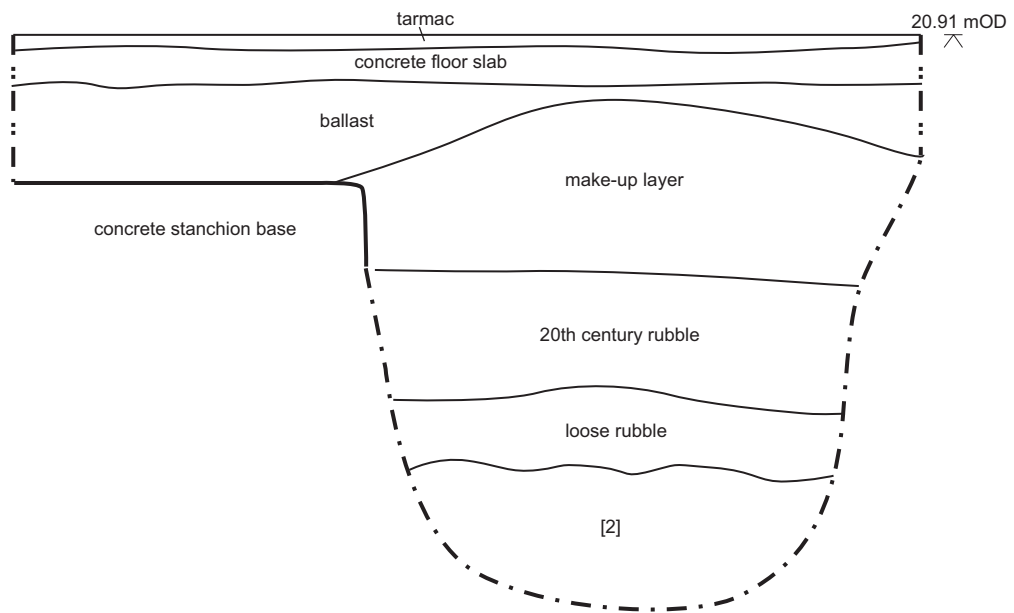


Fig 3 South facing section

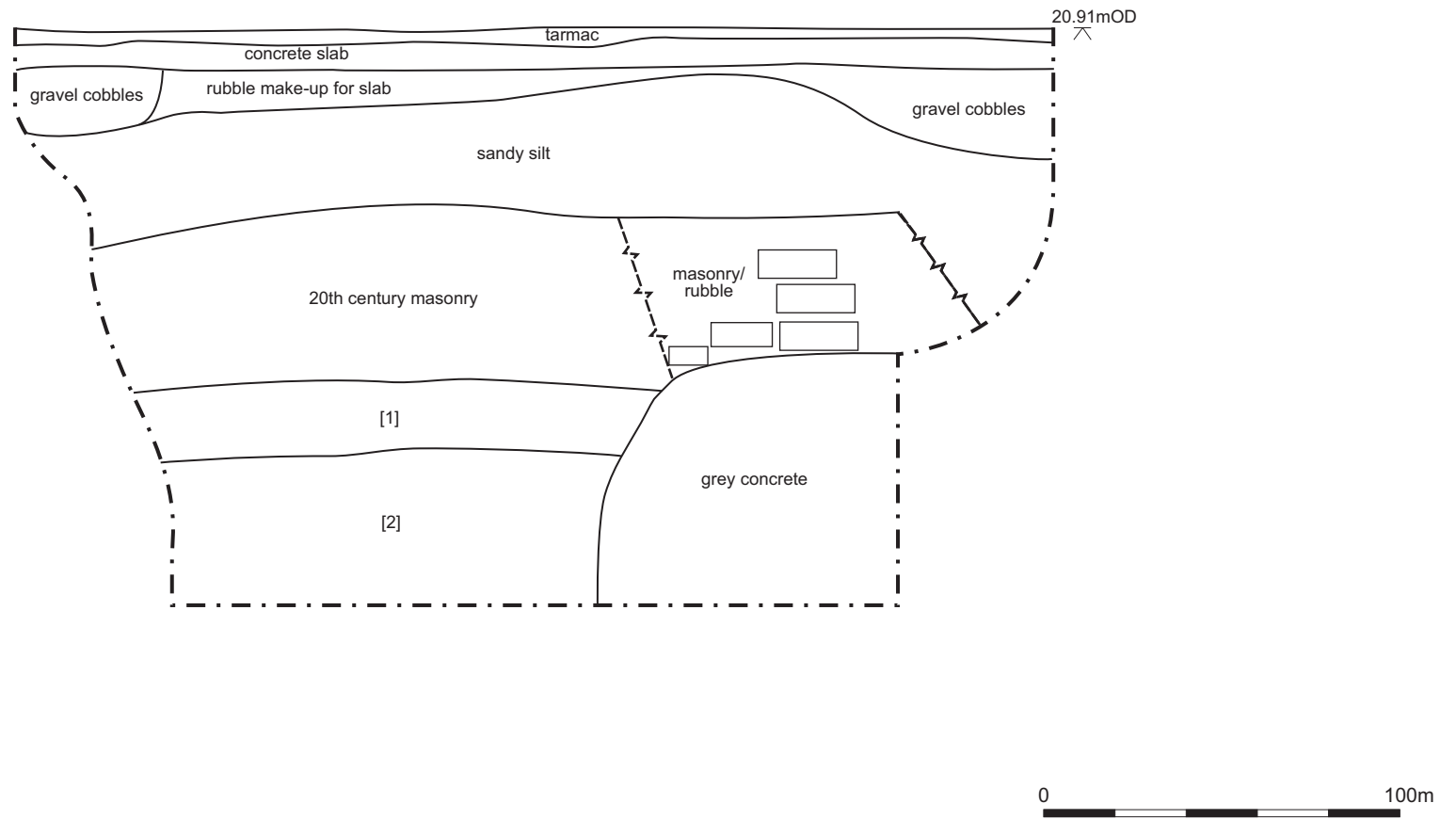


Fig 4 West facing section