

259 PLAISTOW ROAD London E15

London Borough of Newham

Report on archaeological evaluation

April 2020



259 Plaistow Road London E15

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Report on an archaeological evaluation

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Summary

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by MOLA at 259 Plaistow Road, London E15. The report was commissioned from MOLA by Located on behalf of the client, the Department of Education.

The investigation methodology was agreed with Historic England ahead of the works being undertaken and outside of the scope of any planning permission. These investigations are pursuant to the site clearance and remediation to prepare the site for a future development.

The archaeological evaluation took place between 9 and 20 March 2020. It was originally to comprise the excavation of ten evaluation trenches as per WSI (MOLA 2020). Only six of the originally planned ten evaluation trenches could be investigated due to presence of live services located in areas of the site where many trenches had been proposed. These cannot not be moved until permission has been granted for remediation works.

The excavated areas were in some cases re-distributed across the site in order to get an even representation of the archaeological survival.

Untruncated natural gravel was observed in all trenches but Trench 3 between 1.10m OD and 1.70m OD. This was clean, well sorted gravel in an orange sand matrix and presented no evidence of Prehistoric activity.

Directly above the gravel, natural brickearth was observed across the site between 1.5mOD and 2.15mOD, but had clearly been truncated by late 19th- 20th century activity associated with various phases of construction and subsequent clearance of the London, Tilbury and Southend (later Midland) Railway Buildings. Only in Trench 7 and 8, was untruncated natural brickearth and here it was overlain by a thin band of alluvial clay, likely to have been water-lain, possibly as a result of flooding.

Most the trenches, contained remains associated with the late 19th - early 20th century railway building foundations and tracks, along with remains of other additional buildings like the floor of a Toy Factory in Trench 1 (Photo 2). A large backfilled channel or ditch containing 19th or 20th century finds was recorded in Trench 7 is thought to have been associated with railway construction in order to drain land prone to flooding.

No archaeology pre-dating the 19th century was seen in any of the Trenches.

In the light of the results of this evaluation, due to the level of widespread truncation related to the construction of the 19th-20th century railway infrastructure, MOLA considers that it is highly unlikely that significant archaeological deposits or features survive on the site. The only archaeological remains anticipated are from the 19th and 20th century and of low significance.

While MOLA advise that any further archaeological work would be of limited value, the decision on the appropriate archaeological mitigation rests with the Local Planning Authority. It is therefore anticipated that another phase of archaeological evaluation will be required to investigate those areas that could not be assessed during this initial phase of evaluation due to presence of live services. In our professional opinion, these works could be secured via an appropriately worded condition on any permission issued for site remediation and would be undertaken in accordance with the previously agreed methodology.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was carried out by MOLA at 259 Plaistow Road, London E15 ('the site') within the London Borough of Newham.
- 1.1.2 The fieldwork was undertaken between 9 and 20 March 2020 (see *Fig 1*) in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation dated 08/01/2020 that was agreed with Historic England. This document is the Report on that work.
- 1.1.3 A written Archaeological Assessment was previously prepared, which covered the whole area of the site (MOLA 2017). This 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.

1.2 Project background

- 1.2.1 The legislative and planning framework in which the evaluation took place was set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (see Section 1.1, MOLA 2020).
- 1.2.2 An archaeological evaluation was carried out to support a stand-alone application for site clearance and remediation works.
- 1.2.3 These works are to take place outside of any extant planning permission to assist the programme of delivering a new secondary school on the site. The clearance works would take place in advance of planning permission being granted for the school and associated development by the London Borough of Newham.

1.3 Scope of the evaluation

- 1.3.1 Evaluation is defined by Historic England as intended to provide information about the archaeological resource in order to contribute to the:
 - 1.3.2 - formulation of an appropriate response or mitigation strategy to planning applications or other proposals which may adversely affect such archaeological remains, or enhance them; and/or
 - 1.3.3 - formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigations within a programme of research
- 1.3.4 An archaeological evaluation is a limited fieldwork exercise designed to test the conclusions of preliminary desk-based work. It is not the same as full excavation.
- 1.3.5 The evaluation was carried out within the terms of the relevant Standard for evaluation specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIFA, 2014).
- 1.3.6 All work has been undertaken within the research priorities established in the Museum of London's A research framework for London Archaeology, 2002
- 1.3.7 All work was undertaken within research aims and objectives established in the Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation (Section 2)

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Topography

- 2.1.1 Topography can provide an indication of suitability for settlement, and ground levels can indicate whether the ground has been built up or truncated, which can have implications for archaeological survival (see section 5.2).
- 2.1.4 The area around the site is flat, with a slight slope from north-east down to south-west, reflecting the natural slope down into the Lea valley. The site is on a low terrace that is generally higher than the main or deepest part of the valley floor and would have been dry and free from flooding from the prehistoric period onwards.
- 2.1.5 Ordnance Survey mapping shows the natural slope reflected in the levels along Corporation Street parallel to the north-western part of the site. These fall from 3.3m Ordnance Datum (OD) at its junction with Plaistow Road, 10m north of the site, to 2.7m OD at the junction with Holbrook Road, 20m to the west of the site. Plaistow Road along the north-eastern border of the site rises towards the south-east, but this simply reflects an artificial embankment to cross over the railway.
- 2.1.6 A topographical survey of the site (MLNL_378_Topo_Exst_MLedit_160627) shows ground level at 3.2m OD, with ground level in the south-western corner of the site generally at 1.5m OD. The centre of the site ground level is recorded at between 2.4–2.7m OD. This suggests that there has been some lowering

2.2 Archaeology

- 2.2.1 A detailed description of the geology, archaeology and history of the site was provided in the earlier Archaeological desk-based assessment (MOLA 2017). A brief resume is provided here.
- 2.2.2 The extensive geoarchaeological modelling by MOLA of the sub-surface topography of the Lea floodplain (MOLA 2011) indicates that the site was located on a low-lying terrace on the valley side that would have been a dry land surface off the floodplain throughout the Prehistoric period. Areas of dry ground with ready access to the predictable resources of the wetland marsh (fish, game, reeds, clay) would have been a first choice for early settlement. Despite this, no evidence for prehistoric activity has been found despite several investigations in the study area. A Neolithic hand axe was found by chance 600m west of the site. Undated prehistoric flint artefacts were found by chance 700m south of the site. The significance of these finds is uncertain but indicates a prehistoric presence in the area.
- 2.2.3 The site is located 6.5km north-east of the Roman city of Londinium (London). The London to Colchester Roman road, Ermine Street, runs south-west/north-east from Liverpool Street, crossing the River Lea at Old Ford, and linking the settlements at Old Ford and Stratford on either side of the valley. The exact line of the Roman road where it crosses the Lea valley is uncertain and has yet to be confirmed archaeologically. A GLHER conjectured projection places it 2.4km north-west of the site, on a south-west to north-east alignment. It is presumed to continue, approximately along the line of Romford Road. The line of this road has been traced in several places, 1.4km north of the site.
- 2.2.4 The River Lea is also likely to have been an important route in the Roman period. It was probably used to supply the London area both with agricultural produce and, in the late period, with pottery from Much Hadham, via the River Short. Archaeological investigations have established that Roman settlement existed on both sides of the Lea Valley, at Old Ford and in the areas of Stratford and Leyton.
- 2.2.5 As with the prehistoric period, the gravel terraces would have provided dry and

fertile land suitable for settlement throughout this period, whilst areas of marsh would probably have been exploited for varied and predictable resources. Despite this, there is only one recorded chance find of a Roman coin within the study area, 685m to the south-east of the site.

- 2.2.6 The site lies within the ancient Saxon manor of 'Hamme', first mentioned in AD 958 when King Edgar granted land to an Ealdorman Athelstan of East Anglia. Currently references to Ham do not distinguish between West and East Ham (Barber et al 2004, 12). The name Ham refers to an area of low-lying pasture and more than half of the land, in the south and west, lay in marshland below the level of ordinary spring tides (VCH Essex vi 43–50). The Claylands in the north of the parish, north of Romford Road, 1.4km to the north of the site, lay within an extensive forest. The manor of Sudbury was formed during the 12th century. Its location is not known but its name, 'southern manor house', described its position in West Ham, in the area of Plaistow. This was later incorporated manor of Bretts, formed around the 13th century. The medieval settlement of Plaistow, along the High Street, is first mentioned in 1414, and probably grew up near by or around the manor house at the eastern end of the High Street, 500m south-east of the site (VCH Essex vi 68–74).
- 2.2.7 The present 'centre' of Plaistow later developed later further south of the medieval centre. The exact extent of this roadside village is uncertain. Based on the earliest maps consulted, dating to the mid-18th century (see below), it is likely that the site was outside the built up area and probably within the adjacent open fields. It lay at the side of the main road leading from Plaistow to West Ham village.
- 2.2.8 Throughout this period it is likely that the site was located within open fields under arable cultivation. Other than the remains of the abbey, no other finds of this period have been recorded within the study area despite several investigations.
- 2.2.9 Rocque's map of 1746 is the earliest map consulted. It is small scale but shows general topography, road and built up areas. The map shows the area of the site as being open fields, with Plaistow settlement lining a section of what was then all called Church Street.
- 2.2.10 The site was first developed in the latter half of the 19th century for a railway works. In 1854, the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway (LTSR) was opened as a joint enterprise between the London and Blackwall Railway and the Eastern Counties Railway (later the Great Eastern Railway). The line was completed between Forest Gate and Southend in sections between 1854 and 1856. In 1879 the Plaistow Works was set up on the site to supply the LTSR with locomotives and rolling stock (National Railway Museum 2006, 2). Initially some 4-4-2 tank locomotives were supplied by Sharp, Stewart & Co Ltd, gradually supplanting those supplied by the GER. The workshops were built by Kirk & Parry of Sleaford and were fully operational by 1881. The locomotive works did not build its own locomotives, which were purchased from outside contractors, but did carry out extensive repair and rebuilding work (ibid).
- 2.2.11 The site, by the time of the Ordnance Survey 3rd edition 25" map of 1916–19 the site was still occupied by railway buildings, now belonging to Midland Railway Works and the number of buildings within the site has increased as it is now full with large depot buildings and rail tracks. The surrounding area has also changed slightly, with the area to the west no longer open farmland but dense rows of terraces, so that the site is now surrounded by streets of terraced houses. Plaistow Road also now has a tramway along it.
- 2.2.12 The site does not undergo any changes until the Ordnance Survey 1:1250 scale map of 1949–50, which shows some of the original railway sheds have been cleared, leaving just two of the larger ones in the north-west part of the site. Trackways have been removed too, leaving only three lines leaving each of the remaining depot sheds. The sheds are marked as 'Betal Works (toys)' and 'Lion Works (pressed hinges)'. The bottom right building of the site is marked as a ruin, as it was presumably damaged during World War II.

- 2.2.13 Most recently, the site has been used as a Trust Ford car sales room and service centre, with associated garage buildings and offices, all of which are ground floor and one storey only.

3 Evaluation methodology

3.1 Field methodology

- 3.1.1 The archaeological evaluation had originally been planned to comprise the excavation of ten trenches as per WSI (MOLA 2020). However, it was only possible to carry out six trenches due to presence of live services located in areas of the site where many trenches were proposed. These services cannot be moved until permission has been granted to facilitate the site clearance.
- 3.1.2 The six excavated trenches were resized and relocated in order to get an even representation of the archaeological survival across the site.
- 3.1.3 The tarmac and underlying slab was broken out and cleared by a 13 machine under MOLA supervision. Trenches were excavated by a 13t machine under the direction of a MOLA supervisor.
- 3.1.4 Archaeological excavation was carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2020)
- 3.1.5 Trench locations were individually surveyed on site by MOLA surveyors.
- 3.1.6 Where referenced in this report (e.g. '13.45m OD'), levels relate to OS Ordnance Datum and were taken from GPS survey points set out by MOLA surveyors.

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 2020).

3.3 Site archive

Number of trench record sheets	6
Number of overall location plans	1
Number of Context (SU) sheets	4
Number of photographs	20
Number of Plan sheets	0
Number of Sections	1

4 Results of the evaluation

For trench locations see Fig 2 and Fig 3.

4.1 Trench 1

Location	North of the site
Dimensions	13m by 5.5m by 1m (sondage 1.7m) deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	2.8mOD
Base of modern fill/slab/turf	2.5mOD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	1.3m (19th-20th century remains)
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	2mOD
Top of surviving natural observed at	Brick earth 1.8mOD (1m BGL) Gravel 1.1m OD (1.7m BGL)
Level of base of trench	1.8m OD sondage 1.10m OD

- 4.1.1 Trench 1 was orientated north-east to south-west in the north of the site.
- 4.1.2 Natural gravel was observed at 1.10m OD at the base of a sondage excavated at the centre of trench. This was overlain by truncated brickearth recorded at 1.80m OD across the whole trench. No cut features or material culture were observed and/or retrieved.
- 4.1.3 Above this, were the remains of the 19th and 20th century railway industrial buildings and rails (Photo 1). A yellow stock brick wall was seen at the north-eastern end of the trench running across the width. Rails, sitting on brick and concrete foundations, were seen running the length of the trench at either section edge (running north-east to south-west). The brickearth in the centre of the trench was truncated by a large inspection pit lined with yellow stock bricks. The top of the rails were seen at 2.22m OD (0.57m below ground level). These were likely to be the original rails of the late 19th century rail buildings.
- 4.1.4 Above this was a layer of rubble measuring 0.25m thick. Above this was a further brick floor surface. This is likely the floor surface of the later toy factory which was on the site in the 20th century (Photo 2; HEA 2017 fig 7).
- 4.1.5 Immediately above this, was a concrete slab overlain by the car park tarmac surface recorded at 2.8mOD.
- 4.1.6 No archaeology pre-dating the 19th century was seen in the Trench.



Photo 1 19th century rails cutting through natural brickearth in Trench 1, facing south-west



Photo 2 20th century remains of the Toy factory floor within Trench 1, facing south-west

4.2 Trench 2

Location	Centre of site
Dimensions	14m x 4m x 1m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	2.62m to 2.72m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	2.2mOD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	None
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	2.2mOD
Top of surviving natural observed at	Brickearth 1.72mOD (1m BGL)
Level of base of trench	1.72mOD

- 4.2.1 Trench 2 was located at the centre of site and was orientated north-west to south-east.
- 4.2.2 Natural gravel was not reached due presence of railway brick-lined foundations and services. However, truncated brickearth was observed at 1.72m OD (1m below ground level) consistently across the whole trench.
- 4.2.3 Cutting through this, were the remains of the 19th and 20th century railway industrial buildings and rails (Photo 3). Furthermore, at either end of the trench large yellow stock brick walls running north-east to south-west were encountered. At the southern end, a brick floor was recorded associated with the wall. In the centre of the trench were two sets of rails, each supported by concrete and brick foundations. The rails were 1.54m to edges of the rails, 1.42m apart, a standard British 4'8 1/2" gauge. The rails were steel and 0.06m thick.
- 4.2.4 The rails and buildings were partially sealed by demolition rubble lying immediately below the concrete slab and tarmac surface, which together was 0.40m thick.
- 4.2.5 No archaeology pre-dating the 19th century was seen within the Trench.

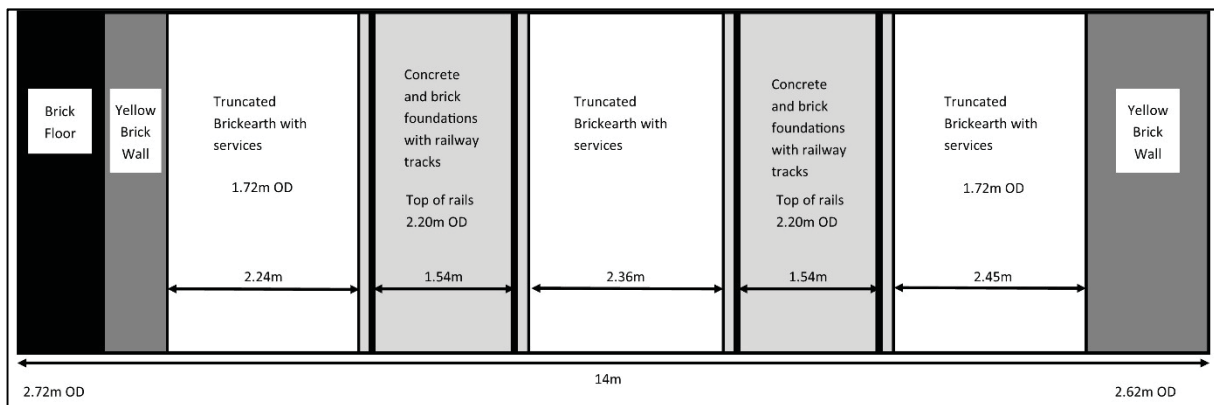


Photo 3 Schematic Plan of Trench 2

4.3 Trench 3

Location	South-west of the site
Dimensions	6m by 4m by 1.50m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	2.15mOD
Base of modern fill/slab	0.65mOD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	None
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	0.65mOD
Top of surviving natural observed at	Truncated gravel 1.45m OD (0.70m BGL)
Level of base of trench	0.65mOD

- 4.3.1 Trench 3 was located at the south-west of the site.
- 4.3.2 Natural gravel was observed at 1.45m OD (0.70m below ground level). This had been truncated not just horizontally, but also in the centre by a modern cut feature filled with debris, concrete rubble and steel sheets possibly associated with the dismantling of 19th-20th century railway structures. These sealed a concrete slab observed at the base of the modern truncation at 0.65m OD (1.5m below ground level) (Photo 4).
- 4.3.3 Above this, was 0.65m of black modern debris laying just below tarmac. This was recorded at 2.15mOD.
- 4.3.4 No archaeological features or material culture was observed within the Trench.



Photo 4 Trench 3, facing north.

4.4 Trench 6

Location	South-west of site
Dimensions	17.7m by 4m by 1.35m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	2.5mOD
Base of modern fill/slab	2.3mOD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	None
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	1.2mOD
Top of surviving natural observed at	Brick earth 1.8m OD (0.7m BGL) Gravel 1.15m OD (1.35m BGL)
Level of base of trench	1.8mOD sondages 1.15m OD

- 4.4.1 Trench 6 was orientated north-west to south-east in the north-west of the site.
- 4.4.2 The centre of trench 6 could not be excavated due to the presence of asbestos. This was immediately covered and reburied, with a 5m buffer placed around it.
- 4.4.3 Natural gravel was seen at 1.15m OD at the base of two sondages, each measuring 2.2m by 4m at either end of the trench (Photo 5 and Photo 6). In the sondage at the north-west end of the trench, the gravel was cut across by a large cast iron service pipe (Photo 6).
- 4.4.4 Gravel was overlain by truncated orange brickearth observed at 1.8m OD (1m BGL) across the trench.
- 4.4.5 Cutting through this, were the remains of the 19th and 20th century railway industrial buildings and rails. A yellow stock brick wall was seen at the north-west end of the trench running across the width. A further yellow stock brick wall ran the entire length of the northern section (Photo 5). Extending c 0.10m south from the brick wall were the remains of cut rails.
- 4.4.6 The buildings were overlain by demolition rubble, immediately below the concrete slab and tarmac surface, which together was 0.20m thick.
- 4.4.7 No archaeology pre-dating the 19th century was seen within the Trench.



Photo 5 Sondage at south-east end of TR6, facing north-east



Photo 6 Sondage at north-west end of TR6, facing south-east

4.5 Trench 7

Location	North-east of site
Dimensions	17m by 4m by 1.9m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	2.8mOD
Base of modern fill/slab	2.30mOD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	0.60m
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	1.5mOD
Top of surviving natural observed at	Brickearth 1.7m OD (1.1m BGL) Gravel 1.1m OD (1.7m BGL)
Level of base of trench	1.1mOD

- 4.5.1 Trench 7 was orientated north-east to south-west in the north-west of the site.
- 4.5.2 Natural gravel was seen at 1.1m OD at the base of two sondages measuring 2.2m by 4m and dug at either end of the trench. Gravel was overlain by clean orange brickearth at 1.5m OD (1.3m below ground level) (Photo 7).
- 4.5.3 Above this was a 0.30m thick layer of grey alluvial clay (context [004]). No material culture was recovered, and the makeup of the clay was consistent with flood deposits the author had seen on other sites in East London.
- 4.5.4 A north-south running linear channel was cut into the alluvial deposit at the north-east end of the trench (Photo 8). The channel (context [003]) was filled with dark brown sticky clay (context [002]). The base of the feature truncated to the level of natural gravel and was heavily iron panned, and irregular in form. This indicates the feature was open with water in for some time before it was backfilled. The fill was a mixture of water lain clay with a great deal of 19th and 20th century material culture such as pottery, glass, leather, iron work and coconut shells (Photo 9). It is suspected this channel was cut prior to the construction of the railway buildings and may have been to drain the area.
- 4.5.5 Above this was a series of demolition rubble deposits up to 0.60m thick, and these were immediately below the concrete slab and tarmac surface, which together was 0.20m thick.
- 4.5.6 No archaeology pre-dating the 19th century was seen in the Trench.



Photo 7 Trench 7, facing north-east



Photo 8 Ditch [003] in Trench 7, facing north



Photo 9 Collection of finds from ditch [003] in Trench 7

4.6 Trench 8

Location	North—east of the site
Dimensions	23.7m by 3.4m by 0.90m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	2.90mOD
Base of modern fill/slab	2.50mOD
Depth of archaeological stratigraphy above natural (if any)	0.20m
Level of base of lowest features or deposits observed	2.15mOD (0.75m BGL)
Top of surviving natural observed at	Brick earth 2.15mOD (0.75m BGL) Gravel 1.7m OD (1.2m BGL)
Level of base of trench	2.00mOD

- 4.6.1 Trench 8 was orientated north-west to south-east in the north-west of the site.
- 4.6.2 Natural gravel was seen at 1.70m OD at the base of a sondage dug at the centre of the trench. This was overlain by natural brickearth recorded at 2.15m OD (0.75m below ground level) (Photo 10).
- 4.6.3 Above this was a 0.20m thick layer of grey alluvial clay (context [001]). No material culture was recovered, and the makeup of the clay was consistent with flood deposits the author had seen on other sites in East London.
- 4.6.4 At the south-east end of the trench were a series of railway timber sleepers (Photo 11).
- 4.6.5 Above this was a series of demolition rubble deposits up to 0.40m thick, and these were immediately below the concrete slab and tarmac surface, which together was 0.20m thick.
- 4.6.6 No archaeology pre-dating the 19th century was seen within the Trench.



Photo 10 Sondage in the centre of TR8, looking north-east



Photo 11 Rail sleeper timbers at south-east end of TR8

4.7 The finds

- 4.7.1 At time of writing the report the finds had been scanned but detailed examination has not been possible due to the Covid-19 emergency.

4.8 The site as a whole

- 4.8.1 The evaluation has revealed that the archaeological sequence observed within the areas of investigation dates mainly to the 19th-20th century. This comprises remains of 19th-20th century railway wall foundations and railway tracks, although their preservation seems to decrease to the south-west of the site where none have been observed.
- 4.8.2 The only other archaeological feature observed was a linear channel (Trench 7), also dated to the 19th century, possibly associated with the drainage of the land prior to the construction of the railway. A layer of alluvial clay seen on top of the natural brickearth (Trenches 7 and 8) supports the idea that the area was prone to flooding, but the absence of any finds makes it hard to determine its date.
- 4.8.3 Untruncated natural gravel was observed in all trenches but Trench 3 between 1.10m OD and 1.70m OD. This was clean, well sorted gravel in an orange sand matrix and presented no evidence of Prehistoric activity.
- 4.8.4 Directly above the gravel, natural brickearth was recorded across the site between 1.5m OD and 2.15m OD, but typically at about 1.7-1.8m OD and had clearly been truncated by late 19th- 20th century activity, principally associated the London, Tilbury and Southend (later Midland) Railway Works. Only in Trench 7 and 8, natural brickearth was untruncated lying below undated silty clay truncated at 1.8m OD in Trench 7 but surviving to 2.35m OD in the central part of Trench 8.
- 4.8.5 While current ground level shows a gradual slope from the north-east at 2.8m OD to the south-west of the site at 2.15m OD, the evaluation has shown that the majority of the site has been levelled off at about 1.7-1.8m OD, presumably to create a level surface for the railway tracks. The absence of any surviving brickearth in Trench 3 shows the relatively high degree of truncation in the south western part of the site. Only in the central part of Trench 8, in the eastern part of the site, did naturally deposited layers survive at a higher level of 2.35m OD indicating the extent of 19th century truncation across the rest of the site.

5 Archaeological potential

5.1 Answering original research aims

5.1.1 Original research aims were set out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* and have been answered by the evaluation.

- *What is the nature and level of natural topography in the trench areas?*
Gravel was seen in Trench 8 at 1.70m OD in the north, in Trenches 1, 6 and 7 in the centre at 1.10m OD, and in Trench 3 in the south at 1.45m OD.

Untruncated brickearth, below a naturally deposited silty clay, was seen in Trench 7 at 1.5m OD and Trench 8 at 2.15m OD.
- *What are the earliest deposits identified?*
A potential flood deposit was identified at the north-east of the site (Trench 7 and 8), which pre-dates the later post-medieval activity. While no dating evidence was recovered, it is thought this probably dates from the medieval or earlier post-medieval periods.
- *Is there any evidence of Prehistoric activity?*
No evidence was found
- *Is there any evidence of post-medieval activity?*
One linear cut feature was recorded in Trench 7 which has been interpreted as a drainage channel, possibly excavated as part of the enabling works for the railway construction.
- *Are there any remains associated with the 19th century railway infrastructure?*
Yes, the foundations of 19th century yellow stock walls associated with the railway were seen in all trenches. Direct evidence of railway tracks was recorded in Trenches 1, 6 and 8. Truncation of the natural deposits at about 1.7-1.8m OD indicates a general level formation level associated with the construction of the railway works.
- *What is the extent of modern disturbance?*
Modern disturbance is seen across the entire site to a level of c 0.60m BGL associated with the demolition of the 19th and 20th century warehouses. In the southern and western side of the site, truncation levels completely removed the entire natural brickearth horizon into the gravel levels. Only in the north-east of the site was un-truncated natural brickearth recorded below a layer of silty clay, itself truncated in Trench 7. .

5.2 General discussion of potential

- 5.2.1 The evaluation has shown that the potential for survival of ground surfaces (horizontal archaeological stratification above natural ground) is low as naturally deposited layers were seen to have been truncated to a level of 1.7-1.8m OD, and lower in places. The untruncated surface of naturally deposited layers was only recording towards the eastern part of the central part of Trench 8.
- 5.2.2 Remains of the 19th-20th century railway yard and associated buildings were seen to survive across much of the site, although these remains were of little

archaeological interest.

- 5.2.3 There was some potential for archaeology remains predating the railway structures, in the north-east of the site where truncated flood deposits up to 0.30m thick were observed within Trench 7 and 8, although no finds were recovered.
- In light of these results, the potential for any pre-19th century archaeological remains appears low as no evidence was observed in any of the trenches excavated.

5.3 Significance

- 5.3.1 Whilst the archaeological remains may be considered of some local interest there is nothing to suggest that they are of any particular significance and certainly not of regional or national importance.

5.4 Assessment of the evaluation

- 5.4.1 In the case of this site the number and distribution of the trenches was limited due to live service, the proximity of the TfL station and standing buildings.
- 5.4.2 In the trenches which were excavated, sufficient depth was reached to characterise the natural gravels and surviving brickearth, indicating limited archaeological potential.
- 5.4.3 From the trenches which were excavated we have a clear picture of the extensive horizontal truncation levels across the majority of the site.
- 5.4.4 In the north-eastern part of the site, there is some potential for archaeological remains to survive if present.
- 5.4.5 In the areas accessible for evaluation, we can be confident of the results of the evaluation, in that it is unlikely that significant archaeological remains survive.

6 Proposed development impact and conclusions

- 6.1.1 Taking into account the results of the trenches carried out during this evaluation, it appears that archaeological deposits, where they do survive, are all likely to be limited to the 19th-20th century.
- 6.1.2 The evaluation has revealed that the archaeological sequence observed within the areas of investigation dates to the 19th-20th century. This comprises remains of railway tracks and associated buildings' foundations, although their preservation seems to decrease to the south-west of the site where none were observed.
- 6.1.3 The only archaeological cut feature observed was a linear channel, also dated to the 19th century and thought to be associated with land drainage prior to the construction of the railway. A silty clay flood deposit above brickearth (Trenches 7 and 8) supports the idea that the area was prone to flooding, but the absence of any finds makes it hard to determine its date.
- 6.1.4 While current ground level shows a gradual slope from the north-east at 2.8m OD to the south-west of the site at 2.15m OD, the evaluation has shown that the majority of the site has been levelled off at about 1.7-1.8m OD, presumably to create a level surface for the railway tracks. The absence of any surviving brickearth in Trench 3 shows the relatively high degree of truncation in the south western part of the site. Only in the central part of Trench 8, in the eastern part of the site, did naturally deposited layers survive at a higher level of 2.35m OD indicating the extent of 19th century truncation across the rest of the site.
- 6.1.5 The future redevelopment of the site requires a cleared site. In advance of a scheme coming forward, there is the need to demolish the standing buildings and undertake ground clearance and remediation across the whole site. This will remove any archaeological remains to natural gravels.
- 6.1.6 However, in the light of the results of this evaluation, due to the level of historic truncation recorded across the site, MOLA consider that it is unlikely that archaeological deposits or structures of any significance will survive within the site. If archaeology is encountered, it is likely to date to the 19th century and would be of negligible significance.
- 6.1.7 The decision on the appropriate archaeological mitigation to the deposits revealed rests with the Local Planning Authority. While the results in this report suggest that any further archaeological works would be of limited value, it is anticipated that Historic England will request another phase of archaeological evaluation to investigate areas that could not be accessed during this phase of evaluation.
- 6.1.8 Should Historic England or the Local Planning Authority require these works to take place, it is our professional opinion that these can be undertaken via the already agreed WSI and secured via condition.

7 Acknowledgements

- 7.1.1 The author would like to thank Vinci for providing access to the site and security, Will Attlee from Located for his constant support during the evaluation and MOLA Geomatics and Graphics for their assistance with this report.

8 Bibliography

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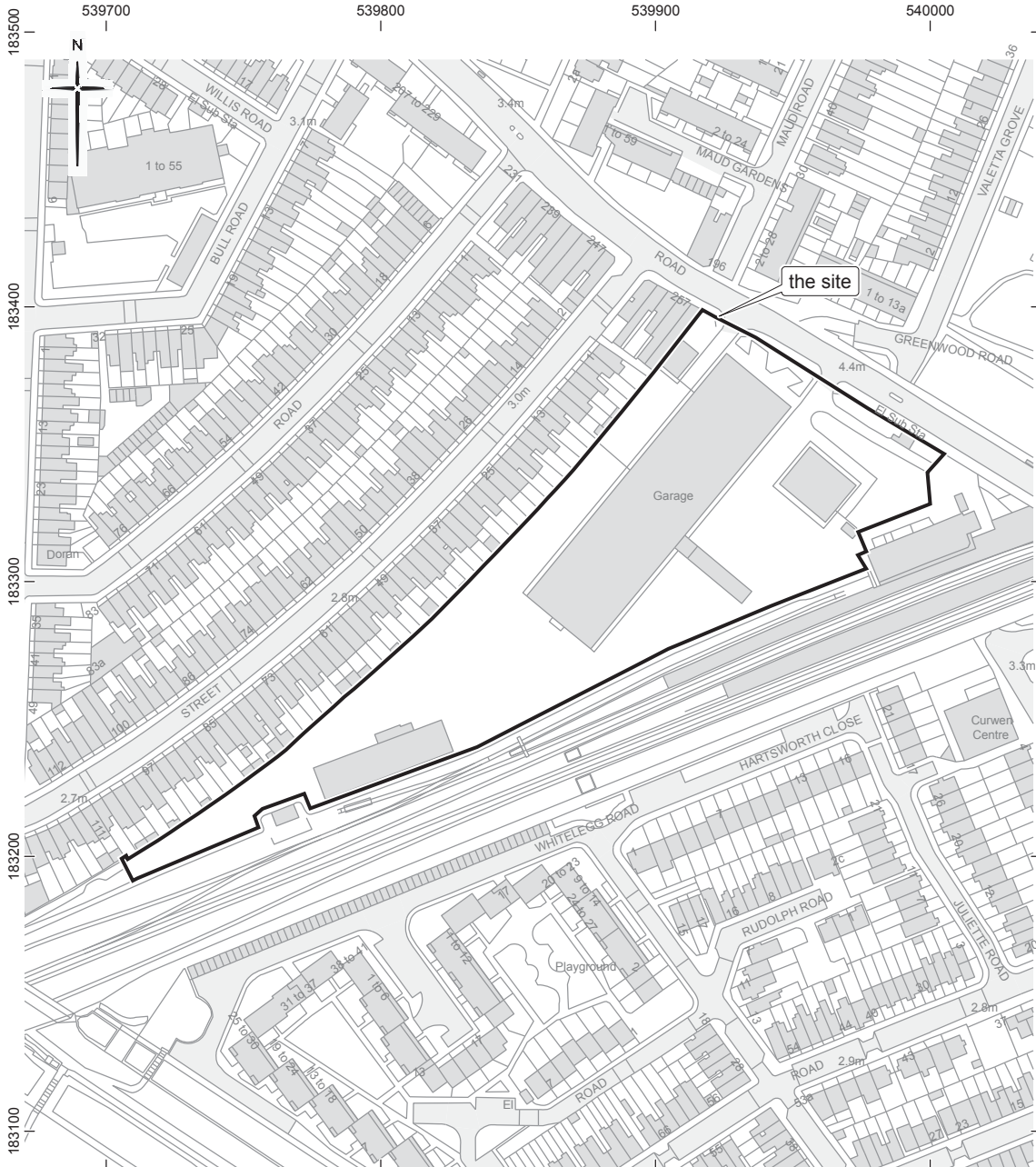
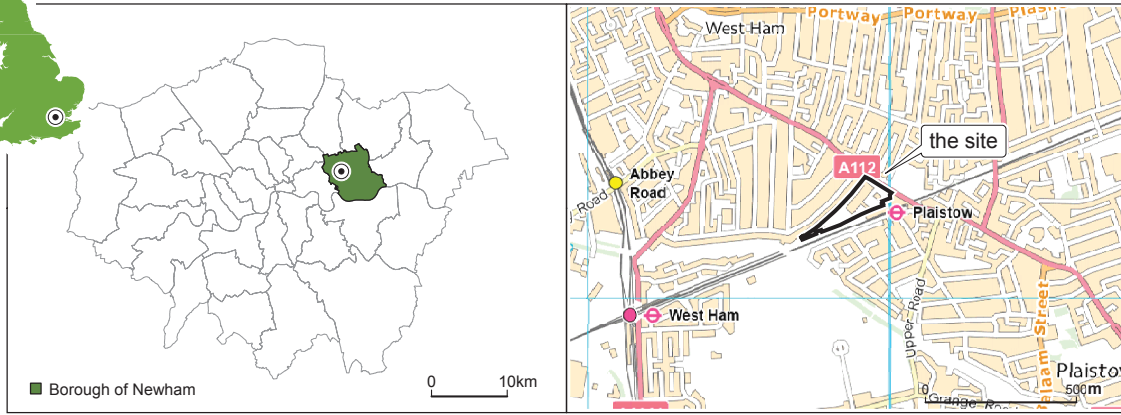
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Fig 1 Site location

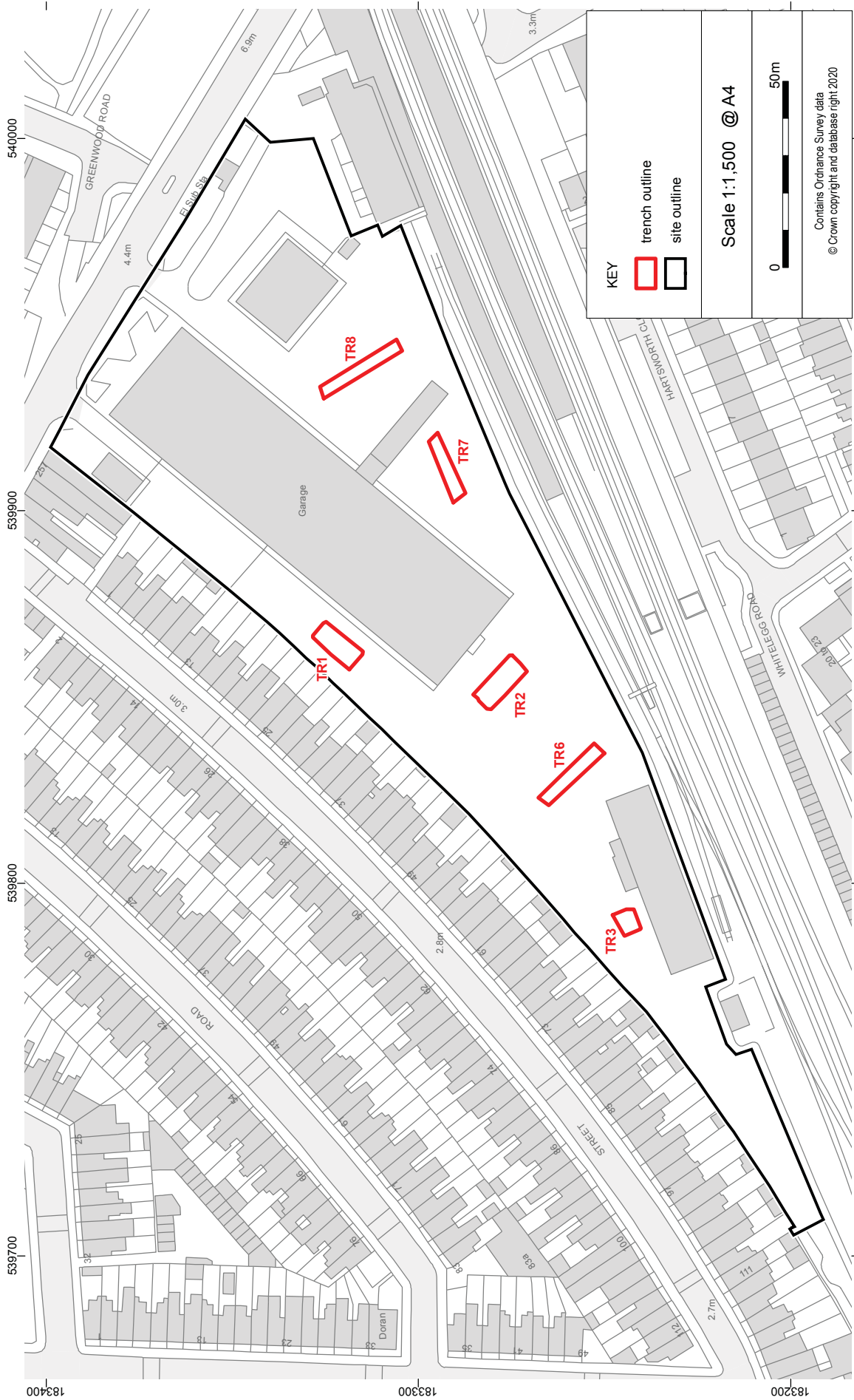


Fig 2 Trench location

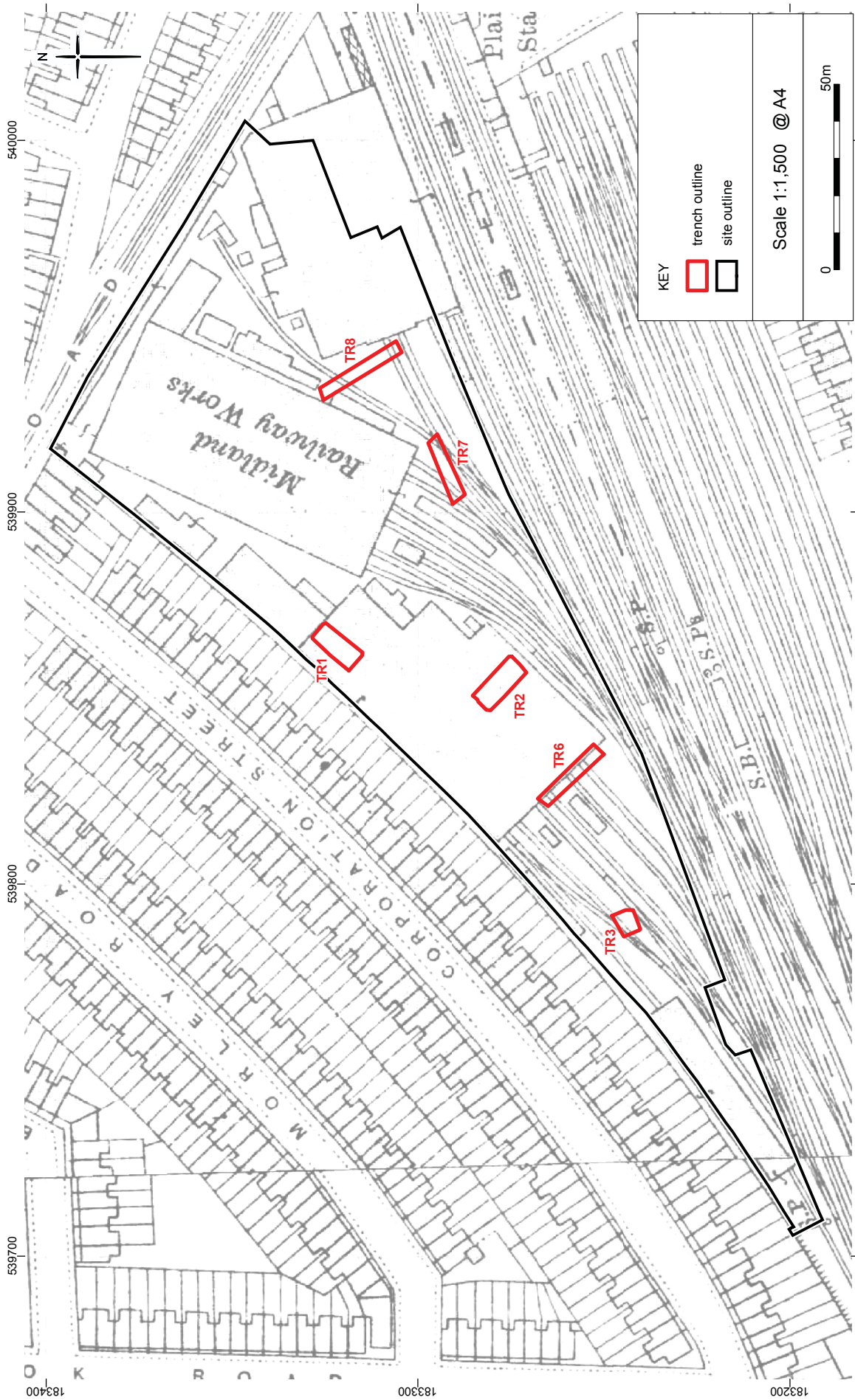


Fig 3 Trenches overlaid onto 1916 OS map

9 OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID: molas1-391106

Project details

Project name	259 Plaistow Road
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation carried out by MOLA at 259 Plaistow Road. The report was commissioned from MOLA by Gleeds on behalf of the client. In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2020). Ten evaluation trenches were proposed in the original WSI, and six were excavated on site between the 9th and 20th March.
Project dates	Start: 09-03-2020 End: 20-03-2020
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	PTW20 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	Between deposition of an application and determination

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON NEWHAM NEWHAM 259 Plaistow Road
Postcode	E3
Study area	45000 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 539899 183318 50.943258166905 0.192188397872 50 56 35 N 000 11 31 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 0.9m Max: 2.9m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	MOLA
Project brief originator	GLAAS
Project design originator	GLAAS
Project director/manager	Serena Ranieri

Project supervisor	Jessica Bryan
Type of sponsor/funding body	Commercial developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Gleed

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Archive ID	PTW20
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	PTW20
Digital Media available	"Database", "GIS", "Images raster / digital photography", "Spreadsheets", "Survey", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	PTW20
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Drawing", "Map", "Photograph", "Report", "Survey "

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Report on an archaeological evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Bryan, J
Date	2020
Issuer or publisher	MOLA
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	Report on an archaeological evaluation

Entered by	jessica bryan (jbryan@mola.org.uk)
Entered on	3 April 2020