



5–6 St JAMES'S SQUARE  
London  
SW1

City of Westminster

Archaeological Evaluation

March 2008



MUSEUM OF LONDON

Archaeology Service

5–6 ST JAMES'S SQUARE  
London  
SW1

City of Westminster

Archaeological Evaluation

National Grid Reference: 529525 180460

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## Summary (non-technical)

*This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by the Museum of London Archaeology Service on the site of 5–6 St James's Square, London, SW1. The report was commissioned from MoLAS by Cushman and Wakefield.*

*Following the recommendations of English Heritage Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service three archaeological evaluation pits were excavated on the site (TPs A, B and C) and seven geotechnical trial pits were monitored (TPs 1, 2 and 3 concerning general site investigations, TPs 7, 8, 9 and 10 investigated the boundary between No. 6 and No. 5 St James's Square).*

*The results of the field evaluation have helped to refine the initial assessment of the archaeological potential of the site. In the Desk Based Assessment (MoLAS 2007) Hackney Gravels were predicted to lie under the north half of the site. The interface between them and the lower – later – Taplow Terrace was potentially an area where soft sediments and Lower Palaeolithic implements could have survived. Trial pits, however, have demonstrated that the northern part of the site was terraced into underlying marine clay (London Clay). The gravels that survive to the south and west are at a lower level than this marine clay and, consequently, thought to have been derived from the Taplow Terrace where that cut through the earlier river terrace. The soft sediments that were found within the natural gravel sequence are thought to indicate subsequent reworking by water emerging from springs associated with the nearby marine clay (where the thickness of water-bearing gravels has been reduced). There was no evidence of Ice Age land surfaces or Palaeolithic remains.*

*The remains of a lower cellar, or sub-basement, were found near to and beneath the party wall with 7 St James's Square. It was built of brown bricks with terracotta floor tiles set on yorkstone slabs. The depth below St James's Square (3.4m) is considered deep for the 16th-century house that formerly occupied the site. The bricks are considered to be a later engineering-type brick rather than the red, or purple-red bricks common in the 17th- or 18th-century. They are similar to Ketley engineering bricks still in production. So too are the floor tiles which are similar to hand-made floor tiles made to this day. Taking the evidence as a whole, the lower cellar, or sub-basement, is considered to have been a late 19th- or early 20th-century modification of that earlier building and to be of low archaeological, or architectural significance.*

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Site background

The evaluation took place at 5–6 St James’s Square and 10–11 Babmaes Street, London SW10, hereafter called ‘the site’. The site is located on the north side of St James’s Square, and is bounded to the east by Babmaes Street and to the north by buildings associated with Apple Tree Yard (Fig 1). The centre of the site lies at Ordnance Survey National Grid reference is 529525 180460. Modern pavement level near to the site lies at *c* 15.20m OD and 12m OD to the St James’s Square frontage. The site code is JMS08.

An archaeological *desk-based assessment* was previously prepared, which covers the whole area of the site (MoLAS 2007). 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.

## 1.2 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 evaluation (see Section 1.2, MoLAS 2008).

## 1.3 Planning background

Full planning permission was granted on 14th December 2007 (07/01534/FULL) subject to a condition requiring a programme of archaeological work including an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (*Method Statement*, MoLAS 2008) and a written report on the findings delivered to the planning authority, to English Heritage and to the Greater London Sites and Monuments Record (condition 24).

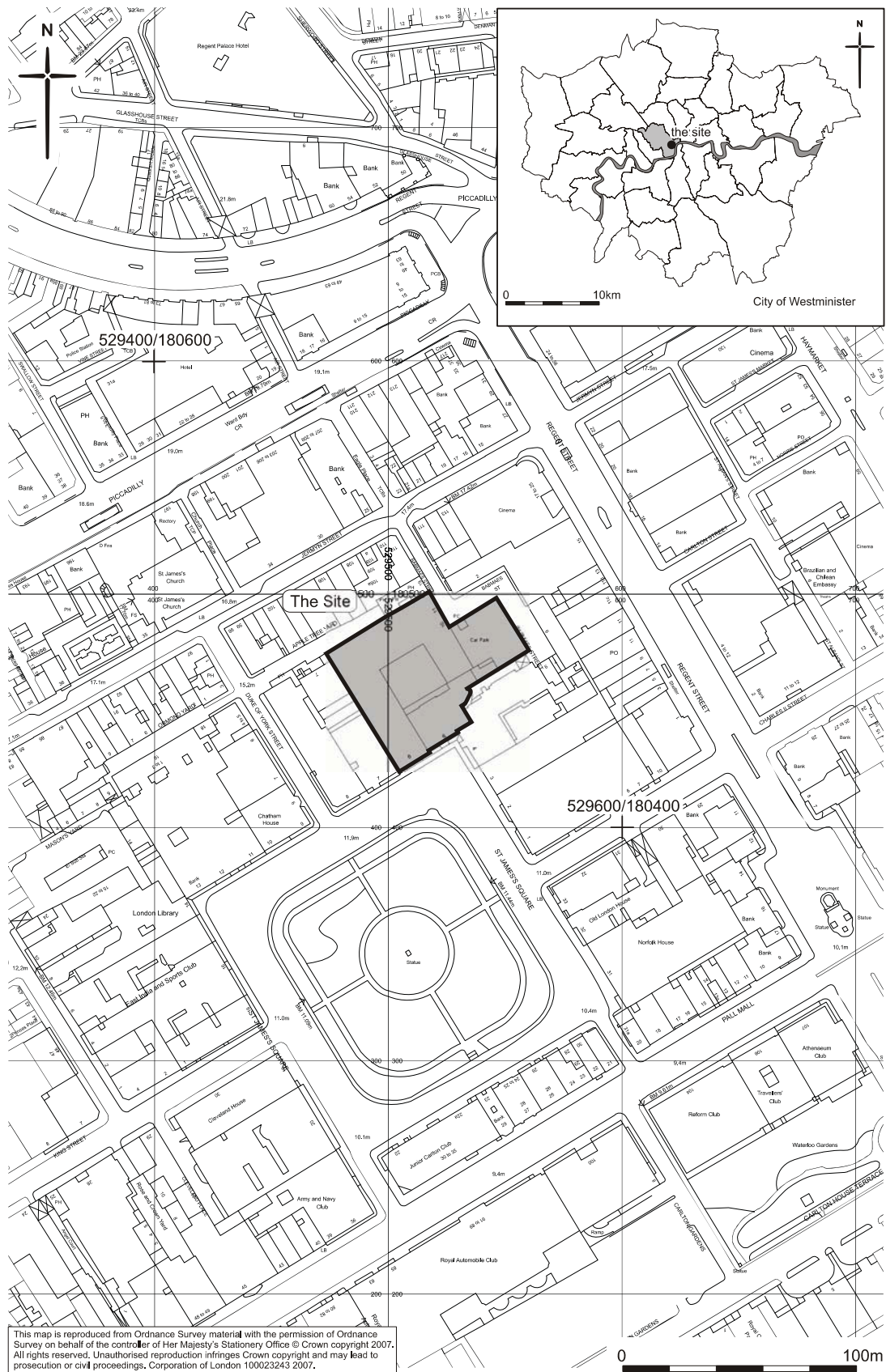


Fig 1 Site location

#### 1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Cushman and Wakefield 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).

Field evaluation, and the *Evaluation report* which comments on the results of that exercise, are defined in the most recent English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage, 1998) as intended to provide information about the archaeological resource in order to contribute to the:

- formulation of a strategy for the preservation or management of those remains; and/or
- 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
- formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigations within a programme of research

#### 1.5 Aims and objectives

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 evaluation (Section 2.3):

What is the nature and level of natural topography?

What are the earliest deposits identified?

Is there any evidence associated with any earlier structures located on the site, in particular of the 17th century buildings known to have existed within this part of St James's Square.

What are the latest deposits identified?



## 2 Topographical and historical background

For a detailed background see the *desk-based assessment* (MoLAS 2007).

### 2.1 Prehistoric

Re-deposited Palaeolithic (*c* 700,000–10,000 BC) flints and hand axes have been found in the Westminster area but no finds have been found within a 350m radius of the site. The desk-based geotechnical assessment indicated that the site may straddle the boundary between the Taplow gravel terrace and the older Hackney Gravels (approximately 300,000BC). Should they have survived subsequent truncation, the fine-grained sediments between terraces were predicted to have a high potential for Lower Palaeolithic remains (MoLAS 2007, 8, par 4.1.4). These would typically be large *Acheulian* hand axes and cleavers: pointed *ficrons*, *cordate* and *ovate* axes made by the archaic humans *Homo Heidelbergensis* (the European form of *H. Ergaster*, not presently thought to have been an ancestor of anatomically modern humans but the progenitor of Neanderthals).

By the end of the last Ice Age anatomically modern humans had supplanted Britain's Neanderthal population and had a developed upper Palaeolithic culture, including portable art. There is no evidence of this period in the vicinity of the site. neither is there of *in situ* Mesolithic finds (*c* 10,000–4,000 BC) but later prehistoric finds have been found in the vicinity of the site. These finds include a flint assemblage found 230m to the north of the site, a Bronze Age (*c* 2,000–600 BC) axe found 100m to the south-east, and two later prehistoric axes, one found 170m to the north, the other found 20m north of the site close to the eastern end of Apple Tree Yard.

### 2.2 Roman

The site is situated some distance from the Roman city of Londinium and from known Roman roads. A Roman cremation jar and a bowl have been found 180m to the north of the site. The site has a low potential for Roman remains.

### 2.3 Medieval

The site is situated some distance from the Saxon settlement of Lundenwic and no Saxon finds have been recovered from within the immediate vicinity. The site has a low potential for early medieval remains. Historic maps indicate that the site was in open pasture land during the later medieval period. There is a low potential for medieval remains.

### 2.4 Post-medieval–modern

Map evidence shows that buildings were first constructed on the site in the late 17th century. Two town houses and their rear gardens occupy the site by 1682 and later

maps show more extensive construction across the site. There is a high potential that cut features, such as wells and foundations, relating to these buildings will be present.

The 17th-century house at No. 6 St James's Square stood on the site until 1958. The house was commissioned by the Earl of St. Albans, who instructed Abraham Storey, mason and builder, to erect 'a Great building' on the site of No. 6 St James's Square. The house was completed by 1676.

A mid 18th-century view of St James's Square by Sutton Nicholls shows a terraced town mansion with a *piano nobile* following the Italianate style at No. 5 St James's Square, while No. 6 is a four-storey building part of a terrace of identical houses. Wentworth House, located at No. 5 St James's Square is a Grade II\* Listed Building (ref. 82/13), which was built in 1748–49.

To the rear of these buildings, covering the central part of the site, are a series of open courtyards. Terraced houses occupy the northern and eastern parts of the site fronting onto Apple Tree Yard, with the easternmost part of the site lying over Babmaes Mews.

By the 19th century extensive construction work had been undertaken with several buildings occupying the site. The central courtyard has shrunk in size as has the space taken up by Babmaes Mews.

A large building replaced the town house at No. 6 St James's Square, built in 1958–60. This new office block extends northward and eastward, respecting the existing central courtyard at the back of No. 5, into the former Babmaes Mews. A car park occupies the westernmost part of the site along Babmaes Street.

## 3 The evaluation

### 3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and monitoring during the evaluation was carried out in accordance with the preceding *Method Statement* (MoLAS 2008), and the MoLAS *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS 1994).

Three evaluation trial pits were excavated along an arc across the north side of the site (TPs A, B and C). In addition seven geotechnical trial pits were monitored. Three concerned general site investigations (TP1 centrally located in the underground car park, TP2 against the north face of No 5 St James's Square and TP3 adjacent to No. 7 St James's Square). Four trial pits specifically investigated the "interface" of No. 6 St James's Square with No. 5 James's Square at depth (TPs 7, 8, 9 and 10)

The slab/ground was broken out and cleared by contractors under MoLAS supervision. Trenches were excavated by hand and machine by the contractors, and monitored by a member of staff from MoLAS.

The locations of evaluation trenches were recorded by MoLAS offsetting from adjacent standing walls observable on the trial pit instruction drawing (No SK-OUW-012) and best-fitted onto the OS grid by matching features on the drawing with the same features on the OS 1:1250 map.

A written and drawn record of all archaeological deposits encountered was made in accordance with the principles set out in the MoLAS site recording manual (MoLAS, 1994). Levels were calculated by measuring from basement slabs or lightwell pavements which had recorded Ordnance Datum levels.

The site has produced: 1 trench location plan and 10 trench record sheets with 1:50 and 1:20 scaled plans and sections as appropriate.

The site finds and records can be found under the site code JMS08 in the MoL archive.



Fig 2 Location of observations

### 3.2 Results of the evaluation

<i>Trial pit A</i>	
Location	Former archive north west
Dimensions	3m by 1m by 0.7m depth (width constrained by archive racking)
Modern ground level/top of slab	10.2m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	Slab 300mm thick, and modern fill with timber 100mm–400mm
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	None
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	9.5m OD
Natural observed	Yellow-brown Terrace Gravel



*Fig 3 Trial Pit A, looking northeast*

*The timber baulk at the centre of the pit, and other timber seen in section, are from temporary works around the time of the construction of the present building*



<i>Trial pit B</i>	
Location	Outside of the boiler room, adjacent to central car park ramp
Dimensions	3.0m by 1.5m by 1.2m depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	10.2m OD
Base of modern slab	9.9m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	none
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	9.0 m OD
Natural observed	London Clay 9.9m OD



*Fig 4 Trial Pit B, looking southwest.*

*The surface of the London Clay is weathered brown, below 9.7m OD it is stiff-hard blue-grey marine clay.*

<i>Trial pit C</i>	
Location	Lower car park
Dimensions	4.5m by 2.0m by <0.8m depth
Modern ground top of slab	8.8m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	8.5m OD (Below which there was 100mm of hogging)
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	none
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	8.0m OD
Natural observed	London Clay 8.4m OD



*Fig 5 Trial Pit C looking Southwest, during excavation.  
A toothed bucket was required to excavate into London Clay (to ensure it was not redeposited). It oxidised in contact with the air due to the action of surface water*

<i>Trial pit 1</i>	
Location	Central car park
Dimensions	3m by 3m by 1.4m depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	10.2m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	9.9mm OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	None
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	8.8m OD
Natural observed	9.65m OD Banded sand and gravel dipping to south



*Fig 6 Trial Pit 1, looking south*

*Beneath the slab was 250–550mm of clay with modern yellow stock bricks, followed by inclined banded sand and gravels comprising:*


- A) Hard golden-yellow brown, ferruginous laminar sand, over*
- B) Firm grey (iron depleted) sandy, gravely clay with iron pan at base, over*
- C) Firm light grey (iron depleted) sandy gravel, and*
- D) Firm brown clayey sandy gravel*



<i>Trial pit 2</i>	
Location	Lightwell north side of 5 St James's Sq
Dimensions	500mm by x300mm by 1.0m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	9.7m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	9.5m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	none
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	8.7m OD
Natural observed	Grey-brown sandy gravely clay 9.2m OD



*Fig 7 Trial pit 2, looking west*

<i>Trial pit 3</i>	
Location	West side of 6 St James's Sq
Dimensions	1.7m by 1m (with a further 1m dug beneath the slab to the party wall foundation) by 1.9m depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	10.2m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	9.9m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	None
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	8.3m OD
Natural observed	Gravel 8.5m OD
NOTE: Remains of an earlier cellar lay beneath the present floor, made of hard brown engineering-type bricks with a floor of 45mm-thick terracotta tiles over yorkstone slabs at 8.6m OD. The building material is not easily dated (similar handmade terracotta floor tiles are still made today of Wadhurst, Sussex, clay) but it is later than the 17th-century, probably late 19th- or early 20th-century in date. The cellar floor is 3.4m below St James's Square, thought to be too deep for a 17th- or 18th-c cellar.	
	
<p><i>Fig 8 Trial pit 3 party wall foundations with 7 St James's Square</i>  <i>The party wall foundations with cellar wall recessed and a brick stanchion projecting and incorporating the terracotta tile and yorkstone floor</i></p>	

<i>Trial pit 7</i>	
Location	Telephone exchange room 6 St James's Sq, adjacent party wall with No. 5
Dimensions	3.2m by 1m by 1.4m depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	9.7m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	9.5m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	None
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	8.3m OD
Natural observed	Hard yellow-brown laminar sand 8.65m OD



*Fig 9 Trial pit 7 looking southwest (left) and northwest (overview right)  
The natural sand is overlain with clay and concrete from 1950s construction*



<i>Trial pit 8</i>	
Location	Corridor joining 6 St James's Sq with No 5, on the No. 6 side pf threshold
Dimensions	0.85m by 0.8m by 1.5m depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	9.7m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	9.5m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	None
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	8.2m OD
Natural observed	None



*Fig 10 Trial pit 8 looking northwest  
Loose modern fill to the base of the trial pit 8.2m OD*

<i>Trial pit 9</i>	
Location	West side of lightwell north side of 5 St James's Sq
Dimensions	500mm by x300mm by 1.0m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	9.7m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	9.5m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	none
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	8.7m OD
Natural observed	Grey-brown sandy gravely clay 9.2m OD



*Fig 11 Trial pit 9, looking east*

<i>Trial pit 10</i>	
Location	East side of lightwell north side of 5 St James's Sq
Dimensions	3.8m by 1.0m by 1.7m depth (1.0m x 600mm excavated to full depth)
Modern ground level/top of slab	9.7m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	9.5m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	none
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	8.0m OD
Natural observed	200mm of yellow sand from 8.7m OD. Clean, light brown–grey sandy clay 8.5–8.0m OD



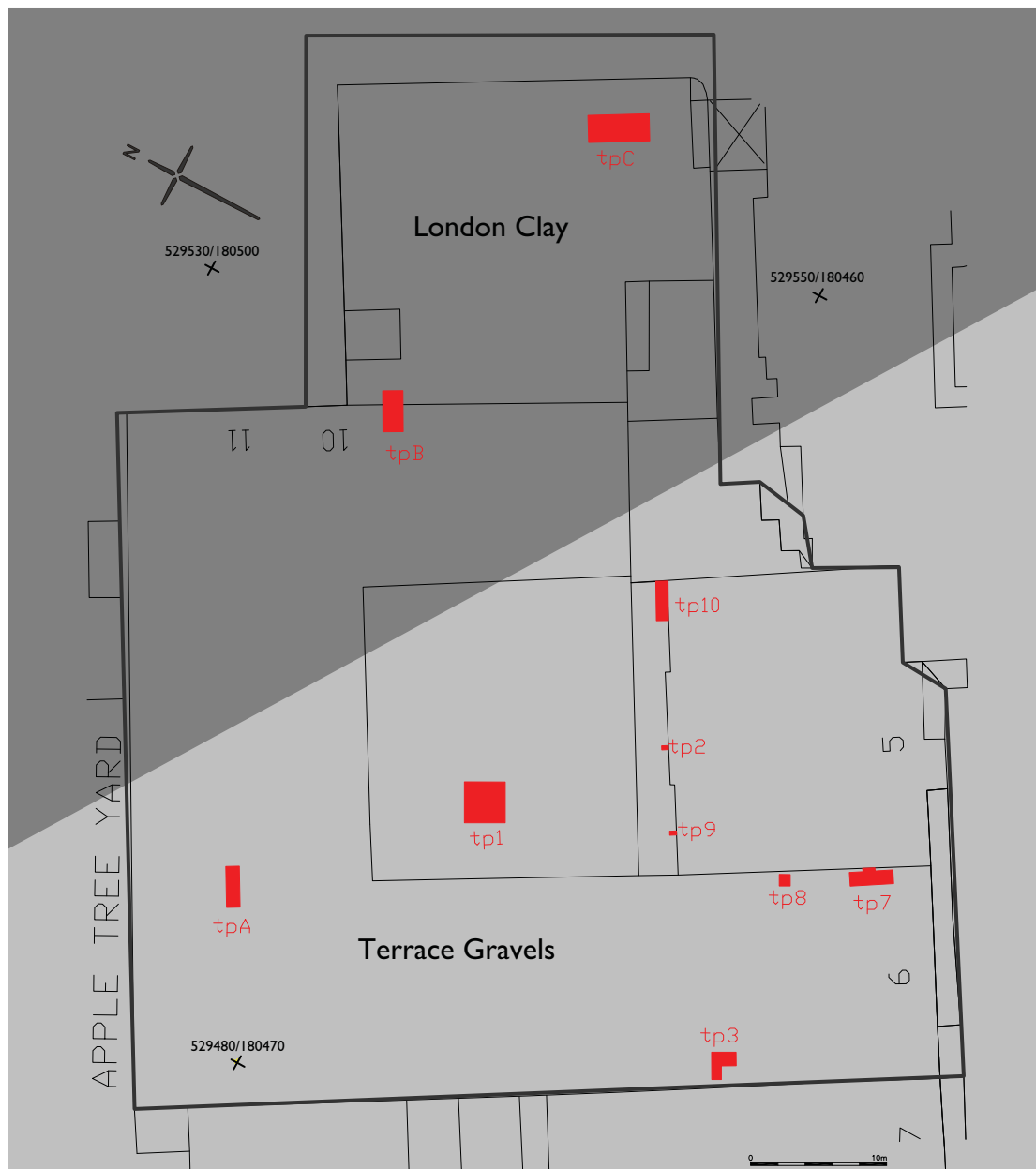
*Fig 12 Deeper part of Trial pit 10 with interior of excavation lightened in inset*

### 3.3 Results summary

The natural topography slopes from north to south and the basement of the present buildings at 6 St James's Square – constructed in the 1950s – terraces the slope so that London Clay outcrops at 9.9m OD in Trial Pit B. This indicates that the older Hackney gravels have been stripped from the site and with them the transitional finer grained sediments that had the potential for Ice Age land surfaces. The natural deposits exposed in TpA, Tp1 and Tp10, and those of the trial pits south of this line, vary considerably and do include lenses and layers of fine-grained sediments but the angle of dip exposed in Tp1, together with the alternate indications of iron-rich and iron-depleted layers, indicate that these Taplow Gravels have been reworked by the action of water streaming off the slope from the north. This was undoubtedly

compounded by the height of London Clay, exposed in TpB. The difference in levels between the outcropping London Clay (9.9m OD) and the lowest gravel in the nearby Tp1 (8.8m OD) indicates that the erosion cut of a former Thames tributary lay between the two. The full depth of gravels exceeded that of the lowest observations (8.0m OD, Tp10) and the glacial or periglacial river that deposited them may have eroded a large section of London Clay to form the terrace.

No Palaeolithic remains were found and the conditions are not considered suitable for their in situ survival.



**Fig 13 Interpretive plan**

*London Clay (in darker tone) was observed at 9.9m in TpB whilst reworked terrace gravels (lighter tone) were exposed at 8.5m OD (sandy clay) or 8.7m OD (sand) in Tp10. Between the two is thought to have been the edge of the younger lower river terrace.*

The only remains that did not relate to the late 1950s demolition of earlier – or construction of the present – buildings was that of a potential cellar wall with floor found in Trial Pit 3. The wall forms part of the party wall with 7 St James's Square. Its form, including a large stanchion, and the level of the floor 3.4m below St James's Square, indicate that this cellar postdates the 17th-century construction of 6 St James's Square and probably its early 19th-c reconstruction (MoLAS 2007). The house constructed in 1819–21 was 3-storey with a single basement unlikely to have been constructed as deep as 3.4m below the ground level. The doorway of the house was remodelled in 1914, indicating that the structure was modified from time to time and the building materials are more consistent the late 19th or early 20th centuries. It is considered that the remains represent the surviving fragment of a later, smaller double basement.

### **3.4 Assessment of the evaluation**

GLAAS guidelines (English Heritage, 1998) require an assessment of the success of the evaluation 'in order to illustrate what level of confidence can be placed on the information which will provide the basis of the mitigation strategy'. In the case of this site trial pits were spread across the area of the site and were sufficient to give a coherent picture of subsurface deposits in general. The deposits recorded within the test pits also demonstrate significant horizontal truncation across the site.

## **4 Archaeological potential**

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

The following research aims were addressed thus:

*What is the nature and level of natural topography?*

London Clay outcrops at 9.9m OD in TpB and indicates that 1950s construction has terraced away older Hackney Gravels and any associated – transitional – fine sediments and land surfaces. The later, lower Taplow Terrace gravels have been reworked at an unknown subsequent period and are sorted into alternate bands of clay sand and gravel with repeated iron-rich or iron-depleted layers. This is typical of water action and to be expected on a slope with London clay near the surface. There is no indication of the likely presence of Palaeolithic remains and only the random possibility of rolled and redeposited tools within the gravel layers.

*What are the earliest deposits identified?*

There are no early archaeological deposits or remains earlier than the relatively modern dates

*Is there any evidence associated with any earlier structures located on the site, in particular of the 17th century buildings known to have existed within this part of St James's Square.*

There are no 17th-century building remains, or 17th-century remains of any sort.

*What are the latest deposits identified?*

The earliest remains from a period after terrace gravels and before the present building are those of a late 19th or early 20th century cellar.

### **4.2 General discussion of potential**

The archaeological potential of the site was compromised by the 1950s construction of the present buildings, which terraced into marine clay.

### **4.3 Significance**

There are no significant archaeological remains. Such remains as they are – fragmentary remains of the base of a late 19th- or early 20th-century cellar – are more appropriately investigated by historical research.



## 5 Proposed development impact and recommendations

The proposed redevelopment involves the demolition of 6 St James's Square and 10–11 Babmaes Street. It includes the construction of a five-storey building with a two-storey basement. 5 St James's Square is to be retained and refurbished. The proposed new building will have a sub-basement floor level of 8.35m OD, the new underslab level will lie at *c* 7.95m OD. This will truncate London Clay and reworked Taplow Terrace gravels, not thought to contain *in situ* Palaeolithic remains. Whilst reworked tools of 300,000BC are still significant, their presence or absence cannot be predicted. The only other subsurface remains – if we disregard the deposits reworked when the present building was constructed – are those of a late 19th- or early 20th-century cellar. Specific remains of architectural interest from the late 19th century are recorded by MoLAS from time to time, but that is where there is a specific reason to, or question to answer (for instance, the first use of a particular construction technique, or to provide a baseline for subsequent monitoring). However, there are no such specific reasons to record this later building feature in this instance.

The decision on the appropriate archaeological response to the subsurface deposits exposed in the trial pits rests with the Local Planning Authority and their designated archaeological advisor.

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## 7 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID: molas1-39867

### Project details

Project name	5-6 St James's Sq, LONDON SW1, archaeological evaluation
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation found London Clay at 9.9m OD to the north of the site - where it was truncated by modern basements - and reworked terrace gravels below this level on the south and west of the site. No archaeological remains were found
Project dates	Start: 19-02-2008 End: 08-03-2008
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	JMS08 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices
Methods & techniques	'Test Pits'
Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER CITY OF WESTMINSTER 5-6 St James's Square London SW1 archaeological evaluation
Postcode	SW1
Study area	4700.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 2952 8046 51.5077101404 -0.133490857917 51 30 27 N 000 08 00 W Point
Height OD	Min: 8.00m Max: 9.90m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Molas
Project brief originator	Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service
Project design originator	MoLAS
Project director/manager	Simon Davis

OASIS ID: molas1-39867 Continued

Project supervisor	David Sankey
Type of sponsor/funding body	real estate advisor
Name of sponsor/funding body	Cushman and Wakefield

**Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Media available	'Text'
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Media available	'Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Unpublished Text'

**Project bibliography**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	5-6 St James's Square, London SW1, archaeological evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	D Sankey
Date	2008
Issuer or publisher	Museum of London
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	A4 report
Entered by	David Sankey (DSankey@museumoflondon.org.uk)
Entered on	27 March 2008