

AMELIA ROAD
London
SE17

London Borough of Southwark

An archaeological evaluation report

April 2008



MUSEUM OF LONDON

Archaeology Service

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An archaeological evaluation report

Site Code: AM108
National Grid Reference: 532125 178540

Project Managers	Derek Seeley Elaine Eastbury
Author	Peter Cardiff
Graphics	Sandra Rowntree

Museum of London Archaeology Service
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Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1
7ED
tel 020 7410 2200 fax 020 7410 2201
email molas@molas.org.uk
web www.molas.org.uk

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 Amelia Street, London, SE17. The report was commissioned from MoLAS by First Base.

Following the recommendations of the previous Archaeological Assessment (Cowan, 2001) 9 evaluation trenches were excavated on the site.

The results of the field evaluation have helped to refine the initial assessment of the archaeological potential of the site. Trenches 3, 5, 7 and 9 show the eastern area of the site to be composed of marshland with pottery dating from the 18th to 19th centuries. The easternmost trench 4 revealed a boundary ditch aligned north-south dating to the 18th to 19th centuries. The majority of the site revealed significant 20th century truncation.

In the light of revised understanding of the archaeological potential of the site the report concludes the impact of the proposed redevelopment is negligible and that no further action is required.

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Front cover: The site in 1862

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The evaluation took place at Amelia Street, hereafter called 'the site'. The site lies to the west of Walworth Road, adjacent to the railway. It is bounded on the west by Robert Dashwood Way, to the east by properties fronting onto Walworth Road, to the north by flats and to the south by Amelia Street. The OS National Grid Ref. for centre of site is 532125 178540. The level of the slab varied between 3.32m OD and 3.50m OD. Modern ground level immediately adjacent to the site is 3.60m OD. The site code is AMI08.

A desk-top *Method Statement* was previously prepared, which covers the whole area of the site (Seeley, 2008) The Method Statement 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.

An archaeological field evaluation was subsequently carried out on 9 pits on the site between 7th April and 11th April 2008.

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, Seeley, 2008).

1.3 Planning background

The evaluation was carried out as a condition of planning permission (Application no: 07-AP-0650).

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by First Base 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 2.2, Seeley, 2008):

- *What is the nature and level of natural topography?*
- *What are the earliest deposits identified?*
- *Is there any evidence of prehistoric activity on the site?*
- *Is there any evidence of Roman activity on the site, such as field boundaries or roadside activity?*

- *Is there any evidence of medieval activity on the site, such as field boundaries?*
- *Is there any evidence of structures or rear yard activity dating from the 18th century?*
- *What are the latest deposits identified?*

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Archaeological background

2.1.1 Topography

London occupies part of the Thames Basin, a broad syncline of chalk filled in the centre with Tertiary sands and clays. In the City, and in most of London, this Tertiary series of bed-rock consists of London Clay. Above the bed-rock lie the Pleistocene (Quaternary) fluvial deposits of the River Thames arranged in flights or gravel terraces. These terraces represent the remains of former floodplains of the river, the highest being the oldest with each terrace becoming progressively younger down the valley side. The site is situated on the first terrace.

Evidence for the varying nature of the natural topography comes from archaeological work at sites nearby. Excavations at the site to the south at 2–28 Manor Place revealed natural gravel up to 2.54m OD.

By contrast, modern street level adjacent to the site on Walworth Road is at 3.3m OD rising to the south of the site where it is at 3.6m OD.

2.1.2 Prehistoric

The first terrace gravels are broadly contemporary with the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic communities in Britain. The product of major erosive events connected with the Ice Age, these deposits often contain the tools and domestic debris left behind by these hunting communities. A Palaeolithic flint flake was found in Kennington Park Road near the site. Flint artefacts and possible prehistoric cut features were identified on a site at Skipton Street near Elephant and Castle, to the north of the study site.

2.1.3 Roman

The site lies between the location of two Roman arterial routes Stane Street and Watling Street and to the south of the centre of Roman activity in Southwark, which was concentrated around the approach to London Bridge.

Agriculture would have taken place in the land between the two roads and sherds of Roman pottery was found at Berryfield Road to the south–west of the site. Roman glass and pottery was found to the west in Kennington Lane along the line of Stane

Street. The site at Skipton Street found evidence of Roman cremations and ditches as well as a number of Roman artefacts. There are also numerous GLSMR references for Roman finds around the Elephant and Castle area.

2.1.4 Saxon

Southwark in the Saxon period is not well understood and archaeological excavations have revealed few finds of this date in the area. A hoard of over 250 Saxon coins was found in Colworth Grove to the south of the site. It is possible that a settlement was established just to the south of the site in Manor Place, possibly the antecedent of the manor granted in AD 1052 to Convent of Christ Church in Canterbury. The name Walworth is described as Wealawyro in AD 1067 which translates as ‘farm of the serfs or Britons or where such worked’.

2.1.5 Medieval

The entry for Walworth in the Domesday Book of 1086 provides evidence for an agricultural settlement, both arable and pastoral and a manor house. The earliest known plan showing the manor is dated to 1681 but the settlement may not have changed significantly since the medieval period. The administration of church manors was very conservative, the manor house and the layout of the fields can usually be traced from century to century with little variation. Pits at Berryfield Road excavation revealed medieval pottery dating from 1150–1300. Walworth Road has medieval origins. Much of the land was undrained marsh with an area of higher ground to the west where Newington was sited in the 13th century.

2.1.6 Post-medieval

Up until the mid-18th century Walworth remained a discrete village but from 1774 onwards land within the manor was leased for building and Walworth was developed to provide houses. Henry Penton of Penton Place to the west of the site let his fields for buildings in 1774. The site may have lain just to the north of the village in open fields or gardens as labelled on Rocque’s map of 1747.

Walworth Road was described in 1808 as lined by elegant mansions and a charming retreat. It was famed for its market gardens and the growing of exotic fruits and vegetables such as peaches, grapes and tulips and narcissus.

With the advent of the London and Chatham railway in 1862, the elegant Regency village was transformed into a dense area of packed houses, shops and sheds. The mansions along Manor Place and Walworth Road were replaced by terraced houses.

On Horwood’s map of 1799 small houses and fields or gardens can be seen on the study site. By 1872 the site was still largely open but with more houses and gardens constructed in the northern part of the site. There was also a small chapel. By 1888 the Midland Coal Depot had been constructed on the site and was to remain up until the 1960s.

3 The evaluation

3.1 Methodology

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

9 evaluation trenches were excavated across the site.

The slab was broken out and cleared by contractors under MoLAS supervision. Trenches were excavated by machine by the contractors, and monitored by a Senior Archaeologist from MoLAS.

The locations of evaluation trenches were recorded by members of MoLAS's Geomatics team using a GPS system in relation to the Ordnance Survey National Grid.

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 traversing from a known level (3.60m OD) on Amelia Street.

The site has produced: 57 context records; 2 section drawings at 1:20; and 13 photographs.

The site finds and records can be found under the site code AMI08 in the MoL archive.

3.2 Results of the evaluation

For trench locations see **Error! Reference source not found.**

Figures in brackets are context numbers.

<i>Evaluation Trench 1</i>	
Location	Extreme south-west of site
Dimensions	2.50m x 2.50m x 2.40m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	3.43m OD
Base of modern slab	3.18m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	2.40m deep
Level of base of deposits observed	0.83m OD
Natural observed	1.73m OD

The earliest deposit was natural mid brown gravel [6] was observed at 1.73m OD. In the east facing section a "lens" of very dark grey silt [5] was observed. This would be presumably just beyond the southern limit of the marshy ground to the north (see Trenches 3, 5, 7 and 9). Both [5] and [6] were truncated by loose orange gravel [4] 0.30m thick. Sealing [4] was a 0.20m thick deposit of crushed red brick [3] beneath a 0.35m thick concrete slab [2]. Overlying the slab [2] was 0.60m of loose sandy gravel

[1] which was beneath the ground slab. The top of the slab was at a height of 3.43m OD.

<i>Evaluation Trench 2</i>	
Location	Extreme south-east of site
Dimensions	2.30m by 2.30m by 2.00m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	3.46m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	3.21m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	2.00m deep
Level of base of deposits observed	1.46m OD
Natural observed	1.61m OD

The earliest deposit was mid orangey-brown gravel [13] surviving to a height of 1.61m OD. This was sealed by two deposits of silty mid brown sandy brickearth [11] and [12], which were overlain by a layer of crushed red brick [10] at a height of 2.21m OD. This underlay a 0.30m thick concrete slab [9]. Overlying the slab was 0.70m of loose yellow gravel [8] which was beneath the concrete ground slab. The slab level was at a height of 3.46m OD.

<i>Evaluation Trench 3</i>	
Location	South-west of site
Dimensions	2.50m by 2.50m by 3.20m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	3.32m OD
Base of slab	3.07m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	3.20m deep
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	0.12m OD
Natural observed	N/A

The earliest deposit was very dark grey/black silt [16] surviving to a height of 2.02m OD. This probably represented marshland deposits, which were also observed in trenches 5, 7 and 9. This deposit was sealed by 0.30m of orangey brown gravel [15], beneath loose yellow gravel to a height of 2.77m OD. This was sealed by 0.30m of crushed and fragmented concrete beneath the ground slab. The top of the ground slab was at a height of 3.32m OD.

<i>Evaluation Trench 4</i>	
Location	Extreme east of site
Dimensions	2.30m by 2.50m by 2.00m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	3.41m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	3.16m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	2.00 m deep
Level of base of deposits observed	1.41m OD
Natural observed	1.91 m OD

The earliest deposit was mid pale orangey brown gravel surviving to a height of 1.91m OD. In the west, it was cut by a north-south running boundary ditch [33], with 2 silty brickearth infills [31] and [32] neither having any inclusions. The topmost fill [31] was truncated by a later north-south running ditch cut [30]. Both ditch cuts were shallow sided and flat bottomed. Not much survived of the earlier cut [33], but the later [30] was 1.20m deep and at least 2.30m wide at the top. The basal fill of [30] was a 0.20m thick deposit of fine dark grey sandy silt sealed by a mid grey silty clay [55] with very occasional charcoal and brick flecks. Also from this deposit was a fragment of late 18th century red glaze pottery. Overlying [55] was a dump of mid yellow silty gravel [54] which was sealed by the highest surviving infill [28], a mid brown silty clay with occasional mixed pebbles and brick flecks. At 2.70m OD was a 0.25m thick deposit of soft dark greeny brown silt [27], with occasional mixed pebbles, charcoal, brick and decayed bone flecks. This was sealed by a 0.15m thick deposit of compact greasy black silt with occasional mixed pebbles, brick, charcoal and mortar flecks, beneath concrete fragments 0.20m thick which was beneath the concrete ground slab. The ground slab was at a height of 3.41m OD. Contexts [18], [26], [29] and 34 refer to the same contexts on the north facing section on the opposite side of the trench. See Fig. 3.

<i>Evaluation Trench 5</i>	
Location	West middle of site
Dimensions	2.30m by 2.30m by 2.40m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	3.48m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	3.15m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	2.40m deep
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	1.10m OD
Natural observed	N/A

The earliest deposit was very dark grey silt [39], approximately 0.40m thick, containing occasional mixed pebbles, charcoal, brick, mortar and chalk flecks surviving to a height of 1.68m OD. This deposit was sealed by a 0.30m thick layer of compact mid brown gravel [38], which underlay crushed and fragmented red bricks [37]. At a height of 2.28m OD there was a layer of concrete fragments [36], which was sealed by loose mid yellow gravel [35] up to 0.50m thick. This was sealed by 0.10m of concrete fragment underneath the 0.25m thick concrete ground slab. The top of the ground slab was at a height of 3.48m OD.

<i>Evaluation Trench 6</i>	
Location	East middle of site
Dimensions	2.40m by 2.20m by 2.30m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	3.46m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	3.16m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	2.30m deep
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	1.16m OD
Natural observed	1.51m OD

The earliest deposit was natural mid orangey brown gravel [44] surviving to a height of 1.51m OD. Overlying this was a 0.35m thick layer of dark grey silt [43] which contained occasional fragments of red brick. This deposit was overlain by fragmented red brick [42], which was sealed by dark grey silt [41] to a height of 2.46m OD. Above this silt was a deposit 0.70m thick of loose yellow gravel [40], which was immediately beneath the concrete ground slab. The top of the ground slab was at a height of 3.46m OD.

<i>Evaluation Trench 7</i>	
Location	North-west of site
Dimensions	2.40m by 2.00m by 2.50m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	3.48m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	3.23m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	2.50m deep
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	0.98m OD
Natural observed	N/A

The earliest deposit was very dark grey silt [46] approximately 1.20m thick surviving to a height of 2.18m OD. The deposit contained occasional mixed pebbles, brick and tile fragments, occasional charcoal flecks and three small fragments of late 18th\early 19th century pottery. This was sealed by a deposit of loose mid yellow gravel [45] 0.85m thick. At a height of 3.03m OD a 0.20m thick layer of concrete fragments was observed which was sealed by the 0.25m thick concrete ground slab. The ground slab was at a height of 3.48m OD.

<i>Evaluation Trench 8</i>	
Location	Extreme north-east of site
Dimensions	2.50m by 2.00m by 2.50m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	3.48m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	3.23m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	2.50m deep
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	0.98m OD
Natural observed	1.25m OD

The earliest deposit was mid orangey brown natural gravel [49] surviving to a height of 1.25m OD. This was sealed by a 0.60m thick deposit of mid brown silty clay [48] with occasional charcoal flecks. This deposit was overlain by 1.50m of modern made ground [47] which was directly beneath the concrete ground slab. The top of the ground slab was at a height of 3.50m OD.

<i>Evaluation Trench 9</i>	
Location	Extreme north-west of site
Dimensions	2.30m by 2.30m by 2.40m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	3.50m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	3.25m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	2.40m deep
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	1.10 m OD
Natural observed	N/A

At 1.70m OD the top of a deposit of very dark grey silt [53] was observed. This deposit was at least 0.60m thick and contained occasional mixed pebbles, charcoal flecks and oyster shell fragments as well as one fragment of pottery, circa 1700, which was a tin glazed platter rim. This deposit was the northernmost of the marshland deposits also seen in trenches 3, 5 and 7. This was sealed by 0.30m of compact mid orange gravel [52], which was sealed by a 0.20m thick deposit of fragmented red bricks [51]. A 0.90m thick layer of loose mid yellow gravel [50] overlay [51], and was sealed by the 0.25m thick concrete ground slab. The top of the slab was at 3.50m OD.

3.3 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 a good level of confidence can be placed on the results. The 9 trenches were placed to evaluate the archaeology across the site and how the level of modern truncation would affect this. The 9 trenches supported what was already known of the area’s archaeology and showed to what level it might survive. 5 of the trenches were excavated down to natural deposits. Trenches 3, 5, 7 and 9 showed the western side to be an extensive marshland area with pottery dating from circa 1700 to the early 19th century. The easternmost trench (4) contained a boundary ditch aligned north-south also dating from the 18th to 19th centuries. All the trenches showed significant 20th century truncation.

4 Archaeological potential

4.1 Realisation of original research aims

- ***What is the nature and level of natural topography?***
 - *The natural is mid orangey-brown gravel with lenses of fine pale sand*

- ***What are the earliest deposits identified?***
 - *The earliest deposits identified are alluvial deposits with pottery dating from the late medieval to the mid 19th century. The alluvial deposits represent marshland.*

- ***Is there any evidence of prehistoric activity on the site?***
 - *There is no evidence of prehistoric activity on the site.*

- ***Is there any evidence of Roman activity on the site, such as field boundaries or roadside activity?***
 - *There is no evidence of Roman activity on the site.*

- ***Is there any evidence of medieval activity on the site, such as field boundaries?***
 - *There is no evidence of mediaeval activity on the site.*

- ***Is there any evidence of structures or rear yard activity dating from the 18th century?***
 - *There is no evidence of 18th century structures or rear yard activity on the site.*

- ***What are the latest deposits identified?***
 - *The latest deposits identified on the site are 20th century.*

4.2 General discussion of potential

The evaluation has shown that the potential for survival of ancient ground surfaces (horizontal archaeological stratification) on the site is low and in line with those predicted in the desktop assessment.

4.3 Significance

The evaluation has demonstrated that no significant archaeological remains were present and no areas needed to be expanded to characterise archaeological deposits.

5 Proposed development impact and recommendations

The proposed redevelopment at Amelia Road involves the erection of a building up to 9 storeys high, comprising 164 residential flats and 1152 sq. m of either B1 (offices) or D1 (non-residential institutions) floor space, basement car parking and associated works including hard and soft landscaping. The impact of the development on the surviving archaeological deposits will be insignificant. It is therefore recommended that no further archaeological investigation is required for this consented scheme.

6 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank First Base for commissioning this report.

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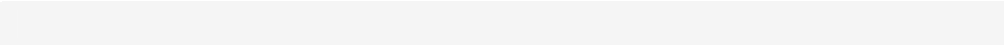
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8 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

8.1 OASIS ID: molas1-40654



Project details

Project name Evaluation

Short description of the project 9 evaluation pits (generally 2.50m by 2.50m by 2.50m deep) were dug in open ground in Amelia Road. Marshy ground was observed in the west of the site, and a north-south boundary ditch was observed in the east. The whole area had been truncated including the natural gravel.

Project dates Start: 07-04-2008 End: 11-04-2008

Previous/future work Not known / Not known

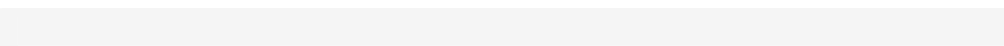
Any associated project reference codes AMI08 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Other 13 - Waste ground

Monument type POT Post Medieval



Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON SOUTHWARK SOUTHWARK Amelia Road

Postcode SE14

Study area 3000.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 32125 78540 51.4898497065 -0.09669147119930 51 29 23 N
000 05 48 W Point

Height OD Min: 1.25m Max: 1.73m

Project creators

Name of MoLAS
Organisation

Project brief LAARC
originator

Project design First Base
originator

Project director/manager Derek Seeley

Project supervisor P. Cardiff

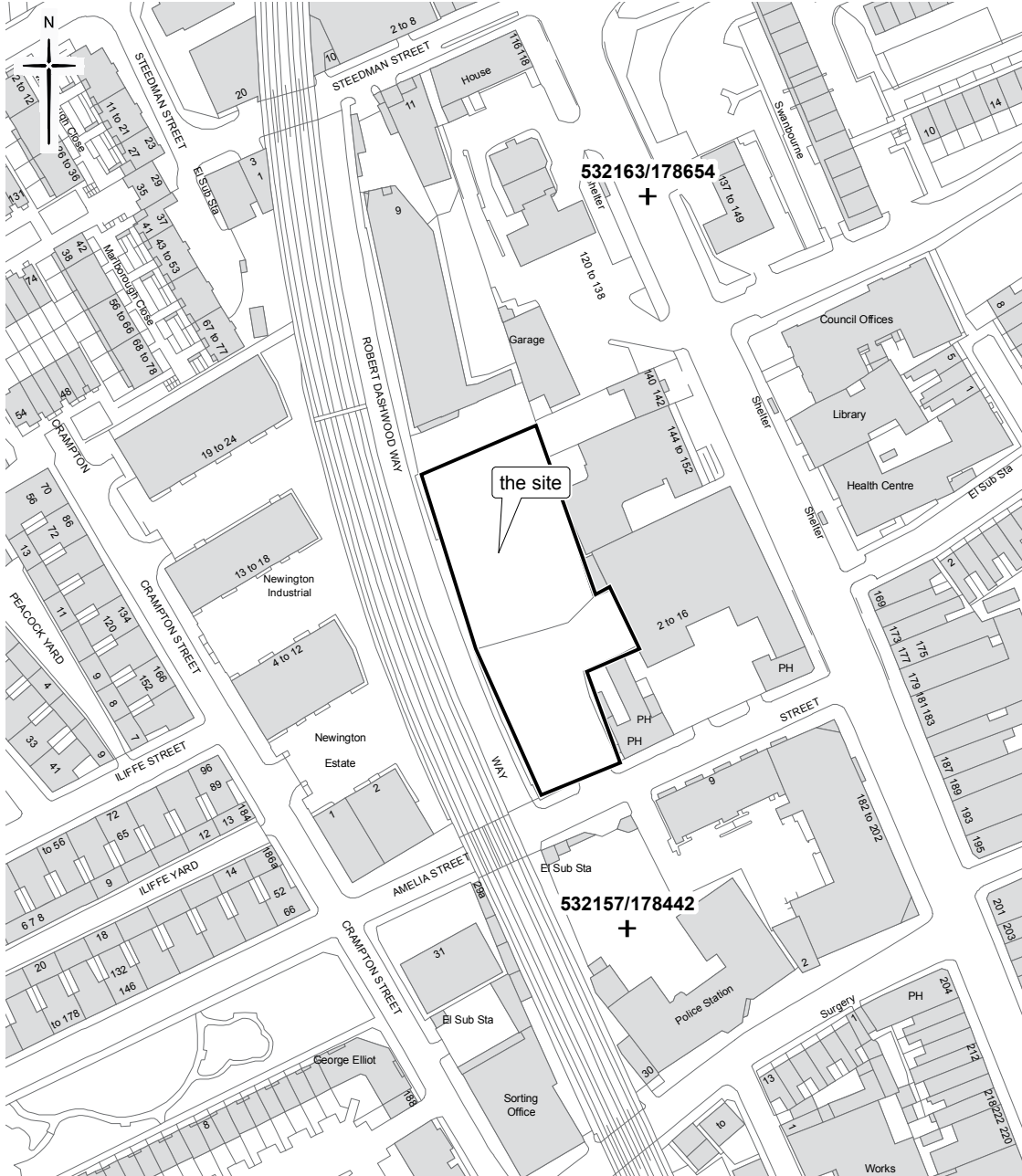
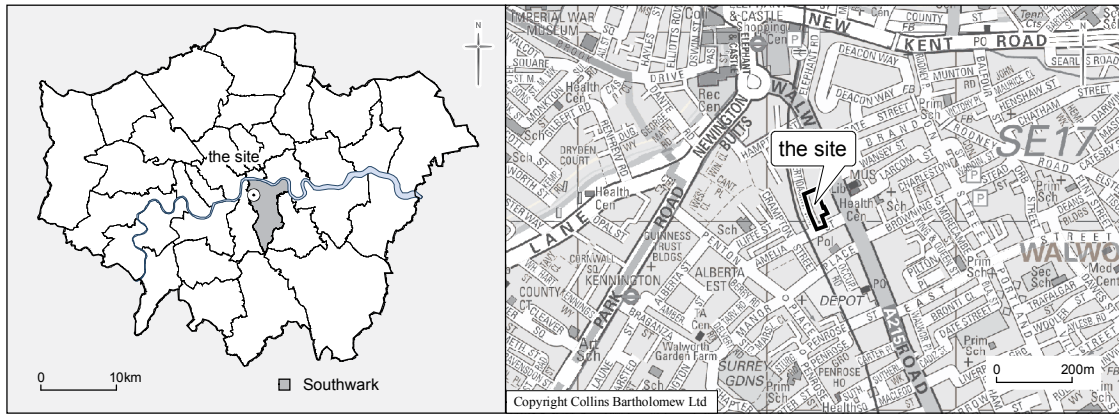
Name of First Base
sponsor/funding
body

Project archives

Physical Archive No
Exists?

Entered by P. Cardiff (pcardiff@molass.org.uk)

Entered on 15 April 2008



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Scale 1:2,000 @ A4

0 100m

Fig 1 Location map



Fig 2 Evaluation pits location

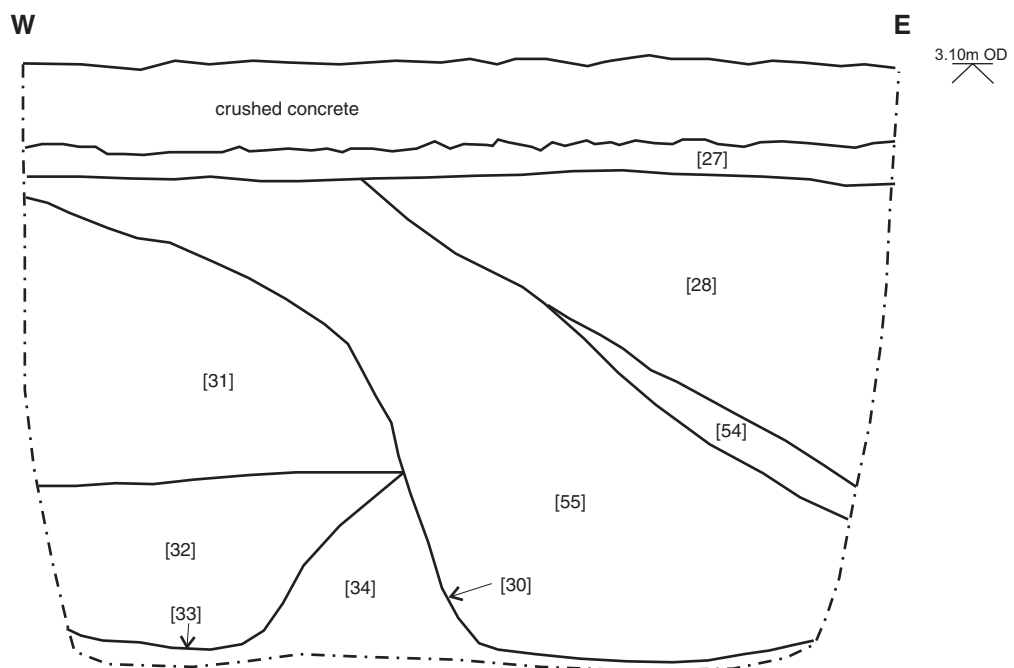


Fig 3 South facing section in Pit 4

