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**MONTROSE PLACE**  
London  
SW1

City of Westminster

An archaeological evaluation report

November 2004



MUSEUM OF LONDON

Archaeology Service

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London  
SW1

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An archaeological evaluation report

Site Code: MNP04  
National Grid Reference: 528409 179570

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## Summary (non-technical)

*This report presents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out by the Museum of London Archaeology Service at Montrose Place, London SW1. The report was commissioned from MoLAS by Grosvenor Ltd.*

*The archaeological evaluation revealed around 1.4–2.2m depth of post-medieval dumps over natural brickearth. These could have been dumping as make-ups or middens or they could have been fills and tips to backfill the quarry pits seen on Rocque's map of 1747. Walls were identified in two of the test pits which could have been part of the buildings seen on Horwood's map of 1800.*

*Only three pieces of pottery were found which gave a very broad date range from the 17th–19th centuries.*

*No archaeological work has been carried out in the vicinity of the site, therefore it is very difficult to determine the levels of comparable archaeological deposits. The deposits, although clearly post-medieval, are not well dated and it is still uncertain whether the natural brickearth is truncated by quarrying or whether this could be an intact ancient land surface of an island.*

*Further archaeological work, such as a watching brief during the proposed groundworks, may be required to record any archaeological remains that may be present. The decision for any further archaeological work rests with the Local Planning Authority.*

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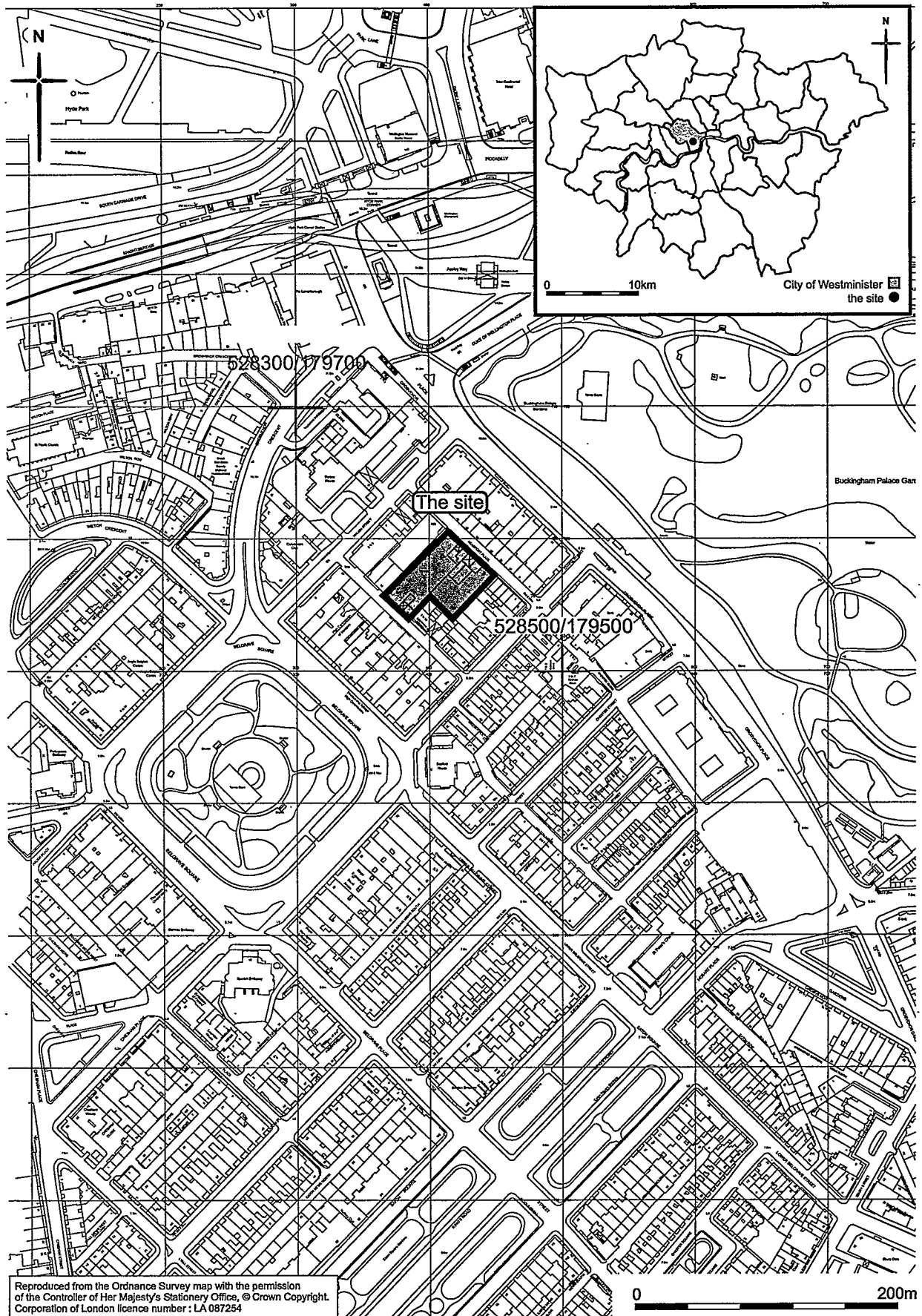


Fig 1 Site location



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Site background

The site of Montrose Place, forms part of a block bounded by Montrose Place on the west, Headfort Place to the east, Chapel Street to the south and by Halkin Street to the north. It includes 10 Montrose Place and nos 11–23 and 35 Headfort Place. It is located in the City of Westminster, SW1, in the parish of St Peter, Eaton Square, which was formed out of St George, Hanover Square. The Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference for the centre of the site is 528409 179570. The site covers some 0.65 ha. The site code is MNP04.

An *Archaeological impact assessment* was previously prepared, which covers the whole area of the site (Miles 2001) 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 *Archaeological impact assessment*, which formed the project design for the evaluation (see Section 2, Miles 2001).

The present document forms the report of the archaeological evaluation on the site as required under the archaeological planning condition placed on the development.

## 1.3 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Grosvenor Ltd 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

#### 1.4 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 (Drummond-Murray 2004):

What is the nature and level of natural topography?

Is there any evidence for the clay and gravel extraction that took place in the 18th century?

Have any earlier archaeological deposits survived the clay and gravel extraction on site?



## 2 Topographical and historical background

The time-scales used in this report are as follows.

Palaeolithic	c 450,000–12,000 BC
Mesolithic	c 12,000–4000 BC
Neolithic	c 4000–2000 BC
Bronze Age	c 2000–600 BC
Iron Age	c 600 BC–AD 43
Roman	AD 43–410
Saxon	AD 410–c 1000
Medieval	c AD 1000–1500
Post-medieval–modern (including industrial)	c 1500–present

A detailed description of the geology, archaeology and history of the site was provided in the earlier *Archaeological impact assessment* (Miles 2001, Section 3). A brief resume is provided here:

### 2.1 Topography

The study site lies between two tributaries of the Thames. The Parliamentary and Borough boundary that lies to the west of the site follows the former course of the Westbourne, while to the east lies the River Tyburn. The site lies on the boundary between flood plain gravels, which form the rising ground of Belgravia and a small island of brickearth.

### 2.2 Prehistoric

The site appears to be on a gravel island and it is possible that some prehistoric activity may have occurred here. The Greater London Sites and Monuments Record lists an isolated flint axe found at Hyde Park Corner, approximately 300m to the north of the site and a side scraper found outside 145 Piccadilly in 1933.

The gradual rise in the river level forced the eventual abandonment of the riverside sites as they were inundated. The gravel banks became islands and the traces of the settlements became submerged in alluvium. This alluvium helped to bury and therefore preserve prehistoric land surfaces below the modern ground level.

### 2.3 Roman

The site is outside the focus of Roman settlement at Londinium and few Roman finds have been recovered from the immediate area.

## **2.4 Saxon and medieval**

The site lies in the Manor of Eia or Eye (later Eybury or Ebury). The Domesday Survey records that this manor was held by one of William the Conqueror's principal lieutenants, Geoffrey de Mandeville. Before 1100 Geoffrey had given the estate to Westminster Abbey, and seems to remain part of the abbey's holdings until the Reformation.

By the 14th century the estate seems to have developed a tripartite division. The northern part was referred to as Hyde, the southern part as Neyte or Neat and the central part as Eybury, which included the site. Ebury Farm and the nucleated village of Ebury can be seen on maps of Ebury estate of 1614 and 1663 (not illustrated). As early as the reign of Edward I (1272–1307) Ebury was a grange (or monastic out-farm) and the residence of a bailiff. The site lay within meadows at this time on the west side of the road leading to Ebury.

## **2.5 Post-medieval**

As part of his general seizure of monastic lands Henry VIII acquired the Ebury estate in 1540. The Ebury estate passed through a number of owners until it came into the hands of Alexander Davies who took up residence at the manor farm of Ebury then known as Lordship House. The estate fell to his daughter Mary Davies, and in 1676 she was married to Sir Thomas Grosvenor, Baronet of Eaton (Cheshire). This marriage was to form the basis of the Grosvenor estates in London.

The Ebury estate map of 1614 shows the site to be within Mulberry Garden Field. Rocque's map of 1747 shows the area of the site occupied by large water filled pits, probably formed by extraction of clay for the adjacent brick kiln. It was not built upon until the time of Horwood's map of c 1799–1819 (Cover).

Construction of the dominant feature of the area, Belgrave Square, began in 1826 after Earl Grosvenor, who owned the land, obtained an Act of Parliament enabling him to build upon it. Over the next thirty years Belgravia was built around its centrepiece as a rival to Mayfair for the well-to-do. But what gave the district a totally new importance was the conversion, from 1821 onwards, of Buckingham House into Buckingham Palace. Within three or four years of that date Thomas Cubitt took a lease of the 'five fields', belonging to Lord Grosvenor. The buildings that form the site were originally constructed as mews for the houses around Belgrave Square and Grosvenor Place, although some rebuilding has occurred.

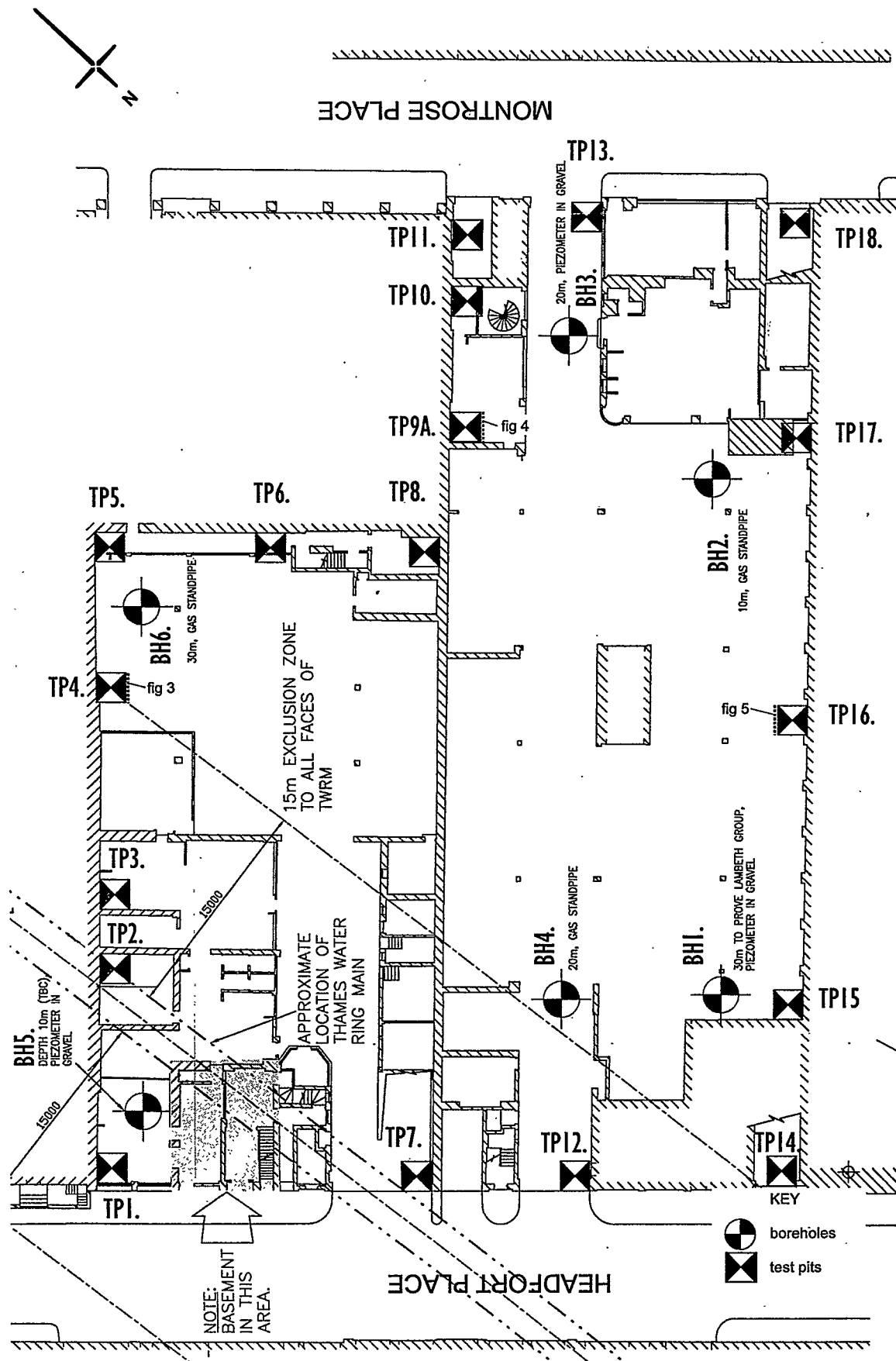


Fig 2 Location of the test pits

### 3 The evaluation

#### 3.1 Methodology

The archaeological evaluation was carried out in accordance with the *Method Statement* (Drummond-Murray 2004) and the MoLAS *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoL 1994).

The evaluation consisted of 11 test pits and four boreholes (Fig 2). Four test pits were abandoned and three test pits were halted because of live services. The remaining boreholes were also abandoned.

Test pit 9 was moved from its original position due to the presence of a manhole. A basement was discovered at the west end at Montrose Place.

#### 3.2 Results of the evaluation

<i>Test Pit 1</i>	
Location	East end near Headfort Place
Dimensions	0.50 by 0.67 by 2.7m
Modern ground level	8.27m OD
Base of modern fill	7.67m OD
Natural observed	5.77m OD

Natural was augured down to orange gravel at 5.57m OD, overlain by an orange-brown silty clay brickearth at 5.77m. Above this was a deposit of dark grey clay, possibly ?alluvial up to 5.82m OD. This was overlain by a homogenous dump mid-brown sandy silt with occasional lenses of white mortar up to 7.67m OD. It contained a fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem and probably dates to the 17th–19th centuries as nothing of more recent date was found. It was overlain by modern material and concrete slab.

<i>Test Pit 2</i>	
Location	East end near Headfort Place
Dimensions	0.50 by 0.70 by 2.55m
Modern ground level	8.05m OD
Base of modern fill	7.73m OD
Natural observed	5.55m OD

Natural was augured down to orange-brown silty clay brickearth at 5.55m. Gravel was not present at this level but the test pit was not continued further down. Above the brickearth was a red crushed brick layer up to 6.45m OD and over this a dump of redeposited brickearth mixed with frequent red brick and white mortar up to 7.73m

OD. It contained a fragment of Delftware pottery which probably dates to the 17th–18th centuries.

<i>Test Pit 3</i>	
Location	East end near Headfort Place
Dimensions	0.92 by 0.50 by 2.65m
Modern ground level	8.07m OD
Base of modern fill	7.62m OD
Natural observed	5.57m OD

Natural was augured down to gravel at 5.42m OD overlain by orange-brown silty clay brickearth at 5.57m OD. Above the brickearth was a lens of white crushed mortar up to 6.67m OD and over this a dump of brown redeposited brickearth mixed with crushed red brick up to 6.91m OD.

This was overlain by a loose dark brown silt with frequent red brick and a sherd of 19th-century stoneware up to 7.62m OD.

<i>Test Pit 4 (Fig 3)</i>	
Location	East end near Headfort Place
Dimensions	1.10 by 0.80 by 1.02m
Modern ground level	8.18m OD
Base of modern fill	7.65m OD
Natural observed	

The lowest deposit in the pit was a loose crushed red brick layer up to 7.23m OD overlain by a layer of white mortar up to 7.33m OD. Above this was a loose brown silt and slate up to 7.65m OD. It was cut by a red brick wall foundation of bricks 210 by 100 by 64mm with grey-white lime mortar. The top of the foundation was at the base of the modern fill at 7.65m OD and the base of the foundation was not reached. The foundation formed a corner of a ?19th-century wall, possibly a cellar, as a loose fill of sandy silt and slate was present to the east. Its width of at least 0.42m suggests that it was too wide for a construction trench.

<i>Test Pit 5</i>	
Location	Central area
Dimensions	0.90 by 0.60 by 2.10m
Modern ground level	8.07m OD
Base of modern fill	7.82m OD
Natural observed	

The lowest deposit in the pit was a soft fine silty clay with frequent red brick and coal up to 6.92m OD. Above this was a dark brown sandy clay with frequent red brick and lenses of white crushed mortar up to 7.82m OD.

<i>Test Pit 7</i>	
Location	East end near Headfort Place
Dimensions	0.63 by 0.88 by 2.50m

Modern ground level	8.17m OD
Base of modern fill	7.37m OD
Natural observed	

The lowest deposit in the pit was an orange-brown silty clay brickearth mixed with grey silty clay and containing frequent peg tile and CBM flecks up to 6.91m OD overlain by a loose crushed red brick layer up to 7.07m OD. Above this was a loose brown sandy silt and occasional peg tile up to 7.37m OD.

<i>Test Pit 9A (Fig 4)</i>	
Location	West end near Montrose Place
Dimensions	0.90 by 0.60 by 1.80m
Modern ground level	8m OD
Base of modern fill	7.55m OD
Natural observed	6.20m OD

The lowest deposit in the pit was an orange-brown silty clay brickearth which may have been a natural deposit up to 6.20m OD. It was overlain by a thin layer of white mortar up to 6.24m OD and then a layer of broken red brick and peg tile fragments up to 6.80m OD. Above this was a layer of redeposited brickearth up to 6.96m OD and a dark brown silty clay with frequent pebbles and peg tile up to 7.21m OD. The uppermost layer was a silty clay with frequent red brick and the base of a Chinese cup dated to 1620–1800, up to 7.55m OD.

<i>Test Pit 11</i>	
Location	West end near Montrose Place
Dimensions	0.60 by 0.68 by 1.60m
Modern ground level	8m OD
Base of modern fill	7.72m OD
Natural observed	

The lowest deposit in the pit was a dark grey silty sandy clay which may have been an alluvial deposit up to 7m OD. It was overlain by a dumps of brown sandy silt and loose red brick and occasional tin-glazed earthenware 'Delftware' dated to the 17th–18th centuries.

<i>Test Pit 14</i>	
Location	Ramp at east end near Headfort Place
Dimensions	0.60 by 0.60 by 1.72m
Modern ground level	8.45m OD
Base of modern fill	8.05m OD
Natural observed	

The lowest deposit in the pit was a mid brown silty clay with frequent peg tile and white and mortar flecks up to 7.33m OD. A red brick wall foundation was seen in the south facing section under the modern party wall which may have been the remains of an earlier 18th- or 19th-century brick cellar which had been reused as a foundation. It was truncated on the top at 7.92m OD and its base was at 6.72m OD. The rest of the

pit was taken up with a loose cellar infill of brown silt, red brick and pieces of timber joists not in situ but loose in the fill up to 8.05m OD.

<i>Test Pit 16 (Fig 5)</i>	
Location	Central area
Dimensions	0.75 by 0.75 by 1.32m
Modern ground level	8.00m OD
Base of modern fill	7.66m OD
Natural observed	

The lowest deposit in the pit was a dark grey silty clay which may have been an alluvial deposit up to 6.82m OD. It was overlain by a loose crushed red brick layer up to 7.13m OD. Above this was a loose brown silt and crushed white mortar with occasional large cobbles up to 7.66m OD.

<i>Test Pit 18</i>	
Location	Ramp at west end near Montrose Place
Dimensions	0.63 by 0.75 by 2.10m
Modern ground level	8.55m OD
Base of modern fill	8.25m OD
Natural observed	

The lowest deposit in the pit was a brown silty clay with frequent peg tile and white and yellow mortar flecks up to 7.50m OD. Above was a layer of broken red brick and lime mortar up to 7.85m OD overlain by a loose brown silty clay with yellow stock brick up to 8.25m OD.

<i>BH1</i>	
Location	East end near Headfort Place
Modern ground level	7.97m OD
Natural brickearth observed	5.67m OD
Natural gravel observed	4.67m OD

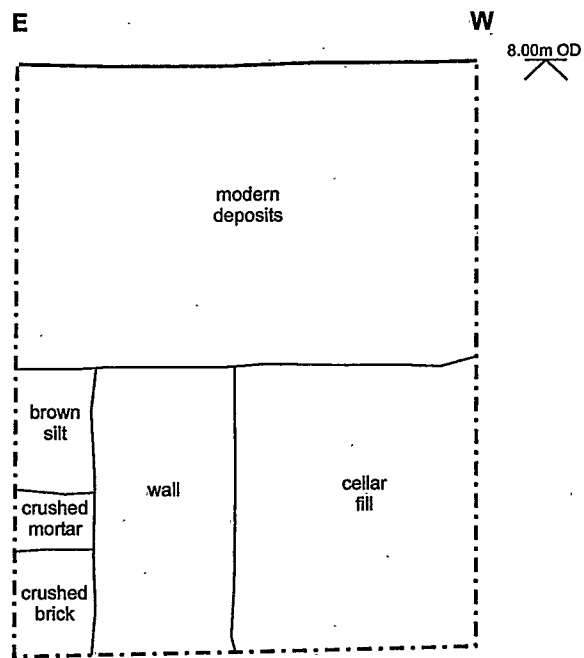
<i>BH2</i>	
Location	Central area
Modern ground level	7.95m OD
Natural brickearth observed	5.45m OD
Natural gravel observed	3.95m OD

<i>BH3</i>	
Location	West end near Montrose Place
Modern ground level	7.96m OD
Natural brickearth observed	5.76m OD
Natural gravel observed	4.66m OD

<i>BH4</i>	
Location	East end near Headfort Place



Modern ground level	7.97m OD
Natural brickearth observed	5.77m OD
Natural gravel observed	3.49m OD



0 0.5m

Fig 3 South facing section through test pit 4

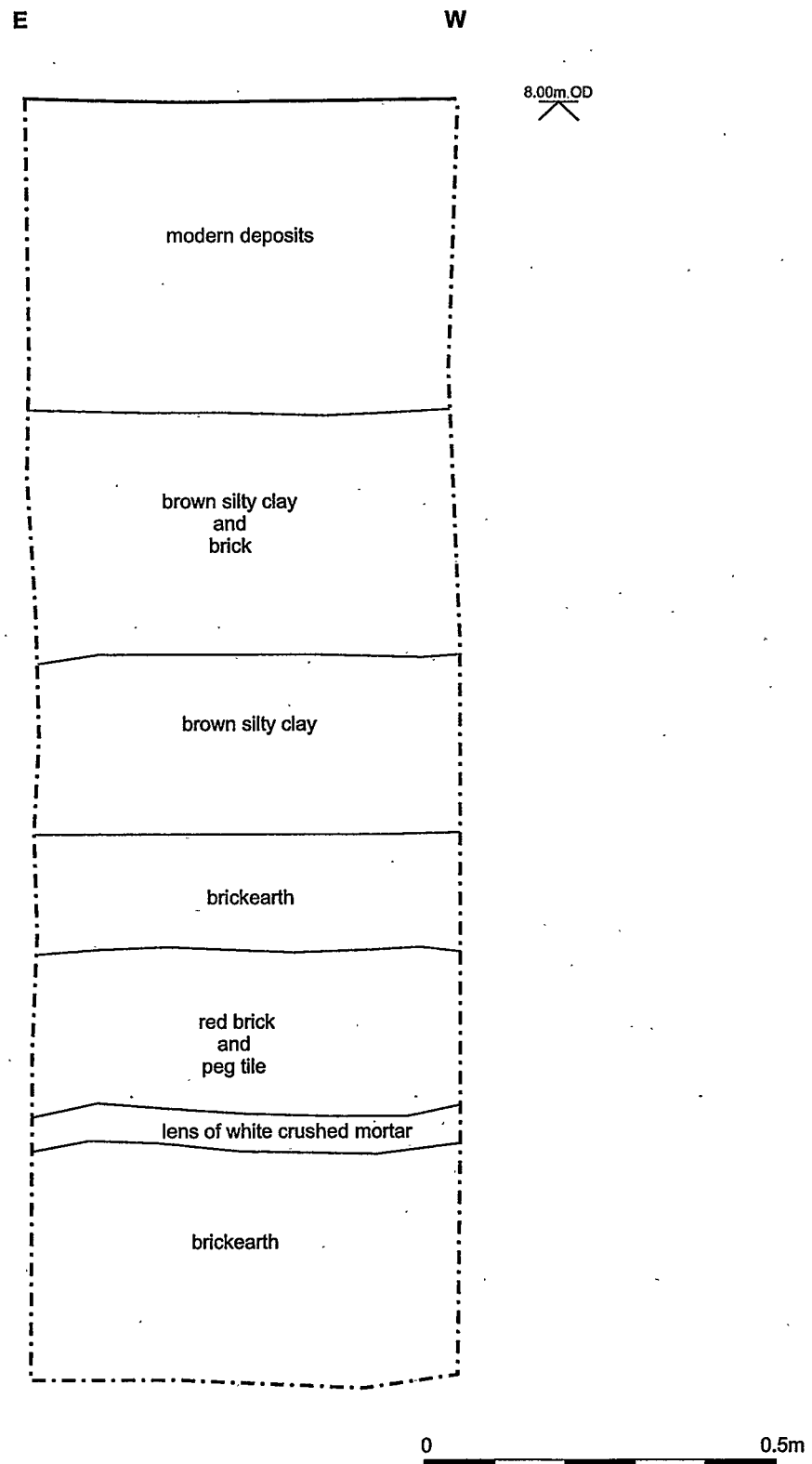


Fig 4 South facing section through test pit 9A

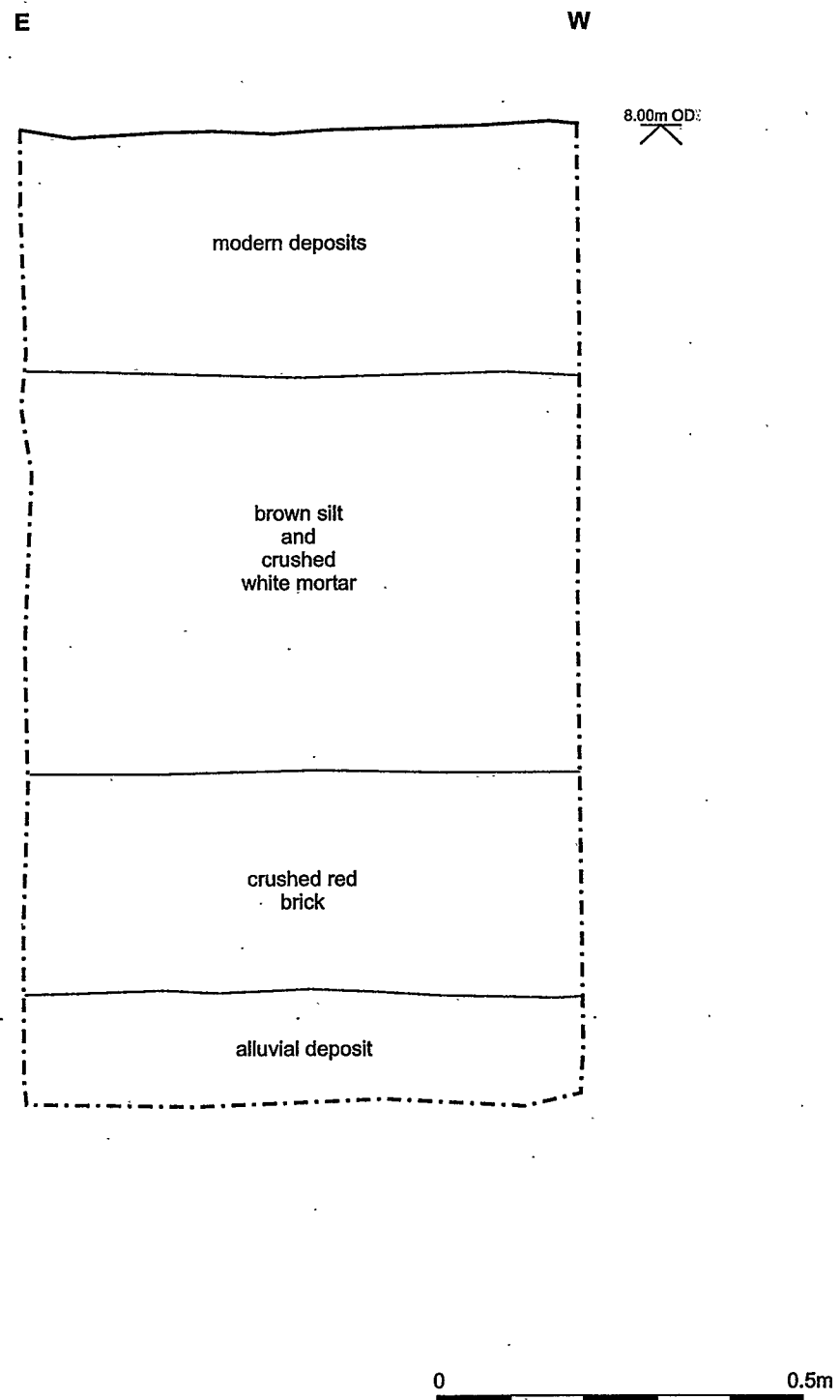


Fig 5 North facing section through test pit 16

## 4 Archaeological potential

### 4.1 Realisation of original research aims

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

Natural gravel was recorded at 3.49m OD in the north (BH4) and 5.57m OD in the south of the site (TP1). This might indicate the slope down off the island to the north-west. Natural brickearth was at 5.76m OD in the north and 5.55m OD and 6.03m OD in the south.

*Is there any evidence for the clay and gravel extraction that took place in the 18th century?*

In the 18th century the site appears, from the historic maps, to have been located in an area of gravel and clay extraction.

No archaeological work has been carried out in the vicinity of the site, therefore it is very difficult to determine the levels of comparable archaeological deposits. The deposits found in the test pits consisted of around 1.4–2.2m depth of dumps which could have been dumping as makeups or middens associated with structures, or these deposits could have been fills and tips to backfill the quarry pits.

The walls identified in the test pits could be part of the buildings seen on Horwood's map of 1800 (Cover).

*Have any earlier archaeological deposits survived the clay and gravel extraction on site?*

Only three pieces of pottery were found which gave a very broad date range; thus it not known whether earlier deposits exist on the site.

### 4.2 General discussion of potential

The test pits have revealed post-medieval deposits dated to the 17–19th centuries. Foundations of walls survive in two pits, possibly 19th century as seen on Horwood's map or perhaps earlier. They may have been cellar walls. A dark grey silty sandy clay which may have been an alluvial deposit was also seen.

The only existing basement forms a small part of the Headfort Place Hotel and there is also a sunken area, possibly a tank, in the east end of the site near Montrose Place. Otherwise the site is unbasemented and therefore the potential for archaeological survival is good.

## 5 Proposed development impact and recommendations

The proposed redevelopment involves the demolition of the existing group of buildings to create a new six storey residential building with basement and partial sub-basement. The basement will have a floor level at 4.8m OD and the sub-basement will impact down to 0.5m OD (Hamilton Assocs 2001: dwgs SK01A and SK01).

The impact of this on the surviving archaeological deposits will be to totally remove most deposits and cut features.

The little known information about the area means that definite conclusions are very difficult to draw. Although the archaeological potential for the site appears limited, insufficient information is available to be certain. The deposits, although clearly post-medieval, are not well dated and it is still uncertain whether the natural brickearth is truncated by quarrying or whether this could be an intact ancient land surface of an island.

The site does not lie within an Area of Special Archaeological Priority, as defined in the Westminster Unitary Development Plan, and the site was defined as being within an area of limited archaeological potential in the *Archaeological impact assessment* (Miles 2001, Section 6). The results of the evaluation concur with the desk-based assessment in that although late post-medieval deposits do survive on the site, their potential and significance is considered to be low. The requirement for further on-site archaeological work rests with the Local Planning Authority, however, the results of the evaluation suggest that further archaeological works are not required.

## **6 Acknowledgements**

MoLAS would like to thank Grosvenor Ltd for commissioning and funding the archaeological work.



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## 8 Oasis data collection form

### 8.1 OASIS ID: molas1-4647

#### Project details

Project name Montrose Place, London SW1

Short description of the project An archaeological field evaluation consisting of test pits was carried out at Montrose Place, London SW1. It includes 10 Montrose Place and nos 11-23 and 35 Headfort Place. The archaeological evaluation revealed around 1.4-2.2m depth of post-medieval dumps over natural brickearth. These could have been dumping to backfill the quarry pits seen on Rocque's map of 1747. Walls were identified in two of the test pits which could have been part of the buildings seen on Horwood's map of 1800. Only three pieces of pottery were found which gave a very broad date range from the 17th-19th centuries.

Project dates Start: 13-10-2004 End: 27-10-2004

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes MNP04 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Other 15 - Other

Monument type CELLAR Post Medieval

Methods & techniques 'Test Pits'

Development type Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)

Prompt Planning condition

Position in the planning process      Between deposition of an application and determination

**Project location**

Country                      England

Site location                GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER PADDINGTON  
BAYSWATER AND KNIGHTSBRIDGE Montrose Place, SW1

Postcode                    SW1

Study area                   .65 Hectares

National reference        grid      TQ 28409 79570 Point

Height OD                   Min: 5.55m Max: 6.03m

**Project creators**

Name of Organisation      MoLAS

Project originator        brief      Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory  
body

Project originator        design      MoLAS

Project director/manager      Elizabeth Howe

Project supervisor        Carrie Cowan

**Project archives**

Physical recipient        Archive      LAARC

Physical Exists?        Archive      Yes

Digital Exists?        Archive      Yes

Paper Exists?            Archive      Yes

**Project  
bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Montrose Place, London SW1: Archaeological Evaluation Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Cowan, C
Date	2004
Issuer or publisher	MoLAS
Place of issue or publication	London
Entered by	carrie cowan (molash.archive@museumof london.org.uk)
Entered on	8 November 2004