



675-683 HIGH ROAD  
Leytonstone  
London  
E11

London Borough of Waltham Forest

An archaeological evaluation report

November 2004

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MUSEUM OF LONDON

Archaeology Service

WALT/1037



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Leytostone  
London  
E11

London Borough of Waltham Forest

An archaeological evaluation report

National Grid Reference: 539387 186946

Project Manager  
Author  
Graphics

David Lakin  
David Sankey  
Jane Dunn

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](mailto:molas@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 675-683 High Road, Leytonstone, London E11. The report was commissioned from MoLAS by Galliford Try Partnerships Limited.*

*Following site remediation works a single trench was excavated on the north side of the site, the area to the south having been disturbed. The base of a large medieval quarry pit dating to the 11th – 12th centuries was revealed between 1.5m and 1.9m below ground level. This is below the general construction level of the site, which is to be piled. It is likely to be below pile cap and ground beam levels also.*

*The results of the field evaluation have helped to refine the initial assessment of the archaeological potential of the site. No Roman remains and no indications of the line of the Roman road were revealed*

*In the light of revised understanding of the archaeological potential of the site the report concludes the impact of the proposed redevelopment is limited to the potential damage of deep drainage and (possibly) temporary works such as tower crane bases. If these deep intrusions were sited to the south of the trench, they will not disturb archaeological remains.*

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## 8 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Site background

The site of 675–683 High Road, Leytonstone, London E11 is located on the west side of High Road Leytonstone, and is bounded by buildings on all other sides. The centre of the site lies at National Grid reference 539387 186946. Modern pavement level near to the site lies at c 20m OD. The site code is LYH04.

## 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 (MoLAS 2004, 4).

## 1.3 Planning background

Application Number 2004/0155, planning permission granted subject to a condition specifying an archaeological investigation.

## 1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Galliford Try 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):

- What is the nature and level of natural topography?
- What are the earliest deposits identified?
- Is there any evidence of a Roman road?
- Is there any evidence of other Roman activity?
- Is there any evidence of medieval Leytonstone?
- What are the latest deposits identified?

## 2 Topographical and historical background

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

Palaeolithic	c 650,000–12,000 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
Early medieval	AD 410–c 1000
Later medieval	c AD 1000–1500
Post-medieval–modern (including industrial)	c 1500–present

### 2.1 Topography

London occupies part of the Thames Basin, a broad syncline of chalk filled in the centre with sands and clays. Above this 'bed-rock' lie the fluvial deposits of the River Thames arranged in flights or gravel terraces. These terraces represent the remains of former floodplains of the river. Some authors prefer to determine terraces for the individual tributaries of the Thames. The terrace gravels are commonly overlain with clayey silt deposits known as Brickearths. They also may form silt lenses between gravel terraces.

The site is on the edge of Lynch Hill Gravel, which spreads to the north, and the Hackney Gravel, exposed to the south (according to the British Geological Survey 1:10,000 TQ38ne drift geology map). These broadly correspond to the Stamford Hill/Corbetts Tay gravel and Leytonstone gravels illustrated in a section along the M11-link road by Gibbard (1994, 42). He shows the later lower Leytonstone Gravel between 10m and 20m OD and the older Stamford Hill / Corbetts Tay Gravel between 20m and 30m OD, the terraces separated by (gravelly silt?) deposits.

The site lies near the edge of a broad interfluvial that corresponds with Wanstead flats. The ground slopes c 20m OD down 10m to the Lea westwards across Leyton, the High Road using the beginning of the slope to ensure a well-drained route, and rising another 10m to the Green Man roundabout.

An auger survey of Fillebrook Road indicated dumped deposits and garden soils overlying gravels (site code LE-FB93).

### 2.2 Palaeolithic (Ice-Age hunter gatherers)

Archaic human species, *Homo Heidelbergensis* and Neanderthals, as well as later anatomically modern man, visited the British Isles in warm periods between



glaciations (Ice Ages). In this period Britain was connected to the rest of the European land mass and the Thames joined the Rhine.

The underlying terrace gravels on this site are rich in artefacts; Palaeolithic remains are (by far) the predominant type of local archaeological remains recorded on the Greater London Site and Monuments Register. Most of them are probably redeposited as river-rolled particles within the gravel, although it is possible that some contemporary land surfaces survive in the interleaving deposits. A camp or work site on a contemporary land surface might be represented by the group of material at Fillebrook Valley, which included an axe, a knife and other, less-defined, implements (GLSMR 061825-6-7 & 060556). Other finds are likely to be redeposited within the gravel (eg an axe found near the Church, 060560).

### 2.3 Later prehistory (Post-glacial hunters to early states)

Britain was reoccupied following the last Ice Age and cut off from the rest of Europe about 7,000BC. Increasingly sophisticated and localised hunting styles and cultures characterised the Mesolithic period. Remains of this period are rare to find however and none are recorded locally.

Subsequently, prehistoric remains in the London region mostly take the form of features cut into the natural subsoil, particularly Brickearth. Locally, Neolithic flint artefacts have been found about 500m to the west at Grove Green Lane and Bent Farm (061833 & 061834). Agriculture intensified and societies became more sophisticated throughout the Bronze Age and ritual deposits become recognisable, often in ponds or rivers. It is possible that a Bronze Age Axe found in Belgrave Road Aldersbrook was in just such a location (060220), certainly the area was later landscaped as ponds and they may have originated as a wet area in a hollow on the flats.

Increased wealth and sophistication also led to increasing conflict in tribal societies, as did proximity to the Roman Empire and the attractions of the slave trade. Increasing conflict encouraged nucleated settlement some distance from the area of the site and Iron Age remains are generally not found in the vicinity. However, the Late Iron Age also saw the development of a sophisticated road network and it is possible to speculate that a route followed the approximate line of the High Road up to Loughton Camp and/or Ambresbury Banks, in Epping Forest.

### 2.4 Roman

In 1715 Smart Lethieullier of Aldersbrook found a Roman mosaic pavement about 20ft by 16ft north of the Heronry Pond, Wanstead Park. The mosaic was found when holes were being dug for an avenue of trees and was never fully exposed but it did have a decorated black and white centre with a border of larger red tile *tesserae*. Finds included Roman pottery, coins and tiles, as well as bones. Unfortunately the pavement was not preserved or recorded. From 1978 to 1989 West Essex Archaeological Group (WEAG) carried out further investigations in an attempt to find the Roman villa. Roman material was found, including pottery from the first to the 4th centuries AD,

painted plaster and three coins, one of which could be identified as a denarius of Septimius Severus (AD 193-211)(Clark et al 1990, 66-85).

A Roman "M11" is thought to have run from a junction near Stratford through Chigwell where it is visible as a crop mark and it has been excavated (Clark 1998). A Roman road was found in the Beaumont Road Estate with the nearest road being Clyde Place, just off Capworth Street, TQ 3765 8762. Its roughly on a NE-SW orientation heading towards Whipps Cross and running parallel to, and north of, a band of Roman archaeology as found at Oliver Close Estate, Church Road, Leyton Grange, Leyton High Road, Leyton Green and Livingstone College Tower (as you head from the SW towards the NE) (Peter Moore pers. comm.).

## 2.5 Medieval

There are no early medieval remains in the vicinity of the site, of the Saxon and Norse migrations or the establishment of the kingdom of Essex. However, Leyton is a Saxon name: *\*Lea tun* Lea village. Leytonstone is named from a prominent landmark, possibly a Roman milestone, grave marker or wayside altar, which stood by the road. The old Roman road was still in use in the early Saxon period and a Saxon Spur was found on it out at Chigwell. Leyton is recorded in the Domesday book as several manors held in Lordship and a property held from Westminster Abbey. The new owners have Norman French names whilst the owners prior to 1066 had both Saxon and Norse names (eg *Swein*, modern Sven). Leytonstone may have fallen within the holdings of Robert son of Corbucion, who had woodland for ten times the number of pigs as the other landholders. The imposition of "Royal Forest" law on the area was a considerable curtailment of the local powers previous rights to exploit the woodlands (recorded as *Walwood*), although the commoners retained rights to forest pasture and "lopping" (pollarding) firewood. Settlement up till recent times took the form of wayside inns, commoners houses and cottages alongside the road with somewhat larger moated residences, such as Cann Hall, offset some distance from it. The junction of Cann Hall and High Roads provided a degree of focus to the otherwise dispersed medieval settlement pattern.

Excavated medieval remains are widespread but one of the characteristic late medieval moated manor houses was excavated at Low Hall, Walthamstow (WS-LH97) and a well at Temple Mills (062290). A medieval knife was recovered from the back garden of a house in Albert Road Leyton, just under a kilometre from the site (061774).

## 2.6 Post-medieval

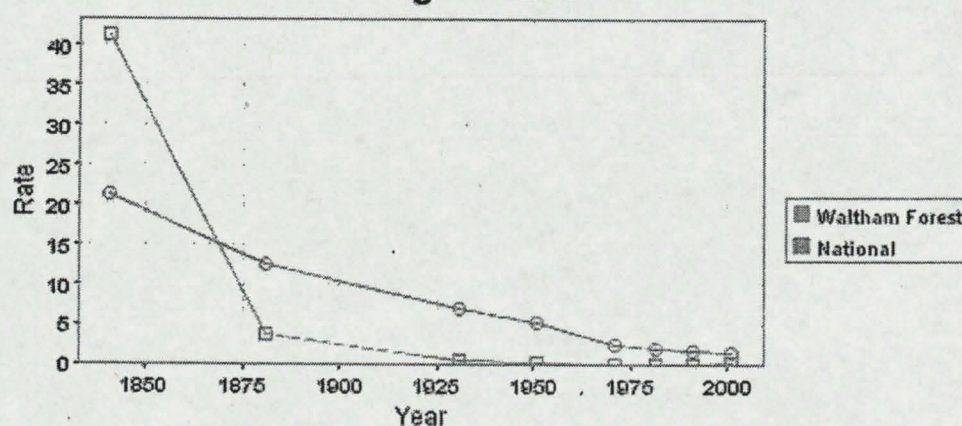
At the beginning of the 17th century Leytonstone was a very small hamlet situated about 8km north-east of the City of London. The High Road was (and is) an important route out of London, turnpiked in the 18th century. The increase of trade and establishment of empire from the 17th century onwards led to a demand for merchants dwellings within the local countryside. Defoe remarks in 1722 on the increase "of handsome, large houses" in "...Low Leyton, Leytonstone, Walthamstow, Woodford, Wanstead, and the towns of West Ham, Plaistow, Upton... etc". Stables from one such large house were recently recorded at 7(A and B) Davies Lane (DVS00). Much

the grandest of the houses was Wanstead Park, formerly Leyton Grange, situated about 1km to the east of the present site, roughly in the direction in which Davies Lane (then called Castleton Lane) runs. This house was rebuilt on a magnificent scale in the 18th century by a descendant of a governor of the East India Company, but was demolished in 1824 (Weinreb & Hibbert 1983, 922-3; VCH 1973, 204). Another large House (the Cedars) stood at the junction of Davies Lane and the High Road, opposite the site.

By the late 18th century terraces for wealthy businessmen (such as 694a-698a High Road) were becoming common. However it was the 19th century, and rail transport, which led to the incorporation of the area in built-up London. The proportion of the local population engaged in agriculture plummeted and number and value of dwellings rose until overcrowding in the late 19th century started the decline in social status of the area.

Year	Population	Rate assessment (rateable value)	Rate assessment (rateable value) at year 2000 values (using RTPI)	Average rate assessment per person at 2000 values
1775	1,313	£21 - 17s - 8d	£1,761.09	£1.34
1825	3,400	£8,000	£439,121.86	£129.15
1881	27,000	£125,000	£7,448,232.11	£275.86
1901	98,000	£400,000	£25,664,302.52	£261.88

### Agriculture



[http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/themesub.jsp?u\\_id=10056720&data\\_theme=T\\_IND&id=2](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/themesub.jsp?u_id=10056720&data_theme=T_IND&id=2)

### 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 2004), and the MoLAS *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS 1994).

A single trench 20m x 2m, aligned E-W, was excavated using a 360° mechanical excavator with a flat-bladed bucket and monitored by an archaeologist. The trench was located by topographic survey by the site engineer Prab Manicken, using EDI Surveys Ltd control (Hilti Nails on pavement outside site, Stn 1, 539400.576/1868918.928/19.576 Stn 2, 539403.668/186949.238/19.873). Further information can be obtained from [www.edisurveys.co.uk](http://www.edisurveys.co.uk) Tel 01473 21122, Job 8428, Dwg No 8428/T/01-01, surveyor P Rhodes. The topographic survey was then transferred to OS 1:1,250 scale map and taped trench detail added by Museum of London Geomatics department. This was use to produce an archive plot of observation locations.

Levels were calculated by direct measurement form the Ordnance Survey Benchmark on the Public House at the junction of Davies Lane and the High Road (No 666 High Road, 20.53m OD).

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).

The site has produced: 1 trench location plan, 3 context records, 1 section. In addition one bag of finds were recovered from the site (>1 standard archive box).

The site finds and records can be found under the site code LYH04 in the MoL archive.



### 3.2 Results of the evaluation

Remediation works had truncated the west side of the trench. Natural sandy clayey silt brickearth was found at 18.45m OD, 1.55m below the surface [1]. It was cut through by a large oval pit [2], the base of which was at 17.99m OD. It was over 5m in diameter and thought to be a quarry pit, possibly for extracting brickearth for use as daub. The pit was filled by brown dirty brickearth/soil [3], which also covered the base of the trench. A small group of London Coarse ware body sherds were recovered from the quarry fill. Together with a single glazed sherd also of London Ware. They are dated 1080–1200 (L. Whittingham pers. comm.). A modern ceramic land drain cut through the upper levels of the fill [3] and it was overlain with imported modern made ground.

### 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 remediation works has truncated the majority of the area of the site. The trench was a substantial proportion of the potential area of archaeological remains.

## 4 Archaeological potential

### 4.1 Realisation of original research aims

- What is the nature and level of natural topography?

Natural brickearth was recorded at 18.45m OD. This is significant as it falls at the top of the range for the Leytonstone/Hackney gravels. It is likely that this is a silt cap to that gravel terrace and that there is potential for interglacial land surfaces, especially if soliflucted colluvial deposits can be identified from the higher terrace overlying the lower silts. Both terraces are rich in Palaeolithic remains.

- What are the earliest deposits identified?

The earliest archaeological remains are of a medieval quarry pit.

- Is there any evidence of a Roman road?

No.

- Is there any evidence of other Roman activity?

No.

- Is there any evidence of medieval Leytonstone?

Yes, a medieval quarry pit which yielded significant numbers of pottery sherds given the limited nature of the excavation.

- What are the latest deposits identified?

Above the medieval quarry was only modern imported material.

### 4.2 General discussion of potential

The evaluation has shown that there is potential for survival cut features beneath medieval soil. However, contemporary land surfaces have been truncated by modern activity. Archaeological remains are unlikely above 1.5m below the present ground level.

### 4.3 Significance

Whilst the archaeological remains are of considerable local significance there is nothing to suggest that they are of regional or national importance.



## 5 Proposed development impact and recommendations

The proposed redevelopment of 675-683 High Road involves the construction of piled foundations. The impact of this on the surviving archaeological deposits will be limited to the area of the piles themselves. Deep drainage manholes or lift pits should not be sited in the area of the east side of the trench, or north of the trench. Nor should tower crane foundations, if a tower crane is used in construction. Pile caps and ground beams are considered unlikely to truncate archaeological deposits.

The assessment above does not suggest that preservation *in situ* would be the *only* appropriate mitigation strategy. Archaeological excavation could be considered if it is felt imperative to disturb remains below 1.5m beneath ground level. However, preservation of the remains, and limiting impact to that of deep piles, may be preferred.

The decision on the appropriate archaeological response to the deposits revealed rests with the Local Planning Authority and their designated archaeological advisor (English Heritage – GLAAS).

## 6 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Prab Manicken for site survey work and Trevor Mingail for kindly sharing site accommodation. Also, Lucy Whittingham identified the pottery at an early stage of the post-excavation work, allowing a quick assessment of the implications of the findings.

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Fig 1 Site location



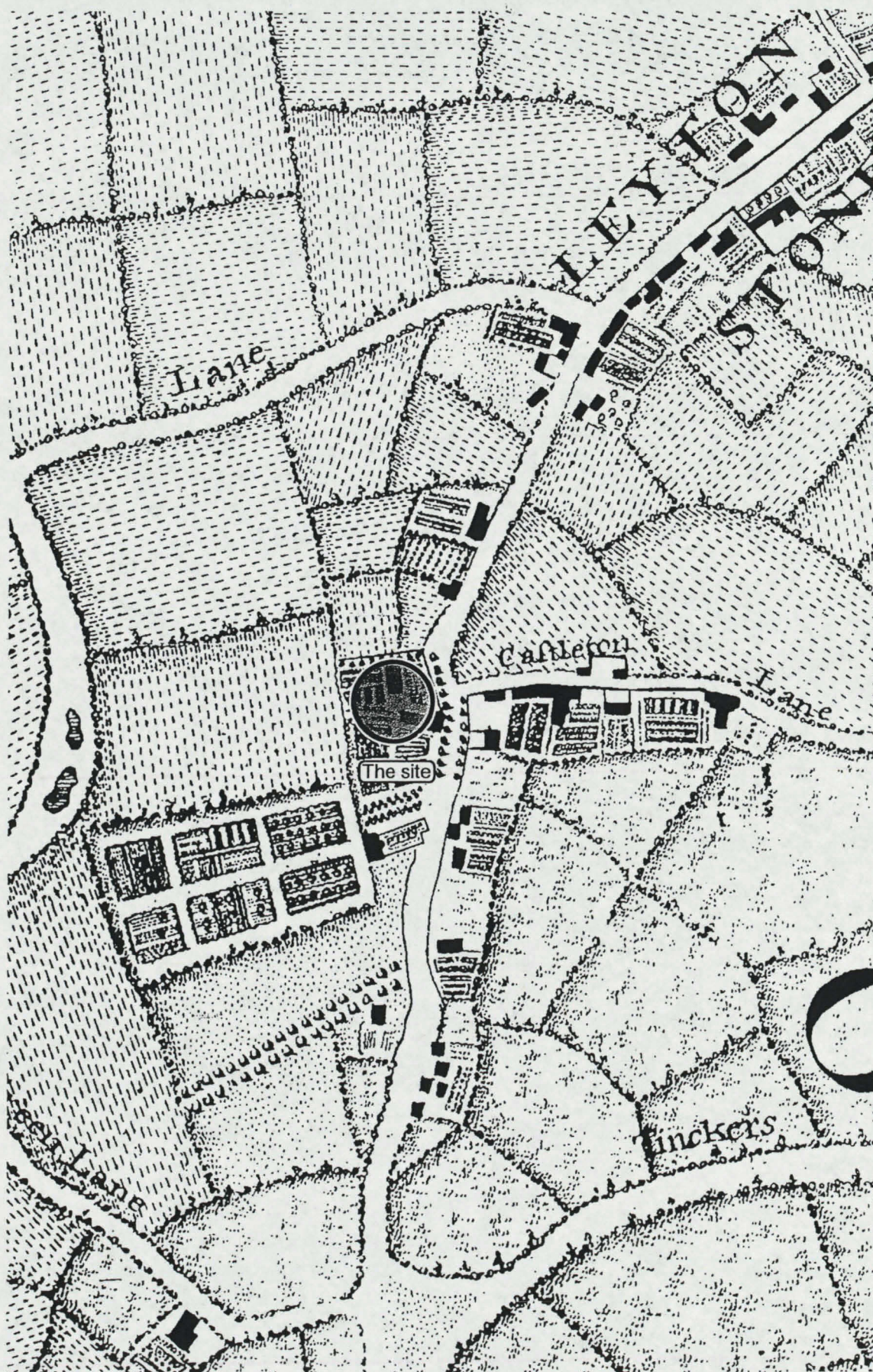


Fig 2 Site vicinity in the 1740s (Rocque)





Fig 3 Site vicinity in the 1770's (Chapman and Andre)



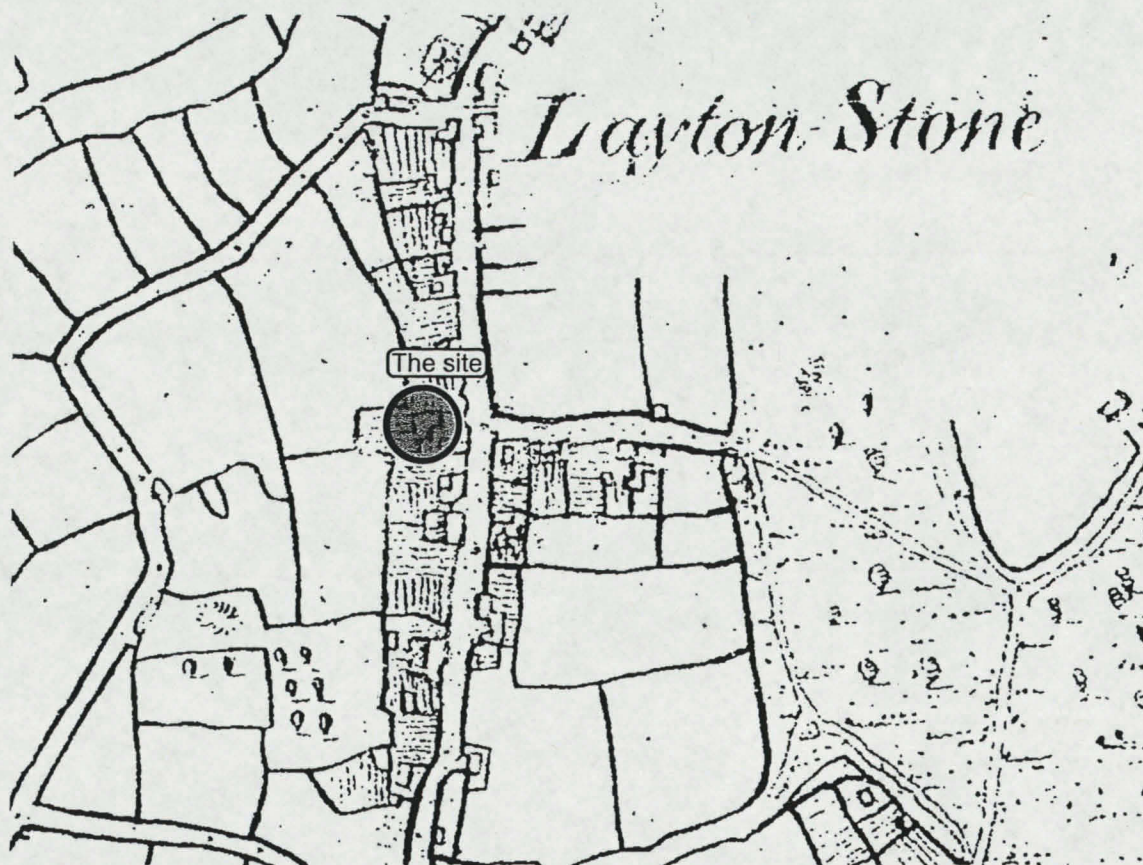


Fig 4 Site vicinity c 1805 (OS 1 inch to mile 1st edition)

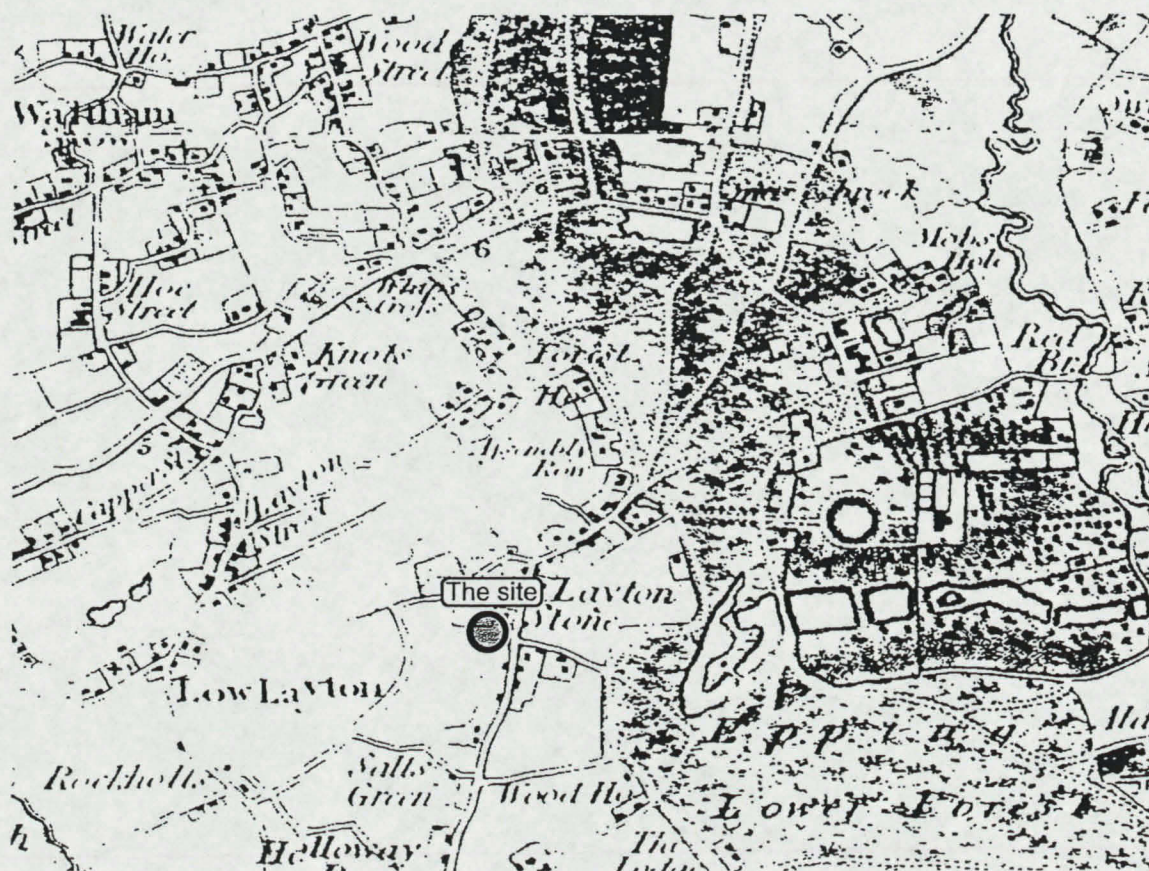


Fig 5 Site vicinity c 1799 (OS surveyor's drawing)





Fig 6 Trench location



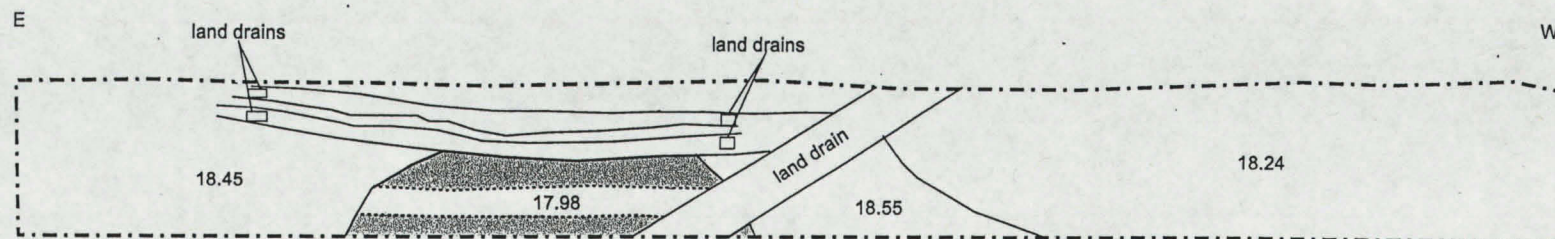


Fig 7 Plan of trench

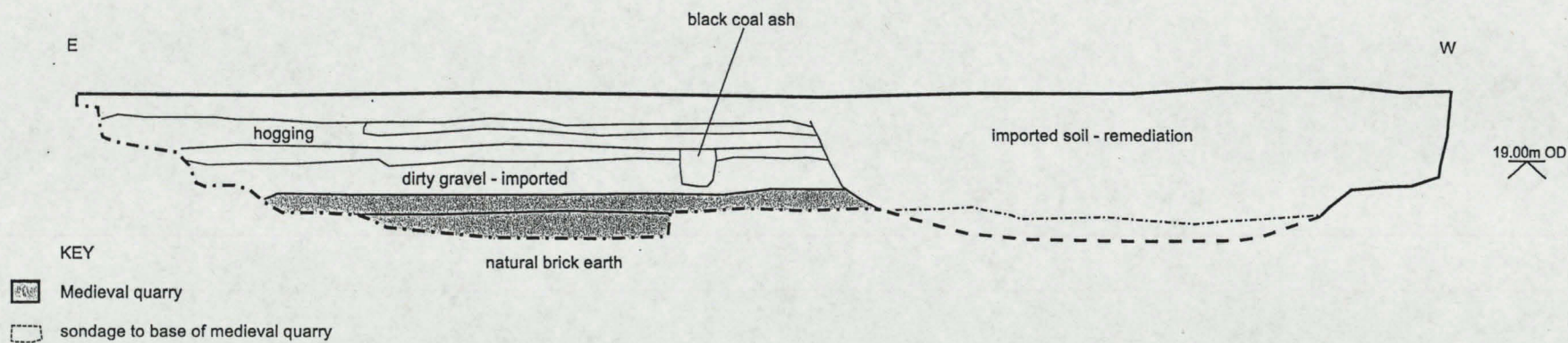


Fig 8 Section of trench

**OASIS ID: molas1-5154****Project details**

Project name	675□683 High Road, Leytonstone, London E11
Short description of the project	Evaluation - single trench - revealed a medieval quarry pit with pottery of 1080 to 1200
Project dates	Start: 18-11-2004 End: 19-11-2004
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	LYH04 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Area of High Ecological Value
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 3 - Retailing
Monument type	BRICKEARTH QUARRY Medieval
Significant Finds	BODY SHERD Medieval
Significant Finds	BASE SHERD Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Documentary Search','Targeted Trenches'
Development type	Housing estate
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 WALTHAM FOREST LEYTON 675□683 High Road, Leytonstone, London E11
Postcode	E11
Study area	1500.00 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 39387 86946 Point
Height OD	Min: 17.99m Max: 18.45m

**Project creators**

Name of Organisation	MoLAS
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	MoLAS
Project director/manager	David Lakin
Project supervisor	David Sankey
Sponsor or funding	Galliford Try

body

**Project archives**

Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Contents	'Ceramics'
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Media available	'Database','GIS','Images raster','Images vector','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Correspondence','Drawing','Manuscript','Map','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Report','Section','Unpublished Text'

**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	675-683 High Road, Leytonstone, London E11, an Archaeological Evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Sankey, D.
Date	2004
Issuer or publisher	Molas
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	A4 ringbound report
Entered by	David Sankey (DSankey@museumoflondon.org.uk)
Entered on	24 November 2004