



MYDDLETON HOUSE GARDENS
Bulls Cross
London EN2 9HG

London Borough of Enfield

Watching brief report

May 2010

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Watching brief report

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Summary (non-technical)

This report has been commissioned by the Lee Valley Regional Parks Authority in order to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out at Myddelton House Gardens.

Groundwork's for a new visitor facility in the stables block annexe was monitored between 22 February and 24 March, 2010. The first portion of the watching brief, undertaken on 22 and 23 February, 2010, entailed monitoring of trench excavation and borehole drilling to the west of the annexe building, in the area of a proposed extension. The second portion of the watching brief, undertaken on 25 March, 2010, entailed monitoring of pavement removal, drain-run excavation, and test pit excavation prior to access ramp construction and resurfacing in the courtyard to the south of the annexe building.

Natural gravel was observed at 1m below the present ground surface (c 32.5m OD). Above this possibly in-situ subsoil, probably re-worked by cultivation, was present up to as high as 0.2m below the present surface (c 33.3m OD). In the area of the courtyard, this was directly below the concrete base for the present paving. To the west of the annexe building, there were post-medieval (probably 19th- and 20th-century) backfill deposits and what may have been a buried tarmac surface within 0.3m of the present ground surface.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The watching brief took place in February and March, 2010, at Myddelton House Gardens, in the vicinity of the stables block hereafter called 'the site'. The site is located on the west side of Bull's Cross, at the junction of Bull's Cross and Turkey Street (west of the Great Cambridge Road) in the London Borough of Enfield (see Fig 1). The stables block is situated to the north of Myddelton House and has a walled courtyard to its east and an annexe building to its north-east (on the north side of the courtyard). The site comprises this annexe and courtyard and also the ground to the west and north-west of the annexe (ie, to the north of the stables block). The centre of the site is at OS National Grid Reference 534184 199189. Modern pavement level near to the site lies at c 33.5m OD. The site code is MYY10.

Archaeological monitoring was required during improvement works to develop a new visitor facility at the stables. The new facility will include reception, interpretation and tea rooms with new access ramps. In addition to work on and within the standing buildings, there will be a new, linking extension added to the north side of the stables block and the west side of the annexe, where there is presently an open-air storage area on hard standing, as well as the addition of two new ramps for access into the annexe: one to the south, within the courtyard, and one to the east.

Monitoring was carried out during groundwork's for the new structure (ie, the extension) and heat pump to the west and north-west of the annexe, and during ground work for the new ramp and associated resurfacing within the courtyard to the south of the annexe.

1.2 The planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the written scheme of investigation for the watching brief (MOLA 2010, Section 2).

1.3 Planning background

The archaeological watching brief was carried out pursuant to a condition placed on planning permission granted for improvements to Myddelton House Gardens.

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority and produced by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA). The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (IFA, 2001).

The purpose of the watching brief was to determine whether archaeological remains or features were present on the site and, if so, to record the nature and extent of such remains. As noted above, the watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation prepared by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA 2010).

The purpose of the present report is to analyse the results of the watching brief against the original research aims, and to suggest what further work, including analysis or publication (if any), should now take place.

1.5 Aims and objectives

The limited nature of the proposed works and the watching brief upon them made it unreasonable to establish many specific archaeological research objectives. The archaeological brief was essentially limited to establishing where, if at all, archaeological deposits may survive (presence/absence), recording where necessary, and to ensuring that the proposed groundwork's do not involve the destruction of any archaeological deposits of national significance. Nevertheless, in addition, a few research questions were outlined in the written scheme of investigation (MOLA 2010, Section 3.2):

- What was the 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 associated with Ermine Street on the site?
- Is there any evidence of Bowling Green House?
- Is there any evidence of 19th/early 20th century garden features?
- What are the latest deposits identified?

All research is undertaken within the priorities established in the Museum of London's *A research framework for London Archaeology 2002*.

2 Topographical and historical background

The following discussion of the topographical, historical and archaeological background of the site has been taken in its entirety from the written scheme of investigation (MOLA 2010, Section 2.5):

The drift geology of the Enfield area is characterised by the alluvial deposits of the River Lea in the east, and a band of brickearth in the central area of the borough. To the west London Clay is overlain in places by river terrace gravels or Boulder Clay. The site is situated over London Clay.

Located on an area of higher ground Myddelton House is situated at c 33.53m OD. The ground is fairly level to the north, east and west, but dips gradually to the south, overlooking the Turkey Brook.

There is little evidence for prehistoric settlement in Enfield. However the remains of a prehistoric sub-circular structure cut into the natural brickearth was found at Forty Hill School in 1992 (site code FHS92). It was sealed by topsoil, in the lower levels of which, worked flints and two sherds of late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age pottery were found (Gibson 1992)

During the Roman period the site was close to the line of a Roman road later known as Ermine Street. The road entered the parish south of Enfield Town and passed east of Forty Hill and Bull's Cross to the east of the site (VCH Middlesex vol V). There is the chance of associated roadside activity such as ditches and burials on the eastern side of the site.

During the Saxon and medieval periods the site was situated within farmland and by the late 16th century there were cottages in Bulls Cross Lane (now Bulls Cross).

The New River, an artificial cut bringing fresh water from Chadwell Spring, near Ware, to London, was completed by 1613. The course through the area was drastically altered in 1859 with a replacement section, including a new aqueduct over Maidens Brook, running from Turkey Street to Tenniswood Road (*ibid*).

By the mid 19th century the settlements in this area of Enfield had changed relatively little since 1572 and by 1914 the Bulls Cross area was still predominantly rural.

In the 16th century the site was occupied by Bowling Green House. In 2004, the Enfield Archaeological Society (EAS) found structural remains which are probably a part of Bowling Green House. The Elizabethan house was demolished in the 1820s (Dearne 2005).

Myddelton House is shown on the Ordnance Survey map (not illustrated) of 1880. Myddelton House was home to E A Bowles who devoted much of his life to the creation of the Garden (www.leevalleypark.org.uk)

Post-medieval demolition dumps, which included fragments of building material, domestic pottery and glass, were recorded by Enfield Archaeological Society on the site in 2005 (Dearne 2005).

3 The watching brief

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and recording during the watching brief was done in accordance with the written scheme of investigation (MOLA 2010) and the *Archaeological Site Manual* (Museum of London 1994).

The first portion of the watching brief, undertaken on 22 and 23 February, 2010, entailed monitoring of trench excavation for wall foundations in the area of hard standing to the west of the annexe and of borehole drilling in the grassy verge to the north-west of the annexe. The second portion of the watching brief, undertaken on 25 March, 2010, entailed monitoring of pavement removal, drain-run excavation, and test excavation (to prove depth of modern sub-base) prior to access ramp construction and resurfacing in the courtyard to the south of the annexe building. Slab-breakout, pavement removal, excavation and drilling were carried out by contractors, monitored by a member of staff from MOLA. Trench excavation in the area of hard standing to the west of the annexe was by mechanical excavator. All other excavation (not including borehole drilling) was done with hand shovels.

The locations of the areas of excavation were recorded by the monitoring archaeologist and were plotted on client-supplied site plans by offsetting from adjacent standing walls and divisions in the pavement.

The heights of observations were recorded, by hand measurement, as distance in metres below adjacent ground level (m bgl), and extrapolated from the nearest Ordnance Datum spot height to the excavations.

The site has produced one trench location plan and one sheet of sketch sections in addition to photographs and observation notes.

The site records can be found under the site code MYY10 and will be stored in the Museum of London archive. At a later date it is proposed that the records or a copy of them, may be transferred to a new museum at Myddelton House.

3.2 Results of the watching brief

For the locations of work monitored during the watching brief, see Fig 2.

<i>Foundation trenches for extension to annexe / stables block</i>	
Location	In an area of hard standing to the west of the annexe and north of the stables block
Dimensions	North-south trench: 9m x 0.5m East-west trench: 2.4m by 0.6m
Base of modern slab	0.09m bgl / 35.41m AOD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	0.87m / 34.13m AOD
Level of base of deposits observed	1.2m bgl / 33.3m AOD
Natural observed	0.96m bgl / 34.04m AOD

The foundation trenches were excavated to a depth of 1.2m in the area of hard standing (concrete surfacing) to the west of the annexe building and north of the stables block (Fig 3, Fig 4 and Fig 5). No significant archaeological artefacts or features were observed apart from a still-functioning brick drain and a buried layer of what may have been disintegrated tarmac. The drain ran east to west at a depth of 0.80m bgl. It was found crossing the north–south trench (for the west wall of the extension) about 3.6m to the north of the stables block's north wall. The drain was built of a single order of mostly brownish yellow bricks (plus at least one red brick) with their long axes aligned along the length of the drain. No mortar was observed. The drain measured 0.45m in diameter and its uppermost surface was reached at 0.80m bgl. The bricks are evidently of post-1666 date.

The bases of the trenches were in natural gravel (Fig 6), the upper surface of which was at 0.96m bgl. Above that level, within the north–south trench to the north of the construction cut for the brick drain, there was sandy silt that may have been natural subsoil and which appeared to have been re-worked to varying depths (Fig 7). This sediment was overlain at about 0.27m bgl by a former surface or sub-base composed of 300mm of disintegrated tarmac or bituminous industrial waste. The construction cut for the drain (visible just north of the drain itself) did not continue above this dark layer, lending support to the suggestion that it may represent a buried surface at 0.24m bgl. Above this level, and sealing both the bituminous layer and the backfill over the brick drain, there were several laminated layers and lenses comprising the sub-base for the concrete of the present ground surface. These laminated layers and lenses included interleaved dumps of sand, gravel, brick rubble, and black bituminous sand and pebble-sized particles that may have been disintegrated tarmac.

To the south of the brick drain, within the north–south trench, against the north wall of the stables block, the natural gravel at the base of the trench was overlain by 0.84m of sandy clay silt with inclusions of red and yellow brick fragments, mammal long-bone fragments, pieces of slate and at least two fragments of stone slab, possibly from a pavement. This layer is probably a backfill deposit, possibly within the construction cut for the stables block wall. It was not possible to determine the relationship between this layer and the backfill of the construction cut for the brick drain to the north, due to the collapse of the trench sides; however, all of the deposits above the natural gravel to the south of the brick drain appeared to be similar. Thus, the ground to the south of the brick drain in this area appeared to have been truncated down to the level of the natural gravel in the later post-medieval period (post-1666 and probably during or after the construction of the stables block).

The north wall of the stables block continued down to the base of the north–south trench, where there appeared to be a brick footing (although this was not fully revealed).

Within the east–west trench, the natural gravel was also overlain by the mixed backfill similar to that described above and, evidently having been re-deposited in the construction cuts for the brick drain and for the west wall annexe building.

The west wall of the annexe building sat on a two-step brick footing which was laid on a concrete strip foundation. The base of the brick footing was at 0.44m bgl. The depth of the concrete foundation was not determined (although it seemed to be tapering to a base at about 0.6m bgl).

<i>Ground-source heat pump borehole</i>	
Location	In the grassy verge to the north-west of the annexe building
Dimensions	0.2m diameter
Base of modern fill	About 0.1–0.2m bgl (base of turf and topsoil) / 34.9–34.8m AOD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	About 0.8–0.9m / 34.1–34.2m AOD
Level of base of deposits observed	About 1m bgl / 34.5m AOD
Natural observed	About 1m bgl / 34.5m AOD

The first borehole attempt was abandoned after a live water service was struck. The hole was entirely within the construction cut for the modern service. The table above describes the successful second borehole. Monitoring entailed observation of spoil as it was cast up by the auger.

As drilling progressed, dark brown topsoil gave way to stony, brown sand/silt with red brick fragments. This sediment became greyer with depth, although it continued to include fragments of red brick. At about 0.5m bgl, the spoil became noticeably less stony and appeared to be predominantly a mid-brown silt very similar to the subsoil observed in the northern half of the north–south trench (described above). The next change in the spoil was noted when the auger reached natural gravel at about 1m bgl.

<i>Courtyard area to south of annexe building</i>	
Location	To south of annexe building, within courtyard
Dimensions	test pit: 0.9m by 0.6m drain trench: 2m by 0.2m
Base of modern hard standing (paving on concrete)	0.2m bgl / 34.8m AOD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	0.4m bgl in test pit / 34.6m AOD 0.1m bgl in drain trench / 34.5m AOD
Level of base of deposits observed	0.6m in test pit / 34.4m AOD 0.3m in drain trench / 34.3m AOD
Natural observed	N/A

During the archaeological watching brief, small areas of cobbles were lifted and a small test pit was excavated to reveal near-surface ground-makeup in the area where the ramp will be constructed and the pavement removed and replaced in the northern half of the stables block's courtyard (Fig 8). The test pit (Fig 9) reached a maximum depth of 0.6m bgl. In addition to the test pit, a drain run was excavated to a depth of 0.3m bgl in the north-west corner of the courtyard (the corner between the stables block and the annexe building; see Fig 10). The strata revealed were the same as those seen in the test pit.

The modern paved surface is typically about 0.7m thick and sits on top of concrete hard standing that is about 1.3m thick. The base of the concrete is at about 0.2m bgl. Below this hard standing there is brown silty clay with occasional pebbles and roots. This may be a natural deposit or, more likely, a soil or subsoil re-worked by cultivation. The proposed ground works will not penetrate lower than 0.2m bgl and so no deeper excavation or further archaeological monitoring was required.

4 Potential of archaeology

4.1 Original research aims

The results of the watching brief are discussed below in terms of the research aims set out in the written scheme of investigation (MOLA 2010). Apart from a brick drain run, no archaeological remains were observed. The results of the watching brief suggest that, in general, backfill deposits and buried surfaces relating to the construction and subsequent use of the stables block are present to the west of the annexe building between the stables block's north wall and the brick drain that runs parallel to that wall at a remove of about 3.6m to the north. Further to the north and north-west of the annexe building, below the hard standing and grassy verge, there is potential for the survival of archaeological features that may pre-date the construction of the stables block and annexe, although no such features were observed during the watching brief. Within the courtyard to the south of the annexe building, there is potential for the survival of archaeological remains below the existing paving and concrete hard standing, although no such remains were observed during the watching brief.

- *What was the level of natural topography?*
Natural gravels were observed at about 1m below the present ground surface / 34.5m AOD to the west and north-west of the annexe building. In the northern part of this area, the natural gravel was overlain by silt that may have been re-worked (perhaps by cultivation) but ultimately *in-situ* subsoil that was reached at depths of between 0.27m and 0.5m bgl. Thus, the surface of natural gravel does not appear to have been truncated in this area, and the lower reaches of the subsoil are probably also essentially a natural deposit.
- *What are the earliest deposits identified?*
Apart from the standing buildings, there was a brick drain running parallel to the north wall of the stables block at a remove of about 3.6m to the north of that wall. The drain was built of post-1666 brick. A bituminous surface or layer, possibly disintegrated tarmac, which was found at about 0.24m bgl / 34.76m AOD, had apparently been cut through by the construction of this drain. If this layer is indeed a former bitumen-bound surface, then it probably dates to no earlier than the 19th-century. Thus, apart from the re-worked subsoil, for which there is no dating evidence, the earliest deposits found during the watching brief probably date to the 19th/20th century.
- *Is there any evidence of prehistoric activity on the site?*
- *Is there any evidence of Roman activity associated with Ermine Street on the site?*
- *Is there any evidence of Bowling Green House?*
- *Is there any evidence of 19th/early 20th century garden features?*

There was no evidence pertinent to the above research questions.

- *What are the latest deposits identified?*
The latest deposits identified comprise several laminated and interleaved layers and lenses of sand, gravel, brick rubble, and what may be disintegrated tarmac directly below the concrete hard standing to the west and north-west of the annexe building. These deposits seal the primary fill of

the construction cut for the brick drain described above and represent a one or more re-workings – possibly re-surfacings – of the area during the 19th and 20th centuries.

4.2 Significance of the data

The results of the watching brief are of very limited, if any, archaeological significance and there is nothing to suggest that they are of national, regional, or even broadly local importance.

5 Publication and archiving

Information on the results of the excavation will be made publicly available by means of a database in digital form, to permit inclusion of the site data in any future academic researches into the development of London.

The site archive containing original records will be stored, in accordance with the terms of the written scheme of investigation (MOLA 2010), with the Museum of London within 12 months of the end of fieldwork. At a later date it is proposed that the records or a copy of them, may be transferred to a new museum at Myddelton House.

In view of the limited significance of the data (Section 4) it is suggested that a short note on the results of the watching brief should appear in the annual round up of the *London Archaeologist*.

6 Bibliography

This bibliography includes works referred to in addition to those cited in the text of the report.

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VCH Middlesex: Vol 5

7 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID: molas1-75883

Project details

Project name Myddelton House Gardens

Short description of the project An archaeological watching brief was carried out on the grounds of Myddelton House Gardens in February and March, 2010, to monitor ground works for a new visitor facility in the stables block annexe. The first portion of the watching brief entailed monitoring of trench excavation and borehole drilling to the west of the annexe building, in the area of a proposed extension. The second portion of the watching brief entailed monitoring of pavement removal, drain-run excavation, and test pit excavation prior to access ramp construction and resurfacing in the courtyard to the south of the annexe building. Natural gravel was observed at 1m below the present ground surface. Above this, possibly in-situ subsoil, probably re-worked by cultivation, was present up to as high as 0.2m below the present surface. In the area of the courtyard, this was directly below the concrete base for the present paving. To the west of the annexe building, there were post-medieval (probably 19th- and 20th-century) backfill deposits and what may have been a buried tarmac surface within 0.3m of the present ground surface.

Project dates Start: 22-02-2010 End: 25-03-2010

Previous/future work Not known / No

Any associated project reference codes MYY10 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Site status English Heritage List of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest

Current Land use Other 14 - Recreational usage

Monument type BUILDING Post Medieval

Monument type DRAIN Uncertain

Monument type HARD STANDING Uncertain

Significant Finds NONE None

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

Prompt Planning condition

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON ENFIELD ENFIELD Myddelton House Gardens

Postcode EN2 9HG

Study area 0.20 Hectares

Site coordinates TQ 534184 199189 50.9576738791 0.184727758374 50 57 27 N
000 11 05 E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 32.50m Max: 32.50m

Project creators

Name of Organisation MOLA

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

Project design originator MOLA

Project director/manager Stewart Hoad

Project supervisor Michael Tetreau

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Name of Lee Valley Regional Parks Authority

sponsor/funding
body

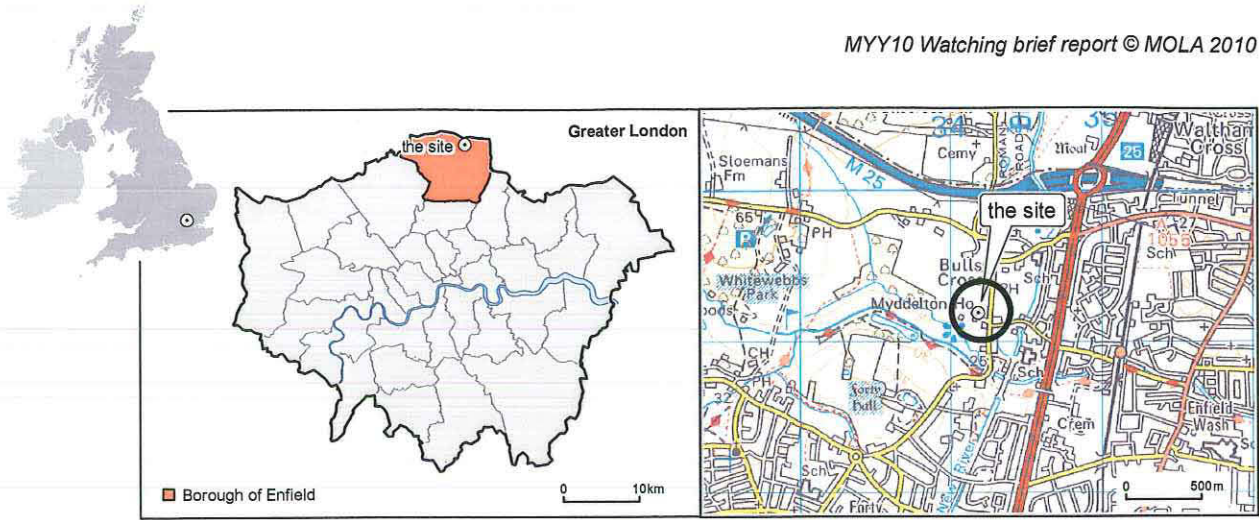
Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	MYY10
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	MYY10

**Project
bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Myddelton House Gardens, Bulls Cross, EN2 9HG, London: a report on the watching brief
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Tetreau, M.
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Entered by	Michael Tetreau (mtetreau@museumoflondon.org.uk)
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Scale 1:10,000@ A4

0 500m

Fig 1 Site location

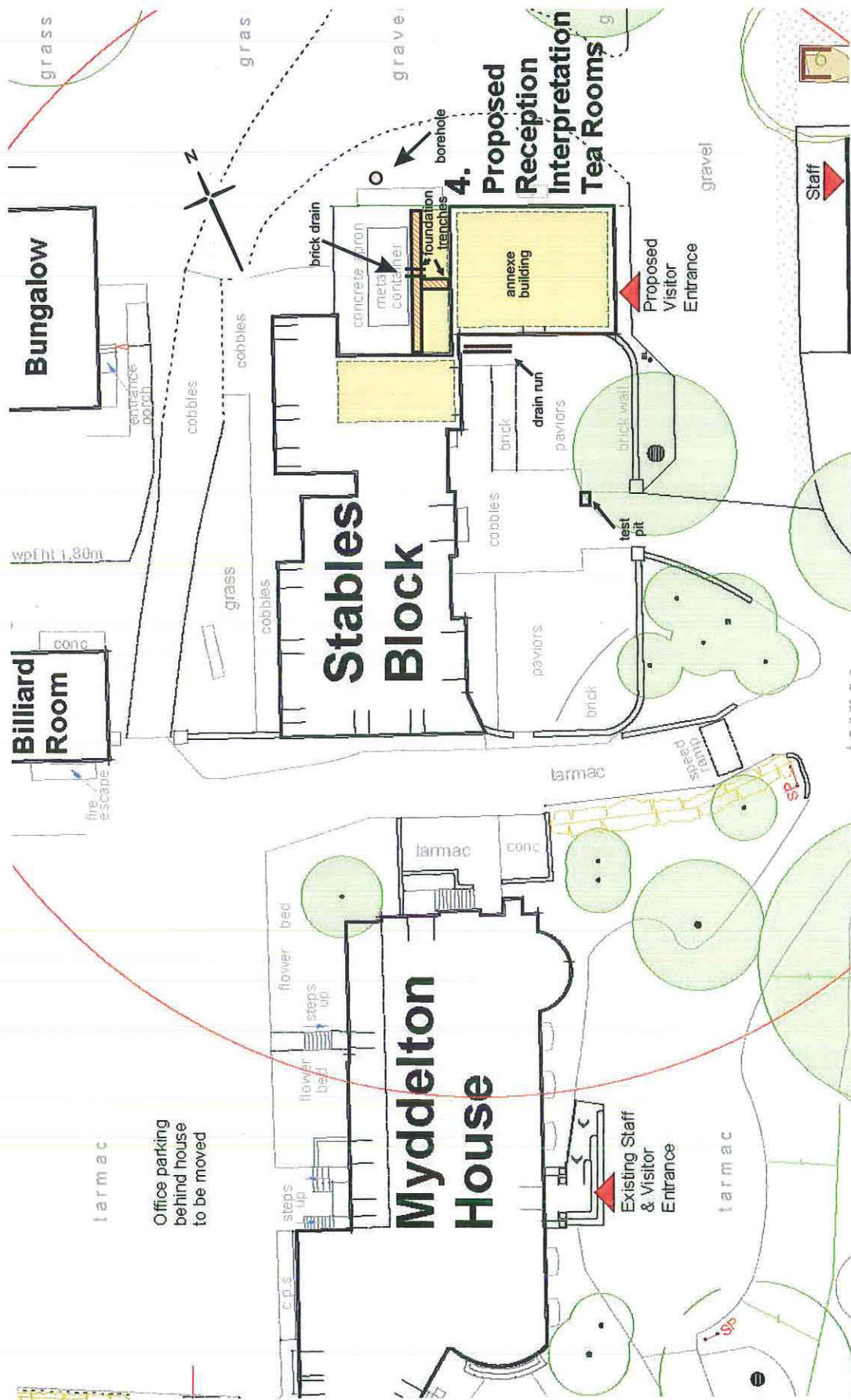


Fig 2 Ground works observed during the watching brief (annotations added to a base drawing by Andris Berzins + Associates, Chartered Architects: drawing no 08/07/ISB01)



Fig 3 Looking south towards where the extension to the annexe building will be built (ie, the area of foundation trench excavation and borehole drilling)



Fig 4 Looking south-east, showing excavation of the north-south foundation trench to west of the annexe building



Fig 5 Looking south, showing the foundation trenches excavated to the west of the annexe building (and north of the stables block)

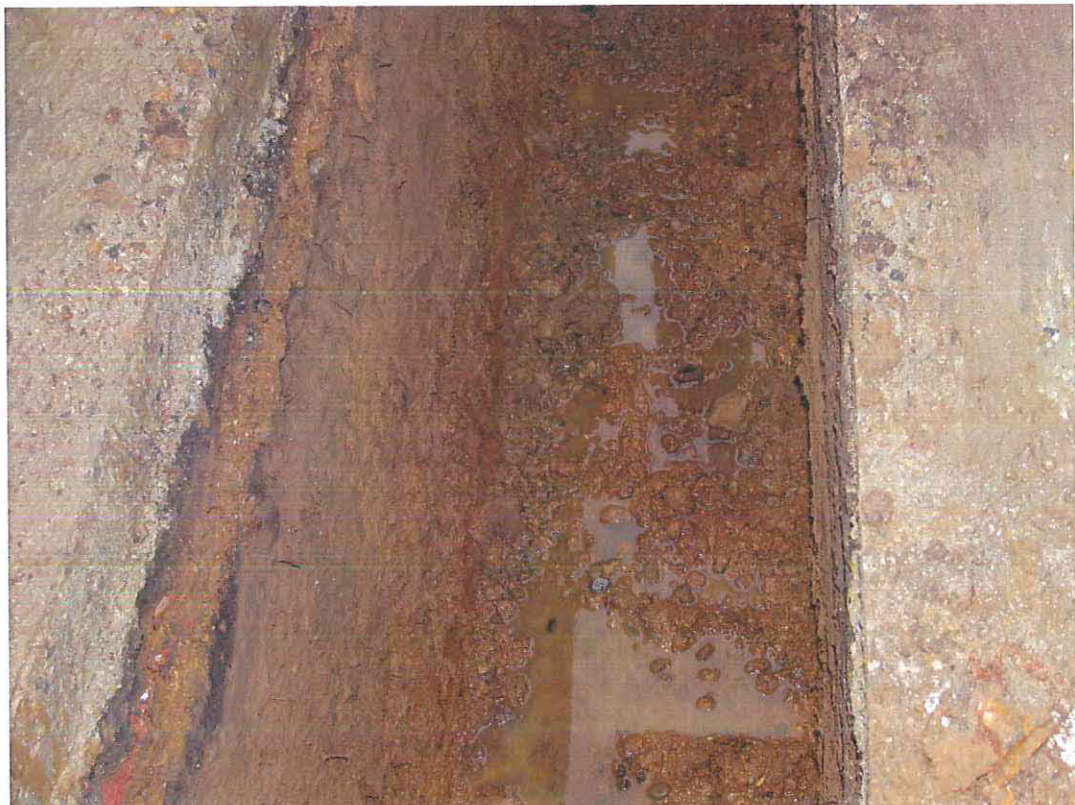


Fig 6 Looking south, showing natural gravel at the base of the north-south foundation trench (to west of the annexe building)



Fig 7 Looking east near the north end of the north-south foundation trench (to west of the annexe building)



Fig 8 Looking north across the courtyard with the annexe building opposite and the stables block to the left



Fig 9 Looking east over the test pit excavated within the stables block courtyard



Fig 10 Looking north-east over the drain run excavated within the courtyard just south of the annexe building