



**82–84 FOREST ROAD  
London E17**

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Evaluation report

August 2010

**82–84 FOREST ROAD  
London E17**

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Evaluation report

Site Code: FRO10

National Grid Reference: 536080 189410

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## **Summary (non-technical)**

*This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by the Museum of London Archaeology on the site of 82-84 Forest Road, Walthamstow, London, E17. The report was commissioned from MOLA by Longcross Construction Limited on behalf of the client Tesco Stores Limited.*

*In fulfilment of a planning condition an L shaped evaluation trench was excavated on the site during August 2010. The trench revealed that natural drift geology consisted of Head deposits overlain by Brickearth. A post-medieval landsurface consisting of a top or garden soil horizon was located. In the north-eastern part of the site part of two early 20th century brick buildings were located. These buildings may have been destroyed by bombing during the Second World War and this area subsequently used as a car park for the adjoining public house the Essex Arms (established 1865-1872, closed 2007).*

*The results of the field evaluation indicate that the archaeological potential of the site is very low. The report concludes that the impact of the proposed redevelopment is minimal and it is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work take place.*

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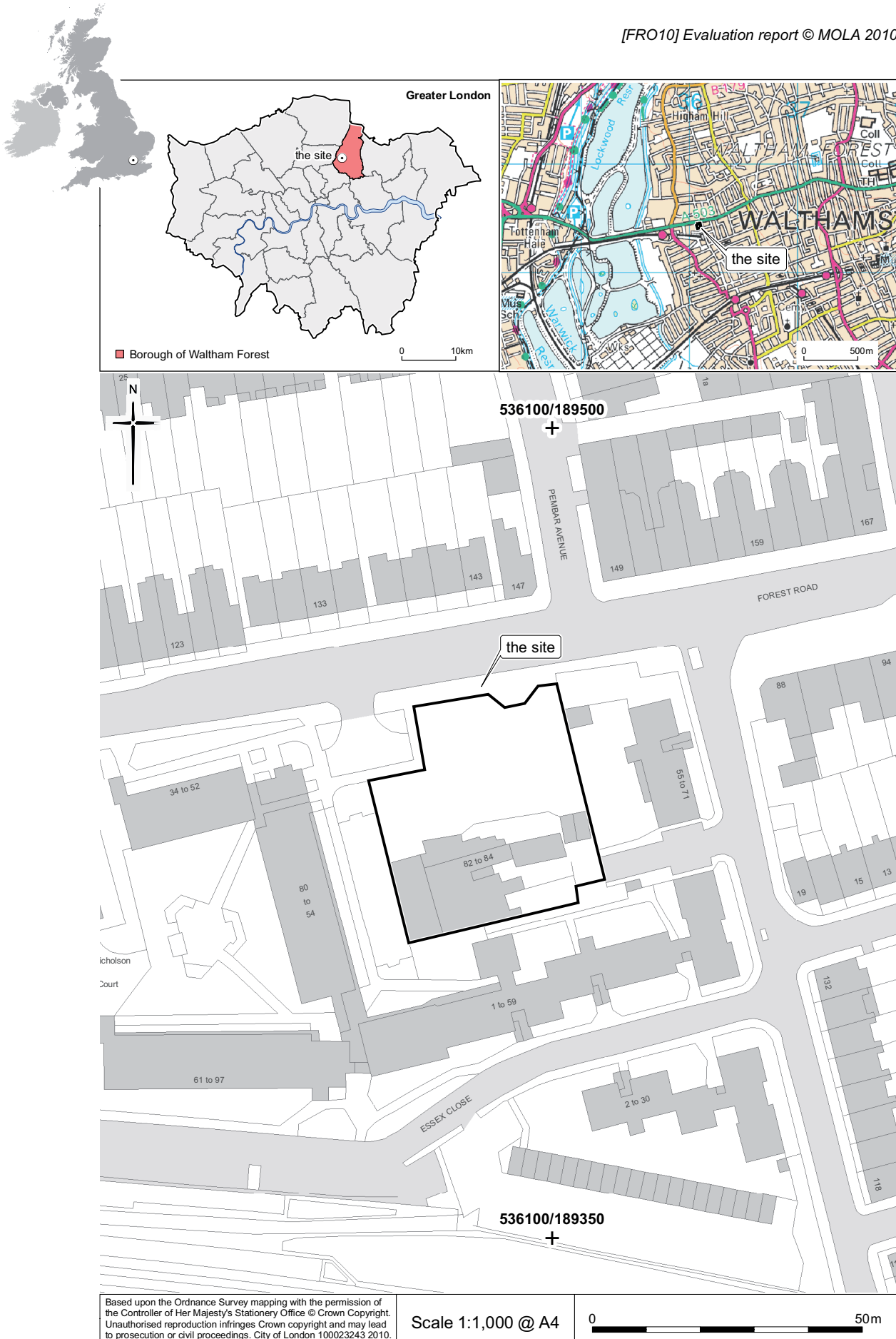
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## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Site background**

The evaluation took place at 82-84 Forest Road (formerly occupied by the Essex Arms public house), Walthamstow, London, E17, hereafter called 'the site'. This site comprises an irregularly shaped block of land (covering some 1430m<sup>2</sup>) bounded by Forest Road to the north, and various blocks of flats to the east, south and west (fig 1). The centre is National Grid reference 536080 189410. Modern street level near to the site lies at c 14.3m OD. The existing ground level of the site lies at 14.80 to 14.90m OD. An archaeological field evaluation was carried out between the 9th and 13th August 2010. The site code is FRO10.



Based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. City of London 100023243 2010.

Scale 1:1,000 @ A4

0 50m

Fig 1 Site location

## 1.2 Planning background

The proposed redevelopment of the site was granted planning consent (application no 2009/1429) on the 12th of February 2010. This planning consent was subject to a number of conditions. Condition 2, related to the built heritage of the site, which has already been carried out (Dwyer 2010). Condition 3 required archaeological investigation prior to commencement of development, which is the subject of this report.

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; Nielson, 2010).

## 1.3 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) by Longcross Construction Limited on behalf of the client Tesco Stores Limited. This report has been prepared in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA, 2008) guidelines.

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 (Section 2.2):

- What is the nature and level of natural topography?
- What are the earliest deposits identified?
- What are the latest deposits identified?



## 2 Topographical and historical background

### 2.1 Topography and Geology

London occupies part of the Thames Basin, a broad syncline of chalk filled in the centre with Tertiary sands and clays. This Tertiary series of bed-rock consists of London Clay. Above the bed-rock lie the Pleistocene (Quaternary) fluvial deposits of the River Thames and its tributaries 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 drift geology of the area consists of Taplow gravels, sealed by Brickearth. Brickearth is a generic term that describes an array of silty and clayey sediment types that may have accumulated by being blown in by wind (aeolian), or associated with rivers (fluvial or alluvial) during the early Holocene.

The impression is that due to periglacial action (freezing and slumping) the gravels and other sediments on the slopes along this stretch of the Lea valley have been churned up and were transformed into Head deposits during the Pleistocene and early Holocene. Head deposits are generally consist of a mass of angular rock fragments of varying size set within a clayey matrix.

The site is situated on eastern side of the River Lea valley and the natural topography sloping gently from east to west, the slope getting more pronounced near the line of Blackhorse Road, which clearly follows the line of higher ground which defines eastern edge of the river valley locally.

### 2.2 Prehistoric

The Lower and Middle Palaeolithic (c 500,000 to 40,000 BC) saw alternating warm and cold phases and intermittent perhaps seasonal occupation. During the Upper Palaeolithic (c 40,000–10,000 BC), after the last glacial maximum, and in particular after around 13,000 BC, further climate warming took place and the environment changed from being a treeless steppe–tundra to one of birch and pine woodland. It is probably at this time that this part of England first saw continuous human occupation. Subsequent erosion has removed many of the land–surfaces on which Palaeolithic people lived and hunted and consequently, most Palaeolithic finds are typically residual (located outside the context in which it was originally deposited), and often discovered during terrace gravel extraction.

The Mesolithic hunter-gather communities of the postglacial period (c 10,000–4,000 BC) inhabited a still largely wooded environment. The site is situated north of the River Thames and close to one its tributaries the River Lea, which would have been provided a predictable source of food and water, as well as a means of transport and communication. No Mesolithic remains have been found in the vicinity of the site.

The Neolithic (c 4000–2000 BC), Bronze Age (c 2,000–600 BC) and Iron Age (c 600 BC–AD 43) are traditionally seen as the time of technological change, the establishment of farming and settled communities, and forest clearance occurred for

the cultivation of crops and the construction of communal monuments, and with increasing population and pressure on available resources throughout each period.

### **2.3 Roman**

The area immediately around Walthamstow in the Roman period is not well known and there are no known significant Roman sites or finds within the area of the proposed development.

### **2.4 Saxon and Medieval**

Following the withdrawal of the Roman army from England in the early 5th century AD the whole country fell into an extended period of socio-economic decline. It is likely that the site was situated in woodland during throughout much of the early (AD 410-1066) and later medieval (AD 1066-1485) periods. The nucleus of the pre-Conquest and medieval settlement lay at Church End around the church of St Mary's Walthamstow. This church was founded in the 12th century by descendants of Ralph de Toni, standard-bearer to William the Conqueror, whose family owned the parish until 1427.

### **2.5 Post-medieval**

Until the 19th century Walthamstow was largely rural, with a small village centre surrounded by a number of large estates. The main route through the district was Hoe (ridge) Street, which was named by 1513. Additionally there were various small lanes, crossing the town. One of these roads now known as Forest Road, where the site is situated, was originally named Clay Street.

The earliest representations of the site are provided by Rocque's Survey of London of 1741–45, and Chapman and André's map of Essex of 1777, which show the site as lying in open ground on the southern side of Clay Street, the road which ran between 'Hilyar's Tole Bridge over the River Lea to the west, and Woodford to the east. The 19th century transformed Walthamstow into a heavily populated and industrialised urban area.

The 1843 Tithe map of the parish of Walthamstow indicates that the site had still not been built on, but some development of villas and the laying out of gardens had occurred. The 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of Walthamstow Parish of 1865 showed the site as a vacant plot on the eastern side of Essex Grove, a short street which had been laid out, along with Cross Street, on the southern side of Clay Street.

The terrace of three buildings which contained the Essex Arms appears to have been constructed along the eastern side of Cross Street between 1865 and 1872, when the Essex Arms was granted a beer and wine licence (see cover). The pub originally occupied the central of the three properties, which was larger, being three window bays in width (the neighbouring properties to the north and south were two window bays wide). The first freeholder of the pub in 1872 was the Stag Brewery of Pimlico, and the first landlord was George William Barker, who ran the pub until 1899 (Dwyer 2010; Waltham Forest Oral History Workshop, 2009).

During the 1880s the land on the southern side of Clay Street (which was re-named Forest Road) surrounding the site was developed by Sir Courtenay Warner,

constructing houses and flats for the working classes. In the process, a new clientele for the pub was created. In order that Warner's new housing development could be connected with London, he requested that the new Tottenham and Forest Gate Railway should be constructed through the area. This necessitated the demolition of many new buildings, as the line cut through the existing street layout. Blackhorse Road Station opened in 1894.

In 1894 the pub expanded into the neighbouring building to the south. At around this time, possibly in 1900, when building alterations are recorded as having been carried out, the ground floor of the pub was remodelled, to accommodate multiple entrances, an advertising fascia and consoles, and large glass windows with etched designs. During the 1910s the pub expanded into the house at the northern end of the short terrace, but the exterior of the ground floor was not altered, the canted bay window was retained, and the external door converted to a window (Dwyer 2010). The Ordnance Survey Map (Walthamstow West, London sheet 14) for 1913, showed the Essex Arms and to the north of it two vacant building plots (fig 2).

Walthamstow was seriously damaged by bombing during the Second World War, and most of the buildings occupying the area to the east of the site were destroyed (Wyld 1989). As a result of this destruction much of the housing in the immediate vicinity of the Essex Arms was subsequently rebuilt as flats. However, the Essex Arms was undamaged and continued to thrive hosting talent nights and live music. The pub finally closed in 2007. To the north of the pub was situated a car park.

### 3 The evaluation

#### 3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and monitoring during the evaluation was carried out in accordance with the preceding *Method Statement* (Nielsen, 2006), and the MoLAS *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS, 1994).

Two archaeological evaluation trenches each 20m long and 2.0m wide forming an L shaped arrangement were planned within the former pub car park (to the north of the recently demolished standing building and away from the live electrical cables). The slab/ground was broken out and cleared under MOLA supervision. Trenches were excavated by machine and monitored by a member of staff from MOLA (fig 3). The fieldwork was carried out between the 9th and 13th August 2010.

The locations of the evaluation trenches were recorded MOLA Geomatics and plotted on the OS grid. Geomatics staff also used GPS to provide the OD value for a site datum (15.52m 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: a trench location plan, 17 context records; four trench plans at 1:20 and a site matrix. The site records can be found under the site code FRO10 in the MoL archive.



Fig 2 Detail from Ordnance Survey map of 1913

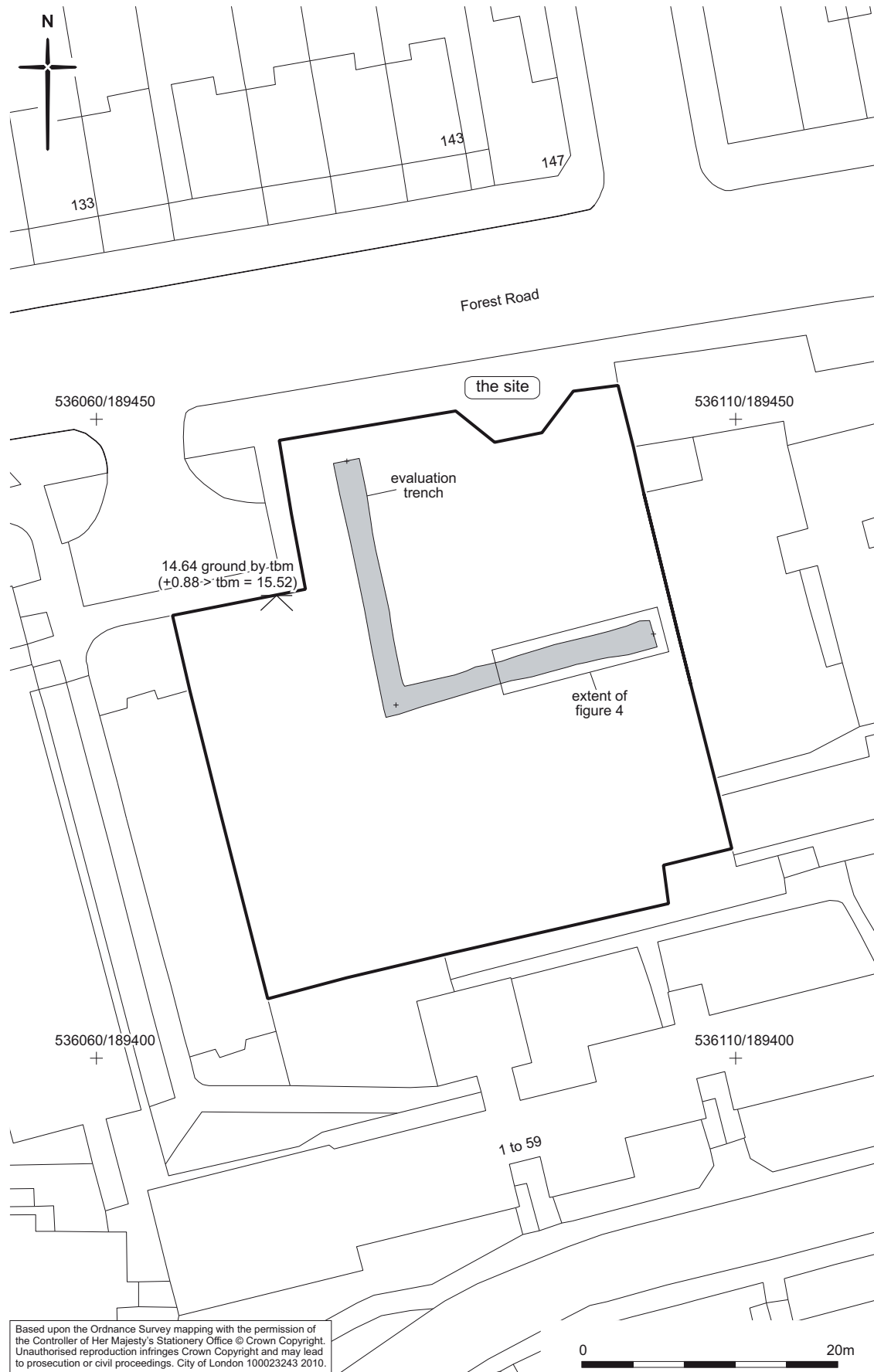


Fig 3 Trench location plan, showing location of fig 4

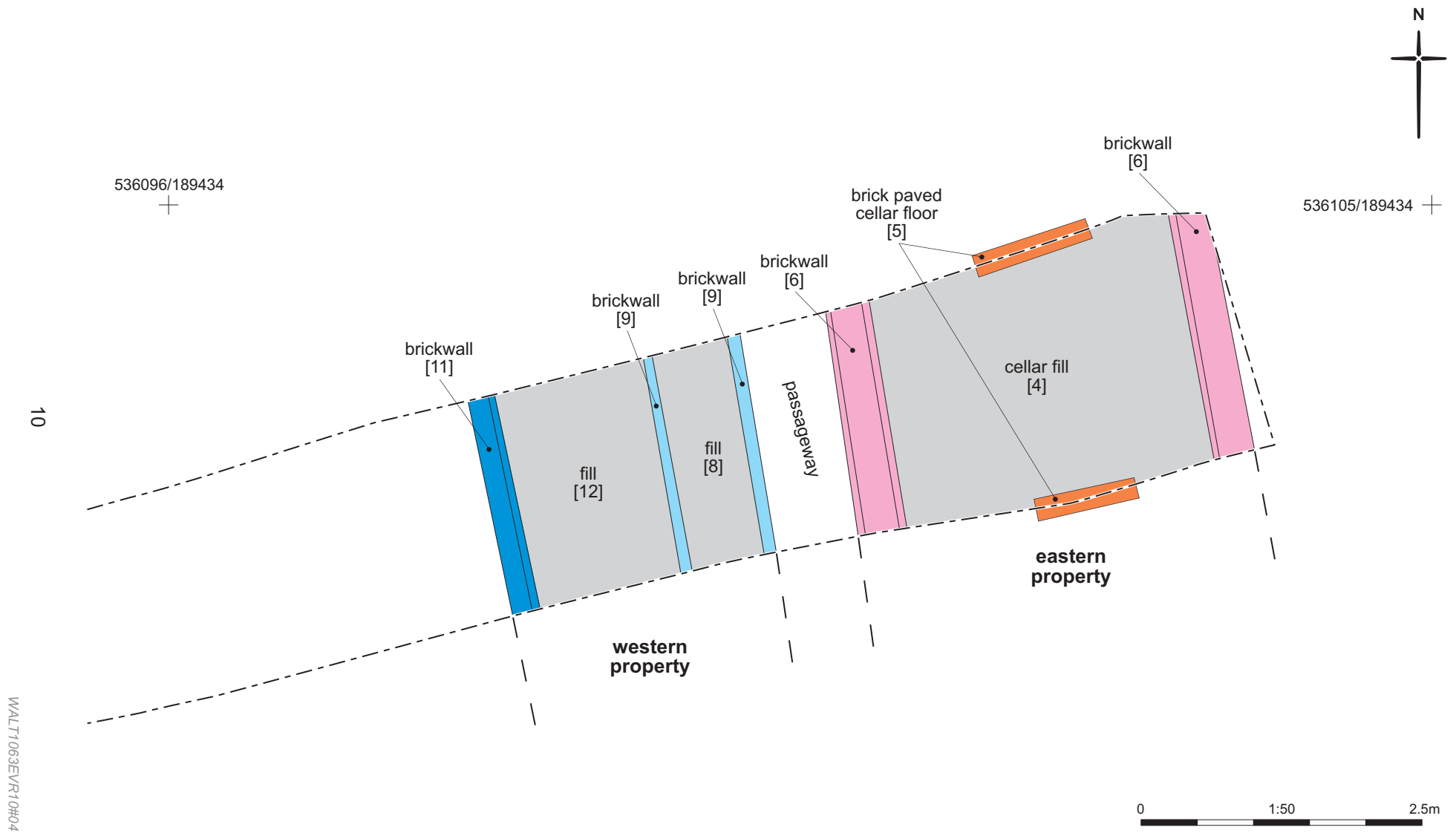


Fig 4 Building foundations located in the eastern arm of the trench

### 3.2 Results of the evaluation

In the base of both the northern and eastern arm of the trench the top portion of the natural geology – Head deposits were recorded at between 13.97 and 13.49m OD, showing that the top surface of this material undulated [2] (not illustrated, numbers in square brackets refer to context numbers assigned to structures and deposits). The Head deposits consisted of an orangey brown sandy clay, discoloured by ferrous staining, containing abundant flint gravel varying in size from grit to sub-angular cobbles. This material was sealed by a layer of Brickearth varying in thickness from 0.25 to 0.50m, its top surface varied between 14.07 and 14.35m OD. This brickearth consisted of a mottled (by biological action) pale brown and pale greyish-brown slightly fine sandy clayey silt, containing a few pebbles [1]. The top of the Brickearth was marked by a diffuse interface due intense biological action which has transformed the upper part of this deposit into topsoil and lower portion into a subsoil horizon. The top soil horizon consisted of a uniform layer 0.20 to 0.30m thick of very dark greyish-brown fine sandy silt, which contained fragments of earthenware flower pots [3]. Its top surface varied between 14.57 and 14.38m OD. This area was farmland during the 18th century (see 2.5) and was not developed until the 19th century, when the Essex Arms was constructed between 1865 and 1872 (see 2.5). However, the rest of the site appears to have remained open space, probably used as either gardens or allotments until after 1913 (fig 2), when more of the site was built over. There were two localised variations to the top and subsoil succession [15] and [16]. The top soil was sealed by modern deposits, bisected by service trenches and sealed by modern deposits and the tarmac surfaces (14.79 to 14.90m OD) of the pub car park.

Within the far end of the eastern arm of trench the top and subsoil horizons had replaced by a series of north-south aligned truncated brick-built wall foundations, which on stylistic grounds (red and yellow frogged bricks dimensions 9x4x2½ inches) are of post 1840 date. Cartographic evidence indicates that these buildings were constructed after 1913 and then demolished during the latter part of the 20th century. Possibly these buildings were destroyed by bomb damage during the Second World War (see 2.5). These wall foundations are interpreted either as the rear portion of two adjoining properties which fronted onto the south side or outbuildings attached to rear of these properties of Forest Road (fig 4). The most easterly of these two properties was represented by two parallel stock brick walls [6] each 0.25m wide, and 2.90m apart. The area between these walls was occupied by a shallow basement with traces of a paved brick floor (top 13.93m OD), below which was Head deposits [2]. The space between these walls was infilled with a loose mass of soil containing abundant fragments of stone roof slate and corrugated sheet asbestos cement [4]. This infill is interpreted as demolition material and contained no datable finds.

The two properties were apparently separated by a north-south aligned alley or passageway 0.80m wide. The western property consisted of three parallel wall foundations (fig 4). The eastern and central wall foundations were both single brick stretcher bond [6], which implies that they part of a single storey outhouse, as house walls are normally double brick (like those of the eastern property). The space between these walls was filled with loose soil containing abundant fragments of stone roof slate [8]. The western wall of this property consisted of a double brick wall [11]. This wall consisted of two distinct builds, the lower portion was constructed of red bricks and the upper of yellow stock bricks. This change may reflect different types of



brick being used for the foundations and superstructure. The space between this wall and the nearest single brick wall was infilled with a distinct series of horizontal layers of clayey silt, ash/cinders, which appear to represent successive dumps of waste material, as opposed to demolition material seen infilling the other spaces between walls. There were no sign of any floors within this property, which suggests it may have possessed suspended timber floors which were removed before demolition. The remains of these buildings were sealed by the same car park surfaces mentioned earlier.

The area of the former public house occupying the southern part of the site was not investigated, as it was considered probable that its foundations would have destroyed any earlier foundations or features.

### **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'. The evaluation revealed nothing of archaeological significance. The earliest human activity on site was represented by the foundations of parts of two early 20th-century buildings, which were possibly destroyed by bombing during the Second World War. Most of the evaluation trench was occupied by natural deposits overlain by modern topsoil, which is interpreted as gardens or allotments.

## 4 Archaeological potential

### 4.1 Realisation of original research aims

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

Natural drift geology consisted of Head deposits found at 13.97 and 13.49m OD [2], which were sealed by a layer of brickearth [1]. The local topography consists of a slight slope from east to west leading down into the Lea valley.

- *What are the earliest deposits identified?*

The earliest deposits recorded was the garden soil, which represents part of the post-medieval land surface, predating the early 20th century properties located within the eastern portion of the site.

- *What are the latest deposits identified?*

The latest deposits identified were the tarmac car park surfaces and various modern service trenches.

### 4.2 General discussion of potential

The evaluation has shown that the potential for the survival of ancient ground surfaces (horizontal archaeological stratification) is very low. There is some potential for the survival of cut features on the site such field ditches, although no such features were seen during the evaluation and their presence is now considered very unlikely.

### 4.3 Significance

The results of the evaluation have produced no evidence for the survival of archaeological remains of local, regional or national significance.

## 5 Assessment by EH criteria

The recommendations of the GLAAS 1998 guidelines on *Evaluation reports* suggest that there should be:

'Assessment of results against original expectations (using criteria for assessing national importance of period, relative completeness, condition, rarity and group value) .....

(Guidance Paper V, 4 7)

A set of guide lines was published by the Department of the Environment with criteria by which to measure the importance of individual monuments for possible Scheduling. These criteria are as follows: *Period*; *Rarity*; *Documentation*; *Survival/Condition*; *Fragility/Vulnerability*; *Diversity*; and *Potential*. The guide lines stresses that 'these criteria should not...be regarded as definitive; rather they are indicators which contribute to a wider judgement based on the individual circumstances of a case'.<sup>1</sup>

In the following passages the potential archaeological survival described in the initial Assessment document and Section 3.2 above will be assessed against these criteria.

### *Criterion 1: period*

As no archaeological remains were encountered during the evaluation the Application site is not characteristic of any particular period.

### *Criterion 2: rarity*

There is nothing to suggest that any of the likely archaeological deposits are rare either in a national or regional context.

### *Criterion 3: documentation*

There are no surviving documentary records for remains in the area before 1700, when the whole area was farm land. However, there is extensive documentation concerning the Essex Arms public house (established 1865-72)

### *Criterion 4: group value*

None of the likely archaeological deposits are associated with contemporary single Monuments external to the site.

### *Criterion 5: survival/condition*

The evaluation has demonstrated that the potential for the survival of ancient ground surfaces (horizontal archaeological stratification) is very low. There is some potential for the survival of cut features on the site, although no such features were seen during the evaluation and their presence is unlikely.

### *Criterion 6: fragility*

There is no indication that archaeological remains of any fragility are present on the site.

### *Criterion 7: diversity*

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<sup>1</sup> Annex 4, DOE, Planning and Policy Guidance 16, (1990). For detailed definition of the criteria see that document. Reference has also been made to Darvill, Saunders & Startin, (1987); and McGill, (1995)

As above.

*Criterion 8: potential*

The absence of archaeological remains in the evaluated area, suggest that the archaeological potential of the site is very low.

## **6 Proposed development impact and recommendations**

The proposed redevelopment of the site involves the demolition of existing building and its replacement by a supermarket with residential accommodation above. The impact of this development will be to disturb and truncate any archaeological deposits which may exist on the site. However no archaeological features were observed on the site and consequently the archaeological potential is deemed to be very low. Therefore, it is therefore recommended that no further investigation take place. The decision on the appropriate archaeological response to the proposed redevelopment rests with the Local Planning Authority and their designated archaeological advisor.

## 7 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Longcross Construction Limited for sponsoring the fieldwork, plus Simon Stevens and the other MOLA staff for their assistance during both the evaluation and post-excavation.

## 8 Bibliography

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## 9 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID: molas1-81146

### ? Project details

Project name	82-84 Forest Road, Walthamstow, London E17
Short description of the project	archaeological evaluation carried out by the Museum of London Archaeology on the site of 82-84 Forest Road, Walthamstow, London, E17. In fulfilment of a planning condition an L shaped evaluation trench was excavated on the site during August 2010. The trench revealed that natural drift geology consisted of Head deposits overlain by Brickearth and topsoil. A post-medieval landsurface consisting of a top or garden soil horizon was located. In the north-eastern part of the site part of two early 20th century brick buildings were located. These buildings may have been destroyed by bombing during the Second World War and this area subsequently used as a car park for the adjoining public house the Essex Arms (established 1865-1872, closed 2007), which was the subject of standing building survey earlier (Molas; 80757)
Project dates	Start: 09-08-2010 End: 13-08-2010
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	molas:80757 - OASIS form ID
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Community Service 2 - Leisure and recreational buildings
Monument type	field Post Medieval
Monument type	houses Modern
Significant Finds	flower pots Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Targeted Trenches'
Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Status Complete

### ? Project location

Site location	GREATER LONDON WALTHAM FOREST WALTHAMSTOW 82-84 Forest Road
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Postcode	E17
Study area	1430 Square metres
Site coordinates	NGR - TQ 536080 189410 LL - 50.9488350722 0.187012925992 (decimal) LL - 50 56 55 N 000 11 13 E (degrees) Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 13.49m Max: 13.97m
Status	Complete