REGENT'S PLACE
Osnaburgh Street
London
NW1

London Borough of Camden

Archaeological evaluation report

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REGISTERED ORGANISATION IFA

MUSEUM OF LONDON
Archaeology Service

Fig 5 Strade House, Trench 2

Fig 6 Fottett House, Trench 7

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Site Code: EOL06
National Grid Reference: 528945 182292

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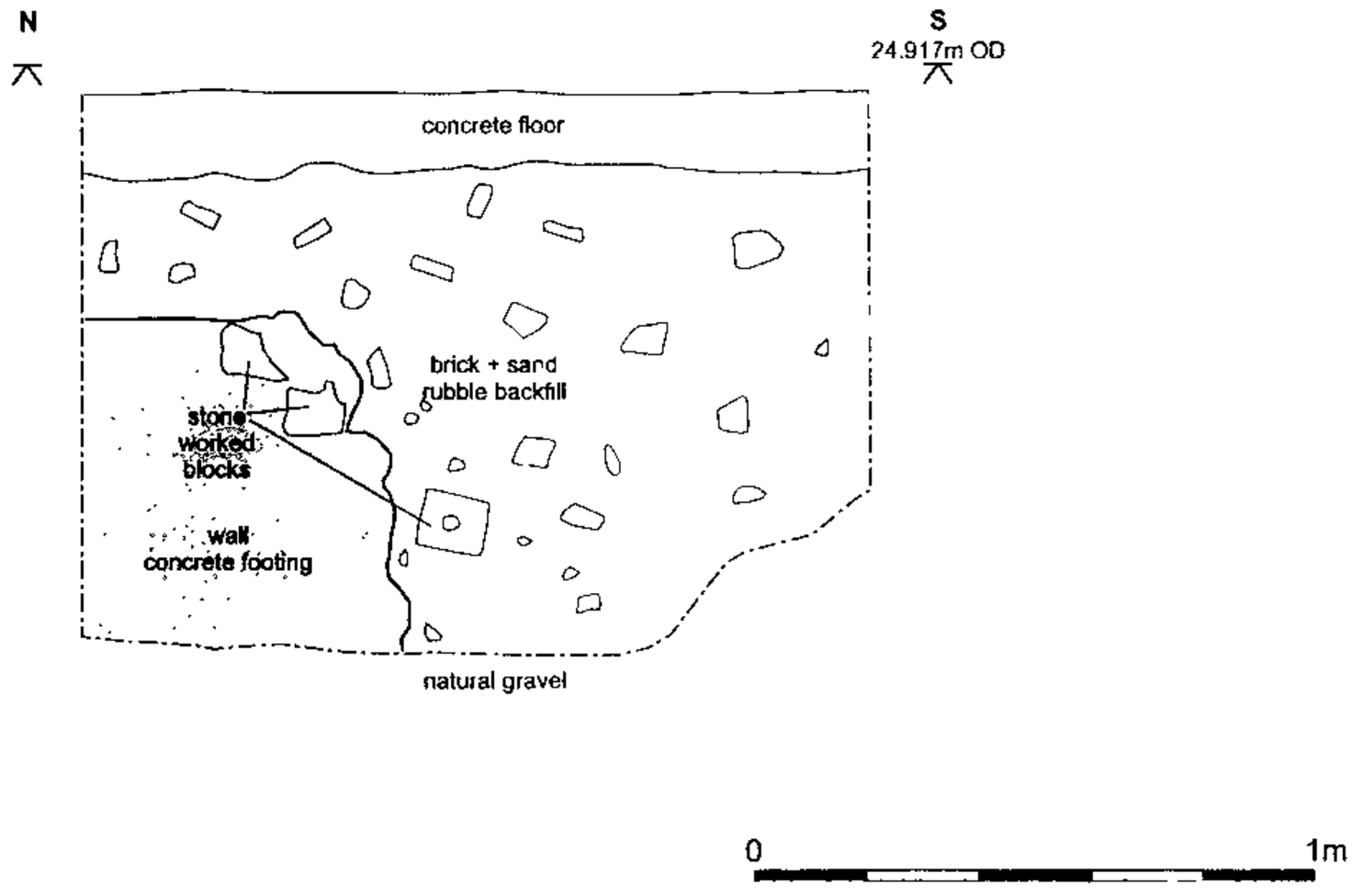

Fig 3 Section 1: west facing section of trench 1

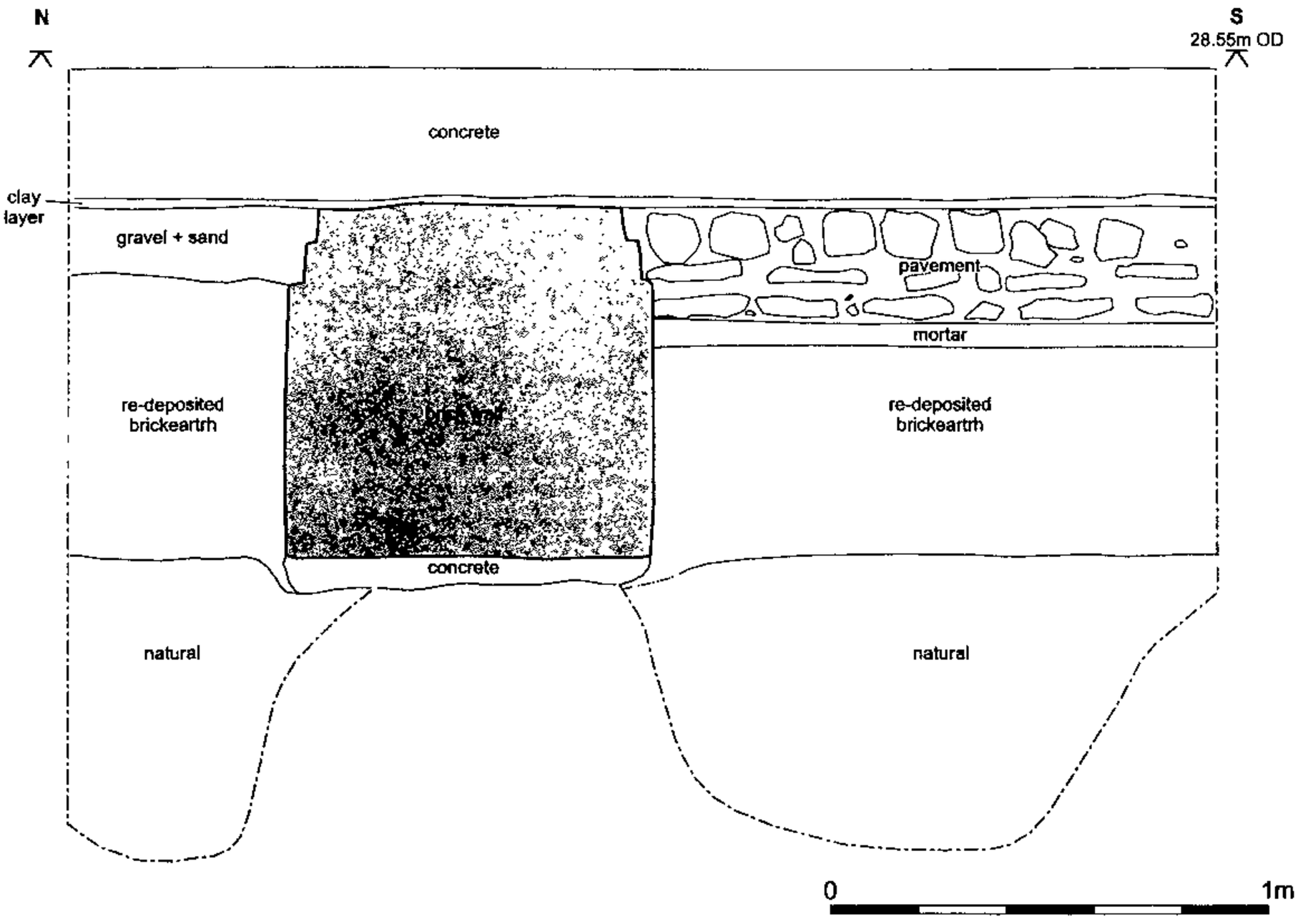

Fig 4 Section 2: west facing section of trench 8

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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 Regent's Place, Osnaburgh Street in London, NW1. The report was commissioned from MoLAS by M3 consulting on behalf of the client, Sealhurst Properties Ltd and British Land.

Work on the site was monitored between 21st November and 6th December 2006.

Following the recommendations of English Heritage, 8 trenches, 11 window sample holes and 5 cable percussion boreholes were excavated on the site to provide both archaeological and geotechnical information.

The results of the field evaluation have helped to refine the initial assessment of the archaeological potential of the site. Observation during the ground works revealed no evidence of archaeological features or artefacts. Truncated natural gravel was found revealed at c. 25.53m OD. In places the natural gravels remained overlain by natural brickearth seen at c. 27.46m OD. This was sealed by modern made ground, and in most trenches-rubble levelling dumps.

The construction of the existing buildings has removed any archaeological deposits, which may have otherwise existed on the site.

In the light of the revised understanding of the archaeological potential of the site this report concludes that there is low potential for the proposed development to impact on any archaeological remains.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The evaluation took place at Regent`s Place, Osnaburgh Street, NW1 hereafter called 'the site'. It is located within a block formed by Osnaburgh Street on the west, bounded by Longford Street to the north, Central Square to the east and by Euston Road to the south. The site comprises: 360-376 Euston Road, 1-56 Osnaburgh Street and 23-43 Longford Street, including Jellicoe House, Marlborough House, Regency House, Follett House, Strode House, Goodyear House and the rear of 28-30 Osnaburgh Street. (Fig 1)

The OS National Grid Ref. for centre of site is 528945 182292.

The level of the modern street, adjacent to the site varies between c. 29.3m and 28.3m OD.

The site code is EOL 06.

A desk-top *Method Statement for an archaeological evaluation* was previously prepared, which covers the whole area of the site (MoLAS, 04 August 2006).

This 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.

On the recommendation of English Heritage an archaeological field evaluation was carried out via a series of geotechnical test-pits and boreholes located within the existing buildings in November-December 2006.

1.2 Planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Archaeological assessment* which formed the project design for the evaluation (see Section 2, MoLAS, 2003).

1.3 Planning background

Full Planning Permission (subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement) with conditions was granted on 08/06/2006. The archaeological evaluation exercise was undertaken in order to satisfy a condition for a programme of archaeological work, placed on the development (the site) (Planning Ref: 2004/1700/P, Condition 15).

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by M3 Consulting on behalf of Sealhurst Properties Ltd and British Land 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 limited nature of the proposed works and the archaeological evaluation makes it unreasonable to establish many specific archaeological research objectives. The archaeological brief is essentially limited to establishing the levels and nature of surviving archaeological deposits, and to ensure that the digging of geotechnical pits does not involve unnecessary destruction of such deposits. Nevertheless, in addition, a few broad research questions can be outlined:

1. What is the nature and level of natural topography?

2. What are the earliest deposits identified?

3. John Rocque's map of 1746 shows Bilson's farm on the southern part of the site, in the area now occupied by Jellicoe House. Are there any remains of the farmhouse in this area?

4. What is the nature and significance of the surviving archaeological remains?

5. What is the level of truncation caused by post-medieval/modern basements on the site?

6. What are the latest deposits identified?

The research aims and objectives above were established in the *Method Statement* for the evaluation (Section 2.2).

The results of observations obtained by monitoring the geotechnical evaluation exercise outlined in Section 3.1 will be used to gauge the extent and importance of archaeological survival. This information will be used in future stages of building design and construction programming, and to inform a decision on an application for planning consent.

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Topography

The site lies within an area of Taplow gravels, Thames terrace gravels which were laid down approximately 186000-128000 years ago as a glacial event. These were sealed by a thin layer of fine sandy clay (brick earth) which is thought, at least in part, to be a loess (windblown) deposit, again deriving from the last glaciation.
At Drummond Street to the north east of the site natural Taplow gravels were found at 25.81m – 25.97m OD and were overlain by a thin layer of truncated brick earth.

By contrast, modern street level adjacent to the site varies between *c* 29.3m and 28.3m OD.

2.2 Prehistoric

There is little in the way of prehistoric activity recorded within the vicinity of the site. A single, possible Palaeolithic small flint flake have been recovered during fieldwork in Gower Street, but no evidence of any occupation has been found.

2.3 Roman

The area immediately around the site in the Roman period is not well-known. No evidence of any occupation or other activity has been recorded in the area, although seven incomplete Roman bone pins, an iron brooch and a small fragment from a plate were found in Great Portland Street.

2.4 Saxon

There is no evidence of any Saxon activity in the area of the site. The main focus of the Early and Middle Saxon settlement was a busy trading port around Aldwych and Covent Garden, in an area known to Bede in the 8th century as Lundenwic.

2.5 Medieval

The area of the site was originally part of the forest of Middlesex and was part of the Manor of Tottenhall. At the Dissolution of the monasteries, between 1535 and 1540, Henry VIII appropriated part of the land and bought out the occupier to create a hunting park. A ditch and rampart, later surmounted by a fence, were constructed to keep the deer in and poachers out.

In 1645, Charles I pledged the park to Sir George Strode and John Wandesford as security for arms and supplies with which to conduct the Civil War. At the King's execution in 1649 the park was sold with the rest of the Crown Estates; a survey had been made of it which records that there were some 16,297 standing trees - oak, ash,

elm, whitethorn and maple - valued at £1,774 8s 0d. These were soon felled, some for the Navy, the rest for the purchaser's profit; the land was ploughed over and let out in small holdings. At the Restoration, it reverted to Crown Land and for the next 150 years the farms here helped supply London's needs for hay and dairy produce. A 1591 plan shows the site as open ground,

2.6 Post-medieval

At the end of the 18th century John Fordyce, a Crown official, instigated a competition for development of the area but he died in 1809. In 1811 when the Prince of Wales became Prince Regent, the leases expired, by which time London development had reached what had once been isolated farmland. John Nash put forward a plan to build some 50 detached villas in a parkland setting with elegant terraces around the sides and a central circle.

The park would include a pleasure pavilion for the Prince approached from Portland Place and linked to Carlton House by Regent's Street. Work was delayed by the Napoleonic Wars and not all Nash's plans materialised. The numbers of villas was soon reduced to 26 although only eight were ever built and nothing became of the Prince's pavilion. The terraces intended for around the Inner Circle were not constructed. By 1830 most of the terraces, named after titles held by the Prince's family, and the lake (from the Tyburn River) had been constructed. The north side was left open to protect the views of Hampstead and Highgate and the park was opened to the public in 1835. The 18 acre area within the Inner Circle became the garden of the Royal Botanical Society until 1932 when the lease run out. It was taken over and named after Queen Mary, wife of George V and the Jubilee Gates were added in 1935. During World War II the terraces were bombed and neglected and demolition and rebuilding was considered. Fortunately it was decided to restore them and Lois de Soissons was appointed as architect. Originally coloured and jointed to replicate Bath Stone with oak sash bars and bronze railings they are now cream stucco with white paintwork and black railings. The Avenue Gardens were laid out with 32 Tazzas in 1864 to replace unhealthy trees and other features deemed necessary in a Victorian park were added many of which remain today.

Rocque's map of 1747 shows the site as mainly open fields, with Billson's farm located at the south end of the plot.

Originally Osnaburgh Street formed the eastern limit of Regent's Park and was part of the manor of Tottenhall taken by Henry VIII for the Crown Estate.

The development of the eastern part of the park is summarised by Summerson (1962):

> 'Eastwards of the park is the area of the Crown's Marylebone Estate reserved by Nash for three purposes: first, for a working class quarter with markets and shops, second, for a large barracks, and third, for a miniature 'garden suburb'. The working class district comprises Cumberland Market, Clarence Market, York Square and the rather depressing brown brick streets adjoining them.'

Horwood's first survey for his map in 1799 shows the area of the site as open fields with a farm at the southern end, but by his 1813 edition, the plots for Osnaburgh Street have been laid out, but the construction was not complete. This can be seen from the designs of the squares to the north, which are shown as the markets they were designed to be, rather than as constructed.

The wall in the east of the site which defines the limit of the Crown Properties has a plaque on its east side, which reads:

This Wall
Is the Property of
M^{R} MARTIN,
And Built on his
...ad 1818

Osnaburgh Street may have been laid out on the site of an old lane leading from Euston Road. Originally it ran further north than its present limit of Longford road, up through Munster Square (York Square), Clarence Gardens (Market) and on to Cumberland Market, where a hay and straw market was held three times a week.

This was by the Cumberland Basin, an arm off the main part of the Regent's Canal which was designed to facilitate the daily supply of fresh vegetables from the Middlesex market gardens to the shopping centre of Regent's Park. This branch of the canal was backfilled with rubble from houses destroyed during World War II in 1942 and is now allottements.

In April 1848 the composer Hector Berlioz moved to No. 26 Osnaburgh Street when was engaged as conductor by Jullien the director of Theatre Royal Drury Lane. He stayed two and half months in the house, during his first visit to London.

Originally sited at 10 Osnaburgh Street was St Saviour's Hospital for ladies of limited means. The sisterhood which served the hospital was founded by Dr Pusey in 1845 and came to St Saviour's in 1852. Dame Palmer, wife of Pusey's friend, Sir Henry Palmer, established this small hospital in the first house built for an Anglican Community since the Reformation. It was designed by Butterfield in 1850 and is notable for the choir screen and choir stalls, dated to 1690–1700, which were brought from the Charterhouse of Buxheim in south-west Germany. They were purchased in 1880 and re-erected in a space much too small for them. These stalls are the best example of German wood-carving of that date in England and were moved to the hospital's new chapel in Seabrook Road, Hythe, Kent when the Osnaburgh Street site was demolished in the 1960s.

Much of the area north of the site was badly damaged during World War II and a major rebuilding programme was undertaken from 1951 onwards. The site area was reasonably unaffected, with the majority of the buildings remaining.

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, August 2006), and the MoLAS *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS, 1994).

For both archaeological and geotechnical purposes 8 trenches were excavated and backfilled after recording, 11 window sample holes and 5 cable percussion boreholes were also drilled.

The slab was broken out and cleared by contractors under MoLAS supervision. Trenches were excavated manually by the contractors, and monitored by a member of staff from MoLAS.

The locations of evaluation trenches were recorded by MoLAS offsetting from adjacent standing walls and plotted on to a Basement Survey (provided by WSP Environmental). This information was then plotted onto the OS grid.

A written and drawn record of all archaeological deposits encountered was made in accordance with the principles set out in the MoLAS site recording manual (MoLAS, 1994).

The site TBM was surveyed from the Bench Mark on the entrance to the Walton House in Longford Street, value 29.34m O.D.

The site has produced: 1 trenches and boreholes location plan; 6 separate trench plans; 0 context records; 2 section drawings at 1:10; and photographs. In addition 4 crates of (unstratified) worked stone blocks were recovered from the site.

The site finds and records can be found under the site code EOL06 in the MoL archive.

3.2 Results of the evaluation

In total, 24 separate interventions were recorded for the purposes of the evaluation. These comprised 8 trenches, 11 window sample holes and 5 cable percussion boreholes.

For trench locations see Fig. 2

Evaluation Trench 1	
Location	Goodyear House, basement
Dimensions	1.85m by 2.90m; depth 1m
Top of basement slab	24.917m OD
Base of modern slab	24.767m OD (0.15m thick concrete)
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Base of trench	23.917m OD
Natural observed	24.217m OD (gravel)

Trench 1 (Fig 3).was situated in the basement of Goodyear House and was located against the northern wall of the property.
Natural gravel, the earliest deposit observed, was found at a depth of 24.217m OD. It consisted of subangular and subrouned particles c. 10x10 mm mixed with coarse, orangey sand and occasional natural flint.
This was truncated by the cut of the existing building concrete footing, running East-West in the northern section of the trench. Its top was recorded at 24.517m OD. The footing was 0.6m thick and within the trench measured 0.8m N-S x 2.9m E-W.
Overlying this was a levelling dump deposit consisting mostly of brick and concrete rubble. It was c.0.85m thick over the footing construction cut, and 0.55m in the trench southern part, overlying natural gravel deposit.
Sealing this was the concrete slab, 0.15m thick, at 24.917m OD.
No finds of archaeological significance were recovered from Trench 1, as it was backfilled with modern material. The only finds retrieved were three large worked stones -redeposited architectural features possibly from the buildings previously on site.

Evaluation Trench 2	
Location	Strode House, workshop area
Dimensions	1.50m by 2.50m; depth 2.25m
Top of slab	28.10m OD
Base of modern slab	28.07m OD (c.0.03m thick tarmac)
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	27.20m OD
Base of trench	25.55m OD
Natural observed	25.80m OD (brickearth)

Trench 2 was located in the warehouse area of Strode House, against the southern wall of the property and excavated from street level.
The earliest observed deposit was clean, undisturbed orange-grey brickearth found at 25.80m OD.
This was overlain by a thick (c. 1.20m) layer of dirty, redeposited brickearth observable from 27.20m OD. It contained a high amount of brick fragments, charcoal flecks and chalk dust as well as some decayed fragments of wood.
Sealing this was a levelling dump of mixed brick and concrete, of modern origin, 0.40-0.50m thick. It was found at c.28.07m OD.
Above was a thin layer of surface tarmac, c. 0.03m thick, at 28.10m OD.

An archway blocked with loose bricks was built into the southern wall of the property at a depth of c. 1m below the floor level and it is possible that this area was originally basement (Fig 5).
No finds were recovered from the trench.

Evaluation Trench 3	
Location	Number 38, Regent's Place, basement
Dimensions	2.30m by 1.90m; depth 1.35m
Top of basement slab	25.83m OD
Base of modern slab	25.68m OD (c.0.15m thick concrete)
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Base of trench	24.48m OD
Natural observed	25.53m OD (gravel)

Trench 3 was situated in the basement of building No. 38 on Osnaburgh Street.
The earliest deposit observed was coarse sand mixed with gravel (natural) found at a depth of 25.53m OD. The natural consisted of multiple layers of coarse yellow sand and solid gravel and was truncated by the footing of a supporting pier in the South-West corner. The footing was 1m wide, 1 m long and 0.6m thick. It consisted of stepped bricks that ended on a concrete surface found at 25.18m OD.
All this was sealed by a thin layer of a make up/dumped deposit, consisting of concrete and brick rubble at 25.68m OD.
Sealing both was the 0.15m thick concrete basement slab at 25.83m OD.
No archaeological finds were recovered from the trench.

Evaluation Trench 4	
Location	Follett House, underground car park
Dimensions	1.60m by 1.80m; depth 2.70m
Top of slab	27.97m OD
Base of modern slab	27.67m OD (0.30m thick concrete)
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	27.67m OD
Base of trench	25.27m OD
Natural observed	25.27m OD (gravel)

Trench 4 was situated in a car park area in Follett House, against the eastern wall.
The earliest natural deposit observed at 25.27m OD was orange gravel in coarse sand, with particles of c.5-15mm in diameter.
Overlying this was a thick (2.40m) layer of redeposited, orange-brown brickearth with a high amount of clay and coarse sand lenses. It contained some inclusions of pottery, animal bone and CBM (post medieval/modern), concrete and charcoal flecks. It was recorded at 27.67m OD.
The brickearth deposit was truncated to the East by the brick wall of the property and its concrete footing. The footing was 0.50m wide and 0.20m thick and recorded at 26.77m OD. The brickwork was c.0.35m wide (E-W), ran along the eastern side of trench (1.80m), and was 0.50m thick. It was observed at 27.21m OD. All this was sealed by 0.30m thick concrete slab at 27.97m OD.

Evaluation Trench 5	
Location	No. 34 Osnaburgh Street, open yard.
Dimensions	1m by 2.35m; depth 2m
Top of slab	28.51m OD
Base of modern slab	28.45m OD (0.05-0.06m thick concrete)
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Base of trench	26.51m OD
Natural observed	27.46m OD (brickearth)

Trench 5 was located in an open yard area, in the property No.34 on Osnaburgh Street, against the North-South running wall.
The earliest deposit was clean, undisturbed brickearth, observed at 27.46m OD and 27.16 at the West and East side of the trench respectively.
This deposit was truncated by modern brick foundation visible at the top of the trench at 28.31m OD. The brickwork visible in the trench was 0.85m wide on the west side and c. 1.15m on the east side.

The brickwork was truncated by a drainage ceramic pipe running North-South, recorded at 28.11m OD.

Overlying this was a 0.15m thick dump deposit consisting mostly of fine sand, white mortar and brick fragments, observed at 28.45m OD. On top of this deposit there was a 0.05m thick concrete slab, at 28.51m OD.
No finds were recovered from the trench.

Evaluation Trench 6	
Location	Jellicoe House, basement
Dimensions	4.5m by 5.5m ; depth N/A
Top of slab	24.72m OD
Base of modern slab	Not recorded
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A

Trench 6 was located in the basement of Jellicoe House.
The trench was excavated as enabling works for a new substation within the northwest corner of the building.
The trench revealed horizontally truncated natural deposits of yellow-orange sandy gravels, visible directly under the slab.
No archaeological remains were observed during the groundwork.

Evaluation Trench 7	
Location	Follett House, open yard
Dimensions	1.55m by 2.50m ; depth 2.10m