



# Site Record Form

**NZAA SITE NUMBER:** M36/294

**SITE TYPE:** Transport/ communication

**SITE NAME(s):** Government wharf, Town wharf

**DATE RECORDED:**

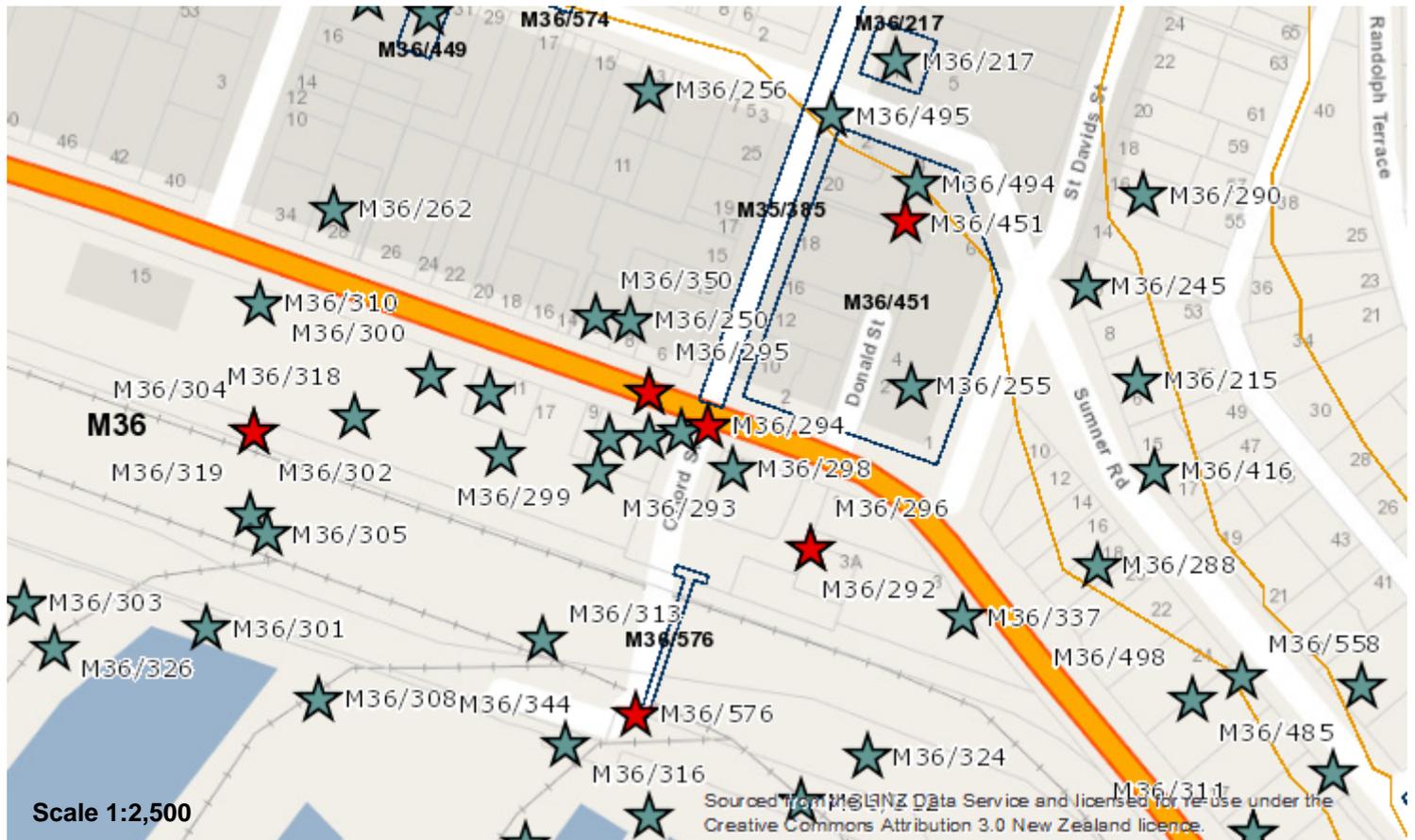
**SITE COORDINATES (NZTM) Easting:** 1577577

**Northing:** 5172068

**Source:** On Screen

**IMPERIAL SITE NUMBER:**

**METRIC SITE NUMBER:** M36/294



**Finding aids to the location of the site**

At the intersection of Oxford Street and Norwich Quay, extending seaward for a distance of approximately 115 m with a maximum width of approximately 18 m across the landing stage.

**Brief description**

Site of the Government Wharf constructed in 1849 and extended between 1858 and 1859. Subsequently buried by railway yard reclamation works in 1867.

**Recorded features**

**Other sites associated with this site**

**SITE RECORD HISTORY****NZAA SITE NUMBER:** M36/294**Site description**

Updated 05/09/2016 (Field visit), submitted by luketremlett , visited 25/06/2016 by Tremlett, Luke  
Grid reference (E1577577 / N5172068)

**INTRODUCTION**

The earthworks carried out here involved one stage of service trenching of an 11kV infrastructure roll-out at Lyttelton Port. This stage, stage 5a, involved excavating a 420 m long trench from the Oxford Street overbridge (to the Ferry Terminal) to the south side of the Sutton Quay gate between May and July 2016 under authority 2015/600. The location of the 1858 Government wharf extension (M36/294) was intersected by these works. As such, archaeological monitoring of earthworks in this area was carried out.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF THE EARTHWORKS**

The Stage 5a 11kV trenching works carried out in the area surrounding the Government wharf extension occurred between 25 June and 13 July 2016 by Fulton Hogan Ltd, using a mechanical excavator and Hrydrovac, with Teri Anderson and Luke Tremlett (Underground Overground Archaeology) monitoring the work. The earthworks here involved excavating trenches to a depth of 1 to 1.2 m deep and 200 mm to 2 m wide depending on what was required by the scope of works. A site plan was prepared showing the extent of the earthworks and the location of the Government wharf extension (Figure 4).

A total of seven features were found during the works (these are discussed as part of archaeological sites M36/302 and M36/576). Of these, three were located in the area surrounding the former location of the Government wharf extension. However, as will be argued below, none of these represented evidence of the Government Wharf extension, which was either completely removed in this location or remains intact deeper than the excavation extended.

**INTERPRETATION**

Based on historic documentation the location of this wharf is well understood – it extended straight out from Oxford Street and terminated immediately south of what is now the Oxford Street overbridge (Figure 4). However, it seems to have been extended further by 1867 when the railway yard reclamation was formed (Figure 3). Earthworks extended both east-west and north-south across this location and no evidence of the wharf was found (Figure 5). Here, the stratigraphy appeared as either a mixed claggy yellow clay with stone and gravel fill or as multiple layers of 19th or 20th century mixed fill matrices - consistent with reclamation fill in an area developed multiple times since initial formation (Figure 5, 6 and 7). Although this appeared to be heavily disturbed by modern services, two features were found which sat within the footprint of the former wharf but can only have been deposited during the formation of the Railway yard reclamation or later (see the railway reclamation site record form (M36/294) for more information).

No report was submitted for this stage of 11kV trenching – this site record form was agreed upon to be the final documentation of these specific earthworks by Heritage New Zealand, Underground Overground Archaeology and Lyttelton Port Company.

Updated 28/08/2014 (other), submitted by matthewcarter  
Grid reference (E1577577 / N5172068)

The Government wharf was the first work of harbour engineering at Lyttelton. Built at the foot of Oxford Street in 1849, it was originally 150 feet (6 m) long by 15 feet (5 m) wide and constructed from piles from Tasmania and planks from Akaroa (Johnson 1952:28, Scotter 1968: 63). By 1859, a sea wall had been built on either side of it, providing protection for the customs house and post office (Rice 2004: 26). The wharf was lengthened between 1858 and 1859 to a total length of approximately 115 m (Amodeo 2005:90). This wharf was buried by the railway-yard reclamation works along the foreshore in c. 1867 (Millicent 1941:143).

**Condition of the site**

Updated 05/09/2016 (Field visit), submitted by luketremlett , visited 25/06/2016 by Tremlett, Luke

No evidence for the Government wharf extension was found here. However, there is potential for this structure to be located deeper than this and potential for this structure to remain in situ to the north of the area investigated - it remains unclear how the original wharf was demolished and whether parts of the original structure remain in situ.

Updated 28/08/2014 (other), submitted by matthewcarter

Low – buried below surface during reclamation work and possibly destroyed.

**Statement of condition**

**Current land use:**

Updated: 14/08/2016 - Coastal margins, Industrial/ commercial

**Threats:**

Updated: 14/08/2016 - Property development

**SITE RECORD INVENTORY**

**NZAA SITE NUMBER:** M36/294

Supporting documentation held in ArchSite



Figure 1. The Government wharf, 1862. Image: Rice 2004:27.



Figure 2. The Government wharf. Image: Canterbury Association 1849.

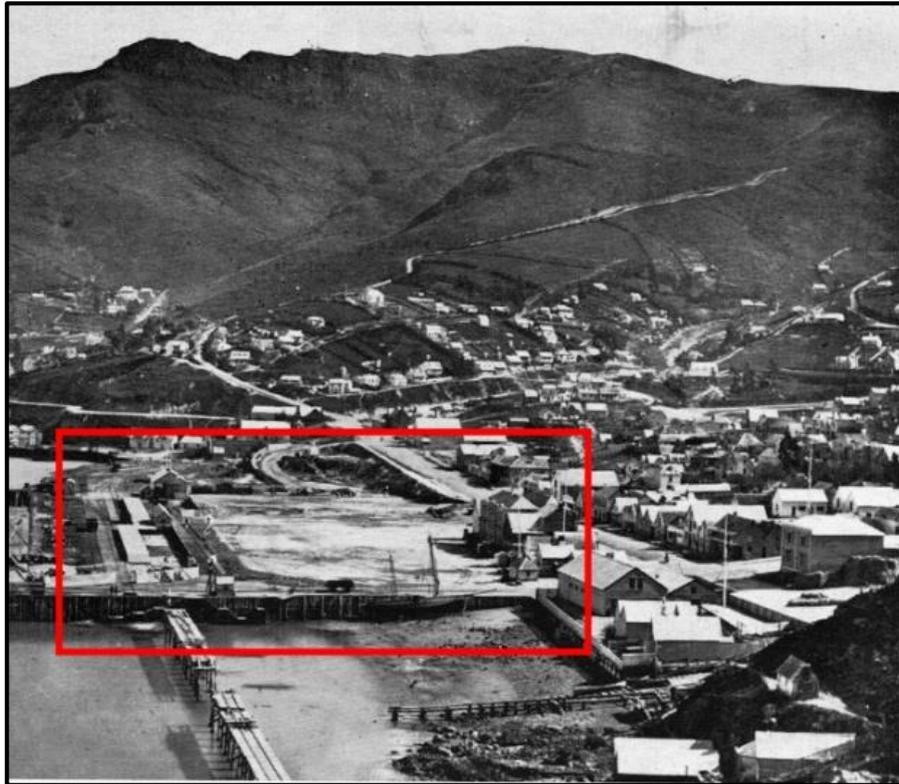


Figure 3. Lyttelton port in 1867. The Government wharf is in the foreground, in the red box. Image: Rice 2004:37.

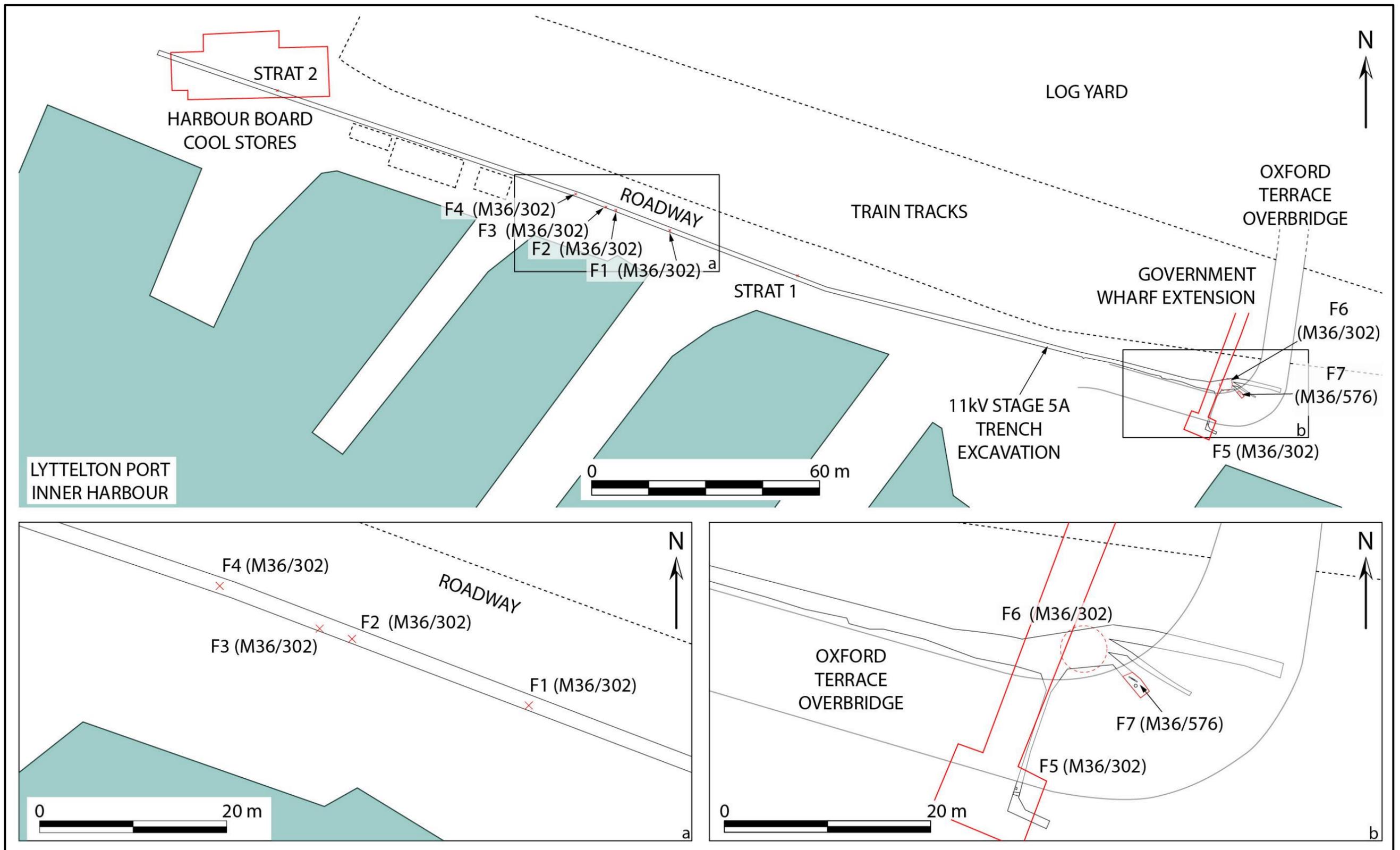


Figure 4. Site plan showing the extend of the earthworks and two archaeological sites that were intersected by the works. This site plan also shows all earthworks that were carried out as part of this project and all archaeological material that was found during the works.

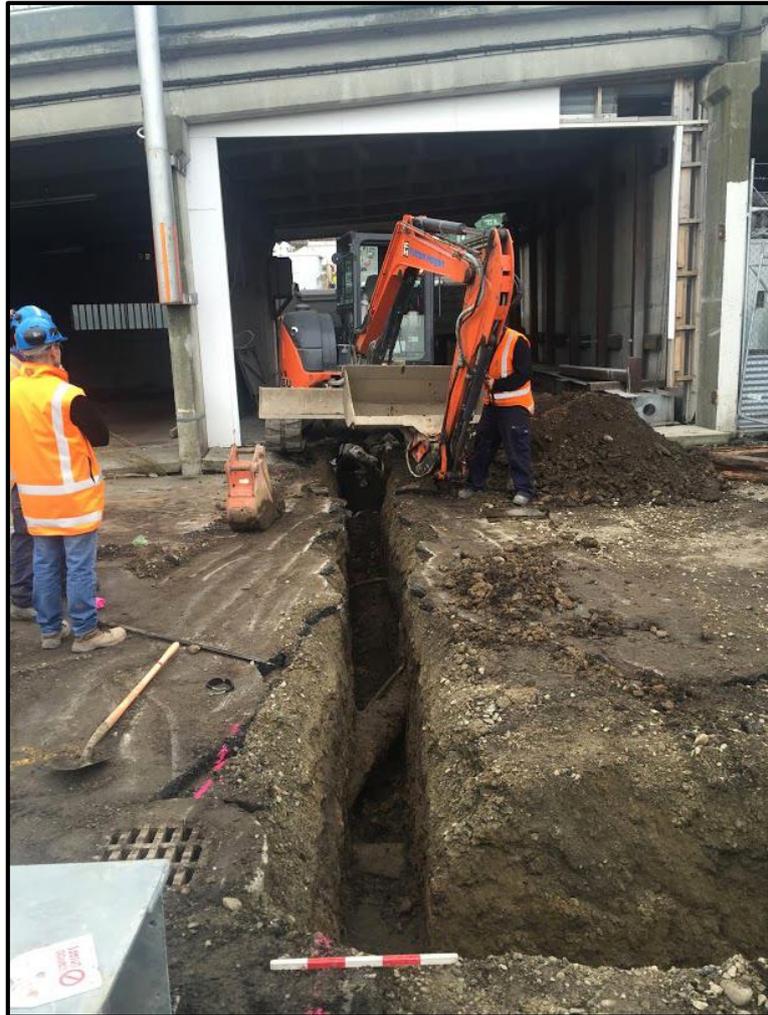


Figure 5. The small trench excavated under the Oxford Street overbridge through the approximate area where the Government wharf extension sat. Looking north.

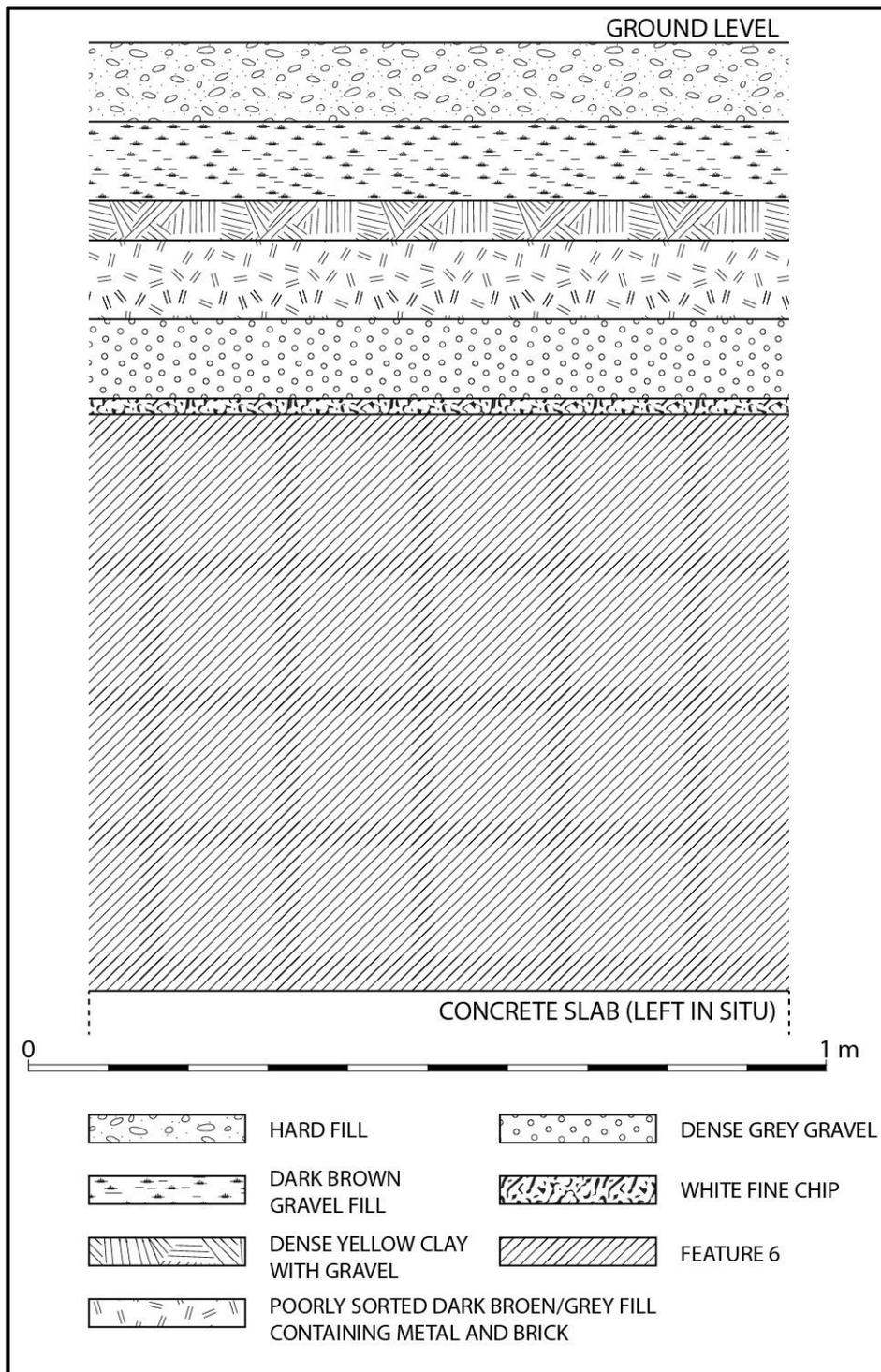


Figure 6. Stratigraphy observed in the at Feature 6.



**Figure 7.** The stratigraphy observed immediately north of the current Oxford Street overbridge within the footprint of where the Government wharf extension once sat. Within Feature 6 was a particularly complex area of stratigraphy - metres west of this was simple yellow clay reclamation.



**Figure 8.** The stratigraphy observed immediately south of the current Oxford Street overbridge within the footprint of where the Government wharf extension once sat. See M36/302 for a stratigraphic drawing of the reclamation.