

## GLA 65 Vanbrugh Pits, Blackheath

Grid Reference: Exposure best seen at  
TQ 3980 7715

Site Type: Series of small disused gravel pits on  
Blackheath plateau

Site Area (hectares): 3.02

Current use: Recreational as part of Blackheath open  
space

Site ownership: Royal Borough of Greenwich

Borough: Royal Borough of Greenwich

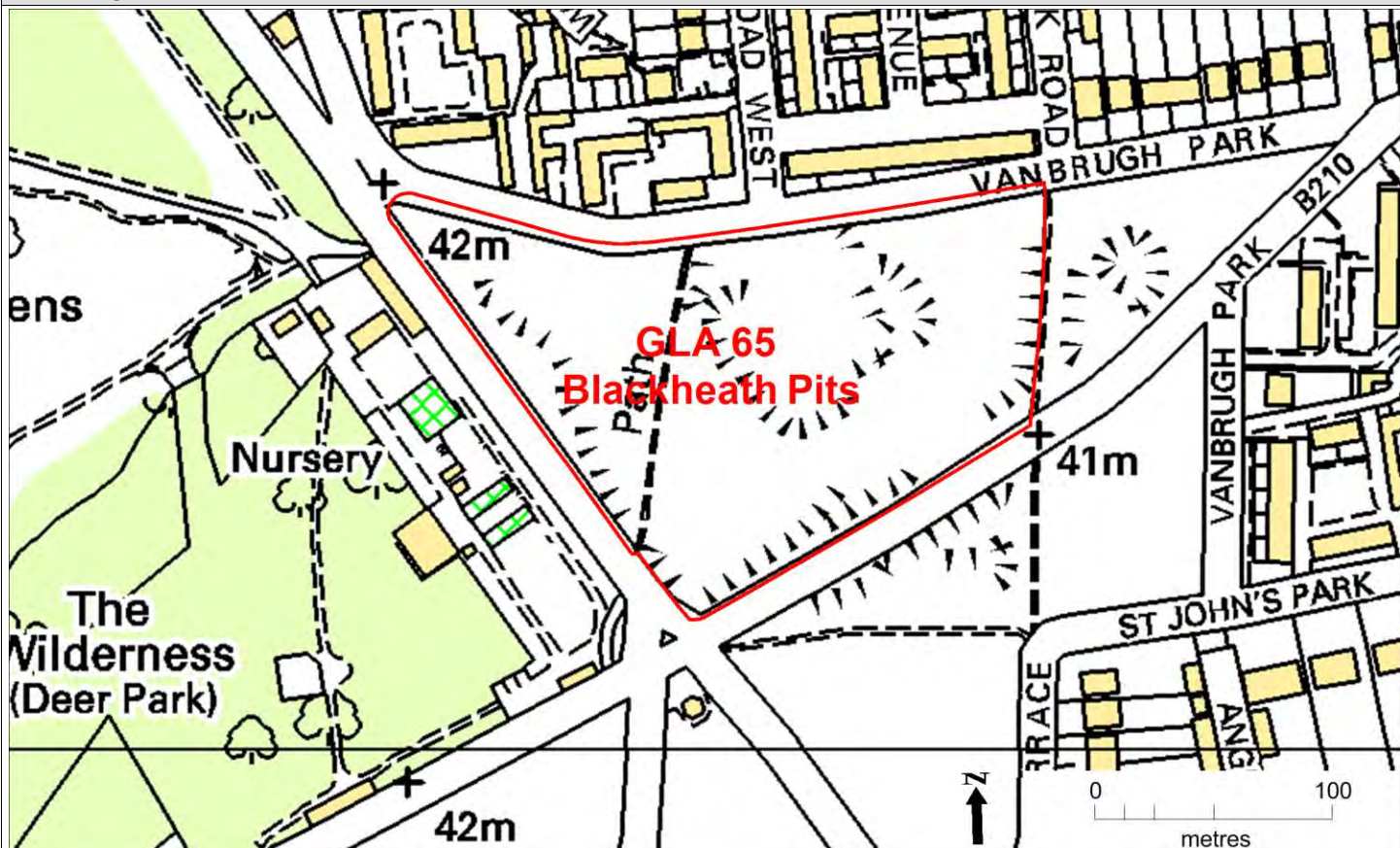
Field surveyor: Laurie Baker, Diana Clements

Date: June 2012

Current geological designations:

Other scientific:

**Site Map** OS Topography © Crown Copyright



### Stratigraphy and Rock Types

Time Unit: Eocene

Rock Unit: Blackheath Member, Harwich Formation, Thames Group

Rock Type: Sand and gravel

Details: Sand and pebbles (mostly round, black), with a fragile brackish marine fauna locally. Calclitic conglomerate found at certain horizons.

### Site Description

These small pits were made by quarrying the rounded pebbles of the Blackheath Member that form the Blackheath plateau (Harwich Formation). Many have since been back-filled with wartime rubble. These are better exposures than GLA 24 on the south side of Blackheath (in Lewisham) which is very overgrown. The pebbles can be well seen in the worn paths, enhanced by BMX bikes. Both sites would benefit interpretation boards which could be the same board for both sites. GLA 24 is shown as Eliot Pits on the Nature Trail leaflet and the Greenwich pits are shown as Vanbrugh Pits. There is scope to link these pits to the nature trail.

### Assessment of Site Value

**Geodiversity topic:** Lithostratigraphy; sedimentology; palaeontology.

### Access and Safety

**Aspect**

**Description**

Safety of access

Vanbrugh Park, Charlton Way, and Prince Charles Road provide parking possibilities (2 hours free in Vanbrugh Park at least). The paths through Vanbrugh pits are rough and sometimes steep-sided. The rounded nature of the pebbles makes them difficult to grip.

Safety of exposure	Walkers and BMX bikers help the small exposures not to become vegetated	
Permission to visit	Open access at all times	
Current condition	Mostly vegetated, only small windows of gravel where eroded	
Current conflicting activities	Walkers and bikers aid exposures.	
Restricting conditions	Many of the former pits have been filled with wartime rubble	
Nature of exposure	Small disused pits where Blackheath Gravel has been dug	
<b>Culture, Heritage &amp; Economic</b>		
<b>Aspect</b>		<b>Rating</b>
Historic, archaeological & literary associations	Needs research for old pictures and map refs.	?
Aesthetic landscape	Open space remaining close to urban conurbations	8
History of Earth Sciences	'Type' area for the Blackheath Member of the Harwich Formation	7
Economic geology	Formerly locally important source of gravel	7
<b>GeoScientific Merit</b>		
Geomorphology	Part of the plateau that runs along to Lesnes Woods with the higher ground at Shooters Hill	4
Sedimentology	The small round black pebbles gave the plateau its name	4
Palaeontology	None described from here	0
Igneous/mineral/ Metamorphic Geology	None.	0
Structural Geology	None.	0
Lithostratigraphy	The Blackheath Beds are best viewed at Gilbert's Pit SSSI GLA 14 although this is the Type locality	4
Potential use	Research; further education; on-site interpretation.	
Fragility	Natural overgrowing; weathering/slumping.	
<b>Current Site Value</b>		
Community	Open access so potential along with GLA 24; possible addition to nature trail; close to the Green Chain Walk Geotrail	6
Education		6
<b>Geodiversity value</b>		
Potential LIGS: Combined with GLA 24 to provide local interest of the Blackheath Beds from which the Blackheath area is named.		4
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Photos: Diana Clements 2012		

