

**A PRELIMINARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE  
PROPOSED RE-DEVELOPMENT AT SUTTON AND NORTH CHEAM  
SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB, LONDON ROAD, CHEAM**

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Client	Sawley Cross Leisure Ltd
Consultant	Blue Sky Planning

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## **1. Introduction**

### *Planning Background*

1.1 Planning permission is being sought for a programme of re-development at North Cheam and Sutton Sports and Social Club, 658, London Road, Cheam, figure 1 shows the location of the development area. The London Borough of Sutton Planning Authority has requested the preparation of an archaeological desktop assessment to accompany the planning application.

Blue Sky Planning have commissioned Surrey County Archaeological unit to prepare the assessment on behalf of their client Sawley Cross Leisure Ltd.

### *Study Area*

1.2 In order to assess the effects of the proposed scheme, existing archaeological information within a one kilometre radius of the site was examined in detail. The extent of this area is shown in figure 1.

### *Assessment Methodology*

1.3 The assessment of the effects of the scheme on archaeology has been based on a variety of sources including

- the Sites and Monuments Record held by G.L.A.S.S
- maps held by the Surrey Record Office,
- examination of secondary historical works and readily available local history materials.

1.4 In addition a walkover survey of the area was undertaken to assess whether any part of the site had already been damaged or disturbed by activities in the modern period and whether any aspects of specific archaeological interest could be identified within the site area.

1.5 There has been no assessment of aerial photographs as early aerial photographs have previously been thoroughly examined. It is considered unlikely that more recent photographs would reveal any sites of archaeological interest in an area that has little surviving from its earlier landscape.

1.6 The assessment of the impact of the proposed scheme on archaeology is qualitative and considers two issues. The first of these deals with the impact on identified sites within the local study area. The second deals with the potential impact on buried evidence, as yet unidentified.

1.7 The second stage of work, dependent on the result of the preliminary assessment would be Survey and Evaluation of those areas that are to be the subject of significant ground disturbance. There are various options for such work depending on the archaeological potential of the site as defined by the preliminary assessment.

1.8 The third stage of work would be (if required) definition of a Mitigation Strategy based on the results of the second stage.

## **2. Geology**

2.1 The Geological Survey of Great Britain, sheet 270, covering the Greater London area, at scale 1:50,000, was consulted for the geological background to the site. The site is located within a large area of London Clay.

## **3. Sites and Monuments Record**

3.1 The Greater London Sites and Monuments Records were consulted to see what sites of archaeological interest were known from the area of the proposed development – see Appendix 1. Figure 1 illustrates many of the records within the vicinity of the proposed re-development site. The records show that there is not a great deal of medieval or earlier archaeological material retrieved from this area, either as stray finds or during the more recent archaeological interventions. The most relevant record relates to the route of the Roman road, Stane Street, which largely follows the line of London Road. However archaeological investigations to date in the area directly around the Sutton and North Cheam Sports and Social club have produced no evidence relating directly to the line of the Roman road. For example during the evaluation, undertaken prior to the development of the Sainsbury's supermarket adjacent to the present site, a few struck flints, and one fragment of tegulae (Roman tile) were recovered (ref: 021858 & 021859). Again in 1992 prior to the construction of the current clubhouse, and relocation of the bowling green to the Sports and Social club, an evaluation revealed no archaeological evidence. The stratigraphy revealed modern field drains and topsoil over subsoil, and underlying natural London Clay (ref: 021860)

Post medieval material that has been identified at several nearby sites, is not thought to have any direct relevance to the current proposal area.

## **4. Printed Sources**

4.1 Various written sources were checked for information regarding the history of the general area and the site itself. A starting point for this investigation was an examination of archaeological evidence and its link to the geology of the area.

4.2 The present site is centrally placed within an area of London Clay geology. It has been seen that settlement patterns are influenced by the suitability of the land, in terms of subsistence, agricultural productivity and the presence of natural resources. These factors to a great extent depend upon geological conditions (Macphail & Scaife in Bird, 1987, 31-52).

4.3 A comparison between archaeological sites and geology has illustrated that London Clay was not the most favorable to prospective settlers. Most Neolithic sites are located on Alluvium, and Lower Greensand, with few indications that London Clay terrain was inhabited (Field & Cotton, 1987, 79).

4.4 Similarly there is a paucity, or complete lack of archaeological evidence from the Bronze Age in London Clay areas. Any finds that are made in this area, are thought to be occasional stray losses, made for example during forestry expeditions (Needham, 1987, 130). Cotton (2000, 22) comments that in this physiographic zone 'Stray finds from the immediate locality and elsewhere hint at activities geared around woodland management on topographic highs and areas close to the headwaters of tributary streams including the Fleet and the Tyburn.

4.5 The Iron Age seems to illustrate an avoidance of London Clay, except occasionally near to the border of another geological area although Iron Age discoveries by the Museum of London Archaeological Services at Alpine Avenue, Tolworth and Percy Gardens, Worcester Park modify this view a little, although they remain close to the edge of the London Clay. ‘Neither older or more recent work has produced evidence to suggest the existence of settled communities within this area’ (Poulton 2004).

4.6 This pattern continues into the Roman period, with few town or villa sites being situated within the London Clay area (Bird, 1987). Bird (2000, 156) comments that ‘The survey by Sheldon and Schaaf (1978, 60) demonstrated that there was little evidence for settlement on the London Clay and that geological boundaries were a preferred site location, probably for springs and mixed soils (thus supporting Applebaum’s earlier conclusions 1972, 56; cf. 66; see also Bird 1996, 217-220). Work since then has confirmed this picture. Apparent exceptions serve only to reinforce the conclusion that the Clay was avoided for settlement and agriculture’. The largely negative result of recent archaeological intervention in this area (see Appendix 1), would seem to confirm the statements in paragraphs 4.2-4.6.

4.7 There is a certain degree of Roman activity in this area, which is thought to be due to the nearness of the Roman road, Stane Street. As the road passes through North Cheam towards Pylford Bridge, the present London Road, follows the theoretical alignment of the Roman route (see figure 6 taken from Margary 1948, 77), but then deviates from this alignment shortly after the junction of Ridge Road with London Road / Stonecot Hill. Remains of the Roman road were encountered during the water-main excavations (*Lord Nelson Inn* – location to the north of the present site at the junction with Ridge Road), in the form of ‘very hard metalling, as though laid in cement’ (Margary 1948, 76). No evidence has been discovered for the Roman Road in recent archaeological investigation adjacent to the present road.

4.8 Only from the Saxon period onwards are any substantial settlements encountered within the London Clay area, (although this could still be considered a low number in comparison with the frequency of sites in the rest of the county) and this continues from 1066, with several moated sites being built on London Clay. (Poulton and Turner , 1987, 197-261).

4.9 The cartographic evidence discussed below, suggests that the present site did not lie within the area of an early medieval settlement; possibly the closest such villages were at Morden or Lower Morden to the north and the larger settlements of Cheam and Sutton to the south.

4.10 The manor of Cheam is first mentioned in a alleged charter of 727AD in which Frithwald confirms to the monastery of Chertsey ‘20 hides of land at Cheam with swine in pasture at Danwald’. In 915AD a charter of Athelstan’s mentions ‘lands which were formerly possessed by that abbey (Chertsey), including Cheam’. The authenticity of these early Chertsey charters is sometimes thought to be doubtful, however, records from AD1018 mention the two vills of Merstham and Cheam being granted to Christchurch, Canterbury by Athelstan. Later there were apparently two

estates, as West Cheam seems to have been in the possession of Christchurch, Canterbury, and East Cheam belonging to the Archbishop. (VCH 1911, 196).

4.11 The church of St Dunstan was erected in 1864, and stands on a new site to the north of the former church, the east end of the chancel of which has been preserved as a sepulchral chapel. The date of the original church is thought to be not later than c. AD1230 (VCH 1911, 197).

4.12 The place name evidence suggest that Cheam means ‘the place of the stumps or underwood’ (E.P.N.S 1934, 43-44). The earliest reference to the name is *Cegeham* in 675 AD, with its current form not appearing until the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century.

## 5. Historical Maps

### *General*

5.1 These can be a very useful source of information when looking for archaeological features as it is possible to trace the development of a landscape over several hundreds of years or more, and features recorded on early maps, which often disappear on later ones, can be identified.

### *Rocque Map of 1768 (fig 2)*

5.2 This is a detailed map showing features such as fields, small buildings and woods. The approximate location of the site is marked on the map, and it is seen to lie within an undeveloped arable field. The majority of this area appears to be used for agricultural purposes, although some large unenclosed areas are still apparent, such as Cheam Common to the northwest and Sutton Common to the east. The straight line of London Road / Stane Street, is quite distinctly shown on Rocque’s map, as well as the point at which the Pyl Brook crosses it, *Pylford Bridge*. The villages of Cheam and Sutton are marked to the south of the site, but no occupation is shown within close proximity to the development site.

### *Tithe map for the parish of Cheam, 1840, (fig 3),*

5.3 The long, narrow parish of Cheam is aligned north- south, and is underlain by London Clay in the area of Cheam Common and North Cheam, Woolwich Sands underlie the central portion, and the southern end of the parish stretches over the chalk. The common fields were enclosed by an Act of 1806 (VCH 1911, 194). The proposal site, lying within plot 98 has remained undeveloped since the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, although development has taken further down London Road around the junction with, and to the south side of Cheam Common Road. The tithe apportionment document was examined for evidence of field names and ownership. Nothing of note was identified; plot 98 was named *Milestone field & thirteen acre*, and described as arable.

### *The Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Maps, (figs 4 & 5)*

5.4 The detailed map of 1871 shows little to have changed within, and around, the club site, which remains arable land. In the subsequent maps examined there continues to be no development within the area until the 1933 edition, which shows that tennis courts and a pavilion have been established within the present development area. The tennis courts are set back slightly from the main road, and an “in and out” access road is present with a smaller track leading to the pavilion. The tennis courts

shown on the 1933 edition overlies the present courts which lie adjacent to the London Road side of the club site, although they cover roughly twice the area of the those present today in this location. Hachures are shown around the north-east and south-east sides of the courts on the 1933 map, indicating that the natural gradient of the land has been levelled down over this area to create the courts.

The 1976 six-inch Ordnance Survey map for this area was also examined and this showed no change within the club site since the 1933 edition. The site was developed with the sports and social club in 1993 (see Sites and Monuments Ref 021860 in section 3 above).

## **6. The Proposed Development**

*The site and the proposed development (fig 7 & 8)*

6.1 The re-development work will comprise of the following elements.

1. A nursery buildings occupying the front (north west) half of the tennis courts lying adjacent to London Road
2. A new multi-sport court will be established on the rear (south east) half of the tennis courts lying adjacent to London Road, and the existing football pitch will be re-surfaced as multi-sports courts
3. A multi-sport pavilion will be built to the south east of the bowling green
4. A landscaped acoustic barrier will be created in the south-east most corner of the site.
5. The main car park area will be extended south-east toward the main area of multi-sport courts.
6. The existing clubhouse, social club and bowling green will be unchanged

In terms of impact each of the above proposals will involve differing levels of ground disturbance. The construction of the new buildings Nos. 1 and 3, and the area of landscaping No. 4 will involve the largest level of ground disturbance. The conversion of the area to multi-sports pitches is unlikely to involve any substantial degree of ground disturbance.

No geotechnical survey has been undertaken at this stage, and as such it is difficult to determine what intact stratigraphy is present over the site. The site visit indicated that there was a substantial drop (c. 1.5m) in level between the pavement adjacent to London Road and the tennis courts. A similar drop in level is present along the southern edge of the site between the football pitch and the public park. These drops in level appear to suggest that during the development of the sports and social club substantial reductions in ground level took place to create a level area for the various sports pitches and courts. In fact prior to the relocation of the Bowling Green in 1992-3, archaeological investigation was undertaken which produced no archaeological material.

## **7. Conclusions and Recommendations**

*The Archaeological Potential*

7.1 It is clear from the Sites and Monuments Record that the general archaeological potential for this area is low to moderate. No archaeological material has been found specifically from the site despite an archaeological investigation in 1992, although the limited amount of archaeological survey within the site and surrounding area mean that some caution is necessary in drawing conclusions from

this. The limited evidence of early activity in the area is believed to be a consequence of the inhibiting geological conditions presented by the London Clay.

7.2 The highest archaeological potential for this area is based on the projected route of the Roman Road Stane Street, which is believed to have followed the line of London Road in this area. Several archaeological investigations have been carried out during recent developments adjacent to London Road, however no sign of the road, or a possible roadside ditch, have been discovered to date.

7.3 The documentary and early cartographic evidence reveal that the present site lay beyond the area of early medieval settlement at Cheam, within arable land between Sutton and Cheam Common. The area remained undeveloped until the early twentieth century when the tennis courts were established adjacent to London Road.

#### *The Impact of the Proposed Development*

7.4 In general terms, archaeological evidence, if it exists may be expected to survive, at, and to a limited depth below, the interface between the topsoil (garden or plough soil) and the present undisturbed sub surface.

7.5 The proposed development of certain areas (see 6.1, items 1, 3 & 4) would inevitably destroy most, if not all, potential archaeological deposits, through activities such as levelling, excavation of trenches for foundations and services, which will all involve large scale earth movement.

7.6 It would appear, however, that the site has already undergone a certain degree of earlier landscaping and ground level reduction due to the notable drop on level along the north-west and south-east boundaries. This is likely to have resulted in the removal or disturbance of any archaeological features and finds that may have existed.

In the area of the new nursery building, which covers an area of 575m<sup>2</sup>, the results of a geotechnical survey would be able to more clearly show current ground conditions in this area. The level of ground disturbance on the site of the new pavilion building, which covers an area of 480m<sup>2</sup>, is less clear. Again the geotechnical survey would be able to clarify the likely survival of any archaeological material.

#### *Conclusions and Recommendations*

7.7 The total site area is 1.88Ha, although only roughly a fifth of the area (c.0.2Ha) will be affected by any development, which is likely to have sufficient impact to be a risk to potential archaeological remains.

The site appears to have undergone a degree of earlier landscaping, which would have removed any potential archaeological deposits. It is, therefore, considered unlikely that further archaeological fieldwork at this site would produce any tangible or coherent evidence. If however subsequent geotechnical investigations illustrate an intact stratigraphic sequence, then it would be advisable to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the programme of construction in the area of the new nursery building, multi-sports pavilion and acoustic barrier area.

It is, therefore, recommended that the results of the geotechnical investigations are reviewed, and an addendum to this report produced, with an updated

recommendation on the need for further archaeological work. In the event that a watching brief is required a provisional methodology for such work has been attached

## **8. Methodology of Further Archaeological Work**

### *General Considerations*

8.1 The further evaluation should aim to gather sufficient information to establish the presence/absence, extent, character, quality and date of any threatened deposits within the site in order to allow definition of an appropriate mitigation strategy.

8.2 The methodologies for further work outlined below have been formulated after careful consideration of all the relevant factors, including cost. They are believed to be the most appropriate in the circumstances of the site and its perceived potential.

8.3 Where a detailed specification is not given below it is to be assumed that all work should be carried out within high professional standards, with the scope and level of different aspects of the work defined by reference to the advice and practice of G.L.A.S.S 'Archaeological Guidance Paper 3 & 6' and the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

8.4 The specification below is for the *strategy* to be adopted in further archaeological work. The *tactics* (e.g. precise location and length of each trial trench) of that work are for determination by those working in the field.

### *Archaeological Watching brief on the northeast half of the site –see figure 8*

8.5 The watching brief should consist of observation by a qualified archaeologist of all ground disturbance associated with the reduction of ground levels in areas defined, and agreed within the assessment report, and or addendum.

8.6 The frequency of the visits is a matter for determination in the light of the pace of development works and the character of the site as revealed by the works. The archaeologist must be afforded full access for the purpose of observing and recording any items revealed. Such recording may include cleaning and small scale excavation, and it may be necessary for development activities to move away from the area affected for a limited time period.

8.7 The watching brief may be discontinued, with the agreement of G.L.A.S.S, acting on behalf of the Local Authority, at the point where it becomes clear that identification of any archaeological material of interest is very unlikely (for example if earlier development has already destroyed the levels of interest).

### *Recording and Processing*

8.8 Recording should be undertaken as follows:

- a) All structures, deposits and finds are to be recorded according to accepted professional standards and in conformity with the systems set out in Department of Urban Archaeology Site Manual (MOLAS 1994)
- b) Plans indicating the location of areas examined and the location of all archaeological features are to be drawn at an appropriate scale (1:1250 in conformity to G.L.A.S.S Archaeological Guidance Paper 3 – 5.3). Plans at an appropriate scale should be related to the National Grid. All plans and sections are to be drawn (at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20) on polyester based drafting film and clearly labeled.
- c) All archaeological contexts are to be recorded individually on record context sheets (equivalent to those used by MOLAS). A further more general record of the work

comprising a description and discussion of the archaeology is to be maintained as appropriate.

d) A full black and white and colour (35 mm transparency) photographic record of the work is to be kept. The photographic record is to be regarded as part of the site archive (in accordance with G.L.A.S.S Archaeological Guidance Paper 3 – 5.10).

e) The OD height of all principle strata and features will be calculated and indicated on the appropriate plans and sections.

f) All artifacts recovered during the work on the site are to be suitably bagged, boxed and marked in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, Conservation Guidelines No 2.

g) Where appropriate conditions are encountered and after consultation with G.L.A.S.S, environmental samples should be taken.

### *Report Preparation*

8.9 A short summary of the results of the work, even if negative, will be bound into the client report for submission to the Local Planning Authority and GLSMR along with the GLSMR report as soon as possible after the completion of the archaeological works. Copies should be supplied to our client Rydon Homes and to Mark Stevenson, Archaeology Adviser, G.L.A.S.S.

The site summary should be a non-technical summary that will enable the archaeological adviser to inform local societies and press about the results of the archaeological investigations.

The client report should include:

1) A copy of the location plan of the areas examined at an appropriate scale together with a plan of the main archaeological features identified, if applicable, together with more detailed plans as appropriate and relevant section drawings.

2) A descriptive summary and interpretation of the archaeology of the site.

8.10 A full report on the work, containing a level of detail appropriate to the importance of any discoveries made, must be made available for publication in a publicly available journal, within two years of completion of any fieldwork.

### *Finds and Archive Deposition*

8.11 Finds will need to be retained by the archaeological contractor until an appropriate level of study has been completed, and it is anticipated that they will then be placed in the nearest suitable Public Museum. In this instance it is most likely that the complete archive, including all site records and drawings and all other relevant background materials along with the finds, would be deposited with the Museum of London.

8.12 Arrangements would need to be made with the Museum of London prior to starting fieldwork in order for an appropriate site code to be allocated to the project, as well as to agree the arrangements for the curation of the archive.

8.13 If the applicant (as legal owner of the finds) wishes to make alternative arrangements for the curation of all or part of the archive such arrangements (including details of storage arrangements) will be agreed in writing with the planning authority. Where the place of deposition is not a Public Museum, a comprehensive

record of all materials will need to be made for deposition in the nearest suitable Public Museum.

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**Fig 1** Sutton and North Cheam Sports and Social Club, London Road, Cheam: Map showing the location of the Site and Sites And Monuments Records

**Fig 2** Sutton and North Cheam Sports and Social Club, London Road, Cheam: An extract from the Rocque map, 1768

**Fig 3** Sutton and North Cheam Sports and Social Club, London Road, Cheam: An extract from the Tithe Map for the Parish of Cheam, 1840

**Fig 4** Sutton and North Cheam Sports and Social Club, London Road, Cheam: An extract from the OS First edition 25 inch Map of 1871

**Fig 6** Sutton and North Cheam Sports and Social Club, London Road, Cheam: An extract from Margary, 1948, showing the projected route of the Roman road.

**Fig 7** Sutton and North Cheam Sports and Social Club, London Road, Cheam: Plan showing present layout of the site

**Fig 8** Sutton and North Cheam Sports and Social Club, London Road, Cheam: Development Plan

**APPENDIX 2**  
**ESNR International Limited (report no 20578-1)**  
**Site Investigation Ridge Primary School, Ridge Road, Sutton**

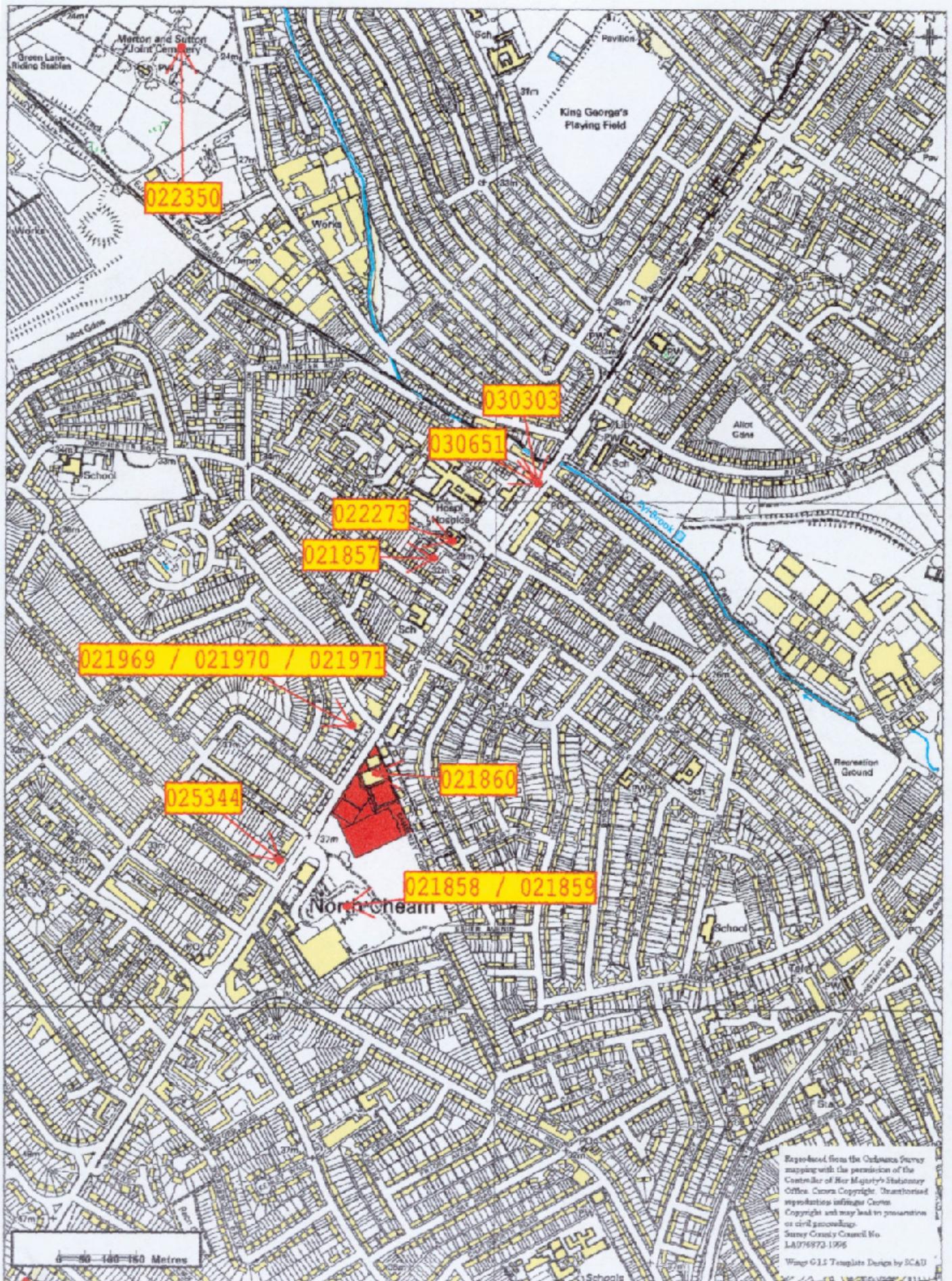


Fig 1 Sutton and North Cheam Sports and Social Club, London Road, Cheam: Map showing the location of the Site and Sites And Monuments Records



Fig 2 Sutton and North Cheam Sports and Social Club, London Road, Cheam: An extract from the Rocque map, 1768



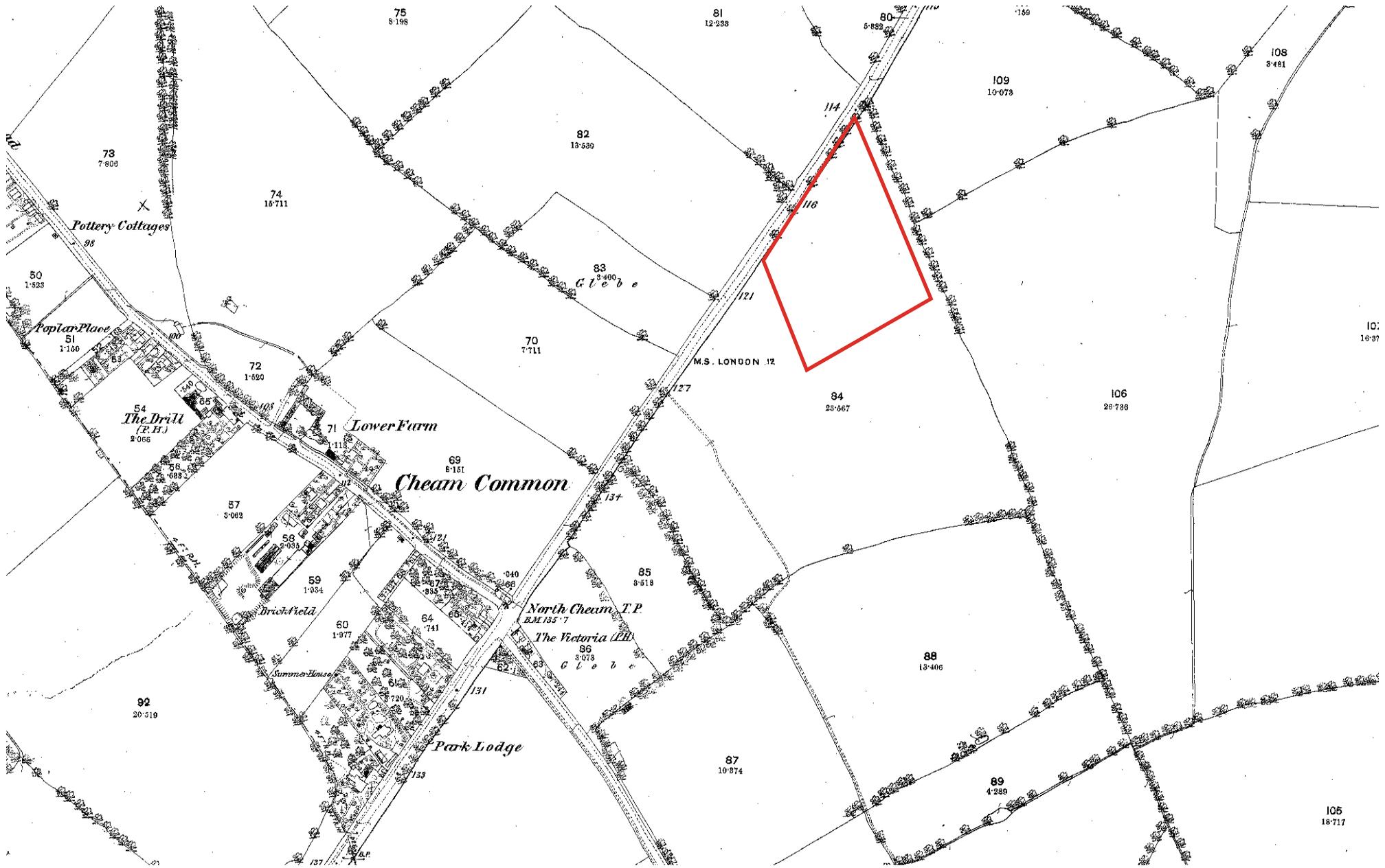


Fig 4 Sutton and North Cheam Sports and Social Club, London Road, Cheam: An extract from the OS First edition 25 inch Map of 1871

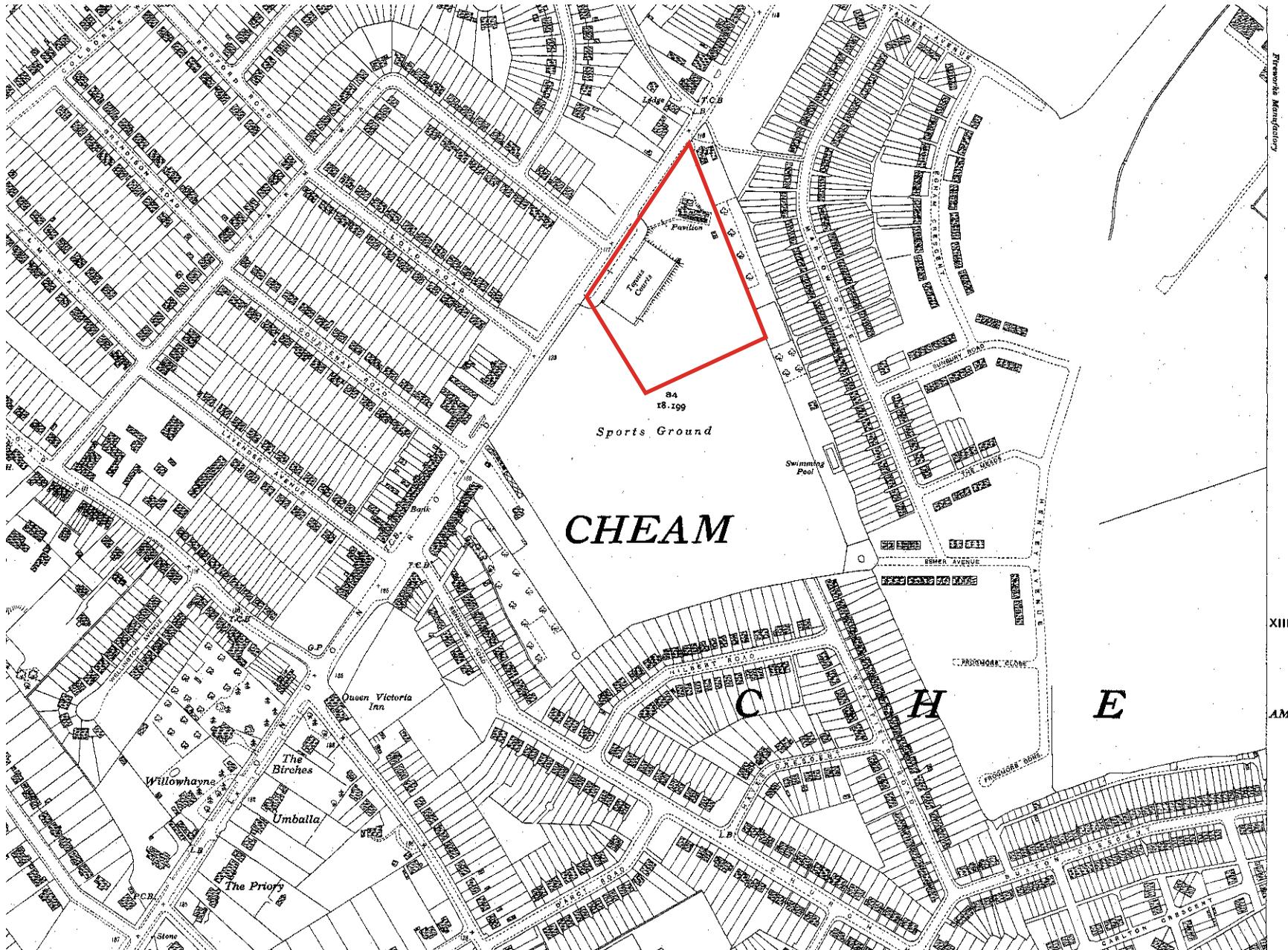


Fig 5 Sutton and North Cheam Sports and Social Club, London Road, Cheam: An extract from the OS 25 inch Map, 1933 edition