

**Hydon Cottage, Hollymeoak Road, Coulsdon, London Borough of  
Croydon: An Archaeological Evaluation**

**Site Code: HCZ 06  
Central National Grid Reference: TQ 2913 5803**

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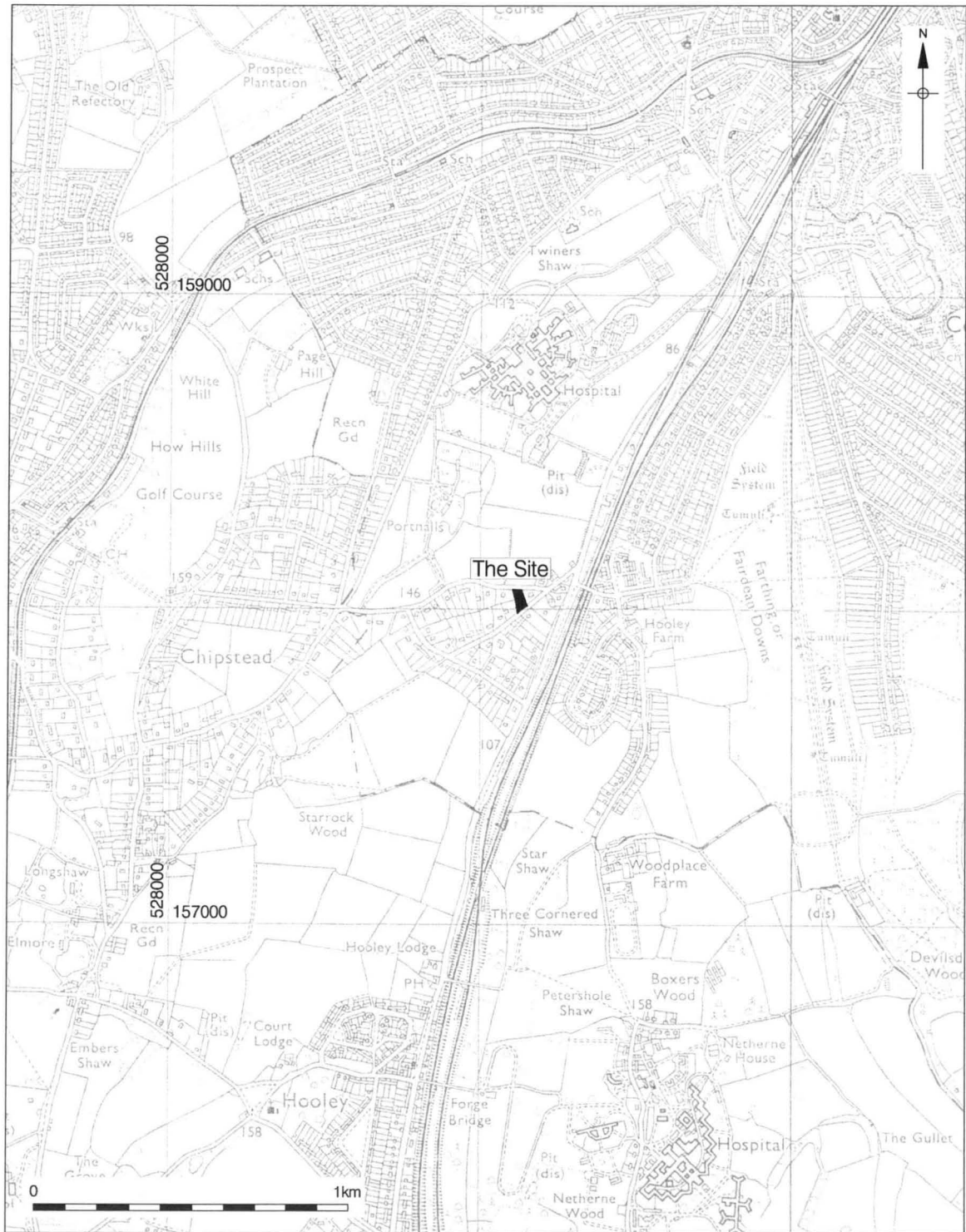
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# **1 ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of a pre-determination archaeological evaluation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at Hydon Cottage, Hollymeoak Road, Coulsdon, London Borough of Croydon.
- 1.2 The archaeological work was implemented in advance granting planning permission for the proposed development of three detached houses.
- 1.3 Four trenches were excavated across the site, two in the northern area and two in the southern area. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered and no residual finds of any date were recovered.

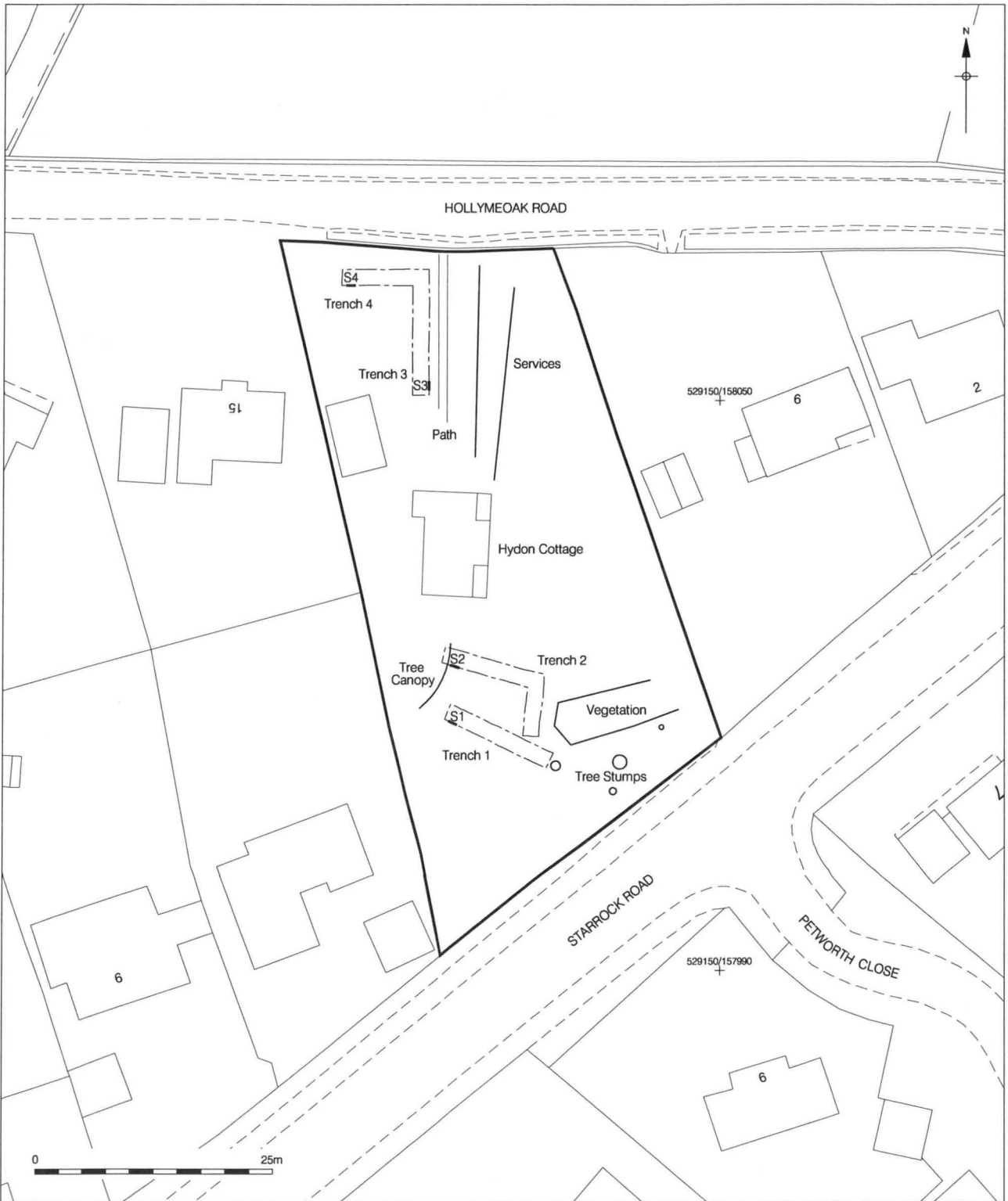
## **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 A pre-determination archaeological evaluation was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at Hydon Cottage, Hollymeoak Road, Coulsdon, London Borough of Croydon (Figure 1), in advance of a proposed development.
- 2.2 The evaluation was conducted between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> January 2006 and commissioned by JP Whelan Homes.
- 2.3 Excavation of four trenches was undertaken using a mechanical excavator under archaeological supervision in the gardens surrounding the extant property (Figure 2). Excavation continued to a depth at which the natural strata were exposed, or health and safety constraints prevented further excavation.
- 2.4 The National Grid Reference of the site centre is TQ 2913 5803.
- 2.5 The site was given the unique code HCZ 06.
- 2.6 The evaluation was supervised by Stuart Holden and project managed by Tim Bradley for Pre-Construct Archaeology. The work was monitored by Mark Stevenson, English Heritage.



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey 1:25,000. Crown Copyright 1980.

Figure 1  
 Site Location  
 1:20,000



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Figure 2  
Trench Location  
1:625

### **3 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND RESEACH OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 Planning background**

3.1.1 The study aims to satisfy the objectives of the London Borough of Croydon, which fully recognises the importance of the buried heritage for which they are the custodians. The council's deposited draft 'Croydon Unitary Development Plan', adopted in 1997, contains policy statements in respect of protecting the buried archaeological resource.

3.1.2 The proposed development is subject to the Archaeology and Urban Conservation policies:

#### **SP6 The Council will protect and enhance Croydon's archaeological heritage.**

##### Minimising Disturbance

AR2 The siting and design of development should have regard to the desirability of minimising the disturbance of archaeological remains.

##### Preserving Important Remains

AR3 There will be a presumption against development which would harm archaeological remains of national importance. Decisions on development proposals affecting other remains will take account of the archaeological importance of those remains, the need for the development, the likely extent of any harm, and the prospects of the proposals successfully preserving by record the archaeological interest of the site.

##### Recording Other Remains

AR4 On sites where archaeological remains do not need to be preserved in situ, the Council will make sure that there is investigation, excavation, recording, analysis and publication to a specification agreed by the Council, secured where appropriate by the use of agreements.

3.1.3 The site lies within an Archaeological Priority Zone, as defined within the UDP. There are no Listed Buildings on the site. The Planning Application Number is 05/00365/P (formerly 04/03683)

#### **3.2 Research Objectives**

3.2.1 The Method Statement prepared by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Taylor and Bradley, 2005), under guidance and approved by English Heritage Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service, proposed that consideration should be given to all periods but highlights the likelihood of encountering Saxon and prehistoric remains, based on the findings of the Desk-Based Assessment prepared for the site (Holden, 2005).

3.2.2 The following research aims were addressed during the course of the archaeological evaluation:

- Is there any evidence of prehistoric activity on the site?
- Is there any evidence of prehistoric exploitation of the area for flints as evidenced by flint debitage? If so, can this industry be dated to one period of the prehistoric age or is there more than one phase of such activity?
- Is there any evidence of prehistoric settlement or occupation of the area?
- Is there any evidence of Roman activity on the site?
- Is there any evidence of Saxon activity on the site? Particularly is there evidence of a Saxon cemetery or Saxon settlement associated with the known cemeteries nearby?
- Is there any evidence of medieval activity on the site?
- Are there any post medieval remains on the site?



## 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 An archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (Holden, 2005) was compiled prior to the commencement of the evaluation. The results of this document are summarised below.

### 4.2 Prehistoric

4.2.1 There is reasonable archaeological evidence for prehistoric activity in the area from a number of periods.

#### Palaeolithic and Mesolithic

4.2.2 Evidence for lower Palaeolithic activity in the area is represented by reports of fragments of remains such as mammoth tusks and a pre-glacial hippopotamus recovered from Cane Hill Hospital, 670m to the north.

4.2.3 There are a few of isolated findspots of Palaeolithic handaxes within the study area. During excavations at Numbers 9-11 Starrock Road, a neighbour brought round a lower Palaeolithic 'ficron' handaxe and a Mesolithic or later worked flint. The handaxes are fairly large artefacts and easily recognised however, smaller flakes require a keener eye to identify thus the data available on the SMR for this period could be much less than the actual evidence for activity in the study area.

#### Neolithic

4.2.4 A polished Neolithic axe was recovered from the garden of 41 Fairdene Road to the east of the site in 1963. Similar such findspots for Neolithic material exist just outside the study area and include finds of polished axes and worked flint flakes.

#### Bronze Age

4.2.5 Approximately 620m to the east of the site, on Farthing Down, a watching brief undertaken on the excavation of a pipe trench revealed a small pit containing a number of fragmentary sherds of flint-tempered pottery and animal bone. Sir James Moody found stone arrowheads in 1907 near The Shaw, 500m to the north of the site.

#### Iron Age

4.2.6 Farthing Down is also the site of a *Celtic* field system investigated by Barry Hope-Taylor in 1947. It is suggested that the fields lay either side of a track that runs north to south along the length of the down. Iron Age pottery sherds have been found

across the area but in particular in the southwest where the lynchets and bank were best preserved. During excavations of an anti-aircraft ditch in 1944, a pit was excavated that contained flints, pottery and charred acorns and shells.

- 4.2.7 On the slope of the valley to the southwest of the site, between Starrock Wood and Brighton Road, the Croydon Natural History Society (CHNS) collected a number of pottery sherds representing at least eight vessels that all dated to 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. These were found with animal bones in a bomb crater in 1941.

#### Unclassified prehistoric

- 4.2.8 Undiagnostic flint artefacts have been found within the study area but those closest to the site consist of burnt flint fragments from an archaeological watching brief in 1993 at Woodfield Hill and Woodfield Close and undiagnostic flints and burnt flint from the rear of 15 Starrock Road.

### 4.3 Roman

- 4.3.1 Within the study area, a Roman coin was found on a 'track' which may be a metalled road, a dark grey body sherd of pottery was found in 1940 in an air raid trench and presented to CNHS, a watching brief undertaken between 1999 and 2000 by Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society (CNHSS) (sitecode FDG99) produced a single Romano-British pottery sherd.

### 4.4 Saxon

- 4.4.1 The name Coulsdon evolved from Saxon times and the local fiefdom of Cuthraed. It is thought to be derived from 'Cuthraed's Down in c.648AD. Since then there are other variations documented:

675: Curreddone

1287: Colesdene

1377: Cullysdon

1446: Culsdon

1656: Couldson ([www.croydon.gov.uk](http://www.croydon.gov.uk))

- 4.4.2 According to the writings of Manning and Bray's *History of Surrey*, in around 1760 a man from London open a mound of earth upon Farthing Down and found within it a complete skeleton that he took away. It is now known that an Anglo-Saxon cemetery is situated here, and a number of excavations have since taken place. A further sixteen barrows were excavated in 1871 by J Wickham-Flower. These comprised two

groups approximately a quarter of a mile apart (Anderson, 1877). Each inhumation was made with the skeleton extended with the head at the western end of the grave and the arms by the side of the body. No instances of cremation were recorded. Finds of iron swords, knives and spearheads were made, together with bronze and wooden buckets and jewellery (ibid.). One of the skeletons was of a male measuring approximately 6ft 5in tall and J Wickham-Flower suggested this could be Cuthraed from whom the name of Coulsdon originates (Davidson, 2000).

4.4.3 Weaponry formed the bulk of material recovered from the graves but the haphazard way in which finds were collected and the resulting fragmentary nature, it is difficult to say that these graves are more richly furnished than those at Quelland or Merrow barrows, but they are certainly more ornamented than the more populous cemeteries at Fetcham and Ashted that are formed without barrows (Hines, 2004).

4.4.4 A further nine flat graves have also been identified at Farthing Down, several of which were excavated in 1939 and 1948. The style of the graves and the material from within them suggest a mid-7<sup>th</sup> century date. It is possible that the graves lay on a land boundary that has since been destroyed by the establishment of the Croydon estate (Blair, 1991). A possible grave, sealed by a post-medieval ditch, was exposed but not excavated during a watching brief (sitecode FDG99).

4.4.5 There are records of Saxon cemeteries on the opposite side of the valley, much closer to the subject site itself. One of these possibilities lies at Cane Hill Hospital, Portnalls Road although the exact details of this are somewhat sketchy. Skeletons with some grave goods (pottery, knives) were excavated here between 1873 and 1913. Some were reburied so it is possible that some have been excavated twice. The suggested 8<sup>th</sup> century date of this group of burials is also debatable.

4.4.6 In 1910, remains including a complete inhumation male skeleton were found while excavations were underway into the chalk in the area of Starrock Road. These had their heads at the western end of the grave and were buried with an iron knife (Moodie, 1913). It is possible that this is an extension of the cemetery mentioned above.

#### 4.5 **Medieval**

4.5.1 Colesdone, the present Old Coulsdon, was held by the Abbey of Chertsey at the time of the compiling of the Domesday Book (Walford, 1983) and there are records of St John's church being rebuilt in 1260 (Weinreb and Hibbert, 1983). To the north of the

site, in the area of Rickman Hill, a half-penny of Edward III (r.1327-77), London mint and a late-medieval casket key were found by metal detector around 1994.

4.5.2 Sir Nicholas Carew of Beddington acquired the manor of Coledstone in 1537 from Henry VIII but was later executed in 1539 for high treason (Weinreb and Hibbert, 1983).

4.5.3 There is little archaeological evidence for much activity within the study area during the medieval period. The land is most likely to have been used purely for agriculture with any settlement occurring in the main village. *Portnals Farm* is marked on Rocque's map of c.1762 and is likely to have been present from before this time.

#### 4.6 **Post-Medieval**

4.6.1 Old Coulsdon is situated to the south of the centre of the modern town, which was originally referred to as Smithambottom meaning 'smooth valley'.

4.6.2 John Rocque's map of c.1762 shows Hollymeoak road running from the London to Brighton Road at *Wholey*, westwards towards Chipstead, where it meets the road running to the southwest from Leaden Cross. A few houses are scattered around the junction of the roads at *Wholey* and at *Portnals Farm*. The surrounding land is divided into fields and Coulsdon is positioned directly east of the site, beyond Farthing Down.

4.6.3 The 1868 Ordnance Survey map shows the site within a parcel of land between the tracks serving the farms in the area, to the south of a short road leading through Hooley.

4.6.4 The 1933 Ordnance Survey map shows a much-changed landscape to that in 1868. The expansion of Coulsdon in the early-20<sup>th</sup> century is evident with the rapid development of residential property consuming the farmland. Most of the new roads follow the alignments of earlier tracks and footpaths. The plot of Hydon Cottage is delineated between Hollymeoak Road and Starrock Road, such as it is at the time of writing.

4.6.5 In the years that followed, up to the 1975 edition of the Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map, there has been little large-scale development, such as there was during the early part of the century. The site, and the properties in the surrounding area remain unchanged. By 2001, there has been some development in the area, with new properties being constructed to the southeast and southwest of the site.

## 5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 The fieldwork was designed to assess the presence or absence of significant archaeological remains, which may require further investigation.
- 5.2 The excavation of four trenches, each measuring 15m by 2m was agreed with Mark Stevenson, GLAAS monitor, on behalf of Croydon Borough Council. Due to the presence of existing vegetation and substantial tree stumps of in the southern area of the site, the trenches positioned here (1 and 2) were adjusted in order to obtain maximum coverage within the constraints.
- 5.3 In the northern area of the site, the presence of extant electricity and waste services (and most probably gas and water in addition) were established to the east of the path leading from Hollymeoak Road to Hydon Cottage. In order to prevent disruption to these services, no trenching was undertaken in this area. Two trenches were excavated in an 'L-shape' to the west of the path.
- 5.4 Under archaeological supervision, a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat ditching bucket was used to remove unproductive soils down to the highest archaeological horizon. The features identified within the trenches were then cleaned and investigated by hand. Investigation was limited to identifying the extent and nature of the deposits and to recover dating evidence.
- 5.5 All archaeological and natural deposits were recorded in plan and in section using standard recording methods. A photographic record using 35mm colour transparencies, black and white print film and digital mediums was also made as appropriate.
- 5.6 Temporary benchmarks (values 113.88, 112.32 and 113.12m OD) were traversed onto the site from the Ordnance Survey Benchmark, located on No 39 Hollymeoak Road (value 145.13m OD).
- 5.7 The work was undertaken following English Heritage (GLAAS) guidelines (English Heritage 1998).
- 5.8 Following the completion of the archaeological investigation, the trenches were backfilled using the excavated material.

## **6 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

- 6.1 The British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series Sheet 270 (South London) indicates that the site is likely to be underlain by Cretaceous Upper Chalk. Recent excavations at numbers 9 and 11 Starrock Road, to the south of the site, recorded natural chalk at between 350mm and 650mm below ground level (Batchelor, 1989).
- 6.2 The site is located at a height of approximately 110mOD, on the east facing flank of a river valley, through the bottom of which runs the London to Brighton road and rail lines. To the west, the valley culminates at a relatively flat plateau at a height of 160mOD, approximately 1km from the site. The eastern side of the valley is equally steep, rising to Farthing Down at a height of 1.45mOD.
- 6.3 Hollymeaoak Road runs along an east-west orientated hollow, whilst Starrock Road transects a prominence that juts out towards the east from the main body of the valley side.

## 7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

### 7.1 Summary

- 7.1.1 No archaeological evidence was identified in any of the four trenches excavated and all produced a similar sequence of deposits.

### 7.2 Trench 1

- 7.2.1 This trench measured 12.0m in length and was orientated east-west. The western end was brought in from the edge of the site boundary due to the presence of the canopy of a mature tree in the vicinity. At the eastern end, the presence of a substantial tree stump halted excavation prematurely as the root system would have caused great disturbance to any underlying archaeological deposits.

- 7.2.2 The natural chalk [03] was present at a level of between 114.13mOD and 114.46m OD, overlain by a layer of stiff brown clay and flint [02] up to 0.25m thick and topsoil [01] up to 0.20m thick.

### 7.3 Trench 2

- 7.3.1 This trench was orientated east-west with a section running south from the eastern end. The overall length of the trench was 15.75m.

- 7.3.2 The natural chalk [06] was present at a level of between 113.01mOD and 113.37m OD, overlain by a layer of stiff brown clay and flint [05] up to 0.35m thick and topsoil [04] up to 0.20m thick.

### 7.4 Trench 3

- 7.4.1 This trench measured 12m in length and constituted the north-south orientated arm of an 'L-shaped' trench located within the northern area of the site. A deep hole was sunk at the southern end of the trench to a depth of 1.2m (111.69mOD) and excavation was halted due to health and safety constraints. Although natural chalk was not attained at this point, there was a marked increase in the frequency of flint nodules in deposit [09]- a mid greyish brown sandy silt with moderate chalk fragment inclusions excavated to a depth of 0.36m. This was overlain by 0.60m thick deposit of mid yellowish brown sandy clay silt subsoil [08] and 0.20m of topsoil [07].

### 7.5 Trench 4

- 7.5.1 This trench measured 9.5m in length and constituted the east-west orientated arm of an 'L-shaped' trench located within the northern area of the site. A deep hole was

sunk at the western end of the trench to a depth of 1.5m (112.25mOD) and excavation was halted due to health and safety constraints. Although natural chalk was not attained at this point, there was a marked increase in the frequency of flint nodules in deposit [13]- a mid greyish brown sandy silt with moderate chalk fragment inclusions excavated to a depth of 0.46m. This was overlain by 0.56m thick deposit of mid yellowish brown sandy clay silt subsoil [12], 0.28m of mid greyish brown silty sand subsoil [11] and 0.20m of topsoil [10].



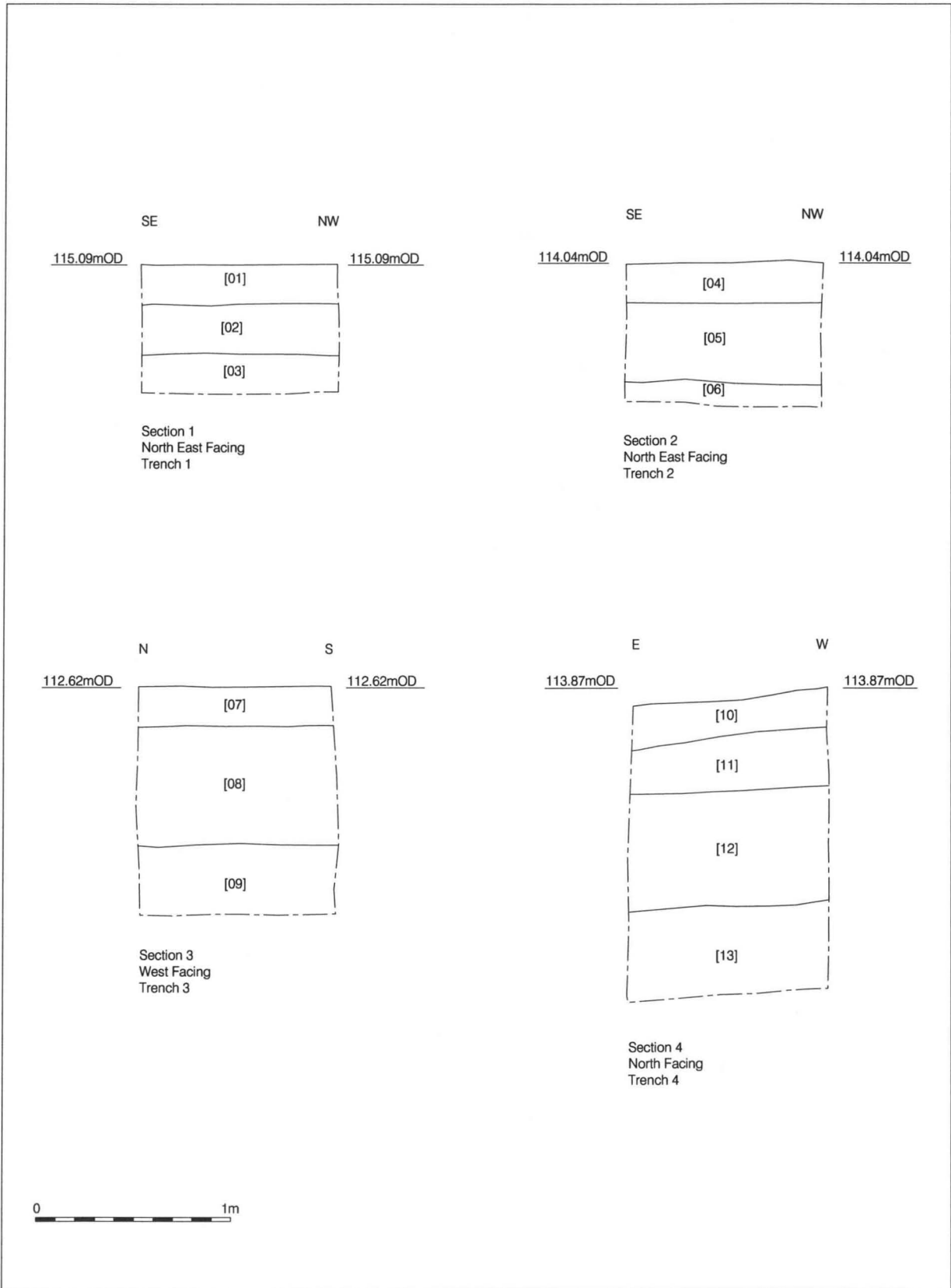


Figure 3  
 Sections 1-4  
 1:30

## **8 CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 No evidence of archaeologically sensitive material in the form of features, deposits or residual finds was encountered in any of the trenches excavated. It is likely that the localised topography of the site is a major contributing factor to the paucity of activity. The steep slope down towards the north is unlikely to have been conducive to settlement, burial or other activities during any period, the flatter plateau further west along Starrock Road being far more favourable.

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank JP Whelan Homes Ltd for commissioning the work, Mr W Hackham for his cooperation during the fieldwork and Mark Stevenson, English Heritage, for monitoring the fieldwork.
- 9.2 The author would like to thank Amelia Fairman, Charlie Correa and Neil Hawkins for their work on site, Nathalie Barrett for surveying the trenches, Hayley Baxter for the drawings and Tim Bradley for his project management and editing.

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## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Layer	Topsoil
2	Layer	Subsoil
3	Layer	Natural
4	Layer	Topsoil
5	Layer	Subsoil
6	Layer	Natural
7	Layer	Topsoil
8	Layer	Subsoil
9	Layer	Natural
10	Layer	Topsoil
11	Layer	Subsoil
12	Layer	Subsoil
13	Layer	Natural

## APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM

**OASIS ID: preconst1-12497**

### Project details

Project name Hydon Cottage, Coulsdon

Short description of the project An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Hydon Cottage, Hollymeoak Road, Coulsdon. However, no archaeologically sensitive activity was recorded.

Project dates Start: 16-01-2006 End: 19-01-2006

Previous/future work Yes / Not known

Associated project reference codes HCZ 06 - Site code  
05/00365/P - Planning Application No.

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Residential 1 - General Residential

### Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON CROYDON COULSDON Hydon Cottage, Hollymeoak Road, Coulsdon

Postcode CR5

Study area 2280.00 Square metres

National grid reference TQ 2913 5803 Point

Height OD Min: 111.62m Max: 114.46m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Project brief originator Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service

Project design originator Tim Bradley

Project director/manager Tim Bradley

Project supervisor Stuart Holden

Sponsor or funding body JP Whelan Homes

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title Hydon Cottage, Hollymeoak Road, Coulsdon, London Borough of Croydon:  
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Author(s)/Editor(s) Holden, S

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