

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at the site of the former Colham House,
Bakers Road, Uxbridge, London Borough of Hillingdon. UB8 1SS**

Site Code: CXB 07

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 0561 8422

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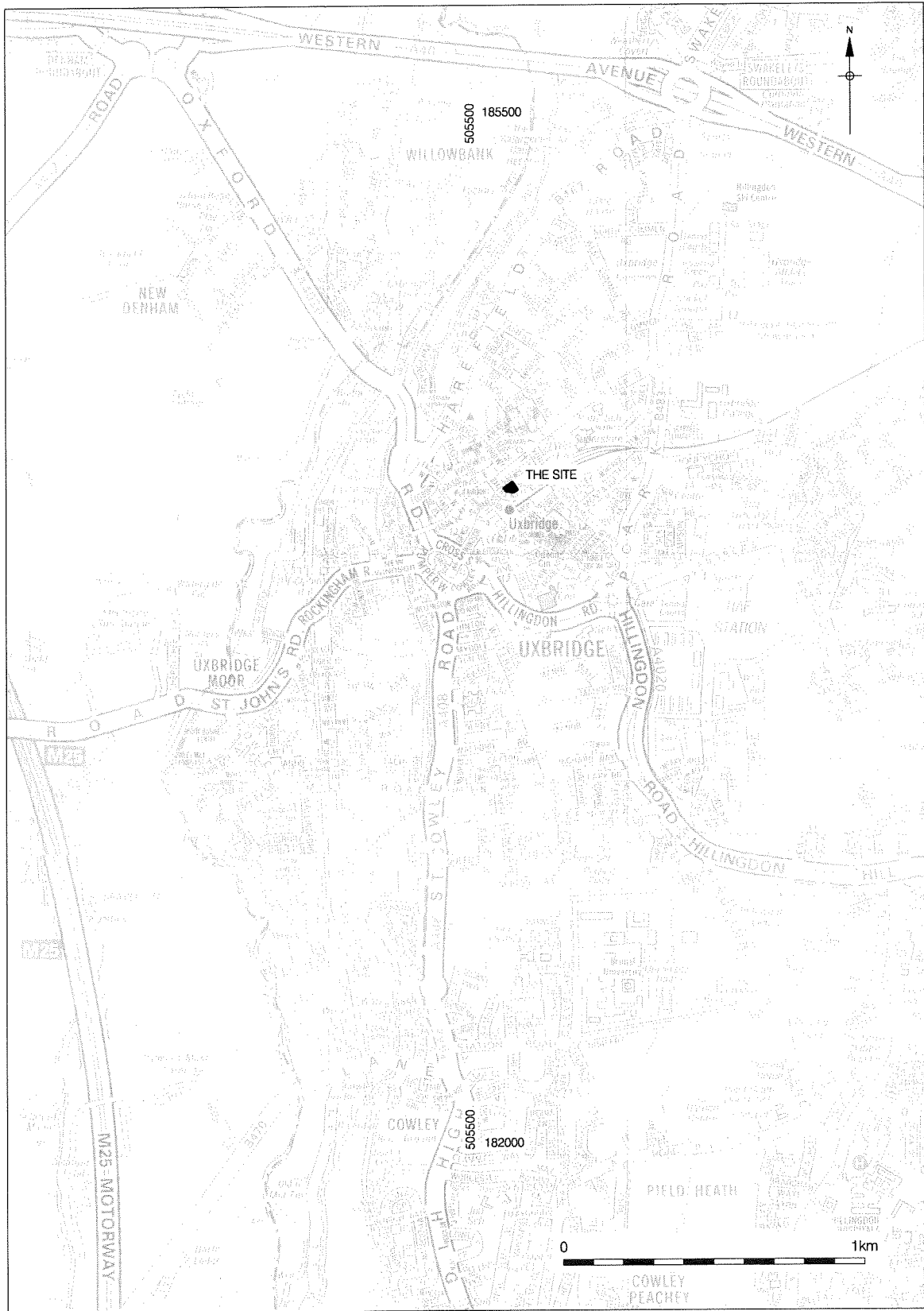
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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken during the ground reduction phase after the demolition of Colham House and prior to the construction of new Travelodge Hotel at Bakers Road, Uxbridge, London Borough of Hillingdon. UB8 1SS.
- 1.2 The area for ground reduction involved the entire footprint of the site.
- 1.3 The study area was excavated to a maximum depth of c.900mm below current ground level.
- 1.4 The watching brief revealed little evidence of any archaeological deposits, with the exception of an area to the north west of the site, which consisted of a layer of garden soil provisionally dated to the 19th century. The remaining areas of the site revealed no archaeological deposits from any period.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd at the site of the former Colham House, Bakers Road, Uxbridge, London Borough of Hillingdon, UB8 1SS, from 2nd July to 6th July 2007. The work was commissioned by George & Harding Construction. The site was project managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology by Gary Brown and Chris Mayo and was supervised by the author.
- 2.2 The site is bound to the north by properties fronting onto Belmont Road, to the west by Bakers Road, to the south by Uxbridge Station (LUL) and to the east by Bakers Court Bus Station (Fig. 1).
- 2.3 The National Grid Reference of the site is TQ 0561 8422 and the site was given the unique site code: CXB 07.
- 2.4 The areas of excavation were located within the confines of the site (Fig. 2).
- 2.5 The site lies in an Archaeological Priority Area as defined by policy BE3 of the London Borough of Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan.



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Figure 1
 Site location
 1:20,000 at A4

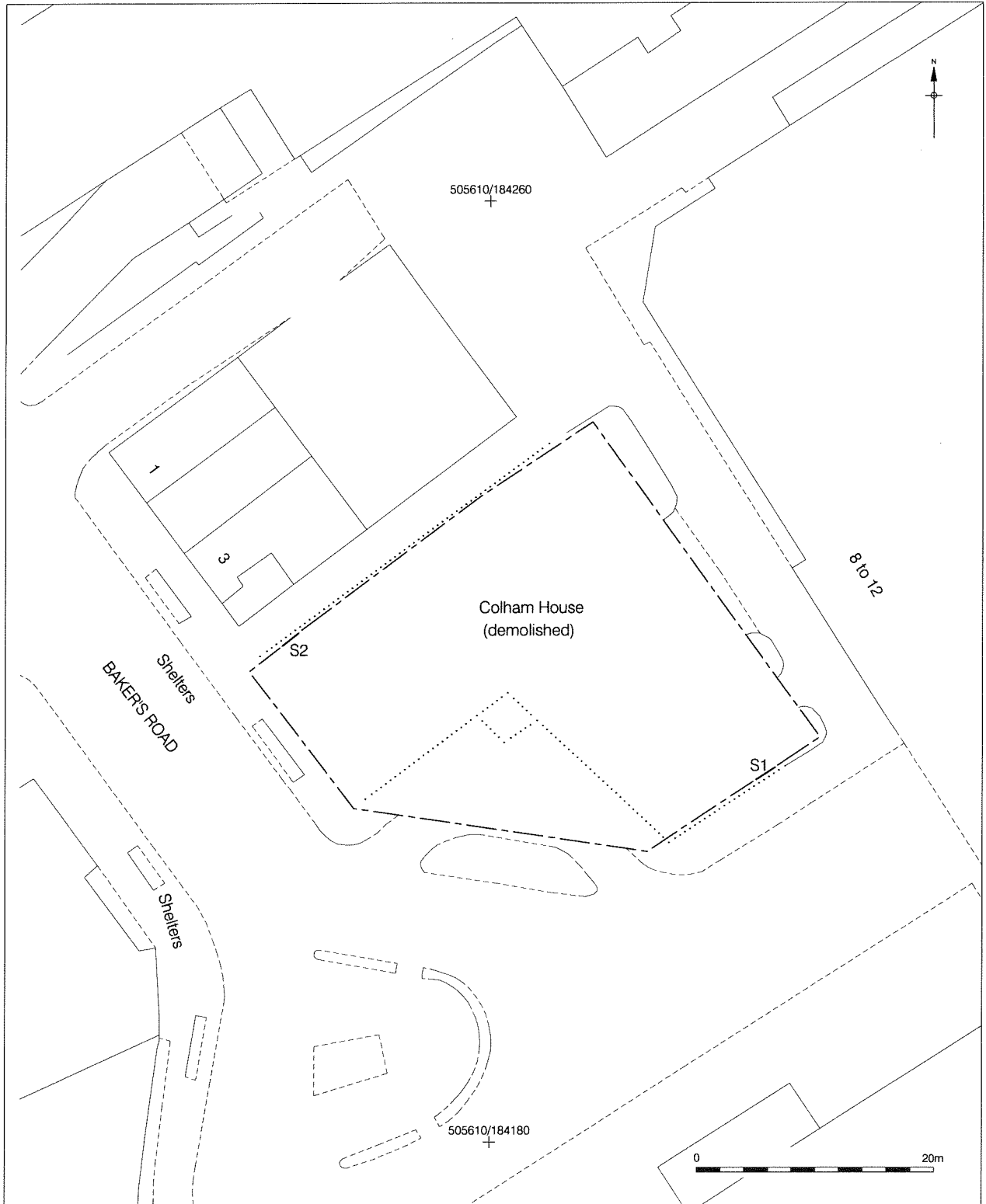


Figure 2
Trench location
1:500

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In November 1990 the Department of the Environment issued Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) "Archaeology and Planning" providing guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains.
- 3.2 In considering any planning application for development, the local planning authority is bound by the policy framework set by government guidance, in this instance PPG16, by current Structure and Local Plan policy and by other material.
- 3.3 Hephher Dixon Ltd obtained planning consent for the demolition of Colham House and the erection of a nine story Travelodge hotel. The works entailed limited ground disturbance, which required archaeological attention to fulfill the requirements of the London Borough of Hillingdon's grant of planning permission, condition 21 (Application Ref: 27298/APP/2006/875; dated 12.01.07) and in accordance with policy BE3 of the Hillingdon Unitary Development plan, the relevant extract of which is given below:¹

"No development shall take place until the applicant, their agent or successors in title has secured the implementation of a program of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigations which has submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter development shall only take place in accordance with the approved scheme. The archaeological works shall be carried out by a suitable qualified body acceptable to the Local Planning Authority."

- 3.4 An archaeological written scheme of investigations was prepared prior to the commencement of the watching brief ².

¹ London Borough of Hillingdon.

² Brown, G. *Project Design for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 The British Geological Survey 1: 50,000 Series Sheet 256 (North London) indicates that the site is likely to be underlain by Quaternary Post-diversionary Thames River Deposits: Terrace Gravels. This was confirmed during excavation when natural gravels were observed at c. 42.05mOD, approximately 900mm below current ground level.

- 4.2 The topography of the current land surface is generally flat, gradually sloping down to the south.

5 BACKGROUND AND RESEACH OBJECTIVES

5.1 BACKGROUND

5.1.1 PREHISTORIC

5.1.2 Prehistoric activity within the area seems to have been centred on the town of Hillingdon and around Colham and Yiewsley,³ all to the south east of the study area. There is limited evidence for Prehistoric activity within an approximate 1km radius of the site. Evidence for Late Bronze Age activity was discovered at the site of the former Railway Station in Vine Street, Uxbridge (N.G.R. TQ 056839, site code; VNE00) approximately 0.4km south of the study area and evidence of mid to late Bronze Age features at the former Jewson site in Harefield Road (N.G.R TQ055845, site code: HRR93), which is approximately 1.2km north west of the site. There are also indications of a possible Bronze Age field enclosure at the site of the High Street (N.G.R. TQ 05718412 site code: HSU 96), approximately 0.6km south of the site.⁴

5.2 ROMAN

5.2.1 Evidence for Roman activity in the area is fragmentary. However, at least one Roman road is believed to run north-south through the parish of Hillingdon and fragments of Roman pottery have been found near Cowley Church, Uxbridge, south of the study area. To date, no evidence of activity in the Roman period has been discovered within the vicinity of the site.⁵

5.3 SAXON

5.3.1 Uxbridge owes its existence to the London to Oxford road, an ancient and important route. The name itself is thought to derive from a Saxon tribe the Wixan, and means 'the bridge belonging to the Wixan'. The bridge in question taking the road over the River Colne that formed the boundary of their territory. Uxbridge itself is not mentioned by name in the Domesday Book, being grouped together with the hamlets of Hillingdon and Colham (hence the name 'Colham House' of the study site), but was certainly in

³ Victoria County History of Middlesex.

⁴ LAARC

⁵ Victoria County History of Middlesex

existence by the late 11th century⁶. To date, no evidence of activity in the Saxon period has been discovered within the vicinity of the site.

5.4 MEDIEVAL

5.4.1 For much of the early medieval period Uxbridge formed part of the manor of Colham, and only started to develop as a separate entity in the late 12th century with permission to hold a market. Uxbridge became the main corn market for the counties to the west of London, and allied to that was the development of a flour milling industry along the Rivers Colne and Fray. It was the presence of the market that continued to be the dominant factor in the development of the town up until the 19th century.⁷ There is limited evidence for Medieval activity within an approximate 1km radius of the site; a possible 13th century kiln discovered in the High Street (N.G.R. TQ 05718412 site code: HSU 96), approximately 0.6km south of the site and also the remains of a late Medieval timber framed building at the site of the Nationwide Building Society, Crown Yard, High Street (N.G.R. TQ 05408435 site code: NAB 91), approximately 0.5km from the site⁸.

5.5 POST-MEDIEVAL

5.5.1 During the 19th century the importance of the market began to decline and was replaced by the development of a brick making industry around Cowley accompanied by increasing building development. This process was accelerated by the arrival of the Metropolitan Railway in 1904⁹ stimulating the urban development that continues today. Ordnance Survey maps from 1866, 1914, 1925 and 1934 (Fig. 3, 1914 only) show little change to the basic topography of the study area; namely dense housing and 'yards', (e.g. Bakers Yard) which were closely packed rows of terraced housing that were a feature of the town, north of the High Street in the 19th and early 20th century (Fig. 4), since demolished in the 1950s and 1960s. By the 1950s the building of a new Uxbridge station had substantially altered the area with the creation of Bakers Road and the site of the bus depot (Fig. 5, Fig. 6). There is evidence of Post-Medieval activity in the vicinity of the site.

5.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

5.6.1 The following Research Questions were addressed by the watching brief:

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Victoria County History of Middlesex.

⁸ LAARC

⁹ Victoria County History of Middlesex

- What is the potential for Palaeolithic activity being recorded in the Terrace Gravels?
- What is the nature of the prehistoric activity at the site?
- Is there any evidence for the exploitation of the area in the Roman period?
- Is there any evidence for Medieval remains at the site, particular those related to the medieval settlement of Uxbridge?

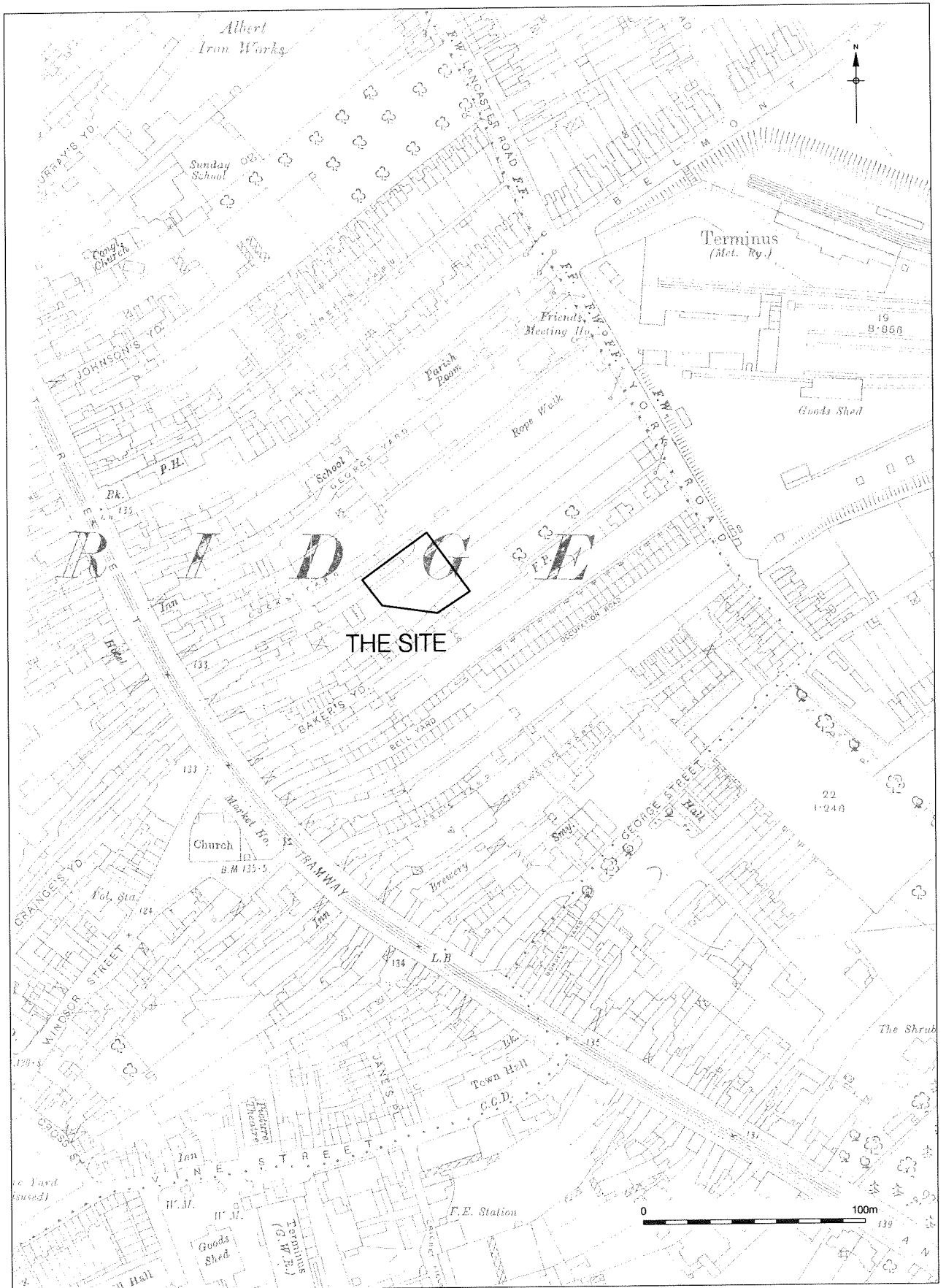
6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The areas to be reduced were laid out by the groundwork contractors in accordance with the proposed development plan. The contractors undertook the ground reduction with the use of a 30 tonne 360 degree mechanical excavator equipped with a toothed ditching bucket.
- 6.2 When archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated and recorded stratigraphically by the attendant archaeologist.
- 6.3 The areas of ground reduction were located from the Scheme Proposals 1:100 site plan and levelled from a Temporary Bench Mark established on site by the developers with a value of 44.00m OD. The areas of archaeological interest were recorded using pro-forma sheets and planned at 1:200. Representative sections were recorded at 1:10. A photographic record of the excavation in colour was carried out.

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

7.1 SUMMARY

- 7.1.1 Only archaeological features relating to the post-medieval period were observed during the watching brief.
- 7.1.2 The site is roughly triangular in shape and measures 45.0 m east-west and 33.0m north-south, and covers an area of approximately 980.0 square meters. The site was cut from a height of approximately 42.90m OD down to a formation level of 42.0m OD.
- 7.1.3 The lowest deposit attained [2] was the top of a natural layer of Terrace Gravels at a level of between 42.02m OD and 42.00m OD. This layer is a result of River action and was laid down in the Quaternary period. The total depth could not be established as no further excavation took place below this level. No archaeological finds or deposits were observed in this layer.
- 7.1.4 Above layer [2] was a thick layer of Mid yellowish brown clayey sand and represents a layer of natural brickearth [1]. The top of the layer was at 42.67m OD and the base of the layer was 42.02m OD, its thickness being 0.65m. No archaeological finds or deposits were observed in this layer.
- 7.1.5 To the south-west of the site was a layer of dark greyish brown silty sand [3]. The top of the layer was at 42.80m OD and the base at 42.02m OD and has been interpreted as 19th century garden soil. This layer, [3], overlies the terrace gravels [2]. Its relationship with the brickearth layer [1] was impossible to establish as any boundary between the two lay in the area now obscured by the basement of the demolished Colham House. The dating of the layer comes from two shards of pottery (which represent the only archaeological finds from the site); a small shard of post-medieval red earthenware and a small shard of German stoneware (possibly Westerwald), both of which have a broad date range, but are consistent with a 19th century date.
- 7.1.5 Above layers [1] and [3] was a layer of modern made ground topped with a thin layer of Tarmac. The highest level (ground level) was between 43.20m OD and 42.90M OD, and the lowest level of made ground was between 42.80m OD and 42.67m OD.



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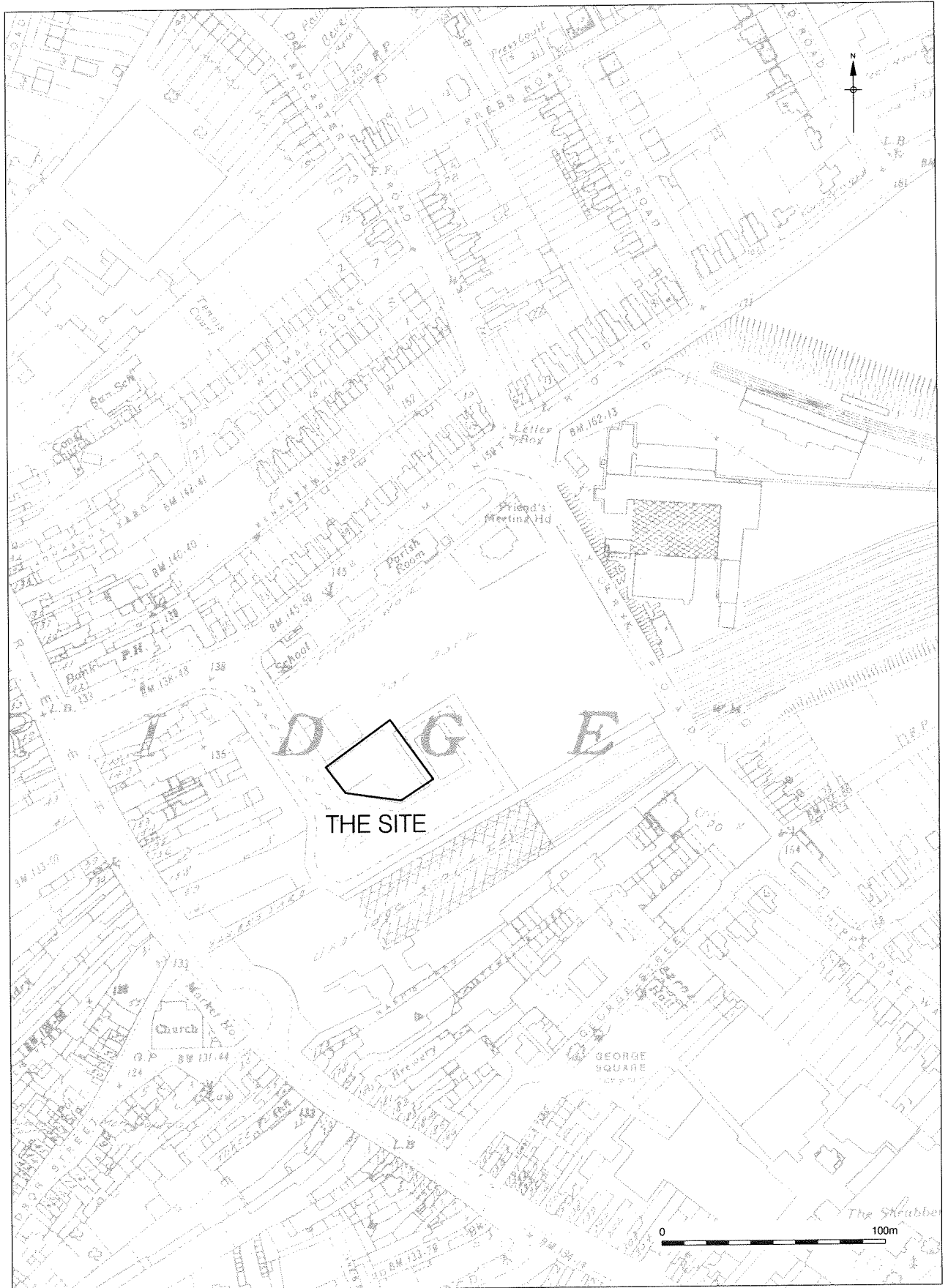
Figure 3
 Ordnance Survey 1914
 1:2,500 at A4



Figure 4
Photograph of Baker's Yard 1930



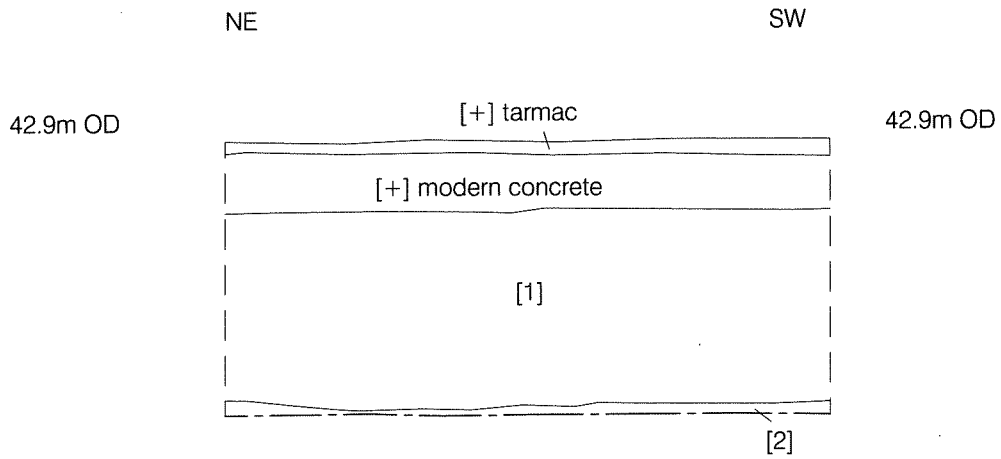
Figure 5
Photograph of the Site 1950



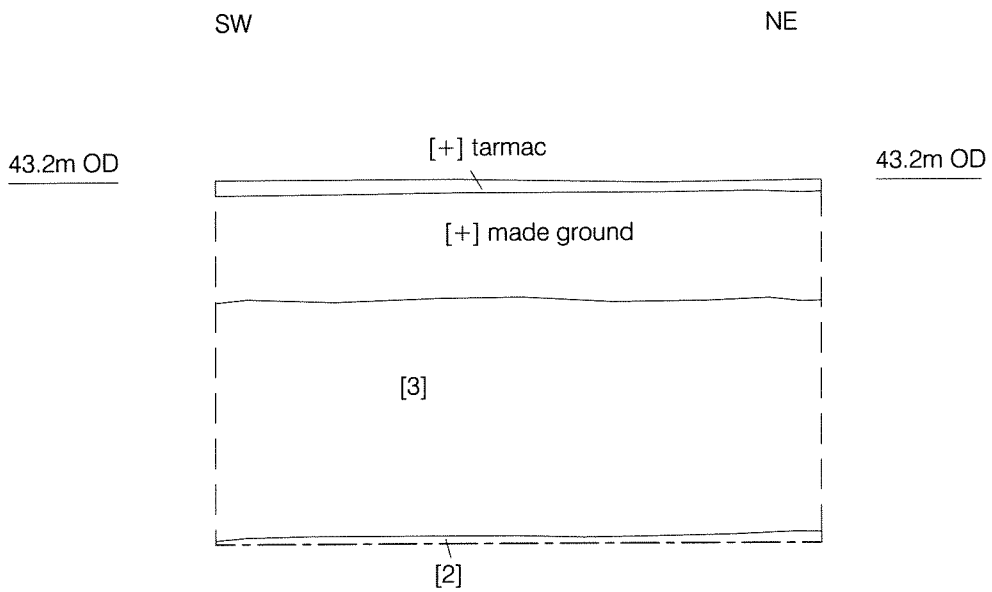
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Figure 6
Ordnance Survey 1959
1:2,500 at A4



Section 1
Northwest facing



Section 2
Southeast facing



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Figure 7
Representative Sections 1 and 2
1:20 at A4

8 INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The watching brief was intended to identify and record archaeological material exposed by the ground reduction phase after the demolition of Colham House and prior to the construction of new Travelodge Hotel on the site.
- 8.2 Project level was achieved at a maximum depth of 42.00m OD and as a result geological deposits of Natural Brickearth [1] and Terrace Gravels [2] were observed across the site.
- 8.3 No Prehistoric, Roman, Saxon or Medieval deposits were encountered during the watching brief.
- 8.4 An area of 19th century garden soil [3] was observed to the west of the site, but with the exception of two shards of pottery, no other archaeological features were encountered.
- 8.5 To the north of the site, and covering almost one third of the area, a substantial quantity of crushed building demolition debris had been laid down, filling the *in situ* basements of the demolished Colham House. The construction of the basements would have severely impacted on any archaeological remains that may have survived on the site.
- 8.6 In conclusion, the construction of extensive basements for Colham House would have severely impacted on any surviving archaeological deposits over a substantial area of the site, and the absence of any archaeological remains on the rest of the site gives a negative response to any of the research objectives set out in section 5.6 of this report.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank George & Harding Construction for commissioning the work, especially Ralph Daubeney. Thanks also to the groundworkers for their help and assistance.

- 9.2 The author would like to thank Angelo Indelecato for the illustrations and Gary Brown and Chris Mayo for their project management and editing.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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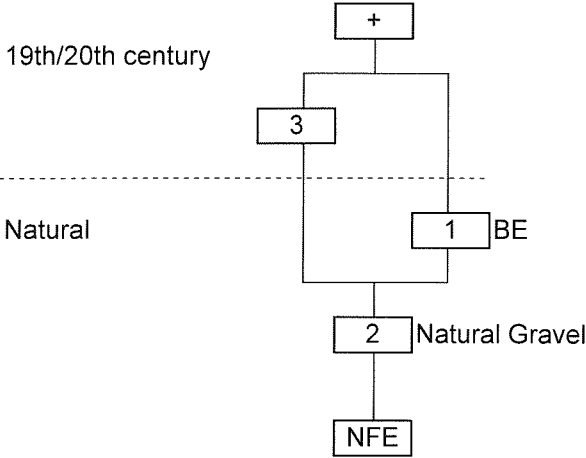
Appendix 1: Site Register

Site Code	Context No.	Plan	Section / Elevation	Type	Description	Date	Photos No.
CXB 07	1	TR1	S.1	Layer	Natural Brickearth layer	03/07/07	
CXB 07	2	TR1	S.1 S.2	Layer	Natural Gravel layer	03/07/07	
CXB 07	3	TR1	S.2	Layer	Garden soil layer	04/07/07	

Appendix 2: Section Register

Site Code	Section No.	Scale	Datum	Trench No.	Co-ordinates	Comments	Sheets No.
CXB 07	1	1:10	42.9	TR1	N/A	North west facing section	1
CXB 07	2	1:10	43.2	TR1	N/A	South east facing section	1

Appendix 3: Site Matrix



Appendix 4 - Oasis Report form

1.1 OASIS ID: preconst1-28548

Project details

Project name An Archaeological Watching Brief at the site of the former Colham House, Bakers Road, Uxbridge, London Borough of Hilling

Short description of the project The results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken during the ground reduction phase prior to construction of a new hotel.

Project dates Start: 02-07-2007 End: 06-07-2007

Previous/future work Not known / Not known

Any associated project reference codes CXB 07 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed

Significant Finds POTTERY Post Medieval

Methods & techniques 'Documentary Search', 'Visual Inspection'

Development type Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON HILLINGDON UXBRIDGE Bakers Road, Uxbridge

Postcode	UB8 1SS
Study area	980.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 056 842 51.5463158809 -0.476934169211 51 32 46 N 000 28 36 W Point
Height OD	Min: 42.00m Max: 42.02m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	George and Harding Construction
Project design originator	Gary Brown
Project director/manager	Gary Brown / Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	Stuart Watson
Type of sponsor/funding body	George and Harding Construction
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Contents	'Ceramics'
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC

Paper Contents	'Ceramics'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet', 'Map', 'Matrices', 'Photograph', 'Plan', 'Report', 'Section'
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief at the site of the former Colham House, Bakers Road, Uxbridge, London Borough of Hillingdon
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2 OASIS:

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