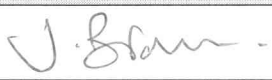
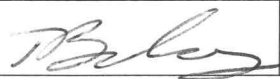


DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

LOWER COOMBE STREET, LONDON BOROUGH  
OF CROYDON

EVALUATION

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited			
	Name & Title	Signature	Date
Text Prepared by:	Joanna Taylor		February 2005
Graphics Prepared by:	Adrian Nash		February 2005
Graphics Checked by:	Josephine Brown		February 2005
Project Manager Sign-off:	Tim Bradley		February 2005

Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd  
Unit 54  
Brockley Cross Business Centre  
96 Endwell Road  
London  
SE4 2PD

**An Archaeological Evaluation at 23–31 Lower Coombe Street and Land adjacent to 17 St Andrews Road, London Borough of Croydon**

**Site Code: LCS05**

**Central National Grid Reference: TQ 532263 164886**

**Written and Researched by Joanna Taylor  
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, February 2005**

**Project Manager: Tim Bradley**

**Commissioning Client: Mansell Construction Services Ltd on behalf of  
Wandle Housing Association**

**Unit 54  
Brockley Cross Business Centre  
96 Endwell Road  
Brockley  
London  
SE4 2PD**

**Tel: 020 7732 3925  
Fax: 020 7732 7896  
E-mail: [tbradley@pre-construct.com](mailto:tbradley@pre-construct.com)  
Website: [www.pre-construct.com](http://www.pre-construct.com)**

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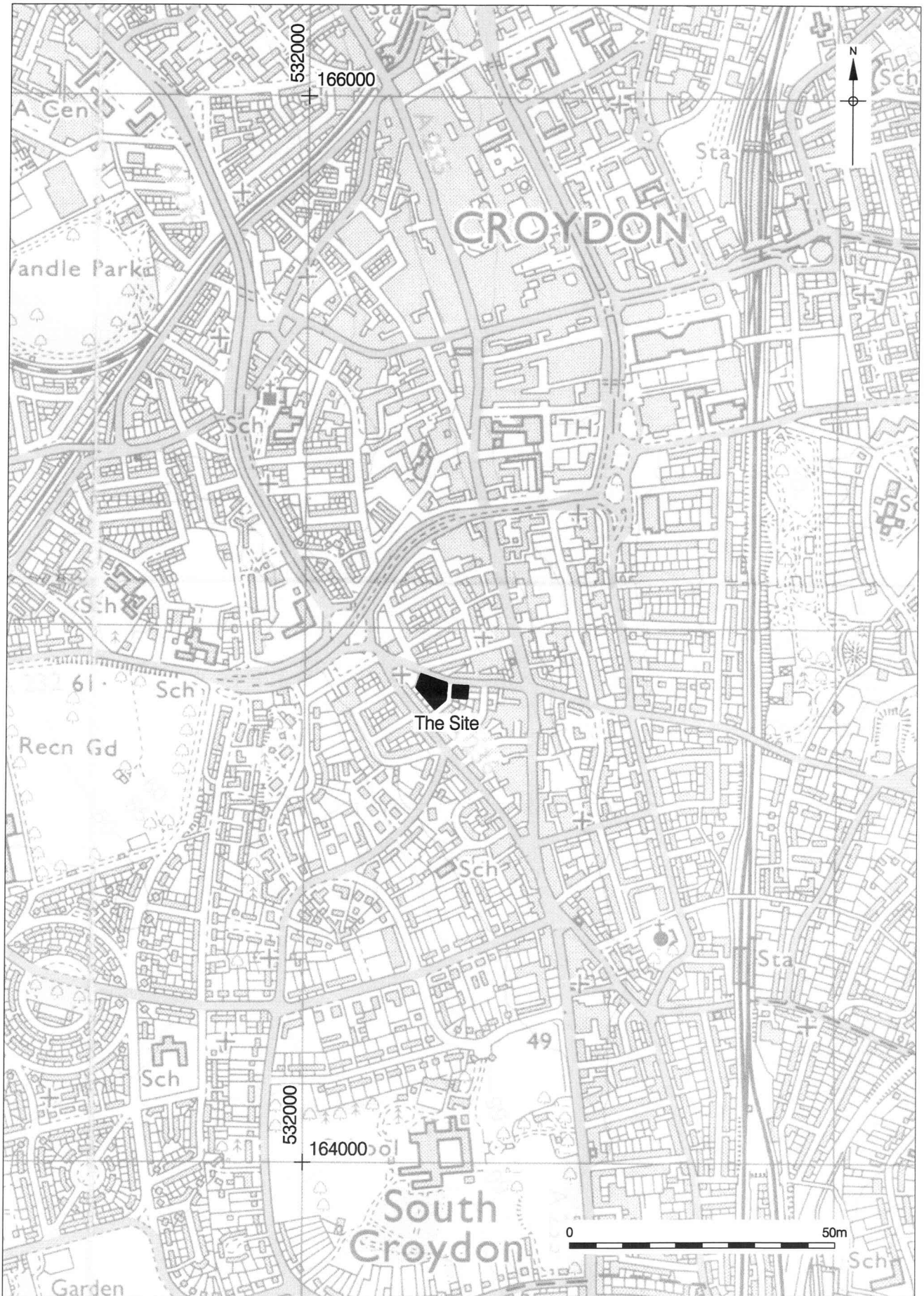
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## **1 ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological evaluation undertaken in advance of the redevelopment of the 23-31 Lower Coombe Street and Land Adjacent to 17 St. Andrews Road, London Borough of Croydon (fig.1). The site is centred at National Grid Reference TQ 532263 164886.
- 1.2 The evaluation consisted of 4 trenches located within the footprint of the proposed development. All trenches were orientated on an east/west axis with Trench 1 measuring 8.40m by 2.00m, Trench 2 measuring 11.20m by 2.00m and Trenches 3 and 4 measuring 10.00m by 2.00m (fig.2).
- 1.3 The evaluation found evidence for natural gravels across the site at heights between 45.60m OD and 45.70m OD. Whilst there was no evidence of a natural brickearth sealing the natural terrace gravel, the natural horizon did not appear to have been terraced or horizontally truncated outside the footprint of the extant buildings.
- 1.4 The evaluation found possible evidence of prehistoric activity on site and abundant evidence of Roman activity in the eastern half of the site. This took the form of probable pitting which had been backfilled with dumped deposits containing large amounts of cultural material.
- 1.5 The medieval/post-medieval deposits on site reflect a land use that was essentially agricultural with minimal quantities of cultural material accumulating on site. The presence of these deposits throughout all of the excavated evaluation trenches suggests that limited truncation has occurred on site since the end of the Roman period and the redevelopment of the site in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 An archaeological field evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd between 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of February 2005. The site is comprised of 23–31 Lower Coombe Street and land adjacent to 17 St Andrews Road, London Borough of Croydon (fig.1).
- 2.2 The commissioning client was Mansell Construction Services Ltd on behalf of Wandle Housing Association. The field evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd under the supervision of Joanna Taylor and the project management of Tim Bradley.
- 2.3 The site is divided in two by St Andrews Road with the eastern portion of the site bounded to the north by Lower Coombe Street, to the east by properties fronting onto Lower Coombe Street and to the south by properties fronting on to St Andrews Road. The western portion of the site is bounded to the north by Lower Coombe Street, to the west by St Andrew's Church and to the south by properties fronting onto Southbridge Road and St Andrews Road (fig.1).
- 2.4 The eastern portion of the site currently consists of tarmac surface associated with the sites recent use as a car park, whilst the western portion of the site is occupied by concrete surfaces and standing buildings.
- 2.5 A temporary benchmark was transferred from the Ordnance Survey Bench Mark located on the south side of Tanfield Road (47.73m OD).
- 2.6 The completed archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records and artefactual material will be deposited at the Museum of London under the site code LCS05.



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Figure 1  
Site Location  
1:10,000



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Figure 2  
Trench Locations  
1:500

### **3 PLANNING BACKGROUND**

3.1 The site is located within one of the London Borough of Croydon's Archaeological Priority Zones (APZ) and the following is a brief summary of the Borough's Unitary Development Plan (see Askew, 2003 for the complete planning background to the site):

Para. 6.3: Archaeological remains are the main surviving evidence of Croydon's past. They are important to local identity, and are valuable for their role in education, recreation and tourism. Archaeological remains are a finite and fragile source easily destroyed by development. Once they are gone, part of the Borough's past is lost forever.

Para. 6.4: The archaeology of the Borough can best be protected if as much information as possible is available at the planning application stage. The evaluation, which may involve fieldwork, is needed so that the Council can assess the archaeological implications of proposals. Where appropriate the evaluation may also show how development can be designed so that they do not harm a site. The Council will also seek the advice of English Heritage on the competency and expertise of the organisations intending to undertake archaeological site evaluation.

Para. 6.6: The national importance of some remains may be such to warrant their preservation in situ. Archaeological remains are often highly fragile and vulnerable to damage and irreplaceable evidence may be lost as a result of development or even as a result of prior archaeological excavation. Preservation by record involves excavation of a site to record archaeological remains in advance of development.

Para. 6.7: Other archaeological sites contain information which is vital to an understanding of Croydon's past. This can only be retrieved through proper excavation, analysis and recording. The information cannot be used as a local educational and cultural resource unless finds are looked after and results published. The Council will encourage landowners, archaeologists and developers to co-operate in accordance with the Code of Practice agreed by the British Archaeologists and Developers Liaison Group. In line with this code, and in place of a local alternative, the approved museum for the donation or lodging of archaeological finds is currently the Museum of London.

POLICY ARC4: On sites where archaeological remains do not need to be preserved in situ, the Council will make sure there is investigation, excavation, recording, analysis and publication to a specification agreed by the Council, secured where appropriate by the use of agreements.



## **4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

- 4.1 Croydon is located on outcrops of solid rock (Upper Chalk) which form the hills of the North Downs and date to approximately 80 million years ago when a shallow sea covered the region. The upper geological sequence consists of sandy sediments (Thanet Beds), shelly, sandy clays (Woolwich and Reading Beds), rounded pebbly shores (Blackheath Beds) and dark grey silty clays (London Clay) (Askew, 2003).
- 4.2 Croydon is built on one of the lowest and youngest of the sand and gravel terraces (Taplow Gravel) which were formed during the last quarter of the Pleistocene by the River Wandle. The site itself lies on the eastern side of the terrace towards the base of the river valley (Askew, 2003; Anon. 2004).
- 4.3 The current ground surface of the site ranges between c.46.90m OD in the east of the site to c.46.30m OD in the west. Natural gravels were encountered in all four trenches at between 45.60m OD and 45.70m OD suggesting that the slope in the modern topography of the site is not a consequence of the natural topography underlying it.

## **5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **5.2 Introduction**

5.1.1 As part of the Desk-Based Assessment, compiled for the site in 2003, a complete check of the London Borough of Croydon's Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) was conducted to assess the archaeological potential of the site. The following is a brief summary of the initial assessment with the inclusion of relevant information from watching briefs, evaluations and excavations conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd in the London Borough of Croydon.

### **5.2 Prehistoric**

5.2.1 Mesolithic and Neolithic flint tools, once belonging to nomadic hunter-gatherer groups seasonally exploiting the area near or along the banks of the River Wandle, have been found in the vicinity of the site at St Peters Road, 2-4 Coombe Street, Church Road and Park Lane (Askew, 2003).

5.2.2 Bronze Age pits and gulleys have been found c.0.5km to the northwest of the site at 82-86 Park Lane and it has been suggested that scattered settlement existed at a number of locations along the line of the Wandle Valley with further evidence found at Purley Way and Brighton Road (Askew, 2003).

5.2.3 There is little evidence to suggest the presence of Iron Age activity within the vicinity of the site although small amounts of Late Iron Age pottery were found during excavations at 3-7 Park Street, 700metres to the north of the site (Askew, 2003).

### **5.3 Roman**

5.3.1 Whilst the site lies relatively close to the Roman road from London to Portslade Way the exact route of the road is poorly known to date (Brown, 1992). However, it may have followed the line of North End and High Street which would bring it in close proximity to the site (Askew, 2003).

5.3.2 The SMR has shown that there is a lack of excavated sites in the vicinity of the study site and most evidence has come from chance finds such as pottery, coins and jewellery in the vicinity of the site (Askew, 2003).

5.3.4 The closest excavated site of Roman date is c.600m to the southeast of the site at 17-19 Brighton Road. The excavations found evidence for ditches, large quantities of pottery and a mid 4<sup>th</sup> century coin hoard. In addition a number of Roman burials have been found around the George Street/High Street junction spreading to Park Street (Askew, 2003).

5.3.5 Whilst it is generally considered that a well established settlement existed in Croydon in the Roman period it has not been possible to date to establish the nature or extent of the Roman settlement although evidence has been found in the areas around

George Street, Surrey Street, Park Street and Whitgift Street (Askew, 2003). Recent archaeological investigations to the north (Clough, 2003; Proctor, 1999; Wooldridge, 1999), the northwest (Duckering, 2002) and the south of the site (Brown, 1992) found a lack of evidence for in situ Roman deposits which may suggest that the Roman settlement did not extend this far to the north, south or northwest.

- 5.3.6 It is suggested that as Croydon lies approximately ten miles south of Central London it may have been used as the site of a posting station or *mutatio*. Had there been a posting station at this point a settlement would have inevitably developed and the discovery of deposits dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries at 14 Whitgift Street may suggest a possible period for the development of the site (Askew, 2003).

#### **5.4 Saxon**

- 5.4.1 A 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> century Saxon cemetery was discovered in the 1890's, c. 250 metres from the site at Edridge Road and additional evidence of Saxon occupation in Croydon is known from excavations at 82-86 Park Lane (Askew, 2003).
- 5.4.2 It is thought that the late Saxon settlement may have been in the vicinity of the parish church which itself is thought to be built on the site of a Saxon predecessor (Askew, 2003).
- 5.4.3 No evidence is known to suggest that the Saxon settlement encroaches on to the study site (Askew, 2003).

#### **5.5 Medieval**

- 5.5.1 The earliest documentary reference to Croydon dates to the 9<sup>th</sup> century when Archbishop Aethred exchanged land in 'Crogedene' for land belonging to Aelfred at Chartham in Kent (Askew, 2003).
- 5.5.2 By the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 the Manor of Croydon, 'Croindene', belonged to the Archbishop of Canterbury (Askew, 2003).
- 5.5.3 Few finds dating to the medieval period have been found in the vicinity of the site and it is probable that the ground surrounding the town, on which the site is situated, was mainly utilised for agricultural purposes (Askew, 2003).

#### **5.6 Post-medieval**

- 5.6.1 Croydon continued to develop through the later medieval period and by the 16<sup>th</sup> century it had become a large market town at the centre of a the nearby charcoal burning industry of the 'Great North Wood' (Askew, 2003).
- 5.6.2 Maps indicate that the site was situated in open ground within a sparsely occupied area away from the main settlement area in the early post-medieval period (Askew, 2003).

- 5.6.3 The 1868 Ordnance Survey Map is the first to show development of the site whereby it was occupied by a mixture of tenements, gardens and yard areas. Whilst there was some further redevelopment throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the site remained largely unchanged until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Askew, 2003).
- 5.6.4 Unlike much of Croydon this part of the town did not sustain heavy bomb damage in the Second World War (Askew, 2003).
- 5.6.5 In the post-war years the site remained largely unchanged although the 1955 Ordnance Survey Map shows that there had been increased industrialisation with the western half of the site occupied by an upholstery works. By the 1960's the tenements that occupied the eastern half of the site had been demolished and the area of land came to be used as a car park from the 1970's onwards (Askew, 2003).
- 5.6.6 A number of boreholes were excavated on the site in 2004 and whilst they do not specify the deposits present they do indicate the depth of 'made ground' across the site. In the eastern half of the site natural deposits were encountered at between 1.20m and 1.60m below ground surface whilst in the west of the site natural deposits were encountered at between 1.50m and 2.00m below ground surface (Anon. 2004). Whilst the dates of the deposits are not known the borehole data suggests that stratified deposits may be evident throughout the site.

## 6 METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The archaeological evaluation was comprised of four trenches located within the footprint of the proposed development (fig.2).
- 6.2 The evaluation trenches were excavated to the following dimensions:
- Trench 1 was orientated E/W and measured 8.40m x 2.00m x 1.05m max. depth
  - Trench 2 was orientated E/W and measured 11.20m x 2.00m x 1.00m max. depth
  - Trench 3 was orientated E/W and measured 10.00m x 2.00m x 2.05m max. depth
  - Trench 4 was orientated E/W and measured 10.00m x 2.00m x 1.70m max. depth
- 6.3 The positions of all services were checked before locating the trenches on the ground and trenches were CAT scanned before work commenced. When necessary the extent, axis and location of the trenches were changed to avoid live services and physical obstructions on site.
- 6.4 The removal of ground level surfaces and subsequent mechanical excavation were undertaken utilising a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a flat bladed ditching bucket under archaeological supervision.
- 6.5 Mechanical excavation continued through undifferentiated deposits in spits of no greater than 200mm until either significant archaeological, or natural, deposits were encountered.
- 6.6 Following fill clearance, all faces of the trench that required examination were cleaned using appropriate hand tools. All investigation of archaeological deposits was by hand, with cleaning, examination and recording both in plan and section.
- 6.7 Recording on site was undertaken using the single context recording system as specified in the Museum of London Site Manual. Plans were drawn at a scale of 1:20, and full or representative sections at a scale of 1:10. Contexts were numbered sequentially and recorded on *pro-forma* context sheets.
- 6.8 The site was given the code LCS05
- 6.9 Trenches were fenced off during the excavation to protect the archaeology and the public and were all backfilled on the last day of the excavation.

## **7 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE**

### **7.1 TRENCH 1 (figs. 2 & 3)**

- 7.1.1 The earliest deposit recorded in Trench 1 was a naturally deposited sandy gravel layer [43] encountered at 45.67m OD.
- 7.1.2 Truncating the natural horizon at 45.67m OD was a NW/SE orientated feature [42]. The northern edge of the feature was not encountered within the trench and consequently its width is not known. The feature had a flat base and a depth no greater than c.0.35m which when considered together may suggest that the truncation represents a wide, shallow, poorly defined ditch. The feature was filled by a dark brownish black sandy gravel fill [40] which contained occasional fragments of abraded Roman pottery.
- 7.1.3 Towards the eastern end of Trench 1, truncating the earlier deposits, was a NW/SE aligned construction cut [52] which contained a single course of chalk blocks [51]. The construction cut was backfilled by a dark grey brown clayey peaty silt [50], and all three contexts were encountered at 45.65m OD. During the excavation of the chalk blocks, a number were noted as having circular holes bored into their upper face which may suggest they once supported an additional superstructure of small posts, possibly forming a fence or revetment.
- 7.1.4 Sealing the earlier deposits throughout the trench was a soft, mid greyish brown, sandy silty peat layer [41] encountered at 45.81m OD. This layer was in turn sealed by a similar layer [57] containing occasional chalk fragments, which was encountered at 46.00m OD. The organic peaty nature of the two layers is suggestive of deposition by slow running water and may be indicative of periods of flooding in the western part of the site in the post-medieval period.
- 7.1.5 The remainder of the trench was constituted by 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century made ground and services and a 0.20m thick reinforced concrete surface which was encountered at 46.43m OD and represents the current ground surface in the vicinity of Trench 1.

### **7.2 TRENCH 2 (fig. 2)**

- 7.2.1 The earliest deposit recorded in Trench 2 was a naturally deposited sandy gravel layer [44] encountered at 45.59m OD.
- 7.2.2 An irregularly shaped feature [56], c.0.20m in depth and containing a mid brownish yellow, sandy silt fill [55] truncated the natural gravel towards the western end of the trench at a height of 45.32m OD. The feature had been truncated horizontally by later intrusions, and no finds were retrieved during the excavation of the fill. Whilst it is possible that the feature may be naturally formed, i.e. a tree throw, it cannot be discounted that it may be evidence for prehistoric activity in this area of the site.
- 7.2.3 Truncating the natural horizon was a NW/SE orientated feature [47], possibly a continuation of [42] in Trench 1. The southern edge of the feature was not encountered

within the trench and consequently its width is not known. The feature had a flat base and a depth no greater than c.0.40m which when considered together may suggest that the truncation represents a wide, shallow, poorly defined ditch. The feature was filled by a dark brownish black, sandy gravel fill [45]/[46] which contained occasional fragments of abraded Roman and possible medieval pottery and was encountered at 45.70m OD.

- 7.2.4 Sealing the earlier deposits throughout the trench was a soft, mid greyish brown, sandy silty peat layer [54] encountered at 45.79m OD. As in Trench 1, the layer was sealed by similar layer [53] containing occasional chalk fragments which was encountered at 45.92m OD. Again, the organic peaty nature of the two layers is suggestive of deposition by slow running water and may be indicative of periods of flooding in the western parts of the site in the post-medieval period.
- 7.2.5 At the eastern end of the trench was a square pit [49] measuring c.1.90m by c.1.90m in plan and encountered at 45.59m OD. The pit contained a loose greyish black, silty sand fill [48] from which pottery dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century was retrieved.
- 7.2.6 The remainder of the trench was constituted by 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century made ground and services and a 0.20m thick reinforced concrete surface which was encountered at 46.24m OD and represented the current ground surface in the vicinity of Trench 2.

### **7.3 TRENCH 3 (figs. 2 & 3)**

- 7.3.1 The earliest deposit recorded in Trench 3 was a naturally deposited sandy gravel layer [15]/[24]. The layer was separated into two contexts by a Victorian foundation and was encountered at 45.63mOD in the east of the trench and 45.02m OD in the west of the trench. The latter height of the deposit is not a true reflection of the natural topography as substantial truncation had occurred in antiquity in the west of the trench.
- 7.3.2 The shape in plan of the cut feature [14], truncating the natural gravel in the west of Trench 2, was not established during the evaluation as the sides were located beyond the limit of excavation and only the base of the feature was encountered. However, the disparity in the levels of the Natural Gravel within Trench 3 clearly indicated that a large truncation was present. The feature contained a number of fills, the lowest of which was a 0.45m thick dark black, silty peat deposit [13] which contained moderate quantities of Roman pottery. A mid yellowish brown sandy silt deposit [12] formed an interface between the primary and tertiary fills of the feature towards the eastern end of the trench and may be suggestive of a tip line within the feature. The tertiary fill of the feature was a dark black, sandy peaty silt deposit [11] encountered at 45.32m OD which again contained moderate quantities of Roman pottery. The organic nature of the primary and tertiary fills are indicative of deposition by slow moving or standing water and it is suggested that the feature investigated in Trench 3 may be a large gravel extraction pit that, whether intentionally or not, developed into a pond-type feature sometime after its initial excavation.

- 7.3.3 Sealing the upper fill was a 0.35m thick, dark black, silty gravel layer [2] encountered at 45.67m OD which extended throughout the western part of the trench. The layer contained abundant quantities of Roman pottery and animal bone and whilst recorded as a layer may represent dumped infilling of the pond-type feature discussed above. The quantity of domestic refuse recovered from this deposit clearly indicates that Roman occupation existed on, or in the vicinity of, the site.
- 7.3.4 A probable small pit [4] containing a dark black, sandy silt fill [3] which in turn contained abundant Roman pottery and animal bone was recorded truncating the surface of the dumped layer in the central area of the trench. Alternatively, this feature may be part of the dumping episode discussed above.
- 7.3.5 Sealing the Roman horizon at 46.20m OD was a 0.55m thick, mid brownish black, silty gravel layer [1]. The layer contain very little cultural material with the exception of occasional fragments of ceramic building material, and formed a clear and noticeable break in the stratigraphy within the trench. The layer was similar in composition to contexts [40]/[45]/[46] in Trenches 1 and 2 and together appear to represent a change of use on site, possibly to agricultural, in the post-Roman period.
- 7.3.6 A large NW/SE orientated ditch [23] occupied the eastern portion of Trench 3 removing all of the earlier deposits. The feature contained two greyish brown, sandy gravelly clay fills [22] and [21], neither of which contained cultural material with the exception of occasional fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material.
- 7.3.7 A brownish, sandy silt layer [10] sealed the earlier deposit at 46.52m OD and may represent a post-medieval ploughsoil. The surface of the layer was truncated by a NW/SE orientated ditch cut [9], 0.90m in depth, which contained a mid brown, sandy silt fill [8] which yielded minimal cultural material. The continuation of the ditch [20] was present in the eastern half of the trench and when seen in section appeared to be a recut of the earlier ditch discussed above. The recut ditch contained a brownish grey, sandy silt fill [19] and once again cultural material within the fill matrix was largely lacking. Deposits in Trenches 1 and 2 clearly suggested that the site had suffered from flooding in the past and it may be that the large ditch and recut encountered in Trench 3 were an attempt to limit the effects of flooding on site in the post-medieval period.
- 7.3.8 The earlier deposits were sealed by a mid brown, clayey silt dumped layer [58] encountered at 46.67m OD. Immediately truncating this horizon in the central area of the trench was a N/S orientated construction cut [7], 0.45m in depth, which contained a trench built brick foundation [6] associated with the Victorian terraces that once stood on site. To the east of this foundation, and dividing the trench into two separate areas, was an additional N/S orientated construction cut [17] encountered at 46.63m OD which contained a brick foundation [18] and associated backfill [16]. The wall continued beyond the depth of the trench and it is probable that it formed part of a small basement associated with the Victorian terraces.



7.3.9 The remainder of the trench was comprised of modern deposits including an area to the east of the Victorian wall which was not removed during the evaluation due to the presence of modern obstructions, a 0.15m thick brick hardcore levelling layer and a 0.06m thick tarmac surface. The height of the tarmac surface was 46.87m OD and represents the current ground surface of the site in the vicinity of Trench 3.

#### **7.4 TRENCH 4 (figs. 2 & 3)**

7.4.1 The earliest deposit recorded in Trench 4 was a naturally deposited sandy gravel layer [34] encountered at 45.63m OD.

7.4.2 Truncating the surface of the natural horizon was a NE/SW orientated feature [36], 0.30m in depth, which contained a light grey, silty clay fill [35]. The feature had a flat base with gradually sloping sides and was c.0.40m in width. Whilst no finds were retrieved during the excavation of the fill it is possible that the feature represents a gully or small ditch and may be evidence for prehistoric activity in this area of the site.

7.4.3 A small machine excavated slot was established at the west end of Trench 4 to further assess the archaeological deposits, and its excavation revealed the presence of two cut features of Roman date. A pit [31] measuring 0.58m in width and with a depth of 0.24m was located towards the west of the trench and was encountered at 45.63m OD. Contained within the feature was a dark brown black, silty sandy gravelly fill [30] which contained moderate quantities of Roman pottery and animal bone. A second pit [33], encountered at the same level with a width greater than 0.47m and a depth greater than 0.57m, was located immediately to the east. Contained within the feature was a dark brown black, silty sandy gravelly fill [32] within which were moderate quantities of Roman pottery and animal bone. A later layer, sealing the features, was left predominantly in situ throughout the trench at the evaluation project level. As a consequence the pits were not seen in plan during the evaluation and it is probable that additional pits and features of Roman date remain in situ below the later horizon. It is possible that the pits may have been dug as gravel extraction pits and later reused for waste disposal, again suggesting that Roman occupation was in existence on, or in the vicinity of, the site.

7.4.4 Sealing the earlier cut features and present throughout the trench was a dark black, silty gravel layer [5] encountered at 45.74m OD. The dumped layer was c.0.08m in thickness and contained frequent Roman pottery and animal bone.

7.4.5 Sealing the Roman horizon at 46.03m OD was a 0.55m thick, mid brownish black, silty gravel layer [29]. The layer contain very little cultural material with the exception of occasional fragments of ceramic building material and formed a clear and noticeable break in the stratigraphy within the trench. The layer was identical in composition to context [1] in Trench 3 and appears to represent a change of use on site, possibly to agricultural, in the post-Roman period.

- 7.4.6 A brownish sandy silt layer [28] sealed the earlier deposit at 46.23m OD and may represent a post-medieval ploughsoil.
- 7.4.7 The earlier deposits were sealed by a mid brownish yellow, clay dumped layer [37] encountered at 46.67m OD which was in turn was sealed by a mid brown, clay silt dump layer [27] encountered at 46.48m OD. Immediately truncating this horizon were two N/S orientated construction cuts [39] and [26] which contained trench built brick foundations [38] and [25], both of which are associated with the Victorian terraces that once stood on site.
- 7.4.8 The remainder of the trench was comprised of modern deposits including a 0.15m thick brick hardcore levelling layer and a 0.06m thick tarmac surface. The height of the tarmac surface was 46.63 OD and represents the current ground surface of the site in the vicinity of Trench 4.

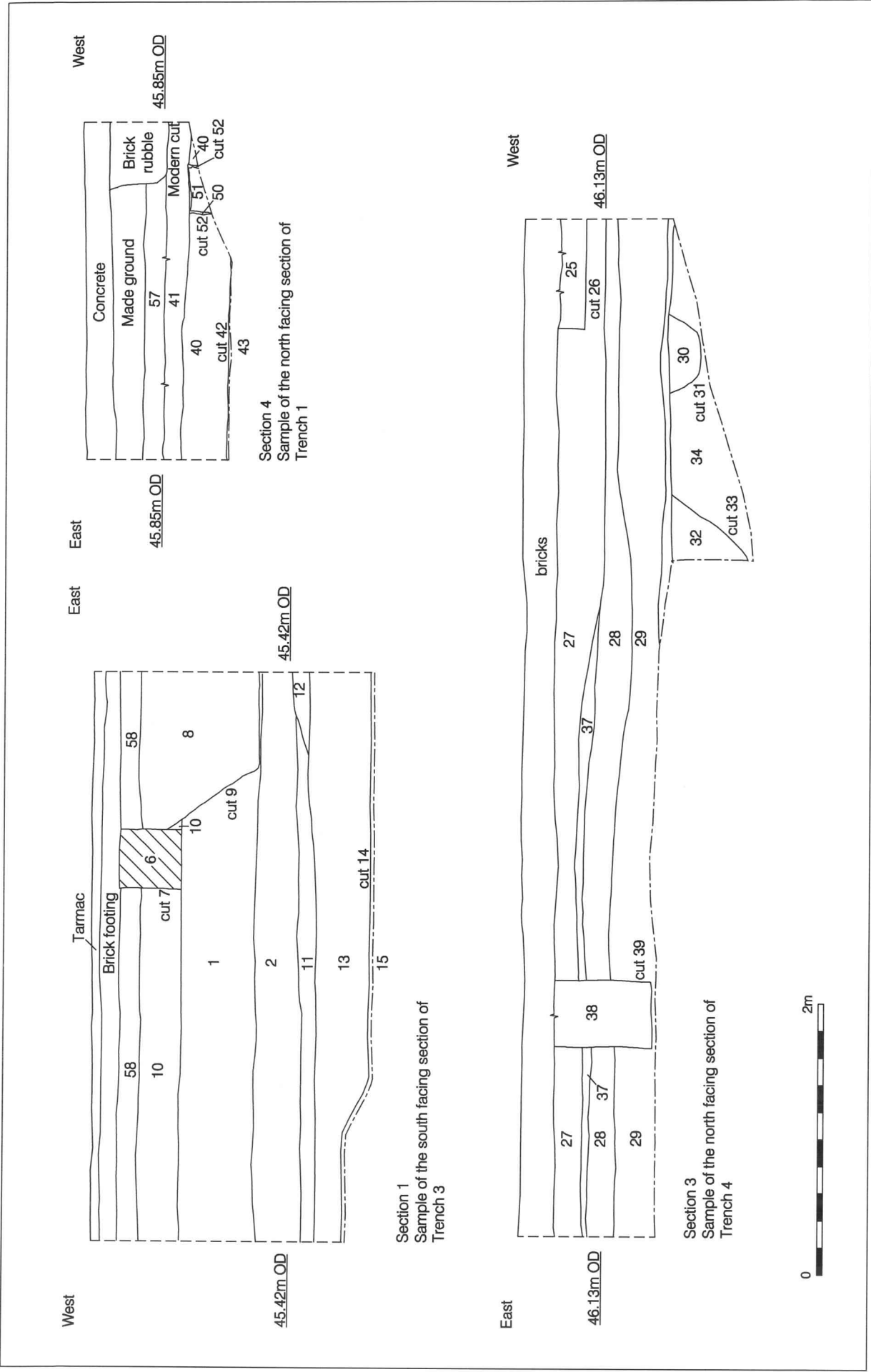


Figure 3  
Sections 1, 4 and 3  
1:40

## **8 PHASED DISCUSSION**

### **8.1 Phase 1: Natural**

- 8.1.1 The archaeological evaluation revealed evidence for natural terrace gravels in all of the evaluation trenches and found the natural topography to be present across the site at heights ranging between 45.60m OD and 45.70m OD.

### **8.2 Phase 2: Prehistoric/Natural Features**

- 8.2.1 Two features, a possible pit and a gully, were seen to truncate the natural horizon and whilst no dating evidence was retrieved from the associated fills it is possible that they may represent prehistoric activity on site.

### **8.3 Phase 3: Early Roman**

- 8.3.1 Two rubbish pits and a possible pond-type feature were identified as truncating the natural horizon in the east of the site. It is possible that the three features were initially excavated as gravel extraction pits, possibly to obtain surfacing material for the near by Roman road, and came to have a secondary use later in the Roman period.
- 8.3.2 All three features contained abundant quantities of Roman pottery and animal bone and suggest that Roman occupation exists on, or in the near vicinity of, the site.

### **8.4 Phase 4: Later Roman**

- 8.4.1 The Roman features in the east of the site were sealed by a wide spread dump layer encountered at 45.67m OD. The layer contained abundant Roman pottery and animal bone and it was noted that contemporary cut features may have truncated this surface.
- 8.4.2 The presence of a widespread culturally rich layer across the eastern half of the site once again suggests that Roman occupation exists in the near vicinity of the site.

### **8.5 Phase 5: Post-Roman/Medieval**

- 8.5.1 The Roman deposits in the eastern half of the site were sealed by a thick gravelly layer which contained minimal cultural material and marked a clear break between the upper and lower stratigraphy. Similar deposits were found in the western half of the site within a wide, yet shallow NW/SE ditch.
- 8.5.2 Whilst it is possible that the ditch may yet prove to be a undulation in the topography on site at this time, the presence of a widespread homogenous deposit containing abraded Roman pottery and a sherd of possible medieval date may imply that the site was largely abandoned in the post-Roman period before being reused in the medieval period, possibly for agricultural purposes.

### **8.6 Phase 6a: Post-medieval/medieval**

- 8.6.1 The remains of a NW/SE fence or temporary revetment in the west of the site and a NW/SE drainage drain in the eastern area indicate that human manipulation of the

landscape on site became increasingly prevalent in the later medieval/post-medieval period. Both features notably lacked cultural material within their fills, and the site appears to have been situated beyond the fringe of settlement activity during this period, with its most probable use being agricultural.

#### **8.7 Phase 6b: Post-medieval**

8.7.1 Deposits in the west of the site clearly suggested that the site suffered from widespread flooding in the post-medieval period and the ploughsoil present in the east of the site was absent from this area. The drainage ditch discussed above appears to have been recut at this time, most probably in an attempt to limit the effects of flooding in the post-medieval period. Once again cultural material was notably lacking from the deposits and the site appears to have continued to be situated beyond the fringe of settlement activity with its most probable use being agricultural.

#### **8.8 Phase 7: 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century**

8.8.1 The excavated trenches provided abundant evidence to indicate that the site was redeveloped in the Victorian period with the presence of dumped deposits and N/S wall foundations associated with the properties that once fronted onto Lower Coombe Street apparent in all of the evaluation trenches.

8.8.2 The Victorian properties were demolished and levelled in the 20<sup>th</sup> century before being sealed by the concrete and tarmac surfaces that exist on site today.

## 9 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 The evaluation found evidence for natural deposits across the site at a height of between 45.60m OD and 45.70m OD. Whilst there was no evidence of a natural brickearth sealing the natural terrace gravel the natural deposits do not appear to have been terraced or horizontally truncated in antiquity.
- 9.2 The evaluation found possible evidence of prehistoric activity on site and abundant evidence of Roman activity in the eastern half of the site. The Roman activity was predominantly represented by pitting, with part of a particularly large probable pit recorded at the western end of Trench 3. These pits were subsequently infilled with material containing large quantities of domestic refuse, indicating the presence of a settlement in the vicinity of the site at this time.
- 9.4 The medieval/post-medieval deposits on site appear to reflect a land use that was essentially agricultural with minimal amounts of cultural material accumulating on site. Whilst these deposits are uninspiring in themselves their presence throughout the evaluation trenches suggests that limited truncation has occurred outside the footprint of the extant buildings on site between the end of the Roman period and the redevelopment of the site in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

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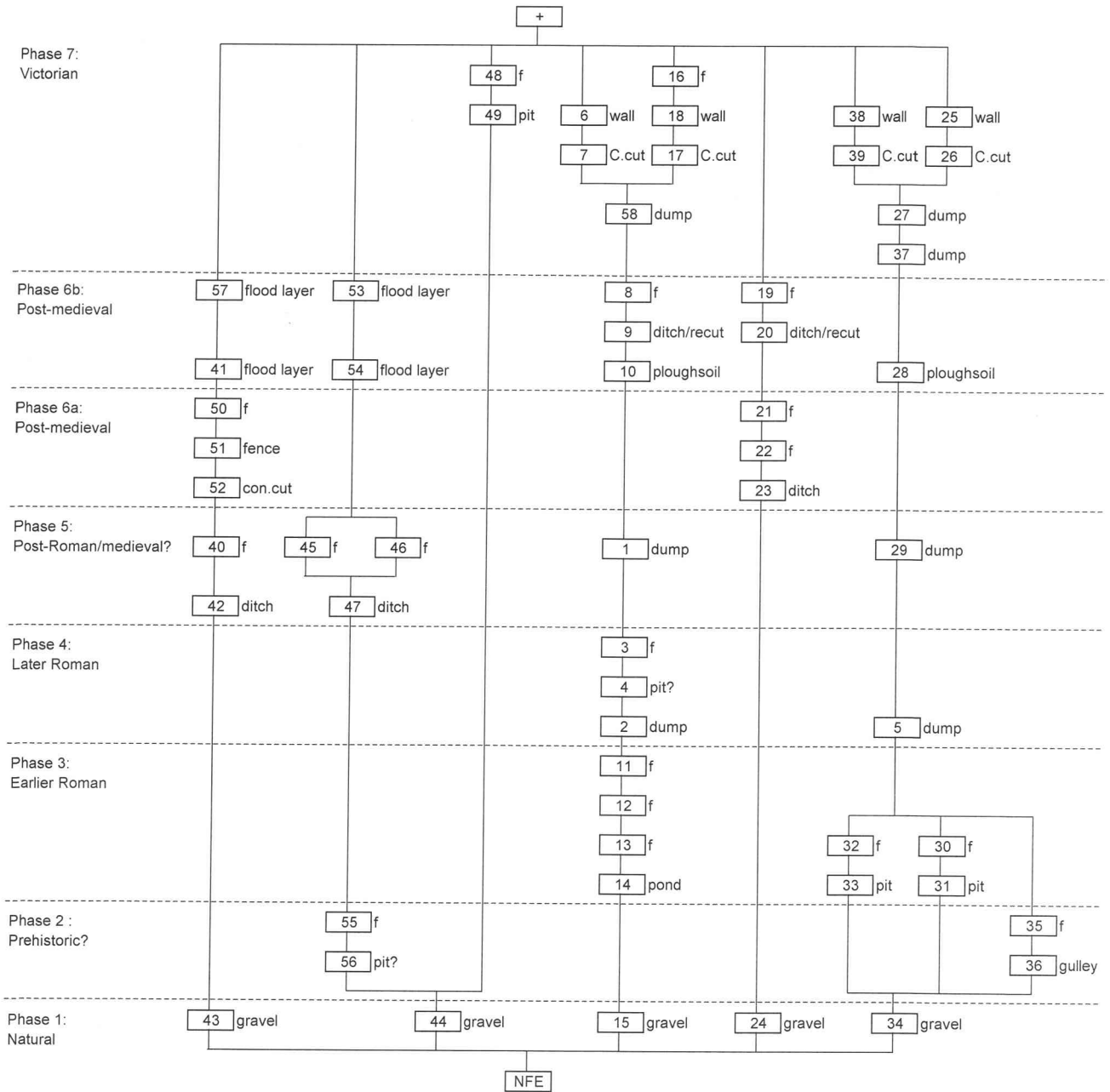


## Appendix 1: CONTEXT REGISTER

Site Code	Context Number	Trench	Plan Number	Section Number	Phase	Type	Description	Highest	Lowest
LCS05	1	Tr 3		1		Layer	Dump/levelling layer, mid brown black, silty gravel	46.2	45.67
LCS05	2	Tr 3	Tr 3	1		Layer	Dump/levelling layer, dark black, silty gravel	45.67	45.32
LCS05	3	Tr 3				Fill	Fill of [4], dark black, sandy silt	45.5	
LCS05	4	Tr 3	Tr 3			Cut	Pit? (possibly a dump line in [14])	45.5	45
LCS05	5	Tr 4	Tr 4	3		Layer	Dump/levelling layer, dark black, silty gravel	45.74	
LCS05	6	Tr 3		1		Masonry	N/S Foundation within [7]	46.64	
LCS05	7	Tr 3		1		Cut	Construction Cut for [6]	46.64	46.22
LCS05	8	Tr 3		1		Fill	Fill of [9], mid brown, sandy silt	46.52	
LCS05	9	Tr 3		1		Cut	NW/SE Ditch = [20]?	46.52	45.64
LCS05	10	Tr 3		1		Layer	Ploughsoil, mid brown, sandy silt	46.52	
LCS05	11	Tr 3		1		Fill	Fill of [14], dark black, sandy organic silt	45.32	
LCS05	12	Tr 3		1		Fill	Fill of [14], mid yellow brown, silty sand	45.39	
LCS05	13	Tr 3		1		Fill	Fill of [14], dark black, silty peat	45.27	
LCS05	14	Tr 3		1		Cut	Gravel Extraction Pit/Pond	45.39	44.82
LCS05	15	Tr 3	Tr 3	1		Layer	Natural Gravel	45.02	44.82
LCS05	16	Tr 3	Tr 3			Fill	Backfill of [17], mid brown, silty sand	46.63	
LCS05	17	Tr 3	Tr 3			Cut	Construction Cut for [18]	46.63	45.44
LCS05	18	Tr 3	Tr 3			Masonry	N/S Foundation/Wall within [7]	46.63	45.44
LCS05	19	Tr 3	Tr 3	2		Fill	Fill of [20], mid brown grey, silty clay	46.28	
LCS05	20	Tr 3	Tr 3	2		Cut	NW/SE Ditch Recut = [9]?	46.28	45.38
LCS05	21	Tr 3	Tr 3	2		Fill	Fill of [23], mid grey brown, gravelly sandy clay	46.16	45.38
LCS05	22	Tr 3		2		Fill	Fill of [23], dark grey brown, sandy gravelly clay	45.8	45.38
LCS05	23	Tr 3	Tr 3	2		Cut	NW/SE Ditch	46.13	45.38
LCS05	24	Tr 3	Tr 3	2		Layer	Natural Gravel	45.63	
LCS05	25	Tr 4		3		Masonry	N/S Foundation within [26]	46.48	
LCS05	26	Tr 4		3		Cut	Construction Cut for [25]	46.48	46.28
LCS05	27	Tr 4		3		Layer	Dump/levelling layer, mid brown, clay silt	46.48	
LCS05	28	Tr 4		3		Layer	Dump/levelling layer, dark brown, sandy silt	46.23	46.13
LCS05	29	Tr 4		3		Layer	Dump/levelling layer, mid brown black, silty gravel	46.03	
LCS05	30	Tr 4		3		Fill	Fill of [31], dark brown black, silty sandy gravel	45.63	
LCS05	31	Tr 4		3		Cut	Pit	45.63	45.39
LCS05	32	Tr 4		3		Fill	Fill of [33], dark brown black, silty sandy gravel	45.63	
LCS05	33	Tr 4		3		Cut	Pit	45.63	45.06
LCS05	34	Tr 4	Tr 4	3		Layer	Natural Gravel	45.63	

Site Code	Context Number	Trench	Plan Number	Section Number	Phase	Type	Description	Highest	Lowest
LCS05	35	Tr 4	Tr 4			Fill	Fill of [36], light grey, silty clay	45.61	
LCS05	36	Tr 4	Tr 4			Cut	Gulley?	45.61	45.31
LCS05	37	Tr 4		3		Layer	Dump/levelling layer, mid brown yellow, clay	46.28	46.13
LCS05	38	Tr 4		3		Masonry	N/S Foundation within [39]	46.48	
LCS05	39	Tr 4		3		Cut	Construction Cut within [38]	46.48	45.78
LCS05	40	Tr 1	Tr 1	4		Fill	Fill of [42], dark brown black, sandy gravel	45.7	45.65
LCS05	41	Tr 1	Tr 1	4		Layer	Water deposited layer, mid grey brown, sandy silty peat	45.81	
LCS05	42	Tr 1	Tr 1	4		Cut	NW/SE Ditch?	45.7	45.35
LCS05	43	Tr 1	Tr 1	4		Layer	Natural Gravel	45.67	45.35
LCS05	44	Tr 2	Tr 2	5		Layer	Natural Gravel	45.59	45.36
LCS05	45	Tr 2	Tr 2	5		Fill	Fill of [47], dark brown black, sandy gravel	45.7	
LCS05	46	Tr 2	Tr 2			Fill	Fill of [47], dark brown black, sandy gravel	45.59	
LCS05	47	Tr 2	Tr 2	5		Cut	NW/SE Ditch?	45.69	45.29
LCS05	48	Tr 2	Tr 2			Fill	Fill of [49], dark grey black, silty sand	45.59	
LCS05	49	Tr 2	Tr 2			Cut	Pit	45.59	
LCS05	50	Tr 1	Tr 1	4		Fill	Backfill of [52], dark grey brown, clayey peaty silt	45.65	
LCS05	51	Tr 1	Tr 1	4		Masonry	Chalk Foundation for Fence(?) within [52]	45.65	
LCS05	52	Tr 1	Tr 1	4		Cut	Construction Cut for [51]	45.65	45.28
LCS05	53	Tr 2		5		Layer	Water deposited layer, mid grey brown, sandy silty peat	45.92	45.89
LCS05	54	Tr 2		5		Layer	Water deposited layer, mid grey brown, sandy silty peat	45.79	
LCS05	55	Tr 2	Tr 2			Fill	Fill of [65], mid brown yellow, sandy silt	45.32	
LCS05	56	Tr 2	Tr 2			Cut	Pit/Natural Feature	45.32	45.12
LCS05	57	Tr 1		4		Layer	Water deposited layer, mid grey brown, sandy silty peat	46	45.98
LCS05	58	Tr 3		1		Layer	Dump/levelling layer, mid brown, clay silt	46.67	

## Appendix 2: SITE MATRIX



### **Appendix 3: POTTERY ASSESSMENT (Berni Sudds)**

The pottery recovered from Lower Coombe Street appears to be entirely of Roman date. One as yet unprovenanced sherd from linear feature [45] demonstrates a few spots of green glaze and may potentially be of medieval date, although the fabric can neither be paralleled to Roman glazed wares in the vicinity (Southern British Glazed ware) or local medieval products (C. Jarrett pers com.). Identification is complicated by fact that the sherd is quite abraded and the surfaces worn. The spots of glaze may also be accidental, namely the as a result of self-glaze.

The remainder of the assemblage is Roman, comprised of well-paralleled fine and coarse wares fabrics represented by forms typically associated with food storage, preparation and serving. All feature assemblages demonstrate signs of abrasion but whilst contain some broadly dated coarsewares the presence of certain forms and fineware fabrics may suggest much of pottery was deposited during the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Coarse ware fabrics include Alice Holt Reduced ware, Black Burnished ware and possibly Late Roman grog-tempered fabrics. The range of forms includes jar and flanged rim bowls. Finewares include late Roman colour-coated beaker forms (?Oxfordshire red/brown slipwares), poppyhead beakers and Samian bowls. A single abraded oxidised mortarium sherd was also recovered, of as yet unknown provenance.

## Appendix 4: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-6774

### Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Evaluation at 23–31 Lower Coombe Street and Land adjacent to 17 St Andrews Road, L
Short description of the project	<p>An archaeological field evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd on 23– 31 Lower Coombe Street and land adjacent to 17 St Andrews Road, London Borough of Croydon. The evaluation found possible evidence of prehistoric activity on site and abundant evidence to suggest that a significant Roman settlement existed on, or in the near vicinity of, the site. Whilst the known Roman features were isolated to the eastern half of the site it can not be discounted that they may have existed and remain in situ elsewhere within the development area. The medieval/post-medieval deposits on site reflect a land use that was essentially agricultural with minimal quantities of cultural material accumulating on site. The presence of these deposits throughout all of the excavated evaluation trenches suggests that limited truncation has occurred on site since the end of the Roman period and the consequent redevelopment of the site in the 19th and 20th centuries. The lack of truncation to the site suggests that Roman and prehistoric deposits may remain undisturbed elsewhere on site.</p>
Project dates	Start: 15-02-2005 End: 18-02-2005
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	LCS05 - Site code
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 4 - Storage and warehousing
Monument type	PIT? Uncertain
Monument type	GULLEY? Uncertain
Monument type	PITS Roman
Monument type	POND? Roman
Monument type	LAYER Roman

Monument type	DITCH? Medieval
Monument type	PLOUGHSOIL Medieval
Monument type	FENCE? Post Medieval
Monument type	PLOUGHSOIL Post Medieval
Monument type	MASONRY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Significant Finds	BONE Roman
Significant Finds	CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Housing estate
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)
<b>Project location</b>	
Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CROYDON CROYDON 23–31 Lower Coombe Street and Land adjacent to 17 St Andrews Road, London Borough of Croydon
Study area	3113 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 53226 16488 Point
Height OD	Min: 45.6m Max: 45.7m
<b>Project creators</b>	
Name of	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd



Organisation

Project brief originator Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service

Project design originator Tim Bradley

Project director/manager Tim Bradley

Project supervisor Joanna Taylor

Sponsor or funding body Wandle Housing Association

**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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**OASIS:**

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