

# 32-42 HIGH STREET, PURLEY, CROYDON, LONDON, CR8 2AA

## Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment Report

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## SUMMARY

*This report presents a provisional desk-based assessment constituting rapid archaeological appraisal of land at 32-42 High Street Purley, Croydon (TQ 31386 61623, centred; Fig 1). The report was commissioned by Gordon Osborne in October 2016 in view of proposed development of the site.*

*The site lies within an Archaeological Priority Area. On the basis of previous work within the proposed development area and nearby, archaeological remains of regional significance are likely to be extant within the proposed development area.*

*A programme of archaeological watching brief on any demolition work, and evaluation of the area prior to development is recommended.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents a provisional desk-based assessment constituting rapid archaeological appraisal of land at 32-42 High Street, Purley, Croydon (TQ 31386 61623, centred; Fig 1). The report was commissioned by The report was commissioned by Howard Fairbairn MHK in October 2016 in view of proposed development of the site.
- 1.2 This assessment is a consultation document prepared for the client which may be submitted as part of a planning proposal (supplementing a heritage statement for example). It constitutes a pilot study assessing the potential for further research, either desk-based or in the field. Additional desk-based research and/or fieldwork may be requested by planning authorities or specified as conditions on any planning consent, although any request for further desk-based work should clearly demonstrate the benefits of such an approach as opposed to field evaluation, for example.
- 1.3 The objective of the current research, verbally agreed with the client and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), has been to view readily available existing evidence in order to assess the extent and nature of any heritage assets with archaeological interest within the Proposed Development Area (PDA), and thereby gauge the likelihood of heritage assets of archaeological interest being affected by development within the PDA. Research has been undertaken to an appropriate level of detail in response to funding limitations which affect the affordable scope and provisional nature of the study, as well as the particular circumstances of the proposed development.

## 2. POLICY AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORKS

- 2.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with national and local policy regarding heritage assets and with reference to research frameworks.

### *National policy*

- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG March 2012) sets out a series of core planning principles designed to underpin plan-making and decision-taking within the planning system. In terms of development proposals affecting known heritage assets, the following principle states that planning should:

*Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.*

- 2.3 By definition the historic environment includes all surviving physical remains of past human activity. Heritage assets include extant structures and features, sites, places and landscapes. The European Landscape Convention definition of a historic landscape describes: ‘an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors’ (Council of Europe 2000: which came into force in the UK in March 2007; see research frameworks, below). Furthermore the historic landscape encompasses visible, buried or submerged remains, which includes the buried archaeological resource.

- 2.4 Policy 126 states that:

*Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:*

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and*
- Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of the place.*

2.5 When determining planning applications, the following policies are especially pertinent:

*128. Local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.*

*129. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of the heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.*

*132. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a Grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

139. *Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.*

2.6 The existence of the latter within a proposed development area can be partially investigated and to an extent predicted via desk-based assessment, but field evaluation and/or archaeological monitoring of groundworks are likely to be a planning requirement and should be expected.

#### *Local policy*

The PDA lies within the northern edge of an Archaeological Priority Area (GLAAS 2014; Fig. 3).

#### *Research frameworks*

2.7 The national and local policy outlined above should be considered in light of the non-statutory heritage frameworks that inform them.

2.8 The PDA lies within an Archaeological Priority Areas (APA).

2.9 Research topics within the Greater London area are summarised in the introduction to ‘The Archaeology of Greater London’ (MOLAS(ed) 2000, 26-27). More detailed research policy is set out in ‘A research framework for London archaeology’ (MOLAS(ed) 2002). This covers all aspects of London’s Past with three chief aims, the most relevant of which for the present study being the ‘management of the archaeological resource’ and to ‘facilitate better focused archaeological research’ (Museum of London 2002, x).

2.10 Some research policies may be relevant to the site and can be specified, the most relevant perhaps being those covering:

- the Pleistocene deposits within the superficial geology or in valley deposits associated with the Wandle River
- The identification of prehistoric occupation
- the location of Roman settlement close to the presumed road line. If Roman settlement occurs in the area, Objectives R2 and R4, the study of the settlements in the context of the landscape, might prove relevant while R12 and R13 consider the landscape, agriculture and economy in the vicinity of London.
- Anglo-Saxon and other undated human burials lie close by.

### 3. LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

3.1 The PDA lies within the southern part of the present London Borough of Croydon, Purley lying on the line of the Brighton road heading up the Wandle Valley towards Coulsdon and Chipstead. Purley lies at the junction of this main valley with a dry side valley curving southeast to continue past Caterham and Godstone.

3.2 Bedrock geology within the area of the PDA is shown as Lewes/Seaford/Newhaven Nodular Chalk Formation, the valley at this point occupied by the Hackney Gravel member ([www.bgs.ac.uk/discovering\\_geology/geology\\_of\\_Britain/viewer](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discovering_geology/geology_of_Britain/viewer) Accessed 24.11.16). To the south the Lynch Hill Gravel member occurs in the valley while Head deposits occur on the spur to the east of the PDA and on the valley floor to the south.

3.3 Archaeological interventions have complemented these records of the geology and provide information on the depth of deposits in the area. Watching briefs in Whytecliffe

Roads and Purley Parade, 100-200m north east of the PDA, showed, respectively, natural valley deposits of chalky sand at 0.84 and 1.2m depth and Natural Chalk at 60.7-61.2m AOD (ELO 10405 & 12910). In Brighton Road 200m south-west monitoring of geotechnical works revealed natural river terrace deposits of gravel, sand and clay at a depth of 0.30 to 1.50m (ELO10409). Evaluation in Friends Road in the valley 450m to the south-east revealed natural chalk and clay (ELO436). Evaluation trenches on rising ground in Foxley Lane 350m to the northwest found only colluvial deposits over the natural chalk (ELO780).

3.4 The PDA lies on the east side of the southern end of the High Street, known until the mid-twentieth-century as the Godstone Road. The site is approximately 1100m<sup>2</sup> in area and is situated at TQ 31386 61623 (centre). The PDA is presently occupied by a restaurant and a rear parking area at street level below a two-storey building raised above it. Access is from the High Street frontage (Fig 2). Street level is at approximately 64m AOD, the natural ground surface rising eastward to approximately 67m at the rear. Within the site envelope the present ground level has been terraced to street level.

#### 4. DESIGNATIONS

- 4.1 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments or World Heritage Sites within the PDA or in its vicinity.
- 4.2 As noted above, the site lies within an Archaeological Priority Area (APA).
- 4.3 The PDA does not adjoin any Listed Buildings but lies opposite a group of buildings so designated (DLO 34465-71).

#### 5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

- 5.1 A search of the Greater London Historic Environment Records (GLHER report 12900: see Fig 1) as well as a list of reports of archaeological investigations not yet included in the HER was commissioned from Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service, along with recently published reports on major sites in the area. The HER and reports search covers a radius of 500m around the PDA (centred on NGR TQ 31386 61623). These records have been assessed in terms of their particular relevance to the PDA and only significant evidence is cited in this report.
- 5.2 . In addition, the London Archaeologist Reports and other published literature reports have been checked.
- 5.3 It has been considered beyond the means of this project to pursue detailed questions requiring an in-depth study of primary documentary and cartographic sources. General historical context for archaeological findings is provided where applicable/significant in terms of results, and a survey of published and unpublished maps (including geology and contour survey) has been undertaken. A full list of maps consulted is provided in the list of sources at the end of the report. Only maps showing significant topographical developments are reproduced here.
- 5.4 No pertinent geophysical surveys were available. Only photographs, images or results showing significant features or topographical developments are reproduced, the findings incorporated with map regression, documentary evidence and archaeological sections of the report as appropriate and fully referenced.
- 5.5 All results of analyses are presented below in synthesis and in order of chronology.

*Prehistoric (c 500,000BP – AD 43)*

- 5.6 Archaeological remains of the pre-Roman period within a 500m radius of the PDA are rare but a Palaeolithic flint tool is reported from Wilmot Road, close to the valley floor (MLO19563). Three Neolithic flint axes reported as from the same area are an unusual coincidence and question the provenance as possible collectors' discards (MLO19617).
- 5.7 The possible barrow ring ditch on Russell Hill should be noted as a potential Bronze Age burial site and the focus for the adjacent discovery of inhumation burials of probable Anglo-Saxon date. Bronze Age implements are reported from the wider area.

*Romano-British (c AD 43 – 450)*

- 5.8 No Romano-British archaeological remains are reported within the 500m radius of the PDA, but the line of the Roman road from London to Brighton should pass close to the PDA, whichever exact route was followed (MLO197771). There may have been alternative routes at the point of the crossing of the Wandle Valley on the road's course from Croydon to Caterham (Margary 1948, 113-5; Road 150, Margery 1973, 62-63). While a route from Croydon along the Wandle Valley floor is possible, passing close to the PDA before heading south east towards Riddlesdown, the Mere Bank approaching Russell Hill from the north, across the site of Croydon Airport, has the characteristics of a metalled road on an agger. and could have descended into the valley before climbing the eastern hillside on course to Godstone. Either route passes close to the PDA. The existence of the 'Newedich or Widedich' straddling the Riddlesdown ridge and descending into the valley would confirm the existence of an ancient route here, blocked by the earthwork, as elsewhere in road lines approaching London (for the triple bank and ditch see VCH Surrey, vol IV, 1967, 199).

*Anglo-Saxon (c 450 – 1066)*

- 5.9 Inhumation burials of possible Anglo-Saxon date are reported within a 500m radius of the PDA on Russell Hill. These would lie close to both the possible Bronze Age barrow on that hill and close to the Roman road line.

*Medieval (c 1066 – 1540)*

- 5.10 No medieval archaeological remains have been reported within the PDA or within a 500m radius of the PDA.
- 5.11 In the medieval period the site lay distant from any known settlement, manor houses or religious houses but could lie on a communication route reusing the line of the Roman road. Purley does not figure in Domesday Book, nearby parishes such as Croydon, Chipstead or Coulsdon referenced therein lying at some distance. The name Purley first occurs in 1200 as *Pirlee* a name derived from Old English for the 'pear tree woodland glade' (Ekwall 1960).

*Post-medieval (c 1540 – 1900)*

- 5.12 The List of Locally Listed Buildings comprises a series of Churches and the Victorian terrace on the west side of the High Street opposite the PDA. In addition, the GLHER list of monuments includes the important early railway lines passing through Purley,



recreation grounds and Parks and further churches or chapels within the 500m radius around the PDA.

- 5.13 Purley does not figure on the Norden and Speed map of ‘Surrey, Described and Divided into Hundreds, 1610’. Fairburn’s Map ‘12 miles around London’ of 1798 shows the line of the Brighton Road and the road curving southeast, presumably the Godstone Road, now the section of High Street close to the PDA. On the north, very close to the PDA, is the site of Purley Farm while to the south was Purley House.
- 5.14 During the Napoleonic War a horse-drawn railway was established through the area and traces of this occur both to the north and south of the site but its exact route close to the PDA is uncertain (MLO107683 and 98419). A linear feature, however, on the OS 1:2500 shown passing north-east of the PDA might be the trace of this important early railway.
- 5.15 Ordnance Survey maps show that in 1872 (Fig 3) the centre of Purley was little developed, the main building the Caterham Junction Hotel on the road junction 100m to the south of the PDA. The Godstone Road at this point was occupied only by one building, the ‘Tudor Cottages’ set within its own property boundaries, the map identifying ‘wells’ within and close to this plot. This may have been a relic of the Purley Farm or an earlier nineteenth century new build on a site which approximates to the boundaries of the PDA. The equivalent second edition map of (1898; Fig 4) shows semi-detached houses with small back gardens had been built along almost the whole frontage including the PDA.
- 5.16 A watching brief in Whytecliffe Roads 180m north east of the PDA revealed cellar walls from two buildings built on open ground in the late nineteenth century (ELO 10405).

#### *Modern (c 1900 – 2000)*

- 5.17 An air photograph from 1945 on Google Earth (Fig 5) shows that the terrace of houses along the Godstone Road survived the war and were still extant in 1956 when the road had become an extension of the High Street (TQ3161 OS 1:2500). The place name is still commemorated by the Pear Tree public house on the Brighton Road.

#### *Modern (c 1900 – 2000)*

- 5.18 Of an important pair of Second World War pill boxes associated with the defence of the railway lines at the junction of the Caterham and Brighton lines only one survives (MLO 105524-5).
- 5.19 An air photograph from 1945 on Google Earth shows the terrace of houses on the site of 32-42 High Street as still extant as does a map of 1956 (TQ3161 OS 1:2500). Thereafter these were demolished to make way for the present property.

## 6. INTERIM IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### *Archaeological assessment*

- 6.1 Although some doubt must attach to the unusual group of finds from Wilmot Road the valley fluvial deposits may contain Palaeolithic flint implements. Such finds could be of regional importance.
- 6.2 Prehistoric finds in the area and the presence of a probable prehistoric round barrow on the hilltop to the northwest could suggest of the same period in the area of the PDA. The line of the Roman road is of importance and could have been a focus for minor settlement

at the point it crossed the valley, close to the PDA. Inhumation burials of the Anglo-Saxon period close to the road line and barrow site suggest nearby settlement. Either could be of regional importance

6.3 Medieval settlement is absent so the possibility of archaeology of this date occurring within the PDA may be rated as low.

6.4 Post-medieval and modern archaeology on this street frontage may well survive within the PDA and the likelihood should be considered to be high although truncated by the present building and the terracing of the rear area. Such features should be considered of (at least) minor significance. The Listed Buildings in the vicinity are all unaffected by the proposed development.

#### *Existing impacts*

6.5 Groundworks associated with the existing buildings and services will have seriously damaged the frontage area and the rear of the site has been terrace into the rising ground.

#### *Potential impacts*

6.6 From the present knowledge of the limited nature of the proposed works, there is a chance that extant archaeological features, artefacts or eco-facts, particularly relating to the prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods, may be disturbed or destroyed by groundworks within the PDA. The impact of their destruction would be considered major.

6.7 From the limited knowledge of the archaeological resource provided by existing records, archaeological features or deposits may survive within 0.5m to 2m of the present ground level. Waterlogged levels might exist in this valley location but would probably be aerobic; although organic remains might not survive other environmental remains could exist.

#### *Mitigation recommended*

6.8 The destruction of preserved archaeology without proper record risks a major negative impact on the historic environment. While the exact nature of the proposed ground works is uncertain the existence of an Archaeological Priority Area based on the known archaeological resources would require archaeological procedures prior to any development.

6.9 In order to mitigate any potential impact, it is recommended that, in the first place, any site ground investigation or borehole operations be monitored as a check on the nature of the archaeological stratigraphy and the uppermost geology. This would inform whatever archaeological response was necessary to mitigate the impact of the proposed redevelopment.

6.10 An archaeological watching brief on all groundworks associated with the proposed development, including the excavation of foundation and service trenches, landscaping, water attenuation or similar operations, would be an appropriate minimum safeguard, with more extensive mitigation (excavation) being retained as an option, in liaison with the GLAAS Archaeological Advisor (South London), in the event of intact and significant remains being encountered during the works.

## 7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The existing archaeological record suggests this is an area of medium potential, with the possibility of archaeological features of more than one period on an important communication route linking with London.
- 7.2 In view of this potential, archaeological mitigation measures would be informed in the first place by the results of the monitoring of any initial ground investigations, these operations carried out in liaison with, and under the guidance of, GLAAS.

## SOURCES

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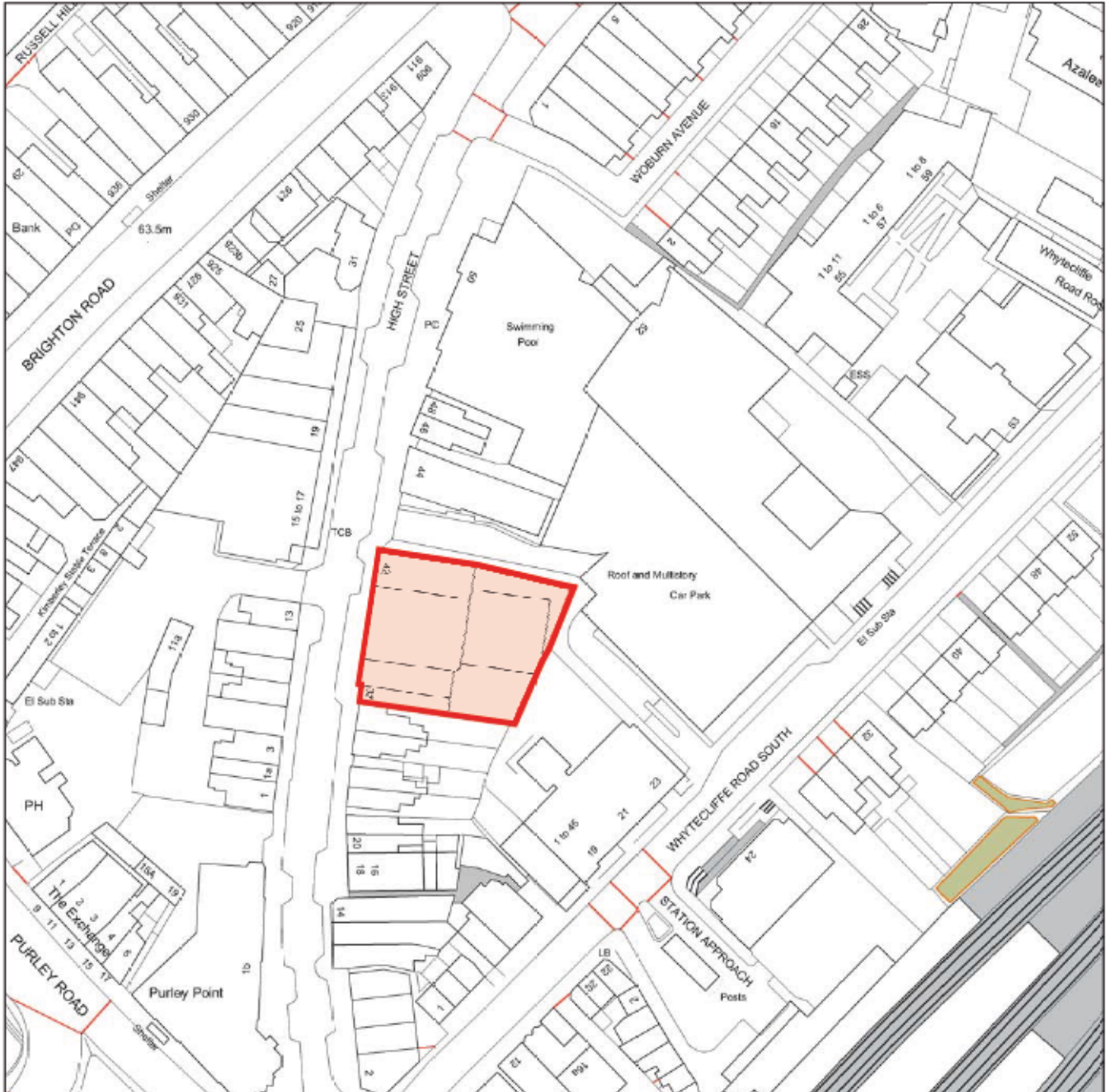


Fig 1. Site location plan (1:1250)



Fig 2. The Proposed Development Area in relation to GLHER data



Fig 3. First Edition Ordnance Map of 1872, marking the location of the PDA



Fig . 2<sup>n</sup> e ition Ordnance Survey ap





Fig 5. Post-war aerial photograph