

CLWB13 (LCS14)



33-35 Lower Coombe Street, Croydon:

Archaeological Monitoring

Prepared for Mr A Ogunwale

Client

Mr A Ogunwale

National Grid Reference

TQ 32223 64904

Parish:

Croydon

Council:

Croydon Borough Council

OASIS ref.:

headland4-187656

Archive will be deposited with:

London Archaeological Archive and
Research Centre

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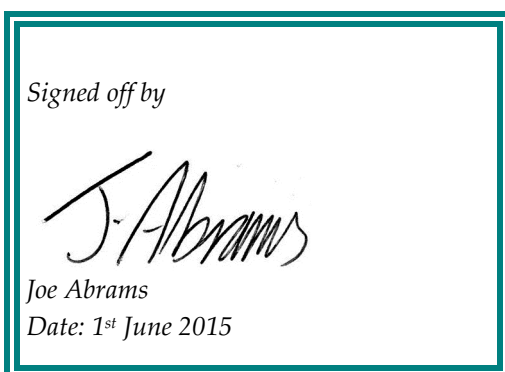
Graphics:

Caroline Norrman

Schedule

June 2015

Report



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33-35 LOWER COOMBE STREET, CROYDON.

Archaeological Monitoring

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd undertook archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the construction of a three/four storey residential block on land at Lower Coombe Street, Croydon, in order to provide information on its archaeological potential. No significant archaeological remains or finds were revealed with only made ground identified, generally extending below the depth of the foundation trenches, and a limited area of natural gravels exposed.

1 INTRODUCTION

Croydon Council has granted planning permission for the demolition of the existing building and erection of a three/four storey building at 33-35 Lower Coombe Street, Croydon (Planning Ref: 12/02271/P). A condition attached to that permission requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation to be undertaken during these works.

Mr Alex Ogunwale, the client, commissioned Headland Archaeology to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological monitoring (Headland Archaeology 2013), undertake the archaeological observation and recording, and prepare a report (this document) on the results. The WSI was approved by the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) prior to commencement of the project.

2 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The Development Area lies within Croydon, c.600m to the northwest of South Croydon station. It is positioned on the southern side of Lower Coombe Street, to the west of the junction with St Andrews Road and southeast of St Andrews Church. It is bounded by the open area and parking of St Andrews Church to the northwest, a modern housing development to the southeast, and terraced houses on Southbridge Road to the southwest, centred at NGR TQ 32223 64904 (Illustration 1).

The site is rectangular in shape, covering an area of c.300m² and was formerly occupied by a single two-storey building fronting onto Lower Coombe Street, with a yard area to the rear. It is positioned on flat land, at around 50m OD.

The underlying solid geology comprises a variety of undifferentiated chalk formations (Lewes Nodular, Seaford, and Newhaven). These are sedimentary bedrocks formed in the Cretaceous Period in a local environment dominated by warm chalk seas. This is overlain by superficial deposits of Hackney Gravels – sand and gravels formed in the Quaternary Period in a local environment dominated by rivers (www.bgs.ac.uk).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

An archaeological evaluation and excavation was undertaken on land directly to the southeast of the site (Nos.23-31 Lower Coombe Street). This uncovered a variety of archaeological remains including a pit and gully thought to be prehistoric in date (HER: MLO97836); two phases of Roman activity represented by gravel pits and rubbish pits (dated to the 1st century AD) and a ditch, two curvilinear gullies, and postholes (dated to the 2nd-3rd centuries AD) (HER: MLO97842); an early medieval gravel layer and ditch (HER: MLO97843); and medieval to post-medieval activity in the form of fences and dumps (HER: MLO978444). This shows that archaeological remains, from a variety of periods, can be found in this area.

Aside from the evidence at 23-31 Lower Coombe Street, evidence for prehistoric activity has been uncovered more widely in the Croydon area. This includes Mesolithic hut sites excavated at Croham Hurst (c.1.5km to the south-east) and a flint-working site at Haling (c.600m to the south of the development). Evidence for prehistoric activity in closer proximity includes two Neolithic or Bronze Age pits and a linear cut at 68-74 Park Lane (HER: 022297/00/00), prehistoric flints at 82-90 Park Lane (HER: 021443/00/00) and Mesolithic flints at 2-4 Coombe Road (HER: 021291/00/00).

A Roman road, the London to Portslade road, ran through Croydon – its exact route is unclear, either along London Road, North End, High Street, South End, Brighton Road (approximately 80m to the east of the site) or along a more westerly route. Evidence for Roman activity, including a small settlement and a ‘mansio’ have been uncovered in Croydon.

Evidence for Roman activity in closer proximity to the site, aside from that at 23-31 Lower Coombe Street, includes a late Roman structure and occupation layer at 2-14 Whitgift Street (HER: MLO63796); flints found on Lower Coombe Street which are thought to have been part of a Roman road surface; and the discovery of numerous individual finds of Roman date such as pottery at Edridge Road (HER: 020416/00/00).

Saxon activity in the Croydon area is attested to by the place-name ‘Croydon’, thought to derive from the Anglo-Saxon ‘*croh*’ (for crocus) and ‘*denu*’ (for valley). Several of the churches in the area are Saxon in date, it is mentioned in the Domesday Book, and is known to have been part of a large estate belonging to the Archbishops of Canterbury.

Archaeological evidence for Saxon activity in the vicinity includes the discovery of a large Saxon pagan cemetery at Park Lane (HER: MLO24037); Saxon pits at 82-86 Park

Lane (HER: MLO58851); and a hoard of early medieval coins uncovered in Old Palace Road (HER: 020324/00/00).

The settlement at Croydon continued to grow throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods. This is attested to in the archaeological record, with the discovery of medieval and post-medieval pits at 2-14 Whitgift Street (HER: MLO63801); medieval and post-medieval structures at 113-121 High Street (HER: 021165/00/00); and a medieval pit and post-medieval wall footings at 68-74 Park Lane (HER: 022300/00/00 and HER: 022301/00/00).

The more recent history of the site can be understood through examination of historic maps. Two terraced houses fronting onto Lower Coombe Street (with rear gardens) are shown within the footprint of the development on the 1869, 1898, 1919, 1935 and 1955 OS Maps and the 1870 and 1896 Croydon Town Plans (www.old-maps.co.uk). St Andrews Church is shown to the northwest of this on all of these maps. The terraced houses in this area were probably constructed in the later 19th century (alongside much of London), and those within the site itself probably date from soon before the 1869 OS Map. It is not clear precisely when the existing building on the site was constructed – clearly in the second half of the 20th century.

4 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The aim of the investigation was to meet the requirements of the planning condition. This involved recording and enhancing understanding of the significance of heritage assets before they were lost (NPPF para 141). This was to be achieved by determining and understanding the nature, function and character of any remains on the site, in their cultural and environmental setting.

The national research context is provided by English Heritage (1991 and 1997) and regionally by 'A Research Framework for London Archaeology' (Museum of London and English Heritage 2002). Any evidence retrieved during the works will be analysed in light of the objectives contained in these frameworks.

The aims of the investigation included:

- Establishing the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation in the development area.
- Establishing the relationship of any remains to the surrounding contemporary landscapes.
- Recovering artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region.

- Recovering paleo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

To facilitate access for future research and interpretation for public benefit, the resulting archive (finds and records) will be deposited in LAARC (The London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre, site code LCS14).

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Site works

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken between the 28th April 2015 and 11th May 2015.

Monitoring was carried out in accordance with the WSI (Headland Archaeology 2014). This involved continuous archaeological observation, investigation and recording during all groundworks unless agreed otherwise with GLAAS.

Excavation of foundation trenches was carried out using a tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.50m bladed bucket.

Spoil generated from the excavations was monitored and observed for artefactual material which may have indicated the presence of archaeological features.

5.2 Recording

All recording was in accordance with the code of practice of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). Deposits identified were assigned unique numbers (context). All recording was undertaken on pro forma record sheets that conform to accepted archaeological standards. All stratigraphic relationships were recorded.

An overall site plan at an appropriate scale and relative to the National Grid was compiled. The site plan was accurately tied in to the National Grid.

A digital photographic record was taken and a metric scale was clearly visible in record photographs.

Full summaries of records compiled during the course of the fieldwork appear as appendices to this report.

5.3 Reporting and Archives

The results of the works are presented below. A summary report has been prepared for submission to the OASIS database (headland4-187656).

The resultant archive will be deposited with The London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre. All archive preparation will be undertaken in accordance with guidelines published by the ClfA on behalf of the Archaeological Archives Forum (July 2007).

6 RESULTS

Monitoring of the foundation excavations revealed a sequence of deposits, to a maximum depth of 1.00m below existing ground surfaces, comprising a dark greyish brown clayey sandy silt and demolition rubble (001)=(004)=(005). Modern plastic, tin cans and white glazed ceramics were identified throughout the deposits, including in the base of excavated trenches. This deposit extended beyond the limits of excavation

In the extreme north-eastern area of the foundations, the made ground was observed to overlie a dark greyish brown clayey silty sand (002). This was identified as a disturbed topsoil/subsoil deposit containing frequent gravel and occasional ceramic building material.

In the eastern foundation trench a gas pipe cut and sand backfill [007], (006) were recorded cutting the made ground and demolition deposit (Illustrations 2 & 3).

Two small patches of natural gravels (003) were recorded in the periphery of the foundation trenches (Illustration 3). It is likely these survived because they were positioned outside of the footprint of the previous buildings on the site.

The northernmost and two interior foundation trenches were prepared for concreting prior to monitoring (Illustration 3). Examination of the spoil removed from these excavations suggested deposits entirely consistent with those observed during prior monitoring and observed throughout the foundation trenches.

6.1 Discussion

Archaeological monitoring of intrusive excavations at 33-35 Lower Coombe Street, Croydon, revealed a sequence of made ground and demolition deposits of variable depth, with natural geological gravels exposed in two limited areas of the development.

No archaeological deposits or remains were identified and no artefacts were recovered during the monitoring.

The depth of the demolition/made ground deposits are indicative of the presence of a former cellar of relatively modern date, likely to have truncated any archaeological remains. The limited evidence of natural geological

deposits identified on the site is also indicative of a high level of prior truncation within the development area.

Table 1: Significance of Heritage Assets

| Description of Heritage Asset | Significance of heritage asset on Local, Regional, National, International scale |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| None | None |

6.2 Conclusion

No archaeological remains were found within the development area. There has been considerable modern disturbance and prior truncation within area of the site.

No further archaeological investigation is required.

7 REFERENCES

7.1 Bibliographic sources

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8. APPENDICES

8.1 Context register

| Context no. | Description |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 001 | Firm dark greyish brown clayey sandy silt and demolition rubble - Made ground |
| 002 | Firm to loose dark greyish brown clayey sandy silt - Made ground/disturbed topsoil |
| 003 | Loose, mid yellowish brown coarse sand and gravel - Natural geological deposit |
| 004 | Firm to loose dark greyish brown clayey silty sand and demolition rubble - Made ground |
| 005 | Firm dark greyish brown clayey sandy silt and demolition rubble - Made ground |
| 006 | Firm, light grey gravel and sand - Fill of gas pipe trench |
| 007 | Soft mid-yellow brown sand - Fill of gas pipe trench |

8.2 Photographic Register

| | |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| W | General view side of western foundation trench |
| N | General view along western foundation trench |
| N | General view along western foundation trench |
| W | Section of western foundation trench |
| N | Section of southern footing trench showing made ground |
| Plan | View of base of southern trench showing rubble |
| E | View of edge of eastern trench showing gas pipe |
| N | General view of eastern trench showing made ground |
| SE | General view southern foundation trench |
| SW | General view southern foundation trench |
| E | Section 002 - representative section |
| N | General view along eastern foundation trench |
| NE | Gas pipe and pile in NE corner of trenching |
| N | Central foundation southern segment |
| SE | Central foundation trench, eastern segment |
| SE | Central foundation trench |
| S | view of section of central foundation trench |
| N | view of section of central foundation trench |
| E | view of section of central foundation trench |
| W | Working shot, central foundation trench |
| SW | Western section, central foundation trench |
| SE | General view, central foundation trench |

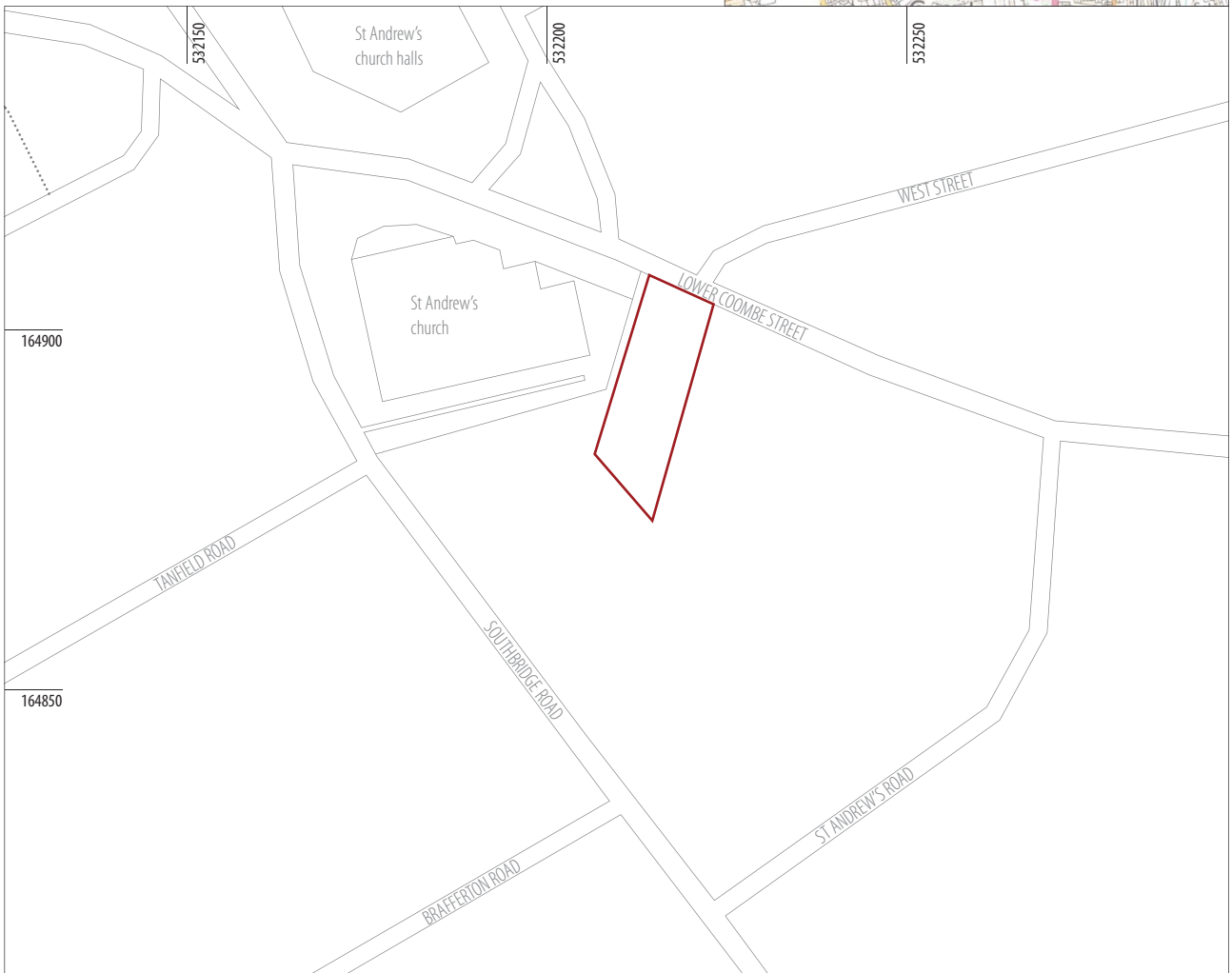
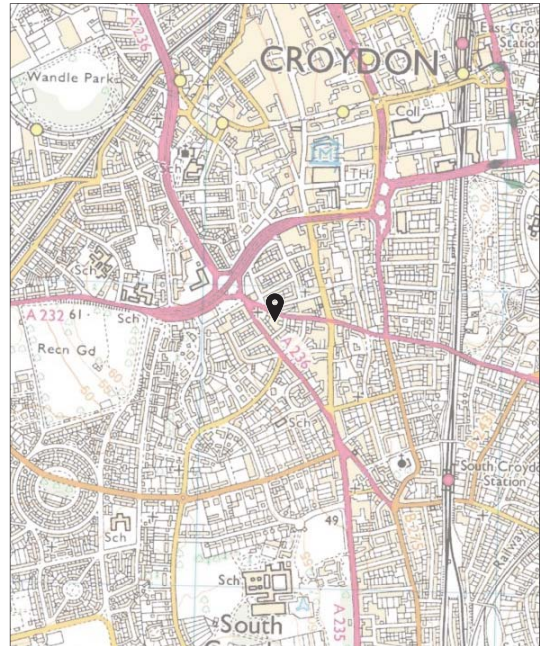
8.3 Drawing Register

| Drawing no. | Plan | Section | Description |
|--------------------|-------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| 001 | 1:50 | | Foundation trench plan |
| 002 | | 01:10 | West facing representative section |

CROYDON (CLWB)
 33–35 Lower Coombe Street
 Croydon
 Greater London



0 200km



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KEY
 development boundary

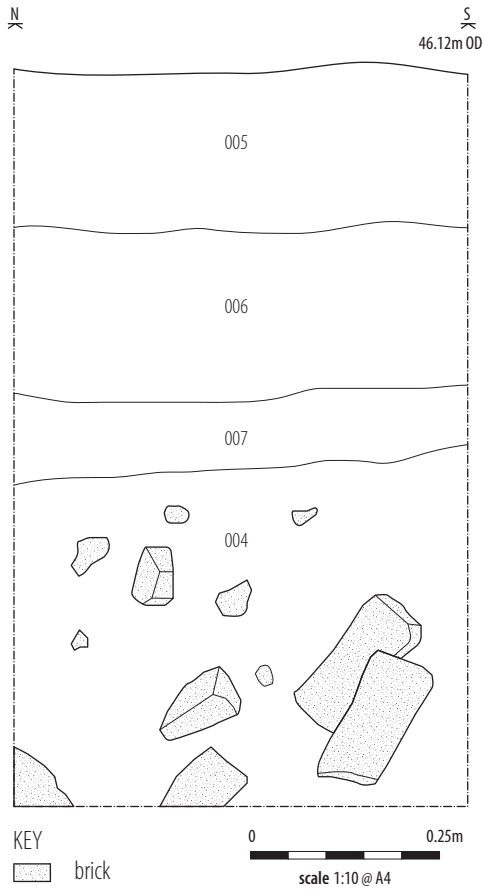
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HEADLAND
ARCHAEOLOGY

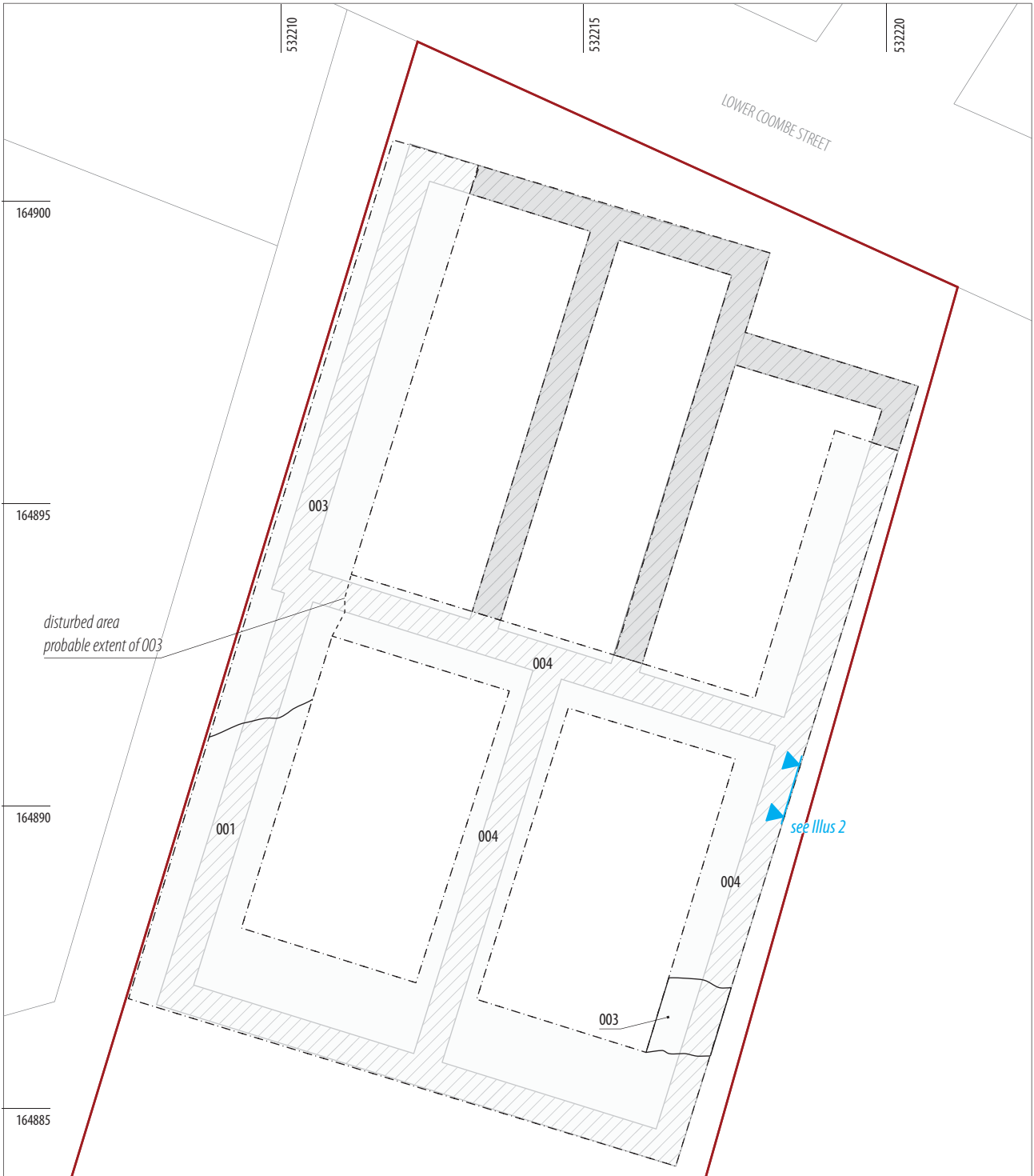
SOUTH & EAST

Building 68C, Wrest Park
 Silsoe
 Bedfordshire MK45 4HS
 01525 861 578
www.headlandarchaeology.com

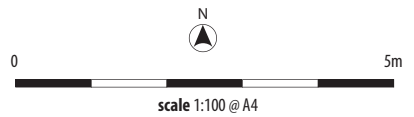
ILLUS 1
 Site location



ILLUS 2
Representative section drawing – Section 002 facing W



- KEY
- development boundary
 - foundation layout
 - monitored area
 - not observed area



ILLUS 3
Foundation plan



ILLUS 4
General view of site during ground works looking north

ILLUS 5
Section 002 – Representative section – eastern
foundation trench

ILLUS 6
General view of western foundation trench