

76-78 Park Lane, London Borough of Croydon, Greater London

Archaeological Evaluation Report



**76-78 PARK LANE
LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON
GREATER LONDON**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT
Site Code PKA07**

Prepared for

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by LRK Associates to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at the 76-78 Park Lane and 28-31 & 35 Edridge Road in the London Borough of Croydon. The Site comprises an approximately u-shaped (sub-rectangular) parcel of land measuring approximately 1360m², located at National Grid Reference (NGR) 532530 165120. The Site lies within an 'Archaeology Priority Zone', as defined by the local authority.

The Site was deemed to have the potential to include Anglo-Saxon period burials, a number of which have been recorded in the immediate vicinity in the late 19th century and in more recent archaeological excavations. Neolithic, Bronze Age, Romano-British and medieval activity, represented by features as well as residual artefacts, have also been recorded within c. 200m of the Site.

No artefacts, features or deposits of archaeological significance were recorded from the evaluation. The only features and deposits recorded were post-medieval in date. A number of large (c. 1-2m) cut features (pits) were recorded in both trenches. These cut the natural gravels and were filled with made ground deposits. Examples in the south-west of Trench 4 and the north-west of Trench 5, which were investigated by hand, contained post-medieval ceramics, clay pipe, glass as well as brick and roof slate fragments.

Natural gravels were recorded at 0.80 – 1.22m(+) depth from the present ground surface. The presence of a buried topsoil directly on the natural gravel (recorded in Trench 4) suggests that the original soil profile of this part of the Site has been truncated, probably to construct tenements in the early 20th century.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of Document

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by LRK Associates to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at the 76-78 Park Lane and 28-31 & 35 Edridge Road in the London Borough of Croydon (**Figure 1**) hereafter referred to as 'the Site'.

1.1.2 This document sets out the results of the archaeological evaluation, which comprised the machine excavation of two archaeological trenches in the west of the Site comprising 320m², a 1.7% sample (by area) of the Site. The evaluation was undertaken on the 20th August 2007.

1.2 The Site

1.2.1 The Site comprises an approximately u-shaped (sub-rectangular) parcel of land measuring approximately 1360m², located between 76-78 Park Lane and 28-31 and 35 Edridge Road, Croydon (National Grid Reference (NGR) 532530 165120, **Figure 1**). It is bounded by Skyline Court to the north, Park Lane to the east and Edridge Road to the west. The entrance to Skyline Court forms the northern Site boundary to Edridge Street and No 37 Edridge Street to the south. Number 33 Edridge Street is outside of the Site, although surrounded by the proposed development on three sides.

1.2.2 The Site is currently occupied by five residential buildings which are programmed to be demolished as part of the re-development.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 An archaeological evaluation is required in support of an application for planning permission for a proposed re-development of the Site comprising the erection of a seven-storey building fronting Park Lane with basement parking, comprising 32 flats, a 3-storey building fronting Edridge Road comprising 8 flats, a two-storey residential unit, as well as vehicular access and associated parking.

1.3.2 It was the aim of the evaluation to ascertain if significant archaeology extends into the area of the application, and follows the preparation of an Archaeological Desk-based Assessment of the Site (MoLAS 2006).

- 1.3.3 The specification for the evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 2007) followed discussions with Mark Stevenson of GLAAS and was produced to detail the objectives, methods and resourcing of the archaeological evaluation.
- 1.3.4 The requirement for the archaeological work stems from the Site's location within an Archaeology Priority Zone, as defined by the Local Authority. It is south of, and outside, the Local Area of Special Character and there are no Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, or otherwise designated sites, buildings or structures on the Site. The Site nevertheless has the potential to contain important archaeological remains from the prehistoric, Roman and medieval periods with a high possibility that remains associated with a Saxon cemetery, recorded in the immediate vicinity of the Site (see 2.1.11 below) may be present.

1.4 Geology and Topography

- 1.4.1 The Site lies on the gravel terraces, which were formed during the last quarter of the Pleistocene by the River Wandle. They are broadly equivalent to the Taplow Thames River Gravel. The contemporary Wandle is a little over 400m to the west and the Thames 12km to the north. Nearby older geological deposits outcrop on slopes above the Site, such as London Clay, the Woolwich, Reading, Thanet Beds and chalk on the North Downs.
- 1.4.2 The Site slopes fairly steeply down from east to west, towards the Wandle Valley. Eastwards, and to the southeast, there is a gradual rise towards Park Hill and the higher ground of the North Downs.
- 1.4.3 The Ordnance Survey (OS) map spot heights indicate Park Lane, on the eastern border of the Site, lies at c. 59.1m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). Archaeological investigations at Skyline Court immediately to the north recorded ground levels of 58.15m aOD at the south end and 58.24m aOD at the north end. Edridge Road, on the western border of the Site, lies 2/5m below the level of Park Lane.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The Site was the subject of a Desk-Based Assessment by the Museum of London Archaeological Service (MoLAS) in 2006. Much of the information presented in this specification is based on its results.

Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic (450,000-1,800BC)

- 2.1.2 No evidence from the early prehistoric periods has been recorded on the Site.

- 2.1.3 Fragments of mammoth tooth and tusk from between 200,000-400,000 years ago have been found in the sands and gravels on the site of East Croydon station, but no potential for finds of this period within the Study Area were identified in the assessment.
- 2.1.4 No remains from the Mesolithic period were located in the Study Area.
- 2.1.5 It is considered possible that some of the prehistoric material from excavations at 68-74 Park Lane (Skyline Court) dated to the Neolithic period.

Bronze Age (1,800-600BC)

- 2.1.6 Some of the finds from archaeological works at 68-74 (Skyline Court) and also 82-86 Park Lane (c. 40m from the edge of the Site) were dated to the Bronze Age and derived from pits and postholes cut into natural gravel. This was interpreted as an indication of a possible settlement in the area.

Iron Age (600BC - AD43)

- 2.1.7 During the Iron Age, Surrey formed part of a large confederacy of indigenous peoples, possibly owing allegiance to a continental elite or dynasty – the Atrebates – centred at the town of Silchester. Local researchers have suggested that a long-distance Iron Age road may have passed 120m to the north of the boundary of the Site, and Late Iron Age pottery was found at 3-7 Park Street, 300m to the north.

Romano-British (AD43-410)

- 2.1.8 Croydon was strategically placed on the line of a Roman road, sometimes referred to as the London to Portslade Way. It has been suggested that it may have formed the site of a posting station or *mutatio*.
- 2.1.9 To the north, the route has been reasonably well established from the Old Town through Broad Green to Streatham, continuing to a junction with Stane Street just to the south of London (possibly at Kennington). The exact route through the central part of Croydon and the south is uncertain but the road may have followed the line of North End and High Street.
- 2.1.10 A number of Roman burials have been recorded along this route, including a chalk-packed coffin/grave recorded a few metres to the south of the Site boundary. The grave cut through a buried soil containing Roman remains. Two small, truncated curved Roman ditches were located at 113-121 High Street, c. 90m to the west, and Roman pottery was also found in various locations along Edridge Road. Further Roman artefacts have also been recorded in the wider surroundings of the Site.

Saxon / Early Medieval (AD410-1066)

- 2.1.11 A richly furnished Saxon cemetery dated to the 5th-7th centuries AD was discovered at Edridge Road during the construction of terraced housing in the 1890's. Due to the haphazard circumstances of recovery the exact location and size of the cemetery remains unknown. Archaeological excavations at Nos. 4,7, 9,16 and 23 Edridge Road in 1972, and an evaluation at 4-20 Edridge Road in 1995 failed to recover any burials, as did an evaluation at 5-25 Edridge Road in 1989.
- 2.1.12 It is currently uncertain whether the cemetery extends to the area of the proposed development. Burials have been recorded during recent archaeological investigations c. 40m to the south of the Site boundary, but none were discovered during investigations at Skyline Court in 1995, immediately to the north of the Site.
- 2.1.13 In 1992, an archaeological evaluation by MoLAS at 82–86 Park Lane, c. 40m south of the Site, uncovered nine inhumations and possibly as many as eight cremations in a limited area. In 1999 and 2000, excavations were carried out at 82–90 Park Lane by Wessex Archaeology which recorded 46 Saxon inhumation graves and two cremation burials. Whole pots exposed beyond the area of proposed buildings were left unexcavated and may also have contained cremations. Three quarters of the graves contained goods, comprising weaponry (33%) - including four swords - jewellery (13%) and other items of status or involved in funerary feasts. The finds span the late 5th to late 7th and early 8th centuries. While there was relatively good preservation of organic remains including textiles, horn, wood and skin/leather, the human remains were poorly preserved with small quantities of bone recovered from only 48% of graves, despite tests which indicated that the soil conditions were neither acidic nor alkali.
- 2.1.14 The earliest documentary reference to Croydon dates to 9th century, when Archbishop Aethelred exchanged land in 'Crogedene' for land belonging to Aelfred at Chartham in Kent. Coincidentally, a hoard of 9th century coins was found on the site of the later Archiepiscopal Palace, now the Old Palace School of John Whitgift (approximately 500m from the site). In the later Middle Ages Croydon was the centre of a large dispersed estate held by the Archbishops of Canterbury. More reliable historical evidence for settlement in Croydon is found in the joint will of Beorhtric and Aelfsweyth dated to AD 962, where it is referred to as 'Crogdoene'. No definite early Saxon village has been found, although it would be reasonable to suggest that it was located where the later medieval village grew, in Old Town Croydon, 280m to the north of the Site.

Medieval and Post Medieval (AD1066-1799)

- 2.1.15 Domesday Book (AD1086) indicates that the Norman Archbishop Lanfranc held Croydon, subletting much of the estate. It is likely that the estate was managed from a building on the site of the later Episcopal Palace, near to the Church. The church and a mill are included in the Domesday account. The village at this time was largely confined to the Old Town.
- 2.1.16 A triangular market place, bounded by Surrey and High Streets and Crown Hill (320m to the north), was probably laid out during the 13th/14th centuries.
- 2.1.17 The area between High Street and Park Lane, including the area of the proposed development site, was laid out as a planned eastern extension to Croydon in the 15th century. Park Lane formed a back lane to the settlement and High Street continued to serve as the main thoroughfare.
- 2.1.18 Many investigations have recovered medieval pottery – mostly residual from secondary contexts. Excavations at 113–121 High Street exposed a flint and mortar structure with a havette, or shearmen's hook embedded in the floor, provisionally dated to the 14th or 15th century which probably dates to the planned extension to the town.
- 2.1.19 Rocque's 1753 Surrey map and J. Cary's 1786 map give only the sketchiest outlines of the area but Park Lane is evident as the back lane to High Street with burgage plots set out as strips between the two roads. The scale is too small and the detail too symbolic to accurately locate the Site. The name Park Lane is derived from the extensive park to the east, owned by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Modern (1800-Present)

- 2.1.20 The 19th century, in common with most of Greater London, saw a phenomenal population growth as communications brought Croydon within the greater metropolitan area of the capital. It was this growth that was to lead to the original development of the Site.
- 2.1.21 The Parliamentary Enclosure maps of 1800 shows the Site within two properties. The northern half of the Site lies at the rear of an east-west aligned burgage plot, one of a series of medieval burgage plots located between High Street to the west and Park Lane to the east. The southern half of the Site falls within the grounds of a large house belonging to R. Allen. The house is set back from the road and lies to the south of (outside) the Site.

- 2.1.22 The OS 1st Edition 25" map of 1868 shows the development of the town following the construction of Katherine Street Rail Station. The map shows the site as predominantly open ground with trees, to the rear of (outside) a large group of industrial buildings (a brewery) fronting High Street, and to the north of 'The Elms', the large house shown on earlier maps.
- 2.1.23 The OS 2nd edition 25" map of 1894 shows considerable change, with the newly set out Edridge Road along the western border of the Site. The map marks 'burial ground' to the north of the Friends Meeting House, although it is unclear whether this refers to the recently discovered Saxon burials or a Quaker burial ground. The map shows two semi-detached houses in the north-west corner of the Site, the first of a whole row that would soon be constructed along the eastern side of the road. The remainder of the Site is open and undeveloped.
- 2.1.24 Archaeological remains of post-medieval date in the immediate vicinity of the Site include a flint-lined pit and walls at 82–86 Park Lane and a gravel quarry at 68–74 Park Lane.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1.1 The objective of the evaluation was to establish and nature, extent and state of preservation of any archaeological remains that may survive on the Site and that may be threatened by the proposed development works.

4 EVALUATION STRATEGY

4.1 Trial Trenching

- 4.1.1 It was proposed initially to evaluate the Site through the excavation of five trial trenches (1-5); three measuring 10m by 2m (Trenches 2, 4 and 5) and two measuring 15m by 2m in plan (Trenches 1 and 3) - **Figure 1**.
- 4.1.2 Due to the presence of dense vegetation and lack of available space Trenches 2 and 3 could not be undertaken as planned. Because of the Health and Safety concerns regarding the potential for services and the close proximity of a public pavement and highway to Trench 1, this was also not undertaken. Only Trenches 4 and 5 were undertaken.
- 4.1.3 These trenches were excavated to the top of significant archaeological remains or to the level of the underlying natural gravels, whichever was encountered first.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section includes all information on the natural deposits encountered and the archaeological features and deposits recorded. A detailed summary of the stratigraphic sequence, deposits and features of each evaluation trench are listed in **Appendix 1**. No dateable archaeological deposits or artefacts predating the 19th century were recorded.

5.2 Natural deposits and soil sequence

Overburden

- 5.2.1 Below modern tarmac and its bedding layers (**400, 500**) of gravel and rubble hard core (0 - 0.32m depth) were differing thicknesses of made ground.
- 5.2.2 The made ground (**401, 402, 501**) was c. 0.50m thick and comprised a dark brown clayey sand or sandy silt containing frequent post-medieval brick rubble and roof slate fragments. These deposits derived from the demolition of earlier (early 20th century) terraced housing on the Site.

Buried soil

- 5.2.3 This c. 0.20m thick deposit (**403**) was only recorded in Trench 4 and laid directly on the natural gravel geology (**Plate 1**). It was characterised by a loose and friable, very dark brown sandy clay with occasional, small, moderately well-sorted, rounded flint gravel (<20mm). It probably represents a buried garden soil, from when this area of the Site represented the back yards of the 20th century houses.

Natural geology

- 5.2.4 The natural gravel geology (**404, 502**) was recorded at depths of 0.79 – 1.22m(+) though slightly deeper (1.10m) in Trench 4 where it laid directly below buried soil **403**. It was characterised by a dark yellowish-brown coarse sand matrix containing abundant, well-sorted, sub-rounded/rounded flint gravels (<80mm).

5.3 Evaluation trenches

- 5.3.1 No archaeological features or deposits were recorded which were earlier than 19th century in date. A number of large (c. 1-2m) cut features (pits) were evident in both long sections of both trenches (**Plate 2**). These cut the natural gravels and were filled with made ground deposits. Examples in the south-west of Trench 4 and the north-west of Trench 5 were investigated by hand.

- 5.3.2 Material recovered (though not kept) included post-medieval ceramics, clay pipe, glass as well as brick and roof slate fragments.
- 5.3.3 A visual scan of the spoil arisings from each trench recorded no artefacts earlier than 19th century in date.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.1 Because of the prevailing dense undergrowth and space restrictions on the Site, as well as Health and Safety concerns, only two (Trenches 4 and 5) of the five proposed evaluation trenches were undertaken. These were located at the westernmost c.20m of the Site where access was possible.
- 6.1.2 No artefacts, features or deposits of archaeological significance were recorded from the evaluation. The presence of a buried topsoil directly on the natural gravel (recorded in Tr.4) suggests that the original soil profile of this part of the Site has been truncated; probably to construct housing on this part of the Site in the early 20th century.
- 6.1.3 Truncation of the Edridge Road area of the Site is also suggested by the presence of a retaining wall dividing the Site with an increase in ground level by approximately 1m to the east.
- 6.1.4 It is considered that there is limited potential for significant archaeological remains to survive on the western part of the Site adjacent to Edridge Road. The increase in ground level to the east of the Site suggests that the area of the Site fronting Park Lane has not been subject to such a high degree of truncation and therefore still has the potential to contain archaeological deposits. However without demolition of existing structures meaningful evaluation of the eastern, Park Lane area of the Site is not possible at this time.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARY TABLES

All archaeological deposits/features of note shown in **bold**.

All (+) indicate deposits/features not fully excavated.

'Depth' equals depth from present ground surface.

Trench No. 4	Co-ordinates: (SW) 532516.15 E, 165120.70 N; (SE) 532523.65 E, 165125.52 N Ground Level (m aOD): (SW) 56.41; (SE) 56.56	Dimensions: 9.5 x 1.6m Max.depth: 1.22m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
400	Modern surface – tarmac surface overlying gravel hard core.	0 – 0.25
401	Made ground – a greyish-brown clayey sand with frequent, well-rounded and angular, well-sorted flint gravels (20 – 40mm).	0.25 – 0.61
402	Rubble – a dark brown sandy clay with occasional rounded, well-sorted, flint gravels (<70mm). Contains frequent post-medieval brick, roof slate frag's. Layer from demolition of earlier tenements on the site.	0.61 – 0.82
403	Buried soil – a very dark brown sandy clay with occasional small, moderately well-sorted, rounded flint gravel (<20mm).	0.82 – 1.01
404	Natural gravel – a dark yellowish-brown coarse sand matrix containing abundant, well-sorted, sub-rounded/rounded flint gravels (<80mm).	1.01 – 1.22(+)
A small number of post-medieval pit cuts were observed in both long TR sections. A small remnant of one of these pits was present in the SW of the trench base. It contained only a very small assemblage of post-medieval material (see Tr 5 records below).		

Trench No. 5	Co-ordinates: (SW) 532499.53 E, 165122.10 N; (SE) 532509.77 E, 165119.39 N Ground Level (m aOD): (SW) 56.05; (SE) 56.236	Dimensions: 9.7 x 1.6m Max.depth: 1.13m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
500	Modern surface – tarmac surface overlying a dark yellowish-brown clayey sand containing frequent flint gravel and brick and tile rubble. Hard core bedding for modern tarmac surface.	0 – 0.32
501	Made ground – a dark brown sandy silt with frequent post-medieval brick rubble. Material related to the demolition of tenements on the site.	0.32 – 0.79
502	Natural gravel – a dark yellowish-brown coarse sand matrix containing abundant, well-sorted, sub-rounded/rounded flint gravels (<80mm).	0.79 – 1.13(+)
A number of large post-medieval pits could be seen in both NE and SW facing TR sections cut from just below deposit (500) and physically cutting the natural gravel in the base of the trench. A section across one of these features produced an assemblage (discarded) of post-medieval brick, slate, glass, clay pipe and ceramics.		



Site and trench location

Figure 1



Plate 1. North-east facing section of Trench 4 (Scale:1m)



Plate 2. General shot of Trench 5 from the south-east (Scales: 1m, 2m)



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