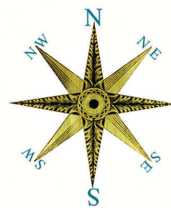


14 BRIGHTON ROAD
PURLEY, CR 8.
LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

July 2007

C O M P A S S



ARCHAEOLOGY

14 BRIGHTON ROAD
PURLEY, CR 8.
LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

SITE CODE: BNU 07

SITE CENTRE NGR: TQ 3117 6155

PLANNING REFERENCE: LB of Croydon 01/03353/P

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July 2007

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief during groundworks at 14 Brighton Road, Purley, London Borough of Croydon took place on the 19th July 2007. The watching brief was carried out as a condition of planning consent, prior to redevelopment of the site. The methodology was in accordance with the requirements outlined in the written scheme of investigation for the site (EDP, 2007) and in line with current English Heritage and Institute of Field Archaeologists' guidance for archaeological projects.

An archaeological desk-based assessment of the site was carried out in October 2003 (TVAS, 2003) and indicated that it had the potential for the survival of prehistoric, Roman and Saxon archaeological remains. The site lies close to the Brighton Road, the current route of which in places follows the line of the main Roman road from London to Portslade, and also within an area of Saxon activity, the Anglo Saxon cemetery at Russell Hill being approximately 600m to the north.

The desk-based assessment and written scheme of investigation indicated that in later times the site was generally open, undeveloped agricultural land until the rapid growth of the general Croydon and Purley area, which took place from the 1840s prompted largely by railway development. A large house, 14 Brighton Road, previously occupied the site and was built sometime between 1898 and 1913 (TVAS 2003) and demolished sometime after October 2003.

The watching brief involved the observation and recording of a single L-shaped trench for the contractors' groundworks within the proposed development footprint. However, the excavations revealed that the central area of the site has been extensively built up with modern brick, tile and concrete rubble relating to the demolition of 14 Brighton Road. This demolition rubble extends to a depth of c. 1.8m below the current ground surface on the southern perimeter of the site. As a result of this, the groundworks have now been put on hold owing to the unforeseen discovery of these adverse ground conditions and this will necessitate the redesign of the foundations for the development.

The watching brief has revealed no archaeological finds or features to date. Reconsideration of the adopted methodology will also need to take place in light of the discovery of excessive depths of modern made ground and following the redesign of the foundations for the development.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1** This report presents a summary of an archaeological watching brief on land at 14 Brighton Road, Purley, London Borough of Croydon (Fig 1). Compass Archaeology undertook the watching brief fieldwork on the 19th July 2007.
- 1.2** An archaeological desk-based assessment of the site was carried out in October 2003 (TVAS, 2003) and indicated that it had the potential for the survival of prehistoric, Roman and Saxon archaeological remains. The site lies close to the Brighton Road, the current route of which in places follows the line of the main Roman road from London to Portslade, and also within an area of Saxon activity, the Anglo Saxon cemetery at Russell Hill being approximately 600m to the north. The desk-based assessment and written scheme of investigation indicated that in later times the site was generally open, undeveloped agricultural land until the rapid growth of the general Croydon and Purley area, which took place from the 1840s prompted largely by railway development. A large house, 14 Brighton Road, previously occupied the site and was built sometime between 1898 and 1913 (TVAS 2003) and demolished sometime after October 2003.
- 1.3** The archaeological work was carried out to a written scheme of investigation compiled by the Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP, 2007).

2. Acknowledgements

The archaeological watching brief was commissioned by Andrew Crutchley of the Environmental Dimension Partnership on behalf of David Wilson Homes.

Mark Stevenson (English Heritage Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service) monitored the project on behalf of the London Borough of Croydon.

3. Location, geology and topography

- 3.1** The site is located close to Purley town centre on the northwestern side of the Brighton Road, between the rear of properties facing on to Banstead Road to the north and properties fronting Purley Knoll to the south. The site covers an area of approximately 0.48 hectares and is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TQ 3117 6155 (Fig 1).
- 3.2** The site lies on gently sloping land, which rises from the valley bottom up to the north and northwest, towards Russell Hill and Woodcote. The site itself rises by nearly 3m across its length with levels at its boundary with the Brighton Road to the southeast being in places 64.66m AOD and levels at the rear of the site to the northeast being in the region of 67.59m AOD. The groundworks revealed that this rise in land surface results from an excessive build up of demolition rubble from the large house that previously stood on the site.

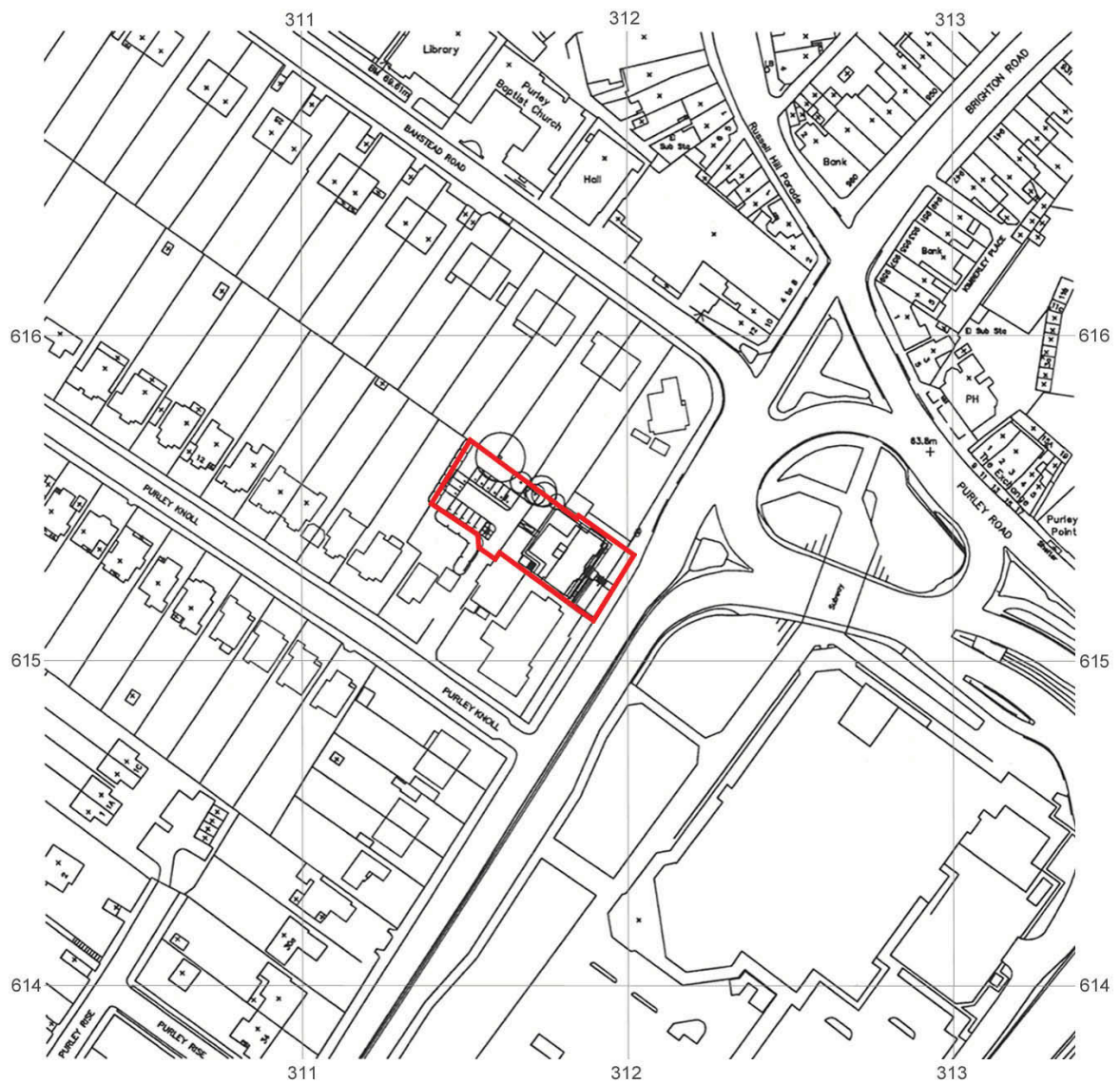


Fig 1 Site location, the site is shown outlined in red. The proposed new build layout is shown; this figure is reproduced from Miller Bourne Chartered Architects drawing number. AD-22 rev. A. © Miller Bourne Partnership.

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey 2005 map with the permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright (Compass Archaeology Ltd, 5-7 Southwark Street, London SE1 1RQ, licence no. AL 100031317).

- 3.3** The settlements of Croydon and Purley grew up because of the topographical advantage of a gap in the North Downs. A number of deep dry valleys meet in this area and early trackways no doubt converged on the place where natural springs feeding into the River Wandle rose¹.
- 3.4** The modern town centre of Purley generally stands on the lower gravel terrace of the Hackney Gravel. The geological survey (British Geological Survey 1998: Solid and Drift Sheet 270) indicates that the site area has a complex geology, incorporating the intersection of the Hackney Gravels, with the Upper Chalk. These lower lying Tertiary formations overlie the downland chalk and are exposed in a northward progression across the borough, comprising, in ascending order, sands of the Thanet Beds, loams and clays of the Woolwich and Reading Beds and heavier clays of the London Clay.
- 3.5** The geological surface shows the site on the Upper Chalk, but with the Hackney Gravels just to the east following the line of the Brighton Road. The watching brief appears to have revealed the top of the Hackney Gravel deposits and indicates that the arbitrary line defining the two deposits should be shown extending into the site area, rather than ending at the edge of the Brighton Road.

4. Archaeology and history

- 4.1** Although the site is relatively small, it is located in an area with the potential for a range of archaeological remains. The Greater London Sites and Monuments Record gives a number of prehistoric, Roman and Saxon medieval references and these are detailed in the desk based assessment of the site (TVAS 2003).
- 4.2** Purley was on the route of a Roman road from London to the South Coast, and evidence suggests that the present Croydon town centre was the site of one of the small roadside settlements and cemeteries that lie in a ring around Londinium². Evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity, which followed the demise of the Roman administration, is in the form of cemeteries found in Central Croydon and on Farthing Downs, Cane Hill and Russell Hill - the cemetery in Central Croydon being one of the earliest in the country.
- 4.3** The line of the Roman road between London and Portslade is thought to run through Croydon, and Margary has proposed that it runs through the valley bottom between Purley and Broad Green to the north³. Brighton Road follows the probable route of the Roman road, although Margary has presented a case for the road to run further to the west along the valley bottom in the Croydon area, although he agrees that it follows the line of the Brighton Road through the Purley area⁴.
- 4.4** The desk-based assessment indicated that the road might kink from northeast to southwest, to more north north east by south south west, at the junction of the Brighton Road and Banstead Road in the vicinity of the site⁵. Local historians also suggest that the Roman road followed the line of the gravel terrace⁶. Drewett has also argued that the course of the road runs along the gravel terraces to the east of the

¹ Gent, J. 2002 'Croydon Past' p.1.

² Bird 1996

³ Margary 1956

⁴ Margary 1965

⁵ TVAS 2003

⁶ Jim Davison *pers. comm*

River Wandle, though no traces have yet been found⁷. The Roman road has been observed in excavations behind the Half Moon public house in Broad Green⁸ and several possible branch roads from Purley to Beddington and Kenley and south Croydon are also thought to have existed.

- 4.5** The general scatter of Roman material over a relatively wide area implies that Roman settlement in the borough represented a roadside village rather than just a hamlet or farm and that it may have specialised in the production of autumn crocus – from which its Anglo-Saxon name is believed to derive – for yellow dye and flavouring⁹. The nature of the Roman settlement and road layout across the Borough remains to be defined in detail.
- 4.6** The Purley area underwent relatively gradual change in size and geographical extent until the mid 18th century. Further development followed with the opening of the Surrey Iron Railway (1803-1805) and the Croydon Canal (1809) which stimulated ribbon development along the Brighton Road to the south of the town: this is clearly seen on later 18th century maps.
- 4.7** The large house which once stood on the site was probably part of the rapid growth of the area that only took place from the 1840s, prompted largely by railway development. The footprint of the house is shown on the OS 1956 1:1250 series and on later OS maps of the area (see Fig 2). The house was demolished sometime shortly after the topographical survey of October 2003 (Fig 3).

⁷ Drewett 1970 and Savage 1982

⁸ Jim Davison *pers.comm*

⁹ Bird 1996



Fig 2 Extract from the OS 1956 1: 1250 series showing the footprint of 14 Brighton Road, the large house that once stood on the site.

- 4.8 In 2003, a topographical survey of the site was commissioned prior to the demolition of 14 Brighton Road and an extract from this survey is shown below (Fig 3). The survey shows that the house was constructed on a level terrace that cut into the natural slope of the hill. The surface level at the Brighton Road frontage was in the region of 65.5m AOD and the level at the rear 65.43m OD, with some landscaping and a flight of steps leading up to the site access road, which is at a general level of approximately 67m AOD.
- 4.9 The current site levels have changed significantly, with the terracing no longer visible, but a general slope rising from the Brighton Road frontage at *circa* 64.7m AOD to *circa* 66.5m AOD in the area of the watching brief trench and then rising again to the site access road still at just over 67m AOD. The trench appears to have just fallen at the edge of the terrace for the house and this explains why the Hackney Gravels were visible in the northwest section but demolition rubble was evident at depth to the south.

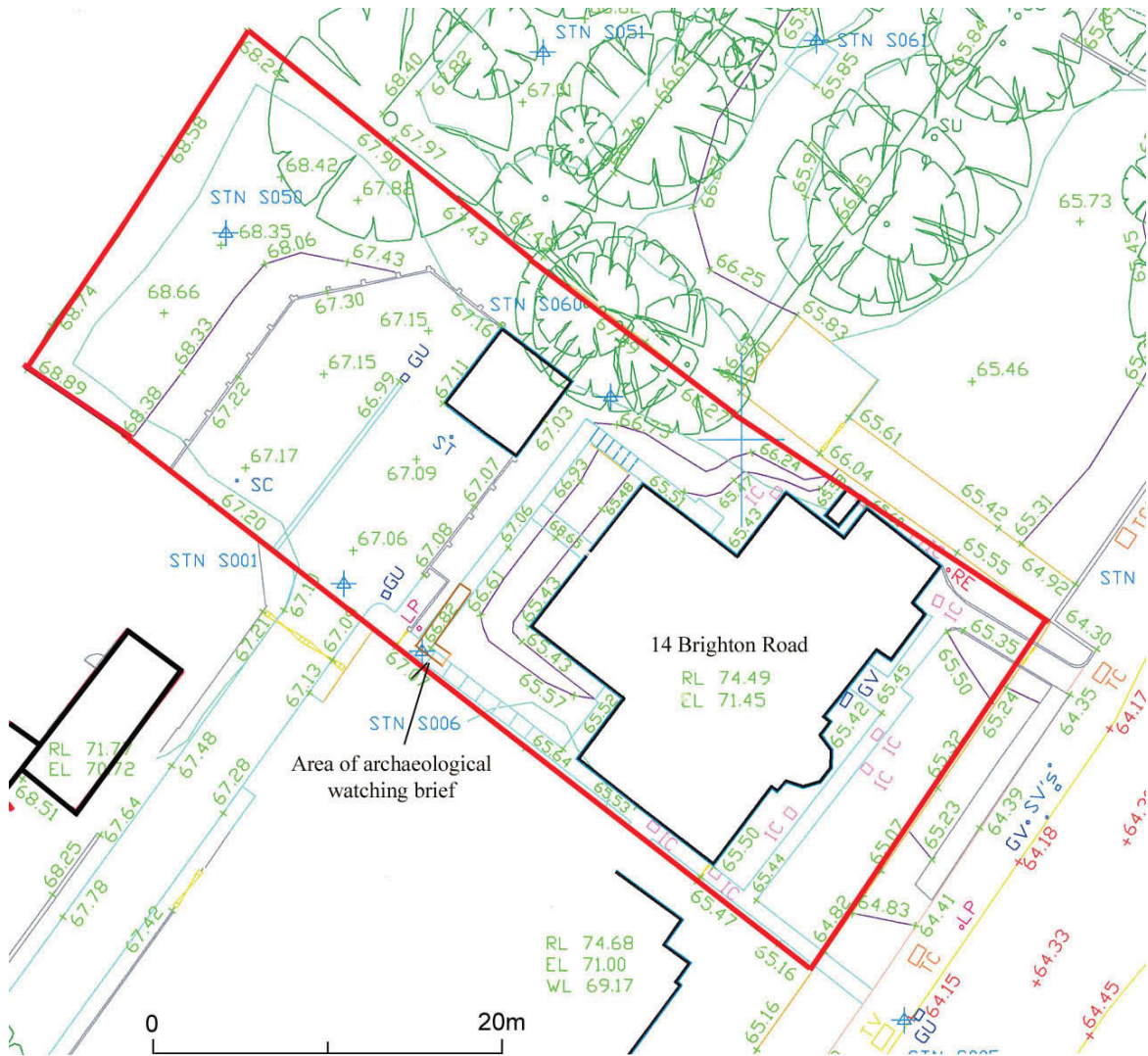


Fig 3 Annotated extract from the 2003 Topographical Survey, showing the approximate location of the archaeological watching brief (brown) in relation to the various levels on the site prior to the demolition of 14 Brighton Road.

5. Archaeology and planning

5.1 An archaeological watching brief of the site was required as part of the planning process. Archaeology forms part of the current London Borough of Croydon Unitary Development Plan (1997) and the Second Deposit Draft Replacement Unitary Development Plan (the Croydon Plan) and the planning position is detailed in the desk based assessment and WSI for this site¹⁰. Following a previous desk-based assessment (TVAS October 2003) English Heritage (the advisor to the Council of the London Borough of Croydon) advised that an watching brief should be undertaken as a condition of planning consent and prior to redevelopment (LB. of Croydon Planning Ref. 01/03353/P).

6. Analytical summary and methodology

6.1 The WSI was produced and agreed prior to the fieldwork. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the English Heritage *Brief* and general guidelines (including *Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork*, 1998) and those of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (*Standard and Guidance for Field Watching briefs*, 1996).

6.2 The watching brief comprised the observation and recording of one L-shaped trench located within the area of proposed development, as shown on Figs 3 and 4. The trench was approximately 0.8m wide and measured 3m northwest by southeast and 6m southwest by northeast. The developer's surveyors set out the long axis of the trench and the setting out coordinates are shown on Williams and Lester (Chartered Architects) drawing 2006A-BR-102 (Setting Out Plan scale 1:100). The northwest corner of the trench was at NGR 2534.722/7336.065 and extending for 6m in length on an alignment towards NGR 2539.843/7243.052 - a point set out along the site grid at 8.66m from the north west corner of the trench. It was proposed to excavate the trench to this extent, but this became impossible because of the depth of made ground encountered during the watching brief.

6.3 The trench was opened by mechanical excavator and recent demolition deposits were exposed across the entire extent of the opened area. These were in the form of loose ground compiled of modern tile, brick, pipe, flint nodules and large lumps of concrete and were exposed to a depth of 1.8m in the northwest end of the trench and across the short axis running north west by south east. The long axis of the trench was stepped up at about 3m along its length to a depth of 1.2m below current ground surface and similar deposits were encountered continuing along the length of the trench. The trench was excavated to a length of 6m. Following consultation on site it was decided to cease the groundworks and a small section (*circa* 3m) of the long axis of the trench was concreted. The groundworks are now on hold pending a redesign of the foundations of the development, owing to the adverse ground conditions. The nature of the modern deposits is shown in Figs 5 to 7.

¹⁰ Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 2003 '14 Brighton, Road, Purley, London Borough of Croydon. A Desk-Based Assessment'; The Environmental Dimension Partnership LLP, 2007, '14 Brighton, Road, Purley, London Borough of Croydon. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief' Section 2, page 2.

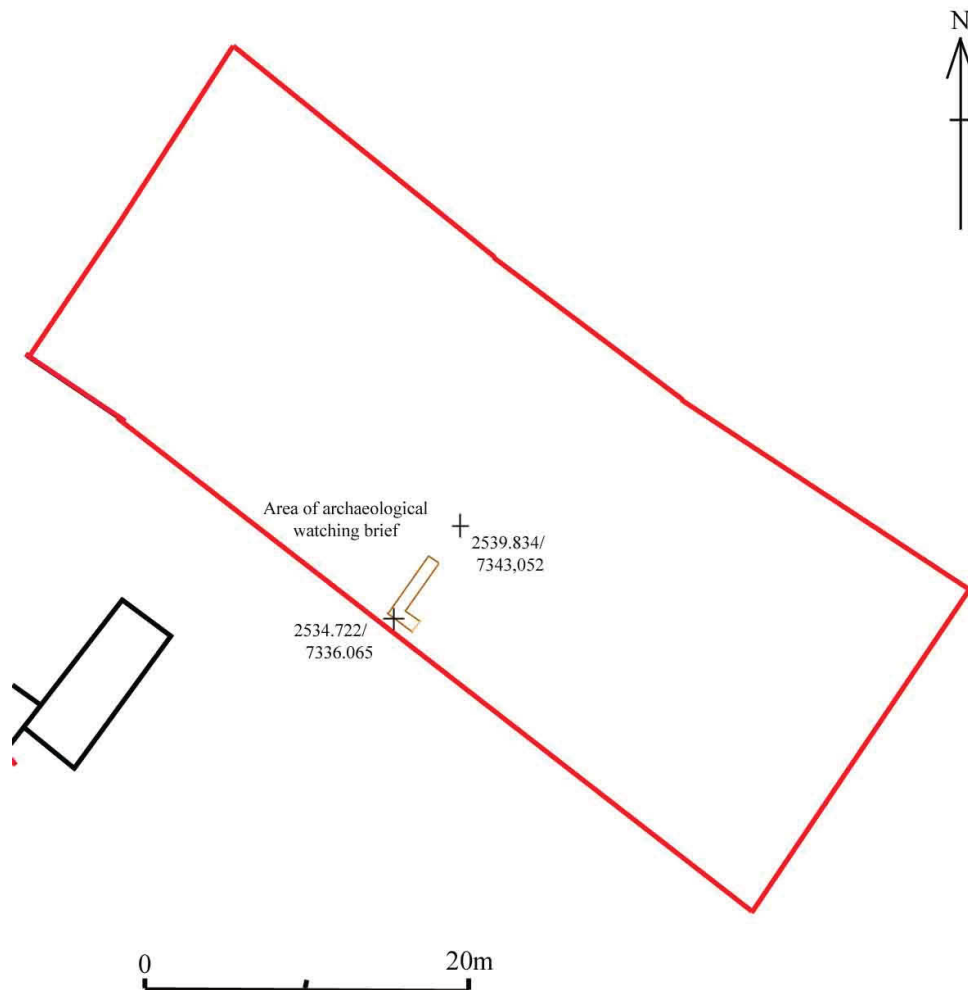


Fig 4 Trench location plan, showing the watching brief area (brown), see Figs 1 and 3 for additional location information.

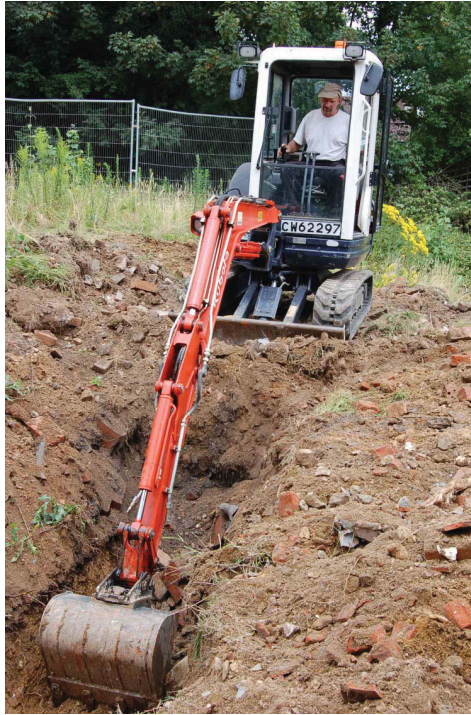


Fig 5 General view of the groundworks excavations at the northeastern extent of the long axis of the trench. Modern made ground deposits were exposed in this area to a depth of 1.2m below current ground surface and then excavation ceased.



Fig 6 General view of the groundworks excavations looking southwest along the long axis of the groundworks trench. Modern made ground deposits were exposed in this area to a depth of 1.8m below current ground surface (where the figure is standing in the trench).



Fig 7 A view of the groundworks, looking back northwards from the Brighton Road frontage. The artificial mounding of the deposits on site can be seen. The machine stands in approximately the area where the terracing for the old house had its northernmost limit.

- 6.4** The deposits and features exposed in the watching brief were all of extremely modern date and relate to the demolition of the large house that stood on the site. The deposits show that when the house was demolished a large quantity of the demolition material was mounded on site. The house appears to have been originally terraced into the natural slope and much of the arisings from the demolition process were banked on site to form an artificial mound, which explains the rise in the site surface morphology from *circa* 64m AOD at the Brighton Road frontage to *circa* 67.5m AOD at the northwestern boundary (Fig 7).
- 6.5** Levels were derived from an OSBM located at the south wall of 12 Brighton Road, value 65.34m AOD. The watching brief trench positions were located to the existing site boundaries by the groundworks contractor, with the resultant plan in turn related as a ‘best fit’ to the Ordnance Survey grid as derived from the 1:1250 map. A more detailed trench location drawing will be generated as the project progresses.
- 6.6** The records from the watching brief have been allocated the site code: BNU07 by the Museum of London Archaeological Archive. An ordered and indexed site archive will be compiled in line with the MoL *Guidelines* and will be deposited in the Museum of London Archive

7. The archaeological watching brief

7.1 Summary of the findings

Trench 1 (Figs 3 to 7)

+ (recent made ground)
|
1 (weathered Hackney Gravels)

The trench revealed only recent made ground [+] with the indication of a weathered gravel formation, which may be the surface of the Hackney Gravels, evident only in the northwest face of the trench, but clean natural deposits were not encountered and demolition rubble extended at depth to the south in the watching brief area. Made ground was encountered to a depth beyond 1.8m in the southwestern end of the trench and excavated to a depth of 1.2m at the northeastern end of the trench.

No section drawings are included in this report, as only made ground has been encountered at this stage of the watching brief programme for this site.

8. Assessment of the results of the watching brief

8.1 The site was heavily disturbed by the construction and subsequent demolition of 14 Brighton Road and the footprint of the new build now lies in an area of extensive made ground. The current depths of made ground across the site do not permit entry into the trenches to identify archaeological deposits or features and a revised methodology for the safe execution of the standard requirements of an archaeological watching brief will need to be part of the redesign of the foundations for the development.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

9.1 The archaeological watching brief did not reveal any archaeological remains, in part owing to the depth of made ground present in the trench area.

9.2 A redesign of the foundations of the development will inform on the next stage of the archaeological mitigation for this site.

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Appendix 1: OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

OASIS ID: compass1-29366

Project details

Project name	14 Brighton Road, Purley, London Borough of Croydon
Short description of the project	A Compass Archaeology watching brief during developers' groundworks revealed extensive modern disturbance relating to the demolition of a large late 19th/early 20th century house that once stood on the site. This disturbance included large dumps of modern brick, tile and concrete, extending beyond 1.8m below the current ground surface. No archaeological finds or features were encountered. Natural deposits in the form of the weathered upper strata of the Hackney Gravels may have been visible in the north west section of the trench, although the possibility of this been a reworked deposit cannot be eliminated at this early stage of the project and only demolition rubble was evident in the opposite face of the trench. The groundworks have currently been put on hold owing to the unforeseen discovery of these adverse ground conditions, which will necessitate the redesign of the foundations for the development. A second stage of watching brief works will continue at sometime in the future.
Project dates	Start: 19-07-2007 End: 19-07-2007
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	BNU 07 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	01/03353/P - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status (other)	Adjacent to a Local Authority Archaeological Priority Area
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CROYDON PURLEY 14 Brighton Road, Purley, London Borough of Croydon
Postcode	CR8
Study area	0.48 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 3117 6155 51.3373707230 -0.116727442751 51 20 14 N 000 07 00 W Point
Height OD	Min: 64.00m Max: 64.50m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Compass Archaeology
Project brief originator	English Heritage/Department of Environment
Project design originator	Environmental Dimension Partnership
Project director/manager	Geoff Potter
Project supervisor	Gillian King
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Museum of London archive
Digital Contents	'Stratigraphic','Survey'
Digital Media available	'Survey','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Museum of London Archive
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic','Survey'
Paper Media available	'Correspondence','Map','Photograph','Plan','Report','Survey'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	14 Brighton Road, Purley, London Borough of Croydon. An Archaeological Watching Brief.
Author(s)/Editor(s)	King, G.
Date	2007
Issuer or publisher	Compass Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Compass Archaeology
Description	A4 in-house, spiral bound, developer report.
Entered by	Gillian King (mail@compassarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	30 July 2007

OASIS:

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3 February 2006

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Appendix II. London Archaeologist summary

14 Brighton Road, Purley CR 8. TQ 3117 6155. CA (Gillian King). Watching brief. July 2007. David Wilson Homes. BNU 07

Summary

A Compass Archaeology watching brief during developers' groundworks revealed extensive modern disturbance relating to the demolition of a large late 19th/early 20th century house that once stood on the site. This disturbance included large dumps of modern brick, tile and concrete, extending beyond 1.8m below the current ground surface.

No archaeological finds or features were encountered. Natural deposits in the form of the weathered upper strata of the Hackney Gravels may have been visible in the north west section of the trench, although the possibility of this been a reworked deposit cannot be eliminated at this early stage of the project and only demolition rubble was evident in the opposite face of the trench. The groundworks have currently been put on hold owing to the unforeseen discovery of these adverse ground conditions, which will necessitate the redesign of the foundations for the development. A second stage of watching brief works will continue at sometime in the future.