

CORKSCREW HILL & SPARROW'S DEN PLAYING FIELDS, WEST WICKHAM

LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION AND RECORDING

DURING THAMES WATER ENGINEERING WORKS



August 2007



COMPASS



ARCHAEOLOGY

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SITE CODE: SDN05

SITE CENTRE NGR: TQ 3884 6519

COMPASS ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED

5-7 SOUTHWARK STREET

LONDON SE1 1RQ

Telephone: 020 7403 9660

Facsimile: 020 7403 9661

e-mail: mail@compassarchaeology.co.uk

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Project 320

Abstract

Archaeological observation and recording took place between June and November 2005 on Corkscrew Hill and in the adjacent area of Sparrow's Den playing fields, West Wickham. The programme was carried out during groundworks for a Thames Water sewer and flood alleviation scheme, and in response to recommendations made by English Heritage.

Groundworks included some 150m of new pipe trench on Corkscrew Hill and crossing the playing fields to Addington Road, plus excavation of an underground storage chamber some 18m in diameter. Monitoring and metal detecting were also undertaken during preliminary topsoil stripping for the site compound and groundworks within Sparrow's Den.

The site lies just to the east of a Roman road, the so-called London-Lewes Way, and to the northeast of the Scheduled Romano-British settlement site of Wickham Court Farm (SAM 146). Previous metal detecting in the site area is understood to have recovered a significant number of Roman coins.

Historic maps show that the site was in open land, although only about 400m to the north of the medieval (and possibly Saxon) Wickham Court and St John the Baptist Church. A map of 1632 by Nicholas Lane also shows a stream crossing the site approximately west to east: this is not shown on later surveys, although the 1840 Tithe map still refers to the area as Lower Bourn Field.

Metal detecting during the topsoil strip produced a range of finds, including seven 3rd to 4th century Roman coins and a small assemblage of 15th to 18th century items – an Elizabethan silver penny, several copper alloy mounts and buckles, a lead token and two 18th century coins. There was also some more recent material of local interest, notably a 19th century gilt brass button from the East India Company academy at Addiscombe House.

Some of these finds probably derive from chance loss or agricultural activity. However, the Roman coins form a group and can be related to existing evidence for the area. The absence of other material (eg. ceramics) rules out immediate settlement but some form of roadside activity may be suggested, either commercial or votive. Alternatively the coins could be part of a widely dispersed hoard: there is considerable evidence for natural ground movement on the site, as well as for man-made disturbance.

The pipe trench excavation also exposed the line of the stream shown on Lane's map of 1632. The channel was over 15m wide and at least 2m deep, although not bottomed by the trench. Infilling seems to have occurred naturally, with waterlaid silts overlain by coarser material eroded from the adjacent banks. The area was then sealed by up to 400mm of hillwash or colluvial deposit, probably in a fairly short period of time.

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1. Introduction

Groundworks for a part of a Thames Water sewer and flood alleviation scheme were archaeologically monitored between June and November 2005. The work took place on Corkscrew Hill and the adjacent area of Sparrow's Den playing fields, just to the south of West Wickham.

The works comprised preliminary topsoil stripping of the open grassed field in preparation for the site compound, subsequently extended to areas where groundworks were to take place. The main contract works comprised excavation of a pipe trench for the new sewer some 150m in length, along part of Corkscrew Hill and then crossing the southeast corner of the playing fields to exit onto Addington Road (Figure 2). A large (*c* 18m diam.) underground storage chamber and adjacent pumping station were also constructed in the northeast corner of the compound.

The project was carried out in response to recommendations made by English Heritage, and reflected the archaeological potential of this area for a range of archaeological remains, in particular of Roman date. A Roman road passes nearby and there is a Romano-British Scheduled site just to the south. Palaeo-environmental remains were also possible from a watercourse that is recorded flowing west to east across the playing fields.

The archaeological and historic background is discussed in more detail below (4).

2. Acknowledgements

The archaeological programme was commissioned by Nick Clark, Biodiversity and Heritage Advisor, Thames Water Utilities Limited.

Assistance during the project was also given by Andy Keohane and Darren Wetherell, and by other representatives of the main contractor Morrison Construction.

The archaeological measures on this site were supported by Mark Stevenson, (English Heritage Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service).

Metal detecting during the project was undertaken by Bill Yendall on behalf of Compass Archaeology.

3. Location and topography

3.1 The site is approximately centred at TQ 3884 6519 (Figure 2). The compound occupied an open area some 50m by 70m within the open ground of Sparrow's Den. This area also contained the storage chamber, whilst the new pipe route ran some 50m further to the north on Corkscrew Hill and also to the southeast and south.

3.2 The works occupied the base and lower northern slope of an east-west valley, historically occupied by an eastward flowing stream (*cf.* 4.4 below) and today is followed by Addington Road. The local land surface was generally quite level, at about 64.5m to 65.0m OD, although embanked towards the adjacent roads and rising more steeply along the northern section of the proposed pipeline to a maximum of about 66.3m OD (see also Figures 6 & 7).

3.3 The British Geological Survey (1998. *South London. Sheet 270*; Figure 5) indicates that the site largely overlies a fairly recent River Terrace Deposit of Kempton Park Gravel. This deposit forms a fairly narrow southwest to northeast band within the valley bottom, sealing the much earlier Thanet Sand and Upper Chalk.

4. Archaeology and history

4.1 A number of prehistoric remains are recorded in the vicinity, in particular Iron Age material to the south of Addington Road.

4.2 The site lies some 200m to the east of the line of a Roman road running southwards from Watling Street towards the South Downs, the so-called London-Lewes Way (Figure 1). The road line has been exposed and recorded in the Sparrow's Den fields and just to the north of Addington Road, as well as slightly further to the south and on the County boundary some 1.6km away (Davis 1935, 61-3; Graham 1941, 98; Margary 1965, 127-31). Under favourable conditions the road line may be seen today as a lighter band of grass crossing the playing fields, and past investigation records that the gravelled crown of the road is overlain by some 17 inches (*c* 430mm) of sandy hillwash.

It is likely that the watercourse described below (4.4) would also have been extant in the Roman period, and so would have been crossed by the road either by bridge or ford just to the west of the present site.

The Scheduled Romano-British settlement site of Wickham Court Farm (SAM 146) lies just to the south of Addington Road (Figure 1), and was investigated between 1962-64 by the West Kent Border Archaeological Group (Philp 1973, 20-23; 55-65). Further to the north of the site there is evidence for a small Roman settlement close to the road at West Wickham, with past finds including metalwork, pottery and cremation urns (Knowlden & Walker 1986, 7).

It is understood that several years ago the approximate area of the present site was flooded and subsequently stripped and turfed. It appears that this was accompanied by extensive but unofficial metal detecting, which recovered a large quantity of Roman metalwork (mainly coins). Some of this material is now in Bromley Museum, but it is likely that more remains unrecorded and in private hands.

4.3 It is likely that there was Saxon and early medieval activity in the area, presaging the later development of Wickham Court and of St John the Baptist Church (about 300m to 500m to the south of the present site; *ibid* 7-12). A manor hall may well have stood on or close to the location of the existing Court, whilst the manor itself is mentioned in Domesday (Wickham Court 1969, 4). The Church retains some elements of early construction although largely rebuilt (*ibid*).

The present Wickham Court buildings were begun about 1470, originally as a relatively simple brick-built structure with octagonal turrets at each corner. This building survives today with some alteration and addition.

- 4.4** Early maps show the site area as open land, although evidently in agricultural use (either grazed or cultivated) and with the lines of Corkscrew Hill and Addington Road already established.

The earliest detailed map seems to be that by Nicholas Lane in 1632 (reproduced in Knowlden & Walker 1986; 74, and illustrated here with amendments as Figure 3). This shows that the present Sparrow's Den playing fields was traversed southwest to northeast by a stream, with the adjacent land recorded as *Bourne feilde* – bourn[e] being derived from the Middle English for small stream or brook. This watercourse formed a tributary of the present Ravensbourn, thereafter flowing northwards to the Thames from Hayes, and is also reflected in the geological map (Figure 5).

There is no sign of the stream on subsequent maps of 1769 (Watson 1952, 16) or on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map published in 1819 (Figure 4). However, the 1840 Tithe map of the Parish of Wickham appears to show the same land division as Lane's map, the eastern half (covering the present site) named *Lower Bourn Field* and the western half *Upper Bourn Field*.

- 4.5** The present recreational use of Sparrow's Den dates to some time between 1909 and 1936, with the Ordnance Survey 25-inch Revision of the latter date recording the area as 'Sports Ground'.

5. Archaeological research questions

The project presented an opportunity to address the following research questions, as defined in the preliminary *Specification* (Compass Archaeology, June 2005):

- Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, and what is the stratigraphic context and date range?
- Is there any evidence for Roman activity (occupation or agriculture)? Can any features be related to the projected road line?
- Is there any evidence for Saxon and/or medieval activity, and can the nature of this be defined. In particular, is there evidence for any early settlement?
- What evidence is there for post-medieval land usage and development?
- Is there any evidence for the historic stream that is shown crossing the site in the 17th century, and does this include any environmental remains?

6. Methodology

- 6.1** The *Specification for a Programme of Archaeological Observation and Recording* was approved by English Heritage prior to commencement of the fieldwork. The programme was also carried out in accordance with guidelines issued by Heritage and by the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

6.2 In terms of potential archaeological impact the main elements of the scheme were as follows:

- Creation of a site compound covering just under 0.3 hectare (maximum dimensions *c* 68m x 50m) with access onto Corkscrew Hill. This involved erection of a solid perimeter hoarding (with a series of post pits *c* 0.5m deep) plus machine stripping of much of the enclosed grass and topsoil prior to hardcore surfacing. The topsoil strip was to a depth of between 120mm and 300mm, generally being shallowest in the northeast corner and along the northern boundary of the compound.
- Further topsoil stripping within and to the southeast of the site compound prior to the groundworks noted below. Depth of excavation tended to be slightly less than that noted above (particularly towards Addington Road), at *c* 80mm to 150mm.
- Excavation of an underground storage chamber and smaller pumping station in the northeast corner of the compound. The main construction cut was nearly 19m in diameter and some 16m deep, although clearly archaeological interest was confined to the uppermost level of excavation.
- Excavation of an open-cut trench approximately 150m long, running from a point on the eastern side of Corkscrew Hill (adjacent to No. 28) southwards to Addington Road. The trench was generally between 1.0m to 1.15m wide and 1.65m to 2.50m deep, with the deeper excavation located on Corkscrew Hill itself. There were also several pits to accommodate inspection chambers, measuring up to about 3.5m square in plan.

6.3 The preliminary works and topsoil stripping were observed over a period of several weeks, between late June and late August 2005. Exposed deposits were examined for finds and/or buried features, and a metal detector survey was undertaken on the removed spoil and cleared surfaces (*cf.* Figure 8).

The subsequent storage chamber, pumping station and pipe trench excavations were monitored and representative areas were recorded and photographed in greater detail, with particular attention given to the one area where deeper *in situ* deposits were found. Individual elements were described on drawings or trench sheets but in general were not related to any significant finds or features, and were therefore not separately contexted. In addition, machine stripping generally exposed reworked soil horizons that yielded both modern and more ancient finds.

The groundworks and recorded areas were located onto an overall 1:500 site survey by taped measurement (Thames Water Dwg. No: *IM5D-A1-02011-IN*). This was in turn related as a 'best fit' to the Ordnance Survey plan as derived from the 1:1250 map (Figures 7 & 14). Levels were derived from an OSBM located on the northwest corner of No. 28 Corkscrew Hill, value 66.31m OD.

6.4 The records from the evaluation have been allocated the site code: SDN05 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 fieldwork

For descriptive purposes the groundworks have been divided into two main phases (7.1 & 7.2 below):

- The topsoil strip within the site compound and in adjacent open areas of proposed groundworks. This phase also removed substantial areas of subsoil and included all the retained finds (Appendices I-III).
- The subsequent deeper excavation of the storage chamber/ pumping station and new pipe trench, in areas of previous topsoil stripping and in the adjacent roads (Corkscrew Hill & Addington Road). This section has been further subdivided into six areas (7.2.1 *etc.*), on the basis of location and archaeological results.

7.1 The preparatory works and topsoil strip (*Figures 7 & 8*)

As described above (6.2) machine stripping of turf and topsoil took place within the site compound and adjacent areas, to a maximum depth of *c* 300mm. The stripped surface area was generally quite level, at about 64.2m to 65.0m OD, with the highest points recorded towards the adjacent roads.

The compound construction also involved the erection of a solid perimeter hoarding, with over a hundred post pits averaging 0.5m deep (Figure 8 *top*). However, these excavations were very small in plan and did not add anything to the overall picture.

The deposits that were removed by stripping were generally quite consistent across the site, a dark grey-brown silty sand topsoil at the uppermost level merging to a mid to lighter brown subsoil with more frequent pebbles. Although there was a distinction between these horizons both were evidently reworked, and both produced finds of modern and earlier date without obvious differentiation (see below 7.1.1). There were also occasional chalk flecks, which may derive naturally or from agriculture. It is likely that the area was cultivated in the past, prior to the development of the playing fields in the first half of the 20th century (4.4 & 4.5 above). It is understood that further disturbance occurred a few years ago consequent upon flooding and returfing of this area.

The only exception to the simple soil profile described above was in two areas of modern disturbance or made ground. The first of these was found across the site entrance, where ground had been built up along the line of Corkscrew Hill; darker and more humic material here also reflecting root action from the former roadside hedge. Recent deposits with much fragmentary chalk were also encountered at the southern limit of the stripped area, close to Addington Road and apparently associated with previous service trenching.

Outside these areas of localised disturbance and made ground the exposed surface was quite clean, although its composition did change across the site. Within the northern part of the compound and also to the south the soil strip typically exposed a light brown silty sand with variable quantities of pebbles and gravel, which can be taken to represent the top of the underlying natural River Terrace (Kempton Park Gravel). However, within the central area exposed deposits tended to less stony and more silty. This phenomenon is discussed in more detail below (7.2.2, Area 4).

Although the topsoil strip revealed no significant features or deposits metal detecting during this phase did produce a number of artefacts, of Roman to modern date. These were found quite randomly across the site, and as noted above were not differentiated by stratigraphic level or associated deposit.

Not all the metal finds were retained but the more interesting and/or dateable were examined, either in-house or by a specialist, and are briefly summarised below. More detailed assessments are also given in Appendices I to III.

There were no other finds from the topsoil strip, apart from occasional fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material (brick, tile and occasional pipe), and very rarely sherds of recent pottery. A few pieces of coal were also noted within the southern part of the site. These items tended to be in the uppermost level of the soil profile, and most obviously in modern made ground. There was no prehistoric material, and no finds of any type dating between the Roman and late medieval periods.

7.1.1 The metal finds (*Figures 9 to 13 & Appendices I to III*)

Metal detecting of removed spoil and of exposed surfaces produced a number of finds which were retained for further study, of Roman to modern date.

Earlier finds included seven Roman coins of later 3rd to 4th century date and a number of small items of late 15th to 18th century date. There were several copper alloy mounts and buckles, as well as a clipped Elizabethan silver penny, a 17th or 18th century lead token and two 18th century coins.

There were also a range of more recent finds, including pre-decimal currency, tokens, and military buttons and badges. A few items are of local interest, for example the 'Military Seminary' gilt brass button from the East India Company academy at Addiscombe House. The cap badges – one local, the other from a Scottish regiment – may reflect units that were stationed nearby.

7.2 The deeper excavations (*Figure 14*)

Deeper excavation works on the storage chamber, smaller pumping station and pipe trench took place at various stages between mid July and November 2005.

7.2.1 The storage chamber and pumping station (*Figure 15, Area 1; Figure 16*)

The storage chamber excavation covered an area some 18.8m in diameter, the topsoil strip having already removed turf and much of the developed soil profile. The clean natural deposit – slightly silty sand with occasional to moderate medium/fine flints and occasional chalk flecks – was exposed at a depth of about 280mm below the previous ground surface.

The natural became more gravelly with depth, ultimately being replaced by mixed pebbles and gravel in a compact clayey/sandy silt matrix. This change took place almost immediately on the western side of the excavation, but the thickness of the silty sand increased to the north to about 0.5m and to the east to a maximum of *c* 1.2m.

The natural gravel exposed in the storage chamber became coarser and more sandy with further excavation, but between 3.6m and 5.0m below ground level gave way to a lighter-coloured deposit mixed with fragmentary and decayed chalk. At c 6m to 7m the chalk became predominant, although still fragmented and unstructured – presumably the result of processes during at the end of the last Ice Age. These characteristics persisted to a depth of at least 10m to 11m, typically with lumps of fractured chalk up to c 350mm and occasional flint nodules in a matrix of decayed chalk and silt.

The smaller pumping station was excavated immediately to the southeast of the storage chamber and after the main construction. The rectangular construction cut was about 3.5m by nearly 5m in plan and 3m deep, and exposed a similar sequence to that noted above. The only contrast was at the uppermost level, where deposits to the east included recent made ground embanking and raising the level of the adjacent road (Corkscrew Hill).

7.2.2 The pipe trench (*Figure 15, Areas 2 to 6; Figures 17 to 20*)

Area 2

Initial excavation of the pipe trench took place on Corkscrew Hill, starting at a 3m square pit just outside the site entrance and working northwards. The trench itself was just over 1.0m wide and some 2.4m deep, and ran close to the western kerb line before crossing the road close to its northern extremity. Over this distance the road level itself rose by approximately 1.0m.

The exposed sequence of deposits was fairly straightforward. At the southern end there was about 0.9m of recent made ground, a feature already noted in relation to the topsoil strip and pumping station works (*cf.* 7.1 & 7.2.1 above). This reflects a general raising of the road surface at this point – presumably to level out the gradient. The made ground overlay a thin and somewhat disturbed layer of darker silty material, presumably a remnant land surface, and thereafter natural silty sand silt and gravel (including some quite large flint nodules) at a depth of c 1.35m.

Further to the north the depth of made ground decreased slightly (broadly in line with the gradual topographic rise) although still apparent as a layer of mixed silty gravel and subsequently darker more homogeneous silt. In this area the deposit frequently seemed to directly overlie natural sandy gravel, with no evidence for a buried land surface. However, there was occasional evidence for the latter as a thin, rather disturbed (?truncated) layer of darker silty material. Towards the northern limit of excavation the ground was heavily disturbed by modern services.

Area 3

A relatively short section of pipe trench coming through the site entrance from Corkscrew Hill, and turning north and south to join up with the storage chamber and to continue southward towards Addington Road.

Observations here were broadly similar to those in the adjacent excavations, with a substantial deposit of recent made ground towards Corkscrew Hill – once again including a band of much darker soil with frequent roots that reflected the line of the

previous roadside hedge. To the west a sterile and firm sandy silt deposit some 400mm thick was exposed almost directly below the previous level of topsoil stripping, in turn overlying natural silty sand and gravel. This sequence continued southwards into Area 4 and is more fully described below as contexts [3] and [9].

Area 4

Some 32m of trenching, just over 1m wide and some 1.65m to 1.80m deep, running parallel with and some 15m west of Corkscrew Hill. This proved to be by far the most significant area of deeper excavation: consequently individual deposits have been given context numbers, although in general they did not produce any finds. These are described in detail in the table below and are illustrated in section on Figure 19.

Context	Description	Interpretation
1	Dark grey-brown silty sand with scattered pebbles	Modern topsoil
2	Mid brown sandy silt, becoming lighter to base & in places merging into [3]	Reworked subsoil
3	Firm, light brown fine sandy silt. Occasional mainly fine flints/pebbles & a few chalk flecks. To N. becomes darker & more clayey to base	Probable colluvium or hillwash deposit
4	Medium-fine gravel in fairly dark brown-grey sandy silt matrix	Uppermost fill of [7]
5	Coarser gravel than above in mid-light brown silty sand. To N. becomes more silty with fewer & finer pebbles, then more stony & merges into [4]	Fill of [7]
6	Very firm fine waterlaid silt, dark grey with brown mottles & occasional pebbles/larger flint nodules. Slightly lighter with sandy lenses to N.	Fill of [7]. Not bottomed in excavation
7	Broad & fairly shallow-sided cut into natural deposit [9], aligned approx. E-W	Easterly flowing stream channel. Not bottomed in excavation
8	Medium-fine gravel & some larger flint nodules in mid to dark grey brown slightly silty sand. Clearer to north of [7]; patchy to south	Buried land surface on either side of stream, upper level possibly truncated
9	Medium to fine gravel in firm light brown slightly silty sand. Occasional larger flint nodules & becoming more orange-brown with depth	Natural River Terrace Deposit (Kempton Park Gravel)

Table describing recorded contexts in Area 4

The pipe trench in this area cut approximately at right angles though the line and upper fills of a buried watercourse, which clearly followed the base of the valley from west to east. The existence of this feature has already been suggested, in relation to Nicholas Lane's map of 1632 as well as the naming of adjacent fields even in the 19th century (*cf.* Figure 3 and para 4.4 above).

The main body of the stream channel (context [7]) was some 15m wide, and the full extent nearer 20m. These figures may be slightly exaggerated if the section obtained

is oblique rather than at right angles, although there was no evidence of this in plan or from the opposing trench section.

Either side of the channel (and particularly to the north) the natural gravel was overlain by a darker and more silty deposit some 200mm thick [8]. This was not observed elsewhere on site (the deposit below made ground on Corkscrew Hill being far more recent) but appears to be a remnant of a buried land surface.

The base of the channel cut [7] was not exposed, but depth from the contemporary land surface is likely to be at least 2m – and possibly much greater. The lowest recorded fill was an homogenous and apparently sterile waterlaid silt [6], which was recorded in plan over a distance of nearly 10m. This was overlain by layers of fine to fairly coarse gravel and pebbles in mixed sandy silt [4] and [5]. It is assumed that these latter deposits were washed into the channel by erosion of slightly higher land to the north and south.

None of the channel fills produced any environmental evidence (for example organic remains or molluscs), nor were there any conclusive finds – although it is possible that the 17th century copper alloy mount <15> (Figure 12) originated from excavation in this area.

The upper fill [4] and adjacent land surfaces [8] were sealed by a consistent layer of fine sandy silt some 300mm to 400mm thick [3]. This appears to be a hillwash or colluvial deposit, and although not directly dated is suggested by the historic map evidence to be mid 17th to 18th century date. However, its character – homogeneous, light-coloured and sterile – suggests that it may have formed over a fairly short period of time.

The uppermost levels in Area 4 consisted of a simple profile of topsoil grading into subsoil, together some 250mm to 300mm thick. As elsewhere this was largely removed during the preliminary stripping operation.

Area 5

A further length of just over 30m of trenching, to the south of the buried stream course and up to 2m deep. There was no evidence here for the buried land surface [8] – or even a truncated subsoil – overlying the natural silty sand and gravel. However the later hillwash deposit [3] could be traced, albeit thinning as the surface of the natural gravel rose to the south – about half way along this section it was some 250mm thick.

Area 6

The final and southernmost section of pipe trench showed considerable evidence for ground disturbance, probably mainly from existing services following the line of Addington Road. Natural gravel was frequently truncated, and at the northern end of Area 6 modern backfill continued below the base of the present excavation at a depth of 1.8m.

The pipe trench in this area was also cut directly from the land surface, so deposits were not exposed within a wider area stripped of topsoil.

8. Assessment of the results

The archaeological fieldwork provided an opportunity to address the site-specific objectives that were defined within the preliminary *Written Scheme* (5 above). The responses are outlined below:

- *Is there any evidence for prehistoric activity, and what is the stratigraphic context and date range?*

There was no evidence for any prehistoric activity, nor were any residual artefacts recovered. In particular, there was no sign of burnt flint – a not infrequent feature of prehistoric activity in the vicinity of a watercourse.

- *Is there any evidence for Roman activity (occupation or agriculture)? Can any features be related to the projected road line?*

There was some evidence for Roman activity, in the form of seven copper alloy coins of later third to later fourth century date. This is also supported by reports of previous and more substantial metal detecting finds – of coins and other artefacts – from the site. However, these remains do not obviously relate to either settlement or agriculture: nor were there any other finds, for example pottery or ceramic building material.

- *Is there any evidence for Saxon and/or medieval activity, and can the nature of this be defined. In particular, is there evidence for any early settlement?*

There was no evidence for Saxon or early medieval activity. Potential later medieval evidence was limited to a single copper alloy mount <19> (Figure 11), which is of 15th or early 16th century date.

- *What evidence is there for post-medieval land usage and development?*

The only evidence for land use was provided by occasional metal finds from the reworked soil horizons. The investigation produced at least eight finds of 16th to 18th century date, including copper alloy mounts and buckles, a silver coin, a lead token and two copper alloy coins. There were also occasional small fragments of post-medieval brick and tile, plus a few sherds of later 19th or 20th century pottery.

Some of these finds may derive from agriculture – perhaps imported onto the land as a result of manuring – whilst other may derive from simple chance loss. There was no other evidence for post-medieval activity, other than that related to the recreational use of the site since the earlier 20th century.

- *Is there any evidence for the historic stream that is shown crossing the site in the 17th century, and does this include any environmental remains?*

Conclusive evidence for the historic stream was found in the area just to the southeast of the site compound. The feature was at least 15m wide and probably over 2m deep, and appeared to have been naturally backfilled by a mixture of waterlaid silts and subsequent coarser deposits from the adjacent banks.

There were no environmental remains (at least at the excavated level) or other dateable finds, although map evidence indicates that the feature disappeared between the mid 17th and later 18th centuries. In fact infilling may have taken place over a fairly short space of time.

9. Conclusions

The archaeological observation and recording at Sparrow's Den produced several significant results.

- 9.1** Metal detecting during the topsoil strip produced a range of finds, including seven 3rd to 4th century Roman coins, a small assemblage of objects of late 15th to 18th century date, and several more recent items of intrinsic or local interest. Almost all the finds were found within a reworked soil profile that covered the site to a depth of about 300mm, and were not stratigraphically separate.

There were virtually no other finds, apart from occasional post-medieval ceramic building material and recent pottery, and certainly nothing of antiquity. This is despite previous metal detecting finds from the area, which are understood to have included a significant number of Roman coins.

- 9.2** The pipe trench excavation also crossed the line of an infilled stream, running approximately west to east. There were no definite finds from the area but the feature can be identified as a former tributary of the Ravensbourn, which is shown on a map of 1632 but had probably disappeared by the mid 18th century. The buried channel was over 15m wide and at least 2m deep, although not bottomed by the present excavation.

Infilling of the stream seems to have occurred naturally, with fine waterlaid silt deposits overlain by much coarser material that had been eroded from the adjacent banks. The whole area was then sealed to depths of up to 400mm by a fine hillwash or colluvial deposit – a clean and sterile layer that probably formed over quite a short period of time

- 9.3** The evidence for Roman activity is given further significance when taken in conjunction with previous finds on the site – and in relation to the Roman road and Scheduled area, respectively located just to the west and south. However, the lack of ceramic finds would seem to rule out any immediate settlement.

Some form of roadside activity may be suggested, either commercial or votive, and perhaps also associated with the former watercourse. Alternatively the coins could represent part of a widely dispersed 4th century hoard: the investigation of deposits within and over the buried stream channel has shown that considerable natural movement of ground has taken place even in the post-medieval period, and in addition to man-made disturbance.

The presence of the buried stream is also significant in relation to the Roman road, in so far as this suggests the presence of a buried ford or remains of a bridge a short distance to the west of the site and just to the north of Addington Road.

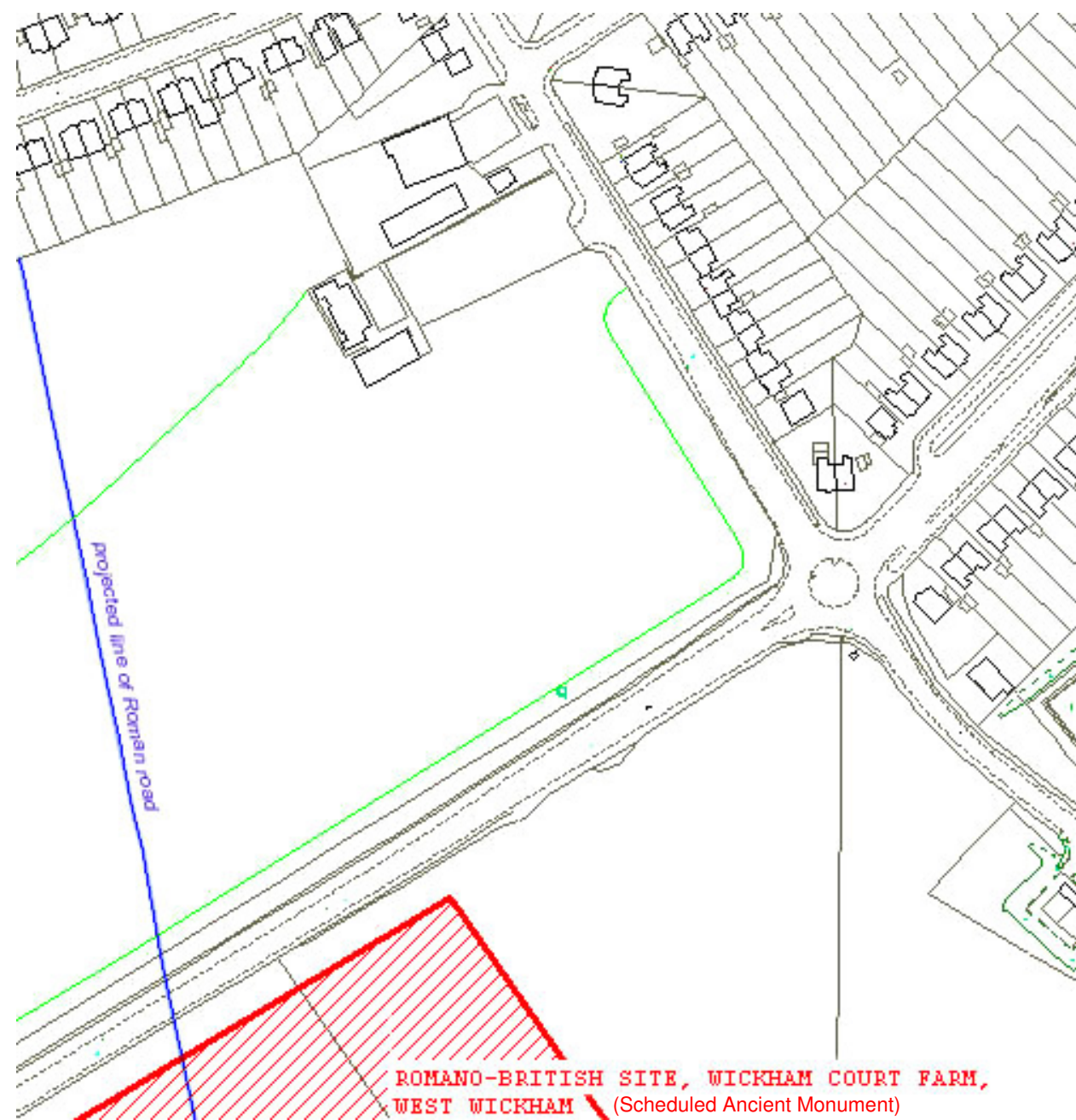


Fig 1 General plan of the area showing the line of the Roman road and boundary of the Wickham Court Farm Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 146)

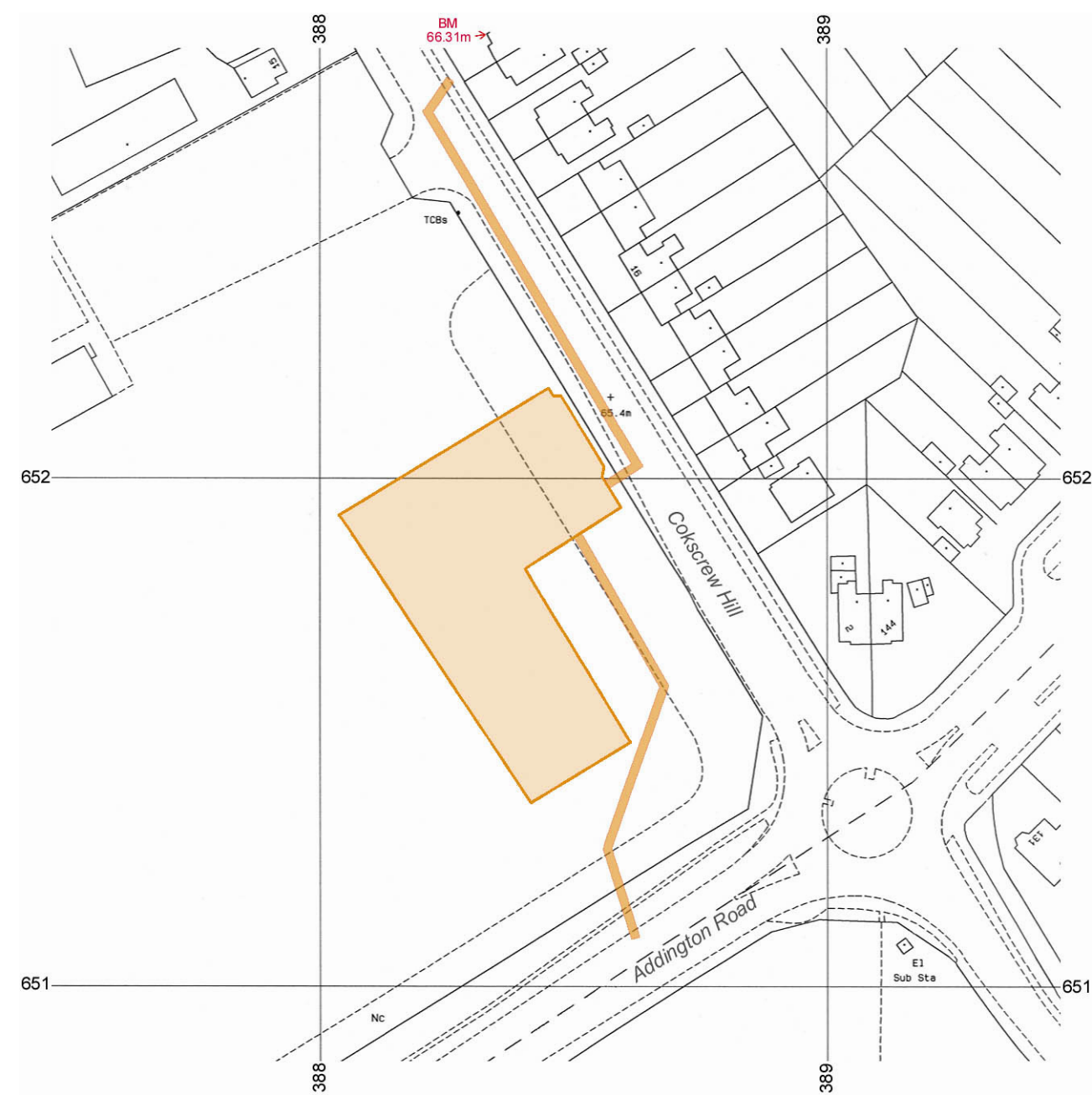


Fig 2 Outline of the site compound and pipe trench in relation to the 2006 Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map

Fig 1 Map base supplied by Thames Water

Figs 1 & 2 reproduced from the Ordnance Survey maps & digital data with permission of the HMSO. ©Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Compass Archaeology Ltd., London SE1 1RQ, licence no. AL 100031317

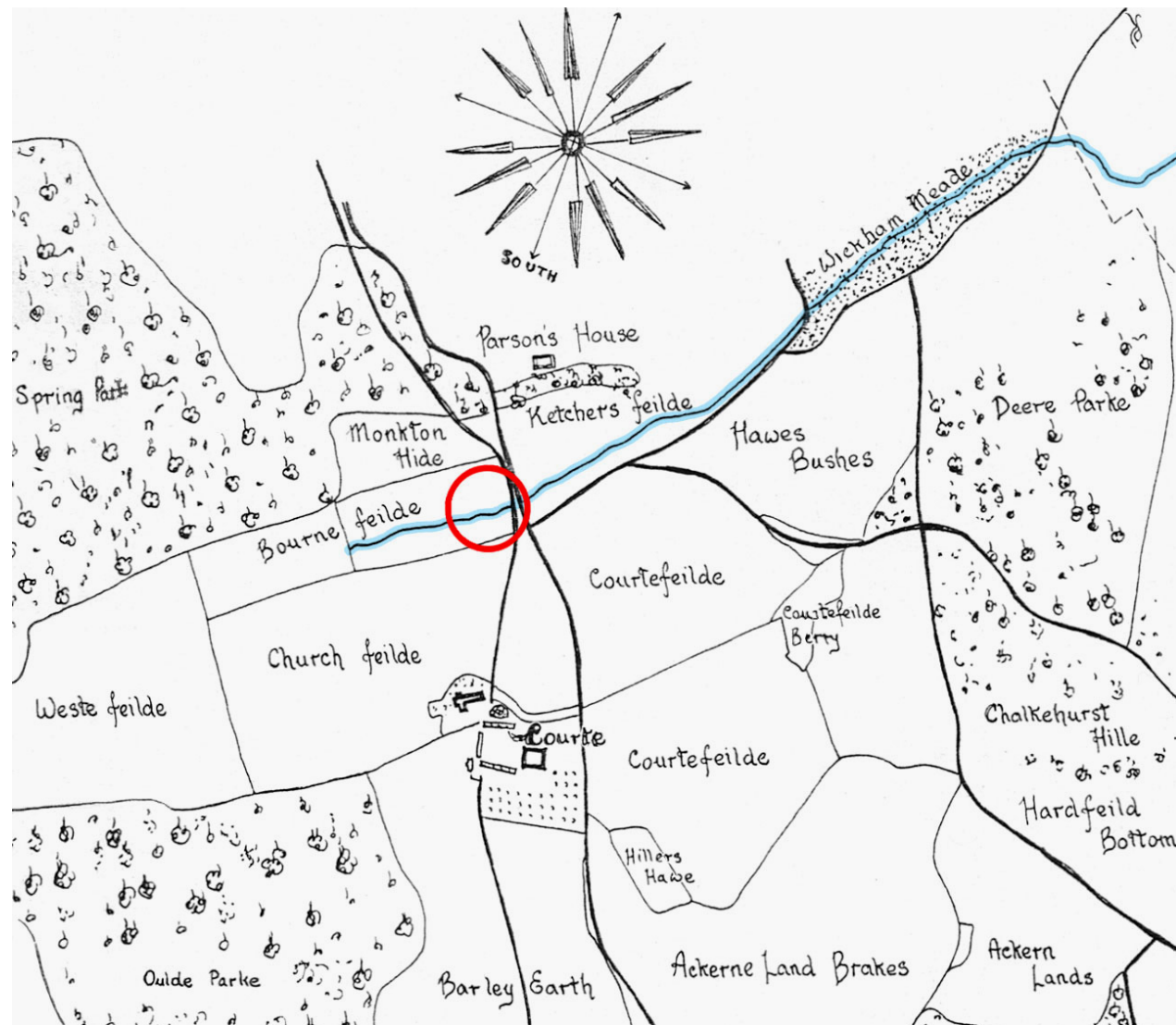


Fig 3 A redrawing of Nicholas Lane's map 1632, showing the approximate site location (circled) and the line of the now-buried stream channel (highlighted in blue)

Based on the reproduction in Knowlden & Walker 1986, 74



Fig 4 Extract from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1819, covering more or less the same area as Figure 3. It appears that by this date the head of the watercourse had retreated to the vicinity of Hayes, in the top right hand corner of this map

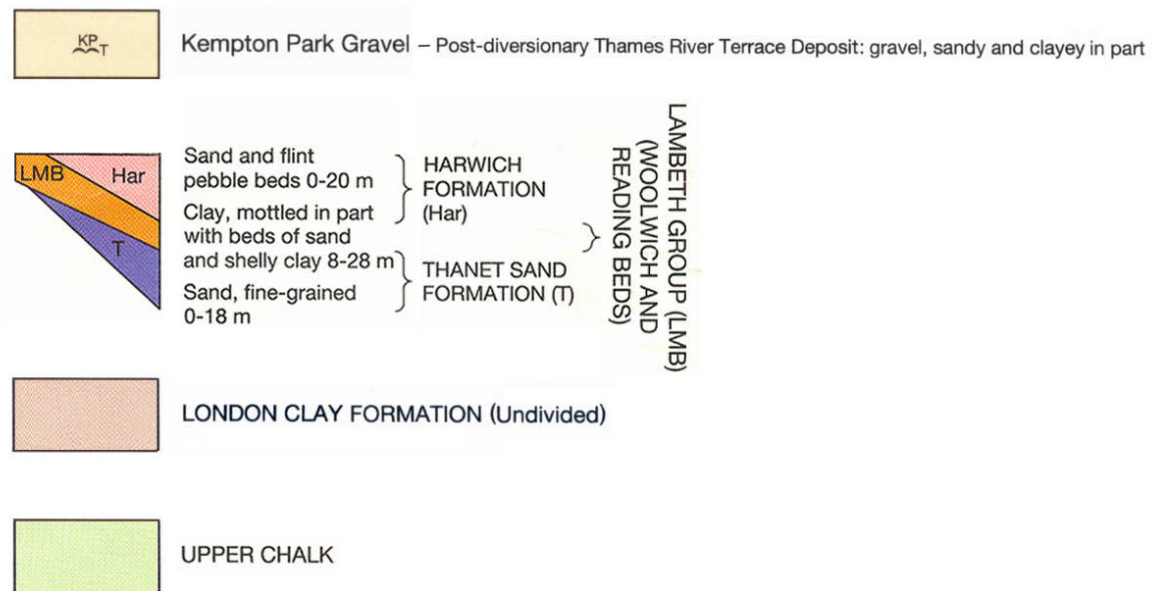
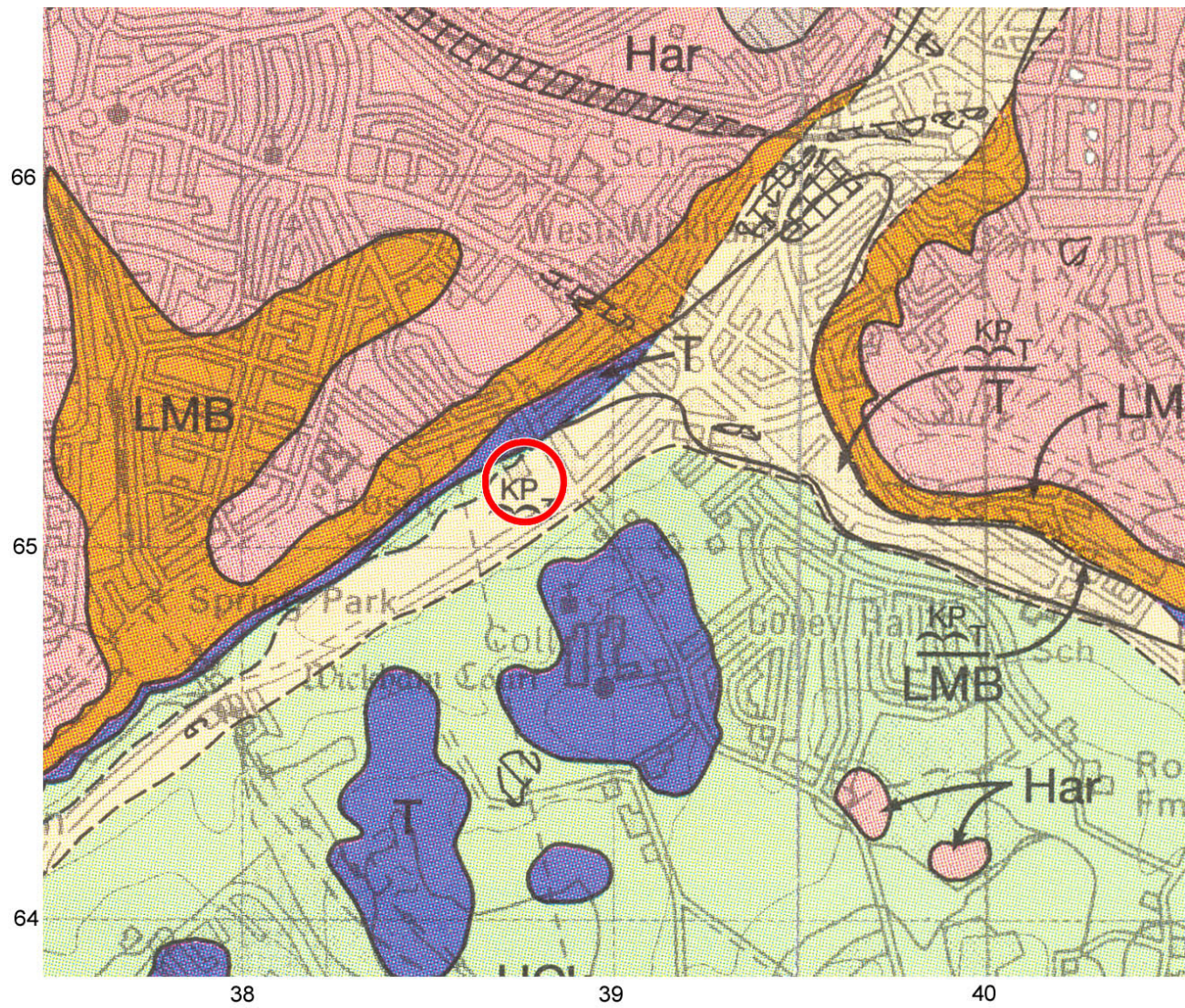


Fig 5 Site location in relation to the Geological Survey, and clearly showing the line of River Terrace Gravel following the former stream channel (BGS 1998)



Fig 6 General view looking southward down Corkscrew Hill. The site is in the centre of the frame, with the Church of St John the Baptist just visible at top right

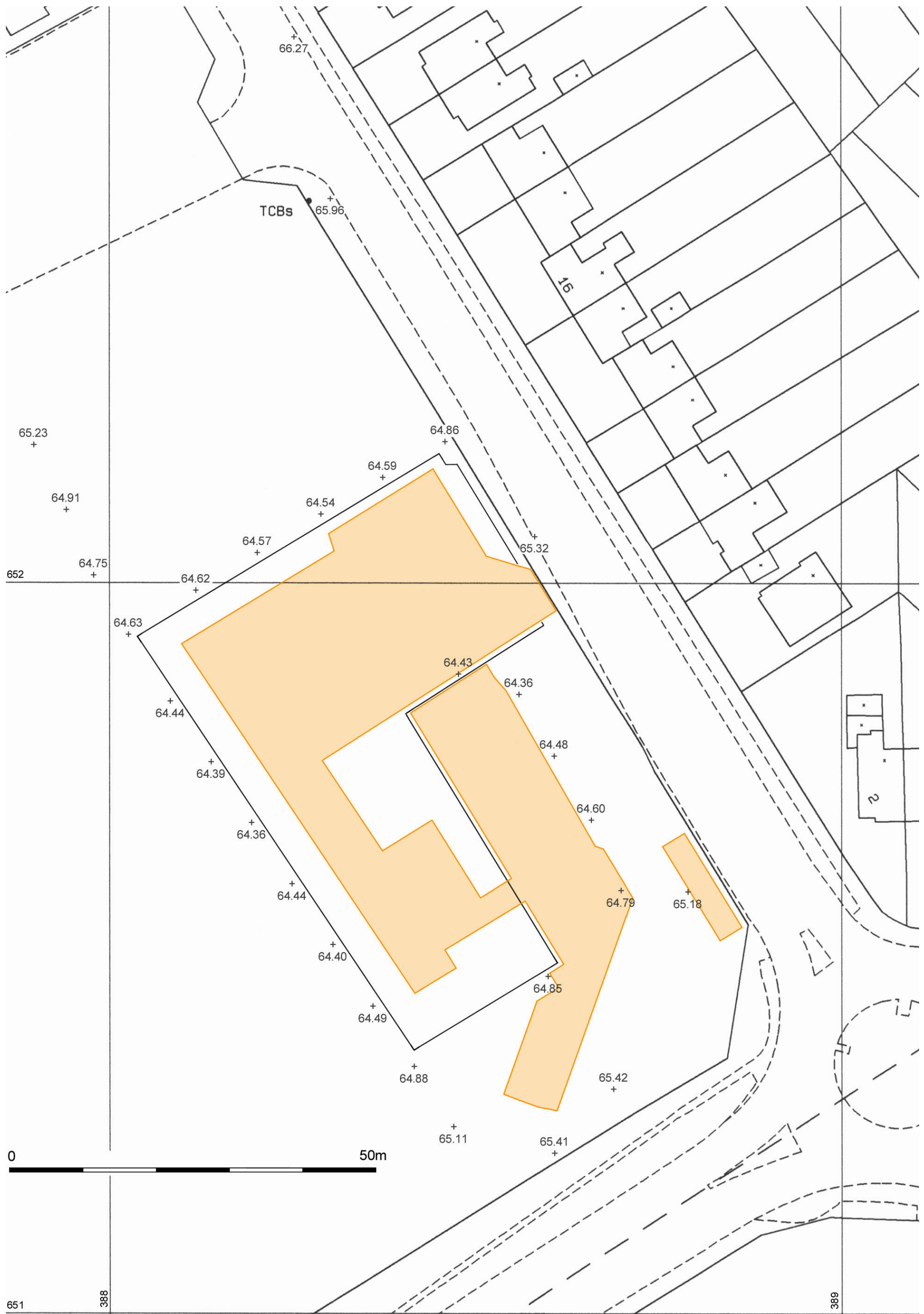
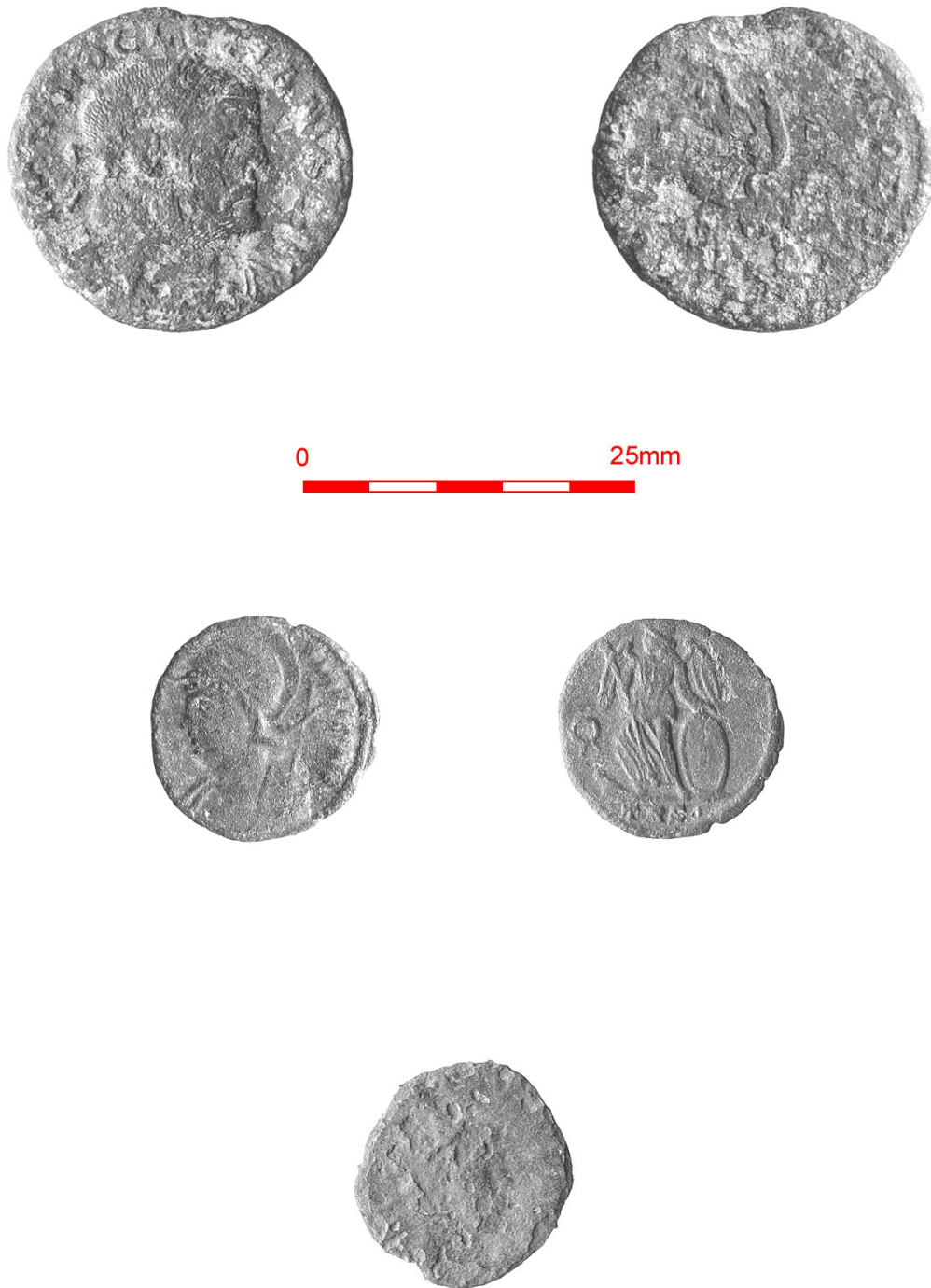


Fig 7 Site plan showing the areas of topsoil stripping (shaded orange) and spot heights on the present ground surface

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Fig 8 Preliminary topsoil stripping: *top* - view from Corkscrew Hill looking west along the valley occupied by Sparrows Den
bottom left - metal detecting in the northeast corner of the site compound and (*right*) in the area to the southeast where the buried stream channel was later exposed



0 25mm

Fig 9 Roman coins from the topsoil strip (x2):

- top* - Diocletian, 284-305 <1>. Emperor's head on obverse, facing right
- centre* - c 330-335 <2>. Helmeted head of Constantinopolis on obverse, facing left;
figure of Victory with sceptre and shield on reverse + mint mark TRS (Trier)
- bottom* - c 270-285 <3>. Very abraded on both sides. Tetricus II irregular



Fig 10 Clipped silver penny <8>, probably of Elizabeth I (x2). The reverse (*right*) depicts the royal arms within a shield, quartered by a long cross



Fig 11 Copper alloy finds (x2): *upper* - mounts <19> and <20>, late 15th to 17th century date
lower - 17th century double-looped buckle <14>



Fig 12 17th century fleuret mount with traces of gilding <15>. Shown x5



Fig 13 Lead seal marked **III** <12> and (below) part of a decorative shoe buckle <14> (shown x2). 17th to 18th century date, both from the topsoil strip

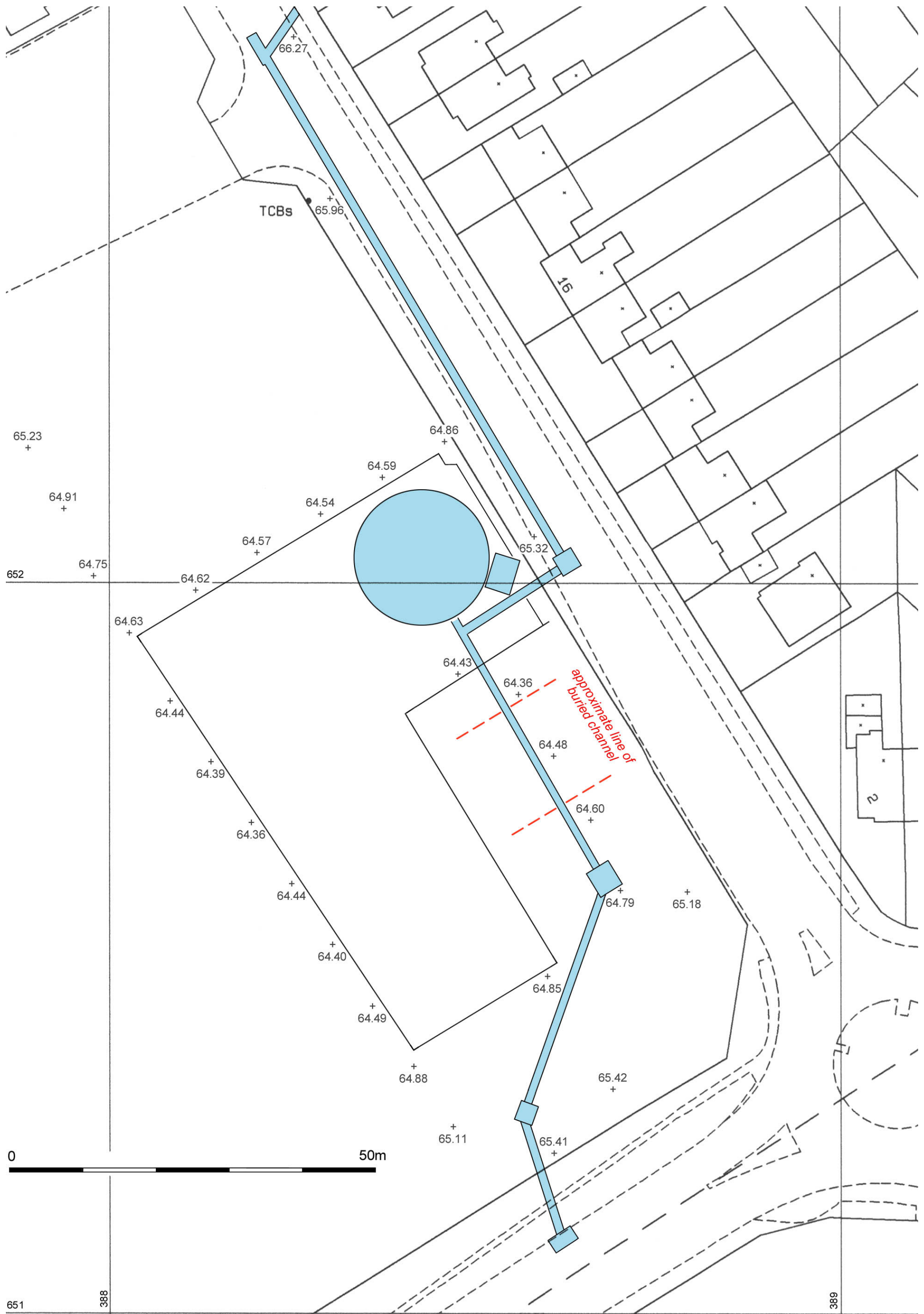


Fig 14 Plan showing areas of deeper excavation for the pipe trench and storage chamber (in blue), plus spot heights on the present ground surface
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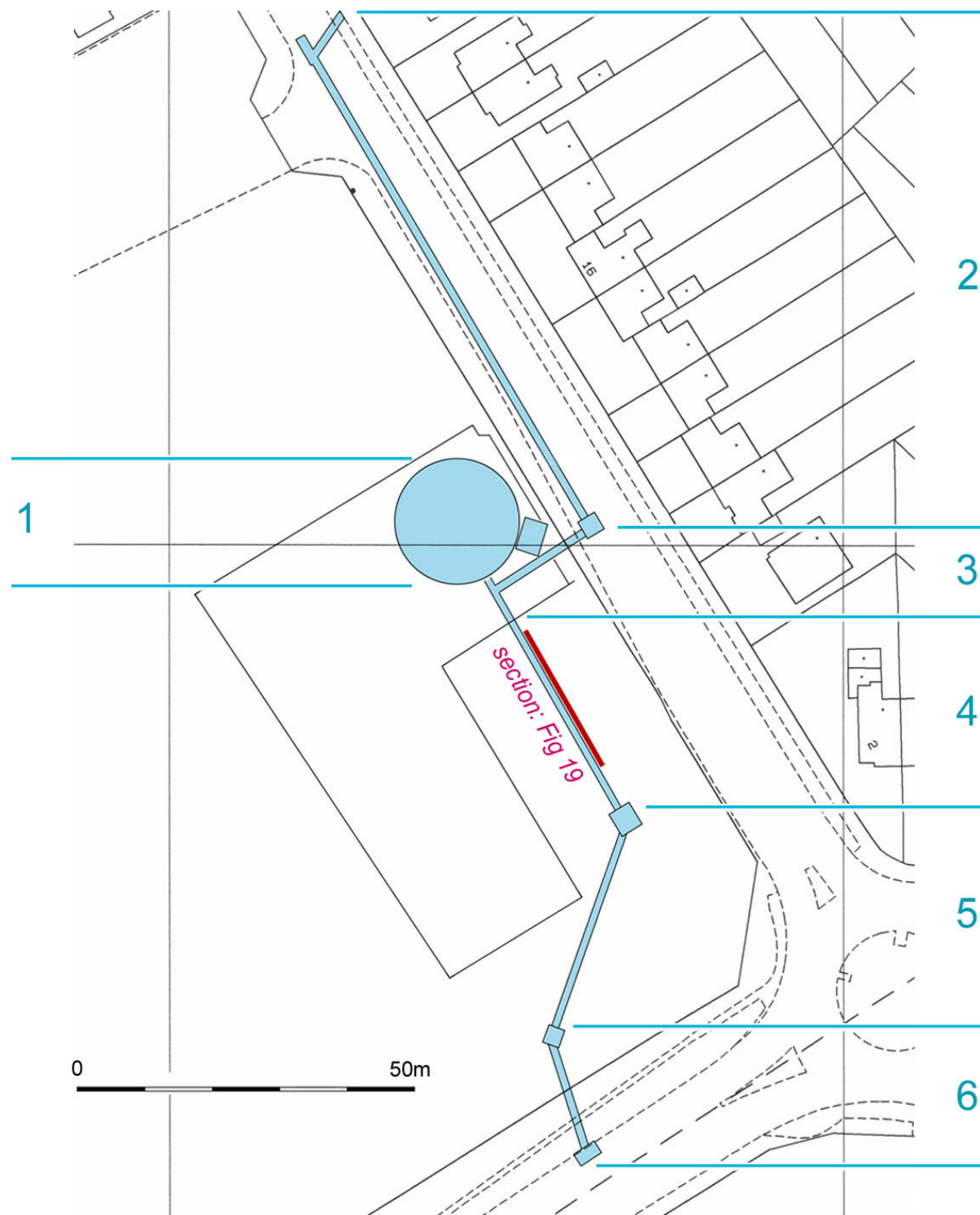


Fig 15 (above) Areas of deeper excavation described in the text (Nos. 1-6) and location of drawn section through the buried watercourse (Figure 19)

Fig 16 (right) Excavation of the storage chamber (Area 1 above):
Top & centre – initial excavation showing shallow soil horizons over natural Terrace Gravel
Bottom – subsequent excavation reaching the top of the decayed chalk bedrock and with the upper part of the sectional concrete retaining wall in place



(1m scale)





Fig 17 Excavation on Corkscrew Hill (Area 2 on Figure 15): *top left* – the northern limit of excavation, showing modern road make-up over a clean silty deposit, with natural gravel at a depth of about 1.25m. *Bottom left* - pit at the southern end of excavation, looking east: the road base overlies *c* 0.9m of recent made ground, with a remnant buried land surface below and natural gravel at a depth of *c* 1.35m. *Right top & bottom* – the main section of pipe trench, general view southeast and detail of the eastern section, both showing recent made ground over disturbed natural gravel (0.5m scale)



Fig 18 Pipe trench excavation in the playing fields (Area 4 on Figure 15): *top left* - section just south of the site compound showing the shallow soil horizon and underlying lighter silty (colluvial) deposit, over a former land surface and natural gravel. *Bottom left* - work in progress. *Top & bottom right* - views of the fills and overlying deposits in the central and northern parts of the buried stream channel [7] (0.5m scale). The darker waterlaid silt [6] is particularly clear at the base of the lower frame

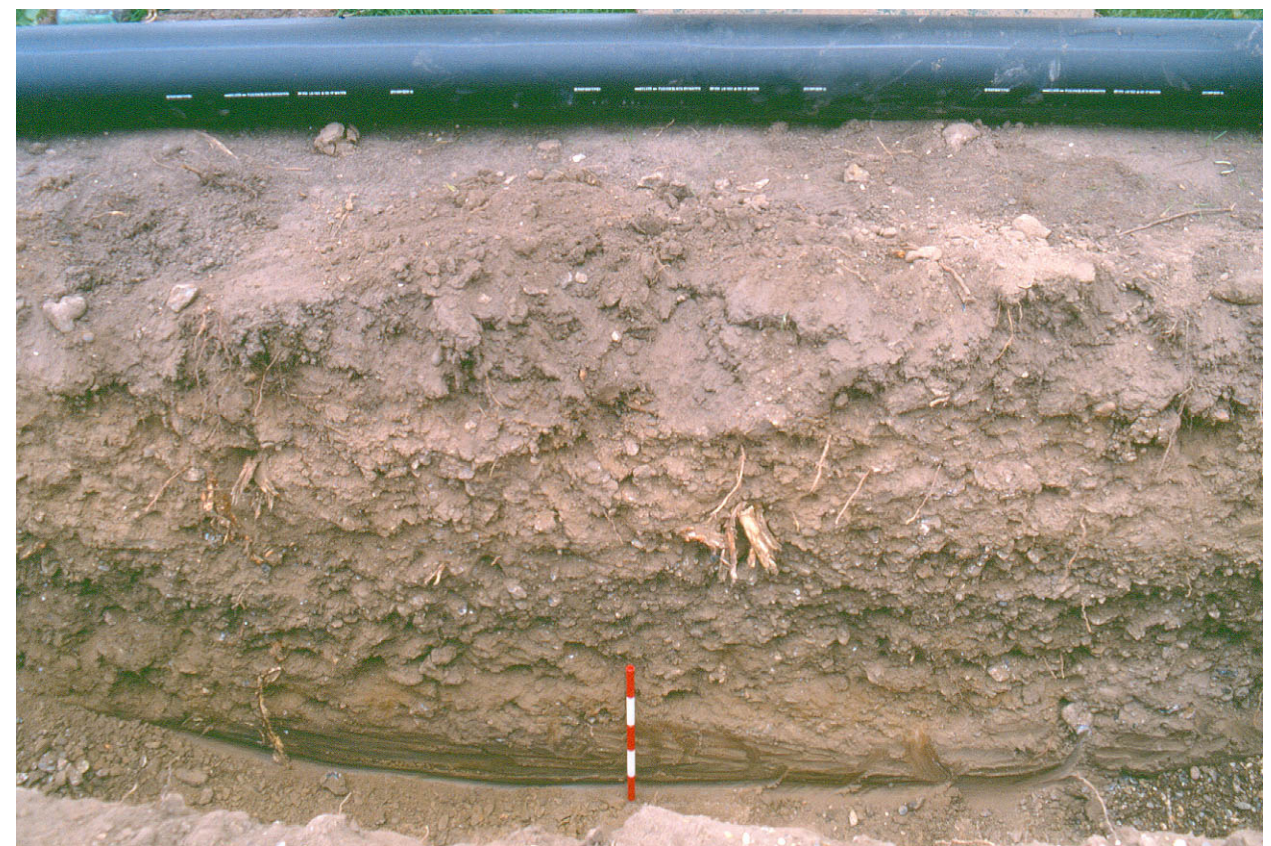
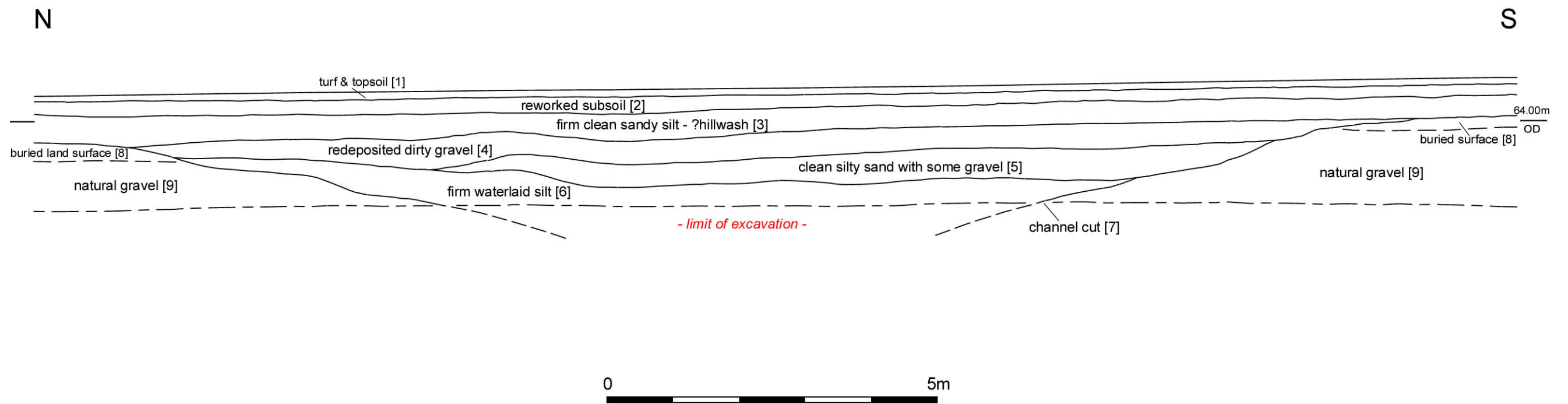


Fig 19 Drawn section through the buried stream channel [7] and overlying deposits (located on Figure 15). Below - views on the southern side of this feature looking north and east, with the waterlaid silt deposit [6] visible at base (0.5m scale)

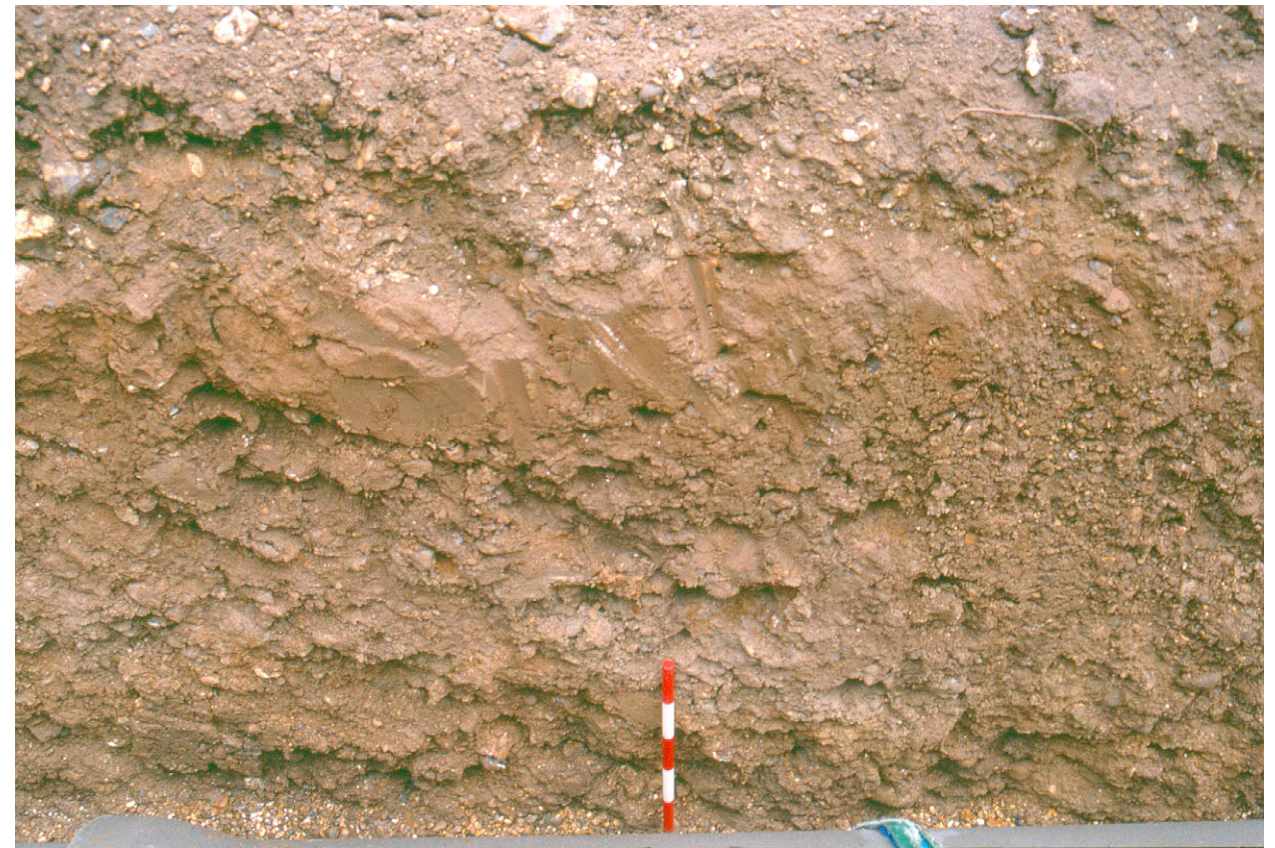


Fig 20 Pipe trench excavation in the southeast corner of the playing fields (Area 5 on Figure 15):

top left – Inspection chamber at the junction of Areas 4 & 5, looking northeast and showing the shallow soil profile and underlying clean silt (colluvial) deposit, overlying natural gravel at the base of 0.5m scale

bottom left – General view of Area 5 looking north

above – Detail view of the southeast-facing section of the pipe trench, showing truncated subsoil and again the underlying silty colluvial deposit sealing the natural gravel (0.5m scale)

APPENDIX I. Specialist Assessment of Metalwork

Nicola Powell
Museum of London Specialist Services

MoLSS ref: Compass archaeology / SND05 Quantification

1. Summary/ Introduction

Twenty-one pieces of metalwork were submitted for assessment. The assemblage is made up of one silver find and two lead artefacts, with the remaining metalwork being copper alloy. All were collected during the watching brief and within the southeast corner of Sparrow's Den playing fields. The finds were hand collected from exposed surfaces and removed spoil during topsoil stripping and after scanning with a metal detector.

In general the finds came from the same reworked soil horizon that covered the playing fields, and therefore do not include separate context numbers. The only possible exceptions to this are the small bronze artefacts <15> and <16>, which were recovered from spoil but *may* derive from one or more of the fills of the former stream channel [7].

No finds were recovered from groundworks in the adjacent roads (along Corkscrew Hill and in the small area on and immediately to the north of Addington Road).

2. Methodology

The metalwork was examined by eye and with the aid of a X10 hand lens. The identification and any further information about each find was then entered onto an Excel spreadsheet (Figure 21). The condition of the metalwork varies greatly, with one of the earliest post-Roman finds, a mount <19>, being bent out of shape but otherwise in good condition. The Roman coins varied widely too. The later post-medieval coins were badly worn and abraded.

The metalwork ranged in date from the Roman to modern periods. Roman finds are represented by seven coins of later third and fourth century date (*eg*, Figure 9). All are in poor condition, although some markedly more fragmentary and worn. No metalwork of Saxon date was recovered.

A sheet copper alloy mount <19> is of medieval or slightly later date, 15th to early 16th century (Figure 11 *left*). It is a cross-crosslet mount, comprising a cross with each arm crossed. It probably had a central lug at the back for attachment, but this is now lost. It would have been applied, using the lug, to strapwork. Use of such mounts was widespread, as an almost identical mount was recovered from Exeter (Read 1995, 114-115, *No.* 728).

A heavily clipped silver coin <8> is probably 16th to early 17th century in date (Figure 10). It is penny-sized and appears to be from the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603), although the obverse (portrait) side is very abraded.

Finds attributable to the 17th century include a copper alloy rectangular double-loop buckle <21> and a fleuret mount <15> with traces of gilding (Figures 11 *lower* & 12). Of similar date is a sheet copper alloy multifoil mount with a central boss <20> (Figure 11 *upper right*).

The two lead finds consist of a 17th or 18th century lead token <12>, uniface with the letters 'I H' (Figure 13), and what may be a second token or small weight <13>. The latter is in poor condition. Part of a fancy shoe buckle <14> was also recovered (Figure 13 *lower*). It is highly decorated, with wavy edges, rectangular openwork and a round boss on the remaining corner. Grooves and incised lines echoing the form of the buckle. It is 18th century in date.

Of similar date are two copper alloy coins <9> and <11>, probably a halfpenny and farthing of George II (1727-60). The coins are in very poor condition, with legends almost entirely lost, although both show the monarch's head and also Britannia on the reverse facing left.

Unidentified finds include a copper alloy fragment with an integral lug-like protrusion <16>. Two further objects <17> and <18> appear very similar in form. Both have bent shanks with trumpet shaped terminals, and are approximately 30mm to 38mm in length. Each may be part of a hook or fitting. Item <10> may be a coin, but is unusually thin, quite smooth and without any obvious marking.

3. Analysis of Potential

The assemblage comprises a disparate group of finds with a wide date range. Many are probably casual losses or recovered as a result of dumping or manuring. However, it is understood that previous metal detecting on the site has uncovered a large number of Roman finds, mainly coins, and this is indicative of more significant activity. The small number of coins recovered during this archaeological intervention add a little to that corpus, and also suggest that there are unlikely to be many further finds from this area.

The dearth of early medieval or Saxon finds is of some interest, as otherwise the date range of finds would suggest the site was in constant use up to the modern period.

4. Significance of data

The finds from the watching brief are principally significant in terms of the site itself. When considered with other work in the immediate area, namely metal detecting, the Roman coins are more significant in relation to the Roman road and Scheduled area to the south. Some form of roadside activity is suggested, which may also be associated with the former watercourse.

5. Revised Research Aims

There are no revised research aims.

Find no.	Material	Type	Diam. (mm)	Length	Width	Weight (gm)	Denom.	Ruler	Date	Note
1	CuA	Coin	24				Nummus	Diocletian	c.290-305	obv. IMP DIOCLETIANUS[---] laur. Cuir. Bust r. Worn and corroded
2	CuA	Coin	16				Nummus	?House of Constantine	c.330-335	Constantinopolis. Crude, possibly irregular (340-350)
3	CuA	Coin	16				Nummus	Tetricus II	c.270-285	Irregular, rev. possibly Fortuna
4	CuA	Coin	15			<1	Nummus	prob. Gallic Empire	c.270-285	No detail, poss. Irregular
5	CuA	Coin	10.5			<1	Nummus	prob. Gallic Empire	c.270-285	No detail, irregular, rev. standing figure
6	CuA	Coin	10.5			<1	Nummus	?House of Constantine	c.340-350	Constantinopolis. Irregular
7	CuA	Coin	-			<1	Nummus	Valentinianic	364-375	Fragmentary, rev. GLORIA ROMANORUM type Emperor and captive
8	Ag	Coin	14			<1			?1558-1603	Penny, heavily clipped, probably of Elizabeth I. 'CIVITAS' only part of legend visible.
9	CuA	Coin	28.5			9			18 th century	Probable half penny of George II, very abraded
10	CuA	Coin?	26.5			5			18 th /19 th century	half penny size, very abraded
11	CuA	Coin	24			4			18 th century	Probable farthing of George II, very abraded
12	Pb	Token?	19.5			4			17 th /18 th century	Uniface with a crossed 'I' and an 'H'.
13	Pb	Token?	16.5			2			Post medieval	Poor condition, token or weight
14	CuA	Buckle		41	9	4			18 th century	Fragment from the side of a square or rectangular shoe buckle. Corner boss with wavy edges to the side and rectangular openwork. Grooves follow edges with rilling.

Find no.	Material	Type	Diam. (mm)	Length	Width	Weight (gm)	Denom.	Ruler	Date	Note
15	CuA	Mount		14	12	2			17th century	Fleuret, with short stem. Traces of gilding. Two lugs, points lost.
16	CuA	?				2			-	Unidentified fragment, with lug
17	CuA	?Hook		29		5			Post medieval	Curved shank with trumpet-like terminal
18	CuA	?Hook		38.5		6			Post medieval	similar to <17> with a round hole in terminal. May have held a fitting, now lost.
19	CuA	Mount	19			<1			1485-1540	Sheet copper alloy mount with turned over edges. Cross-crosslet with square openwork.
20	CuA	Mount	15.5			<1			Post medieval	Sheet copper alloy, domed multifoil with central boss. Central lug now lost.
21	CuA	Buckle		38	22	4			17th century	Cast rectangular double-loop, with a bifid protrusion along both sides and at both ends of central bar.

Fig 21 Details from specialist examination of metal finds <1> to <21>

APPENDIX II. Assessment of conservation requirements of the accessioned metal finds

Liz Goodman
Museum of London Specialist Services

MoLSS ref: Compass/SDN05

1. Quantification

Table 1: Summary of conservation work on the accessioned finds

	Material	No. accessioned	No. conserved	No. to be treated (see below)
Metals	Copper alloy	18 (10 coins)	10 (coins)	0
	Lead	2	0	0
	Silver	1 (coin)	1 (coin)	0

2. Summary/Introduction

The following assessment of conservation needs for the accessioned finds encompasses the requirements for finds analysis, illustration, analytical conservation and long term curation. Work outlined in this document is needed to produce a stable archive in accordance with MAP2 (English Heritage 1992) and the Museum of London's Standards for archive preparation (Museum of London 1999).

3. Methodology

Treatments are carried out under the guiding principles of minimum intervention and reversibility. Whenever possible preventative rather than interventive conservation strategies are implemented. Procedures aim to obtain and retain the maximum archaeological potential of each object: conservators will therefore work closely with finds specialists and archaeologists.

All conserved objects are packed in archive quality materials and stored in suitable environmental conditions. Records of all conservation work are prepared on paper and on the Museum of London collections management system (Multi MIMSY) and stored at the Museum of London.

4. Finds analysis/investigation

The accessioned finds were assessed by visual examination of both the objects and the X-radiographs, and closer examination where necessary was carried out using a binocular microscope at high magnification. The accessioned finds were reviewed with reference to the finds assessments by Nicky Powell (*see Appendix I*).

No metal items were identified as requiring conservation input to prepare them for the find specialists.

5. Work required for illustration/photography

No items were identified as requiring conservation input to prepare them for drawing and photography.

6. Preparation for deposition in the archive

If the material is to be deposited in the LAARC the Museum of London's archive standards (1999) need to be considered. These state that the accessioned finds need to be appropriately packed and stabilised before the site can be accepted into the archive.

At present all of the metal is stored in Stewart boxes with silica gel to maintain a low relative humidity. The material appears to be stable and no interventive conservation work is required.

APPENDIX III. 19th and 20th Century Metalwork

1. Introduction

The large areas that were stripped of turf and soil yielded a range of metal finds in addition to those described above (Appendix I). These were of quite recent date – from the 19th century and more or less up to the present day. The finds were examined, and those of very recent date and no intrinsic significance discarded. However, a number of items were recorded and in some cases retained for further study. These are described below, and except as noted all are made of copper alloy (including post 1947 ‘silver’ coinage).

2. Coinage & tokens

2.1 Pre-decimal British currency

8 farthings	–	1898-1920
10 halfpennies	–	1903-1942 (2 heavily damaged, up to 50% lost)
7 pennies	–	1917-1966 (+ 1 earlier Victorian, worn & not decipherable)
1 threepence piece	–	1945
1 sixpence	–	1944 (silver)
1 shilling	–	1963 (cupro-nickel)
1 florin	–	1948 (“ ”)

2.2 Foreign currency

1 dime, USA	–	1904 (silver, drilled hole so possibly reused as jewellery)
1 2c piece, S Africa	–	1967

2.3 Tokens

Covent Garden 1 shilling (E MERRICK), scalloped edge up to 32mm diam. ?Early 20th century.

Payantake Stores Ltd. A, diam. 22mm. Outlets of this name recorded in Ruislip Manor & Hatch End c 1960-67.

3. Militaria

3.1 Munitions, etc.

Lead musket ball, irregular shape with maximum diameter of 14mm (17th/18th century)

Bullet + cartridge, base of latter stamped 9 M/M and with War Dept. mark

Cartridge, base stamped H4 and 45

Anti-aircraft shrapnel, 12 nose fragments (141gms); 9 from driving band (154 gms).

3.2 Personal items

Royal West Kent Regiment cap badge. Raised 1881 but this item is probably 1921-1961, at the latter date being amalgamated to form the Royal Kent Regiment. Complete, c 44 x 39mm.

Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) cap badge. Another regiment raised in 1881, although this badge is probably of similar date to the above, the last Regular unit being disbanded in 1968. Badly damaged and part lost.

'Military Seminary' gilt brass button. Embossed with a shield containing 3 cannon, surmounted by a lion rampant. Diam. 15mm. This relates to the military academy set up by the East India Company at Addiscombe House in 1809 for the training of artillery and engineering officers. The Seminary was closed in 1861 in the aftermath of the Indian Mutiny.

British Army General Service button. Bearing Royal Arms and inscription *Dieu et mon droit*. Diam. 17mm. Probably pre-1939.

4. Miscellaneous items

LB & SC (London Brighton & South Coast) Railway button. Diam. 24mm. The company operated between 1846 and 1922, when it was amalgamated, but this item is probably pre-1911. The nearest station appears to have been Selsdon, operated jointly with the South Eastern Railway.

Lead seal marked Christchurch Meat Co., Canterbury, New Zealand. Diam. c 16mm. This business is recorded between 1898-1910.

Lead seal: Sutton and Sons. Reading, England. Seeds, etc. Diam. up to 23mm. This firm was founded in 1806 and remained in Reading till the early 1960s. The seal probably dates to the latter part of this period.

APPENDIX IV. Other finds

1. Summary

No other finds were retained from the site. Occasional fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material were noted (brick and tile), and there were also a very few sherds of late 19th or 20th century pottery. This material was confined to the upper reworked soil horizons across the site and to areas of recent made ground adjacent to Corkscrew Hill, plus some areas of modern disturbance for previous services within the adjacent roads and just inside the southern boundary of the site. There were no other finds, and in particular nothing from the fills of the buried watercourse [7] (with the *possible* exception of the small metal finds <15> and <16>).

2. Potential significance

One other point can be made. In view of the quantity of Roman coinage, *etc.*, previously recovered by metal detectorists it is significant that there were no other contemporary finds, for example pottery or building material. This suggests that activity was not related to an established settlement, and that one possibility is a votive deposit of metalwork in open land or perhaps adjacent to an open watercourse. However, an alternative may simply be a widely dispersed hoard.

APPENDIX V. Oasis Data Collection Form

OASIS ID: compassa1-30718

Project details

Project name	CORKSCREW HILL and SPARROW'S DEN PLAYING FIELDS, WEST WICKHAM
Short description of the project	Observation and metal detecting took place during groundworks some 200m to the east of a Roman road, and close to a Scheduled Romano-British site. Stripping of reworked soil horizons to a maximum depth of 300mm yielded a range of metal finds: many were quite recent (pre- and post-decimal currency, shrapnel, etc.) but there were also seven Roman coins (c later 3rd to mid 4th century) and several artefacts of late 15th to 18th century date. Apart from this there were very few finds, and no ceramic or other material of early date. In many areas the soil strip exposed natural gravel. However, one section of deeper pipe trench revealed an infilled stream channel, aligned roughly west-east and over 15m wide. The recorded depth was c 1.3m, although the waterlaid silt and gravel fills were not bottomed. This feature can be identified as a former tributary of the Ravensbourn, shown on a map of 1632 and probably infilled by the mid 18th century. The channel and adjacent surfaces were sealed by a fine sand/silt some 350mm thick (presumably natural hillwash), and thereafter by recent subsoil and topsoil.
Project dates	Start: 15-06-2005 End: 30-11-2005
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	SDN05 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 2 - Leisure and recreational buildings
Monument type	FINDSPOT Post Medieval
Monument type	FINDSPOT Roman
Monument type	STREAM Post Medieval
Significant Finds	COIN Roman
Significant Finds	COIN Post Medieval
Significant Finds	MOUNT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	BUCKLE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	SEAL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	HOOK Post Medieval
Significant Finds	TOKEN Post Medieval
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Response to English Heritage recommendations due to archaeological potential of the area

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON BROMLEY BROMLEY CORKSCREW HILL and SPARROW'S DEN PLAYING FIELDS, WEST WICKHAM, LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY
Postcode	BR4
Study area	2400.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3884 6519 51.3682589272 -0.00525437056997 51 22 05 N 000 00 18 W Point
Height OD	Min: 64.00m Max: 65.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Compass Archaeology
Project brief originator	English Heritage/Department of Environment
Project design originator	Compass Archaeology
Project director/manager	Geoff Potter
Project supervisor	Geoff Potter
Type of sponsor/funding body	Thames Water Utilities
Name of sponsor/funding body	THAMES WATER UTILITIES LTD

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Bromley Museum
Physical Contents	'Metal'
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	Bromley Museum
Paper Contents	'Metal'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Drawing','Photograph','Plan','Report','Unpublished Text'

**Project
bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Corkscrew Hill and Sparrow's Den Playing Fields, West Wickham, London Borough of Bromley, BR4: Archaeological Observation and Recording during Thames Water Engineering Works
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Potter, G
Date	2007
Issuer or publisher	Compass Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Compass Archaeology, 5-7 Southwark Street, London SE1
Description	Text report with photographs, illustrations, maps and plans. Standard format, bound presentation.
Entered by	Geoff Potter (mail@compassarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	22 August 2007

OASIS:

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Appendix VI. London Archaeologist publication summary

Corkscrew Hill / Sparrow's Den Playing Fields, West Wickham. NGR: TQ 3884 6520 (centre). CA (Geoff Potter). Watching brief. June-Nov. 2005. Thames Water Utilities. SDN05

Observation and metal detecting took place during groundworks some 200m to the east of a Roman road, and close to a Scheduled Romano-British site. Stripping of reworked soil horizons to a maximum depth of 300mm yielded a range of metal finds: many were quite recent (pre- & post-decimal currency, shrapnel, *etc.*) but there were also seven Roman coins (*c* later 3rd to mid 4th century) and several artefacts of late 15th to 18th century date. Apart from this there were very few finds, and no ceramic or other material of early date.

In many areas the soil strip exposed natural gravel. However, one section of deeper pipe trench revealed an infilled stream channel, aligned roughly west-east and over 15m wide. The recorded depth was *c* 1.3m, although the waterlaid silt and gravel fills were not bottomed. This feature can be identified as a former tributary of the Ravensbourn, shown on a map of 1632 and probably infilled by the mid 18th century. The channel and adjacent surfaces were sealed by a fine sand/silt some 350mm thick (presumably natural hillwash), and thereafter by recent subsoil and topsoil.

The natural was typically a light brown silty sand with pebbles merging to more gravely material (identified by the Geological Survey as Kempton Park River Terrace), which in turn sealed decayed Upper Chalk.

References

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