

Archaeological Evaluation 18-26 Russell Hill Road, Purley, London Borough of Croydon

NGR 530995 162001

(TQ 309 620)

Project No: 4940

Site Code: RSS11

ASE Report No: 2011158

OASIS ID: archaeol6

By Diccon Hart

September 2011

# Archaeological Evaluation 18-26 Russell Hill Road, Purley London Borough of Croydon

NGR 530995 162001 (TQ 309 620)

Planning Reference 10/00813/P

Project No: 4940 Site Code: RSS11

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By Diccon Hart

September 2011

Archaeology South-East
Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex
BN41 1DR

Tel: 01273 426830 Fax: 01273 420866 Email: fau@ucl.ac.uk

#### **Abstract**

Archaeology South East was commissioned by Chartwell Land and New Homes to undertake an archaeological evaluation at 18-26, Russell Hill Road, Purley, London Borough of Croydon, in advance of the development of the site.

A total of five trenches were excavated across the site, to reveal the underlying natural chalk at a maximum height of 107.37m OD in the northwest of the site, falling away to 105.91m OD to the east and 103.58m OD to the south. Extensive prior landscaping of the site has resulted in significant truncation of the underlying natural chalk in the north and west of the site and in these areas survival of any potential archaeological deposits is considered to be minimal. To the south and east of the site, on the other hand, ground raising operations have resulted in the preservation of an archaeological horizon, substantiated by a single undated north-south aligned ditch. This feature is close in position and alignment to the current boundary between two properties and is considered to represent an earlier incarnation of this boundary.

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#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) a division of the University College London (UCL) Institute of Archaeology (IoA) Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), was commissioned by Chartwell Land and New Homes to undertake an archaeological evaluation at 18-26, Russell Hill, Purley, London borough of Croydon, in advance of the redevelopment of the site. The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 530995 162001 and its location is shown in Figure 1.

### 1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 According to the latest data of the British Geological Survey (BGS 2011), the site lies on Lewes Nodular Chalk formation.
- 1.2.2 The site is situated at around 105m OD and comprises the former gardens to the rear of nos. 18-26, Russell Hill. It is bounded to the south, east and west by residential properties and to the north by playing fields associated with the Thomas Moore School.

### 1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Following an appeal by the Chartwell Property Group against an earlier decision by Croydon Borough Council, planning permission was granted for the erection of 11 dwellings, with associated car parking, landscaping and a new access road on the site (Planning Reference 10/00813/P), subject to conditions. Due to the archaeological potential of the site, Mark Stevenson of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS), in his capacity as advisor to Croydon Borough Council recommended that a programme of archaeological work be a condition of permission. Condition 16 of the decision notice therefore stated that

"No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority".

1.3.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) outlining the requirements and scope of this archaeological work was duly prepared by Archaeology South-East (ASE 2011) and approved by GLAAS. All work was carried out in accordance with this document and with the relevant Standards and Guidance papers issued by GLAAS and the Institute for Archaeologists (GLAAS 2009; IfA 2009).

### 1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The aims of the archaeological investigation as set out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* and are herewith reproduced in full below.
  - To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains, with particular reference to burial evidence, within the footprint of the proposed development
  - To determine the survival, extent and minimum depth below modern ground level of any archaeological remains
  - To determine the nature and significance of any archaeological remains
  - To report on the results of the archaeological evaluation

### 1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report details the results of the archaeological work on the site. The work was undertaken on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> August 2011 by Diccon Hart (Senior Archaeologist) and John Cook (Surveyor). Project Management was undertaken by Jon Sygrave (fieldwork) and Jim Stevenson (post-excavation management). The illustrations were prepared by Justin Russell and John Cook.

#### 2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

#### 2.1 Introduction

- The archaeological background of the site was outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2010) and is summarised here.
- 2.1.2 The following information is drawn from a 1 km radius search of the Historic Environment Record (HER) held at GLHER centred on NGR TQ 3050 6150. The results of the HER search are summarised in Appendix 1 with the locations plotted on Figure 1.
- 2.1.3 Several prehistoric findspots of flintwork are recorded within a 1km radius of the site. In addition, an evaluation undertaken at Thomas Moore School found remains of a possible penannular ditch and central pit. These features may represent the remains of an Early Bronze Age Barrow or possibly the remains of an Anglo-Saxon burial tumulus (as the evaluation was situated within an area of a large Anglo-Saxon cemetery; MLO75703).
- An Anglo-Saxon cemetery containing 107 skeletons with grave goods was reputedly found from 1854 onwards on Russell Hill (MLO12399). A second reference, located within Thomas Moore School, refers to a group of 74 skeletons found in 1854-56. In 1974 during school building, a further skeleton was found within a bridleway (MLO12280). This cemetery is reputedly located within the immediate area of the development site, and is of high significance to the planned archaeological programme.
- 2.1.5 An evaluation carried out by Sutton Archaeological Services in 2008 some 130m to the west of the current site, (at 32a Russell Hill) found no archaeological remains.

- 3.1 The methodology comprised the mechanical excavation, under archaeological supervision, of five trial trenches, totalling 120m trenching, as shown in Figure 2. The
  - trenches were excavated through undifferentiated topsoil and made ground in spits of no more than 0.25m until the top of the underlying natural sediments were reached.
- 3.2 Trench locations were scanned using a Cable Avoidance Tool prior to excavation. Excavation was undertaken in spits of no more than 0.10m to the top of the underlying natural substrate, or to the top of archaeological deposits, whichever was higher.
- 3.3 Some revision to trench locations was necessary due to existing site conditions and obstructions. Any significant revisions were made with the agreement of GLAAS.
- 3.4 All deposits were recorded using standard ASE context sheets, with colours recorded using visual inspection. A full digital photographic record of the work was compiled during the course of the fieldwork.
- 3.5 All trenches and spoil heaps were scanned by metal detector.
- 3.6 Trenches were backfilled and compacted by machine but no further reinstatement was undertaken.
- 3.7 The site archive is currently at ASE premises in Portslade but will be submitted to the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) upon completion of the project.

Number of Contexts	17
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	1
Bulk Samples	-
Photographs	25 digital
Bulk finds	-
Registered finds	-
Environmental flots/residue	-

Table 1: Site Archive Quantification

### **4.0 RESULTS** (Figs. 3 - 5)

### 4.1 Natural geology and overburden

- 4.1.1 The natural geology observed during the course of the fieldwork comprised chalk of the Lewes Nodular Formation. This was encountered at a maximum height of 107.37m OD in the northwest of the site, falling away to 105.91m OD to the east and 103.58OD to the south.
- 4.1.2 As a result of extensive landscaping of the site, the overburden sequence varied considerably across the five excavated trenches. To the southwest and the north of the site (Trenches 1, 4 and 5) the surface of the underlying natural chalk had been truncated as a result of terracing into the hillside and here the overburden consisted merely of a thin topsoil horizon measuring between 0.20m and 0.35m in depth. In Trench 5 in particular, the truncation of the underlying natural chalk as a result of terracing operations was in excess of 1.00m in depth.
- 4.1.3 In southeast of the site, on the other hand (Trenches 2 and 3) the ground surface had been artificially raised and here sequences of made ground, sealing an intact subsoil horizon were in evidence, providing a total depth of overburden of up to 1.00m.

### 4.2 Trench 1

4.2.1 Length: 30.00m total Width: 2.00m Depth: 0.40m

Orientation: northwest-southeast/northeast-southwest

Number	Туре	Description	Max. lengt h	Max. width	Max. depth	Max. height (m OD)
1/001	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.23m	106.11m
1/002	Deposit	Natural chalk	Tr.	Tr.	-	105.91m

Table 2: List of Recorded Contexts, Trench 1

#### Summary

- 4.2.2 Natural chalk [1/002] was recorded at a maximum height of 106.11m OD at the northeast end of the trench, falling away to 105.37m OD to the southeast. This was directly overlain by the topsoil horizon [1/001] and the absence of any identifiable subsoil horizon indicates truncation of the underlying natural chalk as a result of terracing.
- 4.2.3 No archaeological features were observed.

#### 4.3 Trench 2

4.3.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 2.00m Depth: 0.60m

Orientation: northwest-southeast

Number	Туре	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth	Max. height (m OD)
2/001	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.30m	106.40m
2/002	Layer	Made ground	19.00m	Tr.	0.20m	106.10m
2/003	Layer	Subsoil horizon	19.00m	Tr.	0.12m	105.90m
2/004	Deposit	Natural chalk	Tr.	Tr.	-	106.10

Table 3: List of Recorded Contexts, Trench 2

### Summary

- 4.3.2 Natural chalk [2/004] was encountered at a maximum height of 106.10m OD at the northwest end of the trench, falling away to 105.35m OD to the southeast. This was sealed by a subsoil horizon of mid yellowish brown silty clay with frequent chalk flecks [2/003], in turn overlain by a layer of made ground [2/002]. These deposits extended over all but the very north-western end of the trench, where the natural chalk was directly overlain by the topsoil horizon [2/001] that capped the sequence.
- 4.3.3 No archaeological features were observed, although several modern tree throws were evident within this trench.

#### 4.4 Trench 3

4.4.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 2.00m Depth: 1.20m

Orientation: northwest-southeast

Number	Туре	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth	Max. height (m OD)
3/001	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.25m	105.78m
3/002	Layer	Made ground	15.40m	Tr.	0.82m	105.53m
3/003	Layer	Subsoil horizon	Tr.	Tr.	0.24m	104.94m
3/004	Deposit	Natural chalk	Tr.	Tr.	•	104.72m
3/005	Fill	Fill of [3/006]	2.00m	0.88m	0.24m	103.98m
3/006	Cut	Ditch cut	2.00m	0.88m	0.33m	103.98m
3/007	Fill	Fill of [3/006]	0.80m	1.00m	0.20m	103.98m

Table 4: List of Recorded Contexts, Trench 3

#### Summary

- 4.4.2 Natural chalk [3/004] was observed at between 104.72m OD at the north-western end of the trench and 103.58m OD at the southeast end. A single north-south aligned ditch was present within this trench, consisting of a steep-sided and flat-bottomed ditch cut [3/006], with a primary fill of mid yellowish brown silty clay [3/007], overlain by a secondary fill of loose chalk rubble [3/005]. No finds were recovered from the feature, which was sealed by the subsoil horizon of the site [3/003].
- 4.4.3 The subsoil horizon was overlain by a thick sequence of made ground [3/002] that

extended across all but the south-western 5.00m of the trench. This was in turn overlain by the topsoil horizon of the site [3/001].

#### 4.5 Trench 4

4.5.1 Length: 30.00m total Width: 2.00m Depth: 0.35m

Orientation: northwest-southeast/southwest-northeast

Number	Туре	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth	Max. height (m OD)
4/001	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.35m	107.67m
4/002	Layer	Natural chalk	Tr.	Tr.	-	107.37m

Table 5: List of Recorded Contexts, Trench 4

### Summary

- 4.5.2 Natural chalk [4/002] was recorded between 107.37m OD at the north-western end of the trench, falling away to 106.30m OD to the southwest and 106.32m OD to the southeast. This was directly overlain by the topsoil sequence of the site [4/001]. The absence of a subsoil horizon indicates prior truncation of the surface of the underlying natural chalk as a result of landscaping of this part of the site.
- 4.5.3 No archaeological features were observed, although several modern tree throws were evident within this trench.

### 4.6 Trench 5

4.6.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 2.00m Depth: 0.30m

Orientation: northwest-southeast

Number	Туре	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth	Max. height (m OD)
5/001	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.30m	105.21m
5/002	Layer	Natural chalk	Tr.	Tr.	•	105.01m

Table 6: List of Recorded Contexts, Trench 5

## Summary

- 4.6.2 Natural chalk [5/002] was encountered at a maximum height of 105.21m OD at the northwest end of the trench. Substantial landscaping of this part of the site had resulted in the reduction of the level of the natural chalk to 103.71m OD to the southeast (see Fig. 5). The natural chalk was directly sealed by the topsoil horizon of the site [5/001] and the absence of any subsoil horizon at the higher end of the trench suggests that even here the surface of the natural chalk had suffered a certain degree of truncation.
- 4.6.3 No archaeological features were observed.

#### 5.0 THE FINDS

**5.1** No finds were recovered during the course of the fieldwork.

#### 6.0 DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Topography and deposit survival

- 6.1.1 Significant prior landscaping of the site was evident in all five of the excavated trenches, almost certainly as a result of the situation of the site on the southern flank of Russell Hill. Attempts to level the various garden plots that comprise the site have resulted in ground reduction in the north and west of the site (Trenches 1, 4 and 5), resulting in substantial truncation of the underlying natural chalk and ground raising operations in the southeast of the site, typified by sequences of made ground that preserve intact subsoil horizons (Trenches 2 and 3).
- 6.1.2 On this basis, it seems reasonable to assume that survival of potential archaeological deposits can be deemed minimal in those areas of the site where ground reduction has already taken place, while those areas of the site subject to ground raising have the potential to preserve archaeological deposits. Given this, it is probably no coincidence that the only archaeological feature exposed during the course of the fieldwork was situated in such an area of artificially raised ground levels.

### 6.2 The archaeological evidence

- 6.2.1 The only archaeological feature encountered during the course of the fieldwork consists of the single, undated, north-south aligned ditch [3/006]. This lies close to the current position and alignment of the boundary between two separate garden plots and probably represents an earlier incarnation of this boundary.
- 6.2.2 The absence of any identifiable elements of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery, known to exist immediately to the north of the site suggests that the cemetery does not extend as far south as the subject site. Admittedly, the extensive landscaping of parts of the site have affected deposit survival but nonetheless, one might expect deep features such as graves to survive all but the most intrusive of landscaping works. The absence of any such features and indeed the absence of any Anglo-Saxon finds strongly suggests not only that the site was peripheral to the cemetery but that the cemetery itself is centred on the current site of the Thomas Moore School, on the very crest of Russell Hill.

### **Bibliography**

ASE. 2011: 18-26, Russell Hill road, Purley, Croydon. CR8 2JA. Archaeological Evaluation Written Scheme of Investigation. Unpub. Method statement

GLAAS 2009: Standards for Archaeological Work. London Region, English Heritage External Consultation Draft

IfA 2009: Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation. http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/node-files/ifa standards field eval.pdf

### Acknowledgements

ASE would like to thank Martyn Avery of Chartwell Land and New Homes for commissioning the work. The advice of Rob Whytehead and Mark Stevenson of GLAAS for their advice and guidance throughout the project is also gratefully acknowledged.

# APPENDIX 1: GREATER LONDON HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD DATA

MonUID	Name	MonType	DateRange	PeriodRang	Finds
MLO9017	RUSSELL HILL	FINDSPOT	500000 BC to 10001 BC	Palaeolithic	FIND UNCLASSIFIED (Palaeolithic)
MLO9005	RUSSELL HILL	FINDSPOT, FINDSPOT	10000 BC to 4001 BC	Mesolithic	FIND UNCLASSIFIED (Mesolithic), AXE (Mesolithic)
MLO10791	BEDDINGTON	FINDSPOT	4000 BC to 2201 BC	Neolithic	LITHIC IMPLEMENT (Neolithic)
MLO19616	RUSSELL HILL	FINDSPOT	4000 BC to 2201 BC	Neolithic	AXE (Neolithic)
MLO8984	PURLEY	FINDSPOT	4000 BC to 2201 BC	Neolithic	CORE (Neolithic)
MLO8986	BEGGARS BUSH	FINDSPOT	4000 BC to 2201 BC	Neolithic	SCRAPER (TOOL) (Neolithic)
MLO23226	PURLEY	FINDSPOT	2200 BC to 701 BC	Bronze Age	AXE (Late Neolithic to Late Bronze Age)
MLO24613	PROMENADE DE VERD UN	FINDSPOT, FINDSPOT	2200 BC to 701 BC	Bronze Age	HOARD (Late Bronze Age), HOARD (Late Neolithic to Late Bronze Age)
MLO75703	Thomas Moore School	DITCH, PIT	2200 BC to 701 BC	Bronze Age	
MLO76249	6 FOXLEY LANE, PURLEY	FINDSPOT	2200 BC to 701 BC	Bronze Age	BURNT FLINT (Bronze Age)
MLO9101	RUSSELL HILL	FINDSPOT	2200 BC to 701 BC	Bronze Age	GOUGE (Late Neolithic to Late Bronze Age)
MLO9102	PURLEY	FINDSPOT	2200 BC to 701 BC	Bronze Age	INGOT (Late Neolithic to Late Bronze Age)
MLO12280	Russell Hill	CEMETERY	410 AD to 1065 AD	Early Medieval/Dark Age	
MLO12399	RUSSELL HILL	CEMETERY	410 AD to 1065 AD	Early Medieval/Dark Age	
MLO82411	RUSSELL HILL SCHOOLS (THOMAS MORE SCHOOL FOR BOYS), MAIN BUILDING	SCHOOL, TRADE SCHOOL	1863 AD	19th Century	
MLO82362	CHURCH OF ST MARK	CHURCH	1910 AD	Modern	
MLO12339	PAMPISFORD RD	CEMETERY	Uknown	Uknown	
MLO13237	EDGEHILL RD SITE OF SCHOOLS	CEMETERY	Uknown	Uknown	

MonUID	Name	MonType	DateRange	PeriodRang	Finds
MLO67676	THOMAS MORE SCHOOL	NEGATIVE EVIDENCE	Uknown	Uknown	
MLO77393	Land between 21 and 23 Highfield Road	NEGATIVE EVIDENCE	Uknown	Uknown	
MLO12315	RUSSELL HILL	NEGATIVE EVIDENCE			
MLO12370	RUSSELL HILL	SETTLEMENT			
MLO12414	RUSSELL HILL	FINDSPOT			
MLO19563	1A WILMOT RD	FINDSPOT			
MLO19617	1A WILMOT RD	FINDSPOT			
MLO4366	5 HILLCREST RD	FINDSPOT			
MLO6652	WOODCOTE PARK	ROAD			
MLO8907	WOODCOTE	FINDSPOT			

#### HER SUMMARY FORM

Site Code	CQM10							
Identification Name and Address	18-26, Russell	18-26, Russell Hill Road, Purley, London Borough of Croydon.						
County, District &/or Borough	London Borough of Croydon							
OS Grid Refs.	530995 16200	530995 162001						
Geology	Lewes Nodula	Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation						
Arch. South-East Project N	Number	4940						
Type of Fieldwork	Eval. ✓	Excav.	Watching Brief	Standing Structure	Survey	Other		
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban <b>√</b>	Deep Urban	Other				
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval. 16-17.08.11	Excav.	WB.	Other				
Sponsor/Client								
Project Manager	Jon Sygrave							
Project Supervisor	Diccon Hart			<u> </u>	<u> </u>			
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB		
	AS	MED	PM	Other: und	ated			

Archaeology South East was commissioned by Chartwell Land and New Homes to undertake an archaeological evaluation at 18-26, Russell Hill Road, Purley, London Borough of Croydon, in advance of the development of the site.

A total of five trenches were excavated across the site, to reveal the underlying natural chalk at a maximum height of 107.37m OD in the northwest of the site, falling away to 105.91m OD to the east and 103.58m OD to the south. Extensive prior landscaping of the site has resulted in significant truncation of the underlying natural chalk in the north and west of the site and in these areas survival of any potential archaeological deposits is considered to be minimal. To the south and east of the site, on the other hand, ground raising operations have resulted in the preservation of an archaeological horizon, substantiated by a single undated north-south aligned ditch. This feature is close in position and alignment to the current boundary between two properties and is considered to represent an earlier incarnation of this boundary.

### **OASIS Summary Form**

OASIS ID: archaeol6-108137

**Project details** 

Project name 18-26 Russell Hill road, Purley, London Borough of Croydon

Short description of the project

Archaeology South East was commissioned by Chartwell Land and New Homes to undertake an archaeological evaluation at 18-26,

Russell Hill Road, Purley, London Borough of Croydon, in advance of the development of the site. A total of five trenches were excavated across the site, to reveal the underlying natural chalk at a maximum height of 107.37m OD in the northwest of the site, falling away to 105.91m OD to the east and 103.58m OD to the south. Extensive prior landscaping of the site has resulted in significant truncation of the underlying natural chalk in the north and west of the site and in these areas survival of any potential archaeological deposits is considered to be minimal. To the south and east of the site, on the other hand, ground raising operations have resulted in the

preservation of an archaeological horizon, substantiated by a single undated north-south aligned ditch. This feature is close in position and alignment to the current boundary between two properties and is considered to represent an earlier incarnation of this boundary.

Project dates Start: 15-08-2011 End: 16-08-2011

Previous/future

work

No / Not known

Any associated project reference

codes

RSS11 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference

codes

4940 - Contracting Unit No.

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Other 5 - Garden

Monument type DITCH None

Significant Finds N/A None

Methods & techniques

'Sample Trenches'

Development type Housing estate

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Position in the planning process

After full determination (eg. As a condition)

**Project location** 

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON CROYDON PURLEY 18-26, Russell Hill Road,

Purley

Postcode CR8 2JA

Study area 3660.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 309 620 51.3414776413 -0.120436262278 51 20 29 N 000 07 13

W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 103.58m Max: 107.37m

**Project creators** 

Name of Organisation

Archaeology South-East

Project brief

originator

GLAAS

Project design

originator

Archaeology South-East

Project

director/manager

Jon Sygrave

Project supervisor Diccon Hart

Type of

sponsor/funding

body

Developer

Name of

sponsor/funding

body

Chartwell Land and New Homes

**Project archives** 

**Physical Archive** 

Exists?

No

Digital Archive

recipient

LAARC

Digital Contents

'Stratigraphic', 'Survey'

Digital Media available

'Images raster / digital photography', 'Images vector', 'Survey', 'Text'

Paper Archive

Exists?

No

Paper Contents

'Stratigraphic'

Paper Media

'Context sheet', 'Plan', 'Report', 'Section', 'Unpublished Text'

#### available

Project bibliography 1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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Author(s)/Editor(s) Hart, D

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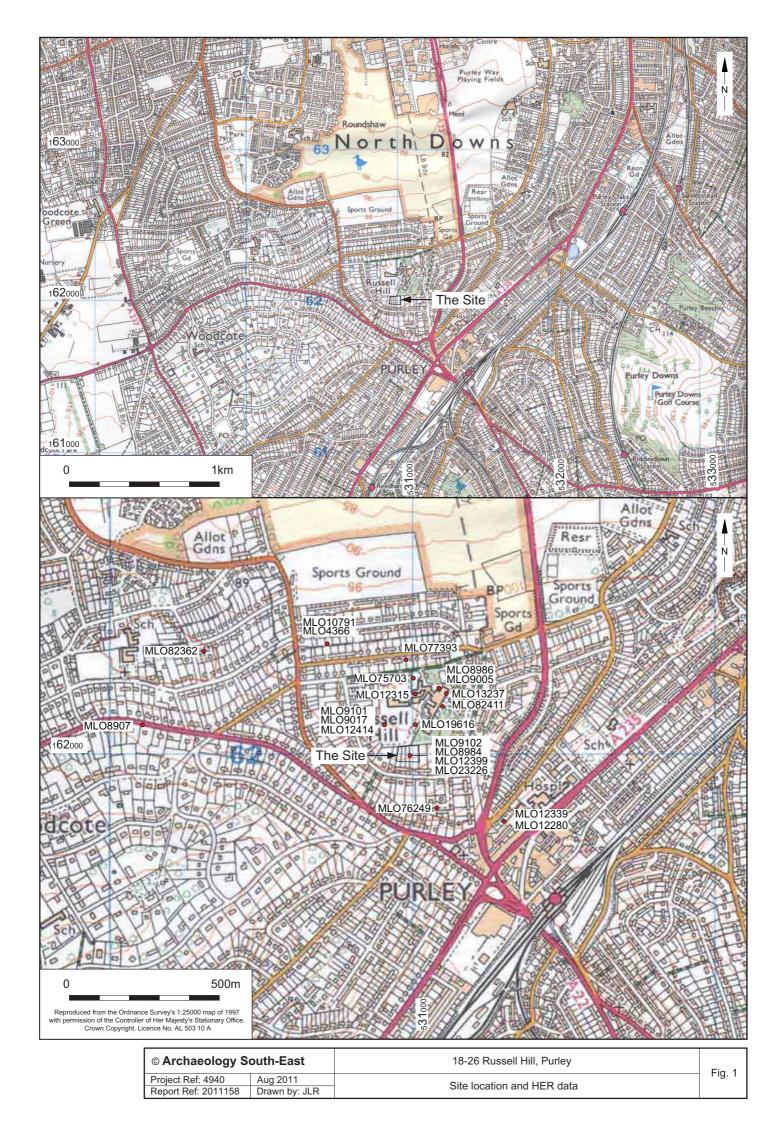
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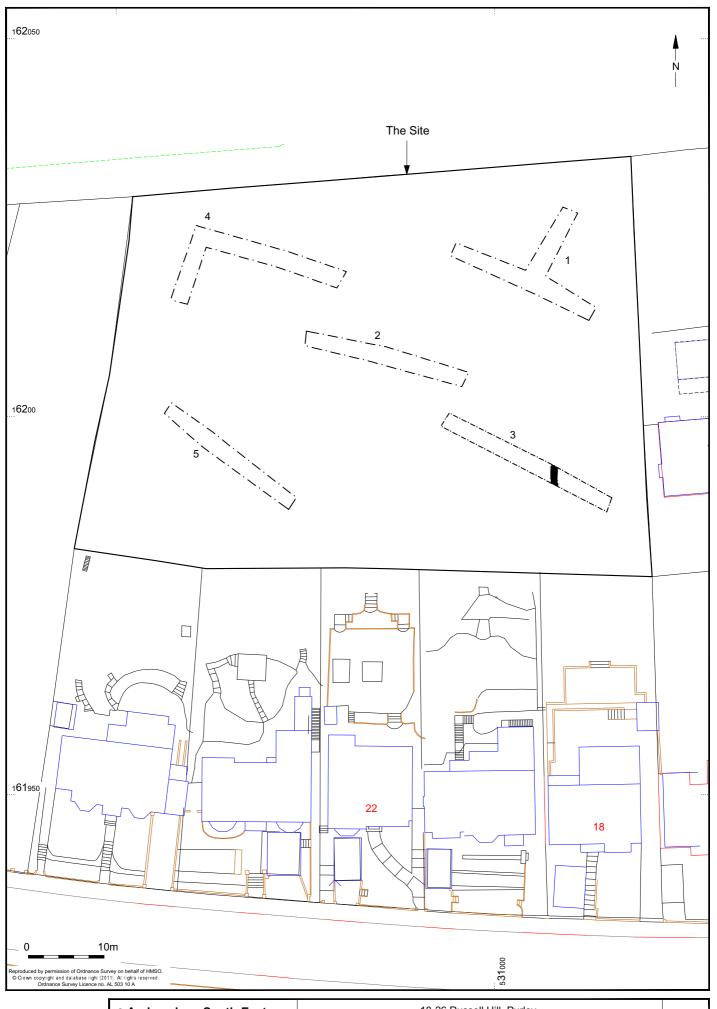
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Description A4 booklet

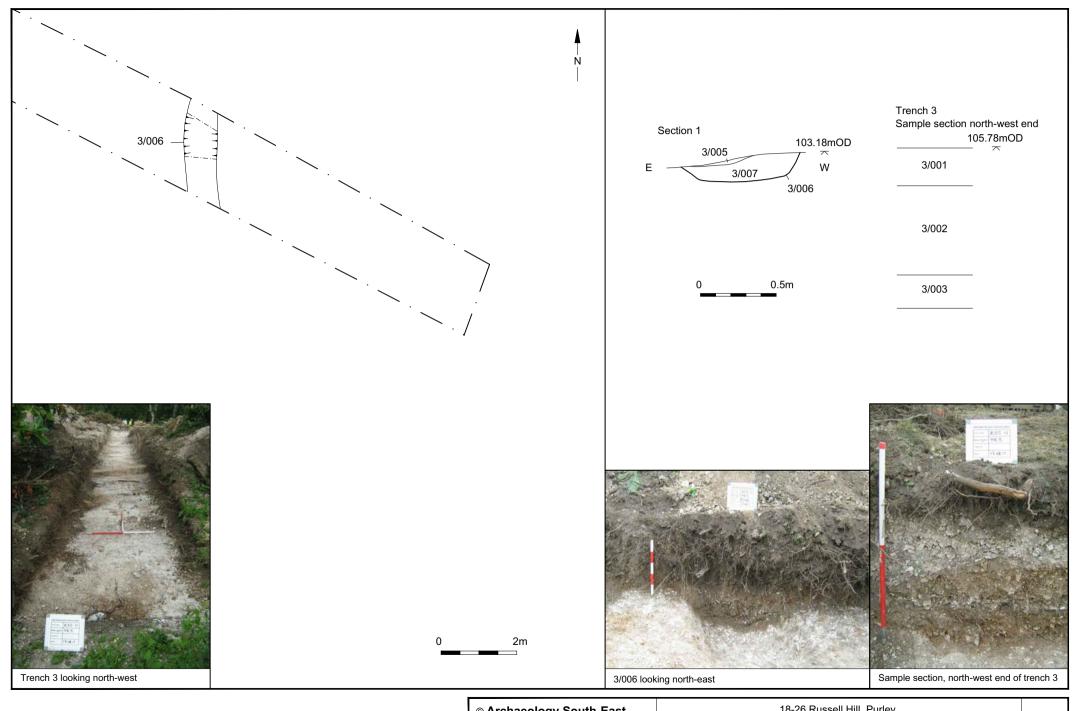
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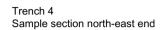




© Archaeology South-East		18-26 Russell Hill, Purley	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 4940	Aug 2011	Trench location	rig. z
Report Ref: 2011158	Drawn by: JLR		



© Archaeology South-East		18-26 Russell Hill, Purley	Fig. 4
Project Ref: 4940	Aug 2011	Trench 3: Plan, sections and photographs	1 ig. <del>1</del>
Report Ref: 2011158	Drawn by: JLR		



106.52mOD

4/001

4/002



Sample section north-east end of trench 4

Trench 5 Sample section south-east end 105.21mOD

5/001

5/002

0.5m







Sample section north-east end of trench 5

Detail of terracing in trench 5

© Archaeology South-East		18-26 Russell Hill, Purley	Fig. 5
Project Ref: 4940	Aug 2011	Trenches 4 and 5: Sample sections and photographs	1 lg. 5
Report Ref: 2011158	Drawn by: JLR		

**Head Office** Units 1 & 2 2 Chapel Place Portslade East Sussex BN41 1DR Tel: +44(0)1273 426830 Fax:+44(0)1273 420866 email: fau@ucl.ac.uk Web: www.archaeologyse.co.uk



London Office Centre for Applied Archaeology Institute of Archaeology University College London 31-34 Gordon Square, London, WC1 0PY Tel: +44(0)20 7679 4778 Fax:+44(0)20 7383 2572 Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/caa

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