

**An Archaeological Evaluation at 399-403 London Road,  
Croydon.**

**NGR 531750 166750**

**Project No. 2391**

**by  
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(with a contribution by Luke Barber)**

**April 2006**

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### **Summary**

*The proposal site was evaluated in late March 2006 on behalf of Milford Group Ltd. Planning permission had been granted for the construction of a four/five storey building comprising 49 residential flats (Planning Reference: 05/04841/P). Four trial trenches were excavated to a cumulative length of 75 metres. Archaeological remains were encountered in Trench 4. The remains of one post medieval pit were discovered as well as a Victorian cellar/basement.*

## *Archaeology South-East*

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*Archaeology South-East is a division of the Field Archaeology Unit, University College London, one of the largest groupings of academic archaeologists in the country. Consequently, Archaeology South-East has access to the conservation, computing and environmental backup of the college, as well as a range of other archaeological services.*

*The Field Archaeology Unit and South Eastern Archaeological Services (which became Archaeology South-East in 1996) were established in 1974 and 1991 respectively. Although field projects have been conducted world-wide, the Field Archaeology Unit retains a special interest in south-east England with the majority of our contract and consultancy work concentrated in Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex, Kent, Greater London and Essex.*

*Based in the local community, the Field Archaeology Unit sees an important part of its work as explaining the results to the broader public. Public lectures, open days, training courses and liaison with local archaeological societies are aspects of its community-based approach.*

*Drawing on experience of the countryside and towns of the south east of England the Unit can give advice and carry out surveys at an early stage in the planning process. By working closely with developers and planning authorities it is possible to incorporate archaeological work into developments with little inconvenience.*

*Archaeology South-East, as part of the Field Archaeology Unit, is a registered organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists and, as such, is required to meet IFA standards.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** Archaeology South-East (a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit) was commissioned by the Milford Group Ltd. to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of the construction of a proposed new residential development comprising 49 new two bedroom flats and four, one bedroom flats with associated parking on the site of 399-403 London Rd, Croydon (NGR 531750 166750) (Fig.1).

**1.2** The site of the proposed development lies within the parish of Croydon. It is bounded to the south by Midhurst Avenue, to the east by London Road and to the west by existing housing.

**1.3** Planning permission has been granted by the London Borough of Croydon for the construction of a four/five storey building (Planning Ref. DC/03/04537/FULL6). Owing to the archaeologically sensitive nature of the area, and after consultation with the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service of English Heritage (GLAAS) (Croydon Borough Council's advisers on archaeological issues) an archaeological condition (Condition No. 18) was attached to this consent requiring a programme of archaeological trial trenching to be implemented at the site prior to development.

**1.4** A Written Scheme of Investigation for the initial evaluation phase was produced by Jon Sygrave of Archaeology South East and approved by Mark Stevenson of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service. This document outlined a strategy for the archaeological evaluation of the site by mechanically excavated trial trenches. The stated objective of the evaluation was to:

*'determine the presence or absence, location, extent, depth, stratigraphical relationships, condition, character, quality, significance, date and origin of any potential archaeological features and/or deposits which may be encountered within the area of the proposed development site.'*

**1.5** The document also outlined the possible character of further archaeological investigations (subject to the results of the initial evaluation), including detailed excavation of revealed archaeological remains, or a watching brief during construction work. Such later work would be subject to further Specifications issued by GLAAS.

**1.6** The on-site archaeological work was carried out by Paul Riccoboni (Field Officer) and Elizabeth Chambers (Assistant Archaeologist) between 28<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> March 2006. The project was managed by Darryl Palmer ( Senior Project Manager) and by Louise Rayner (Post-Excavation Manager).

1.7 The underlying geology of this site according to the British Geological Survey Sheet 270 (England & Wales 1: 50 000 series) Solid and Drift edition is Lynch Hill Gravel. This is part of the Post diversionary Thames River Terrace Deposits: gravel, sandy and clayey in part.

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

2.1 The site lies in an area rich in known archaeological remains. The entries in the Museum of London Sites and Monuments Record lie within a 0.5km radius of the site and are listed in the Appendix. These results have been summarized. A full description of these sites can be obtained from the SMR officer.

## **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

3.1 A pattern of four trenches designed to a cumulative length of 75 metres was produced by Jon Sygrave of Archaeology South East prior to the commencement of work (Fig. 2). Small adjustments were made to the trench plan in the field due to obstructions and modifications to development plans.

3.2 The trenches were then excavated by a 30 ton 360° tracked excavator fitted with a six-foot (1.8m) wide toothless ditching bucket under the supervision of staff from Archaeology South-East.

3.3 The excavation was taken down to the top of the ‘natural’ deposits or any significant archaeological deposit, whichever was the higher. Care was taken not to damage archaeological deposits through excessive use of mechanical excavation. Revealed surfaces of the ‘natural’ were manually cleaned in an attempt to identify individual archaeological features. Spoil was scanned for the presence of artefacts.

3.4 All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded according to accepted professional standards, using context record sheets based upon the Central Excavation Unit recording system as modified for use by Archaeology South-East. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.

3.5 All trenches were levelled to the site datum from values given on a survey plan. These values were derived from a spot height in the centre of the London Road. The temporary bench mark used on site measured a height of 45.40m A.O.D.

3.6 A full photographic record of the work was kept and will form part of the site archive. The archive (including the finds) is presently held at the Archaeology South-East office in Ditchling and will be offered to a suitable local museum in due course.

**3.7** All excavated archaeological features were planned, photographed and recorded utilising the Museum of London site code. All excavated contexts were drawn on plastic film at a scale of 1:20 and 1:50. All sections were drawn on plastic film at a scale of 1:10.

## **4.0 RESULTS**

### **4.1 Trench 1 (Fig 2)**

**4.1.1** Trench 1 was moved 3m to the north of its original position to avoid obstructing the site access. Trench 1 was excavated to a length of 20 metres and to depths of between 500mm (44.87m A.O.D) at the eastern end and to 400mm (44.41m A.O.D) at the western end at which the ‘natural’ gravels were encountered and mechanical excavation ceased. The overburden consisted of one distinct layer. Context **1/001** was *c.*500mm thick and of a mid - dark greyish brown colour. It was of a loose/friable consistency and contained modern inclusions throughout. This Context directly overlay the natural (**1/002**), a light-mid brownish orange silty sand containing patches of gravels throughout.

**4.1.2** Context **1/001** overlay a modern feature at the western end of the trench, which cut into context **1/002**. Only part of this feature (**1/003**) was visible in plan. It had a rectangular shape, which measured 4.50m in length and a minimum of 1.50m in width. The depth of the feature and shape of the base was not ascertained. It was filled by **1/004** a light coloured, silty clay deposit containing a high quantity of modern (factory made) bricks throughout.

**4.1.3** No archaeological features were encountered in this trench.

### **4.2 Trench 2 (Fig 2)**

**4.2.1** Trench 2 was excavated to a length of 15 metres and to varying depths of between 550mm (47.09m A.O.D) at its northern end and to 400mm (44.41m A.O.D) at the southern end at which point the ‘natural’ mid orange yellow clay (with gravel inclusions) was encountered and mechanical excavation ceased. The overburden was similar in character to that encountered in Trench 1. Context **2/001** was *c.* 350mm in depth and was a dark greyish brown coloured silty clay. It contained crushed tarmac (20-30%), gravels (10%) and brick fragments throughout (1-2%). This Context directly overlay the natural gravels.

**4.2.2** A modern service trench was seen orientated along the length of the trench (through the centre). This modern machine cut trench led into a modern soakaway positioned near the northern end of the trench. No archaeological features or deposits were seen.

### **4.3 Trench 3 (Fig 2)**

**4.3.1** Trench 3 was excavated to a length of 20 metres and to depths of between 700mm (46.55m A.O.D) at the north western end and 700mm (47.08m A.O.D) at the south eastern end at which the ‘natural’ gravels were encountered and mechanical excavation ceased. The overburden consisted of one distinct layer (**3/001**). This was *c.* 500mm thick and was a mottled dark brownish grey colour of a silty clay composition and loose consistency. It contained modern bricks throughout. This deposit was directly above the natural gravels and sands (**3/002**). There were no archaeological features recorded.

#### **4.4 Trench 4 (Figs. 2 and 3)**

**4.4.1** Trench 4 was excavated to a length of 20 metres and to varying depths of between 1.2m (46.96m A.O.D) at the eastern end and to 500mm (47.17m A.O.D) at the western end at which the ‘natural’ gravels were encountered and mechanical excavation ceased. At the western end of the trench the layers of overburden were similar to those found in the other trenches. Context (**4/001**) was a dark blackish grey colour, *c.* 300mm in depth and contained modern construction materials throughout. Directly beneath this deposit the natural gravels and sands were encountered (**4/002**).

**4.4.2** Near the centre of the trench two inter cutting pits were recorded [**4/003**] & [**4/005**]. Context [**4/003**] was a sub circular shaped feature with concave sides and a fairly flat base. This feature was filled by (**4/004**), a mid brownish grey coloured sandy clay. It contained small flint inclusions and post medieval pottery and clay pipe. Context [**4/005**] was a sub circular feature of *c.* 230mm depth and unknown diameter. It had concave sides and a flat bottomed base. It was filled by (**4/006**), a mid brownish grey sandy clay. This fill was indistinguishable from (**4/004**) in section (Fig 3).

**4.4.3** In the eastern end of the trench a Victorian cellar was recorded. This basement/cellar (**4/007**) was 8.7m in length 1m in depth. It contained surviving floor slabs and wall footings. This basement was filled by (**4/012**), a mixed deposit of dumped bricks and concrete. Wall **4/009** is the front wall of the cellar. This wall was orientated approximately NW-SE and had four surviving courses with evidence of plaster on the inner face. The bricks used were red frogged bricks of a mid 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> Century date. This wall butted (**4/008**), a two course thick wall 7.3m in length. This wall was composed of frogged factory made bricks of a red and yellow colour (<250 x 200 x 100mm). Also butting against this wall was (**4/010**) a two course curving wall/internal feature. The original function of this feature is unknown.

**4.4.4** Between feature/wall (**4/010**) and the back wall of the cellar (wall **4/011**) were different surviving floor layers. Context (**4/013**) was a mid greyish white coloured crushed chalk deposit. This deposit also contained crushed building material (10-15%) and some wooden floor panels. A tin plate dating



to the mid 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Century was found in this layer. To the west of this were a series of concrete floor slabs butting up to wall (4/011). Some bricks were also used as a floor layers.

## 5.0 THE FINDS by Luke Barber

### 5.1 Spot Dates:

- 4/004 C17<sup>th</sup> – early 18<sup>th</sup>
- 4/008 Mid C18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> (cbm only)
- 4/010 Mid C19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> (cbm only)
- 4/011 Mid C19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> (cbm only)
- 4/013 Mid C19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>

5.2 The archaeological work recovered a small-sized assemblage of finds. These are summarized in Table 1.

Context	Pottery	Weight (g)	CBM	Weight (g)	Tin	Weight (g)	CTP	Weight (g)
[4/004]	1	8					1	8
[4/008]			1	2868				
[4/010]			1	2830				
[4/011]			1	1772				
[4/013]					1	148		

**Table 1:** Quantification of finds (number/weight in grams)

5.3 Only one sherd of pottery was recovered – a glazed red earthenware sherd from an uncertain hollow-ware form with all over glaze, context [4/004]. A 17<sup>th</sup>- to early/mid 18<sup>th</sup>- century date is likely. A single plain clay pipe stem from the same context is of 17<sup>th</sup>- century date.

5.4 Three brick samples were recovered. Potentially the earliest consists of a well-made red frogless brick measuring 215 x 106 x 61mm in a sandy fabric, context [4/008]. A mid 18<sup>th</sup>- to 19<sup>th</sup>- century date range is probable. This brick has two distinct types of mortar/cement adhering to it showing it to have been re-used. One face is plastered and painted in salmon pink and the later cement bonding overlays this surface. The brick from context [4/010] is also in a red sandy fabric but with notable iron oxide inclusions. It measures 215 x 105 x 62mm and has a poorly defined frog in its upper surface. This brick has also been re-used as one face exhibits a white-washed finish below later grey cement bonding. A mid 19<sup>th</sup>- to mid 20<sup>th</sup>- century date is likely. The final brick sample, context [4/011], consists of a yellow stock brick in a coarse sandy fabric with abundant large (to 8mm) iron oxide inclusions. This brick has a poorly formed frog and measures 105mm wide by 67mm high. A mid 19<sup>th</sup>- to mid 20<sup>th</sup>- century date is probable.

**5.5** The only other find consists of a white enameled tin plate of later 19<sup>th</sup>- to 20<sup>th</sup>-century date, context [4/013].

**5.6** The current finds assemblage is not considered to hold any potential for further detailed analysis.

## **6.0 DISCUSSION**

**6.1** An archaeological evaluation by mechanically excavated trenches was shown to be appropriate, but proved that no significant archaeological deposits survive at the site. A single archaeological feature was identified in Trench 4, but this is thought to be a Victorian garden waste pit.

**6.2** The Victorian cellar/basement indicates that a large house used to exist on this plot. However, no finds of intrinsic value were found in this cellar.

**6.3** The character of the overburden found in the majority of the trenches suggests that there has been substantial landscaping in the area, with removal/redistribution and subsequent importation of material to level the site in the recent past.

**6.4** This importation/redistribution of material has led to a *c.* 500mm depth of overburden above the surface of the 'natural'. As this modern overburden was directly above the natural geology it must be assumed that this land had been stripped before the construction of the previous garage. It is likely therefore that any archaeological features (had they been present) might already have been destroyed.

## **7.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**7.1** The use of information supplied by Barry Taylor of English Heritage is gratefully acknowledged, as is the co-operation of the staff of Sloane demolition.

**SMR Summary Sheet**

Site Code	LCO 06					
Identification Name and Address	399-403 London Road, Croydon					
County, District &/or Borough	London Borough of Croydon					
Ordnance Survey Grid Reference	TQ 531750 166750					
Archaeology South-East Proj. No.	2391					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval. ✓	Excav.	Watching Brief	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban ✓	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval. 28-30 <sup>th</sup> March 2006	Excav.	WB.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Milford Group Ltd					
Project Manager	Darryl Palmer & Louise Rayner					
Project Supervisor	Paul Riccoboni					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other: Victorian		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p>The proposal site was evaluated in late March 2006. Planning permission had been granted for the construction of a four/five storey building comprising 49 residential flats (Planning Reference: 05/04841/P). Four trial trenches were excavated to a cumulative length of 75 metres. Archaeological remains were encountered in Trench 4. The remains of one post medieval pit were discovered as well as a Victorian cellar/basement.</p>						

APPENDIX

**Table 1:** SMR entries

MonUID
Pref. Ref.
Name
Monument Types
Date Range
<u>MLO1590</u>
020664/00/00
PURLEY WAY
ROAD
Roman (43 AD to 409 AD)
<u>MLO2241</u>
222924/00/00
SUMNER RD
CHURCH
Post Medieval (1540 AD to 1900 AD)
<u>MLO9054</u>
020238/00/00
WHITEHORSE LA (AREA )
FINDSPOT
Roman (79 AD to 81 AD)
<u>MLO9063</u>
020228/00/00
HANDCROFT RD
FINDSPOT
Roman (43 AD to 409 AD)
<u>MLO9064</u>
020227/00/00
CROYDON CEMETERY
FINDSPOT
Roman (43 AD to 409 AD)
<u>MLO9065</u>
020224/00/00
HANDCROFT RD
FINDSPOT

Roman (43 AD to 409 AD)

MLO9081  
020206/00/00

FINDSPOT

Iron Age (700 BC to 42 AD)

MLO13008  
020663/00/00  
BENSHAM LA

ROAD

Roman (43 AD to 409 AD)

MLO13009  
020665/00/00  
IMPERIAL WAY

ROAD

Roman (43 AD to 409 AD)

MLO15077  
020662/00/00  
LONDON RD

ROAD

Roman (43 AD to 409 AD)

MLO19603  
020267/00/00  
BROAD GREEN

FINDSPOT

Bronze Age (2200 BC to 701 BC)

MLO23322  
020660/00/00  
ELMWOOD RD

WINDMILL

Post Medieval (1540 AD to 1900 AD)

MLO59758  
021582/00/00  
517-523 LONDON RD

NEGATIVE EVIDENCE

Unknown (Unknown)

MLO61848  
021715/00/00  
LONDON RD

FINDSPOT

Medieval (1066 AD to 1539 AD)

MLO61849  
021716/00/00  
LONDON RD

FINDSPOT

Post Medieval (1540 AD to 1900 AD)

MLO70900  
023113/00/00  
513-515 LONDON RD

NEGATIVE EVIDENCE

Unknown (Unknown)

MLO71304  
023144/00/00  
518 LONDON RD

FINDSPOT

Post Medieval (1540 AD to 1900 AD)

MLO74841  
025606/00/000  
344-354 LONDON RD

NEGATIVE EVIDENCE

Unknown (Unknown)

MLO75671  
MLO75671  
London Road

MADE GROUND

Post Medieval to Modern (1540 AD to 2002 AD)

**Table 2:** Listed Buildings

<i>MonUID</i>	<i>Pref. Ref.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Monument Types</i>	<i>Date Range</i>
<u>MLO82339</u>	MLO82339	WEST CROYDON UNITED REFORMED CHURCH	United Reformed Chapel	19th Century (1886 AD)
<u>MLO82413</u>	MLO82413	WALL ENCLOSING CHURCHYARD OF CHURCH OF ST SAVIOUR	WALL, CHURCHYARD	19th Century to Modern (1830 AD to 1901 AD)
<u>MLO82440</u>	MLO82440	CHURCH OF ST SAVIOUR	CHURCH, CHURCH	19th Century (1867 AD to 1880 AD)

**Table 3:** Event Index: Completed Archaeological Projects

<b>Event ID</b>	<b>Event Name</b>	<b>Event Description</b>
ELO173	London Road	Two evaluation trenches were excavated and only modern deposits were found overlying the natural gravel. Location: Centroid TQ 3166 6688 (MBR: 10m by 10m) (Centred on)
ELO173	London Road	Two evaluation trenches were excavated and only modern deposits were found overlying the natural gravel. Location: Centroid TQ 3166 6688 (MBR: 10m by 10m) (Centred on)
ELO5777	Imperial Way, Croydon	Margary suggested the presence of a Roman road near Imperial Way in Croydon, following the line of the Mere Bank (which runs along the Sutton/Croydon borough boundary). Major, however, has expressed doubts. (Although see ELO 5766).
ELO5796	Purley Way, Croydon	Research carried out by Major ( but disputed by Margary) suggests the possibility of a Roman road on what is now Purley Way, Croydon. However, later excavation at Purley Way only found evidence for a 19th century lane (monument record 020419/00/00).



30

31

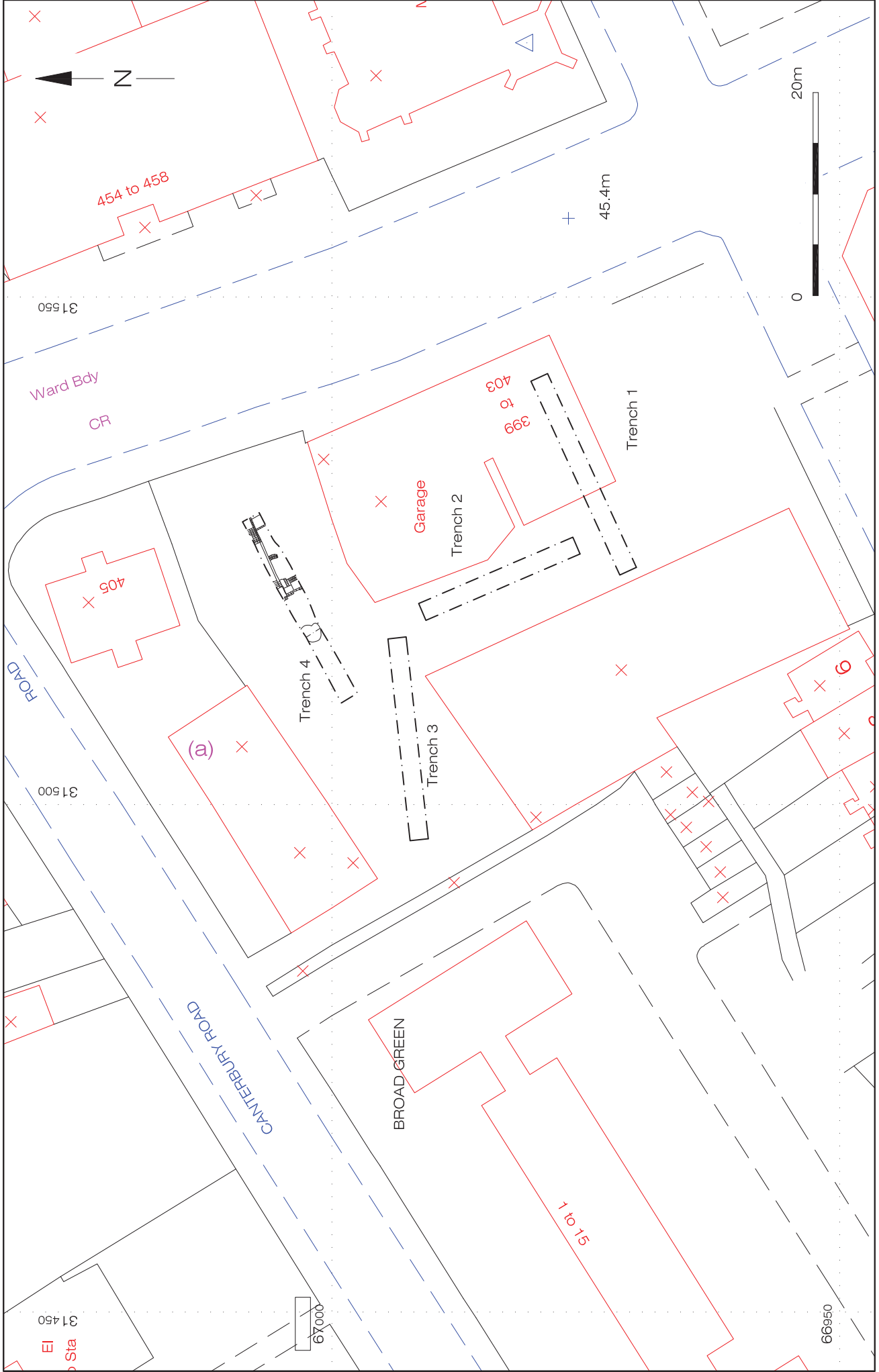
32

33

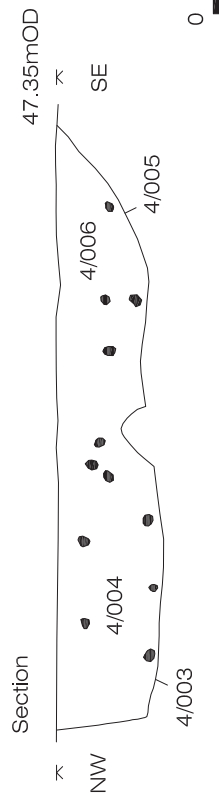
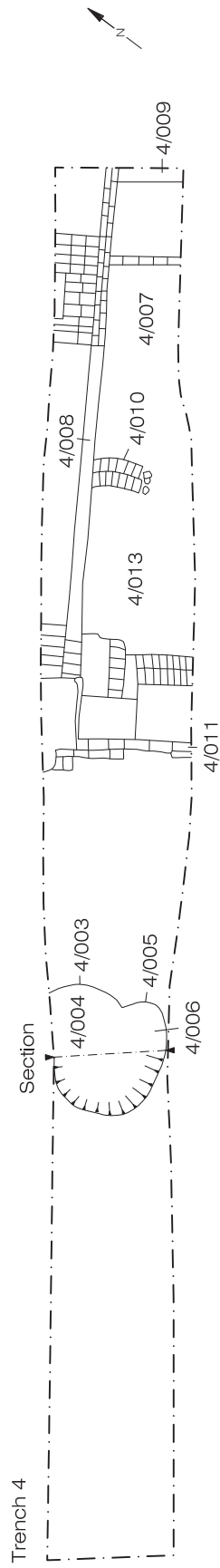
© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST		399-403 London Road, Croydon	Fig. 1
Ref: 2391	April 2006	Site Location Plan	

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© ARCHAEOLGY SOUTH EAST		399-403 London Road, Croydon	Fig. 2
Ref: 2391	April 2006	Trench Location Plan	
Drawn by: JLR			



© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST		399-403 London Road, Croydon	
Ref: 2391	April 2006	Drawn by: JLR	Trench plan and section

Fig. 3

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**OASIS ID: archaeol6-17521**

## Project details

Project name	399-403 London Road, Croydon.
Short description of the project	The excavation of four trial trenches (75m total) prior to the construction of a four/five storey building. Archaeological remains were encountered in Trench 4. The remains of one post medieval pit were discovered as well as a Victorian cellar/basement.
Project dates	Start: 28-03-2006 End: 30-03-2006
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	2391 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

## Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CROYDON CROYDON 399-403 London Road Croydon
Postcode	CR0
Study area	75.00 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 53175 16675 Point
Height OD	Min: 44.41m Max: 47.17m

## Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Darryl Palmer

Project supervisor Paul Riccoboni  
Sponsor or funding body Milford Group Ltd.  
Sponsor or funding body Milford Group Ltd.

**Project archives**

Physical Archive recipient Museum of London  
Physical Contents 'Ceramics'  
Digital Archive recipient n/a  
Paper Archive recipient Museum of London  
Paper Media available 'Context sheet', 'Photograph', 'Plan', 'Report'

**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)  
Title An Archaeological Evaluation at 399-403 London Road, Croydon  
Author(s)/Editor(s) Riccoboni, P.  
Other bibliographic details Archaeology South East Report 2391  
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