

**Archaeological Evaluation Report  
London Irish Rugby Club  
Sunbury-on-Thames  
Surrey, TW16 5EQ**

**NGR: 510511 169498  
(TQ 10511 69498)**

**ASE Project No: 7091  
Site Code: TIS 14**

**ASE Report No: 2014323  
OASIS id: archaeol6-192374**



**By Sarah Ritchie**

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**By Sarah Ritchie**

**October 2014**

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**Abstract**

*Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd. to undertake an archaeological evaluation at London Irish Rugby Club, Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey in advance of the redevelopment of the site. The site work was carried out between 6th and 9th October 2014.*

*Eleven archaeological evaluation trenches were excavated on the site and revealed natural deposits overlain by subsoils and topsoil. Natural deposits were observed at c.11.43m OD in the north of the site, c.10.30m OD in the centre, c.11.40m OD in the south of the site. No archaeological remains were observed.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Background**

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd. to undertake an archaeological evaluation at land at London Irish Rugby Club, Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey, TW16 5EQ, (NGR: 510511 169498; Figure 1) in advance of the redevelopment of the site.

### **1.2 Geology and Topography**

1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey 1:50,000 scale geological mapping (available online) the natural geology of the site comprises London Clay overlain by Kempton Park Gravel Formation.

1.2.2 The site comprises rugby pitches and associated training facilities. The site is located south of Sunbury Common and north of the historic core of the village of Sunbury-on-Thames. It is bounded to the north, south and east by residential housing on Pine Wood, Manor Lane and The Avenue, and to the west by the Virgin Active Health Club building and car park and St. Paul's College.

### **1.3 Scope of Report**

1.3.1 This report details the results of the archaeological evaluation carried out on the site between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> October 2014, and has been prepared in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2014). The work was carried out by Sarah Ritchie (Project Supervisor) and Charlotte Faiers. Survey was carried out by John Cook. The fieldwork was managed by Andy Leonard and the post-excavation work by Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift.

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

2.1.1 The following archaeological information is drawn from a previous specification (Scott Wilson 2010). For a complete background please refer to this document.

### **2.2 Prehistoric**

2.2.1 No Palaeolithic (c.450,000 -10,000 BC) finds have been recovered from the immediate area.

2.2.2 There are a number of find-spots dating to the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods which mainly consist of isolated finds of axes.

2.2.3 The majority of prehistoric archaeological material dates to the Bronze Age. Two Bronze Age cemeteries are located within the wider area. There are also a number of Bronze Age weapon find-spots associated with ritual deposition in the River Thames and its environs. Other Bronze Age features in the area include a pit and ditch, a possible barrow and several crop marks.

2.2.4 No Iron Age features or finds are known from the area

### **2.3 Roman**

2.3.1 There is little indication of Roman activity in the area, apart from a small quantity of Roman pottery, a spearhead, ditch, pit and a post hole found on 2005.

### **2.4 Medieval**

2.4.1 During archaeological trial trenching at Kempton Park Racecourse from 1971-73 by the West London Archaeological Field Group, sherds of medieval pottery were recovered. The medieval town of Sunbury develop

### **2.5 Post-medieval**

2.5.1 Also during archaeological trial trenching at Kempton Park Racecourse from 1971-73 by West London Archaeological Field Group, remains of the former Hyde House dating mainly to the 17th century with 18th century additions were uncovered. In 1999, observations of footing trenches under the direction of a watching brief for a residential development at 1113 Forge Lane, post-medieval and modern 20th century deposits were recorded.

2.5.2 During the early modern and modern periods, there was a significant rise in the population of Lower Sunbury and Upper Sunbury and the archaeological and historical evidence supports this, recording numerous residential buildings.

## **2.6 Previous site investigations**

- 2.6.1 A geophysical survey of the area was undertaken (Stratascan 2010). A series of anomalies were indicated, some of which lay within the area to be investigated by trial trenching.
- 2.6.2 Sixteen evaluation trenches were excavated in 2010 (ASE 2010), revealing one post-medieval boundary ditch and several modern features associated with the rugby club.

## **2.7 Project Aims and Objectives**

- 2.7.1 The aims and objectives of the field evaluation were:-.

*To identify the presence/ absence of buried archaeological remains*

*To assess the geoarchaeological and palaeo-environmental potential of the proposed development area*

*To determine (where possible) the nature, depth, extent, character and date of any archaeological deposits or features encountered (as far as circumstances permit)*

*To determine the condition or state of preservation of any archaeological deposits or features encountered*

*To determine the significance of any archaeological remains present*

*To aid in the design of a suitable mitigation strategy as necessary*

- 2.7.2 The fieldwork will be carried out within the general parameters defined by the Surrey Structure Plan.
- 2.7.3 The final aim is to make public the results of the archaeological evaluation, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Fieldwork Methodology**

3.1.1 Ten trenches measuring 50m x 1.8m and one measuring 22m x 1.8m were mechanically excavated on the site, as shown in Figure 2. Trench 22 was moved slightly south to avoid access roads and the site compound, and Trench 10 was re-orientated east-west in order to avoid an access road and a large oak tree, and shortened to avoid a modern soak-away.

3.1.2 The trenches were located using a Digital Global Positioning system (DGPS).

3.1.3 The trenches were scanned prior to excavation using a CAT scanner.

3.1.4 Excavation was undertaken under archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator and a toothless ditching bucket, and the ground reduced in spits of no more than 0.10m to the top of the underlying natural substrate.

3.1.5 The trenches and sections were cleaned by hand, and deposits were recorded using ASE standard recording sheets, with colours recorded by visual inspection only. Sample sections were recorded and a comprehensive photographic record taken.

3.1.6 Spoil heaps and trench bases were scanned by eye for unstratified finds. A metal detector was used to scan all excavated material.

#### **3.2 Archive**

3.2.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at the LAARC in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	33
No. of files/paper record	11
Photographs	48

Table 1: Quantification of site archive



## 4.0 RESULTS

No archaeological remains were observed within any of the trenches.

### Trenches 1 & 2

Trench Number	Context	Type	Description	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
1	001	Layer	Topsoil	0.20-0.28	11.78
1	002	Layer	Subsoil	0.12-0.18	11.58
1	003	Layer	Natural	NFE	11.43
2	001	Layer	Topsoil	0.08-0.15	11.59
2	002	Layer	Subsoil	0.09-0.21	11.44
2	003	Layer	Natural	NFE	11.23

Table 2: list of recorded contexts

- 4.0.1 Trenches 1 and 2, measuring 50m x 1.80m, were located in the northern most area of the site (Figure 2). Both revealed a sequence of light orangy-brown natural sands, silt and gravels [1/003] & [2/003], overlain by a mid-brown sandy silt subsoil c. 0.20m thick [1/002] & [2/002], and sealed by a dark brown silty-sand topsoil with turf, located [1/001] & [2/001].
- 4.0.2 Trench 1 revealed a north-south aligned row of modern post holes, with the wooden posts still in situ, within the northern area of the trench, and Trench 2 revealed the base of a modern metal rugby post within the western end of the trench. No archaeological remains were observed in either trench.

### Trench 10

Trench Number	Context	Type	Description	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
10	001	Layer	Topsoil	0.30-0.48	11.24
10	002	Layer	Made ground	0.52-0.60	10.94
10	003	Layer	Made ground	0.10-0.25	10.34
10	004	Layer	Natural	NFE	10.24
10	005	Fill	Fill of 006	0.90	10.94
10	006	Cut	Cut of mod. soakaway	NFE	10.94

Table 3: list of recorded contexts

- 4.0.3 Trench 10 was re-orientated east-west in order to avoid a large oak tree and the access road to the sports centre, it was also shortened to 22.70m x 1.80m in order to avoid a large modern soakaway situated to the east of the trench.
- 4.0.4 The trench revealed orange-yellow natural clay [10/004]. Overlying this within the western 19m of the trench was a dark brown silty-clay [10/003] with frequent brick fragments, this layer measured 0.25m thick and was sealed by 0.60m of light orange sandy-silt made ground with very frequent plastic, CBM and concrete inclusions [10/002] and sealed by c. 0.40m of loose dark brown sandy-silt topsoil and turf [10/001].

4.0.5 The western most 3.70m revealed a modern pipe and the cut for the modern soakaway [10/006] at least 0.90m deep. The soakaway was filled with loose dark brown sandy-silt with very frequent gravel and fragments of brick, at the base was a layer of light concrete chips.

4.0.6 No archaeological evidence was observed within this trench.

#### Trenches 13, 21-23 & 26

Trench Number	Context	Type	Description	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
13	001	Layer	Topsoil	0.22-0.28	11.26
13	002	Layer	Subsoil	0.15-0.20	10.98
13	003	Layer	Natural	NFE	10.78
21	001	Layer	Topsoil	0.20	10.83
21	002	Layer	Subsoil	0.15-0.23	10.63
21	003	Layer	Natural	NFE	10.40
22	001	Layer	Topsoil	0.18-0.23	10.83
22	002	Layer	Subsoil	0.18-0.30	10.60
22	003	Layer	Natural	NFE	10.30
23	001	Layer	Topsoil	0.28-0.50	11.02
23	002	Layer	Subsoil	0.20-0.30	10.72
23	003	Layer	Natural	NFE	10.42
26	001	Layer	Topsoil	0.20-0.25	10.83
26	002	Layer	Subsoil	0.16-0.25	10.58
26	003	Layer	Natural	NFE	10.33

Table 4: list of recorded contexts

4.0.7 Trenches 13, 21-23 & 26 revealed mid orange natural silty-clay with occasional gravel [13/003]; [21/003]; [22/003]; [23/003]; [26/003]. Sondages in trenches 23 and 26 revealed this to be c. 0.50m thick and overlying a similar natural deposit with frequent gravel inclusions.

4.0.8 The natural was overlain by a mid-grey brown silty-sand subsoil layer with moderate small to medium stones, flecks of modern CBM and charcoal, and fragments of post-medieval and modern glass, brick and CBM [13/002]; [21/002]; [22/002]; [23/002]; [26/002]. The thickness of this layer varied from 0.15m to 0.30m. Cut into this were a series of cable runs and land drains running both north-south and east-west, both were filled with clean gravel and pea grit.

4.0.9 The trenches were sealed by c. 0.24m of mid-brown topsoil and turf [13/001]; [21/001]; [22/001]; [23/001]; [26/001]. No archaeological remains were observed within any of the trenches.

**Trenches 24-25 & 27**

Trench Number	Context	Type	Description	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
23	003	Layer	Natural	NFE	11.71
24	001	Layer	Topsoil	0.18-0.22	11.49
24	002	Layer	Natural	NFE	11.71
25	001	Layer	Topsoil	0.16-0.28	11.43
25	002	Layer	Natural	NFE	11.54
27	001	Layer	Topsoil	0.15-0.28	11.39
27	002	Layer	Natural	NFE	

Table 5: list of recorded contexts

4.0.10 Trenches 24, 25 and 27 revealed mid orange natural sands and gravels [24/002]; [25/002]; [27/002]. Cut into the natural deposits were north-south and east-west aligned cable runs and land drains filled with gravel and pea grit.

4.0.11 Sealing the trenches was c. 0.20m of mid-brown silty-sand topsoil and turf [24/001]; [25/001]; [27/001]. No archaeological remains were observed within any of the trenches.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1 Consideration of research aims

- To identify the presence/ absence of buried archaeological remains

*No archaeological remains were observed within the site.*

- To assess the geoarchaeological and palaeo-environmental potential of the proposed development area

*No geoarchaeological or palaeo-environmental potential was observed.*

- To determine (where possible) the nature, depth, extent, character and date of any archaeological deposits or features encountered (as far as circumstances permit)

*No archaeological deposits or features were encountered.*

- To determine the condition or state of preservation of any archaeological deposits or features encountered

*No archaeological deposits or features were encountered.*

- To determine the significance of any archaeological remains present

*No archaeological deposits or features were present.*

### 5.2 Conclusions

5.2.1 The site comprised a mixed natural geology consisting of sand and gravel within the southern-most (Trenches 24, 25 and 27) and northern-most (Trenches 1 and 2) areas of the site. The central area of the site (Trenches 10, 13, 21, 22 and 26) revealed a heavy silty-clay natural deposit, possibly an alluvial deposit associated with the Thames or an ancient tributary thereof.

5.2.2 Trenches 13, 21-23 and 26 all revealed evidence of a post-medieval-modern subsoil, which could be associated with an earlier phase of the Rugby Club and its pitches.

5.2.3 Trench 10 revealed large scale modern truncation and made ground/landscaping. It is likely this activity is linked to the building of the Virgin Active Health Centre, parking lot and access road.

5.2.4 The site was sealed by topsoil and turf used for rugby pitches and training areas. The ground level varied from 11.78m OD in the north of the site to 10.83m OD in the centre and 11.71m OD in the south.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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**HER Summary**

Site Code	TIS14				
Identification Name and Address	London Irish Rugby Club, Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey, TW16 5EQ				
County, District &/or Borough	Surrey				
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 10511 69498				
Geology	London Clay overlain by Kempton Park Gravel Formation.				
Arch. South-East Project Number	6931				
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.				
Type of Site	Green Field				
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval. 6th-9 <sup>th</sup> Oct				
Sponsor/Client	CgMs				
Project Manager	Andy Leonard				
Project Supervisor	Sarah Ritchie				
Period Summary					
			PM	Modern	
<p>Summary</p> <p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd. to undertake an archaeological evaluation at London Irish Rugby Club, Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey in advance of the redevelopment of the site. The site work was carried out between 6th and 9th October 2014.</i></p> <p><i>Eleven archaeological evaluation trenches were excavated on the site and revealed natural deposits overlain by subsoils and topsoil. Natural deposits were observed at c.11.43m OD in the north of the site, c.10.30m OD in the centre, c.11.40m OD in the south of the site. No archaeological remains were observed.</i></p>					

**OASIS Form**

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-192374**

**Project details**

Project name	London Irish Rugby Club, Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey, TW16 5EQ
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd. to undertake an archaeological evaluation at London Irish Rugby Club, Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey in advance of the redevelopment of the site. The site work was carried out between 6th and 9th October 2014. Eleven archaeological evaluation trenches were excavated on the site and revealed natural deposits overlain by subsoils and topsoil. Natural deposits were observed at c.11.43m OD in the north of the site, c.10.30m OD in the centre, c.11.40m OD in the south of the site. No archaeological remains were observed.
Project dates	Start: 06-10-2014 End: 09-10-2014
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	TIS14 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 14 - Recreational usage
Significant Finds	CBM Modern
Significant Finds	CBM Modern
Significant Finds	GLASS Modern
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - Direction 4
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

**Project location**

Country	England
Site location	SURREY SPELTHORNE SUNBURY London Irish Rugby Club, Sunbury-on-Thames

Postcode	TW16 5EQ
Study area	72.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 10511 69498 51.4132168917 -0.410732728775 51 24 47 N 000 24 38 W Point

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**Project creators**

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Archaeology South-East
Project design originator	ASE
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard
Project supervisor	Sarah Ritchie
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

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**Project archives**

Physical Archive ID	TIS 14
Digital Archive ID	TIS14
Paper Archive ID	TIS14

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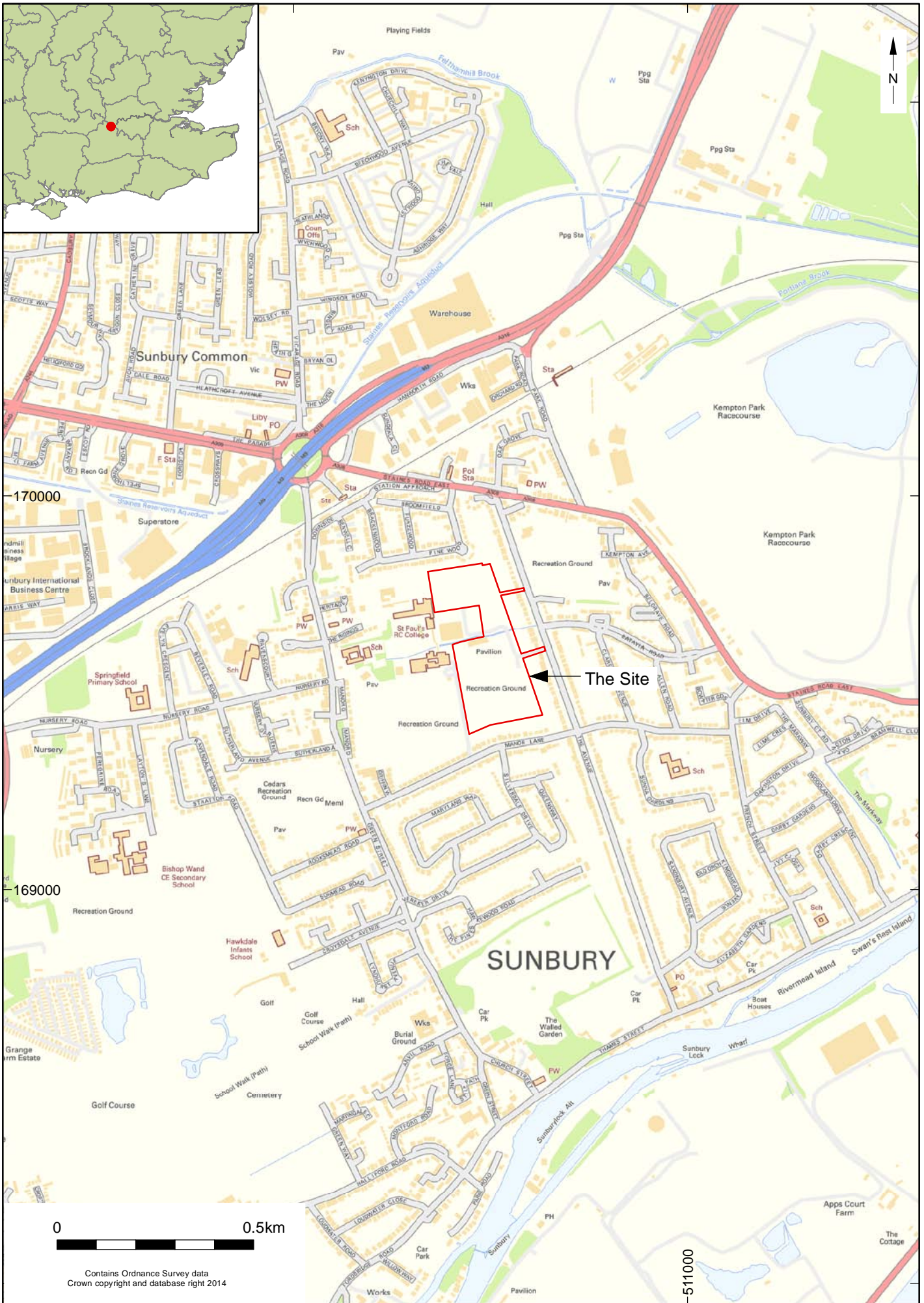
**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Evaluation at London Irish Rugby Club, Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey, TW16 5EQ
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Ritchie, S.
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© Archaeology South-East		London Irish Rugby Club, Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 7091	October 2014	Site location		
Report Ref: 2014323	Drawn by: RHC			



© Archaeology South-East		London Irish Rugby Club, Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 7091	October 2014	Site plan	
Report Ref: 2014323	Drawn by: RHC		



Trench 24 looking south-east



Trench 24 north-east facing section



Trench 21 looking south-west



Trench 21 south-east facing section

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