

**Archaeological Evaluation Report
Theale, Old Bath Road
Colnbrook, Slough
SL3 0NS**

NGR: TQ 0363 7660

Planning Ref: P/12934/009

**ASE Project No: 7768
Site Code: TSB 15**

**ASE Report No: 2015396
OASIS id: archaeol6-227721**



By Ian Hogg

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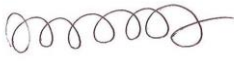
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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Theale, Old Bath Road, Colnbrook, Slough. The evaluation comprised two trenches.

Natural gravel was recorded in sondages in the ends of either trench between 19.35m and 20.11m AOD. It was uniformly overlain by modern made ground deposit between 1.6m and 1.8m thick. No archaeological remains were recorded on the site and any potential alluvial deposits had been removed.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Theale, Old Bath Road, Colnbrook, Slough, SL3 0NS (Figures 1 and 2; NGR: TQ 0363 7660).
- 1.1.2 The site is sub-rectangular, and covers an area of approximately 1,770m². The site is bounded by Bath Road to the north, a warehouse and delivery depot to the east, a recycling centre to the south and residential housing and disused railway tracks to the west. The site is centred on NGR TQ 0363 7660 (Figure 1).
- 1.1.3 The evaluation comprised two machine excavated trenches each measuring 20.00m x 1.80m in plan.

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey, the underlying geology of the study site consists of London Clay Formation; a Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 34 to 56 million years ago in the Palaeogene Period. Overlying this is a superficial deposit of alluvium; formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period (BGS 1996).

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 A planning application (P/12934/009) has been submitted to Slough Borough Council for permission to erect 22 residential apartments over two separate blocks. As part of the planning consultation, the Archaeology Officer has recommended the following condition be attached, should permission be granted:

Condition: No development shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which may comprise one or more phases of work, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the planning authority.

Reason: The site lies in an area of high archaeological potential, particularly in relation to prehistoric and Roman remains.

- 1.3.2 The Archaeology Officer proposed that the first stage of the programme of archaeological work should be exploratory trial trenching (evaluation). The results of this exploratory work should determine if any further archaeological investigations are merited.
- 1.3.3 Accordingly, an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2015a) was prepared prior to the commencement of this phase of works. This document set out the methodology for the works and all works were carried out in accordance with this and with the ClfA standards and guidance documents (ClfA 2014a, b and c).

1.4 Research Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The aims of the archaeological investigation are as follows:

- To determine, as far as reasonably practicable, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains
- To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features encountered
- To enable CgMs and the County Archaeologist to make an informed decision as to the requirement for any further work required in order to satisfy the archaeology condition

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report details the results of the archaeological evaluation carried out on the site between the 20th and the 21st October 2015 and has been prepared in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2015a). The work was carried out by Ian Hogg (Archaeologist), Paulo Clemente (Archaeologist) and Michael Lobb (Archaeologist).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Prehistoric

- 2.1.1 Among the earliest traces of human activity in Britain are the flint tools, characteristically heavy hand axes, found within the glacial gravels of the Thames Valley. The most productive of the terraces for traces of Lower Palaeolithic occupation (2,000,000-70,000 BC) are the Lynch Hill Gravels, which occur well to the north of Poyle. Largescale gravel extraction around West Drayton and Yiewsley has resulted in one of the greatest concentrations of discoveries of artefacts of this period.
- 2.1.2 Middle Palaeolithic discoveries have again largely been the result of gravel extraction in Yiewsley and West Drayton. In this area, as at Creffield road in Acton, material of this period tends to be situated at the base of 'brickearth', where it overlies the Lynch Hill gravel. Late Upper Palaeolithic material has been found within the alluvium in the floodplain of the River Colne where it overlies the brickearth. The most important site of this type is Three Ways Wharf in Uxbridge to the north.
- 2.1.3 Further afield, the alluvium at Three Ways Wharf in Uxbridge produced evidence for continued occupation in the early Mesolithic period. It may well be, given the dating evidence from Colnebrook; that the alluvium that has been observed along the courses of the Wraysbury and the Colne dates to a similar period (and is likely to have continued in the area of the current site).
- 2.1.4 In the Neolithic the evidence of significant human occupation in the vicinity of Poyle becomes clear. Much of the evidence for this period, as well as for the subsequent Bronze, Iron Age and Romano-British periods, comprises aerial photographic observations that require confirmation by fieldwork, particularly in the area of Poyle. To the east, around Heathrow, as a result of the large-scale development of the airport facilities, a series of archaeological excavations and evaluations have confirmed the archaeological significance of similar cropmarks, and have revealed a wide and varied prehistoric landscape within the vicinity of Poyle.
- 2.1.5 Causewayed enclosures, such as that excavated at Yeoveney Lodge, Staines, to the south, at Mayfield Farm and at Stanwell to the east, are thought to date to the Middle Neolithic period. Closer to Poyle, a double ring-ditch has been excavated at Horton, two kilometres to the west, which saw a number of successive phases of activity, dating from the Middle to Late Neolithic. As a result of the waterlogged conditions prevailing in this low-lying area this produced well preserved wooden bowls.
- 2.1.6 This section of the Colne Valley clearly comprised an important ritual centre in the prehistoric period. The key feature in the landscape is the Stanwell Cursus, two parallel ditches running from Stanwell to the north-west for some two kilometres. A series of aerial photographic features observed to the east, south-west and north of Poyle may incorporate elements of Neolithic occupation evidence, but it is impossible to judge without further assessment. However, the example of the Horton ring-ditch indicates that Neolithic activity did extend into these lower sections of the Colne Valley.

- 2.1.7 A similar picture of fairly intensive prehistoric rural activity is indicated for the Iron Age, as investigated most completely at Caesar's Camp, where eleven hut-circles were found inside a banked enclosure, which also contained a square post-built structure interpreted as a temple. A number of other sites have produced traces of Iron Age farming in the form of field and property boundaries, including Perry Oaks Sludge Lagoons, just over a kilometre to the east of the site, and at Longford, on the north side of Heathrow's Runway 1.
- 2.1.8 Excavations at Poyle House, c.600m west of the site, revealed residual worked flint of Mesolithic and late Neolithic/early Bronze Age date.

2.2 Roman

- 2.2.1 There were no significant Roman settlements in the area of Poyle during the Roman period. The nearest were at Staines and Brentford, the points at which the road connecting the Roman towns of London and Silchester crossed the Thames. It has been suggested that Uxbridge road may be Roman in origin and that a road ran up the Colne Valley. Such proposals remain speculative, however, given the low-lying and often wet terrain. Nevertheless, excavations on the east side of the Colne Valley have indicated that the Iron Age rural economy described above continued in a similar vein during the Romano-British period. Such occupation, typically with enclosed farmsteads and field systems with ditched boundaries, has been observed to the north of Heathrow, with field systems dating to the second and fourth centuries, and at the Perry Oaks Sludge Works, where Roman ditches, enclosures and trackways have been identified during archaeological evaluation work. While no Roman discoveries are recorded in the immediate vicinity of the site, the undated cropmarks to the south and north may well include remains of this period.

2.3 Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

- 2.3.1 The Colne Valley has formed a major political division as far as records go, until recently marking the western edge of Middlesex. It seems likely that it formed the western boundary of the territory of the Middle Saxons in the 5th-6th centuries. There was a Saxon estate at Harmondsworth to the northeast, while nearby Saxon settlements in existence by the time of the Norman Conquest include Stanwell, Harlington, Cranford and Bedfont. Poyle is not mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086), at which time it probably comprised one of two subsidiary estates held by knights from Stanwell Manor.
- 2.3.2 Poyle is first mentioned as an independent estate in the early 13th century. In this early period the manor passed through the hands of number of different owners, resulting in various boundary changes. By the 15th century the estate comprised a house with two hundred acres of arable land, and forty acres of pasture and meadow, although its focus was probably the mill. There is little indication of any significant settlement at Poyle beyond this throughout the medieval period.

2.4 Post-medieval

- 2.4.1 The 1st edition Ordnance Survey (1866) shows the site occupying agricultural land to the south of Bath Road. By the 1890's the railway line has been built along the western boundary of the site, and the site itself is marked as a footpath. The site remains relatively unchanged until the 1930's, when buildings are erected within the northern area, towards Bath Road.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 Two evaluation trenches were excavated by machine (Figure 2). The trenches were originally planned to measure 20.00m x 1.80m at base. However, due to special and access constraints Trench 2 was rotated to the north-west and shortened to 18.00m in length.
- 3.1.2 All trenches were scanned using a cable avoidance tool (CAT) prior to excavation. Excavation was undertaken in spits of no more than 0.25m to the top of the underlying natural substrate, or to the top of archaeological deposits, whichever was higher.
- 3.1.3 All deposits were recorded using ASE standard context sheets. Vertical sections were taken across features where necessary and a comprehensive photographic record taken.
- 3.1.4 Trenches were located and planned using GPS and tied in to the Ordnance Survey.
- 3.1.5 Spoil heaps and trench bases were scanned by eye for unstratified finds.
- 3.1.6 Trenches were backfilled using the machine bucket, no formal reinstatement was undertaken.

3.2 Archive

3.2.1 Currently there no museums are accepting archaeological archives within Slough Borough. The site archive will therefore be held at the offices of ASE until a suitable repository can be found. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	7
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and section sheets	0
Bulk Samples	0
Photographs	6 digital
Bulk finds	0
Registered finds	0
Environmental flots/residue	0

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

Trench contexts are listed in the appendix at the rear of this report.

4.1 Trench 1

4.1.1 Trench 1 was located in the north of the site; it measured 18.00m x 1.80m in plan and was aligned north-west to south-east. Excavation ceased at a safe depth of 1.20m; sondages were excavated at either end of the trench to the natural gravels. The trench measured 1.87m in depth at the north-western end and 1.63m at the south-eastern end.

4.1.2 The natural mid greyish orange sandy gravel [1/004] was recorded between 19.82m and 20.11m AOD. It was overlain by mixed layers of yellow clay and dark brown silt modern made ground [1/003] between 0.57m and 0.99m in thickness; the deposit contained modern CBM, iron and plastic.

4.1.3 The made ground was overlain by another modern made ground deposit [1/002] comprising crushed stone and brick in a brown silt matrix; the deposit measured between 0.52m and 0.76m in thickness. The made ground was overlain by an asphalt surface [1/002] 0.11m thick.

4.1.4 No archaeological features or finds were recorded in this trench.

4.2 Trench 2

4.2.1 Trench 2 was located in the south of the site; it measured 20.00m x 1.80m in plan and was aligned north to south. Excavation ceased at a safe depth of 1.20m; sondages were excavated at either end of the trench to the natural gravels. The trench measured 1.72m in depth at the northern end and 1.96m at the southern end.

4.2.2 The natural mid greyish orange sandy gravel [2/003] was recorded between 19.35m and 19.64m AOD; this deposit was slightly siltier at its surface, probably indicating interface to a removed alluvium. It was overlain by mixed layers of yellow clay and dark brown silt modern made ground [2/002] between 1.14m and 1.49m in thickness; the deposit contained modern CBM, iron and plastic.

4.2.3 The made ground was overlain by another modern made ground deposit [2/001] comprising crushed stone and brick in a brown silt matrix; the deposit measured between 0.34m and 0.48m in thickness.

4.2.4 No archaeological features or finds were recorded in this trench.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence

5.1.1 Natural gravelly clays were recorded at either end of the trenches at between 20.11m and 19.35m AOD. The natural deposit was uniformly overlain by modern made ground deposits with an asphalt surface in the north.

5.1.2 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were recorded. No definite alluvial deposits were recorded but the slightly siltier material recorded at the surface of the natural gravel in Trench 2 may represent the interface with a removed alluvial deposit.

5.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts

5.2.1 Significant horizontal truncation was recorded throughout the trenches. The natural gravels were directly overlain by modern made ground deposits.

5.3 Consideration of research aims

5.3.1 No archaeology was recorded within the trenches and no evidence of prehistoric activity was recorded on the site. Any alluvial deposits had been removed.

5.4 Conclusions

5.4.1 The evaluation confirmed the absence of archaeological remains on the site and that significant truncation that has occurred.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank CgMs Consulting Ltd. for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project and Berkshire Archaeology for their guidance and monitoring. The evaluation was directed by Ian Hogg. The author would like to thank all archaeologists who worked on the excavations. Lauren Gibson produced the figures for this report; Andy Leonard project managed the excavations and Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift the post-excavation process.

HER Summary Form

Site Code	TSB 15					
Identification Name and Address	Theale, Old Bath Road, Colnbrook, Slough					
County, District &/or Borough	Berkshire					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 0363 7660					
Geology	Terrace Gravels					
Arch. South-East Project Number	7768					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.					
Type of Site	Deep Urban					
Dates of Fieldwork	20-10-2015 to 21-10-2015					
Sponsor/Client	CgMs Consulting					
Project Manager	Andy Leonard					
Project Supervisor	Ian Hogg					
Period Summary						
						Modern
<p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Theale, Old Bath Road, Colnbrook, Slough. The evaluation comprised two trenches.</i></p> <p><i>Natural gravel was recorded in sondages in the ends of either trench between 19.35m and 20.11m AOD. It was uniformly overlain by modern made ground deposit between 1.6m and 1.8m thick. No archaeological remains were recorded on the site and any potential alluvial deposits had been removed.</i></p>						

OASIS Form**OASIS ID: archaeol6-227721**

Project details

Project name	Theale, Old Bath Road, Colnbrook, Slough
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Theale, Old Bath Road, Colnbrook, Slough. The evaluation comprised two trenches. Natural gravel was recorded in sondages in the ends of either trench between 19.35m and 20.11m AOD. It was uniformly overlain by modern made ground deposit between 1.6m and 1.8m thick. No archaeological remains were recorded on the site and any potential alluvial deposits had been removed.
Project dates	Start: 20-10-2015 End: 21-10-2015
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	7768 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	TSB 15 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (e.g. As a condition)
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	BERKSHIRE SLOUGH SLOUGH Theale, Old Bath Road, Colnbrook
Postcode	SL3 0NS
Study area	1770 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 0363 7660 51.47836202083 -0.507571543165 51 28 42 N 000 30 27 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 19.35m Max: 20.11m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East

Project brief originator	Berkshire Archaeology
Project design originator	CgMs Consulting
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard/Jim Stevenson
Project supervisor	Ian Hogg
Type of sponsor/funding body	CgMs Consulting
Name of sponsor/funding body	CgMs Consulting
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Slough Museum
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic","Survey"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey"
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic","Survey"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Plan","Report","Survey "
Entered by	Ian Hogg (ian.hogg@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	26 October 2015

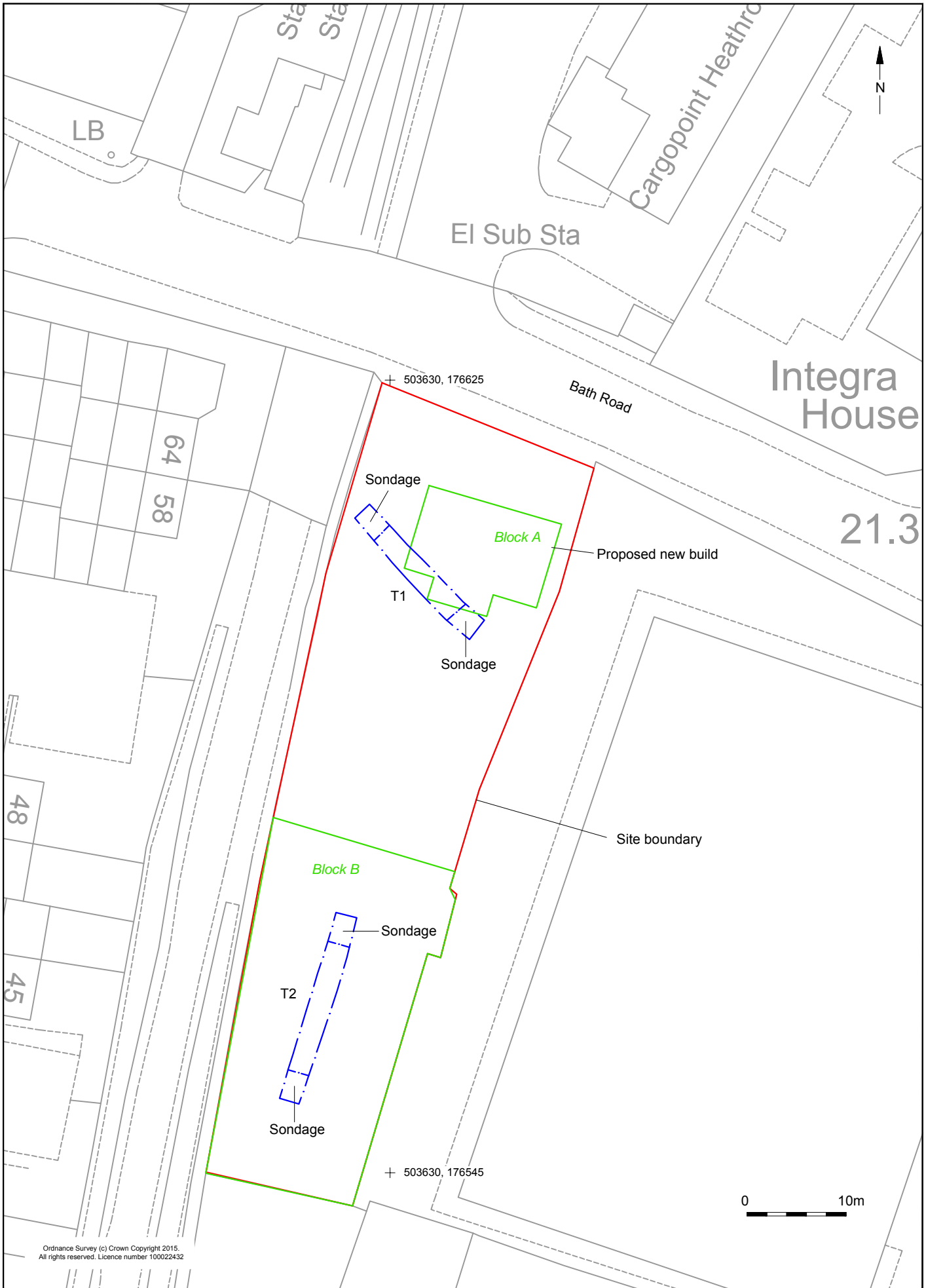
Appendix 1: Archaeological Negative Trenches, List of Recorded Contexts

Trench Number	Context	Type	Description	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
1	001	Layer	Asphalt surface	0.11	21.44-21.55
1	002	Layer	Modern made ground	0.52-0.76	21.33-21.44
1	003	Layer	Modern made ground	0.57-0.99	20.68-20.81
1	004	Layer	Natural	-	19.82-20.11
2	001	Layer	Modern made ground	0.34-0.48	21.21-21.24
2	002	Layer	Modern made ground	1.14-1.49	20.76-20.84
2	003	Layer	Natural	-	19.35-19.64



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© Archaeology South-East		Land off Bath Road, Colnbrook, Berkshire		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 7768	October 2015	Site location		
Report No: 2015396	Drawn by: DJH			



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© Archaeology South-East		Land off Bath Road, Colnbrook, Berkshire	Fig.2
Project Ref: 7768	October 2015	Location of evaluation trenches	
Report Ref: 2015396	Drawn by: DJH		



Trench 1: Section of northwest sondage



Trench 1: View of trench looking southeast



Trench 2: Section of southern sondage



Trench 2: Section of northern sondage

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