

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Land at Chestnut Grove Academy School
Chestnut Grove, Balham
London Borough of Wandsworth**

**NGR: 52830 17332
(TQ 2830 7332)**

**ASE Project No: 8562
Site Code: NUT16
ASE Report No: 2016089
OASIS id: archaeol6-244324**





By Sarah Ritchie, MA, ACIfA

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Prepared by:	Sarah Ritchie	Archaeologist	
Reviewed and approved by:	Dan Swift	Project Manager	
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**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 CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological watching brief of land at Chestnut Grove Academy School, Chestnut Grove, Balham, Borough of Wandsworth, in advance of redevelopment. The watching brief was carried out on the 22nd February 2016.

No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed. The watching brief revealed that, between c.1973-2002, during the process of removing the post-medieval housing and the building of the existing school the whole site had been reduced, thus meaning the whole site sits within a basin approximately 2m lower than the existing road level making the likelihood of any archaeological survival within the site minimal.

The stripping of an access ramp from Chestnut Grove into the school revealed a sequence of natural head deposits overlain by made ground, topsoil and turf.

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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 watching brief of land at Chestnut Grove Academy School, Chestnut Grove, Balham, Borough of Wandsworth (Figure 1, NGR.: TQ 2830 7332).

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The solid geology of the site is shown by the British Geological Survey (BGS Map Viewer online, 2015) as London Clay deposits (clay and silt) with overlying deposits of Lynch Hill Gravel Member (sand and gravel) and head (clay, silt, sand and gravel). Head deposits typically comprise frost and ice damaged material which has progressed downslope through a process of solifluction.

1.2.2 Geotechnical data from a recent ground investigation report at the site (Geosphere Environmental, 2015) records deposits of head overlying London Clay predominantly in the southern part of the site, and at one location in the north of the site. Head deposits were encountered between 0.3m and 3.3m below the ground surface.

1.2.3 Lynch Hill Gravel was observed in the north of the site overlying London Clay between 1.6m and 2.7m below the ground surface.

1.2.4 Deposits of made ground were mostly encountered in the north of the site and at two locations in the south of the site. In the north of the site, thicker deposits of made ground were encountered, ranging between 0.7m and 1.2m thick and lying between 0.15m and 1.7m below the ground surface, overlying the natural geology. In the south of the site, thinner deposits were encountered roughly 0.2m thick and lying between 0.3m and 0.5m below the ground surface.

1.2.5 A spot height of 25m AOD is situated on Boundaries Road to the south-east of the site.

1.2.6 The site is bound by Chestnut Grove to the north-east, Hearnville Road to the north-west, Boundaries Road to the south-east, a rail line and terraced housing to the south and south-west.

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 A planning application has been approved by Wandsworth Council (Planning Ref: 2015/5395) for the demolition of the main school buildings and the erection of two new school buildings and a substation with associated landscaping. Permission was granted subject to the following condition:

Condition 6

A) No development other than demolition to existing ground level shall take place until the implementation of a programme of archaeological site work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority in writing, and a report on that evaluation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing.

B) No development or demolition shall take place other than in accordance with and implement the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under Part A.

C) The development shall not be occupied until the archaeological site work and post site work assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under Part (A), and the provision for analysis, publication and dissemination of the results and archive deposition has been secured.

REASON: To secure the provision of appropriate archaeological investigation as heritage assets of archaeological interest may survive on the site, including the publication of results, in accordance with Section 12 of the NPPF and Council policy DMS2.

- 1.3.2 An archaeological desk-based assessment was prepared in support of the application (CgMs 2015). Archaeological potential was recorded as limited with significant truncation likely. Having considered the DBA, GLAAS recommended that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken in the area of the proposed northern block, where previous impacts have been minor.

1.4 Scope of Report

- 1.4.1 This report details the results of the archaeological watching brief carried out on the site between on the 22nd February 2015. This report has been prepared in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE, 2015).
- 1.4.2 The site work was carried out by Sarah Ritchie, and was managed by Andy Leonard (fieldwork), Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift (post-excavation).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The archaeological background is set out in the Desk Based Assessment prepared for the site (CgMs, 2015) and summarised below.

2.2 Prehistoric

2.2.1 There have been a limited number of Palaeolithic residual finds in the Balham area. No features of this date are noted in the DBA with the exception of a 'Palaeolithic stream', recorded at Sarsfield Road. The dating of this stream is based on it having silted up prior to the deposition of Mesolithic flints on top. Further finds from Sarsfield Road include a residual flint scraper of Mesolithic or early Neolithic date.

2.2.2 By the 1st millennium, i.e. 1000 BC, the landscape of the area was probably a mix of extensive tracts of open farmland, punctuated by earthwork burial and ceremonial monuments from distant generations, with settlements, ritual areas and defended locations reflecting an increasingly hierarchical society.

2.2.3 No finds of Bronze or Iron Age date have been recorded from the vicinity of the site. Overall the archaeological potential of the site for the prehistoric periods is thought to be generally low, though residual lithic finds in very small quantities could be present.

2.3 Roman

2.3.1 Balham High Road is believed to follow the course of Stane Street, the Roman road from London to Chichester located to the west of the site. Part of the road surface was observed at Balham High Road in 1968 and comprised a heavily disturbed layer of flints in a gravel and mortar bed.

2.3.2 A supposed 'Roman villa' was identified at 'Balham' in the late 1930s. However the records of this find are so poor that its exact nature and location remains uncertain. The existence of this villa is discounted in the most recent overview of Balham's Archaeology and History.

2.3.3 It is likely during the Roman period that the site lay within open land peripheral to known areas of settlement further north.

2.4 Anglo Saxon and Medieval

2.4.1 Balham is first recorded in an Anglo Saxon Estate Charter of 957 AD. It is thought that the Saxon farmstead was located on Stane Street, with the surrounding area probably comprised of farmland or woodland. Balham is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086AD, as a small agricultural estate comprised of 3 households and 240 acres of ploughland.

2.4.2 No finds of Anglo-Saxon or early medieval date are recorded within the wider area.

2.4.3 The medieval core of Balham developed further to the north-east of the site. Balham High Street developed as a main thoroughfare from Balham down to Newington throughout the medieval period.

2.4.4 The site is located well outside the historic core of the early post-medieval settlement of Balham.

2.5 Post Medieval and Modern

2.5.1 The site likely lay within agricultural land throughout the post-medieval period, with settlement in the area focussed further to the north. The 1729 John Senex Map of Surrey, 1747 Rocque Map of London and the 1804 Ordnance Survey Drawing all show the site located within agricultural fields to the west of Balham High Street.

2.5.2 The 1840 Streatham Tithe Map shows residential roads and terraced properties being laid out within the site. Boundaries Road forms the south-eastern boundary of the site, and Chestnut Grove is shown laid out to the north-east. The line of the railway forms the southern boundary of the site. The accompanying tithe award records the field occupying the site as a meadow.

2.5.3 By 1874 the site was chiefly occupied by rows of Victorian terraced and semi-detached housing along Dandy Street (later Dendy Street), Kate Street and the western side of Chestnut Grove. Two large rectangular buildings are shown in the south-eastern corner of the site. Fields are shown in the northern part of the site, with a large detached house and ancillary buildings linked by a drive to Chestnut Grove.

2.5.4 The 1894-6 Ordnance Survey map shows the construction of further terraced housing on the northern side of Kate Street, and the north-western side of Chestnut Grove. One of the large rectangular buildings in the south-eastern site corner has been demolished, and the land subdivided into two plots. The detached house in the northern part of the site has been replaced by a smaller square building, with the remainder of the plot subdivided into three sections. Two long rectangular buildings are shown in this area to the rear of properties lining Chestnut Grove.

2.5.5 The 1906 Ordnance Survey map shows Hearnville Road now forming the northern site boundary. A school has been constructed in the former field in the northwest of the site, together with associated ancillary buildings. There is little visible change on the remainder of the site.

2.5.6 By 1973-4 the site has been largely cleared, with all the housing along Kate Street, the northern side of Dendy Street and along the western side of Chestnut Grove having been removed. The Hearnville Primary School and Balham School buildings are still shown on the site. By 2003 the site is shown containing the current modern buildings.

2.6 Project Aims and Objectives

2.6.1 The general aims of the watching brief were:

- To define, insofar as possible, the date, character, form and function of any archaeological features observed on site
- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the footprint of the proposed development and to preserve by record any such remains
- To determine the survival, extent and minimum depth below modern ground level of any such remains
- To determine the nature and significance of any archaeological deposits

2.6.2 Specific research questions include:

- Is there any evidence of prehistoric activity on site?
- Is there any evidence for the post-medieval buildings which previously occupied the site?

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 A Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) were prepared prior to commencement of the work. A site code (NUT 16) was obtained from the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) and was used as the unique site identifier for all records.
- 3.1.2 The watching brief work, as detailed in the WSI (ASE 2015), originally comprised the archaeological monitoring of all ground reduction; excavation for foundations; drainage and landscaping associated with the development of the northern block (Figure 2). However, upon arriving at the site it became apparent that, between c.1973-2002, during the process of removing the post-medieval housing and the building of the existing school the whole site had been reduced, thus meaning the whole site sits within a basin approximately 2m lower than the existing road level. The likelihood of any archaeological survival within the site is thus highly unlikely and it was agreed between GLAAS and CgMs that no further work need be archaeologically monitored within the site.
- 3.1.3 All machine excavation was undertaken using a suitable back-acting mechanical excavator provided by the client or their contractor and fitted with a wide flat-bladed ditching bucket. The machine excavation was excavated through undifferentiated topsoil and modern made ground in spits of no more than 0.25m until archaeological deposits or the top of the underlying natural sediments reached.

3.2 Archive

3.2.1 ASE informed LAARC prior to the commencement of fieldwork that a site archive would be generated. 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 (Tables 1 & 2).

Context sheets	3
Section sheets	0
Plans sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	25
Context register	0
Drawing register	0
Watching brief forms	1
Trench Record forms	0

Table 1: Quantification of site paper archive

Bulk finds (quantity e.g. 1 bag, 1 box, 0.5 box 0.5 of a box)	0
Registered finds (number of)	0
Flots and environmental remains from bulk samples	0
Palaeoenvironmental specialists sample samples (e.g. columns, prepared slides)	0
Waterlogged wood	0
Wet sieved environmental remains from bulk samples	0

Table 2: Quantification of artefact and environmental samples

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Ramp Area

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m	Depth (mOD)
1/001	Layer	Topsoil	25m	7m	0.30m	25.43-23.38m OD
1/002	Layer	Made Ground	24m	7m	NFE	25.13-23.23m OD
1/003	Layer	Natural	1m	7m	NFE	23.09m OD

Table 3: List of recorded contexts

- 4.1.1 An area running from Chestnut Grove down into the site was stripped in order to create an access ramp for lorries associated with the proposed building works. The access ramp measured 7m x 25m x 0.30m deep.
- 4.1.2 The strip revealed natural orange-brown clay with sand and gravel head deposits [1/003] within the western-most 1m of the ramp, located at c.23.09m OD. Overlying this was a layer of made ground consisting of dark-brown sandy-silt with brick and concrete fragments and crushed mortar inclusions [1/002] believed to be associated with the demolition of the post-medieval housing previously on the site (demolished by 1973) and the subsequent erection of the existing school buildings (completed by 2002). This layer was not fully excavated, but sloped east to west from c. 25.13m OD down to 23.23m OD.
- 4.1.3 The strip was sealed by 0.30m of mid-dark brown silt topsoil and turf [1/001], which sloped east-west down from c.25.43m OD to 23.38m OD.
- 4.1.4 No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence

5.1.1 The watching brief revealed that between c.1973-2002, during the process of removing the post-medieval housing and the building of the existing school, the whole site had been reduced, thus meaning the whole site sits within a basin approximately 2m lower than the existing road level within natural deposits. The stripping of an access ramp from Chestnut Grove into the school (Figure 3) revealed a sequence of natural head deposits overlain by made ground and sealed by topsoil and turf.

5.1.2 No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed.

5.2 Potential impact on archaeological remains

5.2.1 Planning permission has been granted (Planning Ref: 2015/5395) for the demolition of the main school buildings and the erection of two new school buildings and a substation with associated landscaping.

5.2.2 Due to the fact that the whole site sits within a basin approximately 2m lower than the existing road level. The likelihood of any archaeological survival within the site is highly unlikely, and so it is unlikely there are any archaeological remains surviving within the site.

5.3 Consideration of research aims

- *To define, insofar as possible, the date, character, form and function of any archaeological features observed on site.*

No archaeological remains were observed within the site

- *To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the footprint of the proposed development and to preserve by record any such remains*

No archaeological remains were observed within the site

- *To determine the survival, extent and minimum depth below modern ground level of any such remains*

The site was heavily truncated and ground level reduced during the demolition of the post-medieval housing and the subsequent erection of the existing school buildings, meaning no archaeological remains were observed within the site.

- *To determine the nature and significance of any archaeological deposits*

No archaeological remains were observed within the site.

- *Is there any evidence of prehistoric activity on site?*

No evidence relating to the prehistoric period was observed within the site.

- *Is there any evidence for the post-medieval buildings which previously occupied the site?*

Aside from a made ground associated with the demolition of the post-medieval buildings and subsequent building works, no evidence of the post-medieval buildings was observed.

5.4 Conclusions

- 5.4.1 No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed. The watching brief revealed that, between c.1973-2002, during the process of removing the post-medieval housing and the building of the existing school the whole site had been reduced, thus meaning the whole site sits within a basin approximately 2m lower than the existing road level making the likelihood of any archaeological survival within the site minimal.
- 5.4.2 The stripping of an access ramp from Chestnut Grove into the school revealed a sequence of natural head deposits located at 23.09m OD overlain by made ground and sealed by topsoil and turf. The ramp sloped east-west from 25.43m OD to 23.38m OD.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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HER Summary

Site Code	NUT16				
Identification Name and Address	Land at Chestnut Grove Academy School, Chestnut Grove, Balham				
County, District &/or Borough	London Borough of Wandsworth				
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 2830 7332				
Geology	Lynch Hill Gravel Member				
Arch. South-East Project Number	8562				
Type of Fieldwork			Watching Brief		
Type of Site		Shallow Urban			
Dates of Fieldwork			22 nd Feb 2016		
Sponsor/Client	CgMs				
Project Manager	Andy Leonard				
Project Supervisor	Sarah Ritchie				
Period Summary			PM	Modern	
Summary					
<p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to to undertake an archaeological watching brief of land at Chestnut Grove Academy School, Chestnut Grove, Balham, Borough of Wandsworth, in advance of redevelopment. The watching brief was carried out on the 22nd February 2016.</i></p> <p><i>No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed. The watching brief revealed that, between c.1973-2002, during the process of removing the post-medieval housing and the building of the existing school the whole site had been reduced, thus meaning the whole site sits within a basin approximately 2m lower than the existing road level making the likelihood of any archaeological survival within the site minimal.</i></p> <p><i>The stripping of an access ramp from Chestnut Grove into the school revealed a sequence of natural head deposits located at 23.09m OD overlain by made ground and sealed by topsoil and turf. The ramp sloped east-west from 25.43m OD to 23.38m OD.</i></p>					

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-244324

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Land at Chestnut Grove Academy School, Chestnut Grove, Balham, London Borough of W
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to to undertake an archaeological watching brief of land at Chestnut Grove Academy School, Chestnut Grove, Balham, Borough of Wandsworth, in advance of redevelopment. The watching brief was carried out on the 22nd February 2016. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed. The watching brief revealed that, between c.1973-2002, during the process of removing the post-medieval housing and the building of the existing school the whole site had been reduced, thus meaning the whole site sits within a basin approximately 2m lower than the existing road level making the likelihood of any archaeological survival within the site minimal. The stripping of an access ramp from Chestnut Grove into the school revealed a sequence of natural head deposits located at 23.09m OD overlain by made ground and sealed by topsoil and turf. The ramp sloped east-west from 25.43m OD to 23.38m OD.
Project dates	Start: 22-02-2016 End: 22-02-2016
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	NUT16 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - Direction 4

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON WANDSWORTH TOOTING Chestnut Grove Academy School, Chestnut Grove, Balham
Postcode	SW12 8RR
Study area	400 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 2830 7332 51.443815788588 -0.153655889085 51 26 37 N 000 09 13 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 23.09m Max: 23.09m

Project creators

Name of	Archaeology South-East
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Organisation

Project brief originator CgMs Consulting

Project design originator ASE/CgMs

Project director/manager Andy Leonard

Project supervisor Sarah Ritchie

Type of sponsor/funding body Client

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Archive recipient LAARC

Paper Archive recipient LAARC

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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Author(s)/Editor(s) Ritchie, S.

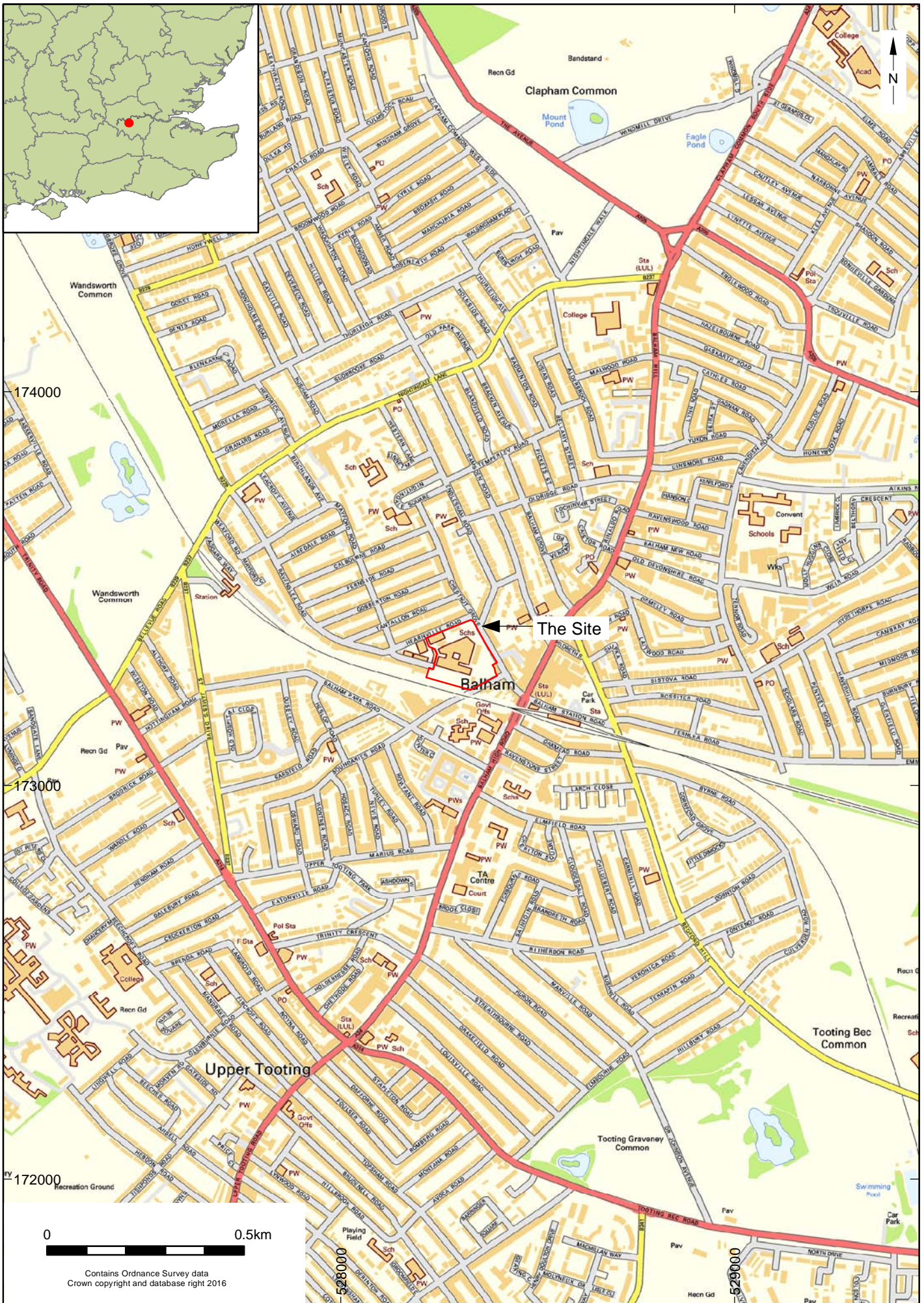
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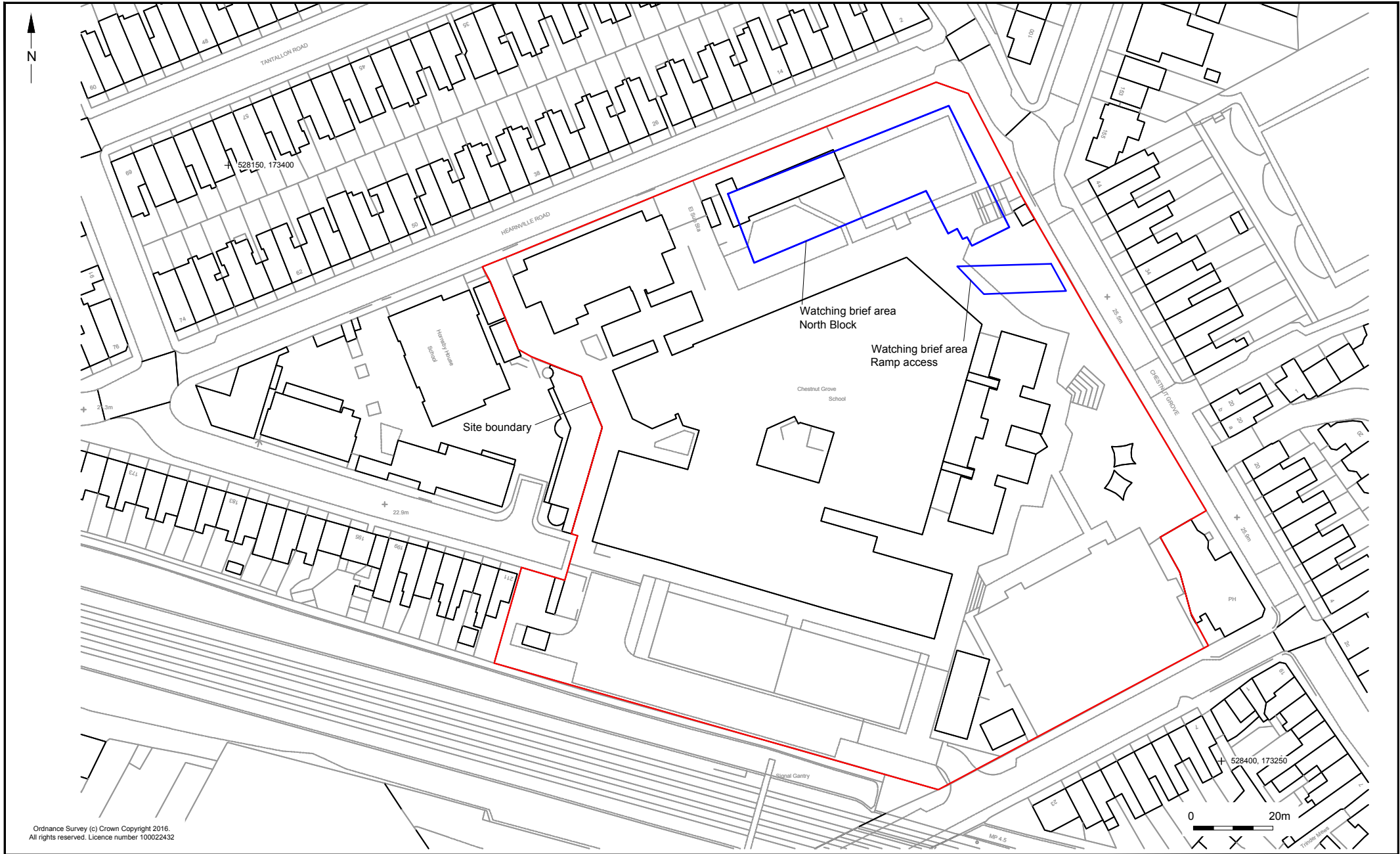
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© Archaeology South-East		Land at Chestnut Grove Academy School, Chestnut Grove, Balham, London Borough of Wandsworth		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 8562	03 - 2016	Site location		
Report Ref: 2016089	Drawn by: NG			



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© Archaeology South-East		Land at Chestnut Grove Academy School, Chestnut Grove, Balham, London Borough of Wandsworth	Fig.2
Project Ref: 8562	03 - 2016	Watching brief area	
Report Ref: 2016089	Drawn by: NG		



Excavated ramp area, facing north west



Excavated ramp area, facing east

Sussex Office

Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex BN41 1DR
tel: +44(0)1273 426830
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
www.archaeologyse.co.uk

Essex Office

27 Eastways
Witham
Essex
CM8 3YQ
tel: +44(0)1376 331470
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
www.archaeologyse.co.uk

London Office

Centre for Applied Archaeology
UCL Institute of Archaeology
31-34 Gordon Square
London WC1H 0PY
tel: +44(0)20 7679 4778
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
www.ucl.ac.uk/caa

