Archaeology South-East

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BARKING POWER STATION, RIVER ROAD, CREEKMOUTH, LONDON BOROUGH OF BARKING AND DAGENHAM

HISTORIC BUILDINGS RECORD (HISTORIC ENGLAND LEVEL 3)

Commissioned by: CgMs Consulting

Project no. 160566
Report ref: 2017058
Site Code: RER16
OASIS ID: archaeol6-277204

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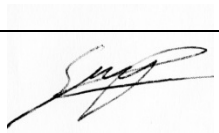
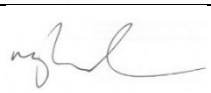
Prepared by:	Seth Price	Archaeologist	
Reviewed and approved by:	Dr Michael Shapland	Project Manager	
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SUMMARY

In January 2017 Archaeology South-East (a division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, UCL) carried out a programme of historic building recording (Historic England Level 3) at the former Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (NGR: 546433 181858). The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting. The site is proposed for redevelopment as part of the Barking Riverside development.

When Barking Power Station was completed in 1925, it was the largest power station in Europe. The control room building, along with the nearby Station B switch house (not a part of the record), form the last vestiges of this complex. Constructed in the Art Deco style in two phases – a western range of 1925 and an eastern range of c.1932, it was from here that the power generation across the site, and the grid the stations served, could be supervised. The success of the station paved the way for the 1926 Electricity Supply Act which culminated in the creation of the National Grid, centralising generation on a national scale of distribution.

The decommissioning of the complex in 1981 reflected the rising costs of coal- and oil-fired stations, improvements in technology, and increasing environmental concerns. During its time Barking Power Station transformed the local area, from an area of open wasteland to a thriving industrial landscape inhabited by large factories, stores, and post-1930s suburban housing developments.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In January 2017 Archaeology South-East (a division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, UCL) carried out a programme of historic building recording (Historic England Level 3) at the former Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (Figures 1 and 2; NGR: 546433 181858). The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on land proposed for redevelopment as part of the Barking Riverside development.

1.2 The site comprises the control room and office building of the former Barking Power Station A, dating to 1925, which had been extended by 1932, for the completion of Power Station B. The site forms a *c*. one hectare rectangular parcel of land bounded to the north-west by River Road and to the south by Bullmans Shipping Containers yard and an electricity sub-station. The former electrical substation of the Phase 'B' stage of the former Barking Power Station is located to the north-east of the site, dating to c.1932, together with the Dagenham Retail Market. The former control room and office building is aligned north-east – south-west at the angle created between the junction of the site's north-east and south-east boundaries. None of the structures within the site or located within the vicinity of the site are listed or locally listed.

2.0 SCOPE & METHODOLOGY

2.1 The building was recorded to Historic England Level 3 as defined in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (Historic England 2016). A Level 3 record is essentially an analytical record.

2.2 The site was visited by Seth Price and Christopher Curtis on the 15th and 16th February 2017 in order to carry out the recording work. This entailed the compilation of written notes, the verification of measured survey drawings and the production of a photographic record.

2.3 The drawn record comprises plans of each floor of the building to illustrate its layout and elevation drawings. These are based on drawings provided by the client. The resulting scaled drawings are included within the report as Figures 22 – 26.

2.4 The photographic record was made using high-resolution digital photography. Within the report selected digital images have been reproduced as plates, together with a full index of the digital photography and location plots (Appendix 2). A full catalogue of all photographs is included in the archive.

3.0 SITE LOCATION

3.1 The former control room building, the last remnant of the Phase A power station, is situated to the north of the original turbine hall and boiler buildings. The turbine hall, boiler house, and other structures forming the Phase A power station, along with the former Phase B and C structures, were demolished following decommissioning in the 1980s.

3.2 The study site lies on an east-facing slope on the north bank of the River Thames. Levels within the site slope down from 6.4m AOD at the north-western boundary at to 6.1m AOD at the north-eastern edge of the site. The site forms a rectangular parcel of land with an area of c.1ha. The control room building is set back from River Road, within the south-east of its present parcel. Modern palisade fencing, disused shipping containers, and irregular self-sown vegetation delineate the site boundaries. The surrounding landscape is decidedly industrial in nature, with the site being enclosed to west, south, and east by container storage yards, and wasteland to the north.

4.0 HISTORIC BACKGROUND

4.1 The former Barking Power Station at River Road comprised the original coal-fired A, B and C stations. The first of the stations opened in 1925 and all three were decommissioned by the end of the 1980s, with the majority of the associated structures subsequently demolished. The former power station was replaced in the 1990s by the current gas-fired station (known as Barking Reach Power Station), located at short distance to the north of the site. Barking Reach Power Station is itself now largely obsolete, having last seen major use for backup power during the 2012 London Olympics, and since being considered too unprofitable to operate due to increasing gas prices (Shales 2014).

4.2 Prior to the construction of Barking A Power Station, Barking Town Urban District Council operated its own power station from 1897 until its closure in 1927. In 1920, the County of London Electric Supply Company (CLESCo) applied for permission to build a power station at Creekmouth in Barking capable of expansion to 600 MW (Holmes 1920).

4.3 The Barking site was chosen for the development, owing to a plentiful supply of water and ease of access by road, rail and river (CLESCo 1925: 23). A site comprising some 320 acres was acquired as early as 1914, but development was delayed by the outbreak of the First World War, and subsequently by the passing of the Electricity Supply Act of 1919, which stipulated that no new generating station could proceed without permission of the newly established Electricity Commissioners (CLESCo n.d.: 18). Sir Harry Renwick, director of the Company, appealed until permission was finally granted in June 1922. The scale of the development and the softness of the ground necessitated the diversion of drainage, construction of new roads and railway sidings, and the laying of three thousand five-ton reinforced-concrete piles to a depth of 40 feet (CLESCo 1925: 24). Some 300,000 tons of earth and rubbish had to be removed from the site. The first half of Barking A Power Station opened on the 19th May 1925 by King George V, and in 1927 it took over from the Barking Town Urban District Council station (Powell 1966). By 1925 the construction of the station had used some four-thousand tons of steelwork and two and a half million bricks (CLESCo 1925: 24).

4.4 Aerial photographs and Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping from 1916 to 1925 show the initial clearance and development of the site (Figures 3 – 7). The control room at that

time only comprised a five-bay structure with switch rooms to its west (Figure 7). Also of interest are a series of concept illustrations published by CLESCo in their commemorative publication for the opening of the power station, entitled '*County of London Electric Supply Co. Ltd.: Opening of the Company's New Power House at Creekmouth, Barking by His Majesty King George V on 19th May 1925'* (Figures 8 – 10). The publication includes photographs of notable rooms within the new station, including an aerial photograph and the interior of the switch room within the subject building (Figures 11 and 12). Messrs. Merz and McLellan were the designers of the station.[1] The Control Room building, the subject of this record, is briefly described:

> *The Switch House building, comprising the Control Room, round which are grouped the administrative offices, and two main switch rooms, is separated from the Engine Room by a twenty-foot roadway… The main switches are divided, for safety, in two separate buildings, and are of the Reyrolle ironclad type. Each switch is capable of breaking some 2,000,000 house-power, and all are operated electrically by means of push-button control panels situated in the control room… Here the attendants can regulate the speed of the turbo-alternators and operate the whole of the switchgear controlling the generators and the cables leading from the Power House… In this room is a large diagram of the Company's distribution mains, so that the operator has before him a visual indication of the system which he is supplying and the position of the switches in the main sub-stations are fed from baking… The Switch Room is connected by a complete system of telephones and telegraphs with the Engine Room, also with the power stations or sub-stations on the system; the output of the Power House can thus be regulated to give maximum efficiency.* (CLESCo 1925: 28)

4.5 Construction and extension of the facility continued until *c*.1930, as visible in early aerial photography (Figures 13 and 14). When completed, the A station was the largest power station in Britain to have been built as a complete station at one time. The original boilers were scrapped in the early 1950s and replaced by steam from the B station, whilst the fuel boilers were converted to oil firing around 1964.

4.6 Barking's original Station A was extended by the building of the Station B between 1931 and 1939 (Figures 15 - 17). A second power station at the site had been intended as early as 1925, in order to meet the Company's estimated demand for the 1930s (CLESCo N.D.: 21). The establishment of the new station required that the control room be extended (to its present dimensions), which had been enacted by 1932 (The Engineer 1934: 31). A photograph dating to 1932 shows the Station B switch house under construction, with the Station A control room building at its full extent shown beyond (Figure 16). Figure 18 shows the appearance of the extended control room.

4.7 A description of the power station in *The Engineer*, February 1934, describes the control room and switch house. The 33kV switchgear in the station was manufactured by A. Reyrolle and Co., and the switch house, to the west of the control room building, comprised two wings housing circuit breakers with a breaking capacity of 1.5 million kVA. The control room itself was also equipped with Reyrolle apparatus, comprising a large system diagram and system telephone desk, two generator governor control

[1] Merz and McLellan was established in 1902 when William McLellan joined Charles Merz's company Cork Electric Tramways and Lighting Company (Ireland). The company operated out of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Merz was integral to the emergence of an integrated electrical grid, culminating in the National Grid following the Electricity Supply Act of 1926. Merz and McLellan worked with Sir Alexander Gibb to design Barking Power Station (Grace's Guide 2017; Redmayne 2011).

pedestals, a telephone pedestal to the turbine room, generator and reactor panels, and two 33kW outgoing feeder control boards.

4.8 Barking B was also designed by the consulting engineering firm Merz and McLellan and its capacity stood at 303 MW. The power station was transferred to the London Division of the British Electricity Authority in 1948 (Powell 1966). Both Stations A and B survived relatively undamaged by bombing during the Second World War, and are clearly visible in an aerial photograph dating to 1946 (Figure 19). Station B was decommissioned on 15th March 1976, at which time it had an operating capacity of 144 MW (Hansard 1984).

4.9 The British Electricity Authority built a third station at Creekmouth, which was completed in 1954. Ordnance Survey mapping dating to 1961 and 1975 shows the site at its maximum extent, with Station A to the west, and Stations B and C arrayed in turn to the east (Figures 20-21). Railway sidings encircle the site, with one running directly into Station A just west of the former control room. Station C was closed on 26 October 1981, at which time its operating capacity was 220 MW (Hansard 1984). Much like A station, the fuel boilers at C were converted to oil firing around 1960. Stations A and B had both been demolished by 1984, with C following soon after, and the railway sidings formerly serving the site also removed.

5.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING

Overview

5.1 The Art Deco control room building is primarily of three storeys with a basement (not accessed) and flat parapeted roof (also not accessed). It is formed of two distinct ranges, of five bays to the west (constructed by 1925) and four bays to the east (constructed by 1932), with the western range projecting slightly on its northern side. At its western-most end, the building retains a single-storey section of a now-demolished switch house which originally continued westwards. In addition to the rooftop and basement, a part of the ground floor of the building was also inaccessible for survey.

5.2 Although the control room is essentially unaltered, retaining many of its original fixtures and architectural detailing, most of its fittings and equipment have been removed. Fittings and external stylings are largely uniform, clearly demonstrating elements of a simplified Art Deco style, wherein design elements vary minimally between ranges, both internally and externally, although fittings do tend to be less ornate within the eastern range. The quality design and expensive fittings express a late iteration of the 19th century trend of company investment and civic pride, which diminished through the 20th century.

5.3 The building is arranged around a large central double-height control room at first floor level, ringed by a series of smaller office and ancillary rooms. Corridors provide circulation, leading off a principal staircase situated within the north side of the principal western range. Primary external access is via a doorway within the centre of the principal elevation of the western range, leading to a lobby, hallway, and the principal stair. Several secondary access points are situated around the building, though are presently blocked or boarded up, and a secondary stair is situated within the south-east corner of the 1932 eastern range.

Exterior

5.4 The building is constructed from red brick laid in Flemish bond resting on a rusticated plinth of banded stone, with a stone plat band dividing the ground and first floor elevations, and a moulded cornice with a brick parapet above, which appears to be a later addition. The roof-height of the eastern range is slightly higher than that of the western, and features a more elaborate entablature: part of the western range's entablature may have been removed when its parapet was constructed (Plates 1 and 2).

5.5 The principal, northern, elevation of the building is divided into two ranges; five bays to the west and four bays set back to the east (Plate 3). The central doorway to the western range is accessed up a flight of stairs, has a banded rusticated surround in the Art-Deco style, contiguous with the building's plinth, and is topped by a moulded entablature (Plate 5). The door itself comprises a two-leaf panelled oak door (only one leaf of which remains), with a design of stripes and circles framing the panels (Plate 6). To either side of the stairs are curved stone walls, formerly ornamented by finials or the like at their ends, as indicated by remnant steel ties. The windows typically comprise multi-pane Crittalls with moulded sills, framed by stone architraves with prominent keystones (Plate 4). At first- and second-floor level are five tall continuous window openings, divided by elegant cast-iron spandrels (Plates 7 and 8).

5.6 The eastern range has three windows at ground-floor level, alike to those of the west elevation. A former large opening with a banded architrave has been partially infilled with Fletton brick, and set with a smaller doorway and a Crittall window and a fixed light. This formerly accommodated a railway siding which led to a long service bay. The first floor windows resemble those of the western range.

5.7 The eastern elevation is divided between its tall northern part, which continues the architecture of the principal elevation and a lower two-storey southern part, which is plainer and carries less embellishment to the entablature and window openings, which lack stone architraves, and feature simple flat lintels of brick (Plate 10).

5.8 The south elevation also lacks the grandeur of the principal elevation, having formerly backed onto the power station (Plates 11 and 12). The east end of the south elevation is only two storeys in height, with an open roof space above. An opening with a folding steel door is set towards the eastern side of the elevation, a low blocked opening is situated towards the middle, and a third opening to the west (Plates 13-15). A blocked opening at first-floor level to the west of the elevation appears to have formerly led to a bridge leading south to the engine houses of the power station, as shown on the historic mapping (Plate 16; Figures 19 & 20). Where the elevation reverts to three-storeys in height to the rear of the western range, the roofline bears an elaborate entablature similar to that seen to the front of the eastern range: an entablature of similar type is likely to have formerly been present across the entire front elevation, but it has been partially removed (Plates 3 & 17).

5.9 The west elevation formerly incorporated the switch house, so is devoid of ornamentation (Plate 18). It presently extends as a single-storey structure with a broad brick plinth and a flat roof, but formerly rose to the full height of the main control room building. A remnant length of railway siding runs alongside, served by a concrete platform, which would likely have facilitated plant deliveries to the building (Plate 19). The building has been partially repaired with concrete at its truncated southern end (Plate 20).

Interior – General

5.10 The interior of the building has seen fairly minimal interventions since its construction, although some of its decorative ornamentation and most of its fixtures have been removed, and a number of doorways blocked. Rooms radiate around the large central control room, with offices and ancillary rooms along corridors. Rooms are also fairly consistent in appearance: WCs have tiled dados; offices have skirting, picture rails, and cornicing in the western range, and skirtings and picture rails only in the eastern range; corridors and general circulation areas are paved with granolithic flooring, whilst offices generally have parquet flooring, overlain in places by asbestos tiling; corridors within the west range feature skirting and cornicing, while those in the east range feature picture rails and skirting but no cornicing, as depicted on the as-existing building plans (Figures 22 – 24). The steel-framed frame structure of the building is evident looking along corridors, where regular pilasters mark the location of structural posts (Plate 21).

5.11 Doorways typically feature moulded architraves, with plinths at their bases tying into skirting (Plate 22). Doors have been largely removed throughout the building, but those that remain are of a six-panelled type.

5.12 For ease of description, rooms have been numbered by floor (e.g. G1, G2, etc.), with room numbers being shown in Figures 22 – 24 below.

Interior – Ground Floor

5.13 Beyond the main entrance is a small lobby (G1) with a reception desk window immediately ahead, and double doors to the left leading to the hallway (G2) (Plate 23). The reception (G3) is screened by a window with moulded timber mullions and architrave and frosted leaded panes. The lobby has a moulded skirting, picture rail, and cornicing, embellished by the addition of a moulded chair rail and blue-tiled dado. The double doors leading to the hallway are glazed, and feature a fine Art-Deco overlight with a pattern of crossed glazing bars (Plate 24).

5.14 The hallway (G2) is a grand open space decorated in similar fashion to the lobby (Plate 25). The elaborate Art Deco main stair has a graceful moulded oak handrail, a decorative cast iron balustrade, and a volute newel post atop a pair of bullnosed steps (Plates 27 and 28). The stair treads are of concrete with a granolithic finish, and the dado and chair rail continue from the hallway up the stairs. It has an open well and quarter-paced landings, and bifurcates at second floor level to access the east and west corridors at first-floor level (Plate 29). The below-stairs cupboard is lit by glazed lights and is accessed via a part-glazed door.

5.15 Corridors lead east and west from the hallway, and a third opening formerly led south to a large room located beneath the first-floor control room (Room G13), which is now blocked and inaccessible. (Plate 26). The opening is now blocked, and no access was available, although imperfect glimpses show a space filled with cabling for the control room apparatus above.

5.16 The reception (G3) is enclosed by a glazed timber wall to its southern side, with the open desk to its east, and window to the lobby to its north (Plate 30). The room is simply adorned, lacking the cornicing, dado and chair rail seen in the adjacent rooms.

5.17 Turning west along the corridor from the hallway are two rooms. G4 is a standard office room with a glazed timber partition to the hallway (Plate 31), while G5 is a former telephone exchange which probably controlled the '*complete system of telephones and telegraphs*' that connected the control room with the Engine Room and power stations or sub-stations on the system (CLESCo 1925: 28; Plate 32). The room is styled alike with other office rooms, though fitted with an extant telephone exchange (Plate 33). A cable run, fuse-box, and switches on the room's south wall suggest other apparatus have been removed from the room.

5.18 East of the hallway the corridor is plain, adorned only by a moulded skirting (Plate 34). The south side of the corridor comprises a glazed timber wall leading to room G6. Towards the end of the corridor is a short flight of stairs down to a service room (G7). Room G6 comprises an L-shaped office space with only a typical skirting board for elaboration (Plate 35).

5.19 Room G7 is a plain service room (Plate 36), accessed via a doorways with bullnosed brick jambs and chamfered concrete lintels (Plate 37). The room has a large blocked opening to its north wall, now set with an inserted external window and door. Its southern wall is also inserted, dividing it from room G12. This part of the building formerly accommodated a railway track, as seen on historic aerial photographs (Figure 17), which exited where there is now a folding steel doorway on the southern elevation.

5.20 From Room G7 a low flight of stairs rises to Room G8, which is large and open plan with two central supporting columns (Plate 38). The room is adorned in typical style with skirting and picture rail, and most likely served as an office space. To the north,

Rooms G9 and G10 are typical office rooms (Plates 39 and 40), of which the latter retains a large 1950s Chatwood Milner 'Fire & Thief Resisting' safe within its south-west corner. This was opened live on ITV on the 6th October 2016, after an engineer spent some 7 hours cracking it (ITV 2016), when it was found to contain documents and artefacts relating to the day-to-day operation of the power station. In Room G9 a large quantity of documents and blueprints regarding pump and engine systems at a number of power stations around the country were observed, but not collected (Plate 41).

5.21 South from Room G8 is a blocked entrance to the inaccessible Room G12, which formerly comprised part of the railway line linking with Room G7 (Plate 42). Adjacent, WC G11 is typical of those at the site, with blue tiling on the lower parts of the walls, ceramic toilet ware, and original cubicles (Plate 44). Original 'SANICO' toilet roll holders are present in the cubicles. The room is lit by narrow high-set WC windows, and features no skirting, picture rail, or cornicing.

5.22 The secondary stair in the building's south-eastern corner is elegant in form, with cantilevered precast-concrete steps and a simple balustrade of square sectioned balusters supporting a sinuous oak handrail (Plates 45 - 47). It ascends to second floor level, where it terminates in a small enclosed space which comprises a steel and timber platform for a water tank, and a doorway providing access north to the roof space (Plate 48).

5.23 At the west end of the building is the single-storey remnant of the former switch house (Plate 49). The three rooms within this space (G14 – G16) were not accessible.

Interior – First Floor

5.24 The first-floor stair landing (F1) is divided from the stairwell by a glazed timber partition (Plates 50 and 51). A timber dado and chair rail runs along the landing's west wall, while a typical skirting and cornice provide further elaboration. To the south the landing leads through a double-doorway (lacking its doors) to the control room (F15). A corridor runs to the east and west, extending round three sides of the central control room (Plate 52).

5.25 The following three rooms west of the landing comprise two typical office rooms (F2 and F3) and a WC (F4) (Plates 53 – 55). Rooms F2 formerly featured a glazed timber partition to the corridor, which has since been removed, leaving a low wall section. WC F4 is similar to WC G11, albeit with a large window opening, and only one cubicle; it retains its skirting board. The end of the corridor leading west from the landing terminates at a typical doorway, which would formerly have led through to the switch houses (Plate 56).

5.26 Crossing east of the stair, Rooms F5 – F10 are consistent in general appearance, forming office spaces with skirting and picture rails (Plates 57 – 62). Room F7 has had one of its architraves and a section of skirting stripped from its west wall, revealing the underlying Fletton-brick construction, reinforced around the door opening with occasional cement bricks and a concrete lintel (Plate 63). A blocked doorway was also noted, between Rooms F6 and F7.

5.27 When the corridor reaches Room F7 it turns south, providing access to Rooms F8 – F10, and F11 (Plate 64). Room F11 (Plate 65) was previously separated from the corridor by a glazed timber partition, which has been removed. A blocked doorway in the north of the room formerly led to F16 and on to the control Room F15. F16 is adorned in the same manner as F11; with a moulded skirting alone (Plate 66). The

room was formerly lit by a skylight. A blocked opening at the end of the corridor formerly led west to Room F14, whereafter it turns towards the secondary stair in the south-eastern corner of the building. Adjacent, WC F12 is much like WC G11, and retains its granolithic flooring and much of its original sanitary ware (Plate 67).

5.28 To the rear of the building, now only accessible via the control room F15, is a long open room/corridor (F13). The room is unfurnished, with granolithic flooring, skirting, and cornicing (Plate 68). In the south wall at the room's west end is a blocked opening, formerly leading to a bridge across to the former engine rooms, since demolished (Plate 69). An opening leads west to the former switch house.

5.29 East of Room F13 is a short length of corridor leading to an irregularly shaped WC (F14) with angled glazed walls (Plates 70 and 71). It is presumed that this room was adapted for its present use as a WC. The corridor formerly continued east. Opposite the WC a small leaded light overlooks a narrow, inaccessible, flight of stairs leading down from the control room to G13 (Plate 72).

Interior – The Control Room

5.30 The Control Room (F15) is a large open-plan, double-height room which previously housed monitoring systems for the power station (Plate 73 and 74). The apparatus has been largely stripped from the room, with concrete beds and negative impressions in the asbestos tile floor showing their former locations (Plate 75). The concrete beds feature holes through which cabling could be ran to the room below (G13). Historic photos of the room demonstrate its original appearance (Figures 12 and 18), which has typical moulded skirting boards beneath yellow and blue tiled dados, rising to an elaborate entablature. Four large piers support the space, and are styled alike with the walls (Plates 76 and 77). Double doors with moulded architraves (Plate 78) lead north, south, and west from the room, with an unadorned opening leading off east to room F16. The room is lit from above by large skylights.

5.31 In the middle of the space between the four piers is a remnant later 20th century control panel equipped with a voltmeter and a series of switches and buttons (Plate 79). The rear of the panel houses multiple fuses. Until recently it is understood that this panel was housed within a glazed timber cabinet. A small, opened, Hobbs, Hart & Co. Ltd. safe is situated against the north-east pier (Plate 80).

5.32 When first operable in 1925 the control room was smaller than present, terminating two bays short of the present east wall. The room was extended to its present extent by 1932 to meet the increased demands of Station B. Comparison of the two historic control room photos (Figures 12 and 18), and looking at the present room, the melding of the two phases of construction is seamless. It would appear that the doorway in the west, leading to the former switch house, was a later addition, which is not depicted in the 1925 photograph (Figure 7). Likewise, the unornamented opening in the east wall of the room is likely to be a later addition, as it is not shown in the 1934 photograph (Figure 15). Both photographs show equipment (governor control pedestals and telephone pedestals) towards the centre of the room, imprints of which were documented during the site visit (Plate 81).

Interior – Second Floor

5.33 From the top of the main stair seven rooms are arrayed; four to the west (S1 – S4) and three to the east (S5 – S7). Beyond the rooms to the east end of the building is an open roof space and two further rooms which were not accessible at the time of the site visit. The corridors east and west are lit by skylights Plates 21 and 82). The

west end of the corridor terminates in a doorway leading to a later-20th century fire escape, though presumably it formerly led to the switch house. It has a panelled surround, creating a small lobby area dividing the space between the two earlier buildings (Plate 83).

5.34 Rooms S1 and S2 are finished in typical style for office rooms within the west range, with skirting, picture rail, and corniced coffered ceilings (Plates 84 and 85). Room S1 features two doorways to the corridor, and may previously have been subdivided along its mid-line. Extant lighting fixtures here, with winged flanges, are probably of mid- 20th century date (Plate 86). Rooms S3 and S4 are WCs, with the typical interiors (Plates 87 and 88). WC S3 has been stripped of fittings, but retains its tiling and granolithic flooring.

5.35 To the east, Rooms S5 through S7 are again standardised office rooms (Plates 89 – 91). As well as being accessible from the corridor, the rooms lead through to one and other through typical door openings. Room S5 has an extant early cupboard with a six-panel door; glazed timber walls partially survive subdividing Room S7. A room to the north of Room S7 was inaccessible. Likewise the doorway leading north from the corridor to the roof space was sealed (Plate 92). Looking out of the doorway a series of four blocked skylights are visible, lighting rooms F11 and F16.

6.0 DISCUSSION

6.1 When it opened, Barking Power Station was the first super power station to be constructed in the UK, and the largest in Europe. The control room building, along with the nearby Station B switch house (not a part of the record), form the last vestiges of this complex. The control room building was constructed using a mix of emerging technologies alongside traditional craftsmanship of a high standard, representative of a late example of civic pride in industrial infrastructure, where horsehair plaster was applied to modern mesh laths, and moulded cornicing embellishes a steel frame.

6.2 The building formed the control hub of the site, from where the operation of Stations A and B, along with satellite substations, and the grid the stations served, could be supervised. An integral phone system linked the control room with the systems and streamlined the operation of the complex. The building is of two phases, a western range dating to 1925, and an eastern range dating to c.1932. The two ranges are very similar in appearance and fittings, seamlessly blending design elements both externally and internally, with minor variations differentiating the two. It merges classical dimensions but draws upon the Art Deco movement for its ornamention, including exaggerated classical mouldings, quality materials, strong lines, and the use of cast iron metalwork with geometric motifs.

6.3 The sheer size and production capability of the station allowed it to serve an area far larger than earlier imagined, and paved the way for the 1926 Electricity Supply Act which culminated in the creation of the National Grid, with centralised generation on a large scale and wide distribution. Despite this success, it eventually declined due to the rising cost of coal and oil, improvements in technology, and increasing environmental concerns as gas and nuclear power had become viable alternatives, leading to its decommissioning by 1981. During its time Barking Power Station transformed the local area; from an area of open wasteland to a thriving industrial landscape inhabited by large factories, stores, and post-1930s suburban housing developments. The building would have formed the landward public face of the larger power station beyond, although now lies isolated and abandoned within an atmospheric edgeland landscape of shipping containers, self-sown scrub, and scrap metal. The area is currently undergoing regeneration as part of the Barking Riverside project.

7.0 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

A full archive intended for deposition with London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Archives (Valence House, Dagenham) has been prepared according to the principles of Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (Historic England 2015). The archive will comprise a hard copy of the full report, a pdf version of the report on CD, the full photographic record with registers, field notes and drawings. A copy of the report will be submitted by the client to LAARC, with an additional copy submitted on CD-ROM to the Greater London HER.

8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology South-East would like to thank CgMs Consulting for commissioning this historic buildings record on behalf of their client. We would also like to thank the search-room staff at the Barking and Dagenham Archives for their kind assistance.

9.0 SOURCES CONSULTED

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PLATES

Plate 1: Entablature of the eastern range (#RER16-0226)

Plate 2: Entablature of the western range (#RER16-0227)

Plate 3: North elevation of the Control Room Building (#RER16-0229)

Plate 4: Typical north elevation ground-floor window (#RER16-0224)

Plate 5: Main entrance to the building (#RER16-0225)

Plate 6: Door to the main entrance (#RER16-0044)

Plate 7: First and Second floor windows (#RER16-0007)

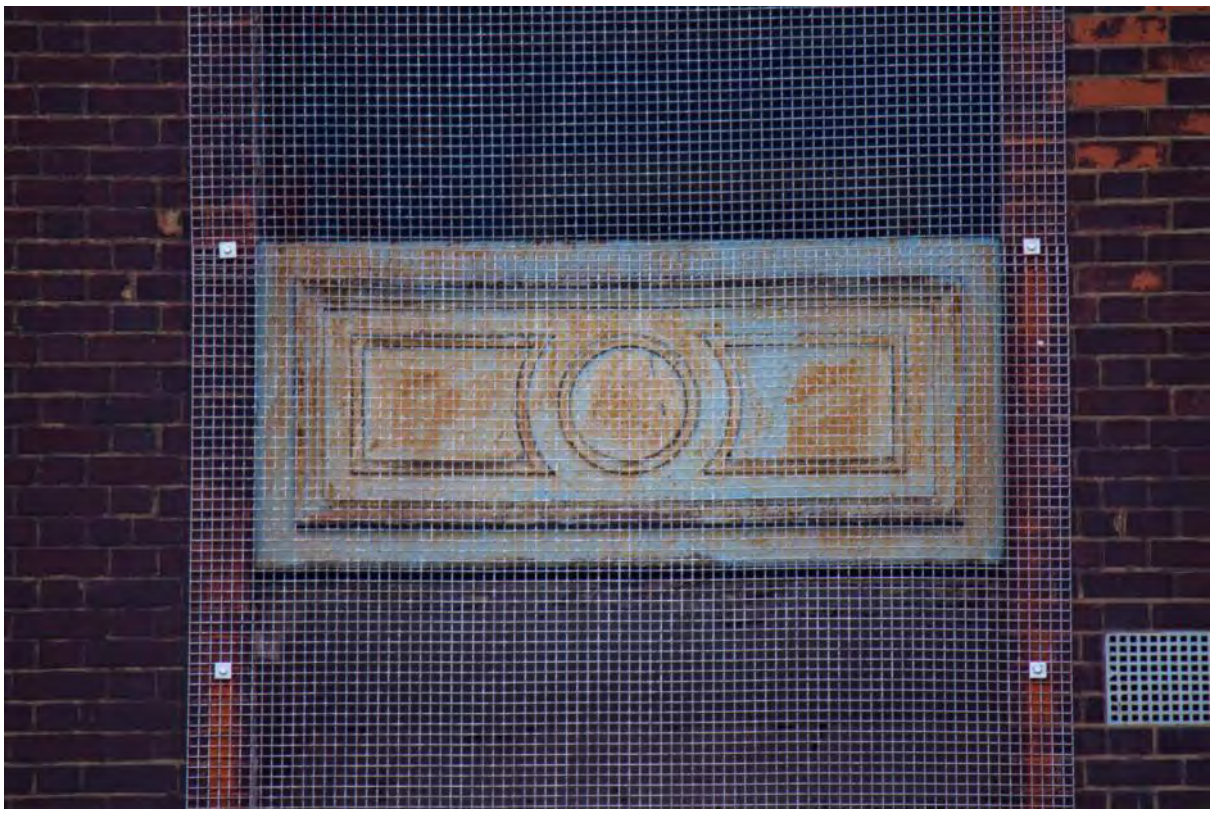

Plate 8: North elevation of the Control Room Building (#RER16-229)

Plate 9: Bricked-up opening with window and door in the north elevation (#RER16-0009)

Plate 10: East elevation of the Control Room Building (#RER16-0033)

Plate 11: South elevation of the Control Room Building (#RER16-234)

Plate 12: South elevation of the Control Room Building (#RER16-0031

Plate 13: Concertina door (#RER16-0027)

Plate 14: Low blocked opening in the south elevation (#RER16-0024)

Plate 15: Opening to the west side of the south elevation (#RER16-0023)

Plate 16: Blocked first-floor doorway and projecting steelwork of a former bridge (#RER16-0038)

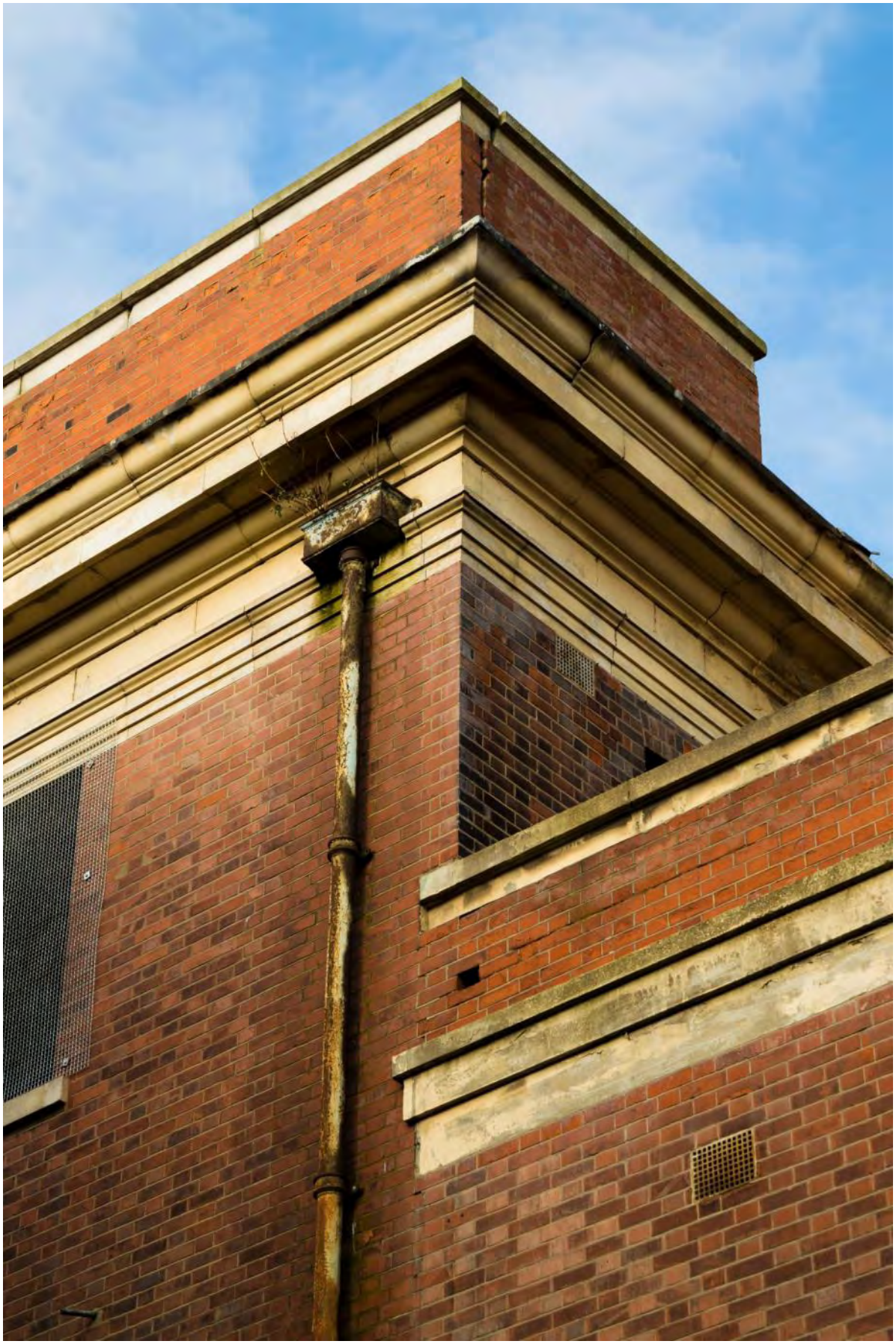

Plate 17: Detail of the entablature to the rear of the western range, with the plainer moulding of the rear of the eastern range below (#RER16-0028)

Plate 18: West elevation of the Control Room Building (#RER16-230)

Plate 19: Remnant railway sidings adjacent to the west elevation (#RER16-0041)

Plate 20: Crudely truncated brickwork on the south side of the west elevation (#RER16-0020)

Plate 21: View west along the second floor corridors (#RER16-219)

Plate 22: Typical architrave, door, skirting, and picture rail, east range, Room S5 (#RER16-214)

Plate 23: Lobby (G1) (#RER16-0047)

Plate 24: Lobby doors, seen from the hallway (G2) (#RER16-0052)

Plate 25: Overview of the hallway (G2) seen from the main stair (#RER16-0102)

Plate 26: Blocked doorway from the hallway to Room G13 (#RER16-0053)

Plate 27: The main stair (#RER16-0237)

Plate 28: Main stair, from the first floor landing (#RER16-0248)

Plate 29: Top of the stairs, second floor (#RER16-204)

Plate 30: The reception (Room G3) (#RER16-0051)

Plate 31: Room G4 (#RER16-0089)

Plate 32: Room G5 (#RER16-0090)

Plate 33: Telephone exchange panel, Room G5 (#RER16-0092)

Plate 34: Corridor east of the hallway (#RER16-0058)

Plate 35: Room G6 (#RER16-0059)

Plate 36: Room G7 (#RER16-0062)

Plate 37: Doorway from G7 to G8 (#RER16-0065)

Plate 38: Room G8 (#RER16-0066)

Plate 39: Room G9 (#RER16-0070)

Plate 40: Room G10, with the safe to the right (#RER16-0071)

Plate 41: Engineering plans in Room G9 (#RER16-0250)

Plate 42: Blocked entrance to Room G12 (#RER16-0086)

Plate 43: Corridor south of Room G8, facing a blocked egress to the east side of the building (#RER16-0076)

Plate 44: Bathroom G11 (#RER16-0081)

Plate 45: Secondary stair (#RER16-0079)

Plate 46: Secondary stair, first-floor level (#RER16-0178)

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Plate 49: Sealed openings to Rooms G14- G 16 (#RER16-0013)

Plate 50:Landing F1 (#RER16-0108)

Plate 51: Landing F1 (#RER16-0107)

Plate 52: Corridor west of the landing (#RER16-0109)

Plate 53: Room F2 (#RER16-0111)

Plate 54: Room F3 (#RER16-0113)

Plate 55: Bathroom F4 (#RER16-0117)

Plate 56: West egress from first floor corridor (#RER16-0115)

Plate 57: Room F5 (#RER16-0150)

Plate 58: Room F6 – note the blocked doorway to Room F7 (#RER16-0154)

Plate 59: Room F8 (#RER16-0156)

Plate 60: Room F9 (#RER16-0160)

Plate 61: Bathroom F9 (#RER16-0162)

Plate 62: Bathroom F10 (#RER16-0166)

Plate 63: Stripped architrave and skirting from west wall of Room F7 (#RER16-0157)

Plate 64: Looking north along the corridor towards Room F7. Note Room F11 to the left (#RER16-0170)

Plate 65: Room F11 (#RER16-0164)

Plate 66: Room F16 (#RER16-0130)

Plate 67: Bathroom F12 (#RER16-0174)

Plate 68: Room F13 (#RER16-0138)

Plate 69: Blocked doorway to the presumed bridge south from Room F13 (#RER16-0139)

Plate 70: Corridor east of F13 leading to F14 (#RER16-0141)

Plate 71: Bathroom F14 (#RER16-0147)

Plate 72: View of the blocked stairs from the corridor adjacent to F14 (#RER16-0145)

Plate 73: The Control Room F15 (#RER16-0128)

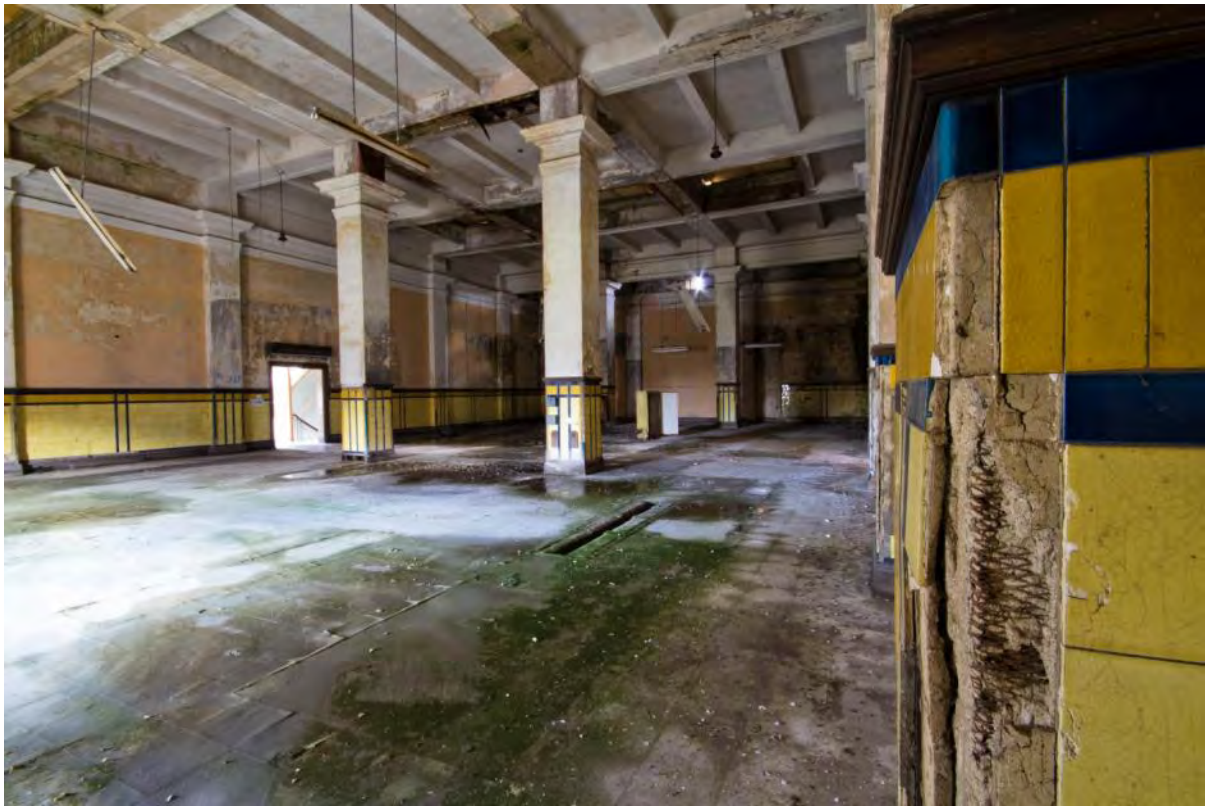

Plate 74: The Control Room F15 (#RER16-0240)

Plate 75: Concrete beds with channels for cabling in the Control Room (#RER16-0131)

Plate 76: Detail of tiling on pier within the Control Room (#RER16-0123)

Plate 77: Detailing of mouldings on pier within the Control Room (#RER16-0134)

Plate 78: Doorway south from the Control Room (#RER16-0137)

Plate 79: Control Room control panel (#RER16-0125)

Plate 80: Safe in the Control Room (#RER16-0133)

Plate 81: Extant impressions left from the removed governor control pedestals and telephone pedestals within the Control Room (#RER16-0246)

Plate 82: View east along second-floor corridors – note the blocked skylight (#RER16-0201)

Plate 83: Panelled surround and second-floor egress (#RER16-0200)

Plate 84: Room S1 (#RER16-0191)

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Plate 86: Light fixture in Room S1 (#RER16-0222)

Plate 87: Bathroom S3 (#RER16-0197)

Plate 88: Bathroom S4 (#RER16-0199)

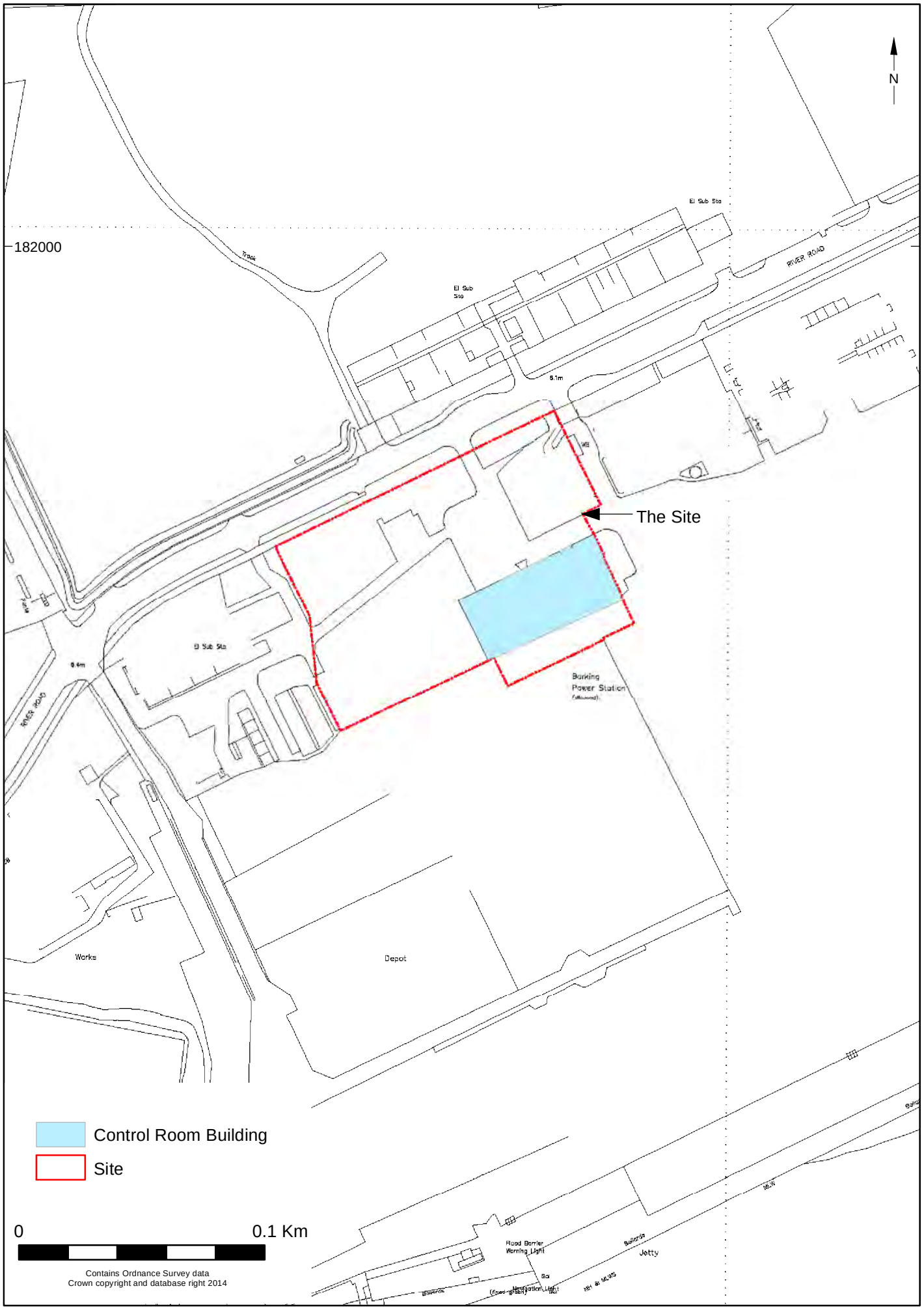
Plate 89: Room S5 (#RER16-0212)

Plate 90: Room S6 (#RER16-0216)

Plate 91: Room S7 (#RER16-0217)

Plate 92: View of the roof space through the sealed door (#RER16-0220)

© Archaeology South-East		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Site Location	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: HG		



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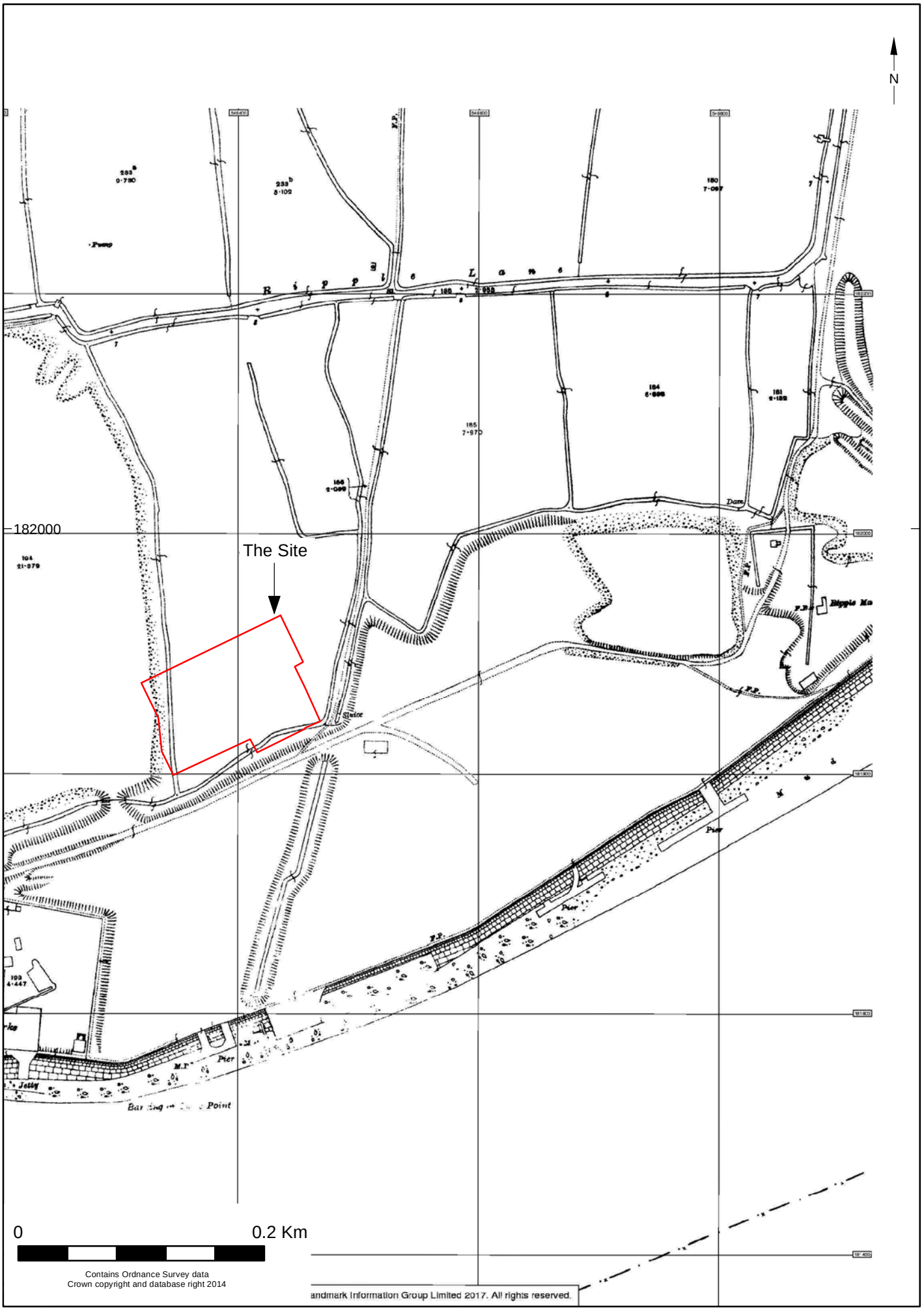
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Site Plan	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: HG		



© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Ordnance Survey Map, 1916	
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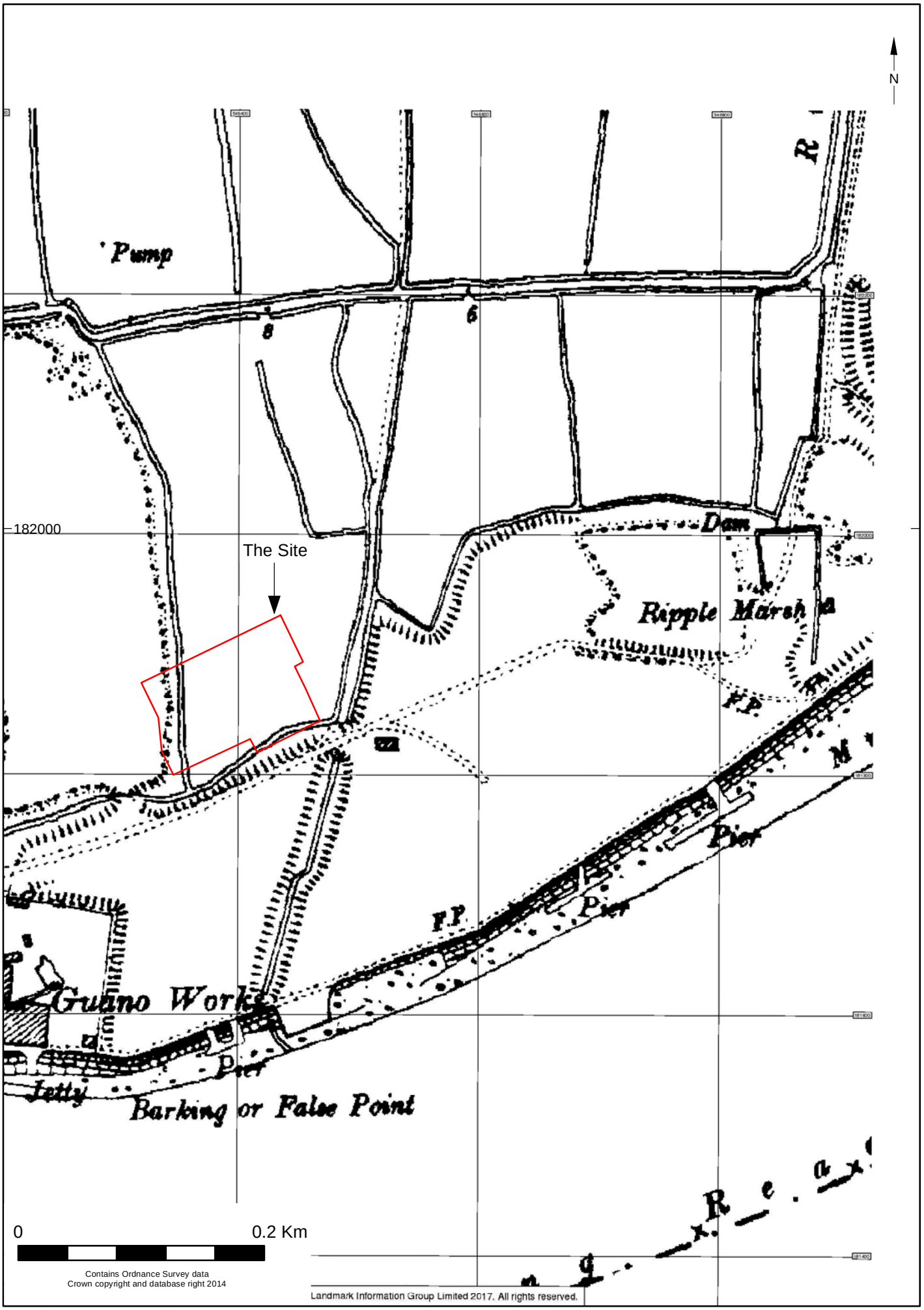


© Archaeology South-East		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 4
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Ordnance Survey Map, 1920	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		

Boiler House

Control Room Building

Switch Houses

Turbine Hall

© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 5
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Aerial Photograph, 1923 (http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/)	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		

© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 6
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Aerial Photograph, 1924 (http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/)	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		

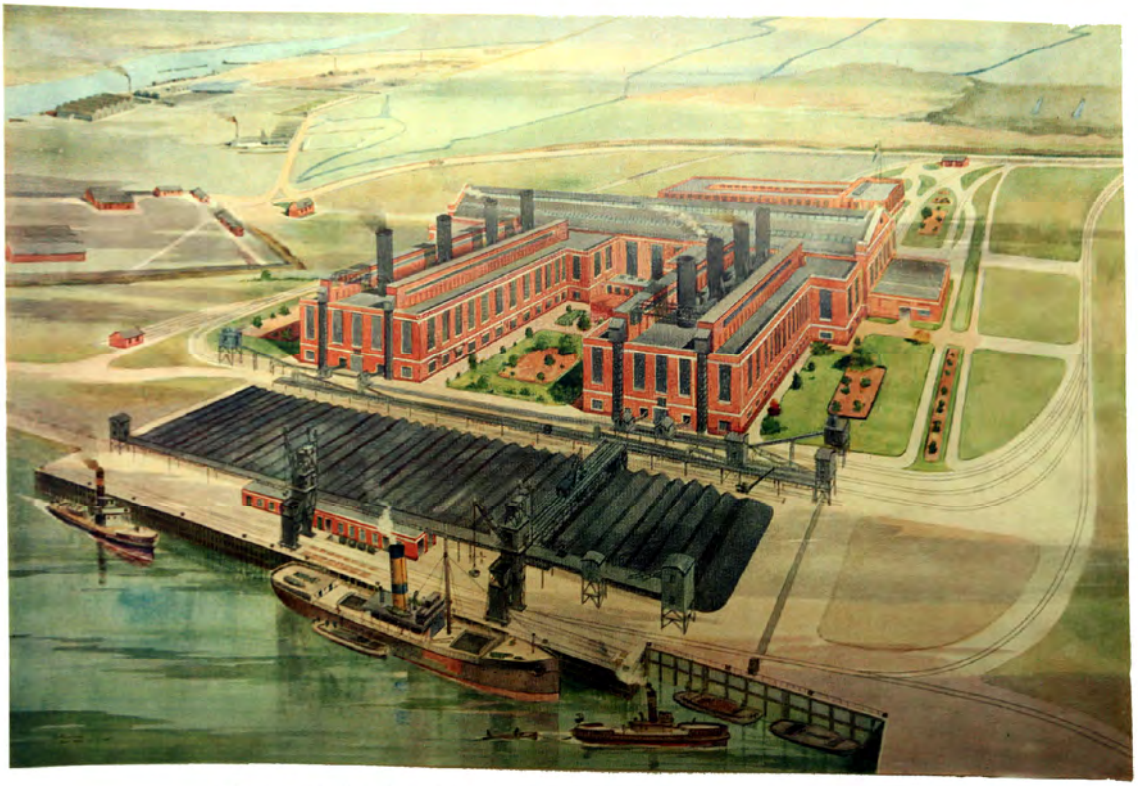
© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 7
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Aerial Photograph, 1925 (http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/)	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		

View from the River of the Barking Power House as it will be when completed (over 750,000 horse-power).

© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 8
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Concept Watercolour (CLESCo 1925)	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		

View from the River of the Barking Power House as it is to-day
(over 125,000 horse-power).

© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 9
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Watercolour (CLESCo 1925)	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		



View from the air of the First Section of the Barking Power House as it will be when completed (over 250,000 horse-power).

© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 10
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Concept Watercolour (CLESCo 1925)	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		

© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 11
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Aerial Photograph (CLESCo 1925)	
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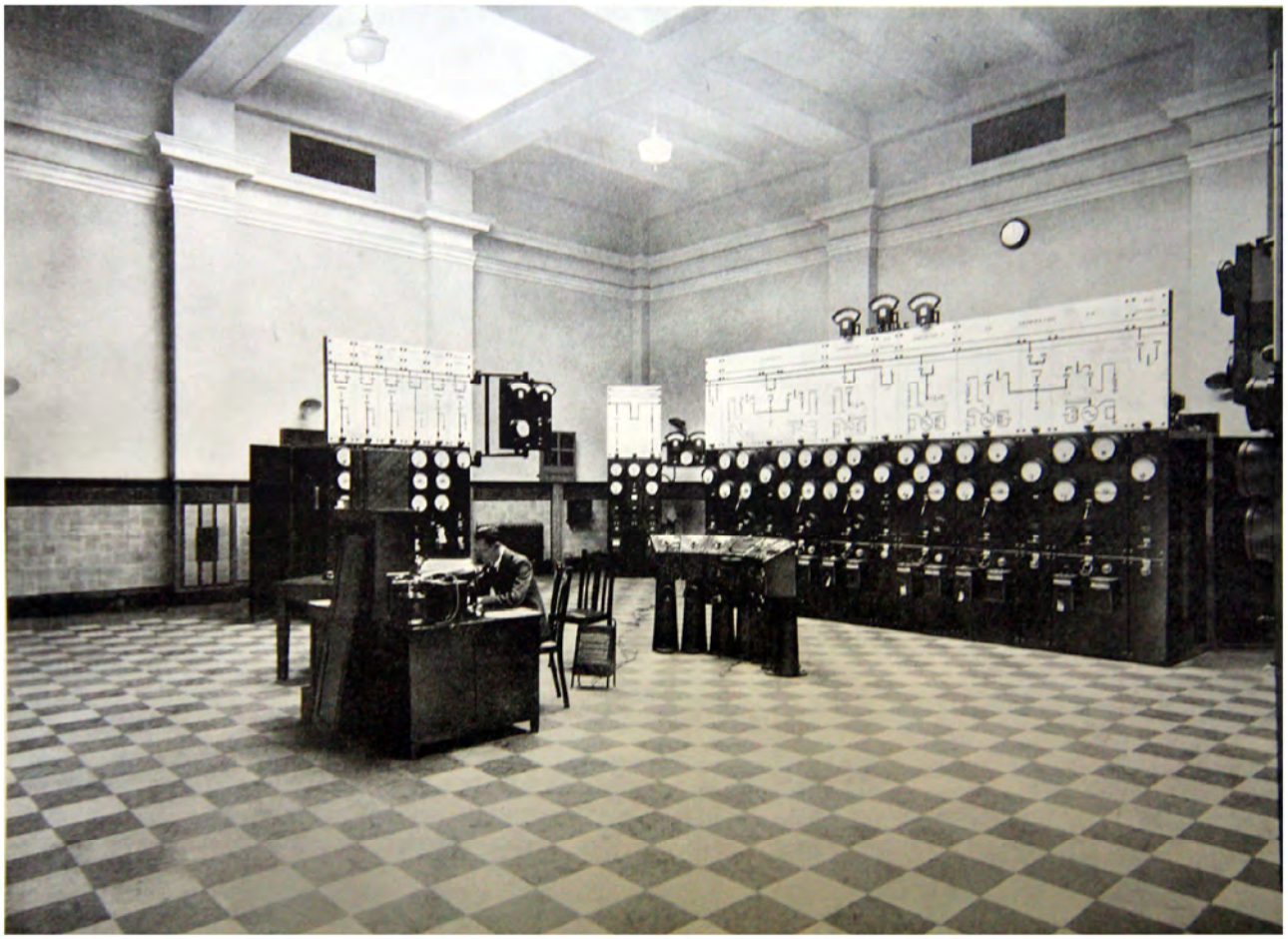


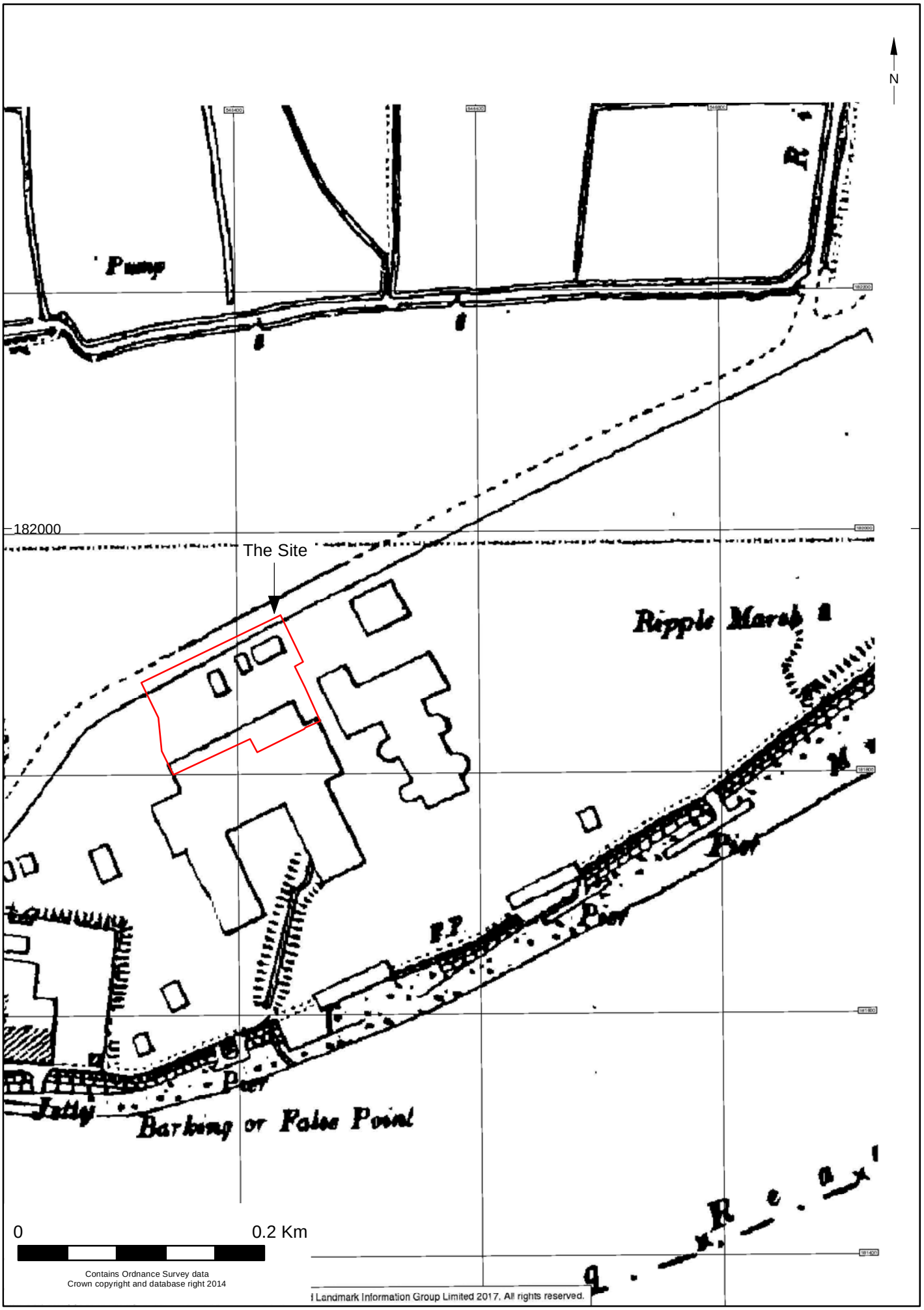
© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 12
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Control Room Photograph, facing south-west (CLESCo 1925)	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		

© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 13
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Aerial Photograph, 1928 (http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/)	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		

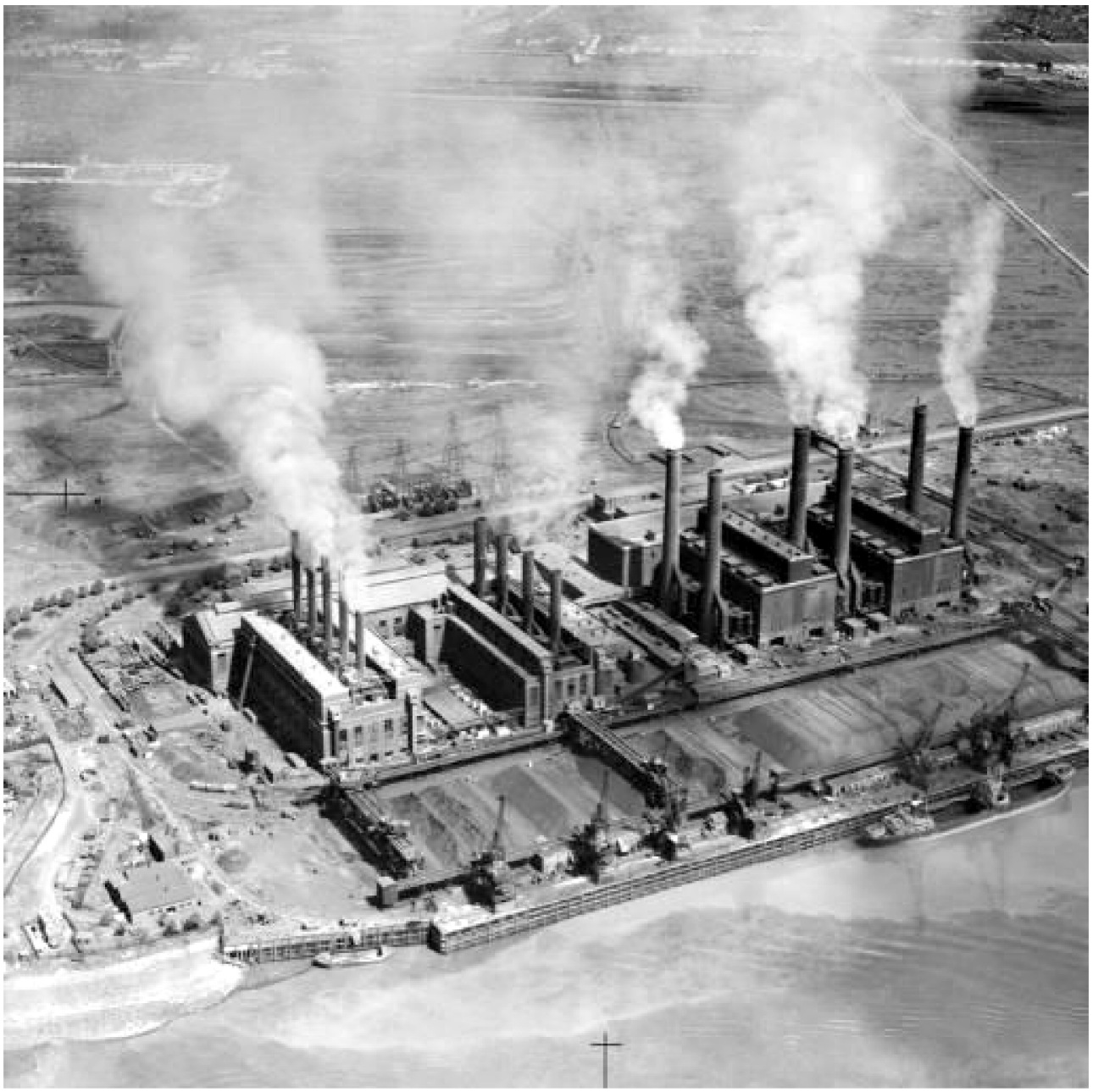
© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 14
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Aerial Photograph, 1930 (http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/)	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		

© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 15
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Control Room Photograph, facing north-east (The Engineer 1934)	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		

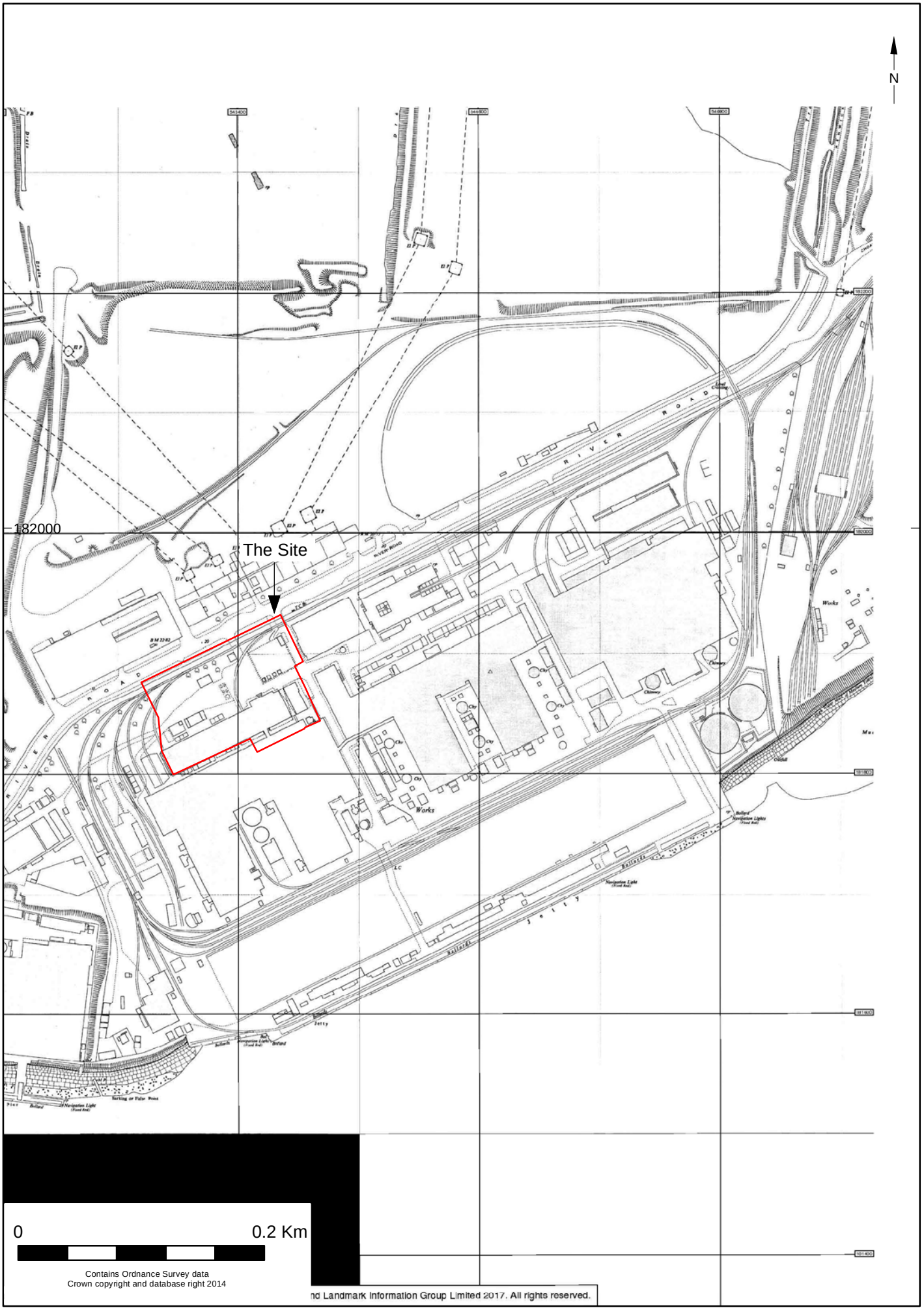
© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 16
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Aerial Photograph, 1931 (http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/)	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		



© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 17
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Ordnance Survey Map, 1938	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		



© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 18
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Aerial Photograph, 1946 (http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/)	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		



© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 19
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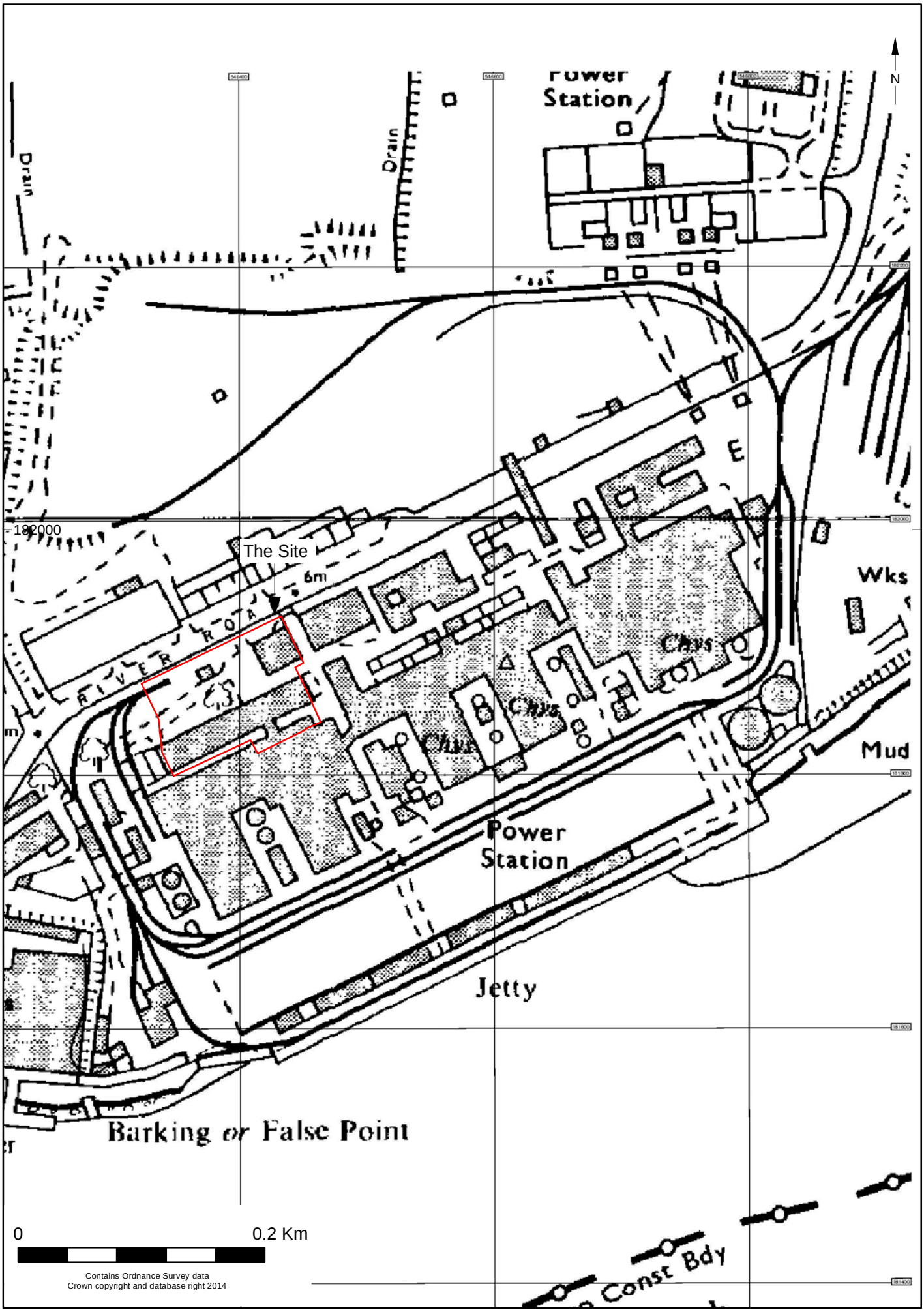
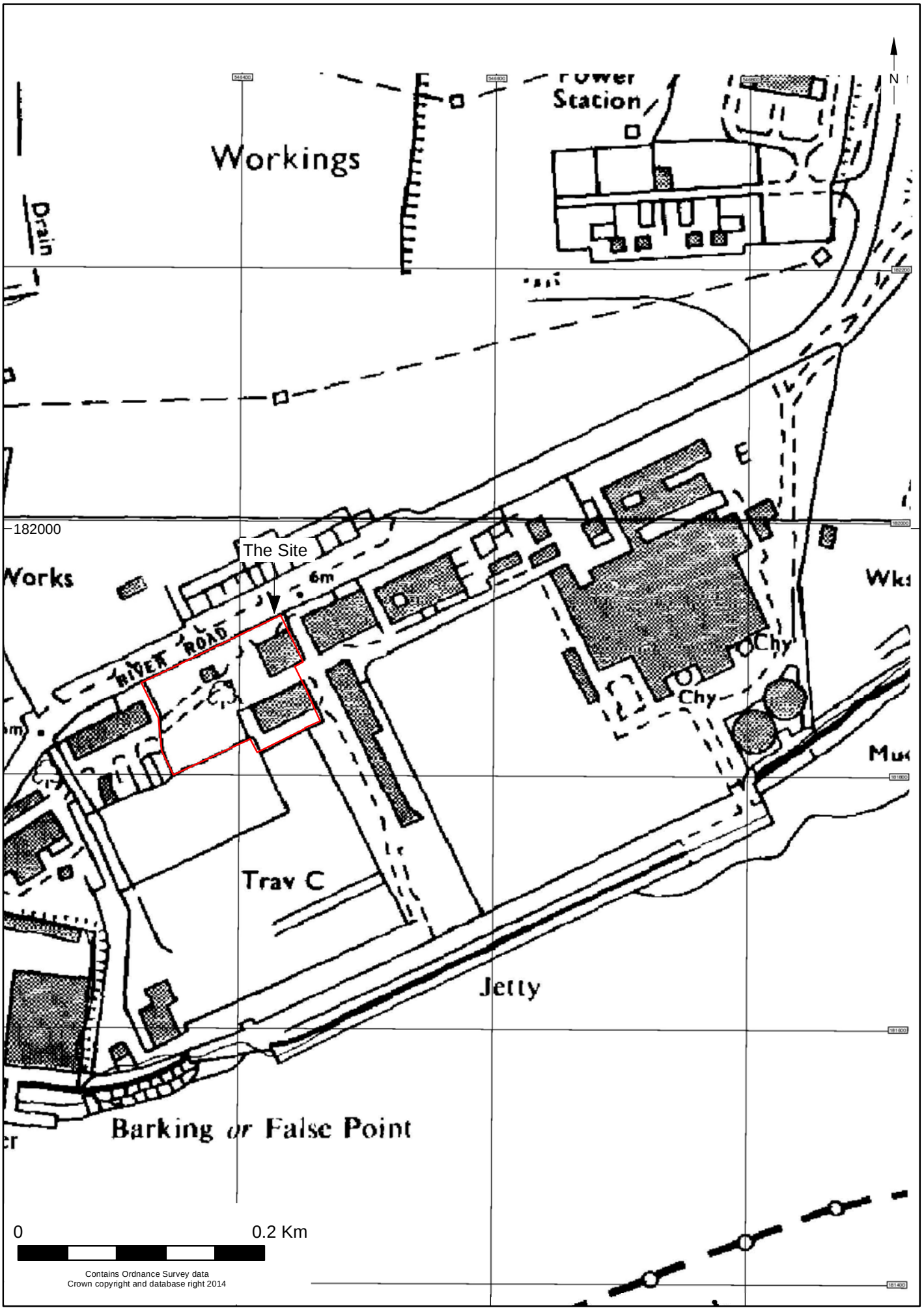


© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 20
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Ordnance Survey Map, 1975	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		



© Archaeology South-East		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 21
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Ordnance Survey Map, 1984	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		

© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 22
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Ground Floor Plan	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		

© Archaeology South-East		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 23
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	First Floor Plan	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		

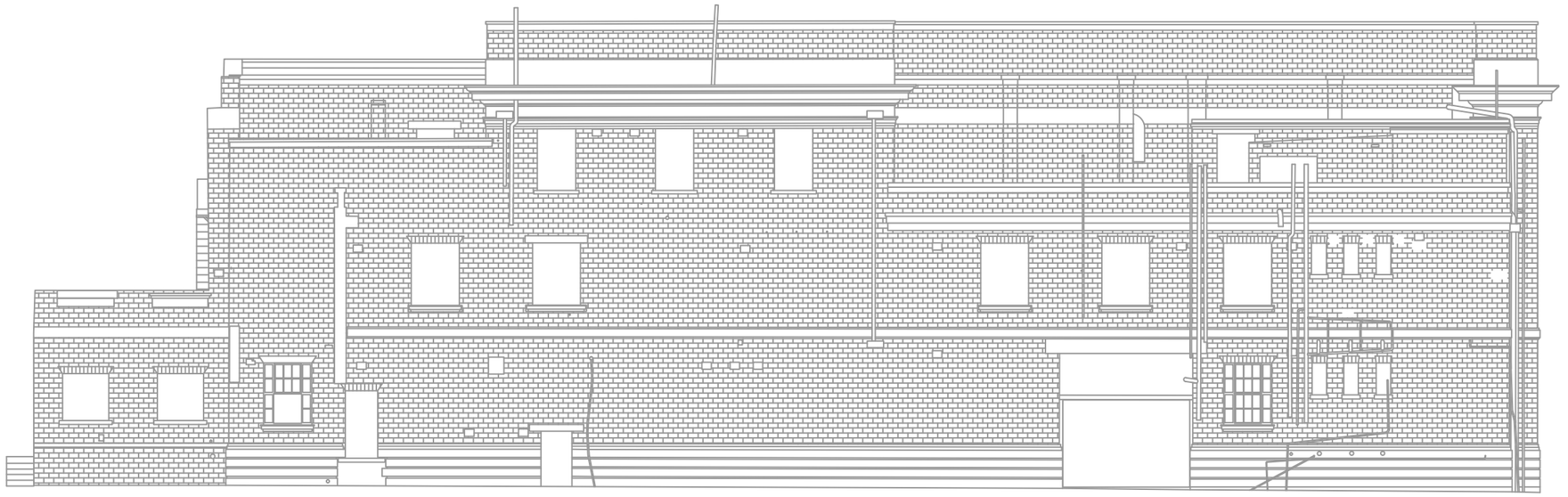
© Archaeology South-East		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 24
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Second Floor Plan	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		

NORTH ELEVATION

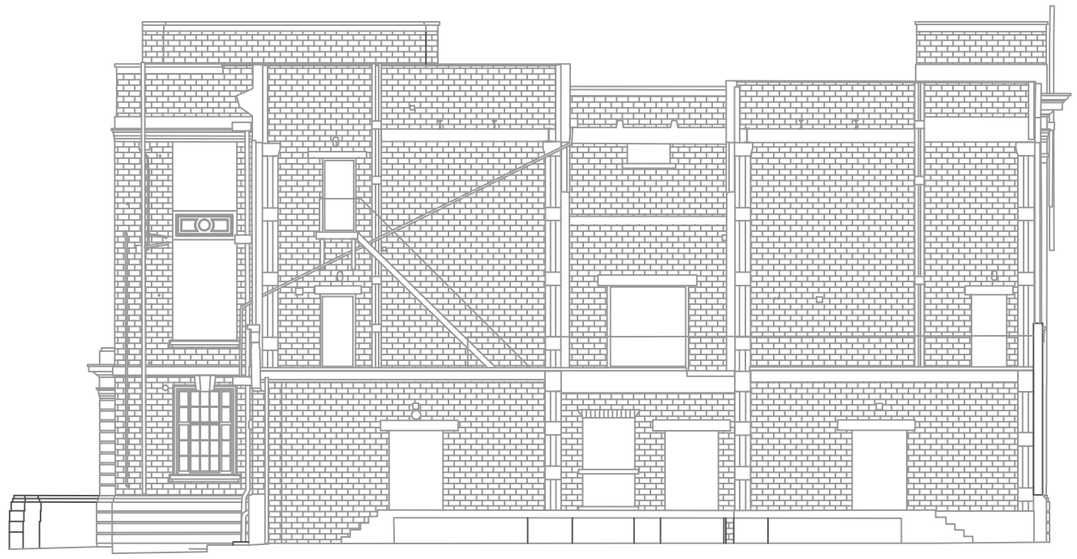
EAST ELEVATION

0 10m

© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	North and East Elevations
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP	Fig. 25



SOUTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION

0 10m

© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. 26
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	South and West Elevations	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		

APPENDIX 1: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: archaeol6-277204

Project details	
Project name	BARKING POWER STATION, RIVER ROAD, CREEKMOUTH, LONDON BOROUGH OF BARKING AND DAGENHAM HISTORIC BUILDINGS RECORD (HIST
Short description of the project	In January 2017 Archaeology South-East (a division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, UCL) carried out a programme of historic building recording (HE Level 3) at Barking Power Station, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (NGR: 546433 181858). The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting. Barking Power Station was the first super power station to be constructed in the UK; the largest in Europe. The control room building forms one of the last vestiges of the power station. The building is loosely classical in dimensions and at first glance, though drawing upon the Art Deco movement. The building formed the control hub of the site, from where the operation of Stations A and B and the grid the stations served could be supervised. The building comprises a western range dating to 1925, and an eastern range dating to c.1932. The size and production capability of the station allowed it to serve an area far larger than earlier imagined, and paved the way for the 1926 Electricity Supply Act which culminated in the creation of the National Grid. The eventual decline of the power station, with the stations all being decommissioned by 1981, reflects the rising costs of coal- and oil-fired stations, improvements in technology, and an increasing environmental conscience; gas and nuclear power had become a more viable alternative. During its time Barking Power Station transformed the local area; from an area of open wasteland to a thriving industrial landscape inhabited by large factories, stores, and post-1930s suburban housing developments.
Project dates	Start: 01-01-2017 End: 01-03-2017
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	RER16 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	160566 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Building Recording
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Monument type	CONTROL ROOM Modern
Significant Finds	NONE
Methods & techniques	"Measured Survey","Photographic Survey","Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure"
Prompt	General structure plan/local plan/minerals plan guidance
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough Of Barking And Dagenham
Postcode	IG11 0DS

Study area	1 Hectare
Site coordinates	TQ 46435 81859 51.516142363409 0.110684468892 51 30 58 N 000 06 38 E Point
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	CgMs Consulting
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Ron Humphrey/Amy Williamson
Project supervisor	Seth Price
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Text","Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Photograph","Plan","Report","Unpublished Text"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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G9 - Documents. Facing south

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RER16-0059
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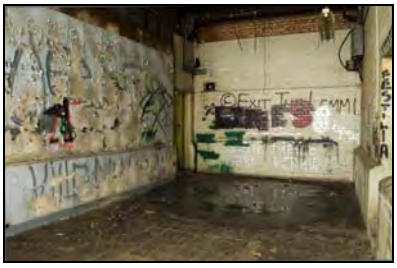
RER16-0060
G6 - Overview. Facing south-east

RER16-0061
G7 - Inserted door. Facing north



RER16-0062
G7 - Overview. Facing south

RER16-0063
G7 - Overview. Facing north-west

RER16-0064
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G5 Telephone Exchange - Overview. Facing north-west

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G5 Telephone Exchange - Relay. Facing south-west

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G5 Telephone Exchange - Relay. Facing south-west

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G5 Telephone Exchange - Overview. Facing south

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G5 Telephone Exchange - Overview. Facing south-west

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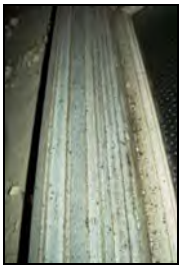
RER16-0097
G2 - Newel Post. Facing north-east

RER16-0098
G2 - Newel Post. Facing north-east

RER16-0099
G2 - Newel Post. Facing north-east



RER16-0100
G1 - Trim detail. Facing south-east

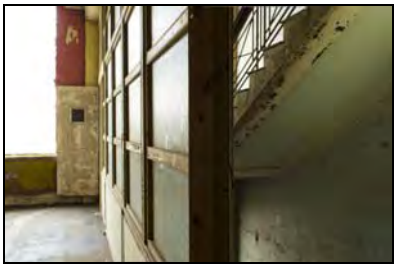
RER16-0101
G1 - Main Stair. Facing south

RER16-0102
G1 - Overview. Facing south-west

RER16-0103
Main Stair. Facing north

RER16-0104
Main Stair. Facing north-west

RER16-0105
F1 - Screen. Facing north-west



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RER16-0107
F1 - Overview. Facing north-west

RER16-0108
F1 - Overview. Facing south-east

RER16-0109
Corridor. Facing west

RER16-0110
Corridor. Facing west

RER16-0111
F2 - Overview. Facing north-west

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RER16-0113
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RER16-0114
F3 - Overview. Facing south-east

RER16-0115
Corridor - west egress. Facing west

RER16-0116
Corridor - Fire saftely sign. Facing north

RER16-0117
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RER16-0118
WC F4 - Overview. Facing north

RER16-0119
WC F4 - Tiling detail. Facing north-west

RER16-0120
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RER16-0121
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RER16-0122
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RER16-0123
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RER16-0124
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RER16-0125
Control Room F15 - Control Panel. Facing south

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RER16-0127
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Control Room F15 - Trim detail. Facing east

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RER16-0142
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View from corridor window. Facing south

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RER16-0145
Blocked stair. Facing west

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RER16-0148
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RER16-0149
Main Stair/Corridor - Dado detail. Facing north-east

RER16-0150
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RER16-0151
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RER16-0152
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RER16-0153
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RER16-0154
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RER16-0155
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RER16-0156
F7 - Overview. Facing north-west

RER16-0157
F7 - Removed architrave and skirting. Facing west

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RER16-0159
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RER16-0160
F8 - Overview. Facing west

RER16-0161
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F9 - Door. Facing south-west

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WC F12 - Fitting. Facing north-west

RER16-0173
WC F12 - Urinal. Facing west

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RER16-0175
WC F12 - Overview. Facing east

RER16-0176
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RER16-0178
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RER16-0179
Secondary Stair. Facing south-west

RER16-0180
Secondary Stair - Water tank and platform. Facing south-west

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Secondary Stair. Facing south-west

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Main Stair. Facing south

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S1 - Architrave detail. Facing south

RER16-0194
S1 - Architrave detail. Facing south

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WC S4 - Overview. Facing north-west

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WC S4 - Overview. Facing north

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S6 - Overview. Facing south-west

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North Elevation - Spandrel detail. Facing south

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RER16-0234
South Elevation. Facing north-east

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G1 - Overview. Facing east

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G2 - Main Stair. Facing south-east

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RER16-0247
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RER16-0248
Main Stair. Facing north

RER16-0249
G9 - Documents. Facing east

RER16-0250
G9 - Documents. Facing north

© Archaeology South-East		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. A1
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Ground Floor Photo Locations	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		

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© Archaeology South-East		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. A2
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	First Floor Photo Locations	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		

© **Archaeology South-East**		Barking Power Station, River Road, Creekmouth, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Fig. A3
Project Ref: 160566	February 2017	Second Floor Photo Locations	
Report Ref: 2017058	Drawn by: SP		

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