

Archaeological Evaluation Report Smitham Primary School, Portnalls Road, Coulsdon, London Borough of Croydon, CR5 3DE

> NGR: 529446, 159334 (TQ 29466 59334)

Planning Application No.: 17/02763/FUL

ASE Project No: 170324 Site Code: PTA17 ASE Report No: 2017468 OASIS ID: archaeol6-299599

By lan Hogg

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Prepared by:	lan Hogg	Senior Archaeologist	linky
Reviewed and approved by:	Andy Margetts	Project Manager	000009
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Archaeology South-East
Units 1 and 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 Wilmott Dixon to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Smitham Primary School, Portnalls Road, Coulsdon, London Borough of Croydon. The evaluation comprised two machine excavated trenches.

Natural Lewes Chalk and Head deposits were recorded at between 82.37m and 82.85m aOD. The site had undergone truncation associated with the construction of the school and its car park. Machine scars were observed truncating the natural deposits. In both trenches the natural deposits were sealed by modern layers associated with the construction of the car park.

No archaeological remains were recorded on this part of the site.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by Wilmott Dixon to undertake a programme of archaeological work at Smitham Primary School, Portnalls Road, Coulsdon, London Borough of Croydon, CR5 3DE (Figure 1, NGR 529446, 159334).
- 1.1.2 The site comprises a primary school, situated south of Portnalls Road and Fourth Drive. The surrounding character is largely post-war suburban in nature. South-west of the site are the grounds of the former Cane Hill Hospital recently demolished for a new residential development. The Surrey Iron Railway formerly lay to the east. The remaining embankment is a scheduled monument (SM) (List entry Number: 1021441), being the world's earliest example of a public railway. The site comprises the north-western corner of the existing playing field and car parks, bounded by hedges and treelines on three sides.
- 1.1.3 The proposed evaluation comprised three trenches. Only two trenches could be excavated during the current phase of works as Trench 2 lay within the school itself.

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey (BGS) 1:50,000 scale geological mapping available online, the natural geology of the site comprises chalk deposits (Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation (Undifferentiated)) overlain by gravel, sand, and clay head deposits.
- 1.2.2 Borehole survey data available on the BGS website just east of the school premises found 1.82m of 'loose ballast' overlying chalk deposits. The location suggests this material may be associated with the former railway.
- 1.2.3 The site is located at c.83mAOD on a level car park, within a depression surrounded by playing fields.

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 Planning permission (17/02763/FUL) has been granted for the erection of a new two storey classroom block and the reconfiguration of existing parking. Permission was granted subject to the following condition:
 - A. No development other than demolition to existing ground level shall take place until the applicant (or their heirs and successors in title) has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological evaluation 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. Under Part A, the applicant (or their heirs and successors in title) shall implement a programme of archaeological evaluation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation.
- C. No development other than demolition to existing ground level shall take place until the applicant (or their heirs and successors in title) has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological mitigation 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
- D. Under Part A, the applicant (or their heirs and successors in title) shall implement a programme of archaeological mitigation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation
- E. The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post site work assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under Parts (A and C), and the provision for analysis, publication and dissemination of the results and archive deposition has been secured.

Reason: Heritage assets of archaeological interest may survive on the site. The planning authority wishes to secure the provision of appropriate archaeological investigation, including the publication of results, in accordance with Section 12 of the NPPF.

- 1.3.2 A *Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* (James 2017) had highlighted a moderate potential for the survival of prehistoric, early medieval and post-medieval.
- 1.3.3 Accordingly, an *Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief* (ASE 2017) was prepared, and approved by Mark Stevenson, Archaeology Advisor (South London), National Planning Group, Historic England, prior to the commencement of works.
- 1.3.4 This (ibid.) set out the methodology this evaluation, as well as a future watching brief on the site, would take. All works were carried out in accordance with this document and with the ClfA code of conduct, Standards and Guidelines (ClfA 2014a; 2014c) and the GLAAS Standards for Archaeological Work in Greater London (Historic England 2015).

1.4 Scope of Report

1.4.1 This report details the results of the archaeological evaluation carried out on the site between the 16th and 17th October 2017.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The following is drawn from the *Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* (James 2017) and is not repeated in full here. For a full background refer to that document.

2.1 Prehistoric

- 2.1.1 Palaeolithic material from the vicinity of the site includes a Lower Palaeolithic axe from Fairdene Road and fossil finds of Middle Palaeolithic animal remains from the Cane Hill area.
- 2.1.2 No unequivocally Mesolithic material has been recorded within the vicinity of the site.
- 2.1.3 A number of Neolithic finds are known from the wider downland context around Croydon, including polished axes. Within the vicinity of the site Neolithic tools, including an axe, are recorded from Fairdene Road Oaks Road Field.
- 2.1.4 The Croydon area generally has produced a relatively large amount of Bronze Age material, including a concentration of Late Bronze Age hoards on the North Downs dipslope. Finds of possibly Bronze Age flint arrowheads are recorded from The Shaw, Coulsdon and an Early Bronze Age axe is recorded from Smitham Downs.
- 2.1.5 Finds of later Iron Age or early Romano-British pottery are recorded from Coulsdon Woods, within the vicinity of the site.
- 2.1.6 Finds of poorly dated, but broadly prehistoric, lithic materials are recorded within the vicinity of the site, at Dunstans Road, Fairdene Road and Coulsdon Inner Relief Road. In addition, a prehistoric flint mine is recorded from the general area of Deepfield Way.

2.2 Romano-British

2.2.1 Roman settlement evidence is known from scattered sources in Croydon, forming part of a pattern of small-nucleated settlements around London, situated along roads, and which may have grown up around Imperial posting stations. Five Romano-British sites have been recorded within the wider vicinity of the site, mostly finds of coins and pottery.

2.3 Early Medieval and Medieval

- 2.3.1 The Early Saxon period saw central London largely abandoned. Instead, a number of small settlements grew up around the periphery, of which Croydon is one. By the Late Saxon period, Croydon had grown in importance as an estate centre for the Archbishops of Canterbury. Two inhumation cemeteries of early medieval date are recorded within the vicinity of the site, at Portnalls Road and Lion Green Road Car Park.
- 2.3.2 Coulsdon is documented in the Domesday Book as 'Colesdone', in the Hundred of Wallington. The settlement was moderate in size, with a population of 14 households comprising 10 villagers and 4 cottagers, with land for 10

ploughlands, worked by 1 lord's plough team and 6 men's plough teams. The settlement included woodland and 3 swine renders. Coulsdon remained within the demesne of the St. Peter's Abbey, Chertsey, with a value of £7.

2.3.3 The site is situated within the grounds of the medieval estate of Pertenales (Portnalls). As a part of the Manor of Coulsdon the estate was managed by Chertsey Abbey. The landscape of the adjacent Cane Hill Hospital estate reflects the medieval Portnalls estate as described in documents in the 15th century (Rumble 1972).

2.4 Post-Medieval and Modern

- 2.4.1 Croydon grew in importance in the post-medieval period. By the early 19th century it was the largest town in the region outside of London itself, with a population of 6000, and was a major nodal centre in the regional economy. In 1803, the town acquired the first public railway in the world, the Surrey Iron Railway horse tramway (Croydon, Mertham and Godstone Railway), which ran partly along Brighton Road. The Surrey Iron Railway (List entry Number: 1021441) ran to the east of the site, roughly north-south. The railway was constructed on land acquired by Act of Parliament, and was constructed using the embryonic iron rail technologies of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The railway closed in 1939, and 1946 (in parts), being superseded by the newer steam railways.
- 2.4.2 Cane Hill Hospital was constructed to the south-west of the site as a late 19th-century asylum with an associated estate. The hospital operated until its final closure in 1991. The site is situated within the former grounds of the Hospital, which has recently been razed to make way for new residential development.
- 2.4.3 Additional archaeological sites of post-medieval date within the vicinity of the site include two chalk extraction pits at Portnalls Road and a number of WWII defences including anti-glider defences at Farthing Downs, an anti-tank vertical rail at Chipstead Valley Road, a weapons pit at St. Andrews Road and pill boxes at Portnalls Road and Chipstead Valley Road.

2.5 Project Aims and Objectives

- 2.5.1 In general the aims of the trenching 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
 - 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
- 2.5.2 The specific aims of the trenching were:

- Is there any prehistoric evidence on the site?
- Is there any evidence for medieval activity on the site?
- 2.5.3 The evaluation will also seek to inform on the following research aims highlighted by the research framework for London Archaeology (Museum of London 2002):
 - P4 (Neolithic and Early Bronze Age), Paragraph 3: Researching the potential for categorisation of settlement sites. Future research should consider whether the lack of 'settlement sites' is more apparent than real, and if so, what it signifies;
 - P6 (Late Iron Age and early Roman), Paragraph 2; Assessing the relationship
 of the London region to the core south-east zone of coinage, oppida,
 Continental imports and elite burials in the period following Caesar's invasions;
 - R1 (Romano-British), Para 6: Understanding how the relationship between hinterland and territorium of Londinium operated;
 - S1 (Saxon), Para 1: Studying the transitions between late Roman and early Saxon, including the reasons and implications for shifting settlement patterns;
 - L10 (Post-medieval), Paragraph 3: Examining the success with which small towns in the London region adapted to the capital's growth.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 Three trenches were to be excavated (Figure 2); Trench 2 could not be excavated due to it lying within the still open school premises.
- 3.2 The trenches were mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision using a 360° back acting excavator, in small spits of no more than 0.25m to the top of the natural deposits; or in some cases a safe depth still within modern overlying deposits, and were subsequently hand-cleaned. The trenches were scanned using a cable avoidance tool prior to excavation.
- 3.3 All deposits were recorded using ASE standard context sheets. Vertical sections were taken across features where necessary and a comprehensive photographic record taken.
- 3.4 The trenches were hand planned and tied in to the Ordnance Survey.
- 3.5 Spoil heaps and the trench bases were all scanned by eye for unstratified finds.
- 3.6 The trenches were backfilled using the machine bucket but no formal reinstatement was undertaken.

3.2 **Archive**

3.2.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at the LAARC in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Tables 1 and 2).

Context sheets	12
Section sheets	1
Plans sheets	1
Colour photographs	0
BandW photos	0
Digital photos	16
Context register	0
Drawing register	1
Watching brief forms	0
Trench Record forms	2

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 Trench 1 (Figures 2 and 3)

- 4.1.1 Trench 1 was located in the south of the site; it was aligned north-west to south-east and measured 11.00m x 1.80m in plan. The trench measured 0.44m in depth at the north-western end and 0.46m deep at the south-eastern end; excavation ceased at the natural deposits.
- 4.1.2 The natural white Lewes Chalk [1/006] was recorded intermittently in the trench between 82.65m and 82.85m aOD; it was overlain by reddish brown clay silt Head deposits with frequent flint inclusions [1/005]; this deposit was only seen in patches in the trench between 82.72m and 82.85m aOD.
- 4.1.3 The natural Head deposits were overlain by a levelling layer of redeposited chalk [1/004] with inclusions of plastic and metal, measuring between 0.04m and 0.14m in thickness; this was overlain by a second levelling deposit [1/003] comprising orange sandy gravel between 0.08m and 0.19m in thickness. The levelling deposits were overlain by a pinkish brown crushed stone bedding deposit [1/002] between 0.04m and 0.09m in thickness; this was sealed by the asphalt car park surface [1/001] between 0.15m and 0.18m in thickness.
- 4.1.5 No archaeology was recorded in this trench. A modern geotechnical pit was encountered beneath the asphalt carpark surface at the southern end of the trench truncating the natural horizon.

4.2 Trench **3** (Figures 2 and 3)

- 4.2.1 Trench 3 was located in the south of the site; it was aligned north-west to south-east and measured 11.00m x 1.80m in plan. The trench measured 0.53m in depth at the north-western end and 0.87m deep at the south-eastern end; excavation ceased at the natural deposits.
- 4.2.2 The natural white Lewes Chalk [3/006] was recorded only at the south-eastern end of the trench at 82.37 aOD; it was overlain by reddish brown clay silt Head deposits with frequent flint inclusions [3/005]; this deposit was only seen in patches in the trench between 82.45m and 82.52m aOD. The natural deposits showed signs of modern truncation with scars from machine excavation visible.
- 4.2.3 The natural Head deposits were overlain by a levelling layer of redeposited chalk [3/004] with inclusions of plastic and metal, measuring between 0.10m and 0.32m in thickness; this was overlain by a second levelling deposit [3/003] comprising orange sandy gravel 0.25m in thickness. The levelling deposits were overlain by a pinkish brown crushed stone bedding deposit [3/002] between 0.10m and 0.18m in thickness; this was sealed by the asphalt car park surface [3/001] between 0.10m and 0.17m in thickness.
- 4.2.5 No archaeology was recorded in this trench.

5.0 **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

5.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence

- Natural Lewes Chalk was recorded between 82.37m and 82.85m aOD within the two excavated trenches; it was overlain by natural Head deposits 82.45m and 82.85m aOD. The natural deposits were uniformly overlain by modern levelling deposits associated with the construction of the car park; these deposits were overlain by bedding deposits and the car park surface itself.
- 5.1.2 No archaeological remains were recorded within any of the trenches.

5.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts

5.2.1 The school lies within a depression in the surrounding landscape, almost certainly the result of landscaping. The trenches both showed signs of truncation associated with the construction of the school car park; machine excavation scars were recorded in Trench 3 and the natural deposits in both trenches was directly overlain by modern deposits.

5.3 Consideration of research aims

5.3.1 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.

To determine the nature and significance of any archaeological deposits

No archaeological remains were recorded; both excavated trenches showed signs of truncation with modern deposits directly overlying the natural.

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

Both trenches showed signs of truncation with machine scars evident in Trench 3 and the natural being uniformly overlain by modern deposits associated with the construction of the car park. The school lies within a depression in the landscape which at least in part, was most likely the result of excavation for the construction of Smitham School.

5.3.3 Is there any prehistoric evidence on the site?

Is there any evidence for medieval activity on site?

P4 (Neolithic and Early Bronze Age), Paragraph 3: Researching the potential for categorisation of settlement sites. Future research should consider whether the lack of 'settlement sites' is more apparent than real, and if so, what it signifies;

P6 (Late Iron Age and early Roman), Paragraph 2; Assessing the relationship of the London region to the core south-east zone of coinage, oppida, Continental imports and elite burials in the period following Caesar's invasions;

R1 (Romano-British), Para 6: Understanding how the relationship between hinterland and territorium of Londinium operated;

S1 (Saxon), Para 1: Studying the transitions between late Roman and early Saxon, including the reasons and implications for shifting settlement patterns;

L10 (Post-medieval), Paragraph 3: Examining the success with which small towns in the London region adapted to the capital's growth.

Given the absence of archaeological remains on site and the truncation evident on site, it was not possible to address these research aims.

5.4 Conclusions

5.4.1 The evaluation confirmed the absence of archaeological remains, the site having been truncated by the construction of Smitham School and the associated car park.

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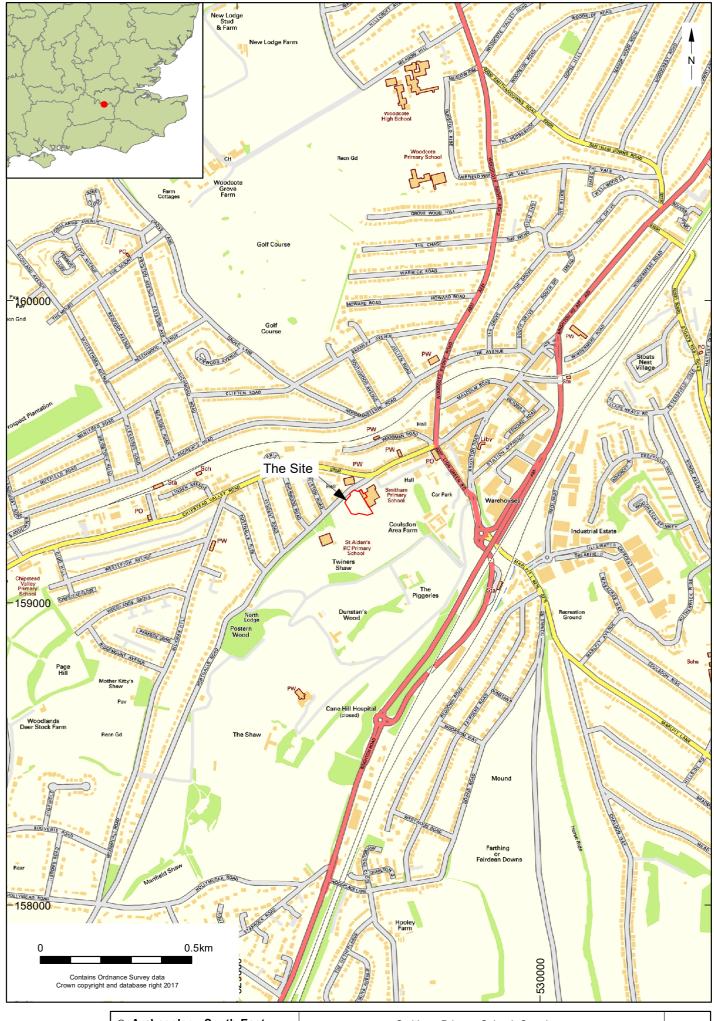
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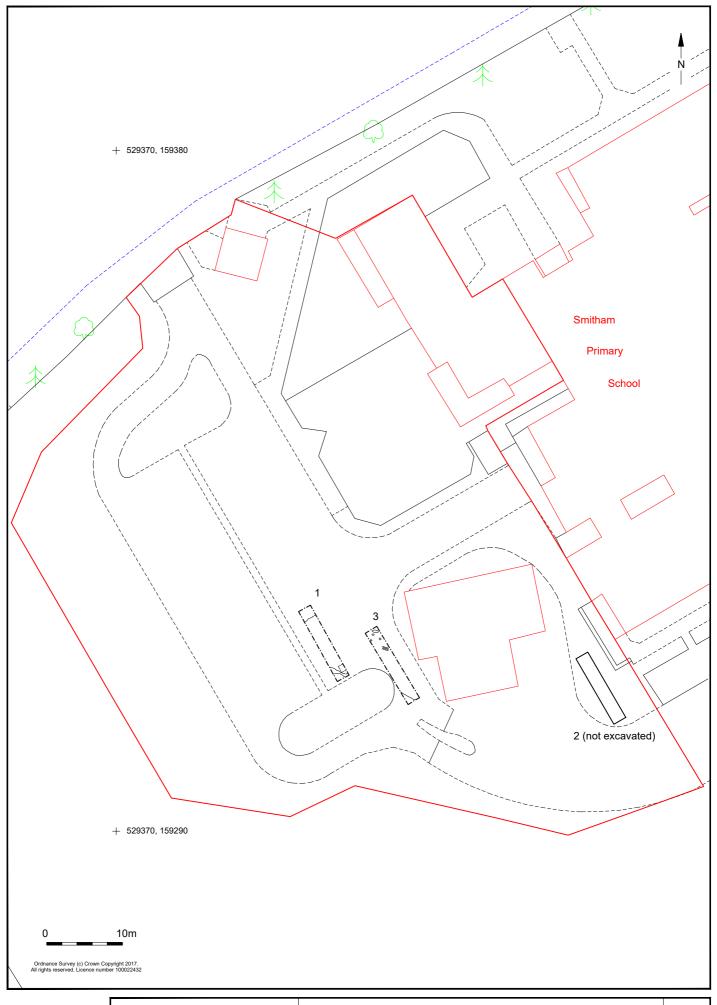
Rumble, A. 1972. *The Medieval Boundaries of Coulsdon, Surrey*. In: Journal of the English Place-Name Society, vol. 4

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

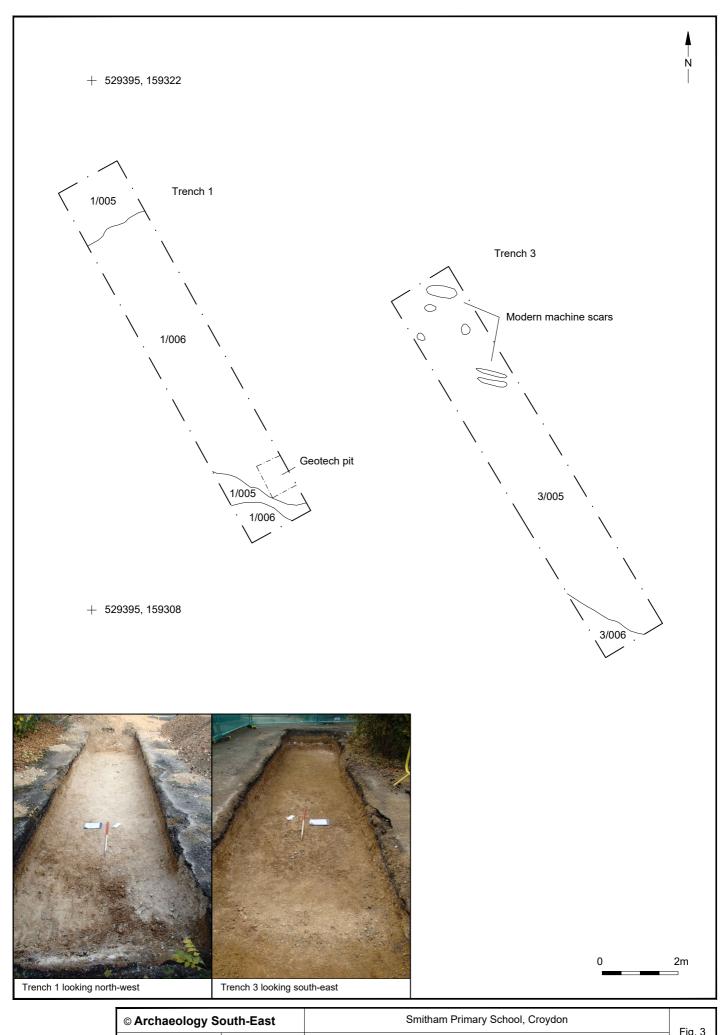
ASE would like to thank Wilmott Dixon for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project. Thanks are also due to Mark Stevenson of GLAAS for his guidance and monitoring. The work was carried out by Ian Hogg (Senior Archaeologist), Naomi Humphrey (Archaeologist) and Tomas Marciewiscz (Assistant Archaeologist). Justin Russell produced the figures for this report. The fieldwork was managed by Andy Leonard, the post-excavation work by Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift.



(Archaeology South-East		Smitham Primary School, Croydon		
Pi	roject Ref: 170324	Nov 2017	Site location	Fig. 1	
R	eport Ref: 2017468	Drawn by: JLR	Site location		



© Archaeology South-East		Smitham Primary School, Croydon		
Project Ref: 170324	Nov 2017	Transh location	Fig. 2	
Report Ref: 2017468	Drawn by: JLR	Trench location		



© Archaeology South-East		Smitham Primary School, Croydon		
Project Ref: 170324	Nov 2017	Trenches 1 and 3: plans and photographs	Fig. 3	
Report Ref: 2017468	Drawn by: JLR	Trenches Fand 3. plans and photographs		

HER Summary

site code	PTA 17								
Project code	170324								
Planning reference	17/02763	/FUL							
site address	Smitham	Prima	ary Sc	hool	, Portn	alls Ro	ad,	Coulsdo	n
District/Borough	London E	Borou	gh of C	Croy	don				
NGR (12 figures)	529446,	15933	34						
Geology	Lewes Cl	nalk,	Head (depo	sits				
Fieldwork type	Eval								
Date of fieldwork	16-10-20	17 to	17-10	-201	7				•
Sponsor/client	Wilmott D	Wilmott Dixon							
Project manager	Andy Leonard								
Project supervisor	lan Hogg	lan Hogg							
		Modern							Modern
Project summary	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Wilmott Dixon to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Smitham Primary School, Portnalls Road, Coulsdon, London Borough of Croydon. The evaluation comprised two machine excavated trenches. Natural Lewes Chalk and Head deposits were recorded at between 82.37m and 82.85m aOD. The site had undergone truncation associated with the construction of the school and its car park. Machine scars were observed truncating the natural deposits. In both trenches the natural deposits were sealed by modern layers associated with the construction of the car park. No archaeological remains were recorded on this part of the site.								

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-299599

Project details

Project name Smitham Primary School, Portnalls Road, Coulsdon

> Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Wilmott Dixon to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Smitham Primary

School, Portnalls Road, Coulsdon, London Borough of Croydon. The evaluation comprised two machine excavated trenches. Natural Lewes Chalk and Head deposits were

the project

Short description of recorded at between 82.37m and 82.85m aOD. The site had undergone severe truncation associated with the construction of the school and its car park. Machine scars were observed truncating the natural deposits. In both trenches the natural deposits were sealed by modern lavers associated with the construction of the car park. No archaeological remains were

recorded on this part of the site.

Project dates Start: 16-10-2017 End: 17-10-2017

Previous/future

work

No / Not known

Any associated

project reference

PTA17 - Sitecode

codes

Any associated

project reference

170324 - Contracting Unit No.

codes

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)

Current Land use Community Service 1 - Community Buildings

NONE None Monument type Significant Finds **NONE None**

Methods and techniques

"Sample Trenches"

Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, Development type

law courts etc.)

Prompt National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Position in the planning process

After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country England

GREATER LONDON CROYDON COULSDON Smitham Site location

Primary School, Portnalls Road

Postcode CR5 3DE

Study area 0.48 Hectares

TQ 29446 59334 51.317849255532 -0.142270935498 51 19 Site coordinates

04 N 000 08 32 W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 82.37m Max: 82.85m

Project creators

Name of Archaeology South-East Organisation

Project brief **GLAAS** originator

Project design **Archaeology South-East** originator

Project Andy Leonard/Jim Stevenson director/manager

Project supervisor Ian Hogg

Type of

sponsor/funding Developer body

Name of

sponsor/funding

body

Wilmott Dixon

Project archives Physical Archive

Exists?

No

Digital Archive recipient

LAARC

"Stratigraphic", "Survey" **Digital Contents**

Digital Media available

"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"

Paper Archive LAARC recipient

Paper Contents "Stratigraphic"

Paper Media available

"Context sheet","Plan","Section"

Entered by lan Hogg (ian.hogg@ucl.ac.uk)

Entered on 31 October 2017

Appendix 1: Archaeologically negative trenches: list of recorded contexts

					Depth	Height (m
Context	Туре	Interpretation	Length (m)	Width (m)	(m)	aOD)
		Asphalt car				
1/001	Layer	park surface	11.00	1.80	0.15-0.18	83.19-83.24
		Bedding				
1/002	Layer	deposit	11.00	1.80	0.04-0.09	83.01-83.09
		Levelling				
1/003	Layer	deposit	11.00	1.80	0.08-0.19	82.97-83.00
		Levelling				
1/004	Layer	deposit	11.00	1.80	0.04-0.14	82.82-82.93
		Natural Head				
1/005	Deposit	deposits	11.00	1.80	-	82.65-82.85
1/006	Deposit	Natural chalk	11.00	1.80	-	82.65-82.85
		Asphalt car				
3/001	Layer	park surface	11.00	1.80	0.10-0.17	82.95-83.10
		Bedding				
3/002	Layer	deposit	11.00	1.80	0.10-0.18	82.85-82.93
		Levelling				
3/003	Layer	deposit	11.00	1.80	0.25	82.67-82.83
		Levelling				
3/004	Layer	deposit	11.00	1.80	0.10-0.32	82.42-82.58
		Natural Head				
3/005	Deposit	deposits	11.00	1.80	-	82.45-82.52
3/006	Deposit	Natural chalk	2.30	1.80	_	82.37

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

