

**An Archaeological Evaluation at  
48-50 Benhill Avenue, Sutton, Surrey**

**DRAFT**

**NGR: 525962 164613  
(TQ 25962 64613)**

**Project No: 3998  
Site Code: CJB09**

**ASE Report No. 2009174  
OASIS id: archaeol6-67475**

**By Nick Garland MA**

**November 2009**

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## **Abstract**

*Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), was commissioned by Goldstar Contracts Ltd, on behalf of their client, to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of redevelopment on 48-50 Benhill Avenue, Sutton, Surrey (NGR 525962 164613).*

*Two evaluation trenches were excavated. A brick lined post-medieval cistern tank or well and a brick cellar or drain were uncovered to the north of the site under a thick layer of made ground. No other archaeological remains, deposits or artefacts were recovered.*

*The natural horizon varied in depth from 48.569m OD in the west of the site to 49.474m OD in the centre of the site.*

## **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**
- 3.0 Archaeological Methodology**
- 4.0 Results**
- 5.0 Discussion and Conclusions**

### **Bibliography**

### **Acknowledgments**

### **SMR Summary Sheet**

### **OASIS Form**

## **FIGURES**

- Figure 1: Site Location
- Figure 2: Trench location
- Figure 3: Trench 1 looking west
- Figure 4: Cistern tank or well in Trench 1
- Figure 5: Cellar or drain in Trench 1
- Figure 6: Trench 2 looking north-west

## **TABLES**

- Table 1: Quantification of site archive
- Table 2: Recorded contexts in Trench 1
- Table 3: Recorded contexts in Trench 2

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), was commissioned by Goldstar Contracts Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of redevelopment at 48-50 Benhill Avenue, Sutton, Surrey henceforth referred to as 'the site' (NGR 525962 164613; Figure 1).

## 1.1 Geology and Topography

- 1.1.1 According to the British Geological Survey Map for South London (Sheet 270) the site is located on an area of Head deposit comprising of silt, sand and clay with variable gravel.
- 1.2.2 The site was bounded to the north and east by Benhill Avenue and Lenham Road respectively. Existing housing lies to the south and west.

## 1.2 Planning Background

- 1.2.1 Following consultation with Diane Abrahams, the Greater London Archaeology Advisor for the Borough of Sutton, it was decided that a condition should be attached to the planning permission.

*The condition states:*

*'No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implantation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority.'*

*Reason*

*'Significant archaeological remains may survive on the site. The planning authority wished to secure the provision of archaeological investigation and the subsequent recording of the remains prior to development, in accordance with the guidance and model condition set out in PPG16.'*

- 1.3.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the archaeological work was produced by ASE (2009) and was approved, prior to the commencement of work, by Diane Walls, Archaeological Advisor, Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS), London Region. This document outlined the methods to be used during the archaeological evaluation of the site, namely the excavation and recording of two trenches, measuring c. 15m by 1.8m and 10m by 1.8m to be located in the footprint of the new development. A provision for the excavation of a third trench once the demolition of the existing building takes place was subject to the results of the first two trenches.

### **1.3 Aims and Objectives**

1.3.1 The aims and objectives of the evaluation as listed in the WSI (ASE 2009) were:

- To establish whether any archaeological remains exist in the area, with particular regard to any which are of sufficient importance to require preservation *in situ*.
- The evaluation should aim to determine, as far is reasonably possible, the location, form, extent, date, character, condition significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains, irrespective of period, liable to be threatened by the proposed development. An adequate representative sample of all areas where archaeological remains are potentially threatened should be studied, and attention should be given to sites and remains of all periods (inclusive of evidence of past environments).
- The evaluation should also seek to clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusions and hence assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits and any surviving structures of archaeological significance.

### **1.4 Scope of Report**

1.4.1 This report details the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Nick Garland (Archaeologist) and Liane Peyre on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2009. The project was managed by Darryl Palmer and Neil Griffin (Project Managers) and Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift (Project Managers, Post-Excavation).

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** A general archaeological and historical background was produced for the WSI of the evaluation and is reproduced below with due acknowledgement (ASE 2009).
- 2.2** A number of prehistoric discoveries have been made in the vicinity of the Site. Palaeolithic faunal material is known from Benhilton, north of the Site. Excavations in the vicinity over a number of years have produced a range of material, including a Mesolithic site comprising a pit and flint artefacts at 341 High Street, a Neolithic/Bronze Age flint assemblage in Manor Lane and various poorly provenance finds of artefacts including flint arrowheads have been found around Sutton. Romano-British material is scarce, apart from a few stray coins.
- 2.3** Sutton originated as an Anglo-Saxon settlement (the south tun), probably named in relation to Chertsey, of which it formed a subsidiary holding. It remained in the hands of Chertsey Abbey until the Dissolution. The form of the medieval settlement at Sutton appears unclear, but is likely to have been a small agricultural settlement laid out along the main road. Archaeological evidence has included a wall at 101-103 High Street, a pit at 3 Throwley Way and a pond and ditch at 123-211 High Street.
- 2.4** Post-medieval Sutton remained a small agricultural settlement largely until the arrival of the railway in 1847, which, as so often in the outskirts of the capital, stimulated the growth and development of residential suburbs. Until this time, the site lay beyond the medieval built-up core of Sutton.

### 3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1** The evaluation followed the principles laid out in the methodology (WSI; ASE 2009), what follows here is a précis of the complete methodology listed within that document and details of any significant variations made.
- 3.2** Two trenches (Figure 2), one measuring c. 15m in length and the other c. 10m in length, were excavated using a 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m flat ditching bucket. Both trenches were designed to test the potential for archaeology on the proposed development site prior to demolition of the existing building.
- 3.3** The trial trenches were scanned prior to excavation using a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT). The trenches were excavated under constant archaeological supervision. Revealed surfaces were manually cleaned as necessary in order to identify any archaeological deposits or features. The sections of the trenches were selectively cleaned to observe and record their stratigraphy. All spoil removed from the trenches was scanned visually and with a metal detector for the presence of unstratified artefacts.
- 3.4** Only undifferentiated topsoil, subsoil and overburden of recent origin was removed by machine and kept separately. The excavation was taken, in spits of no more than 0.25m for the top and sub soil, down to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the top of the underlying 'natural'.
- 3.5** All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded according to accepted professional standards in accordance with the WSI (ASE 2009) using pro-forma context record sheets. Sections through archaeological features and deposits were drawn at a scale of 1:10. Deposit colours were verified by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell colour chart.
- 3.6** A full photographic record of the trenches and associated deposits and features was kept, and forms part of the site archive.
- 3.7** The complete site archive is presently held at the Archaeology South-East offices at Portslade, East Sussex, but will in due course be offered to the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC).

Number of Contexts	10 contexts
No. of files/paper record	1 file
Plan and sections sheets	1 sheets
Photographs	24 photographs

Table 1: Quantification of the site archive

## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1 Trench 1 (Figure 3-5)

4.1.1 Trench 1 was located within the north of the site and was orientated in an east to west direction.

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Thickness	Height m.AOD
1/001	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.25 m	50.199
1/002	Layer	Made Ground	Tr.	Tr.	1.30 m	49.869
1/003	Layer	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	N/A	48.569
1/004	Cut	Cistern tank/well	1.05m	0.7 m	N/A	49.891
1/005	Masonry	Cistern tank/well	1.05m	0.7 m	N/A	49.891
1/006	Cut	Cellar or drain	Tr.	Tr.	N/A	48.593
1/007	Masonry	Cellar or drain	Tr.	Tr.	N/A	48.593

Table 2: Recorded contexts in Trench 1

#### 4.1.2 Summary

Trench 1 was only excavated to depth at the far eastern end as its depth exceeded 1.2 metres and there was not sufficient space in order to step the edges of the trench to continue excavation. A sondage was excavated in the eastern end of the trench measuring 1.8 metres in length and width to investigate the depth of the natural horizon, which lay 1.55 metres below modern ground level.

The natural [1/003], a mixed mid yellowish brown clay/silt sand, was observed at 48.569 OD in the western end of the trench. A layer of made ground [1/002], a mixed mid yellow to dark brown stony/silt clay material with moderate inclusions of CBM, chalk, concrete and tarmac, lay over the natural, beneath a layer of topsoil [1/001].

A small post-medieval cistern tank or well [1/005], measuring 1.05 metres in length and 0.7 metres in width lay to the eastern end of the trench (Figures 3 and 4). It was lined with red brick and cement mortar and only the top of the feature was uncovered in the trench. The construction cut for this was not visible within the trench. Due to the depth of the trench, the feature could not be excavated.

Elements of a possible cellar or drain [1/007] were uncovered during the excavation of the sondage at the western end of the trench (Figure 5). This was a red brick structure with cement mortar and was cut into the natural [1/003]. From what was uncovered in the trench it measured 2.1 metres in length and 0.8 metres in width. Due to the depth of the sondage, the feature could not be excavated.

## 4.2 Trench 2 (Figure 5)

4.2.1 Trench 2 was located in the middle of the site and was orientated in a north-west to south-east direction.

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Thickness	Height m.AOD
2/001	Layer	Tarmac	Tr.	Tr.	0.1 m	50.107
2/002	Layer	Made Ground	Tr.	Tr.	0.64 m	50.007
2/003	Layer	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	N/A	49.367

Table 3: Recorded contexts in Trench 2

### 4.2.2 Summary

The natural [2/003], a mixed mid yellowish brown clay/silt sand, was observed between 49.474 OD in the north-east of the trench and 49.074 OD in the south-west of the trench. A layer of made ground [2/002], a mixed mid yellow to dark brown stony/silt clay material with moderate inclusions of CBM, chalk, concrete and tarmac, lay over the natural and beneath a layer of tarmac [2/001]. No archaeological features or finds were present in this trench. Modern intrusions included a land drain.

A sondage measuring 1.8 metres in length and width was excavated at the north-western end of the trench in order to examine the geology. The water table was encountered at a depth of 1.25 metres below the surface and excavations were ceased at this point.

## **5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1** The evaluation has revealed some post-medieval evidence of uncertain date and no artefactual finds. The post-medieval evidence included a cistern tank or well and a possible cellar or drain, however, neither feature could be hand excavated due to the depth of the trench and sondage.

These remains were located to the north of the site in Trench 1 and were overlain by a thick layer of made ground, presumably built up from the existing street level during construction of the Conservative Club which is due for demolition.

Previous truncation on the site appears to have been limited to the land drains and services present within Trench 2.

The evaluation has revealed little evidence of significant archaeological remains suggesting that the site was not occupied before the post-medieval period.

Dependant on the depth and/or form of the foundation design for the proposed development, these remains and any others which may exist in the central, unevaluated part of the site may not be impacted upon due to their depth below present ground surface.

## **Bibliography**

ASE 2009. *48-50 Benhill Avenue, Sutton, Surrey: Archaeological Evaluation Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpub ASE report

## **Acknowledgements**

The assistance of Simon White, Goldstar Contracts Ltd, and Diane Abrahams of Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) is gratefully acknowledged.

## SMR Summary Form

<b>Site Name:</b> 48-50 Benhill Avenue, Sutton	
<b>Site Address:</b> 48-50 Benhill Avenue, Sutton , Surrey	
<b>Summary:</b> Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), was commissioned by Goldstar Contracts Ltd, on behalf of their client, to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of redevelopment on 48-50 Benhill Avenue, Sutton, Surrey (NGR 525962 164613).  Two evaluation trenches were excavated. A brick lined post-medieval cistern tank or well and a brick cellar or drain were uncovered to the north of the site under a thick layer of made ground. No other archaeological remains, deposits or artefacts were recovered.  The natural horizon varied in depth from 48.569m OD in the west of the site to 49.474m OD in the centre of the site.	
<b>District/Unitary:</b> London Borough of Sutton	<b>Parish:</b> Sutton and Cheam, Sutton
<b>Nature of Development:</b> Demolition of existing building and erection of two blocks in a part two, part three story building with roof accommodation	
<b>Period(s):</b> None	
<b>NGR (centre of site : 8 Figures):</b> NGR 525962 164613	
<b>Type of archaeological work (delete)</b> Evaluation	
<b>Date of Recording:</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2009	
<b>Unit undertaking recording:</b> Archaeology South-East	
<b>Geology:</b> Head deposit	
<b>Title and author of accompanying report:</b> An Archaeological Evaluation at 48-50, Benhill Avenue, Surrey, by Nick Garland	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results</b> No archaeological deposits, features or finds were discovered	
<b>Likelihood of surviving archaeological remains on-site:</b> Low: Only Post-medieval remains visible during evaluation	
<b>Location of archive/finds:</b> Currently held at the offices of ASE	
<b>Contact at Unit:</b> Darryl Palmer	<b>Date:</b> November 2009

OASIS Form

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-67475**

Project details

Project name 48-50 Benhill Avenue, Sutton

Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), was commissioned by Goldstar Contracts Ltd, on behalf of their client, to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of redevelopment on 48-50 Benhill Avenue, Sutton, Surrey (NGR 525962 164613).

Short description of the project Two evaluation trenches were excavated. A brick lined post-medieval cistern tank or well and a brick cellar or drain were uncovered to the north of the site under a thick layer of made ground. No other archaeological remains, deposits or artefacts were recovered.

The natural horizon varied in depth from 48.569m OD in the west of the site to 49.474m OD in the centre of the site.

Project dates Start: 02-11-2009 End: 02-11-2009

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes CJB09 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices

Monument type CISTERN Post Medieval

Monument type CELLAR Post Medieval

Significant Finds NONE None

Methods & techniques 'Sample Trenches'

Development type Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)

Prompt Planning condition

Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON SUTTON SUTTON AND CHEAM 48-50 Benhill Avenue, Sutton

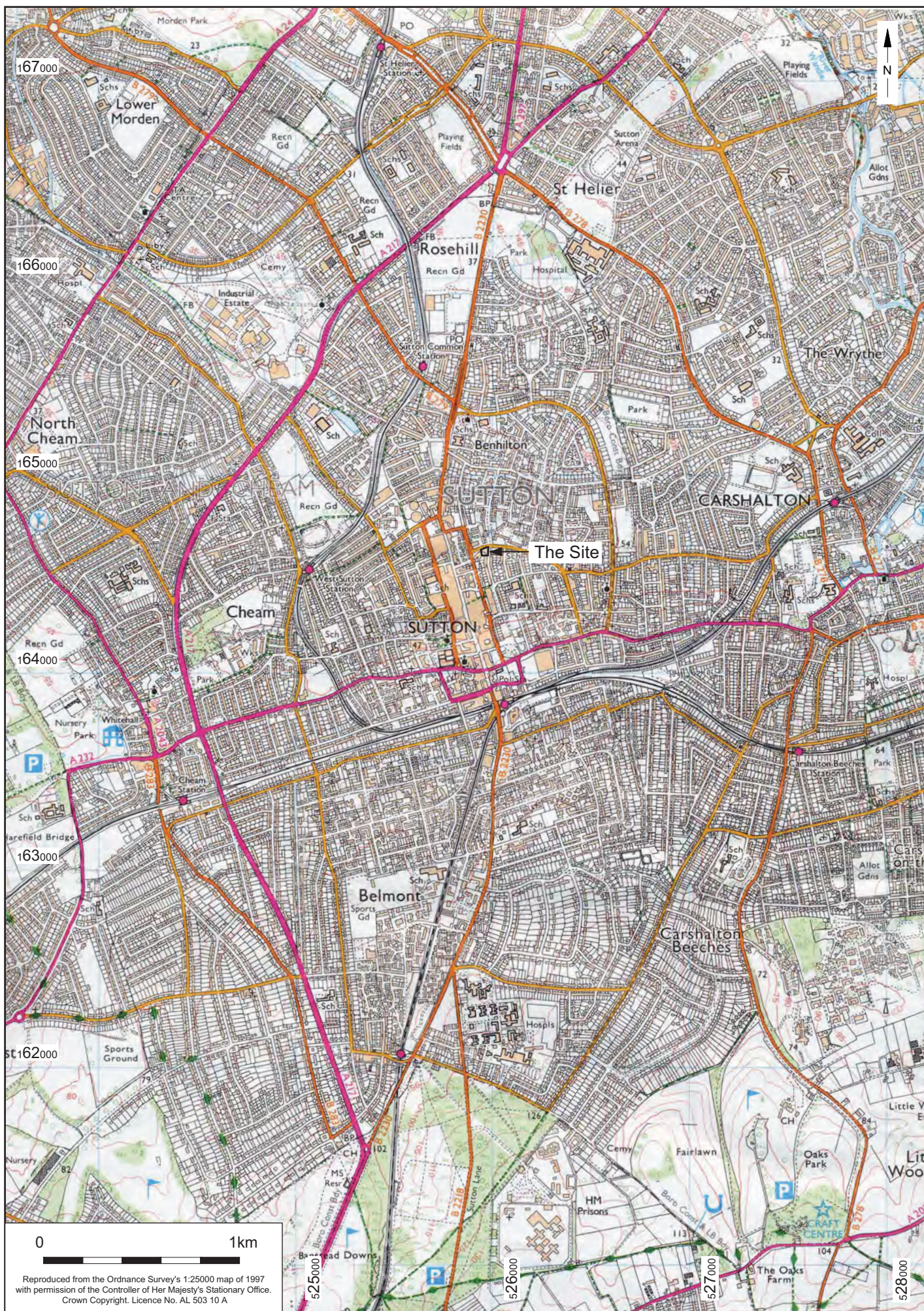
Postcode SM1 4

Study area 1280.00 Square metres

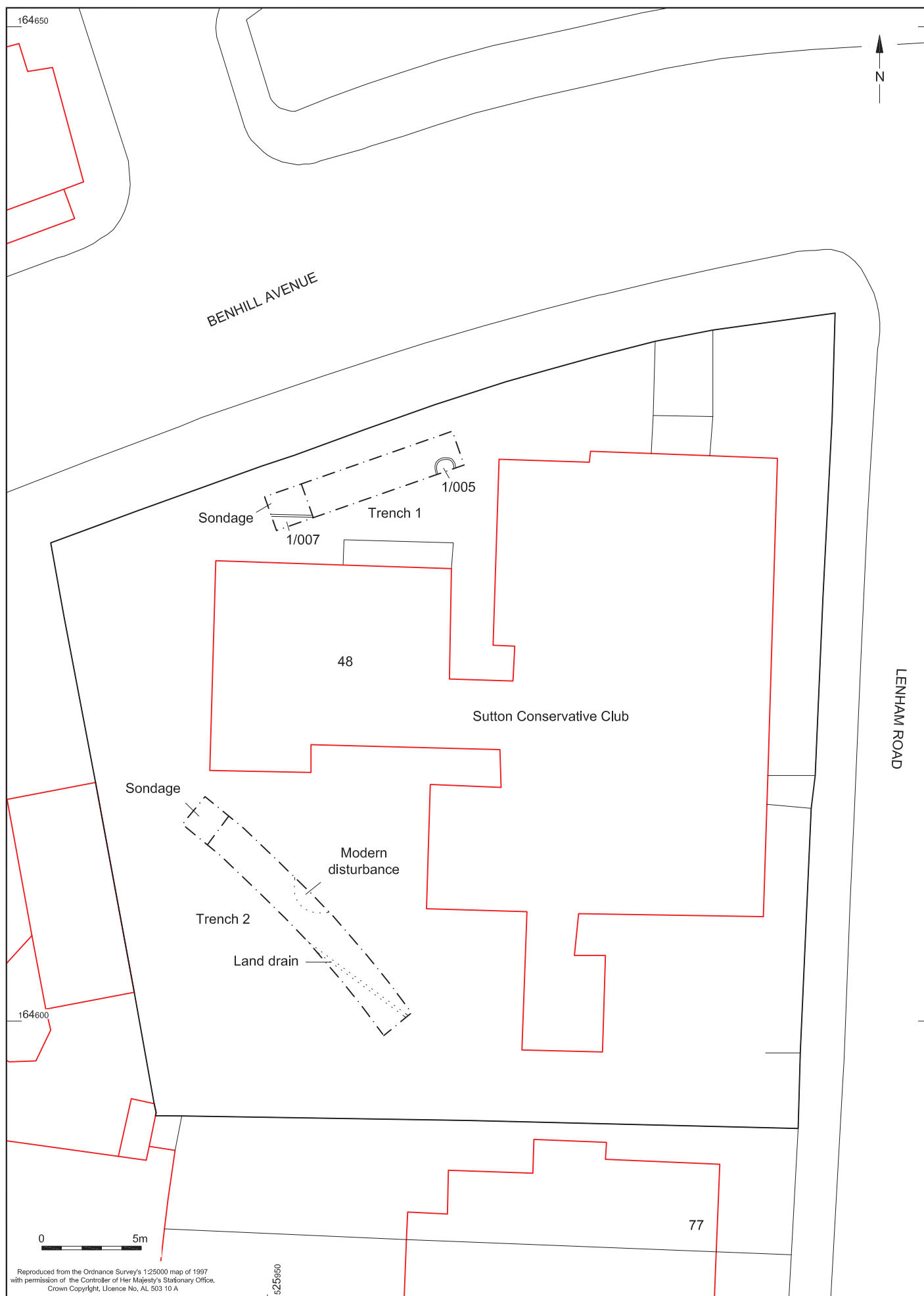
Site coordinates TQ 25962 64613 51.3660819104 -0.190375901542 51 21 57 N 000 11 25 W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 48.57m Max: 49.47m

Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Darryl Palmer
Project supervisor	Nick Garland
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Goldstar Contracts Ltd
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Local Museum
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Photograph','Plan','Report'
Project bibliography	
1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Evaluation at 48-50 Benhill Avenue, Sutton, Surrey
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© Archaeology South-East		48-50 Benhill Avenue, Sutton	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 3998	Nov 2009	Site location	
Report Ref: 2009174	Drawn by: JLR		



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Project Ref: 3998	Nov 2009	Trench location	
Report Ref: 2009174	Drawn by: JLR		



Fig. 3: Trench 1 looking west



Fig. 4: Cistern tank or well in Trench 1

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Fig. 5: Cellar or drain in Trench 1



Fig. 6: Trench 2 looking north-west

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