

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
76 Napier Road, Croydon, London Borough of Croydon**

Planning ref: 08/03630/P

**NGR 534608 168069
(TQ 34608 68069)**

**Project No: 3944
Site Code: NAP 09**

ASE Report No: 2010055

OASIS id: archaeol6-76474

**By
Andrew Margetts BA (Hons) and Chiz Harward**

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Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks for the construction of seven residential units at land adjacent to 76 Napier Road, South Croydon, London Borough of Croydon.

Works included the excavation of footing trenches to a maximum depth of 2m below the current ground surface (58.65m O.D.). Site visits were made to monitor groundworks on the 1st and 14th of April 2010.

No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the groundworks and it was determined that truncation of the archaeological horizon had occurred during the 20th century to raise the level of the ground surface.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), were commissioned by CgMs LTD on behalf of their client Greenacre Homes (South East) to undertake an archaeological watching brief at 76 Napier Rd, Croydon henceforth called the site (NGR TQ 34608 68069; Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 The site measures approximately 20m by 60m and lies to the south of Napier Road, Croydon. The site is bounded to the west by properties facing onto Napier Road and gardens to the rear of Bynes Road, to the south by gardens to the rear of Bynes Road and to the east by the London to Brighton mainline railway embankment.
- 1.1.3 The site had formerly been used as a scaffolding yard, with a single 1960's property at the northern part of the site and hardstanding/concrete covering the remainder of the site. A series of concrete and brick sheds had apparently stood in the rear of the site.
- 1.1.4 The site is being redeveloped by Greenacre Homes (South East) with the construction of seven residential units and associated landscaping.
- 1.1.5 A condition was attached to the planning consent:

No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme pursuant to this condition. The archaeological works shall be carried out by a suitably qualified investigating body acceptable to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: to preserve the archaeological integrity of the borough in accordance with Policy UC11 of the Replacement Unitary Development Plan (the Croydon Plan).

- 1.1.6 The Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) Archaeological Advisor recommended that a watching brief be undertaken during the ground works to record any potential archaeological remains

1.2 Aims and Objectives

- 1.2.1 According to the WSI (ASE 2009), the aims are to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area. To determine the nature, extent, condition, date, character, quality, significance and state of preservation of any archaeological features and deposits affected by the proposed works. To assess the ecofactual and palaeo-environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features within the site, to take samples where deemed appropriate and to report on the results of the fieldwork.

1.3 Geology and Topography

- 1.3.1 The underlying geology at the site according to the Ordnance Survey geological survey of Great Britain, scale 1:50,000 (Sheet 270 – South London), comprises Hackney Gravels.
- 1.3.2 The general topography of the area is of a slope down from east to the west. The site itself is broadly level, with a slight slope of approximately 0.7m from 60.5m OD at the west down to 59.8m OD at the east, and a slope of approximately 1.3m from a broadly level area at the south (rear) of the site (60.3m OD) to a roughly level area at the north (front) of the site (59.0m OD).

1.4 Scope of Report

- 1.4.1 This report aims to outline the findings of the archaeological watching brief. A Written Scheme of Investigation for these works was produced by Archaeology South East (ASE 2009) and was subsequently approved by Mr Mark Stevenson, the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) Officer for the London Borough of Croydon.
- 1.4.2 The fieldwork was undertaken by Chiz Harward on the 1st 6th and 7th of April 2010 and by Andrew Margetts from the 12th to the 14th of April 2010. The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Project Manager) and Dan Swift (Post-excavation Manager).

2.0 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The preceding brief (CgMs Consulting Ltd 2009) stated the archaeological potential of the site, reproduced below with due acknowledgement:

According to British Geological Survey Sheet 270 (South London 1998) the study site is underlain by deposits of Hackney Gravels, immediately adjacent to an area of made ground.

Geotechnical information obtained from the site has revealed concrete and hardcore varying from 0.18-0.6m thick, above layers of sand and gravel. The borehole logs and location plan are reproduced at Appendix 1 (CgMs 2009, Appendix 1).

A review of data held on the Greater London Sites and Monuments Record (GLSMR) has revealed an archaeological potential at the study site for the Prehistoric periods. Principally this is due to finds and features of Mesolithic and Neolithic date, and in greater quantities, of Bronze Age and Iron Age date, around the area of the study site, particularly along Pampisford Road to the west, and Haling Park to the northwest.

A substantial Roman settlement has been identified in central Croydon some distance north of the study site, concentrated around Park Street. The line of Brighton Road to the west of the study site follows the line of a Roman road from London to Brighton. While it is unlikely that typical roadside activity, such

as settlement and burial, will be present at the site, agricultural and property boundary ditches aligned with the road could conceivably be present.

The study site appears to have lain away from known areas of settlement and activity during the Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods; the potential for the site itself can be considered relatively low, although evidence of agricultural activity and land division could conceivably be present.

The Croydon Enclosure Map (dated 1800) and the Croydon Tithe Map (1844) both show the study site within undeveloped land.

The 1882 First Edition Ordnance Survey shows the study site undeveloped, but successive Ordnance Surveys from the 1894-6 Second Edition show the northern part of the site occupied by a range of industrial buildings, with the remainder lying between the backs of housing fronting Byres Road to the west, and the railway to the east. The study site is currently occupied by a building fronting Napier Road, with areas of concrete hardstanding to the rear (CgMs 2009, Fig 2).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The site code NAP09 was used.
- 3.2 The work was undertaken in accordance with the EH/GLAAS guidance.
- 3.3 The following methodology was adhered to, as stated in the preceding specification (CgMs Consulting Ltd 2009), reproduced below with due acknowledgement:

Before groundworks commence a programme and excavation methodology will be agreed between the groundworks contractors and CgMs Consulting to ensure that all relevant parties are aware of the monitoring requirements. An archaeologist will monitor groundworks as specified in Section 1.4 which are likely to impact upon archaeological deposits. Where topographical or archaeological features occur, either in plan or section, these will be clearly identified to the civil engineering contractor to allow, where practical, sufficient time for their investigation and recording.

Areas that have been observed by the archaeological contractor and where no topographical features or archaeological deposits have been recorded will be clearly identified to the civil engineering contractor so that their work can continue in areas of no archaeological interest.

Where topographical features or archaeological deposits occur they will be planned and recorded. The hand-excavation of archaeological deposits may be undertaken where it is reasonable, practical and safe to do so. The percentage of any feature to be excavated will be dependent on the percentage of the feature exposed by the groundworks, its stratigraphic relationship to other archaeological features and health and safety considerations.

Observations of ground disturbance works will continue until it is clear that no further geological topographical information or archaeological deposits are likely to occur within the site area.

All artefacts will be retained from excavated contexts unless they are undoubtedly of modern or recent origin. In these circumstances sufficient material will be retained to elucidate the date and function of the feature. The presence of modern artefacts will, however, be noted on context records.

All finds will, as a minimum be counted, weighed and identified. Contingency will be made for specialist advice and conservation needs on-site should unexpected, unusual or extremely fragile and delicate objects be recovered.

Provision will be made for the bulk sampling of archaeological deposits for artefactual, economic and environmental data from appropriate deposits recorded during the monitoring work.

- 3.4 Prior to the initial site visit the building had been demolished to ground level and the hard surfaces removed. A piling mat had been laid across part of the site, and sheet piles inserted along the line of the east walls of the proposed plots to retain the railway embankment. It is not thought that these initial site works had any impact on buried archaeological remains.
- 3.5 Below ground works consisted of the excavation of narrow trenches to carry strip footings for the new residential units. These trenches were approximately 0.6m wide and were excavated to formation level or natural ground depending on which was reached first. These trenches were up to 2m in depth.
- 3.6 It was not possible to enter the trenches due to the depth and instability of the sides, however the base of the trench could be observed from the side, and the spoil was inspected *ex situ*.
- 3.7 All archaeological features were recorded according to standard UCLCAA practice. Where practicable, all features were planned at 1:20 and section drawings were at 1:10, unless this was impractical in which case an alternative would be agreed with the GLAAS Archaeological Advisor. Drawings were made on plastic draughting film. Features and deposits were described on standard pro-forma recording sheets used by ASE. All remains were levelled with respect to Ordnance Survey datum wherever practicable. A photographic record was made in digital format, monochrome and colour transparency.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Number of Contexts | 0 |
| No. of files/paper record | 1 |
| Plan and sections sheets | 1 |
| Bulk Samples | 0 |
| Photograph | c.5 digital |
| Bulk finds | 0 |
| Registered finds | 0 |
| Environmental flots/residue | 0 |

Table 1: Quantification of Site Archive

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS (Fig. 2)

4.1 *The southern plots (Fig. 3)*

4.1.1 The footings for the southern plots were excavated between 1st April and 8th April 2010 with site visits on 1st, 6th and 7th April. The westernmost footing trenches (excavated 8th April) were not observed due to the negative results from the adjacent footings and the probable truncation caused by a terrace retaining wall immediately to the west of the footing line.

4.1.2 Numerous large reinforced concrete obstructions were encountered during the excavation of the observed footings. In addition a lightly reinforced concrete slab extended over much of the footprint of the southern plots at a depth of approximately 1.3m below current ground level. This was removed using either the machine bucket or broken out by hydraulic breaker and the footing trenches were dug down through the clay until good ground was reached, or sufficient depth for the concrete footings, up to 2m in depth from current ground level.

4.1.3 Natural ground was observed over most of the trench floor and consisted of a compact mid-orange brown sandy clay with occasional small sub rounded stones and frequent flecks of chalk. The surface of the clay was at a depth of approximately 58.65m OD (1.4m below current ground level) at the east of the trench sloping slightly down to the west.

4.1.4 The natural clay graded upwards into mid-brown sandy clay containing occasional CBM fragments, small fragments of chalk, and charcoal flecks. This appears to be a buried Victorian soil horizon across the south of the site. The soil horizon was approximately 0.2m thick but its surface had been truncated by later activity.

4.1.5 Across much of the southern area the surface of the soil had been truncated by a lightly reinforced concrete slab. This was associated with concrete and brick walls that appeared to be the buried remains of partitions for storing aggregates and other such materials. It appears that at some point these areas were infilled with made ground and levelled over, raising the ground level by up to 1.3m. To the rear of the partitions, made ground consisting of brick and concrete rubble and clay fill was present across the area and appeared to have been dumped on site as a single episode to raise the ground level. This deposit of made ground was between 1.2 and 1.8m thick and sealed the buried soil horizon. Much of the dumped material was contaminated by hydrocarbons, and there had been some seepage of contaminants into the underlying soil and clay.

4.1.6 No archaeologically significant deposits or remains were observed during the excavation of the footing trenches.

4.2 *The northern plots*

4.2.1 The footings for the northern plots were excavated between 12th to the 14th of April 2010.

4.2.2 In contrast to the southern plots, few obstructions were encountered during excavation of the footing trenches which were dug through made ground

deposits until good ground was reached, or sufficient depth for the concrete footings, up to 2m in depth from current ground level, whichever was higher.

- 4.2.3 Natural ground was observed over most of the trench floor and consisted of either compact mid-orange brown sandy clay with frequent angular flint nodules or truncated chalk natural. The surface of the natural was at a depth of approximately 58.82m OD (1.5m below current ground level) at the east of the plots sloping up quite dramatically to the southwest. 59.92m OD (0.8m below current ground level)
- 4.2.4 In similarity with the southern plots a thin buried Victorian soil horizon was noticed throughout the trench however its existence was patchy due to later truncation.
- 4.2.5 It is thought that the underlying natural was largely truncated through much of the northern plot with the possible exception of the extreme southwest corner. However, thick deposits of fairly recent made ground utilised to level the site (see above) together with the patchy nature of the buried Victorian soil horizon that it sealed meant that disturbance due to the fairly recent raising and levelling of the site may have served to destroy any archaeological evidence had it ever existed.
- 4.3 A number of service runs and a single soak-away were due to be excavated after archaeological monitoring of the footings for the housing plots. It was certain however that the service runs would be excavated through made ground deposits and that the negative evidence shown by the preceding watching brief meant that the likelihood of archaeology surviving in the area of the soak-away was minimal.

5.0 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 The underlying geology encountered during the course of the groundworks comprised Hackney Gravels and Upper Chalk.
- 5.2 Disturbance of the site due to fairly recent levelling and raising of the ground would have probably served to destroy any archaeological remains had they been present.
- 5.3 No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the groundworks although a Victorian buried soil horizon was encountered through much of the site.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The Watching Brief succeeded in its general aim of monitoring and recording the groundworks and was successful in proving the absence of archaeological remains at the site. The results must therefore be classed as negative evidence.

Bibliography

ASE, 2009, *Land adjacent to 76 Napier Road, Croydon, London Borough of Croydon, Archaeological Watching Brief Written Scheme of Investigation*. ASE unpublished report

CgMs Consulting Ltd, 2009, *Specification for An Archaeological Watching Brief at land adjacent to 76 Napier Road*, unpub grey report

Acknowledgements

ASE would like to thank Richard Meager of CgMs Ltd for commissioning the work as well as Mark Stevenson of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) for his guidance through the project. Archaeology South East would also like to thank Michael Parfitt of Greenacre Homes (South East) for his assistance on site.

SMR Summary Form

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|-----------------|---|--------------------|--------|-------|
| Site Code | NAP09 | | | | | |
| Identification Name and Address | 76 Napier Road, Croydon, CR2 6xx | | | | | |
| County, District &/or Borough | South Croydon, London Borough of Croydon | | | | | |
| OS Grid Refs. | NGR TQ 34608 68069 | | | | | |
| Geology | Hackney Gravels and Upper Chalk | | | | | |
| Arch. South-East Project Number | 3944 | | | | | |
| Type of Fieldwork | Eval. | Excav. | Watching Brief ✓ | Standing Structure | Survey | Other |
| Type of Site | Green Field | Shallow Urban ✓ | Deep Urban | Other | | |
| Dates of Fieldwork | Eval. | Excav. | WB. 1 st , 6 th , 7 th and 12 th - 14 th April 2010 | Other | | |
| Sponsor/Client | CgMs LTD | | | | | |
| Project Manager | Neil Griffin and Dan Swift | | | | | |
| Project Supervisor | Andrew Margetts and Chiz Harward | | | | | |
| Period Summary | Palaeo. | Meso. | Neo. | BA | IA | RB |
| | AS | MED | PM ✓ | Other Modern | | |
| <p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks for the construction of seven residential units at land adjacent to 76 Napier Road, South Croydon, London Borough of Croydon. Works included the excavation of footing trenches to a maximum depth of 2m below the current ground surface (58.65m O.D.). Site visits were made to monitor groundworks on the 1st, 6th, 7th and 12th to 14th of April 2010.</i></p> <p><i>No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the groundworks and it was determined that truncation of the archaeological horizon had occurred during the 20th century to raise the level of the ground surface.</i></p> | | | | | | |

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-76474

Project details

| | |
|--|--|
| Project name | An Archaeological Watching Brief at 76 Napier Road, Croydon, London Borough of Croydon |
| Short description of the project | An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks for the construction of seven residential units at land adjacent to 76 Napier Road, South Croydon, London Borough of Croydon. Works included the excavation of footing trenches to a maximum depth of 2m below the current ground surface (58.65m O.D.). Site visits were made to monitor groundworks on the 1st, 6th, 7th and 12th to 14th of April 2010. No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the groundworks and it was determined that truncation of the archaeological horizon had occurred during the 20 th century to raise the level of the ground surface. |
| Project dates | Start: 01-04-2010 End: 14-04-2010 |
| Previous/future work | No / No |
| Any associated project reference codes | NAP09 - Sitecode |
| Type of project | Recording project |
| Site status | None |
| Current Land use | Other 3 - Built over |
| Monument type | 0 None |
| Significant Finds | 0 None |
| Investigation type | 'Watching Brief' |
| Prompt | Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16 |

Project location

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Country | England |
| Site location | GREATER LONDON CROYDON CROYDON Napier Rd |
| Postcode | CR2 6XX |
| Study area | 100.00 Square metres |
| Site coordinates | TQ 34608 68069 51.3951553175 -0.06492745419610 51 23 42 N 000 03 53 W Point |
| Lat/Long Datum | Unknown |
| Height OD / Depth | Min: 58.82m Max: 59.92m |

Project creators

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Name of Organisation | Archaeology South East |
| Project brief | CgMs Consulting |

originator

Project design
originator Archaeology South-East

Project
director/manager Neil Griffin

Project supervisor Andrew Margetts

Project supervisor Chiz Harward

Type of
sponsor/funding
body CgMs Consulting

Project archives

Physical Archive
Exists? No

Digital Archive
Exists? No

Paper Archive
recipient Museum of London

Paper Contents 'none'

Paper Media
available 'Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Report'

**Project
bibliography 1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title An Archaeological Watching Brief at 76 Napier Road, Croydon, London
Borough of Croydon

Author(s)/Editor(s) Margetts, A.

Other bibliographic
details ASE Report No: 2010055

Date 2010

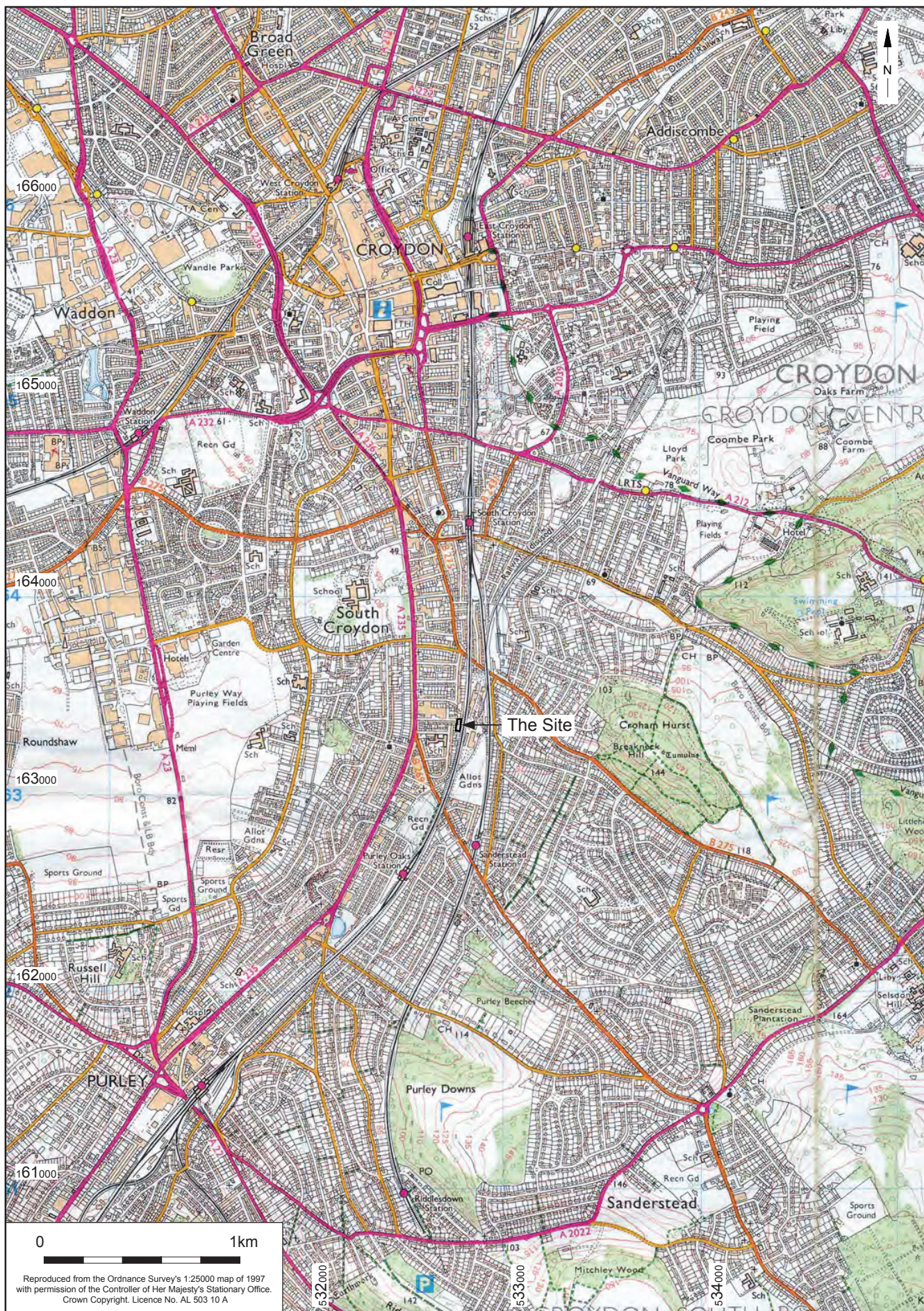
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Entered on 30 April 2010



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Project Ref: 3944

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April 2010

Drawn by: JLR

Napier Road, Croydon

Site location

Fig. 1



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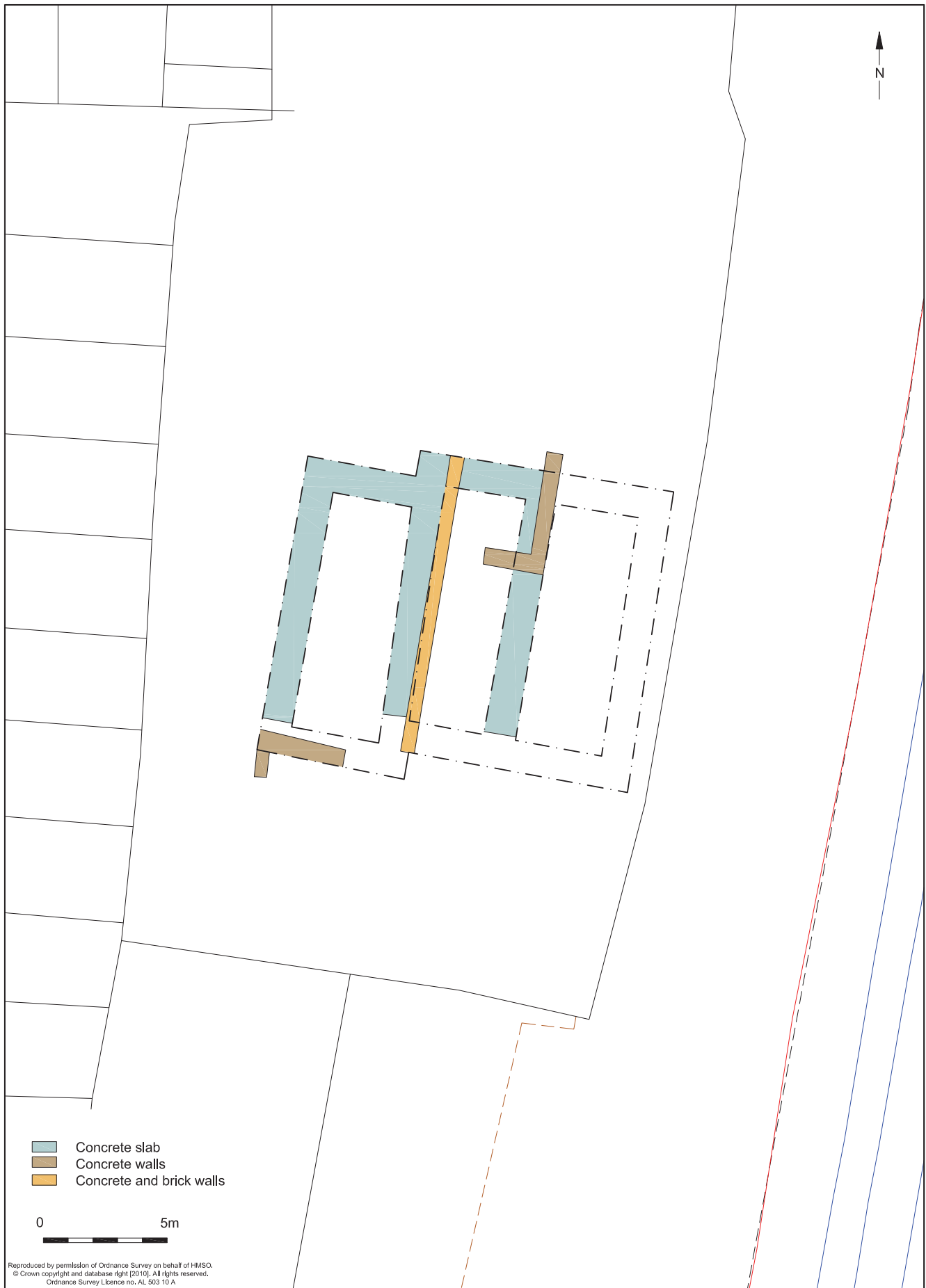
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Drawn by: JLR

Napier Road, South Croydon

Plan of monitored footings

Fig. 2



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