

**An Archaeological Evaluation
at 13-15 Wandle Road, South Croydon
London Borough of Croydon**

(TQ 3230 6514)

By

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Project No. 1966

February 2005

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Archaeology South-East

Archaeology South-East is a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit. The Institute of Archaeology at UCL is one of the largest groupings of academic archaeologists in the country. Consequently, Archaeology South-East has access to the conservation, computing and environmental backup of the college, as well as a range of other archaeological services.

UCL Field Archaeology Unit and South Eastern Archaeological Services (which became Archaeology South-East in 1996) were established in 1974 and 1991 respectively. Although field projects have been conducted world-wide, the Archaeology South East retains a special interest in south-east England with the majority of our contract and consultancy work concentrated in Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex, Kent, Greater London and Essex.

Drawing on experience of the countryside and towns of the south east of England, Archaeology South East can give advice and carry out surveys at an early stage in the planning process. By working closely with developers and planning authorities it is possible to incorporate archaeological work into developments with little inconvenience.

Archaeology South-East, as part of UCL Field Archaeology Unit, is a registered organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists and, as such, is required to meet IFA standards.

Abstract

The excavation of two evaluation trenches revealed extensive disturbance associated with the site's former use and recent demolition activity, particularly at the eastern end of the site. The unstratified nature of all the finds from the site, which included ceramics and clay tobacco pipes, offer little evidence and probably represent domestic waste within the rear gardens of properties that formerly fronted onto the High Street in the 17th and 18th centuries.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Archaeology South-East (ASE), (a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit (UCLFAU)) was commissioned by Milford Homes Limited to undertake a Stage II archaeological evaluation in advance of the construction of a proposed new residential development at 13-15 Wandle Road, South Croydon, London Borough of Croydon (NGR TQ 3230 6514) (Fig. 1).
- 1.2** The site lies to the south of the London Borough, in the town centre of Croydon, and to the south of a flyover and dual carriageway that crosses the High Street. The southern and eastern sides of the site are bounded by properties that front onto Laud Street and the High Street. To the north of the site is a multi-storey car park. According to the British Geological Survey 1:50,000 scale map (Sheet 270, *South London*) the site lies on Hackney Gravels of the Post Diversionary Thames River Terrace Deposits, although a vein of Thanet Sands lies to the immediate east. The site was until very recently used as a car park for adjacent businesses and was covered by hardstanding. Recent demolition work had removed this surface, in addition to underlying structural remains of earlier buildings and associated services.
- 1.3** The proposed redevelopment of the site will comprise a residential development with five six-storey blocks of flats with associated soft landscaping areas, car parking facilities and access roads.
- 1.4** A planning application for this proposed development has been submitted to and approved by the London Borough of Croydon (the local planning authority) (Planning ref: 03/02035/P). However, as the proposal site is situated in an area of known archaeological potential, the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service of English Heritage (GLAAS), have recommended that an archaeological condition be attached to this planning consent. This condition requires that a programme of archaeological work be carried out prior to the granting of consent for this planning application. Following discussions between Neville Hall of ASE and Mark Stevenson of GLAAS, it was agreed that an initial Stage I archaeological desk based assessment of the application site should be undertaken (Worrall 2004).
- 1.5** This Stage I assessment was undertaken by ASE in August 2004 and submitted to and duly approved by Mark Stevenson of GLAAS. This assessment established that the proposed development site has overall moderate archaeological potential; with low potential for Palaeolithic and Mesolithic; low-moderate potential for the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and medieval periods; and high archaeological potential for the Roman and post-medieval, which may be affected by the proposed development. However, because of a large degree of potential disturbance from the site of a former printworks and its ancillary buildings, and the effects of landscaping over the site evident from substantial deposits of made ground revealed by prior geotechnical works, the report recommended that a limited and targeted Stage II evaluation should take place in those areas of the site where archaeological potential was most likely to survive.

- 1.6** Following further discussions between Neville Hall of ASE and Mark Stevenson of GLAAS, the extent and requirements of this programme of targeted trial trenching for the Stage II evaluation was agreed. This was to comprise a 4% sample by area of the application site.
- 1.7** A Method Statement and trench layout proposal was prepared by Neville Hall in accordance with these aforementioned discussions and approved by Mark Stevenson before work began on site.
- 1.8** The fieldwork was undertaken by Neil Griffin (Field Officer), and Paul Riccoboni (Assistant Field Officer) on the 28th of January 2005. A previous site visit was made on the 10th January to undertake the fieldwork, but was abandoned as demolition work at the site was still taking place. The project was managed by Neville Hall.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Desk Based Assessment mentioned above (Worrall 2004) provides comprehensive details of the archaeological potential and known history of the proposed development site. This identified only sparse evidence of prehistoric activity within *c.*150 metres of the site. The proximity of the former London to Brighton Roman road (route preserved as London Road/Roman Way) just to the east of the site in addition to settlement activity and miscellaneous findspots (including a coin hoard) suggested that further evidence may be expected within the site.
- 2.2** An Anglo-Saxon settlement existed at Croydon, which developed into an estate centre for the Archbishops of Canterbury late on in the period. However, only a single pottery sherd and cemetery have been found in close proximity to the development site indicating that the settlement did not reach this far. A similar picture is found in the medieval period, where the settlement core is known to have been focussed on the High Street to the north east. It is suggested that at this time the site was located within agricultural land.
- 2.3** This use is likely to have continued until development spread along the High Street, at which point all but the western end of the site became gardens and/or orchards (as depicted on the Tithe Map of 1845). Rapid expansion of the town from the middle of the 19th century saw the open fields around the site developed predominantly for housing although the site itself was developed as a printing works with a succession of buildings (and possible cellars), some of which survived until the late 20th century.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1** Two evaluation trenches (Trenches 1 and 2) measuring 2m x 15m were to be

excavated at the site (Fig. 2). The proximity of live drains and of the foundations of adjacent buildings (coupled with the depth of excavation) resulted in some changes being made to the proposed trench layout. Trench 1 was shifted approximately 5m to the north and widened to between 2.2m to 2.7m and only the central 8m of Trench 2 was excavated, and widened to between 2.3 to 2.7m. These changes resulted in a very slight reduction in the area excavated from 60m² to c. 56.75m².

- 3.2 The evaluation trenches were scanned by a CAT scanner in order to locate any live services prior to mechanical excavation.
- 3.3 Mechanical excavation was carried down to the surface of geological drift deposits, or to the top of surviving archaeological deposits (whichever was uppermost) using a 21-ton tracked machine equipped with a 1.2m wide flat-bladed bucket.
- 3.4 All archaeological recording was undertaken in accordance with the Method Statement. However due to the unstable conditions of the overlying deposits it was not considered safe to enter the trenches. All recording was therefore undertaken from the top of the trenches.
- 3.5 Trenches were planned onto a copy of the Ordnance Survey map not smaller than 1:2500 scale. Levels were taken in relation to an Ordnance Survey benchmark located at 51 Wandle Road (value = 46.48mAOD).
- 3.6 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using *pro forma* context record sheets used by Archaeology South East. Soil colours were recorded using visual inspection and not by reference to the Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.7 After the completion of recording works the evaluation trenches were backfilled and compacted by machine ensuring that the surface of the fill was left flush with the surrounding ground surface and that no open cavities were left exposed.

4.0 RESULTS

- 4.1** Trench 1 was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.7m. Approximately 700mm of recently mixed soil and demolition material (Context **100**) containing bricks, gravels and large concrete blocks was removed. This overlay a friable, very dark orange-grey silty topsoil (Context **101**), which measured up to 1m in thickness. This overlay an orange silty-clay deposit (Context **103**) containing *c.*30-50% gravels for much of the trench (rising slightly at the eastern end of the trench), although a dense gravel deposit self supported within an orange clay matrix (Context **102**) was present for the westernmost 3m of the trench.
- 4.2** No features or deposits of archaeological interest were noted within this trench.
- 4.3** Trench 2 was excavated to a maximum depth of 2m. This trench was located in an area where extensive disturbance had recently been caused by the removal of concrete footings and associated drainage, which, according to the demolition contractors, was to a depth of around 2.4m. Redeposited demolition material and soil (Context **100**) was found to be in excess of 2m deep at the northern half of the trench (beyond the limit of the excavation) and approximately 2m deep to the south where it was found to overlie a grey-orange clay matrix containing gravels and degraded chalk (Context **104**).
- 4.4** The unstable nature of the recent demolition backfill and proximity to the foundations of adjacent buildings rendered the northern continuation of this trench dangerous. Live drainage serving properties fronting the High Street and the proximity of further standing structures prevented its southern continuation.
- 4.5** No features or deposits of archaeological interest were noted within this trench.
- 4.6** An assemblage of artefacts was collected from the disturbed surface of the site, predominantly at the eastern end.

5.0 THE FINDS by Luke Barber

- 5.1** A small assemblage of finds was recovered from the site, all of the material being unstratified surface discoveries. Nine sherds of pottery are present weighing 1,112g. The earliest consists of part of the neck and body from a Frechen Bellarmine bottle of 17th- century date though this could easily be an 18th- century discard. The majority of the pottery is of 18th- century date and consists of a large fragment from the base of a green glazed storage jar in buff earthenware, a fragment from a deep plate in white salt-glazed stoneware, a sherd of 'scratch blue' stoneware, a sherd of Chinese porcelain, a sherd from a 'flow-blue' plate and three sherds of pearlware from a mug and plate. The pottery is in good condition on the whole and does not appear to have been extensively reworked. Most appears to relate to 18th- century activity though some material obviously extends into the first part of the 19th century.

- 5.2** A single oyster shell is present as well as 52 (240g) fragments of clay pipe. The clay pipe consists almost entirely of plain stems (including three simple mouthpieces) dating from the second half of the 17th century to the 18th century. Only one bowl is present. This appears to date to between 1700-1720 and has the maker's initial WR.
- 5.3** The finds assemblage from the site is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis and the material has been discarded.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1** Extensive disturbance associated with the site's former use and recent demolition activity was evident, particularly at the eastern end of the site. Deposit **101** within Trench 1 is likely to represent a former garden soil. This was not encountered within Trench 2, which suggests that it has either been removed by recent demolition activity or by earlier buildings associated with the former printworks.
- 6.2** It is not known whether cellars existed in the vicinity of Trench 2, so in the absence of Context **101** it is not possible to tell whether the underlying geological deposits (and potential archaeological remains) have been truncated. Levels taken on the surface of this deposit at the eastern end of Trench 1 and within Trench 2 differ by only 20mm (45.74m OD and 45.76m OD respectively).
- 6.3** The unstratified nature of all the finds from the site offer little evidence and probably represent domestic waste within the rear gardens of former properties that fronted onto the High Street from the 17th and 18th centuries.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

13-15 Wandle Road, South Croydon, London Borough of Croydon: Stage II Archaeological Evaluation Written Scheme of Investigation. Archaeology South-East document (October 2004).

Worrall, S. 2004. *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of 13-15 Wandle Road, South Croydon, London Borough of Croydon.* Archaeology South-East Project Report No. 1904.

SMR Summary Form

Site Code	WRC 04					
Identification Name and Address	13-15 Wandle Road, South Croydon, London Borough of Croydon					
County, District &/or Borough	London Borough of Croydon					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 3230 6514					
Geology	Hackney Gravels					
Arch. South-East Project Number	1966					
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. 28 th January 2005	Excav.	WB.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Milford Homes Limited					
Project Manager(s)	Neville Hall/Luke Barber					
Project Supervisor	Neil Griffin					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other ✓ No features		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p>The two evaluation trenches revealed extensive disturbance associated with the site's former use and recent demolition activity, particularly at the eastern end of the site. The unstratified nature of all the finds from the site, which included ceramics and clay tobacco pipes, offer little evidence and probably represent domestic waste within the rear gardens of properties that formerly fronted onto the High Street in the 17th and 18th centuries.</p>						