

T H A M E S      V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

S O U T H

**5-7 Brighton Road, Crawley,  
West Sussex**

**Building Recording**

**by Sean Wallis**

**Site Code: BCW14/101**

**(TQ 2670 3631)**

**5-7 Brighton Road, Crawley,  
West Sussex**

**Building Recording  
For PMC Construction Co Ltd**

Planning References : CR/2009/0368OUT and CR/2012/0447/CAC

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BCW 14/101

**February 2015**

## Summary

**Site name:** 5-7 Brighton Road, Crawley, West Sussex

**Grid reference:** TQ 2670 3631

**Site activity:** Building Recording

**Planning reference:** CR/2009/0368OUT and CR/2012/0447/CAC

**Date of project:** November 2014

**Project manager:** Sean Wallis

**Project supervisor:** Sean Wallis

**Site code:** BCW 14/101

**Area of site:** c.0.43ha

**Summary of results:** Although much of the former cinema building was demolished prior to the building recording taking place, it has been possible to glean sufficient information from photographs, architects' plans, and historic maps and other documents to provide a record of the structure.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Crawley Museum in due course.

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## **5-7 Brighton Road, Crawley, West Sussex Building Recording**

by Sean Wallis

**Report 14/101**

### **Introduction**

This report documents the results of building recording at 5-7 Brighton Road, Crawley, West Sussex (TQ 2670 3631) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Tim Guest of PMC Construction Co Ltd, 106 Queens Road, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO2 7NE. Until recently the site was occupied by a vehicle dealership, part of which utilized the former Imperial Cinema building.

Outline planning permission (CR/2009/0368OUT) and conservation area consent (CR/2012/0447/CAC) had been gained from Crawley Borough Council to demolish the existing structures on the site and redevelop the site for residential and commercial purposes. The conservation area consent was subject to conditions (2 and 3) relating to archaeology and the historic environment. Condition 2 required a building recording of the site, to be carried out prior to demolition, whilst condition 3 required an archaeological investigation (trial trenching) to be carried out post-demolition but before the commencement of groundworks. This report is solely concerned with the building recording, whilst the trial trench evaluation is covered by a separate report (Wallis 2014).

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology and the historic environment. The building recording was carried out to a specification approved by Mr John Mills of West Sussex County Council, advising the Borough, and the fieldwork element of the project took place in November 2014. Unfortunately most of the structures on the site were demolished before the survey could take place, with only the front (eastern) portion of the former cinema building being retained. Following discussions with Mr Mills, it was agreed that a report should still be produced, incorporating photographs which had been taken shortly before demolition, along with architects' plans, historic photographs and other relevant documents. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Crawley Museum in due course. The site code is BCW 14/101.

### **Location, topography and geology**

The site lies to the south of historic core of Crawley (Fig. 1), on the west side of Brighton Road (Fig. 2). Until recently the site was occupied by a number of buildings which functioned as a vehicle dealership, along with

various car parking areas. Most of the buildings were demolished shortly before the survey took place, although the eastern portion of the main building was still standing, along with a small workshop in the south-west corner of the site (Fig. 8; Pls 1 and 2). The site is relatively flat and lies at a height of approximately 79m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of Wealden Clay (BGS 1972).

## **Methodology**

The building survey was carried out in accordance with guidelines set out by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (England) for a level 2 record (RCHME 1996; English Heritage 2006).

The objectives of the project were :

- To provide information on the plan, form, date, materials and function of the building, both immediately prior to its recent demolition and throughout its lifetime.

- To highlight constructional details and methods, and materials used.

- To highlight the most important architectural details, including carpenters marks and any other inscriptions and significant features, such as fixtures and fittings.

- To note any construction materials that may have been re-used.

- To provide a concise written and illustrated history of the former cinema site.

The project comprised a summary analysis of the structure using the architects' plans of the site, along with photographs taken by the client shortly before, and during, its partial demolition. Further photographs were taken in November 2014, although these necessarily largely concentrated on the surviving portion of the building. The resulting collection of photographs have been catalogued (Appendix 1). In addition, a number of historic photographs of the site have been obtained from various sources (Appendix 2).

## **Historic Background**

Although Crawley is not mentioned in Domesday Book (1086), the settlement is likely to have Saxon origins as its name is derived from the Old English words *crawe* and *leah*, which is thought to mean "wood or clearing frequented by crows". The place-name is first recorded in a document from the early 13th century as *Crauleia* (Mills 1993). The historic settlement that now forms the centre of Crawley, to the north of present site, was split between two ancient parishes. The area to the east of the High Street (of which Brighton Road is the southern continuation), and north of the present Three Bridges Road, was within Crawley parish, whilst the remainder was within Ifield parish. This split is clearly shown on the Ifield parish tithe map of 1839 (Fig. 3). Ifield is

mentioned in Domesday Book (1086) as *Ifelt*, which is believed to mean “open land where yew-trees grow” (Mills 1993), and it is likely that Crawley initially began as a small village on the eastern border of Ifield parish.

The settlement at Crawley is likely to have developed as a result of the Wealden iron industry, which initially flourished between the 12th and 14th centuries, before appearing to decline some time after the Black Death of 1348. Crawley parish church, dedicated to St John the Baptist, was certainly in existence by 1267, and several other buildings contain elements dating from the medieval period (VCH 1987). Several medieval pits, containing large amounts of iron slag were found in the south-east corner of the present site, during the recent trial trench evaluation (Wallis 2014). Crawley appears to have expanded in the 16th century, probably as a result of a revival in the iron industry that lasted until the late 18th century. During the early post-medieval period the settlement was still largely located on either side of the present High Street. Although agriculture once again became the primary source of income for the area following the decline of the iron industry, Crawley began to prosper as a coaching halt towards the end of the 18th century, being ideally positioned half way between London and Brighton. The latter’s popularity as a seaside resort was furthered by the patronage of the Prince Regent (later King George IV), and by 1839 there was a hourly coach service from Crawley to both destinations. However, this trade was brought to an abrupt end by the coming of the railways in the early 1840s. When the original line from London to Brighton was opened in 1841, the station for Crawley was located some 2km east of the town centre at Three Bridges (originally known as East Crawley). Crawley got a more central station when the branch line from Horsham to Three Bridges was opened in 1848, and the station was situated immediately east of Brighton Road. This survived until 1968, when the station was demolished and a new replacement built slightly further east (VCH 1987).

The construction of the Horsham to Three Bridges branch line led to a rapid expansion of the town, especially to the south of the railway line, indeed the area was initially called New Town. This growth can be clearly seen by comparing the 1839 tithe map (Fig. 3) with the First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1874 (Fig. 4). Crawley continued to grow during the late 19th and 20th century, partly due to the availability of land and the proximity of rail and road connections. A bypass was built in 1939, which relieved the High Street and Brighton Road of some of its traffic, and the M23 motorway was opened in the early 1980s. The construction of Gatwick Airport to the north of the town has also helped to make Crawley an important commercial centre (VCH 1987).

As far as the history of the site itself is concerned, a range of documentary evidence has been studied, including historic maps and photographs. The earliest available map which shows the area in detail is the Ifield parish tithe map of 1839 (Fig. 3). Although this map does not show most of the buildings on the east side of the

High Street, which fell within Crawley parish, the ‘ribbon’ like development of the settlement is clearly visible. This map shows the area shortly before the coming of the railway, at a time when Crawley was an important stopping place for coaches travelling between London and Brighton. Unsurprisingly the coach route to the south of the High Street followed Brighton Road, which is depicted as quite a wide thoroughfare on the map. It is difficult to identify the present site accurately on the 1839 map, but it is clearly within an area of open fields to the west of Brighton Road, opposite the road which later became East Park. Field boundaries are shown running immediately west of Brighton Road, and between the individual fields, along with a small pond.

The major changes which took place after the Horsham to Three Bridges branch line was opened in 1848 are clearly evident on the First Edition Ordnance Survey from 1874 (Fig. 4). This shows the new station to the north-east of the present site, along with a number of large houses on the west side of Brighton Road. The southern boundary of the site had clearly been established by this time, and new semi-detached villas occupy the south-east corner. Two more houses, set back from the main road, are shown in the northern part of the site, with a well in front along with a brewery to the rear. The rest of site appears to be occupied by gardens and possible orchards. Although the area looks different on the Second Edition Ordnance Survey of 1897 (Fig. 5), this is largely due to a change in cartographic styles. The only major change to the site appears to be the construction of new buildings to the south of the brewery.

The earliest cinema in Crawley is remembered as ‘The Tin Hut’, which was located about 200m east of the present site, in East Park. The real name of this cinema is not known, but a film of the June 1911 coronation of George V is said to have been shown here. A local businessman, Charles Gadsdon opened a garage and motor car showroom in the north-east part of the site in the early 1900s, and the garage fronting onto Brighton Road can be seen in a postcard dating from about 1908 (Pl. 3). The garage is depicted on the 1911 revision of the Ordnance Survey (not illustrated), and was presumably built after the two houses set back from Brighton Road (shown on the 1897 map) were demolished. Elsewhere on the site the only major changes appear to be associated with the brewery. However, the map does not show the Imperial Picture Theatre, which was built by Gadsdon in 1911 immediately to the south of his garage. The opening of this cinema led to the closure of “The Tin Hut” shortly afterwards. Initially Gadsdon leased the Imperial to W Howard Flint, with the lease passing to H W Hire in 1912. By 1918 the cinema was being leased to G S Hire, but the following year Gadsdon took over the running himself. Although it was primarily used for showing films, the cinema was also used for live events, including charity concerts and public meetings. The Imperial Picture Theatre is shown in the background on a number of postcards and photographs of the area, many of which were taken of parades and marches (Pls 4 and

5). From these images it seems to have originally had a central window at ground floor level, which may have served as the box office, with an entrance to either side. There were two windows in the east facing elevation at first floor level, with a further central window suggesting a possible upper level. The cinema's frontage appears to have been remodelled at ground floor level at some time between 1915 and 1923, and the name was changed to The Imperial Cinema during the same period (Pls 6 and 7). The two flanking entrances were blocked up and a large new central entrance created, with sliding steel shutters. The cinema was positioned between Gadsdon's garage (to the north) and a printer's works (to the south). Although it was originally built without a balcony, one was added in the late 1920s shortly before the whole building was destroyed by a fire. The fire was discovered by a policeman at 11pm on Saturday 4th August 1928, and it had apparently started at the screen (west) end of the building. Luckily the fire brigade managed to get the fire under control before it spread to the adjacent garage, in which was stored 2000 gallons of petrol. A photograph taken shortly after the fire was extinguished (Pl. 8) shows the extensive damage to the building, and a decision was made to demolish the structure (Eyles *et al.* 1996). It appears that the printer's works was also demolished at this time, although Gadsdon's garage was left standing.

Following the disaster, Charles Gadsdon decided to build a new cinema on the same site, and the new Imperial Cinema was formally opened on Saturday 20th July 1929 by Dr S P Matthews, chairman of Ifield Parish Council (Eyles *et al.* 1996). The neo-classical frontage of this new building, bearing the date 1928, still exists, and is to be retained as part of the present development. This new building is shown on the 1932 revision of the Ordnance Survey (Fig. 6), whilst the original Imperial Picture Theatre does not appear on any Ordnance Survey maps. The new cinema had an auditorium seating 664 people (Pls 9 and 10), and the foyer was tiled in blue and grey (Pl. 11). A staircase in the foyer provided access to the first floor (Pl. 12), where there was a doorway into the balcony of the cinema. The side doors visible in the photograph of the first floor presumably led into the projector room (Pl. 13), and perhaps toilets and offices. An orchestra of four initially accompanied the silent films, although 'talkies' became dominant shortly after the cinema opened. Until the Embassy opened in 1938, the Imperial was Crawley's only cinema, and it was used for a wide variety of purposes. It became a venue for important town meetings, and the then prime minister, Ramsay MacDonald, gave an address there on Hitler and disarmament in October 1933. It was also used for meetings by the British Legion and the League of Nations Union. The Imperial cinema closed in 1939, probably due to the fact that it could not compete with the newly opened Embassy, which obtained new films earlier, and was in a more central location (Eyles *et al.* 1996).



Although the frontage of the cinema building appears to be one property, the 1932 map (and subsequent revisions) depicts the southern bay as separate. This is most likely the result of this part of the building being leased out separately as a shop, which is just about visible in photographs dating from the 1930s (Pls 14, 15 and 16). The map obviously records what was happening at ground level, and there is a clear gap between the shop and the cinema, which widens out at the rear. The central bay served as the entrance to the cinema, which was accessed via a set of steps. The 1932 map shows Gadsdon's garage immediately to the north of the cinema, in the same position as it is depicted on the 1911 Ordnance Survey. Elsewhere on the site the brewery has been demolished, and a terrace of three new houses built, which was known as Bank Terrace. The brewery is believed to have been pulled down towards the end of the First World War (Hygate pers. comm.). A long building was built to the rear of the new cinema, and this is most likely part of Gadsdon's garage. The southern half of the site appears to have changed very little between 1911 and 1932.

No changes are evident on the 1937 revision of the Ordnance Survey (not illustrated), which was published shortly before the Imperial Cinema closed. After it closed, the cinema building, along with Gadsdon's garages, were requisitioned by the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, and used for army vehicle repairs during the Second World War. After the war, the cinema building became an auction house, and it was probably being used as such when the 1961 revision of the Ordnance Survey was published (Fig. 7) (Hygate pers. comm.). This map shows the eastern part of the site much as it was in the 1930s, although a new access road had been created to the north of the houses in the south-east corner of the site, which appear to serve a new range of garages in the south-west corner. Elsewhere on the site, a new building appears to have been built to the rear of 2 Bank Terrace between 1937 and 1961, and new buildings and alterations are evident to the north of the long garage to the rear of the cinema building.

The modern Ordnance Survey (Fig. 2) indicates that numerous changes to the site took place between 1961 and 2014. Most of these are linked to the fact that the old cinema building became a car dealership in the 1980s (Pl. 17), initially under the name of C Gadsdon Ltd, and some of the changes can be discerned by planning applications that were made to Crawley Borough Council. An application to demolish the whole of Bank Terrace and Gadsdon's original garage on Brighton Road was made in 1988 to provide additional parking areas. An application to demolish the Victorian houses in the south-east corner of the site was made in 2000. Various applications in respect of the workshops, showrooms and offices were made between 1987 and 2003, which have resulted in the site looking as it did before the recent demolition (Pl. 18).

## Description

The survey took place in November 2014, at which point most of the buildings on the site had been demolished, with the exception of the eastern portion of the former cinema building and a small workshop in the south-west corner (Fig. 8). However, a number of photographs were taken by the client before and during the demolition work, and these can be used in conjunction with historic photographs and the known history of the site to provide a relatively good description of what the site looked like before its planned redevelopment (Figs 8 and 9).

### *External (Fig.10)*

#### East Facing Elevation (Pl. 19)

The far eastern end of the former cinema building is to be retained as part of the new development, and is clearly visible from Brighton Road. Although the building was constructed in red brick, the decorative neo-classical design of the Brighton Road frontage is apparent at first floor level and above. The building materials used in the neo-classical elements of the frontage is not clear, as they have been rendered and painted white. Two columns on the north-east and south-east corners of the building support a relatively plain entablature, although this has been moulded in such a way that the cornice, frieze and architrave can all be identified from ground level. Two central columns protrude slightly, and support their own similarly styled entablature. The cornice of this central entablature is surmounted with a pediment. A plaque within the pediment gives the date 1928, whilst a larger plaque between the lower parts of the two central columns contains the words 'Imperial Cinema'.

There are four windows with semi-circular heads at first floor level, which appear to be original features, although historic photographs (Pls 14 and 15) suggest that the frames were not originally painted white. Each window has decorative brickwork around the head, and there are two moulded "string courses" running along the elevation. The roof structure cannot be seen from Brighton Road, partly due to the presence of a parapet which runs along the top of this elevation. This parapet is largely constructed from red brick, with decorative balustrades either side of the central pediment. Historic photographs indicate that the top portion of the ground floor has been obscured by hoarding since at least the 1980s (Pls 17 and 18), and further hoarding boards had been put up prior to the building survey taking place. The presence of the hoarding means that the three arched bays which were a feature of the cinema building are not clearly visible at present. However, the arches can be seen internally. In summary, this elevation of the building appears to have changed very little since it was built in 1928.

### South Facing Elevation

Prior to the recent demolition work, the south facing elevation of the building could be said to consist of three distinct elements (Fig. 9). From east to west these consisted of the structure fronting onto Brighton Road (A), the main auditorium building of the former cinema (B), and the large workshop building belonging to the vehicle dealership (C). At the time of the building survey only the building fronting onto Brighton Road was still standing, but a number of photographs were taken before and during the demolition work.

The south facing elevation of building A (Pl. 20) has obviously been altered since it was originally built, and historic photographs suggest that this happened sometime after the 1980s (Pls 17 and 18). The changes included the insertion of a semi-circular headed window at first floor level (built to match the four along the east facing elevation), and a large rectangular window on the ground floor. Differences in the brickwork of this elevation also support the idea that these features are quite recent additions. It seems possible that the rear part of this building, which includes a small first floor balcony, may have been altered at the same time as the windows were inserted (Pl. 21). Unfortunately no historic photographs were available clearly showing this elevation. The large ground floor window was boarded up at the time of the building survey, but could still be seen internally. A large Citroen sign is affixed to the external wall, close to where the boundary wall meets it. The gable end of the roof of building A can be clearly seen in this elevation.

Building B had been demolished prior to the building survey taking place, but photographs were taken before and during its demolition (Pls 20 and 22). This large building had a simple gabled roof structure, and was originally built as the cinema's auditorium. It was built using reddish brown bricks, and the south facing elevation had six equally spaced shallow brick buttresses. Prior to its demolition there were four windows with semi-circular heads at first floor level, along with four rectangular windows and two entrances on the ground floor. Although no historic photographs of the outside of this building could be traced, it is likely that all the openings in this elevation are recent additions. This is supported by the fact that the building did not originally have a first floor, and also by historic photographs of the interior (Pls 9 and 10) which do not show any windows. Parts of the original south facing elevation of this building were obscured by the modern workshop building (C) and large fittings around the two entrances. There were two drainpipes along this elevation, and the slate roof of the building was clearly visible.

Building C was the main workshop for the vehicle dealership which formerly occupied the site. Although the lower parts of the walls are faced with brick, it is probable that the building was largely constructed from concrete and steel sometime after the 1980s. The building was demolished before the survey was carried out, but

a number of photographs were taken shortly before its demolition (Pl. 23). The building was not recorded in detail, but two entrances and two rectangular windows were noted along its south facing elevation.

#### West Facing Elevation

Prior to the demolition work, only a small section of the west facing elevation of building A was visible as it was largely obscured by building B (Pl. 21). The visible section coincided with the first floor balcony. There was one rectangular window with a concrete lintel and sill. The modern appearance of this window suggests that it was not an original feature of the building.

In a similar way, the west facing elevation of Building B was largely obscured by Building C prior to their demolition. Photographs taken before the buildings were demolished suggest that the west facing elevation of Building B was of plain reddish brown brick construction. There was possibly a central window with a decorative surround, but this is not clear from any of the available photographs. The gable end of the roof structure was clearly visible in this elevation.

The west facing elevation of Building C was photographed shortly before its demolition (Pl. 24). These photographs clearly show its asymmetrical design, and three large entrances.

#### North Facing Elevation

Historic photographs and map evidence suggest that when Building A was originally built in 1928 its north facing elevation was largely obscured by another building (the original Brighton Road frontage of Gadsdon's Garage). An application to demolish this adjacent property, to provide additional parking space, was made in 1988. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the small first floor window, along with the doorway and window on the ground floor, are all recent additions (photo 12, not illustrated). The gable end of the roof structure is visible, and the brick walls are fully rendered. There was a large Citroen sign on the wall, and part of the hoarding for the vehicle dealership extended along this elevation.

It is likely that the north facing elevation of building B would originally have been very similar to the south facing one when it was originally built as the cinema auditorium in 1928. However, there appear to have only been four shallow brick buttresses (instead of six) along the north facing elevation (Pl. 25), and this may be due to the fact that there was an adjoining property (Gadsdon's original Garage) when the cinema was built. The seven rectangular windows at first floor level are clearly later additions, as are the windows and entrances on the ground floor. A historic photograph of the interior of the cinema (Pl. 10) suggests the presence of a fire exit

along this wall of the building, but this feature is not visible in the photographs taken shortly before the structure was demolished. There were two drainpipes along this elevation of Building B.

The north facing elevation of Building C is just about visible in some of the photographs taken shortly before it was demolished (Pl. 25). A small section of this building, which housed an electricity sub-station, was still standing at the time of the building survey. The presence of various windows and entrances along this elevation can be gleaned from the pre-demolition photographs and plans.

### *Internal*

As mentioned above, most of the buildings on the site had been demolished before the survey took place. However, a number of internal photographs were taken prior to demolition, and Building A was still standing at the time of the survey, along with the far eastern end of Building B.

### Building A

This building, which fronts onto Brighton Road, was originally built in 1928 to house the cinema's foyer, first floor lobby and projection room (Pls 26 and 27). The cinema's offices and toilets may also have been situated in this building, but there is firm no evidence for this. Historic photographs and maps suggest that the southern bay of the building was occupied by a separate business, at ground floor level at least, although no internal walls survived to support this. Pre-demolition photographs show that the wall between Buildings A and B had been removed at ground floor level to create one large open space, and a low ceiling inserted. Various partition walls are shown on these photographs and on the architects' plans, all of which were clearly later additions. The same is true of the staircases linking the ground and first floors. The low ceiling between the two floors was removed during the demolition work, and the late 20th century structural changes were clearly revealed. The most obvious of these was the insertion of a new steel girder frame, supported by four large steel and concrete pillars (Pl. 28).

Within Building A the demolition work exposed the previously "dead" space between the original ground floor ceiling and later low ceiling. Although some of the brickwork had been heavily disturbed when the steel frame was inserted, some of the earlier historic fabric of the building was revealed, along with an earlier steel frame which supported the first floor (Pl. 29). The large central entrance to the cinema, with its arched head, was clearly visible within the building following the demolition work. The walls associated with this entrance are fairly thick, possibly for structural reasons, although they may also have served to make the entrance more impressive. The arched entrances either side of the central entrance appear to have been built as decorative features to mirror the main entrance (Pl. 14). Some painted and rendered ceilings and sections of wall were revealed following the removal of the low ceiling. As the Imperial Cinema was noted for the blue and grey tiles

in its foyer, the bluish grey colour of these surviving ceilings and walls indicates that they may be original features. However, there was no trace of the decorative coving which is depicted in historic photographs. Modern windows and a doorway were noted in the north and south walls of the building.

The first floor of Building A was accessed by a modern staircase. There was no trace of the original staircase shown in some of the historic photographs. A landing at the top of the staircase provided access to a large eastern room and a smaller western room. However, the architects' plans indicate that the doorway through to the western room may have been blocked up until recently. It is possible that this doorway was re-opened during the demolition work. A doorway previously led west from the first floor landing into Building B, but was blocked up during the survey (Pl. 30). This doorway was an original feature of the cinema, as it provided access to the balcony of the auditorium (Building B). A fair amount of demolition work had obviously taken place on the first floor as the toilets shown on the architects' plans in the north-east corner of the building had been removed prior to the survey, along with their associated partition walls. As a result, the eastern room was bigger during the survey than it had previously been, having three large windows with semi-circular heads in its east wall and a small rectangular window in the north wall (Pl. 31). A southern room could be accessed through the south wall of the eastern room. This room had large windows with semi-circular heads in its east and south walls, along with a large rectangular window in its west wall overlooking the balcony. The semi-circular headed window in the south wall is a much later addition. A western room could be accessed through the north wall of the southern room. This room had no windows, but a fire door in the southern wall provided access to the small balcony.

### Building B

The only traces of this building left by the time the survey took place were the scar of its curved ceiling immediately to the west of Building A (Pl. 26), and the first floor doorway which originally provided access to the balcony of the auditorium. However, some internal photographs of this building were taken prior to it being demolished. These photographs clearly show how the original cinema auditorium was affected by the insertion of a new floor. On the ground floor this was coupled with the removal of the wall between Buildings A and B to create a large open space with a low ceiling. Various windows and entrances were inserted to the walls of Building B so that it could function as a vehicle showroom. It is unlikely that any original features on the ground floor would have survived these changes.

On the first floor, the insertion of the new floor resulted in a large open space which was primarily used for storing spare vehicle parts. The windows in the north and south walls were presumably added around this time, if

not before, and it is interesting to note that the semi-circular headed windows in the south wall mirror those on the Brighton Road frontage. Unfortunately no historic photographs showing the north and south elevations of this building could be traced, but it is possible that the windows in the south and north walls may differ in date. Despite the addition of windows, various partition walls, and an additional (western) staircase down to the ground floor, some elements of the original cinema auditorium had survived prior to demolition. The most obvious of these was the curved ceiling which still had some of the decorative mouldings for light fittings and ventilation (Pl. 32). At the western end of the main first floor room of Building B the decorative moulded surround of the cinema screen was still partially visible.

Building B originally had a separate western area, which would have contained the actual screen and its curtains. This can be seen on a historic photograph (Pl. 9), which also shows doorways on either side of the screen. These doorways may have just led to additional exits. Although the ground and first floors of this area are shown on the architects' plans, no photographs were taken before the building was demolished.

### Building C

Prior to its demolition, some photographs were taken of the main vehicle workshops to the rear of the showroom. These show the steel structure of Building C and various inspection pits (Pl. 33). Apart from a small electricity sub-station on the northern side of this building, the structure had been demolished prior to the survey taking place.

## **Discussion**

The building recording carried out in November 2014 successfully recorded those elements of the former cinema site which had not been demolished by then. By studying historic maps and photographs, and other documentary evidence, it has been possible to trace the history of the building, despite the fact that it had been altered significantly since the cinema closed.

Following the fire which destroyed the original cinema in 1928, a new Imperial Cinema was built on the same site. This consisted of Building A, which contained the foyer, first floor lobby and projection room, and Building B which functioned as the auditorium. The southern part of Building A, at least at ground floor, probably contained a separate business for many years. The cinema closed in 1939, and the site was commandeered by the army during the Second World War. Charles Gadsdon, the Crawley businessman behind the Imperial Cinema, had operated a motor garage on the site from around 1905. His initial garage was situated

on Brighton Road, immediately to the north of the cinema. However, the 1937 Ordnance Survey indicates that the business had expanded over the years, and there was a large workshop to the rear (west) of the cinema by the start of the war. Whilst it seems likely that this workshop was the main focus of activity during the war, it is not clear whether the old cinema (Buildings A and B) was also used during this period. Following the end of the war the former cinema was apparently used as an auction house for a number of years. It seems possible that some of the windows in Building B, particularly the semi-circular headed ones on the south side, may have been inserted during this period to provide some natural light. The buildings were then occupied by a vehicle dealership from the early 1980s until recently, and this resulted in a number of significant changes to the site. As far as the historic buildings on the site were concerned, this included the installation of a new floor in Buildings A and B, which involved some major structural changes. Some of these, such as the insertion of a steel frame, were revealed after parts of the building had been demolished. The recent archaeological evaluation on the site also revealed that a new concrete slab had been laid down within Buildings A and B, probably at the same time. The insertion of the new floor also resulted in some of the historic fabric of the cinema being preserved. Traces of the painted ceilings and walls in Building A, probably dating from the late 1920s or 1930s, had survived in the “dead space” between the ground and first floors. Elsewhere on the site, a large workshop (Building C) was constructed to the rear of the former cinema, and Gadsdon’s original garage building was demolished. At the time of the building survey, the only part of the original cinema to survive unaltered to any large degree is the Brighton Road frontage, and this is to be retained as part of the development.

## References

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## APPENDIX 1: Photographic Catalogue: all digital images

<i>No.</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	Exterior, east facing elevation, looking W [Pl. 19]
2	Exterior, general view, looking WNW
3	Exterior, general view of south facing elevation, looking N [Pl. 21]
4	Exterior, general view of south facing elevation, looking N
5	Exterior, general view of south facing elevation, looking WNW
6	Exterior, general view of south facing elevation, looking NNE [Pl. 20]
7	Exterior, general view of south facing elevation, looking WNW
8	Exterior, general view of south-facing elevation, looking NE [Pl. 23]
9	Exterior, general view of west facing elevation, looking N
10	Exterior, general view of west facing elevation, looking E [Pl. 24]
11	Exterior, general view of area to north of building, looking E
12	Exterior, general view of north facing elevation, looking E
13	Exterior, general view of north-facing elevation, looking SW [Pl. 25]
14	Exterior, view of south facing elevation during demolition, looking N [Pl. 22]
15	Exterior, general view of site post-demolition, looking E
16	Exterior, general view of site post-demolition, looking ESE
17	Exterior, view of remaining section of former cinema building post-demolition, looking SE [Pl. 26]
18	Exterior, general view of site post-demolition, looking W from first floor balcony
19	Exterior, ground floor of remaining section of former cinema building post-demolition, looking NE
20	Exterior, general view of Bank Terrace, looking W
21	Exterior, south facing elevation of remaining former cinema building post-demolition, looking N
22	Exterior, general view of remaining former cinema building post demolition, looking SW
23	Exterior, general view of remaining former cinema building post-demolition, looking WNW
24	Interior, main vehicle workshop, looking W
25	Interior, main vehicle workshop, looking ESE [Pl. 33]
26	Interior, ground floor of former cinema building, looking W
27	Interior, ground floor of former cinema building, looking WSW
28	Interior, ground floor of former cinema building, looking N
29	Interior, ground floor of former cinema building, looking ESE
30	Interior, ground floor of former cinema building, looking E [Pl. 27]
31	Interior, staircase to first floor of former cinema building post-demolition, looking N [Pl. 28]
32	Interior, ground floor, central entrance to former cinema building post demolition, looking E
33	Interior, ground floor, traces of original ceiling of former cinema building post demolition, looking S
34	Interior, first floor of former cinema building post-demolition, looking SE from ground floor
35	Interior, steel structure supporting first floor of former cinema building post-demolition, looking ENE
36	Interior, ground floor, south wall of former cinema building post-demolition, looking S
37	Interior, steel structure supporting first floor of former cinema building post-demolition, looking SE [Pl. 29]
38	Interior, steel structure supporting first floor of former cinema building post-demolition, looking SSW
39	Interior, first floor of former cinema building, looking ENE
40	Interior, first floor of former cinema building, looking W
41	Interior, first floor of former cinema building, looking W [Pl. 32]
42	Interior, first floor of former cinema building, looking S from staircase [Pl. 30]
43	Interior, first floor, eastern room of former cinema building post-demolition, looking SSE
44	Interior, first floor, eastern room of former cinema building post-demolition, looking NNE [Pl. 31]
45	Interior, first floor, southern room of former cinema building post-demolition, looking NE
46	Interior, first floor, southern room of former cinema building post-demolition, looking NW
47	Interior, first floor, western room of former cinema building post-demolition, looking NW
48	Interior, first floor, western room of former cinema building post-demolition, looking SW
49	Interior, first floor, balcony looking S

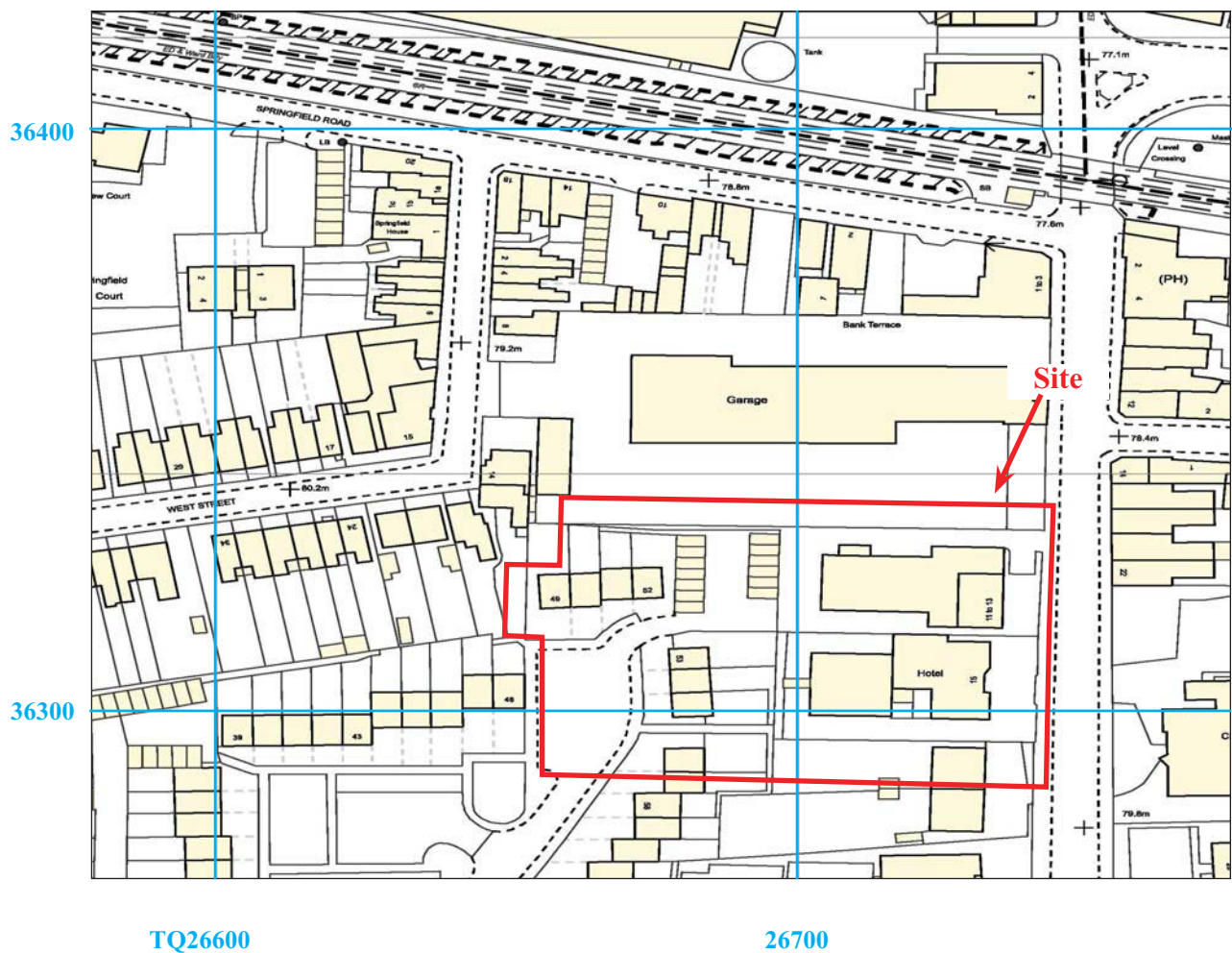
## APPENDIX 2: Photographic Catalogue of Historic Photographs

<i>No.</i>	<i>Description</i>
H1	1908 view of Brighton Road, looking N <b>[Pl. 3]</b>
H2	1911 view of the Imperial Picture House and Gadsdon's Garage, looking NNW <b>[Pl. 4]</b>
H3	1915 view of Brighton Road, looking N <b>[Pl. 5]</b>
H4	1923 view of parade passing the Imperial Cinema, looking NW <b>[Pl. 6]</b>
H5	Pre-1928 view of the Imperial Cinema and Gadsdon's Garage, looking NNW <b>[Pl. 7]</b>
H6	1928 view showing the aftermath of the fire, probably looking E <b>[Pl. 8]</b>
H7	Late 1920s or 1930s view of the auditorium showing the screen end of the cinema, looking W <b>[Pl. 9]</b>
H8	Late 1920s or 1930s view of the auditorium showing the balcony end of the cinema, looking E <b>[Pl. 10]</b>
H9	Late 1920s or 1930s view of the ground floor foyer, probably looking NW <b>[Pl. 11]</b>
H10	Late 1920s or 1930s view of the first floor lobby, probably looking E <b>[Pl. 12]</b>
H11	Late 1920s or 1930s view of the projection room, probably looking SW <b>[Pl. 13]</b>
H12	1930s view of the Imperial Cinema, looking W <b>[Pl. 14]</b>
H13	1936 view of the Imperial Cinema, looking Q <b>[Pl. 15]</b>
H14	1930s view of Brighton Road, looking S <b>[Pl. 16]</b>
H15	1980s view of Gadsdon's Garage, looking WNW <b>[Pl. 17]</b>
H16	View of Peugeot dealership, prior to its recent closure, looking WNW <b>[Pl. 18]</b>









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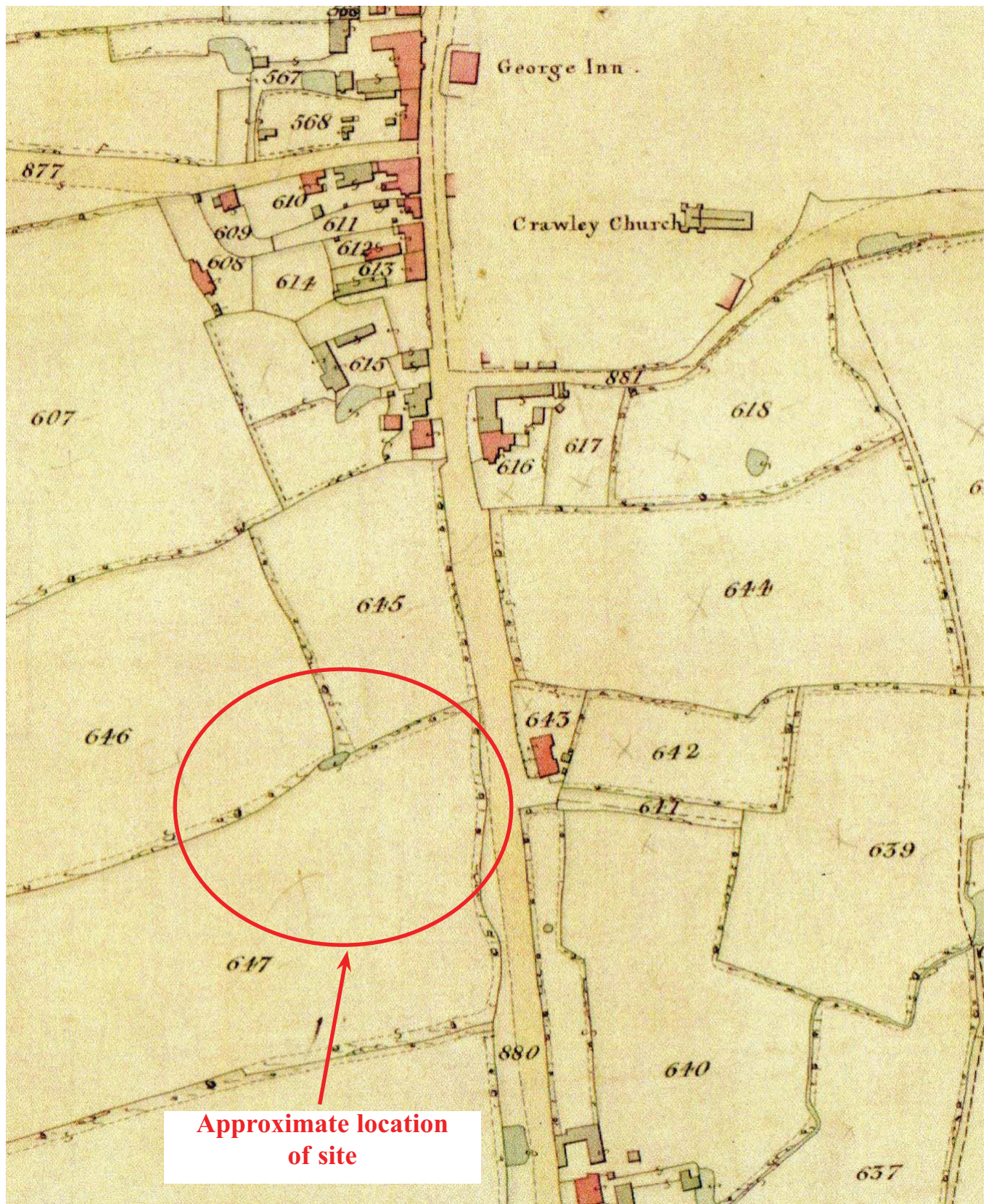
**5-7 Brighton Road, Crawley,  
West Sussex, 2015  
Building Recording**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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Crown Copyright reserved. Scale 1:1250

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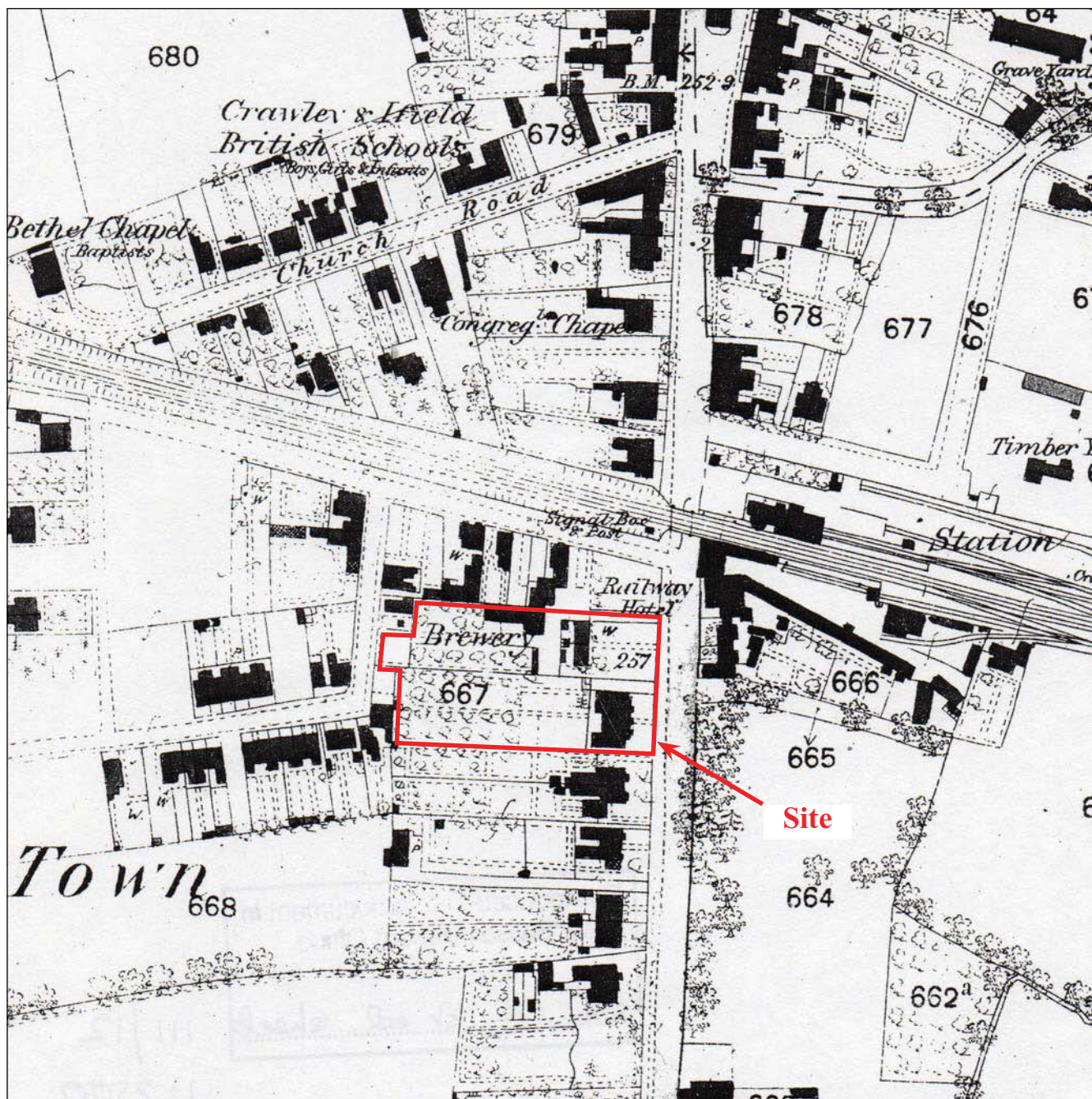


5-7 Brighton Road, Crawley,  
West Sussex, 2015  
Building Recording

Figure 3. Ifield parish tithe map, 1839.

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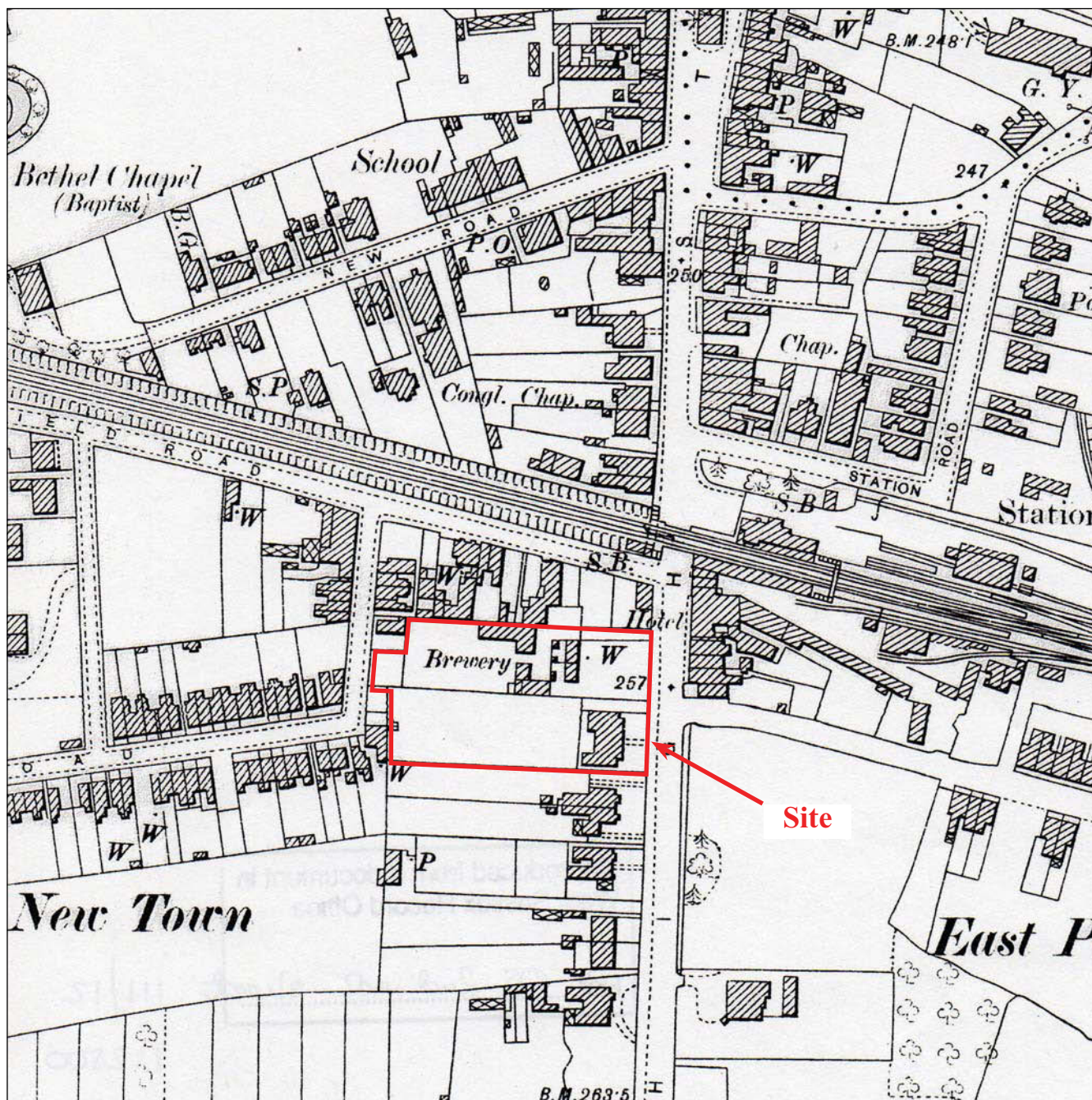


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West Sussex, 2015  
Building Recording

Figure 4. First Edition Ordnance Survey, 1874.

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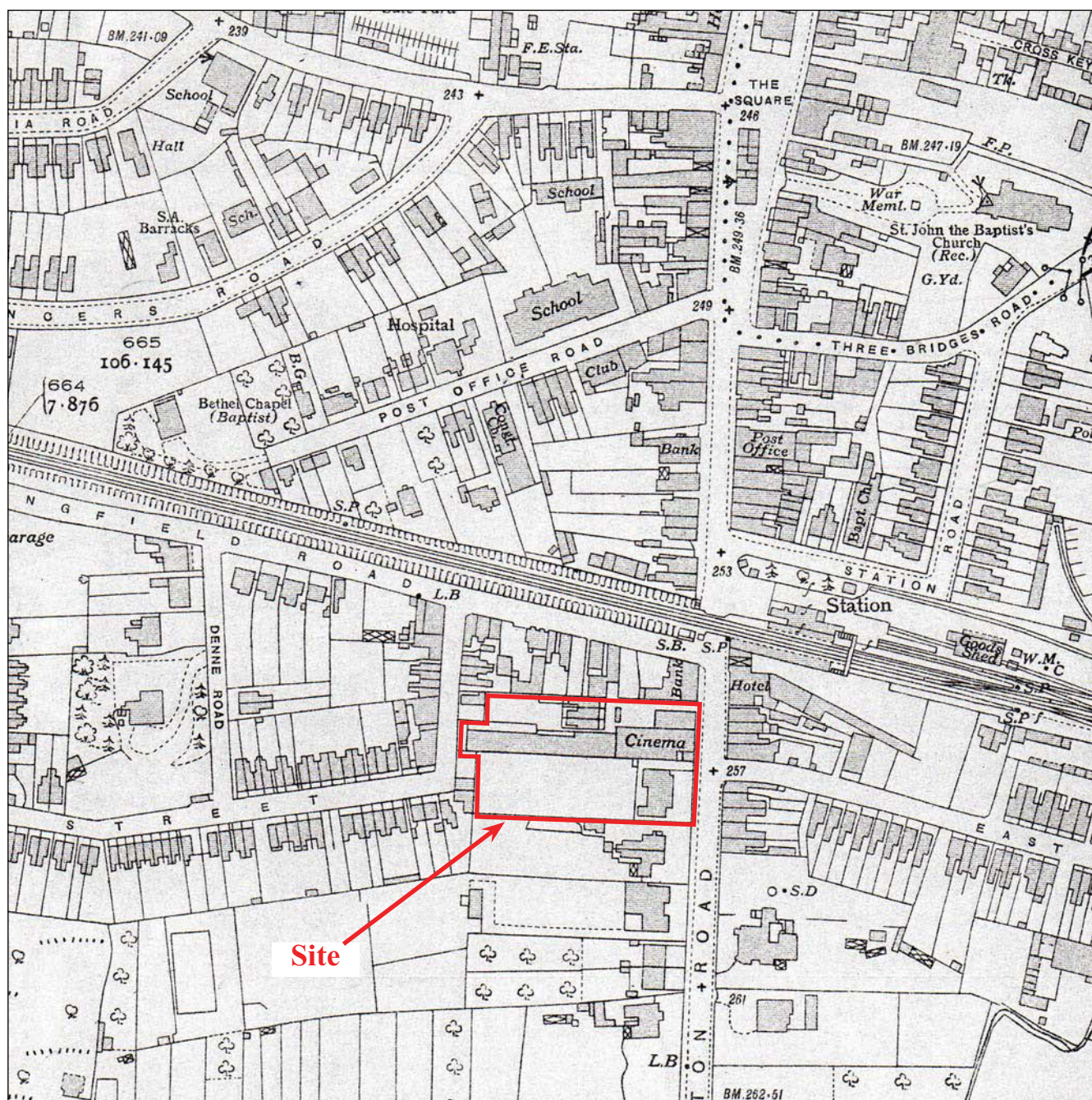


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Figure 5. Second Edition Ordnance Survey, 1897.

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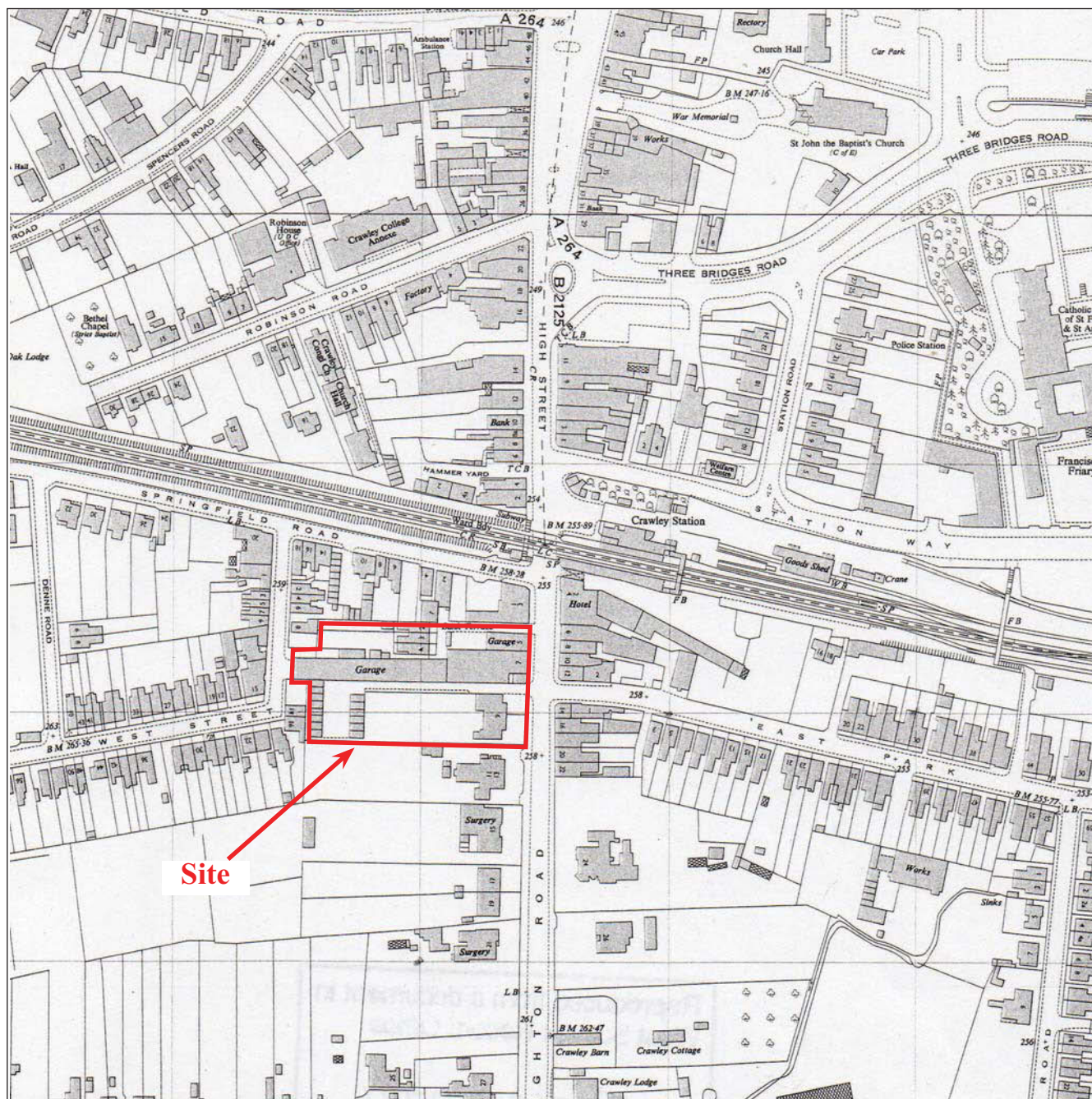


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Figure 6. Ordnance Survey, 1932.

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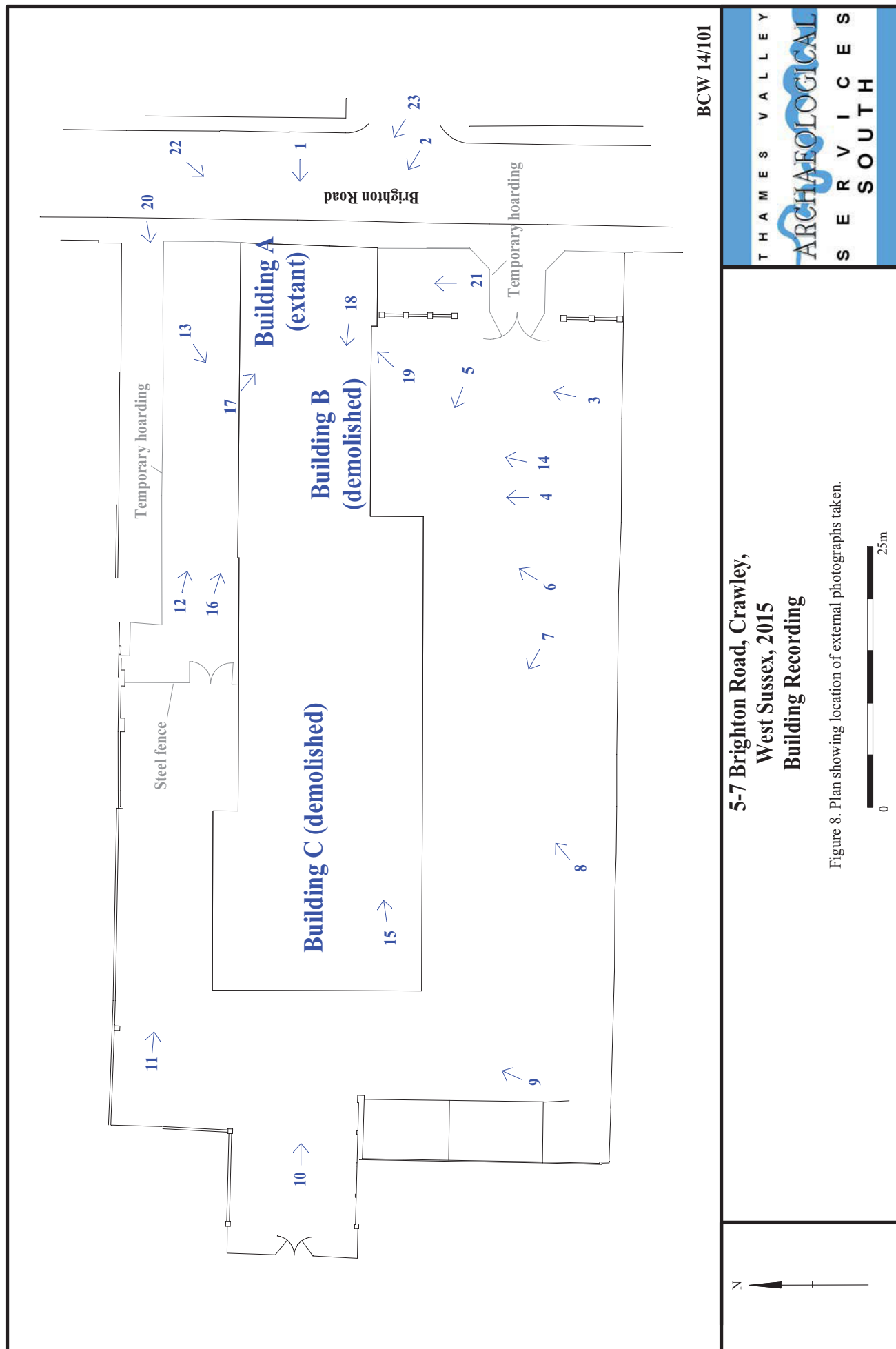




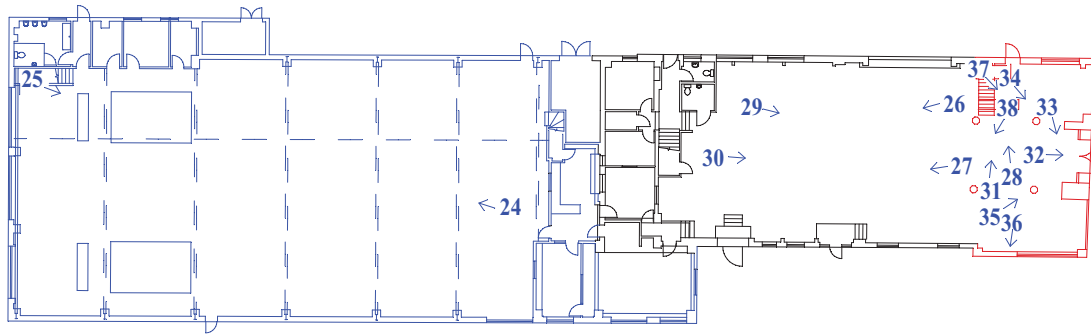
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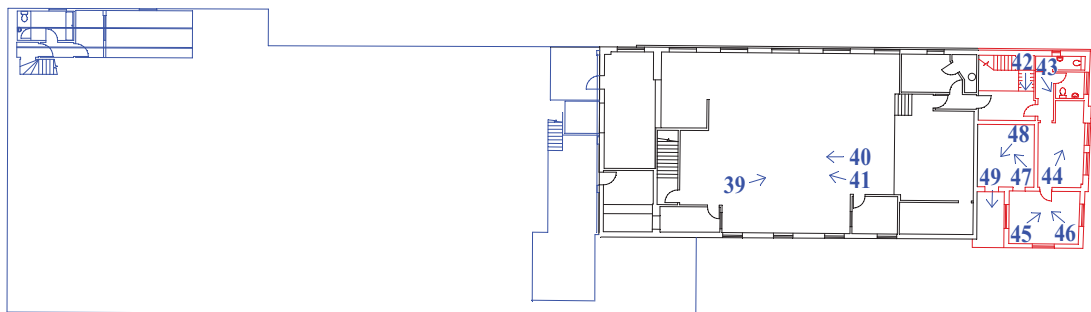
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Building Recording  
Figure 7. Ordnance Survey, 1961.



## Ground Floor



## First Floor



**Building A - 1928 Cinema foyer, lobby etc**

**Building B - 1928 Cinema auditorium**

**Building C - 1980s Vehicle workshop**

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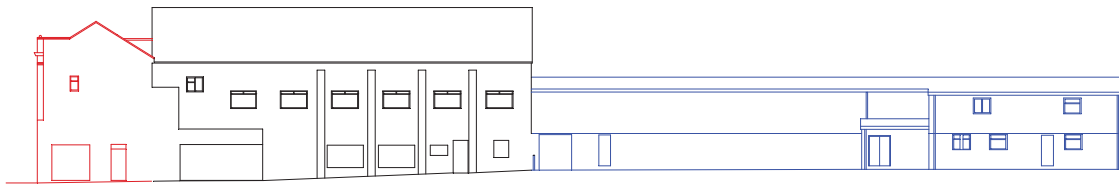
**5-7 Brighton Road, Crawley,  
West Sussex, 2015  
Building Recording**

Figure 9. Plan showing location of internal photographs taken.

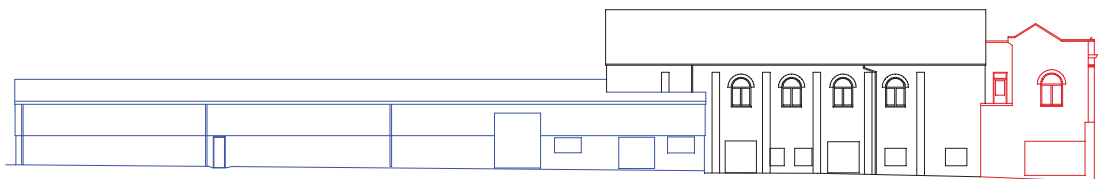
0 25m

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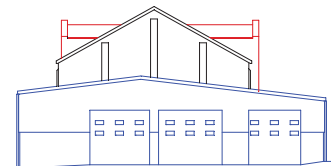
### North facing elevation



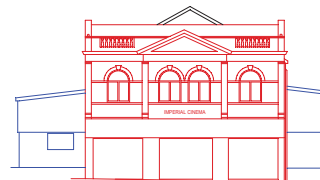
### South facing elevation



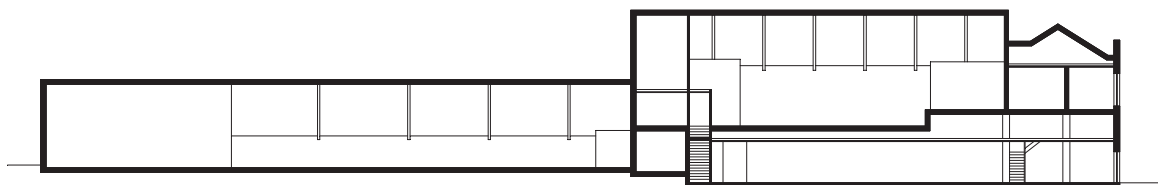
### West facing elevation



### East facing elevation



### West-east section through building



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Figure 10. Elevations and section of building, recorded shortly before demolition work.

0 25m

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Plate 1: General view of site at time of survey, looking east



Plate 2: General view of site, looking west

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Building Recording  
Plates 1 - 2.**

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Plate 3: 1908 post-card.



Plate 4: View from 1911



Plate 5: 1915



Plate 6: 1923



Plate 7: pre-1928



Plate 8: Fire damage, 1928.

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Plates 3 - 8.

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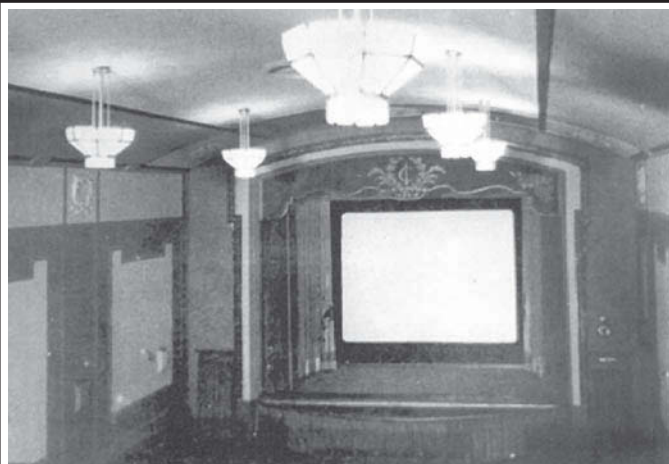


Plate 9: New cinema interior, 1930s



Plate 10: New cinema interior, 1930s



Plate 11: New cinema interior, 1930s

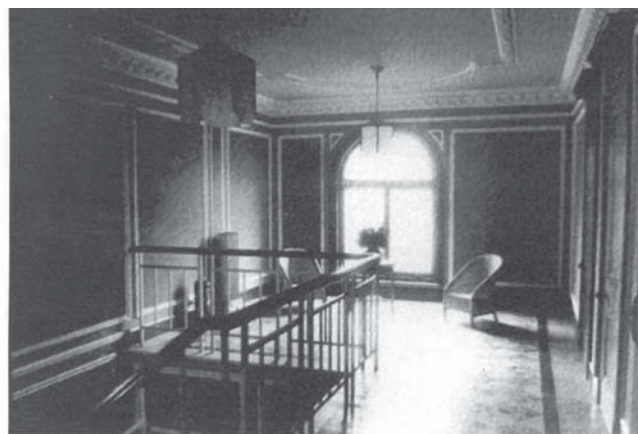


Plate 12: New cinema interior, 1930s

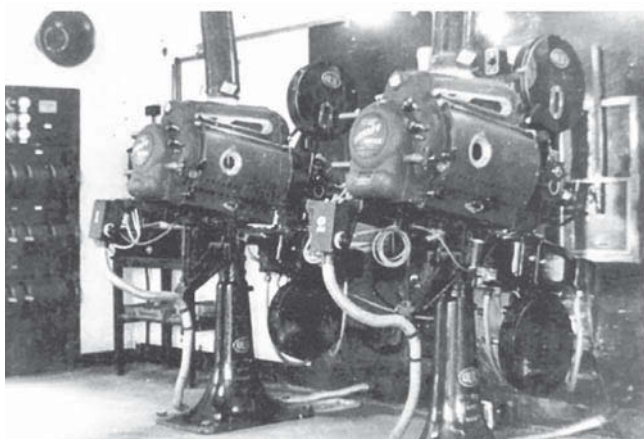


Plate 13: Projection room, c. 1930



Plate 14: 1930s

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Building Recording  
Plates 9 - 14.

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Plate 15: 1936



Plate 16: 1930s



Plate 17: 1980s



Plate 18. Site frontage, pre-demolition

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Plates 15 - 18

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Plate 19: Exterior, east facing elevation, looking west



Plate 20: Exterior, general view of south facing elevation, looking north east



Plate 21: Exterior, general view of south facing elevation, looking north

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Building Recording  
Plates 19 - 21

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Plate 22: Exterior, view of south facing elevation during demolition, looking north



Plate 23: Exterior, general view of south-facing elevation, looking north east



Plate 24: Exterior, general view of west facing elevation, looking east



Plate 25: Exterior, general view of north-facing elevation, looking south west



Plate 26: Exterior, view of remaining section of former cinema building post-demolition, looking south east

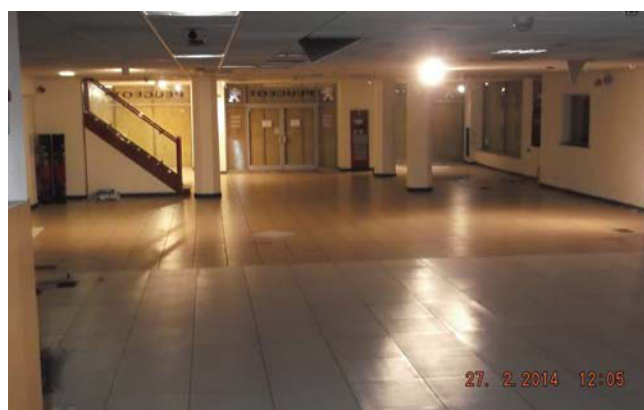


Plate 27: Interior, ground floor of former cinema building, looking east

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Building Recording  
Plates 22 - 27

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Plate 28: Interior, staircase to first floor of former cinema building post-demolition, looking north



Plate 29: Interior, steel structure supporting first floor of former cinema building post-demolition, looking south east



Plate 30: Interior, first floor of former cinema building, looking S from staircase



Plate 31: interior, first floor, eastern room of former cinema building post-demolition, looking north north east



Plate 32: Interior, first floor of former cinema building, looking west



Plate 33: Interior, main vehicle workshop, looking east south east

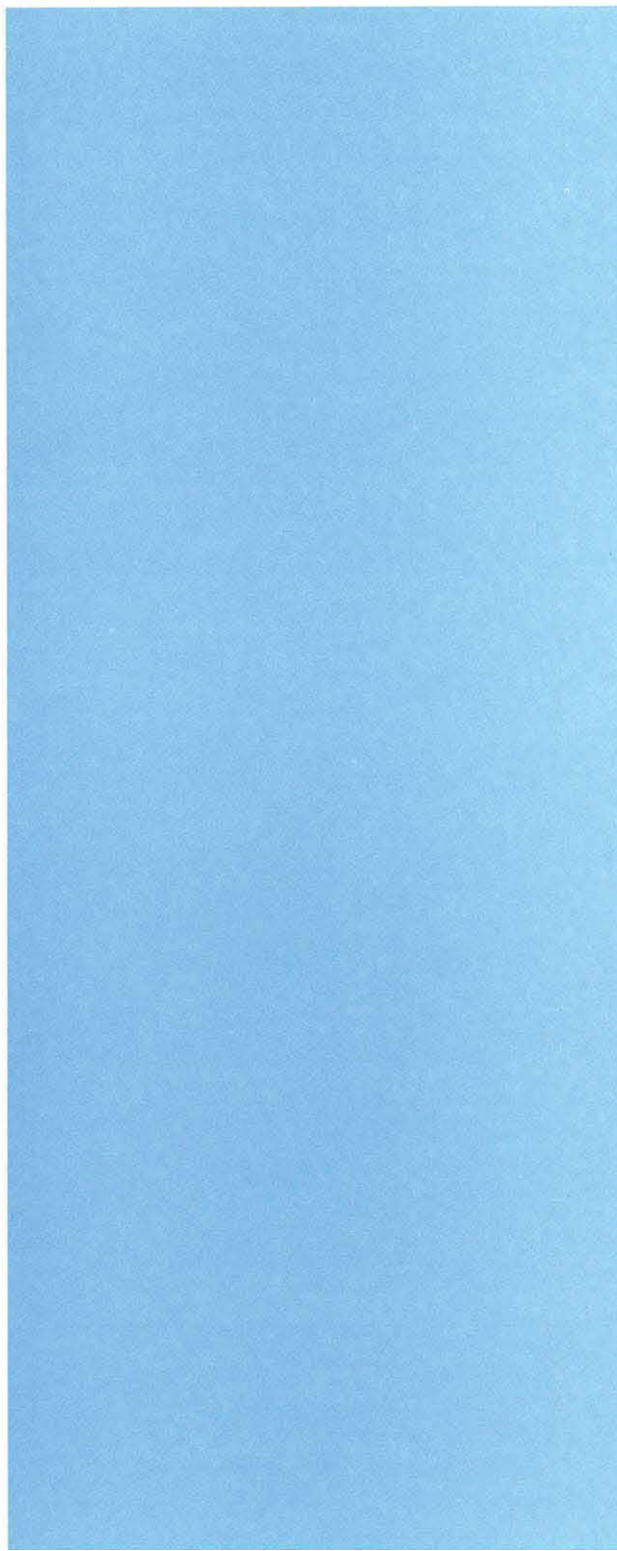
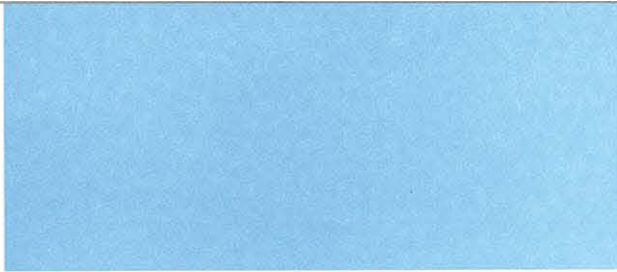
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Building Recording  
Plates 28 - 33

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## TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late -----	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle -----	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early -----	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late .....	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early .....	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late .....	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early .....	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper .....	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle .....	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower .....	2,000,000 BC
↓	↓



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