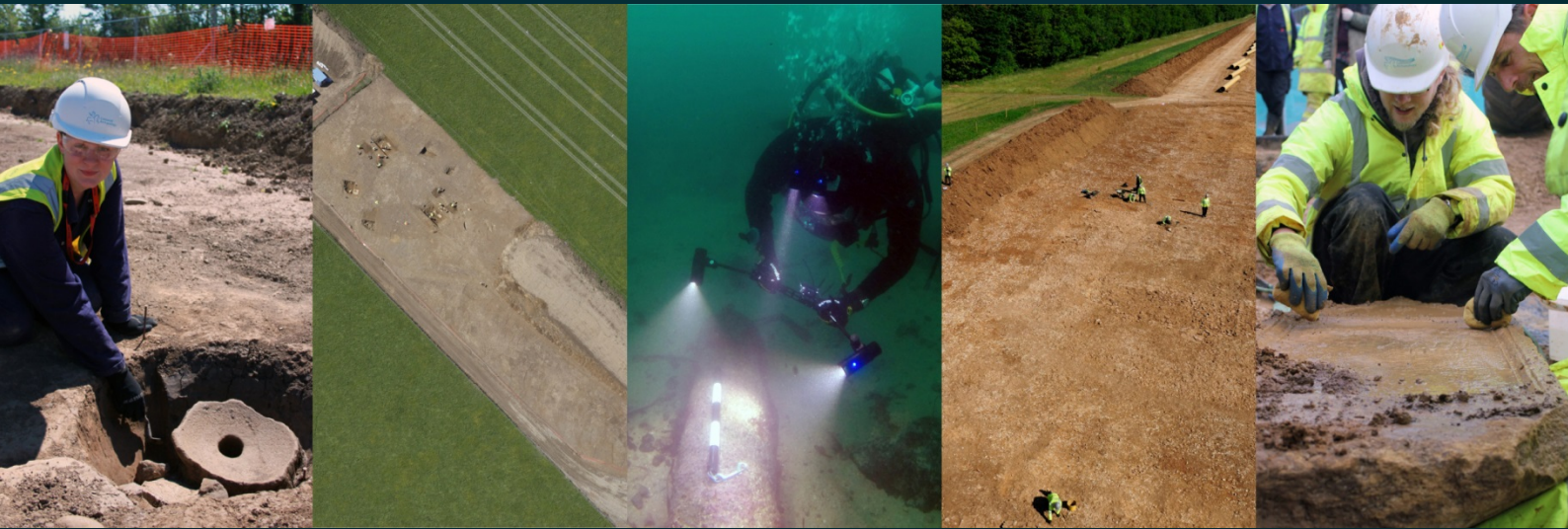


# Land at the rear of 23-25 George Street Croydon

## *Archaeological Watching Brief*



for  
Surface Property

CA Project: AN0024  
CA Report: AN0024.1

May 2019



# Land at the rear of 23-25 George Street Croydon

## Archaeological Watching Brief

CA Project: AN0024  
CA Report: AN0024.1



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A	30/4/19	Sam Wilson	Oliver Good	Internal review	General Edit	Richard Greatorex

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project Name:</b>	Land at the rear of 23-25 George Street
<b>Location:</b>	Croydon, London
<b>NGR:</b>	532466 164642
<b>Type:</b>	Watching Brief
<b>Date:</b>	26-29 April 2019
<b>Planning Reference:</b>	18/03907/FUL
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with appropriate local Museum
<b>Site Code:</b>	GOST19

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during geotechnical investigations at the rear of 23-25 George Street, Croydon. Six geotechnical test pits were excavated.

The only archaeological feature of note was an undated wall of irregular flint nodule and chalk block construction bonded with a mid-brown sand mortar within Test Pit 4, the alignment of which was unclear. It was of uncertain date but was determined to at least pre-date the extant buildings on site. No artefacts pre-dating the modern period were identified.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In April 2019 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Surface Property – Trading name (Arcus Consultancy Ltd.) at land at the rear of 23-25 George Street, Croydon (centred at NGR: 532466 164642; Figure 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to a planning consent for geotechnical works associated with the demolition of existing buildings and erection of mixed use commercial and residential properties with associated infrastructure and landscaping (Planning ref: 18/03907/FUL).

1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a brief for an archaeological watching brief prepared by Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) the archaeological advisors to Croydon Council and with a subsequent detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by Surface Property Ltd (2019) and approved by the GLAAS. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014) and the GLAAS standards (2015).

### ***The site***

1.3 The site is located to the rear of properties 23-25 George Street in central Croydon. The site is currently occupied by a mews type development, typical of late 19th century redevelopment along George Street. The site lies adjacent, but not within, the Croydon Conservation Area. The Development area is located within a Tier II Archaeological Priority Area (APA), as defined by Croydon Council, which is associated with the historic settlement of Croydon. APAs within the London Boroughs are categorized into Tiers according to their archaeological potential and significance with Tier 1 being most significant. Tier 1 APAs comprise heritage assets of national significance (a Scheduled Monument or equivalent), Tier 2 APAs indicate the presence or likely presence of heritage assets of archaeological interest, and Tier 3 APAs refer to landscape zones of archaeological interest (Surface 2019). The site lies at approximately 20m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), and is generally level.

1.4 The site comprises an irregular parcel measuring approximately 600m<sup>2</sup> and is currently occupied by a mixture of disused properties and an open tarmac yard.

- 1.5 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as clay, silt and sand of the Lambeth Group – sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 48 to 59 million years ago in the Palaeogene Period, in an environment dominated by swamps, estuaries and deltas. Superficial deposits of sand and gravel of the Lynch Hill Gravel Member are also recorded. These are sedimentary deposits up to two million years old, formed by rivers (BGS 2019). This is consistent with the natural substrate revealed during the geotechnical works.

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The following is a summary of a full desk-based assessment produced by CgMs (2017) and reference should be made to that document for full information.

### *Prehistoric*

- 2.2 A number of Prehistoric findspots have been recorded within the vicinity of the site, but no features. A Palaeolithic handaxe was found c.220m south of the site, while three Mesolithic flakes have also been recorded c.85m south.
- 2.3 Other findspots include several residual Prehistoric cores found along Mint Walk c.230m south of the site, a Prehistoric scraper found c.250m south-west of the site, 16 pieces of residual Prehistoric flint and further struck flints of Prehistoric date found during archaeological excavations c.120m to the south-west.
- 2.4 Archaeological excavations at 3-7 Park Street in 1996, c.120m south-west of the site, recorded a single Bronze Age findspot and a large number of Iron Age pottery sherds and worked flint.

### *Romano-British*

- 2.5 The amount of Roman material that has been recovered from the wider Archaeological Priority Area indicates that a settlement was located here during this period. The London to Brighton Roman road passed through the APA and Croydon's distance approximately 10 miles south of the Roman Londinium would have made it a convenient place for a stopping site. Another Roman road, which is thought to have run in an east-west direction along the northern edge of the North Downs, also ran through Croydon and would have intersected with the London to Brighton road. Remains of this road have been found in Lower Coombe Street c.800m south of the

site. The traffic passing along both of these roads would have stimulated the growth of the settlement and led to it becoming a significant trading centre.

- 2.6 The site lies c.120m north-east of a Roman cemetery first recorded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Human bones were found during the 1814 gravel pit excavations c.115m south-west of the site while 10 Roman burials including a lead coffin were recorded c.120m south-west. A lead coffin with surviving bone fragments and a further row of graves nearby was found c.120m south of the site and a single large Roman skeleton was also recorded c.250m to the west.
- 2.7 A Roman boundary ditch was recorded during archaeological investigations at 3-7 Park Lane c.120m south-west of the site and two Roman pits were recorded c.230m to the south-west.
- 2.8 Further Roman findspots comprising coins, tile and pottery were recorded during an archaeological excavation c.150m south-west of the site and more generally from the wider site environs.

### ***Anglo-Saxon and medieval***

- 2.9 Croydon continued to be occupied in the Anglo-Saxon period and one of the most significant archaeological discoveries found close to the town centre is the scheduled Anglo-Saxon cemetery in the Edridge Road/Park Lane area, c. 600m south of the site.
- 2.10 A synod was held at Croydon in 809 which indicates that the town had a degree of economic and ecclesiastical importance by this time and that a minster church may have been located there. Croydon is referred to as Crogedene in a document of 871 and as Croindene in the 1086 Domesday Book by which time the manor was owned by the Archbishops of Canterbury. Croydon Palace, the Archbishop's Manor House, located c.500m south-west of the site, was built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and was used by the Lords of the Manor as their summer residence until 1780 (Mills 2011). A Saxon coin was found c.130m south-west of the site and a Merovingian coin c.190m north-west.
- 2.11 The presence of a weekly market and nine-day annual fair by the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century further demonstrates how Croydon had become an important commercial centre in the north Surrey area (Weinrebb & Hibbert 2008). Medieval pottery dated



to 1200-1400AD was recorded during an archaeological evaluation c.50m south-east of the site while archaeological investigations c.130m to the south-west revealed medieval cultivation soil, medieval gravel extraction pits, pottery and ceramic building material, as well as pits and walls.

- 2.12 Late medieval occupation sites were recorded c.110m west, c.140m south and c.250m south-west of the site. A medieval pit was also recorded c.270m to the west.

### ***Post-medieval***

- 2.13 The 1594 Norden Map shows the site located to the north of the Croydon settlement core with two main roads to the west and south. The 1729 Senex Map shows the evolving settlement of Croydon. The site is located within open land or backyards associated with structures fronting the north-south aligned parallel roads.
- 2.14 The site was occupied by structures in 1789 as shown on the Harns Map and is shown in a similar form by 1809 Ordnance Survey Drawing, which depicts the rapid expansion of Croydon. The population of 5,743 in 1801 rose to 134,037 by 1901 (Weinrebb & Hibbert 2008).
- 2.15 The 1838 Croydon Tithe Map and associated Award show the southern part of the site occupied by a House/Office and the central and northern part as Lawn/Garden/Shrubbery. The 1868 Ordnance Survey shows the site in a similar form. The southern area is occupied by a structure and the northern area lies within gardens associated with Dingwall House to the north-east. The structure in the southern area of the site had been removed by 1894 and warehouse type constructions were erected along the western boundary. Additional structures were built along the western and northern site boundaries by 1913 and along the eastern site boundary by 1932. The structure along the northern site boundary was removed by 1941 and an extension to the existing warehouse at the site was built by 1955 whereupon the site has remained largely unchanged until the present.





### 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:

- to monitor geotechnical works, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks;
- at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (Surface 2019). An archaeologist was present during intrusive geotechnical works comprising the hand excavation of geotechnical test pits (Figure 2).

4.2 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.

4.3 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the site archive will be deposited with an appropriate local museum. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

### 5. RESULTS (FIGURES 2-3)

5.1 The natural geological substrate consisting of light yellowish-brown sand was revealed within **Test Pits 1, 2, 5 and 6** at an average depth of approximately 0.9m below present ground level. This was overlain by multiple disturbed and made ground deposits below modern surfaces.



- 5.2 No features of archaeological significance were identified in **Test Pits 1, 2, 3, 5** and **6** beyond the foundations of extant walls of the buildings currently occupying the site, and against which the **Test Pits 1** and **2** were placed.
- 5.3 Within **Test Pit 4** wall **401** of irregular flint nodule and chalk block construction bonded with a mid-brown sand mortar was encountered at a depth of 0.13m immediately below the modern floor and to a depth of at least 0.64m. Its size was greater than that of the excavated test pit (0.25m x 0.25m) and its alignment could not be determined.
- 5.4 Despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.

## 6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see archaeological background above) the watching brief only identified limited archaeological remains within the area of observed geotechnical works. The absence of archaeological deposits may indicate that they have been subject to disturbance or truncation by more recent activity or simply be reflective of the very limited size of the test pits.
- 6.2 The wall encountered within **Test Pit 4** is of notably different construction to the existing buildings and clearly pre-dates them, although with such a limited extent exposed, it is impossible to draw any firmer conclusions regarding size, extent or date.

## 7. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Chris Ellis. The report was written by Sam Wilson and the illustrations were prepared by Marta Perlinska. The archive has been compiled by Chris Ellis, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Olly Good.



## 8. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey (BGS), 2019, *Geology of Britain Viewer*  
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed 30 April 2019

CgMs Heritage, 2017, *Archaeological Desk Based Assessment, Land to rear of 23 George Street, Croydon, CR10 1LA*, report ref: MP/24041

Surface Property Ltd, 2019, *Land at the rear of 23-25 George Street, Croydon: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Mitigation*

Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) Guidance Paper (April 2015)  
Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Greater London,  
<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/glaas-standards-for-archaeological-work/glaas-archaeologicalstandards-apr15/> (Accessed 30/4/2019)



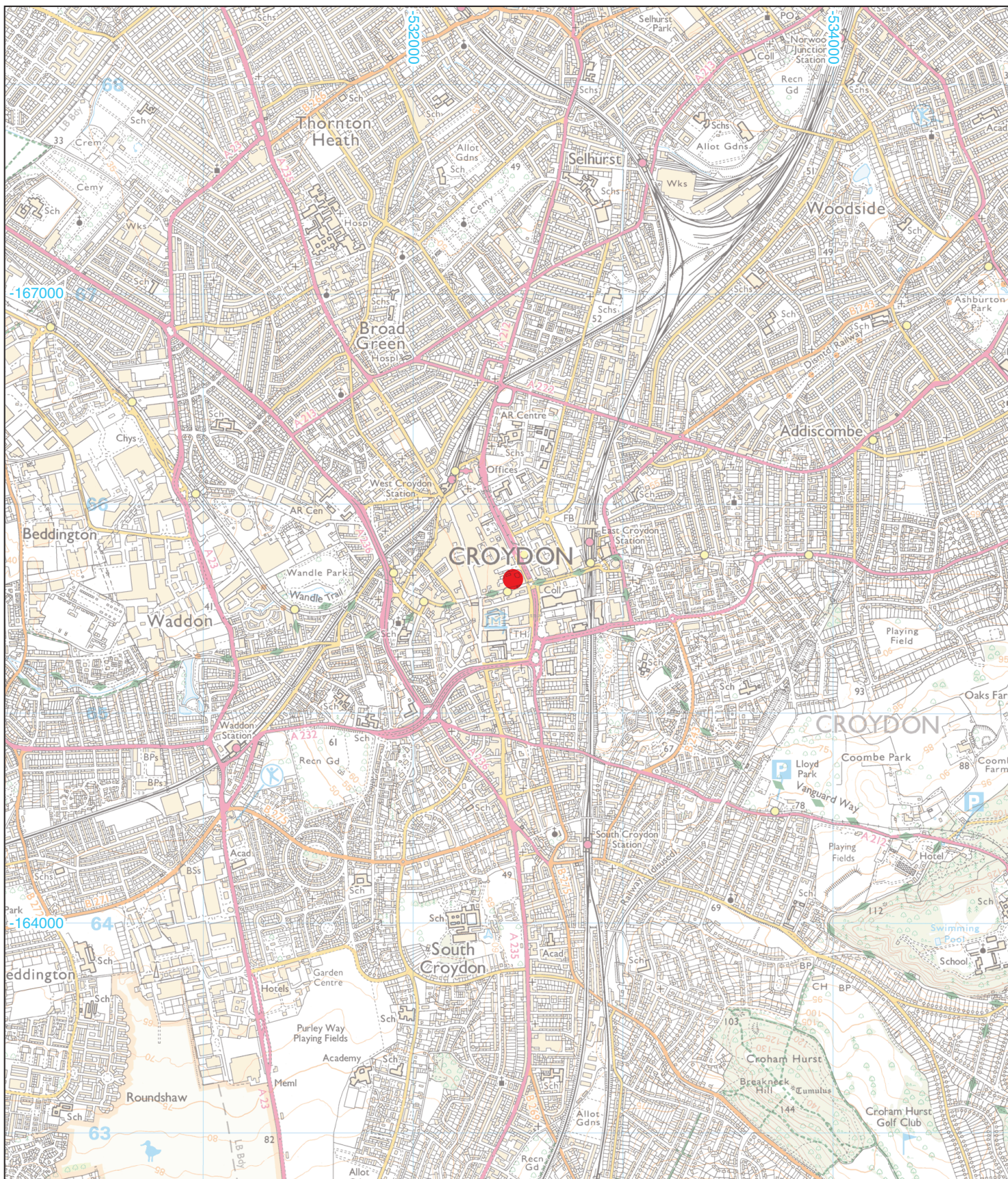
## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Test pit No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		Modern surface	Concrete slab	0.6	0.4	0-0.14	
1	101	Layer		Made ground	Modern brick and concrete rubble	0.6	0.4	0.14-0.5	
1	102	Layer		Made ground	Dark greyish brown sand with rare chalk, brick and charcoal inclusions	0.6	0.4	0.5-1.1	
1	103	Layer		Natural substrate	Light brown fine sand with rare rounded gravel	0.6	0.4	1.1-1.3+	
1	104	Structure		Wall	Brick wall, E-W aligned along northern elevation of extant building	>0.2	0.34	0.07-0.5+	Post-medieval/modern
2	200	Layer		Modern surface	Concrete slab	0.35	0.35	0-0.5	
2	201	Structure		Wall	Brick wall footing of extant wall, unfrogged bricks with rare flint and chalk block inclusions and yellowish white lime mortar	>0.35	>0.2	0.05-0.49	Post-medieval/modern
2	202	Layer		Made ground	Brick rubble overlying 201	0.35	0.32	0.49-1	
2	203	Layer		Disturbed soil	Dark brown very fine sand with occasional brick inclusions	0.35	0.32	1-1.1	
2	204	Layer		Natural substrate	Light brown fine sand	0.35	0.32	1.1-1.3	
3	300	Layer		Modern surface	Concrete slab	0.25	0.25	0-0.18	
3	301	Layer		Modern foundations	Concrete and brick foundations for extant wall	0.25	0.25	0.18-1.02+	Modern
3	302	Layer		Disturbed soil	Very dark brown fine sand with charcoal flecks	0.25	0.25	0.67-1.02+	
4	400	Layer		Modern surface	Wooden floor	0.25	0.25	0-0.13	
4	401	Structure		Wall	Irregular flint nodules and chalk block foundation with mid brown sand mortar	0.25	0.25	0.13-0.64+	Uncertain
5	500	Layer		Modern surface	Concrete slab	0.62	0.5	0-0.17	
5	501	Layer		Made ground	Light greyish brown coarse sand with brick and concrete rubble	0.62	0.5	0.17-0.64	
5	502	Layer		Disturbed soil	Mid brown silty fine sand with occasional brick inclusions	0.62	0.5	0.64-0.79	
5	503	Layer		Natural substrate	Light yellowish brown silty fine sand	0.62	0.5	0.79-1.43+	

**APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project Name	Land at the rear of 23-25 George Street, Croydon	
Short description	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during geotechnical investigations at the rear of 23-25 George Street, Croydon. Six geotechnical test pits were excavated.</p> <p>The only archaeological feature of note was an undated wall of irregular flint nodule and chalk block construction bonded with a mid-brown sand mortar within test pit 4, the alignment of which was unclear. It was of uncertain date but was determined to at least pre-date the extant buildings on site. No artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was identified.</p>	
Project dates	26-29 April 2019	
Project type	Watching brief	
Previous work	Desk-based assessment (CgMs 2017)	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site Location	23a George Street, Croydon	
Study area (M <sup>2</sup> /ha)	c. 600m <sup>2</sup>	
Site co-ordinates	532466 164642	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Surface Property Ltd (2019)	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS)	
Project Manager	Olly Good	
Project Supervisor	Chris Ellis	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>	None	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	None	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		None
Paper	LAARC	Trench sheets, registers
Digital	LAARC	Digital photos
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Cotswold Archaeology (CA) 2019 <i>Land at the rear of 23-25 George Street, Croydon: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . CA typescript report <b>AN0024.1</b>		





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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Land at rear of 23-25 George Street,  
 Croydon, Greater London

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site location plan



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 Ordnance Survey 0100031673

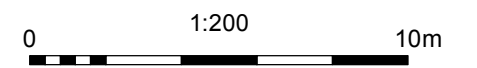
<b>DRAWN BY</b>	<b>MP</b>	<b>PROJECT NO.</b>	<b>AN0024</b>	<b>FIGURE NO.</b>
<b>CHECKED BY</b>	<b>DJB</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>01/05/2019</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>APPROVED BY</b>	<b>CE</b>	<b>SCALE@A4</b>	<b>1:25,000</b>	





**Legend**

- Site boundary
- Test pit location



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Land at rear of 23-25 George Street,  
 Croydon, Greater London

**FIGURE TITLE**  
**The site, showing location  
 of monitored geotechnical works**

<b>DRAWN BY</b>	MP	<b>PROJECT NO</b>	AN0024	<b>FIGURE NO.</b>	
<b>CHECKED BY</b>	DJB	<b>DATE</b>	24/05/2019		<b>2</b>
<b>APPROVED BY</b>	CE	<b>SCALE@A3</b>	1:200		





Test Pit 1, post-excavation, looking north-east (0.4m scale)



General view Test Pit 4, post-excavation, looking north-west (0.3m scale)



General view Test Pit 5, post-excavation, looking north (0.4m scale)



Test Pit 6, post-excavation, looking south-east (0.4m scale)



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