



## 2-4 DALE ROAD, PURLEY, LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDEN

*Archaeological Watching Brief Report*



**2-4 DALE ROAD,  
PURLEY,  
LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

Prepared for  
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**Museum of London Site Code DLP06**

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

**Acknowledgements**

Wessex Archaeology (London) would like to thank John Macleod of Independent Homes Limited for commissioning the work. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Mark Stevenson, the English Heritage Archaeological Advisor to the London Borough of Croydon for monitoring the work.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Gary Evans who also prepared this report. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology (London) by Lawrence Pontin. Mark Roughley prepared the illustrations.

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

**Non-technical Summary**

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief commissioned by Independent Homes Limited and carried out by Wessex Archaeology (London) during groundwork at 2-4, Dale Road, Purley in the London Borough of Croydon.

The works were commissioned as a condition or planning approval from the London Borough of Croydon to re-develop the Site for residential use.

Observations during the excavation, by the site contractor, of trenches for poured concrete foundations showed a layer of loose gravel rich topsoil. This appeared to have been disturbed during the construction of the two houses which until recently stood on the Site. Geological deposits comprising coarse sandy gravels overlying chalk with flints were observed in the sections of all the foundation trenches. These deposits were seen to lie directly beneath the topsoil at a height of 64.22m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

The report concludes that archaeological deposits do not exist within the development area, any remains which may have been present having been heavily disturbed and truncated by the construction of the recently demolished houses and gardens.

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Scope of Document**

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Independent Homes Limited (the Client) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the machine excavation of trenches for poured concrete foundations at 2-4, Dale Road, Purley, in the London Borough of Croydon CR8 2EA (the Site), centred on NGR 531540 161050 (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 This report details the results of this fieldwork which took place between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> July 2006.

1.1.3 This document sets out the results of the watching brief of the Site.

**1.1 Planning Background**

1.2.1 The watching brief was required as a condition attached to planning approval for the re-development of the Site, involving the construction of residential flats.

1.2.3 The watching brief and the preparation of this report were undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Wessex Archaeology, 2006) which was prepared prior to the commencement of work by Wessex Archaeology (London). This was approved by Mark Stevenson, the English Heritage Archaeology Advisor to the London Borough of Croydon.

**2 SITE DESCRIPTION**

**2.1 Site Location**

2.1.1 The Site lies at the foot of Purley Downs, some 50m to the south of Godstone Road (A22) and 500m to the southeast of Purley town centre. The Site is broadly rectangular in plan and measures 0.1 hectare. To the south it is bounded by Dale Road. and to the north, west and east by gardens and houses (**Figure 1**).

2.1.2 The Site is presently open ground, the two houses which formerly stood on Site having been demolished and removed.

**2.2 Topography and Geology**

2.2.1 The Site is level and the modern ground level within the Site is 64.62m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

- 2.2.2 The geology of the Site comprises River Terrace deposits (Hackney Gravels) above Chalk with flints (British Geological Society, South London, Sheet 270).

### **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.1.1 An Upper Palaeolithic (12,000 - 10,000 BC) flint hand axe is recorded as having been found to the south of the Site at Foxley Wood (NGR 531550 161500) whilst a “flint artefact” is recorded to the northeast of the Site at Purley Downs (NGR 532500 161500) (Museum of London, 2000, 60).
- 3.1.2 A Neolithic (4,000 - 2,400BC) flint scrapper and several flint flakes have been discovered to the north of the Site at Riddlesdown Road (NGR 532500 160500) and to the east of the Site at Riddlesdown (NGR 534400 160300 and 533700 160300) (Museum of London, 2000, 77).
- 3.1.3 A Bronze Age (2,400 - 700BC) socketed axe has been found to the east of the Site at Riddlesdown (NGR 529000 159500) (Museum of London, 2000, 95).
- 3.1.4 Romano – British (AD 43 - 410) inhumations are also recorded in the area to the north of the Site in Oakwood Avenue (NGR 23200 162000) (Museum of London, 2000, 165).
- 3.1.5 A number of Saxon (AD 410 - 1066) burials have also been found to the north of the Site at 119 Riddlesdown Road (NGR 532200 160700) and at the junction of Riddlesdown Road with Mitcham Avenue (NGR 532280 160740) (Museum of London, 2000, 202).

#### **3.2 Aims and Objectives**

- 3.2.1 The overall aim of the watching brief was to establish and record, as far as reasonably possible, any archaeological remains that may survive beneath the present ground surface. This was undertaken through the observation of ground works carried out during the re-development of the Site.
- 3.2.2 It also aimed to characterise the nature, date, depth and state of preservation of any such features or deposits, and to retrieve, where present, stratified assemblages of finds and ecofacts.
- 3.2.3 More specifically, it sought to determine if prehistoric remains existed on the Site.

### **4 STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Methodological Standards**

- 4.1.1 All excavation was undertaken in compliance with the standards outlined in the Institute of Field Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (as amended 2001).

#### **4.2 Health and Safety**

- 4.2.1 All work was undertaken in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992, and all

other relevant Health and Safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice in force. Safe working practices overrode archaeological considerations at all times.

- 4.2.2 A Risk Assessment was prepared by Wessex Archaeology prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

### **4.3 Fieldwork**

- 4.3.1 The watching brief comprised a continual archaeological attendance and monitoring of all ground interventions undertaken by the site contractor.
- 4.3.2 Regular breaks in machine excavation by the site contractor were timetabled into the work programme. These breaks allowed the examination, by Wessex Archaeology, of the revealed archaeological sequence.
- 4.3.3 The excavation of foundation trenches was undertaken utilising a 21 ton tracked excavator fitted with a toothed bucket.
- 4.3.4 Trench widths varied between 0.90m and 2.00m. Trench depths also varied depending on the requirements of the intended build but were no where deeper than 1.50m.
- 4.3.5 Recording of the archaeological sequence consisted of scaled photographic records complimented by measured sketch drawings and written observations recorded on Wessex Archaeology standard Trench Record Sheets. A full or representative selection of artefacts was collected, depending on their intrinsic nature, age, quality, preservation, rarity, monetary and or artistic/technological value.
- 4.3.6 All spot heights, provided in the text, refer to heights above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and refer to the top (upper interface) of each deposit.

## **5 RESULTS**

- 5.1.1 Detailed contextual information is presented in tabulated form in **Appendix 1** at the rear of this report.
- 5.1.2 The following provides a brief summary of the findings and an outline narration of the depositional sequence encountered.
- 5.1.3 The underlying solid geological was observed and recorded in the sections of all of the foundation trenches observed. This deposit, which occurred at a height of 63.52 m aOD, comprised, a compact, chalk (**003**) with moderate amounts of large, up to 0.15m, flint nodules throughout (**Figure 2**).
- 5.1.4 The solid geology was overlain by a 1.10m thick deposit of coarse sandy gravels (**002**). This deposit formed the drift geology on Site and was observed in all the foundation trenches (**Figure 2**).
- 5.1.5 The latest deposit observed on Site was a loose, mid grey, silty gravel rich topsoil (**001**). This deposit, which was observed across the entire Site, was up to 0.40m thick and contained numerous fragments of modern brick and roots from the former gardens on Site and the many trees which surround the Site. Truncated in the northwest corner of the Site by the demolished remains of an outdoor swimming pool and elsewhere by modern drains and brick lined

soakaways, this deposit lay directly above the loose gravel deposits of the natural drift geology (**Figure 2**).

## **6 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION**

- 6.1.1 No archaeological remains were observed in any of the foundation trenches.
- 6.1.2 A thin layer of disturbed topsoil, overlying geological deposits of coarse sandy gravels and chalk with flints was observed in the sections of all the foundation trenches.
- 6.1.3 The report concludes that archaeological deposits do not exist within the development area, any remains which may have been present having been truncated by the construction and demolition of the recently demolished houses, outdoor swimming pool and rear and front gardens of the former dwellings on Site.

## **7 THE ARCHIVE**

- 7.1.1 The project archive is held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology under the Wessex project code WA63790. Following conclusion of the project, and with the permission of the landowner, it will be deposited at the appropriate museum or storage facility.

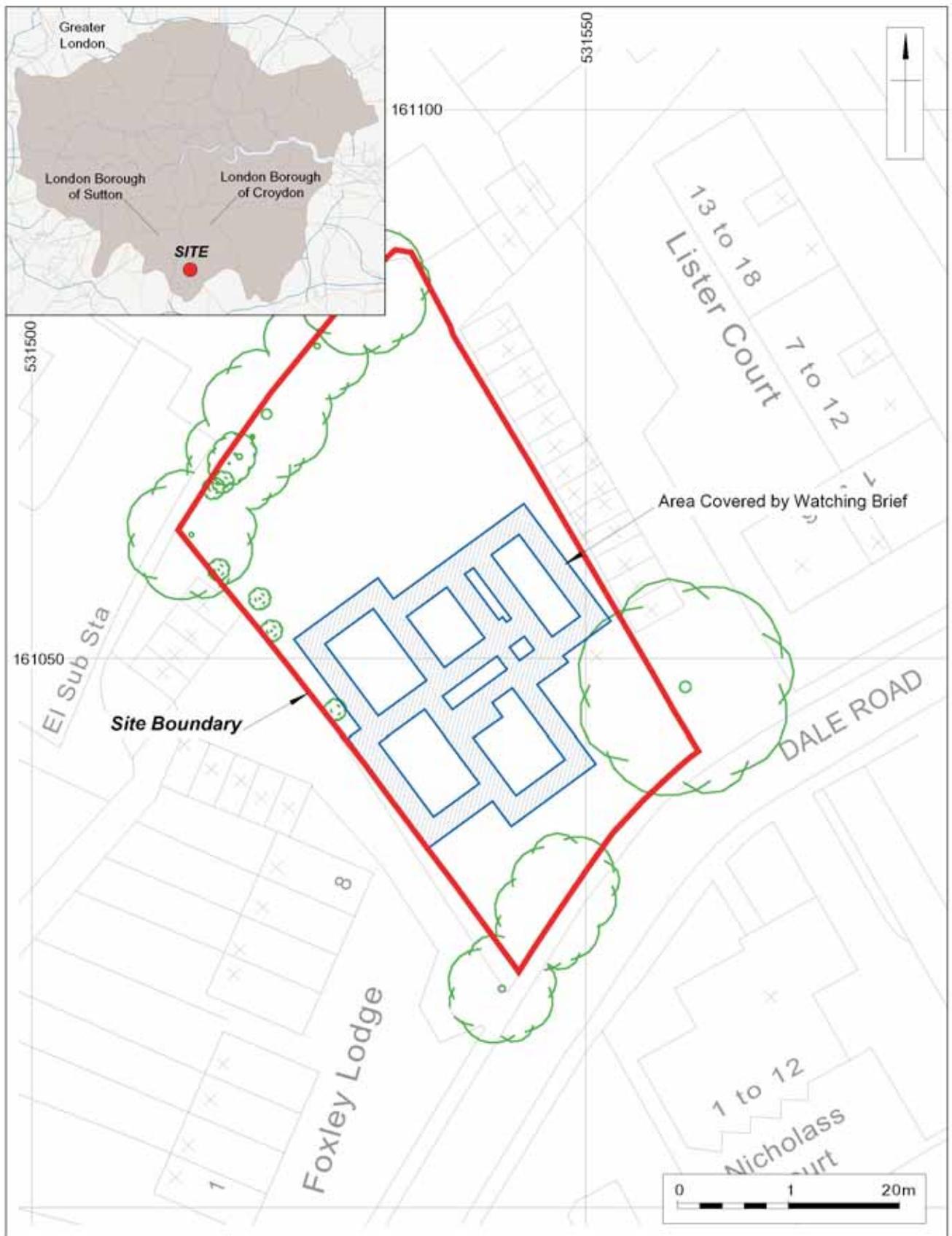
## **8 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

British Geological Survey	1994	England and Wales, South London, Sheet 270, 1:50 000 series
Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA).	2001	<i>Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs</i>
Museum of London	2000	The archaeology of Greater London, An assessment of archaeological evidence for human presence in the area now covered by Greater London
Wessex Archaeology	2006	2-4 Dale Road, Purley, London Borough of Croydon, Archaeological Watching Brief Project Specification (Ref T10120)

## 9 APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARY TABLE

(+) indicated not fully excavated

Context No	Interpretative/processual keyword	Type	Description	Height aOD
001	Topsoil. Cultivation. Use	Deposit	Mid grey, loose fine sandy gravel rich silt, frequent sub rounded – well rounded flint pebbles up to 40mm, occasional large flint nodules up to 90mm in diameter, moderate fragments of modern red brick and general demolition rubble, frequent roots from trees. shrubs and grass	64.62m
002	Natural Drift Geology	Deposit	Dark greyish brown, coarse sandy silty gravel. Gravel = frequent medium (up to 50mm) sub rounded – well rounded flint pebbles, occasional, up to 100mm in diameter, sub rounded – well rounded pebbles, occasional large flint nodules	64.22m
003	Natural Solid Geology	Deposit	Compact chalk, with occasional - moderate medium – large flint nodules up to 0.20m in diameter throughout	63.52m-63.12m (+)



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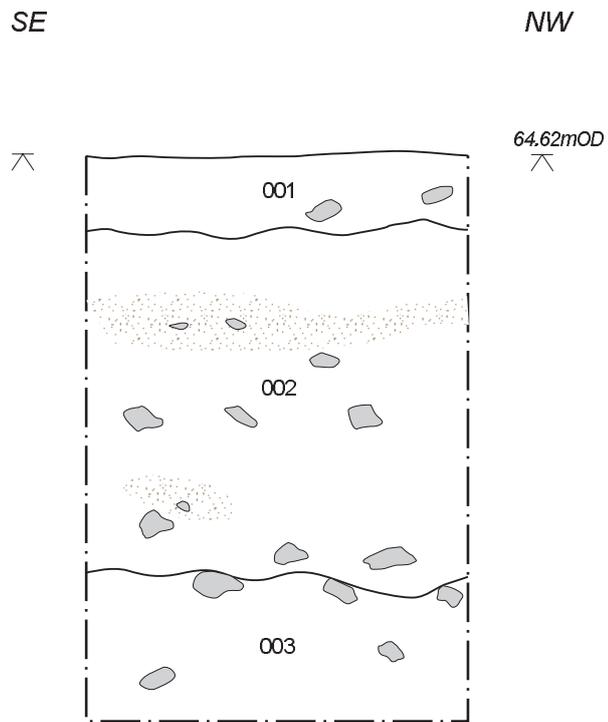
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Site Location Map and Site Plan showing area covered by Watching Brief

Figure 1

## Representative Section



0 1m

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