

66 Highfield Road, Purley
London Borough of Croydon

Archaeological Evaluation Report





**66 HIGHFIELD ROAD, PURLEY
LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON**

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Mol site code: **HFI 07**

Prepared for

Tinos Homes Limited
Long Orchard Farm
Cobham
KT11 1EL

By

Wessex Archaeology
Portway House
Old Sarum Park
Salisbury
Wiltshire SP4 6EB

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Front cover – 66 Highfield Road with trial pit 4 in foreground

Back cover – 66 Highfield Road with trial pit 7 in foreground

Figure 1 – Site plan showing test pit locations

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Tinos Homes Ltd to conduct an archaeological evaluation at 66 Highfield Road, Purley, in the London Borough of Croydon. The property and associated garden, hereafter known as 'the Site', are centred on NGR 531200, 162380 and comprise an area of c. 0.2 hectares. The proposed development comprises the demolition of the existing house and associated buildings, followed by the construction of three two-storey residential buildings with associated parking facilities.

The evaluation, which comprised the mechanical excavation of 8No 5m x 5m trial pits, was carried out under the guidance of Mark Stevenson of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) in order to inform a condition of planning consent, prior to any development on the Site (Planning Application Reference 07/04506/P).

The evaluation took place between the 5th and the 7th November 2007.

Of the eight trial pits, six displayed features of modern (in this instance post-1930s) or natural origin and two displayed features of archaeological interest. Trial pit 2 contained a single shallow pit dated, by pottery, to the Late Bronze Age period. Trial pit 4 contained a single, undated shallow gully.

The discovery of a single Late Bronze Age pit on the Site is consistent with previous finds from within the surrounding area and suggests occupation of Highfield Road during this period.

However, the evaluation demonstrated that the majority of the Site had been heavily truncated by previous landscaping associated with 'Redstacks' which would have had an impact upon the survival of any further archaeological remains on the Site.

Given the large proportion of the Site which was evaluated and the paucity of the archaeological features uncovered it is likely that no further archaeological remains have survived.

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Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Tinos Homes Ltd. for commissioning the project, in particular Eliot Roberts and Paul Scott of Tinos Homes and Mark Stevenson of Greater London Advisory Service (GLAAS) for their assistance during the work. The fieldwork was monitored by Mark Stevenson (GLAAS).

The fieldwork was carried out by Luke Brannlund and supervised by Gemma White who also compiled this report. The illustrations were compiled by Linda Coleman and Kenneth Lymer. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Caroline Budd.

**66 HIGHFIELD ROAD, PURLEY
LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON**

Archaeological Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Tinos Homes Ltd. (The Client) to undertake an archaeological evaluation at 66 Highfield Road, Purley, in the London Borough of Croydon, hereafter 'the Site'.
- 1.1.2 The evaluation was conducted under the guidance of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) and was required in response to a request for further information to inform planning consent for the proposed development of the Site (Planning Application reference 07/04506/P).
- 1.1.3 The evaluation consisted of the mechanical excavation of eight 5m x 5m trial pits in order to identify and record any archaeological features or deposits that may be present on the Site.
- 1.1.4 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Wessex Archaeology (WA 2007 B) and approved by Mark Stevenson of GLAAS.

1.2 Site Description

- 1.2.1 The Site currently comprises a residential property, known as 'Red Stacks', located in the east of the development area, surrounded by a garden and privet hedge. The proposed redevelopment comprises the demolition of 'Red Stacks' and the construction of three two-storey residential buildings with associated parking.
- 1.2.2 The garden, in which the eight trial pits were situated, had been landscaped with a raised bank running along the western edge of the Site, a swimming pool in the centre and a flat rolled lawn in the north-east of the area. It is presumed that any archaeological deposits that may have existed below the house or pool were removed during construction and therefore the trial pits were located in the remaining garden area, specifically in areas which will lie under the proposed new building footprints.

1.3 Geological and Topographical background

- 1.3.1 The solid geology of the Site is Upper Cretaceous Upper Chalk (British Geological Survey 1998, Sheet 270). The Site is predominantly flat with landscaped banks along the western edge.

- 1.3.2 The Site is sub-rectangular and is bounded by Highfield Road to the south, Hillcrest Road to the west, residential properties to the north and playing fields to the east. It lies at approximately 104.50m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), is centred on NGR 531200, 162380 and comprises an area of c. 0.2 hectares.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Desk Based Assessment

- 2.1.1 A desk-based assessment of the Site was carried out by Wessex Archaeology (WA 2007 A) in order to determine the potential for the survival of archaeological remains on and around the Site area. A summary of the results follows.

Palaeolithic (500,000BC-10,000BC)

- 2.1.2 Evidence for Palaeolithic activity has been identified to the south-west of the Site at Russell Hill in the form of flint scrapers of no specified date and the isolated find of a Palaeolithic flint implement, interpreted as a possible saw.

Mesolithic (10,000BC-4000BC)

- 2.1.3 Mesolithic activity is represented by a flint tool, described as a chisel or an adze, which was also found at Russell Hill.

Neolithic (4000BC-2400BC)

- 2.1.4 Neolithic artefacts found near the site, and within the study area of the Desk Based Assessment, include part of a polished axe found in the garden of 5 Hillcrest Road and a flint core, a polished stone axe and two side-scrapers all found on nearby Russell Hill.

- 2.1.5 A flint scraper with retouch along one edge has been recorded as having been found at a general co-ordinate position in the vicinity of the Site and fragments of a polished axe were found to the north of the Site in the sports field.

Bronze Age (2400BC-700BC)

- 2.1.6 A bronze socketed gouge, a socketed axe and a large copper ingot are all recorded as having been found in the Russell Hill area. Bronze Age pottery was found to the north-east of the Site and a possible penannular ditch with a central pit was recorded to the south of the Site, possibly indicative of the presence of a barrow.

Iron Age (700BC-AD43)

- 2.1.7 No evidence dating to this period is known from the Site.

Romano-British (AD43–410)

- 2.1.8 To the south-west of the Site antiquarian sources have described a possible Roman town though there is no evidence of Romano-British occupation on the Site.

Anglo-Saxon (AD 410-1066)

- 2.1.9 The name Purley is Saxon in origin and means an open space in woodland with pear trees.
- 2.1.10 Anglo-Saxon graves are known to have been excavated around the Site area with 107 being recorded on the site of Thomas More Roman Catholic School, Russell Hill, during construction of a bridal way and during road works. Further inhumations were found to the north during tree planting at Beggar's Bush and around 20 graves were found to the north east at Pamisford road.

Medieval (AD1066–1499)

- 2.1.11 There is no evidence of medieval activity on the site.

Negative evidence

- 2.1.12 With the plethora of Anglo-Saxon inhumations in the area and prehistoric finds, extensive archaeological fieldwork has been undertaken prior to development on the Site and in the surrounding area.
- 2.1.13 Sutton Archaeological Services undertook evaluations at Land between 21 and 23 Highfield Road (Site Code: HIP01), 22B Hillcrest Road (Site Code: HLC98) and 24 Hillcrest Road (Site Code: HCS03), these all record the observation of no archaeological features or artefacts.
- 2.1.14 An evaluation was undertaken by Museum of London Archaeology Service at the Thomas More School (Site Code: RSH96) in which no archaeological material or features were observed.
- 2.1.15 Also at Russell Hill a watching brief by CNHS was undertaken in 1986, this consisted of a large area, which was stripped to reveal only modern features cut into chalk.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1.1 The primary objective of the evaluation was to identify the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the Site. Where archaeological features or deposits were present, the intention of the project was to record their location, extent, date, character, condition, and depth, within the constraints of the evaluation.
- 3.1.2 Further to this, the project objectives call for the production of a report that will present the information in sufficient detail to allow interpretation without further reference to the project archive. This is intended to aid and inform any future decisions concerning the need for further archaeological mitigation on the Site prior to development.

4 EVALUATION STRATEGY

4.1 Fieldwork

- 4.1.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WA 2007 B) approved by GLAAS, and in compliance with the standards outlined in the Institute of Field Archaeologist's Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations (amended 1994).
- 4.1.2 The fieldwork comprised the mechanical excavation of 8 trial pits measuring 5m x 5m as shown in **Figure 1**.
- 4.1.3 The trial pits were excavated by a JCB mechanical excavator using a toothless bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Machine excavation proceeded to the top of the natural geology and care was taken not to damage archaeological deposits during machine stripping.
- 4.1.4 The fieldwork was conducted between the 5th and the 7th November 2007.

4.2 Sampling strategy

- 4.2.1 The trial pits were laid out in general accordance with the pattern given in the WSI and were initially located using GPS equipment. Trial pit 1 was moved approximately 1m south and Trial pit 5 was moved approximately 0.6m east of their proposed locations in order to avoid damage to trees and shrubbery. Trial pit 8 was also moved in order to fit into the tight space available without damaging garden features.
- 4.2.2 Once the level of the archaeological deposits or the top of the natural geology had been exposed, the trenches were hand cleaned and all archaeological features excavated.

4.3 Health and Safety

- 4.3.1 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 legislations, regulations and codes of practice which are in force.
- 4.3.2 A Risk Assessment was provided by Wessex Archaeology prior to the start of work and this was read, signed and understood by all staff attending the site.
- 4.3.3 Health and Safety considerations were of paramount importance in conducting all fieldwork, and safe working practices took priority over archaeological considerations at all times

- 4.3.4 Prior to the commencement of any groundwork a visual survey of the site was conducted to identify the location of any above ground services and a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) was used within the trial pit areas to identify any live below ground services.

4.4 Survey

- 4.4.1 All trenches were surveyed using GPS equipment and tied in to the Ordnance Survey once opened so that they could be accurately relocated (**Figure 1**).

4.5 Recording

- 4.5.1 All archaeological deposits were recorded by means of Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording sheets.
- 4.5.2 A photographic record was made of archaeological features, individual trial pits and of the Site as a whole by means of black and white prints, colour slides and digital images.
- 4.5.3 Drawings were made at an appropriate scale (1:20 for plans; 1:10 for sections) and levels were calculated above Ordnance Datum (aOD) for drawings and for trial pit tops and bases.

4.6 Monitoring

- 4.6.1 The project was monitored by Mark Stevenson of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service who was informed of progress on site and of any archaeological deposits uncovered.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The excavation of the trial pits revealed a series of naturally formed and landscaped deposits.
- 5.1.2 Of the 8 trial pits, 6 revealed only modern or natural features, whilst 2 contained features of archaeological interest.

5.2 Site wide deposits

- 5.2.1 With the exception of Trial Pits 1, 3 and 8, all trial pits displayed a similar soil profile consisting of topsoil (c.0.2m deep), which overlay a poorly developed subsoil (c. 0.15-0.3m deep). This was removed to reveal degraded natural chalk bedrock.
- 5.2.2 In addition to the above, Trial Pit 1 also revealed a layer of chalk rubble (c. 0.2 – 0.45m) covering earlier topsoil which was interpreted as being associated with recent garden landscaping.

5.2.3 Trial Pit 3 uncovered a thick layer of made ground (c. 0.44 - 0.7m) below the topsoil. The layer contained brick and metal of modern date, which is also thought to have derived from previous garden landscaping and levelling.

5.2.4 The soil profile of Trial Pit 8 differed in that the deposit had a much higher sand content than those experienced in other trial pits. This may again be the result of recent landscaping, and suggests that topsoil was imported from elsewhere, after the construction of 'Red Stacks'.

5.3 Trial Pit 2

5.3.1 Trial Pit 2 contained shallow pit **202 (Figure 1)**. The pit contained one fill, which contained 7 sherds of pottery and a chalk loom weight of probable Bronze Age date.

5.3.2 Pit **202** is a discrete feature and, at only 0.12m deep, it is possible that the pit was truncated during garden landscaping.

5.4 Trial Pit 4

5.4.1 Cut into the natural chalk bedrock of Trial Pit 4 was thin, shallow gully **403 (Figure 1)**. Though similar in appearance to other naturally derived features observed in the trial pit excavation revealed the gully to have a clearly defined cut. The gully also contained a fill that was quite distinct from that of the naturally derived features suggesting it had formed through human action. Despite the gully being excavated in its entirety no dating evidence was recovered.

6 FINDS

6.1.1 Finds were recovered from a single context (203). These comprise a roughly circular piece of chalk (diameter c. 45mm) with an off-centre perforation (whether deliberate or naturally occurring is uncertain), and eight sherds of pottery, all in flint-tempered fabrics and possibly from a single vessel, dated on fabric grounds as Late Bronze Age.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL

7.1.1 None of the deposits uncovered during the evaluation were deemed suitable for environmental sampling.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1.1 The archaeological evaluation at Highfield Road revealed sparse evidence of archaeological remains on the Site.

8.1.2 The discovery of a single Late Bronze Age pit on the Site is consistent with previous finds from within the surrounding area and suggests occupation of Highfield Road during this period.

- 8.1.3 However, the evaluation demonstrated that the majority of the Site had been heavily disturbed by previous landscaping associated with 'Redstacks' which would have had an impact upon the survival of any further archaeological remains on the Site.
- 8.1.4 Given the large proportion of the Site which was evaluated and the paucity of the archaeological features uncovered it is likely that no further archaeological remains have survived.

9 THE ARCHIVE

- 9.1.1 It is proposed that the primary archive will be deposited with the relevant London museum under the Museum of London accession number HFI 07. It is intended that this will be done within six months of the completion of the fieldwork. Until this time, the archive will be held at Wessex Archaeology's Salisbury Office, under the project code 66861.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

British Geological Society, 1998, *Solid and Drift Geology*, Sheet 270

Institute of Field Archaeologists, revised 2001, *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations*

Wessex Archaeology, 2007 A, 66 Highfield Road Purley, London Borough of Croydon, Archaeological Desk Based Assessment, unpublished client report ref 66860.01

Wessex Archaeology, 2007 B, 66 Highfield Road, Purley, London Borough of Croydon, Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological investigation, ref 66861.01

11 APPENDIX 1: TRIAL PIT SUMMARIES

Trial Pit 1	Dimensions: 4.9m x 4.2m x 0.7m		
	Land use: Landscaped garden		
Context	Category	Description	Depth
100	Topsoil	Light brown silty clay with common chalk inclusions.	0.0m – 0.2m
101	Made ground	Layer of chalk rubble used to build up a bank in this part of the garden. Undated but believed to be post-1930s as it is likely to be contemporary with, or post-date, the construction of the house in the south-east of the Site.	0.2m- 0.45m
102	Buried topsoil	Mid-brown silty clay with common chalk inclusions. Buried by chalk rubble (101) when the garden was landscaped. Again undated but believed to have been covered post-1930.	0.45m – 0.7m
103	Natural geology	Degraded chalk natural.	0.7m+
104	Tree throw	Cut of tree throw briefly investigated through excavation and found to be highly irregular.	>0.2m
105	Fill of tree throw	Coarse degraded chalk rubble in a matrix of light brown silty clay. Likely to have been formed by the up cast of a fallen tree. Partially excavated.	>0.2m

Trial Pit 2	Dimensions: 4.8m x 4.8m x 0.3m		
	Land use: Landscaped garden		
Context	Category	Description	Depth
200	Topsoil	Mid-brown silty clay with chalk inclusions.	0.0m – 0.3m
201	Natural geology	Degraded chalk natural.	0.3m +
202	Pit	Cut of a small pit 0.6m in diameter. Shallow and possibly truncated by landscaping work on the Site. Contained one fill. Isolated.	0.12m
203	Secondary deposit	Mid-orange brown silty clay with common chalk flecking forming the only fill of pit [202]. Contained 3 un-abraded pot sherds and a chalk loom weight. May represent a deliberate backfill of refuse material though feature is too shallow to prove or disprove this.	0.12m

Trial Pit 3	Dimensions: 5.08m x 4.5m x 0.7m		
	Land use: Landscaped garden		
Context	Category	Description	Depth
300	Topsoil	Mid/dark brown loose silty clay with sparse chalk inclusions. Affected by bioturbation.	0.0m - 0.44m
301	Made ground	Mid red/brown loose silty clay with brick and iron in it. Likely to be a made layer associated with garden landscaping and levelling.	0.44m – 0.7m
302	Natural geology	Degraded chalk natural.	0.7m+

Trial Pit 4	Dimensions: 5.4m x 5.2m x 0.3m		
	Land use: Landscaped garden		
Context	Category	Description	Depth
400	Topsoil	Mid-dark brown silty clay loam with sparse chalk inclusions.	0.0m – 0.16m
401	Subsoil	Poorly developed layer of red/brown silty clay with diffuse interfaces.	0.16m – 0.3m
402	Natural geology	Degraded chalk natural.	0.3m+
403	Possible gully	Cut of possible gully or heavily truncated linear. At first thought to be rooting but cut was clear and fill was different to that of other root 'features' in this trench. 100% excavated after recording but no dating evidence retrieved. Orientated NE-SW and not associated with any other visible features.	0.06m
404	Secondary deposit	Mid red/brown silty clay with chalk flecks. Secondary deposit and only fill of possible gully [403]. Likely to have been heavily truncated by post-1930's garden landscaping. 100% excavated after recording but no dating evidence retrieved.	0.06m

Trial Pit 5	Dimensions: 5.8m x 5m x 0.82m		
	Land use: Landscaped garden		
Context	Category	Description	Depth
500	Topsoil	Dark brown silty clay with sparse chalk inclusions.	0.0m– 0.15m
501	Subsoil	Mid orange/brown silty clay with common flint and chalk inclusions.	0.15m - 0.3m
502	Natural geology	Degraded chalk natural over cut by machine. Thought initially, due to its degradation, to be a made layer of chalk rubble associated with garden landscaping as trench five cuts through a sculpted bank. It seems though	0.3m+

		that this material is natural, though heavily affected by bioturbation, and that the rest of the site has been lowered to create a bank.	
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Trial Pit 6	Dimensions: 5m x 5.2m x 0.32m		
	Land use: Landscaped garden		
Context	Category	Description	Depth
600	Topsoil	Mid-brown silty clay with common chalk inclusions.	0.0m – 0.12m
601	Natural geology	Degraded chalk natural.	0.12m+

Trial Pit 7	Dimensions: 4.8m x 5.2m x 0.24m		
	Land use: Landscaped garden		
Context	Category	Description	Depth
701	Topsoil	Mid-brown silty clay with common chalk inclusions.	0.0m – 0.24m
702	Natural geology	Degraded chalk natural.	0.24m+
703	Modern disturbance	Cut of modern disturbance. Briefly excavated, surveyed but not recorded.	0.1m+
704	Fill of [703]	Fill of modern cut. Contained modern glazed tile which was not retained.	0.1m+

Trial Pit 8	Dimensions: 5.1m x 4.8m x 0.4m		
	Land use: Landscaped garden		
Context	Category	Description	Depth
800	Topsoil	Mid-dark brown silty sand. Different to topsoil found on the rest of the site and is possibly another product of landscaping.	0m – 0.2m
801	Subsoil	Well developed but with diffuse interfaces. Consists of mid red/brown silty sand. Sits in pockets in the top of the chalk natural.	0.2m – 0.4m
802	Natural geology	Degraded chalk natural.	0.4m +

11.1.1



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▭ The site ▭ Test pit ● LBA ● Undated 	Reproduced from the 2002 Ordnance Survey (1:25 000 Explorer®) map with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright, Wessex Archaeology, Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire. SP4 4EB. Licence Number: 100026190. This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.	
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Site plan showing test pit locations

Figure 1



WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED.

Registered Head Office: Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB.

Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk

London Office: Unit 113, The Chandlery, 50 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7QY.

Tel: 020 7953 7494 Fax: 020 7953 7499 london-info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk

