

Land to the
Rear of 106-110
Southbridge Road

Croydon London



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



October 2009

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Land to the Rear of 106-110 Southbridge Road, Croydon, London

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

CONTENTS

Summary.....	1
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Scope of work.....	1
1.2 Location, geology and topography.....	1
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	1
2 Project Aims and Methodology.....	3
2.1 Aims.....	3
2.2 Methodology.....	3
3 Results.....	4
3.1 Description of deposits (Figs 2 and 3).....	4
3.2 Finds.....	4
3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains.....	5
4 Discussion and Conclusions.....	5
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory.....	6
Appendix 2 Bibliography and references.....	6
Appendix 3 GLSMR/RCHME NMR Archaeological Report Form.....	8

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location
Fig. 2 Plan of area of watching brief
Fig. 3 Sections 1-3

SUMMARY

In September 2009 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land to the rear of 106-110 Southbridge Road, Croydon, London (NGR: TQ 3230 6469). The work was commissioned by Hartcrest Properties Ltd in advance of the demolition of existing outbuildings and the construction of two new semi-detached houses. The watching brief revealed deposits of worked soil consistent with post-medieval domestic gardens, including several rubbish pits, overlying colluvium. No other significant archaeology was encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 In September 2009 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land to the rear of 106-110 Southbridge Road, Croydon, London (NGR: TQ 3230 6469). The work was commissioned by Hartcrest Properties Ltd in respect of a planning application for the demolition of existing outbuildings and the construction of two new semi-detached houses (Planning Application 07/04301/P and Planning Appeal APP/L5240/A/08/2073960).

1.1.2 Due to the potential for the disturbance of below ground archaeological features a condition requiring that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during the period of groundworks was attached to the planning consent. This was in line with Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) policy and PPG 16.

1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of this condition (OA 2009).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

1.1.4 The site is located on level ground to the rear of 106-110 Southbridge Road, facing onto Dering Road (Fig. 1). The development site is bounded by domestic rear gardens to the north and east and by a row of lock up garages to the west. The site originally formed part of the rear gardens associated with 106-110 Southbridge Road but had latterly been walled off and used as a car dismantling yard. The site lies at a height of approximately 48 m AOD on the junction between 2nd level terrace gravel deposits and Upper Chalk deposits (Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet no 270).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.1.5 The town of Croydon is situated at the head of the River Wandle, just to the north of a significant gap in the North Downs. It lies 10 miles south of London, and the earliest settlement may have been a Roman staging post on the London-Portslade road, although conclusive evidence has not yet been found.

1.1.6 It was the Saxons who first inhabited the area in great numbers and named it "Crogdene", thought to mean either 'crooked valley' or 'saffron valley'. The name

changing over time into Croydon. In the fifth to sixth centuries, it was the site of an important pagan Saxon cemetery.

- 1.1.7 By the later Saxon period, it was at the heart of a huge estate belonging to the archbishops of Canterbury. The main settlement at this time lay around the church and the archbishops' manor house, in the area still known as Old Town.
- 1.1.8 By the time of the Domesday Book in 1086 it was recorded:
“Archbishop Lanfranc holds in demesne CROYDON. It was assessed at 80 hides, and now at 16 hides and 1 virgate. There is land for 20 ploughs. In demesne are 4 ploughs; and 48 villans and 25 bordars with 34 ploughs. There is a church, and a mill rendering 5s., and 8 acres of meadow, woodland for 200 pigs. Of the land of this manor, Restold holds 7 hides of the archbishop; Ralph 1 hide; and they have £7.8s. from them for rent. T.R.E., and afterwards, the whole was worth £12; now £27 to the archbishop, £10.10s to his men.”
- 1.1.9 During the medieval period Croydon slowly expanded into a market town becoming noted for its charcoal, tanning and brewing industries.
- 1.1.10 Croydon had always been an significant halt on the road south of London, and its role as a coaching town increased after Brighton developed as a fashionable resort in the 1780s. Soon afterwards, Croydon became the terminus of two important new commercial transport links, stretching southwards from the Thames. The first, opened in 1803, was the horse-drawn Surrey Iron Railway from Wandsworth (extended to Merstham, as the Croydon, Merstham and Godstone Railway, in 1805); and the second, opened in 1809, was the Croydon Canal, which came from Deptford. Neither was a great success: the canal closed in 1836, and the railway in 1846. However, the route of the canal was taken over by the London & Croydon Railway (a steam-powered railway), which opened between London Bridge and West Croydon in 1839.
- 1.1.11 As the town continued to grow, it became especially popular as a pleasant residential area for members of the respectable middle classes, who could commute to work in the City of London. The style and construction of numbers 106-110 Southbridge Road (of which the site originally formed part of their rear gardens) suggest that they are of late 19th/early 20th-century construction.
- 1.1.12 A series of rescue excavations, approximately 400m north-east of the development site on Park Lane, carried out during the 1970s and 1990s and reported during the 1990s (Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society (CNHS)) revealed evidence of archaeological activity dating from the Mesolithic period through to the medieval period.
- 1.1.13 In particular, excavations revealed a single, coffined inhumation dated to the Roman period and 43 early Saxon inhumations at 82-90 Park Lane. Substantial damage to the archaeological deposits was recorded, which occurred during the Victorian development of the area (OA, 2005).
- 1.1.14 Further isolated findspots, also dating from the late prehistoric period through to the

post-medieval period have been identified, in particular on Edridge Road and High Street, 250 m and 300 m north-east of the site respectively. These findspots suggest a general pattern, indicating that archaeological activity is becoming scarce to the west of Park Lane (OA, 2005).

- 1.1.15 Evidence for a medieval manor (SMR 020654/00), approximately 800 m to the north of the site, in North End, along with later 17th to 18th century developments, including chalk and flint walls and a contemporary floor layer has been recorded (SMR 020835/00).
- 1.1.16 Additionally, a single mammoth (*Elephas Primigenius*) tusk (SMR 020007/00) was recovered approximately 880 m to the north-west of the site, on Waddon New Road (OA, 2003).
- 1.1.17 There has been no previous archaeological work on the site.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 1.1.18 To identify and record the presence or absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 1.1.19 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological deposits and features.
- 1.1.20 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 1.1.21 The watching brief was conducted as a continuous archaeological presence during any works likely to damage, disturb or remove archaeological deposits. These works included the reduction of the ground level within the site and the excavation of the building foundations.
- 1.1.22 All work was carried out using a mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.5 m wide toothless grading bucket during the ground reduction and a 0.6 m wide bucket during the excavation of the footings.
- 1.1.23 A plan of all excavations was maintained at a scale of 1:100 (Fig. 2) and any recorded sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20 (Fig. 3). The sections and the excavations were photographed using digital photography and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Field Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits (Figs 2 and 3)

- 1.1.24 The whole area of the site had been disturbed during the demolition of the original

outbuildings. Due to the presence of contaminated soil the northern end of the site was subjected to a topsoil strip of approximately 0.4 m depth prior to the excavation of the building foundations.

Section 1

- 1.1.25 The underlying natural, a coarse flint gravel (6) was encountered at a depth of 0.8 m below the original ground level. This was overlaid by a 0.18 m deep layer of dark red-brown clay silt containing many small to medium sub-angular flints (5). Cutting this deposit was a 1.4 m diameter pit (4). This measured 0.3 m deep and had steeply sloping sides and a flat base. This was filled by a dark grey-brown clay silt (3) which produced fragments of brick and charcoal flecking. Sealing this was a 0.3 m deep layer of dark brown silt loam (2). This deposit produced fragments of stoneware and transfer printed pottery suggesting a 19th- or early 20th-century date.
- 1.1.26 Overlying this was a 0.3 m deep layer of grey-brown clay silt (1), containing numerous brick fragments, bottle glass and corroded iron objects.

Section 2

- 1.1.27 The natural flint gravel (6) was encountered at a depth of 0.8 m below the current ground level. This was overlaid by a 0.25 m deep continuation of layer 5.
- 1.1.28 Cutting layer 5 was a 1.6 m wide pit (8). This was 0.6 m deep and had almost vertical sides and a flat base. This feature was filled by a fine grey-brown silt loam (7) containing a large quantity of domestic refuse including broken flower pots, old bedsprings, bottle glass and large fragments of transfer printed pottery. Sealing the feature was a continuation of layer 2, 0.22 m in depth. This was overlaid with a continuation of layer 1.

Section 3

- 1.1.29 The natural (6) was encountered at a depth of 1.1 m below the current ground level. Overlying this was a continuation of layer 5, 0.2 m in depth. This was sealed by a 0.33 m deep continuation of layer 2, which in turn was overlaid by a continuation of layer 1, 0.3 m in depth.
- 1.1.30 Overlying layer 1, within this area of the site only, was a 0.3 m deep layer of dark grey-brown clay silt (9) containing demolition debris.

3.2 Finds

- 1.1.31 The only finds recovered during the course of the watching brief were post-medieval in date (19th and 20th-century) and included fragments of brick and tile, fragments of transfer printed creamware (“Willow Pattern”), stoneware and glazed earthenware ceramics and corroded iron objects identified as old car components. These were evaluated on site but were not retained.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

1.1.32 No deposits suitable for paleo-environmental sampling were observed during the course of the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

1.1.33 The layer of flint gravel (6) has been identified as the underlying natural deposit recorded on the geological survey. This deposit tilts gradually to the east reflecting the general topology of the area. The layer of sub-angular flints in a silt clay matrix (5) overlying the natural is a probable layer of colluvium. This conclusion is suggested by the rounded appearance and smaller size of the flints together with the absence of any evidence of activity such as charcoal flecking or finds.

1.1.34 Layer 2 represents a layer of worked soil, probably garden soil associated with the houses fronting Southbridge Road. The dating evidence recovered also suggests that it is contemporary with the houses. This deposit seals the pits containing domestic refuse (4 and 8), but the dating evidence recovered from them is similar suggesting that they occurred within the same phase of activity as layer 2.

1.1.35 Layer 1 was deposited during the modern use of the site and is 20th-century in date. Layer 9 was probably generated during the demolition of the existing outbuildings prior to development.

1.1.36 No evidence for any other archaeology pre-dating the construction of the houses fronting Southbridge road was observed. The absence of any residual finds earlier than the 19th-century or of any truncated early features, suggest that this area may have been unoccupied prior to the construction of the present day suburbs surrounding it.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	0.3 m	Modern occupation layer	Brick, tile, pottery, bottle glass, iron, plastic	C20th
2	Layer	0.18 m - 0.25 m	Buried soil horizon, probably a garden soil	Brick, pottery, glass	C19th/C20th
3	Fill	0.3 m	Backfill of Pit 4	Brick	C19th/C20th
4	Cut	0.3 m	Domestic rubbish pit	-	C19th/C20th
5	Layer	0.2 m – 0.3 m	Probable colluvium	-	-
6	Layer	> 0.3 m	Natural gravel	-	-
7	Fill	0.6 m	Backfill of Pit 8	Brick, pottery, bottle glass, iron	C19th/C20th
8	Cut	0.6 m	Domestic rubbish pit	-	C19th/C20th
9	Layer	0.3 m	Modern made ground	Brick, mortar	C20th

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA 2008 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

OA, 1992 *Field Manual* (ed. D. Wilkinson)

OA 2005 No. 1 Woodstock Road, Croydon, London: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief.

OA 2009 *Land to the Rear of 106-110 Southbridge Road, Croydon, London: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief.*

APPENDIX 3 GLSMR/RCHME NMR ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FORM

1) TYPE OF RECORDING

Evaluation, Excavation, **Watching Brief**, Building Recording, Survey,
Geoarchaeological Evaluation, Fieldwalking, Other

2) LOCATION

Borough: Croydon

Site address: Rear of 106-110 Southbridge Road, Croydon

Site Name: Land to the Rear of 106-110 Southbridge Road Site Code: SBJ 09

Nat. grid Refs: centre of site: TQ 3230 6469

Limits of site: N: TQ 3230 6470 S: TQ 3230 6468

E: TQ 3229 6469 W: TQ 3231 6469

3) ORGANISATION

Name of archaeological unit/company/society: Oxford Archaeology

Address: Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 OES

Site director/supervisor: Mike Sims Project manager: Jodie Ford

Funded by: Hartcrest Properties Ltd

4) DURATION

Date fieldwork started 28th September 2009 Date finished: 30th September 2009

Fieldwork previously notified? YES/NO

Fieldwork will continue? YES/NO/NOT KNOWN

5) PERIODS REPRESENTED

Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Saxon (pre-AD 1066),
Medieval (AD 1066-1485), **Post-Medieval**, Unknown

6) PERIOD SUMMARIES Post medieval pits, post-medieval worked soils

7) NATURAL

Type: Flint gravel

Height above Ordnance datum: 46.9 m

8) LOCATION OF ARCHIVES

- a) Please provide an estimate of the quantity of material in your possession for the following categories:

NOtes x3	PLans x2	PHotos x12	Ngtives x12
SLides	COrrspondence	MScRipts (unpub reports, etc)	
BUIk finds	SMall finds	SOil samples	
OTHer			

- b) The archive has been prepared and stored in accordance with MGC standards and will be deposited in the following location:
- c) Has a security copy of the archive been made?: NO

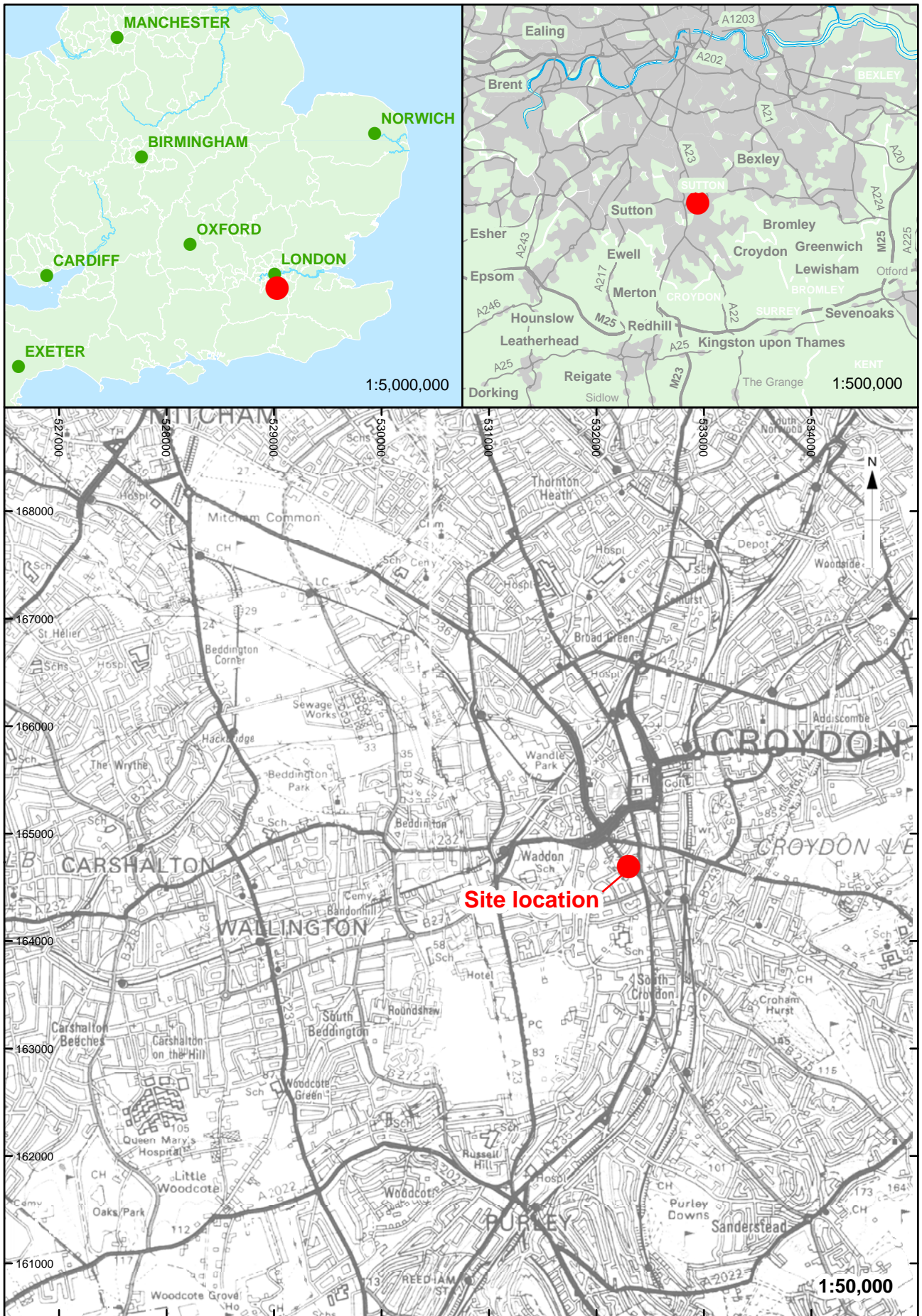
10) BIBLIOGRAPHY

See Appendix 2 Bibliography and references

SIGNED:

DATE:

NAME :



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Figure 1: Site location

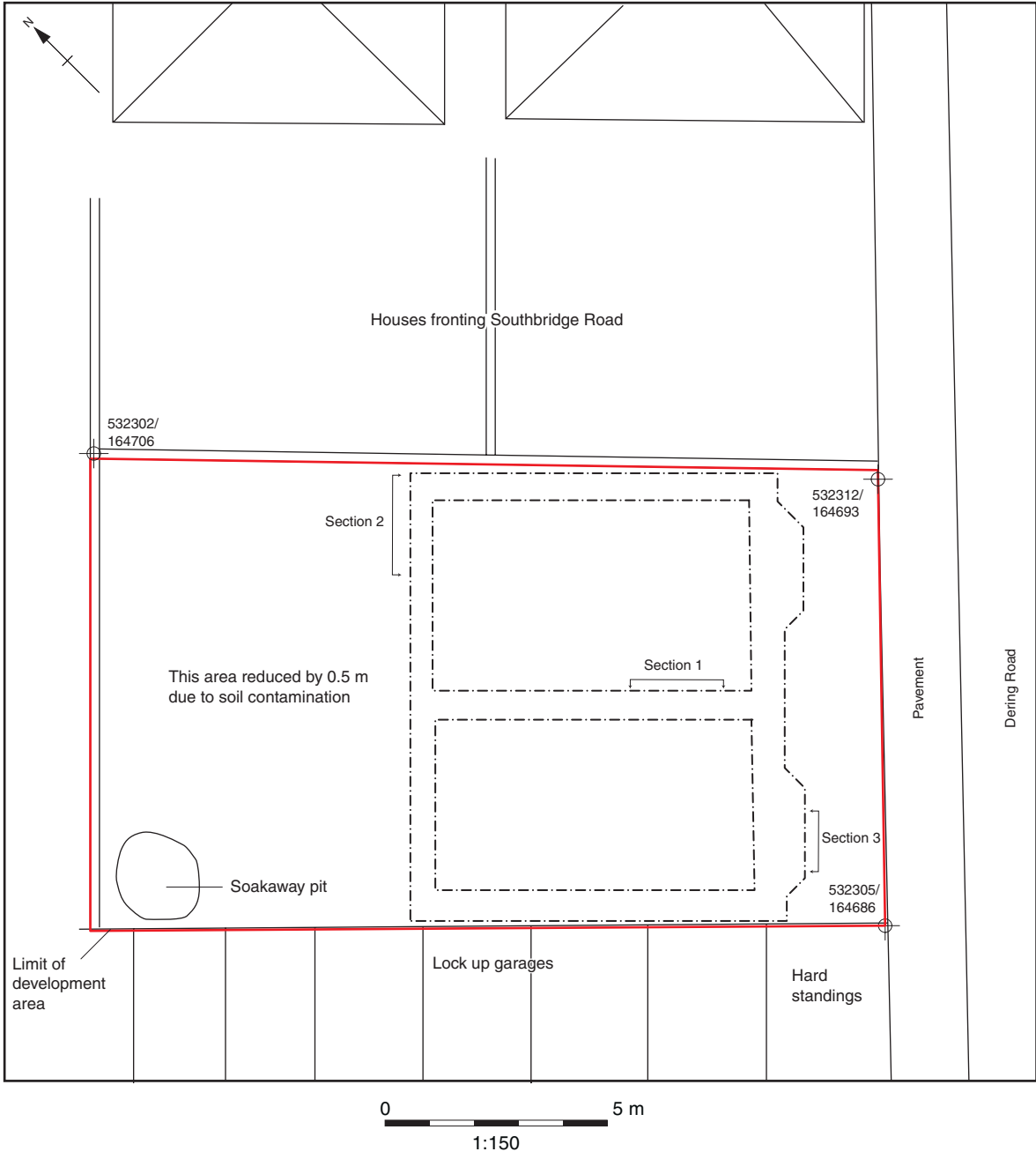


Figure 2: Site plan

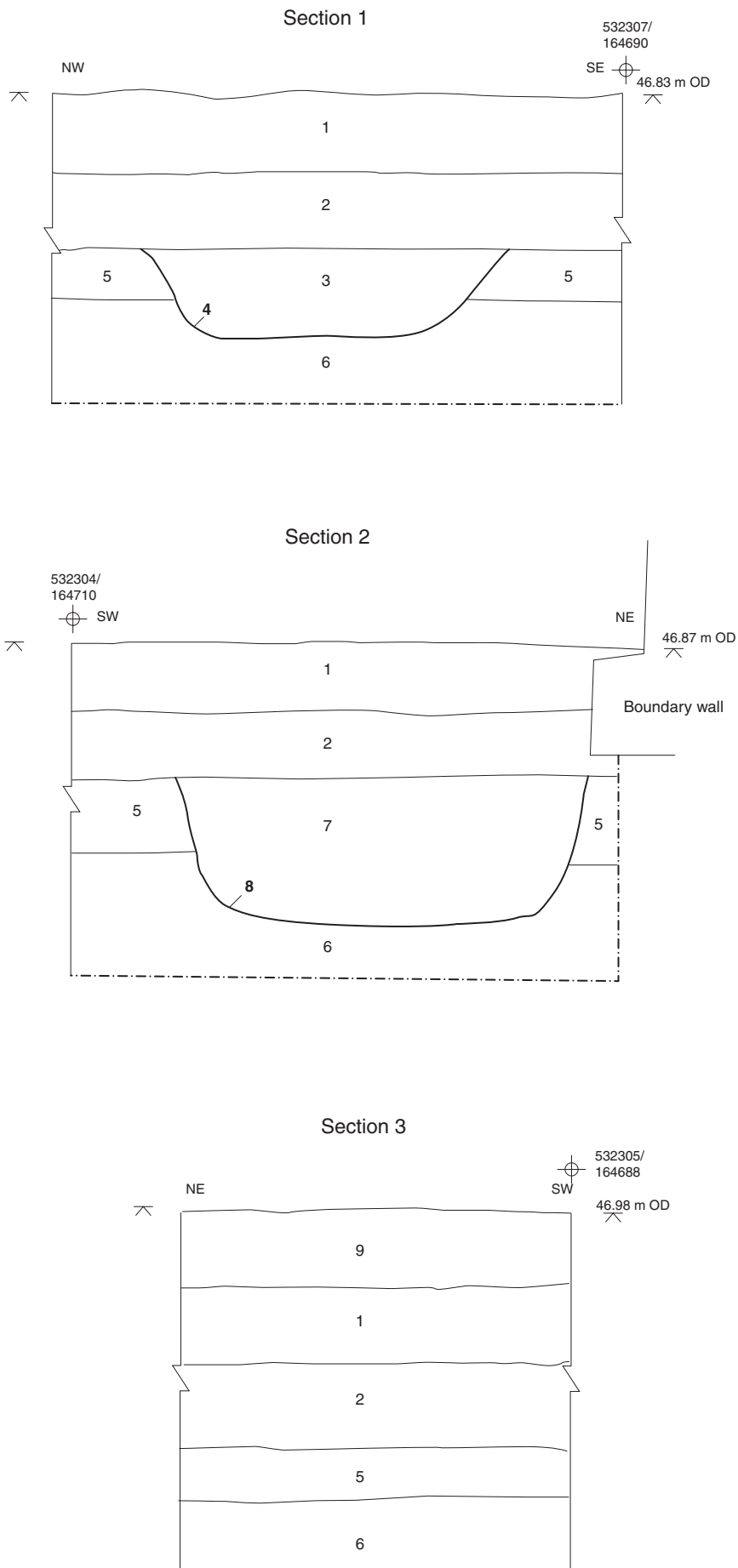


Figure 3: Sections