

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment
In advance of Development of Land at the
PHB Stadium, Stonebridge Road,
Northfleet, Kent

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Report for
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Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment in Advance of Development of Land at PHB Stadium, Stonebridge Road, Northfleet, Kent

1 SUMMARY

SWAT Archaeology has been commissioned by Faithorn Farrell Timms LLP to carry out an archaeological desk-based assessment of land at the PHB Stadium, Northfleet in Kent. The assessment is in support of a proposed planning application.

This Desk Based Assessment examines the wide variety of archaeological data held by Kent County Council and other sources. This data is reviewed and it is recommended in this case that an Archaeological Level 2 Building Recording Brief to a written specification approved by the Local Planning Authority is recommended for areas that are to be developed.

The proposed development area (PDA) is situated in a landscape rich in known archaeology. However, cartographic research shows that most of the PHB Stadium is located in an area that in 1865 were Old Clay Pits (Fig.2 1865) which suggests very little, if any archaeology will survive under the stadiums footprint.

The Gravesham Core Strategy under Heritage and Archaeology notes that:

'the area around Robin's Creek (outflow of the Ebbsfleet into the Thames) was the site of a medieval watermill later converted to grind cement in the 1790s, Portland cement was later invented here and Aspdin's Kiln (Scheduled Monument) and other features of heritage interest are likely to remain'.

The Gravesham Core Strategy has been reviewed and the archaeological sensitivities in the locality considered and listed (Section 4.0) but as the proposed works are contained within the curtilage of the football stadium there will be no direct impact on the known archaeological resource.

The present development plans do not impact on any below ground strata which indicates the strategy for archaeological investigation should be focused only on building recording.

The site (Fig. 1) is located to the east close to the River Thames, and to the west by the Ebbsfleet railway station. The site is bounded on the west by Stonebridge Road, to the south by Grove Road and to the north by industrial units.

History of the site

The Ordnance Survey map of 1865 and 1872 show the site of the future stadium is 'Old Clay Pits' whilst to the east are 'Chalk Pits'. To the north beyond 'Botany Bay' is a corn windmill, and to the east kilns and a cement mill. The Ebbsfleet is a natural watercourse with a sluice at the bridge called 'Stone Bridge' (Figs. 2, 3).

By 1879 the area of the future stadium has now been backfilled. The cement works have expanded and the corn windmill is now disused. Ebbsfleet stream is now contained in a conduit but still tidal to Stone Bridge (Fig. 3).

On the 1909 Ordnance Survey map the area of the football ground is now defined with a new building (covered stand?) located on the north-east side (Fig. 4).

By 1932 the football pitch is shown on the OS map with a larger building on the north-east side and an additional covered stand facing it on the south side (Fig. 5).

On the 1939 OS map there is little change but on the GoogleEarth 1940 aerial photograph terracing can be seen on the south end of the pitch (Fig. 6 & Plate 1).

On the 1952 Ordnance Survey map concrete terracing can be seen on all sides of the football pitch and with an additional covered stand on the south side with exterior stairs on the south side of the building (Fig.7).

The Ordnance Survey map of 1961 shows little difference but the GoogleEarth 1960 aerial photograph shows the stand on the south-west side has been replaced by a much longer stand and the stand on the south side has been extended to the width of the pitch. It is of some interest that the OS map issued in 1961 had not been updated (Fig. 8 & Plate 2).

By 1973 the OS map shows the football ground as it appears today with three stands, concrete terracing, toilets, fast food outlets and offices. Home to Ebbsfleet United FC the ground had a capacity of 5,011 standing and 500 seated fans (Fig. 1, below).

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Archaeological Recording of Buildings

For historic building applications, archaeological surveys are often required by the local planning authority (LPA) in order to:

- i) inform decisions about proposed repairs and alterations through a documented understanding of the historic character and appearance, sufficient to take the implications fully into account.
- ii) record historic fabric (often previously hidden) during repairs and alterations, to add to the understanding of the building and to inform the works in progress
- iii) make a formal record of the whole building for archive purposes, prior to permitting demolition or major alterations to the existing historic fabric.

The level of archaeological survey will also vary according to the complexity and significance of the building, as well as the extent of proposed works and/or alteration. English Heritage (in the guise of the former Royal Commission on Historic Monuments England) has produced guidelines for undertaking building surveys, identifying four levels varying in intensity:

Level 1 - the lowest level which is a visual record using annotated photographs to depict a buildings external and internal appearance.

Level 2 - a descriptive, fuller record than Level 1, with the addition of measured floor plans and a written account of the building's plan, form, function, age and development sequence .

Level 3 - a fully analytical record which will include detailed photographs of decorative and structural elements, a detailed written description and account of the building's origins, development, use and the evidence on which this has been based. Readily available historic documentation will be examined and measured drawings will be made of relevant sections, elevations and key architectural features.

Level 4 - the highest level of investigation and record which comprises a detailed study involving: measured plans, elevations and sections, detailed photographs, a full written description and informed analysis as well as detailed historical research.

The full description of these levels can be found in 'Recording Historic Buildings - a descriptive specification' by RCHM England. Second Edition published in 1991.

For listed building applications involving a significant amount of alteration it is usually necessary to undertake at least a Level 2 survey, to ensure provision of sufficient information to explain and justify the proposed works. It is often the case that a mixture of recording elements is needed, being tailored to the character of the listed building and the nature of the proposed works.

Sometimes health and safety considerations or the obscuring of historic features and fabric by modern render mean that a staged approach to recording has to be adopted. A requirement for additional recording work may be identified during the course of the survey, such as the need to undertake a 'watching brief' during the stripping out of key areas within the building. There is also the possibility of below ground archaeological remains being present, for instance the footings of previous buildings or features relating to industrial processing, and these may be of key interest in understanding the origins and development of a listed building. In such cases archaeological recording of buried remains will be required.

Planning Policy Guidance No: 15 (DoE/DNH 1994) 'Planning and the Historic Environment' provides best practice advice on recording listed buildings.

2.2 Planning Background

The National Planning Policy Guidance (27th March 2012)

The National Planning Policy Guidance sets out a series of core planning principles designed to underpin plan-making and decision-taking within the planning system. In terms of development proposals affecting known heritage assets, the following principle states that planning should:

12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

126. Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and

- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

12.7. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

12.8. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

2.3. Local Policy Framework

Local planning policy is set out in the Gravesham Local Plan (First Review)1994, which is gradually being replaced by Local Development Framework Development Plan Documents (DPD). There are no saved policies in the local plan relevant to the historic environment and no relevant DPDs. The reader is referred to national policy. Guidance to help practitioners implement the NPPF, including the legislative requirements that underpin it, is provided in *Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide* (2010).

Heritage assets include extant structures and features, sites, places and landscapes. The European Landscape Convention definition of a historic landscape describes: 'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors' (Council of Europe 2000: which came into force in the UK in March 2007; see research frameworks, below).

Furthermore the historic landscape encompasses visible, buried or submerged remains, which includes the buried archaeological resource.

Policy 126 states that:

Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning Authorities should take into account:

- i) The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- ii) The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- iii) The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- iv) Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of the place.

When determining planning applications, the following policies are especially pertinent:

Local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of the heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.

Substantial harm to or loss of a Grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional.

Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

The existence of the latter within a proposed development area can be partially investigated and to an extent predicted via desk-based assessment, but field evaluation and/or archaeological monitoring of groundworks are likely to be a planning requirement and should be expected.

More recently English Heritage has issued detailed guidance on the *Setting of Heritage Assets* (2011). This guidance is based on principles and guidance already issued by English Heritage in the *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* (2010), and *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (2008). It provides a framework for assessing impacts based on the identification of individual asset's cultural significance and the relationship between that and its surroundings followed by assessment of the degree to which change in the surroundings affects significance.

This Desk-Based Assessment therefore forms the initial stage of the archaeological investigation and is intended to inform and assist in decisions regarding archaeological mitigation for the proposed development and associated planning applications.

2.4 The Proposed Development

The proposed development will comprise of a planning application for:

1. A new main stand to the Stonebridge Road elevation (Phase 1A).
2. The removal of the existing concrete terracing and the provision of new concrete terracing at the 'home end' of the ground, the terracing being suitable for seating at a later date (Phase 1B).
3. The removal of the existing concrete terracing and the provision of new concrete terracing at the 'away' end of the ground, the terracing being suitable for seating at a later date (Phase 1C)
4. The demolition and construction of a new stand to replace the existing main stand (Phase 2)

2.5 Project Constraints

No project constraints were encountered during the data collection for this assessment.

2.6 Geology and Topography

The Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50,000) shows that proposed development site (PDA) is situated on Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation (undifferentiated), as also shown by the British Geological Survey Sheet 272. It is thought that on the PDA the underlying natural chalk will be sealed by made-up ground deposits.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Introduction

The Desk-Based Assessment was commissioned by Faithorn Farrell Timms LLP in order to supplement a proposed planning application for the development of land at the PHB Stadium at Stonebridge Road, Northfleet, Kent.

3.2 Desktop Study – Institute For Archaeologists (revised 2011)

This desktop study has been produced in line with archaeological standards, as defined by the Institute for Archaeologist (revised 2011). A desktop, or desk-based assessment, is defined as being:

“a programme of study of the historic environment within a specified area or site on land, the inter-tidal zone or underwater that addresses agreed research and/or conservation objectives. It consists of an analysis of existing written, graphic, photographic and electronic information in order to identify the likely heritage assets, their interests and significance and the character of the study area, including appropriate consideration of the settings of heritage assets and, in England, the nature, extent and quality of the known or potential archaeological, historic, architectural and artistic interest. Significance is to be judged in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate”. (2011)

The purpose of a desk-based assessment is to gain an understanding of the historic environment resource in order to formulate as required:

- 1. an assessment of the potential for heritage assets to survive within the area of study*
- 2. an assessment of the significance of the known or predicted heritage assets considering, in England, their archaeological, historic, architectural and artistic interests*

3. strategies for further evaluation whether or not intrusive, where the nature, extent or significance of the resource is not sufficiently well defined

4. an assessment of the impact of proposed development or other land use changes on the significance of the heritage assets and their settings

5. strategies to conserve the significance of heritage assets, and their settings

6. design strategies to ensure new development makes a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment and local place-shaping

7. proposals for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research, whether undertaken in response to a threat or not.

IFA (2011)

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Desk-Based Assessment

4.1.1 Archaeological databases

The local Historic Environment Record (HER) held at Kent County Council provides an accurate insight into catalogued sites and finds within both the proposed development area and the surrounding environs of Northfleet, Kent.

The Archaeology Data Service Online Catalogue (ADS) and was also used. The search was carried out within a 500m radius of the proposed development site. The Portable Antiquities Scheme Database (PAS) was also used as an additional source as the information contained within is not always transferred to the local HER.

Important KCC HER sites in the vicinity of the PHB Stadium include:

TQ 67 SW 298. Early Medieval Tidal Watermill, Ebbsfleet Valley. A well preserved example of a tidal watermill dating between 684- 720AD.

TQ 67 SW 482. Early Medieval building associated with Aspdin's Kiln a Scheduled Monument located just to the north of the PDA.

TQ 67 SW 303. Romano- British Enclosure site and possible hard at Ebbsfleet Sports Ground.

4.1.2 Historical documents

Historical documents, such as charters, registers, wills and deeds etc were not relevant to this specific study.

4.1.3 Cartographic and pictorial documents

A full map regression exercise was undertaken during this assessment. Research was carried out using resources offered by Kent County Council, the Internet and Ordnance Survey Historical mapping (Figs. 1-10).

4.1.4 Aerial photographs

The study of the collection of aerial photographs by Google Earth was consulted (Plates 1-3).

4.1.5 Geotechnical information

To date, no known geotechnical investigations have been carried out at the site.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Existing Impacts

The search area is for the most part, subject to massive industrial development and the potential impact on buried archaeological deposits will have been due to these activities. The site of the proposed development will also have been affected by the removal of brickearth for brick making. It is unlikely that any archaeological deposits will have survived. The existing impact is considered as **high**.

Proposed Impacts

At the time of preparing this archaeological assessment, the extent of the proposed development was for the regeneration of the football stadium. Extensive impact is to be expected within the development area once construction begins. The excavation of footings for concrete stands and the installation of services will be the main cause of this impact and it is therefore considered as **high**.

6 MITIGATION

The purpose of this archaeological desk-based assessment was to provide an assessment of the contextual archaeological record, in order to determine the potential survival of archaeological deposits that maybe impacted upon during any proposed construction works.

The assessment has generally shown that the area to be developed is within an area of low archaeological potential because of the extensive historic industrial development on the area of the PDA. There may be small areas of archaeology surviving which may require an Archaeological Watching Brief.

7 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Archive

Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, two copies of this desk-based assessment will be submitted to Kent County Council (Heritage) within 6 months of completion.

7.2 Reliability/limitations of sources

The sources that were used in this assessment were, in general, of high quality. The majority of the information provided herewith has been gained from either published texts or archaeological 'grey' literature held at Kent County Council, and therefore considered as being reliable.

7.3 Copyright

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) and the author shall retain full copyright on the commissioned report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. All rights are reserved, excepting that it hereby provides exclusive licence to Faithorn Farrell Timms LLP (and representatives) for the use of this document in all matters directly relating to the project.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Paul Wilkinson PhD., MifA., FRSA.

16th October 2014

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9 REFERENCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY

IFA (revised 2011) STANDARD AND GUIDANCE for historic environment desk-based assessment.

National Planning Policy Statement 2010: Planning for the Historic Environment. TSO (The Stationery Office)

National Planning Policy Practise March 2012.

KCC HER Data 2014

Appendix 1. Regressive mapping

The first engraved Ordnance Survey map of Kent was published in 1801 at a scale of 1" to the mile whereas the earlier Ordnance Survey Surveyors drawing were drawn at 6" to the mile. In consequence a tremendous amount of detail shown on the surveyor's drawings does not make it on to the smaller scale engraved maps.

From the 1840s the Ordnance Survey concentrated on the Great Britain 'County Series', modelled on the earlier Ireland survey. A start was made on mapping the whole country, county by county, at six inches to the mile (1:10,560). From 1854, to meet requirements for greater detail, including land-parcel numbers in rural areas and accompanying information, cultivated and inhabited areas were mapped at 1:2500 (25.344 inches to the mile), at first parish by parish, with blank space beyond the parish boundary, and later continuously. Early copies of the 1:2500s were available hand-coloured. Up to 1879, the 1:2500s were accompanied by Books of Reference or "area books" that gave acreages and land-use information for land-parcel numbers.

After 1879, land-use information was dropped from these area books; after the mid-1880s, the books themselves were dropped and acreages were printed instead on the maps. After 1854, the six-inch maps and their revisions were based on the "twenty-five inch" maps and theirs.

The six-inch sheets covered an area of six by four miles on the ground; the "twenty-five inch" sheets an area of one by one and a half. One square inch on the "twenty-five inch" maps was roughly equal to an acre on the ground. In later editions the six-inch sheets were published in "quarters" (NW,NE,SW,SE), each covering an area of three by two miles on the ground.

The first edition of the two scales was completed by the 1890s. A second edition (or "first revision") was begun in 1891 and completed just before the First World War. From 1907 till the early 1940s, a third edition (or "second revision") was begun but never completed: only areas with significant changes on the ground were revised, many two or three times.

The following maps are from OS national archives and are from the six-inch sheets dating from after 1854.

Figures

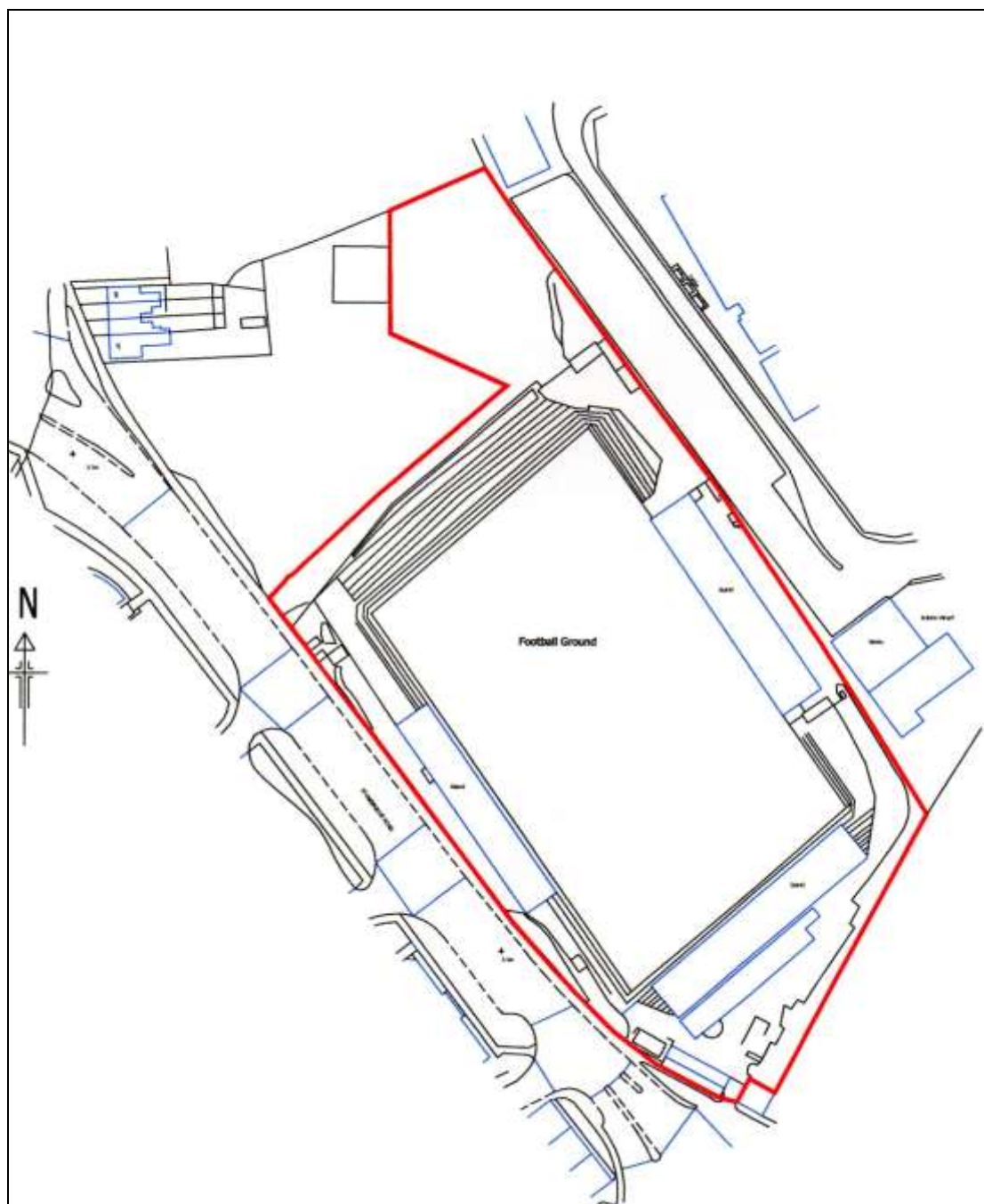


Figure 1. Site Plan

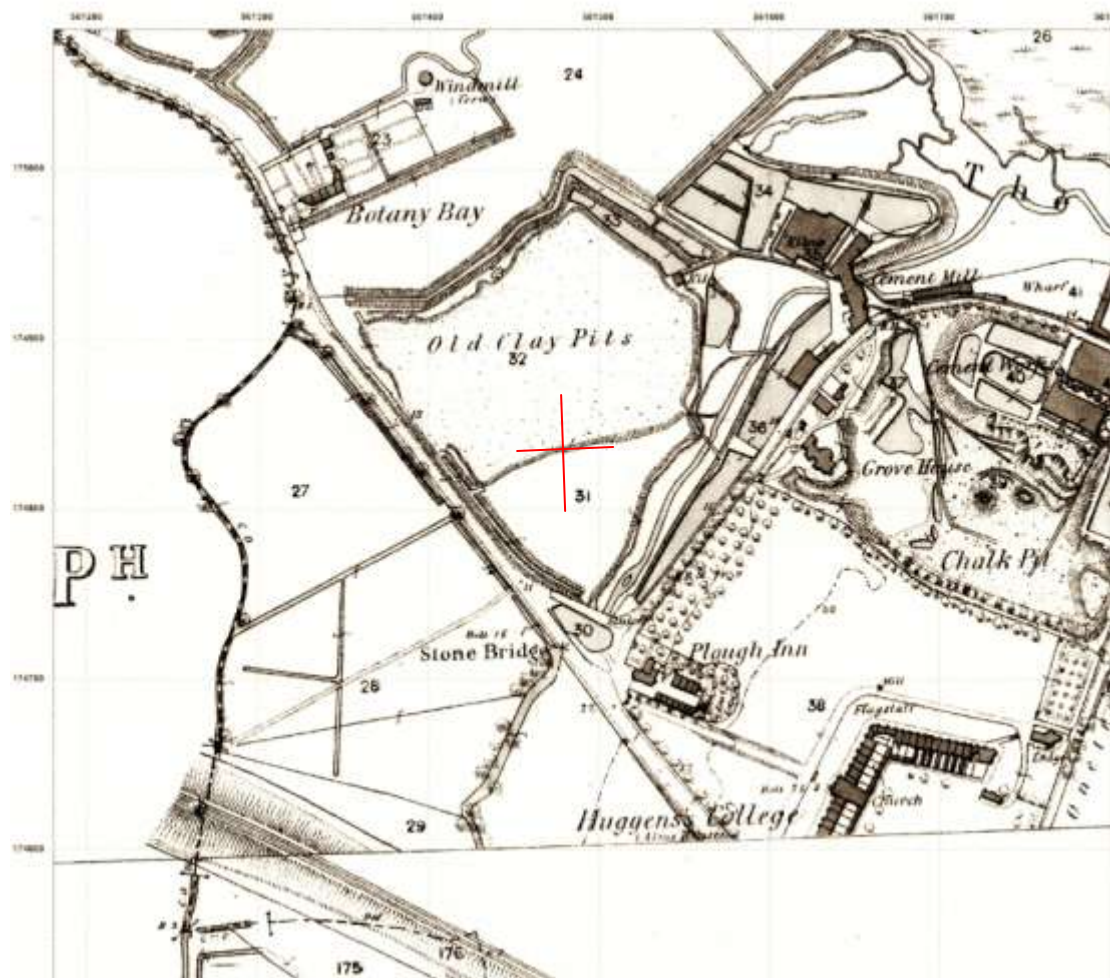


Figure 2. Ordnance Survey map of 1865. Cross denotes location of site

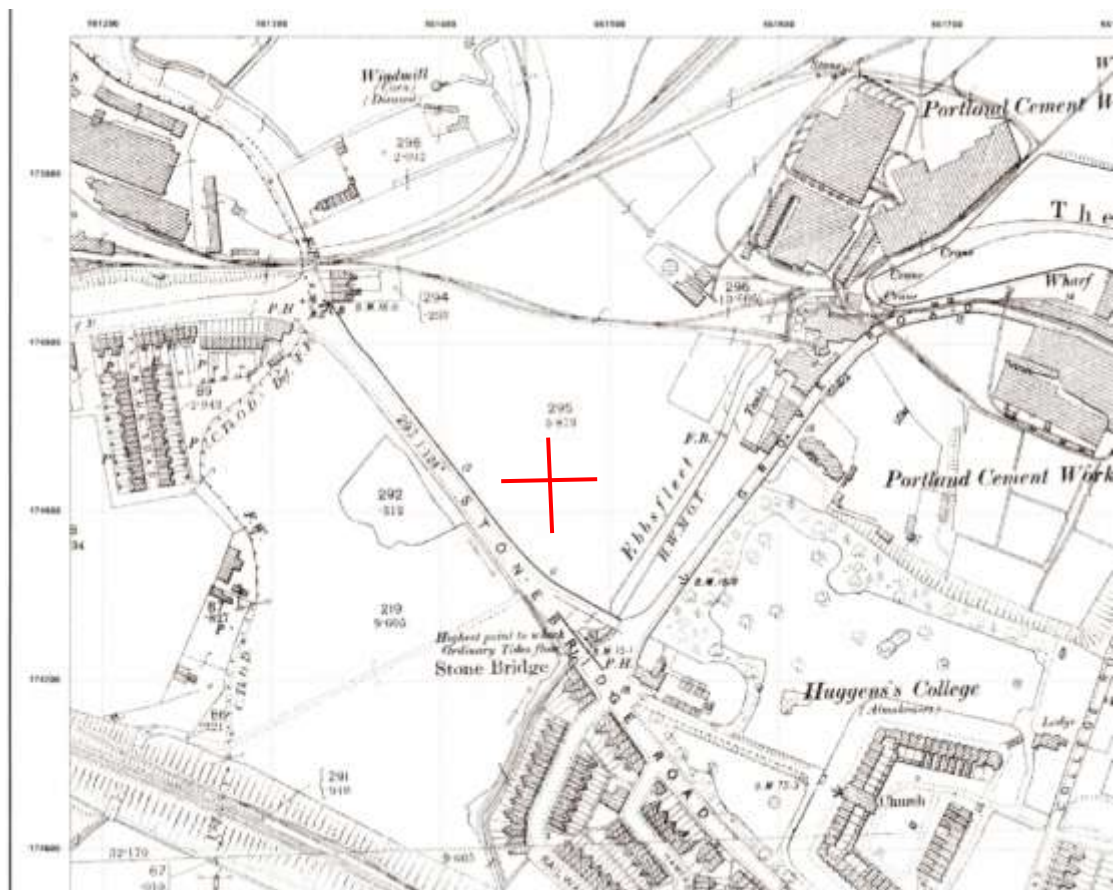


Figure 3. OS map of 1897 (red cross denotes centre of site)

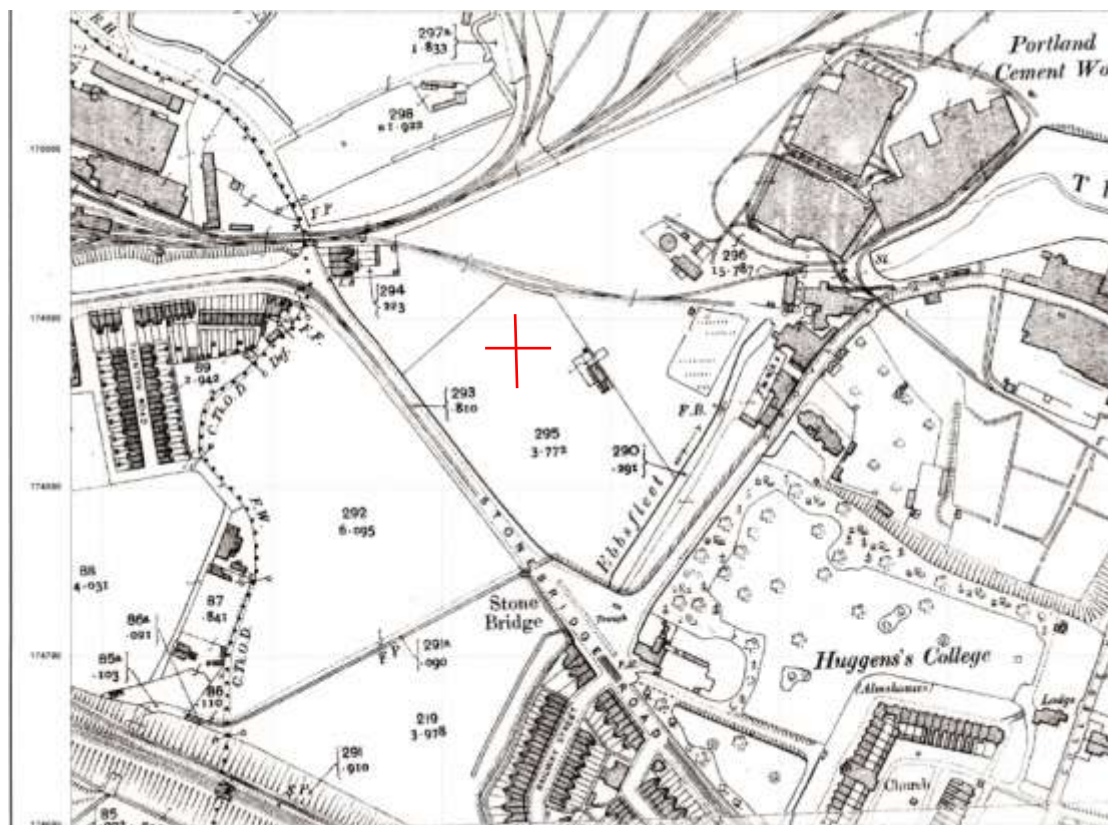


Figure 4. The site at Ebbsfleet, Kent (OS 1909).

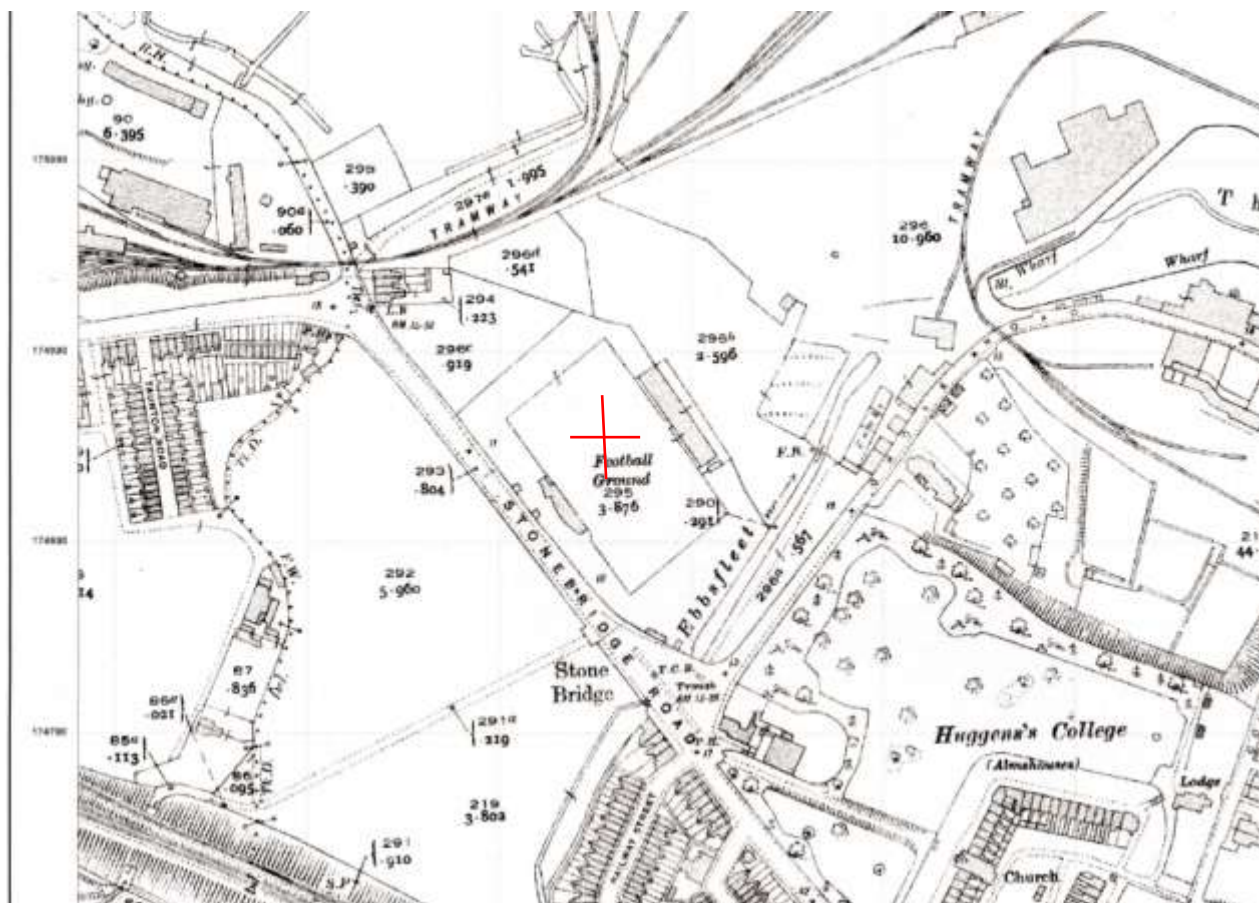


Figure 5. OS map of 1932

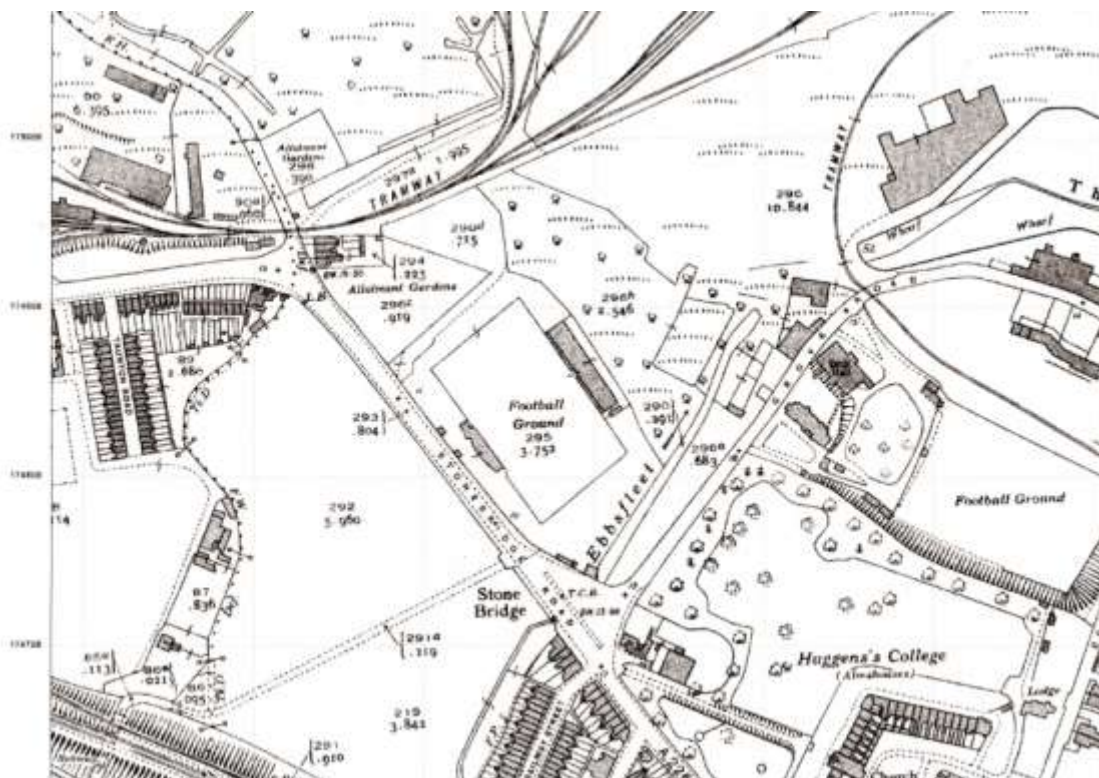


Figure 6. OS 1939

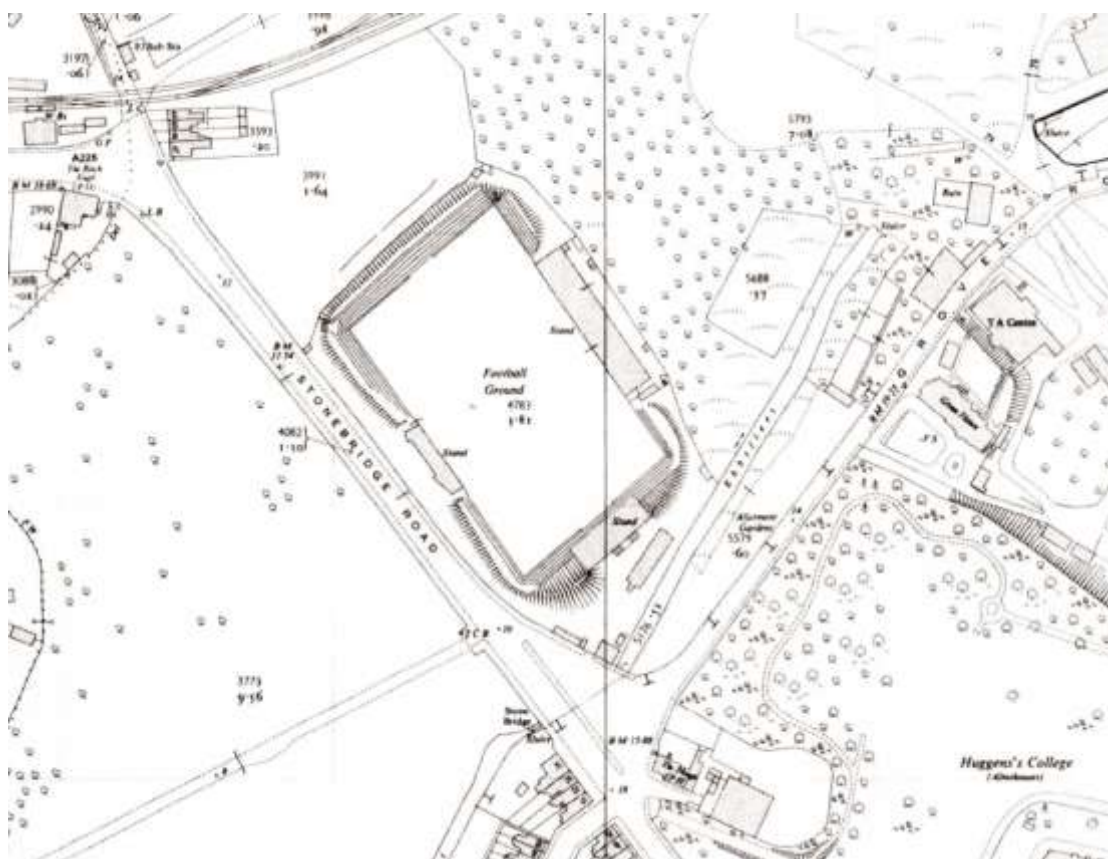


Figure 7. OS 1952

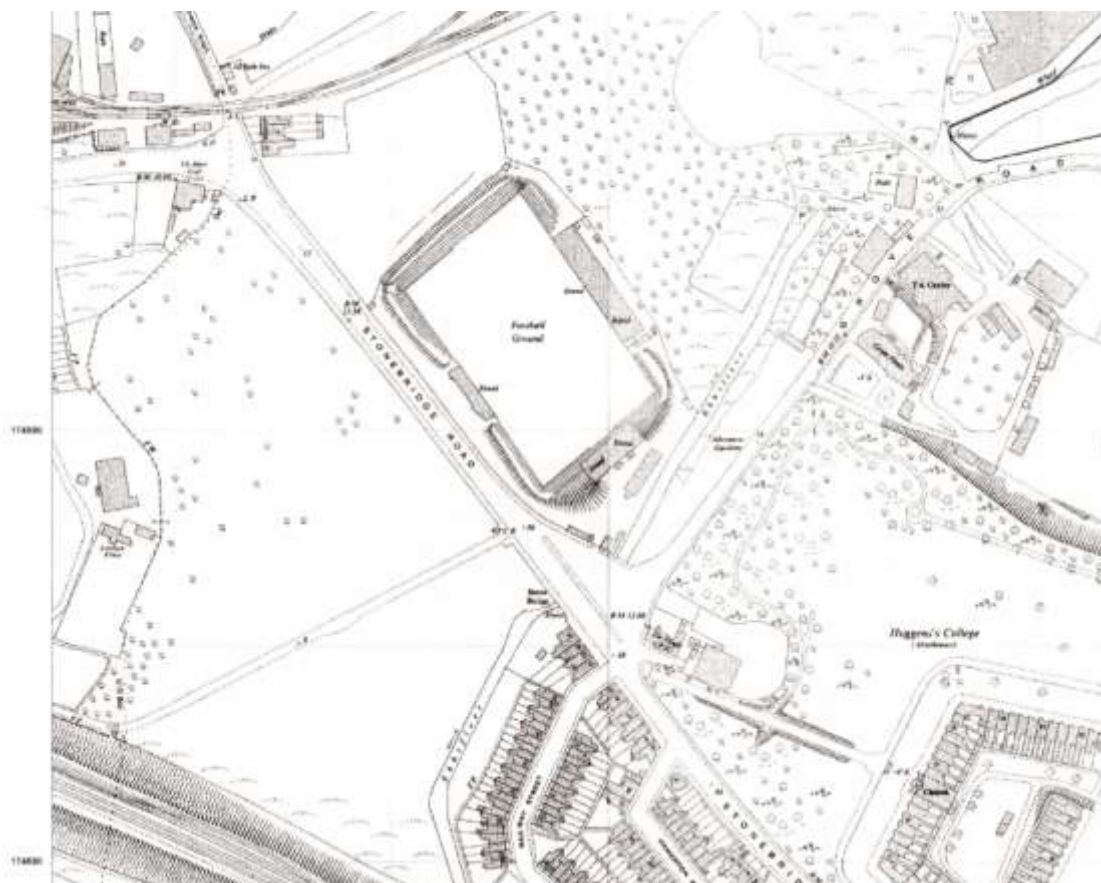


Figure 8. OS 1961

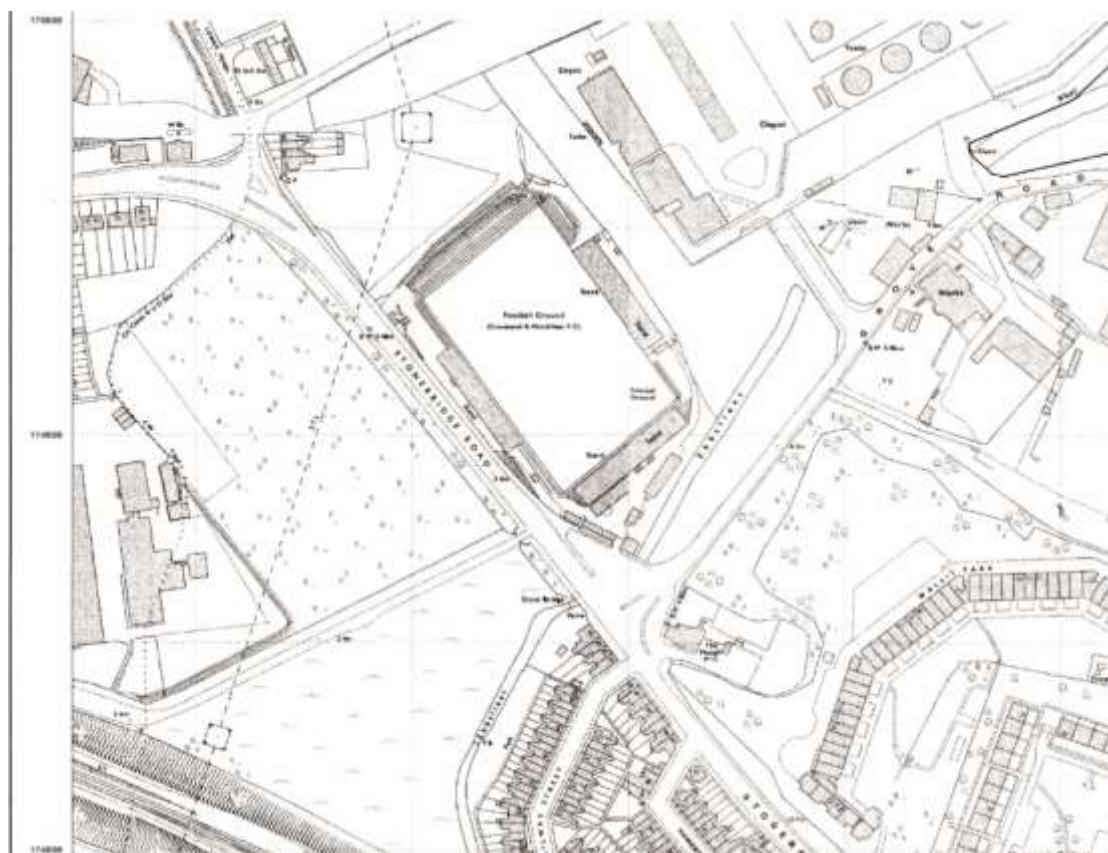


Figure 9. OS 1972

Plates



Plate 1. Google Earth dated 1940



Plate 2. Google Earth dated 1960



Plate 3. Google Earth dated 1999



Plate 4. Google Earth dated 2014



Plate 5. The south-west stand looking north-west



Plate 6. The south stand looking south



Plate 7. The south stand looking east



Plate 8. The pitch looking west



Plate 9. Inside the south-west stand showing details of roof



Plate 10. Looking along the south stand



Plate 11. Looking south to the south stand