

**223 CENTRAL ROAD,  
MORDEN, SM4 5SP,  
LONDON BOROUGH OF  
MERTON  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF**

**SITE CODE: CEN15  
REPORT NO: R12126**



**PRE-CONSTRUCT  
ARCHAEOLOGY**

**223 CENTRAL ROAD, MORDEN, SM4 5SP, LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

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**Central NGR:** TQ 25863 67777

**Local Planning Authority:** London Borough of Merton

**Site Code:** CEN15

**Commissioning Client:** CJ Enviro Design Atelier Ltd

**Written/Researched by:** John Joyce  
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

**Project Manager:** Helen Hawkins (MCIfA)

**Contractor:** Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited  
Unit 54 Brockley Cross Business Centre  
96 Endwell Road  
Brockley  
London SE4 2PD

**Tel:** 020 7732 3925

**Fax:** 020 7732 7896

**E-mail:** [hhawkins@pre-construct.com](mailto:hhawkins@pre-construct.com)

**Web:** [www.pre-construct.com](http://www.pre-construct.com)

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**DOCUMENT VERIFICATION**

**Site Name**


**223 CENTRAL ROAD, MORDEN, SM4 5SP, LONDON BOROUGH OF**

**MERTON**

**Type of project**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited Project Code			K4028
	Name	Signature	Date
Text Prepared by:	J Joyce		12.06.15
Graphics Prepared by:	J Simonson		12.06.15
Graphics Checked by:	J Brown	<i>Josephine Brown</i>	16.06.2015
Project Manager Sign-off:	H Hawkins		16.06.2015

Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd  
Unit 54  
Brockley Cross Business Centre  
96 Endwell Road  
London  
SE4 2PD

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (PCA) undertook an archaeological watching brief at 223 Central Road, Morden, SM4 5SP London Borough of Merton (Figures 1 and 2).
- 1.2 The watching brief was commissioned by CJ Enviro Design Atelier Ltd.
- 1.3 The site is centred on National Grid Reference TQ 25863 67777.
- 1.4 The proposed development will see the construction of four houses with associated parking and landscaping.
- 1.5 Discussions were carried out with the Archaeological Adviser to the London Borough of Merton, Gill King and it was agreed that an archaeological watching brief during the ground reduction would be a suitable mitigation for the archaeological potential of the site.
- 1.6 The site is located within the locally designated Morden Archaeological Priority Zone.
- 1.7 Two planning conditions have been attached to the planning permission as follows:

### *Condition 14*

*No development [including demolition] pursuant to this consent shall take place until the implementation of a programme of archaeological work has been secured in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The archaeological works shall be carried out by a suitably qualified investigating body acceptable to the Local Planning Authority and in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation.*

*Reason: In order to provide the opportunity to record the history of the site and to comply with the following Development Plan policies for Merton: policy 7.8 of the London Plan 2011, policy CS14 of Merton's Core Planning Strategy 2011 and policy DM D4 of Merton's Sites and Policies Plan 2014.*

### *Condition 15:*

*No development [including demolition] pursuant to this consent shall take place until an on-site watching brief, which ensures the presence of a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist during construction work, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. In the event of important archaeological features or remains being discovered, which require fuller rescue excavation, then construction work shall cease until the applicant has secured the implementation of a further programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

*Reason: In order to provide the opportunity to record the history of the site and to comply with the following Development Plan policies for Merton: policy 7.8 of the London Plan 2011, policy CS14 of Merton's Core Planning Strategy 2011 and policy DM D4 of Merton's Sites and Policies Plan 2014.*

- 1.8 The work on site was to be carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Hawkins 2015) which had been approved by the archaeological adviser to the London Borough of Merton in advance of work commencing. However, the main site itself (22.8m x 10.5m, Area A on Figure 2) was reduced by machine without archaeological attendance, and so additional areas of ground reduction were requested by the archaeological adviser to mitigate this situation.
- 1.9 Archaeological monitoring of some of the ground reduction was carried out on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2015 of an area approximately 6m x 11m (the "garden area") to the south of the main site (Area B), and a smaller area to the north-east of the main site of approximately 4.20m x 4m (Area C). A further area was machined and monitored on 11<sup>th</sup> June as requested by Ms King (Area D).

## **2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

- 2.1 According to the British Geological Survey (BGS) of England and Wales (Sheet 270, South London), the immediate area's geological sequence consists of a basal geology of Cretaceous Upper Chalk overlain by Thanet Sands and Lambeth Group (Woolwich and Reading Beds) deposits of Palaeocene age. These are overlain by Eocene London Clay. No drift geology is marked on the site but Terrace Gravels of the Taplow Formation are marked to the north of the site. Alluvium is noted to the east of the site.
- 2.2 The site was generally flat.
- 2.3 A temporary bench mark was established on the site using a GPS; the value of the benchmark was 31.52m OD.

## **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The archaeological and historical background is taken from an evaluation report for a site at Bordesley Road, c. 50m to the north of 223 Central Road (AOC 2013), as detailed in the WSI (Hawkins 2105).
- 3.2 Prehistoric
  - 3.2.1 In the Thames basin it is usual that areas of prehistoric settlement are concentrated in gravel eyots or ridges that were naturally created through geological activity, and in the marshy ground lying between the gravel features. As the underlying geology of the site is London Clay, it is not considered to be in an area of high prehistoric activity.
  - 3.2.2 Evidence of prehistoric activity within a 500m radius of the site includes some reported Palaeolithic elephant remains and possible Mesolithic and Bronze Age residual flint artefacts recovered from a plough soil.
- 3.3 Roman Period (AD 43 – AD 410)
  - 3.3.1 There is scant evidence for Roman occupation close to the development site. The GLHER records a Roman coin dated to 78BC, which was recovered at 18 Hatfield Mead. The Roman road Stane Street, leading from London to Chichester, ran through Morden to the east of the development site. Goodman describes the road "enters Morden at Stonecot Hill, where modern and ancient road coincide briefly, and then cuts through part of Morden Park, where its course has been picked up at a few points. Between them and Colliers Wood High Street its precise route is still conjectural, though its Wandle crossing is likely to have been at or near the present point, for late in the 19th century masonry was said to have been found in the fabric of the bridge'. It is suggested that there was probably a 'mansio' or staging station in Merton or Morden, although this has not been confirmed archaeologically.
- 3.4 Early Medieval (AD 410 – AD 1066) and Medieval Periods (AD 1066 – AD 1536)
  - 3.4.1 Merton (Meretone / Meretune), located in historic Surrey, belonged to Earl Harold and, with the Norman conquest of 1066, became the property of William the Conqueror. Morden (Mordure / Mordore) meaning 'hill in a swampy place' remained the property of Westminster Abbey. At the time of the Domesday Book the presence of a mill was recorded but there was no mention of a church.
  - 3.4.2 Documentary sources from the Saxon period indicate that the Battle of Meretun took place in the borough in 871, resulting in the death of King Ethelred. The name Merton (meaning 'farmstead by the pool') is first recorded in 967. Little is known of settlement in the Morden area throughout the Saxon period, although it is likely that the fertile grounds near to the Wandle were used for agricultural purposes, particularly with the advent of the Saxon plough.
  - 3.4.3 There is no archaeological evidence for early medieval occupation in close proximity to the site. An archaeological investigation at the former Penfolds Nursery recorded a buried soil horizon which has been interpreted as medieval in date.
- 3.5 The Post-Medieval (AD 1536 – AD 1900) and Modern (AD 1900 – Present) Periods
  - 3.5.1 Cartographic evidence shown on Saxton's map (1579) reveals that, a settlement named 'Mordon' was situated to the south of 'Merten' and to the west of the River Wandle. It had a church at this time. Speed's Map of 1610 shows 'Moredon' present. Seller's Map of 1690

shows both an Upper Morden and Lower Morden. Upper Morden appears to be the settlement that became what is now known as Morden.

- 3.5.2 The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1865 (1:2,500 scale), shows that the site was located in enclosed agricultural lands, with Morden House to the north and settlement along the line of Central Road.
- 3.5.3 The site itself remained undeveloped until the construction of the cul-de-sac part of Central Road, built after the First World War and before 1935. The character of the surrounding landscape substantially altered between 1913 and 1935 with the construction of the rail terminus to the north of the site and extensive residential development to the south (Ordnance Survey 1913, 1935 1:2,500). No structures or features pre-dating the current cul-de-sac are recorded on Ordnance Survey mapping. A row of presumed garages or sheds are marked on the actual site, which are still in situ today.
- 3.5.4 A number of GLHER entries are recorded within the wider landscape. Notably, due to proximity to the site, a post-medieval ditch was recorded during archaeological investigations at Abbotsbury First School to the south of the site. The north-south ditch was dated by Staffordshire white salt glazed stoneware and creamware dating from 1750-1800. The ditch may represent a post-medieval field boundary shown on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch map of 1871.

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Watching Brief**

- 4.1.1 Groundworks for the proposed development were to be the subject of an archaeological watching brief. However, the main part of the site was excavated before an archaeologist attended (Area A). Two smaller areas were monitored by an archaeologist to the north and south of the main area on the first visit, and one more additional area was required to be monitored by an archaeologist in order to establish if archaeology had been missed in the first area (Areas B, C and D, Figure 2). The additional area was carried out on 11<sup>th</sup> June. The main part of the site (Area A) was also examined and recorded.
- 4.1.2 The additional excavations for the new development were carried out by a machine fitted with a flat bladed bucket.
- 4.1.3 A GPS was used to record the locations of the trenches and provide a temporary bench mark of value 31.52m OD.

## **5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE AND INTERPRETATION**

- 5.1 Trench locations and sections are shown on Figures 3 and 4.
- 5.2 Phase 1: Natural
  - 5.2.1 A natural layer of clay was observed extending across all of the reduced ground. This natural deposit [1] was stiff, mid-yellowish brown clay, with occasional small to medium sub-angular and angular flints. The top of this deposit was located between 31.49m OD and 31.49m OD.
  - 5.2.2 The original surface of this layer was not observed in the main area (Area A), as it had already been machined away to a depth of 30.69m to 30.91m OD. It was instead observed in section. No cut features were seen. Small amounts of charcoal and burnt clay were however observed in south-facing Section 3 (north-east corner, Area A).
  - 5.2.3 The surface of the clay was observed under excavation in Area B to the south, as well as Areas C & D to the north, but no archaeology was seen. It is likely that this natural deposit is the Eocene London Clay as described by the British Geological Survey.
- 5.3 Phase 2: Sub-soil
  - 5.3.1 The clay deposit was sealed by a layer of sub-soil [2], approx 0.30m – 0.40m thick. This firm, friable deposit was dark greyish brown, silty clay, containing occasional small, rounded & sub-angular pebbles. This deposit was again mainly recorded in section, and no archaeology was observed except for very occasional charcoal flecks. The top of the deposit was between 31.79m OD and 31.32m OD.
- 5.4 The whole site seemed to be sealed by a modern, patchy layer of top-soil and gravel, presumably from the site's previous development of garages. Ground level was between 31.89m OD and 31.42m OD.



## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The watching brief was unable to record all of the groundworks in the main part of the site (Area 'A') as planned, as the ground reduction had been carried out without the presence of an archaeologist.
- 6.2 Areas B, C and D (to the south and north) were however reduced in the presence of an archaeologist.
- 6.3 Beyond a few shallow modern intrusions, the only archaeology observed was very occasional flecks of burnt clay and charcoal.

## **7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 7.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank CJ Enviro Design Atelier Ltd for commissioning the project.
- 7.2 The author would like to thank Helen Hawkins for her project management, and Jennifer Simonson for the preparation of illustrative material.

## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

AOC 2013 *Perseid School, Bordesley Road, London Borough of Merton: an Archaeological Watching Brief Report* unpublished client report

Hawkins 2015 *223 Central Road, Morden, SM4 5SP, London Borough Of Merton: Written Scheme Of Investigation For An Archaeological Watching Brief* Pre-Construct Archaeology unpublished client report

London Borough of Merton,

[http://www.merton.gov.uk/environment/designandconservation/archaeology/archaeological\\_priority\\_zones\\_in\\_merton.htm](http://www.merton.gov.uk/environment/designandconservation/archaeology/archaeological_priority_zones_in_merton.htm)



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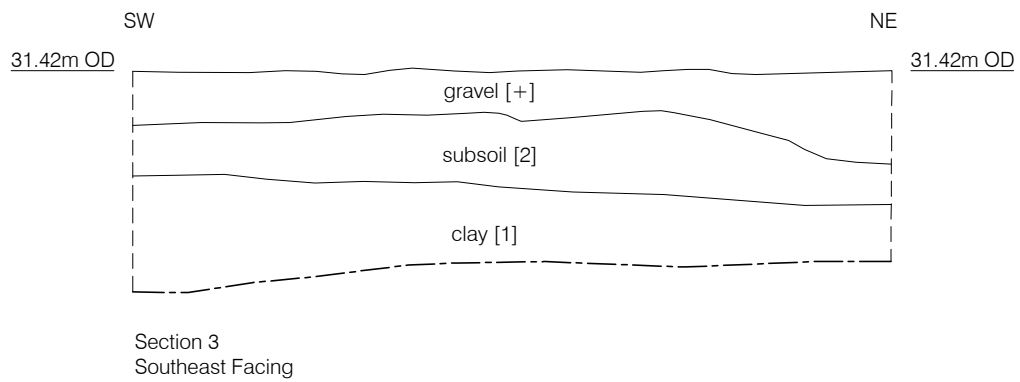
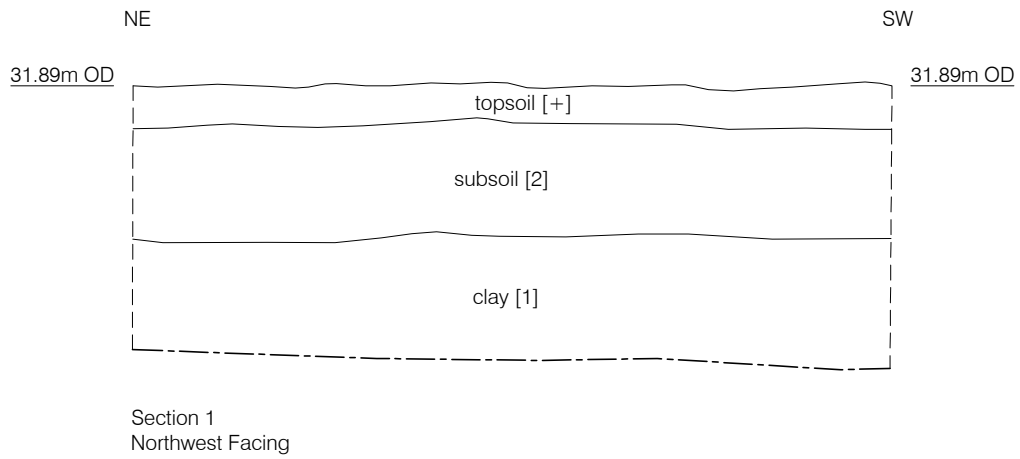
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Figure 1  
Site Location  
1:20,000 at A4



Figure 2  
 Trench Location  
 1:400 at A4



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Figure 3  
Sections 1 & 3  
1:20 at A4

## APPENDIX 1: PHOTOGRAPHS



Plate 1: Area A, facing west



Plate 2: Area A, facing east



Plate 3: Area C, facing north



Plate 4: Area B, facing west





Plate 5: Area D, facing east



Plate 6: North-facing Section 1 (2m)

## APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-214214

### Project details

Project name 223 Central Road, Morden, SM4 5SP

Short description Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (PCA) undertook an archaeological watching brief during the ground reduction for the erection of 4x4 Bedroom dwellings with associated parking and landscaping, at 223 Central Road, Morden, SM4 5SP, London Borough of Merton. Natural clay was found approximately 0.5m below ground level throughout the site. This was sealed by a subsoil and a patchy, modern topsoil.

Project dates Start: 26-05-2015 End: 11-06-2015

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes CEN15 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Industry and Commerce 4 - Storage and warehousing

Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds NONE None

Investigation type "Watching Brief"

Prompt Planning condition

### Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON MERTON MORDEN 223 Central Road Morden

Postcode SM4 5SP

Study area 625.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 25863 67777 51.3945425473 -0.190676141177 51 23 40 N 000 11 26 W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 30.76m Max: 31.20m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

Project brief originator Gill King

Project design originator Helen Hawkins

Project director/manager Helen Hawkins

Project supervisor John Joyce

Type of sponsor/funding body House builder

Name of sponsor/funding body CJ Design Atelier

### **Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Archive ID CEN15

Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media available "Database", "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"

Paper Archive recipient LAARC

Paper Archive ID CEN15

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Drawing", "Map", "Matrices", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey", "Unpublished Text"

### **Project bibliography 1**

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type

Title 223 CENTRAL ROAD, MORDEN, SM4 5SP, LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

Author(s)/Editor(s) Joyce, J

Date 2015

Issuer or  
publisher PCA

Place of issue or  
publication London

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Entered on 15 June 2015

### APPENDIX 3: CONTEXT INDEX

Context No.	Phase	Type	Description
1	1	Layer	Natural Clay
2	2	Layer	Subsoil

# PCA

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## **PCA SOUTH**

UNIT 54  
BROCKLEY CROSS BUSINESS CENTRE  
96 ENDWELL ROAD  
BROCKLEY  
LONDON SE4 2PD  
TEL: 020 7732 3925 / 020 7639 9091  
FAX: 020 7639 9588  
EMAIL: [info@pre-construct.com](mailto:info@pre-construct.com)

---

## **PCA NORTH**

UNIT 19A  
TURSDALE BUSINESS PARK  
DURHAM DH6 5PG  
TEL: 0191 377 1111  
FAX: 0191 377 0101  
EMAIL: [info.north@pre-construct.com](mailto:info.north@pre-construct.com)

---

## **PCA CENTRAL**

7 GRANTA TERRACE  
STAPLEFORD  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB22 5DL  
TEL: 01223 845 522  
FAX: 01223 845 522  
EMAIL: [info.central@pre-construct.com](mailto:info.central@pre-construct.com)

---

## **PCA WEST**

BLOCK 4  
CHILCOMB HOUSE  
CHILCOMB LANE  
WINCHESTER  
HAMPSHIRE SO23 8RB  
TEL: 01962 849 549  
EMAIL: [info.west@pre-construct.com](mailto:info.west@pre-construct.com)

---

## **PCA MIDLANDS**

17-19 KETTERING RD  
LITTLE BOWDEN  
MARKET HARBOROUGH  
LEICESTERSHIRE LE16 8AN  
TEL: 01858 468 333  
EMAIL: [info.midlands@pre-construct.com](mailto:info.midlands@pre-construct.com)

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