

**73 SWITCHBACK ROAD
SOUTH, MAIDENHEAD,
BERKSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

REPORT NO: R12203

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	Name & Title	Signature	Date
Text Prepared by:	T Hayes		25/08/2015
Graphics Prepared by:	J Brown		28/08/2015
Graphics Checked by:	J Brown		28/08/2015
Project Manager Sign-off:	P McCulloch		02/09/2015

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1 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) was commissioned by Hugh Steed to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the construction of a residential property including a basement, at 73 Switchback Road South, Maidenhead, Berkshire (487949 183062). The watching brief was carried out in two site visits, on the 7th and 12th August 2015.

No archaeological deposits, features, artefacts or environmental remains (significant or otherwise) were observed during the course of the watching brief. Natural gravel, encountered in the 3m deep proposed basement excavation, was sealed by a layer of 'Brickearth', in turn covered by a thin layer of modern build up. No other natural deposits were encountered.

The intact Brickearth, which showed no sign of previous disturbance, suggests the site does not lie over a former gravel quarry and is unlikely to have been the provenance of early prehistoric finds recorded from historic gravel extraction in the vicinity of the site.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background

- 2.1.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) was commissioned by Hugh Steed to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the construction of a residential property including a basement, at 73 Switchback Road South, Maidenhead, Berkshire (487949 183062), hereafter 'the site' (Fig1). The watching brief was carried out in two site visits, on the 7th and 12th August 2015.
- 2.1.2 The site is the subject of a development, for which planning permission was been granted by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (planning reference 14/02145 – an amendment to 13/00849), comprising the demolition of an existing dwelling and construction of a detached dwelling with basement and detached single garage. Planning permission for the development is subject to a condition, No.9, which states: *'No development shall take place within the application area until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority'*. The reason for the condition is given as: *'The site is within an area of high archaeological interest in relation to Palaeolithic remains, as demonstrated by the Berkshire Archaeology Historic Environment Record. A programme of archaeological investigation is required to mitigate the impact of development and ensure preservation "by record" of any surviving remains, or allow provision for preservation in situ should any such remains be considered to be of national significance. Relevant Policy - Local Plan ARCH2'*.
- 2.1.3 The required Written Scheme of Investigation (PCA 2015) was submitted to the LPA in February 2015. This report presents the results of the archaeological watching brief that took place over two site visits on the 7th and 12th August 2015. It has been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief (IfA 2008) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (English Heritage, 2006).

2.2 Location, Geology and Topography

- 2.2.1 The site is located on the west side of Switchback Road South, Maidenhead, Berks, in the area of Furze Platt and approximately 2km west of the River Thames (figure 1). It is located in a residential area, with the current work contributing to the re-building of a residential property and basement.
- 2.2.2 Superficial deposits beneath the site comprise sand and gravel of the Lynch Hill Gravel Member (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>), part of the sequence of River Thames terrace deposits formed in the Quaternary Period up to 2 million years ago. Bedrock geology comprises Chalk.
- 2.2.3 The topography of the site is flat. Ground level occurs at approximately 42m above OD.

2.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

2.3.1 The site lies in an area of known archaeological sites and findspots that range in date from the Palaeolithic period to the post-medieval period. Of particular relevance, the site lies close to a number of significant finds of Palaeolithic date, namely flint tools including handaxes. These occur re-deposited within the Thames valley gravel terraces and notably the Lynch Hill Terrace on which the site is located. As such the proposed development of the site, particularly the proposed basement excavation has the potential to uncover Palaeolithic finds and related geo-archaeological deposits. However, there was some evidence that the site's archaeological potential had been affected by gravel extraction works.

3 AIM

3.1 Archaeological Watching Brief

3.1.1 The aim of the watching brief was to monitor ground works for the new development in order to identify and, if necessary, investigate, sample and record any archaeological resources that are present within the site, taking account of their potential to contain biological, palaeo-environmental and geo-archaeological remains. The aim of this report is to demonstrate that the watching brief was carried out in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation and in satisfaction of Condition 9 of planning permission.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The following summary of results is based upon the site archive, which comprises the site diary and digital photographs. The archive is held at PCA's Winchester office under the PCA site code SRMB15 and will in due course be deposited with the appropriate museums service

4.2 Watching Brief

4.2.1 The watching brief comprised monitoring visits to observe groundwork for the proposed development, including new foundations and excavation for a new basement. Arrangements were put in place so that all ground work was effectively monitored by PCA as part of the ground work programme. Areas of the site that were monitored and found to be of no archaeological interest were identified by PCA to the main contractor.

4.3 Observations

4.3.1 No archaeological deposits, features, artefacts or environmental remains were observed during the course of the watching brief.

4.3.2 During the course of ground works the following natural undisturbed deposit sequence was observed in the excavated areas (Appendix 1, Plates 1-3 & Figure 2):

- Between 0.00m and 0.05m Below Ground Level (BGL):- Modern demolition build up
- Between 0.05m and <3m BGL:- 'Brickearth' of the Langley Silt Complex
- 3m+ BGL:- Gravel

4.3.3 Both the clay and the gravel was inspected for the presence of archaeological resources, however no deposits of a later prehistoric or historic date were identified in the clay and no evidence for early prehistoric activity was identified in the lower gravels.

4.4 Conclusion

4.4.1 Although the wider area around the site may have significant archaeological resources, the excavated area observed during this watching brief did not contain any features or deposits that could be considered archaeological.

4.4.2 The intact Brickearth, which showed no sign of previous disturbance, suggests the site does not lie over a former gravel quarry and is unlikely to have been the provenance of early prehistoric finds recorded from historic gravel extraction in the vicinity of the site.

5 ARCHIVE PREPARATION AND DEPOSITION

5.1 The Site Archive

5.1.1 The Site archive, to include all project records and cultural material produced by the project, will be prepared in accordance with '*Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage*' (UKIC 1990) and the Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*' (IfA 2009). On completion of the project PCA will arrange for the archive to be deposited in accordance with the provisional arrangements made at the onset of the watching brief. Any alternative arrangements will be agreed with the Historic Environment Officer and the Local Planning Authority.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd is grateful to Hugh Steed for commissioning the watching brief and for logistical support on site. PCA is also grateful to Roland Smith, Berkshire Archaeology, for his advice.

The author would like to thank Katherine Marshall for carrying out the Watching Brief, Josephine Brown for preparing the report illustrations and Paul McCulloch for project management and for editing of this report.

APPENDIX 1: SITE PHOTOGRAPHS – PLATES 1 - 3



Plate 1: Clean Brickearth exposed in footprint of proposed new house. View to south-east.



Plate 2: View of natural deposits exposed during basement excavation. View to south-east.



Plate 3: Basement excavation showing natural deposit sequence. View to north-west.

APPENDIX 2: OASIS REPORT

OASIS ID: preconst1-222314

Project details

Project name	73 SWITCHBACK ROAD SOUTH, MAIDENHEAD, BERKSHIRE
Short description of the project	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) was commissioned by Hugh Steed to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for the construction of a residential property, focusing on the excavation of previously undeveloped ground for the construction of a basement, at 73 Switchback Road South, Maidenhead, Berkshire. No archaeological deposits, features, artefacts or environmental remains (significant or otherwise) were observed during the course of the watching brief. A thin layer of modern build up covered a natural clay which in turn covered a natural gravel. No other natural deposits were encountered. The excavation stopped at approximately 3m below ground level. The intact brick earth clay, with no sign of disturbance, suggests that there has been no gravel extraction with in the study site. As such early prehistoric finds from gravel extraction could not have originated from this particular location.
Project dates	Start: 07-08-2015 End: 12-08-2015
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	SRMB15 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	14/02145 amendment 13/00849 - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Project location

Country	England
Site location	BERKSHIRE WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD MAIDENHEAD 73 SWITCHBACK ROAD SOUTH, MAIDENHEAD, BERKSHIRE
Postcode	SL6 7QG
Study area	0.18 Hectares
Site coordinates	SU 87949 83062 51.539116229213 -0.731724731427 51 32 20 N 000 43 54 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	PCA West
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Project brief originator	The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Project design originator	Paul McCulloch
Project director/manager	Paul McCulloch
Project supervisor	Katherine Marshall
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Hugh Steed

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	n/a
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Database", "Images raster / digital photography", "Spreadsheets"
Paper Archive recipient	n/a
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Diary", "Notebook - Excavation", "Research", "General Notes"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	73 SWITCHBACK ROAD SOUTH, MAIDENHEAD, BERKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT
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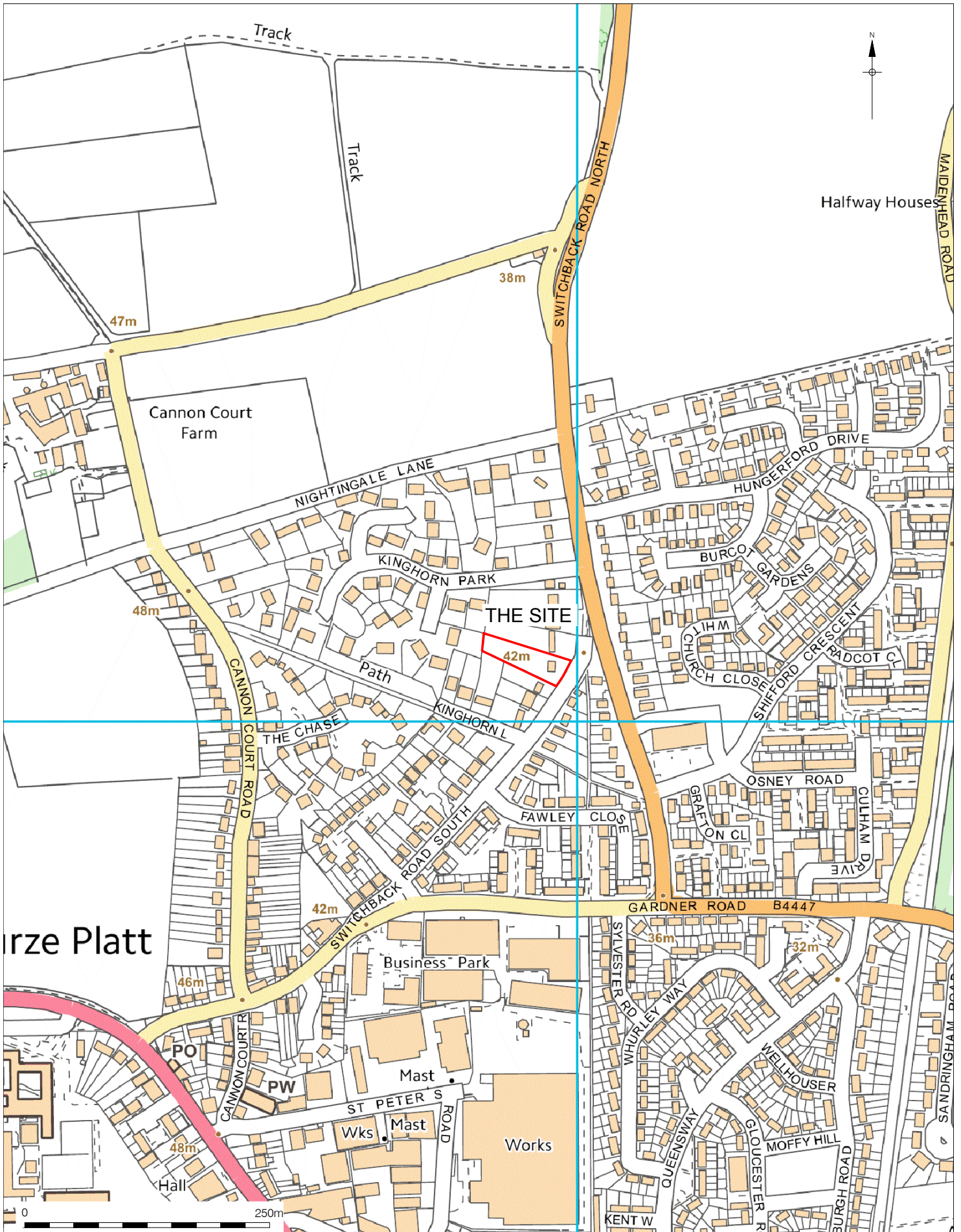


Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:5,000 at A4



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02/09/15 JB

Figure 2
Watching Brief Location
1:500 at A4

PCA

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

PCA NORTH

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

PCA CENTRAL

THE GRANARY, RECTORY FARM
BREWERY ROAD, PAMPISFORD
CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB22 3EN
TEL: 01223 845 522
FAX: 01223 845 522
EMAIL: 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

PCA MIDLANDS

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

