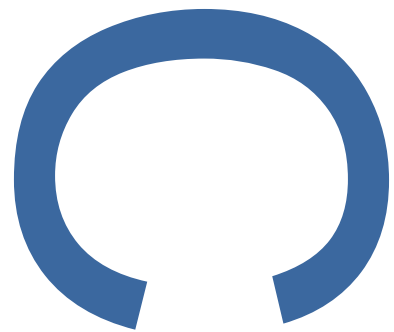


**BBC TELEVISION CENTRE, WOOD  
LANE, WHITE CITY, W12 7RJ:  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING  
BRIEF**

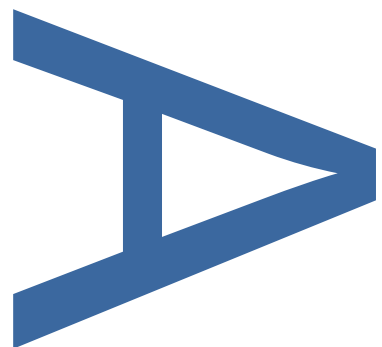


**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:  
LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH  
AND FULHAM**



**SITE CODE: BBC14**

**OCTOBER 2016**



**BBC TELEVISION CENTRE, WOOD LANE, WHITE CITY, W12 7RJ:  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

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**Local Planning Authority:** London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

**Site Code:** BBC 14

**National Grid Reference:** TQ 23202 80488

**Commissioning Client:** AECOM

**Written by:** Michael Tunnicliffe (PCIfA)

**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  
**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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**October 2016**


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## DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

BBC TELEVISION CENTRE, WOOD LANE, WHITE CITY, W12 7RJ

### Type of project

#### AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited Project Code		K4704	
	Name	Signature	Date
Text Prepared by:	M Tunnicliffe		31.10.16
Graphics Prepared by:	R Murphy		31.10.16
Graphics Checked by:	J Brown	<i>Josephine Brown</i>	31.10.16
Project Manager Sign-off:	H Hawkins		31.10.16

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 ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by PCA Ltd at the BBC TV Centre Wood Lane, White City, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, W12 7RJ in advance of redevelopment. The watching brief took place between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> October 2016. The work was commissioned by Iain Williamson of AECOM and monitored by Laura O'Gorman on behalf of Historic England.
- 1.2 The watching brief took place in the southern part of Phase 3 (Figure 1) during the excavation for an attenuation water tank. An area measuring 1426m<sup>2</sup> was reduced by 4m from the existing ground level. The excavation was monitored until all ground reduction had been completed.
- 1.3 The results of the watching brief indicated that no remains of the Cowley Brickworks survived within the area being evaluated. A number of concrete structures were recorded. It is possible that these concrete structures formed part of the foundations of the 1908 White City Exhibition buildings.
- 1.4 A series of modern service pipes which crossed the area were recorded. No activity which predated the 20<sup>th</sup> century was seen. The watching brief demonstrated that the area had been truncated down to natural deposits by modern activity.

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The site was located in White City and was occupied by the BBC Television Centre (centred on Ordnance Survey NGR 523202, 180488; Figure 1). The site covered an area of approximately 6 hectares (ha.) and was bisected by the Hammersmith and City Line which was carried by a viaduct across its south-eastern corner.
- 2.2 The Site comprised the main BBC Television Centre (known as the 'Question Mark Buildings'), the inner ring of which was formed by the original 1960 grade II listed BBC offices, studios and central Helios courtyard. An outer ring of further television studios and a 'Central Wedge' surrounded the inner ring. On the northern side of the inner ring a range of buildings comprising The Spur, Stage 5 and Stage 6 extended north-eastwards. The 'Question Mark Buildings' were surrounded by an outer ring-road which provided access around the Site.
- 2.3 The BBC Television Centre comprised a number of additional buildings that surrounded the 'Question Mark Buildings' including the East Tower, the Drama and Scenery Block to the south, beyond which lay yards and service areas, and to the west the Restaurant Block. To the southeast of the main buildings and separated by the Hammersmith and City Line viaduct was a multi-storey car park.
- 2.4 The Site was bounded to the north by the Wood Lane Estate and the White City Territorial Army Centre, off South Africa Road; to the east by Wood Lane; to the south by land owned by London Underground and residential housing fronting onto Frithville Gardens; and to the west by Hammersmith Park.
- 2.5 PCA previously carried out archaeological evaluation trenching in the Phase 4 area. Five trenches were carried out, but no significant archaeological remains were encountered.
- 2.6 The proposed development will include the demolition of parts of the former BBC Television Centre, associated buildings and structures (including boundary walls) to facilitate the comprehensive phased redevelopment of the site to provide up to 943 residential units with a range of land uses.

### **3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

- 3.1 The British Geological Survey (BGS) records the underlying solid geology of the Site as London Clay.
- 3.2 BGS mapping shows the Site lying near to the northern limits of the Thames terraces, within an area of superficial deposits comprising brickearth of the Langley Silt Member.
- 3.3 A number of geotechnical investigations have been completed across the site since the start of construction for the BBC Television Centre in the 1950s. A review of the available borehole logs confirmed the presence of Kempton Park terrace gravels (part of the Thames terraces), overlying the London Clay and sealed by the Langley Silts. The surface of the terrace gravels was recorded at between 2.40m and 3.99m OD. The boreholes also confirmed that large areas of the site had been worked or quarried with the surviving surface of the brickearth present between 3.60m and 7.13m O. The brickearth was overlain by made ground, and what were described on geotechnical borehole logs as 'rubbish' deposits at between 0.30m and 4.50m in depth.
- 3.4 The natural topography of the Site sloped gently downhill to the south and southwest. The northern corner of the Site; where it meets Wood Lane, lay at approximately 7.50m Ordnance Datum (OD) before sloping to approximately 6.50m OD on the southern site boundary. The central part of the site encompassing the inner and outer ring of the Question Mark Buildings appeared to have been raised, with the ground floor of these buildings lying at c. 9.60m OD.

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The archaeological and historical background are given in the Written Scheme of Investigation (URS 2015). The WSI also contains details on archaeological monitoring of geotechnical investigations and expected ground conditions.
- 4.2 Summary of the Archaeological Works
- 4.3 Archaeological watching brief was proposed within the southern part of Phase 3, during the excavation of an attenuation tank (Figure 1).
- 4.4 All works were undertaken in accordance with the following documents:
- The Written Scheme of Investigation and this method statement
  - Standards for Archaeological Work (GLAAS, EH 2014)
  - Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Codes, Standards and Guidelines Papers (CIfA, 2014)
  - MoRPHE (English Heritage, 2008).



## **5 RESEARCH DESIGN**

5.1 The watching brief aimed to address the following primary objectives as outlined in the WSI:

5.2 The general objectives of the archaeological watching brief are detailed below:

- to record the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, depth, condition, state of preservation, significance and complexity of any subsurface archaeological remains revealed by the Phase 3 Infrastructure works.
- to record the location and extent of any modern ground disturbance, revealed by ground reduction activities within the site;
- to record the condition or state of preservation of any archaeological deposits or features encountered; and to recover the range, quality and quantity of artefactual and any surviving environmental evidence present.
- The general objectives of the watching brief are:
  - to confirm the presence or absence of surviving archaeological or palaeo-environmental remains within the Site;
  - to determine the location, nature, extent, date, condition, state of preservation, significance and complexity of any archaeological remains;
  - to determine the likely range, quality and quantity of artefactual and environmental evidence present; and to inform the design of any detailed archaeological mitigation required, if appropriate.

5.3 The site specific aims of the archaeological watching brief were:

- to record the presence/absence, location and extent of any archaeological remains associated with the 1908 Great White City Exhibition Grounds;
- to record the presence/absence, location and extent of any archaeological remains that predate the construction of the 1908 Great White City Exhibition Grounds; and to identify evidence for previous ground reduction associated with the Cowley Brickworks.

## 6 METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a methodology set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (URS 2016) and Method Statement for Archaeological Watching Brief (Mayo 2016).
- 6.2 An area measuring 1426m<sup>2</sup> was reduced by 4 metres from the existing ground level. Two 32 tonne machines and a 10 tonne machine were used by the contractors for ground reduction. Where possible the excavators were fitted with flat bladed grading buckets. Steel sheets were driven into the ground bordering the excavation and a series of hydraulic props were installed across the area prior to machining in order to prevent the sides collapsing.
- 6.3 All excavation work was carried out under constant archaeological supervision. Archaeological structures were assigned individual context numbers, recorded on to pro – forma sheets and recorded in plan and section as appropriate using the Museum of London recording system. A digital photo record, scale plan of the area and two sections drawn at 1:10 was also made. Heights of deposits and structures were calculated from an engineering drawing supplied by the contractor. A scale plan also supplied by the contractor was used to plot structures and record the location of sections. The limit of excavation was recorded using a GPS system.

*Plate 1 : Ground reduction, viewing NW.*



## 7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

### 7.1 Phase 1: Natural

- 7.1.1 The earliest deposits recorded in the area were a natural mid brown, firm, clay / silt [157]. This was seen at a height of 5.80m OD at the south-western edge of the site, rising to 6.80m at the north-eastern edge. This was examined for any evidence of prehistoric activity but was archaeologically sterile. This layer extended across the whole area and was at least 1.50m thick.

*Plate 2 : Made ground [158] overlying natural clay/silt [157]. Viewing SW scale 1m.*



### 7.2 Phase 2: Modern

- 7.2.1 A series of four concrete piles [152],[153],[154],[156] were recorded extending in a straight line from the north of the area towards the south for a distance of 14m. These were seen at a height of 6.98m OD. Each pile measured 1.50m by 0.90m, 2.80m in depth and was also reinforced with four evenly spaced upright iron or steel rods. Another concrete pile [162] was located close to those structures, but on a slightly different alignment and had slightly differing dimensions.



*Plate 3 : Concrete pile [153], viewing West. Scale 1m.*





*Plate 4 : Extracted concrete pile [162], viewing West. Scale 1m*





Plate 5 : Concrete piles [152],[153],[154]. Viewing North.



- 7.2.2 Two large, lagged, steel parallel pipes [160] were recorded at a depth of 5.20m OD. These crossed the area in a north-west south-east alignment and were probably the remains of a heating system of recent date. Made ground [158] was recorded at a height of 6.30m OD in the south western side of the site, rising to 7.30m OD at the north eastern side. The depth of this layer varied between 0.50m to 1.50m and consisted of broken frogged bricks, plastic rubbish, sand and concrete fragments. This made ground was directly over natural deposits [157] showing the extent of modern truncation of the area being excavated.

## **8 CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 The earliest deposit seen during the watching brief was a natural clay / silt [157] which was recorded at heights varying from 5.80m OD in the south west of the site rising to 6.80m OD at the north east of the area. These heights follow the topographic profile suggested by the geotechnical evaluation with the land sloping down towards the south west.
- 8.2 There were no features that could be related to the Cowley Brick Works. A series of substantial concrete piles: [152],[153],[154],[156],[162] were recorded. These possibly formed part of the foundations of the 1908 Great White City Exhibition buildings or grounds and did not appear to relate to the construction of the BBC buildings. Apart from these concrete piles there was no other evidence of buildings which might pre date the 1950s BBC complex within the attenuation tank area. There was no evidence of any archaeology predating the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 8.3 The degree of modern truncation down to the natural deposits [157] was recorded with recent demolition deposits covering the area being recorded as at least 0.50m in depth and up to 1.50m in some areas. The previous archaeological evaluation of a different part of the site (Langthorne 2015) found a similar sequence of made ground overlying natural deposits. However, in that evaluation cultural material in the form of pottery and glass was recovered from the made ground which were of late 19<sup>th</sup> / 20<sup>th</sup> century date. In this area of the site there was no cultural material in the made ground, only modern demolition material. The severe degree of modern disturbance had eradicated all archaeology and archaeological cultural material that might have existed within the attenuation tank area, with the exception of the aforementioned concrete piles.
- 8.4 The completed archive, comprising of all site records from the fieldwork, will eventually be deposited with LAARC under site code BBC 14.

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank AECOM for commissioning the works, and Laura O’Gorman of Historic England for monitoring the works on behalf of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. We would also like to thank Graham Francis of MACE for facilitating the site work.
- 9.2 The author wishes to thank Helen Hawkins for project management, editing this report and Ray Murphy for the CAD illustrations.



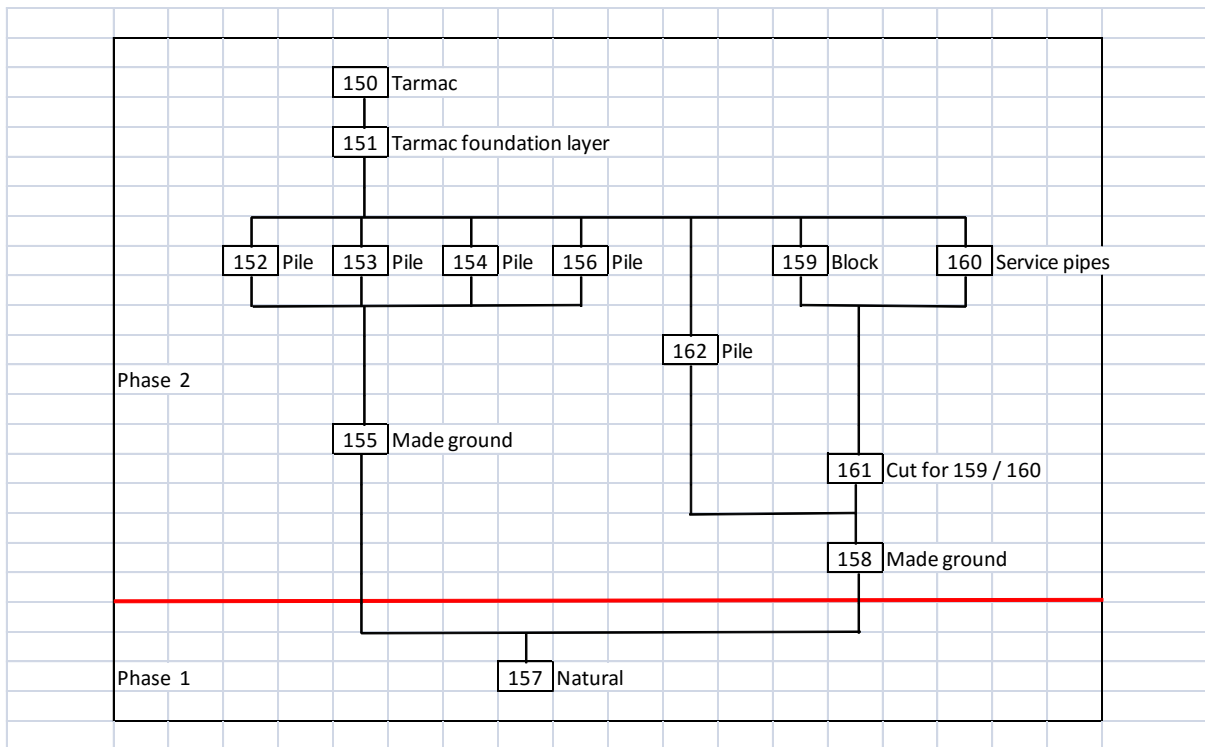
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- Historic England. 2015. *Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service 2015, Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Greater London.*
- Langthorne, J. 2015. *BBC Television Centre, White City : An Archaeological Evaluation, PCA Unpublished Report.*
- URS. 2015. *BBC Television Centre : Site Wide Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation. URS unpublished report.*

## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Site Code	Context	Type	Section	Comments	Phase
BBC14	150	Layer		Tarmac	2
BBC14	151	Layer		Tarmac foundation layer	2
BBC14	152	Masonry		Concrete pile	2
BBC14	153	Masonry		Concrete pile	2
BBC14	154	Masonry		Concrete pile	2
BBC14	155	Layer		Made ground	2
BBC14	156	Masonry		Concrete pile	2
BBC14	157	Natural	10, 11	Natural clay / silt	1
BBC14	158	Layer	10, 11	Made ground	2
BBC14	159	Masonry		Concrete block	2
BBC14	160	Services		Steel service pipes	2
BBC14	161	Cut		Cut for [159], [160]	2
BBC14	162	Masonry		Concrete pile	2

## APPENDIX 2: SITE MATRIX



## APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-267200

### Project details

Project name	BBC TELEVISION CENTRE, WOOD LANE, WHITE CITY, W12 7RJ: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by PCA Ltd at the BBC TV Centre Wood Lane, White City, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, W12 7RJ in advance of redevelopment. The watching brief took place between 3rd and 14th October 2016. The watching brief took place in the southern part of Phase 3 during the excavation for an attenuation water tank. An area measuring 1426m <sup>2</sup> was reduced by 4m from the existing ground level. The excavation was monitored until all ground reduction had been completed. The results of the watching brief indicated that no remains of the Cowley Brickworks survived within the area being evaluated. A number of concrete structures were recorded. It is possible that these concrete structures formed part of the foundations of the 1908 White City Exhibition buildings. . No activity which predated the 20th century was seen. The watching brief demonstrated that the area had been truncated down to natural deposits by modern activity
Project dates	Start: 03-10-2016 End: 14-10-2016
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	BBC14 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM BBC TV Centre, Wood Lane
Postcode	E12 7RJ
Study area	1426 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 23202 80488 51.509377528542 -0.224481413485 51 30 33 N 000 13 28 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 5.8m Max: 6.8m

### Project creators

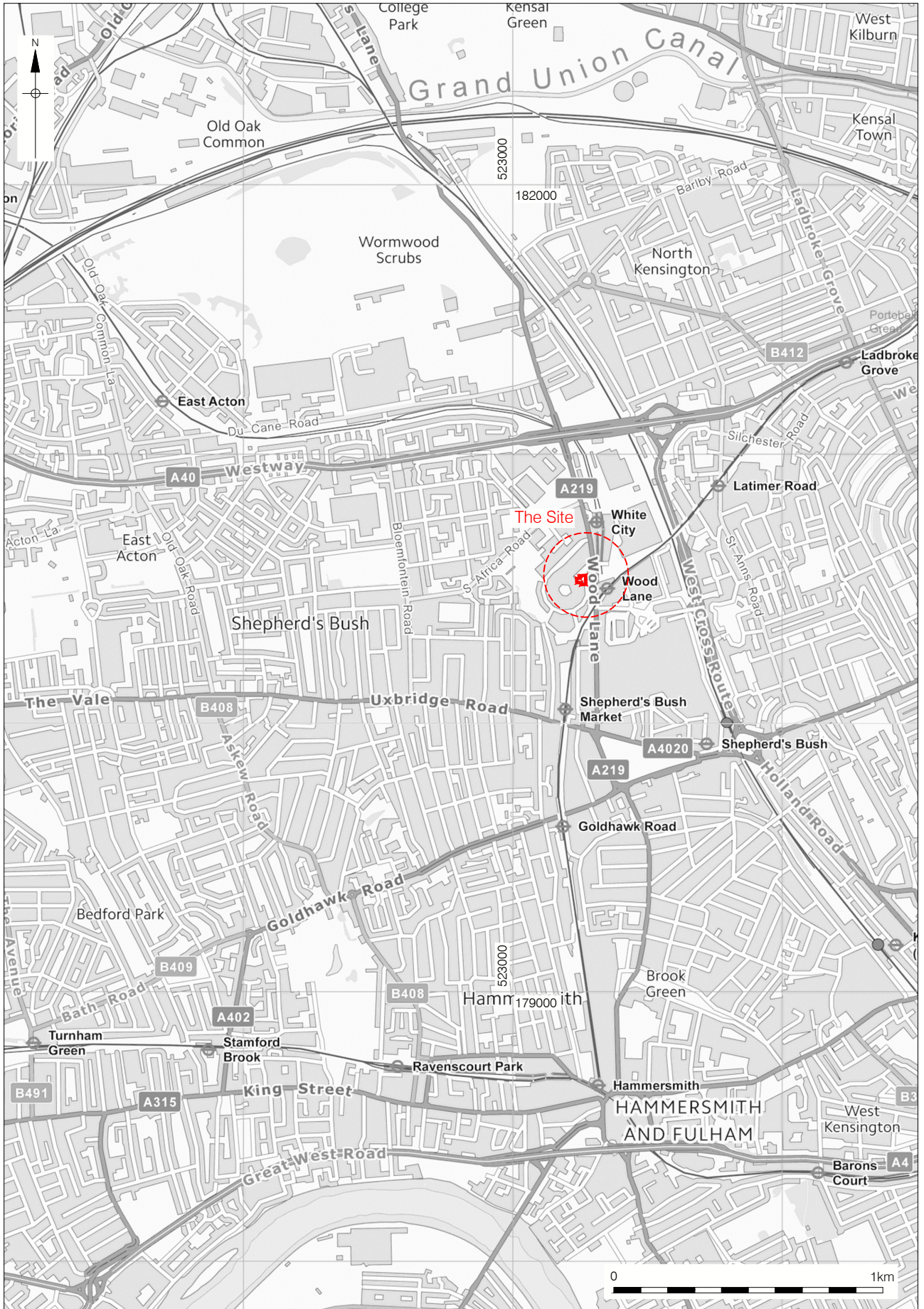
Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Project brief originator	AECOM
Project design originator	Iain Williamson
Project director/manager	Helen Hawkins
Project supervisor	Mike Tunnicliffe
Type of sponsor/funding body	House builder
Name of sponsor/funding body	n/a
<hr/>	
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	BBC14
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Database","Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	BBC14
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Matrices","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Survey","Unpublished Text"
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Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	BBC TELEVISION CENTRE, WOOD LANE, WHITE CITY, W12 7RJ: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Tunnicliffe, M
Date	2016
Issuer or publisher	PCA

Place of issue or  
publication      London

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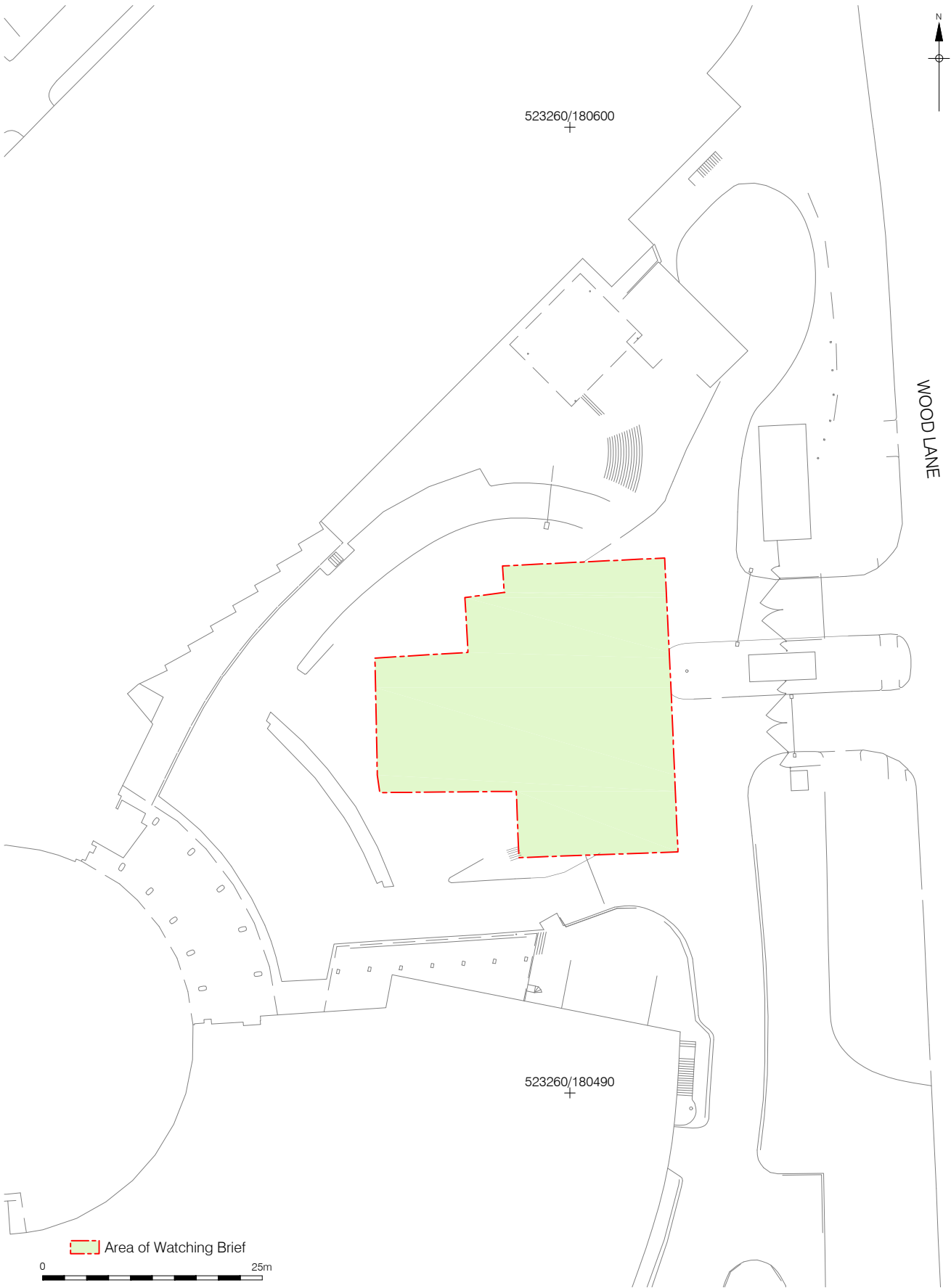
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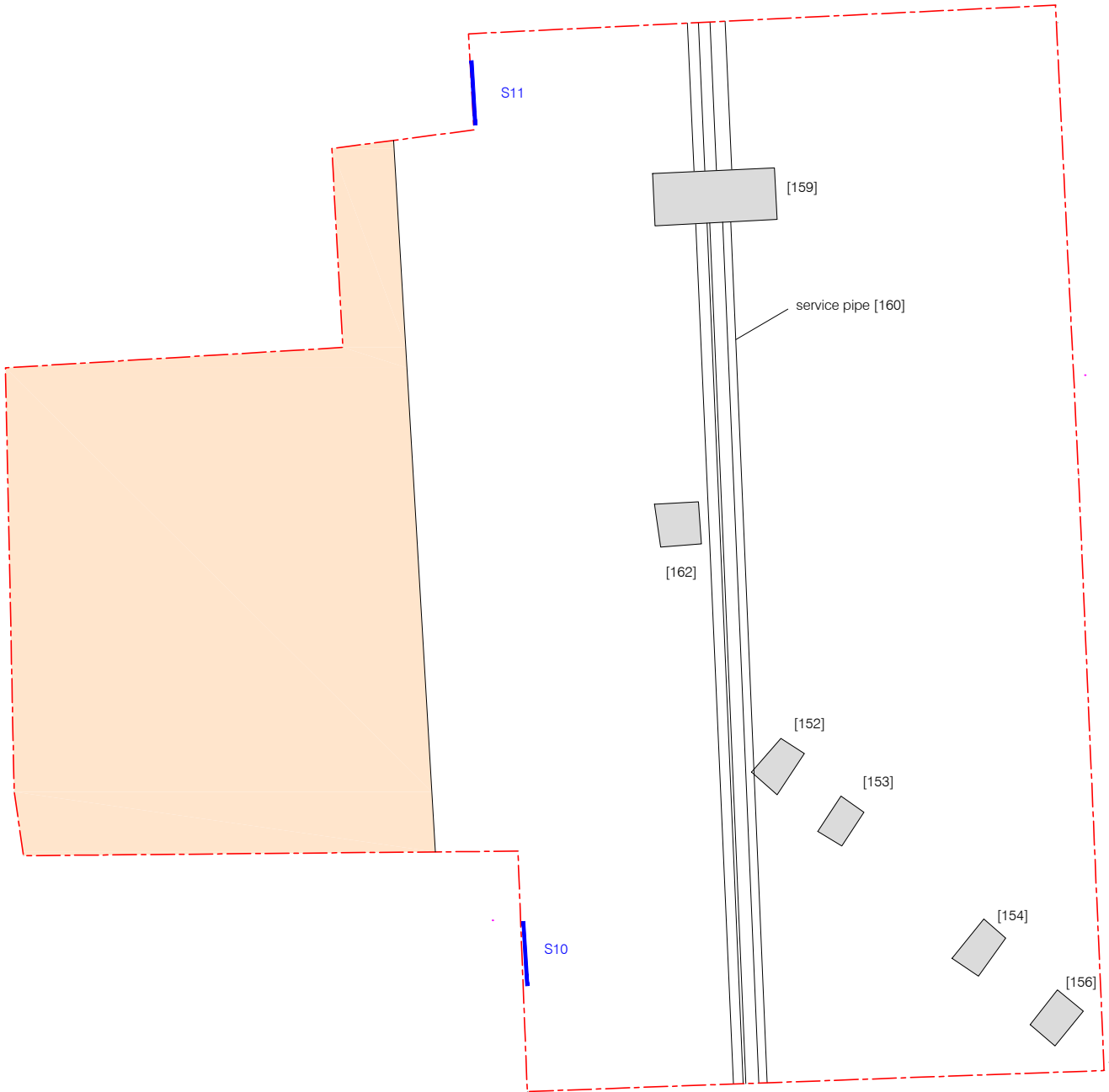
Figure 1  
 Site Location  
 1:20,000 at A4



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 27/10/16 RM

Figure 2  
 Area of Watching Brief  
 1:625 at A4



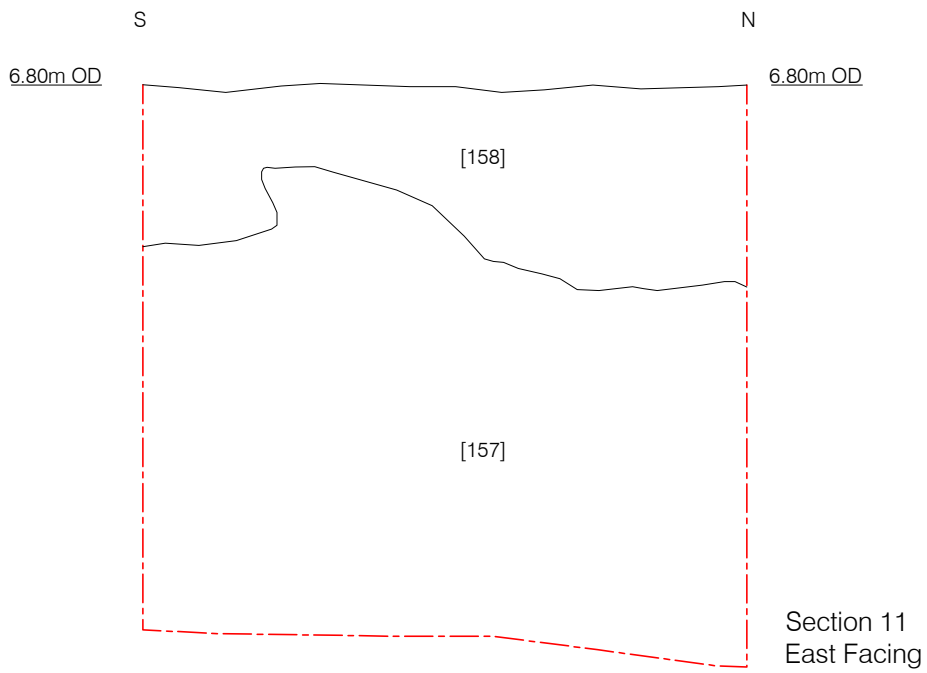
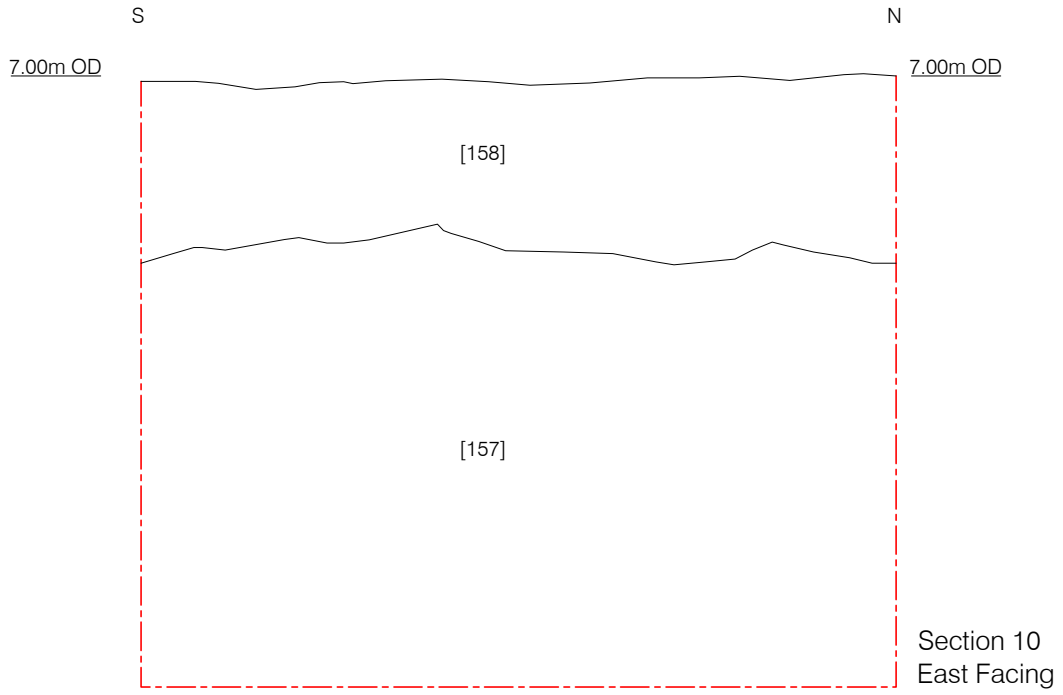


- Concrete Pile
- Basement

0 10m

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Figure 3  
Plan of Features  
1:200 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](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**

THE GRANARY, RECTORY FARM  
BREWERY ROAD, PAMPISFORD  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB22 3EN  
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)

