20 ROPEMAKER STREET, LONDON, EC2Y 9AR

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY: LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON

SITE CODE: RMA18

OCTOBER 2018

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

20 ROPEMAKER STREET, LONDON EC2Y 9AR

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF DURING GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd	
Project Number	K5803
Report Number	R13451

	Name & Title	Date
Text Prepared by:	Cecelia Galleano	October 2018
Graphics Prepared by:	Ray Murphy	October 2018
Graphics Checked by:	Mark Roughley	October 2018
Project Manager Sign-off:	Chris Mayo	October 2018

Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved

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

20 ROPEMAKER STREET, LONDON EC2Y 9AR

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF DURING GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATIONS

CENTRAL NGR:	**TQ 3275 8180**
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE CODE:	**RMA18**
LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:	**LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON**
PLANNING REFERENCE:	**P2017/3103/FUL**
COMMISSIONING CLIENT:	**Mills Whipp Projects Ltd.**
on behalf of:	**CORE LLP**
WRITTEN BY:	**Cecilia Galleano** **Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd**
PROJECT MANAGER:	**Chris Mayo**

Contractor:	**Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited** **Unit 54, Brockley Cross Business Centre** **96 Endwell Road, Brockley** **London SE4 2PD**
Tel:	**020 7358 8950 | 020 7732 3925**
Email:	**cmayo@pre-construct.com**
Website:	**www.pre-construct.com**

October 2018

PCA Report Number R13451

CONTENTS

1 ABSTRACT

1.1 This report details an archaeological watching brief undertaken during geotechnical investigations conducted at 20 Ropemaker Street Site, London EC2Y 9 AR.

1.2 During this phase of work, two Boreholes and one Test Pit were excavated by the geotechnical contractor, RSK Group.

1.3 The natural geology was reached within the two boreholes at a level of between 8m and 7.9m OD, and consisted of the London Clay Formation.

1.4 The boreholes and test pit showed a similar stratigraphic sequence: underneath the concrete slab, a made ground layer covered alluvium sealing natural deposits of sandy gravel and then London Clay. The sequence in Borehole 4 was disturbed, probably because of a nearby pillar.

1.5 Archaeology was found at the surface of the layer of sandy clay (brickearth) at 9.70m AOD in TP3; it consisted of a possible posthole, from which a single struck flint, heavily abraded, was recovered.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA) was commissioned by Mills Whipp Projects Ltd on behalf of CORE LLP to carry out an archaeological watching brief at 20 Ropemaker Street in the London Borough of Islington. The watching brief was undertaken on 9th, 11th and 17th of October 2018, and monitored the excavation of one test pit and two boreholes.

2.2 The work was undertaken in response to a planning condition attached to consent for the development of the site. A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by Mills Whipp Projects Ltd and approved in advance by the archaeology advisor to the local planning authority, Sandy Kidd of GLAAS, Historic England. It is expected that further geotechnical works may be implemented, if so these will also be subject to further archaeological attendance.

2.3 The central Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference for the Site is TQ 3275 8180. It is bordered by Ropemaker Street to the south, Finsbury Pavement to the east, Finsbury Street to the west and properties fronting both of those roads to the north.

2.4 The boreholes and the test pit were located in the basement of 20 Ropemaker Street, the floor level of which was at 10.9m AOD.

2.5 The site was assigned the unique code RMA18 by the Museum of London.

2.6 The watching brief was managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited by Chris Mayo and conducted by Cecilia Galleano.

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 National Planning Policy: National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.1.1 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 24 July 2018 and replaces the previous NPPF published in March 2012. The NPPF constitutes guidance for local planning authorities and decision-takers both in drawing up plans and as a material consideration in determining applications.

3.1.2 Chapter 16 of the NPPF concerns the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

3.2 Regional Planning Policy: The London Plan

3.2.1 The London Plan, first published July 2011, updated March 2016, includes policy 7.8 regarding the historic environment in central London, which should be implemented through the Local Development Framework (LDF) being compiled at the Borough level.

3.3 Local Planning Policy: London Borough of Islington Local Plan

3.3.1 Relevant local policy is provided by the London Borough of Islington Local Plan which manages the growth and development of the borough through a set of planning policy documents. The relevant document within the plan is the Core Strategy (2011), which includes land use policies and guidance that is used in deciding planning applications and guides future development in the borough up until 2025. The pertinent section Is Policy CS 9

3.4 Guidance

3.4.1 The guidance papers issued by the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (Historic England) 2015 and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014 have been observed.

3.5 Site Specific Planning Background

3.5.1 The site lies within an Archaeological Priority Area as defined by LB Islington advised by the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS), part of Historic England. The Site but does not contain any Scheduled Ancient Monuments and does not lie within a Designated Archaeological Area as defined in Scheduled Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

3.5.2 Planning permission for the redevelopment of the site is granted by the LB Islington under reference P2017/3103/FUL. The consented development is the

> *Demolition of the existing buildings and erection of a 27-storey building (part 10, part 15, part 20, part 25, part 27-storeys) with 3 basement levels to provide for 63,507 square metres (GIA) of office floorspace (Use Class B1(a)) and 1,222 square metres (GIA) of flexible retail/professional services/restaurant/café floorspace (Use Class A1/A2/A3) along with associated access and servicing arrangements, cycle parking, refuse storage and*

landscaping works.

3.5.3 The planning consent include the following archaeological condition:

35 ARCHAEOLOGY (GLAAS)

CONDITION:

A) No demolition or development shall take place until a stage 1 written scheme of investigation (WSI) has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. For land that is included within the WSI, no demolition or development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed WSI, and the programme and methodology of site evaluation and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works.

B) If heritage assets of archaeological interest are identified by stage 1 then for those parts of the site which have archaeological interest a stage 2 WSI shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. For land that is included within the stage 2 WSI, no demolition/development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed stage 2 Written Scheme of Investigation which shall include:

i. The statement of significance and research objectives, the programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works

ii. The programme for post-investigation assessment and subsequent analysis, publication & dissemination and deposition of resulting material. this part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the stage 2 WSI.

REASON: Heritage assets of archaeological interest are expected to survive on the site. The planning authority wishes to secure the provision of appropriate archaeological investigation, including the publication of results.

3.5.4 The client's archaeological consultant, Mills Whipp Projects Ltd, agreed with the archaeological advisor to the LB Islington, Sandy Kidd of Historic England, that in the first instance the proposed geotechnical investigation of the site would be subject to a watching brief. This work was designed within a Written Scheme of Investigation (Mills Whipp Projects 2018) which was approved by Historic England.

3.5.5 This report details the watching brief which was conducted by PCA during the first phase of site investigation work.

4 GEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The following geological and topographical information is taken from the desk-based assessment for the site (Mills Whipp Projects 2017).

4.1 The site is located upon level ground. A major redevelopment of the Site took place in 1950s and again in the 1970s; these resulted in basements across most of the site, in some areas double depth, however the north-west corner of the site has no basement.

4.2 The Site is centred on TQ 3275 8180 and is c. 33.000 sq. m.

4.3 The site lies north of the River Thames and in the proximity of the upper valley of the River Walbrook.

4.4 The British Geological Survey identifies the underlying bedrock geology at the site to be the 'London Clay Formation' overlain by drift geology of the Hackney Gravel Member.

4.5 The natural geology bedrock was noted during the investigation at between 8m and 7.9m AOD.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The following is summarized from the desk-based assessment for the site (Mills Whipp Projects 2017).

5.1 There is a low potential for significant prehistoric archaeology on the Site. In the Roman period the area close to the north of the city wall was used as a burial ground c.100m south-east of the Site.

5.2 Later in the Roman period the Moorfields marsh began to form, possibly due to the Walbrook becoming partially blocked. The subsequent marsh deposited alluvium over the Roman land surface. The potential for significant Roman archaeology on the Site is considered to be low given its location away from the burial grounds and beyond the city wall.

5.3 During the Saxon and mediaeval periods the Site occupied the now fully formed Moorfields marsh. Following attempts to drain the area it was used for pasture. In the 13th century the manor house 'Finsbury Court' was built the main buildings lying north of the Site. The Site lay in the southern part of the manor precinct and was occupied by a garden with a small building adjacent to Finsbury Pavement.

5.4 In the 18th century the Site was developed. On its western side a Chapel was built, possibly with a burial ground and further north the Site was occupied by a distillery.

5.5 A major redevelopment of the Site took place in 1950s and again in the 1970s.

6 METHODOLOGY

6.1 The proposed investigation as per the Written Scheme of Investigation (Mills Whipp 2018) comprised two Test Pits and two Boreholes.

6.2 During the investigation only one of the Test Pits (TP3) was excavated and its position was modified from the planned location. Test Pit 3 was shifted 2.23m north-east in respect of the location of Borehole 3. TP3 measured 0.84m NS by 1.0m EW and was 1.6m deep in total

6.3 Test Pit 4 was not excavated (Figure 2).

6.4 Boreholes 3 and 4 were excavated where intended according to pre-planned location. Borehole 3 was excavated to a maximum depth of 4m BGL, while Borehole 4 was excavated to a maximum depth of 3.20m.

6.5 Test Pit 3 was excavated with a mini-digger, with the upper horizons frequently checked with archaeological hand tools. An archaeological feature within the test pit was investigated by hand.

6.6 The boreholes were excavated using a borehole rig.

6.7 All excavation works were performed under constant supervision of the attendant archaeologist over the course of three days: 9th, 11th and 17th of October 2018.

6.8 All interventions were located to an existing site survey

6.9 The test pit was recorded on pro-forma Recording Sheets, and was planned and sectioned at a scale of 1:20 and 1:10.

6.10 The two boreholes were recorded on pro-forma Borehole Record Sheets and a section for each was drawn at the scale of 1:10.

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL PHASED DISCUSSION

7.1 Phase 1: Natural Geology

7.1.1 The earliest deposit reached during the investigation was a layer of plastic, dark grey clay with occasional patches of grey sand [6], [14]. It was seen in Boreholes 3 and 4 respectively at levels of 7.90m and 8m AOD. It was interpreted as the London Clay Formation.

7.1.2 Above the London Clay horizon four natural deposits were recorded within Borehole 3, respectively loose mid reddish-brown gravel-sand [5] (8.7m AOD), loose dark reddish brown, coarse sand [4] (8.9m AOD) and stiff mid reddish brown, fine sand [3] (9.7m AOD) were interpreted as superficial deposits.

7.1.3 The same fine sand deposit was recorded in Test Pit 3 as layer [8] at a similar level (9.65m AOD).

7.2 Phase 2: Undated

7.2.1 The fine sand deposit [8] in TP3 was cut by a feature, a possible posthole. The feature [10] appeared as an oval mid-grey patch in plan and was not very regular when excavated, with a steep break of slope on the SE side and a stepped break of slope on the NW side. The base of the feature was pointed. It was located north west corner of the test pit (see Figure 3, Plate 1). It was filled by a firm, mid grey, sandy clay [9], with occasional patches of reddish sand and moderate gravel. A single struck flint was recovered from the fill [9]; it is considered to be man-made but is heavily abraded (Appendix 4).

Plate 1, view north of feature [10] in TP3

7.3 Phase 3: Alluvial Marshland

7.3.1 A stiff, mid reddish brown, sandy-clay layer was observed at 10.54m in TP3 and 10.26m AOD in BH3, contexts [7] and [2] respectively. A few pieces of 19th century CBM (Appendix 3) were collected from the surface of the layer, which sealed the aforementioned layer [8]. The deposit was interpreted as alluvium which could derive from the marshland in the area between the Roman and medieval periods.

7.4 Phase 4: Modern

7.4.1 The modern phase is represented by made ground deposits and the concrete slab at ground level (10.9m AOD)

7.4.2 In TP 3 no made ground deposits were noted, the alluvial clay layer was directly below the concrete slab [+].

7.4.3 In BH 3 a made ground deposit [1] was recorded. It appeared as a firm, mid greyish brown, sandy-clay layer with moderate flecks and pieces of broken CBM, associated with occasional fragments of concrete. It was at a level of 10.54m AOD.

7.4.4 In BH4, three made ground deposits were encountered. The lowest, [13], was loose, mid to light brown gravel and fine sand with frequent fragments of concrete and CBM, at the level of 8.70m AOD. The last 0.20m of this deposit was sterile, with no apparent inclusions. The middle layer, [12], was stiff to firm mid brown, sandy clay and lay at 9.70m AOD. The upper made ground layer [11], at a level of 10.41m AOD, was firm to loose, mid reddish brown, sandy-silty-clay with moderate fragments of frogged bricks,, occasional fragments of concrete and modern detritus such as plastic.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The investigations showed a sequence of London Clay natural sealed by superficial sands and gravels, then an alluvial layer finally sealed by made ground deposits.

8.2 During the excavation of Test Pit 3 a single archaeological feature was noted and a struck flint was recovered. That the feature was found in isolation makes interpretation impossible.

8.3 No evidence of, Roman, Saxon, medieval and post-medieval occupation or structures were seen during the monitoring of ground investigations.

8.4 The investigation has shown that the site retains an intact stratigraphic sequence beneath the basement footprints, and therefore the archaeological potential is increased.

8.5 The physical and digital archive will be deposited with the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) under site code RMA18.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Butler, J, 2006, "Reclaiming the Marsh. Archaeological Excavations at Moor House, City of London", PCA Monograph 6.

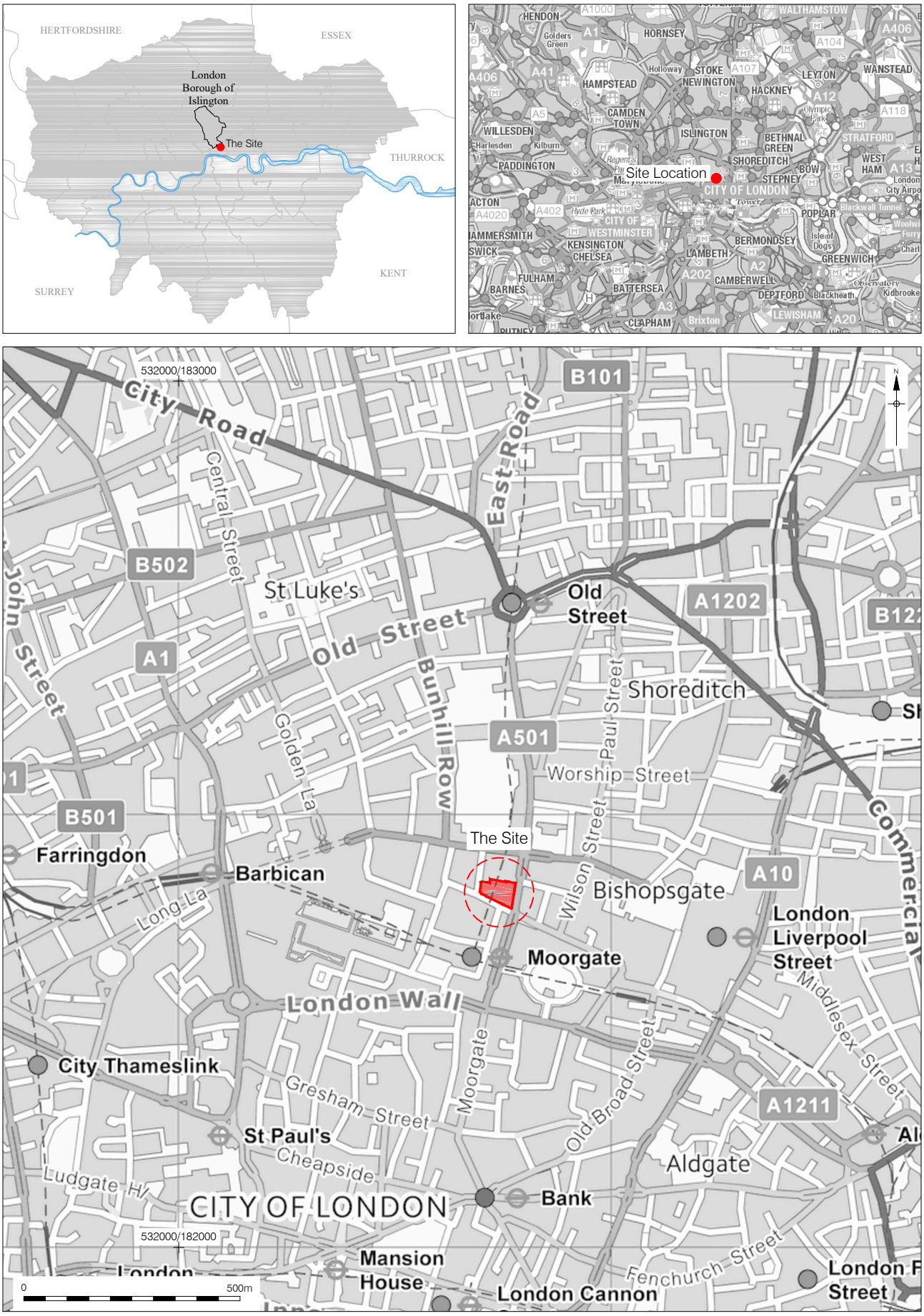
Mills Whipp Projects, 2017, "20 Ropemaker Street, 101-117 (Odd Nos) Finsbury Pavement and 10-12 Finsbury Street, London EC2, LB Islington: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment", unpublished report

Mills Whipp Projects, 2018, "20, Ropemaker Street, London EC2: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching during geotechnical investigations". Mills Whipp Projects Ltd.

10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

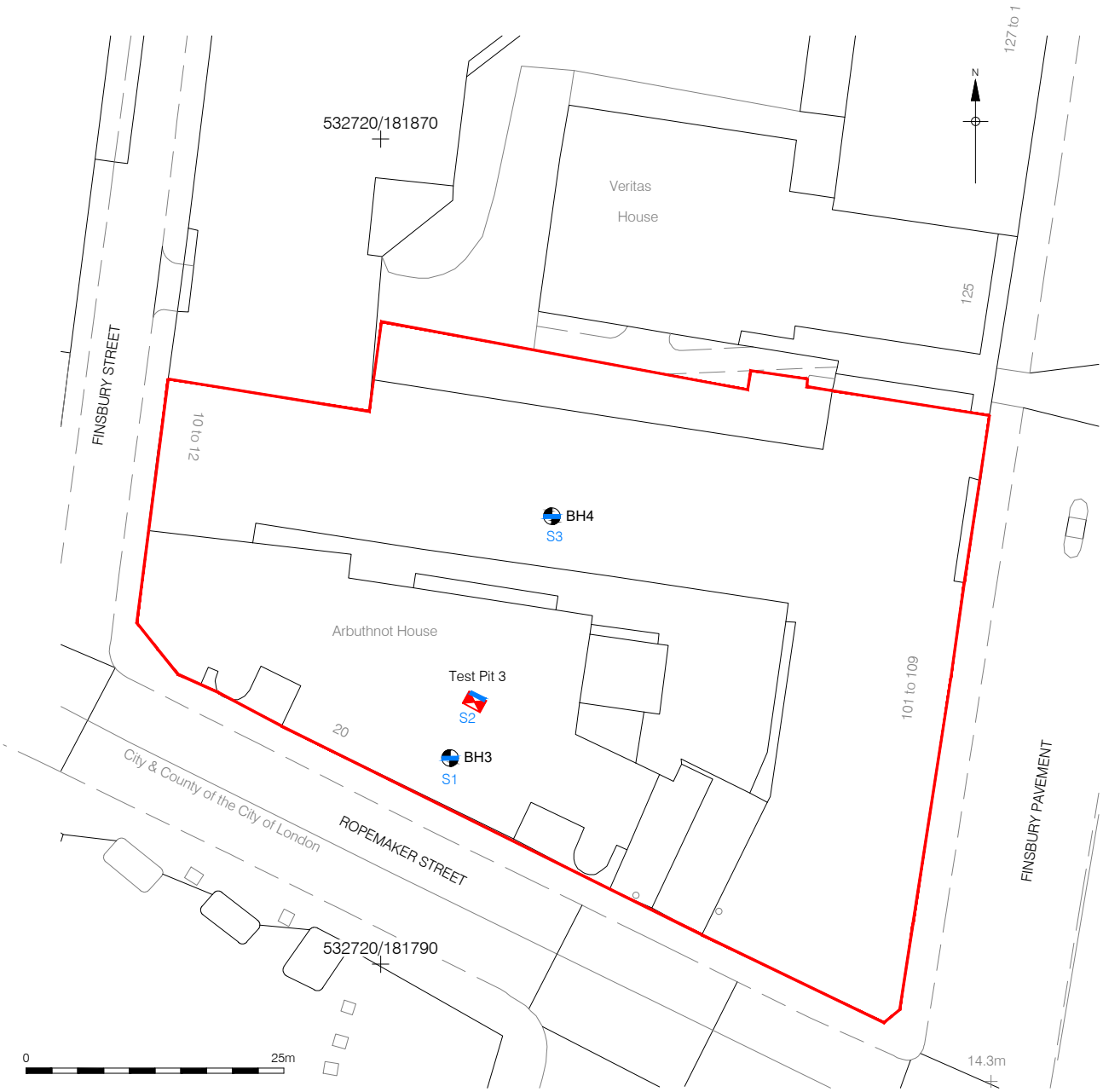
10.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Mills Whipp Projects Ltd for commissioning the work, and RSK Group for their work and co-operation during excavation.

10.2 The author would also like to thank Chris Mayo for managing the project and editing this report, Ray Murphy for producing the illustrations, and Amparo Valcarcel and Barry Bishop for assessing the finds.



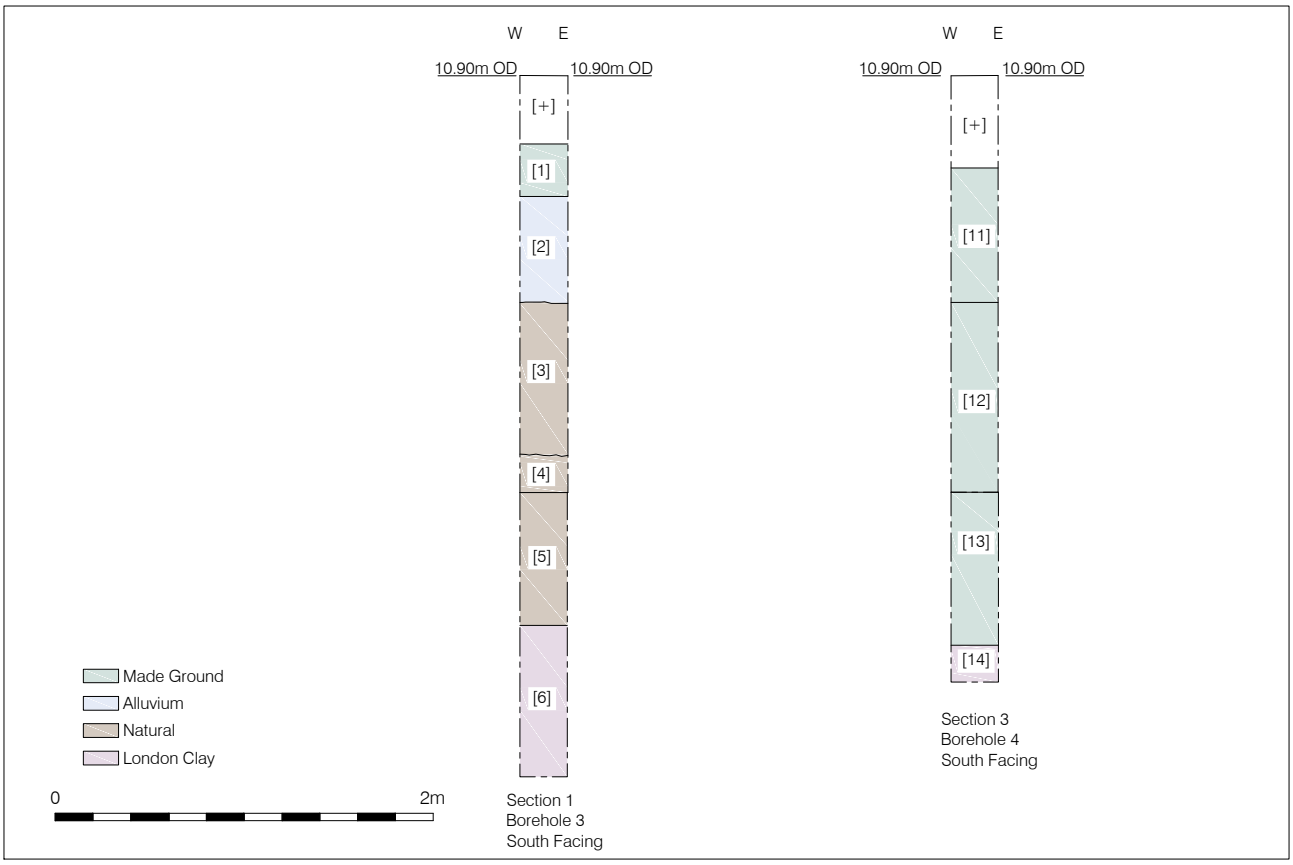
11/10/18 RM

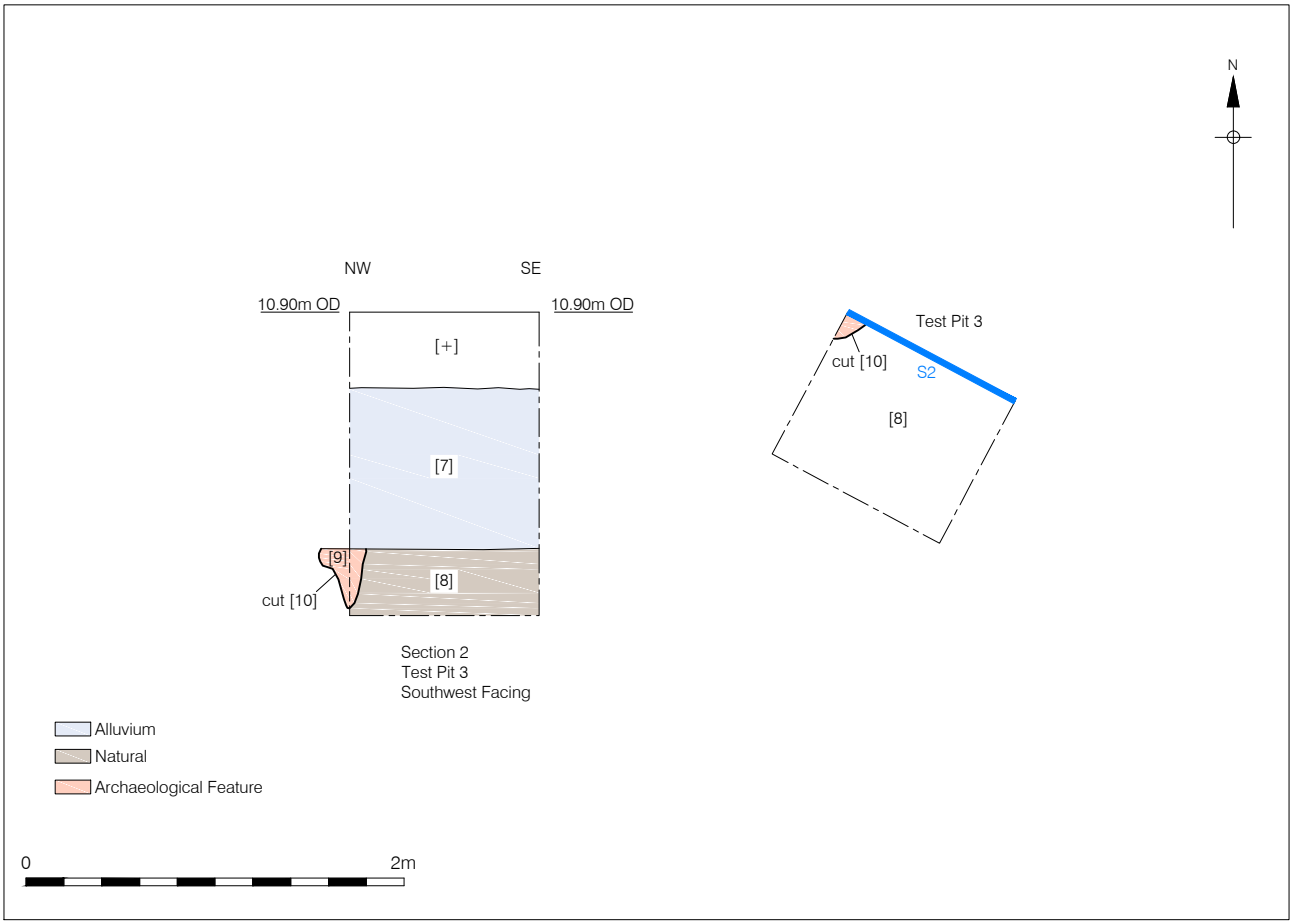
Figure 1
Site Location
1:800,000, 1:250,000, 1:12,500 at A4



26/10/18 RM

Figure 2
Test Pit and Borehole Location Plan
1:625 at A4





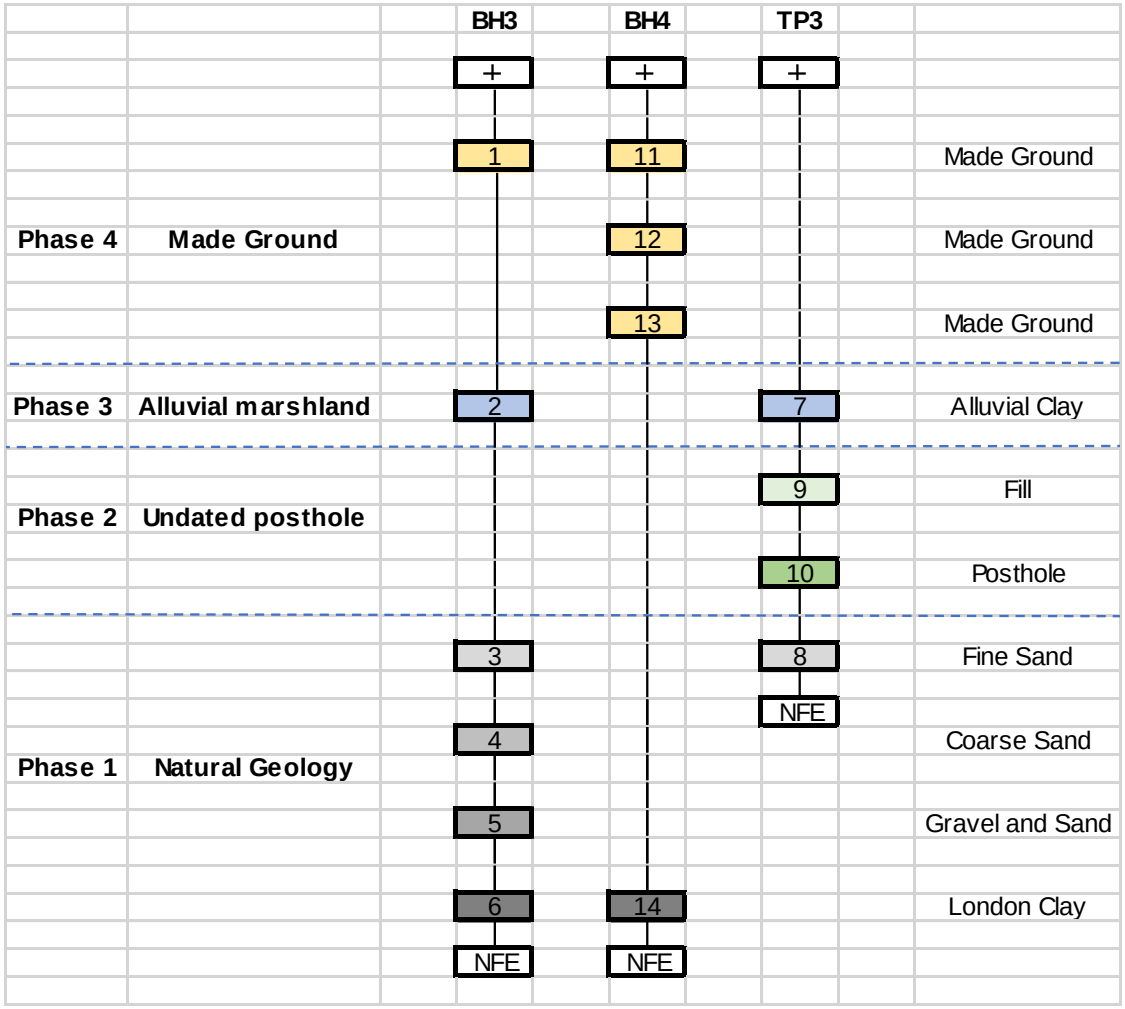
31/10/18 RM

Figure 3
Borehole Sections and Plan and Section of Test Pit
1:40 at A4

11 APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	CTX_Type	CTX_equalto	BH/TP	CTX_Interpretation	CTX_Category	CTX_Levels_high
1	Layer		BH3	Modern Made Ground	Levelling	10.54
2	Layer	7	BH3	Sandy-Clay Alluvial Deposit	Alluvial	10.26
3	Layer	8	BH3	Fine Sand Alluvial Deposit	Alluvial	9.7
4	Layer		BH3	Coarse Sand Alluvial Deposit	Alluvial	8.9
5	Layer		BH3	Gravel-Sand Alluvial Deposit	Alluvial	8.7
6	Layer	14	BH3	London Clay, Natural Geology	Natural	8
7	Layer	2	TP3	Sandy Clay Alluvial Deposit	Alluvial	10.54
8	Layer	3	TP3	Fine Sand Alluvial Deposit	Alluvial	9.65
9	Fill		TP3	Fill of Possible Posthole	Fill	9.65
10	Cut		TP3	Cut of a Possible Posthole	Post-hole	9.65
11	Layer		BH4	Sandy-Silty-Clay Made Ground	Backfill	10.41
12	Layer		BH4	Sandy-Clay Made Ground	Backfill	9.7
13	Layer		BH4	Fine Sand and Gravel Made Ground	Backfill	8.7
14	Layer	6	BH4	London Clay Natural Geology	Natural	7.9

12 APPENDIX 2: SITE MATRIX



13 APPENDIX 3: CBM ASSESSMENT

By Amparo Valcarcel, Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, October 2018

13.1 Introduction

13.1.1 The fabrics were examined at the offices at Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd using the London system of classification with a fabric number allocated to each object. The application of a 1kg masons hammer and sharp chisel to each example ensured that a small fresh fabric surface was exposed. The fabric was examined at x20 magnification using a long arm stereomicroscope or hand lens (Gowland x10).

13.1.2 The small building material assemblage (5 fragments, 196 g) reflects the later post-medieval and modern development of this site (wall tile, Fletton and post great fire bricks). All the building material is in a fragmentary and in an abraded condition which would suggest that it has been re-deposited.

13.1.3 Post-great fire bricks collected from the site, indicates a late post-medieval development in the area, and the white tin-glazed and Fletton brick indicates a modern occupation within or nearby the site.

13.2 Distribution

Context	Fabric	Form	Size	Date range of material		Latest dated material		Spot date	Spot date with mortar
1	3032	Post-great fire bricks	3	1666	1900	1666	1900	1666-1900	No mortar
7	3032;3038;3064 W;3101PM	Post-great fire and Fletton bricks; white tin-glazed; Portland mortar	3	1600	1950	1850	1950	1850-1950	1850-1950

13.3 Recommendation and summary

13.3.1 The value of this small assemblage lies in dating features from the late 17th and mid20th century. All the material reflected the city expansion and the increase of the population in post-medieval and modern period. The material has been discarded following assessment. No further is work recommended.

14 APPENDIX 4: LITHIC ASSESSMENT

By Barry Bishop, Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, October 2018

14.1 A small and heavily rolled flake of translucent brown flint measuring 24mm long by 19mm wide and is 5mm thick was recovered from context [9]. Its striking platform is possibly facetted although this is uncertain due to its degree of post-depositional rolling, and it has a discretely rounded bulb of percussion and a feather distal termination. Its dorsal surface is formed from two flake scars, both struck in same direction as the flake itself was detached, along with a small patch of heavily worn cortex. It is not typologically diagnostic but its technological attributes would suggest a Mesolithic date, but an earlier, Palaeolithic, date could not be ruled out. The latter would be more consistent with its condition, as it appears to have experienced a prolonged period in an abrasive fluviatile environment such as a gravel terrace.

15 APPENDIX 4: OASIS REPORT

OASIS ID: preconst1-331700

Project details	
Project name	20 ROPEMAKER STREET, LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON
Short description of the project	Two Boreholes and one Test Pit were excavated by a geotechnical contractor. The natural geology was reached within the two boreholes at a level of between 8m and 7.9m OD, and consisted of the London Clay Formation. The boreholes and test pit showed a similar stratigraphic sequence: underneath the concrete slab, a made ground layer covered alluvium sealing natural deposits of sandy gravel and London Clay. The sequence in Borehole 4 was disturbed, probably because of a nearby pillar. Archaeology was found at the surface of the layer of sandy clay at 9.70m AOD; it consisted of a possible posthole from which a single struck flint was recovered.
Project dates	Start: 09-10-2018 End: 17-10-2018
Previous/future work	Yes / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	RMA18 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	P2017/3103/FUL - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices
Monument type	POSTHOLE Uncertain
Significant Finds	LITHICS Uncertain
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Test-Pit Survey"
Prompt	Planning condition
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON ISLINGTON ISLINGTON 20 ROPEMAKER STREET
Postcode	EC2Y 9AR
Study area	33000 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3275 8180 51.519002143992 -0.086466263883 51 31 08 N 000 05 11 W Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 7.9m Max: 8m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Project brief originator	Mills Whipp Projects Ltd
Project design originator	Mills Whipp Projects Ltd
Project director/manager	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	Cecilia Galleano

Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	CORE LLP
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Archive ID	RMA18
Physical Contents	"Ceramics","Worked stone/lithics"
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	RMA18
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Images vector","Spreadsheets","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	RMA18
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Drawing","Matrices","Microfilm","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	20 Ropemaker Street, London, EC2Y 9AR: An Archaeological Watching Brief
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Galleano, C.
Other bibliographic details	PCA R13451
Date	2018
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	Grey Literature report in pdf format, A4 with PCA covers
Entered by	Chris Mayo (cmayo@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	31 October 2018

P C A

PCA CAMBRIDGE
THE GRANARY, RECTORY FARM
BREWERY ROAD, PAMPISFORD
CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB22 3EN
t: 01223 845 522
e: cambridge@pre-construct.com

PCA DURHAM
UNIT 19A, TURSDALE BUSINESS PARK
TURSDALE
DURHAM DH6 5PG
t: 0191 377 1111
e: durham@pre-construct.com

PCA LONDON
UNIT 54, BROCKLEY CROSS BUSINESS CENTRE
96 ENDWELL ROAD, BROCKLEY
LONDON SE4 2PD
t: 020 7732 3925
e: london@pre-construct.com

PCA NEWARK
OFFICE 8, ROEWOOD COURTYARD
WINKBURN, NEWARK
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE NG22 8PG
t: 01636 370410
e: newark@pre-construct.com

PCA NORWICH
QUARRY WORKS, DEREHAM ROAD
HONINGHAM
NORWICH NR9 5AP
T: 01223 845522
e: cambridge@pre-construct.com

PCA WARWICK
UNIT 9, THE MILL, MILL LANE
LITTLE SHREWLEY, WARWICK
WARWICKSHIRE CV35 7HN
t: 01926 485490
e: warwick@pre-construct.com

PCA WINCHESTER
5 RED DEER COURT, ELM ROAD
WINCHESTER
HAMPSHIRE SO22 5LX
t: 01962 849 549
e: winchester@pre-construct.com