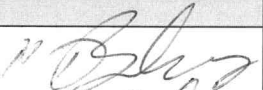
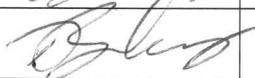


DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

FORMER ESSO PETROL STATION,
CRANMER ROAD, MITCHAM
LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

WATCHING BRIEF

Quality Control

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**An Archaeological Watching Brief at the former Esso Petrol Station,
Cranmer Road, Mitcham, London Borough of Merton.**

Site Code: ESP08

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 2775 6825

Written by Stuart Watson

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, November 2008

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November 2008**

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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at the site of a former Esso Petrol Station, Cranmer Road, Mitcham, London Borough of Merton.
- 1.2 The archaeological investigation (a watching brief) consisted of two phases, conducted on different dates. The first phase involved the monitoring and recording of the excavation of trenches for the removal of contaminated ground in the northwest and southeast corners of the site, while the second phase consisted of monitoring the piling stage of the proposed development.
- 1.3 The investigation revealed post-medieval made ground and 19th century boundary walls. Severe truncation was recorded in the areas of previous underground tanks, with approximately two metres of modern Type II hardcore deposited after the removal of fuel storage tanks to consolidate these areas. No significant archaeological deposits were revealed in ground that had been severely impacted upon during the use of the site as a petrol station from the mid 20th century.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An Archaeological Watching Brief was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd at the site of a former Esso petrol station, Cranmer Road, Mitcham, London Borough of Merton. The archaeological work was undertaken during the removal of contaminated ground and the foundation piling phase of the groundwork, prior to redevelopment for 12 flats (Fig 1).
- 2.2 The initial phase of the investigation monitored and recorded the excavation of four trenches to remove contaminated ground, and was conducted between 25th and 26th September 2008. A second phase, to monitor the piling stage, was conducted between 3rd and 5th November 2008. The work was commissioned by Croft Homes Limited.
- 2.3 The site is bounded to the north and east by Cranmer Road, to the south east by St. Peter and Paul's Catholic Church; to the south by gardens of numbers 1-5 Bramcote Ave and land belonging to St. Peter and Paul's Catholic Church and to the northwest by number 76 Cricket Green (Fig 2).
- 2.4 The National Grid Reference of the site centre is TQ 2775 6825
- 2.5 The site was allocated the code ESP 08.
- 2.6 The watching brief was supervised by Stuart Watson and the project was managed by Tim Bradley for Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited. The site was monitored by Diane Walls, English Heritage (GLAAS), on behalf of the London Borough of Merton.



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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:20,000 at A4

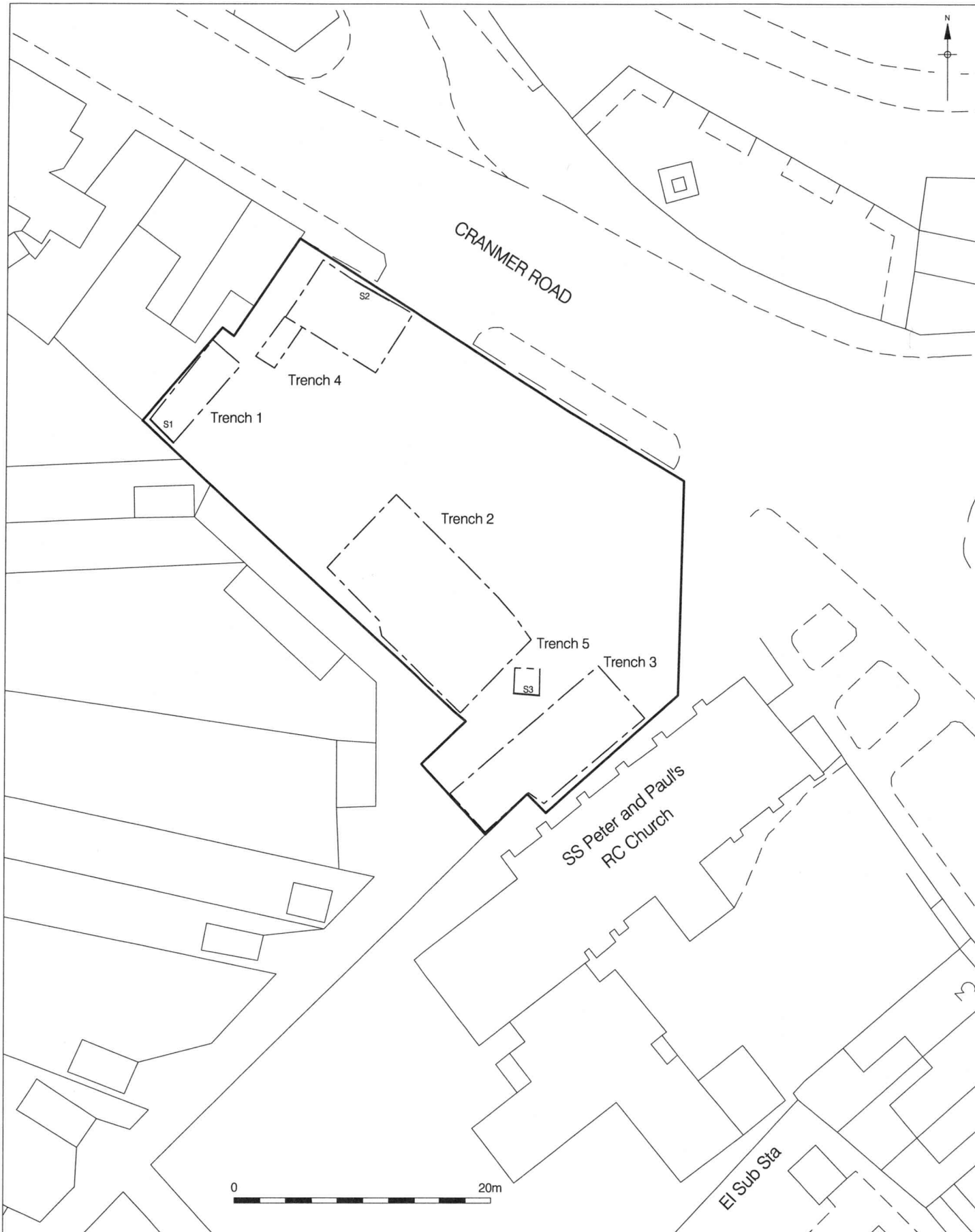


Figure 2
Trench Location
1:400 at A4

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND RESERCH OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The planning background to this site has been comprehensively discussed in the Archaeological Desk Based Assessment prepared for this site¹, and as such only a brief outline will be included in this report.
- 3.2 The study site lies within an Archaeological Priority Zone as defined by the London Borough of Merton's Unitary Development Plan and Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited was commissioned to undertake the work as a requirement to the planning consent; consent number 06/P0708, condition 10.
- 3.3 The archaeological works followed the design specified in the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared for this site² which was submitted and approved by English Heritage and the London Borough of Merton.
- 3.4 The site is located in the Mitcham Common Archaeological Priority Zone, considered to be an area of significance for prehistoric settlement as well as a 'considerable amount of multi-period activity' including the village core which may be early medieval or possibly Saxon in origin³.
- 3.5 The archaeological works followed the methodologies as set out in:
- *Archaeological Guidance Paper 3: Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork In London* (GLAAS 1998).
 - *Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: Archaeological Reports* (GLAAS 1998).
 - *Archaeological Guidance Paper 5: Evaluations* (GLAAS 1998).
- 3.6 There are no Scheduled Ancient monuments on, or close to, the study site.

3.7 Research Objectives

- 3.8 The general aim of the research objectives at the site are as follows:
- What evidence can be revealed of the natural strata and its' topography at the site?

¹ Thompson, G. August 2008

² Brown, G. July 2008

³ LB Merton. 1994

3.9 In addition, the following specific research questions were addressed by the archaeological works on site:

- Is there evidence of prehistoric occupation in the vicinity of the site?
- Is there evidence of Roman occupation in the vicinity of the site?
- Can it be demonstrated that the medieval village extended as far as the limits of the subject site?
- What evidence is there for the survival of post-medieval remains in the area of the site?

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 The British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series Sheet 270 (South London) indicates that site lies on Quaternary River Terrace gravel deposits which in turn overlie London Clay.
- 4.2 Evidence was observed at the study site of the upper geological layers of River Terrace gravel overlying the lower natural deposits of London Clay. These were encountered during the piling phase of the investigation, with the top of the London Clay deposit at approximately 3.00m below current ground level, at c. 19.00mOD.
- 4.3 The site is generally level at c. 22.0mOD.
- 4.4 The site is located approximately 600m northeast of the River Wandle.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The Archaeological and Historical background has been fully documented in the Desk Based Assessment⁴ prepared for this site, and therefore only a brief outline is given here.
- 5.2 No occupation evidence or findspots for the prehistoric period have been identified within 500m radius of the study site.
- 5.3 The study area was probably peripheral to both Roman and Saxon period settlements, with settlement activity not developing until the 11th century.
- 5.4 The site is defined by Cranmer Road, which until the late 19th century was known as the Causeway, an elevated medieval roadway crossing low-lying ground to either side. It is possible that the low-lying terrain of the site was marshy and therefore unsuitable for habitation or cultivation and may have been waste ground until the post-medieval period. Parallel with the Causeway ran Cranmer's Ditch, a drainage channel of medieval origin, which defined the rear boundary of the properties that occupied the site in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- 5.5 The site had been developed for residential use by the 18th century, continuing into the late 19th century. However, according to some sources⁵, the properties on the site may have their origins in the medieval period.
- 5.6 Following air raid damage to residential properties during the Second World War, a garage forecourt replaced the destroyed houses on the study site, which by the 1970s was redeveloped as an Esso fuel filling station.
- 5.7 The filling station was recently decommissioned, and planning consent was granted for the site to be redeveloped with a part 2/3 story building housing 12 flats.

⁴ Thompson, G. August 2008. 6.

⁵ Montague, 2001:107

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The fieldwork was designed as an archaeological watching brief to monitor and record any archaeological deposits exposed during the removal of contaminated ground and the piling phase at the site, prior to development.
- 6.2 The study site was located on the site of a former filling station and encompassed an area of 1100m²
- 6.3 Five trenches were excavated, concentrated in the north-western and south-eastern corners of the site. Trenches 1-4 were excavated as remedial work to remove ground contaminated by hydrocarbons, while Trench 5 was excavated to remove an obstruction encountered during the piling phase. In addition, geological data was obtained from piling position 22, located in the central part of the site.
- 6.4 The dimensions of the trenches are as follows:
- Trench 1, located in the western corner of the site, measured 3.00m northwest - southeast by 8.50m northeast – southwest.
 - Trench 2, located in the southern part of the site, measured 15.50m northwest-southeast by 8.00m northeast by southwest.
 - Trench 3, located in the southwest corner of the site, measured 15.00m northeast - southwest by 5.50m northwest by southeast.
 - Trench 4, located in the northwest corner of the site, measured 8.50m northwest-southeast by 5.50m northeast by southwest.
 - Trench 5, located in the eastern part of the site, measured 2.00m northwest-southeast by 2.00m northeast by southwest.
- 6.5 The total excavated area of the trenches was 282.75 m², representing approximately 26% of the total site area.
- 6.6 The works were monitored and recorded by an attendant archaeologist from Pre-Construct Archaeology limited.
- 6.7 All archaeological features (stratigraphical layers, cuts, fills, structures) were recorded in plan at a scale of 1:100 and in section at a scale of 1:10 and 1:20. All written data was entered on *pro-forma* sheets following standard recording methods, and a photographic record using digital format was made as appropriate.

6.8 Levels were calculated from data shown on developer's plans⁶ which indicated an approximate ground level of 22.00mOD.

6.9 The work was undertaken following English Heritage (GLAAS) guidelines.⁷

⁶ 1:100 scale 'Existing Site Plan' AC Holden Limited, Drg. No.1163/01. February 2007.

⁷ English Heritage, GLAAS. 1998

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The following description of the stratigraphy, discussed by trench, details the main characteristics of each context and its position in the phased stratigraphic matrix. Further information regarding the contexts can be found in Appendix 1. A description of the underlying geological deposits observed during the drilling of pile position 22 is also discussed.

7.2 Trench 1 (Figs. 2 & 3)

7.2.1 The earliest feature observed in Trench 1 was a brick built wall [1], located on the line of the western boundary of the site. The wall, constructed of frogged orange/red stock brick, was exposed along the east-west axis for a length of 3.00m and was encountered at 0.70m below ground level at c. 21.32mOD. It was interpreted as a late 19th century garden boundary wall.

7.2.2 Overlying wall [1] was layer [2], a 0.60m thick deposit of dark greyish brown silty sand with occasional inclusions of pottery and ceramic building material, which dated the layer to the late 19th century. It was encountered at 0.40m below ground level at 21.62mOD. Context [2] represents the deposit south of wall [1], while north of the wall this layer, whilst identical, was assigned context number [3] and was observed continuing beyond the trench limit of excavation. This layer is interpreted as post-medieval garden soil.

7.2.3 The above deposits were overlain by a 0.40m thick layer of modern Type II hardcore laid-down after the removal of fuel storage tanks at the site. The top of this layer formed the current ground level at c. 22.02mOD.

7.3 Trench 2 (Fig. 2)

7.3.1 Approximately 60% of the northern part of Trench 2 had been truncated by the presence of a fuel tank in the area, with the truncation continuing beyond the limit of excavation. In the remaining southern part of the trench layer [4] was encountered at 1.00m below ground level at c. 21.22mOD, and consisted of a deposit of dark greyish brown silty sand with frequent inclusions of ceramic building material. This layer is presumed to be a 19th century made ground deposit. Built onto the top of this layer was

modern concrete foundations interpreted as forming part of the construction of the demolished filling station.

- 7.3.2 A modern hardcore layer sealed the sequence and formed the current ground level at c. 22.22mOD, overlay this layer.

7.4 Trench 3 (Fig. 2)

- 7.4.1 Trench 3 was excavated through modern deposits of Type II hardcore to a depth of 1.00m below ground level, at 21.30mOD. The top of this layer formed the current ground level at 22.37mOD. Modern concrete foundations were observed in the base of the trench. Along the northeast - southwest axis of the trench a 19th century wall foundation was observed, forming the boundary between the site and the adjacent Church.

7.5 Trench 4 (Figs. 2 & 3)

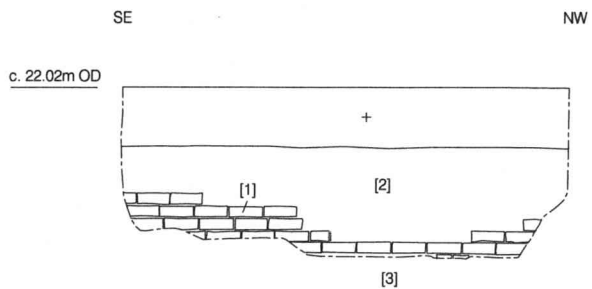
- 7.5.1 Trench 4 was excavated through modern deposits of Type II hardcore to a depth of 1.00m below ground level, at 21.08mOD. The top of this layer formed the current ground level at 22.08mOD. Modern concrete foundations were observed in the base of the trench.

7.6 Trench 5 (Fig. 2)

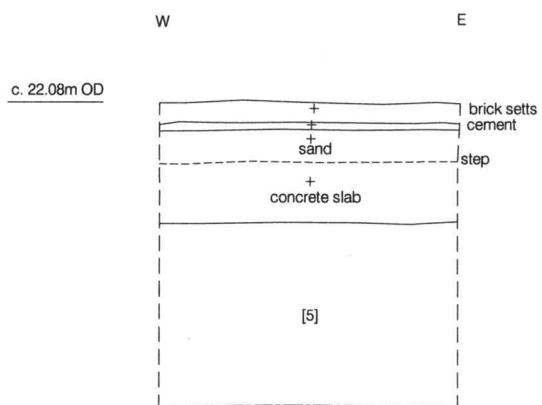
- 7.6.1 Trench 5 was excavated to a depth of 3.00m below ground level, but only the upper 2.00m were visible due to flooding. The lowest deposit observed was a layer of modern made ground with frequent inclusions of ceramic building material and concrete fragments and probably represents the backfilling of voids with demolition rubble left after the removal of fuel storage tanks. The top of this layer was at 1.10m below ground level, at c. 21.20mOD.
- 7.6.2 This in turn was overlain by a 0.60m thick mid brown silty layer of recently re-deposited garden soil similar in composition to layers [2] & [3] in Trench 1. The top of this layer was at 21.80mOD and the base at 21.20mOD.
- 7.6.3 This in turn was overlain by a 0.50m thick layer of Type II hardcore, the top of which formed the current ground level at c.22.30mOD.

7.7 Pile position 22 (Fig. 2)

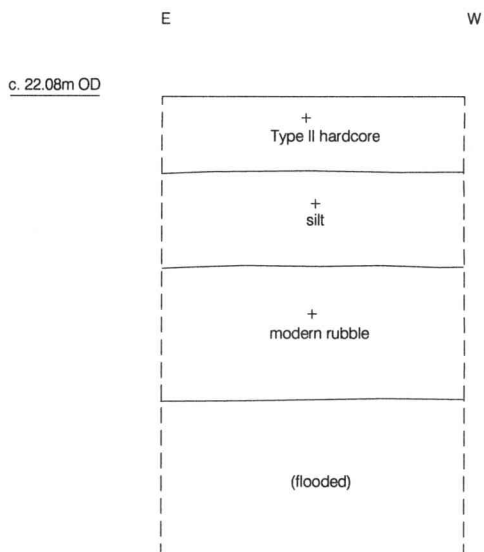
- 7.7.1 Pile position 22 is representative of a number of pile positions drilled across the site, and gives an average profile of the underlying geology of the study area. This position was drilled to a depth of 15.00m, and the lowest deposit encountered was a natural layer [6] of very stiff mid grey clay interpreted as London Clay, the top of which was observed at c. 3.00m below ground level at approximately 19.00 m OD and continued beyond the depth of the borehole.
- 7.7.2 The London Clay overlain by a 0.50m thick natural layer of firm brown/grey sandy clay, the top of which was at 2.50m below ground level at c. 19.60mOD.
- 7.7.3 The natural sandy clay was sealed by a 0.50m thick layer of soft, brown, sandy clayey silt with occasional gravel, the top of which was at 2.00m below ground level at c. 20.10mOD.
- 7.7.4 The sandy clay was in turn overlain by a 2.00m thick layer of modern Type II hardcore, the top of which formed the current ground level at c. 22.10mOD.



Section 1
Trench 1, north east facing



Section 2
Trench 4, south facing representative section



Section 3
Trench 5, north facing representative section



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Figure 3
Sections 1-3
1:50 at A4

8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The original research objectives of the investigation are listed below with a summary of the archaeological evidence recovered to formulate interpretations and conclusions.

8.2 General Research Objectives.

8.2.1 What evidence can be revealed of the natural strata and its' topography at the site?

8.2.2 Evidence for the natural strata was confined to the drilling of pile position 22, and only limited observation could take place. Natural deposits of London Clay were encountered at the site approximately 3.00m below current ground level, overlain by successive layers of brown/grey sandy clay at 2.50m below ground level and sandy clayey silt with occasional gravel at 2.00m below ground level, the latter presumed to be River Terrace Gravel.

8.3 Specific Research Objectives.

8.3.1 Is there evidence of prehistoric occupation in the vicinity of the site?

8.3.2 No evidence for any activity in the prehistoric period was discovered.

8.3.3 Is there evidence of Roman activity in the vicinity of the site?

8.3.4 No evidence was found for activity in the Roman period specific to this location.

8.3.5 Can it be demonstrated that the medieval village extended as far as the limits of the subject site?

8.3.6 No evidence was found for the limits of the medieval village extending to the area of the study site. Indeed no evidence for any activity in the medieval period was discovered at the site.

8.3.7 What evidence is there for the survival of post-medieval remains in the area of the site?

8.3.8 There was limited survival of post-medieval remains in the area of the site.

- 8.3.9 The post-medieval remains encountered were confined to the outer limits of the site, in the form of late 19th century boundary walls observed in Trenches 1 and 3 (Figs. 2 & 3).
- 8.3.10 Much of the site had been heavily truncated by successive episodes of the installation, and later removal of, fuel storage tanks from the 1950s onwards. The modern concrete foundations observed in Trenches 2, 3 and 4 are presumed to be associated with these fuel tanks. The episodes of fuel tank installation and removal would have had a severe impact on any surviving archaeological remains at the site and as a result no significant archaeological remains were discovered.
- 8.3.11 The piling cores for the development were drilled through the top surface of the site to a depth of 15.00m, with beam slot trenches excavated between the pile positions, to a depth of 0.60m. The ground has been raised and levelled with a layer of Type II hardcore to act as the piling mat, to thicknesses of between 1.00-2.00m across the majority of the site and therefore the beam slot trenching will have no impact on any surviving archaeological deposits.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Croft Homes Limited for commissioning the work and Diane Walls, English Heritage (GLAAS) for monitoring the work on behalf of the London Borough of Merton.

- 9.2 The author would also like to thank the on-site contractors for their invaluable assistance. PCA CAD department produced the drawings and Tim Bradley undertook the project management and editing.

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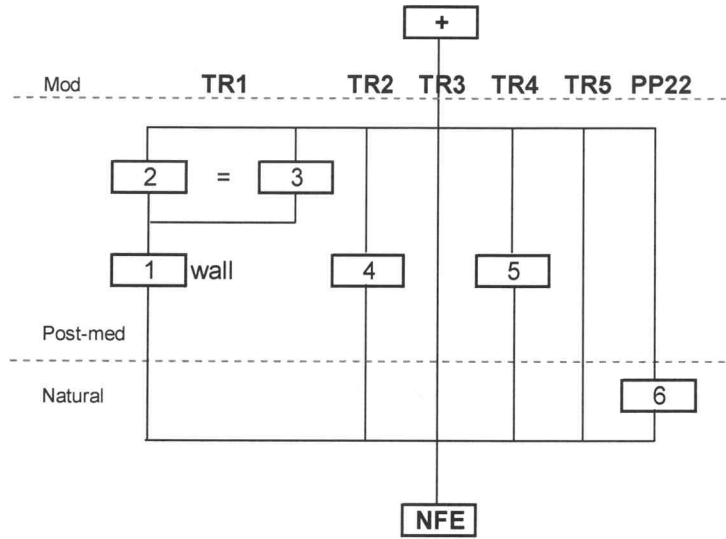
Cartographic sources.

British Geological Survey. 1:50 000 Series, England and Wales Sheet 270 (South London) 1998.

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context No.	Type	Plan No.	Section No.	Description	Date
1	Masonry	TR1	S.1	Boundary wall	Post-med
2	Layer	-	S.1	Garden soil	Post-med
3	Layer	TR1	S.1	Same as [2]	Post-med
4	Layer	TR2	-	Made ground	Post-med
5	Layer	TR4	S.2	Made ground	Post-med
6	Layer	-	PP01	Nat. London clay	Geological

APPENDIX 2: MATRIX



APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at the former Petrol Station, Cranmer Road, Mitcham, London Borough of Merton
Short description of the project	An Archaeological Watching Brief was conducted on the site of a former Esso petrol station. No significant archaeological remains, other than late 19th century boundary walls, were discovered at the site. The natural strata of London Clay was encountered c. 2.80m below ground level.
Project dates	Start: 25-09-2008 End: 05-11-2008
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	ESP08 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	BOUNDARY WALLS Post Medieval

Significant Finds	POTTERY Modern
Methods & techniques	'Visual Inspection'
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON MERTON MITCHAM Cranmer Road, Mitcham, London Borough of Merton
Postcode	CR4
Study area	282.75 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 2775 6825 51.3983712817 -0.163394420289 51 23 54 N 000 09 48 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 19.00m Max: 19.00m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Project brief originator English Heritage

Project design originator Gary Brown

Project director/manager Tim Bradley

Project supervisor Stuart Watson

Type of sponsor/funding body Croft Homes Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient LAARC

Physical Contents 'Ceramics'

Digital Archive Exists? No

Paper Archive recipient LAARC

Paper Contents 'Ceramics'

Paper Media available 'Context sheet', 'Matrices', 'Photograph', 'Plan', 'Report', 'Section'

Project
bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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