

Perseid School, Bordesley Road, Morden, London Borough of Merton: An Archaeological Watching Brief Report

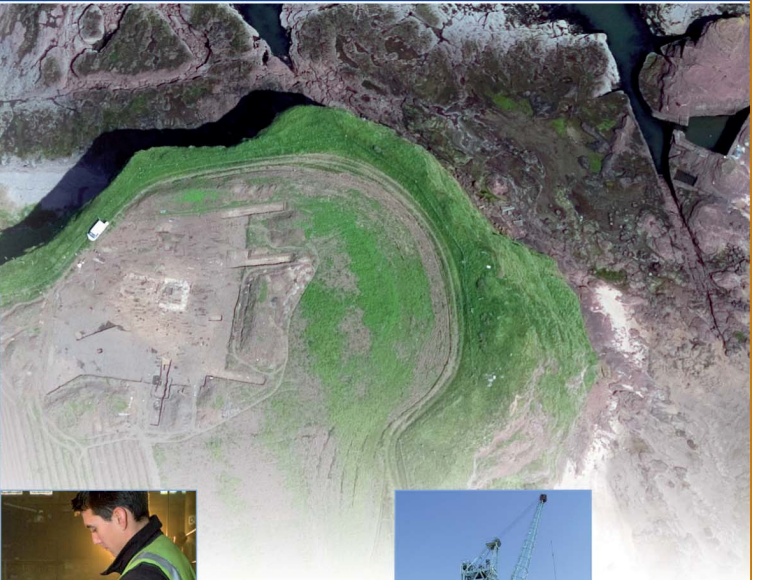
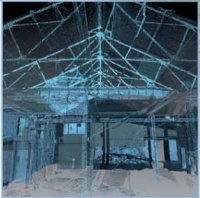
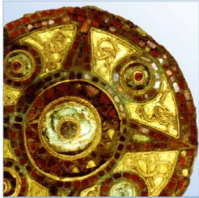
Planning Application Ref: 12/P2095

National Grid Reference Number: TQ 2560 6791

AOC Project No: 32310

Site Code: PE113

Date: January 2013



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group, on behalf of EC Harris LLP, between the 8th and 11th January 2013 at the site of the Perseid School, Bordesley Road, Morden. The watching brief focused on the excavation of footings for extensions to the school, consisting of two trenches.

The watching brief revealed that in both trenches modern made ground deposits overlay natural clay, indicating this area of the site had previously experienced a phase of horizontal truncation, probably associated with the construction of the current school. No features or finds of archaeological interest were observed during the course of the watching brief.

The results of the archaeological investigation will be summarised for inclusion in the London Archaeologist Fieldwork Round-up and published via the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) website.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken at the site of the Perseid School, Bordesley Road, Morden, London Borough of Merton.
- 1.2 The site is located at National Grid Reference (NGR) TQ 2560 6791, set back from the southwest side of Bordesley Road, Morden (Figures 1 & 2). The site is bound by residential properties fronting Bordesley Road to the northeast and Abbotsbury Road to the southeast. The Morden South terminus forms the northern limit of the site. The southern boundary of the site is formed by playing fields with Abbotsbury Primary School located further to the south.

2. Planning Background

- 2.1 The local planning authority is the London Borough of Merton. Archaeological advice to the borough is provided by Diane Abrams, Archaeological Officer for the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS), part of English Heritage.
- 2.2 The site lies in the Morden Village Archaeological Priority Zone as designed by the London Borough of Merton. The priority zone relates to, 'the estate of Morden which is first referred to in the tenth century, and appears to have remained polyfocal with a particular cluster in the vicinity of the church throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods (this may be partly explained by its location on London Clay based soils rather than more easily cultivated gravels or river alluvium deposits)' (Merton Council 2012).
- 2.3 The site does not contain any Scheduled Monuments or Listed Buildings, nor does the site lie within an area designated as a World Heritage Site, Registered Battlefield or Registered Parks and Garden.
- 2.4 The proposed development works comprise the construction of two new single storey extensions to provide additional classroom space within the school. The extensions will be located on the south east elevation of the existing building.
- 2.5 The archaeological condition relating to the planning application (Application Reference: 12/P2095) reads as follows:

No development shall take place within the site until the an on-site watching brief by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist during construction work has been secured in accordance with details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. In the event of important archaeological features or remains being discovered which are beyond the scope of the watching brief to excavate and record, 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 policy BE.13 of the Adopted Merton Unitary Development Plan 2003.

- 2.6 An archaeological desk-based assessment has not been produced for this site. The watching brief formed the first phase of the archaeological investigation.
- 2.7 AOC Archaeology Group were commissioned by EC Harris LLP to undertake the archaeological watching brief. The methodology was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (AOC 2012) which detailed how the watching brief would be conducted.

3. Geology and Topography

- 3.1 The British Geological Survey geo-index map (BGS 2012) indicates that the underlying bedrock geology of the site and surrounding area is composed of the London Clay formation. The superficial geological deposits are not noted for the site, although Kempton Park Gravels are recorded to the north of the site and alluvial deposits associated with the River Wandle are recorded to the east.
- 3.2 No previous geotechnical investigations have been completed on site to inform on below ground conditions.
- 3.3 Topographic data from within the site boundary has not been supplied. The closest benchmark to the site is at 172 Abbotsbury Road (east angle southeast face), which records a height of 26.14m OD (0.7m above ground level).

4. Archaeological And Historical Background

- 4.1 The following archaeological and historical background utilises published and unpublished sources (see bibliography) and a search of Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER) entries recorded on Heritage Gateway (2012).

Prehistoric Periods (c.500,000 BC – AD 43)

- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 Evidence of prehistoric activity within a 500m radius of the site includes some reported Palaeolithic elephant remains (British Geological Survey 1893) and possible Mesolithic and Bronze Age residual flint artefacts recovered from a plough soil (Heritage Gateway 2012).

Roman Period (AD 43 – AD 410)

- 4.4 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 (GLHER 030657/00/00). The Roman road Stane Street, leading from London to Chichester, ran through Morden to the east of the development site. Goodman describes that 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 (Goodman 1995), although this has not been confirmed archaeologically.

Early Medieval (AD 410 – AD 1066) and Medieval Periods (AD 1066 – AD 1536)

- 4.5 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 (Goodman 1995, Malden 1912).
- 4.6 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 (Mills 1991). 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.

- 4.7 There is no archaeological evidence for early medieval occupation in close proximity to the site. An archaeological investigation at the former Penfolds Nursery (GLHER MLO77196) recorded a buried soil horizon which has been interpreted as medieval in date.

The Post-Medieval (AD 1536 – AD 1900) and Modern (AD 1900 – Present) Periods

- 4.8 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.
- 4.9 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 to the south. A footpath connecting these two areas of occupation runs north south to the west of the site. It is not anticipated to fall within the site boundary.
- 4.10 The site itself remained undeveloped until the construction of the school, illustrated on the 1970-1971 Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map. 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 school buildings are recorded on Ordnance Survey mapping.
- 4.11 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 (GLHER MLO76332). 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 25inch map of 1865.

5. Strategy

5.1 Aims of the Investigation

- 5.1.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief were defined as being:
- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.
 - To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
 - To record and sample excavate any archaeological remains encountered.
 - To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological features and deposits.
 - To determine the extent of previous truncations of the archaeological deposits.
 - To enable the archaeology advisor to make an informed decision on the status of the condition, and any possible requirement for further work in order to satisfy that condition.
 - To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation.
- 5.1.2 The specific aims of the archaeological watching brief were defined as being:

- To ascertain if any medieval/post-medieval remains are present.

5.1.3 The final aim was to make public the results of the investigation, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

5.2 Methodology

5.2.1 Site procedures were defined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (AOC 2012). All work was carried out in accordance with national guidelines (IfA 2008, IfA 2010).

5.2.2 The watching brief focused on the excavation of two sets of footings prior to the construction of two small extensions (Figure 2). The results of the watching brief are described below.

5.2.3 A unique site code for the project (**PEI13**) was issued by the London Archaeological Archive Resource Centre (LAARC), and was used as the site identifier for all records produced.

5.2.4 The watching brief was undertaken between 8th and 11th January 2013.

5.2.5 Levels for each context were established based on data contained within the site engineer's specifications.

5.2.6 The archaeological watching brief was conducted by Les Capon and the author under the overall management of Melissa Melikian, Operations Director. The site was monitored by Diane Abrams on behalf of GLAAS.

6 Watching Brief Results

6.1 Trench 1

6.1.1 Surface of Trench = 23.79m AOD

Level (OD)	Depth BGL	Context Number	Description
23.79-23.69m	0.00m	(100)	Imported topsoil. Soft, dark grey, silty clay.
23.69-23.59m	0.10m	(101)	Made ground. Soft, dark brownish grey, silty clay.
23.59-22.69m NFE	0.20- 1.10m	(102)	Natural. Firm, dark brown, clay.

6.1.2 Trench 1 was located directly adjacent to the southern corner of the school building. The trench measured 6.90m by 4.30m in plan and was orientated northwest-southeast (Figs 2 & 3, Plate A).

6.1.3 The earliest deposit encountered was a firm, dark brown natural clay (102), recorded at a height of 23.59m AOD. Overlying natural clay (102) was a soft, dark brownish grey, silty clay made ground deposit (101), 0.10m thick, which was interpreted as a disturbed interface horizon. Sealing the sequence was a dark grey, silty clay imported topsoil (100), 0.10m thick.



Plate A. Trench 1 Looking Northwest

6.1.4 No features or finds of archaeological interest were identified in Trench 1.

6.2 Trench 2

6.2.1 Surface of Trench = 23.84m AOD

Level (OD)	Depth BGL	Context Number	Description
23.84-23.78m	0.00m	(200)	Paving slabs.
23.78-23.53m	0.06m	(201)	Made ground. CBM rubble.
23.53-22.58m NFE	0.31- 1.27m	(202)	Natural. Firm, dark brown, clay.

6.2.2 Trench 2 was located directly adjacent to the southeast wall of the school building. The trench measured 6.70m by 2.60m in plan and was orientated northwest-southeast (Figs 2 & 4, Plate B).



Plate B. Trench 2 Looking West

- 6.2.3 The earliest deposit encountered was a firm, dark brown natural clay (202), recorded at a height of 23.53m AOD. Cut into natural clay (102) in the northwest area of the trench was the line of modern service [207] which was 0.50m wide and was not fully excavated. Modern concrete foundations pads [204], [205] and [206] were located throughout the trench and cut both natural clay (202) and modern service [207]. The concrete pads varied in size and were in excess of 1m deep.
- 6.2.4 Sealing concrete foundations pads [204], [205] and [206] was a 0.25m thick layer of brick rubble (201) which formed the formation deposit for the overlying paved surface (200). Abutting paved surface (200) at the southeast end of the trench, and overlying natural clay (202), was a 0.30m wide band of imported silty clay topsoil (203).
- 6.2.5 No features or finds of archaeological interest were identified in Trench 2.

6.3 Finds

- 6.3.1 No finds were collected during the course of the watching brief.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 During the course of the watching brief at Perseid School the excavation of two trenches was observed. The stratigraphic sequence in both trenches was identified and recorded. Natural clay deposits were identified in both trenches between a height of 23.53m AOD and 23.59m AOD.
- 7.2 The sequence of deposits in Trench 1 identified that natural clay was overlain by made ground and modern topsoil deposits. The sequence of deposits in Trench 2 recognised that natural clay had been truncated by a modern service and several concrete foundation pads, prior to being sealed by a layer of modern made ground and a paved surface. No features or finds of archaeological interest were identified in either of the two trenches.
- 7.3 The sequence of deposits in both trenches indicate that the natural clay in this area of the site has experienced a phase of horizontal truncation, probably associated with the construction of the current school building, which has removed any potential for archaeological features to survive. No remains associated with the medieval or post-medieval periods were identified during the course of the watching brief.

8 Publication and Archive Deposition

- 8.1 Due to the nature of the results of the archaeological investigation, publication is expected to be limited to a summary in the London Archaeology Round-up and publication via the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) (Appendix B). If further work is undertaken the requirements for publication will be reviewed.
- 8.2 On completion of the project, the archive, consisting of paper records, drawings, digital photographs, will be deposited with the LAARC.

9 Bibliography

- AOC Archaeology (2012). *Perseid School, Bordesley Road, Morden, London Borough Of Merton: A Written Scheme Of Investigation For An Archaeological Watching Brief*.
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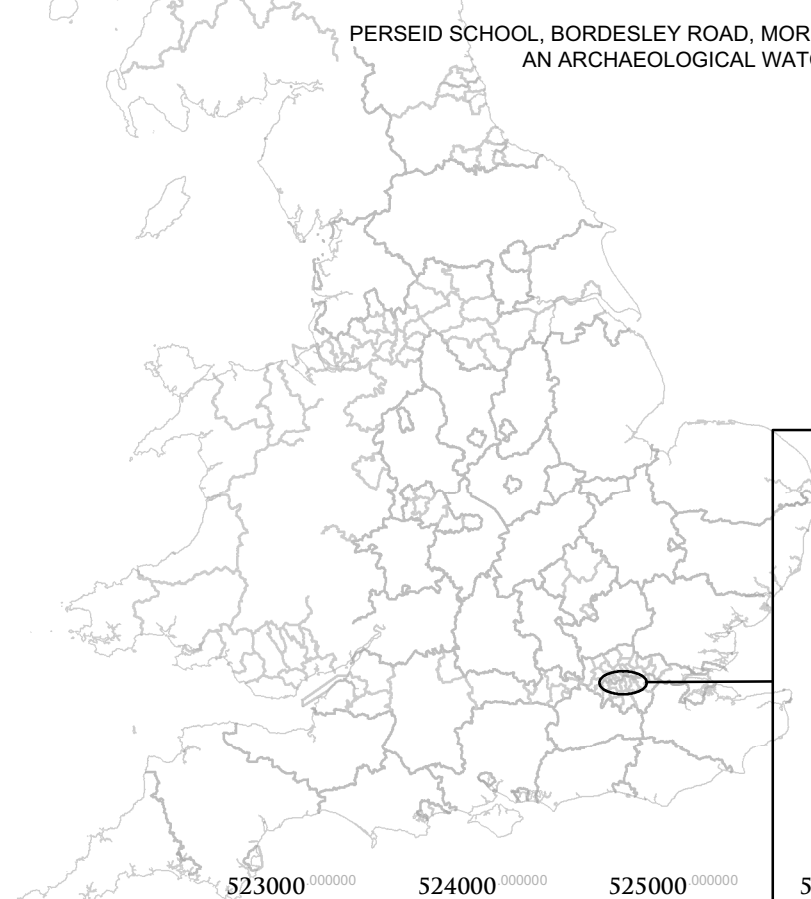
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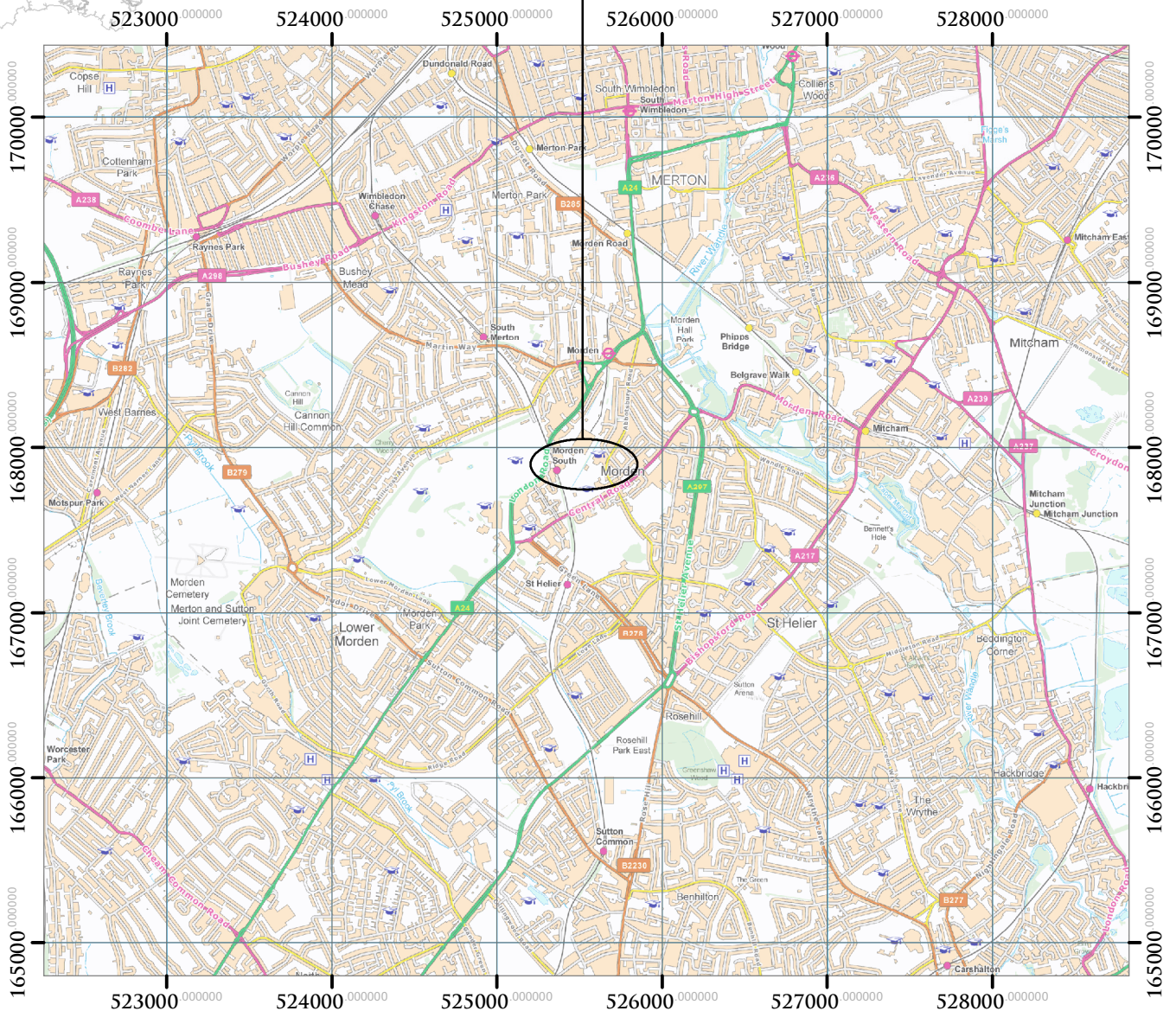
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PERSEID SCHOOL, BORDESLEY ROAD, MORDEN, LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON:
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT



<p>FIGURE 1</p>	
<p>SITE LOCATION</p>	
<p>0 0.5 1 2 KM</p>	
<p>BASED ON DATA PROVIDED BY THE ORDNANCE SURVEY WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CONTROLLER OF HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE. © CROWN COPYRIGHT. LICENSE NO. AL 1000 16114</p>	





■ TRENCH LOCATION

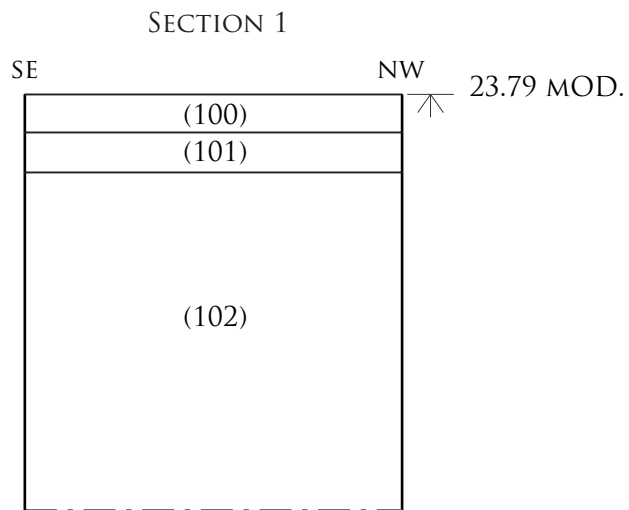
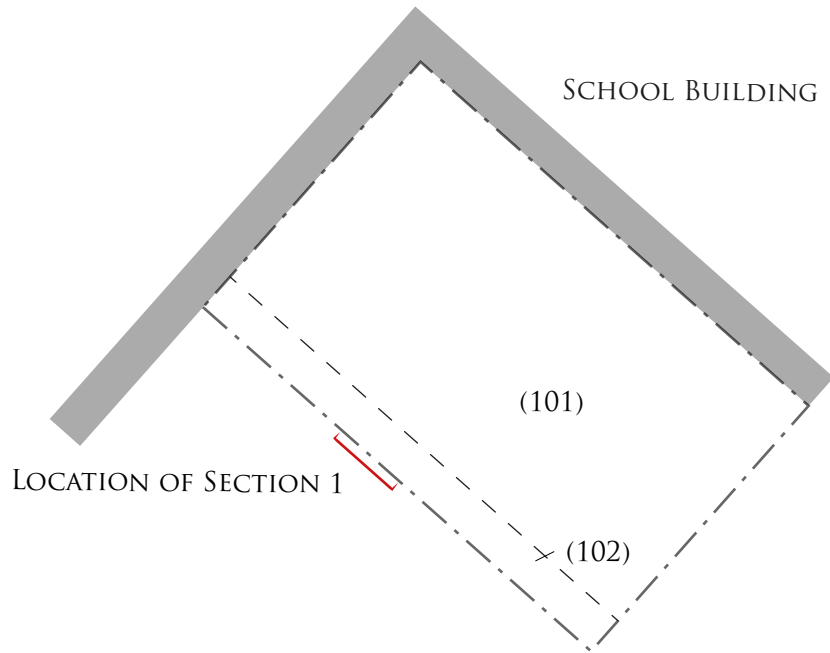
DETAILED SITE/TRENCH LOCATION PLAN

FIGURE
2



NOT TO SCALE





TRENCH 1: PLAN AND SECTION

FIGURE
3

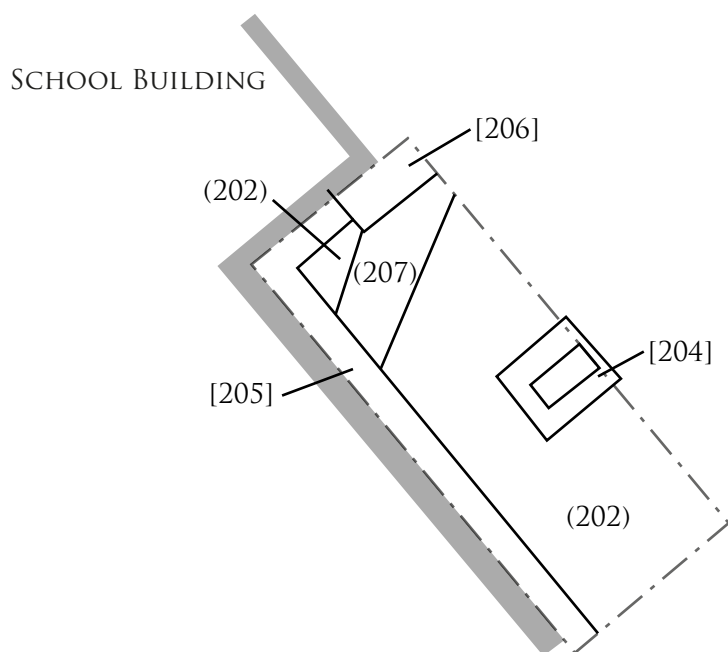


PLAN SCALE:
1:100 ON A4



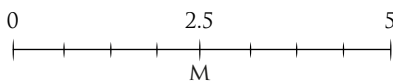
SECTION SCALE:
1:20 ON A4





TRENCH 2: PLAN

FIGURE
4



PLAN SCALE:
1:100 ON A4



Appendices

Appendix A – Context Register

Context No.	Context Description	Length	Width	Depth
100	Topsoil	6.90m	4.30m	0.10m
101	Made Ground	6.90m	4.30m	0.10m
102	Natural Clay	6.90m	4.30m	0.90m+
200	Paving	6.70m	2.60m	0.06m
201	Made Ground	6.70m	2.60m	0.25m
202	Natural Clay	6.70m	2.60m	0.95m+
203	Topsoil	2.60m	0.30m	0.12m
204	Concrete Pad	1.10m	1.50m	1.20m+
205	Concrete Pad	6.70m	0.20m	0.40m+
206	Concrete Pad	0.50m	0.30m+	1.20m+
207	Modern Service	3.00m	0.50m	0.40m+

Appendix B – Oasis Form

OASIS ID: aocarcha1-138214

Project details

Project name Perseid School, Morden, London Borough of Merton: Archaeological Watching Brief

Short description of the project An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group at the site of the Perseid School, Bordesley Road, Morden. The watching brief focused on the excavation footings for extension to the school, consisting of two trenches. The watching brief revealed that in both trenches modern made ground deposits overlay natural clay, indicating this area of the site had previously experienced a phase of horizontal truncation, probably associated with the construction of the current school. No features or finds of archaeological interest were observed during the course of the watching brief.

Project dates Start: 08-01-2013 End: 11-01-2013

Previous/future work No / No

Any project codes associated reference 32310 - Contracting Unit No.

Any project codes associated reference PE113 - Sitecode

Any project codes associated reference 12/P2095 - Planning Application No.

Type of project Recording project

Site status Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)

Current Land use Community Service 1 - Community Buildings

Investigation type ""Watching Brief""

Prompt Planning condition

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON MERTON MORDEN Perseid School, Morden, LB of Merton

Postcode SM4 5JS

Study area 50.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 2560 6791 51 0 51 23 44 N 000 11 39 W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 23.53m Max: 23.59m

Project creators

Name of AOC Archaeology Group
Organisation

Project brief AOC Archaeology Group
originator

Project design AOC Archaeology Group
originator

Project Meklissa Melikian
director/manager

Project supervisor Chris Clarke

Type of developer
sponsor/funding
body

Name of EC Harris LLP
sponsor/funding

body

Project archives

Physical Archive No
Exists?

Physical Archive LAARC
recipient

Digital Archive LAARC
recipient

Digital Archive ID PEI13

Digital Media "Images raster / digital photography"
available

Digital Archive notes To be held at AOC until ready to archive

Paper Archive LAARC
recipient

Paper Archive ID PEI13

Paper Media "Context sheet", "Plan", "Report", "Section"
available

Paper Archive notes To be held at AOC until ready to archive

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title PERSEID SCHOOL, BORDESLEY ROAD, MORDEN, LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON: A WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Author(s)/Editor(s) MacQuarrie, H.

Date 2012

Issuer or publisher AOC Archaeology

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Description A4 text, 4 illustrations, 15 pages bound between plastic covers

**Project
bibliography 2**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title PERSEID SCHOOL, BORDESLEY ROAD, MORDEN, LONDON BOROUGH
OF MERTON:AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Author(s)/Editor(s) Clarke, C.

Date 2013

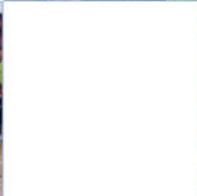
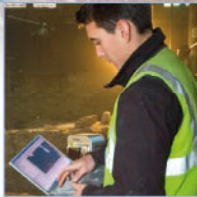
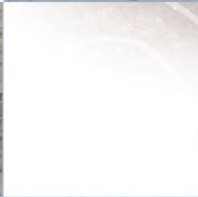
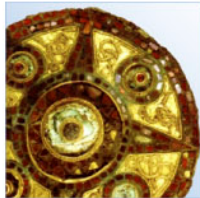
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