

**HEATH MEAD GARAGES, HEATH MEAD, PARKSIDE,
WIMBLEDON PARK,
LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON:
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT**

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1 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by AOC Archaeology on 16th and 17th October 2007 at the site of Heath Mead Garages, Wimbledon Park, London Borough of Merton on behalf of Fabric 8 Developments. The aim of the evaluation was to assess the impact of the proposed redevelopment on any surviving archaeological remains.

The evaluation comprised two machine excavated trenches, measuring 8m by 2m. The trenches revealed that an undisturbed soil sequence survived on site overlying natural London Clay, indicating the site is situated within an area previously used as open fields. London Clay was observed in both trenches at a depth between 49.88mOD and 50.43mOD

No finds or features of archaeological significance were observed during the course of the evaluation.

2 INTRODUCTION

Site Location (Figures 1 & 2)

- 2.1 The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TQ 2364 7245, and is within land bounded by Heath Mead to the east and residential buildings to the north, south and west. The site is roughly rectangular in shape and measures 560m².

Planning Background

- 2.2 The local planning authority is the London Borough of Merton. Archaeological advice to the council is provided by Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS).
- 2.3 Planning permission to undertake the development has been granted under the Town & Country Planning Act (1990) (Ref No.:06/P1080), subject to conditions. The condition states that:

“No development shall take place until the applicant, their agent or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation that has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The archaeological works shall be carried out by a suitably qualified investigating body acceptable to the Local Planning Authority.”

This condition has been required in accordance with *Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning* (PPG 16) issued by the Department of the Environment in 1990 (DoE, 1990), and was recommended by the archaeology advisor to the London Borough of Merton.

- 2.4 AOC Archaeology Group Ltd was commissioned by Fabric 8 Developments LTD to carry out the field evaluation. Subsequently a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced (AOC 2007). This document details how the evaluation, comprising of two trenches, has been undertaken.
- 2.5 Prior to commencing work a unique site identifier for the project was obtained from the Museum of London (**HDM 07**).
- 2.6 On site field work was undertaken on 16th and 17th October 2007.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Geology and Topography

- 3.1 The British Geological Survey map (BGS Sheet 270), indicates that the site is situated upon High Level Terraces, overlying London Clay.
- 3.2 Geotechnical investigations were carried out by Site Analytical Services LTD (2007). The results indicate that the natural deposits are between 0.65m to 2.00m below ground level, the deeper areas being towards the centre of the site.

Archaeological and Historical Background.

- 3.3 The following background information has been drawn from the Written Scheme of Investigation (AOC 2007).
- 3.4 The status of Wimbledon Common itself means that there has been relatively little archaeological work in this area, but stray/casual finds have demonstrated that evidence covering the whole prehistoric period may be anticipated to survive as buried remains. The Priority Zone Designation extends beyond the modern limits of the Common to include additional areas where archaeological evidence for prehistoric landscapes has been shown to survive. No previous archaeological investigations have occurred on the site.

Prehistoric (before c.AD 43)

- 3.5 Prehistoric activity was identified during excavations at 56 Parkside, approximately 105m west of the current development (MLO63782). The excavations revealed Prehistoric gullies, one of which contained pottery dating to the 1st millennium B.C. Archaeological investigations at 52 Parkside also uncovered a gully and a linear ditch (MLO65973). No dating evidence was recovered from these features but they are thought to be related to the Prehistoric gullies recorded at 56 Parkside (GLSMR, 2007)
- 3.6 Caesars Camp, an Iron Age Hill fort and Schedule Ancient Monument is located approximately 1.09km southeast of the site. Probably built in the 5th century BC, this roughly circular fort was protected by a single rampart and ditch and enclosed 4.3ha. The earthwork was very strong, having originally a 4m deep ditch, backed by a rampart faced both front and back by strong timbers.
- 3.7 A Neolithic flint fabricator was found in Wimbledon Park which is situated approximately 150m west of the proposed site. Unfortunately no further information about the lithic tool is known.

Roman (c. AD 43-410)

- 3.8 There is no evidence for Roman activity within the vicinity of the site.

Anglo-Saxon (c. AD 451-1065)

- 3.9 There is no evidence for Saxon activity within the vicinity of the site.

Medieval (c.1066 - 1485)

- 3.10 From 1328 until 1536 the Manor of Wimbledon was owned by the Archbishop of Canterbury. However, no archaeological remains have been identified within the vicinity of the site.

Post-medieval (1485 – modern)

- 3.11 After 1536 the land was owned by various members of the Royal family until it was given to Sir Thomas Cecil in 1589. The medieval village grew around the area of the current High Street at the top of a hill. The Rose and Crown Inn, located on the High Street, dates to the mid 17th century and the land now occupied by the modern Dog and Fox was formerly occupied by Inn. The common remained relatively untouched during the post-medieval period other than occasional occupation by soldiers and armed volunteers for training.

4 STRATEGY

Aims of the Investigation

- 4.1 The aims of the Evaluation 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 archaeological advisor to the London Borough of Merton to make an informed decision on the status of the condition on the planning permission, and any possible requirement for further work in order to satisfy that condition.
 - To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation in order to inform the mitigation strategy as part of the planning process.
- 4.2 The specific objectives of the Evaluation were to:

- Determine the presence of any remains of Prehistoric date on the site.
- 4.3 The final aim is to make public the results of the investigation, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

Methodology

- 4.4 During the fieldwork Trench 1 was altered slightly (one metre wider at the east end) due to the presence of a 20th century drain. This was to allow the machine bucket to dig either side of the obstruction.
- 4.5 Levels for each context were established relative to Ordnance Datum, taken from a survey station located northwest of the site at number 63 Parkside, on the southwest corner of the building and established at a value of 48.87mOD.
- 4.6 The evaluation was conducted by Chris Clarke under the overall management of Ron Humphrey. The site was monitored by Diane Walls of GLAAS, on behalf of the London Borough of Merton.

5 RESULTS

Trench 1

- 5.1 Surface of Trench = 51.38mOD

Level (OD)	Depth (BGL)	Context Number	Description
51.38-50.98m	0.00m	(1/001)	Made ground. Loose, light brown, CBM and concrete fragments in sandy matrix.
50.98-50.83m	0.55m	(1/002)	Tarmac and make up. mixed clayey sand
50.83-50.64m	0.74m	(1/005)	Buried topsoil. loose, dark brown, sandy silt, small sub angular stones
50.64-50.43m	0.95m	(1/008)	Subsoil. loose mid brown, silty clay, with small sub angular stones
50.43-50.13m	1.25m NFE	(1/009)	Natural. firm, orangey brown, sandy clay, with sub rounded stones
50.43-50.13m	1.25m NFE	(1/010)	Natural. firm dark bluish grey clayey sand
50.43-50.13m	1.25m NFE	(1/011)	Natural. firm orange brown sandy clay with sub rounded pebbles
50.43-50.13m	1.25m NFE	(1/012)	Natural. firm dark bluish grey clayey sand

- 5.2 Trench 1 was located adjacent to the west boundary of the site, orientated east-west. The earliest recorded deposit was an orange brown sandy clay (1/009) and (1/011). A diagonal band of bluish grey clayey sand (1/010) bisected this deposit, resulting in the allocation of two context numbers. This was interpreted as a vein of fissure cracked weathered London Clay, caused when it is exposed to light and oxidized. Another vein of this weathered blue grey clay was noted in the east of the trench (1/012). All four of these contexts were naturally deposited and reached a maximum height of 50.43mOD.
- 5.3 Cut into these natural deposits was an irregular, oval-shaped shallow pit [1/014], filled with a loose mid brown silty clay (1/013). Due to root disturbance and the irregular shape this was recognised as a tree throw.
- 5.4 A layer of loose brown silty clay subsoil (1/008) overlay the natural deposits. It was cut by a sub-square, steep sided pit [1/007]. This pit was filled with a soft loose dark grey clay silt (1/006) containing small pieces of pottery and glass. The pottery and glass were all 20th century in date and indicated that the feature was a rubbish pit.
- 5.5 Sealing subsoil (1/008) and the rubbish pit was a loosely compacted dark brown sandy silt buried topsoil (1/005). Two service trenches truncated (1/005): (1/004) and (1/003), both comprising concrete encased drains. The drains were sealed by a bedding layer and tarmac slab (1/002), in turn overlain by a loose, light brown sandy silt, with building material fragments (1/001).
- 5.6 No finds or features of archaeological significance were identified in Trench 1.

Trench 2

- 5.7 Surface of Trench = 51.00m AOD

Level (OD)	Depth (BGL)	Context Number	Description
51.00-50.85m	0.00m	(2/001)	Made Ground. loose, brown, CBM and concrete fragments in sandy matrix.
50.85-50.54m	0.29m	(2/002)	Tarmac and. mixed clayey sand make up
50.54-50.14m	0.69m	(2/005)	Mixed topsoil. soft dark brownish grey clay silt. CBM fragments and domestic rubbish debris
50.14-49.88m	0.95m	(2/006)	Subsoil. soft loose mid greyish brown clay sand, with sub rounded pebbles
49.88-49.68m	1.15m	(2/007)	Natural. firm orange brown sandy clay with small rounded pebbles
49.88-	1.15m	(2/008)	Natural. dark bluish grey sandy clay with sub

49.68m			rounded pebbles
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- 5.8 Trench 2 was located near the centre of the site, orientated north-south. The earliest recorded deposit was a firm orange/brown sandy clay (2/007). A vein of bluish grey weathered London Clay (2/008) was also noted in Trench 2. These were naturally deposited, recorded at a maximum height of 49.88mOD.
- 5.9 Overlying the natural deposit was a layer of loose mid grey/brown clay sand subsoil (2/006), 0.26m thick. It was sealed by a layer of loose dark brown/grey clay silt buried topsoil (2/005). Two service trenches, (2/004) and (2/003), truncated the topsoil. These were both drains aligned east-west.
- 5.10 Sealing the service trenches was a bedding layer and tarmac ground slab (2/002), overlain by a dump of loose brown sand (2/001) containing building material.
- 5.11 No finds or features of archaeological significance were identified in Trench 2.

6 FINDS

- 6.1 Pottery, building material and glass fragments of 20th century date were observed and noted in both Trenches 1 and 2. Given the recent date of these finds they were not retained.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The evaluation successfully characterised both the stratigraphic sequence and archaeological potential of the site. Natural London Clay deposits were observed in both trenches between a height of 49.88mOD and 50.43mOD.
- 7.2 No finds or features of archaeological significance were observed in either of the two trenches.
- 7.3 The evaluation met its primary objective: to establish the presence/absence of any archaeological remains. It is therefore recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork is required to satisfy the archaeological planning condition on this site. However, the final decision regarding any further work will rest with the London Borough of Merton and its archaeology advisor, Diane Walls (GLAAS).

8 PUBLICATION

- 8.1 It is recommended that publication of the results is achieved by a summary in the London Archaeology Round-up and publication via the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) (Appendix B).

9 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

- 9.1 The archive, consisting of paper records, finds, and digital photographs, will be deposited with LAARC.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

AOC Archaeology (2007). *Heath Mead Garages, Heath Mead, Parkside, Wimbledon Park, London Borough of Merton: A Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation.*

British Geological Survey (1:50,000 series). *South London, Sheet 270.*

English Heritage (1998). *Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork. (English heritage London Region).*

Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994). *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations.*

Figure 1

Figure 2: Detailed site location

Fig 3: Trench Location

Fig 4: Trench 1 plan and section

APPENDIX A – Context Register

Context No.	Context Description	Length	Width	Depth
1/001	C20th made ground	8.00m	2.00m	0.40m
1/002	Tarmac and make up	8.00m	2.00m	0.15m
1/003	Concrete capped service	5.00m	1.70m	0.40m
1/004	Service and man hole	2.50m	1.25m	0.40m+
1/005	Buried topsoil	8.00m	2.00m	0.19m
1/006	Fill of C20th pit	1.00m	0.98m	0.15m
1/007	Cut of C20th pit	1.00m	0.98m	0.15m
1/008	Subsoil	8.00m	2.00m	0.21m
1/009	Natural	2.00m+	1.50m+	0.30m+
1/010	Natural	0.80m	0.50m	0.20m
1/011	Natural	7.00m+	2.00m+	0.30m+
1/012	Natural	0.80m+	0.40m+	0.20m+
1/013	Fill of tree bole	1.25m	0.85m	0.22m
1/014	Cut of tree bole	1.25m	0.85m	0.22m
2/001	C20th made ground	5.00m	2.00m	0.14m
2/002	Tarmac and make up	4.50m	2.00m	0.15m
2/003	Concrete capped service	2.00m	0.50m	0.40m
2/004	Service trench	2.00m	0.50m	0.40m
2/005	Mixed topsoil	8.00m	2.00m	0.40m
2/006	Subsoil	6.00m	2.00m	0.26m
2/007	Natural	5.40m	2.00m	0.20m
2/008	Natural	2.60m	2.00m	0.20m+

APPENDIX B: OASIS FORM

4 OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: ENGLAND

[List of Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

4.1.1 Printable version

4.2 OASIS ID: aocarcha1-34733

Project details

Project name	Heath Mead Garages, Heath Mead, Wimbledon Park, London Borough of Merton: An Archaeological Evaluation Report
Short description of the project	A two trench archaeological evaluation was undertaken at the site of Heath Mead Garages in Wimbledon Park, London Borough of Merton. London Clay was identified at between 49.88mOD and 50.43mOD, sealed by natural subsoil and 20th century layers. No finds or features of archaeological significance were identified during the work.
Project dates	Start: 16-10-2007 End: 17-10-2007
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HDM 07 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	7887 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'

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 WIMBLEDON AND MERTON Heath Mead Garages, Heath Mead, Parkside, Wimbledon Park, London Borough of Merton

Postcode SW19 5JP

Study area 560.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 2364 7245 51.4370345907 -0.220985728392 51 26 13 N 000 13 15 W Point

Height OD Min: 49.88m Max: 50.43m

Project creators

Name of Organisation AOC Archaeology

Project brief originator AOC Archaeology

Project design originator AOC Archaeology

Project director/manager Les Capon

Project supervisor Chris Clarke

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Name of
sponsor/funding
body Fabric 8 Developments

Project archives

Physical Archive No
Exists?

Digital Archive Museum of London
recipient

Digital Archive ID HDM 07

Digital Contents 'Stratigraphic','Survey'

Digital Media 'Images raster / digital photography','Images vector','Spreadsheets','Survey','Text'
available

Digital Archive Archive to be retained at AOC until ready for deposition with LAARC
notes

Paper Archive Museum of London
recipient

Paper Archive ID HDM 07

Paper Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Paper Media 'Context
available sheet','Manuscript','Matrices','Microfilm','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section','Unpublished
Text'

Paper Archive Archive to be retained at AOC until ready for deposition with LAARC
notes

Project bibliography 1

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Title Heath Mead Garages, Heath Mead, Parkside, Wimbledon Park, London Borough of Merton: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation

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Description A4 unbound document

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