

Sutton Archaeological Services

Evaluation Report

on

Fair Green Court,
London Road, Mitcham,
Surrey, Cr4 3NA.
FGE 07: (TQ 277 689)

for

Barker Shorten Architects



Fig. 1 John Rocque's map of London 1741-5



Dir: **JEFFREY G. PERRY: BA(Hons), MIFA.**

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by

J G PERRY: April 2008

Summary

Sutton Archaeological Services (SAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at Fair Green Court, London Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3NA on 18th November 2007.

The site lay in an area of archaeological importance as defined in London Borough of Merton's Unitary Development Plan. Research by Sutton Archaeological Services for the research design indicated that there was Medieval and Post-Medieval archaeology and/or activity in the surrounding area.

The evaluation only revealed concrete, above several layers of made ground overlying the natural sand and gravel.

There was no evidence for archaeology, other than modern in either trench.

We suggest that no further archaeological monitoring or intervention is needed and that the archaeological condition in the planning consent has been fulfilled. The decision to discharge the archaeological condition, however, rests with the local planning authority on the advice of the Archaeological Officer at English Heritage

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Situation

This specification relates to the site of the proposed development at Fair Green Court, London Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3NA.

Barker Shorten (the Architects) have commissioned Sutton Archaeological Services (SAS) to carry out an archaeological evaluation and any subsequent archaeological work that may be necessary.

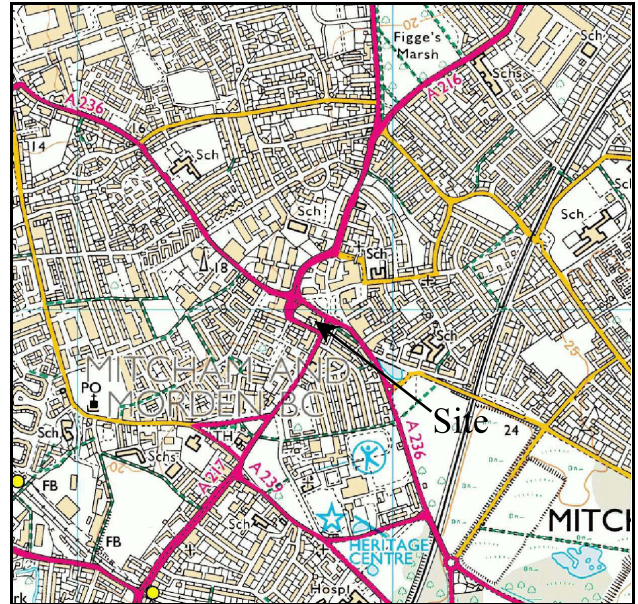


Fig. 2 Location Plan © Crown Copyright MC/98/38

Location: The site is a roughly rectangular area situated behind the Fairgreen Parade block of shops, in the centre of Mitcham. The site lies off Raleigh Gardens close to its junction with London Road, in the eastern part of the London Borough of Merton. Upper Green West lies just to the north, with Lower Green and Cricket Green 400m to the south

Topography: The site lies on the east side of the Wandle valley, in an area consisting of commercial and residential properties. The land slopes from Mitcham Common in the east to the west. The area of the site lies at a height of about 20m aOD.

Geology: The underlying geology consists of Taplow Gravels over London Clay, and in some areas with Brickearth.

Planning background

The proposed development area was once occupied by garages and used for car parking.

The garages are to be demolished and replaced by a 4 storey building 3 commercial units, 8 self contained flats and car parking.



Fig. 3 Site Location Plan (© Crown Copyright MC/98/38)

Planning permission was approved by the London Borough of Merton and an archaeological condition under PPG 16¹ was included in the planning decision 01/P1254 dated 20th July 2002:

- 8 *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 for investigation which has been submitted by the applicant in writing and approved by the local planning authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme pursuant to this condition. The archaeological works*

¹ Department of the Environment: *Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning*, HMSO, 1990.

shall be carried out by a suitably qualified investigating body acceptable to the Local Planning Authority

Archaeological discussion

There have been many scattered finds of flint and stone artefacts as well as faunal remains of the Palaeolithic (pre-10,000 BC) and Mesolithic (c. 10,000-4,500 BC), mainly to the south-east of the site on Mitcham Common and on the Thames Water land at the Beddington Sewage Farm.

Taking the evidence as a whole, before the evaluation, there is a low potential for Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon archaeological and activity on site. There is, however, a low to medium potential for Medieval and Post-Medieval archaeological and activity on site.

Prehistoric: There have been many scattered finds of flint and stone artefacts as well as faunal remains of the Palaeolithic (pre-10,000 BC) and Mesolithic (c. 10,000-4,500 BC). These are mainly on the south of the Wandle, on valley sands and gravels as well as the chalk of the North Downs dip slope², particularly on the Thames Water land at the Beddington Sewage Farm and Mitcham Common. Several sites are suspected, one just north of Hackbridge railway station and the other to the east of Beddington Lane, just north of the old power station. New signs of habitation have been found close to Mile Lane. A few finds have also been made to the north of the Wandle. Traces of field systems tentatively dated to the Bronze Age have also been found over a wide area, but mainly on the Beddington sewage farm. At least two barrows³, probably of Bronze Age date (though possibly Saxon), are suspected and a number of axes have also been found in the general Mitcham area.

The remains of an EIA (Early Iron Age) to LIA (Late Iron Age) settlement, enclosing ditch, and possible field boundaries, were discovered beneath the Beddington Roman Villa⁴. Several coins have

² Adkins, L. 1980 Settlement patterns in the area around Beddington, Carshalton and Wallington: an outline of the evidence, in *THE PAST - OUR FUTURE*, Beddington, Carshalton and Wallington Archaeol Soc, **4**, 8-12

³ GLSMR 20541

⁴ Adkins, L., Adkins, R., & Perry, J. G. 1986 'Excavations at Prehistoric and Roman Beddington, 1984-85', *London Archaeol*, **5**, no.6 (1986), 152-7.
Adkins, L, Adkins, R, & Perry, J. G. 1987 'Excavations at Beddington 1984-87: the Final Interim', *London Archaeol*, **5**, 13 (1987), 349-52.

been found on Mitcham Common and one in the Mitcham area. A bone shuttle, probably of Iron Age date, was found in Heatherdene Close - Crescent Grove area.

Pre-evaluation evidence suggested there was a low potential for Prehistoric archaeology on site

Roman: A Roman site is known at Beddington Roman Villa, where traces of occupation from the 1st to 4th centuries is known.. A further, as yet undefined, Roman building was reported near to or on Mitcham common in the 1870's. A burial with the remains of a coffin were found in Willow Lane, near to Mitcham Junction railway station.

Pre-evaluation evidence suggested there was a low potential for Roman archaeology on this site.

Saxon: A water mill is mention in the Domesday survey for Morden but its exact location is not known. A Saxon cemetery was discovered in 1888 just north of the Wandle, below what is now Morden Road and Heatherdene Road, 300m to the south west. A bronze hanging bowl was found near to Mitcham Church in 1886⁵.

Pre-evaluation evidence suggested there was a low potential for Saxon occupation on the site.

Medieval to Post-Medieval: There is little archaeological evidence for the Medieval period in and around Mitcham, except for a 13th century building and associated cobbled floor found during excavations in Heatherdene Close - Crescent Grove area. Several Medieval moated sites are suspected in Mitcham. One was near to the Wandle at Ravensbury Park, another is at the Cannons on the cricket Green and a third is in the grounds of old Mitcham Hall⁶.

Mitcham appears to have developed as a dual focal village, with one centre around the Lower Green, Cricket Green and Church Road area and the other around the Upper Green area. John Rocque's map of Mitcham (fig. 1) shows a building on the site in the mid 18th century.

Pre-evaluation evidence suggested there was a low to medium potential for Medieval and Post-Medieval occupation on the site.

⁵ GLSMR 30667 and 30671

⁶ GLSMR No.30723 and 30778

Research objectives

In September 2007 Sutton Archaeological Services produced its research design. Based on our brief assessment of the evidence, we formed the objectives to look for signs of Medieval occupation and activity on the site, and if found to determine their extent, date, condition and significance. The Institute of Field Archaeologists has defined the purpose of a field evaluation as follows.

“The purpose of field evaluation is to gain information about the archaeological resource within a given area or site (including its presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality), in order to make an assessment of its merit in the appropriate context, leading to one or more of the following:

- the formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource
- the formulation of a strategy to initiate a threat to the archaeological resource
- the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research.”

Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations, IFA, 2001

Archaeological Proposals

Usually, where development may destroy archaeology, an evaluation is undertaken to identify the presence or absence, extent, character, quality and date of any threatened deposits and, where necessary, to develop an appropriate mitigation strategy.

SAS proposed to excavate 1 x 10m x 2m trench and 1 x 5m x 3m trench

Archaeological methodology

Standards: SAS carried out the archaeological evaluation in accordance with

- our research design dated September 2007.
- the Institute of Field Archaeologists’ Code of Conduct, Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangement in Field Archaeology, Standards and Guidance for Field Evaluations



Fig. 4 Development and Trench location plan

- the archaeological guidance papers issued by English Heritage.

Control: All excavation work was done under the control of the archaeologists on site.

Trenches: We dug 1 trench as shown on fig 4. We broke open the trench with a JCB 3CX Site Master, using a wide-bladed (1.50m+) smooth-edged ditching bucket.

Non-archaeological deposits: In each trench we removed by machine, in level spits of no more than 10-15 cm, the turf and topsoil and subsoil deposit. Work continued removing all overburden until we reached the first significant archaeological layer (or the natural deposits), at which point all machine work ceased in that trench. (We excavated up to 50cm into the natural to make sure we had

reached true natural and not re-deposited material.) In this way we excavated the trench without finding any archaeological deposits.

Site records: We recorded all features as we proceeded, by written records, plans, sections and photographs. In all, we recorded 3 contexts - numbered [001] to [003] - in a single context recording system. The site was recorded in accordance with the Fieldwork Methodology in our research design, and using the Museum of London's recording system.

Levels: All levels were taken from the developers site survey.

Backfilling: After excavating and recording we backfilled the trenches and roughly levelled the ground, leaving surplus spoil on site.

Evaluation results

Trench 1

Trench 1 was located in the north-eastern part of the development area, was 5m in length and aligned east (20.38m aOD) to west (19.90m aOD). Context **001** was the concrete and rubble sub-base, which covered the trench to a depth of about 25cm.

Below **001** lay a deposit of made ground, a black sandy clay [002] (east: 20.14m aOD to west: 19.65m aOD). The deposit extended across the whole trench to a depth of between 36-40cm. The deposit contained occasional small to medium flint pebbles and CBM.

Context **003** (east: 19.79m aOD to west: 19.15m aOD) was another deposit of made ground, a mid to dark brown sandy clay. The context contained 15-20% fragments of CBM and flint pebbles and moderate fragments of medium to large concrete, extending across the whole trench to a depth of between 60-53cm.

A further made ground deposit lay below **003**, a mid brown clay [004] (east: 19.19m aOD to west: 18.62m aOD). The context contained 10% fragments of CBM and frequent small to large flint pebbles, extending across the whole trench to a depth of between 68-58cm at its north-east end and thinning out to nothing at its south-west end.

A possible natural deposit lay below **004**, a loose medium to dark grey medium sand **[005]** (east: 18.51m aOD to west: 18.05m aOD), containing 60-70% fine to large flint pebbles. It extended across the trench to a depth of about 45cm. The upper part of the context was darker, getting lighter in colour with depth. When this context was excavated, water started to seep into the trench.

The final context was the natural, a soft medium brown clay **[006]** (east: 18.02m aOD to west: 17.65m aOD) with bands and areas of sand and gravel and extended across the whole of the trench. The deposit was excavated to a depth of between 20-30cms.

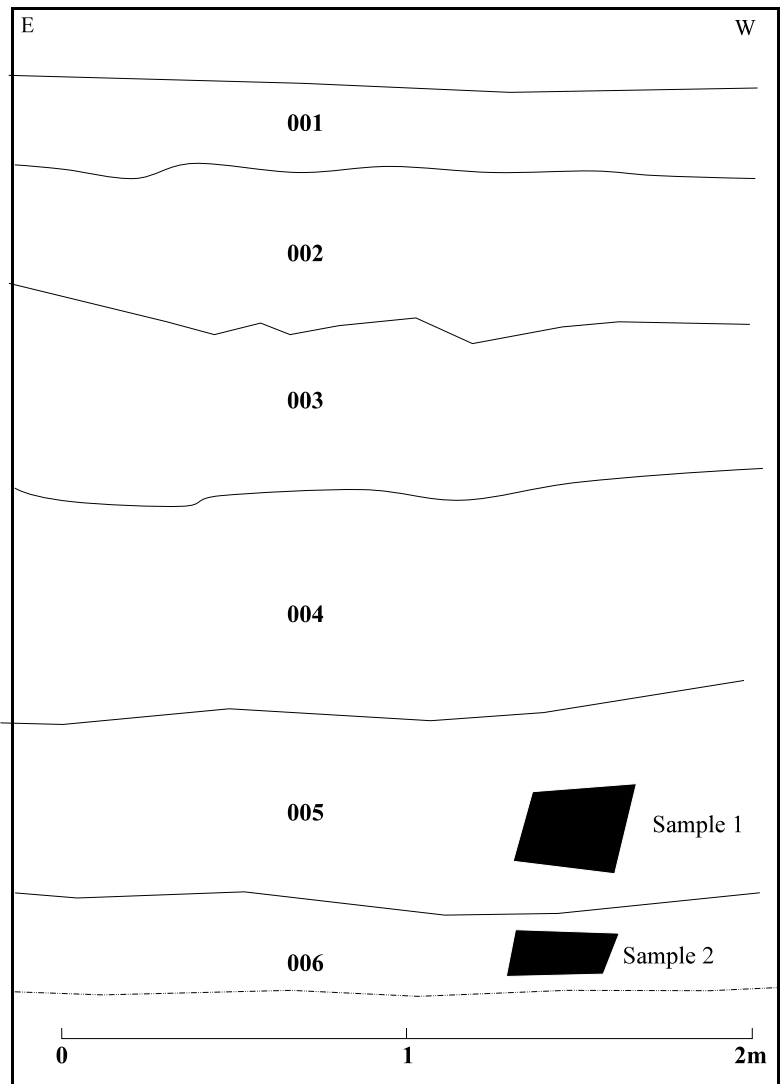


Fig. 5 Tr. 1: south section

Contexts **005** and **006** appeared to be river lain and following discussions with English Heritage, samples were taken from these contexts to see if any environmental evidence could be gained as to their origin. There were no archaeological features and the only finds were fragments of 19th to 20th century CBM.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was located in the southern part of the site, was 10m in length and aligned east (20.42m aOD) to west (20.31m aOD). Context **007** was the concrete and rubble sub-base, which covered the trench to a depth of about 35cm.

Below **007** lay a deposit of made ground, a black sandy clay **[008]** (east: 20.065m aOD to west: 19.95m aOD). The deposit extended across the whole trench to a depth of between 36-40cm and contained moderate small to large fragments of CBM and small to medium flint pebbles.

Context **009** (east: 19.70m aOD to west: 19.46m aOD) was another deposit of made ground, a medium brown sandy clay containing 10% fragments of CBM and frequent small to large flint pebbles. It covered the whole trench to a depth of between 40-45cm.

A possible natural deposit lay below **009**, a loose medium to dark grey medium sand [**010**] (east: 19.315m aOD to west: 19.02m aOD), containing 60-70% fine to large flint pebbles. It extended across the trench to a depth of between 28-30cm. The upper part of the context was darker, getting lighter in colour with depth. When this context was excavated, water started to seep into the trench.

The final context was the natural, a soft medium brown clay [**011**] (east: 19.04m aOD to west: 18.725m aOD) with bands and areas of sand and gravel and extended across the whole of the trench. The deposit was excavated to a depth of between 20-30cms.

There were no archaeological features and the only finds were fragments of 19th to 20th century CBM.

Assessment and interpretation

The evidence from the SAS preliminary research indicated that there was Medieval and Post-Medieval archaeology and/or activity in the surrounding area.

The evaluation only revealed concrete, above several layers of made ground overlying the natural sand and gravel.

There was no evidence for archaeology, other than modern in either trench.

Archaeological Potential

Following the evaluation our revised view is that this site has no potential for archaeological remains of any period.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Our findings set out above lead us to conclude that the proposed development did not threaten to destroy any archaeological remains of national, regional or local importance, deserving further investigation or preservation.

We suggest that no further archaeological monitoring or intervention is needed and that the archaeological condition in the planning consent has been fulfilled. The decision to discharge the archaeological condition, however, rests with the local planning authority on the advice of the Archaeological Officer at English Heritage.

Publications and dissemination

The evidence is not worthy of publication but a note on the evaluation will be placed in the *London Archaeologist's* round-up and a copy of the report lodged in the local library.

Archive

The resulting archive, including all of the finds, will be donated by the developer and deposited with the Museum of London when the final report has been completed.



Plate 1

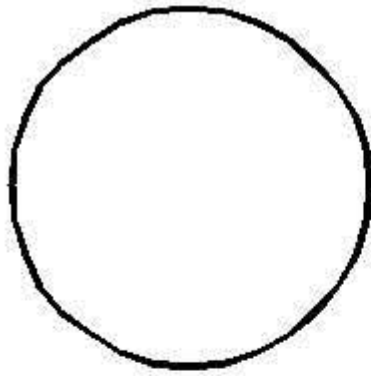
Trench 1



Plate 2

Trench 2

The two gravel samples from contexts [005] and [006] from this site were wet-sieved to 0.25mm, dried and scanned for biological/artefactual remains. The samples consisted entirely of natural gravels and were sterile in terms of both environmental remains and finds and thus cannot be dated or add any information to the site



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