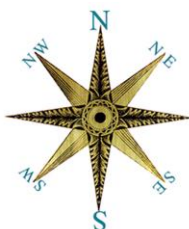


**77 RUNNYMEDE, COLLIERS WOOD, LONDON
BOROUGH OF MERTON, SW19 2PQ.**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

COMPASS



ARCHAEOLOGY

JUNE 2018

**77 RUNNYMEDE, COLLIERS WOOD, LONDON
BOROUGH OF MERTON, SW19 2PQ.**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

**SITE CODE: RUN18
PLANNING REF: 14/P2510
NGR REF (CENTRE): TQ 26603 69743**

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Abstract

On the 30th-31st May 2018 Compass Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief on groundworks at 77 Runnymede, Colliers Wood, London Borough of Merton, SW19 2PQ, for the construction of a two-storey detached dwelling on a previously vacant site. The watching brief was commissioned by the Site Owner as part of a planning condition imposed by Merton Council due to the sites location within the Wandle/Colliers Wood Riverside Industries Archaeological Priority Zone (APZ), and it's close proximity to the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Merton Priory (SAM ref: 1001976).

The watching brief comprised the observation and recording of eight hand dug pits, placed at even intervals along both sides of the length of the site. The pits measured 1.6m (NW-SE side) by 1m (SW-NE) and between 1m to 1.27m deep. Pit numbers 1-7 were observed and recorded, the eighth was not due to time constraints and the lack of finds or archaeological features from the first seven pits.

The stratigraphy was generally the same across all seven pits and comprised a layer of mid-to dark brown silty topsoil with frequent rooting, (1) varying from 0.25m to 0.36m thick. Underlying the topsoil was a layer of modern made ground, (2), varying from 0.39m to 0.57m thick. The made ground contained frequent inclusions of red and yellow brick, concrete, wood (both raw logs and cut timbers), glass, metal fragments, clinker and yellow sand lenses. The frequency of the inclusions within the made ground varied somewhat; a slightly cleaner silty layer with only a few CBM inclusions being seen in pits 1 and 2 towards the southern end of the site. Underlying the made ground was the natural geology, a dark brown organic silt, (3), with few inclusions. The visible thickness varied from 0.18m to 0.39m. The base of several of the pits was flooded, indicating a fairly high water table in the area, though local rain showers may have contributed to this. The silt was seen at an average of 0.82m below ground level (c.12.48mOD), though the lowest level recorded was c.12.03mOD (1.27m below ground level).

No archaeological finds or features were encountered in any observed pit.

The layer of made ground appears marked on the British Geological Survey: Sheet 270 as 'worked ground and made ground', indicating the likelihood that this deposit was dumped over the natural alluvium in the 1940s-50s to provide a level base for the construction of the housing estate which includes Runnymede. No archaeological remains were found in situ and there was no evidence of any previous occupation of the site.

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document forms a summary of the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out on the 30th-31st May 2018, on groundworks for the construction of a two-storey dwelling at 77 Runnymede, Colliers Wood, SW19 2PQ (fig. 1).

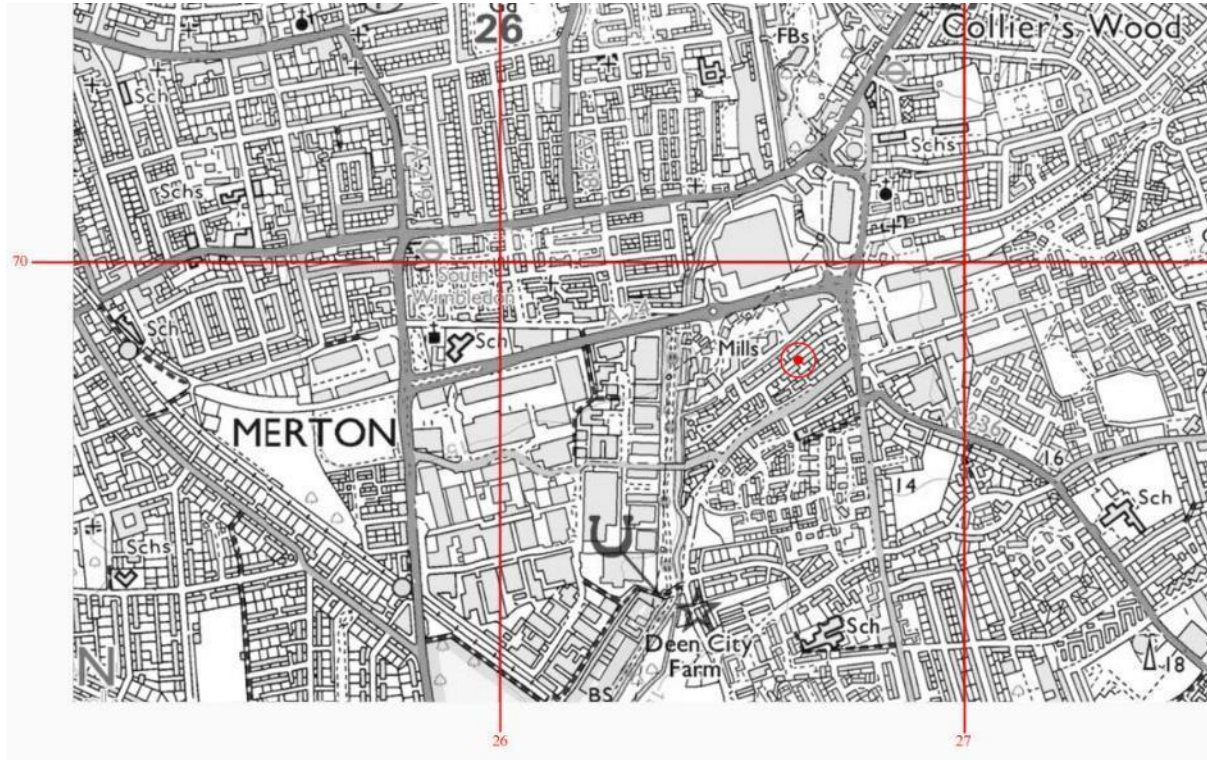


Figure 1: Location of the site marked in red.

- 1.2 The watching brief was commissioned by the Site Owner to fulfil planning conditions laid down by Merton Council. The planning conditions were imposed due to the fact that the site is in close proximity to the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Merton Priory (SAM ref: 1001976) and its location within the Wandle/Colliers Wood Riverside Industries Archaeological Priority Zone (APZ; fig. 2).

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 2.1 Compass would like to thank the Site Owner and project architects Bentleys and Carter Architects for commissioning this watching brief. Thanks also to Anil Kumar (The Market Design and Build) for allowing access to the site during the works, and for keeping us informed of the site progression.

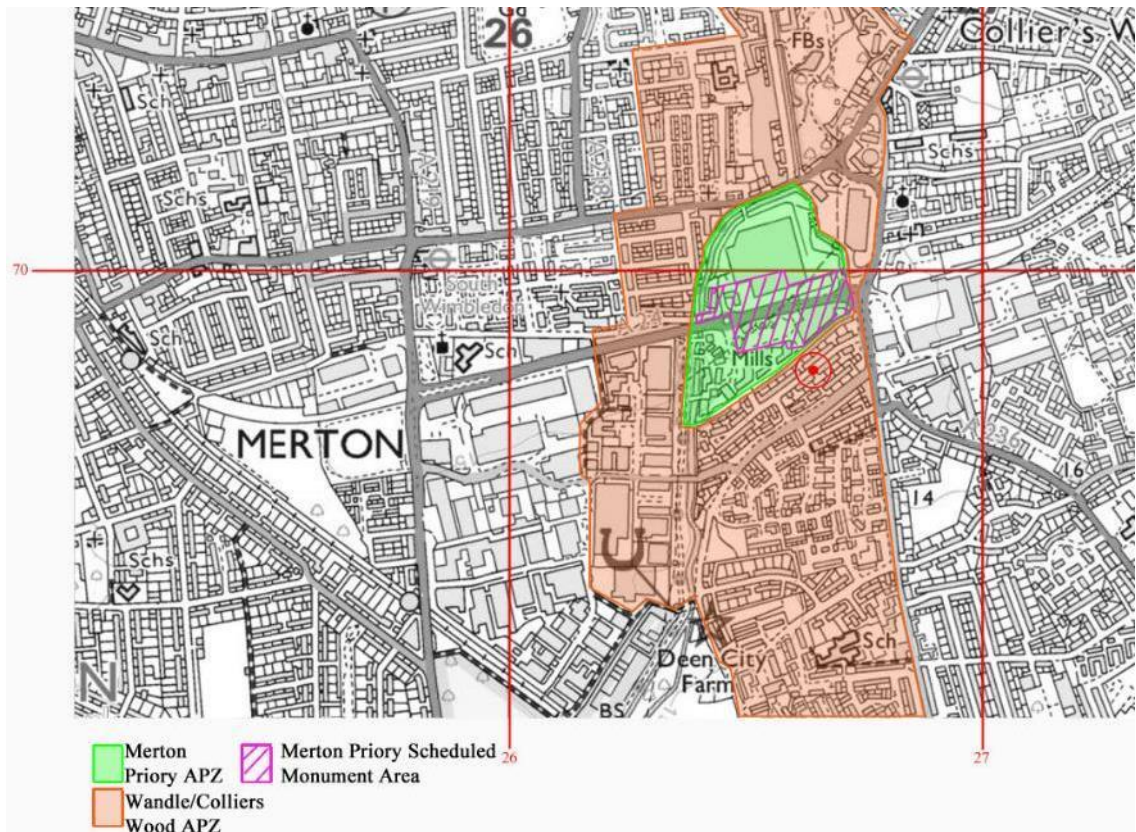


Figure 2: Location of the site (red) in relation to the SAM and APZs.

3 SITE LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 3.1** The site is located in the centre of Runnymede, on the south-eastern side of the road. It is approximately 179m west of the junction with Christchurch Road and bounded on both sides by two-storey housing, each split into two apartments. The site itself consisted of an overgrown, open space with a small garage at the southern end.
- 3.2** According to the British Geological Survey (sheet 270: South London), the site is situated on an area of worked and made ground over a swathe of alluvium covering the Wandle Valley (fig. 3). A line of London Clay runs north-south to the east of the site, with Taplow Gravel on either side.
- 3.3** The site lies level at approximately 12.9mOD.

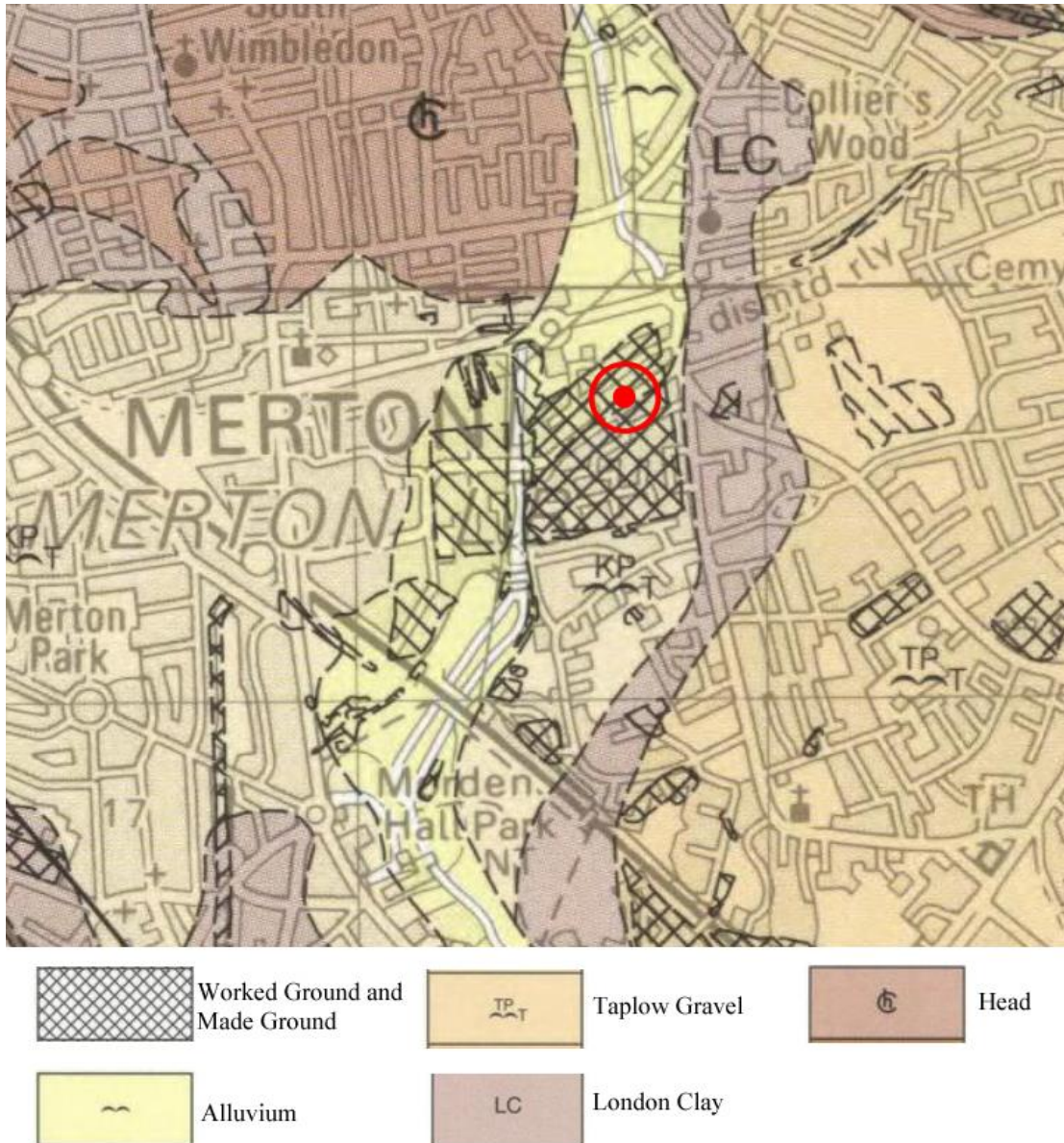


Figure 3: Extract from British Geological Survey sheet 270 with site location marked in red.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 The archaeological and historical background of the area around the site has been discussed at length in previous publications (Pre-Construct Archaeology, 2014; Compass Archaeology, 2014a, 2014b and 2015), including the preceding Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for this watching brief (Compass Archaeology, 2017) and therefore will not be reproduced here. Instead a brief summary of the history of the area will be described below.

4.2 Prehistoric

There is limited evidence available to suggest any prehistoric occupation or activity within the vicinity of the site. Excavations at Merton Priory, north of the site have uncovered a total of 45 pieces of struck flint and three handaxes. Other Prehistoric finds have been encountered elsewhere in the area, but it is likely that due to the alluvial,

marshy nature of the underlying geology within the Wandle Valley the area was unsettled by Prehistoric populations. The nature of the closest Prehistoric finds also suggest small-scale activity in one-off depositions rather than any sort of occupation or settlement.

4.3 Roman

The importance of Merton as a whole during the Roman period is associated with the presence of a Roman road known as Stane Street. It was the major thoroughfare that ran from London Bridge through Borough, Clapham and Merton to Chichester. The road is visible in the straight line of Colliers Wood High Street heading southwest to Morden, following the line of the present A24. Often Roman settlements develop alongside their roads and one such probably existed at Merton. The Runnymede site is located c. 164m southeast of the present line of the A24 and no Roman finds or features have been recorded in the vicinity of the site. It is probable that the land was still marshy and therefore avoided by settlers.

4.4 Saxon

There is no recorded archaeological evidence of Saxon occupation or activity within the vicinity of the site, though there is some documentary evidence that exists. The *Supplementary Planning Guidance Note* on archaeology given by Merton Council (2012) suggests that the origins of Merton date back to the early Saxon period, then known as ‘Mereton’ or ‘Meretun’. However, the name itself can be dated back to the 7th century, usually being translated as ‘the farm by the pond’ or ‘Maera’s homestead’ (Compass Archaeology 2014). Either way, both explanations support the likelihood of a settlement being in existence by that date. In AD967 the grant by Edgar of lands in Merton and Dulwich to Earl Aelfheah and his wife Elswita included recitation of landmarks by which the Merton estate was bounded (*cf* Weinreb & Hibbert 1993). Merton is noted as being held by King William I in the *Domesday Book* (Morris 1975). Again, the marshy nature of the land where the site is situated likely prevented any occupation or activity there.

4.5 Medieval

In the medieval period, Merton underwent a significant period of expansion with the erection of Merton Priory (sometimes mistakenly referred to as Merton Abbey). The Priory was established in 1114 by Gilbert the Norman, Sheriff of Surrey as a monastic priory of Austin canons under Robert, sub-prior of St Mary’s Huntingdon. It was situated to the west of Morden Road, close to the present day parish church. On the 3rd May 1117 the canons moved to a new site further east, covering sixty acres across the banks of the Wandle.

The priory experienced at least 150 years of expansion and rebuilding over its life, including the construction of a new infirmary and reredorter in 1230-1250. The priory achieved national prominence during this period, being the place where the Statutes of Merton were announced in 1236. Henry III also visited the priory several times a year from the mid-1240s onwards. During the establishment and growth of the monastic lands, it is believed that the course of the River Wandle was altered to the straighter flow that exists today to provide a faster current to power the priory’s mill. There is no

archaeological evidence of medieval activity around the site itself or within the vicinity, indicating that the occupation and settlement was focused around the Priory to the north of the site.

4.6 Post-Medieval

The priory was dissolved in 1538 under the rule of Henry VIII. The materials were reclaimed and sent to build establishments such as Nonsuch Palace, Cheam, and St Mary, Battersea. It is during this period that the priory became known as ‘Merton Abbey’, and it was used to house troops during the Civil War c.1648. It is unknown how much of the priory survived post-dissolution, though MOLAS reported a layer of alluvium and medieval demolition rubble overlying a wall associated with the priory, taken to be evidence of the post-dissolution demolition of the buildings.

Bennett’s Mill, situated north of the site around the Priory’s location comprised several workshops, waterwheel headrace and tailrace, furnaces and tanks. A number of dyes and other materials associated with the making and using of dyes were found during archaeological investigations, suggesting that the mill was processing calico up until the 18th century. It was taken over by William Morris in 1881, and later became a Liberty’s printworks. Throughout the post-medieval period, Merton developed as an industrial town with several phases of calico and silk printing works, copper and iron works and 20th century toy, battery and Bakelite factories (fig. 4).



Figure 4: Extract from OS Six-inch 1893-4 with site location marked in red.

From the 18th century onwards, the site remained a relatively open patch of ground, surrounded by factories, becoming more developed into the mid-20th century. Runnymede was constructed in the early to mid-20th century, shown on the 1952 OS map in much the same layout as appears today (fig. 5). The current site has been a vacant lot since the construction of the road, for unknown reasons.

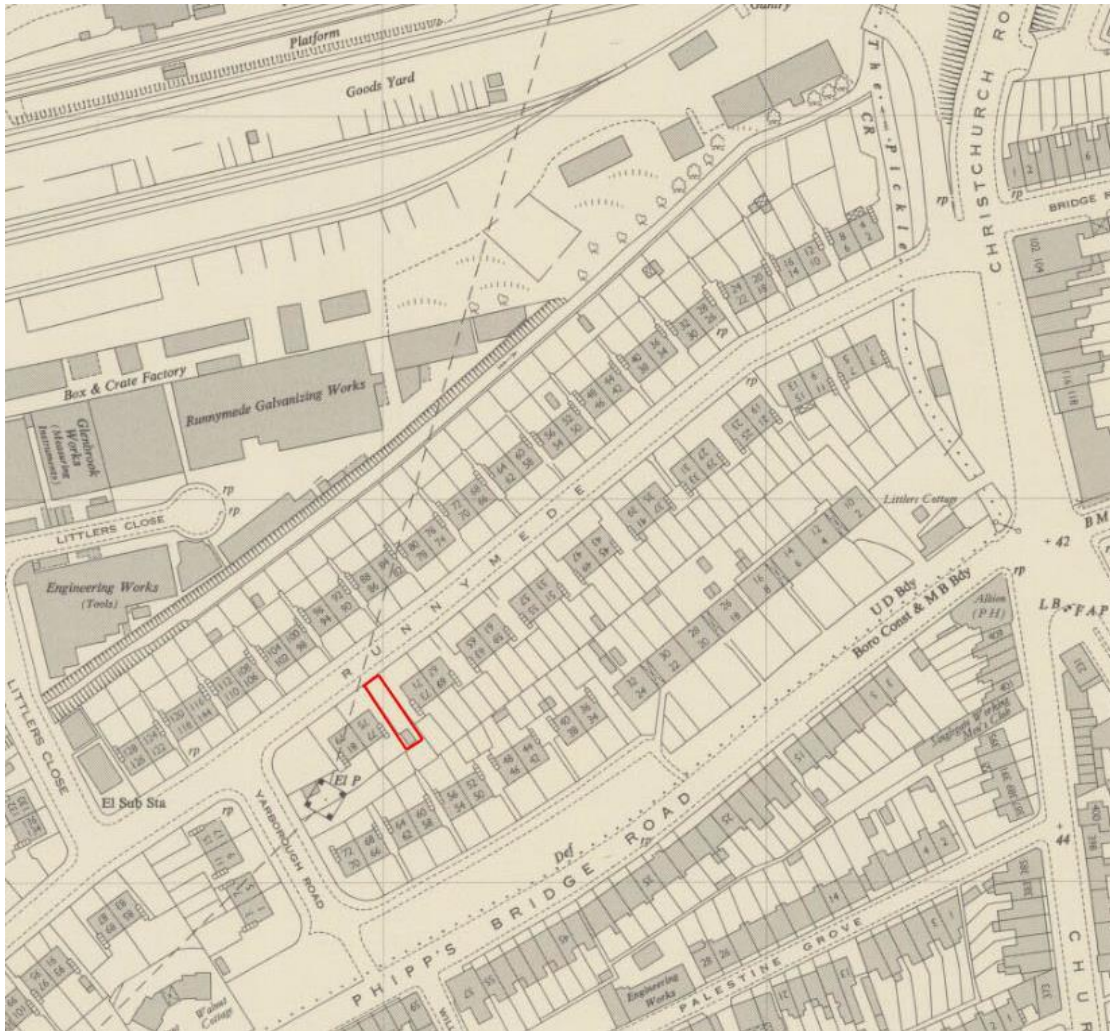


Figure 5: Extract from OS 25-inch map, 1952 with site boundary marked in red.

5 PLANNING AND OBJECTIVES

- 5.1 The works will entail clearing the site and demolishing the current structure, a small garage. A two-story detached house will be constructed in its place. The house will not have a basement.
- 5.2 This report conforms to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), adopted in March 2012 replacing PPS 5 'Planning for the Historic Environment' and policies HE6 and HE7.
- 5.3 The NPPF integrates planning strategy on 'heritage assets', bringing together all aspects of the historic environment, below and above ground, including historic buildings and structures, landscapes, archaeological sites and wrecks. The significance of heritage assets needs to be considered in the planning process, whether designated or not, and

the settings of assets taken into account. NPPF requires using an integrated approach to establish the overall significance of the heritage asset using evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values to ensure that planning decisions are based on the nature, extent and level of significance.

- 5.4** The London Borough of Merton has its own additional policies regarding archaeological remains and other heritage assets, contained within its *Unitary Development Plan* (2003) and repeated in the *Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes: Archaeology* (2004), **policies BE13 and BE14** being the most relevant. The site is also situated within the Archaeological Priority Zone of Wandle/Colliers Wood as designated by the London Borough of Merton, making it a candidate for archaeological investigation and as such is also covered by the same policies. An extract from the *Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes: Archaeology* (2004) follows:

Policy BE.13: Archaeological Protection and Preservation

The council will encourage early consultation on development proposals affecting sites of archaeological importance and their settings.

- (I) *There will be a general presumption in favour of the permanent physical preservation of all Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other nationally important archaeological sites and their settings. Planning permission will not be granted for development that would adversely affect such monuments site, involve significant alteration to them or would have a harmful impact on their settings.*
- (II) *Locally important archaeological remains should preferably also be preserved in-situ. Exceptionally, where remains cannot be preserved in-situ, they will be preserved by record through an appropriate programme of archaeological work by a recognised archaeological organisation before development begins, in accordance with a project design approved by the council. Such provision shall also include the subsequent publication of the results.*

Policy BE.14: Archaeological Evaluation

Before development commences on site, reference should be made to the council's Supplementary Planning Guidance Note on Archaeology. Where development is proposed within an Archaeological Priority Zone, as shown on the proposal map, the council may require a preliminary archaeological assessment before proposals are considered. This requirement may also be applied to sites outside the Archaeological Priority Zones especially where they are over 0.6 Ha or where there is proven or known archaeological potential.

5.5 Archaeological research questions

The watching brief presented the opportunity to answer the following general and more specific questions:

- Is there any evidence of pre-medieval/pre-monastic activity or occupation? If so, what form does this take?

- Are there any finds or features present associated with the medieval occupation of the area? At what level do these occur?
- If so, can this be related to the monastic complex of Merton Priory?
- Is there any evidence of post-medieval activity or occupation?
- If encountered, what is the natural geology and at what level does it exist across the site.

6 METHODOLOGY

6.1 Standards

6.1.1 The field and post-excavation work was carried out in accordance with Historic England guidelines (in particular *GLAAS: Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Greater London*). Works also conformed to the standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (*Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*). Overall management of the project was undertaken by a full Member of the Institute.

6.1.2 Fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the Construction (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations. All members of the fieldwork team held valid CSCS cards (Construction Skills Certificate Scheme) and wore hi-vis jackets, hard-hats and steel-toe-capped boots as required during the watching brief. All members of the fieldwork team also followed the contractors' health and safety guidelines.

6.2 Fieldwork

6.2.1 The watching brief involved the monitoring of the groundworks and recording of any features of archaeological interest. Adequate time was allowed for investigation and recording, although every effort will be made not to disrupt the development programme. During excavations, spoil from the archaeological levels should, if requested, be deposited separately in such a way to facilitate examination.

6.2.2 The main objective of the watching brief was to define the character, extent and significance of any observable remains, and to recover dating and environmental evidence.

6.2.3 Archaeological contexts were recorded as appropriate on *pro-forma* sheets by written and measured description, and/or drawn in plan and section at scales of 1:20 and 1:10 respectively. The investigations will be recorded on a general site plan and related to the Ordnance Survey grid. The fieldwork will be supplemented by digital photography in .jpeg and RAW formats.

6.2.4 The recording system will follow the procedures set out in the Museum of London recording manual. By agreement, the recording and drawing sheets used will be directly compatible with those developed by the Museum.

6.2.5 The Client and Historic England were kept advised of the progress of the fieldwork.

6.3 Post-excavation

The fieldwork was followed by off-site assessment and compilation of a report, and by ordering and deposition of the archive.

- 6.3.1** Assessment of finds was undertaken by appropriately qualified staff. Finds and samples were treated in accordance with the appropriate guidelines, including the Museum of London's '*Standards for the Preparation of Finds to be Permanently Retained by the Museum of London*'.

6.4 Report and Archive

- 6.4.1** Copies of the report will be supplied to the Client and Historic England.

- 6.4.2** This report contains a description of the fieldwork plus details of any archaeological remains or finds, and an interpretation of the associated deposits. Illustrations have been included as appropriate, including at a minimum, a site plan located to the OS grid and in shapefile format (.shp). A short summary of the project has been appended using the OASIS Data Collection Form (Appendix III)

- 6.4.3** Assuming that no further work is required, an ordered, indexed and internally consistent archive of the evaluation will be compiled in line with MoL Guidelines for the Preparation of Archaeological Archives, and will be deposited in the Museum of London Archaeological Archive. The integrity of the site archive should be maintained, and the landowner will be encouraged to donate any archaeological finds to the Museum.

7 RESULTS

- 7.1** The following forms a written description of observations made during the watching brief. Deposits are shown as (x), and cuts as [x]. The text is supplemented with illustrative photographs and site drawings. For a full context list refer to Appendix I.

- 7.2** The groundworks comprised the excavation of eight pits down both sides of the length of the site (fig. 6). The pits were excavated by hand to the same dimensions: 1.6m (NW-SE side) by 1m (SW-NE) and between 1m to 1.27m deep (c.12.03mOD). Numbers 1-7 were observed and recorded, the eighth was not due to time constraints and the lack of finds or archaeological features in the first seven pits (photographs of pits 4-7 can be seen in Appendix II).

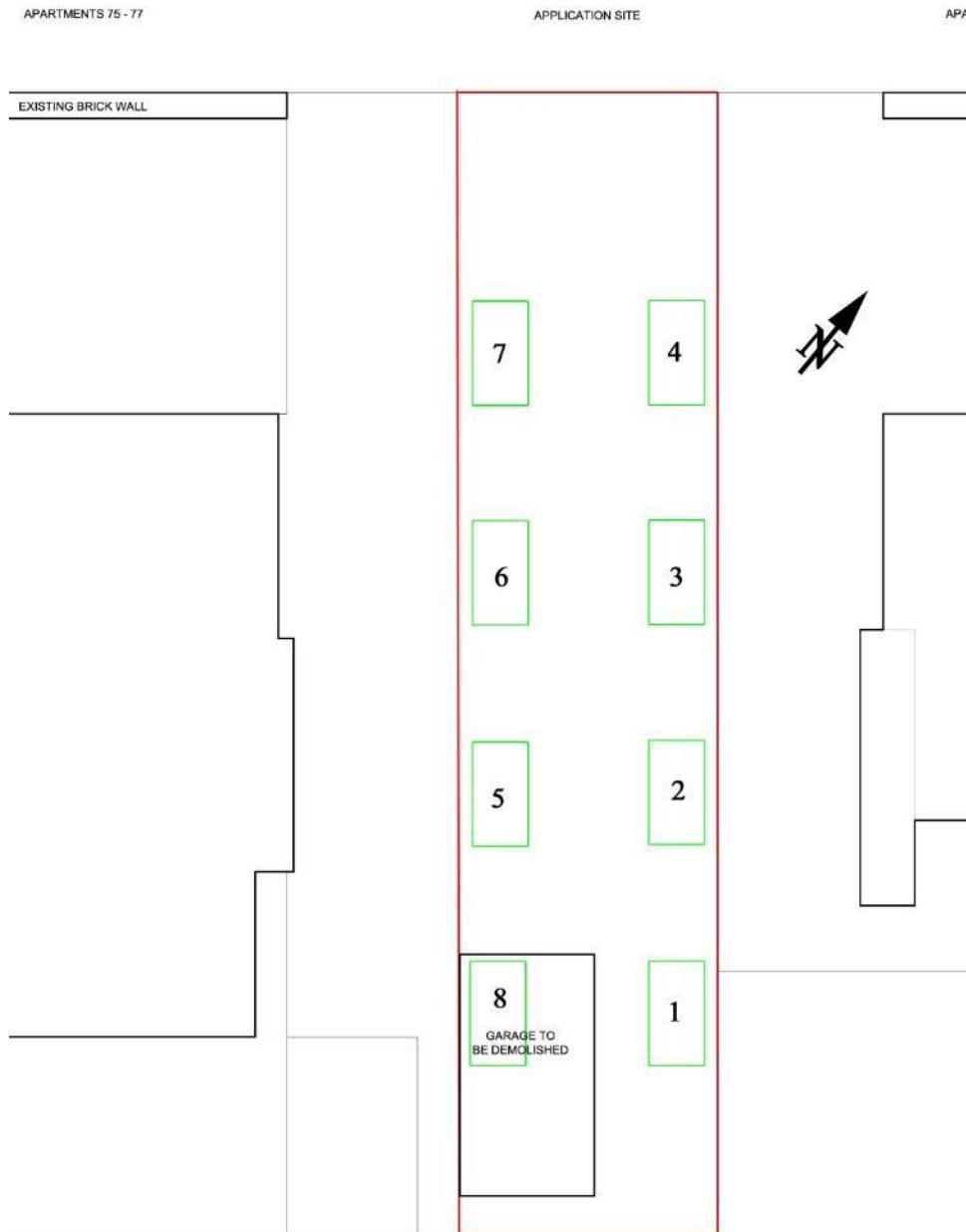


Figure 6: Outline of the site boundary (red) with the pit locations marked in green. Not to scale.

7.3 The stratigraphy was generally the same across all seven pits (fig. 7), comprising a layer of mid- to dark brown silty topsoil with frequent rooting, (1), varying in thickness from 0.25m to 0.36m. Underlying the topsoil was a layer of modern made ground, (2), varying from 0.39m to 0.57m thick. The made ground contained frequent inclusions of red and yellow brick, concrete, wood (both raw logs and cut timbers), glass, metal fragments, clinker and yellow sand lenses. The frequency of the inclusions within the made ground varied somewhat; a slightly cleaner silty layer with only a few CBM inclusions being seen in pits 1 and 2 towards the southern end of the site (figs. 8 & 9). The colour of the made ground also varied, with the layer in pit 1 being a darker brown than what was visible across the rest of the site (fig. 10 for example).

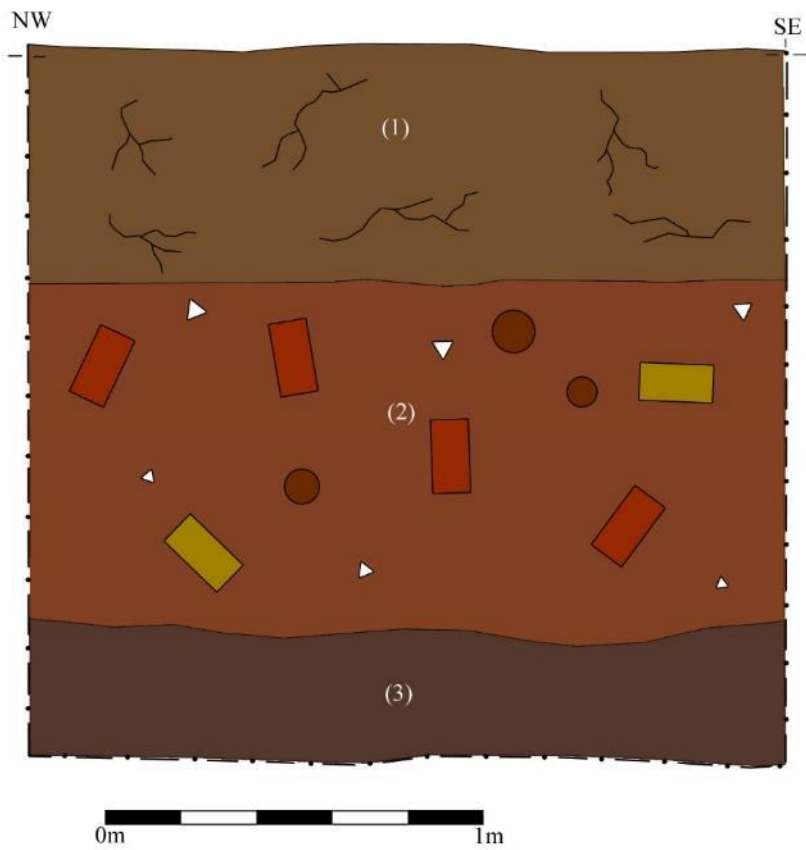


Figure 7: Sample section taken from average deposit thicknesses. Original drawn at 1:10



Figure 8: SW facing section of pit 1. Looking NE, scale 1m



Figure 9: SW facing section of pit 2. Looking NE, scale 1m

- 7.4 Underlying the made ground was the natural geology, a dark brown organic silt, (3). The silt had few inclusions and the full extent is unknown, though the visible thickness varied from 0.18m to 0.39m (fig. 14). The base of several of the pits was flooded, indicating a fairly high water table in the area, though local rain showers may have contributed to this. The silt was seen at an average of 0.82m below ground level (c.12.48mOD).



Figure 10: SW facing section of pit 3. Looking NE, scale 1m

- 7.5 No archaeological finds or features were encountered in any observed pit.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 We can now look back at the original research questions presented in the preceding WSI (Compass Archaeology, 2017) and compare them with the results of the evaluation.

8.2 **Is there any evidence of pre-medieval/pre-monastic activity or occupation? If so, what form does this take?**

No archaeological evidence was found for the previous occupation of the site for any period, nor was any evidence of human activity found on the site before the post-medieval period.

8.3 **Are there any finds or features present associated with the medieval occupation of the area? At what level do these occur?**

See above answer (8.2).

8.4 **If so, can this be related to the monastic complex of Merton Priory?**

No archaeological evidence of activity or occupation was found relating to any period before the post-medieval.

8.5 **Is there any evidence of post-medieval activity or occupation?**

The entirety of the site was covered with a layer of modern made ground, (2), made up of building rubble including bricks, glass and wood. The layer appears marked on the BGS map sheet 270 (fig. 3) as 'worked ground and made ground', indicating the likelihood that this deposit was dumped over the natural alluvium in the 1940s-50s to provide a level base for the construction of the housing estate which includes Runnymede. No archaeological remains were found in situ and there was no evidence of any previous occupation of the site.

8.6 **If encountered, what is the natural geology and at what level does it exist across the site?**

The natural geology comprised a dark brown organic silt with few inclusions, (1). It was seen at levels of 0.7-0.92m below ground level (c.12.60- 12.38mOD).

9 SOURCES

9.1 Online sources

British History Online: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/surrey/>

Historic England, 2017. *The National Heritage List for England*:
<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/heritage-assets/nhle/>

9.2 Bibliography

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http://www.merton.gov.uk/environment/designandconservation/archaeology/archaeological_priority_zones_in_merton.htm.> [Accessed June 2018].

Miller, P. & Saxby, D (2007), *The Augustinian Priory of St Mary Merton, Surrey: Excavations 1976-90*. MoLAS Monograph 34

Morris, J. (1975). *Domesday Book: 3 Surrey* (trans.). Chichester: Phillimore.

9.3 Cartographic sources (chronological order)

Ordnance Survey. (1895). *Five-feet-to-the-mile*.

Ordnance Survey. (1952). *1:1250*.

British Geological Survey. (1994). *Sheet 270: South London*

APPENDIX I: CONTEXT LIST

Context	Description
(1)	Mid-dark brown silty topsoil with frequent rooting
(2)	Made ground
(3)	Dark brown organic silt

APPENDIX II: PHOTOGRAPHS OF PITS 4-7



Figure 11: NE facing section of pit 4. Looking SW. Note no scale due to presence of potentially live electrical utility



Figure 12: SW facing section of pit 5. Looking NE, scale 1m



Figure 13: SW facing section of pit 6. Looking NE, scale 1m



Figure 14: SW facing section of pit 7. Looking NE, scale 1m

APPENDIX III: OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

OASIS ID: [compassa1-319179](#)

Project details

Project name	77 Runnymede, Colliers Wood, London Borough of Merton, SW19 2PQ: An Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Short description of the project	On the 30th-31st May 2018 Compass Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief on groundworks at 77 Runnymede, Colliers Wood, London Borough of Merton, SW19 2PQ, commissioned by the Site Owner as part of a planning condition imposed by Merton Council due to the sites location within the Wandle/Colliers Wood Riverside Industries Archaeological Priority Zone (APZ), and it's close proximity to the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Merton Priory (SAM ref: 1001976). The watching brief comprised the observation and recording of eight hand dug pits, placed at even intervals along both sides of the length of the site. The pits measured 1.6m (NW-SE side) by 1m (SW-NE) and between 1m to 1.27m deep. The stratigraphy was the same across all seven pits and comprised a layer of mid- to dark brown silty topsoil with frequent rooting, underlying this was a layer of modern made ground, containing frequent inclusions of brick, concrete, wood, glass, metal, clinker and yellow sand. Underlying the made ground was the natural geology, a dark brown organic silt, seen at 12.60mOD at its highest level. The layer of made ground appears marked on the British Geological Survey: Sheet 270 as 'worked ground and made ground', indicating the likelihood that this deposit was dumped over the natural alluvium in the 1940s-50s to provide a level base for the construction of the housing estate which includes Runnymede. No archaeological remains were found and there was no evidence of any previous occupation of the site.
Project dates	Start: 30-05-2018 End: 31-05-2018
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	RUN18 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON MERTON WIMBLEDON AND MERTON 77 Runnymede, Colliers Wood, London Borough of Merton, SW19 2PQ

Postcode	SW19 2PQ
Study area	140 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 526606 169746 50.931415678766 0.172710461196 50 55 53 N 000 10 21 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Compass Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)
Project design originator	Compass Archaeology
Project director/manager	Geoff Potter
Project supervisor	Miranda Fulbright
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Museum of London Archaeological Archive
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Museum of London Archaeological Archive
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Plan", "Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	77 Runnymede, Colliers Wood, London Borough of Merton, SW19 2PQ: An Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Fulbright, M.
Date	2018
Issuer or publisher	Compass Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	250 York Road, London, SW11 3SJ
Description	Comprehensive report detailing the results of an archaeological watching brief, including site information such as geology and location, historical and archaeological background and relevant planning policy. The results are supplemented by relevant photographs and section drawings.