

Marden and Knight Architects

New Court, Green Lane, Morden, London, SM 4.

*ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT*

NGR TQ 252 673

Site Code GNE00

planning ref: 95/P0059

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September 2000

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## SUMMARY

*The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation at Green Lane Morden on behalf of Marden and Knight Architect. The evaluation revealed no archaeological features in a area of extensive modern disturbance.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In August 2000 the OAU carried out a field evaluation at the Haig Homes estate (Fig.1), Green Lane, Morden (centered TQ 252 673) on behalf of Marden and Knight Architects in respect of a planning application for a housing development with additional parking (Planning reference: 95/P0059) and in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) agreed with English Heritage (OAU December 1999)

1.1.2 The site covers an area of approximately 6,500 m<sup>2</sup> within an existing housing estate between Green Lane and Central Road, Morden in the London Borough of Merton. The site is bounded to the north by properties fronting Alexandria Square; to the east by the railway; to the south by Douglas Square and to the west by Legion Court and Denmark Court.

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on London Clay with the modern ground surface at approximately 35.00 m above OD. The site is situated on very gently sloping ground which falls away gradually to the north. The area has formerly been used for garage parking and consisted of concrete slabs beneath the now demolished garages, tarmac access roads and surrounding grassed areas.

#### 1.3 Archaeological background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a brief desk-based study contained within the WSI. The site itself produced no significant archaeological evidence although there are some known locations with archaeological remains close to the development site.

#### 1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 Work was undertaken on behalf of Marden and Knight Architects and their client Haig Homes. Monitoring was undertaken by Catherine Kavanagh of English Heritage for the London Borough of Merton. It was directed by Nick Shepherd and supervised by Brian Matthews for OAU.



## 2 EVALUATION AIMS

2.1.1 These were detailed within the WSI and comprised aims:

- to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains, their location/extent, condition and character;
- to establish the potential of any deposits for environmental reconstruction;
- to determine the requirement for and possible scope of any further mitigation;
- to ensure the dissemination of results.

## 3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Scope of fieldwork

3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of four trenches located within the footprint of the proposed development. The trenches measured approximately 20 m long x 2 m wide (Fig 2).

The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

### 3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

3.2.1 The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features and deposits were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples where appropriate. All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:50 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

### 3.3 Finds

3.3.1 No archaeologically significant finds were recovered during the course of the excavation. Obviously modern finds were noted but not recovered.

### 3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

3.4.1 The site was found to be unsuitable for environmental sampling.

## 4 RESULTS: GENERAL

### 4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 The site is located on London Clay. Ground conditions were dry during the evaluation.

### 4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

4.2.1 No archaeological deposits were located during the evaluation.

## 5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

### 5.1 Description of deposits

#### *Trench 1*

- 5.1.1 Trench 1 was aligned approximately north-west/south-east and measured 16 m long by 1.9 m wide.
- 5.1.2 The trench was moved slightly to the north east of its original plotted position to avoid storm water drains to the west, and shortened to avoid new concrete garage slabs to the northwest and the present tarmac access road to the southeast.
- 5.1.3 A light brownish yellow, slightly sandy undisturbed natural clay, 105, was revealed at a depth of between 0.6 – 0.8 m beneath the present ground level (34.25 – 34.45 m OD).
- 5.1.4 Four poorly defined and irregular areas of slightly silty yellow-brown clay were identified against the surrounding natural clay and appear to be the result of root disturbance. The most regular of these features, 109, was sectioned to reveal a very irregular cut which partially underlay the surrounding natural. None of these features produced finds. Some modern roots activity was also apparent
- 5.1.5 A thin layer of brownish yellow clay with occasional small chalk flecking, 104, overlay the clean natural clay, 105. This layer was up to 0.2 m thick and appears to be an interface between clean clays below and disturbed soils above. A single sherd of modern porcelain was found within this horizon.
- 5.1.6 The chalk flecked clay, 104, was sealed by up to 0.2 m of dark gray-brown silty clay, 102, a buried modern turf line, 101, and a 0.3 m thick covering of dark gray-brown silty clay, 100. Both of these upper soil layers, 102 and 100, contained obviously 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery and other debris.

#### *Trench 2*

- 5.1.7 Trench 2 was aligned east – west and measured 20 m long by 1.9 m wide. The trench was placed across an area covered by a concrete garage slab and tarmac.
- 5.1.8 Natural clay was revealed at a depth of 0.54 m beneath the present ground level (34.5m OD). This was overlain by a thin layer of chalk flecked clay, 202/210, which probably represents a slightly mixed interface between the underlying clay and soils above. This layer was overlain by layers of yellow-brown to gray brown clayey silt which contained obviously modern finds and debris. The trench was sealed by a layer of mixed soil broken brick rubble make-up and the present concrete and tarmac surfaces.
- 5.1.9 The only cut feature revealed within this trench was a narrow north-east to south-west aligned linear, 205. This feature appeared to cut from beneath the level of chalk flecked clay 210 and as sectioned revealed a well defined, steep sided, flat based cut

measuring 0.27 m wide by 0.5 m deep. Its fill, a dark blue-gray silty clay produced two very small fragments of undiagnostic ceramic building material. The dark fill of this feature, and the shape of its cut strongly suggest that this is a former pipe or cable trench of modern origin that has been subsequently truncated.

### *Trench 3*

- 5.1.10 Trench 3 was aligned north-south and measured 21m by 1.9m wide. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 1m
- 5.1.11 Natural mid brown/yellow clay was recorded at 0.6m below the modern ground level (34.56m OD) sealed by 0.30 -0.45m of mixed redeposited silts and clays 301/302 providing a make-up/levelling layer for the concrete slab.

### *Trench 4*

- 5.1.12 Trench 4 was aligned north-south and measured 20m by 1.8m wide. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.05m.
- 5.1.13 Natural light brown/yellow silty clay was recorded at 0.98m below the modern ground surface (35.20m OD). It was sealed by a mix of redeposited natural silts/clays 401/402/405 and stoney loam dumps containing modern building material and refuse 404. The latter had probably been laid as part of a make up layer to nearby concrete surfaces although here they lay under topsoil/turf.

## **6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION**

### **6.1 Reliability of field investigation**

- 6.1.1 A total are of 160m<sup>2</sup> was exposed within the trenches representing a 2.5% sample of the development area. Such a sample is normally sufficient to identify the presence or absence of archaeological remains although localised/isolated features can remain unlocated.
- 6.1.2 Light and weather conditions were conducive to recording and no significant obstacle to the survey were encountered.

### **6.2 Overall interpretation**

#### *Summary of results*

- 6.2.1 No archaeological remains were identified within the trenches and this is likely to indicate that none survive across the remainder of the site.
- 6.2.2 The absence of archaeological remains may be due to truncation. Natural clays were encountered at between 0.54 and 0.98m below the modern ground surface. They were sealed by disturbed/redeposited natural silts and clays with localised dumps of soil and building material acting as make up to the concrete slab.



- 6.2.3 The evidence suggests some recent disturbance/truncation. The area was marked as open fields on OS maps as late as 1867. No buried agricultural soils survived in any of the trench profiles and this suggests they have been removed, possibly together with the upper part of the natural clay within which archaeological deposits might normally be expected to survive. Truncation may have occurred during works associated with the construction of adjacent housing or the railway line.

## **7 IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT**

- 7.1.1 The proposed development is likely to have no archaeological impact.

## APPENDICES

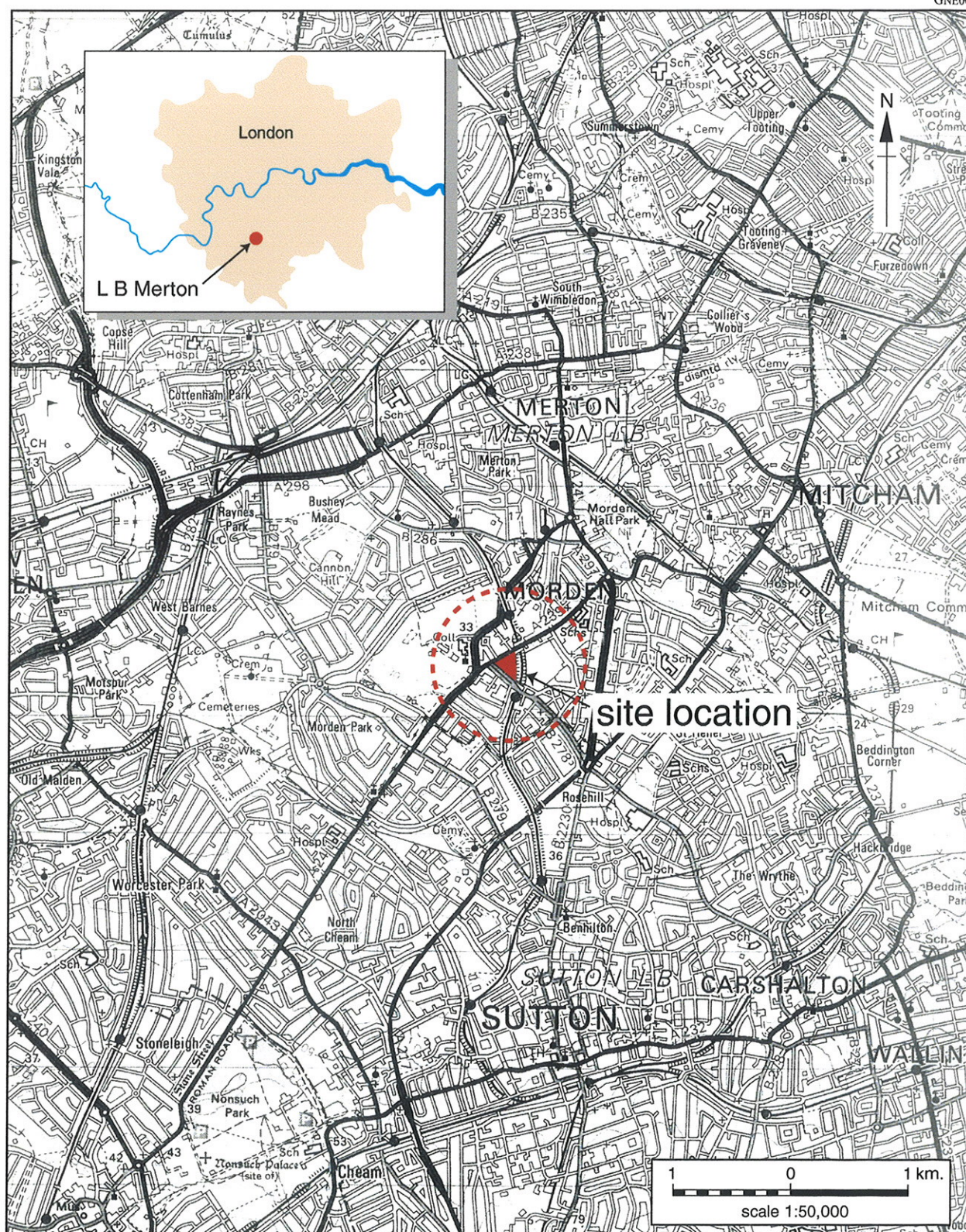
## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>No./ wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
001						
	101	Layer	Topsoil			
	102	Layer	Buried turf			
	103	Layer	Redeposited dump			
	104	Layer	Redeposited dump			
	105	Layer	Natural Clay			
	106	Fill	Fill of 107			
	107	Cut	Natural feature			
	108	Fill	Fill of 109			
	109	Cut	Natural feature			
	110	Layer	Redeposited dump			
	111	Layer	Root disturbance			
	112	Cut	Root disturbance			
	113	Layer	Root disturbance			
002						
	200	Layer	Concrete slab			
	201	Layer	Redeposited dump			
	202	Layer	Redeposited dump			
	203	Layer	Natural Clay			
	204	Layer	Natural Clay			
	205	Cut	Modern pipe cut			
	206	Layer	Fill of 205			
	207	Layer	Asphalt			
	208	Layer	Modern make-up			
	209	Layer	Redeposited dump			
	210	Layer	Gravel interface			
003						
	300	Layer	Concrete slab			
	301	Layer	Make-up dumps			
	302	Layer	Redeposited dump			

	303	Layer	Natural Clay			
004						
	400	Layer	Topsoil			
	401	Layer	Redeposited dump			
	402	Layer	Redeposited dump			
	403	Layer	Natural clay			
	404	Layer	Redeposited dump			
	405	Layer	Redeposited dump			
	406	Layer	Interface			

**APPENDIX 2 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS****Site name:** New Court, Green Lane, Morden**Site code:** GNE00**Grid reference:** TQ 252 673**Type of evaluation:** Four trenches**Date and duration of project:** 21-22nd August 2000**Area of site:** 6,500m<sup>2</sup>**Summary of results:** No archaeological deposits were identified.**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OAU, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited the Museum of London in due course, under the following accession number:





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Figure 1: Site location





Figure 2: Trench locations



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