

7-13 Church Road, Mitcham, CR4 3BE

London Borough of Merton

An Archaeological Evaluation Report

NGR 527171 168598 (Centred)

Planning References: 06/P0430 and 06/P0431

ASE Project No. 2672

ASE Report No. 2007214

LAARC Site Code: CIM 07



Prepared by Dan Swift BA, MIFA

August 2007

Abstract

Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), was commissioned by Burgess Mean Architects on behalf of their clients Amicus Horizon Housing Group to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of the redevelopment of 7-13 Church Road, Mitcham, CR4 3BE. The work was carried out between 24th and 29th of May 2007.

Four trenches were excavated within the footprint of the development. A medieval 12th -13th century ditch and an undated, probably medieval ditch and posthole were recorded. These may pertain to similar features recorded at previous excavations in the area such as at Church Road Vicarage site. Additionally, the remains of a 19th century brick building were recorded.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), was commissioned by Burgess Mean Architects on behalf of their clients Amicus Horizon Housing Group to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of the redevelopment of 7-13 Church Road, Mitcham, CR4 3BE (centred NGR 527171 168598) (Fig. 1).

1.1.2 The proposed development site lies at 7-13 Church Road. The western boundary of the site is shared with existing residential development. The access road to Melrose School is found adjacent to the eastern boundary, with the school grounds located to the south of the site. The northern boundary of the site fronts Church Road.

1.1.3 The fieldwork was conducted by Dan Swift (Senior Archaeologist) and Michelle Statton (Assistant Archaeologist) between the 24th and the 29th of May 2007. The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Project Manager).

1.2 Planning summary

1.2.1 Planning permission has been granted by the London Borough of Merton (Refs. 06/P0430 and 06/P0431) for the demolition of 7 Church Road, a single storey addition to the rear of 13 Church Road, the erection of 17 new residential units and the conversion of 13 Church Road to provide 2 further residential units with associated landscaping and car parking.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the evaluation were set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation document (Griffin 2007):

1.3.1 The evaluation should aim to determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, form, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains, irrespective of period, liable to be threatened by the proposed development. An adequate representative sample of all areas where archaeological remains are potentially threatened should be studied.

1.3.2 The evaluation should also seek to clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusions and hence assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits and any surviving structures of archaeological significance.

1.3.3 Where physical preservation is likely to be considered as a mitigation

option, the primary factors affecting the present state of preservation and the direct and indirect affect of the proposed development should also be considered.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The earliest mention of Mitcham is in the alleged charter of AD 727, which is a confirmation of the grant by which Erkenwald gave lands at Mitcham to Chertsey Abbey. Later there is a grant of land at Merton, near Wimbledon, and Mitcham from Edgar to Earls Alphen and Elswith. In 1086 the canons of Rayeux held for the Bishop of Bayeux five hides in Mitcham which in the time of King Edward had been held by Brictric of the King. Several grants of land at Mitcham were made by Henry I, and it is not improbable that some of their estates formed the Manor of Mitcham, which before the end of the 13th century had come into the possession of the priory of St. Mary Overy. Following the Dissolution Henry VIII sold the manor of Mitcham in 1545, described as lately belonging to St. Mary Overy to Thomas Fremonds, to Nicholas Spackman and Christopher Harbottell.¹ The archaeological potential of the development site has been highlighted by recent archaeological investigations elsewhere on Church Road where Roman, late Saxon, medieval and post medieval features (pits, ditches, well, etc) have been identified.²

¹ 'Parishes: Mitcham', A History of the County of Surrey: Volume 4 (1912), pp. 229-34. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=43055>. Date accessed: 24 April 2007.

² <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/search/fr.cfm?rcn=EHNMR-1060489;1060438;1060490;1082250;1082247;1308631;1324069;1344271>.

Title	Description	Location	Grid ref	Easting	Northing	Subject(s)	Period(s)	Other Identifiers	ADS Record ID
CHURCH RD (MITCHAM), MERTON English Heritage - Greater London Sites and Monuments Record	NEGATIVE EVIDENCE - CHURCH RD (MITCHAM), MERTON	CHURCH RD (MITCHAM), MERTON, England	TQ 27 68, 000 10 W 51 23 N	527000,	168000,	NEGATIVE EVIDENCE	Unknown	Depositor ID: 022206	GLSMR-022206
CHURCH RD (MITCHAM), MERTON English Heritage - Greater London Sites and Monuments Record	CEMETERY - CHURCH RD (MITCHAM), MERTON	CHURCH RD (MITCHAM), MERTON, England	TQ 27 68, 000 10 W 51 23 N	527000,	168000,	CEMETERY	Post Medieval	Depositor ID: 022351	GLSMR-022351

Table 1: Results of ADS GLSMR Search on 'Church Road, Mitcham'

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 Four trenches of varying lengths were excavated (Fig. 2) by an 8 tonne tracked machine fitted with a 1.5m smooth grading bucket under archaeological supervision, to reveal archaeological layers and/or cut features above or in the substratum. Deposits were removed in small spits of no more than 20cm onto the surface of the drift geology.
- 3.2 All recording was undertaken in accordance with accepted professional standards according to the UCLFAU Fieldwork Manual (draft) and the methodology outlined within the 'Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation' (Griffin 2007). A photographic record of the trenches was kept. The spoil from the excavations was inspected by archaeologists in order to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest.
- 3.3 The trenches were levelled in relation to a nearby spot-height of 19.70m OD located in Church Road immediately opposite the site (Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map, 2002). The trenches were located as close as possible to the proposed trench location plan in the WSI document (Griffin 2007, Fig. 2) though it was not possible to open Trenches 1 and 2 to the prescribed full 20 metres due to a lack of space.
- 3.4 The stratigraphic and finds archives of this archaeological evaluation are presently held at the Archaeology South-East offices in Ditchling and will be transferred to the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) in due course.

4 STRATIGRAPHIC RESULTS

See Fig. 2 and Fig. 3

4.1 Trench 1

4.1.1 Trench 1 was situated in the garden to the rear of 7 Church Road and measured 16m southeast to northwest and 1.5m wide. The modern ground surface (grass) was level. No archaeological features or layers were recorded in the trench. Artefacts and animal bone were recovered from the topsoil [1] which overlay the natural sands and gravels [3] and [4]. In the north-western part of the trench an interface [2] between [1] and [3] or [4] existed; composed of a mixture of natural sand and gravel and topsoil. Observation of the levels taken on the natural sandy gravel deposits [3] and [4] reveal a slight dip in the central part of the trench possibly marking the course of an old stream bed. Variations in the sand and gravel [3] and [4] further support this hypothesis.

Level on top of deposit	Description
19.80m OD	[1] Topsoil - very dark grey-brown loose sandy silt with moderate amounts of flint fragments and pebbles
19.00m OD (NW) 18.86m OD (mid)	[2] Topsoil/natural sandy gravel interface
18.80m OD (NW) 18.44m OD (mid) 18.90m OD (SE)	[3] Clean loose mid orangey-yellow sand and gravel, or [4] mottled dark grey/orangey-yellow sand and gravel

Table 2: Trench 1 summary

4.2 Trench 2

4.2.1 Trench 2 was situated in the garden to the rear of 7 Church Road and measured 15.3m southwest to northeast and 1.5m wide. The modern ground surface (grass) was level. Artefacts and animal bone were recovered from the topsoil [1] which overlay natural sands and gravels [3] or [4]. Throughout the length of the trench an interface [2] between [1] and [3] or [4] was recorded.

4.2.2 Two features [5], a possible posthole and [7] a small ditch were recorded. These cut into the natural sands and gravels [4] at the northeast end of the trench, and may have survived within the bottom horizon of the topsoil [1], although this was unclear. Neither feature contained any finds. The ditch [7] continued beyond the limits of the trench to the northwest and to the southeast. The natural sand and gravel [3] and [4] was fairly level.

Level on top of deposit	Description
19.66m OD	[1] Topsoil - very dark grey-brown loose sandy silt with moderate amounts of flint fragments and pebbles
18.86m OD (SW) 18.82m OD (mid) 18.80m OD (NE)	[2] Topsoil/natural sandy gravel interface
18.80m OD	[5] a sub-circular shallow u-shaped cut c 0.50m in diameter and 0.23m deep may represent the base of a posthole. No finds were retrieved from fill [6] of [5], a mid-grey silty sand with frequent gravel inclusions. No trace of timber was recorded in [6].
18.80m OD	[7] a shallow linear feature c 0.50m wide and 0.10m deep with a fairly flat base running from northwest to southeast through the trench. The fill of [7], [8], a very dark grey sandy silt with frequent flints, contained no finds.
18.61m OD (SW) 18.75m OD (mid) 18.64m OD (NE)	[3] Clean loose mid orangey-yellow sand and gravel, or [4] mottled dark grey/orangey-yellow sand and gravel

Table 3: Trench 2 summary

4.3 Trench 3

- 4.3.1 Trench 3 was situated in the front garden of 7 Church Road and measured 10m north to south 1.5-2m wide. A thin layer of grass and modern overburden [+] overlay the remains of a brick built building which extended beyond the limits of the trench in all directions.
- 4.3.2 The building appeared to have at least three phases of construction, or improvement, although differences in brick types of the main phase may suggest two further phases.
- 4.3.3 The earliest and main phases of construction consisted of numerous brick walls [12], [13], [16], [19] and [20] and various brick floors [11]. A second phase consisted of a make-up layer [14] and stone paving slabs [17] and [18] that overlay the earlier brick floors [11]. A third phase consisted of the addition of a ceramic drain of probable Victorian or later date. This appeared to be the final amendment to the property prior to its demise.
- 4.3.4 Brief consultation of several historic maps of the area (see below) suggested that the building remains probably represent a 19th century building that was situated between numbers 7 and 13 Church Road until at least 1932.
- 4.3.5 The building does not appear to exist on the Edwards Map of Wimbledon and District of 1819, but may exist on the Mitcham Tithe Map of 1847 (Densem 2003, Fig 6); it is definitely present on the Ordnance Survey map of 1867 (Densem 2003, Fig 7), the Ordnance Survey map of 1895 (Densem 2003, Fig 8), the Ordnance Survey map of 1913 (Densem 2003, Fig 9) and the Ordnance Survey map of 1932 (Densem 2003, Fig 10). However, the Ordnance Survey map of 1953 (Densem 2003, Fig 11) does not show the building, suggesting that by now it had been demolished or destroyed, perhaps during the Blitz, when Merton, as with most parts of London, suffered damage from German bombers who dropped their payloads over domestic areas when their primary targets could not be located or reached.
- 4.3.6 After the brick building was recorded, it was agreed by telephone with Kim Stabler of English Heritage that a smaller sondage be excavated at the northern end of the trench to ascertain whether any earlier remains existed beneath the structure.
- 4.3.7 Subsequently, a sondage measuring 4m north-south by 1.5m wide was excavated in the northern part of Trench 3. This revealed the brick footings of the above described building cutting into topsoil [1] which in turn overlay the natural mottled sandy gravel [4]. No archaeological features were found in the topsoil or substratum.

Level on top of deposit	Description
19.72m OD (N) 19.60m OD (S)	[+] Grass
	Remains of 19th century brick built building
19.50m OD (N) 19.30m OD (mid)	[1] Topsoil - very dark grey-brown loose sandy silt with moderate amounts of flint fragments and pebbles
18.90m OD (N) 18.80m OD (mid)	[4] mottled dark grey/orangey-yellow sand and gravel

Table 4: Trench 3 summary

4.4 Trench 4

- 4.4.1 Trench 4 was situated in the driveway to the west of 13 Church Road and measured 9m north-south and 1.5m wide. The modern ground surface (gravel) was level. Artefacts and animal bone were recovered from the topsoil [1] which overlay fairly level natural sands and gravels [3]. Throughout the length of the trench an interface [2] between [1] and [3] was recorded.
- 4.4.2 A small ditch [9] was recorded cut into [3] at the northern end of the trench. The ditch continued beyond the limits of the trench to the northwest to southeast and the fill [10] contained the only pottery sherd from a stratified context on the site, dated as c mid 12- mid 13th century and a sheep-sized long-bone fragment.

Level on top of deposit	Description
19.62m OD	Gravel over topsoil [1] - very dark grey-brown loose sandy silt with moderate amounts of flint fragments and pebbles
18.75m OD (N) 18.77mOD (mid) 18.67m OD (S)	[2] Topsoil/natural sandy gravel interface
18.54m OD	[9] a shallow linear feature c 0.90m wide and 0.28m deep with a bowl-shaped base probably represents the bottom of a ditch running from northwest to southeast through the trench. The fill of [9], [10] a very dark grey sandy silt with frequent flints occasional pottery and bone.
18.54mOD (N) 18.59m OD (mid) 18.42 (S)	[3] Clean loose mid orangey-yellow sand and gravel

Table 5: Trench 4 summary

5 THE FINDS

by Trista Clifford

A small collection of finds were recovered from the site at 7-13 Church Road, Mitcham. These are quantified in Table 5 below:

Context	Pottery	weight (g)	CBM	weight (g)	Bone	weight (g)
TR? (1)					95	500
TR1 (1)	8	94	6	432	14	82
TR2 (1)	7	80				
TR3 (+)	6	110	2	50		
TR4 (1)	4	18	1	18	1	22
TR4 (10)	1	24			1	4
Context	Shell	weight (g)	Flint	weight (g)	Stone	weight (g)
TR? (1)						
TR1 (1)			1	86	1	4
TR2 (1)					1	4
TR3 (+)						
TR4 (1)	1	4				
TR4 (10)						
Context	Iron	weight (g)	Glass	weight (g)	Clay pipe	weight (g)
TR? (1)						
TR1 (1)	2	14	4	10	3	4
TR2 (1)						
TR3 (+)	3	160	8	76	1	2
TR4 (1)	1	54				
TR4 (10)						

Table 6: Quantification of finds

5.1 Pottery

- 5.1.1 A total of 26 sherds of pottery were recovered, the majority of which derive from unstratified or topsoil contexts.
- 5.1.2 The only sherd from a stratified context comes from Trench 4 (10). This is a fine sandy ware with frequent shell inclusions. It is almost certainly wheel made, with an oxidised outer surface and a thin layer of carbonised residue on the interior: it is possibly London sandy-shelly ware dating to the mid 12th - mid 13th century. The other medieval fragments are an unglazed medium sand tempered sherd from TR3

(+), of probable 14th century date and a coarse green glazed greyware with abundant sand temper from TR1 (1). Neither is particularly abraded.

5.1.3 The post-medieval pottery assemblage is entirely recovered from topsoil deposits. TR1 (1) contained tin glazed earthenware of 17-18th century date and later glazed redware and yellow wares. TR2 (1) also contained glazed redwares, along with creamwares of 18–19th century date. TR3 contained two 17th–18th century tin glazed earthenware fragments, as well as 18-19th century blue transfer wares. Blue transfer ware and creamware were also recovered from TR4 (1).

5.2 CBM

5.2.1 A total of 9 fragments of ceramic building material were recovered, all from unstratified deposits. TR1 (1) contained two medium fired red brick fragments, of a medium to coarse sandy fabric with occasional clay pellets up to c 4mm. Three tile fragments of a similar fabric minus the clay pellets and a fourth in a coarser sandy fabric were also recovered from this context.

5.2.2 TR3 (+) contained two well-fired fine sandy tile fragments. TR4 (1) contained a single medium sand tile fragment, similar to those in TR1 (1). Close dating of the assemblage is not possible due to its disassociation from any features, although it is certainly 17th century or later.

5.2.3 The partly exposed building in Trench 3 comprised of three types of red brick, probably indicative of separate construction phases. Walls [13], [19] and [20] and brick floor [11] were constructed of frogged bricks c 22cm long x c 10cm wide x c 7cm thick. Wall [12] was constructed of unfrogged red bricks c 23cm long x c 10cm wide x c 8.5cm thick. Wall [16] was constructed of unfrogged bricks c 23.5cm long x c 12cm wide x c 6cm thick.

5.3 Clay pipe

5.3.1 TR1 (1) contained three stem fragments, and a single stem fragment was recovered from TR3 (+). These are 18-19th century in date.

5.4 Glass

5.4.1 Four glass fragments were recovered from TR1 (1), including clear vessel glass and a pale blue fragment from a square bottle of Victorian date.

TR3 (+) contained eight sherds, including blue, green and brown bottle glass and clear window glass, all modern in date.

5.5 Iron

5.5.1 Iron objects include two large nails and a plate fragment of modern date.

5.6 Shell

5.6.1 A single fragment from the upper valve of an edible mussel, (*Ostrea Edulis*), was recovered from TR4 (1).

5.7 Stone

5.7.1 Two small slate fragments were recovered from TR1 (1) and TR2 (1).

5.7.2 Two stone floors were recorded in the partly exposed building recorded in Trench 3. These consisted of [17] a floor between walls [16] and [19] apparently made of a single yellowish white sandstone slab measuring c 1.4m square and c 8cm thick, and an area of grey sandstone slabs [18] c 60cm square.

5.8 Animal Bone

5.8.1 The only animal bone from a stratified deposit was a sheep-sized long-bone fragment from 12th to 13th century TR4 (10). The same trench produced a sheep metacarpal from unstratified (1). Trench 1 (1) contained cattle bone including mandible and longbone fragments and a butchered rib.

5.8.2 The only other bone collected came from unstratified TR1 (1). This assemblage of 95 fragments represents the partial remains of at least two mature dogs.

5.9 Significance of Finds Assemblage

5.9.1 The assemblage is domestic in nature. It is of limited potential due to its small size and disassociation from contemporary features. The pottery from TR4 (10) may be of some aid in dating this ditch and should be retained pending further work on the site.

6 DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL AND SIGNIFICANCE

6.1 Medieval

6.1.1 The two small ditches [7] and [9] recorded in trenches 2 and 4 both follow a similar northwest to southeast trajectory, have similar profiles and fills and are cut to similar depths (see Fig. 2). Whilst these may be separate features, it is not unreasonable to project that these represent elements of the same ditch. Ditch [9] contained a single c mid 12- mid 13th century potsherd, earlier than any of the other material recovered from the topsoil [1], or from the rest of the site [+], and as a sealed stratified find is likely to represent good in situ dating evidence. The possible posthole [5] also probably dates to this period as it was found alongside ditch [7] at the same depth.

6.1.2 The ditches [7] and [9] probably represent later Saxon or Norman property or field boundaries, and may pertain to similar boundary features of 11th/12th/13th century date excavated at the Mitcham Vicarage site c 80m to the west and to features at other proximate sites along Church Road (Ford 2004). The medieval remains are of **moderate local significance**.

6.2 Post-Medieval

6.2.1 As discussed above in section 4.3, Trench 3 contained the remains of a 19th century brick building destroyed or demolished to floor level probably during World War II. These remains are of **low local significance**.

6.2.2 Historic maps (Densem 2003, Fig 10) show the plan of the building as a detached featureless rectangular structure measuring c 7m EW x c 11m NS This fronted onto Church Road and may have been a private residence although it is smaller in size than the properties on either side, equally it may have been an ancillary building or a shop of some sort. None of the finds hint at a possible function.

6.2.3 To the rear of the main building, maps show five small units measuring c 3m square. These may have formed workshops or possibly stables or stalls of some sort.

6.2.4 Interestingly, the maps show that the small units would have been accessible from Church Road along either side of the main building, and that the property boundary behind the sheds is divided in half along the central axis of the whole property, although what this implies is unclear.

6.2.5 The topsoil deposit [1] encountered across the site contained residual finds dating from the c 14th–19th centuries. This attests to the known earlier occupation of the area.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 7.1 The author and Archaeology South-East would like to thank Burgess Mean Architects and their clients Amicus Horizon Housing Group for commissioning the work, and Diane Walls and Kim Stabler of English Heritage for their guidance.

8 REFERENCES

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Griffin, N, 2007, *'7-13 Church Road, Mitcham, Archaeological evaluation and historic building recording written scheme of investigation'*, ASE unpublished report

<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/collections/blurbs/272.cfm>

9 OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: archaeol6-27617

Project details

Project name	7-13 Church Road, Mitcham, L.B. Merton
Short description of the project	Four trenches were excavated within the footprint of the development prior to redevelopment of the site. A medieval 12th -13th century ditch and an undated, probably medieval ditch and posthole, and the remains of a 19th century brick building were recorded. Further archaeological work was recommended by the author.
Project dates	Start: 24-05-2007 End: 29-05-2007
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	CIM07 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	DITCH Medieval, + undated
Monument type	BUILDING Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Test Pits'
Development type	Housing estate
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 MITCHAM 7-13 Church Road, Mitcham
Postcode	CR4 3BE
Study area	75.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 6859 2717 51.0185760287 0.403947546925 51 01 06 N 000 24 14 E Point
Height OD	Min: 18.42m Max: 18.90m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	English Heritage/Department of Environment
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Neil Griffin
Project supervisor	Dan Swift
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Burgess Mean Architects

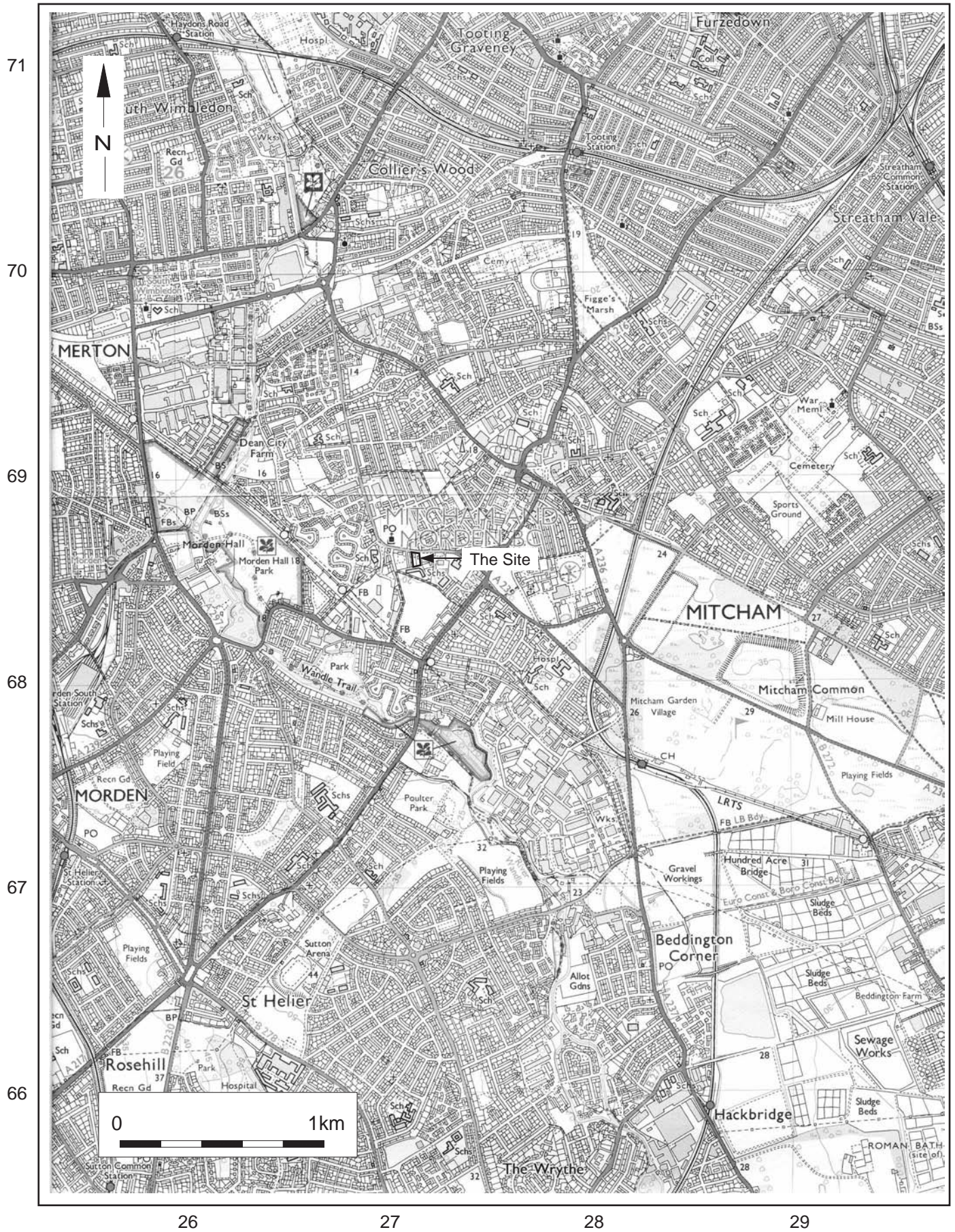
Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Archive ID	cim07
Physical Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Glass','Metal'
Digital Archive recipient	LARC
Digital Archive ID	CIM07
Digital Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Glass','Metal','Stratigraphic','Survey'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Survey'
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	CIM07
Paper Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Glass','Metal','Stratigraphic','Survey'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Map','Matrices','Miscellaneous Material','Photograph','Plan','Report','Survey ','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

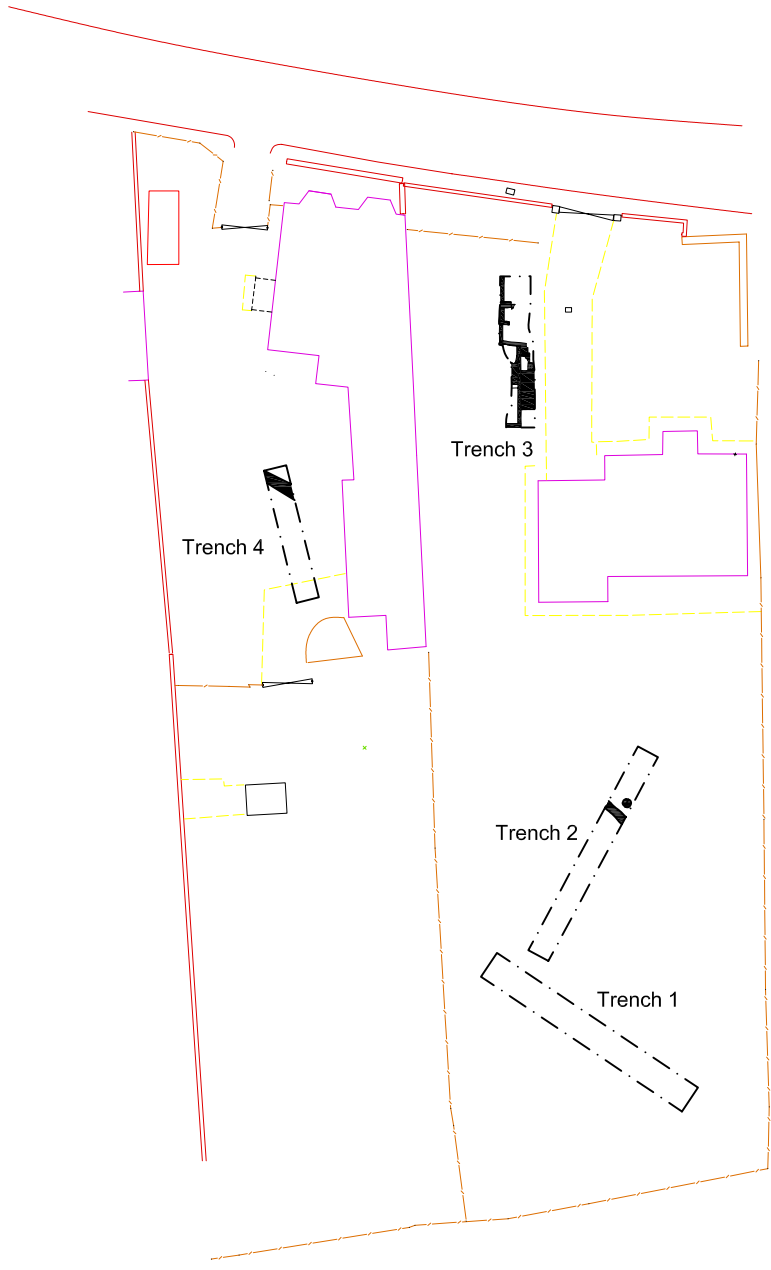
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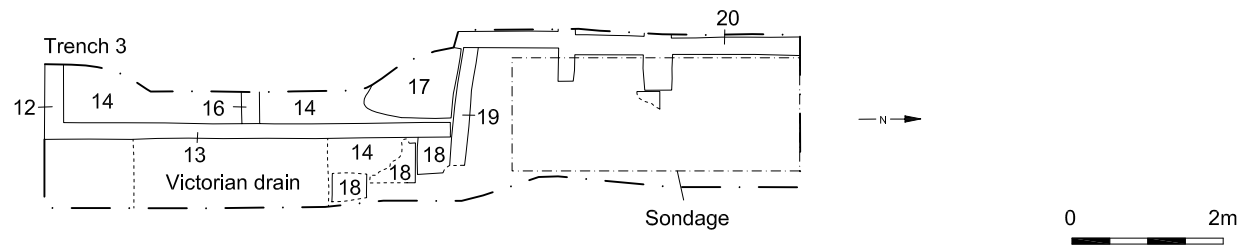
© Archaeology South-East			7-13 Church Street, Mitcham	Fig. 1
Ref: 2672	June 2007	Drawn by: mh	Site Location Plan	

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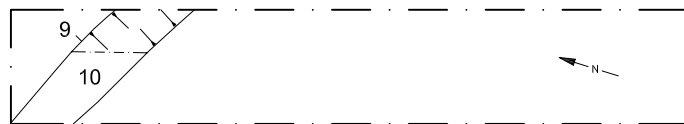


© Archaeology South-East			7-13 Church Road, Mitcham		Fig. 2
Ref: 2672	June 2007	Drawn by: mh	Trench Location Plan		

Trench 2



Trench 4



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