

MERTON UNITARY  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN



# SPG

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SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE NOTES

## Archaeology

SEPTEMBER 1999

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**0181 545 3060**

(9am - 5pm)

For information on the **Merton Unitary Development Plan**, for people who are visually impaired,  
please telephone **0181 545 3060**. Information can be provided in large print. For enquiries from members  
of the public with hearing impairments, a minicom facility is available on **0181 545 3245**.

# Supplementary Planning Guidance Note

## *Explanatory Note*

The Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted in April 1996 is undergoing a process of review. A revised version of the UDP has been placed on Deposit for public consultation from 27 September - 18 November 1999.

This Supplementary Planning Guidance Note (SPG) has been prepared as part of the review and is available for public comment over the same period. The SPG does not form part of the UDP but will be taken into account by the Council in determining Planning Applications.

Any comments on the SPG should be made on the prescribed form available from Merton Civic Centre and at Deposit locations, and should be returned to the Council before 18 November 1999.

Please note that, except where indicated otherwise, all reference to UDP policies in this document relate to the adopted 1996 UDP and your comments should now be considered in the context of the reviewed UDP.

Having received public comments on the SPG and the new policies within the Revised Deposit UDP, the Council may decide to make changes to this SPG.

Should this be the case, there will be a further opportunity for public comment on proposed changes to the SPG before it is formally adopted by the Council.

CONSULTATION  
DRAFT

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON  
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE NOTE

# ARCHAEOLOGY

**merton**  
moving ahead



October 1999

This Guidance Note is intended to provide information and advice on the importance of archaeology when developing a site within the London Borough of Merton. The note is directed towards developers, but is equally applicable to residents and landowners who may be undertaking work within the curtilage of their own properties.

The Guidance Note is divided into 2 Sections, the first explains the importance of archaeology, both nationally and in the local context and outlines Merton's archaeological heritage. It sets out the process for the scheduling of ancient monuments and designating archaeological priority zones and provides a description of the monuments and archaeological priority zones in Merton. The second Section sets out the Planning Framework in relation to the development process and provides advice and guidance to owners and developers on the processes involved. It explains the procedures involved in investigating and assessing the archaeological and/or historic sensitivity of a site and the correct approach to evaluating and dealing with any archaeological remains that are known or considered likely to exist. At the end there is a list of contacts and organisations who can provide additional advice and guidance on issues relating to archaeology.

This is one of a series of guidance notes, all of which should be read in conjunction with the planning policies contained within the Council's Unitary Development Plan. The contents of Guidance Notes, where relevant, will be taken into account when the Council considers planning applications.

## ARCHAEOLOGY IN MERTON

### THE IMPORTANCE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeological or historic remains give us a valuable insight into the way in which our ancestors lived. They contain irreplaceable information about our past and the potential for an increase in future knowledge. They give us a sense of both national and local identity, and are valuable not only for their own sake, but also for

their role in education, leisure and tourism. It is vital that we encourage 'sustainable development' that does not sacrifice what future generations will value, for the sake of short-term and often illusory gains. Our heritage has been created over many centuries and is irreplaceable. It must therefore be preserved wherever possible. Unfortunately however, much of our archaeological heritage has been unknowingly destroyed by human activity as a result of modern developments.

Our heritage may be preserved in terms of archaeological remains hidden below ground, or within buildings of historic interest. In any case, they are a finite and non-renewable resource, often being fragile and vulnerable to damage and destruction. Care therefore needs to be taken to ensure that such remains are preserved wherever possible and not needlessly or thoughtlessly destroyed, and never destroyed without record.

## MERTON'S HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Merton existed in Saxon times, known then as 'Mereton' or 'Meretun'. Indeed in 871 AD, documentary sources tell us that King Ethelred was mortally wounded at the Battle of Mereton. During the 19th century Saxon burials were also found at Mitcham.

Medieval times saw the building of Merton Priory in what is now the Colliers Wood area. However, this was demolished following the dissolution in 1538. King Henry IV was crowned here, and it was also the place where Thomas Becket was educated.

The Surrey Iron Railway, which was the first public railway in the world, was opened in 1803 to serve the many industries that had located in the area. A number of large and fine houses were also built in Merton from the late 16th Century onwards, which soon became popular with the rich and famous. Merton's most famous residents were probably Horatio Lord Nelson and Emma Hamilton who lived at 'Merton Place' just to the west of the old Priory site.

All parts of the Borough have their own unique identity, but all have their origins in the past. Mitcham and Morden are mentioned in the Domesday survey, and there are still a number of fine houses in the Borough that date back to the mid-seventeenth Century.

Clearly the London Borough of Merton has a lot to offer in terms of its past. We must ensure that our history is preserved without stifling new development. Whilst there are many reminders of the past that are visible on the surface, such as the many fine historic buildings that exist in the Borough, there lie unearthed many other important finds that can provide a valuable insight into our ancestors' lives. Archaeology is therefore very important, and developers need to be aware of this fact.

## MERTON'S GEOLOGY

Merton lies on deposits of gravel and clay to the south of the Thames. The underlying geology comprises deposits of London Clay (overlying solid chalk at a depth of several metres). In places the London Clay has been overlain by terrace gravels, which in turn have been partly removed or overlain in places by alluvial deposits laid down by the two watercourses running through the Borough; the River Wandle and the Beverley Brook. Both Streams run from south to north to empty into the Thames. Although relatively insignificant today, these rivers were in the past important both as sources of water and as a means of transport; the alluvial fills of their valleys produced lighter soils which were amenable to early agriculture and settlement.

## MERTON'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

Current archaeological knowledge suggests that prehistoric activity in the Borough was restricted to areas of easily-worked soils overlying gravel and alluvial deposits principally around Wimbledon Common and Mitcham. However, there may be materials still to be found in other soils.

The construction of a major Roman Road crossing the Borough from north-east to south west produced an additional communication route from the first Century AD onwards. The road (later known as "Stane Street") ran from London (Londinium) to Chichester on the Sussex coast: its route is broadly followed by the modern A24 (London Road, Morden, and Colliers Wood High Street) and exerted a significant influence on contemporary and subsequent patterns of development until the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the expansion of rail communications produced a major growth in suburban housing development across the entire Borough.

Past human activity in the Borough is characterised (at least from later prehistoric times onwards) by rural settlement with an agricultural base. However other themes in the archaeology of the Borough are provided by the medieval Merton Priory, the 'gentrification' of parts of the Borough through the establishment of substantial out-of-town houses from the sixteenth century onwards, and the industrialisation of areas along the Wandle (focused especially around Merton and Mitcham) from medieval times at least.

Important archaeological remains, including palaeolithic flint axes and the fossil remains of a mammoth, rhinoceros and giant ox, have already been found in Merton. In many cases this would not have occurred had the developer not taken a thoughtful and sympathetic approach in relation to the matter of archaeology. Other finds dating as far back as 10,000 BC and remains of early settlements have also been found along the course of the river Wandle and Roman coins and pottery have been found in the vicinity of the Roman Road, and Roman burials have also been discovered in Mitcham.

## SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS.

Under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport is required to maintain a schedule of monuments to which statutory protection is afforded: the principal criterion for inclusion is that a monument must be of national importance. Formal consent from the Department of Culture Media and Sport is required for any works to such monuments; further information and advice can be obtained from the Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Greater London at English Heritage. It is a criminal offence to damage or destroy such monuments. There are currently three scheduled monuments within the London Borough of Merton. These are :-

### Caesar's Camp:-

This Scheduled monument comprises the remains of a Late Bronze Age or Iron Age Hill Fort (constructed perhaps C.800BC) of 43 hectares, with a circular earthwork, defensive ditch and bank.







*The Merton seal of 1241, with a representation of Merton Priory in the background.*

### **Merton Priory:-**

The Scheduled area covers the church and domestic buildings of the Augustinian Priory of St. Mary, founded in 1114 and demolished in 1540. It also covers an area subsequently used for calico printing after demolition of the Priory, including the old Liberty Print Works.



Extensive archaeological investigations were undertaken on part of this site, prior to the development of the adjoining hypermarket and Merantun Way in the late 1980s. A large number of important finds were discovered and an informative and interesting document on the history of the area, including details of the archaeological investigations undertaken, is available from local libraries for a small charge. Remains of the Chapter House have now been preserved and can be viewed within an enclosed area beneath Merantun Way.

### **Morden Park Mound:-**

This consists of a mound, potentially a round barrow of Roman date, perhaps modified in the eighteenth century as a landscape feature or viewpoint.

Any future finds of National importance, coming within the criterion, could be considered for Scheduling Under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act.



### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRIORITY ZONES DESIGNATION CRITERIA**

Although the Archaeological Priority Zones have been defined as geographical areas, there are a number of more general archaeological themes behind their designations.



### **Prehistoric and alluvial archaeology**

A number of regional and national initiatives have highlighted the importance of this resource. Deposits which may contain well-preserved prehistoric archaeological remains and evidence for their contemporary landscape, either below or within alluvial deposits of the Thames' tributary river valleys are considered particularly important. Within Merton such deposits have been shown to be present along the Wandle Valley (and to a lesser extent the valley of the Beverley Brook).

#### **Principal Sources:**

- British Geological Survey 1:50,000 series England and Wales Sheet 270, South London, solid & drift geology;
- Greater London Sites and Monuments Record (GLSMR)



## Prehistoric Landscapes of the Thames Gravel Terraces

It has become clear that the Thames Valley gravel terraces do contain extensive evidence of prehistoric landscapes pre-dating the establishment of a nucleated urban core in the London Region, despite considerable changes that have occurred since. Recent archaeological work on the upper reaches of the Wandle Valley, in the London Borough of Sutton, has demonstrated the survival, in this part of London, of landscape evidence of dispersed settlement and land exploitation in the Neolithic and early Bronze Age (4000 - 800BC), developing into extensive field and settlement systems in the later Bronze Age and the Iron Age (800BC - 50AD). Evidence for similar processes have been identified in archaeological excavation in Mitcham and by stray finds from Wimbledon, and may be assumed to have been active across the gravel terraces of the Borough.

The continued recovery of evidence for this aspect of London's archaeology is considered increasingly important on a regional basis.

### Principal Sources:

British Geological Survey 1:50,000 series England and Wales Sheet 270, South London, solid & drift geology;  
GLSMR

## Nucleated Settlements

Regionally the period from later Iron Age onwards saw the growth of settlement. Within the Borough of Merton this can be characterised in the Roman period and from late Saxon times onwards by the development of scattered settlements, within a broader agricultural landscape. This produced a network of medieval homesteads and village nuclei across the Borough – now largely hidden after processes of suburbanisation during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Evidence for Late-Bronze Age and Iron Age activity within Merton is still fairly limited: with the exception of the earthwork hillfort remains of 'Caesars Camp' on Wimbledon Common, this period is represented by only a few stray finds in the Mitcham area.

The construction of 'Stane Street' in the Roman period provided a spur to settlement, and roadside habitation has been suggested in the area of the modern Morden Road/Deer Park Road. Further Romano-British settlement is known in the vicinity of Haslemere Road, Willow Lane and Western Road, Mitcham, where the archaeological evidence suggests the former presence of farmsteads or small village-type (hamlets) settlements.

An early Saxon cemetery excavated in Mitcham provides circumstantial evidence for a settlement in the vicinity during the post-Roman period; the medieval settlements of Merton, Mitcham and Morden have late Saxon origins, settlement at Wimbledon may also have started at this time, although the village does not appear to have been recognised as a distinct unit until the 14<sup>th</sup> Century.

Recovery of information relating to the Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and medieval historic settlements contributes to the Borough's history and will assist the study of the region's development and the interaction of settlements with the urban core of London and with each other.

Also relevant to this theme are the historic roads and other communication routes linking and servicing these settlements.

### Principal Sources

GLSMR, historic maps, published local histories.

## Riverside Industries

Water powered and water related industries have played a significant part in the development of the Borough and represent an important area of historical and archaeological research.

The River Wandle and the Beverley Brook have been used as a water supply from the earliest period of human settlement, and are known to have provided power for industrial processes such as corn milling for at least the last 1000 years. Thirteen mills are recorded along the Wandle between its source and its confluence with the River Thames at the time of the Domesday survey of 1086. By 1610 this number had increased to twenty-four, and by the early nineteenth Century the total was forty. From the seventeenth Century onwards there was an increasing diversification in mill function including the working of copper, the grinding of dyestuffs, the manufacture of snuff and processing and finishing of calico cloth. Textile printing works were established by Huguenots, early in the eighteenth century, a tradition continued by William Morris and Arthur Liberty at Merton Abbey Mills. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Mitcham was also known for its 'physic gardens' – the market gardening of medicinal herbs on the Wandle alluvium.

The continued recovery of information concerning the development and activities of these industries is considered important to broader research into the development of London as a world city.

### Principal Sources

GLSMR, historic maps, published local histories.

## Post-Medieval Estates and Gardens

Developments in garden archaeology offer opportunities to examine the important formal gardens constructed in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In some instances it may be possible to investigate the character and original relationship between formal gardens and extant historic buildings. Suburbanisation, large-scale residential development which swamped the previous-existing landscape from the mid nineteenth century onwards, includes various planned suburban estates including Merton Park laid out by John Innes in the late nineteenth century and claimed as a forerunner of the Garden Suburbs movement.

### Principal Sources

GLSMR, historic maps, published local histories.

## MERTON'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRIORITY ZONES.

The map overleaf indicates the extent of the Archaeological Priority Zones within Merton. The detailed boundaries of each of the zones are shown on the UDP Proposals Map and also identified in a Schedule at the back of the Plan. The Archaeological Priority Zones (APZs) have been primarily identified as a tool to assist the consideration of planning applications, although they also provide a coarse general guide to the Borough's archaeological heritage. APZs identify principal zones where archaeological evidence for specific aspects of the Borough's heritage are thought to survive. They do not encompass every single archaeological site or find site that is known within the Borough; rather, they are based on current knowledge and may be refined or altered as a result of future archaeological research or chance discoveries.

Within the APZs the Borough, acting in consultation with their archaeological advisors, may require developers seeking planning permission to submit as part of their planning application an assessment of the impact of their proposals on the archaeology of the site. This assessment should be to an agreed brief and may involve small scale archaeological fieldwork (an 'Evaluation') to determine the degree to which remains actually survive. This information will enable the borough to consider fully whether additional archaeological safeguards are required.

Where it is considered that important archaeological remains will be affected by a development proposal there will be a presumption in favour of physical preservation *in situ* and the applicant will be required to demonstrate that the proposed development will not affect the remains. On sites where archaeological remains will be affected but physical preservation is

not considered possible, or so important, the Council will attach conditions to any planning permission to ensure that landowners and developers make proper provision for the investigation and recording of the site by a recognised archaeological organisation.

The Archaeological Priority Zones are not a definitive statement of the extent of the Borough's archaeological resource and are subject to constant review as it is possible that there could be other sites of archaeological importance outside these defined boundaries. It is likely that there are a number of unexcavated sites across the Borough and the Council considers it is important to prevent potentially valuable archaeological remains and data from being destroyed without record when sites are developed. The Council may, therefore, on the basis of specialist advice, require similar information and safeguards for development sites outside the designated APZ areas where there are reasonable grounds to believe archaeological remains may be threatened.

Further advice on the archaeological significance of any particular site or area, or details of the information required to support an application, or meet the requirements of planning conditions, can be obtained from the Council's archaeological advisors, English Heritage's Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service.

## Description of the Priority Zones

The Priority Zones designate discrete areas of archaeological potential. They are not intended to form a definitive statement of archaeological survival within the Borough, or identify in detail areas where archaeological remains do/do not survive.

It should be noted that certain Zones have significance in relation to only one of the strategic themes outlined in this Guidance Note, whereas others exhibit potential with regard to several of the themes.

## Alluvial archaeology

### Wandle Valley Alluvium – Map Area 1

This area includes the alluvial silts deposited within the Wandle Valley. Evidence for both prehistoric human activity, and the contemporary natural environment can be preserved within or beneath the alluvial deposits. Archaeological work at Carshalton Road/London Road in Mitcham, and Windsor Avenue in Merton has demonstrated that peat deposits of early prehistoric date are present in some stretches of alluvium. The characteristic waterlogged deposits are particularly important for the survival of some organic archaeological remains.



Map Area 1



Map Area 2



This Area is also relevant to the theme of Riverside Industries cross referenced to:-  
Area 17      Mill Corner      *Riverside Industry*

The importance of the valley and river throughout history means that this area is also relevant to other themes and can be cross referenced to the following areas.

- Area 4      Mitcham Common *Prehistoric Landscapes*
- Area 9      Morden *Nucleated Settlement also Estates and Parks*
- Area 13      Stane Street *Nucleated Settlements: Communication Routes*
- Area 14      Wandle/Copper Mill Lane *Riverside Industry*
- Area 15      Wandle/Colliers Wood *Riverside Industry*
- Area 16      Wandle/Mitcham *Riverside Industry*

**Beverley Brook Valley Alluvium – Map Area 2**

This area maps the extent of alluvial deposits along the course of the Beverley Brook. Although this area is thought to have played a less significant role than the Wandle Valley in the history of the area, it has potential for the survival of evidence of past environments as well as prehistoric (and later) human activities. At least one water mill is known to have existed along the Brook during the medieval period.

**Prehistoric Landscapes**

**Wimbledon Common – Map Area 3**

An area of considerable importance and potential for the study of the Borough's prehistoric development. It and the area of modern Mitcham Common (See below), have produced evidence for early colonisation by humans after the end of the last Ice Age. 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.



Map Area 3

The area includes *Caesar's Camp*, the earthwork remains of a Late Bronze Age or Iron Age hill fort which is protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. 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.



### Mitcham Common– Map Area 4

This area takes in a swathe of gravel terrace on the eastern side of the Wandle Valley. Finds of Mesolithic and Neolithic flint tools, Bronze Age metalwork, and stray Iron Age coins have been recovered from this area, demonstrating the area's significance for early settlement and indicating its potential for the survival of further remains. The area also contains the site of a circular mound (recorded as 'Maiden Hill' or Round Hill' on eighteenth and 19<sup>th</sup> Century maps, but now levelled) which may mark the site of a round barrow (of prehistoric date, or possibly Roman/Saxon), or alternatively may represent a medieval or early post medieval windmill mound.

The archaeological potential of this area will have been reduced by the gravel quarrying known to have taken place across parts of the Common, but evidence for prehistoric landscapes may survive in parts.



The area can also be cross referenced with:-  
 Area 1      Wandle Valley Alluvium      Prehistoric and alluvial archaeology

### Morden Park – Map Area 5

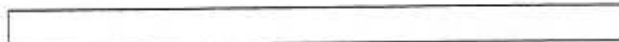
This area encompasses the northern part of the modern Morden Park, where the remains of Roman and medieval date have been found. This Priority Zone has been included under this theme for convenience.

The park contains a Scheduled Monument 'Morden Park Mound', thought possibly to be (or to incorporate) a Roman burial mound, or to be an eighteenth century prospect mound created within Morden Park. The line of Roman '*Stane Street*' also passes across the south-

east side of the Park, and remains of the road are thought to survive as a buried feature.



The area can be cross referenced with:-  
 Area 13      *Stane Street Nucleated Settlements: Communications Routes*



### Nucleated Settlement

*Nucleated Settlement: Late Saxon & Medieval Villages*

### Merton Village – Map Area 6



The medieval village originated in the later Saxon period and is first referred to by name in a document of 967 AD. By the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086 the settlement included a church and two mills, set within extensive agricultural land. The existing Church of St. Mary, which replaced the late Saxon or Norman structure, was built in the early twelfth century and retains substantial medieval fabric. The early core of the village lies around the Church in Church Lane; in the fifteenth century the village was contained within





enterprising landowner in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

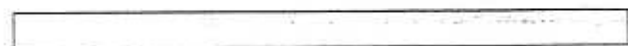
Two elements typical of medieval settlements still survive, notably in the Green, used by villagers from time immemorial as rough grazing for their livestock. To the north and north-east of the church the underlying framework of the strip holdings and furlongs of the open West Field remains fossilised in the pattern of roads and housing estates of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The church and churchyard and its relationship to the surrounding area is, therefore, of significant historic importance.



### Morden Village - Map Area 9

The estate of Morden is first referred to in the tenth century, and appears to have remained a small polyfocal settlement in the vicinity of the church throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods (this may be partly explained by its location on London Clay based soils rather than more easily cultivated gravels or river alluvium deposits). There was a second settlement at Lower Morden, near the Beverley Brook – this is identified as a separate Priority Zone (Map Area 11). As with the other villages in the Borough, there is evidence of the growth of country estates by wealthy Londoners in the post-medieval period (eg Spittel mansion and farm from 1544; Hobbaldes mansion and farm from 1582).

The seventeenth Century Morden Hall may occupy the site of the original medieval Manor House (the Hall and Park are designated separately under Estates and Gardens).



## Nucleated Settlement

### *Nucleated settlements: Minor Medieval Settlements*

Small additional Archaeological Priority Zones have been defined for their potential in relation to settlement studies. All are based on documentary evidence, either medieval documents mentioning the settlements by name, or by their appearance on the earliest maps of the area, principally Rocque's late eighteenth century work.

### Cannon Hill – Map Area 10



An indication of human activity in this area on John Rocque's maps of 1749-62 suggests that this area may contain important remains.



### Lower Morden – Map Area 11

Medieval finds have been recovered from this area, indicating early human activity.

