Wensley Road, Reading, Berkshire

Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief

Planning reference	200122		
Local planning authority	Reading Borough Council		
PCA report no.	n/a	*Site Code*	BWRR21
PCA project no	K7082	*Date*	June 21

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED

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Project Information	
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Project type	Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief
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NGR	SU 70072 71960
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Planning reference	200122
Commissioning client	Frencon Construction
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PCA project code	K7082	PCA report number	n/a
PCA Project Manager	Helen Hawkins		
PCA office	London		
Address	Unit 54 Brockley Cross Business Centre, Endwell Road, London SE4 2PD		
Telephone	02077323925		
E-mail	hhawkins@pre-construct.com	Internet	www.pre-construct.com

Quality Control		
Written by:	Helen Hawkins	
Graphics by:	Frencon	
Graphics checked by:		
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1 INTRODUCTION 5
2 BACKGROUND 7
3 RESEARCH DESIGN 11
4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY 12
5 HEALTH AND SAFETY method statement 14
6 RECORDING SYSTEMS 16
7 TREATMENT OF FINDS AND SAMPLES 17
8 ARCHIVES AND REPORTS 18
9 PROGRAMMING 20
10 BIBLIOGRAPHY 20
FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION 21
FIGURE 2: WATCHING BRIEF AREA 22
APPENDIX 1: PCA COVID POLICY 23

STAFF REGISTER OF INSTRUCTION TO THE CONTENTS OF THIS DOCUMENT

I, as an employee or sub-contractor of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, confirm that I have read this document, understand its contents and will abide by its instructions.

Name	***Signature***	***Date***

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited has been commissioned by Frencon Construction to undertake an archaeological watching brief at land at Wensley Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 6EA NGR SU 70072 71960.

1.2 The site is located on Wensley Road in Reading, Berkshire. The site is roughly rectangular and c.2.37ha in extent. The site lies within the Coley Park area of Reading. The site is situated within a loop of Wensley Road, and part of Lesford Road to the east. To the immediate west of the site, residential houses also within the Wensley Road loop border the site. The Great Western Railway line runs north-west of the study site. The site comprises three 15-storey blocks of flats – Wensley, Irving and Riversley Courts – part of Wensley Road and Lesford Road, car parks, garages, an electrical substation, a water tank and public/semi non-designated green space and verges.

1.3 The planning application proposes to develop the site by constructing 46 new homes consisting of a mixture of houses and flats, reconfiguring the parking courts and mews, improving the central amenity space, and preserving the landscape features.

1.4 An archaeological desk-based assessment was previously prepared for the site (Compass Archaeology 2020). The desk-based assessment identified that the site lies within a historically and archaeologically significant landscape, with evidence of activity dating from the prehistoric period to the present day. The site of the proposed development at Wensley Road holds a medium potential for prehistoric remains, due to worked flints dating from the Palaeolithic to Neolithic periods being recorded in the area as well as the Early to Middle Iron Age settlement found c.650m north-west of the site.

1.5 The site is not within an Area of Archaeological Priority designated by Reading Borough Council, nor is it within a Conservation Area.

1.6 An archaeological planning condition has been attached to the site (Planning reference 200122).

> *39. No development, including demolition or site preparation works, shall take place within the application area until the applicant, their agents or successors in title have secured and implemented a programme of archaeological field watching brief in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The results of the watching brief will inform the preparation of a mitigation strategy which will be submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development. The mitigation strategy will provide for:*
>
> *i) A programme of site investigation and recording, or alternative appropriate mitigation, within the area of archaeological interest. Development will not commence within the area of archaeological interest until the site investigation has been satisfactorily completed.*
>
> *ii) A programme of post investigation assessment, analysis, publication, dissemination and archiving. This part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements of the programme have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI or unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority*
>
> *Reason: The site lies within an area of archaeological potential; specifically, outside of the major 20th-century structures, the site has the potential for prehistoric remains. A programme of archaeological work is required to mitigate the impact of development and to record any surviving remains in order to advance our understanding of their significance in accordance with national policy and Policies EN1 and EN2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.*

1.7 An archaeological evaluation was carried out in April 2021 to fulfil stage 1 of the archaeological condition (PCA 2021). The evaluation comprised the excavation of 13 trenches across both the Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas. The evaluation revealed one linear feature of prehistoric origin containing a small assemblage of struck flint fragments. In addition, two unstratified late prehistoric pottery fragments were found. The feature was found in Trench 13 in the south of the site.

1.8 A review of the results of the evaluation and the impacts of the proposed development was carried out by the archaeological adviser to Reading Borough Council. A stage 2 mitigation in the form of a watching brief was requested for the new landscaping area around the feature in Trench

13. This document forms the Written Scheme of Investigation for the watching brief on the phase 1 area. Trench 13 bridges phase 1 and phase 2, a further WSI will be produced in due course for phase 2.

1.9 Subsequent to the watching brief works a report will be prepared which draws together the findings.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The following backgrounds are taken from the desk-based assessment (Compass Archaeology 2020).

2.2 Geological and Topographical Background

2.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey (Sheet 268: *Reading*) the site lies within an area of Lambeth Group, which is clay mottled in part with beds of sand and shelly clay, which sits on a Chalk Group. There are several outcroppings of Lynch Hill Gravel located to the north of the study site and the alluvial deposit to the south demarcates the extent of Holy Brook – a channel of the River Kennet – and River Kennet itself extending south.

2.2.2 The geotechnical report (Geo-Environmental 2020) identified that the ground conditions encountered within the exploratory holes comprised Topsoil or Made Ground overlying superficial Lynch Hill Gravel Member (variously clay, sand and gravel) overlying soils of the Lambeth Group (typically sand, occasionally clay). The Topsoil and Made Ground were generally between 0.30m and 1.00m thick.

2.2.3 The site sits on relatively uneven ground, at approximately 48.5m OD at the north-east corner of the site where the Wensley Road splits into the loop. Moving clock-wise around the Wensley Road loop the site slopes downward towards the south-east corner, at approximately 42m OD. The site rises again towards the south-west corner, at *c.*46m OD. The north-west corner is the highest area of the site, at approximately 49.5m OD.

2.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

Prehistoric

2.3.1 Several worked flints from the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods have been found, scattered across the HER search area, including Palaeolithic flint flakes and Mesolithic blades and flakes. Two Mesolithic axes were also found near the River Kennet *c.*1km south-east of the study site. The presence of these finds indicates there was a relatively moderate level of activity in the area during the earlier prehistoric periods, with people utilising the landscape for riverine and forest resources.

2.3.2 Neolithic activity may have been similar to proceeding periods, with occupation occurring at certain times of the year and leaving little trace in the archaeological record. The HER results support this, with one Neolithic siltstone axe and scrapers recorded. A worked flint scraper dated to the Neolithic has been recorded on the PAS database within the site region. The excavation at the former Elvian School 650m to the north-west of the site did reveal several pieces of struck flint which are thought to be of Neolithic or Bronze Age in date, suggesting there was a relatively moderate level of activity during this period within the area. Also recorded at this site was a single Middle Bronze Age ditch, which was cut by a later Iron Age roundhouse gully.

2.3.3 There appears to have been a relatively high level of Iron Age activity within the area, with the sites of Denton's Pit and the former Elvian School both situated c.650m north-east of the site providing an abundance of Iron Age finds and features. The former site was discovered in 1933 and a subsequent excavation revealed at least nine pits with several sherds of pottery dating to the Iron Age period. The latter site located just to the east of Denton's :Pit was excavated in 2016, with numerous phases of Iron Age occupation recorded dating from the 5th century BC to the 1st century AD. The features recorded included 10 roundhouse ring gullies, several of which had multiple re-buildings, along with two enclosures, a trackway, a fence line, pits and postholes. This level of evidence indicates there was a substantial settlement which was in use over a relatively long period. Other Iron Age material comes from a site c.680m west of the site, where black sand tempered pottery has been found. The Iron Age centre of the Atrebates, later the Roman settlement of Calleva Atrebatum (now known as Silchester), was located c.11km south-west of the site, indicating the Elvian School Iron Age settlement and the site area may have been situated near a route between Silchester and London, two important centres during the Iron Age.

2.3.4 Trench 13 of the evaluation contained a terminus of a linear feature on a north – south alignment measuring over 1.36m long, 0.96m wide and 0.29m deep with moderately steep

sides, sharp break of slope and a flat base. The feature contained a single fill consisting of firm, light yellow brown sandy clay with occasional small flint fragments. This material was thought to represent a secondary silting process. Finds recovered from this context comprised struck flint fragments of prehistoric origin, probably Later Neolithic.

Roman

2.3.5 The line of the Roman road connecting Silchester and Verulamium is believed to have run on a south-west to north-east alignment, west of the site, although the exact projection is not known. The Roman town of Silchester was situated *c.*11km south-west of the site. It was originally the centre of the Iron Age kingdom of the *Atrebates* tribe from the late 1st century BC and after the Roman conquest it developed into the town of *Calleva Atrebatum* and became an important trading centre. Reading may have developed as a riverside port in the Roman period, facilitating the movement of goods between *Londinium* and *Calleva Atrebatum.* The HER search revealed three findspots of Roman coins and one site where Roman gaming dice were found. Other findspots come from the PAS database, with three Roman coins found within the site area. These finds do not indicate a substantial long-term Roman occupation within the area surrounding the site.

Saxon and Medieval

2.3.6 Following the withdrawal of a Roman presence, Reading continued to develop as a settlement in the Saxon period. The town's name is recorded as *Readingum,* deriving from *Readingas,* an Saxon tribe whose name means 'Reada's People'. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* records that in AD 870 the Vikings set up a base at Reading with the intent on taking the kingdom of Wessex. The Battle of Reading followed in AD 871, in which the Danish Viking army was victorious over King Æthelred. The site of the battle is thought to have been *c.*3km north-east of the site, as the Viking fortress is recorded to have been located between the River Thames and the River Kennet.

2.3.7 The HER search results indicate there was Saxon activity within the area surrounding the site. Approximately 550m east of the site, occupation is evident near the Holy Brook channel, with a wooden stake interpreted as an early revetment of the channel along with domestic evidence including hazel nuts, a possible wooden bowl, pottery, animal bone and a gilt pin. Further evidence of Saxon occupation comes from a pit with pottery sherds recorded on a site *c.*615m north-west of the site. Just north of this site, a Saxon burial urn with ashes and bone fragments was recorded. The HER entries indicate smallscale occupation within the site area, most likely representing the outskirts of the settlements of Southcote to the west and Whitley to the south-east. Therefore, during the Saxon period the study site may have been situated in open ground used for hunting or agriculture by the nearby settlements of recorded in the Domesday Book.

2.3.8 The site was partly located within the Coley Park Estate, which is thought to have been in existence since at least the 13th century, with the Vachell family purchasing the land from Thomas Syward in 1309. Over the course of the 418 years the Vachell family occupied Coley Park Estate, the estate had a working farm and a stately manor house, known as Vachell House, constructed on the banks of the Holy Brook in *c.*1555. The Vachell family also owned many estates in Berkshire, including Little Coley Farm and Southcote Farm.

2.3.9 Despite the presence of the Coley Park Estate and the Southcote Farm Estate, there is a lack of archaeological evidence dating to the medieval period from the HER search. The Coley Park Farm record ranges in date from the medieval to the post-medieval period, however, the evidence comes from 17th to 19th century buildings. The site most likely covered an area of open ground within the estate, possibly used for cultivation or pasture.

Post-Medieval and Modern

2.3.10 Reading saw a great deal of development throughout the post-medieval period, as it became a major centre of wool and cloth production and trade. Several canals were constructed surrounding Reading in the 1810s, which made it easier to transport goods, including coal, timber and corn. The Great Western Railway opened Reading station in 1840 and the railway line was extended to Basingstoke in 1848, running west of the study site. Several of the HER entries relate to the railway, with two sections of railway lines, a disused railway line and two bridges recorded. Despite the increasing urbanisation of Reading and its surrounding towns, many of the towns remained small, and the county

retained much of its traditional, agricultural character. In the areas surrounding the town there was a shift towards dairy farming in the 19th century, with Coley Park Farm being one such dairy farm.

2.3.11 A range of farm buildings were constructed at Coley Park Farm from the 17th to the 19th century, with an earlier building, the extant dovecote, built in the 16th century. Coley Park Estate was owned by the Vachell family until it was sold to a Colonel Richard Thompson in 1724. The Estate passed through several landholders in the 18th and 19th centuries. Vachell House, originally constructed *c.*1555, was modified several times over the years, with a repair occurring after the Civil War in 1651 as it had been left in a bad state. After years of winter flooding due to its location close to the banks of the Holy Brook rivulet, Vachell House was abandoned. A new building, known as Coley House or Mansion House, was constructed in *c.*1802, to the north on higher ground to avoid seasonal flooding. Materials, such as stone, timbers and fittings, were salvaged from the old ruined Vachell House and reused in Coley House. The site was situated towards the western end of the Estate, in an area of woods and the North Lodge cottage with a pathway leading to Southcote Farm across the railway line.

2.3.12 During the First World War two fields in Coley Park were used as an airfield for the Royal Flying Corps' No. 1 School of Military Aeronautics and No. 1 School of Technical Training, which were based nearby.The airfield fell into disuse by the end of the war due to river fogs disrupting the flying. After the Second World War the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) occupied Coley House and the gardens in the northern part of the estate. By the mid-1980s MAFF had moved from Coley House and it was subsequently bricked up and left derelict. In the mid-1990s Coley House underwent major restoration works by the Berkshire Independent Hospital run by Ramsay Health Care UK, and is currently an outpatients building.

2.3.13 Coley Park Estate was owned by the Bucknell family from 1937 to 1955, which included 520 acres, a mansion, gardens, park, three dairy farms, Kennet Moor and Second Gosling Moor. The area of land consisting of the now Wensley and Lesford Roads was purchased by the Reading Corporation in 1956 for future council housing. Subsequently, the existing houses along Wensley and Lesford Roads were built and in 1959 construction of the three existing 15-storey flats began. North Lodge was demolished in the 1990s and houses were constructed on the site of the cottage and its associated gardens.

2.4 Summary of the Archaeological Works

2.4.1 The archaeological watching brief will monitor below ground excavations in the area of the new landscaping around Trench 13, within the phase 1 area of the site (Figure 2). The landscaping will comprise block paving, new areas of shrub and understorey planting beneath trees. A perimeter fence also runs through this area. The prehistoric linear feature identified in Trench 13 was located c. 400mm below ground level.

2.4.2 Any required machining will be undertaken using a 360 excavator or JCB, provided by the client, operating under constant archaeological supervision. Machine excavation will proceed through undifferentiated soil horizons until the surface of archaeological features are encountered or until natural horizons are found. Thereafter investigation will proceed (if necessary) by hand to investigate, define and record the archaeological stratigraphy.

2.4.3 All works will be undertaken in accordance with the following documents:

- This Written Scheme of Investigation (pending approval from the Archaeology Advisor to the Local Planning Authority)
- CIfA Codes, Standards and Guidelines Papers (CIfA, various dates)
- MoRPHE (English Heritage, 2015).

2.5 PCA Background

2.5.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited is a Registered Archaeological Organisation (number 23) with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and will operate within the Institute's 'Code of Practice'. The company has been in operation since 1993.

2.5.2 PCA has the following accreditations:

- ISO9001 registration
- ConstructionLine registration
- Achilles registration
- CHAS registration

2.5.3 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited carries the following insurance policies:

Policy	***Limit of Indemnity***
Public Liability	£10,000,000
Employers Liability	£10,000,000
Professional Indemnity	£5,000,000

3 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 The investigation will aim to address the following primary objectives:

- To determine the natural topography of the site.
- To establish the presence or absence of prehistoric activity. Are there any further features relating to the linear feature found in the evaluation?
- To establish the nature, date and survival of activity relating to any archaeological periods at the site.
- To establish the extent of all past post-depositional impacts on the archaeological resource.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

4.1 Watching brief

4.2 All below ground site works to the top of natural ground or site formation level will be monitored by PCA's Archaeological Supervisor although the works themselves will be led by the client's contractor.

4.3 The watching brief area will be secured by the client's contractor using suitable fencing. Site security is the responsibility of the client.

4.4 The watching brief area will be CAT scanned by a trained member of the client's contractor's staff prior to excavation.

4.5 Any machining required for the site works will be undertaken using an excavator and driver which will be provided by the client's contractor or by hand. The plant will use a toothless ditching bucket will be used to remove modern overburden under the supervision of an archaeologist.

4.6 The PC will allow time in the programme for any archaeological remains to be investigated and recorded by the attending archaeologist.

4.7 Machine or hand excavation will continue until either significant archaeological strata are found or natural ground exposed, or site formation level is reached.

4.8 Following machine or hand excavation, relevant faces of the stripped area that require examination or recording will be cleaned using appropriate hand tools. If archaeology is identified, the majority of the investigation of archaeological levels will be by hand, with cleaning, examination and recording both in plan and in section.

4.8.1 During the groundworks the archaeologist will monitor excavation through all 'fill' and any other deposits to the level of the geological sub-strata. Records will be made onto *pro-forma* context and planning sheets. Archaeological remains will be rapidly recorded on site in line with section 6 below.

4.9 If archaeology is identified, archaeological excavation may require work by 'pick and shovel' or occasionally by further use of the machine. Such techniques will be used only for the removal of homogeneous and 'low grade' layers where it can reasonably be argued that more detailed attention would not produce information of value. They will not be employed on complex stratigraphy, and the deposits to be removed must have been properly recorded first.

4.10 All archaeological features (stratigraphical layers, cuts, fills, structures) will be excavated by hand tools and recorded in plan at 1:20 or in section at 1:10 using standard single context recording methods. Features will be excavated so as to characterise their form, function and date. Photographs will also be taken as appropriate.

4.11 The strategy for sampling archaeological and environmental deposits and structures will be developed by PCA as necessary. If appropriate, the Historic England Regional Archaeological Science Advisor will be consulted.

4.12 The removal of human remains can only take place following the issuing of appropriate licenses from the Ministry of Justice. Should the removal of human remains not pose a risk to the completion of the evaluation and should further archaeological mitigation be necessary at the site, then any remains will be left in situ.

4.13 All gold and silver will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act 1996. Where removal cannot be effected on the same working day as the discovery suitable security measures will be taken to protect the finds from theft.

4.14 Reasonable access to the site will be granted to the Archaeological Adviser for Reading Borough Council and other representatives of the Council who wish to be satisfied, through site inspections, that the archaeological works are being conducted to proper professional standards and in accordance with the agreements made. Full access is also provided for the Client and its agents.

4.15 PCA have not been informed that there are any listed buildings, areas of ecological importance public rights of way or trees protected by TPOs on the site.

5 HEALTH AND SAFETY METHOD STATEMENT

5.1 H&S Policy

5.1.1 All relevant health and safety legislation, CDM, COSHH regulations and codes of practice will be respected. This requirement constitutes one of the non-archaeological requirements on the excavation design. PCA's H&S Policy Statement (2020) and Site Rules (2020) will be followed at all times.

5.2 Risk Assessment

5.2.1 A site specific Risk Assessment and Method Statement will be prepared; this will be reviewed and updated daily by the site supervisor.

5.3 Site security

5.3.1 Site security is the responsibility of the client. PCA will not undertake any alterations to site security installations.

5.4 Welfare facilities

5.4.1 Provision will be made on-site for Covid secure welfare facilities; these will be supplied by the PC.

5.5 Working hours

5.5.1 A standard PCA working day is 08.00 - 16.15. A morning and afternoon tea break and 45-minute lunch break are included within this period. Any workings outside of these times are considered to be overtime. Overtime rates are 150% Monday-Friday & all day Saturday, 200% Sunday and Bank Holidays.

5.6 PPE

5.6.1 Asbestos was noted in the ground contamination report for the evaluation although none was encountered during the evaluation work. The attending archaeologist will therefore have asbestos PPE to hand if excavation through made ground is required.

5.6.2 Minimum PPE for work on the site will comprise safety helmet, safety boots and high-visibility vest. Gloves shall be kept at the ready. Asbestos PPE will be worn for machining if necessary including face fit FFP3 mask.

5.6.3 Other PPE will be provided to site staff and may be necessary depending on site conditions; this will include Light Ear Protection and Goggles.

5.7 UXO

5.7.1 If, during the course of the archaeological investigations, items are observed or found which are considered to be potential UXO objects, all work in the vicinity of the excavation will cease and the client will be informed immediately. They will notify relevant bodies and arrange for appropriate attendance from specialists and/or emergency services.

5.8 Services

5.8.1 All trench locations will be surveyed by a trained member of the PC's staff using a Cable Avoidance Tool prior to excavation.

5.8.2 Should services be encountered during excavation, it will be the assumption of PCA that they are live and will be avoided at all costs.

5.9 Noise restrictions

5.9.1 No machining will be undertaken at the site outside of hours between 0800 and 1630.

5.10 Mechanical excavators

5.10.1 Excavations will be undertaken using a mechanical excavator and operator sub-contracted by the PC. Excavations will be carried out under the direction of a PC member of staff acting as a banksman.

5.10.2 All equipment must be provided with the relevant certificates and their operators with the appropriate licences CITB (or equivalent).

5.11 Site Induction and rules

5.11.1 All PCA's staff are CSCS card holders.

5.11.2 All PCA staff will be inducted for site work by the PCA supervisor and the client's PC if required.

5.11.3 No alcohol consumption or drug-taking will be allowed on site. Smoking or eating will be allowed in designated areas only.

5.12 Dewatering

5.12.1 If groundwater is present within the watching brief trenches, and requires removal to allow work to proceed safely, it will be pumped from the trenches by means of a puddle pump (or similar) and generator.

5.13 Tools and equipment

5.13.1 Only hand tools provided by PCA are to be used by PCA site staff. The maintenance of these tools is the responsibility of PCA's logistics officer.

5.13.2 Whenever metal grid pegs are used these must be covered with an appropriate wooden grid peg cover.

5.14 Designated archaeological personnel

5.14.1 The project will be managed for PCA by Helen Hawkins (MCIfA, SMSTS).

5.14.2 The day to day direction of the fieldwork will be undertaken by a member of staff who has considerable experience of working in this kind of environment.

5.14.3 The team will be selected from current staff and will comprise the archaeological supervisor. The supervisor will be decided upon closer to the start date, once confirmed.

5.15 First Aid

5.15.1 PCA will maintain an appropriate First Aid Kit on site.

5.16 Ecology

5.16.1 PCA have not been informed of any ecological issues on the site other than the TPOs.

5.17 Covid

5.17.1 PCA's covid policy is appended in the RAMS and at Appendix 1.

6 RECORDING SYSTEMS

6.1 Site Code

6.1.1 A unique-number site code has been assigned by PCA prior to the work commencing (BWRR21) and notified to the Berkshire Archaeology Officer via this document.

6.2 Site Records

6.2.1 The recording systems adopted during the investigations will be fully compatible with those most widely used elsewhere in the County, which is those developed out of the Department of Urban Archaeology Site Manual and presented in PCA's Operations Manual 1 (Taylor 2009). No alternative recording system will be adopted without prior agreement with the Berkshire Archaeology Officer.

6.2.2 The site archive will be so organised as to be compatible with the other archaeological archives produced in the Local Authority area. Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated and exposed will be entered onto prepared pro-forma recording sheets which include the same fields of entry as are found on the recording sheets of the Museum of London. Sample recording sheets, sample registers, finds recording sheets, accession catalogues, and the photography record cards will follow the Museum of London equivalents. This requirement for archival compatibility extends to the use of computerised databases.

6.2.3 A 'site location plan' indicating the site north and based on the current Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map (reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO) will be prepared. This will be supplemented by a trench plan at 1:200 (or 1:100), which will show the location of the areas investigated in relation to the investigation area and National Grid Reference. All sections should be located on plan with OS co-ordinates. The location of the OS bench marks used and the site TBM will also be indicated.

6.2.4 A record of the full extent in plan of all archaeological deposits as revealed in the investigation will be made; these plans will be on polyester based drawing film, will be related to the site grid and at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20. 'Single context planning' will be used on site, and the information will be digitised for eventual CAD application.

6.2.5 At least one long section will be drawn or a representative part including a profile of the top of the natural deposits (extrapolated from cut features etc., if the trench has not been fully excavated). Other sections, including the half-sections of individual layers or features may be drawn as appropriate to 1:10 or 1:20.

6.2.6 The OD height of all principal strata and features will be calculated and indicated on the appropriate plans and sections.

6.3 Stratigraphic Matrix

6.3.1 A 'Harris Matrix' stratification diagram will be used to record stratigraphic relationships. This record will be compiled and fully checked during the course of the excavations. Spot dating should be incorporated where applicable during the course of the excavation.

6.4 Photographic Record

6.4.1 Extensive use of digital photography will be made. Shots will be taken as high- and medium-quality jpegs and tiffs and will be downloaded at regular intervals to PCA's computer database.

7 TREATMENT OF FINDS AND SAMPLES

7.1 General

7.1.1 All processing will take place at PCA's Brockley premises, or, if appropriate, those of our environmental consultants.

7.2 Environmental

7.2.1 Different sampling strategies may be employed according to the perceived importance of the deposit or feature under investigation. Close attention will be given to sampling for date, structure and environment. Sample size should take into account the frequency with which material is likely to occur. Bulk sieving should be employed both for recovery of environmental evidence to ensure that complete samples of artefactual evidence are collected for significant deposits.

7.2.2 The strategy for sampling archaeological and environmental deposits and structures (which can include soils, timbers, pollen, diatoms, animal bone and human burials) will be developed in consultation with the Berkshire Archaeology Officer and, if necessary, the Historic England Regional Archaeological Science Advisor. Subsequent on site work and analysis of the processed samples and remains will be undertaken by our own consultants and specialist sub-contractors.

7.2.3 A high priority will be given to sampling river and other anaerobic deposits, such as peat, where organic materials may be preserved. Organic samples will be subject to appropriate specialist analysis.

7.2.4 All finds retrieval policies of the local museum will be adopted and all identified finds and artefacts will be retained according to the stated selection retention and retrieval policy appropriate to the material type and date. No finds will be discarded without the prior approval of the Berkshire Archaeology Officer.

7.2.5 All finds will be treated in a proper manner and to standards agreed in advance with the recipient museum. They will be exposed, lifted, cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged and boxed in accordance with the guidelines set out in the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation's 'Conservation Guidelines No.2' and the Museum of London's 'Standards for the Preparation of Finds to be Permanently Retained by the Museum of London'. All metal objects will be x-rayed and then selected for conservation (except in those cases where the Berkshire Archaeology Officer agrees that this will not be necessary).

7.2.6 Ceramic (pottery, clay tobacco, building material fabric and brick form) reference collections, housed at the local museum should be referred to for descriptive and analytical purposes in order to ensure that terminology is consistent.

8 ARCHIVES AND REPORTS

8.1 Archive and Deposition

8.1.1 The integrity of the site archive will be maintained. The finds and records will be available for public consultation. Appropriate guidance is set out in the Museum and Galleries Commission's *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (1992) and *Towards an Accessible Archaeological Archive. The Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Museums: Guidelines for Use in England, Northern Ireland Scotland and Wales* (SMA 1995). For deposition with a museum, the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Archaeological Archives* will be followed.

8.1.2 The client agrees, by approval of this document, to donate all finds and archives to the appropriate local repository once one is available. Until then, the archive will be held at the PCA offices in Brockley.

8.1.3 If finds are not to be transferred to the appropriate local repository, arrangements will be made for a comprehensive record of all relevant materials (including detailed drawings, photographs and descriptions of individual finds), which can instead constitute the archaeological archive.

8.1.4 Upon completion of the fieldwork project, when the Berkshire Archaeology Officer confirms that no further work is required and when all post-excavation reports have been approved by all relevant parties, PCA will store the archive until which time a suitable repository is available.

8.1.5 The minimum acceptable standard for the site archive is defined in the Management of Recording Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE 2015). It will include all materials recovered, (or the comprehensive records of such materials as referred to above) and all written, drawn, and photographic records, including a copy of all reports relating to the investigations undertaken. It will be quantified, ordered, indexed, and internally consistent before transfer to appropriate local repository once one is available. Until then, the archive will be held at the PCA offices in Brockley. It will also contain a site matrix, a site summary and brief written observations on the artefactual and environmental data.

8.1.6 United Kingdom Institute for Conservation guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage (1990) will be followed.

8.1.7 A short summary of the results of the work, even if negative, will be bound into the client report for submission to the LPA and the Berkshire HER as soon as possible after the completion of archaeological works.

8.1.8 Minimum requirements for public dissemination is for OASIS report forms to be submitted to the OASIS Project as soon as possible or within six months of completion of fieldwork, and the provision of a short paragraph summary of the results for publication in Berkshire Archaeology. Such publications will meet the minimum requirements set out Management of Recording Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE 2015) and derive from a 'phase 2 review' as defined in the same document. There is a need to format reports so that the details of the proposed development impact can be separated from the information and enable all archaeological information to be made available to the Berkshire HER within six months of the completion of fieldwork.

8.1.9 Where the mentioned 'phase 2' review indicates the need for further assessment and analysis the recommendations set out in the Management of Recording Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE 2015) will be followed.

8.2 Watching brief Report

8.2.1 Notwithstanding details included above all watching brief fieldwork and results will be fully recorded and a watching brief Report prepared. Copies of the report will be forwarded to the commissioning Client and the Berkshire Archaeology Officer.

8.2.2 The watching brief report will include the following items:

- Non-technical summary;
- Introduction;

- Planning Background;
- Previous archaeological work relevant to the site;
- Historic Background
- Topography of the site;
- Research objectives;
- Methodology;
- The results of the watching brief and their significance;
- An assessment of the results against original expectations and a review of the effectiveness of the watching brief strategy;
- Statement of potential of the archaeology;
- Conclusions (and recommendations following consultation with the LPA and Berkshire Archaeology Officer);
- Bibliography;
- Acknowledgements;
- OASIS form.

8.2.3 The project resource agreed between PCA and the client allows for the production of an watching brief report, to include CAD illustrations and artefact assessment as necessary. It is intended that PCA will provide our client a draft copy of the watching brief report for comment within three weeks of the completion of the full watching brief, to then be provided to the Berkshire Archaeology Officer.

9 PROGRAMMING

9.1 It is intended that the watching brief will commence on a date to be confirmed, pending approval of this document by the Archaeology Officer at Berkshire Archaeology.

9.2 The on-site watching brief fieldwork programme is currently unknown. A report will be commenced shortly after completion with a draft to be submitted to the client for review within three weeks.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Printed Sources

Compass Archaeology 2020 *Wensley Road, Reading, Berkshire: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment* unpublished client report

Geo-Environmental 2020 *Ground Appraisal Report for the land at Wensley Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 6DR*

Online Sources

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd 2021 *Wensley Road Reading: An Archaeological Evaluation*

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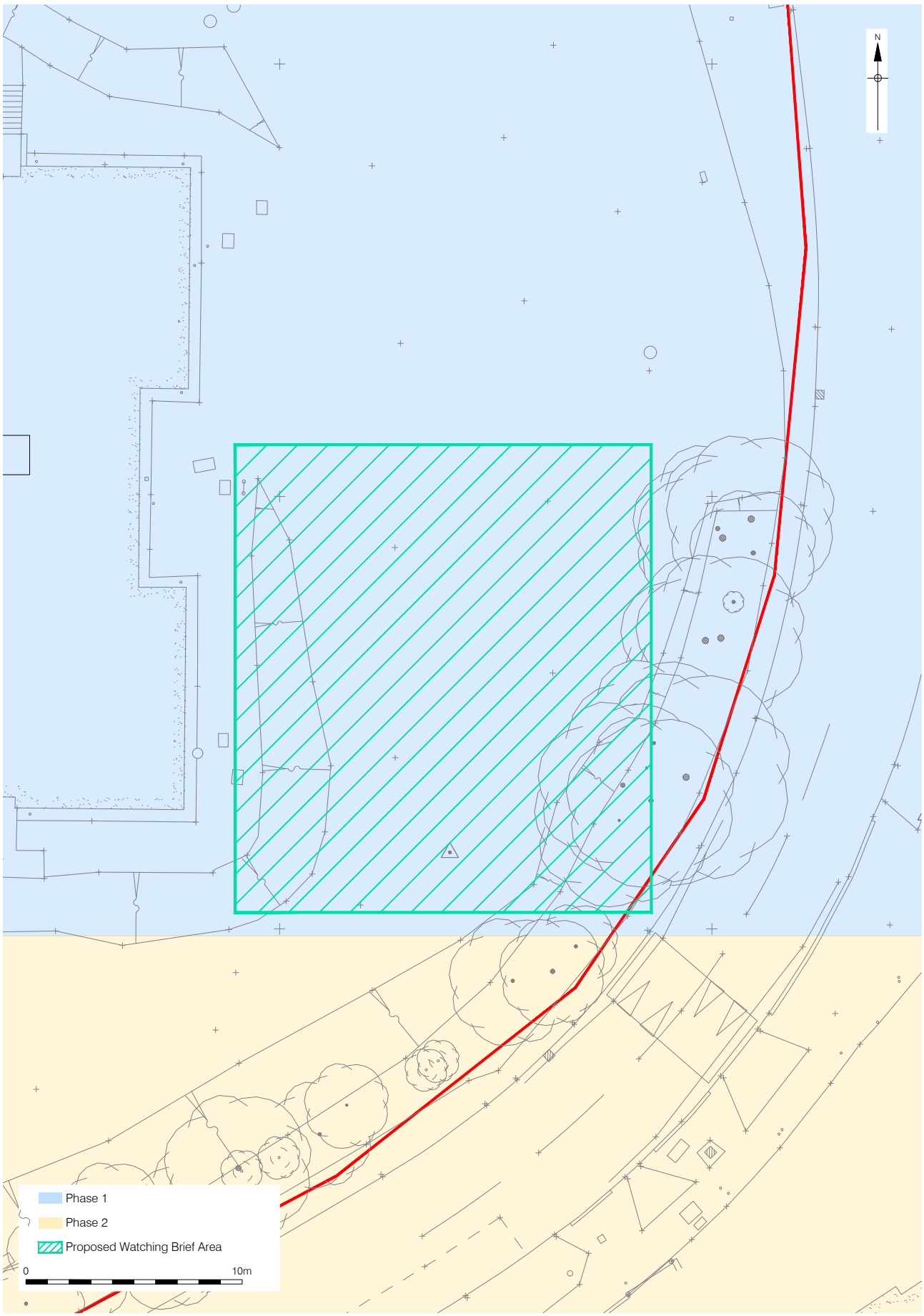
19/04/21 RM

Figure 1
Site Location
1:2,000,000, 1:250,000, 1:25,000 at A4



Background mapping supplied by the client
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29/06/21 RM

Figure 2
Proposed Watching Brief Area
1:250 at A4

APPENDIX 1: PCA COVID POLICY

COVID-19 COMPANY ADVISORY NOTE 6

Site Operating Procedures

TO ALL STAFF

Introduction

PCA sites operating during the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic need to ensure they are protecting their workforce and minimising the risk of spread of infection.

Government guidance for employers in England states "*where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, even through redesigning a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between staff*".

At PCA we are updating our guidance in line with the best advice from Government and the construction industry as well as consulting with professional bodies on a way forward.

This updated guidance is intended to introduce consistent measures on all PCA sites in line with the Government's current recommendations.

The workforce should be reminded during inductions and daily briefings of the specific social distancing and Coronavirus (Covid-19) control measures necessary to protect them, their colleagues, families and the UK population.

These are exceptional circumstances and all PCA employees must comply with the latest Government advice on Coronavirus at all times.

Social Distancing

PCA staff should follow the guidance on social distancing and where they cannot work from home the must follow guidance on meeting with others safely. This revised guidance is contained in Coronavirus (COVID-19): Meeting with others safely (social distancing) (updated 7th January 2021). This can be found at

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing

Anyone who is clinically extremely vulnerable to Coronavirus (Covid-19) if they cannot work from home, should not attend work. Guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable form Covid-19 (updated 7th January 2021) *can be found at* https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19#shielding

Any staff who have received a letter from their GP or NHS, advising them they are clinically extremely vulnerable and therefore are unable to attend work, must inform their manager and provide a copy/scan of the letter so their personnel records can be updated. If an employee thinks they should have received a letter but have not, or need another copy, they can contact NHS via the following link: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/shielding-note/

Self-Isolation

Anyone who has:

- symptoms of coronavirus (Covid-19). These are a high temperature or a new persistent cough or a loss of or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell.
- received a positive coronavirus (Covid-19) test result
- returned from a country that is not on the travel corridor list. (This list is available at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors#countries-and-territories-with-no-self-isolation-requirement-on-arrival-in-england)
- been contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/nhs-test-and-trace-if-youve-been-in-contact-with-a-person-who-has-coronavirus/

Should not come to work, but must follow the guidance on self-isolation www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/

Any staff who have received a positive test result or have been instructed by the NHS Test and Trace to self-isolate must inform their manager and provide a copy/scan, so their personnel records can be updated.

Procedure If Someone Falls ill

If a worker develops symptoms of Coronavirus (Covid-19) they should:

- Ensure their manager or supervisor is informed
- Return home immediately
- Avoid touching anything
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue and put it in a bin, or if they do not have tissues, cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow.

They should get a Coronavirus (Covid-19) test

www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-an-antigen-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/

They must then follow Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (Covid-19) (updated 18th December 2020) infection and not return to work until they have received a negative test result or, in the event of a positive test result, until they have completed their period of self-isolation and are no longer unwell.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection

Workplaces / sites that identify five or more cases within 14 days will need to contact their local Public Health England protection team.

Further information can be found in the 'what to do if a worker has Covid-19 or has to self-isolate' flowchart (updated 5th January 2021)

https://builduk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/What-To-Do-If-A-Worker-Has-COVID-19-Or-Has-To-Self-Isolate.pdf

Travelling to Work/Site

PCA continues to allow staff to work at home as much as possible. However, for those who work on site or have to work in the office the following guidelines for travelling to site/work should be followed.

Walking and cycling

If you can walk or cycle, this will reduce pressure on public transport and the road network.

Where possible try to maintain social distancing when you walk or cycle, for example when approaching or passing other pedestrians or waiting at traffic lights or crossings.

Where using bikes (private, docked or dockless) wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitise your hands before and after cycling.

Private cars and other vehicles

If you have to travel to work using vehicle transport wherever possible you should use your own transport. It may be possible to claim mileage but this must be agreed in advance with the relevant project manager.

If workers have no option but to share transport:

- Journeys should be shared with the same individuals. If vehicles are being shared, maximum of 2 per car or 4 in a crew van depending on the size of the vehicle.
- Good ventilation (i.e. keeping the windows open) and facing away from each other may help to reduce the risk of transmission
- The vehicle should be cleaned regularly using gloves and standard cleaning products, with particular emphasis on handles and other areas where passengers may touch surfaces

Sites should consider parking arrangements for additional vehicles

If hire vehicles are being used check that the vehicle has been deep cleaned by the hire company before use.

For further guidance for staff who work in or from vehicles see https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/vehicles

Public transport

Consider all other forms of transport before using public transport.

Check with your transport operator for the latest travel advice in your route.

Wherever possible maintain social distancing (keep 2m apart). Where this is not possible you should keep the time you spend near others as short as possible, try to face away from other people and avoid physical contact.

Be aware of the surfaces you touch. Be careful not to touch your face. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow when coughing or sneezing.

It may be necessary to adjust working hours to allow staff to travel in off-peak times. Project Managers will facilitate this, **if** possible. However, this will depend on individual site / workplace arrangements and circumstances.

Face coverings are mandatory on all types of public transport.

For further information see

www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers (updated 5th January 2021)

Face Coverings

Where staff are not required to wear Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) and their workplace (which may include welfare and changing facilities, site offices or site meeting rooms) meets all of the criteria below, PCA will make coverings available and they should be worn in:

- An enclosed space
- Where social distancing is not always possible; and
- Where they come into contact with others they do not normally meet.

In line with Government guidance on premises providing hospitality, face coverings must be worn in canteens except when seated at a table to eat or drink.

Safe Systems of Work

All Risk Assessments and Method Statements for work activities must be reviewed and amended to allow for social distancing to be adhered to.

The health and safety requirements of any archaeological work activity must also not be compromised at this time; all existing requirements Risk Assessment and Method Statement must be adhered to.

If an activity cannot be undertaken safely due to a lack of suitably qualified personnel being available or social distancing being implemented, it should not take place.

Any updates to the safe systems of work must be briefed to the workforce, whilst maintaining social distancing and these briefings must be documented – briefings should be carried out outside wherever possible.

Work Planning to Avoid Close working

Sites and work need to be planned and organised to avoid crowding and minimise the risk of spread of infection by following PHE and HSE guidance and the advice within these Site Operating Procedures.

Supervisors should remind the workforce (e.g. at daily briefings) of the specific control measures necessary to protect them, their colleagues, families and the UK population.

All tasks carried out by PCA staff **must** be rearranged so as to enable them to be done by one person, or by maintaining social distance measures (2 metres) wherever possible.

PCA continues to manage the risk of Covid 19 in the workplace by keeping people 2m apart where possible and by an enhanced regime of cleaning and personal hygiene.

If 2m social distancing cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity then 1m+ with all mitigating actions in place may be acceptable as long as the Project Manager has agreed and the risk assessment updated.

Mitigating actions include:

- Further increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning
- Keeping the activity time involved as short as possible
- Using screens or barriers to separate people from each other.
- Using back-to-back or side-to-side working rather than face-to-face whenever possible.
- Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering'

For further information see Working safely during COVID-19 in construction and other outdoor work, (updated 7TH January 2021). This can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19

Site Access Points

Stop all non-essential visitors.

Essential off-site personnel likely to visit site periodically are H&S Manager, Project/Regional Manager and Logistics Officer, all other visitors should be considered non-essential.

- Where required introduce staggered start and finish times to reduce congestion and contact at all times
- Monitor site access points to enable social distancing. Allow plenty of space (2 metres) between people waiting to enter site
- Use signage :

- such as floor markings, to ensure 2 metre distance is maintained between people when queuing
- On Principal Contractor sites entry systems that require skin contact e.g. fingerprint scanners should have been removed or disabled
- Require all staff to wash or clean their hands before entering or leaving the site
- Reduce the number of people in attendance at site inductions and consider holding them outdoors wherever possible
- Drivers should remain in their vehicles if the load will allow it and must wash or clean their hands before unloading goods and materials.

Hand Washing

- Provide additional hand washing facilities to the usual welfare facilities if significant numbers of personnel on site
- Ensure soap (provided in a dispenser) and fresh water is readily available and kept topped up at all times
- Provide hand sanitiser where hand washing facilities are unavailable
- Regularly clean the hand washing facilities and check soap and sanitiser levels
- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal.

Sites will need extra supplies of soap, hand sanitiser and paper towels. It may prove difficult to get these items. If staff can help by procuring supplies when they can – it would be very much appreciated

Toilet Facilities

- Restrict the number of people using toilet/washing facilities at any one time

  and use signage, such as floor markings, to ensure 2 metre distance is maintained between people when queuing
- Wash hands before and after using the facilities
- Enhance the cleaning regimes for toilet facilities particularly door handles, locks and the toilet flush

- Portable toilets should be avoided wherever possible, but where in use these should be cleaned and emptied more frequently
- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal.

Canteens and Eating Arrangements

Where possible, workers should be encouraged to bring their own food. They should also be required to stay on site once they have entered it and avoid using local shops.

- Kettles (externally only), microwaves (internally and externally) must be regularly cleaned.
- Break times should be staggered to reduce congestion and contact at all times
- Hand cleaning facilities or hand sanitiser should be available at the entrance of any room where people eat and should be used by workers when entering and leaving the area
- Staff should be asked to bring pre-prepared meals and refillable drinking bottles from home
- Use only disposable cups or your own mug and do not use communal crockery or cutlery
- Do not share food such as biscuits, crisps etc
- Workers should sit 2 metres apart from each other whilst eating and avoid all contact. Consider sitting outside where possible
- All rubbish should be put straight in the bin and not left for someone else to clear up
- All areas used for eating must be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each break and shift, including tables, chairs, door handles

Changing facilities and drying rooms

- Introduce staggered start and finish times to reduce congestion and contact at all times
- Introduce enhanced cleaning of all facilities throughout the day and at the end of each day
- Consider increasing the number or size of facilities available on site if possible
- Based on the size of each facility, determine how many people can use it at any one time to maintain a distance of 2 metres

- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins in these areas with regular removal and disposal.

Behaviours

The measures necessary to minimise the risk of spread of infection rely on everyone taking responsibility for their actions and behaviours.

There should be a collaborative approach between workers, sub-contractors, PCA managers, Principle Contractors (other contractors) and client

First Aid and Emergency Service Response

The primary responsibility is to preserve life and first aid should be administered if required and until the emergency services attend.

- When planning site activities, the provision of adequate first aid resources must be agreed between the relevant parties on site
- Emergency plans including contact details should be kept up to date
- Consideration must also be given to potential delays in emergency services response, due to the current pressure on resources

Cleaning

Enhanced cleaning procedures should be in place across the site, particularly in communal areas and at touch points including:

- Taps and washing facilities
- Toilet flush and seats
- Door handles and push plates
- Handrails on staircases and corridors
- Food preparation and eating surfaces
- Tools, including mattock handles, shovel handles and wheelbarrow handles
- Keyboards, survey instruments, cameras etc

Rubbish collection and storage points should be increased and emptied regularly throughout and at the end of each day.

We will continue to do everything we can to keep all staff updated with any plans, changes or amendments. If you have any questions regarding Covid-19, please contact either:

Josephine Brown (Jbrown@pre-construct.com)

Al Douglas (ADouglas@pre-construct.com)

Mark Hinman (MHinman@pre-construct.com)