On 11 November 1493, Christopher Columbus discovered the island and named it after Santa Maria de Montserrat, the mountain abbey outside of Barcelona, Spain. “English and Irish colonists from St. Kitts first settled on Montserrat in 1632; the first African slaves arrived three decades later. The British and French fought for possession of the island for most of the 18th century, but it finally was confirmed as a British possession in 1783. The island’s sugar plantation economy was converted to small farm landholdings in the mid 19th century. Much of this island was devastated and two-thirds of the population fled abroad because of the eruption of the Soufrière Hills Volcano that began on 18 July 1995.” (World Factbook, 2011).

Montserrat is about 0.6 times the size of Washington, D.C., the lowest point is the Caribbean Sea (0 m), and the highest point is Chances Peak in the Soufrière Hills (914 m). The island was originally mapped by the British Directorate of Overseas Surveys (DOS) from aerial photography taken from 1952–1959. There is one sheet at 1:25,000 scale of the island. The DOS performed a geodetic control survey and established the local datum origin at point M-36, the Montserrat Island Astro in 1958. The ellipsoid of reference is the Clarke 1880 where: $a = 6,378,124.9145$ m, and $1/f = 293.465$. DOS established a local British West Indies (BWI) Transverse Mercator Grid for the island where the Central Meridian ($\lambda_0$) = 62° W, Latitude of Origin ($\phi_0$) = Equator, the Scale Factor at Origin ($m_0$) = 0.9995, the False Easting = 400 km, and the False Northing = nil (zero at the Equator). The shift from Montserrat Island Astro 1958 Datum to WGS 84 Datum is: $\Delta X = +174 \text{ m } \pm 25 \text{ m}$, $\Delta Y = +359 \text{ m } \pm 25 \text{ m}$, and $\Delta Z = +365 \text{ m } \pm 25 \text{ m}$.

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