

Evaluation at
Boundary Road Estate.
London Borough of Waltham Forest.
WS-BE 92.
LDPEM/ACWS/189.
Level III Report.
Shahina Farid.

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Introduction.

The assessment took place on the Queens Road allotments (see fig 1), as part of the Boundary Road Estate re-development. This was excavated by the staff of the Passmore Edwards Museum between the 5th. and 16th. October 1992. The project was designed to assess the archaeological potential on the site prior to re-development by the Waltham Forest Housing Action Trust. The rest of the Boundary Road Estate re-development by H. A. T. was considered too disturbed by modern building to warrant an archaeological assessment.

Historic documents state that the area lies within what was called Markhouse Common (or "Markdown" in early records), and was an open arable field in the parish of Walthamstow. Markhouse Common was first mentioned in 1369 when an open system of agriculture was in use in the area. By the mid-nineteenth century the enclosure act on the common was enforced, and as compensation six acres of the Common were awarded to the parish overseers for the " labouring poor". This land was divided into allotments which still exist as the Boundary Road Allotment Gardens.

Accordingly, three trenches were excavated and recorded during a two week period, work being restricted to the vacant plots to the north of the site.

Trenches 1 and 3 were machine dug with the use of a JCB down to gravel deposits, while in Trench 2 topsoil was removed by machine and the remaining deposits were hand dug.

Abstract.

The three trenches excavated revealed substantial 20th. century dumps and topsoil, with undated, but pre-modern features cut into natural gravel below possible plough-soil.

Excavation Summary.

Trench 1, (see fig.2), measured 10m. x 12m., located to the west of the area, and was machine dug to a depth of 0.8m. This removed 19th. and 20th. century pits and dumps. The eastern half of the trench exposed possible re-deposited plough-soil (4), which was removed by machine to the west. Cutting the plough-soil was a linear feature (2), aligned N-S running almost the entire length of the trench. This probably represented the base of a 20th. century vegetable bed. Below the plough-soil and across the whole trench was a layer of disturbed gravel (5). A sondage was hand-dug through the gravel deposits, positioned in the centre of the trench, measuring 8m. x 1m. and 1m. in depth. There was no evidence of human activity in contexts (13-22), and the natural gravel formation was recorded.

Trench 2 ran E-W in the north of the area and measured 20m. x 2m. This was hand dug to the top of the gravel at an average depth of 0.8m. Underlying the topsoil and modern dumps was a layer of possible plough-soil (54). This was located to the east of the trench, and presumably truncated to the west. Cutting the natural gravel (55), were a number of features, some of which were sealed by the plough-soil. These comprised two parallel gullies (61) and (67) on a roughly N-S alignment with associated fills (60) and (66), two post-holes (63) and (65) filled by (62) and (64), and two amorphous features (57) and (59) with associated fills (56) and (58). A small pit (69), cut gully (67). No datable evidence was found in these cuts.

Trench 3 was located to the east of Trench 2 and measured 12m. x 1m. This was machine dug to the gravel deposits at 0.8m. below ground level. Underlying topsoil and 20th. century dumps (101) and (102), was a deposit of possible re-deposited plough-soil (103). This represents the earliest activity in the trench and overlay un-disturbed gravel (104).

South of Trench 1., in allotment plot 16, a brick structure was recorded. Built of 20th. century red frogged bricks with alternate courses of headers and stretchers. The shed measured 5.6m. x 2.94m. on a N - S alignment, and a height of 2.6m. Dated to the Second World War, the structure was used as a generator shed for a barrage balloon emplacement.

Trench 1 Matrix.

	1	
	I	
	8	
	I	
I		I
6		I
I		I
7		I
I		I
9		I
I		I
10		I
I		I
11		3
I		I
12		2
I		I
	I	
	4	
	I	
	5	
	I	
I		I
21	22	13
I	I	I
	I	
	14	
	I	
	15	
	I	
	16	
	I	
	17	
	I	
	18	
	I	
	19	
	I	
	20	

Trench 2 Matrix.

			51		
			I		
			52		
			I		
	I			I	I
	I			I	53
	I			I	I
	54			I	I
	I			I	I
I	I	I		I	I
68	I	I		I	I
I	I	I		I	I
69	I	I		I	I
I	I	I	I	I	I
66	58	56	60	62	64 I
I	I	I	I	I	I I
67	59	57	61	63	65 I
I	I	I	I	I	I I
	I			I	I
	I			I	I
			I		
			55		

Trench 3 Matrix.

101

I

102

I

103

I

104

Group Discussion.

Trench 1.

Group 1a. (all levels in meters A.O.D.)

		top	bottom
1	layer; mid-dark brown clay silt	13.330m.	-13.160m.
8	layer; grey brown sand clay silt	13.300m.	-13.110m.

1 layer

I

8 layer

Topsoil and dump. 20th. century.

Plan:--

Section: 1, 2

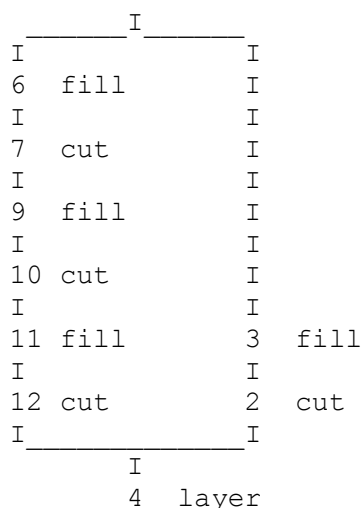
C/S:--

B/W:--

Phase: 5

Group 1b.

2	cut; top gradual, vertical drop to flat base	12.920m.-12.690m.
3	fill; dark yellow brown sand clay silt	12.830m.-12.690m.
4	layer; orange brown clay silt	13.200m.-12.710m.
6	fill; mid-dark brown silt clay	12.950m.-12.520m.
7	cut; irregular, concave sides to concave base	12.890m.-12.520m.
9	fill; orange brown silt clay	12.910m.-12.570m.
10	cut; irregular, concave sides to concave base	12.910m.-12.570m.
11	fill; mid-dark grey brown silt clay	12.910m.-12.870m.
12	cut; possibly linear, top sharp, abrupt to flat base	13.200m.-12.870m.



Three inter-cutting features, possibly rubbish pits or linear cuts, with associated fills and a linear vegetable bed with fill. 20th. century.

Section: 1

Group 1c.

5 layer; orange brown gravel

5 layer

Re-deposited natural gravel. Dating uncertain.

Section: 1, 3

Group 1d.

13	layer; dark orange brown gravel	12.540m.-12.270m.
14	layer; light brown gravel sand	12.550m.-12.070m.
15	layer; dark orange gravel sand	12.380m.-12.130m.
16	layer; dark brown gravel sand	12.200m.-12.070m.
17	layer; dark black brown gravel	12.070m.-12.020m.
18	layer; orange gravel sand	12.020m.-11.960m.
19	layer; blue grey clay sand	11.960m.-11.810m.
20	layer; dark orange gravel sand	11.920m.-----
21	layer; dark brown gravel	12.550m.-12.220m.
22	layer; light orange brown gravel	12.550m.-12.200m.

21	layer	22	layer	13	layer
I		I		I	
<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>	
		14	layer		
		I			
		15	layer		
		I			
		16	layer		
		I			
		17	layer		
		I			
		18	layer		
		I			
		19	layer		
		I			
		20	layer		

Alluvial deposits consisting of gravel and sand. Dating uncertain, but probably Palaeolithic.

Section: 3

Trench 2.

Group 2a.

51	layer; mid-grey brown clay silt	13.670m.-13.230m.
52	layer; light grey brown sand silt	13.350m.-13.100m.
53	layer; dark grey silt clay with gravel	12.900m.-12.660m.

51	layer
I	
52	layer
I	
53	layer

Three layers of top-soil and dumps. 20th. century.

Plan: --	Section: 4
C/S: --	
B/W: --	
Phase: 5	

Group 2b.

54	layer; orange brown sand silt	13.170m.-13.010m.
----	-------------------------------	-------------------

54	layer
----	-------

Plough-soil. Dating uncertain, possibly from at least 14th. to the mid 19th. century.

Plan: --	Section: 4
C/S: --	
B/W: --	
Phase: 3	

Group 2c.

55	layer; mid-orange grey gravel	13.110m.-----
56	fill; light brown sand silt	13.090m.-12.770m.
57	cut; ovoid, top sharp, gradual to	13.090m.-12.770m.

	concave base	
58	fill; orange brown sand silt	13.080m.-12.840m.
59	cut; irregular, top gradual to flat	13.080m.-12.840m.
	base	
66	fill; mid-orange brown sand silt	13.110m.-12.940m.
67	cut; linear, top gradual, gentle slope	13.110m.-12.940m.
	to concave base	
68	fill; mid-orange brown sand silt	13.020m.-12.940m.
69	cut; circular, top gradual, gradual	13.020m.-12.940m.
	slope to concave base	

68	fill	I	I
----	------	---	---

I	I	I
69 cut	I	I
I	I	I
66 fill	58 fill	56 fill
I	I	I
67 cut	59 cut	57 cut
I	I	I
<hr/>		
	I	
	55 layer	

Small pit and fill cutting N-S aligned gully and two irregular features with associated fills. Cut natural gravel and underlie possible plough-soil, therefore, dating possibly pre-14th. century.

Plan: 57, 59, 67, 69 Section: 4
 C/S: 1. 11 - 14
 B/W: 1. 4 - 9
 Phase: 2

Group 2d.

55 layer; mid-orange grey gravel	13.110m.-----
60 fill; orange brown sand silt	13.030m.-12.910m.
61 cut; linear, gradual top curved to concave base	13.030m.-12.915m.
62 fill; mid-orange brown sand silt	13.010m.-12.850m.
63 cut; circular, top sharp, gradual slope concave base	13.010m.-12.850m.
64 fill; mid-orange brown sand silt	13.060m.-12.970m.
65 cut; circular, top gradual, gradual slope to concave base	13.060m.-12.970m.

60 fill	62 fill	64 fill
I	I	I
61 cut	63 cut	65 cut
I	I	I
<hr/>		
	I	
	55 layer	

N-S aligned gully and two postholes with associated fills, cutting natural gravel. Dating uncertain, possibly pre-14th. century.

Plan: 61, 63, 65 Section: 4
 C/S: 1. 15 - 18
 B/W\; 1. 10 - 15
 Phase: 2

Trench 3.

Group 3a.

101 layer; dark brown sand silt	14.080m.-13.580m.
102 layer; mid-brown gravel silt	13.580m.-13.330m.

```

101  layer
    I
102  layer

```

Two layers of top-soil and dump. 20th. century.

```
Plan: --                               Section: 5
C/S: 1. 19 - 21
B/W: 1. 16, 17
Phase: 5
```

Group 3b.

103	layer; light orange brown sand silt	13.580m.-13.310m.
-----	-------------------------------------	-------------------

103 layer

Possibly re-deposited plough-soil. Dating uncertain.

```
Plan: --                               Section: 5
C/S: 1. 19 - 21
B/W: 1. 16,17
Phase: 4
```

Group 3c.

104	layer; orange brown gravel	13.430m.-----
-----	----------------------------	---------------

104 layer

Natural gravel. Dating uncertain.

```
Plan: --                               Section: 5
C/S: 1. 19 - 21
B/W: 1. 16, 17
Phase: 1
```

Trench Phasing Discussion.

Trench 1.

Phase 1.1; consists of group 1d.

This group represents the natural formation of alluvial sand and gravel deposits and are undisturbed strata.

Phase 1.2; consists of group 1c.

This group represents the earliest phase of activity in the trench, being of re-deposited gravel. Overlies Phase 1.1. Dating uncertain.

Phase 1.3; consists of groups 1a., 1b.

These groups represent the latest phase in the trench, consisting of inter-cutting pits and vegetable beds of 20th. century date. Overlain by top-soil and dump, the features cut possible re-deposited plough-soil. This overlies the disturbed gravel of Phase 1.2.

Trench 2.

Phase 2.1; consists of groups 2c. , 2d.

These groups constitute the earliest phase of activity in the trench. The groups consist of a small pit cutting a roughly N-S aligned gully which lies parallel to a second gully, two post-holes, and two amorphous features. Group 2c. is sealed by possible plough-soil which may have been truncated in the area of group 2d. as the fills are of a similar composition and therefore may have derived from the plough-soil.

The features cut undisturbed natural gravel and are as yet undated.

Phase 2.2; consists of group 2b.

This possibly represents plough-soil which may have been built up and worked from at least the 14th. to the mid 19th. century.

Phase 2.3; consists of group 2a.

The latest phase of 20th. century dumps and top-soil.

Trench 3.

Phase 3.1; consists of group 3c.

This group constitutes natural gravel with no features cutting it and is undated.

Phase 3.2; consists of group 3b.

The earliest phase of activity represented by re-deposited plough-soil of uncertain date.

Phase 3.3; consists of group 3a.

20th. century dump and top-soil.

Inter Trench Phasing.

Phase 1.

Consists of trench phases 1.1, 3.1.

The first phase represents the natural formation of undisturbed glacial gravel.

Phase 2.

Consists of trench phase 2.1.

The earliest phase of human activity on the site is represented by features cutting natural gravel. This phase could pre-date 14th. century if the plough-soil which partially overlies the features is derived from the known agricultural activity of the medieval and post-medieval periods.

Phase 3.

Consists of trench phase 2.2.

This phase represents plough-soil which may date to at least the 14th. to mid-19th. century

Phase 4.

Consists of trench phases 1.2., 3.2.

This phase comprises re-deposited plough-soil, probably of 19th. or 20th. century date.

Phase 5.

Consists of trench phases 1.3., 2.3., 3.3.

The latest phase represents gardening activity and a series of inter-cutting rubbish pits or vegetable beds, cutting the re-deposited plough-soil and overlain by dumps and top-soil.

Interpretation and Conclusion.

Evidence for the earliest activity on the site is represented by the features of Phase 2, cutting the natural gravels of Phase 1. Although no dating evidence was found, the phase can be considered to consist of pre-14th. century activity in accordance with documentary evidence.

Phase 3. may possibly represent the plough-soil of the field agriculture practised during the 14th.- 19th. centuries as is stated in historic records.

Phase 4. is of uncertain date, possibly mid- 19th. century, and represents re-deposited plough-soil, probably as the result of gardening activity.

Phase 5. is the latest and last phase on the site, comprising of 20th. century allotment activity, dumps and top-soils.

The excavations at the Boundary road Estate revealed stratigraphic deposits of an average depth of 0.8m. above natural gravels. There was no evidence of structural remains, probably due to 20th. century activity removing earlier deposits. Due to the limited area explored evidence for early activity is inconclusive. However, the data retrieved fits in with documentary evidence that from the 14th century on the area has been cultivated as field systems and allotments.

Recommendation of further excavation in the area south of Trench 2. with machine removal of modern deposits down to a depth of 0.8m. and then hand excavation of any features. This trench would lie directly beneath the proposed housing and should provide adequate dating evidence for the pre-14th. century features.

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context	trench	plan	section	C/S	B/W
1	1	--	1,2	--	--
2	1	2	1	--	--
3	1	--	1	--	--
4	1	--	1	--	--
5	1	--	1,3	--	--
6	1	--	1	--	--
7	1	--	1	--	--
8	1	--	1	--	--
9	1	--	1	--	--
10	1	--	1	--	--
11	1	--	1	--	--
12	1	--	1	--	--
13	1	--	3	1.24	1.20
14	1	--	3	1.24	1.20
15	1	--	3	1.24	1.20
16	1	--	3	1.24	1.20
17	1	--	3	1.24	1.20
18	1	--	3	1.24	1.20
19	1	--	3	1.24	1.20
20	1	--	3	1.24	1.20
21	1	--	3	1.24	1.20
22	1	--	3	1.24	1.20
51	2	--	4	--	--
52	2	--	4	--	--
53	2	--	4	--	--
54	2	--	4	--	--
55	2	composite	4	--	--
56	2	--	--	--	--
57	2	57	--	1.11,12	1.4-6
58	2	--	--	--	--
59	2	59	--	1.13,14	1.7-9
60	2	--	--	--	--
61	2	61	--	1.17,18	1.13-15
62	2	--	--	--	--
63	2	63	--	1.15,16	1.10-12
64	2	--	--	--	--
65	2	65	--	1.15,16	1.10-12
66	2	--	--	--	--
67	2	67	--	--	--
68	2	--	--	--	--

69	2	69	--	--	--
101	3	--	5	1.19-21	1.16,17
102	3	--	5	1.19-21	1.16,17
103	3	--	5	1.19-21	1.16,17
104	3	--	5	1.19-21	1.16,17
105	Plot 16	--	6	1.27-32	1.23-28

Finds.

Context.	Quantity.		Description.	Date.
(4)	2	x	field drain	--
	2	x	water drain (not kept)	--
	2	x	roof tile	C20th.
	1	x	industrial floor tile	C20th.
	2	x	flower pot	C20th.
	3	x	stoneware	C19th.
	2	x	transfer printed ware	1780-1900
	3	x	porcelain	C19th-20th
	1	x	glass vessel	C20th.
	1	x	nail	C20th.
	1	x	key	C20th.
(5)	1	x	gas pipe	C20th.
	1	x	George V half penny	C20th.
(52)	8	x	transfer printed ware	1780-1900
	6	x	porcelain	C19th-20th.
	1	x	borderware	1550-1750
	1	x	creamware	1760-1900
	1	x	bone	--
	1	x	tile	C20th.
	2	x	post-medieval red ware	1600-1800
	1	x	glass vessel	C20th.
	2	x	opaque glass lamp shade	C20th.
	14	x	clay pipe stem	--
small find no.1.	1	x	clay pipe stem 6.4cm in length; up-turn of rear of bowl in tact; diamond in section at bowl end and lozenge in section at tip end.	--
			cat remains (not kept)	--
(54)	1	x	body sherd, post-medieval red ware	1600-1800
	1	x	tile	C20th.
	7	x	clay pipe stem	--
	1	x	porcelain	C19th-C20th.
	1	x	bone	--
	3	x	sand coarse ware possibly medieval	