

Evaluation at Forest Road, Walthamstow. Essex.

London Borough of Waltham Forest.

WS - FR 92.

LDPEM/ACWS/169.

Level III Report.

M. Beasley.

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Introduction.

An evaluation was conducted by members of the Passmore Edwards Museum in advance of a housing development on the corner of Rosebank Grove and Forest Road, Walthamstow E17. The evaluation was conducted over two days, between the 14th. April 1992, and 15th. April 1992.

Early maps show a farm complex on this site. The Roque map of 1746, while using artistic licence, clearly shows the presence of a large complex of buildings at the Forest Road end of the site, with fields to the south. This is repeated in the 1777 Chapman and Andre map, and the 1822 Tithe map, which also shows a related pond. What is important about the site is that Forest Road (then called Clay Street) was certainly a Medieval roads with several farms and manors along it, including Lloyd Hall. The question which had to be addressed in relation to the site was whether the known Post-medieval farm was a development from an earlier Medieval property.

The evaluation was funded by Furlong Brothers Construction Limited, was directed by Peter Moore for the Passmore Edwards Museum, and supervised by the author.

Abstract.

The evaluation showed stratified 20th. century make-up, overlying 19th. century deposits, overlying natural London clay.

Excavation Summary.

Three trenches were placed inside the building lines, and machine-excavated. Trenches 1 and 2 were aligned along the western boundary of the site. Trench 1 was a 10m. x 0.75m trench, aligned north-south, and excavated down to natural boulder clay. Trench 2 was to the north of Trench 1, and measured 5m. x 0.75m., also aligned on a north south axis, and also excavated to natural clay (see fig. 1).

It was apparent that the top layer of the site was disturbed by demolition work, and by subsequent plant activity. This mixed grey brown sandy silt clay, (layer (1)), contained abundant brick and other building debris, and is of possibly 19th. century date, with much intrusive 20th. century material.

Underlying this in trenches 1 and 2, a layer of grey silty

clay was revealed, (layer (2)). This appeared to be of 19th. century date, and was heavily contaminated with oil. In trench 3, layer (1) overlay a brownish yellow layer of sandy clay, layer (8). This is thought to be re-deposited natural, which in turn overlay layer (2).

In trench 2, layer (2) was cut by a linear brick rubble drain.

Layer (2) was found to overlie natural boulder clay in all three trenches.

In addition to the three trenches described above, a linear drainage feature was observed running roughly east-west across the site. This is of note as the fill was composed entirely of oyster shells. Unfortunately, due to heavy oil contamination of the fill this was not sampled.

Matrix.

		9	
		I	
		10	
		I	
		1	
		I	
I			I
6			I
I			I
7			8
I			I
		I	
		2	
		I	
		3	
		I	
		4	
		I	
		5	

Group Discussion.

Group 1.

9	fill;oyster shell	23.910m.-23.650m.
10	cut; linear, abrupt top to straight sides, abrupt to flat bottom	23.910m.-23.650m.
1	layer;grey brown sandy silt clay	23.890m.-23.790m.

9	fill
I	
10	cut
I	
1	layer

Linear drainage cut, filled with oyster shell, cutting disturbed make-up layer. 19th. century.

Plan: --	Section: 1,2,3
C/S: 1. 15-20	
B/W: --	
Phase: 3	

Group 2.

2	layer;dark grey silt clay	23.790m.-23.610m.
6	fill;brick rubble with grey black clay	23.850m.-23.750m.
7	cut;linear, abrupt top to straight sides, abrupt to flat bottom	23.850m.-23.750m.
8	layer;yellow brown sandy clay	23.610m.-23.100m.

6	fill	I	
I		I	
7	cut	8	layer
I		I	
		I	
		2	layer

Rubble-filled drainage cut, cutting dump layer. 19th. century.

Plan: --	Section: 1,2,3
C/S: 1.17-24	
B/W: --	
Phase: 2	

Group 3.

3	fill;mid grey gravel with clay	23.560m.-23.390m.
4	cut;linear, gradual top to concave sides, imperceptible to concave bottom	23.560m.-23.390m.
5	layer;yellow brown sandy clay	23.540m.-----

3	fill
I	
4	cut
I	

5 layer

Linear gravel filled drainage ditch, cutting natural sandy clay. Dating uncertain.

Plan: --

Section: 1

C/S: 1. 17-24

B/W: --

Phase: 1

Phasing Discussion.

Phase 1; consists of group 3.

Phase 1 is the earliest phase on the site. It consists of the natural boulder clay of the area, cut in trench 1 by an apparently linear drainage ditch. This is filled with gravel, and as no finds were recovered from the feature, it is undatable.

Phase 2; consists of group 2.

The next phase of the site, this represents build-up of material over the site, with two layers of dumped material, and a small rubble filled linear drainage cut. Although no finds are available for this phase it is not unreasonable to assume it to be of 19th. century date, based on the presence of the drainage trench. The rubble filling this appeared to be of Victorian brick.

Phase 3; consists of group 1.

This is the final phase of the site, and appears to be a phase of continued dumping over the site. This is cut by a drainage feature, consisting of a linear trench, the top of which was observed over the surface of the site, entirely filled with oyster shells. These deposits are also thought to be of 19th. century date, though recent disturbance of the top deposits of the site makes it difficult to be certain. Again, no stratified finds were recovered.

Interpretation and Conclusions.

The first phase on the site is unfortunately undated. The feature evident in this phase is an unremarkable drainage ditch. The presence of such a feature is not unusual, and is in keeping with an attempt at drainage of the heavy natural sandy clay. No structural remains were located to suggest the presence of farm buildings.

The next phase, Phase 2, is slightly more problematical. The layer of silt clay is reminiscent of plough-soil, but the deposit is heavily contaminated with oil from subsequent industrial

activity. This oil, apparently unable to penetrate deeper into the natural boulder clay, has remained concentrated in the overlying deposits. This has meant that the true character of the deposit has been obscured.

The final phase of the site is also too disturbed by modern activity to date with certainty, but would appear to be of 19th. century date. The presence in layer (1) of modern material can be attributed to the recent demolition of the factory previously occupying the site, and subsequent plant activity over the site. The main reason for dating this to the 19th. century rather than to a later period is the presence of the oyster shell drain, and the unlikelyhood of such a feature being modern.

In conclusion it can be seen that, although limited evidence for agriculture is present on the site, no firm idea of the nature or location of those structures indicated from documents has been found. Given that the trenches were located within the building lines of the new development, and the depth of the revealed pre-19th. century deposits, it seems unlikely that any such remains will be encountered during development. This does not, however, discount the possibility of such structures existing within the site.

Acknowledgements.

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Level II Index.

context	plan	section	C/S	B/W
1	--	1,2,3	1.15-20	--
2	--	1,2,3	1.17-24	--
3	--	1	1.17-24	--
4	--	1	1.17-24	--
5	--	1,2,3	1.17-24	--
6	--	2	1.17-24	--
7	--	2	1.17-24	--
8	--	1,2,3	1.17-24	--
9	--	--	1.15-20	--
10	--	--	1.15-20	--