EXCAVATIONS AT SIDNEY CHAPLIN SCHOOL, FOLLY LANE, WALTHAMSTOW

(now renamed William Morris School)

WS-SC-92

LD PEM AC: WS/163

17/2/92 to 21/2/92

LEVEL III REPORT

By K.R. Sabel

Passmore Edwards Museum
Archaeology & Local History Centre
31 Stock Street
Plaistow
London
E.13 OBX

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION AND METHOD

The excavations at Sidney Chaplin School were carried out between the 17th and 21st February 1992 by staff of the Passmore Edwards Museum in advance of proposed construction work in a field to the north of the school's tennis courts. This field is bounded to the west and north by Folly Lane and was recently used to graze horses. This area is known through documentary sources to have been the location of a brick, flower pot, chimney pot, tile and pottery kiln from the early to mid 19th century till 1944, when the factory closed. The area to the north of the school buildings down to Folly Lane has been terraced for playing fields.

On 30th January 1992 a resistivity survey was undertaken to establish the best positions to locate the trenches in order to find evidence of buildings and deposits relating to the factory. The resulting report (see Report on Resistivity Survey by M. Beasley, included in this report as appendices 1 and 2) suggested the excavation of trenches towards the north of the site, in resistivity grid number 4*, where there were patches of low resistivity in an area of high resistivity. The resistivity survey showed a band of high resistivity along the southern edge of the site, a band of low resistivity to the north and east of that and a band of high resistivity to its north and east. A trench was suggested across these bands to establish the cause of the different readings.

Two trenches were initially opened. Trench 1 was located in resistivity grid number 4 and was nine metres from north to south and one metre wide. On the site grid the middle of its southern edge was at 33 metres east and 22 metres north (hereafter written as 33m/22m). It was excavated by hand to a depth of 0.7 metres in a 2.2 metre long sondage at its northern end and 0.3 metres to the south. Trench 2 was six metres from north to south, one metre wide and was placed across the junction between the low resistivity band and the area of high resistivity in the north east of the site. The middle of its southern edge was at 65m/18m on the site grid. It was excavated by hand to a depth of 1.03 metres in a sondage in its centre and to a depth of between 0.36 metres and 0.66 metres elsewhere.

As the deposits in Trench 1 were found to have been heavily truncated by mid-late Twentieth century dumping a further trench (trench 3) was dug 4.5 metres to the north. Its dimensions were one metre by one metre and it was excavated by hand to a depth of 0.7 metres. The middle of its southern edge was at 33m/35.5m on the site grid.

* The resistivity survey was recorded in 20 by 20 metre grid squares. Grid square number 4 on the resistivity grid corresponds to the 20 metre square with south west co-ordinates of 20m/20m on the site grid used for the excavation.

A small pit approximately one metre by one metre was dug by Waltham Forest council employees in the west of the site to locate a drain cover. This is refered to as trench 6. This revealed an irregularly laid brick surface (context (7)). A

trench 1.4 metres from north to south, 0.9 metres from east to west and 0.34 metres deep (trench 4) was excavated 1.1 metres to the east of this to find the extent of the surface. The middle of the south edge of trench 4 was at 14.8m/13.8m on the site grid.

Two key hole trenches approximately 0.3 metres square and 0.35 metres deep were dug which also revealed the brick floor surface (7) extending to the northeast and south east of trench 4. One was at 20.6m/23.5m and was numbered as trench 9 and the other, at 19.7m/8.1m on the grid was numbered as trench 10. Another trench was excavated (Trench 5) to find the eastern extent of (7). This trench was 3.78 metres from east to west, 0.62 metres from north to south at its western end and 0.28 metres from north to south in its easternmost 1.2 metres. The trench was excavated to a depth of between 0.2 and 0.35 metres. The middle of the western edge of this trench was at 28.75m/14.5m.

On 21st February 1992 two test pits were excavated by contractors using a small mechanical excavator to establish the nature of the subsoils on the site to assess the site's suitability for redevelopment. For the purposes of this report these are refered to as trenches 7 and 8. Trench 7 was 2.7 metres from east to west, 0.6 metres wide and 2.32 metres deep. The middle of its western edge was located at 41m/16.75m. Trench 8 was 2.1 metres from east to west, 0.6 metres wide and 2.44 metres deep. The middle of its western edge was located at 73.4m/16m. Both pits were photographed and an east-west section sketch drawn of each.

The contexts found in trenches 1-6 were recorded and photographed. Plans were made of the surface (context (7)) in trenches 4, 5 and 6. Layers and cuts with edges within the trenches were also planned and one section was drawn from each of trenches 1, 2 and 3. Only the locations of the key hole trenches were plotted. The layers found in the key hole trenches will be discussed in the "Interpretation" section of this report.

GROUP DISCUSSION

GROUP 1 :

1-Layer
I

1-Layer, mid-brown clayey loam topped with grass 13.29m*-12.74m

in all trenches.

This group constitutes the topsoil with turf on top across the whole site.

Colour Slide (hereafter C/S) 1: 1-31.
Black and White (hereafter B/W) 1: 2-35.
Plan: -
Section: 1-7.
Phase: IV.

GROUP 2 :

I
50-Layer
I

50-Layer,mid-grey/brown sandy silt in trench 2. 12.92m-12.5m

This group represents a late 20th century dump layer in trench 2.

C/S 1: 3, 4 and 19-24.
B/W 1: 4, 5 and 24-29.
Plan: -
Section: 4 and 5.
Phase: IV.

GROUP 3 :

I
3-Layer
I
4-Layer
I

3-Layer, mid-brown/grey sandy clay in trench 3. 12.84m-12.70m
4-Layer, light to mid-brown sandy silt with orange mottling in trench 3. 12.75m-12.61m

This group constitutes two layers of mid-late 20th century dumping in trench 3.

*All levels are measured to metres above Ordnance datum.

C/S 1: 5 and 6.
B/W 1: 6 and 7.
Plan: -
Section: 3.
Phase : IV.

GROUP 4 :

I
8-Layer
I

8-Layer, light orangy brown sandy clay in trenches 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10. 13.15m-13.00m

This group represents a layer of build up or dumping above the brick surface (7) in trenches 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10.

C/S 1: 10 and 11.
B/W 1: 13-15.
Plan: -
Section: -
Phase: IV.

GROUP 5 :

I I
2-Layer 5-Layer
I I

2-Layer, dark greyish brown sandy clay/ash/rubble in Trench 1. 12.835m-12.23m
5-Layer, mid-dark brown sandy silt in Trench 3. in trench 3. 12.62m-12.30m

This group consists of two mid-late 20th century layers of dumped rubbish or demolition material in trenches 1 and 3.

C/S 1: 5, 6, 15 and 16.
B/W 1: 6, 7, and 19-21.
Plan: 7.
Section: 1, 2 and 3.
Phase: IV.

GROUP 6 :

I
10-Layer
I

10-Layer, black crushed tarmac/cinder in trench 1. 12.69m-12.65m

This group represents a dump layer of Twentieth century date in the south of trench 1.

C/S 1: -
B/W 1: -
Plan: -
Section: 1.
Phase: IV.

GROUP 7 :

I
9-Cut

I

9-Cut, irregularly shaped in trenches 1 and 3. 12.58m-12.30m

This group consists of a cut into natural or redeposited natural (context (6), group 9). It may be related to the activity on the site while the factory was in operation. This is, however, uncertain.

C/S 1: 5, 6, 15 and 16.
B/W 1: 6, 7, and 19-21.
Plan: 7.
Section: 2 and 3.
Phase: III.

GROUP 8 :

I
6-Layer

6-Layer, light yellowish brown sandy clay with light yellowish grey silt mottling in trenches 1 and 3. 12.61m-12.30m

This group represents a natural or redeposited natural subsoil layer appearing in the north of trench 1 and in trench 3.

C/S 1: 5, 6, 15 and 16.
B/W 1: 6, 7 and 19-21.
Plan: 7.
Section: 2 and 3.
Phase: I.

GROUP 9 :

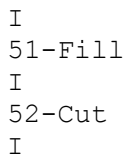
I
7-Layer

7-Layer, Red and yellow brick surface in a brick and gravel matrix, in trenches 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10. 13.0m-12.84m

This group represents a compact layer appearing in the trenches in the south west of the site, which forms part of one or more floor surfaces in that area of the site.

C/S 1: 10, 11, 30 and 31.
B/W 1: 13-15, 34 and 35.
Plan: 5 and 6.
Section: -
Phase: II

GROUP 10 :

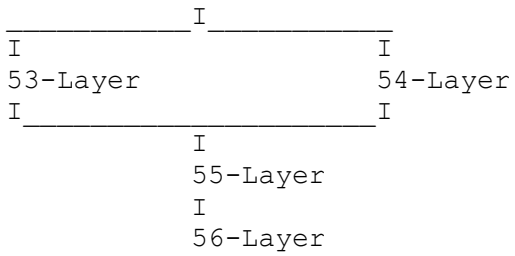


51-Fill, mid-grey sandy silt clay in trench 2.	12.53m-12.05m
52-Cut, possibly linear on east-west orientation in trench 2.	12.53m-12.05m

This group consists of a cut and its fill across the middle of trench 2, which may represent a linear ditch of 20th century date. It is also possible that it represents part of a large ovoid pit.

C/S 1: 7-9, 21 and 22.
B/W 1: 9-12, 26 and 27.
Plan: 2.
Section: 4.
Phase: IV.

GROUP 11 :



53-Layer, mid-grey silt clay with orange mottling in trench 2.	12.6m-12.2m
54-Layer, red brown sand (30 % iron flecks) in trench 2.	12.54m-12.31m
55-Layer, orange brown clay in trench 2.	12.31m-11.96m
56-Layer, very dark grey/black silty ashen gravel in trench 2.	11.96- unexcavated

This group consists of a series of four dump layers towards the bottom of trench 2. The finds from these layers date them to the twentieth century.

C/S 1: 21-26.
B/W 1: 26-31.
Plan: 3 and 4.
Section: 4 and 5.
Phase: IV.

PHASING DISCUSSION

The fact that the site lies on ground that has been terraced, with the ground built up towards the north east and possibly graded off to the south west, makes the exact order in which the layers were deposited in the different trenches difficult to determine with accuracy. However it is possible to detect evidence of there being four phases on the site.

Phase I

This phase consists of group 8 which constitutes a layer of either naturally deposited, or redeposited natural sandy clay (context 6). This was found in the north of trench 1, where a sondage 2.2 metres long was cut in the northern end of the trench, and in trench 3.

Phase II

This phase consists of group 9 and represents part of one or more internal or external brick, and in places brick and gravel, floor surfaces (context 7). This context appeared in the trenches in the south west of the site (trenches 4, 5, 6 and in two "spade holes" to the nort east and south east of trench 4) and would have formed the floor surface of a structure or structures in that part of the site.

Phase III

This phase consists of group 7 (context 9) which constitutes a cut in the northern sondage in trench 1 and in trench 3 which cuts into layer (6) described in phase I. This may be related to the industrial activity on the site.

Phase IV

This phase represents the activity on the site since the demolition of the buildings relating to the factory. This consisted of the depositing of a large amount of loose demolition debris and/or rubbish across the site (including group 11, in trench 2 and groups 6 and 5 in trenches 1 and 3); the digging and backfilling of a linear ditch or large pit (group 10, in trench 2); the dumping of several layers across the site, probably to level the ground (group 2 in trench 2, group 3 in trench 3 and group 4 in trenches 4, 5, 6 and in the two spade holes to the north east and south east of trench 4) and the accumulation of topsoil across the whole site (group 1).

INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

It is possible to interpret the sequence of events on the site from the archaeological evidence. It seems that the natural subsoil may consist of sandy clay (context 6). The earliest activity recorded on the site was the construction of a brick surface (context 7) which in places consisted of closely laid brick (trenches 4 and 6) and elsewhere consisted of more sparsely laid brick and gravel (trench 5 and parts of trench 4). This was found in the south west of the site. No walls were found on the periphery of the surface (its eastern edge appeared in trench 5). It is therefore not certain whether this surface is an internal floor or an external paved surface and whether it is one surface or more than one.

Evidence was found of a cut in the north of the site, in the north of trench 1 and in trench 3 (cut 9). This may have been contemporary with the industrial activity on the site or may have taken place after the factory fell in to disuse after 1944. After this, material, some of which may have been destruction debris, was dumped across the site (these layers are described in phase IV). During this process of gradual dumping a ditch or large pit was dug in the east of the site (contexts 51 and 52 in trench 2). After the pit or ditch was no longer in use more layers were deposited until the field was level. The two contractors trenches, trenches 7 and 8, in the east of the site revealed the dumping of material of 20th century date to depths of more than 2 metres, which included such finds as plastic plug sockets. The volume of material dumped towards the north east of the site was greater than that in the south west, which indicates that the ground either originally sloped from the south west down to the north east, or that material was removed from the east of the

site and later replaced by the dumping of 20th century rubbish and industrial refuse..

Having established that any archaeology in the north of the site is disturbed by cut (9) and that in the east of the site it is either heavily disturbed or buried very deeply by the dumping of 20th century rubbish, the extent of the surviving brick and gravel surface or surfaces (context 7) in the south west of the site needs to be defined. The two key hole trenches (trenches 9 and 10) confirmed the presence of brick paved surfaces there. The eastern edge of the surface appears in trench 5, though it is possible that it originally extended further east and has been truncated. The northern edge remains undefined as does the southern edge.

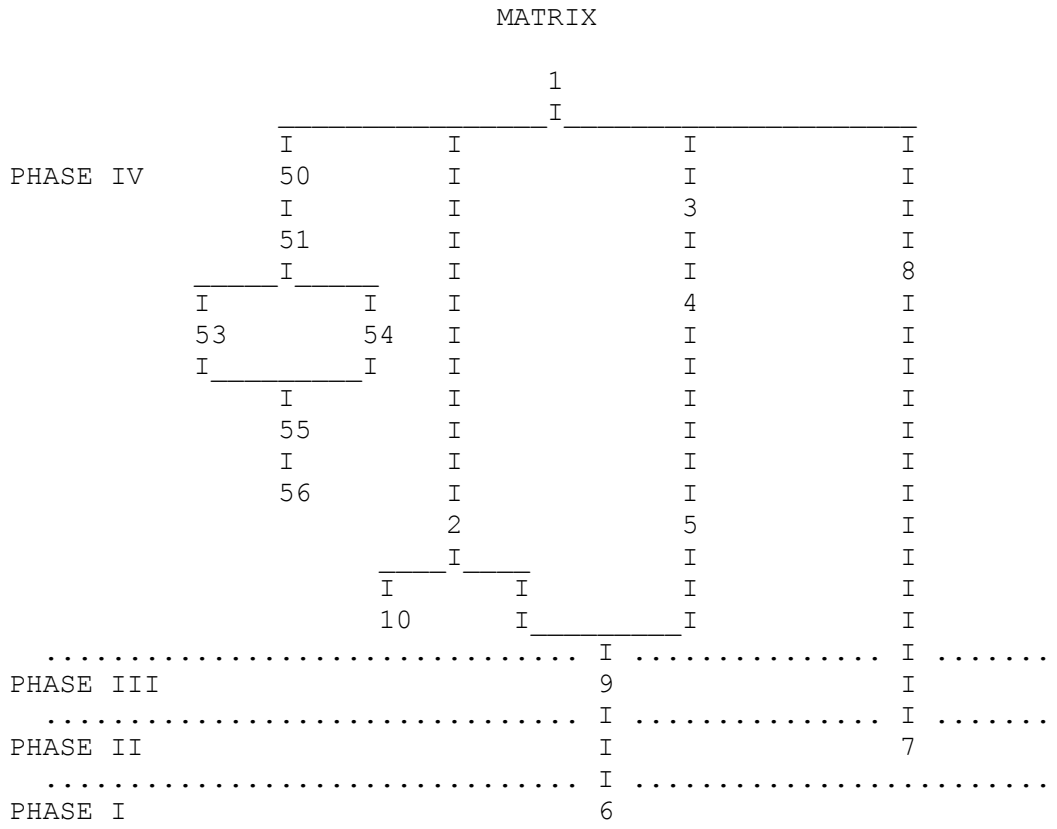
The results of the excavation seem to confirm the results of the resistivity survey. The area of high resistivity in the south west corner of the site seems to correspond to the brick and gravel surface (7). The area in resistivity grid 4, with patches of low resistivity surrounded by patches of medium-high resistivity corresponds to the area in trenches 1 and 3

irregularly truncated by cut (9). The area of low resistivity in the east of the site seems to coincide with the part of the site which has been built up to the greatest depth by the dumping of 20th century rubbish. The area of medium-high resistivity in resistivity grid 8 seems to correspond to the area in the north of trench 2 where the layers of dumped material are more compact than to the south (context (53), to the north of the trench, is clay whereas context (54), to the south, is loose). The bands of high resistivity to the south west of the site and low resistivity to the north east seem to reflect the original slope of the ground down to the north east before the land was levelled during the mid to late 20th century.

The excavation shows the preserved remains of part of the industrial kiln area, though whether this is an internal or an external surface is not known. This kiln complex is important to the development of the industrial history of the River Lea valley in the Waltham Forest area and to the growth of Walthamstow itself in the 19th Century. It demonstrates the change from a rural to an urban environment and it may be that the changes in its production meet the changing needs of the growing population. As this field will be substantially graded, destroying all traces of the existing industrial archaeology, it is important that further excavations are conducted in the southern end of the assessed area so as to record and understand the history of this industry.

CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Description	Trench	Phase	Group	Date
1	Layer	1-10	IV	1	18/2/92
2	Layer	1	IV	5	18/2/92
3	Layer	3	IV	3	18/2/92
4	Layer	3	IV	3	18/2/92
5	Layer	3	IV	5	19/2/92
6	Layer	1, 3	I	8	19/2/92
7	Layer	4-6, 9, 10	II	9	20/2/92
8	Layer	4-6 9, 10	IV	4	20/2/92
9	Cut	1, 3	III	7	21/2/92
10	Layer	1	IV	6	21/2/92
50	Layer	2	IV	2	18/2/92
51	Fill	2	IV	10	20/2/92
52	Cut	2	IV	10	20/2/92
53	Layer	2	IV	11	20/2/92
54	Layer	2	IV	11	20/2/92
55	Layer	2	IV	11	20/2/92
56	Layer	2	IV	11	21/2/92


MATRIX
1
50
51
53
54
55
56
2
10
3
4
5
9
7
6
PHASE IV
PHASE III
PHASE II
PHASE I

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The excavations were supervised by the author and negotiated and directed by Peter Moore. The museum would like to thank the London Borough of Waltham Forest for funding this archaeological assessment in advance of the redevelopment of this site. In particular we would like to thank Alison Young and Robert Shipway of the Planning Division. Thanks also to the site workers from the London Borough of Waltham Forest and contractors for their co-operation and help. Thanks are also due to Mrs. Sullivan and Mr. Roberts and the William Morris School for generuosly providing accomodation for the site team. We would also like to thank Mark Beasley and Steve Chew for their hard work.