

**152 -162 LONDON ROAD
ROMFORD
LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION
BY
TRIAL TRENCHING**



Essex County Council

Field Archaeology Unit

OCTOBER 2004

**152 -162 LONDON ROAD
ROMFORD
LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION**

**BY
TRIAL TRENCHING**

Prepared By: Ben Barker Position: Project Officer	Signature: Date:
Checked By: Patrick Allen Position: Project Manager	Signature: Date:
Approved By: Mark Atkinson Position: Unit Manager	Signature: Date:

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Please contact the Archaeological Fieldwork Manager, at the
Field Archaeology Unit,
Fairfield Court, Fairfield Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 3YQ
Tel: 01376 331470
Fax: 01376 331428

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Essex CM1 1LF

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152 -162 LONDON ROAD
ROMFORD, LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
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SUMMARY

Client: Destinyhomes Ltd

NGR: TQ 50435 88411

Planning Application No: P2192.02

Site Code: LFO04

Project No: 1415

Date of Fieldwork: 7/10/04 - 8/10/04

An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was carried out on of the site of a residential development at 152 -162 London Road, Romford. The specific aim of the evaluation was to identify any evidence for medieval and post-medieval occupation alongside London Road and/or traces of early field boundaries.

The two evaluation trenches identified five features that are likely to be 19th-century or later in date. These included a well, domestic refuse pit and three modern post-holes. It is thought that the well relates to an earlier phase of buildings shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map.

Although the areas of investigation revealed minimal evidence of truncation or disturbance, no remains associated with activity prior to the early 19th century were located. None of the deposits recorded are archaeologically significant. The site is likely to have been agricultural land prior to the 19th-century ribbon development along London Road. It is concluded that the proposed development is unlikely to have any impact on the archaeological resource of Romford.

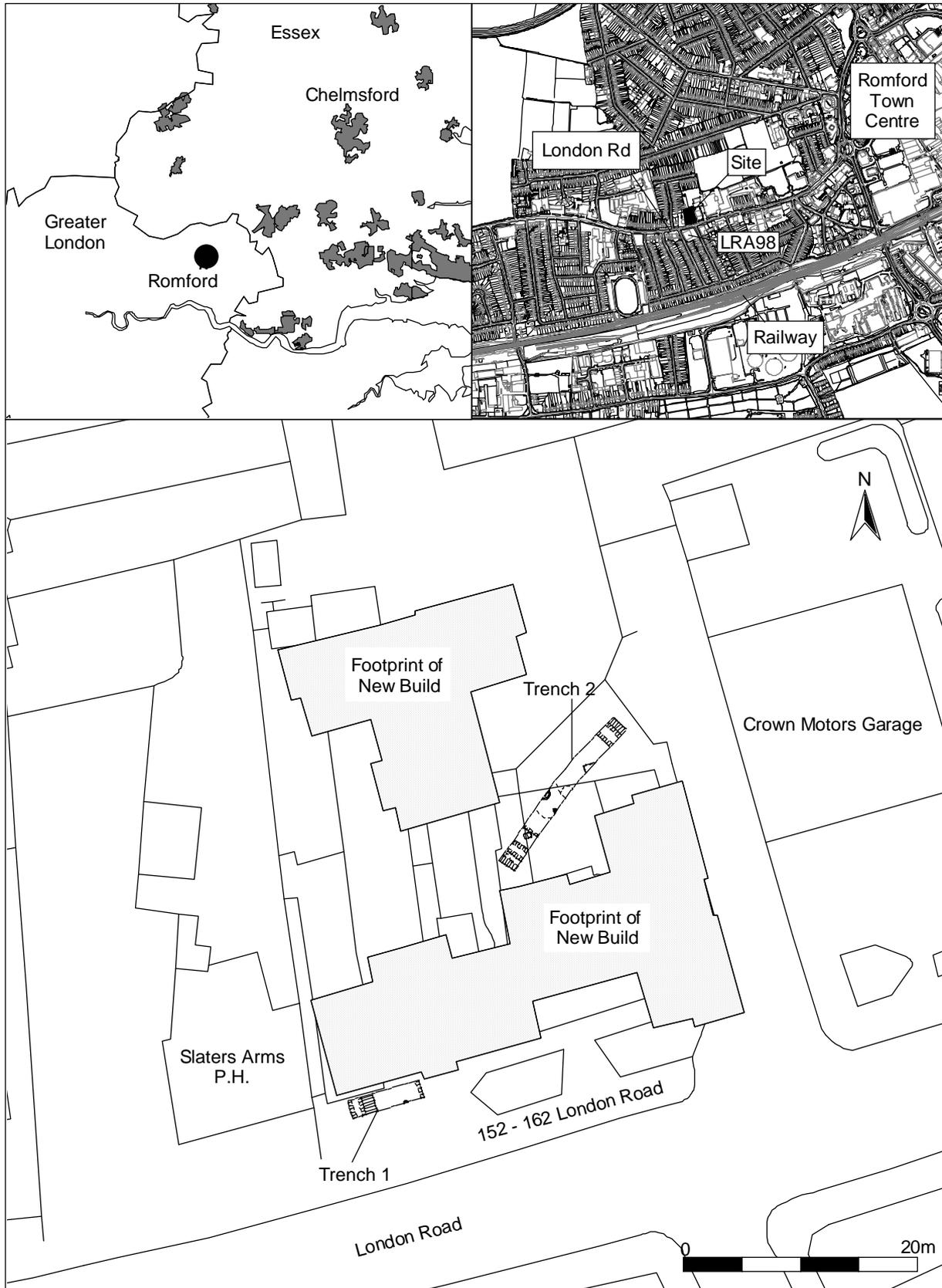


Fig.1. Site Location Plan.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project History

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching prior to the construction of two blocks of flats at 152 -162 London Road, Romford, in the London Borough of Havering. The fieldwork aimed to determine the presence, nature, date and survival of archaeological remains in the proposed development area.
- 1.1.2 Planning Application P2192.02 was submitted by Destinyhomes Ltd to the London Borough of Havering Local Planning Authority. The evaluation was initiated in response to Condition 14 of the Planning Agreement, which requires a programme of archaeological work.
- 1.1.3 Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit carried out the evaluation on behalf of Destinyhomes Ltd. Robert Whytehead of English Heritage (EH) Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS) monitored the work.
- 1.1.4 Following completion of the project, the site archive will be deposited with the Museum of London and an entry will be submitted on the OASIS database.

1.2 Abbreviations used in the report

ECC FAU= Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit

EH = English Heritage

GLAAS = Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service

GLSMR = Greater London Sites and Monuments Record

NMR = National Monuments Record

NGR = National Grid Reference

OS = Ordnance Survey

OD = Ordnance datum

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and Topography (Fig. 1)

- 2.1.1 The development area lies on the north side of London Road (A118), between the Slaters Arms public house and Crown Motors garage (TQ 50435 88411). Nos 152-162 London Road was formerly a terrace of late Victorian houses and shops, with a modern industrial unit to the rear, along the western boundary. Immediately to the rear of the houses/shops were small gardens containing a variety of small outbuildings. A small garage block with hard standing stood to the rear of the development.
- 2.1.2 All buildings had been demolished prior to the archaeological investigation. The site had been levelled and was largely covered with a layer of compacted demolition rubble.
- 2.1.3 One of the new buildings will be situated along the frontage of the plot, whilst a second block is proposed c. 20m further north. This majority of the footprint of the new buildings overlies the site of Victorian buildings and their modern extensions. The hard standing at the rear of the site will be retained in the new development.
- 2.1.4 The ground was relatively flat, at a height of c. 15.5m OD. This was slightly elevated in relation to the road, probably due to modern build-up and demolition rubble.

2.2 Geology

- 2.2.1 The underlying geology was silty-sand and gravel, below between 0.2m and 1.0m of made ground and topsoil.

2.3 History and Archaeology

- 2.3.1 The site lies well to the west of Romford's historic core, but London Road is thought to be an old road line, with potential for associated settlement or agricultural activity alongside it. The A118 is purported to follow the line of the Roman London-Colchester road for much of its length, especially the long straight to the west through Chadwell Heath, but in the immediate area of the site it deviates 140m to the south of the projected Roman road line. This length of London Road most likely follows a medieval or later diversion, with the line of

the original Roman road represented by Recreation Avenue to the north of the development area.

- 2.3.2 The potential for medieval or later remains is supported by medieval and post-medieval ditches and pits found during trial trenching at the Motorpoint garage immediately to the south of the site, carried out by Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) in 1998 (site code LRA98).
- 2.3.3 The 1st edition OS Map of 1881 shows that the land to the north of London Road was occupied by a series of small terraced cottages with extensions to the rear.
- 2.3.4 By the 2nd edition of the OS County Series (c.1898), the cottages had been replaced by a continuous row of terraced houses, with no extensions. It is likely that these buildings, with later additions, were those that were demolished prior to the investigation.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General Aims

- 3.1.1 The aim of the evaluation was to determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains that might be threatened by the proposed development. The aim of the trench layout was to cover both the frontage area and the area between the two new buildings. As well as recording the archaeological remains that were present, the evaluation also assessed the degree of existing disturbance and its effect on archaeological survival.

3.2 Specific Objectives

- 3.2.1 More specific objectives include evaluation of:

- Any evidence for medieval and post-medieval occupation alongside London Road.
- Any evidence for pre-modern field boundaries.

- 3.2.2 The evaluation report aims to assess the significance of archaeological deposits within the development area in order to inform any decision on further work or mitigation proposals.

4 METHOD

4.1 Machining

- 4.1.1 At the request of Destinyhomes, the trenches were positioned to avoid disturbance of the footprints of the new buildings and the sales office at the frontage.
- 4.1.2 A mechanical excavator with a flat-bladed bucket was used to excavate one c. 2 x 6m trench (Trench 1) along the road frontage, and one c. 2 x 15m trench (Trench 2) between the proposed new buildings at 45° to London Road. A total area of c. 42 square metres was stripped and evaluated as part of the investigation.
- 4.1.3 All machining was carried out under archaeological supervision.

4.2 Excavation and Recording

- 4.2.1 Standard ECC FAU methodologies were employed with regard to excavation and recording. All stratigraphy was recorded using the FAU's context recording system. Planning and surveying was tied to the Ordnance Survey National Grid.
- 4.2.2 The site was surveyed by tape measure in relation to the adjacent properties. Plans were drawn at 1:20 and sections at 1:10.
- 4.2.3 All surfaces were sufficiently cleaned to ensure that any features present were visible. Archaeological features and deposits were excavated using hand tools. A sample of natural features was excavated in order to prove that they were not man-made. Deposits deeper than 1.2m below the ground surface were not excavated for safety reasons.
- 4.2.4 Finds from all features were collected, where present.
- 4.2.5 No environmental samples were taken due to the absence of well-stratified, datable deposits with potential for significant ecofact presence or survival.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Summary

5.1.1 The evaluation recorded 18 individual archaeological contexts (Appendix 1). A 19th-century well and pit were identified, along with three modern post-holes. These features are typical of archaeological remains commonly found in the rear gardens of Victorian terraced houses.

5.1.2 No areas of significant archaeological activity were identified.

5.2 Trench 1 (Fig. 2)

5.2.1 Undisturbed natural silty sand (03) was identified at a height of 14.8m OD (0.3m below current ground surface). A test slot at the western end of the trench revealed that this layer was c. 0.45m deep and overlay natural sandy gravel. These deposits are both likely to be of fluvial origin.

5.2.2 The natural silty sand (03) was overlain by a 0.10m thick layer of disturbed sandy silt (02). This was a natural subsoil that had been disturbed by root and animal action.

5.2.3 Layer 2 was cut by a small post-hole (05) at the eastern end of trench, against the baulk. Although this feature contained no finds, it is likely to be fairly recent in date due to its topsoil-like fill (06).

5.2.4 The area immediately around Trench 1 was covered by less than 0.20m of topsoil (01). It was relatively undisturbed and is likely to have been beyond the footprint of previous developments. More recently it was protected by the pavement, which had been removed prior to the investigation.

5.3 Trench 2 (Fig. 2)

5.3.1 The natural geology in Trench 2 was a mid greyish-brown sandy silt (07) that was mottled with orange iron-panning. It was identified at a height of 14.5m OD (c. 0.9m below current ground surface). A test slot at either end of the trench revealed that this layer was c. 0.20m thick and overlay natural gravel (04).

- 5.3.2 The natural sandy silt (08) around the well (see below) was much greyer in colour and displayed more iron-panning than layer (07). This is likely to be due to differences in the saturation of the ground in this area due to the presence of the well shaft.
- 5.3.3 A thin layer of sandy-silt subsoil (18) was present along the length of the trench. This was 0.10m deep and similar to the natural (07). It had been disturbed by root action and did not display as much iron-panning as the undisturbed layer below. Layer 09 towards the centre of the trench represents an isolated patch of disturbance, thought to be the result of tree roots.
- 5.3.4 Towards the middle of the trench, against the north-western baulk, a brick-lined well (12) was identified. It was constructed from roughly broken soft-red un-frogged bricks. Their regularity and lack of coarse inclusions suggests that the bricks are likely to be early 19th-century in date.
- 5.3.5 Well 12 was excavated to a depth of 1.2m (0.2m below the base of the trench). It had been backfilled with domestic waste and building rubble (13), including clay pipe, roof tile and frogged bricks. There was also evidence that that it had been capped, although the upper portions had been disturbed by a later sewer line. This suggests that the well predated the recently demolished buildings, and is likely to be connected to the buildings shown on the First edition OS map. It is probable that it was backfilled at the end of the 19th century, before the construction of the more recent terrace.
- 5.3.6 At the north-eastern end of the trench, a large square-cut pit (16) was identified. It was greater than 0.6m deep, and its excessive depth prevented total excavation. It was filled with layers of domestic refuse containing frequent small fragments of coke and coal, clay pipe and modern pottery, and is interpreted as a domestic refuse pit. The finds recovered indicate that it is likely to be late 19th-century in date.
- 5.3.7 To the south-east of the well, a small, shallow post-hole (14) was identified. One fragment of peg-hole tile was recovered from its fill (15). Such material is often residual and the post-hole was seen to cut layer 08. It is therefore likely that post-hole 14 post-dates the construction of the well.
- 5.3.8 At the south-western end of the trench a square-cut post-hole (10) was identified cutting through layer (18). This feature did not contain any finds, but its position at the intersection of two demolished garden walls suggests a modern origin.

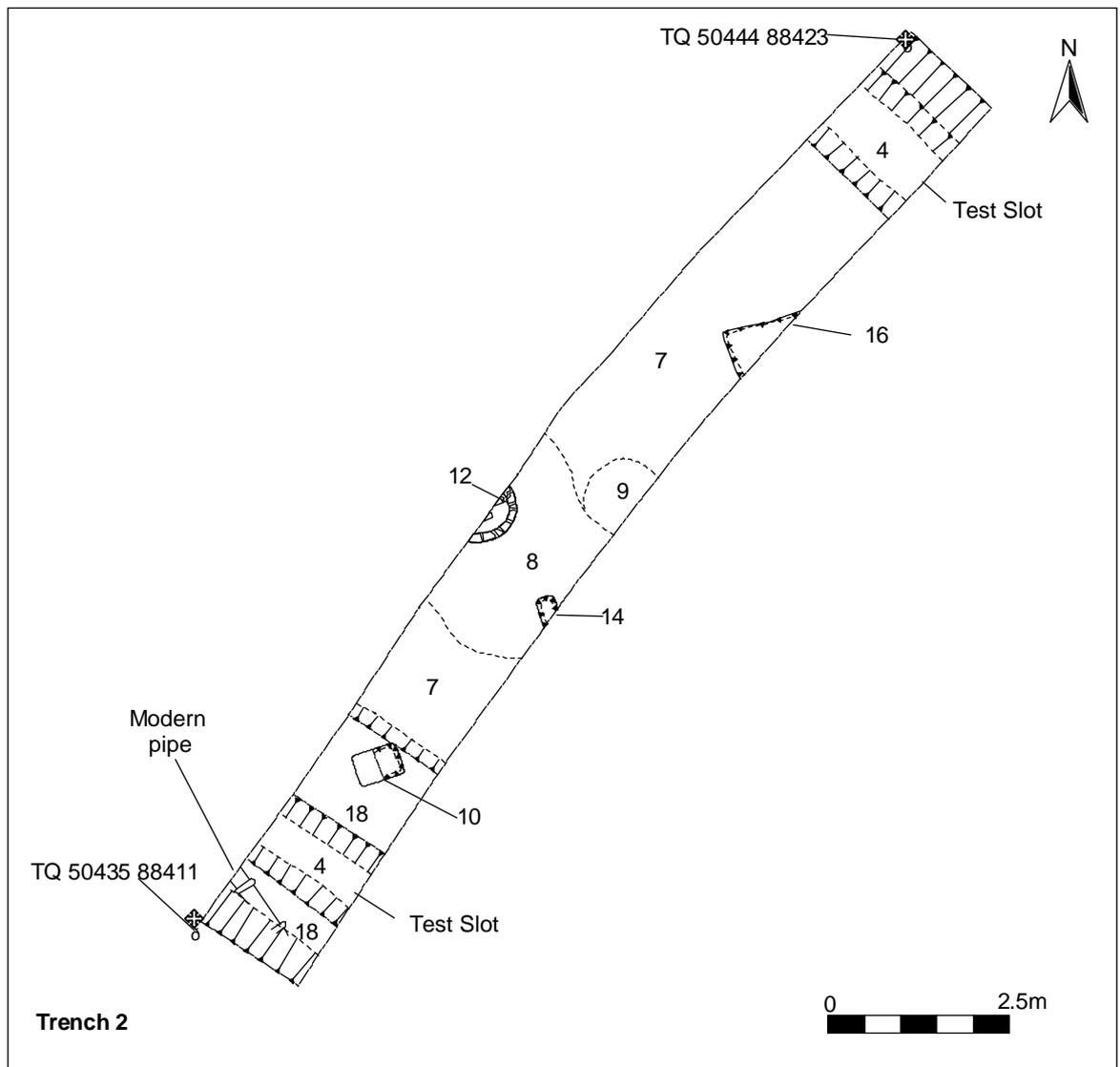
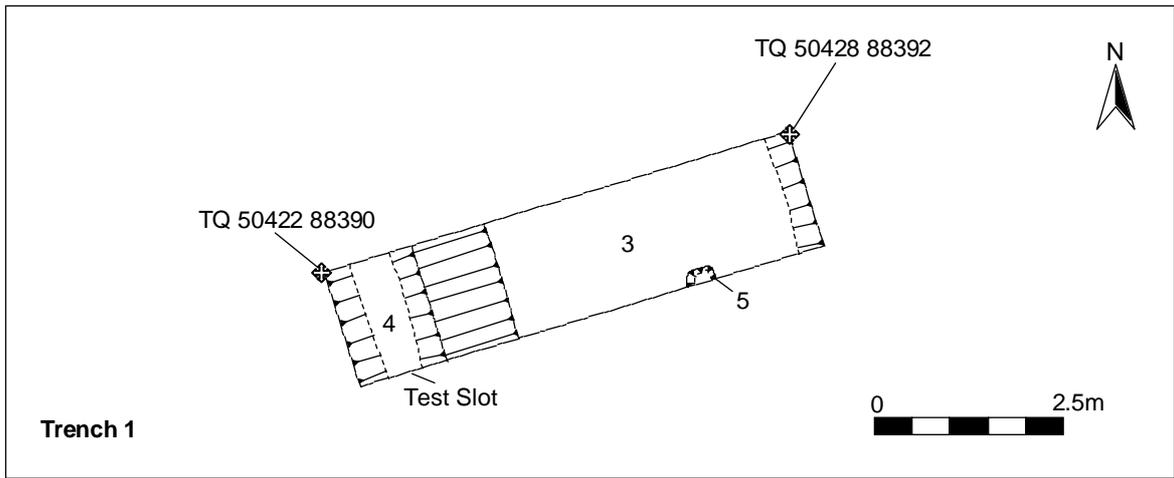


Fig.2. Plan of Excavated Features

5.3.9 The area of Trench 2 was covered by at least 0.60m of disturbed ground and modern build-up. This contained frequent garden wall foundations and sewer pipes. Traces of buried topsoil were identified at a height of c. 15.3m towards the centre of the trench, below the demolition rubble. This is like represent the original ground surface of the gardens to the rear of the demolished terrace, now buried at a depth of c. 0.25m below modern ground surface.

6 FINDS REPORT

6.1 Small groups of finds were recovered from a total of four contexts. These were recorded by count and weight (in grams) by context; full details are provided below (Appendix 2).

6.2 All of the finds are of 19th-century date or later, and comprise roof tile fragments, clay pipes and utilitarian pottery. Of interest is a piece of roof tile from the fill of well 12 which has a pair of dog footprints impressed on the upper surface. These were presumably made while newly-made tiles were laid out to dry before firing. The clay pipe bowl from the fill of pit 16 has the maker's initials (P and B) embossed on either side of the spur.

6.3 The more undiagnostic finds have been discarded following recording and the remainder could be discarded at the archiving stage, although the fragment with the dog prints is unusual on tiles of this late date.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 No significant archaeological remains were present with the area of either trench.

7.2 There was no evidence that the site had been significantly truncated. The difference in the type and height of the undisturbed natural deposits in each trench is likely to reflect the dynamic nature of the fluvial environment in which they were deposited.

7.3 The remains identified are associated with activity typically found in 19th- and 20th-century back gardens. The evidence indicates that there has been continuous occupation of the site for the last 200 years, which has seen at least two phases of development.

7.4 There was no evidence of pre-medieval field boundaries or medieval occupation alongside London Road. The lack of archaeological activity would suggest that the development area is likely to have been used as agricultural land up until the 19th-century.

- 7.5 Although traces of the original buildings may survive within the footprint of the new build at the front of the plot, the lack of earlier post-medieval rubbish pits and residual finds suggest an early 19th-century origin. It is also likely that any early remains, if ever present, will have been disturbed by the construction of the late Victorian terrace.

8 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

- 8.1 The results of this evaluation suggest that the front of the plot of 152 – 162 London Road is not likely to contain any archaeological deposits earlier than 19th-century in date. Evidence of the earliest evident phase of occupation of the site is clearly shown on the 1st edition OS map of 1881. The proposed buildings are, therefore, unlikely to have any impact on the archaeological resource of the area.
- 8.2 The lack of medieval or early post-medieval remains suggests agricultural land-use until the late post-medieval period.
- 8.4 The absence of Roman remains confirms that the site is likely to be at some distance from the Roman road and any roadside activity associated with it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was commissioned by Destinyhomes Ltd. The fieldwork was carried out by Ben Barker and Chris Down of ECC FAU. The finds were processed by Phil McMichael and analysed by Joyce Compton. Digital illustrations were by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed by Patrick Allen of ECC FAU. Robert Whytehead of EH GLAAS monitored the excavation. Thanks are due to Les and Tony Budge and the groundworkers of Destinyhomes Ltd for their co-operation and assistance.

APPENDIX 1: FIELDWORK DATA

Context	Fill of	Trench	Category	Details	Period
01	-	1/2	Layer	Topsoil. 0.2m thick. Dark greyish-brown sandy silt containing frequent stones and brick rubble	Modern
02	-	1	Layer	Subsoil. 0.1m thick. Mid yellowish-brown sandy silt. Disturbed by roots.	Modern
03	-	1	Layer	Natural. 0.45m thick. Light yellowish-brown silty sand.	-
04	-	1	Layer	Natural. Small-medium sub-rounded gravel in a yellowish-brown sandy matrix.	-
05	-	1	Post-hole	Regular square cut with steep sides. 0.2m deep. Cuts 02.	Modern
06	5	1	Fill	Dark greyish-brown silty sand. Redeposited topsoil. No finds.	Modern
07	-	2	Layer	Natural. Mid greyish-brown sandy silt with orange mottles. Evidence of iron-panning.	-
08	-	2	Layer	Natural. Orangish-grey sandy silt with orange mottles. Natural deposit around well 12 affected by different groundwater conditions.	Modern
09	-	2	Layer	Dark grey with orange mottles, evidence of root disturbance. Natural and subsoil mix.	Modern
10	-	2	Post-hole	Regular square cut with vertical sides. 0.25m deep. Cuts 18. No finds.	Modern
11	10	2	Fill	Mid yellowish-brown silty sandy and gravel. Very similar to 04, possibly redeposited? No finds.	Modern
12	-	2	Well	Brick-lined well >0.5m deep. Constructed from un-frogged, roughly halved, soft red bricks 110mm x 60mm x ?. Evidence of brick capping, truncated by modern disturbance.	Early C19th
13	12	2	Fill	Mixed backfill of 13. Dark brownish-grey sandy silt including modern brick fragments, pottery and clay pipe stems. Not fully excavated.	Modern
14	-	2	Post-hole	Regular square cut with concave sides and base. 0.25m deep. Cuts 08.	Modern
15	14	2	Fill	Mid greyish-brown sandy silt including 1 fragment of peg-hole tile.	
16	-	2	Pit	Regular square cut pit with vertical sides. >0.6m deep. Cuts 07.	Modern
17	16	2	Fill	Dark- greyish-brown sandy silt, basal fill of 16, below layers of disturbed chalky mortar-like material and redeposited topsoil. Frequent coke and coal fragments, plus modern china. Not fully excavated.	Modern
18	-	2	Layer	Subsoil. Mid-brownish-grey sandy silt. 0.2m thick. Root disturbance evident.	Modern

APPENDIX 2: FINDS DATA

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
13	12	1 1	4 102	Clay pipe stem (Discarded) Roof tile fragment with dog footprints	Post med. Post med.
15	14	6 1	28 86	Brick fragments, abraded (Discarded) Roof tile fragment with one peg hole	Post med. Post med.
17	16	5 2	16 70	Clay pipe bowl with letters P B on either side of the spur; clay pipe stems (these discarded) Pottery; bowl rim, yellow-glazed kitchen earthenware; plate rim, blue transfer-printed white earthenware	Early Victorian Modern
18	Layer	1	22	Pottery; rim sherd, large vessel, PMRE	Post med.

APPENDIX 3: ARCHIVE INDEX

Index to the Archive

File containing:

1. Introduction

1.1 Specification for Evaluation

2. Research Archive

2.1 Evaluation Report

2.2 Analytical Reports

2.2.1 Finds Report

3. Site Archive

3.1 Context Index

3.2 Context Record Register

3.3 Original Context Records 1 to 18.

3.4 Drawing Registers

3.4.1 Plans Register

3.4.2 Sections Register

3.5 Levels Register

3.6 Photographic Register

3.7 1 sets of 35mm colour slides and B&W Prints

3.8 Miscellaneous maps and plans

Not in Files:

Site Drawings (1 sheet)

APPENDIX 4: GLSMR SUMMARY

GLSMR/RCHME NMR ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FORM

1. TYPE OF RECORDING

Evaluation by trial trench

2. LOCATION

Borough Havering NGR TQ 50435 88411

Site Address 152 -162 London Road, Romford, London Borough of Havering.

Site Name 152 -162 London Road, Romford

Site Code LFO04

3. ORGANISATION

Name of archaeological unit/ company/ society: Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit

Address Fairfield Court
Fairfield Road
Braintree
Essex
CM7 3YQ

Site Director Ben Barker

Funded by Destinyhomes Ltd

4. DURATION

Site Started 7/10/04 Finished 8/10/04

Work previously notified Yes

Will Continue No

5. PERIODS REPRESENTED

Modern

6. PERIOD SUMMARIES

Modern post-holes, and a 19th-century refuse pit and well.

7. NATURAL

Type Silty Sand

Height above O.D. 14.5m

8. LOCATION OF ARCHIVE

Please indicate those categories still in your possession:

Notes Plans Manuscripts

All of the records will be deposited in the following museum: Museum of London

Year of transfer 2004

Location of copies

Security copy made

9. LOCATION OF FINDS

In your possession Nil

All of the finds will be deposited in the following museum: Museum of London:

Year of transfer Not Applicable

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barker, B. 2004 *152 -162 London Road, Romford, London Borough of Havering. Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching. ECC Field Archaeology Unit Report 1415*