

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

WOODFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL  
WOODFORD GREEN  
LONDON BOROUGH OF REDBRIDGE

EVALUATION

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Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited			K1176
	Name & Title	Signature	Date
Text Prepared by:	Neil Hawkins		May 2006
Graphics Prepared by:	Adrian Nash		May 2006
Graphics Checked by:	Josephine Brown	<i>pp [Signature]</i>	May 2006
Project Manager Sign-off:	Chris Mayo	<i>[Signature]</i>	May 2006

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Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd  
Unit 54  
Brockley Cross Business Centre  
96 Endwell Road  
London  
SE4 2PD

**An Archaeological Evaluation at Woodford County High School,  
Woodford Green, London Borough of Redbridge, IG8**

**Site Code: WOB 06**

**Central National Grid Reference: TQ 3980 9170**

**Written and Researched by Neil Hawkins  
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, May 2006**

**Project Manager: Chris Mayo**

**Commissioning Client: CgMs Consulting**

**Contractor:  
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited  
Unit 54  
Brockley Cross Business Centre  
96 Endwell Road  
Brockley  
London  
SE4 2PD**

**Tel: 020 7732 3925**

**Fax: 020 7733 7896**

**Email: [cmayo@pre-construct.com](mailto:cmayo@pre-construct.com)**

**Website: [www.pre-construct.com](http://www.pre-construct.com)**

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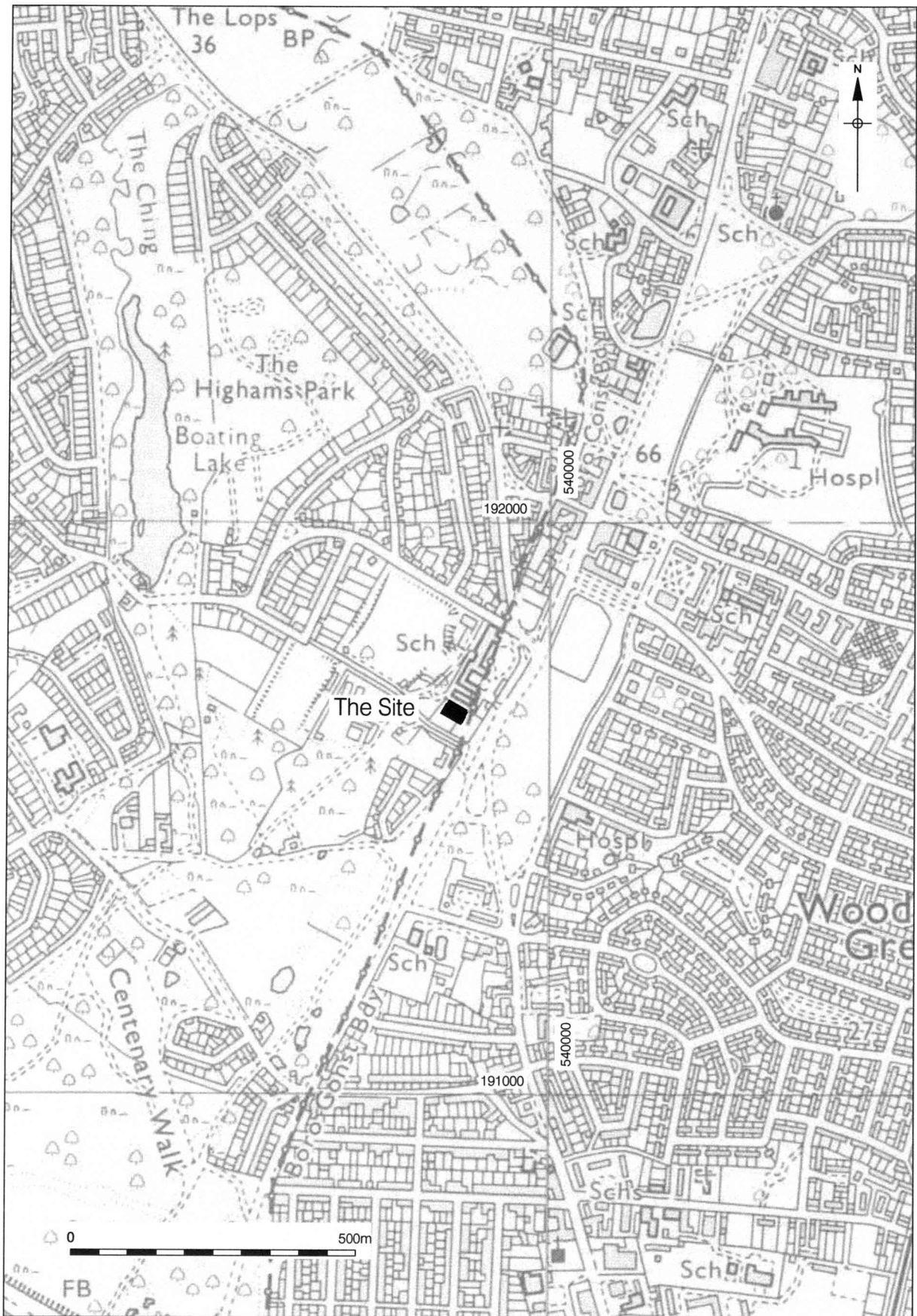
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## **1 ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. at Woodford County High School, Woodford Green, London Borough of Redbridge, IG8. The evaluation was conducted between 8th and 10th May 2006, in advance of the redevelopment of the site. The work was commissioned by Lorraine Darton of CgMs Consulting.
- 1.2 The evaluation consisted of three trial trenches over the area of tennis courts, aimed at coverage of the site, which revealed natural London Clay sealed by modern made ground and tarmac.

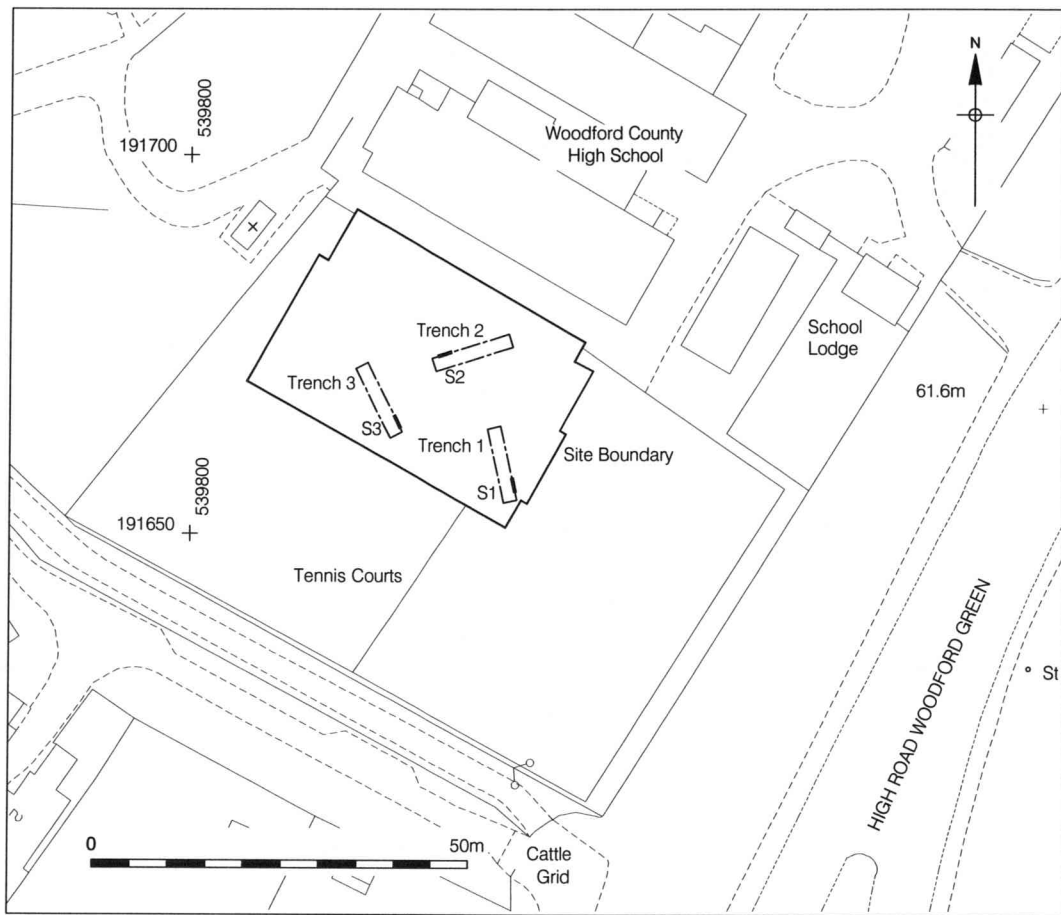
## **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd at Woodford County High School, Woodford Green, London Borough of Redbridge, IG8 (location map, Fig. 1). The evaluation was commissioned by CgMs Consulting in advance of the redevelopment of the site.
- 2.2 The evaluation covers an area of land centred on National Grid Reference TQ 3980 9170. The land was previously used as tennis courts. The site is bounded to the east by a pathway parallel to Woodford New Road, to the north by school buildings, to the west by school gardens and to the south by a residential driveway. The archaeological evaluation involved the excavation and recording of three trial trenches, aimed at comprehensive coverage of the site (see trench location map, Fig. 2).
- 2.3 The evaluation was conducted between 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> May 2006 and followed a written specification prepared by Lorraine Darton of CgMs Consulting. The fieldwork was supervised by the author, Neil Hawkins, under the project management of Chris Mayo. The site was monitored by David Divers of English Heritage.
- 2.4 The completed archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records and artefacts will be deposited at LAARC.
- 2.5 The site was allocated the site code WOB 06.



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey 1:25 000 © Crown Copyright 1985

Figure 1  
Site Location  
1:10 000



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Figure 2  
Trench Location  
1:1000

### 3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

#### 3.1 ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF REDBRIDGE AND THE UDP

3.1.1 In November 1990 the Department of the Environment issued Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) "Archaeology and Planning", providing guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains.

3.1.2 In considering any planning application for development, the local planning authority will be guided by the policy framework set by government guidance, in this instance PPG16, by current Development Plan policy and by other material considerations.

3.2 The London Borough of Redbridge fully recognises the importance of the buried heritage for which they are the custodians. It has made strong commitments to its archaeological heritage in its Unitary Development Plan, and the site lies within an Archaeological Priority Zone as defined by the Borough's Unitary Development Plan, adopted in 1994, which contains the following policies:

**"POLICY SC16: ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRIORITY ZONES**

**Within the Archaeological Priority Zone as shown on the proposals maps, applications for development involving significant groundwork should be accompanied by an archaeological evaluation.**

**POLICY KR31: ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES**

**The Council will encourage the protection, conservation and enhancement of the archaeological heritage of the borough**

**POLICY KR32: ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES**

**The Council will:**

- 1. Refuse permission for development which damages the site or setting of a nationally important archaeological site.**
- 2. Seek the permanent preservation in situ of important archaeological remains.**
- 3. Ensure that other remains or sites of archaeological significance are the subject of archaeological investigation and excavation, with the recording and publication of results.**
- 4. Encourage co-operation between landowners, developers and archaeological organisations to protect the archaeological heritage of the Borough"**

3.3 In order to clarify the nature of the archaeological potential of the site and identify measures that would lead to the satisfactory accommodation of any archaeological constraints and the discharge of any archaeological planning conditions that might be attached to any planning consents, discussions were held between CgMs Consulting, on behalf of the developers, and officers of the Greater London Archaeological Service, acting on behalf of the London Borough of Redbridge.



## 4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 The British Geological Survey Sheet 257 (Romford 1996) shows that the underlying geology of the study site consists of London Clay overlain by the drift glacial gravel deposits<sup>1</sup>.
- 4.2 The topography of the site slopes from south-east to north-west, with an average height of 62m OD. The site was levelled during the construction of the tennis courts<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Darton, 2006

<sup>2</sup> ibid

## 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The site is considered to have a generally low archaeological potential for all periods pre-dating the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods<sup>3</sup>.
- 5.2 The area of Woodford has its origins during the Saxon period as a settlement in the Forest of Essex. This was where a Saxon road from London crossed a ford over the River Roding. From here tracks led to other settlements in the area, Woodford Row and Woodford Church End. During the Saxon period, and up until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Abbott of Waltham controlled the parish, with the first reference to a church occurring in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. In 1540 Waltham Abbey was dissolved and the lands passed to laymen<sup>4</sup>. Woodford Green existed as a small, rural medieval ribbon settlement along the modern Woodford Green High Road. An archaeological watching brief on Broomhill Road (WOBR 91), to the east of the site, encountered foundation trenches, a posthole and pit dated to the late medieval / early post-medieval. An archaeological excavation at Harts Hospital, The Green, north-east of the site, encountered three medieval tenements and the country estate of well-to-do merchants dating from the 16th to 19th centuries<sup>5</sup>.
- 5.3 From the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards wealthy merchants, bankers and other professional people from London began building estates for themselves in the area of Woodford and Woodford Green. These wealthy elite of London built large country houses within the rural setting whilst being in close proximity to their businesses and employment in London. Famous and influential people occupied these houses throughout their history; Harts on Woodford Green was occupied by Richard Warner, compiler of *Plantae Woodfordienses* in 1771 and cultivator of the first gardenia to flower in England. The Rookery was built for Michael Godfrey, brother of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey and father of Michael Godfrey who was one of the founders of the Bank of England of which he became the first Deputy Governor in 1695<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Darton, 2006

<sup>4</sup> Weinreb & Hibbert, 1993

<sup>5</sup> [www.museumoflondon.org.uk/laarc/new/quickresults.asp](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/laarc/new/quickresults.asp)

<sup>6</sup> Weinreb & Hibbert, 1993

- 5.4 The area of the site lies within the grounds of one of these post-medieval mansion houses, Highams Hall, built in 1768, which is now Woodford County High School. Highams Hall originally had extensive grounds, designed by Humphrey Repton, thought by many to be the successor to Capability Brown. The building opened as Woodford County High School in 1919 and continues to be used as such to this day.
- 5.5 The village life of the area changed with the coming of the railway to Loughton in 1856. Various new roads and house developments were erected, slicing into the countryside and private estates. However, remnants of Epping Forest and other areas of green space have allowed Woodford and Woodford Green to keep its leafy, semi-rural character<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> ibid

## 6 METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The excavation of three trenches was outlined in the specification<sup>8</sup>. The fieldwork was designed to assess the presence or absence of significant archaeological remains, which may require further investigation.
- 6.2 All trenches were machine excavated with a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-bladed ditching bucket, under the supervision of an archaeologist. The maximum dimensions of the trenches are shown in Table 1. Once archaeologically sensitive deposits or features were encountered, machining was stopped to allow archaeologists to clean with hand tools as necessary and record any remains.

Trench Number	Max Dimensions (m)	Max height (m OD)
1	10.00m x 1.80m	62.25
2	10.00m x 1.80m	62.22
3	10.00m x 1.80m	62.04

**Table 1: Trench Dimensions**

- 6.3 Recording was undertaken using the single context planning method. All features and deposits observed were planned and recorded onto *pro forma* context record sheets. Contexts were numbered sequentially and are shown in this report within square brackets. Plans and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate. A general photographic survey of the site and working conditions was taken.
- 6.4 A temporary benchmark, 62.13m OD, was traversed onto the site from the Ordnance Survey Benchmark of 64.46m OD, located on the corner of Woodford County High School's exterior wall where Chingford Lane meets Charter Road.

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<sup>8</sup> Darton, 2006

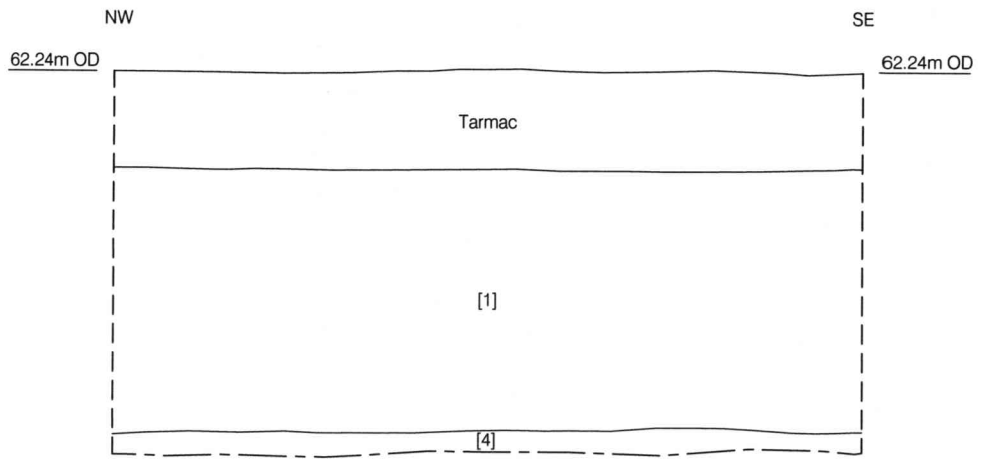
## **7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE**

### **7.1 Phase 1 – Natural London Clay**

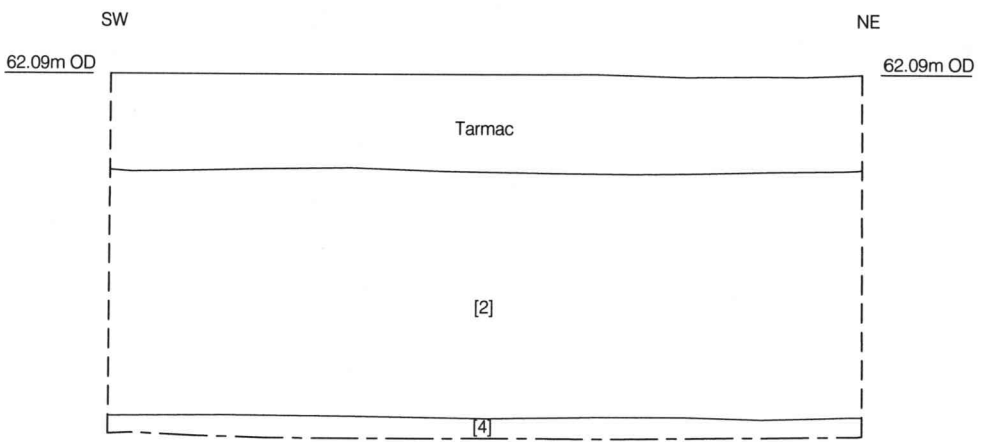
7.1.1 The earliest deposit encountered throughout Trenches 1-3 was the natural London Clay, [4]. In Trench 1 it was encountered at 61.29m OD, Trench 2 at 61.19m OD and Trench at 61.06m OD.

### **7.2 Phase 2 – 20<sup>th</sup> Century Made Ground & Tarmac**

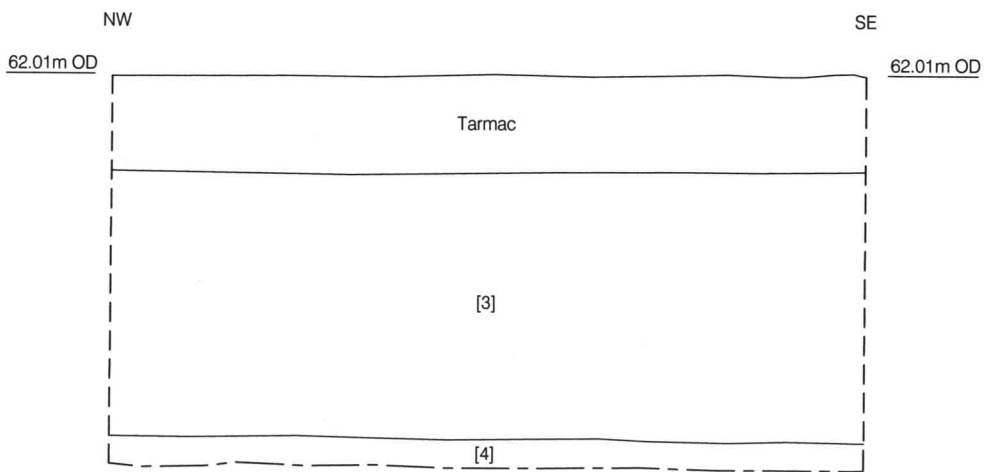
7.2.1 Overlying the London Clay in Trenches 1-3 was a layer of 20<sup>th</sup> Century made ground sealed by tarmac, [1], [2] and [3] respectively. In Trench 1 made ground layer [1] sealed the London Clay, which was overlain by tarmac. These were encountered at a highest level of 62.25m OD and had an overall thickness of 0.95m. In Trench 2 made ground layer [2] sealed the London Clay, which was overlain by tarmac. These were encountered at a highest level of 62.22m OD and had an overall thickness of 0.90m. In Trench 3 made ground layer [3] sealed the London Clay, which was overlain by tarmac. These were encountered at a highest level of 62.04m OD and had an overall thickness of 0.95m.



Section 1  
Trench 1  
South-west Facing



Section 2  
Trench 2  
South-east Facing



Section 3  
Trench 3  
South-west Facing



Figure 3  
Sample Sections  
1:20

## **8 TRENCH SUMMARY**

### **8.1 TRENCH 1**

8.1.1 Trench 1 revealed natural London Clay overlain by 20<sup>th</sup> century made ground, sealed by tarmac.

### **8.2 TRENCH 2**

8.2.1 Trench 2 revealed natural London Clay overlain by 20<sup>th</sup> century made ground, sealed by tarmac.

### **8.3 TRENCH 3**

8.3.1 Trench 3 revealed natural London Clay overlain by 20<sup>th</sup> century made ground, sealed by tarmac.

## 9 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1.1 The evaluation revealed natural deposits in all trenches consistent with the underlying London Clay. No evidence for human activity before the 20<sup>th</sup> century was encountered within any of the evaluation trenches.
- 9.1.2 By 1863 the area of the site lay within ornamental gardens located to the south of Higham Hall. It had therefore been assumed that garden soil deposits associated with this garden would be encountered. However, only 20<sup>th</sup> century made ground deposits were revealed; these probably relate to the construction of the tennis courts that existed by 1939. This lack of any deposit earlier than the 20<sup>th</sup> century implies that the area may have been stripped or reduced and therefore any archaeological deposits will have been truncated. This correlates with geotechnical boreholes and window samples across the site that encountered made ground up to 1.8m deep testifying to the truncation of any possible archaeological deposits across the site.



## 10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 10.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Lorraine Darton of CgMs Consulting for commissioning the work.
- 10.2 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would also like to thank David Divers of English Heritage for monitoring the work.
- 10.3 The author would also like to thank the field staff Amelia Fairman, Adrian Nash for the illustrations, Lisa Lonsdale for the logistics and Chris Mayo for his project management and editing.

## 11 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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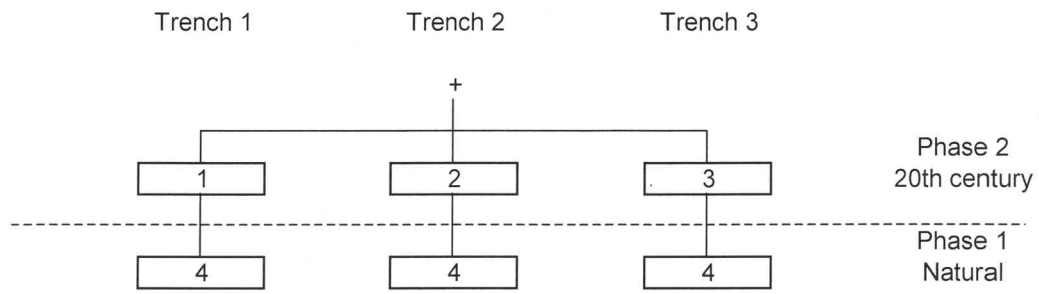
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[www.museumoflondon.org.uk/laarc/new/quickresults.asp](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/laarc/new/quickresults.asp)

## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context No.	Type	Trench	Phase	Description
1	Layer	1	2	20 <sup>th</sup> Century Made Ground
2	Layer	2	2	20 <sup>th</sup> Century Made Ground
3	Layer	3	2	20 <sup>th</sup> Century Made Ground
4	Layer	All	1	Natural London Clay

## APPENDIX 2: SITE MATRIX



## APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

**OASIS ID: preconst1-15086**

### Project details

Project name An Archaeological Evaluation at Woodford County High School, Woodford Green, London Borough of Redbridge, IG8

Short description of the project An Archaeological Evaluation at Woodford County High School, Woodford Green, London Borough of Redbridge, IG8. Three evaluation trenches encountered natural London Clay overlain by 20th century made ground, sealed by tarmac. Site appears to have levelled during the construction of tennis courts in the early 20th century.

Project dates Start: 08-05-2006 End: 10-05-2006

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes WOB 06 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Community Service 2 - Leisure and recreational buildings

Methods & techniques 'Sample Trenches'

Development type Large/ medium scale extensions to existing structures (e.g. church, school, hospitals, law courts, etc.)

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Position in the planning process Not known / Not recorded

#### Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON REDBRIDGE WOODFORD Woodford County High School, Woodford Green, London Borough of Redbridge

Postcode IG8

Study area 1750.00 Square metres

National grid reference TQ 3980 9170 Point

Height OD Min: 61.06m Max: 61.29m

#### Project creators

Name of Organisation Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Project brief originator CgMs Consulting

Project design originator Lorraine Darton

Project director/manager Chris Mayo

Project supervisor Neil Hawkins

#### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Archive recipient Museum of Antiquities, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Digital Media available 'Survey', 'Text'

Paper Archive recipient LAARC

Paper Media available 'Context sheet', 'Drawing', 'Map', 'Matrices', 'Photograph', 'Plan', 'Report', 'Section', 'Survey'

#### Project bibliography 1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type

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