

**ABBAY ROAD DEPOT, THE  
SHAFTESBURYS, BARKING  
IG11 7JA: A REPORT ON  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL PITS**



**REPORT NO: R11937**

**JANUARY 2015**



**PRE-CONSTRUCT  
ARCHAEOLOGY**

**Abbey Road Depot, The Shaftesburys, Barking IG11 7JA: A Report on Archaeological  
Trial Pits**

**Local Planning Authority: London Borough of Barking and Dagenham**

**Central National Grid Reference: TQ 4425 8346**

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**Commissioning Client: Neilcott Construction Ltd.**

**PCA Report Number: R11937**

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DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

Site Name  
**Abbey Road Depot, The Shaftesburys, Barking IG11  
7JA**

Type of project  
Archaeological Trial Pits

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited Project Code			K3807
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## **1 ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 This report details the results of archaeological trial pits on land at the Abbey Road Depot, The Shaftesburys, Barking, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham IG11 7JA. The work was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, and was commissioned by Neilcott Construction Ltd.
- 1.2 Three trial pits were excavated up to 1.50m below current ground level. In two of the trial pits natural deposits were encountered between 3.05m OD and 3.00m OD. The natural deposits were formed of firm silty sandy clay (brickearth type deposit) underlain by a looser sandy clay. The natural topography was flat in the area of the study site.
- 1.3 In TP02, two layers of backfill covered a concrete floor slab at a depth of 1.50m below current ground level. This appeared to be industrial rather than domestic in origin, due to the facts of its size and that it was made of concrete rather than brick. This feature may be a basement relating to an area of industrial units shown on an Ordnance Survey map.
- 1.4 The trial pits indicate that the site lies on a layer of sandy clay alluvium above which the brickearth cap survives, although it is truncated in places. In two of the trial pits a buried soil horizon, possibly of medieval date, survives. No evidence for the Victorian terraces previously present on the site was encountered.

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 Three archaeological trial pits were excavated by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited on land at The Shaftesburys, Barking, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham IG11 7JA (Figures 1 and 2). The study site is bounded by to the north-west, north, east and south by buildings of the Shaftesbury estate. To the west it is bounded by a private depot/storage yard. The site falls within the historic parish of Barking and lay within the county of Essex prior to being absorbed into the administration of the Greater London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. The site covers an area of c. 0.4 hectares and is centred at NGR TQ 4456 8369.
- 2.2 The study site is located in an Area of Archaeological Significance; accordingly, in line with policy BP3 (Archaeology) of the Borough wide Development Policies, developers should take into account the archaeological significance of sites and take appropriate measures to safeguard that interest (London Borough of Barking and Dagenham 2009).
- 2.3 The site is to the east of Abbey Road, Barking, an area of known archaeological interest. The site is located to the south of the abbey, on the lower ground towards the River Roding. Previous work by Pre-Construct Archaeology to the west of Abbey Road identified a ditch of Roman/medieval date.
- 2.4 The trial pits were located in areas away from obvious modern disturbance and in positions to avoid live services. The pits were also located outside the basement of the car park previously located on the site.
- 2.5 The archaeological works were carried out on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014 and were commissioned by Neilcott Construction Ltd.
- 2.6 The archaeological trial pits were supervised by Phil Frickers and the project was managed by Helen Hawkins, both of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited.
- 2.7 The completed archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records and artefacts will be deposited with the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC).

### **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 The watching brief aimed to assess the potential for archaeological survival on the site, and to identify areas where truncation of the natural or archaeological deposits had taken place.

#### **4 GEOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

- 4.1 The British Geological Survey online shows the drift geology to be River Terrace sand and gravel (Taplow Gravel) formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. These gravels overlie at depth the London Clay, a formation laid down 34 to 56 million years ago during the Palaeogene Period. The site lies to the southwest of an area of higher ground where Ilford silt (a brickearth type deposit of clay and silt) deposits are mapped. The underlying drift geology of the study site is alluvium formed of clay, silt and peaty sand.
- 4.2 The site lies c 150m to the east of the River Roding and c 2.5 km to the north of the confluence of the River Roding and River Thames.
- 4.3 Modern ground level is at between 3.90m OD and 3.75m OD in the area of the study site. A brickearth type deposit was encountered within the site at between 3.05m OD and 3.00m OD.



## **5 METHODOLOGY**

- 5.1 The three trial pits were excavated by a 360° rubber tracked 8 ton digger. The pits measured c. 1.70m x 1.80m square and were between c. 1.20m and 1.50m deep. All locations were checked with a CAT scanner before excavation. Excavation was with a toothless bucket, excavating in 100mm spits. The spoil was heaped a safe distance from the edge of the trial pit. The trial pits were backfilled immediately after recording, with the up-cast. The backfill was compressed by the machine and the surface was left flat and level.
- 5.2 The machine excavation was monitored by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist. Sketch sections were drawn and measured, descriptions of ground noted and photographs taken. OD heights were taken for modern ground level, base of the pit and archaeological horizons.
- 5.3 All relevant health and safety legislation, CDM and COSHH regulations and codes of practice were respected.
- 5.4 The trial pit locations were readjusted to avoid services. TP02 was part excavated and then moved because of obstructions 1.70m to the west. TP03 was part excavated and then moved 0.85m to the west to avoid a modern concrete slab that had been encountered (Figure 2).

## 6 RESULTS

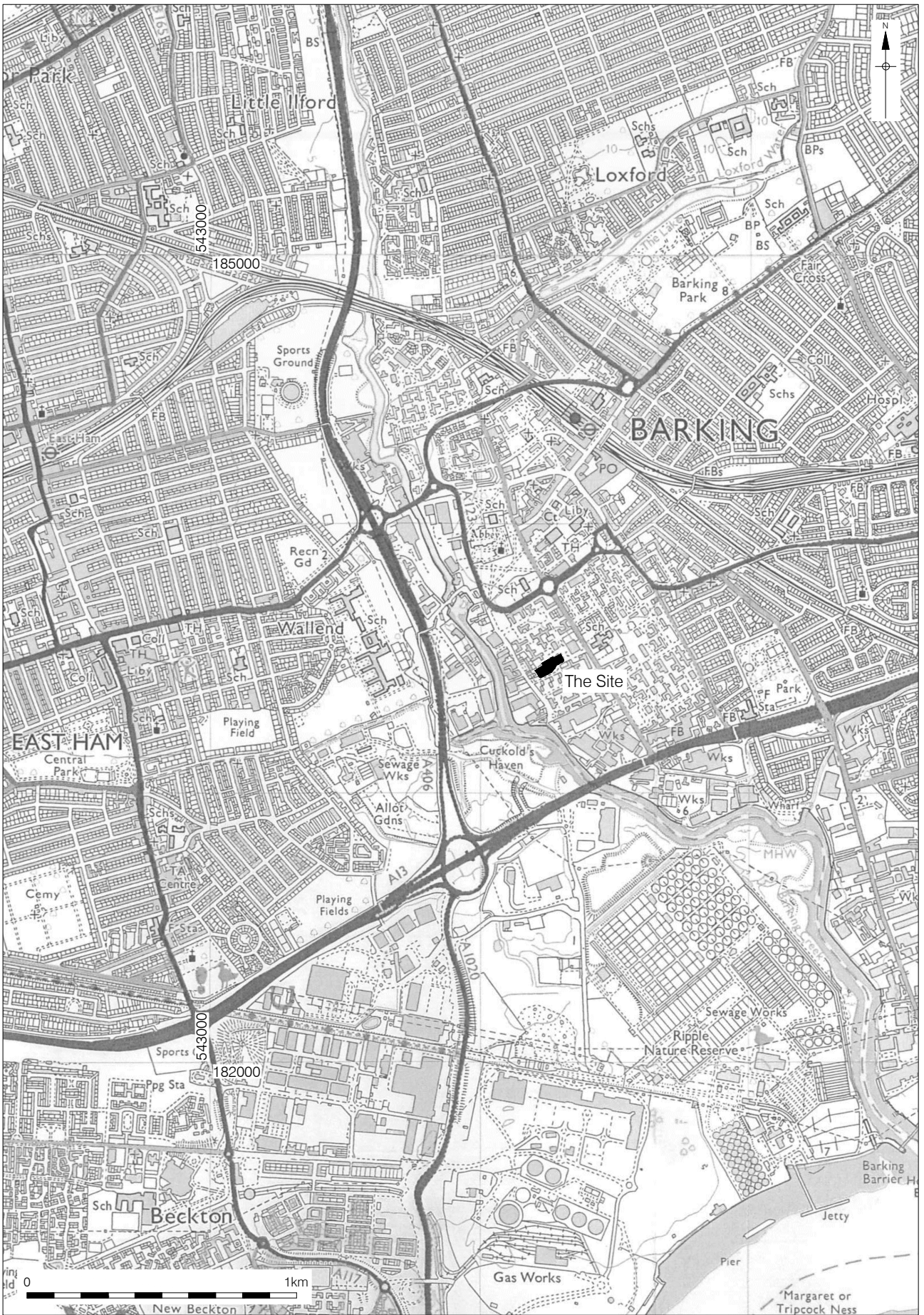
- 6.1 TP01 measured 1.80m E-W by 1.60m N-S and was excavated to a depth of 1.20m below current ground level (bgl). Below the turf and topsoil were a make-up layer [1] and a layer [2] relating to the landscaping of the 1960s estate. This sealed a layer [3] of firm silty clay with charcoal and brick flecks interpreted as a buried soil horizon, possibly medieval in date based on its nature and position in the sequence, and encountered at a level of 3.15m OD. Below this was a firm silty sandy clay [4] with charcoal flecks (a brickearth type deposit). This was interpreted as a natural layer with a top height of 3.05m OD, the charcoal taken down by rooting. Below layer [4] was a layer [5] of looser sandy clay natural with a height of 2.80m.
- 6.2 TP02 measured 3.40m E-W by 1.90m N-S and was excavated to a depth of 1.50m bgl. First an area to the east was excavated but large concrete fragments and an iron girder threatened to undermine the sections exposed. Therefore a similar sized pit (1.70m E-W) was excavated to the west and the previous pit backfilled. Here, below the turf and topsoil was a thick layer [6] of landscaping material and below this a fill of redeposited sandy clay natural [7] with inclusions of concrete, metal rods and tarmac. Underlying these layers, at a depth of 1.50m bgl (2.40m OD) was a concrete slab [8]. This was interpreted as a basement, probably of an industrial building, because of its size and the construction in concrete rather than brick. At this level excavation ceased. In this pit all potential archaeological deposits had been truncated.
- 6.3 TP03 measured 2.45m E-W by 1.75m N-S and was excavated to a depth of 1.20m bgl. During excavation an area of concrete slab was uncovered at a depth of c 0.50m bgl. Therefore the pit was moved 0.85m to the west and excavation continued. Below the turf and topsoil was a layer of landscaping material [9] similar to that observed in the first two trial pits. This sealed a layer of compacted clinker [10] probably associated with the Council Depot present at that time to the north of the excavation. The clinker layer then covered a fill overflowing from a vertical cut feature [13] running north-south across the trench; also present within this cut was a less compacted fill [12]. The cut feature was interpreted as a ground investigation trench excavated by machine at the time of the construction of the Council Depot. Also present here was a small modern pit [15] in the south east corner of the trench sealed by the overflow [11] from cut [13].
- 6.4 Cut by the modern features was a buried soil horizon [3] similar to that found in TP01. This was deeper at 150mm than the deposit found in TP01. It had a level of 3.20m OD and was probably medieval in date, based on its nature and location, although it contained no finds. This sealed a brickearth type deposit [4] equated with that found in TP01 at a level of 3.05m OD. Earliest of all in TP03 was a sandy clay [5] just reached during excavation at a level of 2.70m OD. This was equivalent to the earliest deposit seen in TP01.

**Table 1: Results of Trial Pits with levels (m OD)**

Trial pit	Modern Ground level (m OD)	Level on natural deposits (m OD)	Level on archaeological horizon (m OD)	Maximum depth of pit
TP01	3.75	3.05	3.15	1.20m
TP02	3.90	Not encountered	-	1.50m
TP03	3.85	3.05	3.20	1.20m

## **7 CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 Brickearth type deposits (silty sandy clay) were encountered in both TP01 and TP03 at 3.05m OD.
- 7.2 In both TP01 and TP03 a buried soil horizon, possibly medieval in date, covered the natural deposits. This had been truncated by later activity.
- 7.3 Across the site modern made ground up to 0.75m in depth was encountered in all of the trial pits, but at least some of this was introduced landscaping rather than truncation.
- 7.4 TP02 showed at least some of the area to the north of the site had been basemented. Here industrial activity may have had a larger impact on the underlying archaeology. All archaeological deposits had been removed from TP02.



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 08/01/15 JS

Figure 1  
 Site Location  
 1:20,000 at A4

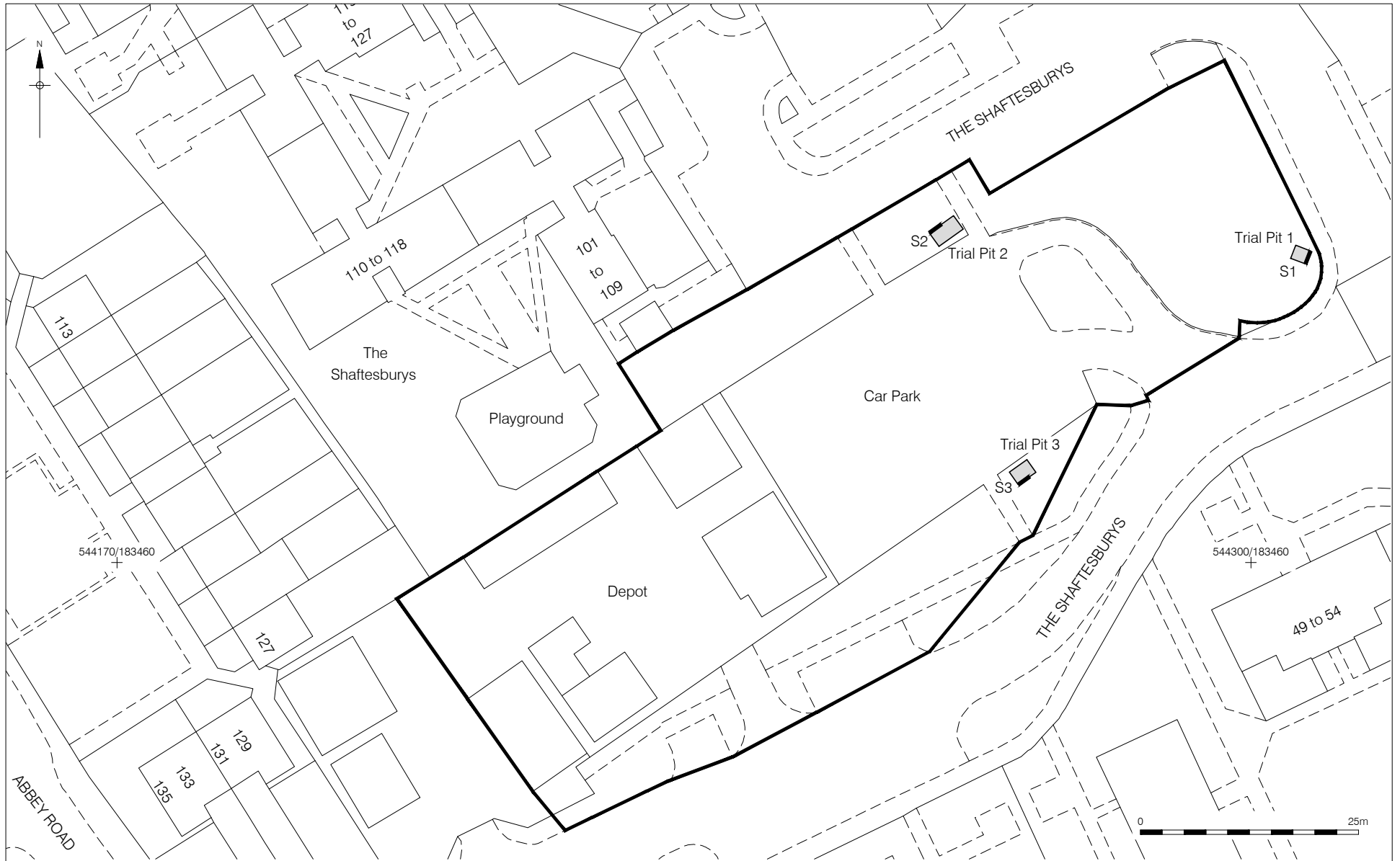
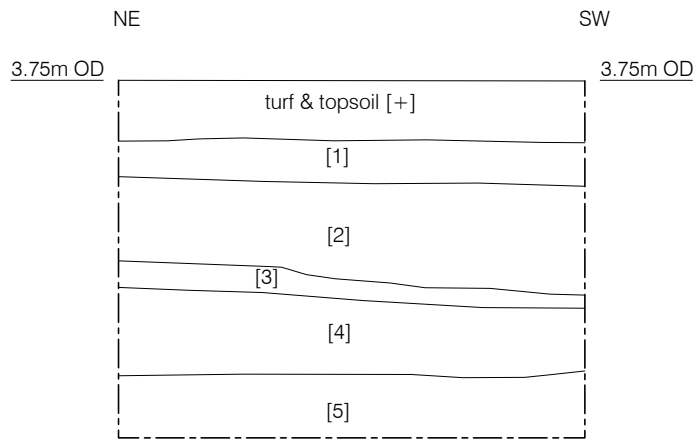
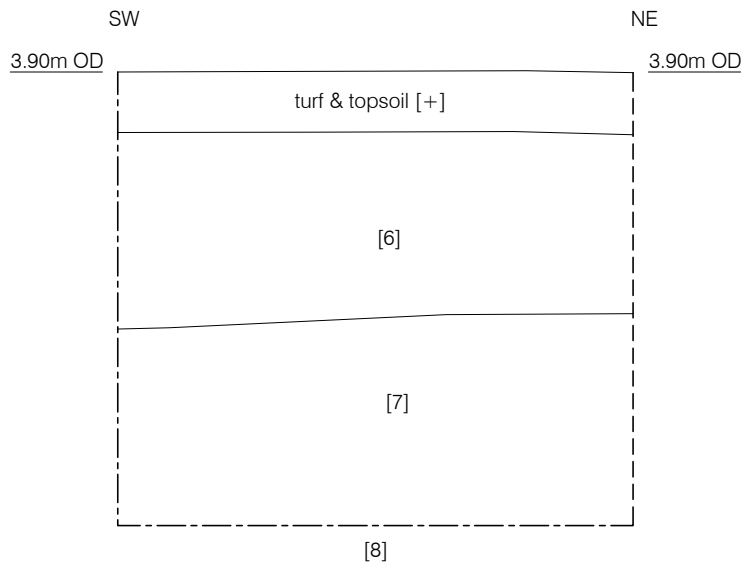


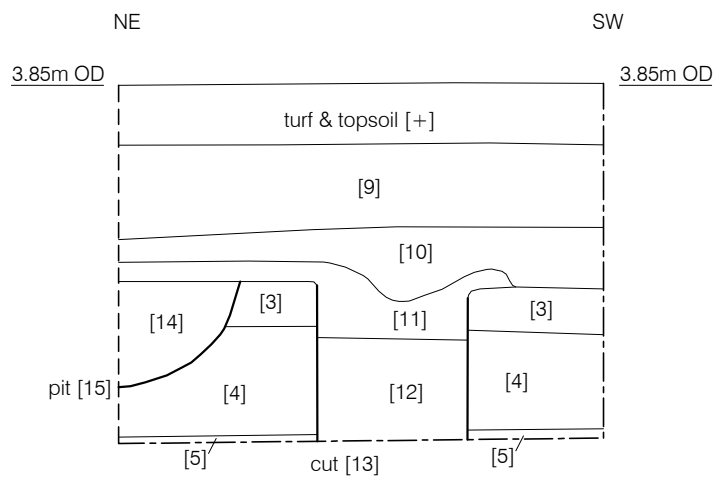
Figure 2  
 Trench Location  
 1:625 at A4



Section 1  
Trial Pit 1  
Northwest Facing



Section 2  
Trial Pit 2  
Southeast Facing



Section 3  
Trial Pit 3  
Northwest Facing

## **8 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

British Geological Survey, online

Keith-Lucas, F, 2003, *An Archaeological Evaluation on Land at St Ann's Gascoigne Estate, barking, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham*, unpublished Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, report.

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, 2009, *Local Development Framework. Planning for the future of Barking Town Centre*.

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to express their thanks to Jason Bransfield for commissioning this archaeological investigation on behalf of Neilcott Construction Ltd.
- 9.2 The author would like to Helen Hawkins for her project management and editing of this report. Thanks to Hayley Baxter for the illustrations. Thanks are also extended to John Rookyard of Neilcott Construction for his assistance on site.



## APPENDIX 1: OASIS REPORT

OASIS ID: preconst1-198676

### Project details

Project name Abbey Road, The Shaftesburys, Barking IG11 7JA.

Short description of the project Three archaeological trial pits were excavated. Two revealed natural silty sandy clay and a possible medieval soil horizon.

Project dates Start: 17-12-2014 End: 17-12-2014

Previous/future work No / Not known

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Industry and Commerce 4 - Storage and warehousing

Monument type NONE None

Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds NONE None

Significant Finds NONE None

Methods & techniques "Test Pits"

Development type Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)

Prompt National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON BARKING AND DAGENHAM BARKING Abbey Road Depot, The Shaftesburys, Barking

Postcode IG 7JA

Study area 0.40 Hectares

Site coordinates TQ 4456 8369 51.5330808149 0.0844294009112 51 31 59 N 000 05 03 E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 3.75m Max: 3.90m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

Project brief originator Adam Single

Project design originator Helen Hawkins

Project director/manager Helen Hawkins

Project supervisor Phil Frickers

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Name of sponsor/funding body Neilcott Construction Ltd.

### Project archives

Physical Exists?	Archive	No
Digital recipient	Archive	LAARC
Digital Archive ID		none
Digital Contents		"none"
Digital available	Media	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper recipient	Archive	LAARC
Paper Archive ID		none
Paper Contents		"none"
Paper available	Media	"Context sheet", "Drawing", "Matrices", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

### **Project bibliography**

**1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Abbey Road Depot, The Shaftesburys, Barking IG11 7JA
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Frickers, P
Date	2014
Issuer or publisher	PCA
Place of issue or publication	Brockley
Entered by	archive (archive@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	6 January 2015

## APPENDIX 2: TRIAL PIT PHOTOS

Plate 1: West Facing Test Pit 1



Plate 2: South Facing Test Pit 2





Plate 3: North facing Test Pit 3



# PCA

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