

**An Archaeological Watching Brief of Geotechnical Investigations on  
Land at Tolworth Court Sports Development, Old Kingston Road,  
London Borough of Kingston upon Thames**

**Site Code: TPF 06**

**Central National Grid Reference: TQ 2041 6570**

**Written and Researched by Helen Robertson  
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, November 2006**

**Project Manager: Tim Bradley**

**Commissioning Client: Kingston University**

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

**Telephone: Projects: 020 7732 3925  
Post Excavation/Administration: 020 7639 9091  
Fax: 020 732 7896  
Email: tbradley@pre-construct.com  
Website: www.pre-construct.com**

**© Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited  
November 2006**

The material contained herein is and remains the sole property of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited and is not for publication to third parties without prior consent. Whilst every effort has been made to provide detailed accurate information, Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd cannot be held responsible for errors or inaccuracies herein contained.

---

## CONTENTS

1	ABSTRACT	3
2	INTRODUCTION	4
3	GEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND	7
4	ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	17
5	ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY	10
6	ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE BY TEST PIT	11
7	INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS	15
8	BIBLIOGRAPHY	16
9	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	17

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX	18
APPENDIX 2: ROMAN POTTERY ANALYSIS	19
APPENDIX 3: OASIS REPORT FORM	21

## ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION	5
FIGURE 2: TRENCH LOCATIONS	6

---

## 1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological watching brief on a geotechnical investigations at Tolworth Playing Fields, Old Kingston Road, London Borough of Kingston (Figure 1). The work was commissioned for Kingston University by Richard Hughes, archaeological consultant. The site is centred on National Grid Reference TQ 2041 6570.
- 1.2 The watching brief monitored the excavation of 10 geotechnical test pits and 1 bore hole, in advance of the redevelopment of part of the site to create a Pavilion complex. The watching brief took place on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November 2006 and was monitored by Helen Robertson of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.
- 1.3 Natural deposits were seen in all test pits and the borehole. The majority of the test pits revealed a sequence of natural sandy clay, subsoil and top soil. In Test Pit 9 layers of 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century made ground were recorded. In Test Pit 3, however, a number of 2<sup>nd</sup> century Romano-British pottery sherds were recovered. Due to the nature of the investigation, these did not appear to be within a cut feature. However the presence of an assemblage of 14 fresh and joining sherds suggests that they are *in situ*.

---

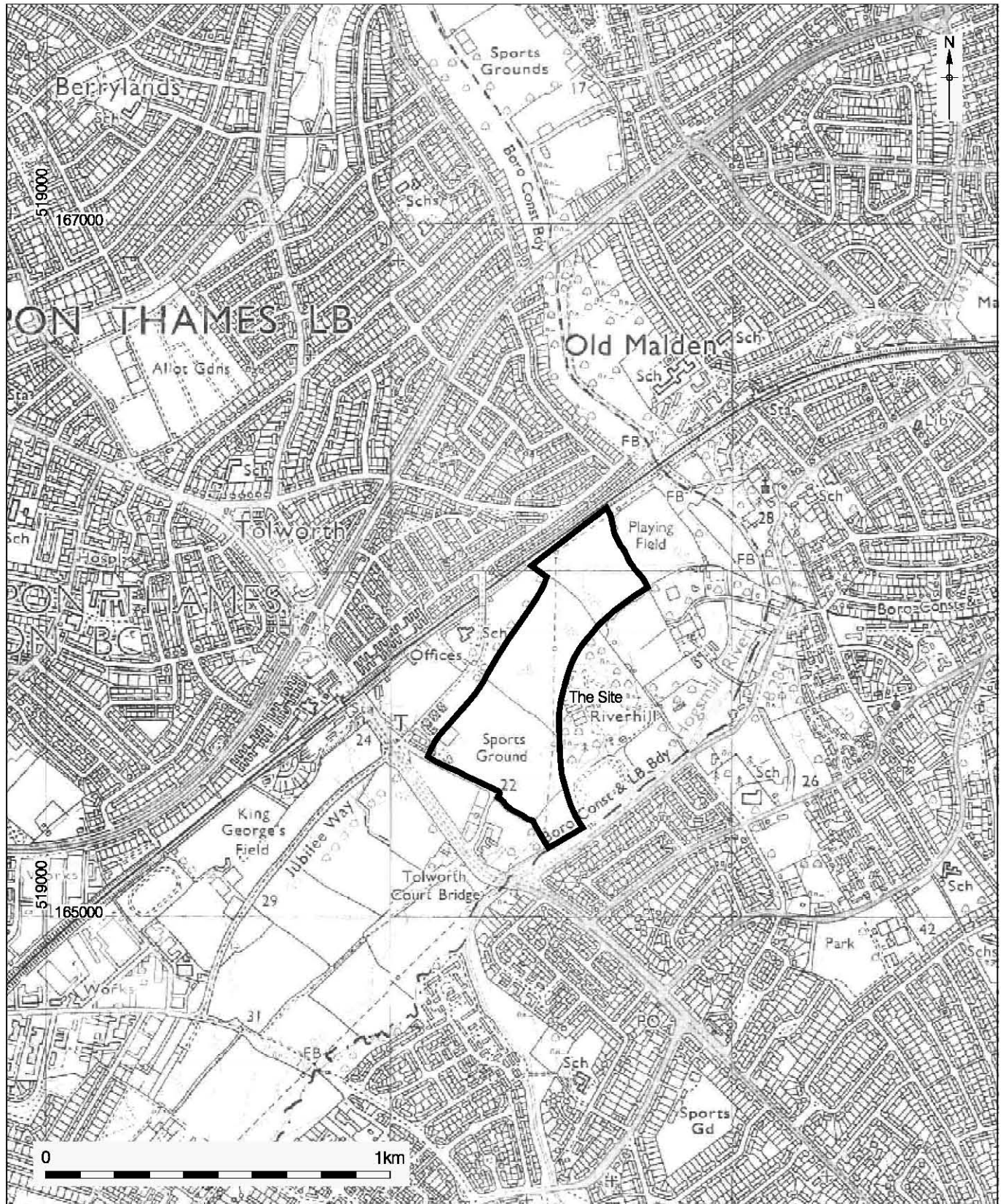
## 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. on geotechnical investigations at Tolworth Playing Fields, Old Kingston Road, London Borough of Kingston. The fieldwork was supervised by the author, project managed by Tim Bradley and monitored by Richard Hughes of International Heritage Conservation and Management (IHCM), and Mark Stevenson of English Heritage (GLAAS).
- 2.2 The proposed development is centred at TQ 2041 6570.
- 2.3 The site is presently occupied by grassed playing fields with a small cluster of buildings located in the west. The height of the current land surface is at present unknown.
- 2.4 A Desk-Based Assessment for the site has been prepared.<sup>1</sup> This concluded that the site had a low potential for post-medieval remains, a low to moderate potential for Roman and Saxon remains, a moderate to high potential for the medieval period and a high potential for prehistoric, particularly the Iron Age, remains.
- 2.5 The project consisted of the monitoring of 10 geotechnical pits and 1 bore hole, and followed a specification set out in an approved Method Statement.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.6 The completed archive comprising written and drawn records will be deposited at the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) under the Site Code TPF 06.

---

<sup>1</sup> IHCM 2006

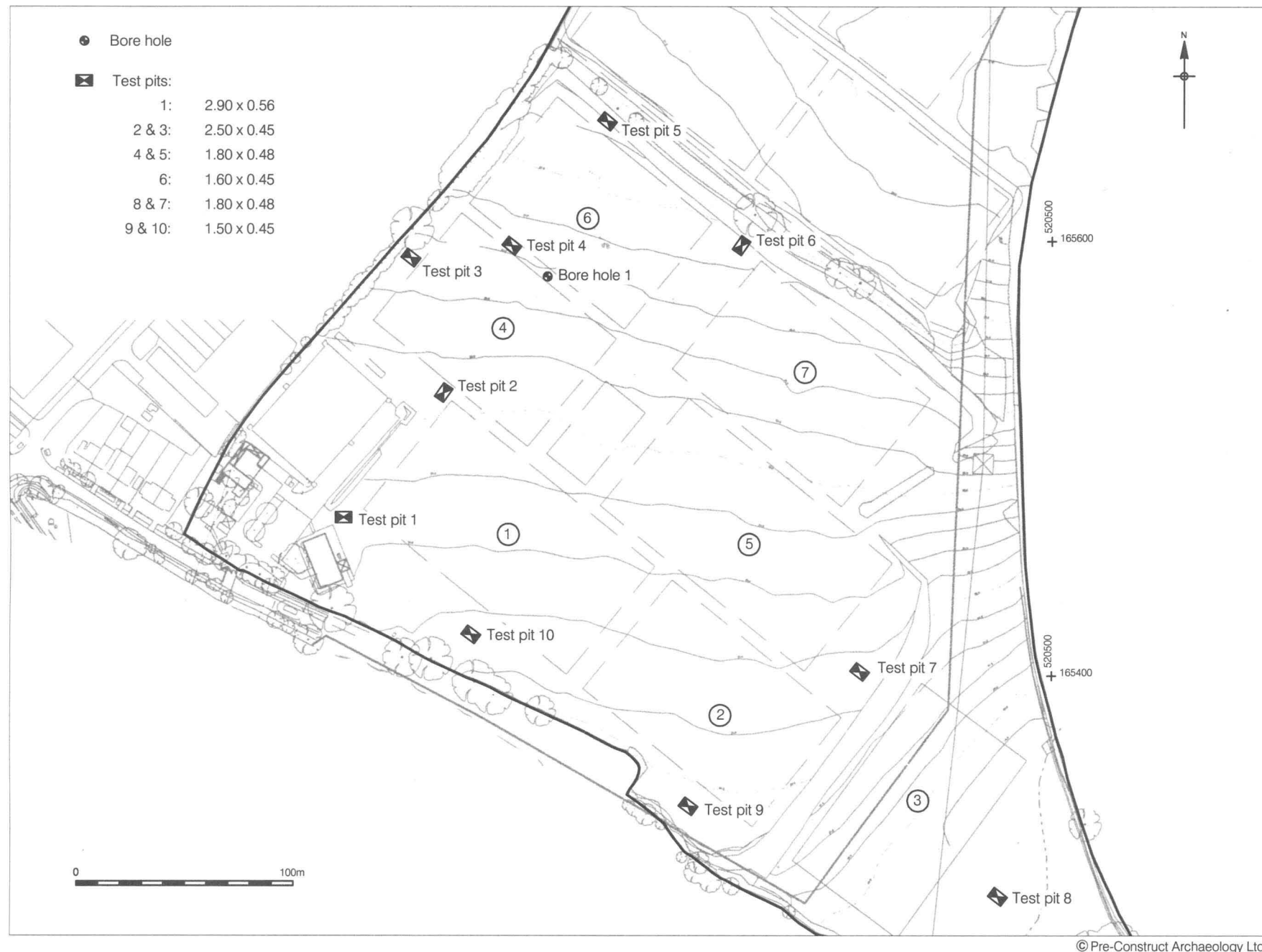
<sup>2</sup> Bradley 2006



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey 1:25,000. Crown Copyright 1988.

© Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Figure 1  
Site Location  
1:16,000 at A4



© Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Figure 2  
Test Pit Location  
1:2500 at A4

---

### 3 GEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The natural geology on site appears to be represented by London Clay overlain by Terrace Gravel<sup>3</sup>. A description of the natural sequence from an excavation immediately to the southwest of the study area describes the natural sequence as follows<sup>4</sup>:

*“The soil geology of the site consists of a thin covering of clay-based loam to a depth of approx. 15 centimetres. This overlies natural deposits of London Clay of Eocene date. In the NE portion of the site as well as towards the Hogsmill River to the SW, small pockets of gravel and alluvium of Pleistocene date are thought to be present. A number of artificial depressions and earthwork platforms are present on the site relating to the various archaeological features thought to be present on site.”*

- 3.2 The geotechnical groundwork undertaken revealed evidence of untruncated natural sandy clay and subsoil sealed by topsoil across the area of investigation. Additionally, a layer of modern made ground was recorded in Test Pit 9, situated towards the south of the area, presumably laid down in order to level the playing fields in this area of the site.
- 3.3 No information is available at present with regards the Ordnance Datum heights across the site.

---

<sup>3</sup> Lever 1996

<sup>4</sup> Wileman 2000

---

## **4.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

- 4.1.1 An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has been undertaken for the site.<sup>5</sup> The following is summarised from that document.

### **4.2 Prehistoric**

- 2.6.1 The SMR and documentary research found sizable evidence to suggest that Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age deposits could be encountered on site. In addition, the SMR and documentary research found strong evidence, in close proximity to the study area, to suggest that Iron Age archaeology should be anticipated on site.
- 2.6.2 There have been a number of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic finds retrieved during a number of archaeological excavations around the vicinity of the site. Mesolithic material has been recovered from excavations at Percy Gardens, Old Government Buildings, Manor Farm and Church Road. Late Bronze Age flints were also found during the excavations at Church Road, along with possible Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery.
- 2.6.3 A series of ditches, gullies and pits were found during both the Church Road excavations and the Manor Farm Buildings excavations whilst at Percy Gardens the arrangement of ditches, pits, postholes and gullies strongly suggested that part of the known Iron Age settlement at Old Morden had been encountered. Before this period it is believed that this area was heavily forested.

### **4.3 Roman**

- 4.3.1 Whilst the SMR found a lack of evidence of Roman activity in the vicinity of the site a recent and as yet unpublished excavation adjacent to the study area found evidence to indicate a Roman presence in the area, particularly in the excavations at Manor Farm Buildings and Percy Gardens.

### **4.4 Saxon and Medieval**

---

<sup>5</sup> IHCM 2006



---

4.4.1 It is possible that the medieval Manor at Tolworth may have had its origins in the Saxon period, however, the SMR found minimal evidence for Saxon occupation within the vicinity of the site.

4.4.2 An evaluation conducted to the northeast of the site at St John's Vicarage found residual Saxon pottery in later medieval ditches. Whilst no other Saxon finds have been made within the vicinity of the site it is possible that a Saxon church may have stood in the vicinity of Church Street and an associated settlement may have been sited nearby.

#### **4.5 Medieval**

4.5.1 The SMR and documentary research found plentiful evidence to suggest that the land to the southwest of the study site was occupied by a Manor in the medieval period. Whilst it is possible that the study area was occupied by fields associated with the Manor it also remains possible that a number of associated structures listed as external to the moated Manor in 1327 may be located within the study area.

#### **4.6 Post-Medieval**

4.6.1 Whilst the map regression compiled for the study area shows huge changes in the development of the surrounding land, the maps are notable for the remarkable lack of change on the study site over a period of 150 years. Within this period, it appears that the land has been used extensively for agricultural purposes only.

---

## 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 The watching brief followed a Method Statement<sup>6</sup> designed to monitor all groundworks and ensure that any archaeological remains were recorded and interpreted. The geotechnical trial pits were opened up and excavated by hand under archaeological supervision.
- 5.2 The geotechnical investigation comprised 10 test-pits and 1 borehole (Table 1). These were located mainly to the south end of the Tolworth Playing fields (Figure 2). Of the test pits, one (Test Pit 8) was located to the far southeast of site, on low flood prone land next to the Hogsmill River, and one (Test Pit 1) was situated next to the existing buildings in the southwest corner. The others were designed to investigate the perimeter of the southern playing fields.

Test Pit number	Length (m)	Width (m)	Max Depth (m)
1	2.90	0.56	1.35
2	2.46	0.45	1.15
3	2.50	0.45	1.20
4	1.80	0.45	1.00
5	1.84	0.48	0.95
6	1.63	0.45	0.74
7	1.75	0.47	1.35
8	1.85	0.50	0.75
9	1.60	0.45	1.75
10	1.62	0.45	0.90
BH 1	Approx 150mm diameter		10.0

**Table 1: approximate Geotechnical Test Pit dimensions**

- 5.3 All material excavated was observed and stratigraphic changes and features were recorded.

---

<sup>6</sup> Bradley 2006

---

## **6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE BY TEST PIT**

### **6.1 Test Pit 1**

6.1.1 Test Pit 1, located to the north of existing structures on the south western-most point of the site, was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.35m. The earliest deposit encountered was context [19], a layer of compact light orange brown sandy clay recorded at a depth of 0.18m below ground level. A core drilled through this revealed the same material for a further 0.50m.

6.1.2 Sealing this was a layer of topsoil [01] with a thickness of 0.18m. This deposit contained fragments of post-medieval ceramics dating from 1850 to 1900 which may represent evidence of agricultural working. This topsoil extends across the site.

### **6.2 Test Pit 2**

6.2.1 Test Pit 2, located to the north east of the tennis courts, was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.15m. The earliest deposit encountered was context [18], natural London Clay, recorded at a depth of 1m below ground level with a maximum recorded thickness of 0.15m. Sealing this was a layer of light yellow grey sandy-clay [17] recorded at a depth of 0.37m below ground level with a maximum thickness of 0.63m. There was no anthropogenic material evident within this deposit.

6.2.2 This layer was sealed by the topsoil [01] which extends across the whole site. In this test pit layer [01] was c 0.37m thick and contained pottery dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, again suggesting agricultural intervention.

### **6.3 Test Pit 3**

6.3.1 Test Pit 3, at the northwest limits of the site, was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.20m. The earliest deposit in the trial pit was a compact mottled light orange grey sandy clay [16] with occasional small (2-10mm) chalk flecks. Context [16] was recorded at a depth of 0.55m below ground level and had the minimum thickness of 0.65m as it was not fully excavated.

6.3.2 This deposit was sealed by a moderate light grey brown very sandy clay [15] which had a maximum thickness of 0.40m and was recorded at a depth of 0.15m below ground level. An assemblage of pottery recovered from this layer suggested that this was an undisturbed Roman deposit, possibly dating to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (see Appendix 2 & Plate 1). There was also evidence of very degraded bone fragments

---

recovered from the layer. These finds may have been within a cut feature, however, due to the restrictions of the geotechnical investigation, it was not possible to confirm this.

- 6.3.3 Context [15], in turn, was sealed by the layer of topsoil [01] with a maximum thickness of 0.15m which contained no datable material.

#### **6.4 Test Pit 4**

- 6.4.1 Test Pit 4, to the northeast of Test Pit 3, was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.00m. At the base of the test pit was a layer [14] of compacted light orange brown sandy clay with occasional small flint pebbles. It was at least 0.68m thick, was recorded at a depth of 0.32m below ground level, and contained no datable material.
- 6.4.2 Sealing layer [14] was a deposit of light mottled orange grey sandy clay [13] with occasional sub-angular flint pebbles which yielded a single pottery sherd and several fragments of ceramic building material which had a maximum thickness of 0.22m and was recorded at a depth of 0.10m below ground level. The retrieved building material has been identified as Roman tile, while the pottery has been spot-dated to c. 1150-1250 and has been described as a sherd of "Poly-tempered" ware originating from Surrey.
- 6.4.3 Sealing this was the topsoil [01] which extends across the site. In Test Pit 4 the topsoil had a thickness of 0.20m and retrieved from the deposit was a Roman roof tile and tesserae dating from between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

#### **6.5 Test Pit 5**

- 6.5.1 Test Pit 5, on the north of pitch number 6, was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.95m. The lowest deposit in the sequence was a compacted light orange brown slightly sandy clay [12] with a thickness of 0.75m. This layer is assumed to be a natural deposit.
- 6.5.1 Above [12] is the loose mid brown topsoil [01]. In this pit the topsoil had a thickness of 0.20m and contained pottery dated to between 1780-1900.

#### **6.6 Test Pit 6**

- 6.6.1 Test Pit 6, located between pitches 6 and 7, was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.74m. At its base was a layer of compacted mid-dark grey brown sandy clay [11]

---

with frequent inclusions of sub-angular and angular flint pebbles. This appeared to be a natural deposit.

- 6.6.2 Sealing [11] was the topsoil [01] which had a thickness of 0.30m and contained some post medieval brick, dating to possibly c.17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century. However, it was very badly degraded which made precise dating difficult.

## **6.7 Test Pit 7**

- 6.7.1 Test Pit 7, to the southeast of pitch 5, at the southeast of the site, was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.35m. At the base of the test pit was a layer [10] of soft orange brown slightly sandy clay with no inclusions with a thickness of at least 0.45m. This layer was undated and is likely to be natural in origin.

- 6.7.2 Sealing deposit [09] was a compacted mid yellow brown sandy clay with frequent small fragments (2-12 mm) and flecks of chalk with a maximum thickness of 0.40m which was recorded at a depth of 0.50m below ground level.

- 6.7.3 This layer [09] was sealed by was a moderate dark orange brown clay silt [08] with occasional sub-angular and angular small flint pebbles. The layer had a thickness of 0.30m and the only datable material retrieved from this context was a possible Roman tile.

- 6.7.4 Above [08] was the topsoil [01] which is evident across site, with a thickness of 0.20m.

## **6.8 Test Pit 8**

- 6.8.1 Test Pit 8, situated in the most south easterly corner of the site, was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.75m. At the base of the test pit was a layer [07] of compacted light orange grey slightly sandy clay, with a thickness of at least 0.15m, recorded at a depth of 0.60m below ground level. At this point there was evidence of ground water seeping into the trial pit.

- 6.8.2 Layer [07] was sealed by layer [06] of compacted light brown grey sandy clay with no inclusions. The layer had a thickness of 0.37m, was recorded at a height of 0.23m below ground level, and was undated.

- 6.8.3 Sealing [06] was the topsoil [01] which is evident across the site, and in this case had a thickness of 0.23m.

---

## **6.9 Test Pit 9**

- 6.9.1 Test Pit 9, on the south of pitch number 2, was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.75m. The earliest deposit in the sequence was a compacted layer of orange grey sandy clay [05] with occasional small sub-angular and sub-rounded flint pebbles. It had a thickness of 0.38m, was recorded at a depth of 1.37m below ground level, and was interpreted as being natural in origin.
- 6.9.2 Sealing [05] was a soft dark grey brown sandy clay [04] with very occasional wood fragments and was 0.45m thick at 0.92m below ground level. This deposit was undated.
- 6.9.3 Deposit [04] was sealed by a layer of made ground [03] comprising very modern inclusions of plastic and coke cans. This layer appeared to be forming a levelling horizon for the southwest playing fields, was a very recent development and had a thickness of 0.54m.
- 6.9.4 As with all the other test pits, the sequence was sealed by mid brown topsoil [01], recorded in Test Pit 9 at 0.38m thick.

## **6.10 Test Pit 10**

- 6.10.1 Test Pit 10, to the southwest of pitch 1, was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.90m. At the base of the test pit was a layer [02] of light orange brown compact sandy clay with no inclusions with a thickness of 0.62m recorded at a depth of 0.28m below ground level. There was no evidence of datable material and this was believed to be a natural deposit.

---

## 7 INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 One of the principal objectives of the archaeological Watching Brief was to determine the presence or absence of archaeological activity of any period. Archaeological material was recovered on the site and the datable evidence retrieved from the test pits show a wide range of materials dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century Romano-British through to the 12<sup>th</sup> century medieval and post-medieval periods.
- 7.2 Post-medieval material has been recovered from Trial Pits 1, 2, 5, 6 and 10, but all within the topsoil [01] which extends across the site. Late post-medieval made ground was recorded in Test Pit 9, presumably laid down to provide levelling for the playing field surface in this area of the site. None of the test pits revealed evidence of localised or more extensive truncation of the natural deposits.
- 7.3 A peg-tile was retrieved from Trial Pit 10 within the topsoil [01] which dated to the late medieval period. The medieval period was also represented by a sherd of Surrey "Poly-tempered ware", recovered from context [13] and dating to c.1150-1250.
- 7.4 However, the majority of finds appeared to derive from the Roman period, with the context [15] from Trial Pit 3 showing evidence of a sealed *in situ* Romano-British layer. Further discussion of this pottery is in Appendix 2. Further Roman material has been recovered from layers: [13], Trial Pit 4 (Roman tile); [08], Trial Pit 7 (possible Roman brick) and [01], Trial Pit 4 (Roman Roof tile and tesserae dating to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century).

---

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Taylor, J. 2006 'An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment of Land at Tolworth Court Sports Development, Old Kingston Road, Borough of Kingston', IHCM unpub rep

Bradley, T. 2006 'A Method Statement For an Archaeological Watching Brief on Geotechnical Pits and Boreholes at Land at Tolworth Court Sports Development, Old Kingston Road, Borough of Kingston', unpub rep for Pre-Construct Archaeology



---

## **8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 8.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Jaime Martins of Kingston University for commissioning the work. Thanks also to Richard Hughes of IHCM for monitoring the project on behalf of Kingston University, Jeremy Coulton of Peter Brett Associates for assistance, and Mark Stevenson, English Heritage (GLAAS) for monitoring the work on behalf of London Borough of Kingston.
- 8.2 The author would like to thank David Harris for the illustrations, James Gerrard for the Roman pottery analysis and Tim Bradley for project management and editing.

---

## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Context Number	Test Pit	Description	Type
1	1-10	Layer	Topsoil extending across site
2	10	Natural	Alluvial clay deposit
3	9	Layer	Modern levelling layer
4	9	Layer	Dark grey brown sandy clay
5	9	Natural	Compact sandy clay
6	8	Layer	Compact sandy clay
7	8	Natural	Compact grey sandy clay
8	7	Layer	Dark orange brown clay silt
9	7	Layer	Compact sandy Clay w/ chalk flecks
10	7	Natural	Compact sandy clay
11	6	Natural	Sandy clay with gravels
12	5	Natural	Compact sandy clay
13	4	Layer	Soft mottled sandy clay
14	4	Natural	Compact sandy clay
15	3	Layer	Loose sandy clay w/ charcoal flecks
16	3	Natural	Compact sandy clay
17	2	Layer	Compact light grey yellow sandy clay
18	2	Natural	Compact sandy clay
19	1	Natural	Compact sandy clay

---

## APPENDIX 2: ROMAN POTTERY ANALYSIS

James Gerrard, November 2006.

A small assemblage of Romano-British pottery was recovered from Context [15], Trial Pit 3. The most significant material present was 14 fresh and joining sherds (184g) from a jar in SAND fabric. The vessel has an upright rim and a double cordon at the base of the neck and on the shoulder. It can probably be dated to the second century. Other material included three abraded sherds of NKFW, one abraded sherd of HOO/NKWS and a single very abraded ?BB2 sherd, all of which are consistent with a second-century date. The presence of this assemblage, and in particular the fresh joining jar fragments suggests that there are *in situ* Roman period deposits.

---

## APPENDIX 3: OASIS REPORT FORM

### 1.1 OASIS ID: preconst1-20693

#### Project details

Project name	Watching Brief of Geotechnical Investigations on Land at Tolworth Court Sports Development, Old Kingston Road, Kingston
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief on geotechnical investigations of land at Tolworth Playing Fields, Old Kingston Road, London Borough of Kingston. The watching brief monitored the excavation of 10 geotechnical pits and 1 bore hole, in advance of the redevelopment of Tolworth Court Sports area. Evidence from one test pit suggests in situ Roman period deposits with a date of possibly the 2nd century. Other test pits revealed a mixture of Roman roof tile, tesserae and 19th century pottery.
Project dates	Start: 21-11-2006 End: 21-11-2006
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Other 14 - Recreational usage
Significant Finds	ROMANO-BRITISH POTTERY Roman

#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON KINGSTON UPON THAMES KINGSTON UPON THAMES Tolworth Court Sports Developments, Old Kingston Road, London Borough of Kingston
Study area	226989.47 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 2041 6570 51.3770590992 -0.269730046038 51 22 37 N 000 16 11 W Point

#### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Pre-Construct Archaeology
Project design originator	Tim Bradley
Project director/manager	Tim Bradley
Project supervisor	Helen Robertson
Type of sponsor/funding body	Kingston University
<b>Project archives</b>	
Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Contents	'Ceramics'
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Contents	'Ceramics'
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Contents	'Ceramics'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Drawing','Plan','Report','Section','Unpublished Text'
Entered by	Helen Robertson (tbradley@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	23 November 2006