

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL

EVALUATION AT

155 – 163 NEW ROAD,

RAINHAM,

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING

JANUARY 2007

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

**155-163 NEW ROAD,
RAINHAM,
LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING

EVALUATION**

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**An Archaeological Evaluation at 155-163 New Road, Rainham,
London Borough of Havering**

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 511 828

Site Code: NRI 07

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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd at 155-163, New Road, Rainham, London Borough of Havering. The central National Grid Reference for the site is TQ 511 828. The field evaluation was undertaken between 2nd January and 5th January 2007, and was commissioned by Lorraine Darton of CgMs Consulting on behalf of Bellway Homes.
- 1.2 The evaluation of five trial trenches, designed to provide coverage of the site and investigate the archaeological potential of the site which had been identified from a Desk-Based Assessment (Darton 2006a).
- 1.3 The evaluation revealed natural clay and gravels overlain by an undated ploughsoil, and sealed by made ground. No archaeological features were found.

2 INTRODUCTION

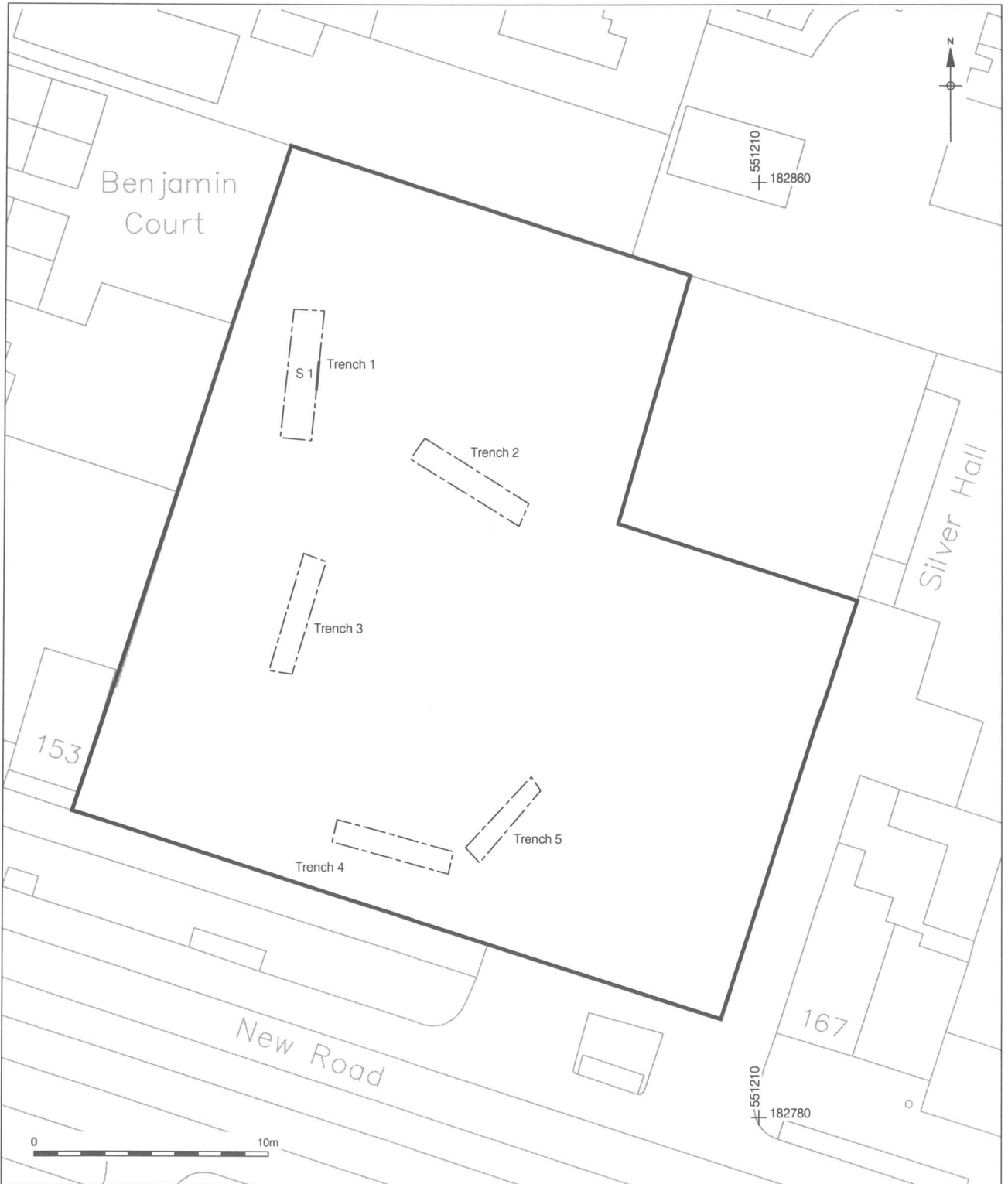
- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd between 2nd January and 5th January 2007 in advance of redevelopment of land at 155-163 New Road, Rainham, London Borough of Havering (Fig.1). The study site covers an area of approximately 2500 square metres, and was bordered to the north by the houses fronting Louise Gardens, to the east by No. 167 New Street, to the south by New Road, and to the west by No. 153 New Road. The archaeological evaluation involved the excavation and recording of five trial trenches, which were to investigate the archaeological potential (Fig. 2).
- 2.2 The evaluation was commissioned by Lorraine Darton of CgMs Consulting on behalf of Bellway Homes, and was supervised by James Langthorne and project managed by Chris Mayo of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. It was monitored by David Divers of GLAAS, Archaeological Advisor to the London Borough of Havering.
- 2.3 An archaeological Desk-Based Assessment had previously been completed; this concluded that the site had a moderate to high potential for the prehistoric and Roman periods, but a low potential for the historic periods (Darton 2006a). All fieldwork followed a specification prepared by CgMs Consulting (Darton 2006b), and included considerations for potential contaminants at the site. During the course of the fieldwork petrochemical residues could be seen within the trenches.
- 2.4 The evaluation revealed natural ground overlain by an undated ploughsoil horizon. All were sealed by modern made ground.
- 2.5 The completed archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records will be deposited with the London Archaeology Archive Resource Centre (LAARC) under the unique site code NRI 07.



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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:20,000 at A4



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Figure 2
Trench Location
1:500 at A4

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 The relevant Development Plan framework is provided by the London Plan, published in February 2004. The Plan contains the following policy relating to archaeology in London:

"POLICY 4B.14: ARCHAEOLOGY

THE MAYOR, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ENGLISH HERITAGE, THE MUSEUM OF LONDON AND BOROUGHs, WILL SUPPORT THE IDENTIFICATION, PROTECTION, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF LONDON'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES. BOROUGHs IN CONSULTATION WITH ENGLISH HERITAGE AND OTHER RELEVANT STATUTORY ORGANISATIONS SHOULD INCLUDE APPROPRIATE POLICIES IN THEIR UDPS FOR PROTECTING SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSETS WITHIN THEIR AREA.

- 3.4 The London Borough of Havering Unitary Development Plan (march 1993), contains the following policies which provides a framework for the consideration of development proposals affecting archaeological and heritage features:

POLICY ENV14

When any development is proposed the council will ensure that any archaeological significance of the site is examined and evaluated. Planning permission will not be given without adequate assessment of any archaeological implications. Planning permission will only be granted where satisfactory provision is made in appropriate cases for the preservation in situ, where possible, or the excavation and recording of archaeological remains. The Council may refuse planning permission for development on sites of outstanding archaeological significance.

POLICY ENV15

The Council will seek to ensure that ancient monuments are preserved and maintained and will not normally permit any development which would adversely affect ancient monuments or their setting.

- 3.5 The site does not lie within a conservation or archaeological priority area, as shown by the proposals map (Darton 2006a).

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

4.1 Geology

4.1.1 The solid geology of the site is London Clay, as indicated by the British Geological Survey (England and Wales 1:50,000 Series, Sheet 257 Romford, 1996). The clay is overlain by Taplow Terrace Gravels (Darton 2006a).

4.1.2 Geotechnical borehole and window sample data for the site have revealed the geological sequence to be overlain by between 0.50-0.60m of made ground (Darton 2006a).

4.2 Topography

4.2.1 The site is located on predominantly level ground, at a height of approximately 3.00m OD, which very gradually slopes down to the west. It lies on the edge of the gravel terrace about 100m north of the Hornchurch Marshes, which are historically the interface between land and the Thames estuary.

4.2.2 The study site lies about 1.5km north-east of the estuary of the River Thames, and between two of its tributaries; the River Ingrebourne to the east and the River Beam to the west.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The archaeological and historical background to this site has been laid out in full in the Desk Based Assessment (Darton 2006a). The following is a summary of the periods represented in that document.

5.1 Prehistoric

- 5.1.1 There are traces of early prehistoric activity within a 750m radius of the study site. For example, an archaeological excavation at 15-17 New Street, about 500m to the west of the study site, revealed a large pit with stakeholes in the base. This pit was dated by the discovery of a thin flint blade, which originated from either the Mesolithic or Neolithic periods, within one of the pit's several fills,
- 5.1.2 Other examples include a prehistoric flint found within a north-south aligned ditch at 111-113 New North Road, approximately 100m to the west of the study site and an evaluation on the Hornchurch Marshes, 250m to the south of the study site, which revealed mineral-rich sediment and peat deposits and substantial parts of preserved yew and alder trees originating from the middle Holocene (6000 to 4500BP) and Bronze Age (4500 to 2800BP).
- 5.1.3 The bulk of prehistoric activity in the area surrounding the study site however originates from the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. The archaeological excavation at 15-17 New Road mentioned above, for example, revealed a sizeable number of postholes one of which contained sherds from a late Bronze Age vessel. While 80m west of the study site, an excavation at the former Manser Works, 137-139 New Road, revealed a plethora of the evidence for mid-late Bronze Age occupation including substantial pits, stakeholes, and postholes. There was also evidence of in-situ burning, identified from quantities of burnt flint and clay or daub.
- 5.1.4 It was concluded that the archaeological potential of the study site was high for later prehistoric periods as it was likely that farming communities settled on the margins of the gravel terrace in order to exploit marshland grazing areas and natural resources to the south.

5.2 Roman

- 5.2.1 Physical evidence of the Roman period is principally a cemetery discovered during gravel extraction works c. 1928, 200m north-west of the study site, and groundworks connected with the construction of the Mardyke Estate in 1963, which lies about

250m to the west of the study site. Cremations and inhumations were recovered, some of which contained grave goods. The pottery found at these sites was originally dated to 1st-2nd centuries but could date from the 3rd century.

5.2.2 The cemetery is thought to be indicative of a nearby settlement or farmstead which flourished from AD50 - AD200 and went into decline after that time. This theory would be consistent with other excavated sites found on the Thames floodplain between Southwark and Erith; which demonstrate that in the later Prehistoric period a rapid fall in sea level led to the exposure and drying out of alluvial clay deposits. These deposits proved to be very fertile and the land was exploited for agricultural purposes for about two centuries until a rapid rise in sea level brought about their inundation and abandonment.

5.2.3 It was concluded that the possibility of a settlement in the area gave the study site a high archaeological potential for Roman remains.

5.3 Saxon / Early Medieval

5.3.1 Rainham is among the earliest Saxon settlements in Essex, confirmed by a hoard of Saxon artefacts found at Gerpins Farm in 1937. The name Rainham is thought to derive from "roeinga-ham", which means "the settlement of the ruling people".

5.3.2 However no physical evidence from this period has been discovered in the surrounding area, and it is thought that the study site lay within pasture land at this time. It was concluded that the archaeological potential for this period was therefore low.

5.4 Medieval

5.4.1 During the post-Conquest period increasing efforts were made to reclaim the floodplain marshes which exist to the south of the study site. This process, known as "inning", consisted of the construction of ditched drainage systems and marsh walls. The success of these initiatives meant that by the thirteenth century organised seasonal grazing of sheep and cattle from farmsteads on the gravel terrace edge was taking place.

5.4.2 However, other than two medieval Nuremberg tokens and a small bronze statue of a saint found 500m north-west of the study site there are no traces of medieval activity in the surrounding area. It has been concluded that the study site still lay in pasture

land and possibly belonged to nearby Marshfoot Farm, and thus had a low archaeological potential.

5.5 Post-Medieval

5.5.1 Until the opening of the London-Tilbury-Southend in 1854, the study site lay in a rather remote and isolated landscape. Only two disparate settlements are recorded as being in the surrounding area: Mudland Farm in Manor Way, dating from 1616 and Marshfoot Farm on Cherry Tree Lane, which was first recorded in 1618.

5.5.2 This isolation is amply demonstrated on by the Chapman and Andre map of 1777, showing the study site on the fringes of the Hornchurch Marshes that border the Thames Estuary and the Hornchurch Tithe Map of 1849, in which the study site is situated in a field west of Marshfoot Farm on the north side of New Road.

5.5.3 The incursion of the London-Tilbury-Southend railway to the south of New Road is clearly shown on the 1864 Ordnance Survey. The study site is still lying within a field to the west of Marshfoot Farm. This situation continued between 1897 and 1915.

5.5.4 By 1939 the area had become extensively developed with housing estates and new roads. Four houses with adjoining yards and a garage are visible on the eastern edge of the study site and a large gravel extraction pit occupies the north corner of the study site.

5.5.5 Gradually further buildings were to occupy the study site, including a narrow building constructed to the west of the garage, and several outbuildings built to the rear of the houses along the west edge of the site in 1965. However in 1972 the buildings in the western part of the site were demolished to make way for the printing works.

5.5.6 Other than the construction of a narrow building in the centre of the site prior to 2005, little apparent change occurred on the study site before the current redevelopment work began.

5.5.7 Up until the 1930s the study existed only as part of a field, therefore the potential for post-medieval remains was determined as low.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The evaluation of five trenches was designed in the Specification (Darton 2006b). During the course of the work, the locations of three of the trenches (Trenches 2, 3, and 5) given in the Specification had to be altered due to surface obstructions. However the new trench positions still allowed for suitable coverage of the study site (Fig 2).
- 6.2 All trenches were excavated with a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-bladed ditching bucket in spits up to 200mm thick, under the supervision of an archaeologist. Machine excavation continued until the first archaeologically significant deposits or natural ground was reached. Excavation then stopped to enable archaeologists to clean with hand tools as necessary and record each trench.
- 6.3 All deposits were recorded on *proforma* context sheets, trench plans being drawn at a scale of 1:50 and the sections at a scale of 1:10. The locations of the trenches were surveyed using a total station theodolite. A photographic record was also kept of all the trenches in black and white print, colour slide and digital formats.
- 6.4 A temporary benchmark was established with a value of 2.99m OD, which was transferred from a spot height of 3.08m OD on a manhole on the pavement of New Road immediately to the south of the study site.

7 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

7.1 Phase 1 - Natural

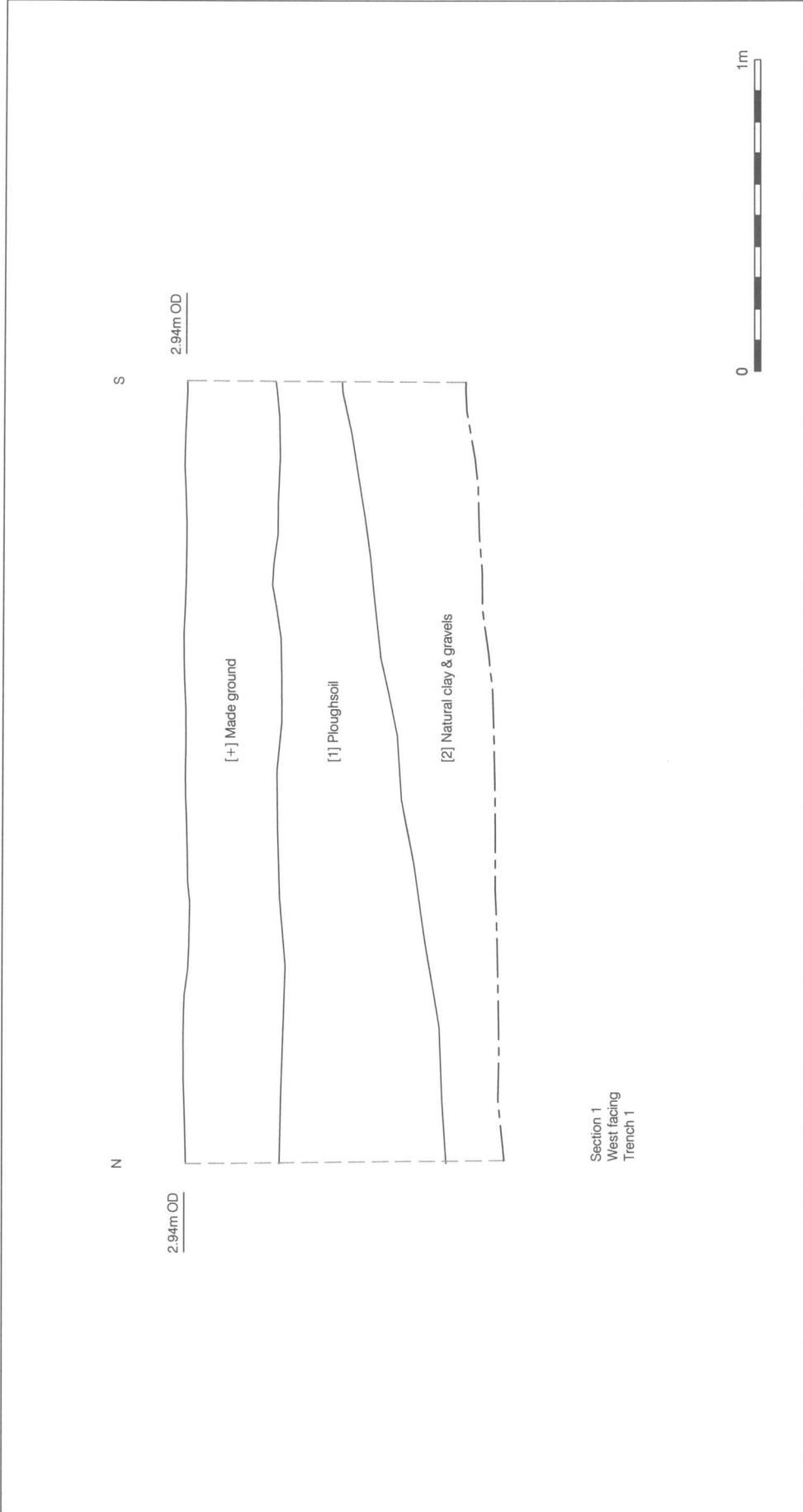
7.1.1 The earliest deposits encountered were sandy clay and gravels. This natural deposit was observed in Trenches 1, 2, and 3 (contexts [2], [4], and [6] respectively). It was light-mid reddish grey/brown in colour, and was sterile with no inclusions. In Trenches 2 and 4, the natural had been truncated by modern intrusions [+] and petrochemical contaminants occasionally stained the clay. The gravel was revealed between maximum heights of 2.72m OD in Trench 1 and 2.28m OD in Trench 3, representing a fall from north to south.

7.2 Phase 2 - Ploughsoil

7.2.1 Overlying the natural ground was a layer of ploughsoil, recorded as [1] in Trench 1, [3] in Trench 2, [5] in Trench 3, [8] in Trench 4, and [7] in Trench 5. It was a friable, mid-light yellowish grey/brown, sandy silt with no inclusions and ranged in thickness between 0.26m and 0.52m. It was recorded between upper heights of 2.97m OD in Trench 2 and 2.35m OD in Trench 4. No finds were associated with this layer.

7.3 Phase 3 - Modern Made Ground

7.3.1 Sealing the ploughsoil in all five trenches was a thick layer of modern made ground, referred to as [+]. It was a fairly firm but friable, dark reddish brown, clay silt with frequent rubble inclusions (including brick, concrete, rebar, glass, and occasionally asbestos fragments). It was between 0.95m and 0.30m thick and was encountered at maximum heights between 3.68m OD in Trench 5 and 2.83m OD in Trench 3.



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Figure 3
Section 1
1:20 at A4

8 TRENCH SUMMARY

8.1 Trench 1 (Figs. 2 and 3)

8.1.1 Trench 1 revealed natural clay and gravels [2] overlain by ploughsoil [1]. The ploughsoil was sealed by modern made ground [+].

8.1.2 No archaeological features were seen in Trench 1.

8.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 2)

8.2.1 Trench 2 revealed natural clay and gravels [4] overlain by ploughsoil [3]. The ploughsoil was sealed by modern made ground [+].

8.2.2 No archaeological features were seen in Trench 2.

8.3 Trench 3 (Fig. 2)

8.3.1 Trench 3 revealed natural clay and gravels [6] overlain by ploughsoil [5]. The ploughsoil was sealed by modern made ground [+].

8.3.2 No archaeological features were seen in Trench 3.

8.4 Trench 4 (Fig. 2)

8.4.1 Trench 4 revealed ploughsoil [8] sealed by modern made ground [+].

8.4.2 No archaeological features were seen in Trench 4.

8.5 Trench 5 (Fig. 2)

8.5.1 Trench 5 revealed ploughsoil [7] sealed by modern made ground [+].

8.5.2 No archaeological features were seen in Trench 4.

9 INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Interpretation

9.1.1 Three evaluation trenches revealed natural deposits that were consistent with the underlying solid and drift geology of the Romford area. The recorded heights of the trenches show a fall in natural ground from north to south.

9.1.2 The ploughsoil horizon recorded in all trenches attests to the use of the site as agricultural land in the post-medieval period. No archaeological features were found in any of the five trenches.

9.2 Conclusions

9.2.1 The evaluation revealed natural ground sealed by an undated ploughsoil horizon, likely to be associated with the post-medieval use of the site. No archaeological features were recorded in any trench.

9.2.2 Evidence for petrochemical contamination was visible in two of the trenches. Occasional evidence for asbestos could also be seen in the made ground deposits.

10 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 10.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Lorraine Darton of CgMs Consulting for commissioning the work on behalf of Bellway Homes. We also thank David Divers of GLAAS for monitoring the work, and Frankis Solutions Ltd. for their help on site.
- 10.2 The author would like to thank Chris Mayo for project managing the site and editing this report, Jem Rogers for survey work, Dave Harris for the illustrations, Alexis Haslam and Lisa Lonsdale for logistics, and Shane Maher and Mike Bazley for their work on site.

11 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Darton, L.

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- 2006b 'Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation: 155-163 New Road, Rainham, London Borough of Havering', unpub rep for CgMs Consulting

12 APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Type	Description	Trench
1	Layer	Ploughsoil	1
2	Natural	Natural clay and gravels	1
3	Layer	Ploughsoil	2
4	Natural	Natural clay and gravels	2
5	Layer	Ploughsoil	3
6	Natural	Natural clay and gravels	3
7	Layer	Ploughsoil	5
8	Layer	Ploughsoil	4

13 APPENDIX 2: OASIS form

OASIS ID: preconst1-22205

Project details

Project name	An archaeological evaluation at 155-163, New Road, Rainham, London Borough of Havering
Short description of the project	A field evaluation was undertaken at 155-163 New Road, Rainham, London Borough of Havering between 2/1/2007 and 5/1/2007. The archaeological programme consisted of 5 trial trenches all measuring 10m by 2m. These were to determine the archaeological potential of the site in order to provide guidance on any identifiable archaeological constraints. No archaeological deposits were found on site. The earliest deposits encountered were natural clay and gravels. The area had been heavily contaminated.
Project dates	Start: 02-01-2007 End: 05-01-2007
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	NRI 07 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Monument type	MADE GROUND Modern
Monument type	PLOUGHSOIL Uncertain
Methods & techniques	'Documentary Search','Sample Trenches'
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON HAVERING RAINHAM 155-163 New Road, Rainham, London Borough of Havering
Postcode	RM13
Study area	2500.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 511 828 51.5233663297 0.178276971450 51 31 24 N 000 10 41 E Point
Height OD	Min: 1.97m Max: 2.72m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	CgMs Consulting
Project design	Lorraine Darton

originator
Project director/manager Chris Mayo
Project supervisor James Young Langthorne
Type of sponsor/funding body Bellway Homes

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive recipient LAARC
Digital Archive ID NRI 07
Digital Contents 'none'
Digital Media available 'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient LAARC
Paper Archive ID NRI 07
Paper Contents 'none'
Paper Media available 'Context sheet', 'Diary', 'Map', 'Photograph', 'Plan', 'Report', 'Section', 'Survey '

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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Date 2007
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