

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at 1-3 Manor Farm  
Cottages, Goldsmith Close, East Acton Lane, Acton, London  
Borough of Ealing**

**Site Code: EAA07**

**Central National Grid Reference: TQ 2095 8045**

**Written and Researched by Strephon Duckering**

**Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, February 2007**

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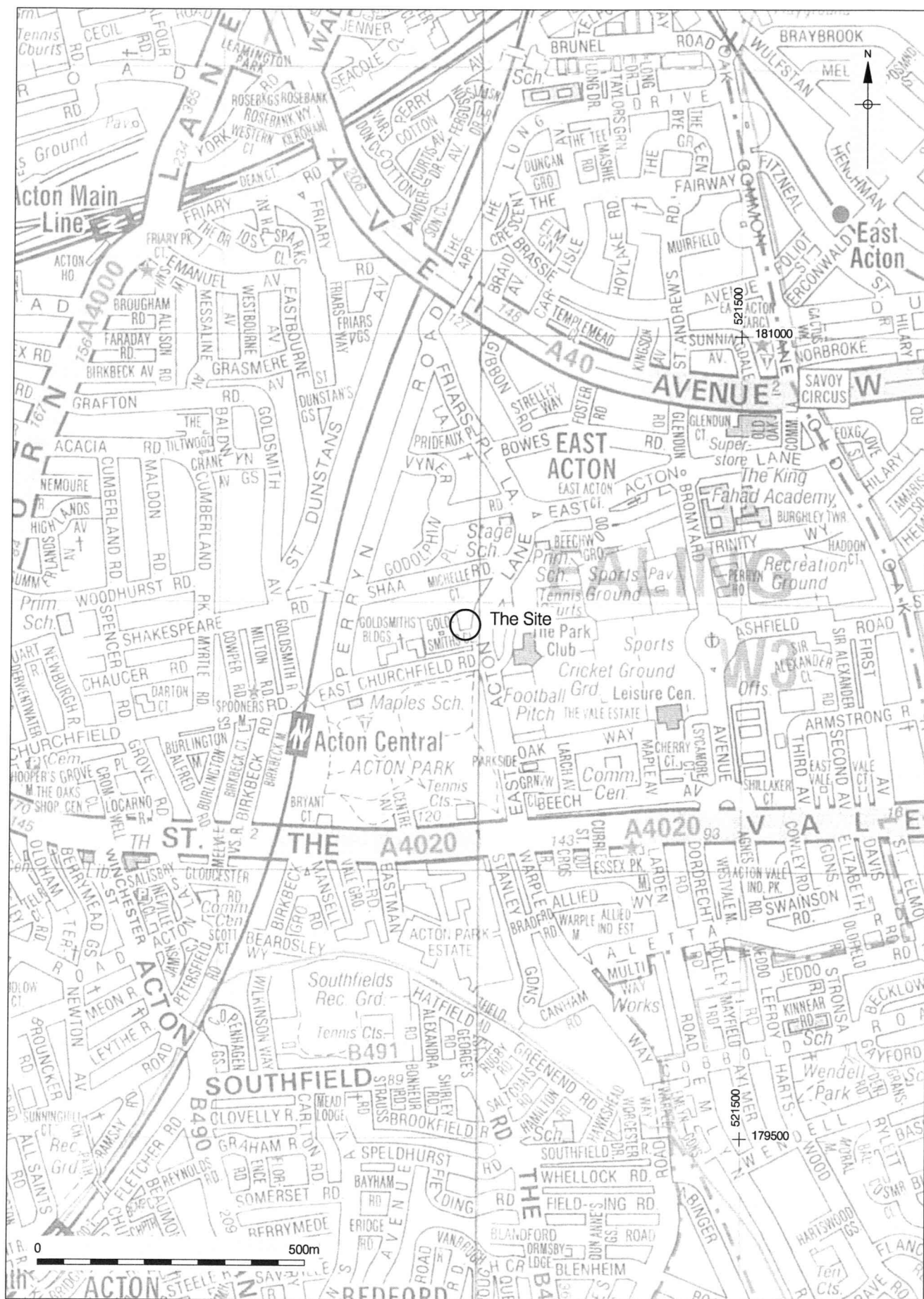
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## **1 ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief at the former Manor Farm Cottages, East Acton Lane, London Borough of Ealing (Figure 1). The work was commissioned by Peter Gallagher of Riverplace Homes Ltd and took place intermittently between 25<sup>th</sup> January and 27<sup>th</sup> February 2007.
- 1.2 The development site is located within an Archaeological Priority Zone as defined in the London Borough of Ealing Unitary Development Plan. The site is bounded to the west and south by Goldsmiths Close, the east by East Acton Lane and the north by 152 East Acton Lane. The watching brief monitored the excavation by machine of foundation trenches for three houses across the area of the site.
- 1.3 The trenches contained Langley silt overlain by Lynch Hill Gravel, sealed by a plough soil and 19<sup>th</sup> century garden soil.
- 1.4 No archaeological deposits or features pre-dating the post medieval period were encountered during the watching brief.

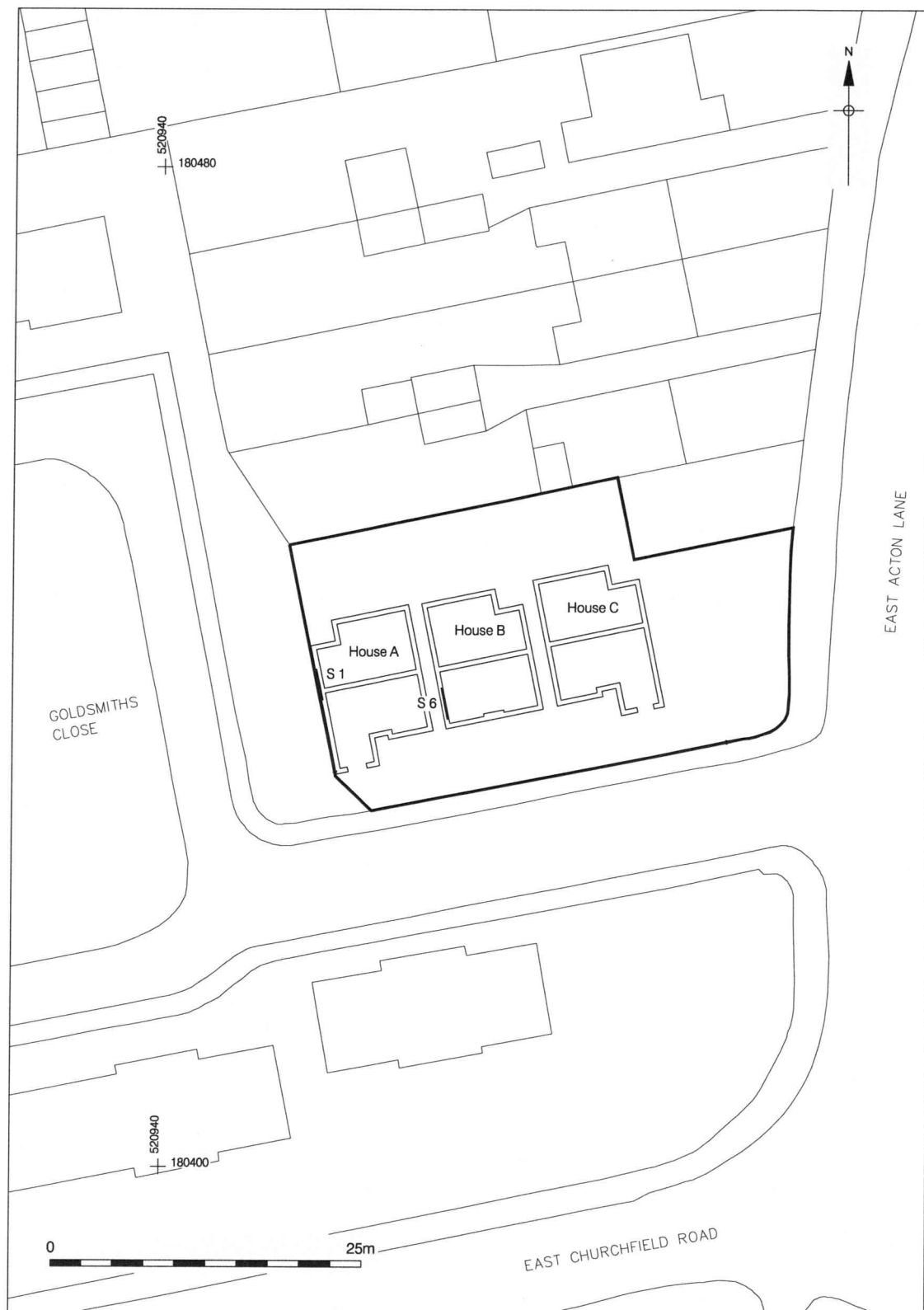
## **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. on land at the site of the former Manor Farm Cottages, East Acton Lane in the London Borough of Ealing (Figure 1). The work was commissioned by Peter Gallagher of Riverplace Homes Ltd and took place between 25<sup>th</sup> January and 27<sup>th</sup> February 2007.
- 2.2 The site is bounded to the west and south by Goldsmiths Close, the east by East Acton Lane and the north by 152 East Acton Lane.
- 2.3 The central National Grid Reference of the site is TQ 2095 8045
- 2.4 The site code is EAA07.
- 2.5 The project was monitored by Gill Hummerstone, GLAAS, on behalf of the London Borough of Ealing, project managed by Gary Brown and supervised by the author.



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Figure 1  
Site Location  
1:10,000 at A4



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Figure 2  
Trench Location  
1:500 at A4

### 3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

Ealing Council Unitary Development Plan section 4.9:

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Interest Areas

The protection of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and their settings is required by law. Any development affecting such an ancient monument requires an impact evaluation, including an archaeological assessment where appropriate.

It is the Council's intention to also protect archaeological sites, and any proposal must:

- i) Provide adequate opportunities for archaeological investigation prior to development;
- ii) Be carried out in accordance with the British Archaeologists and Developers Liaison Code of Practice.

Where development would adversely affect Archaeological Interest Areas or archaeological remains, the applicant will normally be required to:

- i) Modify designs to avoid adverse effects;
- ii) Design suitable land use and management strategies to safeguard any important remains, with the option to seek an agreement covering access and interpretation arrangements;
- iii) Preserve in situ: where this is not feasible, provide appropriate provision for excavation.

Ancient Monuments and archaeological sites are vitally important to the cultural heritage of the Borough. Many prehistoric sites and remains have been found in the older centres of Acton, Ealing, Hanwell and Southall and elsewhere in the borough, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries when brickearths or gravels were dug; or housing and factory development took place. When these geological deposits are disturbed again on redevelopment, more finds may occur; but the pace of modern building processes is such that the evidence may be destroyed. It is important to try and anticipate which sites are likely to contain remains, so that an archaeological assessment can be made, and prospective developers are requested to arrange for an archaeological field evaluation before planning permission is given.

The scheduling and protection of Ancient Monuments is carried out by the Secretary of State, and therefore all applications for Scheduled Monument consent are to be made to the Secretary of State and not the local planning authority. However the Council will endeavour to complement this protection by requiring any development affecting a Scheduled Monument to have an impact evaluation, including an archaeological assessment.

Evaluation of Ancient Monuments and archaeological sites is normally a rapid and inexpensive operation, involving ground survey and small-scale trial trenching, but must be carried out by an approved organisation. The Museum of London has expertise in this area.

Where nationally important archaeological remains and their settings are affected by proposed development, there should be a presumption in favour of their physical protection. On other sites where remains are known to exist, preservation in situ can be achieved by appropriate design or location of landscaped areas. Where this is not feasible, an archaeological excavation for record purposes may be acceptable.

Preservation in situ is preferred because a full excavation is expensive, time consuming and if postponed could enable more information to be obtained with improved techniques in the future. English Heritage hold the Sites and Monuments Record for the Borough and Greater London. When remains of significance are located, the Secretary of State can schedule a site.



## **4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

### **4.1 Geology**

- 4.1.1 The underlying geology of the site comprises Langley silt overlain by Lynch Hill gravel.

### **4.2 Topography**

- 4.2.1 The site is situated downhill and south of East Acton and slopes away slightly from the northwest to the southeast at a level of approximately 19 -18.5mOD.

## **5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND<sup>1</sup>**

### **5.1 Palaeolithic**

- 5.1.1 A Lower Palaeolithic handaxe was found at Goldsmith Gardens, Acton, in an area of Brickearth above Lynch Hill Gravel geology.
- 5.1.2 Lower Palaeolithic implements including a handaxe, a retouched flake, a flake and a Levallois core were found at Myrtle Road and Shakespeare Road. Other implements have also been recorded by Lane Fox, including a scraper. A tooth fragment of a mammoth has also been discovered from the area.
- 5.1.3 Lower Palaeolithic implements including 5 retouched flakes, 13 flakes and 1 Levallois flake were found in East Acton with no specific provenance.
- 5.1.4 Between 1869 and 1872 a Palaeolithic ovate implement, possibly a handaxe, was found lying on the surface by General Pitt Rivers. The object was found on Alfred Road, in an area of London Clay. A Lower Palaeolithic handaxe was also found on Alfred Road by Lane Fox on London Clay beneath sand in an area of Lynch Hill Gravel geology.

### **5.2 Prehistoric**

- 5.2.1 English Heritage - Greater London Sites and Monuments Record cites the discovery of a blade of unspecified prehistoric nature at Acton Vale near the sewage farm.

### **5.3 Roman**

- 5.3.1 There is currently no evidence of Roman exploitation in the immediate vicinity.

### **5.4 Medieval**

- 5.4.1 Medieval and Tudor occupation is recorded in close proximity to Goldsmith Close at the site of the Manor House, East Acton Lane. An unclassified Medieval settlement is documented by English Heritage - Greater London Sites and Monuments Record, also in East Acton Lane.
- 5.4.2 A Medieval key was found at the allotment gardens in Ealing.

### **5.5 Post-Medieval**

- 5.5.1 Acton Central Railway station on the North and South Western Junction Railway opened in 1853.

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<sup>1</sup> Archaeological Data Service



## 6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The watching brief followed a site specific method statement<sup>2</sup> which had been approved by Gill Hummerstone of English Heritage, designed to monitor the excavation by machine of groundbeam foundation trenches at the site.
- 6.2 The trenches were excavated using a mini-digger fitted with a flat-bladed ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. Excavation by machine was undertaken in spits and continued through the ground until natural deposits were reached.
- 6.3 Trenches were excavated to a width of 0.75m and at a depth of 1.90m below ground level (Figure 3). Levels were taken from spot heights at Shaa Road to the north, East Acton Lane to the east and East Churchfield Road to the south of the site. By this method, existing ground level at the site was estimated at approximately 19.00m OD at its highest in the northwest corner.
- 6.4 All recording systems adopted during the investigation were fully compatible with those most widely used elsewhere in London, that is those developed out of the Department of Urban Archaeology Site Manual, now published by the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS 1994). Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated and exposed were entered onto pro-forma recording sheets. All plans and sections of archaeological deposits were recorded on polyester based drawing film, the plans being drawn at a scale of 1:50 and the sections at 1:10. The OD height of all principal strata were calculated and indicated on the appropriate plans and sections. A full photographic record of the investigations was also prepared, using digital images.
- 6.5 The trenches were detailed by the architectural drawings for the proposed houses and tied into the Ordnance Survey grid.

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<sup>2</sup> Brown, G 2006

## **7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL PHASE DISCUSSION**

### **7.1 Phase 1: Natural Gravels and Silt**

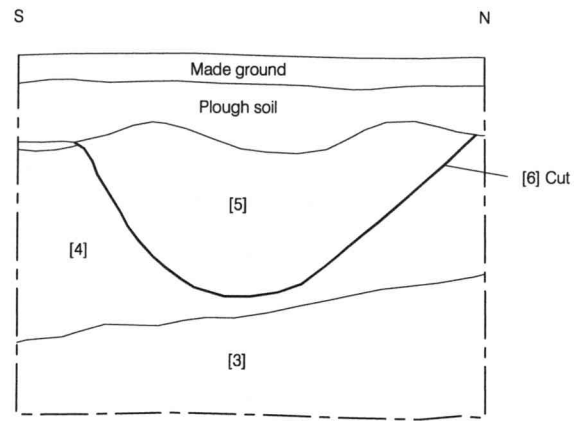
- 7.1.1 The earliest deposit encountered was layer [3], natural silt thought to be Langley silt. The silt was a compact deposit, mid greyish red/brown in colour with marbling of grey in places, at an approximate level of 18.60m OD. The silt covered the entire base of the trenches. Sealing the silt to the west of the site was layer [4], a deposit of loose, mid yellowish-red sand and gravel thought to be Lynch Hill gravel. Elsewhere the silt [3] was sealed by [2], a mid brownish grey sandy gravel about 0.45m thick, similar in consistency to [4] and taking on the hue of it at the interface with [3].

### **7.2 Phase 2: Undated deposits and features**

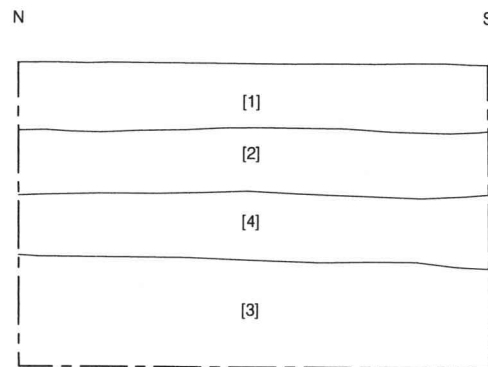
- 7.2.1 Sealing the Lynch Hill Gravel was layer [7], a 0.40m thick layer of mid grey brown sand silt. This was best preserved to the east of the site but was visible elsewhere. This is interpreted as a ploughsoil.
- 7.2.2 Visible in the western most foundation trench section was an elongated pit, or possibly the termination of a ditch [6]. It was oriented approximately East-West and at least 3.00m long. The fill [5] was markedly similar to if not indistinguishable from the ploughsoil [7]. A fragment of well preserved animal bone was the only find recovered from the fill.

### **7. Phase 3: 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> Century deposits**

- 7.3.1 Sealing the ploughsoil [4] and the pit [6] was a 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century topsoil recognisable by its dark brownish grey hue with visible soot and coal waste inclusions. This was about 0.20m at its thickest and was largely mixed with the demolition material from the destruction of Manor Farm Cottages over the whole of the site.



Section 1  
East facing



Section 6  
West facing



## **8 INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 The principal objectives of the archaeological watching brief was to determine the presence or absence of archaeological activity relating to Palaeolithic activities recorded in the gravels, the nature of any prehistoric activity, whether there is evidence for exploitation in the Roman period and is there evidence relating to the Medieval Town at East Acton within the site. No archaeological features from any significant period were observed.
- 8.2 The earliest datable evidence of human activity at the site dated to the post medieval period and consisted of a large elongated pit. This predated the 19<sup>th</sup> century Manor Farm Cottages and their associated garden soil but the condition of the animal bone find and the nature of the backfill of the pit suggest a late post medieval date.
- 8.3 The watching brief has confirmed that there are no significant archaeological deposits or features on the site.

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Peter Gallagher of Riverplace Homes Ltd for commissioning and funding the work. We would also like to thank Gill hummerstone of English Heritage who monitored the work on behalf of the EBC.
- 9.2 The author would like to thank Dave Harris for the illustrations and Gary Brown for his project management and editing. Thanks also to Gary Brown for providing all the relevant background material. Thanks to Peter Gallagher for his kind assistance and excellent welfare facilities on site.



## **10 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Brown, G. 2007 'Project Design For An Archaeological Watching Brief At 1-3 Manor Farm Cottages, Goldsmith Close, East Acton Lane, Acton. ', Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, unpub rep

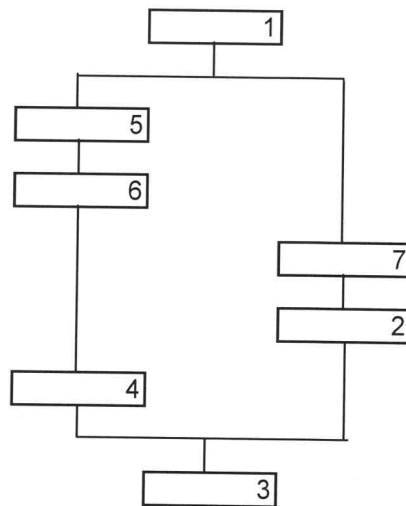
Archaeological Data Service.



## **APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX**



## Appendix 2: site matrix



## APPENDIX 3: OASIS REPORT FORM

### 10.1 OASIS ID: preconst1-24476

#### Project details

Project name 1-3 Goldsmith Lane Acton

Short description of the project This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief at the former Manor Farm Cottages, East Acton Lane, London Borough of Ealing (Figure 1). The work was commissioned by Peter Gallagher of Riverplace Homes Ltd and took place between 25th January and 27th February 2007. The development site is located within an Archaeological Priority Zone as defined in the London Borough of Ealing Unitary Development Plan. The site is bounded to the west and south by Goldsmiths Close, the east by East Acton Lane and the north by 152 East Acton Lane. The watching brief monitored the excavation by machine of foundation trenches for three houses across the area of the site. The trenches contained Langley silt overlain by Lynch Hill Gravel, sealed by a plough soil and 19th century garden soil. No archaeological deposits or features pre-dating the post medieval period were encountered during the watching brief.

Project dates Start: 25-01-2007 End: 27-02-2007

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes EAA-07 - Sitecode

Type of project Research project

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Residential 1 - General Residential

#### Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON EALING ACTON 1-3 Manor Farm Cottages, Goldsmith Close

Site coordinates TQ 2095 8045 51.5095234466 -0.256932730760 51 30 34 N 000 15 24 W Point

Height OD Min: 18.70m Max: 19.00m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Gary Brown
Project director/manager	Gary Brown
Project supervisor	Strephon Duckering
Type of sponsor/funding body	Riverplace Homes Limited
Name of sponsor/funding body	Riverplace Homes Limited

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Museum of London
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### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	A forthcoming report
Entered by	Strephon Duckering (strephy@hotmail.com)
Entered on	1 March 2007