

**An Archaeological Watching Brief on Land at 246-250 High Road, Ilford,
London Borough of Redbridge.**

Site Code: HDI07

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 4410 8650

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Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, November 2007**

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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological monitoring and recording exercise (watching brief) undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited during groundworks on land at 246-250 High Road, Ilford, London Borough of Redbridge.
- 1.2 Excavation of foundation trenches and general ground reduction were monitored for the presence of archaeological deposits, and layers present were recorded.
- 1.3 The earliest deposit recognised was natural brickearth, the top of which lay 0.55m below the surface (at 11.85m OD) at the eastern edge of the site, but had been heavily truncated by recent activity, to depths often exceeding 1.5m, elsewhere. At the eastern edge of the site, the brickearth had been truncated by the foundation cut for a brick drain. It was overlain by up to 0.30m of well-compacted, mid greyish brown gravel, which had been laid down as bedding for a Tarmacadam surface. This surface was 0.15m thick and had been overlaid by a modern deposit of moderately compacted, light greyish brown, gravelly sand, up to 0.10m thick and recorded at an upper elevation of 12.40m OD. Across most of the site, however, the brickearth was overlain by substantial deposits of demolition rubble, capped with a modern piling mat. No archaeological finds or features were present.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited on land at 246-250 High Road, Ilford, London Borough of Redbridge during the excavation of foundation trenches and general ground reduction prior the construction of new, high-rise residential property.
- 2.2 The watching brief was carried out on the 29th – 30th October and the 7th November 2007 and was commissioned by CgMs Consulting. The work was undertaken according to policies contained within the London Borough of Redbridge Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted November 2003.
- 2.3 The site is roughly 'L-shaped' in plan and is bounded to the north by Griggs Approach, which is raised above ground level at this point. To the east it is bounded by a roundabout that links Griggs Approach to Riches Road, which forms the southern boundary. The property at 244 High Road forms the western edge to the site. (Fig. 1).
- 2.4 The watching brief was undertaken across the whole site and included the monitoring of the excavation of foundation trenches and general ground reduction (Fig. 2).
- 2.5 The National Grid Reference of the site is TQ 4410 8650
- 2.6 The site was assigned the code HDI01.

- 2.7 The watching brief was carried out by Peter Boyer of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. and the archaeological consultant was Lorraine Darton of CgMs Consulting. The project was managed by Tim Bradley for Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.

3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 3.1 The 1:50,000 series British Geological Survey (Sheet 257 - Romford) shows the site to be underlain by deposits of Eocene London Clay. These are overlain by Hackney Gravel River Terrace Deposits of Pleistocene age, which are in turn overlain by Ilford Silt (Brickearth). The sequence is capped by modern, unconsolidated deposits.
- 3.2 The sites lies on generally flat ground towards the western end of Ilford High Road, though the flat surface is more a reflection of modern levelling and development than the underlying geology. The nearest water course is the River Roding, which flows southwards a little over 800m WSW of the site.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Archaeological and Historical Background together with the potential for the survival of remains on the site are covered in detail within the desk-based assessment written by Lorraine Darton and Suzanne Gailey (2006)¹. The assessment is summarised here.
- 4.2 Evidence of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic activity has been recovered within 750m of the study site during gravel extraction in the 19th century. Handaxes of all types, levallois flakes, scrapers and arrowheads have been identified. Drainage ditches dug during the construction of Richmond Road c. 300m southwest of the study site exposed mammoth, bison and rhinoceros bones. A watching brief at Balfour Road some 500m northwest of the site revealed a gravel lens between the brickearth and terrace gravels containing several pieces of struck flint identified as Mesolithic. No evidence of Neolithic activity is recorded within 750m of the study site.
- 4.3 An early Bronze Age barbed and tanged arrowhead was found in 1959 during works at Windsor Road approximately 750m southwest of the study site. There is no evidence of Iron Age activity within 750m of the site.
- 4.4 It is believed that the Roman road from London to Chelmsford and Colchester ran on a very close alignment to the current Ilford High Road, which bounds the study site to the north. While the Roman road itself probably lies under the existing road, Roman roadside activities such as land division and field boundaries could be present.

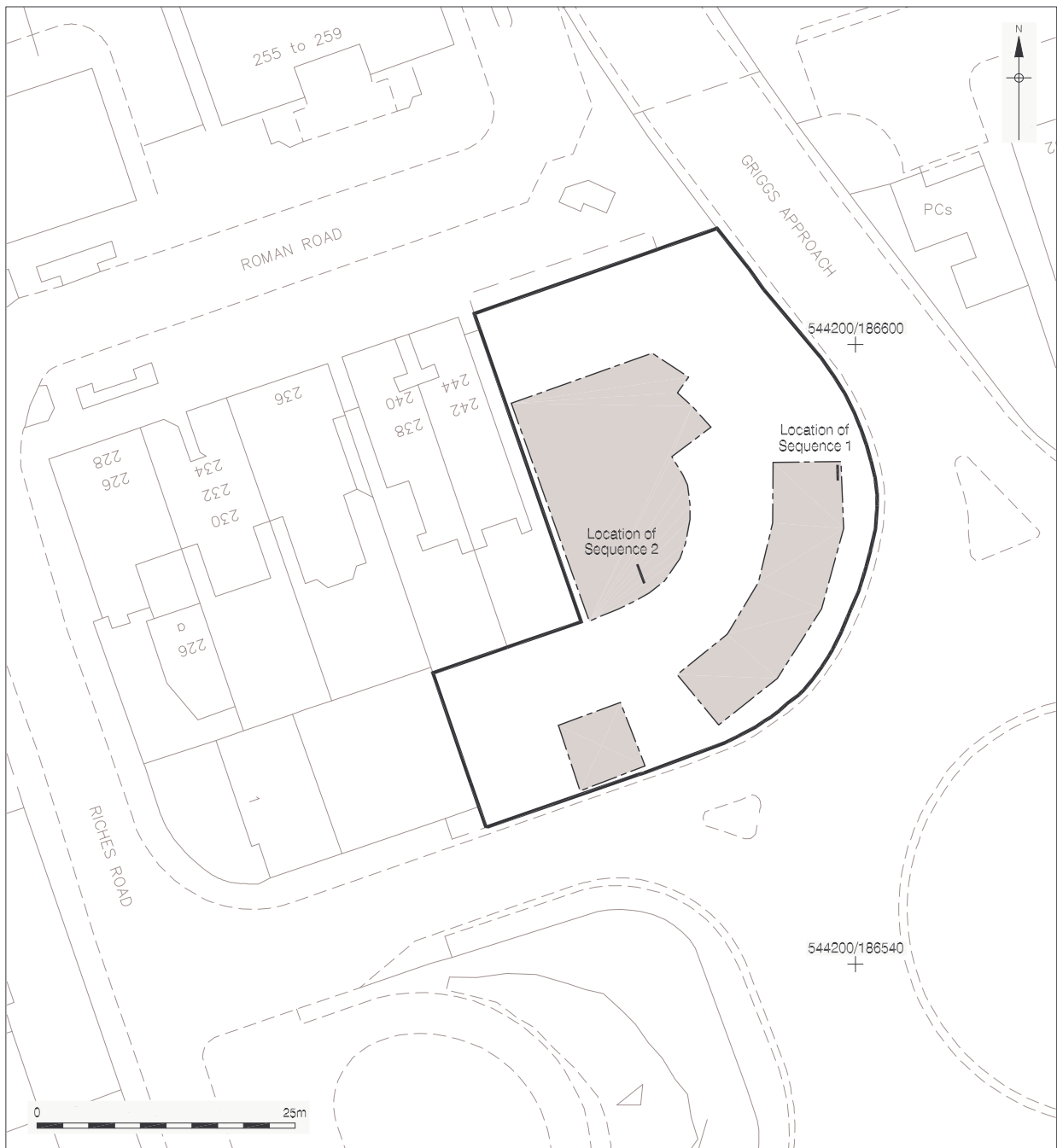
¹ Darton, L. and Gailey, S. 2006 *Desk Based Assessment: 246-250 High Road, Ilford*. CgMs Consulting.

- 4.5 Ilford is a pre-Norman place-name existing before AD1086 and relating to a ford over the River Roding. It is likely the study site lay in agricultural land to the east of the core of settlement which focussed around the river, although evidence of roadside activity could be present. In the Domesday Book *Illefort* (Ilford) is described as the land belonging to one Golceline Loremar.
- 4.6 A leper hospital was founded by the Abbess of Barking in 1140. Evidence of the early foundations of the hospital chapel and associated burials were recovered during excavation at St Mary's Hospital, High Road in the 1950s, approximately 500m south west of the study site.
- 4.7 The study site was located to the east of the core of settlement activity as indicated on later post medieval maps. Chapman and Andre's map of 1777 shows the site on the road from London to Colchester (High Road) located in agricultural land. It is therefore likely that the study site lay in agricultural land during both the medieval and post medieval periods.
- 4.8 The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map shows the study site lay within agricultural land, but by 1896 it was occupied by 3 terraced houses and gardens fronting onto the High Road and part of Queens Road. The southwestern corner of the site lay within the rear gardens of two terraced houses, and the eastern part of the site was occupied by part of Queens Road. Between 1896 and 1919 the three terraced houses and gardens on the east of the site were demolished and redeveloped as a Cinema, set slightly back from the High Road. The remainder of the site was unchanged. By 1938 the cinema had been converted to a Billiards Hall and extended northwards to the Road frontage.
- 4.9 There was no subsequent change to the footprint of the study site marked on the Ordnance Survey maps until 1962. By this time the hall had been rebuilt and extended as the Palais nightclub extending into the southwestern corner of the site over the former back gardens. Between 1975 and 1987 Griggs Approach flyover was constructed removing Queens Road. The 1987 Ordnance Survey shows the east of the study site as open ground. There have been no subsequent changes to the study site apart from minor details.
- 4.10 Archaeological evaluations at Hainault Street c. 500m northwest of the study site, on the High Road c. 500m east of the site and a watching brief carried out at the former Centreway Shopping Centre, High Road approximately 300m west of the study site failed to find any significant archaeological finds or features.



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Figure 1
Site Location
1:12,500 at A4



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 Areas of Watching Brief

Figure 2
Trench Location
1:625 at A4

5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 The watching brief was conducted according to a specification prepared by CgMs Consulting². The fieldwork was designed to assess the presence or absence of significant archaeological remains, which may have been exposed by the excavation of foundation trenches and general ground reduction across the site.
- 5.2 The excavated foundation trenches were initially examined in order to determine whether any significant features or deposits had been exposed during their excavation. This was done in order that the recording of any significant remains could be prioritised. However, assessment of all open trenches revealed no significant archaeological remains. An exposed sample sequence was then located, recorded and photographed.
- 5.3 The second phase of work was the monitoring of ground reduction across the site for the presence of significant archaeological remains. This work revealed only recent disturbance deposits overlying natural Brickearth. Again, sample sequences were recorded and photographed.
- 5.4 The locations of the recorded sequences were recorded on a site base plan and reduced levels were extrapolated from the site surveyor's elevation records.
- 5.5 The completed archive will be deposited with the appropriate local authority office, in this case the Museum of London LAARC.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

- 6.1 Site stratigraphic sequences were observed at a number of locations, though only two broad sequences were recorded: At the eastern edge of the site a sequence through natural and recent deposits, including a structural element, was recorded (Sequence 1). Across the remainder of the site, natural levels were overlain by recent disturbance deposits, with no intermediate material apparent (Sequence 2).
- 6.2 In Sequence 1 the earliest deposit was a moderately compacted, mid brownish orange silt (natural brickearth), at least 1.15m thick and recorded at an upper elevation of 11.95m OD. It was truncated by the construction cut [7] for a brick structure [6]. Only the edge of the feature was exposed in section and the cut was not entirely clear, though was at least 1.15m deep. The structure was somewhat fragmentary, though up to eleven courses survived to a height of at least 1.15m and it measured at least 1.40m NW-SE. It was constructed from yellow, machine-pressed bricks, laid in courses comprising alternating headers and stretchers. It

² Darton, L. 2006 *Specification for an Archaeological Monitoring Exercise: 246-250 High Road, Ilford, London Borough of Redbridge*. CgMs Consulting.

appears that it was part of some kind of brick-built drainage structure. Adhering to part of the southwest face of the wall was a variably compacted, mixed dark greyish brown to mid reddish brown, mixed gravely sand and sandy silt. This was up to 1m thick and was recorded at an upper elevation of 11.75m OD, though it was not clear whether it was part of the fill of the drainage feature, or later material that had been deposited against the wall.

- 6.3 The natural brickearth and the brick structure were overlain by a well compacted, mid greyish brown gravel deposit [5], up to 0.30m thick and acting as bedding for an overlying Tarmacadam surface [4]. This was up to 0.15m thick and recorded at an upper elevation of 12.30m OD. The Tarmacadam surface was overlain by up to 100mm of a modern, moderately compacted layer of light greyish brown, gravely sand [3]. This was truncated by the foundation construction cut [10] for the current development.
- 6.4 In Sequence 2 the earliest deposit was again the natural brickearth [2], however it had been heavily truncated and was recorded at a maximum upper elevation of 10.85m OD. It was overlain by at least 1.15m of mixed demolition rubble [1], the surface of which, had been levelled at 12.00m OD. This was overlain by a recent, 0.40m thick piling mat [11].
- 6.5 Taking the sequences together, four broad phases could be identified. Phase 1 relates to the natural brickearth. Phase 2 comprises the brick structure associated with the former building on the site. Phase 3 relates to deposits laid down, apparently when the building was in use, and Phase 4 relates to modern activity.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The earliest deposit present was natural brickearth, which was observed across most of the site, though it had been subject to widespread truncation. At the eastern edge of the site remnants of the previous development were visible in the edges of foundation construction cuts. Across the rest of the site, only evidence of recent activity was visible above the natural brickearth. No archaeological finds or features pre-dating the latter 20th century were present.

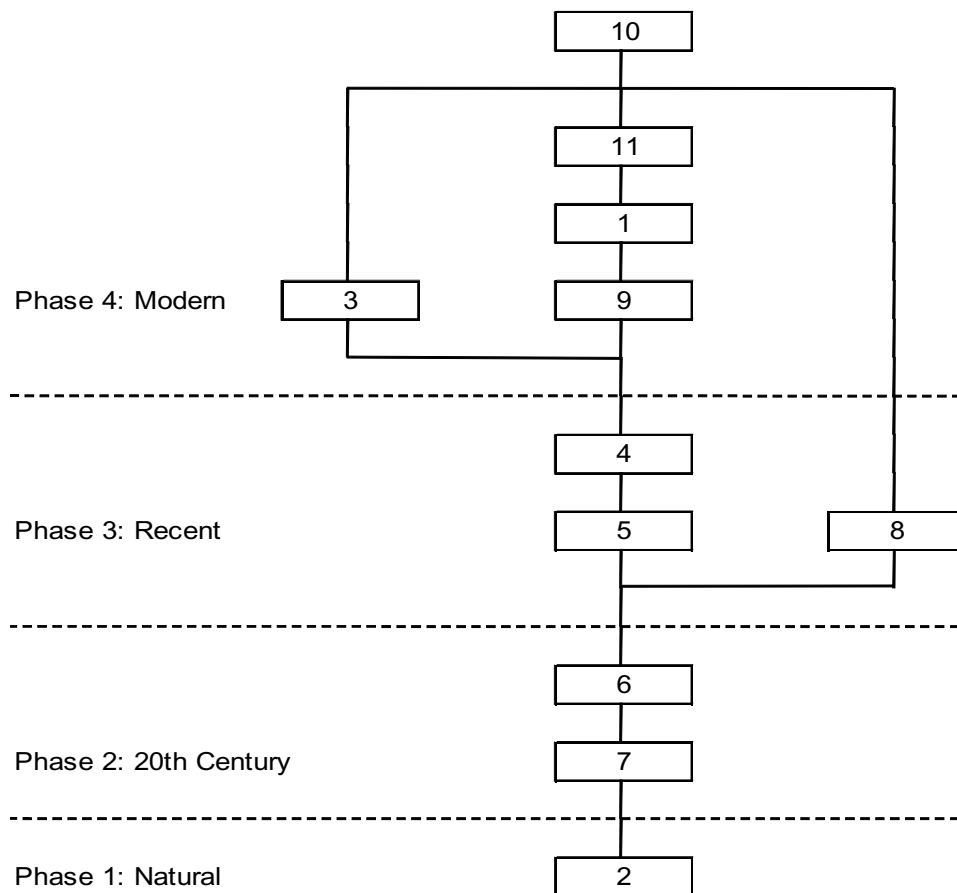
8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Lorraine Darton of CgMs Consulting for commissioning this project on behalf of Galliard Homes Limited. The author would like to thank Martin Richardson, the Site Manager for Galliard Homes Limited, for his help during the fieldwork phase, and Hayley Baxter for the illustrations. Tim Bradley managed the project and edited this report.

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

CONTEXT	TYPE	AREA/ SEQUENCE	PHASE	UPPER ELEVATION	COMMENTS
1	Layer	2	4	12.00	Demolition rubble
2	Layer	1, 2	1	11.85	Natural Brickearth
3	Layer	1	4	12.40	Layer over Tarmac
4	Layer	1	3	12.30	Tarmac surface
5	Layer	1	3	12.15	Bedding for Tarmac
6	Masonry	1	2	11.95	Brick drain
7	Cut	1	2	11.95	Construction cut for brick drain
8	Layer	1	3	11.75	Drain backfill?
9	Cut	2	4	12.40	Demolition truncation cut
10	Cut	2	4	12.00	Foundation cut
11	Layer	2	4	12.40	Piling mat

APPENDIX 2: MATRIX



APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-34176

Project details

Project name 246-250 High Road, Ilford

Short description of the project Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited undertook a watching brief during groundworks on land at 246-250 High Road, Ilford, London Borough of Redbridge. Excavation of foundation trenches and general ground reduction was monitored for the presence of archaeological deposits, and layers present were recorded. The earliest deposit recognised was natural brickearth, the top of which lay 0.55m below the surface (at 11.85m OD) at the eastern edge of the site, but had been heavily truncated by recent activity, to depths often exceeding 1.5m, elsewhere. At the eastern edge of the site, the brickearth had been truncated by the foundation cut for a brick drain. It was overlain by up to 0.30m of well-compacted, mid greyish brown gravel, which had been laid down as bedding for a Tarmacadam surface. This surface was 0.15m thick and had been overlaid by a modern deposit of moderately compacted, light greyish brown, gravelly sand, up to 0.10m thick and recorded at an upper elevation of 12.40m OD. Across most of the site, however, the brickearth was overlain by substantial deposits of demolition rubble, capped with a modern piling mat. No archaeological finds or features were present.

Project dates Start: 29-10-2007 End: 07-11-2007

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes HDI07 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 3 - Built over
Monument type	WALL Modern
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON REDBRIDGE ILFORD 246-245 High Road, Ilford
Postcode	IG1
Study area	1500.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 4410 8650 51.5584507612 0.078952288934 51 33 30 N 000 04 44 E Point
Height OD	Min: 10.85m Max: 11.95m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	CgMs Consults Ltd
Project brief	CgMs Consulting

originator

Project design
originator

Lorraine Darton

Project
director/manager

Tim Bradley

Project supervisor

Peter Boyer

Type of
sponsor/funding
body

Developer

Name of
sponsor/funding
body

Galliard Homes

Project archives

Physical Archive
Exists?

No

Physical Archive
recipient

LAARC

Digital Archive
recipient

LAARC

Digital Contents

'Stratigraphic'

Digital Media
available

'Spreadsheets'

Paper Archive
recipient LAARC

Paper Media
available 'Context sheet', 'Matrices', 'Photograph'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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London Borough of Redbridge

Author(s)/Editor(s) Boyer, P.

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