

EXCAVATIONS
AT
THE OLD VICARAGE
BARKING
BA-OV 92

26/2/92 - 6/3/92

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ABSTRACT

Excavation of three trenches at the Old Vicarage, Barking revealed twelve phases of archaeological activity dating probably from the Post-Medieval to the Present day.

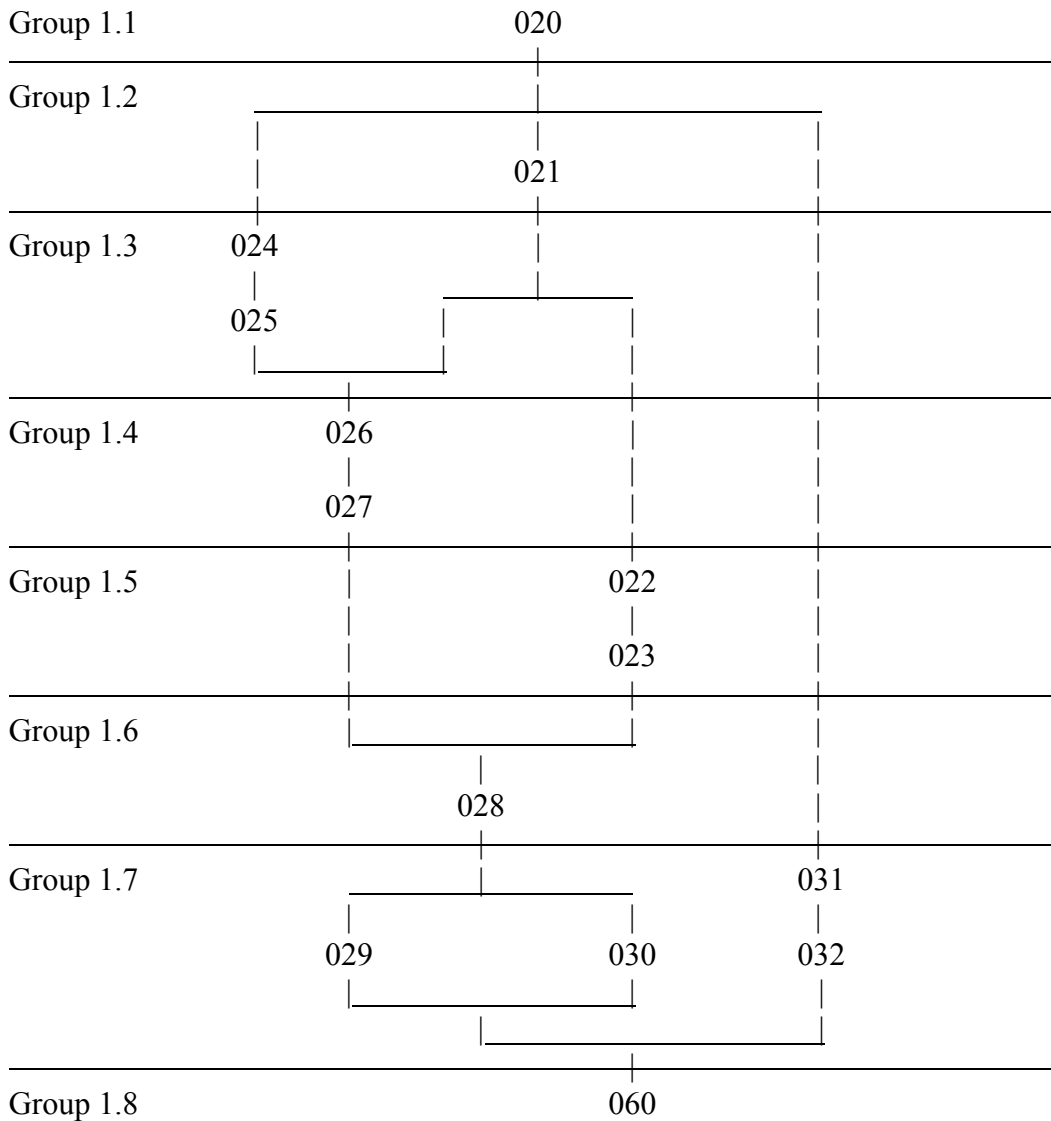
INTRODUCTION

The Passmore Edwards Museum undertook an eight day excavation at the Old Vicarage, Barking (see Figure 1: the site location), for the Countryside Properties PLC who kindly provided the funding. Three trenches were excavated within the area of proposed new buildings (see figure 2 for the trench locations). The trenches were excavated down to natural gravel, under archaeological supervision to a maximum depth of 1.30m. The work started on the 26/2/92 and finished on the 3/2/92. The site was negotiated and directed by Mr Ken MacGowan. It was jointly supervised by Joanne Saunders and Chris Jarrett who made up the work force.

There were two methods of excavation. Firstly, the removal of material by hymac to a depth of between 0.60 and 1.30m. Secondly, the sections and the base of the Trenches were cleaned by trowel and shovel in order to reveal the existence of features, which were subsequently excavated and recorded. Information taken from the sections did not always allow the contexts complete shape and dimensions to be recorded and this is indicated within the text.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS: TRENCH 1

Trench Matrix: Trench 1



Group 1.1

020 - layer; grey silty sand
7.00m (E-W) x 3.00m (N-S) x 0.07m deep

This layer represented a layer of modern builders material and was at surface level.

C/S: 1.1-7
B/W: 1.1-7
Section: 1,2
Plan: -

Phase: XII

Group 1.2

021 - layer; black sandy silt

3.30m (E-W) x 3.00m (N-S) x 0.18m deep

This Group represented a garden soil.

C/S: 1.1-7

B/W: 1.1-7

Section: 1

Plan: -

Phase: XI

Group 1.3

024 - fill; dark brown sandy silt

3.00m (N-S) x 2.78m (E-W) x 0.76m deep

025 - cut; steep concave sides from top to base rounded base

3.00m (N-S) x 2.78m (E-W) x 0.76m deep

This group represented a cut of uncertain function.

C/S: 1.1-7

B/W 1.1-7

Sections: 1

Plan: -

Phase: XI

Group 1.4

026 - fill; dark brown silty sand

2.16m (E-W) x 3.00m (N-S) x 1.20m deep

027 - cut; linear, abrupt east edge from top to base, steeply concave west edge
from top to base, flat base.

2.16m (E-W) x 3.00m (N-S) x 1.20m deep

This group represents a linear pit running North - South, with the base rising in the North facing section. Its function was uncertain.

C/S: 1.1-7

B/W: 1.1-7

Section: 1

Plan: -

Phase: VIII

Group 1.5

022 - fill, greyish brown sandy silt

7.00m (E-W) x 0.68m (N-S) x 0.78m deep

023 - cut, abrupt sides from top to base, flat base

7.00m (E-W) x 0.68m (N-S) x 0.78m deep

This cut and fill represented Group 1.4 and its function was uncertain but could be suggested as a trench for a utility pipe which was never laid.

C/S: 1.11-12

B/W: 1.9-10

Section: -

Plan: 23

Phase: VII C

Group: 1.6

028 - layer; light brown clay sand

3.00m (N-S) x 2.80m (E-W) x 0.56m deep

Context (028) was interpreted as a leached out agricultural soil and was probably in use for a long period of time.

C/S: 1.1-7

B/W: 1.1-7

Section: 1

Plan: -

Phase: IV

Group 1.7

031 - fill, brown sandy silt

0.40m (E-W) x 0.32m (N-S) x 0.12m deep

032 - cut, sub-circular in plan, steep edges from top to base, rounded base

This group represented a post-hole and its fill excavated at the level of natural gravel. No finds were recovered to date it.

C/S: 1.11-12

B/W: 1.8-9

Section: -

Plan: 31

Phase: III A

Group 1.7

029 - layer; reddish brown sandy clay
 3.00m (N-S) x 2.80m (E-W) x 0.42m deep
 030 - layer; orange brown sandy clay
 3.00m (N-S) x 1.86m (E-W) x 0.71m deep

This group represents two layers of natural brick earth which were probably contemporary with each other. There was little evidence to suggest a reason for the difference in the two brick earths, however (029) contained bands of gravel and may have been subject to fluvial activity.

C/S: 1.1-7
 B/W: 1.1-7
 Section: 1
 Plan: -
 Phase: II

Group 1.8

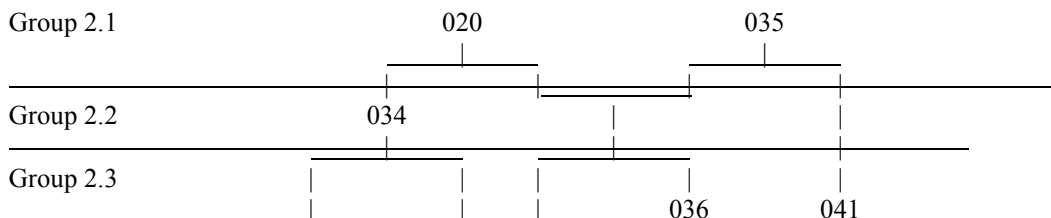
060 - layer, reddish brown silty sand, frequent gravel
 8.00m (E-W) x 3.00m (N-S) x 0.10m deep

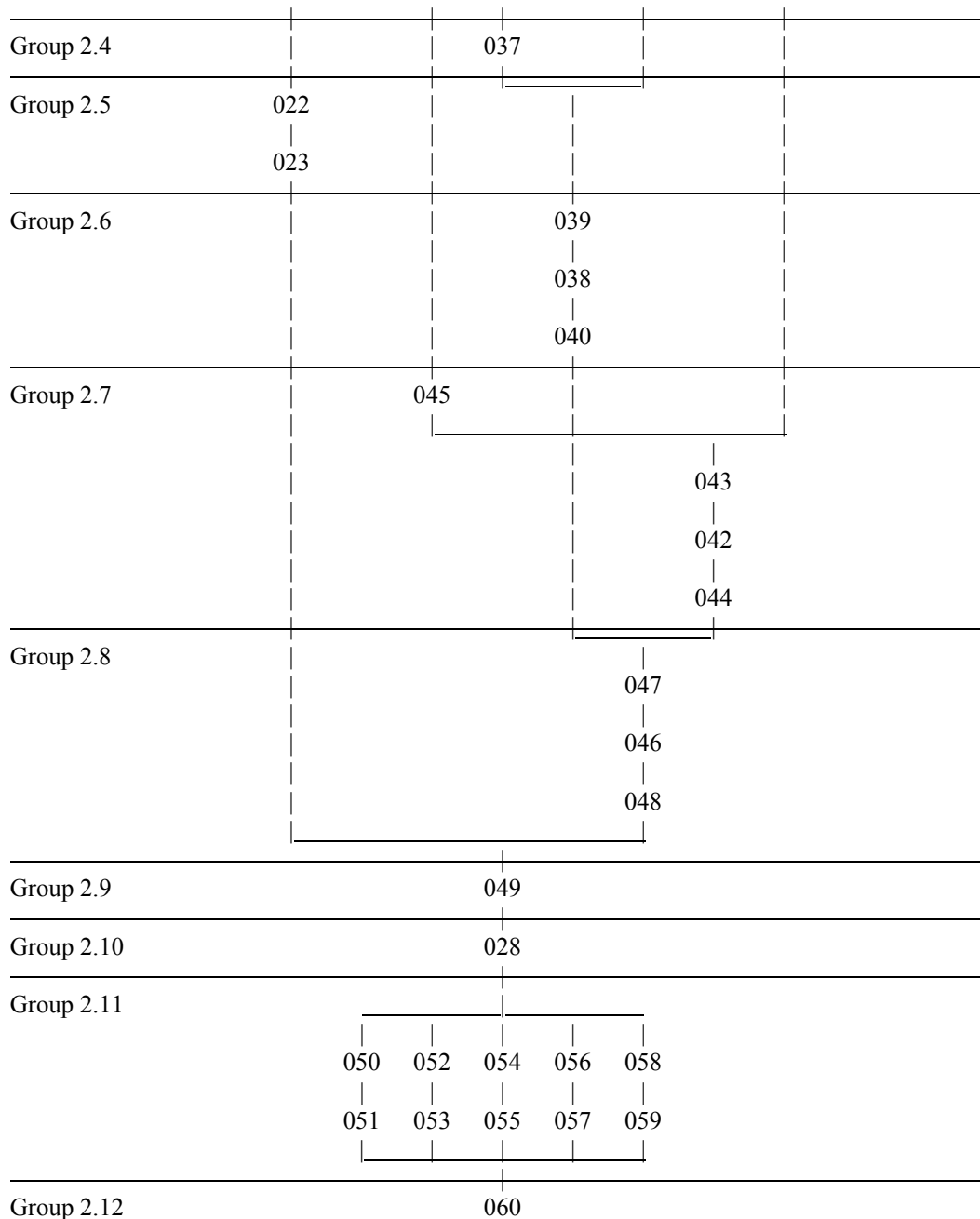
The natural gravel made up this group.

C/S: 1.11-12
 B/W: 1.9-10
 Section: 1
 Plan: 1
 Phase: 1

GROUP DISCUSSIONS; TRENCH 2

Trench Matrix: Trench 2





Group 2.1

020 - layer; grey silty sand

7.00m (N-S) x 3.00m (E-W) x 0.07m deep

035 - layer; light brown sandy clay

3.30m (E-W) x 0.25m (N-S) x 0.20m deep

This group represented a layer of modern building material (020) and a dump of horticultural soil.

C/S: 1.13-14
B/W: 1.11-12
Section: 2
Plan: -
Phase: XII

Group 2.2

034 - layer, light grey brown silty sand and black tarmac
8.00m (N-S) x 3.50m (E-W) x 0.32m deep

This group contained a certain make-up layer which contained tarmac, brick, tile, broken drain pipe and lenses of sand.

C/S: 1.13-14
B/W: 1.11-12
Section: 2
Plan: -
Phase: XI

Group 2.3

036 - fill, grey silty clay
1.70m (E-W) x 0.74m (N-S) x 0.90m deep
041 - fill, brown sandy clay
1.00m (N-S) x 0.70m (E-W) x 0.27m deep

This group of fills represented the back-filling of two disused structures. Fill (036) filled the area between wall (038), a possible cellar and (041) filled the area between wall (042), a certain man-hole.

C/S: 1.15-16
B/W: 1.13-14
Section: -
Plan: 2
Phase: X

Group 2.4

037 - layer, grey sandy silt
0.74m (N-S) x 0.12 m deep

This group was a layer of garden soil that lay on the western side of wall (038).

C/S: -
B/W: -
Section: -

Plan: -
Phase: VII B

Group 2.5

022 - fill, greyish brown sandy silt
3.50m (E-W) x 0.68m (N-S) x 0.78m deep
023 - cut, linear abrupt edge from top to base, flat base
3.50m (E-W) x 0.68m (N-S) x 0.78m deep

This group of a cut and its fill extended into Trench 1, its function was uncertain but may have been for a drain pipe which was never completed.

C/S: 1.13-14, 1.17-18
B/W: 1.11-12, 1.15-16
Section: -
Plan: 2
Phase: VII C

Group 2.6

039 - fill, yellow brown sandy clay
2.58m (E-W) x 0.12m (N-S) X 0.60m deep
038 - wall, English cross brick coursing
2.42m (E-W) x 0.36m (N-S) x 0.90m deep
040 - cut, abrupt edges base not excavated
2.58m (E-W) x 1.12m (N-S) x 0.60m deep

This group represents the construction of a wall, (038). The construction trench (040) was excavated and the wall (038) built within it. Then the construction trench back-filled with (039). The brick wall is part of a surviving garden wall and also functioned as an out-house building to the Vicarage. A barrel vaulted drain was also noted leading into the area within the walls from the man-hole (042). The area within the wall was back-filled with (036) and as this extended well below surface level it could be suggested that the out building had a basement. Wall (038) abutted wall (046). This group of contexts were not fully excavated to reveal their maximum depths owing to the lack of time available.

C/S: 1.15-16
B/W: 1.13 -14
Section: -
Plan: 2
Phase: VII B

Group 2.7

043 - fill, yellow brown silty sand

1.35m (N-S) x 1.25m (N-S) x 0.06m deep
042 - wall, no identifiable coursing to the brick work
1.24m (N-S) x 1.18m (E-W) x 0.27m
044 - cut, rectangular in plan, not excavated.
1.35m (N-S) x 1.25m (E-W) x 0.27m deep
045 - layer, dark grey silty sand
0.74m (N-S) x 0.12m deep

This group of contexts consisted of a construction trench for wall (042), which probably functioned as a man-hole for a barrel vaulted drain (observed but not recorded) built within wall (038) and was probably connected to the Vicarage to the South. The wall was constructed of mainly half bricks (probably re-used) and laid in no discernible coursing pattern. The wall was bonded into wall (038) and the construction trench cut fill (039) was back-fill between the construction trench and the man-hole. The lack of time did not allow for the complete excavation of these contexts and only observed dimensions were recorded. Layer (045) was a garden bed lying along the northern edge of wall (048) (Group 2.8) and sealed the construction cut back-fill.

C/S: 1.15-16
B/W: 1.14-14
Section: -
Plan: 2
Phase: VII B

Group 2.8

047 - fill, grey clay silt sand
0.60m (E-W) x 0.18m (N-S) x 0.45m deep
046 - wall, English cross brick coursing
0.66m (E-W) x 0.75m (N-S) x 0.60m deep
048 - cut, abrupt edges, base not exposed
0.86m (N-S) x 0.30m (E-W) x 0.45m deep

Layer (045) sealed the back-fill (047) for the construction trench (048) which contained the brick wall (048). The wall was largely seen in section, and was constructed of bricks in an English cross coursing pattern. It had a substantial foundation with a brick plinth at its base and was part of an out-house. Again, owing to the lack of time available this group of contexts were recorded as observed and not fully excavated to reveal the actual dimensions of the contexts.

C/S: 1.15-16

B/W: 1.13-14

Section: -

Plan: 2

Phase: VII A

Group 2.9

049 - layer, brown clay sandy silt

7.25m (N-S) x 1.50m (E-W) x .61m deep

This group consisted of a layer whose origins were uncertain and maybe of either Post-Medieval or Victorian age in date. It may have been an agricultural layer or possibly a make-up layer. It was cut by (023), a linear cut (see Group 2.5) and (048) the construction trench for wall (048).

C/S: -

B/W: -

Section: 2

Plan: -

Phase: VI

Group 2.10

028 - layer, light brown clay sand

7.25m (N-S) x 2.10m (E-W) x

This context represented a probable Post-Medieval agricultural soil which was probably leached. In Trench 2 it was overlain by (049).

C/S: 1.11-12

B/W: 1.13-14

Section: 2

Plan: -

Phase: IV

Group 2.11

050 - fill, light orange brown sandy silt

0.82m (N-S) x 0.44m (E-W) x 0.29m deep

051 - cut, sub-rectangular in plan, sides are steep from top to base, rounded base.

0.82m (N-S) x 0.44m (E-W) x 0.29m deep

052 - fill, light brown silt

0.82m (E-W) x 0.64m (E-W) x 0. m deep

053 - cut, rectangular in plan, edges are steep from top to base, flat base

0.82m (N-S) x 0.64m (E-W) x 0. m deep

- 054 - fill, yellow brown sandy silt
 0.60m (E-W) x 0.52m (N-S) x 0.15m deep
- 055 - cut, sub-circular in plan, steep edges
 from top to base, flat base
 0.60m (E-W) x 0.52 (N-S) x 0.15m deep
- 056 - light brown sandy silt
 0.52m (N-S) x 0.34m (E-W) x 0.20m
- 057 - cut, sub-circular in plan steep edges from
 top to base, rounded base
 0.52m (N-S) x 0.34m (E-W) x 0.20m
- 058 - light brown sandy silt
 0.60m (N-S) x 0.34m (E-W) x 0.30m deep
- 059 - cut, sub-circular in plan, steep edges
 from top to base, rounded base

This Group represented five post-holes probably forming a line of fence posts or possibly part of a rectangular structure 3.40m (N-S) x 3.05m (E-W), as observed. Unfortunately there were no floor levels observed and an absence of finds except, for burnt daub in fill (028) meant that the structure could not be dated.

C/S: 1.13-14
 B/W: 1.11-12
 Section: -
 Plan: 2
 Phase: III
 Group 2.12

- 060 - layer, reddish brown silty sand, frequent gravel
 7.75m (N-S) x 3.50m (E-W) x 0.05m deep

This layer of natural gravel covered the whole trench and the depth of this trench stopped when the gravel was reached. Post-holes (051), (053), (055), (057) and (059) cut the natural gravel.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS; TRENCH 3

Trench Matrix: Trench 3

Group 3.1

001

002

Group 3.2

003

005

004

006

Group 3.3

007

008

Group 3.4

011

012

Group 3.5	009
Group 3.6	010
Group 3.7	014
	015
Group 3.8	016
	017
Group 3.9	060

Group 3.1

001 - layer; orange brown sand

8.00m (E-W) x 3.00m (N-S) x 0.18m deep

002 - layer; grey silty sand with frequent gravel

8.00m (E-W) x 3.00m (N-S) x 0.20m deep

These layers represented a dump of modern builders sand overlying a gravel surfacing layer (002).

C/S: 1.23-24, 1.25-26

B/W: 1:23-24, 1.25-26

Section: 3

Plan: -

Phase: XII

Group 3.2

003 - linear fill, very dark grey sandy silt

3.00m (N-S) x 1.56 (E-W) x 0.36m deep.

004 - linear cut, steep sided edge from top to base the base is flat

3.00m (E-W) x 1.56 m (N-S) x 0.36m deep

005 - fill, reddish grey brown sandy silt

1.42m (E-W) x 0.55m deep

006 - cut, sloping concave edges from top to base base uneven

1.42m (E-W) x 0.55m deep

This group consisted of two cuts whose functions were uncertain. Cut (004) extended across the whole of the southern end of the trench and may have been made for the creation of a garden bed. Unfortunately Cut (006) was only seen in the South facing section and its full dimensions could not be ascertained and appeared not to have a drainage use.

C/S: 1.23-24, 1.25-26
B/W: 1.23-24, 1.25-26
Section: 3
Plan: -
Phase: XI

Group 3.3

007 - layer, brown sandy silt
8.00m (E-W) x 3.60m (N-S) x 0.12m deep
008 - layer, light reddish brown sandy silty clay
6.10m (E-W) x 3.60m (N-S) x 0.42m deep

This group consisted of a probable modern garden (007) soil overlying a probable agricultural soil(008).

C/S: 1.23-24, 1.25-26
B/W: 1.23-24, 1.25-26
Section: 3
Plan: -
Phase: VI

Group 3.4

011 - fill, very light grey brown silty sand
0.47m diameter 0.52m deep
012 - cut, west facing edge is steep from top to side, side
from side to base, the east facing edge is steep from
top to base, the base is pointed.

This group consists of a probable post-hole and may have been for a boundary fence.

C/S:1.23-24, 1.25-26
B/W:1.23-24, 1.25-26
Section: 3
Plan: -
Phase: V

Group 3.5

009 - layer, reddish brown clay silt

8.00m (E-W) x 3.60m (N-S) x 0.26m

010 - layer, light brown silt

3.60m (E-W) x 1.63m (N-S) x 0.38m deep

This group probably represents two agricultural soils with layer (009) being the latest.

C/S: 1.23-24, 1.25-26

B/W: 1.23-24, 1.25-26

Section: 3

Plan: -

Phase: IV

Group 3.6

014 - fill, brown silty sand

3.10m (N-S) x 0.88m (E-W) x 0.30m deep.

015 - cut, "U" shaped in plan as no returns were seen as they lay outside the area of excavation, all edges are steep from top to base, flat base.

3.10m (N-S) x 0.88m (E-W) x 0.30m deep

This group represents a "U" shaped ditch (015) filled with (014) which contained no finds to date it. Its function was possibly as a garden feature.

C/S: 1.23-24, 1.25-26

B/W: 1.23-24, 1.25-26

Section: -

Plan: 3

Phase: IIIB

Group 3.7

016 - fill, dark brown silty sand

0.64m (E-W) x 0.56m (N-S) x 0.15m deep

017 - cut, steep edges from top to base. flat base.

0.64m (E-W) x 0.56m (N-S) x 0.15m deep.

This group represents a probable linear ditch (cut by (015)) and contained no finds to date it.

C/S: 1.23-24, 1.25-26

B/W: 1:23-24, 1:25-26

Section: 3

Plan: 3

Phase: IIIA

Group 3.8

060 - layer, reddish brown silty sand, frequent gravel
8.00m (E-W) x 3.60m (N-S)

This layer represents the natural gravel or sub-soil.

C/S: 1.23-24, 1.25-26

B/W: 1.23-24, 1.25-26

Section: 3

Plan: 3, Phase: I

INTER-TRENCH PHASING

Phase I

Consists of Groups 1.9, 2.12 and 3.8

The earliest layer on site was represented by the natural gravel layer which dated from the Pleistocene and resulted from fluvial activity. It was found in all three trenches.

Phase II

Consists of Group 1.8

Two layers of Brick Earth found in Trench 1 represented this Phase. It was suggested that one of these layers, (029) was altered by some form of water action.

Phase III A

Consists of Groups 1.7, 2.11 and 3.7

In Trench 2 this Phase was represented by five post-holes forming a possible rectangular structure or probable line of fence posts. Unfortunately there were no finds except for some burnt daub found in the fill of post-hole (059). In Trench 1, a single post-hole possibly belonging to the structure in Trench 2, belonged to this phase. In Trench 3, this Phase was represented by a short length of linear ditch, which contained no finds to help date this Phase.

Phase III B

Consists of Group 3.8

This Phase consisted of a rectangular ditch in Trench 3 which cut an earlier linear ditch. The rectangular ditch may have formed a structure of an uncertain function. Again no finds were retrieved from its fill to date this feature.

Phase IV

Consists of Groups 1.6, 2.10 and 3.6

In Trench 3, this Phase was represented by two agricultural layers, (009) and (010) in Trench 3 and in Trenches 1 and 2 an agricultural layer (028). The finds date these layers to the Post-Medieval Period.

Phase V

Consists of Group 3.4

This phase was represented by a single post-hole in Trench III, and was probably dated to the Post-Medieval period by a fragment of tile.

Phase VI

Consists of Groups 2.9 and 3.3

This Phase was represented by two layers in Trench 2 and 3 and were probably Victorian in date and probably represented make-up layers.

Phase VII A

Consists of Group 2.8

In Trench 2, this phase was represented by a brick wall built for an out-house for the Vicarage. It probably dated to the Victorian Period.

Phase VII B

Consists of Groups 2.6 and 2.7

This phase again occurs in Trench 2 and represents another out house building abutting the wall of the previous phase. The brick walls of this Phase building had a brick manhole bonded into it, and from this manhole a barrel vaulted drain led south through the building of this Phase towards the Vicarage. A garden soil which sealed the foundation cut of the previous brick wall phase existed as a probable garden border.

Phase VII C

Consists of Groups 1.5 and 2.5

This Phase consisted of a back filled trench seen in Trench 2 and terminating in Trench 1. The trench was probably excavated for a service pipe which was never laid. The finds from the back fill showed it to be of Victorian date.

Phase VIII

Consists of Group 1.4

In Trench 1 this Phase consisted of a linear ditch orientated North-South and had no obvious function and no finds to date it other than its stratigraphic relationship.

Phase IX

Consists of Group 1.3

This Phase was represented in Trench 1 by a large cut of uncertain function. It cut a linear ditch in the previous Phase.

Phase X

Consists of Group 2.3

The out-buildings of the Vicarage described in Phases VII A and VII B, were demolished and the man-hole and buildings back-filled with fills which comprised this Phase.

Phase XI

Consists of Groups 1.2, 2.2, 2.4 and 3.2

This Phase consisted of a number of garden soils, a make-up layer and a cut. In Trench 1 There was a horticultural soil. In Trench 2 a make-up layer and a garden soil to the west of the brick wall described in Group 2.6 and Phase VII B. In Trench 3 a deep cut of uncertain function and a garden bed belonged to this Phase.

Phase XII

Consists of Groups 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1

This Phase represented a number of layers resulting from recent building activity on the site, a dump of garden soil and a layer of surfacing gravel. In Trench 1 and 2 a layer of builders sand and rubble was at surface level. In Trench 2, also at surface level was a dump of horticultural soil. A layer of builders sand overlay a layer of gravel surfacing in Trench 3.

SUMMARY

The excavations at The Old Vicarage, Barking was carried out to assess the existence of archaeological deposits. It was hoped to have revealed the existence of an area of the Medieval Barking settlement (however this seemed to have been immediately to the West of the site.

The excavation of the three Trenches on the site revealed twelve phases of natural and human activity. The earliest layer recorded on the site was the natural gravel deposited during the Quarternary period. Above the gravel two layers of brick earth were deposited, seen in Trench I. The next phase of activity was the excavation of a ditch in Trench III and five post-holes in Trench II which probably formed a fence or possibly a rectangular structure. The absence of finds did not allow this period of activity to be dated but a single fragment of tile may date these features to the Post-Medieval period. The next phase of activity was the digging of a rectangular ditch in Trench III and its function was uncertain as was its date as no finds were found associated with it. The next two phases of activity seemed to be concerned with the deposition of probable agricultural soils and could only be dated to the Post-Medieval period by the finds. The next phase of activity was that a single post-hole in Trench III was cut into one of the earlier agricultural soils. The following phase of activity seemed to be the dumping of probable make up layers in the late 18th or early 19th Centuries. The next phase of activity was seen in Trench II and was the construction of out houses for the main Vicarage building and a garden wall probably between 1777 and 1847 according to cartographic evidence. However these buildings may date to before 1777 and may have been erected at the same time as the Vicarage. The out houses contained a barrel vaulted drain and a man-hole as shown by the excavation. During the Victorian period a possible utility service pipe trench was excavated but a pipe was never laid. The following two phases of activity were seen in Trench I. Firstly a linear ditch of uncertain function was excavated which was later truncated by a large cut of an unknown function. Secondly, the following phase of activity was the demolition of the out buildings to the Vicarage which were dated to sometime during the Victorian period or afterwards by the pottery. The final phases were probably 20th Century in date and consisted of garden soils and make-up layers as well as a cut in Trench III of an uncertain function. The final phase of activity was that of recent building activity with the dumping of layers of sand, rubble and garden soil.

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence for historical activity on the site was largely gleaned from maps, however maps are not always updated accurately and therefore this should be noted. The earliest reference to the site is a map of 1653, which lists the area as a bowling alley of 3 rods and 7 perches. Possibly the post-holes of Phase X date from this time, however there was no evidence to support this. The boundaries of this field can be traced to the modern day. The 1777, Chapman and Andre map show that the Vicarage was in existence, but the map does not show any out houses. The Vicarage was built in the early 18th Century when the previous Vicarage on North Road was demolished about 1721 (VCH). The 1847 tithe map simply shows the existence of the Vicarage and the out buildings recorded in Trench 2 and this was the earliest date to which the out houses can be dated to. The 1864 O.S. map shows the Vicarage and the out houses clearly with the lay out of the gardens, showing lawns and a possible orchard. The house was approached from two wooded avenues both coming from Ripple Road. The 1897 O.S. map showed that there were five rooms to the out house aligned East-West of which only the most westerly room was recorded in Trench 2. The date of the demolition of the out houses is not known as they were still shown on the 1975 O.S. map and this may be inaccurate. No other features recorded during the excavation could be seen on the maps.

FINDS

Context +

2 sherd of Transfer Printed Ware (TPW)	19thC
2 sherds of Cream Ware (CREA)	19thC
2 sherds of Frechen Stoneware (FREC)	1550 - 1700
1 sherd of Brown Glazed Post-Medieval Red Ware (PMBR)	1600 - 1700
1 sherd late Sunderland Slipware (SUND)	19thC

Context 22

2 sherds of late London Stoneware (LONS)	19thC
1 sherd of Porcelain (PORC)	19thC/20thC
1 sherd of stoneware (oriental possibly)	unknown
2 sherds of Northern English Salt Glazed Stoneware(SAST)	18thC

Context 28

1 sherd of Post-Medieval Red Ware, white slipped (PMR)	1600 - 1800
1 piece of calcined flint	

Context 36

1 sherd of late London Stoneware (LONS)	
1 sherd of Brown glazed Post-Medieval Red Ware (PMBR)	1600- 1800

Context 47

2 sherds of Cream Ware (CREA)	18thC
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The pottery all dated from the Post-Medieval and Victorian periods and were largely residual, therefore the pottery could only be used as a broad dating aid.

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