Evaluation at Victoria Street,

Stratford, London E15

HW VS 93

LDPEM/ACHW/221

14/4/93

Level III Report

M Bell

Passmore Edwards Museum 1993

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Abstract

This evaluation showed possible ploughsoil deposits underneath possible post-medieval rubbish dumps and building foundations.

Introduction

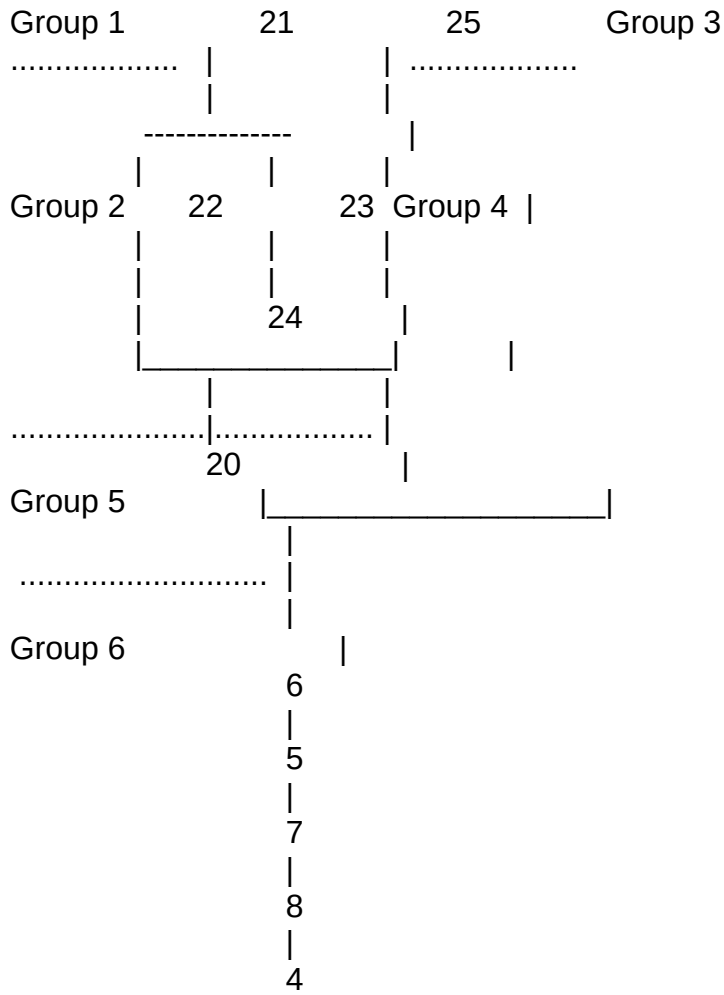
A watching brief was conducted by members of the Passmore Edwards Museum on 14/4/93 during test pit evaluation of the site by Simon Quarrel of Soil Consultants Ltd. at Victoria Street Stratford. The work was funded by the East London Housing Association, the developers of the site. The area is bounded by Victoria Street to the south, Tramway to the west and the buildings fronting Stratford Broadway and Romford Road to the north.

Method

Eleven soil evaluation pits, measuring approximately 3m by 1.5m by 3m deep, were dug by Soil Consultants Ltd. for soil evaluation purposes using a JCB. Archaeologists were present when these test pits were dug and sections of the test pits were recorded at an approximate scale of 1:20. The deposits were recorded on context sheets. No photographs or levels were taken.

Test Pit Summary

Test Pit One
Matrix



Group Discussion

Group 1:
21 layer; light brown sand
Section 2

Modern dump.

Group 2:
22 layer; concrete surface
Section 2

A modern surface.

Group 3:
25 foundation; purple brick

Section 1

Post-c.1800 foundation wall (the brick is dateable by its external yellow speckling to post-1800).

Group 4:
23 fill; dark grey sandy-silt
24 cut; steep sided, bottom pointed.
Section 2

Rubbish Pit of uncertain date.

Group 5:
20 layer; mid-brown sandy-silt.
Section 1

Dump layer of uncertain date.

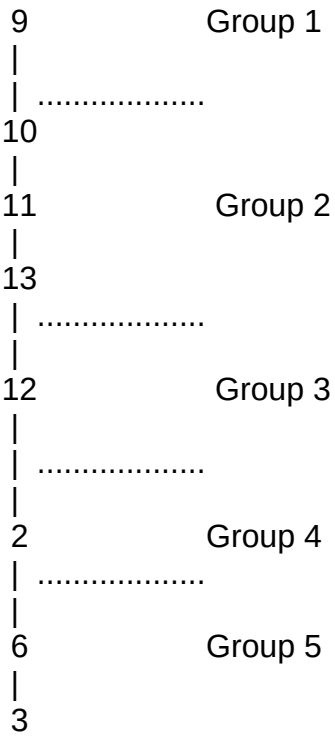
Group 6:
6 layer; orange sandy silt
5 layer; light yellowish grey silty-clay
7 layer; mid-brown sandy gravelly silt
8 layer; light yellow-grey clay silt
4 layer; orange sandy gravel
3 layer; blue grey silty clay
Section 1 and Section 2

A series of naturally deposited layers of alluvium, gravel and clay.

This test pit consisted of a brick foundation 0.8m deep (layer (25)) of red and purple brick overlying a series of natural layers on the east side. On the west side of the test pit a modern dump layer sealed a concrete surface which could be related to the foundation because it respects its position and does not truncate it. The concrete surface overlies but does not seal the dump layer (20) beneath. Layer (20) is also cut by a possible rubbish pit. Under dump layer (20) is the same series of dumps as on the west side. These alluvial layers (6),(5),(7),(8) are 1m thick and overly the top of the natural glacial gravel deposit, layer (4). This in turn overlies a layer of London Clay, layer (3), blue-grey in colour.

Except where the deposits are disturbed by the 19th century foundations, there may be archaeological deposits surviving to the west of this trench.

Test Pit Two
Matrix



Group discussion

Group 1:

9 layer; yellow-brown sandy gravel
Section 3

Consists of a dump layer.

Group 2:
10 fill; dark greyish brown sandy silt
11 fill; ceramic pipe
13 cut; linear
Section: 3

Cut and associated fills for a sewer pipe .

Group 3:
12 layer; brick rubble
Section 3

Dump or demolition layer

Group 4:
2 layer; yellow-brown sandy-silt.
Section 3

Possible plough soil.

Group 5
6 layer; orange sandy-silt
3 layer; blue-grey clay
Section 3

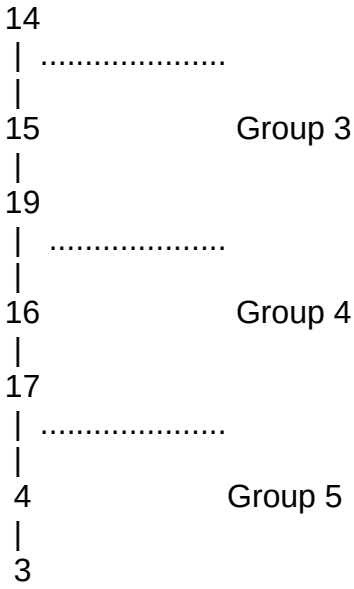
Natural gravel and clay.

This test pit consists of a modern dump layer sealing a modern sewer pipe trench cut through brick rubble. This overlies a possible plough soil, 0.40m thick, which also appears in test pits 5,7 and 11. Underlying this are the naturally deposited glacial gravel and clay as in the other test pits.

Any archaeology in the vicinity of this pit would probably have a good chance of survival and is therefore worth investigation.

<u>Test Pit Three</u>
<u>Matrix</u>

1 Group 1
|
| .....
|
Group 2



Group Discussion

Group 1:
1 layer; Rubble and dark greyish-brown sandy-silt
Section 3

Topsoil

Group 2:
18 layer; Brownish yellow gravel
14 layer; Yellow-brown silty clay with chalk inclusions.

Section 3

Two modern layers of dumped material.

Group 3:
15 fill; modern concrete foundation
19 cut; square cut for foundation,
Section 3

A modern foundation.

Group 4:
16 layer; dark grey silt
17 layer; dark grey sandy-silt
Section 3

Dump layers or fills of a deep feature truncated by cut (19). Their dating is uncertain.

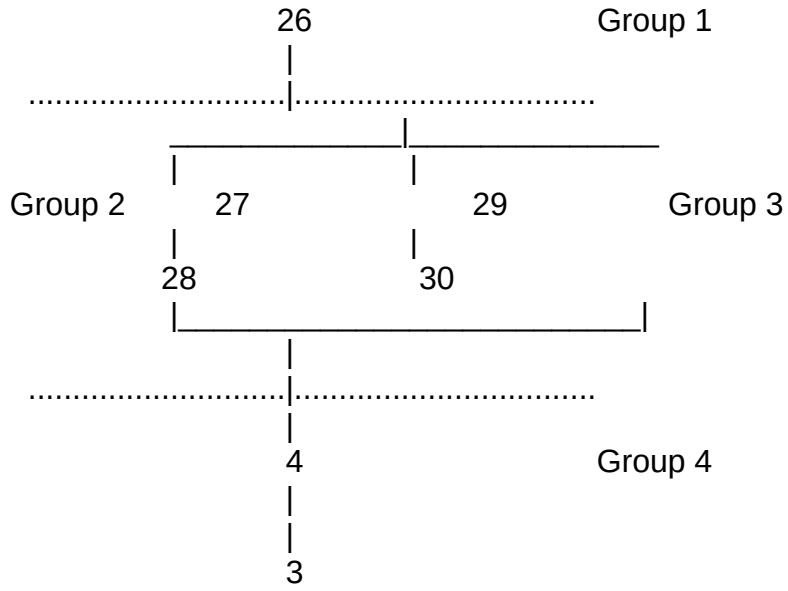
Group 5:

4 layer; orange sandy gravel
3 layer; blue-grey silty clay
Section 3

Natural gravel and clay as in Test Pit 2.

This test pit consists of topsoil and modern dump layers over a concrete foundation which cut away more dump layers of uncertain age. As in test pit 2 the underlying natural is gravel and clay. It seems that the natural deposits in this trench have been heavily truncated.

Test Pit Four
Matrix



Group Discussion

Group 1:

26 layer; Rubble in dark grey sandy-silt
Section 4

Probably modern dump layer

Group 2:
27 fill; concrete foundation
28 cut; cut for foundation
Section 4

Foundation

Group 3:

29 fill; Nineteenth Century rubbish pit
30 cut; vertical cut for rubbish pit
Section 4

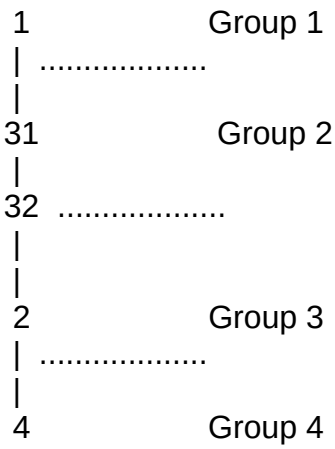
Rubbish pit containing pottery and building material of nineteenth century date.

Group 4:
4 layer; orange sandy gravel
3 layer; blue-grey silty clay
Section 3

Natural gravel and clay as in test pit 3.

Test pit four consists of a modern dump layer that seals a modern concrete foundation and a nineteenth century rubbish pit. Under this the natural sands and gravels are present as in other test pits. The contamination in this pit probably precludes further investigation of this area.

Test Pit 5
Matrix



Group Discussion

Group 1:
1 layer; dark greyish-brown sandy-silt
Section 5

Topsoil

Group 2:
31 layer; black rubble and ash layer with plastic.
32 layer; white crushed chalk/mortar/plaster.
Section 5

(31) is a modern dump of rubble and rubbish. (32) may be part of that dumping process or may be part of an earlier surface or wall footing.

Group 3
2 layer; yellowish brown sandy-silt
Section 5

Possible plough soil.

Group 4
4 layer; natural orange-yellow gravel

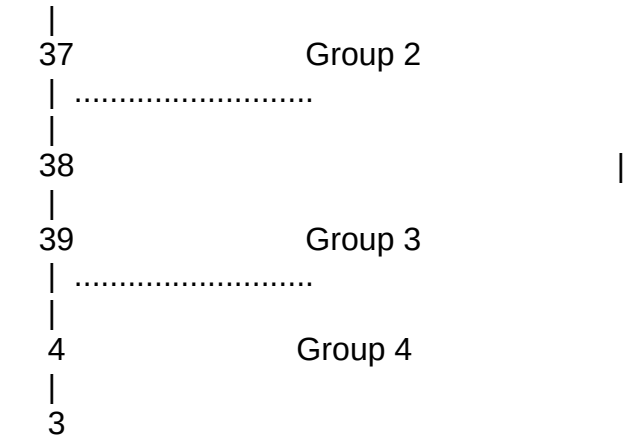
Natural as in other test pits.

This test pit shows a thick layer of modern rubbish including plastic and a white mortar or plaster layer, that overlies a possible plough soil, up to half a metre thick, as in test pits 2, 7 and 11. Under this is the 2.5m thick natural gravel as in other test pits. The clay was not observed in this pit.

The area of this pit is worth further investigation to identify the nature of context (32) and to locate any features either cutting or underlying the possible plough soil (2).

Test Pit 6
Matrix

33 Group 1
|
34
|
35
|
36
| .....



Group Discussion

Group 1:
33 layer; dark grey clay-silt
34 layer; mid-brown clay-sand
35 layer; red brick rubble
36 layer; ash and plastic layer
Section 6

Modern dumps of rubbish, possibly the upper fills of cut (39) though this is not certain.

Group 2:
37 layer; mid-brown sandy silt
Section 6

Dump layer, possibly a fill of (39) though this is uncertain.

Group 3
38 fill; mid-brown sandy silt
39 cut; sides-near vertical, then gradually sloping down to the south.
Section 6

Pit cut with its fill. If groups 1 and 2 are also fills of this pit it is probably 20th century.

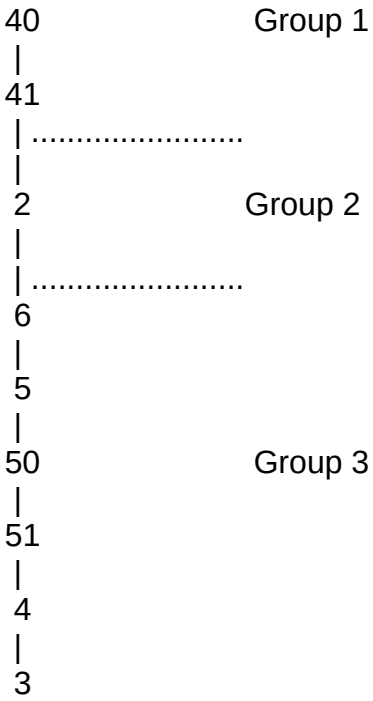
Group 4:
4 layer; orange sandy gravel
3 layer; silty clay
Section 6

Natural as in other test pits.

In this test pit a series of rubbish layers have accumulated to a depth of 1.3m. These layers seal a dump layer and pit fill of uncertain date. It is possible that the layers found above the pit are in fact higher fills of the pit. Again the layers of natural gravel and clay are seen at the base of the test pit.

It seems that there has been much modern truncation and dumping in the vicinity of this trench to a depth of at least 1.3m, which would render further investigation unnecessary.

Test Pit Seven
Matrix



Group Discussion

Group 1
40 layer; concrete
41 layer; brick rubble make up layer
Section 7

Concrete surface and foundation layer.

Group 2:
2 layer; yellow-brown sandy-silt
Section 7

Possible plough soil

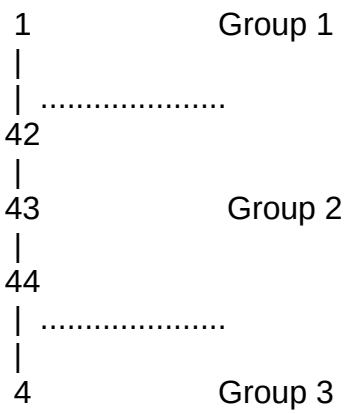
Group 3:
6 layer; orange sandy silt
5 layer; light yellowish grey silty clay
50 layer; black diesel stained sandy gravel
51 layer; mid grey/yellowish brown gritty clay
4 layer; orange sandy gravel
3 layer; blue-grey silty clay
Section 7

Natural Alluvium and gravel and clay.

This test pit is sealed by a modern concrete surface with its associated layer of levelling material (brick rubble). This is on top of the same layer of possible plough soil (2) seen in test pits 2,5 and 11, here 0.18m thick. Under this are the layers of natural alluvium, gravel and clay observed in other test pits.

Further investigation of this area would be useful to determine whether any features cut or underlie (2).

Test Pit Eight
Matrix



Group Discussion

Group 1:
1 layer; dark greyish-brown sandy silt and rubble
Section 8

Modern top soil.

Group 2:

42 layer; dark grey sandy silt
43 layer; mid-brown sandy gravel
44 layer; mid-brown sandy-silt
Section 8

Dump layers of uncertain age.

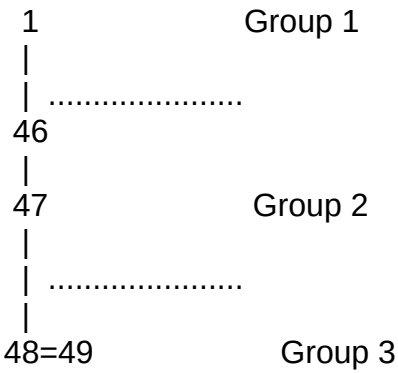
Group 3:
4 layer; orange sandy gravel
Section 8

Natural.

Test pit eight consists of the layer of topsoil that is also present in test pits 3, 5,9,11. Underlying this layer are a number of dumps of gravel and sand that could be a surface or build-up layers. There is no evidence for dating these layers. These layers are over the natural gravel. This test pit does not penetrate the gravel to the clay.

Further investigation of the nature of the deposits over the natural gravel would be useful.

Test Pit Nine
Matrix



Group Discussion

Group 1:
1 layer; dark greyish-brown sandy-silt
Section 8

Modern topsoil

Group 2:
46 layer; brown sandy clay
47 layer; black ash and cinder
Section 8

Modern dump layers

Group 3
48 wall; red brick wall
49 wall; red brick wall
Section 8

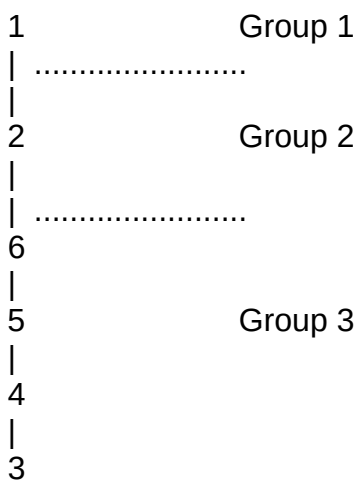
Walls of cellar

This test pit consists of the usual topsoil layer which covers modern dump layers. These in turn cover the brick walls of a possibly Victorian structure. Telephone cables were also revealed.

No further work on this trench is necessary.

Test Pit Ten
Test pit ten was not recorded because its sides were unstable. It contained disturbed brick foundations.

Test Pit Eleven
Matrix



Group Discussion

Group 1:
1 layer; dark greyish-brown sandy-silt
Section 10

Topsoil

Group 2:
2 layer; yellow-brown sandy-silt

Section 10

Possible plough soil

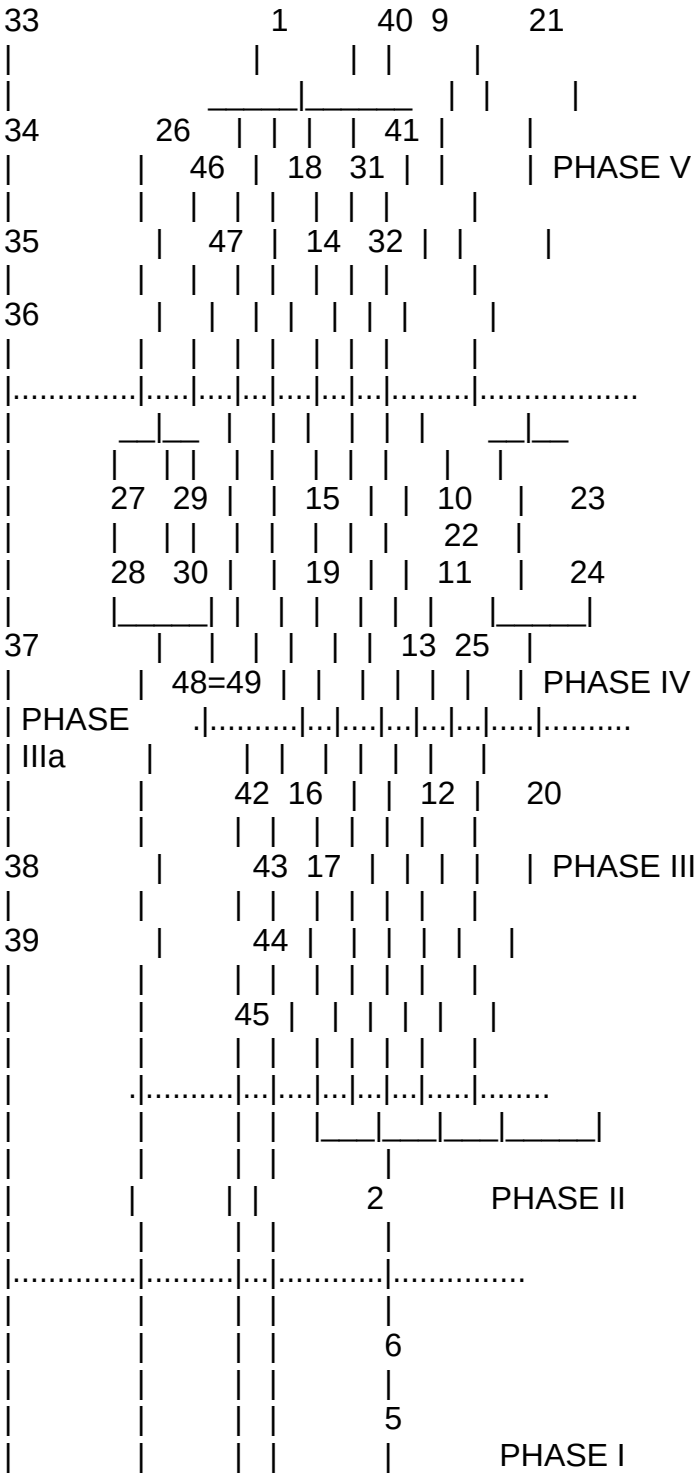
Group 3:
6 layer; orange sandy silt.
5 layer; light yellowish grey silty clay, orange mottling
4 layer; orange sandy gravel
3 layer; blue-grey silty clay
Section 10

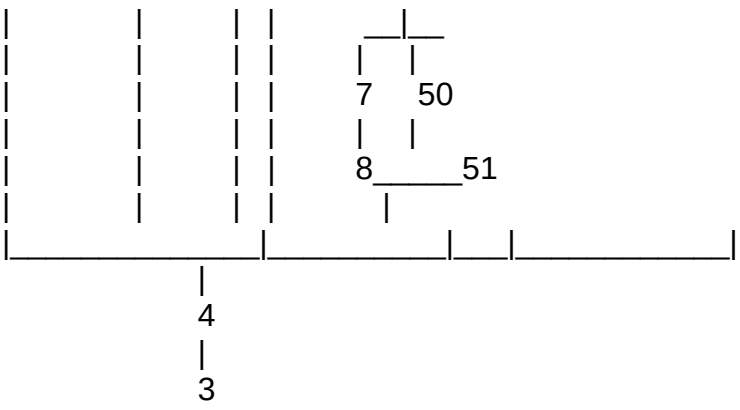
Natural layers of alluvium and gravel and clay

This test pit consisted of the familiar topsoil layer (1) which overlay the possible plough soil, as in pits 7,5 and 2. In this pit it was 0.40m thick. Under the ploughsoil as in test pit 2 there were a series of alluvial layers and the natural gravel and clay subsoils.

If there are any archaeological features in the vicinity of this trench cut into the plough soil or beneath it they standa good chance of having survived.

Site Matrix


33
1
40
9
21
34
26
41
46
18
31
PHASE V
35
47
14
32
36
27
29
15
10
23
22
28
30
19
11
24
37
13
25
48=49
PHASE IV
PHASE IIIa
42
16
12
20
38
43
17
PHASE III
39
44
45
2
PHASE II
6
5
PHASE I



Phasing Discussion

Phase I:

This phase is composed of naturally deposited alluvial layers, with probable London clay forming the lowest excavated layer and layers of gravel and silt above it.

Phase II:

This phase represents a layer of possible plough soil of uncertain date extending across much of the site, appearing in test pits 2,5,7 and 11.

Phase III:

This phase comprises a series of dumped layers in test pits 1,3 and 8 of uncertain date and purpose.

Phase IIIa:

This phase consists of groups 2 and 3 in test pit 6. These groups may form the bottom fills and the cut of a large pit of which of which groups 1 and 2 (contexts 35,36 and 37) form the upper fills. If this is the case this phase should be included in phase V. If group 2 is to be interpreted as being a layer and group 3 as a cut with just one fill, this phase would be contemporary with phase II and/or III.

Phase IV:

This phase represents the activity on the site which can definitely be dated to the 19th and 20th centuries. This consists of two rubbish pits, two concrete foundations, a pipe trench and brick wall bases. The brick foundations appear in test pits 1 and 9.

Phase V:

This phase represents the dumping of material after the demolition of the brick structures on the site and the concrete surfaces and topsoil forming the present ground surface.

Site Discussion

Combining the information from the test pits we can draw some general conclusions about the archaeology of this site. Dumps of modern rubbish, mainly building rubble, up to a metre thick, cover most parts of the site. One of the dump layers (14) above modern foundations in test pit three contains chalk fragments which must have been imported to the site. This also applies to the chalk/mortar layer (32) in test pit five. The nearest sources of chalk occur in north Essex or in Kent. It is possible that the foundation in test pit three has disturbed the footings of Medieval or Post-Medieval buildings that were known to front the road that ran along the line of what is now Stratford Broadway. The alternative is that the chalk was brought onto the site when the nearby Abbey of Stratford Langthorne was demolished in the sixteenth century or at some other time.

A layer of ploughsoil up to a half metre in thickness stretches across the site from test pit 2 in the north-west side to pits 5, 7 and 11 in the south east. This appears to be truncated away by more recent disturbance, in pits 4 and 6 in the centre of the site.

Recommendations for Further Work

The eleven test pits have examined only a small fraction of the area of the whole site. They indictate the potential for archaeological survival on the site. There is a possibility that the remains of Medieval building plots that fronted on to Tramway may survive. The fact that the ploughsoil is undisturbed in test pits 2, 5, 7 and 11 suggests that there is the potential for later archaeological features cut into it and for Prehistoric remains to be preserved under the ploughsoil. Iron Age inhummations and horse burials have recently been found in similar conditions during excavation work in advance of the Jubilee line in Stratford. The site also lies parallel to the line of the Roman road exacavated by the Passmore Edwards Museum in 1986, at 30 Romford Road.