

**An Evaluation at Viking way, Rainham,  
London Borough of Havering.**

**RA - VW 96.**

**TQ 5208 8232**

**Project Manager: M.D. Turner  
Supervisor: M. Beasley.**

**20.08.1996**

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1. Abstract.

- 1.1. The evaluation revealed evidence for the edge of the gravel terrace, and Post-Medieval domestic activity.

## 2. Introduction.

- 2.1. An evaluation was conducted on 13th. August 1996 on land at Viking Way, Rainham, by the Newham Museum Service Archaeology and Local History Section. The evaluation was conducted as part of a continuing programme of archaeological work on the site in advance of development as a community centre.
- 2.2. The evaluation was designed to assess the impact of the proposed development on surviving sub-surface archaeological deposits, lying as it does in an area of high archaeological potential, to fulfil an archaeological condition on planning application PO213.96
- 2.3. The site is bounded to the south and east by the rear of properties on Upminster Road South, to the west by Bridge Road, and to the north by retail development (*Fig. 1A, 1B*). The Evaluation was funded by R.O.Y.A.L.S., directed by Mark Turner for the Museum, and supervised by the author.
- 2.4. The Museum and the author would like to thank R.O.Y.A.L.S. for funding the evaluation and allowing access to the site, Ian Samuels of Churley and Associates, Sarah Harding, Shaun Tamblyn, and Paul Thrane, Chris Jarrett for the pottery analysis, and Graham Reed for the illustrations.

### 3. Archaeological Background.

- 3.1. Rainham village is a known settlement area from the Bronze Age to the present. Significant Bronze Age and Roman deposits have been revealed in excavations in the immediate vicinity of the site, and these findings have been re-inforced by other sites in the surroundings of the village. The most significant of these to the Viking Way watching brief are the Rainham Tesco (RA - BR 89) excavations of 1989 conducted by the Museum in advance of the construction of the superstore (Meddens and Beasley, 1990), only 30m. to the south-west of the Viking Way site.
- 3.2. These deposits included probable Bronze Age ditches and pits, wooden fence structures and a brushwood trackway of Bronze Age date, Roman features including posts and a possible palisade, and Medieval stock enclosures and ditches. These remains represent a settlement in the area on the interface of the marsh and the gravel island upon which the present village is built. This pattern is repeated to the south of the village, notably at the Brookway site in 1992 (RA - BA 92) where Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement deposits were revealed on the interface between gravel and marshland (Waltho, forthcoming).
- 3.3. The Medieval core of the village is the church and the manors of Rainham, Launders, Berwick and South Hall, first mentioned in 1086. The location of Rainham manor is uncertain, but is likely to have been near the present location of the church; Gilbert de Vere being licensed around 1180 by the Abbot of Lesnes to build a chapel and hold services in it. Rainham Bridge, to the North of the site, is first mentioned in 1234 (*VCH*).
- 3.4. The evaluation follows a watching brief on the site by the Museum (Beasley, 1996). The watching brief identified a feature interpreted as a possible linear ditch, which yielded pottery of Bronze Age date, two pot-boilers, and a lithic.

#### 4. Archaeological Methodology.

- 4.1. The evaluation was designed to assess the potential archaeological deposits. Two trenches were planned to further define and link the archaeological deposits identified from the watching brief (*Fig. 2*). Both trenches measured 10m. x 2m. and were machine excavated to the top of the archaeological horizon. These trenches were numbered continuing from the watching brief, and were designated Trenches 6 and 7.
- 4.2. The trenches were then cleaned by hand, and potential features sectioned to determine their exact nature and date. The trenches were recorded on Museum pro-forma sheets, and a long section was recorded of one trench. The trenches were photographed and located on a site plan at 1:200. Finds were retrieved according to Museum retrieval and handling procedure.
- 4.3. The methodology was based on the archaeological brief and conformed to standards set out in English Heritage Guidance Paper No. 3 (Standard Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork, No. 5 Archaeological Assessment and Evaluation Reports), and relevant Health and Safety Regulations.

## 5. Description of Results.

- 5.1. Trench 6 was located to the west of Trench 3, and aligned east-west. The trench showed a 0.60m. deep layer of 20th. century make-up, overlying a layer of grey pale grey ash and clinker 0.10m. deep. This in turn overlay a 0.30m. deep layer of dark grey silty clay sand. In the west of the trench this overlay a layer of mid grey brown sandy clay silt, cut by a pit of Post-Medieval date, and a layer of mid orange brown sandy silt, c.0.05m. deep to the east. This overlay natural sandy gravel.
- 5.2. A sondage at the interface of gravel revealed a sharp gradient down to the west. The orange brown sandy silt overlying followed the slope of the gravel.
- 5.3. Trench 7 was located between Trenches 3 and 4, running north-east to south-west. Removal of 0.22m. of stone make-up for the car park revealed a layer of mid grey sandy silt 0.25m. deep. This overlay red brown sandy silt clay into which were cut several amorphous silt patches. These have been interpreted as natural tree holes (Fig. 3).

## 6. Interpretations and Conclusions.

- 6.1. The trenches in the evaluation show a series of natural deposits, and modern make-up. In Trench 6 a layer of possible make-up, containing tile and brick fragments may indicate a plough soil, but this is not apparent in Trench 7. The presence of a small pit cut into this layer, containing Post-Medieval pottery may indicate the presence of occupation in the near vicinity.
- 6.2. The fills of the probable tree holes in Trench 7 are similar to the feature recorded during the watching brief in Trench 3, and although this feature contained pottery and lithics of Bronze Age date, this may be the result of root action. If this feature is genuine, however it would point to a wooded environment during the Bronze Age, with scattered settlement activity. In the light of the archaeology recorded in BA - RA 89 it would suggest that the Viking way site represents the easternmost limit of the settlement, with cleared land giving way to the Alder carr environment known to exist in the area (Meddens and Beasley, 1990).
- 6.3. The gradient of the gravel revealed in Trench 6 reinforces the suggestion from the watching brief that the site is on the very edge of the gravel terrace. This would possibly explain the difference in depth and elevation of the brickearth overlying the gravel.
- 6.4. Given the lack of significant archaeological remains on the site, it is considered that no further work is required on the site.



## 7. Bibliography.

Meddens, F and Beasley, M, 1990, "Wetland Use In Rainham, Essex. "London Archaeologist. Winter 1990.Vol.6 No.9.

Pontin, L, 1996, "Brief for a Watching Brief on Geotechnical test pits at Viking Way Rainham.", English Heritage Guidance Brief.

Victoria County History, vol VII, pp129-130.

Beasley, M, 1996, "Watching Brief at Viking Way, Rainham. London Borough of Havering." Unpublished Report, Newham Museum Service.

## APPENDIX A

**GLSMR/RCHME NMR ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FORM**

**1. TYPE OF RECORDING.**

Evaluation	<del>Excavation</del>	<del>Watching brief</del>
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~~Other (please specify):~~

## 2. LOCATION.

Borough: LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING

Site address: VIKING WAY, RAINHAM.

Site name: VIKING WAY RAINHAM Site code: RA - VW 96

**Nat. Grid Refs:**      **Centre of site:** TQ 5208 8232

**Limits** of site: a) N/A b)

c) d)

### 3. ORGANISATION.

Name of archaeological unit/ company/ society:

Address: NEWHAM MUSEUM SERVICE  
31, STOCK STREET  
PLAISTOW  
LONDON  
E13 OBX

Site director/ supervisor: M. BEASLEY

Project manager: M. TURNER

Funded by: R.O.Y.A.L.S.

**4. DURATION.**


Date fieldwork started: 13.08.1996

Date finished: 13.08.96

Field work previously notified? YES/NO

Fieldwork will continue? ~~YES/ NO/ NOT KNOWN~~

## **5. PERIODS REPRESENTED.**

Palaeolithic	Roman
Mesolithic	Saxon (pre-AD 1066)
Neolithic	Medieval (AD 1066 -1485)
Bronze Age	Post-Medieval 
Iron Age	Unknown

**6. PERIOD SUMMARIES.** Use headings for each period (Roman; Medieval; etc.), and continue on additional sheets as necessary.

Post-Medieval.

Deposits consisted of a possible ploughsoil layer cut by a shallow pit.

**7. NATURAL.** (state if not observed; please DO NOT LEAVE BLANK)

Type: Gravel

Height above Ordnance Datum: A.O.D. 2.36m.

**8. LOCATION OF ARCHIVES.**

a) Please indicate those categories still in your possession:

<u>Notes</u>	<u>Plans</u>	<u>Photos</u>	<u>Negatives</u>
<u>Slides</u>	<u>Correspondence</u>	<u>Manuscripts (unpub. reports etc.)</u>	

b) All/ some records have been/ will be deposited in the following museum/ records office etc. :

NEWHAM MUSEUM SERVICE,  
31, STOCK STREET,  
PLAISTOW,  
LONDON E13 OBX.

c) Approximate year of transfer: 1996

d) Location of any copies:

NEWHAM MUSEUM SERVICE,  
31, STOCK STREET,  
PLAISTOW,  
LONDON E13 OBX.

e) Has a security copy of the archive been made? ~~YES~~/ NO

If not, do you wish RCHME to consider microfilming? ~~YES~~/ NO

## **9. LOCATION OF FINDS.**

a) In your possession? ~~ALL~~/ ~~SOME~~/ NONE

b) All/ some finds have been/ will be deposited with the following museum/ other body:

NEWHAM MUSEUM SERVICE,  
31, STOCK STREET,  
PLAISTOW,  
LONDON.  
E13 OBX.

c) Approximate year of transfer: 1996

## **10. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Beasley, M, 1996, "Watching Brief at Viking Way, Rainham. London Borough of Havering." Unpublished Report, Newham Museum Service.

Beasley, M, 1996. "An Evaluation at Viking way, Rainham, London Borough of Havering." Unpublished client report, Newham Museum Service.

**SIGNED:**



**DATE:** 20.08.1996

**NAME** (Block capitals) M. BEASLEY

Please return completed form to The Greater London Sites and Monuments Record, English Heritage London Region, 30 Warwick St., London W1R 5RD. Tel. 0171 973 3731/ 3779 (direct dial).