

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT
HARWOOD HALL EQUESTRIAN CENTRE,
HARWOOD HOUSE, UPMINSTER**

SITE CODE: UP-HW 95

GRID REF: TQ 5610 8480

SARAH HARDING

9.5.95

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1 ABSTRACT

An archaeological evaluation took place on the site of Harwood Equestrian Centre, Harwood Hall. Twelve trenches were excavated, all of which reached natural deposits. They revealed evidence of possible periglacial activity on the east of the site, with natural gravel being found only on the north and west of the site. A number of potential archaeological features were examined and were located on this gravel. Most were discovered to be either natural features or the result of modern activity relating to the land's previous use as a market garden and orchard; one feature however fell in neither category, although it contained no datable artefacts. One trench, which contained no archaeological features, produced one sherd of early Roman pottery and one piece of medieval or later tile.

2 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on the site of Harwood Hall Equestrian Centre by Newham Museum Service (previously the Passmore Edwards Museum) between 22.4.96 - 30.4.96. The work was commissioned by The Rosner Partnership on behalf of Westminster Health Care Ltd., the owners of the site, in advance of the development of the site as a nursing home, to fulfil planning condition 12 imposed on planning application P0650.94 by Havering council on the advice of English Heritage.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies within an Archaeological Priority Area defined on the London Borough of Havering UDP. It is also within the estate of Harwood Hall, a Grade II listed building dating from the eighteenth century. The surrounding area is rich in archaeological evidence from all periods, ranging from the early prehistoric to Saxon and medieval.

The early prehistoric periods are represented on a number of sites in the local area. The remains of a mammoth and an elephant dating from the Pleistocene were found in Aveley, and stone hand axes have been found from the nearby Gerpins Pit site (approximately three kilometres to the east) and several other sites in Rainham. Gerpins Pit has also produced finds from the Early and Middle Bronze Age in the form of a Beaker pot, while the wooden trackway found at Bridge Road, Rainham dates from the Middle Bronze Age.

Several of the local farms in the area have produced evidence of later prehistoric activity; sites at both Hunts Hill Farm and Whitehall Wood have revealed Late Bronze Age settlements and field systems. The Early Iron Age is represented at several sites in the area; of particular relevance to this site is the cremation complex at Great Sunnings Farm, which is only 600-700m to the south-east of Harwood Hall. Evidence of Late Iron Age activity is also present on this site and several others, such as Moor Hall Farm and Hunts Hill Farm. Further evidence of middle-late Iron Age comes from the Corbets Tey site almost immediately to the west of the present site in the form of pottery and remains of circular buildings.

Evidence for Roman activity is present on a number of sites in the area, for both settlements and burials. Settlements dating from this period have been found at sites such as Hunts Hill Farm, Great Sunnings Farm, and several other sites in Rainham and Aveley, with evidence for burials coming from the Jewish Federation Cemetery, and cremations from a number of sites including Gerpins Pit. The site at Corbets Tey also produced evidence from this period in the form of a cremation cemetery discovered during topsoil stripping and, during a rescue excavation, a ditched enclosure dating from the early 1st century AD which is cut by a later building dating to the late 3rd century AD (Marshall, 1963).

Although the Saxon and medieval periods are less well represented than the prehistoric and Roman in this area, some evidence does exist, in particular the rich pagan Saxon cemetery at Gerpins Pit and the settlement and cemetery at Ardale school, Aveley, whilst according to the Victoria County History, Corbets Tey was described as a village in 1461.

4 METHOD

The original brief specified that fifteen trenches were to be excavated across the site (see figure 3), with a contingency plan made for five extra trenches should any of the first trenches contain archaeological features which warranted further examination. The trenches were all to be 10m x 2m. However, once on site it was found that it was necessary to relocate trenches 6, 12 and 13: after consultation with English Heritage, trench 6 was moved three metres to the north to avoid the inside wall of the arena and a possible service; trench 12 was moved one metre to the west to avoid a modern service (drain cut?). Trench 6 was also shortened from 10m to 5m in order to keep it within the proposed footprint of the development. It was proposed to shorten trench 13 from ten metres to five metres, by excavating the eastern half only, to avoid a modern drain but this trench was abandoned after further consultation with English Heritage.

Trenches were excavated by machine under archaeological supervision until archaeological features or natural levels were reached. The located features were cleaned by hand and sample excavated to provide datable material and to determine their nature. Trenches where natural levels were reached without any archaeological features being found were recorded on pro-forma trench recording sheets, while trenches containing features were contexted and recorded on pro-forma context recording sheets, with plans being drawn at 1:20 on pro-forma sheets.

Machining began inside the arena where it was discovered that the present surface overlay up to 0.50m of very compacted modern make-up. It was intended to excavate six trenches inside the arena, of which only three were excavated; it was decided to abandon the remaining three since the time taken to excavate through the make-up was considered prohibitive in light of the fact that none of the excavated trenches contained any features of archaeological interest. In order to make up this shortfall in the number of excavated trenches, one extra trench was excavated outside the arena, and trench 2 was extended to the south by five metres, on the advice of English Heritage.

Some Health and Safety problems existed particular to this site: no service plans were available for the area of the proposed development and so it was necessary to scan proposed trench locations using a CAT scanner to determine if any threat was posed to Newham Museum Service employees and sub-contractors. Special care also had to be taken to ensure adequate ventilation inside the arena during machining.

The site records and archive are currently held at the Archaeology and Local History Centre, 31 Stock Street, Plaistow, London, E13 0BX.

The site was supervised by Sarah Harding and negotiated by Ken MacGowan on behalf of Newham Museum Service.

5 PHASE DISCUSSION

PHASE I - (Groups 1, 8 and 11)

This phase represents the underlying natural geology of the site, which consisted of Taplow Terrace Gravel to the north and west and a silty sandy clay known as brickearth to the south and east, possibly laid down as a result of periglacial activity (British Geological Survey, 1976).

PHASE II - (Groups 2, 3, 4, 9, 10 and 12)

This phase represents undatable features cut into the natural. Many of these are probably caused by natural activity, such as root channels and tree holes, while the majority of the rest are probably modern, perhaps related to the period when the land was used as an orchard and market garden. One group in this phase, group 4, does not however seem to fall into either of the above categories, since the feature appeared to be a pit which contained large amounts of daub and burnt flint, neither of which were present elsewhere. However, since it contained no datable artefacts it must be assigned to this phase on stratigraphic grounds.

PHASE III - (Group 5)

This phase represents a silty gravelly subsoil underlying the topsoil, present only in Trench 2.

PHASE IV - (Group 6)

This phase is represented by a modern feature cut through the subsoil and sealed by the topsoil in Trench 2; it was not possible to determine its function and extent within the extent of the trench. This phase of activity is only present in this trench.

PHASE V - (Group 7)

This phase represents the present-day topsoil, laid down within the last twenty five years, after the change in land usage from an orchard to a paddock.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation established that the site was located on the edge of the gravel terrace, with only a minority of the trenches being excavated into the natural gravel. The

remainder of the trenches were excavated into natural alluvial deposits, which showed evidence of possible periglacial activity but no features of archaeological interest. Those trenches in which natural gravel was found are all located to the west of the arena, in an area which was previously an orchard, so some of the features found in these trenches may be associated with this phase of land usage. The features in this area seem to fall into two categories: those caused by natural activity, such as root action and animal or worm activity, and modern features probably associated with the orchard, such as post-holes dug for fence posts. The features in trench 2 however included one pit which falls outside these two categories. This was approximately 1m in diameter and, although it contained no pottery or other dating evidence, it did contain a large amount of burnt flint and daub (clay used as packing in and around wattle walls). None of the features in the other trenches contained any finds.

Whilst on site the author was informed that when the area was developed into the equestrian centre twenty six years ago, the area of the orchard underwent an unquantified amount of truncation and levelling to create the paddock (Anne and Mick Pye, pers. comm.). This truncation was intended to be of a sufficient depth to remove all traces of tree holes left by the orchard, which would imply that at least 0.50m, and easily up to 1m, could have been removed. Truncation of this nature would be likely to remove all but the most substantial archaeological remains; it is possible therefore that the pit mentioned above represents the vestigial traces of what may originally have been, given the rich archaeological landscape in which the site sits, a considerable archaeological presence.

The nature and amount of remains on the site is not considered sufficient to warrant further investigation.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Newham Museum Service would like to thank Westminster Health Care Ltd. for funding the site, Mr. Owen, agent for the vendor, for his help in arranging on-site accommodation, The Rosner Partnership for their help in organising the site, and Mr.

L. Pontin, English Heritage Planning Officer (North-East London). The author would like to thank Mr. Ken MacGowan for negotiating and directing the site, Graham Reed for the illustrations, Pamela Greenwood for the finds analysis, and the site staff, Shaun Tamblyn, Alison Telfer and Paul Thrall, for all their hard work. Further thanks must go to Julia MacLaurin, who came and worked on a voluntary basis, and to Jim, the machine driver, from Newham Plant Hire. Thanks are also due to Anne and Mick Pye, the proprietors of the Equestrian Centre, for their valuable help and information about the past uses of the site.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Marshall, K., 1963, "The Excavation of a Ditched Enclosure Site at Corbets Tey, Hornchurch" Essex Naturalist 31 pt 2
- Victoria History of the County of Essex (VCH) VII (1978)
- London Borough of Havering UDP

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I The archive index

APPENDIX II Site matrices

APPENDIX III Summary of groups and trenches

APPENDIX IV Sites and Monuments Record Form

APPENDIX I

ARCHIVE INDEX

Context	Trench	Plan	Group	Phase	C/S	B/W
1	1	-	-	-	1;11-14	1;13-14

	2	-	7	V	1;7-10 3;5-8	1;9-12 3;5-8
	3	-	11	V	1;23-26	1;25-28
	4	-	-	-	1;19-22	1;21-24
	5	-	-	-	2;16-19	2;15-18
	12	-	-	-	1;27-30	1;29-32
	16	-	14	V	2;30-33	2;29-32
2	2	-	5	III	1;7-10 1;15-18 2;1-8 3;5-8	1;9-12 1;17-20 2;1-8 3;5-8
3	2	2	1	I	1;7-10 1;15-18 2;1-8 3;5-8	1;9-12 1;17-20 2;1-8 3;5-8
4	2	2	2	II	1;7-10	1;9-12
5	2	2	2	II	1;15-18	1;17-20
6	2	2	3	II	1;7-10 1;15-18	1;9-12 1;17-20
7	2	2	3	II	1;7-10 1;15-18	1;9-12 1;17-20
8	2	2	6	IV	1;7-10 2;5-8	1;9-12 2;5-8
9	2	2	6	IV	1;7-10 2;5-8	1;9-12 2;5-8
10	3	3	9	II	1;31-34	1;33-35
11	3	3	9	II	1;31-34	1;33-35
12	2	2	4	II	1;7-10 2;1-4 3;5-8	1;9-12 2;1-4 3;5-8
13	2	2	4	II	1;7-10 2;1-4 3;5-8	1;9-12 2;1-4 3;5-8
14	3	3	10	II	1;23-26	1;25-28
15	3	3	10	II	1;23-26	1;25-28
16	3	3	8	I	1;23-26	1;25-28
17	16	16	13	II	2;34-36	2;33-36

Context	Trench	Plan	Group	Phase	C/S	B/W
18	16	16	13	II	2;34-36	2;33-36
19	16	16	12	II	2;30-33	2;29-32
20	16	16	13	II	3;1-4	3;1-4
21	16	16	13	II	3;1-4	3;1-4
22	16	16	13	II	3;1-4	3;1-4
23	16	16	13	II	3;1-4	3;1-4
24	16	16	13	II	2;30-33	2;29-32

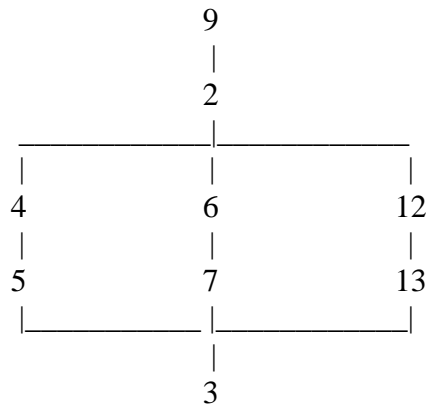
25	16	16	13	II	2;30-33	2;29-32
26	16	16	13	II	2;30-33	2;29-32
27	16	16	13	II	2;30-33	2;29-32

APPENDIX II

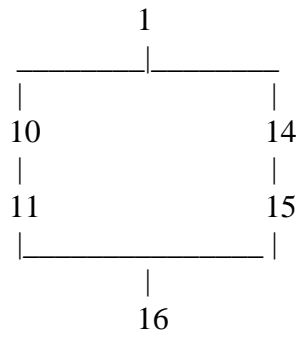
SITE MATRICES

TRENCH 2

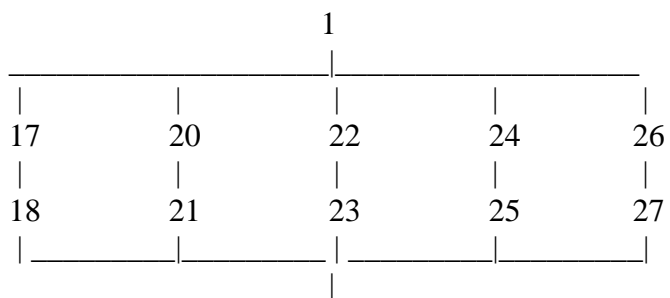
1
|
8
|



TRENCH 3



TRENCH 16



APPENDIX III

SUMMARY OF GROUPS AND TRENCHES

Height above
ordnance datum
in metres
maximum minimum

GROUP 1

|
3

3 Layer: orange brown sandy gravel 21.40 21.10

This group represents the natural gravel present in Trench 2.

GROUP 2

|
4
|
5
|

4 Fill: dark brown silty sand with gravel 21.23
5 Cut: sub-circular, near vertical sides, concave base 21.23 20.99

This group represents a probable post-hole. It contained no finds or other dating evidence, but may be related to the use of the land as an orchard, earlier in this century.

GROUP 3

|
6
|
7
|

6 Fill: grey silty sand with gravel 21.19
7 Cut: linear, sloping sides, tapering base 21.19 21.01

This group represents a linear feature of uncertain function. It too contains no dating evidence; it may be a drainage gully or root channel related to the orchard.

GROUP 4

|
12

|
13
|

12	Fill: mid grey brown, sandy clayey silt	21.28	
13	Cut: sub-circular, fairly steep sides, concave base	21.28	21.10

This group represents a large pit, 1.10m x 1.05m x 0.15m deep. The fill contained large amounts of daub, the clay used as packing in and around wattle walls, and pieces of burnt flint. The fill shows evidence of burning - charcoal flecks were also present within the fill - but this burning appears not to have taken place in situ, as the gravel into which the feature was cut shows no signs of having been subjected to the heat which would have been necessary to burn the flint pieces in the fill to the extent where they crumbled under only a minor amount of pressure. Daub also rarely survives unless it has been subjected to firing, although this daub is somewhat degraded; it is very soft and has retained none of its surfaces - it showed no evidence of wattle marks or of finger impressions from its application onto the wattle, both of which can still remain in well-preserved examples. Unfortunately this feature contained no datable artefacts so it impossible to ascertain its date.

GROUP 5

|
2
|

2	Layer: brown silty gravel	21.50	21.44
---	---------------------------	-------	-------

This group represents a gravelly subsoil, present only in Trench 2. It contained frequent root action, and probably represents the original subsoil of the orchard.

GROUP 6

|
8
|
9
|

8	Fill: light brown clayey silt	21.13	
9	Cut: linear, sloping sides, irregular base	21.13	21.02

This group represents a feature present in the north-west corner of Trench 2; it extended to the north and west beyond the trench edges so its full dimensions and shape are not known. It is of a later date than all the other features in this trench, since

it is cut through the subsoil which seals the others. Its function is unknown, as is its definite date, since it contained no dating evidence.

GROUP 7

1
|

1	Layer: light grey brown sandy silt	21.60	21.54
---	------------------------------------	-------	-------

This group represents the topsoil in Trenches 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 12. It was laid down approximately twenty five years ago when the area to the west of the jumping arena was changed from an orchard to a paddock (information from Anne and Mick Pye). It contained surprisingly few finds of any nature; a few sherds of twentieth century flower pot were the only examples.

GROUP 8

|
16

16	Layer: mid orange yellow sandy silty clay	20.79	20.55
----	---	-------	-------

This group represents the natural in Trench 3, an alluvial deposit. It was at least 0.30m deep, but was not bottomed.

GROUP 9

|
10
|
11
|

10	Fill: mid-dark grey/black sandy silt	20.79	
11	Cut: crescent-shaped, very steep sides, rounded base	20.79	20.57

This group represents a feature of uncertain function or date. The fill contained a high concentration of decomposed organic matter (approximately 40% of the total) so it

would seem likely that this is some form of root channel or hole. No dating evidence was retrieved, but the feature is possibly associated with the orchard.

GROUP 10

|
14
|
15
|

14	Fill: dark grey sandy silt	20.79	
15	Cut: sub-circular, slightly concave sides, rounded base	20.79	20.72

This group also represents a feature of uncertain function. As with the feature in group 9, it too contains a high concentration of decomposed organic material (approximately 50%); due to this and its proximity to the other feature it seems likely that it may be associated with this feature and be related to the orchard, being caused by a root hole.

GROUP 11

|
19

19	Layer: mid orange brown sandy gravel	21.20	21.03
----	--------------------------------------	-------	-------

This group represents the natural gravel present in Trench 16. It contains moderate iron panned patches and becomes sandier, with finer gravel, the deeper it is excavated.

GROUP 12

| | | | |
17 20 22 24 26
| | | | |
18 21 23 25 27
| | | | |

17	Fill: mid orange grey sandy silt	21.25	
18	Cut: sub-ovoid/possibly linear, slightly concave sides, slightly concave base	21.25	21.10
20	Fill: mid grey/orange brown mottles sandy silty clay	21.30	

21	Cut: irregular shaped, gradual sides, flattish base	21.30	21.01
22	Fill: mid grey yellow clayey silty sand	21.10	
23	Cut: linear, steep sides, concave base	21.10	21.00
24	Fill: mid grey brown silty sand	21.13	21.07
25	Cut: linear, steep-very steep sides, rounded base	21.13	21.03
26	Fill: mid grey brown silty sand	21.06	
27	Cut: sub-ovoid, steep-vertical sides, rounded base	21.06	20.94

This group represents all the features present within Trench 16. They have been put together in one group since it seems likely that they are all associated; none of them produced any dating evidence and their often slightly irregular shape would seem to suggest their having been caused by some kind of root activity.

TRENCH 1

This trench was excavated through topsoil and subsoil and onto natural deposits; in this trench the natural was largely brickearth, with gravel present only at the northern end of the trench. No features were observed at any point during the machining or on the natural.

TRENCH 4

This trench was excavated through topsoil and subsoil onto natural layers; here the natural was largely brickearth, with gravel present only at the southern end of the trench. No features were observed in this trench.

TRENCH 5

This trench was excavated through topsoil and subsoil onto natural gravel, present across the trench. No features were observed in this trench.

TRENCH 6

This trench was located inside the arena. It was excavated through various layers of jumping surface, through subsoils and into natural brickearth which showed signs of root action. No features were observed in this trench.

TRENCH 10

This trench was located inside the arena and was excavated through the jumping surface and various (very compact) make-up layers, onto natural brickearth which showed evidence of possible periglacial activity but no archaeological features.

TRENCH 11

This trench was located inside the arena; it was excavated through the jumping surface and modern make-up onto natural brickearth. This trench too showed evidence of possible periglacial activity but no archaeological features were observed.

TRENCH 12

This trench was located in the area to the west of the arena; it was excavated through top soil and subsoil onto natural sandy brickearth. One piece of pot and one piece of tile were retrieved from the subsoil during machining, although they were not located within a feature. The tile dates from the medieval period or later, and the pot sherd is of early Roman date; the tile however was found at a lower level within the subsoil than the pottery.

TRENCH 14

This trench was located in the tarmacadamed area to the east of the arena. It was excavated through the tarmac and modern make-up, into natural sand and gravel. These natural layers had been stained green, possibly from the previous use of the land as a market garden. Frequent root action was noted in the layers immediately above the natural sand and gravel, but no archaeological features.

TRENCH 15

This trench was excavated through layers of tarmac and modern make-up into natural sand and gravel, again stained green. No archaeological features were noticed, although root action was present in the layers immediately above the natural.

APPENDIX IV

GLSMR/RCHME NMR ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FORM

1. TYPE OF RECORDING

Evaluation

~~Excavation~~

~~Watching brief~~

~~Other (please specify)~~

2. LOCATION

Borough:

Havering

Site address: Harwood Equestrian Centre, Harwood House, Upminster

Site name: Equestrian Centre Site code: UP-HW 95

Nat. Grid Refs: Centre of site: TQ 5610 8480

Limits of site: a) b)

c) d)

3. ORGANISATION

Name of archaeological unit/ company/ society: Newham Museum Service

Address: 31, Stock Street, Plaistow, London E13 0BX

Site director/ supervisor: Sarah Harding Project manager: Ken MacGowan

Funded by: Westminster Health Care Limited

4. DURATION

Date fieldwork started: 22.04.96 Date finished: 29.04.96

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.

UNKNOWN

Eleven features, including apparent postholes and pits, in three periods of activity.

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

Type: Taplow Terrace Gravel/brickearth

Height above Ordnance Datum: +21.40m AOD

8. LOCATION OF ARCHIVES.

a) Please indicate those categories still in your possession:

Notes ✓

Plans ✓

Photos ✓

Negatives ✓

Slides ✓

Correspondence ✓

Manuscripts (unpub. reports etc.) ✓

b) All/ ~~some~~ records have been/ ~~will be~~ deposited in the following museum/ records office etc. : Newham Museum Service, Archaeology and Local History Centre, 31, Stock Street, Plaistow, London E13 0BX

c) Approximate year of transfer: 1996

d) Location of any copies: N/A

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, Archaeology and Local History Centre, – 31, Stock Street, Plaistow, London E13 0BX

c) Approximate year of transfer; 1996

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY.

British Geological Survey
Hanson, I.

1976: Romford: Drift Edition Sheet 257
1995: Project Design for the Archaeological Evaluation of the Proposed Nursing Home at Harwood Equestrian Centre, Harwood House, Upminster

SIGNED:

DATE: 9.5.95

NAME (Block capitals): SARAH HARDING

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).

NEWHAM MUSEUM SERVICE

Annual Sites Summary Form

Name of site: Equestrian Centre

Grid Ref. TQ 5610 8480

Address of site: Harwood Equestrian Centre,
Harwood Hall

Parish: Upminster

Project Manager: Ken MacGowan

Supervisor: Sarah Harding

Date of excavation: 22.04.96 - 29.04.96

Size of site: 12 trenches

Purpose of excavation: Evaluation in advance of development

Funded by: Westminster Health Care Limited

Location of Finds: Newham Museum Service, Further work anticipated? No
Archaeology and Local History Centre,
31, Stock Street, London E13 0BX

Date and location of interim and final report: 9.5.95; Newham Museum Service,
Archaeology and Local History Centre, 31, Stock Street, Plaistow, London
E13 0BX

Summary

Summary author: Sarah Harding

Twelve trenches were excavated in advance of the development of the site as a nursing home. Natural deposits were reached in all of the trenches and were discovered to be Taplow Terrace Gravel to the north and west of the site and brickearth to the south and east. Only three trenches contained features of potential archaeological interest and none of these contained datable artefacts. Immediately before its use as the equestrian centre, the land had been used as an orchard and market garden and it is probable that the majority of these features are related to this phase of activity. One trench, with no archaeological features in it, produced one sherd of early Roman pottery and one piece of medieval or later tile from the subsoil.

