

Resistivity Survey at Priory Court, Walthamstow.
London Borough of Waltham Forest.

WS - PC 93.
LDPEM/ACWS/224.

Level III Report.

M. Beasley.

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Introduction.

A resistivity survey was undertaken as part of an archaeological evaluation in the area designated Phase 1A of the Priory Court Estate, Walthamstow, on the 8th. June 1993, by members of the Passmore Edwards Museum field staff, prior to refurbishment of the estate by the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The survey was intended to determine whether any large sub-surface features were present on the site that may indicate surviving archaeology, in order to more accurately target evaluation assessment trenches.

The site consists of a roughly triangular area of short-cropped grass bounded by flats to the east, houses to the south and allotment gardens to the north. The topsoil appeared to be a dark grey / black sandy silt clay, apparently well drained, but hard and dry after a spell of hot weather the preceding week. A tarmac path ran north-east to south-west across the site.

The survey was funded by the London Borough of Waltham Forest, negotiated for, and directed by Peter Moore for the Museum, and supervised by the author.

The Survey.

The survey was conducted using a Geoscan RM15 Basic resistivity meter with 0.5m. separation twin probe array, using 1mA current at a gain of x10, and the results processed through Geoplot software. A base line was established on the site, and four 20m. x 20m. grids were surveyed, sampling at 1m. intervals on a 1m. zig-zag traverse. Obstructions and incomplete grids were dummy-logged, and grid information recorded on Museum pro-forma sheets.

Interpretation and Conclusions.

The results of the survey show no anomalies that may be interpreted as being of archaeological interest. The plot shows large random areas of both high and low resistance. These, however, show no coherence and are generally too large to represent any archaeological feature. The most likely explanation of these readings is that they relate to build up of the area either related to construction debris of the estate itself, or to post construction landscaping. This does not necessarily preclude the existence of archaeological deposits on the site, as they may either be masked by the dump deposits overlying, or may survive deeper than the penetration depth of the equipment.

The band of dummy readings running diagonally north-east to south-west across the plot represent a tarmac path c. 2m. wide running across the survey area. The patch of dummy readings to the south-east of the plot in Grid 1 represent compacted earth, too hard for the equipment to penetrate, caused by pedestrian movement over the survey area.

The confused blocks of high resistance readings in the south of Grid 1 are the result of operating difficulties on lines 2 - 4, resolved after these three lines, and do not represent sub-surface high resistance contact.

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