



Cherry Orchard Close, St. Mary Cray, Orpington, London Borough of Bromley

Archaeological Evaluation Report





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Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Summary

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation, commissioned by Skillcrown Homes Ltd and carried out by Wessex Archaeology prior to the re-development of land at Cherry Orchard Close, St. Mary Cray, Orpington, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 547441 167856.

The programme of works involved the excavation of two trenches measuring 10 x ca 2m to a depth of between 0.70m and 1.20m below the present ground level and took place on the 18th December 2007.

The work was carried out as a means to discharge a planning condition attached to consent for the re-development of the Site involving the construction of three residential properties and associated car parking on land to the rear of 4-10 Cherry Orchard Close.

The work was requested due to the Site's proximity to several known archaeological sites. The area to the south and north of the Site is known to contain archaeological remains of prehistoric and Romano-British date. The Site lies a little to the south of the historic centre of St. Mary Cray and a number of post-medieval buildings still stand at the southern end of St. Mary Cray High Street to the northwest of the Site.

Drift geological deposits consisting of fine sandy silty clay were exposed in both trenches at a depth of between 0.50m and 0.60m below ground level.

Aside from the geological strata all of the deposits observed throughout the evaluation are post-medieval or modern in origin.

A silted up post-medieval field boundary ditch was uncovered running north-south at the eastern end of both trenches. The fills of this feature contained fragments of post-medieval red brick and roofing tile.

No other archaeological deposits or remains were uncovered and the report concludes that, aside from the post-medieval ditch, nothing of archaeological significance will be impacted upon by the development.

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Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Mark Stevenson of English Heritage Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service for monitoring the work.

The Site investigations were undertaken by Gary Evans who also compiled this report. Illustrations were prepared by Kitty Brandon. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Peter Reeves.

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Archaeological Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of Document

- 1.1.1 Skillcrown Homes Ltd (the Client) commissioned Wessex Archaeology to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Cherry Orchard Close, St. Mary Cray, Orpington, in the London Borough of Bromley (hereafter 'the Site'), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 547441 167856 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 This document presents the results of the trial trench evaluation which took place on the 18th December 2007.

1.2 Planning Background

- 1.2.1 The programme of archaeological work was undertaken in fulfilment of an archaeological condition on planning consent (Ref code: DC/07/0251/FULL1 London Borough of Bromley), involving the construction of three residential properties and associated car parking on land to the rear of 4-10 Cherry Orchard Close. The condition was attached by the Local Planning Authority following consultation with the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) and is in accordance with The Department of Environment's Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (1990).
- 1.2.2 The archaeological planning condition was required due to the Site's proximity to several known archaeological sites (Wessex Archaeology, 2007a, 2007b).
- 1.2.3 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Wessex Archaeology (Wessex Archaeology, 2007b ref 66261.01) and approved by Mark Stevenson (GLAAS).

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Site Location, Topography and Geology

- 2.1.1 The Site is situated on the southern edge of the historical centre of St. Mary Cray on the first terrace of the River Cray located c. 240m to the west of the Site. St. Mary Cray High Street runs north-south ca 200m to the west of the Site and Blacksmiths Lane/Crockenhill Road (B258) runs east-west 125m to the north of the Site (**Figure 1**).
- 2.1.2 The Site is located to the east of Cherry Orchard Close. The fences delimiting the rear gardens of houses fronting on to Haddon Road, Elizabeth Way and Cherry Orchard Close form the perimeter of the Site to the north, south, east and west. A concrete road entering the southwest corner of the Site provides access to Cherry Orchard Close.

- 2.1.3 The centre of the Site is currently rough grassland covered with various fly tipping deposits. A row of derelict garages remain along the western edge of the Site. Areas of concrete hard standing and access roads for the adjacent garages run around the perimeter of the Site.
- 2.1.4 The Site is level and lies at a height of approximately 53m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 2.1.5 The underlying geology within the Site has been identified as Cretaceous Upper Chalk (British Geological Survey, 1997).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1 No previous archaeological work has taken place on Site and no known archaeological sites, features or deposits are recorded on the SMR. The site does not form part of, neither is it located adjacent to, a Listed Building or a Scheduled Monument (SM).
- 3.1.2 A trial trench evaluation conducted by Wessex Archaeology in the property adjacent to the northern edge of Site in August 2007 “produced no archaeological evidence” (Wessex Archaeology, 2007a, 4).
- 3.1.3 A number of archaeological remains dating from the Palaeolithic to Post-medieval periods have been found in the St Mary Cray area.

Palaeolithic (500,000-10,000 BC)

- 3.1.4 A few Palaeolithic flint tools and flakes have been found in the vicinity, the closest a bifacial flint tool, was recovered from Nursery Close 1.5km to the southwest of the Site (MoLAS, 2000, 39 and Map1).

Mesolithic (10,000-4,000 BC)

- 3.1.5 Mesolithic material, a struck flint assemblage of tools and flakes, was recorded at Zelah Road 1km to the south of the Site (MoLAS, 2000, 59 and Map 2).

Neolithic (4,000-2,400 BC)

- 3.1.6 No sites or artefacts dating to this period have been found in the area.

Bronze Age (2400-700 BC)

- 3.1.7 Very little evidence of Bronze Age activity has been discovered in the area. A flint arrowhead was found 700m to the southwest of the Site at Wellington Road (MoLAS, 2000, 162, Map 4).

Iron Age (700 BC-AD 43)

- 3.1.8 No Iron Age finds have been found in the immediate vicinity of the Site. No traces of intense Iron Age activity have been found in the immediate environs. A single sherd of Iron Age pottery was retrieved from a Site located adjacent to the High Street to the north of Cherry Orchard Close (MoLAS, 2000, 115, Map 6).

Romano-British (AD 43-410)

- 3.1.9 Activity in the area increased during the Romano-British period and a number of sites have been found in the wider area.
- 3.1.10 To the south of the Site a number of pottery sherds and coins were recorded in Wellington Road (MoLAS, 2000, 163, map 7) and Rookery Gardens (Wessex Archaeology, 2005). A Romano-British ditch was recorded in Kent Road and a corn dryer and pits at Lower Road (MoLAS, 2000, 162, Map 7).
- 3.1.11 Pottery of this period was found during a 1992 evaluation at 83 High Street, at Mountfield Way, and in 1988 at Sandway Road. All of these sites are located to the north of the present Site (Wessex Archaeology, 2006).
- 3.1.12 The remains of a Romano-British bath house and associated remains of settlement activity have been recorded to the west of the Site at Poverest Road (MoLAS, 2000, 162, Map 7).
- 3.1.13 A Romano-British cremation cemetery is recorded in Northfield Road 800m to the south of the Site (MoLAS, 2000, 163, map 7).

Saxon-Medieval (AD 410-1499)

- 3.1.14 A number of Saxon remains have been recorded in the area these including a 5th-6th century cemetery at Poverest Road, on the opposite bank of the River Cray to the Site. A Saxon sunken building was discovered ca. 500m to the south at Kent Road and a 8th-9th century brooch at Cockmannings Road, 1km to the southeast of the Site (MoLAS, 2000, 199, map 9).
- 3.1.15 The place name, St. Mary Cray, is first noted in the Domesday survey of 1086 (*Sudcrai*). The Site would appear to be in an area formally known as *Sentlinge* in Domesday.
- 3.1.16 The extant St. Mary's church appears to date from at least the 13th century (Weinreb and Hibbert, 1983, 64).
- 3.1.17 A number of medieval pottery sherds have been found at Sandwell Road located to the north of the Site (Wessex Archaeology, 2005).

Post-medieval-modern (1499-present)

- 3.1.18 St. Mary Cray "A handsome populous village" appears to have been the market and industrial centre for Orpington and grew up around St Mary's church and the Market House. The latter blew down in the Great Gale of 1703 (Weinreb and Hibbert, 1983, 584 and 762).
- 3.1.19 Major development of the area, occurred in the mid 19th century following the construction of the East Kent Railway Company's St. Mary/Foots Cray railway station in 1858 (<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/results>). Further development occurred in the 20th century with the establishment of light industry in the area and the building of several large housing estates in the 1930s and 1940s (Weinreb and Hibbert, 1983, 64).

- 3.1.20 Ordnance Survey maps of the area dating from the 1870s through to the 1930s (not illustrated) portray the Site as fields. A row of buildings runs along the High Street to the west and a north-south field boundary hedge and/or ditch runs to the east. The area remained unchanged until the development of the surrounding housing estate in the post war period.

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 4.1.1 The aims of the evaluation were to:
- 4.1.2 Establish, as far as reasonably possible, the presence/absence, extent, character, date condition and significance of any archaeological deposits and remains within the area affected by the proposed development.
- 4.1.3 The evaluation also sought to identify the depth of burial (and thus the depth of sensitivity) of any underlying archaeological deposits and features.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Methodological Standards

- 5.1.1 The evaluation and preparation of this report have been undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation document (WSI), which was prepared by Wessex Archaeology (Wessex Archaeology, 2007b). This was approved by the GLAAS prior to commencement of the work.
- 5.1.2 All archaeological works were undertaken in compliance with the standards outlined in the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2001) and English Heritage's London Region *Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork* (1998).

5.2 Health and Safety

- 5.2.1 Health and Safety considerations were of paramount importance in conducting all fieldwork. Safe working practices overrode archaeological considerations at all times.
- 5.2.2 The work was undertaken in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992, and all other relevant Health and Safety legislations, regulations and codes of practice which are in force.
- 5.2.3 A Risk Assessment was produced by Wessex Archaeology prior to the commencement of work. This was reviewed as the project progressed.
- 5.2.4 As part of the project briefing, all staff were made aware of their responsibilities and site specific hazards identified under the Risk Assessment.

5.3 Fieldwork

- 5.3.1 Two trenches (labelled Trench 1 and 2 in the site records and this report) were excavated using a tracked 360° machine fitted with a toothless ditching or grading bucket under constant archaeological supervision.

- 5.3.2 Where safety restraints allowed all archaeological features and deposits were excavated and were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system.
- 5.3.3 All spoil was visually scanned for finds.
- 5.3.4 A complete drawn record of all the trial trenches was compiled. This included both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans and 1:10 for sections).
- 5.3.5 Both trenches were located by digital survey using a GPS system and tied in to the Ordnance Survey.
- 5.3.6 A photographic record was also compiled using colour slides, black and white and digital images.
- 5.3.7 The programme of work was monitored by the GLAAS. Upon completion of archaeological work the trenches were backfilled with the agreement of the GLAAS.
- 5.3.8 Excavated material was backfilled and levelled in the approximate order in which it was excavated. No other reinstatement or surface treatment was required.

5.4 Finds Collection and Retention

- 5.4.1 All Finds were treated in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2001), the UK Institute of Conservators' *Guidelines Conservation Guideline No 2* and the Museums and Galleries Commission's *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (1991), excepting where they are superseded by statements made below.
- 5.4.2 All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained, except those from features or deposits of obviously modern date. No finds were, however, discarded without the prior approval of the GLAAS. In such circumstances, sufficient artefacts were retained in order to elucidate the date and/or function of the feature or deposit.

5.5 Environmental Sampling

- 5.5.1 A strategy for sampling archaeological and environmental deposits was developed in consultation with Wessex Archaeology's environmental manager and was set out in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology, 2007b).

5.6 The Archive

- 5.6.1 The project archive, covering both phases of archaeological work, is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in London under the Wessex Archaeology project code WA 66261 (MoL Code:WCD07).
- 5.6.2 The project archive will be prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage* (UKIC 1990).

- 5.6.3 The resulting archive will be put onto microfiche to the standards accepted by the National Monuments Record (NMR).
- 5.6.4 Following the conclusion of the project and with the permission of the landowner the archive will be prepared for deposition with an appropriate Museum.

6 RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 The following section narrates the archaeological sequence on Site.
- 6.1.2 Context numbers are shown as bold in the text.
- 6.1.3 Trench 1 was aligned east to west across the middle of the Site and was excavated to a depth of 0.70m below the present ground level. A small 1m x 0.90m sondage was excavated at the western end of Trench 1 to a depth of 1.20m below the present ground level (**Figure 1**).
- 6.1.4 Trench 2 located on the northern edge of the Site was also aligned east to west and excavated to a depth of 0.70m (**Figure 1**).

Geology

- 6.1.5 The earliest deposits exposed in both trenches comprised a layer of stiff fine sandy clay (**103**, **104** and **203**) representing the upper facies of the drift geology underlying the Site. The upper surface of the geology was observed at a height of between 0.50m and 0.60m below the present ground level.

B-Horizon

- 6.1.6 The drift deposits were sealed by a very disturbed B-Horizon (Subsoil) **102/202**. This was cut at the eastern end of each trench by a north to south aligned ditch (**106/205**).

Post-medieval Ditch

- 6.1.7 Ditch **106/205** was flat bottomed with a depth of 0.90m and width of 2m. The fills of the ditch **105/204** produced moderate amounts of post-medieval and modern red brick fragments and red roof tile. Ditch **106/205** was traced running north to south across the eastern ends of both trenches and was at least 17m long (**Figure 2** and **Plate 1**).

Topsoil

- 6.1.8 The Topsoil in both trenches (**101/201**) consisted of a homogeneous layer of mid grey fine sandy clay silt containing frequent grass rootlets, brick fragments and assorted modern "builders' rubble".

6.2 Finds

- 6.2.1 All material observed in the up cast from the excavations was of obvious post-medieval and modern origin. They were therefore noted and discarded.

6.3 Environmental Sampling

- 6.3.1 Due to the absence of suitable deposits, no samples were taken for environmental analysis.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1.1 Drift geology deposits, predominantly fine sandy clays (**103**, **104** and **203**), were observed in both trenches at a depth of 0.50m to 0.60m below the present ground level.
- 7.1.2 All of the deposits observed during the evaluation are considered to be post-medieval or modern in origin.
- 7.1.3 A silted up post-medieval field boundary ditch (**106/205**) was uncovered running north to south through the eastern end of both trenches. The fills of this feature contained fragments of post-medieval red brick and roofing tile.
- 7.1.4 No other archaeological deposits or remains were uncovered and the evaluation has demonstrated that nothing of archaeological significance will be impacted upon by the construction of the development.

8 REFERENCES

English Heritage London Region (1998) *Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork*
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archaeological evidence for human prescience in the area now covered by Greater London*

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Bromley, Preliminary Archaeological Appraisal.* (Unpublished Report) Reference 61560.01

Wessex Archaeology (2007a) *The Wickets, Cherry Orchard Close, Orpington London
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66260.02

Wessex Archaeology (2007b) *Cherry Orchard Close, London Borough of Bromley. Written
Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation* Reference 66261.01

Electronic Sources

Web site on 2/01/2008 <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/results>

9 APPENDIX 1 – CONTEXT SUMMARY TABLES

Trench 1

Direction: East – West

Dimensions: 10.00m x 1.90m

Context No	Type	Description	Interpretive keywords	Depth below present ground level
101	Layer	Mid grey, loose homogeneous fine sandy clayey silt. Occasional small sub-rounded to well rounded, coal, brick, red roofing tile, and modern “builders’ debris” and rubbish. Upper 50mm made up of turf grass rootlets	Topsoil. Cultivation	0.0-0.30m
102	Layer	Light greyish yellow, fine sandy silty clay. Very occasional small sub –rounded to angular pebbles, small fragments of burnt flint	B-Horizon, “Sub soil”	0.30-0.60m
103	Layer	Light yellow brown frequent light yellowish brown mottles throughout, stiff fine sandy clay	Natural Geology	0.60-0.80m
104	Layer	Light blue grey with very frequent large mottles of mid orange throughout	Natural Geology	0.80m-1.20m (+)
105	Fill	Mid grey brown homogeneous fine sandy silt. Occasional small fragments Charcoal, red roofing tile throughout deposit, small sub-rounded pebbles	Secondary Fill of Ditch. Use / Disuse	0.20-0.90m
106	Cut	Linear, north – south. Sides- 45°. Base- flat, even. Filled with 104	Ditch. Boundary. Construction	Top-0.20 Base- 0.90m

(+) Indicates deposit/feature not fully excavated

Trench 2

Direction: East – West

Dimensions: 10m x 1.90m

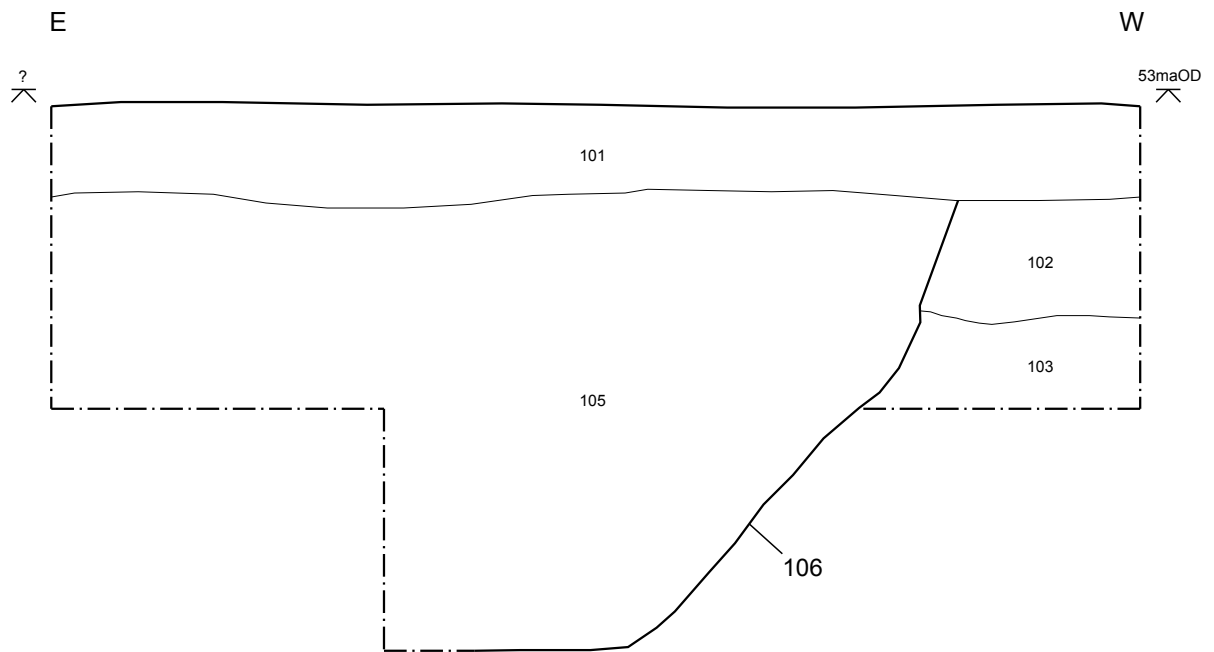
Context No	Type	Description	Interpretive keywords	Depth present level below ground
201	Layer	Mid grey, loose fine sandy clayey silt. Well sorted homogeneous deposit Occasional small sub–rounded to well rounded pebbles, fragments coal, brick and modern “builders’ debris”. Upper 50mm made up of modern turf grass rootlets	Topsoil. Cultivation	0.0-030m
202	Layer	Mid-light yellow, grey fine sandy silty clay. Occasional small sub –rounded to angular pebbles, small fragments of burnt flint, red roofing tile	B-Horizon, “Sub soil”	0.30-0.50m
203	Layer	Light yellowish brown, stiff fine sandy clay. Very occasional small sub-rounded pebbles	Natural Geology	0.50-0.70m (+)
204	Fill	Mid grey brown homogeneous fine sandy silt. Occasional small fragments Charcoal, red roofing tile throughout deposit, small sub-rounded pebbles	Secondary Fill of Ditch. Use / Disuse	0.20m (+)
205	Cut	Linear, north-south. Filled with 204 Probably same as Ditch 106 in Trench 1. Not excavated	Ditch. Boundary. Construction.	Top-0.20 Base- (+)

(+) Indicates deposit/feature not fully excavated



Site location map showing location of evaluation trenches and archaeological features

Figure 1



0 0.5m

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North facing section through ditch 106 in Trench 1

Figure 2



Plate 1: North facing section through ditch 106 in Trench 1

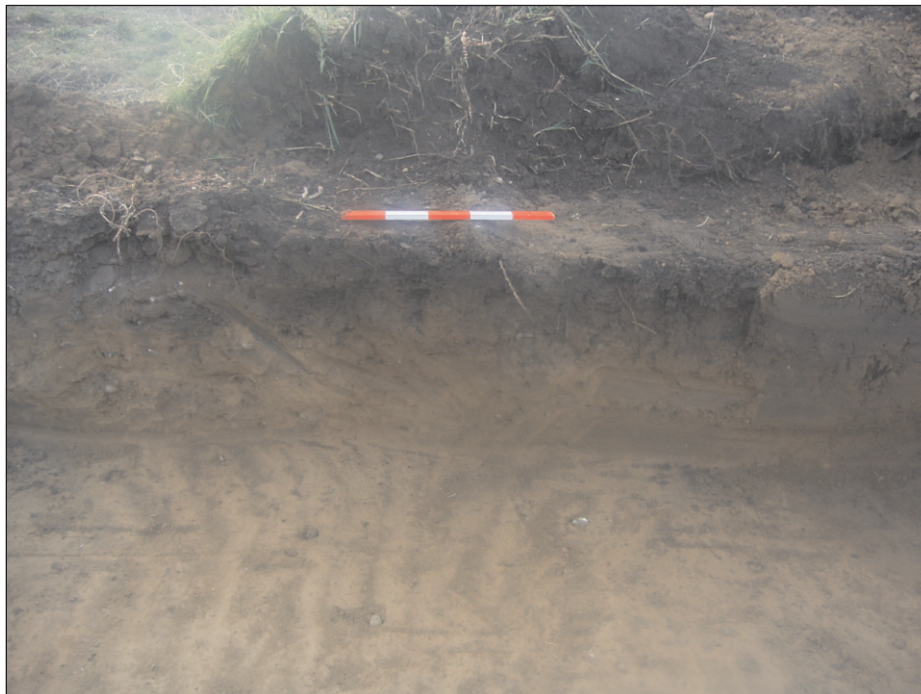



Plate 2: North facing representative section in Trench 2

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