



79 HIGH STREET, ST. MARY CRAY, ORPINGTON LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



**79 HIGH STREET, ST. MARY CRAY, ORPINGTON,
LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

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Cornelius Barton undertook the fieldwork and prepared this report. Lawrence Pontin managed the project for Wessex Archaeology. Mark Roughley prepared the illustrations.

Non-Technical Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Entec UK Ltd to undertake a watching brief on geotechnical pits at 79 High Street, Saint Mary Cray, centered on 547234 168138 (the Site).

No archaeologically significant deposits or structures were noted during the watching brief. However undisturbed natural ground was observed below made-ground deposits across a large part of the Site, and Roman remains are known to have been observed on the Site during prior development. The report concludes that there is a potential for archaeological remains to exist within the eastern area of the Site.

79 HIGH STREET, ST. MARY CRAY, ORPINGTON, LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of Document

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Entec UK Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of six geotechnical trial pits at St. Mary Cray, Orpington, London Borough of Bromley (the Site), centred on NGR 547234 168138 (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 The watching brief was undertaken on 27th March 2006.

1.1.3 This document sets out the results from the observation of the geotechnical pits. It does not constitute a full archaeological evaluation of the Site.

1.2 Planning Background

1.2.1 Entec UK commissioned Wessex Archaeology to provide advice on the risks posed by potential archaeology on the Site to future development options.

1.2.2 The Site has an extant planning consent for the refurbishment of a former Police Station at the western end of the site and the construction of three residential blocks though out the remaining land with appropriate landscaping and access. This consent has a condition with regard to the undertaking of archaeological works on the Site prior to development proceeding.

2 SITE GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 Geology

2.1.1 The underlying geology of the area comprises clays overlying flint gravel.

2.2 Topography

2.2.1 The Site sits on a patch of sloping ground which has been partially terraced, rising from approximately 43.5mOD in the west to 48.5mOD in the west. A former Police Station, built in 1896, occupies the lower western half of the Site. The upper eastern half of the Site consists of temporary buildings and hard standing.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Documentary Evidence

3.1.1 St Mary Cray as a place name (*Sudcrai*) is first noted in the Domesday survey of 1086 and by 1270 as *Seynte Mary Crey*. The Site would appear to be in an area formally known as *Sentlinge* in Domesday, being on the east side of the River Cray. (Domesday Book, 2003, 16-17).

3.2 Previous Excavation (Fig. 1)

3.2.1 Wessex Archaeology undertook research into previous excavations on and around the Site. The results are summarised below.

- 3.2.2 The result of an archaeological investigation on the Site indicates that Roman activity may survive, linked to former buildings or burials. Roman pottery was found on the Site during the digging of a pigsty in 1944 (Wessex Archaeology 2006).
- 3.2.3 The discovery of Roman pottery in a 1992 evaluation on the adjoining property of 83 High Street (WA 2006) further supports such potential on the Site itself. Medieval pottery was also retrieved at the same time although from redeposited contexts, linked perhaps to the disturbance of the Site when the present grade II listed 18th century building was constructed.
- 3.2.4 Further Roman and medieval pottery was recovered from redeposited contexts during limited excavation works at Sandway Road, approximately 50m to the north of the Site (WA 2006).

4 EVALUATION STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Aims and Objectives

- 4.1.1 The objective of the watching brief was to determine the nature, depth and character of any archaeological remains disturbed by the excavation of the trial-pits, and to assess their potential significance.

4.2 Methodological Standards

- 4.2.1 All excavation was undertaken in compliance with the standards outlined in the Institute of Field Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* (1994, amended 2001).

4.3 Health and Safety

- 4.3.1 All 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 legislation, regulations and codes of practice in force.
- 4.3.2 A Risk Assessment was prepared by Wessex Archaeology.

4.4 Fieldwork

- 4.4.1 The trial pits were excavated by means of a JCB fitted with a breaker and a toothless bucket. Each pit was excavated under archaeological supervision. All spoil was visually inspected for artefacts and a drawn record of trial pit sections was compiled at a scale of 1:10 (see Figure 2).
- 4.4.2 A photographic record was maintained using digital images.

5 DESCRIPTION AND RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 None of the trial pits contained features of apparent archaeological significance. Trial pit 2 contained a wall of 20th century date running east-west and a pipe-trench of similar date was observed in trial pit 5. The other four trial pits contained made-ground deposits overlying natural clays and gravel.

5.1.2 Detailed contextual information is presented in tabulated form in **Appendix 1** at the rear of this report.

5.2 Sequence and Stratigraphy

5.2.1 All the trial pits were excavated to a depth well in excess of the top of the underlying natural. No archaeologically significant deposits, structures or finds were encountered in any of the trial pits excavated. The excavated spoil was scanned by eye for artefacts. The only material found was of 19th or 20th century origin, consisting of brick fragments, white china, and window-glass and assorted building rubble. This material was noted but not retained.

5.2.5 The sequence of deposits and Site topography suggest strongly that the Site has been partially terraced; with some of the upcast natural deposits from the lower western half possibly redeposited on its eastern counterpart (see Figure 2). In the eastern half of the site, trial pits 1, 2, and 5 had redeposited clay material of a depth between 0.40m and 0.60m directly overlying natural clay formations (deposits **104**, **303** and **503**- see Figure 2). In trial pit 4 natural clay formations were found at 0.95m beneath present ground surface and were purely overlain by modern overburden **402**. For reasons of safety trial pit 6 was only excavated to a depth of 1.2m, at which depth natural clay had not been reached.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 No remains of any archaeological significance were detected in any of the trial pits. However, given the nature of the watching brief, absence of evidence from the trial pit locations excavated cannot be taken as evidence of the absence of archaeological deposits from the site *per se*.

6.2 It appears likely that any archaeologically significant remains present on the Site would be found on the higher eastern side as defined on Figure 1, as the western side has been severely disturbed by terracing and construction, probably associated with the standing late 19th century building.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Institute of Field Archaeologists 2001 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations*
Wessex Archaeology 2006 *79 High Street St. Mary Cray- Archaeological Appraisal*

8 APPENDIX 1. TRIAL PIT SUMMARY TABLES

Trial No.	Pit	Dimensions (Length/Width/Depth)	
	1	<i>2m x 1m x 3.9m</i>	
Context No.	Description	Interpretation	Thickness
101	Tarmac cap		0.06m
102	Silty clay mixed with brick rubble	Topsoil	0.17m
103	Dark grey brown silty clay with brick, tile and white china fragments	Made ground	0.45m
104	Mid grey-brown clay similar to 103 but cleaner	Probably redeposited from western side of Site	0.81m
105	Orange-brown clay	Natural	3.5m
106	Dark yellow sand	Natural	3.5m+

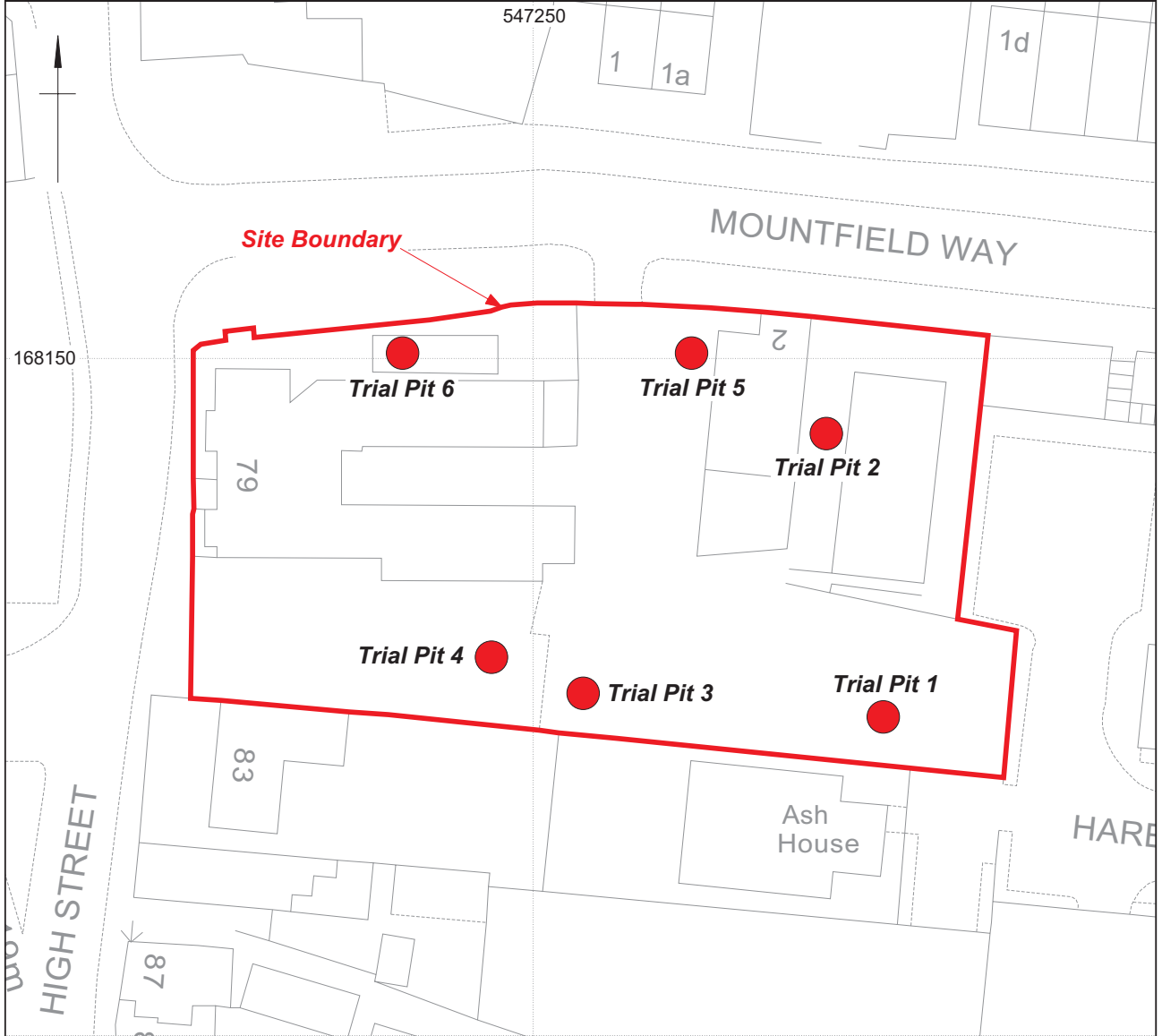
Trial No.	Pit	Dimensions (Length/Width/Depth)	
	2	<i>3m x 1 m x 3.5m</i>	
Context No.	Description	Interpretation	Thickness
201	Concrete cap		0.10m
202	Dark grey-brown silty clay with brick rubble, tile, china fragments etc	Made ground	0.25m
203	Mid grey-brown silty clay with occasional brick fragments	Possibly redeposited material from western side of Site	0.81
204	Dark reddish-yellow clay	natural	0.81m+
205	Brick surface	Possible old paving or floor	1.15m
206	E-W aligned brick wall	20 th century wall	0.30m


Trial Pit No.		3	Dimensions (Length/Width/Depth) <i>2m x1 m x3.7 m</i>	
Context No.	Description	Interpretation		Thickness
301	Tarmac cap			0.05m
302	Dark grey-brown silty clay with brick rubble etc	Made ground		0.65m
303	Dark yellow clay	Natural		3.69m
304	Coarse flint gravel	Natural		3.69m+

Trial Pit No.		4	Dimensions (Length/Width/Depth) <i>2.5 m x1m x3.5 m</i>	
Context No.	Description	Interpretation and Processual Key word		Thickness
401	Mid grey brown silty clay loam	Topsoil		0.30m
402	Mid-to-dark grey-brown clay with brick rubble etc-	Made ground		0.95m
403	Dark yellow-brown clay	Natural		2.8m
404	Coarse flint gravel	Natural		2.8m+

Trial No.	Pit	Dimensions (Length/Width/Depth)	
	5	<i>2.5 m x 1m x 3.5 m</i>	
Context No.	Description	Interpretation and Processual Key word	Thickness
501	Tarmac cap		0.10m
502	Brick rubble with gravel and builders sand	Hardcore/ made ground	0.30m
503	Dark grey clay with occasional brick fragments	Possibly redeposited from west side of Site	0.65m
504	Dark yellow clay	Natural	3.5m
505	Coarse flint gravel	Natural	3.5m+

Trial No.	Pit	Dimensions (Length/Width/Depth)	
	6	<i>2.5 m x 1m x 1.2m</i>	
Context No.	Description	Interpretation and Processual Key word	Thickness
601	Concrete cap		0.05m
602	Dark grey clay with brick rubble, chalk, tile etc	Made ground	0.40m
603	Grey clay with chalk and brick fragments	Made ground	1m
604	Mid grey-brown clay with brick fragments	Made ground	1m++

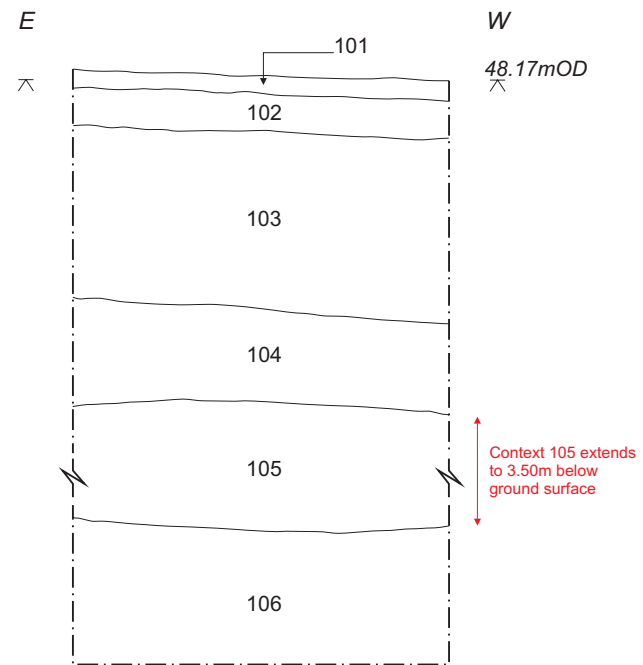


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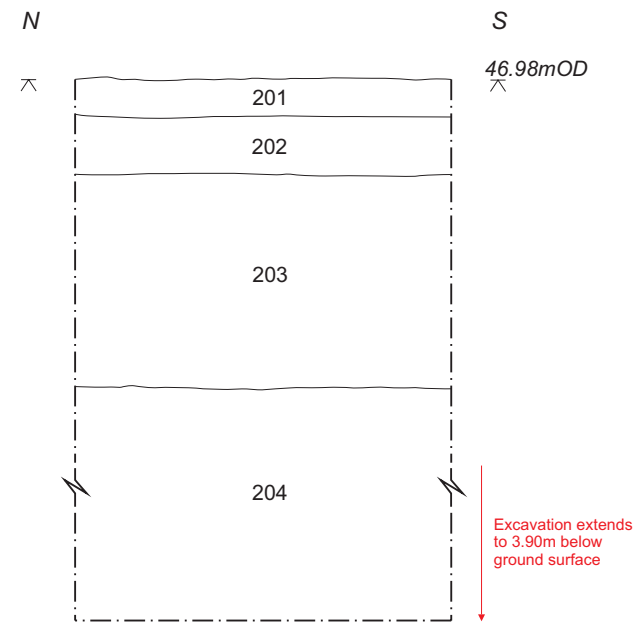
Site location map showing location of Trial Pits

Figure 1

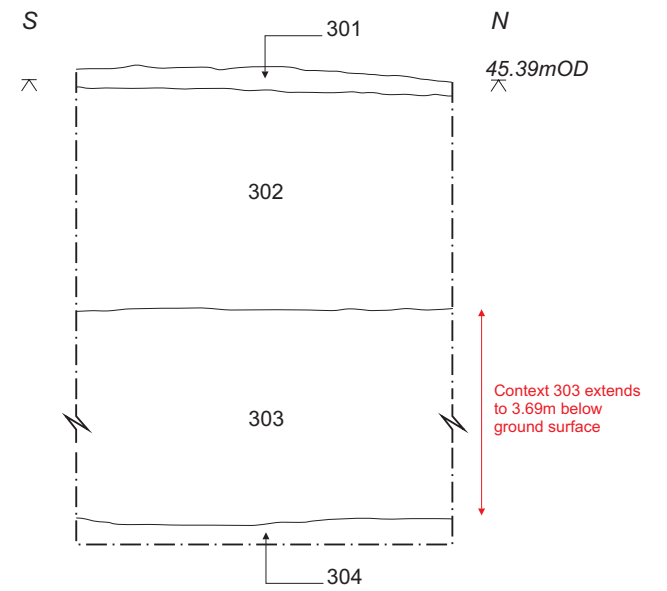
Trial Pit 1 - Section



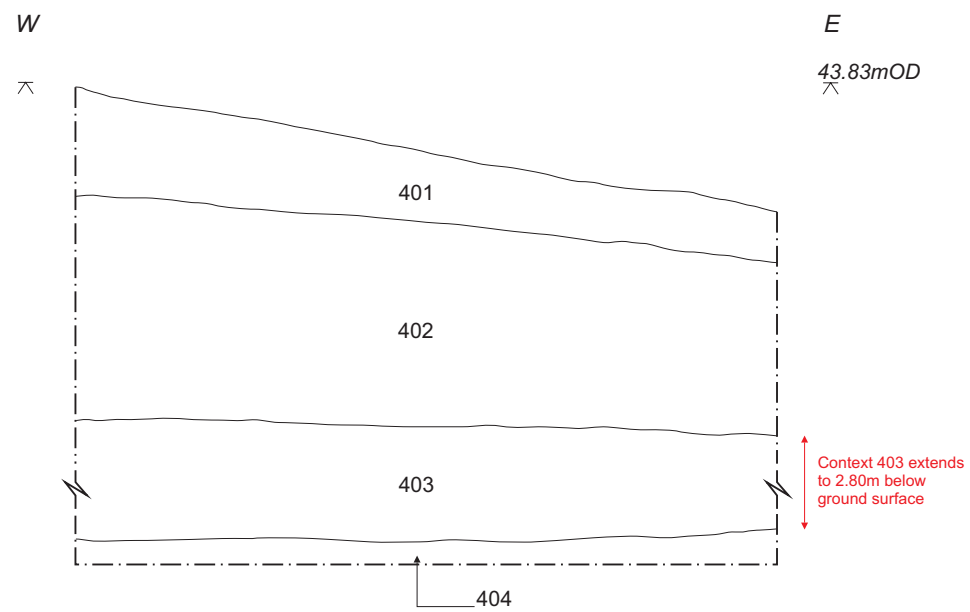
Trial Pit 2 - Section



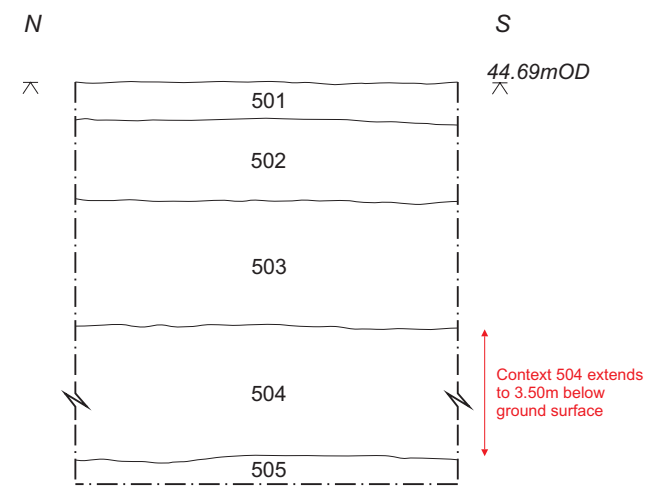
Trial Pit 3 - Section



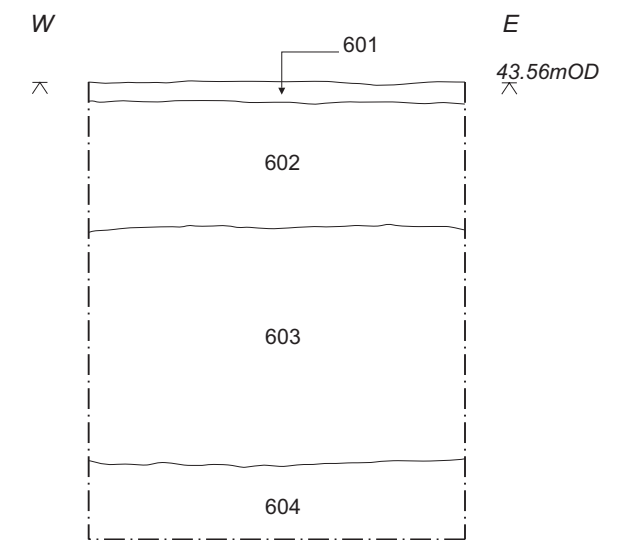
Trial Pit 4 - Section



Trial Pit 5 - Section



Trial Pit 6 - Section



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