

**THE GRANGE  
NEAVE CRESCENT, HAROLD HILL  
ROMFORD  
LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION  
BY  
TRIAL TRENCHING**



**Essex County Council**

**Field Archaeology Unit**

**August 2005**

**THE GRANGE, NEAVE CRESCENT  
HAROLD HILL, ROMFORD,  
LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION  
BY  
TRIAL TRENCHING**

Prepared By: Ben Barker	Signature:
Position: Project Officer	Date:
Checked By: Patrick Allen	Signature:
Position: Project Manager	Date:

Document Ref.	1494evrep
Report Issue Date	15/08/2005
Circulation	Hill Partnerships Ltd
	English Heritage GLAAS
	London Archaeological Archives Resource Centre
	London Borough of Havering Reference and Information Library
	ECC FAU

As part of our desire to provide a quality service, we would welcome any comments you may have on the content or the presentation of this report.

Please contact the Archaeological Fieldwork Manager, at the  
Field Archaeology Unit,  
Fairfield Court, Fairfield Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 3YQ  
Tel: 01376 331470  
Fax: 01376 331428

© **Field Archaeology Unit**, Essex County Council, c/o County Hall, Chelmsford  
Essex CM1 1LF

## CONTENTS

SUMMARY.....	1
1 INTRODUCTION.....	3
1.1 Project History.....	3
1.2 Abbreviations used in the report.....	3
2 BACKGROUND.....	4
2.1 Location and Topography (Fig. 1).....	4
2.2 Geology.....	4
2.3 History and Archaeology.....	4
3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	5
3.1 General Aims.....	5
3.2 Specific Objectives.....	5
4 METHOD.....	5
4.1 Machining.....	5
4.2 Excavation and Recording.....	6
5 RESULTS.....	6
5.1 Summary.....	6
5.2 Trench 1.....	6
5.3 Trench 2.....	7
5.4 Trenches 3 and 4.....	7
5.5 Trenches 5 and 6.....	7
6 CONCLUSIONS.....	8
7 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS.....	8
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	9
APPENDIX 1: Trench Data.....	10
APPENDIX 2: Archive Index.....	10

## FIGURES

Figure 1: Site Location Plan.....	2
-----------------------------------	---

**THE GRANGE, NEAVE CRESCENT, HAROLD HILL,  
ROMFORD, LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION  
BY TRIAL TRENCHING**

**SUMMARY**

**Client:** Hill Partnerships Ltd

**NGR:** TQ 53738 90874

**Planning Application No:** London Borough of Havering P0010.05

**Site Code:** NVE05

**Project No:** 1494

**Date of Fieldwork:** 20/7/05 – 22/7/05

*Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on behalf of Hill Partnerships Ltd before construction of special needs care accommodation at the Grange (formerly West Marsh Lodge), Neave Crescent, Harold Hill Romford. The main aim of the evaluation was to identify any further evidence of Roman cremation burials, previously recorded in the general area, or any evidence of settlement or field boundaries related to the Roman London to Colchester road (the A12) that ran 300m to the south-east of the site.*

*The six evaluation trenches identified no significant archaeological remains, and the only features and artefacts recorded were all of recent origin. The area was farmland to the rear of Haroldwood Hall and became built up with housing and factories during the 1950s, and 1960s. Much of the site was disturbed during the construction of the former West Marsh Lodge in the 1970s. The trial trenching results suggest that the proposed development is extremely unlikely to have any impact on archaeological remains.*



Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of HMSO. Crown copyright. Licence no.LA100019602.

Fig.1. Site Location Plan

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project History

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching prior to a new development on the former site of West Marsh Lodge, Harold Hill, Romford, in the London Borough of Havering. The proposed development will consist of special needs care accommodation, including an access road, car park and services. The aim of the evaluation was to determine the presence, nature, date and survival of archaeological remains in the proposed development area before construction could take place.
- 1.1.2 The archaeological evaluation was carried out in response to a condition placed on planning consent by the London Borough of Havering on the advice of English Heritage's Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (EH GLAAS). The condition required a programme of archaeological investigation to be carried out under the terms of *Planning Policy Guideline 16: Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16), issued in 1991 by the former Department of Environment.
- 1.1.3 Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) carried out the evaluation on behalf of Hill Partnerships Ltd, in accordance with a brief prepared by the English Heritage GLAAS and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ECC FAU.
- 1.1.4 Following completion of the project, the site archive will be deposited in the Museum of London Archaeological Archive Resource Centre (LAARC), and an OASIS on-line record of the evaluation results will be completed.

### 1.2 Abbreviations used in the report

ECC FAU = Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit

EH GLAAS = English Heritage Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service

GLSMR = Greater London Sites and Monuments Record

LAARC = London Archaeological Archive Resource Centre

NMR = National Monuments Record

NGR = National Grid Reference

OS = Ordnance Survey

OD = Ordnance Datum

## **2 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Location and Topography**

2.1.1 The site lies on the eastern side of Neave Crescent (TQ 53738 90874; Fig. 1). It covers an area of 0.31 ha, and is relatively flat, at a height of c. 36-37m OD, although there was a slight fall from north to south.

2.1.2 West Marsh Lodge had been demolished prior to the archaeological evaluation, although a substantial layer of concrete remained in the south-eastern corner of the site. The rest of the site area was covered by long grass, with overgrown scrub vegetation along the northern edge of the site.

### **2.2 Geology**

2.2.1 The natural geology of the site consists of London Clay, which is exposed beyond the northern edge of the Thames terrace deposits.

### **2.3 History and Archaeology**

2.3.1 The site lies about 2 miles (c. 4km) to the east of the historic core of Romford, which was an important medieval and post-medieval market town. Romford probably originated as a Roman settlement, established on the Roman London-Colchester road (now the A12) at the crossing point of the river Rom or Rhum. The site lies 300m to the north-west of the Roman road.

2.3.2 The development area lies within an archaeological priority area defined in the Borough Urban Development Plan (EH GLAAS 2005). The area was previously agricultural land to the rear of Haroldwood Hall, and remained undeveloped until the 1950s and 1960s. West Marsh Lodge was built on the site in the 1970s and demolished recently.

2.3.3 A Roman urn, bottle and *patera* (shallow dish with a handle) were found in the Harold Hill area prior to 1777 (NMR Ref: TQ 59 SW, 14). This, together with the proximity of the Roman road, suggested the presence of Roman cremation burials in the general area of the site. However, a trial-trenching evaluation carried out in 2002 by the Hertfordshire

Archaeological Trust at the Faringdon Centre site, immediately to the west, found no archaeological features, and no evidence of the postulated cremation cemetery.

### **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 General Aims**

3.1.1 The main aim of the investigation was to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains threatened by the proposed development, and establish the degree of existing disturbance and its effect on archaeological survival.

3.1.2 The aim of this evaluation report is to evaluate the significance of archaeological deposits within the development area to inform any decision on further work or mitigation proposals.

#### **3.2 Specific Objectives**

3.2.1 A specific objective was to identify any evidence for Roman inhumation or cremation burials and associated artefacts.

3.2.2 A second specific objective was to identify any evidence for Roman or later settlement or land-use related to the Roman London-Colchester road.

### **4 METHOD**

#### **4.1 Machining**

4.1.1 The trial trenches were located in accordance with the EH GLAAS Brief and the ECC FAU Written Scheme of Investigation, although some trench locations had to be changed to avoid live electricity cables. The trenches covered a total area of 150 sq m, representing a 5% sample of the site area outside the footprint of the demolished West Marsh Lodge, as required in the brief. The trenches were positioned within the footprints of the three proposed accommodation blocks and in the car park area in the south-east of the site. This layout covered all areas of proposed groundworks, while avoiding the disturbed footprint of the demolished building and the known location of live underground services.



4.1.2 The evaluation trenches were excavated using a wheeled mechanical excavator with a flat-bladed bucket, under supervision of an archaeologist.

## **4.2 Excavation and Recording**

4.2.1 Standard ECC FAU methodologies were employed with regard to excavation and recording. All stratigraphy was recorded using the FAU's context recording system. Planning and surveying was tied to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The evaluation trenches were surveyed in by GPS survey equipment.

4.2.2 All surfaces were sufficiently cleaned to ensure that any features present were visible. A sample of the features uncovered in the evaluation trenches was excavated using hand tools to confirm that they were modern, and a sample of natural features was excavated in order to prove that they were not man-made.

4.2.3 No finds were collected, as all were obviously modern.

4.2.4 No environmental samples were taken due to the absence of well-stratified, datable deposits with potential for significant ecofact presence or survival.

## **5 RESULTS**

### **5.1 Summary**

5.1.1 No areas of significant archaeological activity were identified, and the only features present were obviously modern. The evaluation trench locations are shown in Fig. 1.

### **5.2 Trench 1**

5.2.1 Trench 1 measured 4.5m by 4.5m and was excavated through the existing concrete hard-standing in the proposed car park area in the south-east of the site.

5.2.2 Natural clay was identified at 36.6m OD below 0.4m of modern concrete and brick rubble. The top 0.2m of the natural clay had been disturbed by the overlying overburden. A test pit dug along the northern side of the trench confirmed the consistency of the natural to a depth of 0.8m below modern ground level.

5.2.3 No archaeological features or deposits were present within the trench.

### **5.3 Trench 2**

5.3.1 Trench 2 measured 10m by 2m, and was excavated within the footprint of the proposed accommodation block in the south-west of the site. This trench was moved to the north-east of the building footprint to avoid live services.

5.3.2 Natural clay was identified below 0.10m of disturbed subsoil and 0.35m of topsoil. A small pit containing modern glass bottles was identified at the southern end of the trench.

5.3.3 No archaeological features or deposits other than a modern pit were present within the trench.

### **5.4 Trenches 3 and 4**

5.4.1 Trenches 3 and 4 measured 10m by 2m and 15m by 2m respectively, forming a T-shape, and were excavated within the footprint of the proposed accommodation block in the north-west of the site. Trench 3 was moved to the north end of the western wing of the block to avoid live services. Trench 4 was moved to the south side of the northern wing to avoid thick scrub, and was also 5m shorter than originally planned due to the disturbed ground to the west.

5.4.2 Natural clay was identified at 36.9-37.0m OD below 0.30m of topsoil. In trench 4 there was a 0.10m thick layer of disturbed natural clay at the base of the topsoil. A modern dump of topsoil containing polystyrene and foam insulation was present half-way along trench 4.

5.4.3 No archaeological features deposits were present in either trench.

### **5.5 Trenches 5 and 6**

5.5.1 Trenches 5 and 6 measured 20m by 2m and 10m by 2m respectively, forming a T-shape, and were excavated within the footprint of the proposed accommodation block in the north-east of the site. Trench 5 was excavated as originally planned, and trench 6 was excavated as an additional trench as trench 4 had been shortened.

- 5.5.2 Natural clay was identified at a height of 37.2m OD, below 0.25m of topsoil and 0.10m of disturbed natural clay.
- 5.4.4 A large ditch or pit was identified at the north end of trench 5, partially covered by re-deposited clay. After hand-digging retrieved modern china, tile, slate and clinker, machine-excavation revealed that it was 0.7m deep, with no earlier deposits seen toward the base. Trench 6 was more heavily disturbed by the demolition activity, and the west end of the trench contained modern topsoil that had been impacted into the natural.
- 5.4.5 No archaeological features or deposits, other than modern, were present within either trench.

## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 No archaeological features or deposits other than modern were present within the area of any of the trenches. The areas to the west, south and south-east of the former West Marsh Lodge have been extensively disturbed. The north-east of the site, around trench 5 is possibly less disturbed, although even here there was evidence of recent ground disturbance in trench 6, nearer the former West Marsh Lodge.
- 6.2 As well as the general absence of archaeological features, no archaeological finds were present in the topsoil. It is extremely unlikely that any significant archaeological features or deposits are present outside the areas investigated by the trenches.
- 6.3 It is likely that the area was used for agricultural cultivation up until the construction of the adjacent housing and industrial estates from the 1950s onwards.

## **7 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS**

- 7.1 The results of the trial trenching evaluation suggest that the site area is extremely unlikely to contain any significant archaeological deposits, and the proposed buildings and ground works are therefore likely to have at most a negligible impact on the archaeological resource of the area.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Essex CC FAU would like to thank Hill Partnerships Ltd, who commissioned and funded the archaeological work, especially Mark Pigram and Warren Sparkes for their co-operation and assistance. The fieldwork was carried out by Ben Barker. The project was managed by Patrick Allen of ECC FAU. David Divers of EH GLAAS monitored the archaeological work on behalf of the London Borough of Havering.

- |          |      |  |
|----------|------|--|
| ECC FAU  | 2005 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation Archaeological Evaluation. The Grange, Side of West Marsh Lodge, Neave Crescent, Harold Hill, Romford, London Borough of Havering. Essex CC FAU</i> |
| EH GLAAS | 2005 | <i>Brief for an Archaeological Evaluation. The Grange, Side of West Marsh Lodge, Neave Crescent, Harold Hill, Romford. EH GLAAS</i>  |

## APPENDIX 1: TRENCH DATA

Trench No	N Co-Ordinate	S Co-Ordinate	Length	Width	Area
1	TQ 53758,90856	TQ 53754,90850	4.5	4.5	20 m <sup>2</sup>
2	TQ 53727,90854	TQ 53730,90844	10 m	2 m	20 m <sup>2</sup>
3	TQ 53713,90876	TQ 53711,90885	10 m	2 m	20 m <sup>2</sup>
4	TQ 53725,90889	TQ 53712,90882	15 m	2 m	30 m <sup>2</sup>
5	TQ 53739,90895	TQ 53742,90875	20 m	2 m	40 m <sup>2</sup>
6	TQ 53749,90876	TQ 53739,90873	10 m	2 m	20 m <sup>2</sup>
					150 m <sup>2</sup> (c.5%)

## APPENDIX 2: ARCHIVE INDEX

### Index to the Archive

File containing:

- 1. Introduction**
  - 1.1 Brief for Evaluation
  - 1.2 Specification for Evaluation
- 2. Research Archive**
  - 2.1 Evaluation Report
- 3. Site Archive**
  - 3.1 Trench Sheets 1 to 6
  - 3.2 Photographic Register
  - 3.3 1 sets of 35mm colour slides and B&W Prints
  - 3.4 Miscellaneous maps and plans