

**21-23 NORTH STREET
ROMFORD
LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



Essex County Council

**Field Archaeology Unit
April 2005**

**21-23 NORTH STREET
ROMFORD
LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK TOP ASSESSMENT
AND TEST PIT RECORDING**

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	GLAAS
	GLSMR

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.
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Client: Stonebond Ltd
FAU Project No.: 1459
NGR: TQ 5110 8896
Planning Application No.P1157.03
Site Code: NSR05
Date of Fieldwork: 5th and 6th April 2005

SUMMARY

An archaeological condition was placed upon a planning application made by Stonebond Ltd for the construction of an eight-storey apartment block. Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) was commissioned to undertake trial trenching on the development area, this consisted of three 7m-long trenches.

All the trenches were excavated to the top of the undisturbed natural geology, between 1.4m and 1.6m below the present ground surface. All three trenches showed a series of modern rubble layers to a depth in excess of 1m, with a possible 19th century soil layer below. The ground surface was heavily disturbed by services and only modern finds were noted. No archaeological features or deposits were identified.

It is unlikely that any archaeological remains survive within the development area given the amount of build-up and modern disturbance.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In response to a planning application by Stonebond Ltd for the construction of an eight-storey apartment block at 21-23 North Street, Romford, an archaeological condition was placed on planning permission by the London Borough of Havering. This required the applicant to arrange for an archaeological investigation before any groundworks take place, following procedures set out in Planning Policy Guideline 16 (DoE 1990) and agreed with English Heritage Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS), as advisors to the local planning authority. Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) was commissioned by Stonebond Ltd to undertake a documentary and cartographic search and record test pits to assess the archaeological potential of the site. Following the submission of this report GLAAS further required the development area to be evaluated by trial trenching. The present report lays out the results of the trial trenching. The archive will be deposited at the Museum of London (LAARC).

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and Topography (Fig 1)

Romford is situated on the Roman road from London to Chelmsford and Colchester (now the A118 and A12), which crosses the River Rom, a tributary of the Thames, a short distance to the west of the town centre. The historic core of the town is based on the medieval High Street and market place extending along the main road, and the crossroads with North Street and South Street at its western end (Fig. 1). The site (TQ 5110 8896) covers 0.04 ha and has a short frontage onto the west side of North Street, one of the original medieval streets, only 90m north of the central crossroads. Angel Way, on the western side of the site, was not built until the second half of the 20th century.

2.2 Geology

The drift geology of the area is river terrace deposits, with an underlying geology of London Clay (British Geological Survey website). The site was covered with degraded tarmac overlying approximately 1.5m of modern build-up.

2.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

This background is based upon information from the desktop assessment of the site (Robertson 2005). Little archaeological evidence exists for Romford as past archaeological intervention has been limited, consisting only of small excavation trenches or watching brief work.

Roman artefacts have been recovered from several sites in Romford town centre, and five Roman cremation burials, with brooches and coins, were found in an excavation in 1981 at the Dolphin

Centre, east of the market place (NMR 965609). These are possibly associated with *Durolitum*, the presumptive Roman settlement at Romford.

The earliest historical reference to Romford dates to 1166, and it was granted its market charter in 1247. The medieval town may have developed from an earlier settlement to the south of the main road, in the Oldchurch area. The layout of the medieval town and market is still evident in the modern plan of the town centre.

The only archaeological investigation to date in North Street is a watching brief at 274 North Street, where no archaeological evidence was found (Beasley 1996; GLSMR 062505; NMR 1120462). An archaeological watching brief on test pits dug at the former postal sorting office site, to the west of the present development site (Holder 1997; GLSMR 062548), recorded a 19th-century ground surface above the alluvium and below modern made ground, but no archaeological deposits.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The general aim of the project was to establish the potential for archaeological remains in the proposed development area, with a view to developing an archaeological mitigation strategy if there is potential for significant remains.

Specific objectives were to:

- Identify any areas of medieval or post-medieval stratigraphy within the development area, and define the extent of modern intrusions or disturbance
- Evaluate any evidence for medieval and post-medieval occupation alongside North Street
- Evaluate any evidence for activity pre dating the medieval town

4. METHOD

A mechanical excavator with a flat-bladed bucket was used to open all trenches under archaeological supervision.

The machine-excavated surface of the trenches were sufficiently cleaned to ensure that any features present were visible. A representative section of each trench was recorded and the make up and disturbances recorded on a trench sheet.

Standard ECC FAU methodologies were employed with regard to excavation and recording. Planning and surveying was tied to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. A photographic record consisting of colour slide and black and white print was maintained throughout the course of the excavation. All *IFA* standards and by-laws and *ALGAO's* Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (EAA Occ paper 14, 2003) were adhered to throughout the project.

5. FIELDWORK RESULTS (Figs 2 and 3)

Three trenches were excavated around the site, measuring between 6.3m and 6.9m long by 1.6m wide. All of the trenches were disturbed by modern services, which were left extant where encountered. None of the trenches contained any archaeological features or deposits. All of the trenches were excavated down to natural. Further details of each trench can be found in Appendix 1.

5.1 Trench 1 (Fig 3a)

Trench 1 was located along the northern edge of the site and ran east – west, perpendicular to the North Street frontage. It measured 6.9m long and was excavated down onto undisturbed natural at a depth of 1.4m, although the eastern end was subsequently excavated to 2.2m to check for services. While no archaeological features or deposits were identified in the trench, a series of modern layers and walls lay above the undisturbed natural.

Running along the length of the northern section of the trench below the tarmac were the remains of a modern wall of which three courses survived; each brick was approximately 0.11m in height and 0.24m in length. Below this was a levelling layer of gravel and sand which rested upon a grey silty clay containing pieces of modern ceramic tile, brick and glass. It is possible that the bottom layer represents the remains of a ground surface, although it was badly disturbed by ceramic drains and was probably contaminated by material from the layers above it.

5.2 Trench 2 (Fig 3b)

Running from the south-east corner to the approximate centre of the site, Trench 2 measured 6.8m long and was 1.6m deep. It was excavated down to undisturbed natural apart from the northwestern end through which a gas pipe ran.

The bulk of the build-up consisted of a series of modern rubble and levelling deposits to a depth of 1.05m. Below this were two layers of dark grey silty clay that were similar in composition and inclusions as the bottom layer seen in Trench 1 these layer rested upon the undisturbed natural clay.

5.3 Trench 3 (Fig 3c)

Trench 3 ran north- south along the Angel Way frontage and was 6.3m long and 1.6m deep. Only a 3m section in the centre of the trench was excavated down to the undisturbed natural as a gas pipe was encountered at the northern end of the trench and BT ducts at the southern.

As with Trenches 1 and 2, the top 1m of the trench consisted of layers of modern rubble and levelling material. The bottom layer, a 0.53m thick deposit of dark grey silty clay overlying natural, although also heavily disturbed by modern services and contamination from the layers above, may represent a ground surface as its composition and inclusions were similar to the corresponding layer in Trenches 1 and 2.

6. FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL

No finds were collected and no environmental samples taken. Where finds were noted in layers they were obviously modern (c. 19th/20th century), so not collected. Their incidence was noted in the recording of the trench stratigraphy. .

7. CONCLUSIONS

The sections of the trenches and the depth at which undisturbed natural was encountered is comparable to the sections recorded during the test pitting (Robertson 2005). It is possible that the bottom layer, of dark grey silty clay, seen in all three of the trenches represents a 19th century ground surface, lying approximately 1m below the present ground surface. No earlier remains were identified below it. The depth of modern build-up and the amount of disturbance seen in the lower deposits suggests that no archaeological features or deposits are likely to have survived in the development area.

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned and funded by Stonebond Limited. Thanks are due to Mr Steven Savill of Stonebond and Verry Construction Limited for their assistance on site. The project was monitored by GLAAS. A Lewsey prepared the illustrations. P Allen managed the project and the author carried out the fieldwork.

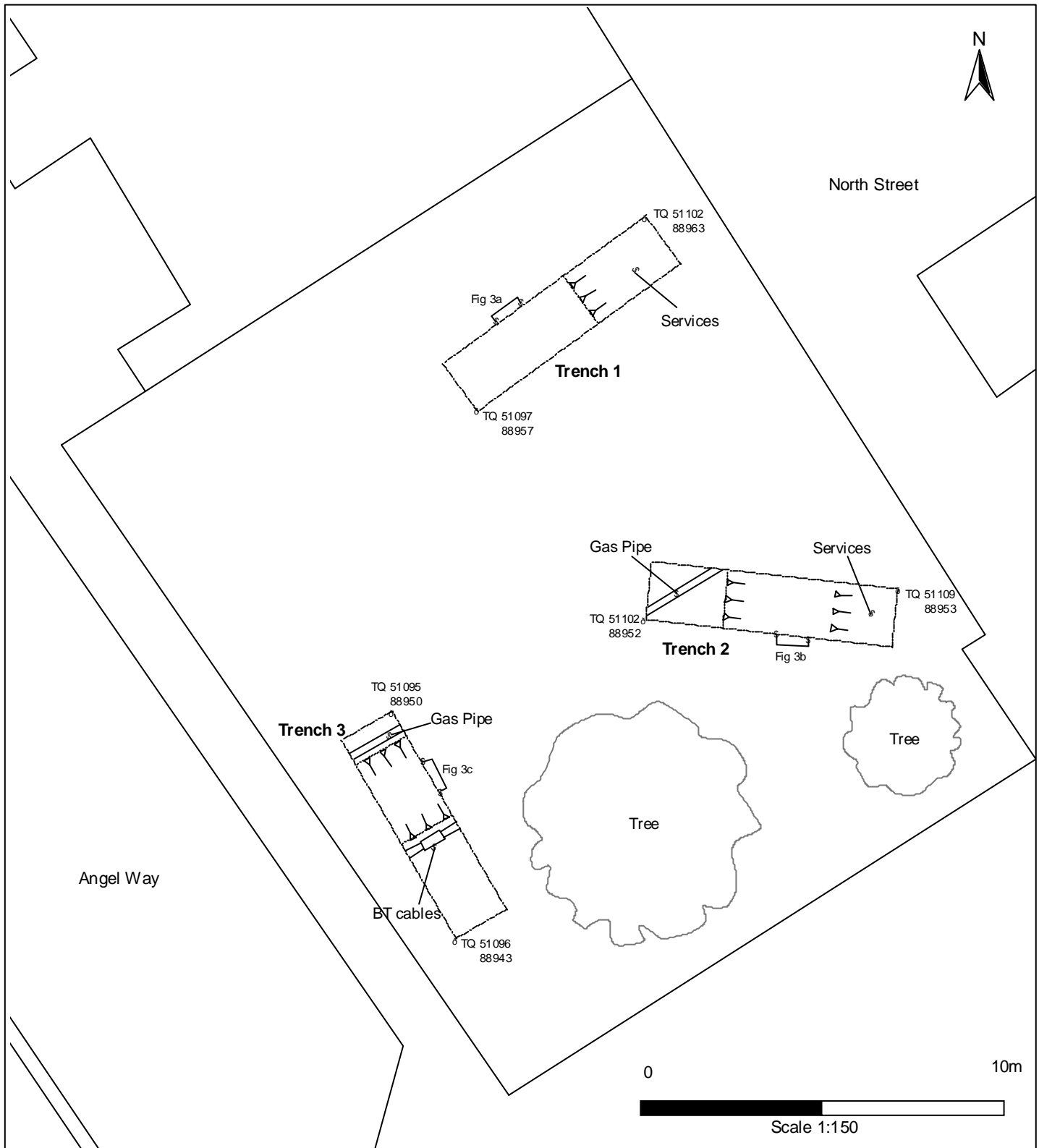
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British Geological Survey	Accessed Feb 2005	http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html
DoE	1990	<i>Planning Policy Guideline 16: Archaeology and Planning</i>
Holder, N.	1997	<i>Watching brief at Angel Way, Romford, 1997. Site Code ANL97.</i> Museum of London Archaeology Service report
Robertson, A.	2005	<i>21 – 23 North Street, Romford, London Borough of Havering. Archaeological Desk Top Assessment and Test Pit Recording.</i> ECC FAU Client Report



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Figure 1. Location Plan



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Figure 2 - Trench Detail

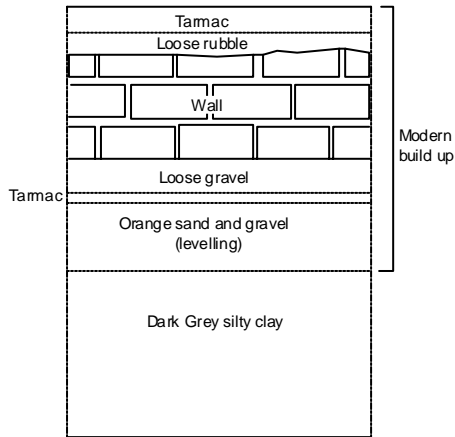


Fig 3a - South facing Trench 1

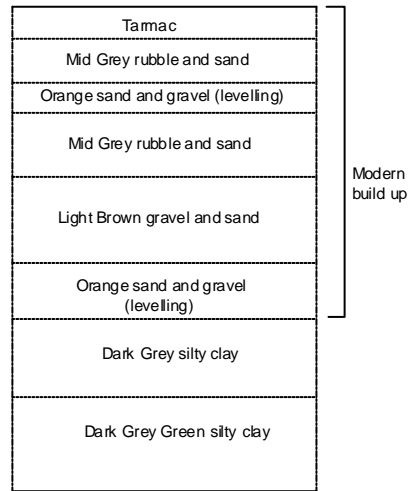


Fig 3b - North facing Trench 2

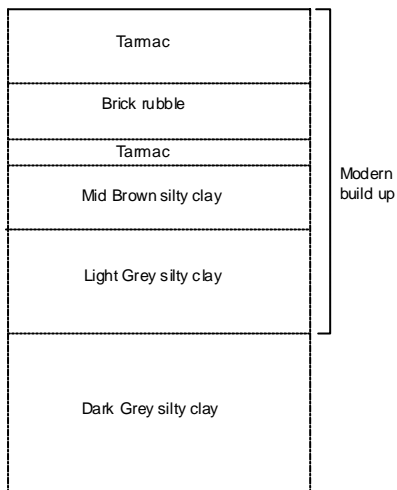


Fig 3c - West facing Trench 3



Fig. 3. Representative Trench sections

APPENDIX 1: FIELDWORK DATA

All dimensions are given in metres.

Trench	Dimensions (L x W x D)	Natural Seen?	Archaeological Features
1	6.9 x 1.6 x 1.4	Yes	None
2	6.8 x 1.6 x 1.6	Yes	None
3	6.3 x 1.6 x 1.6	Yes	None

APPENDIX 2: ARCHIVE INDEX

SITE NAME : 21 – 23 North Street, Romford (NSR 05)

Index to the Archive

File containing:

1. Research Archive

1.1 Client Report

2. Site Archive

2.1 2 x Photographic Register

2.2 Site Photographic Record (3 x B+W Prints; 3 x Colour Slides)

2.3 3 x Trench Sheets

2.4 1 x Site location drawing

No finds

APPENDIX 3: GLSMR/RCHME NMR ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FORM

1. TYPE OF RECORDING

Evaluation

2. LOCATION

Borough Havering NGR TQ 5110 8896

Site Address 21 – 23 North Street, Romford

Site Name 21 – 23 North Street, Romford

Site Code NSR 05

3. ORGANISATION

Name of archaeological unit: Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit

Address Fairfield Court
Fairfield Road
Braintree
Essex
CM7 3YQ

Site Director Andrew Robertson

Funded by Stonebond Limited

4. DURATION

Site Started 05/04/2005 Finished 06/04/2005

Work previously notified Yes

Will Continue No

5. PERIODS REPRESENTED

Modern

6. PERIOD SUMMARIES

Modern over Burden and modern wall remains possible - modern ground surface

7. NATURAL

Type London Clay

Height above O.D.

8. LOCATION OF ARCHIVE

Please indicate those categories still in your possession:

Notes Plans Correspondence Photos Negs Slides Manuscripts

All will be deposited in the following museum: Museum of London

Year of transfer 2005

Location of copies FAU Offices

Security copy made yes

9. LOCATION OF FINDS

In your possession N/A

All of the finds have been / will be deposited in the following museum: Museum of London:

Year of transfer N/A

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Essex and Greater London SMR

21 –23 North Street, Romford, Archaeological Desk Top Assessment and Test Pits. Essex C C Field Archaeology Unit report.

Robertson, A. 21 – 23 North Street, Romford, London Borough of Havering. Archaeological Desk Top Assessment and Test Pit Recording. ECC FAU Client Report. 2005