

LAND TO REAR OF 117-119 MARLBOROUGH ROAD

ROMFORD

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BY

TRIAL TRENCHING



Essex County Council

Field Archaeology Unit

APRIL 2006

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ROMFORD
LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING**

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TRIAL TRENCHING**

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Document Ref.	1611rep
Report Issue Date	4 April 2006
Circulation	Destinyhomes Ltd EH GLAAS Museum of London 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.

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LAND TO REAR OF 117-119 MARLBOROUGH ROAD
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SUMMARY

Client: Destinyhomes Ltd

NGR: TQ 497 892

Planning Application No: P1613/05

Site Code: MBU 06

Project No: 1611

Date of Fieldwork: 23/03/06

Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on the site of a residential development by Destinyhomes Ltd to the rear of 117-119 Marlborough Road, Romford. The general aim of the evaluation was to identify any archaeological evidence on the site, which lies at the edge of the built-up area adjacent to open land to the south and west, which has high archaeological potential, with evidence of extensive cropmarks recorded by aerial photography.

The three evaluation trenches, located alongside the footprint of the proposed block of flats, did not identify any archaeological remains. Apart from a few small modern pits there was no evidence of truncation or ground disturbance. The development is therefore extremely unlikely to have any impact on any archaeological remains.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project History

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching prior to a residential development to the rear of 117-119 Marlborough Road, Romford in the London Borough of Havering. The fieldwork aimed to determine the presence, nature, date and survival of archaeological remains in the proposed development area.

Planning Application P1613.05 was submitted by Destinyhomes Ltd to the London Borough of Havering Planning Department. The evaluation followed a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (EEC FAU) based on consultations with English Heritage's Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) over the archaeological requirements, and with Mr Tony Budge of Destinyhomes Ltd over the form of the development and the foundation design.

Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit carried out the evaluation on behalf of Destinyhomes Ltd.

Following completion of the project, the site archive will be deposited with London Archaeological Archive Resource Centre (LAARC).

1.2 Abbreviations used in the report

ECC FAU= Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit

EH = English Heritage

GLAAS = 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 (Fig. 1)

The site lies 1.5km west of the centre of Romford, on the western slope of the valley of the river Rom (TQ 497 892). It is situated on the south side of Marlborough Road and consists of a 2ha area to the rear of terraced houses along the road frontage that was previously occupied by a yard and a small warehouse, now demolished (Fig. 1). The site is reached by a short access road between numbers 113 and 117. It lies on the southern edge of the built-up area and backs onto open land.

The planned development consists of a block of flats covering an area of 360 sq m, a small outbuilding, car parking and services. The block of flats represents the main area of disturbance to any potential archaeological remains, with the other features involving only shallow or minor groundworks and therefore likely to have only minor impacts.

The ground was relatively flat, with a height of 20.4m O.D located on the road adjacent to the site.

2.2 Geology

The trial trenches revealed a dark brown topsoil up to 0.48m thick over the site. Below this was a brownish orange/yellow subsoil up to 0.15m thick above a silty clay natural material with occasional patches of gravel.

2.3 History and Archaeology

Although the site lies 1.5km to the west of Romford's historic core, the surrounding area shows high potential for archaeological remains, with extensive evidence in the open land to the south and the west of the site for remains of all periods from the prehistoric to the modern. Generally, the site lies near the southern edge of the ancient Hainault Forest, but the immediate area appears to have been settled and farmed from an early date. It also lies near the main road from London to Romford, originally Roman, but continuing in use as the present-day London Road (A118).

Extensive cropmarks are known from aerial photographs of farmland around Crown Farm 0.6km to the south-west of the site. These include boundary ditches of field systems and trackways, and ring-ditches indicating the location of prehistoric burial mounds (MLO 151, 12471-3, 13285, 14018, 14021, 14247, 14311, 23358, 39206). These cropmarks have not been investigated and their date is unknown, but they suggest the survival of ancient landscape features from prehistoric times onwards.

Aerial photographs have also recorded extensive cropmarks around Warren Farm 1km to the west of the site. Excavations in 1988 by Pam Greenwood of the Passmore Edwards Museum revealed: a Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) pit; a large double-ditched Iron Age enclosure; a Late Iron Age/Roman enclosure and field system; six medieval/post-medieval windmill sites, one of which was dated to the 13th century; a late medieval cottage; medieval ridge and furrow cultivation; and World War II defences (MLO 21999, 22889, 23737, 23739-40, 23747, 24073, 24075, 24084, 35485, 53704, 53956, 54301, 54306, 55639).

The line of the Roman road from London to Colchester (the present A118) runs 0.8m to the south of the site. Locally, evidence of cremation burials has been recorded beside the road in two places (MLO 14415, 67573), and a Roman coin hoard was found 700m north-east of the site (MLO 168).

There is documentary evidence for medieval and later settlement along the valley of the Rom. East House manor, 900m to the east of the site, is documented from 1332 (MLO 26410), while a document of 1440 records charcoal burners' cottages along Collier Row to the north-east. Crown Farm house to the south-west dates to the late 16th century (with later alterations and additions), and the earliest map of the area, drawn up in 1618, shows houses in the Collier Row and Warrens Farm areas.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General Aims

Generally, the aim of the work is to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains in the site area.

3.2 Specific Objectives

The results of the evaluation will be assessed in relation to the research agenda set out in the Museum of London's *A research framework for London archaeology 2002*.

- 3.2.2 Specific research objectives were not formed due to the small size of the site and the absence of archaeological evidence in its immediate vicinity. Any significant archaeological features identified by the evaluation would have been related to cropmarks and other evidence in nearby fields, around Crown Farm and Warren Farm to the south and west.

4 METHOD

4.1 Machining

The Essex CC Field Archaeology Unit adhered to IFA's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*, and the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service Guidance Papers No. 3, *Standards and Practices of Archaeological Fieldwork in London*.

Modern overburden and any topsoil were removed by a mechanical excavator, using a toothless ditching bucket. Machine stripping was carried out to ECC FAU standards under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist.

In areas where subsoil existed between soil/overburden and clean natural, the sub soil stripping was removed under archaeological supervision. The spoil heaps were examined for archaeological material.

4.2 Excavation and Recording

All surfaces were sufficiently cleaned to ensure that any features present were visible. Generally any archaeological features and deposits would be excavated using hand tools, and would be fully recorded, except obviously modern features. A sample of features suspected to be root-holes was excavated in order to prove that these were naturally formed. An overall plan related to the site grid and tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid was produced (Fig 1). A photographic record comprising monochrome negatives, and

colour transparencies was made. The photographic record aimed to provide an overview of the trenches and the surrounding area.

Methodologies that are compatible with those used elsewhere in London were employed. All stratigraphy was recorded using the Field Archaeology Unit's context recording system. Only modern finds were collected, and their presence was noted and they were discarded on site. 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

The evaluation consisted of three individual trenches 10m in length by 1.5m wide, identified as Trenches A, B and C. (Fig 1).

The only archaeological features identified were a few small modern pits.

5.2 Trench A

The topsoil was 0.40m thick, dark brown with infrequent gravel and occasional pieces of modern glass, brick, slate, metal and flower pot within it.

The subsoil consisted of brownish orange plastic silty clay with frequent gravel.

No archaeological features or finds were identified. There was evidence of modern root disturbance from trees adjacent to the site. Some of the root holes were excavated to prove these were not in fact man-made features.

5.3. Trench B

A dark brown friable silty clay topsoil was identified. It contained infrequent gravel with occasional modern glass brick and tile.

The subsoil 0.12m in depth, consisted of brownish yellow friable silty clay with infrequent gravel.

There were two irregular shaped modern features, one centrally located, approximately 1m wide and 1.5m long. The second ran along the north western edge of the trench. Both contained modern glass and pot. Neither of the features was recorded or planned.

5.4. Trench C

A dark brown topsoil 0.48m thick consisting of friable silty clay was identified. It contained infrequent gravel and modern finds including brick, glass and concrete.

A subsoil brownish yellow in colour and a plastic silty clay consistency with infrequent gravel was removed.

No archaeological features were identified.

6 FINDS

Only modern finds were identified, none of which were retained.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation trenches did not reveal any evidence of archaeological features. The only features investigated were two small modern disturbances and root holes. There was no evidence within the evaluation trenches for truncation that may have removed archaeological deposits or features.

The most prominent landscape feature is the boundary hedge line, probably associated with the enclosed landscape as visible on the First Edition 1875-1881 1 inch Ordnance Survey.

The evaluation covered only a small area with no previously known archaeological features in the immediate vicinity, but was situated near the edge of the built-up area and adjacent to open land to the south and west. There is extensive evidence of cropmarks across this open space, and the multi-period site at Marks Warren Farm lies 1km to the west, so the general area has potential for surviving archaeological remains. However, the fact that

limited size of the evaluation site did not reveal any archaeological features should not be too surprising.

8.0 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

The lack of any archaeological evidence within the evaluation trenches suggests that the construction of the new building is unlikely to impact upon the archaeological resource within the area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Essex CC Field Archaeology Unit thanks Destinyhomes Ltd for commissioning and funding the archaeological evaluation, and in particular Tony Budge for provision of the mechanical excavator and general help in setting up the archaeological work. The fieldwork was carried out by Mark Germany and Adrian Turner of ECC FAU. Digital illustrations were by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed by Patrick Allen of ECC FAU. David Divers of EH GLAAS monitored the excavation on behalf of the local planning authority.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Essex CC FAU, 2006 Written Scheme of investigation: Archaeological evaluation for land to rear of 117-119 Marlborough Road, Romford, London Borough of Havering.

APPENDIX 1. FIELDWORK DATA

Trench	Category	Description	Date
A	Topsoil	0.40m thick, dark brown with infrequent gravel and occasional pieces of modern glass, brick, slate, metal and flower pot within it.	Modern
	Subsoil	The subsoil consisted of brownish orange plastic silty clay with frequent gravel.	
B	Topsoil	The topsoil was 0.40m thick, dark brown with infrequent gravel and occasional pieces of modern glass, brick, slate, metal and flower pot within it.	Modern
	Subsoil	The subsoil consisted of brownish yellow friable silty clay with infrequent gravel	
C	Topsoil	A dark brown topsoil 0.48m thick consisting of friable silty clay was identified. It contained infrequent gravel and modern finds including brick, glass and concrete.	Modern
	Subsoil	A subsoil brownish yellow in colour and a plastic silty clay consistency with infrequent gravel was identified.	

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 3 in total
- 3.2 1 sets of 35mm colour slides and B&W Prints
- 3.3 Miscellaneous maps and plans

APPENDIX 3: GLSMR SUMMARY

GLSMR/RCHME NMR ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FORM

1. TYPE OF RECORDING

Evaluation by trial trench

2. LOCATION

Borough Havering NGR TQ 49685,89233

Site Address 117-119 Marlborough Road, London Borough of Havering.

Site Name 117-119 Marlborough Road.

Site Code MBU 06

3. ORGANISATION

Name of archaeological unit/ company/ society: Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit

Address Fairfield Court
 Fairfield Road
 Braintree
 Essex
 CM7 3YQ

Site Director Mark Germany

Funded by Destinyhomes Ltd

4. DURATION

Site Started 23/03/06 Finished 23/03/06

Work previously notified Yes

Will Continue No

5. PERIODS REPRESENTED

Modern

6. PERIOD SUMMARIES

Not applicable. No archaeological deposits identified.

7. NATURAL

Type Silty Clay

Height above O.D. 20.4m

8. LOCATION OF ARCHIVE

Please indicate those categories still in your possession:

Notes Plans Manuscripts

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

Year of transfer 2006

Location of copies

Security copy made

9. LOCATION OF FINDS

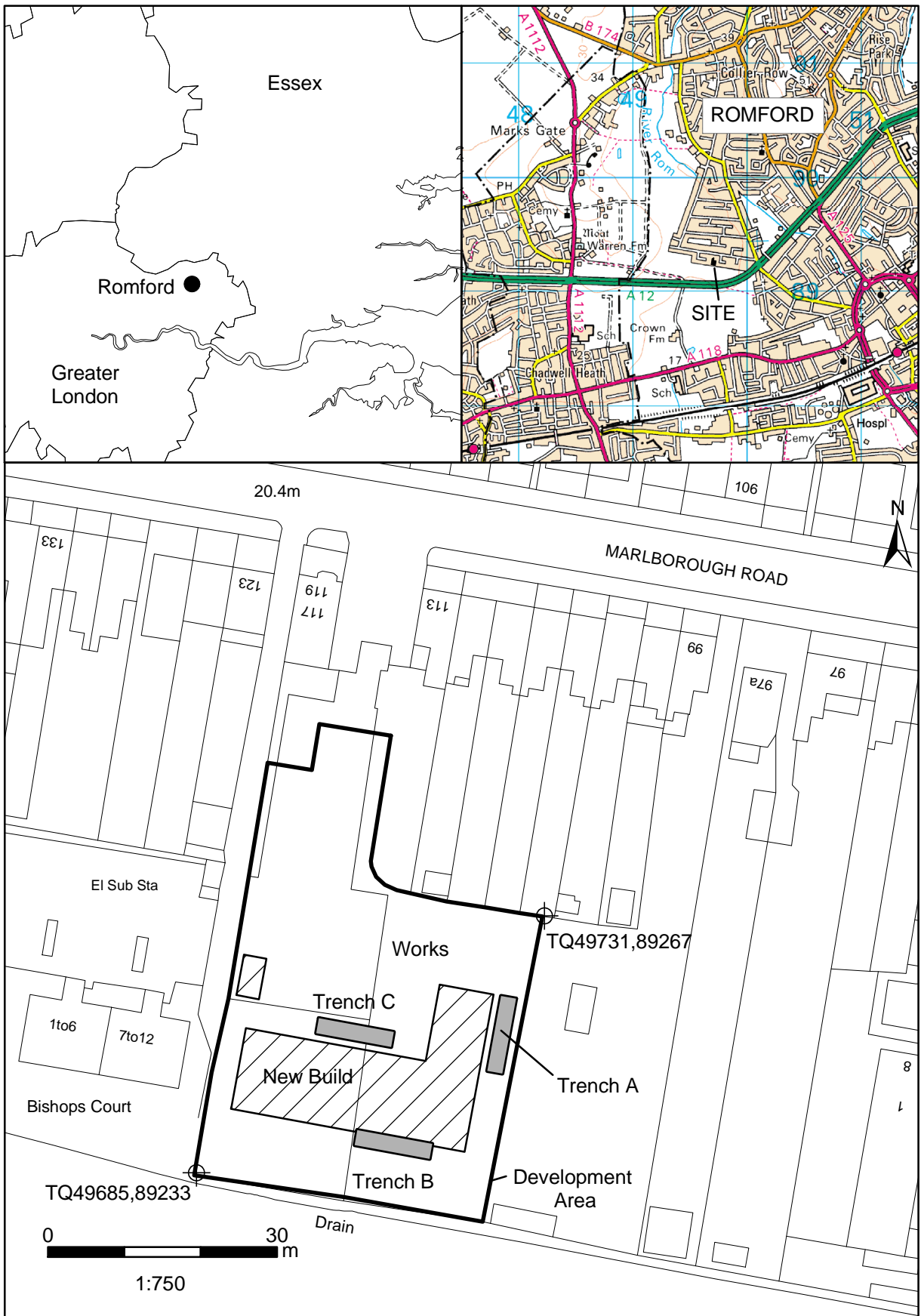
In your possession Nil

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

Year of transfer Not Applicable

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

EEC FAU 2006 Written Scheme of investigation: Archaeological evaluation for land to rear
Of 117-119 Marlborough Road, Romford, London Borough of Havering.



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Fig.1. Location of site and evaluation trench locations