

**63 MAIN ROAD
GIDEA PARK
LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION
BY
TRIAL TRENCHING**



Essex County Council

Field Archaeology Unit

OCTOBER 2004

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GIDEA PARK
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION**

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TRIAL TRENCHING**

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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	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 Detailed Results.....	6
6 FINDS REPORT	9
7 CONCLUSIONS	9
8 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS.....	9
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	10
BIBLIOGRAPHY	10
APPENDIX 1: FIELDWORK DATA	11
APPENDIX 2: FINDS DATA.....	11
APPENDIX 3: ARCHIVE INDEX	12
APPENDIX 4: GLSMR SUMMARY	12

FIGURES

Figure 1: Site Location Plan	2
Figure 2: Plan of Excavated Features.....	8

**63 MAIN ROAD
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
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SUMMARY

Client: Phase 4 Developments Ltd

NGR: TQ 52281 89832

Planning Application No: P1654.03

Site Code: MGK04

Project No: 1405

Date of Fieldwork: 28/9/04

Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on of the site of a new build, to the rear of 63 Main Road, Gidea Park. The specific aim of the trial work was to identify evidence of a Roman road and/or associated activity.

The single evaluation trench identified three features that are likely to have created by tree roots. Although the site showed minimal evidence of truncation or disturbance by buildings, no remains associated with the Roman road or contemporary activity were located. It is likely that the course of the road lies to the south of the development area. No other deposits or features of archaeological significance were encountered. It is concluded that the proposed development is unlikely to have any impact on the archaeological resource of Gidea Park.



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Figure 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 build to the rear of 63 Main Road, Gidea Park, 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.
- 1.1.2 Planning Application P1654.03 was submitted by Phase 4 Developments Ltd to the London Borough of Havering Local Planning Authority. The evaluation was initiated in response to Condition 12 of the Planning Agreement; which requires a programme of archaeological work in an area where borehole evidence suggests the possible presence of the London to Chelmsford Roman road (Truckle, 2004).
- 1.1.3 Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit carried out the evaluation on behalf of Phase 4 Developments Ltd. The project was carried out in accordance with a brief prepared by English Heritage Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service. Robert Whytehead of English Heritage monitored the work.
- 1.1.4 Following completion of the project, the site archive will be deposited with the Museum of London.

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

NMR = National Monuments Record

NGR = National Grid Reference

OS = Ordnance Survey

OD = Ordnance datum

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and Topography (Fig. 1)

- 2.1.1 The development area lies on the north side of Main Road (A118), between Gidea Avenue and Heath Drive (TQ 52281 89832). Number 63 is a large Victorian-style villa. The new build is situated to the rear of the property. This area had been occupied by modern extensions and outbuildings.
- 2.1.2 The modern buildings had been demolished prior to the archaeological investigation. Beyond the footprint of these buildings, the site was either garden lawn or flower beds that contained mature trees and shrubs.
- 2.1.3 The ground was relatively flat, at a height of c. 34m OD.

2.2 Geology

- 2.2.1 Borehole data, compiled by Meridian Soils Ltd in June 2004, indicated that the underlying geology was Sand and Gravel, below 0.2 - 0.5m of made ground and 0.3 -0.4m of topsoil.

2.3 History and Archaeology

- 2.3.1 The development area lies along the line of a Roman road, which follows the roughly east-west course of the A118.
- 2.3.2 The First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1881 shows that the land to the north of Main Road was parkland belonging to Gidea Hall.
- 2.3.3 The house plot first appears on the 2nd Edition of the OS County Series (c.1898), where the line of Main Road to the south-west is described as a 'Roman road'.
- 2.3.4 The 1998 evaluation by ECC FAU prior to the construction of 63a Main Road (MGP98) did not identify any archaeological features at the front of the property (Gadd 1998). However, the bend in Main Road suggests that the Roman road may have ran further north than its modern counterpart.

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.
- 3.1.2 A sample of the area where archaeological remains were potentially threatened was investigated with the aim of recording remains of all periods, if present.

3.2 Specific Objectives

- 3.2.1 A specific aim of the evaluation was to investigate archaeological deposits that may indicate the presence of a Roman road and/or associated activity.
- 3.2.2 The evaluation report aims to assess the significance of archaeological deposits within the development area in order to inform any decision on further work or mitigation proposals.

4 METHOD

4.1 Machining

- 4.1.1 The trial trench location was determined by the GLAAS brief (Truckle 1998). The trench was orientated diagonally across the footprint of the new build.
- 4.1.2 A mechanical excavator with a flat bladed bucket was used to excavate one 19.4m by c. 2m trench, aligned northwest to southeast, under archaeological supervision. A total area of c. 38 square metres was stripped and evaluated as part of the investigation.
- 4.1.3 Excavation of the northwestern end of the trench was hindered by the presence of a mature chestnut tree that was subject to a tree preservation order. Approximately 3.5m of the trench was below the canopy of this tree. Mechanical excavation in this area was restricted to deposits that lacked major root inclusions.

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.
- 4.2.2 The site was surveyed by tape measure in relation to the property boundaries. Plans were drawn at 1:20 and sections at 1:10.
- 4.2.3 All surfaces were sufficiently cleaned to ensure that any features present were visible. Archaeological features and deposits were excavated using hand tools. A sample of natural features was excavated in order to prove that they were not man-made.
- 4.2.4 Finds from all features were collected, where present.
- 4.2.5 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 The excavation recorded ten individual contexts. The majority of these represented areas of root disturbance.
- 5.1.2 No areas of archaeological activity were identified.

5.2 Detailed Results (Fig. 2)

- 5.2.1 Undisturbed natural silty Gravel (6) was identified at a height of 33.3m OD.
- 5.2.2 At the southwestern end of the trench this was overlain by a 0.05m thick layer of clayey silt (5). This was a natural subsoil layer that was probably deposited as part of the same fluvial regime as the underling gravels.
- 5.2.3 Layer 5 was cut by two features, 2 and 4. Feature 2 was a shallow, ovoid pit-like feature that contained a very mixed fill (1). The irregular nature of this cut suggests that it likely to have been created by root disturbance.

- 5.2.4 Feature 4 was identified against the northeastern trench baulk. Although more regular than pit 2, it was filled by a topsoil-like deposit (3). The humic nature of this fill suggests that is recent in origin. This feature could be the remains of a post-hole; however, in the context of the garden, it is more likely to be a planting hole.
- 5.2.5 At the northwestern end of the trench, a c. 0.2m deep layer of grey silt, with occasional gravel inclusions (7) was identified. This layer was heavily exploited by root activity and broadly corresponds to the extent of the overhanging tree canopy. It is probable that this deposit represents a subsoil layer of mixed topsoil and natural, which has been leached out by root action. Excavation of this deposit was not possible due to the proximity of the nearby tree.
- 5.2.6 Layer 7 was cut by a linear feature (10) that ran northeast-southwest across the trench. It was poorly defined and much disturbed by root activity. Its location corresponded with the northern end of the demolished building. However, excavation of a segment indicated that its edges were undercut on the southern side and was therefore unlikely to represent a man-made foundation cut. Two fragments of tile were recovered from the fill (9). This area of disturbance is more probably the result of the removal of a tree root prior to the construction of the outbuildings.
- 5.2.7 No archaeological features were visible in the middle of the trench. Layer (8) formed a straight-sided spread of gravel in a slightly greyer silty matrix. The extent of this deposit broadly corresponded to the footprint of the demolished building; however the deposit appeared to be undisturbed. This outbuilding had been constructed on a concrete raft and it is thought that Layer 8 represents natural gravel that had been stained by the overlying activity. A machine dug sondage revealed that it was less than 0.15m deep. No features were visible below this layer.
- 5.2.8 The topsoil at either end of the trench was c. 0.3m deep. Above Layer 8 the topsoil had been removed and layer of grey sandy silt was present. This had been heavily disturbed during the demolition of the building and it is not known if it was *in situ*. The concrete raft and underlying hardcore had already been removed.

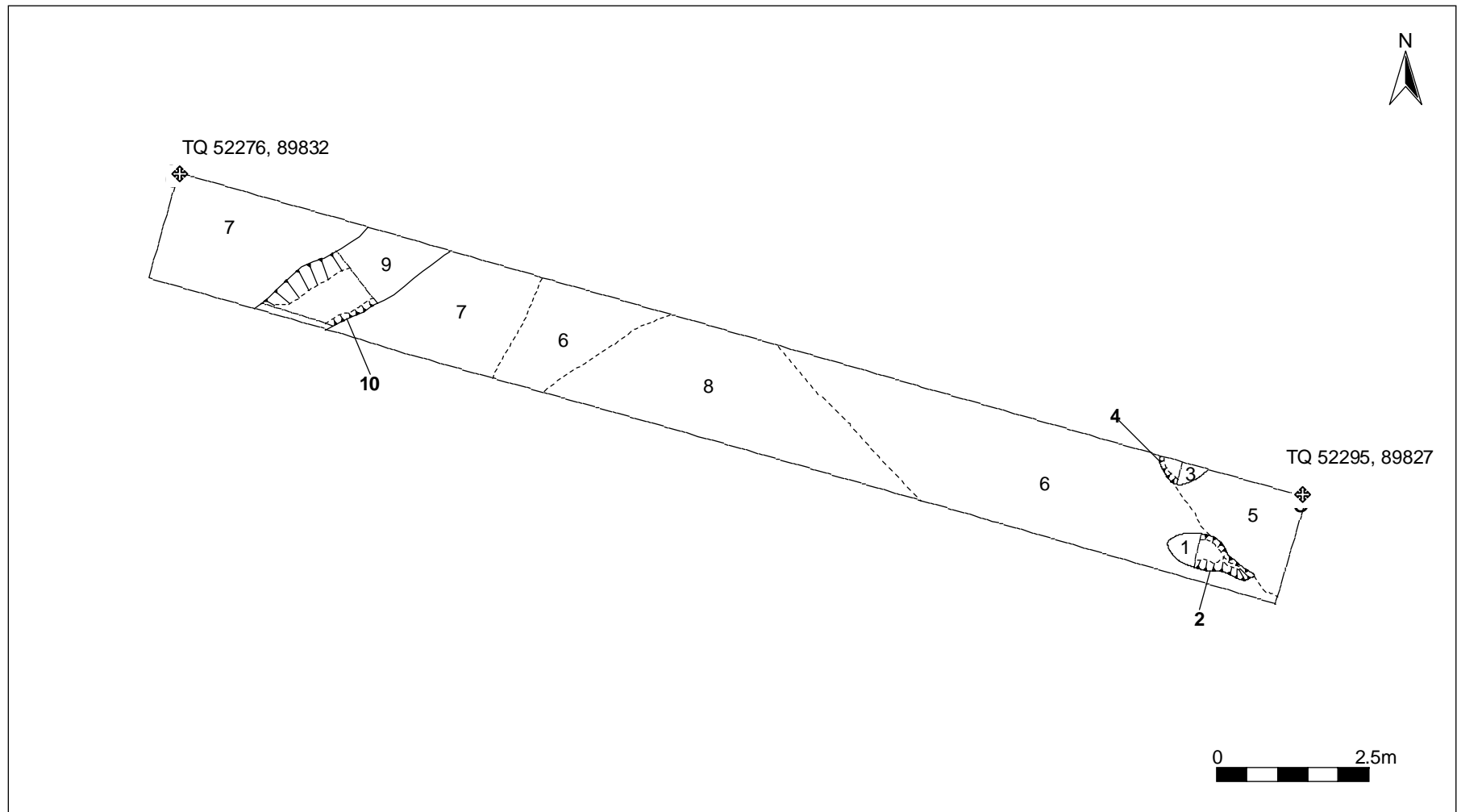


Fig.2. Plan of excavated features.

6 FINDS REPORT

- 6.1 Finds from a single context (fill 9 of linear feature 10) were examined, comprising two fragments (138g) of post-medieval pan tile. These have been discarded following recording.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 No significant archaeological deposits were present with the area of the trench.
- 7.2 There was no evidence that the site had been truncated. The impact of the demolished building on the underlying deposits was minimal and it is unlikely that any archaeological deposits have been lost to subsequent activity.
- 7.3 The presence of features associated with root activity indicates that the development area is likely to have been utilised as garden area for the last 100 years. Before this time, the land to the north of Main Road was parkland and is unlikely to have been developed.
- 7.4 No evidence of the Roman road or associated activity was recorded. It is likely that the road is located closer to the line of the existing A118. The negative results of the evaluation on the frontage of 63a Main Road (Gadd 1998) suggest that the road is unlikely to survive within the limits of the property boundary.

8 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

- 8.1 The results of this evaluation suggest that the area around the trench is not likely to contain any significant archaeological deposits and therefore, the proposed building is unlikely to have any impact on the archaeological resource of the area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was commissioned by Phase 4 Developments Ltd. The fieldwork was carried out by Ben Barker and Adrian Turner of ECC FAU. The finds were processed by Phil McMichael and analysed by Joyce Compton. Digital illustrations were by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed by Patrick Allen of ECC FAU. Robert Whytehead of EH GLAAS monitored the excavation. Thanks are due to Trevor Wilson and Mathew Morley of Phase 4 Developments Ltd for their co-operation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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| Truckle, N. | 2004 | <i>Brief For an Archaeological Evaluation at 63 Main Road, Gidea Park.</i> EH GLAAS |

APPENDIX 1: FIELDWORK DATA

Context	Fill of	Category	Details	Period
1	2	Fill	Mid greyish brown clayey silt. Highly mixed with gravel inclusions. No finds.	Modern
2	-	Cut	Irregular ovoid cut, 0.15m deep. Probable tree bowl.	Modern
3	4	Fill	Dark greyish brown, silty sandy loam. Redeposited topsoil. No finds.	Modern
4	-	Cut	Sub-rounded regular cut, 0.15m deep, with steep sides. Probable tree bole or root hollow.	Modern
5	-	Layer	Mid orangish brown clayey silt. 0.05m thick layer of natural subsoil.	-
6	-	Natural	Mid brownish orange silty gravel. Natural geology.	-
7	-	Layer	Grey silty gravel. Mix of natural gravel and topsoil created by root disturbance. No finds.	-
8	-	Layer	Gravel in a grey silty matrix. Stained natural, 0.05m thick. No finds.	Modern
9	10	Fill	Light Brown sandy silt with abundant gravel. Frequent root inclusions and two tile fragments recovered.	Modern
10	-	Cut	Linear cut with irregular, undercutting sides. Probable disturbance caused by the removal of tree roots.	Modern

APPENDIX 2: FINDS DATA

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
9	10	2	138g	Post-medieval pan tile	Post Med

APPENDIX 3: 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
- 2.2 Analytical Reports
 - 2.2.1 Finds Report

3. Site Archive

- 3.1 Context Index
- 3.2 Context Record Register
- 3.3 Original Context Records 1 to 10.
- 3.4 Drawing Registers
 - 3.4.1 Plans Register
 - 3.4.2 Sections Register
- 3.5 Levels Register
- 3.6 Photographic Register
- 3.7 1 sets of 35mm colour slides and B&W Prints
- 3.8 Miscellaneous maps and plans

Not in Files:

Site Drawings (1 sheet)

APPENDIX 4: GLSMR SUMMARY

GLSMR/RCHME NMR ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FORM

1. TYPE OF RECORDING

Evaluation by trial trench

2. LOCATION

Borough Havering NGR TQ 52281 89832

Site Address 63 Main Road, Gidea Park, London Borough of Havering.

Site Name 63 Main Road

Site Code MGK04

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 Ben Barker

Funded by Phase 4 Developments Ltd

4. DURATION

Site Started 28/09/04 Finished 28/09/04

Work previously notified Yes

Will Continue No

5. PERIODS REPRESENTED

Modern

6. PERIOD SUMMARIES

Not applicable. No archaeological deposits identified other than tree boles.

7. NATURAL

Type Silty Gravel

Height above O.D. 33.3m

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 2004

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

Barker, B. 2004 *63 Main Road, Gidea Park, London Borough of Havering. Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching.* ECC Field Archaeology Unit Report **1405**