

**An archaeological watching brief at
Deyncourt Gardens, Upminster
(London Borough of Havering)
March-April 2006**

**report prepared by
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**on behalf of
Rydon Homes Ltd**

CAT project ref: 06/3c
LAARC site code: DCG 06
NGR: TQ 556230 187160 (c)



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1 Summary

A watching brief on the stripping of a new road line and the installation of services to a new housing development off Deyncourt Gardens revealed nothing of archaeological significance. The development site has been created out of parts of the back gardens to properties on Hall Lane and Courtenay Gardens. The site was generally covered by 0.3m of garden topsoil over a dark yellow or orange clay natural. There were fragments of concrete platforms and walls (from old garden sheds?) at the extreme south end of the development, and modern ceramic land drains were intercepted at several points.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the report on an archaeological watching brief carried out on a new housing development on land off Deyncourt Gardens, between Hall Lane and Courtenay Gardens, Upminster (London Borough of Havering). The site, and the new housing development, is accessed off Deyncourt Gardens.
- 2.2 The watching brief was commissioned by Rydon Homes Ltd, and was carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) between 9th March and 18th April 2006. Post-excavation work took place between 11th and 20th June 2006.
- 2.3 The site is located at National Grid Reference TQ 556230 187160 (centre).
- 2.4 This report follows standards and practices contained in Greater London Archaeology Service's *Archaeological guidance papers* (GLAAS 1997) and the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IFA 1999). The guidance contained in *Management of archaeological projects* (MAP 2) and the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre's *Guidelines* (LAARC 1998) was also followed.

3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 The English Heritage National Monuments Record National Inventory (NMR NATINV) and the Greater London Sites and Monuments Record (GLSMR) list a number of archaeological sites in Upminster. These include loose prehistoric finds from Coniston Avenue and Waldegrave Gardens (GLSMR 060053, 061472, 1.1km and 1.4km south of the site respectively); a major prehistoric enclosure with associated field systems and a hoard at Hacton Lane (GLSMR 060316, 060788, 060801, 060870; 2.4km to the south of the site); and an Iron Age and Roman farmstead and cemetery at Harwood Equestrian Centre (GLSMR nos 0624378-0624381; 3km to the south of the site). There is also a medieval manor house on Hall Lane, 350m south-east of the current site (NMR NATINV 411358).
- 3.2 Recent fieldwork (presumably a watching brief) on a nearby site on Hall Lane revealed no significant archaeological features or finds (GLAAS 2003, 39).

4 Aims

The aim of the watching brief was to record any surviving archaeological features or deposits exposed by the building work, and establish (as far as possible) their date, condition, extent and importance.

5 Results

Seven visits were paid to the site between 9th March and 18th April 2006. Contractor's work observed included the initial topsoil-strip over the access road line, the construction of a manhole at the south end of the site (ie the Deyncourt Gardens end), and the digging of a service trench down the middle of the road line.

Log of site visits

09/03/06

The removal of 10-20cm of topsoil and vegetation at the south end of the access road was observed. Modern demolition material (brick fragments), concrete platforms and wall bases were also stripped out. These were almost certainly the bases of old garden sheds, etc. A patch of black mud with a strong unpleasant smell was also revealed at the south edge of the site (former garden pond?).

15/03/06

Topsoil-stripping was observed; this generally took off the remainder of the topsoil over the road line (approximately 10cm). The pulling of the pipe trench along the road line was monitored across the southern part of the site; nothing of archaeological interest was noted. Natural is 80cm of clay, then a layer of ?sand.

16/03/06

Further pulling of the pipe trench was monitored (45-50m north of site access). Nothing of archaeological interest was noted.

20/03/06

The pulling of the pipe trench was observed north for about 50-65m. A modern brick wall line and occasional modern pipe trenches were intercepted.

22/03/06

The pipe trench was pulled to 85m north of the site access. Some modern rubbish-pits containing coal, modern tile and glass were observed. A headstone for the grave of a ?dog was noted against the northern site boundary (beyond the stripped area). It read 'In memory of (Arthur?) a faithful friend'. The stripping for the road was due on this day but was postponed for several weeks.

05/04/06

The stripping for services continued in the north part of the site. A land drain was seen in section, 5m north of the site access. Some possible disturbance north of the land drain was also noted, possibly another land drain.

18/04/06

The stripping of the northern edge of the road was completed on this day. Nothing of archaeological significance was observed. The spoil heaps were inspected, but nothing of archaeological interest was noted.

6 Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were retrieved.

7 Discussion

Although significant archaeological remains are known from Upminster, such as the prehistoric ditched enclosure at Hacton Lane and, more specifically, the medieval manor 350m to the south-east of the current site, no significant archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief on the building works at Deyncourt Gardens. Such features as were recorded (concrete shed floors, wall lines, land drains) are consistent with the previous site history as back gardens to properties on Hall Lane and Courtenay Gardens. The 30cm topsoil horizon recorded on site has been produced by gardening on this site since the construction of the houses in the earlier 20th century, and there is no evidence of any other archaeological activity here. No finds were retrieved.

8 Acknowledgements

The investigation was commissioned by Rydon Homes. Particular thanks to Colin Spelling and Mike Huggett. Thanks also to site contractors Frederick J French for assistance. Site work was carried out by David Ross and Howard Brooks. The project was monitored by David Divers of GLAAS.

9 References

- | | | |
|-------|------|---|
| GLAAS | 1997 | <i>Archaeological guidance papers</i> |
| GLAAS | 2003 | <i>Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service quarterly review: April to June 2003</i> |
| IFA | 1999 | <i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i> |
| LAARC | 1998 | <i>General standards for the preparation of archaeological archives deposited with the Museum of London</i> |
| MAP 2 | 1991 | <i>Management of archaeological projects</i> , second edition (English Heritage) |

10 Glossary

EH	English Heritage
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor
GLAAS	Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service
GLSMR	Greater London Sites and Monuments Record
NMR NATINV	National Monuments Record National Inventory (EH)

11 Archive deposition

The site record is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF. It will be deposited permanently with the Museum of London, under site code DCG06.

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Distribution list:

Rydon Homes
David Divers, English Heritage London Region
Museum of London (London Archaeological Archive)



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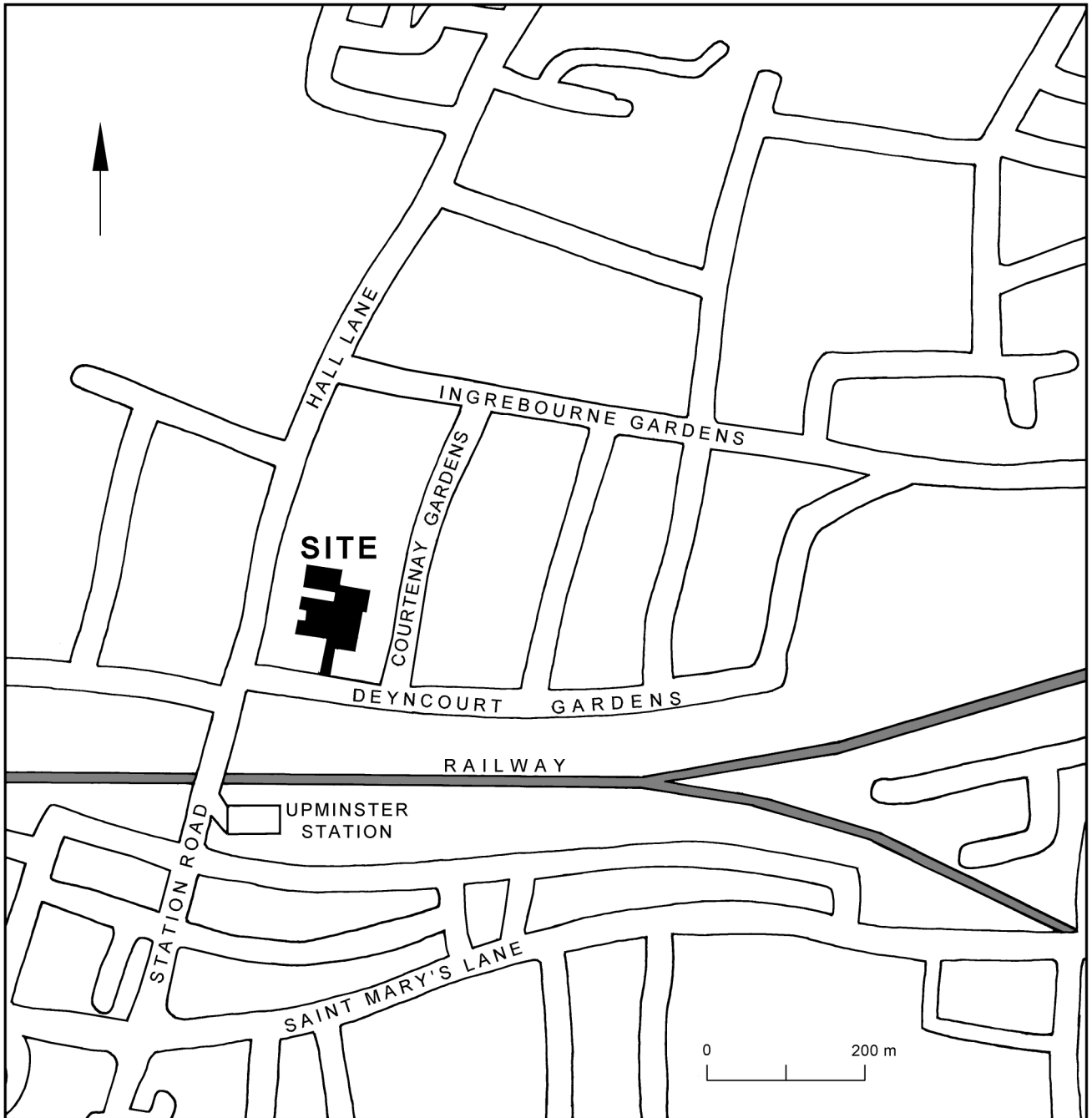


Fig 1 Site location.

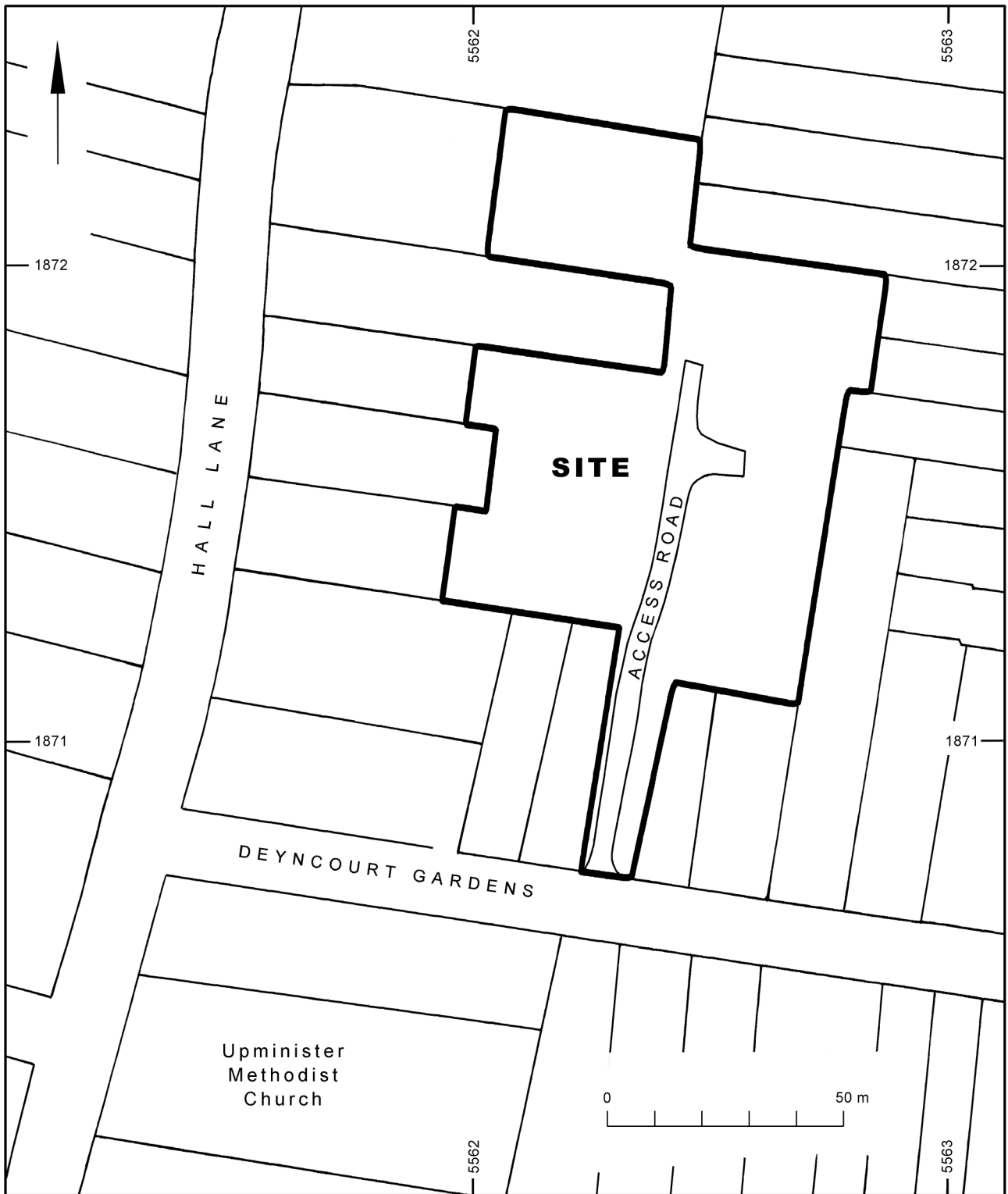


Fig 2 Site plan, showing access road.