

**An archaeological watching brief on
Phase 2 of Deyncourt Gardens, Upminster
(London Borough of Havering)
June-September 2007**

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

CAT project ref: 07/6a
LAARC site code: DCG 06
NGR: TQ 5630 8720 (c)



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1 Summary

A watching brief on the stripping of a new road line, ground-beams for houses and the installation of a storm-water drain trench for Phase 2 of a new housing development of 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.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

- 2.1 This is the report on an archaeological watching brief carried out on Phase 2 of a housing development of Plots 1-9 at Deyncourt Gardens, between Hall Lane and Courtenay Gardens, Upminster (London Borough of Havering). The site, and the new housing development, is accessed from Deyncourt Gardens. The results of the watching brief on Phase 1 are given in CAT Report 370.
- 2.2 The development was given planning permission by the London Borough of Havering under planning application numbers P2132.05 and P2325.05.
- 2.3 The watching brief was commissioned by Rydon Homes Ltd, and was carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) between the 6th June and the 19th September 2007. Post-excavation work took place between September and December 2007.
- 2.4 The site is to the north of the site of Phase 1 and is centred at National Grid Reference TQ 5630 8720.
- 2.5 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 Research Projects In the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) 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 nos 060053 and 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 nos 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 the site of a medieval manor house on Hall Lane, 350m south-east of the current site (NMR NATINV no 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).
- 3.3 In 2006 CAT carried out a watching brief on Phase 1 of the development at Deyncourt Gardens. Nothing of archaeological significance was revealed. The site was generally covered by 300mm of garden topsoil over a dark yellow or orange clay natural (CAT Report 370).

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 Methods (Fig 2)

- 5.1** An archaeologist from CAT made visits during the contractor's groundworks to carry out a watching brief. Groundworks consisted of soil-stripping for the new access road line, the excavation of trenches for ground-beams for houses, and the installation of a storm-water drain.
- 5.2** All the groundworks were carried out by contractors using a mechanical excavator. A toothless bucket was mainly used.
- 5.3** Potential archaeological deposits which were exposed were cleaned by hand. Individual records of layers were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets.
- 5.4** Section drawings were made at a scale of 1:10.
- 5.5** Finds were registered on CAT pro-forma record sheets and assigned finds numbers according to context. Finds were washed, marked and bagged according to context.
- 5.6** Colour photographs were taken with a digital camera.

6 Results (Figs 2-3)

Six visits were paid to the site. Contractor's work observed included the initial topsoil-strip over the new access road line, the digging of trenches for ground-beams for houses, and the installation of a storm-water drain.

Log of site visits

6th June 2007

A visit was made while vegetation was being cleared. Nothing of archaeological significance was seen.

14th June 2007

A second visit was made while the vegetation was being stripped off the line of the new access road. Again nothing of archaeological interest had been exposed.

20th June 2007

The route of the new access road had been stripped of topsoil and subsoil (L1 and L2): 200-300mm at the north end and 400-800mm at the south end. (The difference between the depths on the south side is accounted for by an east-facing slope.) At the northern end, the stripping had not completely removed the topsoil (L1) and it was seen to contain much modern rubbish and rubble. At the southern end, the stripping had removed L1 and had exposed a slightly clayey subsoil (L2) which had been tracked over by the mechanical excavator. Charcoal patches were seen in L2 as well as pieces of flowerpot, modern glass and some coal. Tree roots were in evidence.

A 10m-length of storm-water drain trench, 1.75m deep, was open along the western edge of the road strip. This had been dug in the part of the road strip that had been monitored during the 2006 watching brief. The southern 10m of the trench had already been dug and filled in. L1 and most of L2 had already been stripped off (see above) and the trench was almost entirely dug through natural clay, with bands of gravel (L3). No archaeological features were observed. Two fragments of glass were retrieved from the spoil heap (see section 7).

31st June 2007

Piles had been inserted for the Plot 7 house and trenches for ground-beams dug around them. These trenches were 3.5m-wide corridors dug between the rows of piles. The ground-beam trenches were 2.2m deep, including the vegetation and topsoil layers, and were dug down to natural clay (L 3). No features of archaeological interest were observed.

24th August 2007

Piles had been inserted for house Plot 3 and trenches for ground-beams had been dug around them. These trenches were a similar width to those seen in house Plot 7 and were between 1.5m and 1.9m deep. 600mm of disturbed topsoil containing modern brick (L1/L2) overlaid 800mm of natural clay and gravel (L3). The clay became progressively sandier deeper down and, from approximately 1.4m below ground-level, the natural ground was purely sand and gravel (L4).

Piles had also been inserted for the garage for the house Plot 7 house and ground-beam trenches dug around them. The trenches were 1.1m deep and natural clay was in evidence from 600mm below ground-level.

19th September 2007

The northern half of the works for the Plot 9 house was monitored. Piles had been inserted and ground-beam trenches between 1.2m and 1.5m deep had been dug. These had cut through 300mm of disturbed topsoil and the rest was mid-orange brown clay with gravel deposits. There was no evidence of any archaeological remains.

Due to a lack of any archaeologically significant remains or finds, it was agreed with the GLAAS Archaeology Advisor that the watching brief should terminate.

7 Finds

Only two finds of any interest were retrieved, although both came from the spoil heap and were therefore unstratified. These consisted of two pieces of glass, identified by Howard Brooks of CAT and then discarded, listed below:

- 1 fragment of 18th-century glass from a wine bottle, thickness between 5mm and 7mm, weight 21g.
- 1 fragment of glass from a Victorian medicine bottle, thickness 3mm, weight 4.3g.

8 Discussion

Significant archaeological remains are known from Upminster, such as the prehistoric ditched enclosure at Hacton Lane and, more specifically, the site of the medieval manor 350m to the south-east of the current site. However, no significant archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief on the Phase 2 building works at Deyncourt Gardens. Several modern 'features' or charcoally patches containing modern glass and flower pot were encountered during the road strip. These 'features' are consistent with the previous site history as back gardens to properties on Hall Lane and Courtenay Gardens. The trenches for the ground-beams were deep, ie between 1.1m and 2.2m. Approximately 600mm of disturbed garden topsoil and disturbed clay subsoil were encountered containing flowerpot, bricks, modern glass, coal and charcoal, which is consistent with what would be expected from back gardens to houses constructed in the earlier 20th century. These deposits overlaid natural orange clay with bands of gravel. No features of archaeological significance were observed. From what could be seen from the open trenches and road strip, there is no evidence of any archaeological material here. Two pieces of glass were the only finds retrieved.

9 Acknowledgements

The investigation was commissioned and paid for by Rydon Homes Ltd. Thanks are due to site contractors Frederick J French for their assistance on site. Site work was carried out by H Brooks, K Orr and D Ross. The project was monitored by David Divers of GLAAS.

10 References

CAT Report 370		An archaeological watching brief at Deyncourt Gardens, Upminster (London Borough of Havering), March-April 2006, unpublished CAT archive report, by H Brooks, 2006
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>
MoRPHE	2006	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> (English Heritage)

11 Glossary

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

12 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 Ltd
David Divers, GLAAS
Museum of London (London Archaeological Archive)



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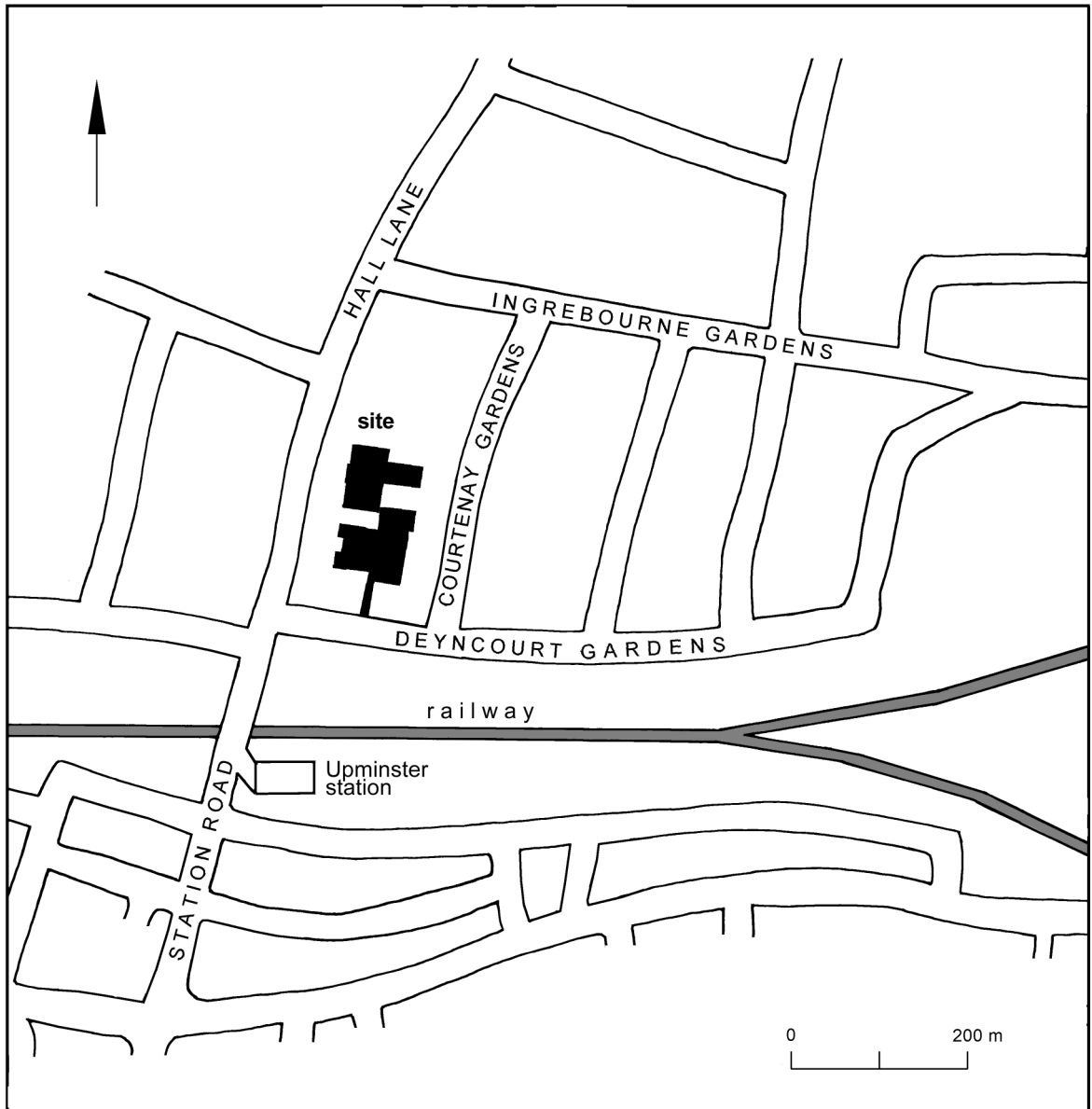


Fig 1 Site location.

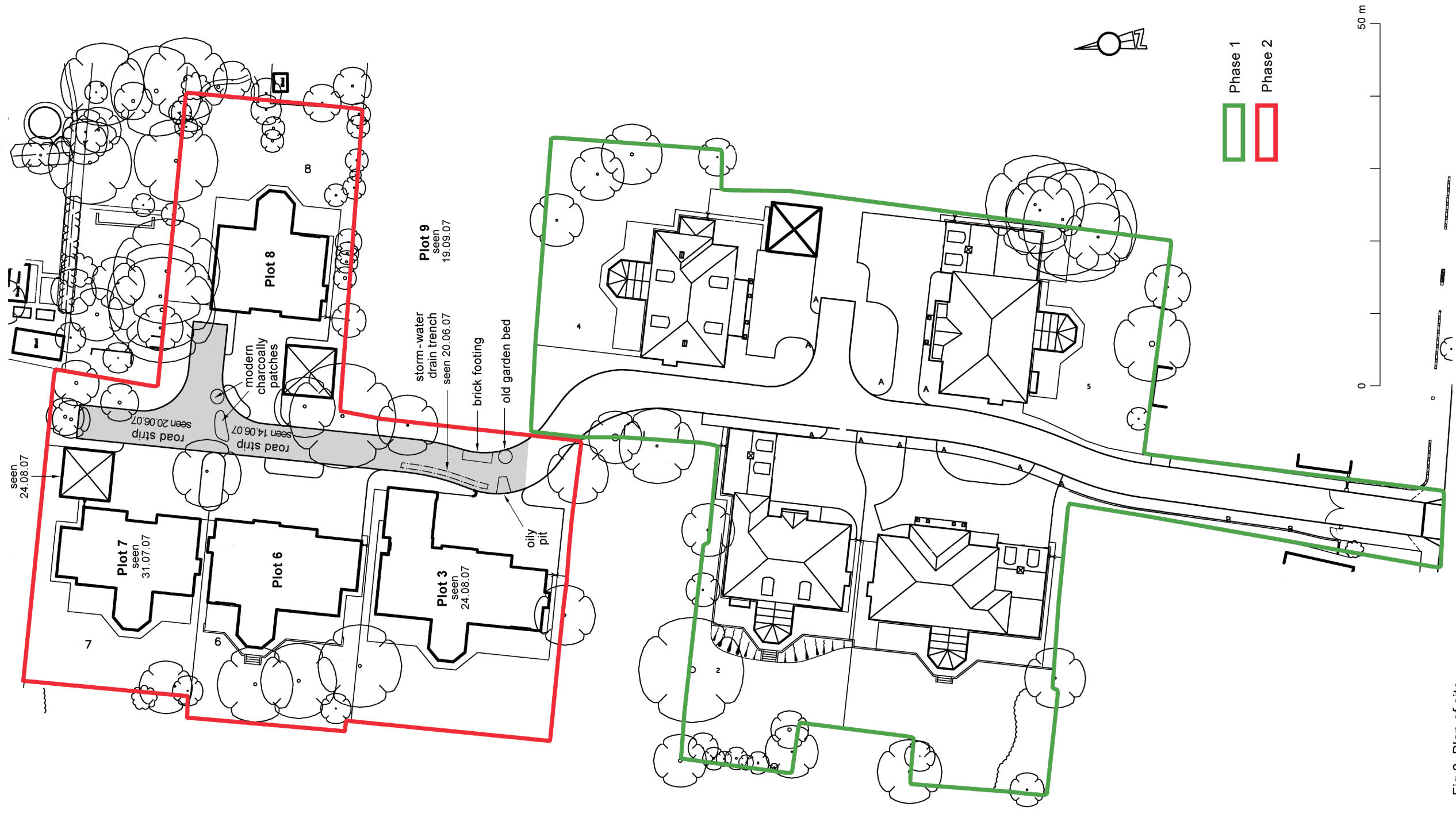
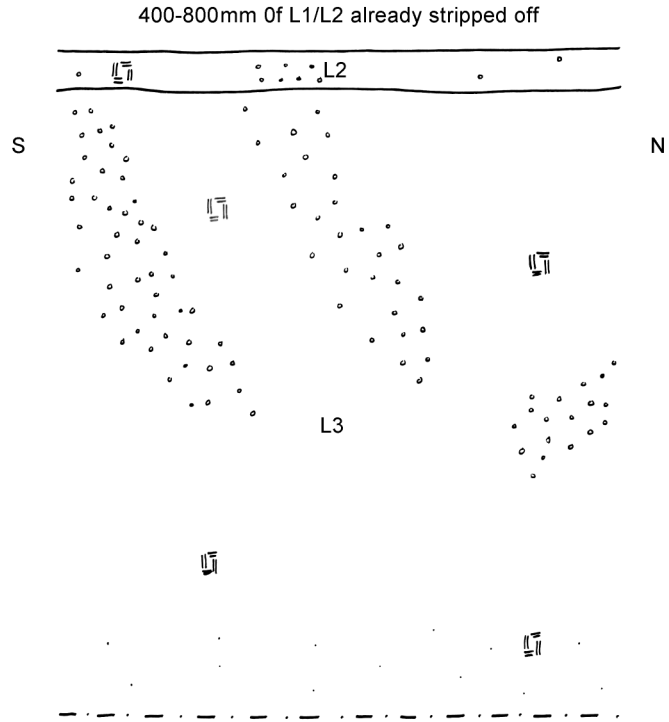


Fig 2 Plan of site.

representative east-facing section of storm-water drain trench



representative east-facing section of ground-beam trench

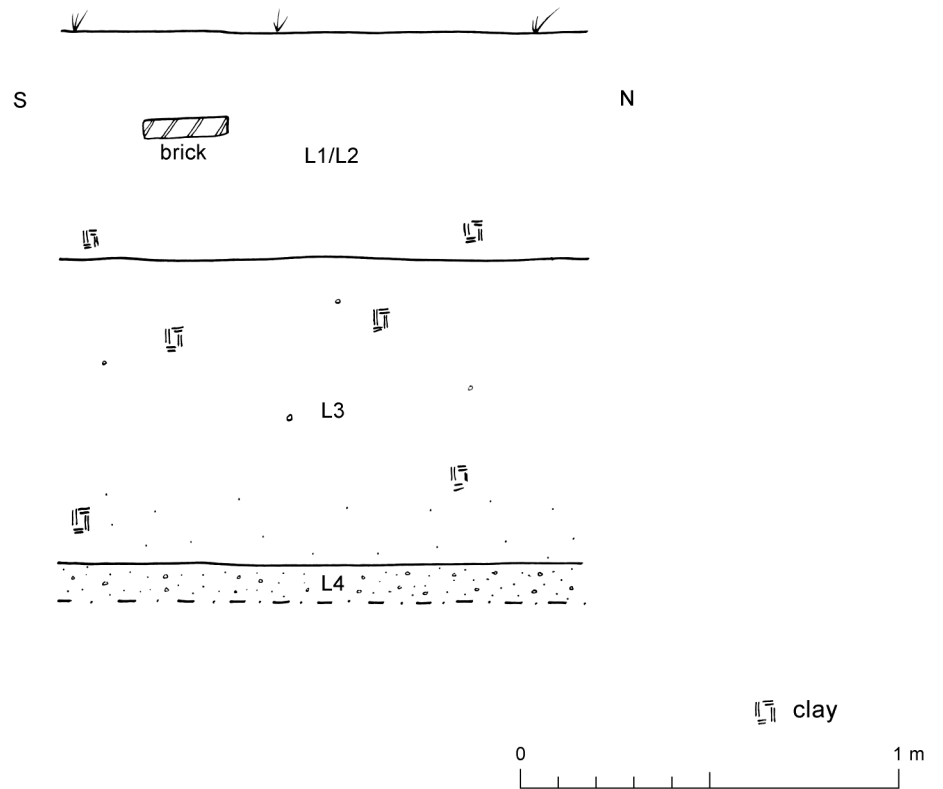


Fig 3 Representative section of storm-water drain trench (above) and representative section of ground-beam trench, Plot 3 (below).