GLA 44 Highgate Wood and Queen's Wood

Grid Reference: Highgate Wood TQ 280 885 Queen's Wood TQ 285 885	Site Type: Natural Landform
Site Area (hectares): 51.16 (HW c.28; QW c.21)	Current use: Recreational land
Site ownership: Highgate Wood is City of London Corporation and Queen's Wood is LB Haringey	Borough: London Borough of Haringey
Field surveyors: Peter Collins, Diana Clements and Mike Hacker	Date: 2011
Current geological designation: RIGS	Other designation: LNR; Metropolitan SINC (Parkland Walk, queen's Wood and Highgate Wood)

Site Map

Stratigraphy and Rock Types

Time Unit: Pleistocene-Holocene	Rock Unit: Head, solifluction and glacigenic deposits
Rock Type: Sand and gravel	Details: Polymict comprising poorly sorted silt, sand and gravel, with some pebbles, probably glacigenic deposits formed by fluvio-glacial processes
Time Unit: Eocene	Rock Unit: London Clay Formation with Claygate member at the top, Thames Group
Rock Type: Clay, silt, sand	Details: Fine, sandy, silty clay/ clayey silt, clay.

Site Description

Two wooded areas with London Clay underlying the hillocks of the Claygate member on higher land (Highgate Wood). Archaeological linked excavation in Highgate Wood found Claygate Member deposits extending beyond the limit shown in BGS maps. There are deeply cut ravines in Queen's Wood that may be related to the Anglian and later glaciations. There is a key north-south interfluve dividing the watershed to the Brent in the west and the Lea in the east. It is an important site located between the glacial till to the north and the Bagshot Formation and Stanmore Gravel Formation on the higher land of Highgate and Hampstead Heath to the south. There is potential for research into composition of the gravels found on and near the surface which could give more information on the provenance of the gravels and therefore

possible glaciogenic processes that deposited them. There is also potential for research into the fluvial or glacial processes causing the formation of the deeply-cut gorges in Queen's Wood.		
Assessment of Site Value		
Geodiversity topic: lithostratigraphy, sedimentology; geomorphology.		
Access and Safety		
Aspect	**Description**	
Safety of access	Footpaths through woodlands with areas of open grassland. Two woods divided by main road. Some step slopes	
Safety of exposure	Observe general safety in woodlands.	
Permission to visit	Open access.	
Current condition	Very good. Highgate Wood well looked after by City of London Corporation. Includes Visitor Centre. Cafés in both woods.	
Current conflicting activities	None.	
Restricting conditions	Trees and leaf cover in autumn.	
Nature of exposure	Exposures in woodland.	
Culture, Heritage & Economic		
Aspect	**Description**	Rating
Historic, archaeological & literary associations	Mesolithic/Neolithic flint surface finds Romano-British pottery kilns utilising Claygate member, quarrying of sands and gravels (formerly named Gravel Pit Wood). Over 800 fragments of worked flint have been found in Highgate and Queen's Wood. Though many of these are waste flakes known as 'debitage', they include a number of scrapers, blades and points. They date from the late Mesolithic or early Bronze Age, between 7,000 and 4,000 years ago.	9
Aesthetic landscape	Footpaths through woods used by local community.	9
History of Earth Sciences	.	2
Economic geology	Extraction of clay, sand and gravels. Over-burnt bricks in local garden walls	7
GeoScientific Merit		
Geomorphology	Gorges within Queen's Wood.	6
Sedimentology	Detailed analysis of the clay in Highgate Woods indicates that it belongs to the Claygate Member of the London Clay Formation	4
Palaeontology	None observed but the Highgate railway tunnel runs beneath the SW corner where Whitaker (1889) found fossils of the 'Highgate Fauna' in Division E2 of King (1981) which underlies the Claygate Member of the London Clay.	(6)
Igneous/mineral/ Metamorphic Geology	None.	0
Structural Geology		0
Lithostratigraphy	Revision of surface London Clay as mapped by BGS to Claygate Member (pers. comm. with Don Aldiss BGS)	6
Potential use	Research; further education; on-site interpretation.	
Fragility	Natural overgrowing; weathering/erosion.	
Current Site Value		
Community	Valuable woodland and green space.	8
Education	Visitors centre in Highgate Wood has a display on the geology. The story boards are reproduced on LGP website. See: https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/highgate-wood and	4
Geodiversity value		
RIGS: Well-maintained woodlands with much research potential on Claygate Member, gravel exposures and deeply-cut gorges; excellent access for local community. Described in LGP Bus Pass Geology 1, *Round the southern limits of the Anglian Ice Sheet*		6

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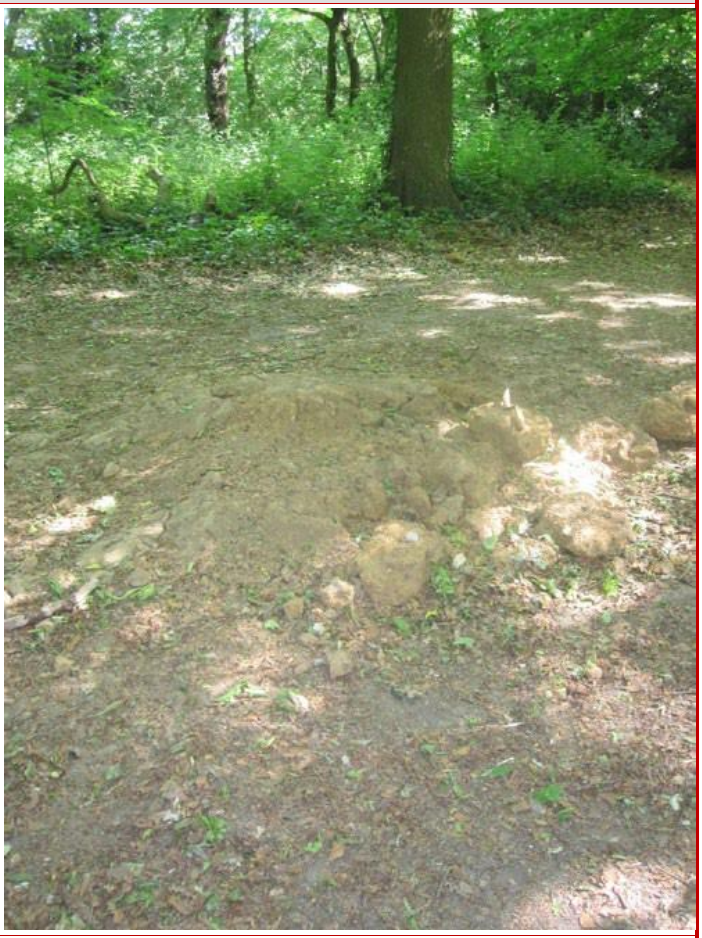
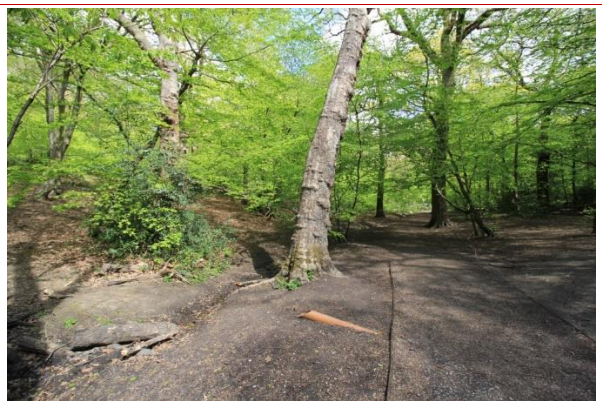
Making bricks.
Photo: Cindy Blaney



Small exposures of Claygate Member.
Photo: Diana Clements



Gorges in Queen's Wood