

5. Gilman Road Brick Pits

The sandy, glacial clays of Mousehold Heath can be fired to make red bricks. These so-called 'mussel bricks' were made in vast quantities in the area of 'Mushold' until the late 19th century.

There was a major brick field near Gilman Road until about 1890, when the industrial areas were landscaped.

The sports ground at Gilman Road and the field known as The Desert are built on leveled heaps of spoil. You can still see the hummocks and hollows of the old clay pits in the wooded area.

Gilman Road was constructed in 1905.



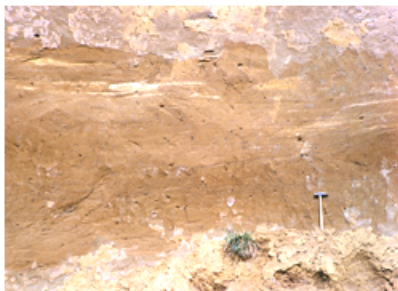
1. The brick field included eight kilns and a deep well.



2. Mounds of quarry spoil around the old clay pits make this area a popular adventure playground.



3. The site of the old Gilman Road brick works was turned into a cricket field in 1885, funded by John Gurney of Sprowston Hall. It was used for allotments during World War Two.



A 'brickearth' is any kind of sandy clay or 'loam' suitable for making bricks. The 'Norwich Brickearth' is a 19th century geological term for a distinctive glacial deposit exposed in the brick pits of the Norwich area and more widely in north-east Norfolk.

Today, geologists classify the 'Norwich Brickearth' as part of the Happisburgh Formation, laid down by an ice sheet entering east Norfolk from a northerly direction during early Middle Pleistocene times, probably some time between 630,000 and 475,000 years ago.

4. Brown, sandy clays of 'Norwich Brickearth' at Lodge Lane brick pit, Catton, 1969.

Photo credits

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