

UNION RAILWAYS LIMITED

# YONSEA FARM

ARC YFM97

## An Archaeological Evaluation

Contract No. 194/870



Museum of London Archaeology Service  
November 1997

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ARC YFM97

An Archaeological Evaluation

## Final Report

Volume 1 of 1

Contract No. 194/870

Prepared by:
Date:
Checked by:
Date:
Approved by:
Position:
Date:



Museum of London Archaeology Service  
November 1997

**YONSEA FARM, NEAR ASHFORD**

**KENT****ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION****SUMMARY**

*As part of a programme of archaeological investigations along the route of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, Union Railways Limited (URL) commissioned the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) to undertake an evaluation of six trial trenches situated at Yonseas Farm. The farm is 3.5km to the north-west of the centre of Ashford, Kent and is bounded by the A20 immediately to the north and farmland to the west, south and east.*

*Yonseas Farm consists of a large house, byres and cowsheds, an oast house, a tollhouse and associated gardens. The farm was probably constructed as a single phase in the 1830s. Immediately to the south of this complex a walled garden is bounded to the east and south by a pond which apparently occupies part of an earlier ditch or possible 'moat'. A fairly substantial depression headed westwards along the south side of the garden and appeared to have been a continuation of this feature. The existence of an earlier moated site, predating the 19th century farm, was therefore thought possible.*

*The location of archaeology associated with a possible earlier medieval moated site was the principal evaluation aim. Five trenches were excavated (within the walled garden and a paddock or former orchard to the west of the garden) in order to locate any archaeological features associated with earlier building and to verify the presence or absence of the other two 'arms' of the possible 'moat'. An additional trench was located in the wheatfield to the south in order to provide a profile of the southern return of the 'possible 'moat''. The area occupied by the 19th century buildings was not available for archaeological investigation.*

*No archaeological features were found within the walled garden. The southern return of the possible 'moat' was shown to be a substantial feature; at one time containing standing water. Much of the upper fills, however consisted of 19th and 20th century backfill deposits. A trench located in the orchard was sited to locate the western side of the possible 'moat', but only a shallow drainage ditch containing 19th century material was found.*

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## ***SECTION 1: FACTUAL STATEMENT***

### **1 BACKGROUND**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

- 1.1.1 The Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) was commissioned by Union Railways Limited (URL) to carry out an archaeological evaluation at Yonseas Farm, about 3.5 kilometres north-west of the centre of Ashford, Kent in the parish of Hothfield (URL Grid 78512/24961) (Fig 1) between the 22 and 25 July 1997. The evaluation forms part of a larger programme of archaeological investigation along the route of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, the aim of which is to assess the effect of the construction of the new railway upon the cultural heritage. An Environmental Assessment has been prepared (URL 1994). The evaluation is within route window 31.
- 1.1.2 The work was carried out according to the ‘Specification for Archaeological Investigations’ prepared by URL, which details the scope and methodology of the evaluation. The preparation of this report is included within the specification. The evaluated area is shown on Fig 2.

#### **1.2 Geology, landscape and landuse**

- 1.2.1 Yonseas Farm is a complex of buildings and gardens, including a large house, byres and cowsheds, an oast house and a tollhouse built in the 1830s alongside the main London to Folkestone road (later the A20). A farm track along the western side of the complex was originally a toll road running southwards from the London road to Hothfield about 1.5km to the west.
- 1.2.2 The evaluated area comprised a walled garden and a former orchard to the south of the farm buildings, and the northern edge of a wheatfield to the south of the garden.
- 1.2.3 The walled garden was originally a kitchen garden. Pathways between the different vegetable and herb plots were still demarcated by rows of bricks laid end-on. The garden was grassed over and used for grazing horses.
- 1.2.4 The south-west corner of the farm was also used for grazing horses but was originally an orchard. The topography of the field suggested the presence of at least two buried ditches; one crossing the field from east to west (see 1.2.5 below) and the other from north to south, close to the garden wall.
- 1.2.5 A pond was situated along the south and east sides of the walled garden. The pond occupied part of a disused ditch or possible ‘moat’ which originally continued westwards along the south side of the garden and into the orchard. This feature was partly infilled but it was clearly visible from the ground.
- 1.2.6 The farm occupied high ground between 54m and 55m OD. There was a gradual slope down to the west and to the south.

1.2.7 The natural geology was head clay over Sandgate Beds (firm sandy clay).

## **2 SPECIFICATIONS**

### **2.1 Aims**

2.1.1 In general the works aimed to provide information to determine:

- the presence / absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains within the area of the evaluation;
- the presence and potential of environmental and economic indicators preserved in any archaeological features or deposits;
- the local, regional, national and international importance of such remains, and the potential for further archaeological fieldwork to fulfil local, regional and national research objectives.

2.1.2 The site specific aims described in the specification were to:

- sample the possible location of the possible 'moat' and its internal area.

### 3 METHODS

#### 3.1 General

- 3.1.1 A detailed project design for the evaluation was agreed by URL with the County Archaeologist and English Heritage. The following summarises the archaeological aspects of the methodology and notes any deviation from the original specification.

#### 3.2 Survey

- 3.2.1 The trench locations (Fig 2), specified by URL were established using a total station EDM from URL permanent ground markers.
- 3.2.2 After excavation, trenches were positioned precisely using total stations and traversing off Ordnance Survey control.
- 3.2.3 The standard error of the trench positioning was set to normal engineering standards, a traverse accuracy of +/- 15mm over 1km. The trench location plan is based on this information. Drawn plans have been digitised using an AutoCAD graphics program.
- 3.2.4 The central site coordinate, according to the given URL grid, was 78512/24961.

#### 3.3 Excavation

- 3.3.1 Six trenches were located and excavated, each measuring 15 x 2 metres. Trenches *3005TT*, *3006TT*, *3008TT* and *3010TT* were located within the walled garden. Trench *3005TT* was designed to find the possible northern return of the 'moat'; the other trenches were designed to define the nature of any archaeological survival within the possible moated area. Trench *3009TT* was sited to cross a linear N-S depression which had been observed running across the site; this was originally thought to be the possible western side to the moated area. Trench *3007TT* was designed to obtain a section through the southern side of the possible 'moat', to define its nature and to obtain dating and environmental evidence.
- 3.3.2 Trench *3010TT* was moved 4m to the east to avoid a 19th century brick structure enclosing two trees. The western end of the trench was originally designed to test for the possible 'moat' close to the wall. A 2m machine excavated sondage was therefore placed close to the wall about 3m to the south of the original trench location. Natural deposits were recorded at a depth of 0.50m, but no archaeology was encountered.
- 3.3.3 Trench numbers were allocated by URL. The trenches were excavated using a 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a ditching bucket; topsoil and any overburden were excavated to deposits of archaeological significance and in most cases deepened to test the natural geology (with the exception of trench *3009TT*).
- 3.3.4 Archaeological features were partially excavated by hand to assess the nature of individual features, to obtain dating material and to allow an assessment of

environmental survival.

### **3.4 Recording**

- 3.4.1 Recording procedures followed the MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual (1995). Each archaeological deposit and cut feature was given a context number and descriptions recorded on context sheets. Scale plans and sections were drawn of features and all heights indicated on the field drawings were related to Ordnance Datum heights above sea level. Individual sheets were prepared for each trench, recording the nature and depth of each observed deposit and recording the archaeological features contained within each trench.
- 3.4.2 A photographic record of the site was kept.
- 3.4.3 Artefacts and samples were collected for dating and identification.
- 3.4.4 A site code was provided by URL, all records can be referenced from this code.

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 General

- 4.1.1 The main components of the trenches are described below. A summary of all the archaeological contexts and associated finds are listed in the archaeological context inventory (Table 2). Detailed reports on the pottery, metal and environmental remains are contained in Appendices 1-2. The site archive has been prepared and includes datasets for the fieldwork event, contexts, bulk finds and environmental samples.
- 4.1.2 Archaeological features were located in two trenches:
- The original continuation of the pond westwards along the south side of the walled garden was sectioned in trench *3007TT*.
  - The linear feature in trench *3009TT* was also sectioned.
- 4.1.3 No archaeology was found in trenches *3005TT*, *3006TT*, *3008TT* and *3010TT*.
- 4.1.4 Generally there was an absence or very poor preservation of bone. The one fragment of bone (weighing 3g), from ditch fill [105] *3009TT*, which was mentioned in the interim report could not be identified and has been discarded.

## 5 TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

### 5.1 Trenches within the walled garden

#### 5.1.1 *Trench 3005TT*

5.1.1.1 Base North: 53.07m OD: South: 53.40m OD. Depth 1.15m. Topsoil over mid brown sandy silt [2], over mid brown clay [4], over light green sand [6].

5.1.1.2 A brick lined drain of probable early-mid 19th century date crossed the trench at the northern end. The drain was inclined down to the east and apparently connected the main house to the pond.

5.1.1.3 A ceramic land drain crossed the centre of the trench, also apparently draining into the pond.

5.1.1.4 A rectangular feature at the south end of the trench was cut from the surface and was identified as a recent geological test pit.

5.1.1.5 No archaeology was located.

#### 5.1.2 *Trench 3006TT*

5.1.2.1 Base West: 53.58m OD: East: 53.48m OD. Depth 1.00m. Topsoil over mid brown sandy silt [2], over mid brown sandy clay [5], over mid brown clay [4], over light brown sand [6].

5.1.2.2 Natural deposits were located at a depth of 0.50m.

5.1.2.3 No archaeology was located.

#### 5.1.3 *Trench 3008TT*

5.1.3.1 Base North: 53.61m OD: South: 53.64m OD. Depth 1.30m. Topsoil over mid brown sandy silt [2], mid brown sandy clay [4] over light brown mottled green sand [9].

5.1.3.2 Natural deposits were located at a depth of 0.55m.

5.1.3.3 A single modern pit containing late 19th century china ware and bone was noted towards the centre of the trench. Surface features consisted of pathways demarcated by unfrosted bricks, presumably associated with the 19th century kitchen garden.

5.1.3.4 No other features were found.

#### 5.1.4 *Trench 3010TT*

- 5.1.4.1 Base West: 53.69m OD: East: 53.61m OD. Depth 1.10m. Topsoil over mid brown sandy silt [2], over banded sand - light brown at the top and green towards the base [6].
- 5.1.4.2 Surface features consisted of pathways demarcated by unfrosted bricks, presumably associated with the 19th century kitchen garden.
- 5.1.4.3 No archaeology was located.

## **5.2 The orchard**

### *5.2.1 Trench 3009TT*

- 5.2.1.1 Base West: 55.00m OD: East: 53.91m OD. Depth 0.40m. Topsoil over yellow clay silt 0.10m thick over brickearth.
- 5.2.1.2 The trench was shortened at its western end to avoid a man-hole with a ceramic sewer pipe. A separate cast iron pipe was found immediately to the east of the sewer pipe.
- 5.2.1.3 A linear N-S aligned feature [106] was located at the very eastern end of the trench, running parallel to the garden wall immediately to the east. The full width was not encountered in the trench. Feature [106] was at least 1.70m wide and 1m deep, with a pronounced step towards the centre. The feature could be seen as a shallow depression on the surface of the field - running into the main ditch to the south. Feature [106] was filled with mid-brown sandy silt and two sherds of pottery and occasional tile fragments were recovered from close to the base of the cut. All of this material was 19th century in date.

## **5.3 The wheat field**

### *5.3.1 Trench 3007TT*

- 5.3.1.1 Base North: 53.05m OD: East: 53.68m OD. Depth 2.80m (at possible 'moat'). Topsoil over mid brown sandy silt [2] over natural deposit [7] at a depth of 0.40m. A sondage through the natural deposits at the south end of the trench revealed brickearth [7], over clayey sand with flints [8], over greenish yellow sand [9].
- 5.3.1.2 The north end of the trench was located across the south side of feature [104] - part of it now partly occupied by the pond. The base of the cut was filled with a sequence of waterlain deposits to a depth of approximately 0.60m. Dark grey clay [103] was overlain by yellow brown clay [102] which was overlain by a further deposit of dark grey organic clay [101]. No dating evidence was recovered from this lower sequence. Much of feature [104] was filled with modern topsoil [1 = 100] which was rich in 19th and 20th century finds including bottles, china ware and iron agricultural tools. Fill [100] seems to have derived mostly from the ploughing of the adjacent field and equated with topsoil [1]. At least half the depth of the original cut remains, acting as a boundary between the farm and the surrounding agricultural land.

- 5.3.1.3 It was possible to trace feature [104] westwards for a further 80m, stopping at the former toll road (now a farm track) which ran southwards from the A20 towards Hothfield. It seems likely that [104] was either part of a possible 'moat' or a field drainage system.

## 6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATASETS

### 6.1 Table 1: Events dataset

<p> EVENT_NAME:Yonseas Farm  EVENT_CODE:ARC YFM 97  EVENT_TYPE:Evaluation  CONTRACTOR:Museum of London Archaeology Service  DATE:22/7/97-25/7/97  GRID: 78512/24961(URL Grid)  PROJECT: CTRL  COUNTY:Kent  DISTRICT:Ashford  PARISH: Hothfield  SMR:  SITE_TYPE:Grassland; Cultivated Landed 2- Operations to a depth &lt;0.25m  PERIOD: Post-medieval  METHOD:Mechanical removal of topsoil; hand excavation and recording of archaeological features.  PHASING: Post-medieval  ENVIRON:Mainly leaf fragments, moderate wild plant seeds, such as docks (<i>Rumex</i> sp), stinging nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>), and poppy (<i>Papaver</i> sp).  FINDS:Minimal post-med pottery, some ceramic building material and fragments of iron  GEOLOGY:Head-clay underlain by Sandgate Beds.  CONTEXT_NUM:7 + 6 trench sheets  THREAT:CTRL  SAMPLE:?  SUMMARY:6 trenches were located within Yonseas farm, a nineteenth century farm complex. No evidence to suggest an earlier moated site was found.   ARCHIVE:  ACC_NUM: </p>
---

## 6.2 Table 2: Archaeological context inventory

*Key:*

PM Post-Medieval

TRENCH	CONTEXT	TYPE	PERIOD	ASSOCIATION	COMMENTS
all trenches	1	deposit			topsoil
3005TT, 3006TT, 3007TT, 3008TT, 3010TT	2	deposit			ploughsoil
3009TT	3	deposit			ploughsoil
3005TT, 3006TT, 3008TT	4	deposit			superficial geology
3006TT	5	deposit			superficial geology
3005TT, 3010TT	6	deposit			superficial geology
3007TT, 3009TT	7	deposit			superficial geology
3007TT	8	deposit			superficial geology
3007TT, 3008TT	9	deposit			superficial geology
3007TT	100	deposit		104	fill of possible 'moat'
3007TT	101	deposit		104	fill of possible 'moat'
3007TT	102	deposit		104	fill of possible 'moat'
3007TT	103	deposit		104	fill of possible 'moat'
3007TT	104	cut			cut of possible 'moat'
3009TT	105	deposit	PM	106	fill of linear feature
3009TT	106	cut			linear feature

## ***SECTION 2: STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE***

### **7 CONCLUSIONS**

#### **7.1 Extent of archaeological deposits**

7.1.1 Only two features of possible archaeological interest were noted:

In trench *3007TT* feature [104] was already visible as a depression in the field and possibly formed part of a 'moat' or drainage system of unknown but probably late date.

In trench *3009TT* cut [106] was a shallower linear feature, possibly part of the same drainage system as that represented by [104].

7.1.2 The remaining trenches contained no deposits of archaeological significance.

#### **7.2 Nature of archaeological deposits**

7.2.1 Only features associated with drainage were noted. No structural features were found.

7.2.2 Within the evaluated area natural deposits were generally encountered at a depth of about 0.50m. Little disturbance had occurred below this level, with the exception of the possible 'moat' in trenches *3007TT* and drainage ditch in *3009TT*, a single nineteenth century rubbish pit in *3008TT* and various modern pipes and land drains.

7.2.3 No finds earlier than the nineteenth century were recovered from the topsoil or from the subsoil. There is therefore no evidence for medieval or early post-medieval activity in the immediate vicinity.

#### **7.3 Character of the site**

7.3.1 No pre-19th century finds were recovered. It is to be assumed that if a medieval building once existed on the site (perhaps where the current farm buildings now stand) some artefacts of medieval date would have been found. In their absence a medieval or early post-medieval precursor to Yonseas Farm is thought unlikely.

#### **7.4 Date of occupation**

7.4.1 A 19th century farm with no apparent precursor.

## **8 IMPORTANCE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS**

### **8.1 Survival and conditions**

8.1.1 No early features of archaeological significance were located.

### **8.2 Period**

8.2.1 Nineteenth century only.

### **8.3 Rarity**

8.3.1 No rarity value.

### **8.4 Fragility and vulnerability**

8.4.1 No features of archaeological significance were located.

### **8.5 Diversity**

8.5.1 Only ditch-type features were located.

### **8.6 Documentation**

8.6.1 No previous documentation relating directly to the site.

### **8.7 Group value**

8.7.1 None.

### **8.8 Potential**

8.8.1 Little archaeological potential was indicated.

**9 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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Archaeological Site Manual (MoLAS)

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Thurnham Roman Villa and Land South of Corbier Hall, Thurnham, Kent.  
Archaeological Evaluation Report (Prepared for URL by A Mudd, OAU)

## *APPENDIX 1*

### 1.1.1.1 Pottery *By Roy Stephenson*

#### **1.1.1.1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1.1.1.1 The evaluation produced a total of 2 sherds (35g) of post-medieval date. The pottery was examined using a x20 binocular microscope and recorded using standard MoLAS codes on pro-forma sheets. Quantification of the assemblage was by sherd count and weight. Pottery was recorded from one context.

#### **1.1.1.1.2 Fabrics**

1.1.1.1.2.1 The fabrics identified have been recorded in broad fabric types.

##### 1.1.1.1.2.2 Fabric groups

*Post-medieval*

Post-medieval redware (PMR) 2 sherds, 35g.

#### **1.1.1.1.3 Forms**

1.1.1.1.3.1 The only post-medieval form to be identified among this assemblage is that of plant pot, from [105].

#### **1.1.1.1.4 Chronology**

1.1.1.1.4.1 The presence of 19th century PMR flower pot fragments are indicative of gardening activity on or near the site.

#### **1.1.1.1.5 General Comments**

1.1.1.1.5.1 These flower pots are probably locally made.

#### **1.1.1.1.6 Assessment of potential and further work**

1.1.1.1.6.1 There is no potential for further work.

#### **1.1.1.1.7 Table 3: Bulk dataset, pottery**

TRENCH	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	COUNT	WEIGHT	COMMENTS
3009TT	105	POT	2	35	1800-1900

## *APPENDIX 2*

1.1.1.1 building materials  
*By Terence Paul Smith*

### **1.1.1.1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1.1.1.1 This site, Yonseas Farm (ARC YFM 97), yielded very little definite building material: just three small fragments of plain roofing tile, all from context [105]. These were examined at x10 magnification. In addition, six tiny fragments of unidentifiable ceramic material (some 25 gm in total) were recovered; some of these may be from bricks, but it is impossible to be certain, and these fragments are not considered further below. No non-ceramic building material was recovered.

### **1.1.1.1.2 Plain roofing tile**

#### *1.1.1.1.2.1 Fabrics*

Two fabric types were identified, one of them corresponding to an established MoLAS fabric type:

*Fabric 1* (= MoLAS fabric 2271): red in colour, hard and well-fired, with very fine texture.

*Fabric 2*: red in colour, very fine matrix with no quartz but much white speckling with crushed shell and with very occasional fine white silty streaks.

1.1.1.1.2.2 Of the three fragments, from context [105], one was in fabric 1, two in fabric 2. Roofing tiles in fabric 1 were made within the London area, although the ones from this site may be from further into Kent - perhaps from the north-west of the county. Tiles in fabric 2 are not encountered in London and may, therefore, be a local product. In neither case, however, it is possible to be at all definite about provenance.

### **1.1.1.1.3 Forms**

1.1.1.1.3.1 The three pieces were fragments of plain roofing tiles. Neither showed any glaze, peg- or nail-holes, or nibs - that is, small lugs for hanging the tiles on the laths of the roof. Plain tiles were used in parts of south-east England (e.g. London and Canterbury) from the late 12th century and have continued in use down to modern times. They are extremely difficult to date with precision, and with small fragments such as those from context [105], which retain no diagnostic features whatever, the task is impossible.

### **1.1.1.1.4 Assessment of potential and further work**

1.1.1.1.4.1 Further investigation within Kent might enable the source of the tiles in fabric 2 to be identified. Otherwise, the material warrants no further attention.

**1.1.1.1.5 Table 4: Bulk dataset, building material**

TRENCH	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	COUNT	WEIGHT	COMMENTS
3009TT	105	CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL	3	73	
3009TT	105	POSSIBLE CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL	6	36	small unidentifiable fragments, perhaps from bricks

### ***APPENDIX 3***

#### 1.1.1.1 plant remains

*By Anne Davis*

##### **1.1.1.1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1.1.1.1 A single environmental sample was collected from the primary fill [103] 3007TT of a possible medieval or post-medieval ‘moat’. This sample was assessed to evaluate the abundance, diversity and quality of preservation of any surviving plant remains.

##### **1.1.1.1.2 Methods**

1.1.1.1.2.1 The sample was processed in a flotation machine, using sieve sizes of 0.25mm and 1.0mm to recover the flot and residue respectively. The residues were dried and sorted by eye for biological and artefactual remains.

1.1.1.1.2.2 The flot was scanned using a low-powered binocular microscope, and the abundance, diversity, and modes of preservation of all organic remains were recorded. A summary of the results is shown in Table 5.

##### **1.1.1.1.3 Results**

1.1.1.1.3.1 The flot was large (500ml), and consisted mainly of leaf fragments, together with smaller numbers of twigs and moss. A moderate number of seeds of wild plants were seen, preserved by “waterlogging” (anaerobic conditions). Most of these were common weed species which grow in waste places or on cultivated land, such as docks (*Rumex* sp.), stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*), and poppy (*Papaver* sp.), but plants of hedgerows, and of ditches and streambanks were also present. No remains of cultivated plants were seen.

1.1.1.1.3.2 A small to moderate number of insect remains were also seen.

##### **1.1.1.1.4 Statement of potential**

1.1.1.1.4.1 Preservation of waterlogged plant remains was good, and full analysis of these could provide information on the environment in and around the possible ‘moat’ at the time of deposition. This is of limited value for a single sample however, particularly if the date of the deposit is uncertain.

##### **1.1.1.1.5 Recommendations**

1.1.1.1.5.1 It is recommended that full archaeobotanical analysis of this sample should take place only if further excavation and sampling of the site were to provide other plant assemblages to supplement the information available.

**1.1.1.1.6 Table 5: Environmental dataset, plant remains**

TRENCH	CONTEXT	SAMPLE NO	METHOD	SUMMARY	COMMENTS
3007TT	103	1	flotation (0.25mm sieve)	waterlogged seeds ++, leaf frags etc. ++++	limited potential for nature of local enviro.

**APPENDIX 4****1.1.1.1 finds**

*By Jackie Keily, with Angela Wardle*

**1.1.1.1.1 Quantification**

1.1.1.1.1.1 Only two small finds came from this site. The details of them are given in the table below.

**1.1.1.1.1.2 Table 6: Finds dataset, iron**

TRENCH	CONTEXT	SPECIAL NO.	MATERIAL	TYPE
3007TT	103	1	Iron	-
3009TT	105	2	Iron	-

1.1.1.1.1.3 Small find <1> is an angled rough strip of iron, possibly part of a hinge fitting. It is impossible at present to date this artefact. The only other small find from this site is a very corroded small fragment of sheet iron. It curves slightly but is too corroded to be able to identify its form at present.

**1.1.1.1.2 Storage and curation**

1.1.1.1.2.1 The small finds require storage in a controlled and monitored low humidity environment.

**1.1.1.1.3 Further work**

1.1.1.1.3.1 These finds require x-raying, both as an aid to identification and as a means of archiving a record of them in the state they were in shortly after excavation.