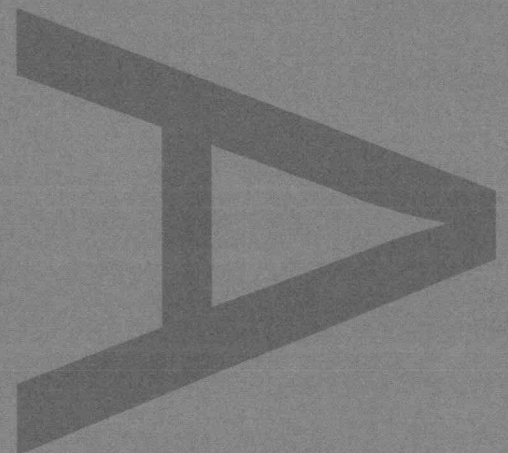
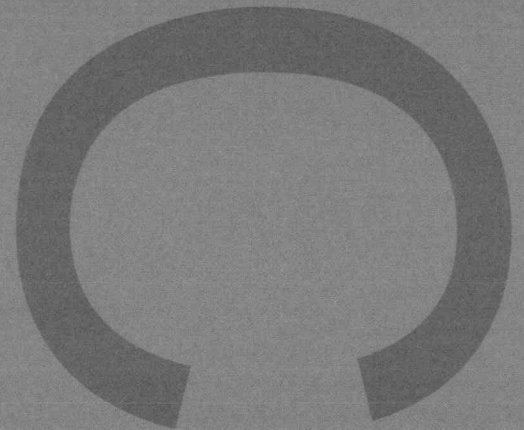
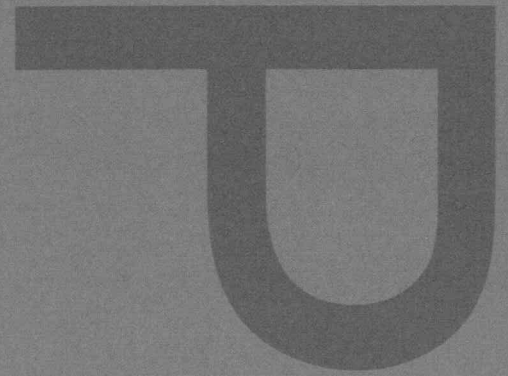


HARCOURT ROAD

BEXLEYHEATH

LONDON BOROUGH OF BEXLEY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



JANUARY 2005

HCU 05


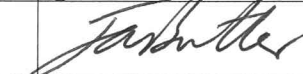
PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

Harcourt Road
Bexleyheath
London Borough of Bexley

Archaeological Evaluation

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited Project Code			K833
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**An Archaeological Evaluation of Harcourt Road, Bexleyheath, London
Borough of Bexley**

Site Code: HCU 05

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 48389 75537

**Written and Researched by Neil Hawkins
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, January 2005**

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January 2005**

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CONTENTS

1	ABSTRACT	3
2	INTRODUCTION.....	4
3	PLANNING BACKGROUND	7
4	GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY	8
5	ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	9
6	METHODOLOGY	11
7	ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE	12
8	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	14
9	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	15
9	BIBLIOGRAPHY	16

ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION.....	5
FIGURE 2: TRENCH LOCATION.....	6

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS.....	16
APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM.....	17

1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited of the north end of Harcourt Road, Bexleyheath, London Borough of Bexley.
- 1.2 Three trenches were arranged across the site, totalling 43.2m².
- 1.3 All three trenches revealed made ground overlying natural sand.
- 1.4 Other than one post-medieval pit recorded in Trench 2 no archaeological remains were encountered, with no further evidence of any human activity prior to the early 20th century.

2 INTRODUCTION

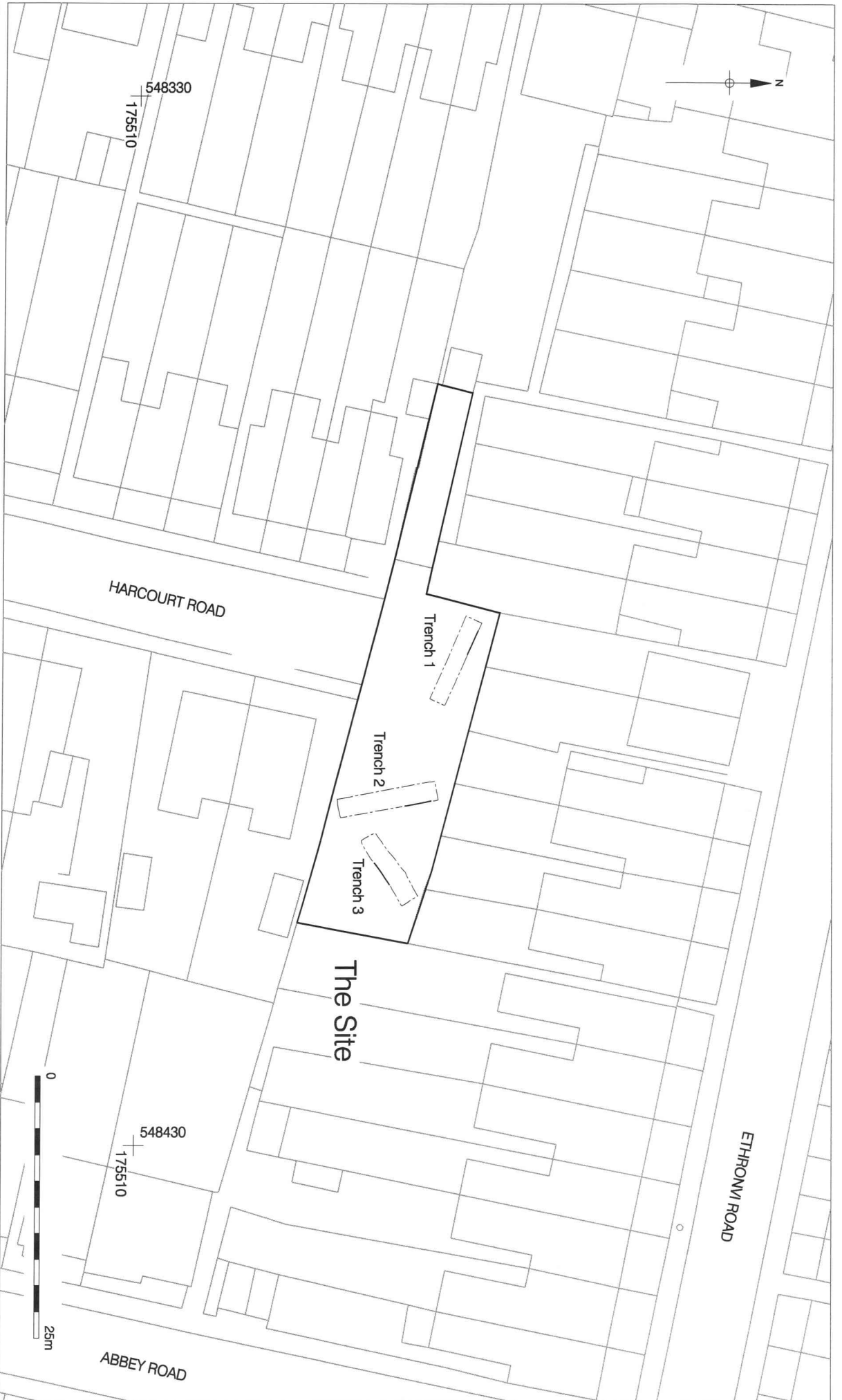
- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited of the north end of Harcourt Road, Bexleyheath (figure 1) in advance of redevelopment.
- 2.2 The evaluation was conducted on the 17th January 2005 and was commissioned by Building Associates Limited. The work was undertaken following English Heritage (GLAAS) guidelines.¹
- 2.3 The excavation of three trenches was undertaken within the proposed development area (figure 2).
- 2.4 The National Grid Reference of the centre of the site is TQ 48389 75537
- 2.5 The site was assigned the code HCU 05.
- 2.6 The evaluation was supervised by Neil Hawkins and assisted by Stella Bickelmann. The project was managed by Jon Butler for Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited.

¹ English Heritage, Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service, "Archaeological Guidance Papers: 1 Written Schemes of Investigation; 2 Desk-Based Assessments; 3 Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork in London; Archaeological Reports; 5 Evaluations", Revised June 1998.



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey 1:25,000. Crown Copyright 1993.

Figure 1
Site Location
1:10,000



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Figure 2
Trench Location
1:500

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

Archaeology in Bexley and the UDP

- 3.1 The study aims to satisfy the recognises the importance of the buried heritage for which they are the custodians. The relevant Development Plan framework is provided by the London Borough of Bexley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted in July 1996 with alterations adopted in April 2004. The Plan contains the following policy, which provides a framework for the consideration of development proposals affecting archaeological and heritage features. objectives of the London Borough of Bexley, which fully

Archaeology

Policy ENV54

In Areas of Archaeological Search and other areas where finds are likely to occur, and in certain historic standing buildings, where development proposals may affect archaeological remains or historic evidence, the Council will expect applicants to have properly assessed and planned for the archaeological implications. The Council may require a preliminary archaeological site evaluation before proposals are considered.

- 3.2 The proposed developments are located in an Archaeological Priority Zone as defined by the Borough's UDP.

There are no scheduled monuments or Listed buildings on the site.

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 The British Geological Survey 1:50000 Series (sheet 271 Dartford) indicates that the site lies upon conglomerate of the Harwich Formation of the Thames Group, laid down in the late Palaeocene Period.
- 4.2 The site lies on relatively flat land at a level of c. 48m OD, though there is a very gentle slope downwards towards Broadway to the south.
- 4.3 Excavation exposed a loose mid orange brown sand, [3], [8] and [10] within all three trenches at a height of between 47.92m and 47.48m OD.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 Harcourt Road runs perpendicular to the Roman road Watling Street. This was one of the principal roads in Britain during the rule of the Roman Empire, connecting the harbours of South East England to Canterbury, the tribal capital of Kent, and on to London. It also continued further North to Chester and beyond.
- 5.2 Canterbury and the Roman harbours were linked by smaller roads, along the shortest and most direct routes. These include Reculver (Regulium) to the North, Richborough (Rutupiae) and Dover (Dubris) to the East and Lympne to the South².
- 5.3 The road to London also takes a very direct route, through Sittingbourne, Rochester, Dartford, Shooters Hill and through to Greenwich Park. Up to this point the road is well documented with positive sightings along the way. Thomas Codderington³ traces the route from Strood to the West of Canterbury along to the East of Dartford where he writes that the agger or roadside bank still remained to a height of 2 or 3 feet and 8 feet wide. The widening of the road into the modern A2 has now removed all traces of such earthworks.
- 5.4 Hasted⁴ reports that the road was clearly visible running across Bexley Heath and through to Welling and it was also observed by Stukeley⁵ at Shooters Hill. Following the same alignment the road points directly to Westminster where the river may have been crossed by way of a bridge. However, the road would have had to diverted to the South and skirt around the low area from New Cross to Westminster, which at the time would have be affected by the tide and marshy throughout.
- 5.5 Apart from its alignment there is archaeological evidence of the road in this region. An evaluation in 1995 at 131 Broadway, Bexleyheath to the East of the subject site revealed the possible south roadside ditch of the Roman road⁶. A residual coin was

² Margary, I., (1955), Roman Roads in Britain, Volume I: South of the Foss Way-Bristol Channel, Pg45

³ Codderington, T., (1928), Roman Roads in Britain, pg. 46

⁴ Hasted , (1790), History of Kent, i211

⁵ Codderington, T., (1928), Roman roads in Britain, Pg.46

⁶ Greenwood, P. & Maloney, C., (1996), London Fieldwork and Publication Round-up 1995, L A Vol 8 supplement 1, Pg 1

also found on a site at 28-70 Broadway in 1996⁷. In 1999 a small ditch containing a single flint flake was observed at 315-321 Broadway⁸. Numerous Roman cremation groups have been found over the years on the line of Watling Street to the West in Welling on both sides of the High Street.

- 5.6 The Historical background has been more extensively covered in the Archaeological Desktop Assessment⁹.

⁷ Greenwood et al, (1997), London Fieldwork and Publication Round-up 1996, L A Vol 8 supplement 2, Pg 31

⁸ Maloney, C. & Holroyd, I., (2000), London Fieldwork and Publication Round-up 1999, L A Vol 9 supplement 2, Pg 35

⁹ Boyer, P., (2004), Land at the North End of Harcourt Road, Bexleyheath, London Borough of Bexley: An Archaeological Desktop Assessment, Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd unpublished

6 METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The excavation of three trenches was outlined in the Method Statement prepared by Pre-Construct Archaeology after consultation with Bexley Council¹⁰. The fieldwork was designed to assess the presence or absence of significant archaeological remains, which may require further investigation.
- 6.2 Three trenches were dug, with Trench 1 being located to the western end of the site, Trench 2 located centrally and Trench 3 located to the eastern end of the site. All three Trenches measured 8m in length and 1.8m wide.
- 6.3 The surface concrete had already been broken through beforehand by Buildings Associates Ltd.
- 6.4 Under archaeological supervision, a mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide flat ditching bucket was then used to remove unproductive soils down to the highest archaeological horizon.
- 6.5 The features identified within the trenches were then cleaned and investigated by hand. Investigation was limited to identifying the extent and nature of the deposits and to recover dating evidence.
- 6.6 The features were assigned individual context numbers. Drawings were made in plan and in section.
- 6.7 A temporary benchmark of 47.95m OD was traversed onto the site from the Ordnance Survey Benchmark of 47.72m OD, located on the northern face between 307 and 309, Broadway.
- 6.8 Following the completion of the archaeological evaluation, the trenches backfilled at the request of Building Associates Limited.

¹⁰ Bradley, T., (2005), A Method Statement for an Archaeological Evaluation at The North End of Harcourt Road, Bexleyheath, London Borough of Bexley, Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd unpublished document

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

7.1 TRENCH 1

Phase 1 - Natural

- 7.1.1 Trench 1 measured 1.8m in width and 8m in length. The earliest deposit encountered was [8], the natural sand deposit at the bottom of the trench. This context existed as a loose deposit of clay sand matrix, mid orange to grey-brown in colour, at a highest level of 47.48m OD.

Phase 2 - Post-Medieval

- 7.1.2 Overlying the natural sand [8], was sub soil [7], a layer of loose, mid orange brown deposit of silt sand matrix containing a moderate amount of small, sub rounded pebbles. This deposit was up to 0.28m thick at 47.74m OD.

Phase 3 - 20th Century

- 7.1.3 Sealing the sub soil [7] was a layer of 20th century ground make-up [6], containing frequent demolition and rubble material, this deposit was up to 0.18m thick at 47.92m OD.

7.2 TRENCH 2

Phase 1 - Natural

- 7.2.1 Trench 2 measured 1.8m in width and 8m in length. The earliest deposit encountered was [10], the natural sand deposit at the bottom of the trench. This context existed as a loose deposit of clay sand matrix, mid orange to grey-brown in colour, at a highest level of 47.66m OD.

Phase 3 – 20th Century

- 7.2.2 Sealing the natural deposit [10] was a layer of 20th century ground make-up [9], containing frequent demolition and rubble material, this deposit was up to 0.39m thick at 48.04m OD.

7.3 TRENCH 3

Phase 1 – Natural

- 7.3.1 Trench 3 measured 1.8m in width and 8m in length. The earliest deposit encountered was [3], the natural sand deposit at the bottom of the trench. This context existed as a

loose deposit of clay sand matrix, mid orange to grey-brown in colour, at a highest level of 47.92m OD.

Phase 2 – Post-Medieval

- 7.3.2 Overlying the natural sand [3], was sub soil [2], a layer of loose, mid orange brown deposit of silt sand matrix containing a moderate amount of small, sub rounded pebbles. This deposit was up to 0.36m thick at 48.17m OD.

Phase 3 – 20th Century

- 7.3.3 Truncating the sub soil [3], and natural deposits, at the north eastern end of Trench 3 was a 20th century brick lined pit containing petrol tanks associated with the works that previously occupied the site. Sealing this and continuing across the trench was a layer of ground make-up [1] containing frequent demolition and rubble material, this deposit was up to 0.15m thick at 48.24m OD

8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 One of the principal objectives of the archaeological evaluation was to determine the presence or absence of archaeological activity of any period. Of particular interest was the proximity of the study site to the Roman Road known as Watling Street to the south.
- 8.2 During the course of the evaluation no surviving elements of the Roman road were observed. No archaeological remains were encountered. The ground level of the study site appears to be considerably lower than the surrounding ground level, and as no horticultural horizons were encountered, only a sub soil, it appears as though 20th century intrusions have truncated these away.
- 8.3 The evaluation has confirmed that there are no archaeological deposits and features predating the early 20th century on the site. Natural sand was observed at the bases of all three trenches at levels between 47.92m OD to the East and 47.48m OD to the West.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Martin Johnston and Building Associates Limited for generously funding this project and for the provision of the mechanical excavator, Mark Stevenson of English Heritage, Martyn Nichols and Graham Briden of Bexley Council for their monitoring and support.

- 9.2 The author would like to thank the field staff Stella Bickelmann, Victoria Osborn for the illustrations, Natalie Barrett for the surveying and Jon Butler for his project management and editing.

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APPENDIX 1: Context Descriptions

Context	Type	Trench	Comments
1	Layer	3	Made Ground
2	Layer	3	Subsoil
3	Natural	3	Natural Sand
4	Fill	2	Fill of Shallow Pit [5]
5	Cut	2	Cut of Pit
6	Layer	1	Made Ground
7	Layer	1	Subsoil
8	Natural	1	Natural Sand
9	Layer	2	Made Ground
10	Natural	2	Natural Sand

APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-6128

Project details

Project name	Harcourt road , Bexleyheath
Short description of the project	3 Trench evaluation at the north end of Harcourt Road, Bexleyheath, London Borough of Bexley. No archaeology remains encountered.
Project dates	Start: 17-01-2005 End: 17-01-2005
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	HCU 05 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning	Not known / Not recorded

process

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON BEXLEY BEXLEYHEATH Harcourt Road, Bexleyheath
Postcode	DA6 8AQ
Study area	360 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 48389 75537 Point
Height OD	Min: 47.48m Max: 47.92m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	unknown
Project design originator	Tim Bradley
Project director/manager	Jon Butler
Project supervisor	Neil Hawkins
Sponsor or funding body	Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient LAARC

Physical Archive Exists? Yes

Digital Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Contents 'none'

Digital Archive Exists? Yes

Paper Archive Exists? Yes

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title An Archaeological Evaluation of Harcourt Road, Bexleyheath, London Borough of Bexley

Author(s)/Editor(s) Hawkins, N.

Date 2005

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