

UNION RAILWAYS LIMITED

LEDA COTTAGES

ARC LED 98

An Archaeological Evaluation

Contract No. 194/870P4



Museum of London Archaeology Service
February 1999

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LEDA COTTAGES, KENT

ARC LED 98

An Archaeological Evaluation

Evaluation Report

Volume 1 of 1

Contract No. 194/870P4

Prepared by:
Date:
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Museum of London Archaeology Service
February 1999

**LEDA COTTAGES NEAR ASHFORD,
KENT**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

The Museum of London Archaeology Service undertook an archaeological evaluation between the 4th and the 6th of August 1998 on the site of Leda Cottages. The site is formed of three separate areas, situated to the south of Charing and to the north-west of Ashford. The excavation forms part of a series of evaluations which were added to the larger programme of archaeological investigations undertaken in 1997 along the line of the future Channel Tunnel Rail Link. The aim was to assess the effect of construction of the new railway upon the cultural heritage.

Of the 18 trial trenches only 3293TT exposed an archaeological feature: a truncated pit [14] of post-medieval date.

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Kent SMR

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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 Leda Cottages, between the 4th and the 7th of August 1998, on land to the north-west and south-east of the A20, about 2.5km south-east of Charing and approximately 6km to the north-west of Ashford, Kent (Fig 1). The evaluation forms part of a larger programme of archaeological investigations along the line of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL), 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). This evaluation is within CTRL route window 29.

1.1.2 The evaluation consisted of 18 trial trenches numbered 3271TT to 3272TT, 3275TT, 3276TT, 3279TT, 3282TT and 3292TT to 3303TT.

1.1.3 The work was carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation, prepared by URL, detailing the scope and methods of the evaluation, including this report. Grid co-ordinates illustrated in all figures or written in the text relate to the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Project Grid unless otherwise stated. The three areas of the evaluation are shown on Fig 2.

1.2 Geology, landscape and landuse

1.2.1 The site consisted of three areas located in harvested fields to the north of the M20, either side of the A20 Maidstone Road and bounded to the north-east by the Folkestone to Maidstone/London railway line. The three fields lay on a fairly even plain, with a high point in the central area at 78.49m OD (3299TT), and a low to the north-west at 69.56m OD (3272TT).

1.2.2 The following profile was recorded for ground level across the site:

69.83m Ordnance Datum (OD hereafter) at 3272TT
72.71m OD at 3271TT
75.46m OD at 3279TT
78.37m OD at 3296TT
75.88m OD at 3300TT
72.60m OD at 3303TT

1.2.3 The uppermost natural geology consisted of friable fine sand or silty sand, of varying colour and inclusions. Detailed descriptions are included in Section 5.

2 SPECIFICATION

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 subsoil deposits of archaeological interest which may be associated with, or in close proximity to, the surface concentrations of prehistoric flint recorded during the earlier URL Environment Assessment;
- the presence and potential of environmental and economic indicators preserved in any archaeological features or deposits;
- the local, regional and national importance of such remains, and the potential for further fieldwork to fulfil local, regional and national research objectives.

2.1.2 More specifically the works aimed:

- to extend the archaeological knowledge in the area situated between sites evaluated previously in 1997, *ie* East of Pluckley Road (ARC PRD 97) and South of Station Road, Parsonage Farm (ARC PFM 97).

3 METHODS

3.1 General

3.1.1 A detailed Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation was prepared by URL and agreed with the County Archaeologist and English Heritage. The following text is intended only to amplify certain aspects of the evaluation methodology.

3.2 Survey

3.2.1 The trench locations were surveyed by MoLAS, based on a trench location plan supplied by URL (drawing number 430-DGH-08370-62046-AA and 430-DGH-08300-62047-AA).

3.2.2 The trenches were accurately positioned and marked out with pegs on the western side of a north to south trench or the southern side of an east to west trench, using a total station and datalogger, traversing off the URL survey control.

3.2.3 The trenches have been plotted on Fig 2 from digital information provided by URL using an AutoCAD graphics programme. The trenches are located on the URL site grid.

3.2.4 The archaeological feature in trench 3293TT was planned at 1:20 and a profile was drawn at 1:20, taking as a grid the line between the two survey pegs used to mark out the trench.

3.3 Excavation

3.3.1 The a 18 trenches excavated at Leda Cottages represented a 1.3% sample of the site area. The trenches were excavated using a 360° tracked excavator with a flat bladed bucket 2.00m wide. The trenches were excavated to the uppermost natural geology or to a maximum depth of 1.20m.

3.3.2 A sample area at each end of all the trenches was hand cleaned to ensure that the stratigraphy could be accurately recorded.

3.3.3 One archaeological feature was located (in 3293TT) and this was half-sectioned and sampled for environmental evidence (Appendix 1).

3.4 Recording

- 3.4.1 Recording was by the standard Museum of London single context recording system but with modifications to adapt the system to the large area under evaluation. Specifically these adaptations concerned layers: where a layer was judged to be the same in two or more trenches (such as topsoil, subsoil and some uppermost geological deposits), the same context number was used. If there was any doubt as to the equality of a layer a new context number was issued. A trench sheet was completed for each trench, on the reverse of which a sketch plan and section (of the entire trench) was drawn using metric measurements and OD heights.
- 3.4.2 One archaeological feature was located; this was drawn in plan at 1:20 and in profile at 1:20.
- 3.4.3 For all trenches the OD heights were established, each trench having a Temporary Bench Mark incorporated onto one of the survey marker pegs.
- 3.4.4 The results were almost entirely negative but due to an error the site supervisor did not compile a photographic record of the evaluation.

4 RESULTS

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 All trenches revealed a section of geology sealed by subsoil, which was in turn sealed by topsoil.
- 4.1.2 One archaeological feature, a post-medieval pit [14] with a charcoal rich fill [13] was located in 3293TT. This pit cut geological layers and was half-sectioned and sampled for environmental evidence (Appendix 1). Pit [14] appeared to be sealed by the subsoil but this apparent seal is probably the result of the subsoil being re-worked by previous plough action (which has truncated the upper parts of pit [14]).
- 4.1.3 The subsoil was generally 0.25m-0.34m thick, with a minimum of 0.22m in trench 3271TT and a maximum of 0.41m in 3292TT. It consisted of light grey brown or light to mid orange brown silty sand with occasional flecks and fragments of charcoal and chalk. The topsoil (modern agricultural ploughsoils) were for the most part approximately 0.30m deep, with a maximum of 0.45m in 3275TT and a minimum of 0.22m in trenches 3298TT -3302TT.

5 TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Trench with archaeological feature

5.1.1 *Trench 3293TT* (Fig 3)

5.1.1.1 Present ground level sloped from 77.82m OD (north-east) to 78.18m OD (south-west). Topsoil [1] had a maximum depth of 0.27m, subsoil [12] was a maximum of 0.35m deep. A sondage was excavated at the south-west end of the trench to -1.20m to ensure the geological layers were sterile. Superficial geology [15] was at 77.32m OD at the north-east. One pit [14] was located cutting geology.

5.1.1.2 Cut [14] was only partially exposed in the trench. It was oval in plan 1.80m long and 0.42m deep, with gradually sloping sides and a rounded base. The fill [13] consisted of dark brown silty sand with occasional flint pebbles, some of which were burnt. It contained one sherd of pottery which the supervisor noted was of a post-medieval date. Unfortunately this sherd was not kept so a more accurate date cannot be given.

5.1.1.3 Cut [14] and fill [13] were sealed by subsoil [12] which was in turn sealed by topsoil.

5.2 Table 1: Trenches without archaeological features

Trench Number	Geology	Subsoil	Topsoil	Current ground level (m OD)			
				North	South	East	West
3271TT	Yellow brown silty sand [23]	[22] 0.22m deep	[41] 0.28m deep	70.90	72.71		
3272TT	Yellow brown silty sand [21]	[2] 0.28m deep	[41] 0.33m deep			69.85	69.91
3275TT	Grey orange brown silty sand [3]	[18] 0.31m deep	[41] 0.45m deep	69.56	70.89		
3276TT	Orange brown silty sand [17]	[16] 0.24m deep	[41] 0.26m deep			70.60	70.72
3279TT	Dark orange brown silty sand with iron pan and sandstone fragments [27]	[26] 0.31m deep	[42] 0.30m deep	75.46	76.02		
3282TT	Light yellowish brown silty sand with iron pan [25]	[24] 0.27m deep	[42] 0.23m deep	77.45	77.49		
3292TT	Grey orange brown silty sand [3]	[2] 0.41m deep	[1] 0.30m deep			78.03	78.10
3294TT	Light yellow brown silty sand [29]	[28] 0.25m deep	[1] 0.38m deep	76.99	77.89		
3295TT	Orange brown silty sand with chalk flecks [31]	[32] 0.30m deep	[1] 0.36m deep			78.39	78.18
3296TT	Red brown silty sand [5]	[4] 0.34m deep	[1] 0.29m deep	78.37	78.12		
3297TT	Orange brown silty sand [7]	[6] 0.29m deep	[1] 0.27m deep	77.93	77.65		
3298TT	Orange brown silty sand with chalk flecks [9]	[8] 0.25m deep	[1] 0.22m deep			78.13	78.10

Trench Number	Geology	Subsoil	Topsoil	Current ground level (m OD)			
				North	South	East	West
3299TT	Orange brown silty sand with chalk flecks [11]	[17] 0.20m deep	[1] 0.23m deep	78.49	71.23		
3300TT	Orange brown silty sand with chalk flecks [31]	[33] 0.26m deep	[1] 0.22m deep			76.13	69.69
3301TT	Yellow brown silty sand [36]	[35] 0.26m deep	[32] 0.23m deep	75.18	74.32		
3302TT	Yellow brown silty sand [38]	[37] 0.27m deep	[32] 0.21m deep	74.36	73.49		
3303TT	Yellow brown silty sand [40]	[39] 0.27m deep	[32] 0.32m deep	73.41	72.60		

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVENTORIES

6.1 Table 2: Events dataset

EVENT NAME:Leda Cottages
EVENT CODE:ARC LED 98
EVENT TYPE:Evaluation
CONTRACTOR:Museum of London Archaeology Service
DATE:4-7/8/1998
GRID:76531E 27300N (CTRL Grid)
PROJECT:CTRL
COUNTY:Kent
DISTRICT:Ashford
PARISH:Westwell CP
SMR:
SITE TYPE:Cultivated Land 3 - Operation to a depth >0.25m
PERIOD:Post-medieval
METHOD:Mechanical removal of topsoil; hand excavation and recording of sections of archaeological features.
PHASING:Post-medieval
ENVIRON:Charcoal fragments and uncharred seeds with modern rootlets
FINDS:None
GEOLOGY:Folkstone Beds (yellow orange to light brown sands with flecks of chalk and pockets of pebbles).
CONTEXT_NUM:42
THREAT:CTRL
SAMPLE:1%
SUMMARY:One post-medieval pit.
ARCHIVE:
ACC_NUM:

6.2 Table 3: Archaeological context inventory

TRENCH	CONTEXT	TYPE	PERIOD	ASSOCIATION	COMMENTS
3292TT - 3299TT	1	deposit			topsoil
3292TT	2	deposit			subsoil
3292TT	3	deposit			natural
3296TT	4	deposit			subsoil
3296TT	5	deposit			natural
3297TT	6	deposit			subsoil
3297TT	7	deposit			natural
3298TT	8	deposit			subsoil
3298TT	9	deposit			natural
3299TT	10	deposit			subsoil
3299TT	11	deposit			natural
3293TT	12	deposit			subsoil
3293TT	13	deposit	post-med	14	fill
3293TT	14	cut		13	pit
3293TT	15	deposit			natural
3276TT	16	deposit			subsoil
3276TT	17	deposit			natural
3275TT	18	deposit			subsoil
3275TT	19	deposit			natural
3272TT	20	deposit			subsoil
3272TT	21	deposit			natural
3271TT	22	deposit			subsoil
3271TT	23	deposit			natural
3282TT	24	deposit			subsoil
3282TT	25	deposit			natural
3279TT	26	deposit			subsoil
3279TT	27	deposit			natural
3294TT	28	deposit			subsoil
3294TT	29	deposit			natural
3295TT	30	deposit			subsoil
3295TT	31	deposit			natural
3300TT-3303TT	32	deposit			topsoil
3300TT	33	deposit			subsoil
3300TT	34	deposit			natural
3301TT	35	deposit			subsoil
3301TT	36	deposit			natural
3302TT	37	deposit			subsoil
3302TT	38	deposit			natural
3303TT	39	deposit			subsoil
3303TT	40	deposit			natural
3271TT-3272TT, 3275TT-3276TT	41	deposit			topsoil
3279TT-3282TT	42	deposit			topsoil

SECTION 2: STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 During the course of the works one archaeological feature was located in trench 3293TT. Modern land drains were also observed in trenches 3272TT, 3275TT, 3292TT, 3295TT and 3300TT. The pit feature (Pit [14]), which appeared to be sealed by the subsoil, contained one sherd of post-medieval pottery. An environmental bulk sample recovered from the fill contained charcoal, a few charred seeds and modern roots.

8 IMPORTANCE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

8.1 Survival and condition

- 8.1.1 Only the base of pit [14] survived. It is likely that the upper parts have been truncated by re-working (ploughing) of the subsoil. The date of this re-working must be fairly recent, given the post-medieval date of the pit.

8.2 Period

- 8.2.1 The single sherd of pottery from pit [14] indicates a post-medieval date.

8.3 Rarity

- 8.3.1 Isolated features of unknown function are a common occurrence during such fieldwork

8.4 Fragility and vulnerability

- 8.4.1 Despite the presence of subsoil on the site, it is likely that any archaeological remains at similar depths to the one located would be liable to damage or destruction due to construction activity.

8.5 Diversity

- 8.5.1 Comment on the diversity is inappropriate given the paucity of the remains.

8.6 Documentation

- 8.6.1 No previous fieldwork had been undertaken for the site. Site specific maps were not consulted as part of the works. Desk-based work undertaken during the Environmental Assessment had not highlighted any documentation relevant to the site.

8.7 Group value

- 8.7.1 The site has no group value with other locations in the local area.

8.8 Potential

- 8.8.1 On the basis of the evidence recovered there is no potential for further archaeological work on this site.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Archaeological Site Manual.

URL, 1994, *Union Railways Limited, Channel Tunnel Rail Link: Assessment of Historic and Cultural Effects. Final Report.* (Four volumes. Prepared for URL by OAU).

URL, 1997a, *East of Pluckley Road*
Archaeological Evaluation (Prepared for URL by MoLAS)

URL, 1997b, *South of Station Road, Parsonage Farm*
Archaeological Evaluation (Prepared for URL by MoLAS)

APPENDIX 1

Plant remains
By John Giorgi

Introduction

One 10 litre bulk sample was taken from a fill [13] (sample <1>) trench 3293TT during excavations at Leda Cottages (ARC LED98) for the potential recovery of biological and artefactual remains. A single sherd of post-medieval pottery was recovered from the fill.

The purpose of the assessment was to evaluate the quality of preservation and the abundance and diversity of biological and artefactual remains in the sample. It was hoped that the remains in the sample could throw some light on the date and function of the feature.

Methods

The sample was processed in a flotation tank and the flot recovered on a 0.25 mm mesh. The residue, retained on a 1mm sieve, was dried and sorted for biological and artefactual remains.

The dried flot were scanned under a binocular microscope. Modes of preservation, abundance and diversity of organic remains were noted. A summary of the results is shown below (*environmental dataset*).

Results

Pitfill [13] 3293TT (sample <1>, flot vol. 20ml.): The small flot consisted of flecks and small fragments of charcoal, rootlets and occasional uncharred seeds, eg. goosefoots (*Chenopodium* spp.). The residue consisted of gravel and a few very small charcoal fragments but no other biological and artefactual remains.

Statement of Potential

The aim of the assessment was to try to establish the possible date and function of the feature. The assessment results suggest that it will not be possible to address these questions; only a very small quantity of fragmented charcoal was recovered from the flot and the presence of modern rootlets may mean that part or all of this material may be intrusive. The absence of artefactual evidence in the sample also does not allow comments to be made on either the date or function of the feature.

Recommendations

No further work is suggested on the basis of the assessment results.

Table 4: Environmental dataset, plant remains

TRENCH	CONTEXT	SAMPLE	METHOD	SUMMARY	COMMENTS
3293TT	13	1	Flotation (flot size 0.25mm)	charcoal++; waterlogged seeds+; rootlets+++	no useful information as charcoal and seeds may be intrusive

Kent SMR Record Sheet

Site Name: Leda Cottages	
Site code: ARC LED 98	
Summary: An evaluation of 18 trenches, commissioned by Union Railways Limited, was carried out by the Museum of London Archaeology Service in August 1998 at Leda Cottages, near Charing, north-west of Ashford, Kent. The evaluation forms part of a larger investigation along the line of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link.	
District: Ashford	Parish: Charing CP
Period(s): 1. Post-medieval	
NGR Easting 596700	NGR Northing 147200
Type of Recording: Evaluation	Watching-Brief
(Delete)	Field Walking
Excavation	Geophysical Survey
	Measured Survey
Date of Recording: (From) 4/08/1998	(To) 6/08/1998
Unit Undertaking Recording: Museum of London Archaeology Service, Walker House, 87 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V	
Summary of Field Results: One of the 18 trial trenches revealed a truncated post-medieval pit.	
Location of Archive/Finds:	URL archive at Aylesford
Bibliography:	Evaluation report

Summary Compiler: Friederike Hammer	Date: 4/10/1998
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