

SANDLING CONSTRUCTION SITE (ARC SCS 98) INTERIM REPORT

UNION RAILWAYS LIMITED

SANDLING CONSTRUCTION SITE, KENT

ARC SCS 98

An Archaeological Evaluation

Contract No. S/300/0052

museum of
LONDON 
Museum of London Archaeology Service
February 1999

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Evaluation Report

Volume 1 of 1

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Museum of London Archaeology Service
February 1999

SANDLING CONSTRUCTION SITE, KENT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

The Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) was commissioned by Union Railways Limited (URL) to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Sandling Construction Site, situated approximately 1km to the north-west of Saltwood, near Hythe, Kent. The centre of the site was at 94123/17151 on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) Project Grid. A total of 15 trial trenches, 1831TT to 1845TT inclusive, were excavated between the 3rd and 7th of September 1998. No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

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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 undertake an archaeological evaluation at Sandling Construction Site, near Saltwood, Kent. The site was situated in the Civic Parish of Postling, in a triangle enclosed by the M20, A20 and the B2068 (Fig 1-2). The centre of the site was at 94123/17151 on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) Project Grid NGR 614100/137150. A total of 15 trial trenches, 1831TT to 1845TT inclusive, were excavated between the 3rd and 7th of September 1998. This evaluation forms part of a larger programme of archaeological investigations along the line of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, the aim being to assess the effect of the construction of the new railway upon the cultural heritage. This evaluation is within CTRL route window 37.

1.1.2 Sandling Construction Site was highlighted for potential archaeological evaluation in the URL 1994 Environmental Assessment. Here the site was shown to be adjacent to a possible Iron Age and Roman settlement, discovered during the construction of the M20. The settlement site, judged to have an unknown importance, was given the Oxford Archaeological Unit Specialist Report number 1101.

1.1.3 The 1998 evaluation 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. The area of the evaluation is shown on Fig 2.

1.2 Geology, landscape and landuse

1.2.1 The surface geology at Sandling Construction site consists of Folkestone Beds. The surface of the geological deposits was recorded in all trenches - generally 0.65m to 1.10m below current ground level. In trenches 1834TT and 1831TT, geological layers were below the topsoil (0.35m deep) and in 1832TT geology was 3.00m down.

1.2.2 The following profile was recorded for ground level from west to east across the site:

89.26m Ordnance Datum (OD hereafter) at 1831TT
 88.10m OD at 1832TT
 87.10m OD at 1835TT
 88.53m OD at 1840TT
 94.20m OD at 1845TT

There was a marked fall in ground level to the south with a height of 82.47m OD recorded at 1838TT.

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 Specific to the evaluation at Sandling Construction Site were the following:

- Environmental sampling of any promising archaeological features.

3 METHODS

3.1 General

3.1.1 A Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation was prepared by URL and agreed by 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 trench co-ordinates supplied by URL.

3.2.2 Each trench was accurately positioned using a total station and datalogger, traversing from a URL survey control, and their four corners marked with pegs.

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; the centre point of the evaluation area is 94123/17151.

3.3 Excavation

3.3.1 Fifteen trenches, 30m long and 1.70m wide were excavated. The trenches were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.20m using a 360° tracked excavator with a flat bladed bucket. In order to accurately assess the nature and level of the geology a sondage was excavated at one end of all trenches.

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.

3.4 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 For all trenches the metric OD heights were established, each trench having a Temporary Bench Mark (TBM) incorporated onto one of the survey pegs.
- 3.4.3 The evaluation showed negative archaeological results and a routine record of trenches after excavation was taken using a single-use 350mm camera and a Kodak Gold 800-2 colour film.

4 RESULTS

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 No archaeological features were recorded or finds recovered from any of the trial trenches. Several modern land drains in 1837TT and 1838TT.
- 4.1.2 Overlying geology in trenches 1835TT to 1845TT inclusive was a deposit that varied in depth from 0.50m (1837TT, 1842TT and 1843TT) to 2.20m thick (1836TT). This deposit was issued context [6] (pale brown sandy silt) in 1833TT and context [8] (grey brown silty sand) in trenches 1835TT to 1845TT inclusive. This layer over geology appears to be an *in-situ* loess/brickearth deposit, the upper part of which has been truncated by modern ploughing.
- 4.1.3 In trench 1834TT, directly overlying (possibly truncated) geology, was modern landfill (issued contexts [3] and [4], totalling 2.74m thick). This landfill is probably associated with recent M20 construction works.
- 4.1.4 Geology was sealed by topsoil in trenches 1831TT and 1834TT.
- 4.1.5 Topsoil varied in depth between 0.15m and 0.30m and consisted of loose friable mid to dark brown grey sandy silt [1] in all trenches.

5 TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Table 1: Trenches without archaeological features

Trench Number	Geology	Deposit	Topsoil	Current ground level (m OD)			
				North	South	East	West
1831TT	Orange sand [2]	Not applicable	Dark brown grey sandy silt [1] 0.30m thick	89.26	86.57		
1832TT	Greenish grey brown slightly sandy clay [5]	Redeposited sand [3] over sandy clay [4] containing modern construction waste. Total 2.74m thick	[1] 0.25m thick			88.10	87.91
1833TT	Yellow brown sand [7]	Light yellow brown silty sand [6]. 1.85m thick.	[1] 0.25m thick	91.11	89.84		
1834TT	Yellow brown sand [7]	Not applicable	[1] 0.35m thick			86.12	84.59
1835TT	Yellow brown sand [7]	Greyish brown silty sand [8]. 0.80m thick	[1] 0.20m thick			87.10	89.51
1836TT	Grey sand with some clay [9]	Silty sand [8]. 0.80m thick	[1] 0.30m thick			88.83	88.43
1837TT	Grey sand with some clay [9]	Silty sand [8]. 1.35m thick	[1] 0.30m thick	84.08	85.96		
1838TT	Yellow brown sand [7]	Silty sand [8]. 0.50m thick	[1] 0.30m thick			83.13	82.47
1839TT	Orange sandy clay [10]	Silty sand [8]. 1.30m thick	[1] 0.30m thick			92.56	90.26
1840TT	Orange sandy clay [10]	Silty sand [8]. 0.90m thick	[1] 0.30m thick			88.53	85.23

Trench Number	Geology	Deposit	Topsoil	Current ground level (m OD)			
				North	South	East	West
1841TT	Yellow brown sand [7]	Silty sand [8]. 0.80m thick	[1] 0.30m thick	87.90	87.00		
1842TT	Yellow brown sand [7]	Silty sand [8]. 0.50m thick	[1] 0.25m thick			96.00	94.90
1843TT	Yellow brown sand [7]	Silty sand [8]. 0.50m thick	[1] 0.30m thick	94.38	94.20		
1844TT	Orange sandy clay [10]	Silty sand [8]. 0.70m thick	[1] 0.30m thick			89.29	90.03
1845TT	Yellow brown sand [7]	Silty sand [8]. 0.70m thick	[1] 0.30m thick			94.20	94.20

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVENTORIES

6.1 Table 2: Events dataset

EVENT_NAME:Sandling Construction Site
EVENT_CODE:ARC SCS 98
EVENT_TYPE:Evaluation
CONTRACTOR:Museum of London Archaeology Service
DATE:3/9/98-7/9/98
GRID:94123 17151
PROJECT:CTRL
COUNTY:Kent
DISTRICT:Shepway
PARISH:Postling CP
SMR:SMR Kent
SITE_TYPE:Cultivated land 3, operations to a depth >0.25m
PERIOD:Unknown, modern
METHOD:Mechanical removal of topsoil; hand recording of sections
PHASING:None
ENVIRON:None
FINDS:None
GEOLOGY:Folkestone Beds.
CONTEXT_NUM:10
THREAT:CTRL
SAMPLE:1%
SUMMARY:No archaeological remains were encountered.
ARCHIVE:
ACC_NUM:

6.2 Table 3: Context dataset

TRENCH_URL	CONT EXT	TYPE	PERIOD	ASSOCIA TION	RES_ INT	COMMENTS
1831TT-1845TT	1	DEPOSIT				TOPSOIL
1831TT	2	DEPOSIT				GEOLOGY
1832TT	3	DEPOSIT				MODERN LAND FILL
1832TT	4	DEPOSIT				MODERN LAND FILL
1832TT	5	DEPOSIT				GEOLOGY
1833TT	6	DEPOSIT				DEPOSIT OVER GEOLOGY
1833TT- 1835TT, 1838TT, 1841TT- 1843TT, 1845TT	7	DEPOSIT				GEOLOGY
1835TT-1845TT	8	DEPOSIT				DEPOSIT OVER GEOLOGY
1836TT- 183+C28TT	9	DEPOSIT				GEOLOGY
1839TT, 1840TT, 1844TT	10	DEPOSIT				GEOLOGY

SECTION 2: STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE

7 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPORTANCE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

- 7.1 No archaeological remains or artefacts were encountered during the evaluation at Sandling Construction Site. Modern landfill, possibly over truncated geology, was recorded in trench 1832TT - this fill is probably connected with the construction of the nearby M20. Recent land drains were noted in trenches 1837TT and 1838TT.
- 7.1.1 A substantial depth of a 'deposit over natural' was recorded in trenches 1835TT to 1845TT. This material ranged from 0.50m thick (1838TT, 1842TT and 1843TT) to 2.20m thick (1836TT). The lack of cultural material and the presence of land drains suggests that this deposit is primarily an *in-situ* post-glacial loess/brickearth deposit. It is not impossible that cultural material is sealed within the upper levels of this subsoil or directly beneath the topsoil, but modern ploughing and construction activity appears to have substantially truncated and altered these levels.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Museum of London, 1994
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).

Kent SMR Record Sheet

Site Name: Sandling Construction Site			
Site code: ARC SCS 98			
Summary: An evaluation of 15 trial trenches, commissioned by Union Railways Limited, was carried out by the Museum of London Archaeology Service in September 1998 at Sandling Construction Site, Kent. The evaluation explored the area adjacent to a possible Iron Age and Roman settlement, discovered during the construction of the M20.			
District: Shepway		Parish: Postling CP	
Period(s): 1.Modern			
NGR Easting 614100		NGR Northing 137200	
Type of Recording: Evaluation (Delete)		Watching Brief Geophysical Survey	
Excavation		Field Walking Measured Survey	
Date of Recording: (From) 3/09/1998		(To) 7/09/1998	
Unit Undertaking Recording: Museum of London Archaeology Service, Walker House, 87 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4AB			
Summary of Field Results: No archaeological remains were encountered. Landfill associated with the construction of the M20.			
Location of Archive/Finds:		URL archive at Aylesford	
Bibliography:		Evaluation report	
Summary Compiler: Friederike Hammer			Date: 15/10/1998

Fig 1 Sandling Construction Site location plan, Natinal Grid Reference TQ 614200 137100.
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