UNION RAILWAYS LIMITED

NORTH OF SEVINGTON RAILHEAD

ARC SRH 97

An Archaeological Evaluation

Contract No. 194/870

museum of LONDON
Museum of London Archaeology Service
January 1998

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Final Report
Volume 1 of 1

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

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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 comprising eleven trial trenches situated in c.2.4ha. of land within the parish of Sevington, Kent, 3.5km south-east of the centre of Ashford. The area of investigation was bounded by the London to Folkestone main railway line to the south, the A2070 Ashford southern orbital road to the west and by Church Road to the north and east.

The site can be divided into three discrete areas. The western area consisted of waste ground adjacent to the A2070 (trenches 1704TT, 1705TT, 1706TT and 1707TT) and was separated from the central evaluation area by a ditch and a wooden fence. The central area consisted of two fields under pasture (trenches 1708TT, 1709TT, 1710TT and 1711TT) and was divided from the eastern evaluation area by a small orchard, 50m long and 18m wide. The eastern evaluation area was a single small field under pasture (trenches 1713TT, 1714TT and 1715TT).

The top of natural geology in the western field was largely truncated, probably by construction activity associated with the building of the A2070 Ashford southern orbital road. The field was mostly devoid of topsoil with the ground composed largely of redeposited clay, gravel and modern rubbish. In trench 1705TT a north-south aligned mortar and ragstone road or trackway was probably 19th or 20th century in date. A number of medieval slots and postholes in the same trench are likely to have been structural, perhaps parts of one or possibly two timber buildings of late 12th or 13th century date.

The central area was undisturbed by modern activity but was devoid of any archaeological features.

The eastern evaluation area contained a number of medieval features, including slots and postholes of a possible 12th century building in trench 1713TT. Ditches located in trenches 1714TT and 1715TT may either form part of a medieval field system or be the rear of medieval properties fronting Church Road.

The church of St. Mary, Sevington is approximately three hundred metres to the north-west and is situated in open farmland. The presence of 12th/13th century timber buildings close to the present line of Church Road may help in defining the extent of the medieval village of Sevington.

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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 on land within the village of Sevington, approximately 3.5km south-east of the centre of Ashford, Kent. The evaluated area consisted of waste ground and pasture north of the Ashford to Folkestone main railway line, east of the A2070 and south and west of Church Road, Sevington (URL Grid 83535/20450) (Fig 1 and 2). The work was undertaken between the 4 and 10 November 1997. The evaluation forms part of a larger programme of archaeological investigation along the line of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, the aim of which was to assess the affect of the construction of the new railway upon cultural heritage. An Environmental Assessment has been prepared (URL 1994). This evaluation is within route window 36.

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 that specification. The evaluated area is shown on Fig 2.

1.1.3 The evaluation was designed to sample an area of geophysical anomalies and to systematically sample a section of the route corridor.

1.2 Geology, landscape and landuse

1.2.1 The evaluation was carried out in the parish of Sevington, with the East Stour River approximately 1km to the south.

1.2.2 Sevington is situated on the Lower Greensand. Atherfield Clay at the base of the Lower Greensand sequence grades upwards into the sandier Hythe Beds, composed chiefly of glauconitic or ferruginous sands and rubbly sandy limestone (Kentish Rag). Ragstone was encountered in quantity on the higher areas of the site, with clayey sands closer to the railway line.

1.2.3 The site was divided into three fields by a ditch and by a small orchard.

1.2.4 The western field (Field 1) was a 50m wide strip of land alongside the embankment of the A2070. Church Road, which demarcates the northern limit of the site, is at this point several metres higher than the north end of the field. From a height of 50.70m OD the ground drops gradually to the south so that at the top of the railway cutting, which forms the southern limit of the site, the ground surface is at approximately 47.40m OD. Four evaluation trenches were located in Field 1, *1704TT, 1705TT, 1706TT* and *1707TT*.

1.2.5 The eastern limit of Field 1 is demarcated by a ditch and a wooden fence. Towards the southern limit of the field the ditch turns eastwards and continues for a distance of approximately 75m into the central evaluation area, composed of two small fields

(fields 2 and 3). Fields 2 and 3 were under pasture and were sub-divided by a north-south wooden fence. Four trenches were located within this area, *1708TT, 1709TT, 1710TT* and *1711TT*.

1.2.6 A small orchard separates field 3 from field 4 in the eastern evaluation area. Field 4 was under pasture, but in the immediate post-War period was part of a cherry orchard. At the eastern end of field 4 the ground level was at 49.36m OD. A drop in ground levels was observed between trenches *1714TT* and *1713TT* put *1713TT* on a slightly lower terrace, at between 45.50 and 46.50m OD.

1.2.7 Archaeological features were generally encountered cutting into the top of the natural deposits, but it is likely that some degree of truncation through later agricultural activity has occurred. Most of the western field, adjacent to the A2070 embankment, had been severely affected by work associated with the construction of that road.

1.2.8 *Black's Guide to Kent* of 1874 describes Sevington as 'a small and sparsely-populated parish, occupying the high ground above the Weald.' The church of St. Mary, Sevington is 300m to the north of the evaluation area and is surrounded by open farmland to the north and to the east, and by Court Lodge Farm to the south.

1.2.9 The present village of Sevington is 200m to the north-west of the church, linking with the village of Willesborough to the west. The original medieval village of Sevington was probably closer to the church, and Church Road, which runs southwards from the church and then turns eastwards to form the northern limit of the evaluation area. It may originally have formed the core of the settlement. Some of the oldest buildings in the present village lie on this southern branch of Church Road.

1.2.10 Boys Hall Moat is situated 500m to the south-west. The moat was the residential centre for the manor of Sevington, probably from the time of Henry III, and survives as a rectangular moat 60m by 70m with extensive outworks. The latter are thought to relate to late 16th or early 17th century formal gardens. The site was abandoned as a residence in the second or third decades of the 17th century in favour of a site nearby in Willesborough.

2 SPECIFICATIONS

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The 'Specification for Archaeological Investigations' described the general aims of the archaeological works, that all the evaluations shall aim 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:

- determine the presence/absence etc. of any subsoil features or deposits of archaeological interest which may be associated with, or in close proximity to, anomalies recorded during geophysical prospecting;

- determine the presence/absence etc. of any structures, features or deposits associated with, or in proximity to, sites recorded during recent fieldwork in the immediate area of Iron Age, Romano-British and medieval date.

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 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.

3.2.3 Individual features in trenches were planned at 1:20 and occasionally 1:50, taking as a grid the line between the two survey pegs used to mark out the trench. Sections, drawn at 1:10, 1:20 and 1:50 were also positioned using these lines. These survey pegs were accurately positioned and marked out the western side of a north/south trench or the southern side of an east/west trench.

3.2.4 The central site coordinate, according to the given URL grid, was 83535/20450.

3.3 Excavation

3.3.1 Eleven trenches were located and excavated, each measuring 30 x 1.5 metres, representing 2% of the total site area of 2.4 ha. (Fig 2). In addition trench *1705TT* was extended northwards for a distance of 6m and additional sondages were excavated 10m to the north and 6m to the south of the trench baseline. This was in order to establish the line of a road or trackway [22] which crossed the trench on a north-south alignment (see 5.2.3.2. below).

3.3.2 Trench numbers were allocated by URL. The trenches were excavated using a 360^{o} tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a ditching bucket; topsoil and any overburden were excavated to deposits of archaeological significance and in some cases deepened to test the natural geology. Archaeological deposits 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, building materials, animal bones, plant remains and flint are contained in Appendices 1- 3. The site archive has been prepared and includes URL datasets for the Fieldwork Event, Contexts, Bulk Finds and Environmental Samples.

5 TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 General

5.1.1 All trenches will be described in order from west to east.

5.2 Field 1 (Western Area)

5.2.1 Four trenches were located in a field adjacent to the A2070 Ashford southern orbital road. The road was constructed as a southern by-pass to Ashford at the beginning of the 1990s and most of the field seems to have been severely affected by this work.

5.2.2 Trench *1704TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.2.1 Base North: 49.43m OD: South: 48.84m OD. Depth 1.30m. A thin layer of topsoil sealed a thick layer of mixed redeposited gravel and clay with large fragments of concrete, metal wire, plastic and other modern detritus. The top of natural green sand was located at a depth of 1.30m, but was probably heavily truncated by modern activity. No archaeology was located.

5.2.3 *Trench 1705TT* (Fig 3)

5.2.3.1 Base West: 48.18m OD: East: 48.29m OD. Depth 1m. A thin layer of topsoil sealed a thick layer of mixed redeposited gravel and clay with large fragments of concrete, metal wire, plastic and other modern detritus. The top of natural green sand was located at a depth of 1m, but was probably heavily truncated by modern activity.

5.2.3.2 A 3m wide road or trackway [22] aligned north-south and of unknown date was located crossing the centre of trench *1705TT*. It was composed of ragstone bonded white sandy mortar, was 0.40m thick at its central point and had a partial camber. In order to follow the line of the road/trackway the trench was extended northwards for a distance of 6m and additional sondages were excavated 10m to the north and 6m to the south of the trench baseline. Road/trackway [22] was located in all three additional sondages. It was covered almost entirely by redeposited gravel and clay containing modern material such as plastic sheeting, metal wire and lumps of bitumen. It may therefore either have been a visible feature in the recent past or have been exposed during the construction of the A2070. No dating evidence was found associated with [22]. The road/trackway was aligned with the gate at the north end of the field and is almost certainly post-medieval in date.

5.2.3.3 Ten cut features were located in trench *1705TT* (Figs 3 and 4). The majority are likely to be structural in nature and are dated by pottery to the period AD 1150-1250.

5.2.3.4 Several slots and two postholes, some containing medieval pottery, were located to the east of trackway [22]. The alignment of most features was NW-SE or SW-NE, noticeably different from the N-S alignment of trackway [22] suggesting two phases of construction. It is probable that archaeological survival was affected by construction

activity associated with the building of the A2070.

5.2.3.5 A pit [2] was excavated at the eastern end of the trench. It was 1.60m NW-SE, 0.70m wide and 0.12m deep and filled with dark grey clay silt [1] with humic lenses and occasional charcoal flecks. Pottery was retrieved dated 1150-1250.

5.2.3.6 Narrow gulleys or slots [4] and [6] were recorded to the west of pit [2]. Gulley [4] was 0.50m wide and 0.16m deep and [6] was 0.40m deep and 0.20m deep. Both were filled with similar material ([3] and [5]) to that of [2] but were on a slightly different alignment (N-S).

5.2.3.7 A possible slot or gulley [10] was aligned SW-NE and was 0.50m wide and filled with dark grey sandy clay [9]. A small posthole [8], possibly associated with [10], was filled with identical material [7].

5.2.3.8 Immediately to the west of [10] a narrow slot [12] 0.20m wide was filled with dark grey sandy clay [11].

5.2.3.9 Parallel to [12] a slot or gulley [14] 0.60m wide and 0.20m deep was aligned NW-SE and was filled with dark grey sandy clay [13] with charcoal flecks and tile fragments. Pottery sherds retrieved from the fill were dated to 1200-1400.

5.2.3.10 Immediately to the west of [14] another slot or gulley [16], 0.70m wide and 0.30m deep, ran parallel to it, appearing to turn a right angle (or junction) just before the southern limit of the trench. Pottery sherds retrieved from the fill were dated 1150-1250. Slot or gulley [16] was also associated with a small posthole [18] 0.50m in diameter and 0.18m deep.

5.2.3.11 A pit [20] was excavated to the east of the road [22]. It was 1m long and 0.60m wide and filled with dark grey humic silty sandy clay [19] with small fragments of tile.

5.2.3.12 Several features appeared to cut a mid brown clay silt layer [23] with occasional charcoal flecks, tile and pot. The pottery was dated to 1150-1250. Most of this layer was, however, truncated by modern construction activity.

5.2.4 *Trench 1706TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.4.1 Base North: 47.98m OD: South: 47.37m OD. Depth 0.90m. A thin layer of topsoil overlay a mixture of redeposited gravel and clay with metal wire, plastic and other modern detritus. The top of truncated natural consisted of green sand and ragstone (Hythe Beds). No archaeology was noted.

5.2.5 *Trench 1707TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.5.1 Base West: 46.77m OD: East: 46.88m OD. Depth 1m. A thin layer of topsoil over made ground consisting of redeposited gravel and clay with tarmac, lumps of iron, decayed wood, plastic and other modern rubbish. Truncated natural consisted of green

sand (Hythe Beds). No archaeology was noted.

5.3 Field 2 (Central Area)

5.3.1 *Trench 1708TT* (Fig 2)

5.3.1.1 Base North: 48.38m OD: South: 47.67 OD. Depth 0.60m. Topsoil over brown sandy silt over ragstone and green sand. No archaeology was noted.

5.3.2 *Trench 1709TT* (Fig 2)

5.3.2.1 Base West: 46.66m OD: South: 46.44m OD. Depth 0.70m. Topsoil over brown sandy silt over green sand. No archaeology was noted.

5.4 Field 3 (Central Area)

5.4.1 *Trench 1710TT* (Fig 2)

5.4.1.1 Base North: 47.67m OD: South: 46.99m OD. Depth 0.60m. Topsoil over brown sandy silt over green sand. No archaeology was noted.

5.4.2 *Trench 1711TT* (Fig 2)

5.4.2.1 Base West: 46.47m OD: East: 45.81m OD. Depth 0.60m. Topsoil over brown sandy silt over yellow brown silty sand. No archaeology was noted.

5.5 Field 4 (Eastern Area)

5.5.1 *Trench 1713TT* (Fig 5)

5.5.1.1 Base West: 44.87m OD: East: 45.77m OD. Depth 0.60m. Topsoil over light brown sandy silt over brown silty sand. A total of 10 features were located in this trench, dated to the period 1150-1250.

5.5.1.2 At the western end of the trench a circular cut [26], 0.90m in diameter and 0.30m deep, was filled with dark grey clay silt [27]with charcoal flecks. Probably a small pit rather than a posthole.

5.5.1.3 A narrow slot or gulley [28], aligned NW-SE, crossed the south-west corner of the trench. It was filled with dark grey clay silt [29] with charcoal flecks and pottery dated 1200-1300.

5.5.1.4 Three possible postholes [35], [31] and [33] were located in a line to the east of [28]. The fill [32]of posthole [33] contained a single pottery sherd dated 1150-1250.

5.5.1.5 Gulleys or slots [39] and [43] were excavated. Gulley [39] was aligned NW-SE and was 0.70m wide and 0.30m deep while [43] was aligned SW-NE and was 0.50m wide

and 0.20m deep. Both were filled with grey clay silt [38] and [42] with charcoal flecks and pottery. Gulleys [39] and [43] were narrow slots running perpendicular to each other and, if projected southwards, would meet beyond the southern limit of the trench. Gulley [39] contained sherds of a tripod pitcher of Pound Lane type, dated 1150-1200. Pottery from [43] was dated 1050-1150. A posthole [50] 0.40m in diameter was associated with [43] and contained a single potsherd dated 1150-1250.

5.5.1.6 A pit [36] was excavated to the west of slot [39]. It was 1.60m in diameter and filled with dark grey humic clay [37] with charcoal flecks and occasional burnt clay. The fill was similar to that of both [39] and [43].

5.5.1.7 A N-S aligned ditch [41] was located at the eastern end of the trench. It was 1.80m wide and 0.50m deep and was filled with grey clay silt [40] with charcoal flecks, roof tile and medieval pottery. Although on a different alignment to most other features in the trench the fills appeared to be identical. Pottery was dated to 1250-1300.

5.5.1.8 There was distinct break in slope at the eastern end of the trench, with *1713TT* occupying a slightly lower area than most of the field to the east.

5.5.2 *Trench 1714TT* (Fig 6)

5.5.2.1 Base West: 47.60m OD: east: 48.21m OD. Depth 0.60m. Topsoil over brown sandy silt over ragstone and green sand.

5.5.2.2 A N-S ditch [46] was located at the eastern end of the trench. It was 1.80m wide, 0.40m deep and filled with a mid brown sandy silt with tile, bone and pot, with occasional fragments of ragstone. The pottery was dated 1200-1400.

5.5.2.3 Towards the centre of the trench a small pit or posthole [48] was recorded. It measured 0.40m in diameter and 0.20m deep and was filled with dark brown sandy silt with ash [47], occasional pot and tile. The pottery was dated 1480-1600.

5.5.3 *Trench 1715TT* (Fig 7)

5.5.3.1 Base West: 48.47m OD: east: 48.51m OD. Depth 0.50m. Topsoil over brown sandy silt over ragstone and green sand.

5.5.3.2 A N-S aligned linear cut [52] was excavated. It measured 0.40m wide and 0.14m deep and was filled with dark brown sandy silt and ash [51]. It was probably a post-medieval slot or gulley.

5.5.3.3 A linear cut [25] aligned N-S crossed the middle of the trench. It was 0.80m wide and 0.12m deep and was filled with light brown sandy silt with pottery dated to 1200-1300. It may have represented a medieval field ditch.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATASETS

6.1 Table 1: Events dataset

EVENT_NAME:North of Sevington Rail Head
EVENT_CODE:ARC SRH 97
EVENT_TYPE:Evaluation
CONTRACTOR:Museum of London Archaeology Service
DATE:4/11/97-10/11/97
GRID:83535/20450 (URL Grid)
PROJECT:CTRL
COUNTY:Kent
DISTRICT:Ashford
PARISH:Sevington
SMR:
SITE_TYPE:Cultivated Land 3: Operations to a depth of >0.25m
PERIOD:Medieval; Post-medieval
METHOD:Mechanical removal of topsoil; hand excavation and recording of archaeological features.
PHASING:Medieval; Post-medieval.
ENVIRON:Root and charcoal fragments; no research potential.
FINDS:Medieval (late 12th-early 13th century) and Post-medieval pottery, and ceramic building material.
GEOLOGY:Atherfield Clay under Lower Green Sand, grades upwards into the sandier Hythe Beds composed of glauconitic or ferruginous sand with ragstone.
CONTEXT_NUM:52 (+ 11 trench sheets)
THREAT:CTRL
SAMPLE:2%
SUMMARY:Two centres of medieval activity; including possible buildings, and a Post-medieval ragstone and mortar trackway.
ARCHIVE:Temporarily at URL warehouse in Aylesford, Kent.
ACC_NUM:

6.2 Table 2: Archaeological context inventory

TRENCH	CONTEXT	TYPE	PERIOD	ASSOCIATION	COMMENTS
1705TT	1	deposit	Med	2	fill of linear feature
1705TT	2	cut		1	pit
1705TT	3	deposit		4	fill of linear feature
1705TT	4	cut		3	linear feature
1705TT	5	deposit		6	fill of linear feature
1705TT	6	cut		5	linear feature
1705TT	7	deposit		8	fill of posthole?
1705TT	8	cut		7	posthole?
1705TT	9	deposit		10	fill of linear feature
1705TT	10	cut		9	linear feature
1705TT	11	deposit		12	fill of linear feature
1705TT	12	cut		11	linear feature
1705TT	13	deposit	Med	14	fill of linear feature
1705TT	14	cut		13	linear feature
1705TT	15	deposit	Med	16	fill of linear feature
1705TT	16	cut		15	linear feature
1705TT	17	deposit		18	fill of posthole
1705TT	18	cut		17	posthole
1705TT	19	deposit		20	fill of linear feature
1705TT	20	cut		19	linear feature
1705TT	21	cut?			poss. modern cut?
1705TT	22	deposit			mortared road
1705TT	23	deposit	Med		layer
1715TT	24	deposit	Med	25	fill of ditch
1715TT	25	cut		24	ditch
1713TT	26	cut		26	pit
1713TT	27	deposit		25	fill of pit
1713TT	28	cut		28	linear feature
1713TT	29	deposit	Med	27	fill of linear feature
1713TT	30	cut		31	posthole
1713TT	31	deposit		30	fill of posthole
1713TT	32	deposit	Med	33	fill of posthole
1713TT	33	cut		32	posthole
1713TT	34	deposit		35	fill of posthole
1713TT	35	cut		34	posthole
1713TT	36	cut		37	pit
1713TT	37	deposit		36	fill of pit
1713TT	38	deposit		39	fill of slot
1713TT	39	cut		38	slot
1713TT	40	deposit	Med	41	fill of ditch
1713TT	41	cut		40	ditch
1713TT	42	deposit	Med	43	fill of slot
1713TT	43	cut		42	slot
	44				cancelled
1714TT	45	deposit	Med	46	ditch
1714TT	46	cut		45	fill of ditch
1714TT	47	deposit	Post-med	48	pit
1714TT	48	cut		47	fill of pit
1713TT	49	deposit	med	50	fill of posthole
1713TT	50	cut		49	posthole
1715TT	51	deposit		52	fill of slot
1715TT	52	cut		51	slot

SECTION 2: STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Extent of archaeological deposits

7.1.1 Archaeological features were found in four of the eleven trenches; nearly all were cut features. They can be broadly divided into four groups:

- possible medieval structural elements in trench *1705TT*
- possible medieval structural elements in trench *1713TT,* and associated ditches in *1713TT, 1714TT* and *1715TT*
- post-medieval features in trench *1714TT*
- a post-medieval road or trackway in *1705TT*

7.1.2 The remaining trenches contained no archaeological features or deposits.

7.2 Nature of archaeological deposits

7.2.1 Archaeological deposits within cut features were distinguishable from the natural sands, clays and ragstone outcrops of the Lower Greensand (the Hythe Beds and the Atherfield clay). The soil conditions allowed for a poor degree of survival for bones and organic materials (see Appendix 3).

7.3 Character of the site

7.3.1 The evaluation located two areas of medieval activity:

7.3.2 In trench *1705TT* a series of narrow cut features aligned NW-SE and SW-NE (associated with two postholes) may have been drip gulleys or beamslots. If projected beyond the southern limit of the trench cuts [10] and [14] would meet at right angles, perhaps forming a junction between two external walls. Parallel to [14] a similar slot [16] appeared to corner immediately before the southern limit of the trench. A late 12th/early 13th century date is indicated by the pottery. The area around trench *1705TT* was heavily damaged by modern construction activity, reducing considerably the area of potential archaeological survival. In all sampled areas of field 1 the surface of natural was truncated. Trackway [22] may have offered some degree of protection to archaeological features in the area immediately to the east, but even here only the lower portion of features survived. Consequently, the horizontal truncation of features in trench *1705TT* made interpretation more difficult. That the features were in some way structural, an interpretation based on their layout, remains the most favoured option.

7.3.3 Trench *1713TT* contained a series of narrow linear features, postholes and a ditch, on a slightly lower terrace than trenches *1714TT* and *1715TT*. Cuts [39] and [43] were narrow slots which ran perpendicular to each other and, if projected southwards, would meet beyond the southern limit of the trench. Cut feature [43] was associated

with a small posthole [50]. Cut [39] contained a quantity of 12th century pottery, including sherds from a tripod pitcher of Pound Lane type dated 1150-1200. A narrow slot [28], at the western end of the trench, may relate to a separate building, as did a number of postholes and pits. A late 12th/early 13th century date is indicated. At the eastern end of the trench ditch [41] was aligned slightly differently (N-S), perhaps due to its location at the base of a natural slope. In plan the features located in trench *1713TT* were similar to those found in trench *1705TT*; the extent of survival, however, made a structural interpretation more certain.

7.3.4 Early medieval buildings in the south of England are usually indicated by lines of postholes and timber slots. During the late 12th and early 13th centuries a changeover to stone construction occurred, perhaps because of a shortage of timber related to the large scale clearances of woodland. The presence at Sevington of timber buildings of 12th or possibly 13th century date conforms this general trend.

7.3.5 The linear features located in trenches *1714TT* and *1715TT* may be part of a medieval field system or be toft/croft boundaries of possible buildings fronting Church Road. Tofts were rectilinear enclosures delineating a dwelling and associated outbuildings; crofts enclosed a larger area.

7.3.6 A number of early post-medieval buildings are still located along the south side of Church Lane and may have had medieval precursors. The presence of a medieval building in *1713TT,* close to the road, is therefore not surprising.

7.3.7 Post-medieval features were located in trench *1714TT*. A narrow gulley [52] and a small pit or posthole were of 16th century date and were located immediately behind Maytree cottages on Church Road. The cottages appear to be early post-medieval in date and the features may perhaps be associated with them.

7.3.8 Maytree Cottages, 20m to the north of trench *1714TT*, has an 18th century exterior but a much older timber framed core. Orchard Cottage, which is 50m to the west of trench *1713TT,* is 17th century in date. Ashdown and Ashdown Cottage, further northwards along Church Road, are also of 17th century date. Court Lodge Farm, to the south of Sevington Church, is a 16th century (or earlier) timber framed hall plan house.

7.3.9 The road or trackway [22] located in trench *1705TT* could be traced across much of the western field. No dating material was recovered but the feature is likely to be post-medieval. It was aligned N-S and was therefore on a different alignment to the earlier medieval features found in the same trench. It was also aligned with a gate at the north end of the field and may be projected northwards towards Court Lodge Farm.

7.4 Date of occupation

7.4.1 Structures located in trenches *1705TT* and *1713TT* appear to be of late 12th/early 13th century date.

7.4.2 Fieldwalking conducted by the OAU to the north of Church Road, directly north of field 4, located a low density spread of medieval pottery. The majority of sherds were of early medieval sandy types including diagnostic rim forms of late 12th and mid to

late 13th century date. The dating is therefore consistent with excavated material from this evaluation (ARC SRH 97).

7.4.3 The area between Highfield Lane, Church Road and the church of St.Mary, Sevington, may therefore have formed part of the village of Sevington during the 12th and 13th centuries.

8 IMPORTANCE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

8.1 Survival and conditions

8.1.1 Field 1 was severely affected by the construction of the A2070 Ashford southern orbital road. Although possible building remains were found in trench *1705TT* the area of potential survival is likely to be small, perhaps in a strip between the trackway [22] and the ditch which demarcates the eastern side of Field 1.

8.1.2 The possible structure located in trench *1713TT* is likely to extend northwards towards Church Road. That this was a building is probable, although the limited area uncovered prevents any meaningful discussion of its exact nature (Lyn Blackmore pers. com.).

8.1.3 Features in trenches *1714TT* and *1715TT* may have been at the rear of properties on Church Road. Maytree cottages are of early post-medieval date, but they are likely to have had medieval precursors. There may also have been buildings immediately to the east of them.

8.2 Period

8.2.1 Cut features are dated to the period 1150-1250. There is also limited early post-medieval activity.

8.3 Rarity

8.3.1 Much is already known of 12th and 13th century rural structures, with the limited excavation of over 150 deserted medieval villages, nationally, since 1950 (for example Wharram Percy, Yorkshire and Goltho, Lincolnshire). The expansion of the medieval rural population during the 12th and 13th centuries was followed by a marked decrease from the mid-14th century onwards, largely as a result of the 'Black Death.' The partial or complete abandonment of many rural settlements followed. Sevington may follow this national pattern.

8.3.2 In Kent relatively little is known archaeologically of rural settlements. Most parishes were in existence by 1100 (many probably earlier) and in most cases sizeable settlements remain close to their respective churches. In only a few cases in Kent is there no settlement still associated with the church (Rigold, 1982). Sevington therefore offers a rare chance to study a partially deserted medieval settlement in Kent.

8.4 Fragility and vulnerability

8.4.1 It has been confirmed that archaeological features exist within the evaluation area in two discrete zones. Any intrusive work undertaken in connection with the CTRL is likely to damage features and deposits of archaeological interest.

8.5 Diversity

8.5.1 Although early medieval buildings may be present there is potential for wider research issues pertaining to social, economic and environmental conditions to be addressed. The location of a probable structure in *1713TT*, close to Church Road, may point to an early origin to the lane and help in identifying the likely spread of the 12th/13th century settlement. Features in *1714TT* and *1715TT* may be at the rear of other properties on Church Road.

8.6 Documentation

8.6.1 Boys Hall Moat, Sevington, represents a medieval manorial complex which survived into the early post-medieval period when it was replaced by the still standing Boys Hall.

8.6.2 Fieldwork carried out by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust in 1987, directly south of field 1, located a Late Iron Age 'Belgic' settlement within 50m of trench *1707TT*. The work was undertaken for Eurotunnel in advance of the building of the Ashford inland freight clearance depot.

8.6.3 Several Late Iron Age (LIA) and Early Romano-British (ERB) sites are known to have existed in the immediate vicinity. A programme of field walking and trial trenching, which formed part of separate projects, was carried out by the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit (KARU) in 1990 and the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) in 1993; this fieldwork located at least three sites of LIA-ERB date including slots and ditches with LIA and RB pottery.

8.6.4 An evaluation at Boys Hall Road (ARC BHR 97) for the CTRL located further LIA-ERB features 500m to the west of this evaluation. Part of a medieval field system was also located in this evaluation.

8.7 Group value

8.7.1 It is suggested that much of the early medieval village of Sevington lay to the south of the church of St. Mary. Sevington may have developed along Church Road and Highfield Lane. Excavated features will aid in identifying the likely spread of settlement.

8.8 Potential

8.8.1 The greatest potential lies in the eastern most field of the evaluation area, especially in the vicinity of trench *1713TT*. To a lesser extent trenches *1714TT* and *1715TT*, and the area immediately to the north of them, may also provide further structural evidence. Little post-medieval disturbance seems to have affected this field.

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