

NORTH OF WESTENHANGER CASTLE (ARC WGC 97) EVALUATION REPORT

UNION RAILWAYS LIMITED

NORTH OF WESTENHANGER CASTLE

ARC WGC 97

An Archaeological Evaluation

Contract No. 194/870



Museum of London Archaeology Service
January 1998

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NORTH OF WESTENHANGER CASTLE

ARC WGC 97

An Archaeological Evaluation

Draft Report

Volume 1 of 1

Contract No. 194/870

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Museum of London Archaeology Service
January 1998

NORTH OF WESTENHANGER CASTLE

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 seventeen trenches situated in c.5ha. of land 4km to the north-west of the centre of Hythe, Kent. The area of investigation was bounded by the M20 motorway to the north and by the existing London to Folkestone Railway to the south. Open farmland lay to both the east and the west of the evaluated area.

Medieval features were located towards the eastern end of the site. Much of the western half of the site was on a shallow west facing slope and contained no archaeology.

A probable 11th-12th century corn-drying oven was located towards the north end of trench 1822TT. Field ditches were found in trenches 1821TT, 1822TT, 1823TT, 1824TT, 1828TT and 1830TT. Ditches in trenches 1823TT and 1824TT were dated 1150-1300 and may therefore have formed part of an early medieval open field system.

In the south-east corner of the site five linear cut features, in trenches 1828TT and 1830TT, also probably formed part of an early medieval field system. One ditch contained pottery of the period 1000-1250.

List of Contents

SECTION 1: FACTUAL STATEMENT

1 BACKGROUND	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Geology, landscape and landuse	1
2 SPECIFICATIONS	3
2.1 Aims	3
3 METHODS	4
3.1 General	4
3.2 Survey	4
3.3 Excavation	4
3.4 Recording	4
4 RESULTS	6
4.1 General	6
5 TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS	7
5.1 General	7
5.2 Trench descriptions	7
6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATASETS	11
6.1 Table 1: Events dataset	11
6.2 Table 2 : Archaeological context inventory	12

SECTION 2: STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE

7 CONCLUSIONS	13
7.1 Extent of archaeological deposits	13
7.2 Nature of archaeological deposits	13
7.3 Character of the site	14
7.4 Date of occupation	14
8 IMPORTANCE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS	16
8.1 Survival and conditions	16
8.2 Period	16
8.3 Rarity	16
8.4 Fragility and vulnerability	16
8.5 Diversity	16
8.6 Documentation	17
8.7 Group value	17
8.8 Potential	17
9 BIBLIOGRAPHY	18

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 Pottery	19
Appendix 2 Ceramic building material	21
Appendix 3 Flint	22
Appendix 4 Glass	23
Appendix 5 Plant remains	24

Kent SMR Record Sheet

List of Tables

Table 1 Events dataset	11
Table 2 Archaeological context inventory	12
Table 3 Bulk dataset, pottery	20
Table 4 Bulk dataset, ceramic building material	21
Table 5 Bulk dataset, flint	22
Table 6 Bulk dataset, glass	23
Table 7 Environmental dataset, plant remains	25

List of Figures

Cover: Medieval oven [11] under excavation in trench *1822TT*, with late medieval stone barns and Westenhanger Castle in the background.

Fig 1 Site location plan

Fig 2 Plan of the evaluation trenches

Fig 3 Trench *1821TT* with profile of feature [8]

Fig 4 Trench *1822TT* with plan of oven [11], with profiles of feature [13] and oven [11]

Fig 5 Trenches *1823TT* and *1824TT* with profiles of features [2], [4] and [18]

Fig 6 Trenches *1828TT* and *1830TT* with profiles of features [20] to [28]

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 farmland four kilometres north-west of the centre of Hythe, Kent. The evaluated area was situated north of the London to Folkestone main railway line and south of the M20 motorway in the parish of Stanford (URL Grid 92070/17490) (Fig 1-2). The work was undertaken between the 21 and 29 October 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 is to assess the effect 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 site was identified as an area of archaeological potential from the presence of a diffuse scatter of worked flints (OAU No. 1366-7) and a medium sized scatter of medieval pottery (OAU No. 1365), 500m to the north-west of Westenhanger Castle.

1.2 Geology, landscape and landuse

1.2.1 Westenhanger is situated on the Folkestone Beds of the Lower Greensand sequence and is in the parish of Stanford, Shepway District.

1.2.2 Immediately to the south of the railway line is Westenhanger Castle; a 14th century castle or fortified house with substantial 16th, 17th and 18th century additions. Two 16th century barns built of galleted ragstone, joining in an L-shape, are situated outside the main western gate of the castle. The medieval village of Westenhanger (OAU No. 1096) was originally thought to be situated along the line of Roman Stone Street, to the east of the castle. The main gate to the castle is, however, in the centre of the west wall and it is therefore possible that any settlement was situated on this side. The castle is of a similar design, and of the same period, as Bodiam Castle, East Sussex.

1.2.3 The central northern area of the site, adjacent to the cutting of the M20 motorway, was at a height of 75m OD. From this point the ground dips gently to the south and to the west to 73m OD and 70m OD respectively.

1.2.4 Sixteen trial trenches were excavated in the western half of a large arable field sown with winter wheat. A wire fence separated this field from pasture to the west. A single trench *1814TT* was situated in this second field.

- 1.2.5 Archaeological features were generally encountered cutting into the top of the natural deposits.

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, surface concentrations of prehistoric worked flint and medieval pottery recorded during the CTRL Environmental Assessment.

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 92070/17490.

3.3 Excavation

3.3.1 Seventeen trenches were located and excavated. Each measured 30 x 1.5 metres, representing 1.5% of the total site area of 5ha. (Fig 2).

3.3.2 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 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 1-4. 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.
- 5.1.2 The majority of archaeological features were recorded cutting natural sandy clay.

5.2 Trench descriptions

5.2.1 *Trench 1814TT (Fig 2)*

- 5.2.2 Base West: 68.90m OD: East: 70.21m OD. Depth 1.60m. Topsoil over made ground consisting of redeposited clay, gravel and large ragstone fragments and containing modern material such as plastic. Natural sand was located at a depth of 1.65m. No archaeology was located.

5.2.3 *Trench 1815TT (Fig 2)*

- 5.2.3.1 Base North: 70.63m OD: South: 71.33m OD. Depth 0.50m. Topsoil over grey clayey sand.
- 5.2.3.2 At the north end of the trench a large linear feature [16], 3m wide and 1.10m deep, was located on a NE-SW alignment. It was filled with dark grey brown clay [15] with fragments of slate, ragstone and gravel. A six inch ceramic pipe lay in the base of the cut. The upper fill was composed of loose green sand [14] mixed with fragments of slate and modern brick. The ditch was post-medieval in date and was apparently backfilled by the present landowner.

5.2.4 *Trench 1816TT (Fig 2)*

- 5.2.4.1 Base West: 72.43m OD: East: 73.67m OD. Depth 0.60m. Topsoil over natural sand. No archaeology was located.

5.2.5 *Trench 1817TT (Fig 2)*

- 5.2.5.1 Base West: 69.90m OD: East: 71.21m OD. Depth 0.60m. Topsoil over natural grey yellow clayey sand. No archaeology was located.

5.2.6 *Trench 1818TT (Fig 2)*

- 5.2.6.1 Base North: 72.89m OD: South: 72.77m OD. Depth 0.55m. Topsoil over natural grey yellow clayey sand. No archaeology was located.

5.2.7 *Trench 1819TT (Fig 2)*

- 5.2.7.1 Base West: 73.73m OD: East: 74.09m OD. Depth 0.50m. Topsoil over natural grey yellow clayey sand. No archaeology was located.
- 5.2.8 *Trench 1820TT* (Fig 2)
- 5.2.8.1 Base North: 74.27m OD: South: 74.22m OD. Depth 0.70m. Topsoil over orange brown sand over yellow orange sand natural. No archaeology was located.
- 5.2.9 *Trench 1821TT* (Fig 3)
- 5.2.9.1 Base West: 73.99m OD: East: 74.64m OD. Depth 0.60m. Topsoil over orange brown sandy clay over orange sand and gravel over yellow sand.
- 5.2.9.2 A large, possibly linear, feature [8] was located at the eastern end of the trench. It was irregular in plan, 7m wide and 0.5m deep and filled with mid brown sandy silt [7]. In section the base of the feature was seen to undulate, possibly representing cart ruts. Several small abraded sherds of medieval pottery retrieved from the fill [7] were dated 1050-1150. The feature [8] may have been a ditch, a sunken trackway or a large pit.
- 5.2.9.3 Towards the centre of the trench was an area of modern disturbance [6], perhaps associated with the construction of the M20 motorway in the late 1970s.
- 5.2.10 *Trench 1822TT* (Fig 4)
- 5.2.10.1 Base North: 74.14m OD: South: 73.79m OD. Depth 0.50m. Topsoil over mid brown sandy silt over orange sandy clay with pockets of green sand and ragstone.
- 5.2.10.2 A N-S aligned sub-rectangular cut [11], with short near vertical sides, was excavated. It was 2m long, 1.4m wide and at least 0.40m deep with part of an *in situ* burnt clay lining [10]. The feature [11] may therefore have been the base of a small kiln or oven. The backfill [9] contained a quantity of burnt daub, probably derived from the superstructure. Soil samples collected from the backfill [9] contained a rich charred plant assemblage, with a large quantity of cereal grains and a range of different weed seeds. The cereal grains included free-threshing wheat, barley, rye and oats. On the basis of the pottery feature [11] would appear to be early medieval in date (1000-1250).
- 5.2.10.3 At the north end of the trench an E-W aligned ditch and its recut [13] was 2.6m wide and 0.30m deep. It was not possible to tell which was the original cut and which was the later recut and so a single cut number was allocated. [13] was also dated to the period 1000-1250 and may therefore be associated with possible small oven [11]. Feature [13] was filled with pale grey clay silt [12] with occasional charcoal flecks.
- 5.2.11 *Trench 1823TT* (Fig 5)

- 5.2.11.1 Base North: 74.12m OD: South: 74.22m OD. Depth 0.50m. Topsoil over yellow grey sand.
- 5.2.11.2 Towards the south end of the trench a linear feature [1], 1.60m wide and 0.90m deep, was aligned approximately E-W and was filled with mid grey silt [2] with flecks and fragments of charcoal, burnt daub and occasional sherds of abraded medieval pottery. A distinct humic lens was noted towards the base of the feature. An environmental sample contained charred botanical remains including one cereal grain of free-threshing wheat and a small quantity of flecks and small fragments of charcoal. The pottery was dated to the period 1150-1250.
- 5.2.11.3 Near the centre of the trench a small slot [4] was recorded aligned E-W. It measured 1m long before extending beyond the limit of excavation and was 0.5m wide and 0.30m deep. It was filled with pale grey silty clay [3]. No finds were recovered.
- 5.2.12 *Trench 1824TT* (Fig 5)
- 5.2.12.1 Base West: 73.87m OD: East: 73.15m OD. Depth 0.40m. Topsoil over orange and grey mottled clayey sand.
- 5.2.12.2 A linear cut [18], aligned approximately N-S, was 2m wide and 0.60m deep and filled with grey sandy clay [17] with charcoal flecks, abraded sherds of medieval pottery and fragments of tile. Pottery was dated to the period 1150-1300.
- 5.2.13 Much of the central area of the trench was affected by modern disturbance, including a large cut with corrugated iron sheeting and wooden posts. This is likely to have been the location of a 20th century farm out-building described and located by the landowner before the commencement of the evaluation.
- 5.2.14 *Trench 1825TT* (Fig 2)
- 5.2.14.1 Base West: 72.63m OD: East: 72.46m OD. Depth 0.40m. Topsoil over mid brown clay over yellow grey sand. No archaeology was located.
- 5.2.15 *Trench 1826TT* (Fig 2)
- 5.2.15.1 Base North: 73.34m OD: South: 73.10m OD. Depth 0.50m. Topsoil over orange brown sandy clay natural. No archaeology was located.

5.2.16 *Trench 1827TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.16.1 Base West: 73.46m OD: East: 73.29m OD. Depth 0.40m. Topsoil over yellow grey sandy clay. No archaeology was located.

5.2.17 *Trench 1828TT* (Fig 6)

5.2.17.1 Base North: 73.12m OD: South: 72.64m OD. Depth 0.50m. Topsoil over yellow grey sandy clay.

5.2.17.2 A narrow ditch or slot [20] crossed the trench on a WSW-ENE alignment. It was 1.20m wide, 0.25m deep and filled with light grey sandy silt [19]. No finds were recovered.

5.2.18 *Trench 1829TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.18.1 Base North: 73.10m OD: South: 72.55m OD. Depth 0.40m. Topsoil over mid brown clay over light brown sandy clay. No archaeology was located.

5.2.19 *Trench 1830TT* (Fig 6)

5.2.19.1 Base West: 72.45m OD: East: 72.15m OD. Depth 0.60m. Topsoil over light grey sandy clay. Four linear features were located in this trench, all aligned N-S.

5.2.19.2 Linear feature [22] was 0.90m wide, 0.34m deep and filled with light grey sandy silt [21] with occasional abraded medieval potsherds dated to the period 1000-1250.

5.2.19.3 Linear feature [24] was 0.65m wide, 0.20m deep and filled with light grey sandy silt [23]. No finds were recovered.

5.2.19.4 Linear feature [26] was 1.35m wide, 0.33m deep and filled with light grey sandy silt [25]. No finds were recovered.

5.2.19.5 Linear feature [28] was 2.20m wide, 0.20m deep and filled with light grey sandy silt over black ash [27]. No finds were recovered.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATASETS

6.1 Table 1: Events dataset

EVENT_NAME: North of Westenhanger Castle
EVENT_CODE:ARC WGC 97
EVENT_TYPE:Evaluation
CONTRACTOR:Museum of London Archaeology Service
DATE:21/10/97-29/10/97
GRID:92070/17490 (URL Grid)
PROJECT:CTRL
COUNTY:Kent
DISTRICT:Shepway
PARISH:Stanford
SMR:
SITE_TYPE:Cultivated Land 3 - Operation to a depth >0.25m
PERIOD:Medieval
METHOD:Mechanical removal of topsoil; hand excavation and recording of archaeological features.
PHASING:Medieval
ENVIRON:A medieval ditch fill produced one charred cereal grain of free-threshing wheat and a small quantity of charcoal. A medieval oven contained a rich charred plant assemblage, with a large quantity of cereal grains and a range of different weed seeds.
FINDS: The evaluation produced a total of 45 sherds of medieval pottery and one sherd of residual Roman pottery. Most of the sherds are non-diagnostic small abraded sherds, that return only very broad 11th - 13th century date ranges. 6.1.1.1.1 Seven pieces of struck flint of probable neolithic or Bronze Age date were recovered, including one side scraper, two end/side scrapers, a two-platform bladelet core, one blade and two blade fragments.
GEOLOGY:Folkestone beds of the Lower Greensand.
CONTEXT_NUM:28 (+ 17 trench sheets)
THREAT:CTRL
SAMPLE:1.5%
SUMMARY: Archaeological features were found in 6 of the 17 trenches, consisting of a possible medieval corn-drying oven and a series of probable field ditches of medieval date.
ARCHIVE:
ACC_NUM:

6.2 Table 2 : Archaeological context inventory

TRENCH	CONTEXT	TYPE	PERIOD	ASSOCIATION	COMMENTS
1704TT - 1715TT	topsoil	deposit	modern		
1823TT	1	cut		2	feature
1823TT	2	deposit		1	fill
1823TT	3	deposit		4	fill
1821TT	4	cut		3	feature
1821TT	5	deposit		6	fill
1821TT	6	cut		5	?recent disturbance
1821TT	7	deposit		8	fill
1821TT	8	cut		7	cut
1822TT	9	deposit		11	fill of oven
1822TT	10	deposit		11	burnt clay, oven base
1822TT	11	cut		9, 10	cut of oven
1822TT	12	deposit		13	fill
1815TT	13	cut		12	feature
1815TT	14	deposit		16	fill
1815TT	15	deposit		16	fill
1824TT	16	cut		14, 15	cut of field boundary
1824TT	17	deposit		18	fill
1828TT	18	cut		17	ditch
1828TT	19	deposit		20	fill
1830TT	20	cut		19	feature
1830TT	21	deposit		22	fill
1830TT	22	cut		21	feature
1830TT	23	deposit		24	fill
1830TT	24	cut		23	feature
1830TT	25	deposit		26	fill
1830TT	26	cut		25	feature
1830TT	27	deposit		28	fill
1830TT	28	cut		27	feature

SECTION 2: STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE**7 CONCLUSIONS****7.1 Extent of archaeological deposits**

- 7.1.1 Archaeological features were found in 6 of the 17 trenches, concentrated at the eastern end of the site; all were cut features.
- 7.1.2 A possible medieval corn-drying oven was found in trench *1822TT*, and a series of probable field ditches of medieval date were identified in trenches *1821TT*, *1822TT*, *1823TT*, *1824TT*, *1828TT* and *1830TT*.
- 7.1.3 The remaining trenches contained no archaeological deposits.

7.2 Nature of archaeological deposits

- 7.2.1 All deposits of archaeological significance were located within cut features. These varied from field ditches to a possible corn-drying oven.
- 7.2.2 The possible corn-drying oven [11] was located towards the north end of trench *1822TT*. Environmental soil samples taken from the backfill of the structure contained a rich charred plant assemblage, with a large quantity of cereal grains and a range of different weed seeds. The cereal grains included free-threshing wheat, barley, rye and oats while the weed seeds included bromes, docks, buttercups and grasses (see Appendix 5). The structure was dated by an assemblage of small, abraded medieval pottery sherds to the period 1000-1150 (see Appendix 1). Corn-drying ovens were usually sited close to habitation, especially barns, for the storage of the dried grain (although far enough away to minimise the risk from fire); it is therefore possible that other, so far unlocated, structures may survive in the immediate vicinity of trench *1822TT*.
- 7.2.3 A ditch [13] was situated 2m to the north of possible corn-drying oven [11] and was also dated 1000-1150. An association between [13] and [11] may therefore be postulated.
- 7.2.4 A large feature [8] was located in trench *1821TT*. It may have been a large boundary ditch, pit or sunken road and was dated to the period 1050-1150.
- 7.2.5 Possible boundary or enclosure ditches were found in trenches *1823TT* and *1824TT*. A north-south ditch [18] in *1824TT* contained pottery dated 1150-1300. An east-west ditch [1] in *1823TT* contained pottery dated 1150-1250. The ditches may therefore have formed part of a 12th to late 13th century system of open fields.
- 7.2.6 In the south-east corner of the evaluated area four shallow linear cut features in trench *1830TT* may also be related to an early medieval field system. Only feature [22] contained dateable material, pottery of the period 1000-1250, but similarities in

alignment and fill composition suggest a common origin with [24] and [26]. Feature [28] may be modern.

- 7.2.7 A shallow linear cut [20] in trench *1828TT* was aligned slightly differently to those seen in *1830TT*. No finds were recovered from [20].

7.3 Character of the site

- 7.3.1 Medieval features were located towards the eastern end of the site. They were cut into the sandy clay natural, immediately beneath the modern ploughsoil, and were probably heavily truncated as a result of ploughing.

- 7.3.2 Although now a large open field it is apparent that a number of field boundaries were removed during the post-war period. A large north-south aligned ditch originally demarcated the western limit of the field (located in trench *1815TT* as [16]), and the presence of a linear north-south aligned ditch, at the eastern limit of the evaluation area, was suggested by a distinct hollow in the ground surface. An embankment to the south of the railway, formerly the approach to a bridge over the railway line, was originally matched by an embankment on the north side, within the evaluation area. This embankment was ploughed away by the present landowner.

- 7.3.3 A small stream runs along the north side of the Westenhanger complex, before turning southwards 50m to the west of the late medieval stone barns (OAU No. 251). The stream passes under the north end of one of the barns. Immediately to the north-east an extensive low-lying area and associated earthworks (OAU No.1171) may originally have been a pond feeding into the stream. This may in turn have been fed by a north-south running stream which once existed to the north-east. This second stream survives only as a dike close to Stone Street (the existence of the stream was known to the present landowner). It is likely that the castle and/or village would have possessed a mill, including a mill pond immediately up stream of it, and the topography suggests a likely location in the vicinity of the surviving stone barns. The evidence is at best, however, circumstantial.

- 7.3.4 The low-lying area to the west of the site (but including trench *1814TT*) was used for soil stockpiling during the construction of the M20 motorway in 1978. The field was used for pasture at the time of the evaluation.

- 7.3.5 The site was located on natural sand and clay. Although a number of ceramic land drains were uncovered during the evaluation, the ground was on the whole well drained. The cutting of the M20 motorway at the north end of the site may therefore have improved the drainage of the field.

7.4 Date of occupation

- 7.4.1 Fifty-eight worked flints and 28 burnt flints were found in two concentrations (OAU Nos.1366 and 1367) during an initial fieldwalking exercise carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit. This included an arrowhead of Neolithic or Bronze Age date and a sherd of prehistoric pottery. During the evaluation a further 7 struck flints (including

a blade core) and 1 burnt flint were found, mostly in the ploughsoil. No associated features were found. A medium sized scatter of medieval pottery (OAU No. 1365) was composed of 18 highly abraded sherds of 12th to late 13th century date.

- 7.4.2 The possible corn-drying oven was 11th-12th century in date. Field ditches in trenches *1823TT*, *1824TT*, *1821TT*, *1822TT* and *1830TT* were 11th-13th century in date. The presence of a corn-drying oven and cereal grains from environmental soil samples taken from the oven and from ditch [1] in trench *1823TT* indicate that the field was under cultivation during the early medieval period.
- 7.4.3 Westenhanger Castle is probably of mid to late 14th century date. Place name evidence dates Westenhanger to as early as 1140 (the date is stated in SMR, see URL 1994, OAU No.1096), and tradition associates the site with a mistress of Henry 11 ('fair Rosamonde' - see Black's Guide to Kent, 1874). The licence to crenellate granted in 1343 to Bertram de Criol suggests that an earlier building already existed. Field ditches and the possible corn-drying oven located in the evaluation area were of mid-12th to mid-14th century date, therefore largely predating the castle. They may therefore be associated with an earlier manorial farm.

8 IMPORTANCE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

8.1 Survival and conditions

- 8.1.1 Topsoil was relatively thin and, across much of the site, lay directly on natural sand and clay. Modern agricultural activity had severely truncated most archaeological features.
- 8.1.2 Where environmental soil samples were taken biological preservation was moderate to good.

8.2 Period

- 8.2.1 The structure [11] located in trench *1822TT* forms the base of a small kiln or oven. The structure was too small to be either a pottery or a tile kiln, and no wasters or kiln furniture was located. The presence of cereal grains in some quantity and the size of the structure suggests that it was a corn-drying oven (Steane, 1984).
- 8.2.2 Other than the corn-drying oven, no settlement activity was identified. Such structures were not usually isolated and, although probably away from any major settlement, other buildings (for example barns for storing the dried grain) may be expected in the vicinity (Steane, 1984).
- 8.2.3 Wheat and barley were the main medieval bulk grain crops in the south of England; at Westenhanger this is reflected in rich environmental soil sample collected from the probable corn-drying oven [11] and a poor sample from the fill of ditch [1] (Appendix 5). Care was needed to dry crops properly by artificial means in corn-drying ovens and after grain was dried, parched and stored it had to be milled and the resultant flour or meal then baked.
- 8.2.4 There is no evidence that Westenhanger constituted a village rather than an important manorial centre with a free standing church (URL 94). Any farming activity in fields to the north of the complex may therefore be associated with the castle.
- 8.2.5 In contrast much of the southern end of the parish was probably occupied by its medieval park. Traces of the park survive, though its bounds are not known with certainty (URL 94).

8.3 Rarity

- 8.3.1 Medieval field boundaries are common in south-east England and are therefore of little significance.
- 8.3.2 Medieval corn-drying ovens are also common finds on excavations of deserted medieval villages (Clarke, 1984), and are therefore of little intrinsic value. However, no references to excavations of such structures in Kent have been found. They are also more common in the midlands and in the north of England where the climate was

wetter and the need to dry the corn was more pressing (Steane,1984).

8.4 Fragility and vulnerability

8.4.1 Any intrusive work undertaken in connection with the CTRL will affect the medieval field ditches and the corn-drying oven located in the evaluation.

8.5 Diversity

8.5.1 Little diversity was exhibited. Only features associated with medieval agriculture were found.

8.6 Documentation

8.6.1 There is some documentary evidence pertaining to Westenhanger Castle, but nothing directly related to the evaluation area, 300m to the north-west.

8.6.2 The surviving castle is probably of 14th century date. A licence to crenellate was granted to Bertram de Criol (or Kiriol) in 1343, although construction may have taken place towards the end of the century. Bodiam, which has a similar design, was not begun until 1385. A house in the north-east corner was built in the 16th century, probably for Sir Edward Poynings before 1521. Part of this house was rebuilt and refronted at the end of the 17th century (completed in 1701).

8.7 Group value

8.7.1 The probable corn-drying oven and any associated buildings may be related to a suggested mill at Westenhanger.

8.8 Potential

8.8.1 It may be possible to date the corn-drying oven using archaeomagnetic techniques.

8.8.2 Possible medieval structures may survive in the vicinity of the probable corn-drying oven [11] in trench *1822TT*.

8.8.3 Further environmental soil samples may provide more economic data for the early medieval period.

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