

B&T Plant Yard, Northfleet Industrial Estate, Lower Road, Northfleet, Kent: An Archaeological Watching Brief Report

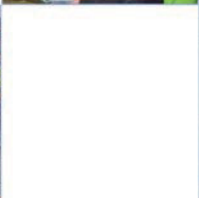
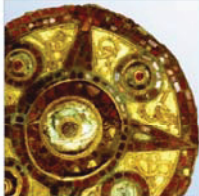
Planning Reference: DA/11/01464/FUL

National Grid Reference Number: TQ 6081 7513

AOC Project No: 32178

Site Code: LWN12

Date: May 2012



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

B&T Plant Yard, Northfleet Industrial Estate, Lower Road, Northfleet, Kent:

An Archaeological Watching Brief Report

On Behalf of: **B&T Plant Ltd**
197-199 Garth Rd
Morden
Surrey
M4 4NE

National Grid Reference (NGR): TQ 6081 7513

AOC Project No: 32178

Prepared by: Ian Hogg

Illustration by: Jonathan Moller

Date of Fieldwork: 9th – 10th May 2012

Date of Report: May 2012

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Draft/Final Report Stage: Draft **Date:** May 2012

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Non-Technical Summary

On the 9th and 10th May 2012 AOC Archaeology Group undertook a watching brief at the B & T Plant Yard, Northfleet Industrial Estate, Kent. The watching brief was commissioned by B & T Plant Ltd. The work comprised the monitoring of the excavation of drainage trenches.

The natural deposit was not observed, and the earliest deposits recorded were redeposited chalky made ground. The remaining deposits all consisted of modern made ground which may have been deposited during the construction of the industrial estate. The presence of a large chalk cliff outcrop located to the south of the site, suggests that the area may well have been subjected to extensive truncation and landscaping.

No features or finds of archaeological interest were identified during the watching brief. As such no further work is recommended. Publication of the watching brief findings will be carried out through a short summary of the fieldwork submitted to the local fieldwork roundup. An OASIS form has also been completed and an electronic copy of the watching brief report will be deposited with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS). The site archive will be prepared in accordance with local and national guidance and will be held at AOC until deposited with the receiving museum.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document is an archaeological watching brief report on the monitoring of groundworks at the B & T Plant Yard, Northfleet Industrial Estate, Lower Road, Northfleet, Kent. The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TQ 60812 75136 (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The site was located on a vacant parcel of land in Northfleet Industrial Estate, accessed by a private road from Lower Road, Northfleet, Kent (Figure 2).
- 1.3 The site is roughly triangular in shape and measures approximately 5300sq m. It is bounded to the west by the Eurotunnel rail link, to the east by Northfleet Industrial Estate and to the north by Lower Road track (which runs north-west from Lower Road).
- 1.4 The development involved the construction of an open storage area for plant equipment, the construction of offices, a vehicle wash and a 3m high security fence. The monitoring was focused on the excavation of drainage runs around the perimeter of the site. This report details the results of that monitoring.

2 Planning Background

- 2.1 The local planning authority is Dartford District Council. Archaeological advice to the council is provided by Wendy Rogers of Kent County Council.
- 2.2 The site is not located within any designated area of archaeological significance or conservation areas.
- 2.3 The site contains no known designated heritage assets. Approximately 500m to 750m to the south-east of the site are two scheduled areas pertaining to Palaeolithic activity. There are no World Heritage Sites, Registered Park and Gardens or Registered Battlefields within the site or within 1km radius of it.
- 2.4 Planning permission (Refs DA/11/01464/FUL) has been granted subject to the following condition;

No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority so that the excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written programme and specification, which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

- 2.5 The archaeological watching brief was commissioned prior to the commencement of groundworks for the drainage. A generic watching brief specification was produced by Kent County Council (KCC 2011). The first phase of this work was the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (AOC 2012) which detailed the methods and standards to which the monitoring would conform. It was designed in accordance with current best archaeological practice and local and national standards and guidelines:

- English Heritage – Management of Archaeological Projects (EH 1991).
- Institute for Archaeologists – Code of Conduct (IfA 2010).
- Institute of Archaeologists – Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (IfA 2008a).
- English Heritage - Archaeological Guidance Papers 2-4 London Region (EH 1998a-c).
- Department for Communities and Local Government - National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012).

3 Geology and Topography

- 3.1 The site is located to the south of the River Thames, is relatively flat and lies at approximately 4mOD.
- 3.2 The site is located upon solid geology of Seaford and Newhaven Chalk Formations. The site's proximity to the River Thames increases the possibility that alluvial deposits may overlay the chalk.

4 Archaeological and Historical Background

4.1 The Prehistoric Periods

(Palaeolithic c. 500,000 – 10000 BC; Mesolithic c. 10000 to 4000 BC; Neolithic c. 4000-2200 BC; Bronze Age c. 2200-700 BC and Iron Age c. 700 BC - AD 43)

- 4.1.1 The site is located within a landscape rich in significant Palaeolithic archaeological remains, with quarrying activity at numerous locations having produced artefacts, faunal remains and other biological evidence relating to climate and environment. Swanscombe Man, one of the earliest hominid finds in Britain was found 2km west of the site. Also notable are the scheduled Palaeolithic sites near Bakers Hole, c 500 and 750 to the south of the site near to Ebbsfleet International Station.
- 4.1.2 Also recorded within the Kent Historic Environment Record (KHER) within 500m of the site are Palaeolithic handaxes, cores and 115 pieces of debitage at Halley Hill Pit, two Lower to Upper Palaeolithic handaxes and two pieces of debitage at Botany Bay Pit, Galley Hill, Lower to Middle Palaeolithic cores recovered from All Saints Church, and a Late to Middle Palaeolithic handaxe recovered during construction of the Galley Hill Tram Tracks.
- 4.1.3 Evidence of Neolithic activity in close proximity of the site includes the recovery of human remains, 'Galley Hill Man', which was found in the late 19th century within a gravel extraction pit.

4.2 The Roman Period (AD 43 – AD 410)

- 4.2.1 There have been surprisingly few Roman villas recorded in east Kent, considering the wealth of agricultural resources available in the area. A settlement has, however, been identified at Northfleet.
- 4.2.2 The sole record in the Kent Historic Environment Record of Roman activity within 500m of the site is a Romano-British pottery kiln, which was recorded in 1904. The KHER also records a rectangular enclosure in close proximity to the site, although the date of this is currently unknown it may relate to Roman activity.

4.3 The Early Medieval (AD 410 – AD 1066) and Medieval Periods (AD 1066 – AD 1538)

- 4.3.1 The name Swanscombe may relate to the medieval Viking origins; called 'Svinescamp' in Domesday; meaning the camp of Sweyn Forkbeard, the Danish King, who ruled England for a short time at the end of 1013 AD. The Thames Estuary was a major invasion route for the Vikings and the Swanscombe peninsular would have been an attractive site for landing and settlement. By contrast, Wallenberg suggests the name derives from Old English "swan" (or "swineherd") and "camp" (or "field") (Wallenberg 1931).
- 4.3.2 The site lies to the north of the historic core of Swanscombe and to the west of the historic core of Northfleet, which was known as Fleote by the Saxons c. 600 AD, Flyote c 900 AD, Flete c 1000 AD. It was recorded as Norfluet in the Domesday Book, and Northflet in 1201. There are no recorded entries pertaining to early medieval or medieval activity in the Kent Historic Environment Record within 500m of the site.

4.4 The Post-Medieval (AD 1538 – AD 1900) and Modern Period (AD 1900 to present)

- 4.4.1 Evidence of the Victorian industrial development of the surrounding landscape is recorded in the Kent Historic Environment Record. For example the construction of the Britannia Cement Works and associated chalk pits which were used in the manufacture of cement and the Thames Tar Distillery. The increase of industry was enhanced by the construction of new rail lines and movement of population into the area. The Grade II* listed Church of All Saints, constructed in 1894 would have served the increasing population at the end of the 19th century.
- 4.4.2 Despite increased development to the south, the site itself remains undeveloped to date.
- 4.4.3 An evaluation in 2005 close to the site recorded a cluster of pits and post holes pertaining to post-medieval activity. No previous archaeological works have occurred within the site boundary.
- 4.4.4 An air raid shelter is recorded on London Road at Swanscombe to the south of the site.

5 Aims of the Investigation

- 5.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief were defined as being:
- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.
 - To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
 - To record and sample excavate any archaeological remains encountered.
 - To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological features and deposits.
 - To determine the extent of previous truncations of the archaeological deposits.
 - To enable the archaeology advisor to Kent County Council to make an informed decision on the status of the condition, and any possible requirement for further work in order to satisfy that condition.
 - To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation.
- 5.2 The specific aims of the archaeological watching brief were defined as being:
- Determine the presence/absence of prehistoric activity on site.
 - Determine the potential for paleoenvironmental remains on site.
 - Assess the potential of the site to inform on the development and chronology of Northfleet.
- 5.3 The final aim was to make public the results of the investigation, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

6 Methodology

- 6.1 The watching brief was carried out between the on the 9th and 10th May 2012 and focused on the monitoring of the excavation two drainage runs in the eastern and northern site perimeter (Figure 3). The trenches were excavated by a 30 tonne 360 tracked excavator using a toothless bucket under the constant supervision of an archaeologist.
- 6.2 Fieldwork procedures followed the Museum of London Archaeological Site Manual (3rd Edition) (MoL 1994) and the Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct (IfA 2010).
- 6.3 The excavation, recording and reporting conformed to current best archaeological practice and local and national standards and guidelines:
- English Heritage – Management of Archaeological Projects (EH 1991).

- English Heritage – Archaeological Guidance Paper 3: Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork (EH 1998).
- English Heritage – Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation (EH 2011).
- Institute for Archaeologists – Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IfA 2008a).
- Institute for Archaeologists – Standards and Guidance and Guidelines for Finds Work (IfA 2008b).
- Institute for Archaeologists – Code of Conduct (IfA 2010).
- Kent County Council – Generic Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief in Kent (KCC 2011)
- Rescue/United Kingdom Institute for Conservation – First Aid for Finds (3rd Edition) (2001).
- United Kingdom Institute for Conservation – Guidance for Archaeological Conservation Practice (UKIC 1990).

6.4 Archaeological recording consisted of:

- Limited hand cleaning of sections and surfaces sufficient to establish the stratigraphic sequence exposed.
- A scan for dating evidence from in-situ deposits and spoil.
- Photographic recording of representative exposed sections and surfaces, along with sufficient photographs to establish the setting and scale of the groundworks.
- Written records on pro-forma sheets.
- Plans/Section drawings at suitable scales.
- A record of the datum levels of archaeological deposits, where obtainable.

6.5 A unique site code, LWN 12, was created by AOC Archaeology prior to the commencement of fieldwork. This was used as the site identifier on all records.

6.6 The investigation area was accurately located to the National Grid.

6.7 The watching brief was undertaken by Ian Hogg, under the overall direction of Alan Ford, Project Manager. The work was monitored by Wendy Rogers of Kent County Council.

7 Results

7.1 Drainage Trenches

Table of the stratigraphic sequence

Thickness	Depth Below Ground Level	Context Number	Description/Interpretation
0.35m	0.00m	(1)	Made Ground
0.25m	0.35m	(2)	Made Ground
0.45m	0.60m	(3)	Made Ground
0.40m	1.00m	(4)	Made Ground
0.05m	1.45m	(5)	Made Ground
0.20m	0.35m	(6)	Made Ground

- 7.1 Two drainage trenches were excavated; one in the east of the site, which ran north south for 64.00m before running northwest-southeast for 40.00m; the second trench was in the north of the site and ran east-west for 60.00m (Figure 3).
- 7.2 In the eastern trench the earliest deposit encountered was a deposit of mid grey clayey chalk (5), observed 1.45m below ground level (Figure 4). This layer was overlain by a deposit of dark grey, chalky clay (4), 0.40m thick. This was sealed by another made ground deposit (3), which consisted of hard, mid brown, rubbly silt, 0.45m thick. The rubbly silt was overlain by another made ground deposit (2), a loose, dark grey sandy silt 0.25m thick. The uppermost deposit was a loose, mid grey silty sand (1) 0.35m thick.
- 7.3 The earliest deposit observed along the northern drain run was a firm, mid brown, silty clay made ground with frequent CBM and concrete inclusions (6), it was 0.20m thick (Figure 4). This deposit was sealed by made ground deposit (1).
- 7.4 No archaeological features were observed on the site and the proximity of the chalk cliff adjacent to the railway to the south suggests some horizontal truncation may have taken place on the site; this allied to the substantial made ground deposits observed across the site led to the watching brief being terminated and the remaining drainage runs not being monitored.

8 Finds and Environmental Samples

- 8.1 No finds were retrieved from the site and no environmental samples were taken.

9 Conclusions

- 9.1 During the course of the watching brief natural deposits were not observed, modern made ground deposits were recorded across the site, these were probably deposited during the construction of the industrial estate.
- 9.2 Despite the natural deposits not being observed, there is a likelihood for significant horizontal truncation due to the large chalk cliff immediately to the south of the railway line. This cliff was probably the result of landscaping for the railway and industrial estate.
- 9.3 Due to the lack of archaeological remains observed during the watching brief it is recommended that no further work is required.

10. Publication and Archive Deposition

- 10.1 Due to the nature of the project, publication will be restricted to a summary of results in the Hertfordshire Archaeological Round Up, and via the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) (Appendix B).
- 10.2 The archive, consisting of paper records, drawings, photographs, finds and digital records will be deposited with the local museum.

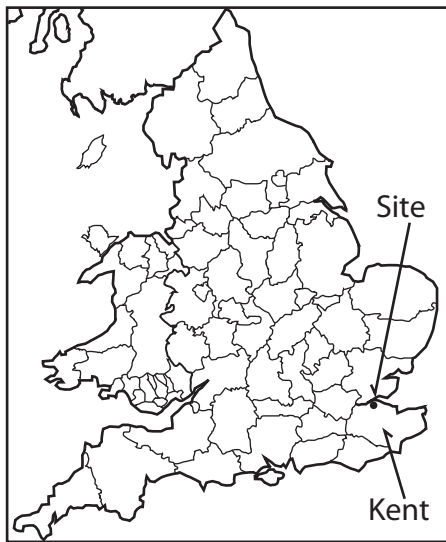
11 Bibliography

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B & T PLANT YARD, NORTHFLEET INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, LOWER ROAD, NORTHFLEET, KENT:
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT



Approximate Site Location
Within England & Wales

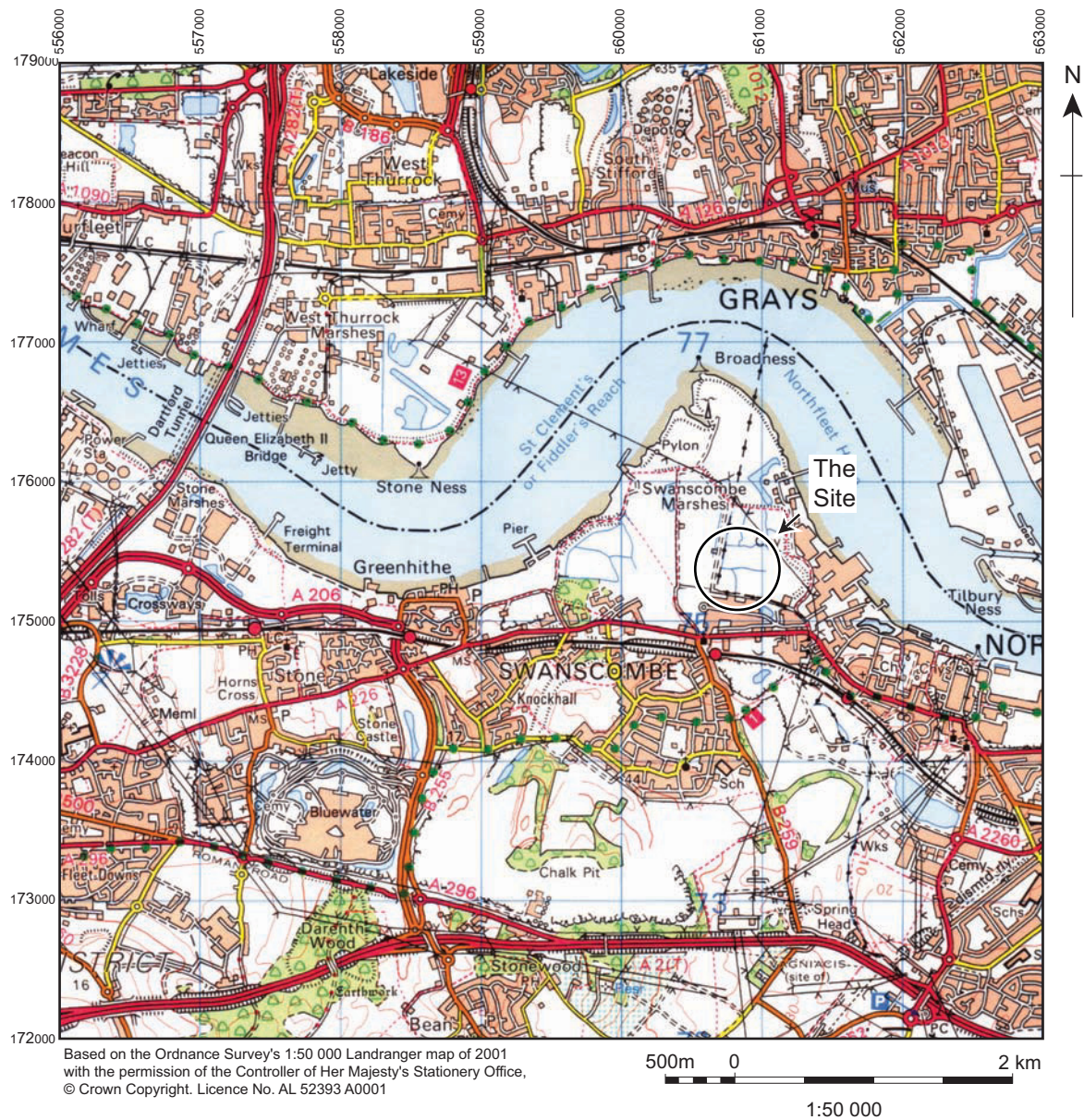
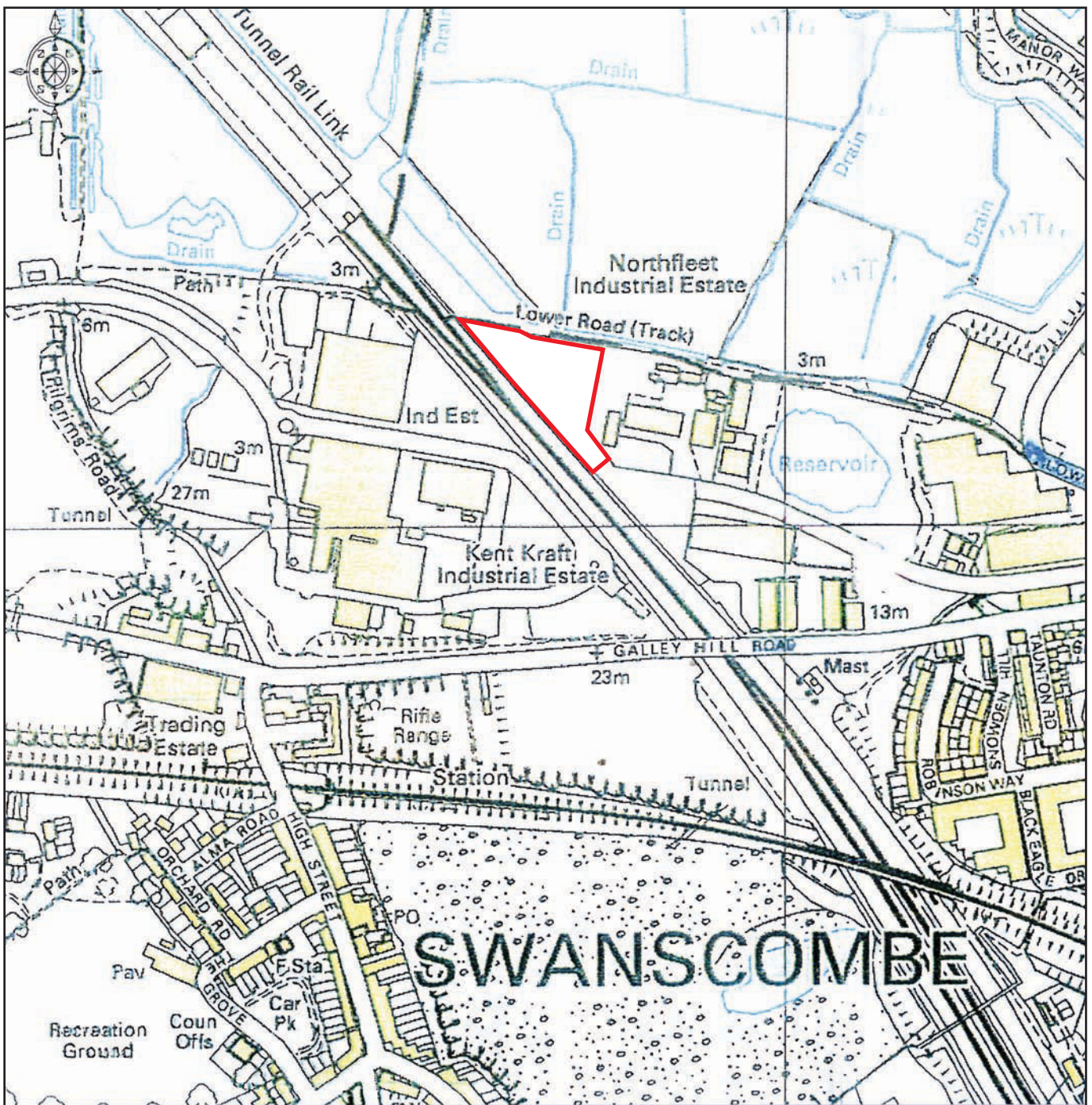


Figure 1: Site Location



Based on the Ordnance Survey's 1:7500 map of 2011
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Not To Scale

Figure 2: Detailed Site / Watching Brief Location

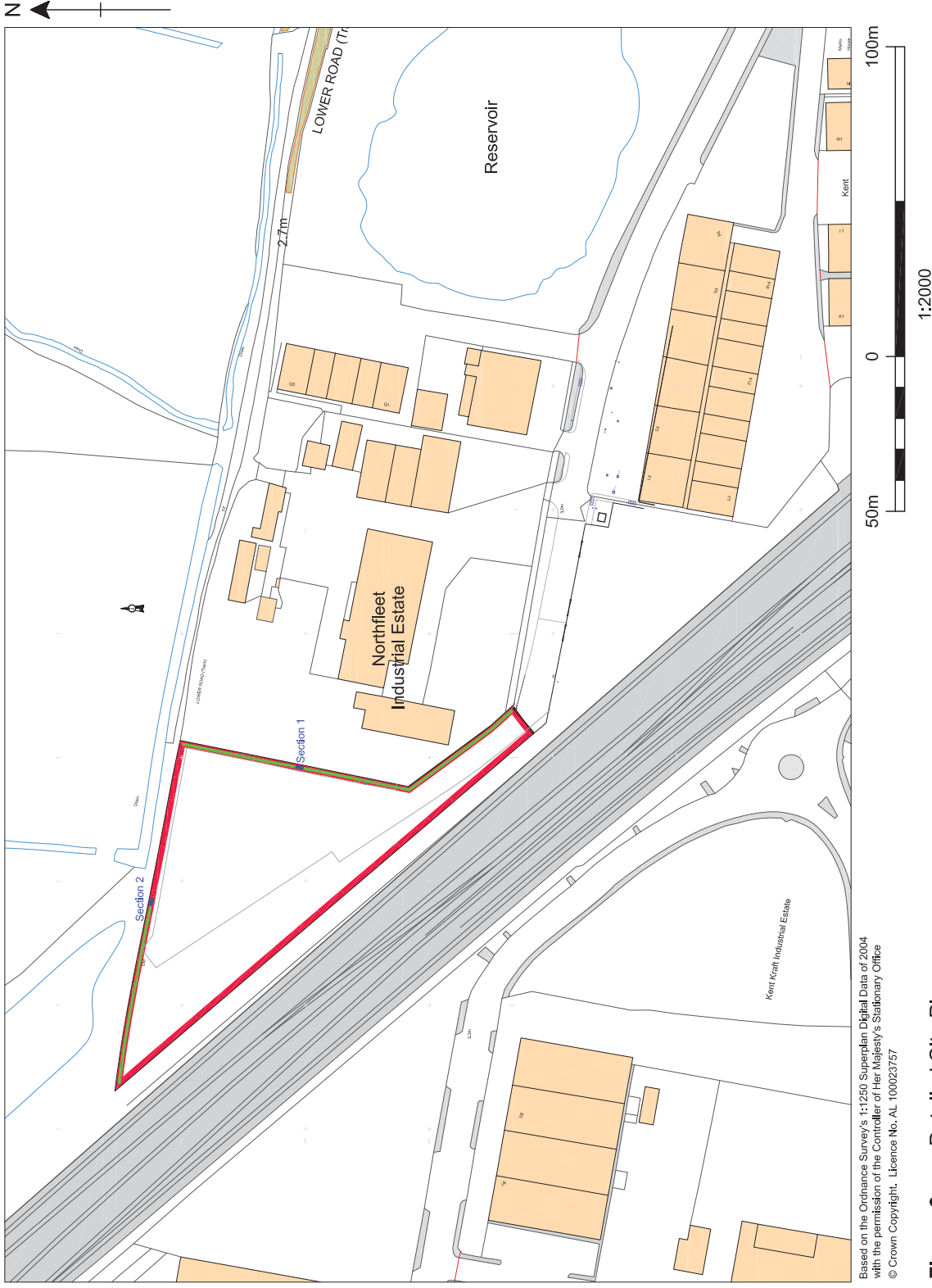


Figure 3: Detailed Site Plan

— Site Outline — Drainage Trenches — Sections

B & T PLANT YARD, NORTHFLEET INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, LOWER ROAD, NORTHFLEET, KENT:
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

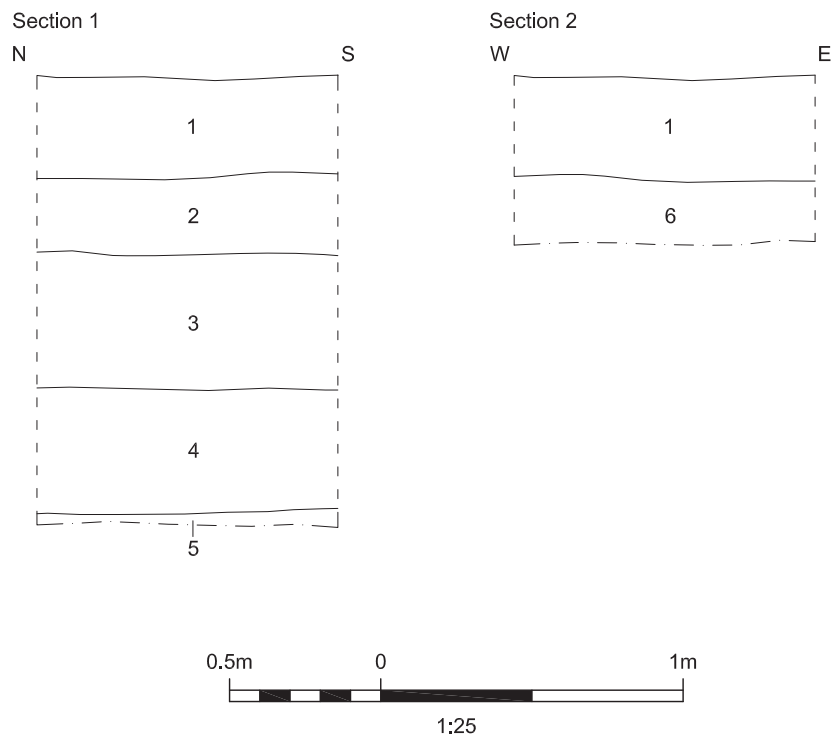


Figure 4: Sample Sections



Appendices

Appendix A – Context Register

Context No.	Context Description	Length	Width	Depth
1	Made Ground	254.00m	0.60m	0.35m
2	Made Ground	104.00m	0.60m	0.25m
3	Made Ground	104.00m	0.60m	0.45m
4	Made Ground	104.00m	0.60m	0.40m
5	Made Ground	104.00m	0.60m	0.05m
6	Made Ground	60.00m	0.60m	0.20m

Appendix B – Oasis Form

OASIS ID: aocarcha1-125354

Project details

Project name B and T Plant Yard, Northfleet, Kent

Short description of the project Watching Brief on the excavation of drainage runs. The natural deposit was not observed, and the earliest deposits recorded were redeposited chalk made ground. The remaining deposits all consisted of modern made ground which may have been deposited during the construction of the industrial estate. The site may have also previously been subject to significant horizontal truncation, with a large chalk cliff to the south suggesting large scale landscaping.

Project dates Start: 09-05-2012 End: 10-05-2012

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference 32178 - Contracting Unit No. codes

Any associated project reference LWN12 - Museum accession ID codes

Type of project Recording project

Site status None

Current Land use Vacant Land 2 - Vacant land not previously developed

Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds NONE None

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

Prompt Planning condition

Project location

Country England

Site location KENT DARTFORD SWANSCOMBE AND GREENHITHE B and T Yard, Northfleet Industrial Estate, Lower Road, Northfleet

Postcode DA11 9SW

Study area 0.53 Hectares

Site coordinates TQ 60812 75136 51.4518145445 0.314675829056 51 27 06 N 000 18 52 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation AOC Archaeology Group

Project originator brief Kent County Council

Project originator design AOC Archaeology Group

Project director/manager Alan Ford

Project supervisor Ian Hogg

Type of sponsor/funding body developer

Name of sponsor/funding body O'Halloran and O'Brian Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive No
Exists?

Physical Archive
recipient Kent Museum Service TBC

Digital Archive
recipient Kent Museum Service TBC

Digital Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Digital Media
available 'Images raster / digital photography','Text'

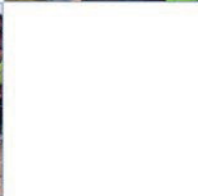
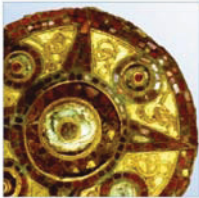
Paper Archive
recipient Kent Museums Service TBC

Paper Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Paper Media
available 'Context sheet','Plan','Report','Section','Unpublished Text'

Entered by Ian Hogg (ian.hogg@aocarchaeology.com)

Entered on 11 May 2012



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