

Zone G Car Park
Molehill Green Roundabout
Stansted Airport, Essex

Archaeological Watching Brief Results

Framework Archaeology

*Report Ref: 97016.02
June 2005*

BAA Archaeology Framework

**ZONE G CAR PARK,
MOLEHILL GREEN ROUNDABOUT,
STANSTED AIRPORT,
ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Site Code BAAZGC05

NGR TL 5621 2405

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June 2005**

Zone G Car Park, Molehill Green Roundabout Stansted Airport, Essex

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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Summary

Framework Archaeology was commissioned by BAA STAL to undertake an archaeological watching brief in advance of the construction of a temporary car parking area immediately adjacent to the Molehill Green Roundabout, Stansted Airport. The proposed development area is centred on National Grid Reference TL 5621 2405.

The majority of the parking area was situated on pre-existing hardstanding, with no requirement for mitigation. However, the watching brief focused on the area of two access ramps (Areas A and B) on the south-western edge of the development, which were required to enable pedestrian and vehicular access from an existing car park further to the south-west.

No evidence for any surviving archaeological remains were observed in either Area A or B. The natural boulder clay, where visible, had clearly undergone heavily truncation and rutting. This was especially evident along the south-western edge of both areas and is likely to relate to the construction of the existing car park.

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by BAA STAL and Framework Archaeology gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Murray Taylor of BAA STAL along with Shelia Kissane, David Hannay and Jason Repeti of the Stansted Pavement Team. Framework Archaeology also acknowledges the assistance and advice of Richard Havis of Essex County Council who monitored the course of the project.

The fieldwork and reporting was undertaken by Caroline Appleton, with illustrations by Matthew McMurray. Survey support was provided by Doug Murphy. Andy Manning managed the project for Framework Archaeology.

Zone G Car Park, Molehill Green Roundabout Stansted Airport, Essex

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Framework Archaeology was commissioned by BAA STAL to undertake an archaeological watching brief in advance of the construction of temporary car parking, on land immediately adjacent to Molehill Green Roundabout, Stansted Airport. The proposed development area (in total approximately 0.75ha) is centred on National Grid Reference TL 5621 2405 hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’ (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 The majority of the Site (approximately 0.72ha) is located on existing concrete hardstanding and the proposed development did not involve any disturbance of the present ground levels. However, levels within this area are approximately 1.70m above that of the adjacent car park, further to the south-west. Therefore, the construction of two access ramps was required, to enable pedestrian and vehicular access into the proposed development. For Area A (vehicular access) this would require a 45-degree ramp, while that for Area B (pedestrian access) would require a 30-degree ramp (**Figure 2**).
- 1.1.3 The ramps required the localised removal of a bund (approximately 1.5m high) and stripping of potentially undisturbed ground, to a depth of approximately 0.4m below the present ground level, before the laying of tarmac.
- 1.1.4 In consultation with Essex County Council, a watching brief was undertaken during the initial stripping of the two access areas. This document sets out the results of the archaeological watching brief.

2 SITE BACKGROUND

2.1 Location

- 2.1.1 The two areas impacted by the construction of the access ramps comprised: Area A, 13m by 8m and approximately 108m² in area, which was located on the western corner of the Site and Area B, 20.5m by 5m and 63m² in area

(slightly smaller than originally proposed), which was located on the south-western edge of the Site (**Figure 2**).

2.2 Geology/Soils, Topography and Land-Use

- 2.2.1 The Site is located on a chalky till (Boulder clay) (BGS 1948). The Site was until recently used as a site compound situated on concrete hardstanding, at a height of approximately 106m aOD.
- 2.2.2 The Site was bounded to the south-west by a 1.5m high earth bund, which separated the compound from an existing car park to the south-west.

2.3 Archaeological Background and Archaeological Potential

- 2.3.1 A full account of the archaeological background, previous known impacts and likely potential is contained within the Written Scheme of Investigation and it is not intended to repeat this information in detail (Framework Archaeology 2005).
- 2.3.2 In summary, a large amount of recent archaeological investigation has been undertaken by the Essex County Council Archaeology Section, Framework Archaeology and Oxford Wessex Archaeology at Stansted Airport. Fieldwalking undertaken by Essex County Council Archaeological Section in the mid-1980s found no significant concentration of archaeological material within the Site, although large scatters of medieval and Romano-British material were found approximately 200-400m from the Site. Three of these scatters were subsequently investigated and revealed three discrete enclosed/partial enclosed medieval sites (**Figure 1**, Molehill Green A-C) (Havis and Brooks 2004).
- 2.3.3 The Site was considered to have a low potential for containing surviving archaeological remains. Any archaeological remains which had survived were likely to have been truncated by previous airport development.

3 MITIGATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The archaeological excavation of the proposed development at Zone G Car Park followed a pattern established by Framework Archaeology for fieldwork projects on BAA sites, and is in accordance with BAA's requirements for archaeological works.

3.2 Fieldwork

- 3.2.1 All mitigation works were conducted in compliance with the standards of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. Detailed procedures are given in the Framework Archaeology's *Archaeological Site Manual* (available on request). All work was undertaken within the framework of the BAA archaeological policy. A unique-number site code (**BAAZGC05**) was allocated prior to the commencement of fieldwork.
- 3.2.2 All machining was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision. In the absence of any identified archaeological features, a representative digital and drawn record of both areas was compiled. This included both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections) tied to the OS National Grid. The OD height of all principal levels was calculated and plans/sections annotated with OD heights. Both areas were surveyed using a Total Station and tied into the Ordnance Survey and Airport grid.
- 3.2.3 A photographic record, primarily using digital images, was maintained, augmented by colour transparencies, and black and white negatives (on 35-mm film).
- 3.2.4 Once the stripping of both areas were complete, Essex County Council were informed and following discussion, no further mitigation was required.

3.3 Results

Area A (Figure 2)

- 3.3.1 Stripping of this area revealed a thin layer of redeposited topsoil, 0.10m deep, sealing a deposit of redeposited subsoil, approximately 2.0m in depth, which contained large amounts of construction debris. This had been used to form the bund, which bounded the south-western edge of the site. The area was stripped from a level of 106.30m aOD (the top of the bund) to a level of approximately 104.33m aOD at the lowest point.
- 3.3.2 Once the bund and overburden had been removed to the proposed construction level, it was clear that only a relatively small area (approximately 30m²) of the exposed surface consisted of clean natural boulder clay. No evidence of any archaeological deposits or features were observed. The top of the clay natural showed evidence of modern vehicle wheel rutting.
- 3.3.3 Due to the angle of the slope, the upper part of the ramp in the northeast section of Area A did not expose the natural boulder clay and consisted of redeposited demolition material. The remainder of the stripped area had been

heavily truncated, with compacted redeposited grey clay and hardcore evident throughout at the level of the stripping.

Area B (Figure 2)

- 3.3.4 The stripping of Area B revealed a similar profile to that for Area A, namely a thin layer of topsoil and redeposited sub-soil and construction debris, creating a bund up to 1.5m in height.
- 3.3.5 The area was stripped from a level of 106.32 m aOD (the top of the bund) to a level of 104.80m aOD at the lowest point. The area was stripped from southwest to northeast at an approximate 30-degree angle.
- 3.3.6 Again, the stripping indicated a high degree of truncation in the south-western half of the area. The clean natural boulder clay was exposed in the centre of the area, although heavily rutted and with no evidence for any archaeological features or deposits. The natural boulder clay was not exposed in the north-eastern half of the area, due to the angle of the slope.

4 CONCLUSIONS

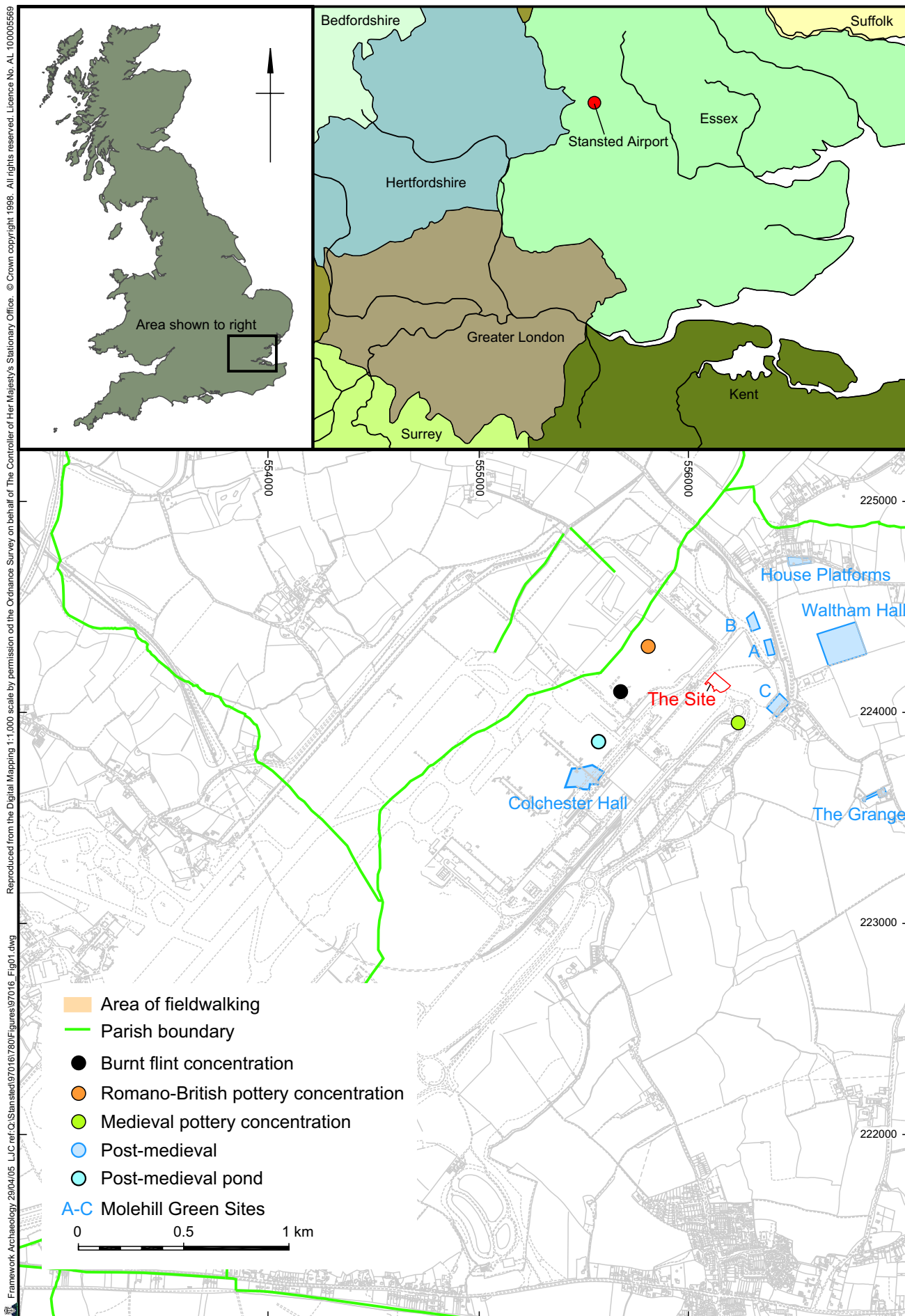
- 4.1.1 In both areas, previous construction appears to have truncated the top of the natural boulder clay. This impact was considerably deeper along the south-western edge of the Site, adjacent to the existing car park.
- 4.1.2 No evidence for any surviving archaeological features or residual archaeological material was observed, although if archaeological horizons had been originally present, it is likely that these would have been heavily impacted and largely removed.

5 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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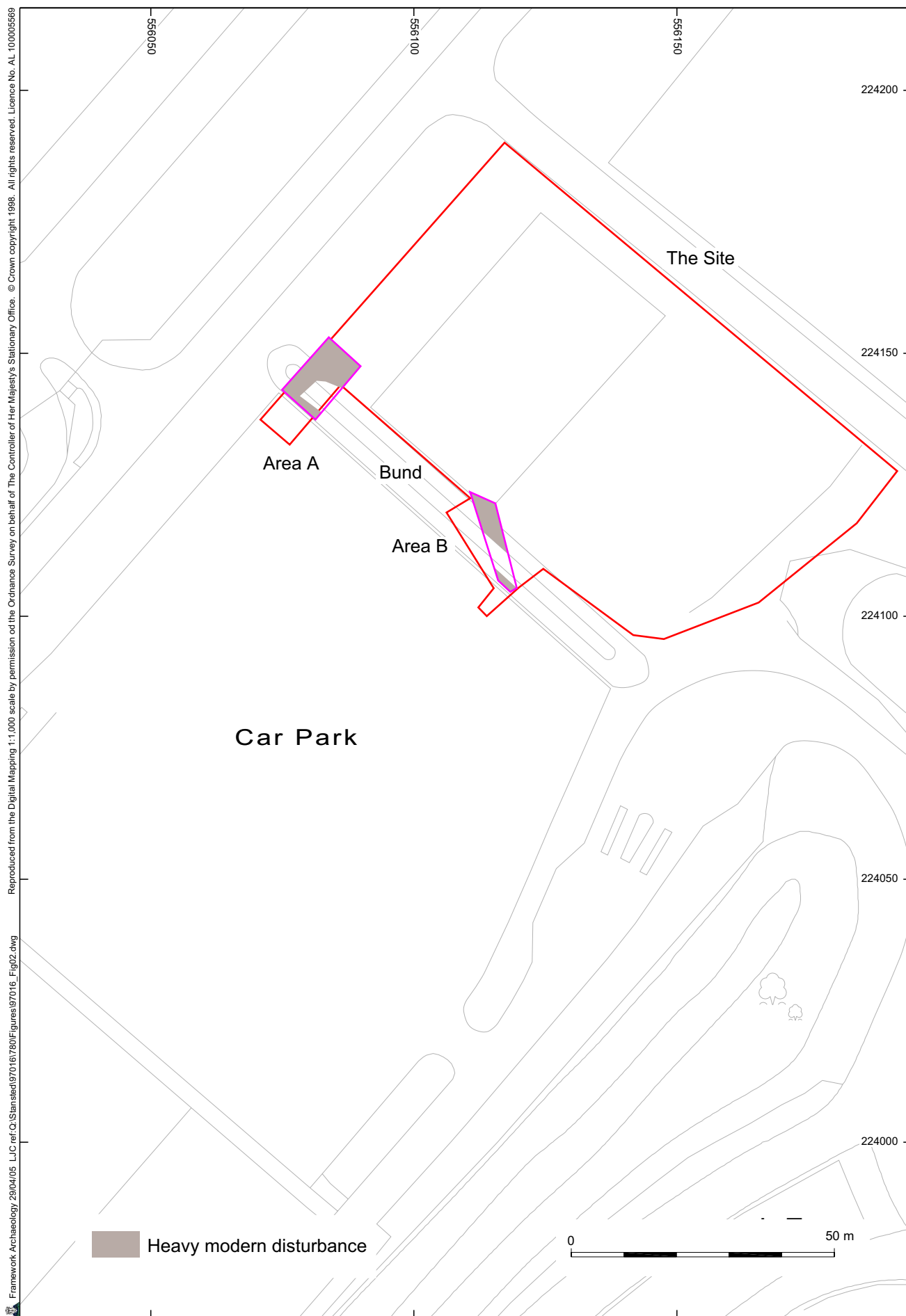
Framework Archaeology 2005, Zone G Car Park, Molehill Green Roundabout, Stansted Airport, Essex, Specification and Project design for Archaeological Mitigation

Havis R. and Brooks H., 2004, *Excavations at Stansted Airport, 1986-91*, East Anglian Archaeology Report No. 107, Essex County Council



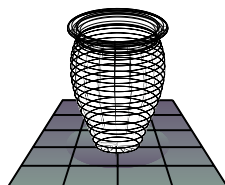
Site Location

Figure 1



Framework Archaeology is a joint venture by the Oxford Archaeological Unit and Wessex Archaeology

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