

HERITAGE NETWORK



**HARLOW MILL GOODS YARD,
Harlow, Essex**

HN389

Archaeological Monitoring Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

HARLOW MILL GOODS YARD

Harlow, Essex

HN389

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Aggregate Industries UK Ltd

by

Geoff Saunders, BA

Report no.221

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12 ROYSTON ROAD, BALDOCK, HERTS. SG7 6NT

TEL: (01462) 893288 FAX: (01462) 893562

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Acknowledgements

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Summary

Site name and address:	Harlow Mill Goods Yard, Harlow, Essex		
County:	Essex	District:	Harlow
Village/town:	Harlow	Parish:	Harlow
Planning reference:	-	NGR:	TL 4700 1220
Client name and address:	Aggregate Industries UK Ltd, Thorney Mill Rd, W.Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7EZ		
Nature of work:	Industrial development	Present land use:	Industrial
Size of affected area:	c.2300m ²	Size of area investigated:	c.2300m ²
Site Code:	HN389	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Type of work:	Monitoring & Recording	Finds location/Museum:	Harlow Museum
Start of work	19/03/2003	Finish of work	29/10/2003
Related SMR Nos:	n/a	Periods represented:	Modern
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis: As the result of an archaeological condition on the planning permission for the industrial redevelopment of land at Harlow Mill Goods Yard, Harlow, Essex, the Heritage Network was commissioned the developers to monitor the groundworks.

Although the site is located within an area of known archaeological activity, no significant features, deposits, or artefacts were revealed during the groundworks.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of *Aggregate Industries UK Ltd*, as part of a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording of development groundworks for the creation of a rail-fed aggregates discharge facility and associated works at Harlow Mill Goods Yard, Harlow, Essex. The planning permission for the development, controlled by the Essex County Council (ECC) as Minerals Planning Authority, had been subject to an archaeological condition which was met by following the provisions set out in a *Specification for Detailed Archaeological Monitoring, Recording and Possible Excavation* dated September 2002 (ref. 2402/1/1), prepared by AC Archaeology (ACA).

1.2 The site is located immediately to the south of the main railway line and southwest of Harlow Mill Station, centred on NGR TL 4700 1220 (see Figure 1). The site consisted of a disused railway siding which had previously been redeveloped with light industrial units on its northern half and open storage areas on the southern half. The present development involved the construction of a rail-fed aggregates discharge facility, an asphalt plant, a concrete batching plant, and ancillary facilities (see Figure 2).

1.3 The site lies within an area of known archaeological activity dating to the Romano-British period. The County Sites and Monuments Record notes that Roman occupation deposits were revealed within the development area itself during the construction of a septic tank in 1990. A further twelve archaeological sites are noted within 500m of the development area, these include Harlow Roman temple, Romano-British settlement sites, and a Romano-British cemetery. In addition, fieldwork on these sites has also produced prehistoric and Anglo-Saxon features and artefacts.

1.4 The aim of the present project has been to identify and record any archaeological features and deposits which might be uncovered, and to retrieve artefactual and ecofactual elements to allow the date, character, and significance of the site to be assessed, subject to the limitations of reasonable safety and practicality.

1.5 The present report is intended to set the site in its archaeological and historical context, and complete the requirements of the planning condition.

2. Site Background

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The site covers an area of approximately 2 hectares, and consists of a narrow strip of land measuring approximately 550m east to west and a maximum 50m north to south (see Figure 2). The site is situated on level ground to the south of the River Stort, at approximately 50mOD.

2.2 The underlying geology of the area is of the London Clay Formation.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.3 During work to construct a septic tank on the site in 1990, Romano-British occupation deposits containing pottery and coins were recorded at a depth of between 1.0m and 1.2m below existing ground levels. These deposits were observed in the north-eastern part of the site.

2.4 Harlow Roman temple is protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (EX62) and lies approximately 100m to the northwest of the current site. The site was fully excavated in the late 1920s with many votive finds being recovered, including coins, pottery, gold priestly regalia and bronze, iron and stone objects. Evidence in the form of middle Bronze Age cremations and early Iron Age pottery seems to indicate that the site was a religious centre long before the Roman period.

2.5 Roman coffins with inhumations and grave goods were revealed immediately to the north of the current site during the construction of the railway cutting (EHCR 3602).

2.6 Further excavations in the immediate vicinity of the present site have demonstrated extensive evidence for Romano-British settlement and industry (EHCR 3609, 3611, 3614, 3616, 7267) including a Bronze-working hearth (EHCR 3634). These excavations have also revealed evidence of activity in the prehistoric and Saxon periods, although the scale of this is not clear.

3. Fieldwork

METHODOLOGY

3.1 The timetable for the fieldwork followed the client's groundwork schedule.

3.2 Spoil from the various stages of groundwork on the site was regularly inspected for archaeological artefacts

3.3 The archaeological monitoring centred on two main elements of the new development, the excavation of the conveyor pit, and of the conveyor tunnel. All other structures in the new development were constructed using concrete piles and so did not require monitoring

3.4 All work was carried out in accordance with the detailed method statement contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, and followed the relevant sections of the Heritage Network's *Operations Manual*.

RESULTS

Conveyor pit

3.5 The conveyor pit was located close to the western boundary of the site. It measured approximately 17.5m long by 11.5m wide and was excavated to a depth of approximately 7.7m

3.6 The monitoring of the ground reduction for the conveyor pit revealed a complicated stratigraphy of imported layers and natural deposits, but no archaeological features, deposits or artefacts (see Figure 3). It has been suggested that layer (105) might have been imported as a levelling deposit. This theory appears to be supported by the geotechnical borehole log provided by the client, which describes as *Made Ground, the medium dense, light brown, clayey sand and gravel of flint* occurring at a depth of 1.20m in Borehole 3 (50m east of the conveyor pit) (Watson & Bangs, 2002). This would imply that layers (106), (107) and (108) form a buried soil.

Conveyor pit data

Context Number	Type	Description	Maximum thickness (m)	Level (mOD)
100	Layer	Modern overburden consisting of dark silt and demolition rubble.	0.50 thick	44.24
101	Layer	Orange gravel, modern levelling deposit.	0.60 thick	43.74
102	Layer	Orange sand, modern levelling deposit.	0.50 thick	43.14
103	Layer	Orange gravel, modern levelling deposit.	0.60 thick	42.64
104	Layer	Mixed ash and gravel coke material, possibly related to construction of the railway.	0.30 thick	42.04
105	Layer	Orange gravelly clay, probably imported levelling deposit.	1.60 thick	41.74
106	Layer	Very dark brown loamy, slightly clayey silt with small roots and many small to medium	0.20 thick	40.14

Context Number	Type	Description	Maximum thickness (m)	Level (mOD)
		shells, natural organic deposit.		
107	Layer	Greyish brown loamy, slightly clayey silt with small roots and many small to medium shells, natural organic deposit.	0.40 thick	39.94
108	Layer	Very dark brown loamy, slightly clayey silt with small roots and many small to medium shells, natural organic deposit.	0.20 thick	39.54
109	Layer	Bluish grey clay with orange yellow striations, natural London Clay.	1.00 thick	39.34
110	Layer	Greyish brown gravelly silt, natural deposit.	1.00 thick	38.34
111	Layer	White clay with frequent shells, natural deposit.	0.15 thick	37.34
112	Layer	Very dark grey clayey silt, natural organic deposit.	0.40 thick	37.19
113	Layer	Greenish grey clay, natural deposit.	0.10 thick	36.79
114	Layer	Greyish brown clay with flint inclusions, natural London Clay.	0.20+ thick	36.69

Conveyor tunnel

3.7 The conveyor tunnel ran on an east to west alignment to the east of the conveyor pit and measured approximately 150m long by a maximum width of 14m. It was excavated to a maximum depth of approximately 3.3m. The stratigraphy in the conveyor tunnel consisted of a variety of imported layers and natural deposits (see Figure 3).

3.8 The monitoring of the ground reduction for the conveyor tunnel did not reveal any archaeological features or deposits. A single sherd of grog-tempered pottery dating to the 1st-2nd centuries AD was recovered from layer (210). This is likely to be redeposited.

3.9 A single modern feature [220] was observed in the conveyor tunnel (see Figure 4). The feature appeared to be sub-circular with steep straight sides and measured approximately 0.95m wide by at least 2.00m deep. It was cut through the modern levelling deposits from below the ash and coke layer, (204), and continued below the limit of excavation for the tunnel. The feature contained a single fill (219), which consisted of a dark olive brown gravel. The purpose of the feature is unclear.

Conveyor tunnel data

Context Number	Type	Description	Maximum dimensions (m)	Level (mOD)
200	Layer	Concrete, modern surface layer.	0.20 thick	44.48
201	Layer	Modern aggregate, levelling deposit for concrete [200].	0.20 thick	44.28
202	Layer	Modern overburden consisting of dark silt and demolition rubble.	0.40 thick	44.60
203	Layer	Orange gravel, modern levelling deposit.	0.10 thick	44.20

Context Number	Type	Description	Maximum dimensions (m)	Level (mOD)
204	Layer	Mixed ash and gravel coke material, possibly related to previous use of the site as a coal yard.	0.35 thick	44.30
205	Layer	Orange gravel, modern levelling deposit.	1.70 thick	44.15
206	Layer	Yellow gravel, modern levelling deposit.	0.55 thick	43.17
207	Layer	Orange, sandy aggregate, modern levelling deposit.	0.30 thick	42.62
208	Layer	Mixed ash and gravel coke material, possibly related to construction of the railway.	0.40 thick	42.55
209	Layer	Olive gravel, modern levelling deposit.	0.55+ thick	41.68
210	Layer	Green silty clay with occasional sub-round stones.	0.25 thick	42.30
211	Layer	Greenish brown sandy gravel with occasional sub-round stones and flints.	0.25+ thick	42.05
212	Layer	Brownish grey, slightly sandy clay.	0.30 thick	42.17
213	Layer	Greyish brown clay occasional flints and gravel patches.	1.00 thick	41.87
214	Layer	Mixed, orange brown, clay and gravel.	0.15+ thick	40.87
215	Layer	Concrete, modern surface layer.	0.80 thick	-
216	Layer	Orange, sandy aggregate, modern levelling deposit.	0.50 thick	-
217	Layer	Mixed ash and gravel coke material, possibly same as [208].	1.00 thick	-
218	Layer	Pale brown silty clay, modern levelling deposit.	0.80+ thick	-
219	Fill	Dark olive brown gravel, fill of [219].	0.95 wide 2.00+ deep	-
220	Cut	Sub-circular cut feature, modern pit or shaft.	0.95 wide 2.00+ deep	43.87

Finds concordance

3.10 A single sherd of Romano-British pottery, weighing 55g, was recovered during the groundworks on the site. The sherd is grog-tempered and dates from the late 1st to the early 2nd century AD. The sherd is abraded and worn, and has been redeposited within a later layer. No further work is proposed for this item.

3.11 Further artefacts dating to the 19th and 20th centuries, including pottery and CBM fragments, were observed in the various levelling layers. In particular, pottery with a manufacturers stamp dated 1945 was observed in layer (208) at a depth of approximately 2.80m below the present ground surface. This gives a good indication that the ground has been thoroughly disturbed during the last century. These modern artefacts were noted but not collected.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

4.1 It is clear from the observed stratigraphy across the Harlow Mill Goods Yard, that the site has been subject to significant disturbance as a result of the construction of the railway and since. At the western end of the site, in the location of the Conveyor Pit, the ground has been built up by at least 2.2m. If layer (105) is also considered to be made ground, the depth of the overburden must be increased to 3.8m. It is of interest that three layers, which appear to represent buried soils, were recorded below (105), although nothing of archaeological interest was identified within or below them. The line of the Conveyor Tunnel appears to have been entirely excavated within the overburden, and no obviously natural deposits were exposed.

4.2 The origins of the material used to level the site are unclear although it was customary in railway construction for such material to be derived as locally as possible.

4.3 Despite the location of the present site within an area of known archaeological activity dating to the Romano-British period, no archaeological features or deposits were encountered in the course of the groundworks. A single sherd of redeposited Romano-British pottery was recovered from one layer, (210), which is likely to have been imported. The mixed ash, gravel and coke, layer (208), which appears across the length of the site at a depth of approximately 2.8m below the existing ground surface, included pottery which was date stamped 1945.

Conclusion

4.4 Although archaeological deposits may have been truncated by Victorian and modern activity on the site, the evidence revealed in the Conveyor Pit suggests the potential that undisturbed archaeological remains were sealed beneath a significant depth of imported material at the time that the railway and the Harlow Mill goods Yard were constructed.

5. Sources Consulted

Hillelson, D. 2002. *Harlow Mill Goods Yard, Harlow, Essex, Archaeological Project Design* Heritage Network

Sumbler, M G. 1996. *British Regional Geology; London and the Thames Valley* British Geological Survey

Valentin, J. 2002. *A Proposed Development at Harlow Mill Goods Yard, Harlow, Essex; Specification for detailed archaeological monitoring, recording and possible excavation* AC Archaeology

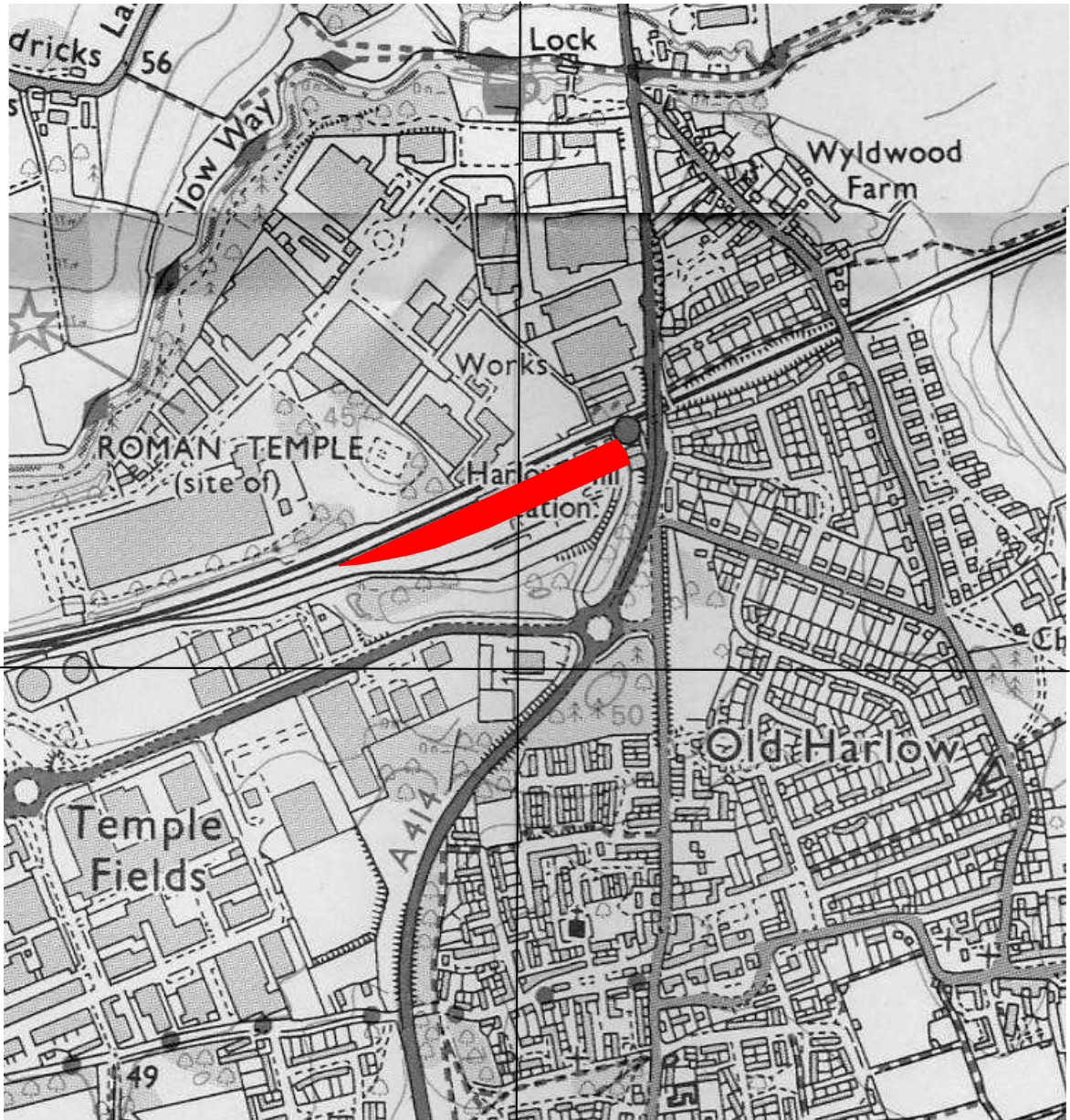
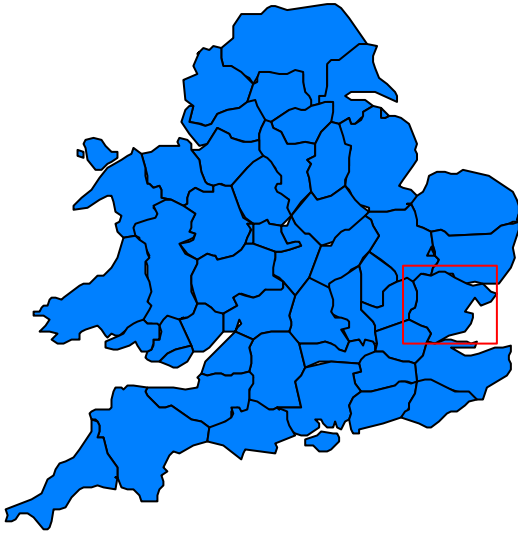
Watson, A. and Bangs, K., 2002. *Land at Harlow Mill, Station Approach, Harlow: Report on Preliminary Ground Investigation* Soil Consultants Ltd

6. Schedule of Site Visits

Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
19/03/03	CT	4	Initial site meeting
16/04/03	CT/GIS	5	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor pit
17/04/03	GIS/MW	9	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel
22/04/03	GIS/MW	5	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel and pit
23/04/03	GIS/MW	5	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel and pit
25/04/03	GIS/MW	5	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel
28/04/03	GIS/MW	4	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel
29/04/03	GIS/MW	3	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel
30/04/03	GIS	3	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel
01/05/03	GIS/MW	8	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor pit
02/05/03	GIS/MW	6	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor pit
06/05/03	CT/MW	3	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel and pit
08/05/03	CT/MW	3	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel
09/05/03	CT/MW	4	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel and pit
12/05/03	GIS/MW	4	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel and pit
13/05/03	CT/MW	3	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel and pit
14/05/03	GIS/MW	4	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel and pit
15/05/03	GIS/KS	3	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel and pit
16/05/03	GIS/MW	4	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel and pit
19/05/03	GIS/MW	3	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel and pit
21/05/03	GIS/MW	3	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel
23/05/03	GIS/KS	4	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel
29/05/03	KS/DGK	4	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel
30/05/03	KS/DGK	5	Monitor ground reduction for conveyor tunnel
29/10/03	MW	4	Inspect ground reduction for weighbridge

7. Illustrations

- Figure 1 Site location
- Figure 2 Site plan
- Figure 3 Site stratigraphy
- Figure 4 Section through feature [220]

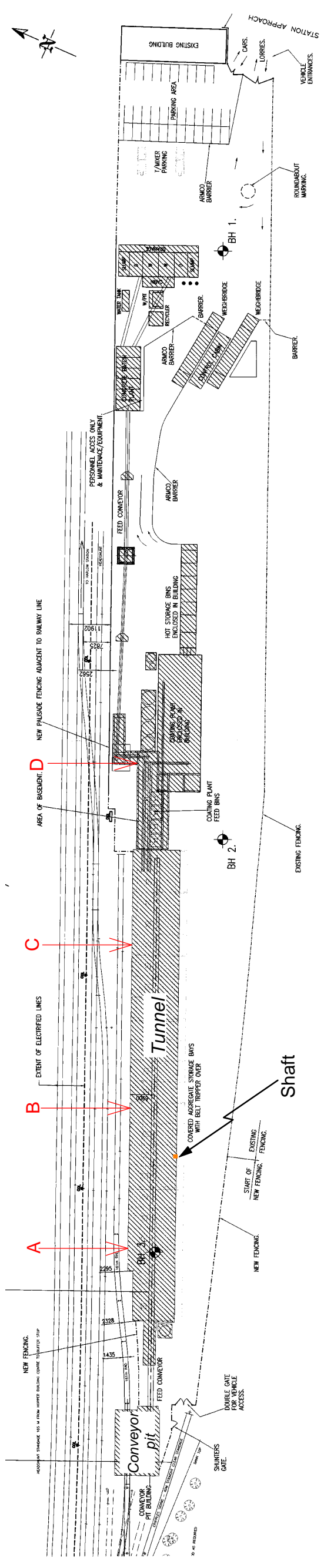


TL 12

TL 47

Site Location

Scale 1:10,000

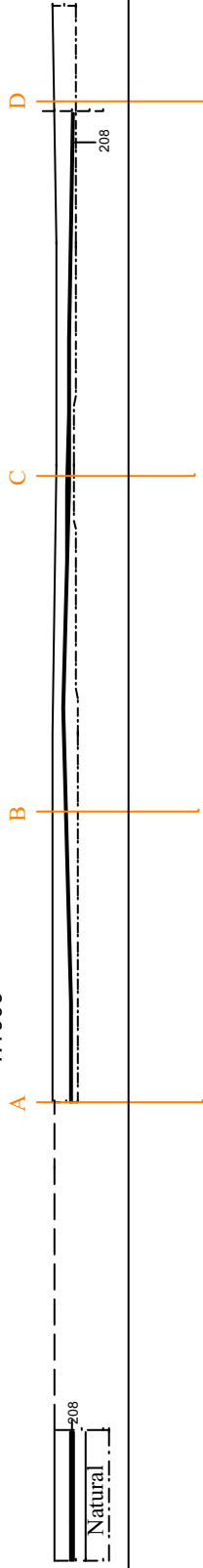


Site plan showing location of section drawings

Scale 1:1250
Figure 2

Schematic south facing profile of the conveyor pit & tunnel

1:1000



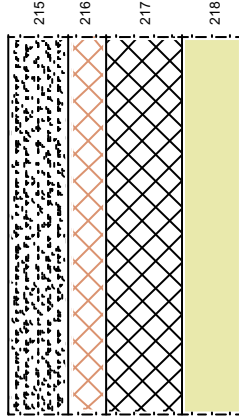
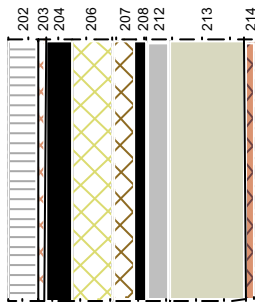
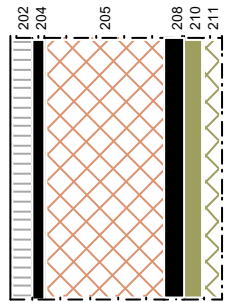
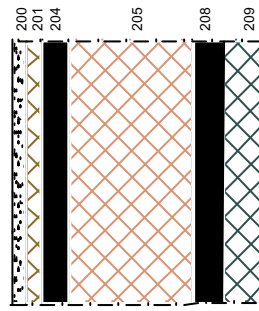
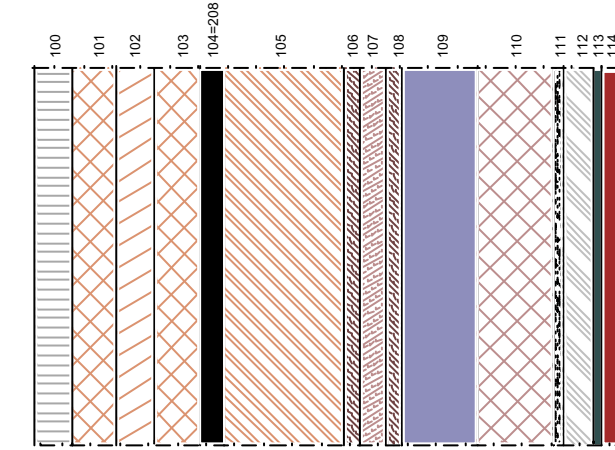
Conveyor pit

Tunnel section A

Tunnel section B

Tunnel section C

Tunnel section D



- | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|--|---|
| | Concrete | | Dk. grey organic clayey silt |
| | Overburden | | V. dk. brown loamy, slightly clayey silt |
| | Aggregate | | Greyish brown loamy, slightly clayey silt |
| | Orange sandy aggregate | | White clay with shells |
| | Mixed ash & gravel | | Orange gravelly clay |
| | Orange gravel | | Green silty clay |
| | Greyish brown gravel | | Pale brown silty clay |
| | Yellow gravel | | Greyish brown clay with flints |
| | Olive gravel | | Brown clay with flints |
| | Greenish brown sandy gravel | | Brownish grey slightly sandy clay |
| | Orange sand | | Orange brown clay & gravel |
| | Coke | | Bluish grey clay |
| | | | Greenish grey clay |

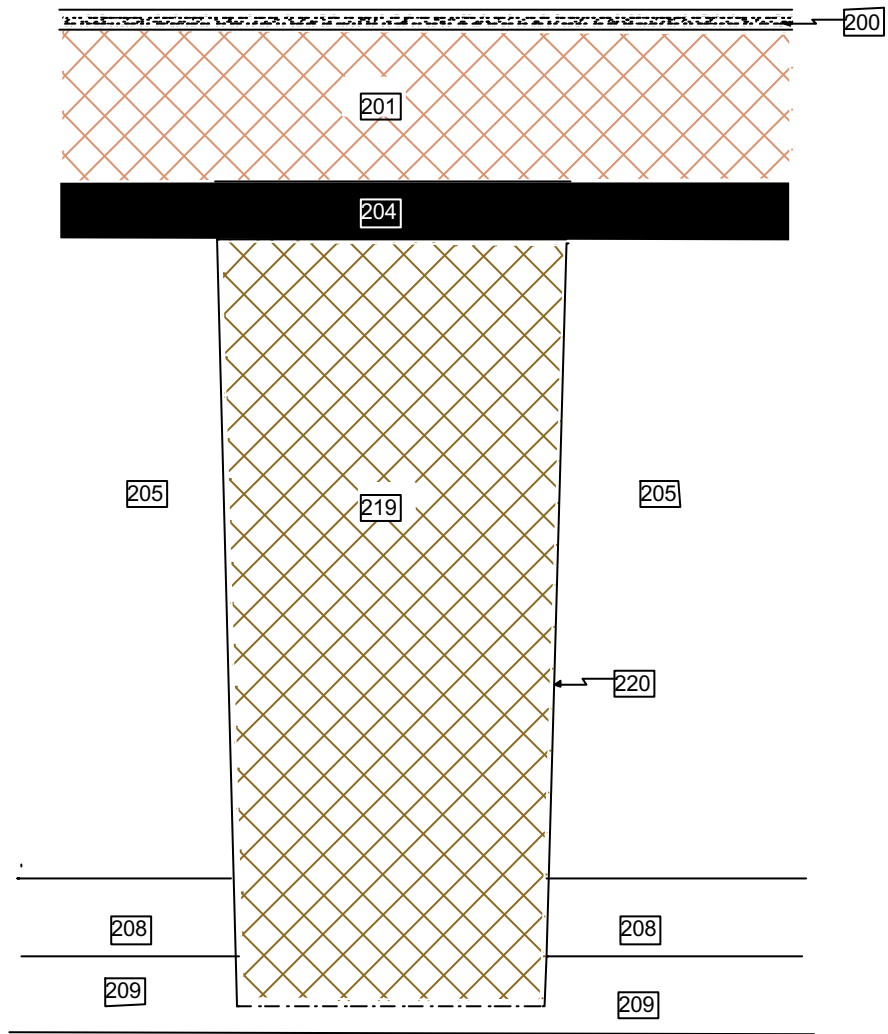
1:100







Site stratigraphy

Scale as shown

Figure 3



-  Concrete
-  Rubble aggregate
-  Coke
-  Dk. olive brown gravel



NW facing section of shaft

Scale 1:20

Figure 4