

**Electrical Substation, Leavesden Studios
Watford
Hertfordshire**

Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample

for

Terence O'Rourke


CA Project: 3280
CA Report: 11076

March 2011

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Watford
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prepared by	Charlotte Haines, Archaeologist
date	24 March 2011
checked by	Richard Young, Project Manager
date	29 March 2011
approved by	Mark Collard, Head of Contracts
signed	
date	30 March 2011
issue	01

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SUMMARY

Project Name: Electrical Substation, Leavesden Studios
Location: Watford, Hertfordshire
NGR: TL 0891 9974
Type: Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample
Date: 2–10 March 2011
Planning Reference: 10/2425/FUL
Location of Archive: To be deposited with Three Rivers Museum
Site Code: LLS10

An archaeological strip, map and sample was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the construction of a new electrical substation at Leavesden Studios, Watford.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no finds were recovered.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In March 2011 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological strip, map and sample for Terence O'Rourke at the proposed location of a new electrical substation at Leavesden Studios, Watford, Hertfordshire (centred on NGR: TL 0891 9974; Fig. 1). This exercise was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to a planning consent granted by Three Rivers Council (TRC) for the erection of an electrical substation (Planning ref: TRC 10/2425/FUL). This condition was recommended by Mr Andy Instone, County Planning Archaeologist, archaeological advisor to TRC. The objective of the exercise was to record all archaeological remains exposed during the development.

1.2 The strip, map and sample was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)* produced by CA (2011) and approved by Mr Instone. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008), the *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003), *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 1: resource assessment* (East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers No. 3, 1997), *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2: research agenda and strategy* (East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers No. 8, 2000), the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006).

The site

1.3 The site lies within the current Warner Bros film studios at Leavesden, Huntonbridge, to the north of Watford, Hertfordshire. The site was formerly an aerodrome built in 1940 and was adapted after the Second World War for aircraft manufacture by de Havilland.

1.4 The development comprises the proposed construction of an electrical substation. This lies on the south-western edge of the current site of Leavesden Studios. The proposed size and foundations of the substation are detailed on figure 2.



- 1.5 The underlying solid geology of the area is mapped as Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation with superficial deposits of Gerrads Cross Gravel (BGS 2011).

Archaeological background

- 1.6 Prior to the closure of the aircraft factory no archaeological information was available for the site. Records were limited to isolated finds of prehistoric and Roman material found during the post-war construction of the surrounding housing estates. After the closure of the airfield, archaeological work on the eastern side of a new spine road in 1998 identified an area of Iron Age and Roman activity (Brossler 1999). The features revealed included ditches, pits, postholes and a possible corn drier. A large assemblage of pottery was recovered as well as some evidence of metalworking. Some of the ditches formed sub-rectangular enclosures. A further evaluation by Cotswold Archaeology (then the Cotswold Archaeological Trust, CAT 2000) to the west of the spine road within the aerodrome site uncovered further features dating from the Early Bronze Age to the Late Iron Age, some of which may be a continuation of those uncovered in 1998.
- 1.7 No further evidence has been recorded of non-agricultural use of the site until the early 20th century when the southern portion was acquired by Watford Council and became the King George V Playing Field. This was followed by the construction of the airfield in 1940.

Methodology

- 1.8 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2011). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks comprising the mechanical excavation of foundation trenches for the construction of the electrical substation (Fig. 2 Areas 3-6).
- 1.9 Written, graphic and photographic records of the groundworks were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.10 The archive from the exercise is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble, and will be deposited with Three Rivers Museum in due course. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the

OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain. In addition, a Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Record Summary Form has been prepared (Appendix C).

2. RESULTS (FIG 2)

- 2.1 Four areas of trenching for the proposed electrical substation were excavated (Areas 3-6; NB Areas 1 and 2 relate to a separate archaeological intervention to the north). The natural geological substrate (302 / 404 / 502 / 602) consisting of red-brown flint gravel in yellow-orange sand was revealed at an average depth of 0.5m below present ground level. Two modern features were revealed cut into this layer. In the central part of Area 3 a pit 303, filled by dark brown clay 304, was observed whilst in Area 4 the concrete casing for a high voltage electricity cable 402 and its associated yellow sand bedding deposit 403, were recorded. These features were overlain by a modern levelling layer of re-deposited natural substrate (301 / 401/ 501 / 601), averaging 0.5m in thickness. This layer was in turn covered by topsoil (300 / 400 / 500 / 600).
- 2.2 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and, despite visual scanning of spoil, no finds were recovered.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the application area the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks. The absence of archaeological deposits may indicate that Early Bronze Age to Roman activity seen to the north-east of the development area (CAT 2000b & Brossler 1999) either does not extend as far as or were not exposed by the development. However the evident truncation suffered by the development area in the modern period would suggest any archaeological deposits that had existed are unlikely to have survived.



4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Donald. The report was written by Charlotte Haines. The illustrations were prepared by John Bennett. The archive has been compiled by Kelly Saunders, and prepared for deposition by James Johnson. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2011 Geology of Britain Viewer
http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html

Brossler A. 1999 *Leavesden Aerodrome, Abbots Langley, Watford, Hertfordshire: Post-excavation Assessment and Research Design*. Oxford Archaeology Unit

Cotswold Archaeological Trust (CAT) 2000 *Leavesden Park, Watford, Hertfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation*. CAT report No. **001201**

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2011 *Electrical Substation, Leavesden Studios, Watford, Hertfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 3

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
300	Layer	Grey-brown silt, topsoil			0.02	Modern
301	Layer	Yellow-brown and grey-brown silt and gravel, levelling layer			0.60	Modern
302	Layer	Red-brown and yellow-orange flint gravel in sandy silt, natural geological substrate				
303	Cut	Cut of sub-circular pit	10.0	>1.60	>1.80	Modern
304	Fill	Dark brown clay fill of 303	10.0	>1.60	>1.80	Modern

Trench 4

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
400	Layer	Grey-brown silt, topsoil			0.15	Modern
401	Layer	Orange-brown silt and gravel, levelling layer			0.65	Modern
402	Layer	Concrete casing for electric cable			0.05	Modern
403	Layer	Grey-yellow sand bedding layer			0.20	Modern
404	Cut	Yellow-brown flint gravel in sand, natural geological substrate				

Trench 5

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
500	Layer	Grey-brown silt, topsoil			0.20	Modern
501	Layer	Orange-brown silt and gravel, levelling layer			0.50	Modern
502	Layer	Yellow-orange flint gravel in sand, natural geological substrate				

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
600	Layer	Grey-brown silt, topsoil			0.20	Modern
601	Layer	Orange-brown silt and gravel, levelling layer			0.45	Modern
602	Layer	Orange-brown flint gravel in sand, natural geological substrate				

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM


PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Electrical Substation, Leavesden Studios, Watford, Hertfordshire	
Short description	An archaeological strip, map and sample was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the construction of a new electrical substation at Leavesden Studios, Watford. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no finds were recovered.	
Project dates	2-10 March 2011	
Project type	Strip, Map and Sample	
Previous work	Evaluation by Cotswold Archaeological Trust (CAT 2000, 001201)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Leavesden Studios, Watford, Hertfordshire	
Study area (M ² /ha)	270m ²	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	TL 0891 9974	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Hertfordshire County Council	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Young	
Project Supervisor	Andy Donald	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	N/a	N/a
Paper	Three Rivers Museum	Context, records, site location plan, trench sheets, context sheets, drawings, day sheets, photo registers
Digital	Three Rivers Museum	Digital photos, project background, reports
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2011 Electrical Substation, Leavesden Studios, Watford, Hertfordshire: Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample CA Report No. 11076		

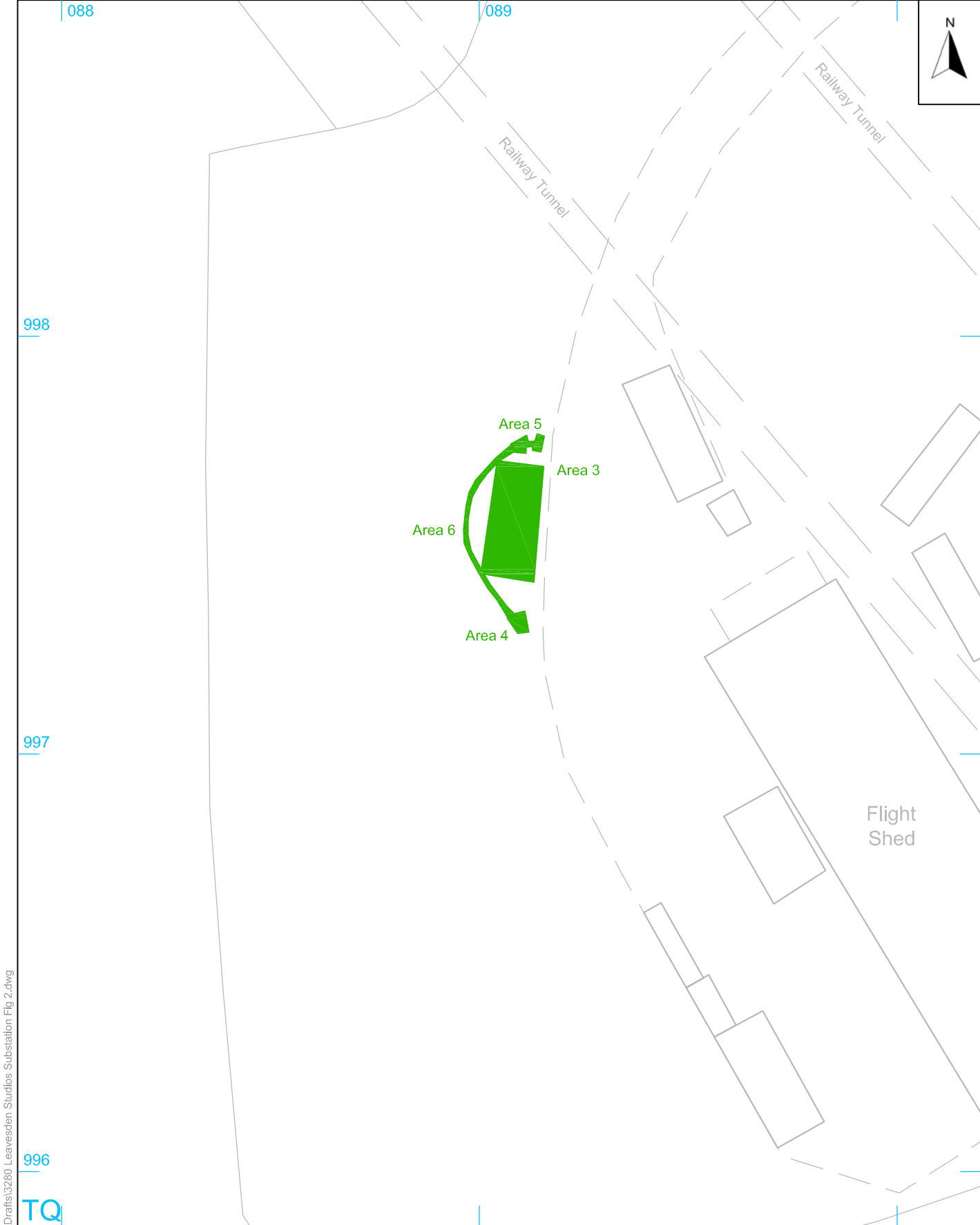
APPENDIX C: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY FORM


Site name and address:	Electrical Substation, Leavesden Studios, Watford, Hertfordshire
County: Hertfordshire	District: Three Rivers
Village/Town: Leavesden	Parish: Abbots Langley
Planning application reference:	10/2425/FUL
Client:	Warner Bros
Nature of application:	Erection of an electrical substation
Present land use:	Film studios
Size of application area: 270m ²	Size of area investigated: 270m ²
NGR (8 figures):	TL 0891 9974
Site Code:	LLS10
Site director/organisation:	Cotswold Archaeology
Type of work:	Strip, Map and Sample
Date of work:	2-10 March 2011
Curating museum:	Three Rivers Museum
Related SMR Nos:	Periods represented: 20th century
Relevant previous summaries/reports:	Evaluation by Cotswold Archaeological Trust (CAT 2000, report no. 001201)
Summary of fieldwork results:	An archaeological strip, map and sample was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the construction of a new electrical substation at Leavesden Studios, Watford. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no finds were recovered.
Author of summary: Andy Donald	Date of summary: March 2011

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PROJECT TITLE Electrical Substation, Leavesden Studios, Watford, Hertfordshire			
FIGURE TITLE Site location plan			
DRAWN BY LG	SCALE 1:50,000@A4	PROJECT NO. 3280	FIGURE NO. 1



 area of observed groundworks



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Electrical Substation, Leavesden Studios, Watford, Hertfordshire

FIGURE TITLE

The site, showing location of observed groundworks

DRAWN BY

LG

SCALE

1:1250@A4

PROJECT NO.

3280

FIGURE NO.

2

