Kenley Revival Community Archaeology Project 2019
Kenley Airfield
London CR8

London Borough of Croydon

Archaeological Investigation Report

January 2020
Kenley Revival Community Archaeology Project 2019

Kenley Airfield
London CR8

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Report on a community archaeological investigation

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Prepared by</th>
<th>Checked/ Approved by</th>
<th>Reason for Issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.12.2019</td>
<td>David Sankey</td>
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<td>First issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.01.2020</td>
<td>David Sankey</td>
<td>Lauren Hardiman</td>
<td>Second Issue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This report presents the results of a community archaeological investigation with fieldwork supervised by MOLA at Kenley Airfield and forms part of the Heritage Lottery Funded Kenley Revival Project.

In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (Bright 2019), ten trenches were excavated on specific targets identified from aerial photographs (Nos. 11 – 20). Two concrete-ring gun emplacements were abandoned part-excavated because of the presence of asbestos insulation. This work was to elucidate the form and function of the selected targets as well as recording their condition and investigating any management or conservation issues.

The work was undertaken by 20 locally-recruited volunteers, including RAF and SSAFA members (supporting veterans and their families), supervised by 2 MOLA professional archaeologists and 3 experienced and capable volunteers with knowledge of “conflict archaeology”. In addition, an innovation this year saw 6 youth volunteers and their skills in excavation, recording and finds processing were certified to be available for academic or vocational careers. The project was supported by Corporation of London staff and Historic England staff, who assisted with delivery. It was accompanied by open days and tours for the general public.

The investigations focused on an area to the south-east of that investigated previously in 2017 and 2018 and included excavation on one of three defensive trenches surveyed in 2018. Also there were excavations on the site of two pairs of upturned concrete sewer pipes (bases for light machine guns), one of which had to be abandoned due to the presence of asbestos lagging contamination. A depression that could potentially have been a command post for a larger gun lower down the slope towards Whyteleafe - identified and cleared by City of London Commons Rangers - was possibly a bomb crater. If so, it is the only clear case of a crater identifiably not filled in on the airfield. Presumably it was always out of the way of operations. A polygonal area of hardstanding was investigated. It was set back from the perimeter track, to which it was connected by a tarmac strip, giving a typical “lollipop” shape. Finally, a series of concrete strips, originally identified as paths were exposed and surveyed. They had a series of iron or steel loops set in one or other of their long edges and are located to the sides of the E-shaped fighter pens. It is conjectured that they may be tie-downs for camouflage nets, alternative interpretations having been sought and none forthcoming.

Finds were examined and recorded in the field and generally discarded where they were found. Exceptional finds have been temporarily retained at the Coulsdon and Kenley Common Merlewood Estate Office where they may be used for public events in the near future.

The investigation has allowed local volunteers to actively participate in the interpretation, presentation, and conservation of a small part of a large complex of monuments that are of national significance, and has laid a solid basis for future work in this area. It has allowed young people to learn new skills and have these documented, veterans and service personnel to co-operate with local volunteers, to increase the understanding of RAF Kenley as an operational base at a crucial moment in its history. There was an appetite for more and a desire that there should be a continuing legacy from this work.
Contents

1 Introduction 3
2 Topographical and historical background 5
3 Excavation methodology 9
4 Results of the evaluation 11
5 Archaeological potential 39
6 Conclusions 42
7 Acknowledgements 44
8 Bibliography 45
9 OASIS archaeological report form 46

Illustrations
Front cover: Volunteers excavating Trench 20, possible pillbox foundation
Fig 1 Site and archaeological project location 3
Fig 2 The study area in relation to historic aerial photographs 7
Fig 3 Potential Areas of Investigation with 2019 trenches 9
Fig 4 Location of all investigations in study area 11
Fig 5 Concrete rings trench 11 north (left) and south (right) 12
Fig 6 Trench 12 concrete structure, looking north-west (blast-pen to right) 12
Fig 7 Lollipop dispersal, where it meets the peri’ track (left) and furthest point (right) 13
Fig 8 Concrete fence post (left 0.2m scale) and scars of fence or gate posts (right 1m scale) 13
Fig 9 Trench 14 depression, looking towards Whyteleafe 14
Fig 10 Three defensive ditches (right) with archaeological slot, Trench 15. On a 1940s aerial photo 15
Fig 11 Slot through central defensive ditch, Trench 15. One metre scale 16
Fig 12 Trench 16 concrete rings, looking northeast 16
Fig 13 Metal cog in central hole in northern of two rings 17
Fig 14 Trench 19 concrete end with staple on blast-pen side (looking east) 17
Fig 15 Trenches 17, 18 and 19 and their relationship to blast-pens 18
Fig 16 Trench 20, looking east (1m scale) 19
Fig 17 Trench 20 on a 1940s aerial photograph with polygonal shape and shadow 19
Fig 18 Trench 11 Fill [135] finds 20
Fig 19 George Jones and Sons ltd, Crescent Brand mug base of 1944, GViR inscribed 20
Fig 20 Metal toe (left) and heel (right) plates 21
Fig 21 Cog or gear wheel, 0.2m scale (left) and General Service button (right) 21
Fig 22 Location of 2017 and 2018 investigations 23
Fig 23 Trench 1 concrete triangle. Looking west along line of “tie downs” 24
Fig 24 Trench 1 with aerial photograph rectified to concrete triangle 24
Fig 25 Flight hut foundations, looking North West (lower concrete visible in west sondage) 25
Fig 26 Sloping back (north) wall of fighter pen – subsequently replaced 27
Fig 27 Concrete rings with fitting and drains 28
Fig 28 Trench 7 on the west arm of the fighter (blast-) pen 29
Fig 29 Trench 8 plan 30
Fig 30 Trench 9 concrete structure [118][120] 31
Fig 31 Trench 10 hut, looking north 32
Fig 32 depression and patch mark in the centre of the study area 33
Fig 33 Location of earthworks and concrete circles on 1941 aerial photograph 34
Fig 34 Profiles of northern and southern earthworks as they exist now 34
Fig 35 Extract from Kenley Record Site Plan (AM Drg 2430/46) 38
Fig 36 2019 Kenley archaeology team on a the hottest day of 2019 42
1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

1.1.1 A community archaeological project with fieldwork supervision by MOLA, took place at Kenley Airfield and forms part of the HLF funded Kenley Revival Project by the City of London.

1.1.2 The airfield is located on Kenley Common which is a 56 hectare site of mainly chalk grassland, scrub and woodland lying within the London green belt. The Common lies just west of the A22 (Godstone Road) and opposite the Riddlesdown and Whyteleaf Recreation Ground. Within this larger area, the community archaeology project was confined to the area of the airfield outside of the taxiway on the north side, near Golf Road, Kenley CR8 5ES and centred on National Grid reference TQ 3290 5835.

Fig 1 Site and archaeological project location
1.2 Scope of the investigations

1.2.1 Investigations were intended to add to those of the previous years, to revisit structures that were surveyed briefly previously and investigate new areas. They comprised targeted excavation of a section of defensive trenches overlooking Whyteleafe valley, of a “lollipop”-shaped hard stand, of “paths” that lie beside E-shaped fighter pens, an archaeological trench over the site of a potential pillbox blockhouse identified from historic aerial photographs and another trench in a depression identified by City of London Commons Rangers as well as excavations of concrete rings (previously surveyed).

1.2.2 Trenches and features were to be excavated by hand under the direction and control of a MOLA Senior Archaeologist working on behalf of the City of London but involving volunteers from the wider community. Historic England were also involved in an advisory capacity.

1.2.3 This project was targeted to uncover archaeological evidence of the previously existing buildings and features of the airfield dating to the period of the Second World War (and potentially earlier) through a community project, and to engage the local community by involving members of the public as volunteers, and students as trainees. It also afforded an opportunity to certify and validate training of youth trainees as well as afford opportunities for RAF and Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) personnel to take part in investigations alongside local community members.

1.2.4 The finds from 2019 were processed, examined, documented and returned to their original locations or donated to the Merlewood Estate Office along with a selection of the 2017 and 2018 finds.

1.2.5 A topographic survey using high-precision Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) hardware and software, by MOLA Geomaticians (including GPS, GLONASS, Galileo, etc.), allowed extra features and trenches to be surveyed.

1.2.6 The resulting data and archive produced by the project will contribute to and inform wider site interpretation and management in the future.

1.2.7 The site was located within the RAF Kenley Airfield, which contains fighter pens that are protected as Scheduled Monuments (30903 & 30904) under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, amended by the National Heritage Act 1983. They fall within Kenley Common, an area administered by the City of London as a charity, which is of national historical significance.

1.2.8 Investigations were carried out in accordance with:

- The Written Scheme of Investigation (Bright 2018).
- Standards for Archaeological Work (GLAAS, HE 2014).
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Codes, Standards and Guidelines Papers (CIIfA, various dates).
- MoRPHE (English Heritage, 2008).

1.2.9 Archaeological investigations were monitored by the Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Iain Bright.
2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Introduction

This section is an edited precis of the background in the WSI (Bright 2017 Section 3) and follows that presented in Heritage Conservation Plan (Wessex Archaeology 2010) and the Conservation Management Plan (Stabler Heritage 2015). It also includes information which is the outcome of map regression exercises that formed part of the community archaeology programme and the results of the 2017 investigations.

2.2 Topography

2.2.1 The majority of Kenley Common, particularly the land surrounding the airfield, lies on a broadly flat plateau at c. 170m OD. The land slopes gently towards the neighbouring valleys to the north and west of the airfield, whilst on the eastern edge is more steeply sloped. The location of the Common was instrumental in its use as an airfield, with the plateau easily enabling the construction of the RAF base, and the prominent eastern escarpment providing a natural defensive ridge.

2.2.2 The underlying solid geology of Kenley Common is (flint nodular-) Chalk, laid down as a sedimentary deposit during the Upper Cretaceous period. This is overlain by a deposit of Clay with Flints which dates to the Pleistocene (Stabler 2015).

2.3 Archaeology and History

2.3.1 No features or finds have been discovered on Kenley Common that date to the prehistoric period. However finds have been made in the surrounding area of material illustrative of human occupation dating back to the Mesolithic. Whilst steep valley slopes may have been difficult to cultivate, broad upland areas may have been more amenable to primitive agriculture.

2.3.2 This equally applies to the Roman and early-medieval periods. A single coin of Antoninus Pius (Roman Emperor AD 138 – AD 161) was found during construction work for the airfield in the 1920s, but no structural remains from these periods have been recorded.

2.3.3 Kenley may be derived from Old English Coena’s Leah (“Kenele” in 1255, Room 2003, 260). Nearby Waddington is recorded in in the late 9th century, in the will of Alfred the Ealdorman (“Elfred Dux”, Maitland, 1921, 245) where a considerable area of land was willed to his son at Hwætedune (possibly, “wheat down “the hill where wheat is grown”). Earthworks identified during an earlier survey are thought to represent the remains of a medieval field system.

2.3.4 Kenley House originated as a farm, and settlement is thought to have been on the same site for 800 years. A dry earthwork may be the remains of a former pond in the woods south of Kenley House.

2.3.5 The whole area is dotted with chalk pits and quarries. Some marked as such on maps, other disused or filled-in chalk pits may be identified from small circular fenced copses. A large quarry was recorded in the north-east corner of the common.

2.3.6 The 1837 Tithe Map indicates that at this time the whole of the hill top was open farmland. The boundary of the Common as shown in the 1837 Tithe Map can be largely traced in modern boundaries. The earliest record of the farm is the 1837
Tithe Map which shows the farm complex. The Common was purchased by the City of London in the 1880s.

2.3.7 Kenley opened in 1917 as an aircraft acceptance park. The park prepared aircraft prior to their being sent to operational units. After the First World War the site was retained as a permanent RAF station. There was an extensive building program in the 1920s to convert the temporary air acceptance park into something more permanent.

2.3.8 In the 1930s, as concerns about a possible war grew, Kenley was one of several airfields that were strengthened. New buildings were built to high design standards (nationally The Royal Fine Arts Commission advised on the design of many airfield buildings) and concrete runways built. Three Air Ministry boundary stones which survive on site probably mark this period of expansion and development.

2.4 World War 2

2.4.1 Because of ongoing construction work, Kenley was not an operational airfield at the outbreak of war. The airfield became operational early in 1940. Around the edges of the airfield a series of defences had been constructed, these included anti-aircraft defences on the large terrace on the eastern edge, and the Parachute and Cable defence in the north. In 1941 a number of Blister hangars were erected around the airfield; a platform was noted during the survey on the site of one of these. A length of concrete road still leads to the site of the platform. In the woods on the western edge of the common the gun alignment range still survives.

2.4.2 Extensive remains of concrete footpaths and roads, relating to the airfield exist on site. Concrete blocks and areas of hard standing can also be observed.

2.4.3 Trenches have been identified in the woods both on the east and west sides of the airfield. The trench found to the west was a portion of a zigzag trench which is shown on aerial photographs as having once extended along much of this side of the airfield. Three features can be identified in the woods to the east, two of these were rectangular trenches measuring approximately 2m x 12m with large well preserved earthen banks to their east side. The third feature appeared to be the remains of a triangular machine-gun position, with a platform for the gun and a hollow for the crew surviving.

2.4.4 Within the woods to the west lie the remains of a small building and also the plinth for a fuel tank adjacent. The building appears to be a guardhouse or some similar structure as it was too small to perform a more technical role. It was directly adjacent to Hayes Lane which would again suggest a defensive role.

2.4.5 Towards the end of the Second World War Kenley was found to be too small to accommodate the new jet fighters that needed longer runways than could be constructed at his location. The late 1940s saw the airfield used to assess and test captured German aircraft and equipment and also as the headquarters of a reserve training squadron. The airfield eventually began to be used as a glider training school and the barracks passed to the Army.

2.5 Post-war and undated

2.5.1 A mound, at the western edge of the Common is a modern construction as it is not shown in old aerial photographs, however its exact date of construction and purpose remain unclear. There exist six undated features within the site of the airfield, all of which comprise linear earthworks and earthen banks. They may relate to land management of the Common area, although they are undated.
2.6 2017 and 2018 investigations

2.6.1 A narrow slit trench aligned across the line of a rocket-fired “Parachute and Cable” anti-aircraft system failed to find any evidence of an electrical cable from the firing mechanism. In 2017 and further metal-detector investigations were abandoned when an area of decaying asbestos cement-bonded board was exposed. This may have been part of the same general contamination associated with the removal of an object identified on aerial photos as a potential (defensive) pillbox.

2.6.2 Two phases of hard-standing dispersal areas were established, with associated tie-down (or picketing-) points. These lined either side of the perimeter taxiway and
approaches to fighter pens. They comprised of an earlier polygonal phase made of hardcore and tarmac, with concreted-in steel tie-down loops. The second phase was triangular hard standing with similar picketing points (one at the apex of the triangle and another towards the centre of the base of the triangle). A further polygonal hard stand was partially exposed near the perimeter track.

2.6.3 Two concrete rings were exposed in the later stages of 2017 and were excavated in 2018. They formed of standard rocker or butt-end sewer pipes with concreted bases and brick drains. One had a central metal fitting of a type that may be seen on illustrations of “stork mounted” light machine gun (Lowry 2014, 41). Two more sets of paired sewer-pipes set vertically with their tops at ground level were surveyed in to the south-west of the 2018 project area, which became the subject of 2019 investigations.

2.6.4 The foundations of a possible flight hut were recorded and discussed in relation to an alternative interpretation as a small arms store in 2018. It was not visible on an Aerial Photograph of 1941 but can be seen clearly on 1944 photographs. A number of tags or tallies found near it suggest, at least for part of its life, it was used as an equipment store. Huts, like people and actors, may play many parts in their time! A large horseshoe found nearby could have been cast at any point prior to the sites conversion to an airfield, or during any phase of construction of the RAF base. However, its use for a game of “horseshoes” (quoits) also cannot be eliminated and may be evocative of Canadian airmen’s stay. Another hut base was investigated near the western site perimeter, which features on an Air Ministry drawing but without a use designation (Drg, No. 2818/45 reproduced “half-scale” as 2430/46). It had a concrete floor with brick wall-footings and door openings with concreted “porch” areas at either end.

2.6.5 Adjacent to this second hut, to its south was a square concrete foundation with a floor slightly below ground level and thin stub-wall foundations to ground level. It may have related to a machine-gun range. Nearby was a depression in the ground that was surveyed as it too could be observed in Aerial Photographs.

2.6.6 The fighter pen to the north (Scheduled Monument 30904) was surveyed in 2018 and the rear brick retaining wall was measured leaning 11° from vertical. This wall was subsequently replaced. Scheduled Ancient Monument consent was granted for specific works to investigate the construction of the fighter pen in 2018 through three targeted trenches on its west arm. Unlike the middle arms of the E-shaped pen, there was no wall forming a central spine, though there was a concrete ridge with projecting metal fittings. The arm was formed of locally quarried clay-with-flints and more material had been subsequently added, including broken pottery with NAAFI insignia. The concrete ridge had been deliberately broken at some point in the past, and comparison with old photographs shows that it would once have keyed into a brick gable wall at the end of the arm. Where the gable had been broken, it was covered with soil which may have been recovered from elsewhere on RAF Kenley. This material included a metal information plate from a German bomber, that may have come from a collection of such plates held by time by Air Ministry scientists (AI2g) who evaluated German equipment (and possibly where it was made, to inform bombing raids). They occupied hangars at Kenley from 1945 (Flint 1985, 146). Many such plates have been found at Kenley over previous years.

2.6.7 Other finds of note included an American-style aluminium canteen cup, which possibly had arrived with a unit of mechanics who trained at Kenley in World War One, after the USA joined hostilities.
3 Excavation methodology

3.1 Field methodology

3.1.1 The WSI specified a number of features for potential investigation as shown in Fig 3. They included (but were not limited to) the investigation of concrete rings, revealing and investigating potential presence of various paths, the investigation of defensive trenches and revealing an aircraft dispersal hard standing.

Historic Aerial photographs supplied by Historic England, not to be reproduced without permission

Fig 3 Potential Areas of Investigation with 2019 trenches

3.1.2 All locations were scanned with a cable-location tool ("CatScan") to ensure there were no unrecorded services in the areas of proposed excavation.

3.1.3 The City of London mobilised local volunteers, provided site inductions and both asbestos and ordnance professionals. All volunteers were taught the safe use of excavation tools before digging.

3.1.4 Trenches were hand excavated down to the first significant archaeological deposit or structure. In the case of structural remains a small sondage was excavated down the side of the structure to determine the depth and condition below ground. Concrete rings were emptied of their contents until concrete bases were exposed, or until asbestos contamination prevented further excavation. After exposing one "path" alongside a fighter E- pen, it became apparent that it may be a different type of structure. Similar "paths" in a similar position were exposed at their ends, only. All works were supervised by the MOLA professional team of Senior Archaeologists, with able assistance form a group of three experienced volunteers, supporting
teams of local volunteers. Groups of volunteers were rotated through various tasks on site, including planning, recording and finds processing/photography as well as excavation.

3.1.5 Two extra targets were added, a structure that may have been a polygonal pill box and a round depression in a distinct horizontal ledge in the local topography.

3.1.6 A single metal detectorist (Neil Quinn, a highly motivated and knowledgeable local historian of Kenley airfield) worked under archaeological supervision in areas outside of Scheduled Ancient Monuments but within the defined study area.

3.1.7 Deeper excavations were edge protected with road pins and barrier fencing.

3.1.8 All exposed archaeological remains were investigated and recorded. There were no remains that required novel or different approaches. Opportunity was provided for Historic England to assess the condition of the remains. None required conservation work or immediate reburial, although they may be reburied. All archaeological exposures were metal detected.

3.1.9 All trenches with significant archaeological remains were planned at appropriate scales. Trench outlines, structural remains and base lines for section drawings were surveyed using high-resolution GNSS receivers, on Ordnance Survey National Grid co-ordinates. Photographs of remains were taken throughout and incorporated into the training exercise. Sections were recorded their baselines surveyed during the topographic survey.

3.1.10 All works were undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation and relevant Historic England/GLAAS Guidance Papers and this report forms the assessment of the data arising from the project.

### 3.2 Site archive 2017, 2018 and 2019

| Number of trench record sheets | 20 |
| Number of overall location plans | 1 digital |
| Number of Context (SU) sheets | 50 |
| Number of photographs | 250 |
| Number of Plan sheets | 17 including measured sketches and level location |
| Number of Sections | 2 |
4 Results of the evaluation

4.1 Trench 11, concrete rings

4.1.1 At the end of 2017 Community Excavations two concrete rings had been exposed, reused mass-produced sewer pipe sections made to be jointed together, 1.5m external diameter with 100mm-wide walls and an upstand internal (“male”) curved joint of half the pipe wall width and projecting c.200mm. They were excavated to concrete bases and were appropriately sized for standard “rocker” and “butt end” sewer pipes (the short length of pipes that enter concrete manholes and allow movement as they exit a manhole and continue on a line of longer lengths).¹

4.1.2 Two more sets of rings were surveyed in 2018, and trench 11 is the first of those sets to be investigated in 2019. Neither ring was fully excavated as asbestos was...

found in both fills. The top of both rings was level at 163.3m OD and they were located at 533285.228E 158225.201N (south) and 533285.941E 158226.506N (north, OS National Grid co-ordinates). Amongst the backfills were bicycle handlebars, an oil drum and the base of a mug made in 1944. Both pits were backfilled immediately that asbestos was discovered and all work on them, including recording, ceased.

Fig 5 Concrete rings trench 11 north (left) and south (right)

4.2 Trench 12 Concrete “path”

4.2.1 Trench 12 was located 3m north of Trench 11 concrete rings and approximately 13m south of the fighter blast pen at the north of the 2019 study area. It was comprised of poured concrete 18.13m (or 60ft) long, east-west, by 0.976m (3ft) wide and 0.1m (4inches) deep. It sloped from 164.58m OD on the west to 163.03m OD at the east end, and did not connect with other sections of concrete. Approximately 0.1m (4inches) from northern edge, nearest the blast-pen, were a series of steel staples at 1.2m (4ft) intervals, with the first set at 0.61m (2ft) from the end. The steel staples themselves were made of approximately 17mm-diameter (5/8inch, or possibly 11/16inch) round section rolled steel bar. Similar structures were recorded as trenches 17, 18, and 19.

4.2.2 The fact that the concrete did not connect with other lengths and that there were metal staples on the side facing the fighter blast pen, led the excavator (Guy Taylor) to interpret this and similar structures as potential anchors for camouflage nets to be stretched over the blast pens. This interpretation is discussed below.

Fig 6 Trench 12 concrete structure, looking north-west (blast-pen to right)
4.3 Trench 13 “Lollipop” dispersal hard-stand

4.3.1 Trench 13 comprised of two area to investigate a “lollipop” hard-stand to tie-down aircraft. One area on the west was where the hard stand met the perimeter track, the other eastern area was located to investigate the far “point” away from the “peri’ track”. The west area measured 7.53m N-S and 1.8m E-W and exposed the width of hard standing where it met the peri’ track. A mixed brown soil [144] was overlain with fine tarmac [142] and a coarser tarmac area [143] perhaps marking a repair. The hard standing lay at 168.0m - 168.05m OD. Three reinforced concrete post bases 100mm (4inches) square [136][137][138] filled shallow holes [139][140][141]. A broken post found by metal detecting showed that these were for low pedestrian barriers. It is possible that these surrounded a former Air Training Corps centre (Niel Quinn pers. comm.)

4.3.2 The eastern area was 2.66m N-S and 2.5m E-W. Brown soil [150] was overlain with fine tarmac [149] and coarse tarmac [148]. These marked the “point” of the lollipop hard-stand, furthest from the perimeter track.

Fig 7 Lollipop dispersal, where it meets the peri’ track (left) and furthest point (right)

Fig 8 Concrete fence post (left 0.2m scale) and scars of fence or gate posts (right 1m scale)
4.4  Trench 14 “Depression”

4.4.1  This was an area that was cleared by rangers and clearly of interest to them. It formed an oval depression set within a ledge or wider levelled area on the slope down Whyteleafe Hill, 30m east of Trench 11 concrete rings.

4.4.2  It was an oval shape 4.79m NW-SE, and 3.67m wide in the opposite direction [145]. The upper lip of the depression fell from 160.5m to 160m OD NW-SE and the middle of the concave depression was at 159.4m OD. A quantity of metal rope was found within the fill.

4.4.3  Before investigation, it was thought possible that this was a control post for a large anti-aircraft gun, or even ground defence, sited further down the slope. However, excavation showed that the slope of the depression was relatively shallow and would not have provided cover for such an emplacement. It may be that it was simply a bomb crater that hadn't been filled in, its location in a relatively flat area of a general slope being subject to chance.

Fig 9 Trench 14 depression, looking towards Whyteleafe

4.5  Trench 15, defensive trenches investigation

4.5.1  In 2018 MOLA surveyed three defensive trenches dug into Whyteleafe Hill. They were arranged to take advantage of the local slope, and also to provide slightly angled views to each other, covering the slope towards Whyteleafe. They comprised three defined trenches, approximately 20m long, with their ends closely in line. In their somewhat filled and eroded state, the northern trench profiles was approximately 0.7m deep and the southern trench profile 0.9m deep.
4.5.2 In 2019 an area was excavated in the central trench to investigate these trenches in more detail. A 2.4m long slot, 1.2m wide was dug from the centre of the lowest point of the central trench to the top of the leading (forward) bank, overlooking the slope. A 0.4m wide slot was dug deeper through deposits at the base. Unsurprisingly, the forward bank of the trench was made of upcast clay-with-flints from the excavation of the trench originally, the top 300mm being converted to a grey soil by the growth of vegetation and small trees above it. The base of the trench lay at 160.4m OD and the top of the forward bank 1.37m higher. Increasing chalk and grey, waterlogged clay at the base of the lower excavations may be the start of underlying geology, and the original trench may have been dug to this level (160.15m OD) to provide a harder footing.

4.5.3 Amongst the finds were 5 angle-iron metal “pickets”, some barbed wire, and some broken Bakelite electricity cable insulator.

![Fig 10 Three defensive ditches (right) with archaeological slot, Trench 15. On a 1940s aerial photo](image_url)
4.6 Trench 16, concrete rings

4.6.1 Two more concrete rings were excavated, partially down the slope towards Whyteleafe, 21m west of the northern defensive ditch. Their centres were at 533254.81E 158140.85N and 533255.78E 158139.73N. There was a slight slope on the top of these concrete rings, the more northern one sloping from 164.93m to 164.83m OD west to east, and the southern 164.88m to 164.77m OD. This may reflect their original position, or soil movement since they were placed there. The outer, higher rim had been deliberately broken down to form a flatter profile. In this respect they differed from the Trench 11 rings which had the higher section on the internal side, unbroken, as had the Trench 6 rings excavated in 2018. In effect, they had been buried the other way about.
4.6.2 They were partially excavated, with some difficulty as both fills contained barbed wire and bricks. The fill of the northerly pit [146] also contained a button and a large cog or gear wheel, which was centrally placed and may have been some improvised fitting, or drain cover, but originally was the size of gear used in central-drive machinery.

![Metal cog in central hole in northern of two rings](image1)

**Fig 13** Metal cog in central hole in northern of two rings

4.7 Trenches 17, 18 and 19 concrete “paths”

4.7.1 These trenches were partially exposed by excavator, recorder Guy Taylor with the help of Neil Quinn, metal detectorists. They conform to the same plan as Trench 12: poured concrete 18.13m (or 60ft) long, east-west, by 0.976m (3ft) wide and 0.1m (4inches) deep. Only the ends of the concrete structures were exposed as they were believed to all form the same pattern. Trench 17 lay between 166.7m (west), and 166.24m OD (east), Trench 18 167.95m (west) and 167.19m OD (east), and Trench 19 168.02m (west) and 167.24m OD (east).

4.7.2 They lay in similar positions, in relation to fighter blast-pens as Trench 12. This taken with the location of metal staples on the side facing the blast pen, led the excavator to suggest that they may have been anchors for camouflage nets that were intended to cover the blast-pens. Certainly, their positions indicate that they had a role in the functioning of the blast-pens and the concrete ridges on the outer arms of the pens also had metal fittings.

![Trench 19 concrete end with staple on blast-pen side (looking east)](image2)

**Fig 14** Trench 19 concrete end with staple on blast-pen side (looking east)
4.8 Trench 20, potential pill box

4.8.1 This trench was located on a polygonal structure on an aerial photograph, potentially the site of a pill box overlooking Whyteleafe Hill. This corresponded to an area of a slight rise and platform on the general slope. A 2m x 0.5m trench was excavated in this area, against the reduced remains of a brick wall (front cover). The brick wall was three bricks thick (laid as stretchers, approximately 0.35m) and with two edge-lain soldiers along the west edge. It was clearly not a strong defensive structure and only the bottom layer of bricks survived. Below it was a small area of concrete 20mm thick.

4.8.2 Type 22 Pillboxes (officially designated fw3/22) have walls that are between 1ft and 2ft thick (0.3m – 0.6m) and are normally made of concrete but can be made of
brick². They were to provide shelter for riflemen and would not have withstanded artillery. It is possible that this is a fragment of such a pillbox. If so it was always shallowly founded. Also, one might have expected a more substantial concrete base. If this was a pillbox then it has suffered a high degree of truncation which has removed the floor, and only the lowest foundations survive.

![Image](image1.png)

**Fig 16 Trench 20, looking east (1m scale)**

![Image](image2.png)

**Fig 17 Trench 20 on a 1940s aerial photograph with polygonal shape and shadow**

² [http://www.pillbox-study-group.org.uk/types-of-pillbox/type-22/](http://www.pillbox-study-group.org.uk/types-of-pillbox/type-22/), a brick-built version can be seen at the former Vickers factory site at Brooklands, it has been suggested that it might have also provided light machine gun anti-aircraft fire also [http://www.pillbox-study-group.org.uk/advanced-pillbox-designs/part-2-o-z/vickers-factory-pillbox/](http://www.pillbox-study-group.org.uk/advanced-pillbox-designs/part-2-o-z/vickers-factory-pillbox/)
4.9 2019 finds

4.9.1 Finds from the 2019 season were not retained by the Museum of London. Selected finds were temporarily retained at the Merlewood Estate Office, for use by the Legacy Officer of the Kenley Revival Project. Other finds were returned to their findspots after being catalogued, weighed, measured and photographed as appropriate. This report reflects kind advice from Guy Taylor, Neil Quinn and Vince Gardiner.

4.9.2 Trench 11 [135] : 2 clear glass fragments (1 frosted window glass, 1 bottle) and 1 brown glass bottle fragment, several steel metal fragments from oil drums or similar, 2.75kgs, <3mm thick, <0.35m diam, bicycle handlebars 0.76m long, thin metal strip (dipstick?) and mortar fragments.

![Trench 11 Fill [135] finds](image1)

**Fig 18 Trench 11 Fill [135] finds**

4.9.3 Trench 11 [136] : steel metal fragments of an oil barrel 1.5mm thick <100mm diameter (larger fragments had already been discarded), metal lid oil cap, “United Glass Bottles” bottle glass frags (base 800mm diam.), part of a spring, threaded steel bar 175mm long x 12.5mm diam., base of a George VI mug (1944-date) 80mm diam., as well as a glass fragment 70mm wide.

![George Jones and Sons ltd, Crescent Brand mug base of 1944, GvR inscribed](image2)

**Fig 19 George Jones and Sons ltd, Crescent Brand mug base of 1944, GvR inscribed**
4.9.4  Trench 13 [149] 2 pieces of electrical insulated wire, a possible nail 100mm long tapering from 11mm wide to 3mm, a wider ferrous-metal “spike” 155mm long 12mm-9mm wide with a rounded end. [150] : Ferrous metal boot heel-plate U-shaped 12mm–15mm wide, 10mm thick, 83mm-wide heel x 75mm, badly rusted. Toe-plate (? 10mm-wide x 6mm-thick metal part U-shaped ferrous metal object to 80mm-wide and fitting 55-mm lengthways to a boot, with rusted nails protruding. Heel and toe plates are very similar to those still produced by H. Goodwin (Castings) Ltd. One piece of porcelain, 2 frags of clear glass and one frosted glass, and a spent cartridge case for a 0.303-inch rifle or machine-gun round.

![Fig 20 Metal toe (left) and heel (right) plates](image)

4.9.5  Trench 14 [145] fill : 12 fragments of ferrous metal 6mm thick <0.99m x 0.33m, 2 fragments of metal picket (angle-iron fence post) and 112.32m of 4.5mm-width twisted wire cable weighing 3.9kg.

4.9.6  Trench 15 [+] unstratified : cow-sized animal bone with cut marks, Several short sections of barbed wire, Bakelite clay-pigeon fragments, and five sections of “angle-iron” fence stakes (pickets)

4.9.7  Trench 16 [146] fill : Iron or steel cog or gear wheel 0.26m diameter 5.5kg, part broken off. Corroded metal object 50mm-wide 15mm-thick, possible padlock? Two metal handles 160mm x 15mm, standard large “General Service” button of the type worn on both WW1 and WW2 great coats, 20mm wide.

![Fig 21 Cog or gear wheel, 0.2m scale (left) and General Service button (right)](image)

4.9.8  Trench 20 [+] unstratified : Sole of a shoe, concrete and charcoal fragments, glazed wall tile fragment and a possible roof-tile fragment.
4.10 Discussion of 2019 work in the context of the whole site

4.10.1 As in previous years, many new discoveries were made in a very short period of time. It has been proposed by their excavator (Guy Taylor) that the concrete structures with metal loops or staples, located next to E-shaped fighter blast pens are anchors for camouflage nets that were strung over those pens. It has to be admitted that there is neither evidence of such camouflage nets in use, nor am I aware of camouflage nets used over blast pens elsewhere. That said, in the absence of any other plausible suggestion for their interpretation, the proposal that they are camouflage-net anchors would appear the most likely interpretation. It may be significant that metal fittings are also found on the concrete ridges of the outer arms of the E-shaped pens. Were they also to attach camouflage nets?

4.10.2 Whilst some trenches confirmed the presence of structures identified from aerial photographs (eg Trench 13 lollipop hard stand), others had been so reduced that it is difficult to interpret. The latter would include the possible pillbox in Trench 20, which, if it was one, has been reduced below most of its foundations.

4.10.3 Some individual finds are of significance. Amongst these may be Bakelite clay pigeon fragments found in unstratified deposits within the defensive ditch system (Trench 15). British Pathé film of the 1940s show bomber-crew training in machine gun turrets to shoot clay pigeons\(^3\). It is perfectly possible that anti-aircraft machine gunners based on the ground, also trained with clay pigeons, although they could also be the result of recreational shooting before, during or after WW2.

4.10.4 The bicycle handlebars are a reminder that bicycles were in common use, to get around the RAF base quickly as much as to go elsewhere\(^4\). Metal heel and toe boot protectors may have come from civilian work boots as from military boots of WW1 and WW2 era. However, their presence is a reminder of a particular incident when planes from RAF Northolt “bombed” Kenley with old boots in 1924 (Flint 1985, 28). Sadly, the boot fragments recovered cannot be definitively identified as those delivered as part of this prank.

4.10.5 Other finds demonstrate the richness of material that is retained buried on the site, such as a 1944 base of a mug and a possible great coat button.

4.10.6 Consideration needs to be given on the location of structures. The concrete rings found at Trenches 11 and 16 lie on the slope down Whyteleafe Hill. Their field of view, and arc of fire, would be restricted as a result. However, these positions also gave a view down into the valley. Was an eye here also on a potential ground defence role, both in defending RAF Kenley from paratroopers and also covering a strategic communications corridor?

4.10.7 Similarly, the depression investigated in Trench 14 appears too shallow to provide cover and is considered likely to be a bomb crater that wasn’t filled in. However, it does occur in an area of relatively flat ground with slopes above and below. Is this “platform” significant?

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\(^3\) [https://www.britishpathe.com/video/stills/raf-clay-pigeon-shooting](https://www.britishpathe.com/video/stills/raf-clay-pigeon-shooting) accessed 21/10/19

\(^4\) See, for instance “Bertha” in WAAF Lillias Barr’s reminiscence [https://www.kenleyrevival.org/content/new-contributions/love-is-in-the-air](https://www.kenleyrevival.org/content/new-contributions/love-is-in-the-air) accessed 21/10/19
Resume of 2017 and 2018 work (for full detail see 2017 and 2018 reports) with additional notes where new information or finds information has become available.

Fig 22 Location of 2017 and 2018 investigations

4.11 Trench 1 Triangle

4.11.1 Trench 1 was located south of the Fighter Pen, north of other 2017 investigations; this trench was intended to investigate a triangular feature that appears on aerial photographs.

4.11.2 The concrete triangle [101] was located immediately below a covering of turf. It was an equilateral triangle of 12.9m long sides and was 0.13m thick, made with grey white cement-bonded (predominantly flint) aggregate. It was somewhat domed up to the centre at 166.46m – 166.66m OD. Two iron "anchor points", formed of an iron bar curved into a loop 200mm across and cast into concrete blocks 450mm, and 500mm square were set laterally along the centre line of the triangle (from east to west).
4.11.3 Investigating the side and depth of this feature exposed an earlier “version” which comprised of a polygonal shape, similar to others around the perimeter taxiway. This was made of a 100mm thick layer of hardcore and re-used building rubble [103] topped with 130mm – 140mm of tarmac to 166.59m OD. It had been set in a prepared trench [104] dug into brown subsoil [105].

4.11.4 A series of three more anchor points, made of curved iron bars set into concrete blocks roughly 0.5m diameter, were set around this tarmac hard standing.

4.11.5 Since both polygons of a similar size and shape (on their own) and concrete triangles are present on aerial photographs, it would appear likely that the triangle was a development of, or renewal of, the same structure.
4.12  Trench 2 Possible Flight Hut

4.12.1  Trench 2 targeted hut foundations south of Trench 1. Finds recovered in 2017 included thin metal plates, and in 2018 a large horse shoe was found 2m from the west end of the hut. The remains consisted of an east-west aligned rectangular concrete floor 11.09m x 4.79m, at 167.19m OD. There was a 15mm fine concrete screed [201] laid on a rougher concrete base [202], between 90mm and 130mm thick. This had been cast on brick footings [203] which stepped out 100mm, with one course visible at the south side.

Fig 25  Flight hut foundations, looking North West (lower concrete visible in west sondage)

4.12.2  A small area excavated on the west side of the concrete floor exposed a second offset of poured-concrete at 166.98m OD, dug into subsoil at (roughly) 166.9m OD. Another on the north side showed two courses of brick laid directly onto earth. The bricks used were soft yellow “Phorpres” frogged bricks of standard sizes, set in brittle cement-based mortar. From mortar applied to the top of them, it would appear that they supported the hut superstructure directly.

4.12.3  An irregular area of concrete, less than 100mm thick, lay on the east side of the trench. It was 3.6m east–west and 3.1m north–south and is thought to have provided hard standing for access to the hut’s doors (facing onto the concrete access to the fighter pen to the north).

4.13  Trench 3 Parachute and Cable

4.13.1  Trench 3 was located between two of the triangular concrete areas adjacent to the perimeter taxiway. It targeted the possible route of the cable firing mechanism of the “Parachute and Cable launchers” which was controlled by an electrical circuit.

4.13.2  The trench was 11.1m long, 0.4m wide and 0.3m deep. It exposed only mixed soil, building rubble and slate. No evidence of the firing mechanism was found and it was not thought to have been deeply buried (if it was buried at all, it may have lain on the surface). Some angle-iron lay obliquely across the north end of the trench It is assumed to have been dumped in post-WW2 clearance.

4.14  Trench 4 Possible pillbox

4.14.1  Trench 4 lay towards the south of the project area, 15m north of the perimeter taxiway. It targeted a feature identifiable on aerial photographs as projecting above
the ground (it had a shadow). On this location a trench measuring 4.74m long (north–south) was dug, 0.5m wide and 0.36m deep, with a 0.6m long extension, 0.4m wide and 0.2m deep.

4.14.2 The ground level sloped from 167.79m OD to 167.65m OD south to north. Below modern turf mixed soil and redeposited clay with flints was exposed, as was a piece of cement-bonded asbestos board. No structures were observed and the asbestos was reburied where it lay.

4.15 Trench 5 “Concrete area”?

4.15.1 Trench 5 was located at the junction of the perimeter taxiway and the concrete approach to the (scheduled) Fighter Pen. It was identified as a possible concrete area, forming an irregular hexagon. Of the shape identified from aerial photographs, only half was excavated. The exposed area measured 14m north–south x 8.6m east–west and was only 0.2m deep, except for a small 0.5m wide sondage at the north edge which was 0.5m deep.

4.15.2 On removal of the turf, it became apparent that this was an “earlier” hardstanding area for aircraft. It was made in a similar way to the polygonal area in Trench 1 with a rubble base covered with tarmac (300mm thick), dug into the local subsoil. Three concreted in anchor points, or “tie-downs”, were recorded, all of a similar construction to those reported above.

4.16 Fighter pen condition survey

4.16.1 The fighter pen (Scheduled Monument 30904) centred at TQ 32918 58429, is the subject of proposed conservation works. A limited condition survey conforming to Level 1 of Historic England’s Guide to Good Recording Practice (HE2016, 25). This comprised a measured sketch plan, a targeted levels survey, and a photographic record, showing some main features of the pens, as well as some conservation issues. The following description is derived from those records.

4.16.2 The pen was formed of an inverted U-shape in plan (north to “top”) revetted earth wall (originally an E-shape but the central blast wall has been removed. It was 65m wide (externally) with a single doorway on the outside (north) centred on 25.7m from the west edge and 0.9m wide. The width may be compared to that of the digitised aerial photographs (67.3m) which might reflect operational constraints, or the “corners” may have eroded. The doorway gave access to a tunnel that ran laterally along the rear earth wall. The arms were 25.8m long externally, and the west arm 9.2m wide (east arm was too vegetated to measure). Between the arms was a yard 51.8m wide. Two doorways gave access to the tunnel referred to earlier, both centred 20.3m from the internal sides of the “U”. Neither doorway aligned with the doorway on the outside, and it is thought that they gave access to pens separated by a central earth bank, that was subsequently removed.

4.16.3 Around the internal edge of the pen was a gully, formed of a 600mm-wide concrete berm sloping away from the bank, down to a 240mm-wide linear depression and a 490mm-wide concreted area to the large slabs of concrete that had been cast to form the floor of the pen. At either end of the gully was a manhole (to a rainwater trap?) 700mm square on the east side and 500mm x 600mm on the west.

4.16.4 The centre of the fighter pen concrete standing, was at 166.08m OD, the top of the manhole cover on the east side was 166.01m OD and the base of the gully channel in the north-east corner 165.96m OD. The door of the eastern doorway was at 166.06m OD, and the berm adjacent to it rose from 166.04m to 166.24m OD. That had been cast against a short revetment concrete wall to 166.46m OD. And the top of the doorway was at 168.16m OD.
4.16.5 The top of the earth wall was at 168.67m OD, where it covered the tunnel between doorways, but fell to 167.93 west of the tunnel. The outer door floor fell from 166.0m OD at the threshold to 165.3m OD externally. The floor of the doorway was made of concrete grooved diagonally so that water wouldn’t collect in the grooves, but drain down to the side and away. An external revetment wall of Phorpres bricks, built somewhat erratically with some bricks laid on edge, was at 166.23m OD at the top (0.93m high from ground level). Some bricks were in a fragile condition and the whole wall slopes outwards as a result of pressure from the (slumping) earth bank.

Fig 26 Sloping back (north) wall of fighter pen – subsequently replaced

4.17 Trench 6, concrete rings

4.17.1 At the end of 2017 Community Excavations two concrete rings had been exposed, reused mass-produced sewer pipe sections made to be jointed together, 1.5m external diameter with 100mm-wide walls and an upstand internal (“male”) curved joint of half the pipe wall width and projecting c.200mm [132][133]. Both pipes were emptied and both were a little over a metre deep (1.08m and 1.06m) before a concrete base was encountered. The full length of the sewer pipes is unknown but standard “rockers” and “butt pipe” lengths (the shorter lengths of sewer pipe for creation of, and jointing to, manholes) for similar dimensioned pipes now is 1.25m⁵. That is not an unreasonable assumption for the length of sewer pipe used here.

4.17.2 Both pipes had drains [110][117] made of extruded bricks (with holes in them) and solid bricks and a metal grate at the base of the one that was excavated [116], below [110]. The bricks may have been a temporary solution after a metal grate on top of the hole, in which they lay, failed. The centre of the southern pit [132] also

had a metal fitting comprised of a circular plate fixed to the concrete floor, on which a 100mm-wide metal pipe had been fixed in an upright position, by strong metal flanges. This is thought likely to have been the fitting for an upright pedestal-mounted light machine gun (a “Stork Mounting” Lowry 2014, 41). The Stork mount held the gun at a safe distance from the operator, and it would have projected significantly beyond the sewer pipe.

Fig 27 Concrete rings with fitting and drains

4.17.3 Both pits were filled with lumps of tarmac broken up, most likely, from areas of hard standing elsewhere on the airfield, as well as some coal ash and flints [106][107]. The southern pit had an angle-iron picket stake at the base, which may once have been associated with perimeter protection of the pits. It is considered likely that the upcast material from the hole into which they were inserted was used to make a “sandbag” surrounding wall both to protect people inside the concrete rings, and to prevent people from falling into them during the black-out. The fill of the pit without the central fitting included a whole dog, as well as bones of a possible frog and rodent and a squashed corroded bucket, a couple of fragments of white-glazed pottery and possibly a fragment of orange rubberised fabric.

4.18 Trench 7 fighter blast pen

4.18.1 Scheduled Ancient Monument consent was granted for specific works to investigate the construction of the fighter pen, in the north of the study area (Scheduled Monument 30904). Investigations took the form of three targeted trenches on the west arm of the fighter pen (from north to south, Trench 7a, 7b and 7c).

4.18.2 Trench 7a was positioned on the mid-point of the inner face of the west arm of the

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6 see http://www.sywellaerodrome.co.uk/sywell-aerodrome-magazine-2001-17-airfield-defences.php, accessed 10.10.2018, for instance
fighter pen, so as to investigate the construction of a blast wall without an internal tunnel (as occurs at the rear wall of the blast pen). It measured 4.56m E-W and 0.9m N-S and crossed the arm of the blast pen from a concrete spine which ran along the apex to gutters that surrounded the base of the wall.

4.18.3 On the east (in-) side of the blast wall was a low concrete retaining wall [115]. Behind which were a series of dumped deposits, the lowest [113] contained frequent chalk fragments and flint nodules and was clearly the upcast natural subsoil (Clay with Flint formed by weathering of the underlying chalk bedrock). Above it sandy clay [108] was reworked from more surface deposits. It contained fragments of pottery, including one with the insignia of the NAAFI (Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes). Above that were two surface soil layers [111][112], which reworked [108]. These upper layers had formed against the side of a concrete ridge applied to the crest of the blast wall [114]. 1.6m wide and 0.63m high it was formed of a centrally moulded spine to 167.83m OD. Surrounding the inside of the blast pen was a sloping concrete skirt [124] to a gutter [125].

**Fig 28** Trench 7 on the west arm of the fighter (blast-) pen

4.18.4 **Trench 7b** was a small exposure of the end of the concrete spine [114]. It measured 1m by 0.9m and was dug to expose the base of the spine at 167.4m OD. It demonstrated that originally the concrete spine had continued further south (presumably to a solid “gable” end wall) but it had been deliberately broken through at some point in the past, to make a sloping end to the blast pen wall. The spine apex was at 167.81m OD, was 300mm wide and dropped vertically to 167.6m (west) and 167.66m OD (east), from where it splayed out a further 200mm on either side sloping to 167.49m (west) and 167.52m OD (east) where it rounded to a flat (-ish) base at 167.4m OD.
4.18.5 **Trench 7c** was a slot dug on the south face, or end, of the west arm of the fighter (blast-) pen, 0.85m wide and 4.5m long, to expose remains of a terminal “gable” wall believed to have been part of the original design. There was indeed a fragment of a greatly truncated wall made of the same Phorpres or Flettoed bricks used elsewhere on the aerodrome.

4.18.6 The terminal or gable wall had been reduced to 166.32m OD, slightly below the level of the retaining wall surrounding the outside of the fighter pen at the edge of excavation to the north 166.69m OD, but above the level of the top of the retaining wall (that sloped) on the north side of the blast pen recorded in 2017, 166.23m OD.

4.18.7 The slumped earth that covered over the bricks, some of which may have been embanked from elsewhere, [121] contained a metal information plate from a German plane (discussed in “Finds” below).

4.19 **Trench 8 Path**

4.19.1 Trench 8 lay south of the west arm of the fighter pen. It was located to investigate whether paths that once surrounded the pen on east and west sides survived, and if so, in what condition. It measured 3.5m x 0.38m and was 0.5m deep.

![Fig 29 Trench 8 plan](image)

4.19.2 In the central area of the trench was an area of hardcore/rubble including concrete and mortar fragments to 300mm diameter [127] at 165.77m OD (0.38m below ground level). This is thought to be the bedding layer for a path, though it wasn’t as wide as the path recorded in aerial photographs. This area of rubble was cut into archaeologically sterile clay with flints, presumed to be the natural subsoil. However, it was excavated after an extended period of relative drought and the clay with flints...
proved too hard to dig into with hand tools, so it proved impossible to dig a sondage to prove it was not a dump of reworked deposits.

### 4.20 Trench 9 Concrete structure (“machine-gun” range)

4.20.1 This structure [118][120][125] lay to the south of that identified in the WSI (which was recorded in Trench 10, below), and in an area that in plans of 1927-8 is referred to as a “machine gun range” (Guy Taylor per. comm.). It was formed of a concrete square base 4.9m x 4.1m at 165.99m OD. Around the outside of this was a 250mm (10 inches?) raised concrete edge 0.1488m (6inches) wide. On the west side there was a break 2.993m wide, where there was no raised ridge. It was filled with sand [119] and a small area only was exposed to the base. The ridge was chamfered internally and had a reinforcing iron projecting from it, which may have connected to precast concrete panels to form an enclosed box, or have anchored something flimsy, like camouflage netting.

![Fig 30 Trench 9 concrete structure [118][120]](image)

### 4.21 Trench 10, hut base

4.21.1 A structure was identified on the west perimeter for investigation. It features on site plans (eg. Air Ministry Drg No. 2818/45 reproduced “half-scale” as 2430/46). However, it is not listed in the schedule of buildings. It lies adjacent to a house immediately outside the airfield perimeter, which was occupied by the RAF during the war and which the present-day occupants informed us, had upper floors reinforced with concrete during WW2.

4.21.2 After it was cleared of vegetation, there emerged a hut base, with brick surround, external path and a concrete entrance area. The hut base [126] was formed a rectangle of concrete at 165.694m OD, 12.11m long and 2.88m wide (39ft 9inches x 9ft 6inches?) with two projections, considered likely to be doorways, 0.9m wide and 0.35m – 0.4m wide. The northern doorway was centrally located whilst the southern doorway was on the east end of the southern face. These doorways crossed the base of a brick wall [128], formed of Phorpres bricks laid with a stretcher and header width (alternate courses of which would give English bond). That to the north led to a possible porch, the concrete base of which [129] measured 0.83m x 2.23m at 165.75m OD which may well imply that the external door faced into the airfield at a right-angle to the door into the hut. It too was surrounded by brick walls [128].
Around the east side of the hut and joining both doors was a concrete path, two areas of which were exposed [130]. It was 0.83m wide, and the maximum surviving level was 165.67m OD.

**Fig 31 Trench 10 hut, looking north**

4.21.3 To the north of Trench 10 was an area of relatively recent-growth woodland which obscured two potential areas of interest: 1) a fuel store / switch house (which might be relevant to the function of Trench 9 structure [118][120][125]), and 2) a “structure” which appears to be a very similar hut base to Trench 10 and which is listed as a timber “Flight Office” on Air Ministry Drg 2430/46. Although, it is apparent that they had different roofs from Aerial Photographs, and possibly different functions. The “structure” is still visible west of the fighter pen and had a similar surrounding footpath to that of Trench 10 [130].

*In 2018 large amounts of survey work was undertaken as a topographic survey after completion of normal fieldwork. The opportunity was taken, in clear open ground, of doing some survey of structures and earthworks that had been exposed by general site clearance on Kenley common and by parch marks due to the hot summer.*

4.22 Shallow depression north of Trench 6 concrete rings

4.22.1 One such was a shallow depression in the centre of the general area of investigation. It appeared in 2018 as a parch mark as well as a slight dip in the ground surface. It measured 8.6m NE–SW and 7.4m SE–NW, centred on 532869.61east 158359.17north and dropped from 166.54mOD on the outside to 166.40m OD in the centre. A 140mm drop over 4m (approx.) is not generally visible when the grass is lush and growing well. However, comparison with the 1941 Aerial photograph show a larger light patch in this area (as well as showing there was no “Trench 2 possible flight hut” at this time and that the Trench 6 concrete rings were not visible and possibly had not been dug by that date).
4.22.2 If the area to the west of the depression was a machine gun range in the 1920s (Guy Taylor pers. comm.), then it is possible that this depression is a wear mark caused by the repeated anchoring of aircraft to test their machine guns here. Equally, it may have been a gun pit for a larger calibre machine gun than those used in the subsequent concrete rings, subsequently backfilled. Its position near to the machine gun range (BUT not straight in front of it) may not be accidental, though primarily positioned for defence.

![Fig 32 depression and parch mark in the centre of the study area](image)

4.23 Defensive trenches and concrete rings

4.23.1 370m across the airfield to the east were a series of defensive works overlooking the slope towards Whyteleafe. Attention was initially drawn as they too included concrete rings, as in Trench 6. However, recent clearance by Kenley Common volunteers and Rangers allowed a brief topographic survey of these to be made, both to inform the interpretation of the main study area and also to provide information for site management and conservation generally.
4.24 2017 and 2018 finds

4.24.1 Finds were of metalwork collected according to their location. They include some (safe) .303 rifle rounds and metalwork thought to be discarded aircraft parts. A finds review was conducted with the help of Roy Stephenson from the Museum of London and this report reflects that and information by Guy Taylor, Neil Quinn and Vince Gardiner.
4.24.2 A fragment of a NAAFI cup from the dumps forming the upper deposits of the West arm of the fighter pen in the study area [108].

4.24.3 Data Plate from German aircraft found in the slumped earth at the end of the west arm of the fighter pen [121]. Information from Vince Gardiner: The top line of text, although in poor condition, reads says ‘[VOLKSWAGENWERK Gmbh]’ indicating that it was a product of the Volkswagen company... ...had contracts for repairing aircraft and manufacturing parts for them. The symbol on the left side of the plate is their logo as it appeared during the Nazi era. According to VW’s history web page the company had contracts to repair Junkers Ju88 bombers and produce aircraft parts including fuel tanks and wing sections 7. Although the data plate is very scarred and corroded, it is possible to see that there were three words, each next to a panel where numbers could be stamped. The top one says ‘Serie’ (serial number), the middle ‘Zeichng’ referring to the type of aircraft, while the bottom one appears to read ‘Herst.Nr’ (manufacturers number). The panel next to ‘Serie’ is almost totally illegible although possibly ‘W W’ there. The panel beside ‘Herst Nr’ says ‘0 36’ with a possible ‘5’ towards the right end. The middle panel ‘8.88’ with a possible ‘5’ further to the right and a possible small stamp saying ‘545’ at the far right end’. The ‘8.88’ signifies that it came from a Ju88.

4.24.4 Metal tags. Found near Trench 2 Possible Flight Hut (scale is 200mm). These were a series of small corroded square metal plates with a hole punctured in one corner. They could have hung from hooks on a board or attached

to equipment. One plate possibly read “U/S” or “unserviceable” (broken, not available) in RAF slang.

4.24.5 Horse shoe found 2m west of Trench 2 Possible Flight Hut.

4.24.6 American M1910 Aluminium canteen cup. These were made to fit over the bottom of a canteen, in aluminium treated so as not to be reflective.

4.24.7 Exhaust? Found in near surface deposits in Trench 3, the PAC trench.

4.24.8 Warning panel. It reads “WARNING AIRCRAFT MUST NOT BE FLOWN WITHOUT GUNS OR FABRIC PATCH OVER TUNNEL”. Surface find.

4.24.9 Other finds include a knife and fork (found separately), a Metropolitan Police button, a Bakelite switch, .303-calibre cartridge case, pottery fragments, a purse with coins from 1928 and 1950s (found mostly as surface finds by metal detecting) and the
near complete skeleton of a dog (?), apparently buried in the backfilled weapon pit [107], which also contained a bucket.

4.25 The site as a whole

4.25.1 This community archaeology investigation has provided a unique insight into the operation of a small corner of a very large site of national importance. The examination of 2 study areas has allowed a broader understanding of the variety of structures and finds across the airfield as a whole. The concrete rings (repurposed sewer pipes) were positively identified as small-calibre machine gun posts. They have been identified elsewhere as anti-aircraft defences. However, the other two pairs of concrete pipes at Kenley also appear to cover the slopes toward Whiteleafe and may have been intended to provide ground fire in support of earthwork trenches in addition to any potential Anti-Aircraft function. At the time of the Battle of Britain, Kenley’s anti-aircraft defences consisted of four 40mm Bofors guns supported by WW1-vintage Lewis machine guns and two elderly 3-inch guns (Flint, 1985, 55).

4.25.2 A variety of gun emplacements surrounded the site and 20mm Hispano-Suiza Anti Aircraft gun pits are recorded as being present in 1941. However they were located located ‘near the gate’. A two-man crewed 20mm Hispano-Suiza gun pit photographed on the perimeter of RAF Mildenhall is a far larger sandbagged structure.

4.25.3 The concrete rings are not visible in a 1941 Aerial Photograph, but only one pair (of three pairs) can be seen in a 1944 AP. While features can sometimes be seen on APs, the effects of camouflage, the altitude from which they were taken, and even the photographic grain mean they cannot be relied on when attempting to date features on the ground.

4.25.4 Sewer pipes were widely used as a prefabricated construction material for many purposes. For instance, at the Lensbury Club, the author recorded sewer pipes horizontally laid and covered with earth (with substantial blast doors) to form air-raid shelters (MOLAS 2000).

4.25.5 Taking three years investigations, there is a wealth of huts to interpret. Essentially, however, huts could be converted to several uses throughout their lives so a designation at a particular time does not mean that it retained that function. The Trench 2 hut is depicted on the Kenley Record Site Plan (AM Drg 2430/46), with a rather illegible key number that could either be 102, Small-Arms Ammunition store, a Nissen Hut, or 103, Flight Office, a Timber Hut. However, a series of tags or tallies found nearby may relate to this building and imply that it was more of a general equipment store used by ground crew to maintain aircraft than a store for ammunition. The ground plan is of different dimensions to those of a Nissan hut, which were mass-produced of standardised components. The Trench 2 hut is not visible on an Aerial Photograph of 1941 (unlike concrete rings, huts look consistently visible with no attempts to camouflage them) but is clearly visible on photographs taken in 1944.

4.25.6 The discovery of a German information plate is significant. Several plates have been

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*a* see, for example RAF Friston which closely resembles those excavated at Kenley
http://www.pillbox.org.uk/blog/245386/ , accessed 10.08.2018

*b* https://internationalbcc.co.uk/memories/a-seven-year-scratch-memories-of-a-world-war-ii-pilot-arthur-john-jack-ball-dfc/ Accessed 10.08.2018
found at Kenley over the years. It is POSSIBLE that they were collected over a period of time by Air Ministry scientists (AI2g) who evaluated German equipment (and possibly where it was made, to inform bombing raids). They occupied hangars at Kenley from 1945 (Flint 1985, 146) and may have brought a collection of such plates with them, collected earlier in the war.

4.25.7 There are two obvious sources for an American style canteen (water bottle) cup; It could have been deposited during World War One, when American Air Force mechanics were trained at Kenley or it could be from the Second World War when an American fighter squadron was based there. However, it was found in the tarmac of a hard-stand picketing area [102] and would have been of considerable age if it was accidentally incorporated into the rubble that was bound by tarmac (There are cups which the author uses daily which are more than double that age). The USAAF 308th Pursuit Squadron were present in 1942 but that is too late for the context in which the cup was found, unless it was buried in a subsequently dug feature which was not identified during the 2017 works. Both explanations for the cup’s presence are plausible. Perhaps a keen student of militaria would be able to distinguish the age of the cup on stylistic grounds, such as the type of fittings or the treatment of the cup edge?

4.25.8 Something of the everyday operations of the base has been illuminated by a fragment of a NAAFI cup in 2018 and a 1944 mug in 2019. Bicycle handlebars underlined the importance of bicycles for transport across the base as well as further afield.

4.25.9 The horseshoe found nearby could have been cast by a working horse at any point before the site before it became an airfield or possibly later during construction work in World War Two, or even have been used in games of “horseshoes” (quoits). Whilst the trench 10 hut is clearly visible on 1941 aerial photographs, it is not listed on the Site Plan (see above). The Structure west of the fighter pen is both visible on 1941 aerial photographs and is listed as a “Flight Office” also, with a nearby “Drying room” (100).

Fig 35 Extract from Kenley Record Site Plan (AM Drg 2430/46)

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5 Archaeological potential

5.1 Answering original research aims

5.1.1 Original Research Aims and Objectives. (Section 4, Bright 2019) were answered as follows:

5.1.2 To actively encourage the involvement of the local community in investigating, interpreting and managing their historic environment. The Kenley Revival Project team actively recruited 20 locally-recruited volunteers, including RAF and SSAFA members. These included local volunteers who have worked on the site for three years, as well as new volunteers who provided invaluable input from RAF and SSAFA as well as a specific group of 6 additional youth volunteers. The recruitment process used social media (Twitter and Facebook), Eventbrite, e-newsletters, posters on site and the website (kenleyrevival.org). There were no reserved places for stakeholders, everybody had the same chance to participate.

5.1.3 To educate and promote a greater understanding within the local communities of their local heritage and in particular that of Kenley Airfield. Potential exists for specialist training in military and conflict archaeology. Volunteers investigated 10 different features in 2019. They also had opportunities for finds processing and recording and had many informal opportunities to compare and pass on information. This was also true for 6 youth volunteers, for whom the Second World War is a more distant event than for the author of this report. Free guided tours also provided an opportunity for the wider local community to understand the significance of Kenley in a global struggle.

5.1.4 To offer opportunities for volunteers of all levels to gain practical experience of archaeological field work, including building recording and all manner of field techniques. Volunteers took part in various levels of excavation and recording. All were trained in physical aspects of excavation and everyone had archaeological stratigraphy, and stratigraphical recording, demonstrated to them. Volunteers assisted in recording sections, plans, filling out context sheets and simple surveying.

5.1.5 To highlight the importance of the heritage to local communities and lay the foundations for the beneficial utilisation of their heritage resource for the future. Most of the volunteers were local, and some are regular visitors to the site. There was a steady stream of “walk-in” visitors and neighbours came over to enquire about activities. There is potential for a regular “diary” of events which use the heritage as a resource for fun and education.

5.1.6 To establish the nature, date, purpose and state of preservation of the buried features, interpreted from historical research, cartographic evidence and other visual observations. The investigations have led to a far-greater understanding of buried features and structures, as well as of the construction and subsequent history of structures that were assumed to be already –relatively– well understood. Of significant potential for further understanding of the design of the RAF base are the series of concrete foundations that have tentatively been interpreted as anchors for camouflage netting.

5.1.7 To undertake an assessment of the archaeological potential of the site, the condition of any surviving archaeology and the establish impacts from past and future land-use. The airfield has considerable potential of the engagement of the public in archaeological research with reminiscence and documentary research, to answer
questions as to the use and chronology of structures. This could be as a resource in interpretation displays or booklets. Structures vary in their condition but none raised immediate concerns, unlike the blast pen investigated in 2017. General mowing regimes and keeping monuments below grass has aided their preservation. More areas of asbestos fills have been discovered in 2019, and their locations forwarded to rangers.

5.1.8 To record and preserve the archaeology before it suffers any further damage and highlight the importance of the heritage to local communities.

Local volunteers undertook recording exercises on individual structures and were involved in consideration of their interpretation, and were tasked with considering the wider historic significance of the airfield on a landscape and regional scale.

5.1.9 To accumulate sufficient data to produce an informed report of the archaeology of the site, including recommendations for further works and inform on future conservation and management of the site.

Sufficient information was retrieved to inform aspects of the archaeology of Kenley airfield. Some of this information may be limited to informing conservation choices, such as not disturbing areas of asbestos contamination. There are choices to be made, of what can be displayed and how (avoiding the creation of unnecessary hazards for visitors to the airfield).

5.2 General discussion of potential

5.2.1 The archaeological investigations have demonstrated the potential for buried remains to be exposed, investigated, better understood within the wider development of the airfield, and displayed.

5.2.2 The ease of access to the site with options for able-bodied and for disabled, for all members of the local community, whatever their educational or cultural background or age, indicates the site has potential for wider community engagement (although elderly, parents with young children and disabled will need transport up the hill).

5.2.3 There are numerous structures of interest across the site, some of which attract attention by visitors from curious locals to enthusiasts from wider areas.

5.2.4 As in previous years, arguably the greatest potential is in marrying informal reminiscence with oral history approaches and historical research, alongside archaeological investigations and a landscape-scale interpretation of the site.

5.3 Significance

5.3.1 The archaeological remains of the airfield are of national significance, playing the role it did in historical events pivotal to the course of World War 2.

5.4 New research aims

5.4.1 The outstanding area of new research that arose from the 2019 work is the question of potential camouflage-net covers for blast pens. Did they exist? Have we uncovered anchors for such nets?

5.5 Assessment of the investigation

5.5.1 The primary significance to the data is in stimulation of enquiry and the use of Kenley Airfield as a monument for and by the local community.

5.5.2 The Heritage 2020, National Heritage Framework has Public Engagement as a theme, and includes: The historic environment sector in England has a good track
record in public engagement…. …..we need to find new ways to enthuse a wider range of individuals, groups and communities to participate in the historic environment and, increasingly to take a lead in its management. We need to encourage more dialogue and shared understanding between the varied interest groups in our communities and encourage people to take more direct action in caring for their historic environment. We must inspire teachers and community leaders to see the potential of the historic environment on their doorsteps for learning, skills development, and improved wellbeing. (Historic Environment Forum 2015, 5.5, 11-12). Archaeological investigations at Kenley over three years have laid a solid foundation to engage a core group of individuals from the local community in active participation in the management and care of historic structures on Kenley airfield. In addition a group of youth volunteers experienced excavation, recording and finds processing, and had their experience certified for use in future academic and vocational careers. At least one youth volunteer has expressed an interest in pursuing classical archaeology at undergraduate level. It is an aspiration that enthusiastic volunteers will be able to participate in a regular range of activities that their interest and expertise flourishes and that they may act as ambassadors for heritage in the community.

5.5.3 The 2015 Greater London Historic Environment Research Strategy set out research priorities, including,  
"Post-medieval defensive sites and structures: A survey to create an inventory of post-medieval defences, organised by date, type and function, could provide a basis for future thematic study and amplify developer-funded work. The survey should extend up to and include structures associated with World War II and the Cold War, and is particularly suitable for community and local society involvement. (Museum of London 2015 RP15, 38). The archaeological aspects of the Kenley Revival Project precisely address this research priority.

5.5.4 The 2002 “Research Framework for London Archaeology” poses the following objective • Establishing how well the various defence systems around London from the 16th century to the beginning of the 20th century survive, and considering their influence and effect on Londoners both practically, and psychologically as reflections of power and political security (Museum of London 2002, L5, 71). You can hardly have a more significant moment in the history of Londoners, nor a more acute psychological or physical effect on the capital, than that of the Battle of Britain and the Blitz, and Kenley played a pivotal role in them. Given the physical and psychological trauma of the Blitz on the civilian population, the subsequent history of the airfield was of profound importance to the feeling — and the reality — of security of Londoners. A state that would only be challenged by the emergence of rocket-engined terror weapons towards the end of the war.

5.5.5 A small community investigation of short duration can only aspire to add details to the fringes of this framework objective. However, its contribution should not be underestimated in a field of study that has been noteworthy for its fragmentary and partial nature (c.f. the successful exception of Aggregates levy-funded RAF Hornchurch Project, http://www.rafhornchurch.thehumanjourney.net)

5.5.6 Nationally, airfield defence evolved as a response to the perceived threat, from the “expansion period” pre-WW2 through the experience of Blitzkrieg tactics on continental Europe through to the newly-formed RAF Regiment taking over ground defence from 1942 (Oliver 2002). Ground defence of airfields may be divided between May–June 1940, when simple weapon pit and gun emplacements were brought in. June–September saw the creation of pillboxes, in consort with wider national defences. September 1940– saw defences against the perceived threat of parachute troops (a threat realised in the invasion of Crete in 1941). From autumn 1941, it has been said that static defences were abandoned, in favour battle headquarters, spigot mortars, barbed-wire and mobile forces, a trend that was consolidated from 1942, when the RAF Regiment took over (Dobinson 2000, 47–61).
6 Conclusions

6.1.1 The archaeological investigations at Kenley Airfield 2019 were enabled by the participation of local volunteers, and skilled archaeologist volunteers from further afield in London and well as professional archaeologists, curators and City of London staff with overall responsibility for the management of the site. The participation of RAF and SSAFA volunteers, as well as a specific youth programme, were new initiatives for 2019, which has deepened the range of participation in archaeological research of the site. It should be noted that the 16-24 year olds are underrepresented in terms of engagement with heritage, as indicated by both the 2017/18 and 2018/19 DCMS ‘Taking Part’ Surveys. So the recruitment of youth volunteers was particularly welcome. The co-operation of such a diverse group directly responds to a major theme of Heritage 2020, National Heritage Framework, the strategy document that sets out the shared strategic priorities for organisations working together to maximise the public benefit of the historic environment in England (Historic Environment Forum 2015, 1.5, 2), which defines five themes through which collaborative action can bring the fullest range of resources to bear on the tasks that have been identified as of greatest urgency to sustain and promote the historic environment of England, encourage access and broaden knowledge for a variety of audiences (ibid, 1.7).

Fig 36 2019 Kenley archaeology team on the hottest day of 2019

6.1.2 The activities undertaken have investigated the form and function, as well as the physical condition and some of the conservation and management requirements of a series of structures on the airfield. It has answered significant academic inquiries on the nature of preserved remains and their historical functions, and it has raised new lines of inquiry for the future (were blast pens camouflage netted?).

6.1.3 The contributors to the archaeological investigation left with a determination to pursue further work. It is to be hoped that this can be integrated into the other activities as part of the lasting legacy of the Kenley Revival Project. It should be

considered as a seamless strand in a project with multiple aspects to enable people to connect with, and take ownership of, a vital part of British history so that Kenley will also become a nationally significant heritage resource (Kenley Revival website http://www.kenleyrevival.org/).

6.1.4 The project archive will be made available via the Museum of London Archaeological Archive, and digital copies of records and drawings will be stored with the Kenley Revival Archive. A summary of the results will be stored in the national “OASIS Report Form” (below) and summaries sent to London Archaeologist and Post-Medieval Archaeology. The resources generated, including this report, may be used to inform “blog posts”, websites and leaflets about the site by the Kenley Revival Project, and information signs around the site.
7 Acknowledgements

7.1.1 The author would like to thank the Heritage Lottery Fund, Kenley Revival Project and Marie Rose (Project Manager) for originally commissioning archaeological work as part of the Kenley revival project. Charlotte Islin (Learning and Volunteer Officer) commissioned the 2019 work and managed the site. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank for her kind support on site, as well as organising Ordnance and Asbestos Professional supervision. Linda Duffield (Kenley revival Legacy Officer) provided essential practical assistance on site. Iain Bright (Historic England, Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments) wrote the Written Scheme of Investigation and regularly attended site and took a detailed interest in the work. Jane Sidell (Inspector of Ancient Monuments) provided site tours for the public, as well as being an instrumental presence on the archaeological side of Kenley Revival administratively. Odette Nelson, David Wellings and Guy Taylor provided expert volunteer supervision, played an enormous role in teaching archaeological skills. MOLA Geomaticians Catherine Drew and Mark Burch provided control survey information and Catherine digitised the location of potential targets after rectifying and geolocating Aerial Photographs. I am enormously indebted to Neil Quinn, who not only provided metal detecting but is a notable local historian, Vince Gardiner and Guy Taylor again, for researching finds, colleagues Tony Mackinder and Paul Thrale for useful comments, and (principally) local volunteers who contributed so much to the success of the Community Archaeology event (too numerous to mention by name). Lauren Hardiman was the MOLA Project Manager and Will Rathouse co-supervised the site.
8 Bibliography


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### OASIS archaeological report form

**OASIS ID:** molas1-371598

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#### Project location

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| **Site location** | GREATER LONDON CROYDON COULSDON Kenley Revival Community Archaeology 2019 |
| **Postcode** | CR8 |
| **Study area** | 57117 Square metres |
| **Height OD / Depth** | Min: 159.4m Max: 167m |

#### Project creators

| **Name of Organisation** | MOLA |
| **Project brief originator** | Historic England |
| **Project design originator** | Historic England |
| **Project director/manager** | Lauren Hardiman |
| **Project supervisor** | David Sankey |
| **Type of sponsor/funding body** | Heritage Lottery Funding |
| **Name of sponsor/funding body** | Kenley Revival project |
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