

MK International

Radio mast site at Castle End Farm, Lea, Herefordshire  
*ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT*

NGR 365600 223100

Planning Application reference: SH 971316 PF

Archaeological Planning reference: HSM 27013

Site Code: HWCM 15988



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

June 1998

MK International


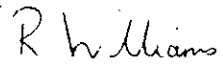
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Prepared by: B. Matthews Date: 5 June, 1998
Checked by:  Date: 12/6/98
Approved by:  HEAD OF FIELDWORK Date: 15/6/1998

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## *SUMMARY*

*The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation on the site of a new radio mast at Castle End Farm, Lea, Herefordshire, on behalf of MK International. The evaluation trenches found no evidence of archaeological features or deposits.*

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Location and scope of work

In June 1998 the Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation on the site of a new radio mast at Castle End Farm, Lea, Herefordshire on behalf of MK International. The evaluation was carried out retrospectively in order to fulfil an archaeological planning condition for a watching brief on construction of the mast (planning reference SH 971316 PF). The work was conducted in accordance with a brief issued by the Herefordshire County Archaeological Officer, and a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by the OAU.

The development site lies on the periphery of the village of Lea, Herefordshire at NGR SO 3656 2231 and covers an area of 96 square metres (Fig. 1).

## 1.2 Geology and topography

The site is situated on high ground adjacent to buildings of Castle End Farm, with the ground falling away gently towards the north-east. The evaluation took place within a newly constructed communications mast compound. Most of the available area within the compound was occupied by the mast and associated plant.

## 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

The development site lies to the south of the Roman town of *Ariconium* (at Weston-under-Penyard) and two Roman roads pass very close to the mast site.

The site is also on the periphery of Lea medieval village, which is first mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. The origin of the place name 'Castle End' is not clear, but could perhaps indicate the presence of a high status medieval settlement in the vicinity.

A search of the Hereford County Sites and Monuments Record has been carried out, covering a radius of 500 m around the radio mast site. The results by period are as follows:

### *Prehistoric:*

HSM 06620: Neolithic and Bronze Age flints found at Adam's Cot, Lea. (SO 660 223)

### *Medieval:*

HSM 06770: Lea parish church (St. John the Baptist). (SO 6576 2174)

HSM 26893: Castle site? 'Castle End' placenames occur to the north-east of Lea Parish Church, on either side of the Roman road leading south from *Ariconium*, but the castle or other defended site to which they refer has not been identified. (SO 655 220)

HSM 25759: Lea medieval settlement. Domesday entry, 1086: *The church itself holds Lea by gift of Walter of Lacy. Ansgot held it before 1066. 1 hide which pays tax. He could go where he would. In lordship 1 plough; 2 slaves; 1 smallholder. The value is and was 10s. 1 more plough possible* (HSM 25759 after Thorn 1983). (SO 660 210)

*Post-medieval and modern*

HSM 12033: Castle End Farm, Lea, 17<sup>th</sup> century dovecote. (SO 6532 2186)

HSM 15166: Castle End Farm, Lea, 17<sup>th</sup> century house (SO 6535 2186)

HSM 15169: Post-medieval tollhouse. North of Castle End, Lea. (SO 6538 2232)

HSM 15170: Post-medieval house. North of Rock Farm, Lea. (SO 6602 2190)

Defence of Britain Project entry: Royal Observer Corps Post, Lea. (SO 652 223)

*Unclassified*

HSM 15986-15990 and 26893: Fields surveyed as part of the Lea and Weston Penyard Sewage Transfer Scheme. Details of the findings are not currently available. (SO 655 222)

## **2 EVALUATION AIMS**

The aims of this evaluation were:

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the radio mast compound;
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present;
- To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features;
- To make available the results of the investigation.

## **3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

The evaluation area comprised two narrow trenches, excavated using a JCB fitted with a 0.50m wide toothless ditching bucket, under close archaeological supervision.

### **3.1 Sample size**

The evaluation was restricted to the interior of the radio mast enclosure. There was very little space available, so the size of the trenches was less than proposed in the WSI (Trench 1 measured 6.5 m x 0.8 m and Trench 2 measured 5.0 m x 0.5 m. The trenches were excavated along the north-east and north-west sides of the radio mast enclosure. This represents an 8% sample of the development area (see Fig.2).

### **3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording**

The trenches were cleaned by hand, photographed and recorded following procedures defined in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992) and *Requirements and Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Hereford and Worcester* (HWCC Archaeological Service. *Planning Advisory Section*).

The archive, including all site records and a copy of the evaluation report, will be deposited with the Hereford County Museum. Copies of the report will be submitted to the Hereford County Sites and Monuments Record. All site records are marked marked with the site code HWCM 15988. The SMR reference will be HSM 27013.

### **3.3 Finds**

Trenches and spoil tips were monitored for the presence of archaeological finds. No finds were recovered.

### **3.4 Environmental data**

The site has no palaeoenvironmental potential.

## **4 RESULTS: GENERAL**

### **4.1 Soils and ground conditions**

The general soil type was firm sandy clay. Ground conditions were dry.

### **4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits**

No archaeologically significant finds or features were found.

## **5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS**

### **5.1 Description of deposits**

The two trenches were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.0 m beneath the present ground surface level. The soil sequence consisted of a series of reddish brown sandy clays with banded sand lenses which gradually slope down to the northeast (Fig 2, Section 2). Both trenches were somewhat disturbed by the insertion of modern earthing straps and were overlain by *c.* 0.20 m of recently laid gravel and stone chippings, surrounding the present radio mast. There was no evidence of archaeological features or finds beneath the level of the radio mast footings.

## **6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION**

### **6.1 Reliability of field investigation**

Within the radio mast compound the topsoil had been removed to a depth of *c.* 0.20 m and replaced with stone chippings and gravel. Although there was some modern intrusion below this level, the underlying subsoil otherwise appeared clean and undisturbed in the excavated trenches.

### **6.2 Summary of Results**

No archaeological features or deposits were found.

## **Bibliography**

Hereford and Worcester Planning Advisory Section *Requirements and Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Hereford and Worcester.*

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*, (First edition, August 1992)

Thorn F and Thorn C 1983 *Herefordshire Domesday Book*

## Appendix 1: Archaeological context inventory.

HWCM 15988				
Trench 1				
Cxt.No	Type	Description / Comments	Depth (m)	Finds
1	Layer	Gravel and stone chippings	0.2	None
2	Layer	Ploughsoil	0.1	None
3	Layer	Subsoil	0.06	None
4	Layer	Subsoil	0.5	None
5	Feature	Modern intrusion	0.5	None
Trench 2				
Cxt.No	Type	Description / Comments	Depth (m)	Finds
6	Layer	Gravel and stone chippings	0.2	None
7	Layer	Subsoil	0.78	None
8	Layer	Subsoil	0.38	None
9	Layer	Subsoil	0.58	None





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