

Ancient Monuments Laboratory
Report 240/87

SOIL REPORT ON ST MARTIN ORGER,
ALDGATE 86, LONDON.

R I Macphail BSc MSc PhD

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Summary

Field examination showed the presence of a moderately disturbed argillic brown earth developed in Brickearth and alluvial sands and gravels.

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During the spring of 1987 the excavation of 2nd Century AD Roman destruction levels by the Department of Urban Archaeology at St Martin Orger, Aldgate revealed a buried soil. The soil was described in the field (Hodgson 1974), and comprises an argillic brown earth, with minor gleying (see Soil Profile Description), and can probably be included within the Hucklesbrook Association (Jarvis, et al 1983). It has developed in brickearth, sands and gravels - river terrace drift.

The soil can be compared with a buried soil from beneath Lloyds Merchant Bank (LLO 78; site supervisor Mr K Flude) which was studied in detail (Macphail, 1980, AMLR 3045; believed to have been archived by the DUA). In the latter, soil micromorphology showed the brickearth parent material to have been of a fluvial character, the Eb horizon appeared to be depleted of iron and clay, whereas the Btg horizon was characterised by the illuvial translocation of iron and clay. From this study it can be inferred that similar parent materials at St Martin Orger have given rise to a similar kind of depleted argillic brown earth (Avery, 1980) generally regarded as the product of a woodland environment (Duchaufour, 1982) although from the evidence of the Lloyd's soil pedogenic histories can be severely affected by anthropogenic influences (Macphail, 1986; Macphail et al 1987).

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Soil Profile Description. St Martin Orger, Aldgate 86

Horizon, depth cm.

Roman Levels.

10.91 m OD

Ah/Ag 0-24(31) Brown (7.5YR4/2) and dark brown (7.5YR3/2) weak sandy loam; fine blocky to prismatic structure; very low porosity; moderately humose; with many burned brick, charcoal etc. from physical mixing; irregular, clear boundary.

Ebg 24(31)-43(48) Yellowish brown (10YR5/4) weak sand with common medium diffuse mottles; moderately porous; few relic root channels which are iron stained; uneven, clear boundary.

Bg 43(48)-(59) Discontinuous yellowish brown (10YR5/4) weak sand with many, prominent, coarse ochreous mottles; broken, clear boundary.

Btg (59)-75+ Strong brown (7.5YR5/6) very weak sandy clay loam; well developed coarse prisms; few flints; few, diffuse, coarse mottles; few thin clay coatings; few relic root holes.

C Sands and gravels.