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HERTFORD CENTRAL AREA

*Review of site records
and proposals for archive and assessment*

Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust



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THE HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

HERTFORD CENTRAL AREA

**REVIEW OF SITE RECORDS
AND PROPOSALS FOR
ARCHIVE AND ASSESSMENT**

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September 1994

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HERTFORD CENTRAL AREA

Review of site records and proposals for archive and assessment

1. INTRODUCTION

Between 1977 and 1980, excavations and watching briefs were carried out in the centre of Hertford by the East Hertfordshire Archaeological Group/Unit (HAU). This work was occasioned by the development of large areas in the centre of the town, notably the former bus station and car park at Bircherley Green. Excavations were funded by several bodies, including DoE, MSC and local government. In recent years, further work in the town has been undertaken by the Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust (HAT), most notably at Castle Street/Express Dairy, Jewson's Yard and Millbridge.

Considering the extent of redevelopment, the HAU excavations were all small in area, probably reflecting funding limitations rather than limited intentions. The general aim of the excavations was the same; to build up a picture of the origins, development and nature of the Saxon *burhs* and medieval town. This work was complemented by the "Hertford Survey", a wide-ranging study of the geography, history and architecture of the town.

Because of the character of these excavations, collective publication of the HCA sites is felt to be the most appropriate means of presenting them. Towards this end, a review has been carried out of the relevant HAU site records and finds assemblages to determine the scale of work necessary to prepare this material for archiving and ultimately for publication, and to indicate the relative importance of each site. The results of this process (to MAP2, Appendices 3-5), begun by Alison Tinniswood, completed by Bob Zeepvat, and funded by HAT, are summarised below. The only HAT site archive involved, Millbridge, has already been assessed for publication: details of that assessment are also included.

2. THE REVIEW

2.1 The Sites

Ten HAU sites were reviewed. These were:

<i>HAT no.</i>	<i>HAU no.</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Extent</i>
P88	HL77	Honey Lane	Excavation
P90	HCA79/80	Bircherley Green	Excavation
P93	DEW78	Dewhurst's	Building recording
P94	BOT77	Priory Street	Exc./Watching brief
P99	HRS80	Railway Street	Excavation
P100	HCM80	Covered Market	Excavation
P126	HMCP80	Museum Car Park	Excavation
P129	CH80	Canvas Holidays	Watching brief
P135	HMP80	Market Place	Watching brief
P139	BP80	23 Bull Plain	Watching brief

also included is one HAT site:

P16	-	Millbridge	Excavation.
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2.2 Review Criteria

The categories of site archive listed below were examined with regard to the following aspects:

Context records: degree of descriptive detail, dimensions, location, relationships, OD level, cross-referencing of plans, sections, photographs and finds and provisional phasing. In the event of any of this information being inadequate or absent, the potential of alternative information sources (eg site notebooks) was examined.

Site drawings: indexing, location, presence/absence of context numbering.

Photographs/slides: indexing, description.

Finds assemblages: size and location, initial processing (ie washing, marking, bagging), labelling, conservation, previous specialist study.

Finds records: description, location, statements of quantity, cross-referencing, provisional dating, drawing.

Interim reports: degree of description, provisional phasing, objectivity.

Additionally, the findings of the HAU excavations are summarised below, with comments on their interpretation, provisional phasing and presence/absence of dating material and other important deposits (e.g. environmental).

3. THE RESULTS

3.1 Context Records

With the exception of the watching briefs (P89, P93, P99) the same site recording system was used for all the HAU sites reviewed, namely context ("unit") sheets supplemented by a site notebook for the site archive. Numbering systems vary from single-context numeric (P88) to numeric features/layers (other HAU sites) to alphanumeric (P16). In general, the descriptive detail is adequate for all Hertford Central Area (HCA) sites. The location of contexts within the site grid is usually given, as are relationships with adjoining contexts. Provisional phasing is often noted, presumably as a result of preliminary examination of the site's pottery assemblage (see below). However, dimensions and OD levels are seldom noted. Likewise, cross-referencing of plans, sections, photographs and finds is absent from most site records. Examination of the site notebooks suggest that the few missing relationships and descriptions encountered can be sourced from there, whilst cross-referencing with site drawings and photographs should be straightforward.

The largest of the context records - and the most variable - is that for P88 (Honey Lane). The major problem here is the large number of missing record sheets, up to 27% of the total. For the remainder, descriptions vary from very good to adequate, but on 10% either descriptions or relationships have been omitted. While some of the gaps can be at least partly filled by reference to the main site section drawings, the site notebook does not provide a "back-up", as for other sites. There also appear to be a large number of contexts with more than one number, but these can be easily weeded out. Unlike other sites, a "level book" survives for P88.

In contrast, the HAT site at Millbridge presents few problems. Contexts are fully described, with relationships, dimensions, levels and provisional phasing, and are fully cross-referenced.

3.2 Site Drawings

Site plans are drawn in pencil on permatrace (some for P16 and P88 are inked). No systematic record exists for any HAU Hertford Central sites. Only P88 has an overall site location plan, and site grid layouts are usually only recorded in sketch form in site notebooks. Multi-phase context plans are the norm, while sections consist of "running sections" of the site baulks, and detail sections of individual features. With the exception of P88, "post-excavation" drawings have been prepared in ink on tracing paper, consisting of overall single-phase plans and individual feature sections; examination of these suggests that some original drawings for these sites are missing, possibly discarded. The quality of the drawings is very variable, but they should form a basis for final publication drawings.

Once again, the exception to this is Millbridge. Site drawings are indexed and properly labelled, and provide a comprehensive record of the excavated contexts.

3.3 Site Photographs

No systematic record exists for any HAU Hertford Central photographic material. Slides have been numbered and filed; negatives and contacts have been filed unnumbered. No descriptions of slides or B&W photos exists, but examination of a small sample suggests that a high percentage could be identified. With the exception of P88 (172 slides, 40 B&W), there are no more than 30 slides or B&W negatives for each site. The exception to this is Millbridge, where photographs are properly labelled and fully indexed.

3.4 Finds Assemblages

Most if not all finds have been washed, marked and bagged, and small finds have been conserved. The finds have recently been repackaged in "standard" HAT small boxes, all of which are labelled and catalogued (the catalogue requires typing up or, more usefully, entering on a database). Most boxes are only lightly packed. This exercise was funded and carried out by HAT.

Average weights for the main "bulk" categories of finds for the principal HCA sites are:

Pottery	4.5 kg
Bone	3.0 kg
Building materials	5.0 kg

The numbers of finds boxes in the HAT store belonging to each site are listed below, by finds category. "Part" boxes have been counted as half a box; half boxes are rounded up in the totals.

<i>Finds Category</i>	<i>Site No.</i>								<i>Total</i>
	P16	P88	P90	P94	P99	P100	P126	P129	
Pottery	37	30	10	4	12	4	3	0	100
Clay pipe	1	2	1	>1	3	>1	>1	0	9
Stone	5	1	1	1	>1	0	?	0	9
Shell	5	5	1	>1	1	>1	0	0	13
Glass	1	3	3	1	3	1	>1	0	13
Building mat	43	36	2	0	7	4	>1	0	93
Organic	4	1	1	0	1	>1	0	0	8
Animal bone	90	7	7	2	32	13	1	0	152
Iron	4	7	1	>1	3	>1	0	0	16
Slag	3	1	1	0	2	>1	0	0	8
Soil samples	25	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	28
Small finds	238	231	230	1	3	56	4	0	

(NB. P16 soil samples in large polythene bags, not boxes)

Some post-excavation work appears to have been carried out on the HAU Hertford Central finds. The pottery assemblages from all sites except P88 were examined, forming the basis for Hugh Borrill's type series for Hertford. Preliminary identification of some of the bone assemblages has been carried out, and there are indications at P90 that considerable quantities of bone was recovered from early medieval contexts. Several of the clay pipe assemblages have also been studied in some detail. No specialist attention has been given to the small finds. Some appear to be post-medieval, and therefore require little further work, but the earlier finds should all be looked at. The finds assemblage from Millbridge has been assessed for post-excavation and conservation work, but none has yet been carried out.

3.5 Finds Records

With the exception of the watching briefs (P89, P93, P99) the same site and finds recording system was used for all the HAU sites reviewed, namely finds cards (sheets at P88) for each context, and index cards and a finds register for small finds. The standard of recording and archiving procedures on HAU sites was variable, but a general index of all the material was compiled, and all the small finds were carded. The material was not quantified. The exception to this once again was P88. Here the recording was far more comprehensive; all finds were quantified by number, and small finds listed, for each context. The Millbridge finds record is also comprehensive, with fully quantified catalogues for the various finds categories, and a card index of small finds.

"Publication" drawings of small finds, clay pipes and pottery are present in all HAU site archives except P94. No Millbridge finds have been drawn.

3.6 Interim Reports/Site Summaries

Reports for all sites except P88 appear in the main to be detailed, reliable and unbiased accounts and interpretations of the site data, drawing on much of the site record, and are in effect site summaries rather than interims. The P88 interim is written in more general terms, and appears to take a rather more optimistic view of the relative importance of the excavation results. The Millbridge interim is brief but detailed, giving a balanced summary of the excavation results. Detailed site summaries exist for the pre-Roman and Roman periods at Millbridge.

3.7 Minor Sites

Three sites (P129, P135, P139) were only small-scale watching briefs. The site records for these are contained in the watching brief report, with only a single sketch plan/section. None appear to have produced any finds. With these should be included P94, which was a combined excavation and watching brief, but for which there are no records of the excavation, and only incomplete records for the watching brief.

The remaining site (P93) involved the recording of a section of medieval timber-framing at 10 Maidenhead Street. While specialist advice on the dating and importance of this has yet to be sought, it is felt that this site warrants separate treatment.

4. PROPOSED ARCHIVAL WORK

It is evident from this review that the HAU site records (and, to a much lesser extent, Millbridge) require some attention to bring them up to a standard suitable for archiving and, ultimately, publication. The HAU sites involved are P88, P90, P99, P100, and P126. The tasks proposed are detailed below according to MAP2 (Appendix 3); estimates of the time required appear below in Appendix 1.

4.1 Excavation Tasks

For the HAU sites, the only task remaining to be completed that is identified by MAP2 as being a part of the excavation process is that of finds cataloguing.

4.2 Materials and Records

Included in this section are the following tasks:

- a) Adding/amending missing/incorrect context relationships and descriptions.
- b) Cataloguing site drawings and photographs.
- c) Cross-referencing contexts and drawings/photographs.
- d) Cross-referencing contexts and finds.
- e) Enhancing site recording sheets and drawings for the purpose of security copying.

Because of the small size of the site archives involved, inputting onto a computer database appears an unnecessary and time-consuming operation, and is not proposed.

4.3 Matrix and Summaries

Included in this section are the following tasks:

- a) All HAU sites require cross-checking of stratigraphic relationships, and preparation of a full matrix for each site. This work has already been done for Millbridge.
- b) Phase plans already exist for HAU sites except Honey Lane. These will need checking, and phase plans are required for Honey Lane and Millbridge.
- c) Site summaries need to be prepared for Honey Lane and the post-Roman phases at Millbridge.
- d) Artefact record summaries are required for the HAU sites.

5. SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The following period summaries have been compiled primarily from the notes on provisional dating, where available, supported by examination of the site records, as necessary.

5.1 Prehistoric

Bircherley Green (P90): Evidence of early activity, in the form of two shallow gullies (U83, U84) and a small pit (U85), cut into an old ground surface (U38), sealed by a medieval soil bank (U26). The only finds from these features were flints. This phase was tentatively assigned a Bronze Age date by the excavator, presumably on the evidence of the flints, but these features could be equally of any pre-medieval date.

5.2 Roman

Millbridge (P16): Apart from a few RB sherds and stray finds, P16 has been the primary source of evidence for this period. From this low-lying area adjacent to the river Lee have been recovered an RB cremation (ALE) with two pots and a platter dated to AD40-65. Also found was evidence of plough marks (APK1-3, APT1-10) with a *tpq* of the 2nd century, and a sub-circular ditched "enclosure" (ANL/ANX/APZ). In the northern half of the site was an area of flint cobbling, and alignments and groups of post- and stakeholes (some with the wood surviving) appear to represent fence lines (AND, ANH, ANJ, ANV1-5, ANY1-5) and parts of structures. A number of pits and drainage gullies were also noted. There is evidence that the activity associated with these features continued into the 4th century. On the Roman river channel, NW of the present canalised course of the river, eight substantial timbers set into the bank were interpreted as part of a quay, or supports for a bridge. The waterlogged state of the site facilitated a comprehensive programme of environmental sampling for this period, the assessment of which is commented on below.

5.3 Saxon

From the provisional phasing available, there appears to be a hiatus in human activity in the present town between the fifth and ninth centuries.

Millbridge (P16): The RB features at P16 were covered by a thick "interregnum" silt deposit, (AMS, AMW, ANB, ALL, AMK) suggesting repeated extensive flooding of low-lying areas adjacent to the river. Several features of a 10th/11th century date had been dug into this deposit.

5.4 Late Saxon/Medieval

Human activity appears to commence/recommence on most sites in the tenth/eleventh centuries, probably in connection with the founding of the northern *burh*, and probably the reconstruction of the southern *burh*, by Edward the Elder in 911. Between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries there appears to have been a decline in human activity, evidenced by increasing areas of open, waste ground in the centre of the town. This is probably associated with the Black Death, and the decline of Hertford as a centre of communication and trade in the region, in the face of the development of Ware.

Bircherley Green (P90): The principal feature in this period was a large 'V' shaped ditch (U32), almost 6.0m wide and 2.0m deep, running NNW-SSE. On its west side were the remains of a bank (U26). The ditch had largely silted up naturally. Pottery from its fill

suggested a late 12th century date, and there was no evidence for cleaning or recutting. A group of seven postholes (U31, 70, 71, 76, 77, 80, 81) forming no distinct pattern were excavated at the west end of the site, and groups of pits at the north (U72-74) and east (U19, 21, 29, 30) ends respectively. Adjacent to the posthole group was a small circular oven (U75), while a narrow gully (U36) ran parallel with and to the east of Ditch U32. These features contained only a small quantity of sherds, of late 11th to 13th-century date. There appears to have been little activity on the site between the 14th and 18th centuries, during which time layers of gravelly silt (U3, 11) accumulated over the earlier features. A few small pits containing later medieval sherds were cut into these silt layers.

Railway Street (P99): Evidence of a series of timber buildings fronting the forerunner of the present Railway Street. The earliest, provisionally dated to c.AD1000, consisted of a beamslot-founded building (1) adjacent to a post-in-trench built structure (2). In both cases, only the north and west walls were located. Building 1 was subsequently replaced by a beamslot-founded structure (3) extending further northwards but not as far west. This was in turn replaced by a post-hole structure 2.0 x 5.0+m (4), aligned east-west, located immediately north of the site of Building 1. Occupation of these buildings seems to have ceased by the twelfth century. Of the features comprising these buildings only U67, the west slot for Building 3, and U60, one of the Building 4 post-holes, contained any pottery. To the north of these buildings was an oven pit and a series of rubbish pits, containing pottery, bone and other domestic refuse.

Sealing these Saxo-Norman features was a layer of silt (U49), containing mixed 10th-12th century sherds. Overlying this was a thin gravel layer (U48), sealed in turn by a 0.5m-deep loam deposit containing 16th-century material. Although there were two post-holes cut into these layers, it appears that the site remained unoccupied and largely disused for much of the medieval period.

Honey Lane (P88): The earliest features on this site have been dated provisionally to the eleventh century, and consist of a series of pits and shallow postholes, the latter forming no intelligible pattern. The only possible evidence of an early building, dated to the 12th century by the excavator, was an isolated E-W beamslot (671). A series of deep and substantial postholes, dated to the 12th/13th centuries, may indicate the presence of post-built timber structures, though the identification of individual buildings at this early date is difficult, owing to the narrowness of the site and the presence of cellars at the east (Market Place) end of the site, where buildings might be expected.

Overlying these early features was a "black earth" deposit (542), suggesting that the area remained open and disused for some time, probably from the 14th-16th century. It was cut by a few post-holes and a rubbish pit (531). Both 542 and 531 contained large quantities of medieval sherds.

Millbridge (P16): As noted above, activity resumed on this site in the 10th/11th century. The earliest features of this date noted included a waterlogged cess-pit (ALZ) and a drainage gully (ALT). However, little structural evidence was found.

Two further phases of activity were recorded in the 11th and 12th centuries. The first of these consisted of a series of layers of dumped material, possibly connected with the construction of Hertford Castle in the 11th century. The second has been identified as four beamslot-founded timber structures, possibly sheds or outbuildings to the rear of houses facing St Andrew Street. As with earlier phases, many contexts related to this phase were waterlogged, and produced much environmental material.

Covered Market (P100): During the 11th and 12th centuries, this site was largely open ground, heavily disturbed by a sequence of pits (28 in all), most containing pottery. On the west side of the excavated area were two linked beamslots (U74), forming the west side and a partition wall of a building fronting Market Street. This structure was short-lived, being cut by pits belonging to this phase. A beam-slot (U52) running almost parallel to the north site of the excavation may have been the rear (south) wall of a building fronting Railway Street. Unlike the first building, this feature contained pottery. Also dated to this phase was a clay-lined oven (U69) in the centre of the site. Pottery was present in its fill.

This site appears to have fallen out of use during the late 12th-early 13th century, when the Saxo-Norman features were sealed by accumulated soil deposits (U35, 36/2, 46). In the late 13th century a gravel yard surface (U36) was laid across the centre of the site, associated with a hearth (U45) on its south edge. The excavator suggested that the latter feature stood inside a timber building constructed on a soleplate, but the site records do not show any conclusive evidence for this. In the 14th century five stake-holes were cut into the yard surface, which was covered by a layer of flint and tile rubble.

Museum Car Park (P126): This area remained open and unoccupied throughout the medieval period, though the discovery of quantities of pottery suggested the presence of occupation nearby.

Priory Street (P94): The site remained as open ground throughout this period. A few Saxo-Norman sherds were recovered.

Canvas Holidays (P129): Produced evidence for medieval occupation, including four cess-pits and 14th-15th century pottery.

Market Place (P135): Five burials and a pit were recorded during the laying of a sewer in Market Place. The pit contained 11th-12th century sherds, and the burials are assumed to be contemporary, part of a burial ground associated with an early Market Place cross, or from a cemetery associated with All Saints Church.

5.5 Post-Medieval

Occupation evidence from most sites appears to increase in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Exceptions to this increased activity were P126, which was evidently a garden, and P16, where a continuing lack of human activity after the thirteenth century provided further evidence of the decline and contraction of medieval Hertford.

Bircherley Green (P90): Appears to have remained unoccupied for the early part of this period, as mentioned above. In the early part of the 18th century a building (1) was constructed in the NW corner of the site. Only one room was excavated; its earliest floor (U65) consisted of rammed chalk, with a flint and earth wall to the south and a beamslot to the west. In the late 18th century this was covered by a compacted clay layer (U63), in which were set bricks to support a timber floor. The beamslot was recut, and the flint wall replaced by brick, with a second brick wall on the east side of the room. At a still later date a chalk floor was laid in the room, and the timber partition wall replaced in brick. To the south of Building 1 was a second structure (Building 2), probably Victorian, represented by a brick-built cellar backfilled with demolition rubble. Both buildings probably fronted onto Green Street, to the west. Other features belonging to this period were confined to the east part of

the site (*i.e.* the gardens of these properties, and consisted of services (drains, soakaway, etc) and garden features.

Railway Street (P99): In the 17th century the west part of the site was covered by a yard surface, consisting of flint and chalk, compacted gravel and mixed flint, tile, brick and mortar. This was sealed in the 18th century by a layer of chalky loam, over which a gravel path was constructed. In the 19th century a brick building (33 Railway Street) was constructed on the site. This was demolished *c.* 1930.

Honey Lane (P88): Occupation recommenced on the site during the 16th century. The south wall of a building fronting Honey Lane was found, adjacent to a gravel-surfaced alleyway leading to a yard behind the property. This building was subsequently demolished, probably in the 17th century, and reconstructed on a similar plan on dwarf chalk/flint walls. At this time it received an additional back room, with an elaborate stone chimney breast. An early chalk wall embedded in the brick walls of the 18th century cellar fronting Honey Lane suggests that it also had a small cellar. In the courtyard behind these building was a well, lined with flint set in mortar. To the west of the well, south of the continuing course of the alleyway, was the north wall of a timber building.

In the 18th century the timber buildings were all replaced by brick structures, constructed on the old footings. The basement was probably enlarged at this time, and the spoil resulting from this was used to raise the level of the rear (west) part of the site. In the late 18th/early 19th century an extension was added to the rear of the northern building, and the presence of burning and slag found in it suggested industrial usage.

Millbridge (P16): Apart from occasional "back-yard" features, the site appears to have remained unoccupied until the 18th century, when the first phases of the present buildings were constructed.

Museum Car Park (P126): This site remained free of buildings, but from the 18th century onwards was laid out as a garden for the building now housing the Museum. Bedding trenches and a garden path of clinker and gravel were among the features belonging to this period.

Priory Street (P94): The site remained open ground until the mid 18th century, when two stone buildings were constructed.

Covered Market (P100): During the early 17th century, a rectangular lime kiln (U26) was constructed in the east part of the site, while a chalk raft (U27) was laid over the west part of the excavated area. This raft probably supported a building, as a fragment of flint walling was found on its SE corner, but no other evidence of the structure remained, because of later disturbance. In the 18th century two small brick-built cottages, backed by a gravel yard (U4) were constructed on the Railway Street frontage. The yard may be part of "Workhouse Yard", recorded on the site in 1705.

5.6 Finds Assemblages

Most sites produced small but mostly securely stratified finds assemblages. While some of these assemblages would be of little interest studied separately, preliminary examination suggests that some (*e.g.* pottery, clay pipes, building materials) would be of far greater use if studied collectively. Work previously undertaken by Hugh Borrill towards a pottery type-series for Hertford certainly fits in with this approach.

The sequence of pottery from Millbridge is of particular importance in both local and regional contexts. It provides a Roman assemblage, hitherto unknown in Hertford, clearly separated by alluvial deposits from later material. This ceramic sequence has not been found in other Hertfordshire towns, and should provide a clear indication of the separation of Roman and later shelly-ware forms, and more precise dating for the start of the Saxo-Norman greyware tradition.

Additionally, there may be individual well-stratified objects of particular interest amongst the assemblage, requiring further study in their own right. Similar approaches to finds study have been followed in recent years at Colchester, Winchester, and Milton Keynes.

5.7 Environmental Assemblages

Apart from three boxes of soil samples from Honey Lane, Millbridge is the only site to have revealed well-stratified waterlogged deposits, and is consequently the only one on which a coherent environmental sampling policy was followed. The Millbridge material, collected from both Roman and medieval contexts, has already been assessed by P. Murphy. The Roman material is of special interest locally, as it provides evidence for environmental conditions prior to the founding of the Saxon *burh*.

A total of 152 boxes of bone were collected from the HCA sites. Of this, only the Millbridge material has been assessed (by CFRU). As with the waterlogged material, they conclude that further study of the Roman element of the assemblage is particularly important, and that the Saxon/medieval material should be studied in comparison with that from Hertford Castle (P27, P31).

6. SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL EVIDENCE

The Hertford Survey archive contains several files of notes, mainly on historical sources and buildings, as well as early drafts with corrections and comments, and a "final" draft of about 10,500 words, which apparently takes these comments on board. A substantial amount of research appears to have been carried out, drawing on a number of sources. There is a detailed bibliography, attached to an early draft of the report. The "final" draft contains the following sections:

- a) Summary introduction.
- b) Topography, communications and pre-Saxon activity.
- c) Founding of Hertford.
- d) Medieval Hertford.
- e) Post-medieval Hertford.
- f) Street plan and development.
- g) Archaeology, and proposals for future work.

This draft seems comprehensive and well-researched, and provides a sound historical and topographical background to the HCA sites and to Hertford generally. However, most if not all of it will need rewriting before it can be used, as the sentence construction and punctuation employed is thoroughly inadequate, and the writer has tended to "ramble" around his subject, rather than moving logically and succinctly from point to point. References, which appear more complete in earlier drafts, will need checking.

Currently under preparation as a private venture by Robert Kiln and Clive Partridge is a publication on the origins and history of Hertford and Ware. It is likely to include a commentary based on the *Hertford Survey*, and general information on HAU and HAT sites in Hertford and Ware. This is a "popular" publication, and is not seen as duplicating in any way the work proposed in this document.

7. PREPARATION OF ASSESSMENT REPORT

Much of what is required in a project assessment report (MAP2, appendix 4) has already been dealt with in this document. Aspects already dealt with include the quantity of records and archaeological material, provenance, range and variety (*Section 4*), a summary statement of the findings of the HCA excavations (*Section 5*), and the existence of relevant documentation (*Section 6*). Assessments of individual categories of finds have already been carried out for the Millbridge site and, less formally, for the pottery and clay pipe assemblages from some of the HAU sites. These are noted in *Section 3.4*. Estimates for the scale of work required to assess the remaining categories of finds from the HAU sites to a similar standard are given in *Appendix 2*.

In summary, individual assessment reports are required for the following assemblages from HAU sites:

<i>Category</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Pottery	63 boxes	(post-exc notes in site archives)
Clay pipe	7	(post-exc notes in site archives)
Stone	8	
Shell	8	
Glass	11	
Building materials	49	
Organic	3	
Animal bone	62	(post-exc notes in site archives)
Iron	12	
Slag	4	
Soil samples	3	
Small finds	500 approx (all conserved)	

8. RESEARCH DESIGN

Preliminary assessment of the Hertford Central area sites indicates that these excavations should be viewed as a coherent group, a view reflected from the outset in the aims for which they were originally carried out. Taking both these original aims and the results of the excavations (summarised in *Section 6*) into account, future work on the Hertford Central Area sites is seen to have three principal aims:

- a) to provide a picture of the current state of archaeological knowledge for Hertford.

Comment: Little has been published on the origins and early development of the town, apart from Martin Petchey's observations (1977) on the possible extent of the Saxon *burh*. While evidence from the HCA sites does little to further knowledge of the latter, a picture of the town's later development can be seen emerging from the archaeological summaries given above. The Roman finds from Millbridge are particularly important in this respect, as they provide evidence for a hitherto unknown period of human activity in the area of the town. This is broadly in line with current English Heritage approaches (EH 1991, 39-40).

A broader understanding of the origins and growth of Hertford may also have implications for the understanding of other medieval towns in the county. The scale of work in Hertford, though small in comparison with that undertaken in larger centres (Winchester, Southampton, York, etc) is nevertheless greater than that carried out in other Hertfordshire towns. Of particular interest in this respect is the medieval pottery (see below).

- b) to determine research priorities for future archaeological work in the town.

Comment: this too is in line with current EH policy (*ibid.*, 40). Although the sort of large-scale development which permitted excavation of the HCA sites is unlikely in the foreseeable future, some framework is required with which to view continuing small-scale developments in the town, and their archaeological implications and potential.

Of particular importance for both Aims (a) and (b), in a regional as well as local context, are the Roman and medieval environmental assemblages recovered at Millbridge.

- c) to construct a comprehensive pottery type-series for the town and its environs.

Comment: This was one of the aims of the original HCA programme of excavations, and Hugh Borrill's work forms a basis for constructing a Saxo-Norman and medieval type-series. To this can be added the important Roman sequence from Millbridge, which contains elements not recorded elsewhere in Hertfordshire (*Section 5.6*). Taken together, these assemblages should provide a ceramic sequence of regional as well as local importance. Furthermore, as a high proportion of HCA site contexts appear to be securely stratified, it should be possible to carry out similar, related studies on other finds assemblages (e.g. clay pipes).

It is envisaged that the "Hertford Survey" will form the basis for studying the town's history and development, providing a framework into which can be fitted the results of the excavations.

From the review (*Section 6*) it is apparent that of the eleven HCA sites, only four (P16, P88, P90, P99) are of sufficient size and archaeological interest to be studied in any detail. One site (P100) falls on the borderline of this group, being similar in size but producing far fewer finds, which may make it more difficult to date accurately.

Five sites (P94, P126, P129, P135, P139) are all either very small trial trenches or watching briefs, producing few intelligible features or securely stratified finds, if any. While some potentially important information was gained from some of them (e.g. burials in the Market Place area in P135), the scale and results of these sites warrant little more the archiving tasks already proposed (*Section 4*).

9. SUBMISSION TO ENGLISH HERITAGE

9.1 Funding Background

As described in the *Introduction* (Section 1) the HAU Hertford Central sites were funded from three principal sources, namely the Department of the Environment, the Manpower Services Commission and local government. The Trust inherited no records of the exact contributions made by these three bodies, but an attempt has been made (Appendix 3.1) to list sources of funding for each of the HAU sites.

English Heritage/DoE: It is evident from this that, although most funding came from local government sources, DoE helped to fund some, if not all, of the larger projects. In the case of Millbridge, for which detailed figures are available, English Heritage funded 44% of the total cost.

Manpower Services Commission: It is clear from surviving HAU files that substantial funding was provided by MSC for most, if not all, of the HAU sites in Hertford, as part of the "Hart Project". This also included the *Hertford Survey*.

Local Government: Funding from local government, in most if not all cases the East Herts. District Council, has also been a major component. All HAU sites except P139 were partly funded from this source, and EHDC, as developer, contributed 35% of the funding for Millbridge.

Herts. Archaeological Trust: Since assuming responsibility for all unpublished HAU sites, HAT's commitment to the HCA sites has been not inconsiderable. Apart from providing secure storage and curation for the site archives and finds since 1987, HAT has funded (from earned income) and supplied the materials and labour to repack all the former HAU material in "standard" small HAT finds boxes (450 boxes for the Hertford Central sites alone) and to catalogue the repacked boxes and the site records, before passing material from the 32 published sites over to Hertford Museum. HAT has also funded from its own resources the archiving and partial assessment of the Millbridge finds (*Appendix 3*), as well as the preparation of this review.

9.2 Proposals

As stated in *Section 1*, it is HAT's intention that the Hertford Central Area sites should ultimately be published collectively. As a result of the review described in this document, it is evident that some work is required, particularly on the HAU sites, to bring them to a state suitable for formulating an updated project design, and for final archive deposition. The tasks identified are described in *Sections 4* and *7*, and time/cost estimates are given in *Appendices 1* and *2*.

As a result of the continuing interest shown by English Heritage in the Hertford Central Area sites, and because of its past commitment to the project, HAT requests that English Heritage consider grant-aiding the programme of work detailed above, to be carried out during the next (1995/96) financial year.

APPENDIX 1**ESTIMATES FOR ARCHIVE WORK**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Sites</i>	<i>Days required</i>
1) Checking context descriptions.	All HAU	10
2) Cataloguing site drawings	All HAU	1
3) Cataloguing photographs	All HAU	5
4) Cataloguing finds	All HAU	3
5) Cross-referencing	All HAU	4
6) Enhancing record sheets	All HAU	included in (1)
7) Enhancing drawings	All HAU, some Millbridge	5
8) Preparing site matrices	All HAU	5
9) Additional drawings	Honey Lane, Millbridge	4
10) Site summaries	Honey Lane, Millbridge (post-RB)	4
11) Artefact summaries	All HAU	4
12) Management	All	2
<hr/> TOTAL DAYS ESTIMATED:		47

APPENDIX 2**ESTIMATES FOR ASSESSMENT REPORTS AND UPDATED PROJECT DESIGN**

<i>Category</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Days</i>
Site:		
Preparing archaeological assessment	-	3
Preparing updated project design	-	3
Finds:		
Pottery	63 boxes: 6 SFs	5
Clay pipe	7 boxes	1
Stone	8 boxes: 5 SFs	1
Shell	8 boxes	1
Glass	11 boxes: 13 SFs	2
Building materials	49 boxes	3
Organic	3 boxes	1
Animal bone	62 boxes	EH specialist
Iron	12 boxes: 22 Sfs	2
Slag	4 boxes	1
Soil samples	3 boxes	EH specialist
Copper alloy	97 SFs	2
Lead	7 SFs	1
Coins	86 SFs	2
Bone objects	31 SFs	1
Pipeclay	3 SFs	1
Other:		
Management		3
TOTAL DAYS ESTIMATED		33

APPENDIX 3

FUNDING BACKGROUND

1. HAU SITES

* definite funding
 ? possible "
 - no "

<i>HAT no.</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Funding organisation</i>		
			<i>DOE</i>	<i>MSC</i>	<i>Local Govt.</i>
P88	1977	Honey Lane	?	*	*
P90	1979/80	Bircherley Green	*	*	*
P94	1977	Priory Street	*	-	*
P99	1980	Railway Street	?	?	*
P100	1980	Covered Market	?	?	*
P126	1980	Museum Car Park	-	?	*
P129	1980	Canvas Holidays	-	?	*
P135	1980	Market Place	-	?	*
P139	1980	23 Bull Plain	?	?	?

2. MILLBRIDGE

<i>Year</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Funding organisation</i>		<i>HAT</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
		<i>HBMC</i>	<i>EHDC</i>			
88/89	Detailed Evaluation	£ 7653.88	-	-	-	£ 7653.88*
90/91	Excavation	£14500.00	£17500.00	£1060.57	£5000**	£38060.57
91/92	Archiving/ Partial Assessment	-	-	£5408.50	-	£ 5408.50

TOTAL SPENT: £51122.95

Notes:

- * HBMC grant of 9628.00 awarded; balance returned.
 ** from R.J. Kiln Trust

APPENDIX 4

INITIAL ASSESSMENTS OF INDIVIDUAL SITES

E294

Excavated: Nov 79 - Jan 80, by HAU

Funded by: Local/MSD/DOE

Research aims: To provide some indication of the status and economy of Saxon and medieval Hertford.

Excavation: Trench 30 x 4.0m, with small extension to north.

Context records: Individual sheets used to record each unit (context) no. The recording method was based on the allocation of one context no. to both the cut feature and its fill. Thus, although 87 context numbers were allocated, subsidiary numbers given to individual fills means that the context sheets total 102. Six sheets (U44-U49) are missing, but much of the information can be salvaged from the site notebook.

All context sheets contain context descriptions, and locations by grid. Relationships are adequately completed, and there is sufficient information to construct matrix. Sheets have been sorted into provisional phases. A few inconsistencies have been noted in localised matrices and context relationships, but in general these are good and can be relied on.

Few context sheets contain information on site levels or cross-referencing with the photographic, planning and finds records. However, much of this information can be retrieved from those categories of record (see below).

Plans and sections: There is no systematic record. The site notebook provides patchy information about the site datum and grid system, and a very arbitrary record of levels taken within the trench. Few features or contexts were levelled, but information on about 40% of the contexts appears on the main or other section drawings, and can therefore be retrieved.

Most of the original drawn site record appears to be present, but its quality is variable. Many of the drawings are untidy, but in the main follow basic principles. The horizontal record comprises multi-phase context plans. The section drawings are a partial record only; one or more original main section drawings have been lost, since the main E-W section exists only as a post-exc. drawing.

The record is adequate, with about 70% of contexts appearing on plan, and 40% on sections or feature profiles. 20% appear on both, and no more than 15% on neither. A rapid comparison between the context and plan/section records indicates that minor contradictions are present, but that the coverage and consistency of the record is sufficient to overcome most problems.

Photos and slides: No written index survives. The archive contains 39 negatives and contacts, and 30 slides. Some slides are labelled, but only with general descriptions. No features are identified by 'U' number. A preliminary check of a sample of photos suggests that a 75% identification success rate can be achieved.

Finds records: The standard of recording and archiving procedures followed was variable, but a general index of all the material was compiled, and all the small finds were carded and conserved. The material was not quantified by HAU.

The general finds index indicates that nearly all the finds came from stratified contexts, and can therefore be used to date individual contexts, or to amplify their provisional phasing.

Finds: All finds from the site have been boxed, giving a total of 29 boxes (13.5" x 8" x 5.5" size). These comprise:

Pottery	10 boxes
Clay pipe	1
Stone	1
Shell	1
Glass	3
Bldg mat.	2
Organic	1
Animal bone	7
Iron	1
Slag/lead/Cu alloy	1

Small finds (230) stored in Trust offices.

Systematic spot-dating of material from significant or problematic features has not been possible, but general observation of the ceramic material when it was boxed did not indicate any major problems in its identification and dating. It also confirmed that a substantial quantity (by Hertford standards) of medieval sherds were recovered, and that much of it was similar to that from HAT sites (eg Millbridge). The earliest pottery types, which include a few late Stamford sherds, have a probable date-range of c.950- 1200, supporting the provisional dates and phasing ascribed to the site by HAU.

A considerable quantity of animal bone, including worked bone, was excavated from features provisionally dated to the early medieval (1000-1200) and medieval periods. This has not been looked at, and some of the collection was not washed or marked.

No specialist attention has been given to the small finds. Several appear to be post-med, and therefore perhaps require little further work, but the earlier finds should all be looked at.

Preliminary work therefore indicates:

- a) that sufficient datable material may exist to support the provisional dating and phasing of the site carried out by HAU;
- b) that constructive and, in all probability, reliable work was carried out on the ceramics material;

- c) that the finds are probably all present, but that all finds categories should be checked/quantified as necessary by HAT, as archiving and post-exc. procedures were carried out to varying standards and different levels;
- d) that the animal bone and some other categories will require a considerable amount of attention.

Provisional Possible prehistoric activity.
dating: C11-l.C12: occupation. Residual and stratified Saxo-Norman and medieval pottery, refuse pits, pits and postholes; ?late C12 ?boundary ditch and bank.
C13-l.C17: open ground. Soil accumulations, ?cultivation.
C18-e.C20: industrial and residential development.
C20: demolition of maltings and housing, use as car park.

Interim: This appears to be a reliable, unbiased account and provisional interpretation of the site data. It draws on most of the original record, and could be used as a basis for assessment of the site record.

General The dating and interpretation of the site,
comments: particularly for its earliest phases, will depend very heavily upon the finds material. The importance of the suggested medieval pottery research project cannot be over-emphasised, since greater precision in the dating of the stratigraphic sequence will probably only be achieved if the ceramic material can be more closely dated.

2. P99 (HRS80) RAILWAY STREET

E295

Excavated: Feb - April, July - Aug 1980, by HAU

Funded by: Local/?MSC/?DOE

Research aims: As for P90, though it was anticipated that this site might provide proportionately more evidence because of its proximity to the medieval street frontage.

Excavation: Two trenches, 9.5 x 5.0m (Area 1) and c.7.5 x 5.0m (Area 2). Area 1 was later extended to the south-east.

Context records: The recording method was identical to that used for P90. Thus, although 136 context numbers were allocated, subsidiary numbers given to individual fills means that the context sheets total 180. 4 sheets (U46, U53, U79, U90) are missing, but much of the information can be salvaged from the site notebook. Two numbers, U99 and U137, have no context sheets but appear on 'publication' drawings, and were probably allocated during post-exc. work.

All context sheets contain context descriptions, and locations by grid. Relationships are adequately completed, and there is sufficient information to construct matrix. Sheets have been sorted into provisional phases. A few inconsistencies have been noted in localised matrices and context relationships, but in general these are good and can be relied on.

Few context sheets contain information on site levels or cross-referencing with the photographic, planning and finds records. However, much of this information can be retrieved from those categories of record (see below).

Plans and sections: There is no systematic record of the site drawings but judging from the post-exc. drawings most are present. Comparison of the context records and drawing archive shows that 27% of contexts do not appear on any of the surviving plans or sections. However, about 33% of these are modern features, and many of the rest can probably be located from descriptions in the context record or site notebook.

Photos and slides: No written index survives. The archive contains about 30 B&W negatives and contacts, and 38 slides. None of the contacts and only a few of the slides are labelled, but could probably be identified from the other site records.

Finds records: The standard of recording and archiving procedures followed was variable, but a general index of all the material was compiled, and all the small finds were carded and conserved. The material was not quantified by HAU.

The general finds index indicates that nearly all the finds came from stratified contexts, and can therefore be used to date individual contexts, or to amplify their provisional phasing.

Find: The finds have been boxed; box type as for P99.
There are 66 boxes in total, comprising:

Pottery	12 boxes
Clay pipe	3
Stone	1
Shell	1
Glass	3
Bldg mat.	7
Organic	1
Animal bone	32
Iron	3
Slag	2

Small finds (3) stored in Trust offices.

Examination of this material has not been possible, owing to the lack of time available and storage conditions. However, random sampling of the assemblage indicates that most if not all of the finds have been washed, marked and bagged. No specialist attention has been given to the small finds.

Preliminary work indicates that:

- a) sufficient datable material may exist to support the provisional dating and phasing of the site carried out by HAU;
- b) constructive and, in all probability, reliable work was carried out on the ceramics material;
- c) the finds are probably all present, but that all finds categories should be checked/quantified as necessary by HAT, as archiving and post-exc. procedures were carried out to varying standards and different levels;
- d) the animal bone and some other categories will require a considerable amount of attention.

Provisional Possible prehistoric activity.

dating: ?1.C10-C13: occupation. Saxo-Norman and medieval pottery, successive phases of timber buildings, refuse pits, pits and post-holes, clay-lined ?ovens

C13-C17: open ground, soil accumulations. Sporadic use of area, but no evidence of structures. ?1.C10 occupation sealed by layer containing residual material.

C17-C19: activity relating to adjacent street frontage properties. Yard surfaces, paths, pits, minor structures.

C19-1.C20: successive phases of brick-built structures, introduction of services, etc. Demolition of same, use as car park.

Interim: This is more in the nature of a first draft for a final report, drawing heavily on the site records and going into more detail than would be necessary for an interim. It appears to be a fairly comprehensive unbiased account of the site, and could form the basis for further assessment.

General Much the same as for P90, as the sites and finds
comments: assemblages are similar in size and date, and the records and post-exc. analysis undertaken are similar in quality and scope.

Excavated: between Nov 1977 and Aug 1978, by HAU.

Funded by: Local/MSc (?no DOE)

Research aims: the site is located centrally within the medieval and later town, and within the postulated boundaries of the southern Saxon burh. As such, the aims of the excavation were identical to those given for P90.

Excavation: a trench 18 x 4.0m was excavated between the rear of 5-6 Market Place and Honey Lane, and the cellars fronting Market Place were also examined.

Context records: Single-context recording used on this site. There are 503 context sheets in the archive (1-23, 36, 59, 100-405, 520-696). However, it is apparent from the plans and sections that context numbers 406-519 were issued, so there may be as many as 190 sheets missing, if 24-99 were also used. In the surviving sheets, three numbers were issued but not used.

The large number of contexts recorded on the site, when compared with other HAU excavations, can be accounted for partly by the fact that there is a lot of duplication in the site record, more than one number being allotted to many contexts. Also, in the writer's opinion, there does appear to have been a tendency to "over-record", the result being a proliferation of paperwork rather than more and better information.

The quality of recording appears to be on the whole slightly above the HAU average, with detailed descriptions and interpretive comment and some references to plan nos, etc, although 39 sheets have no description/relationships, and 11 sheets are blank. There is a note that some sheets were reused (!!) for P99, although they do not appear in that archive. The recording quality in general is better during the early part of the excavation. There is a site notebook, but it does not appear to have been kept up.

As with other sites, there is no reference to levels on the context sheets. There is a "level book" which gives the site bench mark and a list of levels taken along the main sections (site baulks?), though none have been translated to OD values.

Plans and sections: The site drawings are partly inked, and there is a general plan showing trench location and the positions of the major sections.

Assuming that 690 context numbers were issued and used, nearly 20% do not appear on either plans or sections. Fortunately many of the contexts in the 405-520 block, most of which were probably securely stratified, appear on the main site sections, so their relationships can be determined, if not their composition.

Photos and slides: No written index survives. The archive contains 172 slides, and 40 B&W negatives (no contacts?). None are identified, but most probably could be with reference to the site plans.

Finds records: Finds recorded on HAU sheets rather than on cards. Recording comprehensive; all finds quantified by number, and small finds listed, for each context. There appears to have been little post-exc. work on the finds, except for clay pipes.

Finds: The finds have been boxed; box type as for P90. There are 138 boxes in total, comprising:

Pottery	30 boxes
Clay pipe	2
Stone	5
Shell	5
Glass	3
Bldg mat.	36
Organic	1
Animal bone	45
Iron	7
Slag	1
Soil	3

Small finds (231) stored in Trust offices.

Examination of this material has not been possible, owing to the lack of time available and storage conditions. However, random sampling of the assemblage indicates that most if not all of the finds have been washed, marked and bagged. No specialist attention has been given to the small finds.

Preliminary work indicates that:

- a) sufficient datable material may exist to support the provisional dating of the site carried out by HAU;
- b) that the finds are probably all present, but that all finds categories should be checked/quantified as necessary by HAT, as archiving and post-exc. procedures were carried out to varying standards and different levels;
- d) That the animal bone and some other categories will require a considerable amount of attention. It is likely that the large building material assemblage could be reduced by careful sorting.

Provisional dating: 1.C11/e.C12-C14/e.C15: occupation. Medieval pottery, successive phases of timber buildings, pits and post-holes.

C15-C17: open ground, soil accumulation.

C17-C18: occupation. Successive phases of timber buildings, outbuildings, alley-way, well, pits and post-holes.

C18-C19: construction of brick and timber buildings, later extensions, timber outbuildings, well, alley-way, courtyard. Some industrial activity.

C19-C20: Improvements to main building. Timber outbuildings replaced by brick structures, introduction of services. Demolition of all structures.

Interim: A brief report which comments in general terms on the site, its provisional phasing and importance in relation to other Hertford sites. It concludes with pleas for further work and resources, and in that respect probably presents an optimistic view of the excavation results.

General comments: From its size and complexity, Honey Lane demands similar treatment to P90 and P99. There are problems with the site record, primarily the large number of missing context sheets, but these can be resolved to some extent from the plans and sections, and do not appear to be a major stumbling-block to publishing this site.

4. HAT16 MILLBRIDGE

Excavated: Evaluation 1988: excavation 1990, by HAT

Funded by: Local/EH

Research design: a) to investigate any evidence for Roman activity, and the kind of settlement to which it relates.
b) to determine whether the "Saxo-Norman" deposits present relate to the northern burh, and if so, whether they give an indication as to its use.
c) to shed light on the development and function of a later Saxon burh.
d) to provide information on the organisation and economy of the medieval town, from any high quality deposits and assemblages of that period which may be present.
e) to provide material for a programme of environmental research, based on the waterlogged deposits present.
f) to build up well-stratified medieval and possibly Saxon/Saxo-Norman pottery sequences for Hertford.

(for detailed research design, see submission to EH).

Excavation: an area of some 150 sq. m was opened between the standing building and the river Lea.

Context records: The recording system used was alphanumeric, context details being recorded on HAT recording sheets. There are six files of context sheets, from the evaluation and excavation. Contexts are fully described, with relationships, dimensions, levels and provisional phasing, and are cross-referenced to site drawings, photographs and finds.

The site archive file also contains a detailed description of the provisional phasing.

Plans and sections: indexed in archive file.

Photos and slides: indexed in archive file, which also contains copies of contact prints.

Finds records: Categories of finds have been catalogued and quantified, and a card index of small finds has been compiled. There is also a record of samples taken.

The archive contains detailed summaries of the artefactual and environmental records, with comments on the quality and condition of the evidence.

Finds: The finds have been boxed; boxes as for P90. There are approximately 188 boxes (conditions in the store did not permit full access to the material), comprising:

Pottery	37 boxes
Clay pipe	1
Shell	5
Glass	1
Bldg mat.	43
Organic	4
Animal bone	90
Iron	4
Slag	3
Soil samples	25 bags

The small finds number 238.

The finds from this site have already been assessed by relevant specialists with a view to post-excavation study, and some of the small finds have been assessed for conservation work. Detailed reports are included in the site archive.

Provisional m.C1-C3/4: RB cremation, plough marks, enclosure dating: ditch, post/stakeholes, gravel/cobble surface, possible bridge or wharf.

?C4-C10: extensive flooding. Thick silt deposit sealing earlier features.

C10-C11: Drainage ditches and areas of hard standing. Pits dug for disposal of cess and domestic refuse. Soil deposits, probably connected with construction of Hertford Castle. Industrial activity; furnace bases and hearth.

C12-C13: 'yard' area on part of site.

C13-C18: few features - little activity.

Interim: a brief but detailed interim, giving a balanced summary of the results of the excavation.

General The site archive for Millbridge, the most recent
comments: of the Hertford Central excavations, is far more comprehensive and complete than the earlier excavations detailed above. Furthermore its findings, especially the Roman and Saxo-Norman evidence, the presence of waterlogged material, and its connections with the castle point to its being archaeologically the most important of this group of sites. As has been noted above, post-excavation assessment has been carried out already on much of the finds assemblage.

5. P126 (HMCP80) HERTFORD MUSEUM CAR PARK

E297

Excavated: April 1980, by HAU

Funded by: Local/?MSC

Research aims: Formed a continuing part of the programme of excavation begun with P90, and was expected to provide both further information about the ditch and bank identified there, and on the medieval development of Hertford.

Excavation: A trench 5.0 x 4.0m, later extended by 6.0 x 2.0m, to the south-west of P90.

Context records: The recording method was identical to that used for P90. 15 context numbers were allocated, with no subsidiary numbers given to individual fills. All sheets are present.

All context sheets contain context descriptions, and locations by grid. Relationships are adequately completed, and there is sufficient information to construct an overall matrix.

No context sheets contain information on site levels or cross-referencing with the photographic, planning and finds records. However, much of this information can be retrieved from those categories of record (see below).

Plans and sections: No site drawings survive. The only drawn record consists of two 'publication' drawings, a general plan and the 'main' section, which between them illustrate 75% of the contexts. The location of the remainder can be worked out from sketches in the site notebook.

Photos and slides: None.

Finds records: The standard of recording and archiving procedures followed was variable, but a general index of nearly all the material was compiled, and all the small finds were carded and conserved. The material was not quantified by HAU, and the pottery was not entered in the index as it was intended to sort it further. Notes on the pottery and clay pipes are present in the archive.

Finds: The finds have been boxed; box type similar to P90. There are 5 boxes, comprising:

Pottery	3 boxes
Clay pipe	>1
Glass	>1
Bldg mat.	>1
Animal bone	1

Small finds (4) stored in Trust offices.

Examination of this material has not been possible, owing to the lack of time available and storage conditions. However, random sampling of the assemblage indicates that most if not all of the finds have been washed, marked and bagged. No specialist attention has been given to the small finds.

Preliminary work indicates that the finds are probably all present, but that as the assemblage is very small, it probably does not require the degree of further attention suggested for other Hertford Central sites.

Provisional C12-C18: open ground. Soil accumulations, con-
dating: taining C11-C14 pottery, ?cultivation.
C18-m.C20: horticultural use. Traces of flower beds, path.
m.C20-present: levelling and use as car park.

Interim: A short but comprehensive site report exists. This draws heavily on the site records, and describes the principal features and provisional phasing in some detail.

General One of the smaller Hertford Central sites, the
comments: small amount of archaeological finds and features from this excavation do not warrant the same degree of detailed attention as P90 and P99.

6. P100 (HCM80) HERTFORD COVERED MARKET

E298

Excavated: Aug - Sept 1980, by HAU.

Funded by: local/?MSC/?DOE

Research aims: identical to those given for P90 and P99.

Excavation: a roughly 'L' shaped area, covering about 40sq. m.

Context records: The recording method was identical to that used for P90. 89 context numbers were allocated, with notes on subsidiary contexts included on the main context sheet. Nine context sheets are missing: of these, six (17, 37, 48, 50, 57, 83) can be reconstructed from the site notebook, while the others (84-86) are briefly described in the overall context list.

All context sheets contain context descriptions, and locations by grid. Relationships are adequately completed, and there is sufficient information to construct an overall matrix.

No context sheets contain information on site levels or cross-referencing with the photographic, planning and finds records. However, much of this information can be retrieved from those categories of record (see below).

Plans and sections: There is no systematic record of the site drawings, and judging from the post-exc. drawings most but not all are present. Comparison of the context records and drawing archive shows that only three contexts do not appear on any of the surviving plans or sections. However, these can probably be located from descriptions in the context record or site notebook.

Photos and slides: No written index survives. The archive contains 14 slides (one of which is missing), but no B&W negatives or contacts. None of the contacts are labelled, but could probably be identified from the other site records.

Finds records: The standard of recording and archiving procedures followed was variable, but a general index of all the material was compiled, and all the small finds were carded and conserved. The material was not quantified by HAU. Notes on the pottery and animal bone are present in the archive.

Finds: The finds have been boxed; box type as for P90. There are 24 boxes in total, comprising:

Pottery	4 boxes
Clay pipe	>1
Stone	>1
Shell	>1
Glass	1
Bldg mat.	4
Organic	>1
Animal bone	13

Iron	>1
Slag	>1
Lead	>1

Small finds (56) stored in Trust offices.

Examination of this material has not been possible, owing to the lack of time available and storage conditions. However, random sampling of the assemblage indicates that most if not all of the finds have been washed, marked and bagged. No specialist attention has been given to the small finds.

Preliminary work indicates that the finds are probably all present, but that as the assemblage is small, it probably does not require the degree of further attention suggested for other Hertford Central sites.

Provisional C11-m.C12: occupation. Saxo-Norman and medieval dating: pottery, successive phases of timber buildings, refuse pits, pits and post-holes, clay-lined oven or furnace.
 m.C12-m.C13: area disused, soil accumulations.
 m.C13-C15: occupation. Medieval pottery, timber structures, yard surfaces, post- and stake-holes.
 C15-m.C16: area disused, soil accumulation.
 m.C16-m.C19: occupation. Successive phases of buildings, yard surfaces, pits, lime kiln, etc.
 m.C19-present: construction of covered market, introduction of services, etc. Demolition of market.

Interim: This is more in the nature of a first draft for a final report, drawing heavily on the site records and going into more detail than would be necessary for an interim. It appears to be a fairly comprehensive unbiased account of the site, and could form the basis for further assessment.

General comments: One of the smaller Hertford Central sites, the small amount of archaeological finds and features from this excavation do not warrant the same degree of detailed attention as P90 and P99.

E299 300

Excavated: March/April 1977, followed by watching brief in 1977/78. Carried out by HAU.

Funded by: local/DOE

Research aims: to examine occupation and use of the area during the medieval period, and to confirm the position of the boundary between St Mary's Priory and the medieval borough of Hertford.

Excavation: two trial trenches, the location and extent of which remain uncertain. The only surviving drawings (see below) relate to the watching brief only.

Context records: the archive contains 83 context sheets relating to the watching brief. Of these the last four are unnumbered. The recording system used was identical to that used on other Hertford Central sites. Descriptions are adequate, but few relationships have been entered, and no grid references are given. As on other sites, levels have not been recorded, except on one plan from the watching brief, which shows the subsoil depth in contractor's footing trenches.

Plans and sections: there are no detailed site plans. For the watching brief there is a plan of areas observed, and some sections (from contractor's trenches?), but the latter are not located.

Photos and slides: no written index survives. The archive contains about 8 B&W negatives and contact prints, most being general shots of the site, and 15 slides. None are identified.

Finds records: No finds cards. There is a partial list of finds by context, but details of processing (if any) are unknown.

Finds: The finds have been boxed; boxes as for P90. There are 9 boxes in total, comprising:

Pottery	4 boxes
Clay pipe	>1
Stone	1
Shell	>1
Glass	1
Animal bone	2
Iron	>1

Small finds (1) stored in Trust offices.

Examination of this material has not been possible, owing to the lack of time available and storage conditions. However, random sampling of the assemblage indicates that most if not all of the finds have been washed, marked and bagged. No specialist

attention has been given to the small finds.

Interim: The interim report supplied to the DoE makes it clear that little was found during the trial trenching, suggesting the reason for the lack of records. It does not cover the subsequent watching brief.

General the site was open ground until post-med. period.
comments: Evidence for agricultural, and later horticultural activity, relating to either Borough or Priory use of the area. Saxo-Norman sherds present in 'field' soils.

The poor state of the excavation records, coupled with the small amount of finds and the lack of excavated archaeological features, indicate that this site does not warrant further detailed attention. The fact that the expected boundary between Borough and Priory was not located, and the implications of this for the understanding of the development and history of Hertford, could form the basis for a brief note on the site.

Excavated: May 1978, by HAU.

Funded by: ?local.

Research aims: unrecorded.

Excavation: observation of contractor's trenches, extent not recorded, at the rear of the above premises before the building was extended.

Context records: note on contexts recorded in east-west trench contained in note on watching brief.

Plans and sections: drawing of east-west section.

Photos and slides: none.

Finds records: none.

Finds: none noted in store: no small finds.

Interim: see context records, above.

General comments: little evidence for activity: a few 'medieval' sherds were sealed by substantial soil accumulations, and structural evidence was post-medieval and later.

Given the small scale of this site, and its lack of records and results, little more than a brief note is envisaged in the final report.

9. P129 (CH80) CANVAS HOLIDAYS

E 302

Excavated: March 1980, by HAU

Funded by: local

Research aims: unrecorded.

Excavation: contractor's foundation trenches observed and recorded during construction of extension to 7-13 Bull Plain.

Context records: note on contexts recorded in trenches contained in report on watching brief.

Plans and sections: sketch section, with accompanying notes.

Photos and slides: none.

Finds records: finds cards relating to each of four cess-pits rexcorded. Finds indexed and complete.

Finds: none noted in store: no small finds.

Interim: see context records, above.

General comments: produced evidence for medieval occupation, including cess-pits and C14-C15 pottery.

Given the small scale of this site, and its lack of records and results, little more than a brief note is envisaged in the final report.

E305

Excavated: November 1980, by HAU

Funded by: local

Research aims: unknown.

Excavation: watching brief on a sewer trench in Market Place.

Context records: record of principal features noted in report on watching brief.

Plans and sections: Location plan of sewer trench and features encountered. Also section, aligned north-south, probably from Market Place.

Photos and slides: none.

Finds records: none.

Finds: none noted in store: no small finds.

Interim: see context records, above.

General comments: Five burials were noted; others have been recorded in the immediate area, suggesting the presence of a cemetery, presumably Saxon? This in itself requires a note and some discussion in the final report, but otherwise the small scale of this site, and its lack of records and results requires no further work.

E 304

Site: Medieval timber-framing was recorded at Dewhurst's, 10 Maidenhead Street, when the building was renovated in April 1978. The exact nature and extent of the work is unclear.

Funded by: local/MSc

Photographic

Records: a) 18 slides and 4 B&W negatives, none identified or catalogued.
b) 2 site drawings, unlabelled.

General comments: Given the small scale of this work, and the uncertainties expressed above, it is not certain what place, if any, this would have in the proposed Hertford Central report. If the timber framing was of particular significance in structural or chronological terms for that part of the town, or for the understanding of timber-framed buildings generally, a note would be required. Otherwise, it is perhaps best left in the archive.

12. HERTFORD SURVEY

The archive contains several files of notes, mainly on historical sources and buildings, as well as early drafts with corrections and comments, and a "final" draft of about 10,500 words, which apparently takes these on board. A fair amount of research appears to have been carried out, drawing on a number of sources. The outline for the report envisages the following contents:

- a) Summary introduction.
- b) Historic setting of Hertford.
- c) Geographic setting and pre-Saxon activity.
- d) Relationship of Hertford to the territory of London.
- e) The founding of Hertford.
- f) Street plan and development.
- g) Post-medieval Hertford (history and development).
- h) Implications of development.
- i) Conclusion.

By the "final" draft this has become somewhat modified:

- a) Summary introduction.
- b) Topography, communications and pre-Saxon activity.
- c) Founding of Hertford.
- d) Medieval Hertford.
- e) Post-medieval Hertford.
- f) Street plan and development.
- g) Archaeology, and proposals for future work.

The final draft seems comprehensive and well-researched. However, most if not all of it will need rewriting before it can be used, as the sentence construction and punctuation used is thoroughly inadequate, and the writer has tended to "ramble" around his subject, rather than moving logically from point to point. References, which appear more comprehensive in earlier drafts, will need checking.

