



**Archaeological observation, investigation and recording
at Stewards Cottage, Hadham Hall
Little Hadham, Hertfordshire
October 2015**

Report No. 15/180

Author: Claire Finn

Illustrator: Amir Bassir



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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No: molanort1-225988	
Project title	Archaeological observation and recording at Stewards Cottage, Hadham Hall, Little Hadham, Hertfordshire, October 2015		
Short description	A programme of archaeological observation and recording was carried out by MOLA in advance of residential development at Stewards Cottage, Hadham Hall, Little Hadham, Hertfordshire. No archaeological features or finds were observed, with the completed depth for the construction footprint extending no deeper than the topsoil.		
Project type	watching brief		
Previous work	none known		
Current land use	residential garden		
Future work	unknown		
Monument type and period	not applicable		
Significant finds	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Hertfordshire		
Site address	Stewards Cottage, Hadham Hall, Little Hadham, SG11 2EB		
Easting Northing	TL 45260 22776		
Area (sq m/ha)	16m ²		
Height aOD	100m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Hertfordshire Historic Environment Advisor		
Project Design originator	Amir Bassir, MOLA		
Director/Supervisor	Ian Fisher, MOLA		
Project Manager	Amir Bassir MOLA		
Sponsor or funding body	Mr and Mrs Smith		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	05/10/2015		
End date	05/10/2015		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	Hertfordshire Archive Store TBC	Watching brief forms	
Paper			
Digital		Client report PDF	
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Archaeological observation, investigation and Recording at Stewards Cottage Hadham Hall, Little Hadham Hertfordshire October 2015

Abstract

A programme of archaeological observation and recording was carried out by MOLA in advance of residential development at Stewards Cottage, Hadham Hall, Little Hadham, Hertfordshire. No archaeological features or finds were observed, with the completed depth for the construction footprint extending no deeper than the topsoil.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA Northampton was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Smith to carry out a programme of observation and recording at Stewards Cottage, Hadham Hall, Little Hadham, Hertfordshire (NGR: TL 45260 22776) (Fig 1). Archaeological observation was undertaken on groundworks made in advance of the construction of a new storage building/ summerhouse at the cottage (Planning Ref: 3/15/0572/HH), under discharge of condition reference X/15/0510/CND. Fieldwork was carried out on 5th October 2015.

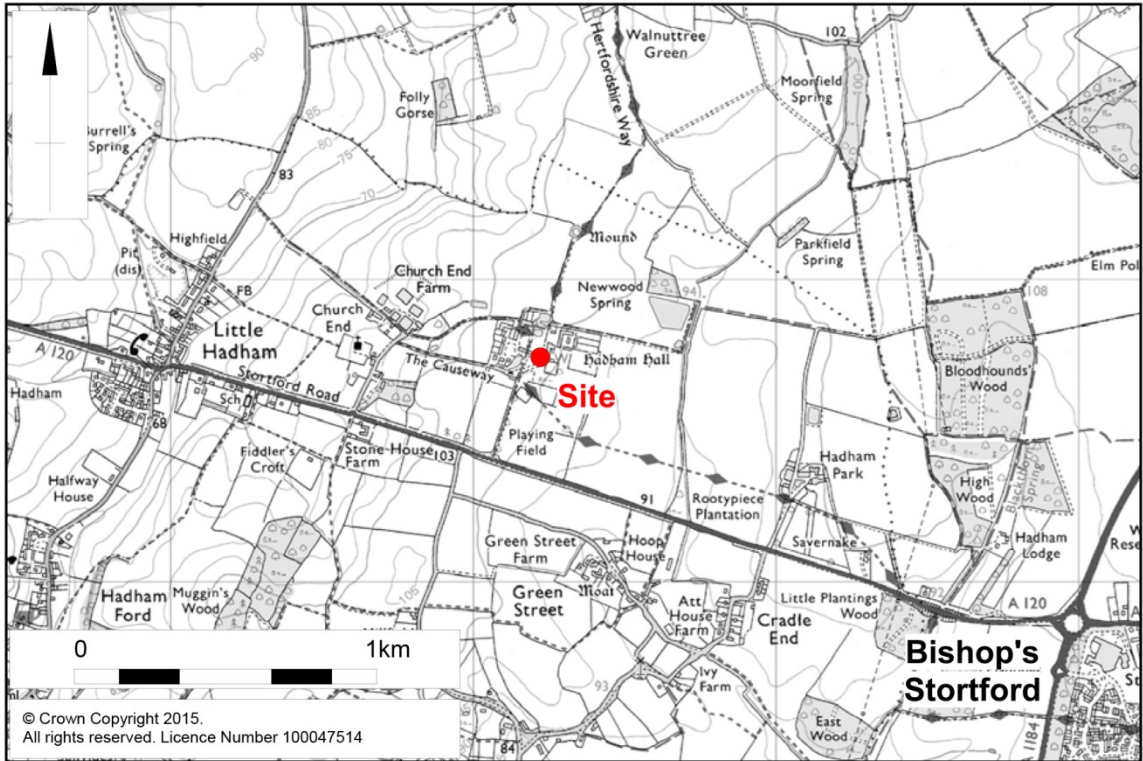
The work was required by the Hertfordshire County Historic Environment Advisory Team as a condition of planning consent, and was laid out in a brief for archaeological work issued in July 2015 (CHEAT 2015). The works were carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by MOLA Northampton (MOLA 2015). The fieldwork was designed to ensure that any archaeological remains within the area of proposed groundwork was appropriately investigated and recorded before construction proceeded.

MOLA Northampton is a Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) registered organisation. The work was carried out in accordance with the current best archaeological practice as defined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a), the Historic England procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (HE 2015) and regional guidelines (Gurney 2003).

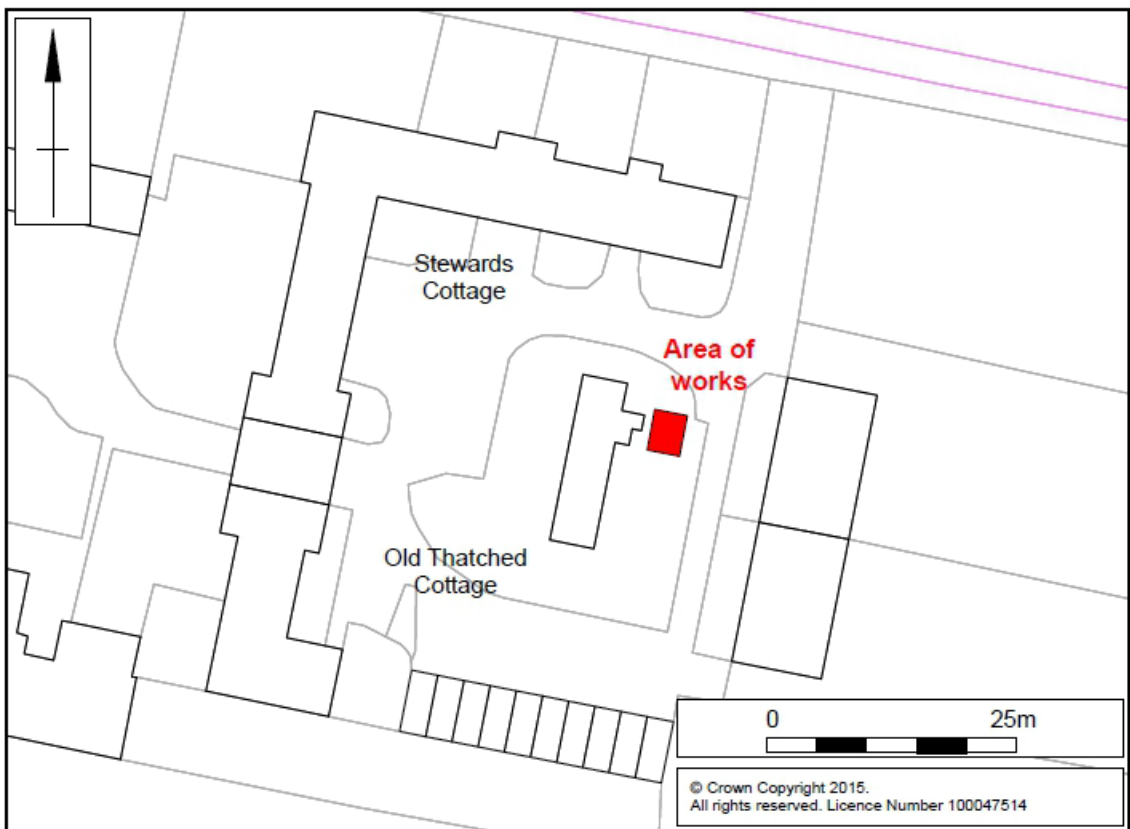
2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, topography and geology

Little Hadham is a village and civil parish in Hertfordshire, around 4km to the west Bishop's Stortford. The proposed development lies some distance outside the village to the east, on the estate of the historic Hadham Hall where a cluster of historic and modern residences are situated to the north of Stortford Road, surrounded by arable farmland. The development area lies to the east of Stewards Cottage, and comprises a 16m² rectangle within a turfed garden with a low picket fence curtilage (Fig 1, Fig 2). It lies at a height of approximately 100m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is London Clay Formation, overlain by Lowestoft Formation diamicton (BGS 2015). Hadham Hall lies on the border between two soil type areas, Hanslope and Melford series chalky tills, formed of calcareous clayey soil overlain with loam (LAT 1983).



Site location Fig 1



The area of works Fig 2

2.2. Historical and archaeological background

Hadham Hall is a Grade II* listed building (ID. 395673) originating in the 16th century, though part demolished and refurbished in the early 18th century. The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1879 (not reproduced here) shows the area to the east of the Hall as comprising a wooded field with a track aligned north-east to south-west and enclosed fields to the north and south. To the east of the site were managed wooded spaces, possibly orchards, with tracks leading through. The trees were removed by 1923 when the first building development in this area took place. In 1948, the Hall was sold to Hertfordshire County Council and converted for use as a school. As part of this usage, more significant construction to the west of Stewards Cottage had taken place by 1976. The school ceased to operate in the 1990s after which the Hall and site was reconverted for private dwelling. The modern development of Capel Court, which encloses the cottage on all sides, took place in the late 20th century.

Stewards Cottage (Historic Environment Record no. 12260) is a mid-16th century two-storey building with a thatched roof, which may have originally formed the cross-wing to an open hall, possibly a banqueting hall. This proposed hall would have been demolished in the 17th century, around which time Stewards Cottage was given a brick frontage. The cottage was subject to historic building assessment and recording in 2003 and 2006 (Wotherspoon 2003; Goldsmith *et al* 2006), and a Planning and Heritage Statement in 2015 (Cashmore 2015).

Further afield, archaeological evidence in the area demonstrates occupation from the late Iron Age, Roman and medieval periods. This latter group includes the medieval church of St Cecilia and the hamlet of Church End, as well as the medieval and later buildings of Hadham Hall.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The main objectives of the fieldwork were to:

- Mitigate the impact of the development through preservation by record;
- establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation in the development site;
- establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- and recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions as an intrinsic part of the investigation.

The regional research framework for Hertfordshire is given by the document *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011), and would have been referred to in the event of archaeological remains being present.

3.2 Methodology

Recording followed standard MOLA procedures as described in the *Fieldwork Manual* (MOLA 2014). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* sheets to include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds. A photographic record was maintained with high resolution digital

images. All works were conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014b) and *Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a), and with *Standards for Field Work in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

The footprint of the summerhouse construction comprised a 4x4m area. The turf and topsoil in the area was excavated by hand under the constant supervision of an archaeologist to the required depth for development. The excavation area was then cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of any potential archaeological features.

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

Within the area of the footprint of the new building, the topsoil was removed down to a depth of 0.15m on the east of the square, and 0.30m deep to the west. The soil type observed in the excavated area comprised a topsoil of firm, free-draining mid-grey-brown loamy clay garden soil, containing frequent small fragments of building rubble, such as crushed brick, and patches of mid-yellow sand (Fig 3). This is likely to be made-ground resulting from the construction of nearby buildings in the 20th century (Fig 4). A stratigraphic sequence could not be established due to the shallow nature of the excavation.

No archaeological finds or features were observed.



Trench section, topsoil containing building debris, looking north Fig 3

5 DISCUSSION

No archaeological finds or features were seen during the observation. This was due to the shallow depth of the excavation, which reached the required depth for the development within the topsoil layer (Fig 5).



The stripped area, showing the proximity of new buildings to the east and south Fig 4



The completed stripped area, looking south Fig 5

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8 October 2015



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