



LAND TO THE REAR OF BOX LANE COURT, BOX LANE, HERTFORDSHIRE

Evaluation

for Darren Andrews Homes

May 2011

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Project Manager

Joe Abrams

Author

Luke Craddock-Bennett

Fieldwork

Luke Craddock-Bennett

Graphics

Julia Bastek

Approved by

Joe Abrams, Project manager



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Technology Centre, Stanbridge Road, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 4QH
T 01525 850 878 • E leighton.buzzard@headlandarchaeology.com
www.headlandarchaeology.com

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	LOCATION	1
3.	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	1
4.	METHOD	2
	4.1 Recording	2
	4.2 Samples and artefacts	2
5.	RESULTS	2
6.	CONCLUSION	3
7.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	3
8.	APPENDICES	4
	8.1 Appendix 1 – HER data	4
	<i>Hertfordshire Council HER data within 500m of Box Lane Court</i>	4
	8.2 Appendix 2 – Site Registers	5
	<i>Context register</i>	5
	<i>Drawing register</i>	5
	<i>Photographic register</i>	5

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

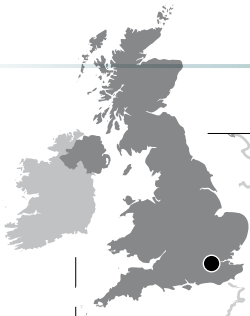
<i>Illus 1</i>		x
<i>Site location</i>		
<i>Illus 2</i>		2
<i>Trench 1 – N-W facing section</i>		
<i>Illus 3</i>		3
<i>Section through palaeochannel</i>		

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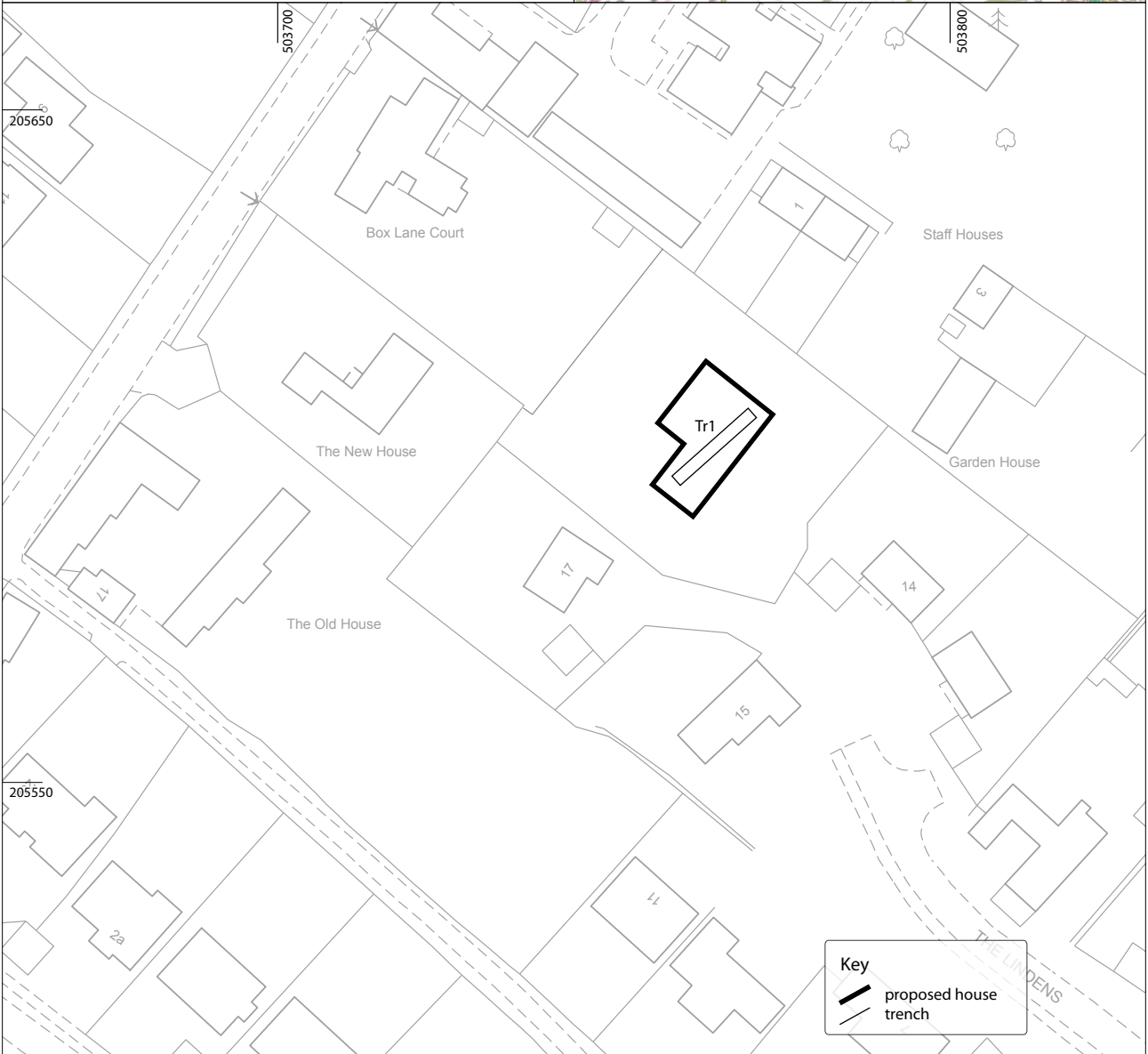
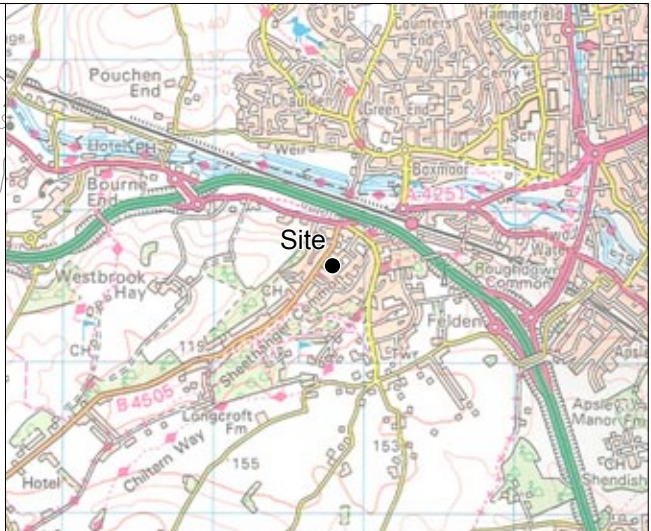
Headland Archaeology would like to thank Darren Andrews Homes for commissioning the work.

The project was managed for Headland Archaeology by Joe Abrams. The fieldwork was undertaken by Luke Craddock-Bennett.

The report was written by Luke Craddock-Bennett.



Box Lane Court
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire



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Scale 1:1,000 @ A4



0 50m

Illus 1
Site location

LAND TO THE REAR OF BOX LANE COURT, BOX LANE, HERTFORDSHIRE

Evaluation

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd. excavated a single evaluation trench in the rear garden of Box Lane Court, Box Lane, Hemel Hempstead. The archaeological potential of the site was high due to the presence of a Roman villa site 60m to the north. No archaeological finds or features were identified, although a palaeochannel (a natural drainage feature) was identified in the western part of the trench.

1. INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd. was commissioned by Darren Andrews Homes to carry out an archaeological evaluation on an area of land to the rear of Box Lane Court, Hemel Hempstead. The client wishes to submit a planning application to construct a detached house on the land. The Historic Environment Officer (HEO) has advised that the proposed change of use area lies in an environmentally sensitive area and that the applicant must include a description of the significance of any heritage assets affected by the proposed change of use. An assessment of the impact of the proposed development on that significance should also be submitted as part of the planning application for the site which is in keeping with HE6.1 and HE6.2 of PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment.

The project was conducted in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the Historic Environment Officer.

2. LOCATION

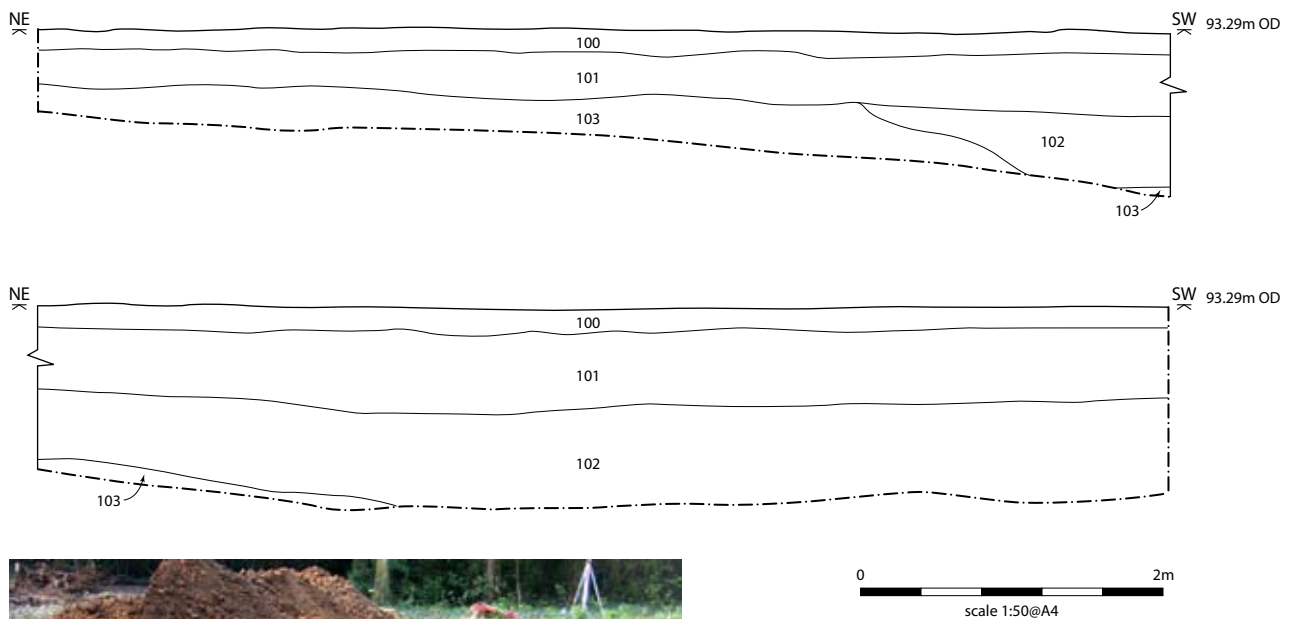
The site forms part of the rear garden of Box Lane Court which is situated on Box Lane to the south-west of Hemel Hempstead (NGR TL 03767 05600). The site is situated at approximately 93m OSL and the land rises away from the site to the south-east. The underlying geology is Holywell nodular chalk formation and new pit chalk formation.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Box Lane Court is a Grade II listed property (Monument No 1078117) dating to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

To the rear of the property, the proposed development site lies within an area with a high potential for Roman archaeology. A search of the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) revealed eighteen entries within a 500m radius of the development site, seven of which dated to the Roman period. In the 1840s the remains of a Roman villa were found approximately 60m to the north of the site. Boxmoor Roman Villa (MHT72) was in use between the late 1st and early 4th centuries and may have had a governmental function - an imperial lead seal was found during excavation. Archaeological monitoring to the north-east and east of the villa between 1995 and 1998 (MHT11687) revealed ditches, a trackway, wall foundations and an oven of probable Roman date. Also found within the vicinity of the site were a Roman key (MHT515) and two cremation urns of Roman date (MHT516).

The purpose of the investigation was to identify and assess the particular significance of any element of the historic environment that may be affected by the development. This was to be achieved by determining and understanding the nature, function and character of any remains on the site, in their cultural and environmental setting.



Illus 2
Trench 1 – N-W facing section

2

4. METHOD

An archaeologist was present on site to monitor the excavation of a single trench measuring 15m by 1.6m. The trench was positioned within the footprint of the proposed development and orientated north-east to south-west. A JCB excavator with a 1.6m grading bucket was used to open the trench. Exposed trench sections and bases were cleaned and checked for archaeological deposits and all spoil was screened for archaeological material.

4.1 Recording

All recording followed *IfA* Standards and Guidance. The trench position was tied into features shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 mapping. A section of the trench was drawn at a scale of 1:50. All contexts, photos and drawings were given a unique number and registers were maintained. 35mm black-and white and colour transparencies were taken of exposed sections. Digital photos were also taken for reporting purposes.

4.2 Samples and artefacts

No contexts suitable for sampling were encountered during the watching brief and no finds were observed.

5. RESULTS

No archaeological material was encountered during the excavation of the evaluation trench. Upon the removal of the turf and topsoil, a silty clay subsoil was revealed. In the north-east of the trench natural chalk deposits occurred immediately below the subsoil at a depth of 0.3 to 0.4m below ground level.

A large palaeochannel feature was identified in the south-western half of the trench. Orientated on a north-west to south-east alignment the channel cut into the chalk deposits to a depth of approximately 0.65m and was filled with heavy clay containing multiple flint nodules. The width of the channel is unknown - the feature continued beyond the south-western trench edge.



3

Illus 3

Section through palaeochannel

6. CONCLUSION

No archaeological finds or deposits were encountered during the excavation of the evaluation trench. The presence of a palaeochannel in this location can be explained by the topography of the site - the trench was located at the foot of a hill and a likely spot for a stream channel to drain water from the surrounding higher ground.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd, 2010, *Archaeological Evaluation. Land to the rear of Box Lane Court; Written Scheme of Investigation*, grey literature.



8. APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1 – HER data

Hertfordshire Council HER data within 500m of Box Lane Court

ID	Name
72	Boxmoor House Roman Villa, Felden Lane, Hemel Hempstead
515	Roman Key, Boxmoor
516	Romano-British Cremations, Box Lane, Boxmoor
1096	Roman Bronze Statuette, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead
1606	Possible Early Medieval Disc Brooch, Hemel Hempstead
5567	Railway Bridge, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead
7096	Railway Bridge Over Fishery Lane, Hemel Hempstead
11481	Post-Glacial Peat Deposits, Boxmoor Common, Hemel Hempstead
11687	Roman Occupation And Prehistoric Flints, Laurel Bank, Felden Lane, Hemel Hempstead
11801	19th Century Cottage, Old Fishery Lane, Boxmoor
11910	The Spinney, London Road, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead
11911	Possible Roman Timber Building, The Spinney, London Road, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead
12386	Sheethanger Common, Hemel Hempstead
4 12807	Cremation of Probable Roman Date, London Road, Boxmoor
12852	Boxmoor House, Box Lane, Hemel Hempstead
13696	The Swan Ph, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead
17358	Box Lane Independent Chapel, 6 Box Lane, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead
17359	The Old House, Box Lane, Hemel Hempstead

8.2 Appendix 2 – Site Registers

Context register

Context No.	Description	Interpretation
100	Mid brown silty clay	Topsoil
101	Light-mid brown clay	Subsoil
102	Heavy clay with multiple flint nodules	Natural fill of palaeochannel
103	White chalk	Natural bedrock

Drawing register

Drawing No.	Scale	Description
1	1:50	Trench 1 - NW facing section
2	Annotated sketch	Trench 1 - location plan

Photographic register

Photo No.	Colour Slide	B&W	Digital	Direction facing	Description
1	534/12	540/12	-	-	ID Shot
2	534/13	540/13	14	S	NW facing section, NE end
3	534/14	540/14	15	SE	" "
4	534/15	540/15	16	E	" SW end
5	534/16	540/16	17	SE	" "
6	534/17	540/17	18	SW	Trench plan
7	534/18	540/18	19	NE	"
8	-	-	20	-	General trench shots - no scale
9	-	-	21	-	"
10	-	-	22	-	"
11	-	-	23	-	"
12	-	-	24	-	"
13	-	-	25	-	"



Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd
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North East (HQ)
13 Jane Street, Edinburgh EH6 5HE
T 0131 467 7705 • **F** 0131 467 7706 • **E** office@headlandarchaeology.com

North West
10 Payne Street, Glasgow G4 0LF
T 0141 354 8100 • **F** 0141 332 9388 • **E** glasgowoffice@headlandarchaeology.com

Midlands & West
Unit 1, Premier Business Park, Faraday Road, Hereford HR4 9NZ
T 0143 236 4901 • **F** 0143 236 4900 • **E** hereford@headlandarchaeology.com

South & East
Technology Centre, Stanbridge Road, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 4QH
T 01525 850 878 • **E** leighton.buzzard@headlandarchaeology.com

www.headlandarchaeology.com