

HERITAGE NETWORK



**150 ST ALBANS ROAD
Sandridge, Hertfordshire**

HN954

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION REPORT***

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

150 St. Albans Road
Sandridge, Hertfordshire

Project ref.: HN954

Archaeological Evaluation

Prepared on behalf of Stuart Cunliffe, FRICS

by

Caoimhín Ó Coileáin BA and James Snee BSC AIFA

Report no.690

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The cover illustration shows the site looking east

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Caoimhín Ó Coileáin. The report text and illustrations were prepared by Caoimhín Ó Coileáin and James Snee and edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to: Stuart Cunliffe, FRICS, and Simon West, St Albans District Archaeologist, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	150 St Alban's Road, Sandridge, Hertfordshire, AL4 9LP		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	St. Alban's
Village/town:	Sandridge	Parish:	Sandridge
Planning reference:	n/a	NGR:	TL 16124 09382
Client name and address:	Stuart Cunliffe FRICS, 39 Guessens Court, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 6RB		
Nature of work:	Field evaluation	Current land use:	Domestic Garden
Site Status:	n/a	Reason for investigation:	Potential development
Position in planning process:	Pre-determination (PPS5)	Project brief originator:	Local authority
Size of affected area:	1090m ²	Size of area investigated:	45m ²
Site code:	HN954	Other reference	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Field evaluation	Archive Recipient:	St Albans Museum
Start of work:	15/11/2011	Finish of work:	15/11/2011
Related HER nos:	n/a	Periods represented	None
OASIS UID:	heritage1-112603	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	n/a		
Physical archive:	n/a		
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis:

In order to advise the determination of a planning application for the development of 150 St. Alban's Road, Sandridge, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by Stuart Cunliffe FRICS to carry out an archaeological evaluation.

The development site lies in the hinterland between the late Iron Age settlements at Wheathampstead and *Verlamion*, and immediately adjacent to the eastern end of Beech Bottom Dyke, a defensive earthwork dating to the same period, which is a Scheduled Monument (SM29449).

Two trial trenches measuring 10m by 2m, were excavated across the area of the proposed development. No archaeological features or deposits were revealed, and no evidence for prehistoric activity was therefore found. Post-medieval and modern brick and tile was noticed in the topsoil but not recovered.

On the basis of these results, the risk that the development might disturb further archaeological remains of is considered to be *Low* for all periods.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of Stuart Cunliffe FRICS, to cover a programme of archaeological work required to advise the determination of a planning application for the development of land at 150 St. Albans Road, Sandridge, Hertfordshire.

1.2 On the advice of the St Albans District Archaeologist (SADA), and in line with Department of Communities and Local Government's *Planning Policy Statement 5* (PPS5), further information regarding the impact of the proposals on the historic environment has been requested. SADA indicated that the investigation should take the form of an evaluation by trial trenching within the proposed development area.

1.3 The proposed development area lies in the gardens to the rear of 150 St Albans Road, centred on NGR TL 16095 09390 (Figure 1). It is bounded to the east by the block of 4 flats which occupies the frontage of the property, to the west by green space occupied by Beech Bottom Dyke, to the north by the lane leading to The Glen, and to the south by 152 St Albans Road. The development proposes the construction of three detached dwellings with associated access, services and landscaping.

1.4 The development site lies in the hinterland between the late Iron Age settlements at Wheathampstead and *Verlamion*, and immediately adjacent to the eastern end of Beech Bottom Dyke, a defensive earthwork dating to the same period, which is a Scheduled Monument (SM29449).

2. Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The proposed development area lies in the gardens to the rear of 150 St Albans Road, at the southern end of Sandridge, in an area of fairly level ground at approximately 98m AOD.

2.2 Locally the soils belong to the Charity 2 Association (571m) and are described as “*Well drained flinty fine silty soils in valley bottoms. Calcareous fine loamy soils over chalk or chalk rubble on valley sides, sometimes shallow*” (SSEW 1983).

2.3 The bedrock consists of the Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation (British Geological Society website). The superficial geology consists of undifferentiated river terrace deposits (sand and gravel) (ibid).

METHODOLOGY

2.4 All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the approved Project Design, current health and safety legislation, and the appropriate IFA and ALGAO guidance documents.

2.5 The trenches were located by triangulation from known points using fibreglass tape measures. All trenches were opened using a tracked excavator fitted with a 0.90m wide toothless ditching bucket. Spoil from the machining was inspected for archaeological artefacts. The trenches were machined to the first significant archaeological horizon, or to the natural geological horizon, as appropriate. A sondage was cut in the southwest end of Trench 1 to confirm that natural deposits had been reached.

2.6 The trenches were cleaned by hand, and any potential archaeological features and deposits were sampled to ascertain their nature, depth, date, and quality of preservation.

2.7 All identified contexts were photographed and recorded using the appropriate proforma. Scaled plans and sections were drawn on drafting film at scales of 1:10 and 1:50.

RESULTS

2.8 Two trenches were excavated across the area of the proposed new dwellings. Each trench measured approximately 2m by 10m.

Trench 1

2.9 Trench 1 was located at the southwest side of the site (Figure 1). It was orientated northeast to southwest and measured 10m in length, 1.80m in width and was excavated to a depth of 0.34m.

Trench 1 data:

Length (m):	10	Width (m):	1.80	Maximum Depth (m):	0.55	Orientation	NE-SW	
Level at NE End of Test pit (mOD)			Top	98.25	Level at SW End of Test pit (mOD)		Top	98.24
			Base	97.70			Base	97.71
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)					
			Length	Width	Depth			
-	Layer	Greyish brown silty sand topsoil	>10	>1.80	0.28			
-	Layer	Reddish orange sandy gravel	>10	>1.80	>0.370			

2.10 The stratigraphy in the trench consisted of 0.28m of greyish brown silty sand topsoil, overlying natural reddish orange sandy gravel.

2.11 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were present in this trench.

Trench 2

2.12 Trench 2 was located at the northeast end of site (Figure 1). It was orientated northwest to southeast and measured 10.10m in length, 1.80m in width and was excavated to a depth of 0.75m. Post-medieval pottery and brick was noticed in the topsoil but not recovered.

Trench 2 data:

Length (m):	10.10	Width (m):	1.80	Maximum Depth (m):	0.75	Orientation	NE-SW	
Level at NE End of Test pit (mOD)			Top	98.76	Level at SW End of Test pit (mOD)		Top	98.74
			Base	98.02			Base	97.99
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)					
			Length	Width	Depth			
-	Layer	Greyish brown silty sand topsoil	>10	>1.80	0.34			
-	Layer	Reddish orange sandy gravel	>10	>1.80	>0.37			

2.13 The stratigraphy in the trench consisted of 0.34m of greyish brown silty sand topsoil, overlying natural reddish orange sandy gravel.

2.14 No archaeological features, deposits or were present in this trench. Post-medieval pottery was noticed in the topsoil but not recovered.

3. Discussion

Archaeological Background

3.1 The proposed development site at 150 St Albans Road, Sandridge, is situated immediately adjacent to Beech Bottom Dyke, an Iron Age defensive earthwork which forms a statutorily protected Scheduled Monument. It lies in a landscape where archaeological remains would not be unexpected, being located between the late Iron Age settlements of Wheathampstead and *Verlamion*, the precursor to Roman *Verulamium*.

3.2 With the exception of Beech Bottom Dyke itself, there has been little archaeological data recorded in the vicinity of the present site. The Hertfordshire *Historic Environment Record* (HER) and the St Albans *Urban Archaeological Database* (UAD) note the discovery of Palaeolithic handaxes at 86 Beech Road (HER13540), 600m to the south-west, and Roman tile fragments (HER656) on the line of a Roman road leading to Coleman Green (Viatores 21A), 550m to the north. An evaluation undertaken at 138 St Albans Road, Sandridge, in 2008, investigated the line of Beech Bottom Dyke, 100m to the north.

Research Design

3.3 The aim of the present programme of work was to identify any archaeological remains that was liable to be threatened by the development, consider their location, depth, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality in accordance with the current published regional research agenda (Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Medlycott 2011), and provide a local and regional archaeological and historical context for them.

3.4 It was considered that such investigation had the potential to contribute to an understanding of activity in the vicinity of Beech Bottom Dyke from the prehistoric period onwards.

Discussion

3.5 No archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the evaluation of the site by trial trenching. Post-medieval and modern brick and tile was observed in the topsoil, but not sampled.

Conclusions

3.6 The proposed development at 150 St Albans Road, Sandridge, lies in the hinterland between the late Iron Age settlements at Wheathampstead and *Verlamion*, and immediately adjacent to the eastern end of Beech Bottom Dyke, a defensive earthwork dating to the same period, which is a Scheduled Monument (SM29449).

3.7 Although it was considered that the investigation had the potential to contribute to an understanding of activity in the vicinity of Beech Bottom Dyke from the prehistoric period onwards, no archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the evaluation of the site.

3.8 On the basis of these results, the risk that the development might disturb significant archaeological remains of is considered to be *Low* for all periods.

Confidence Rating

3.9 The archaeological trial trenching revealed the sequence of natural sand and gravel and topsoil. In addition the weather was mild and the light good. On this basis, the confidence rating for the work may be considered to be *High*.

4. Bibliography

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5. Illustrations

Figure 1 Site location

Figure 2 Trench Location

Plate 1 Trench 1, looking southwest.

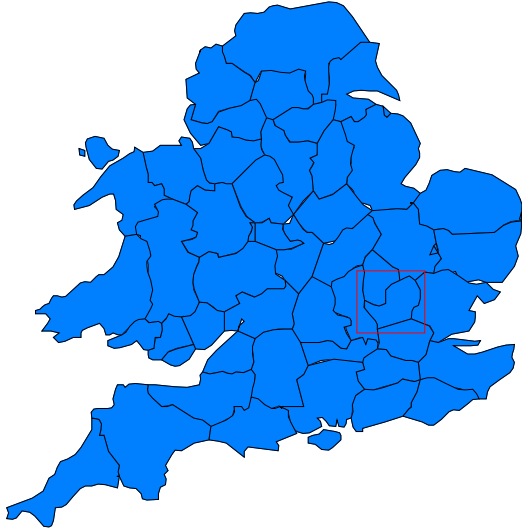
Plate 2 Trench 2, looking southeast.

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150 St Albans Road, Sandridge

HN954



Site Location

Scale 1:15000

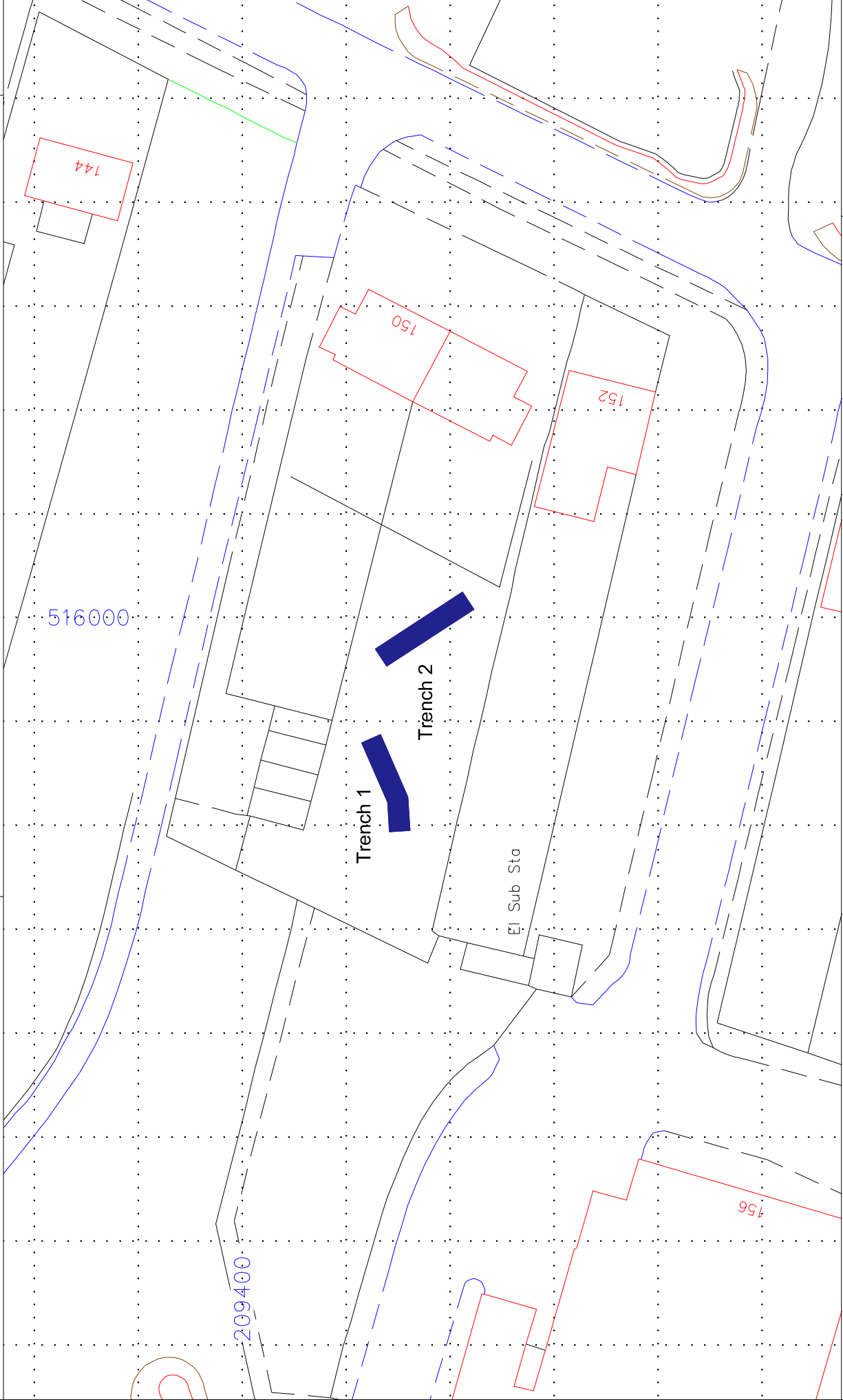
(Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Licence no.AL100014861)

Figure 1

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150 St Albans Road, Sandridge

HN954



Trench Location

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Scale 1:500

Figure 2



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking southwest.



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking southeast.

Appendix 1

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

OASIS ID: heritage1-112603	
Project details	
Project name	Sandridge, 150 St. Albans Road
Short description of the project	In order to advise the determination of a planning application for the development of 150 St. Alban's Road, Sandridge, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by Stuart Cunliffe FRICS to carry out an archaeological evaluation. The development site lies in the hinterland between the late Iron Age settlements at Wheathampstead and Verlamion, and immediately adjacent to the eastern end of Beech Bottom Dyke, a defensive earthwork dating to the same period, which is a Scheduled Monument (SM29449). Two trial trenches measuring 10m by 2m, were excavated across the area of the proposed development. No archaeological features or deposits were revealed, and no evidence for prehistoric activity was therefore found. Post-medieval and modern brick and tile was noticed in the topsoil but not recovered. On the basis of these results, the risk that the development might disturb further archaeological remains of is considered to be Low for all periods.
Project dates	Start: 15-11-2011 End: 15-11-2011
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HN954 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	Pre-application
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE ST ALBANS SANDRIDGE 150 St Albans Road
Postcode	AL4 9LP
Study area	425.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 16124 09382 51.7705907178 -0.316846881672 51 46 14 N 000 19 00 W Point
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief originator	N/A
Project design originator	Heritage Network

Project director/manager	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	James Snee
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	St Albans Museum.
Physical Contents	'none'
Digital Archive recipient	St Albans Museum
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	St Albans Museum
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Diary','Photograph','Report'
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	150 ST ALBANS ROAD, Sandridge, Hertfordshire
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Ó Coileáin, C. and Snee, J.
Other bibliographic details	Heritage Network Report No: 690
Date	2011
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth Garden City
Description	A4 booklet, comb bound, green cover, 10 pages, 2 figures, 2 plates