

HERITAGE NETWORK



**7 NEW PLACE
School Lane, Welwyn**

HN977

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MONITORING REPORT***

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD
Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation
Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

7 NEW PLACE
School Lane, Welwyn, Hertfordshire

Project Ref.: HN977
WHDC Planning Ref.: N6/2011/2211/FP
HER enquiry no.: 290/11

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Mrs Paula Quintela

By

James Snee, BSC (HONS) AIFA

Report no. 718

April 2012

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The cover photograph shows the site prior to groundworks, looking northwest

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Robin Densem, Greg Jones, David Hillelson and James Snee. The report text and illustrations were prepared by James Snee, and edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Mrs Paula Quintela, the owner of the site, and Andy Instone & Isobel Thompson, Historic Environment Unit, HCC, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	7 New Place, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, AL6 9QA.		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	Welwyn Hatfield District Council
Village/town:	Welwyn	Parish:	Welwyn
Planning reference:	N6/2011/2211/FP	NGR:	TL 22767 15932
Client name and address:	Mrs Paula Quintela, 7 New Place, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, AL6 9QA.		
Nature of work:	Extension	Former land use:	Residential
Site status:	AAS	Reason for investigation:	Direction of LPA
Position in planning process:	Post-determination	Project brief originator:	Local Authority
Size of affected area:	24 m ²	Size of area investigated:	24 m ²
Site Code:	HN977	HER reference	290/11
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Monitoring	Archive recipient:	Welwyn Hatfield Museum Service
Start of work	05/04/2012	Finish of work	19/04/2012
Related HER Nos:	n/a	Periods represented:	None
Oasis UID	heritage1-118745	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	None		
Physical archive:	None		
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis:

In response to a condition on the planning consent for the construction of an extension to the existing house at 7 New Place, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the owner to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring of the development groundworks.

The groundworks for the development revealed that the present site had been terraced into the slope to the north, probably when the existing house was built. This is likely to have removed any archaeological features or deposits. The stratigraphic sequence revealed in the footings trenches consisted of chalk bedrock, overlain by natural sandy clay, subsoil and topsoil

No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were revealed during the course of the present project.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of Mrs Paula Quintela, as part of a programme of archaeological monitoring undertaken during the groundworks associated with the construction of an extension at 7 New Place, Welwyn, Hertfordshire.

1.2 Planning permission for the development (ref: N6/2011/2211/FP) granted by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC), was subject to an archaeological condition issued in line with the Department of Communities and Local Government's *Planning Policy Statement 5* (PPS5). The extent of the work was defined in correspondence from the HEU (ref: AI/11/2211-1) acting as advisers to the WHBC.

1.3 The site is located to the southwest of Welwyn town centre, on the north side of New Place, centred on NGR TL 22767 15932 (Figure 1).

1.4 The site lies within Area of Archaeological Significance No.7, as identified in the District Local Plan. This notes the late Iron Age and Roman settlement at Welwyn, a late Iron Age cremation cemetery and two Roman villas, as well as the later medieval settlement.

1.5 The aim of the present project has been to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any remains which were liable to be threatened by the development, and the establishment of a local and regional archaeological and historical context for them, if they were discovered, in accordance with the current published local and regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997; Brown and Glazebrook 2000; Medlycott 2011).

1.6 It was considered that this investigation had the potential to contribute to an understanding of the origins and development of settlement in Welwyn from the prehistoric period onwards.

1.7 The development comprised the construction of a single storey extension with associated services and landscaping.

2. Fieldwork

SITE TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The study area comprises a terraced garden at the rear of a modern dwelling on the north side of New Place. The site lies on sloping ground at approximately 80m AOD.

2.2 The underlying geology comprises Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation (Undifferentiated) - Chalk. This is overlain by drift geology of the Kesgrave Catchment Subgroup - Sand and Gravel (British Geological Survey).

METHODOLOGY

2.3 The fieldwork involved a series of site visits to supervise the soil stripping across the footprint of the new extension, the ground reduction in the area of the new steps and the excavation of foundation trenches to the new extension.

2.4 The initial soil strip was undertaken using a tracked mini-digger, fitted with a 1.2m wide toothless bucket, and the foundation trenches were excavated with the same machine using a 0.60m wide toothed bucket.

2.5 All recording work was carried out in accordance with the approved Project Design, current health and safety legislation, and both IfA and ALGAO standards.

MONITORING AND RECORDING

Stratigraphy

2.6 The stratigraphy, which was consistent across the site, comprised a sloping layer of white chalk, which measured more than 0.60m thick at the northwest end of the site and disappeared below the limit of excavation 2.5m to the southeast. This was overlain by up to 1.2m of yellowish brown sandy clay, with frequent angular flint inclusions.

2.7 On the north-western side of the site the sandy clay was overlain by 0.30m of dark greyish brown sandy, clayey silt subsoil and 0.10m of very dark greyish brown topsoil. The south-eastern side had previously been disturbed by the construction of the existing dwelling.

Ground reduction

2.8 The initial topsoil strip reduced the ground level by approximately 0.10m across the entire site, revealing the underlying overburden.

2.9 Further ground reduction, to a depth of approximately 1.10m, was carried out in the area of the new steps into the garden, adjacent to the north-western corner of the new extension (Figure 2). This revealed the topsoil, subsoil and the upper portions of the yellowish brown sandy clay. Fragments of post-medieval/modern brick and tile were observed in the overburden, but not collected.

2.10 No archaeological features or deposits were revealed during this phase of the development groundworks.

Extension footing trenches

2.11 The footings trenches to the new extension measured 0.60m in width and 1.20m in depth. Their sections revealed the general stratigraphic sequence described above.

2.12 In the eastern corner, the site of the existing patio has been laid on sand directly overlying the sandy clay natural. This, together with the lack of topsoil on the south-eastern side of the site demonstrates that the study area has been terraced into the slope at the rear, probably when the present house was constructed.

2.13 No archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the excavation of the extension footing trenches.

3. Discussion

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SETTING

3.1 The county Historic Environment Record (HER) was consulted for a list of all heritage assets within 250m of the site (consultation ref. 290/11). This lists 14 records and has been used to create an overview of the archaeological and historical context of the proposed development site.

3.2 The earliest evidence for settlement in Welwyn comes from an Iron Age enclosure with post holes, sill beam trenches and other structural indicators (HER 9267), discovered at the Queen Victoria Memorial hospital, to the west of the site of the present investigation. An Iron Age cemetery has also been recorded close to the Civic Centre (AAS7) and in an unlocated chalk pit (HER 1791).

3.3 To the northwest of the proposed development is the route of the Roman road from St Albans to Colchester. Evidence for the road has been revealed to the north of 59 School Lane (HER 7310) in the form of a rutted metalled track, and in allotment gardens off Hawbush Close (HER 7311) where the ditches to either side of the road were revealed.

3.4 Close by, and almost certainly associated with the Roman road, were a number of human burials in the form of skeletal remains and cremations (HER 2303 and HER 12073) which are believed to form part of a cemetery associated with the Roman settlement of Welwyn, which probably exists to the east.

3.5 Evidence of Romano-British settlement has been found in the area in the form of pits (HER 1693) and a corn drier (HER 6181) to the northeast of the site and a coin hoard (HER 1787) to the north. An evaluation at 21-23 School Lane (HER 16245), to the northeast, revealed a ditch, pit and the remains of a timber building with a chalk floor.

3.6 The only late Saxon evidence from the region is a single coin of Edward the Confessor (HER 4165) found in Welwyn in the 18th century. The medieval village of Welwyn is known from historical records, beginning with the Domesday Survey of AD1086 that records the settlement as 'Wilye' (AAS7). The parish church is dated to the 13th century.

3.7 Close to the present development are two post-medieval buildings of note: The Lodge (HER 10982), a 19th century or older building used as a school, and New Place (HER 16035), which is an 'arts and crafts' house.

CONCLUSIONS

3.8 It was considered that the present project could provide the opportunity to investigate the origins and development of settlement in Welwyn from the prehistoric period onwards.

3.9 The groundworks for the development revealed that the present site had been terraced into the slope to the north, probably when the existing house was built. This is likely to have removed any archaeological features or deposits. The stratigraphic sequence revealed in the footings trenches consisted of chalk bedrock, overlain by natural sandy clay. On the north-western side of the site layers of overburden and topsoil were present above the clay.

3.10 No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were revealed during the course of the present project.

Confidence Rating

3.11 Conditions on site were generally acceptable for the identification and recording of any potential archaeological remains, and as such there are no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than *High*.

4. Schedule of site visits

Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
05/04/2012	JGS	2	Site meeting
10/04/2012	GJ	2	Supervision of ground reduction
11/04/2012	RD	4	Supervision of ground reduction
12/04/2012	JGS	2	Supervision of ground reduction
13/04/2012	JGS	2	Supervision of ground reduction
16/04/2012	DJH	2	Supervision of footing trenches
19/04/2012	JGS	2	Supervision of footing trenches

5. Bibliography

Archaeology Data Service: <http://www.ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue>

British Geological Survey: <http://bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience>

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Medlycott, M. (ed.) 2011 *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper no.24

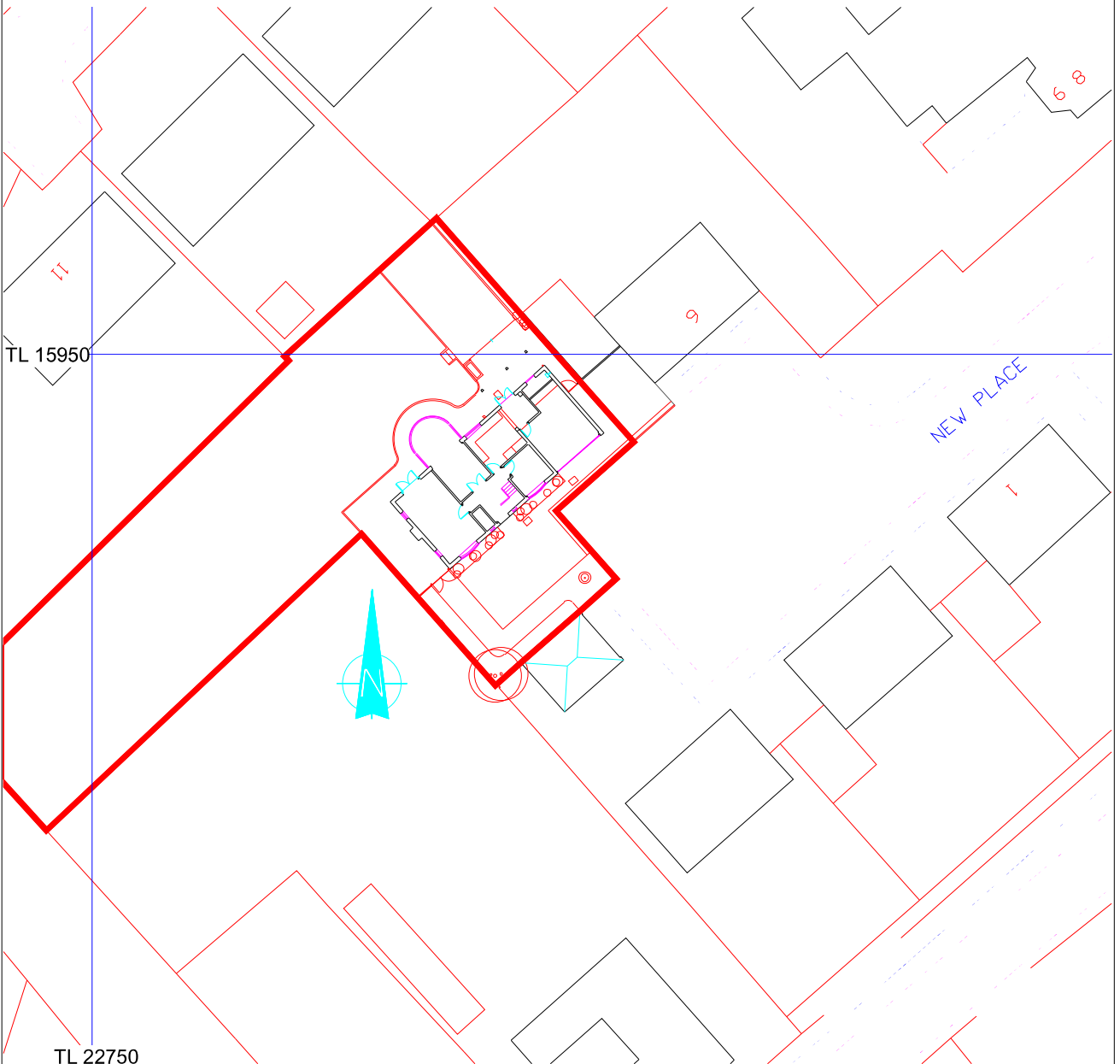
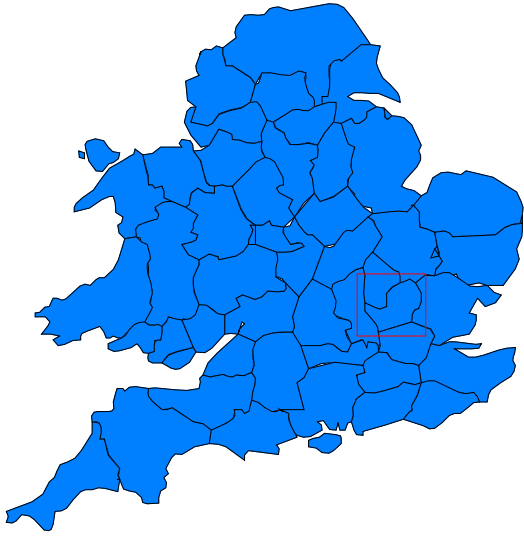
Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW) 1984 *Soil Map 1:25000 scale, Sheet 4, Eastern England*. SSEW: Rothamsted, Harpenden

6. Illustrations

Figure 1 Site location
Figure 2 Site layout

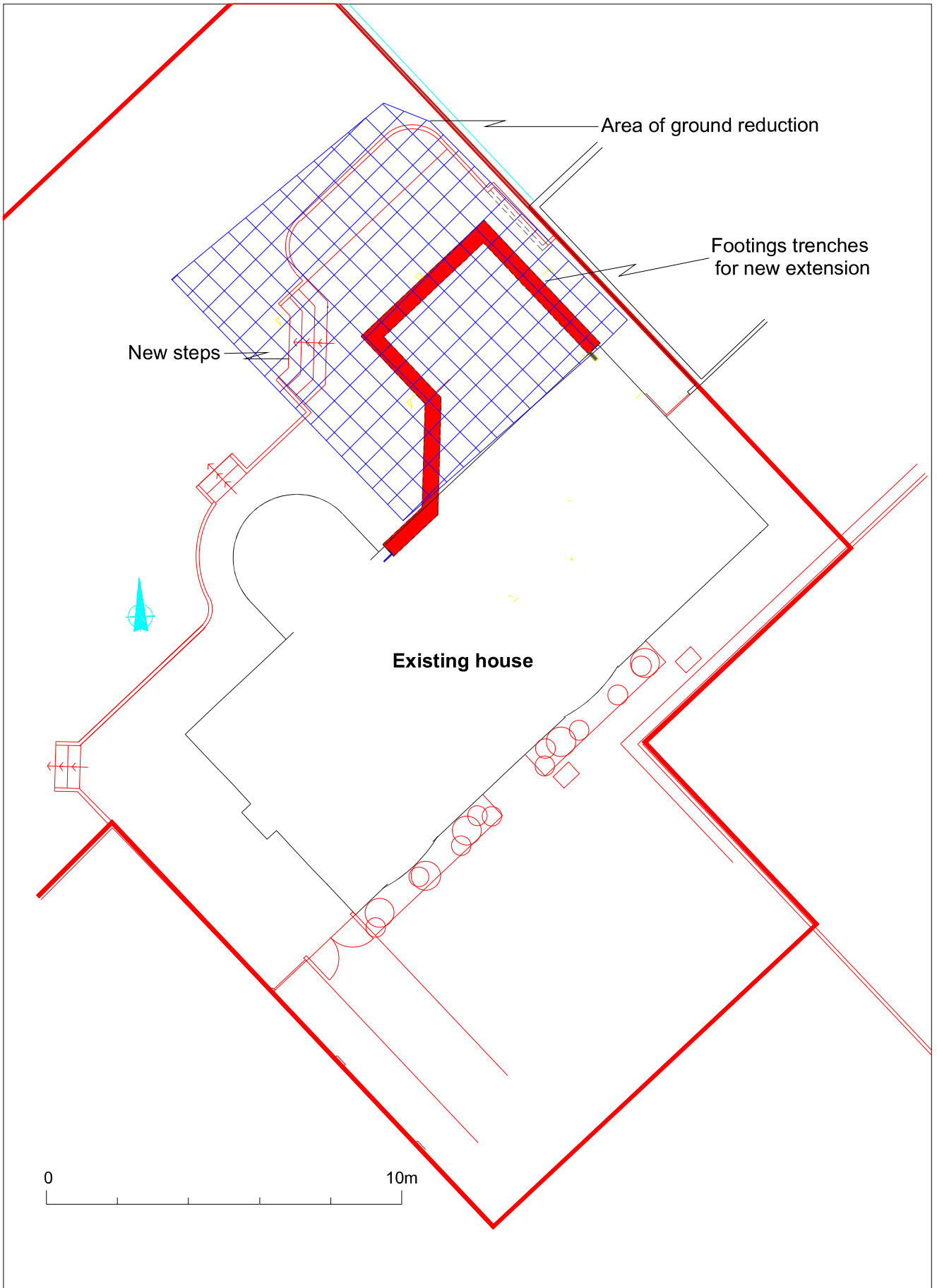
Plate 1 Soil profile revealed during ground reduction
Plate 2 Geological deposits revealed in footing trench

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Site Location

Scale 1:500



Site Layout
Courtesy Wastell & Porter Architects Ltd.

Scale 1:250

Figure 2



Plate 1: Soil profile revealed during ground reduction, looking northwest.



Plate 2: Geological deposits revealed in footing trench, looking northwest.

Appendix

OASIS ID: heritage1-118745	
Project details	
Project name	Welwyn, 7 New Place, School Lane
Short description of the project	In response to a condition on the planning consent for the construction of an extension to the existing house at 7 New Place, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the owner to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring of the development groundworks. The groundworks for the development revealed that the present site had been terraced into the slope to the north, probably when the existing house was built. This is likely to have removed any archaeological features or deposits. The stratigraphic sequence revealed in the footings trenches consisted of chalk bedrock, overlain by natural sandy clay, subsoil and topsoil. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were revealed during the course of the present project.
Project dates	Start: 05-04-2012 End: 19-04-2012
Previous/future work	No/Not known
Associated project reference codes	HN977 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	'Watching Brief'
Development type	Rear extension
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	Post determination
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE WELWYN HATFIELD WELWYN 7 New Place, School Lane
Postcode	AL6 9QA
Study area	24.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 22767 15932 51.8280400599 -0.218289453855 51 49 40 N 000 13 05 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 80.00m Max: 80.00m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Heritage Network
Project director	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	James Snee
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Welwyn Hatfield Museums

Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Welwyn Hatfield Museums
Paper Media available	'Diary','Report'
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	7 NEW PLACE School Lane, Welwyn, Hertfordshire
Author/Editor	Snee, J.
Other bibliographic details	Heritage Network Report no. 718
Date	2012
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