

HERITAGE NETWORK



**1 WILGA ROAD
Welwyn, Herts.**

(HN515)

Archaeological Monitoring Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

1 WILGA ROAD

Welwyn, Herts.

HN515

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Arthur Simms Homes Ltd

by

David Kaye BA

Report no.283

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Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by David Kaye, Karin Semmelmann and Geoff Saunders, under the supervision of Chris Turner. The report text and illustrations were prepared by David Kaye. The report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Jon Bareham, Arthur Simms Homes Ltd and the staff of the County Archaeology Office, Hertfordshire County Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	1 Wilga Road, Welwyn, Herts.		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	Welwyn Hatfield
Village/town:	Welwyn	Parish:	Welwyn
Planning reference:	03/0834/FP	NGR:	TL 22610 15975
Client name and address:	Arthur Simms Homes, The Old Barn, Harpenden Road, Wheathampstead, Herts		
Nature of work:	New Dwelling	Present land use:	Garden
Size of affected area:	c.130m ²	Size of area investigated:	c.130m ²
Site Code:	HN515	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Type of work:	Monitoring	Archive location:	Welwyn Hatfield Museums
Start of work	18/02/2005	Finish of work	22/02/2005
Related SMR Nos:	n/a	Periods represented:	None
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis: In response to a condition on the planning permission for a new dwelling at 1 Wilga Road, Welwyn, Herts., the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developer to undertake the archaeological monitoring of the groundworks.

Despite the location of the site within an area of high archaeological potential, close to the late Iron Age and Roman settlement at Welwyn, and within 75m of the line of a major Roman road, no evidence for archaeological features or artefacts was recorded.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of *Arthur Simms Homes Ltd* as part of a programme of monitoring and recording the groundworks for proposed building development at 1 Wilga Road, Welwyn, Hertfordshire. The planning permission for the development (ref. 03/0834/FP), granted by the Welwyn Hatfield Council (WHC), was subject to a standard archaeological condition, in accordance with the provisions of the Department of the Environment's *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16). The scope of the required work followed the *Design Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording*, issued by the *County Archaeology Office* (CAO) of Hertfordshire County Council, acting as advisers to WHC. A full specification for the work was contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, dated February 2005.

1.2 The site, centred on NGR TL 22610 15975, is located on the eastern corner of the junction between Wilga Road and Hawbush Rise. The development proposes a new detached dwelling adjacent to the existing house (Figure 1).

1.3 The site lies within the *Area of Archaeological Significance* which defines the focus of Roman activity in Welwyn in the District Local Plan. The line of a major Roman road runs NE-SW within 75m of the southern boundary of the site, and significant numbers of features and finds of late Iron Age and Roman date, including cremation burials, have been recorded within 250m on the County Historic Environment Record.

1.4 The aim of the present project has been to identify and record any archaeological features and deposits which were uncovered; and to retrieve artefactual and ecofactual elements which would allow the date, character, and significance of the site to be assessed in accordance with current regional research agenda (Brown and Glazebrook, 2000), and subject to the limitations of reasonable safety and practicality.

1.5 The present report is intended to set the site in its archaeological and historical context, and, together with the deposition of the archive for the project with the Welwyn Hatfield Museum Service, to complete the requirements of the planning condition.

2. Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The site lies at the junction of Wilga Road and Hawbush Rise, on land that slopes downwards in a southerly direction. The geology was consistent across the site and comprised a layer of very dark brown silty clay topsoil, beneath which was a dark yellowish brown slightly silty clay subsoil over the natural geology. This consisted of chalk, with numerous large, amorphous, orange-brown solid clay deposits.

METHODOLOGY

2.2 The timetable for the fieldwork followed the client's groundwork schedule. A number of site visits were made to supervise the ground reduction and the excavation of footings, and drainage, trenches to soakaways.

2.3 The machining was undertaken using a tracked minidigger, fitted with a 1.50m toothless ditching bucket for the ground reduction, and a 0.45m toothed bucket for the footings trenches.

2.4 Spoil from the various stages of the groundworks was inspected for archaeological artefacts.

2.5 The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Design Brief, and with the Heritage Network's approved Project Design.

MONITORING AND RECORDING

2.6 The groundworks included the reduction of the ground level within the footprint of the proposed new building, the excavation of the footing and drainage trenches, and the excavation of a soakaway.

Ground reduction

2.7 As the site lies on a slope, only 2/3rd of the area of the house footprint needed to be reduced to the level of the natural geology. The maximum reduction occurred at the northern end of the site, which was reduced in depth by approximately 1.25m. At the southern end the ground was stripped by approximately 0.27m, which did not exceed the depth of the topsoil.

2.8 No archaeological features or deposits were revealed, and no artefacts were recovered during this process.

Footings trenches

2.9 The footings trenches for the new building measured approximately 0.55m in width and 0.7m in depth. The trench sections revealed a layer of very dark brown silty clay topsoil, approximately 0.4m in depth, beneath which was a dark yellowish brown slightly silty clay subsoil, 0.2m in depth, over the natural chalk. A gas pipe was encountered running east-west supplying the adjacent house.

2.10 No archaeological features were revealed in the trenches.

Drainage trenches

2.11 The drainage trenches were cut into, but not through, the topsoil and subsoil. They did not reach the natural geology and were short in length. On this basis it was not considered necessary to monitor this stage of the development.

Soakaway

2.12 The soakaway measured 1.5m square by 2.5m deep and was situated at the south western corner of the site. It was cut into the natural chalk and no archaeological features were observed whilst it was being dug.

3. Discussion and Conclusion

3.1 Despite the site's location within an area of known archaeological activity, the monitoring of the groundworks associated with the new development failed to reveal any features, other than one modern service trench.

3.2 No artefacts were recovered from any part of the site, including the spoil.

Conclusion

3.3 The present site is located close to the late Iron Age and Roman settlement at Welwyn, the line of a major Roman road runs within 75m of the southern boundary and a significant numbers of features and finds of late Iron Age and Roman date are recorded within 250m on the County Historic Environment Record.

3.4 The lack of archaeological evidence from the site suggests that it lay outside the focus of the late Iron Age and Roman settlement.

Confidence Rating

3.5 The conditions were generally acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation. There were no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than High.

4. Schedule of Site Visits

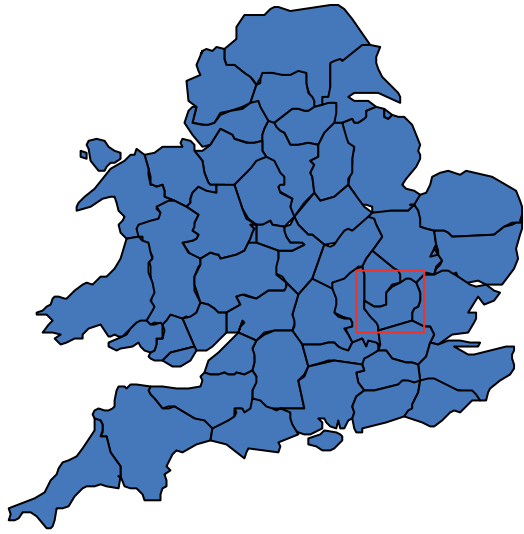
Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
18/02/05	KS	8	Monitoring ground reduction
21/02/05	DGK	8	Monitoring further ground reduction & clean-up site
22/02/05	DGK	2	Finish cleaning and photograph site
02/03/05	DGK	2	Inspect footings trenches
03/03/05	GIS	2	Inspect footings trenches

5. Bibliography

Hillelson, D. 2005, *1 Wilga Road, Welwyn, Herts: Archaeological Project Design*. Heritage Network

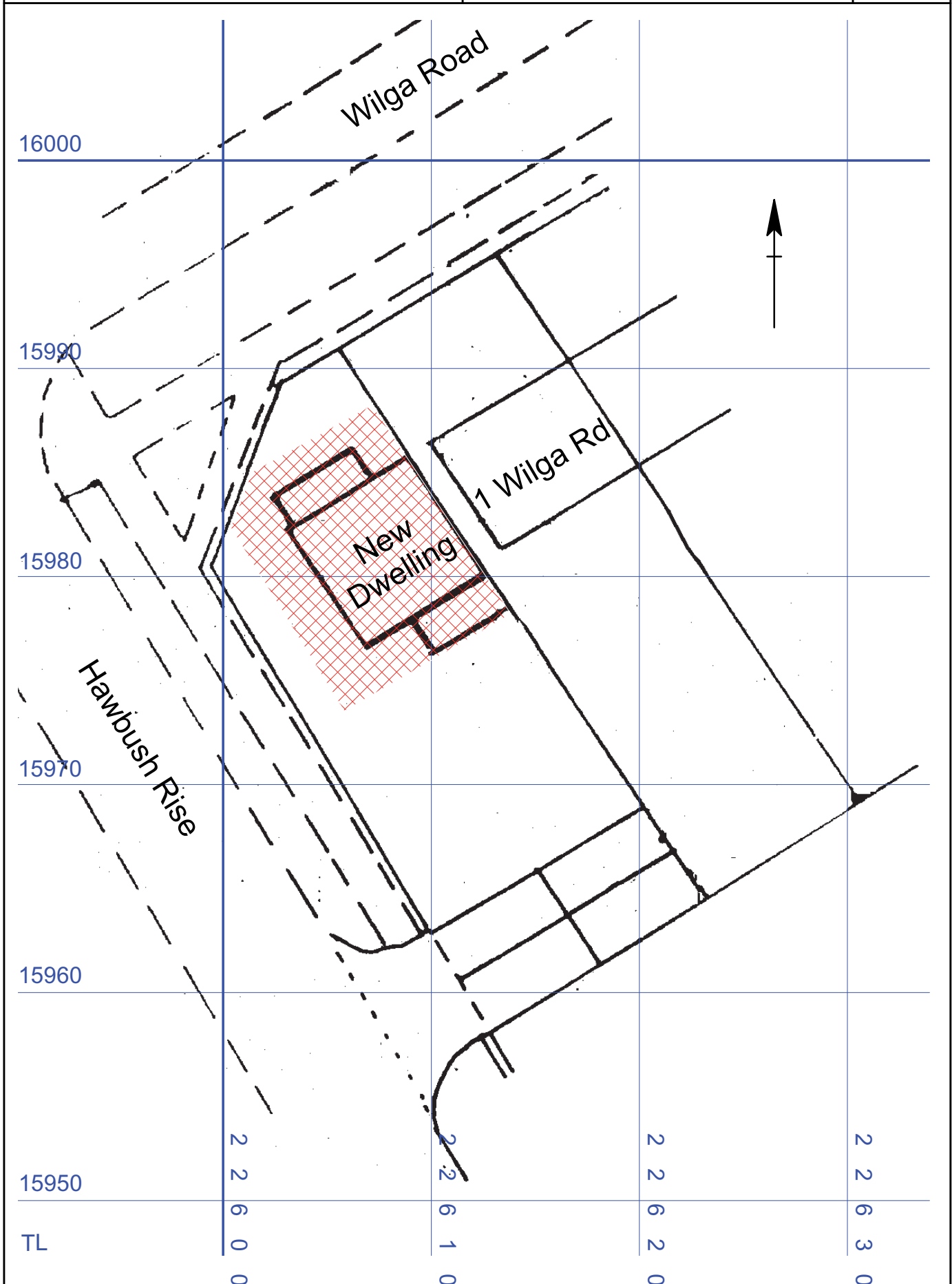
6. Illustrations

Figure 1 Site location
 Figure 2 Site layout



Site Location

Scale 1:5000



Site Layout

Scale 1:250

Figure 2