

HERITAGE NETWORK



THE FOX INN Willian, Herts

HN508

Archaeological Monitoring Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

THE FOX INN

Willian, Herts.

HN508

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Anglia County Inns Ltd

by

David Kaye, BA, PIFA

Report no. 293

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The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Richard Hodson Survey and Technical Services; Cliff Nye, Anglia County Inns 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: | The Fox Inn, Willian, Hertfordshire | | |
| County: | Hertfordshire | District: | North Herts. |
| Village/town: | Willian | Parish: | Letchworth |
| Planning reference: | 01/04/1305 | NGR: | TL 2241 3069 |
| Client name and address: | Anglia County Inns Ltd., The Fox Inn, Willian, LETCHWORTH, SG6 2AE | | |
| Nature of work: | Extension | Present land use: | Car park and garden |
| Size of affected area: | c.130m ² | Size of area investigated: | c.130m ² |
| Site Code: | HN508 | Other reference: | n/a |
| Organisation: | Heritage Network | Site Director: | David Hillelson |
| Type of work: | Monitoring | Archive location: | North Herts Museums |
| Start of work | 17/01/2005 | Finish of work | 03/02/2005 |
| Related SMR Nos: | n/a | Periods represented: | None |
| Previous summaries/reports: | n/a | | |

Synopsis: In response to a condition on the planning permission for an extension at The Fox Inn, Willian, Herts., the Heritage Network was commissioned by Richard Hodson Survey and Technical Services on behalf of the owner Anglia County Inns Ltd to undertake the archaeological monitoring of the development groundworks.

Despite the proximity of the study area to the 12th century church and being within the *Area of Archaeological Significance no.99* (AAS99), which defines the medieval settlement of Willian in the District Local Plan, no significant archaeological features were encountered on the site. No artefacts were recovered from the spoil.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of *Anglia County Inns Ltd* as part of a programme of monitoring and recording the groundworks for an extension to The Fox Inn, Willian, Hertfordshire. The planning permission for the development (ref. 01/04/1305), granted by the North Herts. District Council (NHDC), 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 NHDC. A full specification of the work was contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, dated July 2004.

1.2 The site, centred on NGR TL 2241 3069, is located on the south side of Baldock Lane, just to the north-west of the parish church of All Saints. The development proposes an extension to the southern elevation of the existing building (see Figure 1).

1.3 The site lies within *Area of Archaeological Significance no.99* (AAS99), which defines the medieval settlement of Willian in the District Local Plan. Willian is recorded in the Domesday Book and the parish church dates from the 12th century.

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 describes the findings of the monitoring programme and is intended to complete the requirements of the planning condition.

2. Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The site lies to the south side of Baldock Lane, just to the north-west of the parish church of All Saints. The geology was consistent across the site and comprised a layer of very dark brown silty clay topsoil approximately 0.4m thick beneath which was a lighter brown slightly sandier subsoil 0.4m thick over the yellow sand natural.

METHODOLOGY

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

2.3 The machining was undertaken using a tracked mini-digger fitted with a 450mm toothed and an 800mm toothless bucket, as required.

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

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

MONITORING AND RECORDING

Footings trenches

2.6 The footings trenches for the new extension measured approximately 0.45m in width and varied from 1.0m in depth to approximately 1.9m in the eastern corner where some subsidence had taken place (Figure 2).

2.7 No archaeological features or artefacts were revealed.

Drainage trenches

2.8 The drainage trenches leading to the soakaway were of such a depth that they did not cut through the substantial overburden in the car park to the south-east of the existing building.

Soakaway

2.9 A single soakaway, measuring approximately 2.5m square by 2.5m deep, was excavated on the south-east of the new extension (Figure 2).

2.10 At a depth of approximately 1.1m in the north-west facing section of the soakaway 4 brick courses were observed indicating the base of a wall of post medieval date.

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 extension failed to reveal any features other than the base of the post medieval wall in the soakaway. No artefacts from the medieval or any other period were recovered.

Conclusion

3.2 Despite the proximity of the site to the 12th century church, and its location in the area defining medieval Willian no archaeology was observed during the monitoring process.

Confidence Rating

3.3 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 |
|----------|-------|-------|---------------------------------|
| 17/01/05 | DGK | 7 | Inspection of footings trenches |
| 19/01/05 | DGK | 1 | Inspection of footings trenches |
| 20/01/05 | DGK | 1 | Inspection of footings trenches |
| 01/02/05 | DGK | 1 | Inspection of drainage trenches |
| 03/02/05 | DGK | 1 | Inspection of soakaway |

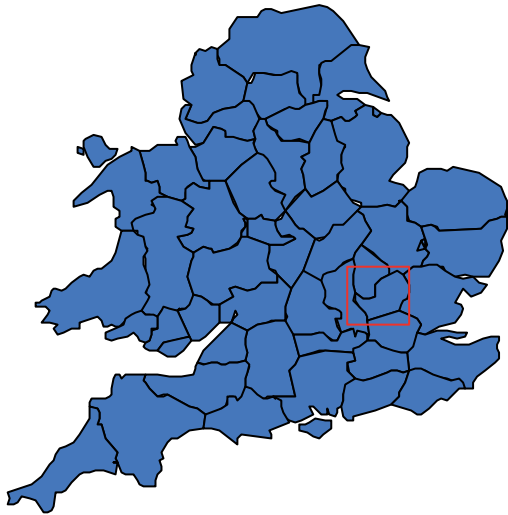
5. Bibliography

Hillelson, D. 2004, *The Fox Inn, Willian, Herts: Archaeological Project Design*. Heritage Network

6. Illustrations

Figure 1 Site location

Figure 2 Site layout

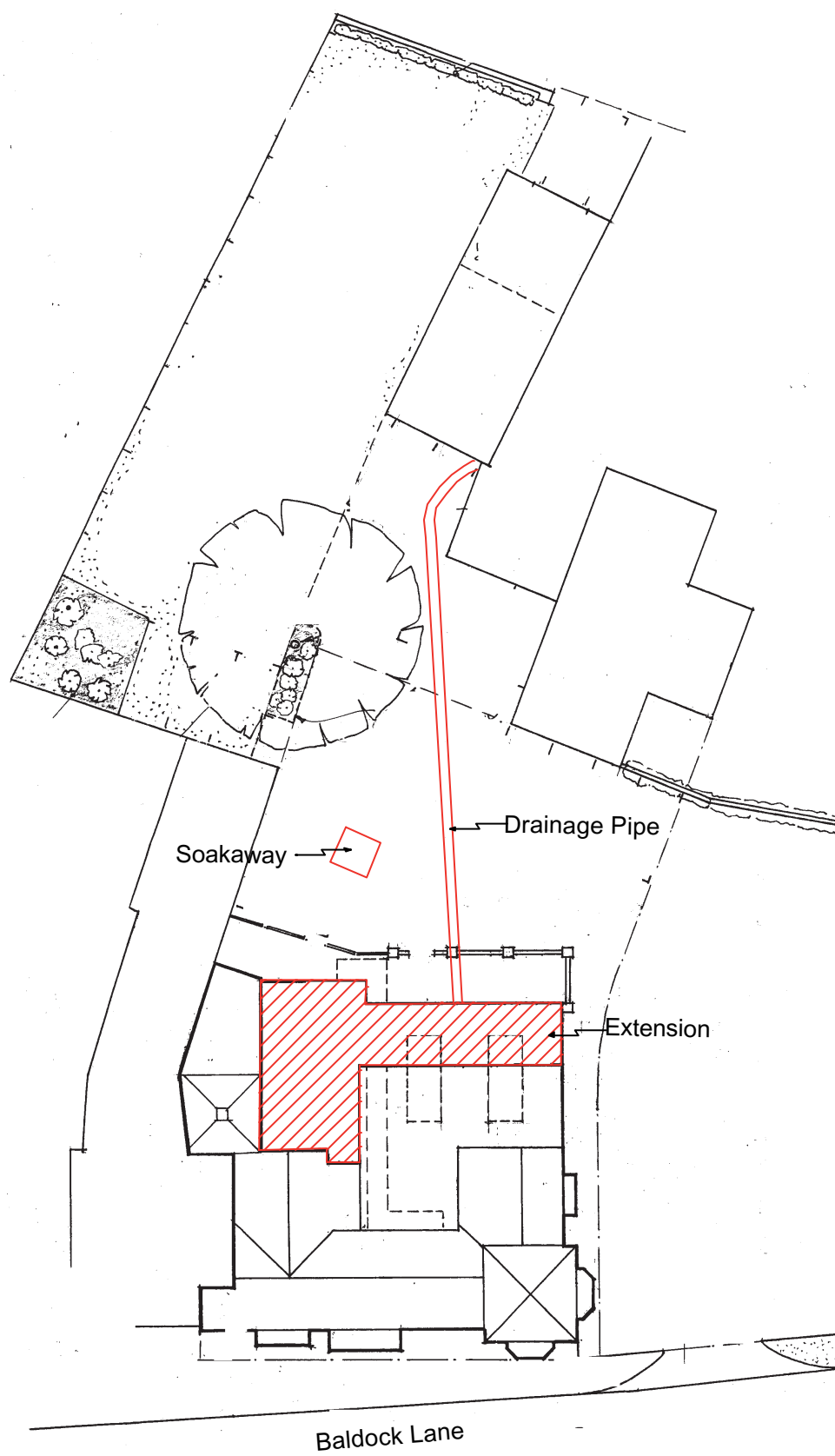


Site Location

Scale 1:500

Reproduced from OS mapping with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Licence no.AL100014861

Figure 1



Site Layout

Scale 1:300

Figure 2