



HERITAGE NETWORK



Land between

10 & 19 ROMAN LANE Baldock, Herts.

HN533

Archaeological Evaluation



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

Land Between
10 & 19 ROMAN LANE
Baldock, Herts.

HN533

Archaeological Evaluation

Prepared on behalf of Norsong Ltd

by

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The cover photo shows feature [101] from the west.

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Abigail Rothwell and Chris Turner. The report text was written by Abigail Rothwell and the illustrations were prepared by David Kaye. The report was edited by David Hillelson.

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Summary

Site name and address:	Land Between 10 & 19 Roman Lane, Baldock, Hertfordshire		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	North Hertfordshire
Village/town:	Baldock	Parish:	Baldock
Planning reference:	05/00591/1	NGR:	TL 2499 3355
Client name and address:	Norsong Ltd, 6 High Street, Stotfold, Hitchin, SG5 4LL		
Nature of work:	New Housing	Present land use:	Garden Plot
Size of affected area:	c.800m ²	Size of area investigated:	34m ²
Site Code:	HN533	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Type of work:	Evaluation	Finds location/Museum:	N.Herts Museum Service
Start of work	02/06/2005	Finish of work	03/06/2005
Related SMR Nos:	n/a	Periods represented:	Late Pre-Roman Iron Age, Roman, Post-medieval
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis: In response to a request for further information on the archaeological potential of a proposed development site located between nos. 10 and 19 Roman Lane, Baldock, Herts, the Heritage Network was commissioned by Norsong Ltd to carry out an archaeological evaluation. Two trial trenches were excavated.

A linear feature identified in Trench 1 has been tentatively interpreted as a boundary ditch. Reference to historic maps suggests that the ditch is of an earlier rather than a more recent origin, and the lack of datable finds and the compact and homogenous nature of the fill suggests that it may be Iron Age or Roman in date. Two brick structures and building material were identified in Trench 2. These are early to mid 19th century in date, and may relate to buildings which appear on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey dated 1884. These are believed to have been associated with the manufacture of whitewash.

The evaluation demonstrated possible Roman or Iron Age activity on the site, which is likely to be preserved below the impact level of the proposed development. Post-medieval remains in the vicinity of Trench 2, associated with the industrial processing of chalk in the early 19th century, may be disturbed by the proposed development.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of *Norsong Ltd*, as part of the archaeological evaluation of a development site located between nos. 10 and 19 Roman Lane, Baldock, Herts. The determination of the planning application for the development (ref. 05/00591/1) by the North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC), has been referred back to the applicants for further information on the archaeological potential of the site. This is in accordance with the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning. The scope of the required investigation was agreed in conversation with the County Archaeological Office (CAO) of Hertfordshire County Council, acting as adviser to the planning authority, and has followed the current model *Design Brief for Archaeological Evaluation*. The evaluation has also followed the provisions set out in the Heritage Network's approved Project Design dated June 2005.

1.2 The site lies at the south-west end of the main section of Roman Lane, opposite its junction with Clothall Road, and is centred on NGR TL 2499 3355. At present, the site forms a garden plot to the rear of nos. 21-23 Pembroke Road. The new development proposes the construction of two new dwellings with access from Roman Lane.

1.3 The site lies close to the limit of known settlement on the south-east edge of Roman Baldock. Recent archaeological investigation on the site of nos. 26-39 Roman Lane, 50m to the north-west, demonstrated the presence of an agricultural ploughsoil. An evaluation of a site at 41 Pembroke Road, 80m to the south, revealed evidence of Roman activity including three post-holes and a boundary ditch running parallel to South Road. On this basis there is considered to be a moderate probability that remains of a Roman or earlier date may be affected by the development.

1.4 The aim of the evaluation has been to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any such remains that are liable to be threatened by the development, and to provide a local and regional, archaeological and historical context for them, in accordance with the current published regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000), if they were to be discovered.

1.5 The present report is intended to provide the planning authority with sufficient data to allow it to consider the archaeological implications of the proposed development, and to determine what further, if any, mitigation measures may be required to allow the development to proceed.

2. Fieldwork

SITE TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The study area lies close to the limit of known settlement on the south-east edge of Roman Baldock. The site is reasonably level at approximately 69m OD. It is currently being used as a garden plot and contains several trees.

2.2 Cartographic evidence from the first edition of the Ordnance Survey dated 1884 shows buildings on the site. These are believed to have been associated with the manufacture of whitewash.

2.3 The underlying geology of the study area is chalk.

METHODOLOGY

2.4 All work was carried out in accordance with the approved *Project Design*, current health and safety legislation, and IFA standards.

2.5 The trenches were triangulated from known points using fibreglass tape measures.

2.6 The machining of the trial trenches was conducted under direct archaeological supervision with a 360° tracked mini-digger fitted with a 1.2m wide toothless ditching bucket. The spoil from machining was inspected for archaeological artefacts. Trenches were machined to the first significant archaeological horizon.

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

2.8 All identified contexts were photographed, and recorded using the appropriate pro-forma. Scaled plans and sections were drawn on drafting film at scales of 1:10 and 1:50.

2.9 The trenches were positioned across the footprints of the two proposed new dwellings so as to avoid existing trees.

FIELDWORK RESULTS**Trench 1**

Length (m):	10	Width (m):	1.8	Maximum Depth (m):	0.85	Orientation (Approximately)	E-W
No. of features		1		Level of Archaeological horizon (m OD)		68.12	
Context	Type	Description			Dimensions (m)		
					Length	Width	Depth
101	Ditch Cut	Linear feature, steep on the NE side and stepped on the SW side with a v-shaped base. Orientation NW-SE			>1.8	2.10	0.82
102	Ditch Fill	10YR 6/6 brownish yellow firm sandy silt, frequent chalk flecks and occasional small flints			>1.8	2.10	0.82
103	Topsoil	10 YR 5/1 grey loose sandy silt, frequent roots			>10	>1.8	0.50
104	Subsoil	10YR 6/6 brownish yellow firm sandy silt frequent roots and chalk flecks			>10	>1.8	0.40
105	Natural	Chalk			>10	>1.8	-

2.10 Trench 1 was located within the footprint of the proposed northern most dwelling.

2.11 The stratigraphy in the trench consisted of a layer of sandy silt topsoil grey (10YR 5/1) in colour, followed by a brownish yellow (10YR 6/6) sandy silt subsoil. There was a large amount of root disturbance in these layers. The natural geology of firm chalk was reached at a maximum depth of 0.85m.

2.12 Within Trench 1 a large linear ditch [101] orientated NW-SE was identified. The sides of the ditch were steep on one side but stepped on the other, and the base was v-shaped. Fragments of animal bone and oyster shell were recovered from the single firm, brownish yellow (10YR 6/6), sandy silt fill. The stepped side suggests that the ditch was recut at sometime.

Trench 2

Length (m):	10	Width (m):	1.6	Maximum Depth (m):	1	Orientation (Approximately)	N-S
No. of features		2		Level of Archaeological horizon (m OD)		68.88	
Context	Type	Description			Dimensions (m)		
					Length	Width	Depth
201	Topsoil	10 YR 5/1 grey loose sandy silt, frequent roots and modern debris			>10	>1.6	0.40
202	Layer	2.5YR 7/6 yellow loose sandy gravel, intermittent layer			5.2	>1.6	0.07
203	Subsoil	10YR 6/6 brownish yellow firm sandy silt occasional roots and chalk flecks			>10	>1.6	0.40
204	Natural	Chalk			>10	>1.6	-

205	Brick Wall	Handmade brick, 10YR 4/8 red (1 brick = 0.245x 0.12x 0.055), 2 bricks wide and >1 course deep, poor chalky mortar and irregular bonding. Orientation NE-SW	>1.7	0.30	>0.055
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)		
			Length	Width	Depth
206	Debris Layer	10YR 8/1 white redeposited loose chalk with frequent building debris and brown silt	>1.2	>1.6	-
207	Brick wall	Handmade brick, 10YR 4/8 red (1 brick = 0.19x 0.12x 0.055), 2 bricks wide and 3 courses deep, poor chalky mortar and irregular bonding. Orientation NE-SW	>1.7	0.30	0.165
208	Debris layer	10YR 8/1 white redeposited loose chalk with frequent building debris and brown silt	>2.8	>1.6	0.50

2.13 Trench 2 was located within the footprint of the proposed southern dwelling.

2.14 The stratigraphy in the trench consisted of a layer of sandy silt topsoil grey (10YR 5/1) in colour, followed by a narrow irregular band of yellow (2.5YR 7/6) sandy gravel and a brownish yellow (10YR 6/6) sandy silt sub soil. The sandy gravel was only observed between walls [205] and [207] and is therefore probably associated with the construction of the associated building. The natural geology of firm chalk was reached at a maximum depth of 1m.

2.15 Trench 2 revealed two parallel brick foundations in poor condition. The bricks were handmade and red (10YR 4/8) in colour. They were bonded with a poor quality lime mortar, now decayed, and were two courses wide. A build-up of redeposited chalk and building debris including tile, brick, metal, animal bone and glass was noted on the outside of both walls.

Concordance of finds

2.16 During the course of the evaluation, artefacts, including pottery, ceramic building material (CBM), glass, iron objects and animal bone were observed within the topsoil, [201], and redeposited building debris, [206] and [208]. These artefacts are likely to be associated with the 19th century brick foundations. In the context of the present site, these types of artefacts have no archaeological significance and, although their presence was noted, they were not collected.

Animal Bone

2.17 A small assemblage of 20 animal bone fragments weighing in total 310g was recovered from ditch [101]. The general condition of the assemblage is fair but very fragmentary. Cattle bone was present.

Recommendations

2.18 Due to the fragmentary nature and the small size of the assemblage, no further work is recommended on this assemblage.

Marine Shell

2.19 Two fragments of oyster shell weighing in total 15g, were recovered from ditch [101]. They were both small and abraded fragments.

Recommendations

2.20 Due to the undiagnostic nature and the small size of the assemblage, no further work is recommended on these objects.

3. Discussion & Conclusion

3.1 Two trial trenches were excavated across the footprints of the proposed new dwellings, in order to characterise the nature of any surviving archaeological remains which might be affected by the development groundworks. Archaeological remains were recorded in both trenches.

3.2 Trench 1 revealed a possible boundary ditch. Reference to historic maps suggests that the ditch is of an earlier rather than a more recent origin, and the lack of datable finds and the compact and homogenous nature of the fill suggests that it may be Iron Age or Roman in date.

3.3 The brick structures and building material identified in Trench 2 are early to mid 19th century in date, and may relate to buildings which appear on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey dated 1884. These are believed to have been associated with the manufacture of whitewash.

Conclusion

3.4 The present evaluation has demonstrated possible Roman or Iron Age activity on the site, which is likely to be preserved below the impact level of the proposed development. Post-medieval remains in the vicinity of Trench 2, associated with the industrial processing of chalk in the early 19th century, may be disturbed by the proposed development.

3.5 It is not considered that any of the remains identified on the site are of more than local importance in terms of the published regional research agenda.

Confidence Rating

3.6 During the course of the fieldwork, the conditions were generally acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation.

3.7 There are no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than High.

4. Bibliography

Hillelson, D., 2004, *Land between 10 & 19 Roman Lane, Baldock, Herts. Project Design: Archaeological Evaluation*, Heritage Network

Ordnance Survey., 1884, *Ordnance survey, 1:10, 560 County Sites, 1st Edition* (courtesy www.old-maps.co.uk)

5. Illustrations

Figure 1Site location

Figure 2Identified Features and Deposits



