

HERITAGE NETWORK



St MARY'S CHURCH Albury, Herts.

HN518

Archaeological Monitoring Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

St MARY'S CHURCH

Albury, Herts.

HN518

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Albury Parochial Church Council

by

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Report no.315

November 2005

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The cover photo shows the study area from the east

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by David Hillelson and Geoff Saunders. The report text and illustrations were prepared by Abigail Rothwell. The report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Gerald W. Barrett, acting on behalf of the Albury Parochial Church Council, and Jonathan Smith, Hertfordshire County Council for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Church of St Mary the Virgin, Albury, Herts.		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	East Hertfordshire
Village/town:	Albury	Parish:	Albury
Planning reference:	3/04/2557	NGR:	TL 43527 24731
Client name and address:	Gerald W. Barrett, Pipers Tye, Galleywood, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8NP		
Nature of work:	New footpath & Boundary Wall	Present land use:	Churchyard
Size of affected area:	c.60m ²	Size of area investigated:	c.60m ²
Site Code:	HN518	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Type of work:	Monitoring	Archive location:	Hertford Museum
Start of work	24/03/2005	Finish of work	04/05/2005
Related SMR Nos:	n/a	Periods represented:	Medieval
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis:

In response to a condition on the planning permission associated with building works in the churchyard of St Mary the Virgin, Albury, Herts, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the Albury Parochial Church Council to undertake the archaeological monitoring of the groundworks.

The site lies within the *Area of Archaeological Significance* no. 102, which defines the medieval core of Albury. The manor is described in the Domesday Book, and the church dates from at least the 13th century. Because of the shallow nature of the groundworks undertaken, no archaeological features were encountered along the line of the new footpath. No features were observed in the new wall foundations.

Two medieval floor tiles were recovered redeposited within the topsoil during the new footpath construction. One of the tiles was decorated with an inlaid bird design. This type of decorated floor tile was popular between the 13th and 16th centuries.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of Gerald W. Barrett, acting on behalf of the Albury Parochial Church Council, part of a programme of archaeological work associated with building works in the churchyard of St Mary the Virgin, Albury, Herts. The planning permission for the work (ref. 3/04/2557), granted by the East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC), has been 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 was set out in a *Design Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording* prepared by the *County Archaeology Office* (CAO) of Hertfordshire County Council, acting as advisers to EHDC. A full specification for the work was contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, dated March 2005.

1.2 The site, centred on NGR TL 43527 24731, is located between the church and Albury School to the west. The development proposes the construction of a new path across the churchyard and a raised boundary wall.

1.3 The site lies within the *Area of Archaeological Significance* no. 102, which defines the medieval core of Albury. The manor is described in the Domesday Book, and the church dates from at least the 13th 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 is intended to present the findings of the project, and, together with the deposition of the project archive with the Hertford Museum, to complete the requirements of the planning condition.

2. Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The site lies within the village of Albury to the south west of the River Ash. The affected area, which forms the churchyard, is approximately flat but is raised above the current street level to the south. The general stratigraphy of the site consisted of a dark greyish brown sandy silt topsoil with frequent roots and a yellowish brown clay natural approximately 0.15m below street level.

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 for the footpath and the excavation of the new boundary wall foundations.

2.3 All ground reduction was carried out by hand by the client's contractors to a maximum depth in the churchyard of 0.25m below the existing surface.

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 dated March 2005.

MONITORING AND RECORDING

2.6 The groundworks included the reduction of the ground level for the new footpath, and the excavation of foundations for the new boundary walls.

Footpath

2.7 The ground was reduced for the footpath to between 0.10m-0.20m below the current ground level and to a width of 1.30m. A patch of greyish brown gravel was observed below the topsoil close to the church and may be the remains of a path from the church porch to the tower door. A modern soakaway was also observed during excavation.

2.8 Two floor tiles, medieval in date, were recovered from within the topsoil during this process. One of the tiles was decorated with an inlaid bird design (Plate 1).

2.9 No archaeological features or deposits were revealed during this stage of works.

Wall foundations

2.10 The foundation trench running along the street frontage was excavated to 0.35m wide and 0.55m below street level, this being 1.10m below the level of the school courtyard. The ground was disturbed to street level by tree root activity and brick fragments.

2.11 The foundation trench running between the school building and the street was excavated to a width of 0.70m. The area was heavily disturbed by root activity from a felled horse chestnut tree at the corner of the churchyard.

2.12 The natural geology of yellowish brown clay was observed 0.15m below the street level.

2.13 No archaeological features were revealed, and no artefacts were recovered during this stage of works.

Concordance of finds

2.14 The removed topsoil from the church yard contained several iron nails, and fragments of post-medieval pottery and tile. 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.

2.15 Two medieval floor tiles, were recovered unstratified from within the topsoil during the new footpath construction. Both appear to be of the same period. One of the tiles was decorated with an inlaid bird design. The plain tile measured 66 x 48 x 39 mm and weighed 165g.

2.16 The decorated tile measured 52 x 61 x 22 mm and weighed 125g. The bird design on the tile is likely to have been created by stamping the design onto a plain unfired tile. This would then have been filled with a clay slip, and the tile covered with a lead glaze and fired. This type of decorated floor tile was popular between the 13th and 16th centuries.

Recommendations

2.17 Due to the unstratified nature and the small size of the assemblage, no further work is proposed.

3. Discussion and Conclusion

3.1 Because of the limited nature of the groundworks on the present site no archaeological features were recorded.

3.2 Two medieval floor tiles, were recovered redeposited within the topsoil during the new footpath construction. One of the tiles was decorated with an inlaid bird design. This type of decorated floor tile was popular between the 13th and 16th centuries.

Conclusion

3.3 Despite the sites location within an area of known archaeological activity, the monitoring of the groundworks associated with the new footpath and wall foundations revealed no archaeological features. This may be because of the shallow nature of the groundworks undertaken.

3.4 The medieval ceramic tiles are likely to be associated with an earlier refurbishment of the 13th century church.

3.5 The present monitoring has demonstrated that any archaeological features which are present at the site will be preserved below the impact level of the development.

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. Schedule of Site Visits

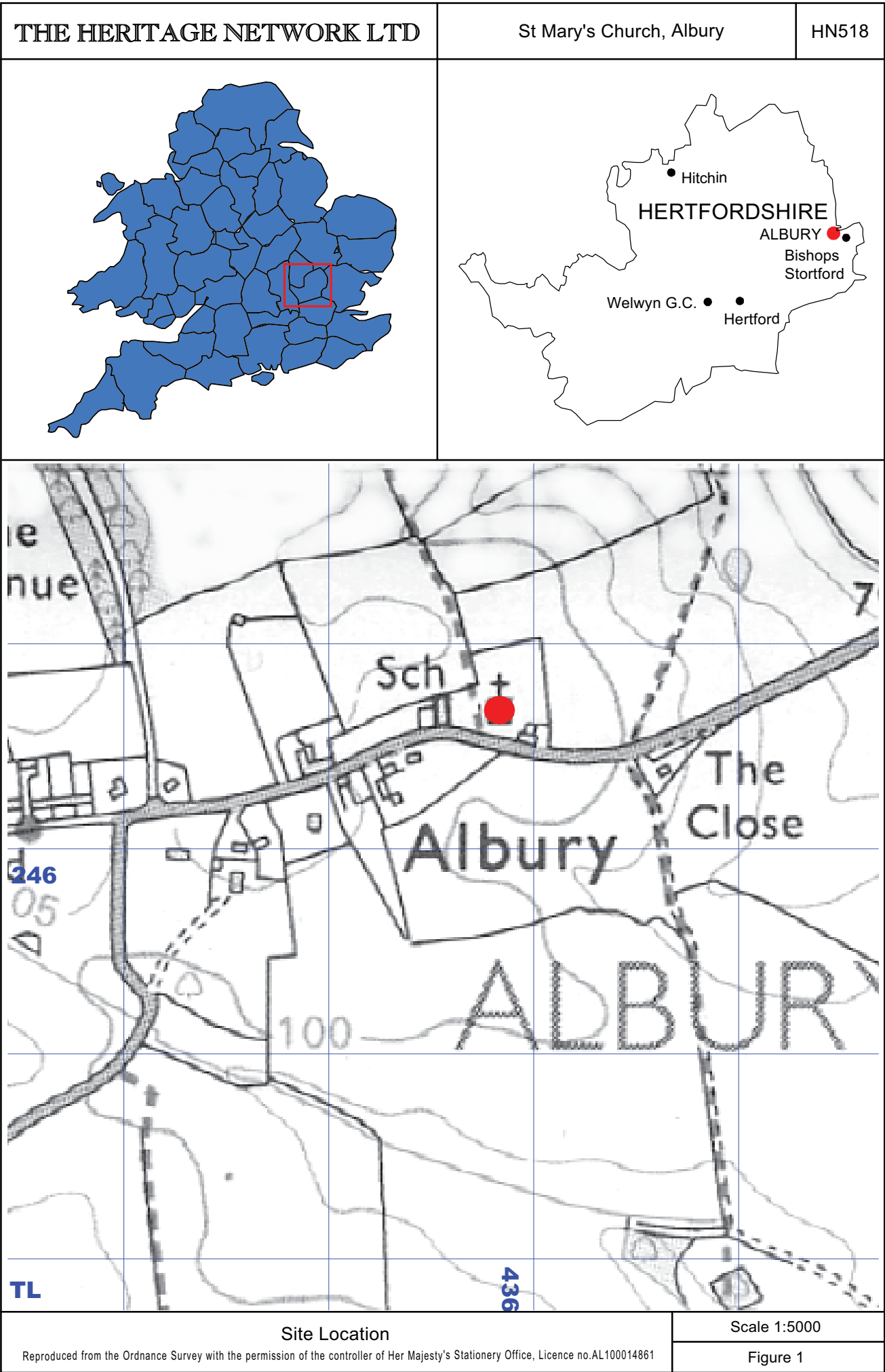
Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
24/03/2005	DJH	2hrs	Inspect wall foundations
05/04/2005	GIS	2hrs	Inspect footpath
07/04/2005	GIS	2hrs	Inspect footpath
04/05/2005	GIS	2hrs	Inspect footpath

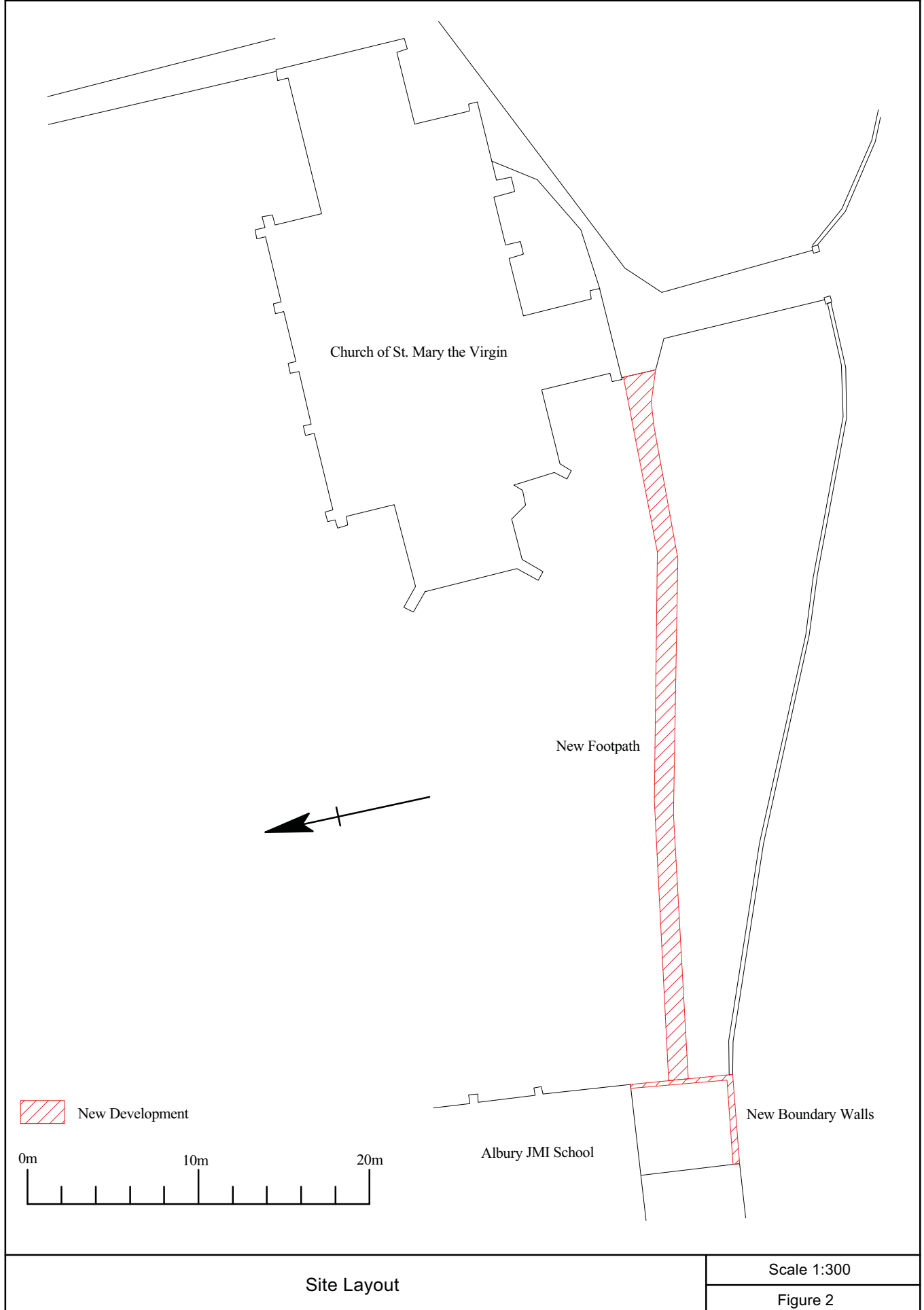
5. Bibliography

Hillelson, D. 2005, *St Mary's Church, Albury, Herts: Archaeological Project Design*.
Heritage Network

6. Illustrations & Plates

Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	Site layout
Plate 1	Decorated Medieval Floor Tile







0 20mm

Decorated medieval floortile

Scale 2:1

Plate 1