



HERITAGE NETWORK



**LAND TO THE R/O 'PARAGON' CAFE
High Street, Newport, Essex**

HN466

Archaeological Monitoring Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

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

Land to the rear of
'Paragon'
High Street
Newport, Essex.

HN466

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Mrs M. McMath

by

Karin Semmelmann, MA PIFA

Chris Turner, Bsc MIFA

Geoff Saunders, BA AIFA

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11 FURMSTON COURT, ICKNIELD WAY, LETCHWORTH SG6 1UJ
TELEPHONE: (01462) 685991 FAX: (01462) 685998

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Acknowledgements

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

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Brian Christian, Building Surveyor; Newmarket Plant Hire; and Richard Havis, Heritage Advice, Management and Promotion Team, ECC, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Land to the rear of ‘Paragon’. High Street, Newport. Essex.		
County:	Essex	District:	Uttlesford
Village/town:	Newport	Parish:	Newport
Planning reference:	UTT/1036/00; UTT/1037/00/CA	NGR:	TL 5222 3408
Client name and address:	Mrs M McMath, c/o Brian Christian, Station Road, Gt. Chesterford, Essex		
Nature of work:	New Dwelling	Present land use:	Scrub land
Size of affected area:	c.1200m ²	Size of area investigated:	c.225m ²
Site Code:	NP12	Other reference:	HN466
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Type of work:	Excavation and monitoring	Archive location:	Saffron Walden Museum
Start of work	25 th May 2004	Finish of work	25 th May 2004
Related SMR Nos.:	N/a	Periods represented:	Post medieval/ mod
Previous summaries/reports:	N/a		

Synopsis: In response to an archaeological condition on the planning permission for a new dwelling and garage block on land to the rear of the former ‘Paragon’ Café, High Street, Newport, Essex, the Heritage Network was commissioned by Brian Christian acting on behalf of the owner to undertake an archaeological excavation and monitoring of the site.

Although the site is located within the historic core of the Saxon and medieval settlement at Newport, the excavation of the building footprint and monitoring of the groundworks failed to identify any significant archaeological remains.

1. Introduction

1.1 This Report has been prepared at the request of Brian Christian, acting on behalf of *Mrs M McMath*, as part of a programme of archaeological investigation in advance of development works at ‘Paragon’, High Street, Newport, Essex.

1.2 The investigation is a requirement of the planning consent for the development, in accordance with the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990). The work has been defined in an *Archaeological Brief* prepared by the *Heritage Management, Advice and Promotion Group* (HAMP) of Essex County Council (ref. RH 05/04/04), acting as advisers to the local planning authority, Uttlesford District Council (UDC) (planning refs. UTT/1036/00, UTT/1037/00/CA). A full specification for the work was contained in the Heritage Network’s approved Project Design dated May 2004.

1.3 The property (centred on NGR TL 5222 3402) is located to the rear of the former ‘Paragon’ Café, which lies on the eastern side of the High Street, opposite Wicken Road. The site lies in the historic core of the town, which is believed to have Saxon origins. The development proposed the construction of a new dwelling and garage, following the demolition of the garages and Nissen huts which had previously occupied the site, and the removal of hard standing.

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 to allow the date, character, and significance of the site to be assessed in accordance with the current published regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000), 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 complete the requirements of the planning condition.

2. Fieldwork

SITE TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The site is situated on the east of the High Street, to the rear of the former 'Paragon' Café, which lies directly opposite Wicken Road. The ground level falls from approximately 57.80m OD at the western side of the site to approximately 55.80m OD at the eastern side. The site had previously been occupied by two Nissen huts and garages, with associated areas of hard standing. These had been cleared prior to the start of archaeological work, leaving the area as overgrown scrubland, bordered by the river Cam to the east and south.

METHODOLOGY

2.2 The timetable for the fieldwork followed the clients groundwork schedule.

2.3 All ground reduction was undertaken using a tracked 360⁰ excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

2.4 Spoil from the various stages of groundwork on the site was regularly inspected for archaeological artefacts.

2.5 The archaeological monitoring focused on ground reduction across the building footprint, and footings trenches for the new building.

GROUND REDUCTION

2.6 The floor level of the new building has been extensively built up, due to the slope of the land and the proximity of the river. On this basis, ground reduction within the building footprint was undertaken to a maximum depth of c.0.10m on the eastern side of the footprint and 0.70m on the western side. The ground reduction failed to penetrate the overburden at any point.

2.7 The footings for a red brick wall, context [01], was observed running for c.8.0m on a north-south orientation, before turning westwards towards the High Street (Figure 2). The wall, which measured 0.38m wide, had been truncated by modern services. It was constructed of slightly frogged red bricks, set in a cement mortar and has been dated to the Victorian period.

2.8 Modern services aside, no further archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were observed during this stage of the works.

FOOTINGS TRENCHES

2.9 The footings trenches for the new building were excavated using a JCB fitted with a 600mm toothed bucket. They were of variable depth, with the easternmost trenches for the house not being excavated at all as the required ground level had already been reached. The deepest trenches were those for the garage and the western half of the building, which reached a maximum depth of 0.43m.

2.10 A chalk and mortar feature, context [02], was revealed in Trench C. The feature, which may represent part of a building foundation, was approximately 0.70m wide and lay 10.88m from the southern end of the trench. Fragments of post-medieval brick/tile and a few animal bones were noted in the vicinity.

2.11 An area of chalk was recorded on the western side of the garage, in Trench L. The full extent was not revealed in the footings trench, but it may represent a floor or levelling layer.

2.12 Several levelling layers were revealed in the footings trenches for the garage at the northern end of the site (Figure 3). Those in Trench I consisted of a layer of chalk, 0.25m deep, below a cinder layer, 0.10m deep. In Trench J a layer of sand, 0.09m deep, was recorded above a layer of cinders, 0.08m deep, and in Trenches K and L they consisted of chalk, 0.16m deep, over a sandy silt deposit, 0.15m deep.

3. Discussion & Conclusion

3.1 Despite the location of the site within the historic core of the Saxon and medieval settlement at Newport, the present no significant archaeological features, deposits, or artefacts were revealed during the course of the present project. This is likely to be the result of previous building up of the ground level, possibly because of the proximity of the site to the present course of the river Cam, which bounds the site immediately to the south and east.

3.2 The levelling deposits identified within the new garage block foundations along with the footings observed in trench C are located within the area of the large Nissen hut which previously occupied the site. It is considered likely that they are associated with the structure.

3.3 The Victorian red brick wall observed during the ground reduction may represent the original rear boundary of the plot.

3.4 No archaeological features, deposits, or artefacts, indicative of activity on the site prior to the Victorian period were observed during the groundworks. This may be an indication that the sites immediate proximity to the river made it unsuitable for settlement. Alternatively earlier archaeological material may be preserved beneath the overburden which was not penetrated by the present project.

Conclusion

3.5 The present groundworks failed to penetrate the considerable overburden on the site. It is possible that significant archaeological evidence remains in situ below this overburden.

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

4. Bibliography

Essex County Historic Environment Record

Hillelson, D. 2004. *Land to the rear of 'Paragon', High Street, Newport, Essex. Project Design: Archaeological Excavation and Monitoring.* Heritage Network May 2004

Havis, R. 2004. *Archaeological Excavation at The Paragon Café, High Street, Newport.* Essex County Council

5. Schedule of Site Visits

Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
25/05/04	GIS & CT	8	Monitor ground reduction within building footprint
05/07/04	KS	2	Monitor footings trenches
05/07/04	KS	2	Inspect footings trenches
06/07/04	KS	3	Inspect footings trenches

6. Illustrations

Figure 1 Site location

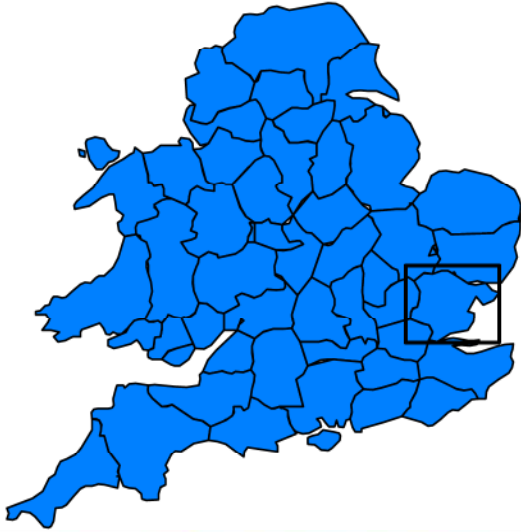
Figure 2 Site layout : Ground reduction

Figure 3 Site layout : Footings trenches

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Land to the rear of 'Paragon', Newport

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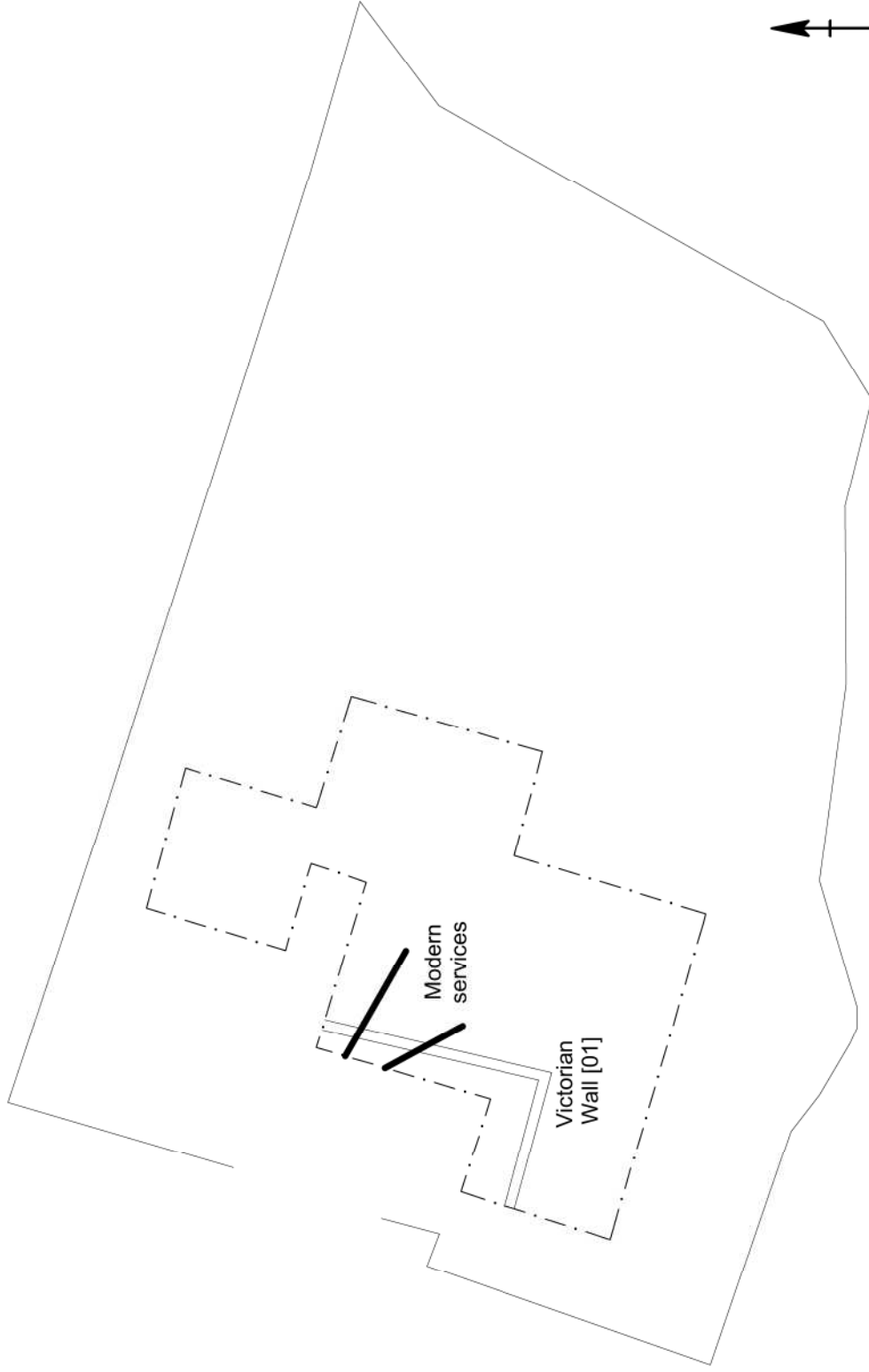
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Site Location

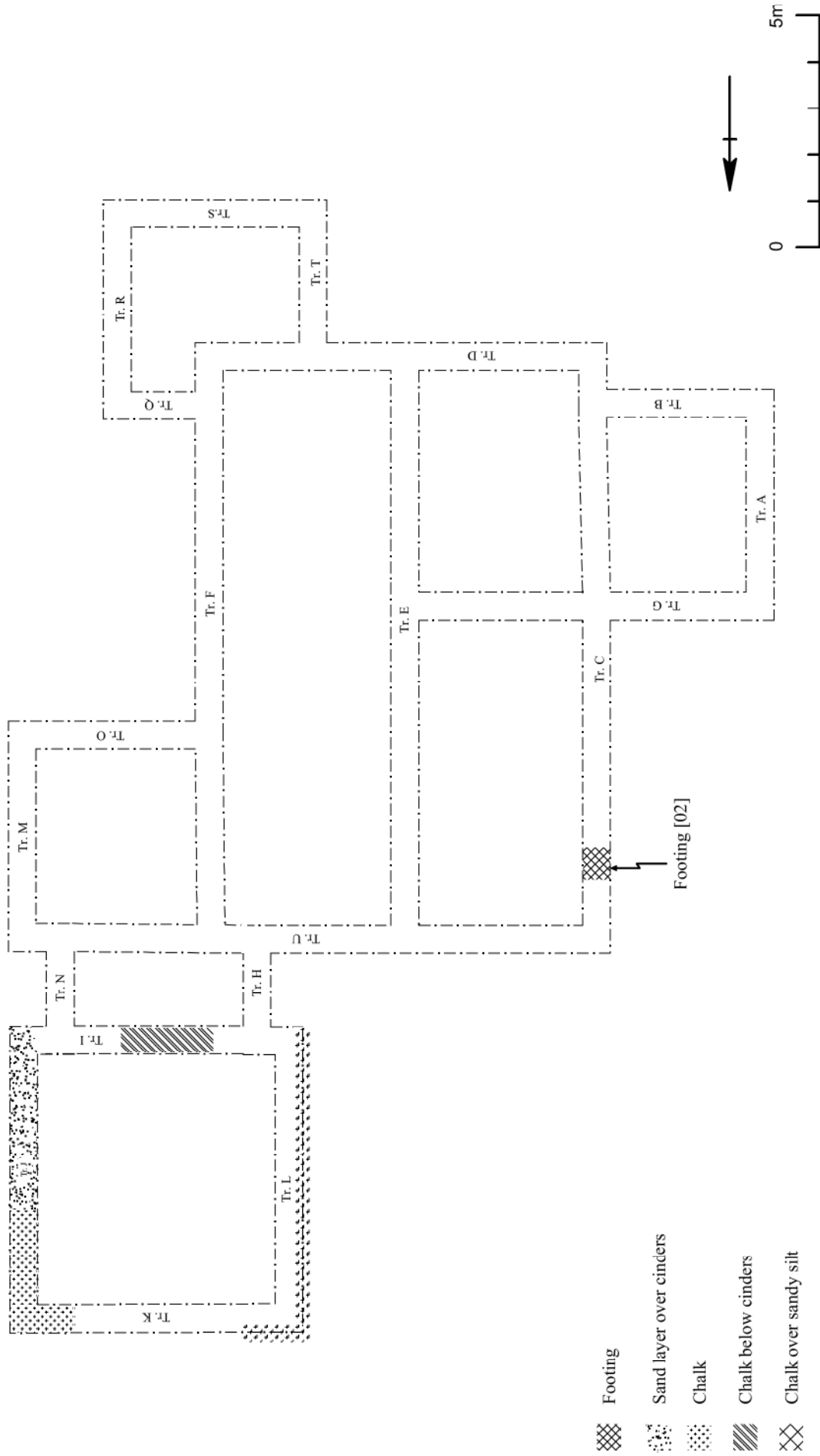
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Figure 1



Site layout : Ground Reduction



Site layout : Footings trenches