

HERITAGE NETWORK



HOW GREEN MEADOW Buntingford, Hertfordshire

HN1024

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

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THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute for Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

HOW GREEN MEADOW Buntingford, Hertfordshire

Project Ref.: HN1024
Planning ref: 3/11/1280/OP
HER enquiry no.: 204/12

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Andrew Boakes Developments Ltd.

By

Chris Turner, BSc MIFA

Report no. 836

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The cover photograph shows the stripping of the access road looking north-east

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Greg Jones. The report text and illustrations were prepared by Chris Turner, and edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Andrew Boakes of Andrew Boakes Developments Ltd and Alison Tinniswood & Isobel Thompson, Historic Environment Unit, HCC, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	How Green Meadow, Buntingford, Hertfordshire		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	East Herts
Village/town:	Buntingford	Parish:	Buntingford
Planning reference:	3/11/1280/OP	NGR:	TL 35640 29370
Client name and address:	Andrew Boakes Developments Ltd. 10 Yeoman's Drive, Aston, Stevenage, SG2 7EJ		
Nature of work:	New Dwellings	Former land use:	Meadow
Site status:	None	Reason for investigation:	Planning Condition (NPPF)
Position in planning process:	After determination (as a condition)	Project brief originator:	Historic Environment Unit, HCC
Size of affected area:	3000m ²	Size of area investigated:	3000m ²
Site Code:	HN1024	HER reference	204/12
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Monitoring	Archive recipient:	Hertford Museum
Start of work	04/11/2013	Finish of work	22/11/2013
Related HER Nos:	-	Periods represented:	Modern
Oasis UID	heritage1- 136319	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	None		
Physical archive:	None		
Previous summaries/reports:	N/a		

Synopsis:

In response to a condition on planning consent for the construction of three dwellings with associated access road, and garages, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developer to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring of the groundworks.

Monitoring of the ground reduction for the access road and the footprints of three new dwellings revealed layers of made ground, probably the result of soil dumping during the construction of the A10 Buntingford Bypass in the late 1980s, immediately to the west of the site. Borehole evidence indicates that this dumped material may be at least 2m in depth. At no point was the overburden breached and no features, deposits or finds of archaeological significance were encountered.

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1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of Andrew Boakes, as part of a programme of archaeological monitoring on the groundworks for three new dwellings at How Green Meadow, Buntingford Hertfordshire.

1.2 The outline planning permission for the development (ref: 3/11/1280/OP), granted by East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC), was subject to an archaeological condition issued in line with the Department of Communities and Local Government's *Planning Policy Statement No.5* (PPS5), now superseded by the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF).

1.3 The site, which is centred at NGR TL 35640 29370, is located on the western edge of Buntingford, to the south of the B1038 Baldock Road (Figure 1). It is bounded to the north and west by a petrol filling station fronting the roundabout on the junction between the B1038 and the A10 Buntingford Bypass, which runs to the west of the site. To the south and east the site is bounded by open fields.

1.4 The aim of the present project has been to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any remains which might be threatened by the development, and to establish a local and regional archaeological and historical context for them, should they be discovered, in accordance with the current published local and regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997; Brown and Glazebrook 2000; Medlycott 2011).

1.5 It was considered that this investigation had the potential to contribute to a greater understanding of the origins and development of settlement at Buntingford, particularly from the Iron Age onwards.

1.6 The development proposed the erection of three dwellings with garages and associated access, landscaping and services.

2. Fieldwork

SITE TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The site lies to the north-west of Buntingford, at the junction between the B1038 and the A10. It is located on the east facing slope to the valley of the River Rib at approximately 105mAOD. The land slopes gently down to the east and upwards to the west. Borehole evidence suggests that the site was used to dump material from construction of the Buntingford Bypass in the 1980s.

2.2 Locally the soils belong to the Hanslope Association (411d) and are described as:

'Slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils. Some slowly permeable non-calcareous clayey soils. Slight risk of water erosion' (SSEW 1983).

2.3 The underlying solid geology consists of Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation (undifferentiated) chalk, a Sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 84 to 94 million years ago (www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience). The chalk is overlain by Lowestoft Formation diamicton, a superficial deposit formed up to 2 million years ago in ice age conditions by glaciers depositing moraines of till, together with outwash sands and gravels from meltwaters (*ibid.*).

2.4 A single borehole was drilled in the centre of the site in May 2012 (Herts & Essex Site Investigations 2012). This showed that the site was sealed by overburden to at least 1m in depth, comprising a layer of gravelly topsoil, 0.80m in depth, above a layer of firm brown silty gravelly clay, 0.20m in depth. Below this is a layer of loose brown silty sandy gravel, 1m in depth, which may be of natural origin. The natural clay was reached at a depth of 2m and the chalk at a depth of 12.80m. It is possible that material from the construction of the bypass in the late 1980s was imported on to the site.

METHODOLOGY

2.5 The fieldwork involved a series of site visits to observe the excavation of the footprint of the dwellings, garages and access road.

2.6 The reduction of the building footprints was undertaken using a tracked 360° excavator, fitted with a 1.5m wide toothless ditching bucket.

2.7 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 pro forma sheets, at scales of 1: 50, 1:20 and 1:10.

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

2.10 All recording work was carried out in accordance with the approved project design, current health and safety legislation, and both IfA and ALGAO standards.

MONITORING AND RECORDING

2.11 The works involved a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording on the stripping of the footprints to the new dwellings, access road and garages (Figure 2). These represented the elements of the construction that had the deepest impact levels on the site.

2.12 The stratigraphy encountered across the site consisted of a highly mixed topsoil layer, approximately 0.30m in depth. This consisted of mixed clay, sand and gravel, which varied in colour from pale yellowish grey to dark greyish brown (Plate 1). Artefacts of late post-medieval and modern date, including brick, tile and glass fragments, were present in this layer, but not collected. Below this was a layer of mixed made ground, over 0.70m in depth, containing modern brick, plastic and metal fragments. The underlying natural was not exposed by the groundworks.

Access road

2.13 The access road covered an area of approximately 455m² and ran on a curving course following the northern boundary to meet the B1038 Baldock Road (Figure 2). It was reduced by 0.10m at the western end, increasing to 0.40m at the north-eastern end.

2.14 The stripping did not breach the overburden and no features, deposits or finds of archaeological significance were encountered in this area.

Plot 1

2.15 Plot 1 was located at the western end of the site and covered an area of approximately 102.50m² (Figure 2). The ground level was reduced by 0.30m in the south-eastern corner, increasing to c.1m in the north-western corner (Plate 3). A separate garage, measuring approximately 5.70m x 5.70m was located 6m to the east. This was reduced by approximately 1m (Plate 4).

2.16 The stripping did not breach the overburden and no features, deposits or finds of archaeological significance were encountered in this area.

Plot 2

2.17 Plot 2 was located to the east of Plot 1 and covered an area of approximately 137.70m², including a linked garage to the west (Figure 2). The ground level was reduced by 0.10m in the south-eastern corner, increasing to 1.20m in the north-western corner (Plate 5). The garage footprint was excavated to a depth of 1m.

2.18 The stripping did not breach the overburden and no features, deposits or finds of archaeological significance were encountered in this area.

Plot 3

2.19 Plot 3 was located in the south-eastern corner of the site and covered an area of approximately 99m² (Figure 2). The ground level was reduced by 0.10m in the south-eastern corner, increasing to 1.20m in the north-western corner (Plate 6). The garage footprint was excavated to a depth of 0.60m.

2.20 The stripping did not breach the overburden and no features, deposits or finds of archaeological significance were encountered in this area.

3. Discussion

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SETTING

3.1 The county Historic Environment Record (HER) was consulted for a list of all heritage assets within 750m of the site (consultation ref. 204/12). The list comprised 73 records, with sites and finds dating from the later prehistoric to the 19th century, and was used to create an overview of the archaeological and historical context of the proposed development site.

3.2 The earliest remains found in the vicinity of the site consist of the chance find of a Neolithic stone axe (HER 219) from an undefined location in Buntingford. A barbed flint arrowhead (HER 220) of Bronze Age date has also been found in the parish.

3.3 The town lies along the line of Ermine Street (HER 4677), a major Roman road linking London and York, and which is likely to have an earlier precursor. Evidence for Roman activity has been discovered close to the line of the road, including a truncated pit containing Roman pottery (HER 18140) located to the rear of 59 High Street, approximately 700m to the north-east, and a single sherd of early Roman pottery found to the rear of 84 High Street (HER 13743), approximately 650m to the north-east. A bronze coin of late Iron Age date (HER 6450) has also been found in Buntingford.

3.4 A number of sites of Iron Age and Roman date were revealed during archaeological investigations ahead of the construction of the A10 Buntingford Bypass, including a ditch containing late Iron Age and early Roman pottery to the west of Freman College (HER 2261), approximately 450m to the north. A number of undated, but possibly contemporary features, were also discovered, including three pits to the south of Baldock Road (HER 2259), approximately 400m to the west and a linear feature (HER 2258), approximately 700m to the south-west.

3.5 It is thought that the town name derives from the Saxon personal name ‘Bunta’ and means the ford of the people of Bunta (Seddon 1999). Until very recently, no evidence for Saxon occupation had been recovered from the town, which is not recorded as a separate settlement in the Domesday Book of 1086. However, archaeological evaluation in 2011 at Longmead, immediately to the east of the study area, revealed evidence for Roman and Saxon activity (HER EHT 7055; Isobel Thompson, pers. com.).

3.6 The medieval town developed along the line of Ermine Street, with a market place at its southern end (Seddon 1999, Figure 4). A number of late medieval buildings still survive along High Street, including The Master Tanner’s House, 12 High Street (HER 10179), 22A & 24 High Street (HER 10075), 32 High Street (HER 10076), 30 High Street (HER 10078), 66 High Street (HER 10082), 35-37A High Street (HER 10086), 49-51 High Street (HER 10114) and 59 High Street (HER 10178).

3.7 A possible boundary or hollow way (HER 16683) has been located to the south of Baldock Road and immediately to the east of the study area. No evidence for a boundary feature is marked on 19th century OS maps.

3.8 How Green Farm (HER 17151) lies to the north of the present site, on the northern side of Baldock Road. Until the construction of the A10 Buntingford Bypass, the farm lay on the southern side of the road. The farmhouse is late 17th century in date, with an adjacent farmstead which includes a barn of 16th or earlier 17th century date.

3.9 Archaeological investigations at Tylers Close, on the north side of Baldock Road and within 100m of the study area, revealed a small number of post-medieval pits and a pond (HER EHT 7283; Isobel Thompson, pers. com.).

3.10 The 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1878 shows that the site of the proposed development lay in open fields to the west of Buntingford (www.old-maps.co.uk). The town extended westwards during the 20th century and the bypass was constructed in the late 1980s.

3.11 The aims of the investigation have been:

- to identify any remains that were liable to be threatened by the development and establish their location, depth, extent, date, character and condition;
- to consider the local and regional archaeological and historical context of such remains, and their significance and quality, in relation to the current published regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Medlycott 2011);
- to ensure that an appropriate strategy for the mitigation of damage or destruction of such remains by the development was adopted.

3.12 It was considered that the investigation had the potential to contribute to a greater understanding of the origins and development of the medieval and later settlement of Buntingford, activity in the hinterland of Ermine Street in the Roman and post-Roman periods, the Iron Age / Roman and Roman / Saxon transition periods, the distribution and morphology of Saxon settlement and the development of medieval and post-medieval Buntingford.

COLLECTED DATA

3.13 Monitoring of the ground reduction for the access road and the footprints of three new dwellings revealed layers of made ground, probably the result of soil dumping during the construction of the A10 Buntingford Bypass in the late 1980s, immediately to the west of the site. Borehole evidence indicates that this dumped material may be at least 2m in depth.

3.14 At no point was the overburden breached and no features, deposits or finds of archaeological significance were encountered in the course of the groundworks.

CONCLUSIONS

3.15 It was considered that the present project could provide the opportunity to investigate the origins and development of the settlement of Buntingford. The monitoring of the groundworks for the new dwellings, garages and access road has revealed no archaeological features or deposits. The stratigraphic sequence demonstrates a significant depth of imported material across the site, which was not breached by excavations for the current development. It is possible that archaeological remains have been preserved in situ below the impact depth of the development.

Confidence Rating

3.16 Conditions on site were generally acceptable for the identification and recording of any potential archaeological remains, and as such 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
04/11/2013	GAJ	3	Monitored excavation of access road
05/11/2013	GAJ	4	Monitored excavation of plot 1 footprint
06/11/2013	GAJ	2	Monitored excavation of plot 1 footprint
07/11/2013	GAJ	2	Monitored excavation of plot 1 footprint
08/11/2013	GAJ	2	Monitored excavation of plot 1 garage footprint
12/11/2013	GAJ	2	Monitored excavation of plot 2 footprint
18/11/2013	GAJ	2	Monitored excavation of plot 2 footprint
21/11/2013	GAJ	2	Monitored excavation of plot 3 footprint
21/11/2013	GAJ	2	Monitored excavation of plot 3 garage footprint

5. Bibliography

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6. Illustrations

Figure 1 Site location

Figure 2 Site layout

Plate 1 General stratigraphy across the site

Plate 2 Access road, looking W

Plate 3 Plot 1, looking N

Plate 4 Plot 1 Garage, looking W

Plate 5 Plot 2, looking S

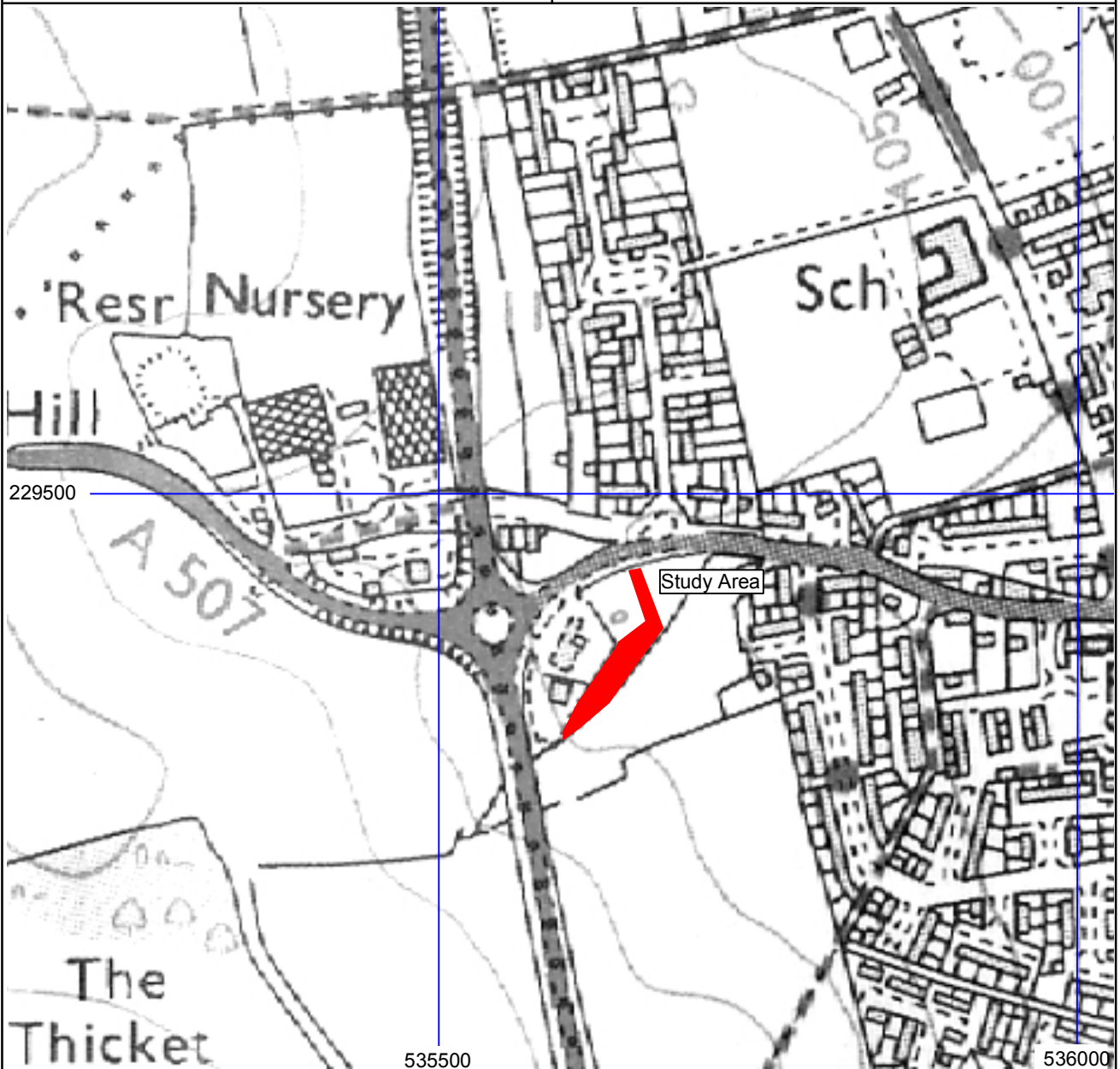
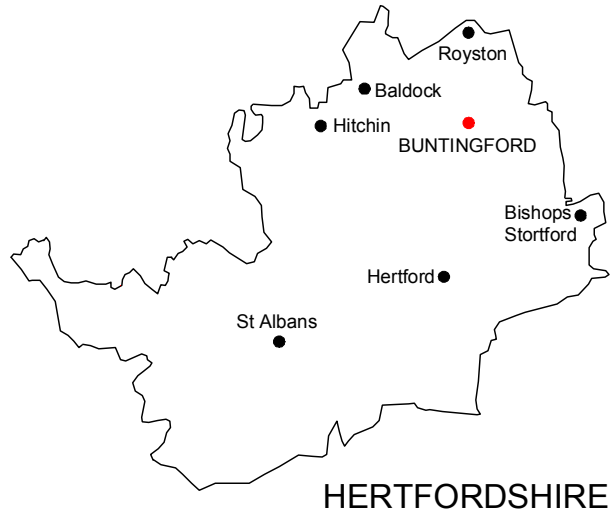
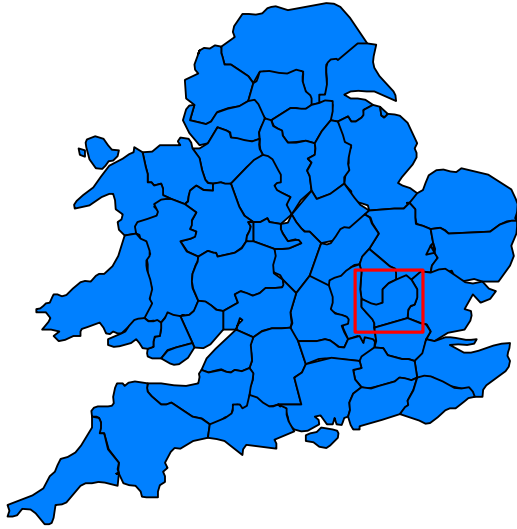
Plate 6 Plot 3, looking SE

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How Green Meadow,
Buntingford, Hertfordshire

HN1024



Site Location

Scale 1:5000

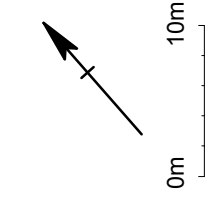
Ordnance Survey (c) Crown Copyright 2012. All rights reserved. Licence no.100014861

Figure 1

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How Green Meadow, Buntingford, Herts.

HN1024



229400

Ballock Road

535600

Access Road

Plot 1

Plot 2

Plot 3

Site Boundary

535700

Proposed site layout
by courtesy Andrew Boakes, Chartered Architect

Scale 1:500
Figure 1



Plate 1: General stratigraphy on the site



Plate 2: Access road, looking W



Plate 3: Plot 1, looking N



Plate 4: Plot 1 garage, looking W



Plate 5: Plot 2, looking S



Plate 6: Plot 3, looking SE

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Appendix

OASIS Data form

<i>OASIS ID: heritage1-136319</i>	
Project details	
Project name	How Green Meadow, Buntingford. Hertfordshire
Short description of the project	In response to a condition on planning consent for the construction of three dwellings with associated access road, and garages, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developer to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring of the groundworks. Monitoring of the ground reduction for the access road and the footprints of three new dwellings revealed layers of made ground, probably the result of soil dumping during the construction of the A10 Buntingford Bypass in the late 1980s, immediately to the west of the site. Borehole evidence indicates that this dumped material may be at least 2m in depth. At no point was the overburden breached and no features, deposits or finds of archaeological significance were encountered.
Project dates	Start: 04-11-2013 End: 22-11-2013
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Associated project reference codes	HN1024 – Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	NONE
Current Land use	Vacant Land 2 - Vacant land not previously developed
Monument type	NONE
Significant Finds	NONE
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE EAST HERTFORDSHIRE BUNTINGFORD How Green Meadow
Postcode	SG11 1HG
Study area	3000 Square metres
Site coordinates	NGR - TL 35640 29370
Height OD / Depth	Min: 103.80m Max: 105.00m
Project creators	
Organisation	Heritage Network
Brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Heritage Network
Project director/manager	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	Greg Jones
Type of funding body	Landowner

Project archives	
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Hertford Museum
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Diary","Drawing","Photograph","Report","Section"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	How Green Meadow, Buntingford. Herts. Archaeological Monitoring Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Turner, C.
Other bibliographic details	Report no.836
Date	October 2015
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth, Herts.
Description	A4 booklet, comb bound, green cover, 10 text pages, 2 figures, 6 plates