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**LAND R/O 39-49 CRABTREE LANE
Harpenden, Herts.**

HN1040

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION REPORT***

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

LAND R/o 39-49 CRABTREE LANE, Harpenden, Hertfordshire

Project ref.: HN1040

LPA ref.: 5/12/2414

Archaeological Evaluation

Prepared on behalf of Marchfield Homes Ltd.

by

Greg Jones, BA (HONS), MA, AIFA

Report no. 768

January 2013

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The front cover shows the site, looking south

Acknowledgements

The evaluation fieldwork for this project was carried out by Greg Jones and Robin Densem. The report text and illustrations were prepared by Greg Jones and edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Marchfield Homes Ltd., and to Simon West, St. Albans District Archaeologist, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Land to the rear of 39-49 Crabtree Lane, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, AL5 5NT		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	St. Albans
Village/town:	Harpenden	Parish:	Harpenden
Planning reference:	5/12/2414	NGR:	TL 14195 13980
Client name and address:	Marchfield Homes Ltd., Chells Manor, Chells Lane, Stevenage, SG2 7AA		
Nature of work:	New dwellings	Current land use:	Orchard
Site Status:	Conservation Area	Reason for investigation:	Direction of LPA (NPPF)
Position in planning process:	After full determination	Project brief originator:	Local Authority
Size of affected area:	c. 5000m ²	Size of area investigated:	c.240m ²
Site code:	HN1040	Other ref.:	None
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc...	Trial trench evaluation	Archive recipient:	St. Albans Museum Service
Start of work:	23/01/2013	Finish of work:	24/01/2013
Related HER nos:	None	Periods represented:	None
OASIS UID:	heritage1-140577	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	None		
Physical archive:	None		
Previous summaries/reports:	None		

Synopsis:

In order to characterise the archaeological potential of the site of a proposed new development on land to the rear of Nos 39-49, Crabtree Lane, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developers to undertake an archaeological field evaluation by trial trenching. This work was a requirement of the planning consent granted by the local planning authority.

The evaluation revealed potential features in two of the trenches, though, on investigation, it was concluded that these were of natural origin. No features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were uncovered during the work.

On the basis of the results of the evaluation, the risk that the proposed development might disturb archaeological remains may be considered to be *Low* for all periods.

1 Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of Marchfield Homes Ltd., to cover a programme of archaeological work carried out as part of a proposed development on land to the rear of 39-49 Crabtree Lane, Harpenden, Hertfordshire.

1.2 Planning permission for the development (ref.:5/12/2414) was granted by St. Albans District Council (SADC), subject to a standard archaeological condition, issued on the advice of the St. Albans District Archaeologist (SADA), acting as adviser to SADC, and in accordance with the Department of Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF). A full specification for the work is contained in the Heritage Network's approved Project Design, dated January 2013.

1.3 The site is located in the southeast quarter of Harpenden, at the southwestern end of Crabtree Lane, centred on NGR TL 14195 13980. The development lies to the rear of 39-47 Crabtree Lane, which is bounded to the northeast by nos. 12-26 Gilpin Green, to the north-west by nos. 13-23 Spenser Road, to the southwest by nos. 31b, 33b and 33c Crabtree Lane and to the southeast by Crabtree Lane itself (Figure 1).

1.4 The site lies within Harpenden Conservation Area No.1 as identified in the St. Albans District Local Plan.

1.5 The aim of the evaluation has been to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any 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, Medlycott 2011), should they be discovered. It was considered that such investigation had the potential to provide evidence that would contribute to an understanding of Harpenden, from the Iron Age and Roman period onwards. Roman buildings have been identified in the near vicinity, and evidence that clarified their location and extent was considered to be of particular interest.

1.6 The proposed development entails the erection of eleven two storey dwellings with habitable roof space, garages, associated access, car parking and landscaping.

2 Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The study area is located at a height of approximately 123mAOD on relatively flat ground.

2.2 Locally the soils belong to the Hornbeam 2 Association (582c) and are described as ‘Deep fine loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging. Some well drained fine loamy and fine silty over clayey and clayey soils. Some soils very flinty’ (SSEW 1983).

2.3 The underlying solid geology consists of chalk, overlain by glacio-fluvial deposits consisting of mid-Pleistocene sands and gravels (www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience).

METHODOLOGY

2.4 All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the approved Project Design, current health and safety legislation, and the appropriate IfA and ALGAO guidance documents.

2.5 The trenches were located by triangulation from known points using fibreglass tape measures. They were opened using a JCB fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket. Spoil from the machining was inspected for archaeological artefacts and a metal detector was used to scan the spoil heaps for ferrous finds. The trenches were machined to the first significant archaeological horizon, or to the natural geological horizon, as appropriate.

2.6 The exposed area was cleaned by hand, and potential archaeological features and deposits were sampled to ascertain their nature, depth, date, and quality of preservation.

2.7 All identified contexts were photographed and recorded using the appropriate proforma. Scaled plans and sections were drawn on drafting film at scales of 1:10 and 1:20.

RESULTS

2.8 The eight excavated trial trenches covered the footprints of the proposed new dwellings (Figure 2).

Trench 1

2.9 Trench 1 was located in the northwestern corner of the site. It was oriented approximately east-west and measured 15m long by c.2m wide (Figure 2). It was excavated down to a depth of c.0.6m and in the west end of the trench a sondage was excavated down to a depth of c.1m to confirm the natural substratum.

Trench 1 Recorded data:

Length (m):	15.0	Width (m):	2.0	Maximum Depth (m):	c.1.0	Orientation	E-W
Level at W End of Trench (mOD)	Top	122.95	Level at E End of Trench (mOD)	Top	123.27		
	Base	122.06		Base	122.60		
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
-	Layer	7.5Y 3/2 ‘Dark Brown’ soft clay silt topsoil.	-	-	c.0.30		

Length (m):	15.0	Width (m):	2.0	Maximum Depth (m):	c.1.0	Orientation	E-W
Level at W End of Trench (mOD)		Top	122.95	Level at E End of Trench (mOD)		Top	123.27
		Base	122.06			Base	122.60
Context	Type	Description			Dimensions (m)		
					Length	Width	Depth
-	Layer	7.5YR 5/8 'Strong sandy natural with frequent sub-angular stones.			-	-	>0.6

2.10 The stratigraphy in Trench 1 consisted of c.0.30m of 'dark brown' (7.5YR 3/2) soft clayey silt topsoil with moderately sorted occasional stones, overlying 'strong brown' (7.5YR 5/8) sandy clay natural with frequent sub-angular stones.

2.11 No archaeological features or finds were located in Trench 1.

Trench 2

2.12 Trench 2 was located to the east of Trench 1. It was approximately oriented north-south and measured 15m in length by 2m wide (Figure 2).

Recorded Data

Length (m):	15.0	Width (m):	2.0	Maximum Depth (m):	c.0.60	Orientation	N-S
Level at N End of Trench (mOD)		Top	123.54	Level at S End of Trench (mOD)		Top	123.30
		Base	123.14			Base	122.80
Context	Type	Description			Dimensions (m)		
					Length	Width	Depth
-	Layer	7.5Y 3/2 'Dark Brown' soft clay silt topsoil.			-	-	c.0.30
-	Layer	7.5YR 5/8 'Strong brown' silty sandy clay natural.			-	-	> 0.30
201	Cut	Irregular linear root. Filled by (202), cuts (204).			>2.7	0.3	0.12
202	Fill	10YR 5/4 'Yellowish Brown' sticky clay silt Fill of [201]. 'No finds. Probable root hole. Natural in origin.			>2.7	0.3	0.12
203	Cut	Irregular shallow feature with shallow sloping sides with a flattish base. Probable root hole. Natural in origin.			0.75	0.65	0.05
204	Fill	10YR 6/3 'Pale Brown' Fill of [203]. No finds. Probable root hole. Natural in origin.			0.75	0.65	0.05

2.13 The stratigraphy in Trench 2 consisted of very dark grey (7.5YR 3/1) soft clayey sandy silt topsoil above strong brown (7.5YR 5/8) sandy clay natural.

2.14 Located at the northern end of Trench 2 was located linear [201]. It measured >2.7m long, by 0.3m wide, by 0.12m deep and was oriented northeast-southwest (Figure 3). The sides were very irregular and the base was rounded. The fill (202) consisted of yellowish brown (10YR 5/4) sticky clay silt and contained no finds. Pit [203] measured 0.75m by 0.65m and was 0.05m deep. The fill consisted of 10YR 6/3 pale brown sticky clay silt with no finds present. Fill (204) was cut by [201]. Both features were interpreted as natural in origin. Most likely they were created by tree root action.

2.15 Trench 2 contained two other features [203] & [205] which, after excavation, were interpreted as being of natural origin.

Trench 3

2.16 Trench 3 was located to the east of Trench 2. It was oriented east-west and measured 15m in length by 2m wide (Figure 2).

Recorded Data

Length (m):	15.0	Width (m):	2.0	Maximum Depth (m):	c.0.50	Orientation	E-W	
Level at W End of Trench (mOD)			Top	123.62	Level at E End of Trench (mOD)		Top	123.93
			Base	123.23			Base	123.46
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)					
			Length	Width	Depth			
-	Layer	7.5Y 3/2 'Dark Brown' soft clay silt topsoil.	-	-	c.0.30			
-	Layer	7.5YR 5/8 'Strong brown' silty sandy clay natural.	-	-	> 0.20			

2.17 The stratigraphy in Trench 3 consisted of very dark grey (7.5YR 3/2) soft silty clay topsoil above strong brown (7.5YR 5/8) sandy clay natural.

2.18 No archaeological finds, features or artefacts were recovered in Trench 3.

Trench 4

2.19 Trench 4 was located to the south of Trench 1. It was oriented north-south and measured 15m in length by 2m wide (Figure 2).

Recorded Data

Length (m):	15.0	Width (m):	2.0	Maximum Depth (m):	c.0.60	Orientation	N-S	
Level at N End of Trench (mOD)			Top	122.96	Level at S End of Trench (mOD)		Top	122.72
			Base	122.54			Base	122.26
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)					
			Length	Width	Depth			
-	Layer	7.5Y 3/2 'Dark Brown' soft clay silt topsoil.	-	-	c.0.30			
-	Layer	7.5YR 5/8 'Strong brown' silty sandy clay natural.	-	-	> 0.30			

2.20 The stratigraphy in Trench 4 consisted of very dark grey (7.5YR 3/2) soft silty clay topsoil above strong brown (7.5YR 5/8) sandy clay natural.

2.21 No archaeological finds, features or artefacts were recovered in Trench 4.

Trench 5

2.22 Trench 5 was located to the east of Trench 4 and to the south of Trench 3. It was oriented north-south and measured 15m in length by 2m wide (Figure 2).

Recorded Data

Length (m):	15.0	Width (m):	2.0		Maximum Depth (m):	c.0.60	Orientation	E-W	
Level at E End of Trench (mOD)		Top	123.84		Level at W End of Trench (mOD)		Top	123.34	
		Base	123.46				Base	122.91	
Context	Type	Description			Dimensions (m)				
					Length	Width	Depth		
-	Layer	7.5Y 3/2 'Dark Brown' soft clay silt topsoil.			-	-	c.0.30		
-	Layer	7.5YR 5/8 'Strong brown' silty sandy clay natural.					> 0.30		

2.23 The stratigraphy in Trench 5 consisted of very dark grey (7.5YR 3/2) soft silty clay topsoil above strong brown (7.5YR 5/8) sandy clay natural.

2.24 No archaeological finds, features or artefacts were recovered in Trench 5.

Trench 6

2.25 Trench 6 was located to the south of Trench 4. It was oriented east-west and measured 15m in length by 2m wide (Figure 2).

Recorded Data

Length (m):	15.0	Width (m):	2.0		Maximum Depth (m):	c.0.60	Orientation	E-W	
Level at E End of Trench (mOD)		Top	123.10		Level at W End of Trench (mOD)		Top	122.70	
		Base	123.47				Base	122.25	
Context	Type	Description			Dimensions (m)				
					Length	Width	Depth		
-	Layer	7.5Y 3/2 'Dark Brown' soft clay silt topsoil.			-	-	c.0.30		
-	Layer	7.5YR 5/8 'Strong brown' silty sandy clay natural.					>0.30		

2.26 The stratigraphy in Trench 6 consisted of very dark grey (7.5YR 3/2) soft silty clay topsoil above strong brown (7.5YR 5/8) sandy clay natural.

2.27 Three features (601) (602) & (603) were encountered in Trench 6. These were all excavated and were shown to be natural in origin, most probably formed by tree roots (Plate 8).

2.28 No archaeological finds, features or artefacts were recovered in Trench 6.

Trench 7

2.29 Trench 7 was located to the south of Trench 4 and to the east of Trench 6. It was oriented north-south and measured 15m in length by 2m wide (Figure 2).

Recorded Data

Length (m):	15.0	Width (m):	2.0	Maximum Depth (m):	c.0.70	Orientation	N-S
Level at N End of Trench (mOD)		Top	123.82	Level at S End of Trench (mOD)		Top	123.53
		Base	123.23			Base	123.01
Context	Type	Description			Dimensions (m)		
					Length	Width	Depth
-	Layer	7.5Y 3/2 'Dark Brown' mixed soft clay silt topsoil and overburden.			-	-	c.0.40
-	Layer	7.5YR 5/8 'Strong brown' silty sandy clay natural.					> 0.30

2.30 The stratigraphy in Trench 7 consisted of very dark grey (7.5YR 3/2) soft silty clay topsoil above strong brown (7.5YR 5/8) sandy clay natural.

2.31 Trench 7 contained patches of concrete asbestos in the topsoil.

2.32 No archaeological finds, features or artefacts were recovered in Trench 7.

Trench 8

2.33 Trench 8 was located to the south of Trench 6. It was oriented north-south and measured 15m in length by 2m wide (Figure 2). The positioning of this trench was altered slightly due to the presence of trees in the area.

Recorded Data

Length (m):	15.0	Width (m):	2.0	Maximum Depth (m):	c.0.50	Orientation	N-S
Level at N End of Trench (mOD)		Top	123.23	Level at S End of Trench (mOD)		Top	122.93
		Base	122.77			Base	122.54
Context	Type	Description			Dimensions (m)		
					Length	Width	Depth
-	Layer	7.5Y 3/2 'Dark Brown' soft clay silt topsoil.			-	-	c.0.30
-	Layer	7.5YR 5/8 'Strong brown' silty sandy clay natural					>0.20

2.34 The stratigraphy in Trench 8 consisted of very dark grey (7.5YR 3/2) soft silty clay topsoil above strong brown (7.5YR 5/8) sandy clay natural.

2.35 A land drain was noted in Trench 8.

2.36 No archaeological finds, features or artefacts were recovered in Trench 8.

3 Discussion

Archaeological Background

3.1 The site lies within Harpenden Conservation Area No. 1, identified in the St. Albans District Local Plan. This part of the conservation area is described as an enclave of the Victorian and Edwardian Houses. A search of the Hertfordshire *Historic Environment Record and the St. Albans Urban Archaeological Database* for a radius of 1km around the site has assisted in establishing the archaeological and historical context for the present project:

- Evidence of Palaeolithic activity was recorded *c.*600m to the north east consisting of worked flints (HER1169) and *c.* 400m to the north of the site was found a handaxe (HER9086).
- A late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age building (HER 10493) and evidence for Bronze Age occupation (10492) was identified as part of the work for the construction of the golf course *c.*600m to the east.
- Late Iron Age activity was recorded in 1867 when a ‘Chieftain’ Burial was uncovered during the construction of the railway, approximately 600m to the north of the site (HER 123).
- Evidence for Roman activity in the immediate vicinity of Crabtree Lane was recovered in the form of possible Roman sarcophagus stonework from The Granary, Upper Top Street Farm (HER2866), which in turn had supposedly come from a Roman Barrow in a field between Coldharbour Lane and the River Lea between 1822 and 1830 (HER667).
- Other evidence for Roman activity in the local area consists of 1st century pottery, loom weights, a piece of a bronze ornament, Samian ware and a coin of Hadrian (HER1168).
- Further evidence of Roman activity includes three Roman coins found in St. Nicholas’ churchyard (HER665) and some Roman pottery and a coin die in Sun Lane (HER675).
- The parish church of St Nicholas, Grade II* listed building (HER 4383) is early 12th century in origin. The church lies *c.* 800m to the east of the site. It is documented that the church’s tower dates to the 15th century and the rest of the church was replaced during the 19th century.
- Harpenden contains a number of post-medieval buildings near to the site including: post-medieval farm buildings (HER 17742 -17744) on Crabtree Lane which formed the old hamlet of Topstreet.

3.2 An examination of Ordnance Survey maps from 1879 to the modern day shows that during the 19th century the site was occupied by an orchard, with a few small residential buildings of the hamlet of Topstreet to the southeast (Figure 5). During the late 1890s there appears to have been a small change in the layout of the surrounding properties to the southeast of the site. By the late-1890s, urban expansion of Harpenden had resulted in residential development to the immediate northwest of the site (Figure 6).

Research Design

3.3 The aims of the evaluation have been:

- to establish the likely presence or absence of archaeological remains on the site, and characterise them in terms of location, depth, extent, date, character and condition should they be present;
- 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 (Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Medlycott and Brown 2008, Medlycott 2011);
- to provide sufficient information to ensure that an appropriate strategy for the mitigation of damage or destruction of such remains by the development is adopted.

3.4 It was considered that such an investigation had the potential to contribute to an understanding of the development of Harpenden, from the Roman period onwards. In particular the location and extent of Roman buildings in the near vicinity, and the nature of the settlement in the Roman and the Iron Age periods.

Recorded Data

3.5 Six features of natural origin were excavated. However no features, deposits, or artefacts of archaeological significance were uncovered during the investigation.

Conclusions

3.6 The study area is located in an area of known archaeological activity dating from the prehistoric period onwards.

3.7 The evaluation revealed six features of natural origin in two of the trenches. However, the eight trial trenches excavated across the footprints of the new houses revealed no features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance.

3.8 On the basis of the results of the evaluation, the risk that the proposed development might disturb archaeological remains may be considered to be *Low* for all periods.

Confidence Rating

3.9 During the course of the fieldwork, the conditions were generally acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation. Although there was lying snow on the ground, there were no further falls during the fieldwork programme, and there were no other circumstances which would lead to confidence rating for the work which was less than *High*.

4 Sources Consulted

British Geological Survey: www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience

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5 Illustrations

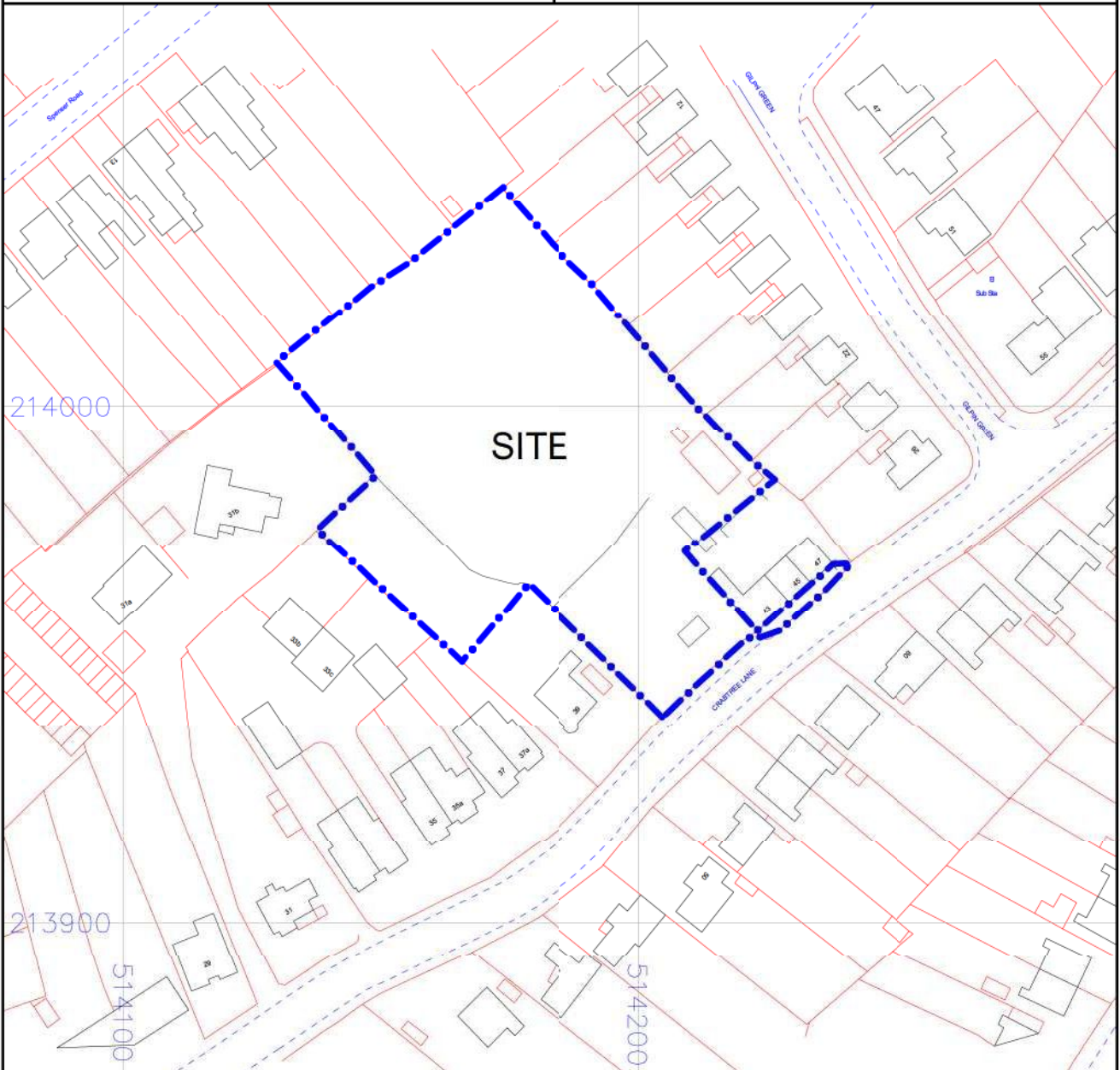
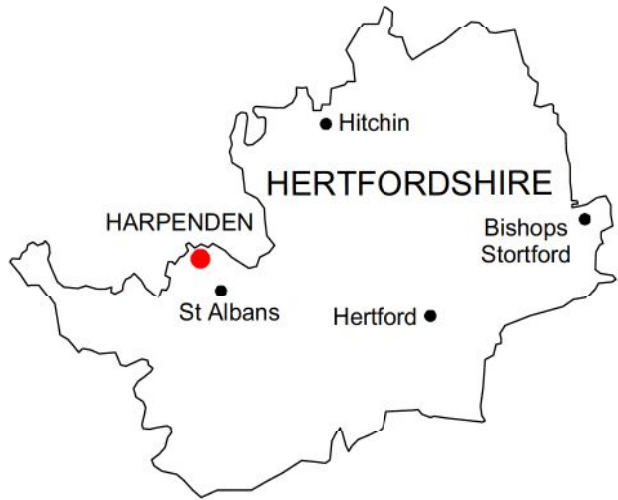
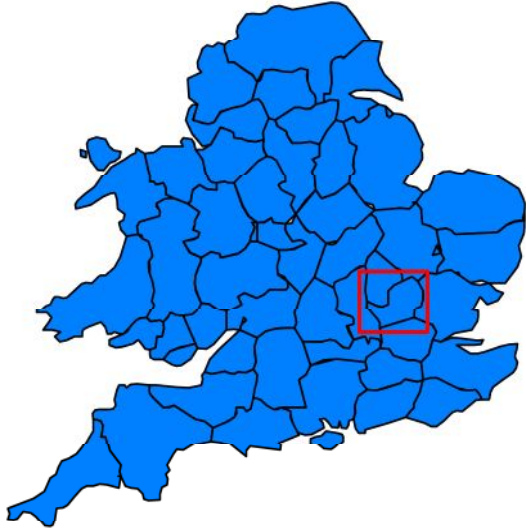
Figure 1 Site location
Figure 2 Trench locations
Figure 3 Plan of Trench 2
Figure 4 Section 1: Features 201 & 203
Figure 5 Ordnance Survey, 1979
Figure 6 Ordnance Survey, 1898

Plate 1 Trench 1, looking southwest
Plate 2 Trench 2 looking north
Plate 3 [201] & [203] looking north
Plate 4 Trench 3 looking northeast
Plate 5 Trench 4 looking south east
Plate 6 Trench 5 looking southwest
Plate 7 Trench 6 Looking west
Plate 8 Natural feature (601) Looking southeast
Plate 9 Natural features (602) & (603) looking south
Plate 10 Natural feature (604) looking north
Plate 11 Trench 7 looking north
Plate 12 Trench 8 Looking northwest

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

R/o 39-49 Crabtree Lane, Harpenden

HN1040



Site Location

Scale 1:1250

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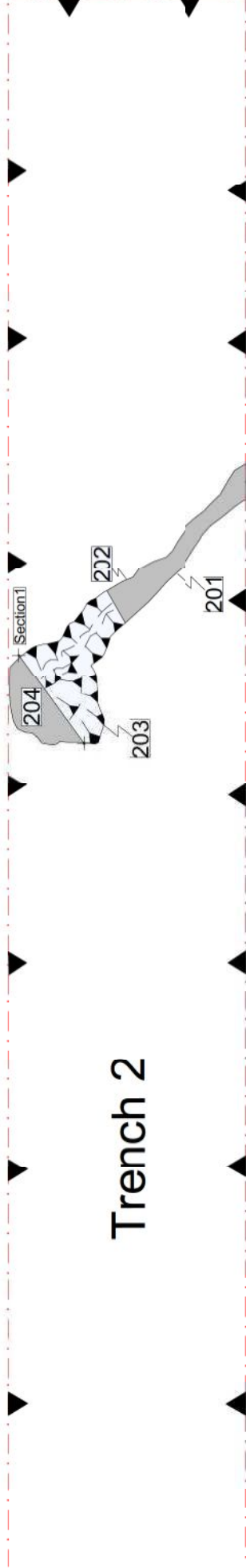
Figure 1



Trench Locations

Scale 1:500

Figure 2

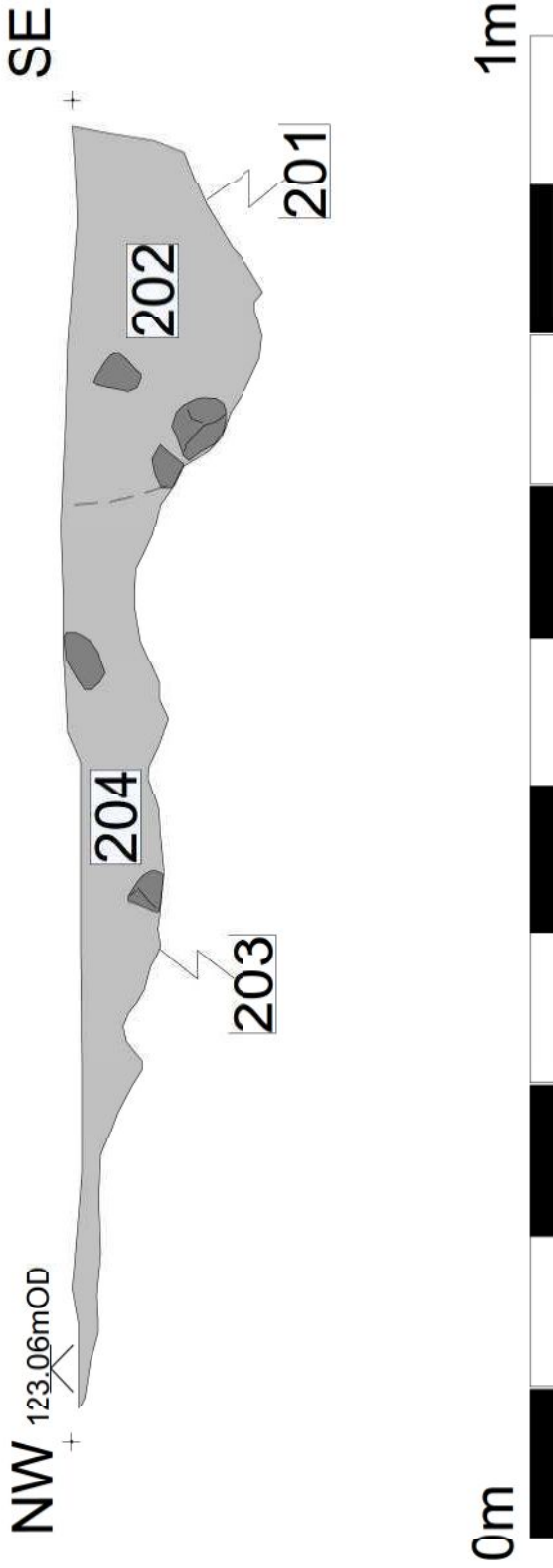


Trench 2

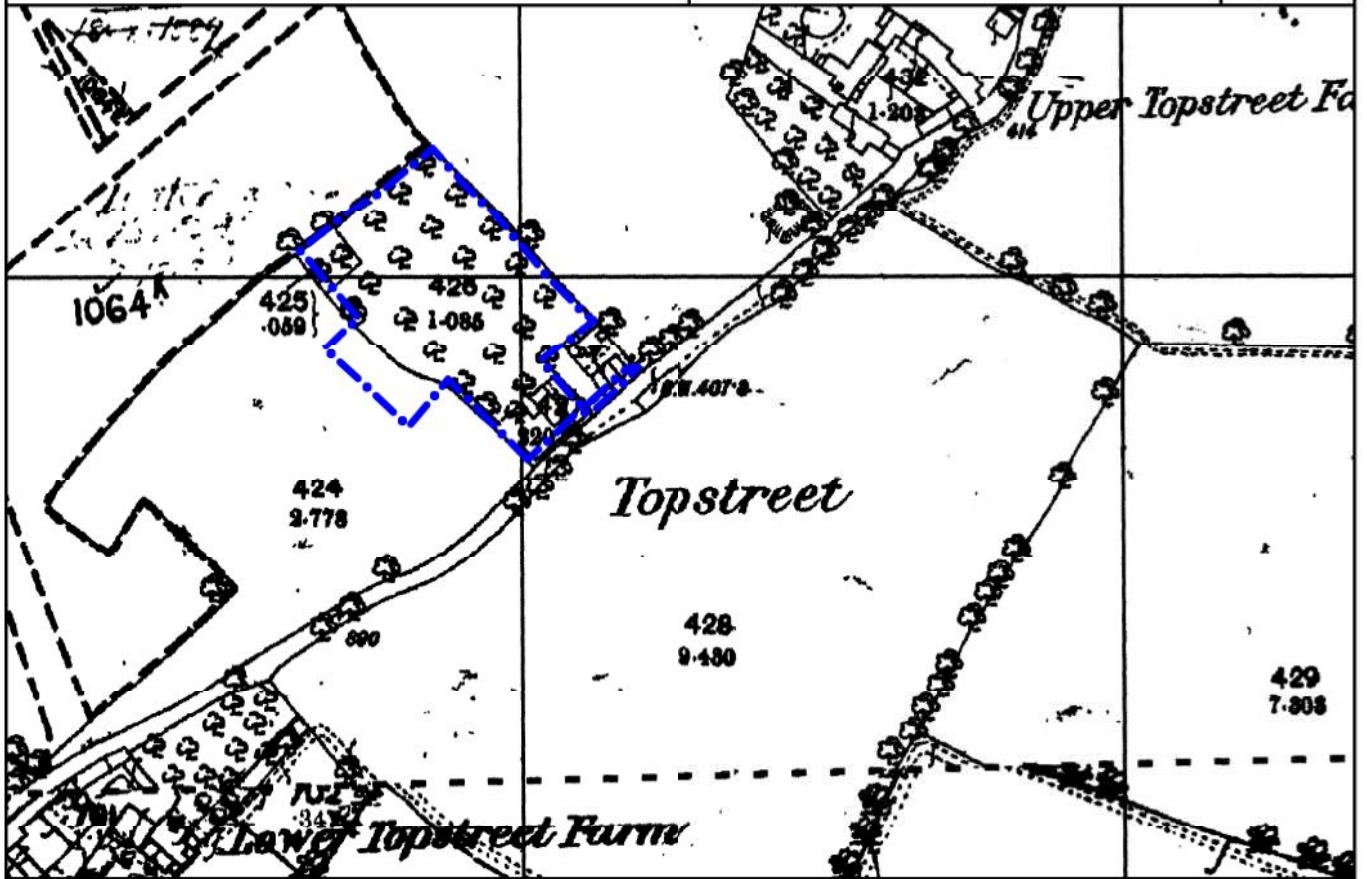


Plan of North End of Trench 2

Section 1



Section 1: Features [201] & [203]

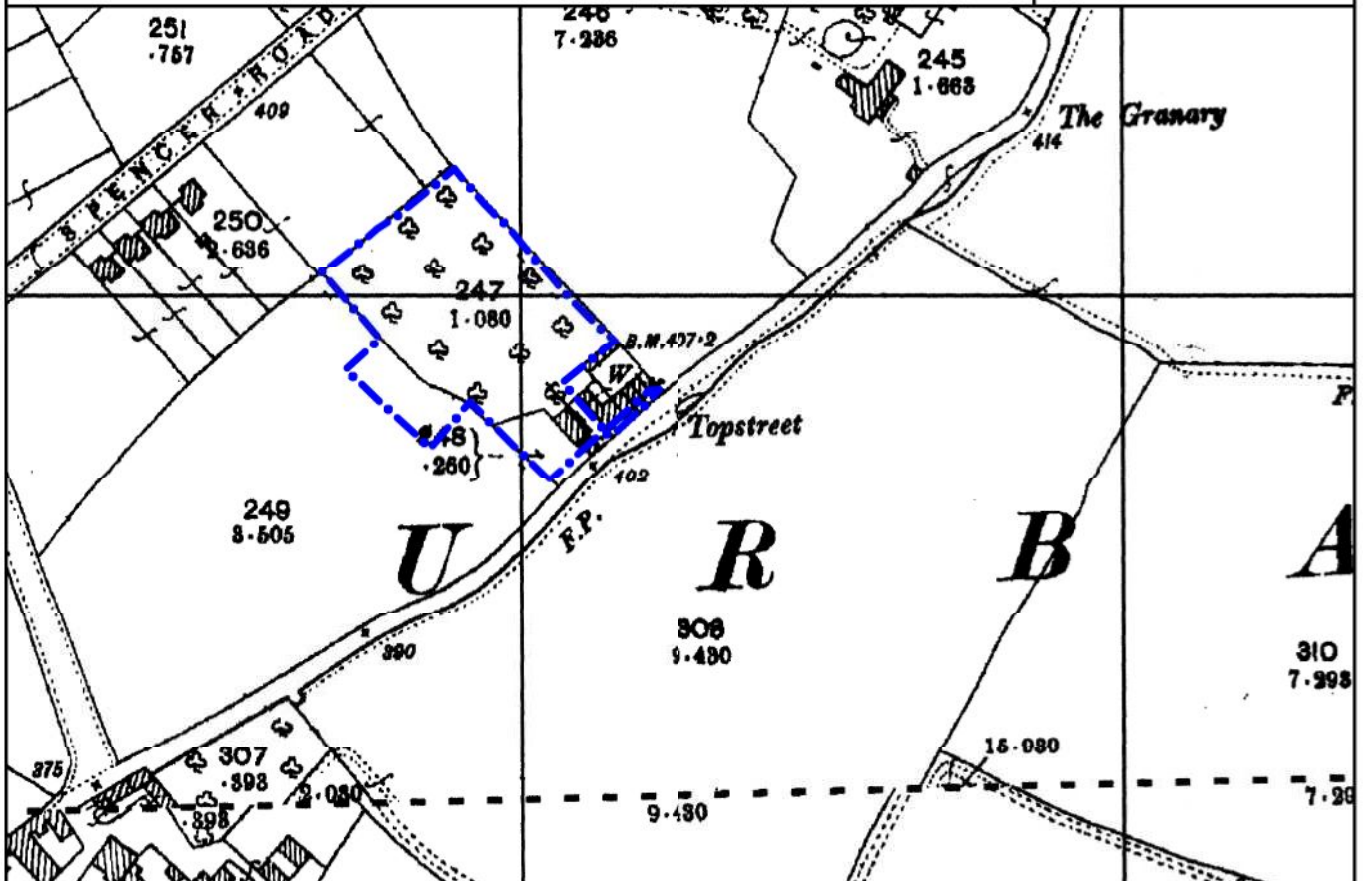


Ordnance Survey Map, 1st Edition, 1879

Scale 1:2500

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Licence no.100014861

Figure 5



Ordnance Survey Map, 2nd Edition, 1898

Scale 1:2500

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Figure 6



Plate 1: Trench 1 Looking southwest



Plate 2: Trench 2 Looking north



Plate 3: [201] & [203] Looking north



Plate 4: Trench 3 Looking northeast



Plate 5: Trench 4 Looking southeast



Plate 6: Trench 5 Looking southwest



Plate 7: Trench 6 Looking west



Plate 8: Natural root feature (601) Looking southeast



Plate 9: Natural features (602) & (603) Looking south



Plate 10: Natural feature (604) Looking north



Plate 11: Trench 7 Looking north



Plate 12: Trench 8 Looking northwest

Appendix

Oasis Summary Sheet

OASIS ID: heritage1-140577	
Project details	
Project name	Land to r/o 39-49 Crabtree Lane, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 5NT
Short description of the project	<p>In order to characterise the archaeological potential of the site of a proposed new development on land to the rear of Nos 39-49, Crabtree Lane, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developers to undertake an archaeological field evaluation by trial trenching. This work was a requirement of the planning consent granted by the local planning authority.</p> <p>The evaluation revealed potential features in two of the trenches, though, on investigation, it was concluded that these were of natural origin. No features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were uncovered during the work.</p> <p>On the basis of the results of the evaluation, the risk that the proposed development might disturb archaeological remains may be considered to be <i>Low</i> for all periods.</p>
Project dates	Start: 23-01-2013 End: 24-01-2013
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HN1040 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	5/12/2414 – LPA ref
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Other 12 - Residential
Monument type	None
Monument type	None
Significant Finds	None
Methods & techniques	"Photographic Survey", "Sample" Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HARPENDEN Land to r/o 39-49 Crabtree Lane,
Postcode	AL5 5NT
Study area	1000 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 14195 13980
Height OD / Depth	Min: 120.93m Max: 123.84m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project 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

Project supervisor	Greg Jones
Type of funding body	Developer
Name of funding body	Marchfield Homes Ltd.
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	St. Albans Museums
Physical Contents	n/a
Digital Archive recipient	St. Albans Museums
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	St. Albans Museums
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Diary", "Drawing", "Photograph", "Plan", "Section", "Survey "
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land to the r/o 39-49 Crabtree Lane, Harpenden, Herts.
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Jones, G.
Other bibliographic details	Heritage Network Report No. 768
Date	2013
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