HERITAGE NETWORK

NORTHWOOD PREPARATORY SCHOOL
Moor Park, Rickmansworth, Herts.

HN639

Archaeological Monitoring Report

REGISTERED IFA ORGANISATION

THE HERITAGE NETWORK *LTD*
Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation
Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

NORTHWOOD PREPARATORY SCHOOL
Moor Park, Rickmansworth, Herts.

HN639

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Northwood Preparatory School

By

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Report no.414

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Contents

The cover photograph shows Walls 1,2 4 and 5, looking south-east

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Chris Turner and David Kaye. The dating of the ceramic building materials was undertaken by Tom Doig. 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 Gordon Maclean, architect; Mick Kelly, QSP Construction; and Andy Instone, County Historic Environment Unit, HCC, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Northwood Preparatory School, Moor Park, Rickmansworth		
County:	Hertfordshire	**District:**	Three Rivers
Village/town:	Rickmansworth	**Parish:**	Watford Rural
Planning reference:	06/1344/FUL	**NGR:**	TQ 082 939
Client name and address:	Northwood Preparatory School, Moor Park, Rickmansworth, Herts.		
Nature of work:	New air conditioning unit enclosure	**Former land use:**	Waste ground
Site status:	AAS15	**Reason for investigation:**	Direction of local planning authority (PPG 16)
Position in planning process:	After full determination (as a condition)	**Project brief originator:**	Local Authority
Size of affected area:	c.340m^2	**Size of area investigated:**	c.340m^2
Site Code:	HN 639	**Other reference:**	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	**Site Director:**	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Monitoring	**Archive recipient:**	Three Rivers Museum
Start of work	24/04/07	**Finish of work**	25/06/07
Related SMR Nos:	n/a	**Periods represented:**	Post medieval, modern
Oasis UID	heritage1-28508	**Significant finds:**	None
Monument types:	Wall		
Physical archive:	Brick, pottery, glass		
Previous summaries/reports:	Hillelson, D. 1999 *New Science and Technology Block, Northwood Preparatory School, Moor Park, Rickmansworth, Herts. Archaeological Evaluation Report*. (HN report no. 82) Hillelson, D. & Ashworth, H. 2001 *Northwood Preparatory School, Moor Park, Rickmansworth, Herts. Archaeological Monitoring Report*. (HN report no. 118)		

Synopsis:

In response to a condition on the planning permission for the construction of a new air conditioning unit enclosure at Northwood Preparatory School, Moor Park, Rickmansworth, Herts, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the school to undertake the archaeological monitoring of the development groundworks.

The monitoring programme revealed the remains of several walls of early to mid 19th century date. These relate to buildings associated with the post-medieval farm that stood on the site in the late 18th and early 19th century. The evidence suggests that at least part of the farmyard was remodelled between 1800 and 1839, including the demolition of the aisled barn to the north, recorded during previous investigations, and the possible structures recorded during the present project. No evidence for the medieval Manor of the More was identified during the present project.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of *Northwood Preparatory School*, as part of the archaeological monitoring and recording of development works at Northwood Preparatory School, Moor Park, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire.

1.2 The investigation is a requirement of the planning consent granted by Three Rivers District Council (TRDC), under the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990), for a new air conditioning unit enclosure (ref. 06/1344/FUL). The extent of the work was defined following consultation with the County Historic Environment Unit (CHEU) of Hertfordshire County Council acting as archaeological advisers to the TRDC. A full specification of the work was contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, dated November 2006.

1.3 Northwood Preparatory School is located on the former Moor Farm, at grid reference TQ 082 939, approximately 2.5km east-southeast of Rickmansworth. The development site lies to the south of the existing Science and Technology building and to the southwest of Moor Farmhouse, now the headmaster's house (Figure 1).

1.4 The construction of a new music block immediately adjacent to the west of the present site was part of a separate planning application and was not subject to archaeological monitoring. A modern dutch barn located on the site was demolished prior to the start of the present project.

1.5 In 1999 the Heritage Network carried out an evaluation on the site of the Science and Technology building (Hillelson, 1999). That was followed by a programme of archaeological monitoring of the construction groundworks (Hillelson, 2001). These works identified the remains of an 18th-19th century aisled barn in the southern margins of the construction footprint, extending into the present site.

1.6 The aim of the investigation has been to identify and record any archaeological features and deposits which might have been uncovered; and to retrieve artefactual and ecofactual elements to allow the date, character, and significance of the site to be assessed in accordance with current regional research agenda (Brown and Glazebrook, 2000), subject to the limitations of reasonable safety and practicality.

1.7 The present report describes the findings of the monitoring programme and is intended, together with the deposition of the site archive with Three Rivers Museum, to complete the requirements of the planning condition.

2. Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The development is located on the southern limits of the school grounds at approximately 53.90mAOD, in an area of overgrown rough ground, formerly an orchard.

2.2 The underlying geology consists of terrace gravels of the River Colne, which lies c.300m to north of the site. The drift geology consists of *plateau gravel and river terrace drift* of the Sonning 1 association (SSEW 1983).

METHODOLOGY

2.3 The timetable for the fieldwork followed the client's groundwork schedule. The development required the entire area of the air conditioning unit enclosure, measuring 17.50m by 19.70m, to be reduced by approximately 2m to match the existing ground level to the north. A number of site visits were made to supervise the ground reduction.

2.4 The machining was undertaken under close supervision using a JCB mechanical digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The ground was reduced to the potential archaeological horizon first, and following archaeological investigation and recording was reduced to the final construction level.

2.5 All 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

Stratigraphy

2.6 The stratigraphy across the site consisted of a thin layer, 0.10m deep, of dark silty topsoil. Below this was a dark brown silty sandy subsoil, c.0.60-0.70m deep, with a lot of root activity. The natural consisted of gravel with sandy clay glacial striations, typical of gravel terraces.

2.7 The eastern c.7m of the site appeared to be largely undisturbed compared to the rest of the site. The stratigraphy in the disturbed area consisted of a layer, 0.10-0.20m deep, of crushed cement asbestos, which was observed below a thin covering of topsoil, 0.05-0.10m deep. Below the asbestos layer was a disturbed mid-brown sandy gravel subsoil, c.0.50-0.60m deep, with frequent redeposited brick fragments.

Ground reduction

2.8 The ground reduction revealed fragments of five walls along the southern edge of the site. (Figure 2)

- Wall [01] was orientated east-west and measured 0.59m (5 brick-widths or 2') in width, and over 6.16m in length (Plates 1 & 5). This wall survived to seven courses high (0.57m) with a yellow brown lime mortar. The base course consisted of a foundation layer of headers laid on edge, above which the bricks were laid in stretcher bond. The wall

continued eastwards under the baulk and was clearly truncated and 'robbed' out at its western end. It was substantial and well constructed, similar in nature to wall [02]. The reddish brown bricks were poorly fired and measured 220mm (8¾") long, 105mm (4¼") wide and 60mm (2½") thick.

- Wall [02] was orientated north-south and measured 0.59m (5 brick-widths or 2') in width, over 1.23m in length and survived to a height of four courses (0.37m) in stretcher bond with a yellow brown mortar (Plate 6). It continued southwards under the baulk and would undoubtedly have butted onto wall [01] at right angles before that wall was 'robbed' out. The reddish brown bricks were poorly fired and measured 230m (9") long, 110m (4½") wide and 60mm (2½") thick.

- Wall [03] was orientated east-west and measured 0.63m in width, 5.92m in length and survived to a height of five courses (0.36m), mainly in stretcher bond with a yellowish white lime mortar (Plates 2 & 7). It was truncated at either end. This wall was well constructed and appears to be later than the walls [02] and [03]. It may represent a rear boundary wall. The bricks measured 215mm (8½") long, 110mm (4½") wide and 65mm (2½") thick.

- Wall [04] was orientated east-west, broadly parallel to wall [01], and measured 0.33m in width, over 6.14m in length and survived to a height of three courses (0.17m), but only a single course remained at the western end (Plates 3 & 8). The wall continued eastwards under the baulk and appear to turn southwards at the western end to join onto wall [05], though it was clearly truncated and 'robbed' out in this location. It was poorly constructed, loosely bonded with yellow brown lime mortar, and was highly disturbed by tree roots. The reddish brown bricks were poorly fired and measured 215mm (8½") long, 105mm (4¼") wide and 60mm (2½") thick.

- Wall [05] was orientated east-west and measured 0.23m in width, and 1.26m in length and survived to a height of one course (0.06m) (Plate 4). The western end was apparently truncated and the ground later consolidated. It lies to the south-west of wall [04], with its eastern end starting in line with the western end of wall [04]. The reddish brown bricks were poorly fired and measured 220m (8¾") long, 110mm (4½") wide and 60mm (2½") thick.

2.9 An irregular patch of large un-worked irregular flint nodules, measuring 1.90m by 2.90m, was recorded at the western limits of walls [01] [02] & [05]. The individual nodules measured approximately 0.10-0.15m in diameter and appear to represent a dump, probably to consolidate the ground.

2.10 All the walls appeared to have been affected by tree root activity, particularly wall [04] which had been badly damaged and undermined.

2.11 During the clearance of the site two large fragments of carved structural sandstone were discovered lying on the surface in the undergrowth (Figure 3). One piece formed a square column base, measuring 0.81m high and 0.52m wide, and the second fragment formed part of an engaged

column measuring 0.37m in diameter and 1.45m in height. Both pieces had been chiselled and damaged as they were removed from their original location. Similar, but decorated, stone column fragments can be observed in other parts of the school, outside some of the class rooms. No information on their provenance was available.

2.12 No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts earlier than those associated with the post-medieval farm were observed during the groundworks.

ARTEFACTUAL ASSEMBLAGE

2.13 In the course of the monitoring programme, 7 sherds of pottery and 2 fragments of glass, dated to the late 19th or early 20th century, were recovered from the overburden between walls [01] and [04]. The pottery was from two separate vessels, and included the base and part of the rim of a jar or vase, and part of a teapot lid.

2.14 Sample bricks were recovered from walls [01] and [03] for dating purposes. The brick from wall [01] has been dated c.1800. It is handmade, bright red in colour, and measures 220mm (8¾") long, 105mm (4¼") wide and 60mm (2½") deep. Traces of lime mortar are present on both top and bottom. The brick from wall [03] has been dated to the 1820s – 1840s. It is handmade, pale reddish brown in colour and measures 215mm (8½") long, 110mm (4½") wide and 65mm (2½") deep. Traces of lime mortar are present on the top and bottom.

Concordance

	Pottery		CBM		Glass		Comments
Context	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
U/S	7	235			2	435	l.19th-e.20th C. 2 separate vessels
01 (wall)			1	2915			Brick
03 (wall)			1	2725			Brick

3. Discussion

Historical background and previous work

3.1 The site lies within Area of Archaeological Significance 15 (AAS15), defined as an area of human occupation on the gravel terraces of the River Colne. Prehistoric activity in the area is concentrated on the north side of the River Colne and on Moor Park Golf Course, and consists of chance finds rather than evidence of settlement. These include Paleolithic implements to the north of the present site (SMR 4960), Mesolithic implements (SMR 877 &4935) and a Neolithic tranchet axe from the Moor Park Golf Club (SMR 6037).

3.2 Romano-British pottery have been recorded in the vicinity and the site of a second century Roman villa (SMR 82) was investigated on Moor Park Golf Course, approximately 400m south-west of the present site.

3.3 The school lies within the curtilage of the medieval Manor of the More. The moated manor house (SMR 829 & 826) was situated approximately 120m north-west of the school buildings under the current school playing fields.

3.4 The first definite mention of the manor was in 1182, when the Abbot of St Albans Abbey exchanged the manor for land in Buckinghamshire. Excavations by Martin Biddle in the early 1950s revealed that between c.1250 and 1426 the moated area underwent several phases of reorganisation (Biddle, 1959). Until the early fifteenth century though, the manor is thought probably to have been fairly small and insignificant and appears to have fairly poorly constructed of timber with stone or tile (Smith,1992a, p.23).

3.5 In 1416 it was conveyed to William Flete, a London merchant, and others. In 1426 he, together with Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, obtained a Royal licence 'to enclose, crenellate, enturret and embattle with stones, lime and brick, their Manor of More in Rickmersworth and also to empark 600 acres of land'. The new mansion was large and elaborate (Biddle, 1959, p.137).

3.6 By the mid fifteenth century Sir Ralph Boteler, Lord of Sudeley, held the manor, but after Sir Ralph's death, the Abbot rebought possession. In 1521 Thomas Wolsey was made Abbot of St Albans and the manor became one of his principal country residences. He also altered and enlarged the house and grounds. In 1525 the Treaty of the More, making peace between England and France, was signed here.

3.7 After Wolsey's fall the manor came into the possession of Henry VIII. Katharine of Aragon was sent here during the divorce proceedings against her. In 1540 it was given to Anne of Cleves for life as part of her divorce settlement. By 1598 the building was in ruins and occupied by squatters (Biddle, 1959, p.137). It was still standing in 1655, but was demolished shortly afterwards. The site of the principal manor house then moved to Moor Park, south of the moated site.

3.8 The buildings of the present Moor Farm, immediately south-east of the moated site of the Manor of the More, date to the seventeenth century at the earliest (DoE, 1985) suggesting that the farm developed in the period after the demolition of the manor house.

3.9 The cartographic evidence for the site shows that essentially the layout of the farm buildings has changed very little since the mid-nineteenth century. The Tithe Map of 1839 (HALS off acc 550) shows the courtyard, formed by the ranges of barns to the north, west and east and the farm house to the south (Figure 4). This basic layout underwent various small alterations during the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

3.10 The moat was backfilled in the twentieth century and now lies beneath the school playing fields. In 1982 Northwood Park Preparatory School moved to its present site at Moor Farm. Several of the existing farm buildings underwent alteration to fit them for use as classrooms and offices, and additional buildings including a sports hall, a science and technology block and a junior school annexe, have been built since.

3.11 In 1999 the Heritage Network carried out an evaluation on the Science and Technology building immediately to the north of the present site (Hillelson 1999). That was followed by a programme of archaeological monitoring on the construction of that building (Hillelson & Ashworth 2001). These works identified the remains of an 18th-19th century aisled barn in the southern margins of the construction footprint, which possibly extended into the present site.

Present site

3.12 The monitoring of the groundworks associated with the development revealed five post medieval wall fragments surviving in the south-east corner of the site and along the southern boundary.

3.13 These walls probably represent part of the post-medieval farm complex. The bricks from walls [01] and [03] have been dated to between c.1800 and 1840. Unstratified finds from between walls [01] and [04] have been dated to the late 19th or early 20th century. The finds assemblage suggests that the main structure, represented by walls [01] and [02], was built c.1800, with later structures or extensions, represented by walls [04] and [05], built to the north in the late 19th or early 20th century.

3.14 The Rickmansworth Tithe Map, dated 1839, shows no evidence for a roofed structure on the present site (Figure 6). This suggests either that the structure had been demolished by this period, or that the bricks were re-used in a later building. However, no evidence for a substantial structure in this area is shown on later maps (Hillelson 1999, figures 2-8). The evidence suggests that walls [01] and [02] may represent a late 18th or early 19th century structure, which was demolished before 1839. The aisled barn to the north, recorded in earlier archaeological investigations at the school (Hillelson 1999; Hillelson & Ashworth 2001), was broadly contemporary and had also been demolished prior to 1839. It appears that a number of significant alterations to the farmyard were carried out at Moor Farm between c.1800 and 1839.

3.15 A dump of large natural irregular flint nodules close to the walls appears to represent an attempt to consolidate the ground in this area.

3.16 From at least the later 19th century the site was used as an orchard (Hillelson 1999, Figure 4) and all the walls identified in the present project, particularly wall [04], show evidence of having been disturbed by tree root activity.

3.17 The presence of a layer of crushed mixed asbestos, coupled with the high density of redeposited brick below and the mixing of the natural gravel and subsoil provided evidence of modern machining in the area.

3.18 There was no evidence for the expected southern half of the aisled barn investigated to the north. The evidence from the stratigraphy suggests that any remains that may have been situated immediately to the south of the Science and Technology block had been disturbed.

3.19 Two large fragments of carved stone that form an engaged column and base were observed laying on the surface of the site in the undergrowth. These features are post-medieval in date and are clearly damaged on the back and sides, where they were removed from their original location. The origin of these fragments, and others elsewhere on the school site, is unclear.

Confidence Rating

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

3.21 There are no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for this project which is less than High.

4. Schedule of site visits

Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
27/04/07	MW	3	Initial visit
09/05/07	CT	9	Monitor ground reduction
10/05/07	CT	9	Monitor ground reduction
15/05/07	DGK	10	Monitor ground reduction and record features
	CT	8	
25/06/07	DGK	5	Monitor ground reduction

5. Bibliography

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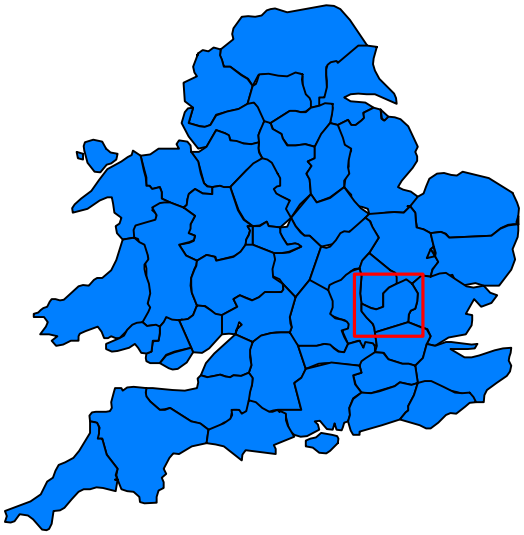
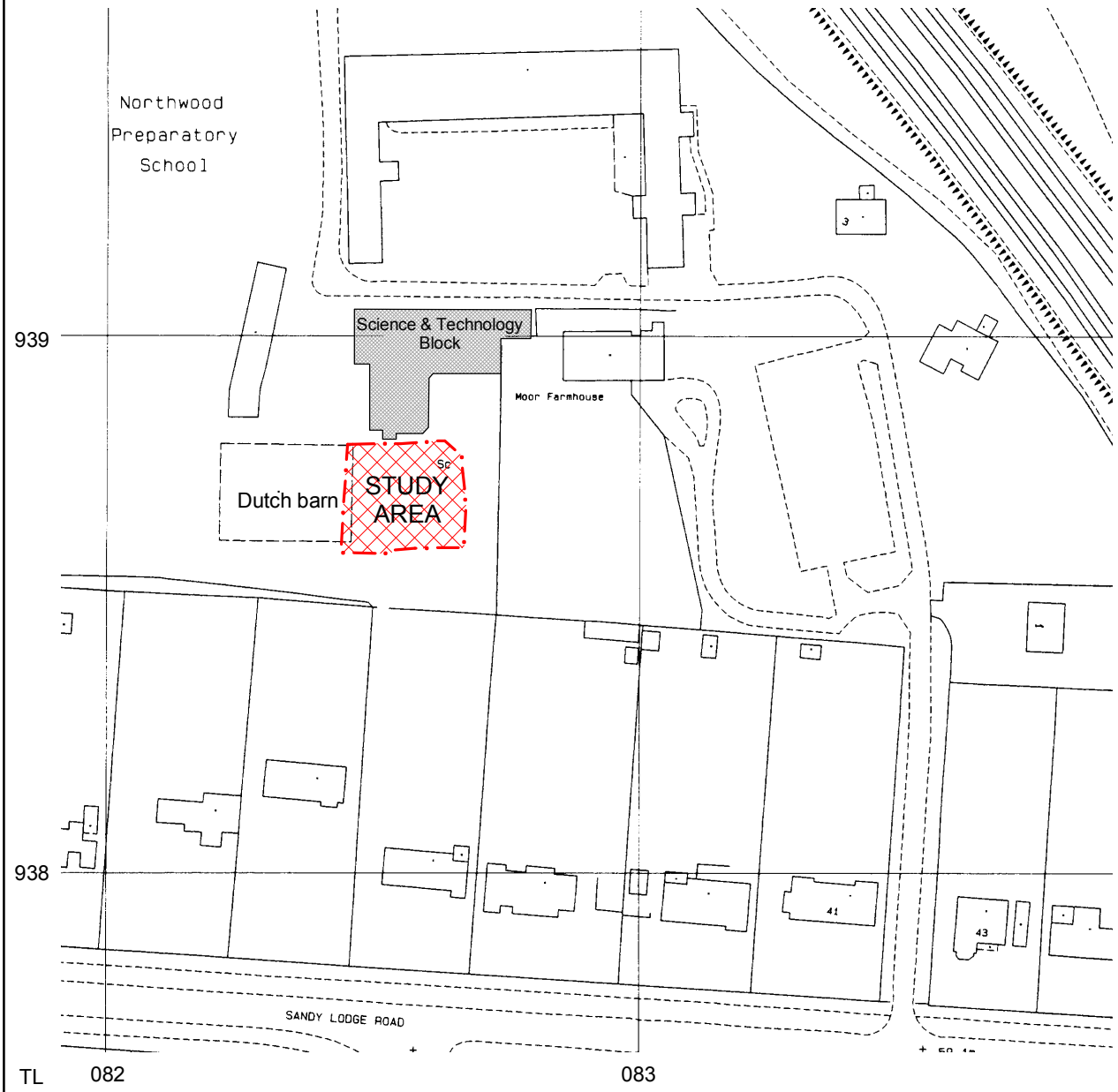
6. Illustrations

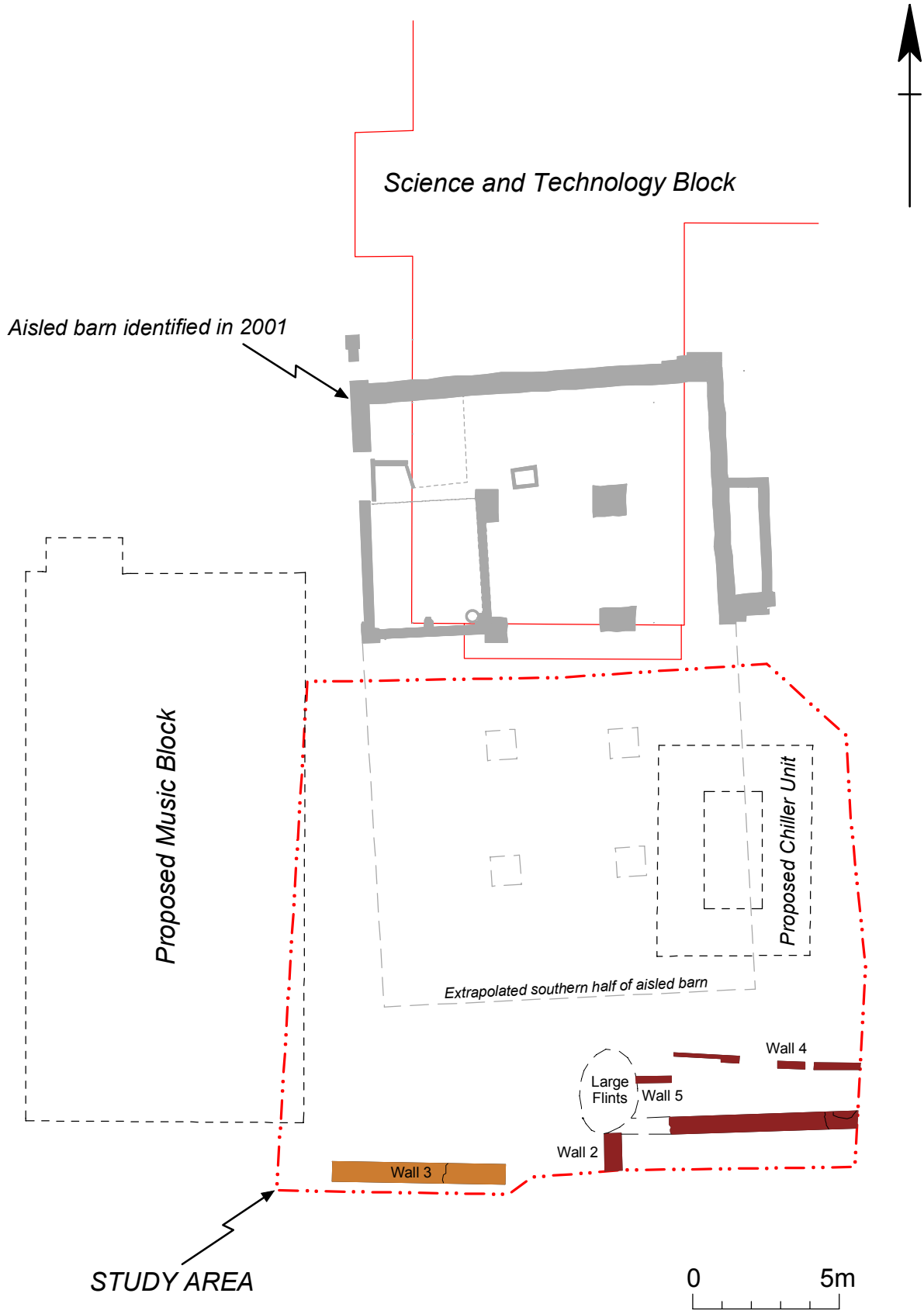
THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD	Northwood Preparatory School, Moor Park, Rickmansworth	HN639





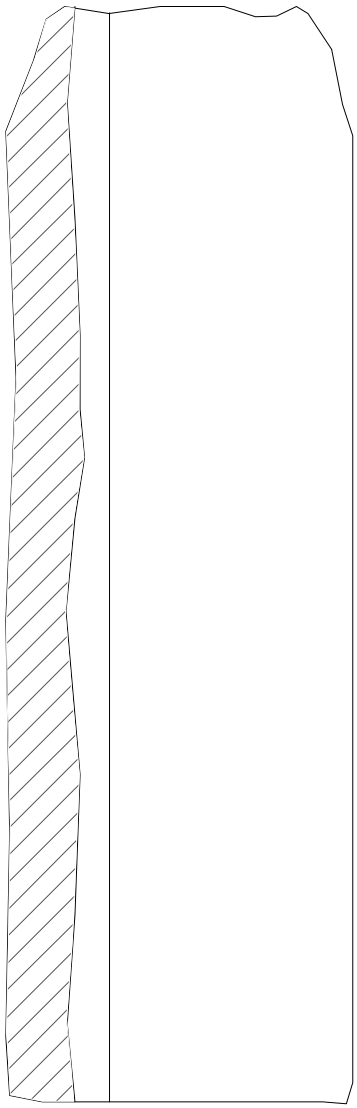
Site Location	Scale 1:1250
(Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Licence no.AL100014861)	Figure 1

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD	Northwood Preparatory School Moor Park, Rickmansworth	HN639

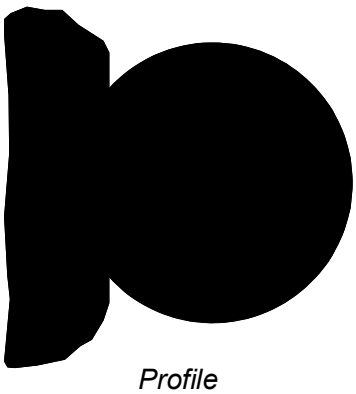


Site Layout	Scale 1:200
	Figure 2

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD	Northwood Preparatory School Moor Park, Rickmansworth	HN639

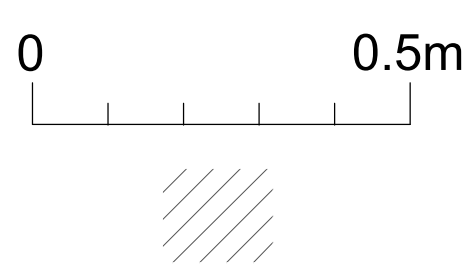


Side elevation

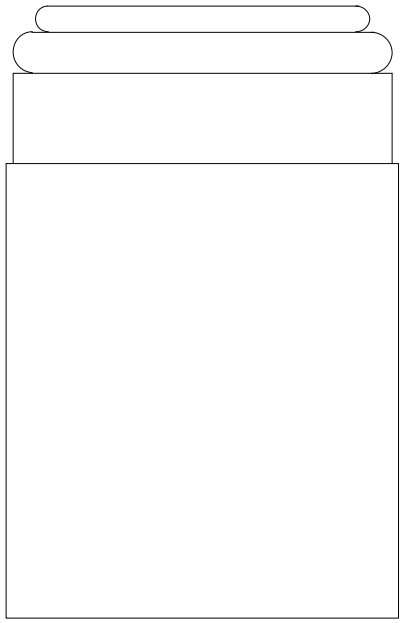


Profile

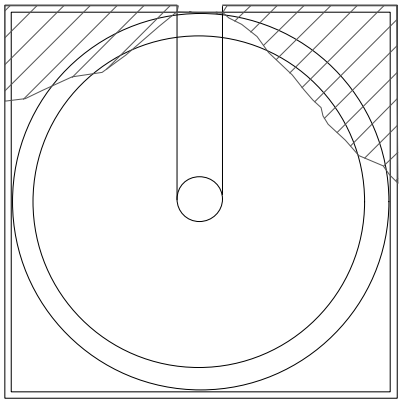
Engaged Column



Damaged areas



Profile

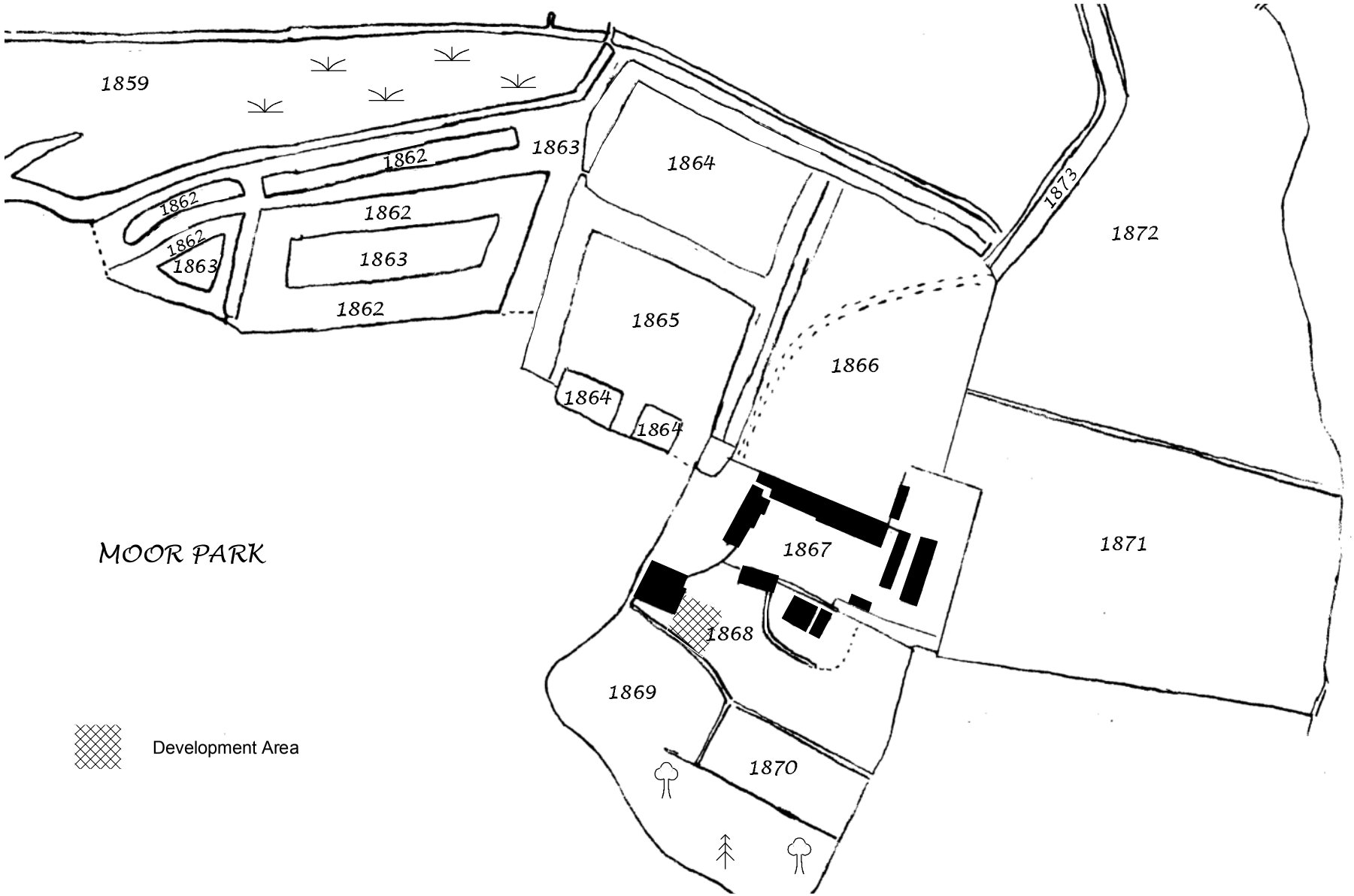


Plan View

Column Base

Stone column and base	Scale 1:10
	Figure 3

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD	Northwood Preparatory School, Moor Park, Rickmansworth	HN639



Tracing from the Rickmansworth Tithe Map 1839 (HALS ref: off acc 550)	Scale 1:2500
	Figure 4

Plate 1: Wall [01] looking south

Plate 2: Wall [03] looking south

Plate 3: Wall [04] looking north

Plate 4: Wall [05] looking north-east

Plate 5: Wall [01] looking west

Plate 6: Wall [02] looking south

Plate 7: Wall [03] looking west

Plate 8: Wall [04] looking west