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**82 HIGH STREET
Stotfold, Beds.**

HN1117

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION REPORT***

HERITAGE NETWORK

Registered with the Institute for Archaeologists

Managing Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

82 HIGH STREET,
Stotfold, Bedfordshire.

Project ref.: HN1117
Accession no.: BEDFM 2014.02
LPA ref.: CB/13/03525/PAPC

Archaeological Evaluation

Prepared on behalf of John and Paul Smith

by

Daniel Phillips, BA (HONS)

Report no.853

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The cover illustration shows the site looking south

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Robin Densem and Daniel Phillips. The report text and illustrations were compiled by Daniel Phillips and edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to John and Paul Smith; Charles Speakman, Be Informed; and Hannah Firth, Archaeology Officer Central Bedfordshire Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	82 High Street, Stotfold, Bedfordshire, SG5 4LD		
County:	Bedfordshire	District:	Central Bedfordshire
Village/town:	Stotfold	Parish:	Stotfold
Planning reference:	CB/13/03525/PAPC	NGR:	TL 21816 36491
Client name and address:	John and Paul Smith, 82 High Street, Stotfold, Bedfordshire, SG5 4LD		
Nature of work:	New Dwelling	Current land use:	Yard area
Site Status:	None	Reason for investigation:	Pre-validation investigation
Position in planning process:	Pre-validation	Project brief originator:	Local authority archaeologist
Size of affected area:	50m ²	Size of area investigated:	c.16m ²
Site code:	HN1117	Accession ref.:	BEDFM 2014.02
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Trial trenching	Archive Recipient:	Bedford Museum
Start of work:	04/03/2014	Finish of work:	04/03/2014
Related HER nos:	n/a	Periods represented	None
OASIS UID:	heritage1-169136	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	None		
Physical archive:	None		
Previous summaries/reports:	No		

Synopsis:

In order to investigate the archaeological potential of a proposed new development located at 82 High Street, Stotfold, Bedfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the owners to undertake a programme of targeted trial trenching.

One trial trench was excavated across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling. This revealed a mixed levelling layer below the existing concrete yard surface. This overburden overlay a sequence of buried topsoil, subsoil, and natural. No features, deposits or finds were encountered in the trench and, on this basis, the risks that the proposed development might disturb archaeological remains of any significance may be considered to be *Low* for all periods.

1 Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of John and Paul Smith, to cover a programme of archaeological work carried out in advance of the submission of a planning application for a residential development at 82 High Street, Stotfold, Bedfordshire (Figure 1).

1.2 In line with the requirements of Paragraph 128 of the Department of Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) and the Central Bedfordshire Council's (CBC) *Validation Checklist*, the applicant is required to submit a description of the significance of any heritage assets affected by the proposal, in the form of a Heritage Statement.

1.3 The extent of the information required to compile the Heritage Statement was defined in a *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Field Evaluation at 82 High Street, Stotfold, Bedfordshire*, prepared by the Archaeological Team (AT) at CBC, acting as adviser to the planning authority. A full specification for the evaluation that has been undertaken in response to this Brief was contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, dated February 2014 (Jones, 2014).

1.4 The property is located towards the southern edge of the village, on the south side of the High Street, centred on NGR TL 21816 36491

1.5 The development proposes the demolition of an existing carport and shed and the construction of a new attached end terrace dwelling.

2 Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The study area is located on the south side of Stotfold High Street, on the top of a low ridge between the headwaters of the Pix Brook to the south and the River Ivel to the east, which gives the area its topographical character. It is located at a height of approximately 50m AOD

2.2 Locally the soils belong largely to the Wantage 2 Association (342d), described as *'Shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over argillaceous chalk associated with similar soils affected by groundwater. Deeper well drained loamy soils in places. Complex soil patterns locally'* (SSEW 1983).

2.3 The underlying geology consists of the West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 94 to 100 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period. Local environment previously dominated by warm chalk seas. (British Geological Survey).

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 One trial trench was located across the site, by triangulation from known points using fibreglass tape measures.

2.6 Within the trench, topsoil and overburden were removed using a mini excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The trench was machined to the first significant archaeological horizon. Spoil from the machining was inspected for archaeological artefacts and a metal detector was used to scan the spoil heap for ferrous finds.

2.7 The open trench was cleaned by hand, and inspected for any potential archaeological features and deposits. The stratigraphy within the trenches was photographed and recorded using the appropriate pro-forma. Plans of potential features and deposits were drawn on drafting film at a scale of 1:20, and sections at a scale of 1:10.

RESULTS

Trench 1

2.8 Trench 1 was located in the northwestern half of the site and across the proposed new building footprint, to the west of the existing building (Figure 2, Plate 1 & 2). The trench, which was oriented approximately northeast - southwest, measured 7.8m in length and 2.1m in width, and was machine excavated to a maximum depth of c. 0.8m. A sondage was excavated in the southeast corner to the trench (Plate 1) to confirm the natural substrate.

Trench data:

Length (m):	7.8	Width (m):	21	Maximum Depth (m):	0.8	Orientation	NE-SW
Level at NE End of Trench (mOD)		Top	49.98	Level at SW End of Trench (mOD)		Top	50.04
		Base	49.37			Base	49.27
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
-	Layer	White (10R 8/1) compact concrete, with very frequent modern building material inclusions.	> 7.8	> 2.1	0.20		
-	Layer	Very dark grey (10YR 3/1) loose clayey silt with rare sub-rounded flint inclusions.	> 7.8	> 2.1	0.20		
-	Layer	Dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) sticky silty clay.	> 7.8	> 2.1	0.30		
-	Layer	Yellow (10YR 7/8) firm sandy silty clay with moderate sub-angular flint inclusions.	> 7.8	> 2.1	> 0.10		

2.9 The stratigraphy in Trench 1 revealed 0.2m of modern overburden. This comprised a concrete yard surface overlaying a levelling layer of mixed modern building material.

2.10 Below this was a layer, 0.2m thick of very dark grey clayey silt topsoil, which overlay a dark greyish brown silty clay subsoil, 0.3m thick over yellow sandy silty clay natural, 0.1m thick.

2.11 A sondage to investigate the nature of the natural, was excavated to a depth of 0.4m below the final trench level at its southern end (Plate 1).

2.12 No archaeological features, finds or deposits were revealed in Trench 1.

3 Discussion

Archaeological Background

3.1 The study area is located in a well-defined archaeological landscape within one of the foci of medieval settlement that formed the village of Stotfold (HER 17162). There is evidence for activity in the area dating from the Prehistoric period onwards.

3.2 A visit was made to the Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record (HER) on 30 January 2014, in order to establish the archaeological and historical context for the site. The overview set out below has been drawn from the HER, and covers a radius of 500m from the centre of the site. The information has been collated by period:

- Crop marks indicating occupation from the prehistoric period have been identified on aerial photographs in the fields to the south and east of the village. These include a linear feature, with abutting sub-rectangular enclosures (HER 16832) to the south of Stotfold, over 500m to the south-east.
- An area of cropmarks to the northeast of the present site (HER 16829) was investigated in 2003 and 2006 (EBD 350 / 363) and produced evidence for a prehistoric cremation cemetery, period undefined, and a number of flint implements of Neolithic to Bronze Age date (Edmondson & Wells 2003; Wessex Archaeology 2006).
- Recent archaeological investigations to the south of Stotfold have revealed an area of activity which started in the middle Bronze Age and continued into the middle Iron Age (Albion Archaeology 2011). Features of this period were concentrated to the south of Mulberry Close, approximately 520m to the SSW.
- Significant evidence for Iron Age activity has been identified during archaeological investigations in the immediate vicinity of the present site. A small settlement, possibly established at the end of the early Iron Age, was identified on the land to the northeast of the study area during archaeological investigations in 2003 and 2006 (HER16829 & EBD 350 / 363). The settlement comprised a rectangular ditched enclosure with a central roundhouse (Wessex Archaeology 2006).
- Evidence for late Iron Age occupation has also been recorded from the immediate vicinity of the study area. In the late Iron Age the land to the northeast of the study area was divided by a series of field ditches and a possible droveway. Some of these ditches respected the earlier enclosure, indicating that this was still present in the landscape.
- Archaeological investigations to the south of Baldock Road have found further evidence for late Iron Age settlement (HER 74 & EBD 51 / 449 / 188 / 970). A burial complex, containing high status cremation burials and secondary inhumations, was revealed during investigations in 1994-5, ahead of the construction of the Arlesey – Stotfold Bypass (EBD 449 / 188). Evidence for an associated settlement was also encountered. Investigations off Groveland Way (EBD 51), immediately to the north-east of the previous site, also revealed substantial boundary ditches of late Iron Age date (Turner & Ashworth 1997).
- Archaeological remains of Saxon and medieval settlement have been found at a number of sites within Stotfold. On the south side of the High Street (approximately

80 metres to the south of the proposed development site) archaeological investigation in advance of development has found an extensive and apparently short lived Saxo-Norman settlement (HER 19534 and Albion Archaeology 2011). Other remains of Saxo-Norman settlement have been found at Queen Street (HER 16829 and Wessex Archaeology 2006) and evidence of early Saxon settlement has been found at Grovelands Way (HER 74 and Steadman and Thomas 1998).

- Current thinking on the development of the medieval village (HER 17162) suggests that Stotfold grew as a polyfocal settlement, in common with many other villages in the vicinity, with foci on the church and manor, on Brook End, and on Stotfold Green.
- In 2011, on land to the rear of 73a High Street, two large pits dating to the 12th/13th century were recorded. The datable artefacts comprised pottery sherds, most of which showed signs of sooting on the outside suggesting domestic use (Albion Archaeology 2011). The site is located approximately 46m to the north of the proposed development site.
- To the north-east, at St Mary's Lower School, archaeological investigations have found remains of late 12th to 15th and 16th century occupation (Simco 1976 and Foard-Colby 2010). The School is also surrounded by earthwork remains of medieval settlement including house platforms and ridge and furrow (HER 759).
- In April 2013, a trial trench evaluation in the grounds of the Old Vicarage, to the north-east of the development site, produced evidence for further medieval settlement activity, including pits, ditches and postholes containing 12th to 15th century pottery (ASC 2013 – unapproved report).
- The medieval parish church of St. Mary lies to the north-east of the proposed development site (HER 1132). St Mary's Church has its origins in the 12th century, although an earlier Saxon church on the same site cannot be ruled out. Between the 13th and the 15th centuries the north and south aisles, the south porch and the west tower were all added, with the 12th century nave and chancel being reworked in the 14th and 15th centuries. The chancel was subsequently rebuilt in 1890.
- Nine listed buildings are recorded within a 500m radius of the present site. None are located in close proximity. Apart from the parish church of St Mary the Virgin (HER 1132), which is Grade II* and is the only medieval building remaining in the village, all are Grade II listed.
- Two of the listed buildings are known to be of 17th century date. These are Stotfold Bury (HER 2243) and The Chequers Public House on Queen Street (HER 13655). Stotfold Mill House and Mill Cottage (HER 13653) together appear to form an early 19th century building encasing an earlier structure of probable 17th century date. Two others are of 18th century date, comprising a pair of cottages at 10 Queen Street (HER 2246) and 45 Rook Tree Lane (HER 2247). The remainder are of 19th century date, including Stotfold Mill (HER2612) which is of early 19th century date, the former school on Church Street (HER 2250), which was built in 1808, and the vicarage (HER 2248), which was built in the early 1830s.

Research aims

3.3 On the basis of the known archaeology in the immediate vicinity it appears that the present site lies towards the southern periphery of Prehistoric, Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement, and within one of the foci of the medieval village.

3.4 The aims of the investigation 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 (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Oake *et al* 2007, Medlycott & Brown 2008, Medlycott 2011);
- to provide sufficient information to advise the planning application for the development of the site, and ensure that an appropriate strategy for the mitigation of damage or destruction of any such remains is adopted should it get consent;

3.5 The present site has provided an opportunity to investigate the southern limits of the village, and had the potential to contribute to a number of research topics highlighted in the published local research agenda (Oake *et al*, 2007), including:

- gaining a greater understanding of patterns of settlement nucleation and dispersal;
- the investigation of landscape development and settlement patterns;
- the investigation of time lags in the adoption of trends between areas;
- gaining a greater understanding of post-Roman stratigraphic levels, and the reasons for a settlement shift in the medieval period;
- gaining a greater understanding of early medieval settlement, the agrarian economy and land use changes;
- gaining a greater understanding of the origin and development of medieval villages in Bedfordshire;
- gaining understanding of the development of rural settlement in the county in the post-medieval period;
- characterising regional variation

Collected Data

3.6 The excavation of the trial trench revealed a modern levelling layer for the existing yard surface. This overlay a buried topsoil, subsoil and natural.

3.7 No significant features, deposits or finds were encountered in the trench.

Conclusions

3.8 Although the site lies in an area of high archaeological potential, no evidence of prehistoric, Roman, Saxon or medieval activity was revealed during the investigation.

3.9 On the basis of the results of the evaluation, the risks that the proposed development might disturb archaeological remains of any significance may be considered as *Low* for all periods.

Confidence Rating

3.10 In the course of the trial trenching programme, the weather, ground and light conditions were acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation. On this basis, there are no circumstances that would lead to a confidence rating for this stage of the project that was less than *High*.

4 Sources Consulted

Archaeology Data Service : <http://www.ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue>

Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record

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Page, W 1908 *The Victoria History of the County of Bedfordshire: Volume 2*.

5 Illustrations

Figure 1 Site location

Figure 2 Trench Layout

Plate 1 Trench 1, showing sondage, looking north

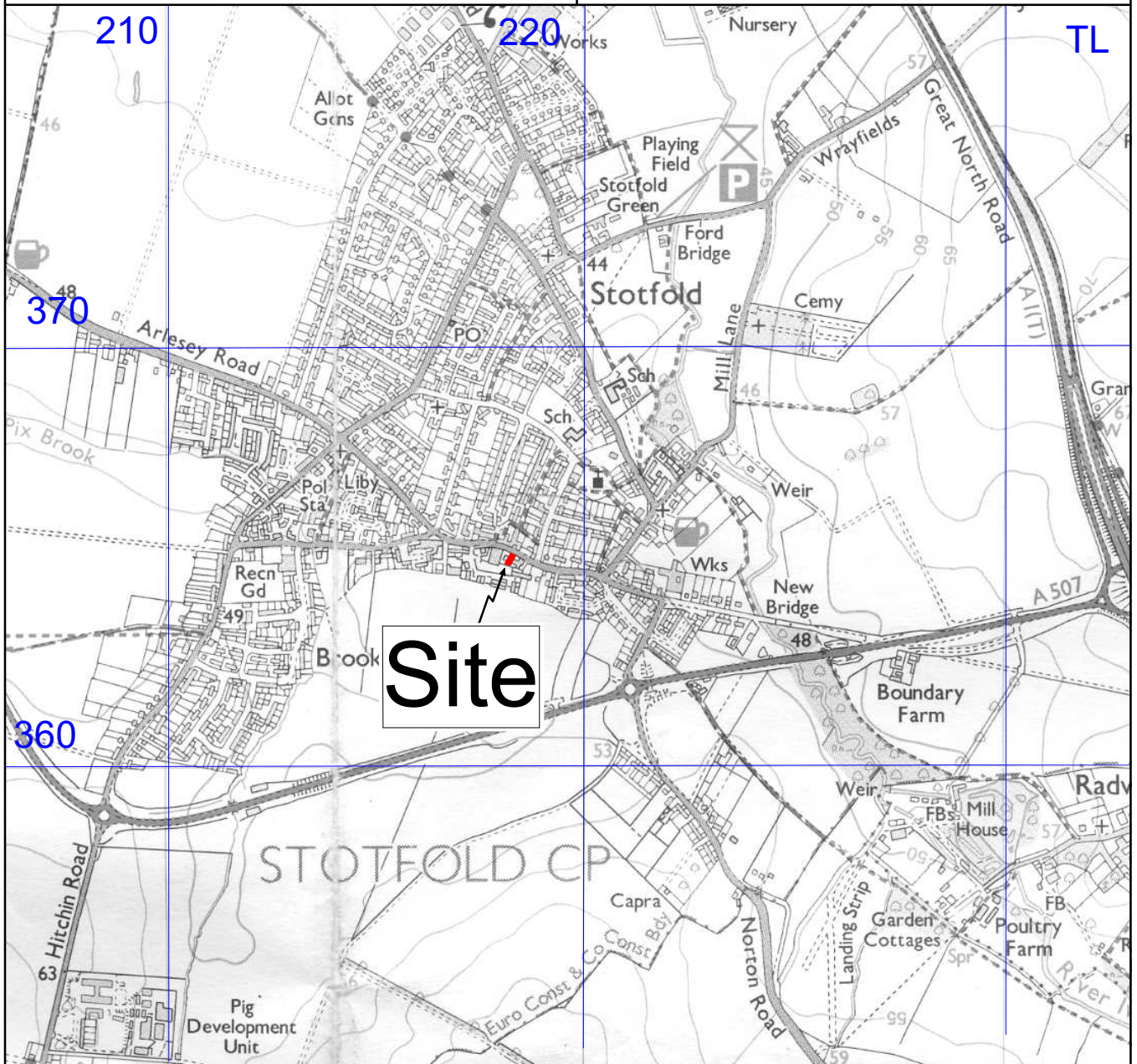
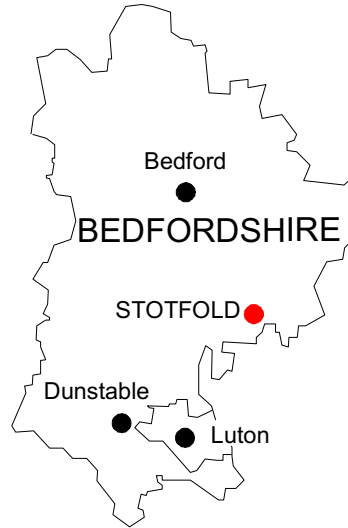
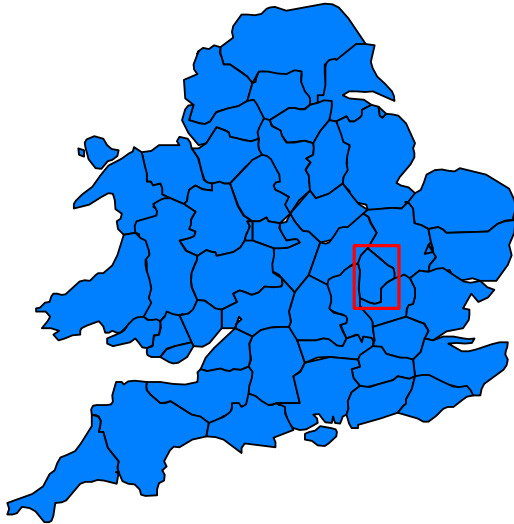
Plate 2 Tr.1 section, looking south

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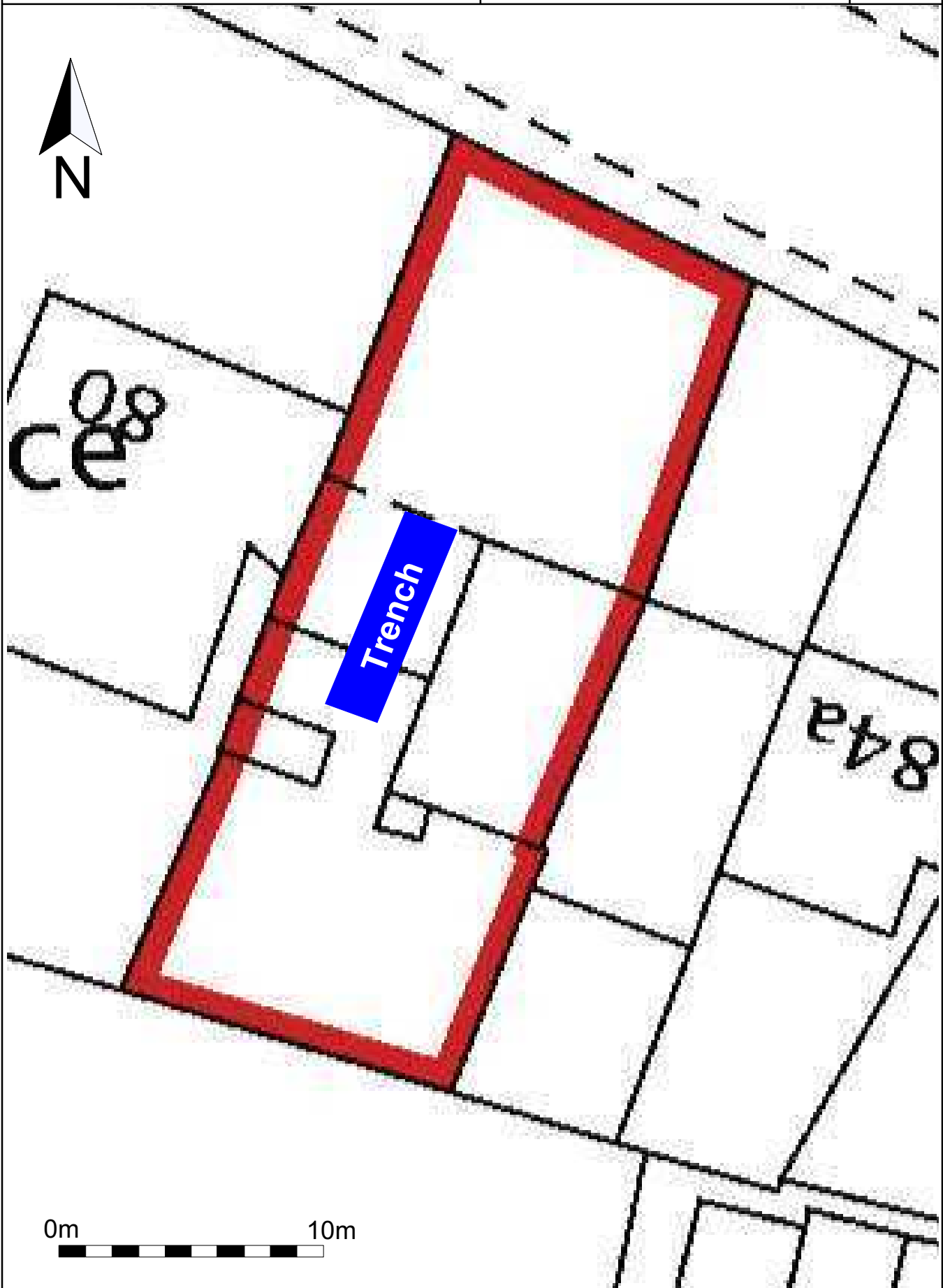


Site Location

Scale 1: 5000

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Figure 1



Site Layout

Scale 1:200

Figure 2



Plate 1: Trench 1, showing sondage, looking north.



Plate 2: Trench 1, looking south.

Appendix

Oasis Summary Sheet

OASIS ID: HERITAGE1-169136	
Project details	
Project name	Stotfold, 82 High Street
Short description of the project	In order to investigate the archaeological potential of a proposed new development located at 82 High Street, Stotfold, Bedfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the owners to undertake a programme of targeted trial trenching. One trial trench was excavated across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling. This revealed a mixed levelling layer below the existing concrete yard surface. This overburden overlay a sequence of buried topsoil, subsoil, and natural. No features, deposits or finds were encountered in the trench and, on this basis, the risks that the proposed development might disturb archaeological remains of any significance may be considered to be <i>Low</i> for all periods.
Project dates	Start: 04-03-2014 End: 04-03-2014
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HN1117 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	""Targeted Trenches""
Development type	Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	Pre-application
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	BEDFORDSHIRE MID BEDFORDSHIRE STOTFOLD 82 High Street
Postcode	SG5 4LD
Study area	16.38 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 21816 36491 52.0130236536 -0.224808738323 52 00 46 N 000 13 29 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 50.00m Max: 50.00m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Greg Jones
Project director/manager	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	Daniel Phillips
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No

Digital Archive recipient	Bedford Museum
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Bedford Museum
Paper Media available	"Diary", "Drawing", "Photograph", "Report"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	82 High Street, Stotfold, Bedfordshire.
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Phillips, D.
Other bibliographic details	Report No 853
Date	2014
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth Garden City
Description	A4 booklet green cover comb bound 11 Pages, 2 figures, 2 plates
Entered by	Daniel Phillips (dp@heritagenetwork.co.uk)
Entered on	21 March 2014