

HERITAGE NETWORK

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**Land r/o
34 BALDOCK ROAD
Stotfold, Beds.**

HN1131

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION REPORT***

HERITAGE NETWORK

Registered with the Institute for Archaeologists

Managing Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

Land to the r/o
34 BALDOCK ROAD
Stotfold, Bedfordshire

Project ref.: HN1131
Accession no.: BEDFM 2014.28
LPA ref.: CB/14/000158

Archaeological Evaluation

Prepared on behalf of Mr D Smith

by

Daniel Phillips, BA (HONS)

Report no.861

April 2014

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The cover illustration shows the site looking north

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Daniel Phillips and Mark Sycamore. 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 Mr D Smith, Laura Watson of EHW architects, and Martin Oake and Hannah Firth from Central Bedfordshire County Council (CBC), for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Land at r/o 34 Baldock Road, Stotfold, Bedfordshire		
County:	Bedfordshire	District:	Central Bedfordshire
Village/town:	Stotfold	Parish:	Stotfold
Planning reference:	CB/14/000158	NGR:	TL 22330 36425
Client name and address:	Derek Smith, 34 Baldock Road, Stotfold, Bedfordshire, SG5 4PB		
Nature of work:	Residential	Current land use:	Garden
Site Status:	None	Reason for investigation:	Pre-validation investigation
Position in planning process:	Pre-application	Project brief originator:	n/a
Size of affected area:	20 m ²	Size of area investigated:	20m ²
Site code:	HN1131	HER ref.:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Trial trenching	Archive Recipient:	Bedford Museum
Start of work:	08/04/2014	Finish of work:	08/04/2014
Related HER nos:	n/a	Periods represented	None
OASIS UID:	heritage1-176165	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	None		
Physical archive:	None		
Previous summaries/reports:	<i>Land to r/o 34 Baldock Road, Stotfold: Heritage Asset Assessment. HN report no.819</i>		

Synopsis:

In order to investigate the archaeological potential of a proposed new development located on land to the rear of 34 Baldock Road, Stotfold, Bedfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the owner to undertake a programme of targeted trial trenching.

Two trial trenches were excavated across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling and access. Both trenches were located in the rear garden of 34 Baldock Road. They revealed a layer of topsoil, overlying subsoil, and then the undisturbed natural substrate. 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 EHW architects, to cover a programme of archaeological work carried out in support of a planning application for a residential development on land at the rear of 34 Baldock Road, 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. A *Heritage Asset Assessment* (Ashworth 2013) has already been submitted to the LPA and this has resulted in a request from CBC's Archaeology Team (AT) for the desk-based research to be supplemented by the results of a field evaluation. The extent of the information required has been agreed in discussion with the AT, and a specification for the work is contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design* dated March 2014.

1.3 The property is located towards the southern edge of the village and the study area forms a rectangular shaped plot on the northern side of Baldock Road, centred at NGR TL 22330 36425. It is bounded to the north by no.18 Prince Harry Close, to the west by the garden of no.32 Baldock Road, to the east by the garden of no.36 Baldock Road, and to the south by no.34 Baldock Road.

1.4 The development proposes the construction of a new detached dwelling with associated services and access.

2 Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The study area is located on the northern side of Baldock Road (Figure 2), which lies 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 Two trial trenches were 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 1.5-tonne tracked mini-digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The trench was machined to the first significant archaeological horizon, to the natural geological horizon, or to the maximum possible safe depth, as appropriate. 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. Where the natural or archaeological horizon could not be reached by machine a sondage was excavated to examine these layers.

2.8 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

2.9 Trench 1 was located in the southern half of the site, across the proposed new car parking and access, and to the north of the existing house (Plate 1). The trench, which was oriented approximately northwest - southeast, measured 5m in length and 2m in width, and was machine excavated to a maximum depth of c. 0.6m. A sondage was excavated in the south-east corner to the trench (Plate 1) to confirm the nature of the natural substrate.

2.10 Trench data:

Length (m):	5.0	Width (m):	2.0		Maximum Depth (m):	0.6	Orientation	NW-SE	
Level at NW End of Trench (mOD)			Top	47.62	Level at SE End of Trench (mOD)			Top	46.56
			Base	46.96				Base	46.99
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)			Length	Width	Depth	
-	Layer	Very dark brown (10YR 2/2) loose silty sandy clay with rare sub-angular flint and root activity				>5.0	>2.0	0.25	
-	Layer	Dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/4) friable silty sandy clay with occasional sub-angular flint and root activity				>5.0	>2.0	0.2	
-	Layer	Brownish yellow (10YR 6/6) loose sandy clay with frequent gravel				>5.0	>2.0	>0.15	

2.11 The stratigraphy in Trench 1 revealed a layer, 0.25m thick of very dark brown silty sandy clay topsoil, which overlay a dark yellowish brown silty sandy clay subsoil, 0.2m thick over the brownish yellow sandy clay natural (Plate 3).

2.12 A sondage to investigate and confirm the nature of the natural, was excavated to a depth of 0.4m below the base of the trench at its southeastern end (Plate 1).

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

Trench 2

2.14 Trench 2 was located in the northern half of the site, across the proposed new building footprint and to the north of Trench 1 (Plate 2). The trench, which was oriented approximately northeast - southwest, measured 5m in length and 2m in width, and was machine excavated to a maximum depth of c. 0.9m.

2.15 Trench data:

Length (m):	5.0	Width (m):	2.0		Maximum Depth (m):	0.9	Orientation	NE-SW	
Level at NE End of Trench (mOD)			Top	47.64	Level at SW End of Trench (mOD)			Top	47.67
			Base	46.75				Base	46.80
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)						
			Length	Width	Depth				
-	Layer	Very dark brown (10YR 2/2) loose silty sandy clay with rare sub-angular flint and root activity	>5.0	>2.0	0.3				
-	Layer	Dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/4) friable silty sandy clay with occasional sub-angular flint and root activity	>5.0	>2.0	0.3				
-	Layer	Brownish yellow (10YR 6/6) loose sandy clay with frequent gravel and Grey (10YR 6/1) sticky silty clay with occasional chalk fragments	>5.0	>2.0	>0.3				

2.16 The stratigraphy in Trench 2 revealed a layer, 0.3m thick of very dark brown silty sandy clay topsoil, which overlay a dark yellowish brown silty sandy clay subsoil, 0.3m thick, over the brownish yellow sandy clay natural (Plate 3).

2.17 No archaeological features, finds or deposits were revealed in Trench 2.

3 Discussion

Archaeological Background

3.1 The Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record (HER) lists all documented heritage assets within the Central Bedfordshire and Luton Borough administrative districts, including evidence of archaeological activity, ranging from chance finds to full-scale excavations. The accumulated evidence shows that the study area lies in a significant archaeological landscape.

3.2 The HER has been consulted for a 500m radius from the site centre (Figure 1). The recorded entries have been listed in chronological order.

3.3 Evidence for Mesolithic activity, in the form of worked flints (HER 16834 / 18959), was recorded during field walking surveys in an area of known cropmarks to the south of Stotfold cemetery, approximately 400m to the north-east. A number of flakes and cores, including some of early Mesolithic date, were collected during the surveys.

3.4 Evidence for late prehistoric activity, in the form of flint implements and pottery sherds, has been recovered from archaeological investigations to the north and south of the present site. These include flint implements recovered during the field walking surveys to the south of Stotfold cemetery (HER 16834 / 18959), approximately 400m to the north-east and pottery sherds from features encountered during trial trenching off Groveland Way (EBD 51; Turner & Ashworth 1997).

3.5 A series of cropmarks indicating occupation at this period have also 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, while cropmarks indicating a possible rectilinear enclosure (HER 16834) are known to the south of the cemetery, approximately 400m to the north-east.

3.6 An area of cropmarks immediately to the north 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).

3.7 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.

3.8 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 in the land immediately to the north 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).

3.9 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).

3.10 The accumulated evidence indicates that permanent occupation in the immediate vicinity of the study area started in the early Iron Age and continued into the late Iron Age. By this period it appears to have consisted of a spread of occupation sites, possibly small rural farmsteads, extending to the north and south of Baldock Road.

3.11 The late Iron Age settlement continued in occupation throughout the Roman period. Features and finds of Roman date have been recorded on sites to the north and south of the study area. At Groveland Way (EBD 51) the north – south alignment of the late Iron Age ditches appears to have been superseded by a new north-east to south-west alignment, which persists to the present day (Turner & Ashworth 1997). To the north of the study area (EBD 350 / 363) Roman activity, which was concentrated in the south-eastern corner of the field, immediately to the north of the present site, appeared to represent an extensive enclosure system (Edmondson & Wells 2003; Wessex Archaeology 2006). Significant amounts of Roman pottery were recovered dumped in the ditch fills, suggesting habitation nearby.

3.12 The line of the A1 trunk road, to the east of Stotfold, follows the course of a Roman road. The settlement to the south and east of Stotfold appears to have been abandoned at the end of the Roman period, but seems to have been reoccupied in the late Saxon period. Saxo-Norman features and finds have been recorded on all sites to the north and south of Baldock Road and to the south of High Streethich linked the settlements at Baldock and Sandy.

3.13 Evidence for occupation of late Saxon / early medieval date was encountered immediately to the north of the present site. The settlement was characterised by enclosure ditches, pits and a post-built structure (Edmondsson & Wells 2003; Wessex Archaeology 2006). Small-scale industrial activities, including metal and bone working, were also taking place in this area.

3.14 The core of the medieval village (HER 17162) is located to the north and north-west of the late Saxon / early medieval settlement recorded in archaeological investigations to the south and east of the present village. This possibly indicates a shift of settlement to focus around the church and manor.

3.15 The parish church of St Mary the Virgin (HER 1132) is located at the northern end of the modern village, and has 12th century origins. The site of the medieval manor of Stotfold may lie in the vicinity of Stotfold Bury (HER 2243), to the north-west of the church

3.16 Medieval earthworks, representing a house platform and ridge and furrow cultivation (HER 759), are known from a site at Rook Tree Lane, approximately 500m to the north-west. Excavations ahead of the construction of St Mary's Lower School in 1975 revealed features associated with the rear boundary of the house, including pits and yard surfaces. Finds recovered from the site indicate occupation between the late 12th and 16th centuries.

3.17 Mapping evidence indicates that the present site lay in open fields to the east of the village in the post-medieval period. Evidence for post-medieval field boundaries was recorded during the archaeological fieldwork to the north of the study area. The Victoria County

History refers to much of the parish as consisting of arable land, with small amounts of grassland and woodland (VCH 1908).

Research aims

3.18 On the basis of the known archaeology in the immediate vicinity it appears that the present site lies within a Prehistoric, Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement landscape, and to the south-east of one of the foci of the medieval village.

3.19 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;

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

- the reconstruction of the environment and ecology of the Neolithic and early Bronze Age, the identification and investigation of settlement sites and field systems, the further investigation into burial practices and closer dating of local ceramic series;
- the reconstruction of the environment and ecology of the Neolithic and early Bronze Age, the identification and investigation of settlement sites and field systems, the further investigation into burial practices and closer dating of local ceramic series;
- further study of the Roman period landscape, looking at road infrastructure and rural landscape settlement patterns;
- gaining a greater understanding of the transition from Roman to Anglo-Saxon, of post-Roman stratigraphic levels, and of the reasons for settlement shift in the medieval period;
- 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

3.21 The excavation of the trial trenches revealed layers of topsoil and subsoil over the natural substrate.

3.22 No significant features, deposits or finds were encountered on the site.

Conclusions

3.23 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.

3.24 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

3.25 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

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5 Illustrations

Figure 1 Site location

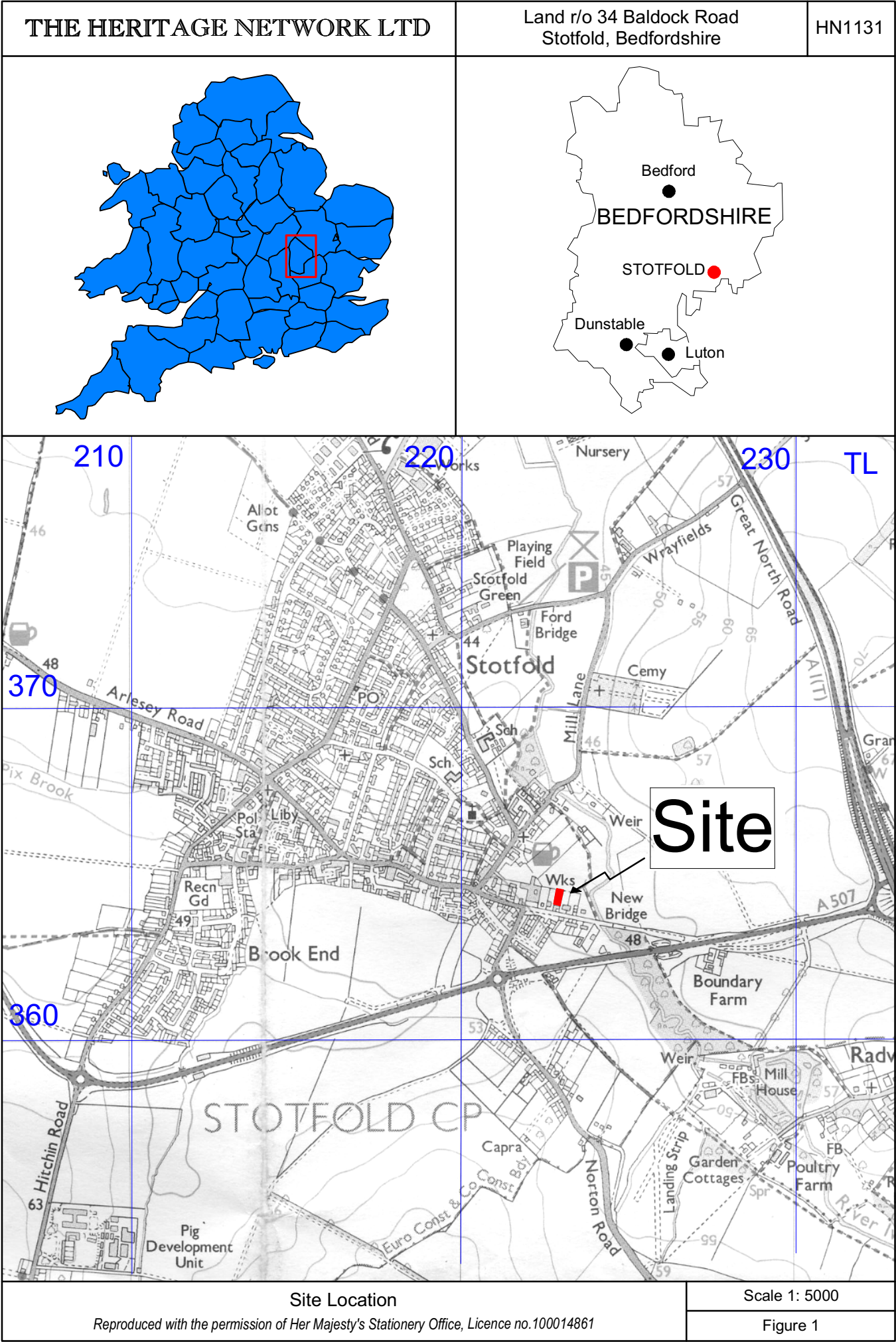
Figure 2 Trench Layout

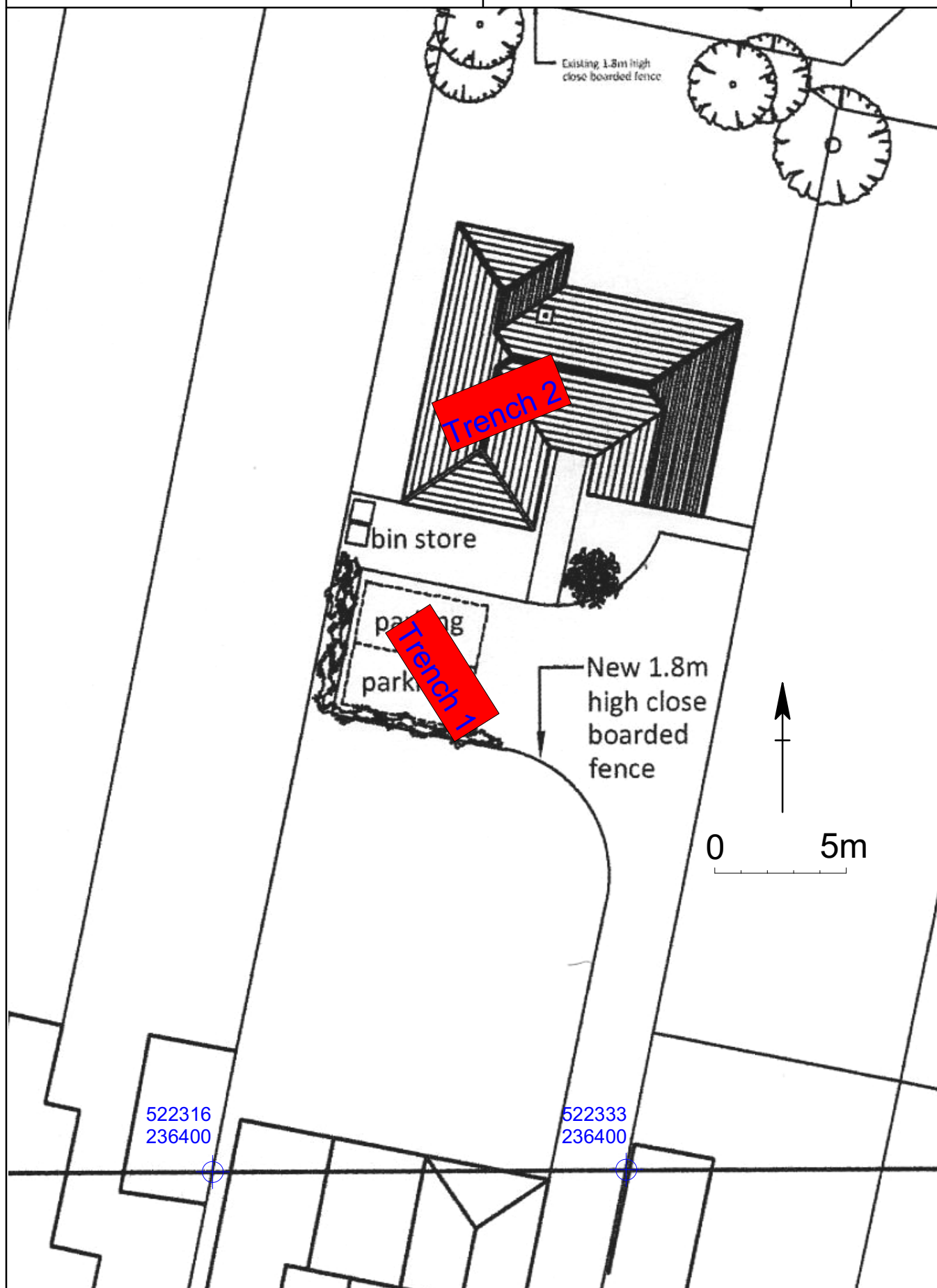
Plate 1 Trench 1, showing sondage, looking northwest

Plate 2 Trench 2, looking northeast

Plate 2 Indicative section, showing stratigraphy

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Site Layout

Scale 1:200

Figure 2



Plate 1: Trench 1, showing sondage, looking northwest



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking northeast



Plate 3: Indicative section, showing stratigraphy

Appendix

Oasis Summary Sheet

OASIS ID: heritage1-176165	
Project details	
Project name	Stotfold, land r/o 34 Baldock Road
Short description of the project	In order to investigate the archaeological potential of a proposed new development located on land to the rear of 34 Baldock Road, Stotfold, Bedfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the owner to undertake a programme of targeted trial trenching. Two trial trenches were excavated across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling and access. Both trenches were located in the rear garden of 34 Baldock Road. They revealed a layer of topsoil, overlying subsoil, and then the undisturbed natural substrate. 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.
Project dates	Start: 08-04-2014 End: 08-04-2014
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HN1131 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Part Excavation"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	BEDFORDSHIRE MID BEDFORDSHIRE STOTFOLD land r/o 34 Baldock Road
Postcode	SG5 4PB
Study area	20.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 22330 36425 52.012317206 -0.217345845608 52 00 44 N 000 13 02 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 49.57m Max: 49.57m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief originator	None
Project design originator	Daniel Phillips
Project director/manager	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	Daniel Phillips
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	Land r/o 34 Baldock Road, Stotfold, Bedfordshire
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Phillips, D.
Other bibliographic details	Report No 861
Date	2014
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth Garden City
Description	A4 booklet green cover bound 11 Pages, 2 Figures, 3 Plates
Entered by	Daniel Phillips (dp@heritagenetwork.co.uk)
Entered on	11 April 2014