

Joseph Rochford Gardens, Old Coach Road, Birch Green, Herts.

HN1139

Report No. 897

Site name and address:	Joseph Rochford Gardens, Old Coach Road, Birch Green, Herts, SG14 2LN		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	Hertford
Village/town:	Birch Green	Parish:	Hertingfordbury
Planning reference:	3/12/1235/FP	NGR:	TL 2957 1169
Client name and address:	Joseph Rochford Gardens Ltd, Joseph Rochford Gardens, Old Coach Road, Birch Green, Herts, SG14 2LN		
Nature of work:	New polytunnel	Present land use:	Uncultivated
Site Status:	AAS No. 228	Reason for investigation:	Direction of local planning authority (NPPF)
Position in planning process:	Post-determination (as a condition)	Project brief originator:	None
Size of affected area:	5000m ²	Size of area investigated:	5000m ²
Site Code:	HN1139	HER reference:	57/14
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.	Observation and Recording	Archive Recipient:	Hertford Museum
Start of work	20/10/2014	Finish of work	22/10/2014
Related HER Nos:	HER 7694	Periods represented:	Modern
Oasis UID:	heritage1-180096	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	None		
Physical archive:	None		
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Narrative:

This report has been prepared at the request of the Joseph Rochford Gardens Ltd, to complete a scheme of archaeological work carried out as part of a programme of development at Joseph Rochford Gardens, Old Coach Road, Birch Green, Herts, SG14 2LN. Planning permission for the installation of a new polytunnel (ref: 3/12/1235/FP), was granted by East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC) subject to an archaeological condition issued in line with the Department of Communities and Local Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The Joseph Rochford Gardens lies to the south of Old Coach Road in the northwest corner of Birch Green village, to the east of Hertingfordbury School and centred on NGR TL 2957 1169 (Figure 1). The site lies within Area of Archaeological Significance No. 228, which includes a series of undated cropmarks, a trackway and probable field boundaries.

The study area comprises a former ploughed field, which had subsequently been used to deposit subsoil extracted during the development of other areas of the site as a nursery. This redeposited subsoil, a brownish yellow (10YR 6/6) sticky clay, contained occasional brick, tile, glass and metal debris. It was observed across the entire site to a depth of approximately 0.4m (Plates 1 & 2).

The groundworks consisted of a series of post-pits, excavated using a tracked 360-degree excavator with an auguring attachment. The pits, which were to accommodate concrete footings for the arched spine of the polytunnel, were evenly spaced in rows across the entire plot. The distance between each pit was 4m, with each row c.10m apart (Figure 2). Each pit was 0.65m in diameter and was excavated to an approximate depth of 0.7m.

Due to the number of augured holes across the plot, which amounted to over 140, and to the observed level of overburden encountered above the buried plough soil, a sampling methodology was adopted, with the approval of the Historic Environment Team of Hertfordshire County Council. In this case, while every hole was

inspected visually, including the spoil from each, only every third pit around the perimeter and a small number in the centre, was fully recorded.

A total of 32 augured holes were recorded across the site (Figure 2), including 9 along the north side (Plates 3-5), 7 along the south side (Plates 6-8), 7 along the east side, 5 along the west side and 4 across the centre (Plates 9-11). Each pit revealed a similar stratigraphy, comprising c.0.4m of redeposited brownish yellow (10YR 6/6) sticky clay, with occasional brick, tile, glass and metal debris, above c.0.2m of dark grey (10YR 4/1) loose silty sandy clay ploughsoil with occasional small rounded pebbles (Figure 3). This overlay a brownish yellow (10YR 6/6) sticky clay subsoil, >0.1m thick, with occasional gravel. The underlying natural sand and gravel was not reached in any of the pits.

Discussion:

While the present site lies within Area of Archaeological Significance No. 228, which includes cropmarks of part of a rectilinear ditch system (HER 7694), due to the quantity of overburden spread across the site and the depth of the auguring, no archaeological horizons were observed.

The investigation has concluded that the concrete footings for the new polytunnel will not impact upon any archaeology and that any archaeological features, finds or deposits will be preserved in situ.

Illustrations:

Figure 1 Site Location
Figure 2 Site Layout
Figure 3 Indicative section

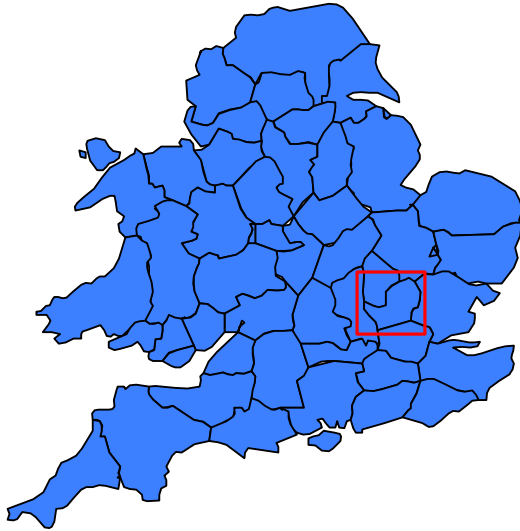
Plate 1 Overburden height from original ground level; East end of site, looking N.
Plate 2 Overburden height from original ground level; East end of site, looking S.
Plate 3 Augured hole, north side, looking S.
Plate 4 Augured hole, north side, looking S.
Plate 5 Augured hole, north side, looking S.
Plate 6 Augured hole, south side, looking N.
Plate 7 Augured hole, south side, looking N.
Plate 8 Augured hole, south side, looking N.
Plate 9 Augured hole, middle, looking N
Plate 10 Augured hole, middle, looking N
Plate 11 Augured hole, middle, looking N

Daniel Phillips BA
November 2014

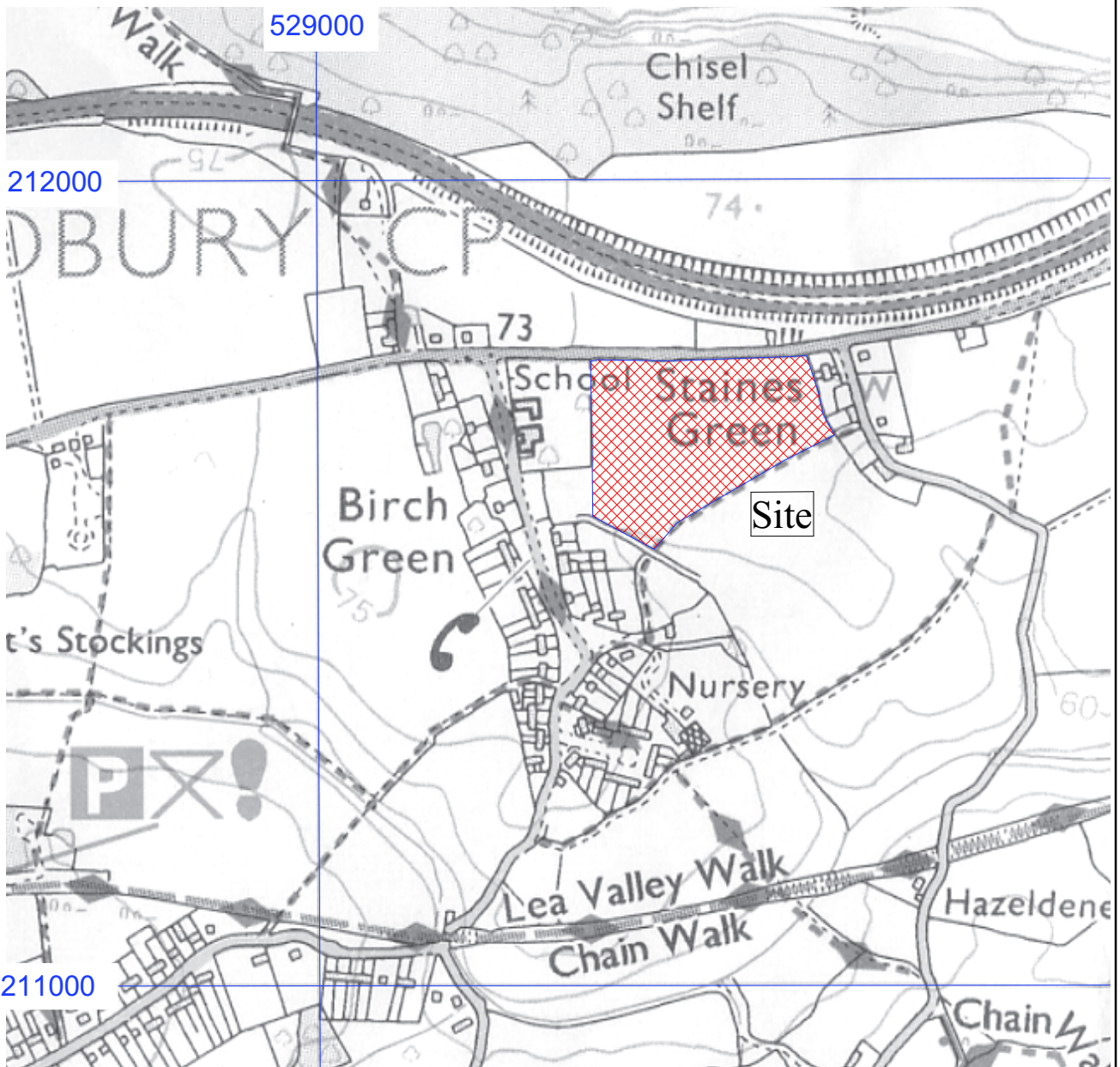
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The Old Coach Road, Birch Green, Herts.

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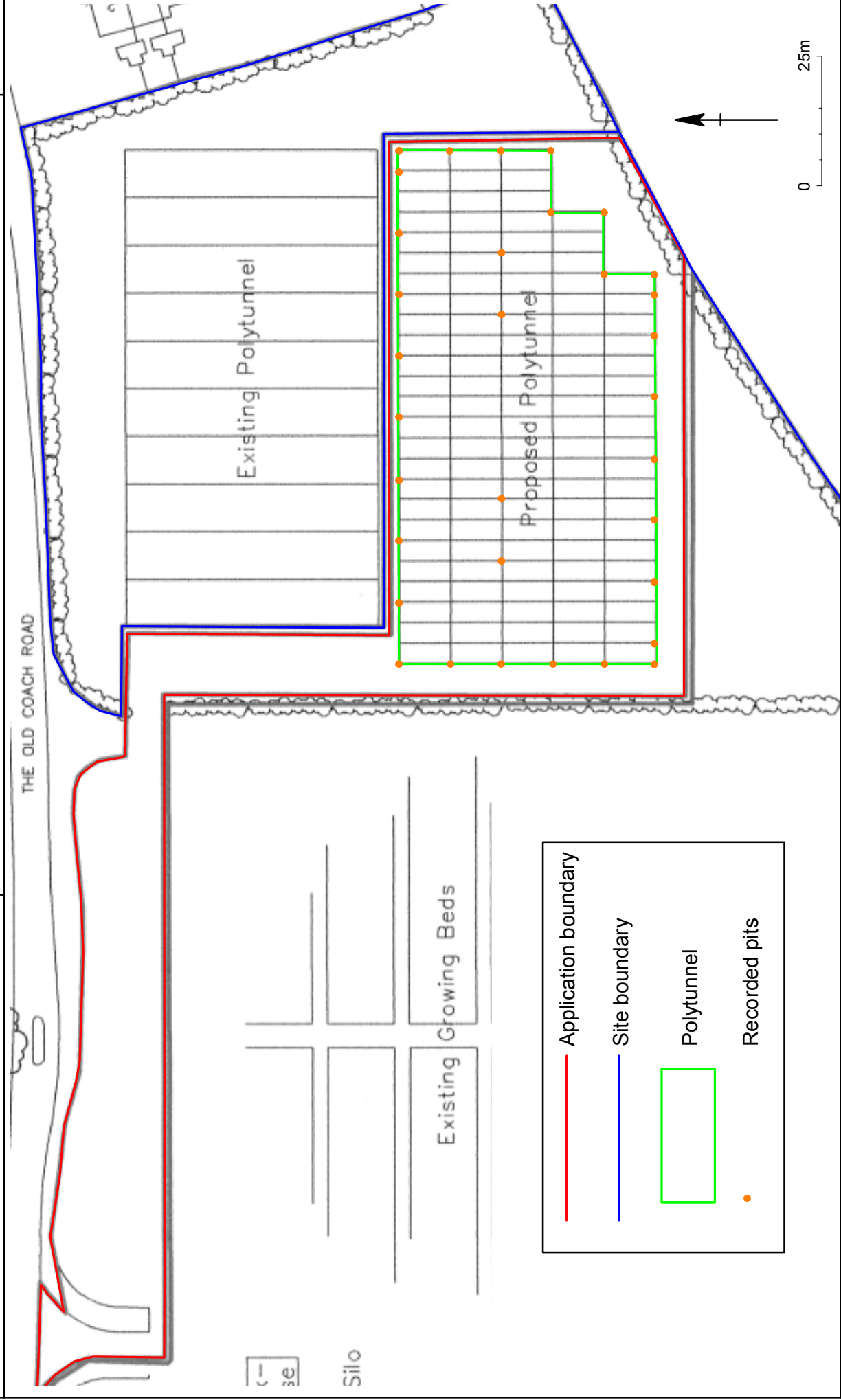


Site Location

Scale 1:10000

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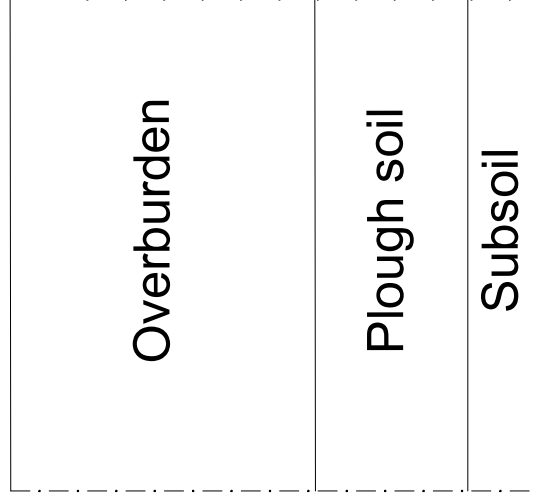
Figure 1



Site Layout

Scale 1:1000

Figure 2



Indicative Section



Plate 1: Overburden height from original ground level; East end of site, looking north.



Plate 2: Overburden height from original ground level; East end of site, looking south.



Plate 3: Augured hole, north side, looking south.



Plate 4: Augured hole, north side, looking south.



Plate 5: Augured hole, north side, looking south.



Plate 6: Augured hole, south side, looking north.



Plate 7: Augured hole, south side, looking north.



Plate 8: Augured hole, south side, looking north.



Plate 9: Augured hole, middle, looking N



Plate 10: Augured hole, middle, looking N



Plate 11: Augured hole, middle, looking N