

HERITAGE NETWORK

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**Land to the rear of 39 SOUTH STREET
Bishops Stortford, Herts**

HN1196

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MONITORING REPORT***

HERITAGE NETWORK

Registered with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Managing Director: David Hillelson, BA MCIFA

Land rear of
39 SOUTH STREET
Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire

Project ref.: HN1196
Planning ref: 3/13/1923/FP
HER enquiry ref: 6/15

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Portland Place Properties plc

by

Daniel Phillips, BA (Hons) ACIFA

Report no. 957

October 2015

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The cover photograph shows the site looking east

Acknowledgements

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

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Portland Place Properties plc; John Briner, J.B Construction Solutions Ltd; John Douglas, Douglas & Warner, architects; David Banks Ltd, civil engineers and Alison Tinniswood, Historic Environment Team, Hertfordshire County Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Land rear of 39 South Street, Riverside Walk, Bishops Stortford, CM23 3AG		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	East Herts
Village/town:	Bishops Stortford	Parish:	Bishops Stortford
Planning reference:	3/13/1923/FP	NGR:	TL 48888 21085
Client name and address:	Portland Place Properties plc, Coach House, Lippitts Hill, Loughton, IG10 4AL		
Nature of work:	Extension to existing building, new shops and dwellings	Former land use:	Building & Public Toilets
Site status:	Archaeological area of significance 114 (AAS114)	Reason for investigation:	Planning Condition (NPPF)
Position in planning process:	As a condition on consent	Project brief originator:	Local authority archaeologist
Size of affected area:	c.577m ²	Size of area investigated:	c.386m ²
Site Code:	HN1196	Site code	N/A
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Monitoring	Archive recipient:	Bishops Stortford Museum
Start of work	14/08/2015	Finish of work	01/10/2015
Related HER Nos:	None	Periods represented:	Roman, Post-Medieval
Oasis UID	heritage1-208083	Significant finds:	Pottery, Brick, Metal, A.bone
Monument types:	Wall		
Physical archive:	Pottery, Brick, Metal, A. bone		
Previous summaries/reports:	N/A		

Synopsis:

In response to a planning condition on the redevelopment of land to the rear of 39 South Street, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developer to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring of the groundworks.

The development involved the demolition of no.39B South Street and an adjacent block of public toilets, and construction of a block of five retail units with flats above. The monitoring programme included ground reduction, and the excavation of ground beams and drainage.

The groundworks demonstrated that ground levels had been built up over the former flood-plain of the river Stort during the post-medieval period. Several layers of material were identified including two layers of redeposited alluvium, Layers (3) and (4), and a mixed dump of material, Layer 2, forming made ground that extended over the entire site and contained post-medieval pottery. The present line of the river Stort lies c.60m to the east of the site, showing the extent of the canalisation of the river from at least the late medieval period onwards.

Two brick structures recorded at the east end of the site are likely to be associated with the 18th or 19th century malthouse lying on the south side of the former Carpenter's Yard, at its eastern end.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of *Portland Place Properties plc*, to cover a programme of archaeological work carried out as part of the redevelopment of land to the rear of 39 South Street, Riverside Walk, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire (Figure 1).

1.2 The planning permission for the development (ref: 3/13/1923/FP) was granted by East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC), subject to an archaeological condition issued under the Department of Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF). The extent of the work required was set out in correspondence from the Historic Environment Team (HET) of Hertfordshire County Council, acting as archaeological adviser to EHDC (ref.: KAT/13/1923-1). This defined the need for a programme of archaeological monitoring of the groundworks associated with the development, followed by appropriate mitigation, if required, analysis of the data recovered and the production of a report. A full specification for the investigation is contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, dated April 2015 (Turner 2015).

1.3 The present site is in the historic core of the town, located in a passageway called 'Riverside Walk' between South Street and Riverside. The study area is centred on TL 48888 21085 and lies c.60m to the west of the River Stort (Figure 1).

1.4 The present development has entailed the demolition of 39B South Street and the adjacent block of public toilets, and construction of a first floor extension to 39 South Street, and five ground floor retail units with six residential dwellings above (Figure 2).

1.5 This report presents the data collected in the course of the archaeological fieldwork, and the conclusions that can be drawn from it. Together with the deposition of the project archive with Bishops Stortford Museum, it completes the process described in the approved Project Design and will allow Condition 3 of the planning consent to be discharged, subject to the agreement of the LPA.

2. Fieldwork

SITE TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The site lies in the centre of Bishops Stortford, on low-lying ground in the flood-plain of the River Stort, which flows c.60m to the east.

2.2 Locally the soils belong to Soilscape 7, described as *freely-draining slightly acid but base-rich soils* (landis.org.uk/soilscapes).

2.3 The site lies at the boundary between superficial deposits consisting of *Glaciofluvial deposits of sand and gravel* to the west, and *Alluvium – Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel* to the east, both formed in the Quaternary Period (British Geological Survey)

2.4 The underlying solid geology consists of chalk of the Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation formed in the Cretaceous Period (ibid.).

METHODOLOGY

2.5 The fieldwork involved a series of site visits to observe the groundworks for the new development. This included ground reduction, ground-beam trenches and a drainage run.

2.6 The excavations were undertaken under supervision, using a tracked 360° tracked excavator, fitted with both toothed and toothless ditching buckets, as required.

2.7 All potential archaeological features and deposits were sampled to ascertain their nature, depth, date, and quality of preservation.

2.8 All identified contexts were photographed and recorded using the appropriate pro-forma. Scaled plans and sections were drawn on pro-forma sheets, at scales of 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10.

2.9 Spoil from the various stages of the groundworks was inspected for archaeological artefacts.

2.10 All recording work was carried out in accordance with the approved Project Design, current health and safety legislation, and both CIFA and ALGAO standards.

MONITORING AND RECORDING

2.11 The monitoring programme on the groundworks for the present project was divided into three phases, which consisted of ground reduction for a piling mat, subsequent excavation for ground-beams and finally drainage.

Ground Reduction

2.12 Ground reduction to accommodate a piling mat was undertaken over the footprints of the five new retail units fronting on Riverside Walk (Figure 3 & 5, Plate 1-3). The area extended from the rear of 39 South Street in the west, to the edge of Riverside in the east, and covered approximately 330m² of the 577m² site.

2.13 The ground reduction revealed a stratigraphic sequence of made ground, up to 0.8m thick (Plate 5), consisting of concrete topped with tarmac overlying mixed deposits of silt, sand and clay with inclusions of flint, gravel, coal, red brick and slate.

- The deepest layer of made ground, Layer (2), consisted of a 0.3m thick deposit of friable dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) silty sand, with frequent sub-angular flint and moderate charcoal, which included a single sherd of 18th/19th century pottery.
- Below this, two layers of redeposited alluvium, Layers (3) and (4), were revealed. Layer (3) consisted of a 0.15m thick deposit of brown (7.5YR 5/3) sticky sandy clay, with occasional charcoal flecks, frequent chalk flecks and occasional sub-angular flint, which included a metal sphere c.10cm in diameter. Layer (4) consisted of a 0.04m thick deposit of dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) friable silty sand, with moderate chalk flecks, occasional sub-angular flint and moderate charcoal flecks, which included a single sherd of 14th/15th century pottery.

2.14 Undisturbed alluvium was revealed beneath the made ground. Layer (5) consisted of a dark olive gray (5YR 3/2), sticky clayey sand, with occasional charcoal flecks and rounded and sub-angular flint, that was in excess of 0.35m thick (Plate 4). Due to the site lying within the former flood-plain of the River Stort, the underlying topography of the site rises to the west. For this reason, Layer 5 was only exposed at the west end of site, the ground reduction further east not breaching the made ground. From within the alluvium, a single heavily abraded fragment of medieval greyware and an animal bone were recovered.

2.15 Excavation for a 2m square test pit at the west end of site (Plate 6), revealed a further deposit sealed by the alluvium. Layer (6) consisted of a 0.21m thick deposit of yellowish-brown (10YR 5/4) sticky clayey sand with rare charcoal flecks and moderate sub-angular gravel.

2.16 At the east end of site, two features were revealed cut into the alluvium, Layer (5). These comprised a red brick foundation, Wall [1], and a brick-built tank.

- Wall [1], which measured 6.5m long by 0.46m wide and was aligned east to west, included a relieving arch at its eastern end, and extended to sixteen courses in height (Plate 7).
- The brick-lined tank (Plate 8), only the top of which was exposed, was circular in plan and constructed of a single skin of red brick. Its opening measured 0.7m in diameter and had an internal depth of 2.86m. The internal space was filled with water.

Ground Beams

2.17 Once the ground reduction had been completed and the piles were in place, ground beam slots were then excavated through the piling mat (Figure 4). These were of varying lengths but all measured 0.6m in width and excavated to a depth of 0.5m (Plate 9).

2.18 The excavation of these demonstrated a continuation of the alluvium, Layer (5), eastwards and extending across the entire site (Plate 10).

Drainage

2.19 A single drainage run was excavated along the front of the new retail units bordering Riverside Walk (Figure 4, Plate 11). This linear trench, orientated east-west, measured 28m in length by 0.4m in width, and 0.5m in depth

2.20 As with the ground beams, this trench was excavated through the piling matt and again revealed the alluvium, Layer (5), across the site.

ARTEFACTS AND ECOFACTS**Finds concordance**

Context	Pottery		Metal		A. Bone		Notes
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
Layer 2	1	260					
Layer 3			1*	3675			*Cannon Ball
Layer 4	1	5					
Layer 5	1	3			1	2	
Totals	3	268	1	3675	1	2	

2.21 The artefact assemblage consisted of three sherds of pottery, a single fragment of animal bone and a spherical metal object.

Pottery

2.22 A total of 3 sherds of pottery, weighing 268g, was recovered from three stratified contexts. The made ground, Layer (2), contained a large base fragment of post-medieval brown-glazed earthenware of 18/19th century date. The redeposited alluvium, Layer (4), contained an abraded sherd of slip-glazed ware of 14/15th century date. The alluvium, Layer (5), contained a heavily abraded sherd of medieval greyware of 12-15th century date.

Recommendations

2.23 This type of material is commonly found on urban sites in Hertfordshire and its location in secondary contexts is of low archaeological significance. On this basis, no further work is proposed on this assemblage and it is recommended that it should be discarded.

Animal Bone

2.24 One small piece of undiagnostic animal bone was recovered from the alluvium, Layer (5), weighing 2g.

Recommendations

2.25 This type of material is commonly found on urban sites in Hertfordshire and its small and fragmentary state means that it is of low archaeological significance. On this basis, no further work is proposed on this material and it is recommended that it should be discarded.

Fe Object

2.26 A large iron sphere, weighing 3675g, was recovered from the redeposited alluvium, Layer (3). The ball, which is heavily corroded, measures approximately 10cm (4") in diameter. It is suggested that this is a 9lb cannon ball, a size that was standard throughout the post-medieval period. It could have been reused as a weight or as ballast.

Recommendations

2.27 This artefact was found in a redeposited context and no evidence was collected regarding its origins or secondary function, if any. No further work is proposed on this and it is recommended that it should be discarded.

3. Discussion

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SETTING

3.1 The present site flanks Riverside Walk, a pedestrian thoroughfare running east-west, connecting South Street and Riverside. The site is located within *Area of Archaeological Significance 114* (AAS114), identified in the Local Plan as the medieval and post-medieval settlement of Bishops Stortford. The River Stort runs 60m to the west.

3.2 In order to establish the archaeological and historical context for the site, the Hertfordshire *Historic Environment Record* (HER) was consulted on 9th April 2015. The overview set out below has been drawn from the HER, our own records and other sources. The study area covers a radius of 250m from the centre of the site.

3.3 The river valley has acted for a focus for archaeological activity from the prehistoric period onwards. The earliest evidence of activity in the vicinity of the site consists of iron spearheads dating from the Anglo-Saxon and Roman periods, found by the railway line on the opposite side of the river, around 230m to the east (HER 2846). A Neolithic polished flint axe was discovered along the river bank in the 19th century (HER 2847). A Bronze Age axe is also thought to have been found in the town (HER 4895).

3.4 Stane Street, a Roman road that follows the original line of the modern A120, crosses present day Bishop's Stortford in a straight line from the Dunmow Road to Braughing, approximately 700m north of the site.

3.5 The crossing of the river Stort, probably continued to be important through the Anglo-Saxon Period, but little evidence remains. A medieval motte and bailey, Waytemore Castle, lies c.400m to the north. During the early medieval period the town became known as *Bishop's Esterteferd*, which was later adapted to the present spelling.

3.6 By the 17th century, the present layout of the town had been broadly established. The town was surrounded by agricultural land, chiefly growing cereal, which led to the development of a malting industry. During the 18th century, the Stort Navigation was constructed and the coming of the railway in the mid-19th century led to the development of Newtown to the west of the site.

3.7 There are thirteen HER records relating to the sites of former maltings within the study area, underlying the importance of the industry to the town during the post-medieval period.

- The sites of three maltings lie close to the eastern end of Riverside Walk (HER 10364-10366), and 19th cartographic evidence shows that Riverside Walk was formerly called Carpenters Yard with buildings occupying the footprints of no.39B and the toilet facilities scheduled to be demolished.
- The only listed building within the study area lies 150m to the north-east and relates to the malting industry. No.8 Dane Street is a Grade II listed, 17th century timber-framed building (listing 160904) that survives to two and a half storeys, with an overhanging sack-hoist on curved brackets.
- A former dock for the export of malt, lies 130m to the south. Swan Wharf was part of a mid- to later 19th century development on previously open ground. It was surrounded by granary buildings associated with malthouses (HER 18247).

- Until 1968 there was a second channel of the river Stort (HER 30730), running along the western edge of the floodplain through the town and into the Hockerill Cut just past the basin at Jackson Square (HER 10776). Part of the historic line of this channel follows the northern half of Riverside, c110m to the north of the site.
- Radiocarbon dating of environmental samples taken from the former course of the river Stort, 100m to the north of the site (HER 13285), suggests that the river cut its present channel during the late Iron Age/Roman period. The upper organic sediments in the sampled peat sequence dated to the late Saxon period, showing that these sediments continued to form on the floodplain by the river.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.8 The aims of the present investigation have been:

- to identify any remains that were liable to be threatened by the development and establish their location, depth, extent, date, character and condition;
- 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, Medlycott 2011);
- to ensure that an appropriate strategy for the mitigation of damage or destruction of such remains by the development was adopted.

3.9 It was considered that the investigation had the potential to contribute to a greater understanding of the origins and development of Bishops Stortford and activity associated with the Stort valley from the prehistoric period onwards. There was considered to be a high likelihood of encountering remains relating to structures associated with the post-medieval malting industry.

COLLECTED DATA

3.10 The stratigraphic sequence recorded during archaeological monitoring on the present site, demonstrated that ground levels had been built up over the former flood-plain of the river Stort during the post-medieval period. Several layers of material were identified including two layers of redeposited alluvium, Layers (3) and (4), and a mixed dump of material forming made ground that extended over the entire site and contained post-medieval pottery.

3.11 Alluvial deposits were identified across the whole site, from the rear of 39 South Street to Riverside, and, at the east end of the site, two brick structures are likely to be associated with the 18th or 19th century malthouse lying on the south side of the former Carpenter's Yard, at its eastern end (Figure 6).

CONCLUSIONS

3.12 It was considered that the present investigation had the potential to contribute to a greater understanding of the origins and development of Bishops Stortford, and particularly activity associated with the Stort valley.

3.13 The monitoring of the groundworks demonstrated a large spread of alluvium, which extended for over 40m from Riverside, across the site to the rear of 39 South Street. The current River Stort lies c.60m to the east, indicating the degree of canalisation of the river from at least the late medieval period onwards.

3.14 The brick built wall foundation revealed at the east end of the site forms part of the range of malshouses to the south (Figure 6). The footprint of the modern buildings on the site incorporates the footprints of two smaller structures, presumably related to the malshouses. The brick tank may also relate to one of the malshouses in the immediate vicinity.

3.15 No artefacts, features or deposits dating from earlier than the late medieval period were encountered in the course of this project.

Confidence Rating

3.16 Conditions on site were generally acceptable for the identification and recording of any potential archaeological remains, and as such there are no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than *High*.

4. Schedule of site visits

Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
14/08/15	RGD	11	Pre-start meeting, monitoring geotechnical test pits
17/08/15	RGD	11	Monitoring ground reduction
18/08/15	RGD	8	Monitoring ground reduction
19/08/15	RGD	8	Monitoring ground reduction
20/08/15	RGD	8	Monitoring ground reduction
21/08/15	RGD	9	Monitoring ground reduction
24/08/15	RGD	11	Monitoring ground reduction
26/08/15	RGD	9	Monitoring ground reduction
10/09/15	DRP	3	Inspection visit on ground beams
11/09/15	DRP	3	Inspection visit on ground beams
15/09/15	DRP	2	Site meeting
16/09/15	DRP	2	Inspection visit on ground beams
17/09/15	DRP	2	Inspection visit on ground beams
30/09/15	DRP	6	Monitoring or drainage
01/10/15	DRP	3	Inspection visit on drainage

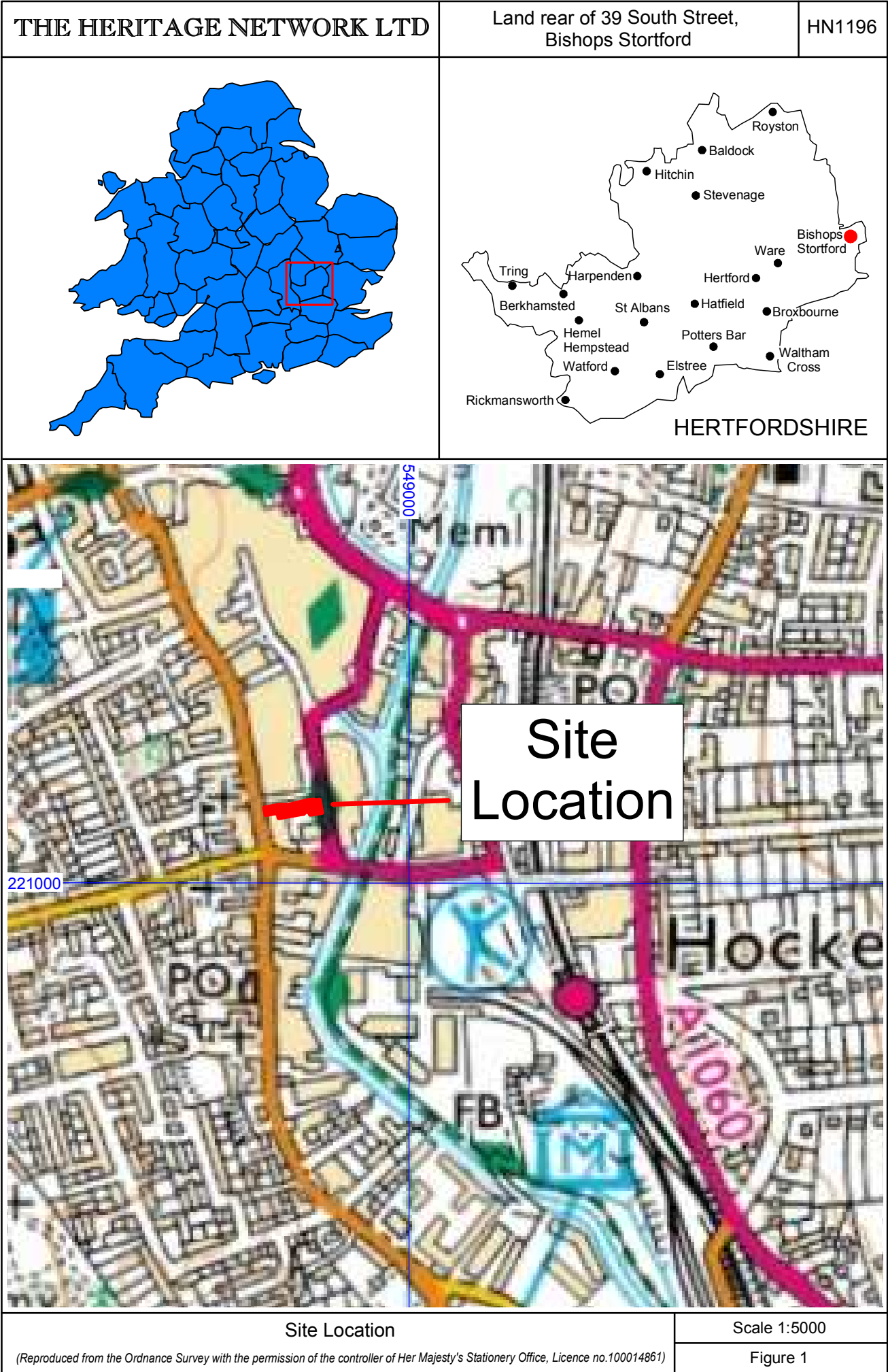
5. Bibliography

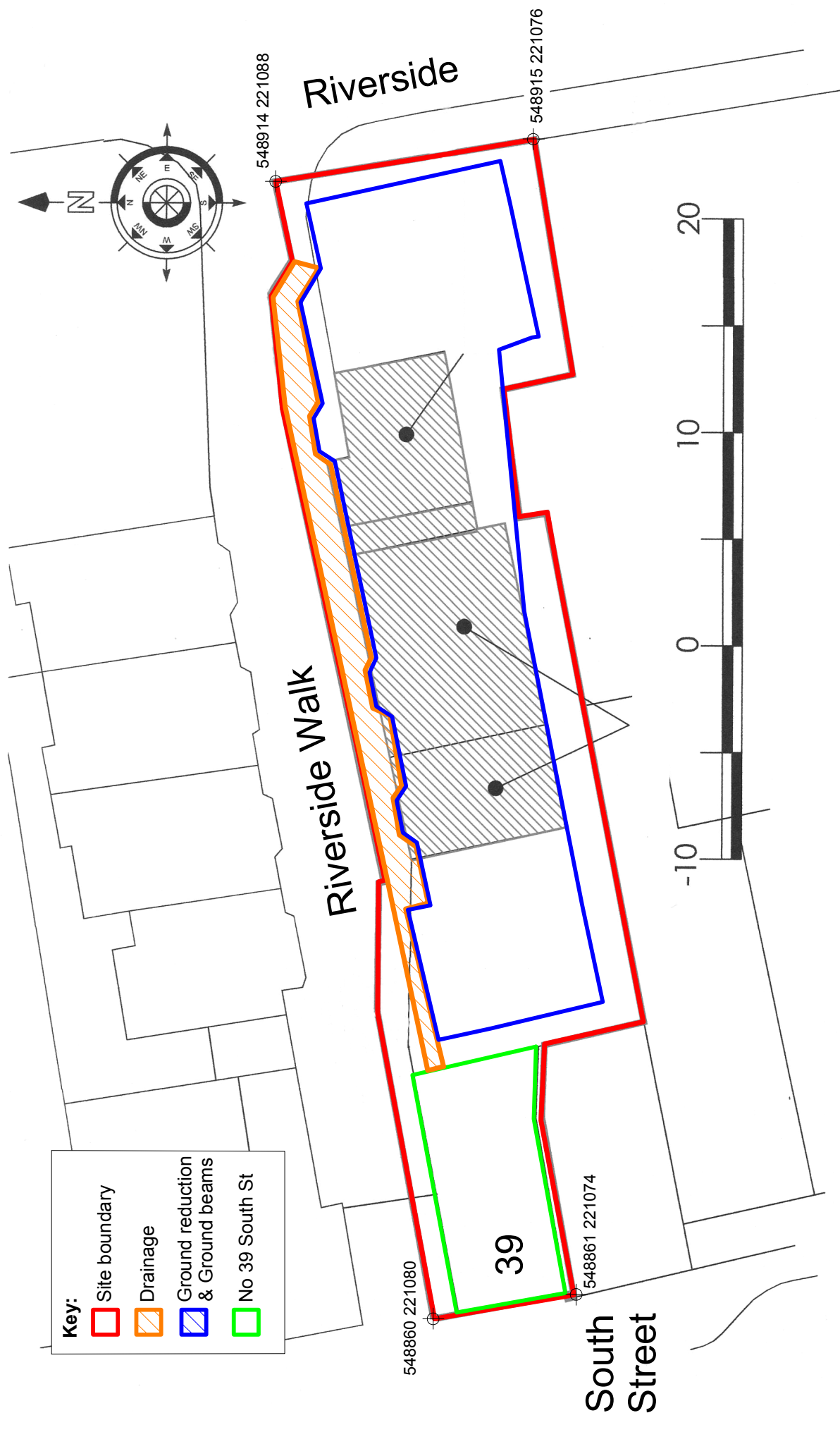
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6. Illustrations

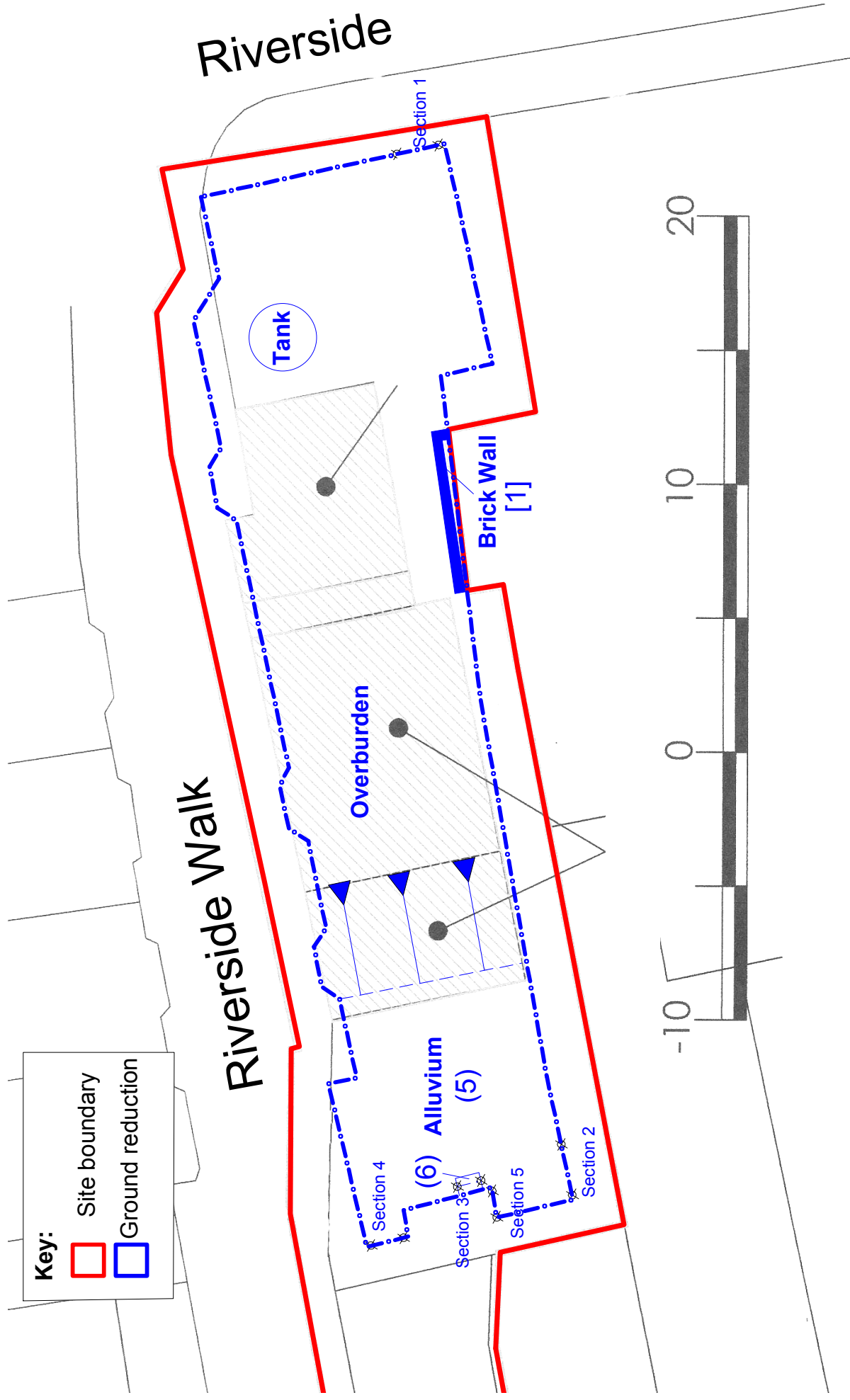
Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	Site layout
Figure 3	Ground reduction
Figure 4	Ground beams and drainage
Figure 5	Sections
Figure 6	1 st edition Ordnance Survey, 1879-91
Plate 1.....	View of site prior to ground reduction, looking W
Plate 2.....	View of ground reduction, looking W
Plate 3.....	Ground reduction, showing alluvium in base of trench, looking W
Plate 4.....	Reduced ground, looking W
Plate 5.....	Section through made ground, looking SE
Plate 6.....	Test pit, showing deposit (6), looking S
Plate 7.....	Brick wall [1], looking S
Plate 8.....	Brick tank, looking S
Plate 9.....	Ground beam trenches, west end of site, looking W
Plate 10.....	Ground beam trenches, east end of site, looking SE
Plate 11.....	Drainage run, looking E

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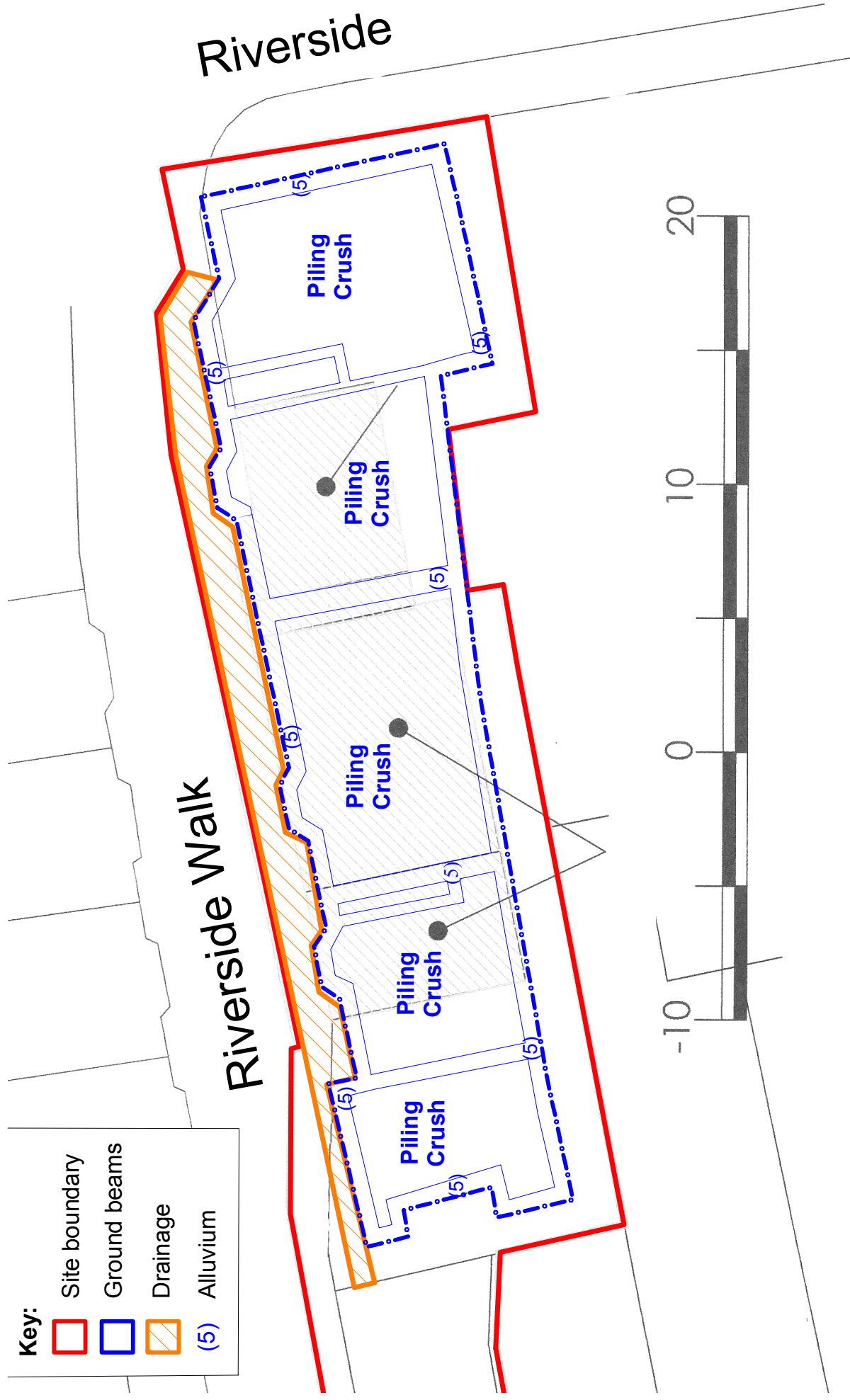
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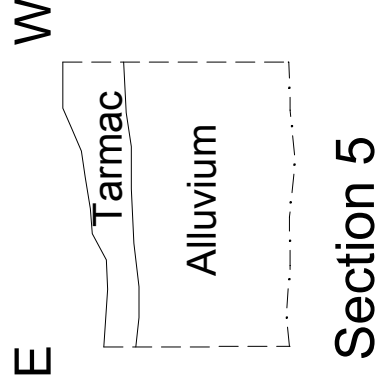
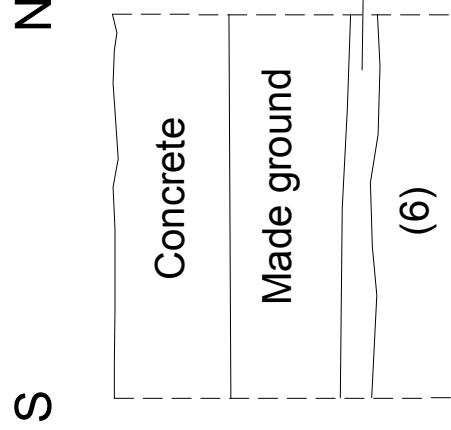
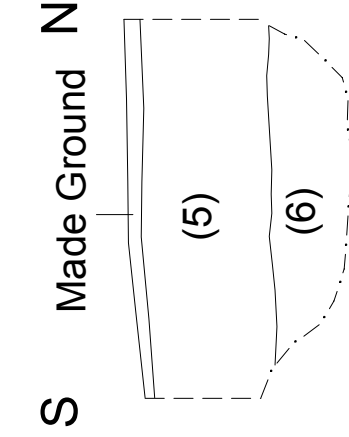
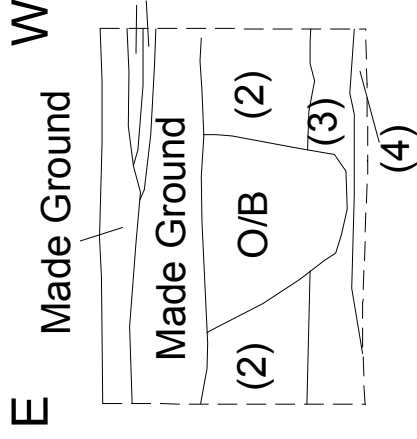
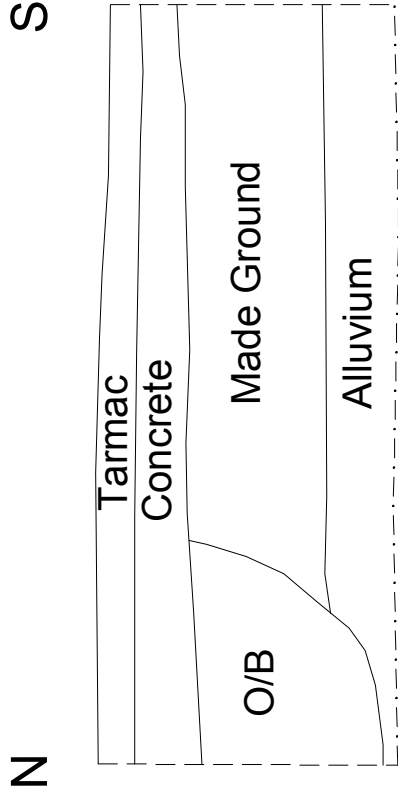
Ground reduction

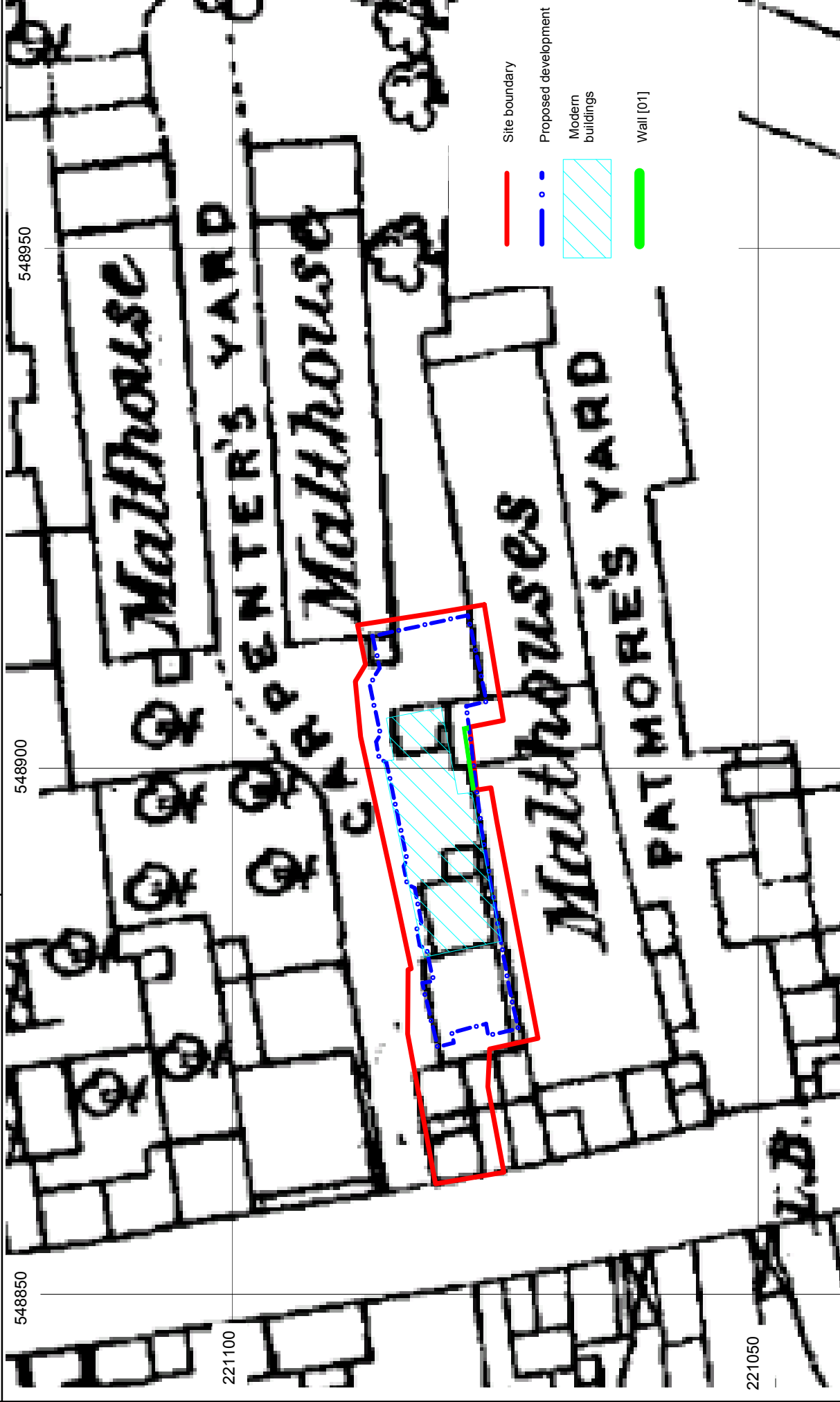
Scale 1:200

Figure 3



Ground beams and drainage





Modern site overlaid on 1st edition OS map, 1879-1891

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Scale 1:500

Figure 6



Plate 1: View of site prior to ground reduction, looking west



Plate 2: View of ground reduction, looking west



Plate 3: Ground reduction, showing alluvium in base of trench, looking west



Plate 4: Reduced ground, showing depth of excavation and alluvium spread, looking west



Plate 5: Section through made ground, looking south-east



Plate 6: Test Pit, showing deposit (6), looking south



Plate 7: Brick wall [1], looking south



Plate 8: Brick tank, looking south



Plate 9: Ground beam trenches, west end of site, looking west



Plate 10: Ground beam trenches, east end of site, looking south-east



Plate 11: Drainage run, looking east

Appendix 1

OASIS Data form

OASIS ID: heritage1-208083	
Project details	
Project name	Bishops Stortford, Land r/o 39 South Street, Hertfordshire
Short description of the project	<p>In response to a planning condition on the redevelopment of land to the rear of 39 South Street, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developer to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring of the groundworks.</p> <p>The development involved the demolition of no.39B South Street and an adjacent block of public toilets, and construction of a block of five retail units with flats above. The monitoring programme included ground reduction, and the excavation of ground beams and drainage.</p> <p>The groundworks demonstrated that ground levels had been built up over the former flood-plain of the river Stort during the post-medieval period. Several layers of material were identified including two layers of redeposited alluvium, Layers (3) and (4), and a mixed dump of material, Layer 2, forming made ground that extended over the entire site and contained post-medieval pottery. The present line of the river Stort lies c.60m to the east of the site, showing the extent of the canalisation of the river from at least the late medieval period onwards.</p> <p>Two brick structures recorded at the east end of the site are likely to be associated with the 18th or 19th century malthouse lying on the south side of the former Carpenter's Yard, at its eastern end.</p>
Project dates	Start: 14-08-2015 End: 01-10-2015
Prev./future work	No / Not known
Associated project reference codes	HN1196 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Monument type	WALL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Uncertain
Significant Finds	BRICK Post Medieval
Significant Finds	METAL Uncertain
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE EAST HERTFORDSHIRE BISHOPS STORTFORD Land at Riverside Walk (r/o 39 South Street)
Postcode	CM23 3AG
Study area	577 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 48888 21085 51.867977467841 0.162756894629 51 52 04 N 000 09 45 E Point

Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief originator	None
Project design originator	Chris Turner
Project director/manager	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	Daniel Phillips
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Bishops Stortford Museum
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones", "Ceramics", "Metal"
Digital Archive recipient	Bishops Stortford Museum
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Bishops Stortford Museum
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Diary", "Drawing", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land rear of 39 South Street, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Phillips, D. / Hillelson, D.
Other bibliographic details	Report No 957
Date	2015
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth Garden City
Description	A4 booklet green cover comb bound 12 Text pages, 6 Figures, 11 Plates