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**STUD FARM
56 Station Road,
Stanbridge, Beds.**

HN1218

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION REPORT***

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HERITAGE NETWORK

Registered with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Managing Director: David Hillelson, BA MCIfA

STUD FARM
56 Station Road
Stanbridge, Bedfordshire

Project ref.: HN1218
LPA ref.: CB/14/04383/FULL
Museum ref.: LTNMG 1155

Archaeological Evaluation

Prepared on behalf of A.G Bunker and Sons

by

Mark Sycamore, BA

Report no. 965

October 2015

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The front cover shows the site, looking north-west

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Greg Jones and Mark Sycamore. The finds assessment was undertaken by Helen Ashworth and the report text and illustrations were compiled by Mark Sycamore and Daniel Phillips. The report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Gary Worth, Worth Planning and Design; Lawrence Bunker, A.G Bunker and Sons; and, Martin Oake, Archaeology Team, Central Bedfordshire Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Stud Farm, 56 Station Road, Stanbridge, Bedfordshire. LU7 9JF		
County:	Bedfordshire	District:	Central Bedfordshire
Village/town:	Stanbridge	Parish:	Stanbridge
Planning reference:	CB/14/04383/FULL	NGR:	SP 9655 2380
Client name and address:	AG Bunker & Sons, Old House, Stud Farm, 56 Station Road, Stanbridge, LU7 9JF		
Nature of work:	Rural residential	Current land use:	Garden
Site Status:	None	Reason for investigation:	Direction of local planning authority (NPPF)
Position in planning process:	After full determination (as a condition)	Project brief originator:	Local Authority
Size of affected area:	c. 550m ²	Size of area investigated:	30m ²
Site code:	HN1218	Museum entry no.:	LTNMG 1155
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc...	Field evaluation	Archive recipient:	Luton Museum
Start of work:	27/10/2015	Finish of work:	27/10/2015
Related HER nos:	n/a	Periods represented:	Unknown, Prehistoric
OASIS UID:	heritage1-219010	Significant finds:	Pot, Flint, Fe nail, tile
Monument types:	Ditch		
Physical archive:	Pot, Flint, Fe nail, tile		
Previous summaries/reports:	None		

Synopsis:

As the result of a condition placed on the planning consent for a proposed new development on land at Stud Farm, 56 Station Road, Stanbridge, Bedfordshire, and in order to characterise the archaeological potential of the site, the Heritage Network was commissioned to undertake a field evaluation.

One trial trench was excavated across the site. This exposed a single feature, a linear ditch possibly prehistoric in date. No other archaeological features were encountered on the site.

On the basis of the results of the evaluation, the risk that the proposed development might have a negative impact on remains of archaeological significance may be considered to be *High* for the prehistoric and *Low* for all other periods.

1 Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of A.G Bunker and Sons, as part of a programme of archaeological work undertaken to meet the requirements of a condition on planning consent for residential development on land at Stud Farm, 56 Station Road, Stanbridge, Bedfordshire (ref: CB/14/04383/FULL).

1.2 Stud Farm lies on the south-western edge of the historic core of Stanbridge. The development site consists of a rectangular plot within the grounds of the farm, fronting Station Road and centred at NGR SP 96555 23795.

1.3 The aim of the evaluation has been to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any remains that might be threatened by the development, and to provide a local and regional, archaeological and historical context for them, in accordance with the current published regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Oake et al 2007, Medlycott 2011), should they be discovered. On the basis of a Heritage Asset Assessment for the site submitted with the planning application (Collins 2014), it was considered that such investigation had the potential to identify archaeological deposits which might contribute to an understanding of the origins and development of Stanbridge from the prehistoric period onwards.

1.4 The present report is intended to provide the planning authority with sufficient information about the archaeological potential of the site and the impacts of the proposed development, to allow it to decide what further measures may be required, if any, to mitigate those impacts when the development proceeds.

2 Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 Stud Farm is located on the south-western edge of the historic core of Stanbridge, on the west side of Station Road. The site lies on a gentle, south facing slope at c.98mAOD. To the south of Stanbridge, the ground drops into a slight valley formed by the tributary of the River Ouzel.

2.2 Locally the soils belong to the Hanslope Association (3411d), described as:

Slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils. Some slowly permeable non-calcarous clayey soils. Slight risk of water erosion (SSEW 1983).

2.3 The underlying geology consists of Gault Formation Mudstone, a Sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 100 – 112 million years ago (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 Cifa and ALGAO guidance documents.

2.5 The overburden was removed, under close supervision, to the first significant archaeological horizon using a wheeled JCB excavator fitted with a 1.5m wide toothless bucket.

2.6 Spoil from the machining was scanned for archaeological artefacts both visually and using a metal detector.

2.7 The exposed area was cleaned by hand, and 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 drafting film at scales of 1:10 and 1:20.

RESULTS

2.9 A single trial trench was excavated across the site. This was surveyed in relation to fixed points defined in a topographical survey of the site and referenced to the Ordnance Survey National Grid (Figure 2).

Trench 1

2.10 Trench 1 was located in the central area of the site, and was orientated approximately north-east to south-west (Figure 2). It measured 15m in length, 2m in width and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m.

Recorded Data

Length (m):	15	Width (m):	2	Maximum Depth (m):	0.5	Orientation	NE-SW
Level at NE End of Trench (mOD)		Top	98.32	Level at SW End of Trench (mOD)		Top	98.11
		Base	97.80			Base	97.66
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
-	Layer	10YR 8/1 Very dark grey, friable silty sandy clay	> 15	> 2	0.35		
-	Layer	GLE Y1 7/1 Light greenish grey, soft clay subsoil	> 15	> 2	0.05		
[101]	Cut	U-shaped linear cut ditch	>5	0.5	0.12		
(102)	Fill	GLE Y1 7/1 Light greenish grey	>5	0.5	0.12		
-	Layer	GLE Y1 8/1 Yellow friable clayey sand natural	> 15	> 2	> 0.1		

2.11 The stratigraphy in Trench 1 comprised c.0.50m of topsoil, a friable very dark grey (10YR 8/1) silty sandy clay, overlying c.0.05m of soft light greenish grey (GLE Y1 7/1) clay subsoil with occasional small chalk, sealing the natural substrate of friable greenish grey (GLE Y1 8/1) slightly chalky clay.

2.12 A linear ditch [101] crossed the trench on an approximately north-south alignment. It contained a single fill (102) that is likely to have formed as the result of natural silting once the feature went out of use. Two finds were recovered from the fill, a small sherd of undated pottery and a piece of prehistoric flint debitage. The feature is shallow and sealed by the topsoil.

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

FINDS ASSESSMENT

Finds Concordance

Context	Pottery		Flint		Fe nail		Tile	
	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)
Trench 1 Unstratified	-	-	-	-	1	10	1	25
Ditch [101]	1	1	1	3	-	-	-	-
Totals	1	1	1	3	1	10	1	25

Pottery

2.14 A single sherd, weighing 1g, was recovered from ditch fill (102). The sherd is small and very abraded.

2.15 Due to its small size and abraded nature it is not possible to date this sherd

Conclusions

2.16 The condition of the sherd suggests it is residual.

Recommendations

2.17 Given the small size of the pottery assemblage, its uncertain provenance, and its abraded condition, no further work is proposed on this material.

Flint

2.18 A single struck flint, weighing 3g, was recovered from ditch fill (102). It is a fragment of debitage dating to between the later Neolithic and early Iron age (c.2800-400BC).

Recommendations

2.19 Given the fragmentary and undiagnostic nature of the material, no further work is proposed on this assemblage.

Fe nail

2.20 A single Fe nail, weighing 10g, was recovered unstratified from Trench 1. It is hand made with a round head and a rectangular shank and is likely to be 19th century in date.

Recommendations

2.21 Given the late date and unstratified location of this item, no further work is proposed.

Tile

2.22 A single piece of tile, weighing 25g, was recovered unstratified from Trench 1. It was in poor condition. No further identification was possible.

Recommendations

2.23 Given the fragmentary and undiagnostic nature of this item, and its unstratified location, no further work is proposed.

3 Discussion

Archaeological Background

3.1 The study area lies on level ground, at approximately 98mAOD, it is bounded by Station road to the east, private residences to the north and south and by the rest of the Stud farm to the west. It is currently garden land in front of the farmhouse.

3.2 In order to establish the archaeological and historical context for the site, a Heritage Asset Assessment (HAA) was prepared (Collins 2014) and submitted to the LPA with the planning application for the present development. The HAA included consultation with the Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record (HER), and the overview set out below draws on the HAA, our own records and other sources. The study area covers a radius of 500m from the centre of the site.

- There is very little evidence of activity close to the site prior to the medieval period. Three Romano-British coins have been found on the western and northern sides of the village (HER 19076, 19080 & 19181) within the study area.
- The first documentary reference to Stanbridge is in the 12th century; however, it is likely that the settlement had its origins in the Anglo-Saxon period. The settlement was not recorded in the Domesday Book as it formed part of the Royal Manor of Leighton Buzzard at that time.
- The earliest medieval settlement developed along what is now known as Tilsworth Road, approximately 500m to the north of the site, at the southern foot of the scarp formed by the Totternhoe-Hockliffe clay hills. The protective position afforded by the scarp, and its associated springs, provided a focus for settlement.
- Later in the medieval period large areas of woodland to the south were cleared to form a large green, with the common fields to the west (HER 10951). Station Road forms the western boundary of the green. Stud Farm lies at the south-western corner of the historic green.
- Stud Farmhouse is shown on a map of the Pre-Enclosure Landscape in the late 1830s (Collins 2014, Figure 1). The close within which the farmhouse and farmyard is situated, appears to mark the southern extent of the medieval closes on this side of the village green, with the former common land defined by surviving ridge and furrow earthworks behind the farm and wrapping around the southern end of the close. The close is unusual for being set back from the road frontage and green (HER 10951), possibly as a later enclosure of the common field, known as Nauldwick Field. The present site appears to fall within the gap between the close and the green.
- The Ordnance Survey map of 1880 (Collins 2014, Figure 5) shows a driveway linking Stud Farm to the road frontage. The present site lies on the north side of this driveway, and appears to have been used for the cultivation of plums (Collins 2014, 18), possibly falling out of cultivation by 1901.

Research Design

3.3 The aim of the present evaluation has been to consider the location, depth, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any remains that might be threatened by the development, and to provide a local and regional, archaeological and historical context for them, in accordance with the current published regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Oake *et al* 2007, Medlycott 2011), should they have been

discovered, and to ensure that an appropriate strategy for the mitigation of damage or destruction of such remains by the development was adopted.

3.4 The present site has provided an opportunity to investigate the development of Stanbridge in the medieval period, and was considered likely to preserve remains from the prehistoric period onwards. The site was also considered to have 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 Anglo-Saxon settlement;
- 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

3.5 The present evaluation revealed the remains of a ditch, containing a single very small sherd of highly abraded pottery that is undateable. A single fragment of prehistoric flint debitage was also recovered. The ditch was sealed by topsoil, which is believed to have been imported onto the site early in the 20th century, after the land stopped being used for the cultivation of plums (Lawrence Bunker, pers.com.). It does not match any modern alignments (i.e. those of Station Road or nearby field boundaries) and is not shown on old maps of the site. It is considered likely to form an earlier land division, which may be prehistoric in origin. There is no indication of nearby settlement activity associated with the ditch.

Impact Assessment

3.6 On the basis of the results of the evaluation, the risk that the proposed development might have a negative impact on remains of archaeological significance may be considered to be *high* for the prehistoric and *low* for all other periods.

3.7 The lack of evidence for prehistoric activity in the vicinity means that this feature may be of some local significance. No evidence for nearby settlement or occupation activity was recovered from the ditch, however, though the recorded remains are likely to have been truncated by later agricultural activity on the site.

3.8 This feature is likely to be damaged or destroyed by construction groundworks, where it crosses the site. If required, such impact could be mitigated through a programme of archaeological monitoring, undertaken with the aim of recovering additional evidence to establish the date and function of the ditch.

Confidence Rating

3.9 During the course of the fieldwork, the conditions were acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation. As such the confidence rating for the work may be considered to be *High*.

4 Sources Consulted

- Brown, N. & J. Glazebrook (ed.) 2000 *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research Agenda and Strategy*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 8
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5 Illustrations

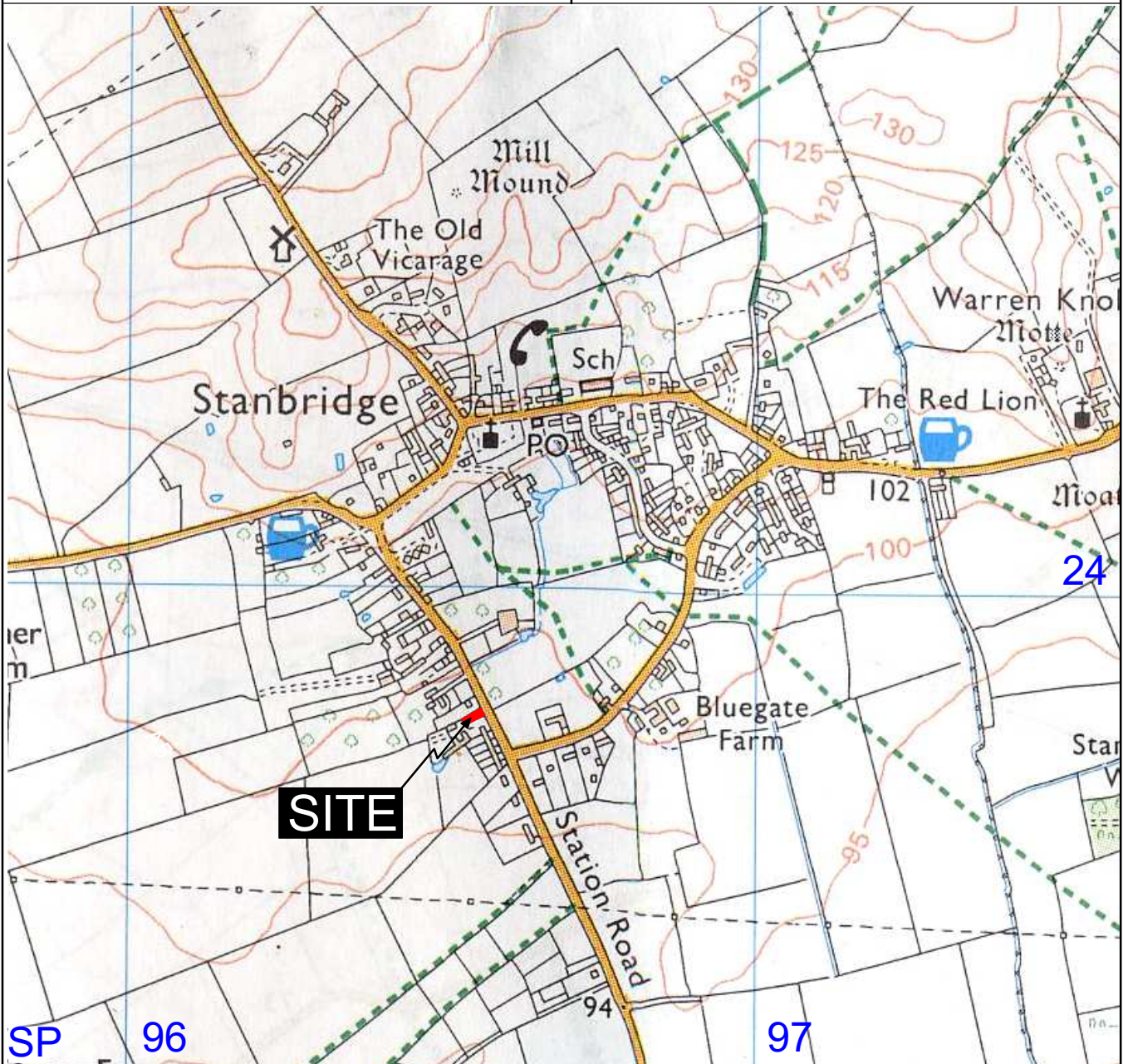
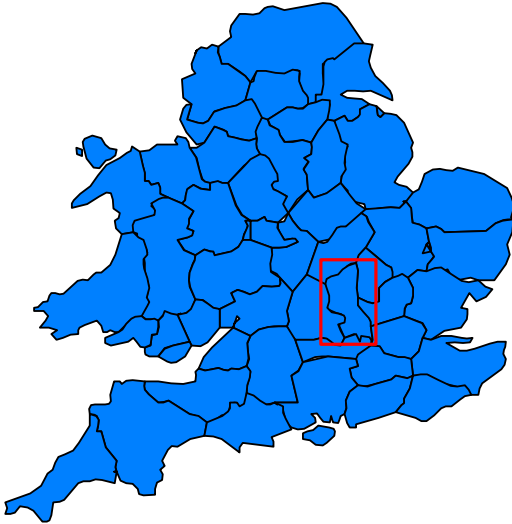
Figure 1 Site location
Figure 2 Site layout
Figure 3 Plan of trench and section of ditch [101]

Plate 1 Trench 1, looking south-west
Plate 2 Ditch [101], looking north-east

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Stud Farm, 56 Station Road,
Stanbridge, Bedfordshire.

HN1218

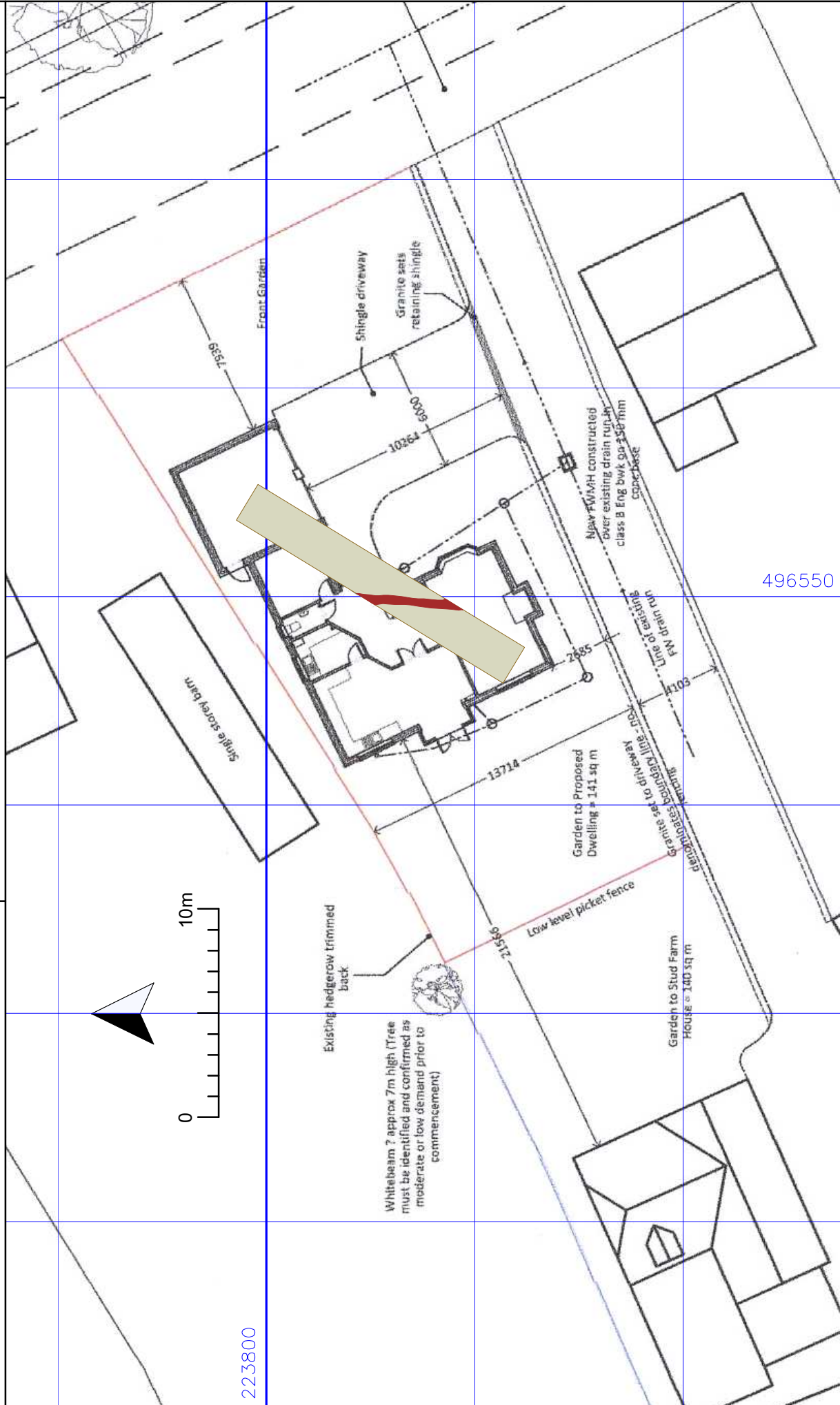


Site Location

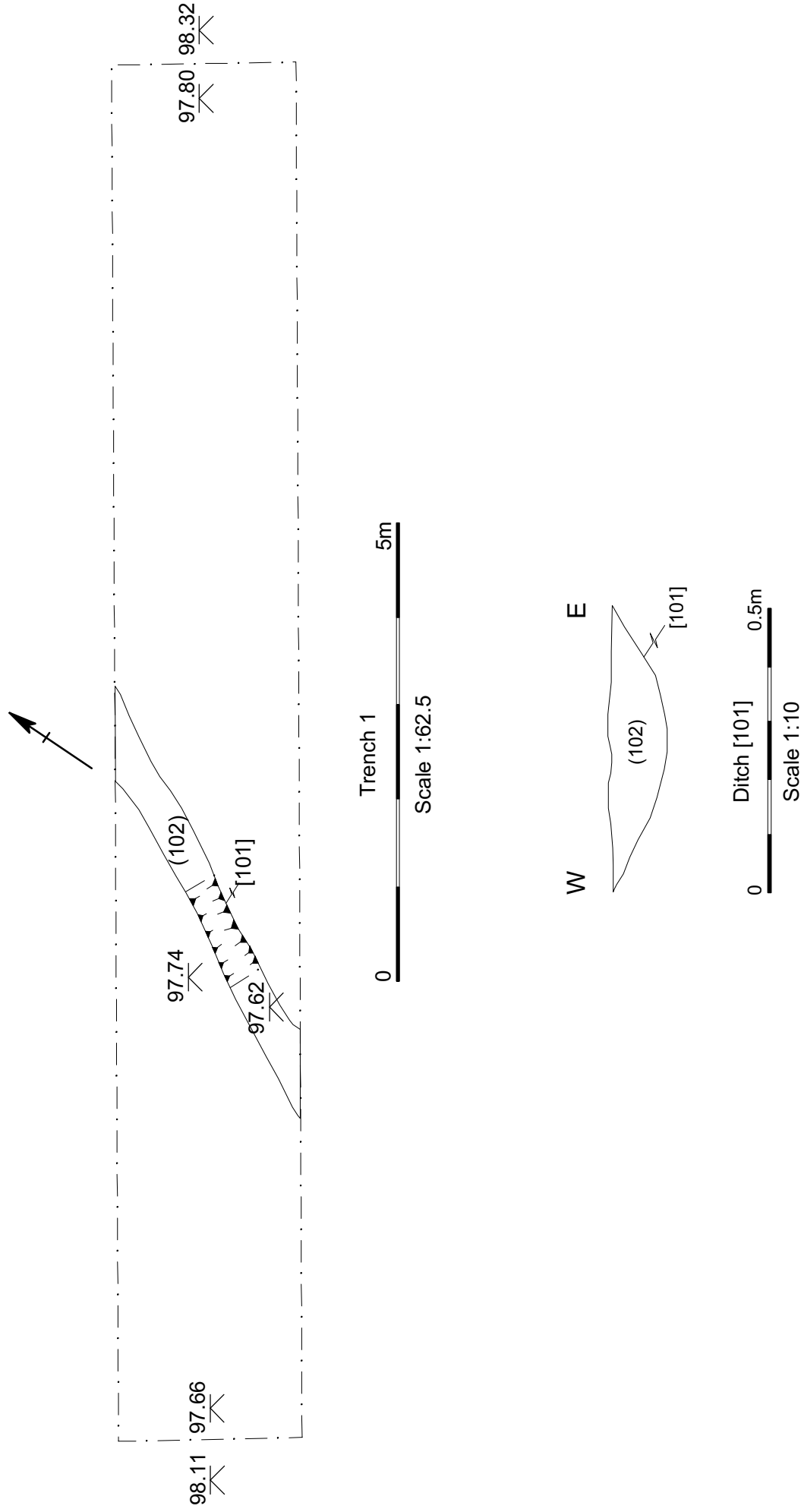
Scale 1:10,000

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Figure 1



Site layout



Plan of trench and section of ditch [101]



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking south-west



Plate 2: Ditch [101], looking north-east

Appendix

Oasis Summary Sheet

OASIS ID: heritage1-219010	
Project details	
Project name	Stud Farm, 56 Station Road, Stanbridge, Leighton Buzzard
Short description of the project	<p>As the result of a condition placed on the planning consent for a proposed new development on land at Stud Farm, 56 Station Road, Stanbridge, Bedfordshire, and in order to characterise the archaeological potential of the site, the Heritage Network was commissioned to undertake a field evaluation.</p> <p>One trial trench was excavated across the site. This exposed a single feature, a linear ditch possibly prehistoric in date. No other archaeological features were encountered on the site.</p> <p>On the basis of the results of the evaluation, the risk that the proposed development might have a negative impact on remains of archaeological significance may be considered to be High for the prehistoric and Low for all other periods.</p>
Project dates	Start: 27-10-2015 End: 27-10-2015
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HN1218 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	DITCH Late Prehistoric
Significant Finds	POTTERY Uncertain
Significant Finds	TILE Uncertain
Significant Finds	FLINT Late Prehistoric
Significant Finds	NAIL Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	""Targeted Trenches""
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	BEDFORDSHIRE SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE STANBRIDGE Stud Farm, 56 Station Road
Postcode	LU7 9JF
Study area	550 Square metres
Site coordinates	SP 96555 23795 51.903876667391 -0.596364421692 51 54 13 N 000 35 46 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 97.62m Max: 98.32m

Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief originator	Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)
Project design originator	Chris Turner
Project director/manager	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	Greg Jones
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Luton Museum
Physical Contents	"Ceramics","Metal","Worked stone/lithics"
Digital Archive recipient	Luton Museum
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Luton Museum
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Diary","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Stud Farm, 56 Station Road, Stanbridge, Bedfordshire.
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Sycamore M, Hillelson D
Other bibliographic details	Report No 965
Date	2015
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth Garden City
Description	A4 booklet green cover comb bound 10 Text pages, 3 Figures, 2 Plates