

HERITAGE NETWORK



MOUNT COTTAGE **Hare Street, Buntingford, Herts.**

HN650

Archaeological Monitoring Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

MOUNT COTTAGE Hare Street, Buntingford, Herts.

HN650

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Classic Window and Conservatory Co Ltd

By

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Report no. 397

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The cover photograph shows Mount Cottage viewed from the East

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Geoff Saunders. The report text and illustrations were prepared by Geoff Saunders, and edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Tim Sparks and Sam Harvey, Classic Window and Conservatory Co Ltd; and Alison Tinniswood, County Historic Environment Unit, HCC, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Mount Cottage, Hare Street, Hertfordshire		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	East Hertfordshire
Village/town:	Hare Street	Parish:	Hormead
Planning reference:	3/06/1964/FP	NGR:	TL 38995 29580
Client name and address:	Classic Window and Conservatory Co Ltd, 17 Wallace Way, Hitchin, Herts.		
Nature of work:	New Conservatory	Former land use:	Patio
Site status:	AAS 330	Reason for investigation:	Direction of local planning authority (PPG 16)
Position in planning process:	After full determination (as a condition)	Project brief originator:	Local Authority
Size of affected area:	16m ²	Size of area investigated:	16m ²
Site Code:	HN 650	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Monitoring	Archive recipient:	Hertford Museum
Start of work	28/02/2007	Finish of work	01/03/2007
Related SMR Nos:	n/a	Periods represented:	Post medieval
Oasis UID	heritage1-26067	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	None		
Physical archive:	None		
Previous summaries/reports:	None		

Synopsis:

In response to a condition on the planning permission for the construction of a new conservatory at Mount Cottage Hare Street, Buntingford, Herts, the Heritage Network was commissioned by Classic Window and Conservatory Co Ltd to undertake the archaeological monitoring of the development groundworks.

The monitoring of the groundworks revealed no archaeological features, deposits, or artefacts. Terracing in the garden and patio area to the rear of the house appears to have removed the original stratigraphy.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of *Classic Window and Conservatory Co Ltd*, as part of the archaeological monitoring and recording of development works at Mount Cottage, Hare Street, Buntingford, Hertfordshire.

1.2 The investigation was a requirement of the planning consent granted by East Herts District Council (EHDC), under the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990), for the construction of a rear conservatory (ref. 3/06/1964/FP). The extent of the work was defined in a *Design Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording* prepared by the County Historic Environment Unit (CHEU) of Hertfordshire County Council acting as archaeological advisers to the EHDC (ref.AT15/12/2006). A full specification of the work was contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, dated January 2007.

1.3 Mount Cottage is located in the historic core of Hare Street centred on grid reference TL 38995 29580. On the basis of the known archaeology on and in the vicinity of the present site, the CHEU advised that archaeological monitoring of the groundworks associated with the development should be undertaken, and the recording and appropriate investigation of any observed archaeological remains before the development proceeded.

1.4 The aim of the investigation has been to identify and record any archaeological features and deposits which might have been uncovered; and to retrieve artefactual and ecofactual elements to allow the date, character, and significance of the site to be assessed in accordance with current regional research agenda (Brown and Glazebrook, 2000), subject to the limitations of reasonable safety and practicality.

1.5 The present report describes the findings of the monitoring programme and is intended, together with the deposition of the site archive with Hertford Museum, Hertford, to complete the requirements of the planning condition.

2. Fieldwork

SITE TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 The ground across the study area appears to have been terraced into the hillside which rises on the western side of Hare Street. The new conservatory is located on part of the former garden patio on level ground at approximately 95mOD.

2.2 The drift geology belongs to the Melford Association (571o), and consists of deep well drained fine loamy or coarse loamy over clayey and fine loamy soils (SSEW, 1983). This was characterised on the site as firm, olive brown (2.5Y 4/4), clay with occasional chalk fragments.

METHODOLOGY

2.3 The timetable for the fieldwork followed the client's groundwork schedule. A number of site visits were made to supervise the reduction of the site and excavation of drainage trenches.

2.4 The machining was undertaken using a mini digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket or toothed bucket, as required.

2.5 All work was carried out in accordance with the approved *Project Design*, current health and safety legislation, and both IFA and ALGAO standards.

MONITORING AND RECORDING

Site stratigraphy

2.6 The stratigraphy was consistent across the site and consisted of a layer of modern concrete slabs forming the existing patio over a layer of soft, yellowish brown (10YR 5/8) sand, imported to provide a base for the patio. Beneath this was the underlying natural geology of firm, olive brown, clay with occasional chalk fragments.

Ground reduction

2.7 The ground level was reduced by approximately 0.3m across the footprint of the new building. This removed the existing patio, levelling aggregate, and approximately 0.1m of natural clay.

2.8 No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were revealed during this stage of the groundworks.

Footings trenches

2.9 A single 'L' shaped footings trench was excavated along the exterior wall of the new conservatory. The footing measured approximately 0.45m wide by 0.6m deep.

2.10 No archaeological features, deposits, or artefacts were revealed during this stage of the groundworks.

Drainage trenches

2.11 A single drainage trench was excavated for the new conservatory. It did not breach the levelling layer for the existing patio and did not impact on the underlying natural geology.

3. Discussion

3.1 The site lies within *Area of Archaeological Significance 330* (AAS330), defined as the historic core of the settlement of Hare Street. Mount Cottage is situated on the western side of the B1368, which forms part of an old coaching route from London to Cambridge. A possible Bronze Age barrow (NMR 540769), 1.2km to the south-east, coupled with the discovery of a Late Bronze Age axe in the same area, demonstrates prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site. Chance finds of Romano-British pottery from Little Hornead approximately 1km to the south-east have also been recorded.

3.2 The monitoring of the groundworks associated with the construction of the new conservatory revealed no archaeological features, deposits, or artefacts.

3.3 Mount Cottage appears to be constructed on land terraced into the hillside which rises steeply on the western side of the B1368. The terracing may have been undertaken during the construction of an extension to the western elevation of the house during the second half of the 20th century. No evidence of stratigraphy predating this period was observed, suggesting that the terracing was extensive enough to remove any earlier archaeological deposits which may have been present.

Confidence Rating

3.4 During the course of the fieldwork, the conditions were generally good for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation.

3.5 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
28/02/07	GIS	2	Introductory meeting/Site inspection
01/03/07	GIS	2	Site inspection

5. Bibliography

Tinniswood, A. 2006, *Design Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording*. (CHEU)

Turner, C. 2007, *Mount Cottage, Hare Street, Buntingford, Herts. Project Design: Archaeological Monitoring*. Heritage Network.

6. Illustrations & Plates

Figure 1.....Site Location

Figure 2..... Site Layout

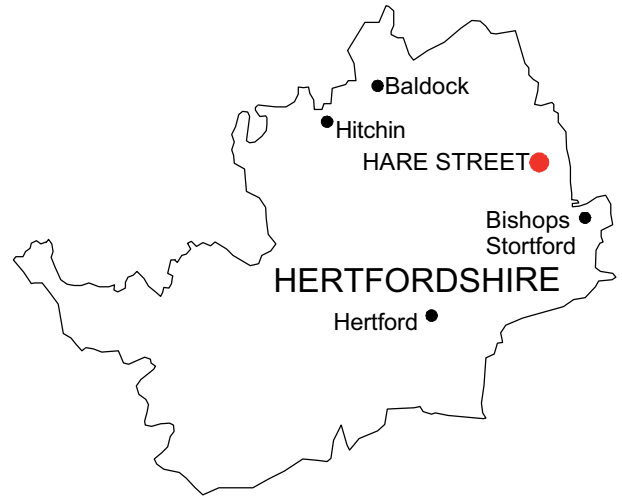
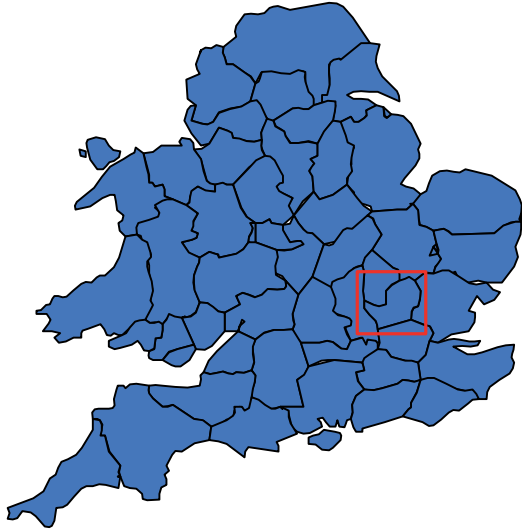
Plate 1.....Stratigraphy in footings trench

Plate 2..... Photograph illustrating extensive terracing in rear garden

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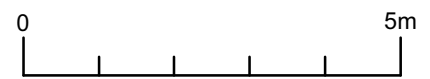
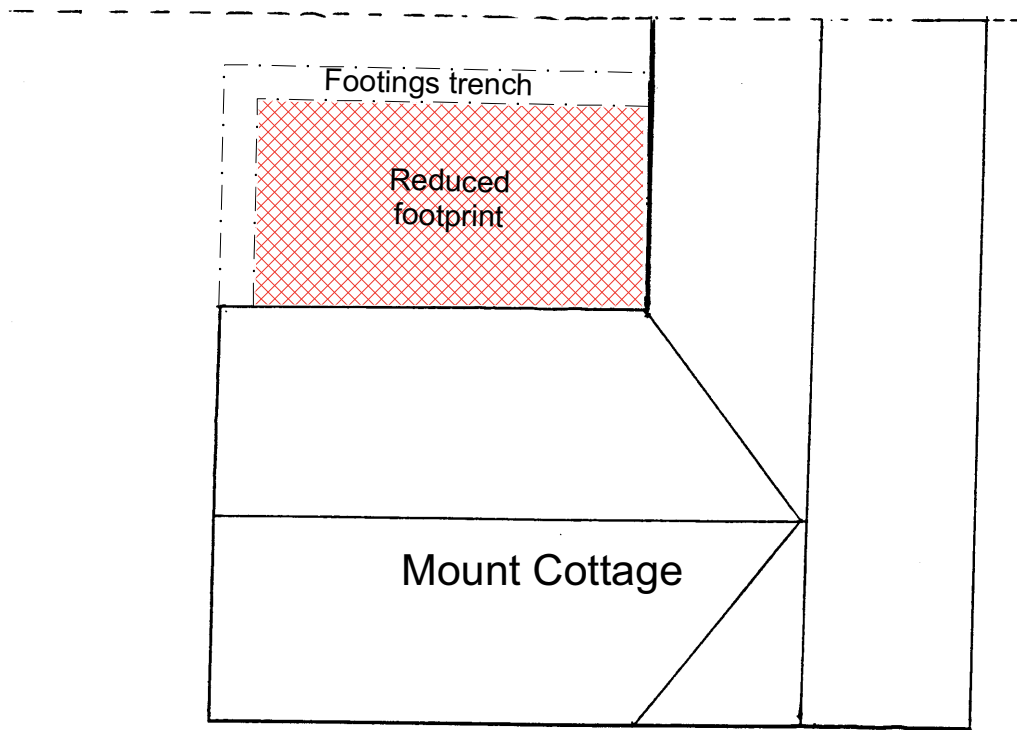


Site Location

Scale 1:1250

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Figure 1



Site layout

Scale 1:100

Figure 2



Plate 1: Stratigraphy in footings trench



Plate 2: Photograph illustrating extensive terracing in rear garden