

# HERITAGE NETWORK

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**Land r/o  
3 PILGRIMS ROW  
Westmill, Buntingford, Herts.**

HN1300

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION REPORT***

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# HERITAGE NETWORK

*Registered with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists*

Managing Director: David Hillelson, BA MCIfA

Land to the rear of  
3 PILGRIMS ROW  
Westmill, Buntingford, Hertfordshire

Project ref.: HN1300  
Planning ref: 3/16/0408/FUL  
HER ref: 190/16

*Archaeological Evaluation*

*Prepared on behalf of Mr S. Walker*

*by*

Daniel Phillips, BA (Hons) ACIfA

Report no. 1035

*December 2016*

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*The front cover shows the site, looking north*

## Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Daniel Phillips and Greg Jones. The report text and illustrations were prepared by Daniel Phillips and the report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Steve Walker; Tim Bond, Bond Chartered Architects; and to Isobel Thompson and Alison Tinniswood of the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Team, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

## Summary

<b>Site name and address:</b>	Land r/o 3 Pilgrims Row, Westmill, Buntingford, Hertfordshire, SG9 9LQ		
<b>County:</b>	Hertfordshire	<b>District:</b>	East Hertfordshire
<b>Village/town:</b>	Westmill	<b>Parish:</b>	Westmill
<b>Planning reference:</b>	3/16/0408/FUL	<b>NGR:</b>	NGR TL 3685 2712
<b>Client name and address:</b>	Steve Walker, c/o Reed Autos, 27 Royston Road, Foxton, CB22 6SE		
<b>Nature of work:</b>	Residential development	<b>Current land use:</b>	Garage/Shed
<b>Site Status:</b>	Area of Archaeological Significance No.50 (AAS150)	<b>Reason for investigation:</b>	Direction of local planning authority (NPPF)
<b>Position in planning process:</b>	After full determination (as a condition)	<b>Project brief originator:</b>	Local Authority
<b>Size of affected area:</b>	c. 125m <sup>2</sup>	<b>Size of area investigated:</b>	20m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Site code:</b>	HN1300	<b>HER consultation no.:</b>	190/16
<b>Organisation:</b>	Heritage Network	<b>Site Director:</b>	David Hillelson
<b>Project type, methods etc.</b>	Field evaluation	<b>Archive recipient:</b>	Hertford Museum
<b>Start of work:</b>	29/11/2016	<b>Finish of work:</b>	29/11/2016
<b>Related HER nos:</b>	n/a	<b>Periods represented:</b>	Unknown
<b>OASIS UID:</b>	heritage1-264189	<b>Significant finds:</b>	None
<b>Monument types:</b>	Ditch		
<b>Physical archive:</b>	None		
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b>	None		

**Synopsis:**

In order to investigate the archaeological potential of a proposed new residential development located on land at the rear of 3 Pilgrims Row, Westmill, Buntingford, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developer to undertake a programme of targeted trial trenching.

The present investigation has demonstrated that the area of the present site has been subject to significant disturbance in the post-medieval and modern periods, including ground reduction and the insertion of modern drainage features.

Two linear features, interpreted as possible boundary ditches, were revealed at the south-western end of the trench. No dating evidence was recovered from their fills, but the northern ditch, [103], was observed cutting the overburden in the trench baulk and is likely to be of late post-medieval or modern date. The southern ditch, [101], appears to have been truncated when the ground level was reduced, suggesting that it is earlier, possibly dating to the medieval or early post-medieval periods.

No evidence for the structure marked on late 19th century OS mapping was found.

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 to be *Low* for the prehistoric, Roman and Saxon periods, *Low-Moderate* for the medieval period and *High* for the post-medieval and modern periods. The potential significance of such remains is likely to be *Low*.

# 1 Introduction

**1.1** This report has been prepared at the request of *Bond Chartered Architects*, acting on behalf of Mr S. Walker, to cover a programme of archaeological work undertaken as part of the proposed development of land to the rear of 3 Pilgrims Row, Westmill, Buntingford, Hertfordshire.

**1.2** The planning consent for the development (ref: 3/16/0408/FUL) was granted by East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC) subject to a standard archaeological condition (Condition 7) issued under the provisions set out in the Department of Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF). A full specification for the evaluation is contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, dated October 2016 (Turner 2016).

**1.3** The site is located in the historic core of the village, centred on NGR TL 3685 2712 (Figure 1). It is situated to the rear of 3 Pilgrims Row, in an area currently occupied by garages, and is bounded to the south by the gardens of nos. 1 & 3 Pilgrims Row, to the west by an access drive from Pilgrims Close, to the north by further parking and the to east by the garden of the Sword in Hand PH. The site lies within *Area of Archaeological Significance* no.50 (AAS50), as identified in the District Local Plan.

**1.4** The proposed development entails the demolition of two existing garages and the construction of a two bedroom detached dwelling with associated access and services.

**1.5** The aim of the evaluation has been 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, Medlycott 2011), should they be discovered.

**1.6** The present report is intended to advise the planning authority on the risk that the development might encounter archaeological remains that could be damaged or destroyed by the development groundworks, and, if necessary, propose an appropriate strategy to mitigate such damage.

## 2 Fieldwork

### TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

**2.1** The study area is located in the centre of Westmill village, to the rear of Pilgrims Row, on the north side of Station Hill. It lies on a gentle north-east facing slope, on the west side of the valley of the River Rib, at approximately 84m AOD.

**2.2** Locally the soils belong to the Fyfield 1 Association (571d), described as *well drained coarse and fine loamy soils over interbedded sands and sandstones* (landis.org.uk/soilscapes).

**2.3** The underlying solid geology consists of Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation, a Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 84 to 94 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period (bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience).

### 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** A single trial trench was located by triangulation from known points, using fibreglass tape measures.

**2.6** Within the trench the topsoil and overburden were removed using a 2-tonne tracked 360-degree excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The trench was machined to the first significant archaeological horizon and spoil from the machining was scanned visually and with a metal detector for ferrous and non-ferrous archaeological finds.

**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 proforma. Scaled plans and sections were drawn on drafting film at scales of 1:10 and 1:20.

### RESULTS

**2.9** A single trench was located to the immediate north of the rear garden of 3 Pilgrims Row, across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling and in an area formerly used for car parking. The trench was orientated NE-SW and measured 10m in length, 2m in width and had a maximum depth of 1.20m; it represents a 10% sample of the site by area (Plate 1).



**Trench Data:**

<b>Length (m):</b>	10	<b>Width (m):</b>	2	<b>Maximum Depth (m):</b>	1.2	<b>Orientation</b>	NE-SW		
<b>Level at NE End of Trench (mOD)</b>			<b>Top</b>	83.78	<b>Level at SW End of Trench (mOD)</b>			<b>Top</b>	83.96
			<b>Base</b>	82.84				<b>Base</b>	83.10
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions (m)</b>						
			<b>Length</b>	<b>Width</b>	<b>Depth</b>				
Overburden	Layer	Pink (7.5YR 8/3) Type 2 MOT	>10	>2	0.2-0.4				
Overburden	Layer	Greyish brown (10YR 5/2) friable clayey silt with occasional rooting, small rounded stones, red brick and tile fragments	>10	>2	0.1-0.6				
[101]	Cut	Cut of linear. Orientated NW-SE. Concave sides with a gentle break in slope. Concave base. Contained (102).	>2	1.8	0.5				
(102)	Fill	Light yellowish brown (10YR 6/4) plastic sandy silty clay with very occasional charcoal flecks and very small sub-angular stones. Fill of [101]	>2	1.8	0.5				
[103]	Cut	Cut of linear. Orientated NW-SE. Shallow curved sides and a concave base. Contained (104).	>2	0.32	0.08				
(104)	Fill	Light yellowish brown (10YR 6/4) plastic sandy silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks. Fill of [103]	>2	0.32	0.08				
Natural	Layer	Yellowish brown (10YR 5/8) firm silty clay with frequent small rounded stones	>10	>2	>0.5				

**2.10** The stratigraphy in the trench comprised an uneven layer of pink (7.5YR 8/3) granular crushed hardcore, between 0.20-0.40m thick (Plate 2). This overlay an uneven and mixed overburden layer of greyish brown (10YR 5/2) friable clayey silt with occasional rooting, small rounded stones, red brick and tile fragments, between 0.10-0.60m thick. The natural substrate of firm yellowish brown (10YR 5/8) silty clay with frequent small rounded stones, greater than 0.50m thick, was exposed below the overburden at a depth of between 0.30m and 0.70m below the present ground surface.

**2.11** Two parallel linear features were revealed, cutting into the natural at the south-western end of the trench (Figure 3).

**2.12** The northern linear, cut [101], was orientated north-west to south-east, with gentle sloping sides and a concave base (Plate 3). It measured more than 2m in length, 1.80m in width and 0.20m in depth. The feature appears to have been cut from a higher level and was observed cutting the overburden in the western baulk (Plate 2), although the edges and interface with the overlying material was unclear. Its fill (102) was a plastic light yellowish brown (10YR 6/4) sandy silty clay with very occasional charcoal flecks and very small sub-angular stones. No finds were recovered from the fill to date the feature.

**2.13** Linear [103] lay approximately 0.60m to the south of [101] (Figure 3). It was oriented north-west to south-east and had shallow curved sides and a concave base (Plate 4). It measured more than 2m in length, 0.32m in width and 0.08m in depth. Its fill (104) was a plastic light yellowish brown (10YR 6/4) sandy silty clay with very occasional charcoal flecks. No finds were recovered to date the feature.

**2.14** A modern drain and soakaway was revealed cutting into the natural at the north-eastern end of the trench.

**2.15** No other features, deposits or finds were encountered.

## 3 Discussion

### *Archaeological Background*

**3.1** The site lies within the historic core of Westmill, which is thought to have its origins in the late Anglo-Saxon period. There has been little development of the village since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**3.2** In order to establish the archaeological and historical context for the site, the overview set out below has been drawn from the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER), the Heritage Network's own records and other sources. The study area covers a 500m radius around the site.

**3.3** The earliest archaeological evidence within the study area is a Roman coin (HER 1585), found by chance in fields 280m to the south-east of the site. The line of the Roman road known as Ermine Street runs 520m to the east of the present site, on the opposite side of the valley.

**3.4** Westmill is mentioned in the Domesday Survey as both 'Westmele' and 'Wesmele, possibly indicative of two manorial estates (HER 2568). The name means 'west mill', which is thought to refer to a mill on the River Rib, which runs 360m to the east of the site. No evidence for a mill associated with this settlement has been found and its location is unknown.

**3.5** The settlement is thought to have a medieval planned layout with the parish church and Westmill Bury (HER 11176) at its core. The present manor house (HER 15955), 220m to the south-east, is a Grade II\* listed building of red brick, dating from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, which has been used as a farmhouse. The farm outbuildings are Grade II listed.

**3.6** The Grade II\* listed parish church of St Mary (HER 4262), located 70m to the east of the present site, has an 11<sup>th</sup> century Anglo-Saxon nave, with other additions to the church dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Roman bricks have been reused in some parts. The church was thoroughly restored in 1875.

**3.7** There are number of historic buildings dating from the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> centuries onwards within Westmill. Pilgrims Row itself comprises a terrace of five Grade II listed cottages, built in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century (HER 16503). The Sword in Hand public house (HER 31120), a timber framed building dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, lies 25m to the south-east of the site, on the street frontage. The Old Thatch (HER 31156), a Grade II listed timber-framed house dating from at least the 17<sup>th</sup> century, is situated on the village green, 75m to the south-west. Old Gaylers is a timber-framed house with associated barn of at least 17<sup>th</sup> century date, also Grade II listed, situated 90m to the north-west.

**3.8** The site of the former Westmill railway station (HER 5541) lies 400m to the east. The station was part of the Ware, Hadham & Buntingford branch of the Great Eastern Railway, which opened in 1863 and closed in 1965.

**3.9** Archaeological work to the rear of 1 and 2 Pilgrims Row encountered a pit containing 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century pottery (EHT1585).

**3.10** The advice from the Historic Environment Team at Hertfordshire County Council, as archaeological adviser to EHDC, notes that an earlier building, on a north-south alignment, is marked as occupying the site on the Tithe map of 1841. This building is not marked on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 25" OS map, dated 1878, and the site appears to have become a back lane ([www.old-maps.co.uk](http://www.old-maps.co.uk)).

***Research aims***

**3.11** The aim of the project 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, Medlycott 2011), should they be discovered, to ensure that an appropriate strategy for the mitigation of damage or destruction of such remains by the development was adopted.

**3.12** It was considered that the investigation had the potential to contribute to an understanding of:

- the origins and development of Westmill from the prehistoric period onwards;
- activity close to the line of Ermine Street in the Roman and post-Roman periods;
- the development of Westmill in the Anglo-Saxon period;
- the development of the settlement in medieval and post-medieval periods;
- the nature and date of the historic structure identified on the site in the cartographic record.

***Collected Data***

**3.13** The trial trench demonstrated post-medieval and modern disturbance on the site. The lack of topsoil and the presence of crushed hardcore and a mixed overburden, directly sealing the natural substrate, suggest that the ground level may have been reduced in the relatively recent past. A modern drain and soakaway were also encountered at the north-eastern end of the trench.

**3.14** Two linear features were revealed at the south-western end of the trench. Features [101] and [103] were aligned north-east to south-west and ran parallel to each other. Whilst both were fairly shallow, feature [101] was observed cutting the overburden in the trench baulk, indicating that it may be of post-medieval or modern date. Only the base of feature [103] survived, suggesting that it may be earlier than [101] and may have been truncated by later ground reduction. The fills within both ditches contained charcoal flecks but no finds.

**3.15** The linear features follow the alignment of the existing property boundaries on the Pilgrims Row frontage, which is likely to have been established in the medieval period. This suggests that the features may be ditches representing property boundaries.

**3.16** No evidence for the building shown occupying the present site on the Westmill Tithe map of 1841, was encountered during the evaluation.

**3.17** No other features, deposits or finds were encountered.

***Conclusions***

**3.18** The investigation has demonstrated that the present site has been subject to significant disturbance in the post-medieval and modern periods, including ground reduction and the insertion of modern drainage.

**3.19** Two linear features, interpreted as possible boundary ditches, were revealed at the south-western end of the trench. No dating evidence was recovered from their fills, but the northern ditch, [103], was observed cutting the overburden in the trench baulk and is likely to be of late post-medieval or modern date. The southern ditch, [101], appears to have been truncated when the ground level was reduced, suggesting that it is earlier, possibly dating to the medieval or early post-medieval periods.

**3.20** No evidence for the structure marked on the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century Tithe Map was revealed during the present project.

**3.21** 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 to be *Low* for the prehistoric, Roman and Saxon periods, *Low-Moderate* for the medieval period and *High* for the post-medieval and modern periods. The potential significance of such remains is likely to be *Low*.

### ***Confidence Rating***

**3.22** During the course of the fieldwork, the conditions were generally 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

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## 5 Illustrations

Figure 1.....	Site location
Figure 2.....	Trench layout
Figure 3.....	Plan and Sections
Plate 1.....	Trench, looking S
Plate 2.....	Indicative section, showing overburden over natural, looking W
Plate 3.....	Linear [101], looking W
Plate 4.....	Linear [103], looking E

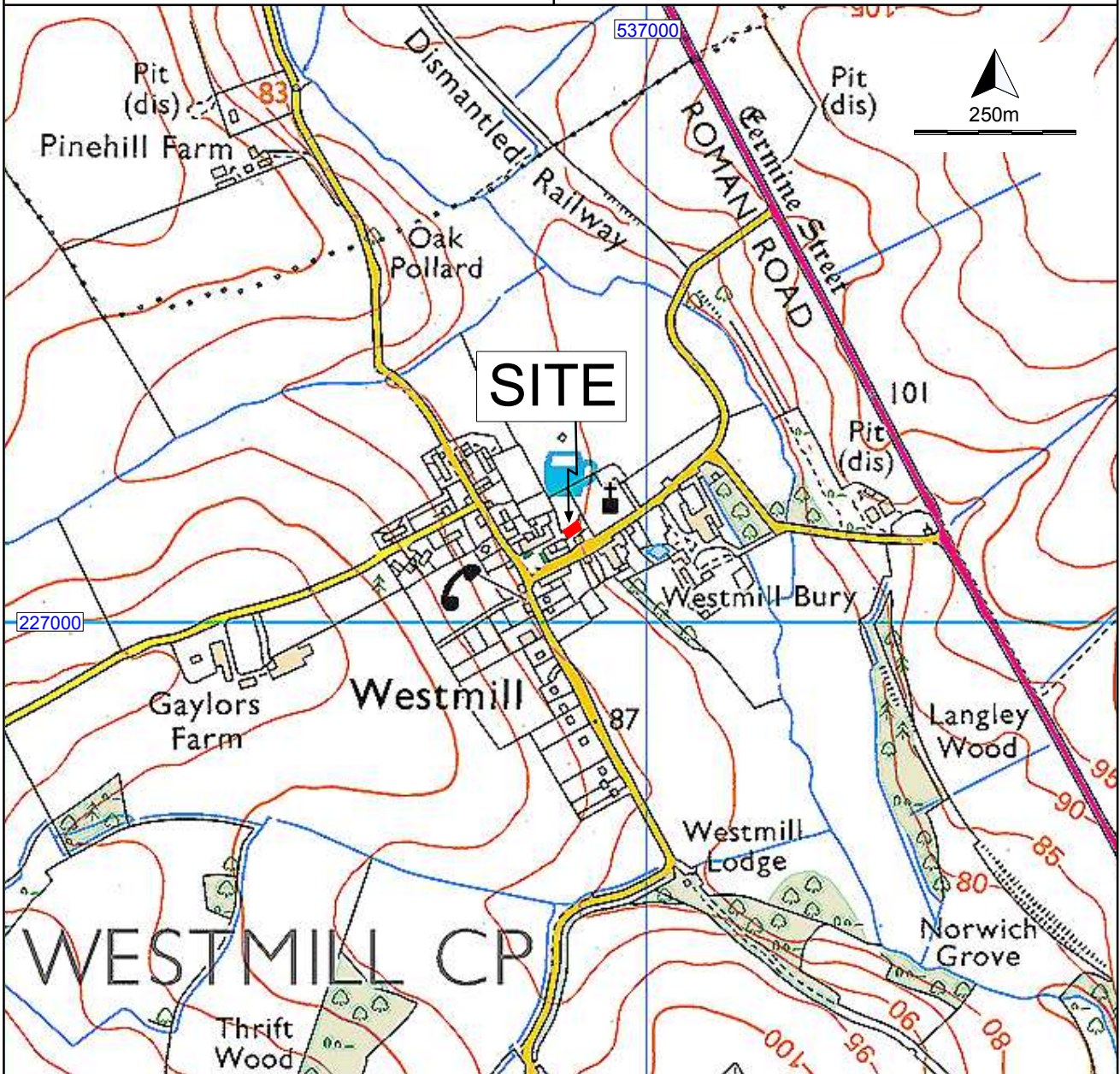
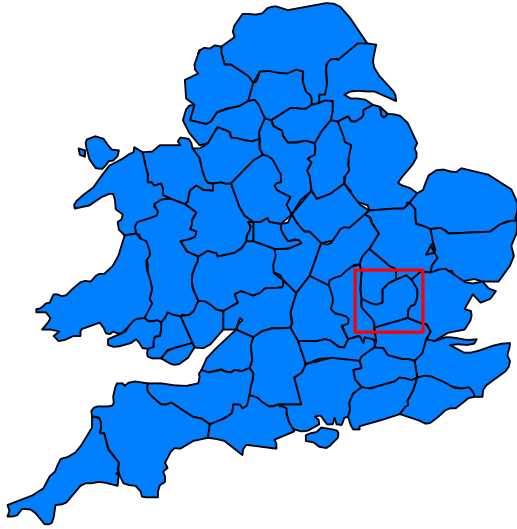
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THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Land r/o 3 Pilgrims Way,  
Westmill, Buntingford, Herts.

HN1300



Site Location

Scale 1:10000

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Figure 1

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Land rear of 3 Pilgrims Row, Westmill, Buntingford, Herts.

HN1300



Trench layout

Scale 1:250

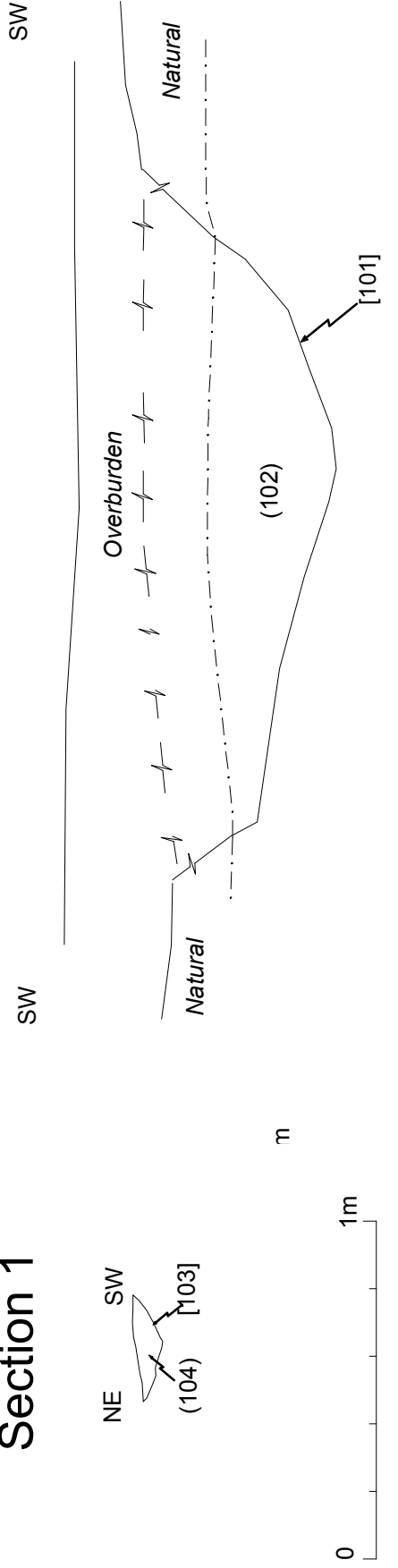
Figure 2

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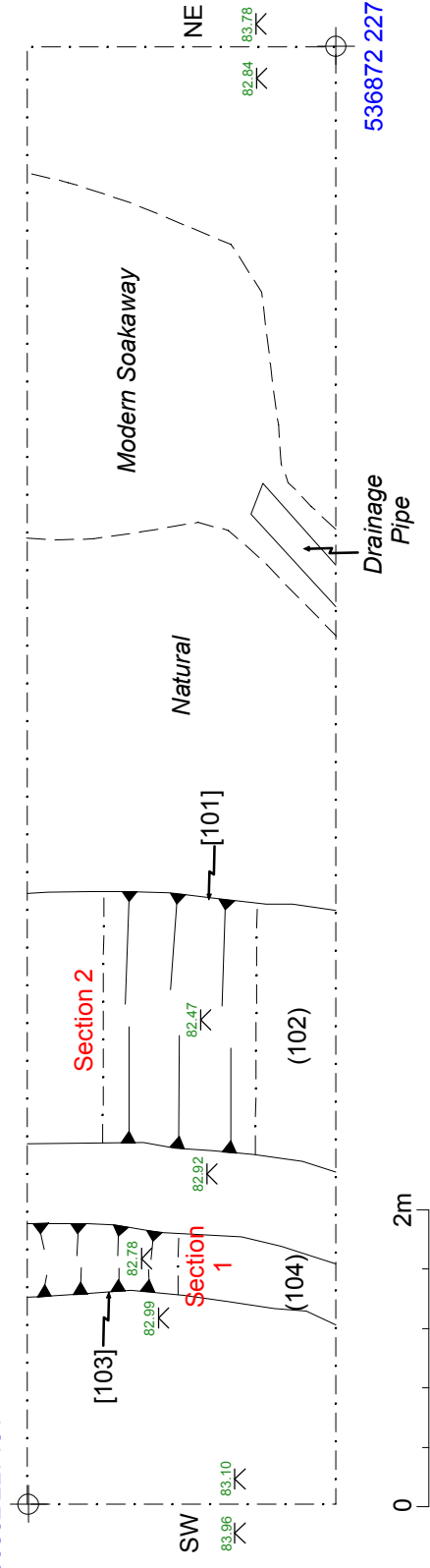


# Section 2

## Section 1



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Plate 1: Trench, looking south



Plate 2: Indicative section, showing [101], looking west





Plate 3: Linear [101], looking west



Plate 4: Linear [103], looking east

## Appendix

### Oasis Summary Sheet

<b>OASIS ID: heritage1-264189</b>	
<b>Project details</b>	
Project name	Land r/o 3 Pilgrims Row, Westmill, Buntingford, Hertfordshire
Short description of the project	<p>In order to investigate the archaeological potential of a proposed new residential development located on land at the rear of 3 Pilgrims Row, Westmill, Buntingford, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developer to undertake a programme of targeted trial trenching.</p> <p>The present investigation has demonstrated that the area of the present site has been subject to significant disturbance in the post-medieval and modern periods, including ground reduction and the insertion of modern drainage features.</p> <p>Two linear features, interpreted as possible boundary ditches, were revealed at the south-western end of the trench. No dating evidence was recovered from their fills, but the northern ditch, [103], was observed cutting the overburden in the trench baulk and is likely to be of late post-medieval or modern date. The southern ditch, [101], appears to have been truncated when the ground level was reduced, suggesting that it is earlier, possibly dating to the medieval or early post-medieval periods.</p> <p>No evidence for the structure marked on late 19th century OS mapping was found.</p> <p>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 to be <i>Low</i> for the prehistoric, Roman and Saxon periods, <i>Low-Moderate</i> for the medieval period and <i>High</i> for the post-medieval and modern periods. The potential significance of such remains is likely to be <i>Low</i>.</p>
Project dates	Start: 29-11-2016 End: 29-11-2016
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HN1300 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Other 3 - Built over
Monument type	DITCH Uncertain
Significant Finds	NONE None
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	HERTFORDSHIRE EAST HERTFORDSHIRE WESTMILL Land R/o 3 Pilgrims Row
Postcode	SG9 9LQ
Study area	125 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 36866 27132 51.925405657302 -0.009356000616 51 55 31 N 000 00 33 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 82.47m Max: 83.96m
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	Daniel Phillips
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Hertford Museum
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Hertford Museum
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Diary", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land r/o 3 Pilgrims Row, Westmill, Bungtingford, Hertfordshire
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Phillips, D.
Other bibliographic details	Report no.1035
Date	2016
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth Garden City
Description	A4 booklet, green cover, comb bound, 10 pages, 3 figures, 4 plates