

# HERITAGE NETWORK

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**LAND TO R/O  
54 HIGH STREET,  
Arlesey, Beds.**

HN1305

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION REPORT***



# HERITAGE NETWORK

*Registered with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists*

Managing Director: David Hillelson, BA MCIfA

## Land to the rear of 54 HIGH STREET Arlesey, Bedfordshire

Project ref.: HN1305  
Planning ref: CB/16/00886/FULL  
HER consultation: 201617/185  
Museum Entry no: BEDFM 2016.75

### *Archaeological Evaluation*

*Prepared on behalf of Steve Granger*

by

Daniel Phillips, BA ACIfA

Report no. 1048

*February 2017*

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*The front cover shows the site, looking south-east*

## Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Daniel Phillips and Mark Sycamore. The report text and illustrations were compiled by Daniel Phillips. The report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Steve Granger and to Martin Oake, Archaeology Team, Central Bedfordshire Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

## Summary

<b>Site name and address:</b>	Land to the rear of 54 High Street, Arlesey, Beds, SG15 6SL		
<b>County:</b>	Bedfordshire	<b>District:</b>	Central Bedfordshire
<b>Village/town:</b>	Arlesey	<b>Parish:</b>	Arlesey
<b>Planning reference:</b>	CB/16/00886/FULL	<b>NGR:</b>	519260 235790
<b>Client name and address:</b>	Steve Granger, Glendal, 45 Upper Tilehouse Street, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 2EF		
<b>Nature of work:</b>	Rural residential	<b>Current land use:</b>	Waste land
<b>Site Status:</b>	None	<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. 240m <sup>2</sup>	<b>Size of area investigated:</b>	20m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Site code:</b>	HN1305	<b>Museum entry no.:</b>	BEDFM 2016.75
<b>Organisation:</b>	Heritage Network	<b>Site Director:</b>	David Hillelson
<b>Project type, methods etc...</b>	Field evaluation	<b>Archive recipient:</b>	Bedford Museum
<b>Start of work:</b>	09/02/2017	<b>Finish of work:</b>	10/02/2017
<b>Related HER nos:</b>	n/a	<b>Periods represented:</b>	Modern
<b>OASIS UID:</b>	heritage1-265369	<b>Significant finds:</b>	Plastic electrical wire ducting
<b>Monument types:</b>	Pit		
<b>Physical archive:</b>	None		
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b>	Phillips, M. 2015, Land to rear of 54 High Street, Arlesey, Bedfordshire: Heritage Statement. Albion Archaeology Report 2015/31		

**Synopsis:**

In order to investigate the archaeological potential of a proposed new residential development located on land to the rear of 54 High Street, Arlesey, Bedfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developer to undertake a programme of evaluation by trial trenching.

A previous Heritage Statement identified a *Low* risk of encountering remains dating from the prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods, and a *Moderate* risk for the medieval and post-medieval periods (Phillips 2015).

A single trench was excavated, which revealed a considerable depth of overburden, suggesting that the present site has been subject to significant disturbance in the post-medieval and modern periods.

A single feature was encountered at the south-western end of the trench, which contained a compact clay fill. A length of modern cable was recovered from the fill. Evidence from archaeological investigations on the west side of High Street suggests that this feature may represent a former extraction pit, possibly related to the local brick-making industry, which has subsequently silted up.

No evidence for any features or deposits pre-dating the post-medieval period was recorded. 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 *Low* for all periods pre-dating the post-medieval period.

# 1 Introduction

**1.1** This report has been prepared at the request of *Mr Steve Granger*, as part of a programme of archaeological work undertaken in support of a planning application for residential development on land at the rear of 45 High Street, Arlesey, Bedfordshire.

**1.2** The planning permission for the development (ref: CB/16/00886/FULL) has been granted by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC), subject to an archaeological condition issued under the Department of Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF). The full specification for the investigation was contained in the Heritage Network's approved Project Design, dated October 2016 (Turner 2016).

**1.3** The site, which lies on the eastern side of High Street, is located in the southern half of the town on the north side of Chapel Drive, centred on NGR TL 1926 3579 (Figure 1). It is bounded to the south by Chapel Drive and to the north, east and west by the boundaries of neighbouring properties.

**1.4** The aim of the present project has been to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any remains which were liable to be threatened by the development, and the establishment of a local and regional archaeological and historical context for them, if they were discovered, in accordance with the current published local and regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997; Brown and Glazebrook 2000; Oake et al 2007; Medlycott 2011).

**1.5** It was considered that the investigation had the potential to contribute to a greater understanding of the landscape and development of Arlesey from the prehistoric period onwards.

**1.6** A *Heritage Statement* was undertaken for the site which identified a *low* risk of encountering remains dating from the prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods, and a *moderate* risk for the medieval and post-medieval periods (Phillips 2015).

**1.7** The development proposes the construction of a new detached dwelling with associated access, car parking, services and landscaping.

## 2 Fieldwork

### TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

**2.1** The study area lies at the southern end of Arlesey, on level ground at approximately 43mAOD. It is located on the south-eastern edge of the Upper Ivel Clay Valley (Central Bedfordshire Landscape Characterisation Area 4C) which is defined as a wide level valley founded on Gault Clay and chalk to the south-east, with alluvium along the watercourses, deposits of glacial gravel to the north and river gravel to the south-east ([http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/type-4\\_tcm3-12990.pdf](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/type-4_tcm3-12990.pdf)).

**2.2** The Upper Ivel Character Area is located on the eastern edge of the county and its historic landscape has largely been defined by the presence of nucleated villages surrounded by common open fields, with meadow along the rivers. The character area is fairly densely settled, with large villages and market towns, including Stotfold, Shefford and Arlesey. Historically the area forms an important transport corridor, with the Great North Road (the modern A1) to the east of the town and the main East Coast Mainline railway to the west.

**2.3** Locally the soils belong to the Wantage 2 Association (342d), described as:

*Shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over argillaceous chalk associated with similar soils affected by ground water. Deeper well drained coarse loamy soils in places. Complex soil patterns locally* (SSEW 1983).

**2.4** The underlying geology consists of Gault Formation Mudstone, a Sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 100 – 112 million years ago (British Geological Survey). The overlying superficial deposits consist of River Terrace Deposits of sands and gravel, deposited up to 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period.

### METHODOLOGY

**2.5** 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.

**2.6** The overburden was removed, under close supervision, to the first significant archaeological horizon or to the natural geological horizon, as appropriate, using a 3-tonne 360-degree tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.3m wide toothless bucket.

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

**2.8** 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.

**2.9** 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**

**2.10** A single north-east to south-west aligned trial trench was excavated diagonally across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling. The trench measured 10m in length, 2m in width and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.4m. It was surveyed in relation to fixed points shown on the current digital Ordnance Survey map of the site and referenced to the OS National Grid (Figure 2).

**Recorded Data**

<b>Length (m):</b>	10	<b>Width (m):</b>	2	<b>Maximum Depth (m):</b>	1.4	<b>Orientation</b>	NE-SW	
<b>Level at NE End of Trench (mOD)</b>			<b>Top</b>	43.31	<b>Level at SW End of Trench (mOD)</b>		<b>Top</b>	43.05
			<b>Base</b>	42.44			<b>Base</b>	41.95
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions (m)</b>					
			<b>Length</b>	<b>Width</b>	<b>Depth</b>			
-	Layer	Dark greyish brown loose silty clay with moderate rooting.	> 10	>2	0.25			
-	Layer	Heavily mixed deposits of mid grey, mid brown & mid bluish grey friable silty clay & clay. Contained frequent cobbles, red brick and tile inclusions.	>10	>2	1.3			
101	Cut	Large feature with concave sides. Unknown base. Contained fill (102).	>4	>2	>0.5			
102	Fill	Light bluish grey sticky clay. Single find of plastic electrical cable.	>4	>2	>0.5			
-	Layer	Light yellowish brown soft sandy clay natural with occasional mottling.	>10	>2	>0.01			

**2.11** The stratigraphy in the trench comprised dark greyish brown loose silty clay topsoil, 0.25m in depth, with moderate rooting. This overlay a heavily mixed deposit, up to 1.3m in depth, which consisted of bands of mid grey, mid brown and mid bluish grey friable silty clay and clay. Within these deposits were fragments of post-medieval and modern red brick and tile, which were not collected. Beneath this was the natural substrate of a light yellowish brown soft sandy clay, >0.01m in depth.

**2.12** The north-eastern edge of a large feature, [101], was revealed cutting the natural at the south-west end of the trench. It measured over 4m in length, over 2m in width and over 0.5m in depth. Its full extent was not exposed in the trench and the base was not reached. The fill (102), consisted of clean light bluish grey sticky clay, which contained a single find of a white plastic electrical cable, deep within the fill.

**2.13** No clear evidence for the feature's purpose was encountered in the small area exposed, but, given its depth and curved sides it may represent part of an extraction pit.

**2.14** No other archaeological features, deposits or finds were revealed in the trench.

## 3 Discussion

### *Archaeological Background*

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

**3.2** Two Iron Age coins have been found in the town during the 19th century (NMR 36243 & 36244). The actual locations of the find spots are unknown. There is no other evidence for prehistoric activity within the study area.

**3.3** A large quantity of Samian pottery of 1st and 2nd century date (HER 389), lies 330m to the south west of the site. Occupation sites dating from the Roman period have been identified in the wider area, and a number of the crop mark sites identified around the village may also date to this period, including a large circular feature (HER 641) immediately to the east of Hilary Rise, 720m to the north east of the site.

**3.4** The site lies within the medieval village of Arlesey (HER 17109) which appears to have been in existence by at least the late Saxon period, probably as a polyfocal settlement concentrated around Church End to the north (Arleseybury), and the southern core around 130m to the south west. The Domesday Book indicates there was a market at Arlesey, which may have been located in the open space in front of St Peter's Church.

**3.5** There are four areas of medieval ridge and furrow, indicative of the agricultural nature of the settlement, survive around the site, (HER 6982) 150m to the south, (HER 6982, 19519 and 19520) 620m, 300m and 480m to the north respectively.

**3.6** The HER record includes some post medieval structures, now demolished such as Victorian railway bridge and former station (HER 196) 450m to the south west, former tram line along West Drive, 270m to the south (HER 1529) and the site of a Wesleyan Methodist chapel 90m to the west (HER 9303).

**3.7** The East Coast main line railway lies 320m to the west (HER 11862). The London to Peterborough section of this line opened on the 7th August 1850, operating from a temporary station at Maiden Lane in London. The new terminus at Kings Cross opened in 1853.

**3.8** There are four listed buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site, all Grade II listed and of post-medieval date. The nearest to the site is the Three Tuns public house and no.86 High Street, 140m to the north of the site, which is a timber framed construction with colour washed roughcast render, and a thatched roof, dating from the 18th century. (HER 6235).

### *Aims and Objectives*

**3.9** The aims of the present investigation have been;

- to establish the location, depth, extent, date, character and condition of any remains that are liable to be threatened by the development;
- to consider the local and regional archaeological and historical context of such remains, and their significance and quality, in relation to current published regional research (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Oake *et al* 2007, Medlycott & Brown 2008, Medlycott 2011);
- to ensure that an appropriate strategy for the mitigation of damage or destruction of such remains by the development is adopted.

**3.10** It was considered that such an investigation had the potential to contribute to an understanding of the landscape of Arlesey and its environs from the prehistoric period onwards, and to contribute to a number of research topics highlighted in the published local research agenda, including;

- the character, development and growth of the medieval settlement;
- the nature and development of agricultural field systems;
- the character, development and growth of post-medieval Arlesey

### **Collected Data**

**3.11** The present evaluation revealed modern imported topsoil, over heavily mixed deposits of made ground.

**3.12** Part of a large feature was revealed at the south-western end of the trench. Its fill consisted of very sticky and clean clay material which contained modern plastic electrical cable. The full extent and depth of this feature was not exposed during the present project and no clear purpose could be assigned.

**3.13** No other archaeological features, deposits or finds were revealed during the evaluation.

### **Conclusions**

**3.14** The investigation has demonstrated that the present site has been subject to significant disturbance in the post-medieval and modern periods, including the addition of various deposits of made up ground, which contained modern building material. These deposits were subsequently overlaid by imported topsoil.

**3.15** No evidence of either an original topsoil or subsoil was encountered in the trench, suggesting that these may have been removed and the ground level reduced in the recent past.

**3.16** The large feature revealed at the south-western end of the trench, [101], contained a clean bluish grey clay fill which peeled away very easily from the cut, suggesting that it was of recent origin. The presence of a length of modern plastic electrical cable deep within the fill confirmed a modern date for the fill.

**3.17** A number of large deposits of clean bluish grey clay have, however, been uncovered during archaeological trial trenching on the western side of Arlesey High Street. It has been suggested that these may represent natural silting in backfilled quarry pits, possibly related to the local brickmaking industry (Oetgen 2016, 16).

**3.18** A study of nineteenth and twentieth century mapping has shown no indication of any large pit like feature on the site, further suggesting that it is modern in date.

**3.19** On the basis of the results of the evaluation, including, the risk that the proposed development might have a negative impact on remains of archaeological significance may be considered to be *Low* for all periods pre-dating the late post-medieval period.

### **Confidence Rating**

**3.20** 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

- 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
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, *Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation*. (CIfA)
- Dept. of Communities and Local Government, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*. (TSO)
- Dobney *et al.* 1995 *Environmental Archaeology and Archaeological evaluations: recommendations concerning the environmental component of archaeological evaluations in England*. Working Papers of the Association for Environmental Archaeology, Number 2
- English Heritage 2015 *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning*. (HBMC)
- Medlycott, M. (2011) *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A revised Framework for the East of England*. ALGAO East of England (East Anglian Archaeology)
- Morris, J. (ed.) 1977 *Domesday Book: Bedfordshire*. Chichester: Phillimore
- Oake M, Luke M, Dawson M, Edgeworth M & Murphy P, 2007, *Bedfordshire Archaeology – Research and Archaeology: Resource Assessment, Research Agenda & Strategy*. Bedfordshire Archaeology Monog. 9
- Oetgen, J. 2016 *Land west of High Street, Arlesey, Bedfordshire [parcels 7 & 9]: Archaeological Evaluation*. Albion Archaeology Report 2016/103
- Phillips, M. 2015 *Land to rear of 54 High Street, Arlesey, Bedfordshire: Heritage Statement*. Albion Archaeology Report 2015/31
- Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW) 1983 *Map Sheet 4, Soils of Eastern England, Scale 1:250,000*.

### Websites

- Archaeology Data Service : <http://www.ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue>
- Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment: [http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/type-4\\_tcm3-12990.pdf](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/type-4_tcm3-12990.pdf)
- British Geological Survey: [www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience)
- Historic mapping evidence: [www.old-maps.co.uk](http://www.old-maps.co.uk)

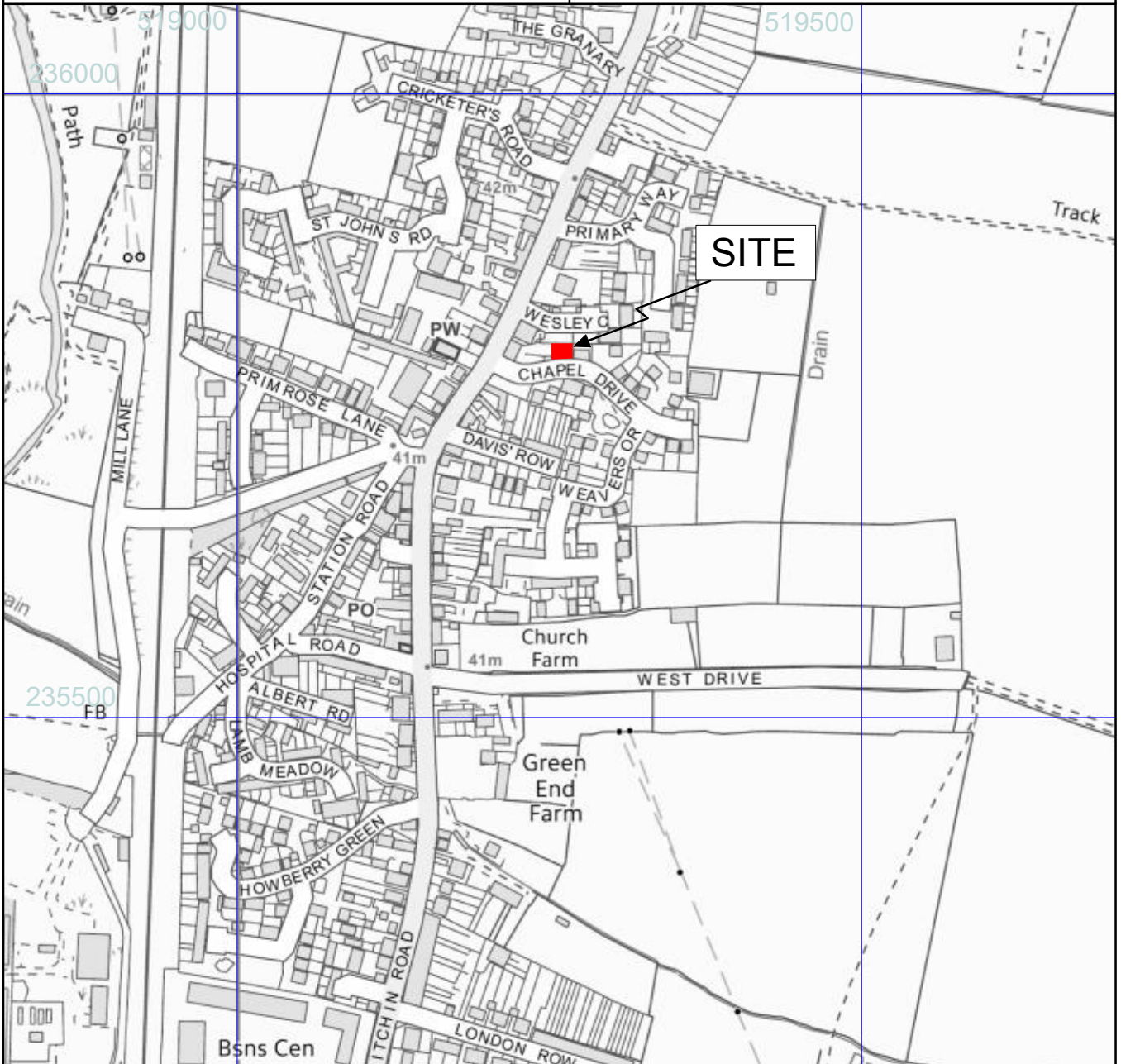
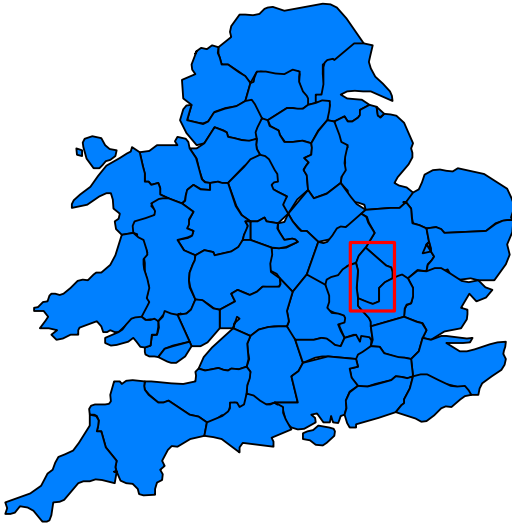
### Archives

- Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record

## 5 Illustrations

Figure 1 .....	Site location
Figure 2 .....	Site Layout
Figure 3 .....	Plan & Sections
Plate 1 .....	Trench 1, looking SW
Plate 2 .....	Indicative section, looking SE
Plate 3 .....	Feature [101], looking NW

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Site Location

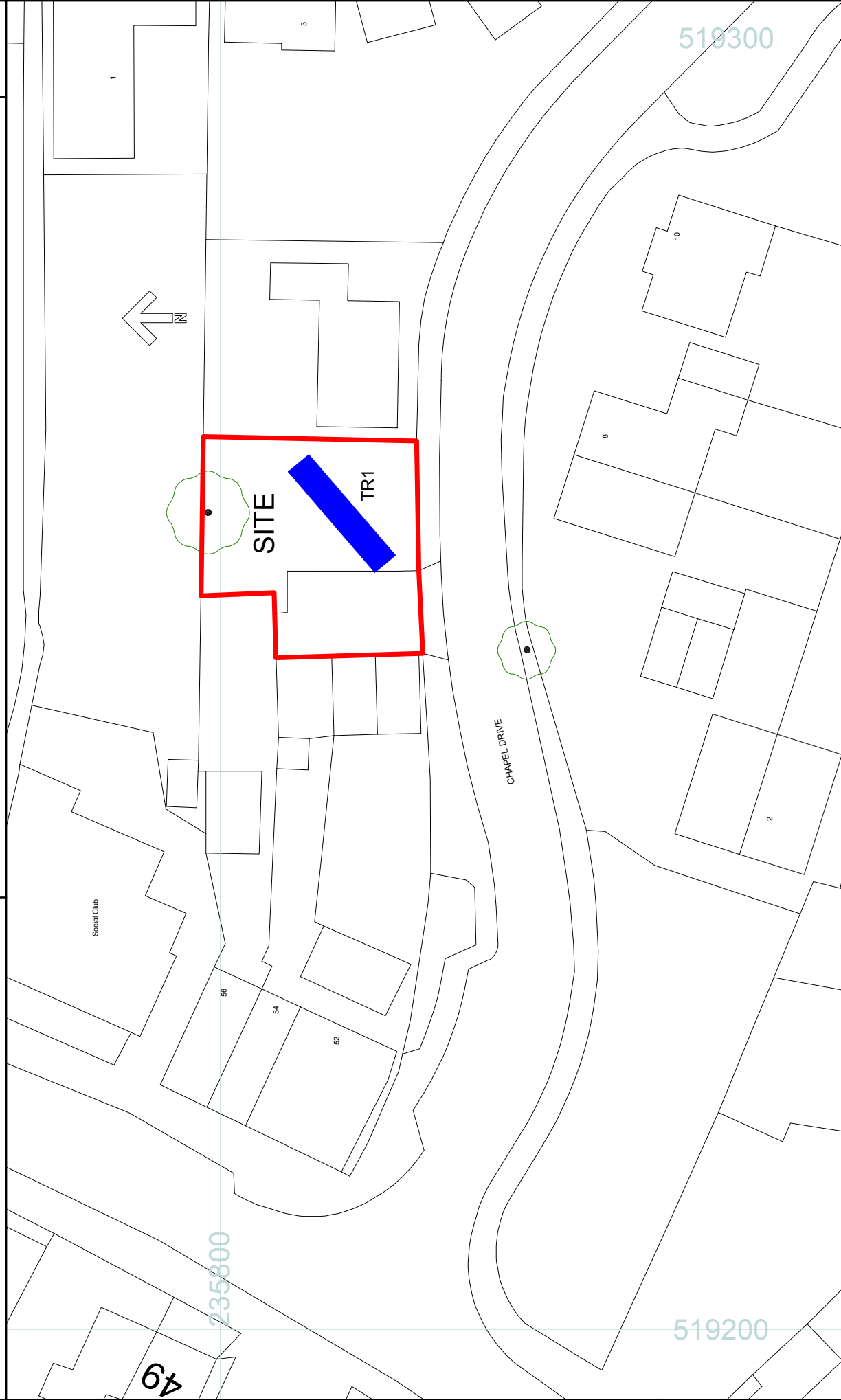
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Land to the rear of 54 High Street, Arlesey

HN1305



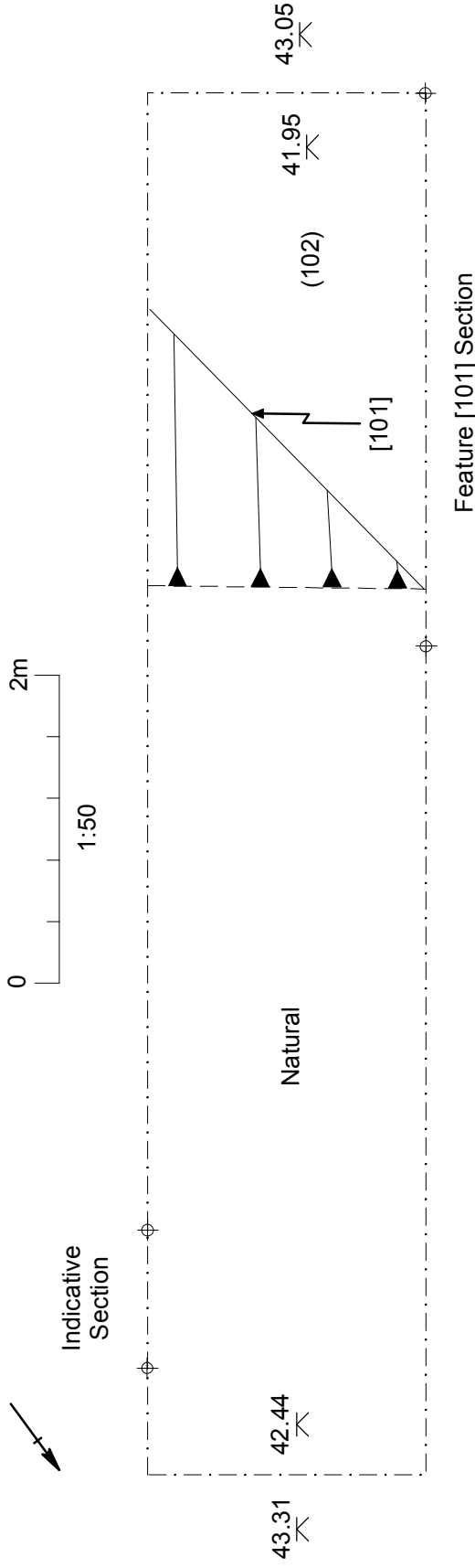
Site layout

Scale 1:400

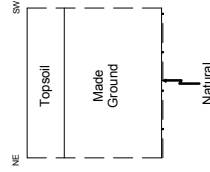
Figure 2

Ordnance Survey (c) Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence no.100020449





Indicative Section



Feature [101] Section

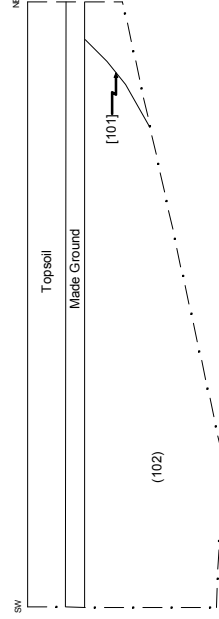






Plate 1: Trench 1, looking south-west



Plate 2: Indicative section, looking south-east





Plate 3: Feature [101], looking north-west

# Appendix

## Oasis Summary Sheet Printable version

<b>OASIS ID: heritage1-265369</b>	
<b>Project details</b>	
Project name	Land r/o 54 High Street, Arlesey, Beds
Short description of the project	In order to investigate the archaeological potential of a proposed new residential development located on land to the rear of 54 High Street, Arlesey, Bedfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developer to undertake a programme of evaluation by trial trenching. A previous Heritage Statement identified a <i>Low</i> risk of encountering remains dating from the prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods, and a <i>Moderate</i> risk for the medieval and post-medieval periods (Phillips 2015). A single trench was excavated, which revealed a considerable depth of overburden, suggesting that the present site has been subject to significant disturbance in the post-medieval and modern periods. A single feature was encountered at the south-western end of the trench, which contained a compact clay fill. A length of modern cable was recovered from the fill. Evidence from archaeological investigations on the west side of High Street suggests that this feature may represent a former extraction pit, possibly related to the local brick-making industry, which has subsequently silted up. No evidence for any features or deposits pre-dating the post-medieval period was recorded. 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 <i>Low</i> for all periods pre-dating the post-medieval period.
Project dates	Start: 09-02-2017 End: 10-02-2017
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HN1305 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Monument type	PIT Modern
Significant Finds	PLASTIC ELECTRICAL WIRE DUCTING Modern
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)
<b>Project location</b>	
Country	England
Site location	BEDFORDSHIRE MID BEDFORDSHIRE ARLESEY Land r/o 54 High Street
Postcode	SG15 6SL
Study area	240 Square metres

Site coordinates	TL 1926 3579 52.007279589594 -0.262282052916 52 00 26 N 000 15 44 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 41.95m Max: 43.31m
<b>Project creators</b>	
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
<b>Project archives</b>	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Bedford Museum
Digital available Media	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Bedford Museum
Paper available Media	"Context sheet", "Diary", "Drawing", "Photograph", "Report"
<b>Project bibliography 1</b>	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land to the rear of 54 High Street, Arlesey, Bedfordshire
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Phillips, D.
Other bibliographic details	Report 1048
Date	2017
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, 3 plates