

HERITAGE NETWORK

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**Land to the rear of
234 HIGH STREET
Arlesey, Bedfordshire**

HN1347

***HERITAGE
STATEMENT***

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HERITAGE NETWORK

Registered with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Managing Director: David Hillelson, BA MCIfA

Land to the rear of
234 HIGH STREET
Arlesey, Bedfordshire

Project ref.: HN1347
Planning ref: Pre-App
HER consultation: 201718/30
Museum Entry no: BEDFM 2017.42

Heritage Statement

Prepared on behalf of AML Property Investments Ltd

by

Mark Sycamore, BA

Report no. 1070

June 2017

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*The front cover shows the site from above
(Courtesy Bing maps)*

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Greg Jones and Mark Sycamore. The report text and illustrations were compiled by Mark Sycamore. The report was edited by Helen Ashworth.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Allen Harvey and David Lallana; and to Matt Adams, Archaeology Team, Central Bedfordshire Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

County:	Bedfordshire	District:	Central Bedfordshire
Village/town:	Arlesey	Parish:	Arlesey
Planning reference:	n/a	NGR:	TL 19320 36748
Client name and address:	AML Property Investments Ltd,		
Nature of work:	New dwelling	Present land use:	Waste ground
Site Status:	None	Reason for investigation:	NPPF
Position in planning process:	Pre-application	Project brief originator:	LPA
Size of affected area:	272m ²	Size of area investigated:	16m ²
Site Code:	HN1347	HER consultation:	201718/30
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.	Evaluation	Archive Recipient:	Bedford Museum
Start of work	07/06//2017	Finish of work	07/06//2017
Related HER Nos:	HER 17109	Periods represented:	None
Oasis UID:	heritage1-283610	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	None		
Material archive:	None		
Previous summaries/reports:	None		

Synopsis:

In order to investigate the archaeological potential of a proposed new residential development located on land to the rear of 234 High Street, Arlesey, Bedfordshire, and to advise the local planning authority in advance of the determination of the planning application, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developer to undertake a programme of evaluation by trial trenching.

Excavation of the single trench revealed a significant depth of overburden above the natural substrate. These layers included an imported topsoil, laid above an earlier topsoil, and a degraded subsoil above the natural clay.

Part of a cobbled surface was seen in the sections at the north-eastern end of the trench below the earliest topsoil layer. Cartographic evidence indicates that this relates to a small structure erected on the northern boundary in the late 1890s and demolished between 1939 and 1976.

No other archaeological features, deposits or finds were revealed during the present project.

1 Introduction

1.1 This *Heritage Statement* has been prepared at the request of *AML Property Investments Ltd*, in support of a planning application for residential development on land at the rear of 234 High Street, Arlesey, Bedfordshire.

1.2 Pre-application planning advice provided by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC), requested the submission of a Heritage Statement, including the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation to assess the level of impact the development proposals will have on any surviving archaeological remains on the site. The request was issued in line with the provisions set out in paragraph 128 of the Department of Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF), and adopted by the *Central Bedfordshire Design Guide* in March 2014. The full specification for the investigation was contained in the Heritage Network's approved Project Design, dated May 2017 (Turner 2017, Revision A).

1.3 The site is located on the eastern side of the High Street, in the rear garden of no.234, centred on NGR TL 19320 36748. The site lies at the northern end of the known medieval settlement of Arlesey (HER 17109).

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 are liable to be threatened by the development, and to establish a local and regional archaeological and historical context for them, if they are 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 site could preserve remains that might contribute to a greater understanding of the landscape and development of Arlesey from the prehistoric period onwards.

1.6 The development proposes the construction of a new detached dwelling and bike shed, 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 40mAOD. 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).

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 2-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 The single evaluation trench was located across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling. It was aligned north-east to south-west and measured 10m in length, 1.60m in width and between 0.95m and 1.05m in depth. 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

Length (m):	10	Width (m):	2	Maximum Depth (m):	1.05	Orientation	NE-SW
Level at NE End of Trench (mOD)		Top	40.64	Level at SW End of Trench (mOD)		Top	40.60
		Base	39.68			Base	39.56
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
-	Layer	Dark brownish grey, friable silty clay topsoil, with frequent rooting	> 10	>2	0.09		
-	Layer	Dark brown, friable silty clay buried topsoil	> 10	>2	0.16		
001	Layer	Cobbled surface: moderate sub-angular and sub-rounded stones, between 0.06m and 0.10m in diameter, set in a dark brown silty clay matrix	4.9	1.6	0.08		
-	Layer	Mid grey soft clay subsoil	> 10	>2	0.12		
-	Layer	Light mottled grey soft clay degraded subsoil	> 10	>2	0.53		
-	Layer	Light yellowish brown sandy clay natural	>10	>2	>0.01		

2.11 The stratigraphy consisted of dark brownish grey, friable silty clay topsoil, up to 0.09m in depth, with frequent rooting (Figure 2). This appears to have been imported as it overlies an earlier topsoil, comprising dark brown, friable silty clay, 0.16m in depth. The remains of a cobbled surface, context [001], which measured 0.08, in depth was observed below the topsoil at the north-eastern end of the trench. This consists of moderate sub-angular and sub-rounded stones, between 0.06m and 0.10m in diameter, set in a dark brown silty clay matrix. Below this was a mid grey soft clay subsoil, approximately 0.12m in depth, which in turn overlies a probable degraded subsoil, comprising light mottled grey, soft clay, 0.53m in depth. The natural light yellowish brown sandy clay was encountered below this layer, at a depth of approximately 0.95m below the present ground level.

2.12 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.

- There is limited evidence of prehistoric activity within the town. Two Iron Age coins were found during the 19th century (NMR 36243 & 36244). The actual locations of the findspots are unknown. Samian pottery dating from the 1st and 2nd century AD (HER 389) has been found the south, there is no evidence for prehistoric activity within the study area.
- Undated cropmarks of a possible enclosure lie 470m to the south east of the site (HER 641)
- The site lies within the limits of the medieval village at Arlesey (HER 17109), which appears to have been in existence by at least the late Saxon period, possibly as a polyfocal settlement concentrated around three manorial sites, Etonbury to the north of Stotfold Road, Arleseybury between Stotfold Road and Howberry Green, and Lanthony to the south of the modern parish. The present site lies within the historic manor of Arleseybury.
- The Domesday Book indicates a market at Arlesey, recorded as part of the Etonbury manor entry, which may have been located in the open space in front of St Peter's Church.
- In 1804, the manor of Arlesey Bury was acquired by Sir John Jackson, a director of the East India Company and the MP for Dover (Ashworth 2014, 5). Between 1808 and 1821 he pulled down part of the existing 17th century house, which lay to the north of the moated enclosure and turned it into a farmhouse. At the same period, in c.1820, he erected a new mansion called Arlesey Place to the east, which was surrounded by landscaped grounds 200m north-west of the site (HER 7040). The house, which was used in the 1950s as accommodation for staff at the Three Counties Hospital (later Fairfield Hospital), was demolished after 1960, with the site of the house and grounds becoming the Chase Hill Road estate in the late 1970s.
- A series of undated cropmarks, including relict field boundaries, circular features and possible sub-circular enclosures, was identified on aerial photographs consulted for a desk-based assessment of land to the west of High Street (Ashworth 2014, Figure 10). These are located in a large field approximately 250m to the south west.
- Areas of medieval ridge and furrow, indicative of the agricultural nature of the settlement, survive on the west of the High Street (HER 19520 and 19519), 400m and 560m to the south west respectively.
- One listed building, Gothic Farmhouse (list reference no. 1113823), a Grade II listed house with 17th century origins, reworked in the early 19th century, lies on the west side of High Street, approximately 410m to the south west.
- A number of buildings not statutorily listed but deemed to be heritage assets of local importance lie within a 500m radius of the present site. These include the White Horse public house (HER 16397), on the opposite side of the High Street, a thatched timber-

framed building of 17th century date; the Cooperative Terrace (HER 9594), 360m to the south, built in the late 19th century and which originally had allotments to the rear; no.260 High Street (HER 15525), 100m to the north, built in the 18th – 19th century; and St Peter's School (HER 5199), 55m to the north, a 19th century former school, which closed in 1926 and is now a private house.

Aims and Objectives

3.2 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 provide sufficient information to advise the planning application for the development of the site, and ensure that an appropriate strategy for the mitigation of damage or destruction of any such remains is adopted should it get consent.

3.3 It was considered that the present site could preserve remains from the prehistoric period onwards that might provide an opportunity to further investigate the historic development of Arlesey. The site had the potential to contribute to a number of research topics highlighted in the published local research agenda (Oake *et al*, 2007), 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

3.4 The present evaluation revealed a cobbled surface in the north-eastern corner of the trench at a depth of approximate 0.24m below the present ground level (Figure 3). The suggested extent of the surface, based on the evidence in the trench sections, was 4.9m in length and 1.6m in width. Its southern edge appears to have run parallel to the northern boundary to the site. Ordnance Survey mapping shows adjoining outbuildings located on the boundary between the present site and no.238 to the north in 1901 (not illustrated). They are not shown on earlier mapping and it is likely that this feature, which is likely to have been constructed in the late 1890s, relates to these structures. Finds observed within this layer included brick fragments, coal and sherds of transfer printed china, all of late 19th and early 20th century date. These artefacts were not collected.

3.5 An irregular line of modern disturbance, probably representing a former service trench, was also encountered, running on a north-east to south-west alignment across the south-western end of the trench. It was observed cutting the degraded subsoil layer and the natural clay and its exposed area measured 1.7m in length, 0.45m in width and over 0.56m in depth. Its fill contained gravel and modern brick fragments.

Conclusions

3.6 Excavation of the trench revealed a significant depth of overburden above the natural substrate. These layers included an imported topsoil, laid above an earlier topsoil, and a degraded subsoil above the natural clay.

3.7 Part of a cobbled surface was seen in the sections at the north-eastern end of the trench below the earliest topsoil layer. Cartographic evidence indicates that this relates to a small structure erected on the northern boundary in the late 1890s and demolished between 1939 and 1976.

3.8 No other archaeological features, deposits or finds were revealed during the present project.

3.9 Despite the broad-based archaeological potential of the site, defined from documentary sources, the development area is small and lies in a location that has been previously disturbed. The sample of the site that was examined demonstrates this disturbance and leads to the conclusion that the risk that the proposed development might disturb archaeological remains of any significance may be considered to be *Low*.

Confidence Rating

3.10 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

- Ashworth, H. 2014 *Land West of High Street, Arlesey, Beds.: Heritage Statement*. Heritage Network report no. 843
- Brown, N. & Glazebrook, J. 2000 *Research and Archaeology: a framework for the eastern counties, 2. Research agenda and strategy*. East Anglian Archaeology
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- Historic England 2015 *The Setting of Heritage Assets. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3* (HBMC)
- Medlycott, M. (ed.) 2011 *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper no.24
- Oake et al. 2007 *Bedfordshire Archaeology Research and Archaeology: Resource Assessment, Research Agenda and Strategy*, Bedfordshire County Council.

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
- British Geological Survey: www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience
- Historic mapping evidence: www.old-maps.co.uk

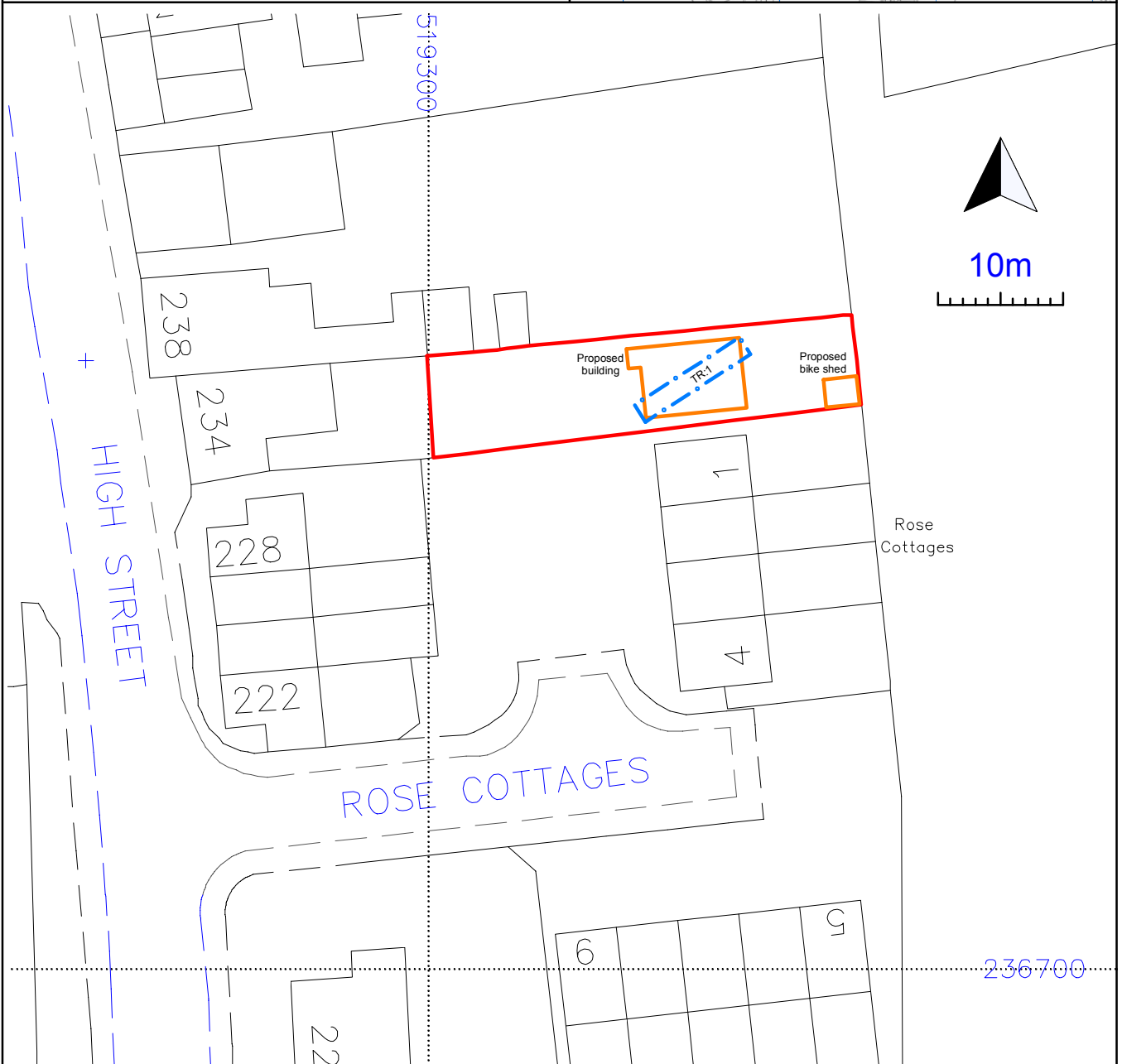
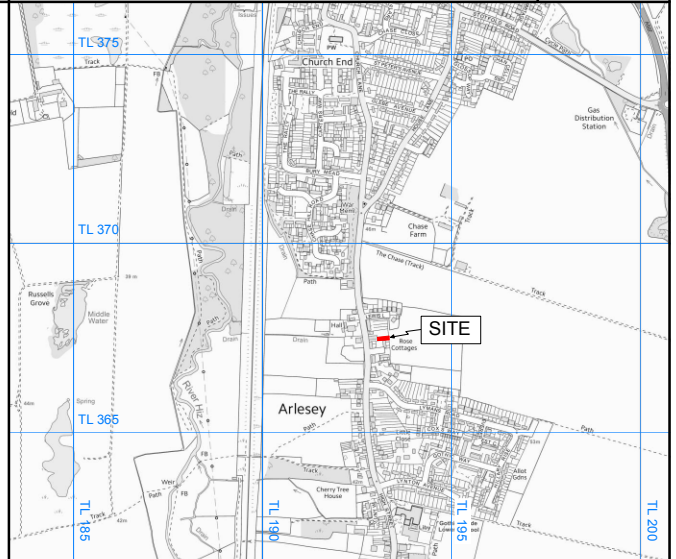
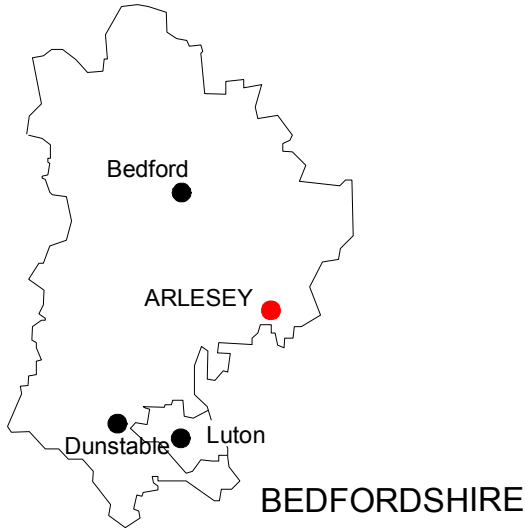
Archives

- Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record

5 Illustrations

Figure 1 Site location
Figure 2 Trench 1: indicative section
Figure 3 Trench 1: plan

Plate 1 Trench 1, looking NE
Plate 2 Trench 1: indicative section, looking NW



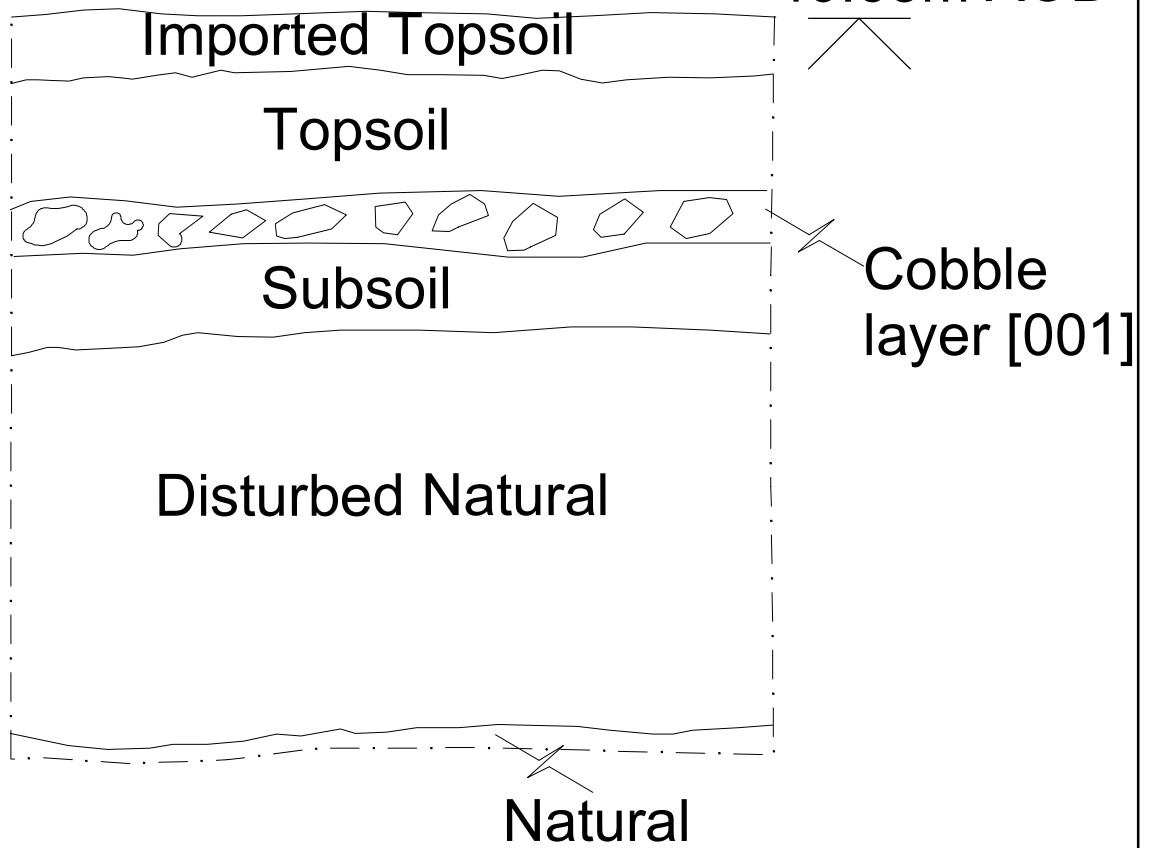
Site location and layout

Scale 1:500

SW

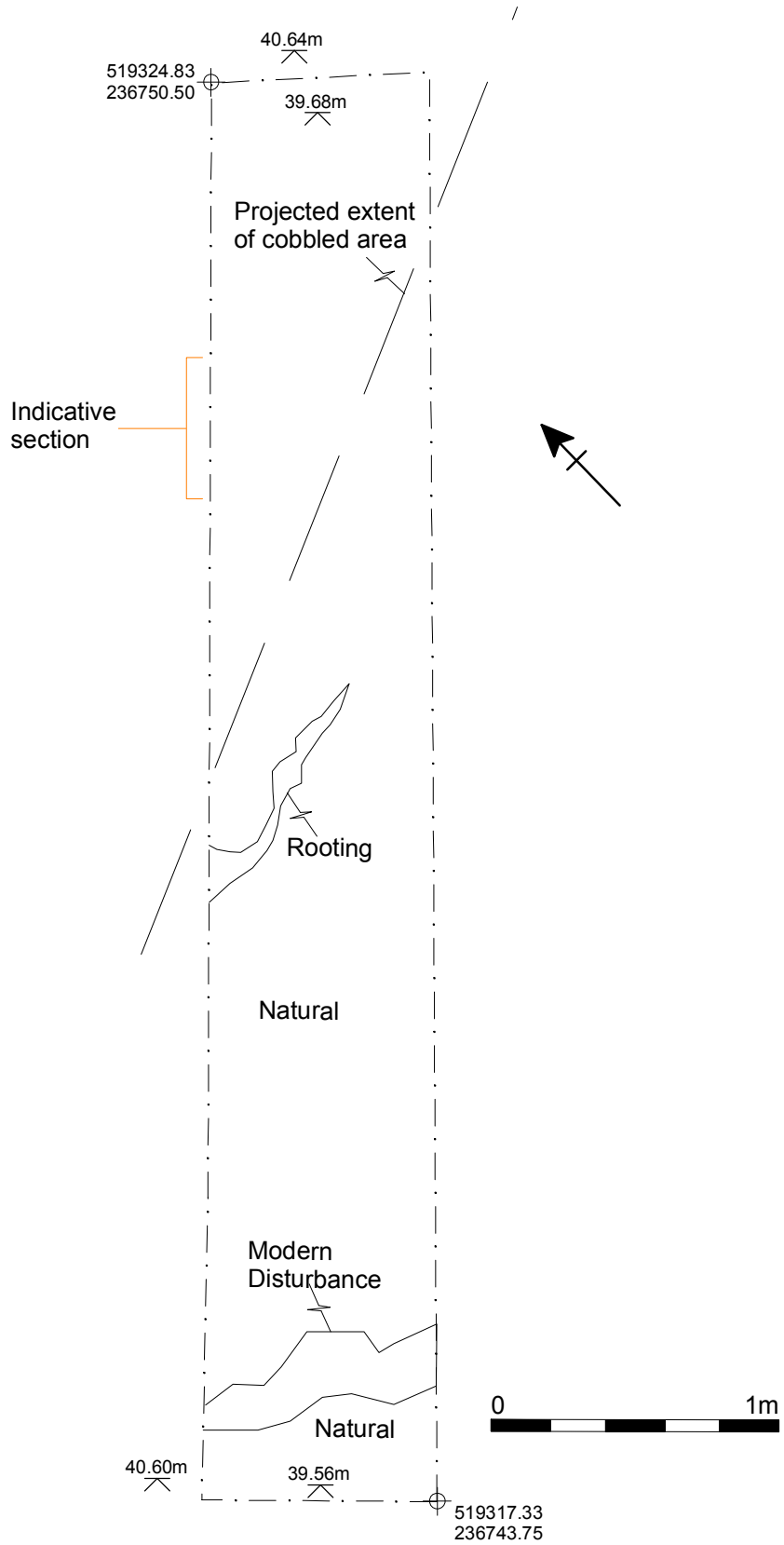
NE

40.63m AOD



0

1m



Plan of trench

Scale 1:50

Figure 3



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking NE



Plate 2: Trench 1, indicative section, looking NW

Appendix

Oasis Summary Sheet

OASIS ID: heritage1-283610	
Project details	
Project name	Land r/o 54 High Street, Arlesey, Beds.
Short description of the project	<p>In order to investigate the archaeological potential of a proposed new residential development located on land to the rear of 234 High Street, Arlesey, Bedfordshire, and to advise the local planning authority in advance of the determination of the planning application, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developer to undertake a programme of evaluation by trial trenching.</p> <p>Excavation of the single trench revealed a significant depth of overburden above the natural substrate. These layers included an imported topsoil, laid above an earlier topsoil, and a degraded subsoil above the natural clay.</p> <p>Part of a cobbled surface was seen in the sections at the north-eastern end of the trench below the earliest topsoil layer. Cartographic evidence indicates that this relates to a small structure erected on the northern boundary in the late 1890s and demolished between 1939 and 1976.</p> <p>No other archaeological features, deposits or finds were revealed during the present project.</p>
Project dates	Start: 07-06-2017 End: 07-06-2017
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HN1347 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Monument type	COBBLED SURFACE Modern
Significant Finds	None
Methods & techniques	""Targeted Trenches""
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	Pre-determination
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	BEDFORDSHIRE MID BEDFORDSHIRE ARLESEY Land r/o 234 High Street
Postcode	SG15 6TD
Study area	272 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 19320 36748
Height OD / Depth	Min: 39.56m Max: 39.68m

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	Developer
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Bedford Museum
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Bedford Museum
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Diary", "Drawing", "Photograph", "Report"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land to the rear of 254 High Street, Arlesey, Bedfordshire
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Sycamore, M.
Other bibliographic details	Report 1070
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, 2 plates