

# HERITAGE NETWORK



## **ALDENHAM SCHOOL Aldenham Road, Elstree, Herts.**

HN673

### *Archaeological Monitoring Report*



# *THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD*

*Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation*

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

## ALDENHAM SCHOOL Aldenham Road, Elstree, Herts.

HN673

### *Archaeological Monitoring Report*

*Prepared on behalf of The Aldenham School Charity*

By

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*The cover photograph shows the site looking east*

## Acknowledgements

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

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Terry Heather, Galower Builders Ltd; Michael Fearn, Shire Consulting; Andy Instone and Alison Tinniswood, Historic Environment Unit, HCC, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

## Summary

<b>Site name and address:</b>	Aldenham School, Aldenham Road, Elstree, Hertfordshire		
<b>County:</b>	Hertfordshire	<b>District:</b>	Hertsmere Borough
<b>Village/town:</b>	Elstree	<b>Parish:</b>	Aldenham
<b>Planning reference:</b>	TP/06/1562	<b>NGR:</b>	TQ 15797 97518
<b>Client name and address:</b>	The Aldenham School Charity, Aldenham School, Aldenham Road, Elstree, Herts		
<b>Nature of work:</b>	Theatre Extension	<b>Former land use:</b>	Hard standing
<b>Site status:</b>	AA 19	<b>Reason for investigation:</b>	Direction of local planning authority (PPG 16)
<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>	115m <sup>2</sup>	<b>Size of area investigated:</b>	115m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Site Code:</b>	HN 673	<b>Other reference:</b>	n/a
<b>Organisation:</b>	Heritage Network	<b>Site Director:</b>	David Hillelson
<b>Project type, methods etc.:</b>	Monitoring	<b>Archive recipient:</b>	Bushey Museum
<b>Start of work</b>	29/05/2007	<b>Finish of work</b>	04/06/2007
<b>Related SMR Nos:</b>	n/a	<b>Periods represented:</b>	Modern
<b>Oasis UID</b>	Heritage1-28626	<b>Significant finds:</b>	None
<b>Monument types:</b>	Wall		
<b>Physical archive:</b>	Brick		
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b>	None		

### Synopsis:

In response to a condition on the planning permission for an extension to the theatre block at Aldenham School, Aldenham Road, Elstree, Herts, the Heritage Network was commissioned by to undertake the archaeological monitoring of the development groundworks.

The monitoring programme revealed no archaeological features, deposits, or artefacts predating the modern period.

# 1. Introduction

**1.1** This report has been prepared at the request of *Shire Consulting*, acting on behalf of *The Aldenham School Charity*, as part of the archaeological monitoring and recording of development works at Aldenham School, Aldenham Road, Elstree, Hertfordshire.

**1.2** The investigation is a requirement of the planning consent granted by Hertsmere Borough Council (HBC) (ref. TP/06/1562), under the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990), for the extension of the existing theatre. The extent of the work was defined in a *Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording* prepared by the County Historic Environment Unit (CHEU) of Hertfordshire County Council acting as archaeological advisers to the HBC (ref. AI 01/03/2007). A full specification of the work was contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, dated May 2007.

**1.3** Aldenham School is situated on the north-east side of Aldenham Road, approximately 500m south-east of Letchmore Heath. The study area is centred on NGR TQ 15797 97518 and lies at the northern end of the school campus. 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, together with 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 which would 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 Bushey Museum, to complete the requirements of the planning condition.

## 2. Fieldwork

### TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

**2.1** The new extension is located on an area of former hard standing to the north of the existing theatre block. The ground is level at approximately 90mAOD.

**2.2** The underlying natural geology of the area consists of terrace gravels (Sumbler 1996, 117). The soils of the area belong to the Bursledon association (572j) which is described as ‘deep fine loamy soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging associated with deep coarse loamy soils variably affected by groundwater. Some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged loamy over clayey soils. Landslips and associated irregular terrain locally’ (SSEW 1983).

### METHODOLOGY

**2.3** The timetable for the fieldwork followed the client’s groundwork schedule. A number of site visits were made to supervise the excavation of foundation 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

#### *Stratigraphy*

**2.6** The observed stratigraphy on the site consisted of a layer of modern concrete slab, overlying 0.50m of highly mixed modern made ground (Plate1).

#### *Ground reduction*

**2.7** The ground level was reduced by approximately 0.70m across the footprint of the new building. This involved the removal of the existing slab and made ground.

#### *Footings trenches*

**2.8** A series of footings trenches were excavated across the area (Figure 2). These measured approximately 0.60m wide by 1.00m deep.

**2.9** The stratigraphy in Trenches 1 to 3 (Plate 2) consisted of a 0.20m thick layer of loose silty sand build-up, over a 0.70m thick levelling layer of highly mixed modern material. Beneath this was a greater than 0.10m thick layer of firm, brownish yellow (10YR 6/8) clay. This contained occasional fragments of modern brick and a ceramic land drain suggesting that it is also redeposited.

**2.10** A change of stratigraphy was observed in Trench 4 (Plate 3). The clay layer, measuring c. 0.30m thick, was now observed at the top of the trench, overlying a very similar but less stony layer measuring c. 0.60m thick. An orange, ceramic land drain was observed running through this layer (Plate 4).

**2.11** A wall formed of modern frogged grey bricks was observed running in line with the north wall of the theatre block along the southern side of Trench 7. The wall survived to a height of 4 courses and was 3.10m long (Plate 5). The bricks measured 10.3m wide by 17.5m long by 6.5m high. The wall has been dated to the 1960s.

### ***Drainage trenches***

**2.12** A single drainage trench was excavated along the western side of the theatre block. This cut through a tarmac layer underneath which 0.30m of mixed overburden and hardcore was observed. Beneath this was the firm clay layer previously observed in the footings trenches, and this overlay the bluish grey (Gley 2 5/10B), clay natural (Plate 6).

### 3. Discussion

**3.1** The site lies within Archaeological Area no.19 as designated in the District Local Plan. This notes that large quantities of Roman pot and tile have been found close to the study area, suggesting the presence of a Roman pottery kiln or kilns in the vicinity. The possible site of a Roman villa is recorded approximately 500m to the west of the site (NMR382240) and Roman settlement evidence has also been recorded within 1500m to the north (NMR1180894, NMR1210225).

**3.2** The monitoring of the groundworks associated with the construction of the extension revealed no archaeological features, deposits, or artefacts predating the modern period. Modern features include ceramic land drains, the remains of a modern wall and a reasonable depth of made ground. Undisturbed natural clay was only observed in the drainage trench running along the western side of the theatre block.

#### *Confidence Rating*

**3.3** Due to an oversight by the client's groundworkers, the removal of the hard standing on the site was not observed, but subsequent inspection demonstrated that the reduced area remained within the depth of the made ground across the footprint of the extension. Apart from this, the conditions were generally acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation.

**3.4** The excavation of the drainage trench to the west of the theatre block was not carried out under archaeological supervision as the client advised that this was part of ongoing maintenance on the site and therefore lay outside the scope of the planning consent.

**3.5** There are no other 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
29/05/07	MW	9	Site inspection
30/05/07	MW	9	Site inspection
01/06/07	MW	5	Site inspection
04/06/07	GIS	3	Site inspection

## 5. Bibliography

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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Sumbler, M.G. 1996, *British Regional Geology: London and the Thames Valley*, British Geological Survey, London

## 6. Illustrations

Figure 1 ..... Site Location

Figure 2 ..... Site Layout

Plate 1 ..... Stratigraphy of reduced area

Plate 2 ..... Stratigraphy in footings Trench 3

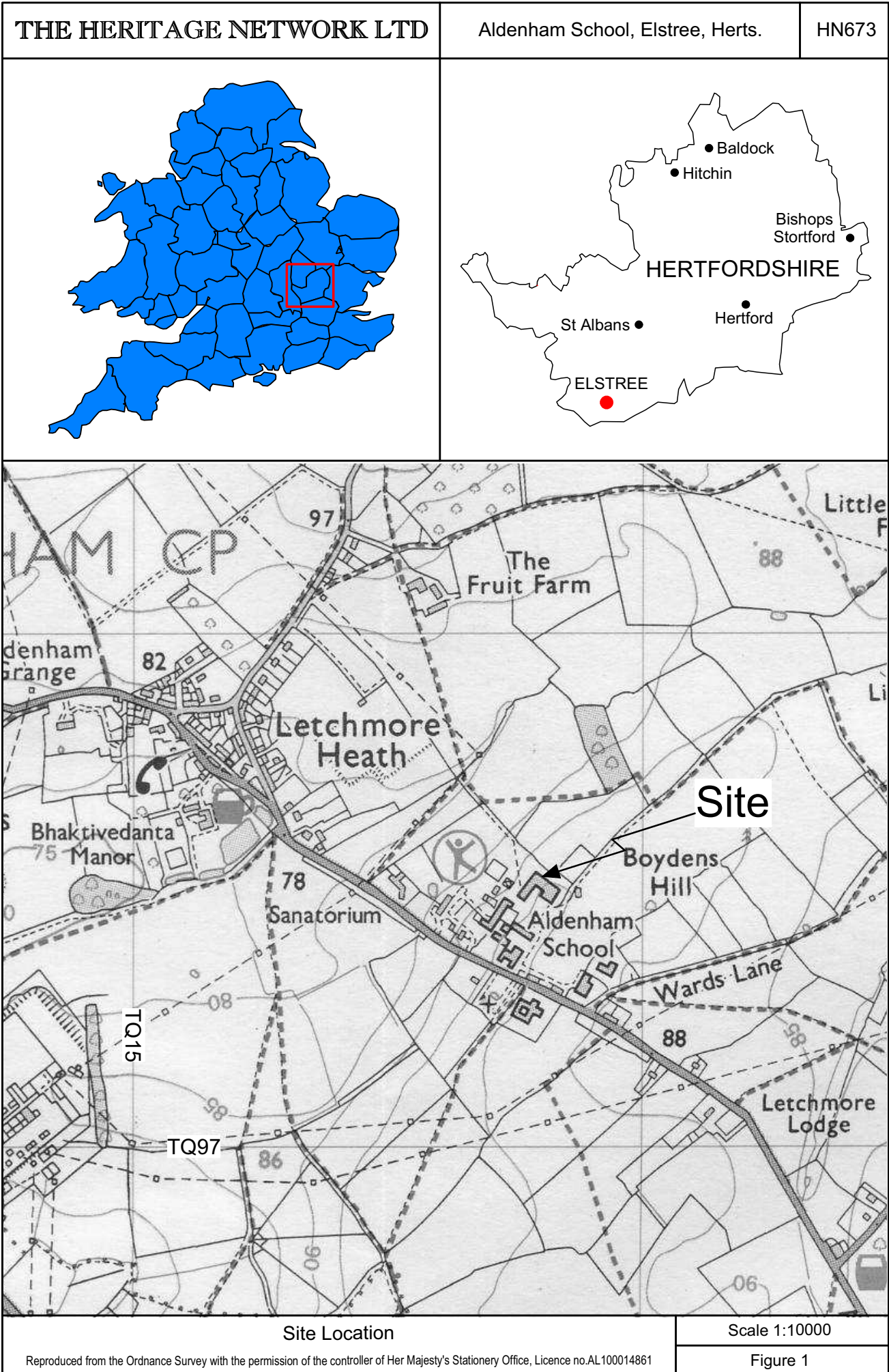
Plate 3 ..... Stratigraphy in footings Trench 4

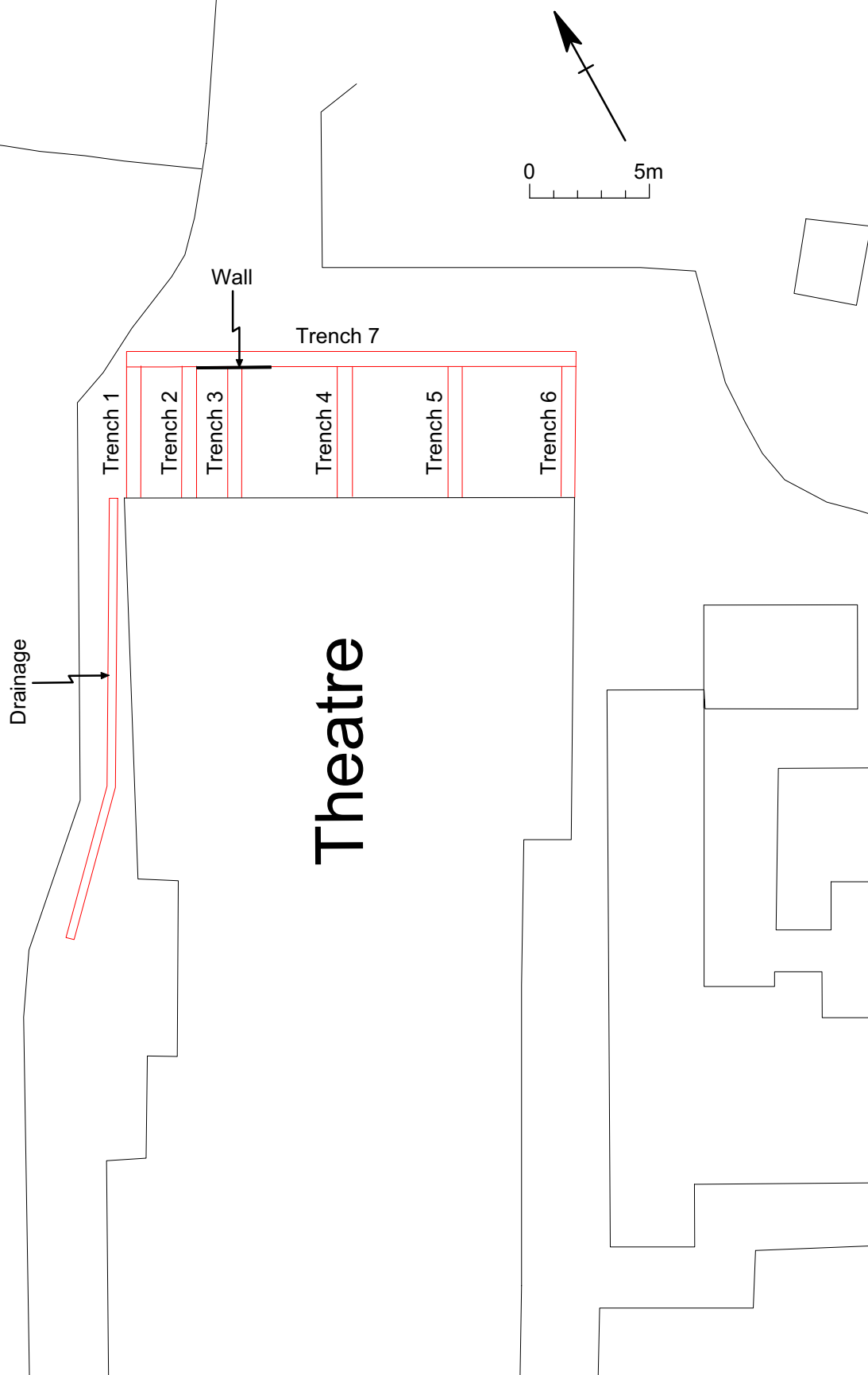
Plate 4 ..... Ceramic pipe in Trench 5

Plate 5 ..... Wall in footings Trench 7

Plate 6 ..... Stratigraphy in drainage trench







Site layout

Scale 1:250

Figure 2





Plate 1: Stratigraphy of reduced area



Plate 2: Stratigraphy in footings trench 3





Plate 3: Stratigraphy in footings trench 4



Plate 4: Ceramic pipe in trench 5





Plate 5: Wall in trench 7



Plate 6: Stratigraphy in drainage trench