



HERITAGE NETWORK



EPCOMBS, Hertingfordbury, Herts.

HN628

Archaeological Evaluation and Monitoring Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

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Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

**EPCOMBS,
Hertingfordbury Road, Hertingfordbury, Herts.**

HN628

Archaeological Evaluation

&

Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Mr and Mrs J Sheehan

by

Helen Ashworth BA AIFA and Geoff Saunders BA AIFA

Report no.432

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11 FURMSTON COURT, ICKNIELD WAY, LETCHWORTH, HERTS. SG6 1UJ
TELEPHONE: (01462) 685991 FAX: (01462) 685998

Contents

	Summary.....	Page i
Section 1	Introduction.....	Page 1
Section 2	Evidence.....	Page 2
Section 3	Fieldwork	Page 14
Section 4	Finds Assessment	Page 19
Section 5	Assessment of Risk.....	Page 22
Section 6	Sources Consulted	Page 28
Section 7	Illustrations	following Page 31
Appendix 1	Extract from Hertfordshire HER.....	Page 32
Appendix 2	Aerial Photographs Consulted	Page 33

The cover illustration shows a view of the house looking south-west

Acknowledgements

The research for this project was carried out by Kate Harwood and Helen Ashworth. The fieldwork was undertaken by Geoff Saunders and Alison Hudson. The brick and tile was dated by T. Doig. The report text and illustrations were prepared by Helen Ashworth and Geoff Saunders. The report was edited by David Hillelson.

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Summary

Site name and address:	Epcombs, Hertingfordbury Road, Hertingfordbury		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	East Herts
Village/town:	Hertingfordbury	Parish:	Hertford
Planning reference:	3/06/1478	NGR:	TL 3077 1226
Client name and address:	Mr & Mrs J. Sheehan, c/o Brian H Packman, 36 Datchworth Green, Knebworth, SG3 6TL		
Nature of work:	Garden features	Former land use:	Garden
Site status:	None	Reason for investigation:	Direction of local planning authority (PPG 16)
Position in planning process:	After full determination (as a condition)	Project brief originator:	Herts CC Historic Environment Unit
Size of affected area:	c.10,000m ²	Size of area investigated:	c124.88m ²
Site Code:	n/a	Other reference:	HN628
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	DBA/evaluation/ O & R	Archive recipient:	Hertford Museum
Start of work	1 st December 2006	Finish of work	20 th February 2007
Related SMR Nos:	12106; 2682	Periods represented:	Medieval; post-medieval
Oasis UID	heritage1-32493	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	house; garden		
Physical archive:	Pottery; brick; tile; animal bone		

Previous summaries/reports:	N/a
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Synopsis:

In order to assess the archaeological risk posed by the construction of a number of garden features, including a new garage, a carp pond and a swimming pool on land at Epcombs, Hertingfordbury Road, Hertingfordbury, Herts, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the owners to undertake a desk-based archaeological assessment and archaeological evaluation of the study area. This was followed by a watching brief on the service trenches and the excavation of the carp pond.

The desk-based assessment indicated that there was a high potential overall that archaeological remains dating from the later prehistoric period to the post-medieval would be damaged, destroyed or otherwise affected by its development.

The archaeological fieldwork showed that the land between the river and the house had been built up, probably to prevent flooding, and therefore no archaeological cut features or deposits were encountered. The remains of two structures of post-medieval date were encountered. These consisted of a well on the eastern side of the house, which has been dated to the mid to late 19th century, and a brick wall on the western side, which was originally constructed in the early to mid 18th century and was subsequently altered in the mid to late 19th century.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of *Mr and Mrs J. Sheehan* as part of the archaeological assessment of a proposed development site located at Epcombs, Hertingfordbury Road, Hertingfordbury, Herts.

1.2 The study area comprises an estate lying on either side of the River Mimram, a tributary of the River Lea (or Lee). This is an area known to have attracted seasonal occupation since at least the Mesolithic period, with evidence for more permanent settlements in the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods. Significant evidence for later activity, including late Iron Age and Romano-British settlements and cemeteries has also been recorded in upper reaches of the Mimram valley. A possible minor Roman road (HER 4665) runs to the south of the study area, from the pre-Roman and Roman settlements around modern Welwyn to join Ermine Street at Ware. The site itself forms part of an early medieval estate recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086.

1.3 On this basis it was considered that such investigation had the potential to contribute to an understanding of the origins, development and growth of settlement and land use in the vicinity of the study area from the Prehistoric period onwards.

1.4 The proposed development, which consists of the construction of a swimming pool to the south of the house, a carp pond to the west and a new garage to the east, is restricted to the land on the northern side of the river, which is roughly triangular in shape. It is bounded to the west by Hertingfordbury Road; to the south and south-east by the River Mimram; to the north and east by a line of trees and shrubs beside a wooden fence.

1.5 The study area is located on the northern and southern banks of the River Mimram, to the north of Hertingfordbury village, centred at NGR TL 3077 1226 (Figure 1).

1.6 The aim of the present investigation, which combines fieldwork with desk based research, has been to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any remains that are liable to be threatened by the development, and to provide a local and regional archaeological and historical context for such remains, in accordance with the current published regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000), should they be discovered.

2. Evidence

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The solid geology consists of river gravels in the valley of the River Mimram, a tributary of the River Lea, or Lee. Locally the soils are derived from the Ludford Association (571x), comprising deep well drained fine loamy, coarse loamy and sandy soils, locally flinty (SSEW 1983).

2.2 The study area is located to the north of Hertingfordbury village and approximately 1 mile to the west of the town of Hertford. It lies at approximately 45m AOD on gently sloping ground either side of the River Mimram.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Introduction

2.3 Documentary and cartographic evidence for this study has been collected from a 0.5km radius of the study area (see Appendix 1). This includes sites and find spots listed on the County Historic Environment Record and buildings included on the statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, maintained by English Heritage on behalf of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

2.4 The study area lies at the northern end of Area of Archaeological Significance No.176, which encompasses the village of Hertingfordbury. The eastern boundary of Panshanger Park, a Registered Park, is located approximately 150m to the north-west.

Earlier Prehistoric: Palaeolithic to Mesolithic (-500,000 bc to – 4,000 bc)

2.5 The study area is located in the valley of the Mimram, a tributary of the River Lea. This was an area particularly favoured for settlement from at least the Mesolithic (-10,000 bc to –4,000 bc) period (Austin & Murphy 1997). Much of the earlier evidence from this region relates to seasonal settlement, including a scatter of Mesolithic flint implements from Foxholes Farm approximately 3km to the east, indicative of a temporary camp (Partridge 1989, 7).

2.6 Slight evidence of early prehistoric activity has been recorded from the vicinity of the study area. A single handaxe dating to the Palaeolithic (-500,000 bc to –10,000 bc) made of porphyry (HER 274) was found in a pit beside a tributary of the Mimram, approximately 360m to the south-west. Another Palaeolithic handaxe was recovered during the excavations at Foxholes Farm, (ibid). This had been redeposited in a later context.

Later Prehistoric: Neolithic to Bronze Age (- 4,000 bc to - 700 bc)

2.7 Although no evidence for this period has, as yet, been recorded from the immediate vicinity of the study area, significant evidence of later prehistoric activity has been recorded in the region. A number of finds of Neolithic (-4,000bc to –2,200 bc) and Bronze Age (-2,500 bc to –700 bc) artefacts have been recorded from the Lea Valley, to the north and east of Hertford (Partridge

1989, 1-3). The prehistoric settlement at Foxholes Farm, approximately 3km east of the study area, started in the earlier Neolithic period and continued into the later Bronze Age (ibid, 7-12)

2.8 This lack of features and finds from the vicinity of the study area may reflect a genuine lack of activity. However, it may also indicate a lack of archaeological fieldwork in the area or that later activity has destroyed the fragile remains of earlier occupation.

Early – Middle Iron Age (- 700 bc to – 100 bc)

2.9 No evidence for occupation of this period has, as yet, been identified from the immediate vicinity of the study area.

2.10 The archaeological evidence from the wider region indicates that extensive woodland clearance was undertaken during the late Bronze Age / early Iron Age transition (c. - 1,200 bc to – 600 bc) most probably to create fields for arable crops (Darvill 1987, 108; Bryant 1997, 25). At this period the settlement pattern is characterised by small open habitations, approximately 1.5 km apart. A number of such small, previously unknown, settlement and funerary sites were revealed during the archaeological fieldwork along the line of the A10 Wadesmill Bypass, approximately 7 km to the north-east (Ashworth & Turner, forthcoming).

Late Iron Age (- 100 bc to AD 43)

2.11 Although no evidence for late Iron Age activity has been recorded from the immediate vicinity of the study area, archaeological fieldwork in the wider area has demonstrated that the region was well settled by this period.

2.12 Settlement appears to have been concentrated around the rivers, with clusters of known sites in the valleys of the Lea, the Mimram, the Rib and the Beane. A number of sites have been recorded from the upper reaches of the Mimram valley, particularly around the modern towns of Welwyn and Welwyn Garden City to the north-west of the study area. The remains of substantial earthworks and domestic occupation have been recorded at Welches Farm, Welwyn and at Welwyn Garden City (Niblett 1995, 17). Occupation also continued into this period at Foxholes Farm (Partridge 1989, 14-15).

2.13 A study of the available aerial photographs (Appendix 2) suggests that circular and sub-circular features of possible late Iron Age date are located to the west of the study area (Figure 14). These are visible on the northern bank of the Mimram between 500m and 900m west of the study area.

2.14 Excavation in 1965, ahead of the development of the Panshanger housing estate at Welwyn Garden City, revealed an extremely wealthy late Iron Age burial. The grave pit contained several imported vessels, including metal cups and amphorae, used to bring wine and olive oil from the Mediterranean. The artefacts recovered from the grave indicate the burial of an individual of wealth and high status. At least six satellite cremation burials were also recorded.

Romano-British (AD 43 to AD 410)

2.15 The line of a possible Roman road (HER 4665) (Viatores' road 214) lies approximately 300m to the south of the study area. This is believed to have run from the Roman settlement at Welwyn to join Ermine Street at Ware. In Hertingfordbury it follows the line of a modern minor road and trackway on the southern side of the Mimram (Figure 2).

2.16 Despite the presence of the Roman road, no settlement evidence has, as yet, been identified in the immediate vicinity of the study area. However, two clusters of small settlement sites have been identified in the Mimram and Lea valleys to the north-east and north-west of the study area (Williamson 2000, Figure 10, p.56). These are located around the modern towns of Welwyn and Ware.

2.17 The rural settlement at Foxholes Farm, approximately 3km to the east, continued in occupation into the Roman period (Partridge 1989). A farmstead was established on the site in the 2nd century AD, surrounded by an extensive field system. By the later Roman period the site was also used for metalworking. At least 40 metalworking hearths were excavated on the site.

Early Medieval (AD 410 to AD 1066)

2.18 Although no archaeological evidence for a settlement has been identified in the immediate vicinity of the study area, place name evidence suggests occupation nearby. The name Hertingfordbury translates as 'the defended place of the Hertingfordingas [the people of Hertford]' (Williamson 2000, 66). This group is recorded in the Tribal Hideage, a list of tribute owed to a Mercian leader in the 8th century AD. The name potentially indicates a tribal territory located around the confluence of the rivers Mimram and Lea.

2.19 Evidence for a group of probable Middle Saxon (6th – 7th century) structures was identified during the excavations at Foxholes Farm, approximately 3km to the east (Partridge 1989, 18-20). The structures have been interpreted as a temporary group established for a single event, possibly the Synod of Hertford in AD 672, rather than a permanent domestic habitation (ibid, 20).

Medieval (1066 to 1540)

2.20 The Domesday manor of Hertingfordbury was assessed at 5 hides (approximately 600 acres), which included meadowland, pasture and enough woodland for 200 pigs. Twenty seven males are recorded as living on the estate, giving an estimated population of between 110 and 130. There were also two watermills.

2.21 The centre of the medieval settlement at Hertingfordbury (HER 2682) may have been located on the south bank of the Mimram, adjacent to the southern part of the study area and to the east of the present village (Figure 2). It appears to have lain to the north-east of the Old Rectory and north of the parish church.

2.22 The parish church of St Mary (HER 1103), approximately 200m to the south of the study area, originally dates to the medieval period, but was almost completely rebuilt in the mid 19th century. In 1890 it was enlarged by Earl Cowper of Panshanger.

2.23 Limited archaeological evidence of medieval activity has been recorded from the immediate vicinity of the study. A medieval jetton, or trade token (HER 4734) was found in Chelmsford Wood, approximately 200m to the east of the study area.

Post-medieval (1540 to 1901); Modern (1901 to present)

2.24 The present village of Hertingfordbury consists of ribbon development along Hertingfordbury Road, and possibly lies to the west of the core of the medieval settlement. A former corn mill (HER 5791) is sited on the Mimram, immediately adjacent to the south-western side of the study area. Mill records go back to 1839 and it ceased milling in 1933.

2.25 Mill Farm (HER 11124), a possible planned farm, is located on the western side of Hertingfordbury Road, opposite the mill.

2.26 A number of disused gravel pits are known from the vicinity of the study area. One pit (HER 6864) was located approximately 180m to the north of the study area. The site has been infilled and is now occupied by a modern housing estate. A second disused pit is marked on modern OS maps approximately 500m to the south-west of the study area, adjacent to the A414.

SITE SPECIFIC

2.27 The name Epcombs (HER 12106) has early medieval origins. It is thought to combine the personal name 'Eoppa' with the rare suffix 'camp', derived from the Latin *campus*, meaning field (Williamson 2000, 69), giving 'Eoppa's field'.

2.28 Epcombs is thought to have been recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as 'Thepecamp'. The estate consisted of half a hide of land (approximately 60 acres) which was held in alms by 'a certain priest'. It contained meadow and plough land and a mill. Two slaves are recorded on the manor. The priest is also recorded as holding the land before the Norman invasion.

2.29 Until recently the study area lay within the parish of Hertford St Andrew's, rather than in Hertingfordbury. It now lies in the civil parish of Hertford.

2.30 The descent of the estate in the medieval period is uncertain, it was apparently held by one Lyving in the reign of Richard I and was claimed by Luke, son of William of Hertingfordbury, in 1281 (VCH1). It was recorded at this period as having 90 acres of land, 3 acres of meadow, 8 acres of pasture and 12 acres of woodland (Greening 1998). By the early 16th century it was owned by the Lawrence family. The estate may have been united with the manor of Hertingfordbury in the early 17th century through a marriage between Elizabeth Darnell, granddaughter of William Lawrence, and Christopher Vernon. The Vernons were lords of the manor of Hertingfordbury.

2.31 In 1690 the Vernon family sold the joint estate to James Selby, who became lord of the manor (Greening 2005). The documentary records appear somewhat confusing for the period of the late 17th and early 18th century, but it appears that James Selby subsequently sold Epcombs to John Miles of Hertingfordbury and William Miles of Watton-at-Stone. However in 1728 James

Selby's son apparently sold Epcombs and the manor of Hertingfordbury to George, 3rd Earl Cowper.

2.32 Other parts of the estate were sold to Thomas Moore and John and Margaret Taylor in 1713 (HALS D/EP T929). In October of the same year Edward Hughes leased the house and lands at Epcombs and the malt house or maltings (HALS D/EP T931a). The Hughes family did not live at Epcombs; a lease of 1767 records Edward Hughes' address as Craven Street, in the parish of St Martins-in-the-Fields, Middlesex (HALS D/EP T1051).

2.33 In the late 18th century, between 1781 and 1790, Sir Edward Hughes, Knight of the Bath, and Ruth his wife, leased the estate from Henry Cowper for £760 (HALS D/EP T1055). It is described as consisting of: *13 messuages, 1 mill, 2 dovecotes, 6 barns, 6 stables, 13 gardens, 250 acres of land, 40 acres of pasture, 40 acres of wood, 10 acres of land covered with water for fishing and ground pasture for all cattle in the parish of St Andrews Hertingfordbury.*

2.34 The lease to the estate was surrendered by Sir Edward in 1790 and transferred to James Farrer (HALS D/EP T1056). In 1819 the lease was taken by John Murray of Yardley Bury for a term of 21 years at an annual rent of £200 (HALS D/EP T1057).

2.35 In c.1800 Epcombs was sold to the Baker family of Bayfordbury, who had already bought Hertingfordbury Park (Greening 2005). Significant alterations may have been undertaken at the house at this period, involving its re-orientation to display to Hertingfordbury Road and to Panshanger House and park (ibid). This work largely consisted of the building of a new west wing and northern façade. It was at this period that the main entrance was moved to the west.

2.36 Jane Austen is thought to have used Epcombs as the model for Longbourne House, the home of the Bennett family in 'Pride and Prejudice' (Greening 1998). Hertingfordbury appears as Longbourne village, whilst 'Meryton' has been identified as Hertford. Balls Park, to the south-east of Hertford, is thought to have been the model for 'Netherfield', Mr Bingley's rented home and either Goldings or Panshanger may represent Sir William Lucas' house.

2.37 The present house at Epcombs has been subject to a number of phases of development. A survey of the visible fabric by conservation architect, Alan Greening, has suggested that the present house may have developed from a late medieval or early post-medieval structure. A possible medieval cross-wing has been identified, running to the west of the present dining room (Greening 2005). This may have been re-used as a chimney-bay from c.1600.

2.38 Mr Greening has suggested that the early 17th century house consisted of two short wings, joined by a rectangular central block. A northern range was added, either in the 1630s or the 1660s. Further remodelling was undertaken in the early 18th century, including rebuilding the central cell and the addition of a new brick façade. The west and north ranges were added in the early 19th century.

Cartographic

2.39 The earliest map consulted is a Survey of Hertingfordbury Farm (HALS D/EP P7) surveyed by Richard Griffin and dated 1732 (Figure 3). This shows very little detail of the

property and is probably inaccurate as to scale. The house is shown sitting right on the road to the north of the village of Hertingfordbury, which is shown in relatively little detail.

- A hedge lines the eastern side of the road almost up to the house, but no hedge is shown to the south.
- Several trees are depicted around the house, and a hedge appears to sit on top of a small mound to the north-east of the house.
- A small structure is depicted to the north of the house. However, the mill is not shown.
- No property boundaries are marked on this map.

2.40 Dury and Andrews' map of 1766 shows the study area in more detail (Figure 4). The house is shown as rectangular structure to the north of the river.

- Outbuildings and a square yard lie to the north. The southern side of the yard is formed by the northern façade of an L-shaped building, the eastern and northern sides by a wall, which terminates in a small square building next to the road. The western side is open to the road. This area may represent the stables and coach house.
- Another wall runs east for a short distance from the eastern end of the L-shaped structure, before turning and running south, towards the river. A wall runs west from this, to the north of the house, dividing the house from the possible stables.
- The eastern line of the southern enclosure is continued to the south by another wall. The house appears to lie to the west of this wall. A second, more broken, line appears to run westward from the southern end of this, to join the south-eastern corner of the house. Unfortunately Edward Hughes' name is written across the property at this point, so it is difficult to determine the exact detail shown on the map.
- A small entrance from the road is shown through the western wall close to the south-western corner of the house.
- A number of dots and lines are shown to the south of the house, possibly indicating garden features or planted areas. Trees and bushes are shown lining the northern river bank
- The mill appears on this map.
- A rectangular feature is marked to the south-east of the house and close to the northern line of the bend in the river. This may represent an ornamental canal, or an enclosed garden. No details are shown of the interior. Some later maps show a rectangular area and it may represent the area enclosed by iron railings noted during the site walkover.
- A line of trees, running north to south, is shown to the east of this rectangular feature. A second line runs west from this to align with the north-eastern corner of the postulated stable block. An avenue of trees, aligned north to south, is shown further to the east. This is shown

as running from the northern side of the road to Hertford and continued to the south of the river. An ornamental canal lies between the rows of trees on the southern side of the river.

2.41 The study area is shown in very little detail on the Plan of Hughes Farm (HALS D/EP P35) dated c.1810 (Figure 5). It appears that most of the farm lay to the north and west of Hertingfordbury Road. The location of the house itself is marked, and labelled Wm Cowper Esq. but no details of the grounds are shown.

- The yard to the north is shown in more detail and consists of a southern and northern range, joined by a wall to the east.

2.42 The Hertingfordbury Enclosure map of 1813 (HALS QS/E/32) shows the study area in limited detail (Figure 6). The house is shown in plan, rather than as a perspective drawing, on the map. At this time it consisted of an irregular rectangle, with narrow extensions to the east and north-east.

- Although no details are shown for the grounds immediately surrounding the house several lines of trees, forming a rectangle, are shown to the north-east. This may represent an orchard.
- The southern range of buildings to the north of the house appears relatively unchanged, but the smaller structures in the northern range appear to have gone. The eastern yard wall is also unmarked.
- A narrow structure is marked on the northern bank of the river, in the south-western corner of the study area. This ran west from the mill building .

2.43 The Hertingfordbury Tithe map (HALS DSA 4/51/2) dated 1838 shows little detail of the study area (Figure 7). The house is marked as a square structure, with two long narrow extensions on the eastern side. The parish boundary runs immediately north of the house.

- The area between the house and the river is numbered as plot 24. The accompanying schedule (HALS DSA 4/51/1) dated 1838, names the plot as part of Mill Mead, owned by Earl Cowper and occupied by Thomas Newman.
- Plot 42 to the south of the river is described as a dwelling house and lands, owned by Earl Cowper and occupied by Mrs Prescott.

2.44 The Tithe map for Hertford St Andrews (HALS DSA 4/50/2) shows slightly more detail of the grounds to the north of the house (Figure 8). The house is depicted as a square building, with two long narrow extensions to the east.

- The main entrance to the property was from the north. A curving drive ran south for a short distance, before splitting into two, with one length running to the eastern side of the house and one to the western side. The wider area at the southern end of the western drive implies that the main entrance at this period was through the western façade. This is supported by the historic building surveys undertaken by Alan Greening (Greening 1998 and 2005).

- A small square structure is shown at the northern end of the drive. This may represent a lodge or gatehouse.
- It is likely that the grounds to the north and south of the house were landscaped and planted, but no evidence of this is shown on the map.
- A rectangular area is marked to the north-east of the house, numbered as plot 36. This is described as ‘Epscomb Grove’ in the accompanying schedule (HALS DSA 4/50/1). It was owned by Earl Cowper and occupied by Mrs Prescott.
- Plot 35, on the western side of the road, is described as stabling and garden etc. It was also owned by Earl Cowper and occupied by Mrs Prescott, suggesting that it formed part of the Epcombs estate.

2.45 The 1st edition 25” OS map of 1881 (HALS BG/HER 90) shows the study area in some detail (Figure 9). The layout of the house and the drive had not changed significantly since 1838.

- The boundary between the gardens surrounding the house and the meadow land to the east followed the line of the eastern arm of the drive. It then turned and ran east to the northern bend in the river. The line of this earlier boundary may cross the area of the proposed new garages.
- Although no formal gardens are marked in the area to the south of the house, the grounds were clearly landscaped and planted. Trees and shrubs are marked at the southern bend in the river, including a line of trees which may represent the lime walk noted during the site walkover (see below). Several of the trees may be sitting on small mounds.
- A path is shown running south from the eastern end of the house to the river. This then turns east and follows the river bank into the meadows beyond the gardens. The line of the path from the house was observed as a raised platform during the site walkover.

2.46 The 2nd edition 25” OS map of 1898 shows no change to the study area (Figure 10), although the space between the two eastern extensions had apparently been roofed over by this time.

2.47 The 3rd edition 25” OS map of 1923 shows a number of changes to the study area (Figure 11). A triangular extension had been constructed on the south-eastern side of the house in the early 20th century.

- The line of the eastern boundary had been straightened and moved further to the east. It turned to run eastwards just short of the river.
- A third length of driveway had been established along the western boundary to the north of the house.
- The shrubs and bushes marked to the north of the mill building and south-west of the house on the earlier OS plans are not shown on this map.

2.48 The 1938 6" edition OS map shows no change to the study area (Figure 12).

2.49 The 1973 1:2500 scale OS map shows very little detail of the study area (Figure 13). The house and drive are marked, but none of the wooded areas on the edges of the property.

- A small rectangular structure is marked adjacent to the eastern arm of the drive and to the north-east of the house.

Aerial photographs

2.50 Aerial photographs, held in the collections of the NMR and Hertfordshire County Council, have been consulted for this project (Appendix 2). These were taken between 1946 and 1994 and show a number of natural and potential archaeological features in the vicinity of the study area (Figure 14). They also show that the river meadow was untouched until the late 1960s / early 1970s, when part of it was ploughed. More recently it has reverted to meadow land.

2.51 The photographs in the Hertfordshire County Council collections focus on the study area (HCC UID 8420 – 8423, taken March 1968). They clearly show paths running south and east to the river from the house. These include the sunken path running east, noted during the site walkover, and the path from the southern side of the house to the river, also noted during the site walkover.

- A path runs from the south-eastern corner of the house to the river, continuing the eastern arm of the drive. This is apparently still in use at this date. To the west of this main north-south path are the marks of other probable paths which apparently radiate from a small circular feature. This undoubtedly represents the remains of a formal garden layout, of unknown date, to the south of the house which consisted of paths and triangular planted beds. The walled area immediately south of the house may encroach on its northern side.
- A curving path appears to continue the line of one of these features eastwards, towards the northern bend of the river. A possible rectangular enclosure lies to the north of this path, approximately where the proposed swimming pool will be sited. This may mark the remains of a former tennis court, or similar feature.
- The same photographs show the lines of former field boundaries on the northern bank of the river, to the north-east of the study area.
- A series of probable buried watercourses appear clearly on the photographs. These are located in the field to the west of Hertingfordbury Road, approximately 200m west of the study area. The palaeo-channels run towards both the stream to the north and the river to the south. Much of this area now lies below the modern A414 road. Similar features are also visible to the east of the study area, in an area now occupied by a housing estate on the south-western edge of Hertford.

2.52 The photographs held by the NMR show the land to the east and west of the study area. A number of these show soilmarks, indicating possible circular and sub-circular features, in the field

between the River Mimram and the stream to the north, approximately 500m – 900m west of the study area (APs RAF/CPE/UK/1779; RAF/58/825; RAF/540/674; RAF/58/1917; RAF/58/4267; MAL/69/031). The marks are visible over an area of approximately 400m in length along the northern bank of the river.

2.53 Faint traces of possible sub-circular features were noted on AP MAL 69031, frame V 123 in a field to the south of the river. They were located close to the eastern end of Blakemore Wood and approximately 400m south-west of the study area. These potential features were not clearly visible on any other AP, though faint traces may be seen on RAF/1066/UK/1565, frame 4162 and RAF/540/674, frame 4068.

2.54 The land to the east of the study area is more wooded, and therefore potential features are less visible. Former field boundaries are visible in this area on a number of photographs (APs RAF/540/674; MAL/69/031; OS/71334).

2.55 Cropmarks of probable square enclosures are visible on AP OS/69360 V 134, taken July 22nd, 1969. These are located on the northern side of the B195, close to the junction with the road to Birch Green, approximately 1.5km to the south-west of the study area. The area now lies beneath the A414 trunk road.

Site Walkover

2.56 The present site was visited by Helen Ashworth of the Heritage Network and Anne Rowe and Kate Harwood of the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust, on Friday 27th October, 2006. Mr J Sheehan, the owner, and Brian Packman, the owner's agent and architect, were also present.

2.57 The study area consists of a roughly triangular plot of ground on the northern side of the River Mimram and a smaller, sub-rectangular plot, on the southern side of the river. The present property forms the remains of a larger estate, which appears on 18th and 19th century maps to have occupied land to the north of the Mimram, between the river and the road (Figures 3 - 10).

2.58 The house is located on slightly rising ground to the north of the river. The main entrance has been through the western façade since the early 19th century (Smith 1993, 82). Prior to that it was through the northern façade. A drive runs towards the house from the northern corner of the property. It splits into two part way along, with one track running to the eastern side of the house and the other to the western side. This arrangement has been in place since at least 1838 as it is shown on the Tithe Map for Hertford St Andrews (HALS DSA 4/50/2) (Figure 8).

2.59 The proposed site for the garages and groundman's store is located to the north-east of the house, but is intended to continue the building alignment. It is a flat grassed area, with a small number of trees, mostly conifers. The area close to the house is currently used as storage for garden equipment and large items associated with the building renovations. A wooden shed is located immediately to the north. No evidence for former garden or landscape features was noted on the site. A line of yew trees, possibly planted in the late 19th or early 20th century, is located nearby, but the new building has been sited to avoid compacting the soil around this feature.

2.60 The proposed site of the swimming pool lies to the south-east of the house and south of the proposed garages. It consists of a level grassed area, about the size of a tennis court or croquet lawn. The south-eastern corner of the site appears to have been slightly banked up to create a flat surface. The vegetation across this area is poor, with bare or mossy patches. This area dried out significantly over the summer (Mr Sheehan, pers. com.) and may indicate something below, such as a compacted surface.

2.61 The proposed site of the carp pond is located immediately west of the house, in front of the main entrance. A number of contractors' vehicles were parked in this area, making it difficult to identify any potential significant features.

2.62 Some evidence for former garden and landscape features was observed during the site visit. The following notes detail these features:

- The grounds to the north of the house comprised grassed areas bisected by the main drives. Trees and shrubs, including conifers and self-seeded sycamores, grow along all the boundaries.
- An historic beech tree was noted adjacent to the drive. The girth of its trunk indicated that the tree was between 150 and 160 years old and may be contemporary with the north and west wings of the house, which were constructed in the early 19th century. Other mature trees are located close to the northern side of the house.
- Mr Sheehan stated that the former kitchen gardens lay outside the present grounds, possibly within an area enclosed by iron railings of possible 19th century date, visible from the eastern boundary. Cartographic research suggests that this area has been demarcated since at least the mid 18th century and enclosed trees, representing either an orchard or a landscaped wooded grove.
- A dip in the ground was also visible beyond the eastern boundary, running approximately east to west. It was suggested that this may mark the line of a ha-ha, though no evidence for such a feature has been identified on the historic maps consulted for this project. It is more likely to represent the remains of a footpath, marked on the 1st edition OS map of 1881, which ran from the eastern corner of the house to the enclosed area (Figure 9).
- A line of yew trees, probably planted in the late 19th or early 20th century, is located at the top of the main drive to the north-east of the house.
- To the south of the house the grounds consist of grassed areas, bordered by trees and shrubs, the remains of 18th and 19th shrubbery plantings. These are clearly shown on the 1st edition OS map of 1881 (Figure 9).
- One such area lay to the south-east of the house, at the southern bend in the river. A lime walk, consisting of two rows of lime trees, was identified running north-west to south-east along the northern bank at this point. At its eastern end a single line of limes followed the river

bank. This feature is marked on the 1st edition OS map of 1881, but is shown as consisting of mature trees so is likely to have been planted considerably earlier.

- Lime trees had also been planted along the western boundary, to the north and south of the river.
- A sunken path, with short brick plinths at its eastern end, was noted close to the northern bend of the river. This ran west towards the house. A dog's gravestone, dated 1892 – 1907, had been discovered by Mr Sheehan close to this path. Although no such path is shown on the historic maps, the line of the parish boundary runs on a north-west to south-east alignment across the north-eastern corner of the house and meets the river just below the bend. It is possible that this feature may represent a boundary earthwork.
- A drainage outfall was noted on the river bend. This consisted of brick abutments on either side of a stone arch.
- The footings for a wooden footbridge were noted on both sides of the river, to the west of the outfall and opposite an existing footbridge across a water channel running south from the river. Both footbridges are marked on the OS 1st edition map of 1881 (Figure 9).
- To the west of the possible tennis court the ground dips, then rises, then dips again. The central rise is broader than the dips, estimated at 1.5m to 2m in width. These suggest at least one path, running from the eastern side of the house south towards the river. Kate Harwood and Anne Rowe suggested that the broad rise may mark the line of a broad gravel terrace walk. This feature terminated in a lime tree on the river bank, located at the western end of the lime walk described above. It is possible that this tree pre-dates those of the lime walk as the central trunk of the tree has decayed, leaving a large number of shoots. A path is marked in this position on the 1st edition OS map (Figure 9).
- Dury and Andrews' map of 1766 (Figure 4) hints at possible formal laid gardens on the western side of the land to the south of the house. These may have been bounded on the eastern side by the possible terrace walk described above. Patches of poor vegetation, similar to those across the proposed site of the swimming pool, were noted in this area.
- The plot on the southern side of the river may have been added to the Epcombs property in the early to mid 19th century. It appears on the Hertingfordbury Tithe map of 1838 (HALS DSA 4/51/2) (Figure 7), but not on maps prior to that date. Formal steps to the river were set into this bank, though not into the northern bank.
- This southern plot was similar to that on the northern side of the river in that it consisted of a grassed area bounded by trees and shrubs. An ornamental well, constructed of marble, with a wrought-iron well-head, is located in the centre of the grassed area.
- A shrubbery lies in the south-eastern corner. This contains stands of bamboo, as well as native species, and suggests a late 19th or early 20th century date for the main planting. Brick footings and a well are also located in this area.

3. Field Evaluation

METHODOLOGY

3.1 All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the approved Project Design, current health and safety legislation, and the appropriate IFA and ALGAO guidance documents.

3.2 The trenches were located by triangulation from known points using fibreglass tape measures.

3.3 Four trenches were opened using a tracked 360⁰ mini-digger fitted with a 1.2m wide toothless ditching bucket (see Figure 15). Spoil from the machining was inspected for archaeological artefacts. Trenches were machined to the first significant archaeological horizon.

3.4 The trenches were cleaned by hand, and all potential archaeological features and deposits were sampled to ascertain their nature, depth, date, and quality of preservation.

3.5 All identified contexts were photographed and recorded using the appropriate pro-forma. Scaled plans and sections were drawn on drafting film at scales of 1:10 and 1:50.

RESULTS

Trench 1

3.6 Trench 1 was located across the proposed carp pond to the west of the house. The trench measured 1.6m x 3.80m and was aligned approximately east – west.

3.7 The stratigraphy in the trench consisted of a layer of modern shingle over a layer of loose, strong brown (7.5YR 4/6), sandy gravel overburden. This sealed a layer of firm, brown (10YR 4/3), silty clay (101) over a layer of firm, dark greyish brown (2.5Y 3/2), silty clay (102). The natural geology was not reached within this trench due to a combination of deep stratigraphy and a high water table.

3.8 Brick wall foundation [103] was observed at the western end of the trench, running on a north – south alignment. The wall survived to a depth of nine courses and these were laid in English bond with a lime mortar. The bricks were broken but measured approximately 97mm (3.75 in) by 90mm (3.60 in) by 54mm (2 in) and have been dated to between 1860 and 1880. The bricks appear to have been laid up against the edge of the foundation cut, the outside face of the foundation being rough and uneven. The width of the footing below 0.60m suggests that it may have formed the base for a substantial structure. Only a short part of the footing was visible as it stopped within the trench, presumably either turning to run east – west or terminating at an opening.

3.9 Later monitoring of the construction of the carp pond revealed that this feature formed a square brick pier set within an earlier wall.

3.10 No further archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were observed in this trench.

Trench 1 data:

Length (m):	3.80	Width (m):	1.60		Maximum Depth (m):	1.25	Orientation	E – W	
Level at E End of Trench (mOD)			Top	42.26	Level at W End of Trench (mOD)			Top	42.33
			Base	41.16				Base	41.18
Context	Type	Description				Dimensions (m)			
						Length	Width	Depth	
101	Layer	Firm, brown, silty clay.				-	-	0.35	
102	Layer	Firm, dark greyish brown, silty clay.				-	-	0.37 +	
103	Structure	Red brick wall foundation surviving to a depth of nine courses and bonded with a lime mortar. Wall aligned N – S.				0.71 +	0.60 +	0.72	

Trench 2

3.11 Trench 2 was located across the footprint of the proposed garage block to the east of the house. The trench measured 1.6 x 14.5m and was aligned north-west – south-east.

3.12 The stratigraphy within the trench comprised a layer of firm, very dark brown (10YR 2/2), clayey silt topsoil. This sealed a firm, brown (10YR 4/3), silty clay subsoil. Beneath this lay the natural geology of firm, yellowish brown (10YR 5/4), clay with chalk and gravel patches.

3.13 The trench contained well [201], modern rubbish pit [203], and a modern plastic drainage pipe.

3.14 Well [201] was observed in the north-west end of the trench. The well was brick lined, sub-ovoid in plan, and had been cut through the subsoil. The brick lining survived to a depth of at least two courses and it was bonded with a lime mortar. Bricks from the lining of the well have been dated to between 1860 – 1880. The bricks measured approximately 135mm (5.4 in) by 102mm (4.1 in) by 70mm (2.5 in). The well had been backfilled with a firm, brown, silty clay (202) which yielded no finds.

3.15 Modern pit [203] was observed in the south-east end of the trench. The pit which was cut through the topsoil yielded modern 20th century material including part of a wheel barrow.

3.16 No further archaeological features or deposits were observed in this trench.

Trench 2 data:

Length (m):	14.50	Width (m):	1.60		Maximum Depth (m):	0.90	Orientation	NW – SE	
Level at NW End of Trench (mOD)			Top	42.45	Level at SE End of Trench (mOD)			Top	42.30
			Base	41.63				Base	41.43
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)						
			Length	Width	Depth				
201	Cut	Sub-ovoid cut feature with vertical straight sides, the base of the feature was not reached. Brick lined Well.	1.73	1.31 +	0.70				
202	Fill	Firm, brown (10YR 4/3), silty clay. Fill of Well [201].	1.73	1.31 +	0.70				
203	Feature	Large modern rubbish pit which yielded 20 th century material including part of a wheel barrow.	1.38 +	1.60 +	0.81				

Trench 3

3.17 Trench 3 was located in the footprint of the proposed swimming pool to the south-east of the house. The trench measured 1.6 x 15m and was aligned east – west.

3.18 The stratigraphy in the trench comprised a layer of firm, very dark brown (10YR 2/2) slightly clayey silt topsoil over a layer of firm, light olive brown (2.5Y 5/4) clay. This sealed a soft, black (10YR 2/1) silt (possibly a buried topsoil) over a soft, dark brown (10YR 3/3) silt subsoil. Beneath this lay the natural geology of soft, grey (10YR 5/1) sand. The natural geology was observed only within a sondage at the western end of the trench, the high water table making it impractical and unsafe to machine to this depth for the entire length of the trench.

3.19 No further archaeological features or deposits were observed within this trench.

Trench 3 data:

Length (m):	15.00	Width (m):	1.60		Maximum Depth (m):	1.76	Orientation	E – W	
Level at E End of Trench (mOD)			Top	41.72	Level at W End of Trench (mOD)			Top	41.73
			Base	40.81				Base	39.97

Trench 4

3.20 Trench 4 was located in the footprint of the proposed pool house to the south-east of the house. The trench measured 1.6 x 8m and was aligned north – south.

3.21 The stratigraphy in the trench comprised a layer of firm, very dark brown (10YR 2/2) slightly clayey silt topsoil over a layer of firm, light olive brown (2.5Y 5/4) clay. This sealed a

soft, black (10YR 2/1) silt (possibly a buried topsoil) over a soft, dark brown (10YR 3/3) silt subsoil. Beneath this lay the natural geology of soft, grey (10YR 5/1) sand. The natural geology was observed only within the sondage at the western end of the trench, the high water table making it impractical and unsafe to machine to this depth for the entire length of the trench.

3.22 No further archaeological features or deposits were observed within this trench.

Trench 4 data:

Length (m):	8.00	Width (m):	1.60	Maximum Depth (m):	1.60	Orientation	N – S
Level at N End of Trench (mOD)		Top	41.45	Level at S End of Trench (mOD)		Top	41.58
		Base	40.39			Base	40.06

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

3.23 Following the evaluation a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken on groundworks associated with the proposed new carp pond and on drainage trenches on the southern side of the house (Figure19).

3.24 The carp pond is located approximately 6m to the west of the main entrance to the house. It is sub-circular with a diameter of 6m and was excavated to a depth of approximately 1.20m.

3.25 Wall [103] was exposed at the western side of the pond during the evaluation. This was revealed to be a brick pier during the excavation of the pond, measuring approximately 1m square and 0.5m in height. A second pier was located approximately 2m to the south-east. These both line up with the main entrance to the western elevation of the house and may represent part of a demolished gateway, though there was no cartographic evidence for such a feature. Sample bricks from the piers have been dated to between 1860 and 1880 (T. Doig, pers. comm.).

3.26 The piers cut an earlier brick wall, [01]. This ran on a north-west to south-east alignment, parallel with the west elevation of the house and approximately 10m to the west. This survived to a maximum height of seven courses (0.4m). The wall was constructed of handmade red bricks, each measuring approximately 234mm (9.2in) by 111mm (4.25in) by 41mm (1.6in) laid in English bond with a lime mortar. A sample brick has been dated to the early – mid 18th century (ibid), which was a period of remodelling on the house (Greening 1998; Greening 2005).

3.27 A drainage trench was excavated from the pond to the western boundary wall. This ran south-west for c.5m, before turning to run west for c.6m to meet the present boundary. It measured 0.60m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.7m. The stratigraphy recorded in the sections were similar to that recorded in Trench 1 of the evaluation and consisted of a layer of shingle above a sandy gravel overburden. Below this was a layer of firm brown silty clay above firm greyish brown silty clay. The natural was not reached in this area. The maximum depth of 1.70m was reached adjacent to the existing boundary wall, where the ground level rises sharply, due to the accumulation of leaf litter and soil against the wall.

3.28 Two drainage trenches were excavated on the western side of the southern extension to the house (Figure 19). They both measured 0.35m in width and were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.70m. The trenches cut through the patio immediately to the north of this part the house and through a small part of the lawn.

3.29 Beneath the patio the stratigraphy comprised a layer of yellowish brown (10YR 5/4) levelling aggregate.

3.30 The stratigraphy beneath the lawn comprised a thin layer of firm, dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) silty clay topsoil over a friable, greyish brown (10YR 5/2) silty clay layer. Small fragments of 18th - 20th century CBM were observed within the lower layer, including fragments of 19th/20th century mosaic floor tile.

3.31 The natural geology was reached within the drainage trenches.

3.32 No archaeological features or deposits were observed within the drainage trenches.

4. Finds Assessment

CONCORDANCE OF FINDS

Context	Pottery		CBM		Daub		An bone		Shell		Glass		Pipe		Wood	
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
U/S Drainage Trench			5 ¹	3000			1	114								
U/S Tr 1	3	174	6	387					2	35					1	28
01			2 ²	4265												
101 Top layer			10 ³	10260	1	98										
102	6	108	8	1610			2	116	1	7						
103			1	653												
201	1	4	5	3830			1	2	1	29	3	55	1	2		
Total	10	286	37	24005	1	98	4	232	4	71	3	55	1	2	1	28

¹ Floor tile; ² Brick; ³ Brick and tile

Pottery

4.1 Ten sherds of pottery, weighing 286g were recovered during the present project. With the exception of one piece in context 201, all of the sherds were recorded as either unstratified in Trench 1 or from layer (102).

4.2 Most of the pottery is abraded and only two fragments are diagnostic. These comprise an unstratified jug rim in a white ware with a bright green glaze on the rim and inner surface and a sherd from a possible bowl, which is decorated both externally and internally with an olive green and brown mottled glaze from layer (201).

4.3 The glazed fabrics indicate that the assemblage is dated to the latter half of the high medieval period (cAD1450 to 1540).

Recommendations

4.4 Due to the small size and largely unstratified nature of the assemblage, no further work is recommended.

Ceramic Building Material

4.5 A total of thirty seven fragments of brick and tile, weighing 24005g, was recovered from five stratified and two unstratified contexts during the present investigation.

4.6 Five unstratified fragments of floor tile, weighing 3000g, were recovered during the excavation of a new drainage trench to the south of the house. The tiles had a green mosaic pattern on them and are likely to date to the 19th century.

4.7 Six fragments of unstratified roofing tile, weighing 387g, were recovered from Trench 1. These were in a sandy orange fabric of probable late post-medieval date.

4.8 Ten fragments of tile and brick were recovered from layer (101). The brick was reddish orange in colour and measured 230mm (9 in) by 120mm (5 in) by 60mm (2 in). It has been dated to 1860-1880 (T. Doig, pers. Comm.) .

4.9 The lower layer (102) contained eight fragments of reddish orange brick, weighing 1610g. Examination of the brick has dated it to 1820-1860 (ibid).

4.10 A sample brick was recovered from wall [103]. This measured 97mm (3.75 in) by 90mm (3.60 in) by 54mm (2 in). It was light orange in colour and has been dated to 1860-1880 (ibid).

4.11 Five fragments of ceramic building material were recovered from well (201). This comprised four tile fragments, in a sandy orange fabric, and a single brick. The brick was reddish orange in colour and measured 135mm (5.4 in) by 102mm (4.1 in) by 70mm (2.5 in). It has been dated to 1860-1880 (ibid).

Recommendations

4.12 Due to the small nature of the assemblage and late date no further work is recommended.

Daub

4.13 A single fragment of daub, weighing 98g, was recovered from layer [101] within Trench 1.

Recommendations

4.14 Due to the small nature of the assemblage no further work is recommended.

Animal Bone

4.15 A total of four pieces of animal bone, weighing 232g, was recovered from two stratified and one unstratified context during the present investigation.

4.16 A distal half of a fully fused sheep/goat metacarpal, weighing 114g, was recovered from a drainage trench to the south of the house. The proximal half appeared to have been broken away post mortem as had half of the distal epiphysis. No evidence of butchery was observed but marks on the surface of the diaphysis were indicative of rodent gnawing.

4.17 Two bone fragments, weighing 116g, were recovered from layer (102). The first bone was the distal quarter of a left tibia from a sheep/goat. The epiphysis was fully fused to the diaphysis, which had been broken post mortem. The bone exhibited evidence for root marking and a green stain was observed on the antero-medial surface of the diaphysis. The second bone belonged to a medium sized mammal but was too fragmentary to identify further.

4.18 One bone, weighing 2g, was recovered from context (201). This was a rib fragment in good condition which could not be further identified.

Recommendations

4.19 Due to the small size and unstratified nature of the assemblage no further work is recommended.

Shell

4.20 A total of four shells, weighing 71g, were recovered from two stratified and one unstratified contexts during the present investigation.

Recommendations

4.21 Due to the small size of the assemblage no further work is recommended.

Glass

4.22 A total of three fragments of post-medieval green glass, weighing 55g, were recovered from Well [201].

Recommendations

4.23 Due to the small size of the assemblage no further work is recommended.

Clay Pipe

4.24 A single piece of clay pipe stem, weighing 2g, was recovered from Well [201].

Recommendations

4.25 Due to the small size and undiagnostic nature of the assemblage no further work is recommended.

Wood

4.26 A single piece of burnt wood, weighing 28g, was recovered unstratified from Trench 1. This is likely to be modern in date.

Recommendations

4.27 Due to the small size and nature of the assemblage no further work is recommended.

5. Assessment of Risk

Early Prehistoric (Palaeolithic – Mesolithic)

5.1 The regional research framework has identified the importance of studying the archaeology of the earlier prehistoric period within its landscape (Austin 2000). The study area is located in the valley of the River Mimram, with other watercourses in the vicinity, in an area likely to have been attractive to early settlers. The valley of the River Lea, Therefore, the significance of any potential remains of early prehistoric date within the study area should be considered to be *High*.

5.2 The bulk of finds of stone implements of early prehistoric date are recorded as redeposited artefacts from river gravels. However, the Palaeolithic handaxe (HER 274) recorded from the vicinity of the study area was apparently found in a stratified context, within a pit close to a tributary of the Mimram, approximately 360m to the south-west of the study area. Its presence indicates the possibility of early prehistoric activity in the Mimram valley. A redeposited handaxe of Palaeolithic date and a scatter of Mesolithic flints was recovered during the excavations at Foxholes Farm, Hertford, approximately 3km to the east of the study area (Partridge 1989).

5.3 On this basis, the risk of encountering features and finds of early prehistoric date, particularly stone artefacts and flint implements, in the course of development on the present site may be considered to be *Low to Moderate*.

5.4 No features, deposits, or finds of early prehistoric date were encountered during the archaeological fieldwork.

Later Prehistoric (Neolithic – Bronze Age)

5.5 The regional research framework has identified a number of relevant research topics, including reconstructing the environment and ecology of the Neolithic and early Bronze Age, identifying and researching settlement sites, the relationship between the location of monuments and the landscape, and dating of local ceramic series (Brown & Murphy 2000, 10 - 12). As the study area lies close to a ritual landscape, with later prehistoric settlement sites in the vicinity, the significance of any potential remains of late prehistoric date on the present site should be considered to be *High*.

5.6 No evidence of known sites or findspots of later prehistoric date have been recorded from the immediate vicinity of the study area. However, a number of finds of Neolithic and Bronze Age artefacts have been recovered from the Lea valley to the north and east of Hertford (Partridge 1989). Archaeological excavation at Foxholes Farm, approximately 3 km to the east, revealed evidence to suggest that the settlement started in the earlier Neolithic period and continued into the Bronze Age (ibid).

5.7 Aerial photographic evidence has indicated the presence of a number of palaeochannels to the west and east of the study area (APs OS / 89103; Os / 71334; HCC UID 8420 – 8422). These feed into both the river Mimram and the stream to the north of the river.

5.8 As the site lies in a river valley, close to an area of known late prehistoric activity, the risk of encountering finds or features of later prehistoric date in the course of development on the present site may be considered to be *Low to Moderate*. However, the risk of encountering environmental layers relating to river deposits or palaeochannel fills, is *High*.

5.9 No features, deposits, or finds of later prehistoric date were encountered during the archaeological fieldwork.

Iron Age

5.10 A number of research topics have been highlighted for the Iron Age in the regional research framework, including the a systematic survey of the Mimram valley (Bryant 2000, 16). It is suggested that this would address some of the key research issues in the region, including providing a representative sample of later prehistoric (late Bronze Age to early Roman) settlement and landscape of the region and the issues of the spatial and chronological relationship of settlements to landscape (ibid). As the study area is located within the Mimram valley the significance of any potential remains of this period on the present site should be considered to be *High*.

5.11 No archaeological evidence for Iron Age activity has been recorded from the immediate vicinity of the study area. This is likely to reflect a lack of investigation in this area, as archaeological fieldwork has demonstrated that the region was well settled by the later Iron Age. Occupation at Foxholes Farm also continued into the Iron Age (Partridge 1989). Clusters of Iron Age settlement sites are also known from the valleys of the rivers Mimram, Lea, Rib and Beane. At present, there are no known Iron Age settlements in the lower Mimram valley, the ones so far identified have been located in the Welwyn area, to the north-west of the study area.

5.12 An examination of available aerial photographs indicates the possibility of circular and sub-circular features of this date in the vicinity of the study area (Figure 14). These are concentrated on the northern bank of the river, to the west of the present site. A small number of possible features are also visible in fields to the south of the river, south-west of Epcombs. Although these may be natural in origin, it is also possible that they represent the site of a small rural settlement of late Iron Age / early Roman date, or of associated stock enclosures on the river meadow. Aerial photographs indicate that this area has not been ploughed since the 1940s. The land to the east is more heavily wooded and therefore potential features are much less visible.

5.13 Excavations in 1965 on the Panshanger housing estate at Welwyn Garden City revealed an important late Iron Age cremation burial. The accompanying grave gifts, which included imported metal vessels and pottery, reveal that the individual was of high status.

5.14 On this basis, the risk of encountering features and finds of late Iron Age date in the course of development on the present site may be considered to be *Low to Moderate*.

5.15 No features, deposits, or finds of Iron Age date were encountered during the archaeological fieldwork.

Romano-British

5.16 A number of relevant topics have been identified in the regional research framework (Going & Plouviez 2000, 21 - 25). These include the study of the Roman agricultural economy, the layout of rural settlements and the relationship of rural settlement to the landscape. Therefore the significance of any potential remains of this period on the present site should be considered to be *High*.

5.17 The line of a possible Roman road (HER 4665) lies approximately 300m to the south of the study area. It is thought that this represents a minor road (Viatores' road 214) running from the settlement at Welwyn to join Ermine Street at Ware.

5.18 No evidence for Roman occupation has, as yet, been identified in the vicinity of the study area, despite the presence of the road. The soilmarks identified on the aerial photographs to the west and south-west of the study area may represent the remains of a small rural settlement in the lower Mimram valley.

5.19 On this basis, the risk of encountering features and finds of Roman date in the course of development on the present site may be considered to be *Moderate*.

5.20 No features, deposits, or finds of Romano-British date were encountered during the archaeological fieldwork.

Early Medieval

5.21 A number of relevant research topics have been highlighted for early medieval activity in the regional research framework, including the study of rural land use and the extent of agricultural exploitation, the study of rural settlements in the region and an understanding of the landscape and environment of the period (Ayers 2000, 29 – 31). As place name evidence suggests occupation on and in the vicinity of the study area, the significance of any potential remains of this period on the site should be considered to be *High*.

5.22 Although no archaeological evidence for early medieval occupation has, as yet, been identified, place name evidence suggests occupation in the immediate vicinity. The name Epcombs (HER 12106) has early medieval origins. It is thought to combine the personal name *Eoppa* with the rare suffix 'camp', derived from the Latin *campus*, meaning field (Williamson 2000, 69), giving Eoppa's field.

5.23 The village name is also significant. Hertingfordbury translates as 'the defended place of the Hertinfordingas' [the people of Hertford] (Williamson 2000, 66). This group was recorded in the Tribal Hideage, a Mercian tribute list dating to the 8th century AD. The name indicates a tribal territory, possibly located around the confluence of the rivers Mimram and Lea.

5.24 On this basis, the risk of encountering features and finds of early medieval date in the course of development on the present site may be considered to be *Moderate*.

5.25 No features, deposits, or finds of early medieval date were encountered during the archaeological fieldwork.

Medieval

5.26 A number of relevant research topics have been highlighted for medieval activity by the regional research framework (Wade 2000, 24 - 25). These include understanding the impact of man on the environment and the nature and extent of rural development. As the present site lay within a small manorial estate, recorded in Domesday and continuing in existence throughout the medieval period, the significance of any potential remains of this period on the site should be considered to be *High*.

5.27 A survey of the structure of the historic house at Epcombs has indicated that it has late medieval origins (Greening 2005). A structure associated with the 11th and 12th century estate may have been located on, or close to, the same site. The associated property is known to have consisted of approximately 60 acres in 1086 and to have increased to at least 90 acres by the late 13th century. It is probable that gardens were established in the grounds immediately surrounding the house.

5.28 Cartographic evidence shows that the medieval parish boundary passes through the estate, running immediately to the north of the house. The land to the south lay in the parish of Hertingfordbury, that to the north in the parish of Hertford St Andrews. A sunken path, possibly the fossilised remains of the parish boundary, was noted to the east of the house during a site visit to the study area. This potentially crosses the area of the proposed garages and groundsman's store.

5.29 The centre of the medieval settlement at Hertingfordbury (HER 2682) may have been located on the southern bank of the river, to the north of the parish church of St Mary and east of the present village. The church (HER 1103) lies approximately 200m to the south of the study area. It was originally built in the late medieval period, but was substantially rebuilt in the mid 19th century. A medieval jetton (HER 4734) was found in Chelmsford Wood, approximately 200m to the east of the study area.

5.30 On this basis the risk of encountering features and finds of medieval date, including the parish boundary, in the course of development on the present site may be considered to be *High*.

5.31 Despite the apparent high risk of encountering evidence for this period during the fieldwork on the present site, no features or deposits of medieval date were revealed during the archaeological fieldwork. A number of sherds of pottery of late medieval date were recovered during the archaeological evaluation. All but one of these were unstratified, the remaining sherd being recovered from the fill of Victorian brick lined Well [201].

Post-medieval and Modern

5.32 The regional research framework has identified the development of parks and gardens, and their place within the local landscape as important research topics for the post-medieval period (Gilman, P., S. Gould & S. Green 2000, 36-39). As the study area lies within the grounds of a small country house, the significance of any potential remains of this period on the site should be considered to be *High*.

5.33 Cartographic and aerial photographic evidence show that, since at least the mid 18th century, the grounds adjacent to the house have been landscaped. Hints of formal gardens to the south of the house have been identified on Dury and Andrews map of 1766 (Figure 4), in a number of aerial photographs (HCC UID 8420 – 8423, taken March 1968) and during the site walkover. Ordnance Survey maps of late 19th and 20th century date show evidence for planting of trees and shrubberies (Figures 9 – 13).

5.34 An existing sunken path, ran approximately east from the house towards the river, and terminated in a pair of short brick plinths. This may represent the fossilised line of the former parish boundary, re-used as a landscape feature in the grounds. A dog's gravestone, dating to the early 20th century, was found very close to this feature by the present owner (J. Sheehan, pers com).

5.35 On this basis, the risk of encountering deposits and features associated with garden landscaping of post-medieval and modern date, in the course of development on the present site may be considered to be *High*.

5.36 The archaeological investigations on the present site have demonstrated that the ground level between the river and the house has been built up, presumably in an attempt to prevent flooding. A buried topsoil and subsoil were recorded in the sections of Trenches 3 and 4, to the south-east of the house. It was also noted, by the developers, that the floor levels on the interior were lower than the levels on the exterior of the house. Although no artefacts were recovered from the buried soil layers, this work is likely to have occurred in the post-medieval period.

5.37 The remains of a north – south aligned brick wall, context [01], was recorded to the west of the house. A sample brick has been dated to the early-mid 18th century (T. Doig, pers. comm.). Two later brick piers, context [103], were cut into the wall (Figure 19). A sample brick from one of the piers has been dated to the mid 19th century (ibid). Historic building surveys and documentary research by Alan Greening in 1998 and 2005 have demonstrated that the house underwent a series of remodelling phases between the early 18th and mid 19th centuries (Greening 1998; Greening 2005).

5.38 A brick lined well, [201], of similar date to the brick piers on the western side of the house, was recorded in Trench 2, to the east of the house.

CONCLUSION

5.39 The present site is located at the northern end of Hertingfordbury village. A study of the cartographic and documentary resources has demonstrated that it formed part of a small estate recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. This was subsequently joined to the manor of Hertingfordbury and, in the early 18th century became part of the Cowper estates.

5.40 Research for this project has indicated that there is a *Low* to *Moderate* probability of encountering features and finds of prehistoric and Iron Age date during development on the site. The risk increases to *Moderate* for the Romano-British and early medieval periods. There is, however, considered to be a *High* risk of encountering features and finds of medieval to modern date during development on the site.

5.41 The archaeological fieldwork has shown that the ground levels to the south of the house have been raised, possibly to prevent flooding. The proposed new garage and pool house are being constructed on a shallow raft foundation, and the groundworks associated with these are unlikely to penetrate the substantial overburden on the site.

5.42 Due to the high water table and substantial depth of overburden, the natural geology was only revealed within a sondage at the western end of Trench 3 which was positioned over the proposed swimming pool. The ground reduction for the swimming pool is likely to breach the overburden within this area. It is possible that earlier archaeological features may be revealed during this stage of groundworks.

6. Sources Consulted

ARCHIVES

Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER)

See Appendix 1

Air Photo Collections (see Appendix 2)

Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies

DSA 4/50/1 1838 Hertford St Andrews Tithe Award

DSA 4/50/2 1838 Hertford St Andrews Tithe Map

DSA 4/51/1 1838 Hertingfordbury Tithe Award

DSA 4/51/2 1838 Hertingfordbury Tithe Map

QS/E/32 1813 Hertingfordbury Enclosure Map and award

D/EP P7 1732 Survey of Hertingfordbury Farm, Surveyor Richard Griffin

D/EP P35 n/d Map of Hughes' Farm

D/EP T929 1713 Deed of Sale of Epcombs to Thomas Moore, John Taylor and Margaret his wife

D/EP T931a 1713 Lease for 1 year from Mr John Miles to Mr Edward Hughes of house and lands at Epcombs

D/EP T1050 1754 Release and settlement of Edward Hughes of freehold estates in reversion

D/EP T1051 1767 Lease from Edward Hughes to Mrs Mary Bellamy of Epcombs estate

D/EP T1043 1781 Will of Edward Hughes

D/EP T1055 ?1790 Lease from Henry Cowper to Sir Edward Hughes, Knight of the Bath, and Ruth his wife of Epcombs estate

D/EP T1053 1790 Covenant to surrender 21 year lease from Sir Edward Hughes and his lady to Henry Cowper Esq

D/EP T1056 1790 Lease from Henry Cowper to James Farrer

D/EP T1057 1819 Lease from Earl Cowper to John Murray of Yardley Bury

D/EP T1059 1822 Transfer of lease from John Murray to Nicholas Legar Parry of Moor Park, Much Hadham

BG/HER 90 1881 OS 1st edition, Hertfordshire Sheet XXIX 14, 25" scale 1881

OS 1898 2nd edition, Hertfordshire sheet XXIX.14, 25" scale, 1898

OS 1923 3rd edition Hertfordshire sheet XXIX.14, 25" scale, 1923

OS 1922 / 1938 Hertfordshire sheet XXIX SW, 6" scale, 1922/1938

OS 1973 Sheet TL 3012 3112, 1:2500 scale, 1973

National Monuments Record: Air Photo Collections

See Appendix 2

Internet Sites

VCH1: 'Parishes: Hertingfordbury', *A History of the County of Hertford*: volume 3 (1912), pp. 462-68. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=43642>. Date accessed: 18 October 2006

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7. Illustrations

Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	HER entries
Figure 3	Survey of Hertingfordbury Farm, 1732
Figure 4	Dury and Andrews', 1766
Figure 5	Plan of Hughes' Farm, c.1810
Figure 6	Hertingfordbury Enclosure map, 1813
Figure 7	Hertingfordbury Tithe map, 1838
Figure 8	Hertford St Andrews Tithe map, 1838
Figure 9	OS, 1881
Figure 10	OS, 1898
Figure 11.....	OS, 1923
Figure 12.....	OS, 1938
Figure 13.....	OS, 1973
Figure 14.....	Aerial photographic evidence
Figure 15.....	Trench layout
Figure 16.....	Trenches 1 & 2 : Sections and plans
Figure 17.....	Trenches 3 & 4 : Sections
Figure 18.....	Elevation of wall [103]
Figure 19.....	Carp pond and drainage layout
Plate 1.....	Trench 1 looking west
Plate 2.....	Wall [103] looking west
Plate 3.....	Trench 2 looking south-east
Plate 4.....	Well [201] looking north-east
Plate 5.....	Trench 3 looking north-east
Plate 6.....	Trench 4 looking north
Plate 7.....	Wall [01] with brick piers [103] looking west
Plate 8.....	Wall [01] with brick piers [103] looking south

Appendix 1

Extract from Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER)

Records from a 0.5km radius around the present site in period order

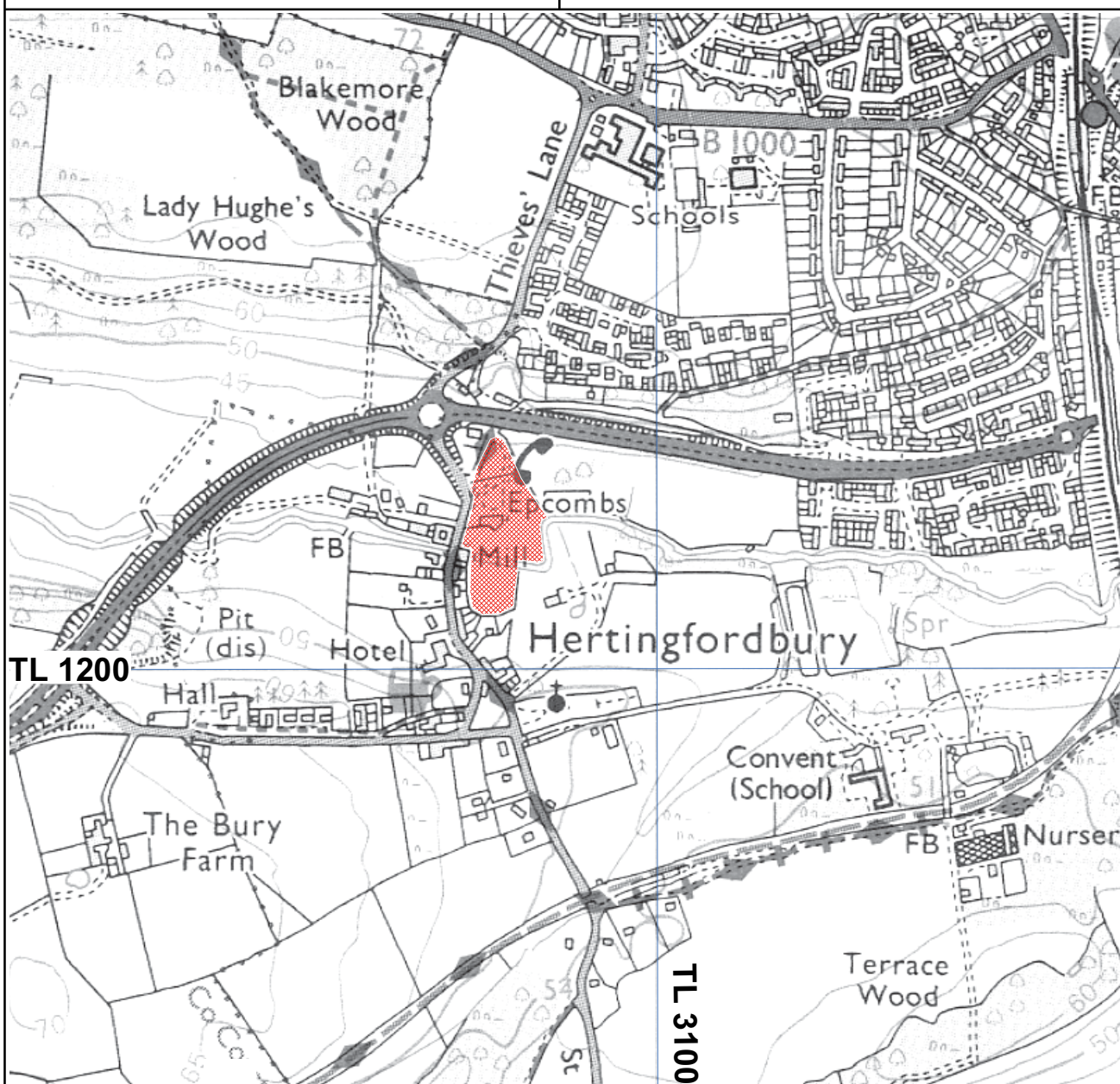
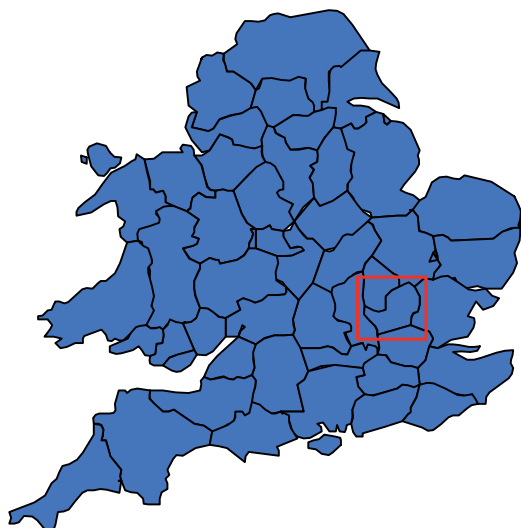
HER	NGR (TL)	Period	Remarks
274	305 120	Palaeolithic	Handaxe made of Porphyry now in the British Museum. Found by H.J.O Kendall in a pit beside a small tributary of the river Mimram. At the base of glacial drift. BM (Acc 1905 1-1641,541(C) 16 & 17), SMR record (1166) has been combined with this one. Findspot is now within the modern civil parish of Hertford. Approximately 360m SW.
4665	305 118	Roman	The length of the Viatores' road 214 from Welwyn Garden City to the Ermine Street at Ware (for the whole route see [4661]); running from TL 2660 1209 to 3512 1373. It has not been confirmed by excavation. Its route through Hertingfordbury is followed by the line of a modern minor road and track on the s side of the river. Approximately 300m S.
2682	3080 1215	Medieval	Medieval settlement of Hertingfordbury, called 'Herefordingberie' in Domesday Book.
4734	310 123	Medieval	Jetton, found in Chelmsford Wood, Hertford. Approximately 200m E.
1103	3085 1195	Medieval to Post Medieval	13th and 15th century church almost entirely rebuilt in 1849-50 and enlarged in 1890 by Earl Cowper of Panshanger. The Victoria County History is quoted as suggesting that the Chancel and nave walls date to the 13th century. The tower appears to be 15th century. Nine test pits around the edge of the church revealed only the remains of undated and uninvestigated walls which were cut by foundation trenches for the 1891 enlargement. Some undated disarticulated bones were observed in one of the pits. The church is now within the modern civil parish of Hertford. Approximately 200m S.
5188	3069 1217	Post Medieval	Road bridges over the Mimram. Brick buttressed and wharfed on the north side. String course, & a single arch protected by an iron grid. Width c6m. East side adjoins a mill. No string course, otherwise as described at B. Johnson survey. Adjacent to western boundary of study area.
5791	307 122	Post Medieval	Former steam corn mill of grey brick with 2 floors, a weatherboarded lucam, and modern additions at the back. The water wheel is still in place. Records of the mill go back to 1839. It ceased milling in 1933 and is now used as a corn-drying store. Still in reasonable condition, but is disused and is boarded up. Adjacent to western boundary of study area.
6079	308 121	Post Medieval	Worked flint from a firearm probably a sporting gun of 17thC date or later. Approximately 180m S.
6864	3085 1250	Post Medieval	Site of a gravel pit. No longer visible at ground level as the site is now occupied by modern housing. Approximately 180m N.
11124	3068 1220	Post Medieval	Mill Farm, Hertford. The 1898 OS map indicates a possible planned layout. Approximately 100m SW.
12106	307 123	Undated	The name Epcombs combines the rare OE 'camp', 'open space', etc., with probably the personal name <i>Eoppa</i> , meaning the 'open space of Eoppa'. The site is recorded in the Domesday Book as 'a priest holds 1/2 hide, of the king's alms ...1 plough: 1 mill at 12d'. A recent survey of the grounds apparently revealed several interesting features.

Appendix 2

Aerial Photographs Consulted

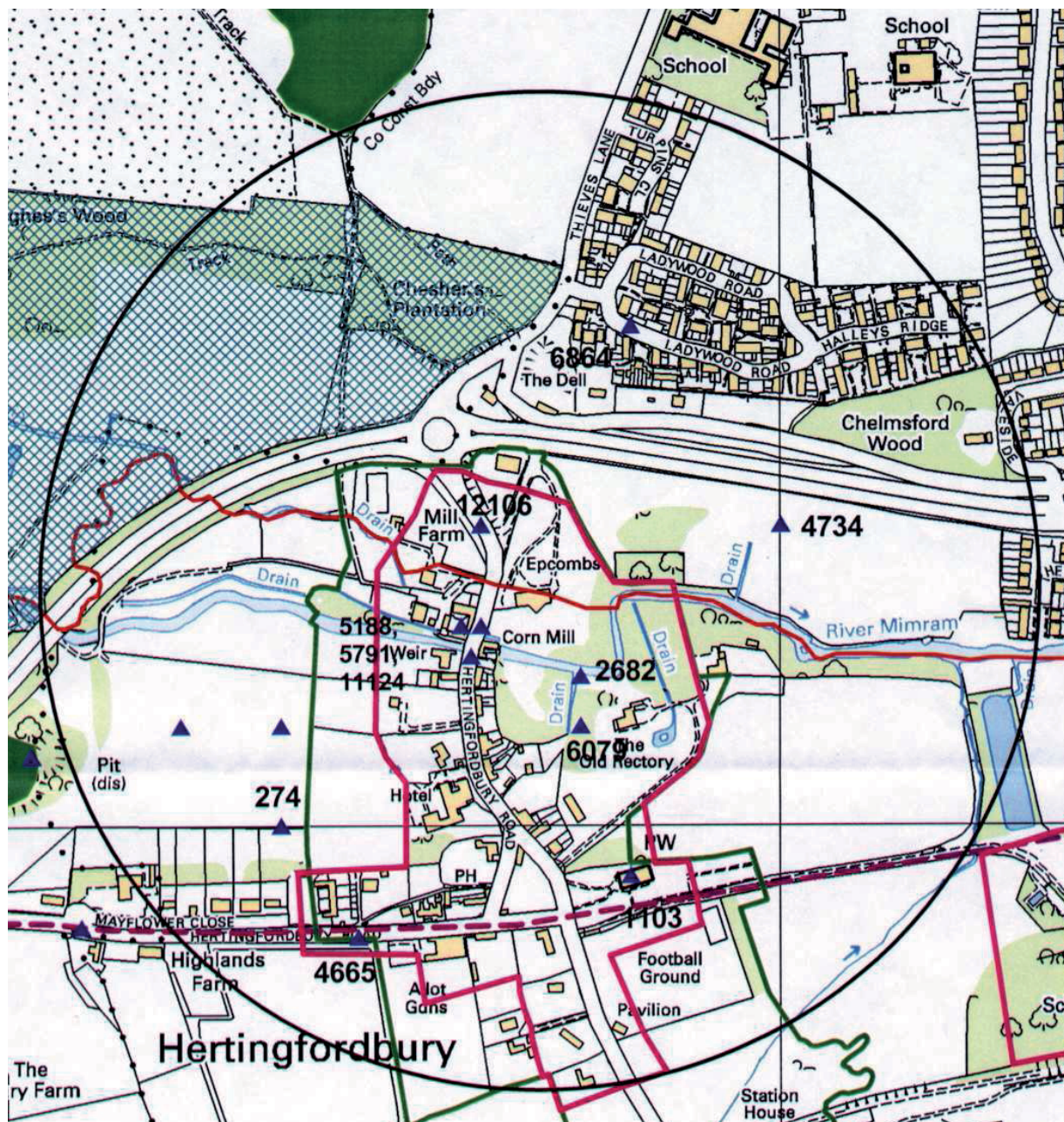
<i>From the NMR's Collection</i>			
Sortie Number	Frame	Date taken	Details
RAF/106G/UK/1565	RS 4161	07/06/1946	Fields W of study area. No potential features visible.
RAF/106G/UK/1565	RS 4162	07/06/1946	As RS 4161
RAF/CPE/UK/1779	RP 3253	10/10/1946	Shows fields to W of study area. Faint marks of possible features between Mimram & stream to N.
RAF/CPE/UK/1779	RP 3254	10/10/1946	As RP 3253
RAF/CPE/UK/1917	RS 4140	09/01/1947	Vicinity of study area under snow & in shadow, no potential features visible.
RAF/CPE/UK/1917	RS 4141	09/01/1947	As RS 4140.
RAF/CPE/UK/2016	RS 4250	17/04/1947	Photograph blurred
RAF/CPE/UK/2016	RS 4251	17/04/1947	Photograph blurred
RAF/58/825	RS 4015	29/01/1952	Circular & sub-circular features visible between stream & river within 500m W of the study area. Fields to E in shadow.
RAF/58/825	RS 4016	29/01/1952	As RS 4015.
RAF/540/674	RS 4018	12/02/1952	Possible features, more clearly seen in frame 4019
RAF/540/674	RS 4019	12/02/1952	Faint marks in fields to E & W of study area (N bank of river). Cluster of possible sub-square enclosures visible close to point where northern stream disappears, approx. 900m to W of study area. Other possible features noted to east of these, c.500m W of study area.
RAF/540/674	RS 4067	12/02/1952	As RS 4019
RAF/540/674	RS 4068	12/02/1952	As RS 4019. Marks to east of possible sub-square enclosures appear more clearly.
RAF/82/1006	F66 172	31/08/1954	Possible relict field boundaries visible to W of study area.
RAF/58/1917	F21 0011	01/11/1955	Nothing clearly visible
RAF/58/1917	F21 0012	01/11/1955	As F21 0011
RAF/58/1917	F21 0013	01/11/1955	Possible faint marks of circular or sub-square features between northern stream & river Mimram, within 500m W of study area.
RAF/58/4267	F43 72	16/08/1961	Faint marks of possible enclosures between stream & river to W of study area. Area to E blurred & in shadow.
RAF/58/4267	F43 73	16/08/1961	Faint marks of possible features to S of river – SW of study area.
MAL / 69031	V 123	05/04/1969	Possible cropmarks to W of study area – under line of present A414. Other marks visible to W, including possible relict field boundaries or tracks. Possible tracks or enclosures in field to south of the river, approx. 400m SW of the study area. Former field boundaries visible in fields to E of study area, between road and river.
MAL / 69031	V 124	05/04/1969	As V 123.
OS / 69360	V 134	22/07/1969	Possible enclosures visible as cropmarks immediately N of B195, close to junction with road to Birch Green, approx. 1.5km SW of study area. Area now under A414.
OS / 69360	V 144	22/07/1969	Cropmark enclosures visible to SW of study area. Farm tracks through field on W side of Hertingfordbury Road, opposite Epcombs. Possible features to W of this very faint. Line of tracks, footpaths & former field boundaries in field to E of study area.
OS / 71334	V 351	07/07/1971	Faint marks of possible features to W of study area. Faint marks in field to E, just north of river. Possible buried watercourses or features.
OS / 71334	V 352	07/07/1971	As V 351 for W of study area. Does not show E of study area
OS / 71334	V 355	07/07/1971	As V 352.
OS / 71334	V 356	07/07/1971	As V 351.

MAL / 75005	V 170	19/01/1975	Shows present A414. Cuts through field to W of study area. Possible features faintly visible close to woodland W of main road.
OS / 89103	V 481	03/05/1989	Possible buried watercourses feeding northern stream visible to W of A414. Possible features visible as faint marks to N of river.
OS / 89103	V 482	03/05/1989	As V 481
OS / 94086	V 10	30/04/1994	No potential features visible. Modern gravel quarry in the woodland to NW of study area.
OS / 94086	V 11	30/04/1994	Possible features appear as faint marks in field to W of A414/
OS / 94086	V 12	30/04/1994	Shows area of cropmark features seen on AP OS/69360, frame V 134. Now beneath A414 road. Possible features also visible on N bank of river, adjacent to woodland & between 500 & 900m W of study area.
<i>From the Hertfordshire County Council's collection</i>			
HSL / UK / 68 / 722 / 2147	HCC UID 8420	12/03/1968	Relict watercourses visible on N bank of Mimram & stream to N, W of Epcombs. Faint marks of possible enclosures in fields to SW of study area. Straight relict field boundaries in meadow to E of study area.
HSL / UK / 68 / 722 / 2148	8421	12/03/1968	As UID 8420
HSL / UK / 68 / 722 / 2149	8422	12/03/1968	As above. Possible lines marking possible paths or other garden features in grass to S of house. Line of sunken feature running from SE corner of house approx. NE to N bend of river.
HSL / UK / 68 / 722 / 2150	8423	12/03/1968	As UID 8422



Site Location

Scale 1:10,000



HER entries, within 500m of the study area

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Scale 1:550

Figure 2



Survey of Hertingfordbury Farm, 1732 (HALS D/EP P7)

Not to scale
Figure 3



Dury and Andrews' 'A Topographical Map of Hartford-shire', 1766

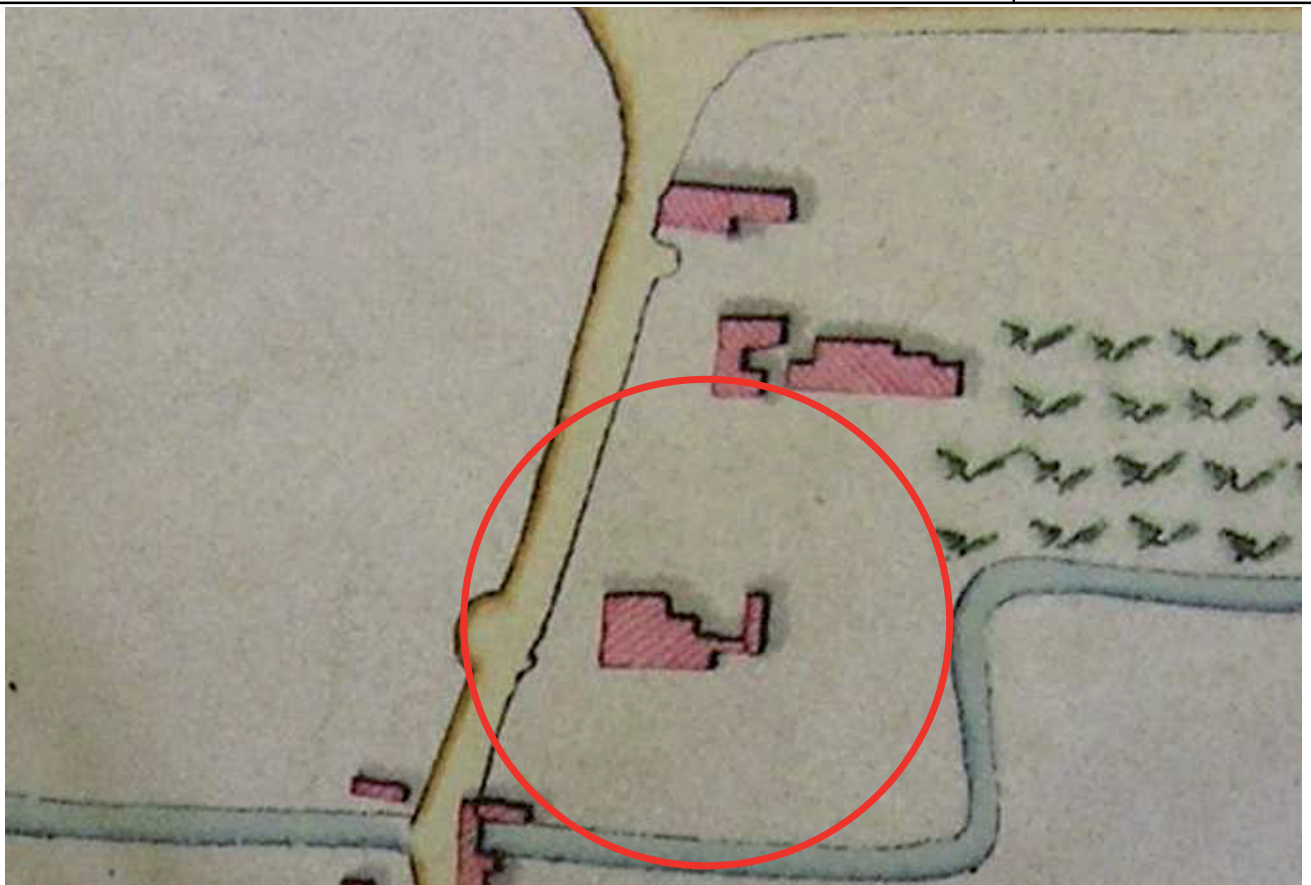
Not to scale
Figure 4



Map of Hughes' Farm, c.1810 (HALS D/EP P35)

Not to scale

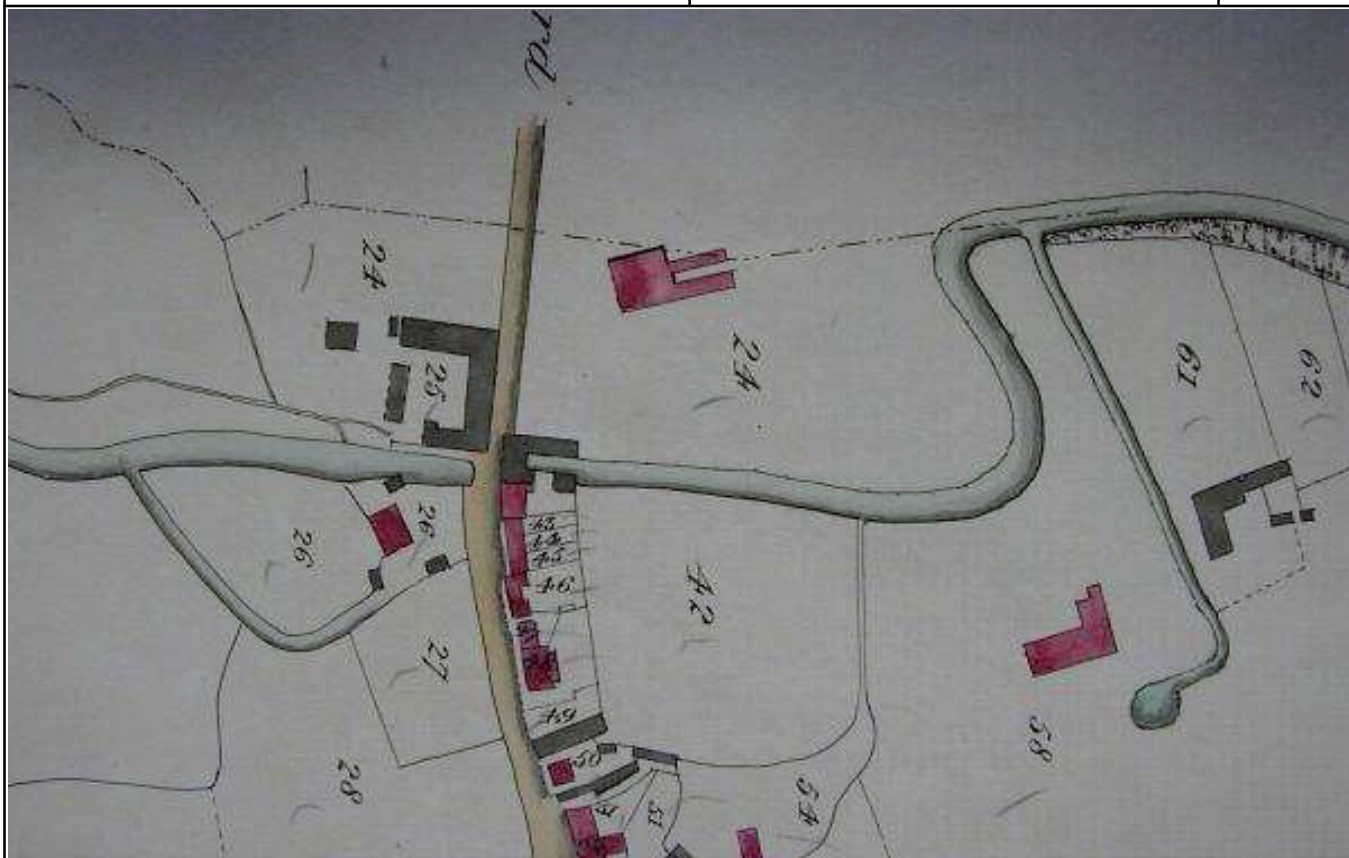
Figure 5



Hertingfordbury Enclosure map, 1813 (HALS QS/E/32)

Not to scale

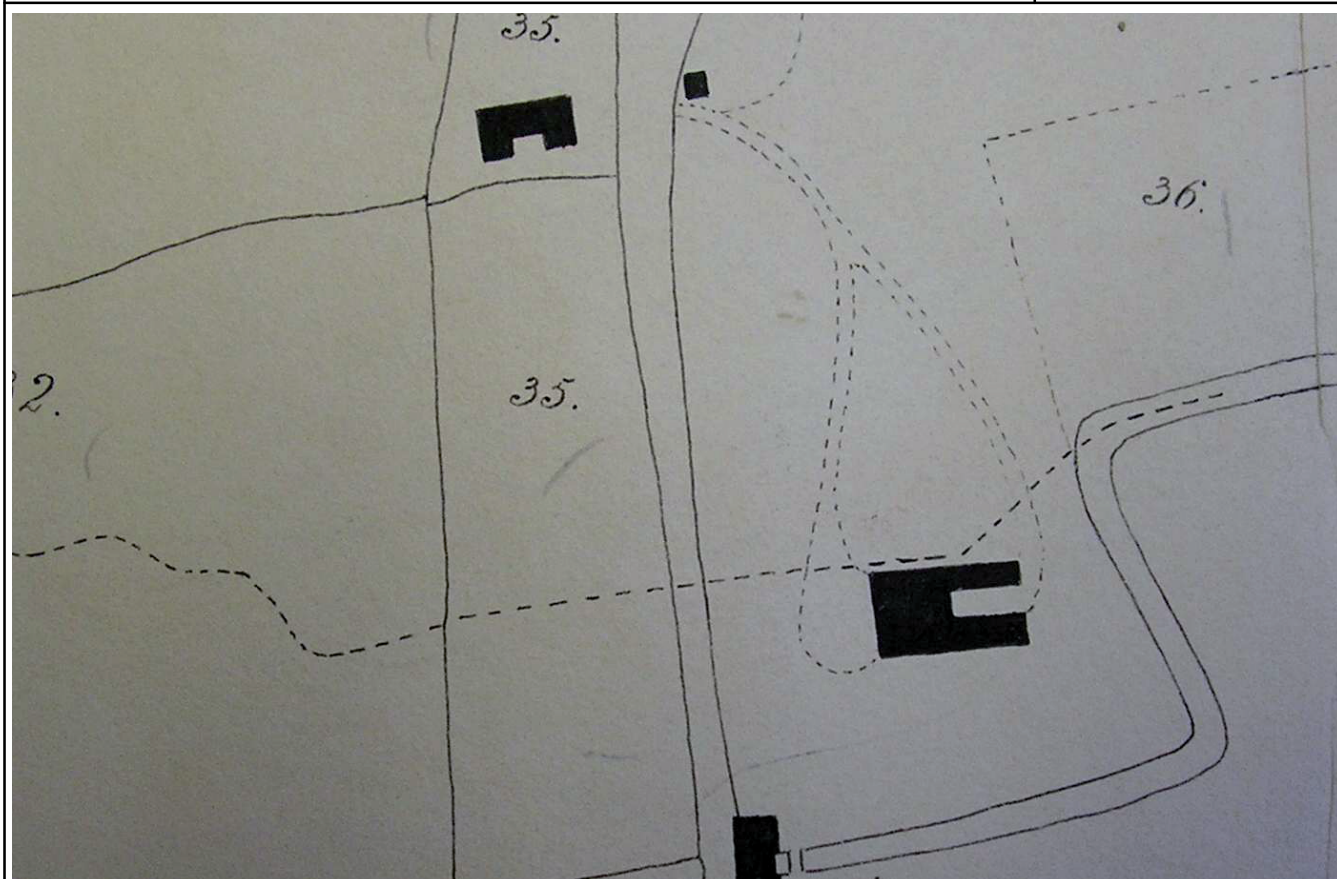
Figure 6



Hertingfordbury Tithe map, 1838 (HALS DSA/4/51/2)

Not to scale

Figure 7



Hertford St Andrews Tithe map, 1838 (HALS DSA 4/50/2)

Not to scale

Figure 8

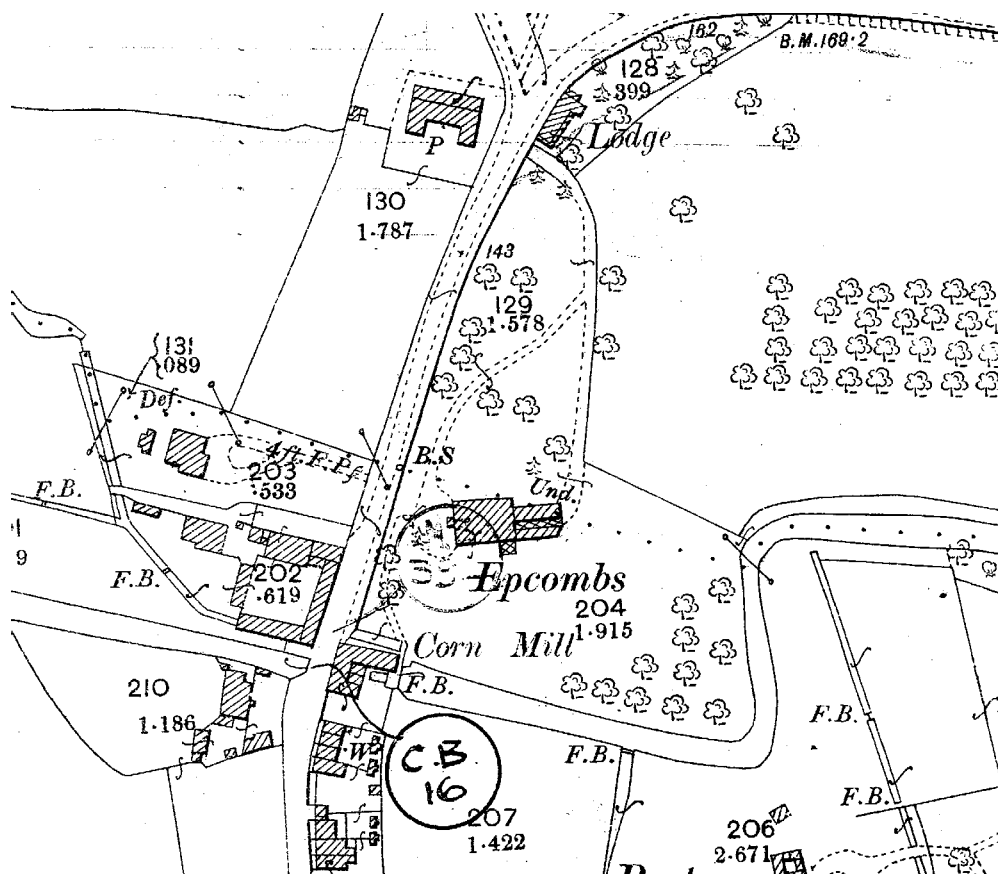


1st edition OS map, 1881

Scale 1:5000

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Figure 9

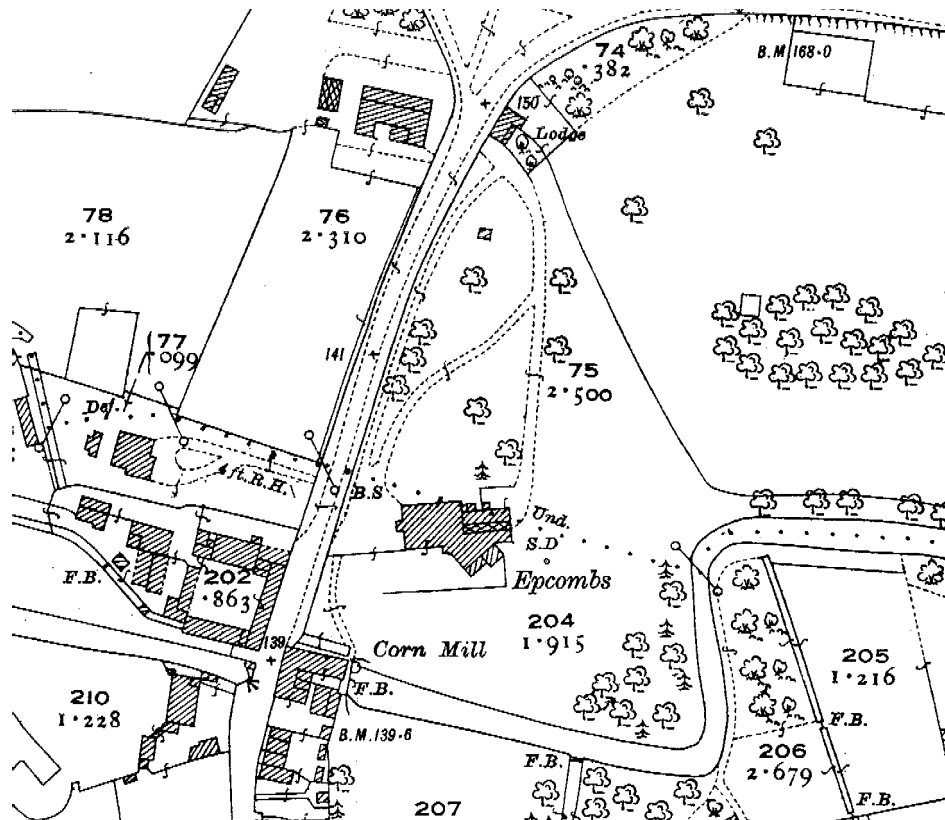


2nd edition OS map, 1889

Scale 1:2500

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Figure 10

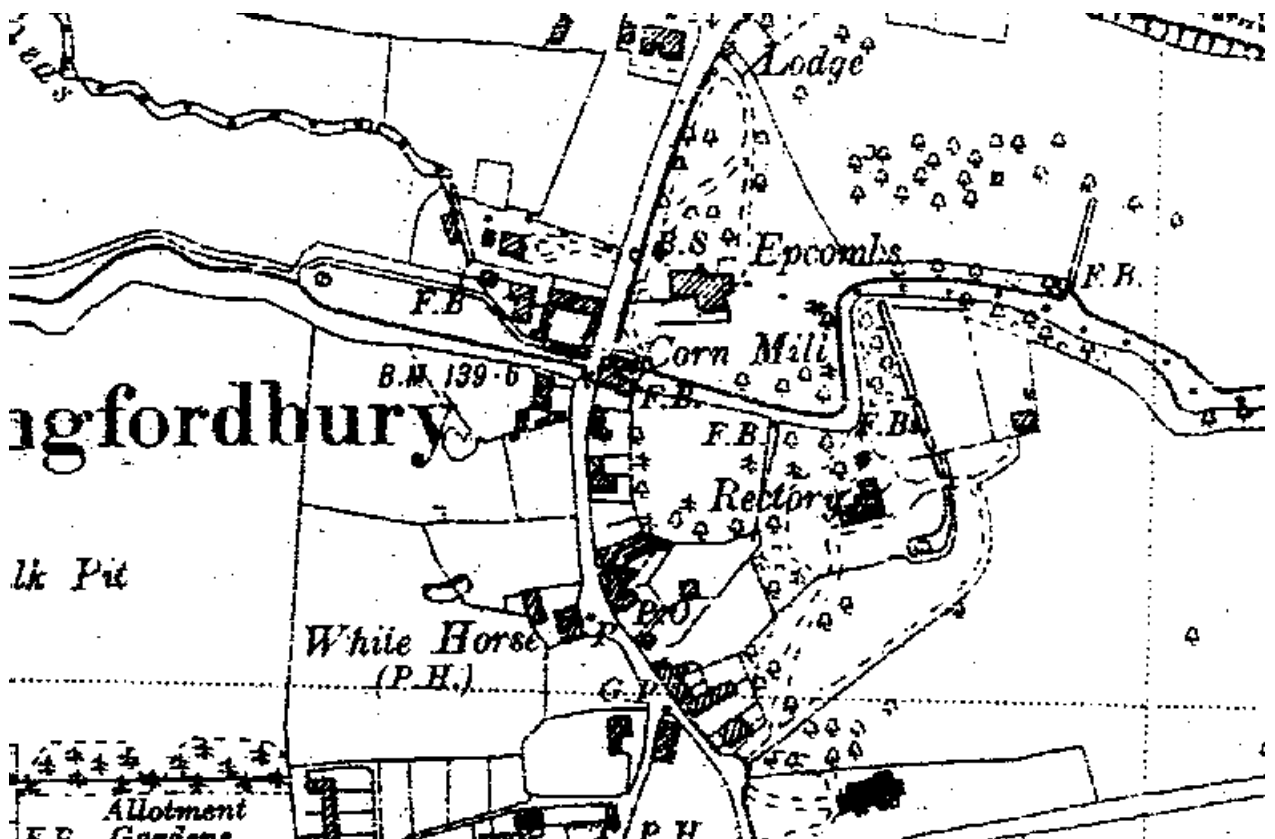


3rd edition OS map, 1923

Scale 1:2500

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Figure 11

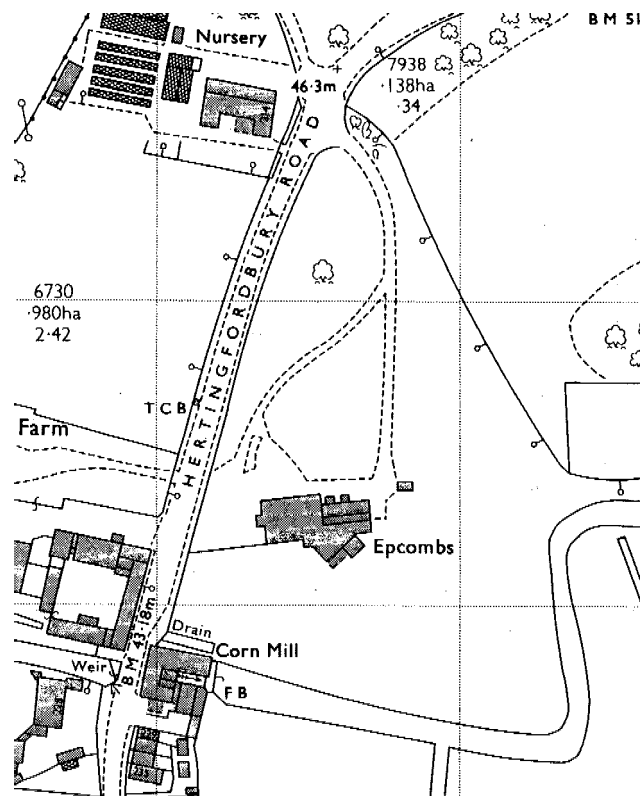


OS map 1922 / 1938

Scale 1:1000

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Figure 12

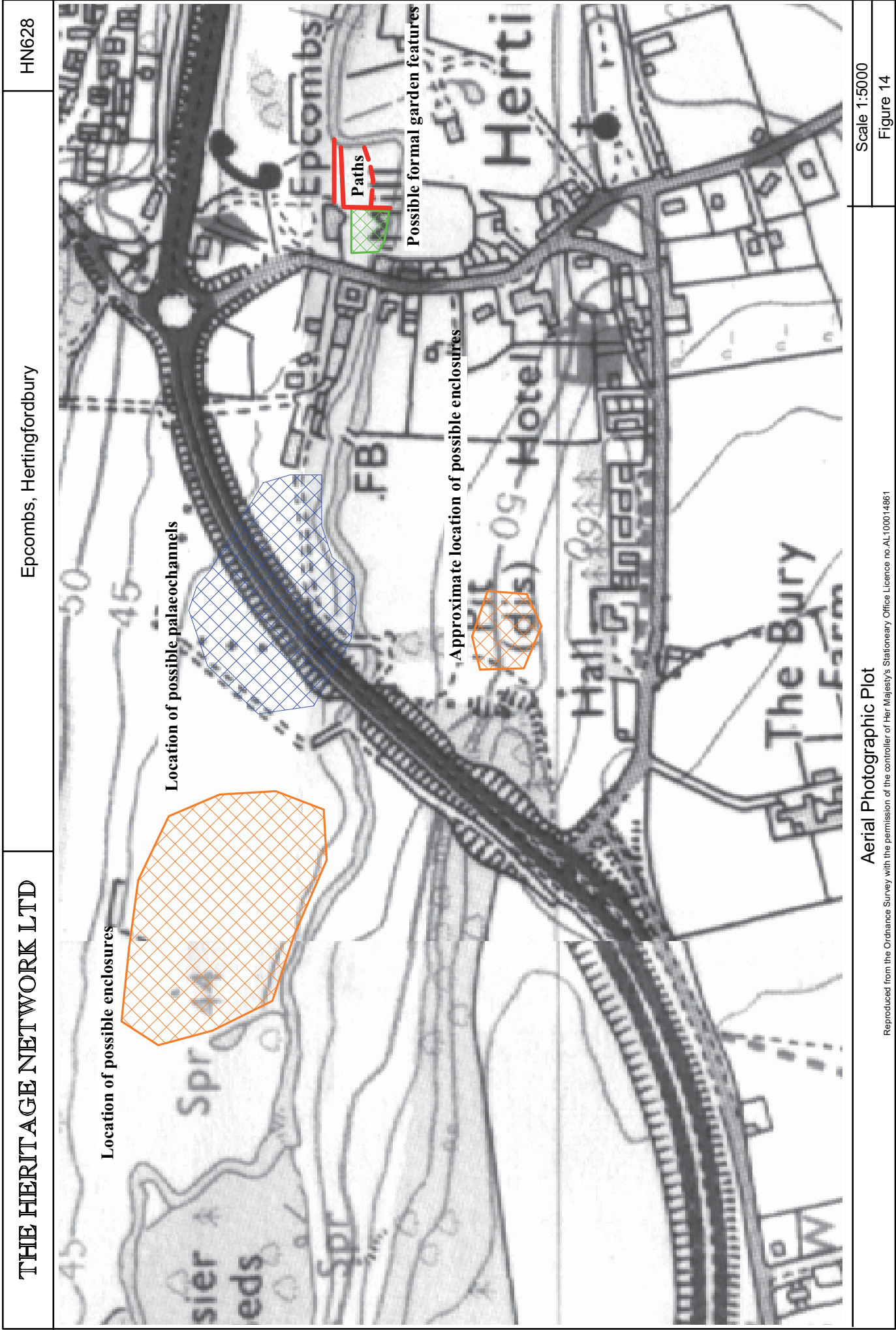


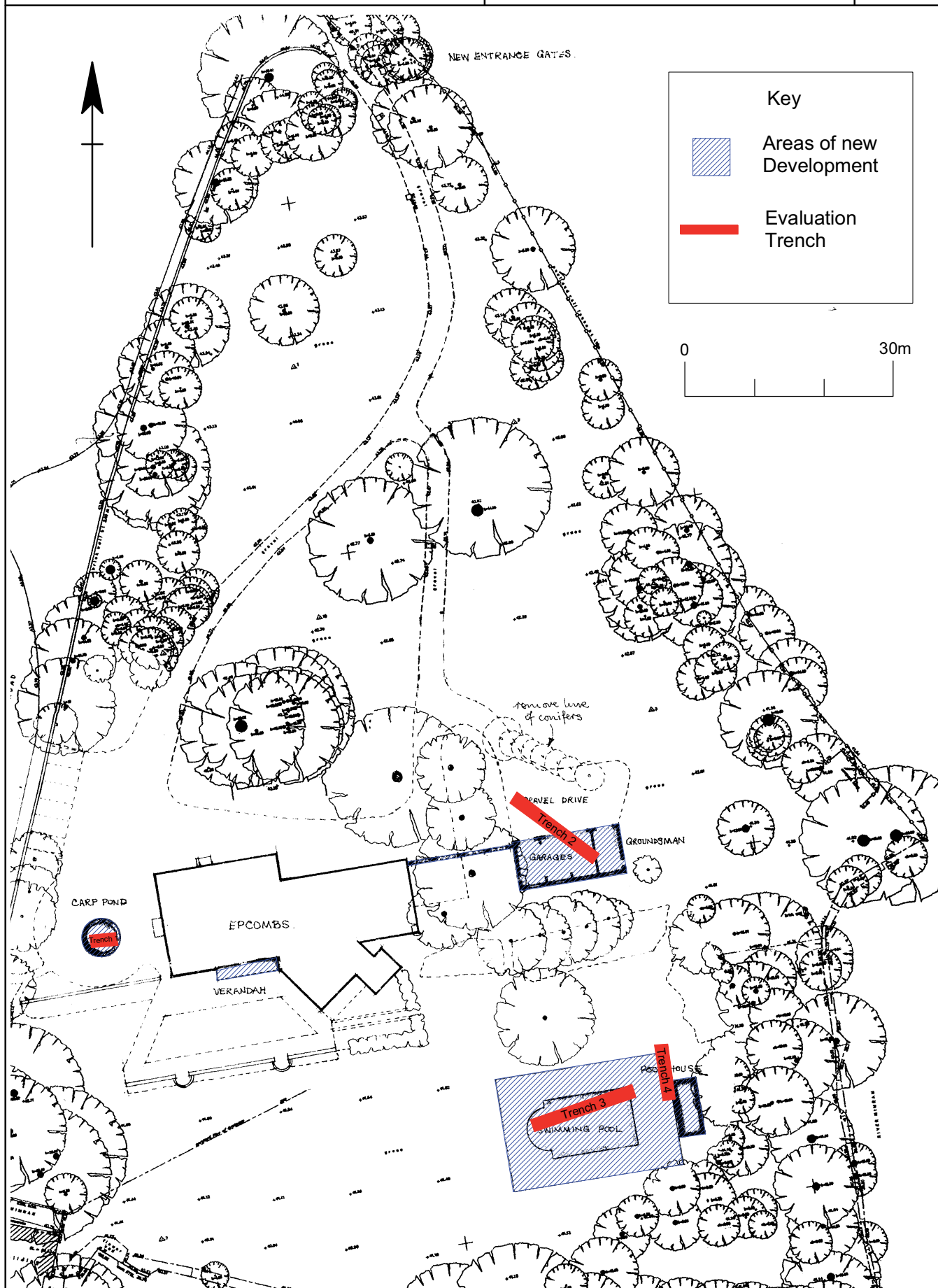
OS map, 1973

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Scale 1:2500

Figure 13

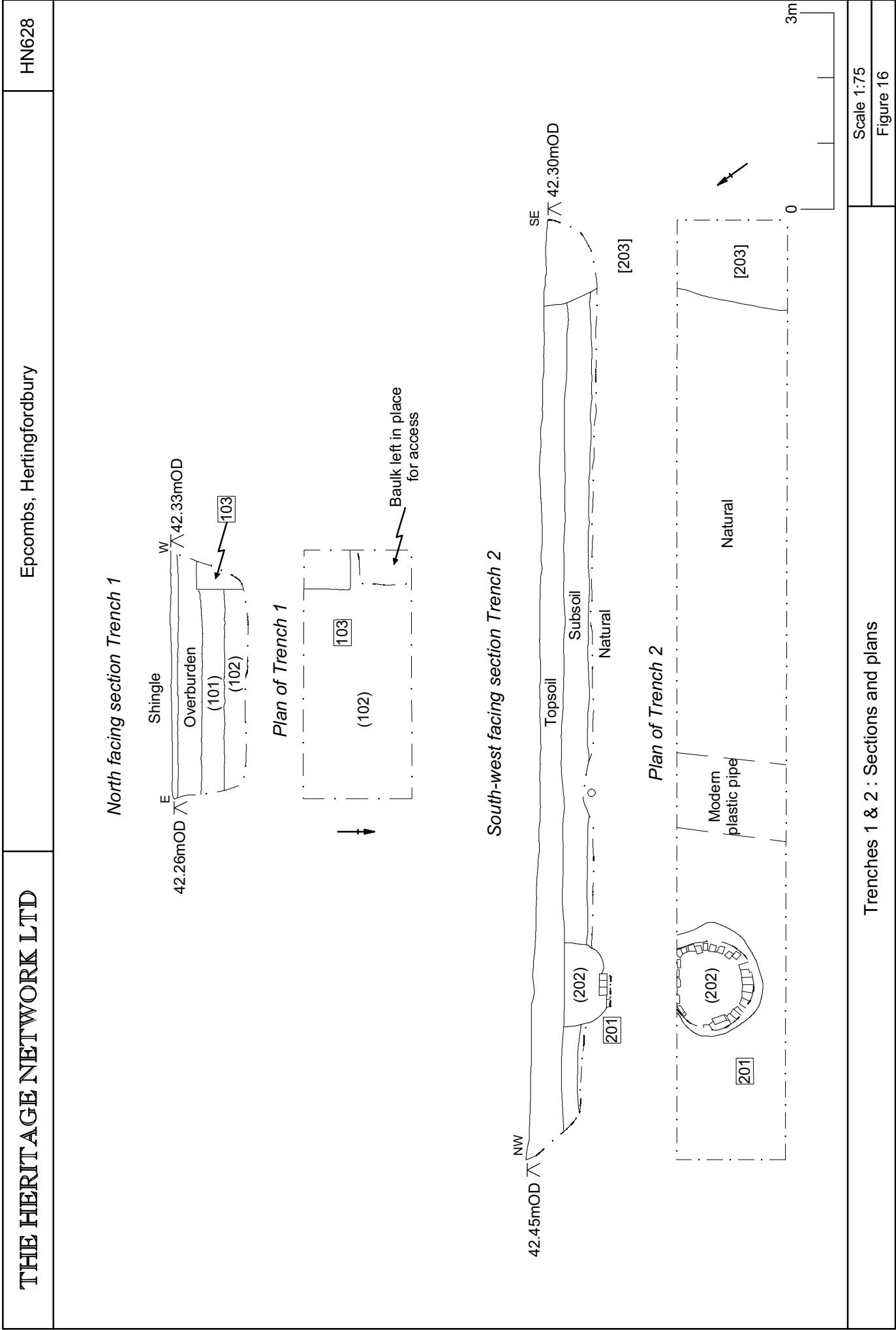


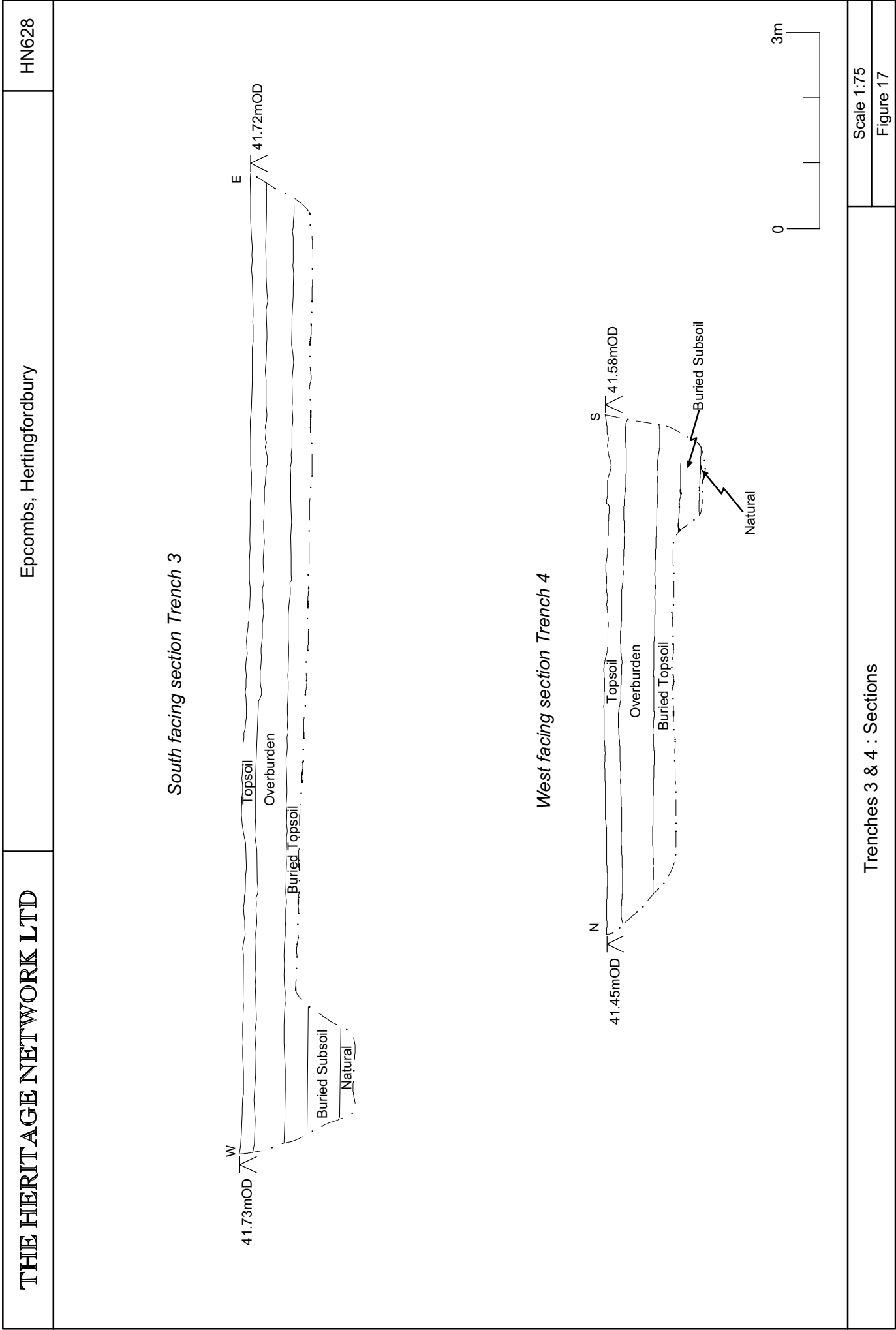


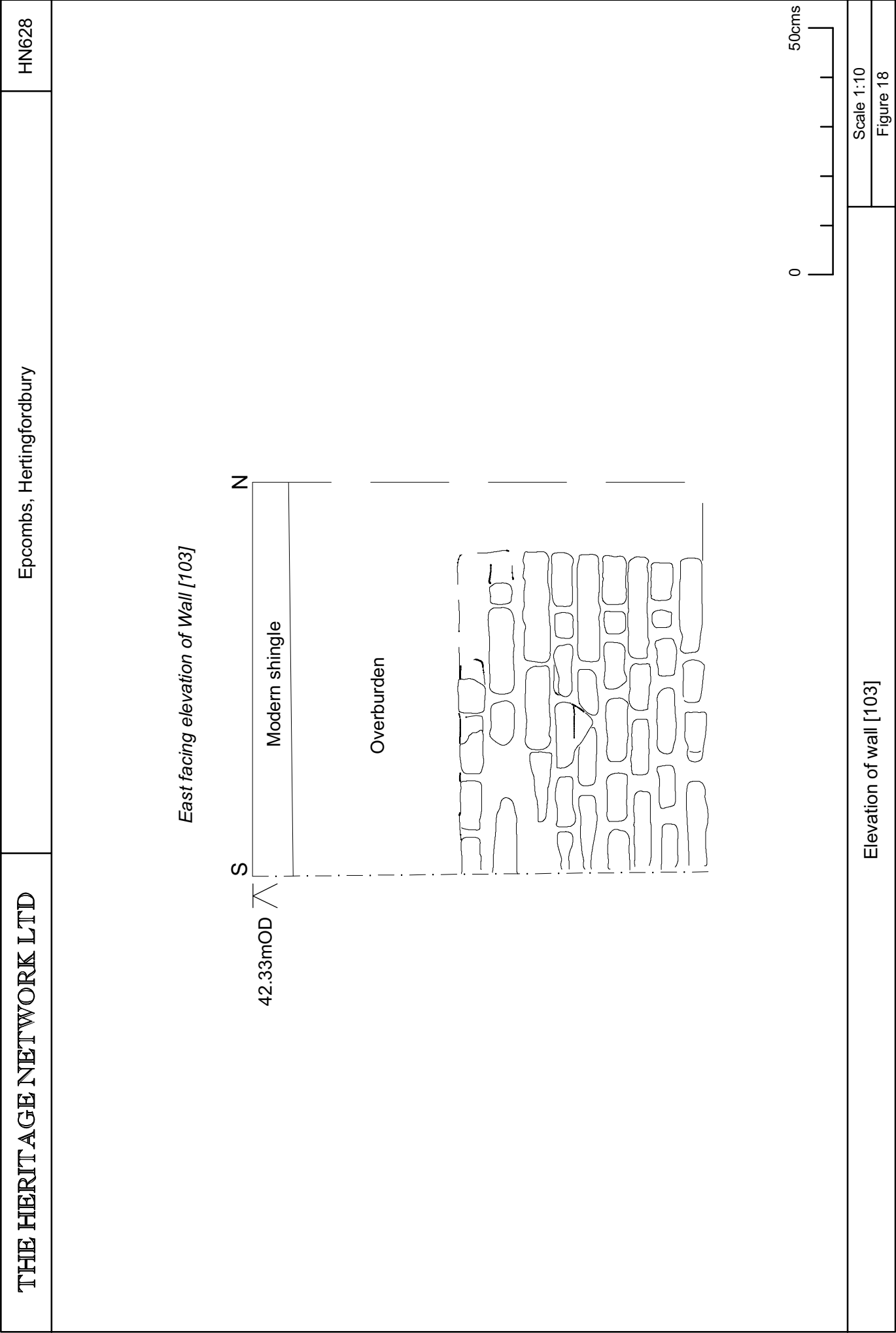
Trench Layout

Scale 1:750

Figure 15







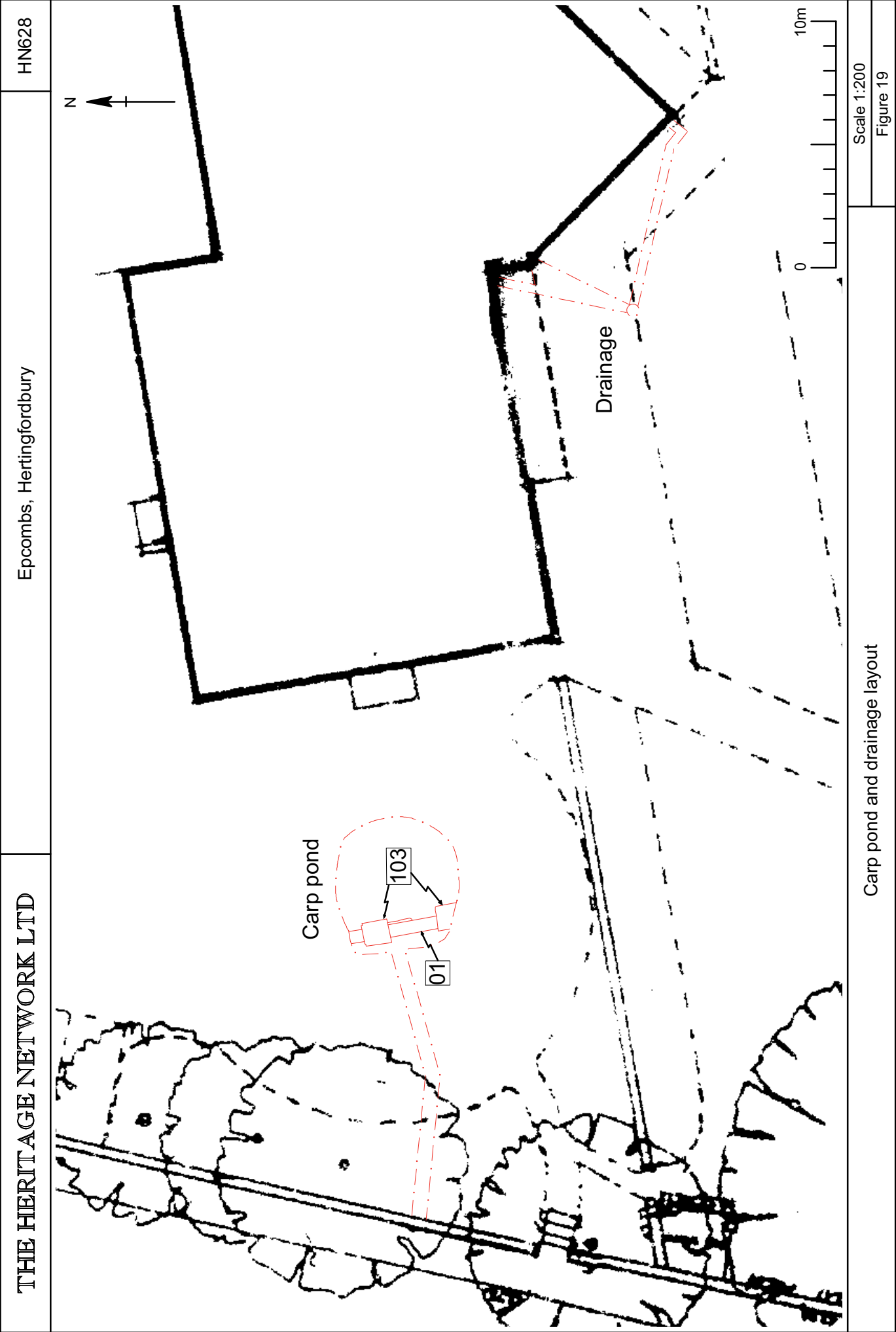




Plate 1: Trench 1 looking west

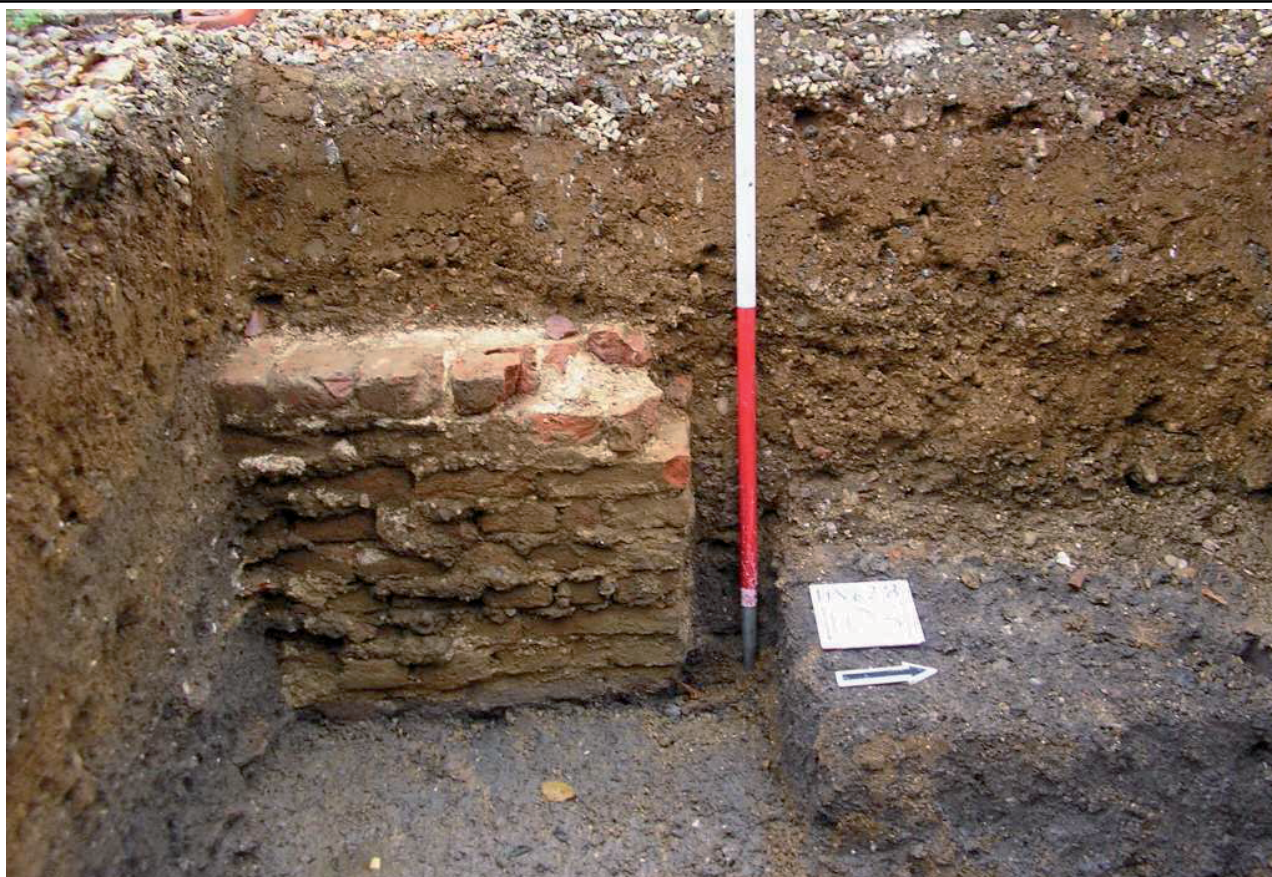


Plate 2: Wall [103] looking west



Plate 3: Trench 2 looking south-east



Plate 4: Well [201] looking north-east



Plate 5: Trench 3 looking north-east



Plate 6: Trench 4 looking north



Plate 7: Wall [01] with brick piers [103] looking west



Plate 8: Wall [01] with brick piers [103] looking south