

# HERITAGE NETWORK



**7 ABBEY VIEW ROAD  
St Albans, Herts.**

HN697

*Archaeological Monitoring Report*



# *THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD*

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

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

7 ABBEY VIEW ROAD  
St. Albans, Hertfordshire

HN697

## *Archaeological Monitoring Report*

*Prepared on behalf of Mr and Mrs Lonsdale*

by

David Kaye, BA PIFA

Report no. 451

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*The cover photograph shows the study area, looking south-east towards the Abbey*

## Acknowledgements

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

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Mr and Mrs Lonsdale; Richard Zajec Builders; and Simon West, District Archaeologist, St. Albans District Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

## Summary

<b>Site name and address:</b>	7 Abbey View Road, St. Albans, Herts		
<b>County:</b>	Hertfordshire	<b>District:</b>	St. Albans
<b>Village/town:</b>	St. Albans	<b>Parish:</b>	Non-civil
<b>Planning reference:</b>	5/07/0420, 5/07/1566	<b>NGR:</b>	TL 1420 0725
<b>Client name and address:</b>	Mr and Mrs Lonsdale, 7 Abbey Road, St. Albans, Hertfordshire		
<b>Nature of work:</b>	House extension	<b>Former land use:</b>	Garden
<b>Site status:</b>	None	<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>	District Archaeologist, St. Albans District Council
<b>Size of affected area:</b>	c.60m <sup>2</sup>	<b>Size of area investigated:</b>	c.60m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Site Code:</b>	HN697	<b>Other reference:</b>	n/a
<b>Organisation:</b>	Heritage Network	<b>Site Director:</b>	David Hillelson
<b>Project type, methods etc.:</b>	Archaeological monitoring	<b>Archive recipient:</b>	St. Albans Museum Service
<b>Start of work</b>	11/10/2007	<b>Finish of work</b>	26/10/2007
<b>Related SMR Nos:</b>	n/a	<b>Periods represented:</b>	n/a
<b>Oasis UID</b>	Heritage1-31808	<b>Significant finds:</b>	No significant finds
<b>Monument types:</b>	n/a		
<b>Physical archive:</b>	n/a		
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b>	n/a		

In response to a condition on the planning permission for two new side extensions at 7 Abbey View Road, St. Albans, Herts, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the owners to undertake the archaeological monitoring of the groundworks.

The site appears to have been heavily landscaped to create a building platform, probably during the construction of the existing buildings. Despite the site's proximity to known medieval archaeology in the vicinity, and evidence of earlier settlement from the prehistoric, Iron Age and Roman periods, no cut features, deposits or artefacts were encountered from any period during this project, and no unstratified artefacts were recovered from the

# 1. Introduction

**1.1** This report has been prepared at the request of Mr. and Mrs. Lonsdale, as part of a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording of building works at 7 Abbey View Road, St. Albans, Herts.

**1.2** The investigation was a requirement of the planning consents granted by St Albans District Council (SADC) (ref.5/07/0420 and 5/07/1566), under the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990). The extent of the work has been defined in consultation with the District Archaeologist for SADC and follows a standard model *Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording*.

**1.3** The site is located in an area of known Roman and medieval archaeological remains close to the historic core of St Albans. No. 7 lies on the south east side of Abbey View Road, between Ver Road and Mount Pleasant, centred on NGR TL 1420 0725 (Figure 1). The development involves the construction of two separate extensions adjoining the south-western side of the existing house, with associated drainage. The larger northern extension measured 6.40m in length and 3.30m in width. The smaller southern extension measured 5.40m in length and 2.10m in width.

**1.4** Abbey View Road lies approximately 350m to the north-west of the medieval Abbey, which has its origins in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and within the part of St Albans known as 'Kingsbury', thought to be the site of the Saxon and early medieval *burh*. Little evidence for the postulated settlement has been so far identified. Several undated timber structures (Urban Archaeological Database (UAD) Monuments 8, 9, 10 and 11), which may relate to the burh, have been recorded on the east side of Hill Street, approximately 250m to the north-east. The Roman town of Verulamium lies approximately 300m to the south, on the opposite bank of the River Ver.

**1.5** The archaeological evidence suggests that this area was occupied in the Roman period. A number of sites have been recorded within a 300m radius of the present site, including a cremation cemetery, which appears to spread across the area (UAD Monument 1), a ditch on Kings Road, approximately 250m north-west (UAD Monument 14), building foundations (UAD Monument 4) and wells (UAD Monuments 5 and 6) at The Lawns, approximately 260m north-west. A human burial was recovered in 1882 from Portland Street, approximately 200m north-west, while Roman material was uncovered in 1905/6 in Kingsbury Avenue, approximately 350m north-west. Roman features and cremation burials were unearthed during excavations at Hill Street, approximately 150m north, in 1998. In addition a probable Roman coin hoard (UAD Monument 2) was discovered approximately 30m to the south-west of the present site.

**1.6** It was considered by the planning authority that the programme of archaeological works had the potential to contribute to an understanding of the origins, development, and growth of settlement in St. Albans, especially during the Roman, Saxon and medieval periods.

**1.7** The aim of the present project has been to identify and record any archaeological features and deposits which may 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), and subject to the limitations of reasonable safety and practicality.

**1.8** The present report describes the findings of the monitoring programme and is intended, together with the deposition of the site archive with the St. Albans Museum Service, to complete the requirements of the planning condition.

## 2. Fieldwork

### TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

**2.1** The Vale of St Albans consists of the broad and shallow basin of the upper River Colne. The historic core of modern St Albans is located on the northern side of the vale, where the soils belong to the Hornbeam 3 association (582d). These are described as *deep fine loamy over clayey, and clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging. Some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy over clayey soils. Calcareous subsoils in places* (SSEW 1983).

**2.2** The underlying geology consists of orange clay-with-flints, containing pockets of sand and gravel. Both were observed during the present project.

**2.3** The present site is located within the valley of the river Ver. It lies close to the top of a steep south-west facing slope above the river, at approximately 85m AOD.

### METHODOLOGY

**2.4** The timetable for the fieldwork followed the client's groundwork schedule. A number of site visits were made to supervise the excavation of the footings and soakaways (Figure 3).

**2.5** Due to the density of services known to be in the vicinity, the groundworks were carried out by hand.

**2.6** Spoil from the various stages of excavation was inspected for archaeological artefacts.

**2.7** The project was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the model *Design Brief*, and with the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*.

### MONITORING AND RECORDING

#### *Site Stratigraphy*

**2.8** The stratigraphy on the site consisted of 0.35m of very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/3) topsoil overlying up to 1.05m of made ground. Beneath this material was the natural orange clay-with-flints.

#### *Footings trenches*

**2.9** The footings trenches and pads were 0.4m wide, and were excavated to a depth of between 1.0m and 1.4m. The trenches have been numbered 1 to 5 for ease of reference. All trenches were cut through the overburden into the natural clay.

#### *Trench 1*

**2.10** This was the northernmost trench, located close to the house front (Figure 3). It measured 2.80m in length, 0.40m in width and was excavated to a depth of 1.40m. The sections revealed a layer of dark brown (10YR 3/3) silty clay topsoil, 0.35m in depth, above a deposit of very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2) made ground, consisting of redeposited clay and chalk, with frequent large flints.

**2.11** Five modern pipes were recorded in this trench, all running on a north-west to south-east alignment (Figure 4). Two of these were also observed in Tr. 3 to the south.

**2.12** No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were observed.

#### *Trench 2*

**2.13** This ran on a north-north-west to south-south-east alignment from the south-western corner of Tr. 1 (Figure 3). It measured 6.35m in length, 0.40m in width and 1.40m in depth. The sections revealed the same stratigraphy as in Tr. 1.

**2.14** A single modern pipe ran along the western side of the trench.

**2.15** No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were observed.

#### *Trench 3*

**2.16** This formed the southern wall to the front extension and ran on a north-north-east to south-south-west alignment from the south-eastern corner of Tr.2 towards the existing building. It measured 2.80m in length, 0.40m in width and 1.40m in depth.

**2.17** The stratigraphy was the same as that recorded in Tr.1 and Tr.2.

**2.18** Two modern pipes were present in the centre of the trench. Both of which were also observed in Tr.1 to the north.

**2.19** No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were observed.

#### *Trench 4*

**2.20** This formed the western side of the smaller extension, towards the rear of the existing building (Figure 3). It measured 5.40m in length, 0.40m in width and 1.00m in depth. The natural clay with flints was reached at a depth of 0.80m below the existing ground surface.

**2.21** The topsoil had been stripped prior to inspection, and the sections revealed a layer of made ground comprising dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) silty clay, with lenses of redeposited natural clay and chalk.

**2.22** Three modern pipes were observed towards the southern end of the trench. One on a north-west to south-east alignment and two running north-north-east to south-south-west.

**2.23** No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were observed.

#### *Trench 5*

**2.24** This formed the southern wall to the rear extension and ran north-north-east to south-south-west from the southern end of Tr.4 to the existing building. It measured 1.60m in length, 0.40m in width and 1.00m in depth.

**2.25** The sections revealed the same stratigraphy recorded in Tr.4.

**2.26** No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were present and no modern pipes were observed.

### **Soakaways**

**2.27** A soakaway was excavated to the south-west of the proposed extension (Figure 4). It measured 0.70m in diameter and approximately 1.05m in depth. The sections revealed a layer of dark brown (10 YR 3/3) silty clay topsoil, 0.35m in depth, above a very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2) made ground, containing post-medieval tile and brick fragments, redeposited chalk and orange gravel, 0.60m in depth. Natural reddish orange sand and gravel was observed at a depth of approximately 0.90m.

**2.28** No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were present and no modern pipes were observed.

### **Drainage trenches**

**2.29** Three drainage trenches were excavated from the existing house and the new extensions to the soakaway (Figure 2). The trenches measured 0.40m in width and 0.65m in depth.

**2.30** The sections in all three trenches revealed the same stratigraphy, consisting of a layer of dark brown (10YR 3/3) silty clay topsoil, 0.35m deep, over very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2) made ground, containing post-medieval tile and brick fragments, redeposited chalk and orange gravel. The natural gravel was not reached in these trenches.

**2.31** Trench A ran on a north-east to south-west alignment for approximately 6m from the rear of the existing house to the new soakaway. Trench B measured 3.20m and north – south from the south-western corner of the rear extension. Trench C measured 4.20m and ran north-north-west to south-south-east from the south-western corner of the front extension to the new soakaway.

**2.32** No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were present and no modern pipes were observed.



### 3. Discussion

**3.1** The present site lies close to the historic core of St Albans, and within the area of the postulated Saxon burh known as 'Kingsbury'. Evidence for this has so far been limited to a few undated timber structures on the east side of Hill Street (UAD Monuments 8, 9, 10 & 11; UAD event 28). The medieval Abbey of St Albans, with its associated monastic complex, lies approximately 350m to the south-east.

**3.2** The walled Roman town of Verulamium lies approximately 300m to the south, but a number of sites of this period have been recorded within a 300m radius, indicating the area was occupied at that time. These include a probable Roman coin hoard (UAD Monument 2) which was discovered approximately 30m to the south-west of the present site, a ditch on Kings Road (UAD Monument 14) and building foundations (UAD Monument 4) and wells (UAD Monuments 5 and 6) at The Lawns. Human burials are also known from the vicinity, including at least one found during work along Portland Street in 1882 and number of cremation burials, associated with a cemetery that appears to covers much of the surrounding area (UAD Monument 1). Roman features and cremation burials were also revealed during excavations at Hill Street in 1998.

**3.3** No evidence for archaeological features, deposits or artefacts was observed during the groundworks. The recorded stratigraphy suggests that the site has undergone a degree of landscaping in order to create a level platform on which to build. This probably occurred during the construction of the existing house, and may have removed any archaeological evidence.

**3.4** The site has been fairly heavily disturbed by modern services associated with the existing building. A number of pipes were observed in four of the trenches during the present project (Figure 3).

#### *Confidence Rating*

**3.5** The conditions were generally good for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation. There were no circumstances that would lead to a confidence rating for the work that was less than High.

## 4. Schedule of Site Visits

Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
11/10/2007	DK	2	Introductory and explanatory meeting
12/10/2007	DK	2	Inspect footings trenches
15/10/2007	DK	3	Inspect footings trenches
16/10/2007	DK	2	Inspect footings trenches
17/10/2007	DK	2	Inspect footings trenches
24/10/2007	MW	2	Inspect drainage trenches
26/10/2007	MW	2	Inspect drainage trenches and soakaway

## 5. Bibliography

Archaeology Data Service: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue>

Brown, N & Glazebrook, J, 2000, *Research and Archaeology: a framework for the eastern counties, 2. Research agenda and strategy*. East Anglian Archaeology

English Heritage, 1991, *Management of Archaeological Projects (EH)*

Gurney, D. et al, 2003, *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. ALGAO (EER)

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 2001 *Standard and Guidance for An Archaeological Watching Brief*. (IFA)

Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983 *Soil Map Sheet 4, Eastern England, Scale 1:250,000*

## 6. Illustrations & Plates

Figure 1..... Site location

Figure 2..... Site layout

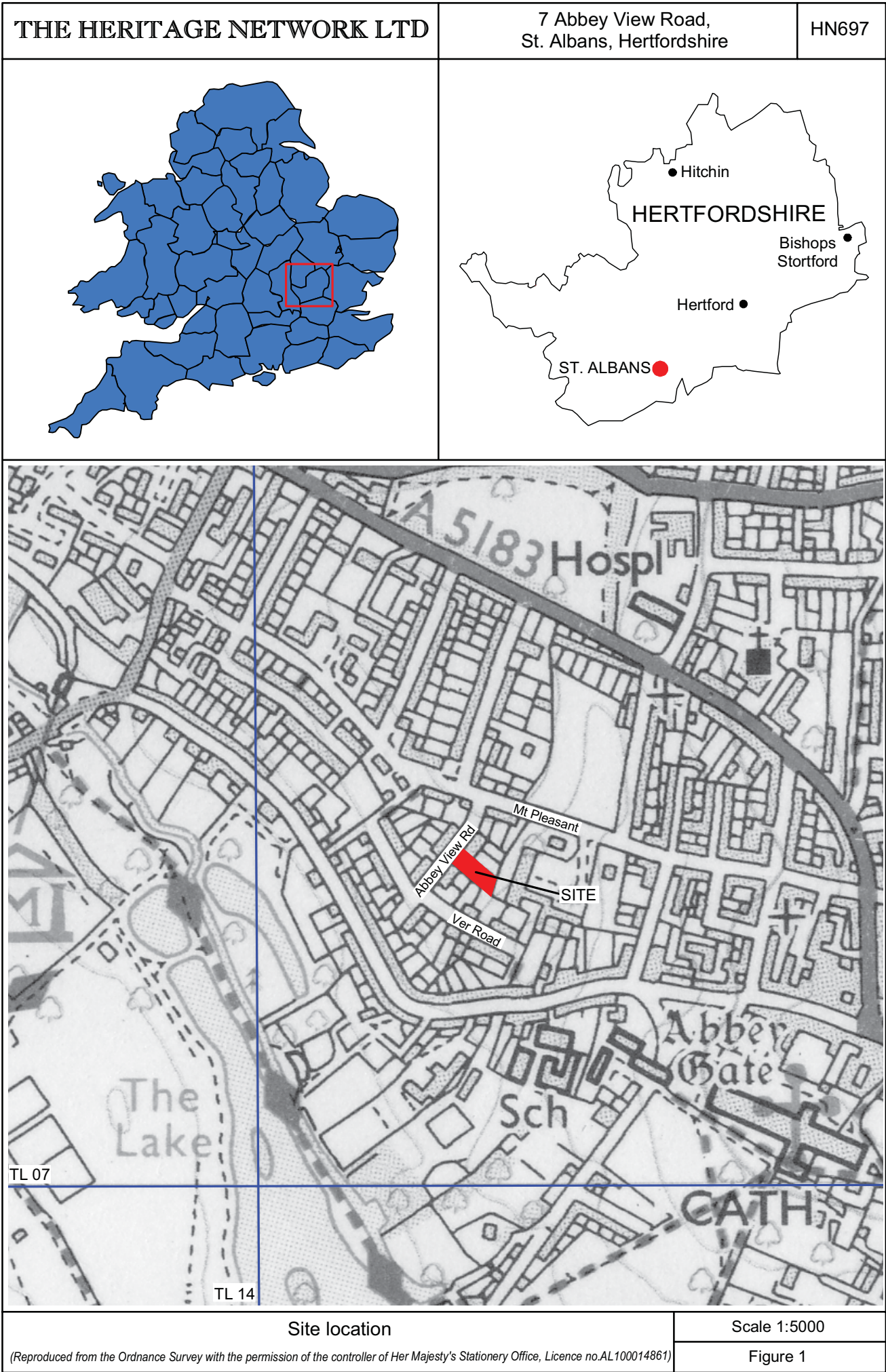
Figure 3..... Groundworks

Plate 1..... Study area, looking north-west

Plate 2..... Sample section, Trench 2



Plate 3..... Sample section, Trench 4

Plate 4..... Soakaway

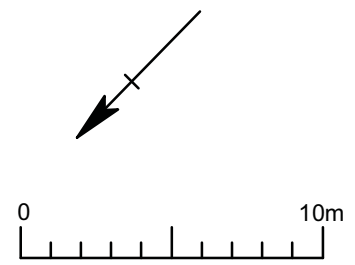




**Key**

-  Existing building
-  Extension

Abbey View Road



Site layout

Scale 1:250

Figure 2

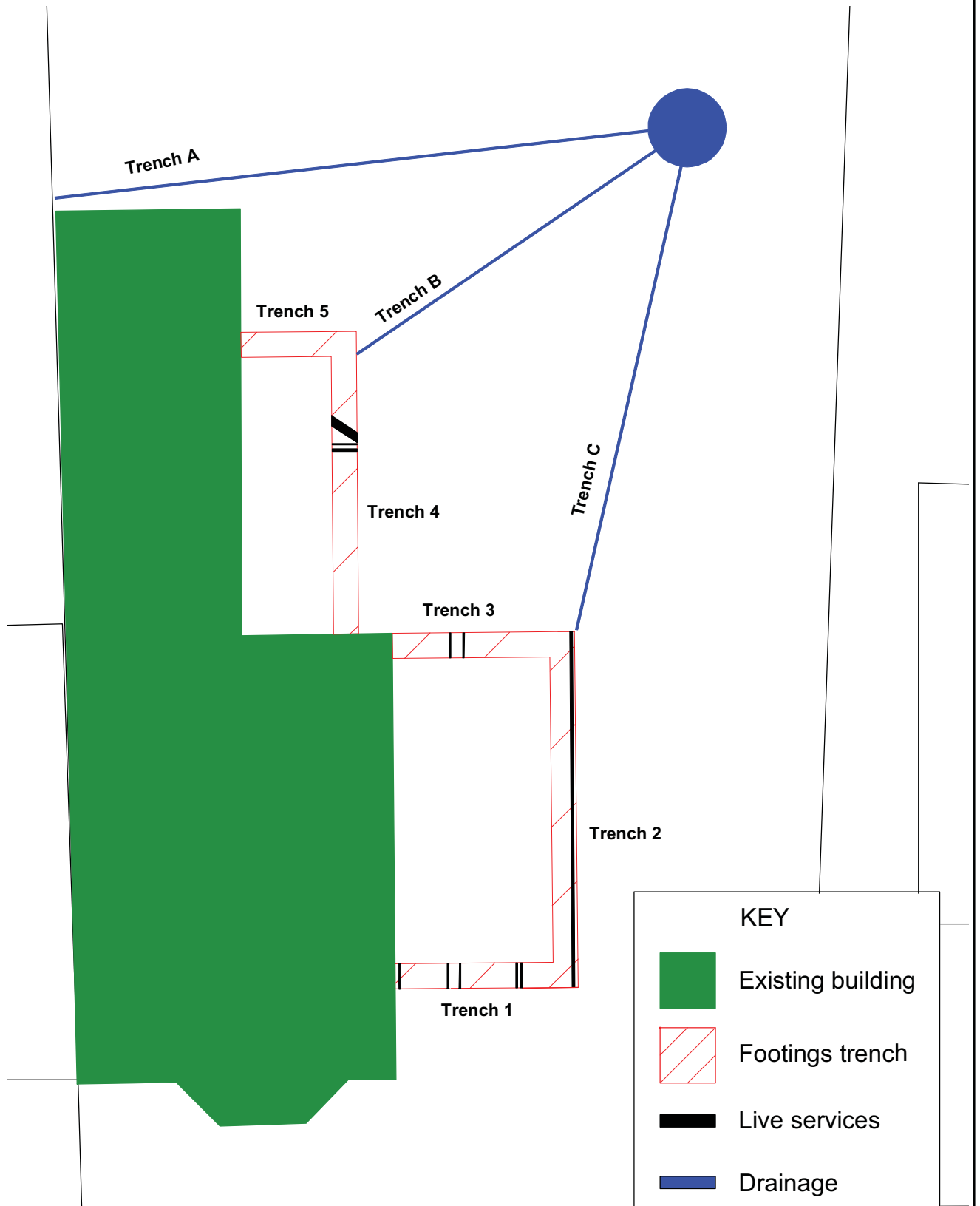




Plate 1: Study area, looking north-west



Plate 2: Sample section, Trench 2



Plate 3: Sample section, Trench 4



Plate 4: Soakaway