

## HERITAGE NETWORK



## 13 KNEESWORTH STREET, Royston, Herts.

HN720

Archaeological Monitoring Report



## THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation
Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

# 13 KNEESWORTH STREET Royston, Herts.

HN720

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Samuel Poulton Properties

By

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### **Contents**

	2000 1
Section 1 IntroductionF	age
Section 2 FieldworkF	age 2
Section 3 Discussion	
Section 4 Schedule of site visits	age 5
Section 5 BibliographyF	age 5
Section 5 Illustrations	_

The cover shows a view of the site looking west

## **Acknowledgements**

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

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Samuel Poulton, Samuel Poulton Properties, and Andy Instone, Historic Environment Unit, HCC, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

## **Summary**

Site name and address:	13 Kneesworth Street	, Royston	
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	North Herts
Village/town:	Royston	Parish:	Royston
Planning reference:	07/02543/1	NGR:	TL 3550 4060
Client name and address:	Samuel Poulton Properties, The Barn, Dove Cottage, Aspenden, Nr Buntingford, Herts, SG9 9PB		
Nature of work:	Conversion	Former land use:	Factory
Site status:	n/a	Reason for investigation:	Direction of local planning authority (PPG 16)
Position in planning process:	After full determination (as a condition)	Project brief originator:	Local Authority
Size of affected area:	$38m^2$	Size of area investigated:	$38m^2$
Site Code:	HN720	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Monitoring	Archive recipient:	North Herts Museum Service
Start of work	03/03/08	Finish of work	07/03/08
Related SMR Nos:	n/a	Periods represented:	Post medieval
Oasis UID	heritage1-39818	Significant finds:	n/a
Monument types:	n/a	·	
Physical archive:	None		
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

#### **Synopsis:**

In response to a condition on the planning permission for development works and associated drainage at the rear of 13 Kneesworth Street, Royston, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by Samuel Poulton Properties to undertake the archaeological monitoring of the groundworks.

The monitoring programme revealed a brick garden feature, chalk yard surface and a substantial amount of build up, most likely imported to create a level surface. No further archaeological features, deposits, or artefacts predating the modern period were encountered.

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of Samuel Poulton Properties, as part of the archaeological monitoring and recording of development works at 13 Kneesworth Street, Royston, Hertfordshire.
- 1.2 The investigation was a requirement of the planning consent for the development granted by North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) (ref. 07/02543/1), under the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990). The extent of the work was defined in consultation with the Historic Environment Unit (HEU) of Hertfordshire County Council and followed the standard model *Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording*, prepared by the HEU, acting as archaeological advisers to the NHDC. A full specification for the work is contained in the Heritage Network's approved project design dated February 2008.
- 1.3 The site, centred on NGR TL 3550 4060, is situated in the core of the medieval town of Royston, on the west side of Kneesworth Street. It lies on level ground at approximately 60mAOD. The development proposes the part conversion of an existing building and the erection of two two-bedroom dwellings following the substantial demolition of an existing building.
- 1.4 The aim of the investigation has been to identify and record any archaeological features and deposits which might have been uncovered; and to retrieve artefactual and ecofactual elements which would allow the date, character, and significance of the site to be assessed in accordance with current regional research agenda (Brown and Glazebrook, 2000), subject to the limitations of reasonable safety and practicality.
- 1.5 The present report describes the findings of the monitoring programme and is intended, together with the deposition of the site archive with the North Hertfordshire Museum Service, to complete the requirements of the planning condition.

HN720\report Page 1

#### 2. Fieldwork

#### TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- **2.1** The site lies on level ground at approximately 75mAOD.
- 2.2 The soils of the area belong to the Upton 1 association (342a), which is described as 'Shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk. Mainly on moderately steep, sometimes very steep land. Deeper fine silty calcareous soils in coombes and dry valleys' (SSEW).

#### **METHODOLOGY**

- 2.3 The timetable for the fieldwork followed the client's groundwork schedule. A total of two site visits were made to supervise and monitor the excavation of a drainage trench and foundations.
- 2.4 The machining was undertaken using a tracked mini digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket or toothed bucket as necessary.
- 2.5 All work was carried out in accordance with the approved *Project Design*, current health and safety legislation, and both IFA and ALGAO standards.

#### MONITORING AND RECORDING

#### Drainage trench

- 2.6 A drainage trench was excavated along the southwest and southeast site limits, tying in to an existing manhole in the western corner. The trench measured 0.60m wide by 0.70m deep in the western corner rising to 0.40m deep in the eastern corner. This cut through a 0.40-0.65m thick layer of very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2) sandy silt containing frequent building debris, chalk and occasional roots. Beneath this was the white (10YR 8/1) chalk natural. It was encountered on the west side of the site only, as the trench did not breach the overburden on the east (Plate 1). This trench was due to be extended along the northeast limit of the site at a later date. As it was not expected to breach the overburden it was not considered necessary that it should be monitored.
- 2.7 A brick structure was observed in the southern corner of the site (Plate 2). This survived for 5 courses and was formed by modern re bricksbricks measuring 0.24m by 0.06m by 0.14m. This was contained within a 0.50m deep U-shaped cut measuring 0.45m+ by 0.40m+ and containing a very dark greyish brown very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2) sandy silt fill.

#### Footings trenches

2.8 Two footings trenches for the building conversion were excavated, the first running northeast-southwest to create a new outer wall, and the second running northwest-southeast to divide the standing building into two. The trenches measured 0.60m wide by up to 1.05m deep (Plate 3). The stratigraphy in this area consisted of a 0.25m thick concrete floor which rested on reinforced beams running northwest-southeast across the building and supported by a central

HN720\report Page 2

brick pier (Plate 4). Beneath the floor was a 0.11m void before a 0.10m thick white (10YR 8/1) redposited chalk surface was encountered. This covered a 0.33m thick layer of very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2) sandy silt mixed overburden overlying a 0.15m thick lighter brown subsoil layer. The white (10YR 8/1) solid chalk natural was then encountered.

Page 3

#### 3. Discussion

- 3.1 The present site lies within an Area of Archaeological Significance (AA10), as designated in the district local plan. This encompasses the centre of Royston, which was recorded in 1163 as 'Crux Roys'. Kneesworth Street follows the line of the Roman road called Ermine Street. It crosses the Icknield Way, an important route between East Anglia and Wessex since at least the Neolithic period, approximately 400m to the south-east of the present site, at the junction between Baldock Street and High Street. A medieval hospital and cemetery are known to be located in the vicinity of the site. In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century a number of buildings along Kneesworth Street were used as court residences and offices associated with the royal hunting lodge, known as 'King James' Palace'.
- 3.2 It was noted that the chalk natural on the site occurs at an unexpectedly low level. This may reflect the natural downward slope of the land from the west to the east. The layer of build up material on the site is likely to have been introduced to bring the site up to a construction level in keeping with the surroundings.
- 3.3 The layer of redeposited chalk observed in the foundation trenches may represent an earlier floor, indicating previous occupation of the site. The brick feature observed in the drainage trench appears to be shown on the modern O.S. plan (Figure 2) and is likely to be a brick garden feature.
- 3.4 The monitoring of the groundworks associated with the development revealed no archaeological features, deposits, or artefacts predating the late post medieval period.

#### **Confidence Rating**

3.5 All elements of the development were monitored and there are no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than High.

HN720\report Page 4

### 4. Schedule of site visits

Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
03/03/08	MW	9	Monitor excavations
07/03/08	DJH	2	Monitor excavations

## 5. Bibliography

Ashworth, H. 2008, 13 Kneesworth Street, Royston, Herts. Project Design: Archaeological Monitoring. Heritage Network.

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

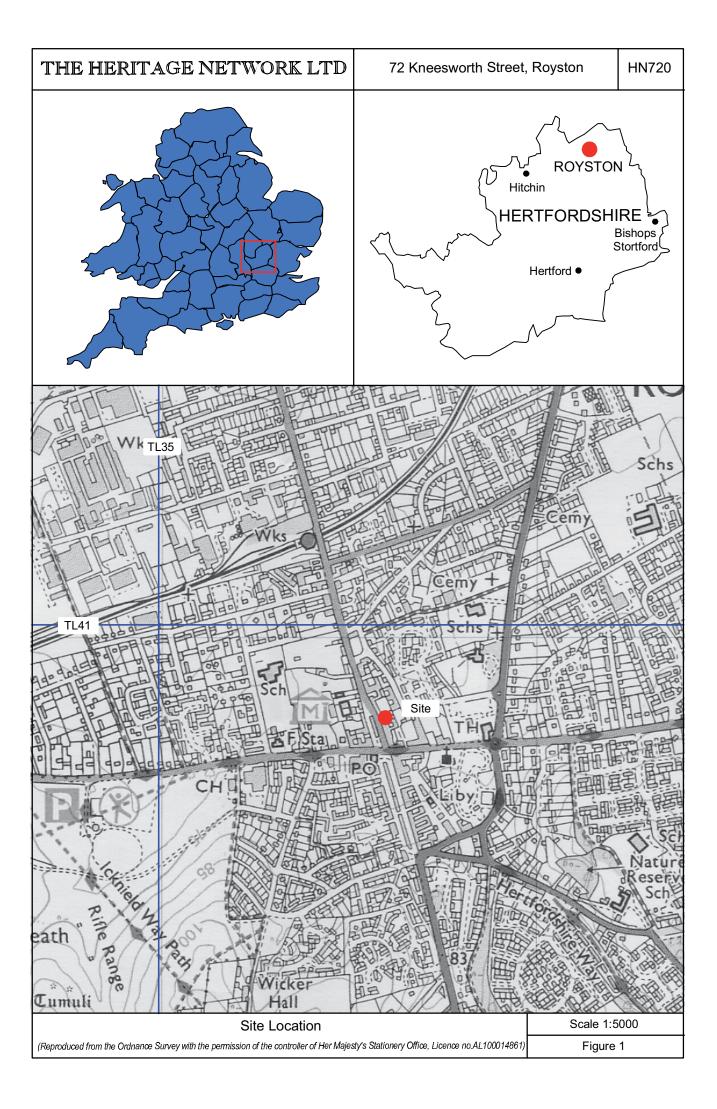
Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1999, Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation.

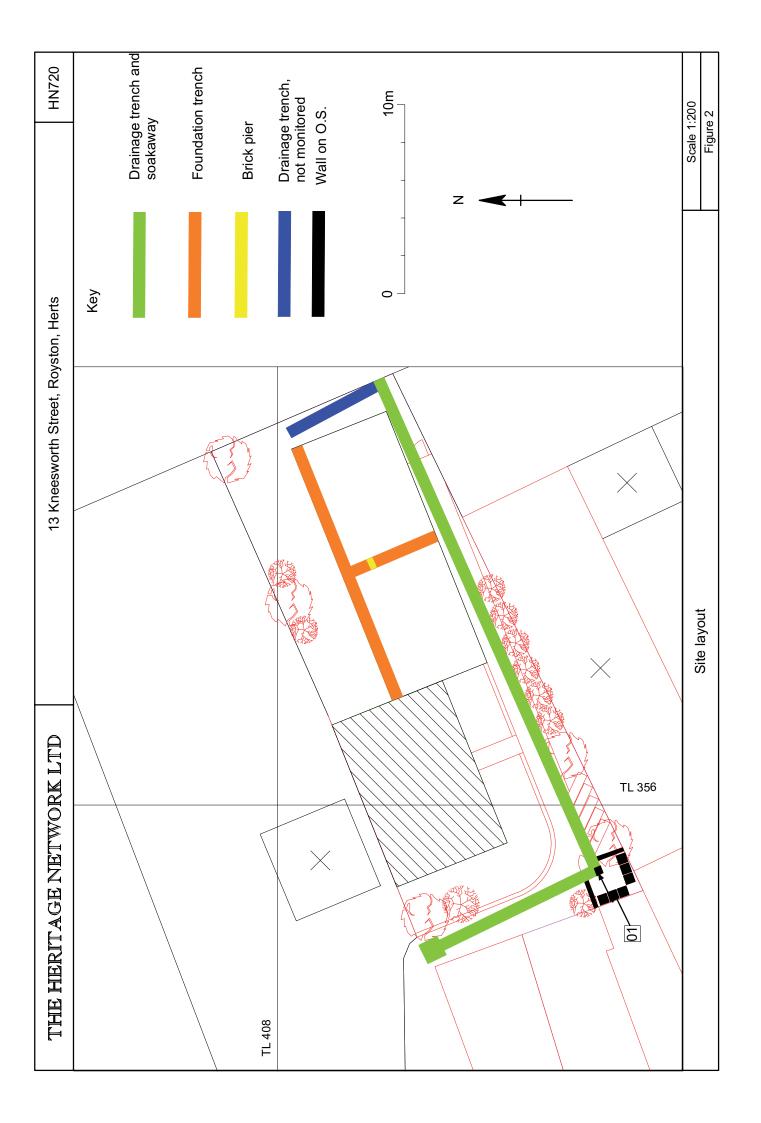
Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW) 1983 Map Sheet 4, Soils of Eastern England, Scale 1:250,000.

## 6. Illustrations

Figure 1	
Figure 2	Site Layout
Plate 1	Drainage trench, indicative section looking southeast
Plate 2	Brick feature [01]
Plate 3	Foundation trench, indicative section
Plate 4	Brick Pier

Page 5





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Plate 1: Drainage trench, indicative section looking southeast



Plate 2: Brick feature [01]