

HERITAGE NETWORK



CASTLE FARM
Thorley Lane, Bishops Stortford

(HN396)

Archaeological Monitoring Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

CASTLE FARM Thorley Lane, Bishops Stortford

HN396

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Westbury Conservatories Ltd

by

Mark Winter, BSc

Report No. 196

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Acknowledgements

Fieldwork for the present project was undertaken by Mark Winter under the supervision of Chris Turner. Illustrations were prepared by Karin Semmelmann and the report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Angie Rains, Westbury Conservatories; and Jonathan Smith, County Archaeology Office, Herts County Council, for their co-operation and assistance.

Summary

Site name and address:	Castle Farm, Thorley Lane, Bishops Stortford		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	East Herts.
Village/town:	Bishops Stortford	Parish:	Bishops Stortford
Planning reference:	3/02/0508	NGR (to 8 figures):	TL 4648 2010
Client name and address:	Westbury Conservatories Ltd, High Easter Road, Barnston, Essex		
Nature of application:	Conservatory	Present land use:	Garden
Size of application area:	40m ²	Size of area investigated:	40m ²
Site Code:	HN396	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	The Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Type of work:	Monitoring	Finds location/Museum:	Hertford Museum
Start of work	11th December 2002	Finish of work	13th December 2002
Related SMR Nos.:	n/a	Periods represented:	Modern
Previous summaries /reports:	n/a		

Synopsis: As the result of an archaeological condition on the planning permission for the construction of a conservatory at Castle Farm, Thorley Lane, Bishops Stortford, Herts, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the builder to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring on the site. The fieldwork consisted of the observation of the groundworks.

Despite the potential of encountering archaeological remains of medieval date, associated with Area of Archaeological Significance 112, no artefacts or features were identified. A significant depth of modern disturbance was noted, cut by 3 modern pipes and a modern cable.

1 Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of *Westbury Conservatories Ltd* as part of a programme of archaeological monitoring of development groundworks undertaken at Castle Farm, Thorley Lane, Bishops Stortford, Herts. The planning permission for the development, granted by the East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC), has been subject to a standard archaeological condition, in accordance with the the provisions of the Department of the Environment's *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16). The scope of the required work follows the *Design Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording* issued by the *County Archaeology Office* (CAO) of Hertfordshire County Council, acting as advisers to EHDC (Ref. JS 05/12/02), and the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, dated December 2002.

1.2 Castle Farm is situated to the west of Thorley Houses on the B1004 Bishops Stortford to Much Hadham road, centred on NGR TL 4648 2010 (see Figure 1). It lies within Area of Archaeological Significance no.112 (AAS112), which defines an area of known medieval activity in the East Hertfordshire District Local Plan.

1.3 The development involved the construction of a conservatory on the east side of the existing farmhouse. Groundworks included the excavation of a foundation trench, reduction of the ground inside the footprint, and associated drainage.

1.4 The aim of the present project has been to identify and record any archaeological features and deposits which were uncovered; and to retrieve artefactual and ecofactual elements which would allow the date, character, and significance of the site to be assessed, subject to the limitations of reasonable safety and practicality.

2 Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The site is located on a plateau between contours 90 and 95m OD. The River Stort, which runs north-south, is located to the east of the site in Bishops Stortford.

2.2 Prior to the start of the present works, the site formed part of the garden of Castle Farm, and was paved for a distance of 2.4m west of the farmhouse wall.

2.3 The underlying geology of the area was not encountered in the course of the present works.

METHODOLOGY

2.4 The site covers an area of approximately 40m². All overburden was removed by hand. The foundation trenches were examined after excavation and all potential archaeological features were fully recorded.

2.5 All work was carried out in accordance with the methodology contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, and followed the relevant sections of the Heritage Network's *Operations Manual*.

RESULTS

2.6 Work on this site involved the reduction of the footprint of the new building, the excavation of four foundation trenches, and the installation of rainwater drainage.

2.6.1 Ground reduction was limited to the removal of vegetation and topsoil, and all drainage was directly linked to existing pipework. No archaeology was therefore encountered in the course of these works.

2.6.2 The foundation trenches were all 0.45m wide and approximately 1m deep. Trench 1 ran west from the existing building for 6m and joined Trench 2 running south for 5.5m. This joined Trench 3 which ran east for 4m, to join Trench 4 which ran south for 2.5m to meet the north wall of an existing conservatory (see Figure 2).

2.7 Ten contexts were recorded and are listed below:

Context	Type	Description and interpretation	Thickness (m)
1	Topsoil	Black (5Y 2.5/2) loamy clay containing occasional flint and brick inclusions.	0.55
2	Topsoil	Dark olive brown (2.5Y 3/3) loamy clay containing occasional flint and brick.	0.6
3	Subsoil	Grayish brown (2.5Y 5/2) loamy clay containing occasional chalk and brick inclusions.	0.45
4	Subsoil	V.dk.grayish brown (2.5Y 3/2) loamy clay containing occasional flint and brick inclusions.	0.3
5	Layer	Light gray (2.5Y 7/1) very malleable clay. Natural ?	0.6
6	Patio	Concrete and sand patio.	0.29
7	Pipe	Modern pipe.	0.1
8	Pipe	Modern pipe.	0.14
9	Pipe	Modern pipe.	0.13
10	Cable	Modern cable.	0.01

Concordance of finds

3.1 No finds were recovered.

4 Discussion

4.1 Despite being located within a designated *Area of Archaeological Significance* no archaeological remains were encountered. The stratigraphy in the trenches indicates a large amount of disturbance in the area, suggesting that the site had been built up. A clay deposit was observed in the corner of Trenches 1 and 2, which may represent an outcrop of undisturbed natural geology.

4.2 A variation in the topsoil was observed 5m west of the farmhouse in Trench 1. Topsoil layer [1], was only observed in this trench while topsoil layer [2] was evident across the remainder of the site.

4.3 Two subsoils, containing modern brick, were encountered. Subsoil layer [3] was observed across the entirety of the site. Subsoil layer [4] was first observed 0.8m from the southern end of trench 2, at a depth of 0.45m.

4.4 A total of 3 modern pipes and 1 modern cable were noted. Pipe [7] was observed running north-south across Trench 1, at a distance of 0.13m east of the farmhouse, at a depth of 0.2m. Pipe [8] was also located in Trench 1, orientated north-south, 0.47m east of the farmhouse at a depth of 0.4m. Pipe [9] was located in Trench 1, 0.6m from the western edge, at a depth of 0.4m. This pipe ran north-south across the site and was also noted in the west facing section of Trench 2 running in to the north facing section of Trench 3. Trench 4 contained cable [10]. This ran east-west at a distance of 0.15m from the existing conservatory.

Conclusion

4.5 The archaeological monitoring of the site has demonstrated that the site has been significantly disturbed in the vicinity of the present farmhouse, probably during or since the post-medieval period. No evidence for medieval activity was observed.

Confidence Rating

4.6 During the course of the monitoring programme, the conditions were generally acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits. There were no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than High.

5 Schedule of Site Visits

Date	Personnel	Time	Comments
11/12/02	MW	2	Confirm work schedule
13/12/02	MW	6	Recording foundation trenches

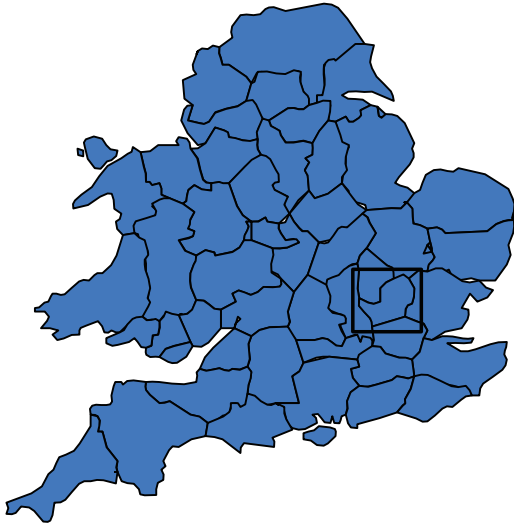
6 Illustrations

Figure 1 Site location
 Figure 2 Site layout
 Figure 3 Sections

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Castle Farm, Bishops Stortford

HN396

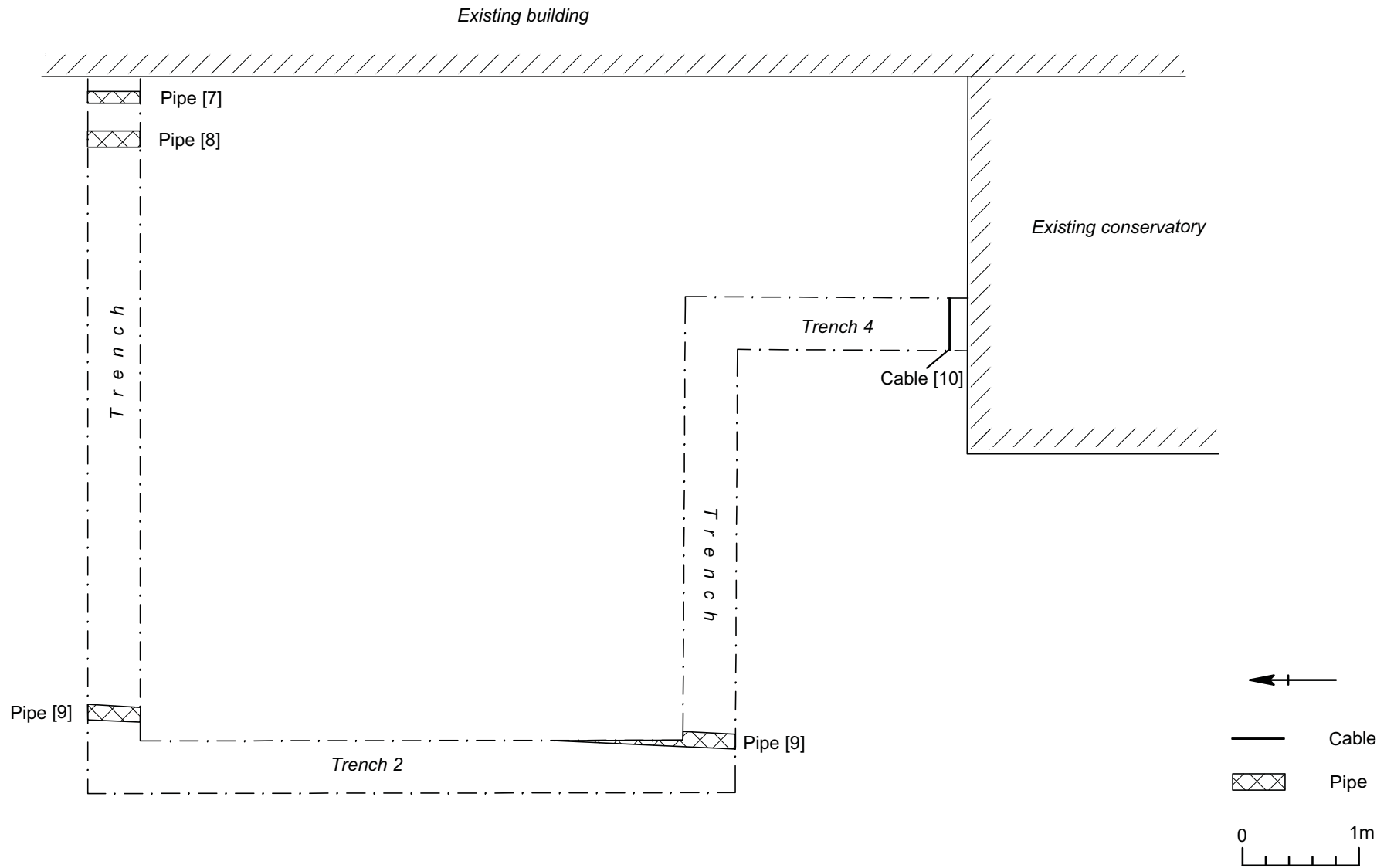


Site Location

Scale 1:1250

Plan based upon the Ordnance Survey with the sanction of the Controller of H M Stationery Office, Crown Copyright Reserved, Licence no. AL1000

Figure 1

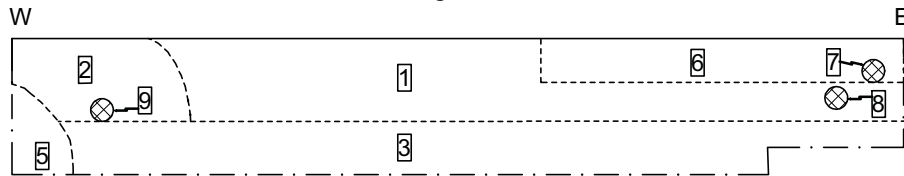


Site layout

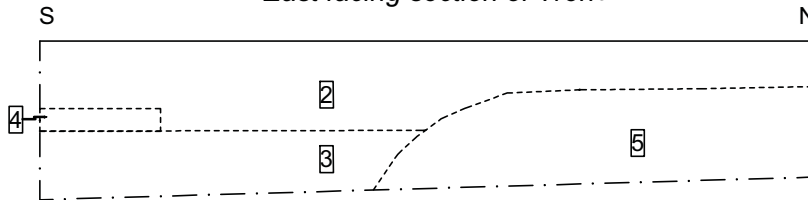
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Figure 2

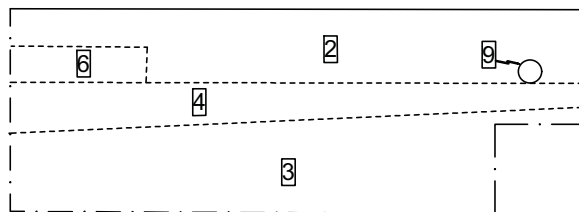
South facing section of Trench 1



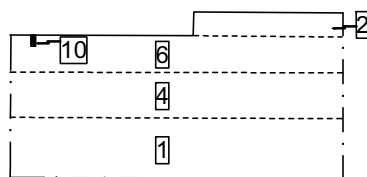
East facing section of Trench 2



North facing section of Trench 3



East facing section of Trench 4



■ Cable

⊗ Pipe



Trench sections

Scale 1:50

Figure 3