



HERITAGE NETWORK



**370 HITCHIN ROAD
Luton, Bedfordshire**

HN840

Archaeological Monitoring Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

370 HITCHIN ROAD
Luton, Bedfordshire

Project ref: HN840

Planning ref.: 09/00389/FUL

Luton Museum accession no.: LUTONM 2009.182

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Milbrook (SW) Ltd

By

Katie Nicholas BA (HONS)

Report no. 583

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The cover photograph shows the former Royal Oak public house looking south

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Katie Nicholas. The report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Robert Parr, Millbrook (SW) Ltd; Simon Tweedy, Lewis Foster Lewis, architects; Neil Greatbanks and Mark Boyce, MTB Waterproofing; and Martin Oake, archaeological adviser to Luton Borough Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	370 Hitchin Road, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU2 7SR		
County:	Bedfordshire	District:	Luton Borough
Village/town:	Luton	Parish:	Luton
Planning reference:	09/00389/FUL	NGR:	TL 1013 2268
Client name and address:	Millbrook (SW) Ltd, Bickfield House Farm, Bickfield Lane, Compton Martin, BS40 6NE		
Nature of work:	Extension	Former land use:	Public House
Site status:	n/a	Reason for investigation:	Direction of local planning authority (PPG 16)
Position in planning process:	After full determination	Project brief originator:	Local Authority
Size of affected area:	1086m ²	Size of area investigated:	180m ²
Site Code:	HN840	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Monitoring	Archive recipient:	Luton Museum
Start of work	10/02/2010	Finish of work	12/02/2010
Related HER Nos:	n/a	Periods represented:	Modern
Oasis UID	Heritage1-68185	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	Walls - Modern		
Physical archive:	None		
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis:

In response to a condition on the planning permission for a new extension at 370 Hitchin Road, Luton, Bedfordshire, Heritage Network was commissioned by the Milbrook (SW) to undertake the archaeological monitoring of the development groundworks.

The foundations for the new extension, two low-rise walls and a soakaway were excavated through a layer of overburden containing fragments of CBM and chalk, modern bricks and gravel, and into the natural clay. The ground level in the northern corner of the site was also reduced by up to 0.30m to form a new car parking area, revealing the remains of a brick structure constructed of modern machine-made bricks which may represent a late Victorian terraced cottage. No other archaeological features, deposits, or artefacts were encountered during the work.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of *Milbrook (SW) Ltd*, as part of the archaeological monitoring and recording of development works at 370 Hitchin Road, Luton, Bedfordshire.

1.2 The investigation was a requirement of the planning consent for the development granted by Luton Borough Council (LBC) (ref. 09/00389/FUL), 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 a *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication at 370 Hitchin Road, Luton* prepared by the Archaeological Officer (AO) from the Conservation and Design Team of Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC), acting as adviser to the LBC.

1.3 The study area is situated in Round Green, a suburb of Luton, centred on NGR TL 1013 2268. It is bounded to the north-east by the Round Tree Tavern, to the north-west by Hitchin Road, and to the south-east and south-west by the Greenwood Court Industrial Estate. The development proposes the erection of a rear extension to the former Royal Oak public house and associated groundworks.

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 (Glazebrook 1997; Brown and Glazebrook, 2000; Oake et al, 2007), 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 Luton Museum, to complete the requirements of the planning condition.

2. Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The study area lies at approximately 162m AOD and was previously in use as a public house with its associated car park.

2.2 The underlying geology of the study area consists of Middle Chalk of the Lewes Nodular Chalk and Seaford Chalk Formations, overlain by drift deposits of clay-with-flints, silt, and sand and gravel (BGS). There are also local deposits of brickearth (CBC 2009).

METHODOLOGY

2.3 The timetable for the fieldwork followed the client's groundwork schedule. Two site visits were made to monitor ground reduction and the excavation of footings trenches.

2.4 Machining was undertaken using a tracked excavator fitted with 0.6m toothed bucket.

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

2.6 Three footings trenches were excavated to form an extension to the south-east of the existing building. Two trenches ran in a south-east to north-west direction, one measuring 14m in length and 0.50m in depth and the other 8m in length and 1m in depth. The third trench ran in a south-west to north-east direction and was 9.5m in length and 1m in depth. All were 0.60m wide (Plate 1). The trenches revealed a 0.20m thick layer of very dark brown (7.5 YR 2.5/2) silty clay overburden containing fragments of CBM and chalk, modern bricks and gravel. This overlay the yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) natural clay which had occasional large flint inclusions (Plate 2). No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered in these trenches.

2.7 Footings were excavated at the front of the property to allow for the construction of two low-rise walls. The trenches ran in a south-west to north-east direction and measured 9m and 14m in length, 0.60m in width and 0.50m in depth. They revealed a brownish yellow (10YR 6/6) sandy silt overburden containing gravel, flint, modern bricks and brick fragments (Plate 3). No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered in these trenches.

2.8 An area of 148m² in the northern corner of the site was reduced by up to 0.30m to form a new car park. Below a mixed overburden of dark brown (7.5 YR 2.5/2) silty clay containing fragments of CBM, chalk, modern bricks and gravel, a series of brick walls, 0.22 - 0.24m (9¼ - 9½ inches) wide, was revealed forming three sides of a rectangular structure measuring 6.16m north-west to south-east and 4.74m north-east to south-west (Plate 5). A fourth wall, 0.12m (4¾ inches) wide crossed the centre of the structure in a north-east to south-west direction with a stub wall extending 1.80m south-east from the structure. The walls were constructed of modern, machine made, frogged bricks.

2.9 A soakaway measuring 2.70m by 2.60m, and located 15m north-east of the existing building and 6m south-east of the car-park, was excavated to a depth of 2.20m. This revealed a 0.70m thick layer of very dark brown (7.5 YR 2.5/2) silty clay overburden containing fragments of CBM and chalk, modern bricks and gravel. Below this lay a yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) clay natural, which had occasional large flint inclusions, above natural white (5Y 8/1) chalk (Plate 4). No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered.

3. Discussion

HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

3.1 The study area is located in the centre of the historic settlement of Round Green (HER 17101), now a suburb of Luton. It lies on top of the Chilterns Ridge overlooking the valley of the River Lea to the west.

3.2 Round Green lies on the northern edge of the modern town of Luton, between the medieval settlements at Luton and Stopsley. It was one of a series of small hamlets around the historic core of Luton, and was centred around a village green (HER 12402). This was shown as a small green on a map of 1842 but is now covered by later housing development.

3.3 Evidence for Palaeolithic activity, in the form of numerous flint implements, has been discovered in Round Green (HER 358), to the north of the study area. A scatter of prehistoric flints of Neolithic to Bronze Age date (HER 17757) was found approximately 700m to the west north-west. Finds of Roman artefacts and human skeletons have been made in Round Green, possibly indicating a small settlement in the area at the time. Two cremations, in cinerary urns, and other pottery vessels (HER 183) were found approximately 500m to the west, and early Roman pottery (HER 11297) was also found, approximately 600m to the north-east.

3.4 During the post-medieval period a number of brickyards were established in the Round Green area, including a site marked as disused on the 2nd edition OS map of 1901 (HER 7114) and a brick and tile works at Ramridge End (HER 6731). A now demolished brickworks (HER 8835) operated between Turners Road and Ramridge Road, approximately 200m to the south-west, from about 1880 to 1914.

IDENTIFIED ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

3.5 The only feature identified in the course of the groundworks consisted of a brick structure that was revealed during ground reduction for the car-park. This was constructed using machine-made, frogged modern bricks. It was located on the street frontage, in an area shown on historic mapping to have been occupied by terraced houses from at least the late 19th century, and may, therefore, represent the base of a two-up two-down cottage of late 19th century date.

3.6 No other archaeological features, deposits, or artefacts were revealed in the course of the works.

CONCLUSIONS

3.7 The present site was considered to have the potential to contribute to a number of research topics highlighted in the published local research agenda (Brown & Glazebrook 2000; Oake et al 2007; Medlycott & Brown 2008; Oake et al, 2007). These include establishing the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation within the development area; establishing the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes; recovering artefacts to assist in the development of a type series within the region; and recovering palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions. In turn, such collected data was intended to contribute to an understanding of the nature of prehistoric activity on the Chilterns Ridge, the nature of the Roman settlement and landscape, the form, nature and extent of the rural medieval settlement of Round Green and

its relationship to nearby contemporary settlements, particularly at Luton and Stopsley, and the origins and development of the brickmaking industry.

3.8 In the circumstances, the identified potential of the site was not realised in the course of the present development.

Confidence Rating

3.9 Conditions on site were generally acceptable for the identification and recording of any potential archaeological remains, and as such there are no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than High.

4. Schedule of site visits

Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
10/02/2010	KRN	8	Monitor excavation of footings
12/02/2010	KRN	8	Monitor ground reduction and excavation of soakaway

5. Bibliography

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Sankaran, V. & Sherlock, D. (eds.) 1977 *Domesday Book: Bedfordshire*. Chichester: Phillimore

6. Illustrations

Figure 1 Site Location

Figure 2 Site Layout

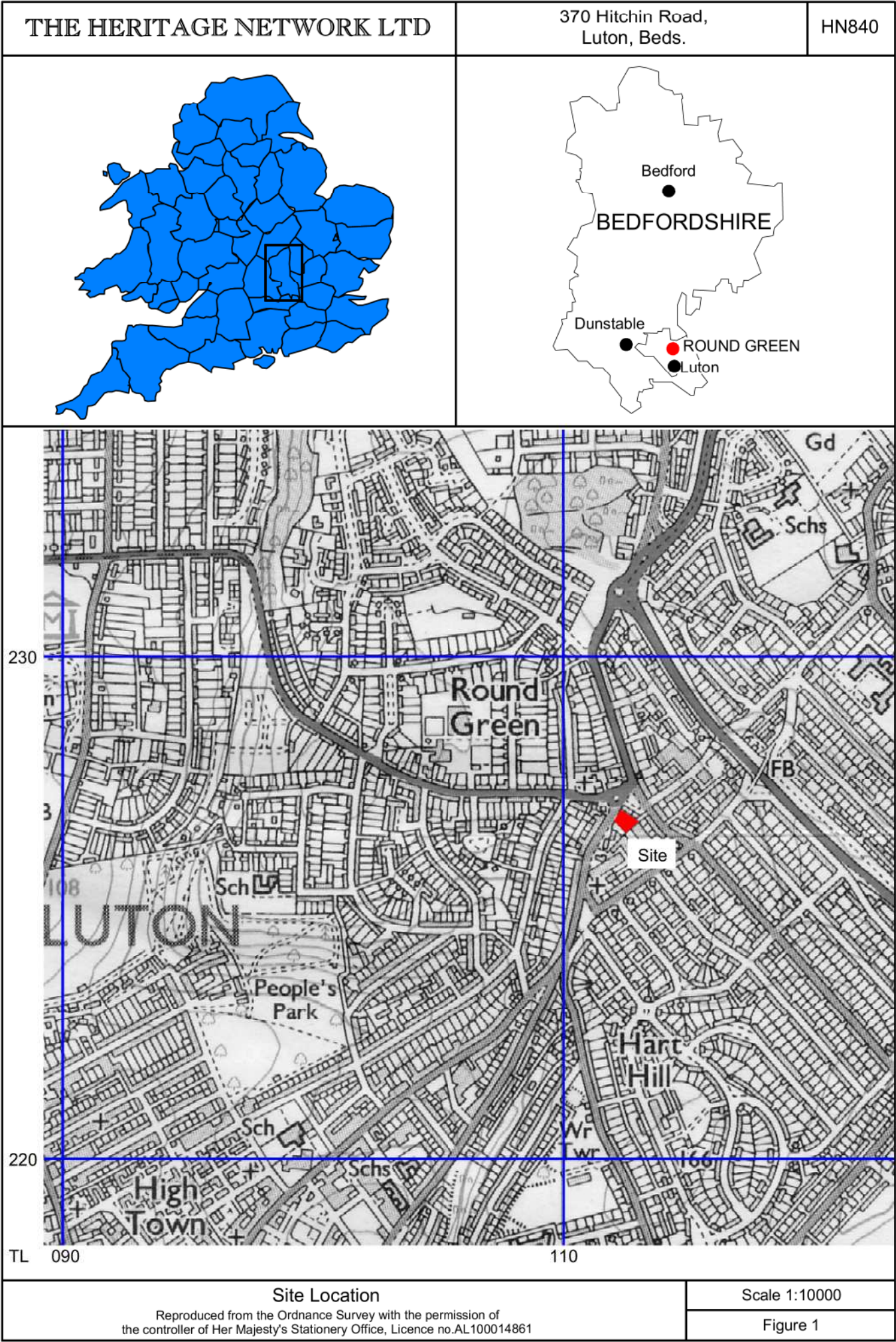
Plate 1..... Excavated footings for extension area

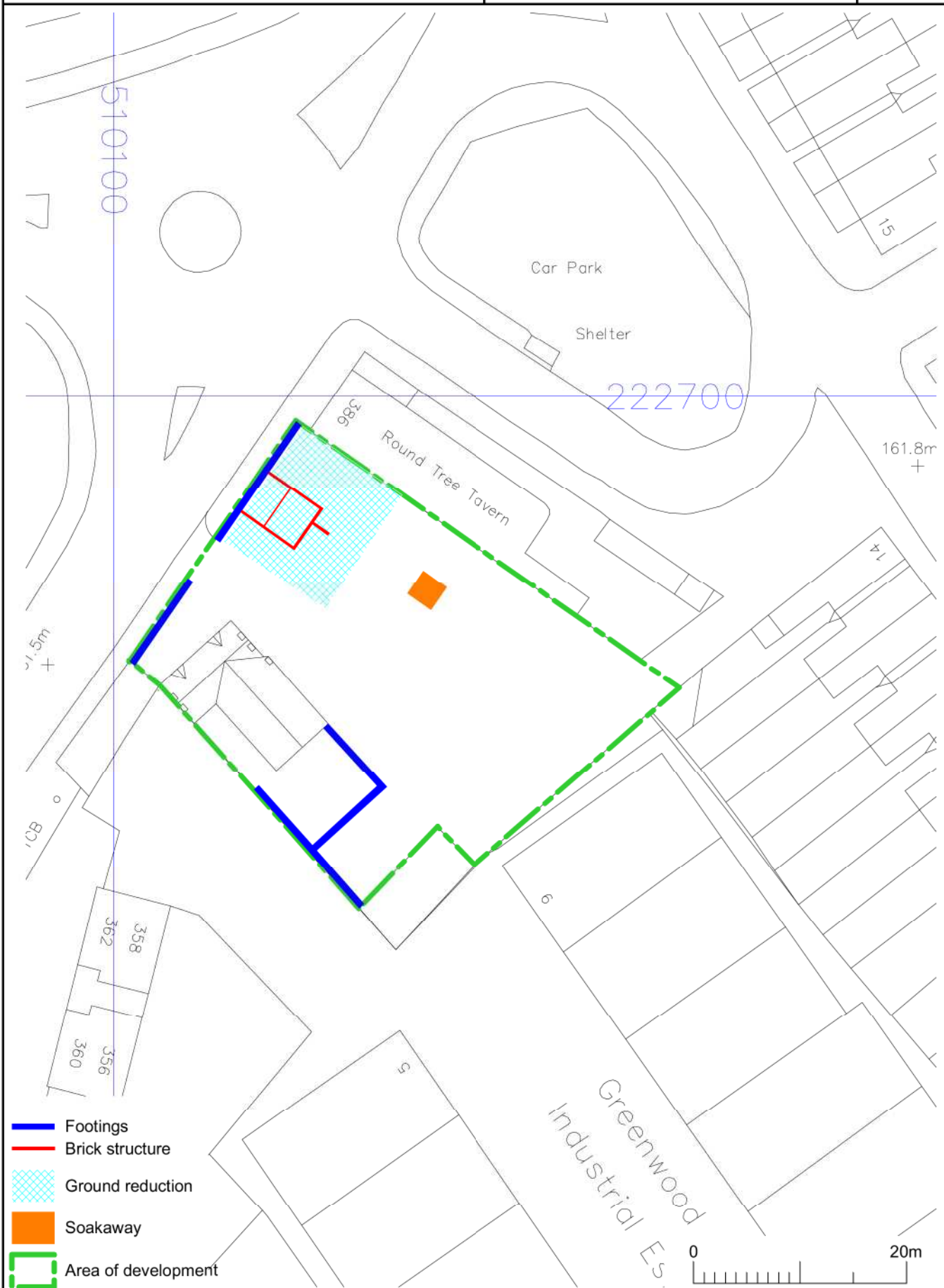
Plate 2..... North west facing section of excavated footings for extension

Plate 3..... North west facing section of excavated wall footings

Plate 4..... North east facing section of soakaway

Plate 5..... Remains of brick structure





Site Layout

Scale 1: 500



Plate 1: Excavated footings for extension area looking east



Plate 2: North west facing section of excavated footings for extension



Plate 3: North west facing section of excavated wall footings on street frontage



Plate 4: North east facing section of soakaway



Plate 5: Remains of brick structure

Appendix

Oasis Data Entry Form

OASIS ID: heritage1-68185	
Project details	
Project name	Luton, 370 Hitchin Road
Short description of the project	In response to a condition on the planning permission for a new extension at 370 Hitchin Road, Luton, Bedfordshire, Heritage Network was commissioned by the Milbrook (SW) to undertake the archaeological monitoring of the development groundworks. The foundations for the new extension, two low-rise walls and a soakaway were excavated through a layer of overburden containing fragments of CBM and chalk, modern bricks and gravel, and into the natural clay. The ground level in the northern corner of the site was also reduced by up to 0.30m to form a new car parking area, revealing the remains of a brick structure constructed of modern machine-made bricks which may represent a late Victorian terraced cottage. No other archaeological features, deposits, or artefacts were encountered during the work.
Project dates	Start: 10-02-2010 End: 12-02-2010
Previous/future work	No / No
Associated project reference codes	HN840 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 15 - Other
Monument type	WALLS Modern
Significant Finds	NONE None
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	BEDFORDSHIRE LUTON 370 Hitchin Road
Postcode	LU2 7SR
Study area	180.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 1001 2271 51.8916666667 -0.401222222222 51:53:30N 0:24:4.4W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 162.00m Max: 162.00m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Heritage Network
Project director/manager	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	Katie Nicholas
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Project archives	
Physical Archive?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Luton Museum
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography', 'Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Luton Museum
Paper Media	'Diary', 'Photograph', 'Report'

Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	370 Hitchin Road, Luton, Bedfordshire: An Archaeological Monitoring Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Nicholas, K.
Other bibliographic details	Report Number 583
Date	2010
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth, Hertfordshire
Description	A4 booklet, comb bound, green cover, 8 pages, 2 figures, 5 plates