

HERITAGE NETWORK



**Land to the rear of
3 ASHWELL STREET
Ashwell, Herts.**

(HN378)

Archaeological Monitoring Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

Land to the rear of
3 ASHWELL STREET
Ashwell, Herts.

HN378

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Mr and Mrs Stuart Gurney

by

Geoff Saunders, BA

Report no.219

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Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by David Kaye, Geoff Saunders and Mark Winter under the supervision of Chris Turner. The illustrations were prepared by Karin Semmelmann, and the report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Mr & Mrs Stuart Gurney; Martin Hillier, FPDSavills; Paul Wells, Builder; and the staff of the County Archaeology Office, Hertfordshire County Council for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Land to the rear of 3 Ashwell Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	North Hertfordshire
Village/town:	Ashwell	Parish:	Ashwell
Planning reference:	1/0278/02 & 1/1028/01	NGR:	TL 2750 3975
Client name and address:	Mr & Mrs Stuart Gurney, 3 Ashwell Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire, SG7 5QF		
Nature of work:	New House & Garage	Previous land use:	Garden
Size of affected area:	800m ²	Size of area investigated:	800m ²
Site Code:	HN378	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Type of work:	Monitoring & Recording	Finds location/Museum:	NHDC Museums Service
Start of work	04/06/2003	Finish of work	25/11/2003
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 a new housing development on land to the rear of 3 Ashwell Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the owners to monitor the construction groundworks.

Despite the site's location within an area of known archaeological activity, no significant features, deposits, or artefacts were revealed during the groundworks.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of *Mr and Mrs Stuart Gurney* as part of a programme of archaeological work associated with building development on land to the rear of 3 Ashwell Street, Ashwell, Herts. The planning permissions for the development (refs. 1/0278/02 & 1/1028/01), granted by the North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC), were subject to a standard archaeological condition, in accordance with the provisions of the Department of the Environment's *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16). The scope of the required work followed the *Design Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording* prepared by the *County Archaeology Office* (CAO) of Hertfordshire County Council, acting as advisers to NHDC (ref. SB 15/07/02).

1.2 The site is located in the garden of no.3 Ashwell Street, and to the rear of nos. 85 and 87 Station Road (centred on NGR TL 2750 3975), on former allotments. The development involved the construction of a new dwelling with double garage on the site with associated services and landscaping (see Figure 2).

1.3 The development site lies within Archaeological Area 31 (AA31) as defined on the District Local Plan, which covers the historic core of Ashwell and its hinterland to the south-east. The remains of three prehistoric burial mounds have been recorded within 250m of the study area, and Roman and medieval remains have been recorded in the vicinity. Ashwell Street, which runs adjacent to the site on its north-west side, is a parallel track of the Icknield Way, a prehistoric routeway between East Anglia and the West. A recent development site to the south of Ashwell Street and Station Road produced evidence of Romano-British and possible prehistoric settlement. On this basis, the planning authority considered that the site had potential for revealing remains dating from the prehistoric to the post-medieval period.

1.4 The aim of the monitoring programme has been to supervise the development groundworks, to identify and record any archaeological features and deposits which may have been uncovered, and to retrieve artefactual and ecofactual elements to allow the date, character, and significance of the site to be assessed, subject to the limitations of reasonable safety and practicality.

1.5 The present report is intended to set the site in its archaeological and historical context, and complete the requirements of the planning condition.

2. Fieldwork

Topography and Geology

2.1 The site lies to the east of the village of Ashwell on land which slopes gently downwards towards Ashwell Street. The geology was reasonably consistent across the site and comprised a layer of dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2), sandy silt topsoil beneath which was natural chalk.

Ground reduction

2.2 Ground reduction across the footprints of the new house and garage was undertaken using a JCB fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The footprints covered an area of approximately 116.3m² and 33.64m² respectively and in these areas the ground was reduced by approximately 0.30m. No archaeology was observed.

Footings trenches

2.3 The external footings trenches for the new house measured approximately 0.6m wide by 1.0m deep, the internal footings measured approximately 0.4m wide by 1.0m deep. No archaeology was observed in the footings trenches.

Service trenches

2.4 Drainage trenches were excavated by a 360° mini-digger and measured approximately 0.4m wide by 0.7m deep. The only features observed were two modern service pipes (Figure 2).

2.5 A single electricity cable trench was excavated running from the north side of the new house towards Ashwell Street to the northwest. The trench measured approximately 0.18m wide by 0.5m deep. The only feature observed was a modern concrete structure which measured 0.6m in length and appeared to be associated with an existing manhole (Figure 2).

Soakaways

2.6 Two soakaways, measuring approximately 1.6m long by 1.1m wide by 1.1m deep, were excavated on the east and west side of the new house (Figure 2). No archaeology was observed in either of the soakaways.

Finds concordance

Context	Pottery		CBM		An.bone		Fe. objects		Fe. Nails		Clay pipe		Comments
	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	
Topsoil	70	6	45	1	10	2	40	1	10	3	1	1	Modern

2.7 During the monitoring of the groundworks, artefacts including pottery and ceramic building material (CBM) dating to the 19th and 20th centuries were recovered from the topsoil. These artefacts are not uncommon in topsoil, have no archaeological significance and have been discarded.

3. Discussion & Conclusion

3.1 The monitoring of the groundworks associated with the new development failed to reveal any features other than modern service pipes and associated structures.

3.2 The artefacts recovered from the topsoil give no indication of any activity on or in the vicinity of the site that predates the 19th century.

Conclusion

3.3 Despite the proximity of the site to prehistoric, Roman, and medieval remains, the fieldwork failed to reveal any archaeological features or artefacts. This appears to indicate that the present site lies outside of the area affected by any activity during these periods.

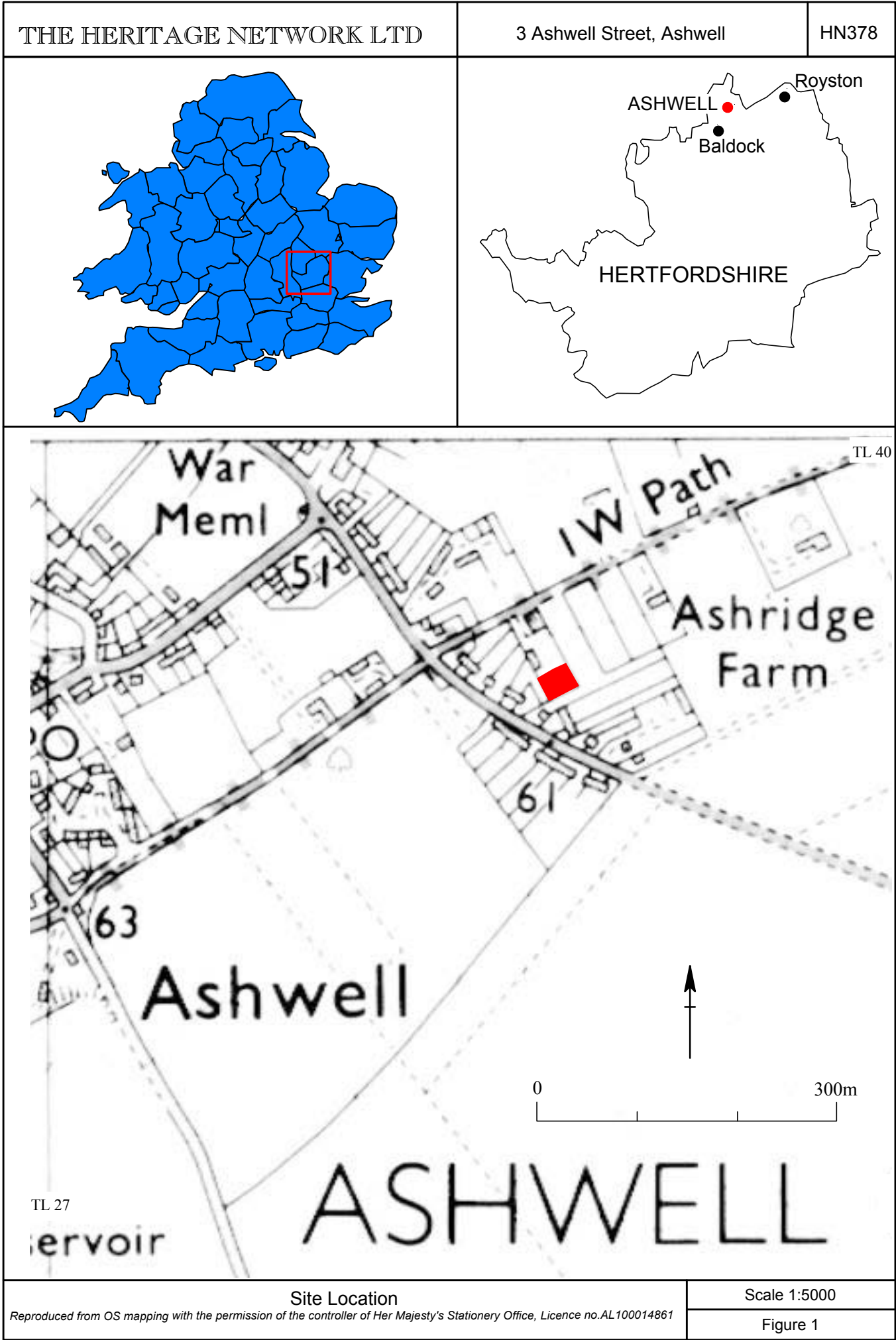
4. Schedule of Site Visits

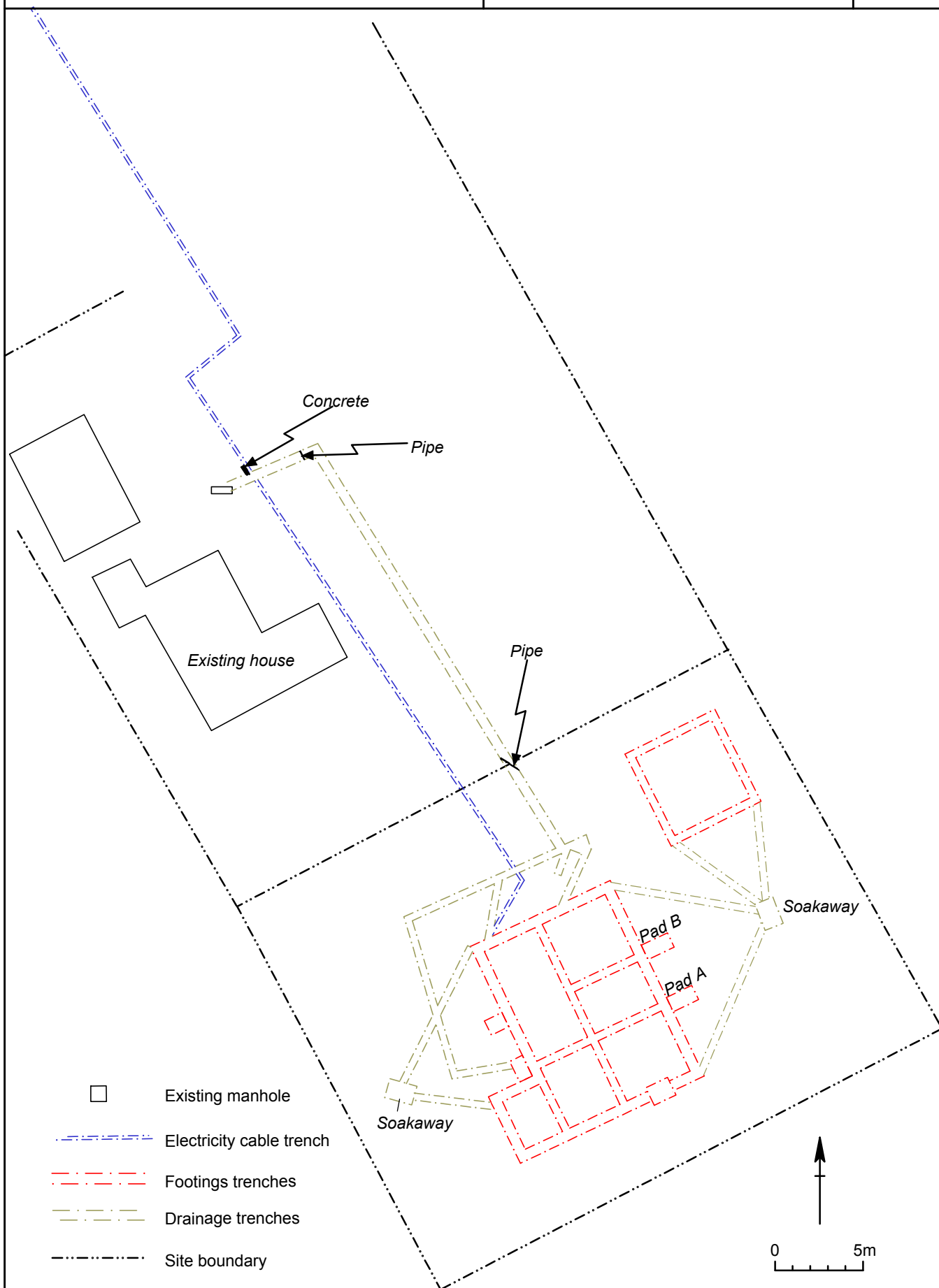
Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
02/06/02	DJH	1	Site Meeting
04/06/03	DGK	5	Monitor ground reduction
05/06/03	DGK	2	Inspect footings trenches
18/09/03	DGK	2	Inspect electricity cable trench
24/11/03	GIS	2	Inspect drainage trenches
25/11/03	MW	1	Inspect drainage trenches
25/11/03	MW	2	Inspect drainage trenches

5. Illustrations

Figure 1 Site location

Figure 2 Site layout





Site layout

Scale 1:300

Figure 2