

HERITAGE NETWORK



**Land adjacent to
28 WYCHDELL
Broadwater, Stevenage, Herts.**

(HN449)

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 adjacent to
28 WYCHDELL
Broadwater, Stevenage, Herts.

HN449

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Arthur Simms Homes Ltd

by

Geoff Saunders, BA

Report no.220

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12 ROYSTON ROAD, BALDOCK, HERTS. SG7 6NT
TEL: (01462) 893288 FAX: (01462) 893562

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Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Geoff Saunders 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 Jon Bareham, Arthur Simms Homes Ltd; Jim Rogers, Cara Construction; 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 adjacent to 28 Wychdell, Broadwater, Stevenage, Hertfordshire		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	Stevenage Borough
Village/town:	Stevenage	Parish:	Stevenage
Planning reference:	2/03/0002	NGR:	TL 26211 21582
Client name and address:	Arthur Simms Homes, The Old Barn, Harpenden Rd, Wheathampstead, AL4 8EE		
Nature of work:	Housing development	Previous land use:	Grassland
Size of affected area:	410m ²	Size of area investigated:	410m ²
Site Code:	HN449	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Type of work:	Monitoring & Recording	Finds location/Museum:	Stevenage Museum
Start of work	08/12/2003	Finish of work	18/12/2003
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 adjacent to 28 Wychdell, Broadwater, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developers to monitor the groundworks.

Although the site is located 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 *Arthur Simms Homes Ltd*, as part of a programme of archaeological work associated with development on land adjacent to the south of 28 Wychdell, Broadwater, Stevenage. The planning permission for the development (ref. 2/03/0002), granted by the Stevenage Borough Council (SBC), was 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* issued by the *County Archaeology Office* (CAO) of Hertfordshire County Council, acting as advisers to SBC (ref. JS 10/09/2003).

1.2 The site is located in the south-west corner of Wychdell, centred on NGR TL 26211 21582. It is bounded by no.28 Wychdell and no.94 Holly Leys to the north, by no.92 Holly Leys to the west, by protected green space to the south, and by an access track leading from Wychdell to the east. The development involved the construction of a two storey block of flats with associated services, landscaping and car-parking (see Figure 2).

1.3 The site lies within Area of Archaeological Significance 15 (AAS15) which defines the hamlet of Broadwater in the District Local Plan. This is considered to be the core of Broadwater Hundred, one of the Anglo Saxon districts recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086. In addition, the County Sites and Monuments Record notes that Roman building materials and coins have been found in the vicinity.

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 to 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.

1.5 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 southwest of the centre of Stevenage on level ground. The geology is reasonably consistent across the site and consists of a thin layer of friable, greyish brown (10YR 5/2), sandy clay topsoil over an imported layer of loose, yellowish brown (10YR 5/8), sandy gravel. Beneath this is a second layer of imported material of loose, dark yellowish brown (10YR 5/6), sandy clay with frequent gravel and root disturbance. This overlies the natural geology which is firm, yellowish brown (10YR 5/6), slightly sandy clay with moderate inclusions of large angular flints.

Ground reduction

2.2 Ground reduction across the footprint of the new building and the associated car park was undertaken using a 360⁰ tracked machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The footprints of the building and car park covered an area of approximately 235m² and 175m² respectively. In the footprint of the building the ground was reduced by approximately 0.10m, and across the area of the car park the ground was reduced by approximately 0.40m. The ground reduction did not extend below the modern overburden, and as such, no archaeology was observed.

Footings trenches

2.3 The external footings trenches for the new building measured approximately 0.8m wide by 1.4m deep, the internal footings measured approximately 0.7m wide by 1.3m deep. No archaeology was observed.

Service trenches

2.4 The service trenches were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m. As the depth of overburden observed across the site varied from 0.7m to 1.0m, the service trenches were not inspected.

2.5 The services were linked into the existing surrounding foul and storm drain network and so it was not necessary to excavate any soakaways for the new development.

Finds concordance

2.6 During the monitoring of the groundworks, artefacts including pottery and ceramic building material (CBM) dating to the 20th century were observed in the topsoil and overburden. These artefacts are not uncommon in topsoil and overburden, have no archaeological significance and were not collected.

3. Discussion & Conclusion

3.1 The monitoring of the groundworks associated with the new development failed to reveal any archaeological features, deposits or artefacts.

3.2 The artefacts observed in the topsoil and overburden give no indication of any activity on or in the vicinity of the site that predates the 20th century.

Conclusion

3.3 Despite the site’s location within an Area of Archaeological Significance (AAS15), the fieldwork failed to identify any archaeological artefacts or features. The stratigraphy observed on the site consisted of a thin layer of modern topsoil overlying modern imported levelling layers immediately beneath which was the natural geology.

3.4 The levelling appears to have taken place in recent years and may be associated with the construction of the modern housing estate adjacent to the present site.

4. Schedule of Site Visits

Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
08/12/03	CT	2	Inspect ground reduction in area of car park
11/12/03	GIS	2	Monitor ground reduction in area of building footprint
12/12/03	GIS	1	Inspect footings trenches
15/12/03	GIS	2	Inspect footings trenches
15/12/03	GIS	2	Inspect footings trenches
17/12/03	GIS	2	Inspect footings trenches
18/12/03	GIS	3	Inspect footings trenches

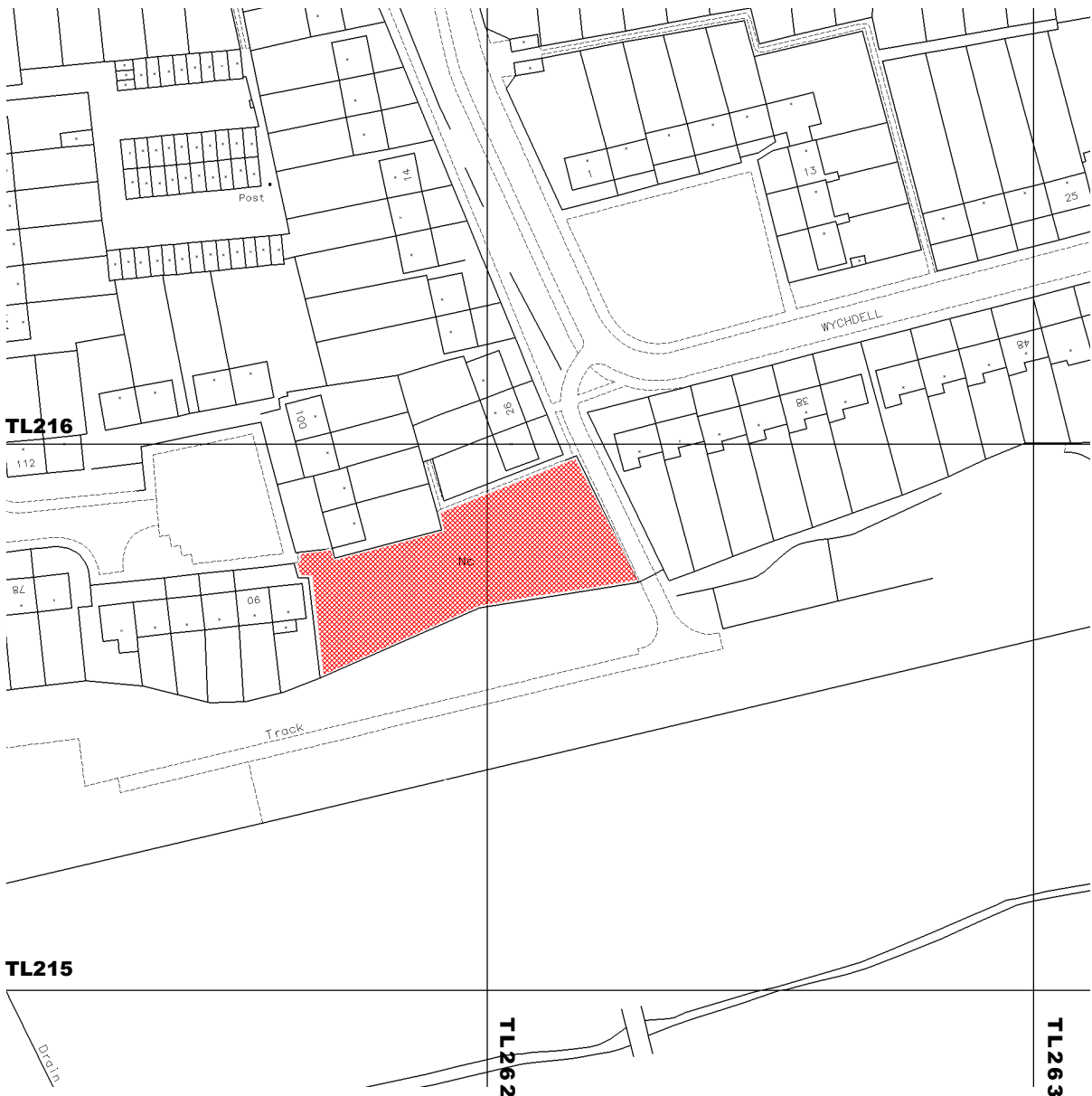
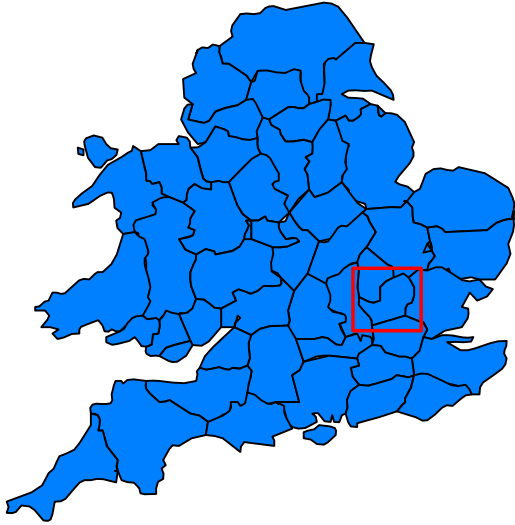
5. Illustrations

Figure 1 Site location
 Figure 2 Site layout
 Figure 3 Indicative section

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28 Wychdell, Stevenage

HN449

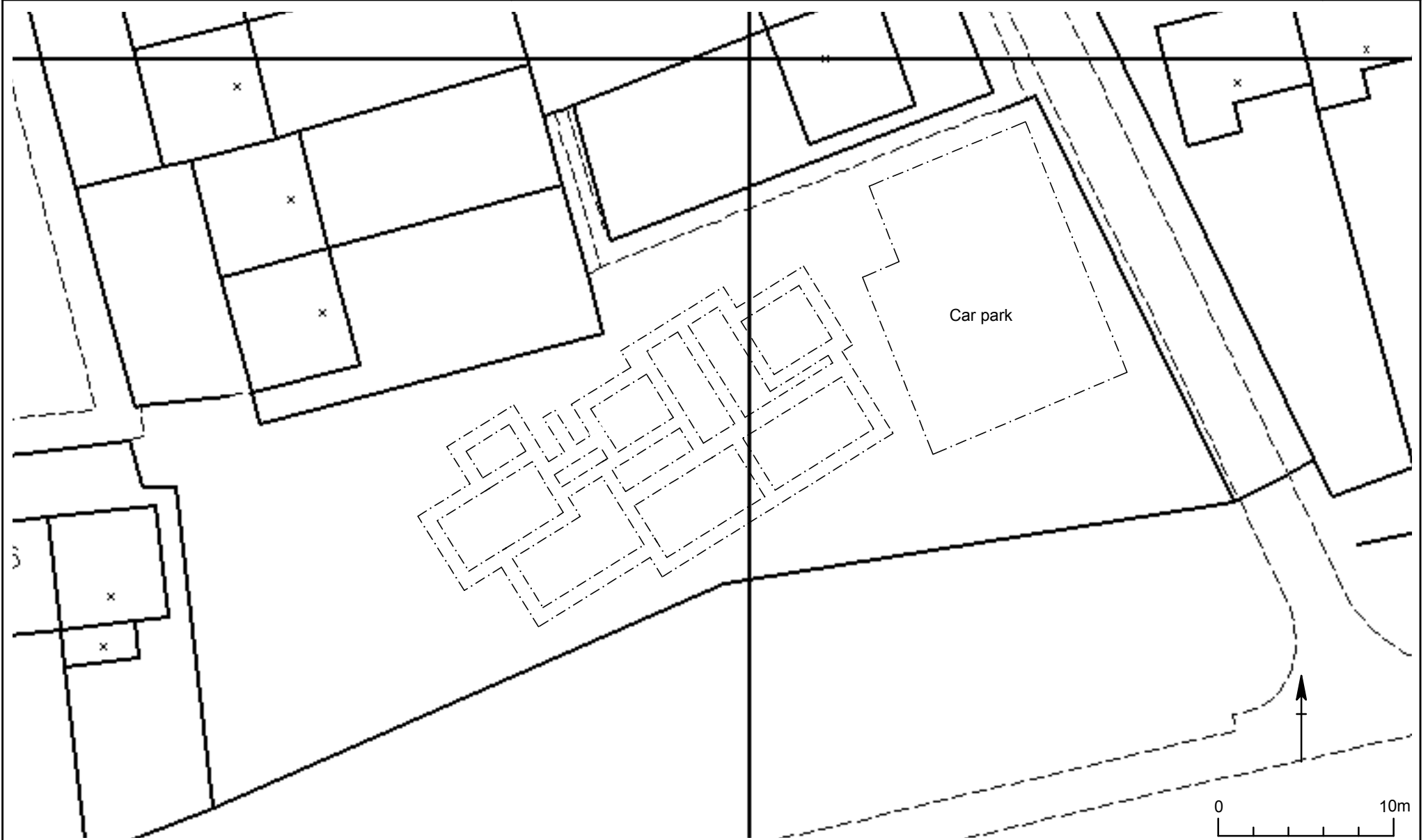


Site Location

Scale 1:1250

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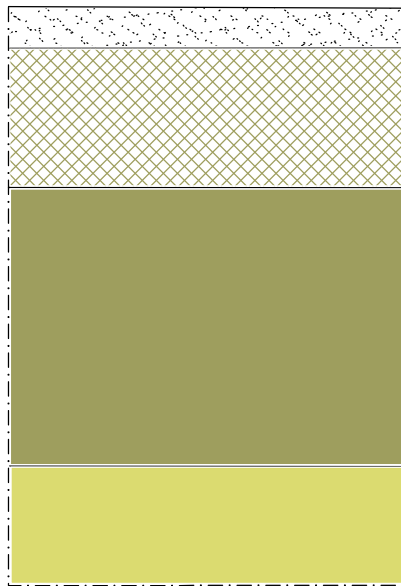
Figure 1







Site layout

Scale 1:300

Figure 2



-  Topsoil
-  10YR 5/8 Yellowish brown loose sandy gravel
-  10YR 3/6 Dk. yellowish brown loose sandy clay
-  10YR Yellowish brown firm slightly sandy clay



Indicative section

Scale 1:20

Figure 3