

HERITAGE NETWORK



**72 - 74 SOUTH ROAD
Baldock, Hertfordshire**

HN853

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MONITORING***

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

**72-74 SOUTH ROAD
Baldock, Hertfordshire**

Project ref.: HN853
LPA ref.: 1/09/00479

Archaeological Monitoring

Prepared on behalf of Wheatley Homes Ltd.

by

Helen Ashworth BA (HONS) AIfA

Report no.618

August 2010

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The front cover shows the footings trenches for Plots 7-12

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by David Hillelson, Greg Jones and James Snee. The report was written by Helen Ashworth and edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Simon Woods, Wheatley Homes and Andy Instone, Historic Environment Unit (HEU) of Hertfordshire County Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	72-74 South Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 6BZ		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	Baldock
Village/town:	Baldock	Parish:	Baldock
Planning reference:	1/09/00479	NGR:	TL 2514 3350
Client name and address:	Wheatley Homes Ltd, Wheatley House, Works Road, Letchworth, Herts.		
Nature of work:	New Housing	Former land use:	House and garden
Site Status:	AAS 19	Reason for investigation:	Direction of local planning authority
Position in planning process:	After full determination	Project brief originator:	Local Authority
Size of affected area:	2230m ²	Size of area investigated:	2230m ²
Site code:	HN853	Other reference:	HER ref 242/09
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc...	Archaeological monitoring	Archive recipient:	North Herts Museum Service
Start of work:	22/02/2010	Finish of work:	22/07/2010
Related HER nos:	N/a	Periods represented:	Modern
OASIS UID:	heritage1-72199	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	Well		
Physical archive:	N/a		
Previous summaries/reports:	<p>Ashworth, H. 2007, <i>72-74 South Road, Baldock, Herts: Desk-based Archaeological Assessment</i>. Heritage Network Report no.442</p> <p>Winter, M. And Wilcox, S. 2008, <i>72-74 South Road, Baldock: Archaeological Evaluation and Historic Building Impact Assessment</i>. Heritage Network Report no.466</p> <p>Jones, G. 2010 <i>72-74 South Road, Baldock: Interim Archaeological Report</i>. Heritage Network Report no.598</p>		

Synopsis:

In order to advise the planning authority on the nature and extent of archaeological remains surviving on a proposed development site located at 72-74 South Road, Baldock, the Heritage Network was commissioned by Wheatley Homes Ltd. to carry out a programme of pre-determination archaeological evaluation. This included the preparation of a desk-based archaeological assessment in 2007, and trial trenching plus an historic building impact assessment in 2008.

The desk-based research demonstrated the potential for remains dating to the Iron Age and Romano-British period to be present on the site, but the trial trenches revealed only an undated gully and a modern wall footing. The existing buildings on the site were not considered to be of historical significance.

The present stage of the project has included some additional evaluation, and the monitoring of the development groundworks. Two further trial trenches were excavated, focused on the northern corner of the site, to investigate the possibility that an early Roman cremation cemetery might extend into the development area. This proved not to be the case. The monitoring of the groundworks revealed only a post-medieval well and a modern animal burial.

1 Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of *Wheatley Homes Ltd* as part of the archaeological investigation of a proposed development site located at 72-74 South Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire.

1.2 The investigation was a requirement of the planning consent granted by North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) (ref. 1/09/00479), 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 correspondence with the Historic Environment Unit (HEU) of Hertfordshire County Council, acting as archaeological advisers to the NHDC.

1.3 The study area consists of a plot of land, previously occupied by two residential properties, on the junction between South Road and Clothall Road (Figure 1). It is bounded on the north by Clothall Road; on the east by the rear of properties fronting Laxton Gardens; on the west by South Road; and on the south by the neighbouring property, no.62 South Road.

1.4 An archaeological desk based assessment was prepared by the Heritage Network in November 2007. This concluded that considerable archaeological investigation had been carried out in the immediate vicinity of the study area. Previous work had demonstrated that the area of proposed development lay in a well defined archaeological landscape, with a *High* probability of encountering features and finds of late Iron Age, Roman, post-medieval and modern date. However, a pre-determination evaluation found only an undated gully and modern remains.

1.5 On the basis of the known archaeology in the vicinity of the present site, which includes a cremation cemetery of Roman date within 100m to the north-east (HER 13190 / 13191), the HEU advised that further archaeological evaluation of the development site should be undertaken before any construction proceeded and that there should be a programme of archaeological mitigation, to include monitoring and recording during the various stages of groundworks undertaken as part of the development, and such other interventions as might be defined by the results of the 2nd Stage evaluation.

1.6 The aim of the present works 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.

1.7 The present report describes the findings of the Stage 2 evaluation and monitoring programme.

2 Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The site is located on the edge of Baldock town centre on level ground at approximately 70m AOD.

2.2 The drift geology in the area consists of chalky drift and chalk of the Swaffam Prior Association (511e). These are described as *'well drained calcareous coarse and fine loamy soils over chalk rubble. Some similar shallow soils. Deep non-calcareous loamy soils in places. Striped and polygonal soil patterns locally. Slight risk of water erosion'* (SSEW 1983).

METHODOLOGY

2.3 All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the approved Project Design, current health and safety legislation, and the appropriate IfA and ALGAO guidance documents.

Evaluation

2.4 The evaluation trenches were located by triangulation from known points using fibreglass tape measures. The trenches were opened using a wheeled excavator with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket fitted to its back actor. Spoil from the machining was inspected for archaeological artefacts and a metal detector was used to scan the spoil heaps for ferrous finds. The trenches were machined to either the first significant archaeological horizon or to the natural stratigraphy. Topsoil and subsoil were separated.

2.5 The trenches were cleaned by hand, and all potential archaeological features and deposits were sampled to ascertain their nature, depth, date, and quality of preservation.

2.6 All identified contexts were photographed and recorded using the appropriate pro-forma. Scaled plans and sections were drawn on drafting film at scales of 1:10 and 1:50.

Monitoring and Recording

2.7 The timetable for the fieldwork followed the client's groundwork schedule. A series of site visits was made to monitor ground reduction and the excavation of footings, service and drainage trenches.

2.8 Machining was undertaken using a wheeled excavator with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket fitted to its back actor.

2.9 All work was carried out in accordance with the approved Project Design, current health and safety legislation, and both IfA and ALGAO standards.

RESULTS

Evaluation

2.10 Two trenches (numbered 6 and 7) were excavated across the footprints of Plots 5 – 14 in the north-western corner of the site (Figure 3). These were in addition to the trenches previously investigated as part of the Stage 1 fieldwork (numbered 1 – 5) and were positioned in order to investigate the possibility that cremation burials, associated with the known cemetery to the north of the site, might be encountered in this area

Trench 6

2.11 Trench 6 was located close to the northern boundary. It was aligned north-west to south-east and measured 15m in length, 1.6m in width and varied between 1m and 1.2m in depth.

Trench 6 data:

Length (m):	15	Width (m):	1.6	Maximum Depth (m):	1.2	Orientation	NW-SE
Context	Type	Description			Dimensions (m)		
					Length	Width	Depth
Overburden	Layer	Very mixed Demolition Overburden.			15+	1.6+	0.5
Subsoil	Layer	Brown (10YR 4/3) Silty Clay Subsoil			15+	1.6+	0.5
Natural	Layer	White (2.5YR 8/1) Chalk Natural			-	-	-

2.12 The stratigraphy in the trench consisted of a very mixed demolition overburden, 0.50m in depth, below which was a brown (10YR 4/3) silty clay subsoil, 0.50m in depth. Beneath this was the natural chalk, which contained patches of reddish brown (2.5 YR 4/4) silty clay, representing root activity (Plate 1).

2.13 No evidence for the presence of cremation burials was encountered and no other archaeological features, deposits or finds were present in Trench 6.

Trench 7

2.14 Trench 7 was located close to the western boundary. It was aligned north-east to south-west and measured 15m in length, 1.6m in width and over 1m in depth.

Trench 2 data:

Length (m):	15	Width (m):	1.6	Maximum Depth (m):	1.5	Orientation	NE-SW
Context	Type	Description			Dimensions (m)		
					Length	Width	Depth
Overburden	Layer	Very Mixed Demolition Overburden			15+	1.6+	0.5
Subsoil	Layer	Brown (10YR 4/3) Silty Clay Subsoil			15+	1.6+	0.5
Natural	Layer	White (2.5YR 8/1) Chalk Natural			-	-	-

2.15 The stratigraphy in the trench was similar to that observed in Trench 6 and consisted of a layer of very mixed demolition overburden, 0.50m in depth, above a brown (10YR 4/3) silty clay subsoil, 0.50m in depth. Beneath this was the natural chalk, which contained patches of reddish brown (2.5 YR 4/4) silty clay, representing root activity (Plate 2).

2.16 No evidence for the presence of cremation burials was encountered and no other archaeological features, deposits or finds were present in Trench 7.

Monitoring and Recording

2.17 Twenty-one visits were made to monitor the groundworks for the new development, including topsoil stripping, ground reduction for the car park area and the excavation of drainage and footings trenches for the new dwellings.

Ground reduction

Topsoil strip

2.18 The overburden across the southern end of the site was reduced by approximately 0.50m, revealing a subsoil layer of brown (10YR 4/3) silty clay, with occasional chalk flecks (Plate 3). Evidence for the former buildings on the site, in the form of patches of bricks and concrete and defunct cables, was also noted.

2.19 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were identified during this phase of the groundworks.

Car park area

2.20 The ground level in the area of the car park for the new development, located in the south-western corner of the site, was reduced by approximately 0.30m below the level of the topsoil strip to the clean natural chalk (Plate 4).

2.21 A feature containing a single animal burial, of fairly recent date, was observed in the centre of the area. It measured approximately 0.60m in diameter and is likely to represent the burial of a pet from one of the houses that formerly occupied the site. No other features, deposits or finds were encountered during this phase of the groundworks.

Drainage trenches and soakaways

2.22 Five soakaways were excavated to the chalk horizon and inspected before being reduced to their impact depth (Figure 4).

- Soakaway 1 was located at the rear of the car park area and measured 6m in length and 2m in width. The natural chalk was exposed at approximately 0.30m below the present surface (Plate 5).
- Soakaway 2 was located to the south-west of Plots 13-14 and measured 4m in length and 1m in width. The natural chalk was exposed at approximately 0.50m below the present surface (Plate 6).
- Soakaway 3 was located to the south of Plots 7-12 and measured 4m in length and 2m in width. The natural chalk was exposed at approximately 0.50m below the present surface (Plate 7).
- Soakaway 4 was located to the south-east of Plots 3-4 and measured 6m in length and 1m in width. The natural chalk was exposed at approximately 0.50m below the present surface (Plate 8).
- Soakaway 5 was located in the car park, close to the southern boundary of the site, and measured 6.5m in length and 3m in width. The natural chalk was exposed at approximately 0.10m below the present surface (Plate 9).

2.23 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered in the soakaways.

2.24 Drainage trenches were excavated, linking the soakaways and the various plots. The excavation of those running into Soakaways 1 and 5 were monitored. The trenches measured approximately 0.45m in width and approximately 1m in depth. Their stratigraphy was similar

to that observed elsewhere on the site and comprised a layer of overburden, between 0.30m and 0.50 in depth, above the subsoil.

2.25 As the monitored drainage trenches produced no archaeological evidence, and the remaining trenches were in areas previously evaluated, it was decided not to monitor the excavation of the remaining drainage, but to inspect them after excavation.

2.26 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered during this phase of the groundworks.

Footings trenches

2.27 The excavation of the footings trenches for the individual plots was carried out under careful archaeological supervision. The trenches measured between 0.60m and 0.70m in width and approximately 1m in depth (Figure 4).

2.28 The stratigraphy in the trench sections was similar across the entire site and consisted of a layer of brown (10YR 4/3) silty clay subsoil, with occasional chalk flecks and small stones, between 0.30m and 0.60m in depth above the natural chalk (Plate 10).

2.29 A modern well was encountered during the excavation of footings trenches from Plots 7 - 12 (Figure 4). Owing to ground conditions it could not be fully recorded, but was clearly a brick-lined post-medieval well which had been backfilled and capped in the 20th century (Plates 11-12).

2.30 No other archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered during this phase of the groundworks.

3 Discussion

3.1 The site lies on the south-eastern edge of the extensive Iron Age and Romano-British settlement at Baldock and at the junction between the road from Braughing to Baldock and a minor road running north-east. Both routes were established by the late Iron Age.

3.2 The desk-based assessment of the site shows that it lies on the south-eastern edge of the Roman small town, at the junction between the road from Braughing and a minor road, aligned south-west to north-east, which apparently marked the south-eastern limit of the settlement (Ashworth 2007). Although only limited settlement evidence has been recorded from the immediate vicinity of the study area, a number of human burials have been found. Eight cremation burials were found during excavations ahead of road widening along Clothall Road in 1968 (HER 13191), less than 100m to the north. The burials dated to the late 1st and 2nd centuries and appear to form part of a roadside cemetery, located along the road from Braughing.

3.3 An archaeological evaluation on the corner of South Road and Pembroke Road, approximately 150m to the south-west, in 2004 (HER 12754) uncovered several features dated to the early Roman period. These comprised a boundary ditch, 1.50m in width and aligned north-east to south-west, and three postholes on the eastern side of the ditch (Ashworth & Saunders 2004). The ditch, which lay parallel to and on the north-western side of South Road, may represent part of a domestic or agricultural enclosure on the edge of the Roman town. Alternatively it may be related to the line of the minor road already discussed.

3.4 In the medieval period the present site lay at the north-western limit of the parish of Weston, on the boundary between the parishes of Weston, Baldock and Clothall. The boundary between Baldock and Clothall was marked by the line of the modern A507 Clothall Road. That between Weston and Baldock was marked by the line of South Road. It is, therefore, likely that the present site lay in open land in the medieval and post-medieval periods. The cartographic evidence suggests that it was not occupied until the late 19th century.

3.5 Late 19th and early 20th century maps show that the northern half of the study area was occupied by a number of buildings, probably a farm, whilst the southern half remained undeveloped. A single building was erected in the centre of the southern half between 1937 and 1987.

Conclusion

3.6 The archaeological investigations on the present site revealed little evidence for archaeological activity. A late nineteenth century wall and an undated gully were encountered during the Stage 1 evaluation and a post-medieval well and a modern animal burial were found during the Stage 2 fieldwork.

3.7 Despite the site's proximity to significant remains dating from the Iron Age onwards, in particular Romano-British cremation burials, no evidence of this date was observed during the current investigation.

Confidence Rating

3.8 During the course of the fieldwork, the conditions were generally acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation.

3.9 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
22/02/2010	GJ	9	Evaluation – trenches 6 & 7
10/05/2010	GJ	1	Monitor topsoil strip
11/05/2010	GJ	3	Monitor topsoil strip
12/05/2010	GJ	4	Monitor topsoil strip
13/05/2010	JS	1	Monitor topsoil strip
14/05/2010	DJH	1	Monitor ground reduction
14/05/2010	DJH	2	Monitor soakaway
18/05/2010	JS	1	Monitor soakaway
20/05/2010	JS	1	Monitor drainage trenches
26/05/2010	DJH	2	Monitor ground reduction for car park
27/05/2010	GJ	2	Monitor ground reduction for car park
15/06/2010	JS	1	Monitor footings trenches – Plots 1 & 2
15/06/2010	JS	5	Monitor footings trenches – Plots 1 & 2
16/06/2010	JS	1	Monitor footings trenches – Plots 1 & 2
30/06/2010	GJ	3	Monitor footings trenches – Plots 3 & 4
01/07/2010	GJ	3	Monitor footings trenches – Plots 3 & 4
05/07/2010	JS	2	Monitor footings trenches – Plots 5 & 6
19/07/2010	JS	3	Monitor footings trenches – Plots 7 - 12
20/07/2010	JS	2	Monitor footings trenches – Plots 7 - 12
21/07/2010	JS	1	Monitor footings trenches – Plots 7 - 12
22/07/2010	JS	5	Monitor footings trenches – Plots 7 - 12
27/07/2010	JS	7	Monitor footings trenches – Plots 13 & 14

5 Bibliography

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6 Illustrations

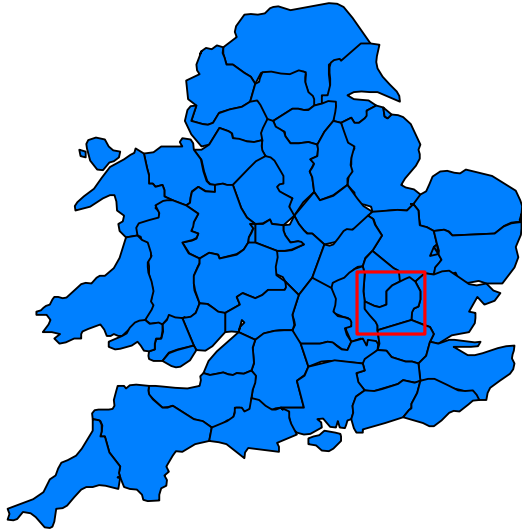
Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	Site layout
Figure 3.....	Location of evaluation trenches
Figure 4.....	Archaeological monitoring
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Plate 2	Trench 7
Plate 3	Topsoil stripping
Plate 4	Ground reduction: car park
Plate 5	Soakaway 1
Plate 6	Soakaway 2
Plate 7	Soakaway 3
Plate 8	Soakaway 4
Plate 9	Soakaway 5
Plate 10	Sample section: footings trench Plots 13-14
Plate 11	Modern well in footings, Plots 7-12
Plate 12	Modern well in footings, Plots 7-12

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72-74 South Rd, Baldock

HN853



Site Location

Scale 1:5000

(Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Licence no.AL100014861)

Figure 1

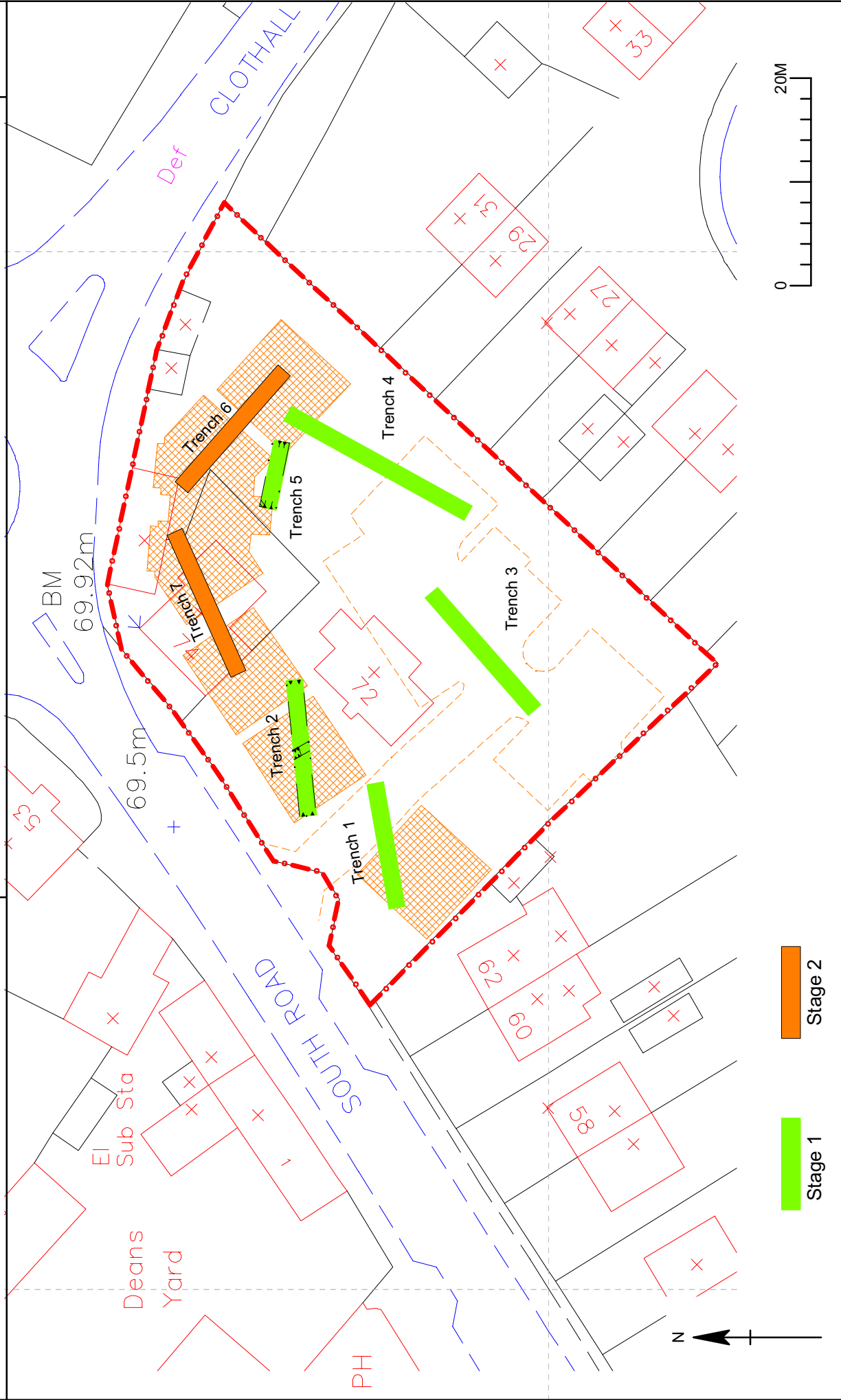


Site layout

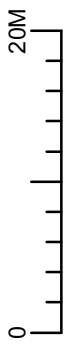
Courtesy of Wheatley Homes Ltd

Scale 1:500

Figure 2



Stage 1
Stage 2



Evaluation trenches



72-74 South Road,
Baldock, Herts.
HN853

Archaeological monitoring

- Soakaways
- Drainage trenches
- Manhole
- Manhole

Scale 1:250

Figure 4





Plate 1: Trench 6, looking north-west



Plate 2: Trench 7, looking north-east



Plate 3: Topsoil stripping, southern end of site, looking north



Plate 4: Ground reduction in car park area



Plate 5: Soakaway 1



Plate 6: Soakaway 2



Plate 7: Soakaway 3



Plate 8: Soakaway 4



Plate 9: Soakaway 5



Plate 10: Sample section, footings trench Plots 13-14



Plate 11: Modern well in footings trench, Plots 7-12



Plate 12: Well in footings trench, Plots 7-12

Appendix

Oasis Summary Sheet

OASIS ID: heritage1-72199	
Project details	
Project name	72 – 74 South Road, Baldock
Short description of the project	<p>In order to advise the planning authority on the nature and extent of archaeological remains surviving on a proposed development site located at 72-74 South Road, Baldock, the Heritage Network was commissioned by Wheatley Homes Ltd. to carry out a programme of pre-determination archaeological evaluation. This included the preparation of a desk-based archaeological assessment in 2007, and trial trenching plus an historic building impact assessment in 2008.</p> <p>The desk-based research demonstrated the potential for remains dating to the Iron Age and Romano-British period to be present on the site, but the trial trenches revealed only an undated gully and a modern wall footing. The existing buildings on the site were not considered to be of historical significance.</p> <p>The present stage of the project has included some additional evaluation, and the monitoring of the development groundworks. Two further trial trenches were excavated, focused on the northern corner of the site, to investigate the possibility that an early Roman cremation cemetery might extend into the development area. This proved not to be the case. The monitoring of the groundworks revealed only a post-medieval well and a modern animal burial.</p>
Project dates	Start: 22-02-2010 End: 22-07-2010
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	HN853 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Residential 1 – General residential
Monument type	WELL Modern
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	'Watching brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE BALDOCK 72-74 South Road
Postcode	SG7 6BZ
Study area	2230.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 2514 3350 51.9854019771 -0.177487427660 51 59 07 N 000 10 38 W Point
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body

originator	
Project design originator	Heritage Network
Project director/manager	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	David Hillelson
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	North Herts Museums Service
Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	North Herts Museum Services
Paper Contents	'none'
Paper Media available	'Diary', 'Plan', 'Report'
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	72-74 South Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire.: Archaeological Monitoring
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Ashworth, H.
Other bibliographic details	Report no.618
Date	2010
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth, Herts.
Description	A4 booklet, comb bound, green cover, 12 pages, 4 figures, 12 photographic plates