

# HERITAGE NETWORK



**49 SCHOOL LANE  
Welwyn,  
Hertfordshire**

HN904

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION REPORT***



# *THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD*

*Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation*

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

49 SCHOOL LANE,  
Welwyn, Herts.

Project ref.: HN904  
LPA ref.: N6/2010/2178/FP  
HER Consultation no.: 267/10

## *Archaeological Evaluation*

*Revision A. - April 2011*

*Prepared on behalf of Mrs S Winch*

by

Helen Ashworth BA (HONS) AIFA

Report no. 642

*March 2011*

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**11 FURMSTON COURT, ICKNIELD WAY, LETCHWORTH SG6 1UJ**  
**TEL: (01462) 685991 FAX: (01462) 685998**



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*The front cover shows the site looking south*

## Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by James Snee. The report text and illustrations were prepared by Helen Ashworth and edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to: Mrs S Winch; Andrew Boakes, Andrew Boakes Associates; Andy Instone and Isobel Thompson, Hertfordshire Historic Environment Unit, Hertfordshire County Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

## Summary

<b>Site name and address:</b>	49 School Lane, Welwyn, Herts, AL6 9PL		
<b>County:</b>	Hertfordshire	<b>District:</b>	Welwyn Hatfield
<b>Village/town:</b>	Welwyn	<b>Parish:</b>	Welwyn
<b>Planning reference:</b>	N6/2010/2178/FP	<b>NGR:</b>	TL 2266 1582
<b>Client name and address:</b>	Mrs S Winch, c/o Andrew Boakes Associates, 10 Yeomans Drive, Aston, Stevenage, SG2 7EJ		
<b>Nature of work:</b>	New dwelling	<b>Current land use:</b>	Garden
<b>Site Status:</b>	Area of Archaeological Significance	<b>Reason for investigation:</b>	Direction of LPA (PPS5)
<b>Position in planning process:</b>	After full determination	<b>Project brief originator:</b>	Local Authority
<b>Size of affected area:</b>	c. 385m <sup>2</sup>	<b>Size of area investigated:</b>	19.2m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Site code:</b>	HN904	<b>HER ref:</b>	267/10
<b>Organisation:</b>	Heritage Network	<b>Site Director:</b>	David Hillelson
<b>Project type, methods etc...</b>	Field evaluation	<b>Archive recipient:</b>	Welwyn Hatfield Museums Service
<b>Start of work:</b>	22/02/2011	<b>Finish of work:</b>	22/02/2011
<b>Related HER nos:</b>	n/a	<b>Periods represented:</b>	n/a
<b>OASIS UID:</b>	heritage1-91973	<b>Significant finds:</b>	None
<b>Monument types:</b>	n/a		
<b>Physical archive:</b>	n/a		
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b>	None		

### Synopsis:

In order to characterise the archaeological potential of the site of a proposed new development on land to the rear of 49 School Lane, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the owner to undertake an archaeological field evaluation. This work was a requirement of the planning consent granted by the local planning authority.

One trial trench was excavated across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling. Although the site lies close to a Roman road and to a cemetery associated with the road, no features, deposits or finds of archaeological significance were encountered during the work.

On the basis of these results, the risk that the development might encounter archaeological remains of significance may be considered to be *Low* for all periods.



# 1 Introduction

**1.1** This report has been prepared at the request of Andrew Boakes Associates, acting on behalf of Mrs S. Winch, as part of the archaeological evaluation of the proposed redevelopment of land at 49 School Lane, Welwyn, Hertfordshire.

**1.2** Planning permission for the development (ref: N6/2010/2178/FP) was granted by Welwyn Hatfield Council (WHC), subject to a standard archaeological condition issued under the Department of Communities and Local Government's *Planning Policy Statement 5* (PPS5). The scope of this investigation has been defined in correspondence with the Historic Environment Unit (HEU) of Hertfordshire County Council, acting as advisers to the WHC (ref: AI 05/11/2010). A full specification for the work carried out is contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design* dated February 2011.

**1.3** The site is located to the southwest of Welwyn, on the corner of School Lane and Hawbush Rise and is centred on NGR TL 2266 1582. It forms the garden to the rear of number 49 and is bounded by the garden of number 51 to the west and number 2 Hawbush Rise to the north (Figure 1).

**1.4** The site lies within Area of Archaeological Significance No.7, as identified in the District Local Plan. This notes evidence for a substantial Iron Age and Romano-British settlement at Welwyn. It is also noted that Welwyn was a medieval village. Roman remains in the area include a Roman Road that runs through Hawbush Rise (HER2303, 7311) and part of a Roman cemetery on either side of the Roman road, between Hawbush Rise and Elmoor Avenue (HER2303, 12073). Iron Age activity has been found at the Queen Victoria Hospital (HER9267), to the west of the current site. Evidence of Roman occupation has also been uncovered during archaeological investigations at numbers 21-25 School Lane (HER 16245) and numbers 17-19 School Lane (HER1693).

**1.5** The proposed development entails the construction of a new three bedroom detached dwelling, with associated access, services and landscaping.

**1.6** The aim of the evaluation has been to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any remains that are liable to be threatened by the development, and to provide a local and regional, archaeological and historical context for them, in accordance with the current published regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000), should they be discovered. It was considered that such investigation had the potential to contribute to an understanding of the origins and development of settlement in Welwyn from the prehistoric period onwards.

**1.7** The present report is intended to provide the planning authority with sufficient data to allow it to consider the archaeological implications of the proposed development, and to determine what further mitigation measures, if any, may be required to allow the development to proceed.

## 2 Fieldwork

### TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

**2.1** The study area is located at a height of approximately 75m AOD in the bottom of a shallow dry valley that falls away to the north-east to the valley of the River Mimram. The land rises to the north-west and south-east.

**2.2** The underlying solid geology consists of chalk, overlain by deposits of the Kesgrave Catchment Subgroup. These encompass fluvial, lacustrine and organic deposits related to the pre-diversionary River Thames and the pre-glacial soils that developed on such deposits ([www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience)).

**2.3** The superficial deposits observed on the site consisted of a mid yellowish brown, slightly clayey silt alluvium containing occasional pebbles.

**2.4** As the present site is located in an urban area, the local soils are unsurveyed. However, the surrounding soils form part of the Palaeo-argillic brown earths, with sub-soils reflecting pedogenic processes that occurred before the last glacial period (SSEW 1983).

### METHODOLOGY

**2.5** 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.

**2.6** The trench was located by triangulation from known points using fibreglass tape measures. It was opened using a wheeled excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket. Spoil from the machining was inspected for archaeological artefacts and a metal detector was used to scan the spoil heaps for ferrous finds. The trench was machined to the first significant archaeological horizon, or to the natural geological horizon, as appropriate.

**2.7** The trench was cleaned by hand, and any potential archaeological features and deposits were sampled to ascertain their nature, depth, date, and quality of preservation.

**2.8** All identified contexts were photographed and recorded using the appropriate proforma. Scaled plans and sections were drawn on drafting film at scales of 1:10 and 1:50.

### RESULTS

**2.9** One evaluation trench was excavated across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling. Trench 1 measured 12m by 1.6m, giving a total coverage of 19.2m<sup>2</sup>, representing a sample of approximately 5% of the area directly affected by the development.

#### *Trench 1*

**2.10** Trench 1 was located in the centre of the site (Figure 2). It was orientated north-west to south-east and measured 12m in length, 1.6m in width and was excavated to a depth of 0.48m (Plate 1).

**2.11** A sondage was excavated to a depth of 2.20m below the present ground surface in order to confirm the nature of the natural deposits (Plate 2).



**Trench 1 data:**

<b>Length (m):</b>	12	<b>Width (m):</b>	1.6	<b>Maximum Depth (m):</b>	0.48	<b>Orientation</b>	NW-SE
<b>Level at NW End of Trench (mOD)</b>		<b>Top</b>	77.69	<b>Level at SE End of Trench (mOD)</b>		<b>Top</b>	77.05
		<b>Base</b>	77.04			<b>Base</b>	76.63
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions (m)</b>				
			<b>Length</b>	<b>Width</b>	<b>Depth</b>		
-	Layer	Black slightly clayey silt topsoil, with occasional pebbles.	12+	1.6+	0.35		
-	Layer	Mid brown slightly clayey silt subsoil, with occasional pebbles.	12+	1.6+	0.10		
-	Layer	Mid yellowish brown slightly clayey silt, with occasional pebbles. Probable pre-glacial alluvial layer.	12+	1.6+	-		

**2.12** The stratigraphy in the trench consisted of black slightly clayey silt, with occasional pebbles, 0.35m in depth, above mid brown slightly clayey subsoil 0.10m in depth. Beneath the subsoil the natural substratum was revealed, which consisted of mid yellowish brown slightly clayey silt with occasional pebbles, over 1.50m in depth.

**2.13** The sondage was excavated at the south-eastern end. It measured approximately 1m in length, 1.60m in width and was excavated to a depth of approximately 1.70m (Plate 2). It demonstrated that the deposit below the subsoil, which has been interpreted as the fill of a palaeo-channel, was natural in origin.

**2.14** No archaeological features, deposits or finds were present in the trench.

## 3 Discussion

### *Archaeological Background*

**3.1** The earliest evidence for settlement in Welwyn comes from an Iron Age enclosure with post holes, sill beam trenches and other structural indicators (HER 9267), located approximately 120m northwest of the site of the present investigation. An Iron Age cemetery has also been recorded close to the Civic Centre (AAS7).

**3.2** Approximately 70m northwest of the proposed development is the route of the Roman road from St Albans to Colchester. Evidence for the road has been revealed to the north of 59 School Lane (HER 7310) in the form of a rutted metalled track, and in allotment gardens off Hawbush Close (HER 7311) where the ditches to either side of the road were revealed.

**3.3** Close by, and almost certainly associated with the Roman road, were a number of human burials in the form of skeletal remains and cremations (HER 2303 and HER 12073) which are believed to form part of a cemetery associated with the Roman settlement of Welwyn, which probably exists to the east.

**3.4** The medieval village of Welwyn is known from historical records, beginning with the Domesday survey of 1086 AD which recorded the settlement as 'Wilye' (AAS7). The parish church is dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

**3.5** Close to the present development are two post-medieval buildings of note: The Lodge (HER 10982), a 19<sup>th</sup> century or older building used as a school and New Place (HER 16035), which is an arts and crafts house.

### *Research Design*

**3.6** The aim of the evaluation has been to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any remains that are liable to be threatened by the development, and to provide a local and regional, archaeological and historical context for them, in accordance with the current published regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000), should they be discovered. It was considered that such investigation had the potential to contribute to an understanding of the development and growth of settlement in the Welwyn area from the prehistoric period onwards.

### *Conclusions*

**3.7** Despite the defined archaeological potential of the site, the evaluation trench did not expose any archaeological finds, features or deposits. The natural substratum has been interpreted as the fill of a palaeo-channel related to the pre-diversionary River Thames.

**3.8** The trench was located across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling. Approximately 5% of the area directly affected by the new development was investigated.

**3.9** On the basis of the results of the evaluation, the risk that the proposed development might disturb archaeological remains of any significance may be considered to be *Low* for all periods.

***Confidence Rating***

**3.10** The archaeological trial trenching did not reveal any significant archaeological features, deposits or artefacts during the investigation.

**3.11** The winter light was poor and the weather conditions were very cold, which factors may have had a slight negative influence on the identification and recording of potential archaeological features and deposits. On this basis, the confidence rating for the work may be considered to be *Moderate to High*.

## 4 Bibliography

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## 5 Illustrations

Figure 1..... Site location

Figure 2..... Site layout

Plate 1 ..... Trench 1, looking NW

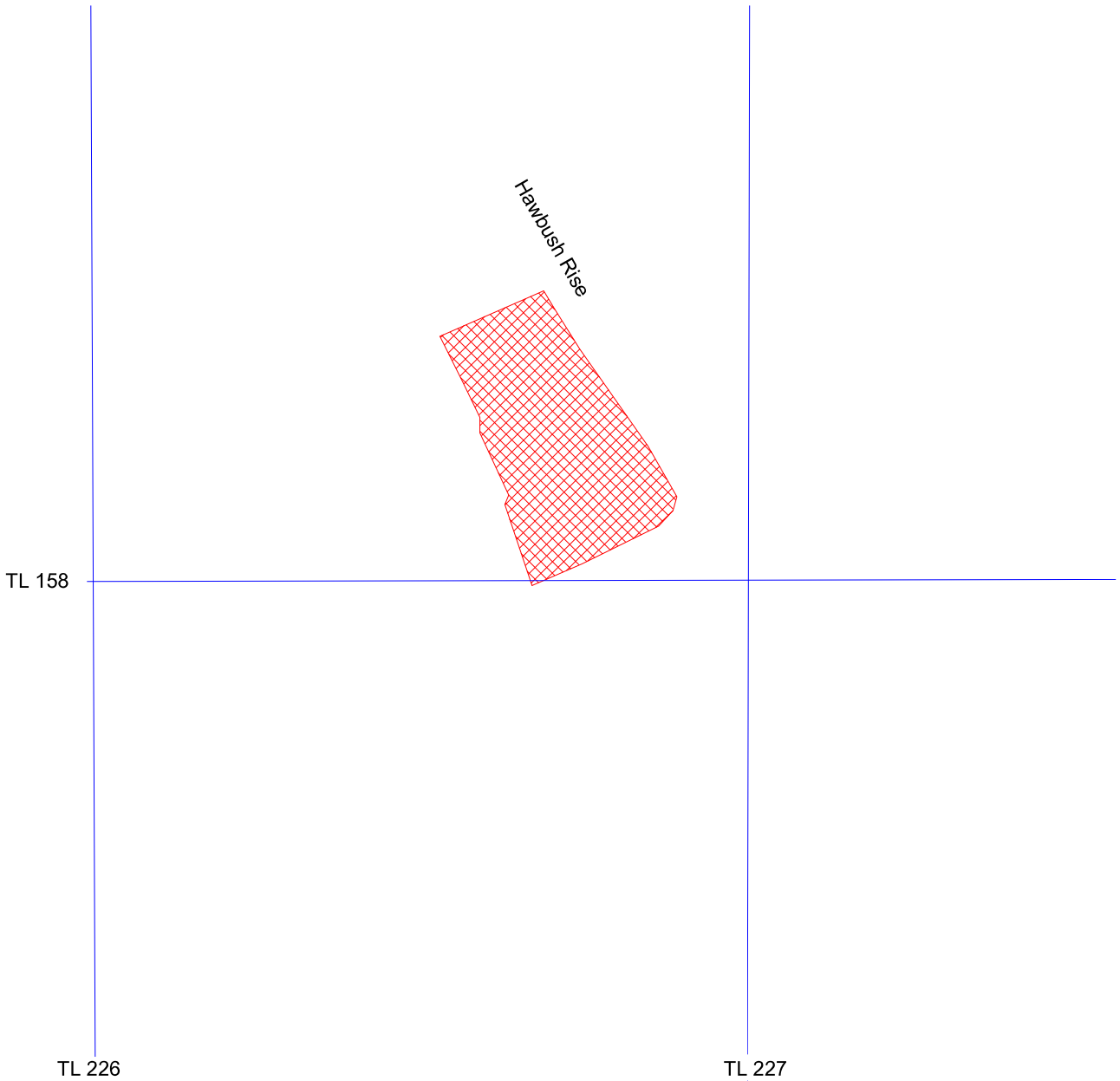
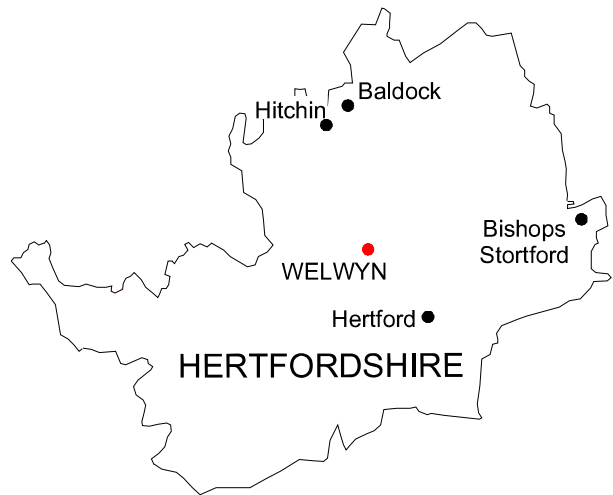
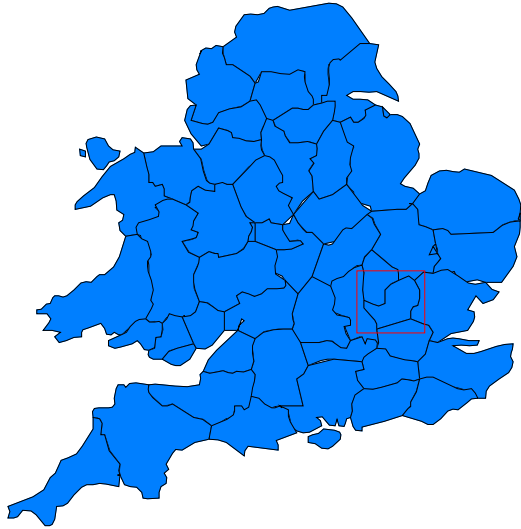
Plate 2 ..... Sondage at SE end of Trench 1

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HN904



Site Location

Scale 1:1000

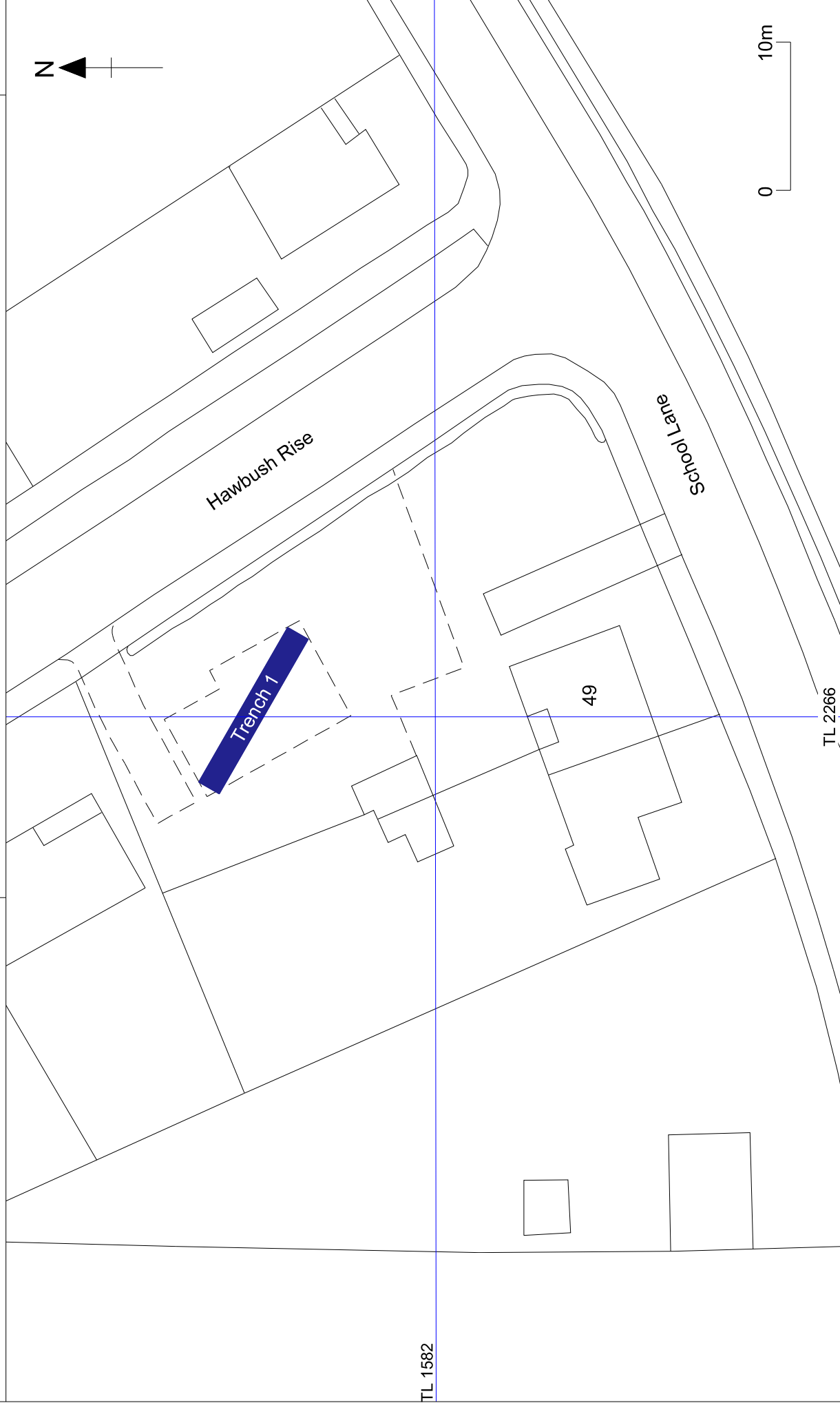
(Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Licence no.AL100014861)

Figure 1

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49 School Lane, Welwyn, Hertfordshire

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Site layout  
Courtesy Andrew Boakes Associates

Scale 1:350  
Figure 2





Plate 1: Trench 1, looking north-west



Plate 2: Sondage at SE end of trench

# Appendix

## Oasis Summary Sheet

<b>OASIS ID: heritage1-91973</b>	
<b>Project details</b>	
Project name	Welwyn, 49 School Lane
Short description of the project	In order to characterise the archaeological potential of the site of a proposed new development on land to the rear of 49 School Lane, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the owner to undertake an archaeological field evaluation. This work was a requirement of the planning consent granted by the local planning authority. One trial trench was excavated across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling. Although the site lies close to a Roman road and to a cemetery associated with the road, no features, deposits or finds of archaeological significance were encountered during the work.
Project dates	Start: 22-02-2011 End: 22-02-2011
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Project code	HN904 – Contracting unit no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance
Current Land use	Other 5 – Garden
Monument type	None
Significant Finds	None
Methods	'Targeted Trenches'
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	After full determination (e.g. As a condition)
<b>Project location</b>	
Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE WELWYN HATFIELD WELWYN 49 School Lane
Postcode	AL6 9PL
Study area	385 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 2266 1582 51.8270569929 -0.219881224040 51 49 37 N 000 13 11 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: c.107m Max: c.109m
<b>Project creators</b>	
Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief author	N/A
Project design author	Heritage Network
Project director	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	James Snee
Funding body	Landowner
<b>Project archives</b>	
Physical Archive?	No
Digital Archive	Welwyn Hatfield Museums

recipient	
Digital Media ?	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Welwyn Hatfield Museums
Paper Media?	'Context sheet','Diary','Drawing','Photograph'
<b>Project bibliography</b>	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	49 School Lane, Welwyn, Herts. Archaeological Evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Ashworth, H.
Other bibliographic details	Heritage Network Report no. 642
Date	2011
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Place of issue or publication	Letchworth Garden City
Description	A4 booklet, comb bound, green cover, 10 pages, 2 Figures, 2 Plates