

# HERITAGE NETWORK



## **COTTERED SERVICE STATION** **Baldock Road, Cottered,** **Hertfordshire**

HN916

## ***ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT***



# *THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD*

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

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

## COTTERED SERVICE STATION Baldock Road, Cottered, Hertfordshire.

Project ref.: HN916  
LPA ref.: 3/10/2242/RP  
HER Consultation no.: 333/10

### *Archaeological Monitoring and Recording*

*Prepared on behalf of Inprop Ltd*

by

James Snee BSc (HONS)

Report no. 685

*October 2011*

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*The front cover shows Cottered Service Station prior to demolition.*

## Acknowledgements

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

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to: Lindsay Jones, Attfield & Jones; John Lucky, Tee Jay Construction; and Alison Tinniswood and Isobel Thompson, 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>	Cottered Service Station, Baldock Road, Cottered, Hertfordshire, SG9 9PS.		
<b>County:</b>	Hertfordshire	<b>District:</b>	East Hertfordshire
<b>Village/town:</b>	Cottered	<b>Parish:</b>	Cottered
<b>Planning reference:</b>	3/10/2242/RP	<b>NGR:</b>	TL 31810 29325
<b>Client name and address:</b>	Inprop Ltd, 8 Woodleigh Mansions, Larch Avenue, Sunningdale, Berkshire, SL5 OAW		
<b>Nature of work:</b>	Demolition of existing buildings; erection of new dwelling	<b>Current land use:</b>	Service Station and workshop
<b>Site Status:</b>	AAS 35	<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>	<i>c.</i> 350m <sup>2</sup>	<b>Size of area investigated:</b>	<i>c.</i> 350m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Site code:</b>	HN916	<b>HER ref:</b>	333/10
<b>Organisation:</b>	Heritage Network	<b>Site Director:</b>	David Hillelson
<b>Project type, methods etc...</b>	Monitoring of groundworks	<b>Archive recipient:</b>	Hertford Museum
<b>Start of work:</b>	13/04/2011	<b>Finish of work:</b>	14/04/2011
<b>Related HER nos:</b>	n/a	<b>Periods represented:</b>	n/a
<b>OASIS UID:</b>	heritage1-97022	<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 response to a condition on the planning permission for development at Cottered Service Station, Baldock Road, Cottered, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developer to undertake a programme of historic building recording and archaeological monitoring of the development groundworks.

Due to an oversight by the planning authority, permission to demolish the existing buildings was granted before they could be recorded. With the agreement of the HEU, a retrospective record of the buildings was made. At the time of demolition, Cottered Service Station represented a post-war rural service station that had been

remodelled in the 1980s. Village service stations such as this are a rapidly disappearing aspect of the 20<sup>th</sup> century historic landscape.

The monitoring of groundworks revealed no archaeological features or deposits pre-dating the late medieval period.

# 1 Introduction

**1.1** This report has been prepared at the request of Attfield and Jones, acting on behalf of Inprop Ltd as part of the archaeological monitoring of the development at Cottered Service Station, Baldock Road, Cottered, Hertfordshire.

**1.2** Planning permission for the development (ref: 3/10/2242/RP) was granted by East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC), 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 was defined in a *Design Brief for Rapid Archaeological Building Recording and Archaeological Monitoring and Recording* prepared by the Historic Environment Unit (HEU) of Hertfordshire County Council, acting as archaeological advisers to EHDC (ref: AT 07/03/2011). A full specification for the work carried out is contained in the Heritage Network's *Project Design* dated March 2011, which was submitted to HEU in advance of the fieldwork.

**1.3** Cottered Service Station is located on the north side of the A507 Baldock Road, c.80m to the west of its junction with the B1037, centred on NGR TL 31810 29325 (Figure 1). The site of the proposed development lies between Rosemary Cottages and Green View Cottage and is opposite Cottered village green. It was formerly occupied by workshop buildings, garage forecourt, kiosk and pumps.

**1.4** The site lies within *Area of Archaeological Significance no.35*, as identified in the District Local Plan, which includes the historic core of the medieval settlement of Cottered (recorded in Domesday Book as 'Chochie'), the 14<sup>th</sup> century parish church of St John, two medieval moated sites, and several buildings of late medieval and early post-medieval date. The front (forecourt) part of the site is believed to date from the 1950s, and represented a rare surviving example of a small rural petrol station of early post-World War II date.

**1.5** The new development entailed the demolition of the existing service station, and its replacement with a three-bedroom house.

**1.6** Due to an oversight by the planning authority, permission to demolish the existing buildings was granted before the present study was commissioned and they could be recorded. The HEU was notified of this and agreed that the historic building record should consist of a retrospective record of the buildings, based on existing resources including photographs and plans held by the present and previous owners, the present architects and builders, and the local planning authority.

**1.7** It was considered that such recording had the potential to contribute to an understanding of the village life of Cottered, and its economic development in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**1.8** The aim of the monitoring of groundworks was to investigate the presence of any archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the development, to ensure the preservation in situ of such remains where practically possible, their preservation by record where not, and to provide a local and regional, archaeological and historical context for them, in accordance with the current published regional research agenda (Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Medlycott and Brown 2008).

**1.9** It was considered that such recording had the potential to contribute to an understanding of the origins and development of Cottered in the medieval and post-medieval periods.

**1.10** The present report, together with the deposition of the project archive with Hertford Museum, and the publication of a short note in *Hertfordshire Archaeology & History*, is intended to complete the archaeological requirements of the planning consent and allow Condition 2 to be discharged.



## 2 Fieldwork

### TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

**2.1** The study area lies on northern slope of a small promontory at approximately 135mAOD. The site was formerly covered with buildings.

**2.2** The underlying geology of the area consists of Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation overlain by chalky till of the Lowestoft Formation (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk>). The local soils comprise slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils of the Hanslope Association (411d) (SSEW 1983).

### METHODOLOGY

**2.3** The historic building record collated a retrospective record of the buildings based on existing resources including photographs and plans held by the present and previous owners, the present architects and builders, and the local planning authority. Together these aim to conform to a Level 3 record, as defined in *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006). Additional documentary research was carried out using readily accessible sources in order to set the site in its historical and archaeological context.

**2.4** 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.

**2.5** The timetable for the fieldwork followed the client's groundwork schedule. Three site visits were made to monitor the development groundworks, including the foundation trenches for the dwelling and the garage attached to Green View Cottage (Figure 3).

**2.6** Machining for the foundation trenches was undertaken with a tracked 360 machine fitted with 0.6m toothed bucket.

### HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD

**2.7** Cottered Service station was located on the north side of Baldock Road. Prior to demolition it comprised of a totem, forecourt, fuel pumps, kiosk, yard and two workshops (Figure 2).

**2.8** The totem was set on a low rectangular traffic island, defined by white painted raised concrete kerbs. The totem itself was a rectangular sign in blue livery with the Proteus logo at the top. There were three white strips for displaying fuel prices with a red strip displaying credit card acceptance below. At the base of the sign were the words; 'diesel', 'servicing' and 'accident repairs'.

**2.9** The forecourt was surfaced in a mixture of tarmac and brick paving. The western and northern limits of the forecourt were defined by white painted concrete kerbs (Plates 1 & 2).

**2.10** At the north side of the forecourt was a low concrete plinth supporting two electric petrol pumps (Plates 1 & 4). The pumps were metric, indicating that they were not original, and displayed the Proteus logo.

**2.11** Immediately to the north of the patrol pumps was a small kiosk (Plates 1 & 4). This comprised a full wall on the north side, with dwarf walls to the east, south and west. Above the dwarf walls were glazed panels with white frames, supporting a pyramidal glazed roof. The kiosk had a single door in the east elevation.

**2.12** The yard was a sub-rectangular area defined by the workshops on the east and narrow brick walls to the north, west and south (Figure 2; Plate 5). Access to the yard was through a blue painted double gate in the southeast corner. The yard contained a number of temporary structures including a grounded truck body (Plate 6).

**2.13** A single storey rectangular range, comprising two connected workshops, occupied the eastern side of the yard and forecourt (Figure 2). Its southern end adjoined Green View Cottage to the east (Plates 2, 3 & 5). The south elevation was composed of machine made brick in stretcher bond with cement mortar. There were two white painted casement windows, each of two lights and 6 panes, in the elevation. The roof was in red pantiles, with a corrugated plastic skylight.

**2.14** The western elevation contained double doors of plank and brace construction, glazed at the top (Plate 5). Above the doors the gable was timber clad and white painted. Two short wooden doors had been inserted into the gable to allow entry to high sided vehicles. A sign was mounted on the gable end which read; "COTTERED SERVICE STATION Accident Repairs & Service Centre".

**2.15** Extending to the north was a second workshop, with brick walls and an asbestos roof that sloped gently to the east.

### ***OBSERVATION AND RECORDING***

**2.16** The excavation of the footings trenches for the new dwelling was monitored. The trenches measured 0.60m in width and were excavated to depths of between 1.10m and 1.20m (Figure 3).

**2.17** The stratigraphy exposed in the trench sections consisted of more than 0.5m of stiff pale yellowish brown natural clay with frequent flint fragments, which in the southern half of the site was overlain by up to 0.60m of mid brown sandy clay subsoil (Plate 7). The site was covered with a levelling deposit of modern demolition rubble that was thinnest at the southern end of the site and became thick towards the north, finally achieving a thickness of 0.60m.

**2.18** A number of modern service trenches were encountered during the course of the groundworks (Figure 3). These included a water pipe and electric cable which ran north – south along the eastern footings trench. A concrete drain was also present, which ran east – west across the site. The ground in the northwestern corner of the new dwelling had been disturbed by the removal of underground fuel storage tanks.

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

## 3 Discussion

### *Archaeological Background*

**3.1** The Hertfordshire County *Historic Environment Record* (HER) was consulted covering a 500m radius from the present study area (HER Consultation no.: 333/10).

**3.2** These include a possible eroded round barrow and pits on Stocking Hill, approximately 400m to the north (HER16893); finds of Roman pottery to the east of The Lordship, approximately 250m to the south-east (HER1367); finds of pottery dating from the 10th to the 14th centuries at Shipwrights Cottage, approximately 170m to the east (HER13135); the 14th century parish church of St John, approximately 100m to the south-southwest (HER4335); medieval moated sites at the Lordship, approximately 150m to the south-east (HER2745), and at Toppesfield, approximately 450m to the east south-east (HER1135); and many post-medieval buildings, some of which may have medieval origins. The settlement is named as a manorial estate in the Domesday Book

**3.3** An examination of Ordnance Survey maps from 1878 onwards shows that the eastern side of the site has been occupied since at least the late 19<sup>th</sup> century ([www.old-maps.co.uk](http://www.old-maps.co.uk)). The site is first marked as a garage on the OS map of 1974 – 1975.

### *Research Design*

**3.4** The aim of the building recording was to collate a retrospective record of the buildings based on existing resources. It was considered that such recording has the potential to contribute to an understanding of the village life of Cottered, and its economic development in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**3.5** The aim of the monitoring and recording was to investigate the presence of any archaeological remains that are liable to be threatened by the development, to ensure the preservation in situ of such remains where practically possible, their preservation by record where not, and to provide a local and regional, archaeological and historical context for them, in accordance with the current published regional research agenda (Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Medlycott and Brown 2008).

**3.6** It was considered that such recording has the potential to contribute to an understanding of the origins and development of Cottered in the medieval and post-medieval periods.

### *Discussion*

**3.7** The absence of any archaeological features could suggest that the village green at Cottered was larger in the medieval period. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the older properties are set further back from the road than the more recent buildings, suggesting a process of encroachment onto the green from the post-medieval period onwards.

**3.8** The first petrol station with kerb side pumps was established in the UK in 1912. As motorcars proliferated, the number of filling stations increased. In addition the majority of rural blacksmiths and bicycle shops began catering for the motorist (Baker 2008). The biggest rise in the introduction of petrol pumps to such village garages was during the 1950s and 60s, with the post austerity boom in car ownership (Thompson 2008).

**3.9** From the mid 1970s onwards, the rise of the supermarket, coupled with major changes such as decimalisation and more vigorous safety regulations, put many small rural filling stations out of business and the process of decline continues to the present day where few village garages remain and even fewer continue trading (Thompson 2008).

**3.10** Cottered Service Station represented a rare survival of the village filling station, post decimalisation. The pumps, kiosk, totem and forecourt are likely to have been remodelled in the late 1980s as part of the conversion to litres and the introduction of self service filling. The workshop buildings are several decades older and have probably remained unchanged in function and form.

**3.11** Proteus Petroleum was one of the largest independent suppliers in the UK. Founded in 1987, it traded until 1998, when it was taken over by Texaco along with its sister companies. At the time of the takeover it supplied 175 independent service stations, mostly located in the south of England (PR Newswire 1998).

### Conclusions

**3.12** At the time of demolition, Cottered Service Station represented a post-war rural service station that had been remodelled in the 1980s. Village service stations such as this are a rapidly disappearing aspect of the 20<sup>th</sup> century historic landscape.

**3.13** The monitoring of groundworks revealed modern services only. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were encountered, suggesting that this part of the village green was only occupied from the later post-medieval period onwards.

### Confidence Rating

**3.14** The retrospective record of the buildings used existing photographs that were not taken for the purposes of building recording. In addition there was no opportunity to examine detailed fixtures or take accurate measurements. On this basis, the confidence rating for this aspect of the work is *Moderate*.

**3.15** During the monitoring of groundworks, 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
13/04/2011	JGS	7	Monitoring groundworks
14/04/2011	JGS	2	Monitoring groundworks
14/04/2011	JGS	1	Monitoring groundworks

## 5 Bibliography

Baker, B 2008 *History of Petrol Filling Stations Part 7; The Early Petrol Stations*. Association for Petroleum and Explosives Administration Bulletin.

Brown, N. & Glazebrook, J. 2000 *Research and Archaeology: a framework for the eastern counties, 2. Research agenda and strategy*. East Anglian Archaeology

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<http://www.prnewswire.co.uk/cgi/news/release?id=37321>

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Thompson, J 2008 *History of Petrol Filling Stations Part 8; 1920 to 1960s*. Association for Petroleum and Explosives Administration Bulletin.

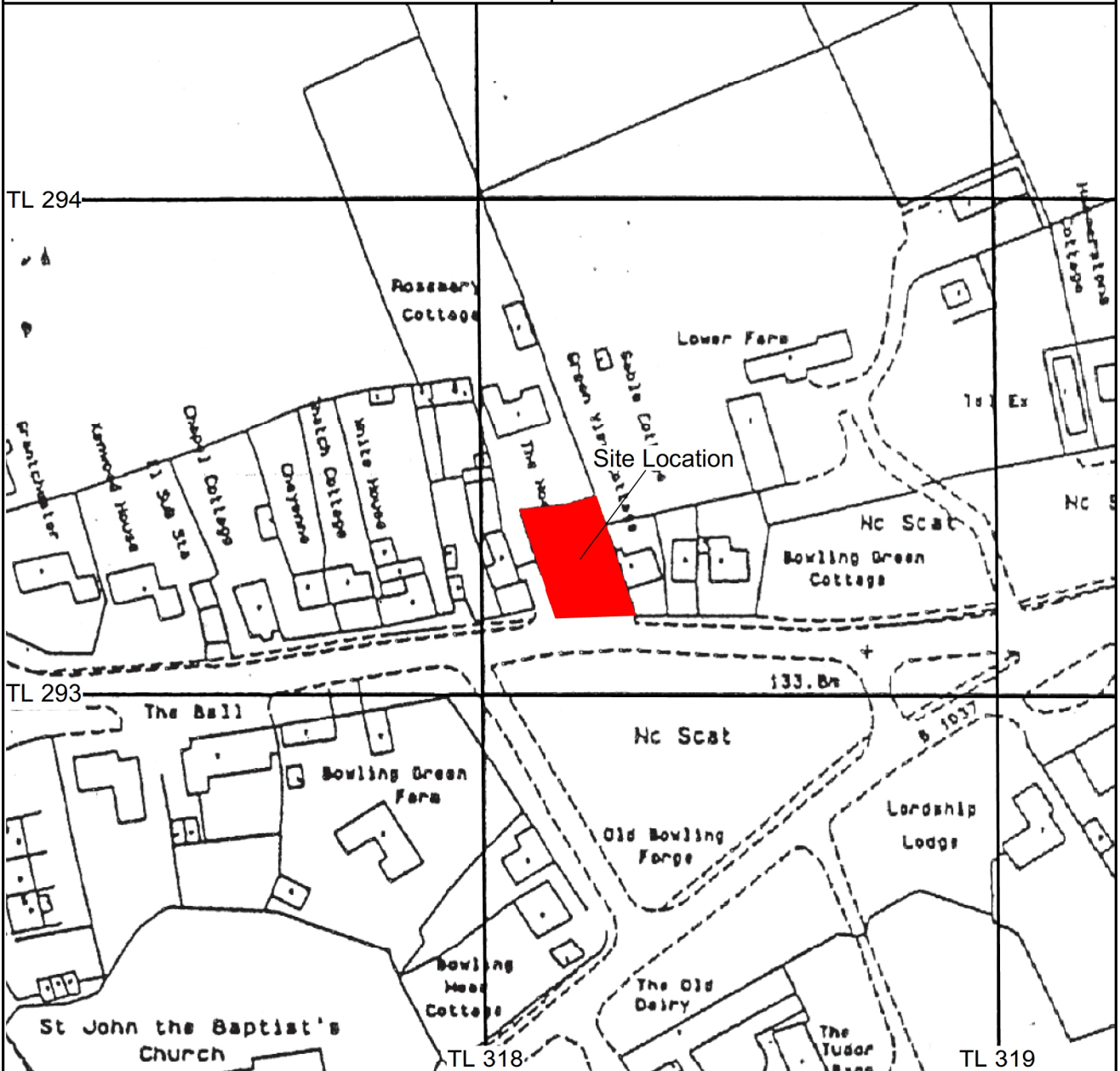
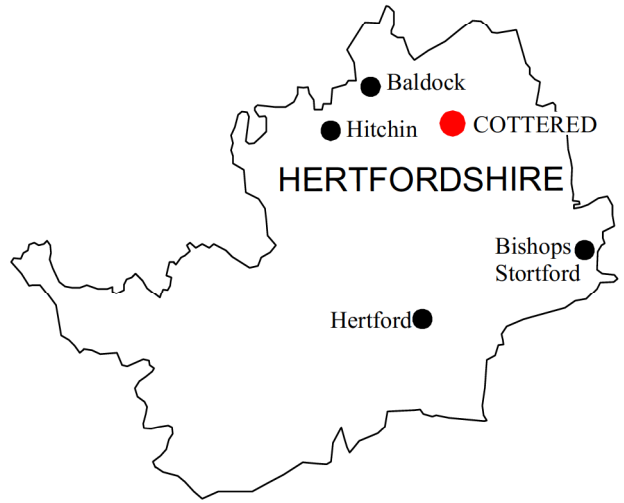
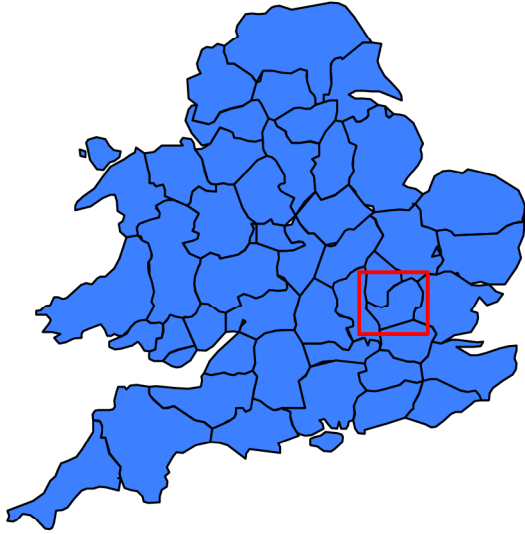
## 6 Illustrations

- Figure 1 ..... Site location
- Figure 2 ..... Former site layout
- Figure 3 ..... Site layout
- 
- Plate 1..... Forecourt and kiosk, prior to demolition, looking north.
- Plate 2.....Forecourt, kiosk and workshop, prior to demolition,  
looking north.
- Plate 3..... Workshop, prior to demolition, and Green View Cottage,  
looking north.
- Plate 4.....Kiosk and petrol pumps, prior to demolition,  
looking northeast.
- Plate 5..... Forecourt and workshop, prior to demolition, looking east.
- Plate 6.....General view of development site, looking north.
- Plate 7..... Typical section showing stratigraphy, looking west.
- Plate 8.....General site view showing groundworks, looking north.

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Cottered Service Station, Baldock Road,  
Cottered, Hertfordshire

HN916

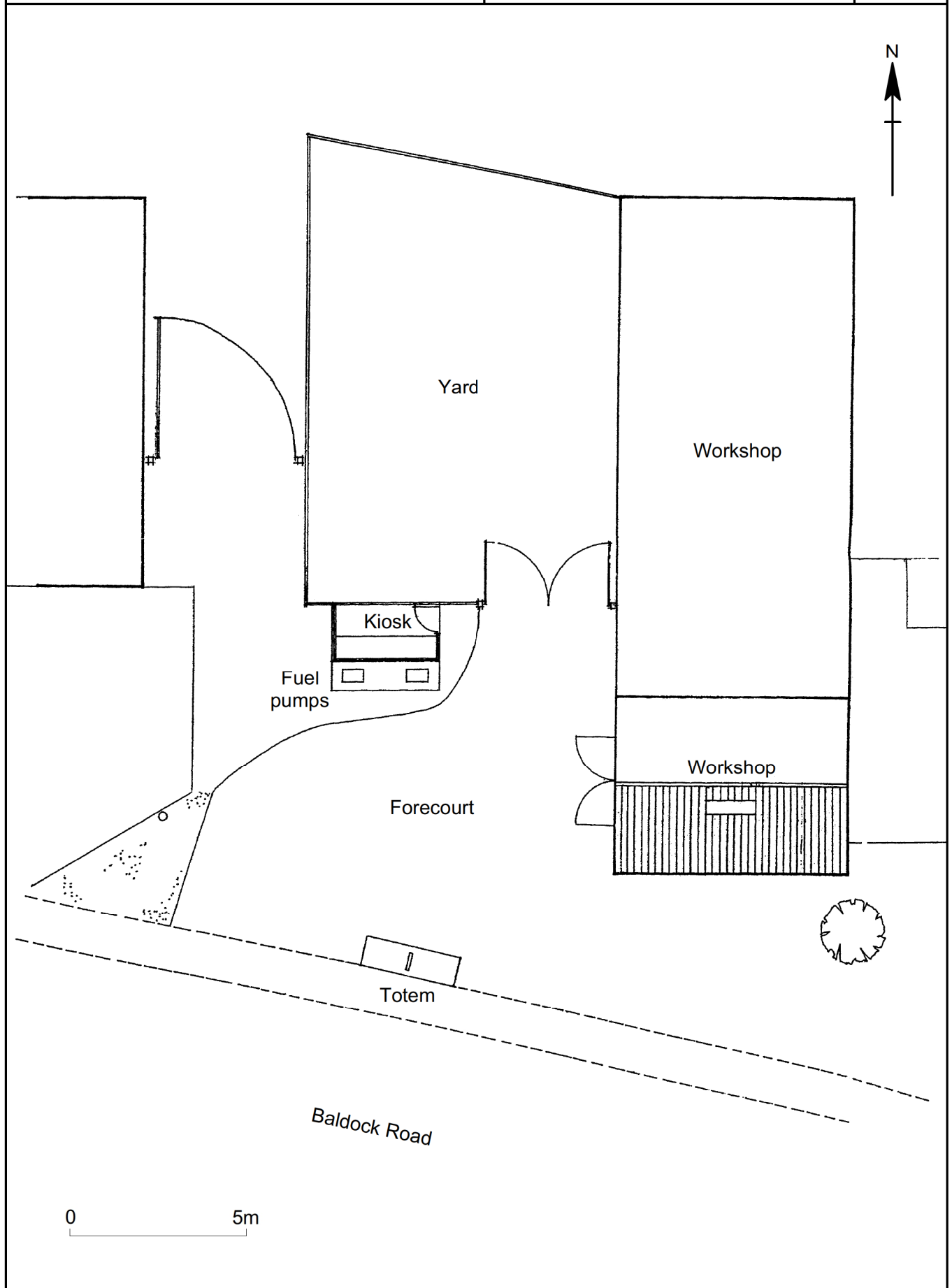


Site Location

Scale 1:1250

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

Figure 1

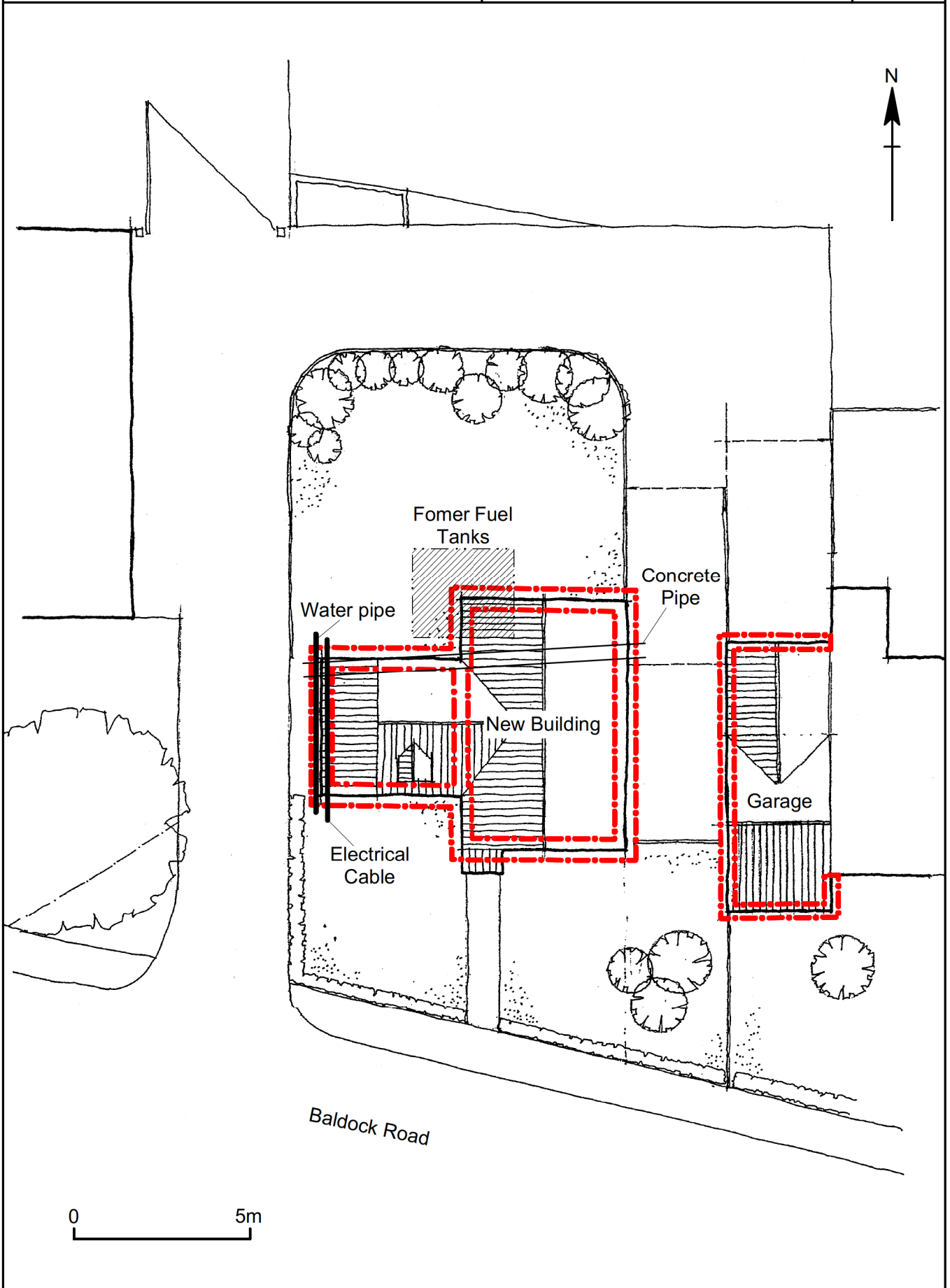


Former Site Layout (Courtesy of Attfield and Jones Architects)

Scale 1:150

Figure 2





Site Layout (Courtesy of Atfield and Jones Architects)

Scale 1:150

Figure 3





Plate 1: Forecourt and kiosk, prior to demolition, looking north.  
(Courtesy of Attfield and Jones Architects)



Plate 2: Forecourt, kiosk and workshop, prior to demolition, looking north.  
(Courtesy of Attfield and Jones Architects)



Plate 3: Workshop, prior to demolition, and Green View Cottage, looking north.  
(Courtesy of Attfield and Jones Architects)



Plate 4: Kiosk and petrol pumps, prior to demolition, looking northeast.  
(Courtesy of Attfield and Jones Architects)



Plate 5: Forecourt and workshop, prior to demolition, looking east.  
(Courtesy of Atfield and Jones Architects)



Plate 6: General view of development site, looking north.

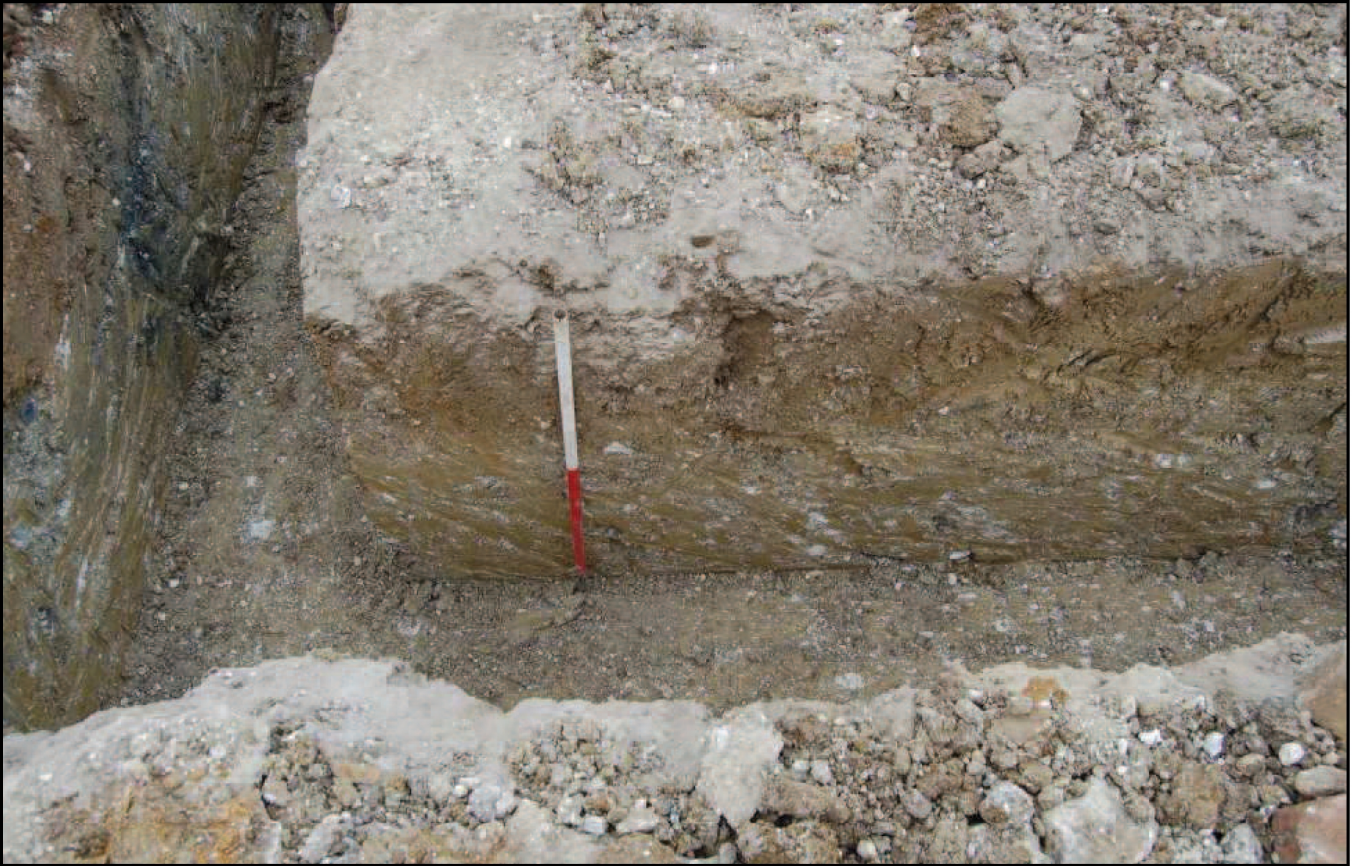


Plate 7: Typical section showing stratigraphy, looking west.



Plate 8: General site view showing groundworks, looking north.

# Appendix

## Oasis Summary Sheet

<b>OASIS ID: heritage1-97022</b>	
<b>Project details</b>	
Project name	Cottered Service Station, Baldock Road
Short description of the project	In response to a condition on the planning permission for development at Cottered Service Station, Baldock Road, Cottered, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developer to undertake a programme of historic building recording and archaeological monitoring of the development groundworks. Due to an oversight by the planning authority, permission to demolish the existing buildings was granted before they could be recorded. With the agreement of the HEU, a retrospective record of the buildings was made. At the time of demolition, Cottered Service Station represent a post-war rural service station that had been remodelled in the 1980s. Village service stations such as this are a rapidly disappearing aspect of the 20th century historic landscape. The monitoring of groundworks revealed no archaeological features or deposits, which could indicate that this part of the village green was only occupied from the later post-medieval period onwards.
Project dates	Start: 13-04-2011 End: 14-04-2011
Previous/future work	No / No
Project code	HN916 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 3 - Retailing
Monument type	None
Significant Finds	None
Methods	'Watching Brief'
Development type	Residential
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 EAST HERTFORDSHIRE COTTERED Cottered Service Station, Baldock Road
Postcode	SG9 9PS
Study area	350 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 31810 29325 51.9463365478 -0.08200709986530 51 56 46 N 000 04 55 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 135m Max: 135m
<b>Project creators</b>	
Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief author	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design author	Heritage Network
Project director	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	James Snee

Funding body	Developer
<b>Project archives</b>	
Physical Archive?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Hertford Museum.
Digital Media ?	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Hertford Museum.
Paper Media?	'Diary','Report'
<b>Project bibliography</b>	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	COTTERED SERVICE STATION, Baldock Road, Cottered, Hertfordshire.
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Snee, J.
Other bibliographic details	Heritage Network Report no. 685
Date	2011
Issuer or publisher	The Heritage Network Ltd
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth Garden City
Description	A4 booklet, comb bound, green cover, 10 pages, 3 Figures, 8 Plates