

Archaeological Watching Brief

**Aldi Store Extension
Former Fyfe Wilson Site, Station Road
Bishop's Stortford
Hertfordshire**

**ASE Project No: 8424
Site Code: LBS 15**

ASE Report No: 2016182



May 2016

Archaeological Watching Brief

**Aldi Store Extension
Former Fyfe Wilson Site, Station Road
Bishop's Stortford
Hertfordshire, CM23 3ED**


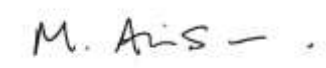
**NGR: 54919 22094
(TL 4919 2094)**

Planning Ref: 3/15/0343/FUL

**ASE Project No: 8424
Site Code: LBS 15**

**ASE Report No: 2016182
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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Aldi Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief at the Aldi Store site, Station Road, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire. The archaeological work comprised monitoring of the demolition of the existing buildings (the former Fyfe Wilson Engineering Works), the removal of stanchion base pits and groundworks for an extension to the existing store and its car park.

The former Fyfe Wilson Engineering Works buildings included a historic maltings range, which was subject to historic building recording in 2007. These had been demolished prior to the commencement of archaeological works.

Natural sands and gravels were recorded in the north and west of the site between 60.83m and 61.13m aOD. Natural Head deposits were observed at around 61.40m aOD; the natural deposits were overlain by modern-made ground.

The foundations of the Maltings building in the east were recorded with flint foundations overlain by red brick. The southern boundary wall and panel shop in the north were also constructed in the same way. During the excavation of the new foundation trenches, the heavily truncated red brick basement walls of the maltster's house were also recorded. The various parts of these buildings appear to be broadly contemporary and probably of late 19th century date.

The site appears to have undergone significant truncation, almost certainly associated with the recently demolished Maltings. No archaeological remains were recorded on site that predate the 19th century.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Aldi Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief and geoarchaeological test pits at the Former Fyfe Wilson Site, Station Road, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire (Figures 1 and 2, NGR: 54919 22094), during site clearance and construction works for a new extension to the existing store and additional car parking.

1.1.2 The site was located on the west side of London Road to the south-east of the centre of Bishop Stortford, and comprised a 0.55ha roughly rectangular plot of land currently occupied by an Aldi foodstore and car park, and the buildings associated with a 19th century maltings (Fig. 1).

1.1.3 The watching brief focussed on the monitoring of the demolition of the existing buildings, below-ground clearance and the excavation of new foundation trenches.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The underlying geology of the site is mapped by the British Geological Survey (BGS) as the Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation. The chalk is overlain by Pleistocene sands and gravels; to the west of the site the gravels are overlain by alluvium.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 A planning application (3/15/0343/FUL) was submitted to East Hertfordshire District Council for the extension of the Aldi foodstore and extension to car park with associated landscaping. As the site lies within an Area of Archaeological Significance (No. 114), the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit (CHEU), in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local planning authority, recommended that an archaeological condition be attached to any grant of planning consent. This advice is based upon guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework, an indicative condition was included:

“No development or groundworks shall take place within the proposed development site until the applicant, or their agents, or their successors in title, have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in writing. The condition will only be considered to be discharged when the planning authority has received and approved an archaeological report of all the required archaeological works, and if appropriate a commitment to publication has been made.”

1.3.2 An Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2015) was prepared prior to the commencement of works. This document set out the methodology

for the works. All works were carried out in accordance with the ClfA standards and guidance (ClfA 2015a, b and c).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The initial aim of the archaeological work was to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition and significance of any surviving remains, and if such were present to sufficiently excavate them to enable their preservation by record.
- 1.4.2 In the event that significant discoveries were made, the post-excavation assessment and reporting phase of the project was to seek to place these in the context of any appropriate research objectives, with particular reference to *Research and Archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties*, *Research agenda and strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000) and *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England*. (Medlycott 2011).

1.5 Scope of Report

- 1.5.1 This report details the results of the archaeological watching brief carried out on the site on the 05 October 2015 and 03 March 2016. The field work was carried out by Kieron Heard and Sarah Ritchie (ASE Archaeologists). The report has been prepared in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2016).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric

- 2.1 Relatively few prehistoric finds have been found in the vicinity of Bishop's Stortford and that part of the Stort Valley. Bronze Age and Iron Age activity is similarly sparse; the main focus of activity lies to the south of the town around Thorley (McDonald 1997).

Roman

- 2.2 The earliest settlement at Bishop's Stortford dates from the Romano-British period, and was located at the point where Stane Street, the Roman road from Braughing to Colchester, crossed the River Stort. The settlement activity appears to have been focussed around the Cannons Close housing estate to the north-west of the site. Excavations revealed evidence of buildings, burials and rubbish pits dating from the 1st to 4th centuries (Hunns 2000). Evidence suggests that a small urban settlement lay either side of the road.

Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

- 2.3 The Anglo-Saxon settlement was centred around North Street, High Street and Market Street to the north-west of the site. Following the Norman Conquest in 1066, Edith the Fair was effectively dispossessed of her Bishop's Stortford lands and William I sold the manor to William, Bishop of London, who bought several estates from the new King and retained the manor until 1868 (Page 1912, 296).
- 2.4 Throughout the medieval period, Bishop's Stortford developed into a thriving commercial centre, attested by a large number of inns in the town. From the 15th century onwards, a successful tanning and leather industry developed rapidly, centred on Water Lane to the north of the site.

Post-medieval and Modern

- 2.5 Bishop's Stortford remained an important town during the post-medieval period. Communications links were drastically improved by the opening of the Stort Navigation in 1769 which linked Bishop's Stortford with London via the Lea Navigation. This provided a direct link to the markets of London and allowed the growth in the brewing and malting industries during the 18th and 19th century.
- 2.6 The maltings on the site have been designated as an Area of Archaeological Significance (No. 114) by the local authority.
- 2.7 The following information is taken from the site background presented in the previous historic building recording report (Letch 2007); for more information refer to that document. No evidence of land use was recorded prior to the development of the maltings; prior to the development of the railway and maltings the site was undeveloped.
- 2.8 Stortford was a major malting centre for the London brewing market. Malthouses were located close to sites where raw materials and finished goods could be transported effectively, i.e. the Stort Navigation, railway and roads.

- 2.9 The malting is believed to have been built in the mid-19th century on a prime site close to the railway station, around the time when the Cambridge to London railway line was constructed (1842). Craven & Co.'s Commercial Directory of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire of 1854 list several malthouses within Stortford. Joshua Miller & Son are mentioned as maltsters at the railway station and South Street, situated to the west of the station/navigation and there is no reference to maltings in Station Road. In later directories Miller & Son are described as being at the railway depot and opposite the station, which could be a reference to the Fyfe Wilson site, but is not specific enough. The disparity between the few maltings mentioned in the trades directories and the many more that lay along the lines of the Stort Navigation and railway line seems perplexing at first. However, many may have been owned and used by the London breweries whose business was assured and therefore did not need to pay to advertise in the directories.
- 2.10 The first edition OS map of 1879-83 shows the malthouse range alongside a second structure, latterly the Fyfe Wilson offices, standing between it and the railway line. The second structure may have been the maltster's cottage, which still stands today. The following map, the OS second edition of 1898, is drawn to a larger scale and therefore shows greater detail. By this time other buildings have been added around the house. Two pumps are indicated outside the house and barley store. Water was vital in malting to start the grain germinating. Another building has been built along the Station Road frontage, which has now become part of the garage to the east and would appear to lie within the original malthouse boundary that stretched from the railway to London Road to the east.
- 2.11 In 1921 the main structures were absorbed into the nascent Fyfe Wilson mechanical and electrical engineering works. The main range, containing grain and malt stores, germinating floors and kiln, was heavily altered to create workshops, offices and large open working areas for overhead cranes. Floors, kilns, windows and internal partitions were removed in the process. Fyfe Wilson left the site in 2002 for a new site on Raynham Hill and since then the site has been unoccupied.

Previous archaeological work on site

- 2.12 The 2007 historic building record, in addition to describing the layout of the maltings complex, identified areas of flint walling and a cobbled yard surface that were speculated to relate to the occupation of the site before the malting was established. In particular, the flint walls seen at the base of the west wall of the malting and southern boundary wall were suggested to have marked former yard divisions that were later incorporated into the maltings complex (Letch 2007).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Watching Brief Methodology

3.1.1 The work comprised the monitoring of part of the demolition of the main buildings. Most of the buildings had already been demolished by before monitoring started; however the removal of a number of concrete stanchions was observed. Some of the walls of the previous building were still intact enough for recording. Subsequent work comprised the monitoring of the excavation of new foundation trenches.

3.1.2 Spoil from the work was visually scanned for finds.

3.1.3 All deposits were recorded using standard ASE recording sheets, with colours recorded by visual inspection.

3.1.4 A digital photographic record was taken of the work.

3.2 Site Archive

3.2.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at Bishops Stortford Museum in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	9
No. of files/paper record	1
Photographs	70

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 General

4.1.1 Much of the demolition works had been undertaken and the maltings building reduced more or less to ground level prior to the commencement of archaeological monitoring, with demolition debris used to level the site. The remains of the eastern wall of the maltings as well as the kiln room wall were recorded, as were the southern boundary wall and part of the panel shop. The excavation of foundation trenches, for the supermarket extension in the north-west of the site, facilitated observation of the cellar of the Maltster's House. Groundworks for the removal of three substantial concrete stanchions located in the middle of the site resulted in some limited exposure of underlying deposits.

4.1.2 The results of the watching brief on the groundworks are described below, with recorded context information presented in Table 2. The various areas and structural features alluded to are located on Figure 2.

Context	Type	Description	Length m	Width m	Thickness m
001	Layer	Modern made ground	52.00	30.00	0.35-0.42
002	Layer	Natural Head deposits	52.00	30.00	-
003	Masonry	Eastern boundary wall	18.00	0.45	0.80-0.90
004	Masonry	Kiln room walls	5.50	0.40	0.92
005	Masonry	Southern boundary wall	7.50	0.46	1.10
006	Masonry	Panel shop wall	3.20	0.44	0.20
007	Layer	Modern crushed concrete	22.00	30.00	1.00
008	Masonry	Maltster's House walls	8.20	1.15	2.00
009	Layer	Natural gravels	25.00	30.00	-

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

4.2 Stanchion removal

4.2.1 Three concrete stanchions were mechanically removed during the monitoring. The stanchions, which would have supported a loading bay roof, each measured 1.20m x 0.60m x 0.80m. The excavations to remove them revealed natural Head deposits comprising yellow brown sandy silt with occasional gravel [002] overlain by between 0.35m and 0.42m of dark grey rubbly silt modern made-ground [001]. No archaeological remains were exposed.

4.3 Former Maltings

- 4.3.1 Within the footprint of the former maltings, ground slabs (and the timber floor of the malt store) had been removed, exposing disturbed deposits of natural sandy silt with occasional gravel [002] overlain by modern made-ground [001].
- 4.3.2 The east wall of the maltings [003] still stood to the original ground level, along the eastern boundary of the site. Demolition of the building had removed some of the internal facing from this wall, allowing the fabric to be recorded.
- 4.3.3 Within the germinating floor room six courses of red brick (unfrogged, average 220mm x 106mm x 64mm) were laid in English bond. There was a levelling course of thin, red tiles at the base of the brick wall. Below this the wall was constructed of random coursed, mortared flint cobbles/nodules, measuring 50–120mm. This part of the wall was 0.50m high above the level of the concrete floor; it was identical to the west wall of the same building, as shown in Plate 15 of the Historic Building Record (Letch 2007). Enough of the fabric of the east wall was exposed to make it clear that the same construction method (brick over flint) was used throughout this part of the building range. It seems unlikely therefore that the flint walling was part of a pre-existing building or yard, as suggested in the Historic Building Record. The east wall was heavily rendered with at least two layers of mortar/plaster with a combined thickness of 50–60mm.
- 4.3.4 A test pit (1.00m x 0.60m) was hand-dug against the base of the east wall of the germinating floor building to examine its foundation. This revealed the same relatively fair-faced construction of mortared flints (50–120mm) to 0.55m below the floor slab. At this depth the wall stepped out 80–90mm and the flints were larger (up to c.200mm). The base of the wall was not seen at this location; however, during the mechanical excavation of a stanchion base adjacent to the west wall of the germinating floor building the same stepped construction was seen to bottom out at approximately 0.80m–0.90m below floor level.
- 4.3.5 There was no evidence for a construction cut for the eastern foundation; rather, it appeared that made-ground [001] had been dumped against the face of the foundation. This is in accordance with the statement in the Historic Building record (Letch 2007) that the eastern part of the malting range was terraced into the natural east-west slope.
- 4.3.6 The construction of the kiln room walls [004] was identical to that seen in the germinating floor, consisting of six surviving courses of brick over 0.55m of coursed flint, to floor level. Small portions of the southern boundary wall and Panel shop were observed but could not be recorded; they were constructed in the same method as previously described.

4.4 Southern Boundary Wall

- 4.4.1 As stated in the Historic Building Record (Letch 2007), the southern boundary wall [005] consisted of red brick over flint construction. This was observed at the west end of the boundary wall (Figure 2) where the top of

the flint coursing was just above ground level and extended to a depth of at least 1.10m, as seen on the south side of the wall where ground level was much lower.

4.5 Panel Shop Building

- 4.5.1 The former panel shop in the north of the site was demolished to ground level prior to the site visit. Some of the footings for this building [006] were partially seen, these were again of flint construction, painted black on their external faces, and were at least 0.20m in height.

4.6 New Foundation Trenches and Maltster's House

- 4.6.1 A series of foundation trenches for an extension to the supermarket building were monitored in the north-east of the site. These revealed natural yellow sands and gravels [009], the top of which was encountered at between 60.83m and 61.13m aOD. In the eastern portion of the foundation trenches, natural head deposits [002] were recorded at 61.40m aOD.
- 4.6.2 The heavily truncated remains of the cellar of the Maltster's House [008] were recorded within the foundation trenches; the remains comprised two portions of cellar wall constructed from unfrogged red brick bonded with lime mortar in English bond. The walls were recorded to 2.00m in height and were only recorded in section. The cellar interior was largely filled with demolition rubble and its full extents were not observed.
- 4.6.3 The remains were overlain by modern made ground [001] around 1.20m in thickness. A deposit of modern crushed concrete and brick [007] was recorded in the western corner of the site with a thickness of at least 1.00m.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence

- 5.1.1 Natural gravels were recorded in the north and west of the site between 60.83m and 61.13m aOD. Natural Head deposits were recorded within the areas of the removed stanchions at 61.40m aOD. The natural deposits were overlain by between 0.35m and 1.20m of modern made ground. Deposits of crushed brick and concrete were recorded in the north-west of the site.
- 5.1.2 The eastern wall of the maltings as well as the kiln room wall was recorded, as were the southern boundary wall and part of the panel shop. All foundations were constructed from unfrogged red brick with the lower portion of the wall, as well as the foundation, made from flint.
- 5.1.3 Within the new foundation trenches, parts of the cellar walls of the Maltster's House were also recorded. These were again constructed from unfrogged red brick with lime mortar. The deposit sequence outside of the cellar was not established.

5.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts

- 5.2.1 The watching brief established that much of the site had been previously truncated, with modern-made ground overlying the natural deposits. Very heavy truncation had occurred in the locations of concrete stanchions and the existing building foundations.

5.3 Archaeological Remains by Period

- 5.3.1 No archaeological remains were identified that predate the 19th century maltings complex.
- 5.3.2 The use of flint coursing for lower walls and foundations was seen in the central part of the malting range (germinating floor and kiln room), southern boundary wall and panel shop. It is probable therefore that these elements of the malting complex were broadly contemporary.
- 5.3.3 The Historic Building Record (Letch 2007) describes weatherboarding to the southern face of the south wall of the barley store, visible from within the germinating floor building. Although it is not clearly stated in the earlier report, this must indicate that the germinating floor building was constructed as a southern extension to the barley store.
- 5.3.4 The watching brief has shown that the malt store seems to have been built against the south end of the germinating floor/kiln room building. A reappraisal of the cartographic evidence suggests that this occurred between 1874 and 1898; certainly the map evidence shows that the malting range was extended to the south between the times of the First Edition and Second Edition Ordnance Survey 25" maps (*ibid.*).
- 5.3.4 The remains of the Maltster's House, while heavily truncated, were sufficiently extant to suggest a late 19th century date as well.

5.4 Consideration of research aims

- 5.4.1 The work established the absence of archaeological remains predating the maltings on site. The various elements of the maltings building, panel shop and boundary walls, appear to be broadly contemporary probably being built between 1874 and 1898.

5.5 Conclusions

- 5.5.1 No archaeological evidence, apart from the former maltings buildings, was recorded within the groundworks subject to watching brief within this site.
- 5.5.2 While the observed building remains generally accorded with the findings of the earlier HBR report (Letch 2007), it has been established that the use of flint in the construction of the lower walls and foundations was widespread across the maltings. Their earlier interpretation as preceding structural features incorporated into the maltings now seems unlikely.

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HER Summary

Site Code	LBS 15				
Identification Name and Address	The Former Fyfe Wilson Site (Aldi Store Extension), Station Road, Bishops Stortford				
County, District &/or Borough	Hertfordshire				
OS Grid Refs.	54919 22094				
Geology	Head deposits				
Arch. South-East Project Number	8424				
Type of Fieldwork			Watching Brief		
Type of Site		Shallow Urban			
Dates of Fieldwork	05-10-2015 and 03-03-2016				
Sponsor/Client	Aldi Ltd				
Project Manager	Andy Leonard				
Project Supervisor	Kieron Heard & Sarah Ritchie				
Period Summary					
			Post-Medieval		
<p>Summary</p> <p>The archaeological work comprised monitoring of the demolition of the existing buildings, the removal of stanchion bases and excavation of new foundations for an extension to the Aldi Store and creation of additional car parking.</p> <p>The site was formerly occupied by the Fyfe Wilson Engineering Works buildings, which included a historic maltings range (recorded in 2007). These had been demolished prior to the commencement of archaeological works.</p> <p>Natural sands and gravels were recorded in the west and south of the site between 60.83m and 61.13m aOD. Natural Head deposits were observed at around 61.40m aOD; the natural deposits were overlain by modern made ground. The foundations of the maltings building in the east were recorded with flint foundations overlain by red brick. The southern boundary wall and panel shop in the north were also constructed in the same way. During the excavation of the new foundation trenches, the heavily truncated red brick basement walls of the maltster's house were also recorded. The various parts of these buildings appear to be broadly contemporary and probably of late 19th century date.</p> <p>Apart from the maltings foundations no archaeological remains were recorded on site. The site appears to have undergone significant truncation almost certainly associated with the recently demolished maltings.</p>					

OASIS Form

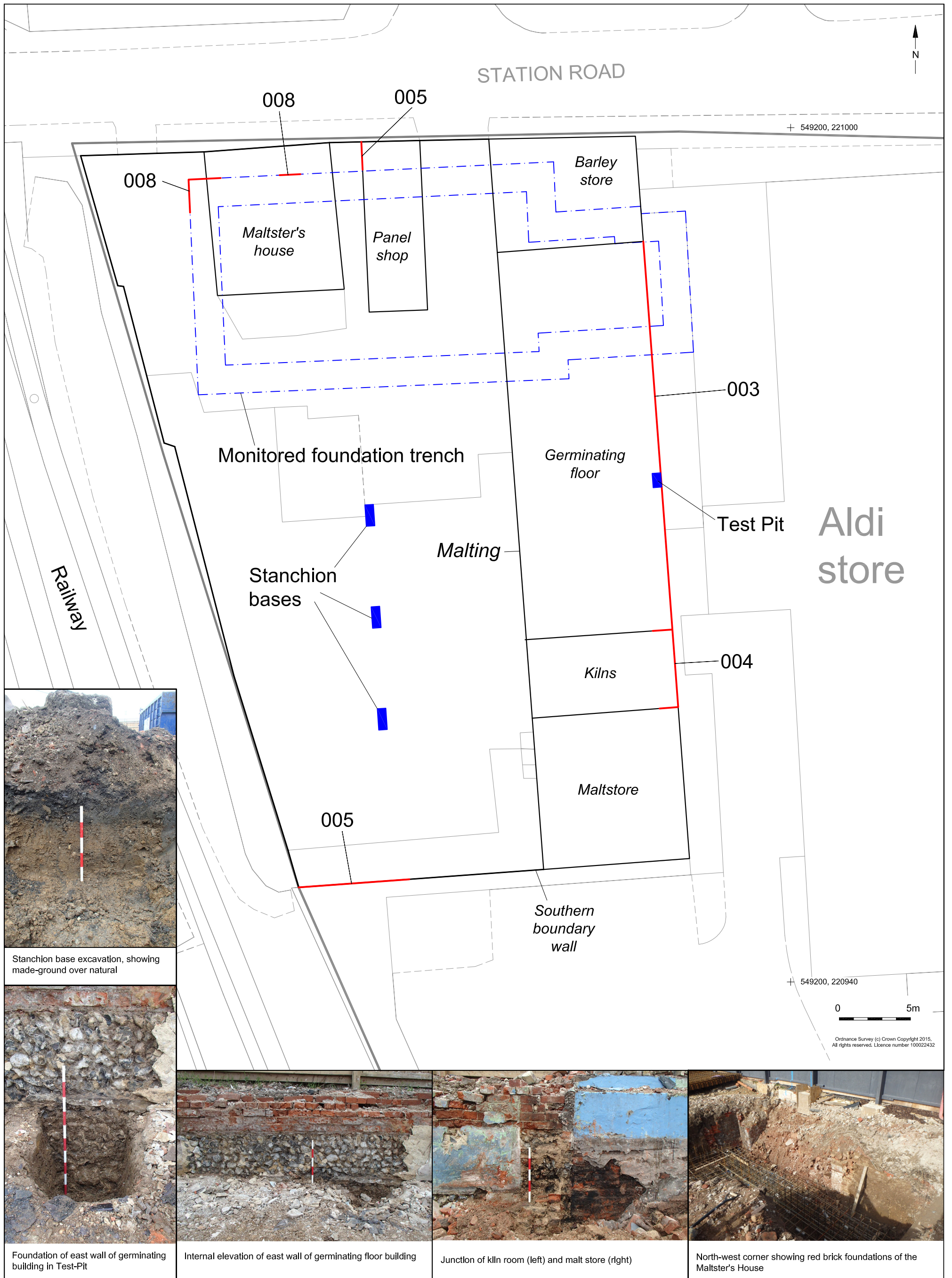
OASIS ID: archaeol6-225648	
Project details	
Project name	Former Fyfe Wilson site (Aldi extension), Bishops Stortford
Short description of the project	The archaeological work comprised monitoring of the demolition of the existing buildings, the excavation of stanchion base pits and of new foundations. Natural sands and gravels were recorded in the west and south of the site between 60.83m and 61.13m aOD. Natural Head deposits were observed at around 61.40m aOD; the natural deposits were overlain by modern made ground. The foundations of the maltings building in the east were recorded with flint foundations overlain by red brick. The southern boundary wall and panel shop in the north were also constructed in the same way. During the excavation of the new foundation trenches, the heavily truncated red brick basement walls of the maltster's house were also recorded. The various parts of these buildings appear to be broadly contemporary and probably of late 19th century date. Apart from the maltings foundations no archaeological remains were recorded on site. The site appears to have undergone significant truncation almost certainly associated with the recently demolished maltings.
Project dates	Start: 05-10-2015 End: 03-03-2016
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Associated project reference codes	LBS 15 - HER event no. 8424 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Monument type	MALTINGS BUILDING Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE EAST HERTFORDSHIRE BISHOPS STORTFORD Former Fyfe Wilson site (Aldi Supermarket), Station Road
Postcode	CM23 3EE
Study area	5685 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 4919 2094 51.866593667225 0.167077740535 51 51 59 N 000 10 01 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 60.83m Max: 61.4m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Hertfordshire County Council

Project design originator	ASE
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard/Dan Swift
Project supervisor	Kieron Heard
Project supervisor	Sarah Ritchie
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Aldi Ltd
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Bishops Stortford
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Bishops Stortford
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Plan", "Report"
Project bibliography	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Watching Brief Report. The Former Fyfe Wilson Site, Station Road, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire
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© Archaeology South-East		Aldi, London Road, Bishops Stortford		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 8424	May 2016	Site location		
Report No:	Drawn by: APL			



© Archaeology South-East		Aldi, London Road, Bishops Stortford	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 8424	May 2016	Location of areas of archaeological monitoring	
Report Ref:	Drawn by: APL		

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