BT UNDERGROUNDING SCHEME

GORHAMBURY ESTATE, ST ALBANS, HERTFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski MA (field work & report)		
NGR: TL 1236 0836 Report No. 3868		
District: St Albans	Site Code: AS1417	
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. P4159	
Signed:	Date: July 2011	

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1 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD DATA (HER)

OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details		
Project name Gorhambury Estate, St Albans, He Undergrounding Scheme	rtfordshire.	BT

In June 2011 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and recording at Gorhambury Estate, St Albans, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 1236 0836). The monitoring was commissioned by Strutt & Parker LLP – Land Management in compliance with a requirement of St Albans City & District Council District Archaeologist (SADC), as part of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. The monitoring was conducted during the groundworks for underground BT cables.

The site lies within a farm complex and Gorhambury residential estate just outside of St Albans, c.3km north-west of the town centre. It lies to the immediate west and north-west of Roman Verulamium with Watling Street crossing the estate north-west/south-east. It is also situated within an estate dating to the medieval period. Therefore the site had a potential for Romano-British, medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains.

In the event the monitoring revealed an undated archaeological feature, possibly a ditch.

Project dates (fieldwork)	06-08, 10/06	5/2011		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N		e work (Y/N/?)	N
P. number	4159	Site c		AS 1417
1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1				
Type of project	Archaeologi	cai Moi	nitoring and Reco	ording
Site status	-			
Current land use	Farm yard a	nd aral	ole fields	
Planned development	Undergroun	ding of	BT cables	
Main features (+dates)	One undated	d ?ditcl	1	
Significant finds (+dates)	-			
Project location				
County/ District/ Parish	Hertfordshire	Э	St Albans	St Albans
HER/ SMR for area	Hertfordshire HER			
Post code (if known)	AL3 6AF			
Area of site	-			
NGR	TL1236 0836			
Height AOD (min/max)	c. 90m AOD			
Project creators				
Brief issued by	St Albans D	istrict C	Council	
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Zbigniew Pozorski			
Funded by	Gorhambury Estate			
Full title	Gorhambury Estate, St Albans, Hertfordshire. BT			
	Undergrounding Scheme. Archaeological Monitoring and			
	Recording			
Authors	Pozorski, Z.			
Report no.	3868			
Date (of report)	July 2011			

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SUMMARY

In June 2011 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and recording at Gorhambury Estate, St Albans, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 1236 0836). The monitoring was commissioned by Strutt & Parker LLP – Land Management in compliance with a requirement of St Albans City & District Council District Archaeologist (SADC) and HCC Historic Environment Unit, as part of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. The monitoring was conducted during the groundworks for underground BT cables.

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In the event the monitoring revealed an undated archaeological feature, possibly a ditch.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In June 2011 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and recording at Gorhambury Estate, St Albans, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 1236 0836; Figs. 1 & 2). The monitoring was commissioned by Strutt & Parker LLP Land Management on behalf of the Gorhambury Estate in compliance with a requirement of St Albans City & District Council District Archaeologist (SADC) and HCC Historic Environment Unit (HCC HEU), as part of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. The monitoring was conducted during the groundworks for underground BT cables.
- 1.2 The monitoring was undertaken in accordance with an advice from SADC, and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 08/11/2010), and approved by Kate Batt of HCC HEU. The project conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for An Archaeological Watching Brief (revised 2008), as well as the document Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003).

- 1.3 The objectives of the project of archaeological monitoring and recording were:
- to ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to affect buried archaeological remains;
- to secure the adequate recording of any archaeological remains revealed by the development programme; and
- to secure the analysis, interpretation, publication (if required), long-term conservation and storage of the project archive.

Planning policy context

1.4 Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5; 2010) states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The Planning Policy Statement aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. It aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. It states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment and to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past, and to make this publicly available, should be taken, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

- 2.1 The site lies within the Maynes Farm complex and is situated approximately 1.5km west of the north-western suburbs of St Albans and c.3km to the north-west of the historic town centre. It is also located within the Verulam estate, which is centred on the Grade II* listed Gorhambury House located 1.1km to the south-west of the site. Maynes Farm lies in a relatively open area of countryside bounded by the A4147 Hemel Hempstead Road to the south and south-east, the A5183 Redbourn Road to the north-east and the M1 and M10 motorways to the west.
- 2.2 The access to the site is via an estate road from the south-east which leads to Gorhambury from the A4147 Hemel Hempstead Road (Fig. 1). The farm is a part of larger estate in Gorhambury, known as Verulam. The farm complex is situated on the northern frontage of the estate road and the farmhouse itself stands towards the north-eastern edge of the complex, which also includes two Grade II listed barns. Historic building recording was conducted by AS on the farm buildings (Collins *et al* 2008).

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

- 3.1 The site is located within a relatively undeveloped and open area of countryside (Fig. 1). The surrounding area is overwhelmingly agricultural, comprising large, irregularly shaped arable fields and characterised by mixed woodland including Prae Wood 1km to the south-south-west. The north-west to south-east aligned course of the River Ver lies 500m to the east of the site, whilst a series of fish ponds lies 450m to the north.
- 3.2 The site lies at approximately 90m AOD, with the surrounding relief sloping down slightly to the east. The solid geology for the area consists of upper cretaceous chalk overlain by clay with flint drift geology (British Geological Survey 1978). The site also lies upon soils of the Batcombe association described as fine silty over clayey and fine loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric

- 4.1 The location of St Albans would have been conducive to prehistoric settlement due to its fertile soils and proximity to the River Ver. Neolithic flints have been discovered in the surrounding area of the city with small amounts of Bronze Age material also recovered. St Albans was substantially occupied in the Iron Age period in the area of Prae Wood, which lies 1km to the south-south-west of the site and which is the site of the Iron Age settlement; the precursor to *Verulamium* Roman town. Despite the probable occupation of St Albans throughout the majority of the prehistoric period, few excavations in the surrounding area have yielded remains earlier than the Iron Age. It is possible that earlier archaeology was destroyed by the intense Roman, medieval and post-medieval development of the town which may distort the true picture of the town's early history.
- 4.2 Prehistoric remains from the vicinity of the site comprise only two sections of a prehistoric earthwork known as Devil's Ditch Dyke, which lies on a west-south-west to east-north-east alignment adjacent to Maynes Farm and within 100m of the site (HERs 53 & 14607). Although undated, the ditch, bank and counterscarp of Devil's Ditch Dyke are thought to date to the Iron Age, and was possibly associated with the Iron Age settlement within Prae Wood.

Romano-British

4.3 At its height, the Roman town of *Verulamium* consisted of the third largest settlement in Britain (Pevsner & Cherry 1997). It was founded in AD 50, yet reputedly destroyed by Queen Boudicca ten years later. It became one of Britain's largest Roman centres with a forum basilica complex (opened in AD 79), an amphitheatre and public bathhouses all situated to the south-west of modern St Albans, with the important communication route of Watling

Street tunning through the centre. There was no known fort in the town and the town walls were not built until the 2nd century AD. Much of *Verulamium* was destroyed by fire in AD 155. The remains of the town are known form over 80 hectares enclosed within 3rd century city walls. Extensive archaeological work has taken place within *Verulamium* and has revealed numerous remains including Romano-Celtic temples, theatre, kilns, sewers, buildings, timber-framed shops, tiled floors, furnaces, cobbled tracks, roads and city walls (Pevsner & Cherry 1997; Niblett & Thompson 2005).

4.4 Romano-British remains in the area surrounding the site include the original course of Watling Street to the north-west of the Chester Gate and 300m to the east of the site (HERs 4608 & 14625). The section of Watling Street through the Verulam estate remained in use as a main highway until Verulam Road was opened in 1824 and survives well in cropmarks. Possible Roman structure have also been identified 100m to the south-east and 150m to the east of the site (HERs 4999 & 14540).

Anglo-Saxon

By the 8th century, the Saxon town of St.Albans/Verulamium was 4.5 known as Watlingchester or Verulamchester and was described by the historian Bede in AD 730 as containing the 'beautiful church worthy of Alban's martyrdom (St Albans Archaeology & History website). The location of the Benedictine Abbey of St Alban was thought to have been the spot where the Christian martyr, Alban was executed in approximately 324 AD. St. Albans Abbey was founded in AD 793 by King Offa of Mercia, although the site lay within the manor of Kingsbury, which belonged to the Saxon kings and was bought by Alfric before he became abbot of St. Albans (Page 1912). The Kingsbury burh was possibly located to the north of the Abbey. Although the manor of Kingsbury was not listed in the Domesday Book of 1086, it is thought that the 'pond for fish' listed in the town of St Albans' entry refers to Alfric's large fishpond known as 'Fischpol' (Page 1912). St Albans School, a public school which occupies a site to the west of the Abbey and which includes the 14th century Abbey Gateway, was founded in AD 948.

Medieval

4.6 Medieval St Albans soon took the form recognisable today with settlement moving across the River Ver from the Roman city to the Abbey precincts and spreading further away from there up the hill to the north and east. By 1086, the town of St Albans incorporated 10 hides, land for 16 ploughs, a park for woodland beasts and three mills valued at 40s and the town had its population of 500 people. In AD 1077, Paul of Caen, the first Norman Abbot, began rebuilding the Abbey of St Albans (St Albans Archaeology & History website). St. Peter's Street, High Street, Market Place, Holywell Street and Fishpool Street were probably all well established in roughly their present positions by the 11th century. The medieval period also saw the division of the town into four wards, roughly corresponding to the built-up areas of the four modern parishes of St Stephen, St Michael, St Peter and the Abbey of St Alban itself. These were each given a constable of the

peace and two chief pledges to maintain order by Abbott Richard de Wallingford (1260 – 1291). By 1327 the boundaries of the borough had been formerly recorded although it is likely that they had already been determined well before then. The Priory was dissolved in 1539 and the Abbey Church became the parish church when it was bought by the local people in 1553 (Page 1912).

4.7 The Maynes Farm complex is known to incorporate a Grade II listed timber-framed barn dating to the medieval period and which was one of a group apparently commissioned by abbot John Moot in the late 14th century (HER 15337). St Mary de Prae Church was constructed 450m to the southeast of the site as a house for leprous women in 1194, and later became Benedictine nunnery in 1328 (HERs 4075 & 14610). A series of fish ponds lies 450m to the north and are thought to date to the medieval period (HER 2024), as is the course of Back Lane to the south-east (HER 14631).

Post-medieval & modern

- 4.8 Post-medieval development of the town saw the construction of roads, specifically catering to the coaching trade, as St. Albans formed the first stop on the coaching route north from London. It accounts for town's numerous inns, many dating from Tudor times. A short distance to the south-east of the present site the Kingsbury Brewery was built in 1827 the buildings of which remain virtually unaltered today (HER 5389). Later development saw the steady expansion of various industries such as printing, engineering, clothing and hat manufacture, while the construction of the railway in 1858 allowed an increase in communication and trade. The Abbey Church was granted a Cathedral status and the town received a City charter in 1877. In the inter-war years it became a popular centre for the electronics industry. After the World War II the town expanded significantly as it took a part in the post-War redistribution of population out of London (St Albans Archaeology & History website).
- 4.9 The Verulam estate consisted of the Saxon and medieval manor of Westwick, but was not significantly developed until the post-medieval period, when the estate was conveyed to Sir Nicholas Bacon in 1560 (Page 1908). Verulam House was built by Sir Francis Bacon approximately 250m to the north of the site, but was demolished by 1663 and is known only from a sketch by Aubrey (HER 9502). Three subsequent notable houses were constructed at Gorhambury, including the extant Grade II* listed Gorhambury House located 1.1km to the south-west of the site, and which dates to 1784 (Page 1912). The fish ponds known as the Pondyards located 450m to the north of the site were developed to ensure a water supply to Old Gorhambury (HER 14613).

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1. The archaeological monitoring comprised the observation of all groundworks, the inspection of the subsoil and natural deposits for

archaeological features and the examination of spoil heaps and the recording of soil profiles. Archaeological features and deposits were recorded using *proforma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was checked for finds and the excavated area was scanned by metal detector.

5.2 The principal element monitored was the mechanically-excavated trench for BT cables. The trench extended across the farm complex from north-east, around the buildings with connecting extensions and to the west (Fig. 2). Seven rectangular pits (1.50m x 1.50m) were also excavated along the trench to facilitate cable joint boxes. The trench was c. 0.70m wide and c. 0.80 – 1m deep.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

6.1 The monitoring revealed one archaeological feature (Figs.2-3).

F1003 was probably a linear feature (0.70+ x 0.85 x 0.60m+; DP 2) located in the north-eastern part of the trench. It had irregular sides and its base was not revealed. Its fill, L1004, was a mid to dark grey, friable, silty sand. No finds were present within this deposit. F1003 may have been a ditch aligned west-north-west/east-south-east.

6.2 Deposits located within the area of investigation were recorded in sample sections shown below.

NE part of the trench. Sample section 1, NW facing (DP 3)		
0.00 = 90.23m AOD		
0.00 - 0.14m	L1000 Topsoil. Mid grey, soft, sandy silt.	
0.14 - 0.33m	L1001	Subsoil. Mid orange yellow, friable, silty sand with
		frequent gravel.
0.33m+	L1002	Natural. Orange light brown, loose, silty gravel and
		locally light to mid orange brown, compact, clay.

Central part of the trench. Sample section 2, SW facing (DP 6) 0.00 = 90.31m AOD		
0.00 - 0.10m	L1000	Tarmac. Surface of access road.
0.10 - 0.26m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.26m+	L1002	Natural gravel. As above.

W part of the trench. Sample section 3, N facing (DP 10) 0.00 = 90.46m AOD		
0.00 - 0.28m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.28 - 0.44m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.44m+	L1002	Natural gravel. As above.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds during the programme of archaeological monitoring and recording.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

- 8.1 The site was commonly overlain by Topsoil L1000, a mid grey, soft, sandy silt (0.15 0.30 m thick). It overlay Subsoil L1001, a mid orange yellow, friable, silty sand with frequent gravel (0.10 0.20 m thick).
- 8.2 The natural geology, L1002, was present at 0.25 0.50m below existing ground level and comprised an orangey light brown, loose, silty gravel and locally light to mid orangey brown, compact, clay.

9 DISCUSSION

- 9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for Romano-British archaeology, as well as the medieval and later remains. It lies to the immediate west and north-west of Roman Verulamium with Watling Street crossing the estate north-west/south-east. It is also situated within an estate dating to the medieval period.
- 9.2 Despite the high potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site, in the event only one feature was revealed (Ditch F1003). This possible ditch remains undated due to a lack of finds. No indication of any previous development of the site was identified except the modern road layout. Little evidence of previous truncation appeared to have taken place. No residual finds were recovered.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at St Albans Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Mr Stuart Gray of Strutt & Parker LLP – Land Management for commissioning the project on behalf of the Gorhambury Estate.

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Kate Batt of HCC Historic Environment Unit and Mr Simon West of St Albans City and District Council.

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Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW), 1983, Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales. SSEW, Harpenden

APPENDIX 1 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD DATA (HER)

The following sites are those that lie within a 1km radius of the site. The table has been compiled from data held by the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER).

HER	NGR TL	Description		
Prehistoric (to AD 43)				
53	1215 0835	Prehistoric earthwork known as Devil's Ditch Dyke, to the north-west of Verulamium, adjacent to Maynes Farm		
14607	12177 08357	A 900m length of ditch with bank and counterscarp, part of a larger Devil's Ditch system, thought to date to the Iron Age		
Romano-Bri	tish (AD 43 – 41			
4608	12641 08373	The vanished stretch of Watling Street from the centre of Verulamium to where the line rejoins the modern road at the parish boundary is shown as a cropmark for approx. 300m of its length and was used until 1826, when it was closed to prevent travellers from avoiding tolls on the new turnpike road leading into St Albans		
4999	125 085	Cropmark of a Roman building and column		
14540	12557 08596	Possible Roman structure of mortared flints, cut by a gas line trench in the river valley, with three coping stones recorded nearby and which may possibly indicate a Roman funerary enclosure		
14625	12606 08488	Watling Street to the north-west of the Chester Gate remained in use as a main highway until Verulam Road was opened in 1824 and survives well in cropmarks		
Medieval (Al	O 1066 – 1500)			
2024	122 088	Fishponds known as the Pondyards possibly extant in 1568, used to supply water to Gorhambury House and enlarged by Sir Francis Bacon <i>c.</i> 1601 as elaborate water gardens to accompany his new house		
4075	1275 0825	St Mary de Prae Church and houses for leprous women built by Warin, Abbot of St Albans in 1194, became a Benedectine nunnery in 1328 and issolved and annexed to St Albans Abbey in 1528		
14610	12759 08185	The Benedictine nunnery of St Mary de Prae was founded by Abbot Warin in the late 12 th century, as a hospital for leprous women and was a counterpart to St Julian's on the other side of St Albans, which was to be reserved for men		
14631	13159 08109	Course of Back Lane, which is a minor road from Kingsbury Manor along the north-eastern side of the river Ver to The Prae and Prae Mill, mapped in 1634 and thus possible medieval		
15337	12370 08370	Medieval aisled barn at Maynes Farm is a Grade II listed timber-framed barn, one of a group apparently commissioned by abbot John Moot in the late 14 th century		

Post-medieval & later (1500 – present)			
9502	1239 0878	Verulam House was built by Sir Francis Bacon (Lord Verulam) c. 1610, demolished by 1663, and known only from a sketch by Aubrey with his brief and muddled description	
14613	12310 08900	The Pondyards are a complex of square moated islands, built to ensure water supply to Old Gorhambury and of which almost no investigation has taken place since Charlotte Grimston's inspection in 1802	
15338	12350 08375	Maynes Farm House dates to the late 17 th century, in red brick with some flint	
Undated rem	nains		
1439	1230 0875	Cropmarks of linear features showing very faintly in the field south of the Pondyards	
2525	1283 0825	Cropmark of a sinuous linear ditch running alongside the river Ver in a north-west to south-easterly direction	
4788	1235 0795	Cropmarks of intersecting linear ditches; one ditch aligned NE-SW, the others NW-SE, and may be part of a field system	
4995	121 081	Ditches visible in cropmarks	
4996	1252 0804	Cropmark of a single-ditched circular enclosure	
4997	125 081	Cropmarks of a series of intersecting linear ditches aligned NW-SE and SW-NE, and possibly associated with further ditches to the south and a ring ditch	
6002	127 082	Cropmark of a linear feature aligned NE-SW with an angled bend which realigns the feature in a NW-SE direction	
14524	12644 08035	Complex of cropmarks outside the Chester Gate, arranged in strips and with curving outliers, and known only from air photographs	
14633	12655 07961	Three circular cropmarks in the area of the Roman cemetery and possible fields outside the Chester Gate	
14645	12558 08124	Cropmarks of ditches within the angle of Devil's and New Dykes in a complex landscape, close to Gorhambury	
14646	12325 08736	Cropmarks of linear features showing very faintly in a field south of the Pondyards	

APPENDIX 2 CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVE

Records	Number
Brief	Advice
Specification	Υ
Registers	4 (Context, Drawing, Photo, Digital
	Photo)
Context Sheets	5
Site drawings A1	0
Site drawings A3	0
Site drawings A4	1
Site photographs b/w	5
Site photographs colour slides	5
Digital Photographs	20

APPENDIX3 HER SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address:	Gorhambury Estate, St Albans, Hertfordshire	
County: Herts	District: St Albans	
Village/Town:	Parish: St Albans	
Planning application reference:	Countryside Stewardship Scheme	
Client name/address/tel:	Mr & Mrs Pegg	
Nature of application:	Underground BT cables	
Present land use:	Garden	
Size of application area:	Size of area investigated	
-	-	
NGR (8 figures):	TL 1236 0836	
Site Code:	AS 1417	
Site director/Organization:	Archaeological Solutions Ltd	
Type of work:	Monitoring and recording	
Date of work:	06-08, 10/06/2011	
Location of finds/Curating	St Albans	
museum:		
Related SMR Nos:	Periods represented: none	
Relevant previous	-	
summaries/reports: -		
Summary of fieldwork results:	In June 2011 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and recording at Gorhambury Estate, St Albans, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 1236 0836). The monitoring was commissioned by Strutt & Parker LLP – Land Management in compliance with a requirement of St Albans City & District Council District Archaeologist (SADC), as part of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. The monitoring was conducted during the groundworks for underground BT cables.	
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	possibly a ditch	
Author of summary:	Date of Summary: July 2011	
Zbigniew Pozorski		

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. Gorhambury estate. NE part of the trench. View SW.



DP 2. F1003. View NW.



DP 3. NE part of the trench. Sample section 1. View SE.



DP 4. Trench extension to the house. View N.



DP 5. Central part of the trench. View SE.



DP 6. Central part of the trench. Sample section 2. View NE.



DP 7. S/central part of the trench. View ESE.



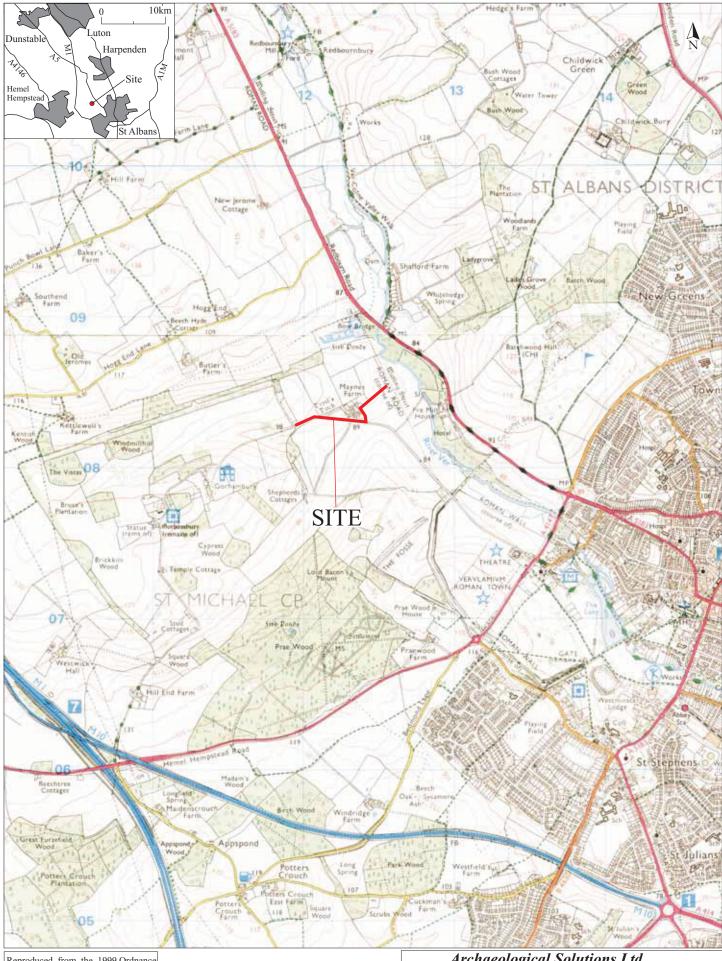
DP 9. W part of the trench. View E.



DP 8. S/central part of the trench, section of pit of a joint box. View S



DP 10. W part of the trench. Sample section 3. View S.



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Fig. 1 Site location plan

Scale 1:25,000 at A4

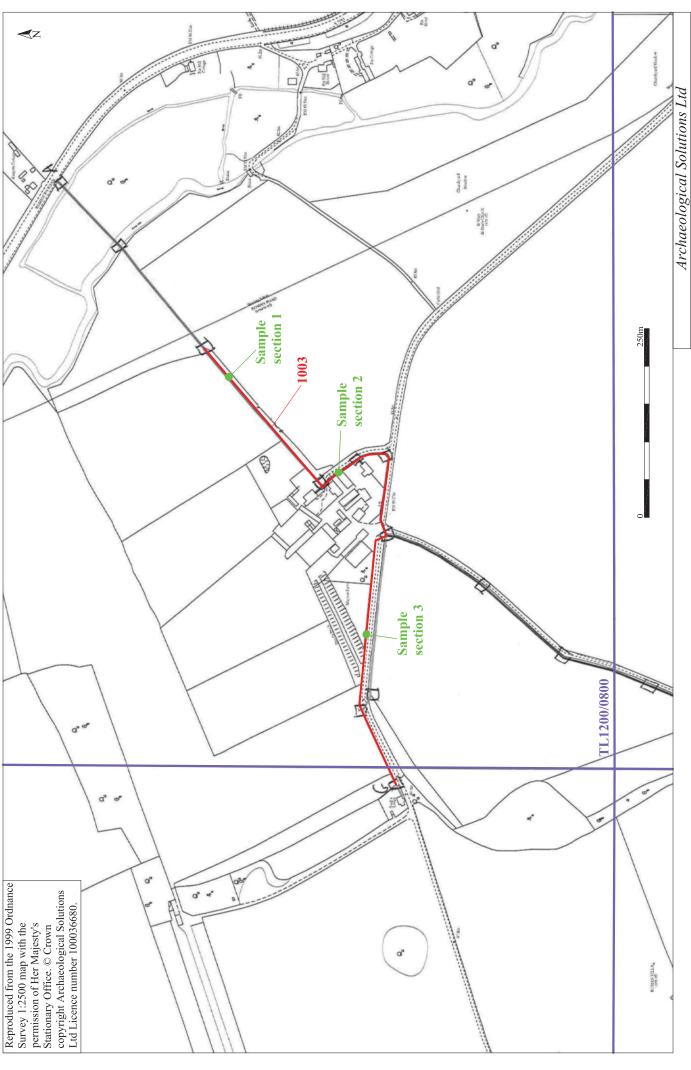
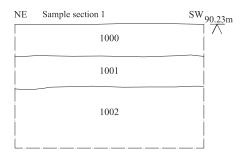
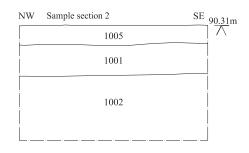
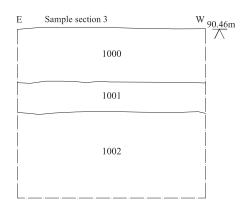


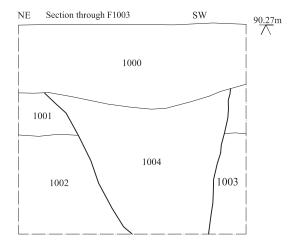
Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan

Scale 1:5000 at A4









1m

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Fig. 3 Sample sections
Scale 1:20 at A4