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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**LAND ADJACENT TO 33 CHERRY GARDENS,  
BISHOP'S STORTFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & RECORDING**

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NGR: TL 4941 2183	Report No. 3134
District: East Hertfordshire	Site Code: AS 1150
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 3198
Signed:	Date: September 2009

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**OASIS SUMMARY SHEET**

<b>Project details</b>			
Project name	<i>Land adjacent to 33 Cherry Gardens, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire: Archaeological monitoring and recording</i>		
<p><i>In June 2008 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during the groundworks at land adjacent to 33 Cherry Gardens, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire( NGR TL 4941 2183). The monitoring was required to comply with a planning condition for archaeological investigation required as part of planning consent (EHDC Planning ref: 3/08/0466/FUL).</i></p> <p><i>The site lies within an Area of Archaeological Significance (AAS) imposed due to the proximity of the Romano-British settlement. The Anglo-Saxon and medieval settlement was likely to have been approximately 600m south west of the site although extra-mural activity associated with the town may be encountered. The post-medieval and modern periods saw extensive urban development which included the construction of the area known as the Cannon's Close housing estate which the site lies within.</i></p> <p><i>Despite the potential for archaeological remains no features or finds were present. Much of the site has been truncated by the construction of a previous culvert, and monitoring of the route of the new culvert within an undisturbed area revealed no archaeological features or finds.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	26.06.08		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N	Future work (Y/N/?)	
P. number	3198	Site code	AS 1150
Type of project	Watching Brief		
Site status			
Current land use	Garden		
Planned development	Residential housing, re -routing of culvert		
Main features (+dates)	-		
Significant finds (+dates)	-		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	Hertfordshire	East Hertfordshire	Bishops Stortford
HER/ SMR for area	Hertfordshire HER		
Post code (if known)			
Area of site			
NGR	TL 4941 2183		
Height AOD (max/ min)	60-65m AOD		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Tim Schofield		
Funded by	Client of G Contractors Ltd		
<b>Bibliography</b>			
Full title	<i>Land Adjacent to 33 Cherry Gardens, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire: Archaeological monitoring and recording</i>		
Authors	Unger, S, Schofield, T		
Report no.	3134		
Date (of report)	July 2008		

## **LAND ADJACENT TO 33 CHERRY GARDENS, BISHOPS STORTFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE**

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING**

#### **SUMMARY**

*In June 2008 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during the groundworks at land adjacent to 33 Cherry Gardens, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire( NGR TL 4941 2183). The monitoring was required to comply with a planning condition for archaeological investigation required as part of planning consent (EHDC Planning ref: 3/08/0466/FUL).*

*The site lies within an Area of Archaeological Significance (AAS) imposed due to the proximity of the Romano-British settlement. The Anglo-Saxon and medieval settlement was likely to have been approximately 600m south west of the site although extra-mural activity associated with the town may be encountered. The post-medieval and modern periods saw extensive urban development which included the construction of the area known as the Cannon's Close housing estate which the site lies within.*

*Despite the potential for archaeological remains no features or finds were present. Much of the site has been truncated by the construction of a previous culvert, and monitoring of the route of the new culvert within an undisturbed area revealed no archaeological features or finds.*

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 On the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2008, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording during the groundworks at land adjacent to 33 Cherry Gardens, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 4941 2183; Figs. 1 - 2). The monitoring was commissioned by G Contractors Ltd on behalf of their client. It was undertaken in accordance to a planning condition (planning application no. 3/08/0466/FUL) imposed by East Hertfordshire District Council (based on advice from Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit (HCC HEU)).

1.2 The monitoring and recording was undertaken in response to advice from HCC HEU (Alison Tinniswood) and in accordance with a specification prepared by AS (dated 09/06/2008). The programme of works also complied with the document; Gurney *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (2003) *EAA Occasional Paper 14*, and the Institute of Field Archaeologists' (IFA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (revised 2001).

1.3 The monitoring was undertaken during the groundworks for the proposed development of residential housing. A 900mm concrete culvert pipe was to be re-routed so that two dwellings could be built on the garden area of 33 Cherry Gardens. A 9-ton 360° tracked excavator was used to remove the soil to the required depth of 1.60m below ground level.



1.4 The objectives of the project were:

- To ensure the archaeological excavation and 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;
- To secure the full analysis and interpretation of the site archive and the publication of the project results, if appropriate,
- To secure the analysis, long-term conservation and storage of the project archive.

## **2 DESCRIPTION OF SITE**

2.1 The site lies to the north-east of the market town of Bishop's Stortford. The latter lies approximately 4km north of the small town of Sawbridgeworth. The River Stort flows north to south, c. 250m east of the site, meandering south towards Harlow and eventually meeting the River Lea at Hoddesdon.

2.2 The site lies to the west of Stansted Road and is part of the designated Area of Archaeological Significance (AAS) which is the presumed extent of the Romano-British settlement. The site lies adjacent to Cherry Gardens, part of a residential estate. Cherry Gardens lies to the east of the River Stort. The land is currently in use as a garden and was heavily truncated and disturbed by modern activity (DP 6).

## **3 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY**

3.1 The topography of Bishop's Stortford is undulating and slopes away towards the River Stort, which flows on an approximate north to south orientation at c.58m AOD. Situated on the eastern side of the river valley and c. 250m from the River Stort, the site ranges in height from 60-65m AOD. The settlement of Bishop's Stortford is situated on a cusp of two different solid geologies comprising both Lower Eocene Reading Beds, comprising a complex of vertically and laterally varying gravels, sands, silts and clays, to the north and Eocene London Clay to the south, upon which the site lies (MacDonald 1995; BGS 1978). Along the River Stort, however, is a narrow strip of Cretaceous Upper Chalk. Overlying the solid geology of Reading Beds, London Clay and Cretaceous Upper Chalk is mainly later drift geology of Boulder Clay, although the river valley of the Stort contains river terrace gravels of a younger age.

3.2 Bishop's Stortford lies across the junction between different soil types. The majority of the East Hertfordshire district and most of the settlement of Bishop's Stortford lie on soils of the Hanslope association, which are described as slowly permeable, calcareous clayey soils with some slowly permeable non-calcareous clayey soils, all of which are at slight risk of water erosion (SSEW 1983). Such soils of the Hanslope association generally lie on a chalky till geology and are used in agriculture for winter cereals with some other arable crops and grassland. The areas of Bishop's Stortford, however, within the valley of the River Stort, which may border the site, comprise soils of the Melford association, which are described as deep, well-drained fine loamy over clayey, coarse loamy over clayey and fine loamy soils, some with calcareous clayey subsoils (SSEW 1983).

## 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### *Prehistoric and (750,000BC to AD 43)*

4.1 In comparison with the nearby Lea Valley to the south-west, few finds have been discovered in Bishops Stortford or within the corresponding section of the River Stort (Hunns 2000). An antiquarian find of a single Paleolithic hand axe was produced from the River Stort in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Other early remains including Mesolithic finds were discovered during rescue excavations in the 1960's to the north and north-east of the town, in close proximity to the site. Evidence of later prehistoric activity in the town is also sparse. Concentrations of later prehistoric remains have been discovered to the south of the town. An excavation in Thorley in 1994 revealed probable Bronze and Iron Age settlement close to the Stort Valley (McDonald 1997) and other remains have been discovered close to this area.

### *Romano-British (43 – 410 AD)*

4.2 The earliest large scale settlement at Bishop's Stortford dates from the Romano-British period, and was located at the point where Stane Street, the north to south Roman road from Braughing to Colchester, now comprising the A120/A1250, crossed the River Stort. Excavations on sections of Stane Street in 1997 revealed the probable early date *c.* 50 AD for the first phase of the road and a second constructional phase during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century when the settlement probably developed. Significantly, the concentration of the Romano-British settlement appeared to be in the area of Cannon's Close housing estate to the north of Stane Street. The current site lies within the extent of the Cannon's Close housing estate and as a result lies within the Area of Archaeological Significance (AAS) which covers the settlement. The remains included buildings, rubbish pits, burials and large quantities of pottery and finds from the 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> century AD (Hunn 2000). A possible tile kiln was discovered to the north of the settlement (Cooper 2005) whilst several burials were also observed during construction works, and included a stone coffin burial and a group of cremations, which suggest that a cemetery probably exists on the eastern side of the settlement.

### *Anglo-Saxon and) Medieval (AD 411 – 1539)*

4.3 There have been suggestions that the late medieval church of St Michael may stand on a pagan Saxon site although there is no archaeological evidence to support this. It is known that the late Anglo-Saxon manor of Stortford was held during the reign of Edward the Confessor by *Eadgifu Swanneshals*, also known as Edith the Fair, and the purported mistress of King Harold (Hunns 2000). After the Norman Conquest in 1066, the manor was the possession of William, the Bishop of London. An important Norman structure in the town, Waytemore Castle (a motte and bailey castle) was built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and lies *c.* 400m to the south-west of the site, in a defensive position close to the ford of the River Stort. The Domesday Book of 1086 depicts a substantial settlement in 1086. It records six hides, with land for ten ploughs and woodland for three hundred pigs. It also had two mills and a resident priest with two knights (Morris 1976). The town was named as *Estereferd* in the Domesday Survey. Once the town and its castle had been sold to the Bishop of London, the settlement became known as *Bishop's Estereferd*, which later became corrupted to the present spelling of Stortford.

4.4 The medieval settlement of Bishop's Stortford, also known as *Stortford*, *Storfurde*,

*Stortford* and *Statford*, is known to have been a borough by around 1306 - 1336 and during the 14<sup>th</sup> century sent members to Parliament, as well as recording burgage rents (Cooper 2005). Market crosses were set up on the four major roads leading from the town although they appear to have been destroyed during either the Reformation or the Commonwealth (1645 – 60). Throughout the medieval period, the town of Bishop's Stortford developed into a thriving commercial centre, attested by a large number of inns in the town. The presumed medieval centre lies approximately 600m south-west of the site.

#### *Post-medieval and modern (AD 1540 – present)*

4.5 A significant event for the town during the post-medieval period was the opening of the Stort Navigation in 1769, which linked Bishop's Stortford with London via the Lea Navigation, itself constructed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This provided a direct link to the markets of London and as a result, the prosperity of the town in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries was fuelled by the brewing and malting industry as evidenced by the high number of maltings and inns recorded by the HER (Cooper 2005). The 18<sup>th</sup> century brought massive growth and transformation in the economy of Bishop's Stortford. Although it was still described as a considerable market town in 1770 (Munby 1977), its horse and cattle fairs had enabled an enormous expansion in leather-working by the 1750's through the tanners of Water Lane. As was the case in the post-medieval period, from 1900 onwards the settlement of Bishop's Stortford expanded significantly in size expanding to the south towards Thorley. The modern period has seen the construction of numerous new housing estates in the town including Cannon's Close to the north-east.

## 5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The archaeological monitoring comprised the observation of groundworks, inspection of subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features, the examination of spoil heaps and the recording of soil profiles. Deposits were recorded by means of *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was searched for archaeological finds.

## 6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

6.1 One site visit took place on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2008. The excavation of the easement for the new culvert was monitored and the following sample section was recorded (DPs 1 – 6).

### 6.1.2 Sample Section 1 Fig. 2, DP 1

<i>Sample section: North side, facing south</i> <i>0.00 = 67.5mAOD</i>	
0.00 – 0.35m	L1000. Topsoil. Mid orangish brown friable sand silt and clay with moderate tree roots.
0.35 – 0.70m	L1001. Subsoil. Light orangish brown friable sand silt and clay with frequent rounded and angular flint gravel (0.01 – 0.05m).
0.70 – 1.10m	L1002. Subsoil. Light brownish orange compact silty clay with occasional rounded flint gravel (0.01 – 0.05m).
1.10m+	L1003. Natural drift geology. Mid whitish yellow compact clay and chalk with flint nodules.

6.1.3 No archaeological features or finds were present.

## **7 CONFIDENCE RATING**

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

## **8 DEPOSIT MODEL**

8.1 The deposit model was fairly uniform throughout the stratigraphy monitored on site (DP 1). At the top of the stratigraphic sequence was topsoil L1000, and it lay at a consistent depth of around 0.35m. Underlying the topsoil was subsoil layer L1001, slightly lighter in colour than L1000. It is possible that L1001 is the previous topsoil layer, with L1000 being brought on to site to level the ground. It lay at a depth of 0.35 to 0.70m. Subsoil L1002 was present below L1001 at a depth of between 0.70 – 1.10m. At the base of the stratigraphic sequence was natural drift geology L1003. It was present at a depth of 1.10m. The culvert trenches were excavated to a depth of 1.60m (DP 3).

## **9 DISCUSSION**

### **9.1 Summary of the archaeology**

9.1.1 Despite the potential for archaeological remains in the area of 33 Cherry Gardens, no features were present in the re-routed culvert trench or revealed elsewhere on the site. No residual finds of pre-modern date were present and no evidence of Romano-British activity was identified.

### **9.2 Research Potential**

9.2.1 The research potential for the site is very low, further archaeological investigations are unlikely to reveal any archaeological remains. The site has been fairly heavily truncated with the previous culvert trench and easement bisecting and damaging a large percentage of the site area.

## **DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited at Bishop's Stortford Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank G Contractors Ltd for commissioning the works and their clients for funding programme of monitoring and recording

Archaeological solutions would also like to acknowledge the advice and input of Alison Tinniswood of HCC HEU.

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## APPENDIX 1

### HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Site name and address:</b>	Land adjacent to 33 Cherry Gardens, Bishop's Stortford
<b>County:</b> Hertfordshire	<b>District:</b> East Herts
<b>Village/Town:</b> Bishop's Stortford	<b>Parish:</b> Bishop's Stortford
<b>Planning application reference:</b>	3/08/0466/FUL
<b>Client name/address/tel:</b>	Client of G Contractors Ltd
<b>Nature of application:</b>	Re-routing of service pipe
<b>Present land use:</b>	Vacant
<b>Size of application area:</b> 400 sq m	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 100 sq m
<b>NGR (8 figures):</b>	TL 4941 2183
<b>Site Code:</b>	AS 1150
<b>Site director/Organisation:</b>	Archaeological Solutions Ltd
<b>Type of work:</b>	Archaeological Monitoring and Recording
<b>Date of work:</b>	26/06/08
<b>Location of finds/Curating museum:</b>	Bishop's Stortford Museum
<b>Related SMR Nos: -</b>	<b>Periods represented: -</b>
<b>Relevant previous summaries/reports: -</b>	-
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b>	<p>In June 2008 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during the groundworks at land adjacent to 33 Cherry Gardens, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 4940 2180).</p> <p>The site lies within an Area of Archaeological Significance (AAS) imposed due to the proximity of the Romano-British settlement</p> <p>Despite the high potential for archaeological remains no features or finds were present. Much of the site has been truncated by the construction of a previous culvert, and monitoring of the route of the new culvert within an undisturbed area revealed no archaeological features or finds.</p>
<b>Author of summary:</b> Newton, A.A.S	<b>Date of Summary:</b> July 2008

## APPENDIX 2

### CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE

RECORDS	NUMBER
Brief	N
Specification	Y
Registers	Context
Context Sheets	1000 – 1003
Site Drawings A1	None
Site Drawings A3	None
Site Drawings A4	None
Site Photographs B/W	5
Site Photographs Colour Slide	5
Site Photographs Digital	1-11



## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



*DP 1*  
*Sample Section 1, facing south*



*DP 2*  
*Existing culvert, facing south-east*





*DP 3*  
New trench, facing east



*DP 4*  
General site shot, facing south- east



*DP 5*  
Existing culvert running south-east at the eastern boundary of the site



*DP 6*  
General site shot showing truncation and modern disturbance of much of the site

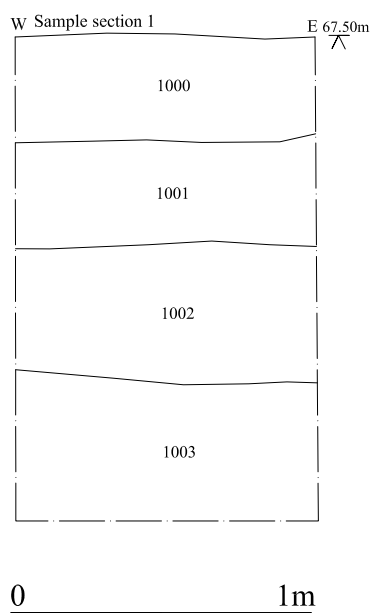
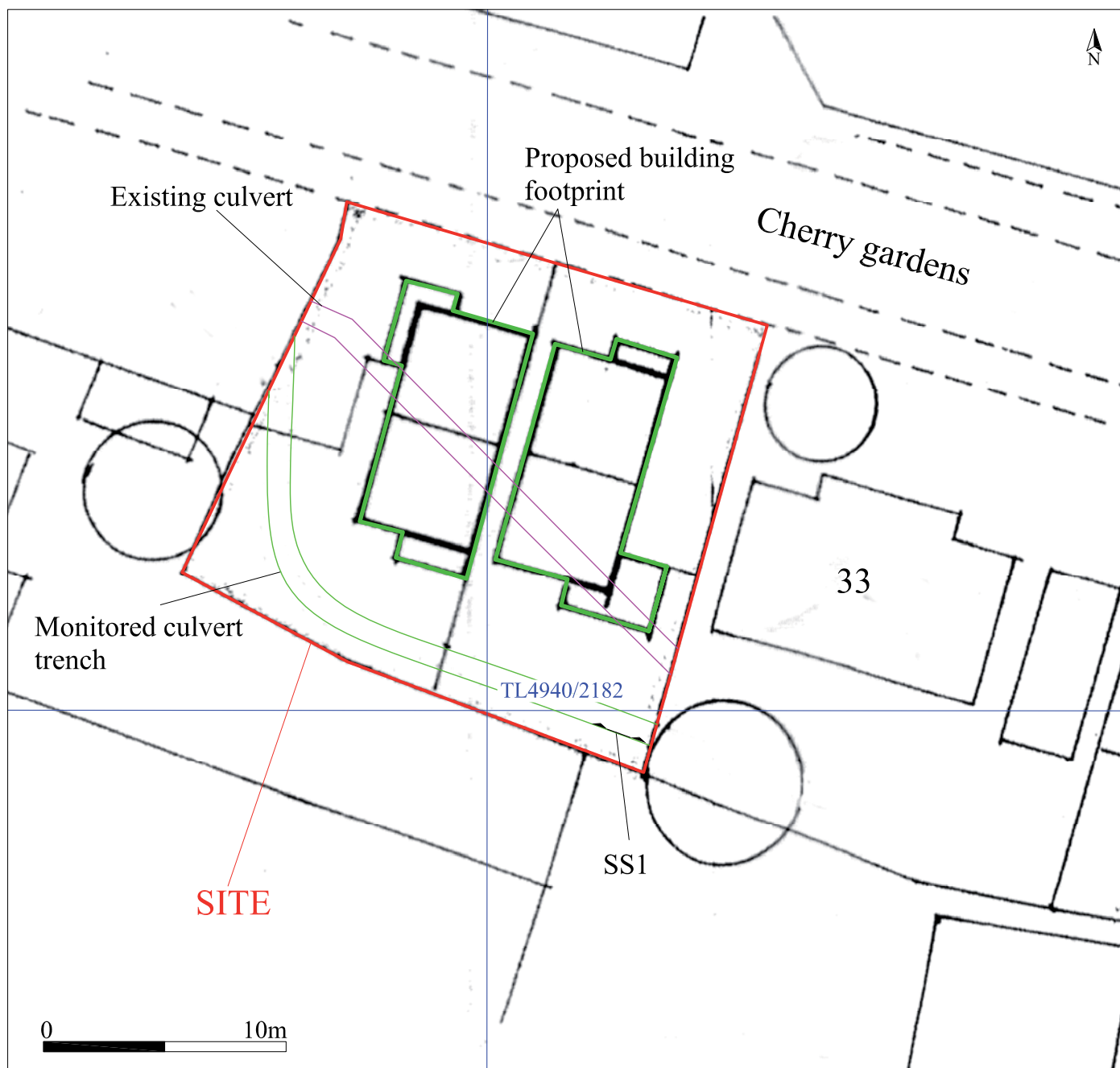




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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4





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<b>Fig. 2 Watching brief area</b>
Scale: Plan 1:250, section 1:25 at A4