

WOODLAND ROAD, HERTFORD HEATH, HERTFORDSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski MA	
NGR: TL 3499 1118	Report No. 3503
District: East Hertfordshire	Site Code: AS 1285
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 3699
Signed:	Date: March 2010

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Woodland Road, Hertford Heath, Hertfordshire</i>		
<i>In March 2010 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at land at Woodland Road, Hertford Heath, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 34990 11180). The evaluation was commissioned by Riversmead Housing Association, and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to approval for the construction of one detached and four semi-detached houses.</i>			
<i>The site is situated in the southern part of the village of Hertford Heath. It is located in close proximity to Area of Archaeological Significance (AAS) No. 242, identified on the EHDC Local Plan, which records the area of an Iron Age and Roman cemetery.</i>			
<i>In the event the evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds.</i>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>20th March 2010</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>
P. number	<i>3699</i>	Site code	<i>AS 1285</i>
Type of project	<i>An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>Adjacent to Area of Archaeological Significance No. 242</i>		
Current land use	<i>Rear gardens, car park and green area</i>		
Planned development	<i>One detached house and four semi-detached houses (residential)</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Hertfordshire</i>	<i>East Hertfordshire</i>	<i>Hertford Heath</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Hertfordshire HER</i>		
Post code (if known)			
Area of site	<i>c. 1700 m²</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 3499 1118</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>94.40/95.50m</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>HCC HEU</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Zbigniew Pozorski</i>		
Funded by	<i>Riversmead Housing Association</i>		
Full title	<i>Woodland Road, Hertford Heath, Hertfordshire. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Pozorski, Z.</i>		
Report no.	<i>3503</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>March 2010</i>		

WOODLAND ROAD, HERTFORD HEATH, HERTFORDSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In March 2010 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at Woodland Road, Hertford Heath, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 3499 1118). The evaluation was commissioned by Riversmead Housing Association, and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to approval for the construction of one detached and four semi-detached houses.

The site is situated in the southern part of the village of Hertford Heath. It is located in close proximity to Area of Archaeological Significance (AAS) No. 242, identified on the EHDC Local Plan, which records the area of an Iron Age and Roman cemetery.

In the event the evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In March 2010 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at Woodland Road, Hertford Heath, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 3499 1118; Figs. 1 & 2). The evaluation was commissioned by Riversmead Housing Association in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of one detached and four semi-detached houses (East Hertfordshire District Planning Ref. 3/1388/09/FP).

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit (HCC HEU; dated 27/10/2009) and a specification prepared by AS (dated 03/11/2009) and approved by HCC HEU. The project conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA, formerly Institute of Field Archaeologists) *Code of Conduct Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2001), as well as the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14 (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The evaluation aimed to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. In particular, it aimed to

establish the presence or absence of any remains relating to the area of late Iron Age and Roman occupation.

Planning policy context

1.4 The relevant planning policies which apply to the effect of development with regard to cultural heritage are Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (PPG15) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 'Archaeology and Planning' (PPG16) (Department of the Environment).

1.5 PPG16 (1990) is the national Planning Policy Guidance Note which applies to archaeology. It states that there should always be a presumption in favour of preserving nationally important archaeological remains *in situ*. However, when there is no overriding case for preservation, developers are required to fund opportunities for the recording and, where necessary, the excavation of the site. This condition is widely applied by local authorities.

1.6 PPG15 (1994) is the national Planning Policy Guidance Note which applies to conservation of the historic environment by protecting the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and protecting listed buildings (of architectural or historical interest) from demolition and unsympathetic change and safeguarding their settings as far as is possible. This condition is also widely applied by local authorities.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

2.1 The site is located in the southern part of Hertford Heath and is situated on both the northern and southern sides of Woodland Road which runs east/west close to London Road. The village of Hertford Heath lies c. 2.5km south-east of Hertford and c. 3.5km south of Ware.

2.2 The site comprises two rectangular plots not occupied by any standing structures. The northern plot had been in use as rear gardens for properties surrounding the site while the southern plot has been used as a car park, recycling collection point and a green area occupied by trees and shrubbery. The dense woodland in the eastern part of the southern plot had been cleared prior to the evaluation taking place.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The site is located on a natural slope with land descending westwards. The heights vary from 94.40 – 95.50 m AOD.

3.2 The site lies at a distance of some 3km south of the river Lea and the floodplains and river terrace gravels associated with it. The site and the

surrounding area are located upon a solid geology of Eocene London Clay (Thames Group; British Geological Survey 1978).

3.3 Soils on the site are clayey soils of the Hallsworth 1 association, surrounded by those of Windsor association, described as permeable clayey soils mostly with brown subsoils (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric

4.1 The earliest known prehistoric archaeological activity in relatively close proximity to the site is concentrated on the gravels to the north; excavations conducted at Foxholes Farm, c. 1km north-west of the site, revealed the largest assemblage of the late Neolithic period remains yet recovered in East Hertfordshire (Partridge 1989). A polished flint Neolithic axe was found in an arable field between Jenningsbury Farm and Balls Park (HER 11613). Flints and Neolithic pottery from shaft pits and other features suggest habitation. Also Neolithic handaxe has been identified along Ermine Street and c. 400m north-west of the site.

4.2 Recent excavations at Balls Park estate to the north, conducted by AS, revealed middle to late Iron Age settlement, comprising a circular enclosure and possibly another, rectangular enclosure or part of a boundary system (Pozorski 2008).

4.3 In Hertford Heath, an important late Iron Age Welwyn-type 'Chieftain's burial (c. 40 – 50 AD) was discovered in 1956 on a housing estate development at Prior's Wood, c. 300m north-east of the site (HER 86). A late Iron Age and Romano-British cemetery was also found to the north of Trinity Road, Hertford Heath. It surrounded the 'Chieftain's burial, dated from 35 – 65 BC to AD 100 (HER 1403), whilst bronze hoards and evidence of bronze manufacturing was found in 1977 – 78 in Prior's Wood (HER 6438). Two late Iron Age gold bracelets were found, 400m north-east of the site, in an area of woodland near Little Amwell (HER 172).

Romano-British

4.4 A major Roman settlement was located at Ware, 3km to the east. Traces of settlement have been discovered in St Andrew's Street, Hertford spanning the first and second centuries, while excavations at Mill Bridge revealed plough marks, a sub-circular ditched enclosure, a cobbled surface and parts of stake holes and fence lines.

4.5 Foxholes Farm produced an extensive area of Roman occupation dating from the 2nd to the later 4th century AD (HER 10027). Corn-drying structures, with minor industrial activity and part of a rectilinear field system hinted at exploitation from dispersed farmsteads or hamlets, although settlement remained concentrated in the gravel valleys of Hertfordshire.

4.6 The late Iron Age and Romano-British cemetery found to the north of Trinity Road dated from 35 – 65 BC to AD 100 (HER 1403, as above), whilst the reputed site of Roman material and a Neolithic handaxe was found along Ermine Street (HER 1404, as above). A puddingstone upper stone of a Romano-British quern with an undamaged handle socket was discovered less than 400m from the site (HER 170). Ermine Street lies around 450m west of the site (HER 4668).

Anglo-Saxon

4.7 Anglo-Saxon archaeological remains are limited in Hertfordshire. Undiagnostic, grass-tempered pottery was identified at Foxholes, but its 6th – 11th century dating remains contentious, whilst the characteristic Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured buildings identified remain undated.

4.8 Hertford emerges into the historical record at an early date. The Northumbrian historian Bede (d. 735) recorded the convening of two important church synods at *Herutford* in 673 and *Hæthfelth* in 675 by Archbishop Theodore. The river Lea became the dividing boundary between the Danish and West Saxon-controlled areas of England in the 9th century, and remained an important spring-board in the 10th century (Page 1912).

4.9 The foundation of the town was secured when King Edward the Elder (899-925) established two defended *burhs* at the southern and northern approaches to the river crossing in 912AD and 914AD (Page 1912). Archaeological excavation has begun to illuminate the evolution of the late Anglo-Saxon town of Hertford. No Anglo-Saxon evidence, however, exists in proximity to the site.

Medieval

4.10 Hertford was designated as the administrative centre of the shire. Hertford Castle, c. 3km north-west of the site, was constructed during the medieval period and is the only known Scheduled Ancient Monument of this time within the environs of the site (SAM No. 20629). At its height Hertford boasted five churches but in the later medieval period, Hertford's fortunes appear to have declined. The settlement contracted and a degree of economic poverty is recorded in the 15th century.

4.11 The water-filled homestead moat at Jenningsbury Farm, c. 1.2km to the north-west of the site, also dates to this period. It is complete, except for the north side, which has been filled in (HER 2011). Medieval pottery was found in Balls Wood, at a site c. 800m south-west of the site (HER 4736). Registered common land believed to date to the medieval period has also been identified at Hertford Heath, The Old Pond and Village Green (12375), and at War Memorial Green beside Hertford Heath (HER 12376).

Post-medieval & modern

4.12 Balls Park, located to the north-west of the site, contains at its centre a Grade I listed country house (Images of England website; IoE number 461217). Simon de Balle, Burgess of the Borough of Hertford owned the park in 1298 (HER 4010). The present house was built by Sir John Harrison in c.1640, subsequently altered in the early 18th century, early 19th century, and extended in 1924 – 25 (HER 7316).

4.13 The settlement at Hertford Heath is a relatively recent development and grew as a result of the opening of the East India College in 1809 on the site of the present Haileybury College. The Grade II listed water tower at Haileybury was built in 1899 for the New River Company, c.400m south of the site, and comprises a tall cylindrical tower of riveted iron plates (HER 10264). The 1847 Tithe map identified clay pits and a brick kiln to the west of Ermine Street, less than 800m north-west of the site (HER 7247).

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Two trenches were excavated using a wheeled 180° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig. 2). The trench locations were approved by HCC HEU and were situated within the areas of the proposed new dwellings. Trench 1 measured 15 x 1.6m and was located in the part of the site to the north of Woodland Road. Trench 2 was located to the south of the road and measured 17 x 1.6m.

6.2 Topsoil and undifferentiated overburden were mechanically excavated under close archaeological supervision. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by hand and examined for archaeological features. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale, and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was searched for finds and the trenches were scanned by a metal detector.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Trench 1 (Figs. 2-3, DP 2-3)

<i>Sample section 1 (DP 4): N end, W facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 95.90m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.50m	L1000	Topsoil. Dark, blackish grey, soft, sandy silt.
0.50m +	L1001	Natural light yellow, compact, clay with lenses of dark yellow and mid grey clayey silt and gravel.

<i>Sample section 2 (DP 5): S end, W facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 95.30m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.37m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.37m +	L1001	Natural gravel. As above.

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

Trench 2 (Fig. 2, DP 8-10)

<i>Sample section 3 (DP 11): W end, S facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 95.02m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.35m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.35 – 0.47m	L1002	Subsoil. Light to mid grey, clayey silt with gravel.
0.47m +	L1001	Natural clay. As above, Tr.1.

<i>Sample section 4 (DP 12): S end, W facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 95.40m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.40m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.40 – 0.55m	L1002	Subsoil. As above.
0.55m +	L1001	Natural clay. As above, Tr. 1.

Description: 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.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 The site was commonly overlain by Topsoil L1000, a dark, blackish grey, soft, sandy silt (0.30 – 0.50m thick). Within Trench 2 L1000 overlay Subsoil L1002, a light to mid grey, clayey silt with gravel (0.10 – 0.25m thick).

8.2 The natural clay, L1001, was present at 0.37 – 0.55m below existing ground level and comprised a light yellow, compact, clay with lenses of dark yellow and mid grey clayey silt and gravel.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for the Iron Age and Romano-British archaeology. Such remains have been found in the vicinity of the site, in particular, within the Prior's Wood development to the north-east.

9.2 In the event no archaeological features or finds were revealed. No indication of any previous development of the site was identified excepting modern drainage. 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 Hertford Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Riversmead Housing Association for their co-operation and funding the evaluation, and their architects, Alan Camp Architects, for their assistance (in particular Mr Simon Camp).

AS also would like to thank Messrs Mark King and Dave Culliton of Bugler Developments Ltd for their assistance.

AS gratefully acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Alison Tinniswood of Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit.

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APPENDIX 1 CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVE

Records	Number
Brief	Y
Specification	Y
Registers	5 (Context, Trench, Photo, Digital Photo, Drawing)
Context Sheets	3
Site drawings A1	0
Site drawings A3	0
Site drawings A4	1
Site photographs b/w	8
Site photographs colour slides	8
Digital Photographs	25

APPENDIX 2

HER SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address:	Woodland Road, Hertford Heath, Hertfordshire
County: Herts	District: East Herts
Village/Town:	Parish: Hertford Heath
Planning application reference:	East Hertfordshire District Planning Ref. 3/1388/09/FP
Client name/address/tel:	Riversmead Housing Association
Nature of application:	Residential
Present land use:	Garden and car park
Size of application area: c.1700m ²	Size of area investigated 51.20m ²
NGR (8 figures):	TL 3499 1118
Site Code:	AS1285
Site director/Organization:	Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Type of work:	Trial trench evaluation
Date of work:	20/03/2010
Location of finds/Curating museum:	Hertford
Related SMR Nos:	Periods represented: None
Relevant previous summaries/reports: -	-
Summary of fieldwork results:	<p><i>In March 2010 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at Woodland Road, Hertford Heath, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 34990 11180). The evaluation was commissioned by Riversmead Housing Association, and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to approval for the construction of one detached and four semi-detached houses.</i></p> <p><i>The site is situated in the southern part of the village of Hertford Heath. It is located in close proximity to Area of Archaeological Significance (AAS) No. 242, identified on the EHDC Local Plan, which records the area of an Iron Age and Roman cemetery.</i></p> <p><i>In the event the evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds.</i></p>
Author of summary: Z Pozorski	Date of Summary: March 2010

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. Woodland Road, Hertford Heath, Hertfordshire. North Plot. View NNE.



DP 2. North Plot with Trench 1. View NNW.



DP 3. Trench 1. View S.



DP 4. Trench 1, N end. Sample section. View E.



DP 5. Trench 1, S end. Sample section, view E.



DP 6. South Plot with Trench 2. View SW.



DP 7. South Plot with Trench 2. View NE.



DP 8. Trench 2, S end, before flooding. View NW.



DP 9. Trench 2, N part. View E.



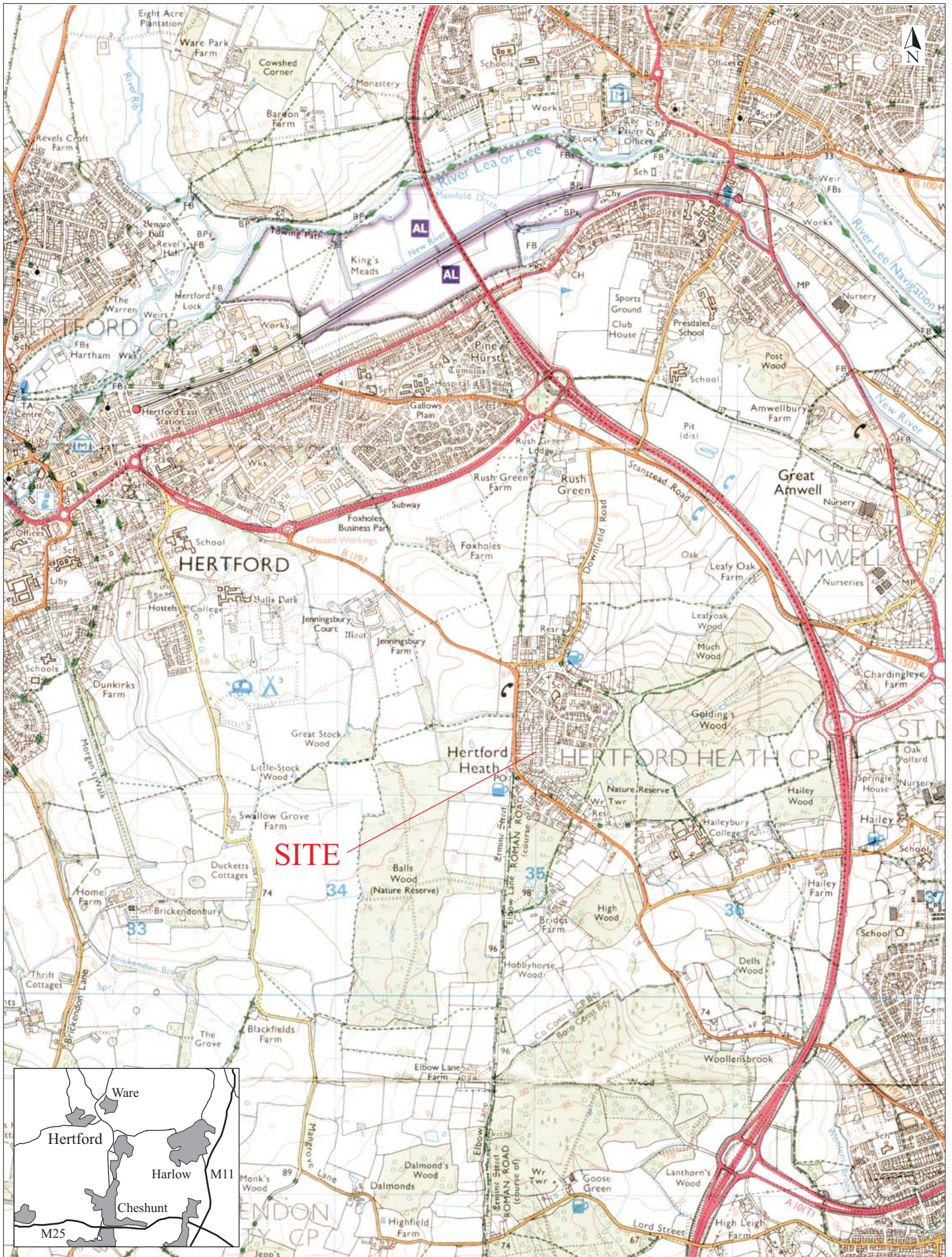
DP 10. Trench 2, E part. View S.



DP 11. Trench 2, W end. Sample section. View N.

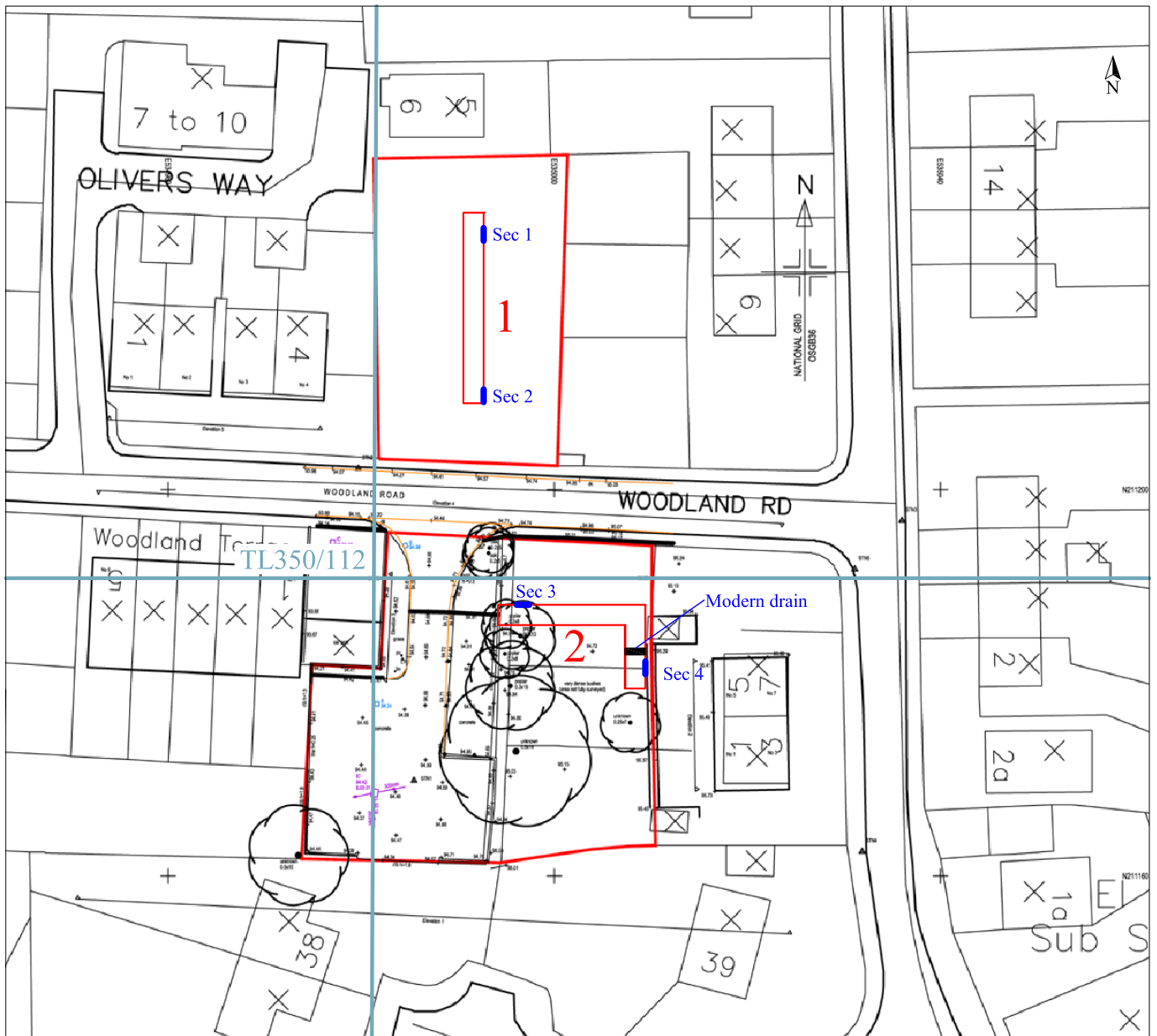


DP 12. Trench 2, S end. Sample section. View E.



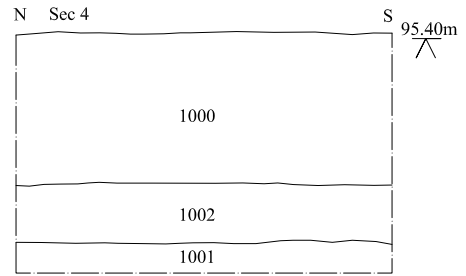
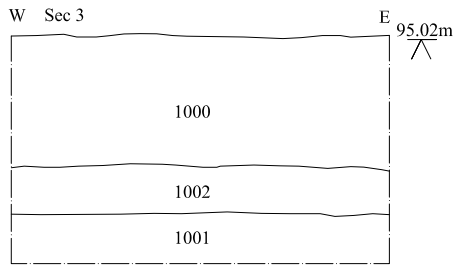
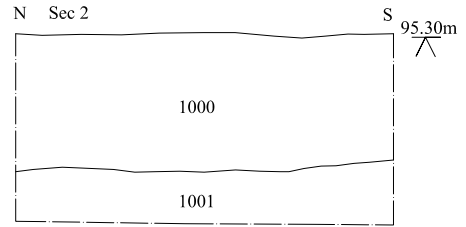
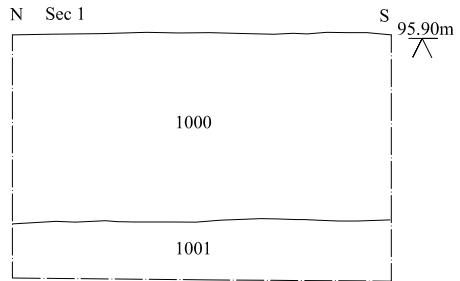
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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



0 25m

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Fig. 2 Trench location plan
 Scale 1:500 at A4



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Fig. 3 Sample sections
Scale 1:20 at A4