

**LAND AT LETCHMORE ROAD
STEVENAGE
HERTFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION**

Project: LR1660

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Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 Background	5
1.2 Site Location, Topography and Geology	5
1.3 Archaeological Background	5
1.4 Project Objectives	6
2. METHODOLOGY	7
3. RESULTS	8
3.1 All Trenches	8
3.2 Conclusion	8
4. BIBLIOGRAPHY	9
5. APPENDIX 1: OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM	10
6. APPENDIX 2: HER SUMMARY SHEET	12

List of Figures

Figure 1: Site location plan

Figure 2: Trial trenching results



Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete a summary as possible within the terms of the method statement. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

The fieldwork was carried out by Richard Gregson (Archaeological Supervisor) and Catherine Godsiffe (Archaeological Technician). This report was written by Richard Gregson with figures produced by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician).

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Version History

<i>Version</i>	<i>Issue date</i>	<i>Reason for re-issue</i>
1.0	09/08/10	n/a

Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

CPA	Hertfordshire County Council Planning Archaeologist
HER	Historic Environment Record
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

Planning permission (Ref: 09/00285/FPM) is being sought for the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of twelve new residential dwellings on land at No. 3 Letchmore Road and an adjacent builder's yard, located within the Old Town area of Stevenage.

Due to the archaeological potential of the site the County Planning Archaeologist advised Stevenage Borough Council that a programme of archaeological work should be carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) in advance of any development. The WSI (CgMs 2010b) identified the need for six trial trenches. Albion Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake the trial trenching.

The trial trenches were positioned evenly across the development area to determine, as far as reasonably practicable, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains.

The results of the trial trenching indicate that there are no archaeological remains of significance within the site.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Background**

Planning permission (Ref: 09/00285/FPM) is being sought for the demolition of the existing buildings at the site and for the construction of 12 new residential dwellings.

Due to the archaeological potential of the site the County Planning Archaeologist (CPA) advised Stevenage Borough Council that a programme of archaeological work should be carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) in advance of any development.

The WSI (CgMs 2010b) identified the need for six trial trenches totalling 75m in length, four in land at No 3 Letchmore Road and two in the adjacent builder's yard (Figure 1).

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to carry out the trial trenching.

1.2 **Site Location, Topography and Geology**

The site is located at grid reference TL 235 250 (Figure 1) in land at a former residential property at No 3 Letchmore Road and an adjacent builder's yard, within the Old Town area of Stevenage, Hertfordshire. The residential property contains a derelict house called 'Fieldcroft' and associated outbuildings. The builder's yard contains a number of brick-built buildings and wooden-framed structures which have been redundant for some time.

The site rises gently from south to north. It is situated at approximately 92m OD.

The underlying geology of the site is glaciofluvial deposits of chalky sand and gravel. These overlie the solid geology of Middle Chalk (CgMs 2010a).

1.3 **Archaeological Background**

The WSI summarised the archaeological background for the development area as follows:

"A comprehensive archaeological review of the area has been undertaken in the Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) for Stevenage. Recent archaeological investigations in the vicinity of the site have revealed Roman remains indicative of settlement. The EUS considers that the town of Stevenage was fairly densely settled in the Roman period and the site's close proximity to the core of the town places it within the sphere for peripheral remains.

The Saxon name 'Stevenage' was spelt *Sticenaece* in 1086 meaning a place 'at the strong oak'. In 1281 Stevenage was granted a market and fair and from the 15th century onwards Stevenage became an important staging point on the route to London. Letchmore Green, opposite the site, is recorded in the HER (12548) as unknown in date but was most likely



formed in the medieval period and is thought to have had areas of associated settlement.

The Stevenage EUS identifies the locations of two late medieval/early post-medieval extant buildings in close proximity to the study site. The location of Southend Farm, a building of c.1500 or earlier, and the Old Workhouse at 2 Letchmore Road dated to the late 15th or early 16th centuries, are within 100m of the study site.”

A desk-based assessment (CgMs 2010a) established that the site had low to moderate archaeological potential for Roman evidence and moderate archaeological potential for the medieval period. The archaeological potential of the site for all other periods of human activity was thought to be low.

1.4 Project Objectives

The WSI identified the following objectives:

General:

- To determine, as far as reasonably practicable, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains.
- To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features encountered.

Specific:

- To clarify the impact of 19th and 20th century development and hence assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits.
- To clarify the impact of any medieval and post-medieval activity and hence assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits.
- To determine the presence or absence of Roman and medieval deposits.
- To determine the presence or absence of medieval evidence associated with Letchmore Green.
- To determine the presence or absence of evidence for medieval occupation or activity.
- To establish the potential for significant environmental deposits.



2. METHODOLOGY

Overburden was excavated from the trenches by a machine fitted with a toothless bucket and operated by an experienced driver under archaeological supervision.

Overburden was removed to the top of the archaeological deposits and/or undisturbed geology. The spoil heaps were scanned for artefacts. Any potential archaeological features were cleaned, investigated and recorded using Albion Archaeology's *pro forma* sheets. The trenches were then planned and photographed as appropriate. All deposits were recorded using a unique number sequence.

A detailed methodology is provided in the WSI which was submitted to the CPA for approval prior to the commencement of the fieldwork.

The project adhered throughout to the standards set out in the following documents:

• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (2nd edn, 2001)
• English Heritage	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Project Managers' Guide</i> (2006)
• IfA	<i>Code of Conduct</i>
	<i>Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation</i>



3. RESULTS

3.1 All Trenches

Six trenches measuring 1.8m wide and 5–20m long were opened on 2nd August 2010 (Figures 1 and 2). The results are detailed below.

Trench	Length	Width	Depth of overburden	OS grid ref.	
1	20m	1.8m	0.85m	TL 23565 / 25043	TL 23585 / 25043
2	7.5m	1.8m	0.9m	TL 23583 / 25036	TL 23583 / 25029
3	7.5m	1.8m	0.7m	TL 23584 / 25016	TL 23592 / 25016
4	15m	1.8m	0.75m	TL 23573 / 25019	TL 23577 / 25004
5	20m	1.8m	0.75m	TL 23601 / 25011	TL 23588 / 24996
6	5m	1.8m	0.79m	TL 23605 / 25026	TL 23609 / 25024

Overburden was mostly made up of topsoil and subsoil. Topsoil comprised dark brown grey sandy silt. Subsoil varied from light brown grey to mid brown orange silty sand. There were also several modern make up and levelling layers in Trenches 2, 3 and 6. The undisturbed geological deposit varied from light grey orange to dark brown orange in colour and from sandy gravel to clay sand in composition.

A pit containing 19th/20th-century pottery sherds and a ditch containing rusting metal sheets and a horseshoe were found in Trenches 3 and 4 respectively (Figure 2).

No other archaeological deposits were present in any of the trenches.

3.2 Conclusion

Evidence from the trial trenching indicates that impact from modern development at the site is restricted to the locations of the standing structures. Elsewhere, intact subsoil and geological deposits were present. Archaeological remains were identified in the trenches, although these only comprised a modern pit and ditch.

The results of the archaeological investigations, therefore, suggest that there are no archaeological remains of significance within the proposed development area.



4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

CgMs 2010a, *Land at Letchmore Road, Stevenage, Hertfordshire. Desk Based Assessment.* Report MS/11766

CgMs 2010b, *Land at Letchmore Road, Stevenage, Hertfordshire. Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Investigation.* Report MS/11766



5. APPENDIX 1: OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

OASIS ID	albionar1-80645
PROJECT DETAILS	
Project name	Land at Letchmore Road, Stevenage
Short description of the project	Planning permission is being sought for the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of twelve new residential dwellings on land at No. 3 Letchmore Road and an adjacent builder's yard, located within the Old Town area of Stevenage. Due to the archaeological potential of the site the County Planning Archaeologist advised Stevenage Borough Council that a programme of archaeological work should be carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) in advance of any development. The WSI (CgMs 2010b) identified the need for six trial trenches. Albion Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake the trial trenching. The trenches were positioned evenly across the development area to determine, as far as reasonably practicable, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains. The results of the trial trenching indicate that there are no archaeological remains of interest present at the site.
Project dates	Start: 02-08-2010 End: 03-08-2010
Previous/future work	Not known / No
Any associated project reference codes	LF1660 - Contracting Unit No. 09/00285/FPM - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	PIT Modern DITCH Modern
Significant Finds	None
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Residential
Prompt	Direction from local planning authority
Position in the planning process	Not known
PROJECT LOCATION	
Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE STEVENAGE STEVENAGE Land at Letchmore Road, Stevenage
Study area	135.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 235 250 51.9093769936 -0.204413559775 51 54 33 N 000 12 15 W Point
PROJECT CREATORS	



Name of Organisation	Albion Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)
Project design originator	Consultant
Project director/manager	Robert Wardill
Project supervisor	Richard Gregson
PROJECT ARCHIVES	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive notes	No finds retained
Digital Archive recipient	Albion Archaeology
Digital Contents	other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Stevenage Museum
Paper Contents	other'
Paper Media available	'Context Sheet', Correspondence',' Microfilm',' Miscellaneous Material', 'Report'
Paper Archive notes	To be stored at Albion Archaeology until deposition
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land at Letchmore Road, Stevenage, Hertfordshire
Author(s)/Editor(s)	'Gregson, R'
Author(s)/Editor(s)	'Wardill, R'
Other bibliographic details	2010-61
Date	2010
Issuer or publisher	Albion Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Bedford
Description	Comb bound report



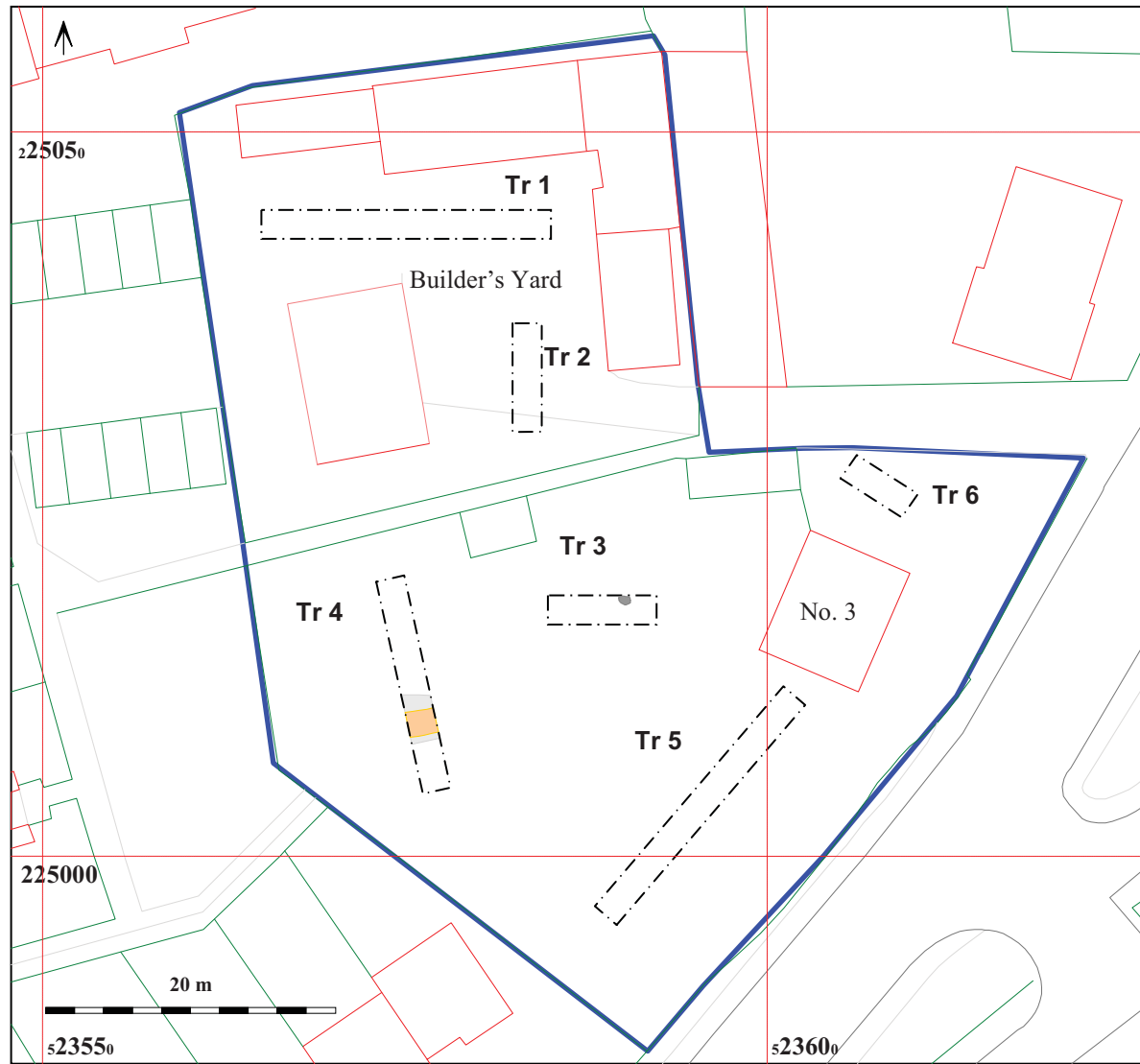
6. APPENDIX 2: HER SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address: No. 3 Letchmore Road		
County: Hertfordshire	District: North Hertfordshire	
Village/Town: Stevenage	Parish: N/A	
Planning application reference: 09/00285/FPM		
Client name, address: CgMs Consulting, Morley House, 26 Holborn Viaduct, London EC1A 2AT		
Nature of application: Demolition of existing buildings and construction of 12 new residential dwellings		
Present land use: None		
Size of application area: 0.24ha	Size of area investigated: 135m ²	
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 23582502		
Site code (if applicable): LR1660		
Site director/Organization: Robert Wardill/Albion Archaeology		
Type of work: trial trench evaluation		
Date of work	Start: 02/08/10	Finish: 03/08/10
Location of finds and site archive/curating museum: Stevenage Museum		
Related HER Nos: 12548	Periods represented: Modern	
Relevant previous summaries/reports: Land at Letchmore Road, Stevenage, Hertfordshire Desk-Based Assessment and Written Scheme of Investigation (CgMs Consulting 2010)		
<p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p><i>Planning permission (Ref: 09/00285/FPM) is being sought for the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of twelve new residential dwellings on land at No. 3 Letchmore Road and an adjacent builder's yard, located within the Old Town area of Stevenage.</i></p> <p><i>Due to the archaeological potential of the site the County Planning Archaeologist advised Stevenage Borough Council that a programme of archaeological work should be carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) in advance of any development. The WSI (CgMs 2010b) identified the need for six trial trenches. Albion Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake the trial trenching.</i></p> <p><i>The trial trenches were positioned evenly across the development area to determine, as far as reasonably practicable, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains.</i></p> <p><i>The results of the trial trenching indicate that there are no archaeological remains of significance within the site.</i></p>		
Author of summary: R. Gregson		Date of summary: 04/08/2010

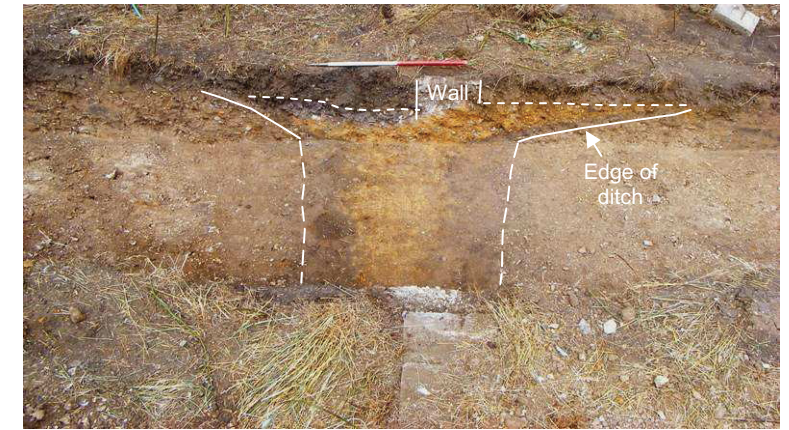


Figure 1: Site location plan

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Trench 4 looking north, showing modern ditch. Scale 1m



Trench 4 looking west, showing modern ditch. Scale 1m



Trench 3 looking west, showing modern pit. Scale 1m



Trench 1 looking west. Scale 1m



Trench 5 looking north-east. Scale 1m



Trench 6 looking north-west. Scale 1m



Trench 2 looking south. Scale 1m

Figure 2: Trial trenching results

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