

**GRANGE PADDOCKS,  
BISHOP'S STORTFORD,  
HERTFORDSHIRE**



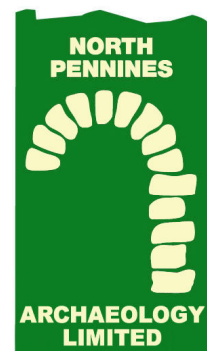
**WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

**CP. No: 941/09**

**08/06/2009**

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# NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

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### *Quality Assurance*

This report covers works as outlined in the brief for the above-named project as issued by the relevant authority, and as outlined in the agreed programme of works. Any deviation to the programme of works has been agreed by all parties. The works have been carried out according to the guidelines set out in the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Standards, Policy Statements and Codes of Conduct. The report has been prepared in keeping with the guidance set out by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd on the preparation of reports.

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## SUMMARY

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North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Helen Martin-Bacon, on behalf of Wardell Armstrong Ltd, acting for their clients 'Everyone Active', to undertake an archaeological watching brief on geotechnical groundworks relating to the proposed extension at Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 4895 2207).

The Archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken over a period of two days between 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2009. The watching brief monitored eight test pits.

Archaeological remains were observed in four out of the eight test pits, with both the test pits within the proposed building footprint (TP 6 and 7) containing archaeological deposits. Due to the presence of archaeological deposits within the development area it is recommended that an additional programme of archaeological investigation be implemented.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Helen Martin-Bacon of Wardell Armstrong Ltd, for commissioning the project, and for all assistance throughout the work.

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would also like to extend their thanks to the geotechnical team for their help during this project and the plant operator from R.A.Swan Ltd.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Frank Giocco. The report was written by Frank Giocco and the drawings were produced by Jocelyn Strickland. The project was managed by Frank Giocco, Technical Director for NPA Ltd. The report was edited by Matt Town, Project Manager for NPA Ltd.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 In May 2009, North Pennines Archaeology was invited by Wardell Armstrong Ltd, to maintain an archaeological watching brief at Grange Paddocks, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 4895 2207; Figure 1 and Figure 2), during groundworks associated with geotechnical test pits. The proposed works lie within the immediate vicinity of a Romano-British Settlement. Previous fieldwork carried out in 1979 (Garfi 1979) and 2001 confirmed the presence of significant Roman remains in the area of the proposed development. As a result, Alison Tinniswood, Historic Environment Officer of Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit (HEU) requested that all ground reduction be subject to a programme of archaeological observation and investigation. This is in line with government advice as set out in the DoE Planning Policy Guidance on Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16).
- 1.1.2 All groundworks associated with the geotechnical work at Grange Paddocks was excavated under full archaeological supervision and all stages of the archaeological work were undertaken following approved statutory guidelines (IfA 2002), and were consistent with the specification provided by Martin-Bacon (2009) and generally accepted best practice.
- 1.1.3 This report outlines the monitoring works undertaken on-site.

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## 2 METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1.1 A project design was submitted by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd in response to a request by Helen Martin Bacon of Wardell Armstrong, for an archaeological watching brief of the study area. Following acceptance of the project design by Alison Tinniswood, Historic Environment Officer with HEU, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by the client to undertake the work. The project design was adhered to in full, and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), and generally accepted best practice.

### 2.2 THE WATCHING BRIEF

2.2.1 The works involved a structured watching brief to observe, record and excavate any archaeological deposits from the development site. A watching brief is a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons, on a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed (IfA 2002).

2.2.2 The aims and principal methodology of the watching brief can be summarised as follows:

- To inform upon the presence or absence of archaeological remains
- To assess depth of stratification and the level of preservation of any archaeological remains
- To inform upon the requirement for further archaeological investigation prior to construction commencing
- To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits should they be present

### 2.3 THE ARCHIVE

2.3.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the specification, and in line with current UKIC (1990) and English Heritage Guidelines (1991) and according to the Archaeological Archives Forum recommendations (Brown 2007). The archive will eventually be deposited



within Bishop's Stortford Museum. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier NPA09, BSG-A, CP 941/09.

- 2.3.2 North Pennines Archaeology, support the **Online AccesS** to the **Index of Archaeological InvestigationS (OASIS)** project. This project aims to provide an on-line index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature, created as a result of developer-funded archaeological work. As a result, details of the results of this project will be made available by North Pennines Archaeology, as a part of this national project.

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## 3 BACKGROUND

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### 3.1 LOCATION AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- 3.1.1 The site is located on the northern edge of Bishop's Stortford in the valley of the River Stort. The site lies on the flood plain just to the east of the river.
- 3.1.2 The proposed development is located within an Area of Archaeological Significance which includes very substantial evidence of a Roman urban settlement. The Roman road known as Stane Street crosses the playing fields less than 50m to the south of the swimming pool.
- 3.1.3 The area of the Leisure Centre itself is known to contain significant archaeological deposits of Roman date. In 1978 the footprint of the existing changing room next to the swimming pool was excavated revealing occupation evidence of 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD date (MHT 6505). The excavation uncovered a small concentration of pits and post holes cut into gravel dumps representing two distinct phases of Roman occupation.
- 3.1.4 In 2001 an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching (MHT12051) was undertaken prior to the construction of an extension to the existing gym and pool. The evaluation uncovered significant archaeological remains of Roman date and included linear ditches, interpreted as enclosures or field boundaries of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century date. Other finds included human and animal bone, brick, tile and iron objects. Significantly the remains of four inhumation burials were excavated in the south-western part of the site. Two of the burials contained 1<sup>st</sup> century AD pottery, one contained 2<sup>nd</sup> century pottery and the other 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century pottery suggesting considerable continuity of use of the area for burials.

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## 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 The watching brief monitoring was undertaken over two days between 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> May 2009. This involved the monitoring of eight test pits (see Figure 2 for test pit locations). The trenches were excavated mechanically by a JCB 3CX using a combination of 0.6m and 0.9m toothed buckets.

### 4.2 TEST PIT 1

4.2.1 Test Pit 1 was located to the east of the proposed development on an area of geotechnical investigation relating to a possible soak away. The trench measured 0.9m by 1.4m and reached a maximum depth of 0.50m. The natural subsoil was not observed in this trench with the earliest recorded deposit being a compact cobble layer (103). Context (103) comprised a silty cobble rich deposit with frequent charcoal flecking its depth is unknown at this stage as it was left in situ. Context (103) was then sealed by a second layer of compact river cobbles (102) measuring 0.14m in depth. This layer contained large amounts of bone and Romano-British pottery of late second century date. Context 102 was sealed beneath an alluvial deposit of silty gravel which is likely to have accumulated during periodical flooding of the valley basin.



*Plate 1: Context (102)*

### 4.3 TEST PIT 2

4.3.1 Test Pit 2 was located to the north west of the proposed development on an area of geotechnical investigation relating to a possible soak away. The trench measured 1.3m by 0.90m and reached a maximum depth of 1.1m. A plastic water pipe was observed in the centre of the trench. The whole trench contained mixed building waste and was obviously related to the construction of the changing rooms in 1979. No archaeology or undisturbed subsoil were recorded in the trench.

### 4.4 TEST PIT 3

4.4.1 Test Pit 3 was located to the north of the development area behind the current changing rooms. A homogenous plough soil (**100**) measuring 0.45m in depth was observed sitting directly on top of the natural gravels (**101**). No archaeology was observed within the trench. It is likely that this trench was position within a 2001 evaluation trench (Figure 2).



*Plate 2: Test Pit 3*

### 4.5 TEST PIT 4

4.5.1 Test Pit 4 was located to the north west of the proposed development on an area of geotechnical investigation relating to a possible soak away. The trench measured 1.3m by 0.60m and reached a maximum depth of 2.7m. Alluvial deposits (**111**) measuring 0.30m were recorded sealing the natural

subsoil **(101)**. Context **(111)** was sealed beneath 0.15m of topsoil **(100)**. No archaeology was observed within the trench.

#### 4.6 TEST PIT 5

4.6.1 Test Pit 5 was located adjacent to the east wall of the leisure centre on the proposed footprint of a external staircase. The trench measured 0.9m by 1m. The trench was abandoned due to the presence of numerous services. No archaeology was observed within the trench.

#### 4.7 TEST PIT 6

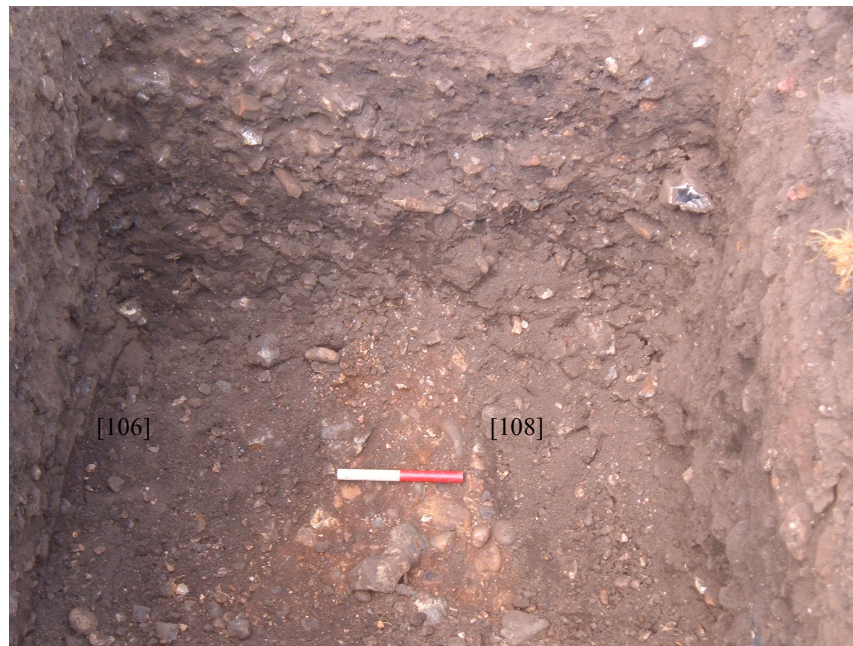
4.7.1 Test Pit 6 was positioned with the area of the proposed extension and measured 0.9m by 1.4m. The trench reached a maximum depth of 2.5m (Figure 4). A sequence of natural river gravels **(101)** were observed with two possible Roman pits cutting into the natural subsoil. The two pits **(106)** and **(108)**, due to the confines of the watching brief and trench size, were left unexcavated, but do appear to correspond to a number of small pits recorded beneath the changing rooms during the 1978 rescue excavation. These pits were dated by pottery evidence to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. The upper fills of these two possible pits (**(107)** and **(109)** respectively) both consisted of dark brown clay silts.

4.7.2 Both contexts **(107)** and **(108)** were sealed beneath a 0.27m layer of dark brown silty loam **(104)**. Context **(104)** produced significant quantities of Roman 2<sup>nd</sup> century pottery, brick and tile and small amounts of animal bone. It is possible that context **(104)** comprised more than one homogenous deposit as at least one cut was hinted at in section. Only more extensive excavation could clarify the exact nature of context **(104)**. This probable occupation layer **(104)** was then sealed beneath a compact band of alluvial silty gravel **(105)**, which measured 0.25m in depth and was in turn sealed beneath a 0.12m layer of topsoil **(100)**.

#### 4.8 TEST PIT 7

4.8.1 Test Pit 7 was positioned within the area of the proposed extension approximately 3m to the west of Test Pit 6 and measured 0.6m by 1.4m. The trench reached a maximum depth of 1.1m (Figure 4). The sequence was broadly similar to that of Test Pit 6 with the natural gravel **(101)** sealed beneath a dark brown silty loam **(110)**. Context **(110)** measured approximately 0.30m in depth and produced a small assemblage of Roman pottery, tile and bone and again is likely to represent a occupation layer of late 2<sup>nd</sup> century date. This deposit was then sealed beneath the same alluvial

build up **(105)** that was observed in section within Test Pit 6 measuring approximately 0.3m in depth.



*Plate 3: Detail of pits [106] and [108]*

#### 4.9 TEST PIT 8

4.9.1 Test Pit 8 was located to the north west of the proposed development approximately 17m to the north of Test Pit 1 on an area of geotechnical investigation relating to a possible soak away. The natural gravels **(101)** were observed at a depth of 0.6m and were seen to have been cut by a large pit (**[114]**) or ditch which continued beyond the limits of the Test Pit. This feature had a near vertical edge and measured over 1.2m in depth and was filled by two distinct fills **(112)** and **(113)**. The primary fill **(113)** consisted of a moist clay silt with frequent charcoal and oyster shell flecks and measured over 1m in depth. Small quantities of pottery and bone were recovered from the fill.

4.9.2 The secondary fill **(112)** measuring over 1.2m in depth consisted of a dark brown silt and contained large quantities of Roman pottery, brick, tile and animal bone. From the assemblage of material recovered it is likely that this feature represents a rubbish pit or a ditch infilled with midden material, future work on the samples taken from this feature would undoubtedly add to our understanding of this feature.

4.9.3 The upper fill of this pit was sealed by a compact gravel rich alluvial deposit **(111)** measuring 0.40m in depth. This alluvial deposit produced no finds and

was identical in composition to the alluvial deposits that were recorded sealing the final phase of Roman-British activity throughout the study area.

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## 5 FINDS

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### 5.1 FINDS ASSESSMENT

- 5.1.1 A total of 108 finds from five different contexts were recovered during the watching brief, (Table 1). At this stage the material has only been cleaned and quantified with minimal assessment as it is understood that this material will be fully assessed during the main phase of fieldwork.
- 5.1.2 The finds were cleaned and packaged according to standard guidelines, and recorded under the supervision of F.Giecco (NPA Ltd Technical Director). The metalwork was placed in a stable environment and was monitored for corrosion.

### 5.2 ROMAN CERAMIC VESSELS

- 5.2.1 In total 80 fragments of a Roman ceramic vessel were recovered. The majority of the fragments were made up of coarse wares ((72), mortaria (2), colour coated wares (6) and Samian (2). The coarse wares included greywares and black burnished ware fragments. The mortarium fragments comprised the wall and rim of a coarse ware bowl, cream in colour, known as a mortarium. The upper sherd has a hooked flange while the lower sherd has black angular grit embedded on the inner surface.
- 5.2.2 Mortaria are bowl-shaped vessels with a prominent hooked flange or vertical 'wall-sided' rim. This enabled better gripping of the bowl during use. They often have a spout formed in the rim and grit embedded in the inner surface. The form suggests use as a grinding or mixing bowl.

### 5.3 MODERN CERAMIC VESSELS

- 5.3.1 A number of modern pottery fragments were observed in context (100) during the initial topsoil removal. This material was noted on site but not retained.

### 5.4 METAL OBJECTS

- 5.4.1 A single piece of iron was recovered which although highly corroded appears to be a fragment of a small knife blade.



NPA 09			SITE CODE: BSG-A		
Context	Trench	Material	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Period
(112)	TP8	Samian	2	0.052	Roman
(112)	TP8	Coarseware	38	1.336	Roman
(112)	TP8	Greyware	2	0.836	Roman
(112)	TP8	Mortaria	1	0.149	Roman
(110)	TP7	CBM	8	0.434	
(110)	TP7	Possible Furnace Lining	2	0.104	
(110)	TP7	Coarseware	3	0.048	Roman
(102)	TP1	CBM	7	0.14	
(102)	TP1	Coarseware	21	0.39	Roman
(102)	TP1	Possible Furnace Lining	1	0.008	
(102)	TP1	Fe	1	0.005	
u/s	BH1	CBM	2	0.007	
(112)	TP8	Fineware	4	0.034	Roman
(112)	TP8	Fe	1	0.007	
(112)	TP8	CBM	3	0.161	
(112)	TP8	Possible Furnace Lining	1	0.024	
(107)	TP6	Coarseware	1	0.01	Roman
(104)	TP6	Mortaria	1	0.29	Roman
(104)	TP6	Coarseware	7	0.113	Roman
(104)	TP6	CBM	1	0.035	
(104)	TP6	Spindle Whorl	1	0.008	

*Table 1: Finds Table of Artefacts Recovered from the Watching Brief.*

## 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 6.1 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.1 At least two phases of Romano-British activity were recorded during the watching brief, with four out of the eight Test Pits containing significant Romano-British deposits. Deposits recorded included pits, cobble surfaces and probable occupation layers indicating significant activity in the immediate vicinity of the development area. The pattern of activity ties in really well with the remains recorded beneath the adjacent changing room block in 1979 (Garfi 1979a).
- 6.1.2 Due to the limitations of the watching brief it is impossible to characterize these deposits to any extent other than in confirming the presence of Romano-British occupation in the development area.

### 6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.2.1 The main purpose of this watching brief was to confirm the presence or absence of archaeology in the development area and inform the next stage of archaeological mitigation. As the presence of in-situ archaeological deposits were recorded in the main area of development, it is recommended that a programme of archaeological investigation be implemented prior to the development of the site.

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## 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT TABLE

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<b>Context Number</b>	<b>Context Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
(100)	Deposit	Topsoil
(101)	Deposit	Natural
(102)	Deposit	Compact Silty Gravel
(103)	Deposit	Silty Gravel
(104)	Deposit	Silty Loam
(105)	Deposit	Compact Silty Gravel
(106)	Cut	Pit?
(107)	Fill	Fill of Pit [106]
(108)	Cut	Pit?
(109)	Fill	Fill of Pit [108]?
(110)	Deposit	Dark Brown Silty Loam
(111)	Deposit	Alluvium
(112)	Deposit	Fill of Ditch
(113)	Deposit	Fill of Ditch
(114)	Cut	Ditch or Large Pit

*Table 2: List of Contexts issued during Watching Brief*

## APPENDIX 2: FIGURES

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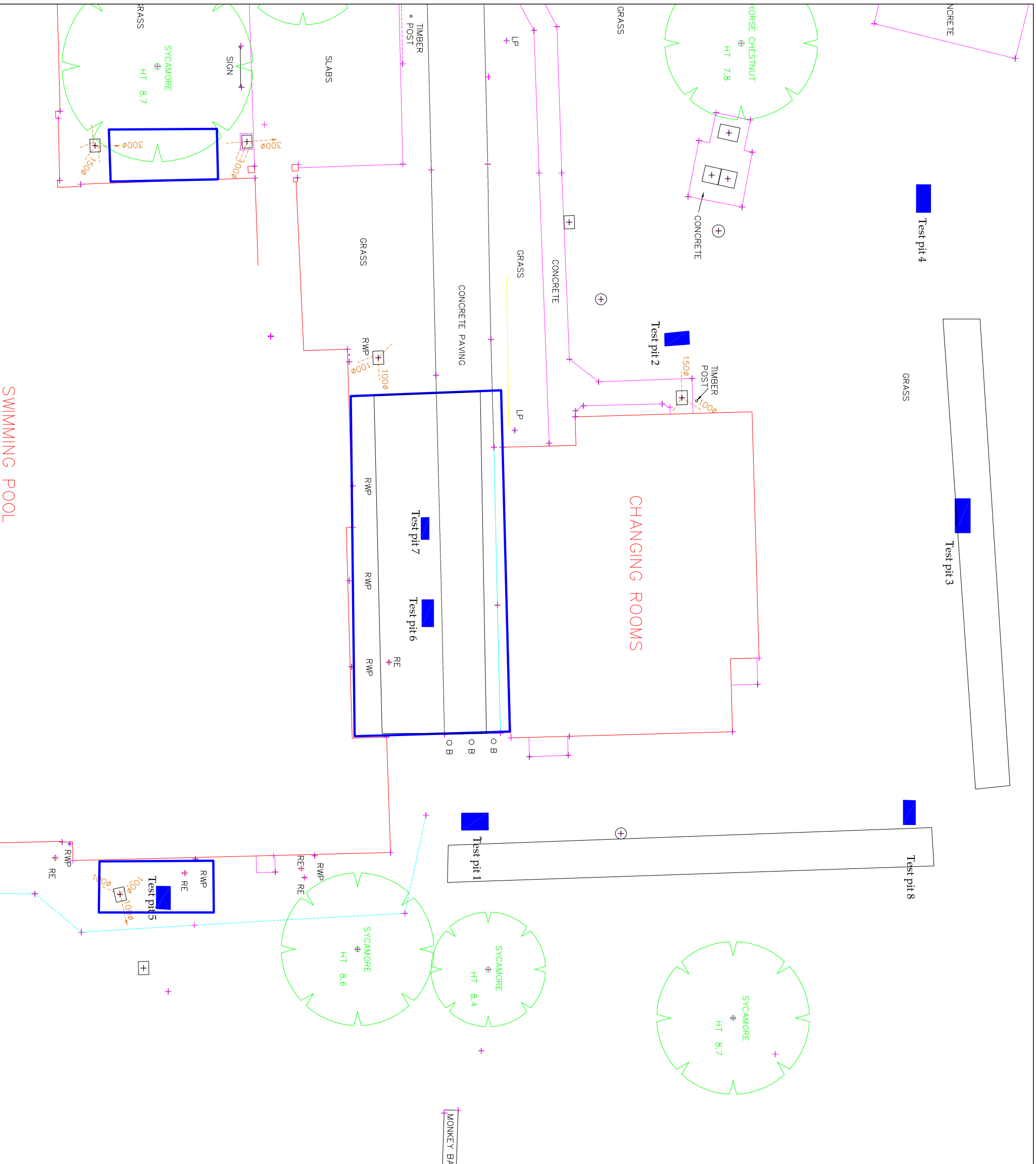
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 REPORT No: CP 941/09  
 CLIENT: Wardell Armstrong  
 DRAWN BY: FG  
 DATE: May 2009  
 FIGURE: Figure 1

KEY:  
 Site Location



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Figure 1 : Site Location Plan






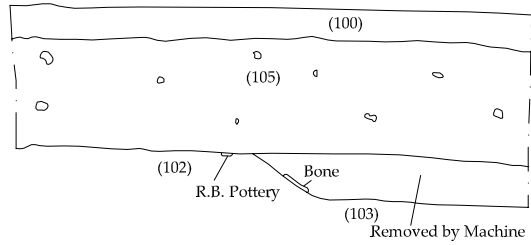
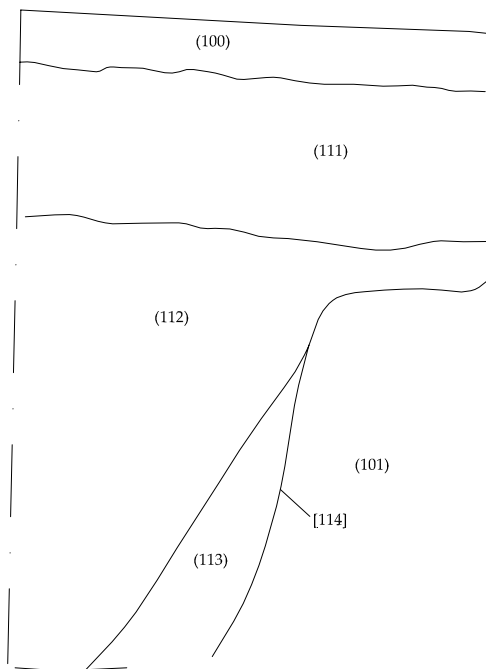
	
<p>North Pennines Archaeology Ltd 2009</p> <p>Grange Paddocks, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire</p>	
CLIENT:	Wardell Armstrong
SCALE:	1:200 at A3
DRAWN BY:	JS
DATE:	May 2009
KEY:	<p> Test Pit</p> <p> 2001 evaluation trench</p>
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FIGURE:	Figure 2

Figure 2: Location of test pits

# Test Pit 1



# Test Pit 8



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 FIGURE: Figure No

Figure 3: East facing section of Test Pit 1 and north facing section of Test Pit 8





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 Bishop's Stroford

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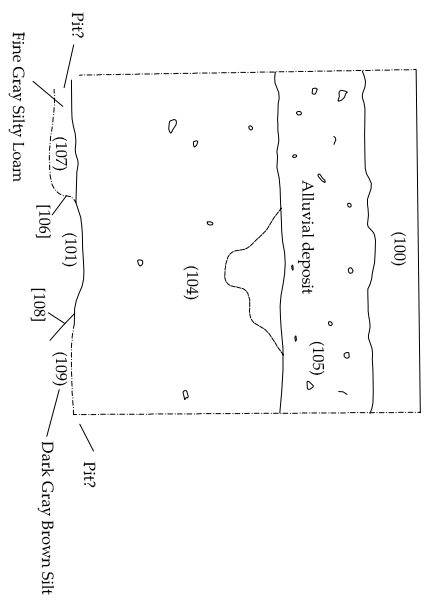
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REPORT No:  
 CP 941/09

FIGURE:  
 Figure 4

## Test Pit 6



## Test Pit 7

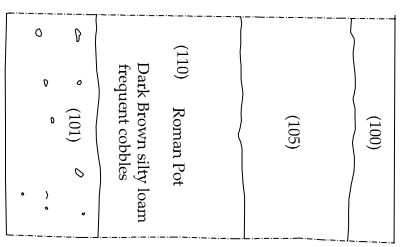


Figure 4: Test Pits 6 and 7, east facing sections