

# 5 Church Lane, Royston, Hertfordshire

An Archaeological Evaluation



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HERTFORDSHIRE**  
**An Archaeological Evaluation**

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## Summary

*A trench-based evaluation, comprising a single trench covering 7.4m<sup>2</sup>, was undertaken at No. 5 Church Lane, Royston, Hertfordshire, between the 30<sup>th</sup> of November and the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2011. Here, a sequence consisting of four phases of activity was identified. The first of these four comprised a group of three undated pits, which were each filled with eroded subsoil material. Subsequently, these features were overlain by two undated layers that may have been associated with the establishment of an open garden at the site. Then, most probably at some time during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, two small cottages were established on the Church Lane frontage; to their rear, a substantial boundary wall was erected. These buildings remained in use until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, when they were levelled and replaced by a single structure. This latter building was constructed of concrete in the 'International' Modernist style.*

## Introduction

The Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) undertook a trench-based evaluation on a 348m<sup>2</sup> area of land located in the southern part of the town of Royston, Hertfordshire, between the 30<sup>th</sup> of November and the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2011. The Proposed Development Area (PDA) is centred on TL 3569 4066 and is situated on the southern side of Church Lane, a short distance to the west of the parish church of St. John the Baptist and immediately to the northwest of a former manorial residence known as The Priory (see Figure 1). It lies approximately 100m to the southeast of the historic core of the town. The PDA is currently occupied by a disused domestic residence – No. 5 Church Lane – which has a small, concrete-covered yard area to its rear. A single trench, covering an area of 7.4m<sup>2</sup> (or 2.1% of the area), was excavated within this latter space (see Figure 2). This work followed the specification issued by the CAU (Dickens 2011) and approved by Andy Instone, Development Control Archaeologist at Hertfordshire County Council. The project was commissioned by Freeland Rees Roberts on behalf of NPK Holdings Ltd. in advance of proposed redevelopment.

### *Methodology*

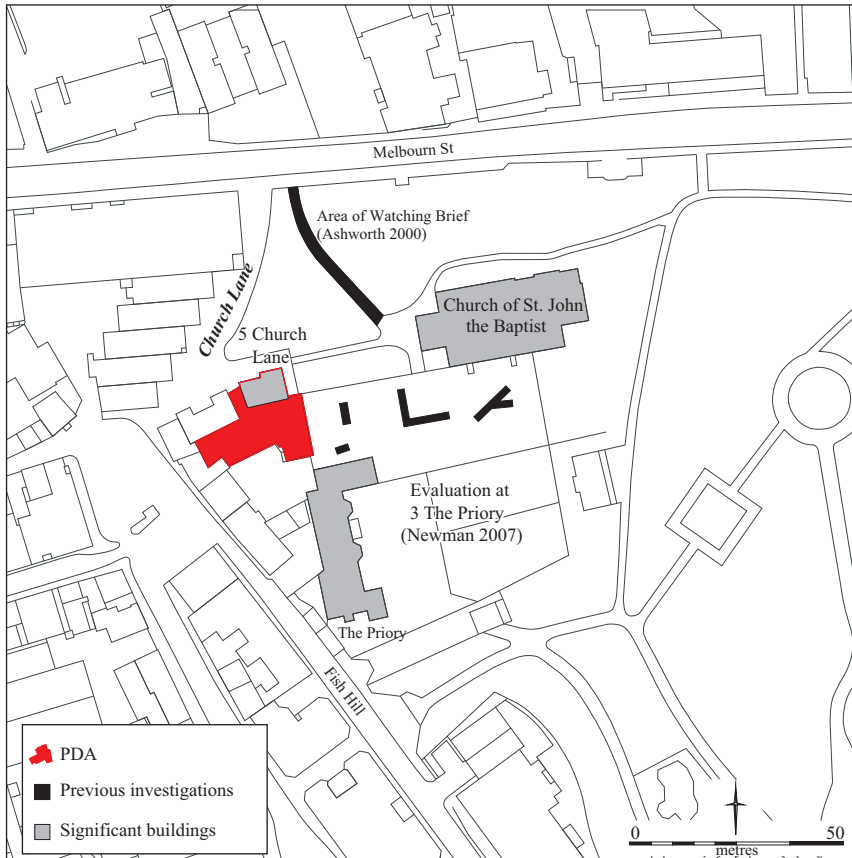
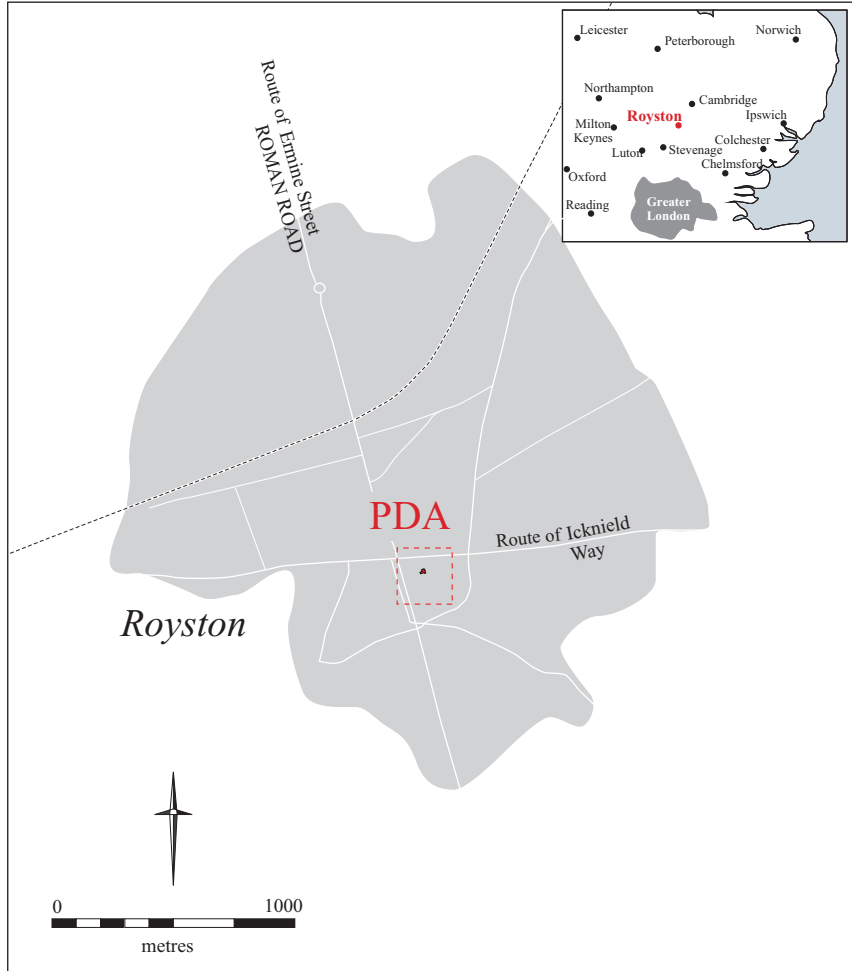
During the course of the evaluation, modern deposits and overburden were removed by a small 360° mechanical excavator with a 1m wide toothless bucket. All archaeological features were then excavated by hand and recorded using the CAU-modified version of the MoLAS system (Spence 1994). Base plans were drawn at a scale of 1:20, whilst sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. Context numbers are indicated within the text by square brackets (*e.g.* [001]), and feature numbers are denoted by the prefix F. (*e.g.* F.03). The photographic archive consists of a series of digital images. All work was carried out in strict accordance with statutory health and safety legislation and the recommendations of the Federation of Archaeological Managers & Employers (Allen & Holt 2010). The site code for this project is RCL11.

### *Landscape and Topography*

Royston lies between two spurs of the northernmost point of the Chiltern Hills, and is situated upon an outcrop of Middle Cretaceous chalk (British Geological Survey 1976; Branigan 1994). The PDA is positioned just outside the core of the historic town, at the base of a natural ridge that rises up Fish Hill to the southeast. Within the investigated yard area, the present surface height lies at 63.65m OD. Natural chalk was encountered at 63.01m OD and a gentle slope was discernable to the south, where this material dropped to 62.81m OD.

### *Historical and Archaeological Background*

The historical and archaeological background of the area surrounding the PDA has been covered in depth in a recent desktop assessment (Appleby 2006) and nearby evaluation (Newman 2007), and the wider background of Royston has been reviewed in several published sources (Kingston 1906; Page 1912; Slater 2004; North Hertfordshire District Council 2007). Neither is therefore reproduced here in full. Nevertheless, it is necessary to briefly outline the history of the town in order to place the PDA securely within its wider context.



Based on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map  
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Figure 1. Site location.

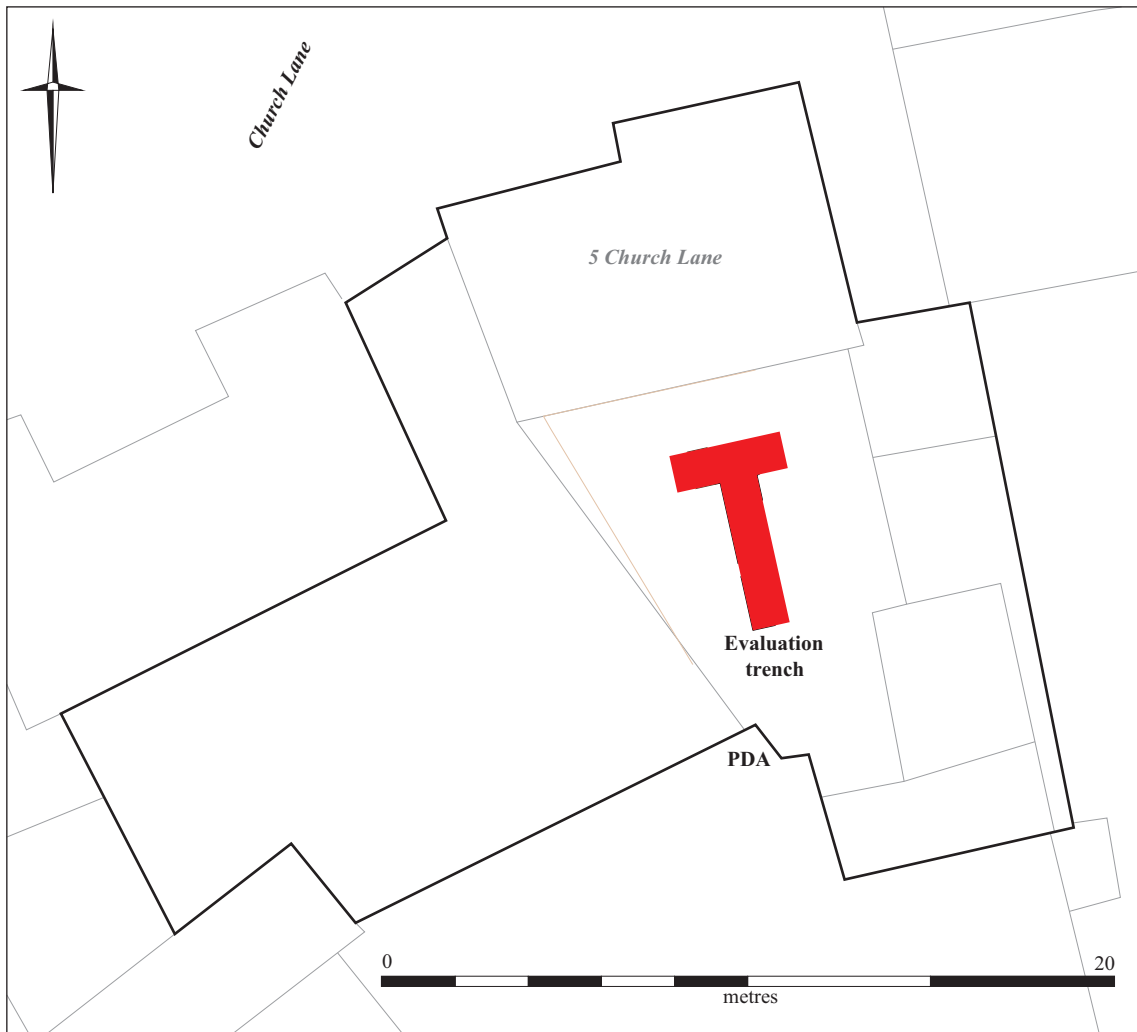


Figure 2. Trench location, with general view of trench facing north.

The precise origins of Royston are obscure. A settlement appears most likely to have first emerged in this location around the time of the Norman Conquest, following the establishment of a probable hermitage at the crossroads of the much earlier routes of Ermine Street and the Icknield Way. The name of the town is purportedly due to the erection of a cross, known as the *Cross of Rohesia* or *Crux Roaisie*, at their point of intersection although this attribution – along with the name of the person who erected the cross – remains the subject of debate (see Cussans 1881; Kingston 1906; Page 1912; Slater 2004). Most significantly for its later development, however, in 1184 an Augustinian priory was founded some 200m southeast of the crossroads, and thus immediately to the east of the PDA (HHER ref: 4200; see Figure 1). The medieval town then appears to have grown up to the west of the priory as a planned ecclesiastical development, concentrated along the High Street, King’s Street and Kneesworth Street in the form of a distinct ‘ribbon’ or linear settlement (Slater 2004, 10-11). It was known at first as *Royes* or *Roeyes*, the first reference to *Roiston* being recorded in 1286 (Glover *et al.* 1938). Although not large, the commercial importance of Royston as a regional market town during this period is underlined by its rapid restoration following extensive fires in 1324 and 1405 (Smith & Ranson 2001, 3).

Divided between five parishes and across two counties, the diverse elements of the town were not united as a single entity until 1537 following the dissolution and suppression of the priory (though it was not until 1897 that it was finally brought under a single county authority). The manorial rights of Royston were purchased by one Robert Chester, who appears to have utilised several of the priory’s claustral buildings as the basis of his new manorial residence – although little if anything of this structure survives above-ground today (HHER ref: 12353; Smith 1993, 150-51). The town’s residents purchased the priory church and converted its eastern end into the present parish church of St. John the Baptist; its western end was demolished and subsequently became the location of the parish cemetery (Kingston 1906, 77; Page 1914, 453). Two hospitals of the period are also known to have existed in Royston. The Hospital of St. John and St James was founded *c.* 1244, becoming a free chapel in 1486 (Page 1914, 464); it was located around 150m to the west of the PDA (HHER ref: 2726). The Hospital of St Nicolas was founded as a leper hospital *c.* 1200 and is thought to have been located to the north of the King’s Dog House, around 300m to the north of the PDA (Knowles 1953, 388), although its precise position is currently unknown (HHER ref: 2725). Royston remained an important market town into the early post-medieval period. In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, James I established a hunting lodge on the High Street that utilised several pre-existing medieval buildings. Many elements of the ‘Royal Palace’, including the buttery, are still standing (Ashworth 1998). The town’s regional importance remained significant, for ‘by the time of Charles I the more distant Royston was buying “a very great parte of the Corne in Cambridgeshire” and sending 180 great malt wagons to the city every week’ (Fisher 1935, 60).

Archaeologically, Royston has been the subject of relatively little previous investigation. Although Prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon features have all been recorded in the general vicinity of the town (see further Semmelmann 1998; Appleby 2006), these sites are situated at too great a distance to be considered pertinent to the present study. Instead, much the most relevant investigation was conducted in 2007 immediately to the east of the current site (see Figure 1). At this time, six trenches were inserted into the lawn of No. 3 The Priory (Newman 2007). Here, numerous

features relating to four distinct phases of activity were encountered. In the first instance, masonry foundations relating to probable claustral structures associated with the former Augustinian priory were identified, along with at least four contemporary burials. Then, following the Dissolution of the priory in 1537, a manor house was established on the site that reused several of the earlier monastic buildings; part of its western range and a probable lodge-house were investigated. Subsequently, during the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, this complex was demolished and a new timber-framed mansion established (which, although altered and extended, remains standing to this day). Finally, The Priory's grounds were landscaped during the 18<sup>th</sup> century before being put to horticultural use a century later. Also of note within the immediate area is a watching brief that was undertaken in the adjacent churchyard in 2000 (see Figure 1). Here, during observation and recording of path widening and cable laying in the churchyard between the western end of the church of St. John the Baptist and Melbourn Street, a cobbled surface approximately level with the existing path was revealed, along with several broken grave markers and evidence of *in situ* burials (Ashworth 2000). Disarticulated human bone was also retrieved during this exercise. Finally, located approximately 200m to the northwest of the PDA is the site of Royston Cave. First discovered in 1742, the 'cave' was in fact deliberately hollowed-out from the underlying chalk, most probably at some time during prehistory. During the 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries it was extensively remodelled and decorated with numerous religious carvings, leading to the suggestion that it may have functioned as an oratory at this time (Beamon & Donel 1978; Smith & Ranson 2001, 5).

## Results

The results of this evaluation have been divided into two sections. The first details the archaeological sequence that was encountered within the investigated trench, and includes an account of the material culture that was recovered. The second presents a brief description of the standing building at No. 5 Church Lane.

### I) Evaluation Trench

The earliest features to be identified within the trench comprised a group of three undated pits. These features – **F.07**, **F.08** and **F.09** – each demonstrated relatively similar morphologies and fill-types, although they had all been truncated by later activity to a greater or lesser degree (see Figures 3 and 4). In general, their fills consisted of relatively sterile eroded sub-soil deposits that contained high quotients of chalk fleck inclusions within their matrices. This suggests that the pits are most likely to have been medieval or pre-medieval in origin, as they clearly predate the formation of later, more humic topsoil deposits. Overlying these features was relatively sterile sub-soil layer [027]. Although this latter deposit is most likely to have originally accrued prior to the pits' insertion, later cultivation/disturbance has now rendered any direct stratigraphic relationship indiscernible.

**F.07** comprised an irregularly sub-oval/sub-circular pit, although only a small remnant of it survived as it had been heavily truncated by modern activity. This remnant measured 0.52m+ by 0.50m+ in extent and 0.19m+ deep. Its single fill, [021], comprised a relatively well compacted deposit of mid to pale greyish brown clay silt with occasional to frequent chalk fragment and fleck inclusions. The pit's cut, [022], had moderately sloping concave sides and a partially concave base. No material culture was recovered. Stratigraphically, this feature was overlain by sub-soil layer [027].





Figure 3. View of main trench, facing north (A), and view of wall F.04, facing west (B).

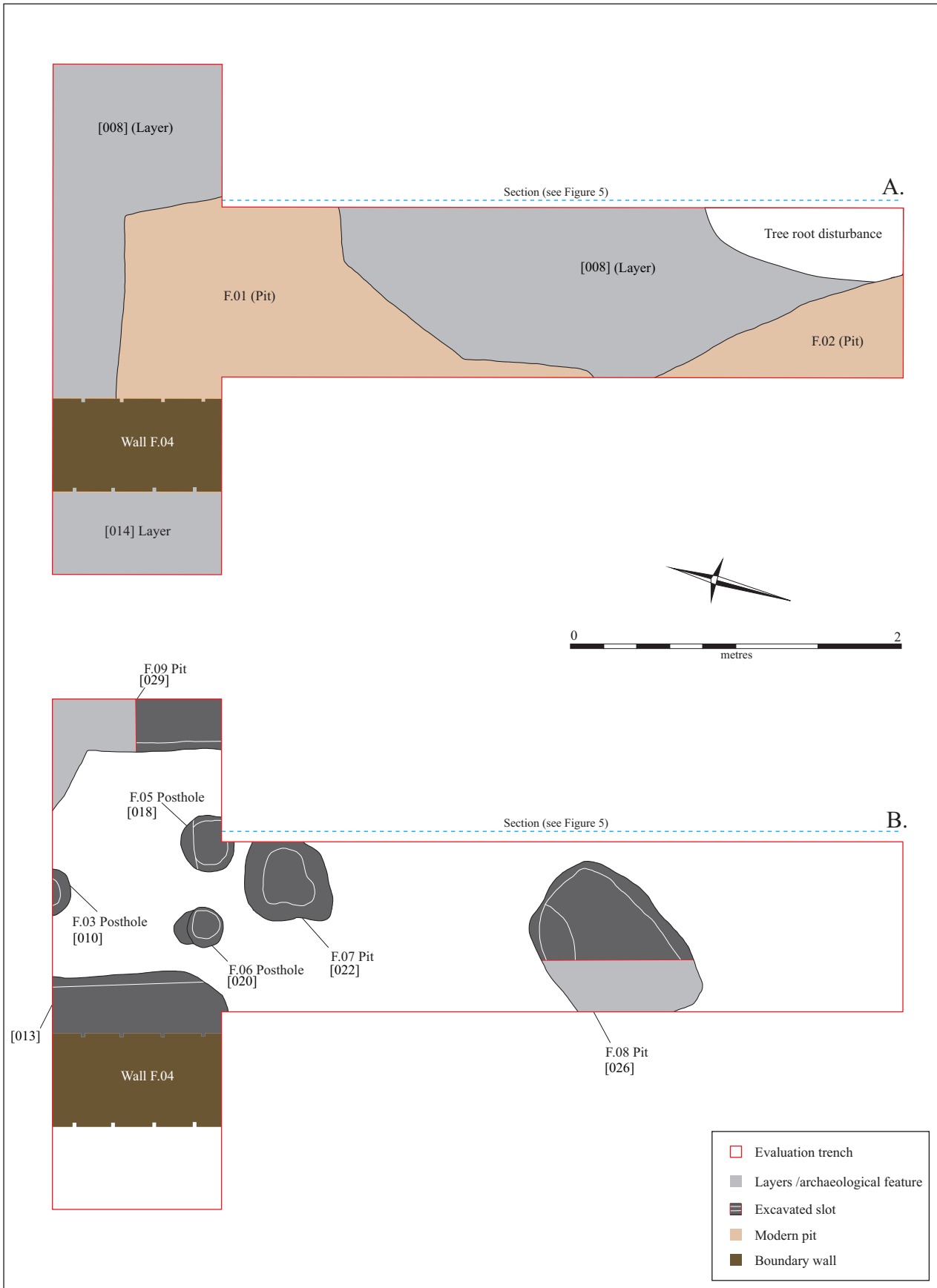


Figure 4. Plans of the upper (A) and lower (B) horizons of archaeology within the evaluation trench.

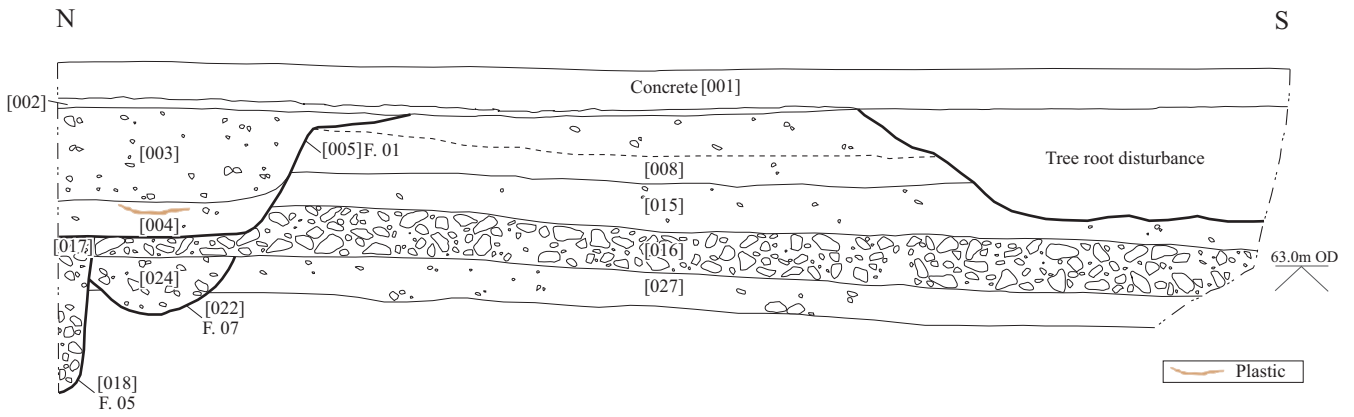


Figure 5. Photograph and section drawing, facing east.

**F.08** comprised a sub-rectangular/sub-oval pit, which measured 1.06m+ by 0.74m in extent and 0.28m+ deep. It contained three fills. The uppermost of these, **[023]**, consisted of a friable deposit of mid greyish brown sandy silt with occasional charcoal, burnt clay and chalk fleck inclusions. Beneath this, **[024]** consisted of a relatively firm deposit of mid to pale grey sandy silt with occasional charcoal, burnt clay and chalk fleck inclusions. Basal fill **[025]** consisted of a relatively firm deposit of mid to pale grey sandy silt with frequent chalk fragment inclusions. These deposits were contained within cut **[026]**, whose sides had a sharp initial break of slope leading to a moderate concave slope and an irregular, partially concave base. No material culture was recovered. Stratigraphically, this feature was overlain by sub-soil layer **[027]**.

**F.09** comprised a sub-rectangular/sub-oval pit, which measured 1.02m+ by 0.27m+ in extent and 0.23m+ deep. Its single fill, **[028]**, consisted of a mixed deposit of pale grey sandy silt with frequent chalk fleck and fragment inclusions. The pit's cut, **[029]**, had steeply sloping to near vertical sides and a relatively flat base. No material culture was recovered. Stratigraphically, this feature was overlain by sub-soil layer **[027]**.

Layer **[027]** comprised a relatively firm deposit of mid to pale clay silt with occasional chalk fleck inclusions. It typically measured 0.12m thick, and contained no material culture.

Subsequently, layers **[016]** and **[015]** were deposited across the area (Figure 5). The first of these two consisted of a mixed, undated deposit that contained a very high proportion of clunch fragment inclusions. This material therefore appears to have been employed as a levelling/make-up deposit that was utilised in order to raise the general ground level of the area. The presence of extensive, although unworked, chalk fragments indicate that this deposit may have been associated with the dissolution and partial demolition of the adjacent priory in 1537. Above this was situated a second relatively sterile deposit, which again contained no datable material; in contrast to the preceding layer, however, the latter material most probably represented the vestiges of a horticultural soil horizon. This suggests that the area most probably comprised an open space that may have been used as garden at this time.

Layer **[016]** comprised a relatively firm deposit of mid to pale brown silty clay with very frequent (80%+) chalk fleck and fragment inclusions. It typically measured 0.17m thick, and contained no material culture. Stratigraphically, it overlay sub-soil deposit **[027]**. Above this layer was deposit **[015]**, which consisted of mid to pale brown clay silt, with occasional to rare gravel and chalk fleck inclusions. This layer, which also contained no material culture, it typically measured 0.15m thick.

A major change in the usage of the area occurred during the late post-medieval or early modern period (*c.* 17<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century). At this time, a substantial brick-built boundary wall – **F.04** – was constructed (see Figures 3B and 4). This subdivided the investigated area into two adjacent properties, both of which fronted onto Church Lane. The nature of the materials that were employed in the wall's construction – which included unfrosted red bricks, lime mortar, peg tiles and unworked flint nodules – suggest that it was most probably built at some time during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Also associated with this phase of activity on stratigraphic grounds were three closely adjacent postholes, **F.03**, **F.05** and **F.06**. These features were related to backyard activities that were undertaken towards the rear of the easternmost of the two properties. Subsequently, the postholes were overlain by the formation of well-worked humic garden soil deposit **[008]**. Within the yard of the adjacent, westernmost property, in contrast, all evidence of the preceding sequence of deposits was removed during the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century when a much deeper, banded garden soil deposit – **[014]** – was introduced. This demonstrates that although small, the two properties comprised separate entities with differing developmental trajectories.

**F.04** comprised a north-south aligned brick-built boundary wall. The wall itself, **[012]**, was principally constructed from unfrosted red bricks, measuring 220mm by 110mm by 55mm on average, which were bonded with pale cream lime mortar. Two courses of stretchers survived, which served to retain a rubble core composed of roughly mortared brick fragments and unworked flint nodules. Below this was situated a course of flat-laid peg tiles that in turn overlay a basal foundation composed of edge-set bricks. Overall, the wall measured 1.0m+ by 0.54m in extent and survived to a height of 0.34m+. It was situated within broad, flat-based construction cut **[013]**, which had near vertical sides and measured 1.0m+ long, 0.96m+ wide and 0.41m deep. This had been backfilled by relatively loose mid to pale greyish brown silt deposit **[011]**, which contained occasional to frequent chalk fragment and brick and tile fragment inclusions. No material culture was recovered. Stratigraphically, this wall truncated layer **[015]** and, following its demolition, its remains were overlain by layer **[008]**.

**F.03**, **F.05** and **F.06** comprised roughly sub-circular postholes, which were each markedly similar in terms of both their morphology and fill. In size they varied between 0.26m and 0.36m in diameter and between 0.15m and 0.32m in depth. Their cuts – **[010]**, **[018]** and **[020]** – each had near vertical sides and irregular, partially concave bases. Their fills – **[009]**, **[017]** and **[019]** – each consisted of pale greyish brown silt with frequent chalk fleck inclusions. No material culture was recovered. Stratigraphically, these postholes all truncated layer **[015]** and were overlain by layer **[008]**.

Layer **[008]** comprised a mid to dark brown clay silt deposit, which contained occasional chalk fleck inclusions. The layer became increasingly darker and more heavily bioturbated with depth; overall, it typically measured 0.22m deep. No material culture was recovered. Stratigraphically, this deposit overlay postholes **F.03**, **F.05** and **F.06** and abutted wall **F.04**. Layer **[014]** comprised a banded mid to dark brown clay silt deposit, which contained occasional lenses of pale grey ash and crushed chalk fragments. This layer, which measured 0.81m+ thick, also contained several sherds of mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery and appears to have been situated within a cut that had removed all preceding deposits.

At some time around the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the two properties were amalgamated into one. Boundary wall **F.04** was demolished, and the two earlier dwellings were levelled and replaced by a single-storey structure that was primarily constructed from concrete (No. 5 Church Lane). Within the investigated area, two large pits – **F.01** and **F.02** – were identified that relate to this period (see Figure 3A). Both features contained modern inclusions, including plastic, which demonstrated that they were mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century in origin. Overlying them was a concrete yard surface, **[001]**, which complemented the aesthetic of the adjacent Modernist structure.

**F.01** comprised a large pit of irregular form, which measured 1.22m+ by 1.0m+ in extent and 0.43m deep. Its upper fill, **[003]**, consisted of mid to pale grey clay silt with frequent chalk fragment inclusions. This overlay **[004]**, a basal deposit of very dark brown loose silt that contained numerous modern inclusions (including a plastic toy truck and portions of a Raleigh bicycle). Cut **[005]** had straight but irregular steeply sloping sides and a relatively flat base. Stratigraphically, this feature abutted wall **F.04** and truncated garden soil **[008]**.

**F.02** comprised a sub-oval/sub-circular pit, which measured 0.72m+ by 0.32m+ in extent and 0.46m deep. Its single fill, **[006]**, consisted of very dark brown loose silt with modern inclusions (including a milk bottle with a foil lid). Cut **[007]** had steeply sloping sides and a relatively flat base. Stratigraphically, this feature truncated garden soil **[008]**.

Layer **[001]** comprised mid grey concrete that measured 0.13m thick. This overlay bedding layer **[002]**, which comprised relatively compacted dark greyish brown clay silt that measured 0.03m thick. These layers capped the stratigraphic sequence.

## Material Culture

A small finds assemblage was recovered during the evaluation undertaken at No. 5 Church Lane, Royston. This consisted of small quantities of pottery and clay tobacco pipe, which are discussed further below.

## Pottery

A small pottery assemblage – comprising 21 sherds, weighing 1163g – was recovered from garden soil layer [014]. This material, which is broken down by fabric in Table 1, is mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century in date. It consists of a typical range of domestic vessels – including a Sunderland-type Coarseware mixing bowl, an English Utilitarian Stoneware blacking bottle and several Refined White Earthenware plates – that are found ubiquitously on sites of this period across England. The assemblage has not been retained.

Fabric	Count	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
Yelloware	1	38	38
Sunderland-type Coarseware	10	709	70.9
English Utilitarian Stoneware	2	284	142
Refined White Earthenware	8	132	16.5
	<b>21</b>	<b>1163</b>	<b>55.4</b>

**Table 1:** Pottery assemblage by fabric.

## Clay Tobacco Pipe

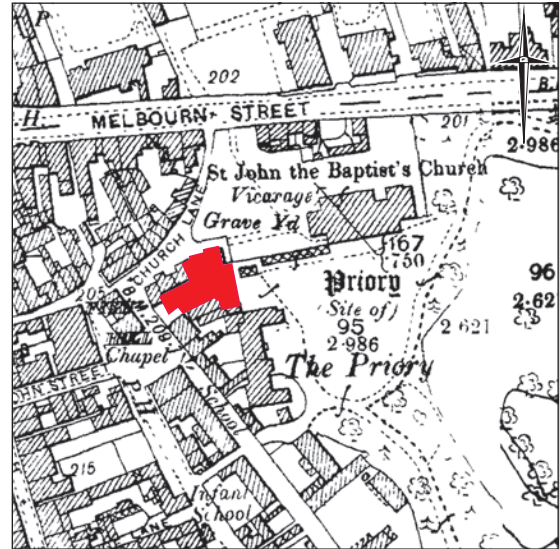
A single clay tobacco pipe bowl, along with four stem fragments, was recovered from garden soil layer [014]. Although clay pipe bowls can often be dated with a reasonable degree of accuracy on typological grounds, this particular example – which is mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century in date – is too late to be covered by Oswald’s general typology (Oswald 1975). In addition, no maker’s mark or other distinguishing features were present to allow further identification. This material has not been retained.

## II) Standing Building

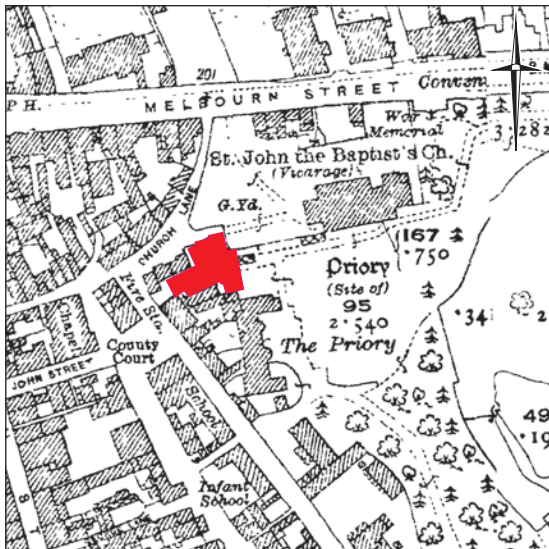
The following account represents a preliminary outline, as opposed to a full building record, as the latter lies outside the scope of the present investigation. In the first instance, the two buildings that formerly existed within the plot now occupied by No. 5 Church Lane were probably at least a century old in 1887-8 when the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey map of this area was published (see Figure 6). Nevertheless, this image establishes several key details with regard to their layout. Both structures were detached, and the easternmost building – which was the larger of the two – was separated from its neighbour by a small alleyway. Furthermore, the boundary wall that is represented archaeologically by **F.04** was also clearly represented by the cartographer. Although no trace of these buildings now survives above-ground, a portion of the easternmost structure was directly incorporated into the present standing building. This element – its cellar – was cut into the natural bedrock, with the result that up to 1.08m of roughly hewn chalk remains exposed within the lower portion of the cellar’s walls. Above this the structure is composed of unfrogged red bricks bonded with lime mortar, materials which bear a marked similarity to those employed within **F.04**. This cellar, which originally appears to have occupied the full footprint of the building, is thus most likely to be 18<sup>th</sup> century in date. Similar chalk-cut cellars are known beneath a number of buildings situated in Royston’s historic core, and at least one of these – located beneath No’s 69-71 King Street (HHER ref: 6365) – is of probable 18<sup>th</sup> century origin. Although certainty is perforce impossible given the absence of extant above-ground remains, it seems likely that these two buildings originally comprised small worker’s cottages of a type that was almost ubiquitous during this period. It is not clear whether they were constructed individually, however, on a piecemeal basis, or as part of a more general, organised development.



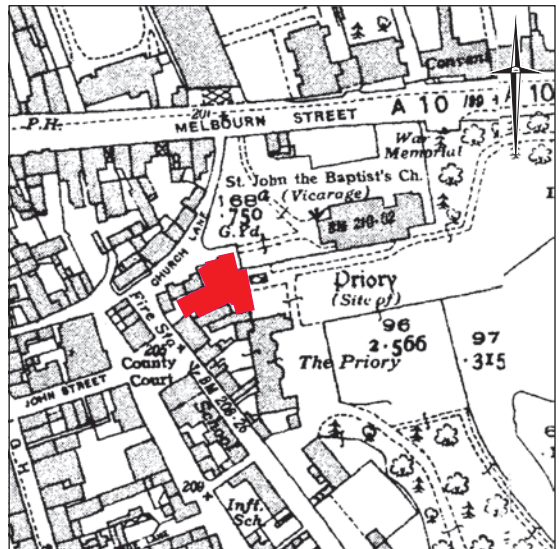
i) 1st Edition 1:2500 Series OS Map 1887-88



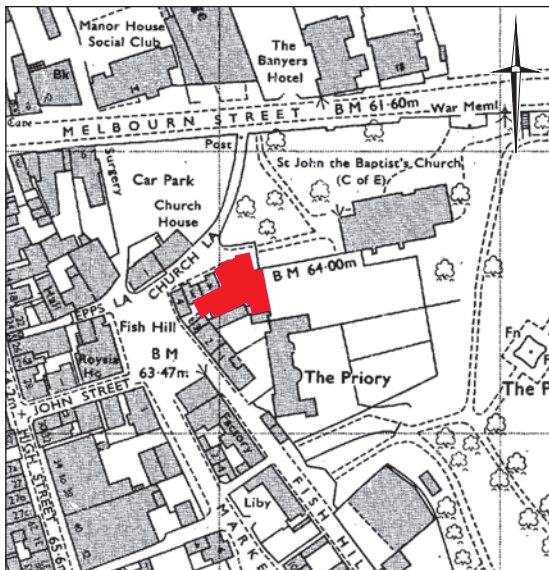
ii) 1st Revision 1:2500 Series OS Map 1902-3



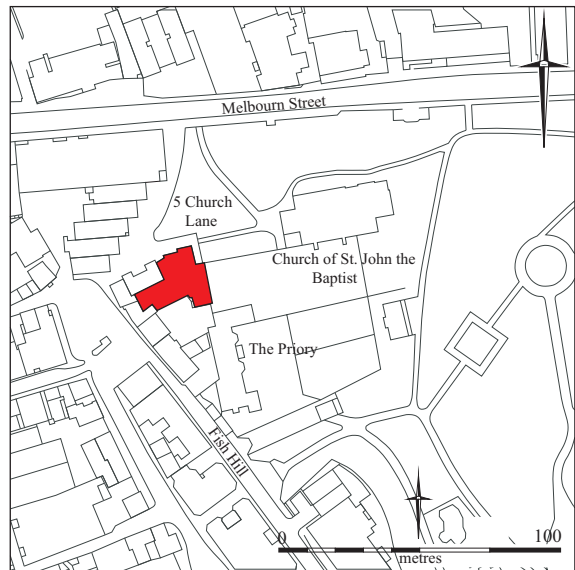
iii) 2nd Revision 1:2500 Series OS Map 1926-7



iv) 3rd Revision 1:2500 Series OS Map 1937-8



v) 1:2500 Series OS Map 1971



vi) Modern 1:2500 Series OS Map

Figure 6: Ordnance Survey historic map sequence (PDA shown in red).



A



B

Figure 7. Views of the frontage of No. 5 Church Lane, facing southeast (A) and the rear of the property, facing north (B). Note the extent of the overgrown shrubbery.





Figure 8. Views of the front door of No. 5 Church Lane, facing west (A), and the main frontage of the property, facing south (B).

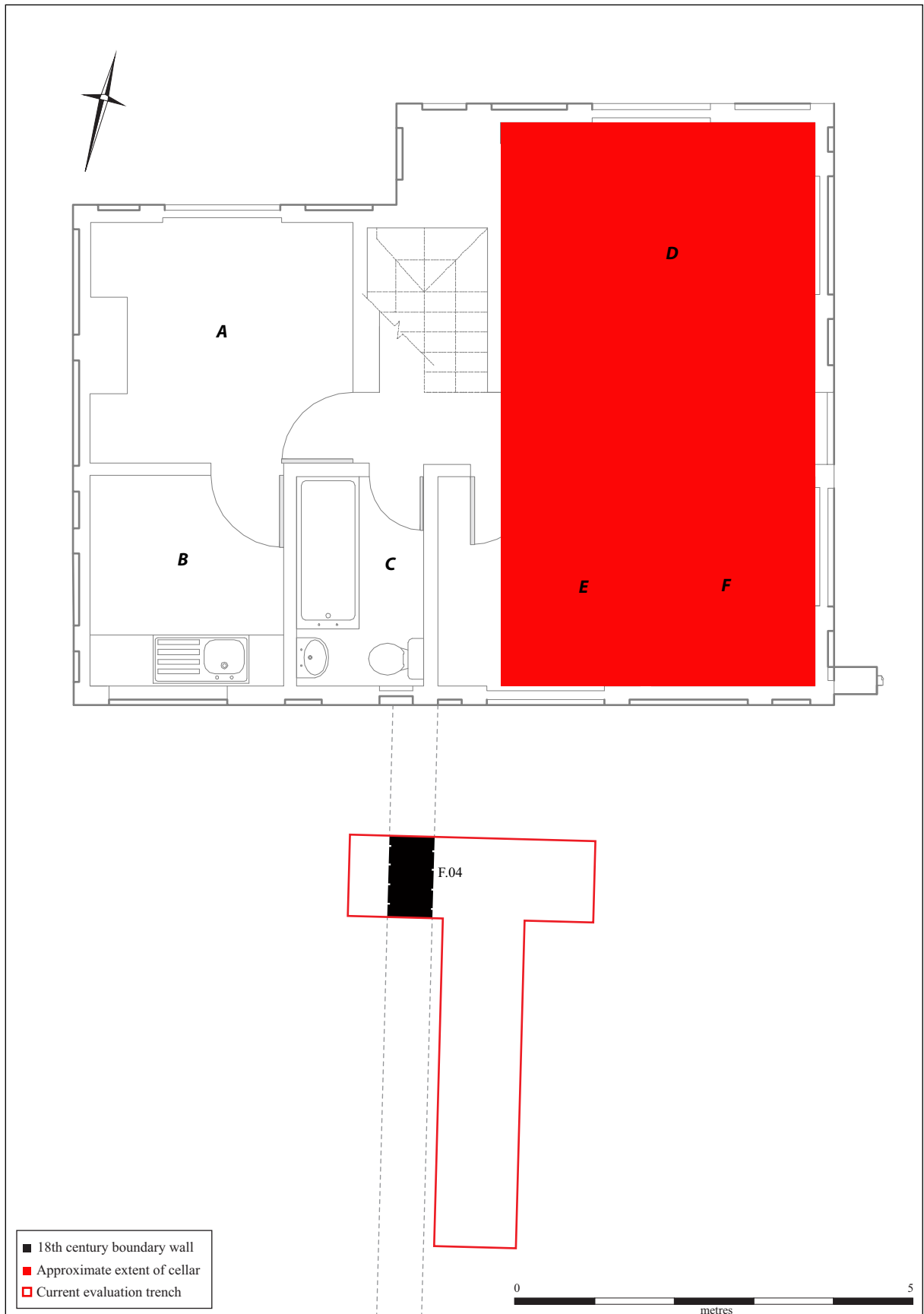


Figure 9. Floor plan of Number 5 Church Lane, in relation to the evaluation trench (as surveyed by Ross Laird Ltd. in 2008).

As the Ordnance Survey historic map sequence reveals (see Figure 6), both buildings remained standing until at least 1937-8. Shortly after this date, however – most probably during the late 1940s or perhaps the early 1950s – these structures were demolished and a replacement building erected. Rather unusually – given its location in the historic core of the town, in close proximity to the parish church of St. John the Baptist – the latter appears to have been directly influenced by the ‘International Style’ of Modernist architecture. Popular from the 1920s to the 1960s, buildings constructed in the International Style were characterised by their stark, unornamented appearance (see further Kahn 2009). Although today heavily obscured by ivy and overgrown shrubbery (see Figure 7), and with its window and door openings predominately blocked or boarded up, elements of its original geometric design are still apparent (especially along its Church Lane frontage; see Figure 8). Directly occupying the footprint of the two former cottages, this building comprises a single-storey structure containing six small ground-floor rooms with a sun terrace above. The pre-existing cellar underlies the eastern half of the building, and is accessed via a staircase that directly underlies that which provides access to the roof (see Figure 9). Internally, the rooms are arranged to either side of a central corridor that bisects the majority of the building from west to east. Aside from the kitchen and bathroom (rooms **B** and **C**), the rooms each have both a fireplace and a parquet floor composed of individual wooden tiles arranged in a herringbone pattern. The staircase is situated towards the centre of the building. Of rather greater interest than its layout, however, is the nature of its construction. The structure appears to have been built almost entirely from concrete. Its weight is distributed across the cellar by concrete rafters, for example, and both staircases (to cellar and sun terrace) are cast in this material. But it is the external appearance of the building which is the most striking. Two rows of modular cells of varying widths are present on every elevation, their outlines demarcated by a series of rectilinear concrete pilasters (see Figure 8). These elevations were also surveyed by Ross Laird Ltd. in 2008 at the same time as the floor plan presented in Figure 9 was prepared.

## Discussion

Given the PDA’s close proximity to the substantial masonry footings that were uncovered a short distance to the east in 2007 (Newman 2007, 7-12; see Figure 1, Trench 2), it is probable that during the medieval period the site was situated within the boundary of the monastic precinct of Royston priory. This institution was initially founded as a chapel for three Augustinian canons at some time between 1164 and 1179 (Simmelman 1998, 15). In 1184 the chapel was raised to the status of a priory, and its original dedication to St. John the Baptist was also changed to include St Thomas Beckett who had been assassinated fourteen years previously (Kingston 1906, 12; Page 1914, 436). Initially home to a community of just seven canons, the priory was granted manorial rights as part of its founding charter and in 1188 was also granted the right to hold a weekly market by Richard I, in addition to the right to hold an annual fair during Whitsun week (Page 1912). These proved to be very successful, benefiting from the priory’s location adjacent to the confluence of two major roads, and further grants of fairs were made in 1213 and 1243 (Greene 1992, 174). Trade flourished to such a degree that a second market place was eventually required and the priory prospered. Indeed, although it remained a relatively minor house the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535 records Royston Priory as the fifth wealthiest monastery in Hertfordshire with an annual net income of £89 16s (Dogget 1991, 59-60).

Although no definite evidence of monastic occupation or activity was encountered within the PDA, one interesting result was recovered. During the evaluation conducted a little way to the east in 2007, the natural chalk was found to be relatively level – lying at 62.20m OD in Trench 2, to the west, and 62.48m in Trench 5, to the east (see Figure 1). This is in direct contrast to the pattern identified at the present site, however, where the bedrock was both markedly higher (at 63.01m OD) and also evinced a distinct slope to the south. This suggests that the area occupied by the priory cloister may have been deliberately terraced prior to its construction. If correct, this would imply that the PDA was situated outside the main core of the monastery. Nevertheless, the site may still have been utilised at this time as a wide variety of activities, often associated with a broad range of ancillary structures, are known to have been undertaken at many monastic sites during this period (see Greene 1992, 4-11). Overall, therefore, it seems most likely that the three undated pits which lay at the base of the sequence – **F.07**, **F.08** and **F.09** – were medieval in origin (although this cannot be proved conclusively). The layers which succeeded them, however, may well have been post-monastic in date. This is because, following the dissolution of the priory on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1537 (Page 1914, 436-40), its lands and manorial rights were acquired by one Robert Chester (Smith 1993, 150). Chester subsequently converted several of the former monastic buildings into a private manorial residence (Cussans 1881, 100; Kingston 1906, 75; Smith 1992, 62; Smith 1993, 150). A plan of this property was drawn up in 1578; this depicted three main ranges of buildings situated about an inner courtyard, with several of the principle rooms constructed above cellared undercrofts. This arrangement was flanked by an outer courtyard containing a ‘porter’s lodge’ to control access to the property (Newman 2007, fig. 13; see also Kingston 1906, 75; Smith 1992, 62).

It is possible that extensive ground-raising/landscaping works were undertaken as part of this conversion process, thereby providing gardens for the new residence. Alternatively, a second period of major alteration is also known to have occurred in *c.* 1634-40 when the earlier manor house was demolished and a replacement timber-framed structure – The Priory, which remains standing to this day – was established (Smith 1993, 151). Given the absence of datable material culture from these deposits, it is conceivable that the landscaping episode may have been associated with either of these two phases of occupation. Then, in 1759, a third period of alteration occurred. Following the sale of The Priory by the Chester family in that year, an extensive series of architectural changes were undertaken by the new occupants (see Smith 1993, 151). Furthermore, the results of the 2007 evaluation established that numerous landscaping deposits were also introduced at this time (Newman 2007, 25-6). This period of widespread change thus comprises the most likely context for the establishment of the two small cottages at the 5 Church Lane site, as their construction would thereby have been associated with a much broader reorganisation of The Priory’s layout and grounds. Indeed, it is possible that the cottages may have been specifically established in order to provide residences for key members of staff employed at the manor (in this context, No. 5 Church Lane is certainly known to have last been occupied by The Priory’s head gardener; James Keatley *pers. comm.*). By the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, these buildings would have been regarded as both small and old-fashioned. But the choice of building selected to replace them was itself somewhat unusual. It comprised a very bold architectural statement, especially given its location in close proximity to a number of extant historic buildings.

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## Oasis Form

<b>OASIS ID: cambridg3-116042</b>	
<b>Project Details</b>	
Project name	No. 5 Church Lane, Royston
Short description of the project	A trench-based evaluation, comprising a single trench covering 7.4m <sup>2</sup> , was undertaken at No. 5 Church Lane, Royston, Hertfordshire, between the 30th of November and the 1st of December 2011. Here, a sequence consisting of four phases of activity was identified. The first of these four comprised a group of three undated pits, which were each filled with eroded subsoil material. Subsequently, these features were overlain by two undated layers that may have been associated with the establishment of an open garden at the site. Then, most probably at some time during the 18th century, two small cottages were established on the Church Lane frontage; to their rear, a substantial boundary wall was erected. These buildings remained in use until the mid 20th century, when they were levelled and replaced by a single structure. This latter building was constructed of concrete in the 'International' Modernist style.
Project dates	Start: 30-11-2011 End: 01-12-2011
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	RCL 11 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	HHER 4200 - Related HER No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	PITS Medieval
Monument type	POSTHOLES Post Medieval
Monument type	WALL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Targeted Trenches'
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)
<b>Project Location</b>	
Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE ROYSTON 5 Church Lane, Royston
Postcode	SG8 9LD
Study area	348.00 Square metres



Site coordinates	TL 3569 4066 52.0472620976 -0.02109649686780 52 02 50 N 000 01 15 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 62.81m Max: 63.01m
<b>Project Creators</b>	
Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Alison Dickens
Project director/manager	Alison Dickens
Project supervisor	Richard Newman
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	NPK Holdings Ltd.
<b>Project Archives</b>	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Digital Archive ID	RCL 11
Digital Contents	'Ceramics','other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Paper Archive ID	RCL 11
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Matrices','Photograph','Plan','Section'
<b>Project Bibliography</b>	
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