



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

OBSERVATION & RECORDING REPORT:
THORN GREEN FARM
THORN
BEDFORDSHIRE

on behalf of David Cremin



NGR: TL 0003 2469

David Kaye BA AlFA

KDK: 019/TGF/2

November 2013

5 Leopold Road Linslade Leighton Buzzard Bedfordshire LU7 2QU
Tel: 01525 385443
Email: office@kdkarchaeology.co.uk
Website: www.kdkarchaeology.co.uk



Site Data

<i>KDK project code:</i>	019/TGF		
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	Kdkarcha1-154494	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	2013/11
<i>County:</i>	Bedfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Thorn		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Houghton Regis		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 0003 2469		
<i>Present use:</i>	Mobile home and barn		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Removal of a mobile home, demolition of a barn and erection of a Granny Annex		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Central Bedfordshire		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	CB/12/04046/FULL		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	28.08.2013 & 12.11.2013		
<i>Commissioned by:</i>	David Cremin Thorn Green Farm Thorn Road Houghton Regis LU5 6JH		
<i>Contact name:</i>	David Cremin		

Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	David Kaye BA AIFA	<i>Date:</i>	18.11.2013
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>	Karin Semmelmann MA MIFA	<i>Date:</i>	18.11.2013
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

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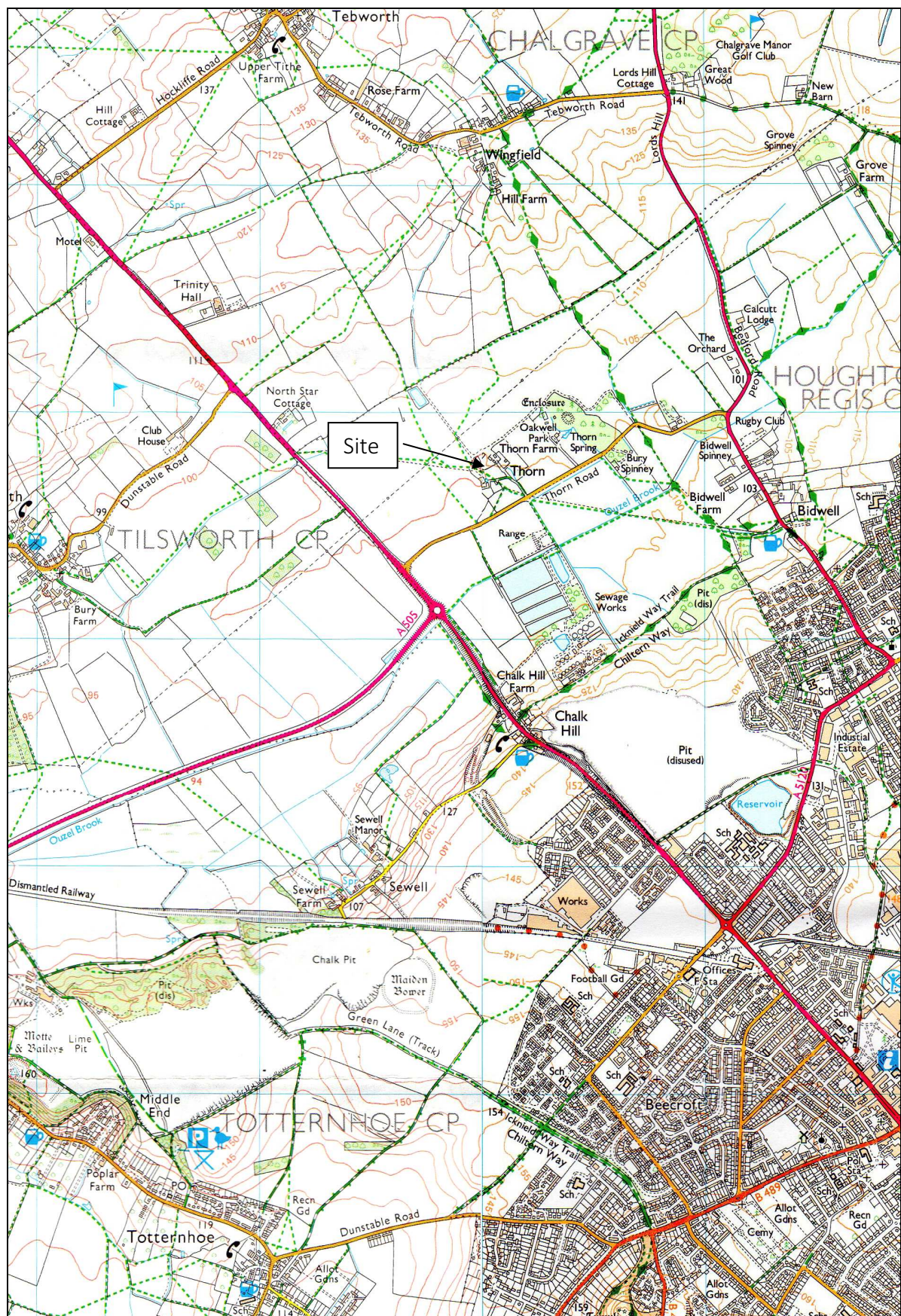


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)



Summary

In August and October 2013 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of observation and recording of Thorn Green Farm, Thorn, Bedfordshire. Footings and drainage groundworks were monitored as part of the planning conditions set on the development.

The area within the footprint of the development had been subjected to seasonal flooding from the adjacent pond, and the ground had been levelled with a layer of redeposited chalk. The only archaeological feature recorded was part of a stone-filled overflow channel leading from a pond to the north to a known soakaway approximately 50m to the south of the development.

1 Introduction

1.1 In August and October 2013 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of observation and recording of Thorn Green Farm, Thorn, Bedfordshire. The project was commissioned by David Cremin, and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Kaye, 2013), and approved by Central Bedfordshire Archaeological Team, archaeological advisor (AA) to the local planning authority (LPA), Central Bedfordshire Council. The relevant planning application reference is CB/12/04046/FULL.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This project has been required under the terms of *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site.

1.3 *The Site*

Location

The site is located in the administrative district of Central Bedfordshire, in the village of Thorn and parish of Houghton Regis, at National Grid Reference TL 0003 2469 (Fig. 1).

Description

The development area comprises a roughly rectangular plot of land, situated immediately to the west of Thorn Green Farmhouse, and adjacent to agricultural buildings, an access road, and lawns (Fig. 2).

Geology & Topography

The site, which lies at a height of around 100 metres AOD and is relatively level, is currently functioning as a hard standing for a mobile home.

The solid geology of the area is formed from West Melbury Marly Chalk of the Late Cretaceous period. Whilst there are no records of the drift geology in the immediate vicinity, deposits of Head (clay, silts, sands and gravels) are noted to the south-east. (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

Proposed Development

The development proposal comprises the removal of a mobile home, demolition of a barn and erection of a bungalow (Fig. 3).

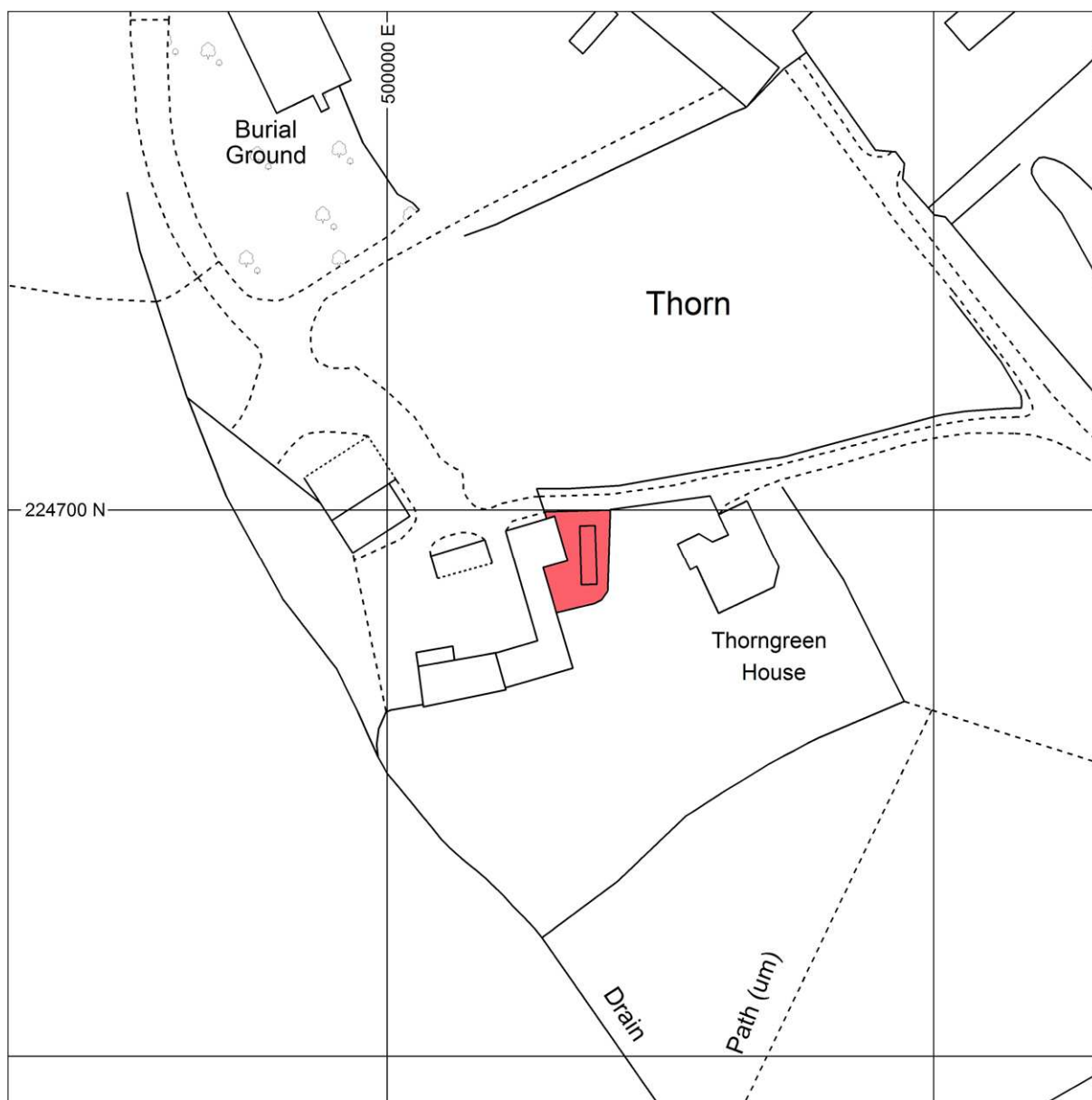


Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:1250)

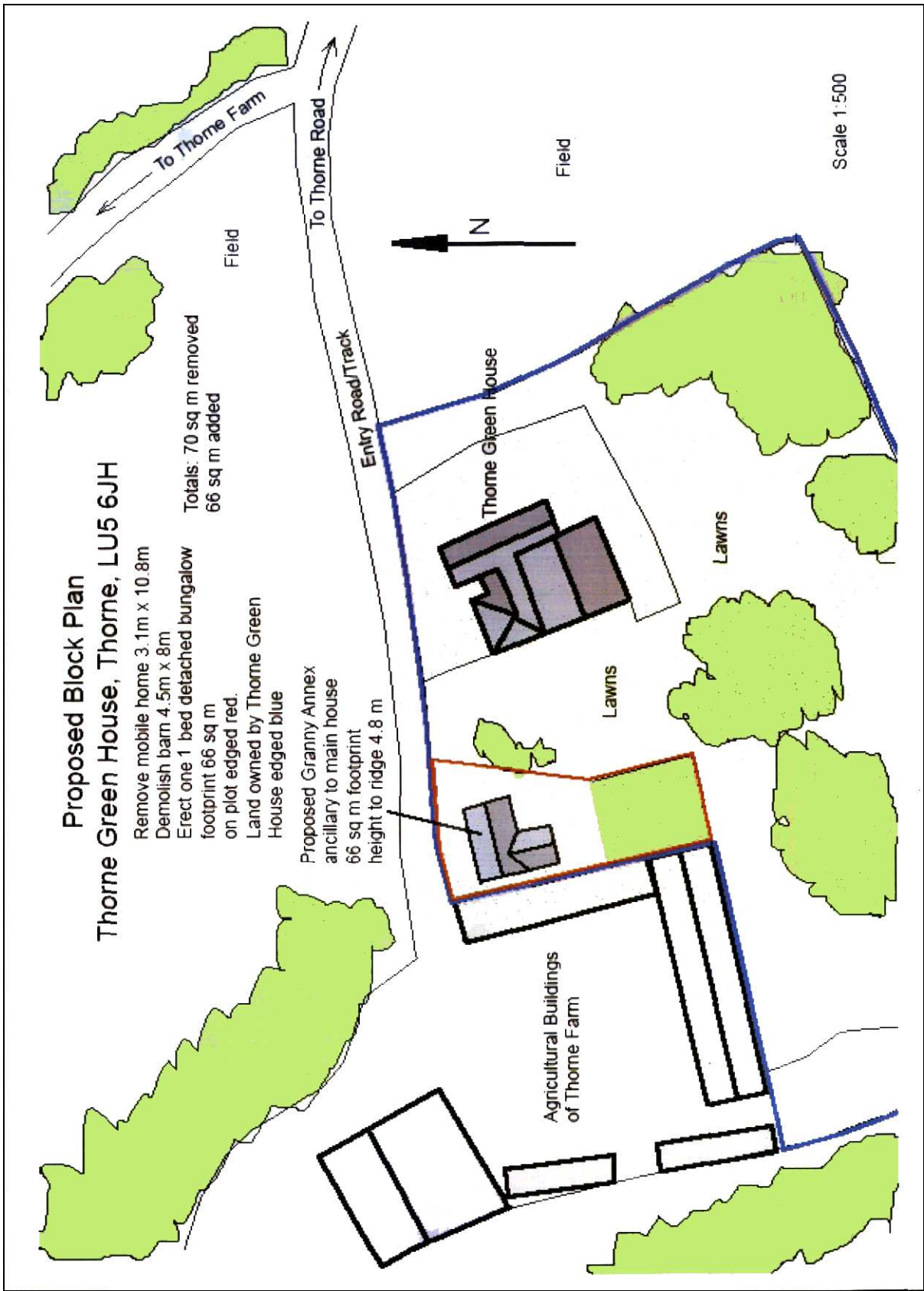


Figure 3: Proposed development (scale 1:500)

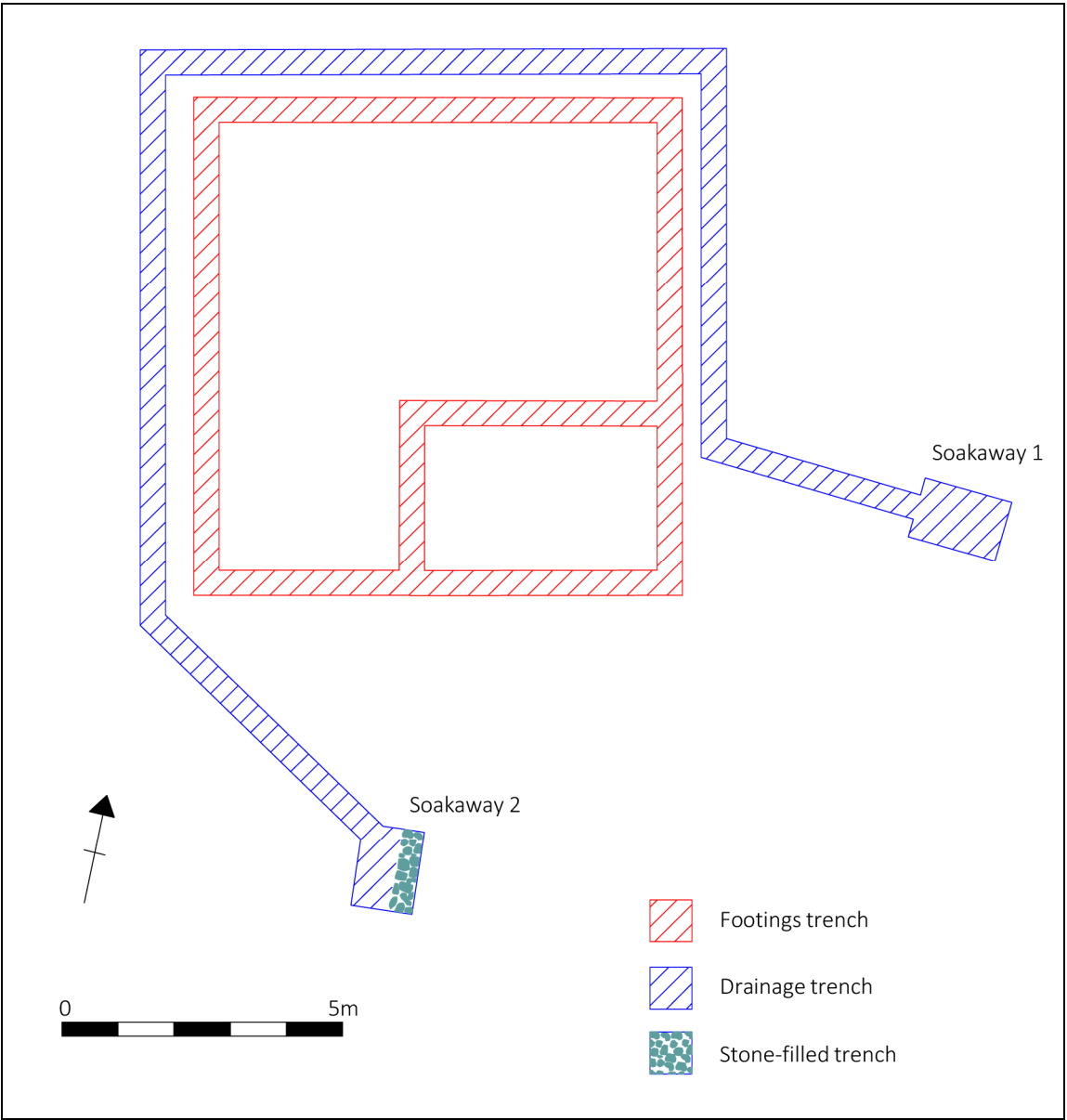


Figure 4: Footings and drainage (scale 1:750)



2 Aims & Methods

2.1 The aims of this project as defined in the approved WSI (Kaye, 2013) were:

- To establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation within the development area
- To establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes
- Recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions

In addition general research aims set out *inter alia* by Going and Plouviez (2000), Oake *et al* (2007), Medlycott (2011) and Wade (2000) that may be relevant to the site included:

- Understanding landscape development and settlement patterns, the relationship between settlement and enclosure in the later prehistoric and Roman period
- Investigating evidence for the ritual codes underlying the later prehistoric and Roman period
- Identifying the number of Roman ritual/religious sites within the area
- Investigating rural Saxon, medieval and post medieval settlements to examine diversity characterise settlement forms and understand how they appear, grow, shift and disappear

2.2 Methods

In line with the requirements of the brief, the methods used were as follows:

- All ground or other works likely to have an impact on archaeological deposits were done under continuous and constant archaeological supervision. This included the excavation of any services trenches and associated structures (such as soakaways).
- If significant archaeological deposits were encountered the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologists would have been notified and a timetable for the adequate investigation and recording of these features agreed.
- Construction works would not re-commence until the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologists were content that the archaeological work had been completed satisfactorily

2.3 Standards

The work conformed to the following requirements:

- The design brief
- The relevant sections of the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2008a) and
- The Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2010),
- Current English Heritage guidelines (EH 1991)
- The Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003), to English Heritage guidelines (EH 1991)



3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 The site lies within the presumed historic extent of the village of Thorn (HER 16888), adjacent to what would have been the village green (HER 12242). Other heritage assets listed in the HER are relatively few, though they cover a large time span, ranging from the Neolithic through to post-medieval.

This section has been compiled with information principally derived from the Historic Environment Record (HER), and the design brief (CBC 2013).

3.2 *Prehistoric* (before 600BC)

Whilst outside the immediate 500m radius study area, significant archaeological deposits were identified at Puddlehill to the south of the site from the early 1950s to mid 1970s, with evidence of occupation from the Neolithic, Iron Age, and Saxon periods being recorded (HER 687). Neolithic pits (HER 3110) were also found near Sewell to the southwest of the site.

Possible Bronze Age features in the form of a pit (HER 18292) and four ditches (HER 16541) were recorded during the A5-M1 link road excavation in 2007 carried out by Northampton Archaeology, approximately 300m northeast of the site.

3.3 *Iron Age* (600BC-AD43)

Also recorded during the link road project were a number of Iron Age features, principally located in a separate excavation to the south west of the site. These consisted of ditches, pits, and gullies, forming possible enclosures related to small scale rural settlements (HER 18290).

Previously identified crop marks to the north east of the site were also excavated and recorded by Northamptonshire Archaeology as part of the road scheme. The main features identified were enclosure ditches that may have formed a possible farmstead (HER 16541).

3.4 *Roman* (AD43-c.450)

No securely dated Roman features have been identified within the immediate study area, although there is a possibility that the Iron Age farmstead (HER 16541) may have functioned into the Roman period. However, the site lies within a wider known Roman landscape which includes the important thoroughfare of Watling Street, c. 550m to the southwest (HER 5508).

3.5 *Saxon* (c.450-1066)

Sewell and Puddlehill are the nearest known Saxon sites. Sunken floored buildings have been identified in both areas (HER 12147 & 687 respectively), and two separate burial grounds were also identified. Whilst no specific Saxon features have been recorded on the proposed development site, the presence of these features raise the possibility that Thorn Green may be part of a wider Saxon landscape.

3.6 *Medieval* (1066-1500)

The manor of Houghton is mentioned in the Domesday Survey, but not Thorn which was part of Houghton Regis estate. The parish became known as Houghton Regis to reflect that it was a Royal manor, owned by the Crown until Henry I granted it to Hugh de Gurney in the 12th century. It stayed within the de Gurney family but was divided by Hugh's son (also Hugh) in



the early to mid 13th century. The larger portion was given to Hugh's sister, Millicent and her husband William de Cantlowe who also held the manorial rights to Eaton Bray.

The manor of "Thornbury" was referenced in 1324 as the property of William de la Zouche and may be the scheduled moated site at Thorn Spring located on the northeast limit of the study area (HER 140; SAM 271100). However, no further mention of the Thornbury Manor is recorded after 1471.

Two L-shaped ponds were recorded on the Bedford Estate Map of 1762 (BLARS: B553) immediately south of Thorn Spring at Bury Spinney (HER 147). There is a possibility that they may form part of another medieval moated site as some of the associated earthworks have similarities to those at Thorn Spring.

There is well preserved medieval ridge and furrow to the west of the site at Thorn Farm, which contains the remnants of a gibbet mound (HER 5073). Other unspecified medieval and post-medieval earthworks are also extant in and around Thorn (HER 12268 and 12269). Other medieval features including the remains of ditches, pits and ridge and furrow (HER 16451, 18290 and 18292) were recorded during the archaeological evaluation carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology for the A5 – M1 Link Road (Northamptonshire Archaeology 2008a and b).

The archaeological evidence suggests that Thorn was probably a small to medium sized hamlet during the medieval period, and that the parish of Houghton Regis consisted of a number of separate but related hamlets, of which Houghton may have been the most important. The development site is shown lying on the edge of Little Thorn Green (HER 12242) on the 1762 Bedford Estates map, which is part of a large area of greens/common. However, by 1796, the greens had been replaced with Thorn Road and allotments (BLARS: MA 84/1).

3.7 *Post-Medieval* (1500-1900)

The post medieval heritage assets listed in the HER consist of a demolished 18th century cottage (HER 5690), a disused Baptist burial ground (HER 2433), an undescribed post medieval building at Oakwell Park (HER 4322), demolished brickworks (HER 12233) and the earthworks and village green previously noted.

3.8 *Modern* (1900-present)

The only modern feature listed is a 20th century rifle range (HER 15319).

3.2 *The Known Archaeology & History of the Site*

The site is likely to have formed part of the medieval village green and as such there have been no other specific archaeological features identified within the footprint of the proposed development. However, the site had a clear association with settlement particularly from the medieval and post-medieval periods.



4 Results

Introduction

The site stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying 0.15-0.30m of redeposited chalk, which in turn overlay 0.2-0.25m of pale brown silty clay. The natural geology was a friable greyish chalk with no inclusions.

The footings trenches were excavated to a depth of 1m using a tracked mini digger fitted with a 450mm toothed bucket. The process was monitored in its entirety, but as it demonstrated that there was at least 0.5m of topsoil and made ground, and the drainage trenches were to be cut into this material to a depth of only 0.2m, only the start of those runs were monitored.

The two soakaways, which measured 1.6m x 1.1m, were excavated to a depth of 1.5m and were monitored throughout their excavation.

Description

The only archaeological feature present was recorded in Soakaway 2, and consisted of a stone-filled channel approximately 0.4m wide by 0.4m deep, running along the eastern edge of the base of the excavation. The stones were large, unworked pieces of Totternhoe clunch which effectively acted as a French drain leading from the former village green pond which is located 10m to the north of the development area, to a large soakaway 50m to the south. Water still ran through the channel. The cut of this feature was not recorded in the footings trenches to the north as they were of insufficient depth to impact upon it.

The channel formed an irregular cut in the natural geology and the overlying silty clay layer, suggesting some of that material may have redeposited over stones once they had been laid, and that the channel was always intended to be a subterranean feature. The silty clay layer is likely to be a deposit from seasonal flooding of the pond and therefore the channel was acting as the overflow, or level control. No datable artefacts were recovered from any context during the excavation.

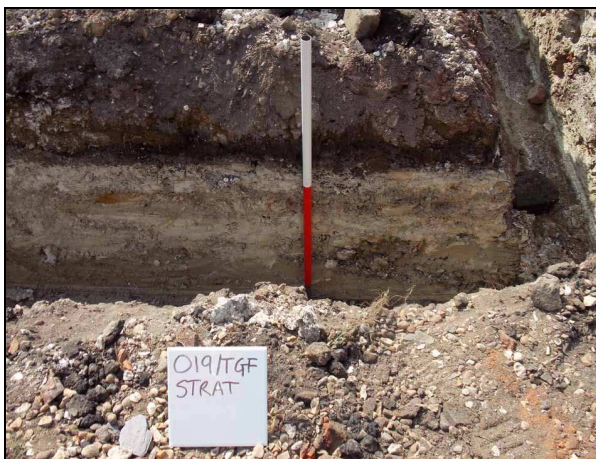


Plate 1: Stratigraphy of footings trench (1m scale)



Plate 2: Stratigraphy of Soakaway 1 (2m scale)



Plate 3: Stratigraphy of Soakaway 2 (1m scale)

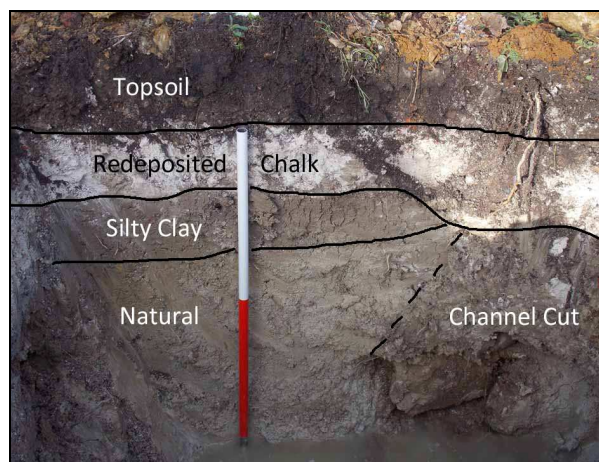


Plate 4: Annotated stratigraphy (1m scale)



Plate 5: Close-up of channel



5 Conclusions

Thorn Green Farm house is situated on a raised piece of ground defined by the lawns and boundary hedges (Fig 3). It is approximately 0.4-0.5m higher than the surrounding fields. The observed stratigraphy of the excavated trenches and soakaways suggests that some degree of landscaping has taken place on the site. The redeposited chalk layer was present in varying depths across the observed area, and the unnatural undulations of the site as a whole could be a result of additional material being spread over quite a large area.

The nearby pond has been known to flood periodically (D Cremin pers.com.), and the subterranean channel had been constructed in an effort to alleviate this. However, as the silty clay layer which is probably derived from those flooding events, overlies the channel, it would appear the effectiveness of the drain was limited.

The lack of datable artefacts from any of the contexts makes it impossible to estimate when the site was landscaped or the channel excavated. However, it is probable that the redeposited chalk was put down as a levelling layer when the barns that immediately predated the existing development were erected.

The lack of archaeological features on the site may be for a number of reasons. The fact that the area was prone to flooding would have been a major constraint on the occupation and use of the land. Also, it is likely that the former village green onto which the development area adjoins, would have been common land from the medieval period, and therefore unavailable for habitation or cultivation.



6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to David Cremin for commissioning this report. His assistance on site and in providing the drawings, which have been used as a basis for the plans in this report, is also duly acknowledged. The project was monitored for Central Bedfordshire Council by Hannah Firth and information from the Historic Environment Record was provided by Stephen Coleman.

7 Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Written Scheme of Investigation
3. Initial report
4. Monitoring sheets
5. List of photographs
6. B/W prints & negatives
7. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with the Luton Museum.



8 References

Standards & Specifications

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- IFA (various dates) Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments 2011, Watching Briefs 2008, Evaluations 2009, Excavations 2008, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings 2008, Finds 2008, Archiving 2009)*.
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- Going, C. J. and J. Plouviez 2000. Roman in Brown and Glazebrook 2000 *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties – 2 Research Agenda and Strategy* East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 8: 19-22.
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- Starke, W & Keir, W 2012 *Land at Thorn Green House, Thorn, Dunstable, Bedfordshire: Heritage Asset Assessment*, Albion Archaeology, 2012/92
- Wade K (2000) Anglo-Saxon and Medieval (Rural), in Brown and Glazebrook (2000), *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties – 2 Research Agenda and Strategy* East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 8: 23-26.
- Williams, A & Martin GH 2002 *Domesday Book: a complete translation* London: Penguin
- British Geological Society:
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>



Appendix 1: Photograph List

SITE NO/CODE:			Site Name:
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
001		X	Footings trench, facing south
002		X	Footings trench, facing south
003		X	Trench stratigraphy
004		X	Trench stratigraphy
005		X	General view
006		X	General view
007		X	General view
008		X	General view
009		X	Soakaway 1, facing north
010		X	Soakaway 1, facing north
011		X	Soakaway 1, stratigraphy
012		X	Soakaway 1, stratigraphy
013		X	Soakaway 2, facing north
014		X	Soakaway 2, facing north
015		X	Soakaway 2, stratigraphy
016		X	Stone-filled channel
017		X	Stone-filled channel
018		X	Stone-filled channel
019		X	Stone-filled channel



Appendix 2: KDK OASIS Sheet

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Thorn Green Farm, Thorn, Bedfordshire	OASIS reference:	Kdkarcha1-154494
Short Description:	<p>In August and October 2013 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of observation and recording of Thorn Green Farm, Thorn, Bedfordshire. Footings and drainage groundworks were monitored as part of the planning conditions set on the development.</p> <p>All of the ground within the footprint of the development had been subjected to seasonal flooding from the adjacent pond, and the ground had been levelled with a layer of redeposited chalk. The only archaeological feature observed was part of a stone-filled overflow channel leading from a pond to the north to a known soakaway approximately 50m to the south.</p>		
Project Type:	Observation and Recording		
Previous work:	None	Site status:	None
Current land use:	Hard standing for mobile home	Future work:	None
Monument type:	Pond overflow channel	Monument period:	Undated
Significant finds:	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Bedfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 0003 2469
Site address:	Thorn Green Farm, Thorn, Bedfordshire		
Study area:	c. 70 sq. m	Height OD:	100mAOD
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Central Bedfordshire Council	Project design originator:	KDK Archaeology Ltd
Project Manager:	Karin Semmelmann	Director/Supervisor:	David Kaye
Sponsor / funding body:	David Cremin		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	28.08.2013	End date:	12.11.2013
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Luton Museum 2013/11	None	
Paper:		Site records, report	
Digital:		CD of photos	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Observation & Recording Report: Thorn Green Farm, Thorn, Bedfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	KDK Archaeology Ltd Report ref. 004/TGF/2		
Author(s):	David Kaye BA AIFA		
Page nos	18	Date:	18.11.2013