



# KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

**OBSERVATION & RECORDING REPORT:  
59 HIGH STREET SOUTH  
DUNSTABLE  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

on behalf of David King



NGR: TL 02092 1700

Author: David Kaye AIFA

KDK: 004/DHS/2.2

November 2013

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
Website: [www.kdkarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.kdkarchaeology.co.uk)



## Site Data

<i>KDK project code:</i>	004/DHS		
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	kdkarcha1-143039	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	LUTNM 2013/1
<i>County:</i>	Bedfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Dunstable		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Dunstable		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 02092 21700		
<i>Present use:</i>	Commercial		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Demolition of part of the existing rear projection, change of use of first and second floor from commercial to residential and erection of new rear extension for residential purposes		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Central Bedfordshire		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	CB/11/01145/FULL; CB/11/01146/CA		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	16.5.13 & 22.10.13		
<i>Client:</i>	David King 59 High Street South Dunstable Bedfordshire LU6 3SF		
<i>Contact name:</i>	David King		

## Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	David Kaye BA AIFA	<i>Date:</i>	5 <sup>th</sup> November 2013
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	5 <sup>th</sup> November 2013
<i>Revisions:</i>	David Kaye BA AIFA	<i>Date:</i>	25 <sup>th</sup> June 2014

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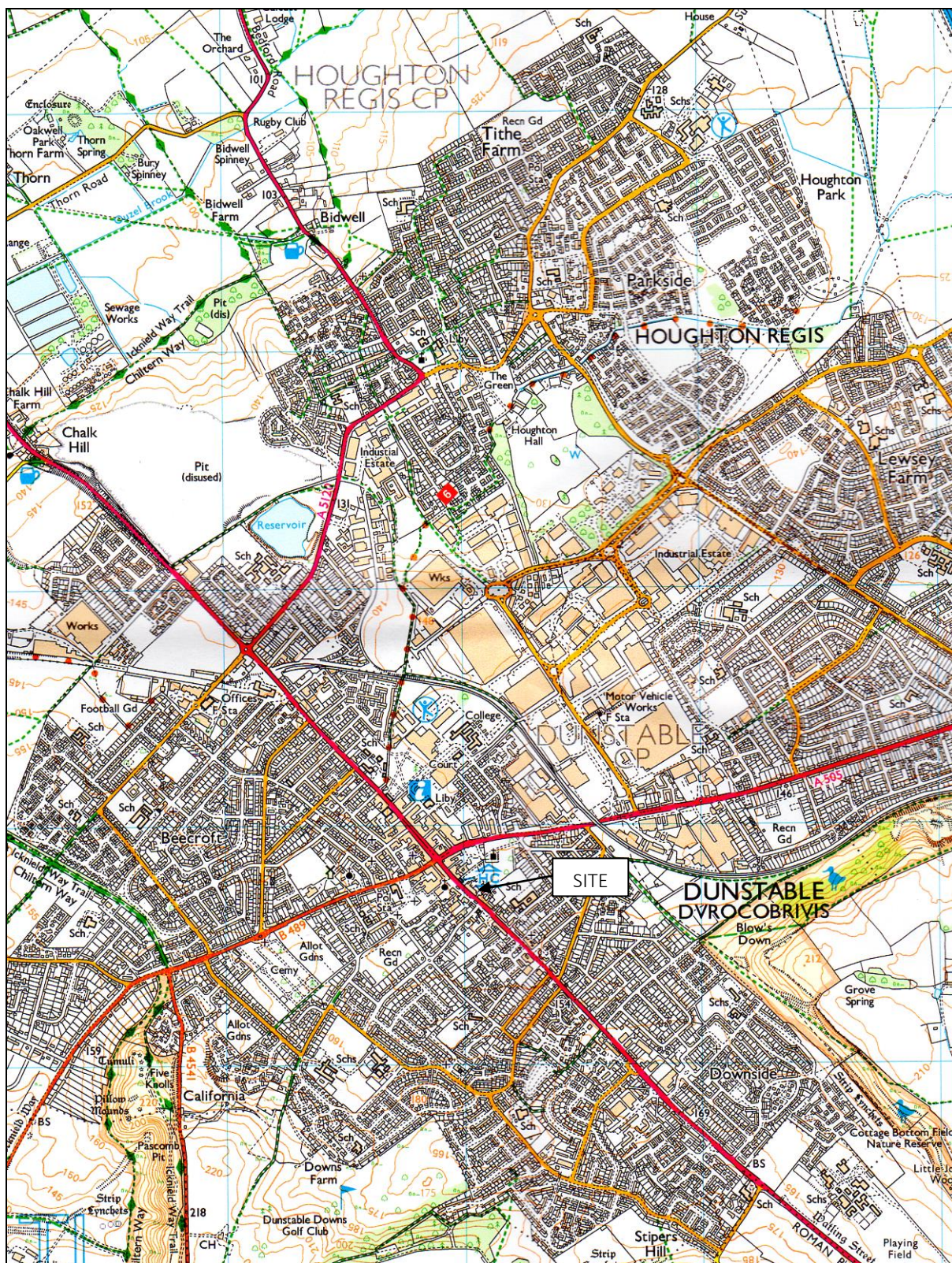
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## Summary

In May and October 2013 KDK Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at 59 High Street South, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, during the ground works associated with the construction of an extension to the rear of the property.

The property dates from at least 1764 when it was recorded as being an inn. Following a series of changes of use, the building became associated with the hat trade in the 19<sup>th</sup> century before reverting to the hospitality industry in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A Victorian brick-built fresh water storage tank, with a vaulted roof was exposed during the groundworks. The tank is known from written records and was probably associated with the hat factory that is known to have occupied the building in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

A post-medieval capped well was located beneath a modern extension which was demolished as part of the redevelopment programme.

Apart from the below ground structures, no archaeological cut features, deposits, or artefactual evidence of significance was encountered, though some worked stone blocks were noted by the contractors when some ground clearance work was undertaken at the north east end of the site (pers. com. Adam Arber).

## 1 Introduction

1.1 In May and October 2013 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of observation and recording of 59 High Street South, Dunstable, Bedfordshire. The project was commissioned by David King, and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Sammelmann, 2013), and approved by Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeology Team, archaeological advisor (AA) to the local planning authority (LPA), *Central Bedfordshire Council*. The relevant planning application references are CB/11/01145/FULL and CB/11/01146/CA

### 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 town and parish of Dunstable. It is situated to the rear of the Four Kings PH, on the northern side of High Street South, at National Grid Reference TL 02092 21700 (Fig. 1)

#### *Description*

The site as a whole is rectangular in shape and bounded to the northwest by buildings belonging to number 57, by a car park to the southeast. It is accessed by a side gate to the rear of the building (Fig. 2).

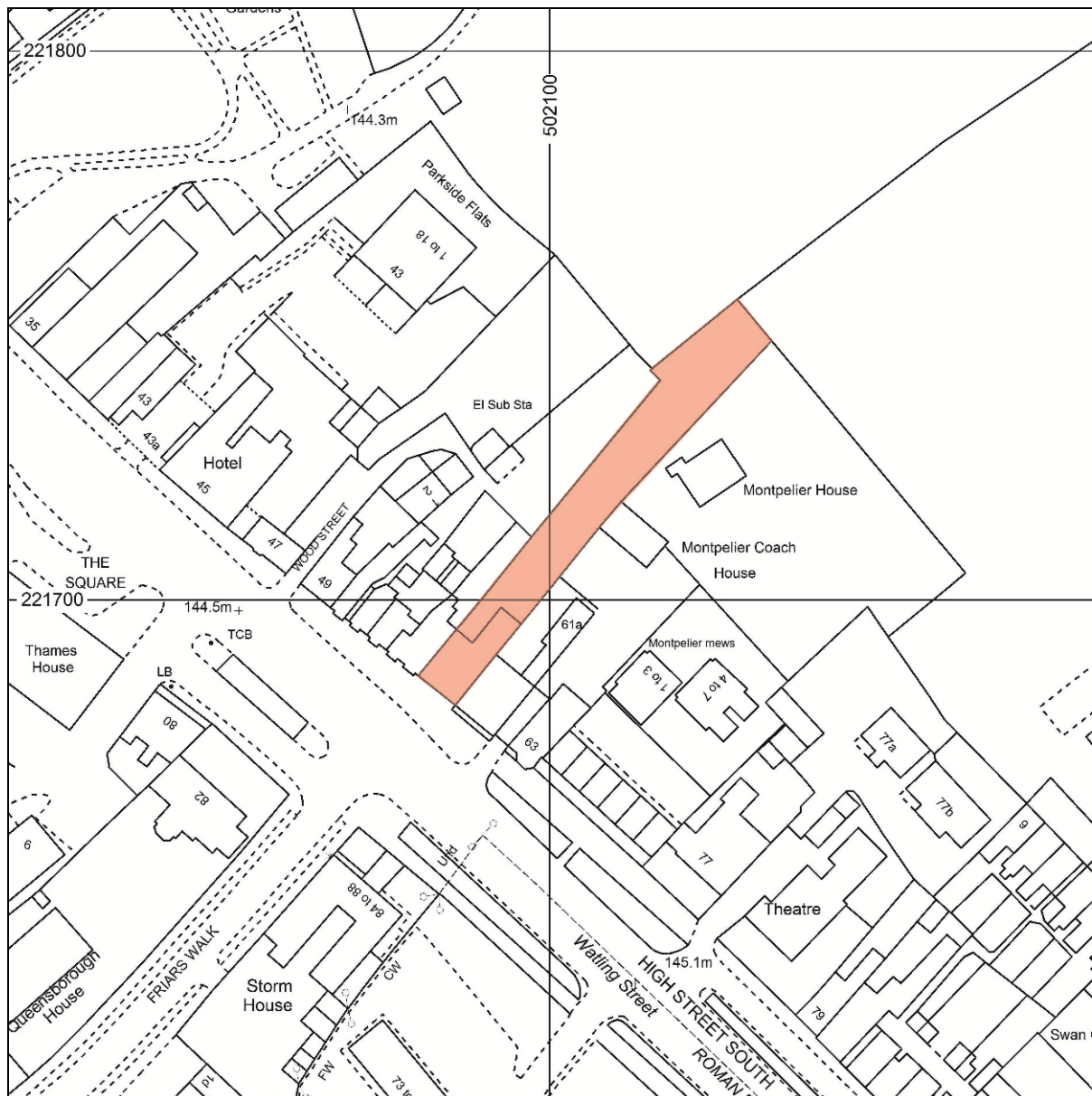


### *Geology & Topography*

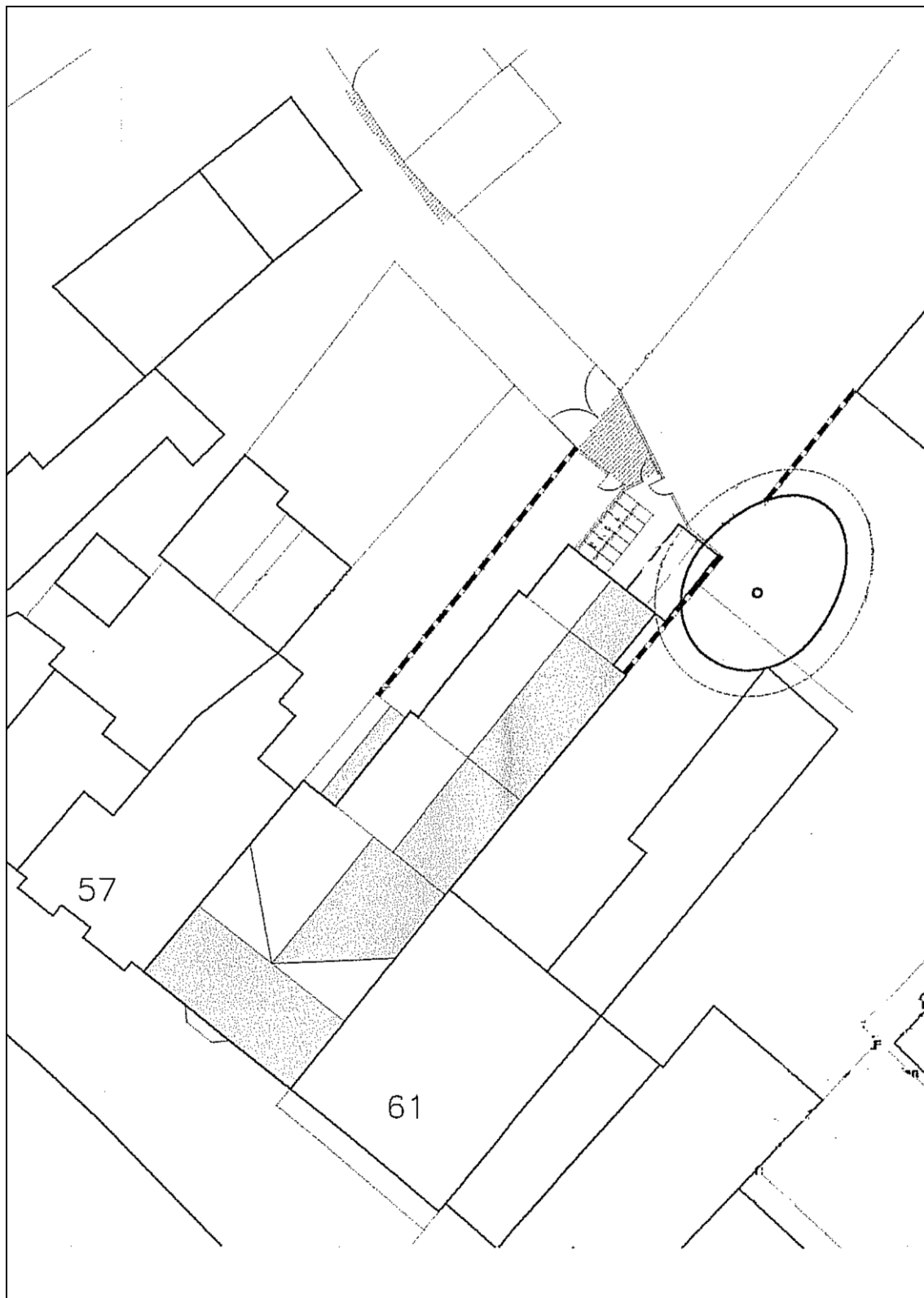
The site is located within the town centre of Dunstable where superficial deposits have not been mapped. Surviving natural soils are likely to comprise the Upton 1 Association, namely shallow well drained calcareous soil (Soil Survey 1983, 342a). The solid geology, which is chalk, is part of the Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation and New Pit Chalk Formation (Undifferentiated) (British Geological Survey). The site lies at a height of c.145m AOD.

### *Proposed Development*

The development proposal comprises the demolition of part of the existing rear projection along with change of use of first and second floor from commercial to residential and erection of new rear extension for residential purposes (Fig. 3).



**Figure 2:** Site location (scale 1:1250)



**Figure 3:** Proposed development (*not to scale*)



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## 2 Aims & Methods

2.1 The aims of this project as defined in the approved WSI (Sammelmann, 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 Oake et al (2007), Brown and Glazebrook (2000) and Medlycott (2011) that may be relevant to the site include:

- The origin and development of small towns
- The relationship between the settlement and its hinterland
- The relationship between ecclesiastical sites and the town
- Evidence for commercial activity

### 2.2 *Methods*

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

- All ground or other works relating to the removal of the foundations of the existing rear extensions and the excavation of new foundations that were likely to have an impact on archaeological deposits were done under continuous and constant archaeological supervision
- If significant archaeological deposits were encountered the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologists was to be notified and a timetable for the adequate investigation and recording of these features agreed.
- Construction works did 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 core of the Roman and medieval towns of Dunstable (HER 135 & 16986). It is also within the precinct of an Augustinian Priory (HER 131), part of which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SM BD3). Number 59 High Street South dates from at least 1764 when it was an inn with an associated farmstead.

#### 3.2 *Prehistoric* (before 600BC)

Despite the proximity of the prehistoric route Icknield Way (HER 353), Maiden Bower causewayed camp and Bronze Age burials, such as at Five Knolls (HER 138), the town itself has revealed relatively little. Bronze Age evidence has been found at Marina Drive where the Anglo-Saxon cemetery was found to have been centred on a Bronze Age barrow, close to London Road and possibly Albion Street (HER 150) (EUS 2003: 19).

#### 3.3 *Iron Age* (600BC-AD43)

Iron age settlement was centred on Maiden Bower, but Iron Age pottery found at Bull Pond Lane may suggest some level of occupation within Dunstable (*ibid*:20).

#### 3.4 *Roman* (AD43-c.450)

The Roman settlement of Durocobravis or Durocobriva (HER 135 & 11284) was situated at the crossing of the Icknield Way and Watling Street, which ran from London to Chester. The core of the Roman town appears to have extended some 400 meters beyond the crossroads. It is not clear what role the town had in the Roman period. There is no evidence for a military presence, which would suggest that the town may have been a form of staging post or *mansion* or even an administrative centre or *pagus*. (CBC 2013: 5; EUS 2003: 20).

Roman material has been found in all four quadrants of Dunstable, in an area similar to that of the medieval town. Although there was a possible farmstead at Graham Road (HER 1341) in the south-east quadrant, most of the archaeological evidence is from the south-west quadrant which was apparently intensively occupied between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> centuries (*ibid*:21). Evidence for Roman buildings was revealed in Dunstable Friary, a well and cess pits were discovered in St Mary's Street (HER 11273) and the remains of a young Barbary ape were found in a cess pit in Friary Field (*ibid*:22).

A Roman cemetery, which was in use from the 3rd to the late 4th century lay in the south-west quadrant (*ibid*:23).

The possibility that Roman town boundary may have been located on the site of the medieval Friary in the south-west quadrant and in the Priory gardens remains as yet unconfirmed by further archaeological evidence (*ibid*:24).

#### 3.5 *Saxon* (c.450-1066)

The Roman town appears to have been largely deserted following the Roman withdrawal, but Saxon settlement evidence has been found in the northwest quadrant, consisting of sunken featured buildings and a pagan Anglo-Saxon cemetery (HER 152; EUS 2003: 24). )

#### 3.6 *Medieval* (1066-1500)

The medieval town (HER 16986) was established by Henry I in the early 1100s using the existing crossroads as a basis for a planned market town. The burgrave plots appear to have



survived to some extent within the town, particularly along High Street South. By 1109, Henry had built himself a residence at 'Kingsbury' (HER 148) on the north side of Church Street, and some 20 years later he founded an Augustinian Priory dedicated to St Peter (HER 131). The priory complex was located between the High Street South and Church Street, the surviving remains of which are the church (HER 132) the gatehouse (HER 6329) and the undercroft at Priory House (HER 6311). The remains of a large monastic building, thought to have been the priory itself, were discovered to the rear of the Saracen's Head Hotel in 1983. The bake house and brew house cellars, which were found approximately 50m north-east of the development site, had been converted for lime production after the priory was dissolved in 1539 (CBC 2013: 5; EUS 2003: 10, 27). The full extent of the Priory precinct is not confirmed. Excavations at Montpelier House to the rear of the development site (EBD 187), found no archaeological evidence for activity, but this would not be unusual for a peripheral location. Equally, the discovery of a late medieval/early post-medieval back street running parallel with High St South (EBD 728 & 739) may be a relict of an earlier boundary. Totternhoe stone, which was the predominant building material of the more significant priory buildings, was clearly robbed from the site after the Dissolution for use elsewhere in the town. A 19<sup>th</sup> century wall foundation at the Saracen's House was found to contain Totternhoe stone (Mustchin 2012), more of which has been found in a series of pits at 65-75 High Street South (Rouse 2005: 10).

Nothing survives of the Dominican friary, which was established in the southwest quadrant of the town in 1259. However, archaeological investigations have revealed the location of the church, ancillary buildings, cemetery and the extensive garden/orchard to the southwest (EUS 2003: 29).

### 3.7 *Post-Medieval* (1500-1900)

Dunstable thrived from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and particularly the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a coaching town (EUS 2003: 35). Numerous inns were established to cater for the travellers, amongst which was the Star or Starr on the development site. This is first recorded in 1764, at which time it had an associated farmstead to the rear (CBC 2013: 6). By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century it had become a private house and was subdivided into 3 tenements by the mid- 19<sup>th</sup> century. Documentary and photographic evidence indicates that the building was used as a hat factory by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3.8 *Modern* (1900-present)

It was known as the Grey House by 1932 and was opened as the Grey House Hotel 20 years later. Since then it has retained a commercial function (CBC 2013: 16). The building is described in the HER record as being 19<sup>th</sup> century to an earlier timber fronted structure (HER 4548).

### 3.9 *The Known Archaeology & History of the Site*

The earliest documentary evidence for the property dates from 1764 when it was an inn known as the Star, subsequently with an associated farmstead belonging to John Shilburne. By 1780 it had been converted to tenements and was the residence of Robert Hogan. In 1870 Eliza Osbourne, who had been running her hat and bonnet making factory next door, rented the property from Munt and Brown, another hat manufacturer based in what is now Priory House. It had previously been occupied by George Horn, a plait dealer who had become bankrupt. She stayed for ten years, before retiring, and died four years later. The house was probably then bought by John Twidell. The property became known as the Grey House by 1932 and was opened as the Grey House Hotel 20 years later. It has retained a commercial function since then.



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In 1923 the building was recorded as having three storeys and a basement. The ground floor had two large living rooms, a kitchen and a scullery. A well outside the back door was also noted.

The cartographic evidence suggests that the original building which fronted onto the High Street was extended sometime before 1880. However, it is not clear if this was to increase production space in the factory, or to provide more living space for tenants.





## 4 Results

The topography of the site results in increase in ground level of more than a meter between the back of the building, and the northeast site boundary. Consequently the footprint of the extant building, notably the extension that has been demolished as part of the development, is cut well into the natural geology (Plate 1). As the drainage was all located at this level or lower and connected to the existing outlet, it was agreed with the planning archaeologist that it was unnecessary to monitor the excavation of the pipe runs.

Two structural features were noted during the site clearance and ground reduction process. A post-medieval well was located approximately 2.5m back from the building (Plate 2). It was constructed of roughly made, red clay bricks with few inclusions, 9" x 4" x 2 ¾", bonded with a pale brown, sandy lime mortar. The construction cut was approximately 10cm wider than its 1.6m diameter, suggesting it had been built from the inside. An unknown number of courses of brick had been removed from the top once the well had gone into disuse and been backfilled. It was then sealed with a 10cm thick brick capping built with orangey-red bricks and a light lime mortar (Plate 3). As the top of the capping was just below the floor of a Victorian extension, it seems likely that the two events were contemporary (Plate 4).

The other structure was a fresh water storage tank (Plate 5). It was 2.1m square, approximately 3.5m from the base to the apex of the vaulted roof, which was two courses thick. It was built of red bricks measuring 9" x 4" x 2 ¾" with few inclusions, in stretcher bond with a pale brown sandy mortar (Plate 6). The tank itself was single skin with a smooth interior which had been waterproofed with render and a bituminous coat (Plate 7). A 4" glazed ceramic pipe ran from the upper southwest corner alongside the footing of the extension, towards the main building where, presumably it once connected to the downpipe from the guttering (Fig.4, Plate 8).

The building's extension had partly covered the tank, incorporating some of its structure into the northeast end wall (Plate 9). The vaulted roof had subsequently been covered over. Both of the archaeological structures recorded were located in what amounted to the Grey House's back yard (Plate 10), and their level in relation to the modern land surface is further evidence of how much disturbance has taken place in the immediate vicinity.

Most of the footings of the proposed development will be excavated into the already exposed chalk natural, though the main northeast trench will be cut through the tank (Fig. 5).

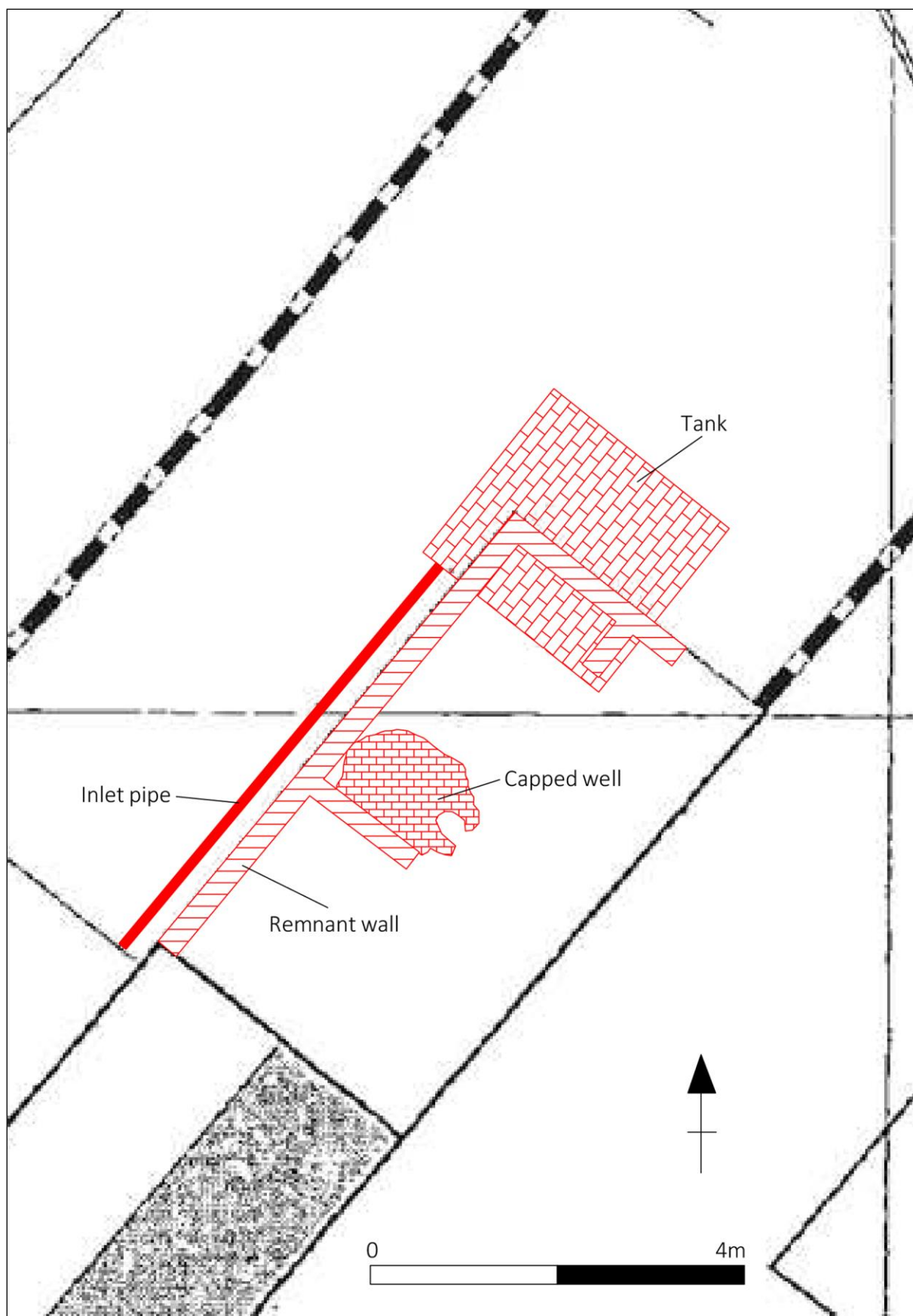


Figure 4: Archaeological features (*scale 1:75*)

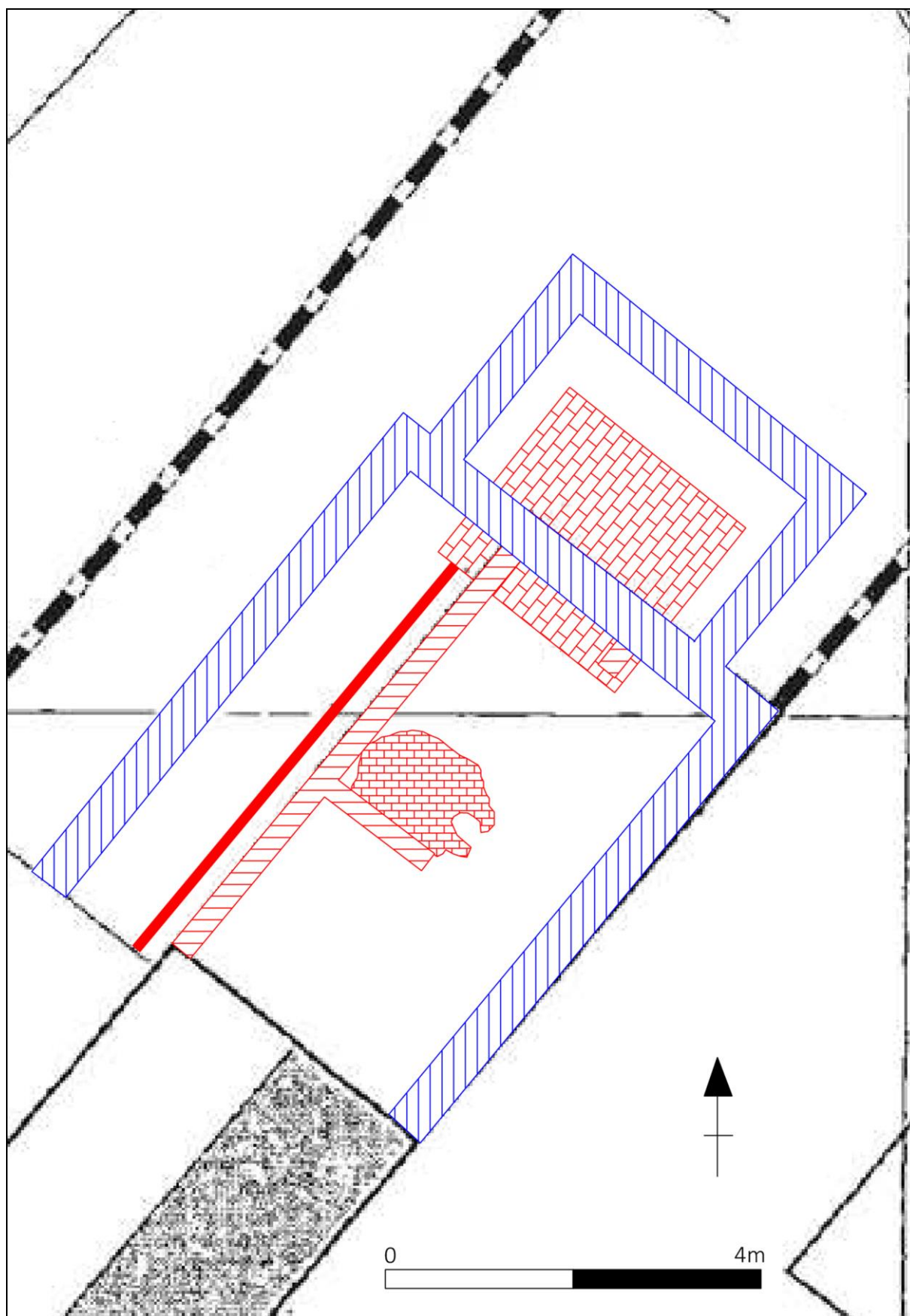


Figure 5: Impact of footings, shown in blue (scale 1:75)





**Plate 1:** Site stratigraphy (1m scale)



**Plate 2:** Post-medieval well (1m scale)



**Plate 3:** Well capping



**Plate 4:** Well capping in relation to floor level (1m & 2m scales)



**Plate 5:** Brick-built tank (1m & 2m scales)



**Plate 6:** Vaulted roof brickwork (0.5m scale)





**Plate 7:** Tank interior



**Plate 8:** Vaulting and inlet pipe (0.5m scale)



**Plate 9:** Extension in relation to tank (1m scale)



**Plate 10:** Well and tank location (1m & 2m scales)



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## 5 Conclusions

Number 59 High Street South, which was first documented in 1764, has been recorded as an inn known as the Star, a farmstead, private residence, and a hat factory. In 1870 Eliza Osbourne rented the property from Munt and Brown, another hat manufacturer based in what is now Priory House. It had previously been occupied by George Horn, a plait dealer who had become bankrupt. Eliza stayed for ten years, before retiring. The property became known as the Grey House by 1932 and was opened as the Grey House Hotel 20 years later. It has retained a commercial function since then.

Both the tank and the well appear to have been visible in 1923, so the remnant walls that incorporate part of the tank, are associated with a 20<sup>th</sup> century extension. The well capping is also at a level below that of the floor of that part of the building.

It is probable that both the well and the tank functioned simultaneously, one providing drinking, cooking and bathing water, the other to collect rainwater to be used in the hat making process. It may be that the rain water was free from chalk particles which adversely affected the hat material, particularly once felt was used in preference to straw. The water may also have been used to generate the steam used in the production process (Benson 1986, 58). There was probably a hand pump connecting the tank and/or the well to the scullery (ibid).

Both the area in general and the site specifically had the potential to yield archaeological features from a broad time span. However, no features from any other period were represented on the site. This may have been due to the amount of ground disturbance and truncation that had occurred during the various stages of construction and extension that have taken place, or simply that the archaeology did not extend to this particular part of Dunstable.





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## 6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to David King for commissioning this report. His, and Adam Arber's 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.



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## 7 Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Written Scheme of Investigation
3. Initial report
4. Monitoring sheets
5. Site sketch drawings
6. Client's site plans
7. List of photographs
8. B/W prints & negatives
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with the Luton Museum.



## 9 References

### *Standards & Specifications*

- ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14.
- Allen J L & Holt A St J 1986 (with later updates) *Health & Safety in Field Archaeology*. London: Federation of Archaeological Managers & Employers
- Brickley M & McKinley J I 2004 *Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains*. Institute for Archaeologists Technical Paper.
- Central Bedfordshire Council 2013 *Brief for a Scheme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication at 59 High Street South, Dunstable, Bedfordshire*.
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- Watkinson D & Neal V 1998 *First Aid for Finds* Hertford & London: Rescue

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Benson, N 1986 *Dunstable in Detail* Luton: White Crescent Press

BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology.*

Brown, N. & Glazebrooke J. 2000 *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties – 2 Research Agenda and Strategy* East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 8

Curran J 2003 *Straw Hats and Bonnets* Dunstable: Book Castle

Medlycott, M (ed) 2011 *Research and Archaeology Re-visited: a revised framework for the East of England* East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 2

Mustchin, A (ed) 2012 *Land rear of the Saracen's Head, 45 High Street South, Dunstable, Bedfordshire: an archaeological evaluation* Archaeological Solutions

Oake, M et al 2007 *Bedfordshire Archaeology Research and Archaeology: resource assessment, research agenda and strategy* Bedfordshire Archaeology 9

Rouse, C 2005 *Watching Brief: 65-75 High Street South, Dunstable, Bedfordshire* Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* Harpenden





## Appendix 1: Photograph List

SITE NO/CODE: 004/DHS			Site Name: 59 High Street South, Dunstable
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
001	X	X	Well, facing SW
002	X	X	Well, facing SW
003	X	X	Well, facing SW
004		X	Well, facing SW
005		X	Well, facing SW
006		X	Well, facing SW
007	X	X	Well, facing NW
008	X	X	Well, facing NW
009		X	Well close up
010		X	Well close up
011		X	Well close up, facing NW
012	X	X	Tank, facing NE
013	X	X	Tank, facing NE
014		X	Tank, facing NE
015		X	Tank, facing NE
016		X	Tank, facing NE
017		X	Inlet pipe
018		X	Inlet pipe
019		X	Inlet pipe
020	X	X	Tank, facing SE
021	X	X	Tank, facing SE
022		X	Tank brickwork
023		X	Tank brickwork
024	X	X	Tank, facing SW
025	X	X	Tank, facing SW
026	X	X	Tank, facing SW
027		X	Tank, facing SW
028		X	Tank, facing SW
029	X	X	Tank, facing SW
030		X	Tank, facing SW
031		X	Tank, facing SW
032		X	Tank, facing SW
033		X	Tank, facing SW
034	X	X	General view, facing W
035	X	X	General view, facing W
036		X	General view, facing W
037		X	General view, facing W
038		X	General view, facing W
039		X	General view, facing W
040		X	Tank interior
041		X	Tank interior
042		X	Tank interior
043		X	Tank interior
044		X	Tank interior
045		X	Tank interior
046		X	Tank interior
047		X	Tank interior



048		X	Tank interior
049		X	Tank interior
050		X	Tank interior
051		X	Tank interior
052		X	Site stratigraphy
053		X	Site stratigraphy
054		X	Pre-ex of tank
055		X	Pre-ex of tank
056		X	Pre-ex of tank
057		X	Pre-ex of tank
058		X	Pre-ex of tank



## Appendix 2: KDK OASIS Sheet

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	59 High Street South, Dunstable	OASIS reference:	kdkarcha1-143039
Short Description:	<p>In May and October 2013 KDK Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at 59 High Street South, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, during the ground works associated with the construction of an extension to the rear of the property.</p> <p>The property dates from at least 1764 when it was recorded as being an inn. Following a series of changes of use, the building became associated with the hat trade in the 19<sup>th</sup> century before reverting to the hospitality industry in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century..</p> <p>A Victorian brick-built fresh water storage tank, with a vaulted roof was exposed during the groundworks. The tank is known from written records and was probably associated with the hat factory that is known to have occupied the building in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century.</p> <p>A post-medieval capped well was located beneath a modern extension which was demolished as part of the redevelopment programme.</p> <p>Apart from the below ground structures, no archaeological cut features, deposits, or artefactual evidence of significance was encountered, though some worked stone blocks were noted by the contractors when some ground clearance work was undertaken at the north east end of the site.</p>		
Project Type:	Observation & Recording		
Previous work:	None	Site status:	None
Current land use:	Back garden	Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	None
Monument type:	Fresh water tank, well	Monument period:	Post-medieval
Significant finds:	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Bedfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 02092 1700
Site address:	59 High Street South, Dunstable		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	45 sq. m	Height OD: (metres)	145mOAD
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Central Bedfordshire Council	Project design originator:	KDK Archaeology
Project Manager:	Karin Semmelmann	Director/Supervisor:	David Kaye
Sponsor / funding body:	David King		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	16.5.2013	End date:	26.10.2013
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content	
Physical:	Luton Museum LUTNM 2013/1	None	
Paper:		Report, Recording Sheets, Plans	



Digital:		CD of photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
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