



**KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD**



**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:  
LAND TO THE REAR OF 59 HIGH STREET SOUTH  
DUNSTABLE  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

on behalf of David King



NGR: TL 02092 21650

David Kaye BA Alfa

KDK: 043/DHS/2

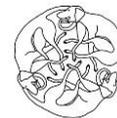
May 2014

5 Leopold Road Linslade Leighton Buzzard Bedfordshire LU7 2QU

Tel: 01525 385443

Email: [office@kdkarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:office@kdkarchaeology.co.uk)

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



## Site Data

<i>KDK project code:</i>	043/DHS		
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	kdkarcha1-178838	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	2014/7
<i>County:</i>	Bedfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Dunstable		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Dunstable		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 02092 21650		
<i>Present use:</i>	Car Park		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Erection of single dwelling		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Central Bedfordshire		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	Pre-planning		
<i>Client:</i>	David King 59 High Street South Dunstable Bedfordshire LU6 3SF		
<i>Contact name:</i>	David King		

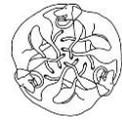
## Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	David Kaye BA AlFA	<i>Date:</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> May 2014
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>	Karin Kaye MA MlFA	<i>Date:</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> May 2014
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

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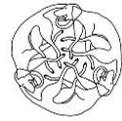


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)



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## Summary

In May 2014 KDK Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation at the land to the rear of 59 High Street South, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, prior to submission of a planning application to construct a single dwelling with garage, access road, and parking.

The land lies immediately adjacent to the Precinct of Dunstable Priory, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SM BD3), and within the core of both the medieval and Roman towns.

Two trenches were excavated with archaeological features being present in one. A section of clunch-built wall was noted in the western corner of Trench 2. However, neither its width nor length could be ascertained at this stage.

A demolition layer, possibly associated with the destruction of the wall, was also recorded, along with a dog burial at a similar stratigraphic level.

## 1 Introduction

1.1 In May 2014 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an archaeological evaluation of the land to the rear 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 (Kaye 2014), and approved by Central Bedfordshire Archaeology Team, archaeological advisor (AA) to the local planning authority (LPA), Central Bedfordshire Council.

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

The work is part of a requirement of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF), and was carried out prior to a planning application being submitted.

### 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 21650 (Fig. 1)

#### *Description*

The site as a whole is rectangular in shape and is bounded to the rear by the plots from numbers 57 and 59 High Street South to the northwest and southwest respectively, Montpelier House to the southeast, and the Priory grounds to the northeast. 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 erection of a single detached dwelling with double garage and access road to parking (Fig. 3).

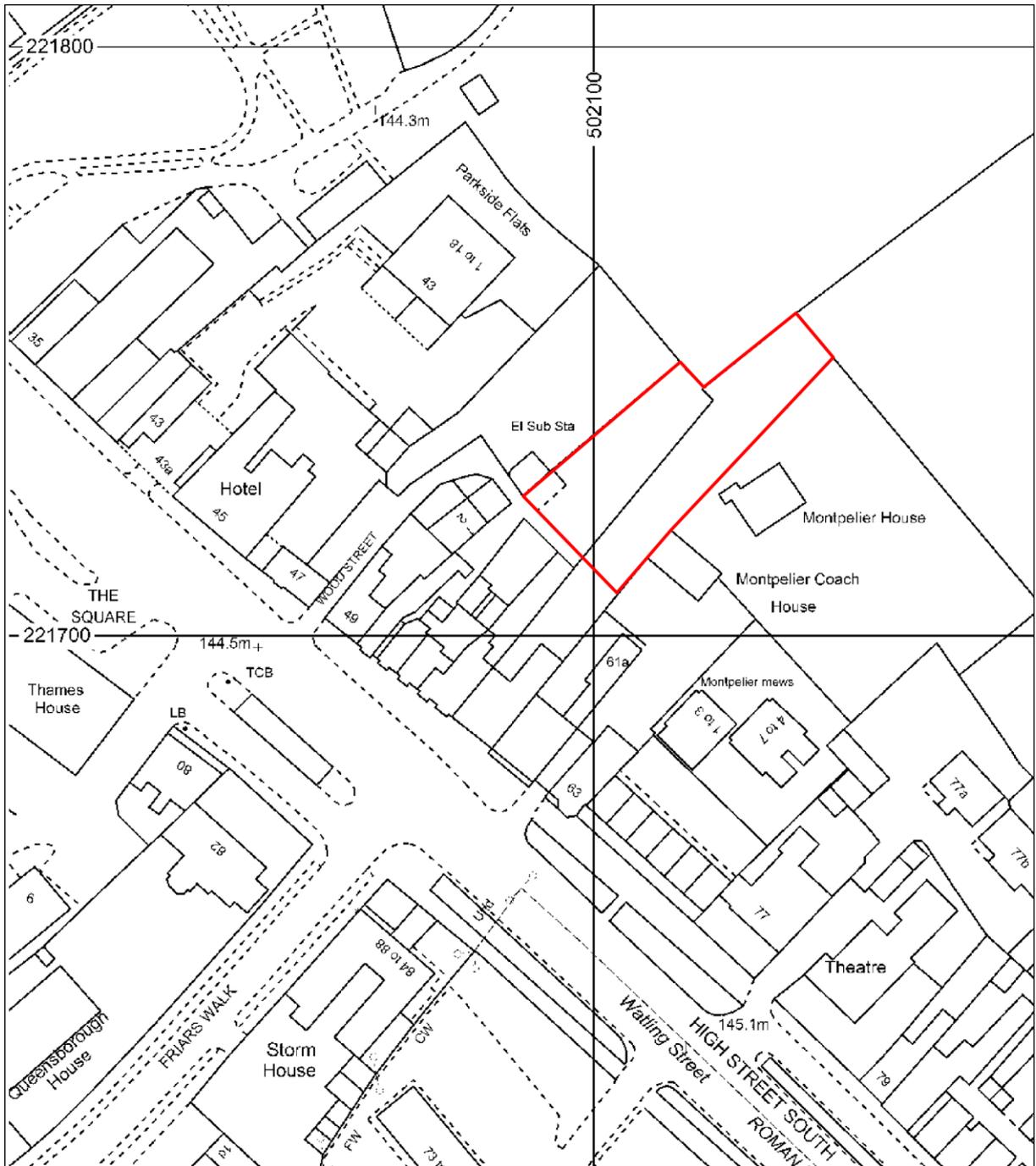


Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:1250)

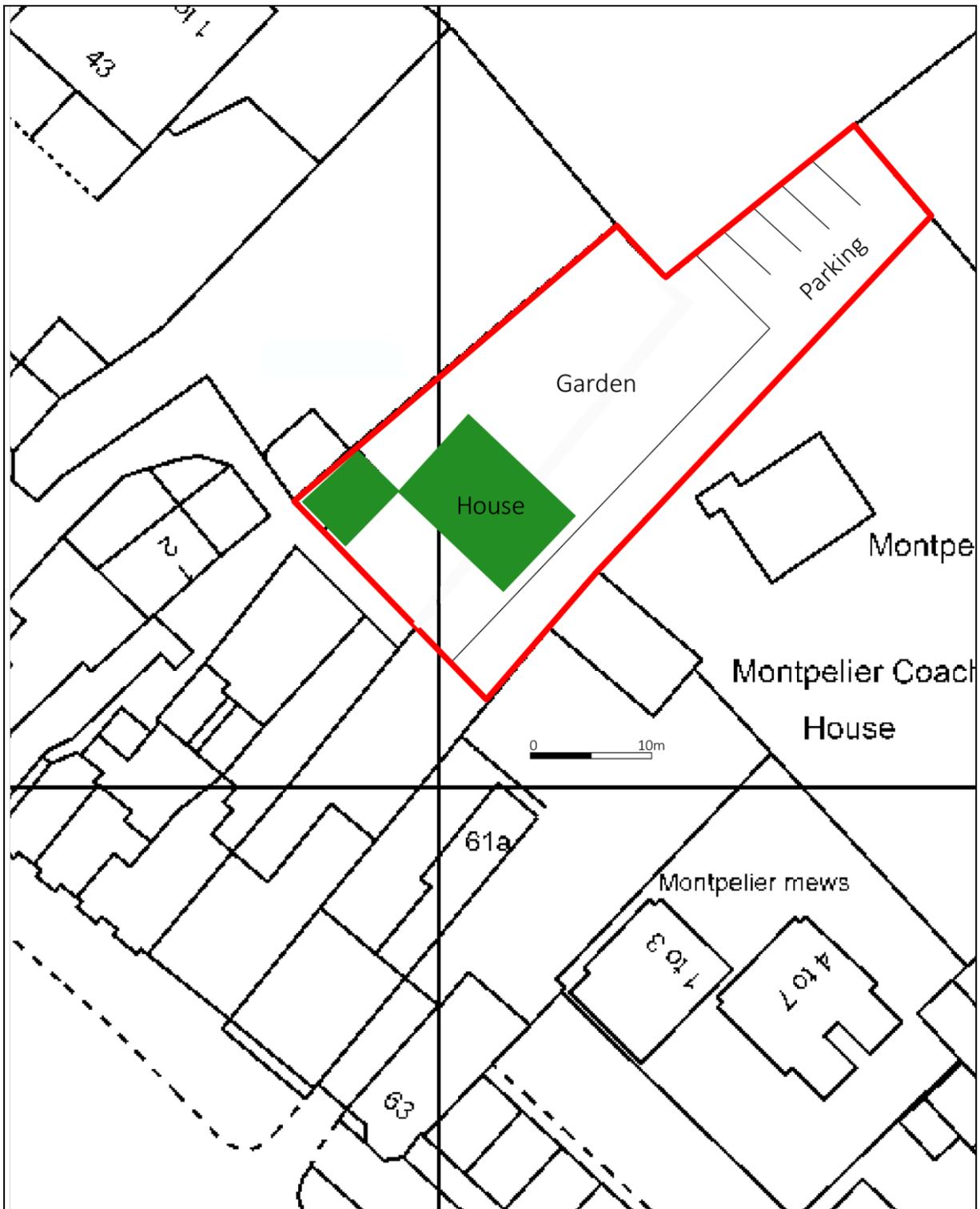
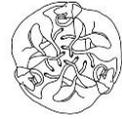


Figure 3: Proposed development (scale 1:500)



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## 2 Aims & Methods

2.1 The aims of this evaluation as defined in the approved WSI (Kaye 2014) were to gather further information on:

- The location, extent, nature, and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present at the proposed development site.
- The integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present at the proposed development site.

### 2.2 *Methods*

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

- Trial trenching could be up to a maximum of 30m<sup>2</sup>
- There was an unused contingency of 15m<sup>2</sup> of additional trenching
- The trenches were a minimum of 2m in width and were excavated under archaeological supervision using a machine fitted with a toothless bucket

The proposed trench layout (Fig. 4) had to be altered due to the presence of large spoil heap and the roots of a protected tree, resulting in Trench 2 being made shorter but wider (Fig. 5).

### 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)

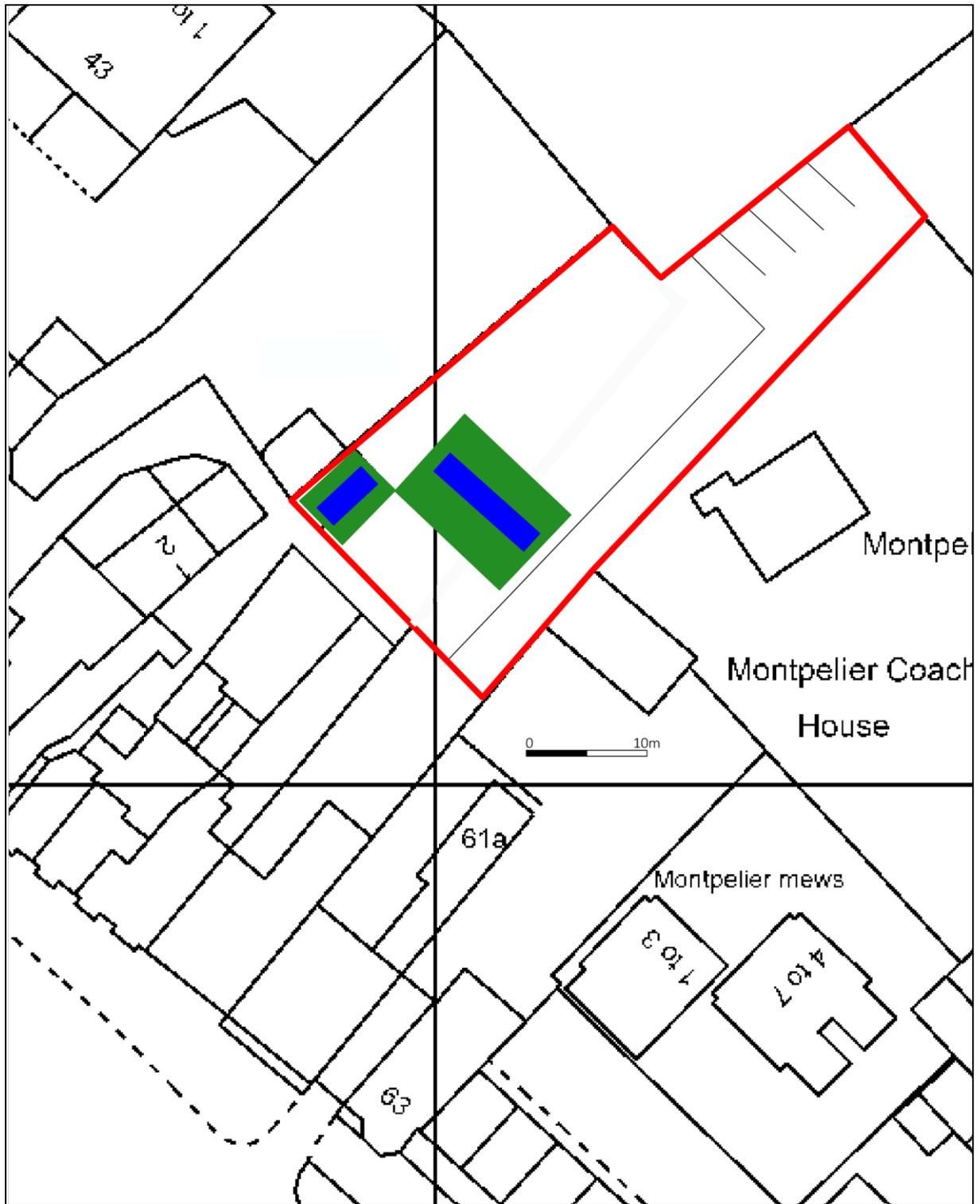


Figure 4: Proposed trench layout (scale 1:500)

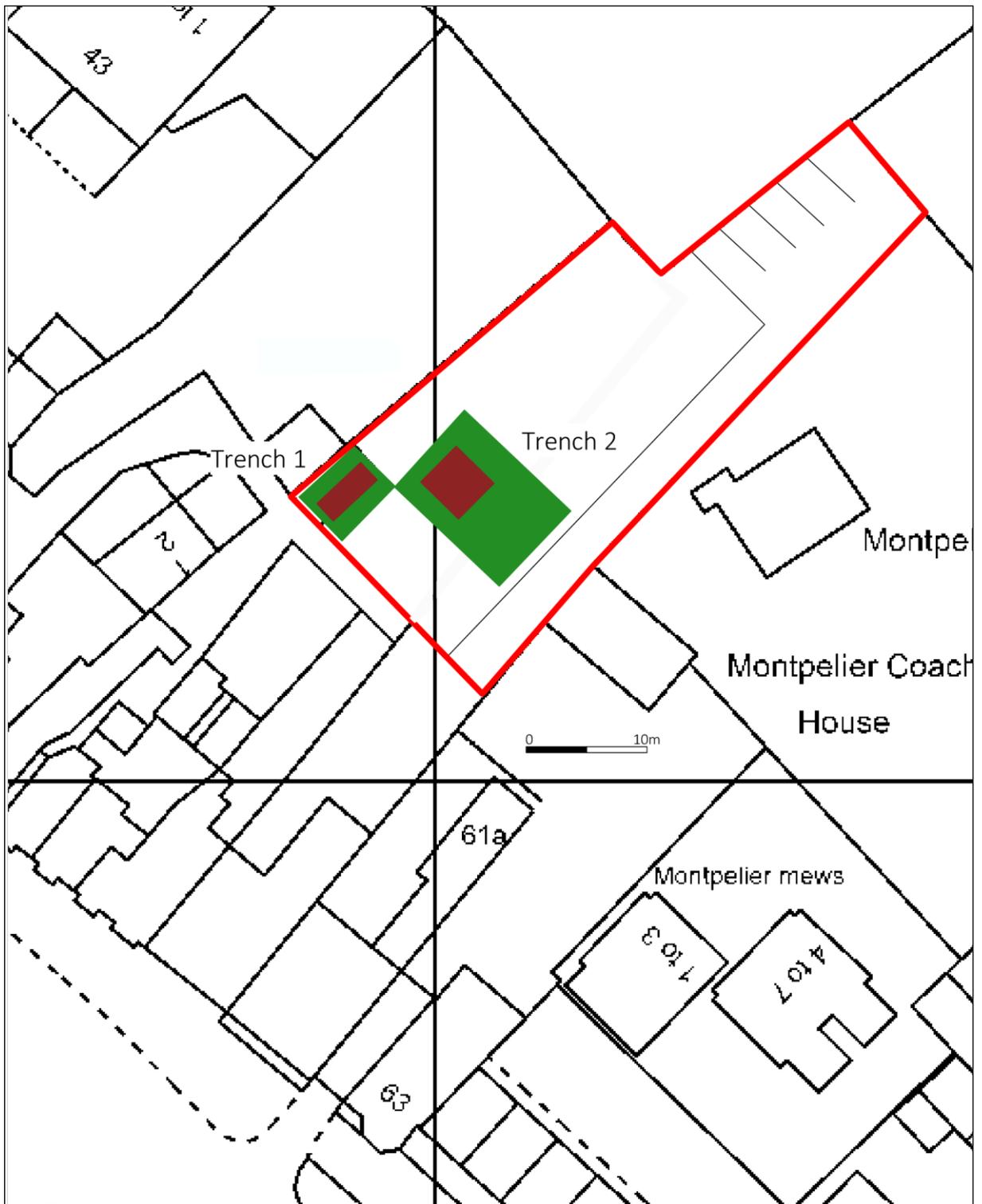
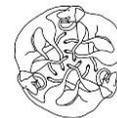


Figure 5: Actual trench layout (scale 1:500)



### 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. The site can be seen to lie within an area of high archaeological sensitivity and may contain archaeological evidence from the Roman period onwards.

This section has been compiled with information from the Historic Environment Record (HER), the Dunstable Extensive Urban Survey (EUS 2003), the design brief (CBC 2013) and archaeological reports of works undertaken on nearby sites.

#### 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 Durocibrivae (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 3<sup>rd</sup> to the late 4<sup>th</sup> 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).



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### 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 burgage 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 Montpellier 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 relic 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 at 59 High Street South. 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. This was supported by the findings of an archaeological watching brief carried out during the development of 59 High Street South. A brick-built, lined tank and a capped well were recorded to the rear of the property (Kaye 2013). Both were almost certainly associated with the industrial heritage of the building, and lie 10 and 15m respectively south of the proposed development.

### 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). However, there are no specific archaeological or historical details relating the development area itself.



## 4 Results

### *Introduction*

The proposed location of Trench 2 had to be altered due to the presence of a protected tree and a large spoil heap. This resulted in it being shortened and widened to maintain the overall stipulated excavation area.

Archaeological features were identified only in Trench 2 (Fig 6).

### *Trench 1 (Fig. 5: Plate 1)*

Trench 1 was orientated northeast-southwest and was 5m X 2m, and c.1.4m deep. It was located within the proposed footprint of the garage, and the stratigraphy below the modern surface (101) consisted of 0.4m of dark humic, silty clay topsoil (102), overlying 0.5m of pale yellowish brown sandy clay subsoil with occasional chalk inclusions (103). The natural geology was clean, nodular chalk (104) (Plate 1).

No archaeological cut features or deposits were present in the trench. However, some post-medieval artefacts such as peg tile fragments and clay pipe stems were present in the subsoil. None were retained.

### *Trench 2 (Figs. 5-8: Plates 2-6)*

Trench 2 was orientated northwest-southeast and was 4.4m X 4.2m, and c.1.2m deep (Plate 2). It was located within the proposed footprint of the house, and the stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of modern surface (201), overlying 0.3m of dark humic, silty clay topsoil (202), and 0.6m of pale yellowish brown sandy clay subsoil with occasional chalk inclusions (202) (Plate 3). The natural geology was variegated brown and white nodular chalk (204).

Approximately 0.8m below the existing ground level, 0.3m into the subsoil, was a spread of dark brown silty clay approximately 1m long by 0.5m wide (205). It appeared to be redeposited topsoil. Within (205) was a small dog burial (206) (Plate 4). Underlying this was a spread of material measuring 1.4m wide, 0.1m in depth and greater than 2.2m long (207) (Fig. 7, Plate 5). It consisted of a mixture of fragments of roof tile and clunch within a predominantly coarse sandy matrix, and was left *in situ*.

Located in the northeast corner of the trench, overlying the natural geology, and running into the baulk on two sides, were the remnants of a clunch wall footing (208), measuring at least 1.4m in length, 0.45m in width and up to 0.2m in depth (Figs. 7 & 8, Plate 6). The single course of stones were mostly unworked, though one fragment had a dressed face, and all were unbonded. However, they appeared to have been deliberately placed rather than dumped randomly. There was no discernible cut in either the natural geology or the overlying subsoil, suggesting the upper courses of stone had been “robbed out” prior to the formation of the subsoil. This feature was left *in situ*.

In common with Trench 1, the subsoil contained peg tile and CBM. However, the only artefact retained was a possible Neolithic flint blade with a retouched edge.

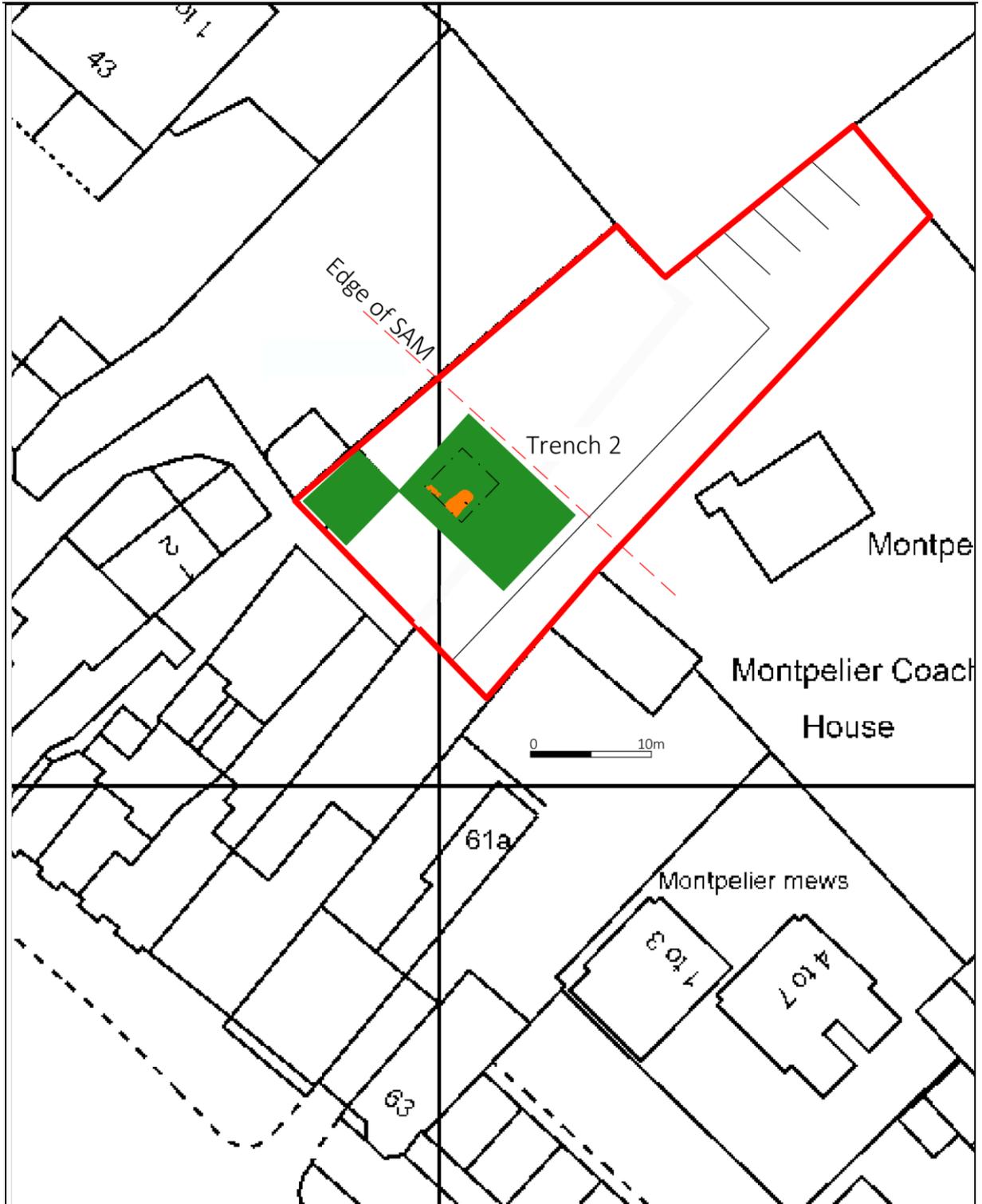


Figure 6: Archaeological features marked in orange (scale 1:500)

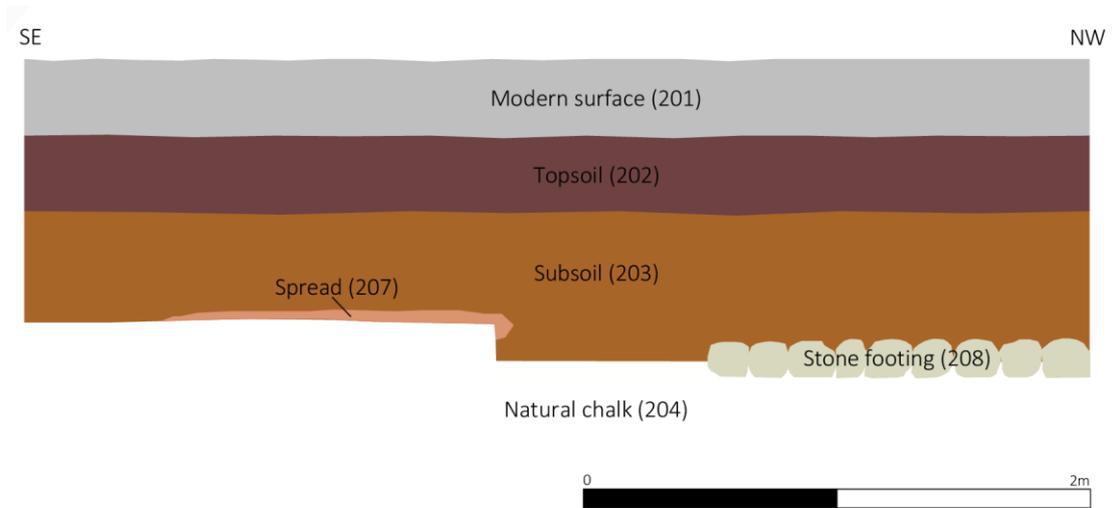
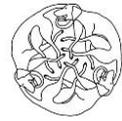


Figure 7: Trench 2 section, facing southwest (scale 1:30)

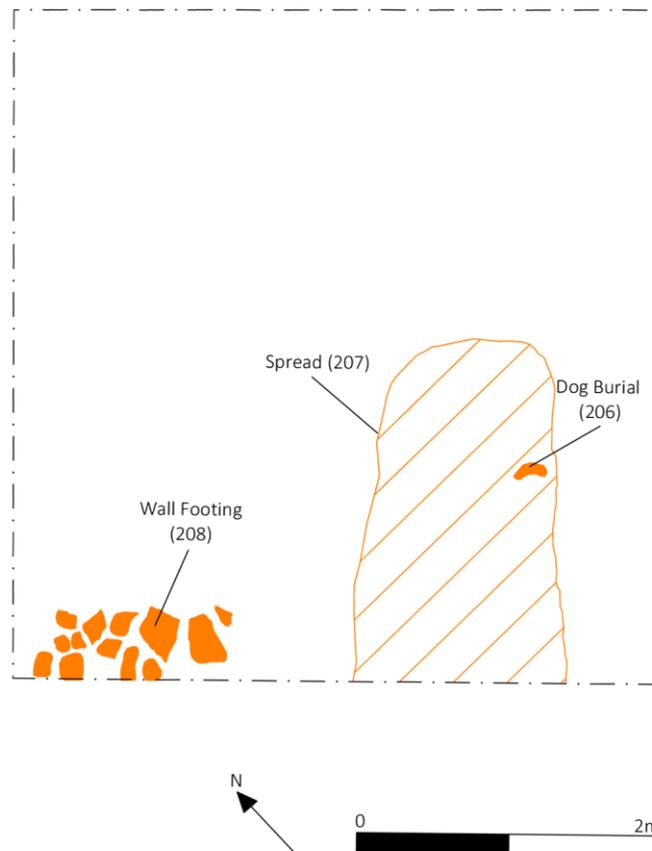


Figure 8: Trench 2 features (scale 1:50)



Plate 1: Trench 1 facing northeast



Plate 2: Trench 2 facing northwest



Plate 3: Trench 2 stratigraphy



Plate 4: Dog burial



Plate 5: Demolition spread



Plate 6: Clunch wall footing



## 5 Conclusions

The edge of the Scheduled Ancient Monument is the presumed Priory precinct boundary, and it is located approximately 7m northeast of the revealed clunch footing in Trench 2. As both these features share the same orientation, there is the possibility that the extent of the precinct has been underestimated, and that the footing exposed in Trench 2 is the remnant of the Priory's perimeter wall. As only a small fragment of the structure has been observed, and its width has not been determined, this can only be a tentative theory. However, clunch tended to be used for high status buildings in Dunstable in the medieval period, as the extant Priory Gate Wall demonstrates.

Alternatively, it could be that the footing represents the remnants of a building beyond the confines of the Priory, built by a wealthy burgess, or a structure built after the demise of the Priory, and the clunch has simply been robbed from the boundary wall, as a convenient source of building stone.

The spread of material recorded in Trench 2 could be related to the destruction of the wall. It contained a mixture of building materials, including small pieces of clunch, and was at a higher stratigraphic level than the base of the wall footing.

The dog burial appears to have taken place at around the same time as the spread was deposited. There was no associated cut, suggesting the animal's body was simply covered with a layer of topsoil.

The possibly Neolithic flint blade that was recovered from the subsoil of Trench 2 is a noteworthy artefact, though its location in amongst medieval and post-medieval material reduces its significance to being merely suggestive of prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the proposed development.

### *Heritage Asset Assessment*

The site lies immediately adjacent to the Precinct of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Dominican Priory, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and within the core of both the medieval and Roman towns. Previous archaeological work on the same plot, but immediately to the rear of 59 High Street South, recorded evidence of post-medieval industrial activity, related to the building's former use as a hat factory (Kaye 2013).

The proposed development consists of a single detached house, garage and access road to parking. There is a likelihood that the foundations of the buildings will consist of strip footings excavated to the depth of the natural geology, in this case 1.2-1.4m below the existing surface. Drainage trenches are likely to be at a much shallower depth, probably within the subsoil, as will be the likely impact level of the access road.

The size of the building's footprint is such that it cannot be moved northeast without encroaching onto the SAM, and there is insufficient space to move it southwest. As such, the footings trenches for the proposed building may impact on the clunch feature in Trench 2. The nature and extent of the clunch feature is as yet uncertain, although its significance may be quite considerable, should it be proven to be part of the precinct wall. The location of the proposed dwelling to the rear of the plot and the results of the evaluation suggest that the proposed construction programme is unlikely to encounter many more archaeological features. However, it is possible that more of the clunch feature may be revealed that will



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allow a better understanding of its date and function and whether it was part of the precinct wall.



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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. Trench recording sheets
  5. Finds
  6. Site drawings
  7. Client's site plans
  8. List of photographs
  9. B/W prints & negatives
  10. CDROM with copies of all digital files.
- 7.2 The archive will be deposited with Luton Museum.



## 8 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*. Reading: Institute for Archaeologists Technical Paper.
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- IFA 2010 Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*. Reading: Institute for Archaeologists
- IFA 2008 Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* Reading: Institute for Archaeologists
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- IFA 2010 Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*. Reading: Institute for Archaeologists
- 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)*.
- Kaye, D. 2014 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation: Land to the rear of 59 High St. South, Dunstable, Bedfordshire*. KDK 043/DHS/1
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- 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



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Medlycott, M (ed) 2011 *Research and Archaeology Re-visited: revised framework for the East of England* East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24

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



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**Appendix 1: Photograph List**

SITE NO/CODE: 043/DHS			Site Name: Land to the rear of 59 High Street South, Dunstable
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	x	x	Trench 1 facing NE
2	x	x	Trench 1 facing NE
3	x	x	Trench 1 facing NE
4	x	x	Trench 2 facing SW
5	x	x	Trench 2 facing SW
6	x	x	Clunch footing
7	x	x	Clunch footing
8	x	x	Demolition spread
9	x	x	Demolition spread
10	x	x	Dog burial
11	x	x	Dog burial



## Appendix 2: KDK OASIS Sheet

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Land to the rear of 59 High Street South, Dunstable, Bedfordshire	OASIS reference:	kdkarcha1-178838
Short Description:	<p>Two trenches were excavated with archaeological features being present in one. A section of clunch-built wall was noted in the western corner of Trench 2. However, neither its width nor length could be ascertained at this stage.</p> <p>A demolition layer, possibly associated with the destruction of the wall, was also recorded, along with a dog burial at a similar stratigraphic level.</p>		
Project Type:	Evaluation		
Previous work:	Watching Brief for 59 High Street South rear extension	Site status:	None
Current land use:	Car park	Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	Unknown
Monument type:	Structure (wall)	Monument period:	Medieval
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	Neolithic flint blade (Unstratified)		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Bedfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 02092 21650
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	Land to the rear of 59 High Street South, Dunstable, Bedfordshire		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	c.25 sq m	Height OD: (metres)	145m
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Central Bedfordshire Archaeology Team	Project design originator:	KDK Archaeology Ltd
Project Manager:	Karin Kaye	Director/Supervisor:	David Kaye
Sponsor / funding body:	David King		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	8.5.2014	End date:	8.5.2014
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Luton Museum (2014/7)	Flint artefact	
Paper:		Site records, plans, drawings	
Digital:		CD of photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
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