



# KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION & RECORDING REPORT:  
LAND TO THE REAR OF HIGH STREET & ST. JOHN STREET  
KEMPSTON  
BEDFORDSHIRE

on behalf of Aragon Land and Planning Ltd



NGR: TL 0277 4741

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KDK: 059/KHS/4.2

February 2015

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## Site Data

<i>KDK project code:</i>	059/KHS		
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	kdkarcha1-180253	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	BEDFM 2014.35
<i>County:</i>	Bedford Borough		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Kempston		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Kempston		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 0277 4741		
<i>Present use:</i>	Storage		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of 2 detached dwellings		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Bedford Borough		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	12/01844/FUL 12/09/2013		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	23 <sup>rd</sup> & 24 <sup>th</sup> June & 1 <sup>st</sup> Oct 2014		
<i>Commissioned by:</i>	Aragon Land and Planning UK LLP The Old Coalhouse 28A Rosamond Road Bedford Bedfordshire MK40 3SS		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Andrew Polson		

## Quality Check

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



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## Summary

*Between June and October 2014 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of archaeological observation and recording during the construction of two detached dwellings on land to the rear of High St and St John's St, Kempston, Bedfordshire. The footing trenches and services monitored revealed two tree throws and no archaeological finds, features or deposits.*

### 1 Introduction

1.1 Between June and October 2014 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of observation and recording on land to the rear of High St and St John's St, Kempston, Bedfordshire. The project was commissioned by Aragon Land and Planning UK LLP, and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Kaye 2014), and approved by Bedford Borough Council Planning Service, archaeological advisor (AA) to the local planning authority (LPA), Bedford Borough Council. The relevant planning application reference is 12/01844/FUL.

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

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

### 1.3 *The Site*

#### *Location*

Kempston is situated approximately 3.2km southwest of Bedford, within the administrative district of Bedford Borough, and the civil parish and village of Kempston, at National Grid Reference TL 0277 4741 (Fig. 1).

#### *Description*

The site covers an area of 0.130 hectares and is located behind existing dwellings which front St John's Street and the High Street. It was formerly occupied by a service yard, various outbuildings and garaging. It is also worth noting that there were several trees on the site, some of which were mature. Access to the site is via The Glen, a side road off Campbell Close, with further access to the north east to St. Johns Street (Fig. 2).

#### *Geology & Topography*

The solid geology is on the junction of interbedded Limestone and argillaceous rocks of the Great Oolite Group and Mudstone of the Kellaway Clays Member. The mudstone is covered by a superficial geology of Head (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

#### *Development*

The development comprised two 2 storey detached dwellings and an access road (Fig. 3).

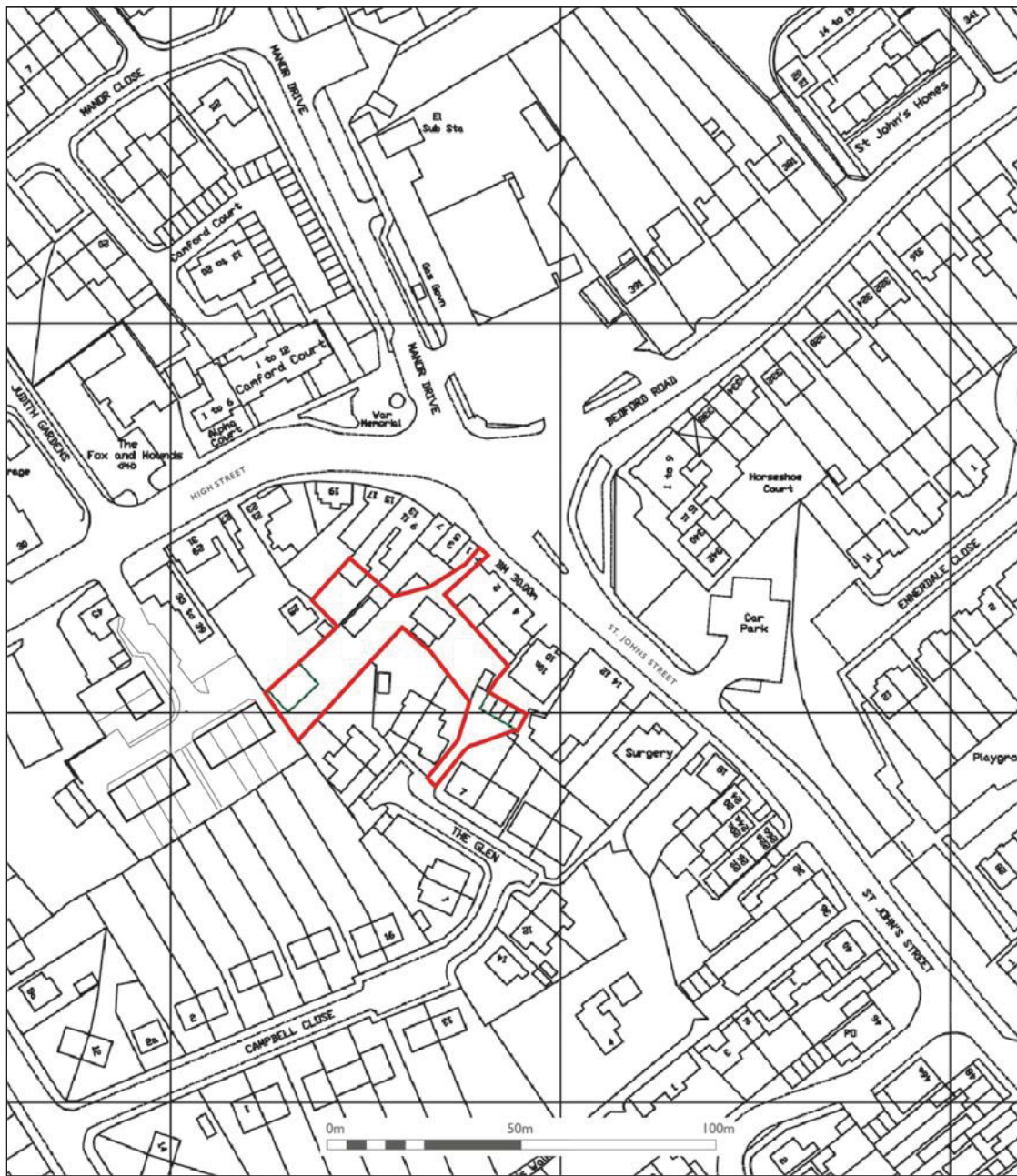


Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:1250)



Figure 3: Proposed development (scale as indicated)



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## 2 Aims & Methods

2.1 The aims of this project as defined in the approved WSI (Kaye 2014) were:

- To investigate the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present on the proposed development site
- To establish the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present on the proposed development site

In addition general research aims set out *inter alia* by Oake et al (2007), Brown and Glazebrook (2000) and Medlycott (2011) that are 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 approved WSI, the methods used were as follows:

- Ground or other works likely to have an impact on archaeological deposits were done under continuous and constant archaeological supervision.
- If significant archaeological deposits were encountered the Bedford Borough Council Archaeology team were to be notified and a timetable for the adequate investigation and recording of these features was to be agreed.
- Construction works was not to re-commence until the Bedford Borough Council Archaeology team was content that the archaeological work had been completed satisfactorily

## 2.3 *Standards*

The work conformed to the following requirements:

- The approved WSI
- The relevant sections of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (CIfA 2014)
- The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA, 2014)
- Current English Heritage guidelines (EH 2006,2008)
- The Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England *Region Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003)

## 2.4 *Constraints*

Due to a miscommunication the excavation of the soakaway was not monitored, rather it was observed once the trench had been partially backfilled.





### 3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 This section has been prepared using readily available material primarily from Internet sources, KDK's own library and the Historic Environment Records (HER). The HER License for this project is BBHER 003 (2014-15).

Modern Kempston is part of the urban fringe south west of Bedford. The town saw considerable expansion in the 19<sup>th</sup> century becoming an urban district in 1895. The area surrounding the proposed site has long been known to produce archaeological finds from all periods from the Palaeolithic to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A settlement has existed in the area since the Late Bronze Age.

Before the Norman Conquest Kempston was a noted estate centre of the earldom of Tostig. Tostig had been banished by Edward the Confessor in 1065 and the Kempston estate passed to Tostig's brother Earl Gyrrh, who was then killed alongside his brother King Harold at the Battle of Hastings. After the Norman Conquest William gave Kempston to his niece Judith de Balliol and in 1086 the Domesday Book records Countess Judith held a manor at Camestone (Kempston), and another at Potton, Kempston being a valuable holding. It is recorded that it comprised of 2,400 acres of arable land that needed 20 teams of oxen to maintain it and a large part uncultivated because it was too wet and marshy. Also on the Ouse, stood a working mill where the local people took their corn to be ground. At that time the population was reputed to be 40-45 men and their families.

In 1237 the manors of Kempston are mentioned with their names, Daubeney on Manor Drive, rebuilt in the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the original site, Kempston St. Johns and Hastingbury (or Greys) which stood to the west of the present Bury House on Cemetery Road. In 1400 there were numerous small hamlets which surrounded the main settlement of Kempston. Eventually there were two medieval settlements that formed modern day Kempston; the west end was called Bell End and the eastern was named Up End. The medieval settlement of Bell End has been investigated a number of times and has produced evidence of its Saxon to early medieval origins. The Up End medieval settlement area is now completely surrounded by the post medieval growth of Kempston.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 1826 a fire destroyed 40 houses on the High Street including part of the King William Public House. However, a number of buildings still survive which have been given a Grade II listing status. The nineteenth century saw a growth of urban housing and building in the New Town including the building of the Kempston Barracks in 1874-6 for the XVI the Regiment of Foot. In 1881, it became the Depot of the Bedfordshire Regiment and in 1918 for the amalgamated Beds. & Herts Regiment. In 1958 the barracks closed with the Keep on Bedford Road being retained as a centre for the Freemasons incorporating a Regimental Museum, with the Regimental War Memorial opposite. The remaining land was used for housing development.

There is a high archaeological potential for multi-phase occupation with Saxo-Norman, medieval farming and domestic activity.

- 3.2 *Prehistoric* (before 600BC)

The earliest finds from the area date from the Palaeolithic, with a large number of flint implements found over the years. The exact findspot is unknown, but the HER location (HER252) is given as being 50m away to the north of the development site, near the war memorial. Given the quantity of finds involved it is highly likely the finds are spread over a larger area. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century gravel extraction produced Palaeolithic and Neolithic finds 350m to the north east as well as five Bronze Age cremation burials with associated beaker vessels (HER256). A further 450m away to the east twelve Palaeolithic hand axes were found (HER1184).



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

Evidence for Late Iron Age occupation of the area primarily involves the cemetery site (HER256), which also produced the Bronze Age cremation burials, discovered 350m to the north east of the development site. Here were numerous burials with a variety of grave goods and associated ceramic vessels dated from the Late Iron Age (LIA) to early 1<sup>st</sup> century. Late Iron Age ditches have also been recorded 800m to the northwest near Kempston Mill (HER 1081).

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

Use of the Iron Age cemetery site (HER256) extended into the Roman period, with a number of high quality ceramic vessels accompanying the burials. With an extension of the gravel extraction site in the 20<sup>th</sup> century more Roman burials were uncovered with evidence for a possible altar. Further away 150m to the north east of the cemetery site gravel extraction revealed a complex of inter-related and subdivided pits (HER8555) which could possibly be related to it. An area 300m to the west was excavated ahead of development and a large Roman enclosure ditch (HER9724) was found. A Roman ditch was recorded at the site of Kempston Mill (HER1081) and close to this, between the manor and the mill, was a dense occupation site (HER14843) dating from Roman to the medieval period. The site produced evidence for ditches and gullies with associated post pits, and some Palaeolithic finds.

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

The area 300m to the west that was the subject of excavation (HER9724) along the modern day High Street, revealed traces of late Saxon occupation extending into early medieval period. A late Saxon ditch was revealed along with associated gullies, pits and postholes. A number of Saxon ditches and pits (HER4544) have been recorded 400m north west of the development site. One of the pits contained 13kg of pottery dating from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and truncated limestone building foundations of uncertain date. Two Saxon inhumations were also found on the LIA/Romano-British cemetery site to the north (HER256). Another cemetery site (HER258) was recorded 350m to the east during gravel extraction works in the 1860's. This site was noted at the time for its particular richness and variety of grave goods.

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

The Domesday Book recorded a mill in Kempston in 1086 and although the site of a mill does exist 300m to the west (HER1081) it may not necessarily be on the original site. Saxon/Medieval pits with a large ceramic assemblage (HER4544) were located approximately 20m west of the mill. Situated at the north end of Manor Drive, is a triangular medieval moated site (HER3396) with evidence of Saxo-Norman occupation. This is relatively close to the original site of the medieval manor house (HER5484) which belonged to Countess Judith, the niece of William I and recorded in the Domesday Book.

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

The present day Manor House (HER5484) is situated 275m north and was built around 1815 on the site of the original medieval house. Kempston Gasworks (HER6802) was built in 1869 along the southern bank of the river 400m to the northwest and was demolished in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the site was redeveloped. Up End School (HER7237) on St. Johns Street, 200 southeast was built in 1854, the building was destroyed by fire in 1975. Kempston Lodge (HER7866), a former workhouse is situated 450 to the east. A post medieval well (HER11529) is shown on a 1960 map 350m north east which is now demolished. Another well (HER11620) was located in the yard of The Bell public house (HER11598) 475m to the west, both of which were demolished in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.



A number of post medieval farmsteads have been noted in the area, Newold Farm (HER11530) 120m to the north, was demolished in 1848, with an associated farmhouse (HER11626) that survived until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until that itself was demolished. Saunders Farm (HER11548) 40m to the north was demolished in the early 1900's. Piersons Farm (Her 11627) 150m to the north with an associated building (HER11628) were, again, both demolished in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Up End school was the site of a homestead (HER11662) which was demolished in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the site of a demolished barn and stable (HER11630) is 200 to the south.

On the opposite side of St. Johns Street, 100m west was the site of St. Johns Church (HER1080), a Roman Catholic church, built in 1868 which existed until 1966. Another chapel site (HER11672) existed on the High Street 50m to the west, mentioned on the 1848 rating survey, it was built around 1800 and was demolished in 1899.

Numerous blacksmiths workshops have been noted in the vicinity. Gwyles Close 50 m to the west was the site of a blacksmiths workshop (HER11576), built circa 1800 and demolished in 1899. Another smithy (HER13314) was located near Manor Drive 250m to the north, another (HER17348) at number 13 High Street 20m to the north east now demolished, and another (HER17506) 450m to the east off Bunyan Road.

Knevitts and Kegshoes Messuage (HER11661) 200m to the southeast were a pair of 17<sup>th</sup> century almshouses which were demolished in 1768. To the southeast, no more than 50m away is the possible site of a 19<sup>th</sup> century building (HER11684), although there is uncertain evidence of the form and function of this structure, it is mentioned in the Enclosure Award and plan of 1804. Several post medieval demolished dwellings are noted, Pricketts Cottage and Close (HER11739) 200m north west, another (HER11745) 350m south west, another at the site of 106 High Street (HER12588) 350m to the west, 70-72 Bunyan Road (HER15219) 400m to the west, 80-98 High Street (HER15398) 300m to the west.

Numerous sites of industrial activity, now demolished are located in the area. The Poultry Appliance Manufacturer (HER17263) 150m to the west on the High Street, an unspecified (HER17655) works also on the High Street 70m to the south west. An engineering works (HER17564) 75m to the north east and another (HER17659) on the site of the now Judith Gardens 125m north west.

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

The majority of the 20<sup>th</sup> century archaeology consists of industrial activity. A garage (HER17346) was situated at 28 High Street 100m to the west, another (HER17493) 150m northwest on Bedford Road, and another (HER17656) 75m southeast off the High Street. A Haulage Contractor's site lay (HER17460) 400 to the west on Bunyan Road. Two scrap yards, one (HER17649) on the High Street 325m to the west, the other (HER17658) on St. Johns Street 75m to the east are also noted. Lincoln Works (HER17650), a rug manufacturing company was 100m to the west on Bedford Road. A builders merchant (HER17660) stood 200m to the west, on Molly Moore Avenue, a bakery depot (HER17661) on Elstow Road 400m to the east, and a slaughter house (HER15065) to the rear of 79 and 93 High Street, 200m to the west. The site of the Boot Inn (HER6548), a 20<sup>th</sup> century inn, lay 300m southeast. Some 450m to the south was a WWII Type 22 pillbox which was demolished by 1999.

### 3.9 *Site specific*

Five evaluation trenches were excavated in May 2014, of which two revealed evidence for medieval activity on the site during the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century (Kaye 2014). The features included an undated gully or ditch orientated perpendicular to the High St, which may be the remnants of a boundary for a burgage plot. A single undated post hole and three probable tree throws, which contained medieval pottery were also recorded. Of the 43 pottery sherds recovered in total, 37 came from one of the tree throws. These consisted primarily of St Neots Ware, with a



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few fragments of medieval shelly ware and Stamford Ware. The range of fabric types found across the site was described as being typical of Saxo-Norman sites in the county, and suggest that activity at the site was fairly short-lived, and probably limited to the earlier 12<sup>th</sup> century.



## 4 Results

### *Introduction*

A total of three site visits were made during the excavation of the footing trenches and associated services for the two new dwellings (Plot 1 & 2). Excavation was carried out with a tracked digger fitted with a 0.6m ditching bucket.

The general site stratigraphy comprised:

0.3m of Topsoil: dark-brown, humic material

0.4m of Sub-soil: mid-brown silty clay

0.7m+ Natural geology: light-orangey brown clay (Plate 1)

### *Footing Trenches: Plot 1 (Fig. 4; Plate 1)*

The footing trenches for Plot 1 to the north of the site were within an area of 68.89 sq. m. The trenches were 0.6m wide and c.1.2m deep.

No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed.

### *Footing Trenches: Plot 2 (Fig. 4; Plates 2-3)*

The footings trenches for Plot 2 to the south of the site were within an area of 92.12 sq. m. The trenches were 0.6m wide and c.1.2m deep.

Towards the northern corner of the trench two tree throws were seen in section. They both had moderately sloping sides with a concave base, 1.5m max wide and 0.5m max deep, and were filled by a mid-brown silty clay material indistinguishable from the sub-soil. One of the tree throws contained animal bone which was not retained. No dating evidence was found (Plates 2-3).

No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed.

### *Service Trenches (Fig. 4; Plate 4)*

A service trench was excavated from Plot 2 and along the fence line, towards the southeast side of the site. The trench was orientated southwest-northeast and was c.16m long, 0.45m wide and c.1m deep into the natural strata. At the northeast end of the trench it was excavated into topsoil and hooked up to existing services. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed.

In the southern corner of the site a soakaway was excavated that measured 1.6 × 1.6m and 0.8m deep. Due to miscommunication the excavation of the soakaway was not monitored, and by the time of the site visit it was partially backfilled with rubble (Plate 4). However, no archaeological features were noted in those parts of the sides that could be observed.



Plate 1: Plot 1 footing trench stratigraphy (scale 2x1m)



Plate 2: Tree throw in northwest corner of footing trench for Plot 2 (scale 2x1m)



Plate 3: Tree throw towards northwest corner of footing trench for Plot 2 (scale 2x1m)



Plate 4: Backfilled soakaway trench (scale 1m)

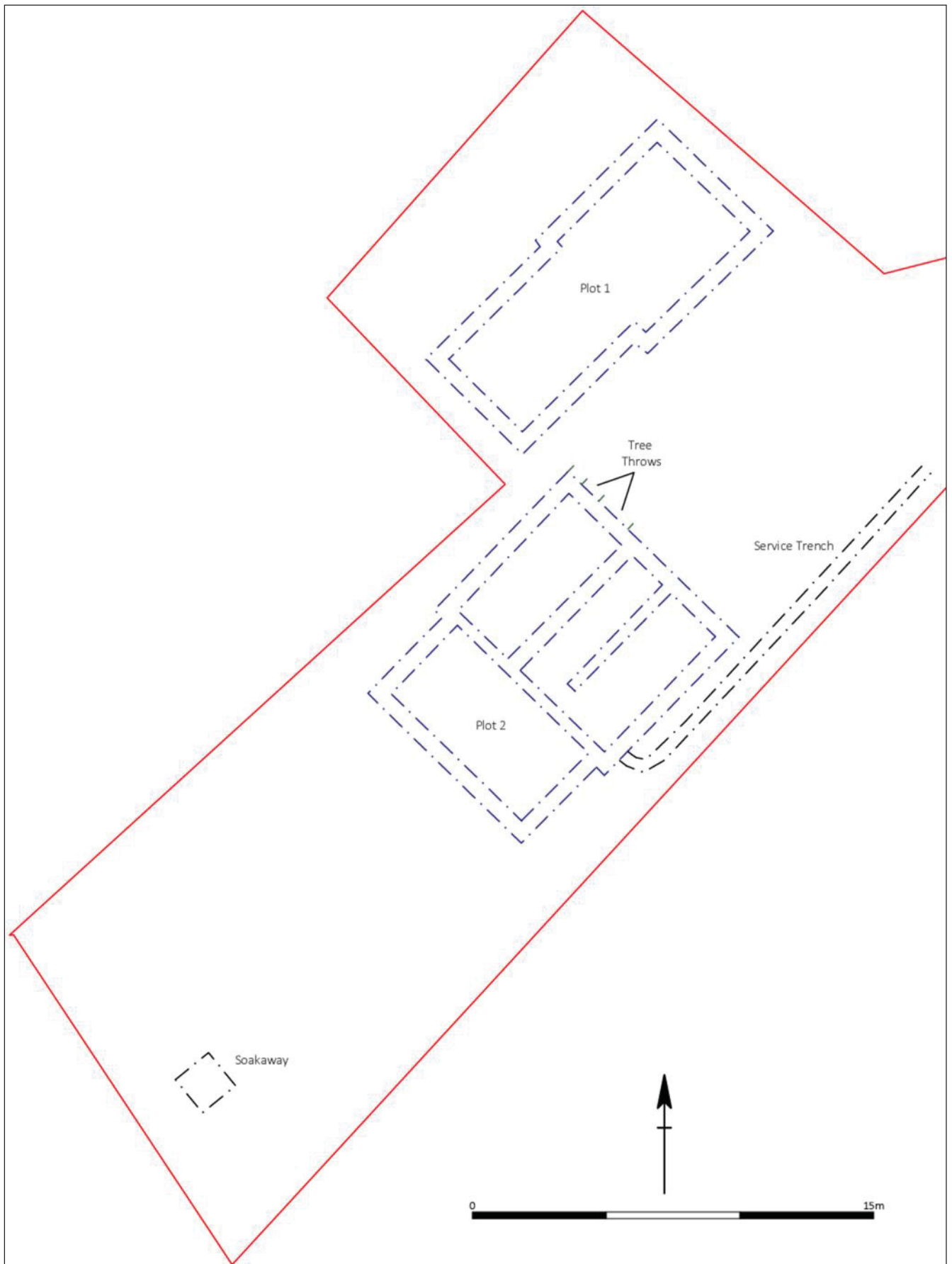


Figure 4: Footings and services plan (scale 1:200)





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## 5 Conclusions

The project was carried out as a direct result of a previous archaeological evaluation on the site (Kaye 2014). Evidence of medieval activity dating to the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century was found that was thought to be domestic activity within a burgage plot. Therefore, the potential for further features within the footings and service trenches was fairly high. However, no further archaeological features were revealed. Rather the project exposed two three throws that contained no dating evidence.

It is likely that the density of archaeological features is relatively low, and does not spread much beyond the areas excavated during the evaluation. This may be because the proposed developments were sited towards the rear of the medieval plots, or that there was just a low level of activity over a short time span in the immediate vicinity from that period.

The research aims laid out in the WSI were addressed as fully as they could be given the nature of the excavation. However, the paucity of features has restricted the depth and significance of the information recorded.



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6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to Andrew Polson of Aragon Land and Planning Ltd for commissioning this report and to Nigel Drummond for 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. Thanks are also due to Vanessa Clarke of Bedford Borough Council Planning Service for monitoring the project, and Bedford Borough Historical Environment Record office for providing historic environment records and other relevant documents. The full co-operation for all onsite contractors is also acknowledged.

The fieldwork was carried out by David Kaye BA ACIfA. The report was written by Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc ACIfA, and edited by David Kaye BA ACIfA.



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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 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 Bedford 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
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*Books and Historical Sources*

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Williams, A & Martin GH 2002 *Domesday Book: a complete translation* London: Penguin

*Online Sources*

British Geological Society: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>



## Appendix 1: Photograph List

SITE NO/CODE: 059/KHS		Site Name: Land to the rear of High St and St John's St, Kempston, Bedfordshire	
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	X	X	Plot 1 footing trench stratigraphy, looking NW (scale 2x1m)
2	X	X	Backfilled soakaway trench, looking NE (scale 2x1m)
3	X	X	Plot 2 tree throw in northwest corner, looking NE (scale 2x1m)
4	X	X	Plot 2 tree throw towards the northwest corner, looking NE (scale 2x1m)



## Appendix 2: KDK OASIS Sheet

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Land to the rear of High St and St John's St, Kempston, Bedfordshire	OASIS reference:	kdkarcha1-180253
Short Description:	Between June and October 2014 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of archaeological observation and recording during the construction of two detached dwellings at the Land to the rear of High St and St John's St, Kempston, Bedfordshire. The footing trenches and services monitored revealed two tree throws and no archaeological finds, features or deposits.		
Project Type:	Watching Brief		
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	Kaye, D 2014	Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	None
Current land use:	Storage	Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	Unknown
Monument type:	None	Monument period:	None
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Bedfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 0277 4741
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	Land to the rear of High Street and St John's St, Kempston, Bedfordshire		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	674.82 sq. m	Height OD: (metres)	c.30m AOD
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Bedford Borough Council	Project design originator:	KDK Archaeology Ltd
Project Manager:	Karin Kaye MA MIfA	Director/Supervisor:	David Kaye BA AIFA
Sponsor / funding body:	Aragon Land and Planning		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	23/06/14	End date:	01/10/14
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Bedford Museum (BEDFM 2014.35)	None	
Paper:		Brief, WSI, report, site records, maps & plans, b&w photographs	
Digital:		CD containing all digital photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Archaeological Observation & Recording Report: Land to the rear of High St and St John's St, Kempston, Bedfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	KDK Archaeology Ltd Report ref. 059/KHS/3		
Author(s):	Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc ACIfA		
Page nos	23	Date:	10/02/15