

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION & RECORDING REPORT:

THE GABLES
3 MAIN ROAD
BIDDENHAM
BEDFORDSHIRE

on behalf of Mr & Mrs Cotton



NGR: TL026499 Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc ACIfA

KDK: 033/BMR/3 February 2015

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KDK Archaeology Ltd



Site Data

KDK project code:	033/BMR						
OASIS ref:	Kdkarcha1-2	01370	Event/Accession no:	BEDFM 2013.59			
County:	County:		Bedford				
Village/Town:		Biddenham					
Civil Parish:		Biddenham					
NGR (to 8 figs):		TL 0268 4996					
Present use:		Existing house and garden					
Planning proposal:		Demolition of West wing of the main house, garage and outbuildings to the rear. Construction of a new West wing, garage, orangery, summerhouse, swimming pool and tennis court.					
Local Planning Author	rity:	Bedford Borough					
Planning application r	ef/date:	13/001765/FUL					
Date of fieldwork:	Date of fieldwork:		07/04/14 - 08/01/15				
Commissioned by:		Alistair Wilkinson David Coles Architects Ltd 1 Cobbs Court High Street Olney Buckinghamshire MK46 5QN					
Client:		Mr & Mrs Cotton The Ossory Ampthill Park House Hazelwood Lane Ampthill Bedfordshire MK45 2HF					
Contact name:		Alistair Wilkinson					

Quality Check

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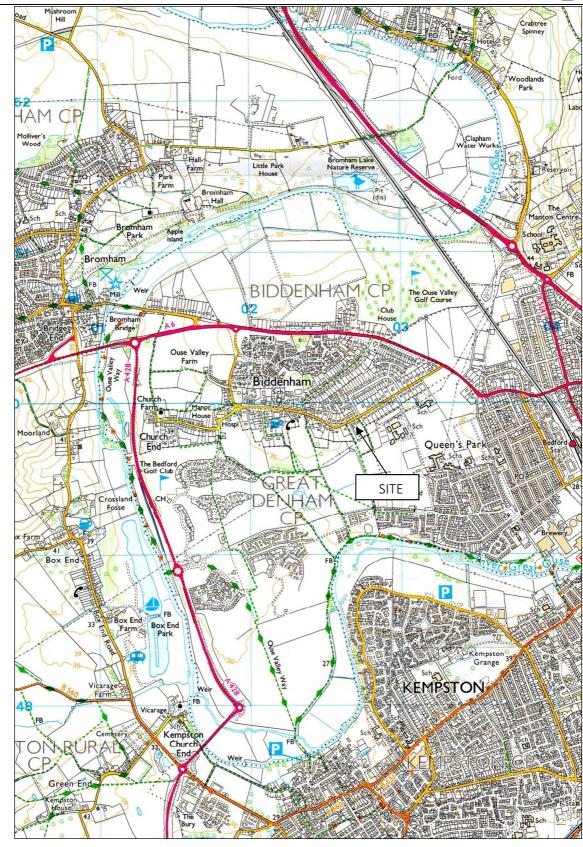


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)



Summary

In April 2014- January 2015 an Archaeological Observation and Recording project was carried out at The Gables, 3 Main Road, Biddenham, Bedfordshire during demolition of the west wing of the main house, garage and outbuildings to the rear, and the construction of a new west wing, garage, pool house, swimming pool and tennis court. The project uncovered the remains of a single ditch, orientated E-W within the ground reduced area for the new swimming pool. No function or date of the ditch could be established. The remainder of the monitoring revealed that the area close to the house consists of made-ground deposits, most likely associated with the houses original construction, whereas all excavations further away from the house identified an undisturbed topsoil, sub-soil and natural clay stratigraphy.

1 Introduction

1.1 Between April 2014 and January 2015 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of observation and recording of The Gables, 3 Main Road, Biddenham, Bedford. The project was commissioned by David Coles Architects Ltd on behalf of their clients Mr and Mrs Cotton, and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Kaye 2013), and approved by Bedford Borough Council Historic Environment Planning Services, archaeological advisor (AA) to the local planning authority (LPA), Bedford Borough Council. The relevant planning application reference is 13/001765/FUL.

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 development site lies within the administrative district of Bedford Borough Council, in the parish of Biddenham and at the southern side of the village at National Grid Reference TL 0268 4996 (Fig. 1).

Description

The Gables is a large Victorian house with an outbuilding to the rear in an established garden, which stands at the northern end of a rectangular 0.3ha plot of land within a residential setting. It is bounded to the north by Main Road, private residences to the south and east, and an associated access track to the west (Fig. 2).

Ground level across the site slopes from approximately 35mAOD on the Main Road frontage to 33.30mAOD on the southern site boundary.

Geology & Topography

The underlying drift geology of the area is typically sands and gravels of the Biddenham Member (Third Terrace) of the Ouse Valley Formation (BGS Sheet 203).

Development

The development included the demolition of the west wing of the house and the outbuilding and the construction of a replacement side and rear extension together with an attached double garage. The work also included the construction of a new summer house, a swimming pool, and tennis court in the rear garden (Fig. 3).



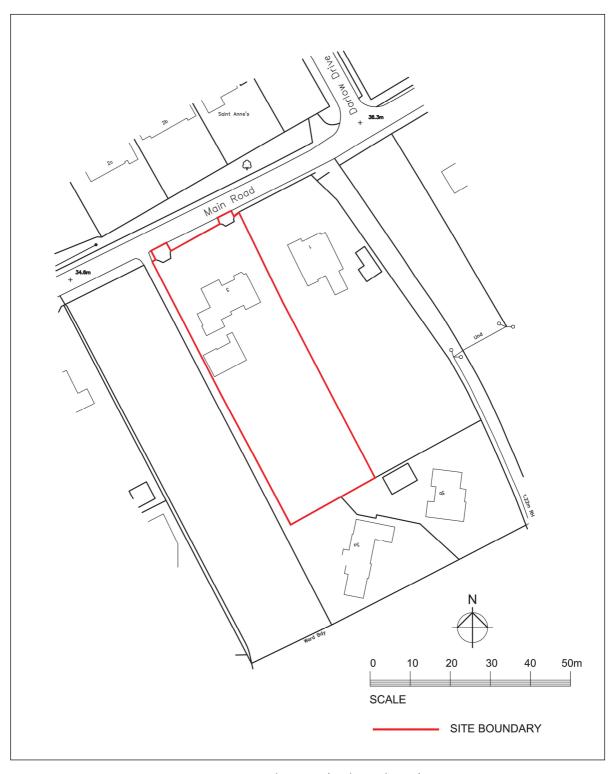


Figure 2: Site location (scale as shown)



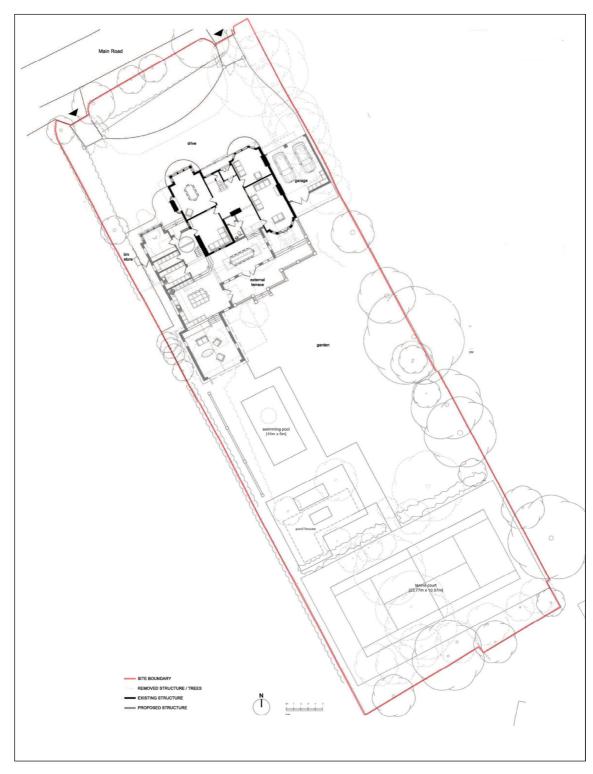


Figure 3: Proposed development (scale as shown)



2 Aims & Methods

- 2.1 The aims of this project, as defined in the approved WSI (KDK: 033/BMR/1.2), were:
 - to record the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains

In addition, the research aims considered *inter alia* the various aspects of the development of Saxon and medieval settlements; their origins, morphology, diversity and ultimate success or failure (Wade 2000: 24-25; Oake 2007: 14 & Medlycott 2011: 70).

2.2 Methods

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

- All open area ground reduction associated with the development were undertaken with a toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision
- The exposed sub-soil or archaeological horizon were cleaned by hand immediately after machine stripping as required and any archaeological deposits, structures or negative features planned.
- Open area ground reduction for overburden removal was only undertaken to the top of the archaeological horizon.
- All other intrusive groundworks such as foundation trenches, service trenches, soakaways etc were undertaken under direct archaeological supervision

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)
- 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)



3 Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 The site lies at the eastern end of the core of the medieval settlement of Biddenham (HER 17017), which was first recorded in the Domesday Book (1086). Excavations undertaken to the west of the site in the late 1990s have revealed evidence of occupation from the Saxo-Norman period onwards.

This section has been compiled with information from the Historic Environment Record (HER), and the design brief (Saunders 2013) and covers an area of a 500m radius centred on the development site .

3.2 *Prehistoric* (before 600BC)

Prehistoric activity in the area has been noted in the form of probable Neolithic flint flakes and possibly a hand axe, recovered c. 500m to the south of the site at Honeyhill (HER 247).

The other significant prehistoric activity dates to the early and middle Bronze Age, and is located within the Biddenham loop of the Great Ouse. The early features, which are generally located to the east and north east of the site, include possible unenclosed settlement, cremations, an inhumation, a post hole, a pit, a pond, a ring ditch, and a ritual shaft. The artefacts consist of two urns (HER MBB 18915). To the south of the site the features are from the middle Bronze Age, and include an unenclosed settlement, a trackway, a possible burial mound, and a cemetery (HER MBB 18916). Within the loop as a whole there are 16 known ring ditches occurring in three clusters, each loosely focussed on an early Neolithic monument. Whilst this may be suggestive of a barrow cemetery, not all the ring ditches produced evidence for burials. By the middle Bronze Age the land had been divided into an extensive field system and possible settlement foci.

3.3 *Iron Age* (600BC-AD43)

Approximately 40m to the west of the site lies a large oval enclosure which is described as an Iron Age hill fort, measuring 880m by 437m (HER 15271). It is possible that it represents an oppidum or large settlement. Some of the bank and ditch are still visible in the landscape. Whilst it is assumed to be Iron Age, similar Saxon structures are to found in the region.

3.4 *Roman* (AD43-c.450)

The suggested line of the Dorchester-On-Thames to Alconbury House Roman road lies c. 250m to the south west of the site (HER 485), and an unrelated, unstratified 2nd century coin was recovered approximately 400m west of the site (HER 2849).

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

The large oval enclosure 40m west of the site is possibly an Iron Age hill fort, though similar structures in the region are thought to be Saxon in date (HER 15271).

3.6 *Medieval* (1066-1500)

Main Road is located in the extant medieval core of Biddenham village (HER 17017). Recent excavations at number 43 revealed features dated as post-Roman through to post-medieval, which included a wall, a 10^{th} - 12^{th} century pit, a yard surface, and a 12^{th} - 13^{th} century ditch (HER 17732). The pottery recovered during the excavation suggested that domestic activity was occurring in the area this period.



The village itself is mentioned in the Domesday Book with nine entries for Biddenham divided between six overlords, including the Bishop of Lincoln and the abbey of Saint Edmund in Bury Saint Edmunds. The Burgesses of Bedford held four separate pieces of land and Saint Paul's church, Bedford held two. Serlo de Rots had the biggest single holding in Biddenham, consisting of four hides less one and a half virgates held from William Speke. This manor included six villagers, two smallholders and two slaves as well as a mill, one of two in Biddenham, the other being held by Ernwin. The Domesday Books notes that its value changed between 1066 and 1086, probably as an effect of William The Conqueror's armies moving through the countryside as they crushed the rebellion.

3.7 *Post-Medieval* (1500-1900)

All the listed buildings within the study area are post-medieval, and of the 23 listed on the HER, 17 are located on Main Road. Other post-medieval features in the vicinity include two gravel pits 400m northwest of the site, which are shown on the pre-enclosure map of 1794 (HER 2874), and 425m north of the site on the OS map of 1902 (HER 8678). A further 50m north are the remnants of clay extraction pits (HER 8673).

3.8 *Modern* (1900-present)

The Three Gables is described as "a large brick built house with tile roof, circa 1900. It is on a three bay plan with a veranda the full length of the front elevation. It is built in the Voysey style" (HER 13474).

Also noted on the HER is a short tramway which ran between the Bedford-Biddenham road and a large gravel pit.



4 Results

Introduction

Archaeological monitoring was carried out during various stages of the project that entailed the following: observing the ground reduction for the new swimming pool; trenching to the side and rear of the property and associated drainage to accommodate the new extension; ground reduction to accommodate the new pool house; ground reduction for the new tennis court, and finally monitoring the footing trenches for the new side garage (Fig. 3).

Mechanical excavation was carried out with an 8 ton and 16 ton tracked digger fitted with a 0.6m wide toothless ditching bucket. A number of services were encountered during the excavation and were dealt with accordingly.

Swimming Pool Ground Reduction (Fig. 3- 5; Plates 1-3)

A rectangular trench measuring $10m \times 5m$, and 0.5m deep was excavated to the rear of the house to accommodate a new swimming pool (Plate 1). The trench stratigraphy (Plate 2) comprised:

- 0.15m of topsoil
- 0.2m of sub-soil: mid orangey brown, soft, silty clay
- 0.15m+ natural clay

A single ditch [04], orientated E-W, was exposed at the southern end of the trench (Figs. 4 & 5; Plate 3). Ditch [04] had a U-shaped profile measuring 1.04m wide and 0.49m deep. It contained a single fill (05), comprising slightly mottled mid grey, firm silty clay, with occasional sub-oval flint <70mm, and no organic material. No dateable artefacts were recovered from the fill although a number of large rounded stones, possibly 'pot boilers' were noted.

Side and Rear Extension Footing Trenches and Associated Drainage (Fig. 3; Plate 4)

A series of footing trenches were mechanically excavated to the side and rear of the house to accommodate the new house extension. The trenches measured 0.6m wide 1.5m deep. The trench stratigraphy comprised a series of made-ground deposits, thought to be associated with the original construction of the house, overlying the natural clay (Plate 4):

- 0.1m of overburden
- 0.13m of made-ground: white chalk
- 0.19m of made-ground: light brown clay
- 0.1m of made-ground: orange gravelly sand
- 0.34m of made-ground: mid brown sandy clay
- 0.64m + natural yellowy clay

A number of shallow drainage trenches were also excavated in the back garden, measuring 0.3m wide and 0.2m deep that were cut into the topsoil.

Overall no archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed within the footing and drainage trenches

Pool House Ground Reduction (Fig. 3)

A rectangular area measuring $c.11 \times 20$ m, and 0.5m deep was excavated to accommodate the new pool house. The stratigraphy comprised:



0.15m of topsoil

0.2m of subsoil: mid orangey brown soft, silty clay

0.15m+ deep of natural yellowy clay

No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed within the area.

Ground Reduction for Tennis Court

(Fig. 3; Plate 5)

Towards the rear of the back garden a rectangular trench measuring $23.77m \times 10.97m$ and 0.4m deep was excavated to accommodate a new tennis court (Plate 5). The area revealed 0.2m of topsoil, underlying which was 0.2m of subsoil. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed.

Double Garage Footings Trenches

(Fig. 3; Plate 6-8)

A series of footing trenches was mechanically excavated to accommodate a new double garage to the NE side of the property (Plate 6). The area measured $c.6.46 \,\mathrm{m} \times 7.65 \,\mathrm{m}$, and each trench was 0.65m wide and 1m deep. Three WSW-NNE trenches comprised (Plate 7):

0.26m of made-ground: light mottled grey/yellow clay with red brick fragments

0.5m of made-ground: mid orange brown, firm clay with red brick fragments

0.24m+ of natural clay: light yellowy clay in places a bluish grey clay

The NW-SE orientated trench comprised (Plate 8):

0.36m of topsoil

0.2-0.4m of subsoil: mid orangey brown soft, silty clay

0.24m+ of natural yellowy clay

The made-ground deposits contained red brick fragments that were thought to be associated with the houses original construction.

No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed within the footing trenches for the new garage.





Plate 1: Ground reduction for new swimming pool looking NW (2X2m scale)



Plate 2: Stratigraphy of swimming pool trench, looking NW (1m scale)



Plate 3: East facing section of Ditch [04] (1m scale)



Plate 4: Footing trench stratigraphy to accommodate the side house extension, looking east (1m scale)



Plate 5: Ground reduction for new tennis court, looking NW (scale 2m)



Plate 6: General shot of footing trenches for new garage, looking SE (2x1m scale)





Plate 7: Stratigraphy of WSW-NNE footing trench for new garage, looking SE (2x1m scale)



Plate 8: Stratigraphy of NW-SE footing trench, looking NE (1m scale)

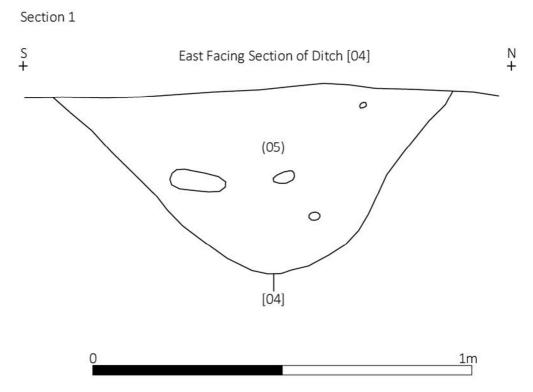


Figure 4: Section drawing of Ditch [04] (scale 1:10)



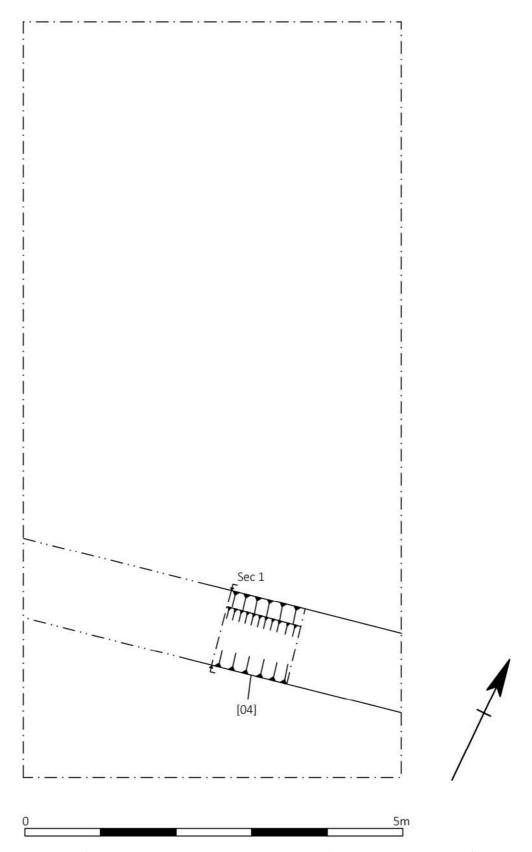


Figure 5: Plan of Ditch [04] within ground reduction area for new swimming pool (scale 1:50)



5 Conclusions

The site is situated on Main Road, Biddenham, which is located in the medieval core of Biddenham village. As excavations at No. 43 revealed features dating from the post-Roman through to the post-medieval periods, the study site had the potential to reveal archaeology from a range of periods.

The project uncovered the remains of a single ditch, orientated E-W within the area reduced for the new swimming pool. No function or date of the ditch could be fully established. It did, however, contain a number of larger stones that may possibly have been used for 'pot boilers'.

The remainder of the monitoring revealed that the area close to the house consists of made-ground deposits, most likely associated with the original construction of the house, whereas all excavations further away from the house identified an undisturbed topsoil, sub-soil and natural clay stratigraphy. The paucity of the archaeological remains did not allow the research aims to be further explored.



6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to Alistair Wilkinson of David Coles Architects Ltd for commissioning this report on behalf of Mr and Mrs Cotton. His assistance in providing the drawings which have been used as a basis for the plans in this report is duly acknowledged. Thanks are also due to the Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record Office; and to the Bedford Borough Council Historic Environment Planning Services, archaeological advisor Geoff Saunders, to the local planning authority Bedford Borough Council. Further thanks are given to site contractors, in particular site manager Chris Scharff, for his full co-operation throughout the project.

The fieldwork was carried out by David Kaye BA ACIFA, Karin Kaye MA MCIFA, Lydia Breeze-Chilcott MA and Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc ACIFA. The report was written by Carina Summerfield-Hill, and edited by Karin Kaye.



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 (BEDFM 2013.59)



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.
- EH 1991 The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition. London: English Heritage
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- Ferguson L M & Murray D M 1997 Archaeological *Documentary Archives: Preparation, Curation and Storage.* Manchester: Institute for Archaeologists' Paper 1
- Gurney, D. 2003 Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14
- 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
- IFA 2008a Standards & Guidance for the Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings. Reading: Institute for Archaeologists
- IFA 2009 Standards & Guidance for Archiving Archaeological Projects. Reading: Institute for Archaeologists
- 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 2013 Written Scheme of Investigation for Observation & Recording: The Gables, 3 Main Road, Biddenham, Bedfordshire 033/BMR/1.
- SMA 1995 Towards an accessible archaeological archive the transfer of archaeological archives to museums: guidelines for use in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. London: Society for Museum Archaeologists
- Walker K 1990 Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage. United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, Archaeology Section (London).
- Watkinson D & Neal V 1998 First Aid for Finds Hertford & London: Rescue

Books and Historical Sources

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

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

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

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: 033/BMR Site Name			Site Name: The Gables, 3 Main Road, Biddenham		
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject		
1		X	Large rounded stones deriving from fill (05) of Ditch [05]		
2		Х	Large rounded stones deriving from fill (05) of Ditch [05]		
3	Х	Х	Reduced area for new swimming pool, looking NW (2X2m scale)		
4		X	Stratigraphy of swimming pool trench, looking NW (1m scale)		
5		X	Stratigraphy of swimming pool trench, looking NW (1m scale)		
6	Х	X	East facing section of Ditch [05] (1m scale)		
7	Х		Ditch [05]m looking SW (2m & 1m scale)		
8		Х	Footing trench stratigraphy to accommodate the side house extension, looking east (1m scale)		
9		Х	Mechanical excavation of footing trenches to accommodate the side house extension, looking SE		
10	Х	Х	Ground reduction for new tennis court, looking NW (scale 2m)		
11	Х	Х	Trench stratigraphy of rear house extension footings, looking NW (1m scale)		
12		Х	Trench stratigraphy of rear house extension footings, looking NW (1m scale)		
13	Х	Х	Ground reduction for new tennis court, looking NW (2x2m scale)		
14		Х	Drainage trench, looking SW (1m scale)		
15	Х	Х	Footing trench to accommodate rear house extension, looking SW (2x2m scale)		
16	Х	Х	Stratigraphty of footing trench for new garage, looking SE (2x1m scale)		
17		Х	Stratigraphty of footing trench for new garage, looking SE (2x1m scale)		
18	Х	Х	Stratigraphty of footing trench for new garage, looking SE (2x1m scale)		
19		Х	Stratigraphty of footing trench for new garage, looking SE (2x1m scale)		
20	Х	Х	Stratigraphty of footing trench for new garage, looking SE (2x1m scale)		
21		Х	Stratigraphty of footing trench for new garage, looking SE (2x1m scale)		
22	Х	Х	Footing trench stratigraphy, looking NE (1m scale)		
23	Х	Х	General shot of footing trench for new garage, looking SE (2x1m scale)		
24		Х	General shot of footings towards NW end of new garage area, looking SW (1m scale)		
25		Х	eneral shot of footings towards the eastern side of the new garage area, looking SE		
26		Х	House footings, looking NW (1m scale)		



Appendix 2: KDK OASIS Sheet

PROJECT DETAILS					
Project Name:	The Gables, 3 Main Road, Biddenham		OASIS reference:	Kdkarchae1-201370	
Short Description:	In April 2014- January 2015 an Archaeological Observation and Recording project was carried out at The Gables, 3 Main Road, Biddenham, Bedfordshire during demolition of the west wing of the main house, garage and outbuildings to the rear, and the construction of a new west wing, garage, pool house, swimming pool and tennis court. The project uncovered the remains of a single ditch, orientated E-W within the ground reduced area for the new swimming pool. No function or date of the ditch could be established. The remainder of the monitoring revealed that the area close to the house consists of made-ground deposits, most likely associated with the houses original construction, whereas all excavations further away from the house identified an undisturbed topsoil, sub-soil and natural clay stratigraphy.				
Project Type:	Observation & Recording				
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	None		Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	None	
Current land use:	House and garden		Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	No	
Monument type:	House		Monument period:	Victorian	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	I Ditch				
PROJECT LOCATION					
County:	Bedfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)		TL 0268 4996	
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	The Gables, 3 Main Road, Biddenham, Bedfordshire, MK40 4BB				
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	1625 sq.m Height OD: (metres)		DD: (metres)	34.6m	
PROJECT CREATORS					
Organisation:	KDK Archaeology Ltd				
Project brief originator:	Bedford Borough Council	Project	design originator:	KDK Archaeology	
Project Manager:	Karin Kaye MA MCIfA	Director	/Supervisor:	David Kaye BA ACIfA	
Sponsor / funding body:	MR & Mrs Cotton				
PROJECT DATE					
Start date:	07/04/14	End date:		03/01/15	
PROJECT ARCHIVES					
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)			
Physical:		None			
Paper:	Regiona Miliselim		SI, report, maps & pla aphs and negatives	ort, maps & plans, site records, b&w and negatives	
Digital:	CD containing all digital files				
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)					
Title:	Archaeological Observation & Recording Report: The Gables, 3 Main Road, Biddenham, Bedfordshire				
Serial title & volume:	KDK Archaeology Ltd Report ref. 033/BMR/1				
Author(s):	Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc ACIFA				
Page nos	21	Date: 23.01.15			

