



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Archaeological Evaluation Report

60 Village Road
Bromham
Bedfordshire



Quality Check

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



Summary

In November 2016, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an archaeological evaluation at 60 Village Road, Bromham, Bedfordshire as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site.

Bromham has been a place of continuing importance from at least the Saxon period. The site is located on the main road through the village and was deemed an area of potential archaeological significance, however, no archaeological finds or features were observed during this exercise.

1 Introduction

1.1 In November 2016, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an archaeological evaluation at 60 Village Road, Bromham, Bedfordshire. The project was commissioned by Andrew Polson of Aragon Land and Planning Ltd and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Lewis 2016), and approved by Vanessa Clarke, Archaeological Advisor (AA) to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Bedford Borough. The relevant planning application reference is 16/00283/FUL.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation has been required under the terms of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site. As development had proceeded prior to the submission and approval of a Written Scheme of Investigation, resulting in all the footings trenches being excavated and filled with concrete, a mitigation strategy was agreed through a consultation meeting on site with the Bedford Borough Archaeological Advisor, Geoff Saunders, David Kaye of KDK Archaeology Ltd, Andrew Polson of Aragon Land and Planning, and the site contractor. It was deemed appropriate at that time to elevate all investigations from an archaeological watching brief to an archaeological evaluation.

1.3 *The Site*

Location

The site is located in the village and parish of Bromham, in the administrative district of Bedford Borough at National Grid Reference TL 00918 51268 (Fig. 1).

Description

The site is fronted by Village Road, facing the southwest end of the Green and the village hall. To the northeast, southwest and southeast of the development site are neighbouring residential properties (Fig. 2).

Geology & Topography

The geology at the development site is primarily sandstone overlain with superficial deposits of diamicton (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). The site is generally flat and sits at approximately 51.5m AOD.

Development

The development consists of the demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of a replacement 4 bedroom dwelling (Fig. 3).



Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:1250)

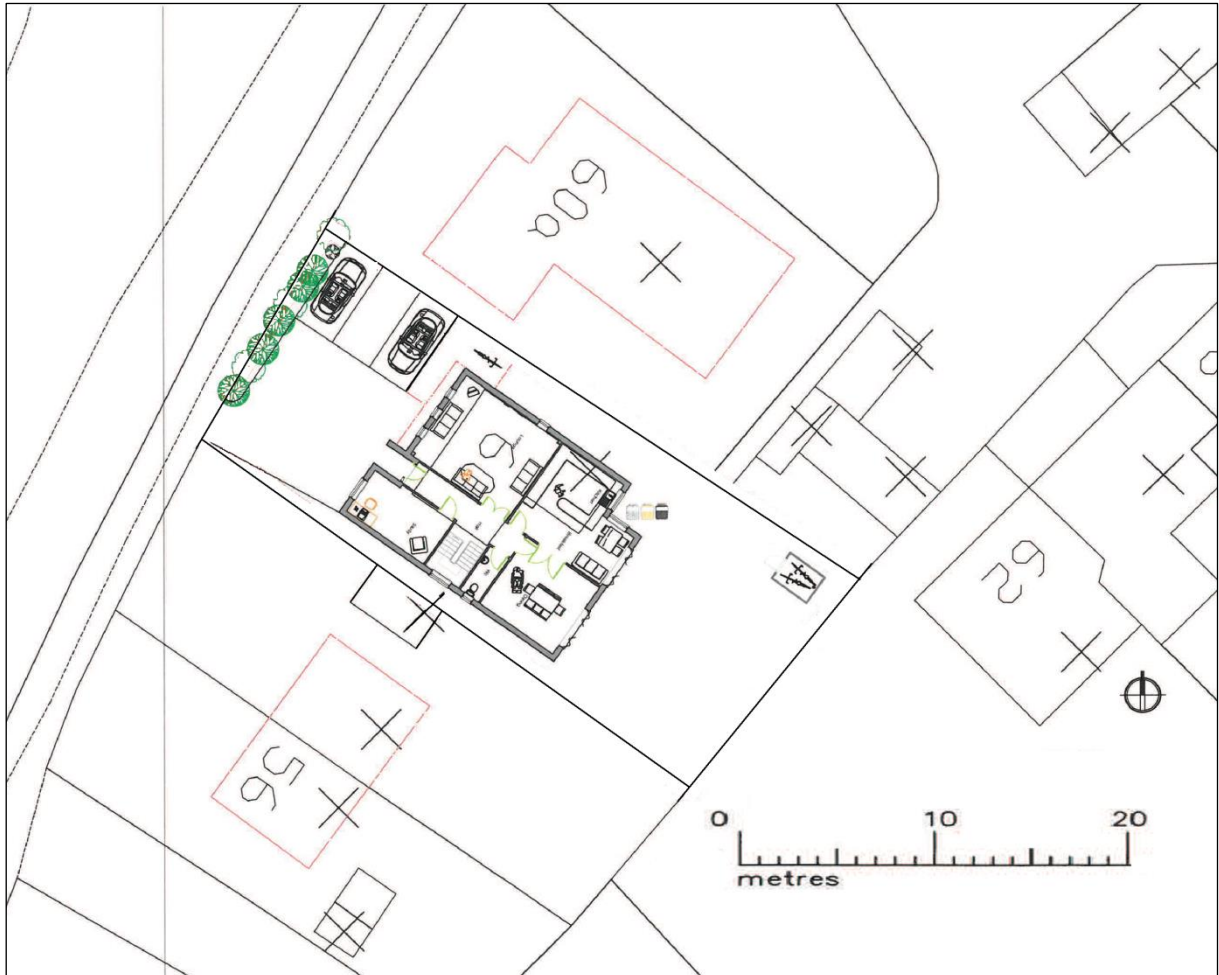


Figure 3: Development plan (scale as shown)



2 Aims & Methods

2.1 The aims of this project as defined in the approved WSI (Lewis 2016) 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 landscape
- To recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

2.2 *Methods*

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

- Two 5m x 2m trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision, one at the front and one at the rear of the property.

2.3 *Standards*

The work conformed to the following requirements:

- The design brief
- 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 (HE 2015, EH 2008)
- The Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003)

The work conformed to the following requirements:

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



3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 The site lies on the northern bank of the river Great Ouse, across from the Biddenham Loop. Much of the Great Ouse valley was subject to intense activity from the early Neolithic right through to the early Saxon period. Documentary evidence shows that from the Saxon period Bromham has been a place of continuing importance.

This section has been compiled with information from the National Heritage List for England (NHLE), KDK's own library, reputable online sources and the Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER).

3.2 **Prehistoric** (before 600BC)

The prehistoric activity known to have taken place within the Biddenham Loop area is extensive, as waterways, particularly the Great Ouse, were known to be used as primary routes of transit in prehistory. It is highly likely, given the level of activity seen within the Loop, that this continued beyond the waterway. Some evidence has already come to light, with Neolithic and paleo flints found in gravels northwest of site. Several ring ditches dating from the Bronze Age have been identified in the area north of the old railway (HER 10144, HER 561).

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

A site of Iron Age date comprising ditches, gullies and a burial dating from late 1st BC has been discovered 2km north east of the development site. The same site also produced evidence for Roman settlement including corn driers, kilns and a large amount of pottery waste. A single Iron Age coin, possibly relating to this site, has been found just north of the site (PAS: Online).

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

The Portable Antiquities Scheme database (PAS), has 10 whole or part Roman brooches of various styles, a single Roman coin, a pair of Roman tweezers and a Roman bracelet recorded as being found in or near Bromham village. These finds have a wide range of dates (PAS: Online). In a field to the north of the Bedford Road opposite the road from Biddenham, are the remains of a stone well said to be Roman. Many fossils, bones and a stone figure of Roman character were found here and the figure has been built into the north wall of Bromham Hall (Page 1912).

Given that most of items are small and designed to be worn on the clothing it is suggestive of a transitory presence in the immediate landscape, possibly in association with the extensive Roman settlement known to have existed near Kempston Church End and Biddenham Loop to the south or the possible pottery site to the northeast (*ibid*).

Pottery ranging from Roman to Medieval has been recovered following excavation along Grange Lane, 200m from the development (HER 16182).

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

The name Bromham is likely to have originated from the Saxon period, formed from the old English words 'brōm' meaning a broom; a thorny bush or shrub; this is also regarded as a personal name; and 'hām' a village, a village community, a manor, an estate or a homestead creating 'Bruna's village'. There are other possibilities, however this seems most probable (Mills 1991:80).



It is likely Saxon Bromham was visited in 1010 AD by a Viking army after it had passed through Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, as the Saxon chronicles state that the Vikings travelled along the Ouse to Bedford and on to Tempsford.

Prior to the Norman Conquest, Bromham was clearly a place of some importance. Of the four manors held there, one each were held by Queen Edith, Countess Judith, King Edward and Earl Harold (Williams & Martin 2002: 567, 573, 584, 588).

Excavations carried out during works at 10 The Green, across the road from the development site, yielded evidence of late Saxon to medieval occupation (HER 21743, EBB869); however excavation carried out at 1-2 The Green did not produce any archaeological results predating the 16th century (EBB621).

3.6 *Medieval* (1066 - 1500)

The core of the medieval village (HER 17018) is located to the north of the Bromham Bridge. In proceeding years the village expanded to the north, south and west of this spot. Through the Domesday survey it is evident that Bromham was a highly productive agricultural village, possessing land for 10.5 plough teams (with only 1 of these being unused), 2 mills producing 225 eels per year and enough woodland to keep 40 pigs, possibly associated with the ancient woodland noted to the north of the development site (HER 13201). Milling in Bromham is believed to have started in late Saxon times on the site of Bromham Mill (EBB622). During the 12th century, a bridge was constructed to the south of the mill, re-routing the traffic between Bedford and Northampton over the river. A chantry chapel, which was closed in 1553, stood north of the bridge (HER 1367). It is clear that during the medieval times, the village was capable of producing the majority of the staples of a medieval diet and benefited from a thriving local economy.

Environment Agency (EA) Lidar data shows evidence of possible ridge and furrow to the northeast of the village as well as south, along the river. This is also recorded in the HER data, however it states that much has been ploughed out in recent years (EA: Online, HER 1777). This is indicative of a changing pattern of agriculture from an arable system based on regular ploughing to a less impactful form of agriculture, possibly based on stock rearing.

PAS data records a single medieval find spot of a silver farthing dating to the reign of Edward I (HER MBB21532). Location data provided with this suggests it may be associated with Bromham Grange, to the northwest of the village.

Four hundred meters to the east of the development site is the Grade I listed St Owen's Church (NHLE 1114226, HER 1027 - MBD1027), mainly built in the 13th to 15th centuries, with renovation work carried out in the 19th and 20th centuries. Slightly east of the church are earthworks, suggesting a possible deserted medieval village (DMV). However, archaeological works conducted here have yielded negative results (HER 7265, EBB585). Further earthworks associated with the medieval Bromham Grange, are also noted to the northwest.

The Domesday Survey states that the village contained a moated manorial site, referring to this as Buelles or Bowles Manor. This may be the moated site recorded in 1924 in Bowles Close.. Since that time the moat has been levelled.

3.7 *Post-medieval* (1500 - 1900)

The bridge at Bromham (NHLE 1005411) was first recorded in 1224, however it is possible that an earlier bridge was present on the site. It has undergone many repairs since; in 1281 a



severe frost caused so much damage to the bridge that it gave way, and a woman was carried away by the stream and drowned. Further repairs were necessary in 1728, 1750 and 1775, while most of the present structure dates to the early part of the 19th century (Page 1912).

A possible 17th century earthwork has been observed running from St Owen's Church towards the river. This has been interpreted as a possible park boundary or landscaping (HER 1346).

Within 500m of the development site are a number of Grade II listed buildings of post-medieval origin. Of these, 62-66, Village Road (NHLE 1114236, HER 10161), the neighbouring property to the development, is a pair of 17th century cottages with later renovations. The majority of the others fall into two distinct categories. One type are small thatched cottages generally of 16th- 17th century date, such as 38-40 Village Road (NHLE 1114235), 45-49 Village Road (NHLE 1114234, HER 1554), Kerry Thatch (16 The Green) (NHLE 131129, HER 1551), Greenwood Cottage (14 the Green) (NHLE 1311293, HER 1552) and 129 Village Road (NHLE 1158980, HER 10153). The other category is larger houses; these seem to be of a much later date, typified by 88-92 Village Road (NHLE 1159002, HER 9895) and Vine Cottages (109-113 Village Road) (NHLE 1321559, HER 1549) which were large houses, now split into 3 residences and Kerry House (15 the Green) (NHLE 1114229, HER 10164).

The complex of listed buildings at Bromham Hall, 600m southeast of the development site, includes the main house, a Grade II* listed building, possibly of late medieval origin but enlarged and altered in the 17th and 18th centuries (NHLE 1158818), an 18th century Orangery, (NHLE 1311291) and thatched Icehouse (NHLE 1114228), 17th century coach house (NHLE 1114227) and cottages (NHLE 1158855), although these are much altered, and a 19th century school house (NHLE 1321557). All of these are Grade II listed.

Excavations at Bromham Hall also found post-medieval structural evidence, although there was a suggestion of possible medieval activity. A stone quarry, roughly dated to the post-medieval period, is also noted (HER 3117).

3.8 **Modern** (1900 - present)

In 1900, the plot on which the development site stands was clear of structures and seems to have been lightly wooded. Since then, while the medieval core of Bromham (HER 17065) has to a large extent maintained its linear pattern, the village as a whole has expanded greatly to the west, with large housing developments covering almost a square kilometre. Development driven archaeology has therefore been disproportionately located to the west of the village, away from the development site. Any gaps in the archaeological record for the medieval core of Bromham may be a reflection of this bias.



Results

4.1 *Introduction*

Two trenches measuring 5 metres in length and 2 metres wide were excavated with a 3 tonne tracked machine fitted with a 1.5m toothless ditching bucket. No archaeological finds or features were observed in either trench.

4.2 *Trench 1* (Fig. 4; Plate 1-2)

Trench 1 was located to the rear of the property, within the garden area. The original planned placement of the trench had to be altered, due to the presence of a large holly tree. A modern service orientated north northeast – south southwest ran through the middle of the trench.

The stratigraphy comprised

- Topsoil: Dark blackish brown loose silty sand containing occasional inclusions of lead, plastic and glass. 0.33m deep.
- Subsoil: Mid grey brown loose sandy clay containing occasional smudges of degraded CBM, rooting and frequent charcoal. 0.10m deep.
- Natural: Mid grey orange soft silty clay containing occasional medium rounded stones. Top of water table reached.

4.3 *Trench 2* (Fig. 4; Plate 3-4)

Trench 2 was located to the front of the property within the footprint of the old driveway. This area had been previously disturbed by past and present building works. A modern service orientated northeast - southwest cut into the natural at the northeast end of the trench.

The stratigraphy comprised:

- Made ground: Mid greyish brown loose silty sand containing frequent stone and building debris as well as occasional inclusions of wire, tile, plastic and glass. Rooting was also present. 0.23m deep.
- Subsoil: Mid yellow grey soft silty with a plastic consistency. Contained frequent inclusions of charcoal, occasional small stones and degraded flecks of CBM. 0.23m deep.
- Natural: Mid grey orange soft silty clay containing a moderate number of medium to large sized, rounded stones.



Plate 1: Trench 1



Plate 2: Trench 1 stratigraphy



Plate 3: Trench 2



Plate 4: Trench 2 stratigraphy

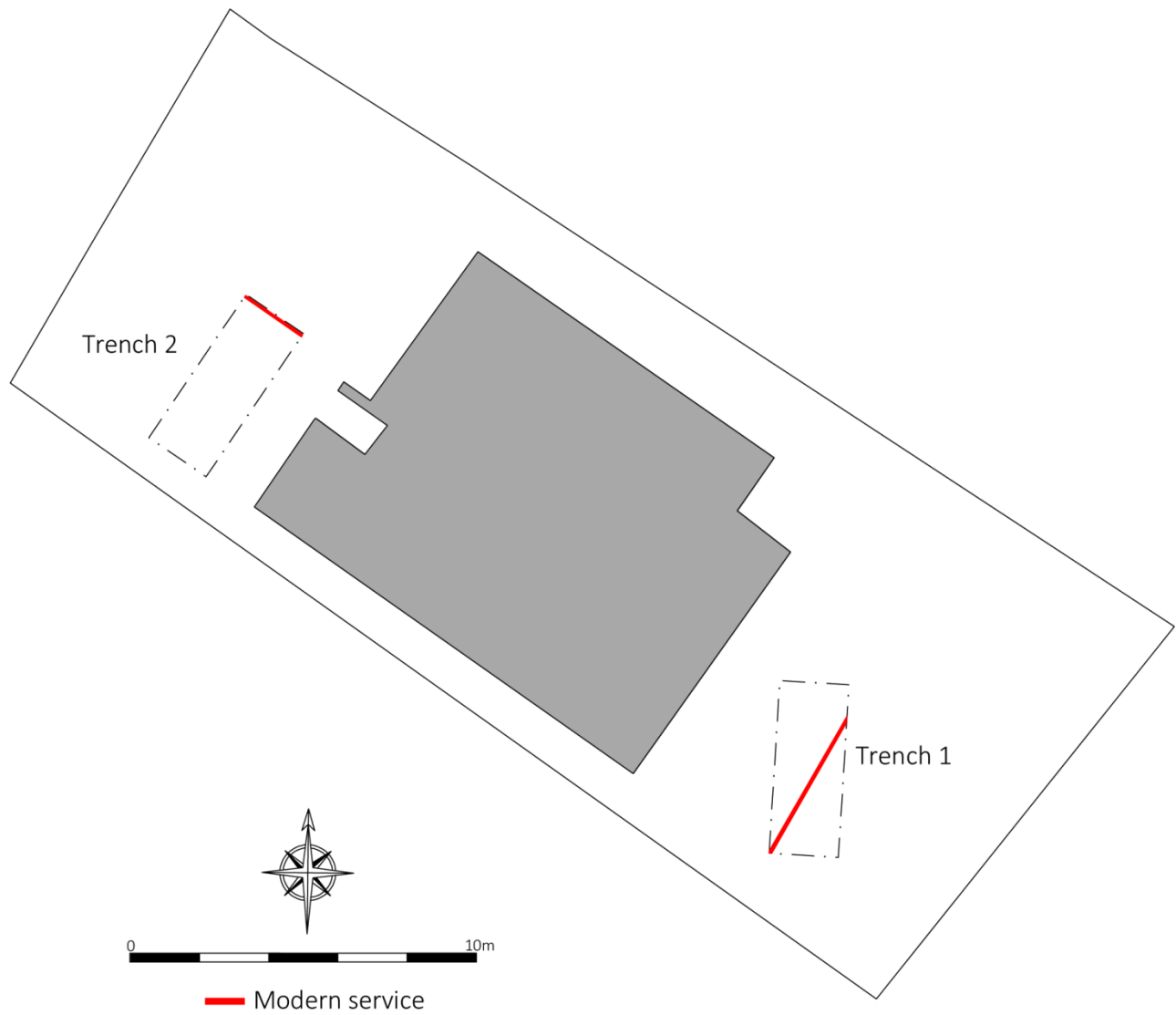


Figure 4: Trench plan (scale 1:200)



5. Conclusions

The site is located on the main road running through the residential core of the village and Number 60 is set in close proximity to older properties, including Grade II listed medieval buildings. These are closely mingled with very modern cottages, built on land that was, until the early 20th century, privately owned fields and gardens. In 1900, the site was an undeveloped area of field and woodland, with no structures. This may explain the absence of medieval archaeological material within the evaluation trenches.

In addition, the results from Trench 2, at the front of the property, indicate previous disturbance associated with the construction of the existing structure. This activity appears to have truncated the ground by an unknown amount which may have destroyed any archaeological evidence.

As no finds or features of archaeological interest were encountered during this programme of trial trenching, it is also possible that the trenches fell between widely dispersed features, or that there simply has not been any occupation in this area other than that which is already documented.



6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to Aragon Land and Planning Ltd for commissioning this report. Thanks are also due to Vanessa Clarke and Geoff Saunders of Bedford Borough Council for providing historic environment records and for monitoring the project. Thanks are also due to DBF Construction Ltd for their assistance on site

The fieldwork was carried out by Laura Dodd MSc and Richard Hudson. The report was written by Laura Dodd, and edited by Ellen Shlasko PhD.



7 Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Written Scheme of Investigation
2. Initial report
3. Trench recording sheets
4. Client's site plans
5. List of photographs
6. B/W prints & negatives
7. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum (BEDFM 2016.54).



8 References

Standards & Specifications

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[online] <https://finds.org.uk/database/search/results/q/bromham>

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Appendix 1: Photograph List

SITE NO/CODE:			Site Name:
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	X	X	Trench 1 with board. Looking south southwest
2		X	Trench 1 without board. Looking south southwest
3		X	Trench 1 stratigraphy with board. Looking southeast
4	X	X	Trench 2 with board. Looking south southwest
5		X	Trench 2 with board. Looking south southwest
6		X	Trench 2 without board. Looking south southwest
7		X	Trench 2 stratigraphy with board. Looking southeast
8		X	Trench 2 stratigraphy without board. Looking southeast



Appendix 2: OASIS and Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name & Address	60 Village Road, Bromham, Bedfordshire	Project Site Code	229/BVR
OASIS reference	kdkarcha1-258580	Event/Accession no	BEDFM 2016.54
OS reference	500911, 251265	Study area size	20 sq m
Project Type	Evaluation	Height (mAOD)	51.5
Short Description	<p>In November 2016 DATE, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an archaeological evaluation at 60 Village Road, Bromham, Bedfordshire as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site.</p> <p>Bromham has been a place of continuing importance from at least the Saxon period. The site is located on the main road through the village and was deemed an area of potential archaeological significance. However, no archaeological finds or features were observed during this exercise.</p>		
Previous work	None	Site status	None
Planning proposal	Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement 4 bedroom dwelling	Current land use	Site of existing dwelling
Local Planning Authority	16/00283/FUL	Planning application ref.	16/00283/FUL
Monument type	None	Monument period	None
Significant finds	None	Future work	Unknown
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project Brief originator	None	Project Design originator	KDK Archaeology Ltd
Project Manager	David Kaye	Director/Supervisor	Laura Dodd
Sponsor/funding body	Aragon Land and Planning Ltd		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	28.11.16	End date	28.11.16
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical	Bedford Museum BEDFM 2016.54	-	
Paper		WSI, report, site records, b&w photographs	
Digital		CD containing all digital data	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title	Archaeological Evaluation: 60 Village Road, Bromham, Bedfordshire		
Serial title & volume	KDK Archaeology Ltd Report ref. 229/BVR/2		
Author(s)	Laura Dodd MSc		
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