



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

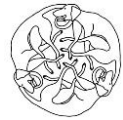
Archaeological Evaluation Report

Hilltop House

High Street

Little Staughton

Bedfordshire



Quality Check

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Summary

In January 2017, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an archaeological evaluation at Hilltop House, High Street, Little Staughton, Bedfordshire as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site. Two trenches were excavated across the area of a proposed development, revealing three linear features, a ditch and two hedgerows. These features were part of the former eastern boundary of the field on which the present houses on the street frontage were built in the 20th century. A single posthole between the former boundary and the road is likely to represent more recent activity on the site. No artefacts were recovered from any of the features.

1 Introduction

1.1 In January 2017, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an Archaeological Evaluation at Hilltop House, High Street, Little Staughton, Bedfordshire. The project was commissioned by Patrick Janes, and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Barclay Jones 2016), and approved by the Bedford Borough Council Historic Environment Team, Archaeological Advisor (AA) to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Bedfordshire Borough Council. The relevant planning application reference is 16/02160/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.

1.3 *The Site*

Location

The site is located in the village and civil parish of Little Staughton, in the administrative district of Bedford Borough. The National Grid Reference (NGR) is TL 1049 6267 (Fig. 1).

Description

The development is situated on the High Street, which bounds the site to the east. Adjoining properties form the northern and southern boundaries of the site, while open fields lie to the west (Fig. 2).

Geology & Topography

The geology of the site consists of sedimentary bedrock, comprising sandstone, mudstone and siltstone, which is part of the Kellaways Formation and the Oxford Clay Formation. No overlying deposits have been recorded (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). The site is located c72m AOD.

Development

The proposed development is for the erection of a two-storey house, with associated external works, including new vehicular access (Fig. 3).

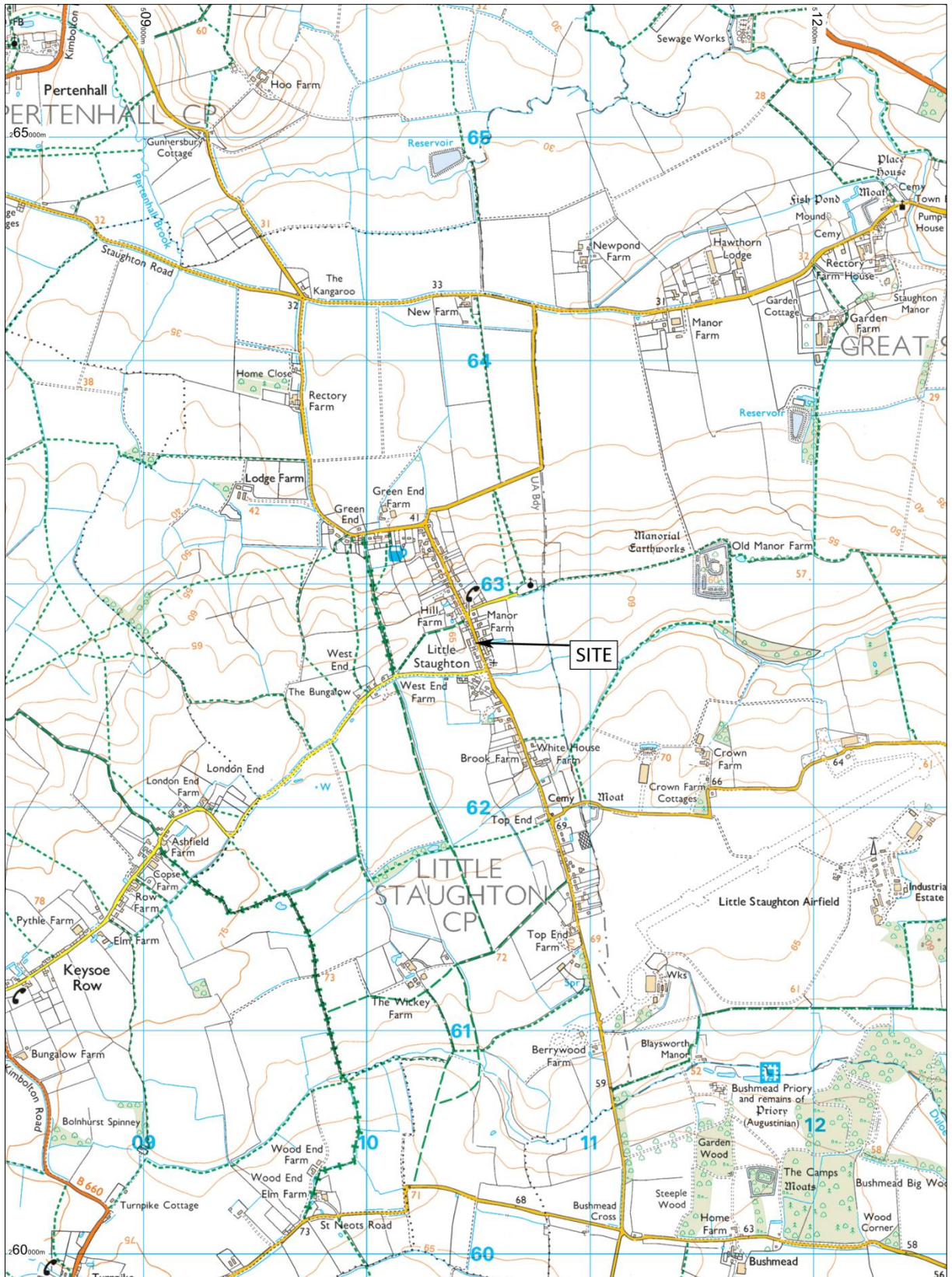


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

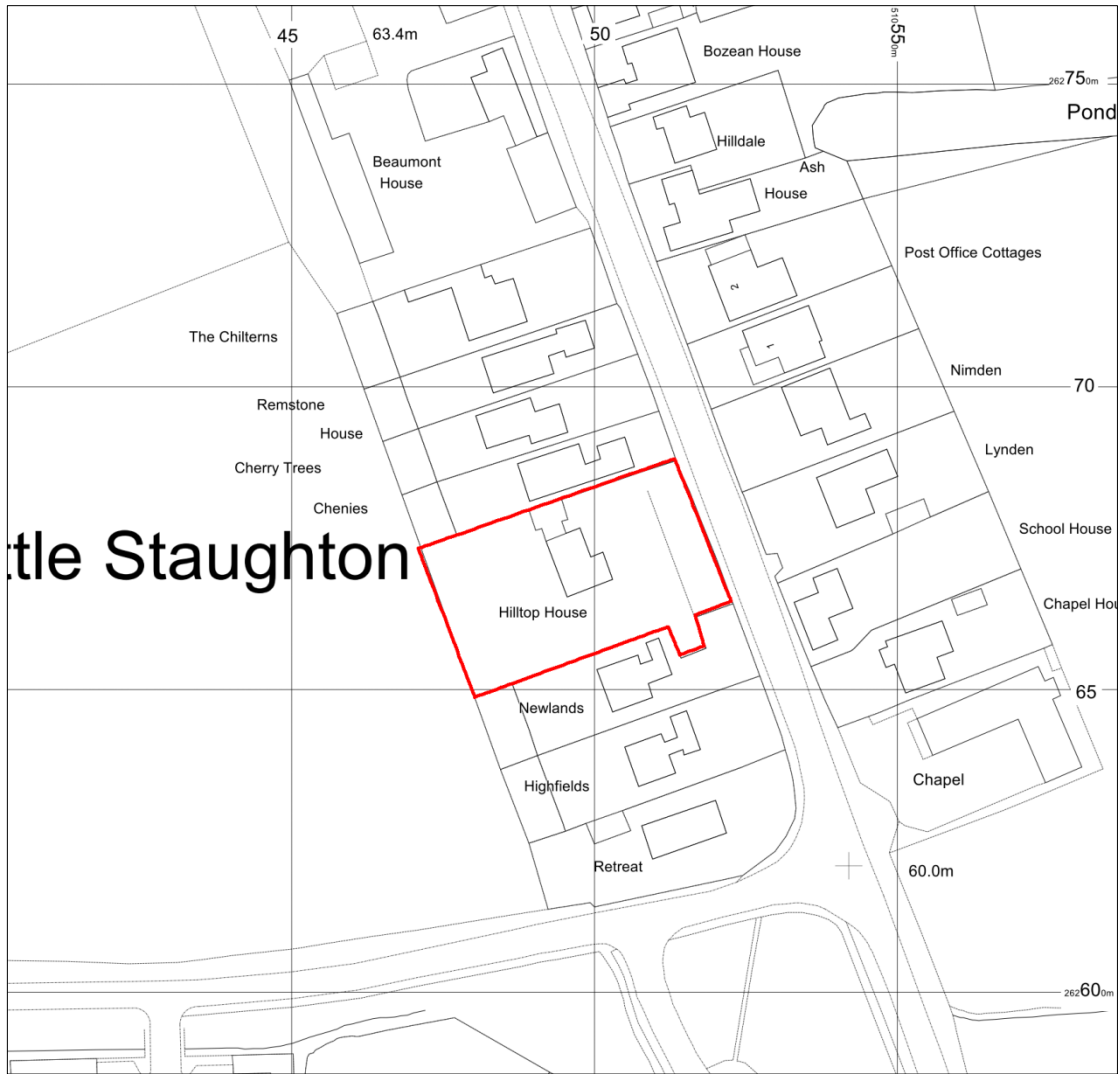


Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:1,250)

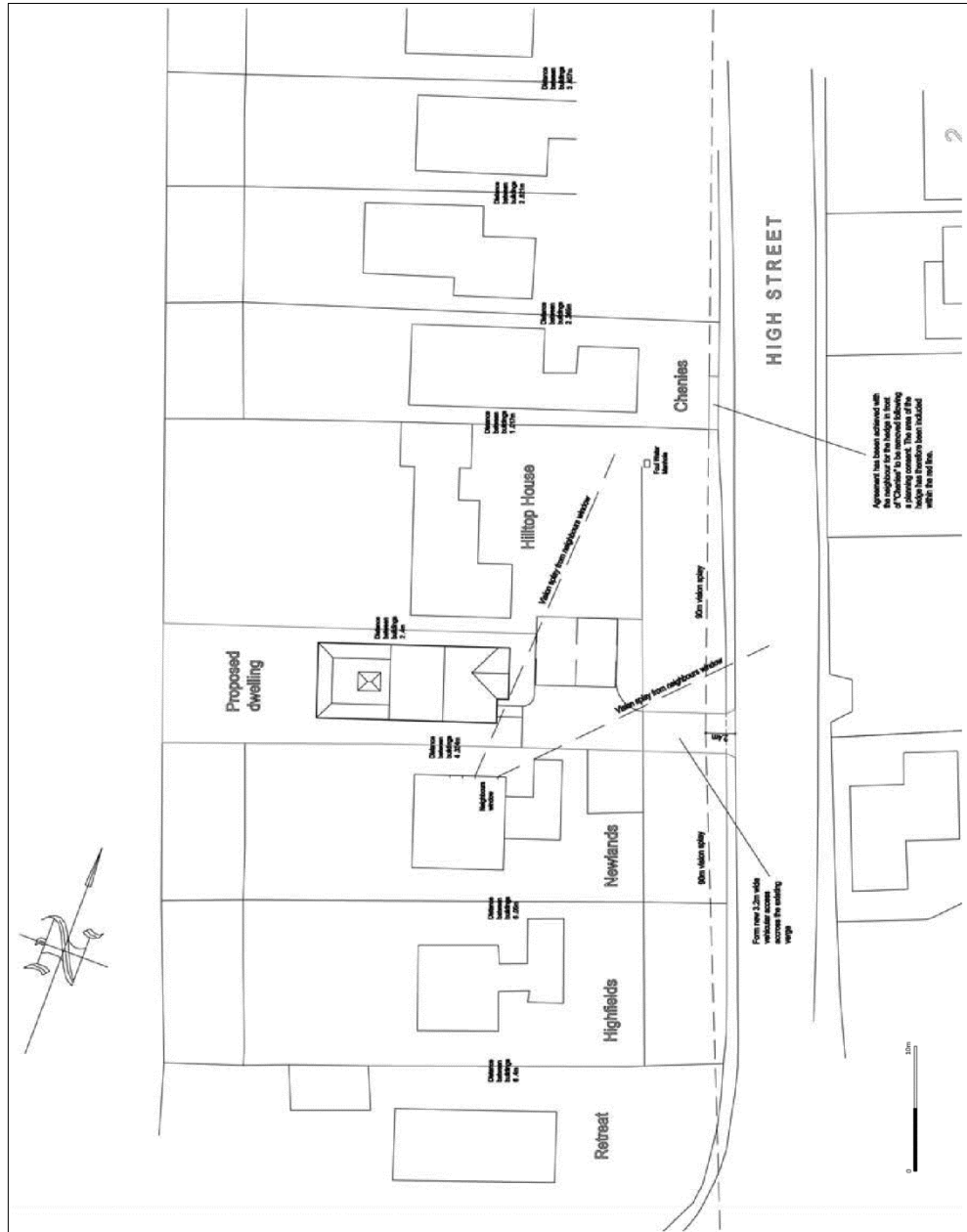


Figure 3: Development plan (scale: 1:500)



2 Aims & Methods

2.1 The aims of this project as defined in the approved WSI (Barclay Jones 2016) were:

- To record the location, extent, date, character, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains within the area of the proposed development.

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, this is the first part of a staged investigation whereby the results of this stage will be assessed to determine the need and extent of further stages of archaeological investigation. The methods used were as follows:

- An archaeological field evaluation of the site consisting of two trenches, one 1.8m x 15m and one 1.8m x 10m within the footprint of the proposed development (Fig. 4).

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)



3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 Little Staughton is a small village in Bedfordshire, with a largely peaceful and uneventful history. It is thought that the site of the present village may not be the original location, which would explain the slight separation of the parish church from the village; the previous village was abandoned after the plague, and new cottages were built a short distance away (Bedford Borough Council 2012). The name Little Staughton comes from the Old English *stoc + tūn*, meaning “farmstead at an outlying hamlet” (Mills 1991: 308), from which we can deduce that it has never been a large or populous settlement.

This section has been compiled with information from Bedford Borough Historic Environment Record, KDK’s own library, and other reliable sources.

3.2 *Prehistoric-Saxon* (before 600BC-1066)

There is little evidence for occupation in the vicinity of the site before medieval times, although there are signs of activity in the area, including cropmarks from possible prehistoric enclosures and trackways (MBD16691, MBD16694, MBD 16695). A flint arrowhead was also found south-east of the development site (MBD19901), dating from the Neolithic or Bronze Age. The only other evidence of pre-medieval activity in the vicinity of the site comes from a fragment of an Anglo-Saxon penny from the time of Aethelred II (MBD19899).

3.6 *Medieval* (1066 - 1500)

There is no mention of Little Staughton at the time of the Domesday Survey, which may indicate that it was part of another settlement at the time and didn’t become a separate village until later; the earliest known document to mention the village is from 1206 (British History Online (BHO)). During the 13th and 14th centuries much of the land in the area was held by the Knights Templar until the dissolution of the Order, after which it was held by the Knights of St John of Jerusalem (usually known as the Hospitallers) (*ibid.*).

The parish church of St Margaret (now All Saints) (MBD1128) dates from this time, originating as an aisle-less building with a nave and chancel in the 13th century, with a chapel and south aisle being added in the 14th century and the chancel being rebuilt in the 15th. The church is Grade I listed (National Heritage List).

There is a considerable increase of activity in the area from this time, including a possible medieval moated site (MBD3901), which lies to the northwest of the site, and a variety of finds, such as a dagger chape made from copper alloy (MBD20835), a strap end (MBD19898), and a metal buckle (MBD20832), which was found just to the north-west of the development site.

3.7 *Post-Medieval* (1500 - 1900)

Records show that many buildings were constructed in the village during the post-medieval period, but many of them have since been demolished or are no longer in evidence (for example, MBD7915, MBD7926 and MBD7946). Colmworth Road (also known as High Street), on which the development site is located, has a number of listed buildings along it, including the Manor Farmhouse (MBD2392), The Old Rectory (MBD2394), the Old White House Farmhouse (MBD2393) and Hill Farmhouse (MBD2395).

There have been various finds in the vicinity of the site from this time, including a silver whistle (MBD19790), found c. 1km to the west-north-west of the site, and a silver James I sixpence (MBD19897) found in the same area. To the north-west of the site, a seal matrix (MBD19937) was discovered.



3.8 **Modern** (1900 - present)

During the Second World War, an aerodrome was constructed at Little Staughton, but as a result the Baptist Chapel, three inns and over half of the houses in the villages were demolished, in order to remove potential flight hazards (Mee 1973: 83). The Baptist Chapel (MBD7967) was replaced in 1956, and the airfield has now been converted to civilian use. Some of the original buildings still remain, including the Robin hangar and the Control Tower, which is now a Grade II listed building (National Heritage List).

3.2 ***The Known Archaeology & History of the Site***

There are no known archaeological resources within the bounds of the development site. Historic maps indicate that the property was an agricultural field with housing fronting on the high street by the time of the first OS map in 1884.



4 Results

4.1 Introduction

Archaeological Evaluation at Hilltop House, High Street, Little Staughton, Bedfordshire, consisted of the excavation of two trenches. These were excavated using a 4 tonne tracked excavator, fitted with a toothless bucket. It was found necessary to move and shorten Trench 2 due to existing services. Trench 1 was lengthened to compensate (Figs 4 & 5).

In both trenches, the stratigraphy consisted of three layers, a dark brown loamy silt topsoil [100 and 200], followed by a thin layer of silty clay [101 and 201], which overlay the natural subsoil [102 and 202] (Fig. 6).

4.2 Trench 1

Trench 1 was 1.8m wide by just over 17.0m long and excavated to a depth of 0.46m (Fig. 7: Plates 1-2). The soils consisted of 0.30m of dark brown very loamy silt topsoil [100], over 0.10m of mid-greyish brown silty clay [102]. The natural subsoil [102], a very firm, yellowish sandy clay, was reached at approximately 0.40m from the surface.

Three linear features running perpendicular to the long axis of the trench and parallel to one another cut the natural (Figs 7 & 8). Feature 103, at the eastern end of the trench, was a U-shaped ditch with concave sides that was 0.75m wide, 0.15m deep and extended beyond the trench to the north and south (Plate 4). Its single fill [104] was silty clay that contained no finds. Features 105 and 106, which also extended beyond the trench, were both 1.68m wide, 0.10m deep and were filled with subsoil [101]. They both had irregular bases and considerable evidence for rooting (Plates 5 & 6). Given the shape and the fill of these features, it is thought that [105] and [106] are the remains of former hedgerows.

Context Table Trench 1

<i>Context no.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Dimensions (max)</i>	<i>Description</i>
100	Layer	1.8 x 17.0 x 0.30	Dark brown very loamy silt
101	Layer	1.8 x 17.0 x 0.10	Mid greyish brown silty clay
102	Natural	1.8 x 17.0 x 0.06	Very firm yellowish sandy clay natural
103	Cut	0.75 x 1.8 x 0.15	Shallow linear, perpendicular to trench
104	Fill	0.75 x 1.8 x 0.15	Mid brown silty clay. Fill of [103]
105	Cut	1.68 x 1.8 x .10	Shallow linear, perpendicular to trench
106	Cut	1.68 x 1.8 x .10	Shallow linear, perpendicular to trench

Trench 2

Trench 2 was 1.8m wide by 7.0m long and excavated to a depth of 0.40m (Fig. 7; Plates 7 & 8). The stratigraphy consisted of dark brown loamy silt topsoil [200] to a depth of 0.20m, followed by a dark brown silty clay layer [201], approximately 0.15m thick. The natural subsoil [202], a yellowish brown sandy clay, was reached at a depth of 0.35m. A single posthole 36cm in diameter with straight sides and a U-shaped base [203] was found cutting the subsoil at the northern end of the trench (Fig. 8; Plate 9). The single fill [204] contained a number of roots, but no finds.

**Context Table Trench 2**

<i>Context no.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Dimensions (max)</i>	<i>Description</i>
200	Layer	1.8 x 7.0 x 0.20	Dark brown very loamy silt
201	Layer	1.8 x 7.0 x 0.15	Mid greyish brown silty clay
202	Natural	1.8 x 7.0 x 0.05	Yellowish brown sandy clay
203	Cut	0.36 x 0.36 x 0.15	Posthole
204	Fill	0.36 x 0.36 x 0.15	Dark greyish brown silty clay. Fill of posthole

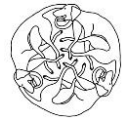


Plate 1: Trench 1: view to east



Plate 2: Trench 1: view to west



Plate 3: Trench 1: stratigraphy



Plate 4: Trench 1: Feature 103



Plate 5: Trench 1: Feature 105



Plate 6: Trench 1: Feature 106



Plate 7: Trench 2: view to southeast



Plate 8: Trench 2: view to northwest



Plate 9: Trench 2: posthole 203

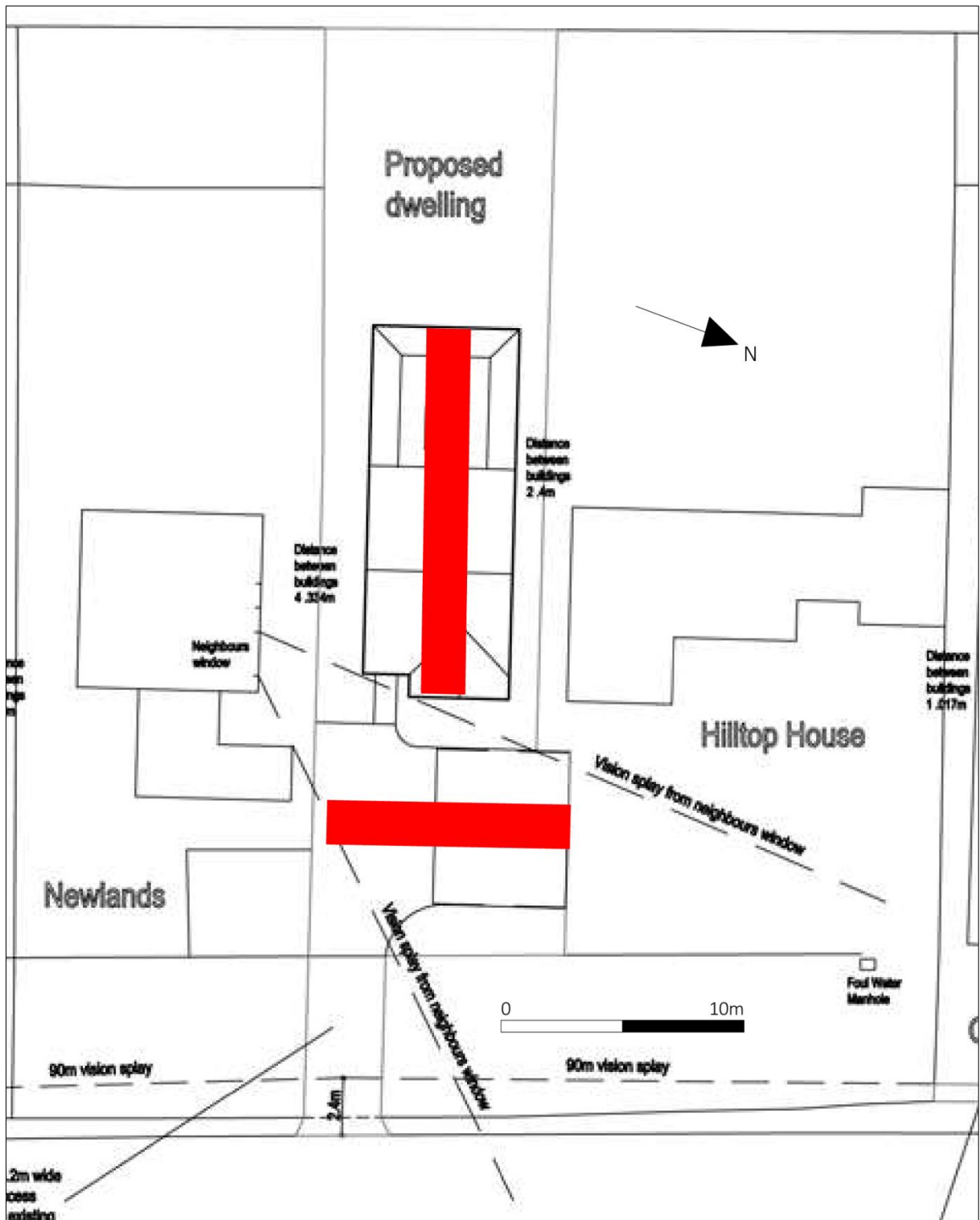


Figure 4: Proposed trench location plan (scale 1:250)

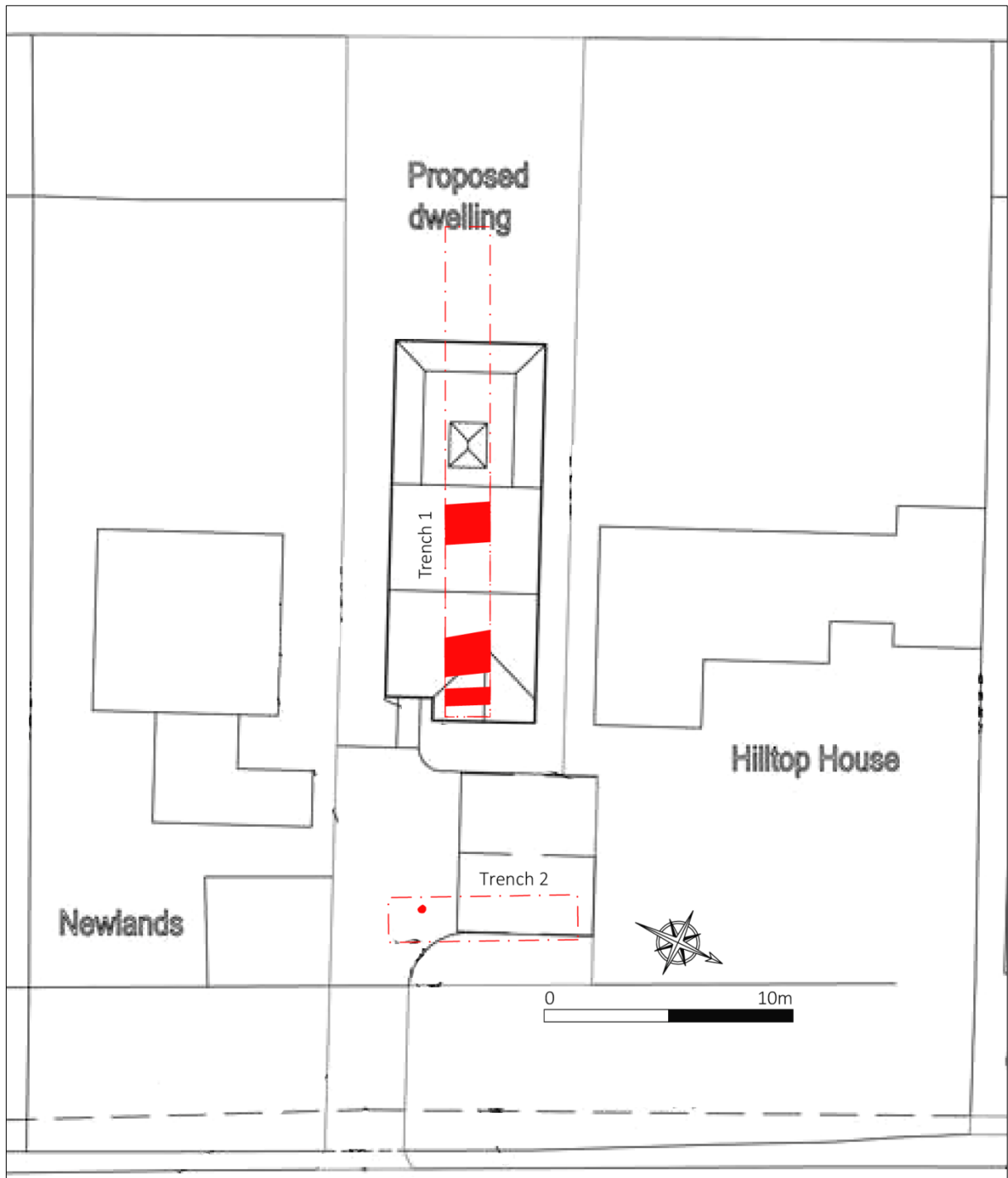
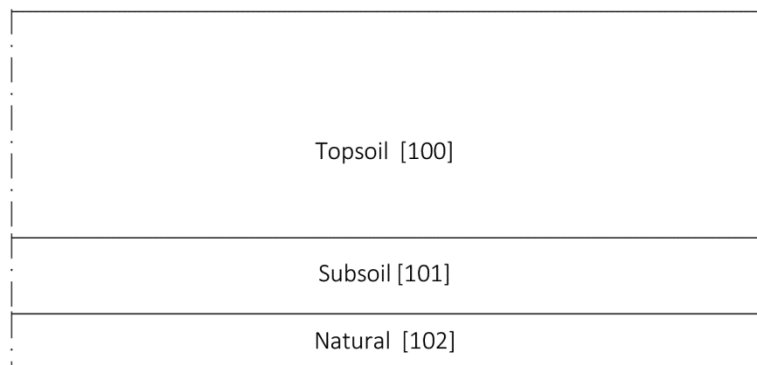


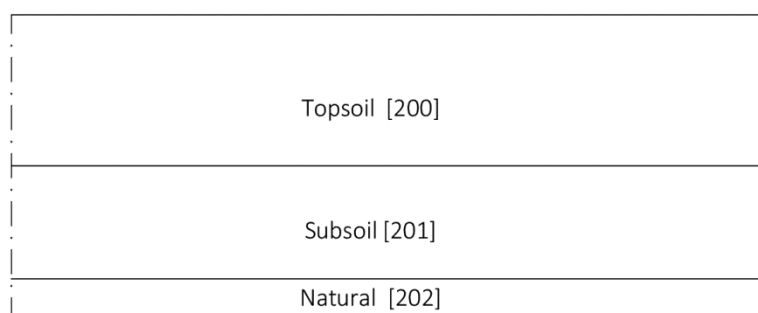
Figure 5: Actual trench location plan showing archaeological features (scale 1:250)



Indicative Section of Trench 1



Indicative Section of Trench 2



0 30cm

Figure 6: Stratigraphy (scale 1:20)

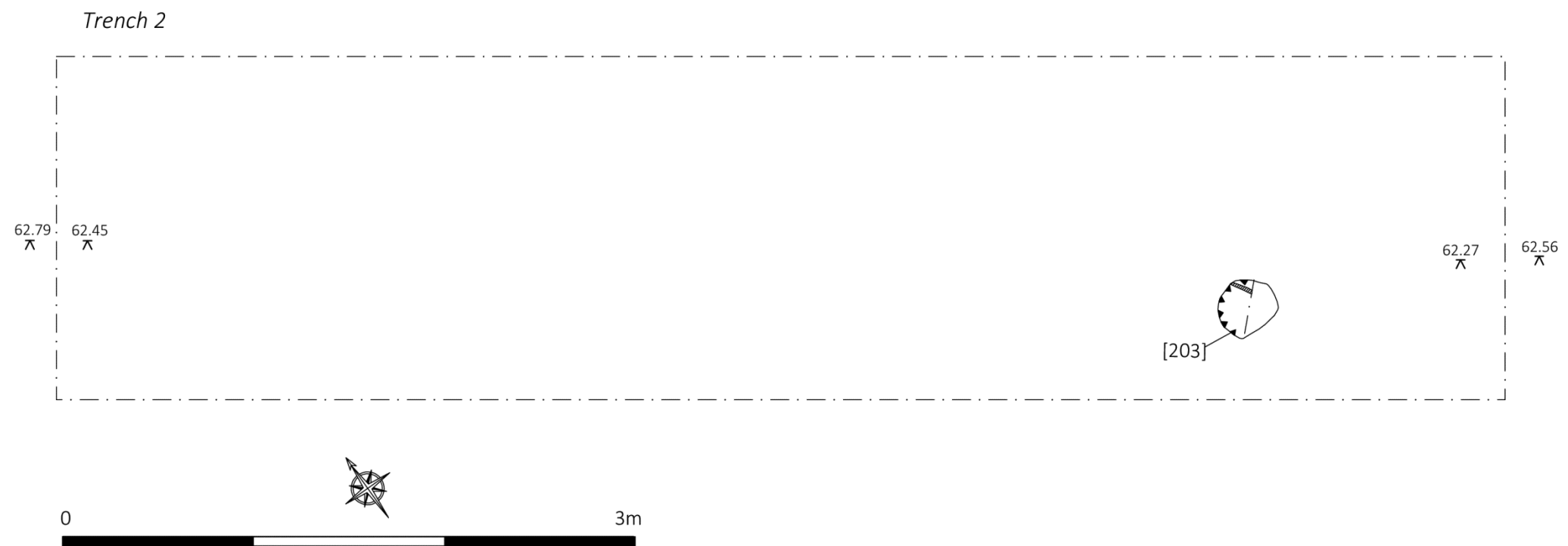
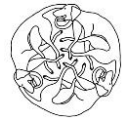
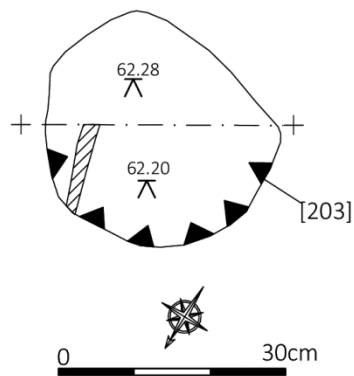


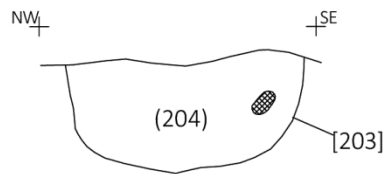
Figure 7: Trench plans (scale 1:30)



Plan of Post Hole [203]



South- West Facing Section of Post Hole [203]



North-East Facing Section of Ditch [103]

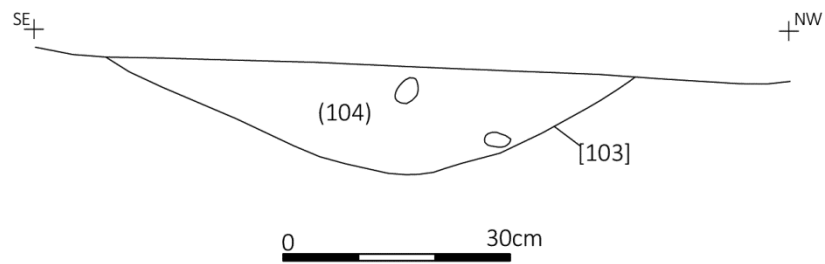


Figure 8: Additional plans & sections (scale 1:20)



5 Conclusions

The excavations revealed a ditch to the east of two parallel hedge lines in Trench 1. These were clearly part of the eastern boundary of the field on which the houses along the High Street were built in the 20th century. The isolated posthole, which fell outside the field boundary, may be a relatively modern feature, perhaps associated with the later development.



6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to Patrick Janes for commissioning this report. Thanks are also due to Geoff Saunders and Vanessa Clarke of Bedford Borough Council Historic Environment Team for providing historic environment records and monitoring the project.

The fieldwork was carried out by Cameron Kaye BA and Barney King. The report was written by Karin Kaye MA MCIfA 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. Sample records
5. Finds records
6. Finds
7. Site drawings
8. Client's site plans
9. List of photographs
10. B/W prints & negatives
11. Specialist reports
12. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with the Bedford Museum (BEDFM 2016.85).



8 References

Standards & Specifications

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Appendix 1: Photograph List

SITE NO/CODE: 256/LHS			Site Name: Hilltops Little Staughton Bedfordshire
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	x	x	Trench 1: view to west
2	x	x	Trench 1: view to east
3	x	x	Trench 1: stratigraphy
4	x	x	Trench 2: view to SE
5	x	x	Trench 2: view to NW
6	x	x	Trench 2: stratigraphy
7	x	x	Posthole 203
8	x	x	Ditch 103: SE facing section
9	x	x	Ditch 103 & Hedgeline 105: view to NW
10	x	x	Hedgeline 105: view to NW
11	x	x	Hedgeline 106: view to NW



Appendix 2: OASIS and Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name & Address	Hilltop House, High Street, Little Staughton, Bedfordshire	Project Site Code	256/LSH
OASIS reference	kdkarcha1-268330	Event/Accession no	BEDFM 2016.85
OS reference	TL 1049 6267	Study area size	300 sq m
Project Type	Archaeological Evaluation	Height (mAOD)	72
Short Description	In January 2017, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an archaeological evaluation at Hilltop House, High Street, Little Staughton, Bedfordshire as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site. Two trenches were excavated across the area of a proposed development, revealing three linear features, a ditch and two hedgerows, which were part of the former eastern boundary of the field on which the present houses on the street frontage were built in the 20 th century. A single posthole between the former boundary and the road is likely to represent more recent activity on the site. No artefacts were recovered from any of the features		
Previous work	No	Site status	None
Planning proposal	Erection of 2-storey house with associated external works, including vehicular access	Current land use	Garden
Local Planning Authority	Bedford Borough Council	Planning application ref.	16/02160/FUL
Monument type	N/A	Monument period	N/A
Significant finds	None	Future work	Unknown
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project Brief originator	Bedfordshire Borough Council Historic Environment Team	Project Design originator	KDK Archaeology Ltd
Project Manager	David Kaye BA ACIfA	Director/Supervisor	Carina Summerfield Hill
Sponsor/funding body	P. Janes		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	11/1/2017	End date	11/1/2017
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical	Bedford Museum (BEDFM 2016.85)	None	
Paper		WSI, report, photos, fieldwork sheets	
Digital		WSI, report, photos, fieldwork sheets	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title	Archaeological Evaluation: Hilltop House, High Street, Little Staughton, Bedfordshire		
Serial title & volume	KDK Archaeology 265/LSH		
Author(s)	Karin Kaye MA MCIfA		
Page no's	23	Date	25 th January 2017