



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

## Archaeological Observation and Recording Report

Willow Farm

Fancott

Toddington

Bedfordshire



**Quality Check**

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## Summary

In July 2017 a programme of Observation and Recording was undertaken at Willow Farm, Fancott, Toddington, Bedfordshire in order to fulfil a planning condition for the development of the site.

The condition was imposed as the site lies within the boundary of the medieval settlement of Fancott, and has been identified as the possible site of a moat. However, the groundworks did not extend deep enough to impact archaeological deposits, and no archaeological features were observed.

## 1 Introduction

1.1 In July 2017, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording at Willow Farm, Fancott, Toddington, Bedfordshire. The project was commissioned by Luke Cousins, and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Shlasko 2017), and approved by the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeology Team (CBCAT), Archaeological Advisor (AA) to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Central Bedfordshire Council. The relevant planning application reference is CB/16/03930/FULL.

### 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*

Willow Farm is located in the hamlet of Fancott, which is within the civil parish of Toddington and the administrative district of Central Bedfordshire. The works are situated at approximately National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 0206 2769 (Fig. 1). The site lies within the boundary of the medieval settlement of Fancott (HER 16982) and is located in an area that has been identified as the site of a possible moat (HER 3426).

#### *Description*

The site is in the back garden of Willow Farmhouse, a Grade II listed 17<sup>th</sup> century building with later additions. The site is an open lawn. To the northwest is the pool house and beyond that Willow Farmhouse itself. To the west is a band of trees, separating the lawn from a large fish pond. Due north from the site, across the expanse of lawn and beyond a hedge, are farm buildings. To the east and south the lawn is bound by trees and hedges. Beyond the boundary to the east are agricultural fields and the back garden of a neighbouring house and to the south is a narrow lane (Fig. 2).

#### *Geology & Topography*

Willow Farm is located at approximately 100m AOD. The local geology for the area comprises the junction of the Gault Clay Formation of the early Cretaceous and the West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation of late Cretaceous Age. These are overlain by superficial deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel, which represent the gradual accumulation of debris through the processes of landslide, debris flow, solifluction, soil creep and hill wash (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

#### *Development*

The development comprised the erection of a detached, single-storey garden room (Fig. 4).



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



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



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## 2 Aims & Methods

2.1 The aims of this project as defined in the approved WSI (Shlasko 2017) were:

- To determine if any evidence for the putative moat was present within the footprint area of the building
- 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.

In addition, the research aims inter alia considered various aspects of the development of Saxon, medieval and post-medieval settlements; their origins, morphology, diversity and ultimate success or failure (Wade 2000: 24-25; Oake 2007: 10-12, 14; Medlycott 2011: 70 and Edgeworth 2007: 121-123).

### 2.2 *Methods*

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

- All groundworks likely to have an impact on archaeological deposits or remains were done under constant and continuous archaeological supervision

### 2.3 *Standards*

The work conformed to the following requirements:

- The Design Brief (CBC 2016)
- 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 & Historical Background

3.1 A small hamlet, Fancott is an outlying settlement of the medieval town of Toddington, which is located approximately 1.5km to the northwest. The name comes from 'Fen Cott', meaning marsh cottages and has been traced back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century (<http://bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk/CommunityArchives/Fancott/TheCommunityOfFancottInGeneral.aspx>). As early as 1581, Fancott is depicted cartographically as a cluster of houses along the road from Luton (CBC 2016: 4). It retains its small size and rural character throughout its history.

This section has been compiled with information from the Victoria County History (VCH), the Central Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER licence 201617/231), the design brief (CBC 2016) and other sources (Fig. 3).

#### 3.2 *Prehistoric* (before AD43)

The only possible prehistoric site listed in the Central Bedfordshire HER in the vicinity of the development site is a sub-square enclosure seen in cropmarks approximately 450m south of Willow Farm. This cropmark abuts two linear features, which may also be prehistoric, although no archaeological investigations have been conducted to confirm this hypothesis (HER 16590).

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

The earliest evidence of occupation in Fancott was found in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century at the old brickworks located on the northern edge of the hamlet, about 200m north of the development site. These finds consisted of ingots of 'nearly pure copper', charcoal and ash, along with 1<sup>st</sup> century pottery from a cremation burial (HER 90). These finds suggest that bronze working was taking place in the vicinity from a very early date.

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

The hamlet of Fancott developed during the medieval period, as a cluster of farms belonging to the manor of Toddington. Toddington itself began as a Saxon settlement, worth £30 to the lord Wulfward White (The Noble) in 1066. The manor contained land for 30 ploughs and was home to 80 households (<http://opendomesday.org/place/TL0028/toddington/>). Toddington was granted a market charter in 1218, with an annual, three-day fair to be held around St George's Day.

Archaeological monitoring at Stockwell Farm, c. 150m northwest of the development site, uncovered extensive evidence for medieval settlement, in the form of pits, postholes and linear features (Heritage Network 2009: 9). Medieval activity near the development site is also indicated in the areas of ridge and furrow at a number of sites around Fancott (HER 3355), aerial photographic evidence of cropmarks and a possible medieval trackway c600m southwest of the site (HER 9076) and Chalton Spinney, a medieval woodland located approximately 500m east of Willow Farm. Earthworks at the development site itself have been historically identified as a moat, although more recent analysis suggests it is more likely to be a drainage ditch (HER 3426). Nonetheless, it may be a medieval feature, along with the pond and possible sunken way that appear to the west of the supposed moat. Other earthworks (a holloway and possible house platforms) have also been found in the vicinity of the site.





### 3.5 *Post-medieval-Modern* (1500 - present)

Fancott appears on the 1581 Agas map as a small collection of properties (CBC 2016: 4). By 1882 the settlement consists of two farms, a handful of houses, a public house and a brick yard, surrounded by open fields (<http://maps.nls.uk/view/101568482>).

In addition to Willow Farmhouse, two other Grade II listed buildings survive in Fancott, both from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Fancott Arms Public House (HER 6494; NHLE 1321319), approximately 170m northeast of the development site, first appears as a beer house in 1876 (<http://bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk/CommunityArchives/Fancott/TheFancott.aspx>). It is still a public house, The Fancott, and has the oldest miniature pub railway in Britain, dating from 1975 (<http://www.fancottrailway.tk/>).

Potentially the oldest structure in Fancott is the Grade II listed barn at Stockwell Farm (HER 14354; NHLE 1200368), c. 50m west of the development site. The barn is a substantial timber-framed structure dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, although recent research suggests it might be even earlier in date (CBC 2016: 4).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a brickyard, with kilns, clay pits and sand pits, operated on the north side of Fancott, c. 180m north of the development site (HER 6735). The brickyard remained in business until about 1903.

### 3.6 *The Known Archaeology & History of the Site*

On the 1882 OS map, the development site is shown as a wooded plot, south of Feoffee Farmhouse, now known as Willow Farm. The surviving farmhouse is a Grade II listed, 17<sup>th</sup> century building with later additions and changes (HER 5325; NHLE 1159595). Feoffee Farm was held by the trustees (or feoffees) of the Toddington Charity. The rents from this land were used, among other things, to support the Feoffee Almshouses in Toddington, which provided housing to needy women throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century (<http://bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk/CommunityArchives/Toddington/FeoffeeYardAlmshousesToddington.aspx>). The charity had its origins in a 1454 grant of lands from the rector of St George's Church, Thomas Wykelwode, and William Grenefeld, the warden of the Hospital of St John the Baptist. At the time of enclosure, in 1800, these lands, which were scattered around the parish, were exchanged for 36 acres of land in Fancott, possibly the land known as Feoffee Farm. When the Victoria County History was written in 1912, the rent from Feoffee Farm still went to support the charity (VCH).





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## 4 Results

### *Introduction*

The groundworks, which were located to the southeast of the existing pool house (Fig. 4), was undertaken using a 0.8 tonne machine fitted with 0.45m and 0.75m toothless buckets for the ground reduction and main trenches, and a 0.22m toothed bucket for the service trench.

### *Description*

The groundworks conducted consisted of a stripped area 8.10m long by 4.60m wide (Plates 1-3) and a service trench approximately 11.00m long by 0.22m wide (Plates 4-5). The stripped area comprised the entire footprint of the proposed garden room and had an area of 37.26m<sup>2</sup>; this and the trenches were excavated to a depth of 0.15m. They did not extend below the topsoil, which contained animal bone, scrap metal, modern ceramic and modern CBM, none of which was retained.



**Plate 1:** Trench, facing north



**Plate 2:** Trench, facing south



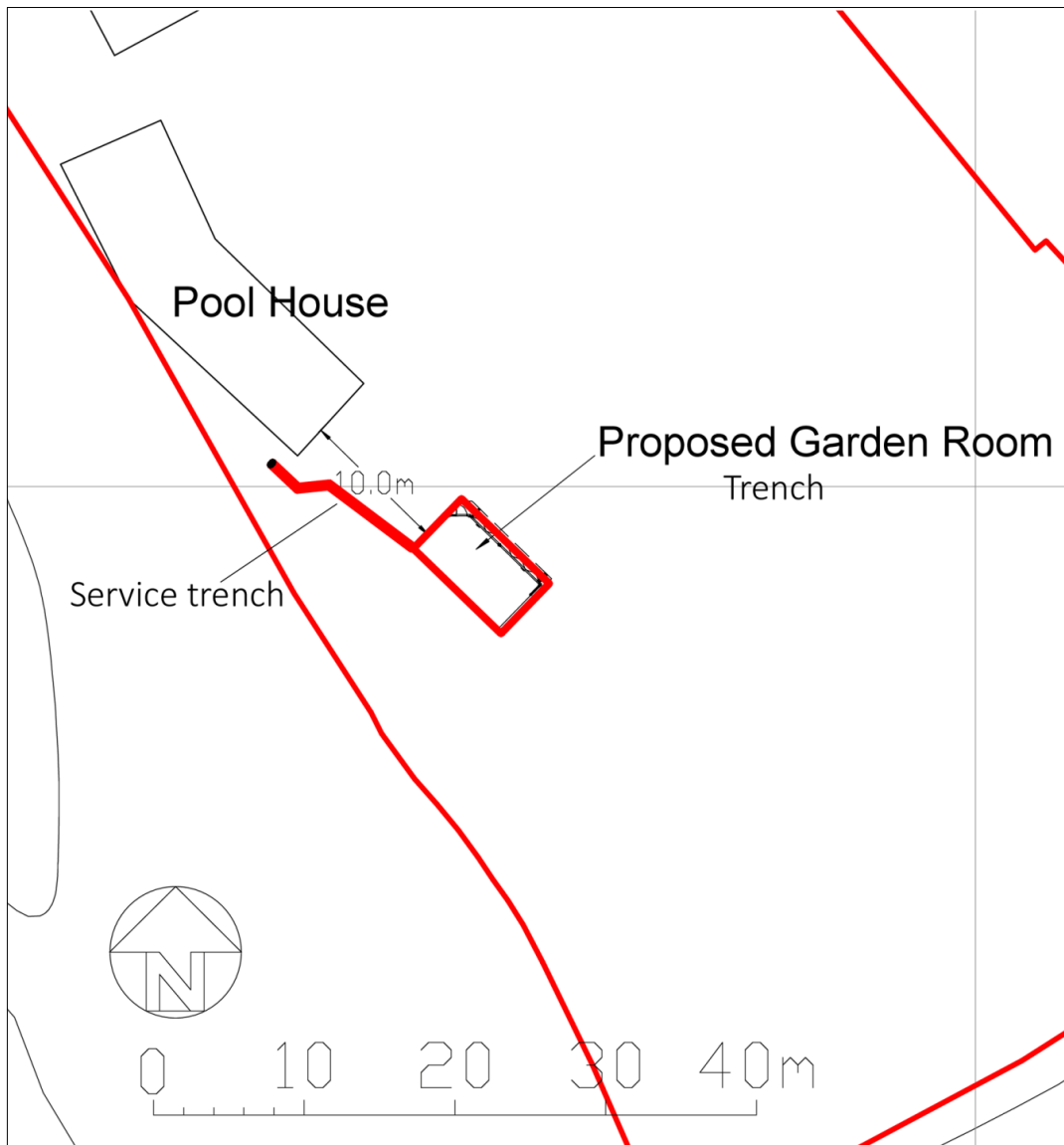
**Plate 3:** Trench profile



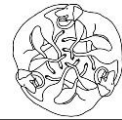
**Plate 4:** Service trench, facing north



**Plate 5:** Service trench, facing south



**Figure 4:** Trench locations (1:500)



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## 5 Conclusions

The programme of archaeological observation and recording at Willow Farm revealed no archaeological features, despite its proximity to known heritage resources such as the listed Willow Farmhouse to the northeast and medieval fishponds to the southwest. This is primarily due to the shallow depths of the excavated trenches. At 0.15m deep, these trenches did not extend below the topsoil and any surviving archaeological features remained undisturbed.



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## 6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to Luke Cousins for commissioning this report. Thanks are also due to Stephen Coleman of Central Bedfordshire Council for providing historic environment records and other relevant documents and to Matt Adams of Central Bedfordshire Council for monitoring the project.

We would also like to thank Ian Tomlin and Robert Cooper for their assistance and hospitality on site.

The fieldwork was carried out by Chris Martin-Taylor BSc. The report was written by Ellen Shlasko PhD and Chris Martin-Taylor BSc, and edited by Karin Kaye MA MCifA.



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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 Luton Museum (LTNMG 1264).





## 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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- CIfA 2014 *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds, Archiving)*
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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
- Heritage Network 2009 *Stockwell Farm, Fancott, Bedfordshire: Archaeological Monitoring Report*. Report No. 569. Letchworth: Heritage Network
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- Mills A. D. 1991 *A Dictionary of English Place Names*. Oxford University Press: Oxford
- Oake M., Luke M., Dawson M., Edgeworth M. and Murphy P. 2007 *Bedfordshire Archaeology - Research and Archaeology: resource assessment, research agenda and strategy*. Bedfordshire Archaeology 9
- Williams A. & Martin G. H. 1992 *Domesday Book: A Complete Translation*. Penguin Group: London

### ***Online Sources***

Bedfordshire Archives:

<http://bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk/CommunityArchives/Fancott/TheCommunityOfFancottInGeneral.aspx>

<http://bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk/CommunityArchives/Toddington/FeoffeeYardAlmshousesToddington.aspx>

British Geological Society (BGS) 2015: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> (Accessed: 08.12.16)

Domesday Book: <http://opendomesday.org/place/TL0028/toddington/> (accessed 8/12/16)

Fancott Railway: <http://www.fancottrailway.tk/>

National Library of Scotland: <http://maps.nls.uk/view/101568482>

Victoria County History: Page, W 1912 "Parishes: Toddington," pp 438-447 in *A History of the County of Bedford: Volume 3*. London: Victoria County History. *British History Online*, accessed December 3, 2016, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/beds/vol3/pp438-447>.



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**Appendix 1: Photograph List**

SITE NO/CODE: 259/TWF			Site Name: Willow Farm, Fancott, Toddington, Bedfordshire
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	x	x	Plan of trench, facing S
2	x	x	Plan of trench, facing N
3		x	Trench profile
4	x	x	Plan of service trench, facing N
5	x	x	Plan of service trench, facing S
6	x	x	Plan of service trench, facing S
7		x	Profile of service trench



## Appendix 2: OASIS and Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name & Address	Willow Farm, Fancott, Toddington, Bedfordshire	Project Site Code	259/TWF
OASIS reference	Kdkarcha1-270081	Event/Accession no	LTNMG 1264
OS reference	TI 0206 2769	Study area size	c.40 sq m
Project Type	Observation and Recording	Height (mAOD)	100
Short Description	<p>In July 2017 a programme of Observation and Recording was undertaken at Willow Farm, Fancott, Toddington, Bedfordshire as a planning condition for the development of the site.</p> <p>The condition was imposed as the site lies within the boundary of the medieval settlement of Fancott, and has been identified as the possible site of a moat. However, the groundworks did not extend deep enough to impact archaeological deposits, and no archaeological features were observed</p>		
Previous work	None	Site status	Grade II listed
Planning proposal	Construction of garden room	Current land use	Garden
Local Planning Authority	Central Bedfordshire Council	Planning application ref.	CB/16/03930/FUL
Monument type	-	Monument period	-
Significant finds	None	Future work	Unknown
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project Brief originator	CBCAT	Project Design originator	KDK Archaeology Ltd
Project Manager	Karin Kaye MA MCIfA	Director/Supervisor	Chris Martin-Taylor BSc
Sponsor/funding body	Luke Cousins		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	10.07.2017	End date	10.07.2017
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical	Luton Museum	No physical content	
Paper		Site drawings, WSI, report	
Digital		CD containing site forms, site drawings, WSI, report, digital photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title	Archaeological Observation & Recording: Willow Farm, Fancott, Toddington, Bedfordshire		
Serial title & volume	259/TWS/2		
Author(s)	Ellen Shlasko PhD and Chris Martin-Taylor BSc		
Page no.s	20	Date	29.08.2017