



KDK Archaeology Ltd

## Archaeological Observation and Recording Report

Rectory Lane Cemetery

Rectory Lane

Berkhamsted

Hertfordshire



**Quality Check**

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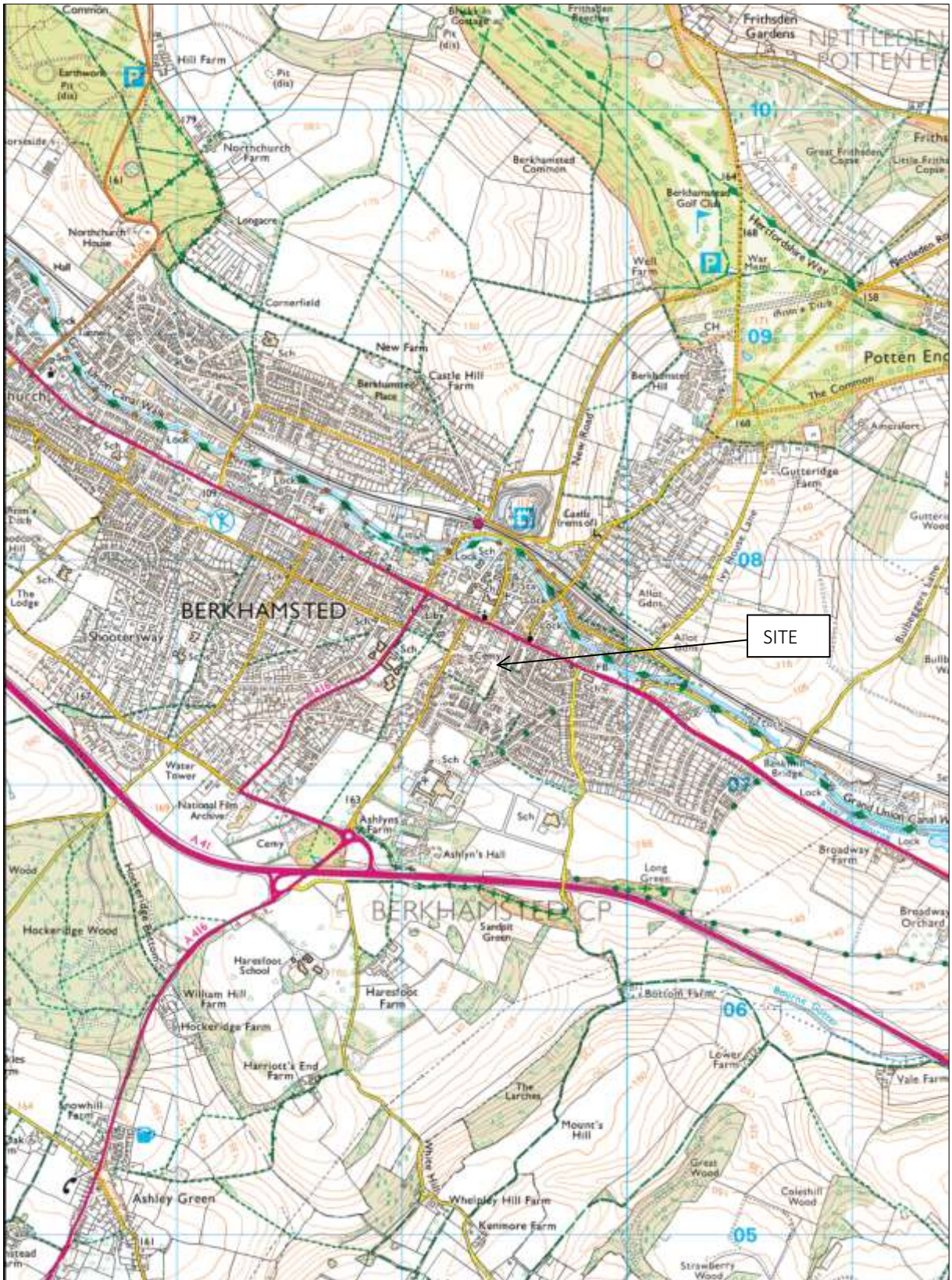


Figure 1: Site location (scale 1:25,000)





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## Summary

In December 2016, KDK Archaeology Ltd monitored the excavation of eight test pits at the Rectory Lane Cemetery, Rectory Lane, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by the Friends of St Peter's, Berkhamsted as part of the development stage of their Heritage Lottery Fund grant project to refurbish the cemetery. The pits were positioned to allow the architect and structural engineer to evaluate below ground elements of existing structures, such as walls and outbuildings. All eight pits exposed the targeted structural elements, but no other archaeological features.

## 1 Introduction

1.1 In December 2016 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording of the Rectory Lane Cemetery, Rectory Lane, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by the Friends of St Peter's Great Berkhamsted.

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

This project was undertaken as part of the development stage of a Heritage Lottery Fund grant project for the proposed refurbishment of the cemetery. Archaeological monitoring of the groundworks was requested by the Archaeological Advisor of the Diocese of St Albans

### 1.3 *The Site*

#### *Location & Description*

The Rectory Lane Cemetery is located in the town and civil parish of Berkhamsted and the administrative district of Dacorum Borough Council. It is a large, L-shaped plot, surrounded by residential properties on the east, west and south and by a car park, residences and a cinema on the north (Fig. 2). The cemetery is surrounded by a high brick wall, topped with iron railings. The main access is via a gate off the east side of Rectory Lane, but there are additional gates on the west side of Three Close Lane. The National Grid Reference for the centre of the cemetery is SP 99416 07576.

#### *Geology & Topography*

The land slopes from high ground in the south towards the north and the Grand Union Canal. At the south end of the cemetery the elevation is c145m AOD, while at the north it descends to c120m AOD. The solid geology of the slope is made up of various chalk formations, including the Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation and New Pit Chalk Formation, Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation and Chalk Rock Member. All of these formed in a local environment of warm chalk seas. There is no superficial geology noted for the location (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

#### *Proposed Development*

The proposed project is the refurbishment of the cemetery, including repaving pathways, adding areas of paving, adding benches, repairing walls amongst other changes (Figs. 3 and 4).

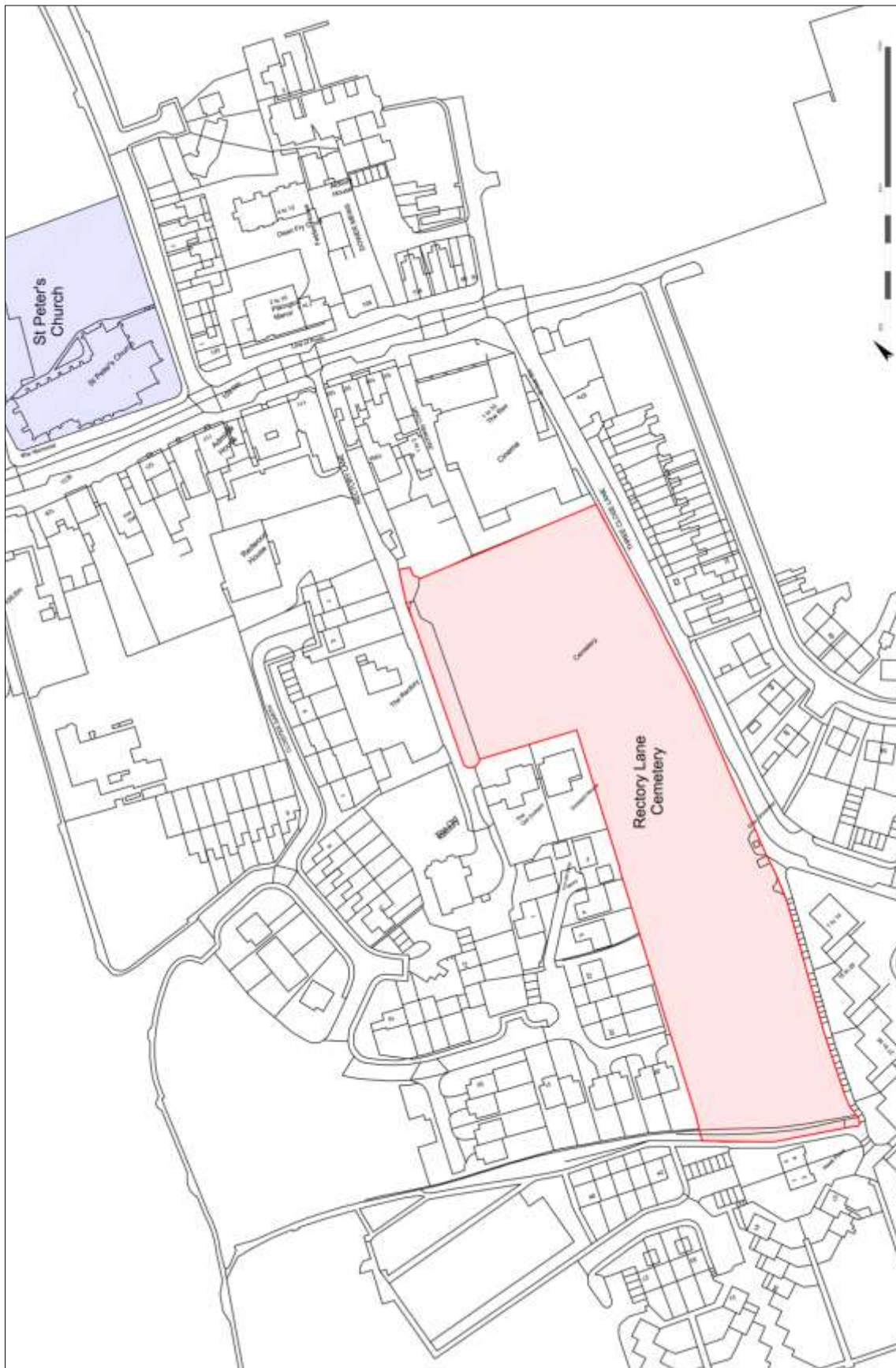


Figure 2: Site layout (scale as shown)



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## 2 Aims & Methods

2.1 The aims of this project were:

- To monitor the test pits
- To record any below ground archaeological features encountered during the test pitting
- 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*

The methods used were as follows:

- All excavations were monitored by a qualified archaeologist
- Test pits were dug using a 1 tonne mini digger fitted with a 0.60m toothed bucket
- All test pits were recorded on KDK's record sheets and photographed.

2.3 *Standards*

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)
- 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)





Figure 3: Proposed refurbishment, north half (scale as shown)





Figure 4: Proposed refurbishment, south half (scale as shown)



### 3 Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 A full history of the town of Berkhamsted is beyond the scope of this report. The valley of the Boulborne has been the location for millennia of human history, from prehistoric workshops to medieval castles. The scale and preservation of that history is evident in the number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Berkhamsted. The castle, obviously, but also a Bronze Age round barrow, a Roman villa and other sites of interest. What follows is a brief review of this varied history, drawn from sources such as the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) (accessed via the Heritage Gateway), the Victoria County History (VCH), and Historic England (HE).

#### *Prehistoric (before 600BC)*

Scattered around Berkhamsted are signs that people have been using this landscape for thousands of years. Excavations at the Berkhamsted Police Station (HER 30951), recovered large quantities of worked flint, including cores, suggesting the presence of a flint working area. Neolithic pits (HER 11478) and Mesolithic flints (HER 30109) have been found, and during archaeological evaluations prior to the expansion of the A41, prehistoric features and artefacts were recovered (HER 11480). A Bronze Age round barrow (HER 6980) is one of several Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Berkhamsted, and there are other Bronze Age features (HER 11479).

#### *Iron Age (600BC – AD43)*

By the Iron Age, settlement in the Bulbourne Valley was widespread. The earthwork known as Grim's Ditch (HER 50) is probably of Iron Age date, and it remains an obvious feature of the landscape (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1021204>). Iron Age coins, including a possible hoard (HER 7320), a large Iron Age settlement (HER 11480) and other evidence, contribute to defining the area of Iron Age and Roman occupation.

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

The main road through Berkhamsted runs along the line of Roman Akeman Street and evidence of Roman settlement is found throughout the area. A large villa is known in Northchurch (HER 1337/Scheduled Ancient Monument 32459-03) and another large building stood to the north of the castle (HER 2716/Scheduled Ancient Monument). There are many other Roman sites and finds in the town, including a possible Romano-British temple (HER 7374/Scheduled Ancient Monument) and Roman pottery kilns (HER 6803).

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

That Berkhamsted was a settlement in the Saxon period is clear, although there is less evidence for Saxon occupation than for the preceding period. An archaeological watching brief at Incents Lawn, Chesham Road uncovered features demonstrating continuity of occupation from the Roman period through the Saxon period and into the medieval period (HER 10725). By the end of the Saxon period, the settlement must have been a place of some significance, because it was here that William the Conqueror met with Edgar Atheling in 1066 and accepted the submission of the English (VCH). The manor, which belonged to Edmer Atule, a thegn of Edward the Confessor at this time was of some significance with 88 households, land for 26 ploughs, woodland for 1000 pigs and 2 mills (<http://opendomesday.org/place/SP9907/berkhamsted/>).

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

Following the Conquest, the manor was given to Robert, Count of Mortain, half-brother of William the Conqueror. He is believed to have begun construction of the motte and bailey castle that still stands just north of the town (HER 39/Scheduled Ancient Monument 20626).



After Robert's son rebelled against Henry I, the castle reverted to the Crown in 1104. It remained an important site throughout the medieval period. Between 1155 and 1165, it was granted to Thomas Becket, who is thought to have initiated the replacement of the original timber castle with the masonry walls (HER 39). After Becket fell from favour, the castle again reverted to the Crown. In 1216, it was held by Queen Isabella, the widow of King John, who was besieged in the castle for a fortnight by King Louis of France and the English barons. Berkhamsted was a favourite home of Edward the Black Prince, becoming part of his Duchy of Cornwall. The castle, by then 200 years old, was renovated to hold the captive John, King of France in 1360 (VCH). But by 1495, the castle was essentially derelict and abandoned (HER).

St Peter's Church, which is Grade II listed, dates from the early 13<sup>th</sup> century (HER 9092) and is the second largest church in Hertfordshire. There were earlier churches and chapels in Berkhamsted. In the Domesday Book, there is mention of a priest in Northchurch, and Robert, Count of Mortain, granted the chapel of the castle, the church of St Mary and the chapel of St James, to the monastery of St Mary of Grestein, in Normandy (VCH). A holy well, St John's Well, stood near the leper hospital (*ibid*, HER 4143).

During the medieval period, the woodland around Berkhamsted was exploited for timber. Other local industries mentioned in the documentary record include the manufacture of roofing tiles in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the presence of lime kilns in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (*ibid*).

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

By the early Tudor period, Berkhamsted Castle was essentially a ruin, but the manor remained in the possession of the royal family. It was granted to Katherine of Aragon upon her marriage to Henry VIII, then to Anne Boleyn and Jane Seymour, in succession. Edward VI granted Berkhamsted to his sister, Princess Elizabeth in 1550, who then leased it to Edward Carey in 1580. Carey quarried the old castle for stone to build Berkhamstead Place.

A number of post-medieval buildings survive in Berkhamsted, including the Court House, a 16<sup>th</sup> century, Grade II listed building (HER 9183). Others have been lost, for instance the Elizabethan Market House, which burned in 1854 (HER 9184, VCH).

The first Old Rectory (HER 9302) was on Rectory Lane. It was occupied in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was the birthplace, in 1731, of the poet William Cowper, whose father was the rector. The original house was demolished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and replaced by the second Old Rectory (HER 18206) in 1828, although the Rectory Coach House survives (HER 18208), as does the site of Cowper's Well (HER 18207), which is intended to be incorporated in the proposed renovation.

The land for the Rectory Lane Cemetery was donated by Charlotte Catharine Anne, Countess of Bridgewater in 1842. It was extended in 1894 and 1921. The cemetery was replaced in the late 1940s, although it didn't close completely until 1976 (<http://www.stpetersberkhamstedfriends.org.uk/projects/cemetery/cemetery-history/>).

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

By the modern era, Berkhamsted was a thriving town with a variety of industries. Cooper's Sheep Dip Works (HER 5887) was located on Manor Street, not far from the Rectory Lane Cemetery. There were a number of maltings in the town and a large number of public houses, including several on the High Street near the development site. In 1938, the Rex Cinema opened just north of the cemetery (HER 11466). This Grade II listed building was extensively renovated and reopened as a cinema in 2004.





## 4 Results

### *Introduction*

A total of eight test pits were excavated around the cemetery (Fig. 5). Each pit was mechanically excavated by a 1 tonne mini digger fitted with a toothed bucket. The pits were all of different sizes and depths, as recorded below. Following manual cleaning, the pits were recorded on KDK Masonry Record sheets and photographed.

The topsoil throughout was a dark blackish brown slightly clayey sand with heavy rooting. Modern artefacts such as plastic, pottery, glass and CBM were all observed in the topsoil. The subsoil was mid-yellow brown sticky sandy clay with areas of heavy rooting and chalk inclusions. No human remains were found or archaeological features other than the foundations of the structures were revealed.

### *Test Pit 1*

Test Pit 1 was located just inside the front gate; placed to expose the footings of the perimeter wall and gate pillars (Plates 1 and 2). The pit measured 1.50m x 0.70m in size and was excavated to a depth of 0.65m.

The foundations of the wall extended 0.47m below ground level and consisted of 10 courses of hand made brick with horizontal skintlings laid in Flemish Bond with lime mortar. The bottom two courses were stepped. The wall above had been repointed with cement.

The gate column is built of red brick with carved limestone decorative banding and caps. The brick was set in lime mortar with cement patching. The foundations of the column extended 0.40m below ground surface.

### *Test Pit 2*

Test Pit 2 was set against the north perimeter wall of the cemetery, in a location where the entire wall was leaning significantly inward (Plate 3). This test pit was 1.10m x 0.60m in size and was excavated to 0.60m in depth. The wall foundations consisted of dark hand made bricks with horizontal skintlings laid in lime mortar with a soldier course at top (Plate 4). The wall above ground at that location was c1.05m high and the foundations extended below the depth of the test pit.

### *Test Pit 3*

Test Pit 3 was located beside the eastern perimeter wall at the intersection of a new stretch of walling with the older part (Plate 5). The pit was 0.87m x 0.80m in size and was excavated to a depth of 0.48m. The subsurface brickwork consisted of pinkish red brick with a yellow brick step course. The brick was laid in lime mortar. A small section of the old south perimeter wall that was not visible above ground, was seen in the pit (Plates 6 and 7).

### *Test Pit 4*

The fourth test pit was excavated against the base of the memorial arch that marks the original southern boundary of the cemetery (Plates 8 and 9). This test pit measured 1.00m x 0.60m and was excavated to a depth of 0.32m (Plate 10). The foundations were brick laid in lime mortar.

### *Test Pit 5*

Test Pit 5 was positioned on the southern edge of the Sexton's Hut, near the eastern boundary of the site (Plate 11). It was 1.70m x 0.70m in size and 1.10m in depth. The brick



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was laid in Flemish bond in a lime mortar and, although 2 stepped courses and an additional 13 courses were uncovered, the base of the foundation was not reached (Plate 12).

***Test Pit 6***

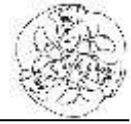
In the upper part of the cemetery, Test Pit 6 was placed against the western wall (Plate 13). The pit was 0.90m x 0.62m in size and 0.60m deep. The wall was made of hand made bricks with horizontal skintling laid in Flemish bond and topped with arched coping. Two courses of spread footing and three courses of walling were revealed (Plate 14).

***Test Pit 7***

Test Pit 7 was positioned against what is thought to be a section of the oldest perimeter wall (Plate 15). It measured 0.90m x 0.60m in size and was excavated to a depth of 0.29m (Plate 16). The wall in Test Pit 7 was the same as in Test Pit 6.

***Test Pit 8***

The final test pit was excavated southwest of the gate, along the perimeter wall (Plate 17). It was 0.90m x 0.70m in size and 0.40m in depth (Plate 18). The foundations were the same style as in Test Pit 1, with only three courses below ground.



**Plate 1:** Entrance gate, location of Test Pit 1



**Plate 2:** Test Pit 1



**Plate 3:** North wall, location of Test Pit 2



**Plate 4:** Test Pit 2



**Plate 5:** Junction of old and new wall, location of Test Pit 3



**Plate 6:** Test Pit 3





**Plate 7:** Test pit 3, remnant of old S wall



**Plate 8:** Memorial Arch



**Plate 9:** Inscription on arch



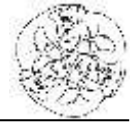
**Plate 10:** Test Pit 4



**Plate 11:** Sexton's Hut



**Plate 12:** Test Pit 5



**Plate 13:** West wall, upper cemetery, location of Test Pit 6



**Plate 14:** Test Pit 6



**Plate 15:** Oldest wall, location of Test Pit 7



**Plate 16:** Test Pit 7



**Plate 17:** Perimeter wall, location of Test Pit 8



**Plate 18:** Test Pit 8



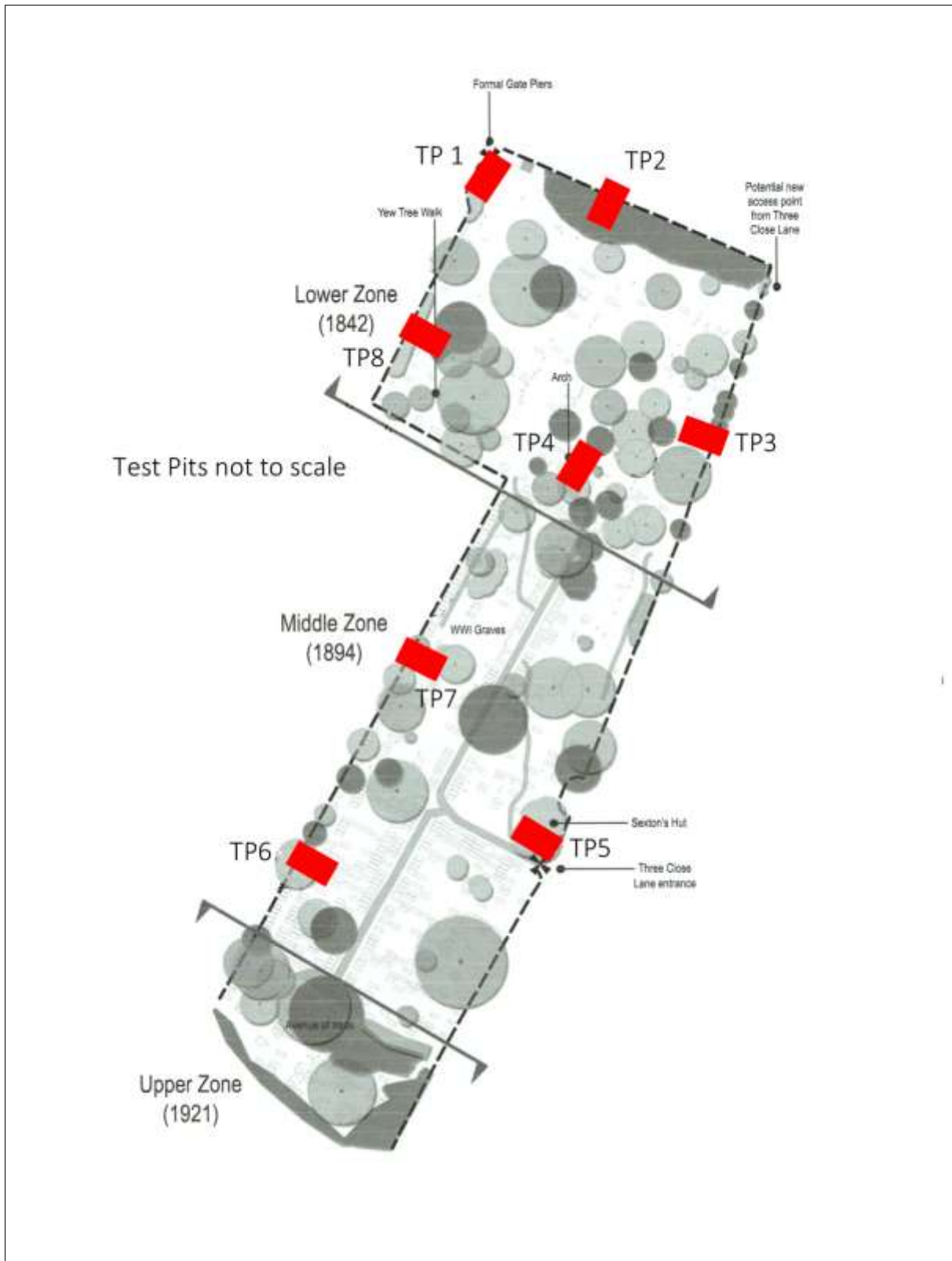


Figure 5: Test pit locations (not to scale)





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## 5 Conclusions

The eight test pits monitored during this project were needed to evaluate the foundations of standing structures in the cemetery, in particular the perimeter walls, the Memorial Arch and the Sexton's Hut.

No below ground archaeological features were encountered during the monitoring, except for the foundations that were being examined and no human remains were found. This is quite possibly due to the fact that the test pits were small, in most cases below one meter square, and placed directly against the brick foundations, undoubtedly within the original builder's excavations.



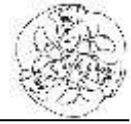
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## 6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to Ann Masat for commissioning this report on behalf of the Friends of St Peter's. Thanks are also due to David Baker, the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor for St Albans for monitoring the project.

The kind help and assistance of everyone involved in the fieldwork is duly acknowledged.

The fieldwork was carried out by Laura Dodd MSc. The report was written by Ellen Shlasko PhD and edited by Karin Kaye MA MCIFA.



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## 7 Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Written Scheme of Investigation
2. Initial report
3. Monitoring sheets
4. Site drawings
5. Client's site plans
6. List of photographs
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. Specialist reports
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Dacorum Heritage Trust.





## 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: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Technical Paper.
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- CIfA 2014 *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*. Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
- CIfA 2014 *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct*. Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
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- 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***

- Domesday Book: <http://opendomesday.org/>
- Friends of St Peter's: <http://www.stpetersberkhamstedfriends.org.uk/projects/cemetery/>
- Heritage Gateway: <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>
- Historic England: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/berkhamsted-castle/history/>
- St Peter's Church: <http://www.stpetersberkhamsted.org.uk/heritage/cemetery>
- Victoria County History: 'Berkhampstead St Peter: Introduction, honour, manor and castle', in *A History of the County of Hertford: Volume 2*, ed. William Page (London, 1908), pp. 162-171. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/herts/vol2/pp162-171> [accessed 9 November 2016].



## Appendix 1: Photograph List

Shot	Subject
1	Front gate of cemetery onto Rectory Lane, looking N
2	Location of Test Pit 1, looking NW
3	Test Pit 1 plan
4	Test Pit 1 profile
5	Test Pit 1 profile
6	Location of Test Pit 2, looking N
7	Location of Test Pit 2, looking N, detail
8	Test Pit 2 plan
9	Test Pit 2 profile
10	Location of Test Pit 3, looking E
11	Test Pit 3 plan
12	Test Pit 3 profile
13	Test Pit 3, showing remnant of south cemetery wall
14	Memorial Arch, location of Test Pit 4
15	Inscription on Memorial Arch
16	Test Pit 4 plan
17	Test Pit 4 profile
18	Sexton's Hut, looking E
19	Sexton's Hut, looking SE
20	Sexton's Hut, looking NE
21	Sexton's Hut, detail of hut and wall, N side
22	Test Pit 5 plan
23	Test Pit 5 profile
24	Location of Test Pit 6, looking W
25	Location of Test Pit 6, looking S
26	Test Pit 6 plan
27	Test Pit 6 profile
28	Location of Test Pit 7, looking W
29	Location of Test Pit 7, looking S
30	Test Pit 7 plan
31	Test Pit 7 profile
32	Location of Test Pit 8, looking W
33	Test Pit 8 plan
34	Test Pit 8 profile



## Appendix 2: OASIS and Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name & Address	Rectory Lane Cemetery, Berkhamsted	Project Site Code	258/BRL
OASIS reference	kdkarcha1-271369	Event/Accession no	TBC
OS reference	SP 99416 07576	Study area size	-
Project Type	Watching Brief	Height (mAOD)	c120m-145m
Short Description	In December 2016, KDK Archaeology Ltd. monitored the excavation of eight test pits in the Rectory Lane Cemetery in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. No archaeological features were encountered during excavations.		
Previous work	None	Site status	
Planning proposal	Refurbishment of cemetery	Current land use	Cemetery
Local Planning Authority	Dacorum Borough Council	Planning application ref.	N/A
Monument type	Cemetery	Monument period	Post-medieval
Significant finds	None	Future work	Yes
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project Brief originator	N/A	Project Design originator	N/A
Project Manager	Karin Kaye MA MCIFA	Director/Supervisor	Laura Dodd MSc
Sponsor/funding body	Friends of St Peter's, Berkhamsted		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	02.12.2016	End date	02.12.2016
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical	Dacorum Heritage Trust	N/A	
Paper		N/A	
Digital		1cd containing report, photographs & fieldwork sheets	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title	Archaeological Observation and Recording: Rectory Lane Cemetery, Rectory Lane, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume	KDK Archaeology 258/BRL/1		
Author(s)	Ellen Shlasko PhD		
Page no's	21	Date	12.12.2016



### Appendix 3: Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record Sheet

Site name and address: Rectory Lane Cemetery, Rectory Lane, Berkhamsted	
County: Hertfordshire	District: Dacorum
Village/Town: Berkhamsted	Parish: Berkhamsted
Planning application reference: None	
Client's name, address, & tel. no: Friends of St Peter's, Berkhamsted	
Nature of application: Pre-development structural test pitting	
Present land use: Cemetery	
Size of application area: N/A	Size of area investigated: N/A
NGR (to 8 figures): SP 99416 07576	Site code: 258/BRL
Site director: Laura Dodd MSc	Organization: KDK Archaeology Ltd
Type of work: Watching brief	
Date of Work: Start: 02.12.2016	Finish: 02.12.2016
Curating museum: Dacorum Heritage Trust	
Related HER no's: None	Periods represented: Post-medieval/Modern
Relevant previous summaries/reports: None	
Summary of fieldwork results: In December 2016, KDK Archaeology Ltd. monitored the excavation of eight test pits in the Rectory Lane Cemetery in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. No archaeological features were encountered during excavations.	
Author: Ellen Shlasko PhD	Date: 12.12.2016