



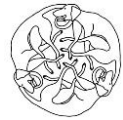
KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Land adjacent to 24 Odell Road

Sharnbrook

Bedfordshire



Quality Check

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Summary

In January 2018 an Archaeological Evaluation was undertaken on land adjacent to 24 Odell Road, Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire as a planning condition prior to the construction of a single dwelling on the site. Despite Bronze Age crop marks in the immediate vicinity, as well as evidence for occupation in Sharnbrook dating to the Saxon period, there were no features or finds revealed within the excavated trenches.

1 Introduction

1.1 In January 2018 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an Archaeological Evaluation at land adjacent to 24 Odell Road, Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire. The project was commissioned by Foxley Tagg Planning Ltd on behalf of Nick Welch and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Shlasko 2017), and approved by Geoff Saunders of Bedford Borough Council Historic Environment Team (BBCHET), Archaeological Advisor (AA) to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Bedford Borough Council. The relevant planning application reference is 17/02485/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 Sharnbrook and the administrative district of Bedford Borough. It is centred on National Grid reference (NGR) SP 99095 59259 (Fig. 1).

Description

The site is bounded to the west and south by open ground and to the north and east by the main property, of which the development area is the garden (Fig. 2).

Geology & Topography

The geology of the site comprises sedimentary bedrock of limestone, from the Blisworth Limestone Formation. There are no recorded overlying deposits (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

Development

The development consists of the construction of a single dwelling (Fig. 3).



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

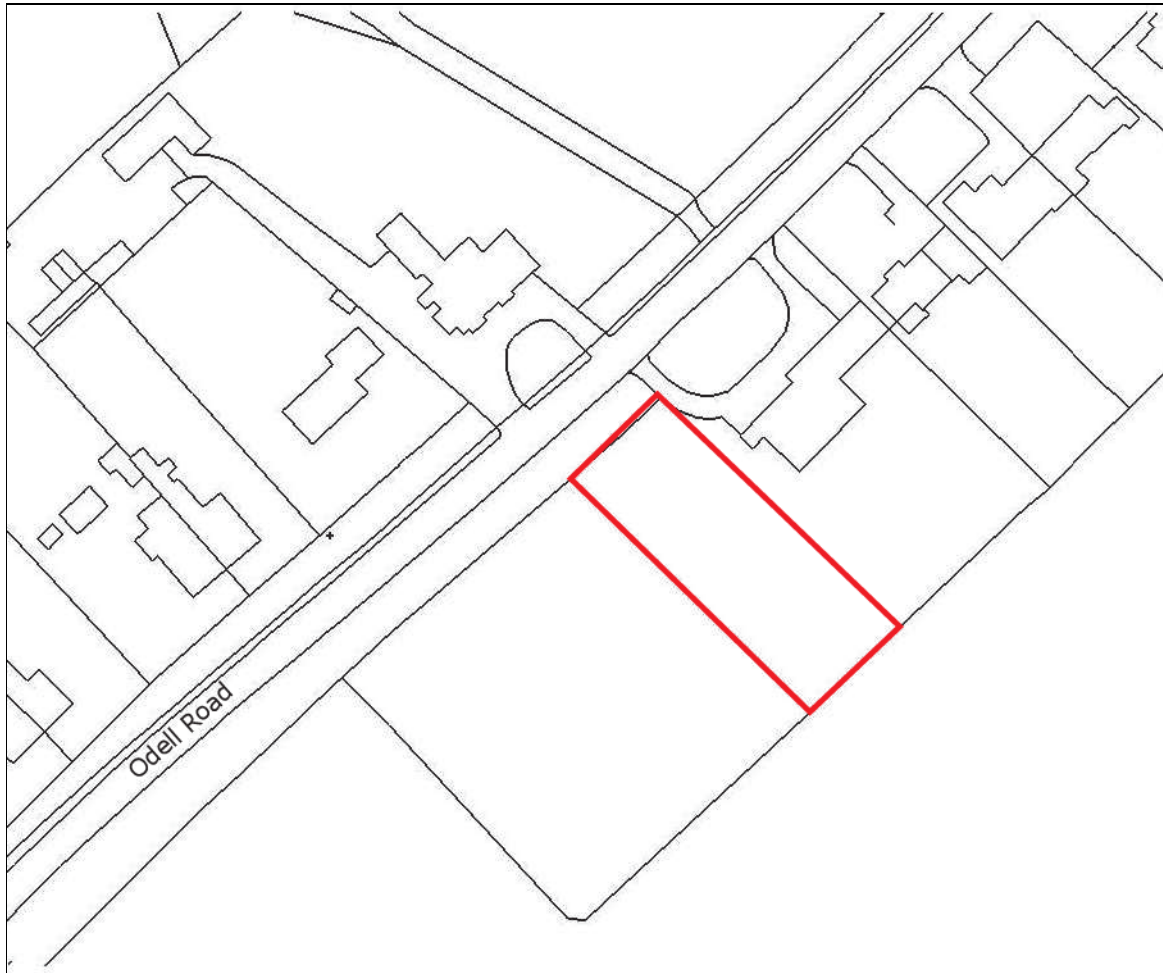


Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:1250)

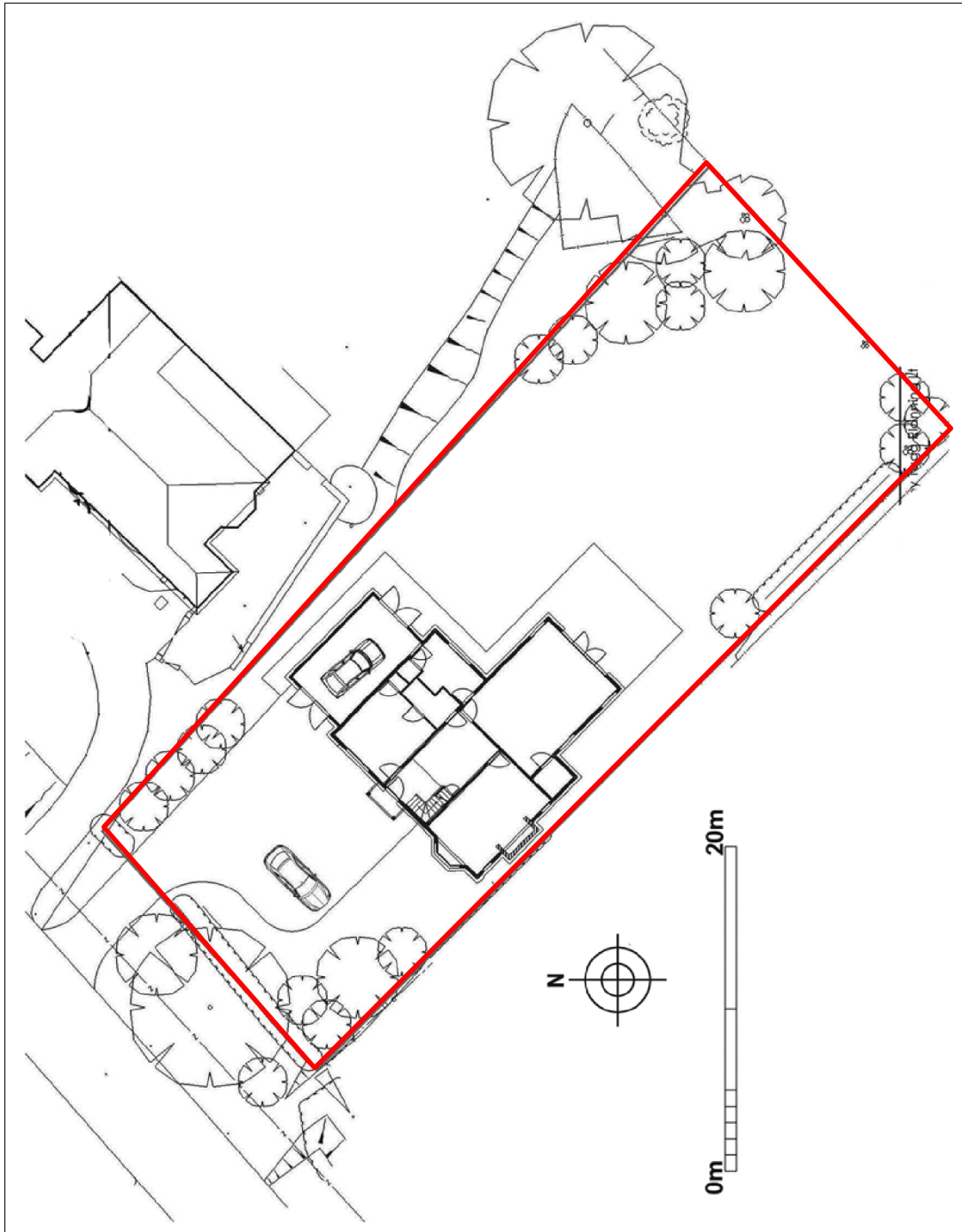


Figure 3: Development plan (scale 1:400)



2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

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

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 a single 10m by 1.8m trench, across the footprint of the proposed development (Fig. 4.).
- The trench was recorded according to the methods stated in the WSI (Shlasko 2017)

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)

2.4 Constraints

The position of the trench was slightly altered on site in order to avoid the roots of a large tree (Fig. 5). This entailed rotating the south end of the trench by approximately 10 degrees towards the house, though the north end stayed in its original position. The trench still lay within the footprint of the proposed development and did not deviate in size.



3 Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 Sharnbrook is located 9 miles to the north-west of Bedford. It has its origins in the Saxon period, first appearing in the documentary record in the Domesday Book, where a number of manors are recorded in the area of *Sernebroc*. The name derives from the Old English *scearn* (dung or muck) + *broc* (stream), meaning a stream with a mucky bed and muddy water (<http://kepn.nottingham.ac.uk/map/place/Bedfordshire/Sharnbrook>) and probably refers to the Sharn Brook itself, which flows south to join the River Great Ouse.

This section has been compiled with information from Bedford Borough Historic Environment Record (BBHER Licence No. BBHER 023 (2017-18), KDK's own library and reliable online sources.

3.2 *Prehistoric* (before 600BC)

There are no early prehistoric remains from the study area that surrounds the proposed development site. The first evidence of human presence is a number of Bronze Age ring ditches that have been identified through aerial photography. There is one approximately 1km southwest of the site (HER 732) and another immediately to the northeast (HER 1839). A group of three ring ditches appears on aerial photographs to the south southwest of the site (HER 15048). These ditches have not been identified on the ground, but are thought to be the remains of Bronze Age barrows, situated on high ground above the valley of the Great Ouse.

3.3 *Iron Age* (600BC - AD43)

In 1946, a possible Welwyn-type burial was discovered approximately 1km south of the proposed development site. This burial contained bronze vessels, early 1st century pottery and other objects (HER 67).

3.4 *Roman* (AD43 - c.450)

Sharnbrook lies along a possible Roman road (HER 728), running from Sandy to Irchester. The route of this road is conjectural, but unlike some supposed Roman roads, which have never been archaeological investigated, excavations of this road in Sandy cemetery in the 1950s revealed a metallised surface typical of Roman road construction. Evidence for Roman occupation in Sharnbrook also includes Roman pottery that was recovered during fieldwalking at a site approximately 500m east of the proposed development (HER 2684).

3.5 *Saxon* (c.450 - 1066)

There is no archaeological evidence for the early Saxon period and Sharnbrook does not appear in the documentary record until the Domesday Book. At that time, however, it was a well-developed settlement with two mills, a fishery, woodland for over 160 pigs and agricultural land for at least sixteen ploughs. In 1086, these lands supported 37 households. Interestingly, the land was not held by one large landholder. Instead, there were eleven estates in the vill of Sharnbrook. These varied in size, with the largest being the manor belonging to Count Eustace, which boasted 4 ploughs of land and eleven households. The smallest was the half plough of land belonging to Almer (www.opendomesday.org; Williams & Martin 2002: 565, 568, 573, 580, 582, 584, 587).

3.6 *Medieval* (1066 - 1500)

As the Domesday records show, at the end of the Saxon period, Sharnbrook was an agricultural settlement, and it remained largely agricultural throughout the remainder of the medieval period. The remains of ridge and furrow have been identified around the village (HER 1642, HER 5108). There are also medieval earthworks (HER 10697, HER 15675), including a possible moat at Castle Close (HER 994). The earliest surviving building in the



village is St Peter's Church, a Grade I listed structure that is mainly 13th-15th century (ID 1160824). Parts are in the Decorated style (Pevsner 2002: 140), although the structure is mainly 14th-15th centuries (Mee 1973: 111). In the 13th century, at least part of Count Eustace's manor, now known as Tofte, was granted to Newnham Priory (VCH). It remained with the priory until the Dissolution and in 1907 a number of burials were found near the remains of the old manor house (HER 10812).

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

During the post-medieval period, the economy began to diversify. There are several gravel pits (HER 3039, HER 10754) and quarries (HER 3040, HER 10755) around the village. A brick and tile works was established by the 1870s (HER 3035). In addition to these extractive industries, Sharnbrook developed a small industry in hand-made lace beginning in the 16th century (VCH).

In 1857, the railway arrived in Sharnbrook. This provided a link to the outside world before closing in 1960 (Bedfordshire Virtual Library).

3.8 ***Modern*** (1900 - present)

In the modern era, Sharnbrook has moved away from its agricultural origins, becoming a largely residential community for commuters to Bedford and other centres. One large local employer was Unilever, which opened in Colworth House in 1947 (*ibid*).



4 Results

4.1 *Introduction*

A single trench was excavated using a 2.8 tonne machine fitted with a 1.2m wide toothless bucket. The trench was orientated approximately north to south (Fig. 5, Plate 1).

The stratigraphy was uniform throughout the trench and consisted of dark brown silty clay topsoil measuring 0.15m in depth overlying dark brown-grey silty clay subsoil, which was also 0.15m deep. The natural soil was excavated to a depth of 0.05cm and was composed of mid orange-brown sandy clay interspersed with large deposits of limestone fragments, most likely Blisworth Limestone, which is the local bedrock formation (Fig. 6, Plate 2).

4.2 *Trench*

The trench measured 10m long, 1.8m wide and 0.35m deep. No archaeological material was identified, only natural soil and stone fragments throughout the trench.



Plate 1: Overall trench shot, facing south



Plate 2: Stratigraphy shot, facing west

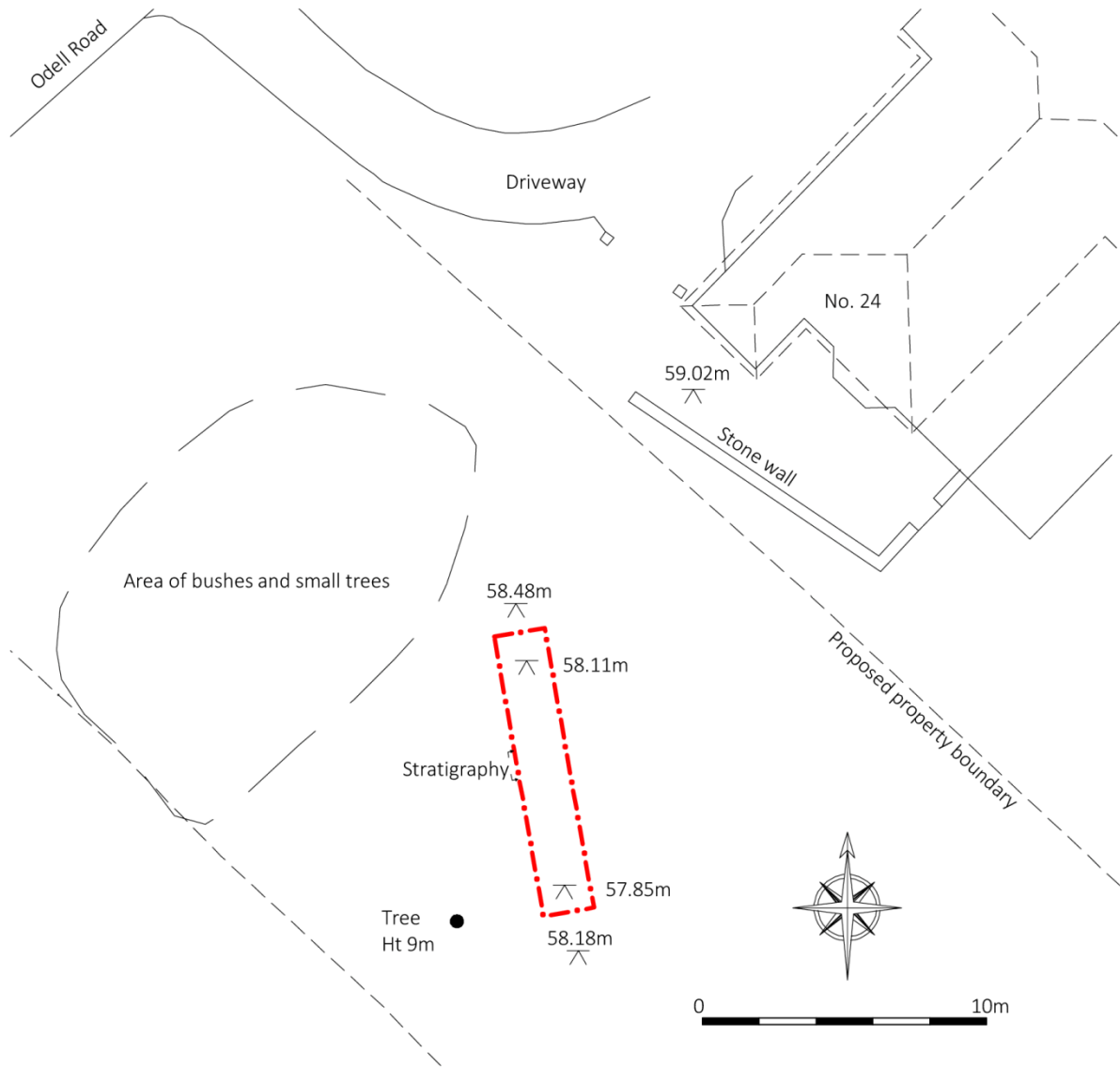
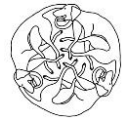


Figure 4: Trench location plan (scale 1:250)

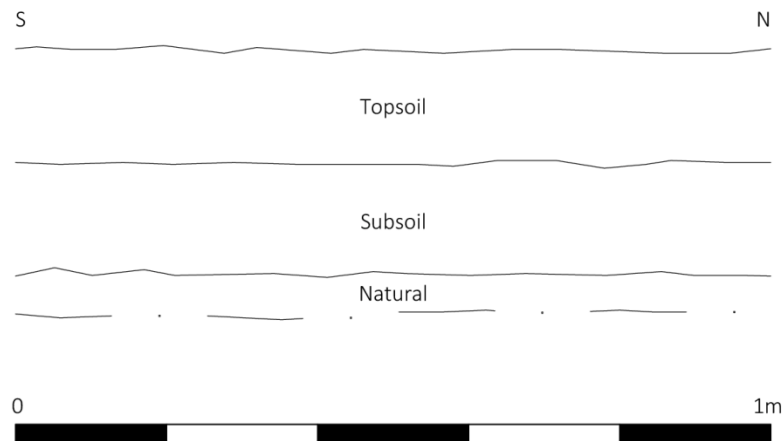


Figure 5: Trench stratigraphy (scale 1:10)



5 Conclusions

The site is located near the boundary of the historic core of Sharnbrook, a village with Saxon origins. Though there are few historic buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site, the HER data suggested that there was a strong possibility for archaeological activity, owing mostly to the crop marks and ring ditches that have been identified to the northeast (HER 1839) and to the south-southwest (HER 15048) of the site. These are believed to be the remains of Bronze Age barrows. The presence of these features in the surrounding landscape was the primary motive of the archaeological condition; however, no evidence relating to any archaeological material could be identified in the evaluation trench. The nature of a Bronze Age ritual landscape often entails large unoccupied spaces between widely dispersed burial mounds, which appears to be the case at Sharnbrook. The settlers that established Sharnbrook in the Saxon period would have avoided building too close to the Bronze Age barrows, even if they often repurposed these earlier structures for their own burial practises. This may explain why no Bronze Age archaeology was found in the evaluation trench, as the settlement was most likely deliberately built away from or between the ancient barrows. The lack of Saxon or medieval material found on the site can be attributed to its location on the periphery of the village.



6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to Foxley Tagg Planning Ltd for commissioning this report on behalf of Nick Welch. Thanks are also due to Geoff Saunders of Bedford Borough Council Historic Environment Team (BBCHET) for providing historic environment records and other relevant documents, as well as for monitoring the project.

We would also like to thank Richard Wilson of Wilsons of Wallington for his assistance on site.

The fieldwork was carried out by Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc ACIfa and Chris Martin-Taylor BSc. The report was written by Chris Martin-Taylor, and edited by Karin Kaye MA MCIfA.



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 Bedford Museum, the accession number is: BEDFM 2017.103



8 References

Standards & Specifications

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Mills A. D. 1992 *A Dictionary of English Place-Names* Oxford: Oxford University Press

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

English Place Names: <http://kepn.nottingham.ac.uk/map/place/Bedfordshire/Sharnbrook>

Open Domesday: <http://opendomesday.org/place/SP9959/sharnbrook/>

Victoria County History (VCH): 'Parishes: Sharnbrook', in *A History of the County of Bedford: Volume 3*, ed. William Page (London, 1912), pp. 88-94. British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/beds/vol3/pp88-94>.



Appendix 1: Photograph List

SITE NO/CODE: 330/SOR		Site Name: Land adjacent to 24 Odell Road, Sharnbrook, Bedford	
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	x	x	Trench 1 (2x1m scale) view SE
2		x	Trench 1 (2x1m scale) view NW
3		x	Trench 1, stratigraphy (1m scale) view N



Appendix 2: OASIS and Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name & Address	Land adjacent to 24 Odell Road Sharnbrook Bedfordshire	Project Site Code	330/SOR
OASIS reference	kdkarcha1-298438	Event/Accession no	BEDFM 2017.103
OS reference	SP 99095 59259	Study area size	18 m ²
Project Type	Archaeological Evaluation	Height (mAOD)	59
Short Description	In January 2018 an Archaeological Evaluation was undertaken on land adjacent to 24 Odell Road, Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire as a planning condition prior to the construction of a single dwelling on the site. Despite Bronze Age crop marks in the immediate vicinity, as well as evidence for occupation in Sharnbrook dating to the Saxon period, there were no features or finds revealed within the excavated trenches.		
Previous work	None	Site status	None
Planning proposal	Construction of a single dwelling	Current land use	Garden
Local Planning Authority	Bedford Borough Council	Planning application ref.	17/02485/FUL
Monument type	N/A	Monument period	N/A
Significant finds	None	Future work	Unknown
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project Brief originator	N/A	Project Design originator	KDK Archaeology Ltd
Project Manager	David Kaye BA ACIfA	Director/Supervisor	Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc ACIfA
Sponsor/funding body	Nick Welch		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	17.01.18	End date	17.01.18
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical	Bedford Museum	-	
Paper		Report, WSI, site records, photographs	
Digital		CD ROM, digital photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title	Archaeological Evaluation: Land adjacent to 24 Odell Road, Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire		
Serial title & volume	330/SOR/2		
Author(s)	Chris Martin-Taylor BSc		
Page no's	20	Date	18.01.18