



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

## Archaeological Observation and Recording Report

Land Adjacent to 12 Poplar Close

Roxton

Bedfordshire



### Quality Check

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## Summary

In May 2018 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording on land adj. to 12 Poplar Close, Roxton, Bedfordshire in order to fulfil a condition of planning permission for the construction of a single new dwelling with associated driveway, parking and garden. The general stratigraphy consisted of a single homogenous deposit of some depth that appeared to indicate that dumping may have been carried out on the site. The site also appeared to have been truncated, as sub-soil was only observed along the southern side of the site. Ordnance Survey mapping points to buildings having once existed on the site from at least 1884 up until 1973. By 1973 the buildings were no longer present and the roadway for Poplar Close had been constructed. Such activities on the site may explain why the site had been truncated.

No archaeological finds, features or deposits were found which may be related to the truncation of the site, but also that any potential archaeological features within this area may be more widely dispersed.

## 1 Introduction

1.1 In May 2018 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording on land adj. to 12 Poplar Close, Roxton, Bedfordshire. The project was commissioned by Amanda Stone, and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Dodd & Watson 2018) and approved by 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 16/02677/FUL.

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

This project 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 development is located in the village and civil parish of Roxton in the administrative district of Bedford Borough. Roxton village is situated within a curve of the River Great Ouse and bounded by the A421 to the west and north and the A1 to the north and east. The development site is located in the southern end of the village at National Grid Reference 15365 54324 (Fig. 1).

#### *Description*

The site is situated to the south side of the road and adjacent to High Street to the west. It is set within a populated area of the village and is surrounded by private residences (Fig. 2).

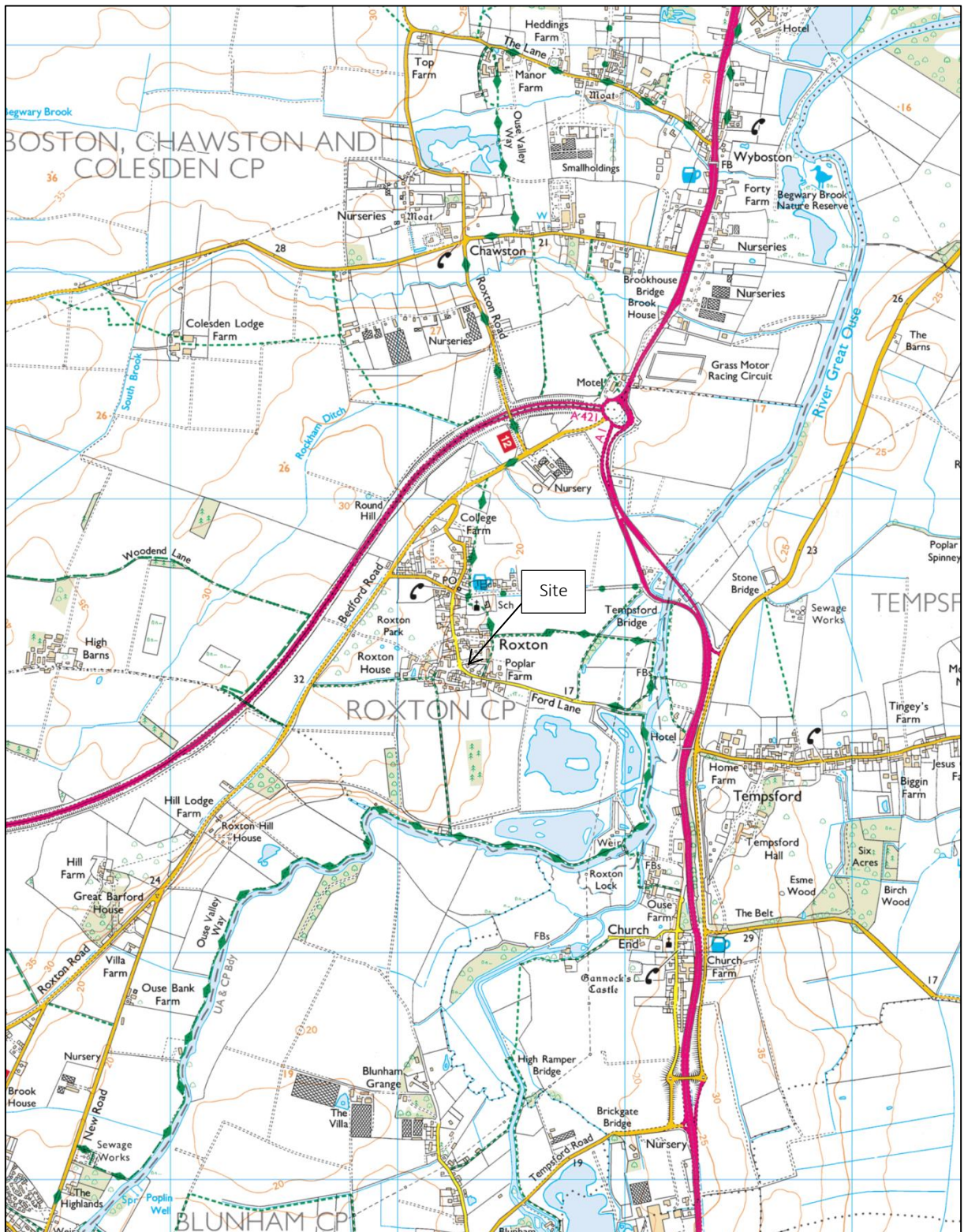
#### *Geology & Topography*

The solid geology of the site is made up of mudstone of the Peterborough Member. This formation developed c161-165 mya, when this area was covered with shallow seas. The superficial deposits comprise sand and gravel, which formed c2 mya. Local conditions at the time consisted of rivers, which deposited sand and gravel in terraces, along with silt and clay alluvium (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). The site is located at c21m AOD.



*Development*

The development comprises the erection of a detached dwelling partly within the Conservation Area and the construction of associated car parking, new driveway access and landscaping (Fig. 3).



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



Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:1250)

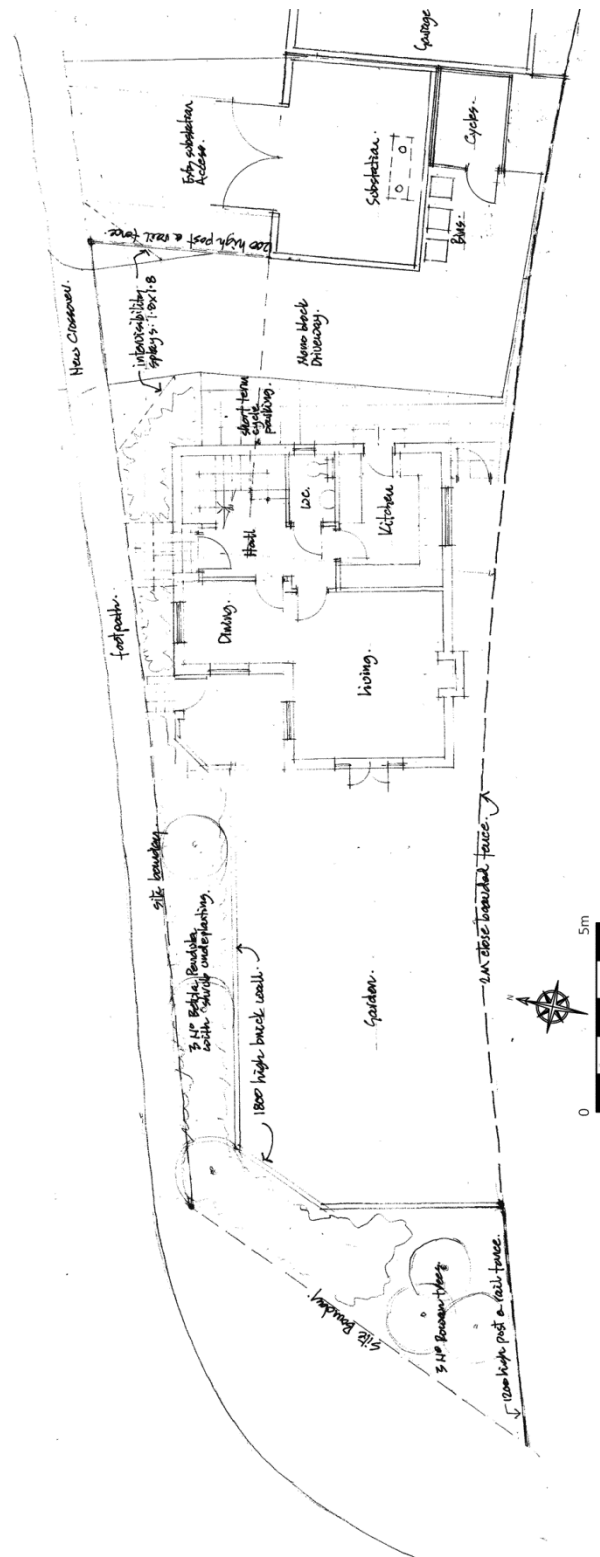


Figure 3: Development plan (scale 1:200)



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## 2 Aims & Methods

2.1 The aims of this project as defined in the approved WSI (Dodd & Watson 2018) 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 the brief, the methods used were as follows:

- All open area ground reduction associated with the development was undertaken with a toothless ditching bucket, and under the supervision and to the satisfaction of a professional archaeologist, this was in turn cleaned to identify any archaeological features.
- The excavation of foundation trenches was undertaken under direct archaeological supervision, whilst two small service trenches were excavated into the topsoil and as such were not monitored.

### 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 & Historical Background

3.1 The site is situated at the southern end of the north-south central axis of the village of Roxton. It lies within the Roxton Conservation Area (DBD3415) and the postulated extent of the medieval settlement of Roxton (BBHER 17154). The development site was recorded to the rear of a number of buildings fronting the High Street on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey mapping (1880's; BBC 2018). Settlement in the area dates from the prehistoric period and by the time of Domesday Survey Roxton was a medium sized village ([www.opendomesday.org](http://www.opendomesday.org)). Historically, the inhabitants were principally engaged in agricultural activities and no industry has been connected with this parish.

This section has been compiled with information from Bedfordshire Borough Historic Environment Record (BBHER 044 (2017-18), the Victoria County History (VCH), Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS-MBB) database and reliable internet sources. The location of HER data is shown in Fig. 4.

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

Prehistoric settlement and agricultural activity in the area is suggested by the presence of extensive cropmarks. Cropmarks north of Tempsford Bridge, adjacent to the River Ouse (BBHER 1832) and an extensive area of cropmarks forming rectangular enclosures, and other linear features, situated on either side of Rockham Ditch (BBHER 1833), approximately 1.5km north of the development site, may be prehistoric. Linear cropmarks, East of Roxton and North of Ford Lane, are within 1km of development site (BBHER 1653). A Palaeolithic hand axe was also found c. 500m southeast of the development site adjacent to Ford Lane (BBHER 8801).

Extensive evidence for Bronze Age (c. 2350-701BC) settlement and activity is situated contiguously to the north and south of the River Ouse where it runs west-east to the south of Roxton (BBHER 617 & 1477). BBHER 617 records the excavation of 5 ring ditches, the remains of Bronze Age burials to the north of the river. Two cremation burials were discovered. The site was under cultivation during the Iron Age, and by the late iron Age or early Roman period a field system had been laid out. BBHER 1477, to the south of the river, is a possible pit alignment recorded from aerial photographs.

#### 3.3 *Iron Age (600BC - AD43) & Roman (AD43 - c.450)*

There is plentiful evidence for occupation and activity dating to these periods. West of Bedford Rd, partially examined cropmarks produced pottery dating to the first century AD, including kiln wasters, and finds including a quern, pottery, a coin, tweezers, a brooch and a partially articulated human skeleton were uncovered during the construction of the A421 in 1969 (BBHER 482). Further work in advance of the Great Barford bypass in 2005 uncovered evidence for settlement from the middle Iron Age, preceded by suggestions of activity in the Bronze Age and earlier Iron Age. Occupation took the form of roundhouses, pits and enclosures and continued into the late Iron Age, but the only indication of Roman activity consisted of a scatter of Roman pottery and other finds in the upper fills of the enclosure ditches. Later archaeological investigations (EBB688) during the construction of the A421 recovered Roman coins (PAS-MBB 20063, 20065, 20066, 20067) dating from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, and an Iron Age/Romano-British enclosure around Round Hill, with some outlying sub-rectangular and rectilinear features indicative of settlement (BBHER 15047). Early Iron Age/Romano-British cropmarks also indicative of settlement lie south of Roxton Park, c. 700m southwest of the development site (BBHER 16785). Further late Iron Age and Romano-British occupation was identified outside of the HER data zone near Black Cat island (EBD 272).



Pottery thought to be Roman, Saxon and medieval was found along with animal bone and red deer antler, and a triangular clay loom weight, and an Iron Age ring, during dredging the River Ouse prior to 1939 (BBHER 2025). Moreover, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and post medieval finds (BBHER 16181), were recovered from near the Anchor (BBHER 12953) public house.

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

Evidence for Saxon occupation and activity in the general area is scant but significant (see above BBHER 2025; 16181). The remains of a possible Saxon occupation site (BBHER 13413; EBB688), comprising one probable structure, was found west of Roxton Rd, adjacent to the A421, and c. 2km north of the development site and so outside of the HER data zone.

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

Roxton is mentioned twice in the Domesday Survey of 1086, though the largest landowner, tenant-in-chief and lord in Roxton was William Speke ([www.opendomesday.org](http://www.opendomesday.org)). This entry in the survey shows that Roxton was assessed as 17 households, 12 villagers, 1 smallholder, 1 slave, land for 8 ploughs, woodland for 20 pigs, and 1 mill, with a taxable value of 8.8 geld units (ibid.). The other 'Lord' was Rhiwallon of Pulloxhill with 2 smallholders, 1 slave, 1 plough and woodland for 4 pigs with a taxable value of 1.3 geld units (ibid.). Prior to the conquest the manor was held by 16 soakmen who were able to sell the land to whomsoever they wished (VCH). During subsequent centuries, the manor was held by numerous owners (VCH). By 1737 it had become the property of the Metcalfe family who eventually sold it in 1854 to the Rev. Robert Delap of Monellan, Ireland (VCH).

Few remains in or around Roxton date to this period. An archaeological investigation (EBB1006) on Land adjacent to 51 High Street (HER 2399), revealed settlement and activity denoted by St Neots ware pottery, dated to the c. 10th to early 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, and further pottery, pits, and ditches dating from the 1250-1500. The path of a medieval trackway, north of Ford Lane and c. 1km west of the development site, is possibly a pre-cursor to the modern route from Roxton to the footbridge. The most significant survival from this period is the grade II\*, 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>, St Mary's Church (BBHER 1105/1114927), which is c. 200m north of the development site, along with its post-medieval churchyard (BBHER 8958). The nearest evidence for ridge and furrow comes from the historic parish of Blunham and Mogerhanger (BBHER 4495) to the south, which is outside of the HER data zone.

#### 3.6 **Post-medieval** (1500 - 1900)

During this period the village expanded and, to an extent, remodelled. A large number of structures within the village have survived, especially adjacent or contiguous with the High St, which is the historic axis of the settlement. On the western edge of the River Ouse as it parallels the A1 running north, are the sites of a ford (BBHER 8803) and a staunch (BBHER 8804) over the river. Nearby is a former post medieval osier bed (BBHER 9735), a possible gravel extraction pit (BBHER 9736), and the site of a demolished pond (BBHER 9738). On the Bedford Rd, is the site of a now demolished milestone (BBHER 8810) inscribed "Bedford 3 St Neots 4". Rare artefactual evidence comprises a silver sixpence, Edward VI (1547-1553), struck at the Tower mint between 1551 and 1553 found c. 200m northeast of the development site.

Buildings dating from the 16<sup>th</sup>, and mostly 17<sup>th</sup> centuries along the High St, and within a few hundred metres of the development site, comprise the following: the grade II, timber-framed College Farmhouse (BBHER 1107); the grade II, Church Farmhouse (BBHER 2409); the grade II, 50 & 56 High St; the site of the now demolished 31 High St (BBHER 2407); the grade II, 2 High



Street (The Cedars; BBHER 2405); 51 High St (BBHER 2399); the site of the now demolished 57 High St (BBHER 2396); the Poplar Farmhouse (BBHER 2397). On Ford Lane, the grade II, nos 2, 4 & 6 (formerly Park Farmhouse) were built c.1600 (BBHER 2398). Near the A1 is the Old Anchor, formerly the Anchor Inn before the modern inn was built (BBHER 5992).

Buildings and monuments dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century include: the grade II, 28,30, 32 & 34 High St (BBHER 2403); the grade II, 38 High St (BBHER 2404); No. 8 High St (BBHER 12472); grade II, No. 14 High St (BBHER 2406); grade II, No. 36 High St (BBHER 7859); grade II, 46 & 48 High St (BBHER 2402); and No. 58 High St (BBHER 2400). Finally, a milestone (BBHER 8808) from this period used to stand adjacent to the Great North Road (A1).

Nineteenth century buildings and monuments include the following: the tombstone of John Barnett dated 9th August 1886, located in Roxton Churchyard (BBHER 14447) near the High St; the grade II\*, Congregational Chapel, High St (BBHER 1106); the Chequers Inn public house (BBHER 12461); Roxton Park (BBHER 7009) between the west side of the village and Bedford Rd; site of now demolished barns (BBHER10533) on Park Rd; the grade II, Roxton House (BBHER 1108), with its grade II barn (BBHER 10413) and grade II lodge (BBHER 2408) are situated within a few hundred metres west and southwest of the development site. The Royal Oak (BBHER 6395) public house on the High St was the site of an archaeological investigation that revealed various post-medieval features including ditches and pits, and structural features associated with an earlier incarnation of the pub (EBB 1033). On the north side of the A428 lies the Roxton Toll House (BBHER 7346). The Anchor public house (BBHER 12953) is adjacent to the A1, south of the bridge (BBHER 5994) that carries the A1 over the River Ouse.

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

Few notable buildings and monuments date to this period in or around Roxton. These comprise the following: the Tempsford Bridge is the site of World War II anti-tank obstacles of the angle iron type (BBHER 18001); the site of a now demolished WWII pillbox (BBHER 17966) on School Lane; the site of a dismantled windpump (BBHER 8807); a standpipe (BBHER 8446); and the Royal Oak public house (BBHER 6395) on the High St. Finally, an undated bead of blue opaque glass (PAS-MBB 19368) was found c. 200m northeast of the development site and undated cropmarks (BBHER 8802) visible on aerial photographs situated south of Ford Lane.

Ordnance Survey mapping of the site between 1884-1960 depict buildings at either end of the area. By 1973 these buildings were no longer present and the roadway for Poplar Close had been constructed.

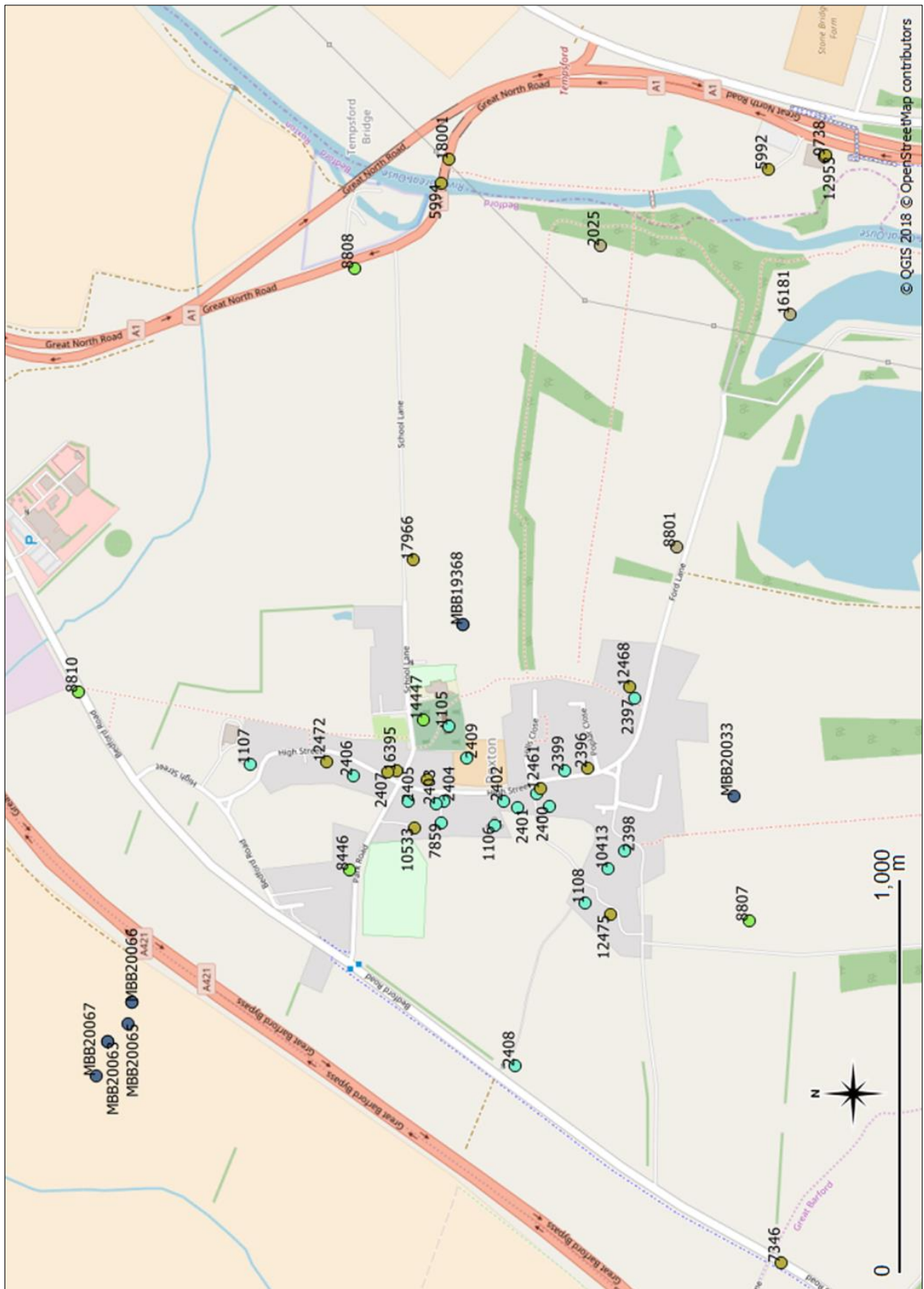


Figure 4: HER data plan (scale as shown)



## 4 Results

### *Introduction*

Two site visits were made to monitor the initial ground reduction within the footprint of the house, and the excavation of the footing trenches. A 3-tonne mechanical excavator fitted with 0.6m wide toothless bucket was used for the excavations.

The ground reduction, which was undertaken in two stages reached a maximum depth of 550mm, which was still within the topsoil.

The ground reduction for the driveway and the two small service trenches were not monitored as they did not breach the topsoil. In addition, footings for a boundary wall were also not monitored as the proposal was altered in favour of a planting a hedge.

### *Description* (Figs. 5 & 6; Plates 1-8)

The footing trenches were within a 65 sq. m area. They were 0.65m in width and 0.8-1.15m in depth. The general site stratigraphy was observed as follows:

#### Context Table

<i>Context no.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Dimensions m (max)</i>	<i>Description</i>
100	Deposit	D: 0.55	Topsoil: dark brown, soft, silty clay with occasional sub-angular stones <20mm.
101	Deposit	D: 0.1	Sub-soil: mid orangey brown, soft, silty clay with occasional sub-angular/rounded stones <20mm.
102	Deposit	D: 0.2	Natural: light brown orange, soft clay
103	Deposit	D: >0.4	Natural: light yellow clay with flint and chalk

The topsoil (100) appeared to be a single homogenous deposit of some depth which may suggest dumping had been carried out on the site. Traces of sub-soil (101) were only observed along the southern end of the footings which would also suggest that the site had also been truncated. There was variation in the natural (102 & 103) which was consistent throughout the footing trenches.

No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed.



**Plate 1:** Footing trenches, general shot, looking SSW (2x1m scale)



**Plate 2:** Footing trenches, general shot, looking WNW (2x1m scale)



**Plate 3:** Trench 1, stratigraphy, looking S (2x1m scale)



**Plate 4:** Trench 2, stratigraphy, looking W (2x1m scale)



**Plate 5:** Trench 3, stratigraphy, looking N (2x1m scale)



**Plate 6:** Trench, stratigraphy, looking N (2x1m scale)



**Plate 7:** Trench 5, stratigraphy, looking W  
(2x1m scale)



**Plate 8:** Trench 6, stratigraphy, looking W  
(2x1m scale)

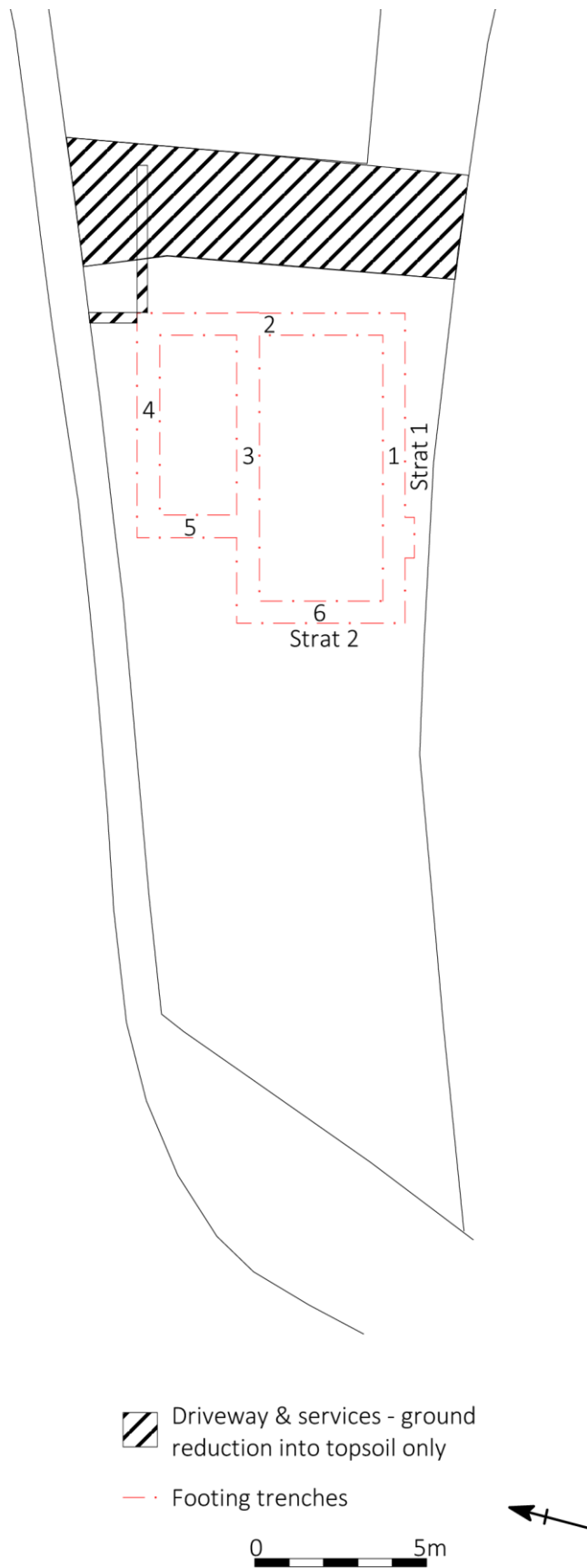
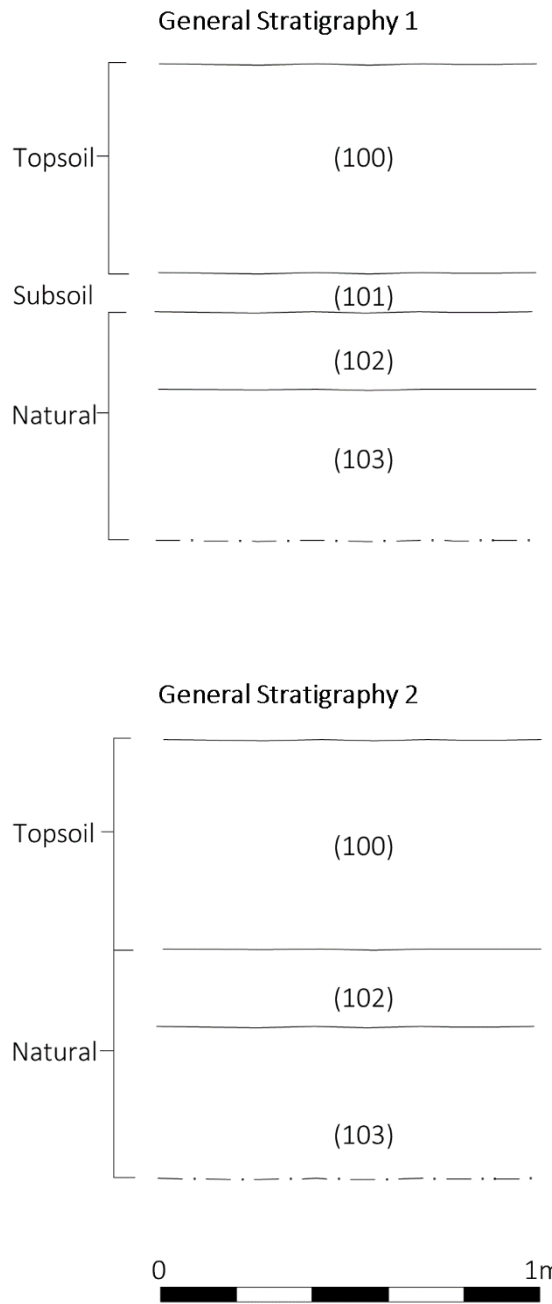


Figure 5: Footing trench plan (scale 1:200)





**Figure 6:** General stratigraphy (scale 1:20)



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## 5 Conclusions

The site is within Roxton Conservation Area and the medieval settlement of Roxton. The general stratigraphy appeared to indicate that dumping may have been carried out on the site, as the topsoil consisted of a single homogenous deposit of some depth. The site also appeared to have been truncated, as sub-soil was only observed along the southern side of the site. Ordnance Survey mapping of the site points to buildings having once existed on the site from at least 1884 up until 1973. By 1973 the buildings were no longer present and the roadway for Poplar Close had been constructed. Such activities on the site likely explain as to why the site had been truncated.

No archaeological finds, features or deposits were found which may be related to the truncation of the site, but also that any potential archaeological features within this area may be more widely dispersed.



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## 6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to Amanda Stone for commissioning this report. Thanks, are also due to Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record Office for providing historic environment records and to Vanessa Clarke of Bedford Borough Council Historic Environment Team (BBCHET) for monitoring the project.

Thanks, are also extended to ground workers for their full cooperation throughout the fieldwork.

The fieldwork was carried out by Barney King and Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc ACIfA. The report was written by Carina Summerfield-Hill and edited by Karin Kaye BA ACIfA.



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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
10. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with is Bedford Museum (Accession BEDFM 2018.2).



## 8 References

### *Standards & Specifications*

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- [www.opendomesday.org](http://www.opendomesday.org) <http://opendomesday.org/place/TL1554/roxtton/> (accessed 25/01/2018).



## Appendix 1: Photograph List

SITE NO/CODE: 353/RPC			Site Name: Land adj. to 12 Poplar Close, Roxton, Bedfordshire
Digital	B&W	View	Subject
1	1	SSW	General shot of Footing Trenches (2x1m scale)
2	2	NNW	General shot of Footing Trenches (2x1m scale)
3		W	Footing Trench 1 (1m scale)
4		N	Footing Trench 2 (1m scale)
5		W	Footing Trench 3 (1m scale)
6		W	Footing Trench 4 (1m scale)
7		S	Footing Trench 5 (1m scale)
8		S	Footing Trench 6 (1m scale)
9		S	Footing Trench 1, stratigraphy (2xm scale)
10		E	Footing Trench 2, stratigraphy (2x1m scale)
11		N	Footing Trench 3, stratigraphy (2x1m scale)
12		N	Footing Trench 4, stratigraphy (2x1m scale)
13		W	Footing Trench 5, stratigraphy (2x1m scale)
14		W	Footing Trench 6, stratigraphy (2x1m scale)



## Appendix 2: OASIS and Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
<b>Project Name &amp; Address</b>	Land adj. to 12 Poplar Close, Roxton, Bedfordshire	<b>Project Site Code</b>	353/RPC
<b>OASIS reference</b>	kdkarcha1-306309	<b>Event/Accession no</b>	BEDFM 2018.02
<b>OS reference</b>	TL 15365 54324	<b>Study area size</b>	c.260 sq. m
<b>Project Type</b>	Observation and Recording	<b>Height (mAOD)</b>	21m AOD
<b>Short Description</b>	<p>In May 2018 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording on land adj. to 12 Poplar Close, Roxton, Bedfordshire in order to fulfil a condition of planning permission for the construction of a single new dwelling with associated driveway, parking and garden. The general stratigraphy consisted of a single homogenous deposit of some depth that appeared to indicate that dumping may have been carried out on the site. The site also appeared to have been truncated, as sub-soil was only observed along the southern side of the site. Ordnance Survey mapping points to buildings having once existed on the site from at least 1884 up until 1973. By 1973 the buildings were no longer present and the roadway for Poplar Close had been constructed. Such activities on the site may explain why the site had been truncated.</p> <p>No archaeological finds, features or deposits were found which may be related to the truncation of the site, but also that any potential archaeological features within this area may be more widely dispersed.</p>		
<b>Previous work</b>	None	<b>Site status</b>	None
<b>Planning proposal</b>	The erection of a detached dwelling partly within the Conservation area and construction of associated car parking, new driveway access and landscaping	<b>Current land use</b>	Garden
<b>Local Planning Authority</b>	Bedford Borough Council	<b>Planning application ref.</b>	16/02677/FUL
<b>Monument type</b>	None	<b>Monument period</b>	None
<b>Significant finds</b>	None	<b>Future work</b>	Unknown
PROJECT CREATORS			
<b>Organisation</b>	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
<b>Project Brief originator</b>	Vanessa Clarke (BBCHET)	<b>Project Design originator</b>	KDK Archaeology Ltd
<b>Project Manager</b>	Karin Kaye BA ACIfA	<b>Director/Supervisor</b>	Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc ACIfA
<b>Sponsor/funding body</b>	Amanda Stone		
PROJECT DATE			
<b>Start date</b>	01.05.2018	<b>End date</b>	02.05.2018
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	<b>Location</b>	<b>Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)</b>	
<b>Physical</b>	Bedford Museum (Accession BEDFM 2018.2).	None	
<b>Paper</b>		Development plan, WSI, Report, Fieldwork Sheets, B&W Photographs & Negs	
<b>Digital</b>		All of the above in digital format onto a CD	





<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
<b>Title</b>	Archaeological Observation and Recording Report Land Adjacent to 12 Poplar Close, Roxton, Bedfordshire		
<b>Serial title &amp; volume</b>	353/RPC/2		
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