



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

## Archaeological Observation and Recording Report

3 Pentley Close  
Welwyn Garden City  
Hertfordshire



**Quality Check**

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## Summary

In May 2019 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording at 3 Pentley Close, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site. The site is located within an area noted for late Iron Age and Romano British settlement activity and a ditch containing Iron Age pottery was exposed within the boundary of the investigation area during excavations on the 1970s. However, no archaeological finds, features and deposits were exposed during this programme of works and the area appeared to have been heavily disturbed by modern activity.

## 1 Introduction

1.1 In May 2019 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording of 3 Pentley Close, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by Nikki Edwards, and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Barclay-Jones 2018), and approved by Simon Wood, Archaeological Advisor (AA) to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council. The relevant planning application reference is 6/2017/2653/HOUSE.

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

This project has been required under the terms of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as outlined in Condition 2 of planning permission for the development of the site.

### 1.3 *The Site*

#### *Location*

The site is located in the town and parish of Welwyn Garden City, in the borough of Welwyn Hatfield. It lies at National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 23610 14170 (Fig. 1).

#### *Description*

The site is rectangular in shape, and is bounded to the north, south and west by adjoining properties, and to the east by Pentley Close (Fig. 2). It lies at a height of approximately 121m AOD.

#### *Geology & Topography*

The geology of the site comprises sedimentary bedrock of clay, silt and sand from the Lambeth Formation, with overlying deposits of diamicton from the Lowestoft Formation (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). The site is on level ground.

#### *Proposed Development*

The development will consist of the erection of a single-storey rear extension and alterations to the existing garage (Fig. 3).



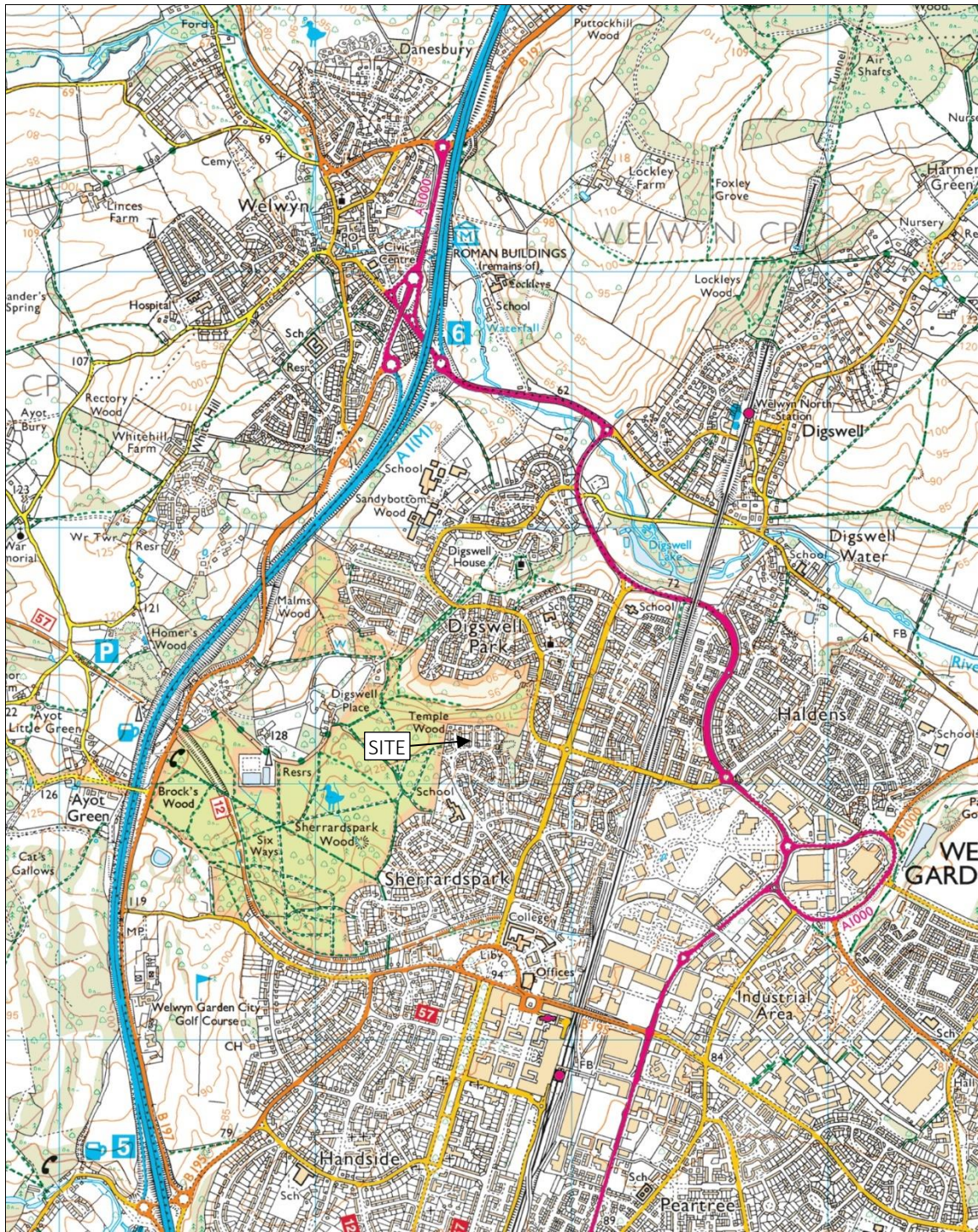


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)



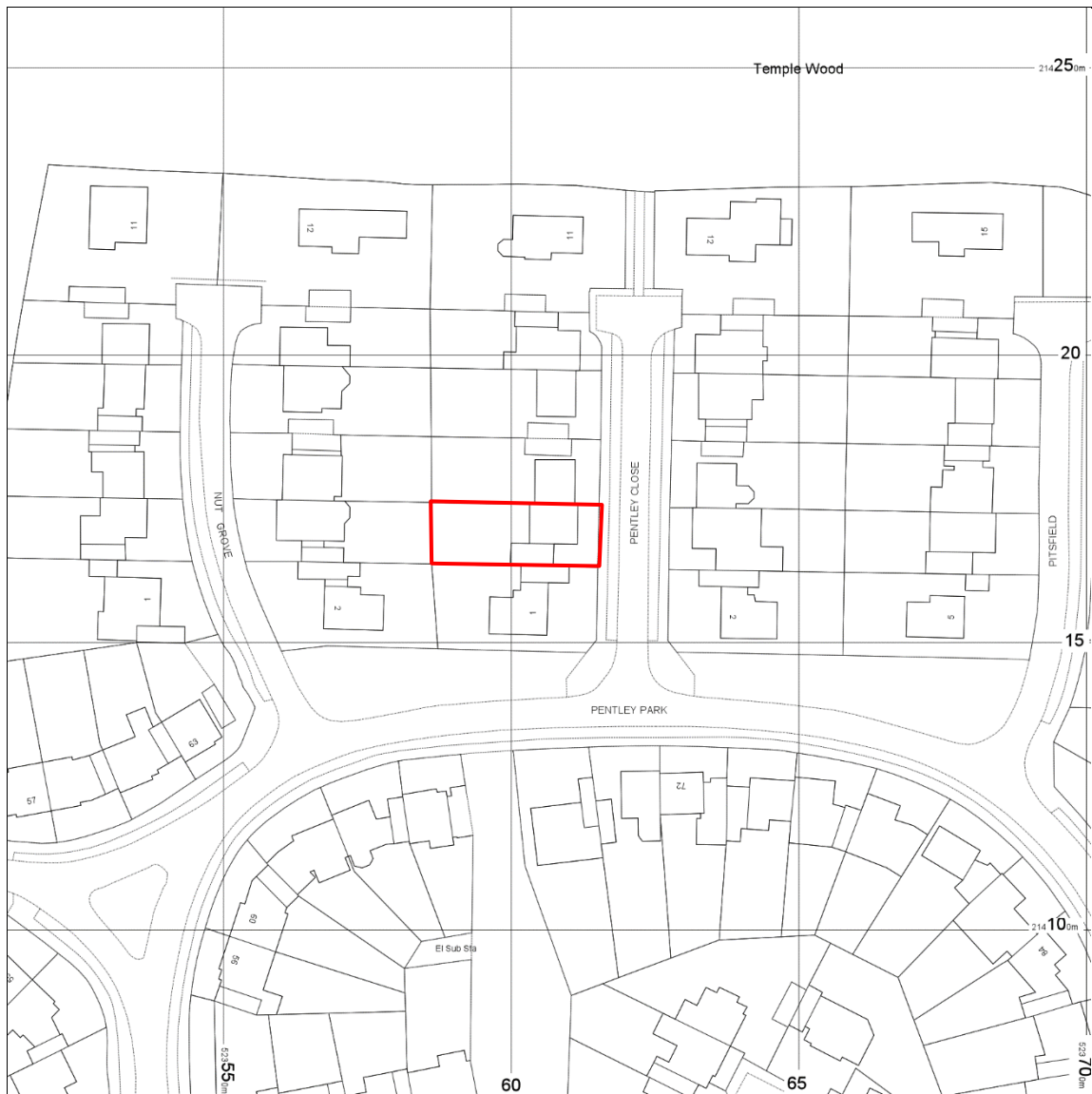


Figure 2: Site location (1:1250)

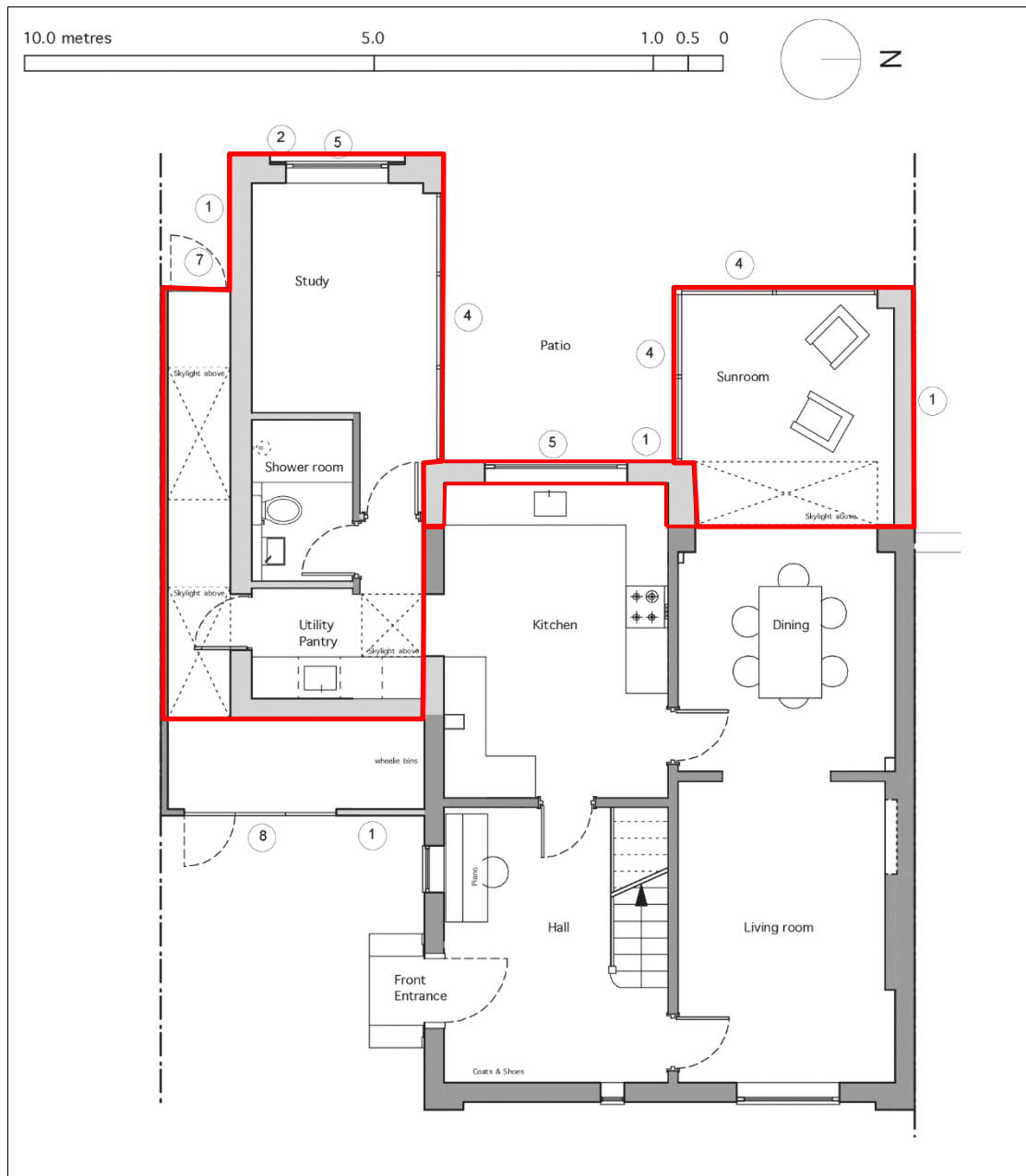


Figure 3: Development plan (scale as shown)



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## 2 Aims & Methods

### 2.1 Aims

The aims of this project as defined in the approved WSI (Barclay-Jones 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

The methods used were as follows:

- The archaeological monitoring of groundworks related to the development, including all ground reduction, foundation trenches, service trenches, landscaping, and any other ground disturbance.

### 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)





### 3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 Although the town of Welwyn Garden City is a modern construction, dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there is extensive evidence for occupation and activity in the area from prehistoric times onwards. The development site itself lies within a late Iron Age/early Romano-British settlement; a late Iron Age feature containing quantities of pottery were revealed on the site itself and seven early Roman period cremations with associated grave goods were discovered on the adjacent plot.

This section has been compiled with information from Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (search number 60/18; search radius 1km), KDK's own library and reliable internet sources.

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

A number of findspots around Welwyn Garden City indicate that there was prehistoric activity in the area. A flint arrowhead (HHER 2113) was discovered near the Quadrangle, to the south of the site, and Acheulian and Neolithic tools have been found in Digswell to the north of the development site, including a chipped flint axe (HHER 641), a polished adze (HHER 2242) and an Acheulian handaxe (HHER 640). Finds have also been made in Sherrardspark Wood, to the west of the development site, including Neolithic flint tools such as an axehead, scrapers and blades, and possibly a sherd of pottery (HHER 13665), and a Bronze Age socketed axe fragment (HHER 11759). Sherrardspark Wood also has a number of linear banks, some of which could be prehistoric, and which were probably used to protect new plantations or crops (HHER 6202).

#### 3.3 *Iron Age* (600BC - AD43)

There is considerable evidence for Iron Age occupation and activity within Welwyn Garden City. Archaeological investigations at Stanborough School (to the south of the development site) in the 1930s uncovered a late Iron Age boundary ditch (HHER 161); later investigations in the 1950s revealed that the ditch was part of a large palisaded enclosure which was probably a settlement. Large quantities of pottery were found in the ditch, with more being found during investigations in the 1990s. Another site, in the Panshanger estate to the south-east of the development site, revealed a late Iron Age cemetery including a rich chieftain burial of the La Tene type, which contained several pots and vessels as well as a set of glass gaming pieces (HHER 2815).

With the exception of a couple of isolated finds of sherds of Iron Age pottery – one sherd of late Iron Age Belgic pottery (HHER 2803) found at Digswell, to the north of the site, and one sherd of late Iron Age pottery (HHER 2805) found in a garden at Digswell Park, the main evidence for Iron Age activity and occupation within the search radius comes from the development site. In the 1970s, Lockleys Archaeological Society investigated a 2m circular depression in the garden at 3 Pentley Close (HHER 2802). It was found to contain a mass of late Iron Age pottery, over a layer of charcoal and clay which showed signs of intense burning.

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

The investigations at Stanborough School also revealed Roman cremation burials and Roman pottery, indicating that use of the settlement continued until at least the early Roman period, as the cremation burials were outside of the Iron Age enclosure. Another site at Church Road, to the south of the development area, uncovered evidence of a late Iron Age or Roman ditch (HHER 199) which contained pottery fragments, animal bone and a bronze fibula. Other sites around Welwyn Garden City have revealed evidence for Roman occupation and activity (ie



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HHER 2818, HHER 1576, HHER 4244). The building of Welwyn Garden City uncovered large amounts of Roman artefacts and remains (Glendinning 1989: 42).

The evidence for Roman occupation and activity within the vicinity of the development site is not widespread. One Roman coin (HHER 11763), an antoninianus of Gordian, was found in one of the back gardens at the Orchards to the south-east of the development site, although the exact findspot is unknown. The most significant evidence comes from 5 Pentley Close, directly adjacent to the development site, where a Roman cremation cemetery (HHER 1785) from the late 1<sup>st</sup> or early 2<sup>nd</sup> century was found by the residents. The cemetery contained at least 7 burials with grave goods, including Samian ware.

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

There is no record of a settlement in Welwyn Garden City during the Saxon period, and no archaeological evidence of occupation or activity in the area within the Historic Environment Record. The nearest known settlement at this time was Digswell, which lies to the north of development site. By the late Saxon period there were two manors and two watermills in Digswell, which had a total population of 37 households, indicating a large settlement, and was assessed as being worth a total of 3 geld units for tax (Open Domesday). The entire settlement was worth £6.5s in 1066 (*ibid.*).

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

The larger of the two estates was granted to Geoffrey de Mandeville after the Norman Conquest and the smaller to Peter of Valognes (*ibid.*). The medieval parish church of St John at Digswell dates from the early 12<sup>th</sup> century and was probably built as a manorial church by the de Mandevilles (HHER 1102). The site of Digswell manor house (HHER 10551) lies to the north of the development site. It was a late medieval courtyard house which was bought by Lord Cowper in 1786 before being demolished in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is thought that there must have been at least one earlier predecessor to this house, which may have been situated slightly further north although still near the church.

A fair and market was established by Lawrence de St Michael, a later lord of Digswell, who also profited from tolls including bridge tolls (HER 1008). However, by 1428 Digswell only had six households.

Digswell has previously been listed as a Deserted Medieval Village (DMV) by the Medieval Village Research Group, but it is now considered that there is no actual evidence for this (HHER 1008). Digswell has since been at least partially absorbed into Welwyn Garden City, as the Digswell estate was sold in 1919 to become part of Welwyn Garden City.

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

A number of post-medieval structures exist within Welwyn Garden City, including many relating to the coming of the railways; these include a number of road and railway bridges (ie HHER 5109, HHER 6163 and HHER 7152), as well the remains or routes of the railway lines (HHER 9822, HHER 30405) as well as the route of the Great North Road (HHER 6258).

Digswell House, as well as its associated park and ice house (HHER 6104), is located to the north of the development site. The house (HHER 10550) is a classical mansion, which was built around 1807 in an older landscaped park to replace the much earlier manor house. It stands on or near the site of Digswell's medieval manor house (HHER 10551). Digswell Place (HHER 10877) is a Grade II listed 19<sup>th</sup> century rectory, built on the site of an earlier one, and lies on the western edge of Digswell Park. The park itself dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and



covers a large area to the north of the site (HHER 30630). It was landscaped by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown before being almost completely redesigned by Repton in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the park there is a former kiln field (HHER 7045), marked on the 1837 tithe map. The site is no longer visible and is now occupied by a cricket ground. More tile kilns were located to the west of Digsweil Park (and to the north-west of the development site) in Malms Wood, which on the 1837 tithe map was shown as Tile Kiln Wood. The field to the north of the wood was shown as Tile Kiln Field; this field is now occupied by a residential street, but in the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century it was the site of the Welwyn Brickworks. To the south-east of the development site there is also the location of a former 19<sup>th</sup> century chalk pit (HHER 30971) at the Vineyard, which is now surrounded by housing.

Sherrardspark Wood (HHER 9598), to the west of the development site, is a largely intact area of woodland and park which may have medieval origins. It is shown on maps from 1766 onwards, but a wood is shown on a 1599 survey of Digsweil, and there is a mention in 1284 of Lawrence of Digsweil stopping up a public way through his wood of "Sherigg". The wood is also the location of a number of finds of prehistoric artefacts and contains a number of linear banks, indicating activity there over several hundred (and possibly thousand) years.

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

Welwyn Garden City (HHER 9599) was founded in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Sir Ebenezer Howard, as the world's second garden city after Letchworth. A number of structures and sites around the town relate to its construction, including the site of a brickworks (HHER 10933) on Roundwood Drive site and the site of sawmills (HHER 10934) on Bridge Road, to the south-west of the site. These were sawmills from World War I, which were adapted in the 1920s to provide materials for the construction of the town. To the south of the development site, at The Campus, there is the site of a construction camp (HHER 10935), which provided temporary accommodation for the workers building the town, and to the east of the site are the remains of a pit and light railway track (HHER 10936) which have been linked to the construction of the town.

There are also remains in the town of World War II defences, including the site of a tank trap located on White Bridge (HHER 6631), and the location of a loopholed parapet on the first storey of the John Lewis building in the town centre (HHER 6632), although this was demolished in 1995.







## 4 Results

### *Introduction*

A total of 21.23sq metres was excavated under constant archaeological supervision. The footing trenches and soakaway were dug to the required depth of <1.55m using a 1.5 tonne machine fitted with a 0.60m toothed bucket and the service trenches were excavated by hand. The stratigraphy of the site comprised:

- Topsoil (001). Dark greyish brown, silty clay which in places was heavily bioturbated through rooting. Contained small rounded stones. Found in the soakaway to the rear of the Garden, Service 1 and in Trench 3 where the depth ranged from 0.30-0.51m respectively.
- Concrete and shingle (002). Modern paved area found within Trench 4 and 5.
- Made ground (003). Brownish grey clay with various bits of modern building detritus. Shingle, concrete and stone was present in various concentrations throughout the site. Covered the majority of the site. Also contained patches of redeposited natural. The depth of this layer varied between 0.22 and 0.82m.
- Natural (004). Mid yellowish orange sandy clay with bands of mid grey stony clay.

There were several areas within the development where ground reduction was not necessary. Pre-existing foundations to the north and hard standing to the south were utilized for the foundations of the sunroom and larger extension respectively. In addition, where services were encountered, the footings were bridged to avoid disturbing existing pipework.

### *Description*

On completion of this investigation, no archaeological features were revealed, and no finds of archaeological significance were noted in the spoil removed during stripping.



**Plate 1:** Trench 1, looking south



**Plate 2:** Trench 4, looking east

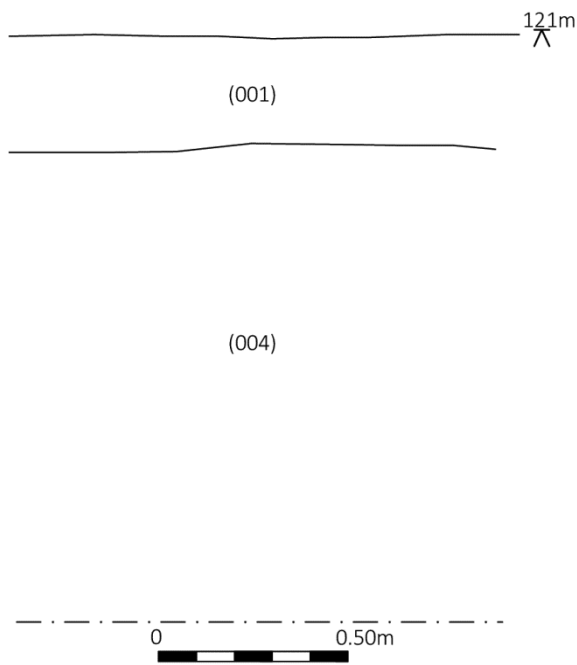




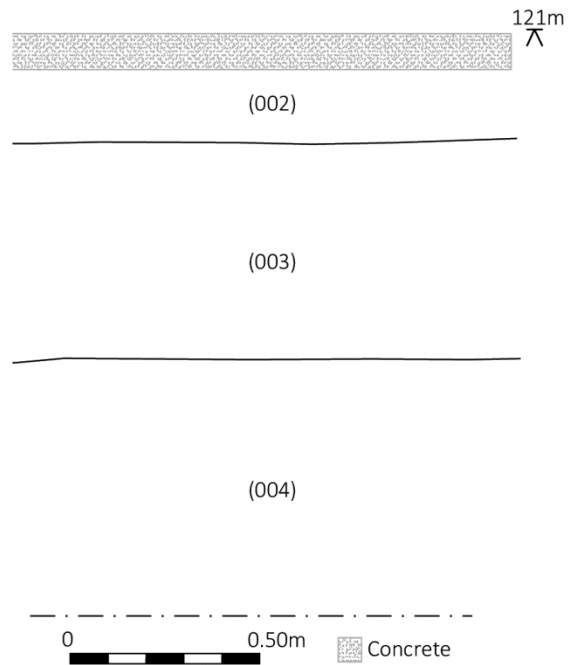
**Plate 3:** Trench 1 stratigraphy, looking east



**Plate 4:** Trench 4 stratigraphy, looking south



**Figure 5:** Trench 1 representative stratigraphy (scale 1:20)



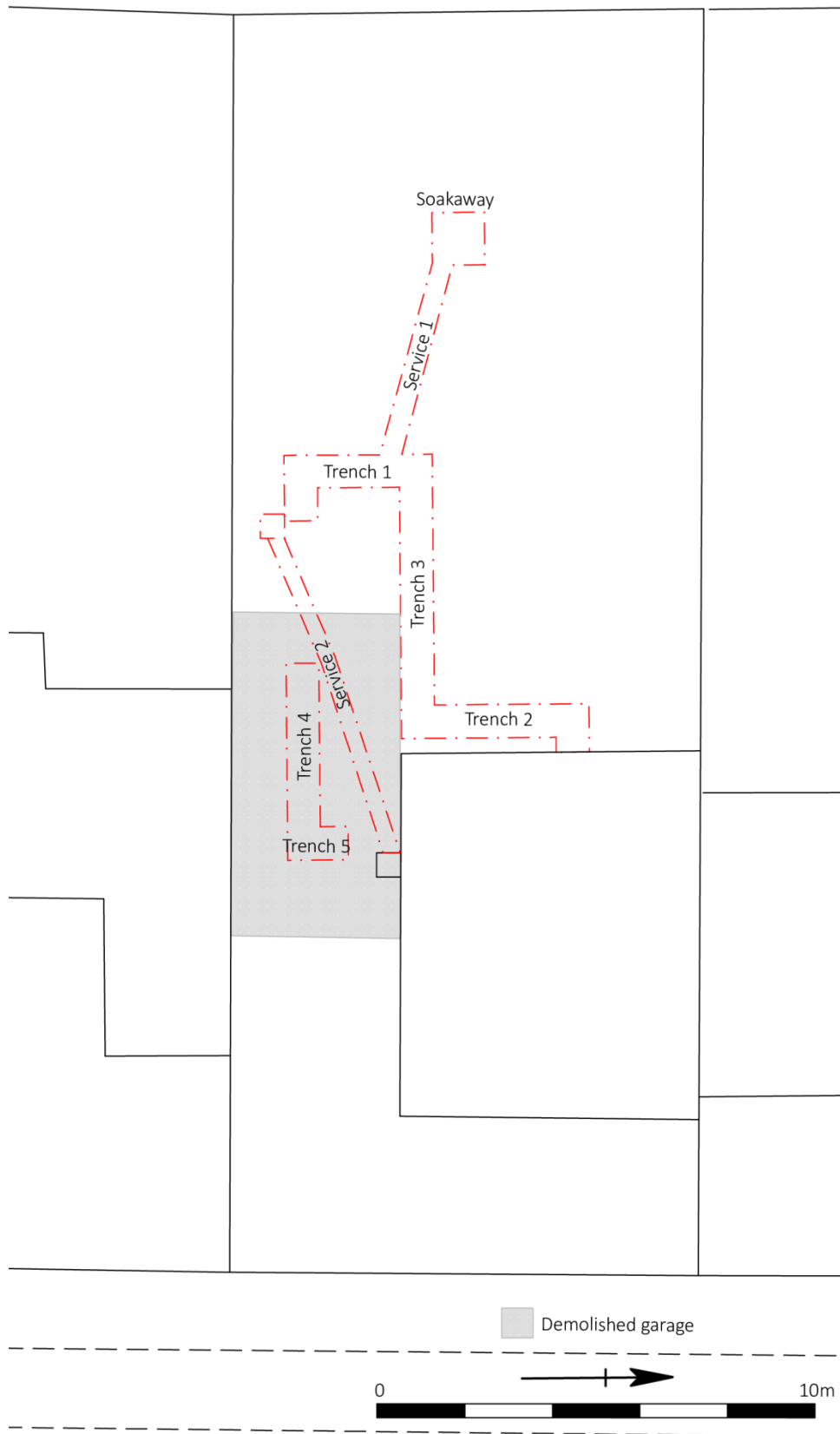
**Figure 6:** Trench 4 representative stratigraphy (scale 1:20)



**Plate 5:** Soakaway, looking south southeast



**Plate 6:** Service trench, looking east southeast



PENTLEY CLOSE

**Figure 7:** Plan of excavated footings and services (scale 1:150)



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## 5 Conclusions

Despite being in close proximity to areas of high archaeological significance, the footing trenches investigated only revealed the general stratigraphy of the site. Archaeological features suggesting occupational activity during the late Iron Age /early Romano-British have been found on the site and within a neighbouring plot; however, further features have not been exposed during this investigation. It is evident from the amount of made ground and the lack of subsoil that the ground had been greatly disturbed during the modern period which may account for the absence of further features. Additionally, this investigation comprises a small percentage of the overall site and it is possible that the trenches fell between widely dispersed features.



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## 6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to Nikki Edwards for commissioning this report and for her assistance on site. Thanks are also due to Isobel Thompson of Hertfordshire County Council for providing historic environment records and other relevant documents and to Simon Wood of Hertfordshire County Council for monitoring the project. We would also like to thank machine drivers Dom and Ricky for their assistance on site.

The fieldwork was carried out by Barney King. The report was written by Laura Dodd MSc ACIfA, and edited by David Kaye BA ACIfA.



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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

7.2 The local depository for this particular project is Welwyn Hatfield Museum. The electronic archive will be made available on OASIS.





## 8 References

### **Standards & Specifications**

- 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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### **Secondary Sources**

- British Geological Society (BGS) 2015: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>
- 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
- Glendinning V. & H. 1989 *Victoria Glendinning's Hertfordshire*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson



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Medlycott M. (Ed) 2011 *Research and Archaeology Re-visited: A Revised Framework for the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24

Open Domesday: <http://opendomesday.org/place/TL2314/digswell/>



## Appendix 1: Photograph List

Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		X	Trench 1 Stratigraphy
2	X	X	Trench 1, looking south
3	X	X	Service 2, looking south southeast
4		X	Trench 2 stratigraphy, looking north
5	X	X	Trench 3 looking east southeast
6	X	X	Trench 3, looking south southeast
7	X	X	Trench 2, looking northeast
8		X	Trench 3 stratigraphy, looking north
9	X	X	Trench 1, looking east
10		X	Trench 4 stratigraphy, looking south
11	X	X	Trench 4 looking east
12	X	X	Trench 5, looking north
13		X	Trench 5 stratigraphy, looking east
14	X	X	Soakaway, looking south southeast
15	X	X	Service Trench 1, looking south
16	X	X	Service Trench 1, looking east



## Appendix 2: OASIS and Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name & Address	3 Pentley Close, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire	Project Site Code	379/WPC
OASIS reference	kdkarcha1-318408	Event/Accession no	N/A
OS reference	TL 23610 14170	Study area size	21.23sq m
Project Type	Observation and Recording	Height (mAOD)	121
Short Description	In May 2019 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording at 3 Pentley Close, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site. The site is located within an area noted for late Iron Age and Romano British settlement activity and a ditch containing Iron Age pottery was exposed within the boundary of the investigation area during excavations on the 1970s; however, no archaeological finds, features and deposits were exposed during this programme of works and the area appeared to have been heavily disturbed by modern activity.		
Previous work	Excavation in the 1970s HHER2802	Site status	None
Planning proposal	Erection of single-storey rear extension and alterations to existing garage	Current land use	Garden and Garage
Local Planning Authority	Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council	Planning application ref.	6/2017/2653/HOUSE
Monument type	None	Monument period	None
Significant finds	None	Future work	No
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project Brief originator	N/A	Project Design originator	KDK Archaeology Ltd
Project Manager	David Kaye	Director/Supervisor	Barney King
Sponsor/funding body	Nikki Edwards		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	07.05.2019	End date	21.05.2019
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical	Welwyn Hatfield Museum	None	
Paper		WSI, report, site records, B&W photographs	
Digital		CD containing all digital data	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title	Archaeological Observation and Recording Report: 3 Pentley Close, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume	379/WPC/2.1		
Author(s)	Laura Dodd MSc ACIFA		
Page no's	20	Date	06.06.2019



## Appendix 6: Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record Sheet

Site name and address: 3 Pentley Close, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire		
County: Hertfordshire	District: Welwyn Hatfield Borough	
Village/Town: Welwyn Garden City	Parish: Welwyn Garden City	
Planning application reference: 6/2017/2653/HOUSE		
Client's name, address, & tel. no: Nikki Edwards. 3 Pentley Close, Welwyn Garden City		
Nature of application: Erection of single-storey rear extension and alterations to existing garage		
Present land use: Garden and garage		
Size of application area: 21.23sq m	Size of area investigated: 21.23sq m	
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 23610 14170	Site code: 379/WPC	
Site director: Barney King	Organization: KDK Archaeology Ltd	
Type of work: Observation and Recording		
Date of Work:	Start: 07.05.2019	Finish: 21.05.2019
Curating museum: Welwyn Hatfield Museum		
Related HER no's: 2802	Periods represented: Modern	
Relevant previous summaries/reports:		
<p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p>In May 2019 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording at 3 Pentley Close, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site. The site is located within an area noted for late Iron Age and Romano British settlement activity and a ditch containing Iron Age pottery was exposed within the boundary of the investigation area during excavations on the 1970s; however, no archaeological finds, features and deposits were exposed during this programme of works and the area appeared to have been heavily disturbed by modern activity.</p>		
Author: Laura Dodd MSc ACIfA	Date: 06.06.2019	