



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Ponsbourne Riding School and Ponsbourne Grange
Newgate Street
Hertfordshire



Quality Check

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Summary

In December 2018 KDK Archaeology Ltd carried out an archaeological evaluation at Ponsbourne Riding School and Ponsbourne Grange, Newgate Street, Hertfordshire prior to the construction of new residential dwellings to the south eastern part of the site. The works demonstrated that the site had been subjected to considerable landscaping in the form of made-ground being dumped onto what was thought to have been truncated natural clay. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed.

1 Introduction

1.1 In December 2018 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an Archaeological Evaluation at Ponsbourne Riding School and Ponsbourne Grange, Newgate Street, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by Islandbridge Properties, and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Barclay-Jones 2018), and approved by Hertfordshire Historic Environment Team (HHET), Archaeological Advisor (AA) to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council. The relevant planning application reference is 6/2018/0598/MAJ. This refers only to the south eastern part of the site as the new riding school and manège is covered by a separate application (6/2016/2706/MAJ) which did not have an archaeological condition placed upon it.

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 on the north-eastern outskirts of the village of Newgate Street, in the civil parish of Hatfield and the administrative district of Welwyn Hatfield (Fig. 1).

Description

The site is irregular in shape, extending around Ponsbourne Grange and across to a road on the western side. The eastern boundary is formed by open fields, as is the majority of the northern boundary, although an adjoining property forms part of the northern boundary at the far western end of the site. The southern boundary is formed by adjoining properties (Fig. 2). A stream runs along part of the site from east to west, and the area along the stream is also more heavily planted.

Geology & Topography

The geology of the site comprises sedimentary bedrock of clay, silt and sand from the London Clay Formation. It is possible that there may be overlying superficial deposits of sand and gravel of uncertain age and origin, or there may be no deposits overlying the bedrock, as it changes in the vicinity of the site (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

Proposed Development

The proposal is for the replacement of the existing stables and buildings with a new indoor riding school and seven new dwellings (Fig. 3).

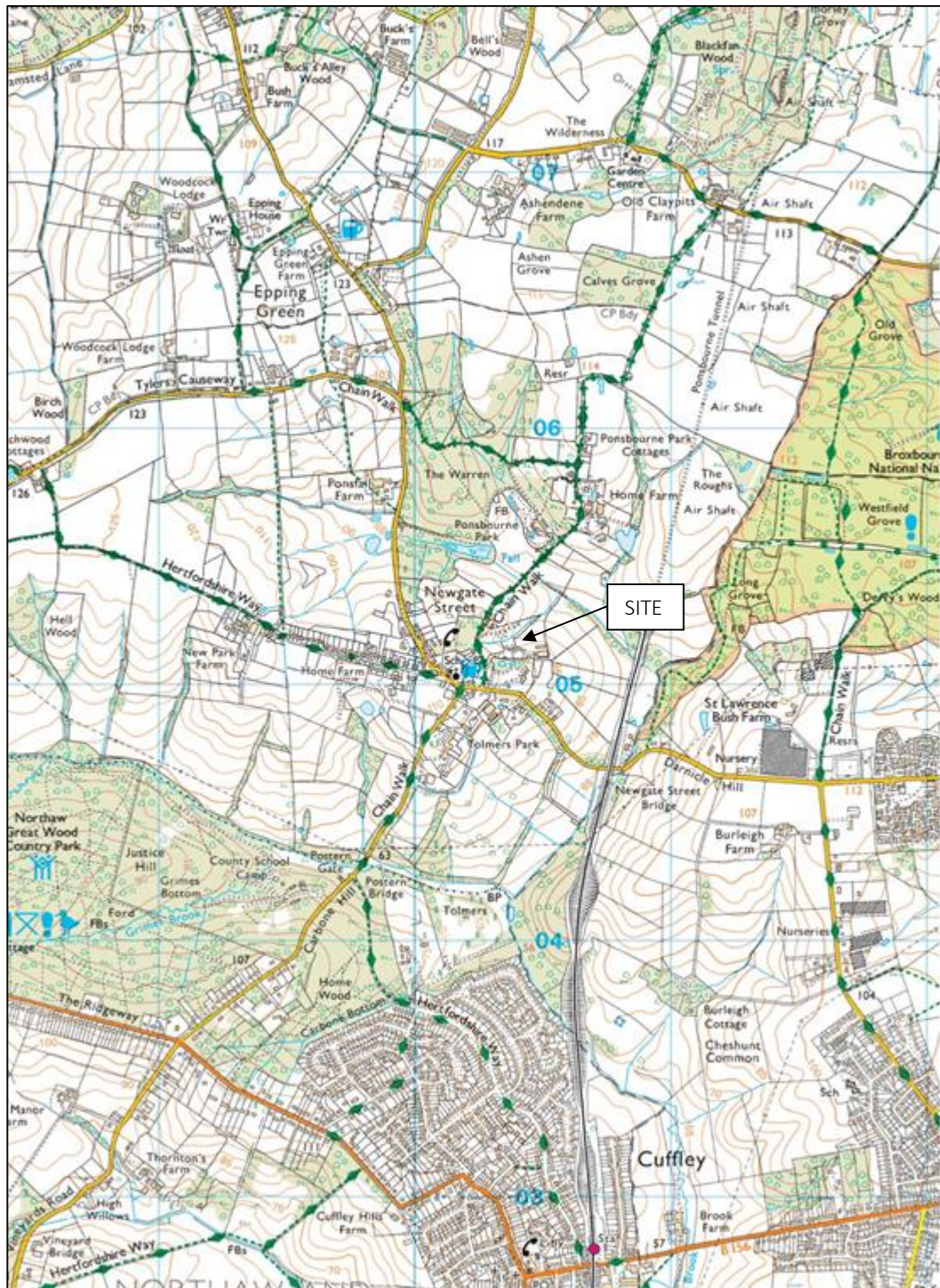


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

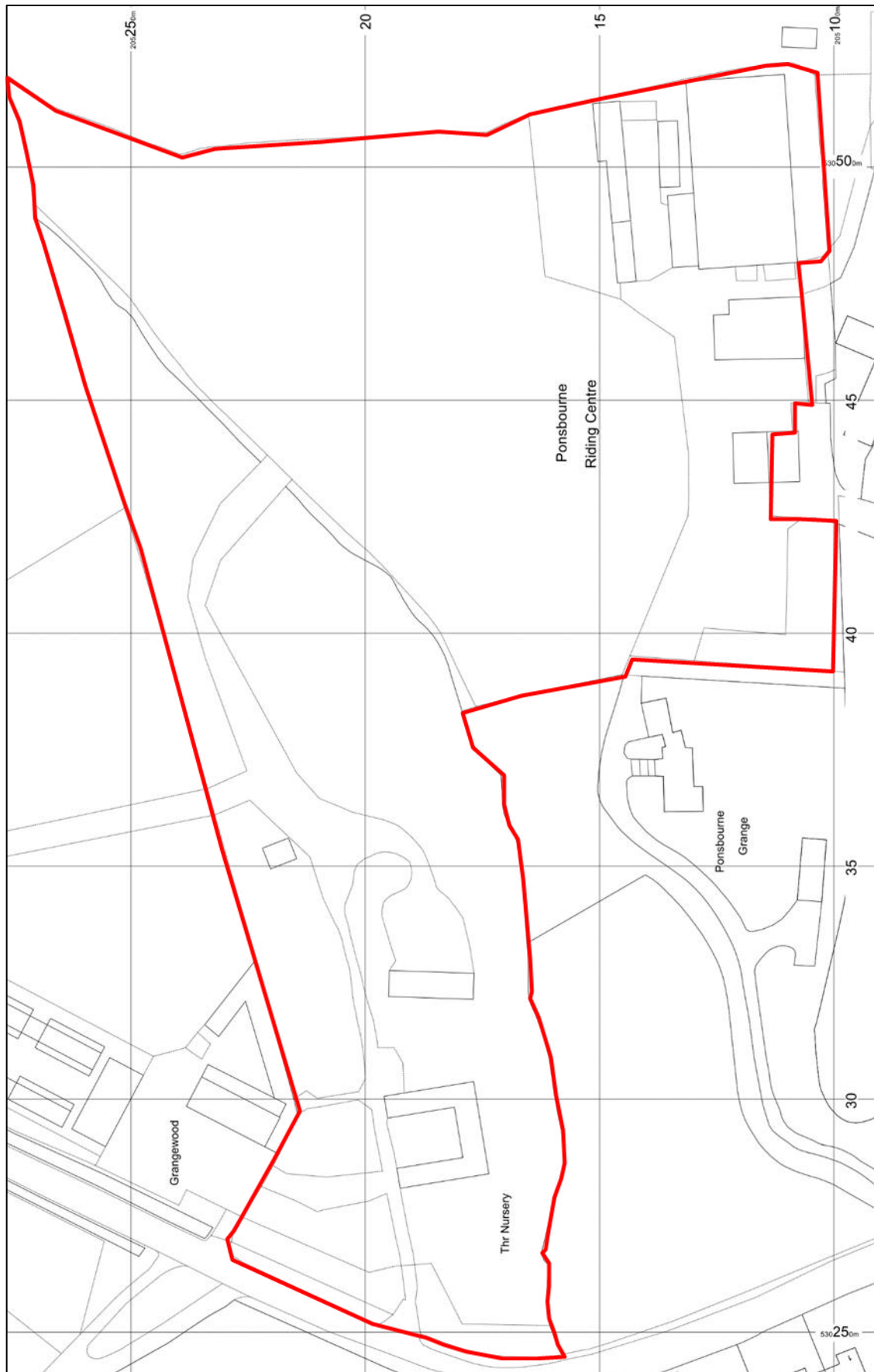


Figure 2: Site location (scale 1: 1,250)

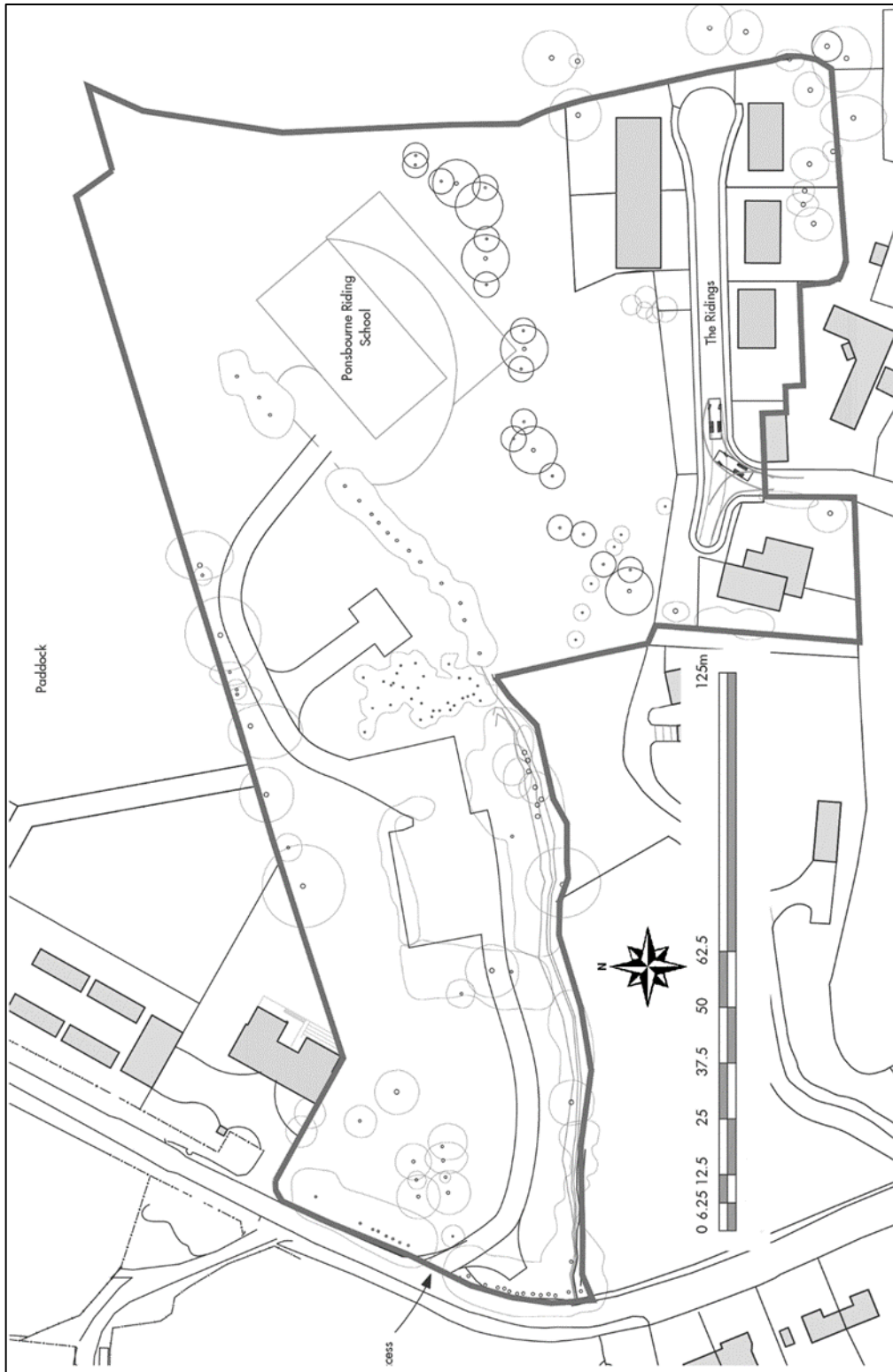


Figure 3: Proposed development (scale: 1:1500)



2 Aims & Methods

2.1 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 environment conditions.

2.2 *Methods*

In line with the requirements of the WSI, 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:

- A minimum of 5% sample area was covered by trenching in the new housing area (Fig. 4).

2.3 *Standards*

The work conformed to the following requirements:

- The approved WSI
- 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*

Due to extensive made-ground deposits found in Trench 1, and despite stepping, the trench sides were too unstable to be able to enter into the trench safely. Also, a previous geotechnical survey carried out on the site demonstrated that at the western part of the site made-ground deposits up to 3m in depth were present (Miles 2018). Consequently trench 2 was relocated to the south in this area.



3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 The site is located a little to the north-east of the main village of Newgate Street, and south of Ponsbourne Park. The name *Ponsbourne* comes from the stream which runs into Cuffley Brook and has been recorded since 1229, although the manor itself was created in 1447 from the original holding and that of Gacelyns (HER 7303). The development area lies approximately 140m outside of the Area of Archaeological Significance which covers the village, and it is clear from the Historic Environment Record that there is little in the way of archaeological or historical remains in the immediate vicinity of the site, as most activity has been clustered around the village and around Ponsbourne Park.

This section has been compiled with the HER data from Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER search ref: 165/18), information from KDK's own library and reliable internet sources, including historic environment data from Heritage Gateway.

3.2 *Prehistoric - Medieval* (before 600BC – AD1500)

There is no evidence for activity, or any record of settlement, in the area of the development site prior to the medieval period.

In the 13th century, Ponsbourne manor was part of the Hatfield estates which were owned by the Bishops of Ely (HER 7303). There is no mention of it by name, but as land in Hatfield parish was held by members of the Ponsbourne family in the 13th and 14th centuries, it seems likely that they were the early possessors of the manor, although it subsequently passed through a number of families and holders (British History Online (BHO)).

The site of Ponsbourne Manor House (HER 7303) was at Ponsbourne Park, to the north of the development site. The house was built in 1447, below the location of the present Ponsbourne Park mansion. The manor was amalgamated in 1684 with the nearby manor of Newgate Street (HER 4725) which was also known as Newgate Manor and the lordship and mansion of Hill House. Both manorial houses were pulled down in 1761, and were replaced by a single new manor house.

There is some evidence for medieval occupation within Newgate Street, as a pit containing medieval pottery (HER 174) was found at a location known as 2 Old Manor Cottages. This was a large deposit of 13th and 14th century sherds, probably from a domestic rubbish pit. However, the exact site of the cottages is unknown. To the east of the village (and the development site) there are also grassmarks from ridge and furrow (HER 18102) by Postern Gate Farm, which are thought to show eroded medieval strip fields and possible field drains.

The area was, however, largely unsuitable for arable and was heavily wooded in the late Saxon and early post-Conquest period. Hatfield Deer Park (HER 6510) originated as woodland held by Ely Abbey, and covered an area of at least 1000 acres by 1251. It was fully exploited in the normal medieval manner for charcoal making, pottery production, coppicing and as common land, and did not become a deer park until the early 16th century.

To the northeast of the development site is St Lawrence Farm, which is named after the lands called 'St Lawrence in the Busshe' (1554) (HER 6254). A chapel is also recorded within the area, but its precise location is unknown.



3.7 *Post-medieval* (1500 - 1900)

Many of the buildings and parts of the estate at Ponsbourne Park, to the north of the site, date to the post-medieval period. It was the site of a deer park (HER 6718) known as Gacelyns, that was first shown on a map from 1577 and related to the 15th century manor house. It is last shown on a map in 1842 and was disparked by 1881, after which it was replaced by the current park and gardens of Ponsbourne Park (HER 13007), which are seen on the 1880 Ordnance Survey Map.

Ponsbourne House (HER 16047) was constructed in 1761, replacing the previous manor houses of Ponsbourne and Newgate Street manors. This was in turn demolished or extensively rebuilt in 1876. Other parts of the estate still surviving include Home Farm (HER 16664), which is sometimes shown as Park Farm, and the icehouse (HER 16665), which has been infilled but remains fairly intact.

To the south of the development site is the location of Tolmers Park House and Farm (HER 10415), a 19th century former country house, with an ice house (HER 6100) ornamental garden and small parkland. The house was converted to hospital use in the 20th century before being turned into flats. These do not appear on a map of 1766, but the name of Tolmers is known from much earlier, so may indicate the presence of an earlier settlement near this location.

There are no notable features or remains from this period in the immediate vicinity of the development site.

3.8 *Modern* (1900 - present)

While there are no notable buildings from the 20th century onwards in the immediate vicinity of the site, it is clear that the area did play an important part in World War II defences. An anti-tank ditches (HER 10232 & 10233) formed part of the Outer London Defence Ring, and a complex of 85 anti-tank obstacles (HER 6702) at the foot of Darnicle Hill to the south-east of the site is the most extensive surviving group of its kind in the county. A pill box and a number of anti-tank obstacles also survive at The Cuffley Scout Camp (HER 6703, 6705 – 7)

To the east of the site, there is also the location of the Ponsbourne Tunnel (HER 12613), Hertfordshire's longest tunnel, which was part of the Hertford Loop Line.

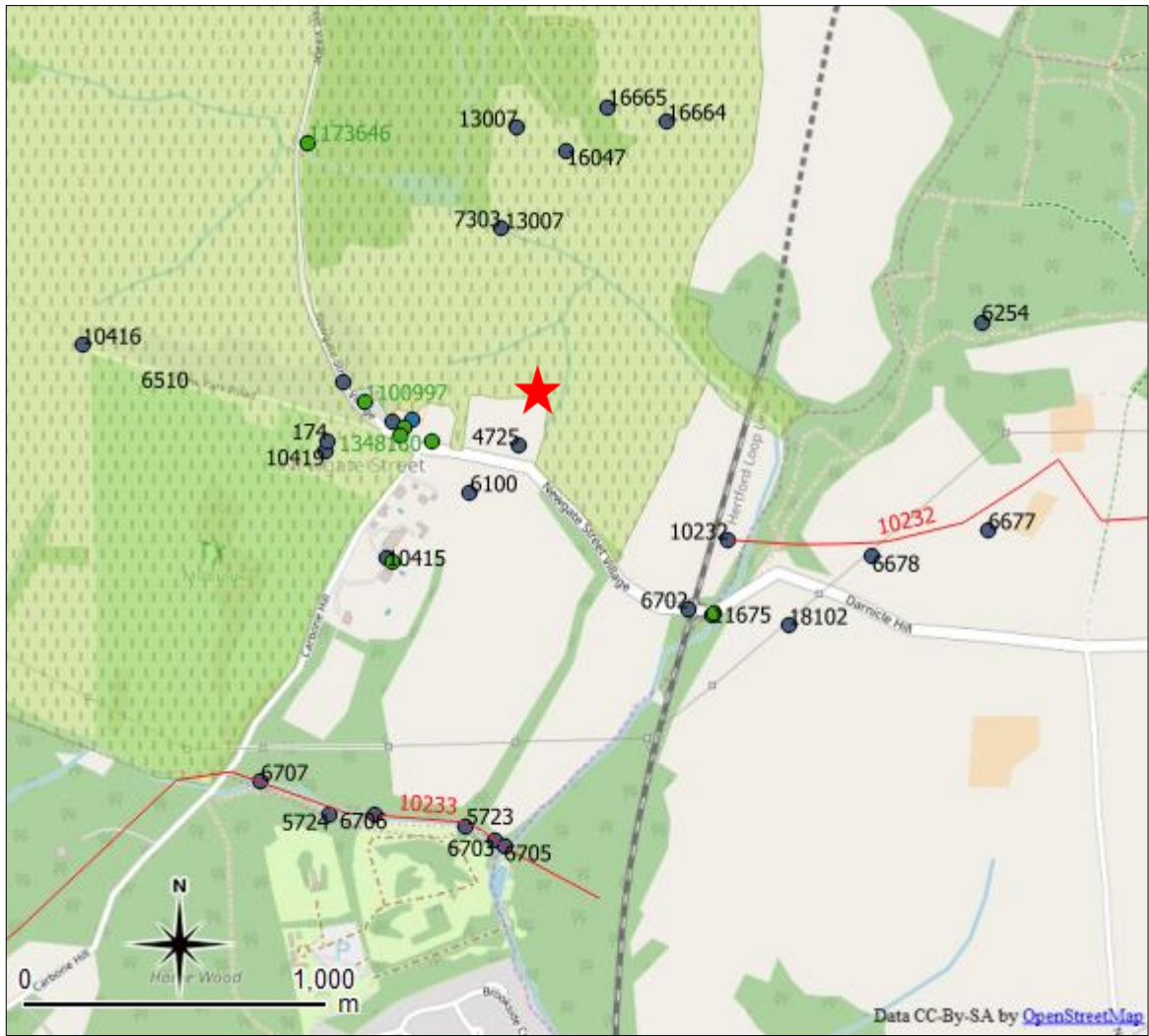
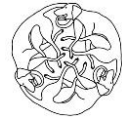


Figure 4: Historic Environment Records Plan. Site marked with star (scale 1:25,000)



4 Results

4.1 Introduction

A single site visit was made to excavate two trenches within the vicinity of the forthcoming new residential dwelling on the site (Fig. 5). A 21-tonne machine was used fitted with a 2.1m wide toothless ditching bucket.

Full context descriptions are presented in Tables 1 and 2 below.

4.2 Trench 1

Trench 1 was situated towards the northern central part of the area for the new dwellings. It was orientated E-W, and measured 2.3 in width, 26m in length and 1.9m in depth. Extensive modern made-ground deposits were observed in the stratigraphy and consequently the trench had to be stepped making the overall width 3.75m. The natural stratum was reached with no archaeological finds, features or deposits observed (Table 1; Fig. 6; Plate 1-3).

Table 1: Trench 1 Context Table

Context no.	Type	Dimensions (m) (max)			Description
		W	L	D	
100	Deposit	>2.3	>26	0.19	Topsoil: Mid-dark greyish brown, loose, silty clay with frequent rooting
101	Deposit	>2.3	>26	1.36	Made-ground: mix mid greyish brown, loose, silty sandy clay with frequent dumping of brick, large stone, plastic, rope, etc, building demolition dumping.
102	Deposit	>2.3	>26	>0.35	Natural stratum: light yellowish orange firm clay with concentrations of light grey clay and gravels

4.3 Trench 2

Trench 2 was situated at the western side of the area for the new dwellings. It too was orientated E-W and measured 2.25m in width, 17m in length and between 0.7-1.2m in depth. Again, the trench demonstrated modern made-ground deposits were present in this part of the site, although less extensive than Trench 1. The natural stratum was reached and no archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed (Table 2, Fig. 6; Plate 4-6).

Table 2: Trench 2 Context Table

Context no.	Type	Dimensions (max)			Description
		W	L	D	
200	Deposit	>2.25	>17	0.17	Hardcore surface
201	Deposit	>2.25	>17	0.3	Made-ground: mid greyish brown, friable, silty clay with frequent dumping of brick, metal, plastic, etc.
202	Deposit	>2.25	>1	0.22	Made-ground: light white with dark brown flecks, chalk found at the western end of the trench
203	Deposit	>2.25	>15	0.23m	Made-ground: dark black, soft clay found at the western and central part of the trench. By the end of the trench at the eastern side this deposit had petered out.
204	Deposit	>2.25	>17	>0.2	Natural stratum: light yellowish orange firm clay with concentrations of light grey clay and gravels

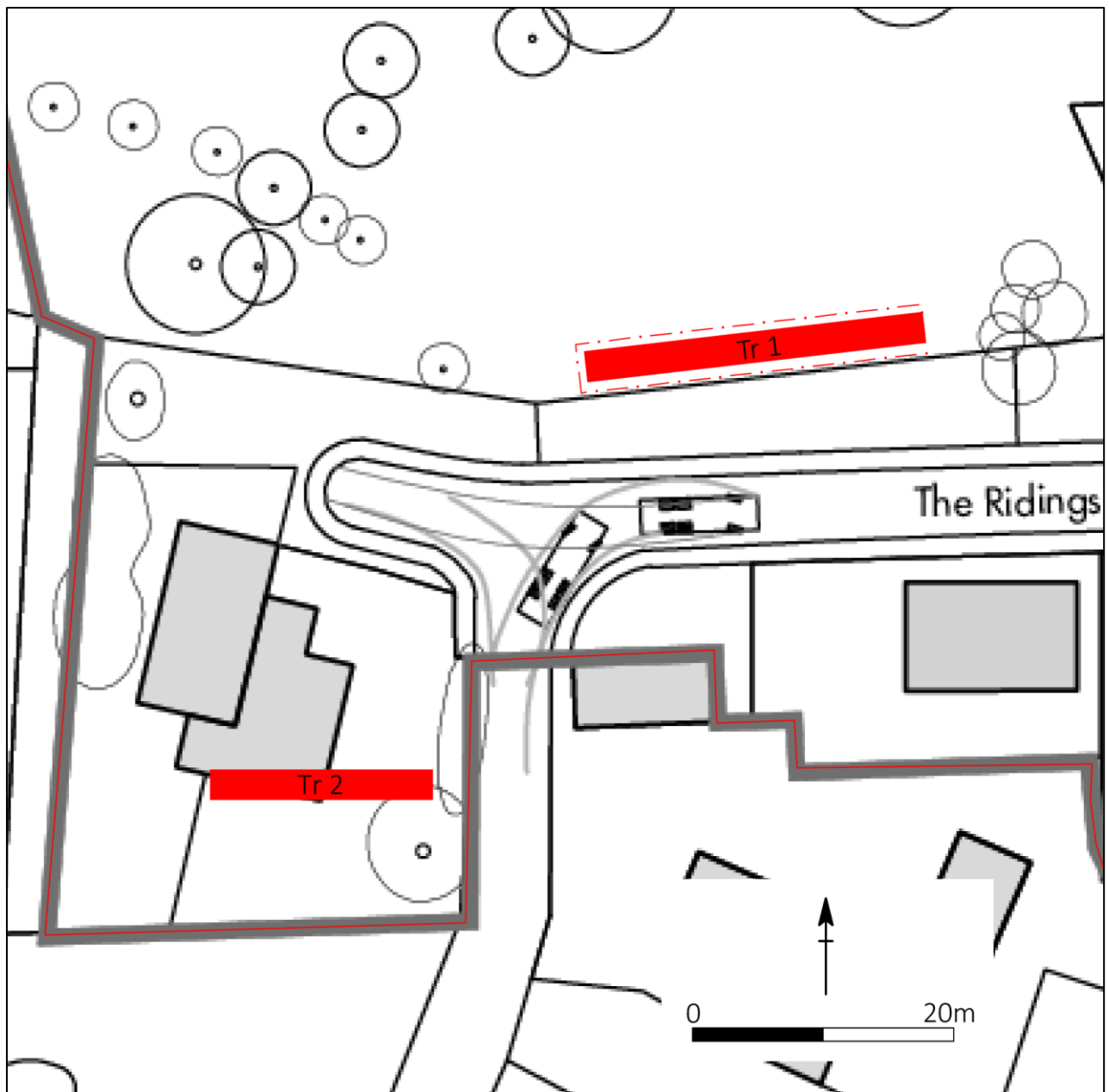


Figure 5: Trench location plan (scale 1:500)



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking E



Plate 2: Trench 1, looking W



Plate 3: Trench 1, stratigraphy, looking N



Plate 4: Trench 2, looking E

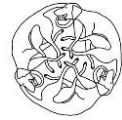


Plate 5: Trench 2, stratigraphy (western end of trench), looking S



Plate 6: Trench 2, stratigraphy (central & eastern end of trench), looking S

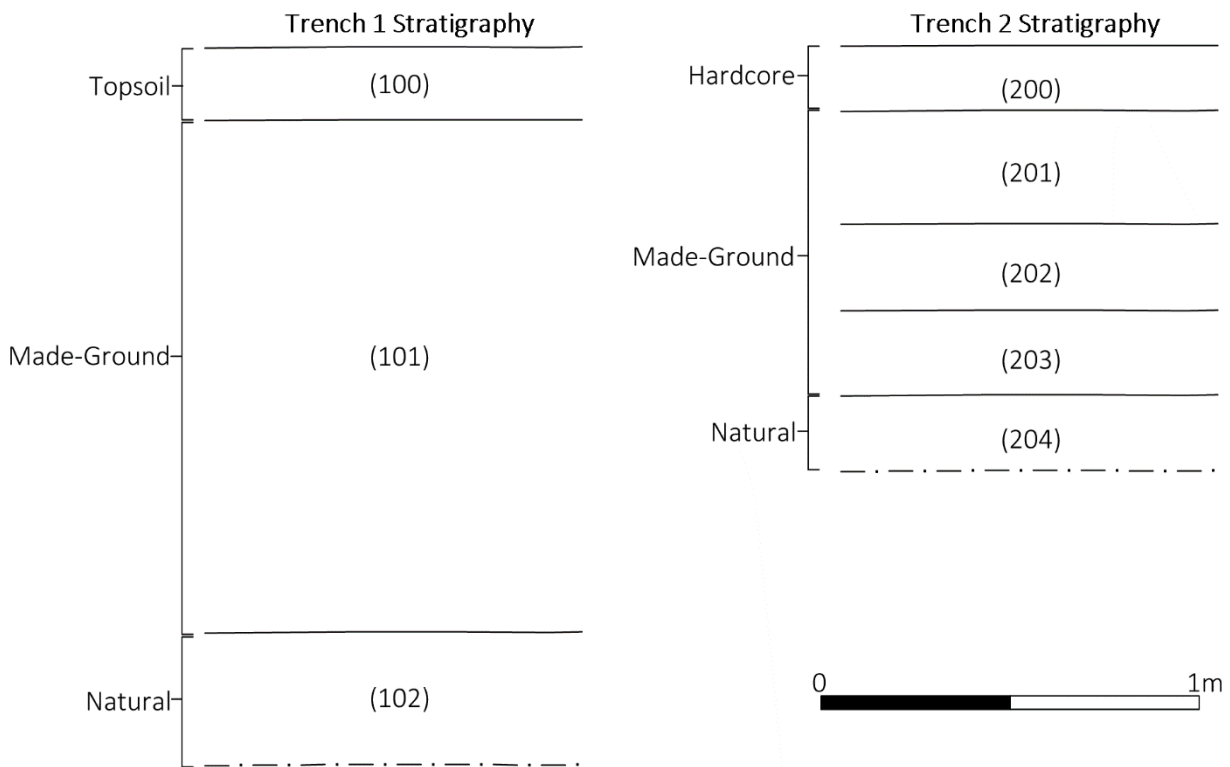


Figure 6: General Stratigraphy sections (scale 1:20)



5 Conclusions

The evaluation demonstrated that the site had been subjected to considerable landscaping in the form of made-ground being dumped onto what was probably truncated natural clay. No buried topsoil or subsoil deposits were observed underlying the made-ground.

The lack of archaeological features on the site may be a result of the ground having been truncated, though the degree to which the natural geology may have been breached is impossible to determine. It may also be that the site, or the trenches, falls between widely dispersed features thereby creating the impression that there has been no human activity in the vicinity from any period which leaves an archaeological footprint. It may also be simply that the site lies at the periphery of settlement and no occupation ever occurred in the area.

With the lack of archaeological features on the site, there was no possibility of advancing the research aims for the area on this occasion.

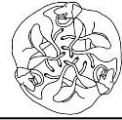


6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to Michael Harris of Islandbridge Properties for commissioning this report. Thanks, are also due to the Hertfordshire Historic Record Office for providing Historic Environment Records and other relevant documents; and to Simon Wood of Hertfordshire Historic Environment Team (HHET) for monitoring the project.

Thanks, are also extended to Site Manager Steven Cole for his help and co-operation on site.

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



7 Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Written Scheme of Investigation
2. Initial report
3. Trench recording sheets
4. Client's site plans
5. List of photographs
6. B/W prints & negatives
7. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Mill Green Museum.



8 References

Standards & Specifications

Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO) 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14.

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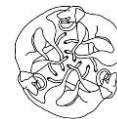
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Medlycott M. (Ed) 2011 *Research and Archaeology Re-visited: A Revised Framework for the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24.

Miles P 2018 *Geo-environmental Site Investigation of Asbestos Report, Ponsbourne Indoor Riding School and The Ridings, Hatfield, Hertfordshire*. Report Ref. 1733/Rpt 6V1. Brown 2 Green Associates Ltd, Saffron Walden, Essex.

Williams A. & Martin G.H. 2002 *Domesday Book: A Complete Translation*. London: Penguin.



Appendix 1: Photograph List

Digital	B&W	View	Subject
1	1	E	Trench 1 (scale 1m)
2		E	Trench 1 (scale 1m)
3	2	W	Trench 1 (scale 1m)
4		N	Trench 1 stratigraphy (scale 1m)
5	3	E	Trench 2 (scale 2x1m)
6		S	Trench 2 stratigraphy (western end) (scale 1m)
7		S	Trench 2 stratigraphy (central area) (scale 1m)



Appendix 2: OASIS and Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name & Address	Ponsbourne Riding School and Riding Grange, Newgate Street, Hertfordshire	Project Site Code	409/HNS
OASIS reference	kdkarcha1-329571	Event/Accession no	TBC
OS reference	TL 30453 05076	Study area size	5565.812 sq. m (new dwellings area)
Project Type	Evaluation	Height (mAOD)	95.53
Short Description	In December 2018 KDK Archaeology Ltd carried out an archaeological evaluation at Ponsbourne Riding School and Ponsbourne Grange, Newgate Street, Hertfordshire prior to the construction of new residential dwellings to the south eastern part of the site. The works demonstrated that the site had been subjected to considerable landscaping in the form of made-ground being dumped onto what was thought to have been truncated natural clay. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed.		
Previous work	None	Site status	None
Planning proposal	Replace existing buildings and stables with new indoor riding school and 7 new dwellings	Current land use	Riding school and stables
Local Planning Authority	Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council	Planning application ref.	6/2018/0598/MAJ
Monument type	None	Monument period	None
Significant finds	None	Future work	Unknown
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project Brief originator	Simon Wood (HHET)	Project Design originator	KDK Archaeology Ltd
Project Manager	David Kaye BA ACIfA	Director/Supervisor	Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc ACIfA
Sponsor/funding body	Islandbridge Properties		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	05.12.18	End date	05.12.18
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical	Mill Green Museum	None	
Paper		Development plans, WSI, report, site records, b&w photographs and negatives, print out of digital photographs	
Digital		The above in digital format	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title	Archaeological Evaluation Ponsbourne Riding School and Ponsbourne Grange, Newgate Street, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume	409/HNS/2.1		
Author(s)	Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc ACIfA		
Page no's	20	Date	06.12.18



Appendix 3: Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record Sheet

Site name and address: Ponsbourne Riding School and Riding Grange, Newgate Street, Hertfordshire		
County: Hertfordshire	District: Welwyn Hatfield	
Village/Town: Newgate Street	Parish: Hatfield	
Planning application reference: 6/2018/0598/MAJ		
Client's name, address, & tel. no: Islandbridge Properties		
Nature of application: Replace existing buildings and stables with new indoor riding school and 7 new dwellings		
Present land use: Riding school and stables		
Size of application area: 27030.593 sq. m	Size of area investigated: 137.87 sq. m (trenching)	
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 30453 05076	Site code: 409/HNS	
Site director: Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc ACIfA	Organisation: KDK Archaeology Ltd	
Type of work: Evaluation		
Date of Work:	Start: 05.12.18	Finish: 05.12.18
Curating museum: Green Mill Museum		
Related HER no's: -		Periods represented: -
Relevant previous summaries/reports: None		
<p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p>In December 2018 KDK Archaeology Ltd carried out an archaeological evaluation at Ponsbourne Riding School and Ponsbourne Grange, Newgate Street, Hertfordshire prior to the construction of new residential dwellings to the south eastern part of the site. The works demonstrated that the site had been subjected to considerable landscaping in the form of made-ground being dumped onto what was thought to have been truncated natural clay. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed.</p>		
Author: Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc ACIfA	Date: 06.12.18	