



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Archaeological Observation and Recording Report

3 The Cottage

Mentmore

Buckinghamshire



Quality Check

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Summary

In August 2019, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Archaeological Observation & Recording at 3 The Cottage, Mentmore, Buckinghamshire, in order to fulfil a planning condition for the construction of a single storey flat roofed side extension. All groundworks, including the ground reduction and the excavation of three footing trenches, were monitored continuously and no archaeological features or artefacts were revealed. The stratigraphy shows truncation in the form of modern made ground, which is more prevalent immediately adjacent to the existing cottage. The absence of archaeological cut features and finds is probably a result of prior building works, which caused the truncation, suggesting that archaeological features could survive outside the footprint of the development.

1 Introduction

1.1 In August 2019, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Archaeological Observation & Recording at 3 The Cottage, Mentmore, Buckinghamshire, in order to fulfil part of a requirement of the National Planning Policy Frameworks (NPPF) and Condition 4 of the Planning Consent, defined by Buckinghamshire County Council Archaeological Service (BCAS), on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Aylesbury Vale District Council. The relevant planning application reference is 18/03730/APP.

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 site is situated in the village and civil parish of Mentmore, in the administrative district of Aylesbury Vale District Council in Buckinghamshire. The site is located at National Grid Reference (NGR) SP 9049 1976 (Fig. 1).

Description

The development site is bounded to the north by Park Gate Road, to the east and west by private residences, and to the south by an access road to Mentmore Towers (Fig. 2). The site is situated at an elevation of approximately 110m AOD.

Geology & Topography

The local bedrock is the Gault Formation consisting of sedimentary mudstones formed approximately 101 to 113 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period. This underlies sands and gravels laid down during glaciofluvial activity between 860 and 116 thousand years ago (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

Development

The development consists of the erection of a single storey flat roofed side extension with associated groundwork (Fig. 3).



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

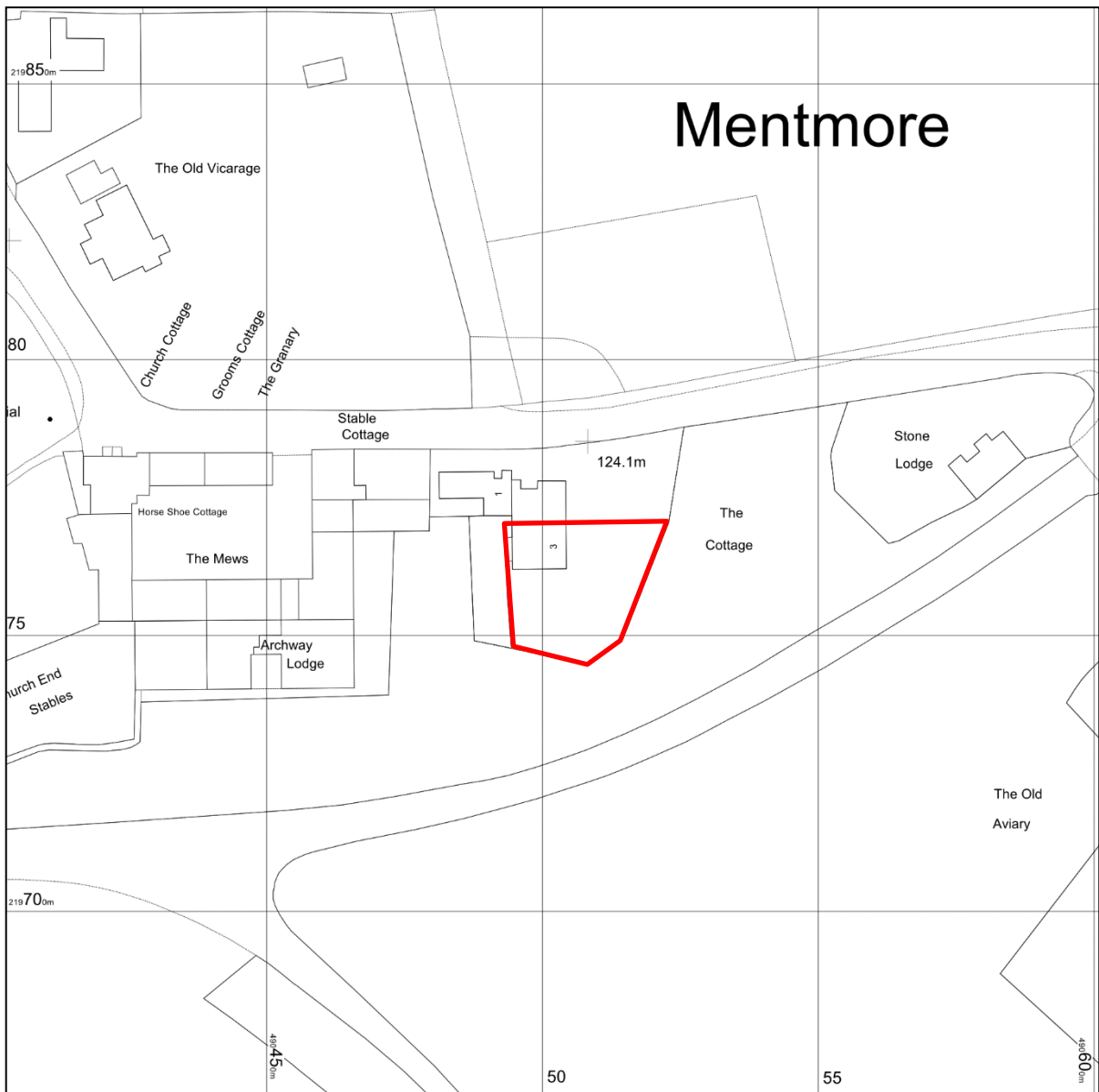


Figure 2: Site layout (scale 1:1250)

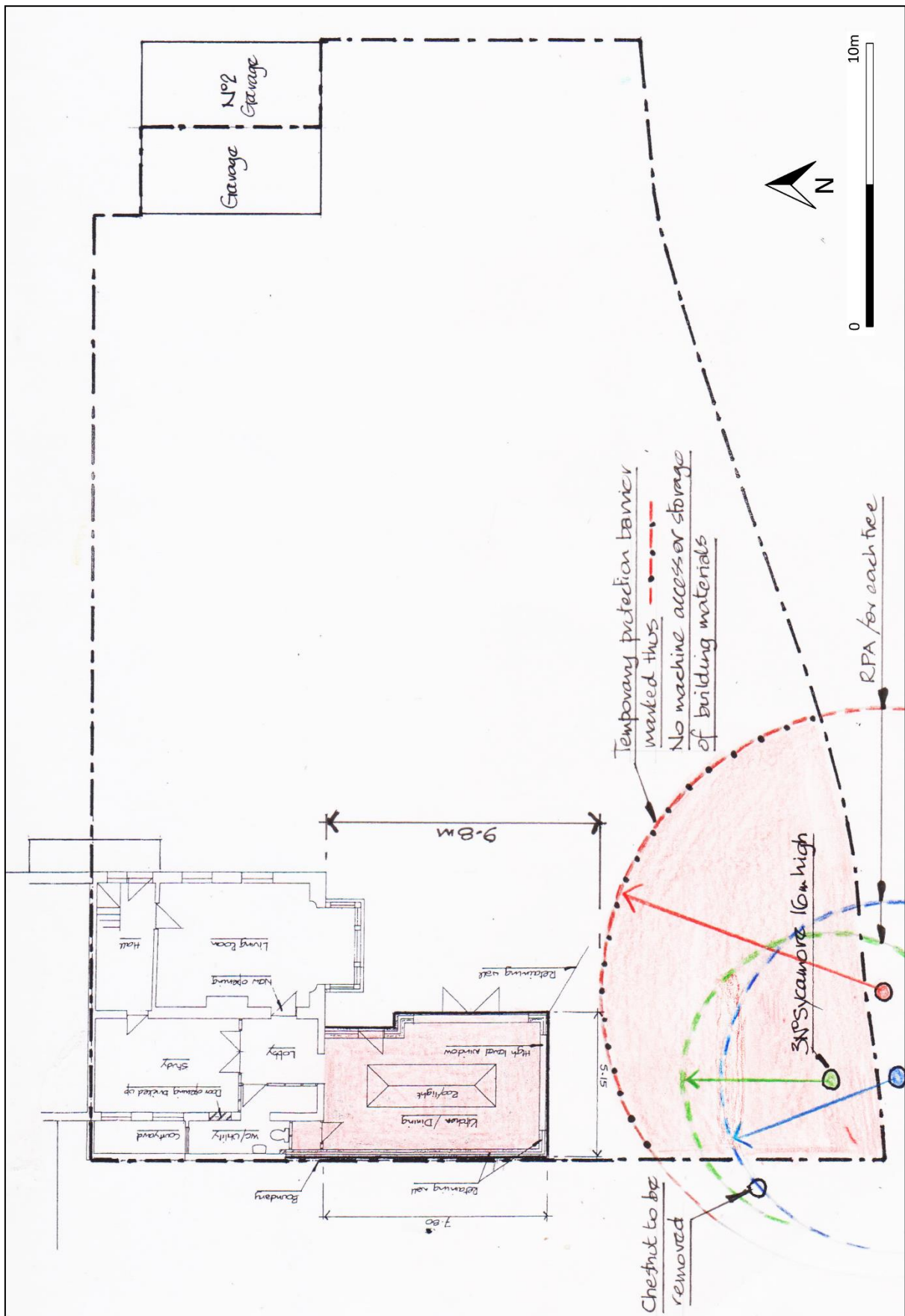


Figure 3: Proposed development plan (scale 1:200)



2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

The aims of the project as defined by the WSI (Watson 2019) 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 groundworks were done under archaeological supervision using a toothless bucket. These comprised general ground reduction and the excavation of three footing trenches. An area of approximately 28 sqm was monitored.

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)



3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 Mentmore is a small village (HER 0667100000) and civil parish (HER 0272700000) in the Aylesbury Vale district of Buckinghamshire. The name of the village derives from *Mentmore*, as recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086, meaning 'Moor of a man called Menta' in Old English (Mills 1991: 228). Roman, Saxon and Medieval remains were found in Mentmore Village Green (HER 0126000000) in the 19th century during gravel-working, though little is known of the immediate area prior to the Saxon period.

The development site lies within the Mentmore Conservation Area (DBC8053; AVDC 2019), which includes the 'new' model village built in 1877 by Hannah Rothschild, a few earlier buildings, and the Grade I (List Entry No 1117863) Mentmore Towers (HER 1067000000). Situated in Mentmore Park, Mentmore Towers is an outstanding example of Victorian architecture that was designed by Sir Joseph Paxton, and built 1852-54 for Baron Meyer de Rothschild. The development site also lies within an Archaeological Notification Area, and a Registered Park & Garden. The settlement is situated within an historic landscape with commons, greens, woodland, enclosures, and a huge 20th century golf course to the southwest, created from combining numerous fields with Mentmore park and garden.

This section has been compiled with information from the Buckinghamshire County Council Historic Environment record (HER), reliable online sources, and KDK's own library. The location of the HER data, within a 500m search radius, is shown in Fig. 4.

- 3.2 ***Prehistoric (before 600BC) to Roman (AD43 - c.450)***

Archaeological observation along the way of the Kingsbury-Buncefield Pipeline that now runs through Mentmore, revealed Iron Age and Roman ditches and pits (HER 0535400000), with associated pottery and tile (BCC 2019). Mesolithic to Bronze Age flints (HER 0535602001), and Late Bronze Age to Middle - Late Iron Age pits and ditches were also found near Ledburn Farm (*ibid.*) to the north of Mentmore. Middle Bronze Age to Late Iron Age pits and ditches (HER 0630600000) were recorded in a watching brief along the Aylesbury-Steppingly pipeline, which also runs through the parish of Mentmore. Roman pottery has been found on the ground surface near Mentmore cross-roads (HER 0406100000) and around Ledburn Farm (HER 0535402000). The finds from these sites indicate prehistoric to Roman occupation in the general area, but none of these sites lie within the HER search area.

Several Roman coins (HER 0126004000), including a coin of Constans or Constantius, and 'signs of cremation sites' (HER 0126001000), but no urns, were found in the Village Green (HER 0126000000), evidencing the presence of a Roman cemetery. This part of the Village Green site is situated c. 130m southeast of the development site.

A potential predecessor to the Roman road Watling Street, putatively the 'main driving line' of the Claudian invasion (AD 43), may run through Mentmore and beneath the Towers, but this road, the Viatores Road 169A (HER 0299100000), has not been confirmed in Buckinghamshire.

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

Saxon remains including a knife (HER 0125900000), a fibula (HER 0126003000), an iron spearhead (HER 0126000001), other 'metalwork' (HER 0126000002, 0126002000), and interments, some lying east-west, were all found during the 19th century in Mentmore Village Green (HER 0126000000), which is located immediately south of development site. Archaeological remains from the Village Green site date from the Roman period, with Saxon interment on a Roman site, though the Roman coins may have accompanied a Saxon burial. A coin of the Mercian King Offa, who held the throne from 757 until his death in 796, was found



during groundworks in the village (HER 0126200000). Late Saxon pottery was also discovered at Ledburn Farm (BCC 2019).

3.4 *Medieval* (1066 - 1500)

In the Domesday Survey of 1086, Mentmore is listed as being in the Cottesloe Hundred, in the lands of Earl Hugh (Williams & Martin 2002: 403). The manor was valuable and held by Robert of Earl Hugh, and assessed at 18 hides; with land for 10 ploughs, in demesne 4 ploughs; 18 *villans* with 6 ploughs; 3 slaves; and meadow for 4 ploughs (ibid.). The settlement was quite large as it included a total of 21 households (Open Domesday 2019). By the mid-13th century the manor was annexed by the Crown, but it was eventually held by the Zouche family until the 15th century, then the Bray family until the 16th century, and the Harcourt family held it until the mid-19th century when it passed to Baron Mayer de Rothschild (BHO 2019).

The potential site of a medieval farmstead or manor house (HER 0467501000), northeast of the development, was recorded during field survey, and consists of a large platform that slopes northwards. A nearby medieval house platform (HER 0467500000) was also recorded during field survey. Medieval pottery was found nearby (HER 0467500001). The possible site of a 13th century windmill (HER 0431900000) is suggested by a 19th century place name: 'Millfield' on 1840 & 1852 maps. It is also recorded that in 1284 Ralf le Poer 'impleaded his neighbours for dismantling his mill & taking it away'. The mill was probably a small post-mill, as the stream at Mentmore was unlikely to have been large or fast flowing enough to drive a watermill.

The Grade II* listed Church of Saint Mary (HER 0415500000) has a 12th century nave, and aisles that were rebuilt in the 14th and 15th centuries; the western tower dates from the late 15th century; and it was extensively restored in 1858 by G.H. Stokes. The building also has 15th century carved stone grotesque heads and carved wooden angels in the roof (HER 0415500001). An archaeological watching brief recorded the foundations of an earlier, smaller medieval chancel (HER 0415502000). A subsequent watching brief (EBC15988) did not locate any archaeological remains. A boundary bank (HER 0415504000) of unknown date defines the margin of the churchyard on the south, and separates the church from Mentmore Towers: the bank is c.1m high on the south and continues on the western side where it is in part over 2m high. An undated mound in the churchyard of St Mary's Church (HER 0415503000), c. 1m high, was noted during a watching brief, which may be related to the 19th century restoration of the church.

Medieval finds from the large Mentmore Village Green (HER 0126000000) site, directly south of the development, comprise a 12th century spur, a coin of Alexander III of Scotland, the head of a bird bolt, and an 'iron instrument' to protect the foot in jousting (HER 0126005000). A 14th to 15th century jug was found during building of the laundry at the back of the development site, 3 The Cottage (HER 0543200000).

A large area of ridge and furrow is situated southeast of the development site (shown as a brown block in Fig. 4) is undated but this system of ploughing was used extensively in Europe during the Middle Ages.

3.5 *Post-medieval* (1500 - 1900)

The Statutory list of 'Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest' in Mentmore includes the aforementioned Mentmore Towers (HER 1067000000), and the Church of St. Mary (HER 0415500000). It also includes the impressive 18th century Grade II* listed Queen Anne Manor House, built of red and vitreous brick (AVDC 2019). The village has a number of



the other listed buildings dating from the 16th - 17th centuries, which are timber-framed, while others date from the 18th - 19th nineteenth centuries. All of the listed buildings within the HER search area are Grade II and fall within the later date bracket. These include Nos 9 and 11, The Green (HER 1067300000); the Pump House (HER 1067600000); Crafton Lodge (HER 1067006000); the Church Cottage (HER 1066900000); Nos 21-25, The Green (HER 1067500000); the Dairy Cottage (HER 1067200000); and Nos 13-19, The Green (HER 1067400000). The only portable artefact listed for this period is a coin dated to AD 1645 AD to 1646, which was during the Civil War (MBC31797).

The remaining listed buildings are also Grade II and built during the 19th century, which are associated with the Grade I listed Mentmore Towers (HER 1067000000), including the three former Laundry Cottages built for the laundry maids (Nos 1-3; HER 1067003000) and the Stone Lodge (HER 1067004000). An archaeological evaluation (EBC16861) at Mentmore Towers documented archaeological deposits that were extensively truncated by later quarrying in the area. The setting for these buildings/structures is Mentmore Park, a Grade II* listed 19th century landscaped park and formal gardens, designed by Sir Joseph Paxton (HER 1067002000). The development site, 3 The Cottage, forms part of the original property utilised by the Rothschild family during the construction of Mentmore Towers (Knight Frank 2019). The house was subsequently inhabited by the butler for the estate (*ibid.*). Mentmore was inherited by Hannah Primrose, Countess of Rosebery, née Rothschild, and owned by her descendants, the Earls of Rosebery.

3.6 **Modern** (1900 - present)

Following the death of the sixth Earl of Rosebery in 1973, the contents of Mentmore Towers were sold by public auction, and in 1978 the building became headquarters for Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's educational charity, the Maharishi Foundation (Jury 1997). Formerly a country house, it became the British Seat of the World Government of the Age of Enlightenment. It was subsequently sold to Simon Halabi in 1997 (Sunday Business 2000).

The heritage assets listed for this period in the HER comprise the probable site of a timber crane (HER 0952600000), now in storage at the Chiltern Open Air Museum and the WWI rough stone War Memorial (HER 0712000000) in the churchyard of St Marys.



Figure 4: Heritage Assets within a 500m radius of the site, shown by a red star (scale 1: 5000)



4 Results

Introduction

In August 2019, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Archaeological Observation & Recording, comprising the monitoring of ground reduction and footing trenches for a one-storey extension. Existing and disused services were encountered during the stripping of the site and the excavation of the footing trenches

Description

A total of 27.927sq metres of ground reduction (Plates 1 & 2; Figure 5) and a further 15.403sq metres of footing trenches were excavated under constant archaeological supervision. The work was undertaken with a 3-tonne machine fitted with either a 1m or a 0.65m toothless bucket, with occasional use of 0.80m toothed bucket on more compact ground. The stratigraphy was consistent throughout all of the trenches (Plate 3). Descriptions of each context are provided in the Context Table.

Three footing trenches were excavated, which varied in length and width in order to avoid existing services.

Trench 1 (Plates 4-6; Figure 5)

Trench 1 ran north-south along the west side of the site. At the north end, near the existing door to the house, the trench was 0.65m wide, but that was extended to 1.0m at the south end. The trench was 7.60m in length. The excavation encountered existing services at the north end of the trench, but no archaeological features or artefacts were found.

Trench 2 (Plates 7 & 8; Figure 5)

Trench 2 ran east-west, defining the southern end of the new extension. It was 1.0m wide and 5.50m long. The top end of the trench was cut into natural geology. No archaeological features or artefacts were present.

Trench 3 (Plates 9 & 10; Figure 5)

Trench 3 ran north-south, forming the east wall of the new extension. It was 0.65m wide and 8m long and was excavated to a depth of 1.0m. The trench had to incorporate a small dog-leg to avoid existing drains. There were no archaeological features or artefacts present in Trench 3.

Context Table

<i>Context no.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depths</i>	<i>Description</i>
100	Topsoil	0.06m	dark greyish brown, slightly silty clay, heavily bioturbated
101	Subsoil	0.10m-0.11m	mid greyish brown, slightly silty clay
102	Made Ground	0.20m-0.54m	crushed brick, contemporary with the house, used to grade the slope of the garden
103	Natural	0.14m-0.16m	light mottled orangey grey clay
104	Natural	0.14m	light grey slightly silty clay



Plate 1: Ground reduction area, facing south



Plate 2: Ground reduction area, facing east



Plate 3: General site stratigraphy



Plate 4: Trench 1, facing south



Plate 5: Trench 1, facing north



Plate 6: Trench 1, stratigraphy, facing west



Plate 7: Trench 2, facing west



Plate 8: Trench 2, stratigraphy, facing north



Plate 9: Trench 3, facing north



Plate 10: Trench 3, stratigraphy, facing east

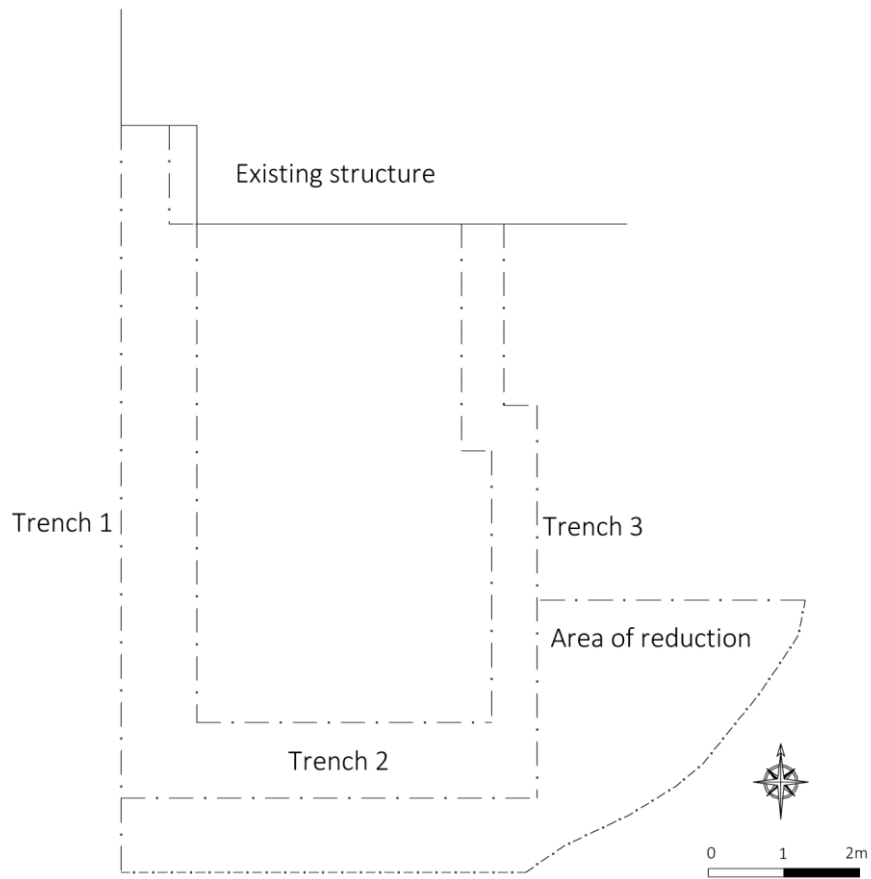


Figure 5: Area of excavations (scale 1:100)



5 Conclusions

All groundworks, including the ground reduction and the excavation of three footing trenches, were monitored continuously. No archaeological features or artefacts were observed in any of the excavations. The stratigraphy shows truncation in the form of modern made ground, which is more prevalent immediately adjacent to the existing cottage. The absence of archaeological cut features and finds, and truncation of the soil profile is probably a result of prior building works, such as the construction of The Cottage in the 19th century. It is possible that archaeological features may survive outside the development footprint.



6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to Ben Carty for commissioning this report. Thanks are also due to Paul Clements of Buckinghamshire HER for providing historic environment records and other relevant documents and Phil Markham of Buckinghamshire Council Archaeology Services for monitoring the project.

The fieldwork was carried out by Barney King. The report was written by Barney King and Ellen Shlasko PhD and edited by Derek Watson PhD.



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 Buckinghamshire County Museum (Accession Number AYBCM : 2019.118).



8 References

Standards & Specifications

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Appendix 1: Photograph List

Shot	Digital	Subject
1	x	Ground reduction, facing south
2	x	Ground reduction, facing south
3	x	Ground reduction, stratigraphy, facing south
4	x	Trench 1, facing south
5	x	Trench 1, facing north
6	x	Trench 1, stratigraphy, facing west
7	x	Trench 1, stratigraphy, facing west
8	x	Trench 2, facing west
9	x	Trench 2, stratigraphy, facing north
10	x	Trench 2, stratigraphy, facing north
11	x	Trench 3, facing north
12	x	Trench 3, stratigraphy, facing east
13	x	Ground reduction, facing east
14	x	Ground reduction, facing east



Appendix 2: OASIS and Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name & Address	3, The Cottage, Mentmore, Bucks	Project Site Code	476/MTC
OASIS reference	kdkarcha1-355840	Event/Accession no	AYBCM : 2019.118
OS reference	SP 9049 1976	Study area size	43.40 sqm
Project Type	Archaeological Observation and Recording	Height (mAOD)	110
Short Description	In August 2019, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Archaeological Observation & Recording at 3 The Cottage, Mentmore, Buckinghamshire, in order to fulfil a planning condition for the construction of a single storey flat roofed side extension. Archaeologists monitored the initial ground reduction and the excavation of three footing trenches. No archaeological features or artefacts were revealed during this project.		
Previous work	None	Site status	None
Planning proposal	Single storey flat roofed side extension with associated groundwork to accommodate extension	Current land use	Garden
Local Planning Authority	Aylesbury Vale District Council	Planning application ref.	18/03730/APP
Monument type	n/a	Monument period	n/a
Significant finds	None	Future work	None
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project Brief originator	Buckinghamshire County Council Archaeological Service	Project Design originator	KDK Archaeology Ltd
Project Manager	Barney King	Director/Supervisor	David Kaye MA
Sponsor/funding body	Ben Carty, 3 The Cottage, Mentmore, Bucks		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	12.08.2019	End date	14.08.2019
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical	Buckinghamshire County Museum	None	
Paper		Site drawings WSI Report	
Digital		Site forms, photographs and drawings. WSI & Report	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title	Archaeological Observation and Recording Report: 3 The Cottage, Mentmore, Buckinghamshire		
Serial title & volume	476/MTC/2.1		
Author(s)	Barney King and Ellen Shlasko		
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