



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

28 Hitchin Road  
Upper Caldecote  
Central Bedfordshire



### Quality Check

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## Summary

In June 2021, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an Archaeological Evaluation at Hitchin Road, Upper Caldecote, Central Bedfordshire. One 25m long trench was excavated prior to the construction of two dwellings and the upgrading of an existing access road. Archaeological investigations in Upper Caldecote have shown significant evidence of occupation since the Bronze Age and in Saxon times. However, no archaeological finds or features were revealed within the excavated trench. Only post-medieval and modern features like rubbish pits and stake holes from possible former farm activity were recorded.

## 1 Introduction

1.1 In June 2021 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an Archaeological Evaluation at 28 Hitchin Road, Upper Caldecote, Bedfordshire. The project was commissioned by JM Property Group Limited on behalf of Jason McGuinness and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Shlasko 2020), and approved by Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeology Team (CBCAT) acting as Archaeological Advisor (AA), on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Central Bedfordshire Council. The relevant planning application reference is CB/18/00960/OUT.

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation has been required under the terms of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), as Condition 4 of planning permission for the development of the site.

### 1.3 *The Site*

#### *Location*

The development site is located on the western edge of Upper Caldecote, which is in the civil parish of Northill and the administrative district of Central Bedfordshire Council. It is centred on Nation Grid Reference TL 1648 4571 (Fig. 1).

#### *Description*

The site consists of the front drive, side and rear of 28 Hitchin Road. It is on the west side of the road. To the north, south and west are gardens and fields (Fig. 2).

#### *Geology and Topography*

The landscape around Upper Caldecote is flat and open. The site is located at approximately 35m AOD. The solid geology is mudstone of the Stewartby member and Weymouth member, which is overlain by glaciofluvial deposits of sand and gravel from the mid Pleistocene (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

#### *Development*

The development comprises the upgrading of an existing access to a private drive to serve 2 additional plots at the side and rear within the existing residential curtilage, and the construction of two dwellings (Fig. 3).



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

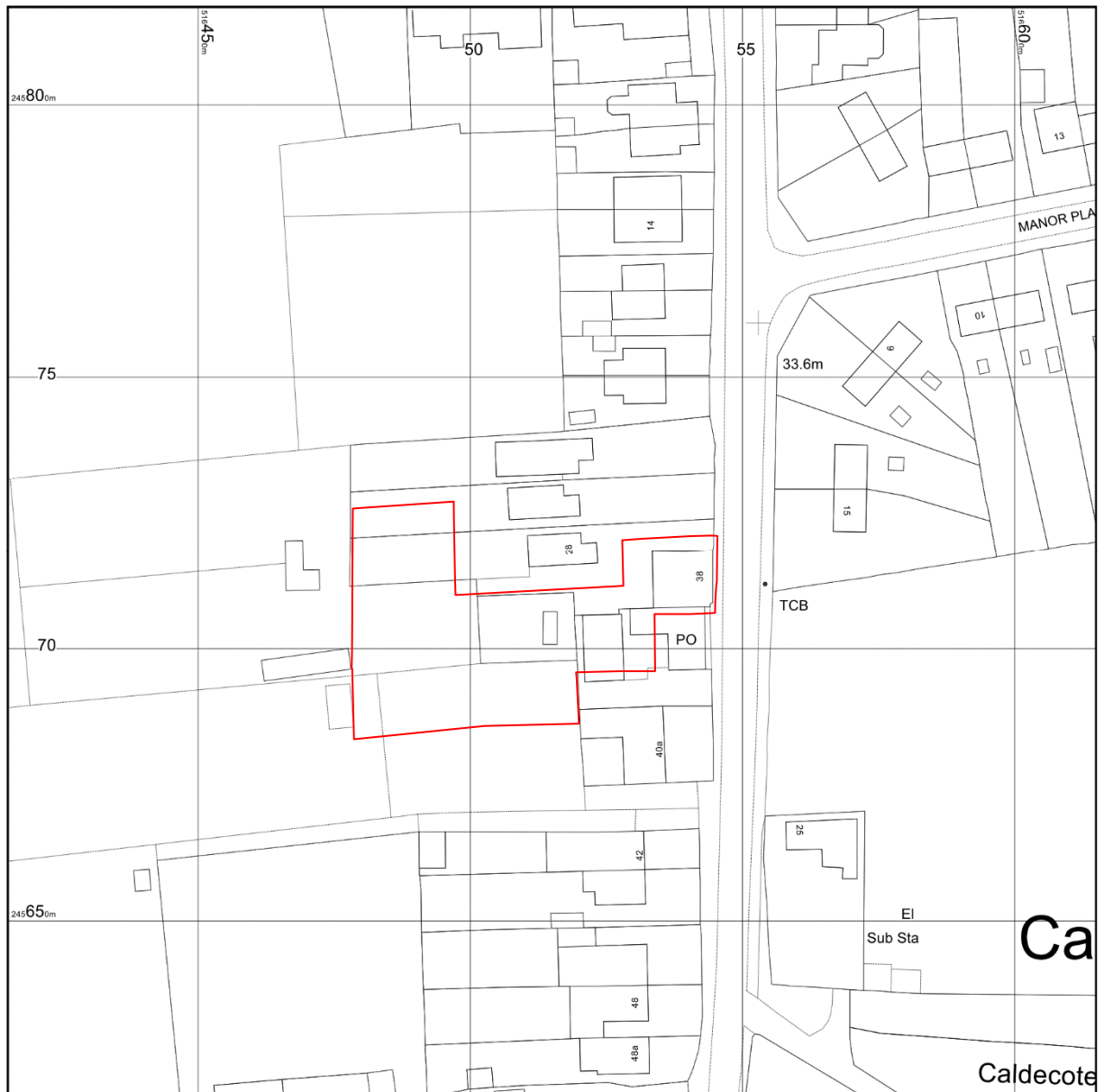


Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:1250)

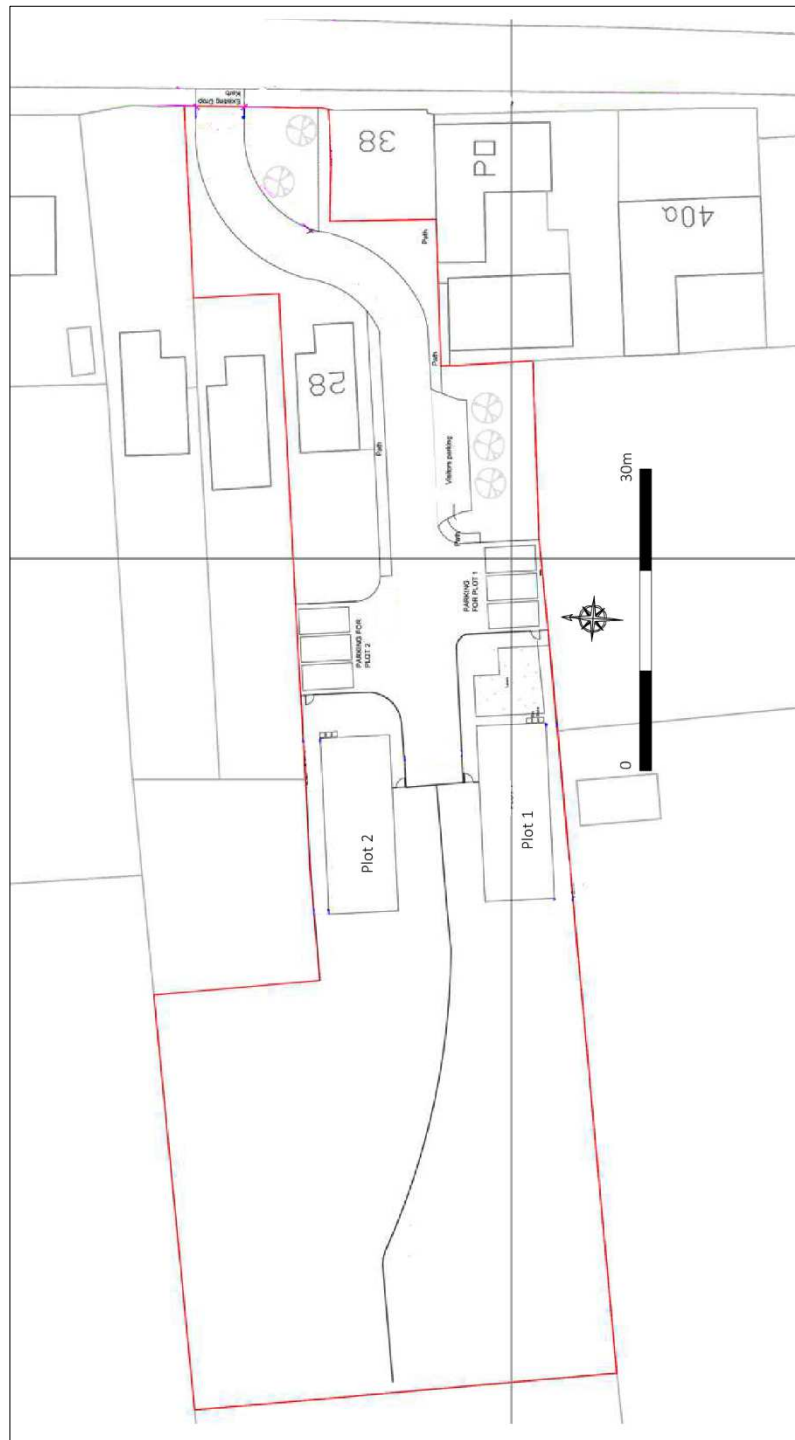


Figure 3: Development plan (scale 1:750)



Figure 4: Proposed trench location plan





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## 2 Aims & Methods

### 2.1 Aims

The aims of this project as defined in the approved WSI (Shlasko 2020) 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 one 25 X 2m trench located within the footprint of the proposed access road, including a contingency of 15 sq. m. (Fig. 4).

### 2.3 Standards

The work conformed to the following requirements:

- The relevant sections of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance* notes (CIfA 2014)
- The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2019)
- Current Historic England guidelines (EH 2008, HE 2015)
- 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 Upper Caldecote is part of the parish of Northill, which was first recorded in the Tribal Hidage in the 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries AD as being part of the tribal territory of the Gifle (Hill 1988: 1-2). The name Caldecote derives from the Old English for 'cold or inhospitable cottage(s), or shelter(s) for travellers' (Mills 1992: 63), with 'Upper' as a general prefix. The village is essentially linear, with settlement spread along its two main roads, the Ickwell to Biggleswade road, which runs west to east and Hitchin Road, which runs north to south. The settlement retains its old village green, southwest of the proposed development site (HER 14873).

This section has been drawn from previous KDK reports (Shlasko 2018), updated with information from the Central Bedfordshire HER (HER Search No. 202021/71), KDK's own library and reliable internet sources.

#### 3.2 *Prehistoric-Roman* (before 600BC – AD450)

Archaeological investigations around Upper Caldecote have revealed significant evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and to the Iron Age and the Roman periods. At Broom Quarry, southeast of the proposed development site, excavations revealed an early Bronze Age barrow, as well as a middle-late Bronze Age double-ditched boundary containing burials and ritual deposits (HER 9093).

Research conducted prior to the construction of a pipeline, revealed significant evidence of early occupation south of Upper Caldecote (HER 9093, HER 16787). Geophysical survey (EBD 744) identified areas of interest, which were subsequently excavated (EBD 164). To the south-west of the development site, near cropmarks that indicate the presence of a trapezoidal enclosure, excavation revealed evidence of a settlement that spanned the whole Roman period. Ditches and pits containing domestic refuse suggest the presence of a nearby settlement, probably located within the trapezoidal enclosure, which was not excavated (HER 6787).

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

During the Saxon period, the area around Upper Caldecote was occupied by a tribe known as the *Gifle*, whose name was given to the River Ivel, to the east of the parish, and occurs in early renderings of the name Northill: *Nortgivele* and *Nortgifelle* (Hill 1988: 1-2). Although Upper Caldecote was not named as a separate settlement at the time of the Domesday Survey, several manors were listed in Northill, including the area thought to correspond with what eventually became known as Upper Caldecote.

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

In 1086, Northill contained four manors containing 11 ploughs of agricultural land, 11 ploughs of meadow, woodland for 300 pigs and 1.5 mills (Williams & Martin 2002: 571). Upper Caldecote was probably part of the two manors held by Eudo the Steward, containing 3.5 ploughs of land and occupied by 3 villagers, 6 smallholders and 3 slaves (*ibid*).

The medieval settlement at Upper Caldecote (HER 17129) is thought to have grown up around the manor, the site of which is believed to be the now-demolished Manor Farm (HER 2987). This would have been just one of several manors that controlled land in Northill parish in the medieval period (Bedfordshire Community Archives).

A windmill stood to the north-west of the development site in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. It was granted to Warden Abbey between 1205 and 1210, and is mentioned again in 1289 (HER 3161).



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By the late 17<sup>th</sup> century it had been demolished, although the name Windmill Hill (eventually corrupted to Wilmer Hill), attested to its former location.

### 3.5 *Post-Medieval* (1500 - 1900)

Much of the development of Upper Caldecote occurred during the post-medieval period. Several surviving 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century farm buildings reflect the largely agricultural character of the settlement, including an onion-drying shed (HER 13364), weather-boarded barns (HER 12774), farmhouses (HER 5813, HER 9306) and a granary (HER 9257); many of these are also listed buildings. Some of this growth may be attributed to the creation of a turnpike road in 1757, which is now Hitchin Road (HER 8246).

The Grade II listed parish church of All Saints (HER 744) was built in 1867-8, originally as a chapel of ease. It became the parish church after the creation of the ecclesiastical parish of Caldecote in 1928. Other 19<sup>th</sup> century development included Caldecote Lodge (HER 3669), Caldecote House (HER 5814), the Harvey Cottages almshouses (HER 9256) and the Old School (HER 7172).

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

Since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many of the former agricultural buildings have been converted to homes, as Upper Caldecote has become increasingly residential. All of the public houses, including the Rose & Crown, south of the proposed development site, have become residences or been replaced by modern housing (HER 16461).

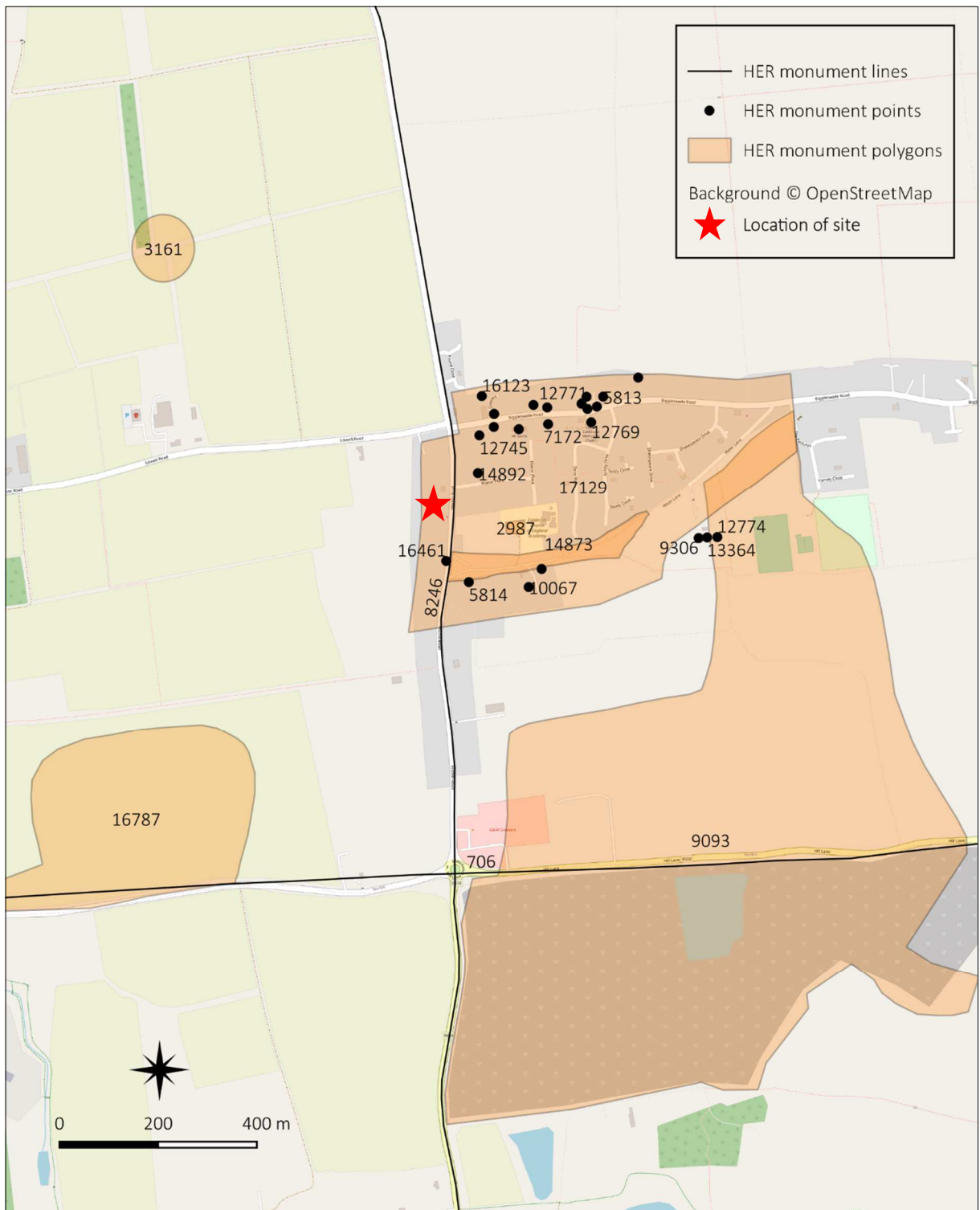


Figure 5: HER data plan (scale 1:20,000)



## 4 Results

### 4.1 Introduction

A single trench was excavated using a 9 tonne machine fitted with a 1.2m wide toothless bucket. The trench was orientated ESE-WNW (Fig. 5, Plate 1).

The stratigraphy was uniform throughout the trench and consisted of mid grey brown sandy clay topsoil (101) measuring 0.14m in depth overlying light grey brown silty sandy clay subsoil (102), which was 0.34m deep. The natural geology (103) was excavated to a depth of 0.16m and was composed of a mid orange-brown sand and gravel (Fig. 6, Plate 2).

### 4.2 Trench

The trench was 25m long, 2.0m wide and 0.52m deep. Two square rubbish pits containing 19<sup>th</sup> century and later broken glass bottles, industrially produced CBM and plastic were exposed at the eastern end of the trench. The larger pit measured 0.98 x 0.80m and the smaller one 0.78 x 0.70m; both cut the subsoil. To the west of these was a series of modern stakeholes, 15m<sup>2</sup>, with remains of wood in them (Fig 7, Plate 1).



**Plate 1:** Trench 1, overall trench shot, facing west south-west



Plate 2: Trench 1, section shot, facing north north-west

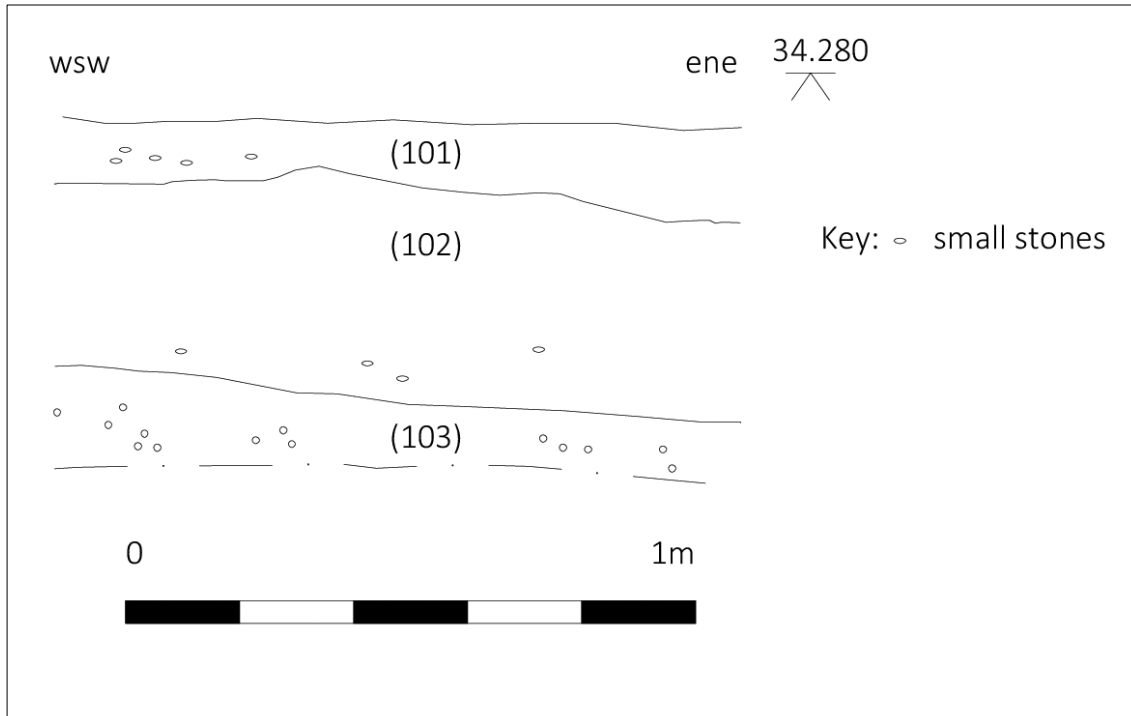


Figure 6: Trench stratigraphy (scale 1:10)

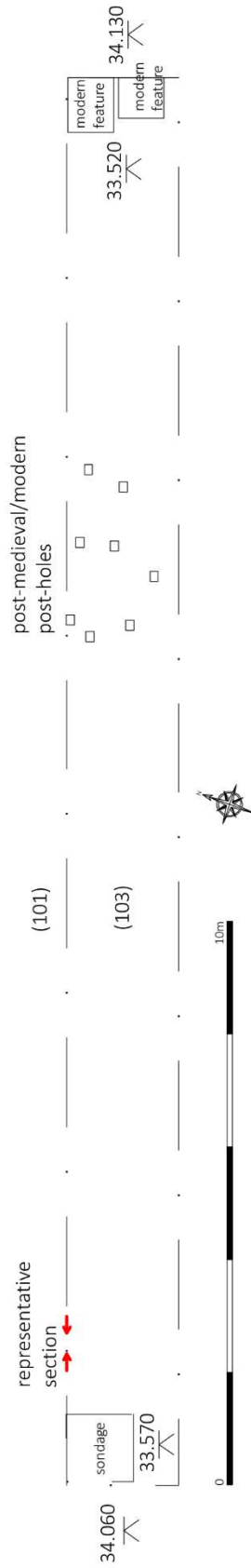


Figure 7: Trench plan (scale 1:125)



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## 5 Conclusions

The archaeological evaluation at 28 Hitchin Road, Upper Caldecote, Bedfordshire comprised the excavation of a single 25m-long trench. The trench, located in the proposed access road, only contained 19<sup>th</sup> century and later rubbish pits and stake holes possibly from former farm activities.

Whilst there are clearly archaeological features within the vicinity of the site dating back as far as prehistory, nothing of note was recorded in the evaluation trench. This may be due to the fact that the trench was located between widely dispersed features or simply that no human occupation has taken place prior to the industrial era.





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## 6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to JM Property Group Limited on behalf of Jason McGuinness for commissioning this. Thanks are also due to Stephen Coleman of Central Bedfordshire HER for providing historic environment records and other relevant documents; and to Slawek Utrata of CBAT for monitoring the project.

The fieldwork was carried out by Florian Weber MA PCIfA. The report was written by Florian Weber MA PCIfA, 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. Site drawings
4. Monitoring sheets
5. Client's site plans
6. List of photographs
7. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum, the accession number is: BEDFM 2020.54



## 8 References

### *Standards and Specifications*

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### *Secondary Sources*

Bedfordshire Community Archives:

<https://bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk/CommunityArchives/UpperCaldecote/UpperCaldecoteIndexOfPages.aspx>

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



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## Appendix 1: Photograph List

Shot	Subject
1	Trench 1 (2x1m scale) view WSW
2	Trench 1 (2x1m scale) view WSW
3	Trench 1 (2x1m scale) view ENE
4	Trench 1 (2x1m scale) view ENE
5	Trench 1, section (1m scale) view NNW
6	Trench 1, section (1m scale) view NNW



## Appendix 2: OASIS and Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
<b>Project Name &amp; Address</b>	28 Hitchin Road, Upper Caldecote, Central Bedfordshire	<b>Project Site Code</b>	543/UCH
<b>OASIS reference</b>	kdkarcha1-400928	<b>Event/Accession no</b>	BEDFM 2020.54
<b>OS reference</b>	TL 1653 4571	<b>Study area size</b>	15 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Project Type</b>	Archaeological Evaluation	<b>Height (mAOD)</b>	33
<b>Short Description</b>	In June 2021, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an Archaeological Evaluation at Hitchin Road, Upper Caldecote, Central Bedfordshire. One 25m long trench was excavated prior to the construction of two dwellings and the upgrading of an existing access road. Archaeological investigations in Upper Caldecote have shown significant evidence of occupation since the Bronze Age and in Saxon times. However, no archaeological finds or features were revealed within the excavated trench. Only post-medieval and modern features like rubbish pits and stake holes from possible former farm activity were recorded.		
<b>Previous work</b>	None	<b>Site status</b>	None
<b>Planning proposal</b>	The upgrading of an existing access to a private drive to serve 2 additional plots at the side and rear within the existing residential curtilage.	<b>Current land use</b>	Access road and former farm land
<b>Local Planning Authority</b>	Central Bedfordshire	<b>Planning application ref.</b>	CB/18/00960/OUT &APP/P0240/W/18/3 209076
<b>Monument type</b>	N/A	<b>Monument period</b>	N/A
<b>Significant finds</b>	None	<b>Future work</b>	Unknown
PROJECT CREATORS			
<b>Organisation</b>	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
<b>Project Brief originator</b>	N/A	<b>Project Design originator</b>	KDK Archaeology Ltd
<b>Project Manager</b>	David Kaye BA ACIfA	<b>Director/Supervisor</b>	Florian Weber MA PCIfA
<b>Sponsor/funding body</b>	Jason McGuinness		
PROJECT DATE			
<b>Start date</b>	14.06.2021	<b>End date</b>	14.06.2021
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	<b>Location</b>	<b>Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)</b>	
<b>Physical</b>	Bedford Museum	-	
<b>Paper</b>		Report, WSI, site records, photographs	
<b>Digital</b>		CD ROM, digital photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
<b>Title</b>	Archaeological Evaluation: 28 Hitchin Road, Upper Caldecote, Central Bedfordshire		
<b>Serial title &amp; volume</b>	543/UCH/2.2		
<b>Author(s)</b>	Florian Weber MA PCIfA		
<b>Page no's</b>	19	<b>Date</b>	15.06.2021