



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Mymms Hall
South Mimms
Hertfordshire



Quality Check

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Summary

In June 2021 an Archaeological Evaluation was undertaken at Mymms Hall, South Mimms, Hertfordshire, in order to fulfil Conditions 3-5 of Listed Building Consent for the construction of a tennis court. A single trench was excavated to the south of a large bank running through the garden that marks the boundary of a medieval moat. However, no evidence of a moat or any other archaeological features were revealed in the excavated trench.

1 Introduction

1.1 In June 2021 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an Archaeological Evaluation at Mymms Hall, South Mimms, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by Dan Bukin of F3 Architects on behalf of Nathan and Ebony Francis, and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Horsley 2021), and approved by Andy Instone of Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Team (HHET), Archaeological Advisor (AA) to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Hertsmeire District Council. The relevant planning application references are 21/0118/HSE and 21/0119/LBC.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This project has been required under the terms of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as Conditions 3-5 of Listed Building Consent for the addition of a tennis court.

1.3 *The Site*

Location

Mymms Hall is located to the east of Warrengate Lane to the northeast of South Mimms. Although almost in Potters Bar, the building is just within the boundary of the civil parish of Shenley, and the administrative district of Hertsmeire. The building is centred on National Grid reference (NGR) TL 2330 0200 (Fig. 1).

Description

Mymms Hall site is located at the junction of two tracks leading from Warrengate Lane. The proposed development site lies to the south of the house and is bounded to the east by a track and by gardens to the south and west (Fig. 2).

Geology & Topography

The bedrock geology consists of silts, sands and gravels of the Lambeth Group that were formed approximately 48 to 59 million years ago in an environment dominated by swamps, estuaries and deltas (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). The site slopes from east to west and is at an elevation of 92mAOD.

Proposed Development

The development proposals are for the construction of a tennis court and associated fencing (Fig. 3).

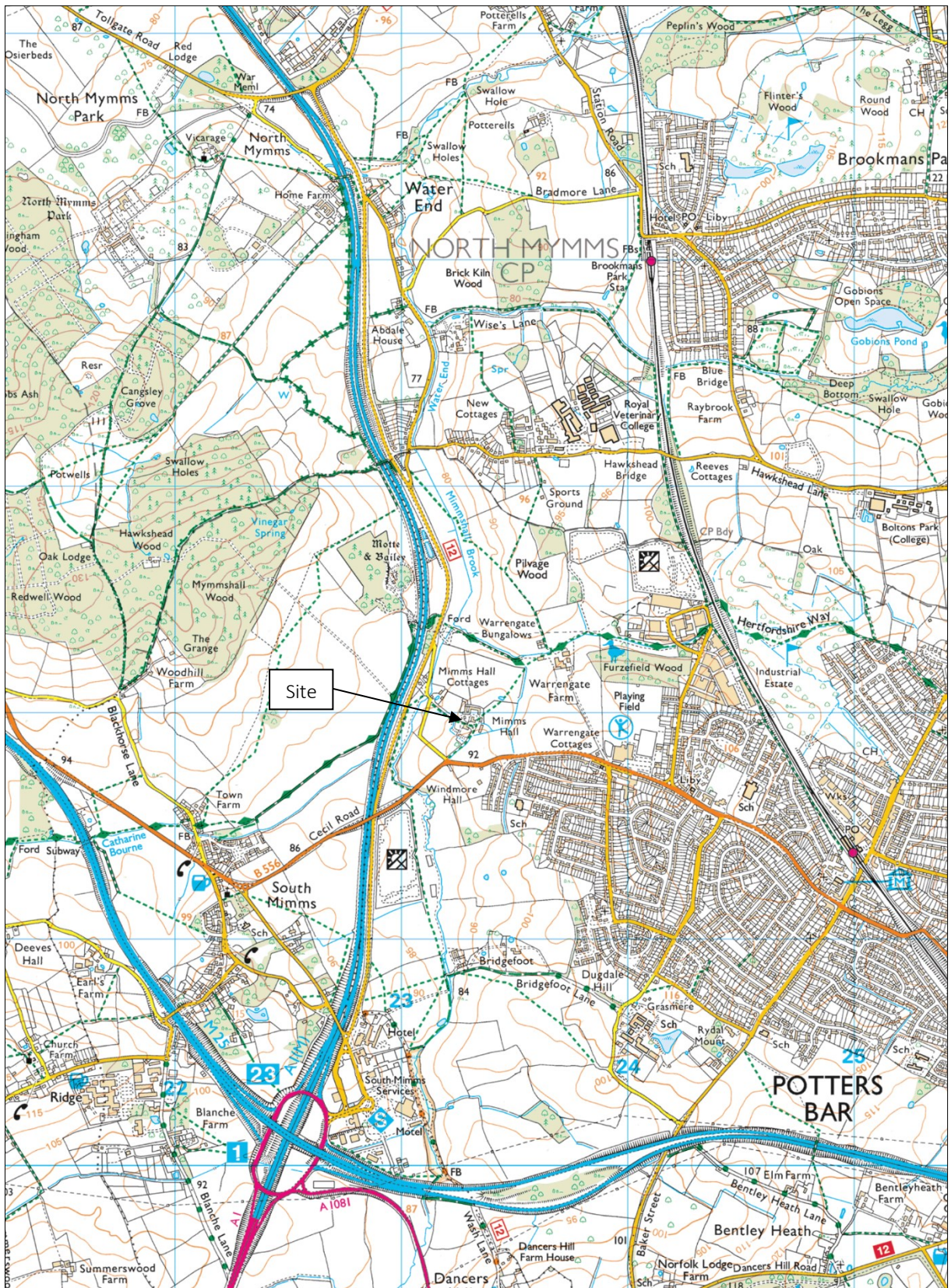


Figure 1: Site location (scale 1:25,000)



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

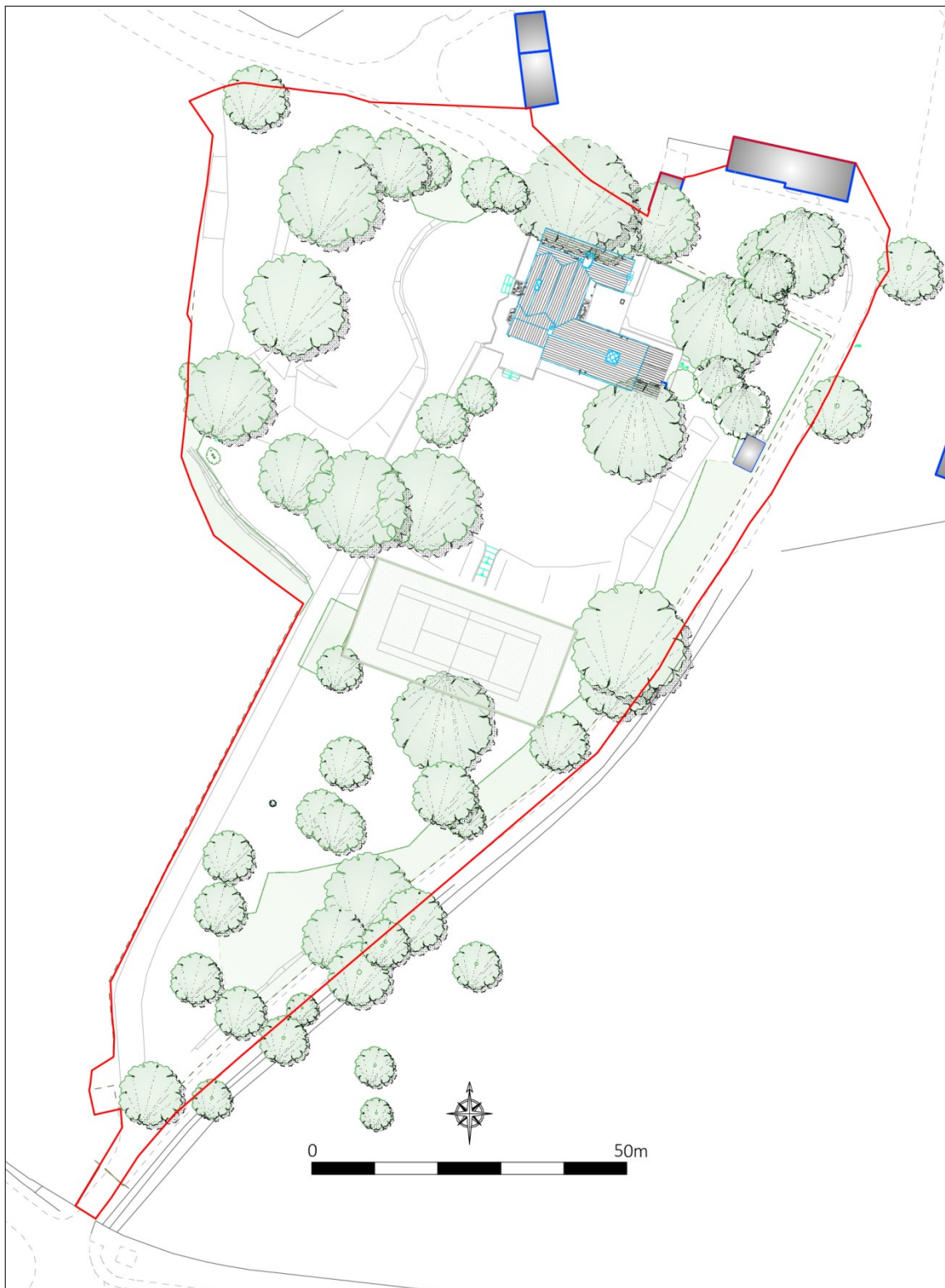


Figure 3: Proposed development (scale 1:1000)



2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

The aims of this project as defined in the approved WSI (Horsley 2021) were:

- To establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation within the development area
- To determine the presence/absence of the medieval moat and bank
- 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

Following discussion with the County Archaeology Officer, the following method agreed:

- A single trench measuring 15 x 1.8m was to be excavated within the footprint of the tennis court with a contingency for a further 2m² to resolve queries if required

Stage Two: An appraisal of the results of the evaluation and their significance with regard to the proposed development.

This report only concerns Stage 1 of investigations. The methods used on site deviated slightly from those stated in the WSI and were agreed by the County Archaeological Officer before the evaluation started.

2.3 Standards

The work conformed to the following requirements:

- The WSI
- The relevant sections of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (CIfA 2020)
- 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)
- Data Protection Act 2018



3 Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 The following section has been taken from a Heritage Asset Impact Assessment (HIA) for the site of proposed development (Kaye 2021), which had heavily drawn from a report written by the author for a Historic Building Assessment of Mymms Hall (Simmelmann 2013). Initial research was undertaken at the Hertfordshire Archive and Local Studies library (HALS) and the Hatfield House Archive and Historic Collections and has been added to by the recent acquisition of the Historic Environment Records for a radius of c.1km of the site.

The locations of known heritage assets recorded in the HER are shown in Fig. 4.

3.2 *Prehistoric* (before 600BC - AD43)

The oldest archaeological remains discovered within the study area are Mesolithic flints from c.8500 BC to 4501 BC (HER 6233). These were found less than 400m from Mymms Hall along with late Iron Age pottery fragments to the east of South Mymms castle during the construction of the A1(M). A prehistoric flint core was found when the motorway was widened in 1977 (HER 4834).

3.3 *Roman* (AD43 - c.450)

Despite the proximity of St Albans, the only entry for Roman heritage assets within the study area is a coin hoard (HER 9240) found just over 1km to the southeast, east of Bridgefoot House. Over 90 coins dating from the reign of Claudius (AD 41-54) to Commodus (AD 177-92) were found by metal detectorists between 1995 and 1996.

3.4 *Saxon* (c.450 - 1066)

Although there is no archaeological evidence for Saxon settlement, which is thought to have been centred on or close to the later motte and bailey castle to the north of Mymms Hall, the settlement is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as having been held by Asgar the Staller (Williams & Martin 2002: 364). It was granted to Geoffrey de Mandeville after the Conquest when it was a berewick or outlier of Edmonton Manor. The whole estate was recorded as having 35 hides with a mill, woodland for 2000 pigs, land for 26 ploughs and pasture (Williams & Martin 2002: 364). It was a large manor, valued at £40 in 1086, but the extent, composition and value of South Mymms itself remains unclear.

3.5 *Medieval* (1066 - 1500)

South Mymms Castle, a Scheduled Monument c.455m northwest of Mymms Hall, is thought to have been built by Geoffrey de Mandeville in 1141 during the Anarchy period (HER 95; SAM 20625). Excavations revealed an earlier apsidal building on the site that may have formed part of an earlier manorial complex. The design of the motte and bailey castle at South Mymms is unusual in that the tower was not built on a mound. Instead, the timber tower was constructed first and the earth was built up around its base. Access was gained by a timber lined tunnel through the base. The castle is thought to have been destroyed in 1143.

At around the same period, the manor seems to have been subinfeudated when Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, who died in 1144, granted half of it to Hugh of Eu. By 1210-12 the whole manor was in the hands of Ernulf de Mandeville, probably a descendant of Geoffrey's eldest son, Ernulf, who held it of the honour of Mandeville for one knight's fee. It was acquired by the Lewknor family, who seem to have been connected with the Mandevilles. They held the manor until at least 1485, albeit with some interruption as Sir Thomas Lewknor was attainted the previous year and his lands granted to Robert Scrope until Lewknor was pardoned (Baker & Pugh 1976).



A manor-house was first recorded in 1268 and was a capital messuage with a dovecot in 1336. By the 15th century the house had become known as 'Mimmehall' (VCH online). Although it has been proposed that the location of the medieval manor house was on the site of Warrengate Farm (HER 15549) 387m to the northeast of Mymms Hall (VCH online), a letter from a former archivist of Hatfield House noted that it is more likely that it was always on or very close to the present house (HER 2036). That the house appears to have been moated (HER 4266) is indicative of the status of the site.

There is documentary evidence for a windmill in 1268, which is thought to have been sited to the south of the hall, possibly on the junction of Warrengate Lane and Mutton Lane (HER 1761; Warren 2011: 6). It could, however, have been built even earlier as the Cartulary of St Bartholomew's Hospital of c.1220 refers to Gervas the miller and Arnold the miller.

The presence of medieval pottery sherds on and adjacent to Mutton Lane (HER 13234), south of Mymms Hall, is not unexpected as it was the medieval road to St Albans.

3.6 *Post-medieval* (1500 - 1900)

The earliest surviving lease dates from 1504 when the manor was let by Andrew Windsor of Stanwell, Middlesex, to John Freeman and John Rayner of South Mimms. This included land that was still used for breeding rabbits and that later formed Warrengate Farm.

It is recorded that repairs took place in 1532/33 and again in 1538/39, although it is unclear whether the repairs refer to the present Mymms Hall or an earlier building on the site (Warren 1999).

Thomas Bowman farmed the estate from 1542-72 after which the next surviving lease dates from 1597. However, it is known from other sources that the manor was leased to Robert Burre but there was some dispute and in 1579 Nicholas Higgs and William Reade succeeded having the tenancy confirmed.

In 1597 the house was leased to George Bayne of Mears Ashby, Northants, and in 1606 the executors of Lord Windsor sold the manor to Robert Cecil, First Earl of Salisbury. The following year it was leased to Thomas Conyers of East Barnet with the proviso that a room be made available to hold the manor court.

Various building events occurred over the next two hundred years. The house was faced in brick in 1648, and extensive repairs took place in 1684 when 13ft of new glass, 3,500 tiles, 3½ bushels of tile pins, 2050 planks, thatching and 3,500 bricks are accounted for. The accounts for 1763 refer to work by a bricklayer, carpenter and a glazier, and further works occurred in 1802.

Warrengate Lane clearly gained significance in the post-medieval period, when was graced with a toll gate c.902m north of South Mymms Hall (HER 18570). To the north of the gate was a wide, open area on the bank of the South Mymms Brook, which was presumably for watering livestock. The gate was removed by 1898. Other post-medieval entries within the study area in the HER include, the common (HER 12546), c.293m northwest of Mymms Hall, Warrengate Farm (HER 15549), Flint Cottage (HER 17611), Bridgefoot House (HER6614), Bridgefoot Farm (HER 16615), Bridgefoot bridge (HER 15651), Hawkshead Farm (HER 9951) and a city of London coal duty marker (HER 5730). A less static heritage asset is the musket ball discovered to the west of the castle site in 1977 (HER 4837).

3.7 *Modern* (1900 - present)

The modern landscape as recorded in the HER comprises largely World War II gun emplacements (HER 9408) and probable tank traps (HER 10425 & 11489). Two bridges are also recorded, one (HER 5119) takes the B566 which includes a long section of Mutton Lane, over



the A1(M) and the other (HER 13009) is Warrengate Farm bridge. This was strengthened in WWII to take the weight of tanks.

Mymms Hall was disassociated from its farm buildings in December 2014 when it was sold by the Cecil Gascoyne Estate to the present owner.

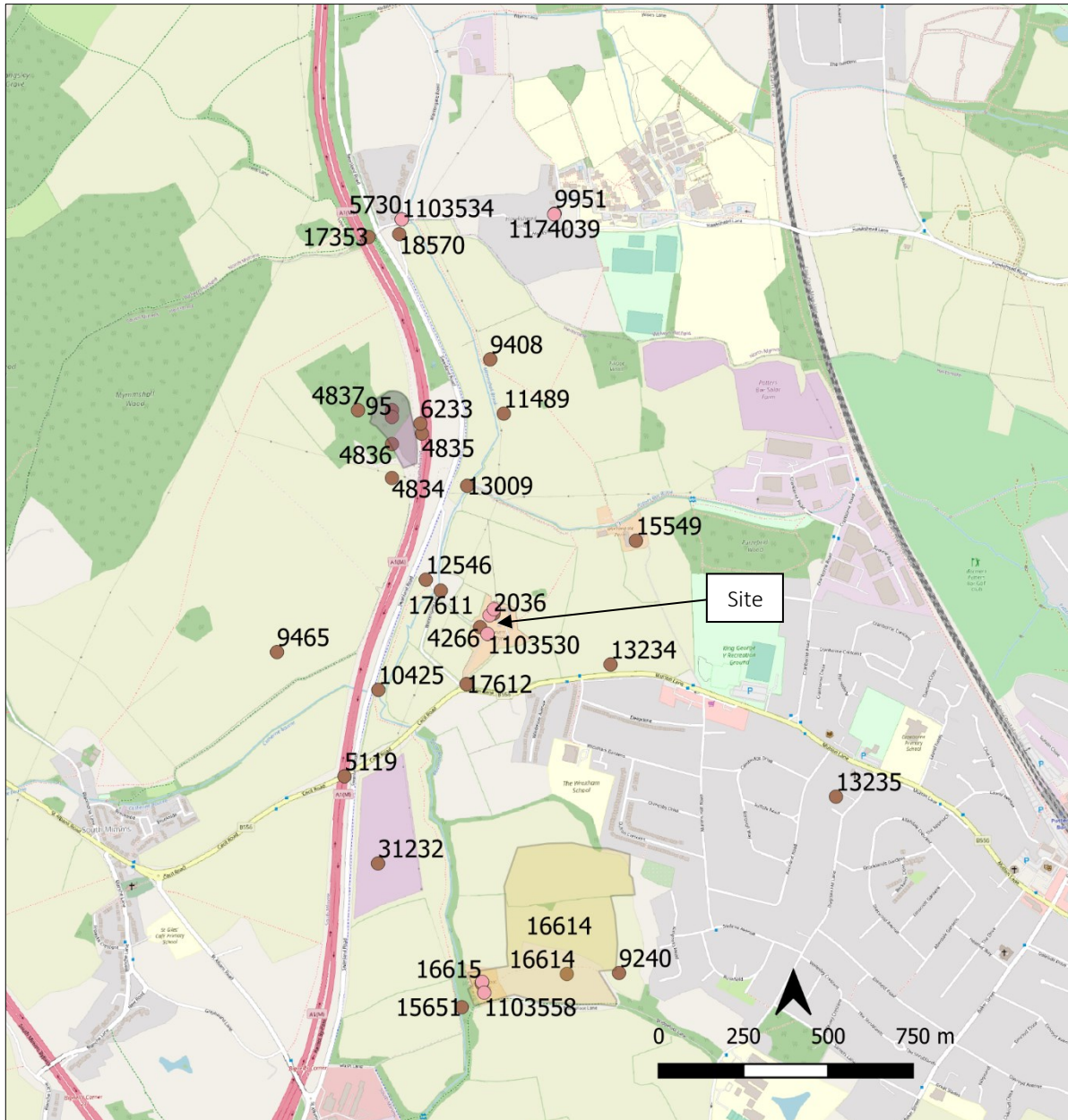


Figure 4: Heritage assets recorded in the Hertfordshire HER (scale 1:2,500)



4 Results

4.1 Introduction

A single evaluation trench was excavated within the footprint of the proposed tennis court, orientated northwest to southeast and measuring 15m in length by 1.8m in width, and between 0.5 and 1.1m in depth (Fig. 5, Plate 1). The work was carried out using a two tonne tracked excavator fitted with a 0.6m toothless bucket.

4.2 Trench

The trench was located in the orchard, which was heavily overgrown prior to its acquisition by the current owners and, as a result of the subsequent clearing of the overgrowth, the ground has been heavily disturbed and contains a large quantity of roots. A large tree stump was found at the southeast end of the trench that could not be removed (Plate 2).

The trench was dug into a large bank at the northwest end that was created by spoil from clearing works undertaken by the present owner. This modern build-up was deposited adjacent to the original bank, thought to mark the location of the moat, however the trench did not extend far enough to interact with this as it lay outside of the proposed footprint (Fig. 6).

The stratigraphy was recorded in both the southeast and northwest halves of the trench, in order to reflect the change in depths caused by the route through the modern bank. Stratigraphy 1 was recorded at the south eastern end of the trench where it was 0.54m deep. This consisted of dark brownish grey slightly silty clay topsoil (101) that was 0.12m deep. Below this was a 0.16m thick layer of made ground (102) with a similar composition to the topsoil but containing significantly more modern and post-medieval rubble including CBM (ceramic building material), concrete, glass and scrap metal. The made ground was also lighter in colour than the topsoil. The natural geology (104) was light yellowish brown sandy clay (Plate 3). Stratigraphy 2 measured 1.1m in total and consisted of 0.12m of topsoil (101) and 0.3m of made ground (102). These were the same as those layers previously mentioned, however below these was a 0.42m thick layer of subsoil (103), which began to appear approximately 6m from the northwest end of the trench. It slowly became deeper as the trench extended to the northwest and consisted of mid greyish brown silty clay with inclusions of small rounded stones. Below this was 0.26m of natural sandy clay (104) (Plate 4; Fig. 7)

No archaeological features were discovered during the excavation of the trench.



Plate 1: Trench overall, looking southeast



Plate 2: Trench overall, looking northwest



Plate 3: Stratigraphy 1, looking northeast



Plate 4: Stratigraphy 2, looking northeast

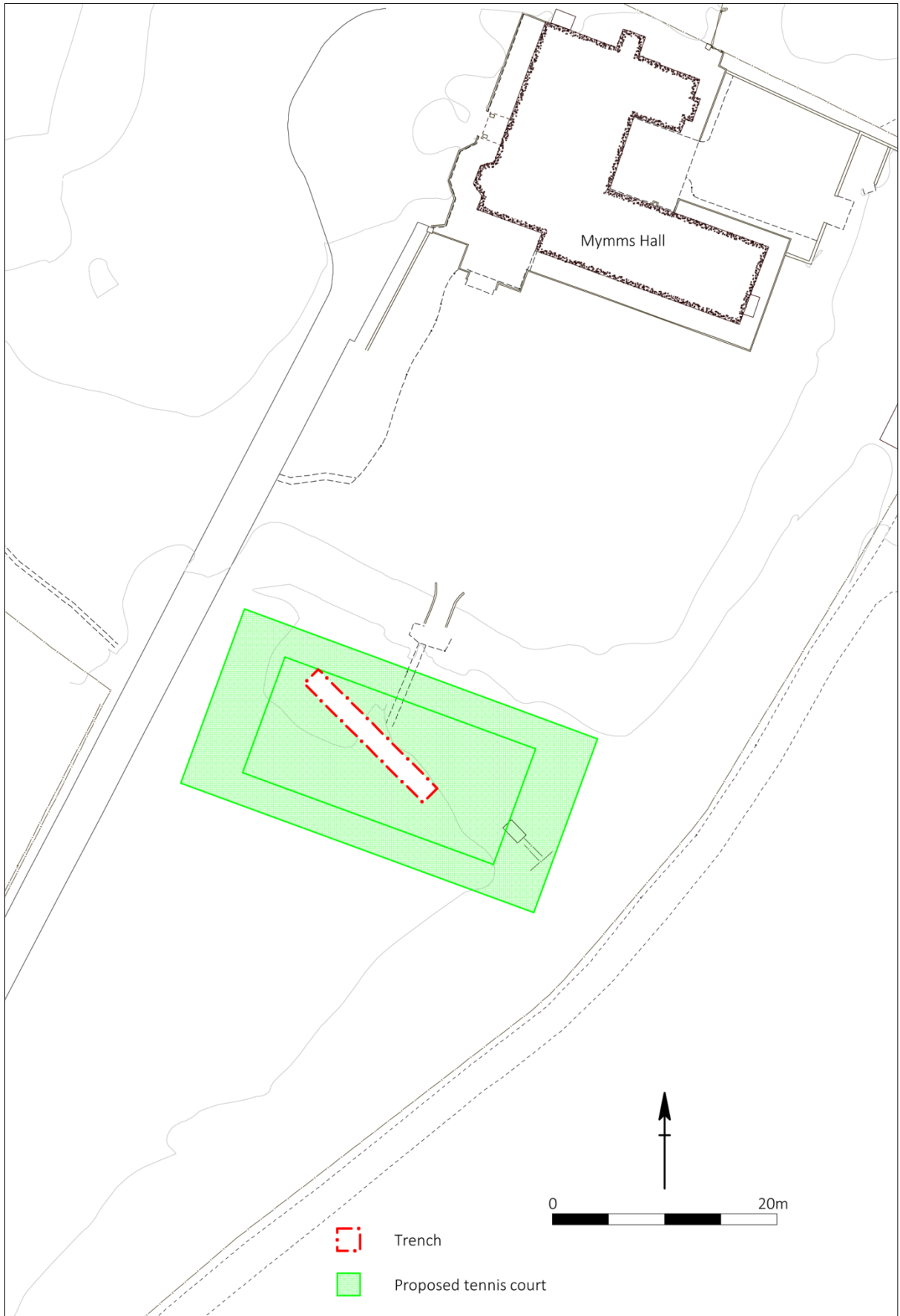


Figure 5: Trench location plan (scale 1:500)

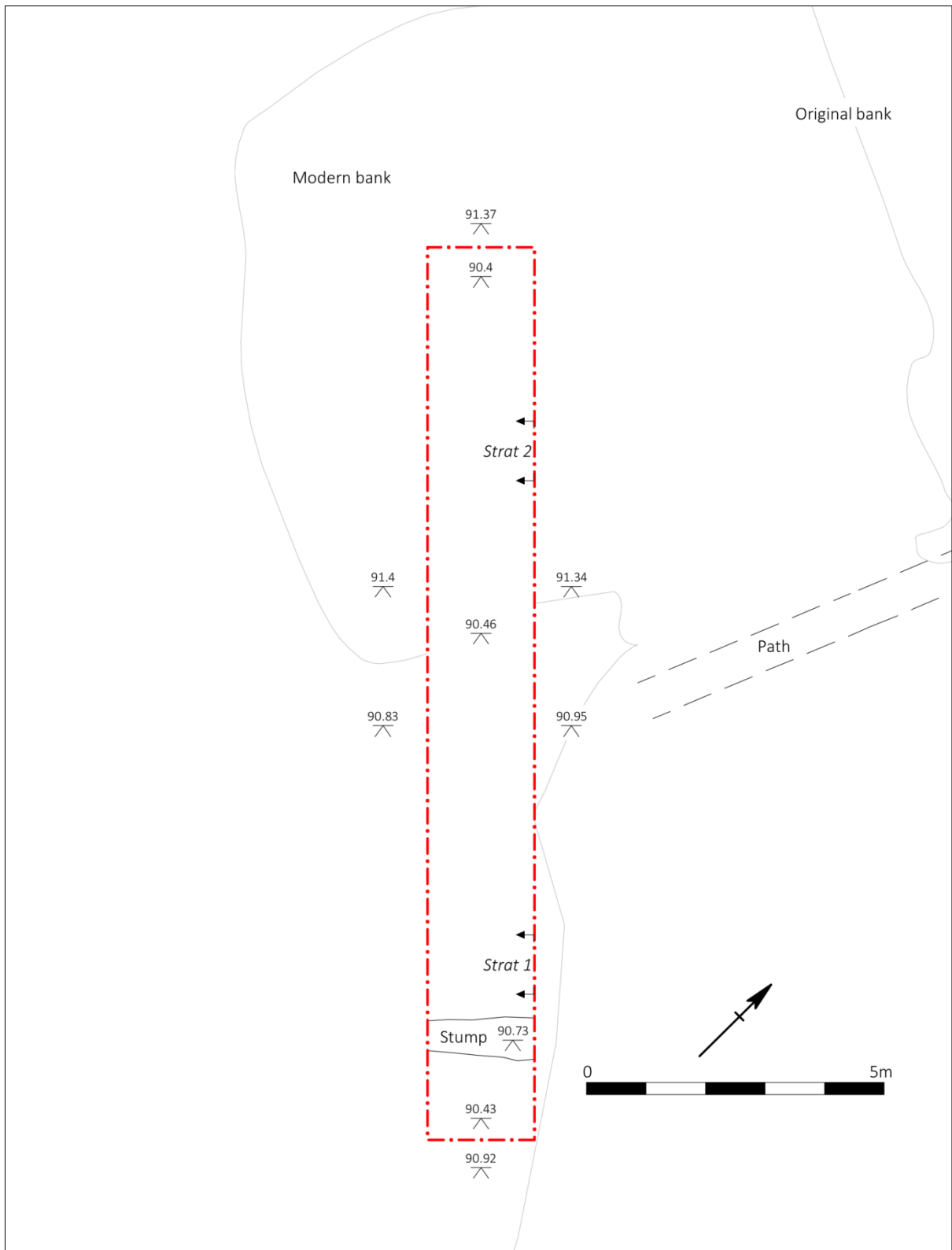


Figure 6: Trench plan and levels (scale 1:100)

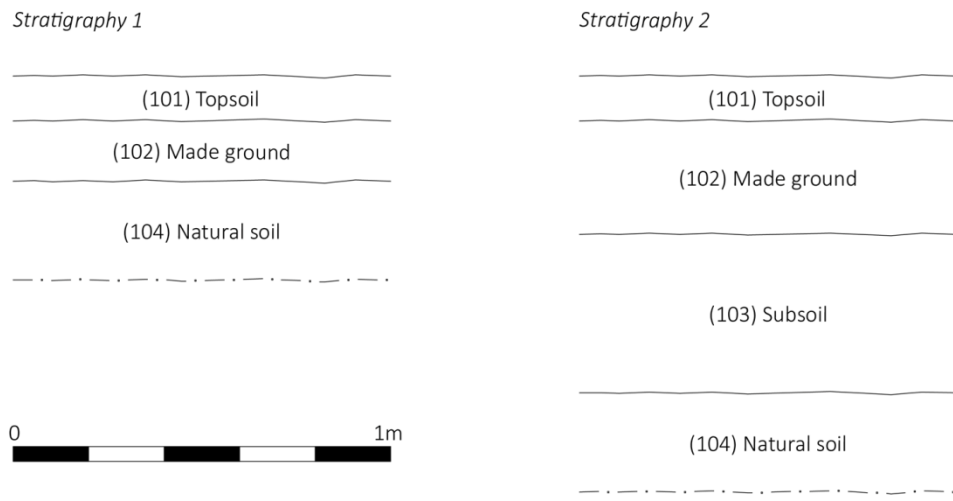


Figure 7: Trench stratigraphy (scale 1:20)



5 Conclusions

Despite the proximity of the trench to a large bank associated with a medieval moat, no archaeological features were identified and no finds were recovered that pre-dated the post-medieval period. The raised section of ground through which the trench was excavated at the northwest end was a modern addition to the medieval bank and had been created by spoil from works carried out by the current owner. The stratigraphy reflected this modern activity with a ubiquitous layer of made ground containing modern material.

The lack of medieval features may well have been a result of later re-working of the site when the orchard was established. Indeed, the layers between the natural geology and the topsoil, contained post-medieval and modern material, suggesting considerable disturbance to the naturally formed stratigraphy.



6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to F3 Architects for commissioning this report on behalf of Nathan and Ebony Francis. Thanks are also due to Rebekah Hart of Hertfordshire County Council for providing historic environment records and other relevant documents; the staff of Hertfordshire Archive and Local Studies library (HALS) and the Hatfield House Archive and Historic Collections for their assistance in the historic research, and to Andy Instone of Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Team for monitoring the project.

Special thanks go to Kane Biggs of KRB Landscaping and Digger Hire, and to Nathan and Ebony Francis for their assistance during the project.

The fieldwork was carried out by Chris Martin-Taylor BSc and Barney King PCI/fA. The report was written by Chris Martin-Taylor, and edited by Karin Kaye MA MCI/fA.



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. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Potters Bar Museum (Accession number has been applied for).



8 References

Standards & Specifications

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Online Sources

- British Geological Society (BGS): <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>
- Pastscape: http://www.pastscape.org.uk/hob.aspx?hob_id=364674
- RCHME 1937. '*Mimms, South*', *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Middlesex (1937)*, pp. 93-96.
URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=121991&strquery=South Mimms>
- Victoria County History 1978: '*South Mimms*', *A History of the County of Middlesex: Volume 5, Hendon, Kingsbury, Great Stanmore, Little Stanmore, Edmonton Enfield, Monken Hadley, South Mimms, Tottenham*, pp. 271-282.
URL: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/middx/vol5/pp271-282>



Appendix 1: Photograph List

SITE NO/CODE: 601/STC			Site Name: Mymms Hall, South Mimms, Hertfordshire
Shot	JPEG	RAW	Subject
1	x	x	Trench overall, looking southeast
2	x	x	Trench overall, looking northwest
3	x	x	Stratigraphy 1, looking northeast
4	x	x	Stratigraphy 2, looking northeast



Appendix 2: OASIS and Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name & Address	Mymms Hall, South Mimms Hall, Hertfordshire	Project Site Code	601/STC
OASIS reference	kdkarcha1-501623	Event/Accession no	TBC
OS reference	TL 2330 0200	Study area size	27m ²
Project Type	Archaeological Evaluation	Height (mAOD)	92m
Short Description	In June 2021 and Archaeological Evaluation was undertaken at Mymms Hall, South Mimms, Hertfordshire, in order to fulfil Conditions 3-5 of Listed Building Consent for the construction of a tennis court. A single trench was excavated to the south of a large bank running through the garden that marks the boundary of a medieval moat. However, no evidence of a moat or any other archaeological features were revealed in the excavated trench.		
Previous work	Historic Building Impact Assessment, 2014. Heritage Asset Impact Assessment, 2021.	Site status	Grade II listed
Planning proposal	Construction of outdoor tennis court & associated fencing	Current land use	Garden
Local Planning Authority	Hertsmere District Council	Planning application ref.	21/0118/HSE, 21/0119/LBC
Monument type	Former farmhouse and garden	Monument period	Post-medieval
Significant finds	None	Future work	Unknown
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project Brief originator	-	Project Design originator	KDK Archaeology Ltd
Project Manager	Karin Kaye MA MClfA	Director/Supervisor	Chris Martin-Taylor BSc
Sponsor/funding body	Nathan and Ebony Francis		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	14.06.2021	End date	14.06.2021
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical	Potters Bar Museum	-	
Paper		Report, WSI	
Digital		CD ROM, digital photographs, monitoring sheets	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title	Archaeological Evaluation: Mymms Hall, South Mimms, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume	601/STC/2		
Author(s)	Chris Martin-Taylor BSc		
Page no's	24	Date	15.06.2021



Appendix 3: Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record Sheet

Site name and address: Mymms Hall, South Mimms Hall, Hertfordshire		
County: Hertfordshire	District: Hertsmere	
Village/Town: South Mimms	Parish: Shenley	
Planning application reference: 21/0118/HSE, 21/0119/LBC		
Client's name, address, & tel. no: Nathan and Ebony Francis		
Nature of application: Construction of outdoor tennis court & associated fencing		
Present land use: Garden		
Size of application area: 552.75m ²	Size of area investigated: 27m ²	
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 2330 0200	Site code: 601/STC	
Site director: Chris Martin-Taylor BSc	Organization: KDK Archaeology Ltd	
Type of work: Archaeological Evaluation		
Date of Work:	Start: 14.06.2021	Finish: 14.06.2021
Curating museum: Potters Bar Museum		
Related HER no's: 2036, 4266		Periods represented: Medieval – Post-medieval
Relevant previous summaries/reports: Kaye, Karin 2021 Heritage Asset Impact Assessment: Mymms Hall, South Mimms, Hertfordshire. KDK Archaeology 555/SMM/1.2 Simmelmann, K. 2014 Historic Building Impact Assessment: South Mymms Hall, South Mimms, Hertfordshire. KDK Archaeology 031/SMH/1.1		
Summary of fieldwork results: In June 2021 and Archaeological Evaluation was undertaken at Mymms Hall, South Mimms, Hertfordshire, in order to fulfil Conditions 3-5 of Listed Building Consent for the construction of a tennis court. A single trench was excavated to the south of a large bank running through the garden that marks the boundary of a medieval moat. However, no evidence of a moat or any other archaeological features were revealed in the excavated trench.		
Author: Chris Martin-Taylor BSc	Date: 15.06.2021	