



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

## Archaeological Observation and Recording Report

The Haven  
White Hill  
Cromer  
Hertfordshire



### Quality Check

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## Summary

Between September and January 2023, KDK archaeology undertook a programme of Observation and Recording at The Haven, White Hill, Cromer, Hertfordshire, SG2 7QA, as a condition for the development of the site. The works included the demolition of the existing bungalow and the erection of a replacement dwelling. The site is located within an Area of Archaeological Significance (ASS37) and is situated within the core of the medieval village. Despite the area being rich in archaeological material, no finds, features or deposits of significance were identified during this investigation and only the site stratigraphy was revealed.

### 1 Introduction

1.1 Between September and January 2023 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording at The Haven, White Hill, Cromer, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by Matthew & Emma Cook, and was carried out at the request of the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Team (HHET), Archaeological Advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), East Hertfordshire District Council. The relevant planning application reference is 3/21/0276/FUL.

#### 1.2 *Planning Background*

This project has been required under the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to fulfil Condition 9 of the planning permission for the development of the site.

#### 1.3 *The Site*

##### *Location*

The development site is situated in the village of Cromer, which is in the civil parish of Ardeley and the administrative district of East Hertfordshire District Council. It is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 2991 2856 (Fig. 1).

##### *Description*

The development site is situated at the north-eastern end of the village of Cromer within a bend in the B1037 road (White Hill) that bounds the site to the west, north and east. It is bounded to the southeast-south by an agricultural field, and to the southwest by the garden of a private residence (Fig. 2).

##### *Geology & Topography*

The bedrock geology is chalk of the Lewes Nodular Chalk and Seaford Chalk Formations (undifferentiated), formed approximately 84 to 94 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period; this is overlain by diamicton (sediment resulting from dry-land erosion) of the Lowestoft Formation, deposited up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). The site is situated at an approximate elevation of 330m AOD.

##### *Proposed Development*

The proposal called for the demolition of the existing bungalow and the erection of a replacement dwelling (Fig. 3).

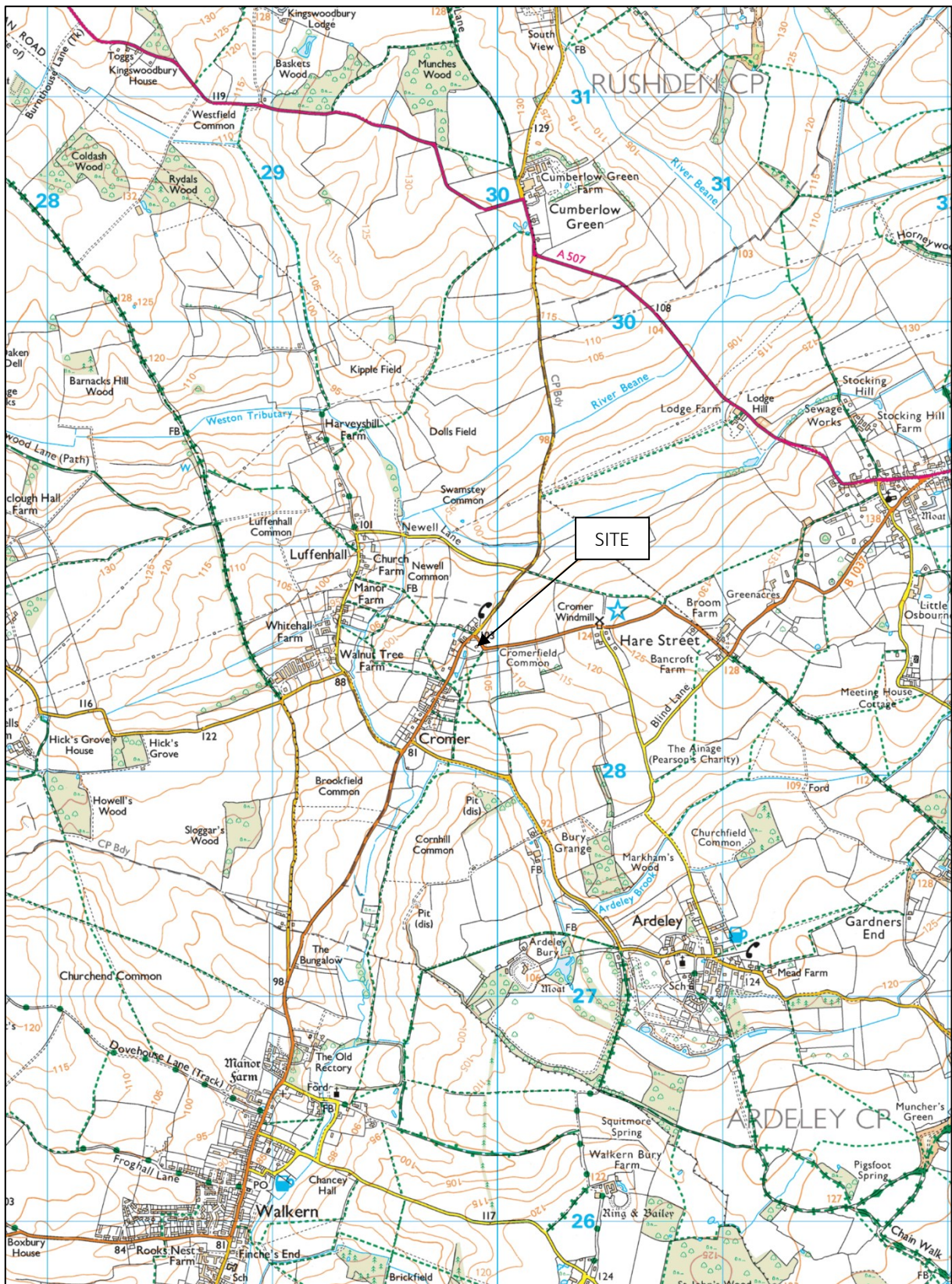


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

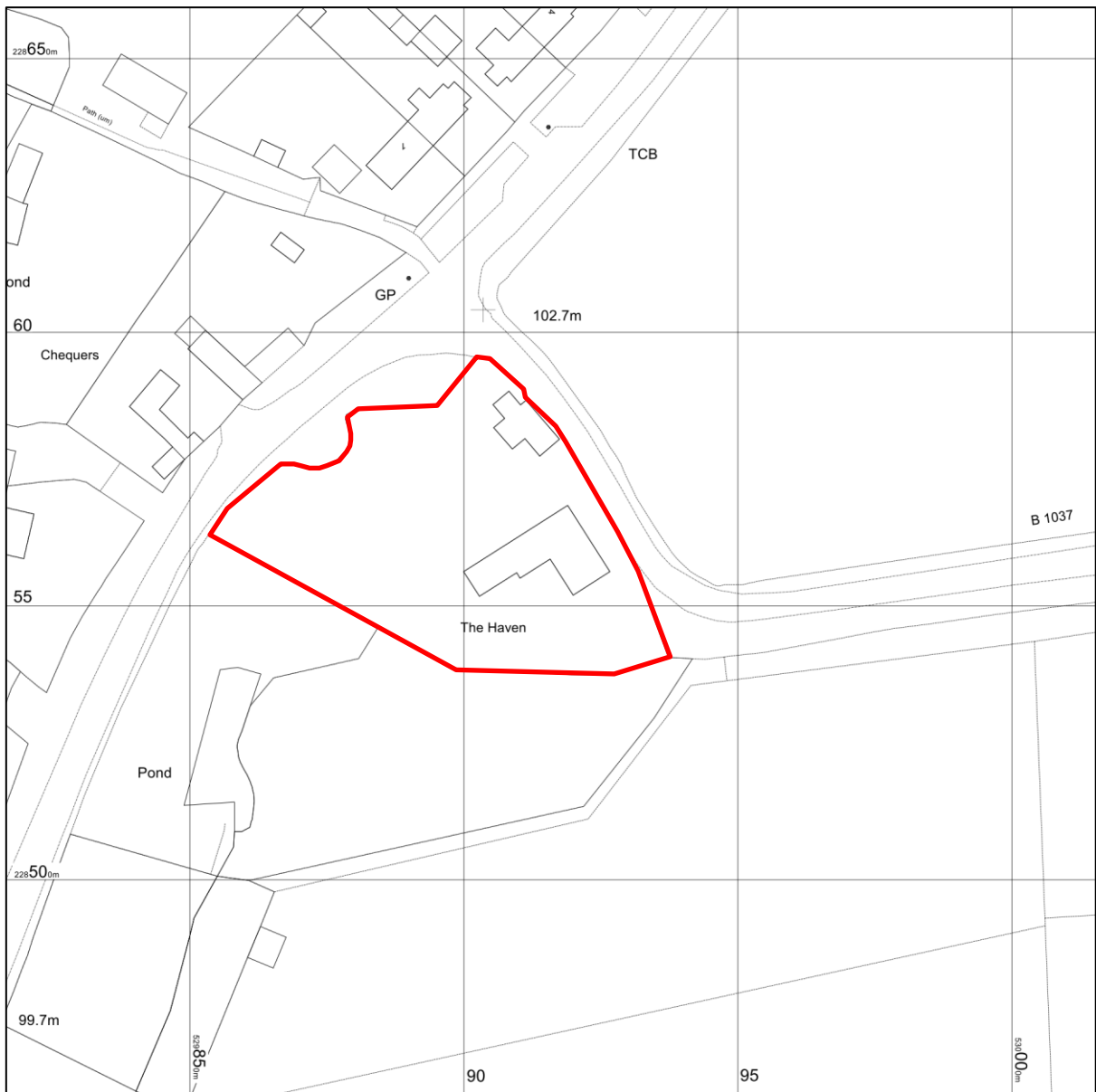


Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:1250)



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 (Watson 2022) 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 and recording of the groundworks of the development, including removal of slab/grubbing out of foundations, the excavation of foundations, services, landscaping, access, etc., including a contingency for the preservation or further investigation of any remains encountered
- The analysis of the results of the archaeological work with provisions for subsequent production of a report(s) and/or publication(s) of these results & an archive
- Provisions necessary to protect the archaeological and historic interests of the site

### 2.3 Standards

The work conformed to the following requirements:

- The relevant sections of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (CIfA 2020a)
- The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2021)
- Current English Heritage 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 The village of Cromer is historically part of the manor and parish of Ardeley. The name first appears as 'Crowmere', meaning a 'pond with crows', in AD1191 (HER 4437). Very little is known about the early occupation of the general area, but by the medieval period a village surrounded by a system of open fields was established in the sub-manor of Cromer. The proposed development is within an Area of Archaeological Significance (AAS 37), as identified in the Local Plan, covering the historic core of the village, which has medieval origins, along with several areas of even older remains in its environs, i.e., Mesolithic/Neolithic and Iron Age/Romano-British.

This section has been compiled with information from the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER ref: 207/22), KDKs own library, and reliable online sources. The HER search area includes 21 listed, predominantly post-medieval buildings (19 = Grade II; 2 = Grade II\*), but as none of these will be impacted by the development these have mostly been excluded from the following summary. The HER data, with a search radius of 1km, is shown in Fig.4.

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

Scattered finds of prehistoric date have been found in the vicinity of Cromer, such as the Mesolithic flints discovered to the west of Cromer Hall (HER 6191), c.200m southwest of the development, which comprised 15 worked flints including burins, scrapers, points, blades and flakes (some with retouch); and the Mesolithic and/or Neolithic worked and burnt flint found to the south of Chequers, c.100m west, during an archaeological evaluation (HER 10943; EHT4857).

#### 3.3 *Iron Age (600BC - AD43) & Roman (AD43 - c.450)*

Little is known about any potential occupation in the Iron Age and Romano-British periods. However, the proposed new dwelling is c.70m north of Cromerfield Common, an area that produced numerous Iron Age and Romano-British coins and artefacts in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (HER 11236). A gold stater found at Walnut Tree Farm, Luffenhall (HER 13025), c.900m west, is the only other find from the Iron Age listed in the HER search area.

Evidence of Roman occupation, though undescribed, was apparently found c.500m northwest at Luffenhall, Clothall (HER 9352). Moreover, a Roman road between Braughing and Baldock (HER 4190) runs southeast to northwest approximately 800m north of the village. Sections of the roadside ditches were identified as cropmarks in an area located approximately 900m east of the development site (HER 15494), and some Roman pottery was found along the road line (HER 15493).

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

Evidence from the early Saxon period comprises an inhumation burial found in the garden at Walnut Tree Farm, c.700m southwest of the development site (HER 12981). The remains were dated to the 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century by the accompanying tanged iron knife and whetstone. A Saxon spearhead of a similar date was discovered near Cromer Windmill, c.600m to the northeast (HER 11468).

An early medieval silver disc engraved with what appears to be the figure of a late Saxon or Norman nobleman was found at Walnut Tree Farm, Luffenhall (HER 13025).

Swamstey Common, c.700m northeast of the development site, is on the Roman road between Baldock and Braughing that was still in use in the late Saxon period (HER 4190). Place name



evidence suggests that this was an execution site, 'cwealmstow' being an Old English term for a place of execution ('*cwealm*' = death, slaughter, pestilence; and 'stow', place) (HER 11822). Such execution cemeteries had been established as part of a wider judicial system by the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and were often close to the hundredal boundary, as is the case here. Gallows Hill was nearby, and documentary evidence from 1638 suggests that a chapel (HER 13118) also stood on the hill, although the exact date and location of this building is uncertain.

An ancient trackway (HER 4687) forming part of the parish boundary between Clothall and Weston, runs from the village of Cromer to the neighbouring hamlet of Luffenhall, a possible shrunken village that also has its origins in the Saxon period (HER 1811).

Although the original documents are lost, it is thought that the manor of Ardeley was granted to the canons of St. Pauls, London by King Athelstan (924-940; Page 1912).

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

By the time of the Domesday survey in 1086, Ardeley contained land for 10 ploughs and woodland for 200 pigs (Powell-Smith 2022). The canons held the manor until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and retained manorial rights afterwards (Page 1912).

Cromer Hall (HER 11929) began as a sub-manor of Ardeley, possibly on assart, or waste land, belonging to that manor. In 1222, it was held by Ralph, son of William of Cromer, who paid three capons yearly for the lease of Cromer Hall. Ralph also received three acres of land in exchange for land used as the site of the manorial windmill (Page 1912). The mound where the medieval windmill stood was occupied by later windmills into the 20<sup>th</sup> century (HER 5822).

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the largest nearby property was probably Ardeley Bury, with its moated house and fenced deer park. Although the estate was disparted by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it remained a significant landholding throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods (HER 9552).

Other medieval heritage assets listed in the HER search area are the late medieval Grade II Walnut Tree Farmhouse, Luffenhall (HER 15787); some residual sherds of medieval pottery found near the Roman road (HER 10943; EHT4857); a ditch containing medieval pottery at Cromer Hall Bungalow (Summerfield-Hill & Shlasko 2019; EHT8246), and the approximate site of St Paul's Chapel at Luffenhall (HER 13118).

### 3.6 **Post-medieval (1500 - 1900) & Modern (1900 - present)**

The early post-medieval period was a time of 'great rebuilding', when older medieval structures were often replaced with larger, more substantially constructed buildings (Hoskins 1953). This process is visible in Cromer, where several 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> buildings have survived, such as Cromer Farm (HER 12921; EHT8496), a farmstead with a Grade II 16<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse; and c.50m to the west of the development site, the 17<sup>th</sup> century Chequers, originally a public house (HER 12936; Grade II, NHLE: 1101452).

In 1526 Hugh and Margaret Brabham sold the manor of Cromer Hall for £100, and subsequently, the property was divided and dispersed. The present Cromer Hall is a Grade II, timber-framed building that dates from the late 16<sup>th</sup>/early 17<sup>th</sup> century, and altered in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (HER 11929; NHLE: 1174276).

In the later 19<sup>th</sup> century Cromer (HER 4437) was no more than a hamlet along the road past Cromer Hall (HER 11929), which contained little more than two farms, a few cottages, two pubs, and a smithy. By 1898 one of the pubs had closed, and a church (HER 17526) had been built. Still, the hamlet remained very small until new housing and an engineering works were built in



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the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The church and the remaining pub were eventually converted to domestic use.

Around 1720, or possibly as early as 1681, a new mill was built on the site of the medieval manorial windmill. This mill, thought to be the oldest surviving post mill in Hertfordshire, was used until the 1920s, restored in the 1960s and is currently a museum operated by the Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust, who have continued an ongoing programme of preservation and repair to keep the windmill in partial operation (HBPT 2022). The Cromer Windmill (HER 5822) is a Grade II\* listed structure (NHLE: 1101453).

### 3.7 *Undated*

Undated cropmarks of possible enclosures (HER 16887, 17210) are located c.280m northwest and c.700m southeast of the development. The cropmarks of geological features are situated near Newell Common, Clothall (HER 17209).

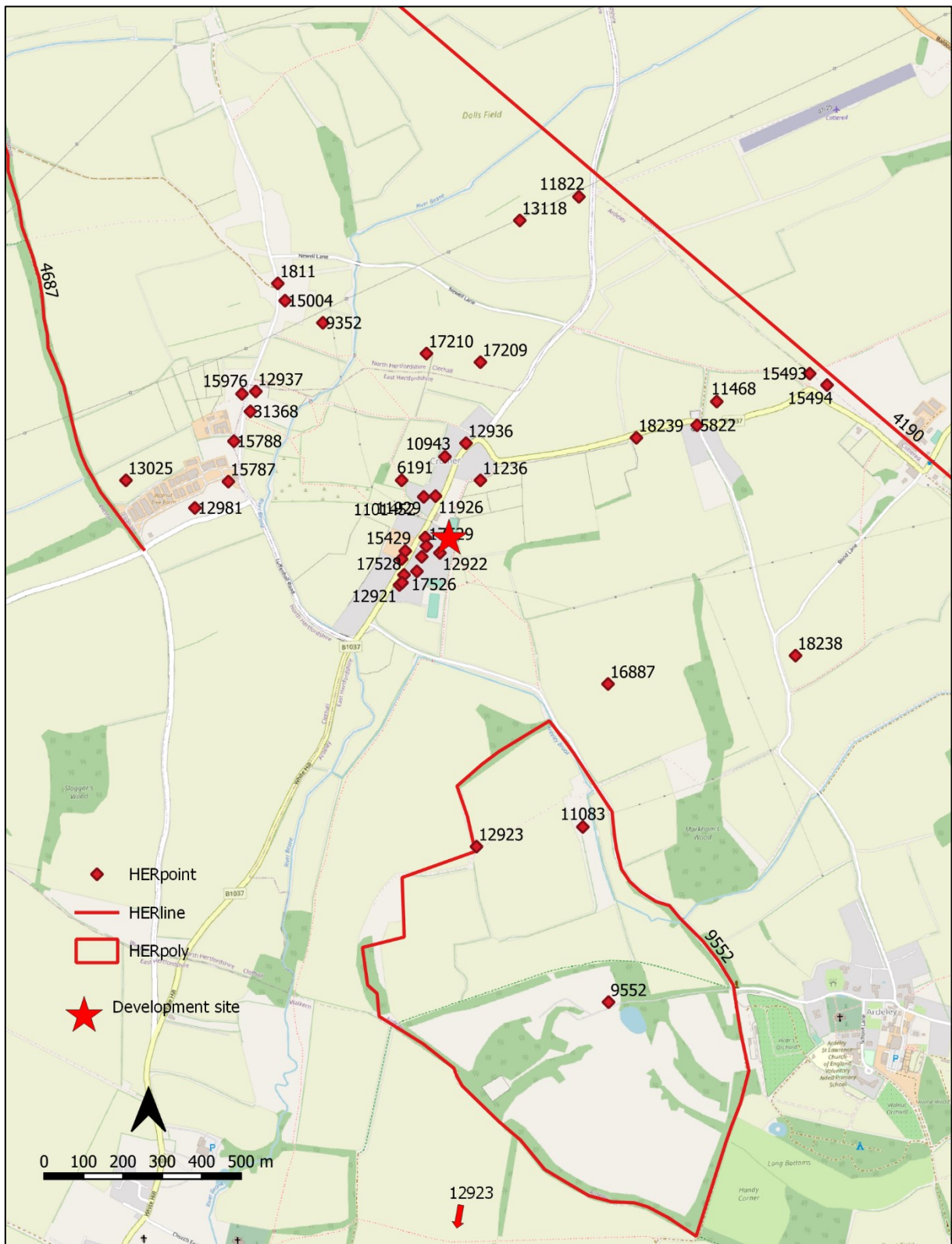


Figure 4: HER data plan (scale 1:12,500)



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## 4 Results

A total of 14 footing trenches and 13 services and a soakaway were excavated under archaeological supervision (Plates 1-8). These were excavated using a three-tonne tracked digging machine fitted with a 0.60m and 0.45m toothless ditching bucket. The stratigraphy encountered comprised (Fig. 4):

- Shingle over tarmac: This layer was 0.20m deep and covered the entire footprint of the new building.
- Topsoil: Dark greyish brown sandy loam with occasional stone inclusions. This layer was c.0.10m in depth and was only present in small patches at the perimeter of the excavated area.
- Subsoil: Mid-orangey brown, slightly sandy clay. Contained small stone gravels. This layer measured 0.56m in depth
- Natural: Light orangey brown, slightly sandy clay. Contained occasional large flint inclusions

The footing trenches reached a maximum depth of 1.30m and the services 0.80m. No archaeological remains, deposits or finds were encountered during this project.



**Plate 1:** Trench 1, looking southeast



**Plate 2:** Trench 5, looking southeast



**Plate 3:** Trench 10, looking north-northeast



**Plate 4:** Trench 15, looking north-northeast



**Plate 5:** Service Trench 27, looking west



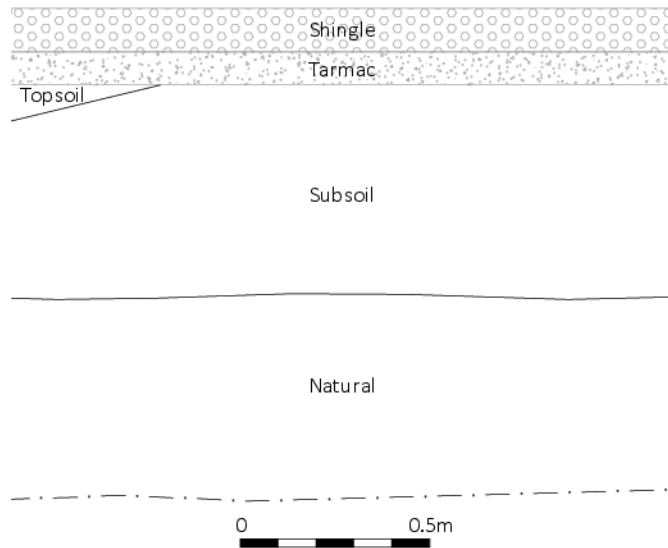
**Plate 6:** Soakaway, looking southwest



**Plate 7:** Porch footing, looking northwest



**Plate 8:** Trench 1 stratigraphy, looking west-southwest



**Figure 4:** Representative site stratigraphy (scale 1:20)



Figure 5: Footing and service plan (scale 1:250)





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## 5 Conclusions

This programme of works consisted of the excavation of 14 footings and 13 service trenches. The development site is located within an Area of Archaeological Significance and is situated within the historic core of the medieval village. However, no finds, features, deposits, or finds of archaeological significance were encountered. The presence of subsoil overlying natural geology across the majority of the excavated area, with small patches of topsoil at the margins, demonstrates that the construction of the now demolished modern bungalow had only a limited impact on the soil profile, as it was mostly the topsoil that appears to have been truncated. Despite the proximity of archaeological sites/material and heritage assets, it seems that the footprint of the development fell between widely dispersed features.

As no archaeological features, finds, or deposits were encountered on the site, it has not been possible, on this occasion, to advance the stated research aims.



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## 6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to Emma Cook for commissioning this report. Thanks are also due to Rebekah Hart of HHET for providing historic environment records and to Alison Tinniswood of HHET for monitoring the project. We would also like to thank Thomas Bros and Gilbert & Gregson for their assistance on site.

The fieldwork was carried out by Chris Martin-Taylor BSc and Barney King PCIfA. The report was written by Laura Dodd MSc MCIfA, and edited by Derek Watson PhD.



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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 digital archive for this project will be uploaded to OASIS in line with the Hertfordshire Archaeological Archive Standards 2017.



## 8 References

### *Standards & Specifications*

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Powell-Smith, A. 2022 Open Domesday: Ardeley.  
<http://opendomesday.org/place/TL3027/ardeley/>

Summerfield-Hill, C. & Shlasko, E 2019 *Archaeological Observation and Recording Report: Cromer Hall Bungalow, White Hill, Cromer, Hertfordshire*. Unpublished report for KDK Archaeology Ltd, 247/CCH 2.1



## Appendix 1: Photograph List

Shot	View	Subject
1	ENE	WSW facing stratigraphy of trench 1
2	NW	Trench 1
3	NE	Trench 1
4	SW	Trench 2
5	NE	Trench 2
6	SE	NW facing Trench 2 Stratigraphy
7	NNW	Trench 2 out crop 1
8	NNW	Trench 2 out crop 2
9	SSW	Trench 3
10	SSW	Trench 3
11	SE	NW facing Trench 3 Stratigraphy
12	NNW	SSE facing Trench 4 Stratigraphy
13	SSW	Trench 4
14	SE	Trench 5
15	NE	SW facing Trench 5 stratigraphy
16	NW	SE facing Trench 6 stratigraphy
17	SSW	Trench 6
18	NW	Trench 7
19	SE	Trench 7
20	SW	NE facing Trench 7 stratigraphy
21	SE	Trench 8
22	NW	Trench 8
23	NE	SW facing Trench 8 stratigraphy
24	SE	NW facing Trench 9 stratigraphy
25	SW	Trench 9
26	NE	Trench 10
27	SW	Trench 10
28	SE	NW facing Trench 10 stratigraphy
29	NE	SW facing Trench 11 stratigraphy
30	SE	Trench 11
31	NW	Trench 11
32	NE	Trench 12
33	NW	SE facing Trench 12 stratigraphy
34	SE	NW facing Trench 13 stratigraphy
35	NE	Trench 13
36	SE	Trench 14
37	NE	SW facing Trench 14 stratigraphy
38	NE	SW facing Trench 14 stratigraphy overview
39	NW	Trench 15
40	SE	Trench 15
41	SE	Trench 15
42	NNE	Trench 15
43	SW	Trench 15 stratigraphy
44	NW	Porch footing
45	SE	Porch footing
46	NW	Retaining boundary wall footing
47	NW	Retaining boundary wall footing
48	SE	Retaining boundary wall footing



Shot	View	Subject
49	NW	Trench 17
50	SSW	Trench 18
51	SW	Trench 19
52	SE	Trench 20
53	SW	Trench 21
54	W	Trench 22
55	w	Trench 23
56	NNE	Trench 24
57	NNE	Trench 25
58	N	Trench 26
59	SW	Soakaway
60	W	Trench 27 stratigraphy
61	W	Trench 27
62	N	Trench 27 stratigraphy
63	W	Trench 27



## Appendix 2: OASIS and Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name & Address	The Haven, White Hill, Cromer, Hertfordshire, SG2 7QA	Project Site Code	673/CTH
OASIS reference	kdkarcha1-504872	Event/Accession no	TBC
OS reference	TL 2991 2856	Study area size	c.390sq m
Project Type	Observation and Recording	Height (mAOD)	330
Short Description	Between September and January 2023, KDK archaeology undertook a programme of Observation and Recording at The Haven, White Hill, Cromer, Hertfordshire as a condition for the development of the site. The works included the demolition of the existing bungalow and the erection of a replacement dwelling. The site is located within an Area of Archaeological Significance (ASS37) and is situated within the core of the medieval village. Despite the area being rich in archaeological material, no finds, features or deposits of significance were identified during this investigation and only the site stratigraphy was revealed.		
Previous work	None	Site status	None
Planning proposal	Demolition of bungalow and erection of a replacement dwelling	Current land use	Private residence
Local Planning Authority	East Hertfordshire County Council	Planning application ref.	3/21/0276/FUL
Monument type	None	Monument period	None
Significant finds	None	Future work	No
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project Brief originator	-	Project Design originator	KDK Archaeology Ltd
Project Manager	David Kaye	Director/Supervisor	Chris Martin-Taylor
Sponsor/funding body	Emma Cook		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	12.09.2022	End date	10.01.2023
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical	OASIS	-	
Paper		A copy of the report will be submitted to the HER	
Digital		Report	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title	Archaeological Observation and Recording Report: The Haven, White Hill. Cromer, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume	673/CTH/2.1		
Author(s)	Laura Dodd MSc MCIFA		
Page no's	25	Date	20.01.2023





### Appendix 3: Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record Sheet

Site name and address: The Haven, White Hill, Cromer, Hertfordshire, SG2 7QA		
County: Hertfordshire	District: East Hertfordshire	
Village/Town: Cromer	Parish: Ardeley	
Planning application reference: 3/21/0276/FUL		
Client's name, address, & tel. no: Emma Cook, The Beeches, Hitchin Road, Weston, Hitchin, Hertfordshire		
Nature of application: Demolition of bungalow and erection of a replacement dwelling		
Present land use: Private residence		
Size of application area: c.390sq m	Size of area investigated: c.390sq m	
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 2991 2856	Site code: 673/CTH	
Site director: Chris Martin-Taylor	Organization: KDK Archaeology Ltd	
Type of work: Observation and Recording		
Date of Work:	Start: 12.09.2022	Finish: 10.01.2023
Curating museum: OASIS		
Related HER no's:-		Periods represented:-None
Relevant previous summaries/reports: None		
<p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p>Between September and January 2023, KDK archaeology undertook a programme of Observation and Recording at The Haven, White Hill, Cromer, Hertfordshire as a condition for the development of the site. The works included the demolition of the existing bungalow and the erection of a replacement dwelling. The site is located within an Area of Archaeological Significance (ASS37) and is situated within the core of the medieval village. Despite the area being rich in archaeological material, no finds, features or deposits of significance were identified during this investigation and only the site stratigraphy was revealed.</p>		
Author: Laura Dodd MSc MCifA	Date: 20.01.2023	