



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Land to the rear of 20 to 22 Simpson Road
Fenny Stratford
Bletchley
Buckinghamshire
EMK1479



Quality Check

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Summary

In September 2022, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an Archaeological Evaluation at Land to the rear of 20 to 22 Simpson Road, Fenny Stratford, Bletchley, Buckinghamshire. Six trenches were excavated prior to the development of two residential buildings comprising a total of forty 2 bed apartments, associated parking, landscaping, creation of new access and ancillary works. Whilst the site is located within a wider Iron Age/Roman landscape, no archaeological finds, deposits or cut features were revealed within trenches.

1 Introduction

1.1 In September 2022, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an Archaeological Evaluation at Land to the rear of 20 to 22 Simpson Road, Fenny Stratford, Bletchley, Buckinghamshire. The project was commissioned by Peter McCorkell of Vauss Limited on behalf of McCann Homes and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Watson 2022), and approved by Nick Crank from Buckinghamshire Council Archaeology Service (BCAS), Archaeological Advisor (AA) to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Milton Keynes Council. The relevant planning application reference is 19/02228/FUL.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This project has been required under the terms of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and condition 18 of the Planning Consent for the development of the site.

1.3 *The Site*

Location

The development site is located in Fenny Stratford, in the civil parish of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford, which is within the administrative district of Milton Keynes Council at National Grid Reference (NGR) SP 8834 3421 (Fig. 1)

Description

The development site is an irregular T-shaped area bounded to the east by the Grand Union Canal, to the north by a small area of vegetation bordering a level crossing, to the south by commercial properties, and to the west/northwest by No. 22 Simpson Road, Simpson Road, and The Old Court House and associated buildings (Fig. 2).

Geology and Topography

The bedrock geology is mudstone of the Oxford Clay Formation, formed approximately 157 to 166 million years ago in the Jurassic Period, overlain with superficial deposits of the Oadby Member, which is diamicton (dryland erosion) formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). The development site is situated at an approximate elevation of 70m AOD.

Proposed Development

The proposal called for the demolition of No. 18 Simpson Road and the erection of x2 residential buildings comprising a total of forty 2 bed apartments, associated parking, landscaping, creation of new access and ancillary works (Fig. 3).



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



Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:2500)



Figure 3: Proposed development (scale as shown)

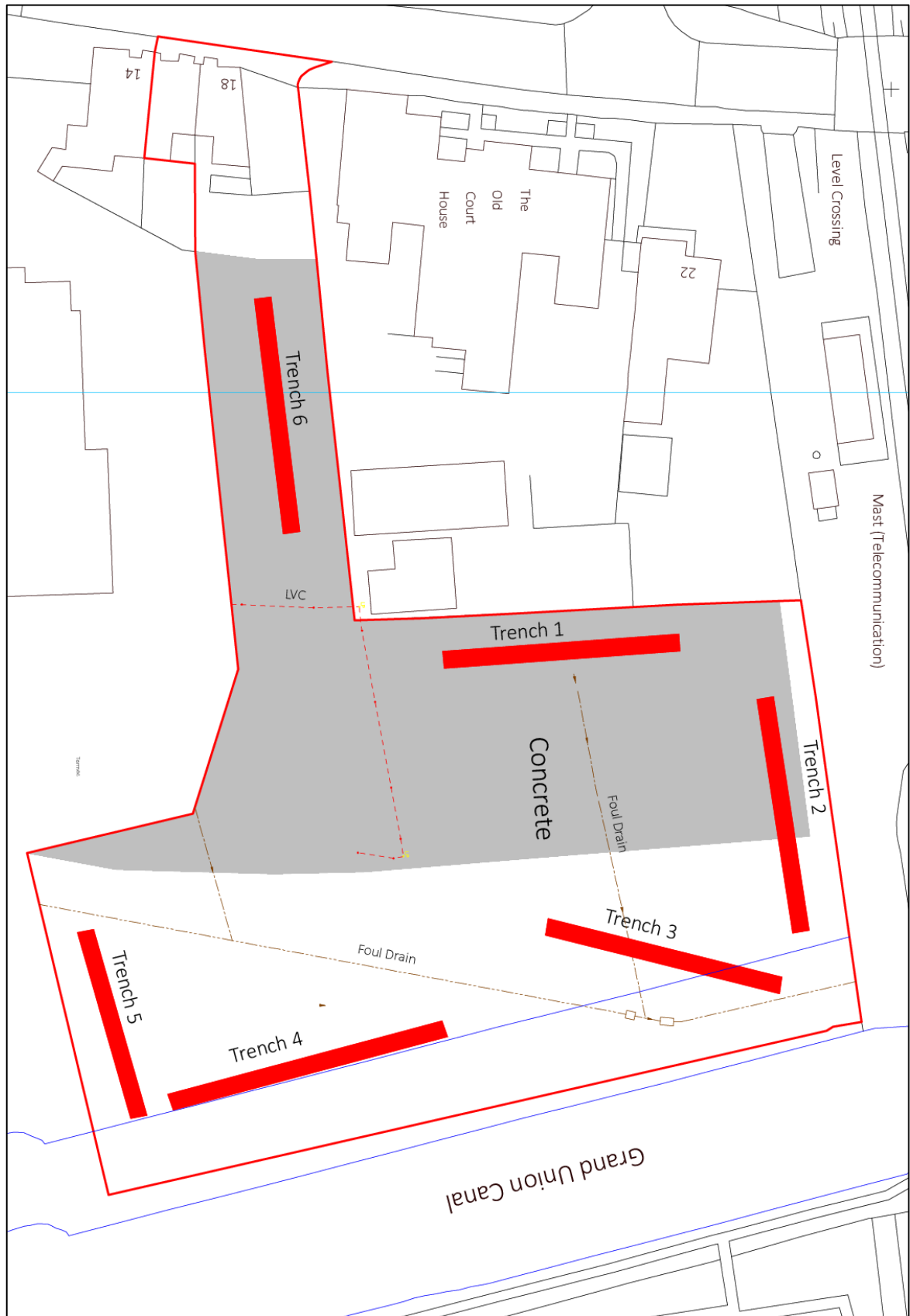


Figure 4: Trench plan (1:500)



2 Aims and Methods

2.1 Aims

The aims of this project as defined in the approved WSI KDK (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 method used were as follows:

- Stage One: An archaeological field evaluation of the site consisting of a minimum of 270m² trial trenching: equivalent to one trench 30m x 1.8m, one trench 20m x 1.8m and four trenches 25m x 1.8m, plus an appropriate contingency (Fig. 4)
- Stage Two: An appraisal of the results of the evaluation and their significance with regard to the proposed development. This in turn may lead to the definition of a programme of investigation and recording of archaeological remains which will be destroyed by the development. MKCAS may prepare a Brief for the next phase of investigation that will also cover a programme of post-excavation, analysis and publication

2.3 Standards

The work conformed to the following requirements:

- The relevant sections of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (CIfA 2020a)
- The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2021)
- Current Historic England guidelines (EH 2008, HE 2015)
- Data Protection Act 2018



3 Archaeological and Historical Background

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 Fenny Stratford (HER MMK5764, MMK5484) is now a constituent town of Milton Keynes, though it was originally an independent and ancient market town. The toponym derives from the elements *strēt* (Anglian for a Roman road) + *ford*, and *fennig* (Old English for ford + dirty, muddy, marshy): meaning 'ford on the street', or 'marshy ford on a Roman road' (Green & Beckley 2009; KEPN 2022). Human activity in the area dates from as early as the Palaeolithic, but the modern settlement likely has its origins in the Saxon period.

This section has been compiled with information from the Milton Keynes Historic Environment Record (HER), Bletchley and Fenny Stratford. Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Assessment Report (Green & Beckley 2009), and reliable online sources. The HER search radius concentrates on an area situated approximately 500m from the development site, though it includes relevant monuments that are outside of this area (Fig. 5). This includes, or borders, c.12 post-medieval listed buildings (ten Grade II; two Grade II*), and various other monuments/artefacts of this period, many located on/near Watling Street or Aylesbury Road to the south of the development site, which have largely been excluded from this summary as these will not be impacted by the current project.

3.2 *Prehistoric (before 600BC) and Iron Age (600BC - AD43)*

Evidence of Palaeolithic activity in the HER search area is limited to canal side finds of a cordiform handaxe at Brickhill Road (HER MMK1655), and a few other dispersed handaxes (HER MMK1102-4).

Archaeological excavations at the Fenny Lock Tesco Site (HER MMK7917), c.300m north of the development, revealed evidence for Mesolithic, early Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age activity and settlement including worked flints, post-hole building foundations, ring gully enclosures, ditches, a roundhouse, and a pit alignment. An early Neolithic to late Bronze Age worked flint flake was found c.400m to the southwest in dredged mud (HER MMK1673). A late Bronze Age socketed axe fragment was discovered in the field south of the former Bletchely Sewerage Works (HER MMK5259). Finally, a mid-2nd century AD Gallo-Belgic 'A' type stater (coin) was found locally, but the precise findspot is unknown (HER MMK7656).

3.3 *Roman (AD43 - c.450)*

At least two Roman roads pass through Bletchley parish and meet each other at Fenny Stratford: the major route of Watling Street runs on a northwest-southeast alignment from Dunstable (*Durocobrivis*) to Towcester (*Lactodurum*), and runs to the south of the development site; and the Buckingham Road (Viatores Number 166) which passes through Bletchley linking Buckingham and Banbury with Watling Street (Green & Beckley 2009: 34).

The only known Roman town in Buckinghamshire, *Magiovinium*, is also located on Watling Street, a short distance from Fenny Stratford at Dropshort Farm. The site of the Roman town of *Magiovinium* and Roman fort is a Scheduled Monument (NHLE: 1006943). Initial Archaeological excavations have revealed evidence for the presence of a possible fort and *vicus*, which preceded a small defended town with regular plots and some substantial buildings, including industrial buildings (smithies etc) that fronted onto Watling Street (Green & Beckley 2009: 34). The ploughed-down remains of the defences comprise a bank and ditch (HER MMK7657). The settlement began to contract in the late 3rd century to 4th century with the abandonment of



some plots, and the industrial area was taken up to create a cemetery (*ibid.*). The settlement was roughly oval, measuring 350 metres north-west to south-east by 250 metres transversely. Two Roman sites comprising ring-gully structures, field systems, paddocks and one stone building were also found at the nearby Fenny Lock Tesco Site; including a number of human burials and cremations (HER MMK7917).

Numerous Roman periods finds have been collected locally, including: 16 Roman coins, ranging in date from Antoninus Pius (AD 138-61) to Valentinian II (364-78) (HER MMK1574); 2 bi-conical lead weights (HER MMK1575); various potsherds (HER MMK1466, MMK1801-2, MMK1559); a bronze Colchester type III fibula (MMK1573); and relatively large artefact assemblages (HER MMK4271, MMK4273). A series of rectilinear enclosures at Belvedere Nursery may also be Roman (HER MMK5204, MMK5589-91).

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

Little is known about settlement in Bletchley parish during the Saxon period, but archaeological investigation in the area has revealed evidence for Saxon activity. Fenny Stratford (HER MMK5484) is not mentioned in the Domesday Survey 1086, but evidence for Saxon occupation has been found prior to the construction of a Tesco store at Fenny Stratford, where a number of sunken buildings and post structures were unearthed (HER MMK7917; Green & Beckley 2009: 11) and a substantial Roman to Early Saxon cemetery was discovered at The Bathing Station site near *Magiovinium* (HER MMK692 MMK5910). The only other find listed in the HER search area is a single Saxon potsherd (HER MMK2058) that was discovered c.300m north of the development area.

3.5 **Medieval** (1066 - 1500)

The only settlement in the area that is known to have existed at the end of the Saxon period, as the only manor mentioned in Domesday, was Water Eaton (Green & Beckley 2009: 36). However, as Water Eaton, granted a Market in 1204, was not situated on either of the two main thoroughfares of Buckingham Road and Watling Street, the economic centre of the parish was eventually moved to Fenny Stratford (*ibid.*). The latter settlement formed along the junction of the two main roads of Watling Street and Aylesbury Street. Surviving plot boundaries indicate burgage type plots on both roads with a higher level of survival north of Watling Street and on the east side of Aylesbury Street (*ibid.*).

Archaeological evidence for medieval activity around the Bletchley settlements remains sparse due to limited development within the small historic settlements (Green & Beckley 2009: 11). The remains of Chantry Houses were discovered at Wharfside (HER MMK MMK2612-14) and the site of St. Margaret's Chapel is situated off Aylesbury Street (HER MMK2576). Various medieval potsherds (HER MMK2142-44) have also been found locally.

The development site appears to have been largely undeveloped according to historic mapping and the 1980 aerial photos show what appears to be ridge and furrow earthworks suggesting that the area formed part of the open fields of the parish during the medieval period (N. Crank, Senior Archaeological Officer, Milton Keynes Council).

3.6 **Post-medieval (1500 – 1900) and Modern (1900 - present)**

During the post medieval period it seems that the settlements in Bletchley parish did not change significantly (Green & Beckley 2009: 38). Moreover, the market fared badly until the late 19th century, with several periods of abandonment (Page 1927). The principal industries throughout the post-medieval period mainly comprised lace making or straw making for women and agricultural work for the men, though the most significant industry in Bletchley was brick



making, which remained nationally important until the close of the century (Green & Beckley 2009: 38-41).

The Grand Junction Canal arrived in 1799/1800, linking Fenny Stratford with London and Birmingham, opening in 1805 and situated adjacent to the development site. Several heritage assets associated with the canal are situated to the north of the development site, and include: the Canalside Cottage (HER MMK3371), Lock View and Pine View (HER MMK3367), and the Lock, Simpson Road East side (HER MMK3370).

The most significant event of the 19th century was the construction of the London and North Western Railway (LNWR) running north-south from London and Hemel Hempstead to Northampton through Bletchley. Fenny Stratford's Grade II Listed railway station (HER MMK4340) dates from 1846.

The current development proposal requires the demolition of No. 18 Simpson Road, though Nos. 14 - 18 Simpson Road are included in the Milton Keynes Historic Environment Record as follows (HER MMK5794):

Brick and slate two storey terrace circa 1860 comprising three houses and a butchers shop. The houses have ground floor canted bays and the butchers shop had a projecting timber shop front with sliding doors The front elevation is rendered. Shop front removed circa 2000.



4 Results

4.1 Introduction

Six trenches were excavated within the development area prior to construction of two new residential buildings comprising a total of forty 2 bed apartments, associated parking, landscaping, creation of new access and ancillary works (Fig. 4). All six trenches were excavated using an 8-tonne machine fitted with a 1.5m wide toothless bucket.

Trenches 3, 4 and 5 were sited in soft ground, and were excavated first, though Trench 5 had to be shortened due to its closeness to the canal bank and Trench 3 was moved further North because of asbestos contamination. Trenches 1, 2 and 6 were sited in a concrete slab, and were excavated once it has been removed. All trenches had a width of 1.8m.

4.2 Trench 1 (Plates 1-4)

Trench 1 was north-south orientated along the western boundary of the site and was 25m long. The stratigraphy, beneath the concrete, consisted of made ground underlying dark buried topsoil and greenish clayey subsoil, overlaying a greenish clay natural with chalk inclusions.

The only features in Trench 1 were modern services.

Context Table

<i>Context no.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Dimensions (max)</i>	<i>Description</i>
(101)	Made Ground	0.41m	Broken brick, mixed with sand large angular stones.
(102)	Layer	0.20m	Dark grey brown, silty clay with CBM inclusions (buried topsoil)
(103)	Layer	0.43m	Mid greenish grey clayey buried subsoil
(104)	Natural geology		Mid greenish grey clayey natural with chalk inclusions

4.3 Trench 2 (Plates 5-7)

Trench 2 was located along the northern boundary of the site, running east-west from the concrete area into the soft ground near the banks of the canal. The trench had to be stepped since its western end was more than 1.60m deep.

The stratigraphy was similar to Trench 1, with made ground overlying buried topsoil and subsoil beneath the concrete. There were also two different types of natural geology present in the trench varying from a greenish clay with chalk inclusions to an orangish gravel.

The only features in this trench were rooting and a modern cable.

<i>Context no.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Dimensions (max)</i>	<i>Description</i>
(201)	Made Ground	0.73m	Broken brick, mixed with sand large angular stones.
(202)	Layer	0.44m	Dark grey brown, silty clay with CBM inclusions (buried topsoil)
(203)	Layer	0.32m	Mid greenish grey clayey buried subsoil
(204)	Natural geology		Mid greenish grey clayey natural with chalk inclusions
(205)	Natural geology		Orangish gravely sandy natural geology



4.4 Trench 3 (Plates 8-10)

Trench 3 had to be relocated further North because asbestos was found at the southeast end of the trench. The relocated trench was 25m long, running northeast–southwest and didn't contain any archaeology. The stratigraphy consisted of the remains of topsoil with modern detritus, overlying subsoil and the orangish sandy gravel natural geology.

<i>Context no.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Dimensions (max)</i>	<i>Description</i>
301	Topsoil	0.14	dark brown grey rooty clay
302	Subsoil	0.17	mid yellowish brown clay with occasional small stones
303	Natural geology	0.12	Orangish gravely sandy natural

4.5 Trench 4 (Fig. 6, Plates 11-13)

Trench 4 was north-south orientated along the eastern boundary of the site, approximately 15m from the canal. The trench was 30m long, 1.8m wide and between 0.50m and 0.36m deep. Several land drains were crossing the trench but no archaeology was present.

Context Table

<i>Context no.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Dimensions (max)</i>	<i>Description</i>
(401)	Topsoil	0.10m	Loose, dark greyish brown slightly sandy clay, modern rubbish inclusions and bioturbated
(402)	Subsoil	0.10m	Moderate, mid greenish grey silty clay, occasional flecks of charcoal
(403)	Natural		Firm, mid orangish brown silty clay gravel

4.6 Trench 5 (Fig. 6, Plates 14-18)

This trench was east-west orientated and was located along the southern boundary of the site. The trench had to be shortened due to the canal embankment at its eastern end, and therefore it was 20m long, 1.80m wide and between 1.20 – 0.78m deep. The top layer of this trench was at the W end a compact yellowish stony backfill material with modern inclusions (501). This material was used to level the ground with the concrete slab on top of it. Underlying (501) and more made ground (506) was a deep dark grey brown silty clay deposit which was the buried topsoil (502). Underlying was the buried subsoil (503) with a mid greenish grey colour and occasionally flecks of charcoal in it. At the west end of trench 5, two different types of natural were present. A mid greenish grey clay natural with chalk in it in W direction and the mid orangish brown silty clay gravel in E direction. Since the greenish grey clay natural had the shape of a linear feature, a slot was excavated to prove that both natural deposits are of geological origin.

Context Table

<i>Context no.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Dimensions (max)</i>	<i>Description</i>
(501)	Made Ground	0.46m - 0.81m	Compact yellowish stony backfill material, modern
(502)	Layer	0.40m - 0.11m	Dark grey brown, silty clay with cbm inclusions (buried topsoil)
(503)	Layer	0.20m - 0.38m	Mid greenish grey clayey buried subsoil



(504)	Natural geology		Mid greenish grey clayey natural with chalk inclusions
(505)	Natural geology		Orangish gravelly sandy natural
(506)	Made Ground		Demolition layer with rubbish, bricks etc, modern

4.7 Trench 6 (Plates 19-21)

Trench 6 was east-west orientated and 25m long. Approximately in the middle of the trench a modern brick cesspit and ceramic pipe running in westerly direction. The top layer in Trench 6 was made ground with greenish subsoil underlying it and the greenish clay natural with chalk inclusions.

<i>Context no.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Dimensions (max)</i>	<i>Description</i>
(601)	Made Ground	0.31	Broken brick, mixed with sand large angular stones.
(602)	Subsoil	0.10	Mid greenish grey clay.
(603)	Natural geology	0.31	Mid greenish grey clayey natural with chalk inclusions, slight contamination from made ground above



Plate 1 : Trench 1, North view



Plate 2 : Trench 1, South view



Plate 3 : Trench 1, Stratigraphy, West facing



Plate 4 : Trench 1, cut of modern feature



Plate 5: Trench 2, West view



Plate 6 : Trench 2, East view



Plate 7 : Trench 2, Stratigraphy , North facing



Plate 8 : Trench 3, NNE view



Plate 9 : Trench 3, SSW view



Plate 10 : Trench 3, Stratigraphy, WNW facing



Plate 11: Trench 4, North view



Plate 12 : Trench 4, South view



Plate 13 : Trench 4, Stratigraphy, West facing



Plate 14: Trench 5, East view



Plate 15: Trench 5, West view



Plate 16 : Trench 5, Stratigraphy, North facing



Plate 17 : Trench 5, Stratigraphy 2, sondage, south facing



Plate 18 : Trench 5, plan photo of sondage, East view



Plate 19 : Trench 6, West view



Plate 20 : Trench 6, East view



Plate 21 : Trench 6, Stratigraphy, North facing

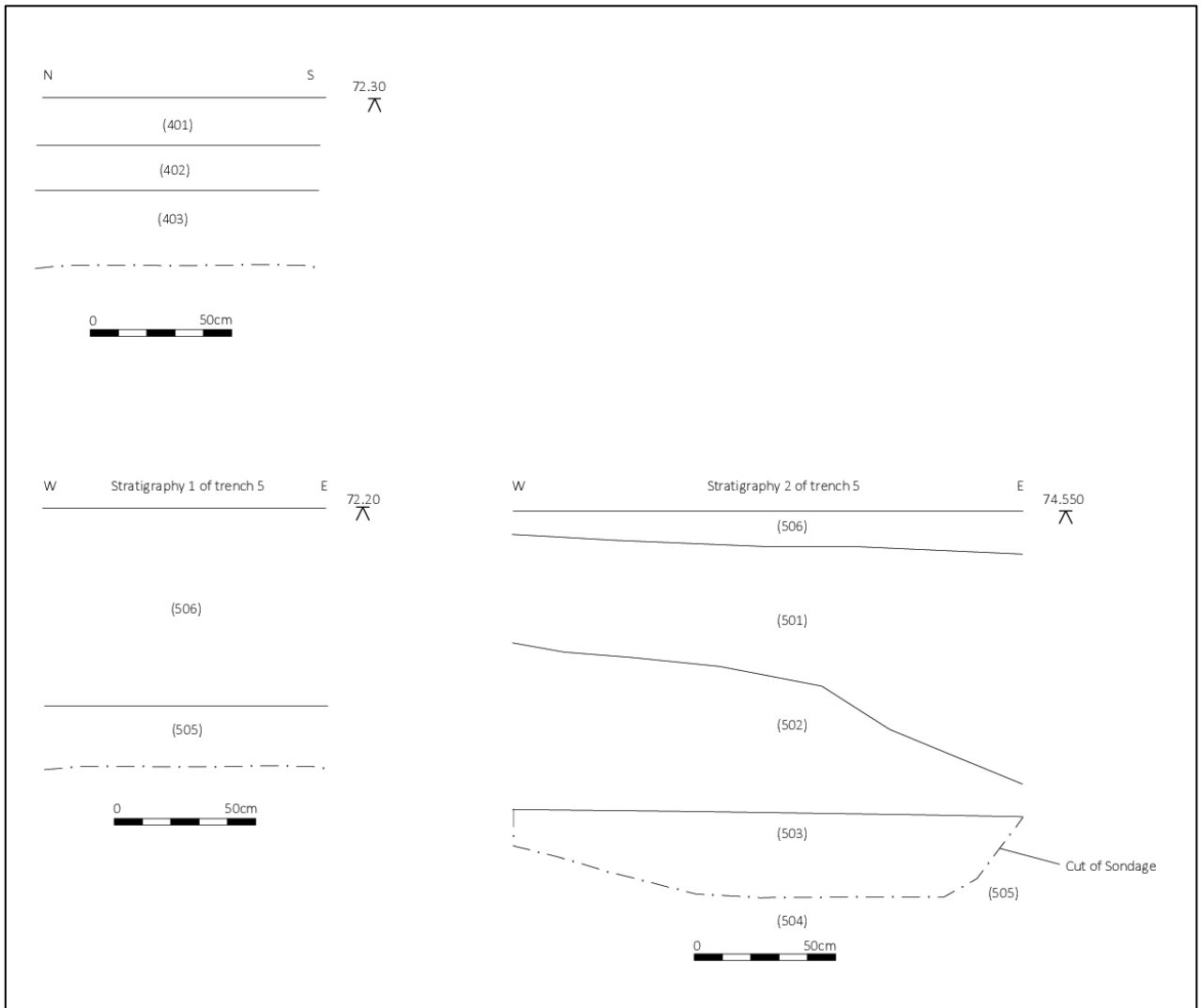


Figure 6: Trenches 4-5, schematic stratigraphy (scale 1:10)



5 Conclusions

The archaeological evaluation at 20 to 22 Simpson Road, Fenny Stratford, Bletchley, Buckinghamshire comprised the excavation of four 25m long trenches, one 30m long trench and one 20m long trench.

The HER data plan shows that the site lies within an area of fairly extensive Iron Age and Romano-British activity and in vicinity of two major Roman roads and the town *Magiovinium*, but nonetheless, no archaeological features or finds were observed during the course of the evaluation.

The presence of undisturbed subsoil demonstrates that the site had not been truncated, and the modern development had been built on layers of made ground sealing the topsoil horizon.

It is possible that the site is situated between widely dispersed features or simply that no human occupation has taken place at point in time on this land, prior to the modern period.

Consequently, the original research aims of the project could not be advanced on this occasion.



6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to Peter McCorkell for commissioning this report Vauss Limited Thanks are also due to Nick Crank of Buckinghamshire Council Archaeology Service (BCAS) for his assistance and for monitoring the project.

The fieldwork was carried out by Florian Weber MA ACIfA. The report was written by Florian Weber ACIfA 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. Monitoring sheets
4. Site drawings
5. Client's site plans
6. List of photographs

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Milton Keynes Museum. Accession number MILSH.2022.46.



8 References

Standards & Specifications

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Appendix 1: Photograph List

Site Name: 20 to 22 Simpson Road, Fenny Stratford, Bletchley, Buckinghamshire	
Shot	Subject
1	Trench 1, North view
2	Trench 1, South view
3	Trench 1, Stratigraphy, West facing
4	Trench 1, cut of modern feature
5	Trench 2, West view
6	Trench 2, East view
7	Trench 2, Stratigraphy, North facing
8	Trench 3, NNE view
9	Trench 3, SSW view
10	Trench 3, Stratigraphy, WNW facing
11	Trench 4, North view
12	Trench 4, South view
13	Trench 4, Stratigraphy, West facing
14	Trench 5, East view
15	Trench 5, West view
16	Trench 5, Stratigraphy, North facing
17	Trench 5, Stratigraphy 2, sondage, South facing
18	Trench 5, plan photo of sondage, East view
19	Trench 6, West view
20	Trench 6, East view
21	Trench 6, Stratigraphy, North facing



Appendix 2: OASIS and Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name & Address	20 to 22 Simpson Road, Fenny Stratford, Bletchley, Buckinghamshire	Project Site Code	681/FSS
OASIS reference	kdkarcha1-505602	Event/Accession no	EMK1479
OS reference	SP 8834 3421	Study area size	270m2
Project Type	Archaeological Evaluation Trenches	Height (mAOD)	70m AOD
Short Description	In September 2022, KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook an Archaeological Evaluation at Land to the rear of 20 to 22 Simpson Road, Fenny Stratford, Bletchley, Buckinghamshire. Six trenches were excavated prior to the development of two residential buildings comprising a total of forty 2 bed apartments, associated parking, landscaping, creation of new access and ancillary works. Whilst the site is located within a wider Iron Age/Roman landscape, no archaeological finds, deposits or cut features were revealed within trenches.		
Previous work	none	Site status	unknown
Planning proposal	The proposal calls for the demolition of No. 18 Simpson Road and the erection of x2 residential buildings comprising a total of forty 2 bed apartments, associated parking, landscaping, creation of new access and ancillary works	Current land use	Residential
Local Planning Authority	Milton Keynes Council	Planning application ref.	SP 8834 3421
Monument type	N/A	Monument period	N/A
Significant finds	N/A	Future work	unknown
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project Brief originator		Project Design originator	KDK Archaeology Ltd
Project Manager	David Kaye BA ACIfA	Director/Supervisor	Florian Weber MA ACIfA
Sponsor/funding body	Peter McCorkell of Vauss Limited		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	20.09.2022	End date	
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical	Milton Keynes Museum		
Paper			
Digital			
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title	Archaeological Evaluation at 20 to 22 Simpson Road, Fenny Stratford, Bletchley, Buckinghamshire		
Serial title & volume	681/FSS/2.1		
Author(s)	Florian Weber MA ACIfA		
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