



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Archaeological Mitigation Report

Land at Henry Isaac Mews
St Ippolyts
Hertfordshire

Event/Accession No. SPI/HIM '24



Quality Check

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Summary

In February 2025, KDK Archaeology undertook an Archaeological Evaluation and Strip, Map and Record of Land at Henry Isaac Mews, St Ippolyts, Hertfordshire, as mitigation for an archaeological condition on planning. This comprised the excavation of two trial trenches and the stripping of an area at the site's south-eastern edge. The development site was previously the location of a 19th century forge and an associated complex of buildings that were mostly demolished prior to the present development.

The stratigraphy revealed by the investigations mostly comprised made-ground overlying the natural gravel geology, with an undisturbed soil profile documented along the south-eastern limits of the site. The presence of made-ground overlying the natural geology demonstrates that these areas had probably been truncated by an unknown amount, most likely during the construction and associated landscaping of the now-demolished buildings. It is possible that past construction activities destroyed any potential archaeological remains within that footprint. Conversely, the lack of any archaeological remains along the south-eastern/southern edge of the site probably evinces, as indicated by the HER, the limits of local settlement.

1 Introduction

1.1 This project was commissioned by Richard Taaffe, of Jarvis Homes Ltd, and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Watson 2024), and approved by the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Team (HHET), on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), North Herts Council. The relevant planning application reference is 22/00754/FP.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This project has been required under the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (DLUHC 2023) as a condition (Nos 21-23) of planning permission for the development of the site.

1.3 *The Site*

Location

The development site is located in the village and civil parish of St Ippolyts and is within the administrative district of North Herts Council at National Grid Reference TL 1959 2709 (Fig. 1).

Description

The development site is situated on the southern side of Brookend Lane, adjacent to the external western edge of the village of St. Ippolyts (Fig. 2). The site is bounded to the east by Ippollitts Brook, and to the west and south by open land.

Geology and Topography

The bedrock sedimentary geology is chalk of the Holywell Nodular Chalk and New Pit Chalk Formations, formed between 100.5 and 89.8 million years ago during the Cretaceous period. The development site straddles two different superficial deposits with Mid Pleistocene sand and gravel Glaciofluvial Deposits, deposited between 860 and 116 thousand years ago during the Quaternary period, to the southwest; and alluvial clay, silt, sand and gravel, deposited between 11.8 thousand years ago and the present during the Quaternary period, covering the majority of the site (<https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/>). The site is situated at an approximate elevation of 73m AOD.



The site is prone to flooding close to the brook, and the natural water table is high across the site, probably exacerbated by the leaching of water from the brook through the superficial gravel deposits.

Proposed Development

The proposal called for the erection of 7 dwellings consisting of two 3-bed and five 4-bed houses with associated amenity space, parking, landscaping and the creation of vehicular access off Brookend Lane following the demolition of existing buildings (Fig. 3). However, the original archaeological condition of Monitoring and Recording was inadvertently not discharged as outlined in the original WSI (Landon 2023) though the development project was almost completed. Consequently, this project was undertaken to discharge the archaeological condition in the form of an archaeological mitigation strategy.

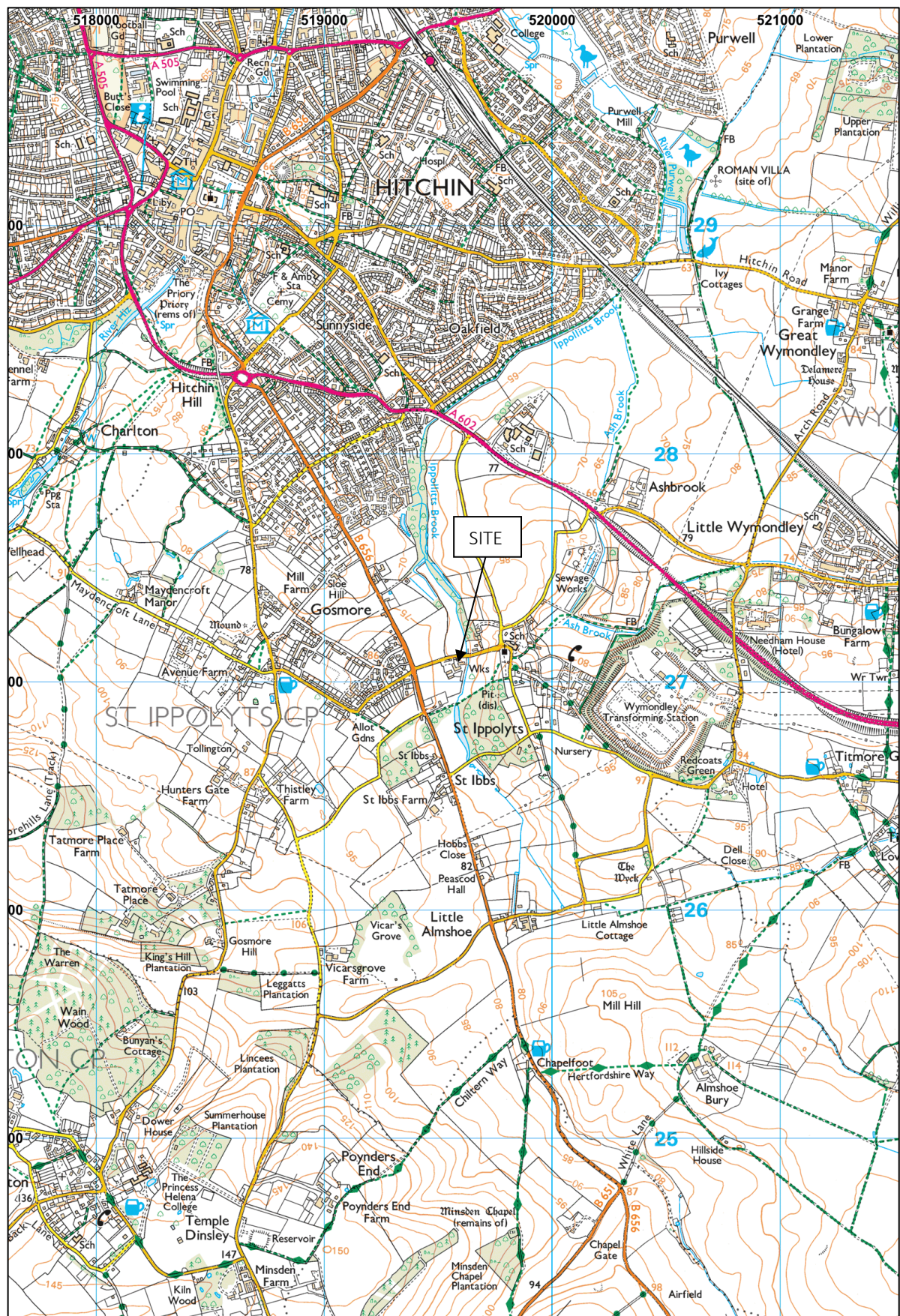


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

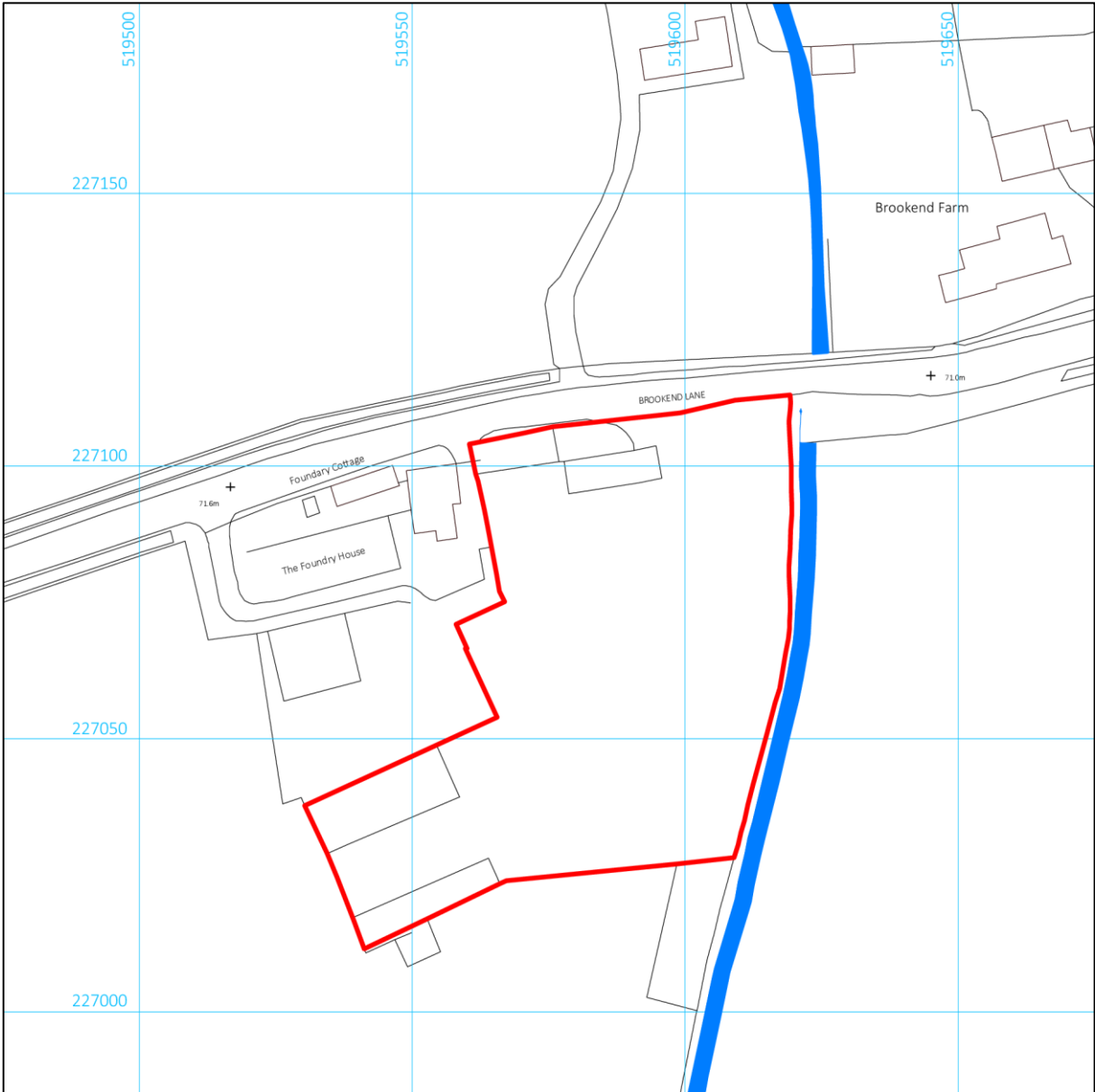


Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:1250)



Figure 3: Proposed development (scale 1:600)



2 Aims and Methods

2.1 Aims

The aims of this project as defined in the approved WSI (Watson 2024) 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.

Additional research aims, based on the Research Agenda of ALGAO East of England, comprised:

- Med (Rural) 09: How can we characterise medieval rural settlement morphology and relationships?
- Med (Rural) 14: How can we characterise and explain medieval rural settlement change, evolution and abandonment?
- P-Med 02: How best can we synthesise what we already know about the post-medieval period?
- P-Med 13: What can archaeology add to our understanding of well-documented periods?

2.2 Methods

The methods used were as follows:

- As originally proposed, the archaeological field evaluation was to comprise a minimum of two trial trenches measuring 15m x 18m (Trench 1) and 25m x 1.8m (Trench 2), with a total area of 72m², plus an appropriate contingency (Fig. 4). However, both trial trenches were relocated, and this is detailed in Section 4.
- The investigations will also include a Strip, Map and Record of an area shown in red hatching in Fig. 4.

2.3 Standards

The work conformed to the following requirements:

- The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2022)
- The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (CIfA 2023a)
- The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Universal Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (CIfA 2023ab)
- Current Historic England guidelines (HE 2008, HE 2015b)
- The Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003)



3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 The small village of St Ippolyts was historically centred around the Church of St Ippolyts, from which the toponym is derived, though much of the modern expansion now spreads along Stevenage Road to the east/southeast (Wood 2019). St Ippolyts, or Saint Hippolytus of Rome, was a Christian martyr (born c.170—died c.235) who was also the first antipope (217/218–235) (Britannica 2024). The development site is situated at the external western edge of the St Ippolyts Conservation Area.

This section has been compiled with information from the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER; search ref: 104.24), the St Ippolyts Village Conservation Area Character Statement (Wood 2019), and reliable online sources. The HER data, with a 500m search radius from the development, is shown in Fig. 4. The majority of the 15, predominantly post-medieval, Listed Buildings (one Grade I and fourteen Grade II) detailed in the HER search area have been omitted from this summary as they are situated sufficiently far away from the development to be unaffected.

Prehistoric (before 600BC)

The only listing in the HER search area for this period is a 'prehistoric' end scraper made on a blade (stone tool), which was found at No. 3 The Crescent (HER 320), c.280m west of the development.

Iron Age (600BC - AD43) and **Roman** (AD43 - c.450)

No remains from either of these periods are listed in the HER search area.

Saxon (c.450 - 1066) and **Medieval** (1066 - 1500)

The traditional date of the foundation of the Church of St Ippolyts is 1087, and the fabric of the nave and chancel of the Grade I building (NHLE: 1347411; HER 4307; Page 1912), which is situated 200m northeast of the development, are 11th century; the north and south aisles, and the chancel, were remodelled in the early 14th century. It remains unclear who built the church, but tradition has it that it was funded by grants given by Judith, the niece of William the Conqueror who was attempting to make amends for giving evidence against a Saxon Earl who was subsequently executed (SIC 2024). As the settlement is not listed in the Domesday Survey 1086, it too may have been founded in the late 11th century (Wood 2019: 4). The early history of the parish, which includes Gosmore, Maydencroft, and Almshoe, is obscure, as it's not mentioned in documents until the 13th century (NHM 2024); the name first appears as *S Yppollitus* in 1283 (SIPC 2024).

The only linkage to the Anglo-Saxon period is a hill called 'Sperberry' situated c.430m southeast (HER 12596). This name, '*Speleburwe*' in 13th century records, means 'hill of speech' in Old English, and it may have been the 'meeting place of the half-hundred of Hitchin'. It also survives as a road name above the Ippollitts Brook at St Ibbs, just off the London Road south of Hitchin itself. The road goes up a steep natural hill north of a group of probable Bronze Age barrows (these are situated outside of the HER search area).

The only finds listed in the HER search area are 'medieval and later pottery and other finds' from St Ippolyts Junior School, Ashbrook Lane (HER 12756), c.220m northeast. A single undated pit or gully as well as unstratified finds were revealed beneath modern made-ground during groundworks at the school. The pottery included a sherd of early sandy ware (10th - 12th century) and two sherds of Herts Grey Ware, all of which were worn (and may have been imported into the site with the made-ground); the other medieval material was a group of relatively large and unabraded sherds which dated from the late medieval or early post-medieval. Other finds



included building materials, oyster shells, iron objects, animal bones, and items such as a glass ink jar and a one-third-pint milk bottle which relate to the school itself.

Post-medieval (1500 - 1900) and Modern (1900 - present)

The morphology of the village is atypical for the area as it lacks a linear principal street or a historic village green, though what is now the village green may have been the setting of a large house (possibly a manor house) that was demolished in the earlier 20th century (Wood 2019: 4-5).

On the northern side of Brookend Lane, c. 70m northeast of the development, is the 17th century Brook End Farmhouse 17C (Grade I, NHLE: 1102510), farm (HER 15096) and its associated barn (Grade II, NHLE: 1175336). A letter box stands opposite St Ippollitts Church (HER 5302).

The development site stands adjacent to the northern edge of the area of an early 19th century park (HER 18304). The park was attached to the 18th century St Ibbs House (Coach House & Vicarage, and walls; HER 15998; Grade II, NHLE: 1102542, 1347427) and appears to have developed during the occupancy of the Rev William Lax from 1801. Within the park lie St Ibbs Lodge (Grade II, NHLE: 1175157), an unusual early 19th century icehouse (HER 215), a bridge (HER 30713; Grade II, NHLE: 1175140) at the head of the lake, and an observatory (HER 5976).

At the southern edge of the HER search area stands an 18th century house which may have served as a Quaker meeting house (St Ibbs Bush; HER 15999; Grade II, NHLE: 1175184), which is situated near a Quaker burial ground (HER 16000).

During the construction of a house in the 1920s on a round mound known as 'Round Hill' (HER 6555) undated human remains were found on the site. It is unclear now whether it was a barrow (burial mound), and there has been much modern landscaping. In 1881, the site was a field situated northwest of Lodge's Farm, without any distinguishing feature. Further undated heritage assets include the cropmarks of two linear ditches; one aligned NW-SE, the other N-S (HER 2665), located near the southern edge of the HER search area.

3.2 The Known Archaeology and History of the Site

The development site lies immediately east of the early 18th century Foundry Cottage (Grade II, NHLE: 1295346) and the mid-19th century Foundry House (Grade II, NHLE: 1347412). These two Listed Buildings are all that remains of a complex of buildings (HER 12156) that included a foundry - the 19th century Isaacs Forge, which was demolished as part of this development project - the Henry Isaacs Mews.





4 Results

4.1 Introduction

In February 2025, KDK Archaeology undertook an Archaeological Evaluation and Strip, Map and Record of Land at Henry Isaac Mews, St Ippolyts, Hertfordshire, as mitigation for an archaeological condition on planning. Two trial trenches measuring 14m (L) x 2m (W) x 0.40m (D) (Trench 1) and 26m (L) x 2-2.6m (W) x 0.40m (D) (Trench 2) and with an area of 80m², were mechanically excavated using an 8-tonne mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.6m wide toothless bucket (Fig. 5; Plates 1-6). Both trenches had to be relocated as a hospitality cabin had been placed in the area originally proposed for Trench 1, and Trench 2 was modified as a spoil-heap occupied much of the proposed area. The mitigation also included the stripping of a large area situated at the south-eastern edge of the development site, measuring approximately 345.74m², which was reduced c.0.3m to expose the natural geology (Fig. 5; Plates 7-11). This was accomplished utilising the same digging machine fitted with a 1.2m toothless bucket.

Trial Trenches 1-2 Stratigraphy (Figs. 6-7; Plates 3 & 6):

Made-ground (101, 201): Crushed demolition debris deposited over the natural; 0.30m deep.

Natural geology (102, 202): Light orangey brown, sandy clay; >0.15m deep.

Stripped Area Stratigraphy (Strat 1-3; Figs. 6-7; Plates 9-11):

Topsoil (001): Dark, brownish-grey, loam, with moderate sub-angular flint (<20mm) and sub-rounded flint (<20mm); 0.10-0.25m deep

Subsoil (002): Mid-reddish brown, sandy clay, with moderate sub-angular flint (<20mm) and sub-rounded stones (<20mm); 0.10-0.60m deep

Made-ground (004): Mixed brownish grey, gravelly, sandy clay, with moderate sub-angular flint (<20mm), sub-rounded flint (<20mm) and CBM fragments (<100mm); 0.40m deep

Concrete (005): 0.10m thick; SW baulk (only)

Natural geology (003): Mid-reddish yellow, brown, sandy, gravelly clay, with moderate sub-angular flint (<20mm) and frequent sub-rounded stones (<20mm); >0.30m deep

As the local water-table was very high, both trial trenches flooded almost as quickly as they were excavated. The stripped area was also subject to extensive flooding, despite the use of a water-pump, and a 0.5m deep drainage channel (Fig. 5) had to be excavated to facilitate the archaeological investigation. There was a tendency for the sides of the trench collapse in places as the water eroded the gravel substrate.

On completion of the fieldwork, no archaeological features, deposits, or finds were encountered within either of the trial trenches or the stripped area.



Figure 5: Proposed trench plan (scale 1:600)



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking NE



Plate 2: Trench 1, looking SW



Plate 3: Trench 1 stratigraphy



Plate 4: Trench 2, looking NE



Plate 5: Trench 2, looking SW



Plate 6: Trench 2 stratigraphy



Plate 7: Stripped area, western part, looking SSE



Plate 8: Stripped area, eastern part, looking WSW



Plate 9: Stripped area stratigraphy, situated at SSE baulk



Plate 10: Stripped area stratigraphy, situated at NNW baulk



Plate 11: Stripped area stratigraphy, situated at WSW baulk

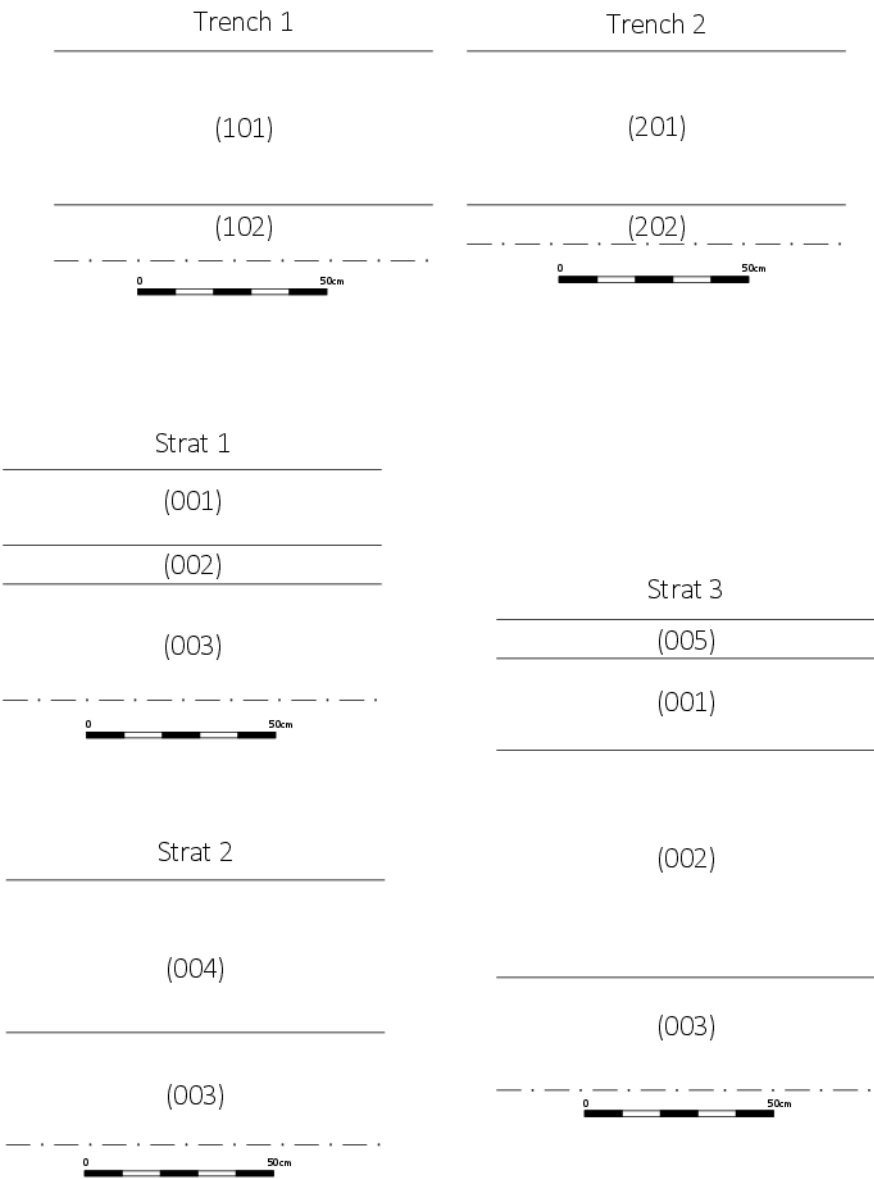


Figure 6: Site Stratigraphy (scale 1:20)



5 Conclusions

The archaeological investigation of Land at Henry Isaac Mews, St Ippolyts, Hertfordshire did not encounter any archaeological finds, features or deposits within either of the trial trenches or the stripped area, all of which were excavated to the natural geology. The stratigraphy revealed in the trial trenches comprised deposits of made-ground overlying the natural geology, whereas in the stripped area this sequence was only encountered in the northeast (Strat 2) with an apparently undisturbed soil profile of topsoil, sub-soil and natural geology documented elsewhere (Strat 1 & 3). The presence of made-ground overlying the natural geology demonstrates that these areas had probably been truncated by an unknown amount, most likely during the construction and associated landscaping of the now-demolished buildings.

It is possible that past construction activities destroyed any potential archaeological remains within that footprint. Conversely, the lack of any archaeological remains along the south-eastern/southern edge of the site probably evinces, as indicated by the HER, the limits of local settlement. Consequently, it has not been possible to further any of the stated research aims for this investigation on this occasion.



6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to Richard Taaffe for commissioning this report on behalf of Jarvis Homes Ltd. Thanks are also due to Mark Landon of HHET for providing historic environment records and other relevant documents and to Andy Instone of HHET for monitoring the project.

The fieldwork was carried out by Barney King PCIfA and Chris Martin-Taylor BSc. The report was written by Derek Watson PhD, and edited by David Kaye BA ACIfA.



7 Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise a digital version of the Evaluation Report which will contain the following:

- List of photographs
- Site Records
- OASIS summary report

7.2 The archive will be deposited with OASIS kdkarcha1-528060. (Museum Number: SPI/HIM '24)



8 References

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Page, W 1912 Parishes: Ippollitts, in *A History of the County of Hertford: Volume 3*, ed. William Page (London, 1912), *British History Online* <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/herts/vol3/pp25-28> [accessed 19 September 2024].

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Appendix 1: Photograph List

Shot	B&W	Subject
1	SSE	Stripped area, West part
2	NNW	Stripped area, West part
3	ENE	Stripped area, South part
4	WSW	Stripped area, South part
5	ENE	Stripped area, South part
6	ENE	Stripped area, South part
7	NE	Trench 2 overall
8	SW	Trench 2 overall
9	WSW	Stripped area, South part
10	SSE	Stripped area stratigraphy over drainage trench, SSE baulk of south part
11	NNW	Stripped area stratigraphy, NNW baulk of south part
12	WSW	Stripped area stratigraphy over drainage trench, WSW baulk of west part
13	WSW	Stripped area stratigraphy over drainage trench, WSW baulk of west part
14	SE	Trench 2 stratigraphy, SE baulk
15	ENE	Trench 1 overall
16	WSW	Trench 1 overall
17	WSW	Trench 1 overall
18	NNW	Trench 1 stratigraphy, NNW baulk
19	NNW	Trench 1 stratigraphy, NNW baulk
20	NNW	Stripped area stratigraphy, NNW baulk of west part. Baulk located beyond the extent of the stripped area, over a new wall footing, so the stratigraphy does not reach the natural



Appendix 2: OASIS and Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name & Address	Land at Henry Isaac Mews, St Ippolyts, Hertfordshire	Project Site Code	878/SIBL
OASIS reference	kdkarcha1-528060	Event/Accession no	SPI/HIM '24
OS reference	TL 1959 2709	Study area size	425.75m ²
Project Type	Archaeological Evaluation and Strip, Map & Record	Height (mAOD)	73m AOD
Short Description	In February 2025, KDK Archaeology undertook an Archaeological Evaluation and Strip, Map and Record of Land at Henry Isaac Mews, St Ippolyts, Hertfordshire, as mitigation for an archaeological condition on planning. This comprised the excavation of two trial trenches and the stripping of an area at the site's south-eastern edge. The development site was previously the location of a 19th century forge and an associated complex of buildings that were mostly demolished prior to the present development. The stratigraphy revealed by the investigations mostly comprised made-ground overlying the natural gravel geology, with an undisturbed soil profile documented along the south-eastern limits of the site. The made-ground demonstrates that these areas were extensively truncated, most likely during the construction and associated landscaping of the now-demolished buildings. It is possible that past construction activities destroyed any potential archaeological remains within that footprint. Conversely, the lack of any archaeological remains along the south-eastern/southern edge of the site probably evinces, as indicated by the HER, the limits of local settlement.		
Previous work	None	Site status	None
Planning proposal	Erection of 7 dwellings (two 3-bed and five 4-bed) including associated amenity space, parking, landscaping and creation of vehicular access off Brookend Lane following demolition of existing buildings	Current land use	Residential
Local Planning Authority	North Herts Council	Planning application ref.	22/00754/FP
Monument type	None	Monument period	Post-medieval
Significant finds	None	Future work	Unknown
RESEARCH AIMS			
Research framework	Section /Question	Summary of outcome	



ALGAO East of England	To establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation within the development area		None
	To establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscape		
	To recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.		
	Med (Rural) 09: How can we characterise medieval rural settlement morphology and relationships?		
	Med (Rural) 14: How can we characterise and explain medieval rural settlement change, evolution and abandonment?		
	P-Med 02: How best can we synthesise what we already know about the post-medieval period?		
	P-Med 13: What can archaeology add to our understanding of well-documented periods?		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project Brief originator		Project Design originator	KDK Archaeology Ltd
Project Manager	David Kaye BA ACIfA	Director/Supervisor	Barney King PCIfA
Sponsor/funding body	Richard Taaffe, Jarvis Homes, Burgundy House, 21 The Foresters, Harpenden Herts AL5 2FB		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	05.02.2025	End date	18.02.2025
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical	OASIS	None	
Paper		None	
Digital		Report, WSI, Photographs, Drawings	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			



Title	Archaeological Mitigation Report: Land at Henry Isaac Mews, St Ippolyts, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume	878/SIBL/2.1		
Author(s)	Derek Watson PhD		
Page no's	28	Date	26.02.2025



Appendix 3: Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record Sheet

Site name and address: Land at Henry Isaac Mews, St Ippolyts, Hertfordshire		
County: Hertfordshire	District:	
Village/Town: St. Ippolyts	Parish: St. Ippolyts	
Planning application reference:		
Client's name, address, & tel. no: Richard Taaffe, Jarvis Homes, Burgundy House, 21 The Foresters, Harpenden Herts AL5 2FB		
Nature of application: Erection of 7 dwellings (two 3-bed and five 4-bed) including associated amenity space, parking, landscaping and creation of vehicular access off Brookend Lane following demolition of existing buildings		
Present land use: Residential		
Size of application area: 425.75m2	Size of area investigated: 425.75m2	
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 1959 2709	Site code: 878/SIBL	
Site director: Barney King PCIFA	Organization: KDK Archaeology Ltd	
Type of work: Archaeological Evaluation and Strip, Map & Record		
Date of Work:	Start: 05.02.2025	Finish: 18.02.2025
Curating museum: North Hertfordshire Museum		
Related HER no's: 12156		Periods represented: Post-modern
Relevant previous summaries/reports:		
In February 2025, KDK Archaeology undertook an Archaeological Evaluation and Strip, Map and Record of Land at Henry Isaac Mews, St Ippolyts, Hertfordshire, as mitigation for an archaeological condition on planning. This comprised the excavation of two trial trenches and the stripping of an area at the site's south-eastern edge. The development site was previously the location of a 19th century forge and an associated complex of buildings that were mostly demolished prior to the present development. The stratigraphy revealed by the investigations mostly comprised made-ground overlying the natural gravel geology, with an undisturbed soil profile documented along the south-eastern limits of the site. The made-ground demonstrates that these areas were extensively truncated, most likely during the construction and associated landscaping of the now-demolished buildings. It is possible that past construction activities destroyed any potential archaeological remains within that footprint. Conversely, the lack of any archaeological remains along the south-eastern/southern edge of the site probably evinces, as indicated by the HER, the limits of local settlement.		
Author: Derek Watson PhD		Date: 26.02.2025