

**THE WORKSHOP
MANOR FARM
BOLNHURST
BEDFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Albion
archaeology



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Preface

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Key Terms

The following terms or abbreviations are used throughout this report:

Albion	Albion Archaeology
BBC	Bedford Borough Council
CIfA	Chartered Institute <i>for</i> Archaeologists
HER	Historic Environment Record
NHLE	National Heritage List for England
SAO	BBC Senior Archaeological Officer
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-technical Summary

Bedford Borough Council granted planning permission (18/02080/FUL) and listed building consent (18/02081/LB) for restoration and refurbishment of the main barn and associated workshop outbuilding to create two new dwellings at Manor Farm, School Lane, Bolnhurst, Bedfordshire. The site is located within a Scheduled Ancient Monument, Manor Farm Iron Age univallate hillfort and medieval moated enclosure (NHLE 1012066). Manor Farm stands within the northern half of the monument, which was reused in the medieval period as a moated enclosure. Planning conditions requiring historic building recording and archaeological mitigation were attached to the consent. Albion Archaeology was commissioned to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), undertake the historic building recording, and subsequently to carry out the archaeological watching brief during the conversion of the workshop building. Archaeological monitoring work on the workshop was completed on 17th July 2020. This report describes the results of the archaeological watching brief during the conversion works on the workshop building.

The workshop was constructed in the 1920s or 1930s and modified during the 20th century.

The observed groundworks were very limited in extent, consisting of three service trenches in the north-west and north-east of the workshop. The deposits that were recorded consisted of modern (20th-century) floor and floor make-up deposits, and dark grey-brown, clay-silt topsoil (seen in a small area of the two eastern trenches). No artefacts or ecofacts were recovered. Due to the limited extent of the works there were no impacts on Iron Age or medieval deposits, and no further conclusions can be drawn about the past development of the site.

The project archive will be deposited with The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum under accession no. BEDFM 2020.06 and the Archaeology Data Service. This report will be uploaded onto the OASIS website under reference number albionar1-382861.



1. BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

1.1 *Planning Background*

Bedford Borough Council granted planning permission (18/02080/FUL) and listed building consent (18/02081/LB) for restoration and refurbishment of the main barn and associated workshop outbuilding to create two new dwellings at Manor Farm, School Lane, Bolnhurst, Bedfordshire. The site is located within a Scheduled Ancient Monument, Manor Farm Iron Age univallate hillfort and medieval moated enclosure (NHLE 1012066). Manor Farm stands within the northern half of the monument, which was reused in the medieval period as a moated enclosure.

The following conditions (nos 2 and 3), covering heritage issues, were attached to the planning permission:

02. *No development shall take place until an archaeological mitigation strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The archaeological mitigation strategy shall include a timetable and the following components (the completion of each to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority will result in a separate confirmation of compliance for each component):-*
- (i) fieldwork and/ or preservation "in situ" of archaeological remains;*
 - (ii) a post-excavation assessment report (to be submitted within six months of the completion of fieldwork);*
 - (iii) a post-excavation analysis report, preparation of site archive ready for deposition at a store approved by the Local Planning Authority, completion of an archive report, and submission of a publication report (to be completed within two years of the completion of fieldwork). The archaeological mitigation strategy shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timings.*

REASON: To safeguard archaeological assets within the approved development boundary from impacts relating to any ground works associated with the development scheme and to ensure the proper and timely investigation, recording, reporting and presentation of archaeological assets affected by this development, in accordance with Saved Policies BE24 & BE25 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002, Policy CP23 of the Bedford Borough Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan (2008) and according to national policies contained in National Planning Policy Framework (2018). The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the timing of compliance is fundamental to the development permitted and that the permission ought to be refused unless the condition is imposed in this form.

03. *No development shall take place until a building recording strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall include a timetable and the following components (the completion of each to the satisfaction of the Local*



Planning Authority will result in a separate confirmation of compliance for each component):-

- (i) building recording fieldwork;*
- (ii) a post-recording report (to be submitted within six months of the completion of recording);*
- (iii) preparation of site archive ready for deposition at a store approved by the Local Planning Authority, completion of an archive report, and submission of a publication report (to be completed within two years of the completion of recording). The recording strategy shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timings.*

REASON: To ensure the proper recording, reporting and presentation of heritage assets affected by this development, in accordance with Saved Policies BE24 & BE25 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002, Policy CP23 of the Bedford Borough Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan (2008) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2018). The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the timing of compliance is fundamental to the development permitted and that the permission ought to be refused unless the condition is imposed in this form.

The Borough's Senior Archaeological Officer (SAO) advised that the following stages of work were required to address the conditions:

- A programme of low-level historic building recording of the farm buildings that were to be converted.
- Archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the development.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by the developer to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Albion 2020a), for approval by both the LPA and Historic England (as required by the scheduled monument consent (ref. S00201094, 27th September 2018)). Albion Archaeology was commissioned by the developer to carry out the historic building recording of the farm buildings (Albion 2020b) and subsequently to carry out the archaeological watching brief during the conversion of the workshop building. The results of the archaeological watching brief on the workshop building form the subject of the present report.

The farm buildings on the west side of the farmyard were purchased by a different developer and were not included in the Albion Archaeology watching brief.

1.2 Location, Topography and Geology

Bolnhurst is a hamlet in the north of Bedfordshire situated on the Kimbolton Road approximately 11km north of Bedford. It is part of the civil parish of Bolnhurst and Keysoe. Manor Farm is on the north side of School Lane.

The permitted development area (PDA) is centred on OS grid reference TL 0852 5986 (Figure 1). It is on level ground at a height of c. 75m OD. The superficial



geology is Oadby Member – Diamicton (boulder clay), formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. The solid geology is Oxford Clay Formation – Mudstone, formed approximately 157 to 166 million years ago in the Jurassic Period¹.

1.3 Description of the Development

The consented development works comprise the conversion of a range of timber buildings, including a large barn, and a brick-built workshop building to create two new residential dwellings (Figure 1). The present report covers the archaeological watching brief on the groundworks associated with conversion of the workshop.

1.4 Archaeological and Historical Background

The archaeological and historical background to the site was examined in a heritage statement that was submitted with the planning application (Albion 2018). The conclusions of the heritage statement were as follows:

- The former farmhouse (Manor Farmhouse) is a grade II listed building (NHLE 1321265). It comprises a 17th-century, timber-framed building that was refronted in brick during the 19th century. Manor Farm is shown on the Bolnhurst draft enclosure map of 1777. The earliest large-scale drawing of the Manor Farm buildings accompanies sales particulars of 1874. The first large-scale, topographically accurate survey of the site was published by the Ordnance Survey in 1884. A building corresponding to the position of the existing main barn is shown on this map, with a lean-to on its east side in the position of the present-day stable. The workshop has been heavily modified since it was constructed in the 1920s/1930s.
- The site is located within a Scheduled Ancient Monument; the Manor Farm Iron Age univallate hillfort and medieval moated enclosure (NHLE 1012066). The irregular outline of the hillfort earthworks extends on both sides of School Lane. Manor Farm stands within the northern half of the monument, which was reused in the medieval period as a moated enclosure. To the north of the Grade II listed farmhouse is a small rectangular moated outwork which is believed to be part of the medieval complex.

1.5 Project Objectives

The site stands within a prehistoric Scheduled Ancient Monument (NHLE 1012066). This type of lowland hillfort, classified as a ‘slight univallate hillfort’ is rare type of monument with c. 150 examples surviving nationally. They were mainly constructed during the later Bronze Age and earliest Iron Age (12th–6th centuries BC). In the list entry the reasons for designation state that: ‘The overall scarcity of these sites, especially in lowland England, indicates that all examples, even where damaged, are of national importance.’

¹ Contains British Geological Survey materials ©NERC [2022]



The research framework for Bedfordshire notes that only limited investigation has taken place on hillforts in Bedfordshire. It states that: ‘Dating of the principal phases of the hillforts should be a priority and attempts to establish the pattern of contemporary settlement, and the relationships of hillforts to it, must be a potentially productive area of research from which to learn more about the evolution of communities in the 1st millennium BC (Oake 2007, 11)’. The limited extent of previous investigation is also highlighted at the regional level (Medlycott 2011, 30).

The site is located in the northern part of the Manor Farm scheduled hillfort (NHLE 1012066). This part of the prehistoric enclosure was reused in the medieval period when it was reoccupied and adapted as moated manor house site. Medieval rubbish pits (HER 7803) have been found a short distance to the east of the site.

The research framework for Bedfordshire states that in general few medieval rural settlements have been investigated in the county. It stresses the potential for acquiring information about the origins, diversity, and development of villages from within or around the edges of existing settlements (Oake 2007, 14). In addition, characterisation of settlement forms, understanding how they grow, shift, and disappear is of local and regional importance (Oake 2007, 14 and Medlycott 2011, 70).

Manor Farmhouse (NHLE 1321265) is Grade II listed and lies just north of the site. Maps from the late 18th century onwards show earlier farmyard layouts and buildings that have since been demolished.

In the post-medieval and early modern periods Bedfordshire was at the forefront of the major developments taking place in agriculture. The buildings at Manor Farm (in particular the late 19th-century main barn) may be considered as worthy of study in themselves for the light they can shed on evolving trends in agriculture (Oake, 2007, 16).

In general terms the purpose of the archaeological watching brief was to:

- Establish the date, nature, and extent of any pre-modern activity within the site;
- Establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- Recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

1.6 Methodology

Detailed method statements for archaeological observation, investigation and recording were given in the WSI (Albion 2020a). The conversion of the workshop was designed in such a way that new foundation bases were not required. Archaeological fieldwork consisted of a single site visit, carried out on 17th July 2020 during installation of services. A written, drawn and photographic record of the observations was made.



2. RESULTS

2.1 Introduction

The groundworks in the workshop were limited in extent. Floor levels were raised to provide the required insulation and new internal dividing walls were constructed in studwork. The observed groundworks consisted of three small trenches for the installation of services: one in the north-west corner; and two in the east side of the building (Figure 2).

The depth of the trenches varied, with most parts measuring 250mm or less. In a limited area next to the east wall the trenches were up to 400mm deep.

See Figure 2 for a plan of the workshop building, showing the locations of the service trenches. Photographic images showing the service trenches are included at the back of the report (Images 3 and 4).

2.2 Modern (20th-century) Deposits

Modern deposits consisted of the existing floors and underlying construction layers for the floors.

The floors were in concrete, between 100mm and 150mm thick. The trench in the north-west corner of the workshop contained a mid-red-brown, sandy silt with frequent stones and occasional fragments of brick. The two trenches in the east side of the workshop contained a layer of rubble beneath the concrete.

2.3 Soil Layers

Soil layers predating the modern floor make-up were only observed in the deeper sections of the two eastern trenches, adjacent to the external wall. They comprised dark grey-brown, clay silt with occasional stones, probably derived from a former topsoil layer, buried by the construction of the building.

2.4 Geological Deposits

No undisturbed geological deposits were uncovered in the service trenches.

2.5 Artefacts

No artefacts or ecofacts were collected. Some modern (20th-century) brick fragments were observed in the make-up deposits for the concrete floors.



3. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during the conversion of a former workshop building at Manor Farm, Bolnhurst.

The site is located within a Scheduled Ancient Monument, the Manor Farm Iron Age univallate hillfort and medieval moated enclosure (NHLE 1012066). The irregular outline of the hillfort earthworks extends on both sides of School Lane. Manor Farm stands within the northern half of the monument, which was reused in the medieval period as a moated enclosure. Manor Farmhouse is a grade II listed building dating from the 17th century. The workshop, which was the subject of the archaeological watching brief, was constructed in the 1920s or 1930s and modified during the 20th century.

The monitored groundworks were very limited in extent, consisting of three service trenches in the north-west and north-east of the workshop building. The deposits that were recorded consisted of modern (20th-century) floor and floor make-up deposits, and dark grey-brown, buried topsoil seen in a small area of the two eastern trenches. No artefacts or ecofacts were recovered. Due to the limited extent of the works there were no impacts on Iron Age or medieval deposits, and no further conclusions can be drawn about the past development of the site.

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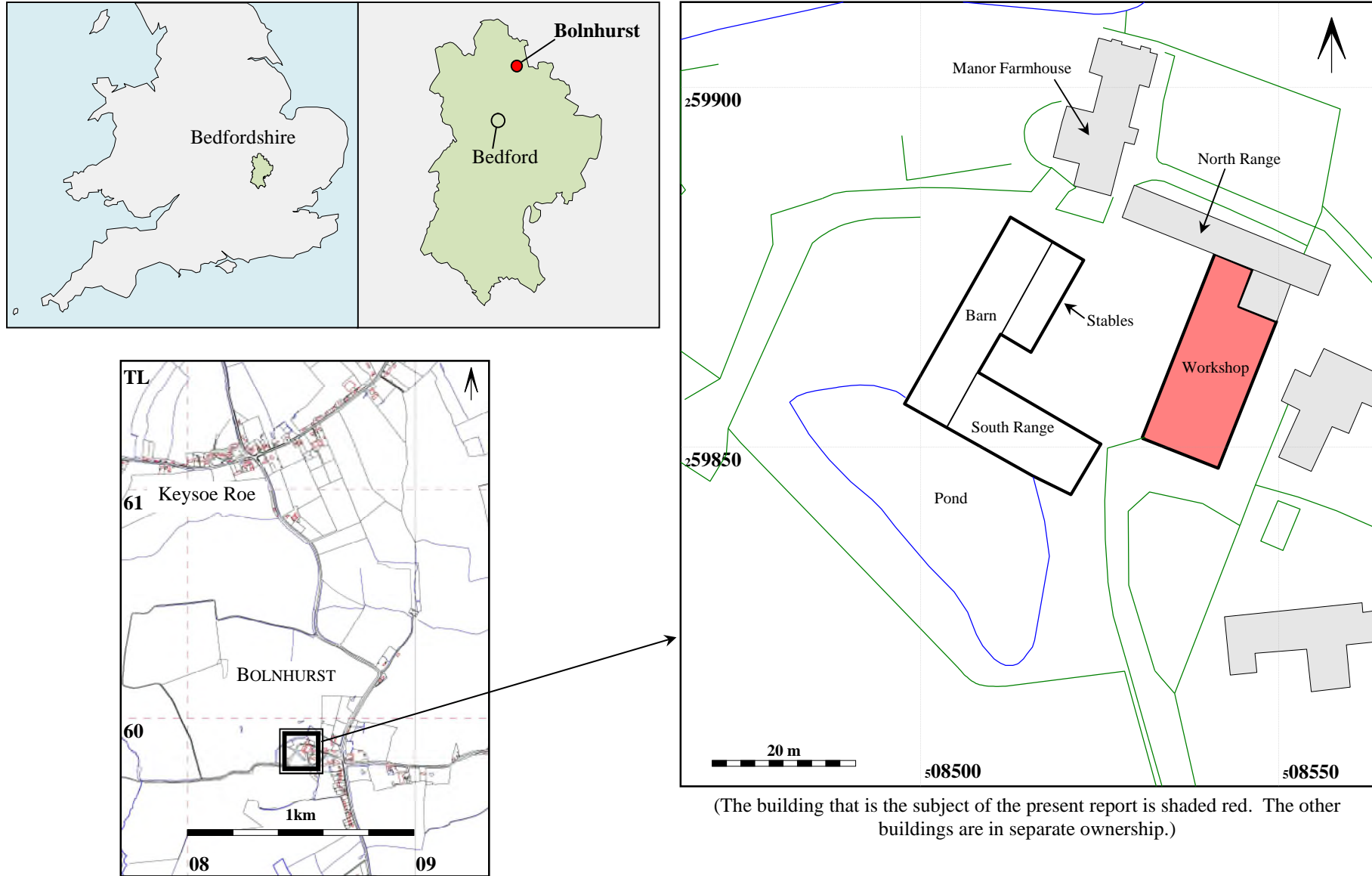


Figure 1: Site location plan

This map is based upon Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright. Central Bedfordshire Council. Licence No. 100049029 (2022)



Figure 2: Service trench locations



Image 1: General view of the farmyard and farmhouse
(Looking north from farmyard gate)



Image 2: West elevation of the workshop



Image 3: Service trench in north-west corner of the workshop
(Looking north, scale 1m)



Image 4: Service trenches in east side of the workshop
(Looking south-east, scale 2m)



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