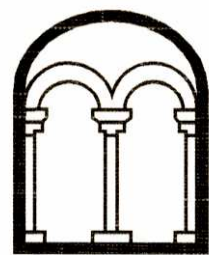


**ALL SAINTS ACADEMY  
HOUGHTON ROAD, HOUGHTON REGIS  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION,  
INVESTIGATION, RECORDING, ANALYSIS AND  
PUBLICATION**

**Albion**  
archaeology



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Marcin Koziminski	Wesley Keir	Drew Shotliff

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Willmott Dixon Construction Ltd



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## **Preface**

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete a summary as possible within the terms of the method statement. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

## **Acknowledgements**

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the archaeological works by Willmott Dixon Construction Ltd. The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Martin Oake, Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist.

Fieldwork was carried out by Marcin Koziminski (Archaeological Supervisor) who also prepared this report. Figures were created by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician).

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## **Version History**

<i>Version</i>	<i>Issue date</i>	<i>Reason for re-issue</i>
1.0	31/12/2011	n/a

## **Key Terms**

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

AT	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeology Team
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
HER	Heritage Environment Record
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
LPA	Local Planning Authority (Central Bedfordshire Council)
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



## **Non-technical Summary**

*Archaeological observation, investigation and recording were undertaken during construction works associated with a replacement academy school at All Saints Academy, Houghton Road, Houghton Regis. Due to the impact of the development upon potential sub-surface archaeological remains, the Archaeology Team (AT) at Central Bedfordshire Council advised the Local Planning Authority (LPA) that a scheme of archaeological work should be implemented during groundworks associated with the development.*

*Though the school lies in a landscape rich in archaeological remains, no archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the groundworks. The only deposits revealed were those associated with development of the school grounds since its opening in 1936. It is possible that any archaeological features or deposits which may once have existed within the area of the development have been destroyed by the previous landscaping of the school grounds. However, no pre-modern artefacts were recovered during monitoring of the groundworks.*



## 1 INTRODUCTION

---

### 1.1 **Project Background**

Planning permission was granted by Central Bedfordshire Council for the construction of a replacement academy school at All Saints Academy, Houghton Road, Houghton Regis (Application no. CB/10/03954/FULL).

Because the school lies in an area of archaeological interest, the Archaeology Team (AT) at Central Bedfordshire Council advised the Local Planning Authority (LPA) that a scheme of archaeological works should be implemented at the site during groundworks associated with the development.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the programme of archaeological works in accordance with the methodologies described in a Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2011), produced in response to a brief prepared by the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeology Team (CBC 2011).

### 1.2 **Site Location and Description**

All Saints Academy lies to the south-west of Houghton Regis town centre, to the north of Houghton Road, and is centred on grid reference TL01170 23080.

The Academy and adjoining playing fields and hard-surfaced areas are bounded to the north-west and north-east by former chalk quarries and elsewhere by residential properties and gardens.

The existing Academy buildings comprised a range of one- and two-storey brick-built buildings with the earliest of these dating from the school's opening in 1936.

The site is located on solid geology of Lower Chalk at a height of *c.*132m OD.

### 1.3 **Archaeological Background**

A desk-based archaeological assessment of the site was carried out in 2009 (WYAS 2009). The results are summarised below.

The landscape surrounding the Academy site is rich in prehistoric archaeological remains, including the site of Maiden Bower Neolithic causewayed enclosure and Iron Age hillfort (HER666), located *c.*1.6km to the south-west.

A series of archaeological investigations undertaken in advance of quarrying to the north of the site at Puddlehill (HER687) identified settlement remains dating to the Neolithic, Iron Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods.

The Roman routeway of Watling Street (HER5508) ran approximately 250m to the south-west of the site and the Roman settlement of *Durocbrivis* lay approximately 1.5km to the south.



Further significant archaeological remains are listed in the HER to the north of Maiden Bower, around the village of Sewell. These comprise Neolithic pits (HER3110), Iron Age settlement (HERs14851 and 15141) and burials (HER1925) and Saxon settlement (HER12147).

#### **1.4 Project Objectives**

The immediate objective of the archaeological fieldwork was to monitor and supervise all groundworks associated with the construction of the new Academy that had the potential to reveal archaeological remains, and to investigate, characterise and record any archaeological deposits encountered within them.

The AT Brief (CBC 2011) stated the following about the potential research objectives of the project:

“The site has the potential to contain archaeological remains relating to Neolithic settlement, Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement and funerary activity, Roman settlement and Saxon settlement and burials. The site has the potential to address a number of identified research objectives including the transition between periods. Specific objectives and issues are addressed in the following: Neolithic settlement (Oake 2007, 9-10; Brown and Murphy 2000, 9-10 and Medlycott and Brown 2008, 21), Bronze Age settlement and ritual (Oake 2007, 9-10; Brown and Murphy 2000, 9-10 and Medlycott and Brown 2008, 31) Iron Age settlement and ritual (Oake 2007, 11-12; Bryant 2000, 14-16 and Medlycott and Brown 2008, 46) Roman settlement (Oake 2007, 11-12; Going and Plouviez 2000, 19-22 and Medlycott and Brown 2008, 65) and Saxon settlement and ritual activity (Oake 2007, 113; Wade 2000, 23 and Medlycott and Brown 2008, 80)”.

The broader objective of the project was to add to the knowledge and understanding of the origins and nature of settlement in the Houghton Regis area and to produce an archive report that fully described the archaeological investigations.



## 2 METHODOLOGY

Archaeological observation of the groundworks took place between 11th April and 6th July 2011. Groundworks monitored included the excavation of service trenches associated with IT facilities and a foul sewer, as well as numerous trenches for foundation pads associated with the new school building (Figure 2). The works were carried out using a flat-edged bucket, except where a toothed bucket was required to remove substantial slabs of concrete/tarmac.

Deposits encountered were investigated and recorded in accordance with Albion's *Procedures Manual*. Spoil heaps were checked on a regular basis for archaeological artefacts recovery.

Throughout the project the standards set out in the following documents were adhered to:

• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (2 <sup>nd</sup> edn, 2001).
• ALGAO (east)	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> (2003)
• English Heritage	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i> (2009)
• IfA	<i>By-Laws and Code of Conduct</i> (2010)
	<i>Standard and Guidance for Excavation</i> (2008)
	<i>Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief</i> (2008)
• Luton Museum	<i>Procedure for preparing archaeological archives for deposition with registered museums in Bedfordshire (version 2.7)</i>

A detailed methodology is provided in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2011).





## 3 RESULTS

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### 3.1 Introduction

The groundworks only revealed deposits associated with landscaping of the school grounds and geological deposits. These are summarised below and detailed in Appendix 1. Numbers in brackets refer to the contexts recorded in Appendix 1.

### 3.2 Overburden

The nature of the overburden and depth of deposits varied significantly across the site.

Within the IT service trench the overburden consisted of up to 0.25m of topsoil and turf (1); a clayey sand levelling deposit (4) that was generally 0.12m thick; and a brown sandy silt subsoil (2) up to 0.3m thick (Figure 2: Section 1).

The overburden revealed in the foul sewer trench in the north-east part of the site comprised the deposits described below (from top to bottom) and shown on Figure 2, Section 2:

- tarmac surface (6), 0.08m thick;
- levelling deposit (4) comprising 0.08m thick gravely clay mixed with ‘type 1’ material;
- previous school yard tarmac surface (11), 0.05m thick;
- previous external yard surface (8), comprising 0.15m thick brick hardcore;
- levelling layer (10), comprising 0.1m thick deposit of clay sand containing moderate amounts of brick and tile fragments.

A similar depth of overburden was revealed in the west part of the site (Figure 2: Section 3) and generally consisted of:

- tarmac surface (6), 0.08m thick;
- levelling layer comprising either mid grey ‘type 1’ material (7) or a mid grey orange clay deposit (5) of c. 0.15m thick;
- previous school yard surface (8) consisting of 0.1m thick deposit of brick hardcore.

In addition, a series of levelling layers were present associated with the former swimming pool building in the west part of the site (9) and the recently demolished school buildings in the centre of the site (12).

### 3.3 Undisturbed Geological Deposits

Undisturbed geological strata were revealed c. 0.5m below the present ground surface and consisted of light grey-white chalk that contained flint and fossilised shell inclusions.



## 4 CONCLUSIONS

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No archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the course of the groundworks. The deposits revealed are associated with development of the school grounds since its opening in 1936. It is possible that any archaeological features or deposits which may once have existed within the area of the development have been destroyed by the previous landscaping of the school grounds. However, no pre-modern artefacts were recovered during monitoring of the groundworks.

The project archive will be deposited with Luton Museum (accession no. 2011.05). This report will be uploaded onto the Archaeology Data Service's OASIS website.



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- WYAS (West Yorkshire Archaeological Services) 2009. *All Saints Academy, Dunstable, Bedfordshire: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment*. Report No.1998.



## **6 APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT SUMMARY**

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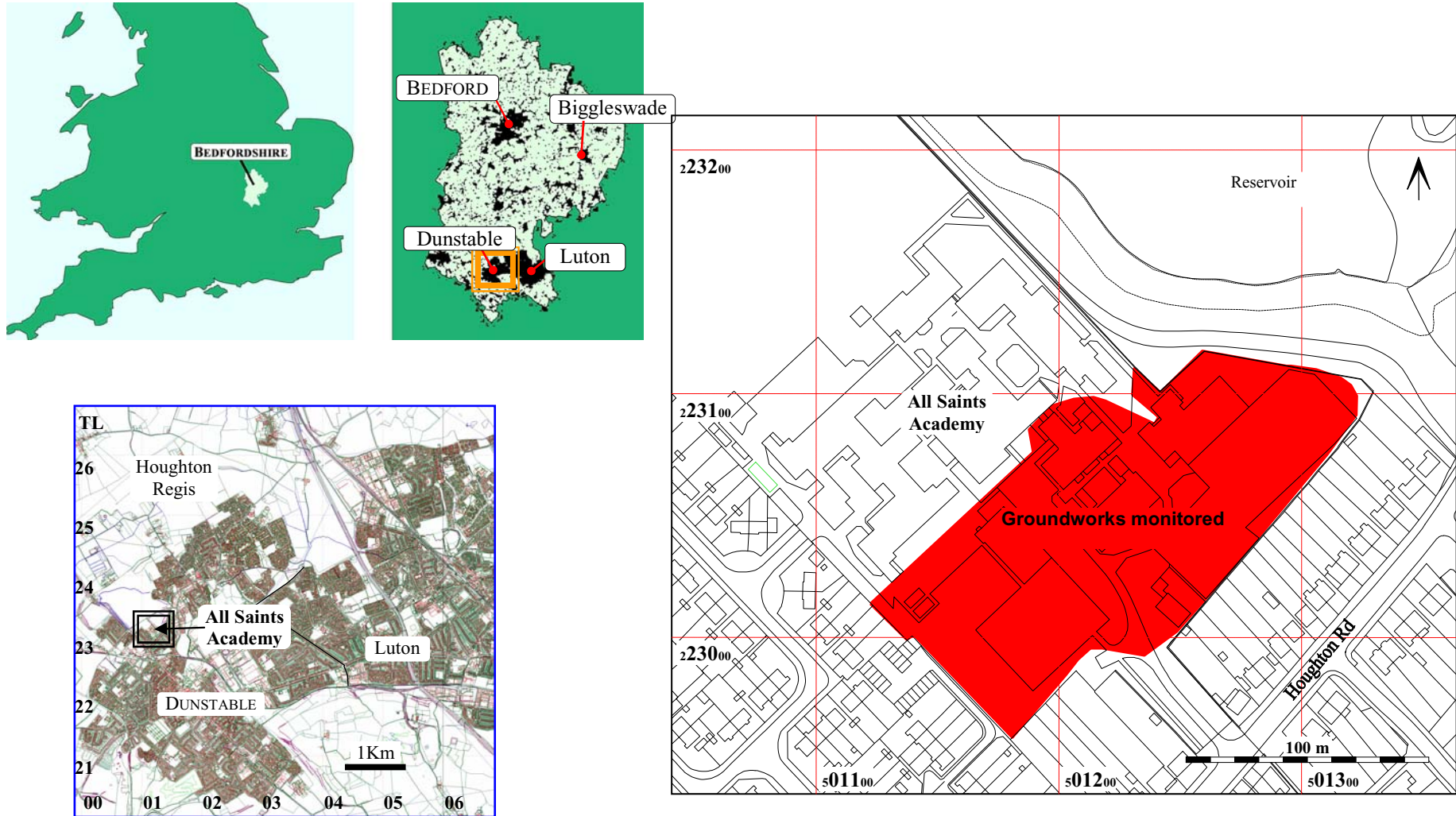
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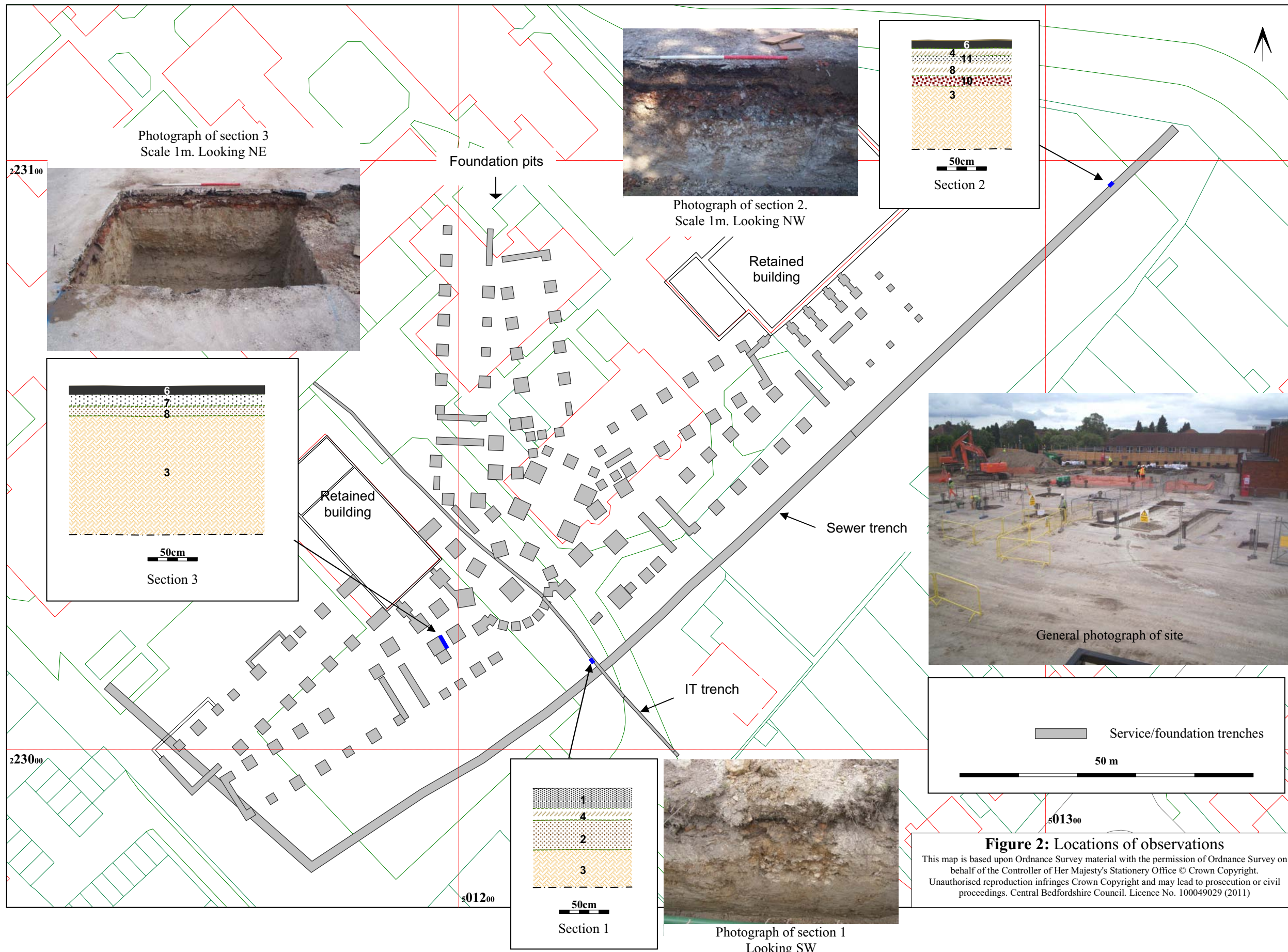
Description: New Academy School Building - monitoring, investigation and recording

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty loam occasional small-medium stones. Thickness of deposit varies from 0.2m to 0.25m	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Subsoil	Firm mid orange brown sandy silt occasional flecks chalk, moderate small-medium stones. Deposit is between 0.15m and 0.3m thick.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Natural	Firm light grey white chalk. Contains occasional flint and fossilised shells	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Levelling layer	Firm mid orange grey clay sand moderate small-large CBM, moderate small-medium stones. Deposit is c. 0.12-0.25m thick. Levelling event prior to landscaping of the school yard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Levelling layer	Firm mid grey orange clay frequent small-medium stones. Up to 0.15m thick deposit. Underlies present day tarmac surface (6).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	External surface	Hard mid grey tarmac. Up to 0.1m thick deposit of present day school yard surface.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Levelling layer	Compact mid grey gravel. Up to 0.13m thick deposit of 'type 1 material' - underlies tarmac (6).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	External surface	Hard mid orange red hardcore. Up to 0.2m thick deposit of former school yard surface, comprised a single layer of unmortared brick fragments, many of which have 'LBC' sign on them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Levelling layer	Firm mid brown grey sandy clay frequent small-large CBM, moderate small-large concrete. Up to 0.5m thick deposit - a series of make-up layers associated with the construction of former swimming pool in the west part of the site.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Levelling layer	Firm mid brown grey clay sand moderate small-medium CBM, moderate small-medium stones. Up to 0.25m thick deposit - levelling event prior to landscaping of the east part of school yard.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	External surface	Hard dark grey tarmac. 0.05m thick deposit of former school yard surface in the east part of site. Sealed by (4) and seals earlier surface (8).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Levelling layer	Firm mid grey brown clay sand moderate small-large CBM, moderate small-medium stones. Between 0.6m and 0.75m thick series of make-up layers associated with demolished school building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Figure 1: Site location**

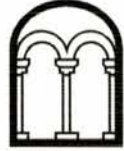
This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Central Bedfordshire Council. Licence No. 100049029 (2011)



**Figure 2: Locations of observations**  
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