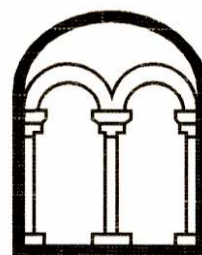


**THE GATE HOUSE
THE COMP
EATON BRAY, DUNSTABLE
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

Albion
archaeology



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Produced for:
Mr A. Holliday



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Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation and submission of this document and all statements 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.

This document has been prepared by Richard Gregson (Project Supervisor) and Gary Edmondson (Project Manager). It was approved by Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

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Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
HER	Historic Environment Record
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
LPA	Local Planning Authority (Central Bedfordshire Council)
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

Structure of this Report

Section 1 serves as an introduction to the site, describing its location, archaeological background and the aims of the project. Section 2 describes the methodology and Section 3 summarises the results. Section 4 is a bibliography.



Non-Technical Summary

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Mr Holliday to undertake a programme of archaeological works to fulfil a condition attached to planning permission CB/12/01334/FUL for the erection of a garage and extensions to the Gate House, The Comps, Eaton Bray.

The condition was attached as the site had the potential to contain heritage assets of archaeological significance. This was in line with the requirements of PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment (DCLG 2010) and policies within its replacement, the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012).

The Gate House, The Comp, is located close to the junction with High Street/Totternhoe Road which runs the length of the village of Eaton Bray. The site is centred on grid reference SP (4)97087 (2)20941) and lies at a height of c. 100m OD just below the northern escarpment of the Chiltern Hills.

The development comprised extensions to the house and the erection of a detached garage towards the road. Only the detached garage, set within the front garden of the Gate House, was monitored as the other works were within a previously disturbed area.

The footing trenches for the garage were opened on 25th July 2012, revealing thin topsoil over a thicker subsoil. This topsoil was thicker than a grassland soil though not as deep as a typical arable cultivation soil; it may be the result of orchard cultivation. No finds were recovered from these deposits. Modern features comprising two brick-filled soakaways and an associated ceramic drain correspond to elements of the rainwater drainage system shown on the 1956 architect's drawing for the current house.

No remains of archaeological significance were revealed within the footings trenches. There is no potential for further analysis or publication.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Background**

Planning permission (CB/12/01334/FUL) has been granted for the erection of a garage, a two-storey side and a single-storey rear extension to the Gate House, The Comps, Eaton Bray.

Because the site had the potential to contain heritage assets of archaeological significance, a condition was attached to the planning consent requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation. This was in line with the requirements of *PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (DCLG 2010) and policies within its replacement, the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012) which states that Local Planning Authorities should ‘*require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part)...*’.

The Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA) issued a brief detailing the requirements of the archaeological work at the site (CBC 2012), comprising observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Mr Holliday to formulate a Written Scheme of Investigation (2012) which set out the procedures and methods employed during the project and to carry out the archaeological works.

1.2 **Site Location and Description**

The Gate House, The Comp, is located close to the junction with High Street/Tottenhoe Road which runs the length of the village of Eaton Bray. The site is centred on grid reference SP (4)97087 (2)20941 (Figure 1) and lies at a height of *c.* 100m OD just below the northern escarpment of the Chiltern Hills.

The development comprises extensions to the house and the erection of a detached garage towards the road. Only the detached garage, set within the front garden of the Gate House, was monitored as the other works were within a previously disturbed area.

A series of geological strata are present in the vicinity of Eaton Bray. The site is in an area of Head, a mass movement deposit derived from materials upslope. This overlies a band of Upper Greensand Formation, with grey mudstone of the Gault Formation further to the west and north, with Combe Deposits, basically similar to Head, a mass movement deposit but composed of chalk. This deposit overlies Lower Chalk to the south and east (British Geological Survey 1992).

1.3 **Archaeological and Historical Background**

A desk-based archaeological assessment of the site was undertaken in May 2012 (Collins 2012) to accompany the planning application.



This indicated limited evidence for prehistoric and Roman activity in the area. The main evidence for activity was from the medieval period onwards, with the settlement being mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086. This would suggest that the settlement is likely to be at least late Saxon in origin. The site is located on the edge of the St Mary's settlement core — one of four late Saxon/medieval settlement foci incorporated into the present village. The others are Eaton Green Common, Moor End and Great Green Common.

The only nearby, extant, medieval building is St Mary's Church (HER 964), c. 200m to the SW, which dates from the 13th century, although documentary evidence suggests the presence of an earlier church. The surrounding churchyard is also listed as a heritage asset (HER 8886).

Ridge and furrow (HER 5075) in the surrounding fields are the only certain medieval earthworks listed within 500m of the site. During trial trenching at Poplar Farm, a ditch containing late 12th – early 13th century pottery was recovered. It is likely to represent a field or property boundary (ASC 2004). The archaeological investigation demonstrated that remains relating to medieval Eaton Bray do survive within this part of the village. Several buildings at Poplar Farm incorporate reused timbers, suggesting continuation of occupation this site, which is located near St Mary's church.

A moat has been identified at Moor End towards the SE margin of the present village. An evaluation trench revealed a substantial ditch, the fills indicating backfilling in modern times, although late medieval material was also recovered.

At Park Farm, a moat, deer park and fishpond complex (HER 531, 13970 and 10652) are scheduled (SM 24418), indicating heritage assets of national significance. This site has been subject to several small-scale investigations and survey.

Other medieval objects found within 500m of the site include a fragment of glazed tile (HER 2001), a 13th–15th century gilt, copper alloy brooch and a 13th–15th century copper alloy strap end.

The desk-based assessment identified a total of 28 post-medieval buildings within 500m of the site. Other post-medieval structures and areas of activity include the site of a former brick kiln, drainage sluices, allotments and the location of a Victorian market place on the green opposite the White Horse pub.

The only post-medieval object listed as being found within 500m of the site was a silver shilling (HER 18324) of Edward VI.

In this period the individual settlement foci merged to form the present-day village, although the individual cores contain clusters of timber-framed post-medieval buildings indicating the original character of the settlement.



1.4 Historical Maps

No buildings are shown within the site on either the 1849 Tithe Map or the enclosure map of 1860. On the earlier map, the site was on the edge of a parcel of land called Common Close, within a set of strip fields called 'comps'. The SE boundary of these 'comps' was defined by a stream. By 1860, the boundary had become a road called 'The Comp'.

In the latter part of the 19th century, orchards were established on the former agricultural land of the 'comps'. The 1924-26 map shows that the area now occupied by the Gate House property was by then part of an orchard. Fruit production probably continued until the end of the Second World War, after which it became uneconomical.

1.5 Project Objectives

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

The CBCA Brief (CBC 2012) stated that the project:

'has potential to contain remains relating to the development of the village of Eaton Bray and therefore the need for the investigation of rural Saxon and medieval settlements to examine diversity, characterise settlement forms and understand how they appear, grow, shift and disappear (Wade 2000, 24-25; Oake 2007, 14; Medlycott 2011, 70) should be considered.'

The general aims of the investigation were to:

- Establishing the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation within the development area;
- Establishing the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- Recovering palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.



2. METHODOLOGY

All groundworks associated with the construction of the garage that had the potential to reveal archaeological remains were archaeologically monitored.

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

- IfA's *Code of Conduct* (2010);
- IfA's *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs and Field Excavations (updated 2008) and finds (updated 2008)*;
- Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual for Archaeological Fieldwork and the Analysis of Fieldwork Records* (2001);
- English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991);
- English Heritage's *Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation (Second Edition)* (2011).



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

The footing trenches for the garage were opened on 25th July 2012. The trenches were 0.65m wide and generally 1.1m deep (Figure 2 and Figure 3: image 1) and were excavated by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

3.2 Overburden

The trenches revealed dark brown topsoil up to 0.15m thick. This was above mid-dark grey brown clay silt subsoil up to 0.45m thick. This would appear to be an old soil profile. There was no evidence of ploughing associated with arable cultivation. However, this soil may have been associated with the former orchard. No finds were recovered from these deposits.

3.3 Geological Strata

Below the overburden was undisturbed geological strata composed of light yellow white clayey chalk.

3.4 Modern Features

Two modern soakaways [4], [7] and an associated ceramic drain were revealed (Figure 2, Figure 3: image 2 and Figure 4: image 3). The soakaways were sub-circular in plan, at least 1.35m across and 0.85m deep, with vertical sides, extending into the geological substrate. They contained brick rubble and had been capped with redeposited topsoil.

Following discussions with the CBCA, it was agreed that monitoring of the excavation of a new 1m square soakaway was not required.

3.5 Summary

The two brick-filled soakaways and ceramic drain correspond to elements of the rainwater drainage system shown on the 1956 architect's drawing of the house.

No remains of archaeological significance were revealed within the footings trenches. There is no potential for further analysis or publication.



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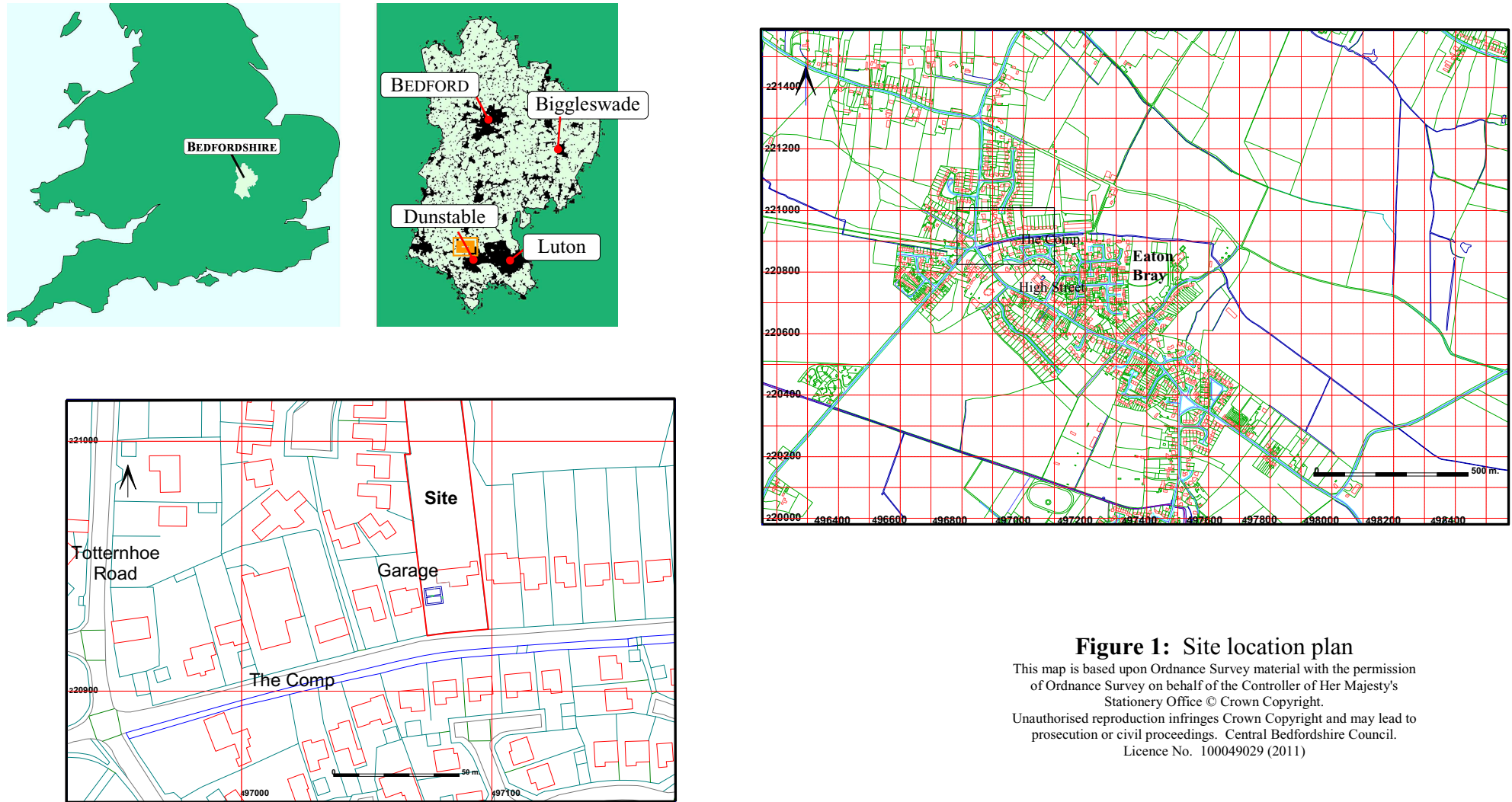




Figure 2: All features plan

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Image 1: General view of excavated garage footings, looking west. Scale 1m in 50cm divisions.



Image 2: Section through brick-filled soakaway [7]. Scale 1m in 50cm divisions.

Figure 3: Selected images 1 and 2

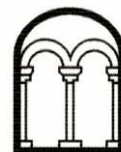


Image 3: Typical soil profiles, with ceramic drain associated with rainwater drainage system. Scale 1m in 50cm divisions.

Figure 4: Selected image 3

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