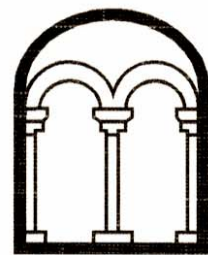


**LAND ADJACENT TO 160A HIGH SREET  
RISELEY  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

**Albion**  
archaeology



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## Preface

*Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete an assessment as possible, within the terms of the specification. 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.*

*The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Geoff Saunders, Historic Environment Team Officer (HETO) of Bedford Borough Council.*

*The fieldwork was undertaken by Marcin Koziminski (Archaeological Supervisor), who also prepared the report. The project was managed by Christiane Meckseper (Project Officer). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shottliff (Operations Manager).*

*The assistance and co-operation of Mr George Davies of 160A High Street, Riseley and the engaged contractors throughout the project are gratefully acknowledged.*

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<i>1.0</i>	<i>27/03/2013</i>	<i>n/a</i>

## Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

BBC	Bedford Borough Council
BLARS	Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Record Service
DA	Development Area
EBD	Events BeDfordshire
HER	Historic Environment Record
HETO	BBC's Historic Environment Team Officer
I/A	Institute for Archaeologists
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 *Planning Background*

Planning consent was granted on appeal for the erection of a two-storey detached 'eco cottage' near the southern boundary of the site with associated infrastructure, following part demolition of a conservatory attached to 160A High Street, Riseley, Bedfordshire (11/01750/FUL).

As the Development Area (DA) lies in an area of archaeological interest, a condition (no. 10) was placed on the planning consent by the Local Planning Authority, following advice received from Bedford Borough Council's Historic Environment Team Officer (HETO). This was in accordance with national planning guidelines in the form of the *National Planning Policy Framework – Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*, which was published on 27 March 2012<sup>1</sup>, which replaced the previous *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment*.

A brief for the necessary work was issued by the HETO (BBC 2012), detailing the requirements for a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording during the construction works. In response to the brief, a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared (Albion Archaeology 2012) and agreed with the HETO.

A pre-works site meeting was held on 11th February 2013 and archaeological monitoring of the construction works took place between 12th and 21st March 2013. The results are presented in this report.

### 1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The DA lies in the northern part of Riseley village, a linear settlement strung out along the High Street. The plot of 160A High Street is a linear parcel of land that extends south-eastwards from the narrow High Street frontage. The main dwelling is set back from the road at the end of an access drive widening out to an area of car parking (Figure 1). The rear of the property is formed by a garden with mature trees and shrubs and open lawns.

The site is bordered to the north and south by residential properties and to the west by a field of pasture lined with mature trees.

Riseley lies in a shallow valley formed by the Riseley Brook which meanders along the back of properties along the western side of the High Street. The topography of the DA rises slightly from west to east with an OD height of c. 51m near the High Street and c. 55m at the eastern limit of the plot. The DA is centred on grid reference TL 04630 63256. The underlying geology is Oxford Clay.

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<sup>1</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf>.



### 1.3 **Archaeological Background**

The DA lies within the limits of the medieval village (HER 17089) as defined in the HER. Riseley is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as a fairly large manor with up to 25 households<sup>2</sup>. The settlement is strung out along the High Street with the parish church c. 700m to the south-west of the DA and set back from the main road.

A medieval moated site lies c. 300m to the west of the DA on the opposite side of the High Street in a field known as “Hall Close”. This is a scheduled monument (HER 347) and consists of a moated enclosure with associated trackways, fishponds and other earthworks. A low ring-shaped bank may be the foundation for a dovecote. A trackway leads from the moated site up to the Riseley Brook and most likely would have accessed the High Street across a ford in the brook.

To the north of the moat a series of ridges represent the remains of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation earthworks. Ridge and furrow remains existed in a number of fields of Riseley parish (HER 4475) but modern cultivation has levelled many of these former earthworks. Medieval pottery has been found opposite and to the north of the DA (HER 575 and 11996 respectively) and groundworks for the construction of a driveway and retaining wall at 129 High Street to the south of the DA revealed four ditches and a considerable quantity of pottery, animal bone and associated artefacts (EBD 540).

The cropmark of a post-medieval hedge line (HER 12648) lies close to the moated site. There are references to brick and tile making in Riseley from the 1550s onwards and the site of a brick and tile works (HER 3023) lies in the fields directly to the south-east of the DA.

The DA also lies within the northern section of Riseley Conservation Area which is defined by a number of 17th-, 18th- and 19th-century cottages along the High Street.

### 1.4 **Project Objectives**

The research framework for Bedfordshire states that, in general, few medieval rural settlements have been investigated in the county. The emphasis also lies on study of settlements of any period which are situated on the more heavy claylands, rather than the more intensively studied gravelly river valleys (Oake 2007, 14).

For the post-medieval period the local research framework sketches a number of general research themes that concentrate on the investigation of the social, economic and intellectual meaning and context of any study undertaken (Oake 2007, 15). The updated *Framework for the East of England* also makes a statement that while brick making is one of the major industries in Bedfordshire little is yet known about its earlier phases of development from the medieval period onwards (Medlycott 2011, 16).

The general objectives of the investigation were to determine:

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<sup>2</sup> <http://domesdaymap.co.uk/search/?geo=riseley>



- the nature of any archaeological remains present at the site;
- the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits present at the site.

The specific objectives of the investigation were to determine:

- if there was any evidence for medieval occupation relating to the scheduled monument of the moated site to the west of 160A High Street;
- if there was any evidence relating to the medieval village development of Riseley;
- if there was any evidence that could shed further light on the medieval and early post-medieval brick making industry that was located to the east of 160A High Street.

The project results are fully described in this document, which is in a form of an integrated archive report.

## 1.5 Methodology

The following groundworks were monitored:

1. Ground reduction of man-made landscaping deposit between the property's western boundary and the access drive over an area of *c.* 150m<sup>2</sup>;
2. Excavation of a service trench in the area of previously removed landscaping overburden; the trench was *c.* 32.5m long, 0.6m wide and 0.7–1.0m deep;
3. Excavation of *c.* 50–350mm of turf and topsoil over an area measuring *c.* 250m<sup>2</sup> within the footprint of the proposed dwelling.

The ground reduction (1) and excavation of turf and topsoil (3) were carried out by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The excavation of the service trench (2) was undertaken using the same excavator fitted with a narrow toothless, bucket. All archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out by experienced Albion Archaeology staff.

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

• IfA	<i>By-Laws and Code of Conduct</i>
	<i>Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (2009)</i>
	<i>Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (updated 2008)</i>
• EAA	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (2003)</i>
• Bedford Borough Council	<i>Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedford (1998)</i>
• English Heritage	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) (2009)</i>



• English Heritage	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation (2011)</i>
• HETO	<i>Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication at Land adjacent to 160A High Street, Riseley, Bedfordshire (July 2012)</i>
• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork (2nd edn, 2001).</i>





## 2. RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

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The first stage of the groundworks involved the removal of overburden between the property's western boundary and the access drive (Figure 2). This consisted of a thin turf line and up to 500mm of soil that made up a bank along the edge of the current access drive. Removal of this overburden exposed undisturbed geological deposits which consisted of mid brown orange clay. The bank consisted of made-up ground which was formed as a landscape feature when the access drive for the current bungalow was constructed. No archaeological deposits were revealed in this area.

Excavation of the service trench in the same area of previously removed landscaping overburden showed another undisturbed geological deposit in the form of light orange sand that underlay the natural clay (Figures 2 and 3). The thickness of overlying clay ranged from 0.3–0.5m.

The last stage of archaeological works comprised monitoring of the ground reduction in the area of the proposed 'eco-cottage'. The ground reduction removed a dark brown deposit of topsoil that was 50–350mm thick; it lay directly over a layer of natural clay. Topsoil increased in thickness from NW to SE towards the rear of the plot, which seems to follow the natural contour of the site.

The ground reduction revealed the remains of a NW-SE aligned hedgerow along the western boundary of the property. This seems to have once been a continuation of the extant hedgerow boundary to the south-east. The works also revealed two large root disturbance areas, where thick vegetation and a tree were removed during monitoring as well as two modern service trenches (Figures 2 and 4).

No archaeological evidence was revealed during the works. No archaeological artefacts were identified within any of the deposits.

The absence of archaeological features, other than the continuation of the known and still extant hedgerow, suggests that the focus of medieval occupation was some distance away from the site. It is likely that no activity associated with the medieval/post-medieval settlement or the brick-making industry took place in this area.

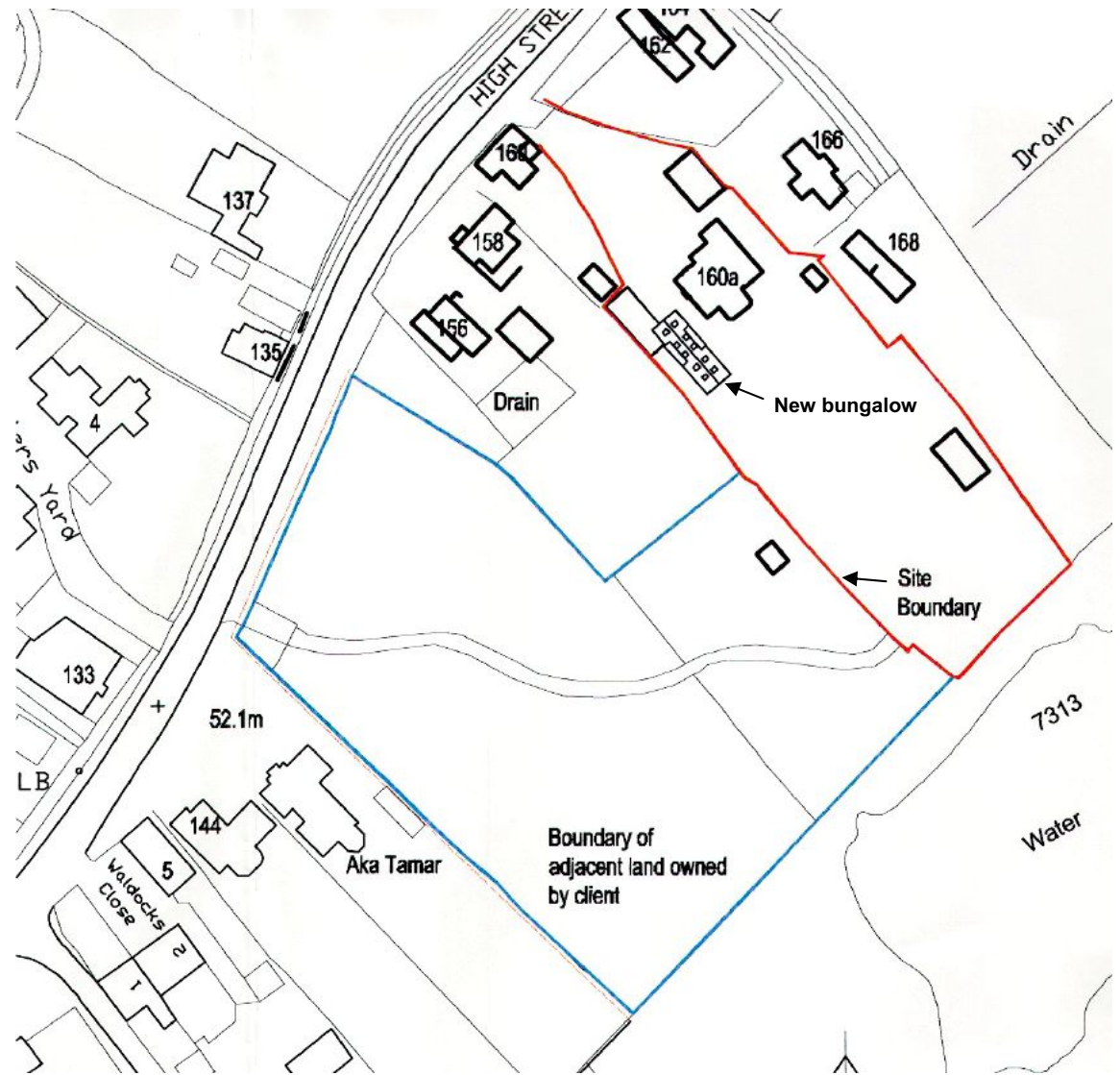
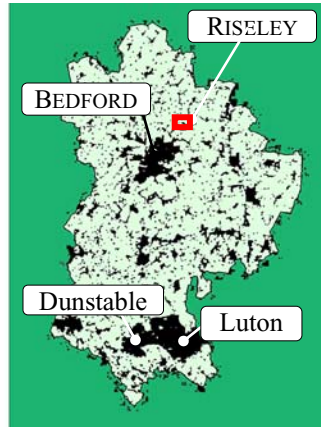
The site records do not merit any further analysis or reporting. The project archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum (accession no. BEDFM 2012.54). This report will be uploaded onto the Archaeology Data Service's OASIS website (ref. albionar1-135021).



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**Figure 1:** Site location (based on architects' *atkins blair ings richardson* plan 0127.PL.01)

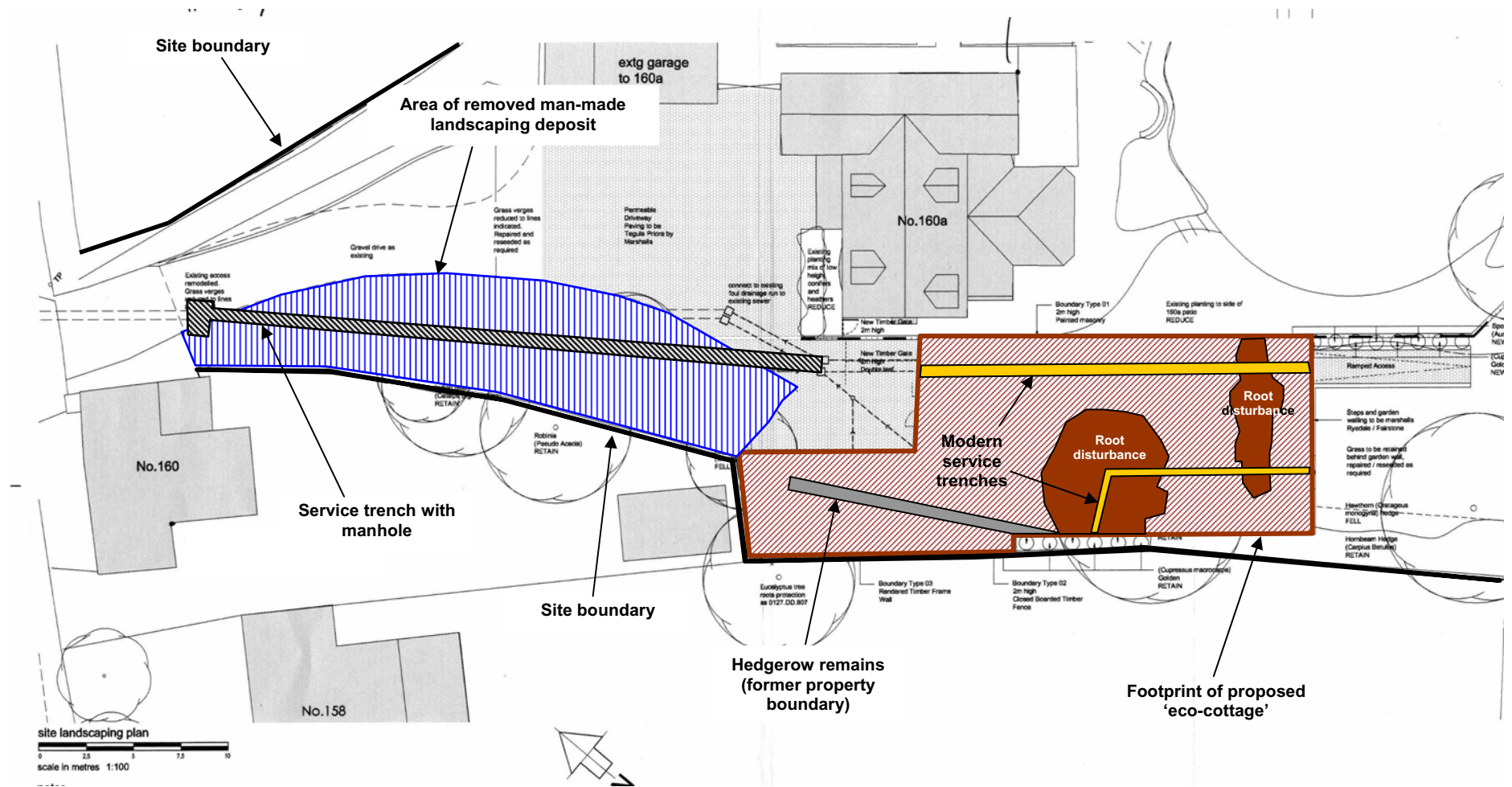
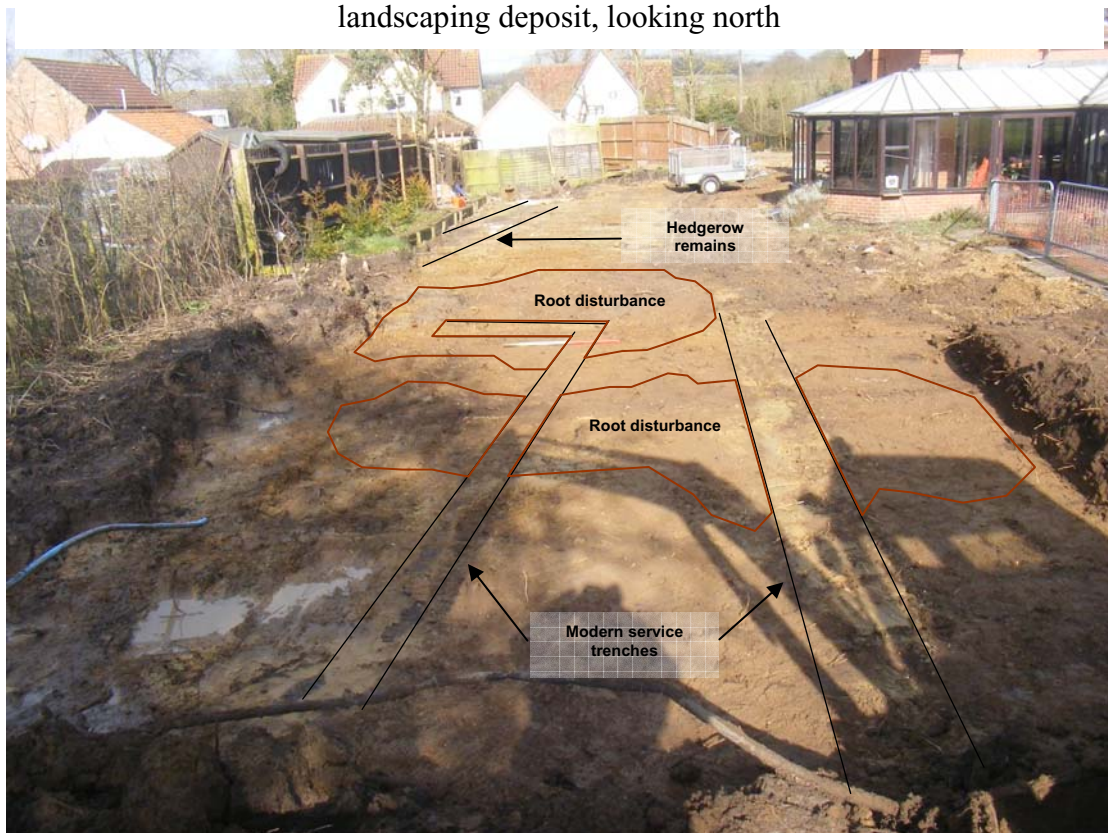


Figure 2: Watching brief results



**Figure 3:** Service trench excavated in the area of previously removed landscaping deposit, looking north



**Figure 4:** Area of the proposed new dwelling, looking north-west

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