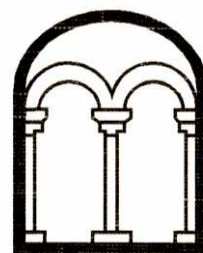


**LAND TO THE REAR OF MUSHROOM FARM  
58 CHURCH STREET  
LANGFORD  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

**Albion**  
archaeology



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Iain Leslie	Ben Barker	Drew Shotliff

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Prepared for

Amber Developments (St Ives) Ltd



## ***Contents***

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<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1	Project Background	5
1.2	Site Location and Description	5
1.3	Archaeological Background	5
1.4	Project Objectives	6
<b>2</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1	Introduction	8
3.2	Overburden	8
3.3	Undisturbed Geological Deposits	8
<b>4</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>10</b>

### ***List of Figures***

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: Observed groundworks

*The figures are bound at the back of this report.*



## **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 Amber Developments (St Ives) Ltd. The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Martin Oake, Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist.*

*Fieldwork was carried out by Iain Leslie (Archaeological Supervisor) who also prepared this report.*

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## **Version History**

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1.0	10/04/2012	n/a

## **Key Terms**

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
DA	Development area
HER	Heritage Environment Record
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
LPA	Local Planning Authority (Central Bedfordshire Council)
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



## **Non-technical Summary**

*Planning permission was granted on appeal for the construction of a single dwelling, garage and access road on land to the rear of Mushroom Farm, 58 Church Street, Langford, Bedfordshire. As the development lay within an area of archaeological sensitivity, the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist advised the Local Planning Authority that a scheme of archaeological work should be implemented during groundworks associated with the development.*

*No archaeological features were observed during the course of the investigations. In conjunction with the results of previous investigations at 62-72 Church Street this would suggest that medieval remains in this part of Langford are confined to the area adjacent to the street frontage, east of the current development.*

*There was no evidence of the disturbance associated with the demolition of the 1980s mushroom farm noted in previous investigations, meaning that there would have been a high chance of archaeological features surviving should they have been present.*

*The project archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum (accession no. 2013.11). This report will be uploaded onto the Archaeology Data Service's OASIS website (albionar1-144738).*



# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 *Project Background*

Planning permission was granted on appeal (Planning Inspectorate: Ref 2181363) for the construction of a single dwelling, garage and access road on land to the rear of Mushroom Farm, 58 Church Street, Langford, Bedfordshire.

As the development lay within an area of archaeological sensitivity, a condition (no. 4) was attached to the planning consent requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. This was in line with Paragraph 141 of the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* which states that Local Planning Authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of a heritage asset(s) before it is lost; this can be achieved by imposing planning conditions or obligations as appropriate (CLG 2012).

In this instance the relevant heritage assets were potential archaeological remains, relating to the Saxon and medieval settlement of Langford.

A brief was issued by the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist specifying the required work (CBC 2013). Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the programme of archaeological work in accordance with methodologies described in a Written Scheme of Investigation, agreed with the CBCA (Albion Archaeology 2013). This report describes the results of the archaeological work.

## 1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The development area (DA) lies at the northern end of the village of Langford (Fig. 1) at a height of *c.* 32m OD, on ground that slopes gently down to the west towards the River Ivel. It is bordered by arable land to the east, with built development on all other sides. Under grass prior to development, the PDA covers an area *c.* 0.1ha, centred on grid reference TL 1859 4172. The underlying geology comprises river-terrace sands and gravels, overlying Lower Greensand and Gault Clay.

## 1.3 *Archaeological Background*

An archaeological field evaluation and subsequent watching brief were undertaken in conjunction with an earlier development to the rear of nos 62–72 Church Street (Albion Archaeology 2012a and 2012b). The investigations found medieval settlement remains towards the Church Street frontage; they comprised a number of ditches and a pit. These features were dated by pottery to the late 12th to early 13th centuries, although the presence of St Neot's ware suggested that there might have been earlier, 9th–11th-century occupation in the immediate vicinity.

To the south of the parish church, *c.* 550m from the DA, an archaeological field evaluation produced further, substantial evidence for late Saxon and early medieval settlement on the west side of Church Street (Hood 2012).



More generally, the DA lies within a landscape that contains evidence of human activity dating back as far as the Palaeolithic period (Coleman, unpublished). Archaeological remains from the prehistoric and Roman periods are plentiful along the Ivel Valley, although little evidence is currently known for them within the immediate vicinity of the PDA.

'British mounds' (HER 1420) were recorded in the 1890s south-west of the DA, but no trace of these could be observed by at least the 1970s. Aerial photographs have revealed an extensive area of crop-marks to the north-east (HER 1486), with evidence of ring ditches, trackways, blocks of rectilinear enclosures and separate small enclosures. A geophysical survey to the east (EBD 772) was inconclusive in some areas, but did also reveal evidence of enclosures, ring ditches and areas of pitting. Metal-detecting within the area of these crop-marks has produced late Iron Age and Roman finds, and similar crop-marks along the rest of the Ivel Valley have been shown to date to those periods.

Further extensive crop-marks to the west (HER 631) show a comparable landscape to that of HER 1486, and an aerial photographic assessment of river-edge settlements to the west (EBD 622) also revealed evidence of pit alignments, enclosures, ring ditches and trackways.

The earliest written mention of Langford comes from 944–6 (Coleman, unpublished). The village of Church End (HER 17135) may originally have been a separate settlement; it has been suggested that it was Danish in origin, due to the presence of Danish names amongst its earliest inhabitants.

A church is recorded in the parish from at least 1142, presumably on the same site as the 13th-century St Andrew's Church (HER 1087). A medieval deer park (HER 13937) existed to the north of village.

Post-medieval remains in the vicinity of the DA include several buildings that have now been demolished, and the parish churchyard of St Andrew's Church (HER 8919). Most of the buildings (HER 5738–5742) were Grade II or Grade III listed, while a windmill (HER 3171) also existed to the south of the DA before being demolished by 1840. Historical maps show the DA to have been open agricultural land since at least 1807; a mushroom farm was in use close to the site in the 1980s.

#### **1.4 Project Objectives**

The purpose of the mitigation works was to record and investigate any archaeological remains that might be impacted by the development.

Such remains could contribute to our developing understanding of the origins and development of medieval rural settlement in Bedfordshire. As such, they had relevance both to Langford itself and contemporary settlement in Bedfordshire as a whole. An understanding of the character and diversity of medieval settlement has been identified as an important research topic in the published Research Frameworks for both in Bedfordshire and the East England (Brown and Glazebrook 2000; Oake *et al.* 2007; Medlycott 2011).



## 2 METHODOLOGY

The Brief (CBC 2013) required that any groundworks, or other works likely to have an impact on archaeological deposits or remains, should be carried out under continuous and constant archaeological supervision. The WSI (Albion 2013) envisaged that this would include the excavation of foundations, service trenches, and general ground reduction. A detailed methodology is provided in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2013).

Archaeological observation of the groundworks took place between 11th March and 2nd April 2013. The monitored groundworks comprised the excavation of foundation trenches and associated service trenches, as shown on Figure 2. The footings measured *c.* 0.6m wide and 1.2m deep; whilst the service trenches were *c.* 0.6m wide and a maximum of 0.6m deep.

Due to a failure in communication, a 2m by 4m soakaway (located at the western edge of the plot) was excavated without archaeological observation. This oversight was reported to the CBCA as soon as it became apparent. No additional significant ground reduction activity was undertaken. The driveway was stripped to a maximum depth of *c.* 0.4m, but did not penetrate the subsoil horizon.

The 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).
• Bedford Borough Council	<i>Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedford</i> (2010)
• East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14	Gurney, D. <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)

The project archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum (accession no. 2013.11). This report will be uploaded onto the Archaeology Data Service's OASIS website (albionar1-144738).





## **3 RESULTS**

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### **3.1 Introduction**

The monitored groundworks revealed no archaeological features. The soil horizons observed on site are summarised below.

### **3.2 Overburden**

The overburden observed within the footing and service trenches consisted of a topsoil of dark brown-grey sandy silt, 0.25–0.35m thick, overlying a layer of subsoil. The subsoil was a 0.3–0.35m thick mid grey-brown sandy silt.

### **3.3 Undisturbed Geological Deposits**

Undisturbed geological strata were revealed *c.* 0.6m below the present ground surface and consisted of light brown-yellow sandy gravels.



## 4 CONCLUSIONS

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No archaeological deposits or features were observed during the course of the investigations. Furthermore, there was no evidence for the disturbance associated with the demolition of the 1980s mushroom farm, as recorded in previous investigations. As such, it is unlikely that any archaeological features within the DA have been lost to modern truncation.

The results of this phase of work complement those of the previous investigations at 62-72 Church Street (Albion 2012a and 2012b). They strongly suggest that medieval remains in this part of Langford are confined to an area within 50m of the Church Street frontage, to the east of the current DA.



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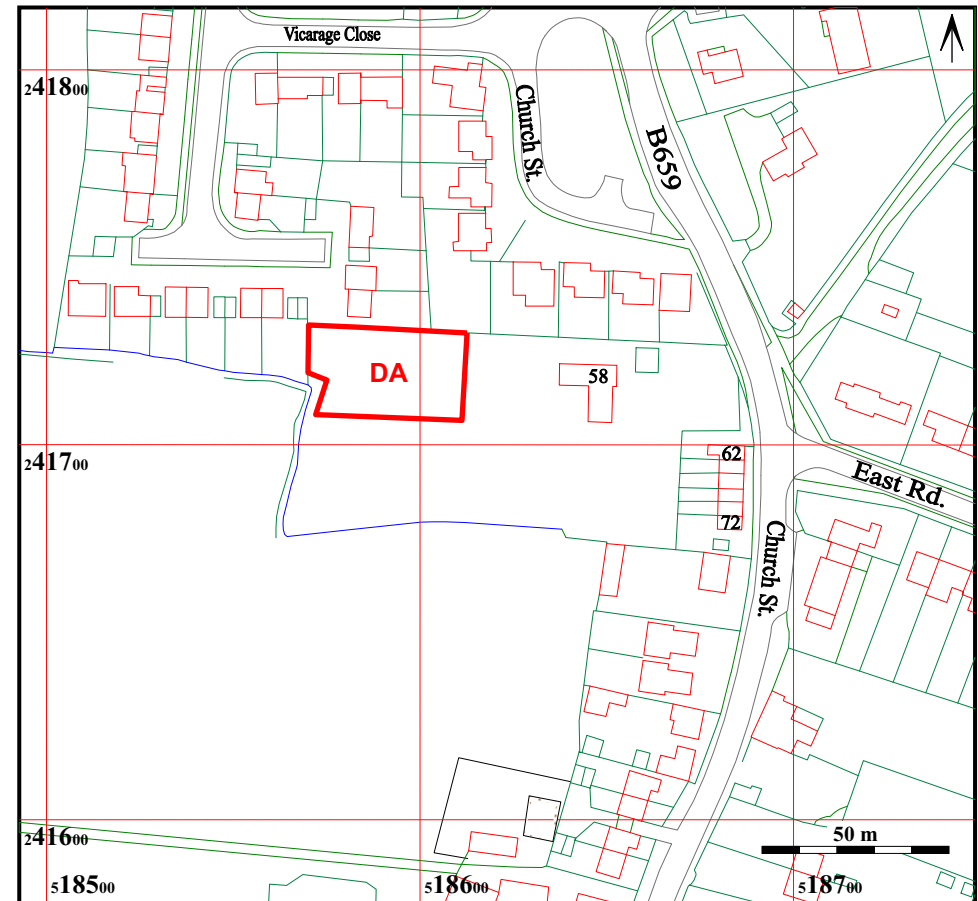
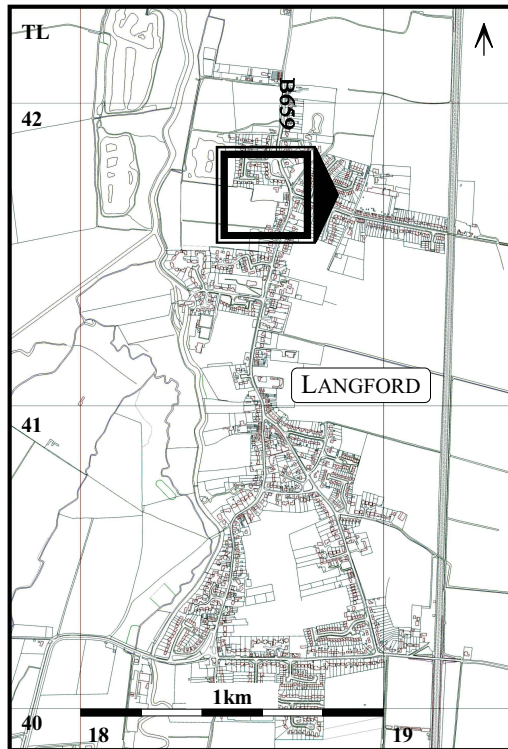
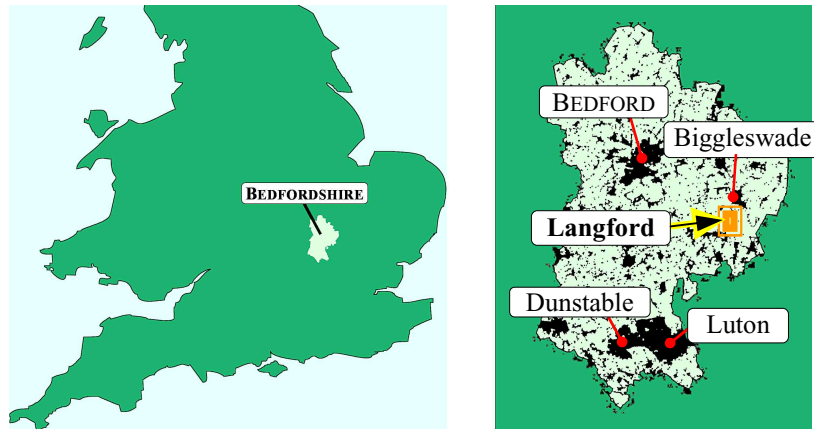
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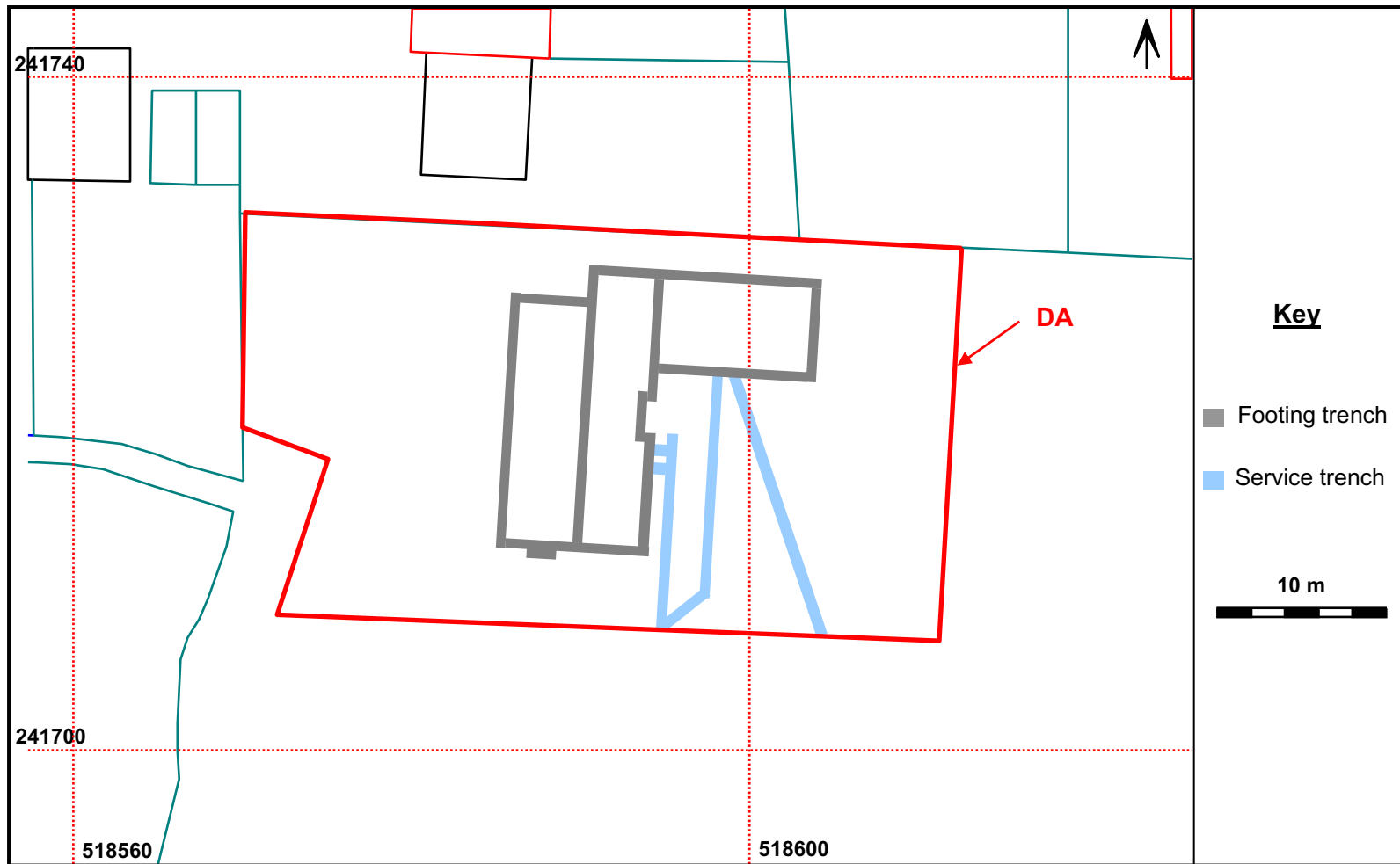
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**Figure 1: Site location plan**

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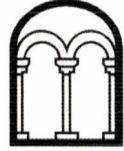


**Figure 2: Observed groundworks**

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