

**101 TURNPIKE DRIVE
LUTON**

**A PROGRAMME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL
OBSERVATION, INVESTIGATION, RECORDING,
ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION**

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Produced for:
Mrs Linda Samsa

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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.

This report has been prepared by Mark Phillips (Project Officer) and edited by Joe Abrams (Project Manager). The fieldwork was also undertaken by Mark Phillips. Joan Lightning (CAD Technician) produced the figures. All Albion Archaeology projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

Albion Archaeology is grateful to Linda Samsa for commissioning the project. We would also like to acknowledge the assistance of April Daines (Department of Media, Culture and Sport) and John Ette who assisted in obtaining scheduled ancient monument consent in advance of the works. We are also grateful to Lesley-Ann Mather, Bedfordshire County Council, County Archaeological Officer and Ismail Mohammed, Luton Borough Council who promptly approved the project design allowing the works to go ahead as planned.

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Structure of the Report

After the introductory Section 1, there is a summary of the results of the fieldwork in Section 2, followed by a brief conclusion (Section 3). Section 4 is a bibliography, and Appendix 1 contains an archaeological context summary.

Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Albion | Albion Archaeology |
| CAO | County Archaeological Officer |
| Client | Mrs L Samsa |
| IFA | Institute of Field Archaeologists |
| LBC | Luton Borough Council |
| Procedures Manual | <i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork, 2nd Edition 2001.</i> Bedfordshire County Council |



Non-Technical Summary

A programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording was undertaken by Albion Archaeology at 101 Turnpike Drive, Luton between 22nd May and 23rd May 2006. The work was carried out during the excavation of foundation trenches for an extension on the north side of the building. The site is in an archaeologically sensitive location, falling within the designated boundaries of the scheduled ancient monument, Dray's Ditches, a linear earthwork believed to originate in the Bronze Age.

No archaeological remains were revealed during the works. Instead, the observations demonstrated that the site contains a uniform series of layers. The lower layers comprise, chalk bedrock and silty-clay subsoil. Sealing these, a layer of buried soil was recorded. This would have been the land surface prior to the dumping of several modern layers, which appear to have been laid to level the site during the construction of the houses on Turnpike Drive.

Although no archaeological remains were identified, it should be noted that conditions were not ideal for archaeological observation for the following reasons. Firstly, the foundation trenches were 2.5m deep and, therefore, all observations and records had to be made without entering the trench. Secondly, the orientation of the main trench, parallel to the line of Dray's Ditches, would make recognition of any linear earthworks problematic.

The project archive will ultimately be deposited with Luton Museum under Accession Number 2006:294.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Luton Borough Council (LBC) has granted planning permission (05/786/FUL) for the erection of a two storey side extension at 101 Turnpike Drive, Luton.

Given the archaeological sensitivity of the development area, a condition was attached to the planning permission. As archaeological adviser to LBC, the County Archaeological Officer (CAO) advised that the site of the new extension should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation. This was also a requirement of the scheduled ancient monument consent, issued by DCMS.

On 3rd May 2006 Albion Archaeology were commissioned to carry out this programme of investigation and to produce a report (this document) on the results. A project design for the work (Albion 2006) was prepared and approved by the CAO.

1.2 Site Location and Description

101 Turnpike Drive lies on the northern fringes of Luton, some 160m to the east of the A6. The development area is c.40sqm in extent and is centred on TL 0821 2652. Dray's Ditches runs east-west to the north of the site.

Topographically, the site lies on the Chilterns ridge at a height of c.119mOD, immediately to the west of the promontories of Galley Hill and Warden Hill. The underlying solid geology comprises mainly clay and chalk. The development area is adjacent to an existing property which has been previously extended.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The development area is situated in a landscape which has been the focus of significant activity from the Neolithic through to the Iron Age. Evidence for this includes find spots of Neolithic worked flints (HER15223-15225, 15824, 15820), two ancient routeways (HER 10843), a territorial boundary earthwork (HER113) and Bronze Age burial mounds (HER 116, 118). Find spots of Roman coins and pottery have also been recorded in several locations to the south of the development area, although currently no associated settlement activity has been found in the area.

The most significant feature of the area is the scheduled ancient monument of Dray's Ditches (HER 113). These earthworks originally followed a line through the proposed development area, starting at the base of Warden Hill to the east and finishing south of Streatley Village, to the west (Simco 1984). Excavations in 1959 (Dyer 1961) and 1971 found the below ground remains of two phases of ditches and banks next to the development area. The first phase comprised two Bronze Age parallel ditches, superseded in the Iron Age by three large parallel ditches, measuring c.4.5m wide and c.2.0m deep. Postholes belonging to a double palisade, which had been constructed between the central and southern ditches, were also excavated (Dyer 1961).



The Icknield Way crosses Dray's Ditches to the east of the development area. It has been proposed that Dray's Ditches were a means of controlling access along the Icknield Way in the prehistoric period, performing a similar function to several other linear earthworks along the Chilterns, such as Grim's Ditches (Simco 1984).

Ede Way or Theedway also runs east-west to the north of the development area, following the same line as Dray's Ditches. It functioned as an important route for the transportation of salt in the Saxon period and still marks the line of parish boundaries on modern maps of this region. However, its influence on the physical landscape and its relationship with Icknield Way and Dray's Ditches has led to the suggestion that it too may have had earlier, prehistoric origins.



2. RESULTS OF OBSERVATION AND RECORDING

2.1 Introduction

The programme of archaeological observation was undertaken between 22nd May and 23rd May 2006. During this period, all groundworks which required monitoring were completed. A mechanical excavator was used for all excavations.

Detailed technical information on all the deposits and archaeological features referred to below can be found in Appendix 1.

2.2 Methodology

The archaeological works adhered to the standards and field methods set out in section 5 of the brief (BCC 2006), specifically:

- 1 Any stripping of overburden or excavation of service trenches was monitored to try to identify *in situ* archaeological deposits.
- 2 All disturbed soil was scanned for artefacts.
- 3 Any excavated deposits were recorded in accordance with Albion's *Procedures Manual* and the detailed requirements in section 5 of the brief.
- 4 All archaeological observations were recorded at a suitable scale on base plans that were tied in to the OS national grid.
- 5 A photographic record was made of all significant deposits.

Throughout the project, the standards set out in the Institute of Field Archaeologists Codes of Conduct and Standards and Guidance documents (specifically *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, September 1999), in English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991) and in Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual* were adhered to.

2.3 Extent and Nature of Groundworks

The development area, covering 40m², was 9m long and 4.5m wide (Figure 1). The groundworks comprised foundation trenches for the western and north sides of the extension and one internal dividing wall (Figure 2). The foundation trenches were excavated to a depth of up to 2.5m.

2.4 Results

A series of stratified layers, comprising geological deposits, a buried former topsoil and several modern construction layers were observed to a depth of 2.5m in the trench. This was orientated broadly E-W on the northern edge of the development area (Figure 3). The layers observed were relatively uniform in depth and character across the site.



2.4.1 Geological deposits and buried soil

Undisturbed geological strata, observed in the base of the trench, consisted of chalk bedrock and chalky clay (8). The upper surface of the geological strata sloped slightly downwards from east to west, reflecting the local topography.

A layer of dark yellowish brown silty clay with occasional small stones (7), sealed the bedrock. This may have been a colluvial deposit, formed by soil movement downslope from the steeper land on Warden Hill to the east.

The clay was overlain by a layer of dark grey clay silt (6). This contained flecks and small to medium sized fragments of chalk, particularly in its upper part. In addition, a number of roots and fine rootlets were visible within the deposit of which the larger roots appeared to be decayed. This layer gave off an odour indicative of decaying organic matter. This observation combined with those on its character and inclusions (Appendix 1) suggest this is a relatively recently buried, former topsoil.

2.4.2 Modern intrusions and layers associated with building construction

Beyond the northern boundary of the garden, the land falls away steeply to the north. Where the trench lay closest to this boundary, at its eastern end, the foundations of a modern retaining wall (9) were exposed in the northern side of the trench. The retaining wall was built on a concrete plinth (10), on top of a concrete filled foundation trench [11] that extended down to the level of the undisturbed chalk.

The retaining wall held back a series of layers, (4) (5) and (6), consisting mainly of redeposited chalk. These were piled up against the southern side of the retaining wall to form a layer up to 1m deep in total, to level the ground and form a terrace for the construction of the house.

The surface of the area was covered in block paving (1) supported on a bedding layer of sand.



3. SYNTHESIS

3.1 Interpretation

No archaeological features were recognized during the on-site observation work. The observations show that the site is covered by a uniform series of layers. The lower part is formed by naturally derived geological deposits (7) and (8). A dark layer of buried soil (6) appears to be topsoil that would have formed the ground surface until buried by a series of modern build-up layers.

3.2 Summary

No archaeological remains were revealed during the works. Instead, the observations demonstrated that the site contains a series of layers uniform in depth and character (Figure 3). The lower layers comprise, chalk bedrock and silty-clay subsoil. Sealing these, a layer of buried soil was recorded. This would have been the land surface prior to the dumping of several modern layers. These upper layers appear to have been used to level the site during construction of the houses on Turnpike Drive.

It should be noted that conditions were not ideal for archaeological observation for the following reasons. Firstly, the site was covered in a deep layer of modern levelling deposits, creating a need for relatively deep (maximum 2.5m) foundation trenches, in order to reach solid geological deposits. As a result, all observations and records had to be made without entering the trench.

In addition, the main foundation trench lay broadly parallel to the projected line of Dray's Ditches, whilst the cross-wall foundations were not excavated to their full depth due to the presence of services. Clearly, it is more likely that linear earthworks (such as Dray's Ditches) would be identified in trenches that lay perpendicular to the line of the earthwork rather than parallel to it.



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5. APPENDICES

5.1 Appendix 1 - Context Summary



Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 9.00 m. Width: 1.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: TL0821326529 Ref. 2: TL0820526526

Reason: Construction trench for foundations of house extension

| Context: | Type: | Description: | Excavated: | Finds Present: |
|----------|-------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | External surface | Block paving | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | Make up layer | Light yellow sand Bedding layer for block paving | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | Levelling layer | Light grey chalk occasional small-large ceramic building material Mixed dirty grey chalk with fragments of brick and ceramic pipe. Construction buildup or leveling layer. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | Levelling layer | White chalk Clean redeposited chalk forming construction buildup or leveling layer. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | Layer | Mid yellow brown silty clay Thin layer of clay, possibly deposited during construction work | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 | Buried topsoil | Dark grey clay silt occasional flecks chalk, occasional small chalk, occasional small stones | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 | Subsoil | Dark yellow brown silty clay occasional small stones | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 | Bedrock | White chalk | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 | Brickwork | Upper part of retaining wall at north edge of house plot | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 | Concrete | Cast concrete plinth supporting brickwork of retaining wall | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 | Foundation trench | Dimensions: max depth 0.8m Construction cut for foundation of retaining wall | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 | Foundation | Concrete made with coarse rounded aggregate filling foundation trench [11] | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13 | Foundation trench | Construction cut for concrete raft foundation of former garage | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14 | Foundation | Concrete foundation raft of former garage | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

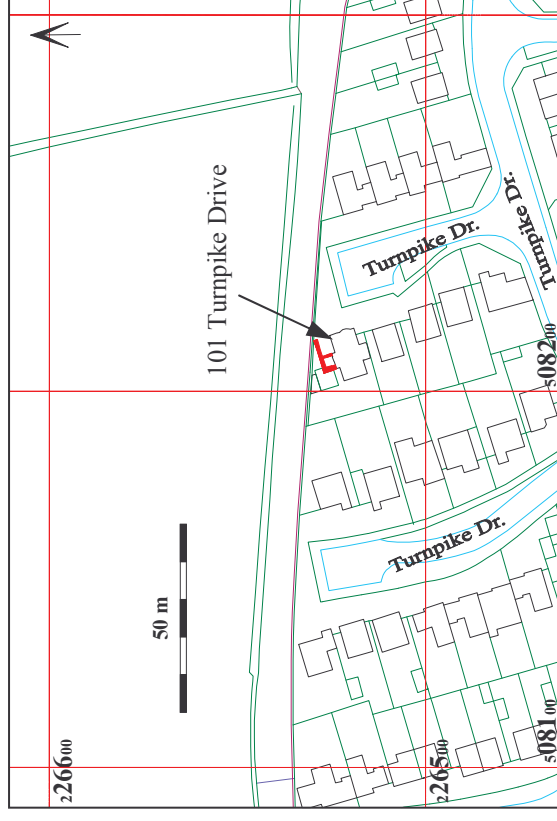
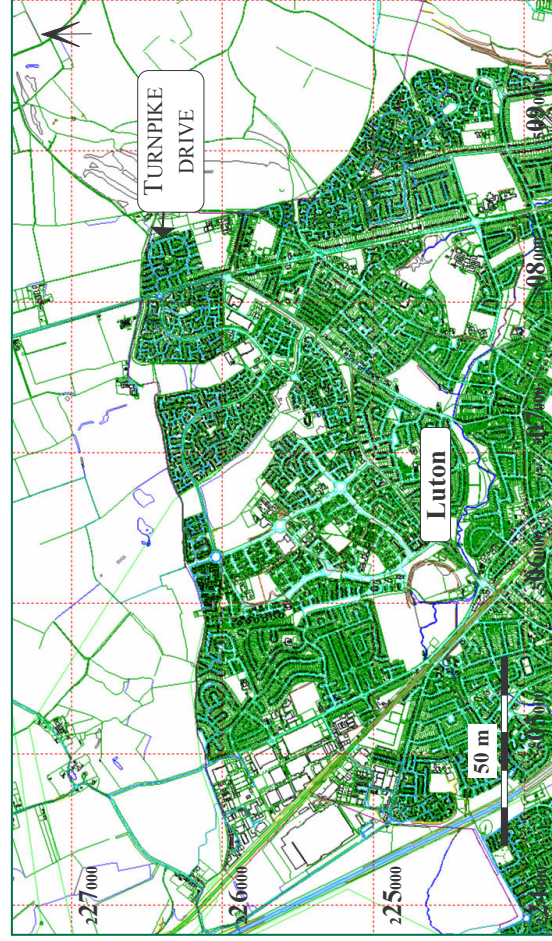
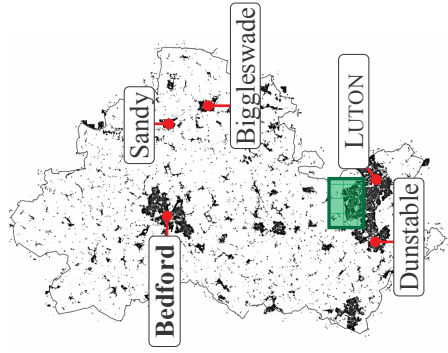


Figure 1: Site location map

Base map reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Land-line Map (2004), with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office, by Bedfordshire County Council, County Hall, Bedford. OS Licence No. 076465(LA). © Crown Copyright.

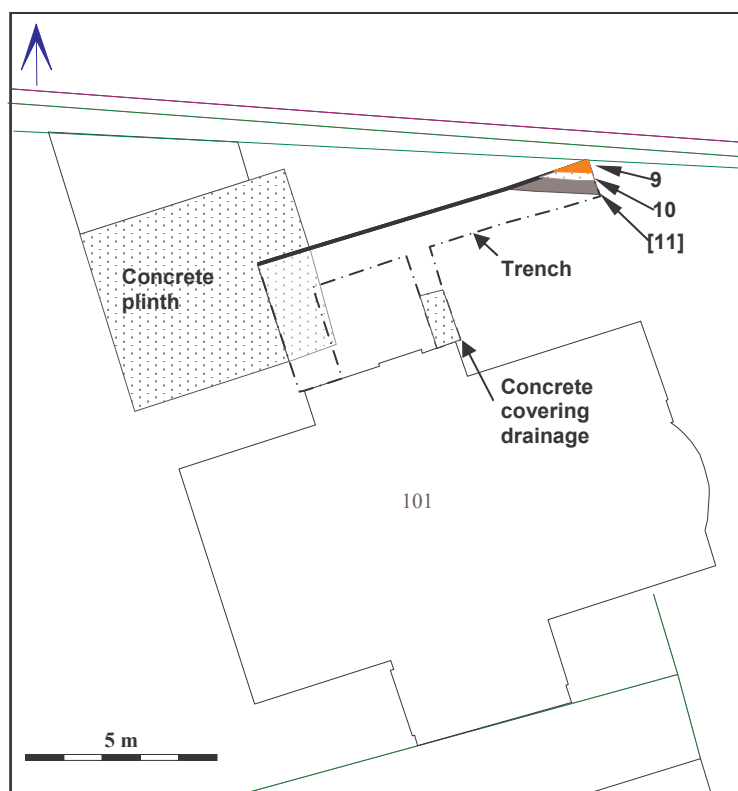


Figure 2: Foundation trench location plan

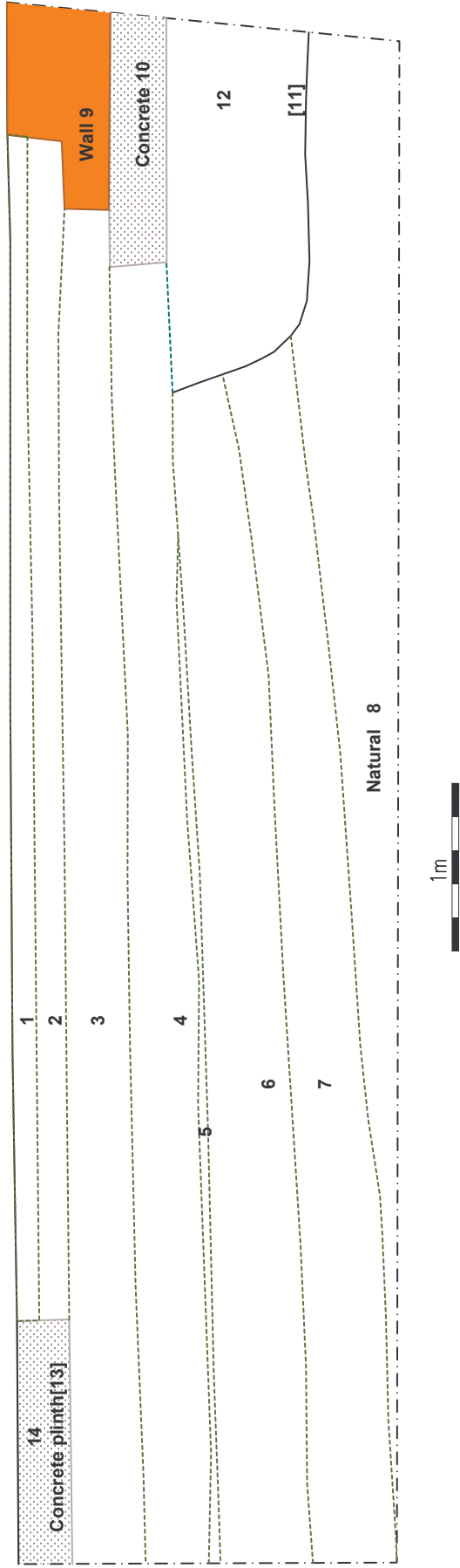


Figure 3: Selected section drawing