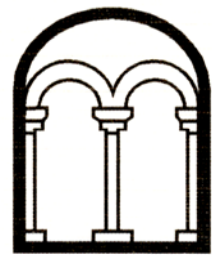


**CROWTHORNE FENCING AND SUPPLIES
CAMBRIDGE ROAD
BEDFORD**

**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 fieldwork was undertaken by Adrian Woolmer (Assistant Site Supervisor). This report has been prepared by Adrian Woolmer and Jeremy Oetgen (Project Manager) with figures by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). The project was managed by Jeremy Oetgen and all Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

Albion Archaeology would like thank Michele Sautschak of Rennie and Partners for his assistance and also acknowledge the co-operation of the staff of Crowthorne Fencing and Supplies (Bedford Branch) and on-site groundworks team (G&D Groundworks Ltd.). Thanks are also due to Geoff Saunders (Archaeological Office, Bedford Borough Council) for monitoring the archaeological work on behalf of the local planning authority. Guidance on the selection for retention of 19th- and 20th-century artefacts was received from Liz Pieksma (Keeper of Archaeology, The Higgins).

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Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

HER	Bedford Borough Council's Historic Environment Record
HET	Bedford Borough Council's Historic Environment Team
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Key Terms

Albion archaeology was commissioned to carry out programme of archaeological monitoring in compliance with a planning condition imposed by Bedford Borough Council (13/02168/FUL) on the construction of a portal-framed shop at Crowthorne Fencing and Supplies, Cambridge Road, Bedford.

The work was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by the council's Historic Environment Team (HET) and Albion Archaeology's written scheme of investigation. Fieldwork took place between 3rd and 27th March 2014 during ground reduction, piling augering, and excavation for service trenches and ground beams.

A series of relatively modern deposits were discovered. These largely comprised thick dumped deposits of varying composition. In-situ subsoil was not encountered; nor was bedrock, except in the case where (possible) Oxford Clay was struck during the pile augering. This provides strong evidence that the land surface has been reduced by large-scale excavation in the recent past before being reinstated to its present level.

The only structure encountered was the foundation of a former enclosure wall attached to the existing office/workshop, which had been built in the 1960s.

Interpreted in the light of historical maps, aerial photographs and ground investigation boreholes, the observations suggest that the site had been subjected to quarrying and reinstatement in the 20th century. It is, therefore, concluded that the development site now has negligible archaeological potential.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Planning Background*

Bedford Borough Council granted planning permission (13/02168/FUL) for the construction of a portal-framed shop and office building and conversion of existing shop/office to warehouse space, with external alterations to existing sawmill and warehouse building, at Crowthorne Fencing and Supplies, Cambridge Road, Bedford.

Condition 2 of the planning permission required the implementation of an archaeological mitigation strategy. This requirement was in accordance with Saved Policies BE24 & BE25 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002, Policy CP23 of the Bedford Borough Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan (2008) and according to national policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, March 2012).

The council's Historic Environment Team (HET) issued a brief (BBC 2014) for a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording during the groundworks associated with the development. Albion Archaeology was, therefore, commissioned by Rennie & Partners, on behalf of Lawsons Holdings Limited, to undertake the archaeological mitigation works. Albion Archaeology's written scheme of investigation (Albion Archaeology 2014) was approved by the HET and the work took place between 3rd and 27th March 2014.

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The development site is located approximately 2.5km to the south-east of Bedford town centre on the north side of Cambridge Road; it is centred on grid reference TL 0728/4819. Prior to development, the site of the new building was an area of hard standing within a complex of warehouse, retail and office buildings (Fig. 1).

The site is level, at a height of *c.* 28m OD. It is situated on the gravel terrace to the south of the river Great Ouse. Superficial geological deposits consist of Felmersham Member sand and gravel river terrace deposits formed up to 3 million years ago. The underlying bedrock consists of Oxford clay.

1.3 *Summary of Works*

The construction of the new portal-framed shop necessitated removal of the existing ground slab and ground reduction by *c.* 350mm for a new ring beam and ground slab. The foundations comprised 45 no. continuous flight auger (CFA) piles, each *c.* 9m deep.

1.4 *Archaeological Background*

The development site is situated on the gravel terrace to the south of the river Great Ouse. Investigations on the gravel terrace to the east of Bedford have identified numerous archaeological sites. These include early Neolithic and Bronze Age ritual monuments and settlement sites dating from the prehistoric and Roman periods.



Bronze Age remains were discovered during the first half of the 20th century, when large-scale gravel extraction occurred immediately to the north and west of the development site. In 1926, a partial inhumation with two mid-late Bronze Age vessels was recovered and in the late 1940s two long-necked beakers were found, along with a flint knife, other early-mid Bronze Age pottery sherds, and an inhumation burial (HER277). A Bronze Age urned cremation was reportedly found in 1926 (HER278). Excavations undertaken in 2005 on the south side of Cambridge Road revealed further Bronze Age round barrows, together with a prehistoric triple-ditched boundary, a Neolithic henge, and a small Anglo-Saxon settlement.

No archaeological investigations had been undertaken previously on the development site, but four ground investigation boreholes undertaken to the west of the present development (Site Analytical Services Ltd, 2005) recorded made ground to depth of almost 5m below the surface.

1.5 Project Objectives

The objectives of the investigation were to determine:

- whether archaeological remains were present on the site;
- the date and character of any archaeological remains;
- the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits on the site.

If significant remains were encountered, a strategy for their investigation and analysis was to be determined in consultation with the HET and with reference to the relevant local and regional research objectives (Oake, et al. 2007) (Medlycott 2011).



2. METHOD STATEMENT

2.1 Methodological Summary

The following is a summary of the detailed methodology that was set out in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2014).

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

• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (2nd edn, 2001).
• Bedford Borough Council	<i>Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedford</i> (ver. 2.8, 2010)
• EAA	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> (2003)
• English Heritage	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Project Managers' Guide</i> (2006)
	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation</i> , (2nd edn, 2011)
• IfA	<i>By-Laws and Code of Conduct</i>
	<i>Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs and Field Excavations</i> (updated 2012) and <i>finds</i> (updated 2012)

An archaeologist was present on site during all groundworks with the potential to expose archaeological remains, e.g. ground reduction, foundation trenches, service trenches etc. All open area ground reduction was undertaken by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket and operated by an experienced driver under the supervision of an archaeologist. Where necessary, machine excavation was paused to permit investigation and recording by the archaeologist.

2.2 Stages of Observation, Investigation and Recording

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during the following groundworks as indicated on Figure 2. The works are described in the order in which they were undertaken.

2.2.1 Slab removal and ground reduction

Slab removal and ground reduction took place across the development area prior to the insertion of the CFA piles and excavation of the ring beam. Machine stripping started with the removal of c. 0.30m from the current ground surface, with concrete and tarmac removed.

2.2.2 CFA Piling

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during the insertion of the CFA piles in order to assess the nature of the made ground encountered beneath slab. The



arisings associated with each pile were examined and recorded prior to their removal from site.

2.2.3 Excavation of service trenches

A live service was encountered during preparation for the excavation of the ring beam. In order to re-route the service a 0.40m-wide trench was machine excavated across the development area, running approximately south-west to north-east. It was excavated to a depth of approximately 1.05m from the reduced ground level (i.e. c. 1.35m below the original surface). Further pipe trenches were excavated at the eastern and western limits of the development area to connect with the initial trench. These were excavated to a depth of 0.75–0.82m from the reduced ground level. The machine excavation of each pipe trench was archaeologically monitored.

2.2.4 Excavation of the ring-beam trench

Machine excavation for the ring-beam began with the digging of a 1.05m-wide trench to a depth of approximately 0.50m from the top of the piles. The excavation of the ring-beam was monitored along the eastern and northern perimeter of the development area. However, when it became clear that all the exposed deposits were very recent — i.e. 19th or 20th century in origin — it was agreed with the Borough's Archaeological Officer that the archaeological monitoring of this phase of works could cease.

2.3 *Liaison with the Historic Environment Team (HET)*

Geoff Saunders (Archaeological Officer) oversaw the archaeological works to ensure that the WSI was complied with and that professional standards were maintained. The findings were communicated to the HET on a regular basis. Agreement to cease monitoring of the ring-beam trench was obtained, in Geoff Saunders's absence, from Vanessa Clark (Senior Archaeological Officer).

2.4 *Post-Fieldwork Analysis and Archiving*

Data gathered during the fieldwork was consolidated into an archive. The archive was assessed and an appropriate level of analysis and reporting undertaken. This analysis work was carried out using Albion's networked Access-based database system and GIS.

All records and materials produced were archived to the standards outlined in English Heritage's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* and those set out by Bedford Borough Council. The archive is deposited at Bedford Museum (accession number BEDFM 2014.13).

Details of the project and its findings were submitted to the OASIS database (ref. no.: albionar1-171829) in accordance with the guidelines issued by English Heritage and the Archaeology Data Service.



3. RESULTS OF THE OBSERVATIONS

3.1 Introduction

This section details the archaeological observations made during the slab removal and general ground reduction, piling, service pipe trench excavation and ring-beam trench excavation (Figure 2).

Where the same deposit was observed in separate interventions a single context record was used to identify and describe the deposit, as long as there was no reason to distinguish between each respective occurrence (as, for instance, if artefacts had been recovered).

3.2 Archaeological Observations

3.2.1 Slab removal and general ground reduction

Removal of the existing surface slab revealed a brick rubble deposit (01) covering most of the development area. This was presumably a make-up layer for the existing surface. The ground was then reduced by *c.* 0.3m across the entire footprint, but no archaeological deposits were visible at this level. The make-up material was distinctly lighter in colour towards the north-west corner of the site, possibly indicating different phases of surfacing.

3.2.2 Piling

The sequence of deposits observed at each pile position is summarised in Appendix 1. Beneath the rubble deposit (01) the majority of deposits arising from the augered piles resembled deposits (02 to 08) that were encountered during the excavation of the service pipe trenches. However, a mid to dark blue-grey silty clay deposit (09) was observed towards the bottom of each pile. In places this deposit contained fossilised mollusc shells. This was almost certainly Oxford Clay bedrock.

A buried brick wall (07) was discovered on the line of piles 33, 39 and 45, which were, therefore, off-set by *c.* 0.60m to the north-west. The wall also observed in the service trench and ground-beam trench (Figure 8).

3.2.3 Service pipe trenches

Machine excavation of new service pipe trenches showed that the brick rubble deposit (01) was thicker (up to 0.40m) towards the eastern limit of the development area. Another, probably modern, make-up deposit (08) was noted towards the north end of the north-west corner pipe trench. This deposit was a compact, mid grey-brown silty gravel (up to 0.30m thick).

An *in-situ* brick wall (07) was recorded towards the eastern end of the central pipe trench. Seven brick courses (up to 0.88m depth) and a concrete foundation (0.85m wide) were observed. The foundation was exposed to its full depth in the trench.

Beneath the brick rubble deposit (01) was a dark brown-black silty clay deposit (02). This was up to 0.22m thick and was largely present across the whole area to



the west of the brick wall (07). This deposit was particularly humic in places and is thought to be a dump deposit incorporating a quantity of topsoil.

Towards the western side of the development area, a distinct, compact mid to light brownish-yellow silty sand (03) (up to 0.74m thick) was observed (Figures 6 and 7).

This overlay a series of deposits grouped as (04) (up to 0.60m thick) which consisted of a dark brown-grey to black silty clay, a compact mid green-brown silty gravel and a mid orange-brown sandy silt. The appearance of these deposits in section as distinctive dumps contrasted with the more mixed appearance of the deposits (05) and (06) towards the centre of the development area and eastern pipe trenches. The latter contained a quantity of glass and pottery fragments. Plastic, paper and bone fragments were also noted.

Below the dump deposit/layer (02) a mixed mid to dark blue-grey black silty clay (up to 0.60m thick) was encountered to the west of the wall (07) in the central pipe trench. This deposit was very humic in places and contained compact, mid orange-brown sandy gravel and mid green-brown silty sand lenses.

Towards the eastern end of the trench, a hard, dark blue-grey clay deposit was also encountered.

In the area to the east of the wall (07) and eastern pipe trenches, a mixed dark blue-grey clay (up to 0.60m thick) was encountered below the rubble deposit (01). This deposit smelt of hydrocarbons (diesel fuel?) and also contained dark orange-brown silty gravel and dark brown-grey silty clay lenses. A cemented clayey gravel deposit was also noted in section.

No artefacts were present in deposits (03), (04), (08), but a number of complete glass bottles and some pottery was recovered from the deposits (05) and (06). A sample of these artefacts was retained on the advice of Bedford Museum's Keeper of Archaeology.

Deposits (04), (5) and (06) extended below the bottom of the pipe trenches.

3.2.4 Structural ground-beam (ring-beam) trenches

These trenches were only monitored along the east side and part of the north side of the building. The rubble deposit (01) and dump deposit/layer (02) were fully excavated within the monitored trenches. However, the dump/backfill deposits (05) and (06) were partially excavated and extended below the base of the monitored trenches. On the basis of these and the previous observations the HET agreed that it would be fruitless to continue with the archaeological monitoring.

The only structural feature noted was the continuation of wall (07), which extended below the base of the trench.

3.2.5 Summary of archaeological observations

Archaeological monitoring of the above works revealed modern make-up layers (01) and (08) associated with the removed concrete and tarmac deposits. These



overlay a series of relatively recent (post-1900) dump/back fill deposits (02) to (06). The *in-situ* brick wall with concrete foundation (07) was probably of similar date; a 'scar' on the south-east corner of the existing building indicated that it had once been attached to the building (Figure 11).

In-situ Oxford Clay (09) was only encountered during the piling.



4. INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological monitoring of the development groundworks led to the discovery of a series of relatively modern deposits (01 to 08). These largely took the form of a series of thick, dumped deposits (03) to (06). Natural subsoil was not encountered anywhere during the observed groundworks, nor was bedrock exposed, except where (possible) Oxford Clay was struck during the pile augering. This provides strong evidence that the land surface had been reduced by large-scale excavation in the recent past before being reinstated to its present level.

The only structure encountered was the foundation (07) of a wall that appeared to have once been attached to the existing office/workshop. The 1968 Ordnance Survey map indicates a boundary on the line of the wall, marking the perimeter of a small yard south of the existing building. It is most likely, therefore, that the wall was not part of a building, but rather a free-standing wall that was constructed at the same time as the existing building.

Historical maps record that the development site was open land until the late 1960s, (see Figures 13–16). The construction of the existing buildings and associated hard standings, alone, ought not to have completely truncated the natural subsoil (and any archaeological features that might have once lain beneath it). It is known that the land east of Fenlake was subjected to quarrying at least from the end of the 19th century, so it is possible that the development site had been subjected to mineral extraction prior to the erection of the buildings.

Regrettably, the available maps do not indicate the extent of quarrying in the area. Some historical aerial photographs held in the HER's comprehensive collection do indicate the extent of quarrying in the area to the north of the development site, but none of the available photographs show quarrying on the Crowthorne Fencing premises. In this context, the observations described in this report are of considerable significance, because they provide evidence that the quarrying was undertaken on the site. Furthermore, this corroborates the information from four ground investigation boreholes undertaken to the west of the present development (Site Analytical Services Ltd, 2005), which recorded made ground to a depth of almost 5m below the surface. It is, therefore, concluded that the development site was quarried in the 20th century and now has negligible archaeological potential.



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6. APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix 1 – Deposits Observed During Piling Operations

The table below indicates the types of deposits observed in the arisings from augering of each pile. The location of each numbered pile is shown on Figure 2. The presence of a deposit is indicated by ✓ in the relevant column.

Pile No. (see Figure 2)	Rubble deposit = (01)	Dark blue-grey deposit = (04), (05), (06)	Mid green-yellow-brown deposit	Mid grey-brown deposit	Light to dark blue-grey deposit = (09)	Dark humic deposits	Comments
1	✓	✓			✓		
2	✓	✓			✓	✓	Pile moved to east to avoid possible service.
3	✓	✓			✓	✓	
4	✓	✓			✓	✓	Lower deposits very wet.
5	✓	✓			✓	✓	
6	✓	✓			✓	✓	
7	✓	✓			✓	✓	Lower deposits very wet. Light yellow-brown deposit also noted.
8	✓	✓			✓		
9	✓	✓			✓		Lower deposits very wet.
10	✓	✓			✓		Lower deposits very wet.
11	✓	✓			✓		
12	✓	✓			✓		Lower deposits very wet.
13	✓	✓			✓		
14	✓	✓		✓	✓		
15	✓	✓		✓	✓		Excavated deposits particularly dry.
16	✓	✓		✓	✓		Excavated deposits particularly dry.
17	✓	✓		✓	✓		Excavated deposits particularly dry.
18	✓	✓			✓		
19	✓	✓			✓		
20	✓	✓	✓		✓		
21	✓	✓	✓		✓		
22	✓	✓			✓		Pile moved to east to avoid stone.
23	✓	✓	✓		✓		
24	✓	✓	✓		✓		
25	✓	✓	✓		✓		Finds recovered.
26	✓	✓	✓		✓		Finds recovered.
27	✓	✓			✓		Pile moved to east to avoid brickwork. Dark blue-grey deposit contained plastic and metal wire. Deposits very wet.
28	✓	✓			✓		Lower deposits very wet.
29	✓	✓	✓		✓		
30	✓	✓	✓		✓		
31	✓	✓	✓		✓		
32	✓	✓	✓		✓		



Pile No. (see Figure 2)	Rubble deposit = (01)	Dark blue-grey deposit = (04), (05), (06)	Mid green-yellow-brown deposit	Mid grey-brown deposit	Light to dark blue-grey deposit = (09)	Dark humic deposits	Comments
33	✓	✓			✓		Pile moved to east to avoid brickwork. Thicker brick rubble at top. Lower deposits very wet.
34	✓	✓		✓	✓		Lower deposits very wet.
35	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
36	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
37	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
38	✓	✓		✓	✓		
39	✓	✓			✓		Pile moved to east to avoid brickwork. Lower deposits very wet.
40	✓	✓		✓	✓		
41	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
42	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
43	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
44	✓	✓	✓		✓		
45	✓	✓			✓		Pile moved to east to avoid potential brickwork.

6.2 Appendix 2 – Summary of Contexts

The deposits recorded were described as follows:

Context	Type:	Description:
01	Make up layer	Rubble, frequent small-medium ceramic building material. Brick rubble deposit. Max. depth: 0.40m.
02	Dump material	Firm, dark brown-black silty clay with moderate small-medium stones. Max. depth: 0.22m.
03	Dump material	Compact, mid brown-yellow silty sand. Deposit only observed towards west extent of development area. Max. depth: 0.74m.
04	Dump material	Firm, dark brown-black silty clay with moderate small-medium stones. Refers to a 'group' of deposits noted at western extent of development area. Compact, mid green-brown, silty gravel and mid orange-brown, sandy silt also noted. Deposit(s) not fully excavated. Depth: 0.60m.
05	Dump material	Mixed deposit comprising: firm, mid grey-black silty clay moderate small-medium stones. Compact, mid orange-brown, sandy gravel and hard, dark grey-blue lenses also noted. Distinguished from (04) by presence of artefacts. Plastic, glass and ceramic fragments were observed and a sample was collected. Comprises deposit(s) to west of wall (07). Deposit(s) not fully excavated. Depth: 0.60m.



Context	Type:	Description:
06	Dump material	Mixed deposit comprising: hard, dark blue-grey silty clay with moderate small-medium stones; firm, dark brown-grey silty clay; compact, dark orange-brown silty gravel; cemented, mid grey-brown clayey gravel and compact, mid yellow-brown, silty sand lenses noted. Plastic, glass and ceramic fragments were observed and a sample was collected. Diesel contamination also noted by smell. Comprises deposit(s) east of wall (07). Deposit(s) not fully excavated.
07	Wall	<i>In-situ</i> red brick wall observed in original positions of piles 27, 33 and 39. Seven brick courses noted with a concrete foundation not fully exposed. Brick width: 0.25m. Concrete foundation width: 0.85m. Depth: 1.00m.
08	Make up layer	Compact mid grey-brown silty gravel. Deposit(s) noted towards north-west corner of development area. Light grey-yellow silty sand deposit also part of (08). Max. depth: 0.30m.
09	Oxford Clay	Firm mid blue-grey silty clay. Observed during piling only

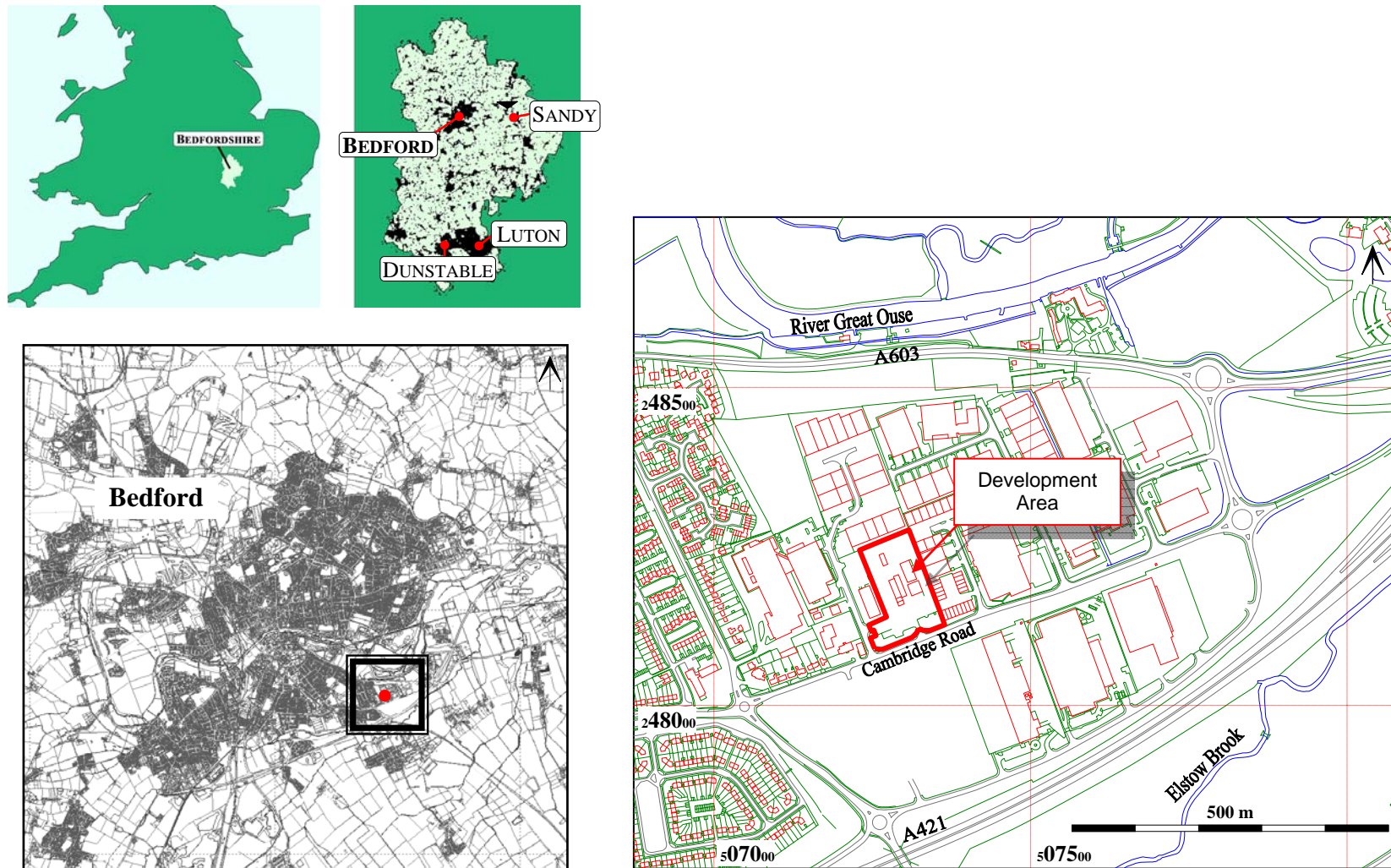


Figure 1: Site location

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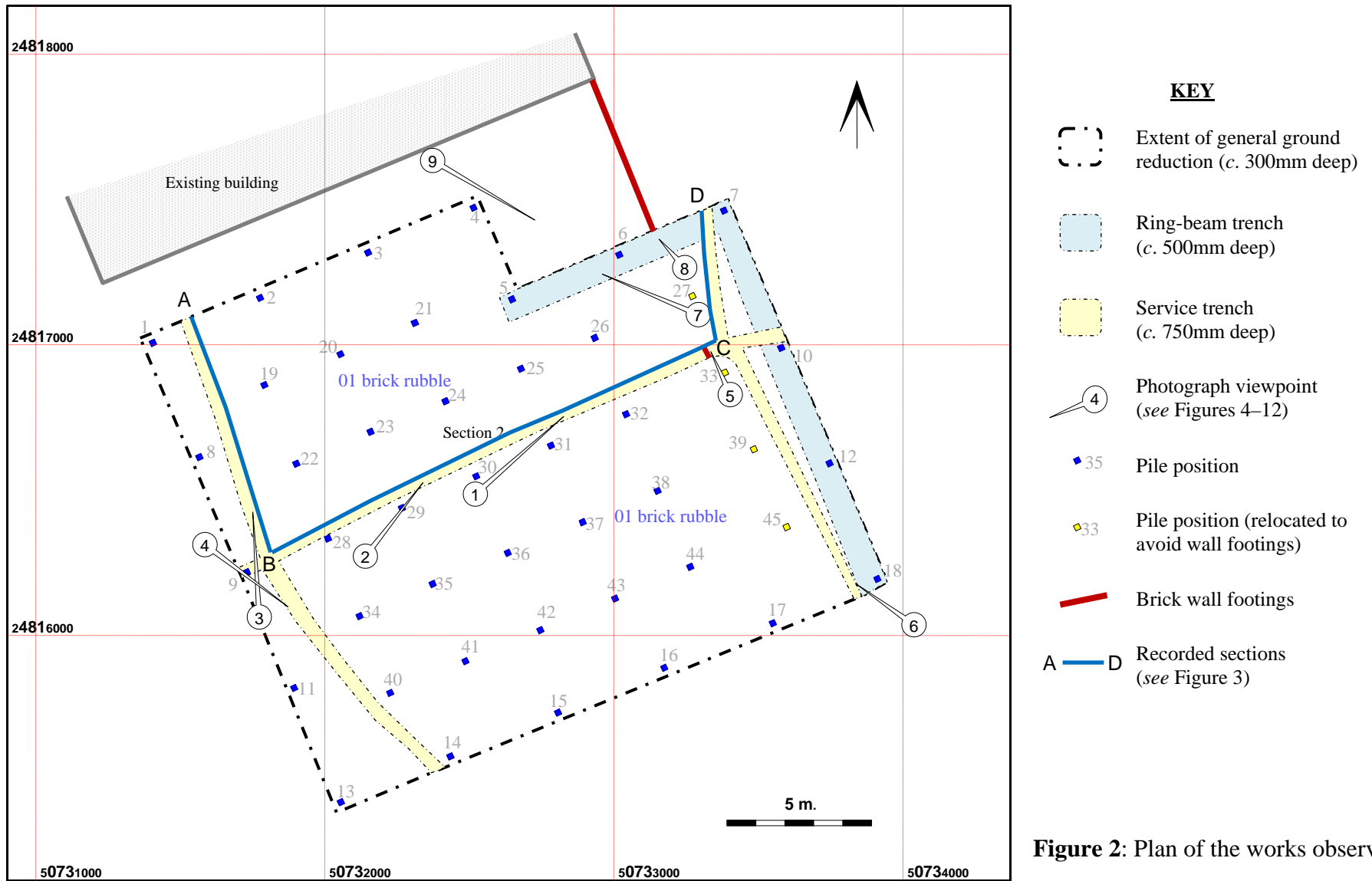


Figure 2: Plan of the works observed

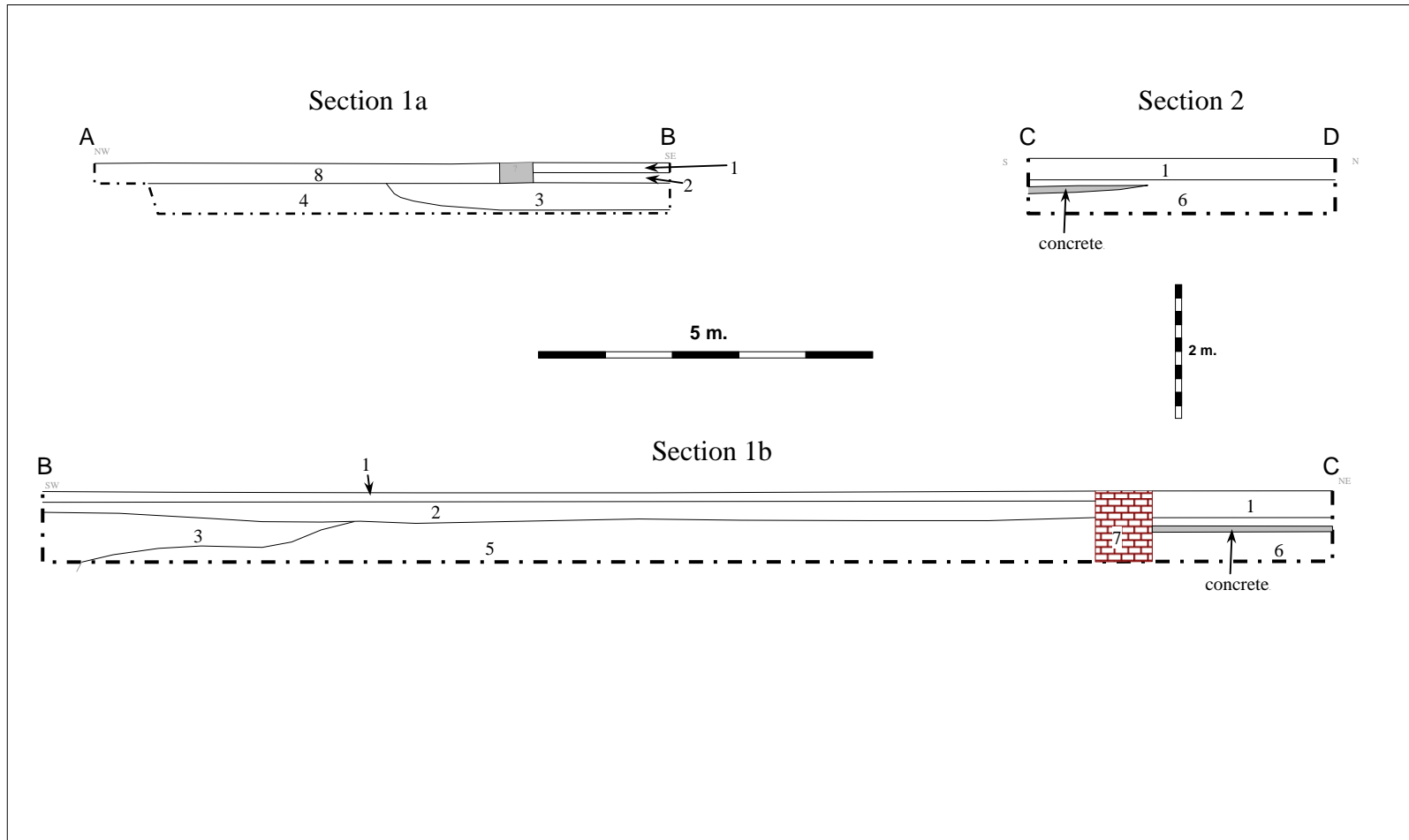


Figure 3: Reconstructed sections



Figure 4: Photo 1
(for location, see Figure 2)



Figure 5: Photo 2
(for location, see Figure 2)



Figure 6: Photo 3
(for location, see Figure 2)



Figure 7: Photo 4
(for location, see Figure 2)



Figure 8: Photo 5
(for location, see Figure 2)



Figure 9: Photo 6
(for location, see Figure 2)



Figure 10: Photo 7
(for location, see Figure 2)



Figure 11: Photo 8
(for location, see Figure 2)



Figure 12: Photo 9
(for location, see Figure 2)



Figure 13: OS 1883 25-inch map
(approximate location of development site outlined in red)



Figure 14: OS 1901 25-inch map
(approximate location of development site outlined in red)

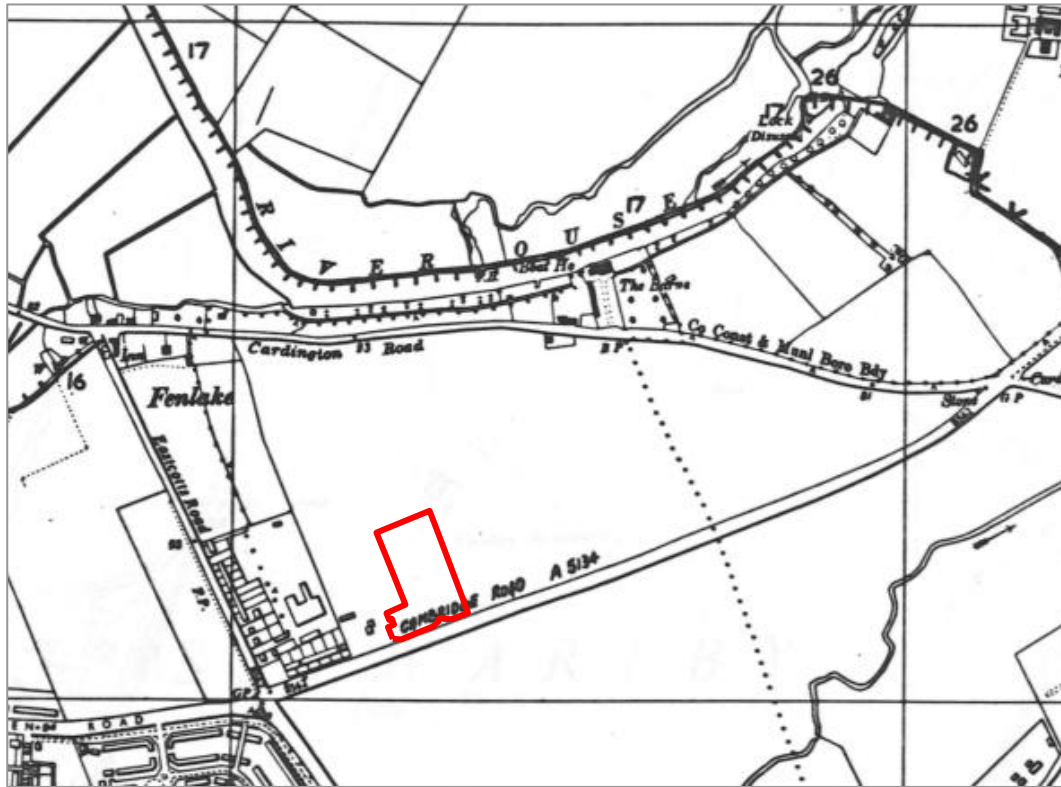


Figure 15: OS 1960 6-inch map

(approximate location of development site outlined in red)

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Figure 16: OS 1968 25-inch map

(approximate location of development site outlined in red)

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