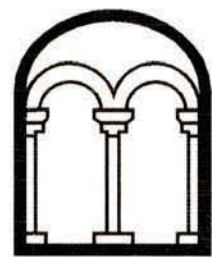


SILSOE HOUSE
SILSOE
BEDFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

Albion
archaeology



**SILSOE HOUSE
SILSOE
BEDFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

Project: SH1990
Accession Number: LUTNM 2013/23
OASIS ref.: albionar1-192123

Document: 2014/172
Version 1.0

Compiled by	Edited by	Approved by
Ian Turner	Wesley Keir	Drew Shotliff

30th June 2014

Produced for:
Michael Hardiman & Associates LLP

On behalf of:
J C Gill Developments



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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.

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Michael Hardiman & Associates LLP on behalf of J C Gill Developments and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Hannah Firth, Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist. The fieldwork was undertaken by Ian Turner (Archaeological Supervisor). This report has been prepared by Ian Turner (Project Officer) with contributions from Jackie Wells (Finds Officer). The figures have been produced by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

*Albion Archaeology
St Mary's Church
St Mary's Street
Bedford, MK42 0AS
☎: 0300 300 8141
Fax: 0300 300 8209
E-mail: office@albion-arch.com
Website: www.albion-arch.com*

Version History

<i>Version</i>	<i>Issue date</i>	<i>Reason for re-issue</i>
<i>1.0</i>	<i>30/06/2014</i>	<i>n/a</i>

Key Terms

The following terms or abbreviations are used throughout this report:

BLARS	Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service
CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
HER	Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

Planning permission (CB/14/00600/FULL) was granted by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) for a new residential dwelling with attached garage at Silsoe House, Silsoe. The proposals also included a parking area, paths, fences, cycle store and the removal of two trees.

The Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA) advised that the development site had the potential to contain heritage assets with archaeological interest. Consequently, a condition (no. 6) was attached to the planning permission, requiring the submission of a written scheme of archaeological investigation (WSI). Discussions with the CBCA determined that the initial stage of the archaeological works would comprise evaluation of the site by means of trial trenching.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to produce the written scheme of investigation (Albion Archaeology 2014a) and to undertake the archaeological evaluation of the site. The WSI was approved by the CBCA in advance of the fieldwork. The results of the evaluation are set out in this report.

The only archaeological features revealed within the trial trench were two parallel ditches corresponding with the location of a field boundary and the course of a former routeway dating back to at least the 18th century. This routeway was replaced during the later 19th century by the current Ampthill Road which lies c. 28m further to the south. Several layers were revealed overlying the northernmost ditch; they are likely to be associated with the levelling of the area of the former routeway and the creation of the existing garden on the south side of Silsoe House.

Though the revealed features are tangible evidence of the morphology of a small area of Silsoe during the post-medieval period, they can be considered to be of no more than local significance, having no potential to address research priorities identified in the regional research frameworks. The potential archaeological impact of the proposed new dwelling is, therefore, of negligible significance.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Background*

Planning permission (CB/14/00600/FULL) was granted by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) for a new residential dwelling with attached garage at Silsoe House, Silsoe. The proposals also included a parking area, paths, fences, cycle store and the removal of two trees.

The Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA) advised that the development site had the potential to contain heritage assets with archaeological interest. Consequently, a condition (no. 6) was attached to the planning permission.

The condition required the submission of a written scheme of archaeological investigation (WSI) that adopted a staged approach and included post-excavation analysis and publication. Discussions with the CBCA determined that the initial stage of the archaeological works would comprise evaluation of the site by means of trial trenching.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to produce the written scheme of investigation (Albion Archaeology 2014a) and to undertake the archaeological evaluation of the site. The WSI was approved by the CBCA in advance of the fieldwork. The results of the evaluation are set out in this report.

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The village of Silsoe lies to the west of the A6, approximately 14km south of Bedford (Figure 1). The development site is located on the corner of Ampthill Road at its junction with the High Street in the centre of the village. Silsoe House itself is centred on grid reference TL0814 3579. At the time of the fieldwork it was undergoing alterations and extensions as part of an earlier planning permission (CB/12/03766/FULL). The subject of this report was a 4-bed dwelling (Plot 9), located between the main house and Ampthill Road.

The site lies on a ridge at a height of 65m OD above the valley of the river Flit to the north. The underlying bedrock is Woburn Sands Formation (Lower Greensand). Localised superficial deposits of glacial till and head deposits are recorded around Silsoe and consist of clay, silt, sand and gravel.

1.3 *Archaeological Background*

The archaeological background to the site has previously been set out in a Heritage Asset Assessment (HAA) which examined historical maps, known archaeological assets and previous archaeological interventions within a 500m radius of Silsoe House (Albion Archaeology 2012). Archaeological monitoring was also undertaken during groundworks associated with alterations and additions to Silsoe House, though no archaeological remains were revealed (Albion Archaeology 2014b).

There is slight evidence for prehistoric and Roman activity within the general vicinity of the site. A flint axe dating from the Mesolithic/early Neolithic period



(HER18594) was found in Juniper Close, *c.* 170m NNE of the site. A leaf-shaped Neolithic/early Bronze Age arrowhead was found in a secondary context at the Church of St James (EBD686) 200m to the south. Limited evidence dated to the Roman period was found during archaeological evaluation at the Cranfield University site *c.* 330m south of the site (EBD611).

Silsoe was recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086, where it is referred to as *Siuuilessou* or *Sewilessou*. At that time there were two manors, the larger of which was held by Hugh of Walter, brother of Saher; it later became the manor of Wrest. The appearance of Silsoe in Domesday Book shows that there was likely to have been a settlement there since at least the late Saxon period.

Archaeological investigations around West End Lane (EBD611) *c.* 300m south of the site found evidence of occupation during the early/middle Saxon and late Saxon to early medieval periods (Thatcher 2011; Upson-Smith 2012).

To the east of the High Street stands the parish church of St James (HER 1121). The church was built between 1829 and 1831, replacing a medieval chapel. Documentary sources for the chapel begin in the early 13th century. Archaeological monitoring (EBD686) at the church in 2000 during the construction of an extension at the north-west corner revealed an east-west aligned ditch that contained sherds from four early/middle Saxon vessels, one sherd of early medieval pottery, a fragment of daub and a redeposited leaf-shaped arrowhead (see above) (Albion Archaeology 2000 and Steadman *et al* 2001).

The medieval settlement is likely to have been polyfocal with occupation centred around West End (HER17003) and around the church and High Street (HER 17002).

Evidence for the post-medieval period consists mainly of listed buildings which range between the 16th and 19th century in date. No. 53 High Street which stands between the site and the High Street dates from the 18th century with 19th-century additions but may be a reworking of an older building. The High Street next to the site was part of the A6 until it was bypassed and was one of the main north-south routes through the county.

An estate map of 1718 indicates that the site was in agricultural use at this time (see Figure 3). After 1800 the northern half of the site was developed with a range of farm buildings set around a rectangular yard. The earliest map depicting Silsoe House is the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1882 (see Figure 4).

1.4 Project Objectives

The general objectives of the investigation were to provide information on the following:

- the location, date, nature and extent of any archaeological features or deposits that might be present within the development area;
- the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that might be present within the development area.



The local and regional research contexts were provided by Glazebrook (1997), Brown and Glazebrook (2000), Oake et al (2007) and Medlycott (2011).

The site lies within a possible focus of medieval settlement and, therefore, the focus of research objectives for the site lay in the Saxon and medieval period. The research framework for Bedfordshire states that, in general, few medieval rural settlements, particularly with Saxon origin, have been investigated in the county (Oake 2007). Oake states a need for research into rural settlement on a micro-scale of investigation, in order to establish the chronology, structure and function of individual settlements as well as classes of settlement, ranging from the prehistoric to the medieval period. The need for investigation into the origins, development and dynamics of medieval rural settlement are also emphasised by Medlycott (2011) in the East of England Research Framework.

The specific objectives of the project were to investigate possible evidence for:

- the date range, character and economy of Saxon/medieval activity in this part of Silsoe.



2. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach to the project is summarised below. A full methodology is provided in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2014a).

2.1 Methodological Standards

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

Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (2 nd edn, 2001).
ALGAO	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England. EAA Occasional Paper No. 14</i> (2003)
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> (2009)
	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation, 2nd edition</i> (2011)
IfA	<i>By-Laws and Code of Conduct</i>
	<i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i> (updated 2013)
Luton Culture	<i>Procedure For Preparing Archaeological Archives For Deposition With Luton Culture 2010 - with minor updates July 2013</i>

Permission will be sought from the landowners for transfer of title of all finds to Luton Museum; the archive will be deposited at Luton Museum (LUTNM 2013/23). Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (ref. albionar1-192123), in accordance with the guidelines issued by English Heritage and the Archaeology Data Service.

2.2 Trial Trenching

The trial trenching took place during the 18th and 19th June 2014 and comprised a single trial trench measuring 9.50m long x 2m wide positioned within the proposed footprint of the new residential unit (Figure 1). The trench was opened using a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket, operated by an experienced driver under close archaeological supervision. All excavation and recording was carried out by experienced Albion staff with external specialists consulted as necessary. Any potential archaeological features were investigated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's pro forma sheets. The trench was subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate. All deposits were recorded using a unique number sequence, commencing at 100. Context numbers in square brackets refer to the cuts [***] and round brackets to fills or layers (***).



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

All features and deposits revealed within the trial trench are summarised below and shown on Figure 2. Context numbers in square brackets refer to the cuts [***] and round brackets to fills or layers (***). Detailed information is provided within Appendix 1.

The artefacts recovered are summarised within this section and discussed in detail in Appendix 2.

3.2 Overburden and Geological Deposits

The overburden comprised building rubble, deposited during works associated with the on-going development and two underlying layers of garden soil. These layers are described stratigraphically, from uppermost to lowest, below.

- (100) 0.26–0.54m thick layer of brick and gravel associated with the on-going development.
- (101) 0.08–0.36m thick layer of dark grey brown sandy silt with moderate amounts of modern pottery (willow pattern), roof tile fragments and bottle glass fragments — the extant garden soil.
- (102) 0.14–0.48m thick layer of mid brown sandy silt which contained moderate amounts of modern pottery (willow pattern), roof tile fragments and bottle glass fragments — an imported make up / levelling layer that also probably served as an earlier garden topsoil.

The underlying undisturbed geological deposits (114) comprised light orange sand with occasional patches of ironstone fragments.

3.3 Archaeological Features and Deposits

The archaeological features and deposits within the trial trench comprised two parallel ditches and landscaping layers dating to the post-medieval and modern periods. These features and deposits are discussed below.

3.3.1 Post-medieval parallel ditches

Two parallel, east to west aligned ditches were identified within the trench — one at the north end and one at the south end.

To the south, ditch [110] had a concave profile. It was at least 1.8m wide and 0.62m deep and contained light brown orange silty sand (111). It produced a sherd of 17th-century pottery. A smaller, parallel re-cut of the ditch truncated the upper half of its northern edge. The re-cut [108] produced a small fragment of ceramic material probably derived from a degraded brick or tile.

Ditch [112], only partially visible at the north end of the trench, was at least 2.4m wide and 1m deep and contained mid brown orange silty sand (113). No artefacts were visible within its fill.



These ditches are likely to be associated with an east-west aligned field boundary and routeway shown in this location on 18th- and 19th-century maps (see Figures 3 and 4). This routeway was later replaced by the current Amphill Road *c.* 28m to the south, first depicted on the OS map of 1882 (Figure 4).

The 18th- and 19th-century estate maps suggest that the position of this earlier routeway may have shifted slightly over time as it developed from a minor cart track into a more established road with buildings located on either side (see Figures 3 and 4).

3.3.2 Post-medieval layer located between the two ditches

A 0.10–0.34m thick layer of dark grey orange silty sand (107) was revealed between the two ditches and partially overlying ditch [112]. It produced moderate amounts of pottery, roof tile and glass of 17th- to 19th-century date. A sherd of late Iron Age pottery is likely to be residual.

How this layer formed is unclear. It may be an imported landscaping layer associated with the final move of the former routeway to its current position and the creation of the garden on the south side of Silsoe house, as illustrated on the OS map of 1882.

3.3.3 Layers likely to be associated with the levelling of the former routeway in the 19th century

At the north end of the trench, four layers (103–106) were identified above layer (107) which appeared to be back-filling a large concave feature or hollow. The layers were each 0.24–0.30m thick and contained deposits varying between light brown orange sandy silt with chalk and coal fragments and mid orange brown sandy silt with moderate amounts of charcoal.

The location of these layers and the concave form of the feature within which they reside suggest they are likely to be back-fill, associated with the levelling of the routeway shown on the 18th- and early 19th-century maps and the creation of the gardens now present on the south side of Silsoe House.



4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 *Archaeological Heritage Statement*

The only archaeological features revealed within the trial trench were two parallel ditches corresponding with the location of a field boundary and the course of a former routeway dating back to at least the 18th century. This routeway was replaced during the later 19th century by the current Ampthill Road which lies *c.* 28m further to the south. Several layers were revealed overlying the northernmost ditch. They are likely to be associated with the levelling of the area of the former routeway and the creation of the existing garden on the south side of Silsoe House.

Although the site lies within the postulated settlement envelope of medieval Silsoe, no features or artefacts of medieval date were present within the trial trench. The only artefact recovered of pre- post-medieval date is a sherd of late Iron Age pottery recovered from one of the post-medieval levelling layers. As such, it could conceivably be derived from anywhere within the vicinity of the site.

Though the revealed features are tangible evidence of the morphology of a small area of Silsoe during the post-medieval period, they can be considered to be of no more than local significance, with no potential to address research priorities identified in the regional research frameworks.

4.2 *Potential Developmental Impacts*

Typical potential archaeological impacts of building construction include footing trenches and service runs. However, given the low archaeological potential of the deposits revealed by the trial trench, the potential archaeological impact of any such construction work is considered to be of negligible significance.



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6. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARY



Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 9.50 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.8 m. Max: 1.3 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL 08106/35791

OS Grid Ref.: TL 08107/35781

Reason: To assess the date, nature and location of any archaeological features or deposits within the site

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Demolition layer	Loose light brown grey sandy silt frequent large CBM A demolition layer associated with the current development. 0.26m to 0.54m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
101	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt moderate flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones Extant garden topsoil covered / truncated by demolition spread (100). The topsoil contained moderate amounts of modern period pottery (willow pattern) and bottle glass. 0.08m to 0.36m thick.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
102	Buried topsoil	Friable mid brown sandy silt moderate flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones Probably a buried former topsoil covered by a levelling / landscaping raised topsoil layer (101). The soil contained occasional modern period pottery (willow pattern) bottle glass and roof tile fragments. 0.14m to 0.48m thick.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
103	Levelling layer	Friable light brown orange sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal Layer identified at north end of trench where maps indicate a road / track was located before being moved to a location further to the south. 0.30m thick.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Levelling layer	Friable mid orange brown sandy silt moderate flecks charcoal Layer contained occasional coal fragments. Layer identified at north end of trench where maps indicate a road / track was located before being moved to a location further to the south. 0.24m thick.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
105	Levelling layer	Friable light orange brown sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones Layer identified at north end of trench where maps indicate a road / track was located before being moved to a location further to the south. 0.24m thick	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
106	Levelling layer	Friable light brown orange sandy silt Occasional coal fragments. Moderate chalk fragments. Layer identified at north end of trench where maps indicate a road / track was located before being moved to a location further to the south. 0.28m thick.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
107	Layer	Friable mid grey orange silty sand A layer identified between two ditches that contained pottery and CBM of 17th- to 19th-century date. The layer may have been a levelling layer associated with the move of the road / track further to the south. 0.10m to 0.34m thick.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
108	Ditch	Linear E-W sides: concave base: flat dimensions: min breadth 1.56m, min depth 0.28m	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
109	Fill	Friable mid brown orange silty sand occasional small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
110	Ditch	Linear E-W sides: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 1.8m, min depth 0.62m	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
111	Fill	Friable light brown orange silty sand occasional small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
112	Ditch	Linear E-W sides: 45 degrees base: concave dimensions: min breadth 2.4m, min depth 1.m	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
113	Fill	Friable mid brown orange silty sand occasional small-large stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
114	Natural	Loose light orange sand Occasional patches of iron stone fragments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



7. APPENDIX 2: ARTEFACT SUMMARY

7.1 Introduction

Seven deposits yielded an assemblage comprising pottery, ceramic building material, bottle glass and animal bone (Table 1).

Feature	Description	Fill	Date	Finds Summary
100	Layer	100	20th century	20th-century ceramic building material (not retained)
101	Layer	101	20th century	20th-century pottery and bottle glass (not retained)
102	Layer	102	20th century	20th-century pottery, ceramic building material and bottle glass (not retained)
104	Layer	104	19th-20th century?	Coal fragments (not retained)
107	Layer	107	17th-19th century	Pottery (99g); ceramic building material (164g)
108	Ditch	109	17th century?	Ceramic building material (2g)
110	Ditch	111	17th century	Pottery (50g); animal bone (4g)

Table 1: Artefact summary

7.2 Ceramics

Retained pottery comprised 16 sherds, representing 16 largely undiagnostic vessels (529g), the majority from the upper fill (111) of ditch [110]. The material is moderately fragmented, with an average sherd weight of 33g, and survives in good condition. Nine fabric types were identified in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series (Table 2).

Fabric Type	Common name	Sherd No.	Wt (g)	Fill / Sherd No.
<i>Iron Age</i>				
F28	Fine sand	1	46	(107):1
<i>Post-medieval</i>				
P01	Glazed red earthenware	4	82	(107):3, (111):1
<i>Modern</i>				
P38	Creamware	5	9	(107):5
P100	Garden earthenware	1	12	(107):1

Table 2: Pottery Type Series

A ceramic peg tile fragment and two pieces of brick (164g) of 17th-century or later date were collected from layer (107). Amorphous ceramic material (2g) recovered from ditch [108] probably derives from a degraded brick or tile of similar date.

7.3 Animal Bone

Two undiagnostic animal bone fragments (4g) derived from the fill of post-medieval ditch [110].



8. APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: *albionar1-192123*

Project details

Project name	Silsoe House, 2 Ampthill Road, Silsoe - Evaluation
Short description of the project	Planning permission was granted by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) for a new residential dwelling with attached garage at Silsoe House, Silsoe. The proposals also included a parking area, paths, fences, cycle store and the removal of two trees. The Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA) advised that the development site had the potential to contain heritage assets with archaeological interest. Consequently, a condition (no. 6) was attached to the planning permission, requiring the submission of a written scheme of archaeological investigation (WSI). Discussions with the CBCA determined that the initial stage of the archaeological works would comprise evaluation of the site by means of trial trenching. The only archaeological features revealed within the trial trench were two parallel ditches corresponding with the location of a field boundary and the course of a former routeway dating back to at least the 18th century. This routeway was replaced during the later 19th century by the current Ampthill Road which lies c. 28m further to the south. Several layers were revealed overlying the northernmost ditch; they are likely to be associated with the levelling of the area of the former routeway and the creation of the existing garden on the south side of Silsoe House. Though the revealed features are tangible evidence of the morphology of a small area of Silsoe during the post-medieval period, they can be considered to be of no more than local significance, having no potential to address research priorities identified in the regional research frameworks. The potential archaeological impact of the proposed new dwelling is, therefore, of negligible significance.
Project dates	Start: 18-06-2014 End: 19-06-2014
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	SH1990 - Contracting Unit No. CB/14/00600/FULL - Planning Application No. LUTNM 2013/23 - Museum accession ID albionar1-166003 - OASIS form ID
Type of project	Field evaluation
Monument type	DITCHES Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	BEDFORDSHIRE MID BEDFORDSHIRE SILSOE Silsoe House, 2 Ampthill Road, Silsoe
Study area	20.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 0814 3579 52.0095613948 -0.424240156523 52 00 34 N 000 25 27 W Point



Project creators

Name of Organisation	Albion Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Albion Archaeology
Project director/manager	Wes Keir
Project supervisor	Ian Turner

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Luton Museum
Physical Archive ID	LUTNM 2013/23
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Physical Archive notes	To be accessioned with later Watching Brief from same site oasis id - albionar1-166003
Digital Archive recipient	Albion Archaeology
Digital Contents	"Ceramics", 'other'
Digital Media available	"Database", 'Images raster / digital photography', "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Luton Museum
Paper Archive ID	LUTNM 2013/23
Paper Contents	"Ceramics", "other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Correspondence", "Drawing", "Miscellaneous Material", "Photograph", "Report"
Paper Archive notes	To be accessioned with Watching Brief from same site oasis id - albionar1-166003

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Silsoe House, Silsoe, Bedfordshire: Archaeological Field Evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	'Turner, I , Keir, W, and Wells, J'
Other bibliographic details	2014/172
Date	2014
Issuer or publisher	Albion Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Bedford

Entered by	Helen Parslow (hl.parslow@albion-arch.com)
Entered on	9 October 2014

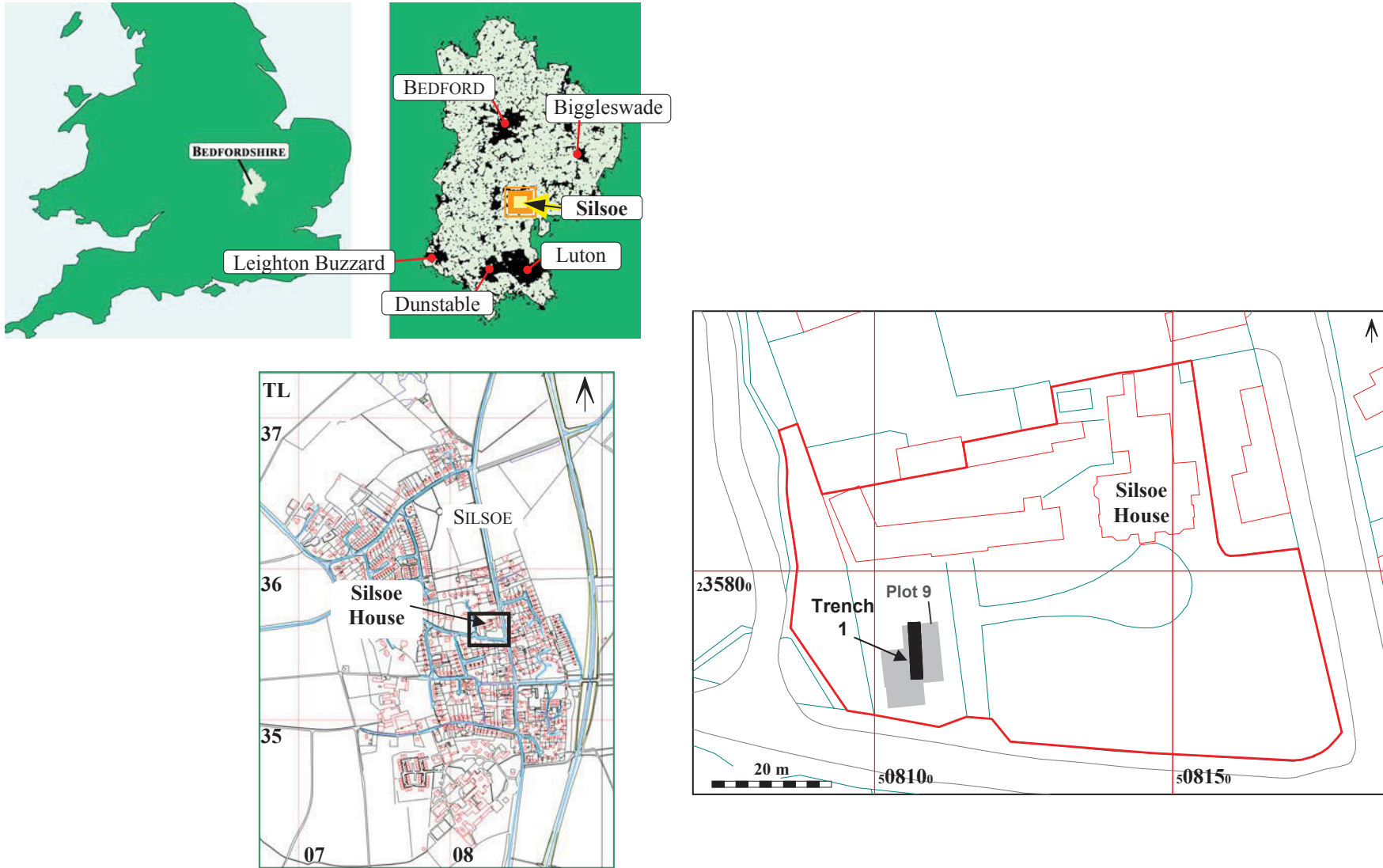


Figure 1: Site location

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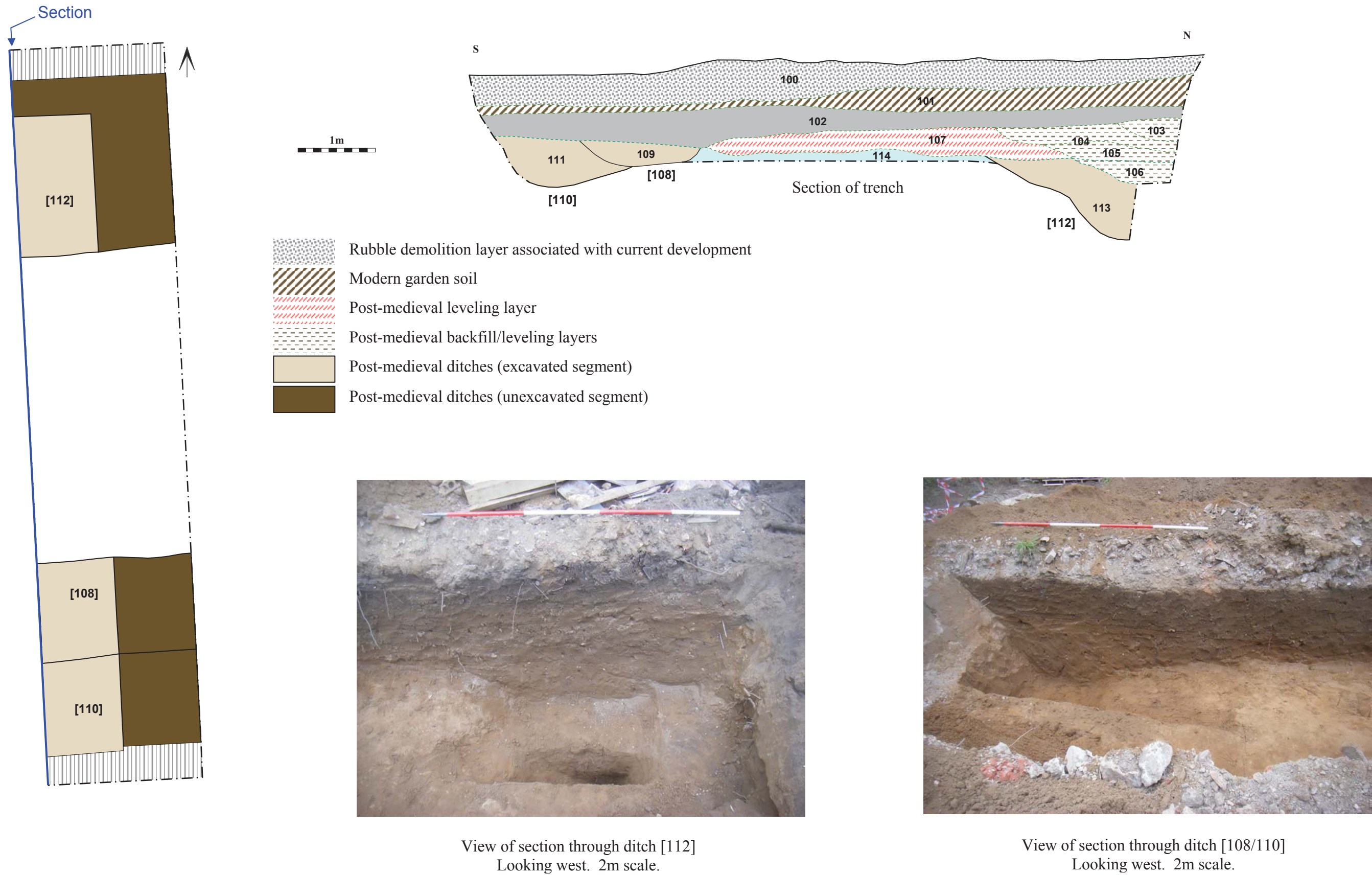
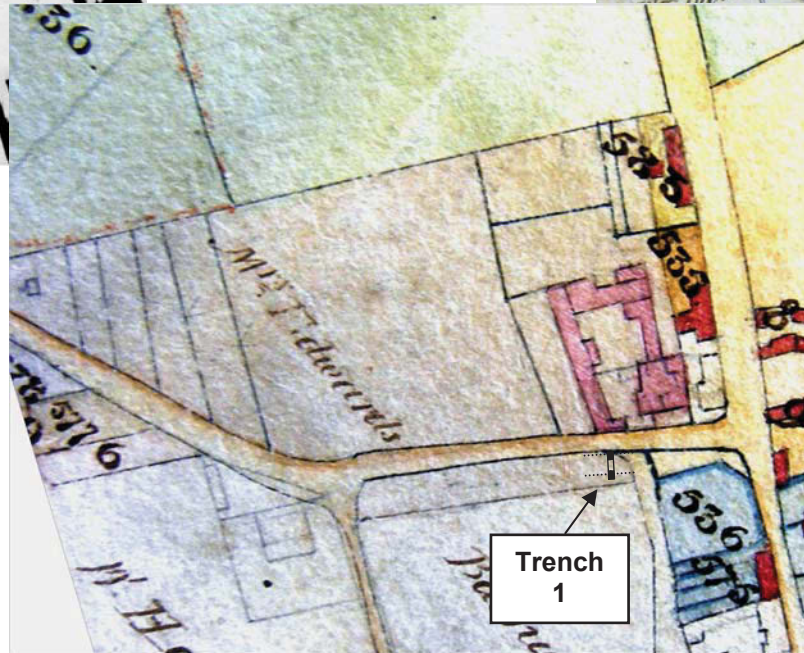
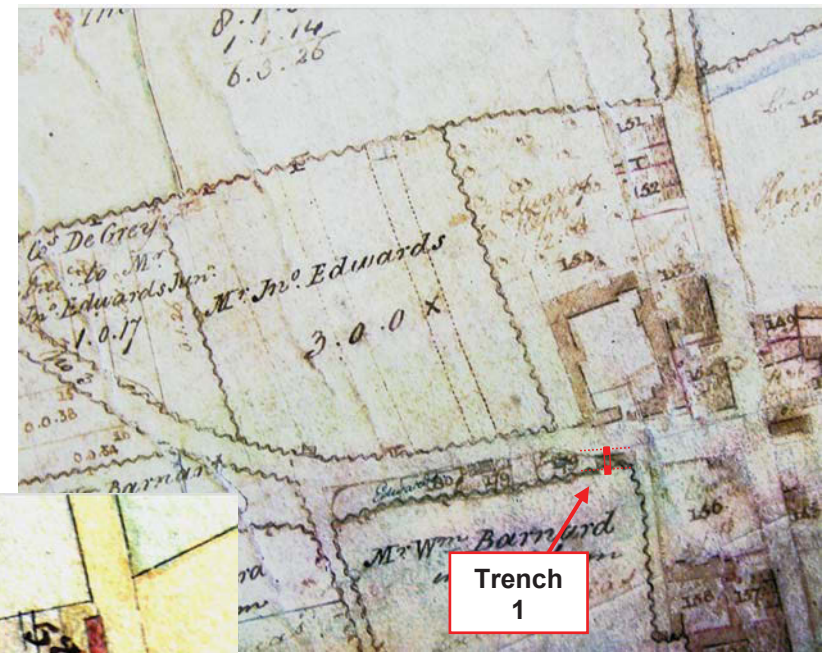
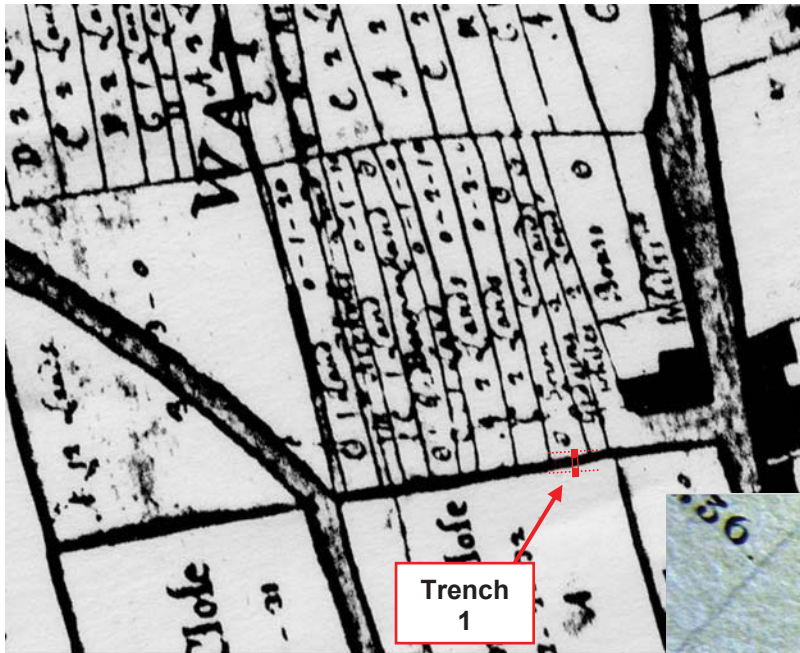


Figure 2: Trench 1 details

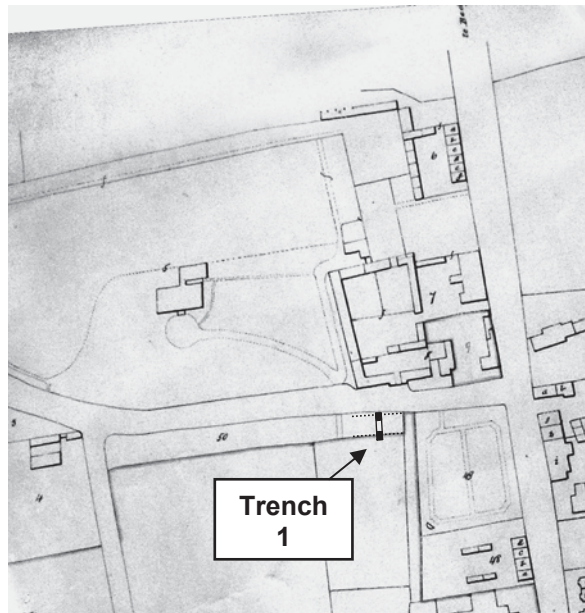


Extract from 'Map of the lands and manors of the Duke of Kent in Flitton and Silsoe' dated 1718.
BLARS ref. L33/286 F5

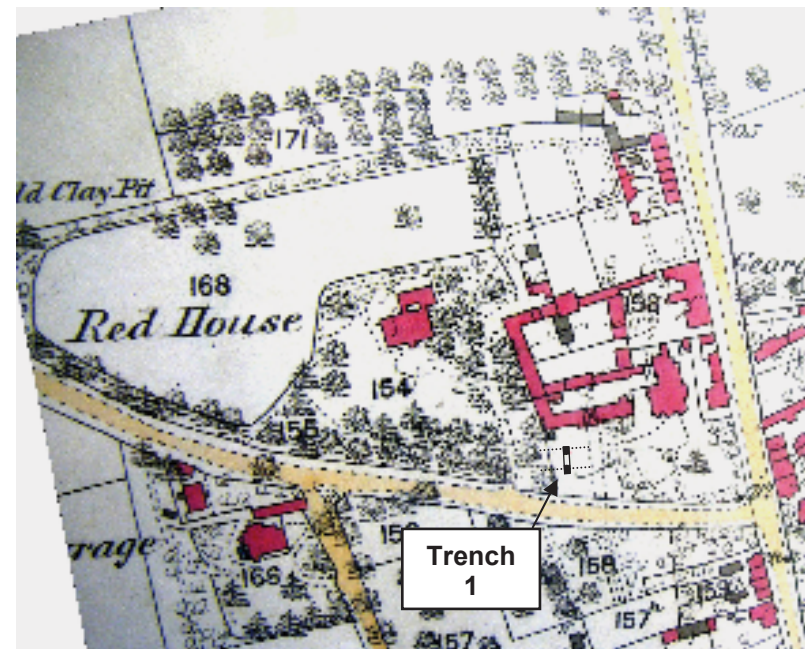
Extract from estate map dated 1826
BLARS ref. L33/7

Extract from estate map dated 1828
BLARS ref. L33/9

Figure 3: Approximate location of the trial trench overlaid with historical maps dating to the 18th and early 19th centuries



Extract from estate map dated 1856
BLARS ref. L33/12B

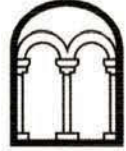


OS 1st edition map dated 1882

Figure 4: Approximate location of the trial trench overlaid with historical maps dating to the later 19th century



Albion
archaeology



Albion Archaeology
St Mary's Church
St Mary's Street
Bedford
MK42 0AS

Telephone 01234 294000
Email office@albion-arch.com
www.albion-arch.com

