4 ELM CLOSE
CAMPTON
SHEFFORD
BEDFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION REPORT AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

Albion archaeology

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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 Kevin Sheridan on behalf of Maulden Properties Ltd and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Hannah Firth, Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist. The fieldwork was undertaken by Ben Barker (Project Officer) of Albion Archaeology. This report has been prepared by Ben Barker with contributions from Holly Duncan (Artefacts Manager). The figures have been produced by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

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Key Terms

The following terms or abbreviations are used throughout this report:

CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
HER	Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record
CI*f*A	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
PDA	Potential development area
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

Non-Technical Summary

Maulden Properties Limited have submitted an outline planning application (CB/15/01077/OUT) to Central Bedfordshire Council for the construction of three detached dwellings to the rear of 4 Elm Close, Campton, Shefford, Bedfordshire.

The potential development area (PDA) is centred on grid reference TL12842/38029 and lies within the historic core of the village of Campton, adjacent to Campton Manor. The wider landscape is characterised by heritage assets dating from the prehistoric to the post-medieval period.

The Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA) advised that an archaeological heritage statement, based on the results of a trial trench evaluation, was required. This advice is in accordance with Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework and policy 45 of the Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire (pre-submission version June 2014)

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to produce a written scheme of investigation (Albion Archaeology 2014) and to undertake the trial trenching. The results are set out in this report.

The trial trenching revealed no significant archaeological features within the 80m^2 area that was sampled; although a residual Mesolithic to early Neolithic flint core fragment was recovered from the subsoil. On the basis of these results, the PDA has been assessed as having negligible potential for the type of archaeological remains that could address regional archaeological research agenda. The proposed development will, therefore, have negligible impact on the archaeological resource of Campton and the wider area of Central Bedfordshire.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

An outline planning application (CB/15/01077/OUT) has been submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council for the construction of three detached dwellings to the rear of 4 Elm Close, Campton, Shefford, Bedfordshire.

As the site is located in an area with the potential to contain heritage assets with archaeological interest, the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA) advised that an archaeological heritage statement, based on the results of a trial trench evaluation, was required. This advice is in accordance with Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework and policy 45 of the Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire (pre-submission version June 2014)

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to produce a written scheme of investigation (WSI) for the archaeological trial trenching (Albion Archaeology 2015). The WSI was approved by the CBCA in advance of the fieldwork.

The results of the trial trenching are set out in this report. The heritage statement (Section 4) appraises the significance of any heritage assets with archaeological interest found within the potential development area (PDA) and assess the impact of the proposed scheme on them.

1.2 Site Location, Topography and Geology

The PDA lies to the rear of 4 Elm Close in the village of Campton. Campton is situated to the north of the River Ivel, *c.* 1.5km to the south-west of Shefford, in the parish of Campton and Chicksands.

The PDA measures approximately 0.3ha in area and is centred on Ordnance Survey grid reference TL12842/38029. It currently comprises the back garden of 4 Elm Close and contains trees, shrubs, lawn and a tennis court.

The geology of the area comprises Sandstone bedrock of the Woburn Sands Formation overlain by superficial Head deposits of sand, gravel and clay.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The PDA lies within the historic core of the settlement of Campton (HER 17107) and immediately adjacent to the probable site of the original Campton Manor (HER 377).

Campton is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as “Chabeltone” — a manor of 6 ½ hides in size. It is, therefore, likely that the present settlement has its origins in the late Saxon period at least.

The focus of the historic settlement appears to have been around the crossroads in the centre of the village and All Saints’ Church (HER 1030), the origins of which lie in the late 13th century and which almost certainly overlies an earlier structure.

A trackway identified from aerial photographs runs north-east from the centre of the village (HER 18312). It has been suggested that it may represent a medieval road between Campton and Shefford.

Documentary sources record the village and its associated manors throughout the medieval period. Campton Manor itself may lie on the original manor site, and has surviving structural elements that date back to the 16th century. A small trenching evaluation carried out in 2014 (HER EBD1281), in advance of the construction of a swimming pool and extension, identified only post-medieval remains probably associated with a former outbuilding.

Although there has been little archaeological fieldwork or research in and around Campton, there are number of find-spots of Saxo-Norman and medieval pottery (HER 2570, 2566, 4328 and 5957) suggesting that archaeological deposits relating to the origins and development of the village in the Saxon and medieval periods do survive within the area.

1.4 Project Objectives

The principal purpose of the evaluation was to gather information on possible sub-surface archaeological heritage assets within the PDA. The investigation of rural Saxon and medieval settlements to examine diversity, characterise settlement forms and understand how they appear, grow, shift and disappear is a local and regional archaeological research objective (Wade 2000; Oake et al. 2007, 14; and Medlycott 2011, 70). Locating manorial sites and understanding the development of those that may not have been enclosed by features such as moats is also a research priority for Bedfordshire (Oake et al. 2007, 100).

The archaeological trial trenching was designed to determine:

- the date, nature, and extent of any archaeological remains present at the site;
- the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;
- the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- the potential of any palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

This information was to be used to appraise the results of the field evaluation and their significance with regard to the PDA and the wider context.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach to the project is summarised below. A full methodology is provided in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2015).

2.1 Methodological Standards

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

• Albion Archaeology	*Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork* (2nd edn, 2001).
• Bedford Museum	*Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedford* (2010)
• CIfA	*By-Laws* and *Code of Conduct*
	Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation (2014)
	Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (2014)
• EAA	*Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (2003)
• Historic England *(formerly English Heritage)*	*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment PPN3: Archaeological Excavation* (2015)
	Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation. 2nd ed. (2011)

2.2 Trial Trenching

The trial trenching took place between 7th and 8th July 2015. The agreed WSI proposed five 8m by 2m trenches, arranged to achieve good spatial coverage and to target the likely areas of maximum development impact (Figure 1). The trenches were 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 Albion staff.

Any potential archaeological features were cleaned, excavated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's pro forma sheets. All deposits were assigned a unique context number commencing at 101 for Trench 1, and 201 for Trench 2 etc. Context numbers in square brackets refer to the cuts [***] and round brackets to fills or layers (***). Each trench was subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate

3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

The location of the trial trenches that were excavated is shown on Figure 1 and a description of their contents is provided below. Detailed information on the deposits present can be found in Appendix 1. The artefacts recovered from the features and deposits are summarised within this section.

3.2 Overburden and Geological Deposits

The overburden comprised topsoil and subsoil layers above the undisturbed geological deposit. The layers are described from top to bottom;

The topsoil was a 0.3–0.6m thick layer of dark grey-brown sandy silt. The thickness of the topsoil was greatest towards the south-eastern boundary of the PDA, where the layer had been artificially increased to form a low bund, presumably with arisings from the construction of the tennis court.

The subsoil was a 0.2–0.3m thick layer that varied from mid grey-brown to dark orange-brown silty sand. In the vicinity of trees this layer was heavily disturbed by tree roots.

Undisturbed geological deposits were consistent across the PDA. The trenches revealed a dark orange-brown sandy gravel with patches of lighter brown-orange sand and weathered Lower Greensand bedrock.

3.3 Archaeological Features and Deposits

3.3.1 Trenches 1, 2, 4 and 5

No archaeological features or modern disturbance were identified in Trenches 1, 2, 4 and 5.

A small fragment of flint core (Plate 1) was recovered from the base of the subsoil layer (102) within Trench 1. The flint was triangular in section, with removal scars from opposing platforms. It had a prepared platform at one end and a damaged opposing platform that had possibly been removed to rejuvenate the core. The flake removal scars were generally narrow and blade/bladelet like in dimensions.

Typologically, the core dates to the Mesolithic / early Neolithic period. It is likely to have been lost through casual discard.

3.3.2 Trench 3

Trench 3 displayed evidence of modern disturbance. This comprised: a modern tree stump [306] that had been sawn off at the interface between the subsoil (302) and the underlying geological layer (303); and a furrow-like area of compaction [304].

The tree stump [306] was located at the eastern end of the trench and appeared

to have been sawn off from an access pit to the north. There was no obvious disturbance to the subsoil and the tree was presumably felled following mechanical stripping of the topsoil and subsoil.

The furrow-like area of compaction [304] was orientated NE-SW and was located approximately 2m to the west of the tree stump. It was approximately 0.8m wide and less than 0.2m deep. It was filled with a highly compressed layer of topsoil-like material that contained traces of decayed timber and anthracite. Its location corresponds with the start of the raised area of landscaping along the south-eastern boundary of site.

The area of Trench 3 is likely to have been used as an access route during the construction of the tennis court. It is likely that the tree stump was felled from a low level to facilitate this access and to allow for the creation of the artificially raised area along the south-eastern boundary of the site. The furrow-like feature is likely to have been a created by plant movement during the construction of the court or subsequent landscaping.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND HERITAGE STATENMENT

No significant archaeological features or *in situ* artefacts were present in any of the trenches. There was no obvious sign that the ground hand been reduced or heavily disturbed other than in Trench 3 and there was a general absence of post-medieval and modern artefacts within the trench arisings. Landscaping, associated with the site's current usage as a residential property, appears to have contributed to a build-up of deposits rather than having a negative impact on the archaeological horizon. It is likely, however, that the area of the tennis court, which was not sampled during this investigation, has been heavily disturbed during its construction.

The significant depth of subsoil in the undisturbed areas of the garden suggests that the plot, at some time, has been subject to arable cultivation. It is likely that the PDA has never been settled but has been subject to past agricultural exploitation. This is consistent with the its depiction on the 1885 first edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey map which shows the area of Elm Close set within a larger field immediately to the west of Campton Manor.

The recovery of a single flint artefact from the subsoil within Trench 1 indicates that the area is likely to have been the site of transitory prehistoric activity, which has otherwise left no archaeological trace. This situation has been observed elsewhere within Bedfordshire where Mesolithic occupation sites that have produced concentrations of worked flint are commonly not associated with sub-surface features (Oake et al. 2007, 25).

The archaeological evaluation of the land to the rear of 4 Elm Close, Campton suggests that the potential for the presence of significant archaeological remains within the PDA is negligible. This situation has been compounded by the construction of a tennis court and former pond within the back garden (Figure 1), both of which will have disturbed a sizeable portion of the PDA.

In conclusion, the sub-surface archaeological remains within the PDA are of negligible significance and have no potential to address regional archaeological research agenda. The proposed development will, therefore, have negligible impact on the archaeological resource of Campton and the wider area of Central Bedfordshire.

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6. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARY

Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 8.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.5 m. Max: 0.6 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL *(Easting: 12845: Northing: 23801)*

OS Grid Ref.: TL *(Easting: 12852: Northing: 38014)*

Reason: To test footprint of proposed house

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
101	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.3m thick.	☑	☐
102	Subsoil	Friable mid grey brown silty sand occasional small-medium stones 0.2m thick.	☑	☑
103	Natural	Firm dark orange brown sandy gravel frequent small-medium stones	☐	☐

Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 8.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.45 m. Max: 0.65 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL *(Easting: 12827: Northing: 38025)*

OS Grid Ref.: TL *(Easting: 12820: Northing: 38030)*

Reason: To obtain spatial coverage of PDA

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
201	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.3m thick.	☑	☐
202	Topsoil	Friable mid orange brown sandy silt moderate small stones, occasional large stones 0.2m thick	☑	☐
203	Natural	Firm mid orange brown sandy gravel frequent small sand, frequent small-medium stones	☐	☐

Trench: 3

Max Dimensions: Length: 8.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.5 m. Max: 0.6 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL *(Easting: 12863: Northing: 38031)*

OS Grid Ref.: TL *(Easting: 12855: Northing: 38032)*

Reason: To test footprint of proposed access road

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
301	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.3m thick.	☑	☐
302	Subsoil	Friable mid orange brown silty sand moderate small-medium stones, occasional large stones 0.3 - 0.5m thick.	☑	☐
303	Natural	Firm mid orange brown sandy gravel frequent small sand	☐	☐
304	Modern intrusion	Linear NE-SW sides: concave base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.8m, max depth 0.2m	☑	☐
305	Fill	Compact dark brown grey sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones Including fragments of modern wood and anthracite. Compressed topsoil?	☑	☐
306	Timber	Coniferous tree stump of recent date (little decay). Cut down by chainsaw at level of natural geology, presumably from an access pit to the north.	☐	☐

Trench: 4

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 8.00 m. **Width:** 2.00 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** 0.6 m. **Max:** 0.65 m.

Co-ordinates: **OS Grid Ref.: TL** *(Easting: 12838: Northing: 38043)*

OS Grid Ref.: TL *(Easting: 12833: Northing: 38050)*

Reason: To test footprint of proposed house

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
401	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.3m thick.	☑	☐
402	Subsoil	Friable mid orange brown silty sand occasional small-medium stones 0.3m thick.	☑	☐
403	Natural	Firm mid grey brown sandy gravel frequent small sand, frequent small-medium stones	☐	☐

Trench: 5

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 8.00 m. **Width:** 2.00 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** 0.5 m. **Max:** 0.65 m.

Co-ordinates: **OS Grid Ref.: TL** *(Easting: 12852: Northing: 38049)*

OS Grid Ref.: TL *(Easting: 12853: Northing: 38057)*

Reason: To test footprint of proposed house

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
501	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.3m thick.	☑	☐
502	Subsoil	Friable mid orange brown silty sand occasional small-medium stones 0.25m thick.	☑	☐
503	Natural	Firm mid grey brown sandy gravel frequent small sand, moderate small sand, occasional medium-large stones	☐	☐

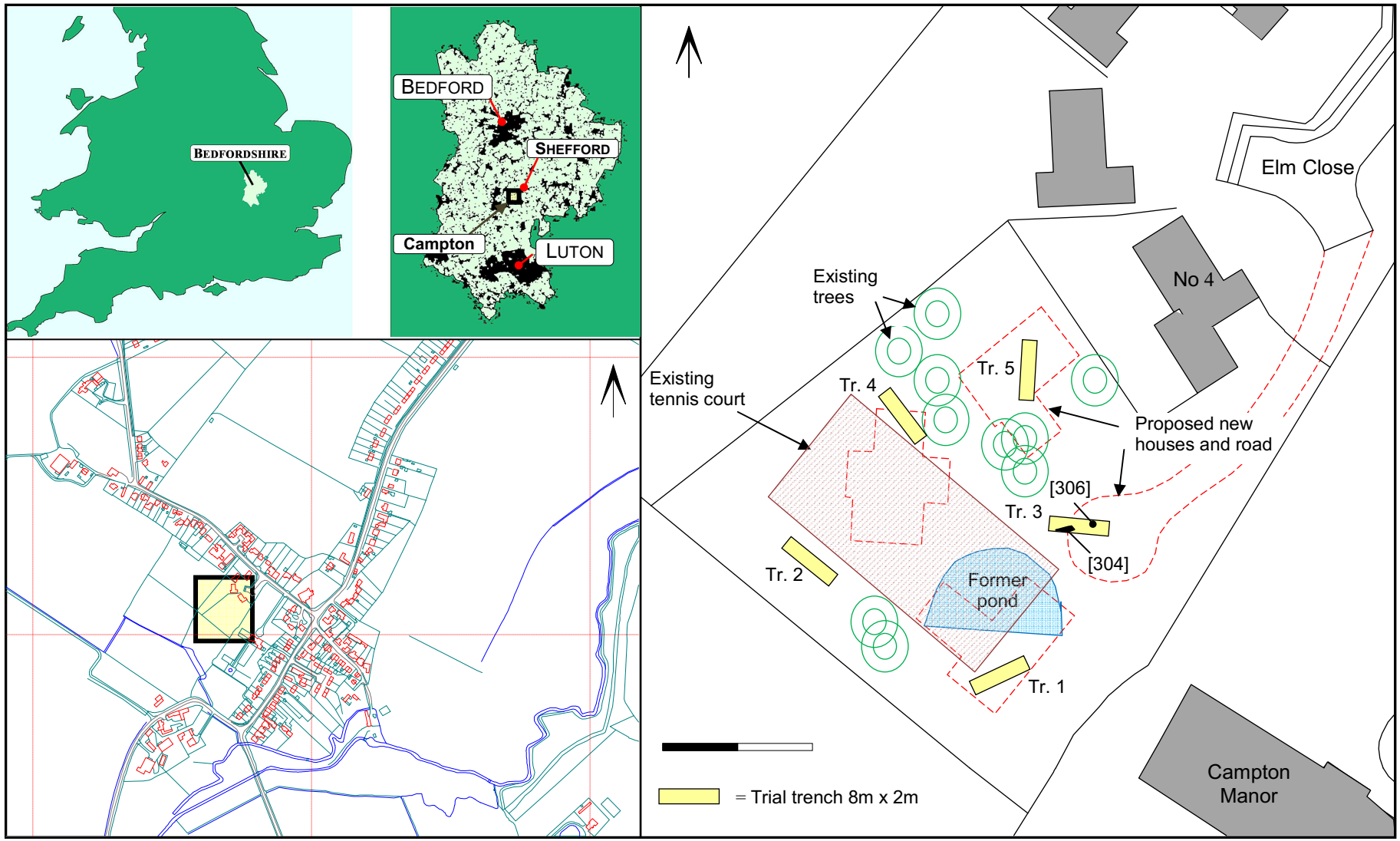

Figure 1: Site and trench location plan

Plate 1: Mesolithic / early Neolithic flint core fragment

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