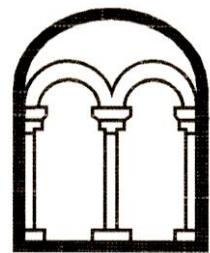


**LAND AT BRIDGE FARM  
BEDFORD ROAD  
SANDY  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

**Albion**  
archaeology



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Produced for:  
JR Glenn & Daughters  
Bridge Farm  
Sandy



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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**

*Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the archaeological works by Alex Glenn. The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Martin Oake, the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist.*

*Fieldwork was carried out by Adam Williams (Archaeological Supervisor). The report was prepared by Christiane Meckseper (Project Officer). The project was managed by Rob Wardill (Project Manager). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).*

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## **Version History**

<i>Version</i>	<i>Issue date</i>	<i>Reason for re-issue</i>
<i>1.0</i>	<i>11/11/2015</i>	<i>n/a</i>

## **Key Terms**

Throughout this project design the following terms or abbreviations are used:

CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
CIfA	Chartered Institute <i>for</i> Archaeologists
HER	Central Bedfordshire Council's Historic Environment Record
LPA	Local Planning Authority
SARM	Scheme of Archaeological Resource Management



## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Planning permission (CB/14/05023/MW) was granted for the creation of a lake as a wildlife habitat by mineral extraction (part retrospective) on Land at Bridge Farm, off Bedford Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire. The permitted development comprised the regularisation of part of the lake, a temporary access track and temporary storage of topsoil during development. Topsoil and subsoil across part of the lake had earlier been excavated down to the underlying terrace gravels without archaeological supervision.*

*As the lake lies adjacent to archaeological heritage assets in the form of a Roman road and a series of cropmarks of possible prehistoric and Roman date, the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist advised that a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication should be carried out during the excavation of the remainder of the lake. This is in line with Paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).*

*The archaeological works were undertaken on 15th and 16th October 2015 and consisted of two stages:*

- *Cleaning of the surface of the part of the proposed lake that had already been reduced.*
- *Machine-excavation of the unexcavated part of the proposed lake to the level of archaeological visibility.*

*No archaeological features or artefacts were revealed during any stage of the works. This suggests that the lake lies in an area where there was no Roman roadside activity and that the cropmarks to the south of the site do not extend into the footprint of the lake.*

*The project archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum (accession no.: 2015.51) and this report will be uploaded to the OASIS website (reference no: albionar1-214724).*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 **Project Background**

Planning permission (CB/14/05023/MW) was granted for the creation of a lake as a wildlife habitat by mineral extraction (part retrospective) on Land at Bridge Farm, off Bedford Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire. The permitted development comprised the regularisation of part of the lake, a temporary access track and temporary storage of topsoil during development.

The Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA) advised that the development could potentially impact heritage assets with archaeological interest. Therefore, a condition (no. 3) was attached to the planning permission, requiring the implementation of a Scheme of Archaeological Resource Management (SARM) approved by the local planning authority (LPA).

This is in line with Paragraph 141 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) which states that Local Planning Authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of a heritage asset before it is lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly available (DCLG 2012).

The CBCA issued a brief designed to secure the implementation of the SARM (CBC 2015). The SARM detailing the specification for the programme of archaeological works was prepared by Albion Archaeology (Albion Archaeology 2015) and approved by the CBCA.

### 1.2 **Site Location and Description**

The lake is situated south of Bedford Road within a field to the south-west of Bridge Farm Shop. It lies within Northill parish, close to the boundaries of the parishes of both Sandy and Moggerhanger and within the floodplain of the River Ivel.

The area of the proposed lake had already been partially excavated in accordance with a planning permission granted in 2010. The proposed lake measures c. 50 x 50m. Including the surrounding working areas, the development comprises a roughly rectangular piece of land measuring c. 6,500m<sup>2</sup>. It is centred on grid reference TL1605 4875. Its western side is bordered by a hedge line; whilst its northern and southern sides are bordered by drainage ditches.

The underlying geology comprises Oxford clay and mudstone overlain by sand and gravel river terrace deposits (British Geological Survey 2015).

### 1.3 **Historic and Archaeological Background**

The site of the lake lies close to the medieval hamlet of Girtford, which lies on the north-western edge of Sandy, a small town with prehistoric and Roman origins.



An isolated ring ditch (HER 15093) lies to the west of the site and several cropmarks associated with likely later prehistoric activity lie to the north and south of the PDA (HER 17125, 15094). The course of a Roman road (HER11984) lies adjacent to the northern edge of the lake.

None of the cropmarks were shown to extend towards the site of the lake during the nearby investigations associated with the Mox Hill to Sandy water-main (EBD5; EBD335). The investigations did confirm the existence and location of the Roman road which consisted of a sand and gravel bank flanked by roadside ditches along part of its length. The agger of the road lay directly below the topsoil (Northamptonshire Archaeology 2007).

The background evidence suggested that there was low to moderate potential for prehistoric remains to survive within the site; while the proximity of the Roman road suggested there was high potential for the presence of evidence for Roman roadside activities.

As the area lies in the hinterland of the Roman and medieval settlements of Sandy and Girtford, it is likely that the majority of it was agricultural land and/or pasture in the River Ivel floodplain contemporary with those settlements. Cartographic evidence confirms that the site was in agricultural use from at least the post-medieval period onwards (Albion 2012).

The majority of heritage assets in the vicinity of the site are post-medieval and modern buildings to the east, in the historic core of Girtford (HER17130).

#### **1.4 Project Objectives**

The heritage asset assessment for the site (Albion 2012) indicated that objectives relating to Iron Age and Roman settlement were likely to be particularly relevant. Potential topics included:

- The characterisation, chronology development, structure and organisation of rural settlement in the Iron Age and Roman periods (Bryant 2000, 16; Going and Plouviez 2000, 19; Oake 2007, 11; and Medlycott 2011, 31 and 47).
- The relationship of the Roman town of Sandy with its contemporary landscape and hinterland (Oake 2007, 11).
- The study of the Roman road network and its place in the landscape (Going and Plouviez 2000, 21; Dawson 2007, 71-72, Medlycott 2011, 48).
- Dating in the Iron Age and Roman periods, particularly the refinement of pottery dating (Bryant 2000, 16; Oake 2007, 10-11; and Medlycott 2011, 29).

The aims of the investigation also included:

- Establishing the date, nature and extent of any activity or occupation within the development area;



- Establishing the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- Recovering palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.





## 2. METHODOLOGY

The archaeological works were undertaken on 15th and 16th October 2015 and consisted of two stages:

- Cleaning of the surface of the part of the proposed lake that had already been reduced.
- Machine-excavation of the unexcavated part of the proposed lake to the level of archaeological visibility.

Both stages of the works were undertaken by a mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket, working under the direction of an archaeologist and under constant archaeological supervision. Deposits encountered were investigated and recorded in accordance with Albion's *Procedures Manual*. Spoil heaps were checked on a regular basis for the recovery of artefacts.

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 ed, 2001).
• EAA	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> (2003)
• Historic England	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Project Managers' Guide</i> (2015)
	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation, 2nd edition</i> (English Heritage 2011)
• CIfA	<i>Charter and By-law; Code of Conduct</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> (2014)

A detailed methodology is provided in the SARM (Albion Archaeology 2015).



### 3. RESULTS

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#### 3.1 *Introduction*

The cleaning of the surface of the already reduced part of the lake revealed no archaeological features. The level of this surface was *c.* 200mm lower than the area of the lake reduced under archaeological supervision. If any archaeological features had existed in this area, they would most probably have been removed during the first stage of unsupervised excavation.

Excavation of the remaining area of the lake under archaeological supervision revealed no archaeological features. An elongated curvilinear tree bowl with a dark blackish fill was the only feature present.

#### 3.2 *Overburden and Undisturbed Geological Deposits*

Overburden consisted of a friable dark red-brown clayey silt topsoil with moderate small and medium-sized stones (100). It was *c.* 280mm thick. Below this was a subsoil (101) of friable mid brown-orange clayey silt gravel that was *c.* 320mm thick.

Undisturbed alluvial deposits (102) comprised a brick-orange gravel with large orange-yellow patches of clayey.

#### 3.3 *Conclusion and Significance*

The investigations revealed no archaeological deposits or artefacts and indicate that there was no Roman roadside activity in this area. They also suggest that the cropmarks of HER 15094 to the south of the site do not extend into the footprint of the lake.

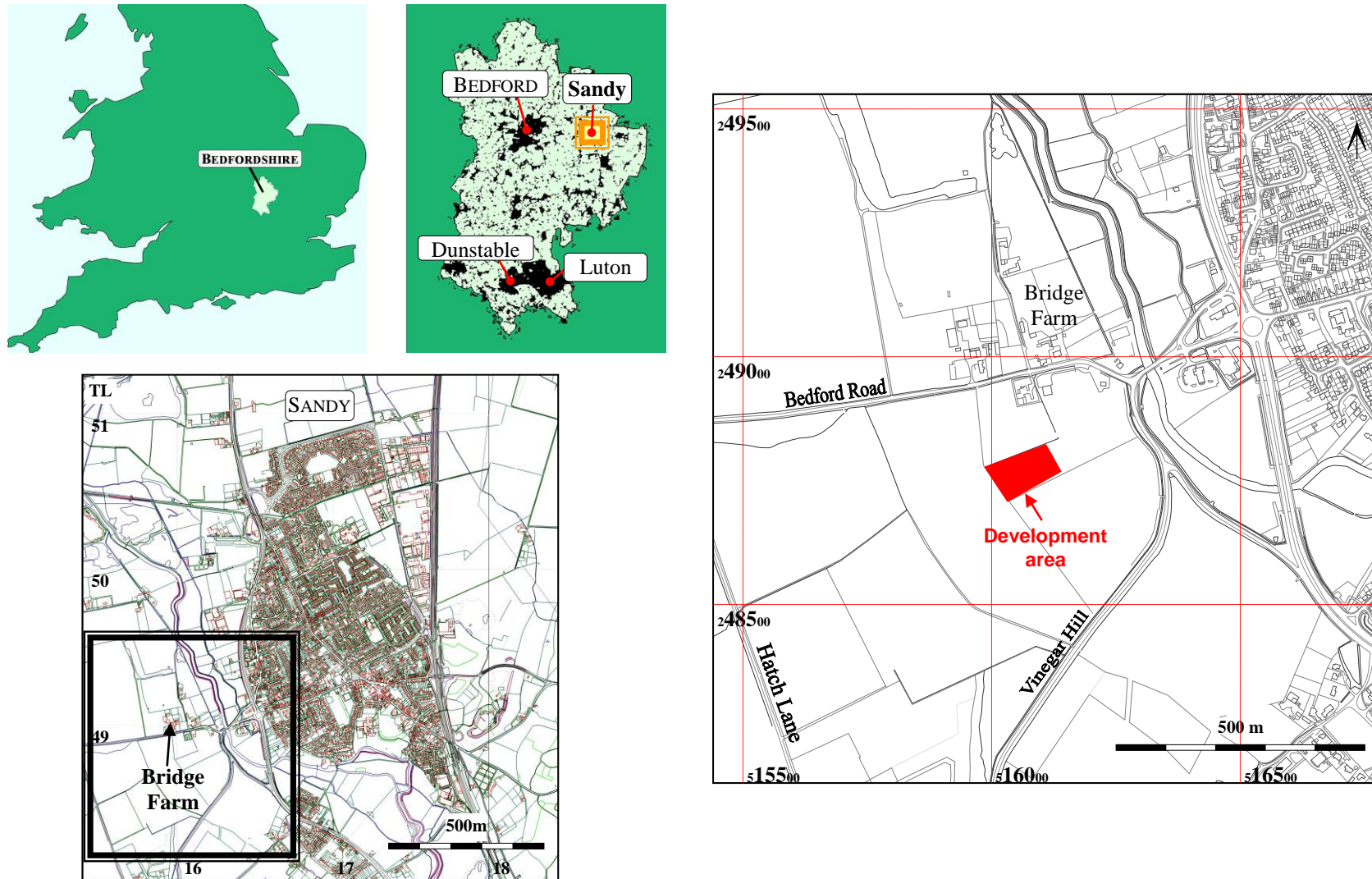
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## 4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

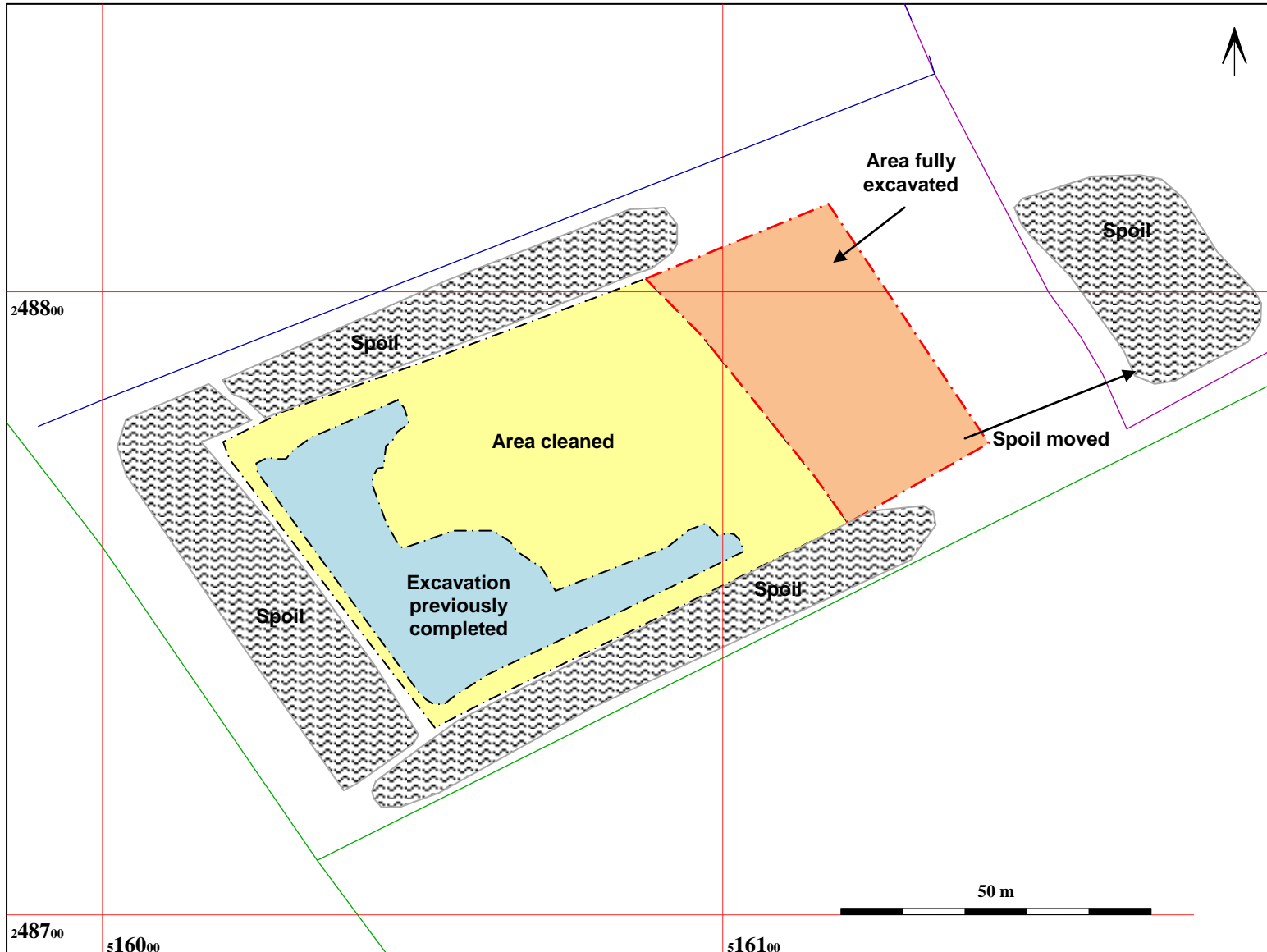
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**Figure 1: Site location**

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**Figure 2:**  
Excavation areas

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**Figure 3:** Newly excavated area, looking south (1m scale)



**Figure 4:** Newly excavated area, looking north (1m scale)

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