

**BURY COURT
CHURCH LANE
BEDFORD**

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

Document: 2006/44
Project: BC 1137

16th May 2006

Produced for:
Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association

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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 Ben Barker (Project Officer). Fieldwork was undertaken by Ben Barker and Matt Smith. Gary Edmondson provided the brick identification. The project was under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager). Joan Lightning (CAD Technician) produced the figures.

Thanks are due to George Moore of Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association, for his assistance during the works. Lesley-Ann Mather, Bedfordshire County Council's Archaeological Officer, monitored the work.

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27th April 2006

Structure of the Report

After the introductory Section 1, there is a summary of the results of the programme of archaeological observation and recording in Section 2, followed by a brief conclusion (Section 3). Section 4 is a bibliography.

Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

<i>Albion</i>	Albion Archaeology
<i>Client</i>	Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association (BPHA)
<i>IFA</i>	Institute of Field Archaeologists
<i>BCC</i>	Bedfordshire County Council
<i>CAO</i>	County Archaeological Officer
<i>Procedures Manual</i>	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork, 2nd Edition 2001.</i> Bedfordshire County Council





Non-Technical Summary

During September 2005 Albion Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication on behalf of the Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association. The work was occasioned by the construction of an additional car park at Bury Court, Church Lane, Bedford. The construction involved ground disturbance in the form of the removal of overburden and the excavation of a soakaway.

The site of the proposed car park lies within the confines of the medieval village of Goldington (HER 17071), less than 150m to the south-east of the 15th century church of St Mary's.

The limited disturbance which accompanied the construction of the car park revealed the foundations of a late 19th-century extension to Goldington Bury, a mansion house which was demolished prior to the construction of the Bury Court tower block. The excavation of the soakaway exposed evidence for modern disturbance.





1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association proposed to build a new car to the east of the existing development of Bury Court. The proposed works included reduction of the current ground surface, by an average of 300mm, over an area of approximately 315sqm, in addition to the excavation of a soakaway, 1.2m in diameter by 1.5m deep, and associated drainage runs.

Because the work had the potential to disturb archaeological deposits, the County Archaeological Officer issued a brief for a programme of archaeological work (BCC 2005). Albion Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the work in accordance with a project design (Albion Archaeology 2005) approved by the CAO.

1.2 Site Location and Description

The site of the car park is centred at TL 0769 5090, on grassed land directly to the east of the Bury Court tower block, Church Lane, Goldington, Bedford (Figure 1).

The geology of the area is river valley gravel terrace.

1.3 Archaeological Background and Objectives

1.3.1 Archaeological Background

The archaeological background is summarised in the CAO's brief (BCC 2005):

- The area of the proposed car park lay within the confines of Goldington medieval village (HER 17071): an area of archaeological sensitivity.
- It was close to St Mary's church, which is 15th century in date with 19th-century alterations.
- Otherwise, very little archaeological investigation had been undertaken within the area and, therefore, more detailed information regarding archaeological potential was limited. The area may have been subject to some disturbance during the construction of Bury Court but it was considered possible that archaeological remains could have survived within the area which would be affected by the stripping and drainage works for the car park.

1.3.1 Research Objectives

Although the impact of the proposed car park was not likely to be great, the land was in an area of high archaeological potential. There was the possibility that it might impact archaeological remains from the late Saxon period (or earlier) onwards. Within this framework the aims of the investigation were set out in the CAO's brief (Section 4):

- i. To establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation in the development site;



- ii. To establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- iii. To recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- iv. To recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.



2. RESULTS OF OBSERVATION AND RECORDING

2.1 Introduction

The programme of archaeological observation was undertaken between 12th and 14th October 2005. During this period all excavations which required monitoring were completed. A detailed plan of the deposits uncovered was drawn and is included in the site archive. A simplified version is shown in Figure 2.

2.2 Methodology

The programme of archaeological observation adhered to the field methods as set out in Section 2 of the Project Design (Albion Archaeology 2005).

- 1 All stripping of overburden or excavation of foundation or service trenches was monitored to try to identify *in situ* archaeological deposits.
- 2 All disturbed soil was scanned for artefacts.
- 3 Surviving archaeological features and deposits were investigated in accordance with sections 5.8, 5.10, 5.11 and 5.12 of the Brief (subject to the limitations imposed by the nature of the groundworks.)
- 4 All deposits were recorded in accordance with Albion's *Procedures Manual* and the detailed requirements in section 5 of the Brief.
- 5 The observations were recorded at 1:50 on a base plan that was tied in to the OS national grid.
- 6 Significant features were photographed using a digital camera.

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 Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual* were adhered to.

2.3 Car Park Area

Approximately 300mm of turf and topsoil was stripped from the car park area. This exposed an area that measured 23m by 17m.

The southern 12.5m of this area was stripped to a level composed of mixed modern overburden with patches of disturbed gravel geology visible in isolated patches. No archaeological features or deposits were exposed by the ground works in this area.

The northern 10.5m exposed the outlines of modern wall foundations and patches of tiled flooring, as shown in Figure 2. The bricks were mostly unfrogged, but clearly machine-moulded. They consisted of a densely-packed fabric that contained poorly mixed coarse inclusions of clinker and crushed brick. They are likely to be modern and no earlier than 1850 in date (Edmondson G, pers. comm.). The southernmost foundation contained machine-made, frogged bricks, which are likely to be part of a later Victorian extension.



The location of these foundations is consistent with the layout of buildings associated with Goldington Bury, as shown on the 1st edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1887-88 (Figure 3). This mansion house was demolished in the mid-20th century, prior to the construction of the current Bury Court development. The exposed foundations are likely to represent an eastern extension to the house, rather than the main building itself.

2.4 Soakaway

The soakaway was located at the south-eastern corner of the car park (Figure 2). It was *c.* 1.7m by *c.* 1.7m and was excavated to a depth of 1.5m. No significant archaeological deposits were encountered. The northern section of the pit revealed 0.25m of topsoil above 0.25m of modern made-ground, overlying yellowish brown sandy gravel. The gravel appeared to be undisturbed natural geology, whilst the made ground is likely to represent activity associated with the demolition of Goldington Bury.



3 CONCLUSIONS

3.1 *Synthesis*

The archaeological investigation, conducted during the construction of the car park, successfully demonstrated the presence of, and recorded, modern foundations associated with Goldington Bury. The excavation of the soakaway exposed evidence for modern disturbance, probably associated with the demolition of the mansion house.

No significant archaeological deposits of earlier date were identified. The limited depth of the main excavation (c. 300mm) cannot preclude the survival of earlier archaeological deposits at greater depth. If these deposits do exist, they are likely to be adequately preserved *in situ* below the new car park.

3.2 *Significance of Results*

All the deposits observed during construction works were of early modern origin or later. They are likely to relate to the Goldington Bury mansion house or activity associated with its demolition c. 50 years ago. This building is recorded on historic maps and is well documented within the historic record. The Victoria County History records it as “a large but severe late 18th-century mansion” (VCH 1912).

The results of the investigation suggest that outlying elements of Goldington Bury were relatively undisturbed by the construction of the adjacent tower block. However, the degree of truncation is likely to have been more severe below the modern access roads and garage blocks. The majority of the footprint of the main building will have been totally destroyed by the tower block foundations.

No significant artefacts or palaeo-environmental remains were identified or recovered during the course of the investigation. The depths of the observed overburden and apparent lack of widespread truncation do, however, suggest that the ground conditions beyond the footprints of Bury Court and Goldington Bury would be favourable to the preservation of more significant archaeological deposits.

3.3 *Project Archive*

The project archive of project records and drawings will be deposited with Bedford Museum, under accession number BEDFM 2006.271. It comprises:

- site records (one file)
- site drawings (one sheet)
- photographs (one digital film)

No bricks from the foundations were retained due to their modern nature and the degree of preservation *in situ*.



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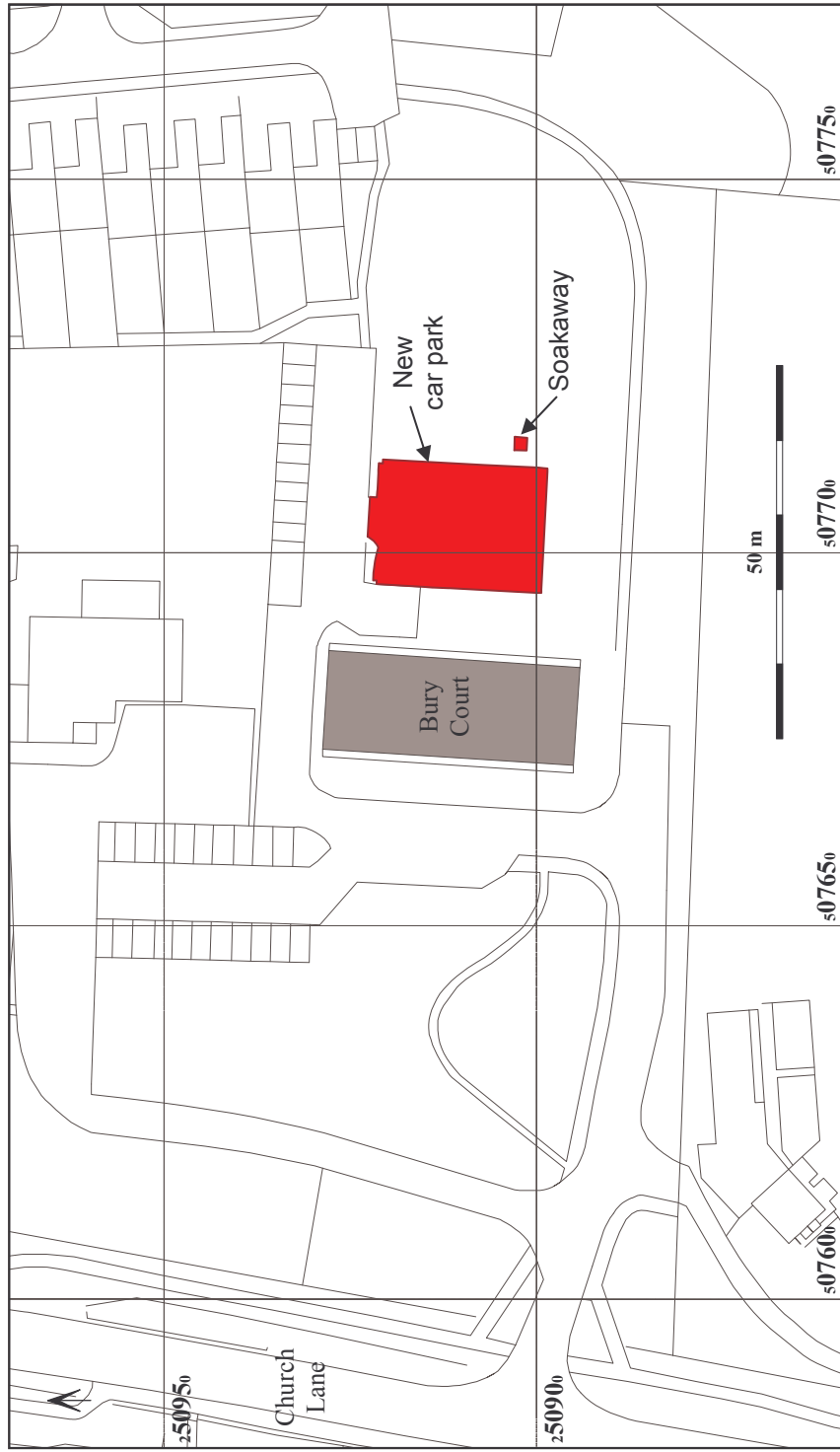
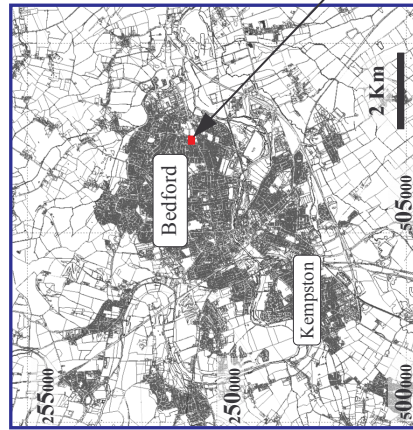
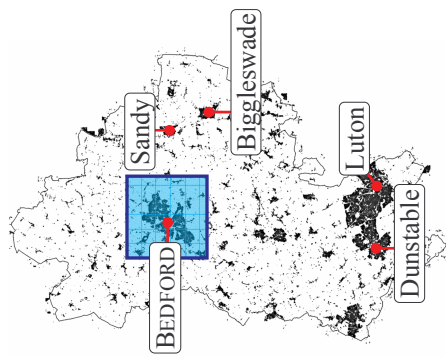
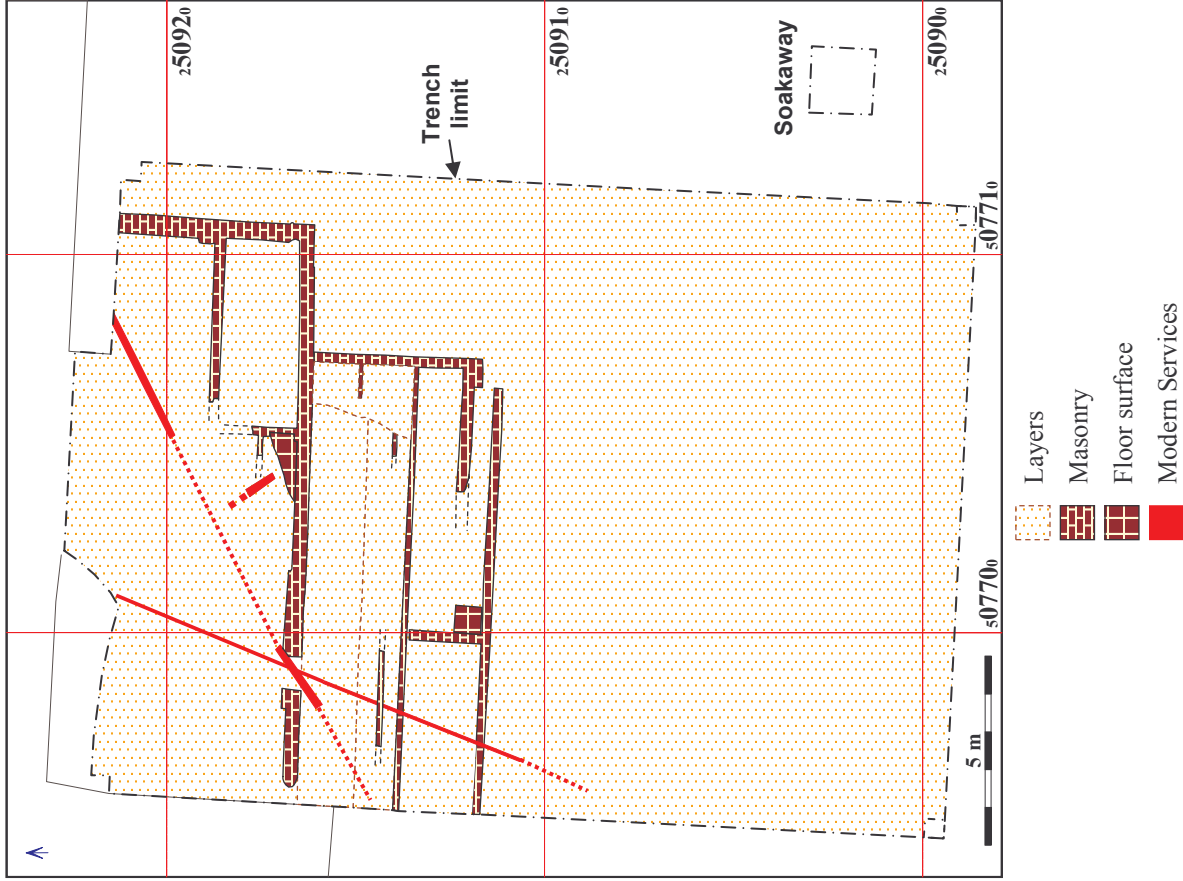
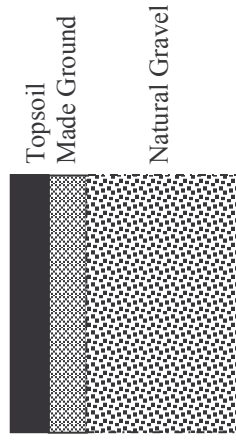


Figure 1: Location map

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Composite photograph of northern half of site



Representative section of the soakaway (1:50)

Figure 2: All features

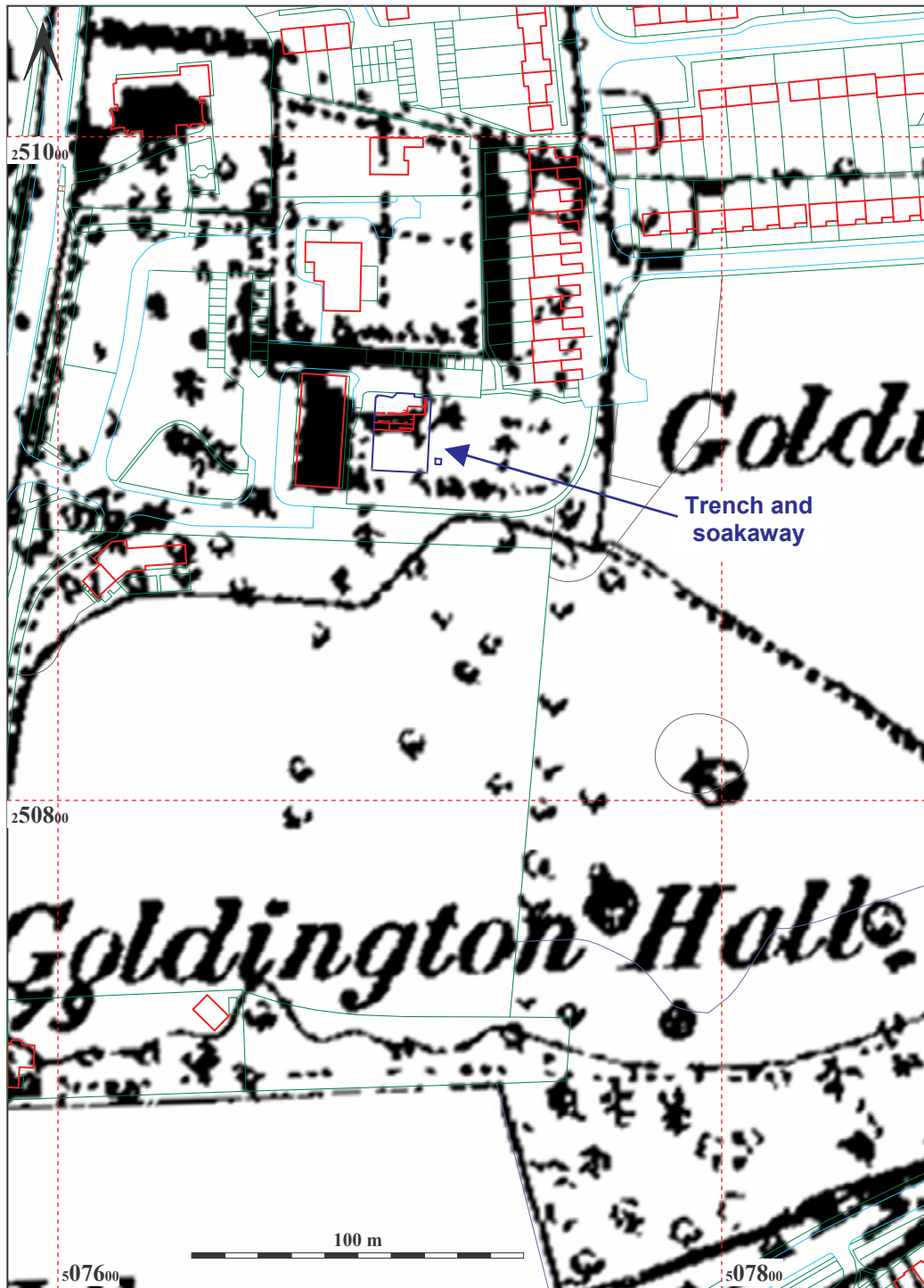


Figure 3: Trench and modern OS map superimposed onto 1st edition OS map
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