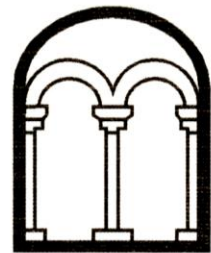


24 THE GREEN  
ICKWELL  
BEDFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

**Albion**  
archaeology



**24 THE GREEN  
ICKWELL  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION**

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Produced for  
Mr. Jason McGuinness



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## Preface

*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.*

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## Structure of this Report

Section 1 serves as an introduction to the project, describing the site's location, its archaeological background and the aims of the archaeological work. Section 2 describes the project methodology and Section 3 summarises the results of the archaeological works. Section 4 comprises the conclusion and heritage statement, whilst Section 5 is a bibliography. Detailed contextual data is contained in Section 6.

CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
CIfA	Chartered Institute <i>for</i> Archaeologists
Client	Mr Jason McGuinness
HER	Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record
PDA	Proposed development area



## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Mr Jason McGuinness is gathering baseline information on land to the rear of 24 The Green, Ickwell, Bedfordshire, in support of a planning application for a proposed new dwelling, including creation of hard standing and landscaping, and realignment of the existing vehicular access (CB/15/03841/FULL). As part of this work, Albion Archaeology were commissioned to carry out a program of archaeological evaluation within the proposed development area (PDA) to assess the potential impact of the development on sub-surface archaeological remains.*

*The proposed development is situated partly within the Ickwell Conservation Area and lies on the eastern edge of the historic medieval village core. The present-day village of Ickwell has its origins in the medieval period. The focus of the medieval village was around a large village green, with the house, parkland and gardens of the 19th-century Ickwell Bury to the west. The grounds and house of 24 The Green lies at the south-eastern edge of the green. A building to the south of the PDA known as The Old House is thought to have medieval origins.*

*The archaeological field evaluation comprised two trenches, 15m and 20m long. These were located across the footprint of the proposed buildings, and also the area of hard standing. No archaeological remains were revealed within the trenches. Below disturbance associated with the construction of a modern tennis court, the presence of a thick ploughsoil demonstrates that the area was part of the agricultural land around Ickwell, prior to its conversion into a garden. No artefacts were recovered during the investigation.*

*The evaluation has shown that the potential for any heritage assets to be present on the PDA is negligible to low. Therefore, the impact of the proposed development on potential below-ground remains is also assessed as negligible to low. The significance of this impact is assessed as neutral / slight.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

---

### 1.1 *Planning Background*

Mr Jason McGuinness is gathering baseline information on land to the rear of 24 The Green, Ickwell, Bedfordshire, in support of a planning application (CB/15/03841/FULL) for a proposed new dwelling and garage, with associated hard standing and landscaping, and realignment of the existing vehicular access.

A heritage statement was compiled by Albion Archaeology in September 2015 to support the planning application (Albion 2015).

Pre-application advice from the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA) confirmed that a programme of field evaluation was required to support the application. This is in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework – Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment* (March 2012).

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the field evaluation which comprised trial trenching.

### 1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The small hamlet of Ickwell lies in the eastern part of Bedfordshire, c. 4km south-west of Sandy and 4km north-west of Biggleswade (Figure 1). The River Ivel and A1 Great North Road are situated c. 1km to the west. Ickwell consists of a large central green, lined with residential properties, and housing strung along the main roads towards Old Warden, Upper Caldecote and Northill to the south, east and north respectively. The proposed development area (PDA) lies on the south-east side of the village green, to the rear of nos 24 and 25 The Green.

Currently, the PDA comprises the rear garden of nos 24 and 25 The Green, which are largely grass with ornamental garden features. The site is bounded on most sides by mature hedges and trees. Existing residential properties are situated on the north-west and south-east sides of the PDA, and agricultural land lies to the east.

The site is centred on grid reference TL 151781 455155 and lies on fairly level ground at c. 30m OD. The underlying geology is Stewartby Member and Weymouth member Formation Mudstone (British Geological Survey 2016).

### 1.3 *Archaeological Background*

The following summary is based upon data obtained from the Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record and the Heritage Statement (Albion 2015).

There are no nationally significant, scheduled monuments recorded within the PDA.



There is no evidence for any heritage assets, other than find-spots, pre-dating the medieval period in the vicinity of the PDA. This may be partly due to an absence of archaeological investigations in the area during earlier development. An evaluation, undertaken at 6 The Green, Ickwell, in October 2015, found no archaeological remains (Heritage Network 2015).

The hamlet of Ickwell is not recorded in Domesday Book of 1086, though a manor existed in the neighbouring village of Northill, situated to the north of the PDA. A small part of the manor lands were later tenanted and became known as Ickwell or Ickwell Bury Manor; both manors were attached to the barony of Eaton. The first recorded mention of the settlement was apparently in 1170, as *Ikewelle*; the name indicating Anglo-Saxon origins. No heritage assets or find-spots dating to this period have been recorded in the vicinity of the PDA.

The present-day village of Ickwell has its origins in the medieval period. The focus of the medieval settlement (HER 17122) was around a large village green, with the house, parkland and gardens of Ickwell Bury (HER 438) some 320m to the west. The extent of the medieval settlement includes a large part of the PDA, which is also reflected in the designated extent of the Ickwell Conservation Area.

A building to the south of the PDA, known as 'Old House' (HER455), is thought to have medieval origins. A possible moat (HER456) is defined by three linear ponds forming three sides of a rectangle, extending from a stream, situated to the south of 'Old House'. This may be a moated site or possibly a later garden feature associated with 'Old House'. A fragment of quern stone found near the ponds was thought to indicate medieval occupation; however, no other evidence for this has yet been found. A post-medieval stable block (HER12486) associated with the house is located just to the south of the PDA.

Three 18th-century cottages (HER 2106) at 23, 24 and 25 Ickwell Green and a 19th-century outbuilding (HER 12762) are situated adjacent to or within the PDA.

According to cartographic sources, the layout of Ickwell around the village green has remained largely static and development has been limited to pre-existing residential plots. Expansion along the roads leading out of the village began in the late 20th century. Within the PDA, the presence of buildings at the west end of the plot and garden to the rear of the plot remained a fairly consistent feature from the time of the 1783 enclosure map. Development within the PDA comprised sub-division of the garden area to the rear from 1885 and a tennis court added after 1950.

#### **1.4 Project Objectives**

The principal purpose of the archaeological field evaluation was to recover information on the:

- location, extent, nature, and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present within the application site;
- integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present within the application site.





- nature of palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

The evaluation provided the information needed to assess the potential archaeological impact of the proposed development and thus assist in the determination of the planning application.



## 2. METHOD STATEMENT

The methodological approach to the project is summarised below and detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2016).

### 2.1 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> (2nd edn, 2001).
• CfA	<i>Charter and by-law; Code of conduct</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> (2014)
• EAA	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> (2003)
• Historic England (formerly English Heritage)	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment PPN3: Archaeological Excavation</i> (2015)
	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation. 2nd ed.</i> (2011)
• Bedford Museum	<i>Procedure for Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition with Registered Museums in Bedfordshire. Version 2.8</i> (2010).

### 2.2 Trial Trenching

Two trenches measuring *c.* 2m wide were excavated within the footprint of the proposed buildings. The locations of the trenches were marked out on the ground prior to excavation; the positions were adjusted slightly due to site constraints.

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 experienced Albion staff.

The extent of investigation of exposed archaeological remains was sufficient to achieve the objectives of the project (see Section 1.4).



### 3. RESULTS

---

#### 3.1 Introduction

Archaeological investigation was undertaken in February 2016, in a period of bright and dry weather.

In the following summary contexts in brackets refer to deposits recorded on site. Each trench was allocated a block of number commencing at 100 for Trench 1, and 200 for Trench 2. Cut features are represented with square brackets, e.g. [106], whereas deposits or layers are in curved brackets, e.g. undisturbed geological strata (105). Figure 2 shows trench locations; Figures 3–6 show selected images.

The results are summarised below with details of the contexts in Appendix 1. No artefacts were recovered during the investigation.

#### 3.2 Overburden

Where the overburden remained undisturbed by modern truncation, it consisted of a dark grey-brown clay silt topsoil (100) and (200), *c.* 0.24m thick. There was a well-defined roughly horizontal boundary with the mid orange-grey clay silt subsoil (104) and (204) which was 0.45–0.49m thick (Figure 6). This sequence was visible at the south-east end of Trench 1 and the south-west end of Trench 2 (Figures 2 and 3). The thickness of the subsoil indicates a long period of cultivation on the PDA. Where (104) and (204) had been truncated, their thickness was reduced to 0.08–0.28m.

Along with the undisturbed overburden, there were remains of a distinctive black asphalt deposit (102) and (202), above a levelling deposit (103) and (203) within a construction cut [106] and [206], for the modern tennis court (Figure 2). Three modern land drains were recorded in Trench 1 associated with the tennis court.

Above the tennis court was a levelling layer (101) and (201), 0.17m thick. This had a similar composition to the subsoil below the tennis court and represents a modern landscaping layer, deposited after the tennis court had gone out of use.

#### 3.3 Geological Deposits

The undisturbed geological deposits mainly comprised mid brown-orange silt clay with orange sand lenses (105) and (205). At the eastern end of Trench 1 orange gravel with blue-grey clay patches was revealed.



## **4. CONCLUSION AND HERITAGE STATEMENT**

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### **4.1 Summary and Significance of the Evaluation Results**

The evaluation revealed no archaeological features or deposits within the trenches. The thick subsoil recorded in both trenches shows that the area was agricultural land until it became a garden with a tennis court in the modern period. In terms of the regional research frameworks, the significance of the layers recorded in the trenches is negligible.

### **4.2 Impact Assessment**

The evaluation has demonstrated that the potential for any heritage assets to be present on the PDA is negligible to low. Therefore, the impact of the proposed development on potential below-ground archaeological remains is also assessed as negligible to low. The significance of this impact is assessed as neutral / slight.



## 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## 6. TRENCH SUMMARY

---



**Trench: 1**

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 20.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

**Co-ordinates:** OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 15190: Northing: 45535)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 15209: Northing: 45529)

**Reason:** Assess archaeological potential

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Topsoil	Firm dark grey brown clay silt occasional flecks charcoal, moderate small-medium stones 0.24m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Levelling layer	Firm mid orange grey clay silt occasional small-medium stones Modern landscaping layer 0.17m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Subsoil	Firm mid grey orange clay silt moderate small-medium stones 0.45m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Natural	Compact mid brown orange silty clay Orange sand lenses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
106	Modern intrusion	Rectangular sides: U-shaped base: flat dimensions: max breadth 1.8m, max depth 0.29m, max length 13.1m	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Fill	Compact dark black hardcore Tennis court surface 0.14m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Fill	Firm mid blue orange clay Tennis court levelling layer 0.15m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench:** 2

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 15.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

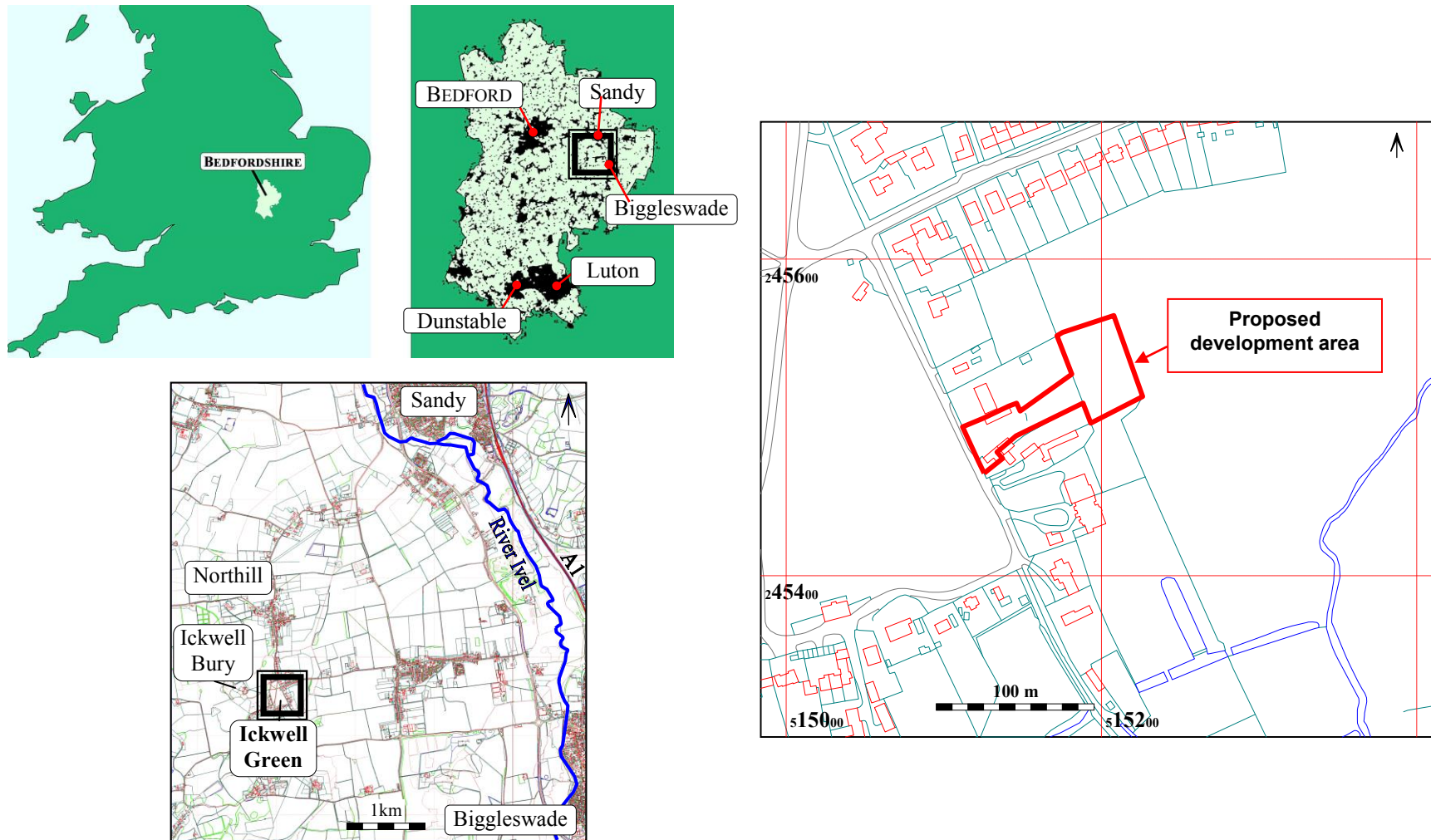
**Co-ordinates:** OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 15202; Northing: 45526)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 15198; Northing: 45512)

**Reason:** Assess archaeological potential

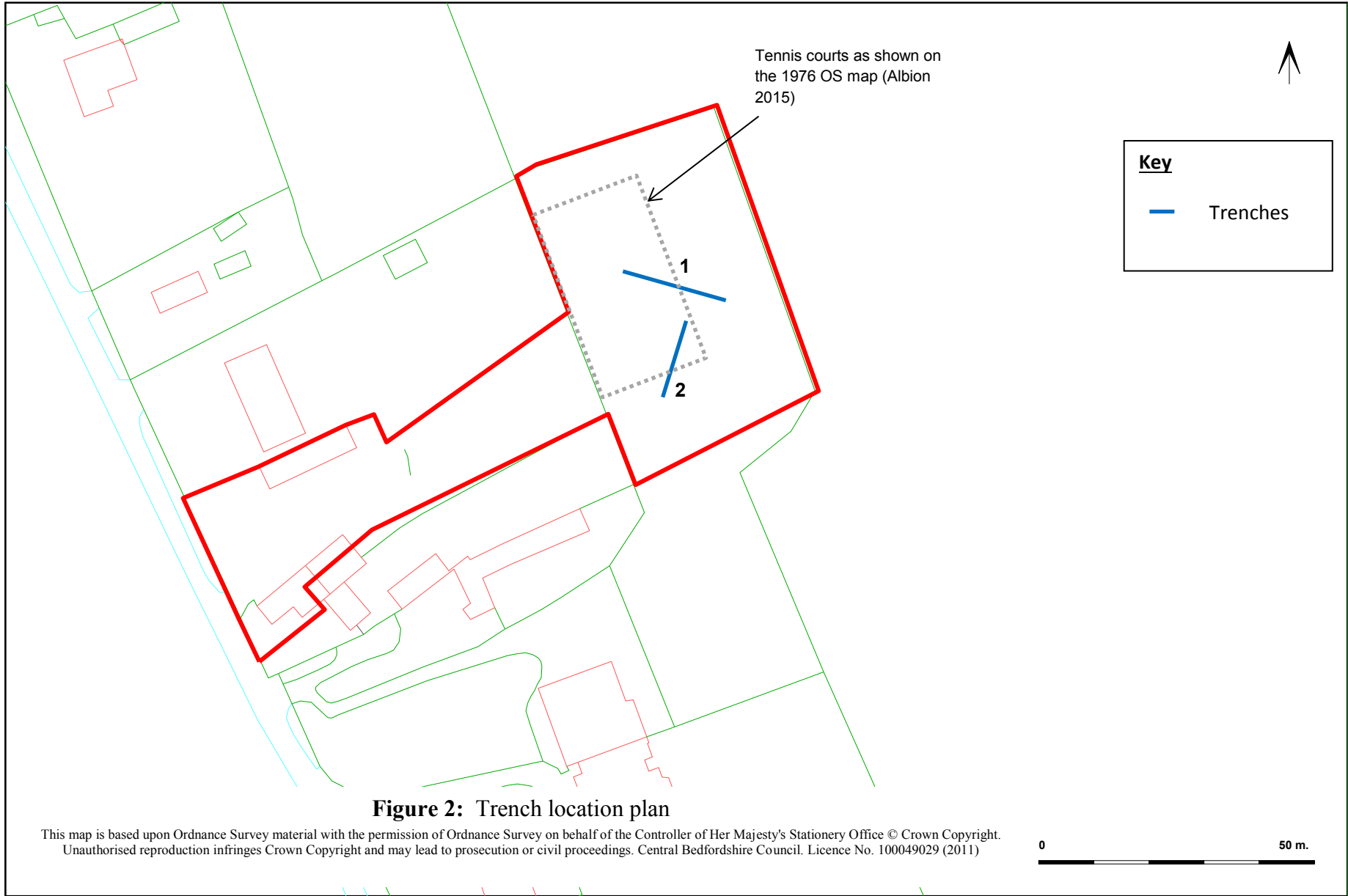
Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
200	Topsoil	Firm dark grey brown clay silt occasional flecks charcoal, moderate small-medium stones 0.24m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
201	Levelling layer	Firm mid orange grey clay silt occasional small-medium stones Modern landscaping layer 0.17m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
204	Subsoil	Firm mid orange grey clay silt occasional small-medium stones 0.49m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
205	Natural	Compact mid brown orange silty clay Orange sand lenses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
206	Modern intrusion	Rectangular sides: U-shaped base: flat dimensions: max breadth 1.8m, max depth 0.24m, max length 2.6m	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
202	Fill	Compact dark black hardcore Tennis court surface 0.19m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
203	Fill	Firm mid blue orange clay Tennis court levelling layer 0.05m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





**Figure 1: Site location**

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**Figure 3:** Trench 1, looking south-east  
(Scale: 1m in 0.5m divisions)



**Figure 4:** Trench 1 sample section  
Shown are the remains of a modern tennis court as the thick black  
band (102) and the landscaping material above (101).  
(Scale: 1m in 0.5m divisions)



**Figure 5:** Trench 2, looking north-east  
The undisturbed cultivation layers are in the foreground with the black band of the tennis court extending up to the scale. (Scale: 1m in 0.5m divisions)



**Figure 6:** Trench 2 sample section  
Shown are the undisturbed cultivation layers (200) and (204).  
(Scale: 1m in 0.5m divisions)

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