

**7 CHAPEL STREET
POTTON
BEDFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

Albion
archaeology



**7 CHAPEL STREET
POTTON
BEDFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

Project: CS2808
Bedford Museum accession no.: BEDFM 2016.26
CBC HER search no.: 201516/259
Oasis reference no.: albionar1-249437

Document: 2016/202
Version 1.0

19th October 2016

Compiled by	Checked by	Approved by
Marcin Koziminski	Robert Wardill	Drew Shotliff

Produced for
Mr Nick Paybody
7 Chapel Street
Potton
SG19 2PT



Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Project Background	4
1.2 Site Description.....	4
1.3 Archaeological Background	4
1.4 Project Objectives and Research Aims.....	6
2. METHODOLOGY	7
3. RESULTS	8
3.1 Introduction.....	8
3.2 Overburden and Geological Deposits	8
3.3 Archaeological Remains	8
4. CONCLUSIONS	9
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY	10
6. APPENDIX: CONTEXT DETAILS	11

List of Figures

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: Trenching results with selected sections and photographs

The figures are bound at the back of the document.



Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete an assessment as possible, within the terms of the brief. 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 Mr Nick Paybody of 7 Chapel Street, Potton and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Martin Oake, Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Marcin Koziminski (Archaeological Supervisor), who also prepared the report with contributions from Joan Lightning (CAD Technician) and Jackie Wells (Finds Officer). 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
www.albion-arch.com

Version History

Version	Issue date	Reason for re-issue
1.0	19/10/2016	n/a

Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

Albion	Albion Archaeology
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
CBM	Ceramic building material
CIfA	Chartered Institute <i>for</i> Archaeologists
HER	Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record
PDA	Proposed development area
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

Planning permission (CB/15/04661/FULL) was granted for the demolition of an existing outbuilding and the construction of a new building at 7 Chapel Street, Potton, Bedfordshire.

Because of the archaeological potential of the site, a condition was attached to the planning permission requiring a staged archaeological investigation of the site.

The Stage 1 trial trenching took place on 13th October 2016. One trench measuring 10m long and 2m wide was excavated within the footprint of the proposed new building.

Two sherds of pottery dating to the 12th–13th century were found in the subsoil. No archaeological features or deposits were found within the trial trench.

The absence of archaeological features and deposits within the trial trench suggests the archaeological potential of the site of the new building is extremely low.

The presence of pottery sherds in the subsoil dating to the 12th–13th century indicates medieval activity in the area but not necessarily in the immediate vicinity of the site. This activity is likely to be agricultural in origin, located on the outskirts of the settlement core.

However, the results of this evaluation indicate that further investigation of the site of the new building is unlikely to yield data that would contribute to our knowledge of the development of medieval and post medieval Potton.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

Planning permission (CB/15/04661/FULL) was granted for the demolition of an existing outbuilding and the construction of a new building at 7 Chapel Street, Potton, Bedfordshire.

A heritage statement was compiled by Albion Archaeology in February 2016 to support the planning application (Albion 2016a). This stated that the proposed development site lay at the edge of the medieval settlement of Potton with potential for archaeological assets to be present.

A condition (no. 5) was attached to the planning permission requiring a staged archaeological investigation of the site. This was in accordance with *Policies DM13 and CS15* of the *Core Strategy and Development Management Policies* (Central Beds 2009) and paragraph 141 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012). The potential stages of work were to comprise:

- 1 Archaeological field evaluation in the form of trial trenching.
- 2 Appraisal of the results of the evaluation and their significance in terms of identified research frameworks.
- 3 If required, the implementation of an agreed programme of further archaeological investigation and recording.

This document presents the results of the Stage 1 evaluation undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) (Albion 2016b), which was approved by the CBCA prior to the commencement of the works.

1.2 Site Description

Potton lies in the eastern part of Central Bedfordshire, close to its border with Cambridgeshire and *c.* 6km east of the A1 and the River Ivel. Chapel Street runs north from the main Station Road in the southern part of Potton.

The proposed development area (PDA) lies on the western side of Chapel Street, to the rear of property No. 7 (Figure 1).

Potton lies on the upper edge of the Greensand Ridge at an elevation of *c.* 55m OD. The underlying geology is Woburn Sands Formation Sandstone with no drift geology recorded (British Geological Survey 2016). The PDA is centred on grid reference TL 22144918.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The following is a summary of the information collated in the heritage statement (Albion 2016a).

Two isolated findspots, a Neolithic axehead (HER 18579) and an Iron Age coin (HER 18694), are recorded near Chapel Street. The line of a Roman road from Bedford to Cockayne Hatley and on to Wimpole was identified by the Viatores project (HER 738, Viatores no. 224). However, most of the Viatores roads have since been discounted due to the lack of reliable evidence (Simco 1984).



Several manors are recorded within the parish of Potton in the Domesday Survey of 1086. The largest of these, Potton Manor, also called Potton Regis, was held by Countess Judith, a niece of William the Conqueror. It was assessed at ten hides and accommodated 18 villagers and 13 smallholders with land for 12 ploughlands, meadow and a water mill¹. The location of the manor has been lost but there is a possibility that the site of several earthworks to the south of Potton (HER 10802) could be a possible manorial site.

The rights to hold markets and fairs within the town belonged to the lord of the principal manor. A weekly market was first mentioned in 1202, when the market day was changed. A churchyard of St Swithin, which apparently fronted onto the east side of the marketplace, was referred to in 1373. This chapel may have been founded at the same time as the planned development of the market. A large part of Potton town centre was destroyed by fire in 1783 (see below); nevertheless, it became the principal market town of east Bedfordshire during the 18th century, overshadowed by Biggleswade only with the advent of the railways in the Victorian era. In the late 19th century Potton was a main centre of the coprolite extraction industry as well as being an important market gardening town.

Geophysical evidence for medieval ridge and furrow (HER 19801) has been recorded to the east of Biggleswade Road to the south of Potton, adjacent to an area of rectilinear earthworks (HER 10802), probably close boundaries and building platforms. Archaeological investigations revealed medieval boundary ditches, possibly away from any settlement focus. However a number of pits with substantial amounts of pottery as well as horn core and slag were also excavated, suggesting some degree of settlement activity in the vicinity (EBD 146, 1146 and 1147). Further recent investigation of HER 10802 has found evidence of medieval occupation including possible industrial activity (M. Oake pers. comm.)

Investigations at Myers Road (HER 3551) on the northern edge of the town revealed a complex of pits and ditches representing a series of enclosures, dating from the Saxo-Norman to the post-medieval period.

No medieval heritage assets have yet been recorded close to the site. A small number of evaluations within Potton and on its edges have revealed medieval, post-medieval and modern boundary ditches and several groupings of pits. It is likely that Chapel Street formed the western extent of medieval Potton, so that the site may have been located on the edge of the town.

The historic environment of Potton is almost exclusively post-medieval. The 'Great Fire of Potton' which broke out in 1783 destroyed half the town within four hours, in particular all of the large houses, wool stores, stables and barns around the market square. The Great Fire was also held responsible for the decline of the weekly Saturday market (Page 1908). The town was re-built after the fire. The resultant large number of Georgian houses around the

¹ <http://opendomesday.org/place/TL2249/potton/>



market square and in the town centre gives Potton a unique and unified look and feel.

Chapel Street is part of a planned, rectangular layout of streets to the west of the Market Square of Potton. Buildings on Chapel Street all date from the early 19th to early 20th century, forming a near continuous historic street frontage.

Map evidence shows that the no. 7 Chapel Street was not built upon until the late 19th century. The 1882 OS map shows a number of small buildings or sheds on the site, which may be part of the larger school complex occupying the southern half of Chapel Street (then called Back Street). Now, no. 7 Chapel Street is the end building of a yellow gault brick terrace with bay windows; it was built before 1926 when it is first shown on Ordnance Survey mapping. The outbuilding proposed for demolition is contemporary with the main house.

1.4 Project Objectives and Research Aims

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 were present within the application site;
- integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that were present within the application site.
- nature of palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

The evaluation provides the information needed to assess the potential archaeological impact of the proposed development and thus assist in the formulation of any mitigation measures that might be required.

More specifically, the site had the potential to preserve archaeological remains that might date to the medieval and post-medieval periods. The investigations might therefore address a number of research objectives identified in the research framework for Bedfordshire (Oake et al. 2007) and the revised framework for the East of England (Medlycott 2011).

The local research framework for Bedfordshire states that very little is known about the county's small towns. Basic work on their origins and development is required in order to understand their socio-economic role in a wider county and regional context (Oake 2007, 14).

The specific objectives of the investigation were to determine:

- whether the site contained evidence for the extent and character of medieval occupation on the western edge of the town;
- whether there were any medieval archaeological remains, most likely in the form of 'back yard' activity;
- whether there were any remains of the buildings that previously stood on the site and their function.



2. METHODOLOGY

A full methodology is provided in the WSI (Albion 2016b).

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).
• Bedford Museum	<i>Procedure for Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition with Registered Museums in Bedfordshire. Version 2.8</i> (2010).
• ClfA	<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)

Trial trenching took place on 13th October 2016. One trench measuring 10m long and 2m wide was excavated within the footprint of the proposed new building.

The trench was opened by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket, operated by an experienced driver under close archaeological supervision. The machine excavation ceased at the top of undisturbed geological deposits. Trench sections and the base were cleaned by hand in order to reveal any potential archaeological remains. All recording was carried out by experienced Albion staff. The spoil heaps were also scanned for artefacts.

Any potential archaeological deposits were investigated and recorded using Albion Archaeology's *pro forma* sheets. Trench 1 was subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate. All deposits were recorded using a unique number sequence, commencing at 100; context numbers in round brackets refer to layers (**). The trench was inspected by the CBCA prior to its backfilling.



3. RESULTS

3.1 *Introduction*

Deposits revealed are described below and shown in Figure 2. Any artefacts recovered are referenced in the text. No archaeological features were present in the trench.

Detailed contextual information on deposits can be found in the Appendix.

3.2 *Overburden and Geological Deposits*

The trench revealed a dark grey deposit of sandy silt topsoil that was 0.32–0.38m thick and was underlain by up to 0.34m of mid orange-brown silty sand subsoil. The combined thickness of overburden was 0.60–0.72m, increasing towards the east.

Topsoil (100) yielded a single sherd (49g) of a modern plant pot rim (discarded after recording) and a late medieval jar rim (33g) of Everton-type reduced ware (210mm diameter). Subsoil (101) produced an abraded body sherd (22g) of buff-grey cored sandy ware as well as a bowl rim (240mm diameter) fragment (16g) in coarse sand fabric; both pottery fragments are datable to the 12th–13th century.

The undisturbed geological stratum comprised mid brown-orange and yellow sand with occasional small-medium stone inclusions.

3.3 *Archaeological Remains*

No archaeological features or deposits were found within the trial trench.



4. CONCLUSIONS

The absence of archaeological features and deposits within the trial trench suggests the archaeological potential of the site of the new building is extremely low.

The presence of pottery sherds in the subsoil dating to the 12th–13th century indicates medieval activity in the area but not necessarily in the immediate vicinity of the site. This activity is likely to be agricultural in origin, located on the outskirts of the settlement core.

The results of the evaluation indicate that further investigation of the site of the new building is unlikely to yield data that would contribute to our knowledge of the development of medieval and post-medieval Potton.



5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Albion Archaeology 2016a. *7 Chapel Street, Potton, Bedfordshire: Heritage Statement*. Report no: 2016/10, version 1.0.
- Albion Archaeology 2016b. *7 Chapel Street, Potton, Bedfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Field Evaluation*. Report no: 2016/86, version 1.2.
- British Geological Survey 2016. *Geology of Britain Viewer*. [Online]. Available at: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> [Accessed: 14th October 2016]
- Central Bedfordshire 2009. *Core Strategy and Development Management Policies*.
- DCLG 2012. *National Planning Policy Framework*.
- Medlycott, M. 2011. *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England*. EAA Occasional Papers 24.
- Oake, M., Luke, M., Dawson, M., Edgeworth, M. and Murphy, P. 2007. *Bedfordshire Archaeology. Research and Archaeology: Resource Assessment, Research Agenda and Strategy*. Bedfordshire Archaeology Monograph 9.
- Page, W. 1908. 'Parishes: Potton', in *A History of the County of Bedford: Volume 2*, ed. William Page (London, 1908), pp. 237-242 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/beds/vol2/pp237-242> [Accessed: 17th October 2016]
- Simco, A. 1984. *Survey of Bedfordshire in the Roman Period*. Bedfordshire County Council, RCHM.



6. APPENDIX: CONTEXT DETAILS

Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 10.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.6 m. Max: 0.72 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL22142/49182

OS Grid Ref.: TL22152/49180

Reason: To evaluate archaeological potential prior to construction of garage.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Topsoil	Friable dark grey sandy silt occasional small-medium CBM, occasional small-medium stones And frequent rooting activity. Between 0.32-0.38m thick deposit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
101	Subsoil	Friable mid orange brown silty sand occasional small-medium stones And moderate rooting activity. Between 0.28-0.34m thick deposit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
102	Natural	Friable mid brown orange sand occasional small-medium stones With grey-yellow pockets. Occasional rooting activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

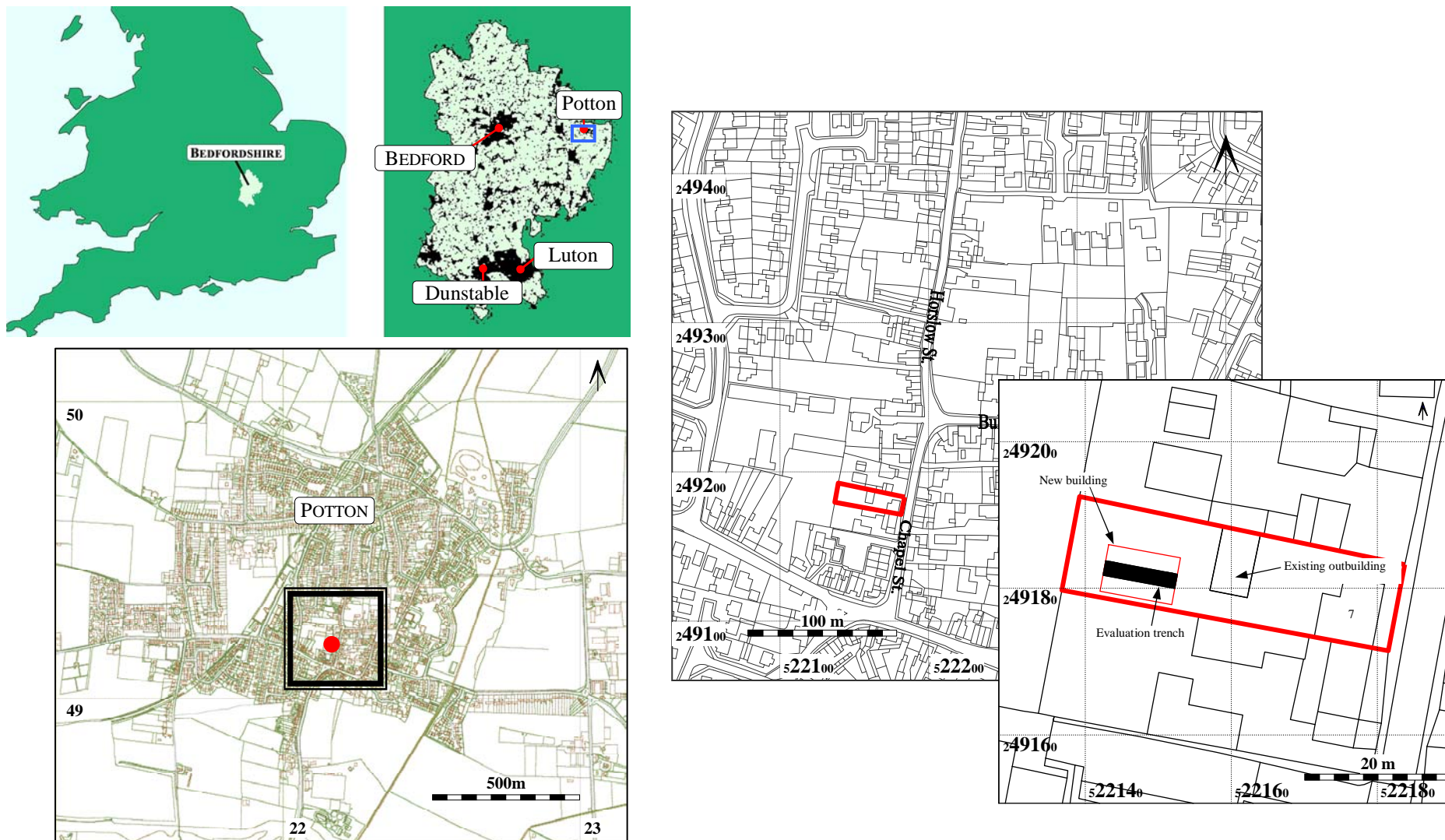
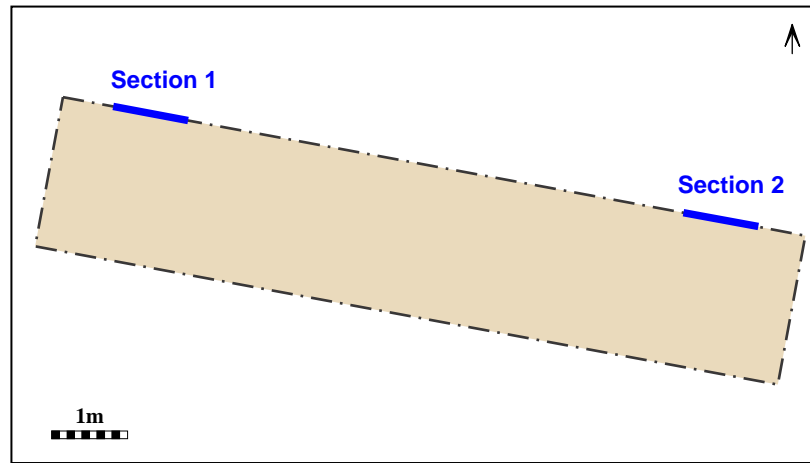


Figure 1: Site location

This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Central Bedfordshire Council. Licence No. 100049029 (2011)



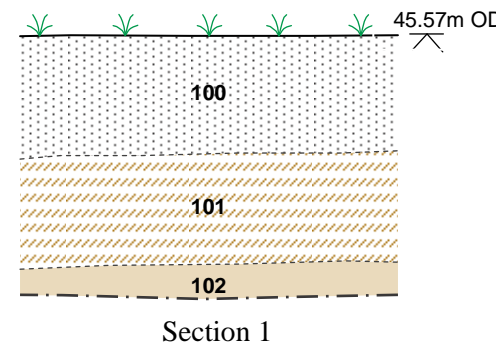
Trench 1: looking south-west. Scale 1m



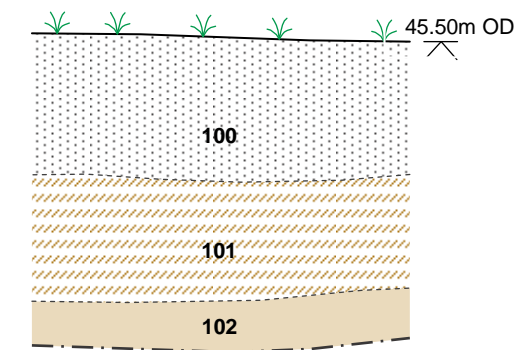
Trench 1 looking north-east. Scale 1m



Trench 1: looking east. Scale 1m



Section 1



Section 2



Figure 2: Trenching results with selected sections and photographs

Central
Bedfordshire

Albion
archaeology



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

Telephone 0300 300 8141
Email office@albion-arch.com
www.albion-arch.com

