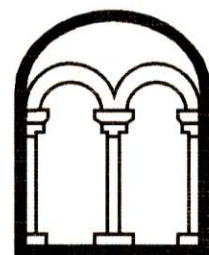


**49-57 CASTLE STREET  
LUTON  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL STRIP, MAP  
AND SAMPLE EXCAVATION,  
ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION**

**Albion**  
archaeology



**49-57 CASTLE STREET  
LUTON  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL STRIP, MAP  
AND SAMPLE EXCAVATION,  
ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION**

Document: 2017/117  
Version 1.0

Project: CS3093  
HER search reference: 201617/263  
Luton Culture entry no: LTNMG 1266  
OASIS no: albionar1-273114

Compiled by	Approved by
Ben Barker	Drew Shotliff

25th July 2017

Produced for:  
Key Partnership Homes Ltd



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## Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete a project design as possible. 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 monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Martin Oake, Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist. The fieldwork was undertaken by Ben Barker (Project Officer). This report has been prepared by Ben Barker. The figures have been produced by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

## Version History

Version	Issue date	Reason for re-issue
1.0	25/07/2017	n/a

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## Key Terms

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

Albion	Albion Archaeology
LBC	Luton Borough Council
CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
Client	Key Partnership Homes Ltd
DA	Development area
HER	Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record
LPA	Local Planning Authority
Procedures Manual	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> , 2nd edn, 2001
	Albion Archaeology
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation





## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Planning permission was granted by Luton Borough Council for the construction of new affordable housing, including 68 flats with parking spaces and gardens, following demolition of a former car showroom at 49-57 Castle Street, Luton, Bedfordshire (16/00528/FUL)*

*The development area (DA) lies within an area of historical settlement, close to the site of an early 12th-century castle. As a result, the development could have impacted on potential below-ground archaeological remains and, therefore, a condition (no. 23) was attached to the planning consent.*

*The Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist directed that the work required to address the condition should comprise a programme of archaeological strip, map and sample (following demolition), followed by post-excavation analysis and publication. This document presents the results of the archaeological work undertaken to address the archaeological condition.*

*The groundworks took place in March 2017. They comprised ground reduction within the footprints of the new buildings and the excavation of a T-shaped trench across the central car park area.*

*The investigation revealed evidence for limited truncation across the whole site and some more severe, localised truncation resulting from the construction of underground fuel tanks, foundations and services. Whilst it is possible that shallower archaeological remains were destroyed by the construction of the former garage premises, any substantial archaeological features should have survived.*

*However, no significant archaeological remains were revealed within the DA, suggesting that the castle of Robert de Waudari did not extend into the site. The DA did not contain archaeological remains with the potential to contribute to local and regional research objectives.*

*The project archives will be deposited with Luton Culture (entry no. LTNMG 1266). Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-273114) in accordance with the guidelines issued by Historic England and the Archaeology Data Service.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 **Project Background**

Planning permission was granted by Luton Borough Council (LBC) for the construction of new affordable housing, including 68 flats with parking spaces and gardens, following demolition of a former car showroom at 49-57 Castle Street, Luton, Bedfordshire (16/00528/FUL).

The development area (DA) lies within an area of historic settlement, close to the site of an early 12th-century castle. As a result, the development could have had an impact on potential below-ground archaeological remains and, therefore, a condition (no. 23) was attached to the planning consent:

*No development shall take place until a written scheme of archaeological investigation; that includes post excavation analysis and publication, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development hereby approved shall only be implemented in full accordance with the approved archaeological scheme.*

*Reason: To record and advance understanding of the archaeological resource which will be unavoidably affected as a consequence of the development. To accord with the objectives of Policy ENV6 of the Luton Local Plan.*

The Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA) (archaeological advisor to the LPA) stated that the work required to address the condition should comprise a programme of archaeological strip, map and sample (following demolition), followed by post-excavation analysis and publication.

Albion Archaeology prepared a written scheme of investigation (Albion 2017), setting out how the condition would be addressed. The WSI was approved in advance of the fieldwork by the CBCA. This document presents the results of the archaeological observations undertaken to address the archaeological condition.

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

The DA is located at TL 09207 20821 (Figure 1) within the New Town area of Luton, around 500m south of the town centre. It encompasses an area of approximately 0.3ha between Union Street and Holly Street.

The DA formerly contained a car showroom, fronting onto Castle Street to the west, with a garage and workshop to the rear. An area of hard-standing, formerly car parking, occupied the eastern part of the site, with gated accesses to Union Street and Holly Street to the north and south, respectively.



Where not occupied by buildings the DA was relatively flat, at a height of *c.* 120m OD. It is located on glaciofluvial Sand and Gravel, overlying Holywell Nodular Chalk and New Pit Chalk Formation<sup>1</sup>.

### **1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background**

The DA's archaeological and historical background, specifically within a 500m-radius study area, was discussed in a heritage statement produced in support of the planning application (ULAS 2016). In preparation of the WSI an updated search of the HER was carried out (ref.: 201617/263). The most salient information from both sources is reproduced below.

#### **1.3.1 Prehistoric (before AD 43)**

The HER data for the study area contains a single entry for the prehistoric period (HER186). A small quantity of prehistoric pottery and worked flint were found during the castle excavations at Castle Street (EBD186), less than 100m to the east of the DA, between 2002 and 2005. This included material dated to the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age through to the late Iron Age.

#### **1.3.2 Roman (AD 43–410)**

The Castle Street excavations (EBD186) also produced a small amount of residual Roman pottery. However, more substantial quantities of Roman building debris and pottery (HER10599) were found during excavations at Vicarage Street in 1976 (EBD1438), *c.* 450m north-east of the study area. Other finds that may be indicative of Roman occupation include a Roman puddingstone quern (HER1979), found *c.* 450m south-east of the DA.

'Stray' Roman finds within the area are represented by a bronze coin of Augustus (HER1516), dated to 31 BC–AD 14, found *c.* 480m east of the DA; and a bronze coin of Domitian (HER1977), dated to AD 81–96, found *c.* 500m to the west of the DA.

A possible Roman kiln (HER205) was found on a site in Waller Street by workmen in 1908, *c.* 430m north of the DA. It was constructed from fused Roman tile; however, it was found in association with large amounts of medieval pottery suggesting that the structure may have simply re-used Roman building material.

#### **1.3.3 Anglo-Saxon (410–1066)**

It is likely that the town of Luton was first settled in Saxon times and the place-name itself is Old English, meaning 'farmstead on the banks of the River Lea'. It is recorded in Domesday Book (1086) as 'Loitune' and until AD 1100 the manor was held by the Crown (VCH 1908). It is likely that the settlement was located at least 150m to the north of the DA, within the historic medieval core of Luton (HER16993).

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<sup>1</sup> Contains British Geological Survey materials © NERC 2016



A possible sunken-featured building and a sherd of Saxon pottery were identified during redevelopment work in Luton town centre (HER11950), c. 450m to the north of the DA.

### 1.3.4 Medieval (1066–1550)

The most relevant HER entry for the DA is the site of the medieval motte-and-bailey castle of Robert de Waudari (HER186) (Figure 2). It is thought to have been sited immediately to the south-west of the DA and to have given rise to the name, Castle Street. It was built outside the medieval town in 1139 on the strategically important south-western approach and was demolished in 1154. Archaeological investigations in 2002 (EBD186) and 2004/2005 (EBD1065) on each side of Castle Street recorded two parts of a substantial ditch, which had previously been noted between Holly Street and Kelvin Close in 1963. This feature is likely to have been the ditch that once surrounded the motte-and-bailey castle.

The DBA states that: “the position of the castle seems to have been preserved by the place-name of Castle Street and documentary evidence refers to a castle ditch as forming part of a boundary plot in the area. Where Matalan now stands, opposite the Castle Street section of the assessment area, stood a large house known as Holly Lodge, which was later replaced by a single-storey building. This stood on top of a mound, believed to be the remains of the castle mound. The site here was slowly incorporated into the Luton Bus Depot and the mound levelled. This mound or motte would have been surrounded by a large ditch and bank incorporating a large courtyard or bailey” (ULAS 2016, 8).

The site of a second castle is located c. 400m to the north-east of the DA. Faulke de Breaute’s Castle (HER 185) was built in 1221. According to the HER, the castle covered most of the area between St Mary’s Church to the north and Lea Road to the south, with the River Lea at its eastern end and St Ann’s Road to the west. The castle was subsequently demolished and the Court House built in the southern corner of its former site.

St Mary’s parish churchyard (HER8926) is located c. 450m to the north-east of the DA. Excavations on the outskirts of the current boundary found early inhumations suggesting that it may have been larger in the medieval period (Albion Archaeology 2009).

Place-name evidence for another possible bailey is recorded c. 400m south-east of the DA. ‘Bailey Hill’ (HER12370) is noted on a map and award of 1842. The HER notes that this close was built over by part of Newtown, including Cowper Street and Baker Street.

Medieval pottery (HER1948), dating to the 13th to 15th centuries, was recovered from the site of the former Technical College during building works in the 1930s and 1950s, c. 375m to the north-east of the DA.



### 1.3.5 Post-medieval (1550–1900)

The ULAS report (2016, 9) identifies four potentially significant post-medieval entries within the HER: a 16th-century vessel found in George Street, 350 north of the DA (HER2817); the sites of two foundries (HER2897 and HER10820), 300m to south-west and 300m north-east; and a lime kiln (HER12373) on London Road, 400m south-west of the site.

There are also a number of disused burial grounds that have post-medieval origins: a Baptist Burial Ground at Park Street (HER9012); a Friends' Burial Ground on Castle Street (HER8928); the Wesleyan Burial Ground on Chapel Street (HER9011) to the north of the DA; and the Ebenezer Chapel Burial Ground on Dumfries Street/Windsor Walk (HER19555) c.350m to the west.

Archaeological excavations at Chapel Street in 2014, c. 250m to the north-west of the DA, revealed that the ground had been severely truncated by 19th-century building foundations (HER 20064).

The existing A6 trunk road from Bedford to Luton (HER19561) was turnpiked following an Act of Parliament in 1727. It follows the current line of Castle Street, immediately to the west of the DA, and is likely to have heavily influenced the development of this part of Luton.

### 1.3.6 Modern (1900-present day)

Potentially significant modern HER entries include a WWII air raid shelter on George Street (HER17934), c. 350m to the north of the DA.

## 1.4 Project Objectives

The primary function of the archaeological investigations was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any archaeological remains in their cultural and environmental setting. Together with the production of an assessment report/publication that fully describes the archaeological works and findings, this will define the value of the archaeological remains.

To achieve the above, the data collected during the fieldwork aimed to determine the following:

1. the date, nature and extent of any activity or occupation within the development site;
2. the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
3. the local environmental conditions (through the recovery of palaeo-environmental remains).

In addition to the primary aims of the fieldwork, wider research objectives were formulated based upon the archaeological remains expected and these were linked to existing research strategies. Details of the national and regional research frameworks are set out in the WSI (Albion 2017).



The proposed development had the potential to reveal archaeological remains associated with the medieval and post-medieval settlement of Luton and its historical environs. This was most likely to be in the form of backfilled ditches and pits, potentially associated with domestic, industrial, or military activities.

The specific objectives of the investigation were to produce data that could address the following research areas:

- Presence/extent and character of the castle of Robert de Waudari;
- Medieval and post-medieval development and expansion of Luton;
- Medieval and post-medieval industrial/manufacturing activities in the area.



## 2. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach to the project is summarised below. A full methodology is provided in the WSI (Albion 2017).

### 2.1 *Methodological 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 ed., 2001).
• CI/A	<i>Charter and by-law; Code of conduct</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> (2014)
• EAA	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment PPN3: Archaeological Excavation</i> (2015)
• Historic England	Archaeology Guidelines and Standards <sup>2</sup> ;
	<i>The MoRPHE Project Managers Guide</i> (2015)
• Luton Culture	<i>Procedures for preparing archaeological archives for deposition with Luton Culture</i> (2013)

The project archives will be deposited with Luton Culture (entry no. LTNMG 1266). Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-273114) in accordance with the guidelines issued by Historic England and the Archaeology Data Service.

### 2.2 *Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavation and Recording Methodology*

The groundworks took place between 2nd and 8th March 2017 following the demolition of all the buildings on the DA. The demolition had left the site at the level of the existing central car park (c. 118.5m OD), although several fuel and effluent tanks had been removed. An ‘anti-traveller’ ditch had been dug across the Holly Street entrance.

The archaeological strip comprised the removal of the overburden to the top of archaeological deposits or the top of natural geological deposits, whichever was encountered first, within the footprints of the new buildings (Figure 3). All ground reduction was undertaken by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket and operated by an experienced driver under the supervision of an

<sup>2</sup> Historic England guidelines on a number of specialist fields and materials, including environmental archaeology, are available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/advice-and-guidance/>.



archaeologist. The site was subject to monitoring visits by the CBCA on 6th and 8th March 2017.

With the written consent CBCA, it was agreed that the remaining part of the site, which was unlikely to be heavily impacted by the development, could be sampled by a T-shaped trench. The location and extent of this trench (also shown on Figure 3) was determined by the remaining available space within the DA, avoiding spoil heaps and demolition rubble.

### **2.3 Publication Methodology**

In light of the lack of significant archaeological remains within the open areas and the trench it was agreed by the CBCA on 8th March 2017 that no further archaeological fieldwork was necessary. It was further agreed that the results of the investigation should take the form of a 'client report' — in accordance with Section 3.3.3 of the WSI (Albion 2017, 16).





### 3. RESULTS

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#### 3.1 Introduction

The extents of the Areas investigated are shown on Figure 3 with representative photographs on Figures 4 and 5. All deposits revealed are summarised below. Context numbers in round brackets refer to fills or layers (\*\*\*)).

#### 3.2 Overburden and Geological Deposits

The footprints of the proposed buildings were covered with a 0.2–0.5m-thick layer comprising a mix of demolition rubble and made ground (101), associated with the clearance of the previous buildings. This layer generally comprised a mix of mid grey-brown silty clay and sandy silt, with occasional fragments of brick rubble.

The underlying undisturbed geological deposits (102) comprised light yellow-brown clayey sand with frequent flint inclusions.

#### 3.3 Area 1

The stripped building footprint that fronted on to Holly Street measured approximately 32m by 20m (Figure 4). It was covered by a thin layer (*c.* 0.2m) of disturbed ground (101). The geological horizon (102) was largely undisturbed and did not display evidence of significant truncation. No archaeological features were identified other than modern disturbance.

The majority of the modern disturbance was located towards the south-east and comprised modern drainage. The north-western part of the area exhibited traces of features associated with the use of the site as a garage, including brick-lined pits, manholes and drainage trenches. Disturbance associated with a probable geotechnical pit was also identified in the north-west corner.

#### 3.4 Area 2

The stripped building footprint that fronted on to Castle Street measured approximately 17m by 13m (Figure 4). It was much more heavily disturbed and was covered by a 0.5m-thick layer of disturbed ground (101). No undisturbed geological deposits were visible in the northern half of the area where the ground had been truncated by a storage tank that was at least 3m deep.

A smaller tank was located in the south of the area, but generally this half of the footprint was less heavily disturbed. No archaeological features were identified other than modern disturbance. The geological horizon was a yellow-brown clayey sand with frequent flint inclusions (101).

#### 3.5 Area 3

Area 3 comprised the footprint of the proposed building that fronted on to Union Street. It was excavated in two parts, due to the need to maintain the



site access (Figure 5). The main area (Area 3a) measured c. 20m by 16m and lay to the north-west of the site entrance. Area 3b was located to the south-east and measured c. 19m by 5m. The 6m-wide access track was left *in situ*. Approximately 0.2m of overburden (101) was removed in order to expose the undisturbed geological horizon.

A large area in the south-east corner of Area 3a had been impacted by a fuel tank that was at least 5m by 10m in plan. Other disturbance within this area included modern services, specifically trenches for water, telecoms and drainage. Towards the frontage of the plot traces of shallow, 19th/early 20th-century building foundations survived, although these were at most one brick deep. These foundations extended into Area 3b and are likely to represent the remains of Langley Lodge — shown on the 1880 first edition 25-inch OS map.

### **3.6 T-shaped Trench**

The T-shaped trench was 21m NE-SW and 30m long NW-SE, with both ‘arms’ measuring 2m wide (Figure 5). Approximately 0.2m of overburden (101) was removed to expose a light yellow-brown clayey sand with frequent flint inclusions (102).

The NW-SE arm of the trench was reasonably undisturbed. There were some modern drainage trenches at the south-east end; whilst two large areas of modern disturbance, filled with demolition rubble, were noted at the north-west end. Two darker patches of ground proved, on investigation, to be the product of natural manganese precipitation.

The NE-SW arm of the trench was much more heavily disturbed due to the removal of a fuel tank removal and the presence of modern concrete / brick foundations and a modern brick-lined well.



## 4. CONCLUSIONS

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### 4.1 *Summary of Results*

The relative shallow depth of overburden and absence of an *in situ* topsoil, or subsoil, indicates that the DA has been subject to truncation at some point in its past. This is likely to have occurred in the early 20th century when the DA was turned over to industrial usage. Prior to the 1924 the 25-inch OS map shows that the DA was largely occupied by the grounds of Langley House.

Whilst it is possible that any shallower remains were destroyed by the removal of the topsoil and subsoil, any substantial archaeological features would have survived. It is also likely that (with the exception of the localised impact of services, foundations and fuel tanks) the former buildings did not significantly truncate the underlying geological horizon. Given the relative height of the undisturbed geology and the absence of residual artefacts or ecofacts, it is likely that the DA was not intensively occupied until it was subsumed by expansion of Luton in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Slightly greater truncation was noted in the western part of the DA (Area 2), but this did not exceed 0.5m. The increased truncation in this area is likely to be the result of the Castle Street frontage previously being occupied by a row of terraced properties (including a public house). These structures were later demolished and converted into a garage and car showroom in the 1960s<sup>3</sup>. This area was closest to the putative ditch of the medieval motte-and-bailey castle of Robert de Waudari (HER186) (Figure 2). However, no remains of it or any associated settlement or industrial activity was identified within the DA.

### 4.2 *Significance of Results*

The results of the fieldwork indicate that the DA does not contain archaeological remains with the potential to address local and regional research objectives.

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<sup>3</sup><http://www2.luton.gov.uk/scannedindexcards/Scanned%20Index%20Cards/Castle%20St/49-57%20Castle%20St.png>



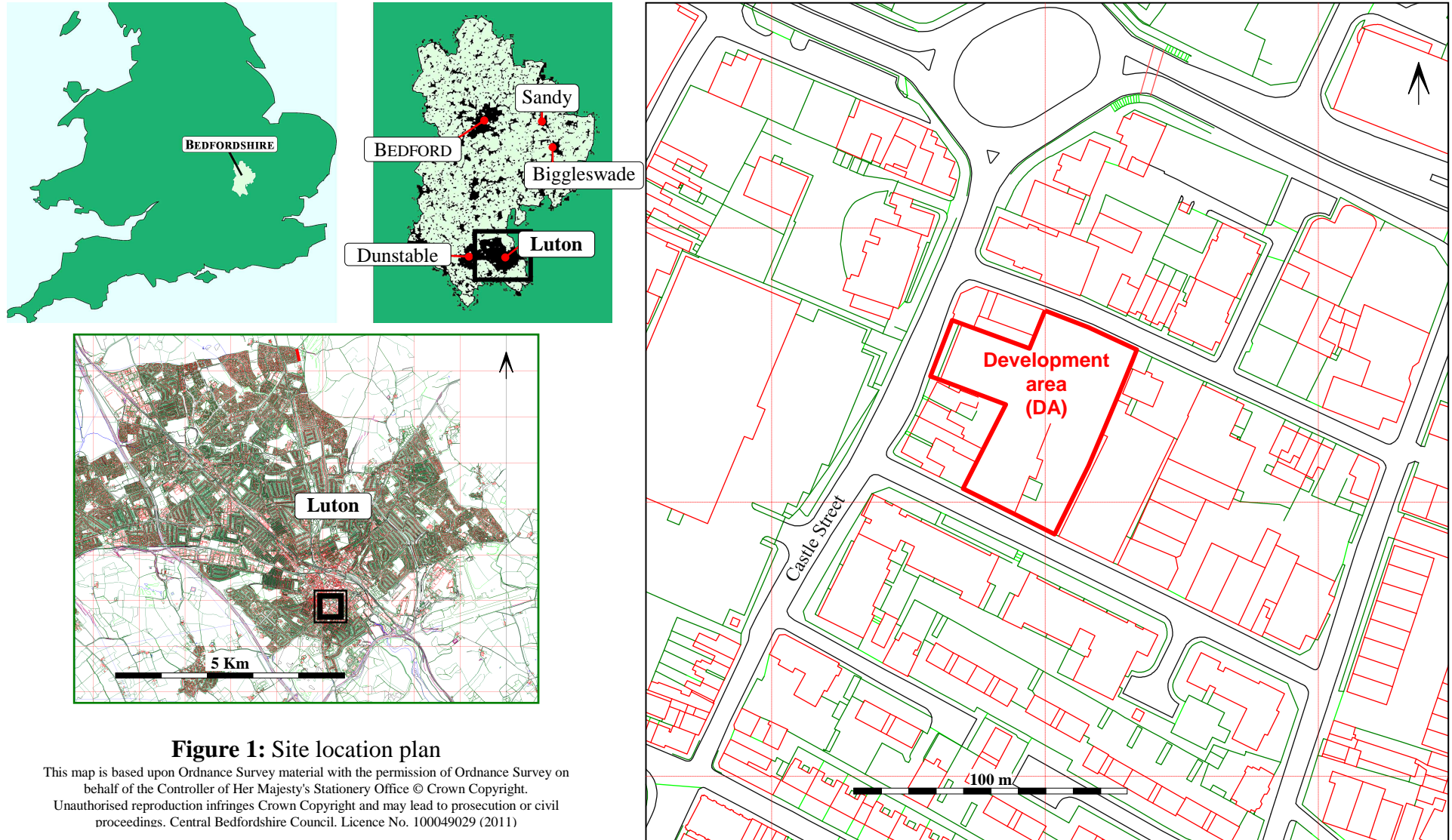
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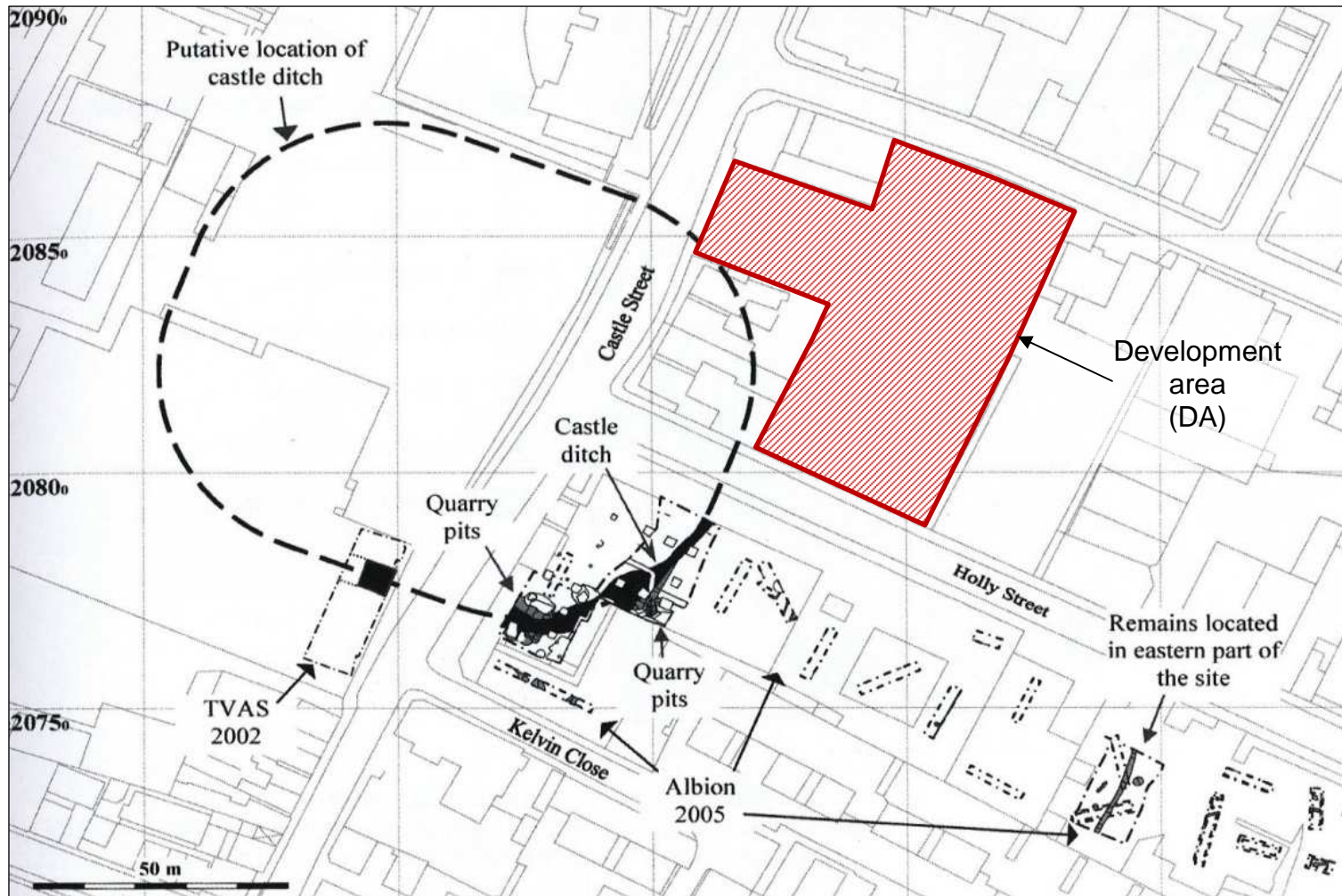
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**Figure 1: Site location plan**

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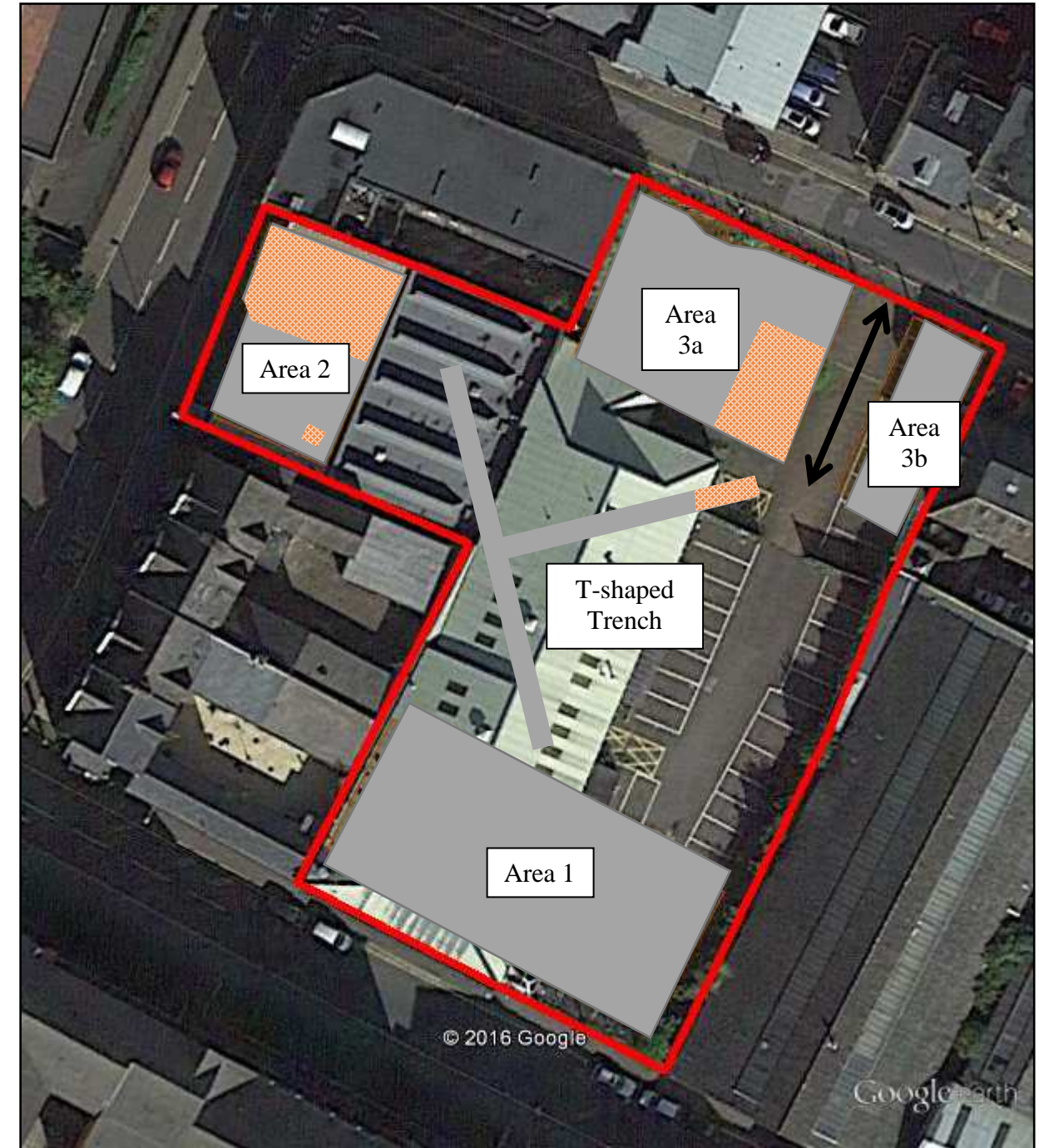




**Figure 2:** Plan of the putative location of the castle ditch and associated archaeological work in relation to the DA (after Abrams and Shottliff 2010)



Development plan  
(MSquare Architects Ltd)



Plan showing stripped areas (in grey) and modern disturbance  
(in orange), over Google Earth aerial photograph

**Figure 3:** Plans showing development impact and extent of archaeological investigation





Area 1- looking SW



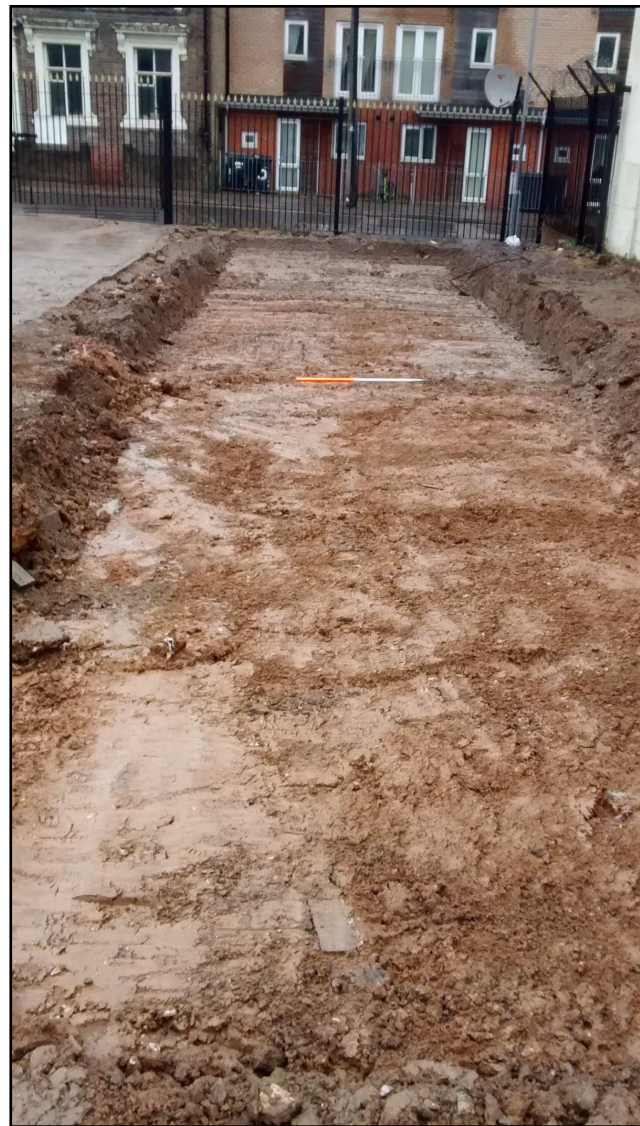
Area 2 - looking NW

**Figure 4:** Panoramic photographs of Area 1 and Area 2





Area 3a - looking NE



Area 3b - looking NE



T-shaped trench - looking NW



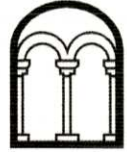
T-shaped trench - looking NE

**Figure 5:** Photographs of Area 3a, Area 3b and the T-shaped trench





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