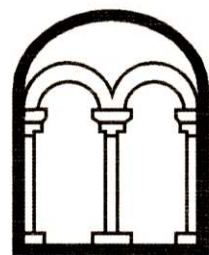


**URSULA TAYLOR LOWER SCHOOL
HIGH STREET
CLAPHAM
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

Albion
archaeology



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

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B. Barker	D Shotliff

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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

The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Geoff Saunders (Bedford Borough Council Archaeologist). The fieldwork was undertaken by Ben Barker (Project Officer). This report has been prepared by Ben Barker. 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
Website: www.albion-arch.com

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Key Terms

The following terms or abbreviations are used throughout this report:

BLARS	Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service
BBC	Bedford Borough Council
BBC AO	Bedford Borough Council Archaeology Officer
CIfA	Chartered Institute <i>for</i> Archaeologists
C of E	Church of England
HER	Bedford Borough Council Historic Environment Record
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

Bedford Borough Council submitted a planning application (16/00963/DC3) for the demolition of a temporary two-classroom unit and the provision of a new two-storey, six-classroom building in a different location at Ursula Taylor Lower School, High Street, Clapham, Bedfordshire.

The school is located on the site of the medieval Clapham Manor and adjacent to the Church of St Thomas of Canterbury which has Saxon origins. Previous archaeological investigations within the school grounds and to the north of the school found substantial medieval remains, dating from the 12th century onwards, as well as Iron Age remains.

For this reason the Bedford Borough Council Archaeology Officer advised that a programme of archaeological work should be carried out in advance of construction.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry evaluation by trial trenching, which took place on 25th August 2016. It comprised the excavation of one trench, measuring 22m x 1.8m, positioned diagonally across the footprint of the proposed building. The trial trench revealed layers associated with car park construction directly above natural clay deposits.

Although no archaeological remains were encountered, the evaluation suggested that there had been little modern truncation associated with the former car park and that other areas of the site had the potential to retain in situ archaeological deposits.

Following a drainage design amendment the BBC Archaeological Officer advised that the excavation of a soakaway, located adjacent to the west of the school entrance, should be subject to archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Willmott Dixon Construction Ltd to carry out this work, which was undertaken on the 10th February 2017. The soakaway trench was approximately 8m long by 5m wide and was mechanically excavated under close archaeological observation to a depth of c. 2.2m. No archaeological features, finds or deposits were encountered.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Background*

Bedford Borough Council submitted a planning application (16/00963/DC3) for the demolition of a temporary two-classroom unit and the provision of a new two-storey, six-classroom building in a different location at Ursula Taylor C of E Lower School, High Street, Clapham, Bedfordshire, MK41 6EG.

A heritage statement was submitted as part of the planning application, assessing the impact of the proposed development in terms of its surrounding built heritage environment (Scape Group Ltd 2016).

The school is located on the site of the medieval Clapham Manor and adjacent to the Church of St Thomas of Canterbury, which has Saxon origins. Previous archaeological investigations within the school grounds and to the north of the school found substantial medieval remains, dating from the 12th century onwards, as well as Iron Age remains.

For this reason the Bedford Borough Council Archaeology Officer (BBC AO) advised that a programme of archaeological work should be carried out in advance of construction. This is in accordance with *National Planning Policy Framework – Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment* (March 2012).

The first stage of the programme of work is an archaeological field evaluation, comprising the excavation of a trench located within the area of greatest potential impact. The trench measured 22m x 1.8m, positioned diagonally across the footprint of the proposed building. It revealed layers associated with car park construction directly above natural clay deposits. The evaluation report (Albion 2016) was approved by the BBC AO on 24th November 2016.

Although no archaeological remains were encountered, the evaluation suggested that there had been little modern truncation associated with the former car park and that other areas of the site had the potential to retain in situ archaeological deposits.

Following a drainage design amendment the BBC Archaeological Officer advised that the excavation of a soakaway, located adjacent to the west of the school entrance, should be subject to archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Willmott Dixon Construction Ltd to carry out this work. The fieldwork was undertaken on 10th February 2017 following the approval of a method statement (Albion 2017) by the BBC AO.

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

Clapham is a village located c. 2.5 miles to the north-east of the centre of Bedford on the banks of the River Great Ouse. Ursula Taylor Lower School lies in between residential development on the northern side of Clapham High Street



(Figure 1). The Church of St Thomas of Canterbury lies adjacent to the school in the north-east and the field and farm buildings of Church Farm lie to its north.

Clapham lies on low, level ground in the valley of the Great Ouse adjacent to the river. The school site is at a height of *c.* 35m OD and is centred on grid reference TL 0328 5246. The underlying geology comprises Stoke Goldington Member And Felmersham Member Sand And Gravel (formed in the local environment previously dominated by rivers) over Kellaways Formation - Sandstone, Siltstone And Mudstone bedrock.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The archaeological background to the site is presented in depth in the archaeological evaluation report (Albion 2016).

The trial trench investigation in 2016 did not to identify any archaeological remains within the footprint of the new build. However, the school is located on the site of the medieval Clapham Manor and adjacent to the Church of St Thomas of Canterbury, which has Saxon origins. Previous archaeological investigations within the school grounds and to the north of the school found substantial settlement remains, dating from the 12th century onwards, as well as Iron Age remains.

1.4 Project Objectives

The principal purpose of the Archaeological Observation, Investigation, and Recording was to gather information on possible sub-surface archaeological heritage assets impacted by the construction of the soakaway.

The ‘watching brief’ endeavoured to determine:

- the date, nature, and extent of any archaeological impacted by the works;
- the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;
- the potential of any palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.



2. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach to the project is summarised below. A full methodology is provided in the Method Statement (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 edn, 2003).
• Bedford Borough Council	<i>Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedford</i> (ver. 2.8, 2010)
• 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)
• 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</i> , (2nd edn, 2011)

The project archive will be deposited at The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford (accession number BEDFM: 2016.43). Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-277247) in accordance with the guidelines issued by English Heritage and the Archaeology Data Service.

2.2 Observation, Investigation and Recording

The excavation of the soakaway took place on 10th February 2017. It comprised the excavation of one trench, measuring c. 8m x 5m x 2.2m deep, positioned within a grassed area to the west of the school car park entrance, centred on TL 03272 52389 (Figure 2).

The trench was opened by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket, operated by an experienced driver under close archaeological observation. All observation and recording was carried out by an experienced Albion staff member. Any potential archaeological features were investigated by hand where safe access was possible. The trench was drawn and photographed as appropriate.



3. RESULTS

3.1 *Introduction*

All deposits revealed within the trial trench are summarised below and shown on Figure 2. No context numbers were assigned due to the absence of archaeological features or deposits.

3.2 *Overburden and Geological Deposits*

The topsoil comprised dark grey-brown sandy silt, c.0.4m thick; its thickness increased to the south of soakaway to where it appeared to be banked-up against the school perimeter wall.

The subsoil comprised friable dark brown-grey sandy silt, c. 0.4m thick, with frequent small-medium, sub-rounded, stone inclusions.

Undisturbed geological deposits were encountered at a depth of between 0.6m and 1m below ground level. These deposits comprised mid yellowish-brown sandy gravel. Occasional darker patches of sand and gravel, associated with periglacial ice-wedge formations, were visible during excavation; all were V-shaped in profile and sterile of finds.



4. CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological features or deposits were present within the limited extent of the footprint of the soakaway. Although the area had undoubtedly been subject to reworking associated with landscaping of the school playing field, there was no evidence to suggest that the ground had been subject to any substantial truncation.

The preservation of periglacial frost wedges within the soil profile suggests that there was the potential for any substantial archaeological remains to survive had they existed in this area at a level below that of the subsoil.



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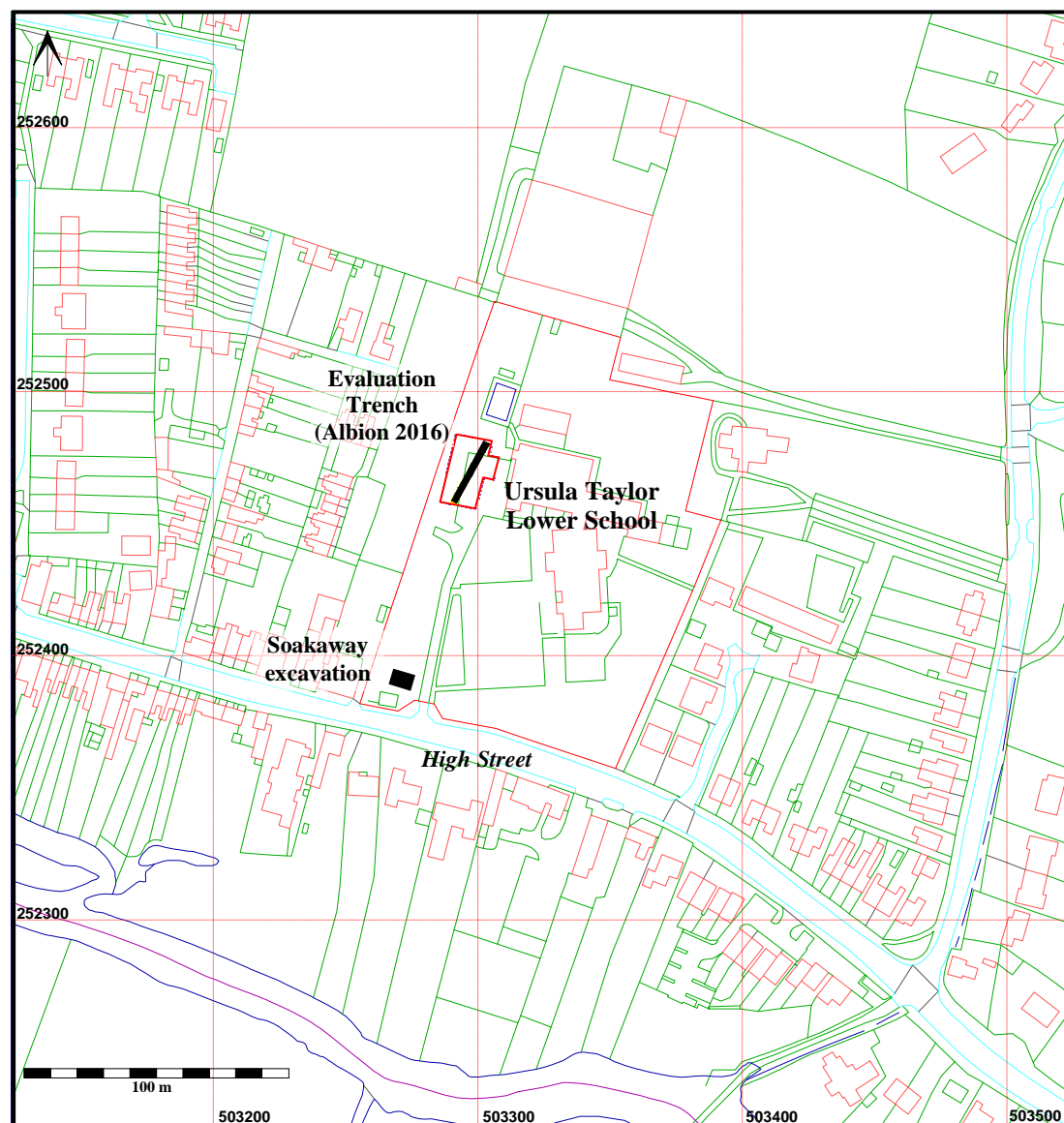
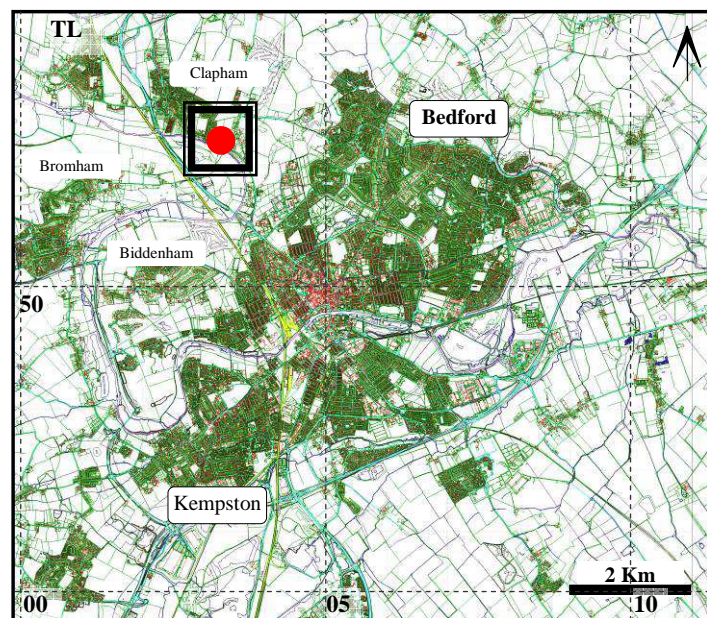
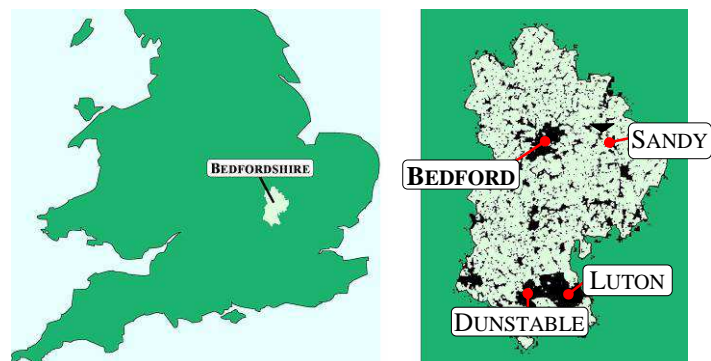
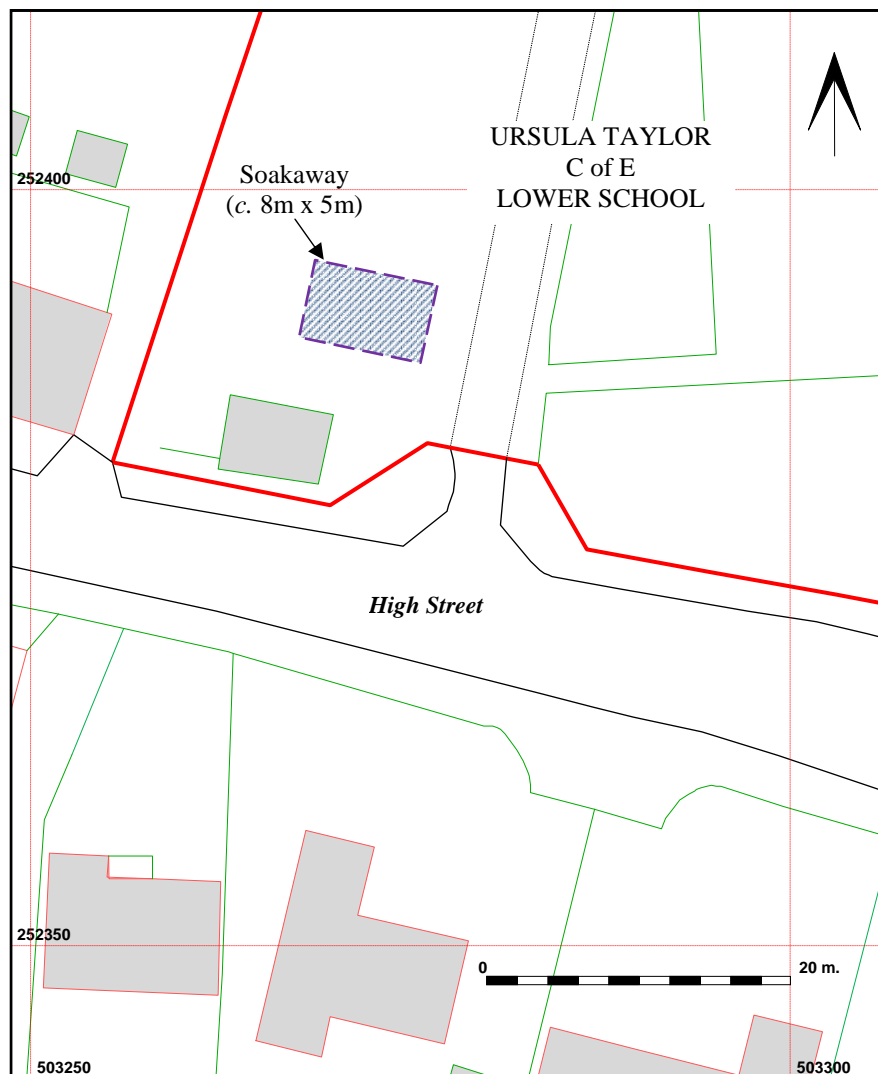


Figure 1: Site location

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Photograph
showing
excavation of the
soakaway in plan
(looking N,
2m scale in
background)



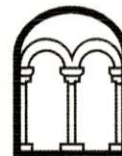
Photograph
showing the
soakaway at its
final depth and
southern baulk
soil profile
(looking SSE)

Figure 2: Trench plan and photographs

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**Central
Bedfordshire**

Albion
archaeology



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

Telephone 01234 294000
Email office@albion-arch.com
www.albion-arch.com

