## STEM BUILDING UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE LUTON

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION, INVESTIGATION, RECORDING, ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION

Albion archaeology





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#### Preface

All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and was prepared solely for the benefit of the client. The material contained in this report does not necessarily stand on its own and should not be relied upon by any third party. This document should not be used for any other purpose without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and the prior written authority of Albion Archaeology (a trading unit of Central Bedfordshire Council). Any person/party relying on the document for such other purposes agrees and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Albion Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Albion Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the persons/party by whom it was commissioned. This document is limited by the state of knowledge at the time it was written.

#### **Acknowledgements**

The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Martin Oake, Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist. Fieldwork was undertaken by Mark Phillips (Project Officer). This report has been prepared by Mark Phillips with figures produced by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

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1.0	23/11/2017	n/a

### Key Terms

The following terms or abbreviations are used throughout this report:

Albion	Albion Archaeology
BARS	Bedfordshire Archives and Records Service
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
HER	Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



## Non-Technical Summary

Planning permission (16/01303/FUL) was granted for the demolition of an existing building and erection of a four-storey academic building at Park Street, Luton on the University of Bedfordshire campus. Permission (17/01425/FUL) was also granted for the erection of a temporary construction crane on 41-43 Park Street, Luton.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to prepare Written Schemes of Investigation for the new building and the crane base and to undertake the archaeological works required as a condition of planning. The archaeological monitoring of groundworks was completed between 16th August and 26th October 2017.

The investigation demonstrated a significant level of modern disturbance associated with former college buildings on the site. In the footprint of the new building, the front of the site and the entire rear half had been truncated by the construction of basements during the 1990s and 1950s respectively. In the remaining 15m-wide strip between the two basements some degree of modern truncation was evident; the sub-base of the 1990s floor slab lay directly on the geological deposit.

Archaeological features identified in the footprint of the new building consisted of a brick wall (4) and an undated pit [7] that was sealed by a construction layer (6) associated with the wall. The brick wall appears to have been part of an 18th- or 19th-brewery building shown on 19th-century Ordnance Survey maps. The pit contained a mottled green-yellow clay fill and a small amount of badly preserved animal bone. The colour of the fill suggests a possible use as a cess pit.

A large pit [13] identified on the site of the crane base is interpreted as a quarry pit dating from the 18th or 19th century. The 1.9m-deep pit was bounded on its west side by St Ann's Lane. It had been deliberately backfilled with a mixed clay fill that contained fragments of brick (14). Late 19th-century maps show this area covered by buildings.

The investigations did not reveal any further evidence for Fulk de Breauté's castle or any other medieval (or earlier) occupation. The brewery foundations and undated pits are of no more than local significance in terms of the regional research frameworks. The truncation associated with the 20th-century buildings would have removed any earlier archaeological remains within their footprints.

The project archive will be deposited with Luton Culture (entry no. LTNMG 1272) and details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-278113).



#### 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Project Background

Planning permission 16/01303/FUL was granted by Luton Borough Council for the demolition of an existing two-storey building and the erection of a four-storey academic building with additional roof plant enclosure together with associated electricity substation and external landscape works.

Due to the high archaeological potential of the site a condition (no. 5) was attached to the planning consent, requiring the implementation of a scheme of archaeological investigation:

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 by the local planning authority. The said development 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 2001-2011.

This recommendation is in accordance with national planning guidelines in the form of paragraph 141 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF), which requires that developers secure a strategy to record and advance understanding of heritage assets with archaeological interest that will be unavoidably affected as a consequence of development.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by the client to prepare a written scheme of investigation (WSI) for approval by the local planning authority (Albion 2017a) and to undertake the required archaeological works.

A subsequent planning application was made during the course of the project for the erection of a temporary construction crane and retention of site hoarding at 41-43 Park Street. Albion Archaeology was again commissioned to produce a WSI and planning permission 17/01425/FUL contained the following condition (no. 3):

The development hereby permitted shall only be implemented in full accordance with the following document Crane Base for STEM building, University of Bedfordshire, Luton Written Scheme for Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording Analysis & Publication (Albion Archaeology Documents 2017/146 Version 1.0. 14th September 2017).

Reason: To record and advance understanding of the heritage assets with archaeological interest which will be unavoidably affected as a consequence of the development.



This report presents the results of the archaeological works that were carried out during the course of both elements of the construction project.

## 1.2 Site Location and Description

The development site lies in the centre of Luton, centred on grid reference TL 0945 2110; it is part of the University of Bedfordshire campus. The buildings that were demolished comprised a two-storey 1960s structure that fronted onto Park Street and a 1990s former library behind it, which extended along St Ann's Lane. The former dwelling at 41 Park Street was demolished prior to construction of the crane base.

Luton lies on the northern slopes of the Chiltern ridge and the underlying geology in this part of Luton is sand and gravel glaciofluvial drift deposits over Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation and New Pit chalk Formation bedrock (British Geological Survey 2017).

### 1.3 Historical and Archaeological Background

The development site is located within the medieval core of Luton (HER 16993), close to the Church of St Mary (NHLE 1114315), which is 12th-century in origin. The church is said to have been founded in the 10th century, although not necessarily on the same site as the present church. It is supposed to have been moved to its new site in 1121 and there is speculation as to the site of the original Saxon church. It is suggested that the footprint of the original building may be within or very close to that of the present church (Albion Archaeology 2003).

Fulk de Breauté's castle (HER 185), which is one of Luton's two medieval castles, was built in the 1220s; it lies to the immediate south of the development site. The castle stood on the south side of the church and was surrounded by a moat. A substantial mound of earth apparently still covered the area at the beginning of the 20th century. The site of the castle has been subject to several investigations.

Investigations by Albion Archaeology in 2009 (EBD1026) within the University of Bedfordshire Park Square Campus revealed part of the moat of the early 13th-century castle. The partial footprint of a large timber-framed building, broadly dating to the 12th–13th centuries, was revealed within the moated enclosure. Other medieval features included two refuse pits located outside the moated enclosure.

Though historically termed a 'castle', the moated site was also a manorial centre, and a court house was documented on the site until the early 17th century. The moat was still at least partially open during the post-medieval period when its fills appear to have largely been quarried away and a well and pit, likely to be associated with the backyards of properties fronting onto Park Street, were in use. Towards the end of the post-medieval period a children's cemetery was established to the west of the moat.

A further large, early medieval structure and associated features, located within the moated enclosure and therefore associated with the castle site, were excavated in an evaluation in Vicarage Street (EBD1145) in 2011.



From 2013 to 2014 re-development of the University of Bedfordshire's Fairview House necessitated a programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation (EBD1277), revealing further substantial remains of Fulk de Breauté's castle. These comprised another section of the moat, which showed a sequence of initial excavation, followed by accumulation of occupation material relating to use of the castle, followed by demolition material relating to its abandonment. The latter were interpreted as the physical remains of the destruction of the castle in 1224.

The demolition was followed by the construction of a timber trestle bridge, affording access to the interior of the castle complex. A phase of re-cutting followed the demolition of the trestle bridge, after which a dead hedge designed to stop animal and human access to the moat was inserted. Ultimately, the moat became infilled, un-maintained and was abandoned and levelled.

On the town side (exterior of the moat) a series of post-medieval chalk extraction features and ditches were recorded. Within the castle complex, a ditch was recorded running south-east to north-west, alongside a potential remnant of a rammed clay surface. The site was overlain by a relatively deep and protective (for the archaeology) layer of soil. This was truncated in parts by the remains of a 19th-century terrace, which occupied the plot up to the 1970s. Fairview House was constructed over the demolished remains of the Victorian terrace.

Excavations at Lea Road (EBD1149) confirmed the location of the south-west arm of the castle moat. It was revealed to be similar in character to the north-west arm of the moat excavated in 2009 — appearing to be largely filled with deposits that had accumulated during the post-medieval and later periods. Though previous excavations a short distance to the north had revealed features likely to be associated with the use of the castle, no other features associated with the castle were revealed within this site. This may simply be due to the site's close proximity to the edge of the moat — a location unlikely to have been the focus of intensive activity.

A colluvial deposit containing late Neolithic to early Bronze Age worked flint was also revealed. Though these artefacts are likely to have moved some distance from their original place of use and deposition, they do indicate activity of this date in the vicinity.

On the southern side of Park Street, an evaluation (EBD411) revealed little evidence of deposits pre-dating the modern periods as the site had suffered considerable truncation by 19th-century development down to the natural gravels. However, palaeo-environmental evidence showed that the lower bands of gravel were deposited in an alluvial environment in the Quaternary period.

Overall in Luton, the Extensive Urban Survey produced by Albion Archaeology for English Heritage and Bedfordshire County Council (Albion Archaeology 2003) identified that, although medieval deposits had been lost during the development of the town in the 18th and 19th centuries, there is still the potential for medieval deposits to survive. This is confirmed by the extensive remains revealed by the castle excavations.



Known post-medieval heritage assets are the site of a demolished 18th- and 19th-century brewery (HER 12367) on the northern side of St Ann's Lane. This is associated with 'The White House' (HER 18086), an 18th-century house on Park Square that was built alongside the brewery with a garden that extended back as far as the churchyard. The building was demolished in 1908 for Luton Modern School, which in turn was demolished in 1957 for the present University buildings.

## 1.4 Project Objectives

It was recognised that the construction of the 20th-century buildings on the site was likely to have already significantly truncated any archaeological remains that might once have been present. Nonetheless, adjacent investigations had shown that there was potential for Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains to survive within previously developed areas.

The investigations might, therefore, have been able to address a number of research objectives identified in *Bedfordshire Archaeology*. *Research and Archaeology*: *Resource Assessment, Research Agenda and Strategy* (Oake et al. 2007) and *A Revised Framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011).

The research framework for Bedfordshire states that in general very little is known about the towns of Bedfordshire and basic work on their origins and development is required before individual towns (and their role in the economy and society of the county and region) can be understood (Oake 2007, 14).

The excavations on the Fulk de Breauté castle site have gone a long way to elucidate the origin and development of this part of Luton's history and archaeology but more investigation is needed to put the castle site into its wider settlement context. The present development site provided a good opportunity to look at more of the town's archaeology and early origins and development.

The specific objectives of the investigation were to determine:

- The extent of archaeological survival between the foundations of the current buildings and former brewery;
- The extent of survival of the 18th–19th-century brewery foundations;
- Whether there was any further evidence for Fulk de Breauté's castle or any external occupation.
- Whether there was any evidence of settlement pre-dating or post-dating the castle.

The general objectives of the investigation were to determine:

- the nature and date of any archaeological remains present at the site;
- the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological remains present at the site;
- the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscape;



• local environmental conditions via recovering palaeo-environmental remains.



#### 2. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach to the project is summarised below. A full methodology is provided in both WSIs (Albion 2017a; 2017b).

#### 2.1 Methodological Standards

The standards and requirements set out in the following documents were adhered to throughout the project:

•	Albion Archaeology	Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork (2nd edn, 2001).
•	CIfA	Charter and by-law; Code of conduct (2014) Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief (2014) Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (2014)
•	EAA	Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (2003)
•	English Heritage (now Historic England)	Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation (2nd edn, 2011)
•	Historic England	Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide (2015)
•	Luton Culture	Procedure for preparing archives for deposition with Luton Culture (2013)

The project archive will be deposited with Luton Culture (entry no. LTNMG 1272). Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-278113) in accordance with the guidelines issued by Historic England and the Archaeology Data Service.

## 2.2 Archaeological Fieldwork Methodology

The archaeological monitoring of the groundworks was completed between 16th August and 26th October 2017.

The investigation of the main construction area was completed between 16th August and 7th September 2017. Demolition of the above-ground structures in this area was carried out prior to the first archaeological monitoring visit. At this stage a large number of concrete foundation pads were to be removed in advance of piling. Archaeological observation during the removal of the concrete foundations would have been ineffective. Therefore, the strategy adopted was to open a series of test pits in the areas between the concrete foundation pads; these test areas were to be expanded if archaeological deposits were identified. This process was carried out in stages as the removal of the concrete floor slab progressed across the site.



Following the completion of the main construction area (Area 1) an additional area (Area 2) was monitored on 25th and 26th October 2017 during the construction of foundations for a tower crane. Before the start of archaeological monitoring works the existing building (41 Park Street) was demolished to clear the site of the crane base. The foundation trench measured approximately 8m by 9.5m and 2.5m deep. The upper surface was initially reduced to a depth of c. 1m before the trench was reduced to formation level. This trench contained a large post-medieval quarry pit which had removed any potential earlier deposits in this area (see below feature [12]).



#### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1 Introduction

The results are summarised below and shown on Figure 2. Context numbers in square brackets refer to the cuts [\*\*\*] and round brackets to fills or layers (\*\*\*). Detailed context descriptions are presented in Appendix 1.

### 3.2 Geological Deposits

#### 3.2.1 Superficial deposits

The upper geological deposit consisted of mixed mid-red-brown clay, sand and gravel — (1) in Area 1 and (12) in Area 2. It was seen in the south-western part of the site in two test pits in the main construction area and also in the south-western corner of the site where it was observed during construction of the tower crane foundations. Where the full thickness of the layer was uncovered it was 1.4-1.6m thick. The upper surface of this layer had been partially truncated by modern construction. It lay beneath a c. 500mm-thick layer of gravel that formed the sub-base for the concrete floor slab of the recently demolished 1990s building on the site.

This layer corresponds to glaciofluvial deposits mapped on British Geological Survey data<sup>1</sup>. A band of glaciofluvial deposits on the southern side of the River Lee extends beneath much of Luton town centre. These deposits were formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period in ice age conditions through the action of glacial meltwater.

#### 3.2.2 Bedrock

A lower geological deposit, consisting of chalk bedrock (2) was seen in a test pit at the south-western end of the site at a depth of *c*. 1.9m. The British Geological Survey describes this as Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation and New Pit Chalk Formation (undifferentiated) formed approximately 90–101 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period.

#### 3.3 Overburden and Modern Disturbance

At the time of the archaeological observations the site was covered by a layer of crushed concrete rubble c. 300–400mm thick, produced by the current demolition of the 1990s college buildings on the site.

Sub-surface structural remains (9) associated with the recently demolished buildings consisted of substantial concrete foundation pads in the main part of the site and a basement along the Park Street frontage constructed in concrete (Image 1).

A series of test pits excavated along the north-east edge and the central part of the site uncovered remains of a basement constructed during the 1950s. The structural remains (11) comprised brick walls, a concrete floor slab and foundations (Images 2 and 3). The walls were made with pressed bricks with

.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Contains British Geological Survey materials © NERC [2017]



bullnose bricks used in the openings. The remains of the basement were sealed beneath a 1.2m-thick layer of brick and concrete rubble (10), formed by the demolition of the building. This basement covered an area measuring approximately 30m by 30m, filling the entire rear half of the present development site.

A strip of ground measuring c. 15m wide in the south-western half of the site was the only part that had not been truncated by the construction of basements during the mid and late 20th century.

## 3.4 Archaeological Features

#### 3.4.1 18th–19th-century brewery building

A brick wall (4) was found in the south-eastern part of Area 1 (Image 4). It was c. 400mm wide, aligned north-east to south-west and made from plain mid-red brick bonded with light yellowish mortar. A narrow construction cut [3] was visible along its north-west side, filled with a mid-grey clay (5) construction backfill. No construction cut was visible on the south-east side of the wall where a layer (6) of mid yellowish brown silty-clay is interpreted as construction make-up for the floor of the building.

Comparison with historical maps suggests that the wall was a longitudinal internal wall of a building that is labelled on the 1884 Ordnance Survey map as brewery (disused at that time) (Figure 3). Layer (6) was observed in what would have been the interior of this building.

#### 3.4.2 18th- or 19th-century quarry pit

A large, steep-sided pit [13] was observed in Area 2. One edge of the pit was visible along the western side of the trench but elsewhere it extended beyond the limit of excavation, measuring at least 7.5m wide and 9m long. The base of the pit lay at a depth of c. 1.9m below the level of St Ann's Lane. It contained a fill (14) of mixed dark grey and mid red-brown clay, containing fragments of plain red brick (Image 5). The same fill was observed throughout the full depth of the feature.

This large pit was located along the eastern edge of St Ann's Lane, possibly respecting an historical boundary or plot. The feature is interpreted as a quarry. It is cut into the glaciofluvial clay, sand and gravel deposit beneath this part of Luton. It is possible that this material was extracted for brick-making. The nature of the fill indicates that the pit was deliberately filled in a single phase, rather than by gradual silting or episodic filling. The type of plain red brick, c. 70mm thick, in the fill indicates a probable 18th- or 19th-century date for the filling of the pit. Historical maps show this area was covered by buildings by the late 19th century (Figure 3).

#### 3.4.3 Undated pit

Within the area covered by the former brewery building a section was cut to examine the ground below layer (6). This uncovered the southern edge of a feature [7] interpreted as a pit (Image 6 and Figure 1: Section 1). Its fill (8) consisted of mid-grey silty clay with frequent green-yellow mottles and



occasional small stones. Six highly abraded indeterminate animal bone pelvis fragments (82g) (not retained) were recovered from the fill but no pottery or any other dateable artefacts were identified.

The green-yellow mottled appearance of the fill is commonly associated with the decay of organic material and could indicate that the feature was used as a cess pit or that it contained other organic material.



#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

## 4.1 Summary of Results

The investigation demonstrated a significant level of modern disturbance associated with the former college buildings on the site. In the footprint of the new building (Area 1), the front of the site and the entire rear half had been truncated by the construction of basements during the 1990s and 1950s respectively. In the remaining 15m-wide strip between the two basements some degree of modern truncation was evident; the sub-base of the 1990s floor slab lay directly on the geological horizon.

Archaeological features identified in the footprint of the new building consist of a brick wall (4) and an undated pit [7] that was sealed by a construction layer (6) associated with the wall. The brick wall appears to have been part of an 18th- or 19th-century brewery building shown on early edition Ordnance Survey maps. The pit contained a mottled green-yellow clay fill and a small amount of badly preserved animal bone. The colour of the fill suggests a possible use as a cess pit.

A large pit [13] identified in the south-east corner of the site (Area 2) is interpreted as a quarry pit dating from the 18th or 19th century. The 1.9m-deep pit was bounded on its west side by St Ann's lane. It had been deliberately backfilled with a mixed clay fill that contained fragments of brick (14). Late 19th-century maps show this area covered by buildings.

## 4.2 Significance of Results

The investigations did not reveal any further evidence for Fulk de Breauté's castle or any other medieval (or earlier) occupation. Parts of the foundations of the 18th–19th-century brewery did survive, along with some undated (but probably post-medieval / modern) pits. These are of no more than local significance in terms of the regional research frameworks. Much of the site had been truncated by 20th-century buildings, which would have removed any earlier archaeological remains within their footprints.



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# 6. APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DETAILS



Area: 1

Extent (ha): 0.159

OS Co-ordinates: TL0946022110

Description: Main construction site for new STEM building

Context:	Type:	Description: Excava	ted:	<b>Finds Present:</b>
1	Natural	Superficial geological deposit consisting of mixed mid-red-brown clay, sand and gravels.		
2	Natural	Chalk bedrock, consisting of Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation and New Pit Chalk Formation.		
3	Foundation trench	Narrow construction cut for brick foundation (4). Seen along western side of wall only.		
4	Foundation	Brick wall in plain mid-red brick bonded with light yellowish mortar. Wall c. 400mm thick. Appeared to be one and a half brick wall, although it is about 50mm too thick for that (appears to have thickened out with some fragments of cut brick between the two leaves, possibly to form a wider plinth).	r	
5	Fill	Mid grey clay. Used to backfill the construction cut on western side of wall.		
6	Levelling layer	Mid yellow brown silty clay occasional flecks charcoal. Appears to be construction levelling deposit within footprint of former brewery building.		
7	Pit	Dimensions: min breadth 2.m, max depth 1.m. Shape in plan not known, only south-west edge exposed. Profile: convex upper edge with steep side and concave base.		
8	Fill	Mid grey silty clay occasional small stones. Frequent green-yellow mottles.	<b>~</b>	<b>✓</b>
9	Modern intrusion	Concrete foundations of 1990s college buildings, consisting of reinforced concrete basement along front of site and numerous, rectangular concrete stanchion bases across the site.		
10	Demolition layer	Loose fill of crushed concrete and brick rubble infilling partly demolished 1950s basement or covering floor slab of fully demolished 1950s basement.  Approximately 1.2m thick.		
11	Modern intrusion	Basement walls and concrete floor slab of 1950s college building. Walls constructed from machine-pressed brick with bullnose bricks used to form openings.		



Area: 2

Extent (ha): 0.0076

OS Co-ordinates: TL0946521080

**Description:** Trench for construction of tower crane foundation

<b>Context:</b>	Type:	<b>Description:</b>	Excavated:	Finds Present:
12	Natural	Superficial geological deposit consisting of mixed mid-red-brown clay, s gravels.	and and	
13	Quarry	Dimensions: min breadth 7.4m, min depth 1.9m, min length 9.5m. Exter limit of excavation. Western edge aligned along present St Ann's Lane. sided feature.	• —	
14	Backfill	Mixed dark grey and mid-red-brown clay, containing fragments of plain red fragments, c. 70mm thick.	orick 🗸	



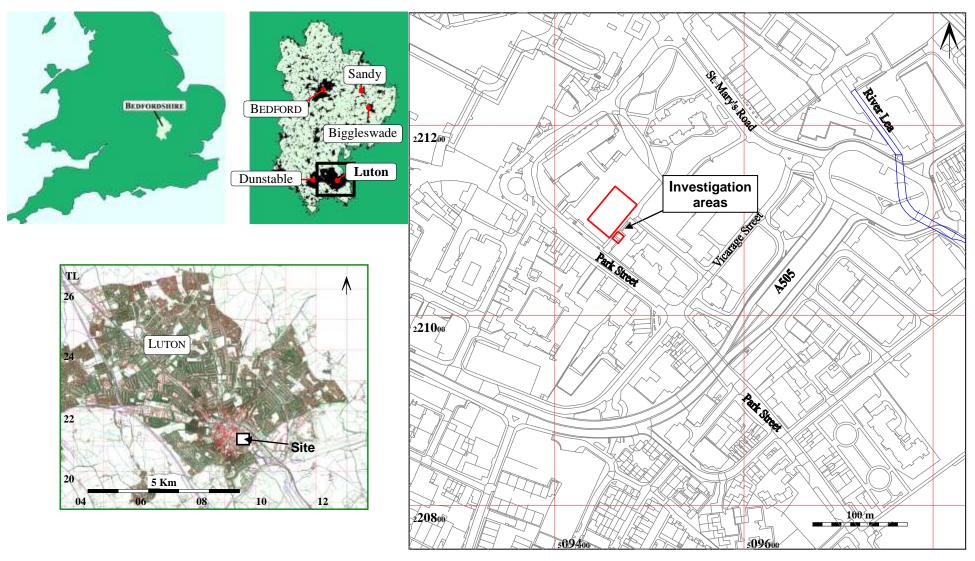
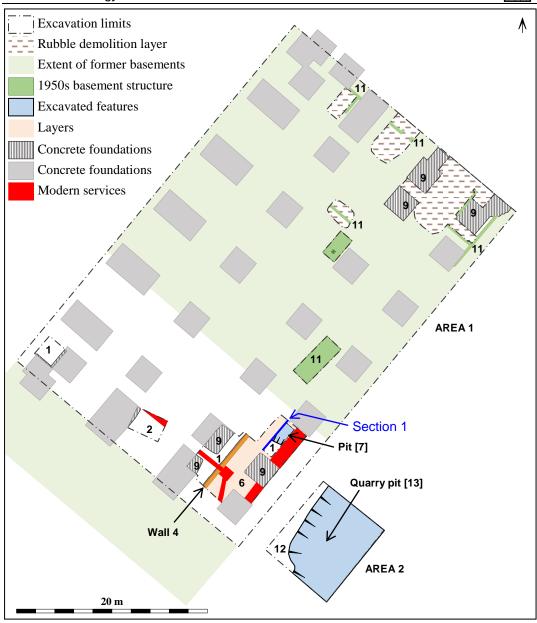


Figure 1: Site location plan

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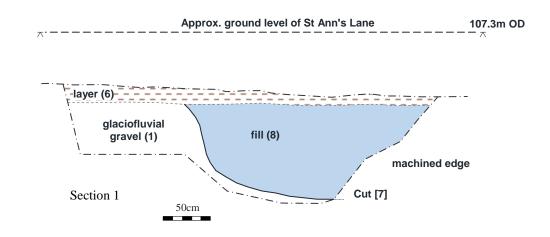


Figure 2: All-features plan



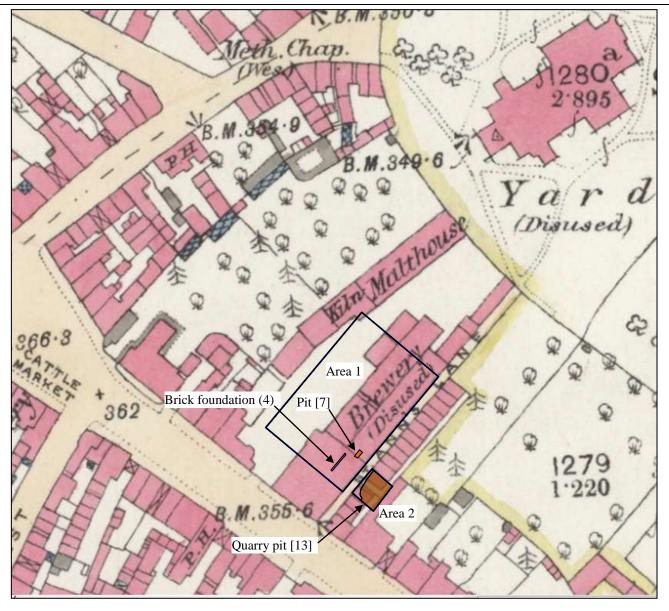


Figure 3: Results overlaid on 1884 Ordnance Survey map





Image 1: General view of Area 1 looking towards Park Street

Southern corner of site, looking south-west. The partially demolished basement walls of the 1990s building are visible in the background, on the Park Street frontage.



Image 2: Area 1, 1950s basement walls

Brick basement walls (11) exposed in northern corner of site. Looking east (scale 2m).





Image 3: Area 1, 1950s basement walls

Part of basement walls (11) exposed in eastern corner of site. Looking west (scale 2m).



**Image 4**: Area 1, brick foundation (4)

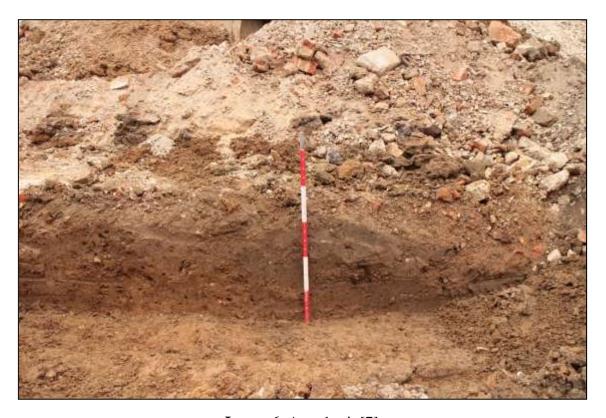
Looking north-east showing 18th- or 19th-century brick foundation (4) associated with former brewery (scale 2m).





**Image 5**: Area 2, showing backfilled quarry pit [13]

Looking north-east, showing trench reduced to depth of 1m, exposing the backfill material within quarry pit [13] (scale 1m).



**Image 6**: Area 1, pit [7]

Looking north-west with pit [7] showing in section as a darker soil compared to the reddish-brown glaciofluvial deposit (1) visible at left (scale 1m).



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