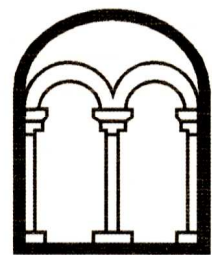


**BROMHAM LOWER SCHOOL
BROMHAM
BEDFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

Albion
archaeology



**BROMHAM LOWER SCHOOL
BROMHAM
BEDFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

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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 Archaeological Officer). The fieldwork was undertaken by Richard Gregson (Archaeological Supervisor). This report has been prepared by Richard Gregson. All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

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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 Archaeological Officer |
| CI/A | Chartered Institute <i>for</i> Archaeologists |
| HER | Bedford Borough Historic Environment Record |
| WSI | Written Scheme of Investigation |



Non-Technical Summary

Bromham Lower School is converting from a 2FE lower school to a 3FE primary school, resulting in an expansion of seven classrooms and an additional hall. The existing hall will be converted into two additional classrooms.

As part of the pre-application process, the Bedford Borough Council Archaeological Officer (AO) advised that the proposed new building (hall and seven classrooms) was located in an area with archaeological interest, associated with the medieval settlement of Bromham. The AO recommended that a programme of trial trench evaluation was required (in advance of development groundworks) in order to inform what, if any, mitigation work needed to be undertaken to allow development to proceed.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the trial trenching, which took place on 24th April 2017. It comprised the excavation of four trenches, measuring from 4m to 12.5m in length and 1.8m wide, positioned across the footprints of the proposed building and associated attenuation tanks.

The trial trenches revealed topsoil and subsoil layers associated with modern and earlier ploughing. A small amount of residual Iron Age pottery was recovered from the subsoil within Trench 1, suggesting activity of this date within the vicinity of the site.

Since no archaeological remains were found surviving below the subsoil, there is very little potential for any significant archaeological remains to survive within the area of the proposed building works. The proposed development will, therefore, have no significant archaeological impact.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Project Background**

Bromham Lower School is converting from a 2FE lower school to a 3FE primary school, resulting in an expansion of seven classrooms and an additional hall. The existing hall will be converted into two additional classrooms.

As part of the pre-application process, the Bedford Borough Council Archaeological Officer (AO) advised that the proposed new building (hall and seven classrooms) was located in an area with archaeological interest, associated with the medieval settlement of Bromham. The AO recommended that a programme of trial trench evaluation was required (in advance of development groundworks) in order to inform what, if any, mitigation work needed to be undertaken to allow development to proceed. The evaluation work would be secured by a suitably worded archaeological condition on the planning permission.

This advice is in accordance with *National Planning Policy Framework – Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment* (March 2012).

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Kier Construction to carry out the evaluation in accordance with the AO's advice.

1.2 **Site Location and Description**

The village of Bromham lies 4km west of Bedford within the valley of the River Great Ouse; the land rises from 33m OD on the valley floor up to 70m OD in the north-west of the parish, close to the boundary with Stevington.

The school is located within the older, north end of the village, on the west side of the village green (Figure 1). The proposed new building lies to the east of the current school buildings on the edge of its associated playing fields. It is centred on grid reference TL 00573 51227 with the land lying at a height of *c.* 50m OD.

The solid geology of the area is largely Oxford clay, although Oolitic limestone outcrops in places. The school itself sits on a localised deposit of mid-Pleistocene glaciofluvial sand and gravel, with boulder clay present to the east.

1.3 **Archaeological and Historical Background**

Bromham is first recorded in Domesday Book of 1086 as *Bruneham*. The village contains several listed and notable buildings, including the church of St Owen's which dates to the 13th century. To the west of the village are two surviving areas of ancient woodland: Molliver's Wood (HER13201) and Bowels Wood (HER13202).

The HER shows that the proposed development area (PDA) is located to the west of the postulated core of medieval Bromham (HER17065) on the west side of the green. The green would have been at the centre of a rural settlement, functioning as common grazing land, a meeting place, and a focal point for village activities. The PDA also lies immediately to the south of a medieval moated site



(HER3385), associated with Buelles Manor (which was listed in Domesday Book). The remnants of the moat are visible in aerial photographs taken in 1947 prior to it being completely levelled.

Archaeological work undertaken in advance of recent housing development c. 300m to the north-east identified significant evidence of Anglo-Saxon and medieval occupation (HER21743) (Albion Archaeology 2014).

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 might be present within the proposed development site;
- integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that might be present at the proposed development site.
- nature of 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 WSI (Albion Archaeology 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 edition (2001) |
| Bedford Museum | <i>Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedfordshire</i> (2010) |
| CIfA | <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 | <i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Project Managers' Guide</i> (2009) |
| | <i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation</i> , 2nd edition (2011) |

The project archive will be deposited at The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford (accession number BEDFM: 2017.38). It is proposed that the residual, unstratified Iron Age pottery is not retained. Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-282702) in accordance with the guidelines issued by Historic England and the Archaeology Data Service.

2.2 Trial Trenching

The trial trenching took place on 24th April 2017. It comprised the excavation of four trenches, measuring from 4m to 12.5m in length and 1.8m wide, positioned across the footprints of the proposed building and associated attenuation tanks.

The trenches were opened by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket, operated by an experienced driver under close archaeological supervision. All excavation and recording were carried out by experienced Albion staff with external specialists consulted as necessary. Any potential archaeological features were investigated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's pro forma sheets. The trenches were subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate.



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

All deposits revealed within the trial trenches are summarised below and shown on Figure 2. Context numbers in round brackets refer to fills or layers (***). Detailed context information is provided in Appendix 1.

3.2 Overburden and Geological Deposits

Topsoil (100, 200, 300 and 400) comprised dark brown-grey sandy silt, c. 0.4m thick.

Subsoil (101, 201, 301 and 401) comprised mid orange-brown sandy silt, c. 0.2m thick. Six abraded sherds (29g) of generic hand-built Iron Age pottery (fabric code F03) recovered from (101) are suggestive of activity in the vicinity of the site during this period.

Undisturbed geological deposits comprised mid brown-orange sandy silt (102, 202, 302, 402).

3.3 Archaeological Remains

No sub-surface archaeological remains were found within the trial trenches.



4. CONCLUSIONS

With the exception of a small amount of residual Iron Age pottery recovered from subsoil within Trench 1, no archaeological remains were revealed during the trial trenching.

This suggests that there is very little potential for any significant archaeological remains to survive within the area of the proposed building works. The proposed development will, therefore, have no significant archaeological impact.



5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albion Archaeology, 2001, *Procedures Manual Vol. 1: Fieldwork*. 2nd edition

Albion Archaeology, 2014, *10 The Green, Bromham, Bedford: Assessment of Potential and Updated Project Design* (Report 2014/114)

Albion Archaeology, 2017, *Bromham Lower School, Bromham, Bedfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (Report 2017/70)

Bedford Museum, 2010, *Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Bedfordshire, Bedford Museum guidelines*

Historic England, 2015, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide*, version 1.2.



6. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARY



Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 12.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.45 m. Max: 0.5 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 567: Northing: 51260)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 577: Northing: 51253)

Reason: To evaluate area.

| Context: | Type: | Description: | Excavated: | Finds Present: |
|----------|---------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 100 | Topsoil | Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.35m thick. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 101 | Subsoil | Friable mid orange brown sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.25m thick. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 102 | Natural | Friable mid brown orange sandy silt occasional small-medium stones | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 12.50 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.47 m. Max: 0.53 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 581: Northing: 51223)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 583: Northing: 51210)

Reason: To evaluate area.

| Context: | Type: | Description: | Excavated: | Finds Present: |
|----------|---------|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 200 | Topsoil | Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.3m thick. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 201 | Subsoil | Friable mid orange brown sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.25m thick. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 202 | Natural | Friable mid brown orange sandy silt occasional small-medium stones | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



Trench: 3

Max Dimensions: Length: 9.70 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.5 m. Max: 0.5 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 568: Northing: 51233)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 558: Northing: 51232)

Reason: To evaluate area.

| Context: | Type: | Description: | Excavated: | Finds Present: |
|----------|---------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 300 | Topsoil | Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.4m thick. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 301 | Subsoil | Friable mid orange brown sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.2m thick. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 302 | Natural | Friable mid brown orange sandy silt occasional small-medium stones | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



Trench: 4

Max Dimensions: Length: 4.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.47 m. Max: 0.5 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 561: Northing: 51217)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 557: Northing: 51216)

Reason: To evaluate area.

| Context: | Type: | Description: | Excavated: | Finds Present: |
|----------|---------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 400 | Topsoil | Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.37m thick. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 401 | Subsoil | Friable mid orange brown sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.2m thick. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 402 | Natural | Friable mid brown orange sandy silt moderate small-medium stones | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

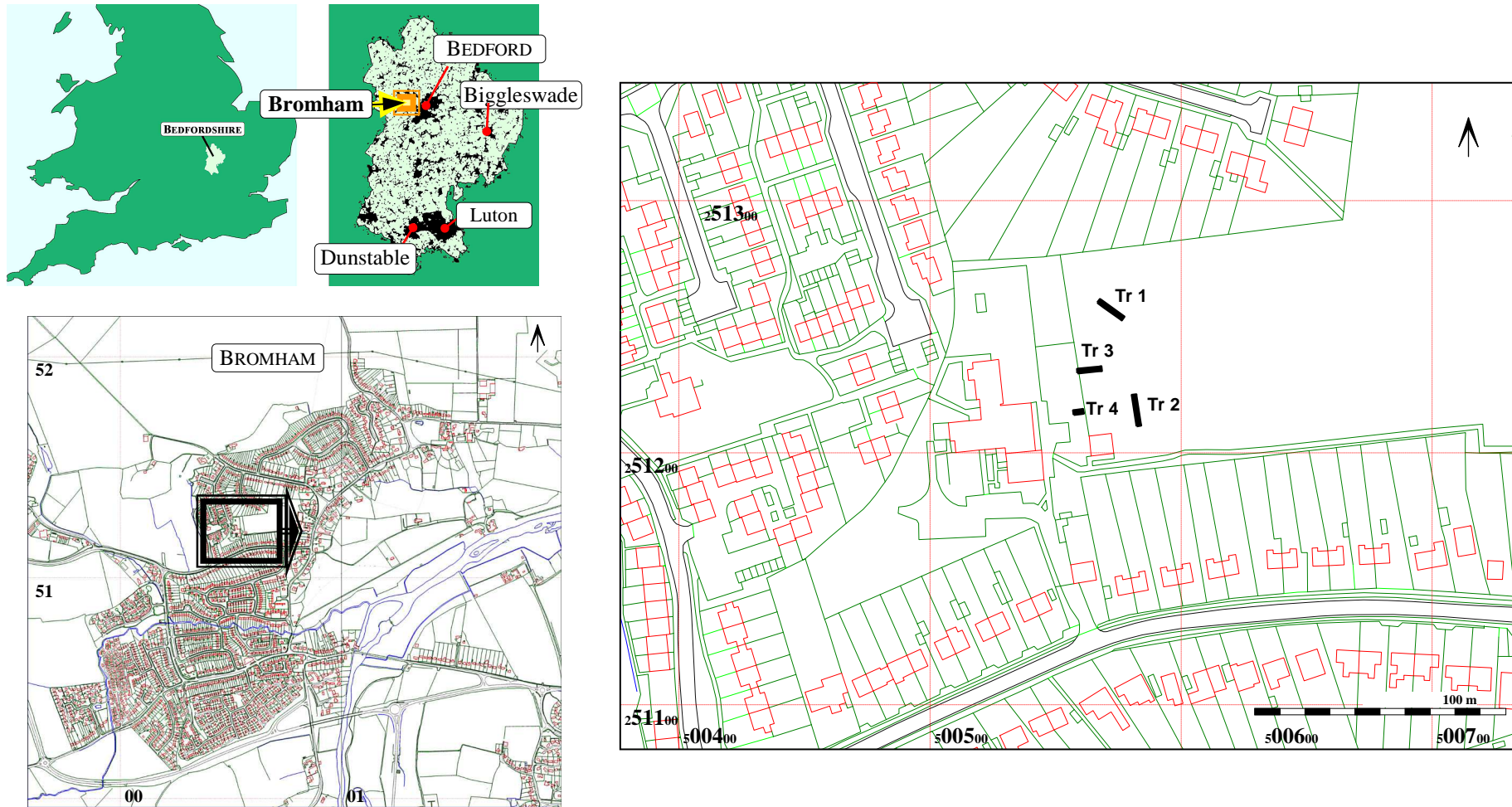


Figure 1: Site location and proposed trench layout

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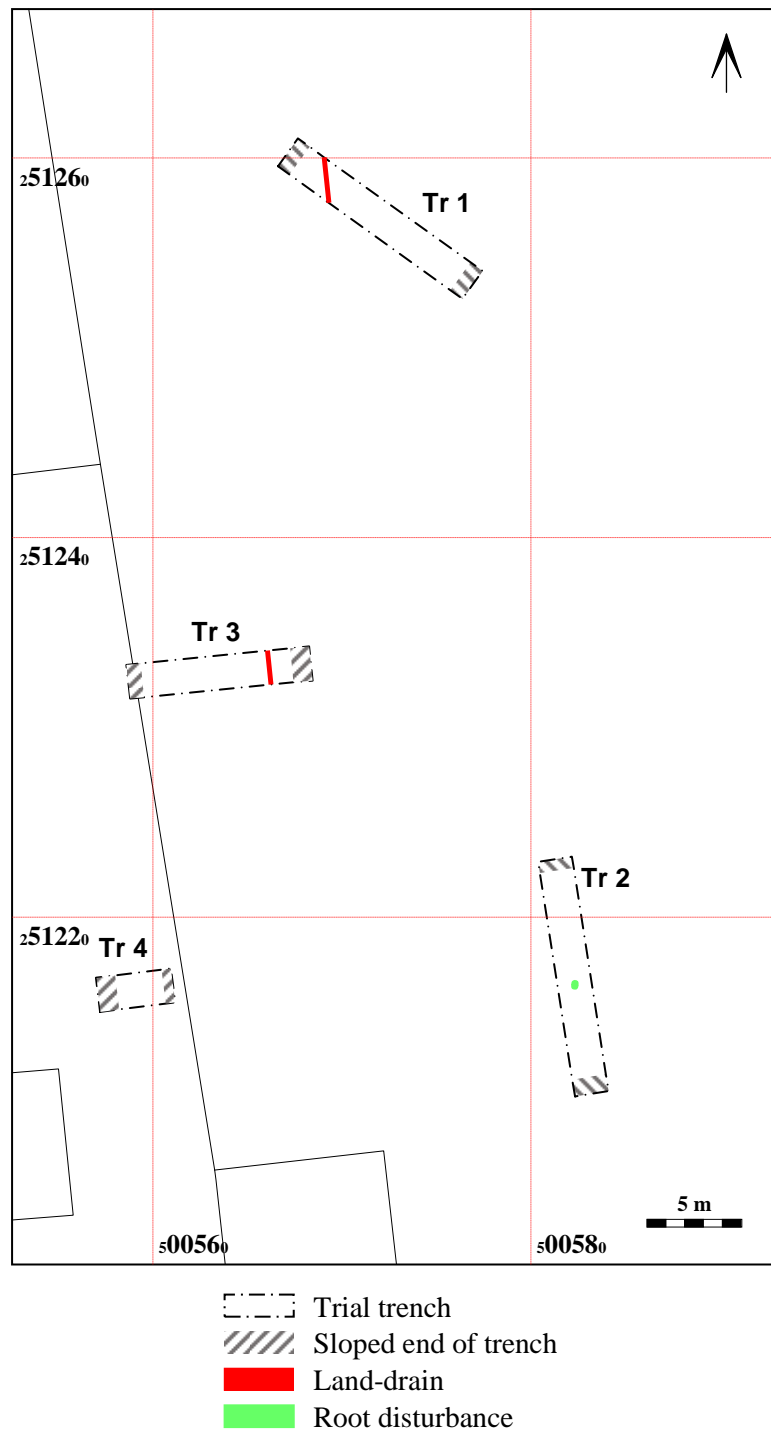


Figure 2: All-features plan

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