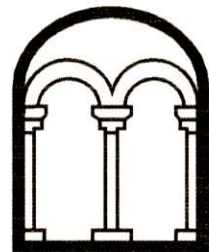


**ROMAN GATE
GREAT DENHAM
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

Albion
archaeology



**ROMAN GATE
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PUBLICATION**

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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 Vanessa Clarke (Bedford Borough Council Senior Archaeological Officer). The fieldwork was undertaken by Ben Barker (Project Officer) and Hanno Conring (Assistant Supervisor). Mike Luke (Project Manager) managed the investigation. This report has been prepared by Ben Barker. 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:

BBC	Bedford Borough Council
BBC SAO	Bedford Borough Council Senior Archaeological Officer
CIfA	Chartered Institute <i>for</i> Archaeologists
DA	Development area
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-technical Summary

David Coles Architects Ltd, on behalf of Takeley LLP, submitted a reserved matters planning application (15/02705/REM) for a commercial and residential mixed used development on Land East of 2 Great Portway, Great Denham, Bedfordshire.

The Bedford Borough Council Senior Archaeological Officer (BBC SAO) advised that the development area (DA) was subject to a condition attached to the outline planning permission (02/00787/OUT), relating to the wider archaeological investigation within the land parcel known locally as the Biddenham Loop. Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Takeley LLP to undertake the required archaeological works and agreed a site-specific scheme of investigation with the BBC SAO.

Monitoring of construction works began in April 2016 and continued intermittently until February 2017. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the monitoring.

The project archive will be deposited at The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford (accession number BEDFM: 2003.1). This report will be uploaded onto the OASIS website (ref.: albionar1-55288).



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Background*

David Coles Architects Ltd, on behalf of Takeley LLP, submitted a reserved matters planning application (15/02705/REM) for a commercial and residential mixed used development, with 500 sq/m (GIA) of use class D1, D2, A1, A2 and A3 uses, 6 self-contained apartments, 15 car parking spaces, secure and open cycle storage, bin storage and associated infrastructure on Land East of 2 Great Portway, Great Denham, Bedfordshire.

The Bedford Borough Council Senior Archaeological Officer (BBC SAO) advised that the development area (DA) was subject to a condition attached to the outline planning permission (02/00787/OUT), relating to the wider archaeological investigation within the land parcel known locally as the Biddenham Loop. As such, the development would be subject to archaeological investigation as per the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Albion 2007).

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Takeley LLP to undertake the required archaeological works. During examination of the development drawings it became clear that part of the DA had already been the subject of archaeological investigation in advance of the David Wilson Homes (Luke 2016) and Bovis (Luke 2008) developments. Consideration of the construction levels determined that much of this area was to become hard-standing and the groundworks in the northern part of the DA were unlikely to impact on the archaeological horizon. This was because previous archaeological investigations in the vicinity had recorded an above-average thickness of the overburden in this area due to the presence of a medieval headland. As such, a site-specific scheme of investigation was agreed with the BBC SAO.

Monitoring began in April 2016 and continued intermittently until February 2017. On completion of the fieldwork the BBC SAO agreed that the results could be presented in summary report format (this document).

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The Roman Gate development is located at the junction of Saxon Way and Anglia Way in Great Denham (Fig. 1). The latter is a new parish created for the extensive development located within a meander of the Great Ouse, known locally as the Biddenham Loop.

The topography is generally flat, although it slopes down towards the floodplain. The majority of the Loop lies at approximately 30–33m OD with its highest point of 41m OD in the north-east. The DA covers less than 0.2ha, at a height of *c.* 32.5m OD, and is centred on grid reference TL 01962 48738.

The underlying geology comprises Stoke Goldington Member and Felmersham Member sand and gravel (formed in the local environment previously dominated by rivers) over Great Oolite Group Limestone and Argillaceous bedrock.



1.3 Archaeological Background

The archaeological background to the area is presented in depth in the wider WSI (Albion 2007) and the publication of the results of the investigations (Luke 2016).

1.4 Project Objectives

The principal purpose of the archaeological work within the DA was to gather information on possible sub-surface archaeological heritage assets impacted by the development and associated services. Period-specific objectives were presented in the original WSI (Albion 2007) with reference to the local (Oake *et al.* 2007) and regional research agendas (Brown and Glazebrook 2000).



2. METHODOLOGY

A site-specific methodological approach was agreed with the BBC SAO in advance of the fieldwork. In summary, it was agreed to:

- Monitor any areas where overburden removal would result in there being less than a 0.3m buffer between the archaeological horizon and any ground reduction in areas that had not previously been the subject of archaeological investigation.
- Monitor any foundation or service trenches in other parts of the DA that had not previously been the subject of archaeological investigation.

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)
• CfA	<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: 2003.1). This report will be uploaded onto the OASIS website (ref.: albionar1-55288).

2.2 Observation, Investigation and Recording

Archaeological monitoring of the ground reduction and trenching was undertaken on eight occasions between 20th April 2016 and 8th February 2017.

The overburden over the southern part of the site was stripped by machine to the archaeological horizon (Fig. 2). The removal of the overburden in the northern part of the site was monitored only where it had the potential to be within 300mm of the archaeological horizon. The excavation of the service trenches that impacted areas not previously stripped to the archaeological horizon was also monitored.



3. RESULTS

The areas investigated are summarised below and shown on Fig 2. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the monitoring.

The southernmost part of the DA was initially stripped to the archaeological horizon until it was proven that the strip was in excess of 300mm below construction formation level. The majority of the site was stripped to a depth of *c.* 400mm and was then ‘stoned-up’ prior to the excavation of the foundation trenches and remaining services. Due to some uncertainties over construction levels, parts of the previously un-investigated area in the northern part of the site were also monitored but there was no observed impact on the archaeological horizon. The northern part of the site (unshaded on Fig. 2) was effectively preserved *in situ* other than where impacted by a service trench.

The depth to the archaeological horizon, i.e. the top of the natural geology, was between *c.* 600mm and 700mm below existing ground level. Therefore, once it was established that there was adequate cover (>300mm) no areas were reduced below *c.* 400mm except in service and wall trenches.

The stratigraphy recorded in the service trenches west of the new build confirmed that the geological horizon was at least 450mm below the current ground level and that any subsequent car-park surface construction would be unlikely to impact on the archaeological horizon.



4. CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological features or deposits were revealed within the DA. Although the area had largely been protected under a medieval headland, and subsequently by a footpath, there was no evidence to suggest that the DA contained significant archaeological remains.

The results of the adjacent archaeological investigation have demonstrated that the DA was located in a landscape that was utilised from the early Neolithic to the early Saxon period (Luke 2016). Settlement, burial/ritual monuments, field systems and dispersed evidence for human activity have been found extensively within the Biddenham Loop. Inevitably within such an extensive landscape there are a few areas, such as the DA, where no evidence for human activity survives or which were never utilised in any period — i.e. they perhaps remained as woodland. By the medieval period the DA would have been located within open field systems, for which the presence of a headland is evidence. The headland persisted in the landscape into the post-medieval period because it was utilised first as a field boundary and then as a footpath.



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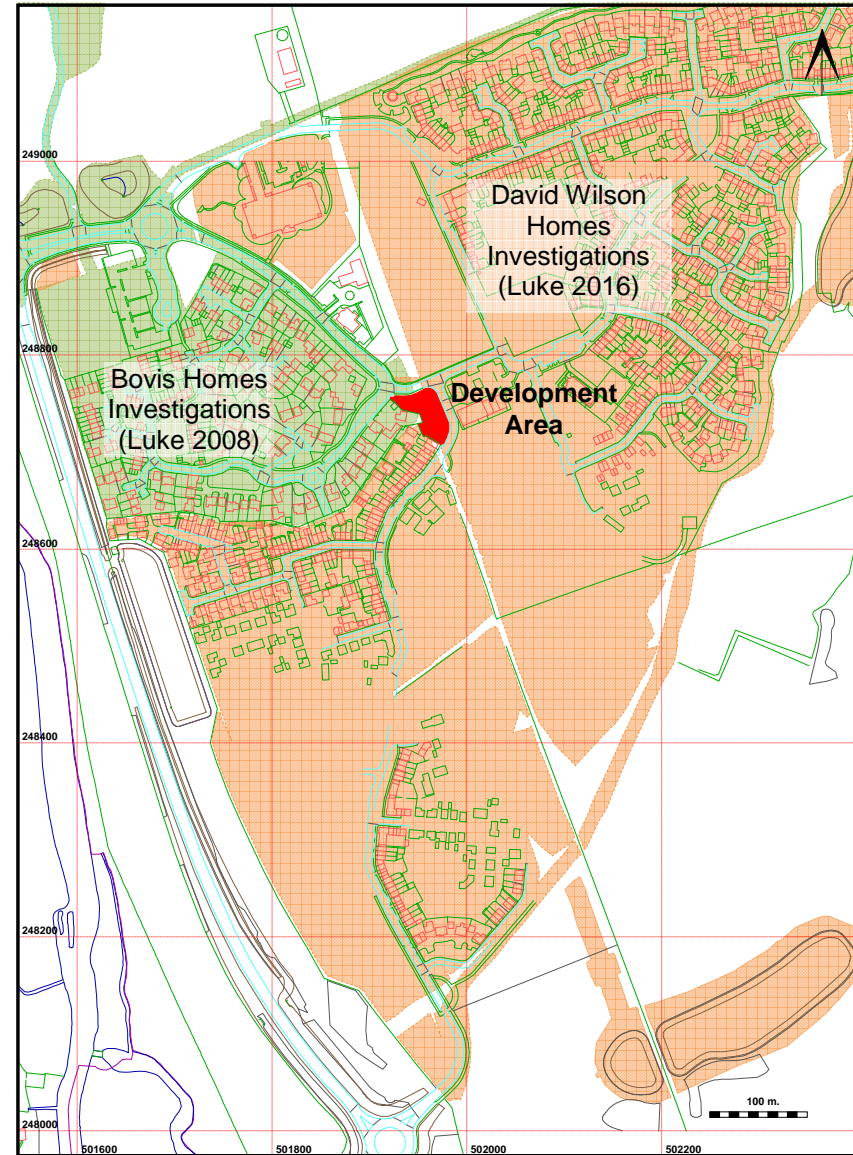
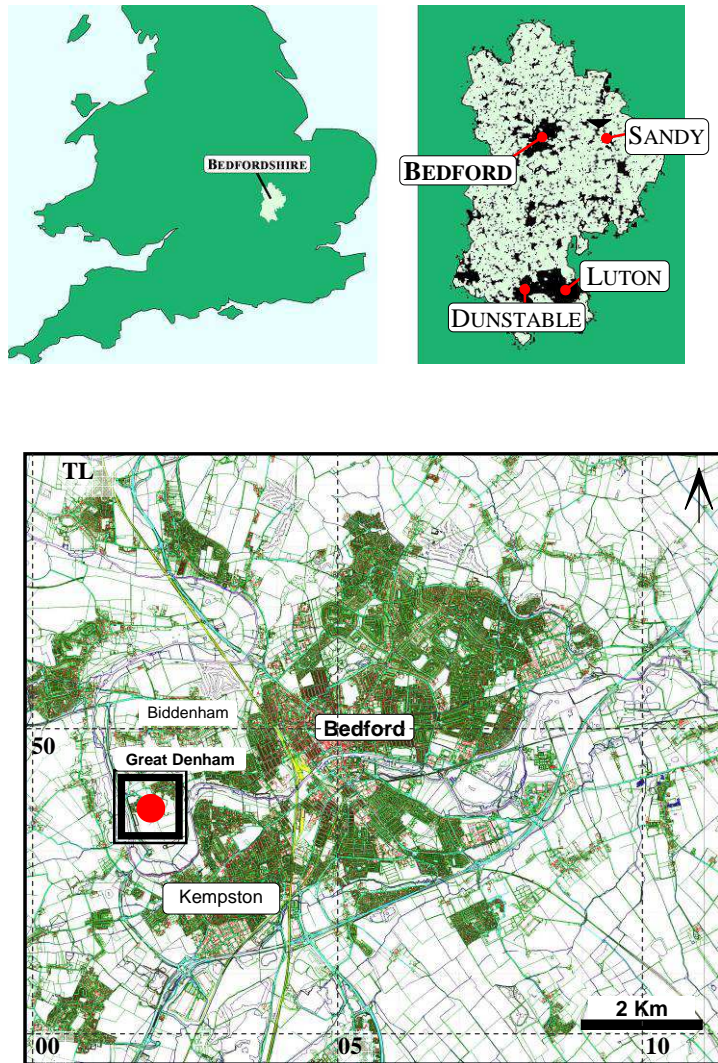


Figure 1: Site location plan

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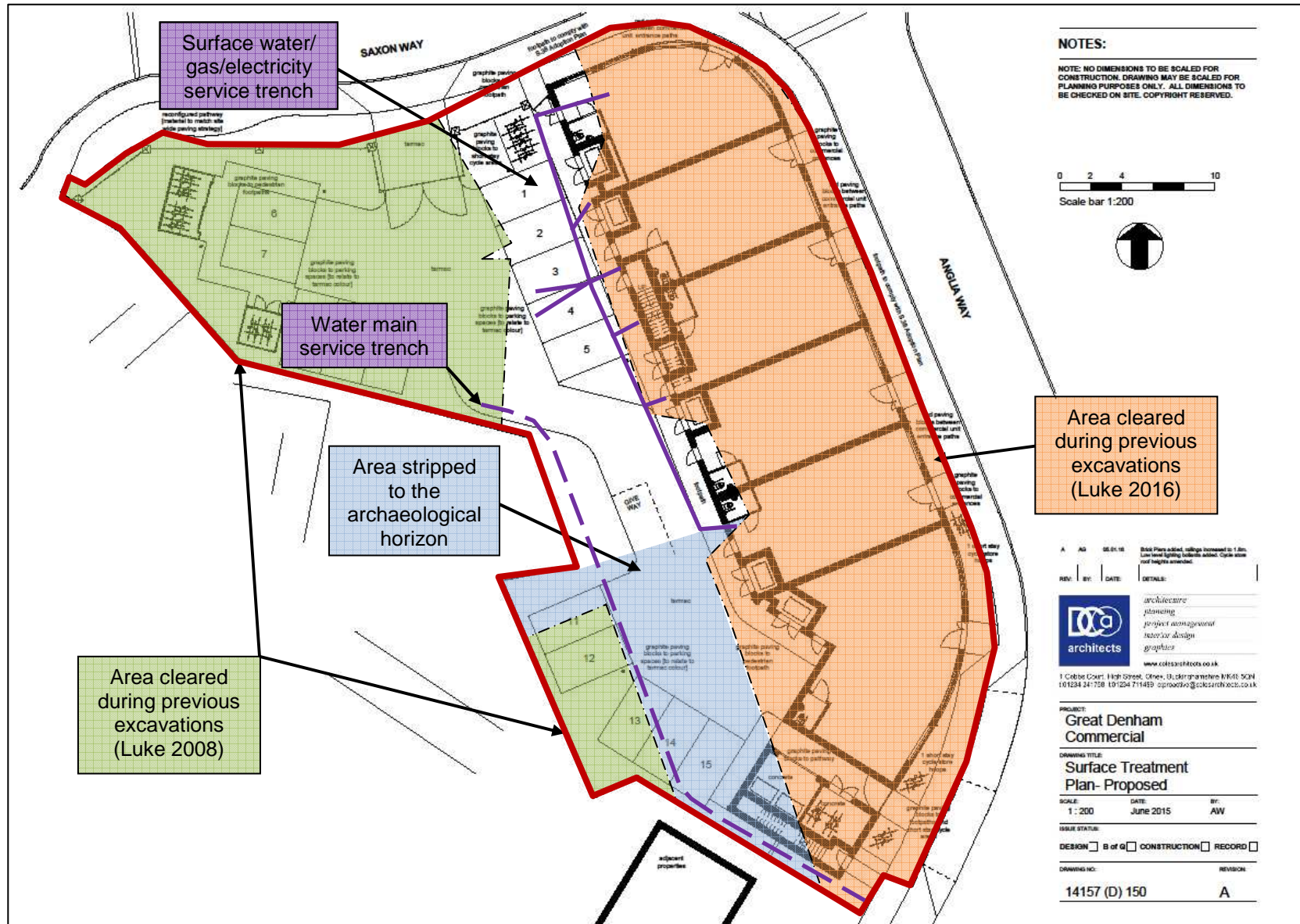


Figure 2: Plan showing the extent of the archaeological works

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