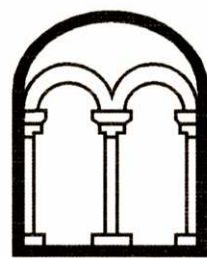


**EMERGENCY WORKS TO THE HIGHWAY
ST PAUL'S SQUARE
BEDFORD**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION
REPORT**

Albion
archaeology



**EMERGENCY WORKS TO THE HIGHWAY
ST PAUL'S SQUARE
BEDFORD**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION
REPORT**

Project: SPS3291
Museum accession no.: BEDFM 2017.112
OASIS no.: albionar1-302912

Document: 2017/195
Version 1.0

20th December 2017

Compiled by	Authorised by
Jeremy Oetgen	Drew Shotliff

Prepared for:
Highways Department
Bedford Borough Council
Barkers Lane Depot
119 Barkers Lane
Bedford MK41 9RR



Contents

1. ACCOUNT OF THE WORKS UNDERTAKEN	3
2. CATALOGUE OF THE HUMAN REMAINS RECOVERED	4
3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HUMAN REMAINS	5
4. BIBLIOGRAPHY	6

List of Figures

Figure 1: Site location plan with details of earlier archaeological investigations

Figure 2: Plan of excavated area

Figure 3: The original excavation, 1st December 2017, looking south

Figure 4: Extended excavation in progress, 6th December 2017, looking north

The figures are bound at the back of the document.



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 document 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.

This document has been prepared by Jeremy Oetgen (Project Manager) and authorised by Drew Shotliff MA MCI(A) (Operations Manager). Jackie Wells (Finds Officer) catalogued the human remains and Joan Lightning (CAD Technician) prepared Figure 2.

Albion Archaeology is grateful for the assistance of the following staff of Bedford Borough Council Gareth Turner, (Interim Manager for Highways), Geoff Saunders (Archaeological Officer) and Liz Pieksma (Keeper of Archaeology).

*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*



1. ACCOUNT OF THE WORKS UNDERTAKEN

On 1st December 2017, statutory undertaker, Anglian Water, was carrying out permitted works within the highway of St Paul's Square, Bedford (Figure 1). The works involved connection of utilities associated with the development at Riverside Square. During the course of the works a void was encountered and some bones, thought to be human, were discovered at a depth of c. 1.2m below ground level. The approximate location of this initial excavation is shown on Figure 2.

Work ceased and the contractors informed Bedford Borough Council's Manager for Highways, who then contacted Bedford Borough Council's Historic Environment Team (HET). The HET advised that Albion Archaeology should be contacted and asked for an archaeologist to attend site in order to identify the bones, determine their significance and assess the significance of the impact of the works.

Jeremy Oetgen, MCI(A), Albion Archaeology Project Manager, visited the site of the works and confirmed that the bones were human. The bones comprised random fragments of long bones and appeared to have come from a secondary context, probably the backfill of an old utility trench (Figure 3). The deposit contained occasional fragments of brick (both machine-made frogged brick and earlier hand-made brick) and fragments of softwood board that might have been the remains of trench shuttering. The location of the excavation was within the former extent of the Saxon and medieval churchyard of St Paul's Church, close to St Mary Herne chapel. The bones were, therefore, considered likely to be medieval or older.

The discovery of human remains was reported to Bedfordshire Police. The police were content that there was no crime to report and required no further action.

The excavation was backfilled and made safe, but further excavation was proposed in order to establish the nature of the void and undertake any remedial engineering work that might be necessary before allowing Anglian Water to complete their works and reinstate the highway.

An application was subsequently made to the Ministry of Justice for an Authority to Excavate Human Remains for Archaeological Purposes. The Authority was issued on 11th December 2017.

At the request of Geoff Saunders of the HET a brief written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared (Albion Archaeology 2017) and approved by the HET prior to resumption of the works.

The works were completed on Wednesday 6th December, and all excavation was observed by Adam Williams (Albion Archaeology Archaeological Supervisor). The excavation was extended to the north of the original trench (Figures 2 and 4), but the maximum depth of excavation was less than 0.5m below the existing road surface. The only material disturbed was road make-up. No further human remains or archaeological artefacts were found.



2. CATALOGUE OF THE HUMAN REMAINS RECOVERED

Jackie Wells

Disarticulated human limb bones, weighing 632g and representing a minimum of three individuals, were collected. Most identifiable bones derive from the leg, with a single probable arm bone (humerus) and indeterminate long bone fragment. Epiphyseal union of the femur head, proximal and distal tibia suggests the remains derive from individuals aged at least 13 or older (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994). The fragments survive in moderate condition, with some surface erosion and splitting; no pathologies are readily apparent.

Bone element	Quantity
R femur; proximal end	1
L tibia; proximal end	1
L tibia; distal end	(joining) 2
Tibia shaft	1
Fibula shaft	1
Humerus(?) shaft	1
Limb bone shaft (misc.)	1

Table 1: Inventory of human remains



3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HUMAN REMAINS

Existing archaeological knowledge of St Paul's Square is summarised in the WSI. The square lies at the heart of the historic core of Bedford, which is known to have been a settlement from the 9th century onwards, with possible origins in the 6th–7th centuries. Burials of this date have been recorded from the north side of St Paul's Square.

Haslam (1986) argues that St Paul's Church was founded by King Offa in the late 8th century, but some argue that its origins go right back to the early conversion period in the 7th century (Owen 1978). It was certainly extant as a house of secular canons at the time of Domesday Book (1086). According to the St Albans medieval chronicler, Matthew Paris, King Offa himself was buried in Bedford. His remains were kept in a chapel, which was swept away by floods. The location of this chapel is unknown, but (if the story is to be believed) the riverside area opposite St Paul's and close to the bridge/ford must be a possibility.

At the south-west corner of the square was the Chapel of St Mary Herne. The earliest reference to it is in 1200, but it may well be much older. Affiliated to St Paul's Church, the chapel was rebuilt several times before falling into disuse in the 16th and 17th centuries. It was demolished in the early 19th century.

St Paul's Square underwent considerable change and development throughout the post-medieval period and it is thought that the present highway has encroached on the area of the former medieval burial ground.

There are no previously recorded finds of human remains from this part of St Paul's Square, so the remains found during the works by Anglian Water are significant as evidence of the early cemetery, even though not recovered from *in-situ* graves. They are undated, but could potentially be dated absolutely by scientific methods and subjected to study, if required, in the future.

It is, therefore, proposed that the remains be retained with the project archive at the Higgins Art Gallery & Museum (accession no. BEDFM: 2017.112). This report will be uploaded to the OASIS website (ref. no.: albionar1-302912).



4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albion Archaeology, 2017 *Emergency Works to Highway St Paul's Square, Bedford: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis, 2*, Report no. 2017/195 ver 1.0

Buikstra, J.E., and Ubelaker, D.H., (eds.) 1994, *Standards for Data Collection from Human Skeletal Remains*, Arkansas Archaeological Survey Research Series 44

Haslam, J., 1986 'The Ecclesiastical Topography of Early Medieval Bedford', in *Beds. Archaeol. J.* **17**, 41–51

Owen, D, 1978, 'Bedfordshire Chapelries; an Essay in Rural Settlement History', *BHRS*, **57**, 9–20

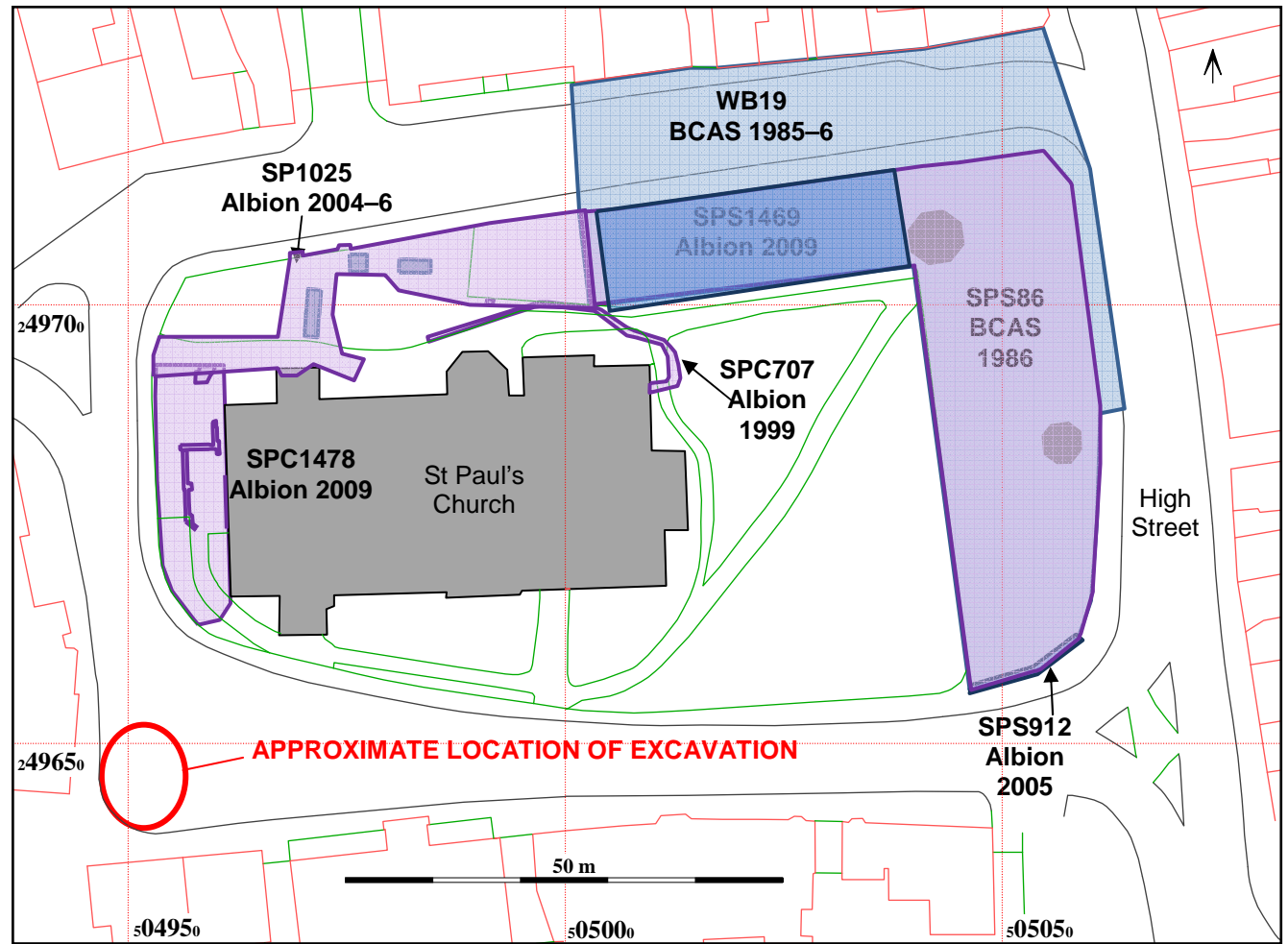
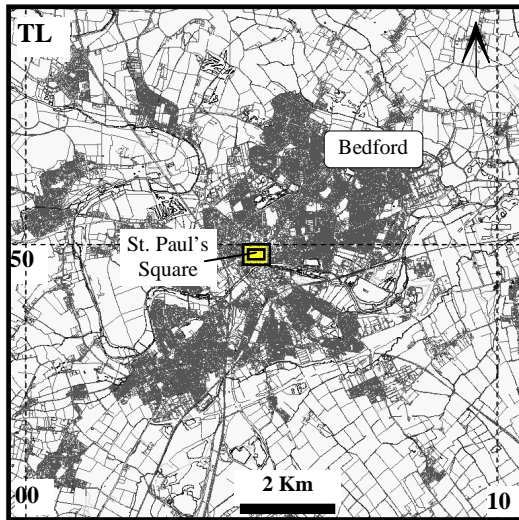
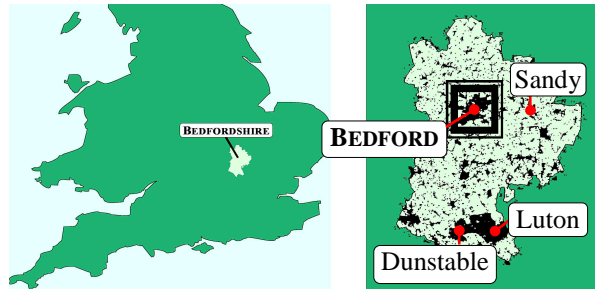


Figure 1: Site location plan with details of earlier archaeological investigations

This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Central Bedfordshire Council. Licence No. 100049029 (2011)

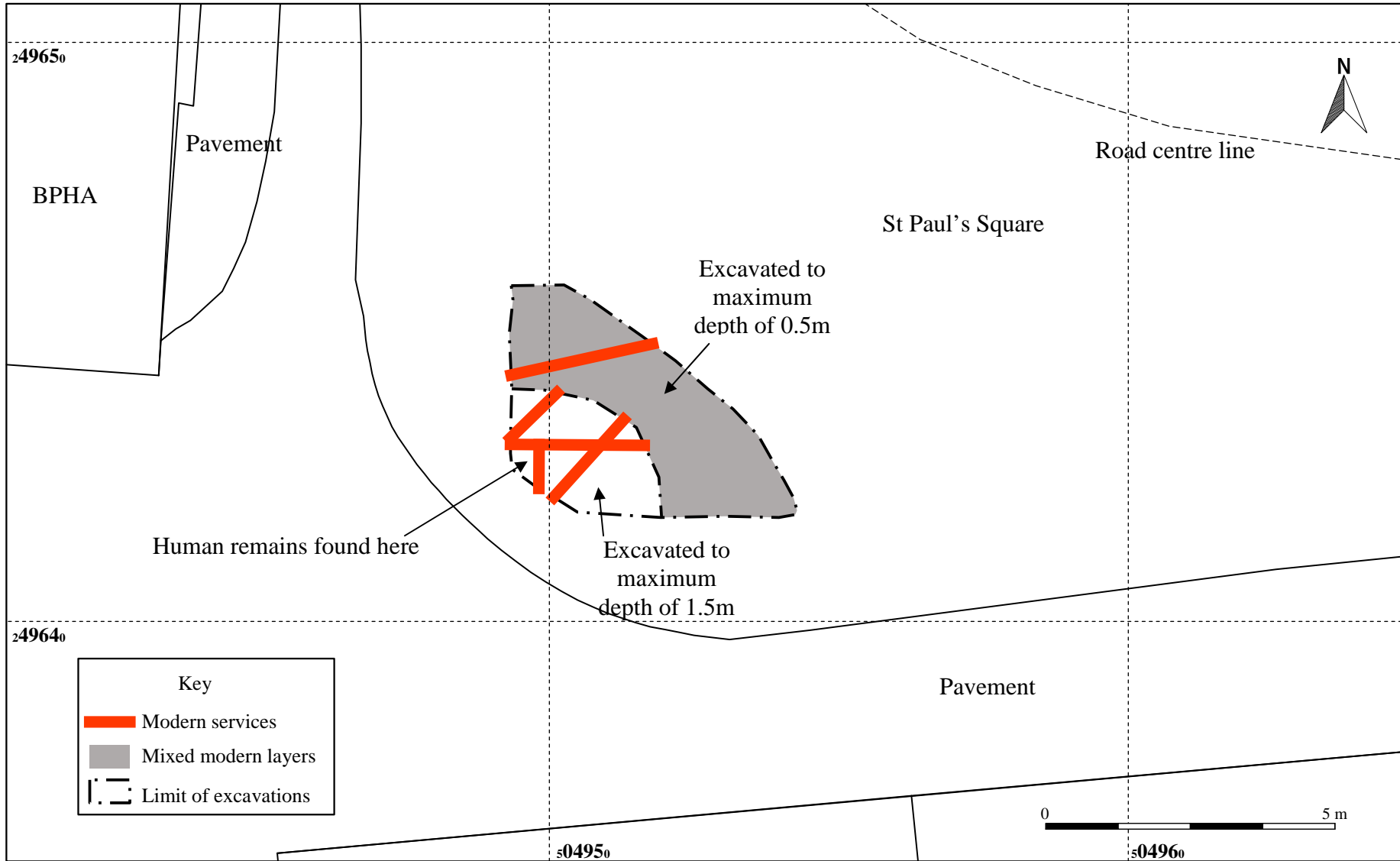


Figure 2: Plan of excavated area

This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Central Bedfordshire Council. Licence No. 100049029 (2011)



Figure 3: The original excavation, 1st December 2017, looking south



Figure 4: Extended excavation in progress, 6th December 2017, looking north



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

