

**THE BEDFORD ARMS
64 HIGH STREET
TODDINGTON
BEDFORDSHIRE**

STAGE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Albion
archaeology



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Prepared by	Approved by
Ben Barker and Tori Guy	Drew Shottliff

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Preface

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This document has been prepared by Ben Barker and Tori Guy (Project Officers) with contributions from Jackie Wells (Finds Officer). The figures were prepared by Joan Lightning. Fieldwork was undertaken by Ben Barker. Albion Archaeology 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
www.albionarchaeology.co.uk

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Key Terms

Throughout this project design the following terms or abbreviations are used:

CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
CifA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
Client	Oakwood Design and Planning
HER	Historic Environment Record
LPA	Local Planning Authority
PDA	Proposed development area
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

Planning permission was granted by Central Bedfordshire Council for the erection of eight 2-storey dwellings with associated parking to the rear of The Bedford Arms Public House, 64 High Street, Toddington, LU5 6BY (CB/17/04684/FULL).

The permitted development area (PDA) was situated within an area of archaeological interest associated with the historic medieval core of Toddington and had the potential to contain heritage assets associated with the historic development of the town.

As a result, a condition (no. 3) was attached to the planning consent. Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Oakwood Design and Planning to carry out the first stage of the investigation required by the condition—an archaeological field evaluation (trial trenching), which was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation agreed in advance with the LPA.

The trial trenching took place between 2nd and 3rd August 2018. Three 2m-wide trenches, totalling 75m in length, were excavated within the footprints of the proposed buildings and the access road.

All three trenches revealed features which warranted further investigation; however, the finds assemblages (or absence thereof) and stratigraphical evidence suggest that these features were most likely modern (20th-century) or geological in origin.

Additionally, two undated pits were identified within the trenches. One contained a partial cow burial of likely recent origin. The second contained roof slate and is equally likely to be relatively recent in date.

The results of the evaluation suggest all identified features have no potential to address regional research objectives and that the proposed development will not have an impact on any significant archaeological heritage assets.

The project archive will be deposited with Luton Culture (accession no. LUTNM: 2019/46) and details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-323622).



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Project Background**

Planning permission was granted by Central Bedfordshire Council for the erection of eight 2-storey dwellings with associated parking, to the rear of The Bedford Arms Public House, 64 High Street, Toddington, LU5 6BY (CB/17/04684/FULL).

The permitted development area (PDA) was situated within an area of archaeological interest associated with the historic medieval core of Toddington and had the potential to contain heritage assets associated with the historic development of the town. As a result, a condition (no. 3) was attached to the planning consent:

No development shall take place until a written scheme of archaeological investigation (WSI); that includes provision for post excavation analysis and publication, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development hereby approved shall only be implemented in full accordance with the approved archaeological scheme.

Reason: This condition is pre-commencement as a failure to secure appropriate archaeological investigation in advance of development would be contrary to paragraph 141 of the NPPF that requires developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets affected by development before they are lost (wholly or in part).

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Oakwood Design and Planning, to carry out the first stage of the archaeological investigation required by the condition. It comprised archaeological field evaluation in the form of trial trenching. The results of the Stage 1 investigation (this report) will inform any further works that might be required for the mitigation of construction impacts on archaeological heritage assets.

Prior to commencement of the site works, a written scheme of investigation was prepared (Albion Archaeology 2018) and approved by the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA).

1.2 **Site Location and Description**

Toddington is a large village in the western half of Central Bedfordshire. Dunstable lies c.6.5km to the south, Luton c.10.6km to the south-east and Flitwick c.6.3km to the north-east. Toddington has developed around the convergence of five roads: Station Road, Leighton Road, Luton Road, Park Road and High Street, with Church Square providing the other focus. The PDA lies on the west side of High Street, c.330m south-west of Church Square (Figure 1).



At the time of the fieldwork the PDA comprised undeveloped land to the rear of The Bedford Arms Public House and included the pub car park. It was centred on grid reference TL 00859 28586. Residential housing bordered the south and west sides of the PDA and the northern boundary was defined by Marlborough Place, another residential area. To the east were the former public house building and houses that front onto High Street.

Toddington is a hilltop village situated on Gault Formation mudstone. This is overlain by mid Pleistocene glaciofluvial deposits, comprising of sand and gravel¹. The PDA lies at c. 146m OD.

1.3 Description of Development Works

The permitted development comprises the erection of eight 2-storey, 3-bedroom dwellings and associated parking on land to the rear of The Bedford Arms Public House. The dwellings comprise two blocks of terraced houses and a pair of semi-detached houses arranged either side of a central road. Access will be directly from High Street.

1.4 Archaeological Background

The historical background to the site was presented in a desk-based heritage statement submitted with the planning application. The latter was augmented by a search of the Central Bedfordshire and Luton HER (search ref. 2018/19/098). A summary of heritage assets recorded within a 500m-radius study area, centred on the PDA, is provided below.

The earliest evidence of archaeological activity with the study area includes the recovery of Mesolithic flints from 11 Station Road (HER15860), c.450m to the north-east of the PDA.

The current line of the High Street was thought by the Viatores (1964) to have been part of a Roman road that linked Dunstable to Ampthill, although the HER states that ‘this route is very unlikely to have ever existed’ (HER11986). Roman coins (HER 6573) have been found c.410m to the north-east of the PDA.

Toddington’s origins are likely to lie in the late Saxon period. A significant early Saxon cemetery (HER 2857) was located c.490m to the south-west of the PDA, where finds including an iron shield boss, numerous swords, daggers and spears, a gilded copper alloy cruciform brooch and four gold saucer brooches. A large number of glass and stone beads were also reportedly recovered during gravel quarrying in the early 19th century.

The settlement is referenced in Domesday Book of 1086 and the impact of the Norman Conquest is evidenced by the remains of Conger Hill motte and bailey castle (HER 89), c.390m to the north-east of the PDA. The site is a Scheduled Monument (NHLE 1010059/ HER 89). The castle is likely to have been sited to control movement along the five historic roads that converged at Toddington.

¹<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html?location=toddington&gobBtn=go>



The growth of the medieval town of Toddington (HER 16981) would have been encouraged by the grant of the right to an annual market and fair in 1218, reconfirmed in 1315. The large majority of the PDA lies within the bounds of the medieval town, as defined in the Extensive Urban Survey for Toddington (Albion Archaeology 2005, fig. 10). The parish church (NHLE 1159540/ HER 962), situated *c.*360m to the north-east of the PDA, is recorded as being dedicated to St George of England in 1222. However, by 1362 the manor was valued at only £12 12s. 8d., ‘not more because the tenants are dead’, indicating that Toddington had suffered heavily from the plague of that year.

The church was substantially remodelled in the 15th century. The Town Hall (NHLE 1114752/ HER 2435) and site of the Hospital of St John the Baptist (HER 7921) also date to this period; both are located less than 410m to the north-east of the PDA. Find-spots of medieval pottery (HER 9822) and a medieval seal and lamp (HER 18364) have also been recorded in the vicinity.

The earliest cartographic source available for Toddington (the Radulph Agas survey of 1581) shows that by the early post-medieval period the town was once again thriving. Its subsequent decline began in the latter part of the 18th century as result of competition from other local market centres, and was hastened when the railway system bypassed the town altogether in the 19th century (CBC 2010).

The PDA was located partly within the Toddington Conservation Area (DBD 3397), which is centred on the village green and includes sixty listed building and one scheduled monument. One of these is The Bedford Arms (NHLE 1114747); a Grade II listed 17th-century timber-framed building situated immediately to the east of the PDA. The HER also lists thirty buildings (or sites thereof) of local historical or architectural interest within 500m of the PDA; most are of 18th- or 19th-century origin.



2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The relevant research frameworks for the area are: *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 PDA was located within the limits of the medieval historic core of Toddington, a heritage asset with archaeological interest, and in close proximity to an Anglo-Saxon cemetery (HER 2857). The PDA was also situated to the rear of a designated Grade II listed 17th-century building.

The investigation of Saxon settlements and medieval small towns—to examine their origins, development and economies—is both a local and regional archaeological research objective (Oake 2007, 14; Wade 2000, 24–5; Ayres 2000, 29–31). The research framework for Bedfordshire advocates research into rural settlement at the micro-scale of investigating the chronology, structure and function of individual settlements or classes of settlement and at the macro-scale of broad patterns of settlement (Oake 2007, 14). The framework also highlights the potential for acquiring information about the origins and development of villages from within or around the edges of existing settlements.

In summary, the specific research objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Provide information as to the scale, layout and nature of the medieval settlement within this part of Toddington—the southern end of the postulated extent of the medieval settlement;
- Retrieve further dating evidence for the settlement;
- Determine the potential for Anglo-Saxon heritage assets to be present on the PDA;
- Identify any post-medieval heritage assets, in particular any pertaining to the history of the Grade II listed Bedford Arms.

The general purpose of the evaluation was to recover information on the:

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



3. METHODOLOGY

A full methodology was provided in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2018).

The trial trenching took place on 2nd and 3rd August 2018. Three 2m-wide trenches, totalling 75m in length were excavated within the footprints of the proposed buildings and the associated access roads (Figure 2). Trenches 1 and 3 were 30m long and trench 2 was 15m long.

The trenches were opened using a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket, operated by an experienced driver and under close archaeological supervision. Overburden was removed down to the top of the archaeological deposits or undisturbed geological deposits, whichever was encountered first. The spoil heaps were also scanned for artefact recovery.

All excavation and recording was carried out by an experienced Albion staff member in consultation with CBCA (Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist). Any potential archaeological features were investigated and recorded using Albion Archaeology's pro forma sheets. Each trench was subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate. All deposits were recorded using a unique number sequence, commencing at 101 for Trench 1, 201 for Trench 2 *etc.* Context numbers in square brackets refer to the cuts [***] and round brackets to fills or layers (***). The trenches were inspected by the CBCA prior to their backfilling.

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> (3rd edn, 2017)
• ALGAO (East)	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> (Gurney 2003)
• Archaeological Archives Forum	<i>Archaeological Archives: A Guide to Best Practice in Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Curation</i> (Brown 2007)
• CIfA	<i>Charter and by-law and Code of conduct</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i> (2014)
• Historic England/ English Heritage	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Project Managers' Guide</i> (updated 2015)
	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation</i> (Campbell <i>et al.</i> 2011)
• Luton Culture	<i>Procedure for preparing archaeological archives for deposition with Luton Culture</i> (2013)



4. RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

Archaeological features and deposits found during the archaeological evaluation are described below by trench and shown in Figure 2. Artefacts recovered in the course of the archaeological evaluation are discussed within the text.

Detailed contextual information on all deposits and features can be found in Appendix 1.

4.2 Overburden and Geological Deposits

Across the PDA the overburden comprised a mid-brown-grey, sand-silt topsoil that was *c.*0.2m thick and contained modern debris. It is thought that the depth of topsoil had been reduced by *c.*0.1m during vegetation clearance prior to the archaeological evaluation. The topsoil sealed a mid-brown-orange, silt-sand subsoil that was identified in all three trenches; it was *c.*0.3–0.4m thick.

The undisturbed geology was generally a mid-red-brown clay-silt with frequent stones and occasional patches of less stony silt. Archaeological features were identified as cutting the natural geology with some modern features visible in the subsoil.

4.3 Archaeological Features

4.3.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 contained only modern and natural features; some of the modern features may have related to The Bedford Arms Public House and the neighbouring property (no. 62 High Street).

The north-east end of Trench 1 contained an area of modern disturbance, comprising fragments of modern tile, bricks and broken concrete. This area corresponded with the location of an outbuilding to the rear of no. 62 High Street, which once extended into this part of the PDA (as shown on the current OS Landline digital map (Figure 2)). The presence of modern frogged bricks and concrete within the demolition rubble suggests that the former structure was likely to have been of recent origin.

The only possible trace of a plot boundary between no. 62 and The Bedford Arms (no. 64) were two modern postholes identified in the subsoil whilst machining the trench. They were less than 0.2m in diameter and *c.*0.1m deep and were not visible in the natural geology. Small fragments of coal were visible in their fills.

A SE-NW orientated band of silty material was identified towards the centre of the trench, on a similar alignment to the plot boundary. This was tested by machine sondage but was found to be only *c.*0.1m deep, with a sterile fill; it is likely to be natural in origin.



4.3.2 Trench 2

The northern end of Trench 2 contained a partial animal burial in pit [204]. This was a very shallow feature and only cut into the natural by *c.*0.15m. Approximately 50% of the animal bone was contained within the subsoil layer; however, no cut within the subsoil was observed. It is likely that there had been modern disturbance in the area disturbing some of the burial and causing the mixed appearance. The pit was fairly irregular with shallow sloping sides; it was *c.*1.1m long and *c.*1m wide at the depth at which it cut the natural geology. Three bones (mandible, scapula and complete humerus: 862g) were contained within the mid grey-brown silt-sand fill (205) and indicate that the animal was a mature cow. The bones were not retained.

A modern bottle dump was identified within the subsoil in the southern half of the trench; it did not extend into the natural geology. Within the subsoil it had surviving extents of *c.*1.2m by 2m. It may have been related to the (former) Bedford Arms Public House; however, a bottle dump of such small size would not have provided much room for waste bottles.

To the south of the trench a patch of red-brown sand-silt was identified, which upon excavation proved to be a shallow bowl-shaped depression. This feature [206] was *c.*2m long by more than 0.9m wide, and only *c.*0.15m deep. Its fill was sterile (207), and it has accordingly been interpreted as a natural deposit.

4.3.3 Trench 3

A small, sub-square pit [304] was identified towards the centre of Trench 3. It was *c.*0.8m wide by *c.*0.8m long and *c.*0.19m deep, with near vertical sides and a flat base. Its fill (305) was a sterile dark grey-brown sand-silt with occasional small stones. Its regularity and the recovery of a small fragment of roofing slate (15g; not retained) is suggestive of a post-medieval or modern origin for the pit, but no other dating evidence was recovered.

The rest of Trench 3 was largely undisturbed other than the remains of the former the pub car-park boundary wall foundation, at the south-east end. This boundary wall is visible on the modern OS digital map.



5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 *Summary of Results*

All three trenches revealed features which warranted further investigation; however, the finds assemblages (or absence thereof) and stratigraphical evidence suggest that these features were most likely modern (20th-century) or geological in origin.

Additionally, two undated pits were identified within the trenches. One contained a partial cow burial of likely recent origin. The second contained roof slate and is equally likely to be relatively recent in date.

5.2 *Significance of Results*

The trial trenching did not reveal any archaeological features that are likely to predate the 20th century.

In terms of the identified local and regional research objectives (Oake 2007, 14; Wade 2000, 24–5; Ayres 2000, 29–31) no evidence for Saxon or medieval remains were identified. This may suggest that the southern extent of the postulated Saxon and medieval settlements did not extend this far south along the High Street. Equally, no evidence of further buildings associated with the (former) Bedford Arms Public House were identified, suggesting that no outbuildings (stables etc.) formerly existed on the land behind the surviving pub building.

The results of the evaluation suggest all identified features have no potential to address regional research objectives and that the proposed development will not have an impact on any significant archaeological heritage assets.

The project archive will be deposited with Luton Culture (accession no. LUTNM: 2019/46) and details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-323622).



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7. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES

Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 30.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.45 m. Max: 0.5 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 851: Northing: 28593)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 880: Northing: 28601)

Reason: Spatial sample of development area

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
101	Topsoil	Firm mid brown grey sandy silt frequent small stones 0.2m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Subsoil	Hard mid orange brown silty sand moderate small-medium stones 0.3m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Natural	Compact mid red brown clay sand frequent small-medium stones Plus patches of pure silt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 15.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.5 m. Max: 0.5 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 865: Northing: 28586)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 865: Northing: 28571)

Reason: Spatial sample of development area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
201	Topsoil	Firm mid brown grey sandy silt frequent small stones 0.2m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
202	Subsoil	Hard mid orange brown silty sand frequent small stones 0.3m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
203	Natural	Compact mid red brown silty sand frequent small-medium stones Plus patches of pure silt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
204	Pit	Irregular NW-SE sides: concave base: flat dimensions: min breadth 1.m, max depth 0.3m, min depth 0.15m, min length 1.1m 50% of the overall depth of this pit was contained within the subsoil	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
205	Fill	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt frequent small-medium stones Contained a high concentration of animal bone, however the shallow depth precluded the identification of whether it was articulated as it was heavily disturbed during machining. Probably c 0.3m thick but only extending into natural by 0.15m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
206	Pit	Oval sides: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.9m, max diameter 0.15m, max length 2.m Pit extended beyond the western limit of the trench	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
207	Fill	Firm mid red brown sandy silt occasional small stones 0.15m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Trench: 3

Max Dimensions: Length: 30.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.3 m. Max: 0.6 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 839: Northing: 28576)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 866: Northing: 28563)

Reason: Spatial sample of development area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
301	Topsoil	Firm mid brown grey sandy silt frequent small stones 0.2m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
302	Subsoil	Hard mid orange brown silty sand moderate small-medium stones 0.4m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
303	Natural	Compact mid red brown clay silt frequent small-medium stones Plus patches of pure silt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
304	Pit	Sub-square sides: near vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.8m, max depth 0.19m, max length 0.8m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
305	Fill	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.19m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

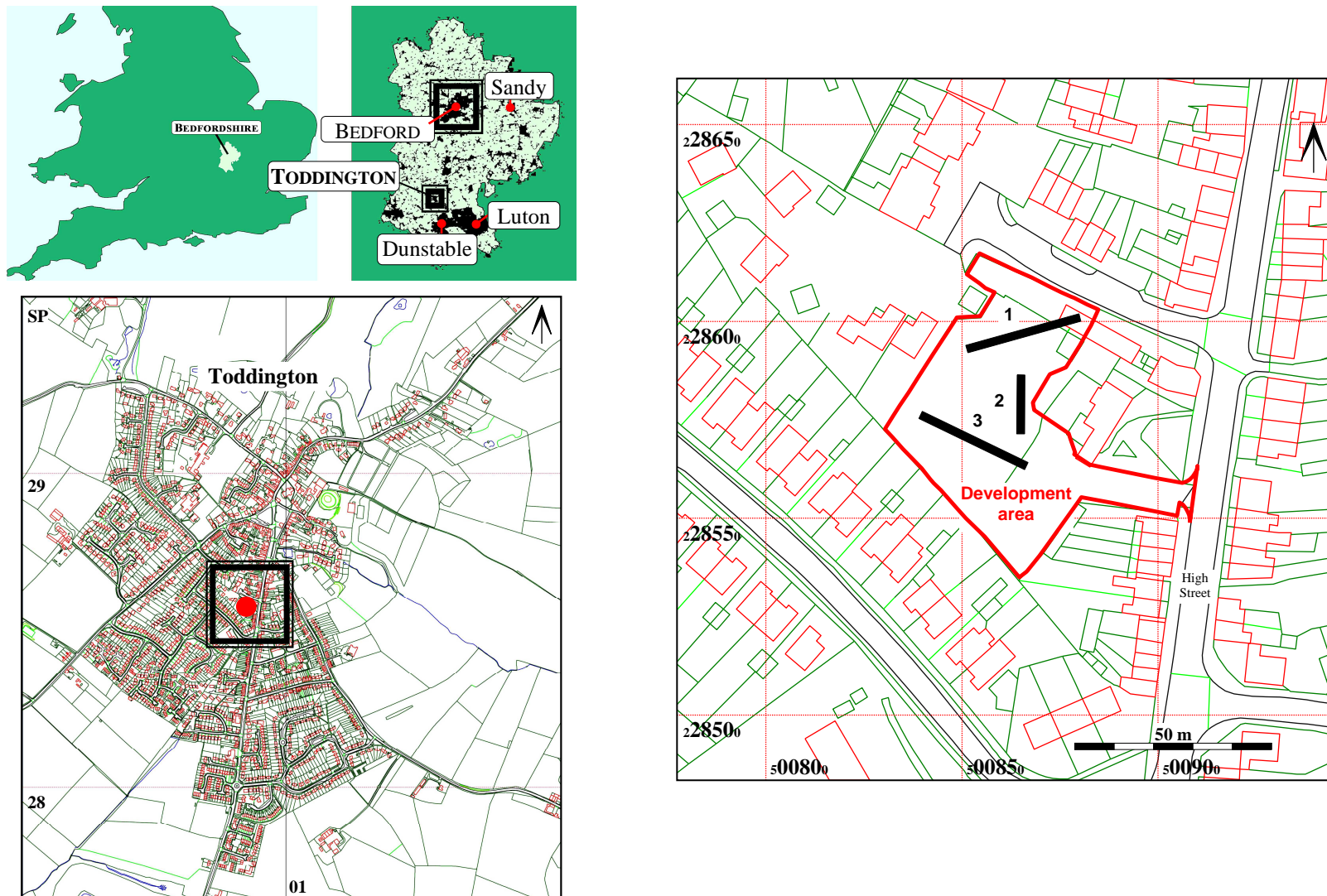
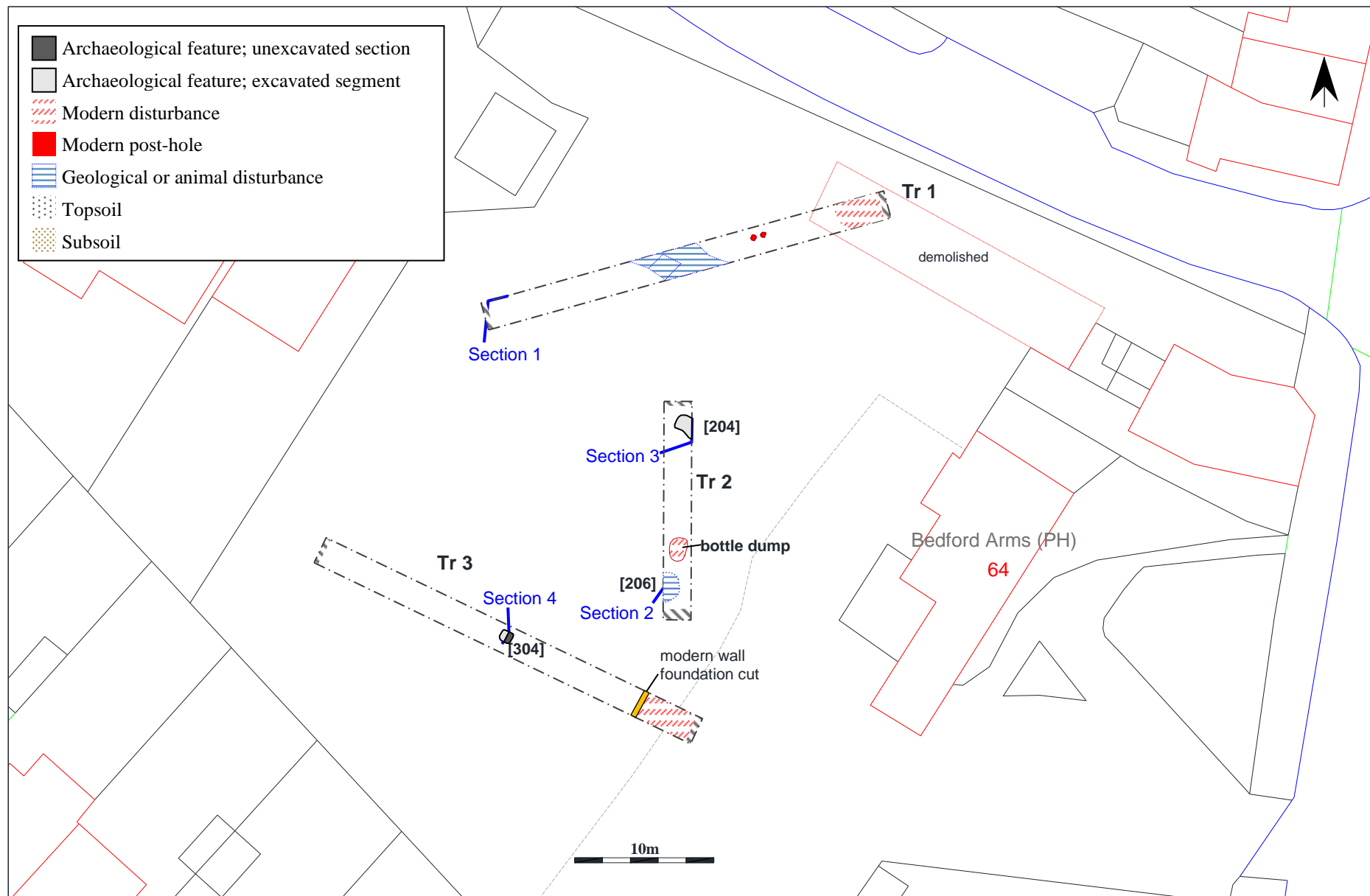


Figure 1: Site location plan

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Trench 1 looking SW



Trench 2 looking N



Trench 3 looking SE



Pit [206] looking W. Scale 1m



Pit [304] looking SE. Scale 1m

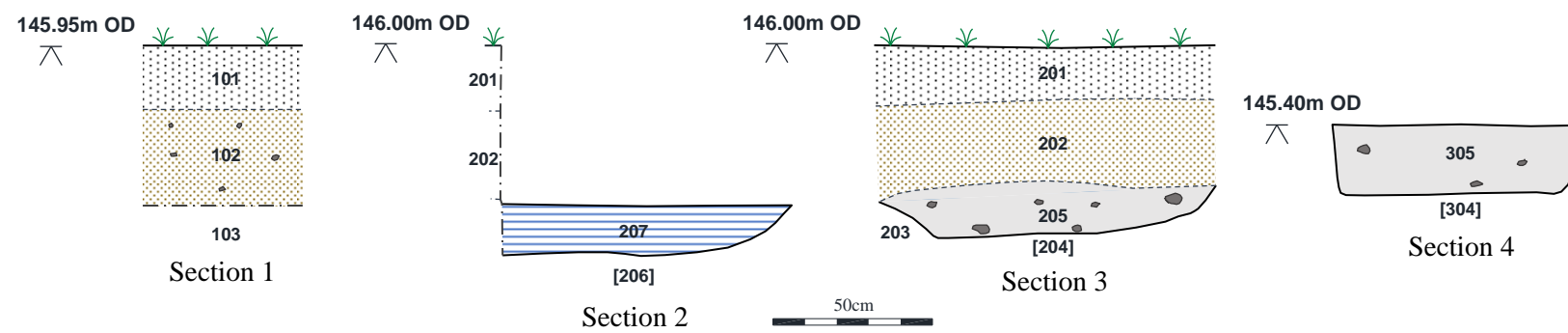


Figure 2: All-features plan, sections and photographs

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

Telephone 0300 300 8141
Email office@albion-arch.com
www.albion-arch.com

