

**HARROLD LOWER SCHOOL LIBRARY EXTENSION,  
THE GREEN, HARROLD, BEDFORDSHIRE**

**A PROGRAMME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
OBSERVATION, RECORDING, ANALYSIS  
AND PUBLICATION**

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9<sup>th</sup> August 2004

Produced for:  
Harrold Lower School

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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.*

*This report has been prepared by Chris Thatcher (Project Supervisor) and Joe Abrams (Project Manager). The fieldwork was undertaken by Chris Thatcher. The project was under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager). Joan Lightning (CAD Technician) produced the figures.*

*Albion Archaeology is grateful to Martin Bridgman, Chair of Governors, Harrold Lower School for commissioning the project. We would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Ryan Amos, and the staff of the Lavendon Building Company for their on-site assistance. Thanks are also extended to Martin Oake (Bedfordshire County Council's County Archaeological Officer) who monitored the site on behalf of Bedfordshire County Council.*

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## Structure of the Report

After the introductory Section 1, there is a summary of the results of the programme of archaeological observation and recording in Section 2, followed by a brief conclusion (Section 3). Section 4 is a bibliography and Appendix 1 contains an archaeological context summary.

## Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

<i>Albion</i>	Albion Archaeology
<i>Client</i>	Harrold Lower School
<i>IFA</i>	Institute of Field Archaeologists
<i>BCC's ACAO</i>	Bedfordshire County Council's Assistant County Archaeological Officer
<i>Procedures Manual</i>	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2001.</i> Bedfordshire County Council



### **Non-Technical Summary**

*In July 2004 Albion Archaeology was commissioned by the client Harrold Lower School to undertake a programme of archaeological observation during the groundworks required for a library extension at Harrold Lower School, Harrold.*

*Because the proposed work had the potential to disturb archaeological deposits, the local planning authority imposed a condition requiring the archaeological monitoring of groundworks for the foundation trenches. The parameters of the work were set out in a brief issued by Bedfordshire County Council's Assistant County Archaeological Officer (BCC 2004).*

*The site was centred on SP 9504 5674 c.60m south-west of the village war memorial on High Street. It lay at a height of around 44m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum). The underlying geology consisted of argyllic brown earths over fine loams with a substrate of alluvial valley gravels, which in turn overlay solid geology of Oolitic limestone.*

*The archaeological monitoring was undertaken between 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> July 2004. During this period all excavations which required monitoring were completed. A mechanical excavator was used to open one c.29.00m long foundation trench.*

*The development area is located within an area of high archaeological potential. The watching brief has shown that whilst the amount of modern disturbance within the development area is high; there remains a possibility that archaeological deposits still survive. If so they are sealed by at least 1.00m of modern deposits.*

*The accession number for the site archive is 2004.157. The archive will be kept in secure storage at the offices of Albion Archaeology at St Mary's Church, Bedford until deposition with Bedford Museum.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 Background

Bedford Borough Council granted planning permission (03/00167/FUL) for a library extension at Harrold Lower School, Harrold.

Because the proposed work had the potential to disturb archaeological deposits, the local planning authority imposed a condition requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation. This was in accordance with Policy 13 of the Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011 and Policy BE24 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002. The parameters of the work were set out in a brief issued by Bedfordshire County Council's, Assistant County Archaeological Officer (BCC 2004).

In response to the brief Albion Archaeology prepared a project design for a scheme of works that fulfilled these requirements and was commissioned by the client to undertake a programme of archaeological observation, recording, analysis and publication.

### 1.2 Site Location and Description

The site was located at SP 9504 5674 *c.*60m south-west of the village war memorial on High Street. It lay at a height of around 44m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The river Great Ouse lay *c.*100m to the south. The boundaries of the Lower School consisted of housing to the north and east, Mowhills road to the south and Priory Middle School to the west. The development area was *c.*120m<sup>2</sup> in size.

The underlying geology consisted of argyllic brown earths over fine loams with a substrate of alluvial valley gravels, which in turn overlay solid geology of Oolitic limestone.

### 1.3 Archaeological Background

The historical and archaeological background to Harrold has been summarised in the extensive urban survey, undertaken by English Heritage and Bedfordshire County Council (Albion Archaeology 2003).

Significant archaeological remains have been recorded within and close to the village (e.g. HER 64, HER 543). Remains dating to all periods since the earliest prehistoric period have been recorded during both quarrying and housing development. These attest the enduring attractiveness of the area as a place for settlement.

In the immediate vicinity of the Lower School the HER records the suspected location of a medieval manor (HER6757). An excavation undertaken by Albion in 2003 at the Priory Middle School, located immediately east of the development area, revealed extensive well preserved deposits dating to the medieval period. These included cobbled courtyard surfaces and the remains of at least two outbuildings as well as high concentrations of medieval domestic pottery.



Finds such as these might be expected within the vicinity of a manorial complex but the actual manor itself was not located.

The development area lay between the Priory Middle School site and the current village centre; an area that was considered to have high potential as the possible location for the manor itself.



## 2. RESULTS OF OBSERVATION AND RECORDING

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### 2.1 Introduction

The programme of archaeological observation was undertaken between 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> July 2004. During this period all excavations which required monitoring were completed. The groundworks consisted of a single foundation trench approximately 29.00m in length.

Detailed technical information on all the deposits and archaeological features discussed below can be found in Appendix 1.

### 2.2 Methodology

The programme of archaeological observation adhered to the field methods set out in section 5 of the brief (Bedfordshire County Council 2004) specifically;

- 1 All excavation of footings or service trenches and stripping of overburden was monitored to try to identify *in situ* archaeological deposits.
- 2 All disturbed soil was scanned for artefacts.
- 3 Archaeological deposits were assessed for environmental evidence, taking into account quality of preservation, dating evidence, risk of contamination and the potential of the material. The guidelines set out in English Heritage's *Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation* (2002) were adhered to.
- 4 All deposits were fully recorded in accordance with Albion's *Procedures Manual* and the detailed requirements in section 3 of the *Brief*.
- 5 All observations were recorded at a suitable scale on base plans that were tied in to the OS national grid.
- 6 The groundworks were recorded using a digital camera.

Throughout the project the standards set out in the Institute of Field Archaeologists Codes of Conduct and Standards and Guidance documents (specifically *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, September 1999), in English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991) and Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual* were adhered to.

### 2.3 Extent and nature of groundworks

A single foundation trench, 0.50m in width and 1.00m deep, was excavated using a small, tracked, mechanical excavator.

The foundation trench was excavated in the northeastern corner of the playground and had a total length of c.29.00m. The playground had a tarmac surface (104), approximately 0.16m thick, which had to be broken prior to excavation of the trench. Some modern disturbance below ground level was therefore expected.

### 2.4 Undisturbed Geological Deposits

The undisturbed geological deposit (100) was observed in the base of the foundation trench. This was recorded at a depth of 1.00m; except in the north-





eastern part of the foundation trench where it was recorded at a depth of 1.40m. It is suggested this truncation had been caused during the construction of a manhole (plate 3).

## **2.5 Modern land-use recorded during the project**

No undisturbed topsoil or subsoil were observed in the trench sides which would suggest that the area had undergone significant reworking and modern disturbance, probably associated with the construction of the school itself and subsequent maintenance of the playground.

Lying over the natural geological deposit was layer (101). This was a mixture of topsoil, subsoil and modern artefacts including bricks, metal objects, wooden stakes, modern glazed pottery and pieces of concrete. Deposit (101) was approximately 0.60m thick.

A layer of dark grey black clayey silt, approximately 0.11m thick (102), overlay (101). This layer appeared to have been derived largely from topsoil. It possessed a more homogeneous composition than (101) which might suggest that it was used to level the area adjacent to the school building. It is suggested that this may have formed a grass playground area prior to the laying of a tarmac hardstanding playground.

Sealing (101) was a layer of hardcore (103). This was 0.16m thick and served as the foundation material for the tarmac playground (104) and existing ground surface.

No significant archaeological remains were observed within the foundation trench. It is possible that any archaeological remains had already been truncated by modern disturbance. However, given the depth (plate 2) to natural geological deposits (also the most likely level at which archaeological remains would be encountered) it is considered possible that significant remains may still lie undisturbed below the proposed library extension.

Four sewage pipes were uncovered within the foundation trenches (plate 1) at depths ranging from 0.80m – 1.00m below ground level.



### 3. SYNTHESIS

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#### 3.1 Interpretation

The vertical sections in the foundation trenches indicate that the development area had been subject to significant modern disturbance. It is considered highly likely that much of disturbance took place during the construction of the school and associated tarmac playground.

This construction work is likely to have had one of the following effects. Either it led to the removal of all significant archaeological deposits. Alternatively it caused large quantities of topsoil, subsoil and various modern objects to be re-deposited on land adjacent to the school building.

The latter explanation is favoured on the following grounds. Albion recently undertook an excavation on land *c.*100m to the west (Albion Archaeology *forthcoming*) during which the undisturbed geological layer was reached at a depth of no more than 0.60m. Therefore the library extension is being built on land which has an overburden depth of at least 0.40m more than the site to the west. This would suggest that a significant amount of modern material had indeed been dumped on this area, raising the existing ground level and possibly protecting any sealed archaeological remains.

It should also be noted that no residual artefactual material dating to either the medieval, or any pre-modern period was found during the works.

#### 3.2 Summary

The development area is located within a landscape of high archaeological potential. The watching brief has shown that whilst the amount of modern disturbance within the development area is high; there remains a possibility that archaeological deposits still survive. If so, they are sealed by at least 1.00m of modern deposits.



## 4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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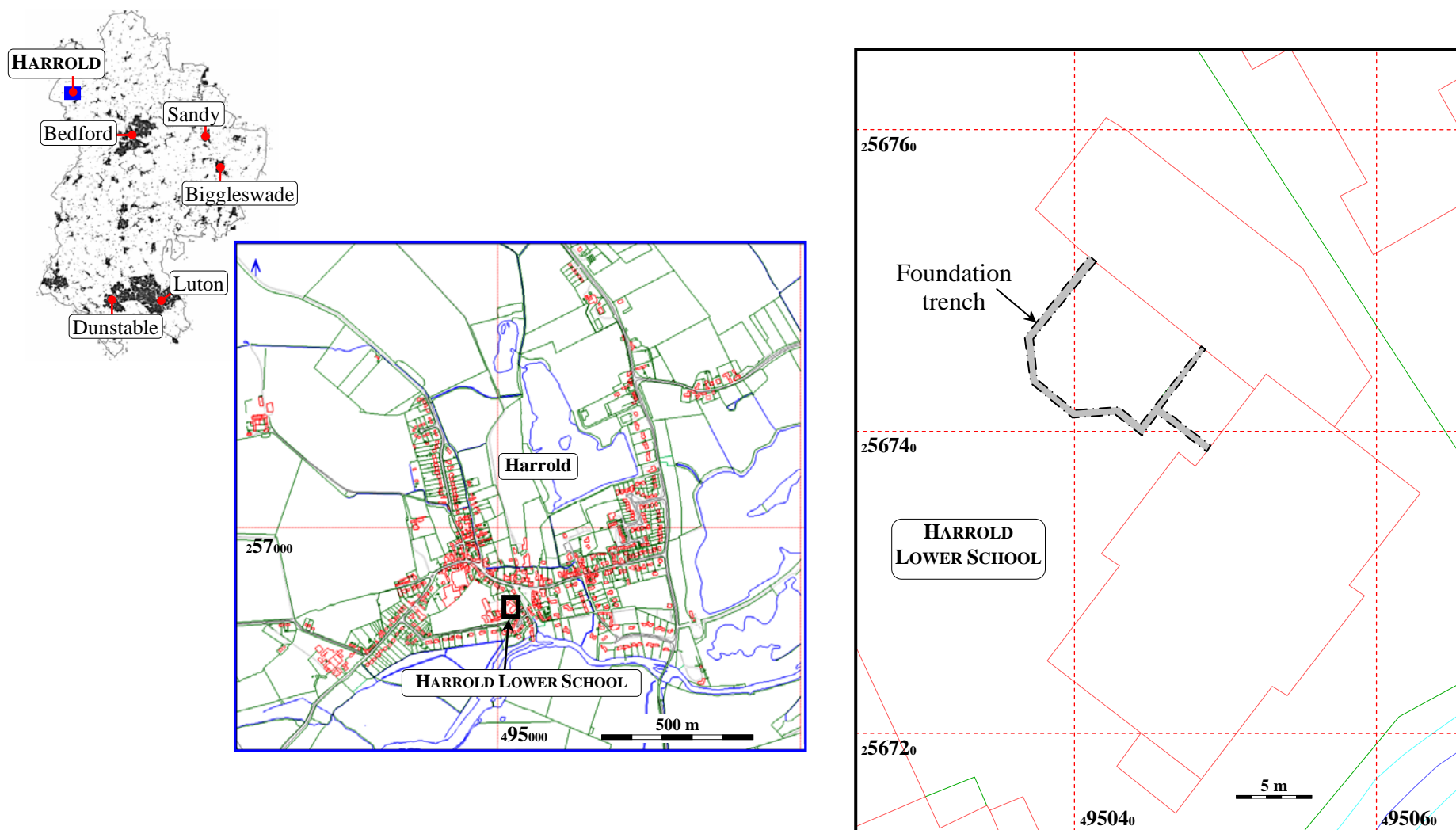


## APPENDICES

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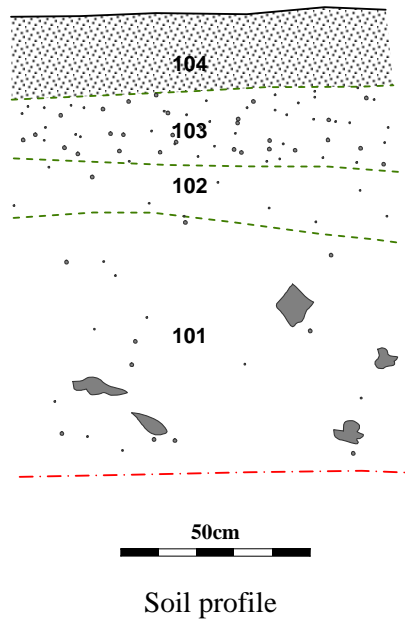
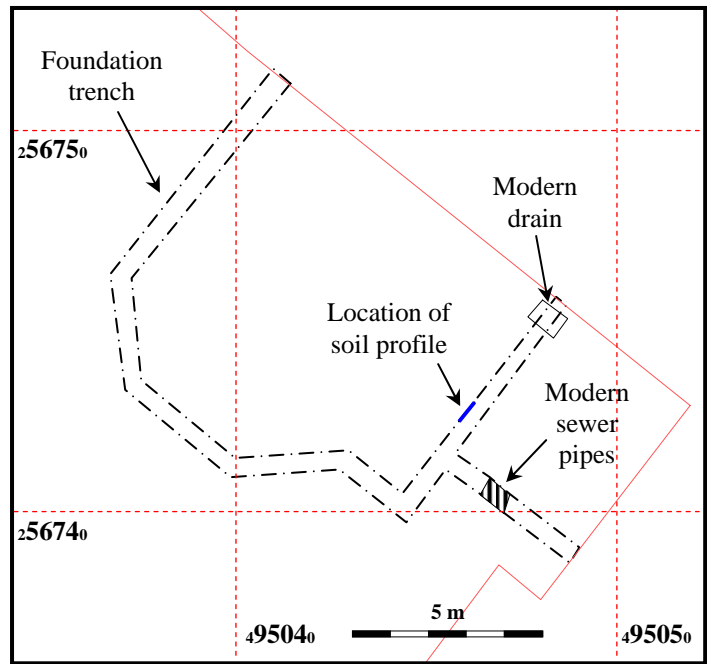
### 4.1 Appendix 1 Context Summary

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions L x W x D (m)
100	Undisturbed geological layer	Compact, mid orange yellow gravel	
101	Make up layer laid down after construction of building	Mid greyish brown clayey silt with frequent small stones and occasional modern debris including brick, metal, wooden steaks and modern glazed pottery fragments	0.57m thick
102	Re-deposited topsoil levelling layer or remains of external surface prior to the laying of a tarmac hard standing layer	Dark greyish black clayey silt with modern small stones and very occasional modern brick/concrete inclusions	0.11m thick
103	Type 1 hardcore layer immediately beneath tarmac	mid pinkish red gravel	0.16m thick
104	Tarmac for playground	Black grey Tarmac	0.16m thick



**Figure 1: Site location**

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**Figure 2:** All features, soil profile and selected photographs

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