

**8-10 HOWARD STREET
BEDFORD
BEDFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

Albion
archaeology



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Compiled by	Checked by	Approved by
Adam Williams Benjamin Carroll & Jeremy Oetgen	Drew Shotliff	Drew Shotliff

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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. This document should not be relied upon or used for any other project 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).

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Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the archaeological works by Peter Pendleton & Associates Ltd on behalf of BCL Group Ltd. The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Vanessa Clarke (Senior Archaeological Officer) and Geoff Saunders (Archaeological Officer) of Bedford Borough Council.

Fieldwork was carried out by Adam Williams (Project Supervisor). This report was prepared by Adam Williams, Benjamin Carroll (Assistant Archaeological Manager) and Jeremy Oetgen (Project Manager). Figures were created by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician) and Jeremy Oetgen. All Albion 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
 E-mail: office@albion-arch.com
 Website: www.albion-arch.com

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Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

BBC	Bedford Borough Council
CIfA	Chartered Institute <i>for</i> Archaeologists
EBB	Bedford Borough Council Event
HER	BBC Historic Environment Record
LPA	Local Planning Authority
NHLE	National Heritage List for England
OD	Ordnance Datum
OS	Ordnance Survey
PDA	Proposed development area
SAO	BBC Senior Archaeological Officer



Non-Technical Summary

Peter Pendleton & Associates Ltd sought pre-application advice from Bedford Borough Council in relation to a proposed development at 8-10 Howard Street, Bedford, MK40 3HS. The development comprised extension to the rear, side and roof in order to create additional residential units.

In her consultation response, the Senior Archaeological Officer (SAO) recommended that pre-determination archaeological evaluation should be undertaken in order to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains, their significance, extent and character. Albion Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the evaluation in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by Bedford Borough Council's Historic Environment Team.

A single trial trench 8.9m long by 1.8m wide was excavated to rear of the standing building and near the east end of the proposed development area (PDA).

Beneath the existing car park surface and make-up (c.0.3m thick) were the remains of buildings demolished in the 1970s. The foundations of these 19th- to 20th-century buildings cut down into substantial deposits of garden soil, at least 0.56m thick, containing pottery dating from the 10th–11th century onwards. Undisturbed geological deposits were revealed at c.1.2m below ground level near the middle of the trench rising to a depth of c.0.6m in the north.

As the PDA is situated within the postulated Anglo-Saxon burh (fortified town) on the north bank of the Great Ouse), the 10th–11th-century finds recovered from the garden soil are likely to relate to the early urban settlement of Bedford.

The evidence of the trial trench indicates that the 19th- and 20th-century buildings did not have large cellars. This suggests that, apart from the foundations of the buildings demolished c.1970, this part of the PDA has suffered little from post-Industrial intrusions.

The evaluation has demonstrated that the PDA could potentially retain moderately well-preserved archaeological remains of urban settlement dating from the late Anglo-Saxon period onwards due to the limited impact from later building foundations. If so they would have potential to address regional research objectives.

Historical map evidence suggests that later medieval and post-medieval remains are likely to relate to the use of the land as gardens. Later garden features will have been more prone to truncation by 19th- and 20th-century structures (being closer to the surface) and any surviving remains are likely to be of local to regional significance. The heritage value of the remains of 19th- and 20th-century buildings has largely been lost, due to their demolition in the 1970s and would only be of local significance depending upon their preservation.

A summary of the evaluation results will be uploaded onto the OASIS website (ref. no.: albionar1-181924). The project archive will be deposited at The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum (accession number BEDFM 2020.48).



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Planning Background*

Peter Pendleton & Associates Ltd sought pre-application advice (19/00303/PREAPP) from Bedford Borough Council in relation to a proposed development at 8-10 Howard Street, Bedford, MK40 3HS. The development comprised extension to the rear, side and roof in order to create additional residential units.

In her consultation response, the Borough Council's Senior Archaeological Officer (SAO) advised that the proposed development lay within the postulated extent of medieval Bedford and that late 19th-century OS mapping depicted a number of long since demolished buildings in the area.

Accordingly, the SAO recommended that pre-determination archaeological evaluation should be undertaken in order to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains, their significance, extent and character.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to prepare a written scheme of investigation for the evaluation and to carry out the required work. The results of the evaluation will inform the determination of the planning application, and where granted, the nature of any necessary archaeological conditions.

1.2 *Site Location, Topography and Geology*

The existing building at 8-10 Howard Street is a five-storey, 1970s, former office block. It is located within Sub-area 3¹ of the Bedford Conservation Area. The proposed development area (PDA) comprises the existing building and former car park to the rear (west). The PDA covers an area of *c.*819m², centred on OS grid reference TL 0509 4995; it is bounded by Howard Street to the east and by other modern buildings on all other sides.

The PDA lies *c.*340m north of the River Great Ouse at a height of *c.*30m OD. The superficial geological deposits consist of Stoke Goldington Member - Sand and Gravel, formed in a riverine environment up to 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period (British Geological Survey 2020). The underlying sedimentary bedrock is Kellaways Clay Member – Mudstone, formed *c.*164 to 166 million years ago in the Jurassic Period.

1.3 *Archaeological and Historical Background*

The following section is based on information held by the Bedford Borough Council Historic Environment Record for a 500m-radius study area around the PDA.

1.3.1 *Designated heritage assets*

There are no designated heritage assets within the PDA itself, and, although there are numerous listed buildings in the town centre, none are close by.

¹ Town Centre East: encompassing an area on the north side of the river and east of the High Street



1.3.2 Bedford Conservation Area

The Sub-area 3 appraisal (Bedford Borough Council 2008, 53–8) states that it is ‘...an area of high archaeological potential, as well as much above-ground interest’. Buildings in this sub-area have a much more diverse character and date than those west of the town centre and comprise a mix of ‘historic housing, public houses, chapels and shops, along with more recent arrivals, notably commercial offices and car parking, which have seriously disrupted the historic urban grain’.

1.3.3 Prehistoric (before AD 43)

Within Bedford town there are occasional records of prehistoric find-spots and heritage assets, but none are known within 500m of the PDA.

1.3.4 Roman (AD 43–c. AD 400)

The likelihood of Bedford having Roman origins is suggested by the density of occupation elsewhere along the Great Ouse. However, the occasional, mostly 19th-century reports of Roman pottery, artefacts and tile from the town are probably not sufficient to indicate the presence of a substantial settlement. The course of several postulated Roman roads lies in the vicinity of Bedford, but none passes directly through the historic core (Albion Archaeology 2001, 20).

A sherd of Roman pottery (in a later feature) was found during excavations on Mill Street (HER 3912), c.120m south-east of the PDA.

1.3.5 Anglo-Saxon (c. AD 400–1066)

From the late 10th century, the PDA lay within the north-eastern quadrant of the northern *burh* (a planned, fortified town) and the nearby Mill Street is thought to follow the line of one of the early streets, which were laid out on a grid pattern.

A settlement at Bedford is known to have been established to the north of the river by AD 915 (or AD 918), when Edward the Elder possibly took over an existing northern *burh* and established the southern *burh* to the south of the river (HER 10530; Baker 1979, 10). In 2017, a programme of archaeological investigation was undertaken at The Residence on the north side of Lurke Street (EBB1353; Boyer, forthcoming). In Plot A, c.80m north-east of the PDA, the work revealed an Anglo-Saxon pit and an east–west-aligned ditch that corresponds with the postulated line of defensive ditch of the northern *burh* ditch (Haslam 1983, 35).

Evidence of Anglo-Saxon settlement in the study area has been recorded at numerous locations, particularly in the area between the PDA and the river. A trial-trench evaluation at Bennetts Works, Castle Lane (HER 14397; EBB740), c.200m south-east of the PDA, identified slots, postholes and hearths of middle Saxon date. These had been cut by later Saxon occupation features and were sealed by a thick cultivation layer of Saxo-Norman date. Numerous Saxon features, including two hall-like structures, were also discovered during various investigations at Bedford Castle (EBB597; EBB599; EBB741, and Albion Archaeology 2009).

During the demolition of buildings at 5–9 St Peter’s Street (HER 15445) Anglo-Saxon pottery was found. Similar material has been recovered from 1 St Peter’s



Street (HER 14051) and at 25 St Peter's Street (HER 14049). The nearest of these sites lies *c.*75m to the north of the PDA.

Anglo-Saxon pottery was also found at various locations on the High Street during building work (HER 300, HER 4461, HER 14048, HER 14050).

1.3.6 Medieval (1066–1550)

Existing evidence suggests that the PDA lies within the limits of the medieval town as recorded by the HER (HER 10530). It is over *c.*160m north of the site of the Norman castle, which was destroyed after a siege of 1224.

Bedford was given to Hugh de Beauchamp in 1087 by William II, third son of William the Conqueror. Much of the street plan of the Anglo-Saxon *burh* survived into the medieval period, although construction of Bedford's motte and bailey castle (NHLE 1010366/ HER298) cleared much of the south-east quadrant of the northern *burh*. The Anglo-Saxon town ditch identified to the north of Lurke Street (see above: EBB1353; Boyer, forthcoming) was maintained throughout the medieval period, and a number of medieval pits were also identified on the same site. An alluvial deposit there may be associated with late medieval or early post-medieval flooding of the River Great Ouse. This investigation confirmed the northern limits of the medieval town as recorded by the HER (HER 10530).

The latest documentary, topographical and archaeological evidence indicates that the castle baileys were rectangular and defined by an earthen rampart and outer ditch (Albion Archaeology 2009). The present-day Newnham Road, Castle Road and Rams Yard mark the line of the eastern and northern sections of the ditch, whilst the western side most likely lies beneath the rear of buildings fronting onto High Street. The PDA, therefore, is situated *c.*160m north-west of the bailey defences.

Evidence of medieval settlement beyond the castle has been identified during archaeological investigations on Mill Street (HER 3069, HER 14378), Rose Yard (HER 14373), Castle Lane (HER 14376) and on St Cuthbert's Street (HER 15659) and mostly comprise pits and postholes. A disturbed medieval inhumation was also identified at 8–10 Cuthbert's Street (HER 15821), *c.*140m east of the PDA.

Find-spots of medieval pottery have been recorded in several locations on the High Street (HER 300, HER 4461, 14048, HER 14050, HER 14819), Mill Street (HER 4456), St Peter's Street (HER 4464, HER 14049, HER 14051) and Silver Street (HER 9823), often occurring with Anglo-Saxon and post-medieval pottery as a result of long-lived settlement activity in the core of the town.

1.3.7 Post-medieval and modern (1550–present)

The HER records that the PDA was formerly the site of a post-medieval works of unspecified type (HER 17584), recorded on the 1972 edition of the 1:2500-scale OS map. The existing office building was given planning permission in 1971 (BB/TP/71/00106) and was probably built between 1972 and 1975, and this is presumably when the former works buildings were demolished. No other



buildings exist on the PDA, apart from a prefabricated, green GRP electricity substation installed in summer 2020, shortly before the trial trenching took place (Figure 2).

The majority of the post-medieval heritage assets within the study area are buildings and epitomise the continued expansion of Bedford during this period. The majority of the listed and undesignated buildings of historical interest date to the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

Nearest to the PDA (immediately to the south) are the undesignated, 19th-century houses at 4 & 6 Howard Street (HER 10535). Further undesignated, 19th- and 20th-century buildings front onto the High Street, immediately to the west of the PDA (HER4102, HER4103, HER4104, HER4105). In the same location are the sites of a post-medieval lace manufacturer (HER 17301) and an ironmonger's (HER 17281). Within the PDA itself is the site of a former post-medieval works of unspecified type (see above). Sites such as these are indicative of the industries that were formerly located within the town centre.

Various elements of the Victorian townscape survive within the study area, including a horse trough (HER 7840) on St Peter's Street, a tombstone (HER 7973) in St Peter's Churchyard (HER 9019), the Bunyan Meeting Churchyard (HER 9003) and the Howard United Reformed Churchyard (HER 9004). Modern heritage assets relate to three WWII air raid shelters on St Peter's Green, which are visible as earthworks on historic aerial photographs (HER 21953).

Former post-medieval buildings and other settlement activity has also been identified during archaeological investigations at 43 Mill Street (HER 3069) and 8–10 St Cuthbert's Street (HER 15659).

A small-scale watching brief on groundworks to the rear of 97A High Street, immediately to the south-west of the PDA (Figure 1), revealed 19th-century foundations and a series of possibly post-medieval rubbish pits (EBB1260; Albion Archaeology 2014a).

The remains of 19th- and 20th-century brewery buildings were also recorded on The Residence development on the north side of Lurke Street (EBB1353; Boyer, forthcoming).

1.3.8 Historical map evidence

Maps dating from the early 17th century onwards suggest that until the late 19th century the buildings within Bedford were generally ranged along the street frontages, with large areas of open land to the rear—presumably used as gardens, orchards, paddocks and open-air workplaces. The PDA lay within one of these open spaces, located between High Street, Mill Lane and Lurke Street. However, in the vicinity of the PDA, John Speed's map of 1610 depicts a conspicuously large gabled building, set back from the High Street frontage (Figure 3).

This building might still have been extant until the early 1800s (Brayley map, 1807), but has gone by the time of Reynold's (1841) map of Bedford. Reynold's map is the first to depict Howard Street. At this date, the street was being built-



out northwards from Mill Lane but did not yet extend as far as the PDA and Lurke Lane (as it then was). Mercer's map of 1878 shows plots laid out on land that includes the PDA but they do not yet contain buildings.

The 1881–82 first edition, 25-inch OS map is the first to indicate that the PDA has been built on, but the east end of the PDA was still largely open land, presumably a garden (Figure 4). Thereafter, the historical mapping suggests a succession of redevelopments on the site. The existing office building within the PDA, which received planning permission in 1971, was probably built between 1972 and 1975, replacing the works shown on the 1972 1:2,500-scale OS map. The 1972 map has not been consulted for this report; no copies were available for inspection at the time of writing, so the 1926 3rd edition is illustrated (Figure 5).

1.4 Objectives of the Archaeological Field Evaluation

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

This information will be used by the SAO and the LPA to evaluate the significance of the potential impact of the permitted development on any archaeological remains that might survive within the site.

The significance of the archaeological remains uncovered during the evaluation will be assessed against the published research frameworks for the region. The relevant documents for the region are provided by *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties* (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Hertfordshire and Essex) (Brown and Glazebrook 2000) and *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011).

In addition to these regionally focussed documents, work has also specifically been done on the county of Bedfordshire: *Bedfordshire Archaeology. Research and Archaeology: Resource Assessment, Research Agenda and Strategy* (Oake et al 2007).

The deposits encountered indicate that the PDA has potential to address research agendas relating to the medieval and post-medieval development of the town and possibly for the Anglo-Saxon *burh*. Such evidence would fit into a number of broad research aims related to urban development that are identified in the regional agenda.



2. METHOD STATEMENT

2.1 Standards

Throughout the project the standards set out in the following documents were adhered to:

• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (3rd edn, 2017).
• Bedford Museum	<i>Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedfordshire</i> (2010)
• CIfA	<i>Charter and by-law</i> (2014); <i>Code of conduct</i> (2019)
	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i> (2020)
	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation</i> (2014)
• Historic England	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment PPN3: Archaeological Excavation</i> (2015)
	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation. 2nd ed.</i> (2011)

2.2 Trial Trenching

The trial trenching was undertaken on 20th and 21st August 2020. A single 8.9m x 1.8m trial trench was opened to the rear of the standing building within the PDA (Figure 1).

The trench's location was adjusted from the originally proposed position due to site constraints (underground services (Figure 2) and other restrictions on safe access). This was agreed in advance with the SAO.

The car-park surface and reinforced concrete was removed with a hydraulic breaker and angle grinder. All other overburden was removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket, operated by an experienced driver.

Due to a misunderstanding, part of the trench was machined without close archaeological supervision. Contractors had been instructed by the client to break out the car park surface to prepare for machine excavation under archaeological supervision. However, having broken out the surface, the contractors began to excavate the south end of the trench before Albion Archaeology staff had arrived to supervise the work. On arrival, Albion Archaeology staff stopped the contractors and informed the SAO, agreeing a course of action and monitoring the north end of the trench excavation under close archaeological supervision.



Investigation and recording were carried out by experienced Albion Archaeology staff. Archaeological features were cleaned, investigated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's pro forma sheets. All features and deposits were assigned a unique context number commencing at 100. The features and deposits in the trench were drawn and photographed as appropriate. The trench was inspected on 21st August by Bedford Borough Council's Archaeological Officer.

Deposits encountered were investigated and recorded in accordance with Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual*. Spoil heaps were checked to recover archaeological artefacts. A detailed methodology is provided in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2020).

The project archive will be deposited with The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum (accession number BEDFM 2020.48). Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-181924) in accordance with the guidelines issued by Historic England and the Archaeology Data Service.



3. FIELDWORK RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

All archaeological deposits and features found within the trial trench are summarised and interpreted in this section. Site recording numbers have been used to identify the deposits, distinguished by different bracket styles to indicate whether they are a feature number [***] or fill/layer numbers (***) .

Detailed descriptions of every individual context are provided in Appendix 1; this should be consulted for information such as alignment, nature of fills, dimensions etc. The trench location is shown on Figure 1, with a more detailed plan and section presented on Figure 2. Selected site images are shown on Photographs 1–7.

The features and deposits included modern building remains and a garden soil. Datable artefacts indicated the presence of deposits dating from the 10th–11th century onwards.

Ordnance datum heights cited in this report are indicative and should not be relied upon without prior consultation with Albion Archaeology.

3.2 Archaeological Deposits

3.2.1 Existing surface and make-up

Modern tarmac (100) and hardcore (101) were present to a depth of c.0.3m (base at c.31.3m OD).

3.2.2 Remains of buildings demolished c.1975

Machine excavation of the trench revealed extensive foundations and other remains of the 19th-century and later buildings that were demolished prior to the construction of the existing office block in c.1975. These probably comprised two adjacent buildings, separated by a narrow (0.8m-wide) alleyway. The first was possibly a workshop, because it had a substantial floor of brick, later reinforced with a concrete slab. The other, located at the south end of the trench, may have had a cellar, which was backfilled with rubble. An earlier phase of building was evidenced by a concrete foundation beneath the floor of the possible workshop. The conjectured layout of these structures is indicated on Figure 2.

A possible workshop building with a substantial floor occupying the north end of the trench

An intact reinforced concrete slab (102), 0.26m thick, survived beneath the hardcore layer (101). This extended over most of the trench. A brick wall (104), or kerb, was set into the top of the slab at the north end of the trench. Because it was set on top of the slab, this wall might have been no more than an internal partition.

The slab overlay an earlier brick surface (103) that was 0.24m thick. The base of this surface lay at c.30.9m OD. At its south side, the brick surface was bonded into a brick wall that was 0.48m high and ran east–west. It was not clear, but it is



possible that this wall was built on top of a foundation of coarse-aggregate concrete (108) in a foundation trench [107] (see below).

The brick structures are interpreted as the remains of an original late 19th- or early 20th-century building, with the concrete slab being a later 20th-century alteration. Given its substantial construction, the floor was probably part of the workshop listed in the HER (see above).

A concrete foundation beam (109) abutted the south wall of the ‘workshop’. It is possible that this had been inserted to partially underpin and reinforce the brick wall. The concrete foundation was 0.38m wide and 0.82m deep and it spanned the width of the trench on an east–west axis. It appeared to be contained within the construction cut [107], which was backfilled with a coarse-aggregate concrete (108)—however, the coarse concrete might have been an earlier footing for the ‘workshop’ building. The depth of the construction cut was not ascertained, because it was too deep to be safely excavated.

Part of a building at the south end of the trench

A brick wall foundation (111) lay alongside foundation (109), separated by a gap of c.0.2m. This structure was 0.36m wide and 1.06m deep and also spanned the width of the trench. A construction cut [110] was visible on its north face, and this was backfilled with a deposit (116) of mixed silty sand with modern ceramic building material inclusions. However, the south side of the wall foundation was a large void backfilled with a deposit (112), comprising brick rubble and other modern ceramic building material. This void was at least 1m wide and 0.48m deep; it might have been a cellar or other subsurface structure. This might be the remains of the building shown on the first edition OS 25-inch map (Figure 4).

An alleyway between the two buildings

A 0.12m-thick concrete slab (117) projected 0.25m from the western side of the trench. This overlies the concrete beam (109) and spanned the gap between it and the brick wall foundation (111). This might have been a concrete surface laid in the space between two buildings. The gap would have been c.0.8m wide, which is sufficient for a narrow alleyway (comparable to the existing alleyway leading from High Street to Ram Yard). This is probably the original line of the alleyway between 97 High Street and Howard Street, which was diverted when the existing office block was built. The alleyway is shown on the third edition OS 25-inch map (Figure 5).

A concrete foundation building beneath the brick floor of the ‘workshop’

Approximately central to the trench a coarse, gravel concrete foundation (106) was identified within construction cut [105]; it was 0.82m wide, but its depth was not established as it extended below the limit of safe excavation. It crossed the trench on an east–west alignment. It was not clear whether or not it related to the ‘workshop’ or an earlier structure—it might have been part of a building shown on the first edition OS 25-inch map (Figure 4).



3.2.3 Garden soil

Substantial deposits of soil survived beneath the later structures, along most of the length of the trench. The deposits comprised firm, dark grey-brown, humic, silty sand with moderate small stone inclusions.

Near the south end of the trench, a soil deposit (113) was identified surviving as close as *c.*0.15m to the present ground level (i.e. as high as *c.*31.3m OD). This deposit was at least 1.04m thick and extended below the base of the trench. However it only survived in the *c.*0.5m-wide gap between the foundation trenches [110] and [107]. No finds were recovered from this deposit, but it had been largely removed by machine.

North of foundation cut [107] a larger deposit of soil (114) was recorded extending for 5.38m along the trench. This was at least 0.56m thick and identical in nature to deposit (113). Its full thickness was not established as it extended below the limit of excavation, but it was at least 0.75m. In the centre of the trench the deposit was bisected by [107]. This deposit contained a small quantity of early medieval pottery, including a sizeable body sherd of St Neots-type ware (fabric B01A²: 126g) of 10th–12th-century date, and two 12th–13th-century shell-tempered body sherds (B07: 12g). Three abraded animal limb bone fragments (38g) of indeterminate species were also collected.

Despite their thickness, these deposits were completely undifferentiated, with no apparent anthropogenic layers or naturally formed soil horizons. In this respect, they are similar to the dark earth deposits or ‘occupation layers’ that have been found on numerous archaeological excavations in Bedford, notably at Bedford Castle (Baker *et al* 1979). They were probably gradually accumulated layers of largely organic material that have been changed by years of garden cultivation (double-digging?) and natural bioturbation processes (e.g. the action of worms and molluscs). It is likely that these deposits are fairly extensive across most of the PDA, except where they have been truncated, in places, by modern structures. The potential for extensive survival of these deposits is also indicated by the historical map evidence, which suggests the area was largely given over to open space, probably gardens to the rear of existing properties.

The base of deposit (114) appeared to rise up towards the north end of the trench, creating a steep interface with the natural gravel-terrace deposits. This might indicate that it had accumulated within a large cut feature, such as a quarry pit, and evidence of large pits was found during archaeological monitoring of groundworks at the rear of 97A High Street. However, the changing thickness of deposit (114) might indicate the edge of cultivation, possibly corresponding with a property boundary or in the proximity of a building.

3.2.4 Geological deposits

Undisturbed geological deposits (115) comprised reddish, silty sand and gravel, overlaying loose river gravels. Generally, these deposits lay were below the base of the trench, but they were observed near the middle of the trench, at 1.2m below ground level (*c.*30.4m OD) and at a depth of 0.62m (*c.*30.9m OD) at the north end

² Fabric types identified in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series



of the trench (Figure 2: Section). The section drawing (Figure 2) indicates a steeply sloping interface between the terrace gravels (115) and garden soil (114), which might be interpreted as a cut edge (perhaps the edge of a large quarry pit—see above) but this could not be ascertained within the trench. It might simply be that the surface of the geology is naturally undulating.



4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 *Characterisation of the Deposits*

The archaeological field evaluation revealed the foundations of buildings dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. One of the buildings at the south end of the trench might have had a cellar, but the other structures did not. This suggests that the majority of the PDA has suffered little from post-industrial intrusions. Historical maps also suggest that the PDA was largely open land until the late 1800s.

Beneath the 19th-/20th-century structures were substantial garden soils containing pottery dating from the 10th–11th century onwards. These were generally 0.56–0.75m thick and generally survived up to 30.9m OD. The presence of these deposits is consistent with the evidence of historical maps that indicate that the PDA lay in open ground throughout the post-medieval period.

Apart from the 19th-/20th-century building foundations, no structures or cut features were identified. However, the survival of the garden soil deposits indicates that there is high potential for the preservation of remains of urban settlement dating back at least to the time of the Norman Conquest. The garden soil deposits were generally deeper than the safe depth of excavation, so it was not possible to test for the presence of any archaeological features cut into natural geology. But such features generally do survive throughout the historic core of Bedford town—where they do, there is evidence that they can date from Anglo-Saxon times (Baker et al. 19079).

As the PDA is situated within the postulated north *burh* of AD 790 (Haslam, 1983) and the later (AD 915) proposed north *burh* (Hill, 1970), the Saxo-Norman finds recovered from the garden soil are likely to relate to the urban settlement of the type encountered on numerous archaeological investigations in the centre of Bedford (Albion Archaeology 2014b).

4.2 *Significance of the Deposits*

The evaluation has demonstrated that the PDA could potentially retain moderately well-preserved archaeological remains of urban settlement from the late Anglo-Saxon period onwards due to the limited impact from later building foundations.

If Saxo-Norman remains do extend into the PDA they should be relatively well-preserved beneath later deposits and will be at least of *regional significance*. They will have potential to address regional research objectives for the study of the origins and nature of Anglo-Saxon and early medieval settlement in one of the most important early towns in the east of England.

Historical map evidence suggests that later medieval and post-medieval remains are likely to relate to the use of the land as gardens. Later garden features will have been more prone to truncation by 19th- and 20th-century structures (being closer to the surface). They are likely to be of *local to regional significance*, depending on their state of preservation, because of their potential to address



regional research objectives for the study of the development of towns from their medieval origins to the Industrial Revolution.

The heritage value of the remains of 19th- and 20th-century buildings has largely been lost, due to their demolition in the 1970s. However, their below-ground remains may still be of *local significance*, for example providing evidence to augment and validate historical maps and documentary sources. Any small cellars—if they exist—might retain architectural features of historical interest or contain evidence pertaining to the former usage of the demolished buildings.



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6. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARY



Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 8.90 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.3 m. Max: 0.68 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL 05086/49943

OS Grid Ref.: TL 05085/49952

Reason: Archaeological Evaluation.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Tarmac	Cemented dark blue black tarmac frequent small stones Tarmac surface. Thickness - 0.15m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Make up layer	Firm dark brown grey sandy hardcore frequent small-medium stones Mmodern make-up layer. Thickness 0.14m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Concrete	Cemented light blue grey concrete frequent small stones Concrete slab. Thickness Min - 0.24m. Max - 0.44m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Brickwork	Cemented mid brown red Brick "floor" and retaining wall. Thickness Min - 0.24m. Max - 0.48m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Brickwork	Cemented mid brown red Small section of brick wall overlying (102). Thickness - 0.2m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Foundation trench	Linear E-W sides: U-shaped dimensions: max breadth 0.84m, min depth 0.54m Foundation trench cut.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
106	Foundation	Cemented mid yellow grey concrete frequent small stones Coarse concrete foundation. Min thickness - 0.54m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
107	Foundation trench	Foundation trench cut.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
108	Foundation	Cemented light yellow grey concrete frequent small stones Coarse concrete foundation. Min thickness - 0.64m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
109	Foundation	Cemented mid blue grey concrete frequent small stones Concrete ground beam. Max thickness - 0.82m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
110	Foundation trench	E-W sides: near vertical dimensions: min breadth 1.42m Foundation trench cut.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
111	Foundation	Cemented mid brown red Brick foundation. Min thickness - 1.06m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
116	Backfill	Firm dark brown grey sandy silt moderate small CBM, moderate small stones Foundation trench backfill. Min thickness - 1.06m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
112	Brick rubble	Loose mid brown red hardcore Demolition deposit. Min thickness - 0.58m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
113	Buried topsoil	Firm dark brown grey sandy silt moderate small-medium stones Garden soil. Min thickness 1.04m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
114	Buried topsoil	Firm dark brown grey sandy silt moderate small-medium stones Garden soil. Min thickness - 0.56m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
115	Natural	Firm mid yellow orange sandy gravel frequent small stones Natural geology. Min thickness - 0.1m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
117	Concrete	Cemented mid blue grey concrete frequent small stones Concrete slab. Max breadth - 0.8m. Min thickness - 0.1m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
118	Modern intrusion	Linear NNE-SSW sides: vertical dimensions: max breadth 0.83m, min depth 1.06m, min length 3.2m Pipe trench.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
119	Backfill	Firm dark brown grey sandy silt frequent small CBM, frequent small stones Backfill of pipe trench. Max breadth - 0.83m. Min thickness 1.06m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

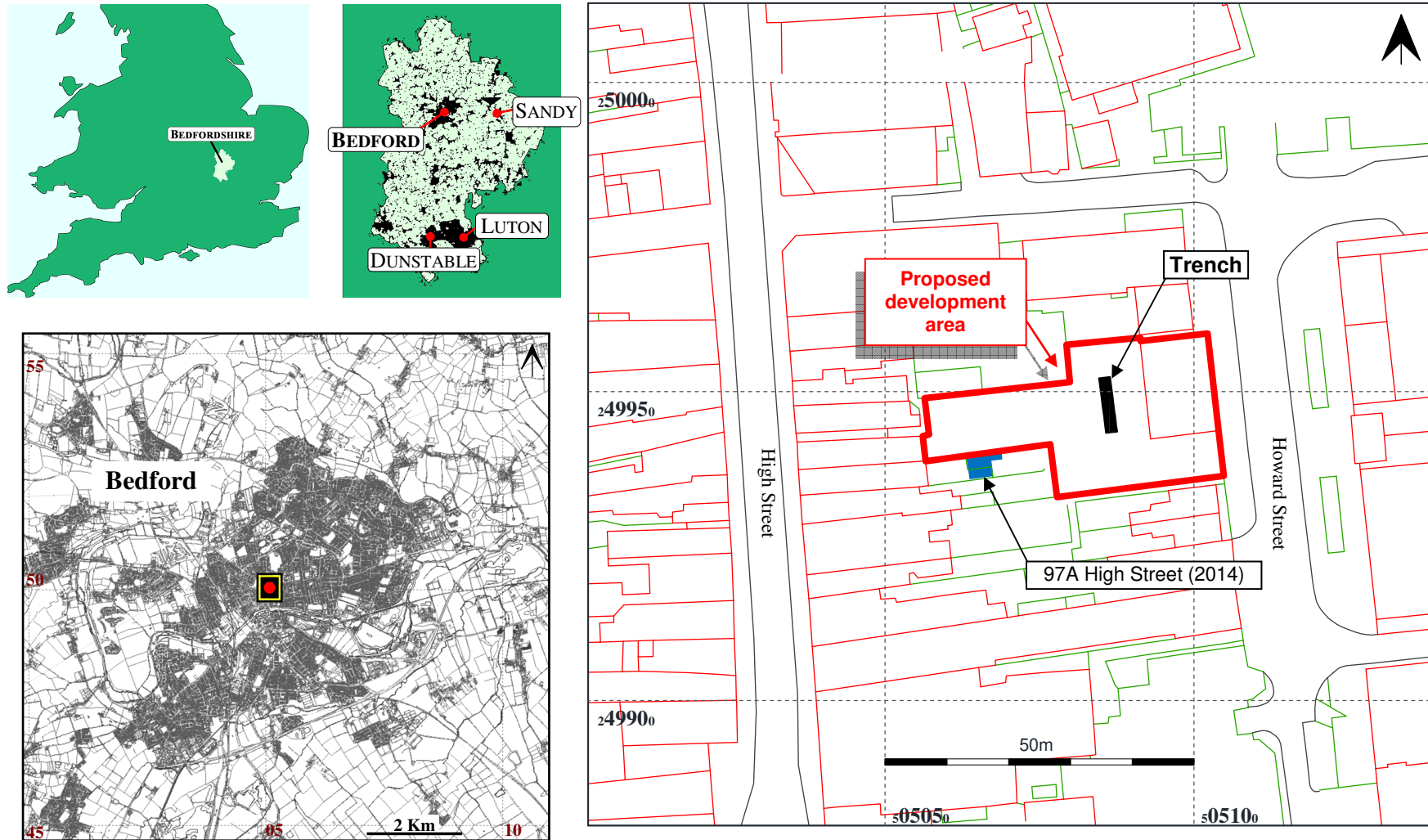


Figure 1: Site and trench location plan

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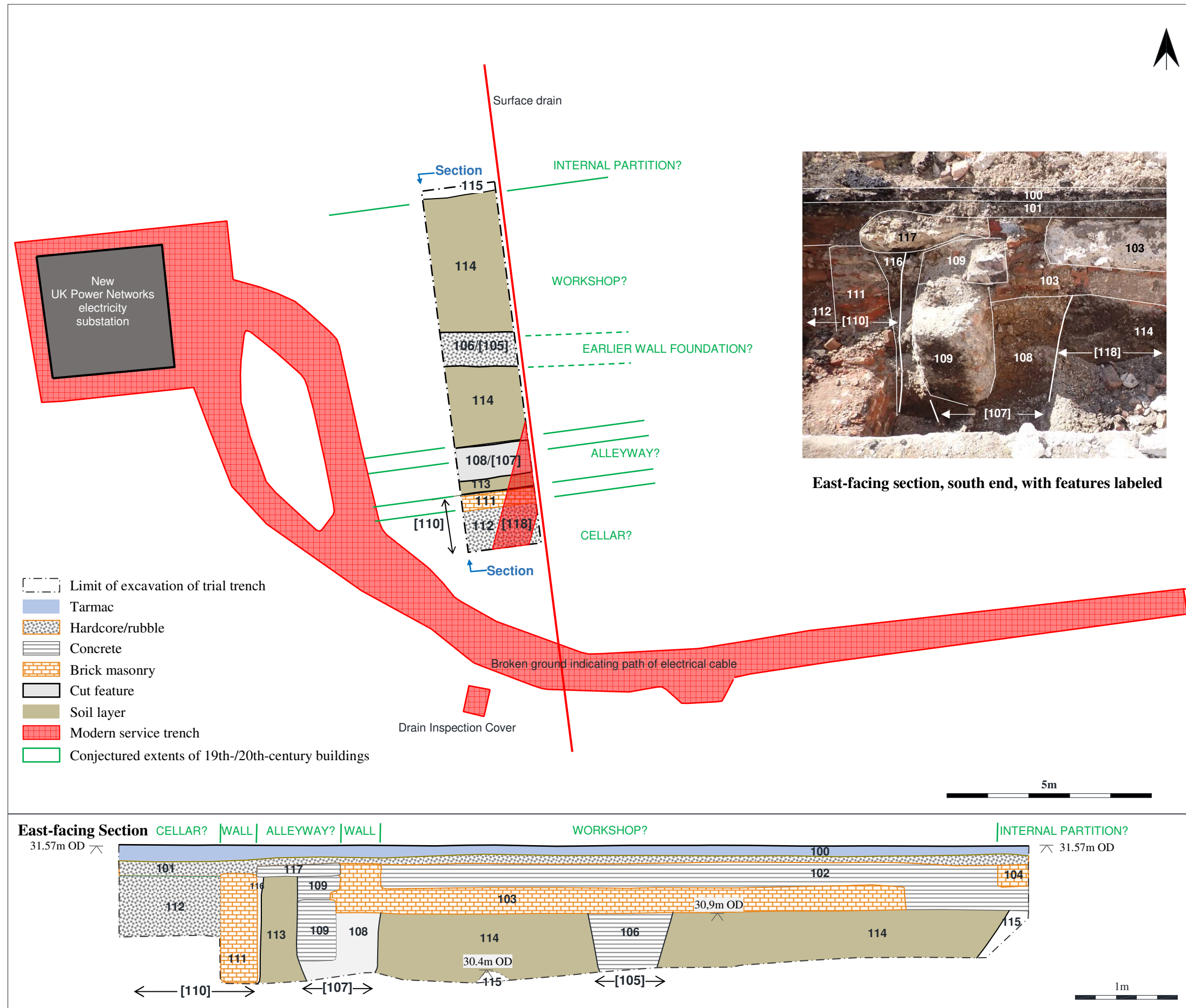


Figure 2: Plan of features and section



Figure 3: Approximate location of the PDA on John Speed's 1610 map of Bedford

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Figure 4: OS First Edition 25-inch map 1882 (1881)

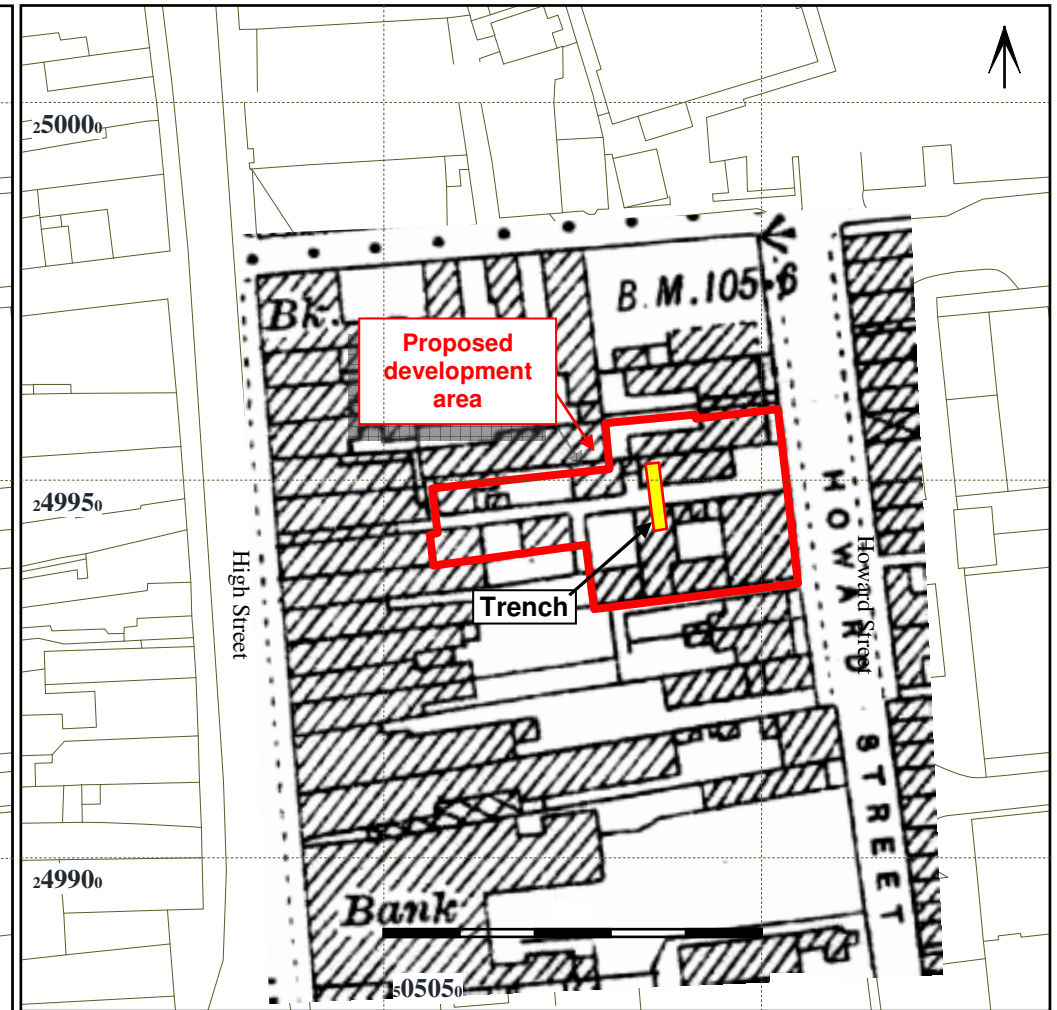


Figure 5: OS Third edition 25-inch map 1926 (1924)

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Photograph 1: Looking north along the trench



Photograph 2: South end of trench (scale 1m)



Photograph 3: East-facing section, looking north-west



Photograph 4: South end of the trench, east-facing section



Photograph 5: North end of the trench, east-facing section (scale 1m)



Photograph 6: Looking towards the south end of the trench (scale 1m)



Photograph 7: Looking towards the north end of the trench (scale 1m)

Central
Bedfordshire

Albion
archaeology



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

