

**NEW HOUSE  
LONG HAYDONS  
BLETSOE  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

**Albion**  
archaeology



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## Preface

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## Acknowledgements

*Fieldwork and report preparation were carried out by Catie Watts (Supervisor). The figures were prepared by Catie Watts and Iain Leslie (Project Manager). The project was managed by Iain Leslie. All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).*

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1.0	30/11/2020	n/a
1.1	05/01/2021	Comments from HET

## Key Terms

*The following terms or abbreviations are used throughout this report:*

ADS	Archaeology Data Service
BBC	Bedford Borough Council
BBHER	Bedford Borough Historic Environment Record



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HET	Historic Environment Team of BBC
LPA	Local Planning Authority
OD	Ordnance Datum
PDA	Permitted development area
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



## **Non-technical Summary**

*Bedford Borough Council granted planning permission (20/00180/FUL) for construction of an equestrian manège with post and rail fencing at New House, Long Haydons, Rushden Road, Bletsoe, Bedford.*

*The permitted development area was located in an area of archaeological interest. For this reason, a condition (no.3) was attached to the planning consent which required an archaeological mitigation strategy to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). It was agreed with the LPA's Historic Environment Team that the archaeological mitigation strategy would comprise a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication. Albion Archaeology was commissioned to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation and to carry out the archaeological works, which are described in this report*

*No archaeological features or deposits earlier than the modern period (post-1750) were present within the area of ground reduction. The lack of archaeological features within this area, along with the absence of any artefacts (other than those dated to the modern period), suggests that the prehistoric and Roman remains previously identified to the south did not extend into this area.*

*The project archive will be deposited with The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum under accession no. BEDFM 2020.73. Any born digital elements of the archive will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). This report will be uploaded onto the OASIS website under reference number albionar1-407190.*



## 1. BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

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### 1.1 *Planning Background*

Bedford Borough Council granted planning permission (20/00180/FUL) for construction of an equestrian manège with post and rail fencing at New House, Long Haydons, Rushden Road, Bletsoe, Bedford.

The following condition (no. 3) was attached to the planning consent:

*No development shall take place until an archaeological mitigation strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The archaeological mitigation strategy shall include a timetable and the following components (the completion of each to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority will result in a separate confirmation of compliance for each component):*

- (i) fieldwork and/ or preservation "in situ" of archaeological remains;*
- (ii) a post-excavation assessment report (to be submitted within six months of the completion of fieldwork);*
- (iii) a post-excavation analysis report, preparation of site archive ready for deposition at a store approved by the Local Planning Authority, completion of an archive report, and submission of a publication report (to be completed within two years of the completion of fieldwork).*

*The archaeological mitigation strategy shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timings.*

*REASON: To safeguard archaeological assets within the approved development boundary from impacts relating to any groundworks associated within the development scheme and to ensure the proper and timely investigation, recording, reporting and presentation of archaeological assets affected by this development, in accordance with Policy 41S of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 and according to national policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (2019). The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the timing of compliance is fundamental to the development permitted and that the permission ought to be refused unless the condition is imposed in this form. The submitted archaeological mitigation strategy shall be in accordance with a brief procured beforehand by the developer from the Bedford Borough Council Historic Environment Team.*

It was agreed with the LPA's Historic Environment Team (HET) that the archaeological mitigation strategy would comprise a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Albion Archaeology 2020) and to carry out the archaeological works, which are described in this report.



## 1.2 Site and Development Description

The permitted development area (PDA) is situated to the north of Long Haydons and to the west of Rushden Road (A6) and comprises the residential curtilage of New House, Long Haydons (Figure 1). The curtilage measures approximately 0.04 hectares in area and is roughly rectangular in shape; it comprises the principal dwelling, an outbuilding to the rear (west); an L-shaped stable block and enclosed area for grazing, and a substantial area of private amenity space. The site abuts Rushden Road (A6) to the east and Long Haydons (road) to the south; beyond both roads are areas of open countryside; to the south-west/west of the site are a series of industrial units. The PDA is situated on land gently sloping down to the north-west, at a height of *c.*40m OD; it is centred on grid reference TL 01696 58743.

The river Great Ouse lies *c.*300m to the west. The underlying solid geology consists of Rutland Formation – Mudstone, sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 166 to 170 million years ago in the Jurassic Period<sup>1</sup>. The overlying superficial deposits comprise clay and silt alluvium, deposits formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period.

The development comprised construction of an equestrian manège with post and rail fencing (Figure 2).

## 1.3 Archaeological Background

The site of a probable Roman villa lies *c.*230m to the south-east (BBHER 307). The presence of a Roman site was originally recognised during building works for a new rectory in 1936, when inhumations were found, along with pottery, coins and a penannular ornament. Further works in the 1960s revealed more inhumations and structural remains (including a stone column fragment, suggesting the former presence of a substantial building). A total of 55 burials were recorded. Occupation of the site has been dated to the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. A number of Roman coins have also been recovered from this area (BBHER 19750, MBB19280 *etc.*).

In the field immediately to the south of the PDA, *c.*300m away, cropmarks of potentially Iron Age or Roman enclosures have been identified from aerial photographs taken in 2004 and 2011 (BBHER576). The cropmarks consist of a complex of accreted and overlapping rectilinear enclosures visible over an area measuring *c.*205 x 90 m. The site was probably multi-phase in use, but it is unclear which the earliest features are. A huge number of Roman coins have been retrieved from the vicinity of this site, as well as rings and brooches (*e.g.* MBB19090–MBB19100). The cropmarks may be associated with the potential Roman villa described above. Another faint cropmark (BBHER 22323) *c.*200m to the south of the PDA, identified from aerial photographs in 2006, may represent a Bronze Age ring-ditch.

The postulated line of the Sandy to Sharnbrook Roman road runs immediately to the north-east of the PDA along the line of the current Rushden Road (A6).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>





## 2. RESULTS

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### 2.1 *Nature of the Works*

Groundworks were undertaken on 17th November 2020 and were subject to archaeological monitoring. The groundworks were associated with levelling of ground prior to construction of an equestrian manège. This comprised reduction of the ground level to the south and east, with the resulting spoil used to raise the ground level to the north and west.

The total area of ground reduction was approximately triangular in plan, measuring *c.*25 x 40 x 47m (Figure 2). Ground reduction was up to *c.*540mm below the existing ground level, at which depth the underlying geological stratum was visible.

### 2.2 *Modern Layers and Features*

The groundworks did not reveal any archaeologically significant features or deposits. A single tree-throw hole was identified, which still contained very large roots, as well as modern building materials and a small sheet of plastic film. This is likely to be associated with an elm tree removed within memory of the current owners of the property. The three layers exposed by the groundworks were:

- Topsoil (001): *c.*0.23m thick, friable, very dark grey-brown clay-silt with occasional modern brick and tile fragments (not retained).
- Subsoil (002): *c.*0.3m thick, friable, dark grey-brown clay-silt with moderate small stones. Very occasional pieces of ceramic land drain, brick and tile, and window glass were noted in this fill; the artefacts indicated a modern (post-1750) date for this layer and were not retained.
- Undisturbed geological stratum (003): Mid brown-orange clay silt. Moderate small stones.



### 3. CONCLUSIONS

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No archaeological features or deposits earlier than the modern period (post-1750) were present within the area of ground reduction. The topsoil and subsoil layers contained occasional modern (post-1750) artefacts, including fragments of land drain and building materials.

Whilst the entire footprint of the manège was not reduced to the undisturbed geological stratum, a moderately large area was exposed. The lack of archaeological features within this area, along with the absence of any artefacts (other than those dated to the modern period), suggests that the prehistoric and Roman remains previously identified to the south did not extend into this area.



## 4. ARCHIVE

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The physical project archive, including a digital security copy, will be deposited with The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum under accession no. BEDFM 2020.73. Any born digital elements of the archive will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). This report will be uploaded onto the OASIS website under reference number albionar1-407190.

The archive will comprise the following:

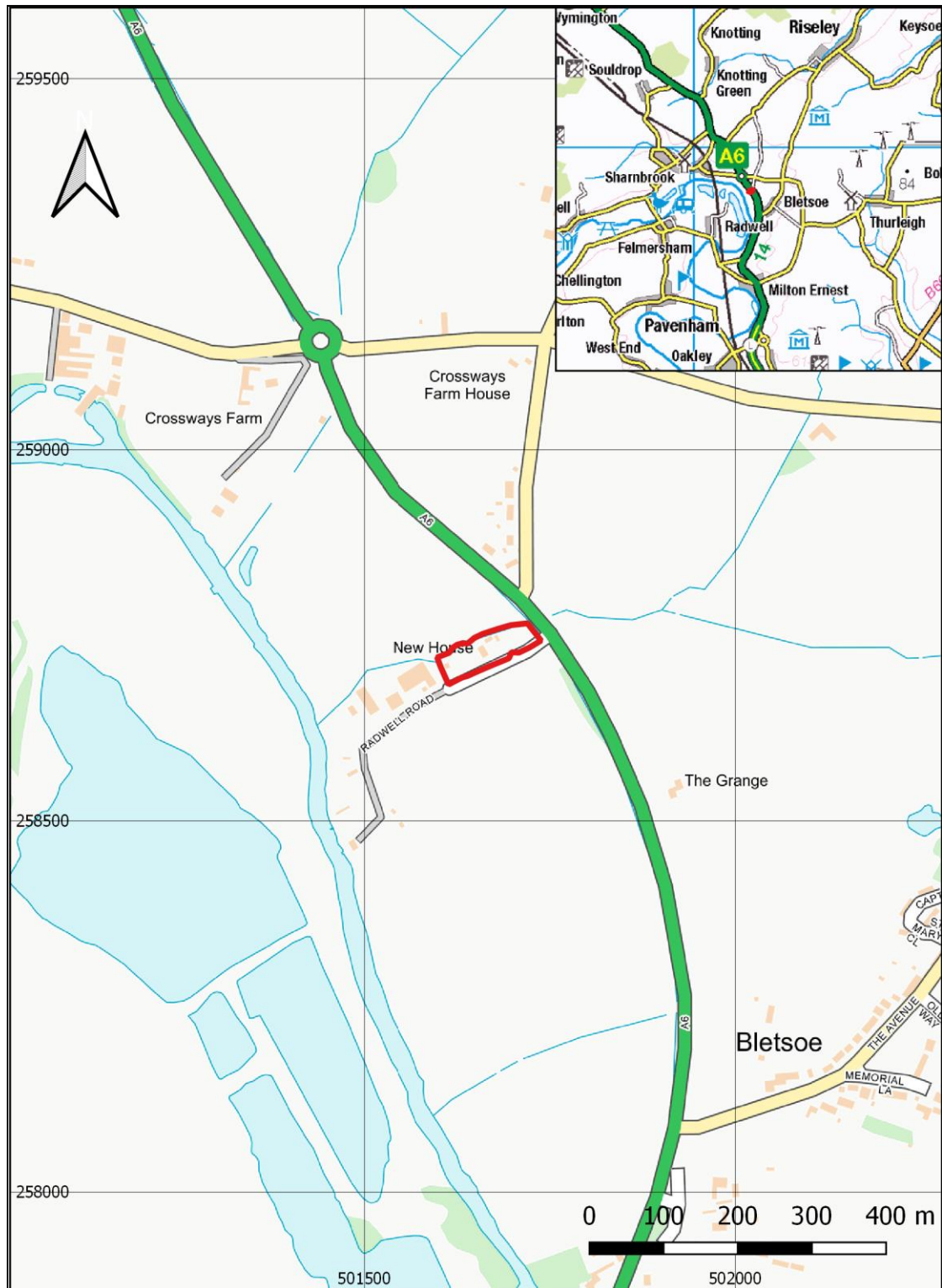
- Physical
  - 1 file of paper records and A3/4 graphics
- Digital
  - Photographs (.JPEG, .TIFF)
  - Spatial data (.SHP)
  - Reports (.PDF/A)
  - Correspondence (e-mail)



## 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

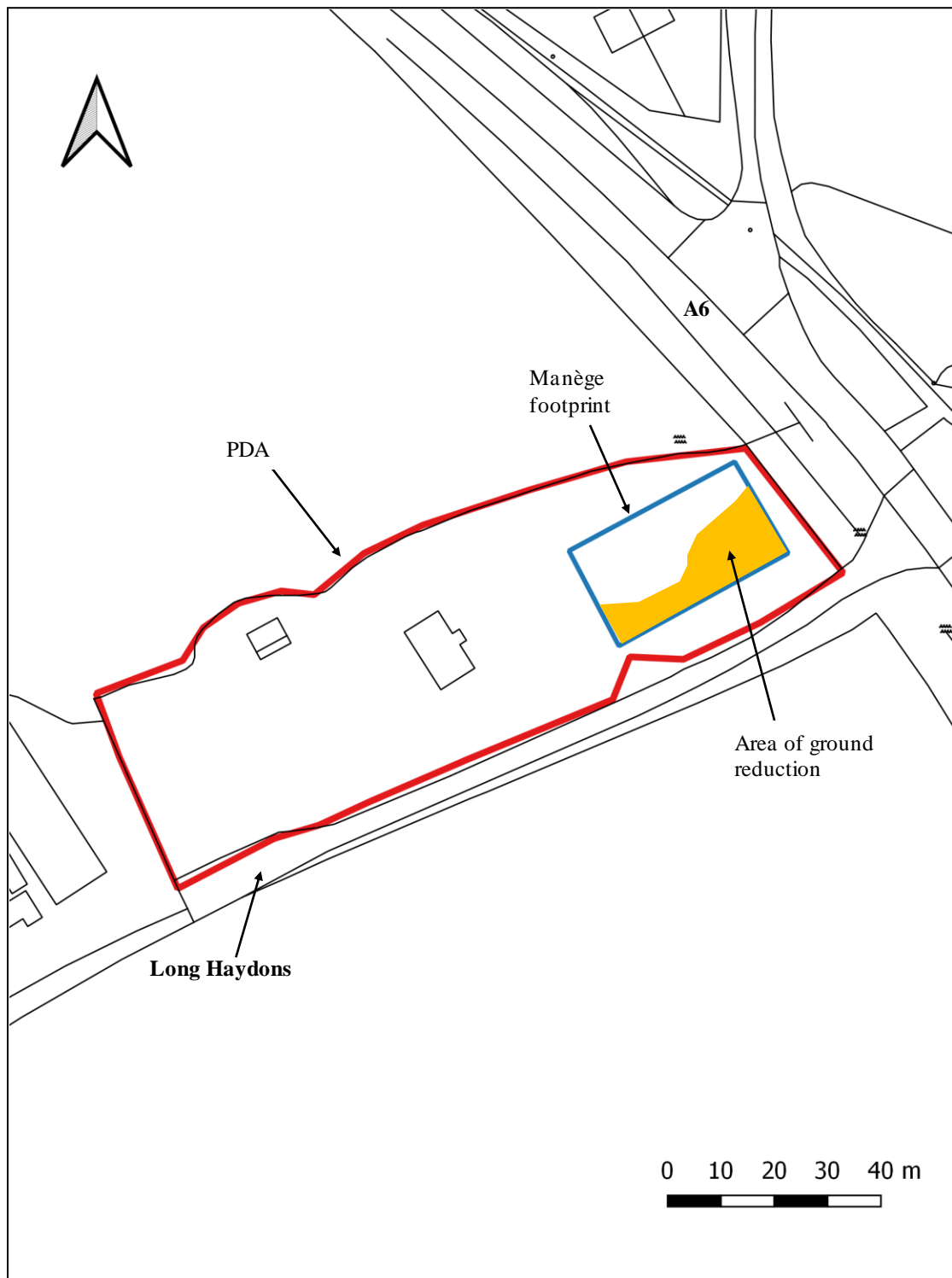
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Albion Archaeology, 2020, *New House, Long Haydons, Bletsoe, Bedfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication*. Albion report 2020/95



**Figure 1: Site location plan**

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**Figure 2:** Plan of site layout



Area of ground reduction, looking west



Area of ground reduction, looking south

**Figure 3:** Selected photographs



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