

**HILL HOUSE MOATED SITE
OLD WARDEN
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

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Introduction

Bedfordshire County Council Countryside Access Service carried out improvement works to the rights of way network in the vicinity of the scheduled moated site near Hill House, Old Warden, Bedfordshire (Figure 1). Consent for the necessary groundworks for a new footpath within the ancient monument was granted by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) on condition that they were carried out under archaeological supervision. A brief (BCC 2008), issued by the County Archaeological Officer (CAO), specified the necessary programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording that was required during the groundworks.

Albion Archaeology was subsequently commissioned by the Bedfordshire County Council Countryside Access Service to prepare a Project Design (Albion Archaeology 2008b) and undertake the archaeological work.

The archaeological fieldwork and preparation of this report were undertaken by Wesley Keir (Project Officer). All Albion Archaeology projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

A copy of this report and the project archive can be found at Bedford Museum (Accession No. 2008/171).

Site Description and Location

The new footpath passed through the western half of Hill House moated site, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (National Monument No. 13606), which is centred at TL 1722 4445. It is located between Broom, Upper Caldecote and Biggleswade on the western side of the valley of the River Ivel, which in this area is a broad, relatively flat landscape between the river and the slopes of the Greensand ridge to the west (Fig. 1).

The western half of the scheduled area, through which the footpath passed, contained moderately dense scrub and woodland before the work was undertaken.

Archaeological Background

Recent investigations associated with Broom Quarry (Cooper and Edmonds 2007) have demonstrated that the scheduled site at Hill House sits within a multi-period archaeological landscape. This includes a series of late Iron Age/Romano-British farmsteads that were identified alongside the River Ivel, together with associated trackways.

The scheduled area itself contains a complex moated site of medieval origin that includes various water-filled, and silted up, channels and fish ponds. This has recently been the subject of a programme of research funded by the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund and Tarmac Ltd, and managed by Andrew Josephs, Environmental Consultant. Part of this work involved earthwork survey (Albion Archaeology 2008a) which included the part of the site traversed by the footpath.

Project Methodology

The project was carried out in accordance with the Project Design (Albion Archaeology 2008b) and the CAO's Brief (BCC 2008). The standards and guidance set out in the following documents were also adhered to:-

- Institute of Field Archaeologists' (IFA) Code of Conduct (Revised edition 2006);



- IFA's Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief (Revised edition 2001);
- IFA's Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials (2001);
- English Heritage's The Management of Archaeological Projects 'MAP 2' (1991)
- Albion Archaeology's Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork (2nd edition, 2001)

Description and Results of Groundworks

Groundworks within the scheduled area included the hand excavation of four holes for waymark posts and the hand excavation of two level indentations either side of the moat inlet channel (Figure 1) for housing sleepers to support a bridge. All works requiring archaeological monitoring were completed on 15th July 2008.

The waymark post holes measured approximately 0.2m across and were excavated to around 0.7m deep. Clay silt topsoil and subsoil layers were observed overlying the undisturbed clay geology which was reached at approximately 0.6m beneath the ground surface. The indentations for the bridge supports did not penetrate the subsoil, each only measuring around 2.5m long x 0.3m wide and up to 0.15m deep.

No archaeological features, deposits or finds were revealed during the course of the groundworks.

Conclusion

Although the groundworks were undertaken in close proximity to earthworks associated with the moated site, no archaeological remains were revealed. However, given the small scale of these groundworks, there remains a strong possibility that buried features and finds associated with the moated site, still survive in this area.

Bibliography

Albion Archaeology, 2008a, *Hill House Moats, Old Warden, Bedfordshire: Earthworks Survey*. Albion Archaeology 2008/07.

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BCC, 2008, *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication at the Moated Site near Hill House, Old Warden, Bedfordshire*

Cooper A. and Edmonds M., 2007, *Past and Present: Excavations at Broom, Bedfordshire 1996-2005*. Cambridge Archaeological Unit.

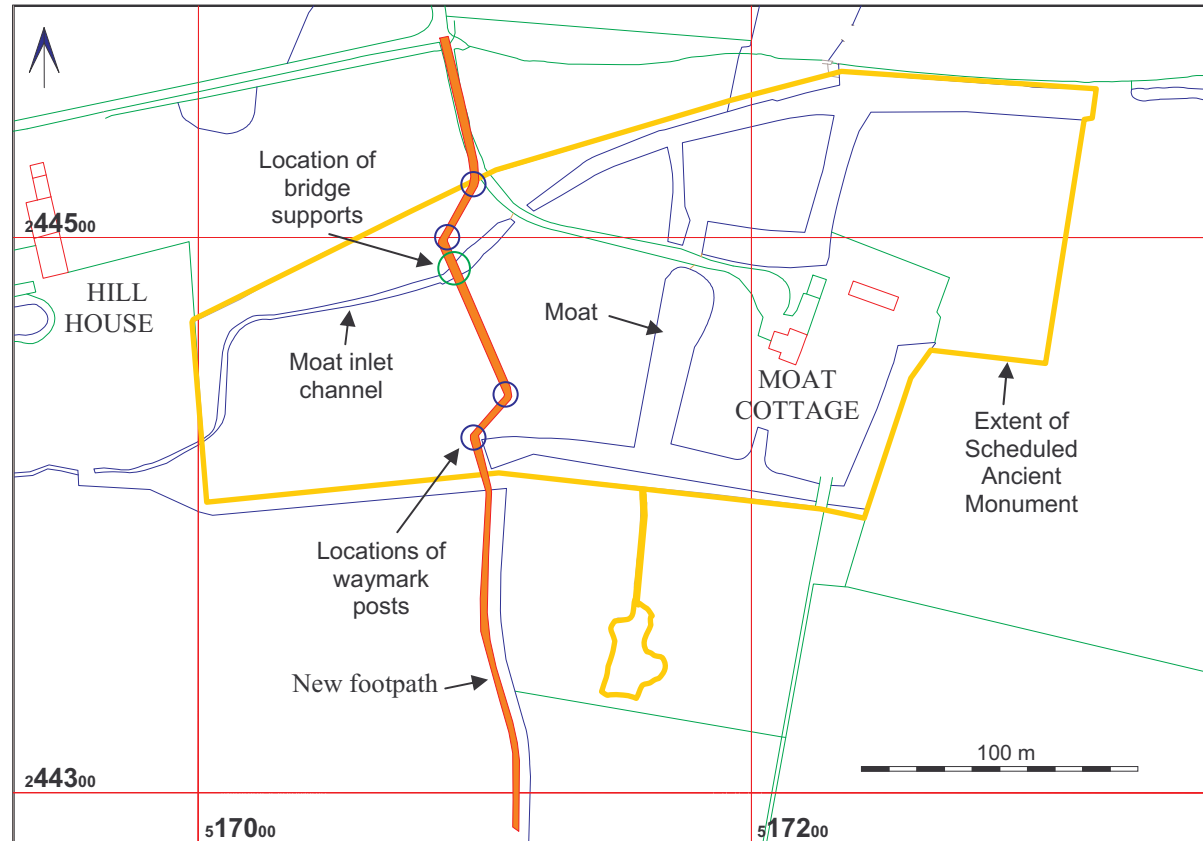
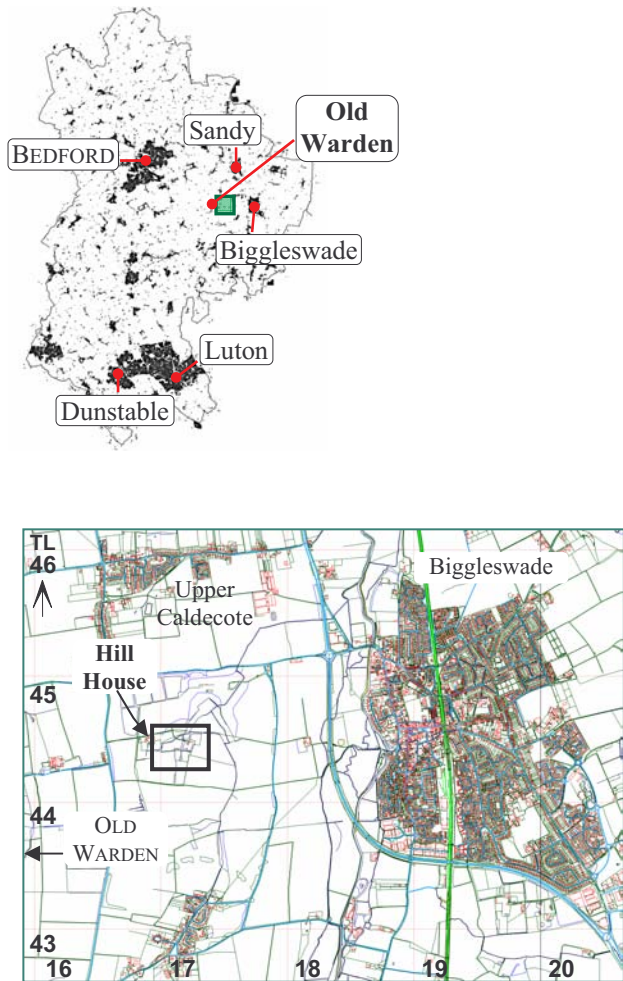


Figure 1: Site location plan showing new footpath and extent of the Scheduled Ancient Monument

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