

**WRESTLINGWORTH LOWER SCHOOL  
CHURCH LANE  
WRESTLINGWORTH**

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

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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 project design. 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.*

*Fieldwork was carried out by Julian Watters (Archaeological Supervisor). This report has been prepared by James Newbould (Project Officer), with contributions by Jackie Wells (Artefacts Officer). Joan Lightning (CAD Technician) produced the figures.*

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## Structure of the Report

Section 1 describes the background to the project. Section 2 describes the methodology used. There is a summary of the results of the fieldwork in Section 3, followed by a synthesis of results in Section 4. Section 5 is a bibliography. Appendix 1 provides an archaeological context summary.

## Key Terms

Throughout this report, the following terms or abbreviations are used:

Client	Mouchel Property Services
CAO	Bedfordshire's County Archaeological Officer
DA	Development Area
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists



## **Non-Technical Summary**

*This document has been prepared by Albion Archaeology on behalf of Mouchel Property Services. In April 2002 Albion Archaeology attended the excavation of ground-works and footings in advance of the construction of a new classroom at Wrestlingworth Lower School.*

*Because the work had the potential to disturb archaeological remains, a brief for a programme of archaeological work (BCC 2002) was issued by the County Archaeological Officer (CAO) as a condition of the planning permission. A Project Design for the work (Albion Archaeology 2002) was prepared in accordance with CAO requirements and was approved prior to commencement of fieldwork.*

*The development area (DA) is centred on OS grid reference TL 2586 4733. It lies in the historic core of Wrestlingworth, adjacent to the parish church of St Peter's. The site is on an area of high ground, overlooking a dry river valley to the north-west and a tributary of the river Cam to the south. The drift geology of the area comprises chalky Boulder Clay, on which a calcareous gley soil of the Hanslope Association has developed.*

*The medieval settlement itself (HER 17167) is first mentioned in 1150. At that time it was a flourishing village, located at a junction where the Potton to Cambridge road is met by a minor road to Cockayne Hatley. Three inns lined the main street in the medieval period. The adjacent church of St Peter, the nave of which is thought to be of 12th century date, is located at the limit of medieval settlement. In 1996 elements of this building were recorded by Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service during repair works (BCAS 1996).*

*The remains of a possible early medieval post-built structure or fence corner were identified within the DA. These remains may have been associated with the medieval village of Wrestlingworth. However, the conditions, size and nature of the construction work prohibited a clearer understanding of their function and extent. The remains also appeared to have been heavily truncated by modern activity and were in a moderate state of preservation. They are considered to be of local significance.*

*The identified post-medieval structural remains probably represent the foundations for an earlier, probably 19th-century, phase of the school buildings. They were relatively well preserved and are considered to be of local significance.*

*It is anticipated that the project archive comprising finds and documentary records will be deposited with Bedford Museum under accession code: BEDFM 2008/170.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 *Background*

In April 2002 a new classroom extension was built on the eastern side of Wrestlingworth Lower School, Church lane, Wrestlingworth. The footprint of the building was *c.* 51sqm in extent. The works included the removal of overburden from the area and the excavation of foundation trenches, 0.75m wide and up to 1.5m deep. A 1m by 1m soak-hole was also excavated to a depth of 1.8m, *c.* 6m to the south of the classroom extension. The site as a whole is henceforth referred to as the Development Area (DA).

Because the work had the potential to disturb archaeological remains, a brief for a programme of archaeological works (BCC 2002) was issued by the County Archaeological Officer (CAO) as a condition of the planning permission. A Project Design for the work (Albion Archaeology 2002) was prepared in accordance with CAO requirements and was approved prior to commencement of fieldwork.

### 1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The DA is approximately centred on OS grid reference TL 2586 4733. It lies in the historic core of Wrestlingworth, adjacent to the parish church of St Peter's.

The site is on an area of high ground, overlooking a dry river valley to the north-west and a tributary of the river Cam to the south. The drift geology of the area comprises chalky Boulder Clay, on which a calcareous gley soil of the Hanslope Association has developed.

### 1.3 *Archaeological Background*

At the time of the works, no archaeological sites of pre-medieval date were known within the village. However, relatively little formal archaeological work has been undertaken and it is possible that sites of this date lie undiscovered.

The medieval settlement itself (HER 17167) is first mentioned in 1150. At that time it was a flourishing village, located at a junction where the Potton to Cambridge road is met by a minor road to Cockayne Hatley. Three inns lined the main street in the medieval period. The adjacent church of St Peter, the nave of which is thought to be of 12th century date, is located at the limit of medieval settlement. In 1996 elements of this building were recorded by Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service during repair works (BCAS 1996).

### 1.4 *Project Objectives*

Although the footprint of the proposed new classroom was relatively small, it was clearly situated in an archaeologically sensitive part of the village and had the potential to contribute to a number of regionally and nationally defined research objectives concerning the establishment and development of



settlements in the early medieval period. The aim of the fieldwork was therefore to:

- Observe all significant ground-works associated with the proposed development.
- Investigate and record these works and any archaeological deposits encountered within them.
- Prepare a report of the fieldwork findings for deposition in the Bedfordshire HER and with OASIS.
- Deposit the project archive with Bedford Museum.



## 2. METHODOLOGY

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The archaeological works were undertaken between 29th April and 7th May 2002. During this period, all construction ground-works requiring monitoring were completed. Overburden stripping was carried by JCB excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. However, the remaining ground-works used a toothed bucket.

The archaeological works adhered to the standards and field methods set out in the Project Design (Albion Archaeology 2003) and comprised the following:

- 1 Any stripping of overburden or excavation of foundation trenches was monitored to try to identify *in situ* archaeological deposits.
- 2 All disturbed soil was scanned for artefacts.
- 3 All excavated features and deposits were fully recorded in accordance with Albion's *Procedures Manual* and the detailed requirements in section 3 of the *Brief*.
- 4 All archaeological observations were recorded at a suitable scale on base plans tied in to the OS national grid.
- 5 Significant features were photographed using a digital camera.

Throughout the project, the standards set out in the IFA's *Code of Conduct and Standards and Guidance* documents (specifically *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, September 1999) were followed.

It is anticipated that the project archive comprising finds and documentary records will be deposited with Bedford Museum under accession code: BEDFM 2008/170.



### 3. RESULTS OF THE FIELDWORK

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#### 3.1 Introduction

All investigated archaeological features and deposits were issued with unique context numbers. Within this report, context numbers referring to cut features are written as [\*\*], and layers or deposits within cut features are written as (\*\*).

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

#### 3.2 Overburden

Topsoil (100) was removed from within the DA to a depth of 0.3-0.4m revealing a clay-silt natural (101) disturbed by several modern drains and cables which criss-crossed the DA (Plate 1).

#### 3.3 Early Medieval

Archaeological remains comprised three similarly sized post-holes [104, 106 and 111] which appeared to form the NW corner of a possible structure or fence-line (Fig. 1). They had relatively flat bases and dish-shaped profiles and were shallow, between 0.1m-0.13m in depth (Plate 2). This suggests that modern activity had caused truncation of archaeological remains.

The eastern-most posthole [111] contained a single sherd (3g) of 12th-13th century pottery in shell-tempered fabric type B07<sup>1</sup>, deriving from a bowl with an in-turned rim. However, the sherd was moderately abraded and may be residual. This suggests that the structure/fence-line fell into disuse during or after the early medieval period. These postholes are likely to represent the basal remnants of a crude post-built structure or fence corner, possibly associated with the medieval village.

#### 3.4 Post-medieval /Modern

The remains of three walls were identified within the DA (Fig 1). Wall (114) in the eastern part of the site was aligned approximately N-S and formed a junction with an abutting E-W wall (109). The third wall (117) was encountered in the sink-hole to the east of the main site and was also aligned E-W, parallel to (109). These walls were constructed of large, uniformly sized bricks, laid on their sides in regular courses, perpendicular to the line of the walls and held together with a mortar bond (Plates 3-4). Their size and construction method of these remains suggest that they are broadly post-medieval / modern in date. They are likely to be the foundations of 19th-century school buildings.

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<sup>1</sup> Fabric type defined in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series, currently maintained by Albion Archaeology on behalf of Bedfordshire County Council.





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## 4. SYNTHESIS

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### 4.1 *Discussion*

The remains of a possible early medieval post-built structure or fence corner were identified within the DA. These remains may have been associated with the medieval village of Wrestlingworth. However, only a small quantity of abraded 12th-13th century pottery was recovered, which may have been residual.

The post-medieval structural remains probably represent the foundations for an earlier, probably 19th-century phase of the school buildings.

### 4.2 *Significance*

The identification of a post-built structure or fence-line is potential evidence for medieval activity within the grounds of the school. However, the conditions, size and nature of the construction work prohibited a clearer understanding of its function and extent. These remains appear to have been heavily truncated by modern activity and were in a moderate state of preservation. They are, therefore, considered to be of local significance.

The post-medieval structural remains can be related to the earlier, 19th-century phase of the school. They were relatively well preserved and are also considered to be of local significance.



## 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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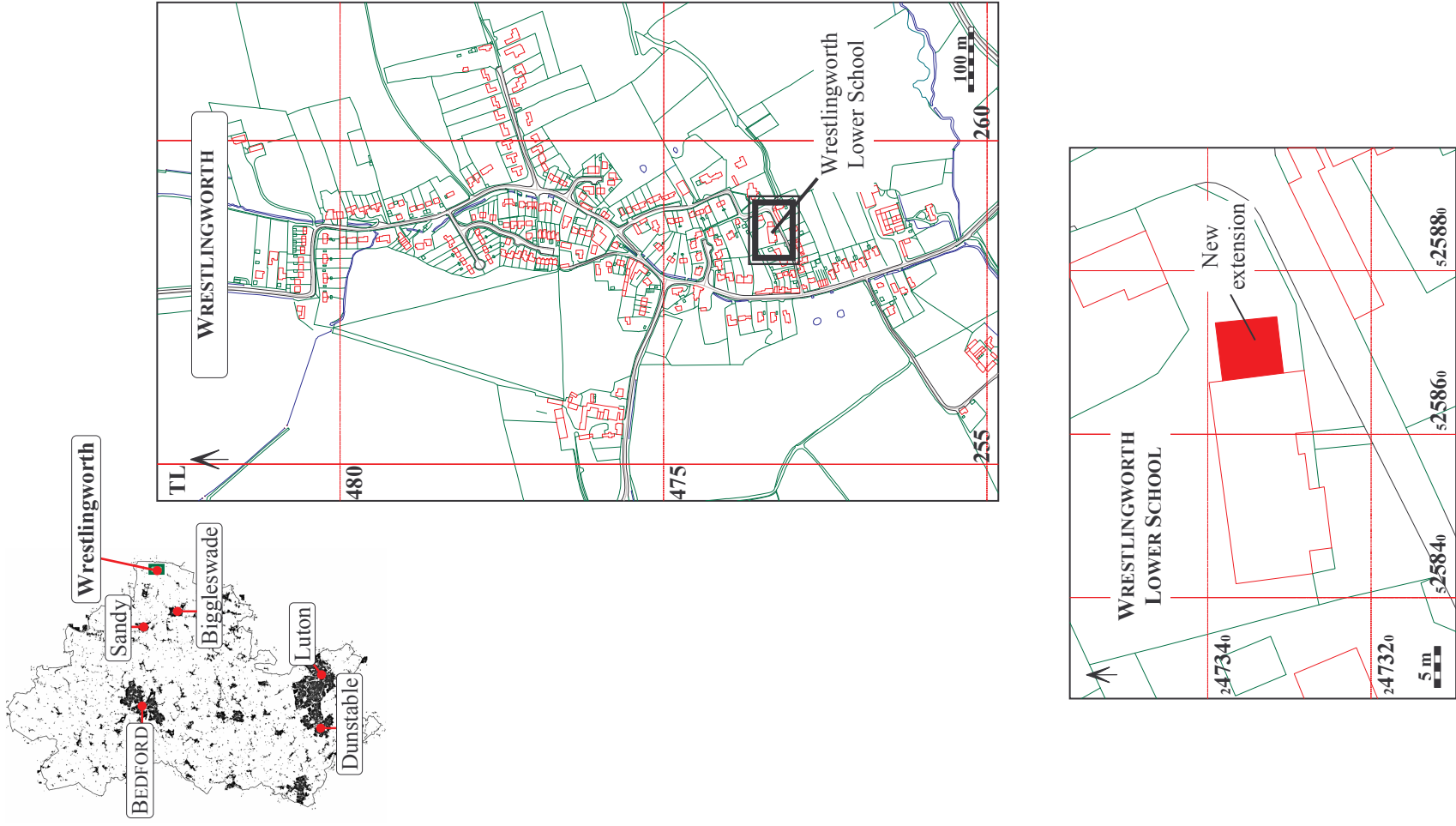
## **6. APPENDIX 1 – CONTEXT SUMMARY**

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**Area:** 1  
**Extent (ha):** 0.0051  
**OS Co-ordinates:** TL0258604733  
**Description:** Topsoil was stripped from the entire area prior to the opening of a series of foundation trenches 0.75m in width and a total of 22m in length

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Topsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Subsoil	Plastic light yellow brown clay silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Natural	Friable yellow clay frequent medium-large stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Natural	Yellow sandy clay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Posthole	Sub-oval profile: 45 degrees base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.24m, max depth 0.13m, max length 0.3m. Steep on the west side, 45 degrees on the east side	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Fill	Plastic mid brown silty clay occasional flecks charcoal, occasional medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
106	Posthole	Sub-oval profile: stepped base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.22m, max depth 0.1m, max length 0.28m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
107	Fill	Plastic dark brown silty clay occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
108	Foundation trench	Linear E-W profile: vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.6m, max depth 0.5m, min length 0.5m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
110	Backfill	Friable dark brown silt . 0.5m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
109	Wall	Aligned E-W constructed of large, uniformly sized bricks, laid sideways in regular courses, perpendicular to the line of the wall with a mortar bond	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
111	Posthole	Sub-circular profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max diameter 0.25m, max diameter 0.11m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
112	Fill	Plastic mid brown silty clay occasional flecks charcoal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
113	Foundation trench	Linear N-S profile: vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 1.m, max diameter 0.5m, max length 6.m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
115	Backfill	Friable dark brown silt . 0.5m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
114	Wall	Aligned N-S constructed of large, uniformly sized bricks, laid sideways in regular courses, perpendicular to the line of the wall with a mortar bond	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
116	Foundation trench	Linear E-W profile: vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.6m, max depth 0.5m, max length 1.25m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
118	Backfill	Friable dark brown silt . 0.5m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
117	Wall	Aligned E-W constructed of large, uniformly sized bricks, laid sideways in regular courses, perpendicular to the line of the wall with a mortar bond	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Figure 1: Site location and all features plan**  
 Base map reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, by Bedfordshire County Council, County Hall, Bedford. OS Licence No. 100017358. © Crown Copyright





**Plate 1:** Showing extent of Development Area facing NW



**Plate 2:** Truncated posthole [111]. 10cm scale





**Plate 3:** Walls (114) and (109) facing SW



**Plate 4:** Walls (114) and (109) facing NE