

**HILL FARM, CHAPEL END LANE
HOUGHTON CONQUEST
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**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 Dan Hounsel (Archaeological Supervisor). This report has been prepared by James Newbould (Project Officer). Joan Lightning (CAD Technician) produced the figure.

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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 and a discussion of their significance in Section 3. Section 4 is a bibliography. Appendix 1 provides an archaeological context summary.

Key Terms

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

Client	Heron Construction Co Ltd
CAO	Bedfordshire's County Archaeological Officer
DA	Development Area
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists



Non-Technical Summary

In 2003, planning permission (03/1252/FUL) was granted for the construction of a new grain store on the southern side of Hill Farm, Chapel End, Houghton Conquest. The site is henceforth referred to as the Development Area (DA).

The work included the excavation of eighteen foundation slots up to 0.75m deep. Because this work had the potential to disturb archaeological deposits, Bedfordshire's County Archaeological Officer (CAO) issued a brief for a programme of archaeological work. A Project Design for the work was prepared in accordance with CAO requirements and was approved prior to commencement of fieldwork.

The DA is centred at TL 0551 4187, within Chapel End, a satellite of Houghton Conquest which lies some 750m to the south-west. The site occupies an area of higher ground at c. 47m OD on the southern fringes of the Marston Vale. The underlying solid geology is Oxford Clay.

The DA lies within the bounds of the medieval settlement of Chapel End. Hill Farm was built over one of three moated sites (HER 3392), known to have existed within the Chapel End settlement. Earthwork remains associated with one of these moats lie immediately to the north of the DA.

Generally, within the Marston Vale, there is increasing evidence for Roman occupation. One such site is known to exist 500m north-east of Chapel End.

The excavation of the foundation slots revealed no archaeological remains. This suggests that the remains of the moated site (HER 3392) did not extend into the DA. Based solely on these results, there is no potential for finding archaeological remains within the DA. However, the nature of the construction techniques used and the relatively small area sampled does not entirely rule out the potential for archaeological remains at Hill Farm.

The project archive, comprising documentary records, will be deposited with Bedford Museum (accession code to follow).



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In 2003, planning permission (03/1252/FUL) was granted for the construction of a new grain store on the southern side of Hill Farm, Chapel End, Houghton Conquest. The site is henceforth referred to as the Development Area (DA).

The work included the excavation of eighteen foundation slots up to 0.75m deep (Fig. 1). Because this work had the potential to disturb archaeological deposits, Bedfordshire's County Archaeological Officer (CAO) issued a brief for a programme of archaeological work (BCC 2003). A Project Design for the work (Albion Archaeology 2003) was prepared in accordance with CAO requirements and was approved prior to commencement of fieldwork.

1.2 Site Location and Description

The DA is centred at TL 0551 4187, within Chapel End, a satellite of Houghton Conquest which lies some 750m to the south-west (Fig. 1). The site occupies an area of higher ground at *c.* 47m OD on the southern fringes of the Marston Vale. The underlying solid geology is Oxford Clay.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The DA lies within the bounds of the medieval settlement of Chapel End. Hill Farm was built over one of three moated sites (HER 3392), known to have existed within the Chapel End settlement. Earthwork remains associated with one of these moats lie immediately to the north of the DA.

Generally, within the Marston Vale, there is increasing evidence for Roman occupation. One such site is known to exist 500m north-east of Chapel End.

1.4 Project Objectives

Although the footprint of the proposed grain store was relatively small, it was clearly situated in an archaeologically sensitive part of Chapel End and had the potential to impact archaeological remains from the Roman, medieval or other periods. The Medieval Settlement Research Group has also identified modern-day, isolated farmsteads as sites of high potential for the investigation of medieval settlement patterns. 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

The archaeological works were undertaken on 3rd December 2003. During this period, all construction ground-works requiring monitoring were completed. Foundation slots were excavated by a 180° wheeled excavator fitted with 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.

The project archive, comprising documentary records, will be deposited with Bedford Museum (accession code to follow).



3. RESULTS OF THE FIELDWORK

3.1 *Introduction*

The excavation of the foundation slots revealed no archaeological remains. All overburden and natural deposits were issued with unique context numbers, written below as (**).

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

3.2 *Overburden and Natural Deposits*

Topsoil (100) was removed from within each of the foundation slots to a depth of 0.18-0.33m revealing silty clay subsoil 0.13-0.21m thick (101). The underlying natural deposits comprised heavy clay.

3.3 *Significance*

This evaluation has demonstrated that the remains of the moated site (HER 3392) did not extend into the DA. Based solely on these results, there is no potential for finding archaeological remains within the DA. However, the nature of the construction techniques used and the relatively small area sampled does not entirely rule out the potential for archaeological remains at Hill Farm.



4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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5. APPENDIX 1 – CONTEXT SUMMARY



Area: 1
Extent (ha): 0.044
OS Co-ordinates: TL0551004187
Description: Overburden and natural deposits encountered in all eighteen foundation slots

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Topsoil	Friable mid yellow brown clay silt occasional small stones. 0.33m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Natural	Plastic mid yellow clay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Subsoil	Plastic light yellow brown silty clay . 0.21m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

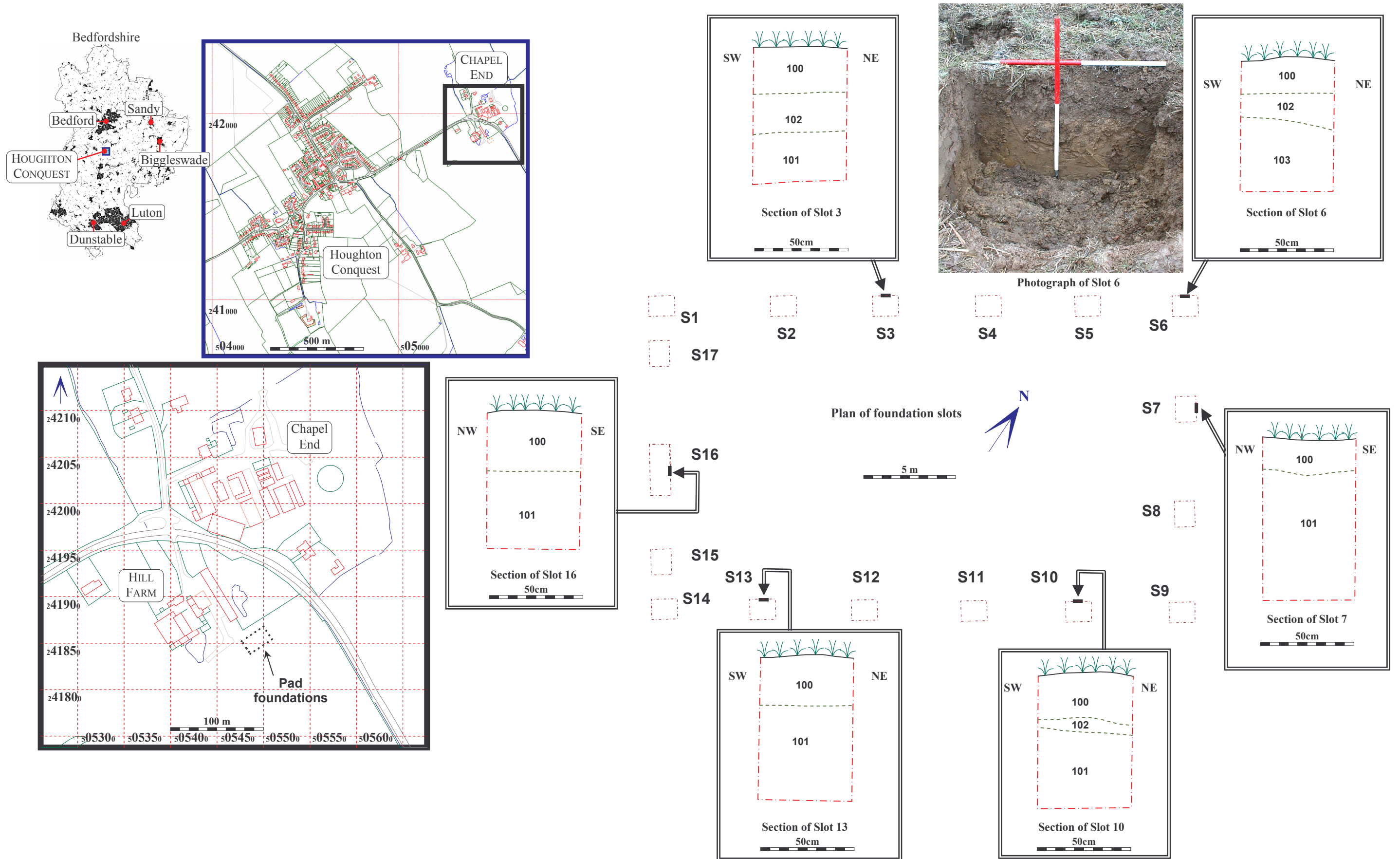


Figure 1: Site location and plan of works

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