

2a CASTLE LANE, BEDFORD

**PRELIMINARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED
ASSESSMENT**

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Compiled by	Checked by	Approved by
Mark Phillips	Jeremy Oetgen	Drew Shottliff

Produced for:
Bedford Borough Council
Town Hall
St Paul's Square
Bedford, MK40 1JS



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Preface

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.

This document was written by Mark Phillips (Project Officer) and edited by Jeremy Oetgen (Project Manager). The figures were prepared by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). The project was managed by Jeremy Oetgen. Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager) was responsible for quality control.

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*Albion Archaeology
St Mary's Archaeology Centre,
St Mary's Church,
Bedford, MK42 0AS
☎: 01234 294001
Fax: 01234 294008
e-mail: office@albion-arch.com
website: www.albion-arch.com*

Key Terms

Throughout this report the following abbreviations are used:

BBC	Bedford Borough Council
BLARS	Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service
Client	Bedford Borough Council
HER	Historic Environment Record
LPA	Local Planning Authority
NM	National Monument
NGR	National Grid Reference
SAM	Scheduled Ancient Monument



Non-technical Summary

Bedford Borough Council proposes to develop land at 2a Castle Lane. The site is situated within the limits of the scheduled ancient monument of Bedford Castle Mound and Gardens (National Monument no. 20412). The Local Planning Authority (LPA) Archaeological Advisor has indicated that the land is very archaeologically sensitive and is known to contain important archaeological remains. The LPA Archaeological Advisor issued a Brief for an archaeological desk-based assessment and field evaluation of the site (BCC 2008). The results of the desk-based assessment and field evaluation will inform emerging development proposals for the site and will provide information that can accompany any subsequent application for planning consent and SMC.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment and field investigation in order to determine the nature, likely date and significance of the archaeological remains on the site. This report presents the results of a preliminary review of the available documentary, cartographic and archaeological evidence for the study area.

The site covers approximately 850sqm and is centred at NGR TL 0521 4978, at approximately 27.20m OD, within the south-eastern quarter of the historic core of Bedford (Figure 1).

Archaeological investigations a short distance to the south and to the west of 2a Castle Lane have demonstrated that this area of Bedford contains archaeological deposits dating from the early to middle Saxon period. Investigations have also established that the site lies within the outer bailey of Bedford Castle, on the line of the northern defences. The projected line of the northern arm of the outer moat falls partly within the boundaries of the 2a site. Excavations to the east and west of the site have demonstrated the survival of medieval deposits within the castle area which include areas of pitting, two lime kilns and other stone structures. Medieval documents record the details of the final siege of the castle in 1224 after which the castle was deliberately demolished.

Cartographic sources show that the area of the former castle, historically referred to as Castle Close, remained an area of open ground during most of the post-medieval period. A militia depot, a brewery and Whig club house were constructed on the land adjoining the site in the first half of the 19th century, but the plot now occupied by 2a Castle Lane itself remained as open space during the 19th century, being shown as a garden with trees on the Ordnance Survey map of 1884. During the first quarter of the 20th century it was developed as a northern extension of the brewery in three phases of construction. Following the sale of the brewery the premises served a variety of commercial uses before becoming an annex of Bedford Museum, which was relocated to the former brewery in 1982. Until 2007 some of the buildings were rented by BCAS/Albion Archaeology as a store and office.



The presence of Saxon and medieval deposits within the immediate vicinity of 2a Castle Lane and the relative lack of post-medieval development suggest a high potential for the survival of significant archaeological deposits within the site.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Planning Background*

Bedford Borough Council proposes to develop land at 2a Castle Lane and requires information on the likely archaeological impact of development to feed into the design process. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) archaeologist has advised that the land is very archaeologically sensitive and is known to contain important archaeological remains. The site is situated within the limits of the scheduled ancient monument of Bedford Castle Mound and Gardens (National Monument no. 20412). In response to the proposal the LPA Archaeological Advisor issued a Brief for an archaeological desk-based assessment and field evaluation of the site (BCC 2008). At the request of the Bedford Design Group, architects for Bedford Borough Council, Albion Archaeology prepared a Project Design (Albion Archaeology 2009) for a programme of archaeological work in accordance with the Brief. The Project Design detailed the methodology for the desk-based assessment and trial trenching.

Because trial trenching was proposed within the scheduled monument, consent had to be obtained in advance from the Department for Culture Media and Sport. To ensure that the consent gave adequate scope for the investigation, the Project Design specified the maximum extent of the likely intervention. The application was submitted on 12th February 2009 and scheduled monument consent (SMC) was granted on 1st May 2009.

The Project Design was also submitted to the LPA for approval. However, before approving the document the LPA Archaeological Advisor asked for the desk-based assessment to be carried out so that there was sufficient information to agree the detailed trenching strategy. This document presents the results of the desk-based assessment.

The preliminary desk-based assessment will be reviewed in the light of the field evaluation and will inform emerging development proposals for the site and will provide information that can accompany subsequent application for planning consent and SMC.

Each stage of the work will be monitored by the English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments and the LPA Archaeological Advisor to ensure adherence to the agreed Project Design and the appropriate professional standards.

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The site is centred at NGR TL 0521 4978, at approximately 27.20m OD, within the south-eastern quarter of the historic core of Bedford. It is situated within the north-eastern limits of the scheduled ancient monument of Bedford Castle Mound and Gardens (NM 20412) (Figure 1). It lies within the northern boundary of a plot of ground referred to historically as Castle Close.



The site covers approximately 850m². The southern and eastern sides of the potential development area contain buildings and the north-eastern quadrant is a yard/car park. The plot is bounded on its south side by the buildings of Bedford Museum and to the east by the yard to the rear of the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery, while the northern and eastern perimeters are defined by a c.2m high brick wall. Within the proposed development area is a narrow strip comprising c.170m², which is designated the 'extra over area' by the Client.

Topographically the site lies on the northern bank of the River Great Ouse on land that rises slightly towards the north. The underlying geology consists of alluvium and river terrace gravels overlying oolitic limestone.

For many years the premises have comprised an annex of Bedford Museum and the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery and, until 2007, most of the buildings were leased by BCAS/Albion Archaeology. The history and architecture of the museum complex have been summarised in a conservation plan for the Castle Lane area (FAS 2001).

1.3 Objectives of this Report

English Heritage is the body that advises the government on matters affecting ancient monuments and listed buildings. English Heritage's Charter advises developers and others to provide as much relevant information as possible at the earliest stage in the development process (English Heritage 2005). It also indicates the range of information that may be required to assist them to advise on proposals affecting nationally important heritage assets.

In accordance with this advice, the purpose of this document is to provide an assessment of the archaeological potential of the site, based on the results of field evaluation and the results of previous archaeological interventions in the area and information from all relevant historical documents and plans.

This document seeks to:

- Characterise the nature, likely date and potential for survival of archaeological deposits beneath the existing buildings and within the curtilage.



2. METHOD STATEMENT

2.1 Methodology

An archaeological desk-based study is an assessment of the known or potential archaeological resource within a given area, consisting of a collation of existing archaeological, historical and topographical information.

This desk-based study was carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments* (2001). It reviews the available documentary, cartographic and archaeological evidence relating to the Bedford Castle quarter (i.e. the area between High Street and Newnham Avenue, Mill Street and The Embankment), focusing on Castle Close.

The archaeological and cultural heritage significance of the Castle Close area has been summarised in a number of reports, including the Castle Lane Conservation Plan (FAS, 2001), the Extensive Urban Survey for Bedford (Albion Archaeology, 2005), and the Castle Mound improvement Scheme and Management Plan (Albion Archaeology, 2002b).

2.1.1 Previous archaeological investigations

This section reviews all previous archaeological investigations that have been carried out in the vicinity of Castle Close. Bedford Castle has been a focus of archaeological investigation from the late 1960s onwards. All archaeological work on the castle to date has been carried out by Albion Archaeology or its predecessor organisation, Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service, which was itself formed by the team that led the first excavations of the castle site. Reference has also been made to information held in the Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER).

2.1.2 Cartographic data

Early maps and other illustrations of an area can be a very informative. Often, they indicate dramatic changes in land use during the post-medieval and modern periods. This can be very helpful in appreciating how the archaeological resource may have been affected by urban development, particularly as a result of the expansion of settlements that took place during the 19th and 20th centuries.

The principal source consulted in this case was the Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service (BLARS).



3. RESULTS OF THE DESK-BASED STUDY

3.1 *Historic Environment Records*

Entries listed in the Historic Environment Records for the area of Castle Close are listed in Appendix 1.

3.2 *Previous Archaeological Investigations*

(See Figure 2.)

3.2.1 *Overview*

A number of archaeological investigations have been undertaken in the vicinity of Castle Close; these are listed in Appendix 2.

A series of investigations took place in Bedford town centre from 1969 to 1973 (Baker *et al.* 1979) (BC 69-72). Trenches within the Castle Close area included over twenty trenches in the area to the west and south-west of the museum and a single trench at the north-east of the art gallery (Baker *et al.* 1979 fig 4). Four trenches were excavated to the north of Castle Close in 1971, three on the Mill Street frontage and one fronting on to Castle Lane, opposite the Study Area (Baker 1974, 99-128).

During 1980, two further trenches were excavated in the courtyard of Bennett's Works (formerly the Higgins Brewery and now Bedford Museum) (Baker 1986, 59-67).

Watching briefs were undertaken during works south of Bedford Museum (WB 115) and the excavation of a service trench in Castle Lane outside what is now the BCA Gallery (WB 237).

Limited archaeological investigation was undertaken during the Castle Mound Regeneration project, undertaken in winter 2003/04 (Albion Archaeology *in prep.* (a)). The majority of the work involved surface stripping in advance of footpath repair and construction, but some small-scale excavations were undertaken, including a 2m by 2m test pit located in the centre of the lawn to the south of the gallery (Figure 3: Trench 1).

Archaeological observation and recording were undertaken during the reconstruction of the wall around the churchyard of St Cuthbert's (SC 1023) between September and December 2006.

Large scale archaeological excavations (CLB 965) were undertaken in 2007 as part of the Castle Quay Development in advance of housing and commercial development (Albion Archaeology *in prep.* (c)).

Archaeological works were undertaken in 2008 on land to the east of the Study Area during the renovation of the Bedford Gallery and the Hexagon Building (Albion Archaeology *in prep.* (d)).



3.2.2 Excavations in the vicinity of Castle Close during the 1970's

The Castle Close area was investigated in a series of small-scale rescue excavations undertaken between 1969 and 1973 in advance of redevelopment of the area (Baker et al 1979). In the course of events the development did not take place and the area remained a car park until the Castle Quay development in 2007. The majority of the trenches were located to the west of Castle Close, in the Castle Lane and Ram Yard public car parks. One trench (BC70 3) recorded a section through the earthwork on the north-eastern corner of Castle Close, identifying it as medieval in origin, although augmented by thick post-medieval deposits. The earthwork embankment was interpreted as a remnant of the outer defences of the castle. Other trenches were excavated at the base of the Castle Mound and on the southern perimeter of the castle boundary. These excavations uncovered pre-castle activity dating from the Saxon period and features associated with the castle. The excavations also produced evidence for the plan of the castle. Some of the principal buildings of the castle were identified within the inner bailey, which was centred on land to the south of Castle Lane, to the west of Castle Mound. Sections were also excavated through the inner bailey moat and the moat around Castle Mound. In both cases, the moat was found to have had a stone lining.

Another series of small-scale rescue excavations were undertaken in 1971 on land between Mill Street and Castle Lane (Baker 1974, 99-128). Trench 22, situated in the southern part of the former Litson's timber yard, lay on the north side of Castle Lane, directly opposite the present Study Area. The trench uncovered remains of a post-medieval building with foundations of stone and brick. Close beneath were natural sand and gravel above bedrock. There was no evidence of the castle ditch.

3.2.3 Bennett's Works investigation 1980

Archaeological recording was undertaken of two mechanically excavated trenches, dug for the foundations of the present Bedford Museum foyer. These provide evidence for settlement from the early middle Saxon period (possibly as early as AD 650) to the 11th century, as summarised in the table below.

Period	Brief description	Approximate depth below ground
Natural	brickearth	0.6m–1.0m
Early middle Saxon	buildings	0.6m–0.8m
Early middle Saxon	buried soil/turf line	0.5m–0.8m
Saxon	buildings and occupation	0.5m
Late Saxon/Saxo-Norman	buried cultivated soil, c. 0.5m thick	0.1m–0.6m
Saxo-Norman	stone building remains, possibly associated with the castle	0.4m
Post-medieval/modern	construction of brewery buildings	0–0.6m

Table 1: Archaeological deposits at the Bennett's Works

Quantities of tap slag and smithing slag were recovered, which may indicate iron making and metalworking on the site, although this material seems to be a fairly ubiquitous component of early medieval contexts in the castle area.



3.2.4 Watching briefs

A watching brief (Albion Archaeology project WB115) was undertaken in 1988 during enhancement works to the car parking area south of Bedford Museum. A small number of Saxo-Norman and early medieval pottery sherds were recovered but no archaeological deposits were observed during the works.

A further watching brief (Albion Archaeology project WB 237) was carried out during construction of a manhole trench through the road surface of Castle Lane, to the west of Bedford Museum. The modern pipe trench was situated at a depth of 1.70-2.20m and seemed to cut through the remains of sandstone masonry at the same depth. The nature and function of the masonry is unclear. Several sherds of Saxo-Norman pottery were recovered from the trench.

3.2.5 Bedford High Street 1995

Investigations to the rear of the properties at 29-41 High Street (Steadman 2009) identified the line of the western arm of the outer bailey ditch and revealed several phases of late Saxon and early medieval industrial activity and occupation, sealed beneath the castle rampart.

3.2.6 Castle Mound Regeneration 2003/04

Limited archaeological investigation was also undertaken as part of the Castle Mound Regeneration project, undertaken in winter 2003/04 (Albion Archaeology *in prep.* (a)). The majority of the work involved surface stripping in advance of footpath repair and construction, but some small-scale excavations were undertaken. These included a 2m by 2m test pit located in the centre of the lawn to the south of the art gallery (Figure 3: Trench 1).

The 2m square test pit revealed a depth of *c.* 0.5m of post-medieval made ground and garden soil. Immediately below this, evidence of timber structures, in the form of small postholes and a beam-slot, was revealed. These features were cut directly into mid orange-brown silty clay (resembling natural brickearth) which contained late Saxon/Saxo-Norman pottery.

3.2.7 St Cuthbert's Churchyard 2006

A programme of archaeological observation and recording was undertaken during reconstruction of the churchyard wall (Albion Archaeology 2007). Observations indicated that the level of the churchyard had been deliberately raised in two stages, initially in the medieval period and later in the post-medieval period. These build-up deposits sealed early medieval soil horizons that probably pre-dated the establishment of the churchyard. Iron working waste and fragment of lime mortar were recovered from the early medieval deposits.

3.2.8 Castle Quay Development 2007

Extensive excavations were undertaken in advance of development for residential and commercial use. The remains ranged in date from the mid Saxon period to the 20th century. Because the investigations were limited to



those deposits that would be removed by the development, the early phases may be under represented and the full depth of deposits could not be determined.

The earliest evidence, consisting of buried subsoil and scattered postholes and hearths, is associated with middle and late Saxon pottery and therefore appears to pre-date the castle construction.

Features associated with the castle included large limestone foundations and cobbled surfaces. A large stone building to the south of Castle Lane is interpreted as a medieval hall lying within the inner bailey of the castle. Of particular relevance for the current study area is the identification of the outer moat of the castle near the northern limit of the site. The projected eastwards continuation of this feature runs along the northern boundary of the Study Area.

Following the siege of 1224 the castle defences were slighted and buildings robbed of stone. Some evidence for settlement and industrial activity was found. A cobbled road was associated with post-built structures. Lime kilns, slag-rich dumps and quarry pits all point to the use of the area for industrial purposes rather than settlement.

The archaeological evidence corroborates documentary evidence that the castle site remained largely open ground until the 19th century.

3.2.9 Bedford Gallery and Hexagonal Building 2007/08

Archaeological works were undertaken during the renovation of the two early 19th-century buildings, the former Bedford Gallery and the hexagonal militia depot. Both buildings are of historical interest and the Bedford Gallery is Grade II listed. The Hexagonal Building is earlier, but unlisted; it sits on top of a substantial earthwork, thought to be medieval in origin (see above and Baker 1979, 51–5). The earliest feature was a large ditch situated at the northern edge of the site, interpreted as the outer moat of the castle. This was succeeded by a series of quarry pits of various sizes that were dug during the medieval period. The quarry pits to the east of the Bedford Gallery were sealed by substantial layers that were stratigraphically post-medieval but which contained Saxo-Norman pottery.

3.3 Cartographic Evidence

This section summarises the information available from historical maps and plans, illustrating the changes occurring on the site and in the general vicinity from the early 17th century onwards. Details of the cartographic sources consulted can be found in Appendix 3.

3.3.1 Speed's map 1610

The earliest map of Bedford is Speed's map from 1610 (Figure 4). It shows the main streets of the northern and southern *burh* with houses along the street frontages and the position of the churches within the city boundary. Bedford



Castle is shown as an unoccupied mound and ruined walls. The northern part of Castle Close is shown as open land containing no buildings. Within this, impinging on the Study Area, is a faint circular feature, consisting of an outer dotted double line and an inner circle of dots. The precise nature of the feature is uncertain, but it appears similar to a number of other circular patterns in garden areas on the plan. It was probably not a direct record but a representation of a garden/cultivated area.

3.3.2 Jefferys's map 1765

Jefferys's map (Figure 5) shows that not much development had taken place in Bedford within the previous 100 years. Its main significance for the purpose of this study is that it shows a large semi-circular earthwork, immediately to the north of the Castle Mound. The earthwork most likely represents the remains of the outer defensive rampart of Bedford Castle (Baker *et al* 1979, p. 54). Castle Mound is now clearly marked as a bowling green, indicating that the area of open land so close to the town centre had become a significant place of recreation.

3.3.3 Parish map 1795

The parish map (Figure 6) is of interest for the general development of Bedford as it is the first map to represent approximate positions of structures, as well as their relative shape and the extent of their associated property boundaries. For Castle Close, however, it only shows a vacant plot to the north of the Castle Mound.

3.3.4 Brayley's map 1807

Brayley (Figure 7) does not show any changes within the Study Area. It shows a blank space to the north of the Castle Mound, bounded by Castle Lane in the west and north, and Newnham Road in the east, which is labelled as *Castle Close*. The close contains a 'tussock' drawing convention, possibly indicative of an area of rough pasture, which contrasts with the garden and cultivation plots at the rear of houses on other streets.

3.3.5 Dewhurst and Nichols 1836

The Dewhurst and Nichols map of 1836 (Figure 8) shows that the Study Area remained an open space at this time.

The plan also shows that the Hexagonal Building was the first building to appear in Castle Close, situated to the east of the Study Area in the north-eastern corner of the close. This building is shown accessed from Castle Lane and enclosed by a boundary that closely followed its hexagonal shape. A thin, dark feature on an east-west alignment is indicated to the east of the Hexagonal Building and the sinuous line of a stream extends southwards from the feature, parallel to the line of Newnham Road (then known as 'Thames Street'). This feature is most likely the 'engine house' indicated on the later 1840 plan and Reynolds's map of 1841 (see below). Dewhurst and Nichols' map shows that in 1836 the watercourse was still an open stream.



3.3.6 Plan of 1840

This plan (Figure 9) is attached to an indenture dated 1840. The Study Area remains an open space at this time but was bounded to its east by a building labelled ‘Whig Club House’ (now the Bedford Gallery) and to its south a brewery (now Bedford Museum). The brewery is shown as series of buildings around a yard with access from the north and south sides. The malthouse was situated on the east side of the yard with the brewhouse on the west side.

The course of the stream shown on the Dewhurst and Nichols map is now described as a ‘Covered ditch’, which leads from the ‘Engine house’ to a small cistern or pond on the northern berm of the moat around Castle Mound.

3.3.7 Reynolds 1841

The map of 1841 (Figure 10) is very similar to the 1840 plan. The Study Area remains as an open area bounded by buildings to its south and east. The Hexagonal Building and Bedford Gallery appear to be joined together and the label above says ‘Castle Rooms’ although the Hexagonal Building itself retains its own label of ‘Depot’.

The engine house to the east of the Hexagonal Building is now marked as a clear rectangular building with a possible central porch on the northern side. The stream immediately to the south of the engine room has been covered and only appears again as an open ditched watercourse to the east of the castle mound.

3.3.8 Salmon 1854

This map (Figure 11), commonly referred to as Salmon’s Gas Map, is one of the first very precise, 19th-century maps of Bedford, giving an exact rendering of buildings and property boundaries.

The Study Area is still an open area; however, a number of significant changes have occurred to the surrounding buildings. The Higgins family villa has been built to the south of the Hexagonal Building. A few alterations have also been carried out to the Bedford Gallery and Hexagonal Building complex itself. The Bedford Gallery has been extended to the south and both buildings have also added features to the north towards the Castle Lane street frontage. The engine house to the east of the Hexagonal Building has now disappeared and the culverted stream has been replaced by a footpath that leads south from the north-eastern corner of Castle Lane and curves around to the entrance of the Higgins villa.

More precise property boundaries also seem to have been drawn up between the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery building complex and the brewery.

3.3.9 Mercer 1878

Mercer’s 1878 map of Bedford (Figure 12) shows comparatively little change in Castle Close and the adjacent areas from the mid 19th century other than small infill developments. The Study Area remains an open space.



Adjacent to the Study Area, the main changes are to the Higgins family villa which has acquired a larger north wing, an added porch in the east and what looks to be a more elaborate southern façade. A small porch may also have been added to the eastern side of the Hexagonal Building and extensions have been added to the brewery.

3.3.10 Ordnance Survey map 1884

The Ordnance Survey map of 1884 (Figure 13) shows the Study Area in greater detail than any previous map. A double thickness line around the northern and western sides indicate that it was surrounded by a wall at this time. Paths within the area outline two large rectangular spaces and small/medium-sized trees are arranged irregularly along the edges of the paths. Extensions of the path to east and west indicate the probable access to the area. At the west the path meets the wall at the south-west corner of the area and, although no break in the wall is indicated, it is possible that a gate or door could have existed. A short section of path situated close to the south-east corner of the area provides a link between the Study Area and the wide passage that appears to be the access to the rear of the Higgins Villa. The layout of the area and its relationship to the adjacent Higgins property suggest that it was a private garden area, possibly a kitchen garden.

The 1884 map also shows that the brewery building has been extended westward and now fronts directly onto Castle Lane. It is labelled *Castle Brewery*. The Higgins villa is labelled as *Castle Close* and the Bedford Gallery and Hexagonal Building as *Castle Rooms (The Brethern)* [sic] *Seats for 350* and *St. Agnes's Infant School* respectively.

3.3.11 Ordnance Survey map 1900

The OS map of 1900 (Figure 14) is the first to show buildings in the Study Area resulting from a northwards extension to the brewery buildings. It consists of a rectangular structure aligned east to west situated in the south-west corner of the area. The open area is subdivided by a boundary that separates the north-west corner and the eastern side of the Study area. The southern continuation of this boundary 'dog legs' around the eastern end of the building, perhaps indicating an access point at this end of the building. A small building has been constructed in the south-east corner of the Study Area against the northern wall of the brewery buildings lying to the south.

Other changes in the vicinity are small extensions to the Higgins Villa to integrate the Villa with the Hexagonal Building.

3.3.12 Ordnance Survey map 1924

The OS map of 1924 (Figure 15) shows that the building which appeared on the map of 1900 has been extended across the entire southern side of the Study Area.



3.3.13 Ordnance Survey map 1967

The OS map of 1967 (Figure 16) shows the buildings in the Study Area in the form that they retain up to the present day. The buildings have been extended by an addition in the north-east corner of the Study Area and the raised area along the northern face of the main range of buildings exists in its present layout. The buildings within the Study Area are labelled *Warehouse* and the former brewery buildings to the south are labelled *Sorting Office*.

3.4 Building Plans

This section presents evidence from building plans which are held in the collection of Bedfordshire and Luton Archive and Records Service. Plans for proposed building alterations and additions to the brewery buildings were inspected. These are listed in Appendix 4. The plans which relate directly to additions and alterations within the boundaries of the 2a Castle Lane site are described below.

3.4.1 New Cellar, Castle Brewery, 1899

The drawing is entitled ‘Plans for New Cellar at “Castle Brewery” for Messrs Higgins & Sons’ (Figure 17). It shows a cellar with a barrel shed at ground floor level above. The cellar is lit and ventilated by three openings in the north wall with corresponding recesses to allow in light from the outside of the building from ground level. Its ceiling is supported on a central row of iron columns supporting transverse floor beams. The barrel shed on the floor above is shown with timber roof trusses supported on iron columns along the north and south sides. It appears from the drawing that the north side of the barrel store was intended to be open with the eaves of the roof being supported by the row of columns on that side.

The cellar shown in the plan is largely the same as the existing basement area, but the barrel room above has since been converted to office accommodation by the infilling of the north wall and the insertion of a number of internal divisions.

3.4.2 Plan of Extension to bottling store, Castle Hill, 1926

The drawing is entitled ‘Proposed extension to bottling store, Castle Hill for Messrs Higgins & Sons Ltd’ (Figure 18). It is marked as being approved on 15th December 1926. The plan shows the proposed extension as a square building situated in the north-east corner of the 2a plot with no internal divisions. The floor consists of a reinforced concrete raft. It is accessed from the outside *via* a door located towards the southern end of its west wall. There was a platform on either side of the door with steps leading from the platform down to the floor level of the new bottling store. The new store is connected with an existing store and bottle store on its southern side *via* two openings with steps leading up to these areas. The new bottle store is lit by two windows in its eastern wall and a row of four small windows just below eaves level in the northern wall. The gabled roof is shown supported by wooden trusses. The plan also indicates the construction of piers for a gateway in the north wall of the yard outside the bottling store.



The bottling store remains largely unchanged as the store area situated in the north-east corner of 2a Castle Lane. The proposed internal and external loading platforms shown in the south-west corner of the building are smaller than those which now exist and a larger sliding door has been inserted in the west wall.

3.4.3 Plan of office & lavatory, Castle Lane, 1930

The drawing is entitled ‘Office and lavatory accommodation – Castle Lane for the Consumers Tea Co Ltd’ (Figure 19). The plans were approved in March 1930. The plan shows details of the conversion of the ground floor area originally created as a barrel store in 1899 into an office space. The plan indicates that the space has already been partitioned from the buildings to the south. The proposed alterations consist of the insertion of windows and doors along the north side of the building, the blocking of openings in the south wall, the creation of an entrance in the west end and the insertion of internal partition walls. The partitions indicated divide the building into offices, passages, toilets and a tea and sample room.

The layout of the current building retains the entrance from the west with the associated passage and the general office space that made up the east half of the planned layout. The indicated plan differs significantly from the current layout in the various rooms in the western half of the building. This may be due to subsequent alterations or changes to the plans. The light internal stud walling would have been relatively easy to alter.

The external loading platform (which is depicted in black, indicating that it was an extant feature) is approximately the same size as the present platform.

3.4.4 Plan of cycle shelter – Castle Buildings 1931

The drawing is entitled ‘Cycle shelter – Castle Buildings for the Consumers Tea Co.’ shows details of a cycle shelter in the yard and a small roofed shelter on the loading platform to protect the door into the warehouse (Figure 20). The plans were approved on 21st January 1931. The construction of the cycle shelter is shown as a timber frame with a corrugated iron roof. An additional note on the drawing, ‘Note cycle shelter to be set back to line of warehouse’, suggests that the north end of the shelter would be constructed a little further south than shown in the drawing.

Both of these features no longer exist. The significance of the plan of the cycle shelter is that it shows the yard at this time was on two levels. The area between the loading platform and the gates was at road level whilst the part to the west was at a higher level and was accessed by steps. The yard has since been reduced to the lower level across its entire width, but there is a straight joint in the concrete surface, corresponding approximately with western edge of the original yard. The surface now covering the western part of the yard is of poorer quality and the retaining wall along the south side of the yard comprises at least two distinct builds (Figure 21).



4. SYNTHESIS OF RESULTS

4.1 Chronological Summary

This section presents a provisional chronological synthesis, based on the results of the desk-based assessment.

4.1.1 Pre-Medieval (pre-AD1066)

No evidence dating to the prehistoric or Roman periods has so far been encountered in the area of Castle Close.

A few Roman artefacts (pottery and flue tile) were recovered from the Castle Lane excavations (Baker *et al* 1979, 20) and tile fragments were found in recent excavations to the rear of 23–27 High Street (Albion Archaeology *in prep.* (b)). Some form of settlement in the area is not unlikely, given the number of later Iron Age and Romano-British settlements that have been found along the Great Ouse Valley.

Saxon features were recorded at Bennett's Works in 1980 (Baker, E, 1986). These provide evidence for settlement from the early middle Saxon period (possibly as early as AD650) to the 11th century. The phases were separated by distinct soil horizons, which have considerable potential for palaeoenvironmental analysis. Evidence for timber buildings found in a test pit on the Castle Close lawn in 2003/04 may possibly also date from the late Saxon period.

Any evidence for pre-medieval occupation of the 2a Castle Lane is very significant as it will contribute to our knowledge and understanding of the early origins and development of the town of Bedford. Whilst evidence for Saxon settlement has been found elsewhere in Bedford, the remains within Castle Close appear to be much better preserved than elsewhere. This is probably due to the fact that the site has not been as densely developed as other areas within the town centre (as evinced by the historical maps).

4.1.2 Medieval (AD1066-AD1550)

The special significance of the medieval remains in the area of the 2a Castle Lane is recognised by the site's status as a scheduled ancient monument of national importance. The scheduling relates to the remains of Bedford Castle. The history of Bedford Castle has been covered in some detail in Baker *et al* 1979.

Bedford Castle itself was a Norman 'motte and bailey' castle. It is first mentioned in historical sources in the 1130s and throughout its early history was in the possession of the de Beauchamp family. In 1215 the castle was taken from William de Beauchamp by Falkes de Breaute after a brief siege. De Breaute refortified the castle in order to defend it against Henry III, but it was taken and subsequently destroyed by Henry's troops in 1224.



Current interpretation of the layout of Bedford Castle indicates that 2a Castle Lane lies within the outer bailey, just inside the northern boundary of the castle. Excavations to the west and east of 2a Castle Lane at the Castle Quay development and Bedford Gallery have located the inner edge of the moat that formed the northern limit of the defences. The projected course of the moat would place its southern edge within the site at 2a Castle Lane.

An earthwork mound, situated 30m to the east of 2a Castle Lane, which forms the foundation of the Hexagonal Building, was probably originally part of the rampart of the outer defensive perimeter of the castle. A trench excavated through the north-eastern slope of the earthwork in 1970 suggested that its earliest phase is dated to *c.* 1100–50, with a secondary earthwork and possible stone-lined ditch that may date to after 1216 (Baker 1979, 53). Investigations in 2008 showed the deposits on the north face of the earthwork to be entirely post-medieval, but this does not disprove the view that the core is medieval.

Based on current understanding of the layout of the castle, the earthwork probably originally ran westwards, parallel with Castle Lane, but it has been largely destroyed by the cellars of the Bedford Gallery. Within 2a Castle Lane, post 1800 truncation of the deposits may not have been as destructive, and there is a good chance that the lower portion of the earthwork may survive in places.

The excavations conducted between 1969 and 1973 found that the main buildings of the castle lay within the inner bailey, centred on land to the south of Castle Lane and to the west of Castle Mound.

After the destruction of the castle and the dismantling of much of its stonework for building stone, the site remained vacant until the late 19th century.

4.1.3 Post-medieval (AD1550-AD1900)

During much of the post-medieval period a large proportion of the former castle site remained as an open space. At the beginning of the 17th century some masonry remains of the castle still survived. Speed's map of 1610 shows what appear to be substantial blocks of masonry close to the river and the castle mound.

Development of the former castle site proceeded slowly throughout this period, spreading initially from the west and along Castle Lane. This process is illustrated in the cartographic evidence of the 17th and 18th centuries.

No development occurred in the eastern part of the castle site until the 19th century. Brayley's map of 1807 shows the area as an open plot labelled as 'Castle Close' with only the castle mound, which was used as a bowling green by this time. The first buildings constructed in Castle Close were situated in the north-eastern part of the plot. The hexagonal building, constructed as a



militia depot sometime after 1804, and a small structure described as an engine house first appear on Dewhurst and Nichols' map of 1836.

The boundaries of the plot which is now occupied by 2a Castle Lane were defined by the mid 19th century with the construction of a brewery to the south and a structure later known as the Bedford Gallery to the east.

The brewery, later known as the Castle Brewery, was started in 1837 on land leased from the Duke of Bedford by Charles Higgins, the inn holder of the Swan Hotel (Collett-White 1981, 313-14 and Osborne 2004, 9-11). A plan of 1840 shows the brewery arranged in a quadrangular plan around a central yard with a brewhouse along the west side and a malthouse on the east side (Figure 9). A residence for the brewery owner, the Higgins villa, was built by 1846 on an adjacent plot to the south of the Hexagon building.

The building that is now called the Bedford Gallery was constructed in 1840 and is labelled on a map of the same date as a Whig club (Figure 9).

The plot later occupied by 2a Castle Lane remained an open space into the late 19th century. It is still shown in detail on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1884 as a garden area with paths and trees (Figure 13).

4.1.4 Modern (AD1900-present)

The development of the site of 2a Castle Lane began in the early part of the 20th century with the expansion of the brewery. The building in the south-western part of the plot was erected to provide a cellar and barrel store. Structural plans, dated 1899, survive and the building is shown on the Ordnance survey map of 1900. A wall dividing the open part of the plot into two halves on the 1900 map may correspond to a difference in height within the yard noted in later drawings (see section 3.4.4).

The Ordnance Survey map of 1924 indicates that the building had been extended along the southern side of plot. The final building to be added was the square building that occupies the north-east of the plot. It was created for Higgins & Sons limited as an extension to their bottling store according to building plans which were approved in December 1926.

Details of the various brewery buildings were recorded as part of the valuation undertaken following the 1925 Valuation Act (BLARS ref. DV1/R43). The survey noted that 'The brewery is old but has been modernised to a certain extent with regard to plant'.

On 31st December 1928 Higgins & Sons Limited was purchased by Wells & Winch, who owned the Biggleswade brewery and numerous public houses in the area. Brewing at the Castle Brewery ceased on 5th October 1928 and the brewery buildings were subsequently sold. The buildings within 2a Castle Lane were purchased by Consumers Teas. Traces of the advertising sign for Consumers Teas can still be seen on the gable of the former extension to the



bottling store. Other parts of the brewery were bought by Bedford brewer Charles Wells. These consisted of a maltings, offices, bottle washing shed, residence and garden.

The main part of the brewery buildings to the south of 2a Castle Lane became Bennett's Clothing Factory and then a General Post Office sorting office before it was converted to house Bedford Museum in 1982.



5. PREDICTIVE DEPOSIT MODEL AND TRENCH STRATEGY

The following section (Table 2) presents information on the possible survival of archaeological deposits based on comparison with deposits recorded during investigations in adjacent areas and the estimated depth of modern construction layers. The heights of known archaeological deposits in the vicinity of 2a Castle Lane are shown on Figure 22. For the location of the investigation areas listed below see Figure 23. The purpose of the proposed trial trenching is to test the veracity of these predictions.

Area	Known disturbance and predicted archaeological deposit
A: Yard	<p>Concrete surface and possible make-up deposits (estimated thickness 0.3m). Local disturbance due to known sewers in western part of area and surface water drains in central part. Deposits in western half of area may have been protected from some disturbance due to former deeper overburden in this area during part of its history.</p> <p>Possible archaeological deposits may include southern edge of moat and possible medieval pitting to south of moat.</p>
B: Basement	<p>Concrete floor (estimated thickness 0.3m) over truncated geological deposit. No disturbance due to services predicted.</p> <p>Saxo-Norman deposits located in earlier investigations c.10m to the west and c. 20m to the east that included pitting which extended up to 2m below ground level. Possible survival of truncated bases of deeper archaeological features.</p>
C: Garage	<p>Concrete floor (estimated thickness 0.3m) over possible 0.2m archaeological deposits above geological deposits. Vehicle inspection pit only known source of disturbance.</p> <p>Saxon and Saxo-Norman deposits located in the Castle Quay and earlier investigations 15m to the west.</p>
D: Store	<p>Concrete floor (estimated thickness 0.3m) over possible 0.6m archaeological deposits above geological deposits. Cellar passage under western end of area will have removed much of the deposit in this area.</p> <p>Saxon and Saxo-Norman deposits located in the Bennett's Works investigations 5m to the south.</p>
E: Store	<p>Concrete floor (estimated thickness 0.3m) over geological deposit. Possible disturbance unknown.</p> <p>Saxon and Saxo-Norman deposits located in the Bennett's Works investigations 5m to the south and Saxo-Norman deposits in Bedford Gallery investigations 15m to the east.</p>
F: Store	<p>Concrete floor (estimated thickness 0.3m) over geological deposit. Possible disturbance unknown.</p> <p>Saxon and Saxo-Norman deposits located in the Bennett's Works investigations 6m to the south and Saxo-Norman deposits in Bedford Gallery investigations 10m to the east.</p>
G: Store	<p>Concrete floor (estimated thickness 0.3m) over geological deposit. Possible disturbance unknown.</p> <p>Saxo-Norman deposits located in Bedford Gallery investigations 10m to the east. Close to projected line of moat and within possible zone of pitting to south of moat.</p>

Table 2: Predictive archaeological deposit model



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7. APPENDICES

7.1 Appendix 1 – Buildings and Sites Listed on the Bedfordshire HER

HER No.	Description	Comments
298	Bedford Castle (inc. antiquarian references to a supposed Roman villa).	This is a general record covering Bedford Castle. Antiquarian suggestions of Roman villa on Castle Lane are now discounted. The main excavations have separate records (see below, 14373 etc).
1241	Swan Hotel.	Built late 18th century on site of old Swan Inn.
1243	Timber-framed building with jettied upper storey.	19th-century front but some parts of structure may be as old as 16th century. Still standing.
1244	Nos 12 and 14 Castle Lane, late 18th-century front.	Now demolished.
1245	16-18 Castle Lane.	Demolished.
3069	See HER 14378.	
4055	Restaurant, Ram Yard (rear of 47 High Street), 19th-century.	
4056	Schoolroom, back of Howard Congregational Chapel, 19th-century.	
4057	56-60 Castle Lane, now the garage.	
4115	Former Century or Plaza cinema, 20th-century.	Demolished.
4116	Former Bedford Modern School Museum, 20th-century.	Demolished.
4117	Cecil Higgins Art Gallery, The Embankment, mid 19th-century.	Formerly Higgins House or Castle Close. Built 1846. Incorporates the hexagonal militia building of c.1804.
4274	Bedford Museum (Bennett's Works), Castle Lane.	Former Higgins Brewery, built 1837.
7336	Medieval lime kiln, 12th–13th-century.	Situated immediately west of 2a Castle Lane.
14373-7, 14379-80, 14385-87, 14394	Bedford Castle. (BC 69-72) Forty-four trial trenches opened over three seasons.	Saxon features. Medieval castle features included a range of Norman buildings, inner bailey ditch, the motte and the smaller earthwork to the NE.
14378	43 Mill St and Litson's Timber Yard (BMS 71-2).	At least three buildings with stone footings, dating from 15th century on. Ceramic 'knight and rider' roof finial found, dated to about 1450.
14379	Litson's Timber Yard, Castle Lane (BCL 71).	Footings for post-medieval cottage found.
14397	Bennett's Works, excavation in advance of work at Bedford Museum.	Slots, postholes and hearths dated to early-middle Saxon period, sealed by turf line. This was cut by later Saxon occupation features, which were sealed by a thick 'black earth' layer of Saxo-Norman date.
15788	Site of Providence Chapel, built 1830s, went out of use in 1890s.	Demolished in 1960s.



7.2 Appendix 2 – Previous Archaeological Investigation in the Vicinity

Project Code	Name	Type	Report Reference
–	Bennett's Works	Salvage excavation	Baker, E. 1986
BC69–72	Bedford Castle	Excavation	Baker <i>et al</i> 1979
BCL 73	Bedford Castle (Lime Kiln)	Excavation	Baker <i>et al</i> 1979
BCAS 426 ASC BHC 01	Howard Chapel	Evaluation and Watching Brief	
BHS 265	Rear of 29-41 High Street	Excavation	Steadman, S. 1999
BMS 72 –BCL 71	Litson's timber yard	Excavation	Baker, D. et al 1974
CH 1209	Bedford Gallery and Hexagon Building	Excavation	Albion Arch. in prep (d)
CLB 965	Castle Quay Development	Excavation	Albion Arch. in prep (c)
CMB 799	Castle Mound Regeneration	Misc.	Albion Arch. in prep (a)
HS 1139	23-27 High Street	Excavation	Albion Arch. in prep (b)
SC 1023	Land at St Cuthbert's Church	Watching Brief	Albion Archaeology Report 2007/19
WB 105	Swan Hotel/embankment		
WB 115	Bedford Museum Car Park	Watching Brief	Albion Archaeology WB115, HER 298
WB237	Bedford 2A Castle Lane	Watching Brief	Albion Archaeology WB237, HER 298

7.3 Appendix 3 – List of Cartographic, Pictorial and Documentary Sources in Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service

Date	Description	BLARS Reference
Maps:		
1610	Speed, 1610	X1/88/1
1765	Jefferys, 1765	X1/88/2
1795	Parish map, 1795	X1/88/3
1807	Brayley, 1807	X1/88/4
1836	Dewhurst and Nichols, 1836	X1/36
1836	W. Berrill 22-Jan-1836. Plan of close & cut at back of Swan Inn, Bedford	X369/2
	Castle Close before construction of brewery and club	X369/29
	Castle Close after construction of brewery and club	X369/30
1840	Plan on indenture date 1840	X369/5
1841	Reynolds, 1841	X1/88/5
1854	Salmon gas map, 1854	X1/88/6 and X133/11
1878	Mercer, 1878	X1/88/7
Pictorial sources:		
1833	Dawson's panorama (photograph of drawing by F. Dawson)	BP28/14a and b
Documents:		
	Contract for granting lease between Duke of Bedford and Charles Higgins	X369/3
1837	Builder's specifications for building the brewery of Mr C. Higgins 1837	X369/4



7.4 Appendix 4 – List of Building Plans in Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service

Date	Title	BLARS Reference
1878	Additions to Brewery Messrs Higgins & Sons	693
1896	Offices – Castle Brewery Messrs Higgins & Sons	3121/1-2
1899	New Cellar – Castle Brewery Messrs Higgins & Sons	3740/1-2
1926	Plan of extension to bottling store – Castle Hill Higgins & Sons Ltd	3740 - 7786
1930	Plan of office & lavatory – Castle Lane The Consumers Tea Co Ltd	3740 - 8699
1930	Plan of alterations to premises – Castle Hill H Bennett	9111 - 8712
1931	Plan of cycle shelter – Castle Buildings The Consumers Tea Co Ltd	3740 - 8874
1932	Plan of alterations to Factory – Castle Hill H H Bennett	9111 - 8712



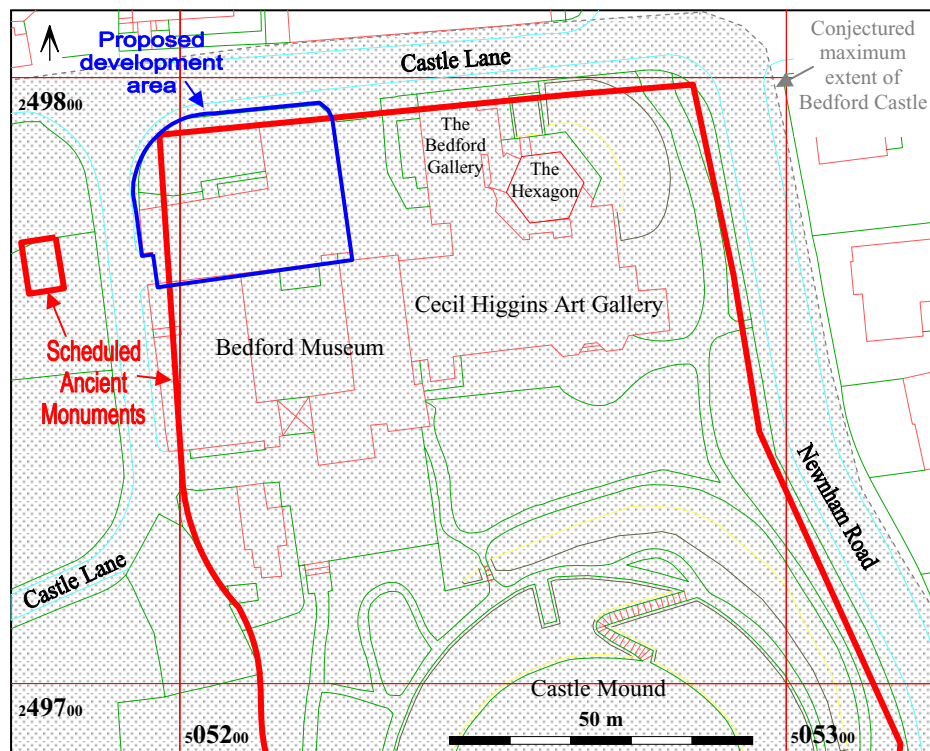
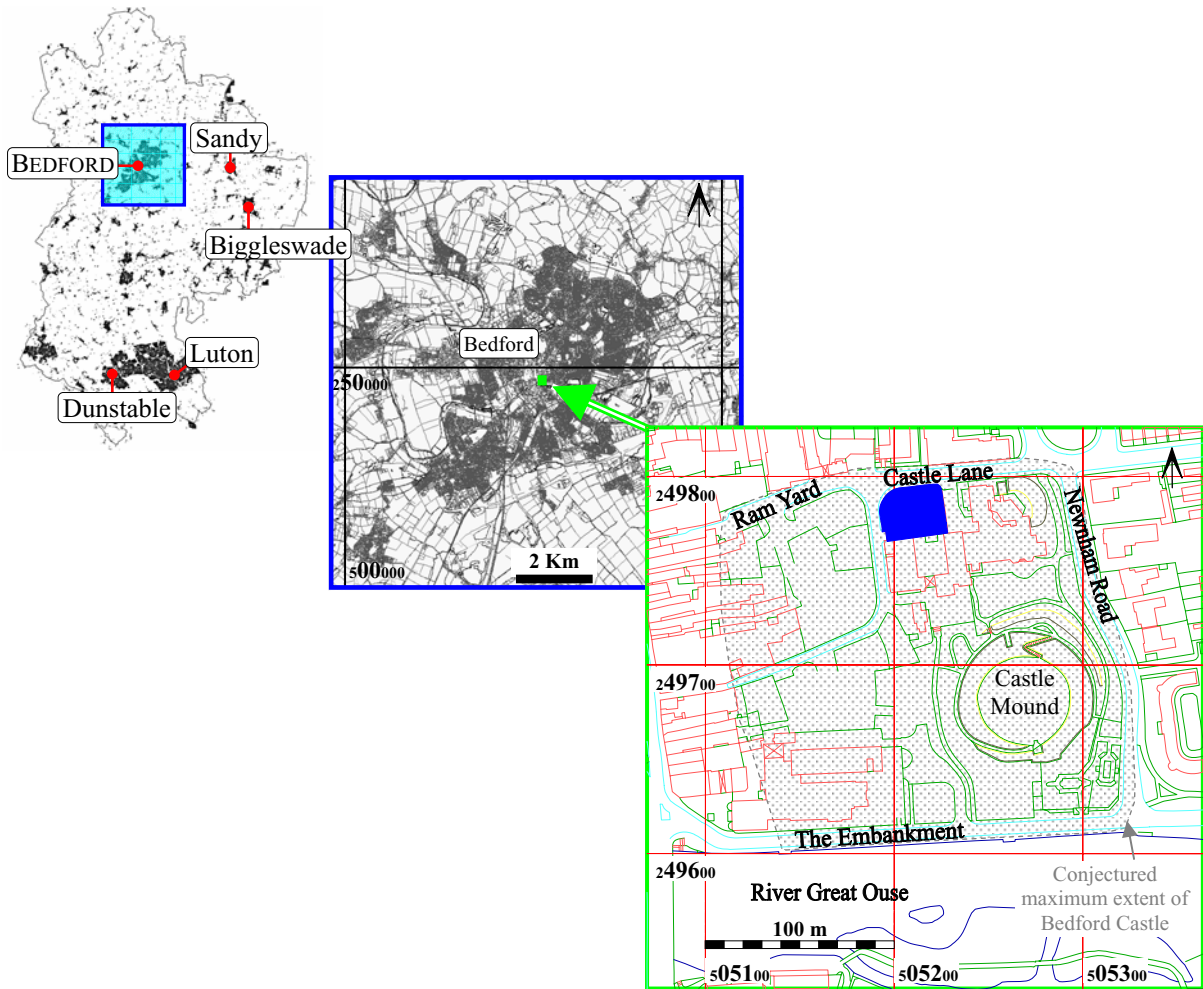


Figure 1: Site location plan

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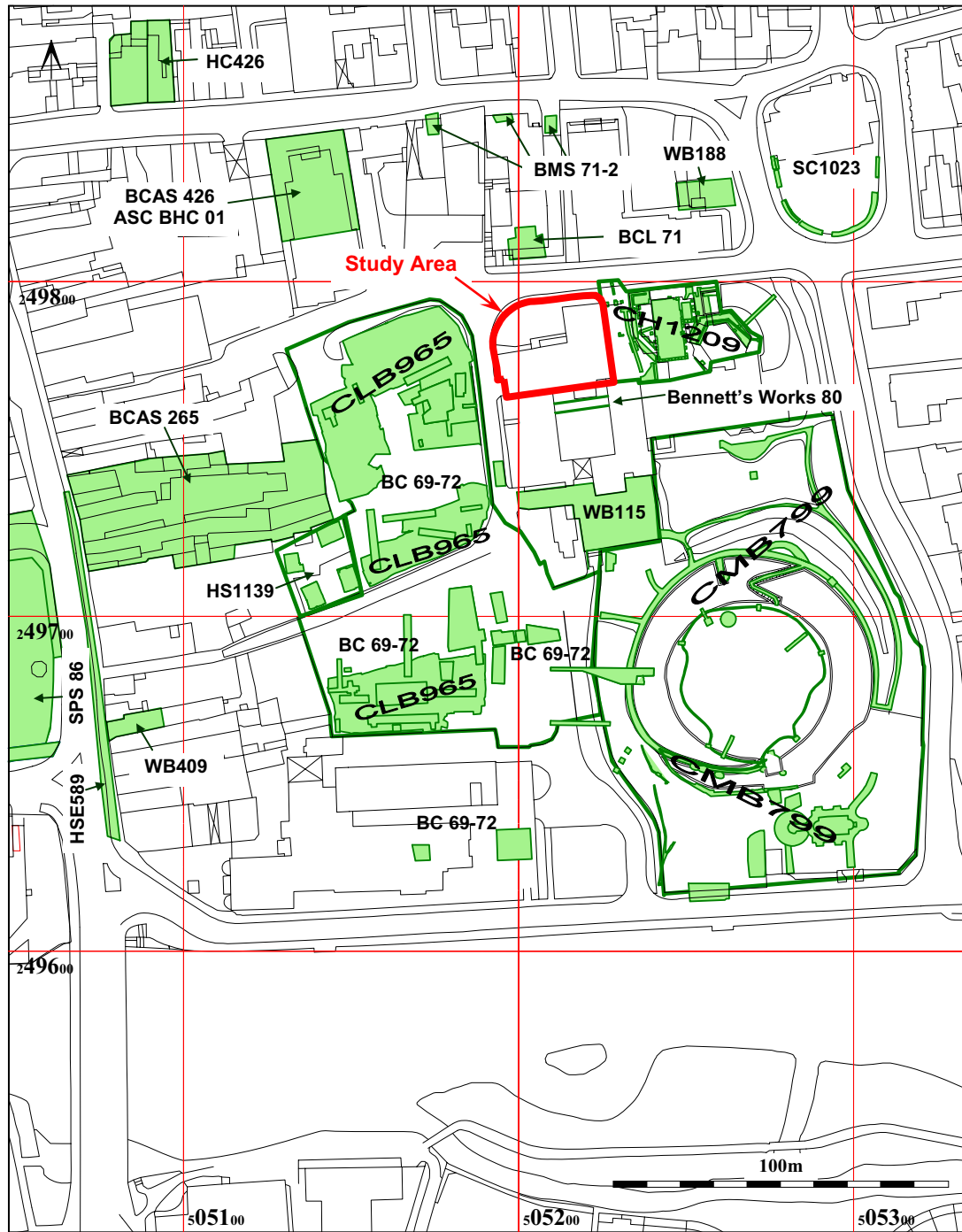
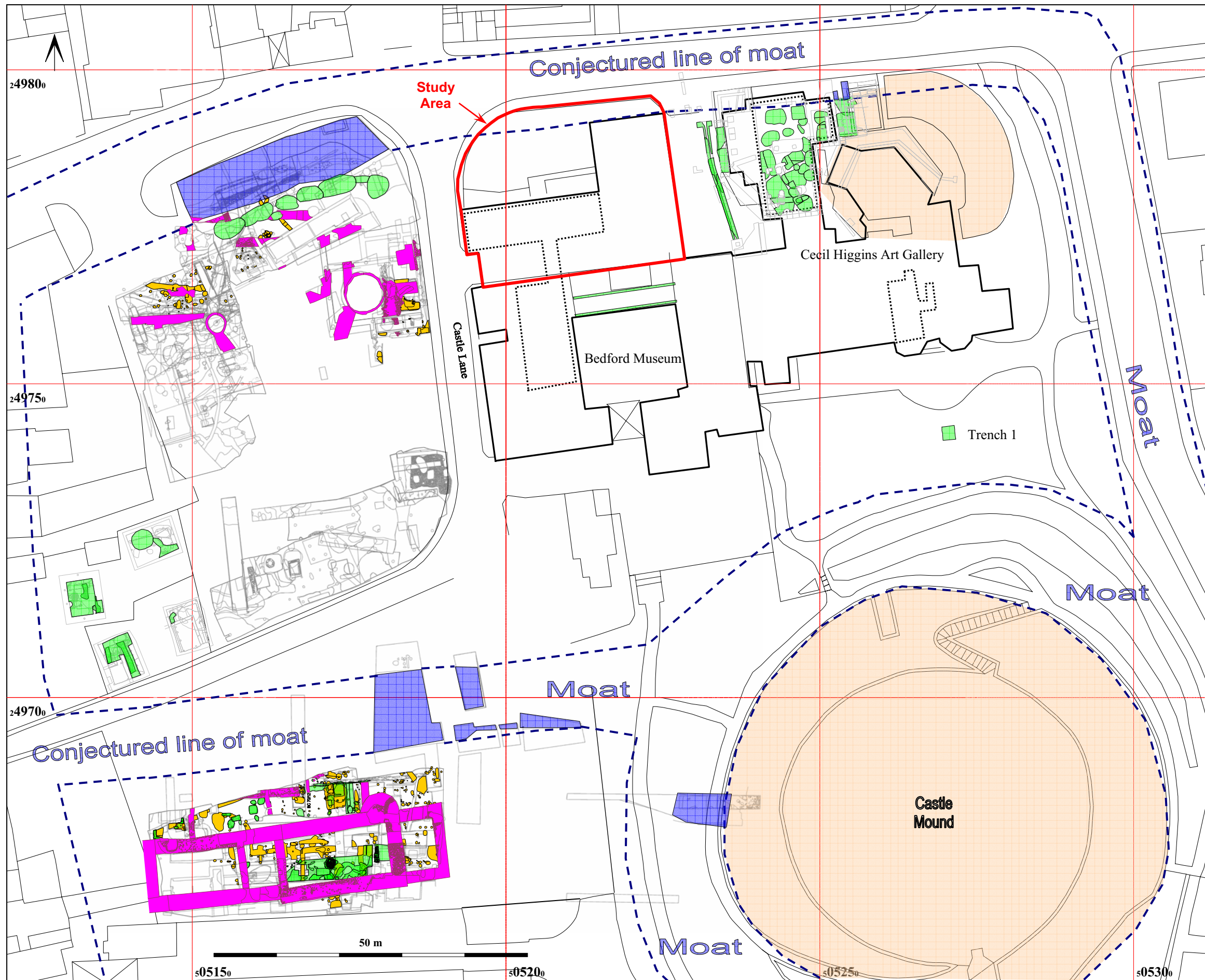


Figure 2: Previous archaeological investigations

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



-  Saxon features
-  Medieval features
-  Medieval structures/surfaces
-  Moat
-  Earthwork

Figure 3: Saxon and Saxo-Norman features adjacent to the Study Area.
Base map reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, by Albion Archaeology, Central Bedfordshire Council. OS Licence No. 100017358(LA). © Crown Copyright.

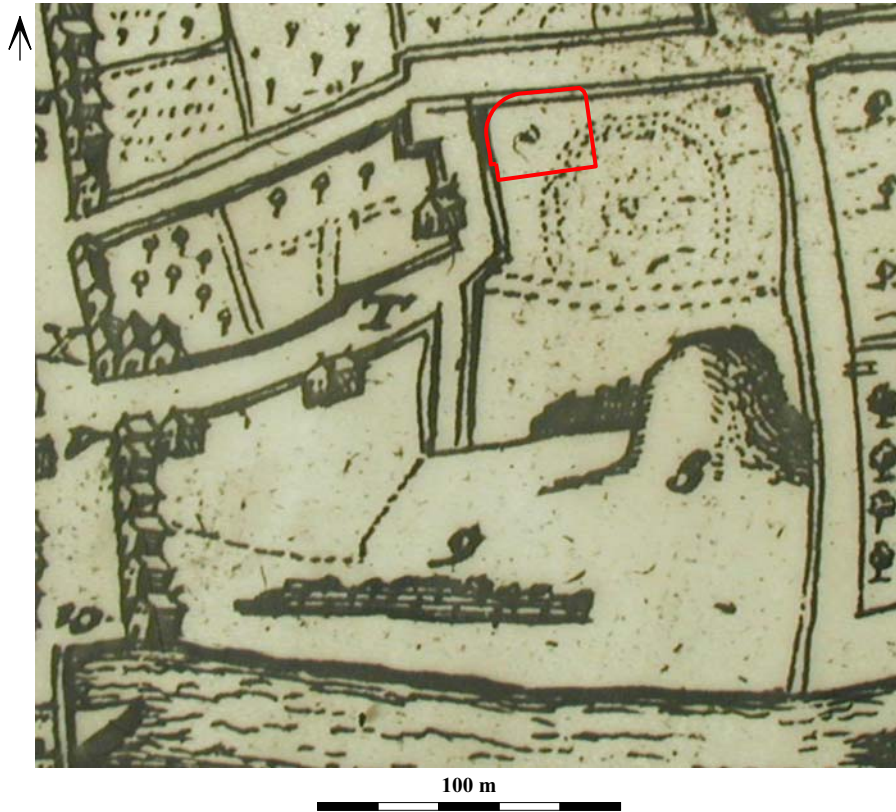


Figure 4: Castle Close in 1610 (Speed)
(Study Area and scale, approximate)

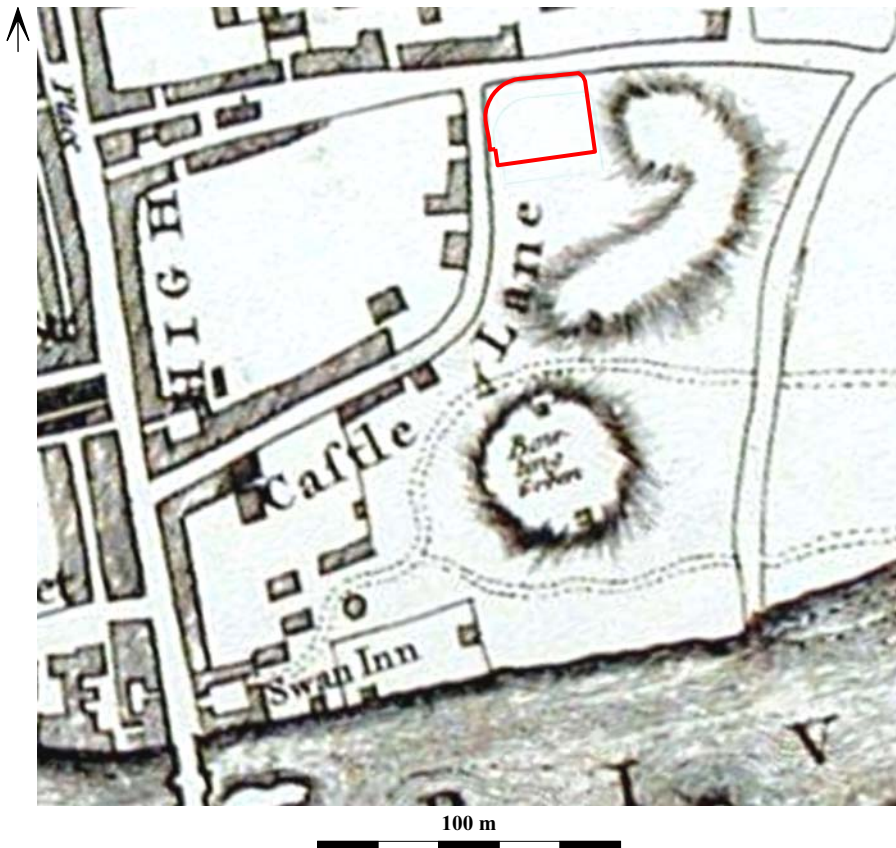


Figure 5: Castle Close in 1765 (Jefferys)
(Study Area and scale, approximate)



Figure 6: Castle Close in 1795 (Parish map)
(Study Area and scale, approximate)

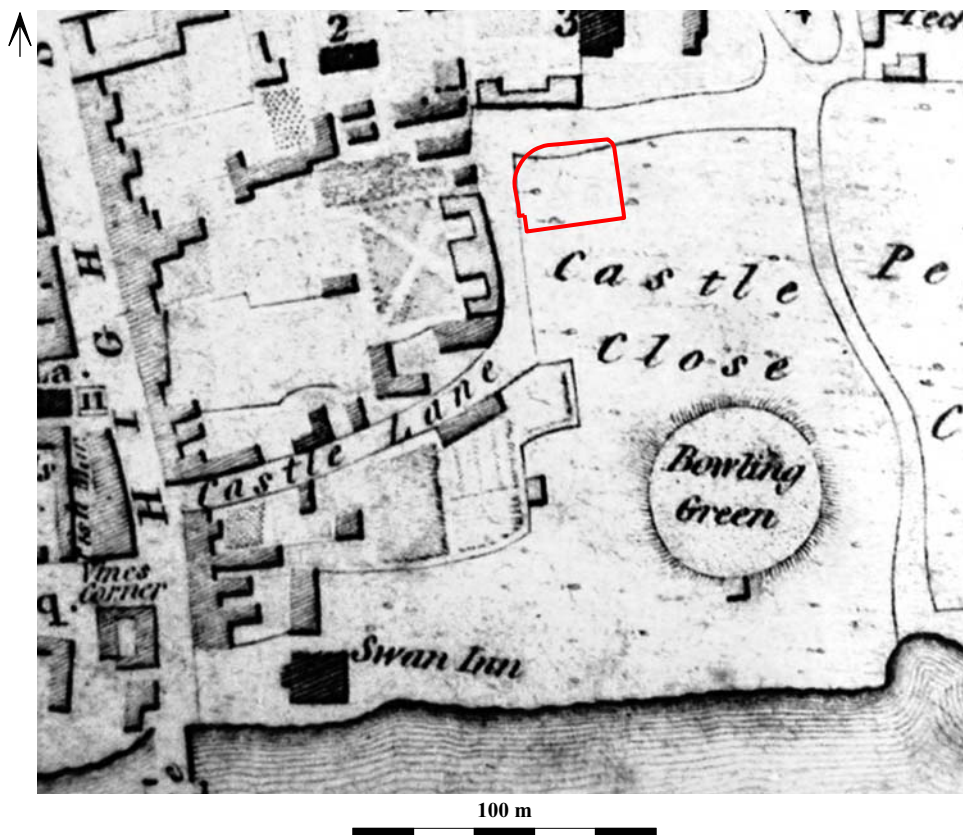


Figure 7: Castle Close in 1807 (Brayley)
(Study Area and scale, approximate)



Figure 8: Castle Close in 1836 (Dewhurst and Nichols)
(Study Area and scale, approximate)

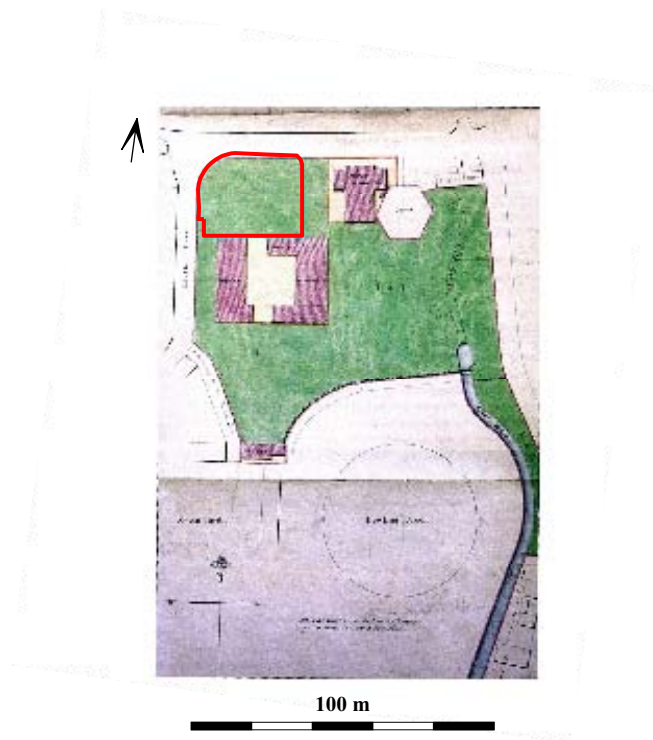


Figure 9: Castle Close in 1840 (BLARS ref: X369/5)
(Study Area and scale, approximate)

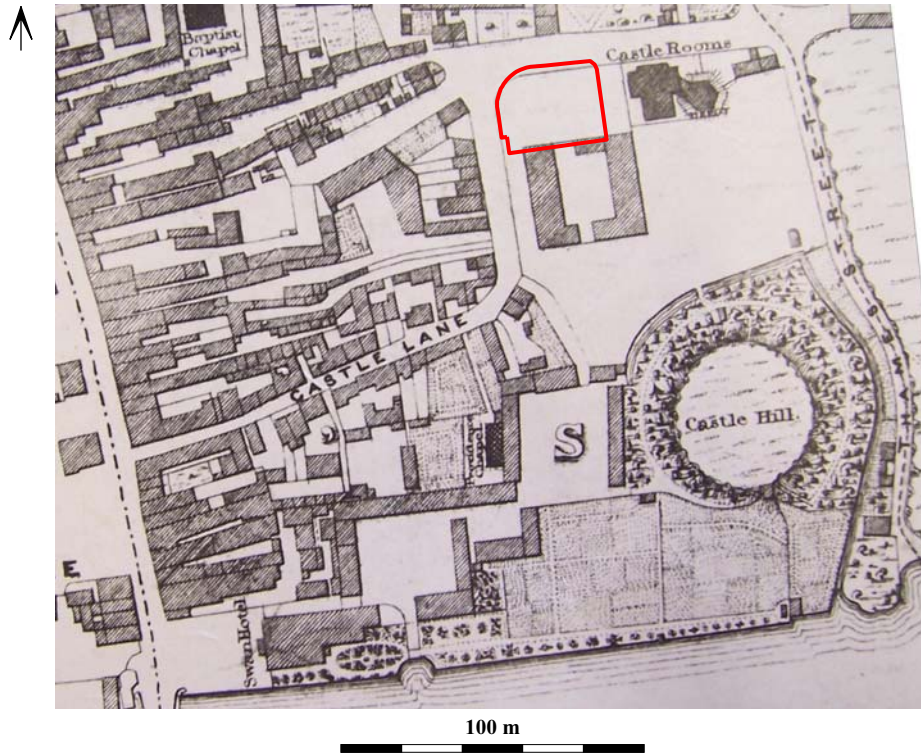


Figure 10: Castle Close in 1841 (Reynolds)
(Study Area and scale, approximate)

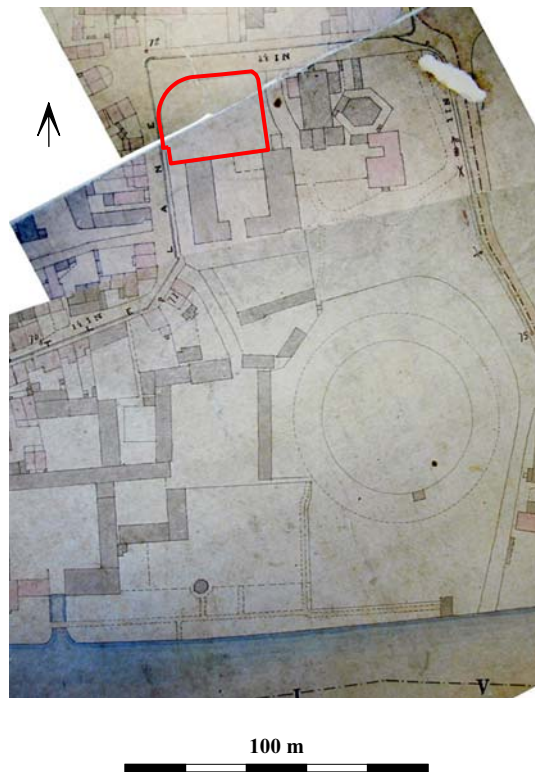


Figure 11: Castle Close in 1854 (Salmon)
(Study Area and scale, approximate)

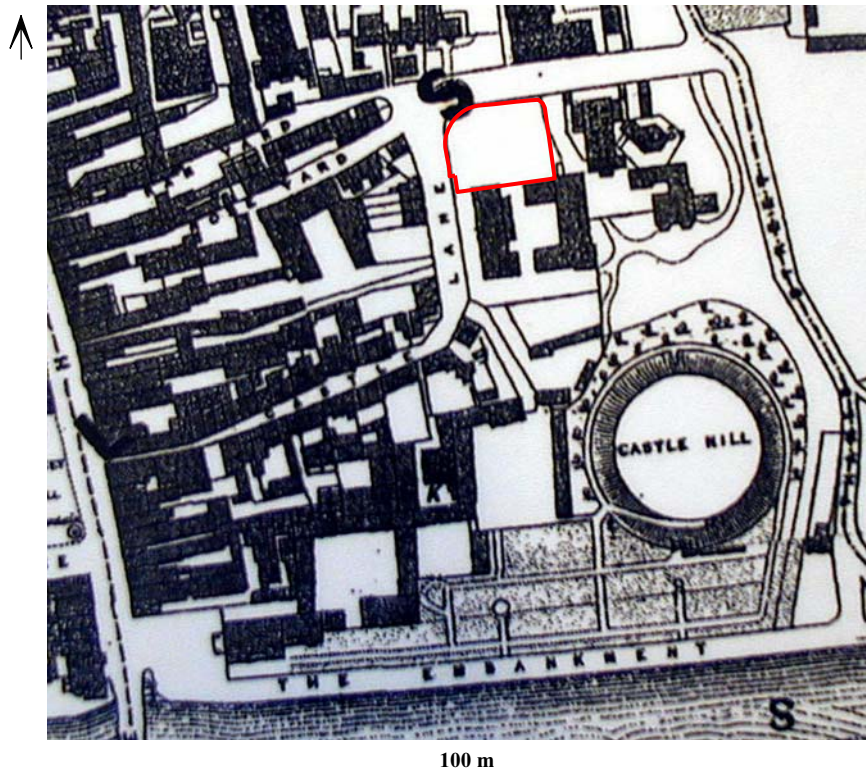


Figure 12: Castle Close in 1878 (Mercer)
(Study Area and scale, approximate)

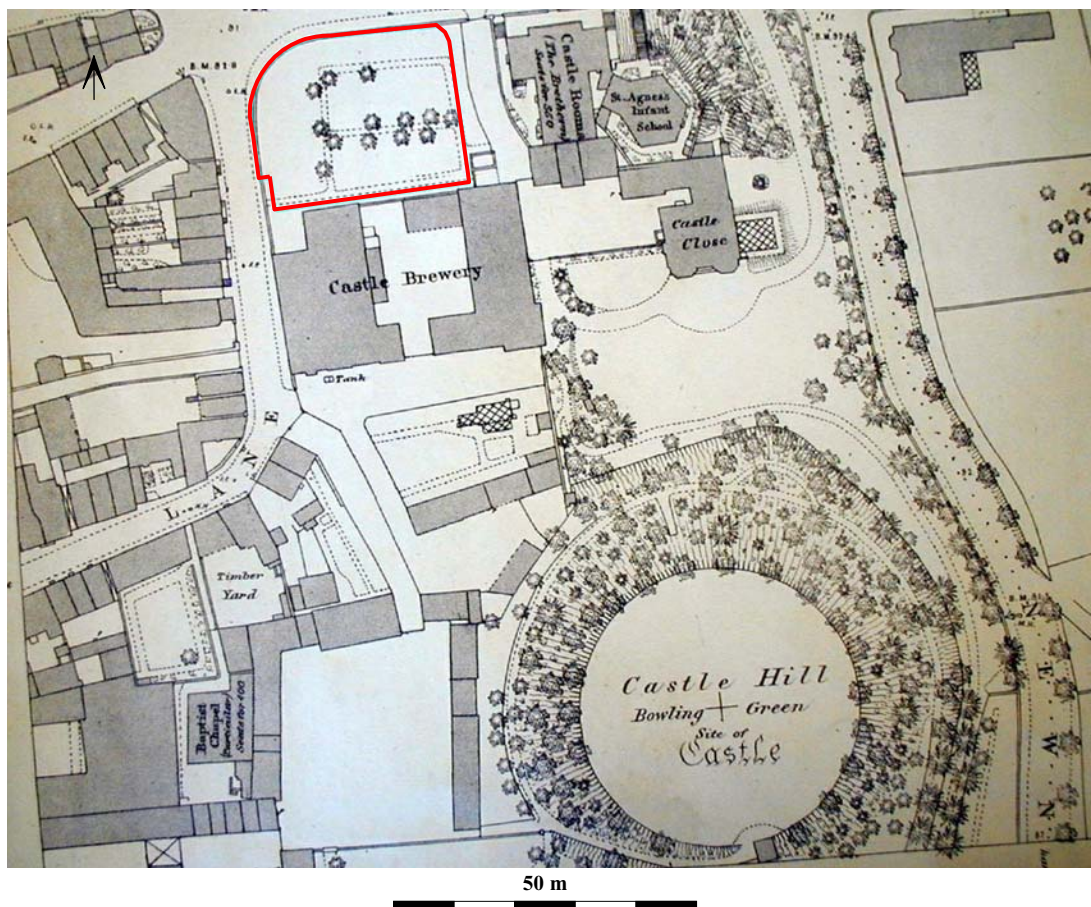


Figure 13: Castle Close in 1884 (Ordnance Survey)
(Study Area and scale, approximate)

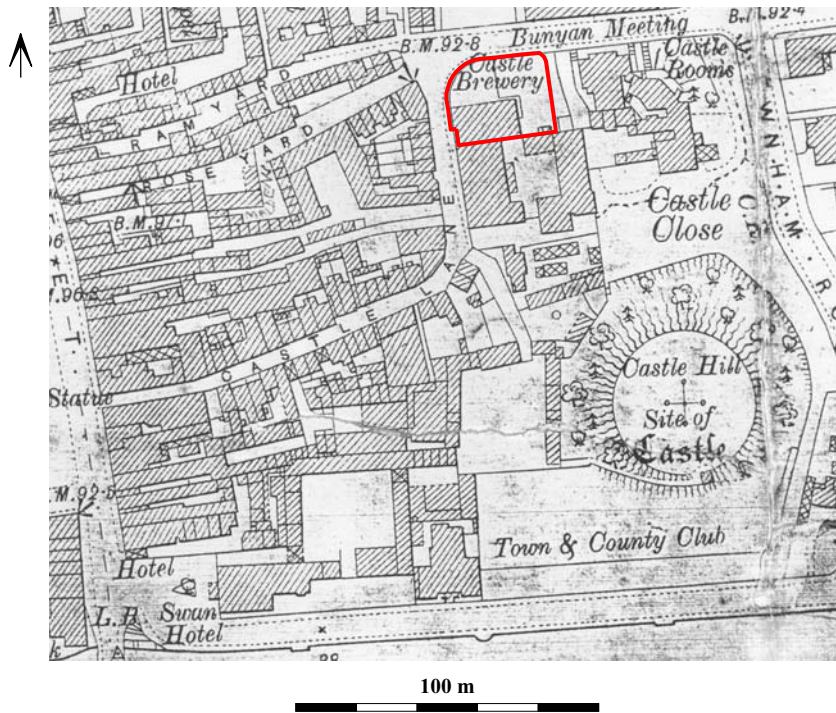


Figure 14: Castle Close in 1900 (Ordnance Survey)
(Study Area and scale, approximate)

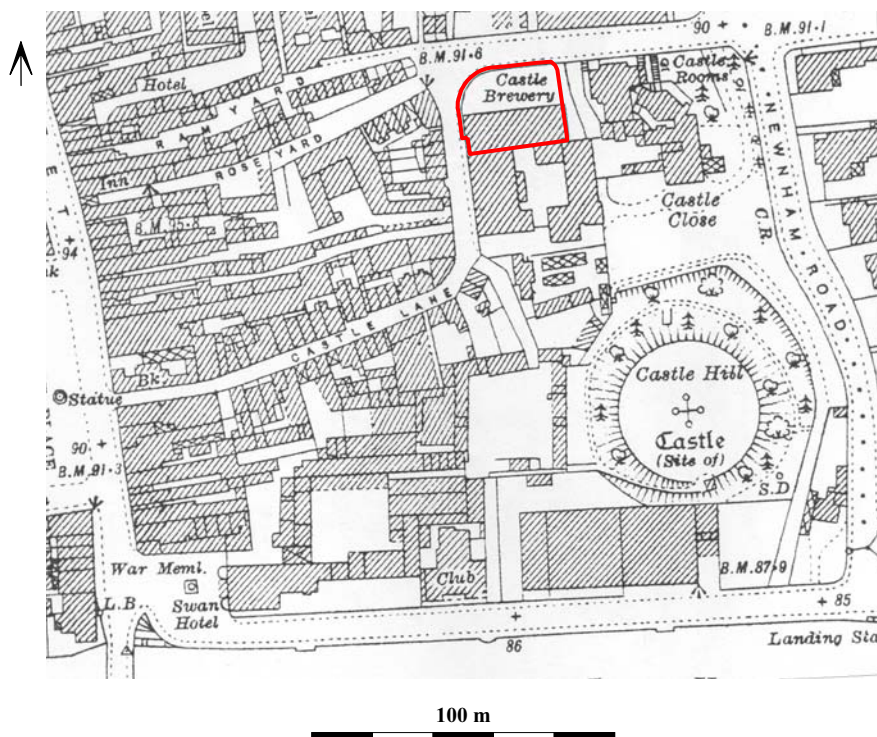


Figure 15: Castle Close in 1924 (Ordnance Survey)
(Study Area and scale, approximate)

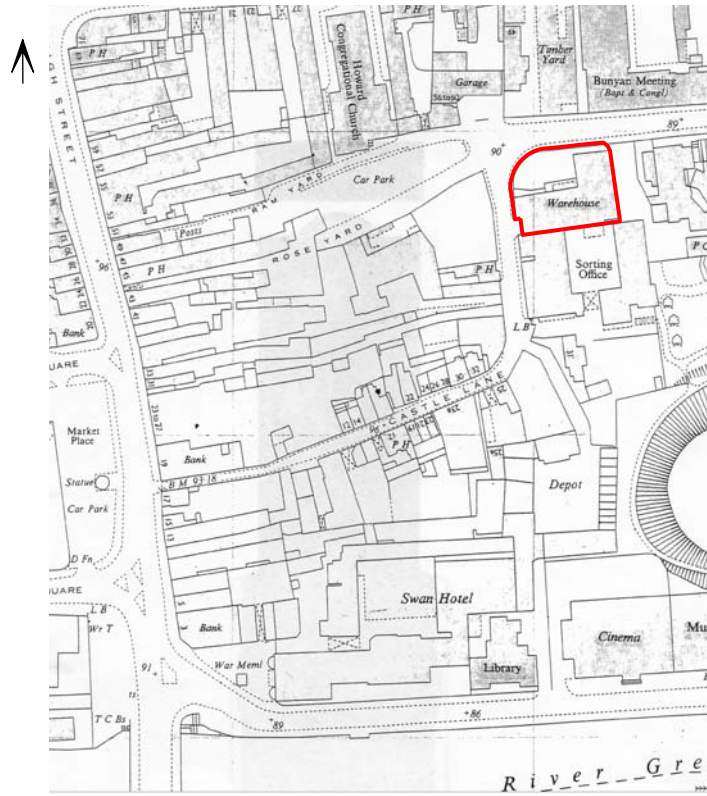


Figure 16: Castle Close in 1967 (Ordnance Survey)
(Study Area and scale, approximate)

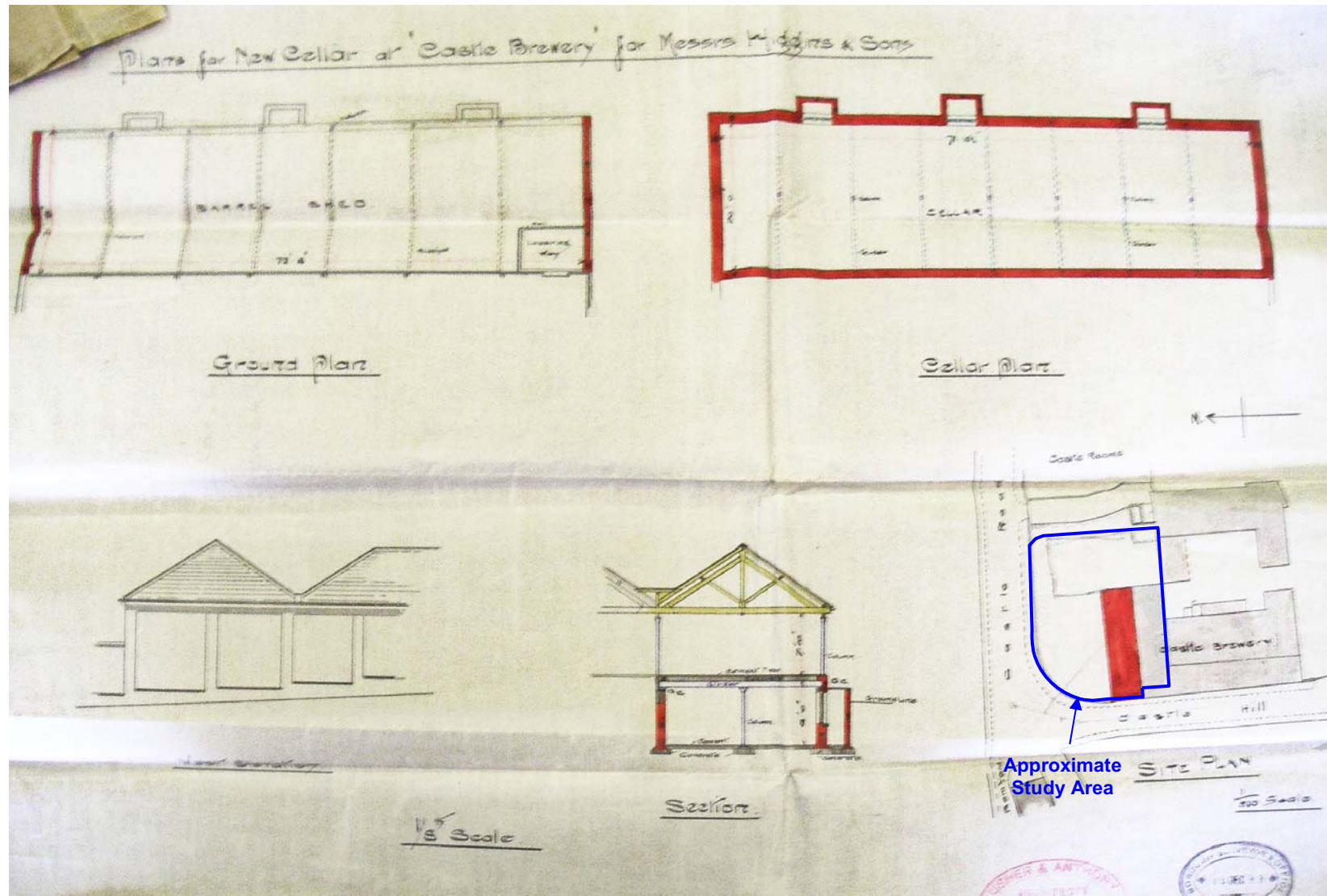


Figure 17: Building plan: New cellar. 1899
(Not to scale)

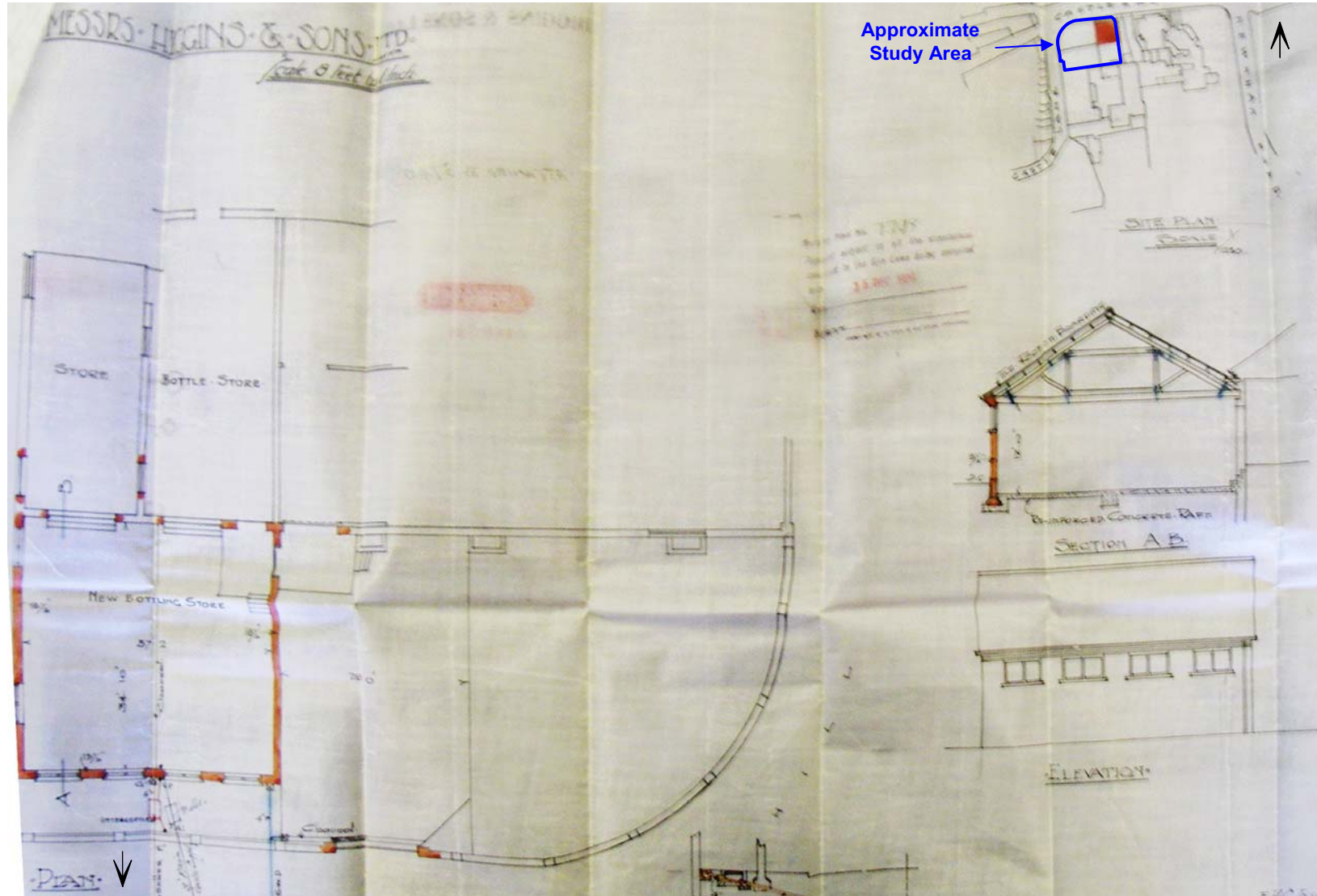


Figure 18: Building plan: Bottling store extension. 1926
(Not to scale)

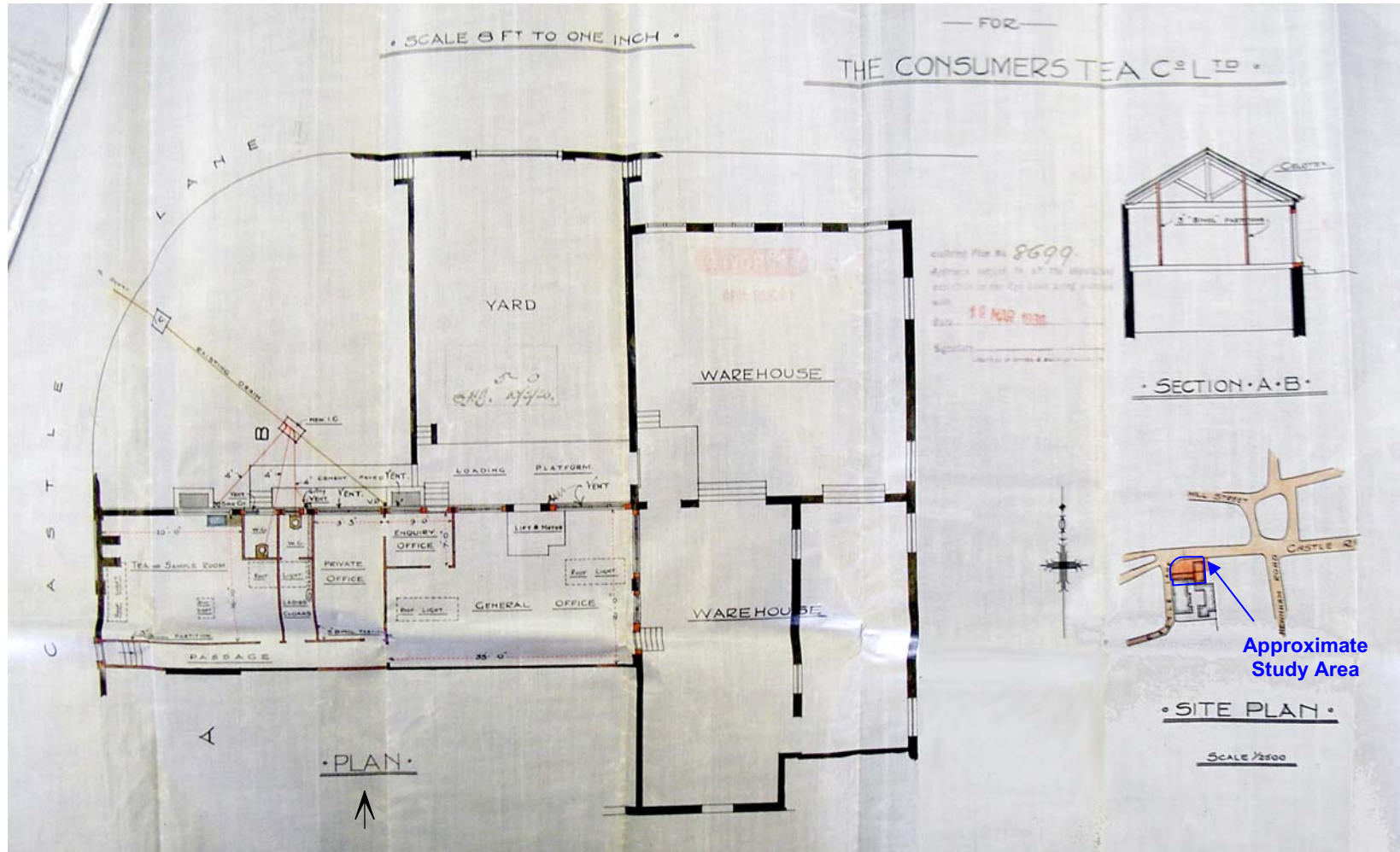


Figure 19: Building plan: Office and Lavatory. 1930
(Not to scale)

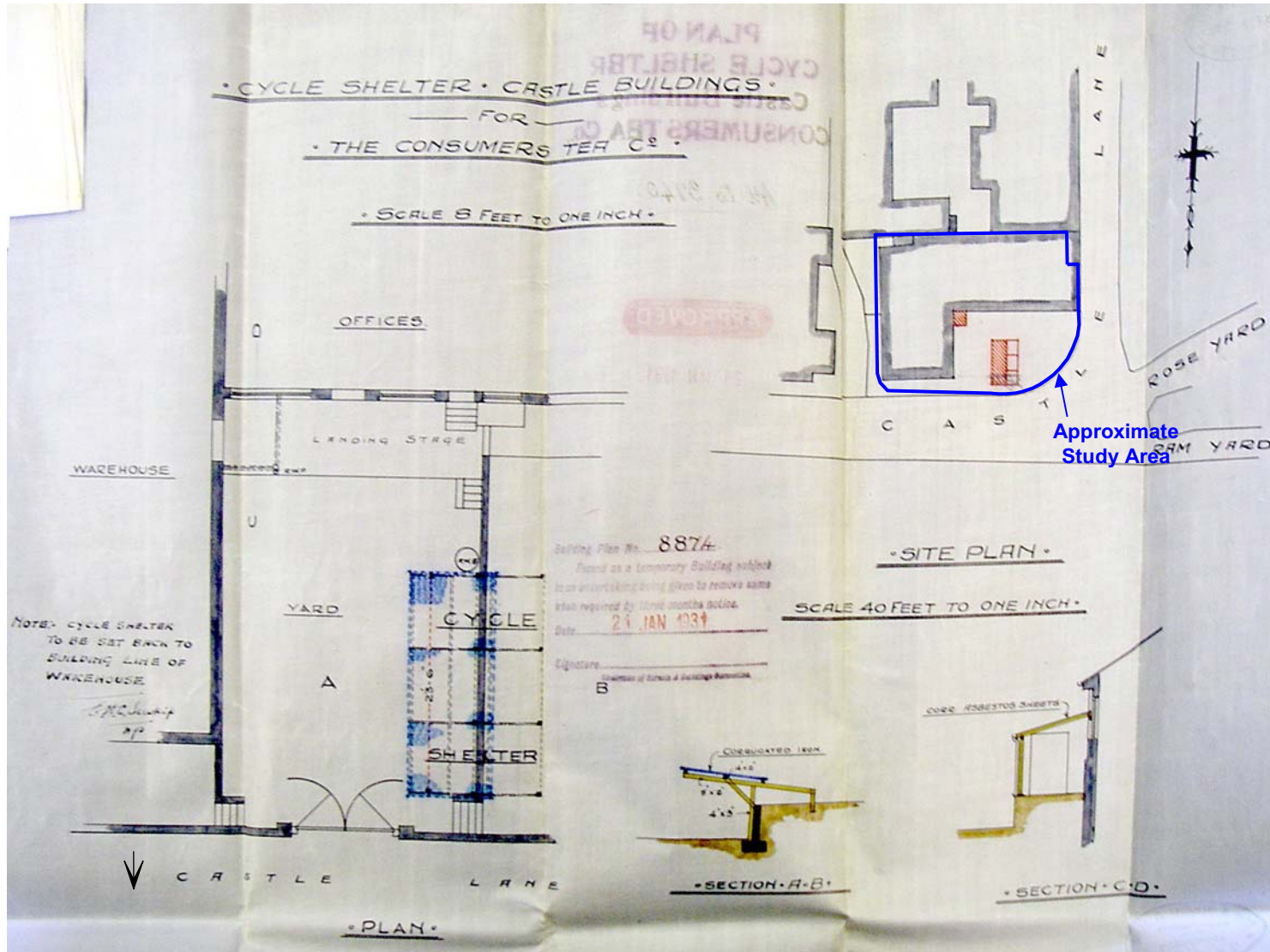


Figure 20: Building plan: Cycle shelter. 1931
(Not to scale)



Figure 21: Composite photograph of the yard and north elevation of the existing building at 2a Castle Lane

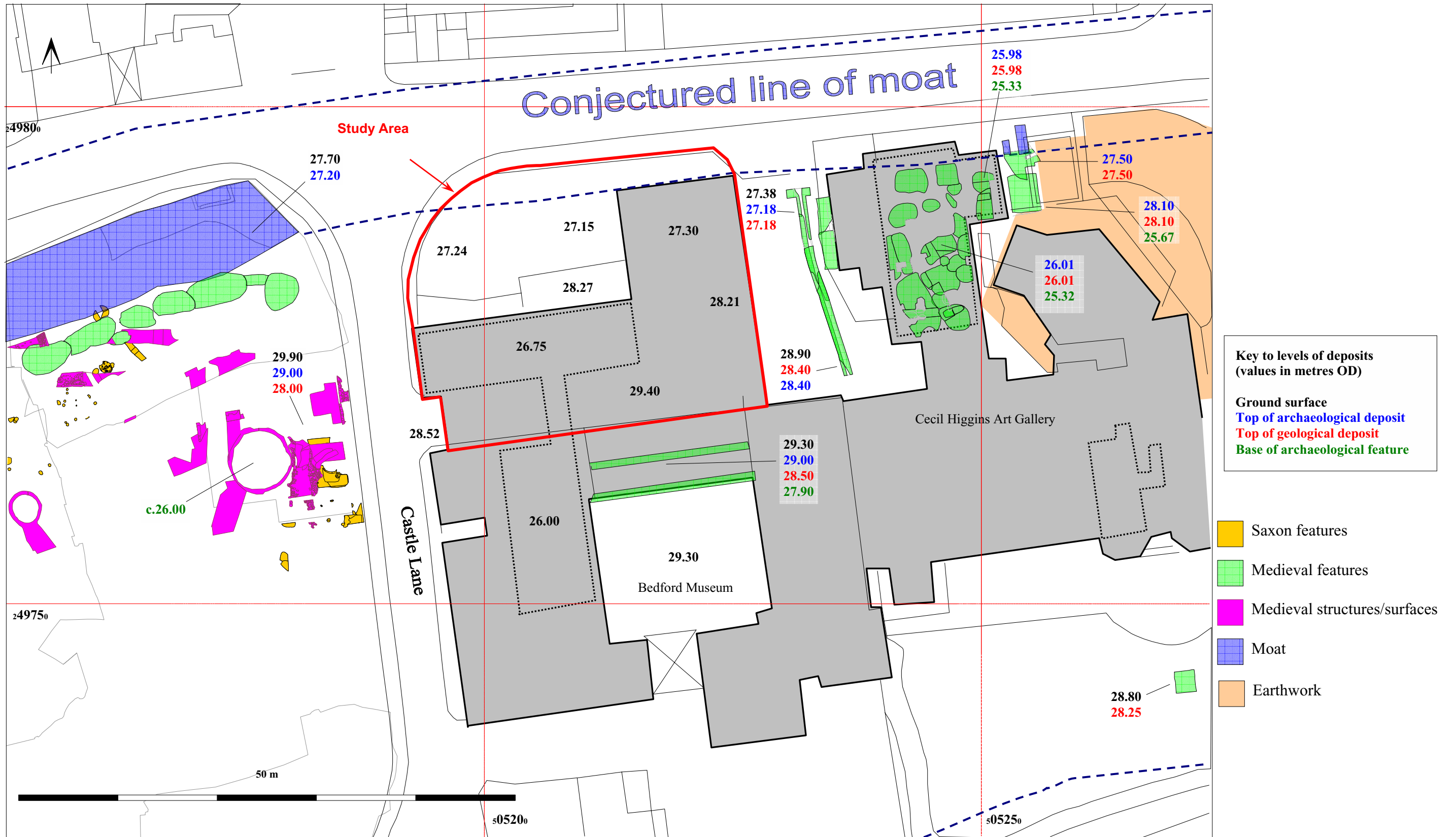
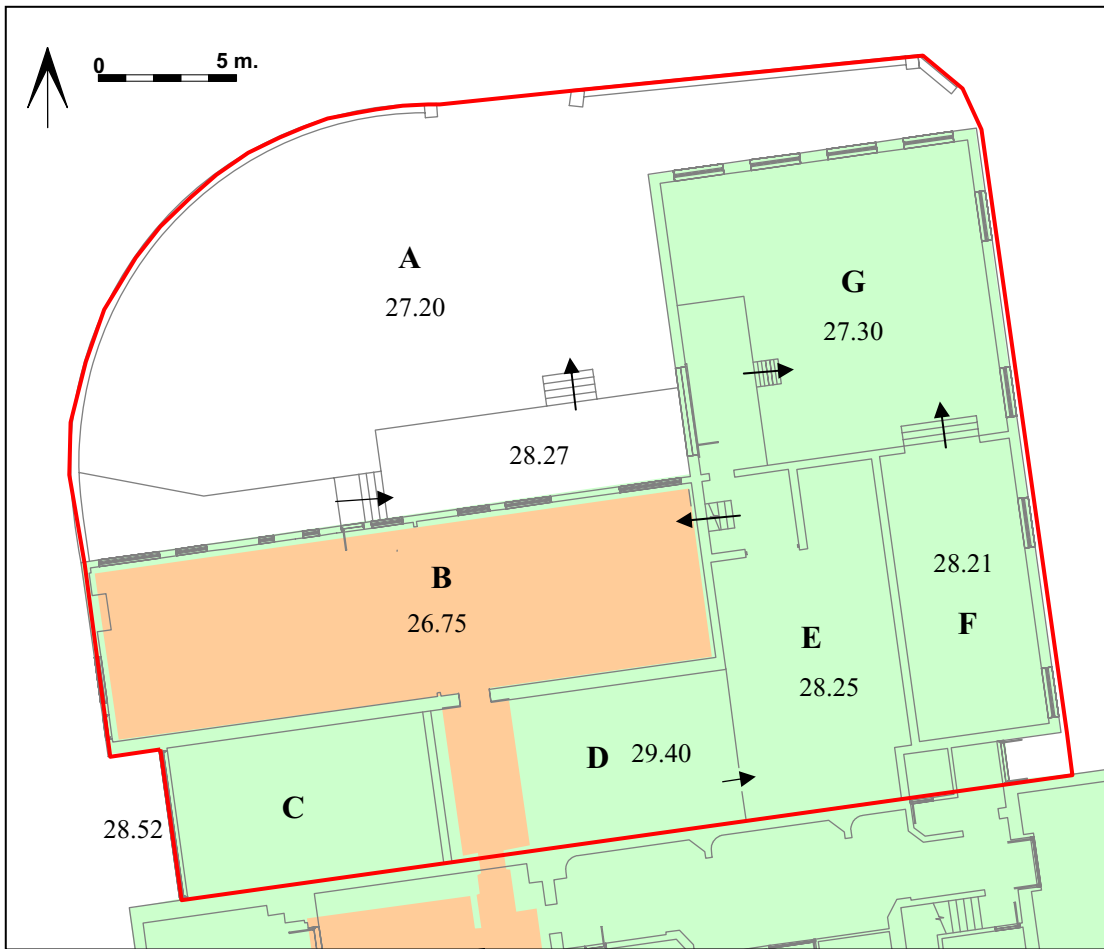





Figure 22: Depths of known deposits adjacent to Study Area

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 Limit of Study Area

 Ground floor

 Basement

Note: Values are floor levels in metres AOD

Figure 23: Investigation areas within 2a Castle Lane
Base map based on developer survey of site