

**LAND AT 2 CHURCH ROAD
WILLINGTON
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

Project: CL1779

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Introduction

A planning application (10/01632/FUL) has been granted by Bedford Borough Council for the construction of a detached double garage with playroom above at 2 Church Road, Willington.

The works include sinking the new building in a slight depression, together with the creation of an associated access and services.

The proposed development area (PDA) lies within an area of archaeological sensitivity, adjacent to the double-islanded moated site and associated earthworks known as the 'Danish Camp' or 'Danish Dock' which extends to the River Great Ouse. This is a nationally significant heritage asset which has been designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Given the nature of the known heritage assets in the immediate vicinity and the nature of development proposal, which involves significant ground reduction, a condition for a programme of archaeological work was attached to the planning permission.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by the client to carry out the archaeological work. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared in response to a brief for the work issued by the Historic Environment Team (HET 2011), which detailed the requirement for a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording during the groundworks for the proposed buildings.

The archaeological fieldwork and preparation of this report were undertaken by Ian Turner (Archaeological Supervisor). The figures were prepared by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). 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. BEDFM:2011.36).

Site Description and Location

The PDA is centred at grid reference (TL) 11254 50120, situated towards the north-east end of Willington, on the northern side of the 'T' junction between Station Road to the south, Church Road to the west and Chapel Lane to the east (Figure 1). It lies immediately to the south-west of the Danish Camp Visitor Centre.

The PDA is a modern residential property; the area of the proposed double garage is currently part of the garden.

The topography of the area is relatively flat at *c.* 23m OD. The superficial geology comprises undifferentiated sands and gravels of the Stoke Goldington and Felmersham Members of the Ouse Valley Formation (BGS Sheet 203).



Archaeological Background

The Bedford Borough Council's Historic Environment Record lists a number of previously recorded heritage assets in the vicinity of the PDA.

The valley of the River Great Ouse has been a focus of human activity from the prehistoric period onwards. To the west of the village, at Octagon Farm (HER 1480), there are nationally significant prehistoric ritual/ceremonial remains and to the east ring ditches — the ploughed out remains of burial monuments — and land divisions (HER 985) comprising ditches and pit alignments. However, there is no evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity within the vicinity of the PDA itself.

The PDA is located within the medieval settlement of Willington (HER 17123), c.600m east of the church, which together with Gostwick manor, are located at the western limit of the current village. A short distance to the north-east of the site is the 'Danish Camp' or 'Danish Dock' (HER 769), which comprises a double-island moated site (Figure 1), with earthworks continuing northwards to the bank of the River Great Ouse. Construction of the Cambridge to Bedford Railway (now converted to a cycle path) disturbed this area. In the 1970s, the site was identified as a possible base for Danish raiders during their 10th-century incursions into the Ouse Valley (Dyer 1972). Due to the risk of further damage to the site, investigations were undertaken in 1973. These indicated that the site was a medieval moated homestead (Hassall 1975). Further investigation occurred in 2000 when the visitor centre was constructed (Edmondson and Mudd 2004). This revealed a series of structures (of timber and stone construction), dating to the 12th-13th centuries, possibly defining an early manor site.

Project Methodology

The project was carried out in accordance with the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2011) and the HET's Brief (BBC 2011). 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* (1991)
- Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork* (2nd edition, 2001)

Fieldwork Results

Groundworks comprised the removal of soils to a depth of 0.70m within a rectangular area measuring 11.5m by 9.6m. All works requiring archaeological monitoring were completed on 4th April 2011.

Overburden

From top to bottom the overburden comprised: a dark brown grey sandy silt turf (0.10m thick), beneath which was a series of build-up / levelling layers.



To the west of the area, the levelling layers comprised mid orange brown silty sand (0.18m thick) above a layer of type 2 aggregate (0.04m thick). To the east of the area, on the site of a former bungalow, the levelling layers comprised a mid orange grey silty sand (0.36m thick) containing occasional modern brick, tile and glass fragments, which in turn sealed a 0.14m thick layer of dark grey black silty sand with frequent charcoal flecks and occasional modern brick, tile and glass fragments. This material appears to represent demolition debris.

Beneath the make-up / levelling layers, a buried former topsoil of mid grey brown silty sand was identified. It contained occasional modern brick, tile and coal fragments. It was 0.28m thick to the west and 0.06m thick to the east on the site of the former bungalow.

Undisturbed river terrace deposits, comprising light brown orange silty sand, were reached at a depth of c. 0.65m below ground.

Archaeological Features

An undated, oval pit was identified towards the north-west corner of the PDA (Figure 2). It was 1.2m long, 0.93m wide and 0.21m deep with concave sides and a flat base. It contained mid orange grey silty sand, which produced no artefacts.

The former foundation trenches and drain system of a bungalow that formerly occupied the site were identified on the east side of the PDA. Four sub-oval pits were also observed in the vicinity of the bungalow foundations during ground reduction. They all contained modern brick, tile, glass, coal and ceramic fragments. One was truncated by a drain trench, suggesting that the pits may pre-date the bungalow.

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

Conclusion

The pit identified in the north-west corner of the PDA contained no artefacts and remains undated. However, it is unlikely to be contemporary with the other modern pits to the east of the PDA, as they contained relatively high numbers of modern artefacts. It probably relates to earlier occupation of the site and does demonstrate that archaeological features do potentially survive at this depth.

Although the groundworks were undertaken in close proximity to earthworks associated with the moated site, with the exception of the un-dated pit, no archaeological features were revealed.

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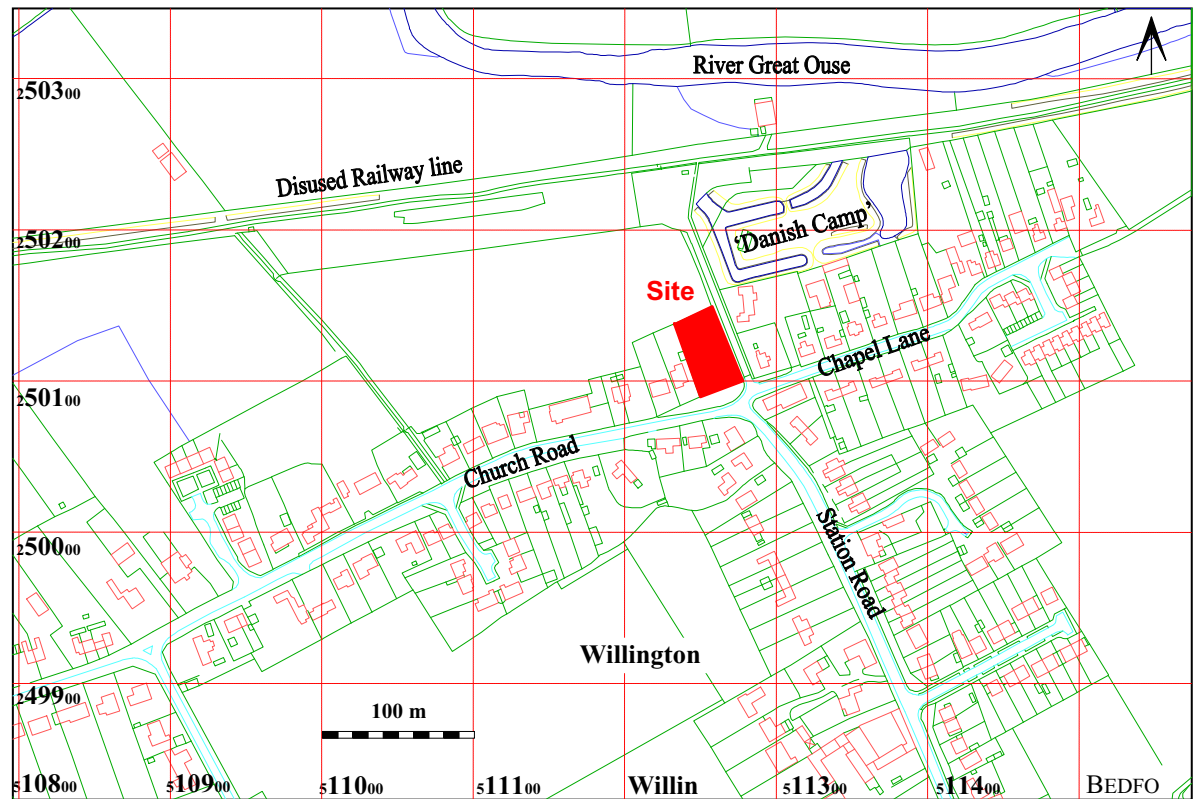
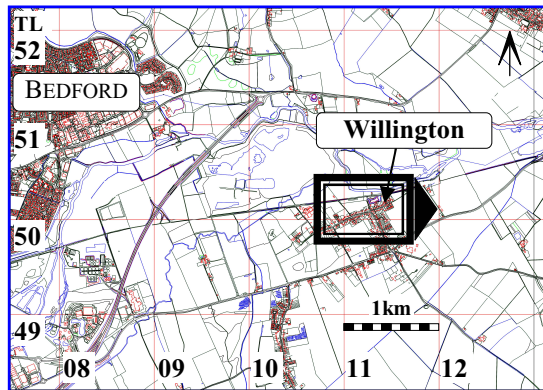
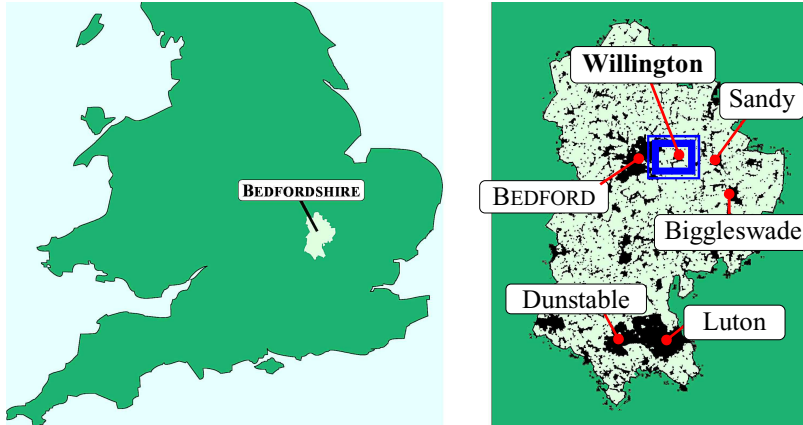
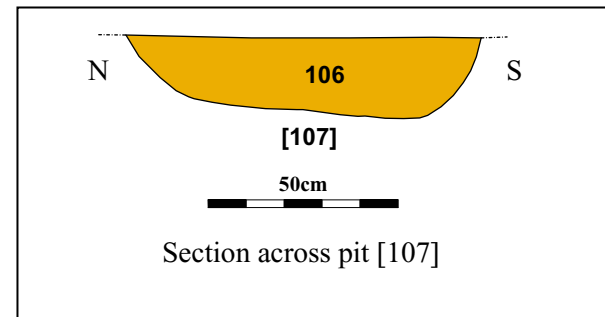
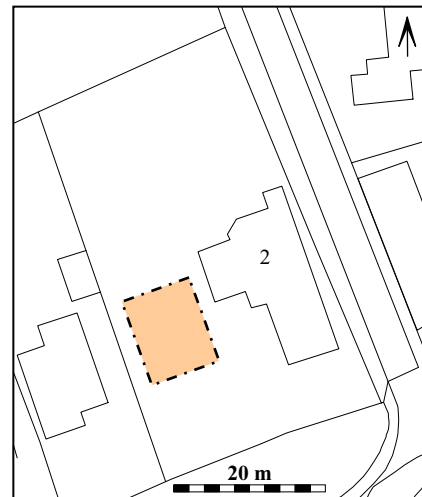


Figure 1: Site location plan

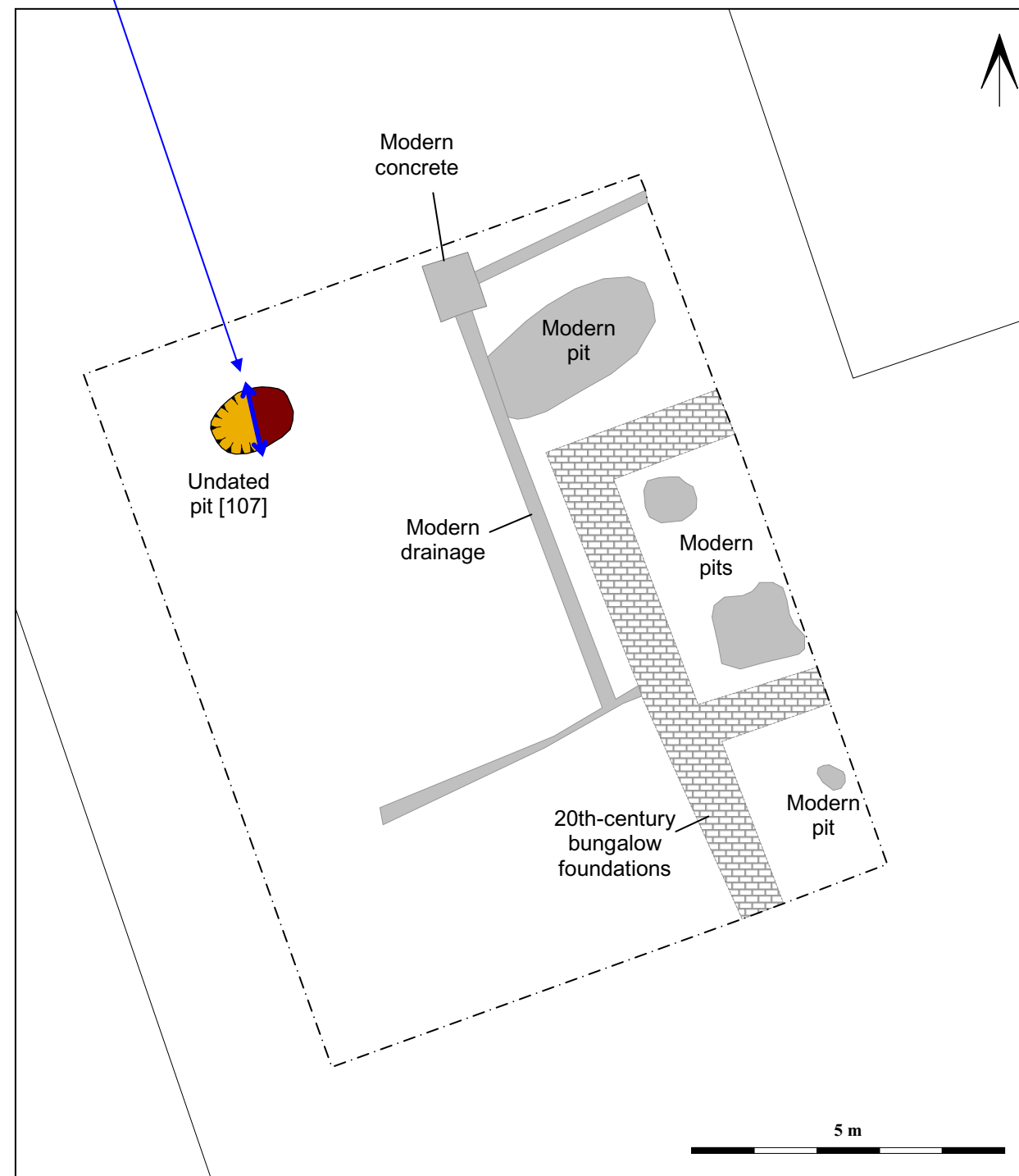
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West half of PDA showing pit [107]. Looking SSE. Scale 1m



Undated pit. Looking ENE. Scale 1m



East half of PDA showing foundations and drains. Looking SSE. Scale 1m



East half of PDA showing foundations and drains. Looking ENE.

Figure 2: All features

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