

**‘GREEN TREE’, 146 HIGH STREET
HARROLD
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

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Produced for:
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Harrold



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Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete an assessment as possible, within the terms of the specification. 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.

The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Geoff Saunders, Archaeological Officer of Bedford Borough Council.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Christiane Meckseper (Project Officers) and Richard Gregson (Archaeological Supervisor). This report has been prepared by Christiane Meckseper with figures by Christiane Meckseper and Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

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1.0	15th June 2011	n/a
1.1	28th June 2011	Added information on pottery according to AO's comments

Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

AO	Bedfordshire Borough Council's Archaeological Officer
Client	Mr & Mrs Bailey
DA	Development Area
HER	Bedfordshire Borough Council's Historic Environment Record
HET	Borough Council's Historic Environment Team
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
LPA	Local Planning Authority
Procedures Manual	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> , 2nd ed, 2001 Albion Archaeology



1. PLANNING BACKGROUND

Planning permission (10/01699/FUL) was granted by Bedford Borough Council for a new side and rear extension to the main house at 146 High Street, Harrold. The works included demolition of the existing conservatory, excavation of foundations for the new extension and necessary services, together with landscaping associated with a new patio to the rear of the building.

A brief for the archaeological work was issued by the Historic Environment Team (HET) of Bedford Borough Council (2010), detailing the requirements for a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording during the development works. In response to the brief, a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared (Albion Archaeology 2011) and agreed with the HET.

Archaeological monitoring of the construction works took place between 2nd and 10th June 2011. The results are presented in this report.

2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The development area (DA) lies in the western part of the village of Harrold, on the northern side of the High Street opposite its junction with Mowhills (Figure 1). It lies some distance from the medieval village core in an area consisting of mixed 19th-century cottages and 20th-century houses.

The development site is a residential property with a long back garden, bordered on both sides by similar properties with an area of trees and greenhouses to the north. It is centred on grid reference SP 9465 5671.

Harrold lies immediately north of the River Great Ouse at the bottom of a north-south slope into the river valley. The geology of the area consists of sand and gravel river deposits. The DA itself is on level ground at an approximate height of 47m OD.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The archaeological background for Harrold has been summarised in the Harrold Archaeological Assessment (Albion Archaeology 2003) as part of the Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) for Bedfordshire, a joint project between Bedfordshire County Council and English Heritage. The following section briefly summarises the findings of the EUS and provides additional information on heritage assets in the immediate vicinity of the DA.

Harrold is mentioned in Domesday Book and is therefore thought to be at least late Saxon in origin. Harrold Manor was situated on the bank of the River Great Ouse, c. 400m to the east of the DA.

Archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric to the post-medieval period have been found in excavations in and around Harrold. Bronze Age ring ditches and a cremation cemetery (with a later focus of Anglo-Saxon graves in the same area), Iron Age round-houses, ditches and other settlement remains were found in



quarry excavations to the north of Harrold. An Iron Age and Roman farmstead plus a number of middle Saxon wells were found during excavations in Harrold-Odell Country Park.

Investigations closer to the centre of Harrold have revealed evidence for Saxon timber-framed and sunken-featured buildings, Saxo-Norman pits, a 13th-century pottery kiln, and late medieval ditches demarcating land parcels (Albion Archaeology 2003, 7-9). Excavations at Harrold Priory Middle School, *c.* 270m to the east of the DA (HER 1973) revealed evidence of a sequence of occupation from the pre-Conquest period to the 13th century, together a large amount of medieval pottery manufacturing waste (Duncan *et al* forthcoming).

The probable late Saxon settlement core (HER 16942) lies some distance to the east of the DA and encompasses the area between the High Street (to the east of Orchard Road), the Odell/Carlton Road and the River Great Ouse. The DA lies along the street leading out of Harrold towards Lavendon (the High Street, formerly “Lavendon Road”), which may have originated in the late Saxon or medieval period.

A sunken lane and earthworks of potential medieval settlement remains (HER 10235) are located to the north and north-west of the DA. A possible late Iron Age and Roman burial site was recorded in Potter’s Close, to the south-west of the DA (Albion Archaeology 2003). A kiln (HER14727) of uncertain date is recorded 30m to the north-east.

The Inclosure map of 1799 and the 1st and 2nd edition 25-inch OS maps show the area of the DA as open fields. Harrold had expanded along the western part of the High Street but by the turn of the 20th century only the southern edge had been built upon. Isolated buildings stand on the northern side of the High Street and today the area is a mixture of late 19th-century and 20th-century housing.

4. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The DA had the potential to reveal information on a number of research objectives identified in the research framework for Bedfordshire (Oake *et al* 2007). Evidence for material from a number of periods (prehistoric to post-medieval) has been found in Harrold and close to the DA.

The general objectives of the investigation were to determine:

- the nature and date of any archaeological remains present at the site;
- the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits present at the site.

The specific objectives of the investigation were to determine:

- whether any medieval activity was present along the edges of the Lavendon Road (the High Street), associated with the earthworks to the north;
- whether any pre-medieval activity associated with settlement or burial activity survived within the DA;
- whether any insights could be gained into the evolution of the Saxon settlement in relation to any earlier Roman or prehistoric activity.



- Overall, the project had the potential to add to knowledge and understanding of the utilisation of the valley of the River Great Ouse and the nature of rural settlements.

5. METHODOLOGY

All trenches were excavated with a mini-digger driven by an experienced operator. They were inspected and recorded by Albion Archaeology staff.

Throughout the project the standards set out in the following documents were adhered to:

- IfA's *Code of Conduct (2010)*;
- IfA's *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs and Field Excavations (updated 2008) and finds (updated 2008)*;
- Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual for Archaeological Fieldwork and the Analysis of Fieldwork Records (2001)*;
- English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects (1991)*.

6. RESULTS

The groundworks were monitored between 2nd and 10th June 2011 and consisted of the excavation of a set of foundation trenches for the building extension, a service trench and a soakaway (Figure 2).

The foundation trenches were 0.5m wide and excavated to a maximum depth of 0.75m. No archaeological features were revealed in any of the trenches.

The soil profile consisted of 0.25m of turf and topsoil, consisting of dark orange brown sandy silt with moderate small stones and limestone fragments, above a mid orange brown sandy silt subsoil c. 0.30m thick (Figure 2). In this part of Harrold this could have formed through a mixture of a build-up of garden soils and erosion from the river valley sides. Undisturbed geological strata consisted of mid to light orange loam with fine gravel lenses and were situated at a depth of 0.5–0.6m below ground level.

Remains of the concrete foundations of the demolished conservatory at the rear of 146 High Street, as well as the foundations of the extension of the neighbouring property at 148 High Street were visible in the sections of the western foundation trench. Modern disturbance in the form of a large pit lined with chicken wire at its base was recorded in the section of the eastern foundation trench. Its function is unclear.

Pottery

Seventeen pottery sherds, representing sixteen vessels (124g) were retrieved during cleaning of the base of the foundation trenches. They did not originate from any archaeological features. The sherds are small, with an average weight of 7g and moderately abraded. All derive from wheel-thrown vessels in shell tempered fabric type B05¹ and are datable to the 12th-13th centuries. No feature

¹ Fabric type defined in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic type series, currently maintained by Albion Archaeology



sherds (rims, bases *etc.*) occur, and none are decorated. Three sherds are overfired and one has evidence of variable / patchy firing, associated with regulation of kiln temperature and the speed of vessel heating and cooling.

The pottery is likely to derive from areas of known kiln activity in Harrold High Street (SP 947567) and in Brook Lane (SP 948569: Hall 1972) or with other, as yet unlocated kilns in the vicinity. Such material is common in Harrold and the sherds are part of a general background scatter of pottery, most likely spread through manuring. The DA was used for agriculture from at least the medieval period until the 19th century.

7. CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological features were revealed at the back of 146 High Street, Harrold. Evidence for medieval activity, associated either with the medieval core of Harrold village or the earthworks to the north of the DA, did not extend into the investigation area. This confirms the conclusions inferred from historical evidence that the area was open fields until the construction of the 19th-century cottage that currently stands on the site.

The site records do not merit any further analysis or reporting; the project archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum (accession no. BEDFM:2011.39).

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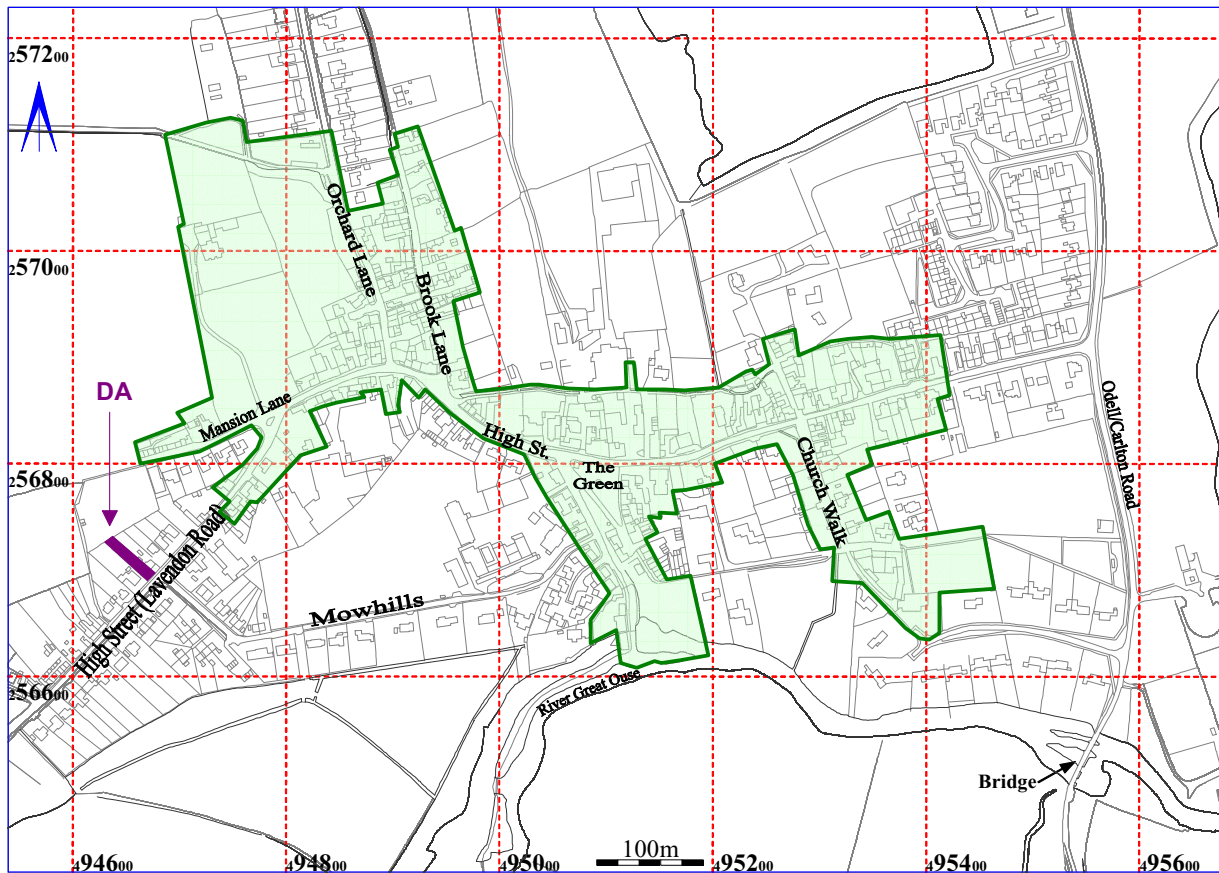
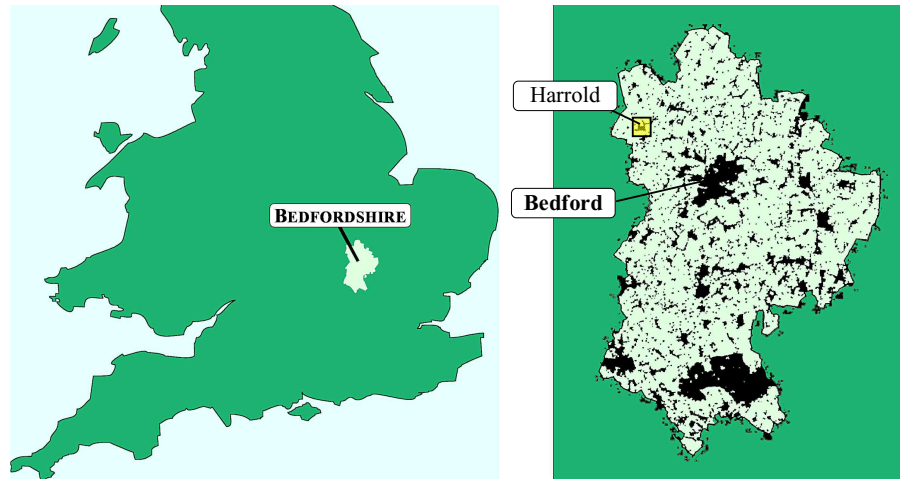


Figure 1: Site location plan (showing extent of Harrold Conservation Area)

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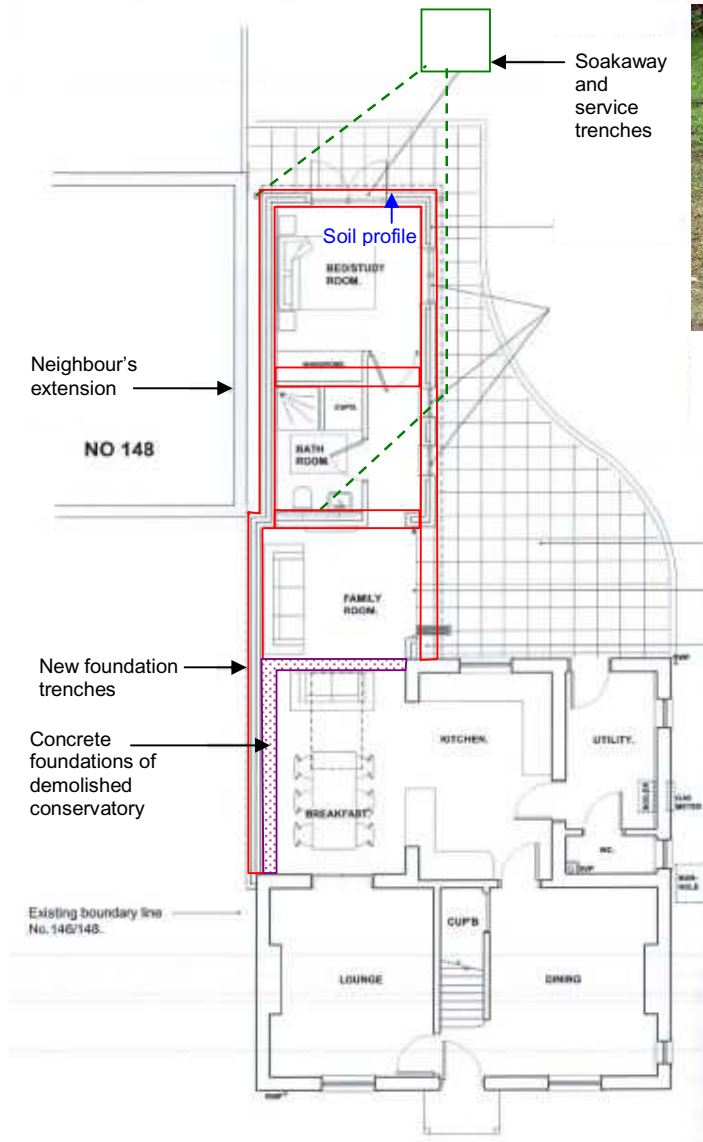


Figure 2a: Soakaway, looking south

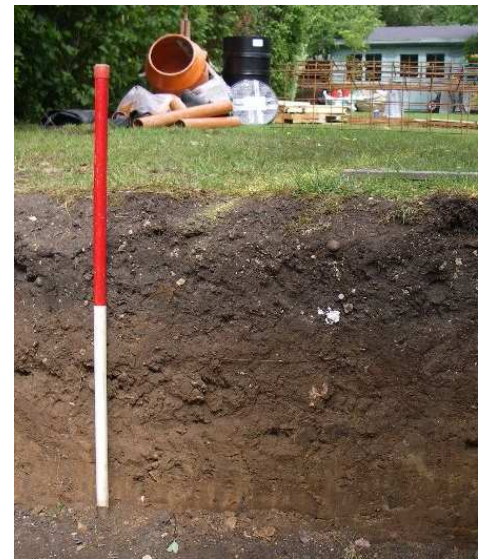


Figure 2b: Soil profile, topsoil – subsoil – undisturbed geological strata. 1m scale, looking north.



Figure 2c: Excavated foundation trenches, looking south, 1m scale.

Figure 2: Location of groundworks.
Not to scale.
(based on MK40 Architects' plans of proposed ground floor, drawing no. 16).