



Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
40-50 EDWARD STREET
DUNSTABLE
BEDFORDSHIRE**

on behalf of Aragon Housing Association



By Elizabeth Gill BSc PgDip

January 2006

ASC: 754/DES/2

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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	DES	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	754
<i>County:</i>	Bedfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Dunstable		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Dunstable		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 0159 2201		
<i>Present use:</i>	Disused builders yard		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Residential development		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	05/372		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	South Bedfordshire District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	24/01/06		
<i>Client:</i>	Aragon Housing Association Katherine's House Dunstable Street Amphill Beds MK45 2JP		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Stephanie Moffat		
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Internal Quality Check

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CONTENTS

Summary	4
1. Introduction	4
2. Aims & Methods	6
3. Archaeological & Historical Background	7
4. Results.	8
5. Conclusions	12
6. Acknowledgements	13
7. Archive	13
8. References	14

Appendices:

1. Trench Summary Tables.....	15
2. Photo List.....	18
3. ASC OASIS Form	19

Figures:

1 .General location	3
2. Site plan	5
3. Site Drawings.....	9

Plates:

Cover: View Across the site toward Edward Road

1. Southeast facing section of trench 1	10
2. Southwest-facing section of pit [104] in trench.....	10
3. Southwestern end of trench 2 showing wall footings.....	10
4. Trench 2 wall footings in detail	11
5. Southeast facing Section of trench 3 showing modern wall.....	11

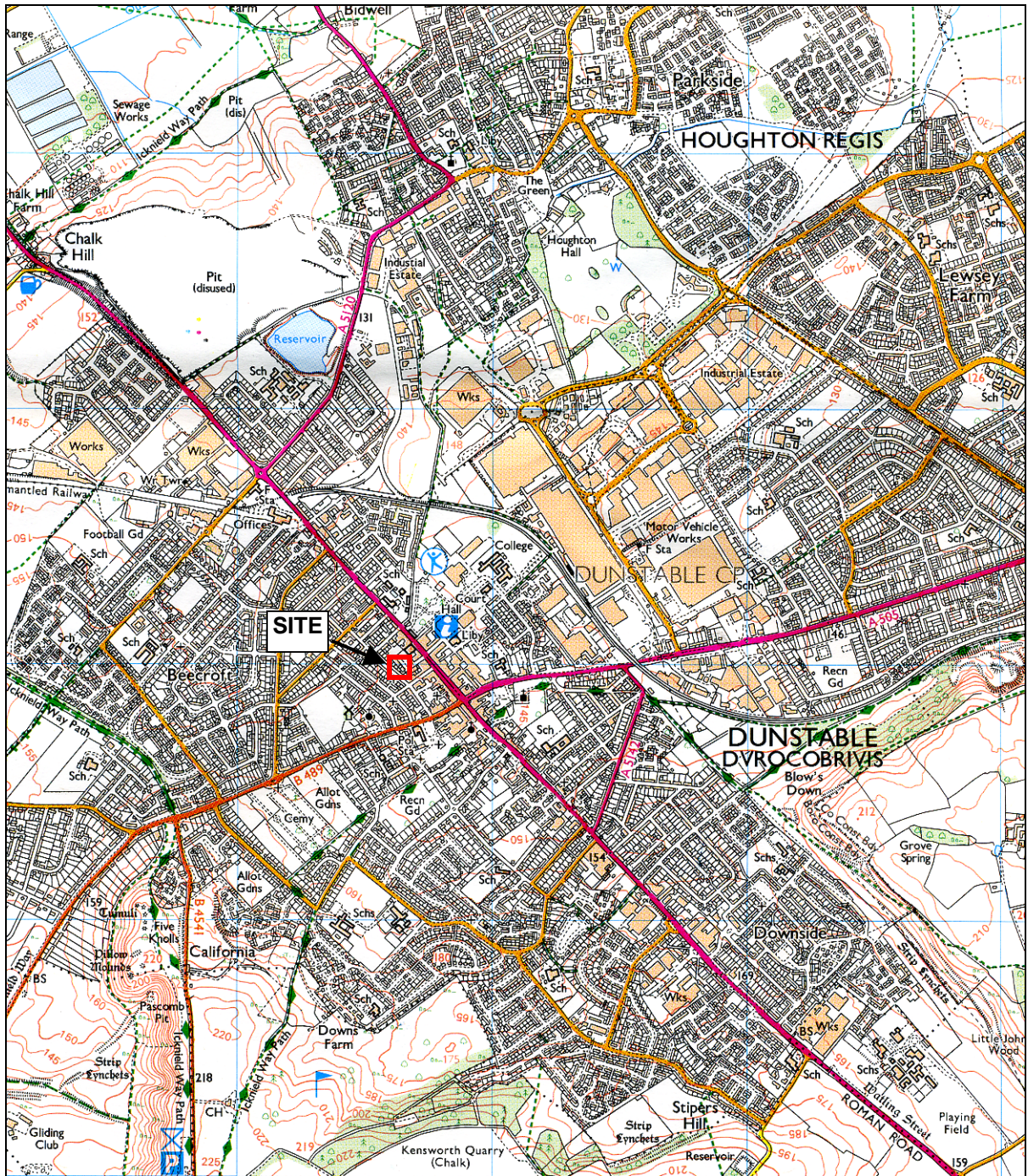


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In January 2006 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd. (ASC) undertook an archaeological evaluation on land at 40-50 Edward Street, Dunstable, Bedfordshire. Dunstable is an area of considerable historical and archaeological significance. The site had the potential to reveal evidence of multi-period activity. . No significant archaeological remains were found on site. Three machine cut trenches were excavated revealing a single pit. Fragments of brick found within the deposit of this strongly suggest a post medieval or perhaps even later date for the feature.

1 Introduction

1.1 In January 2006 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at Edward Street, Dunstable, Bedfordshire (NGR TL 0159 2201 Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Aragon Housing Association, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (754/DES/2), and a brief (754/DES/1) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *South Bedfordshire District Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Heritage and Environment Section of Bedfordshire County Council*. The relevant planning application reference is 05/372.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the construction of residential properties.

1.3 *Location and Description*

The site is in Dunstable and is centred on Ordnance Survey national grid reference TL 0159 2201 (Fig. 1). It is situated west of the central crossroads, on the east side of Edward Street and comprises a square area of land, formerly a builders yard (Fig. 2). Two buildings currently occupy the central part of the site and the remainder is used for car parking.

1.4 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area are unsurveyed, as it falls within an urban area (Soil Survey, 1983, U). The site lies at an elevation of c.150m AOD.

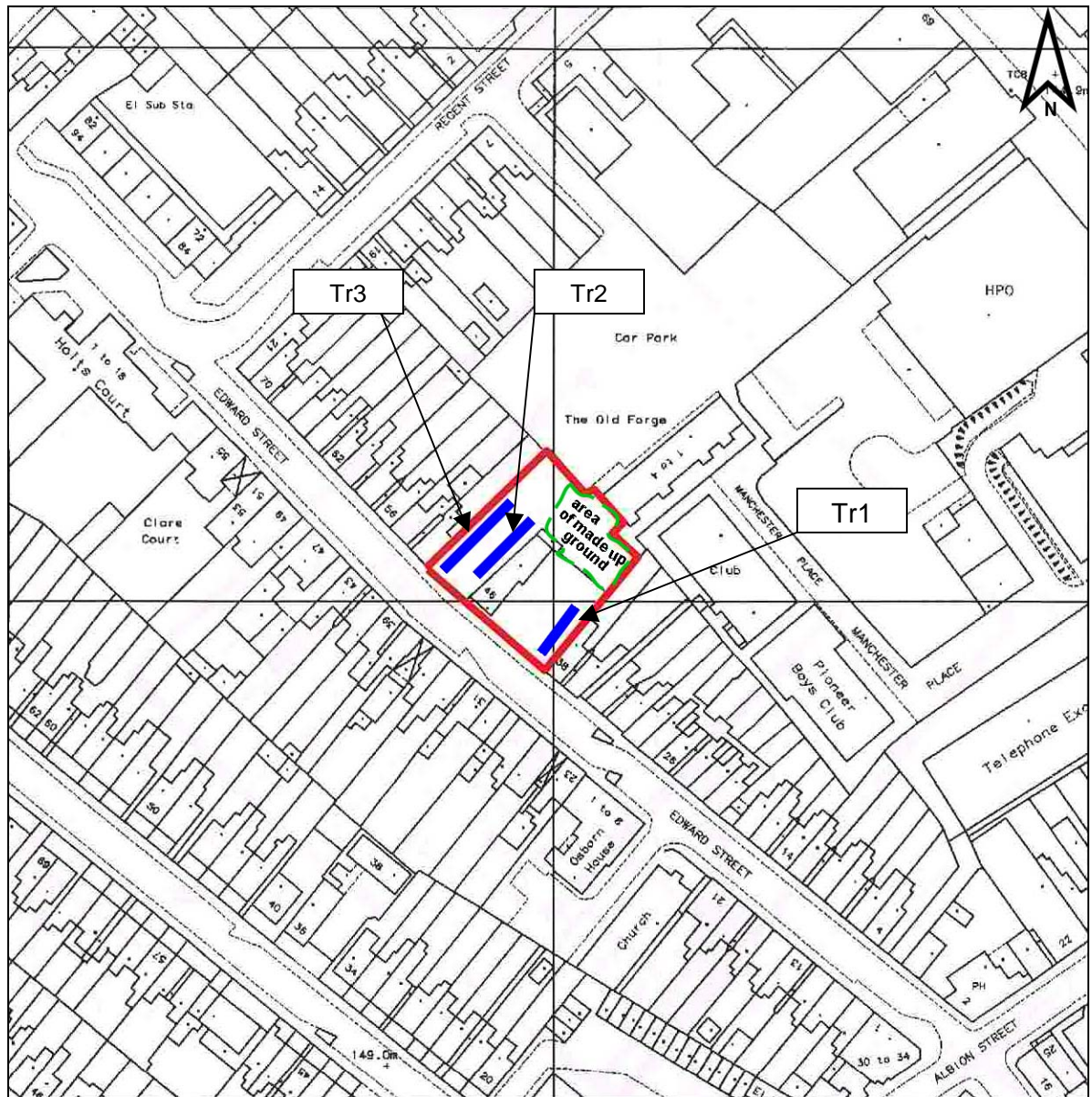


Figure 2: Site plan showing trench locations (scale 1:1250)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the brief (Section 2), the aims of the evaluation were:

- To determine the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present
- To determine the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), to the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGEO 2003), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 3), which required:

- A maximum of 72 sq m of trial trenching within the footprint of the buildings and the proposed car parking area.
- A contingency for a further 10 sq m was also in place to allow for further investigation of any significant features or deposits that are encountered

2.4 Constraints

Due to the position of the boundary fence and services on the site, the proposed trench locations laid out in the project design (754/DES/1) could not be followed and the area of the excavated trenches fell slightly short of that required in the brief. These constraints were communicated to the AA who accepted the revised trench locations and size.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

HER= Historic Environment Record

3.1 Prehistoric (before 600BC)

There are a number of prehistoric sites within the vicinity of the evaluated area. The *Ickniel Way* (HER 353), an important prehistoric trackway runs along the course of what is now Luton Road, c.250m from the site. Several barrows (prehistoric burial mounds) have also been investigated in the immediate area, including a round barrow (HER 128) c.100m to the northwest of the evaluation and a long barrow (HER 129) c.300m to the west. A Bronze Age burial (HER 150) was discovered c.150m from the site.

3.2 Iron Age (600BC-AD43)

Iron Age coins (HER 1386) and evidence of occupation (HER 17802) were discovered c.300m away, to the east and northeast of the proposed development area.

3.3 Roman (AD43-c.450)

A Roman small town, known as *Durobrivae* existed at the crux of Ickniel Way and Watling Street c. 400m southeast of the site. The extent and layout of this settlement are not well understood.

3.4 Saxon (c.450-1066)

There is little evidence for Saxon settlement in the immediate vicinity of the site. The closest examples of Saxon activity are located some distance away, with cemeteries recorded at Puddlehill and in Marina Drive to the north.

3.5 Medieval (1066-1500)

Excavations at 3-25 Albion Street (HER 14964) have revealed evidence of medieval occupation c. 150m south of the evaluated area, with another occupation site situated c.220m to the southeast.

3.6 Post-Medieval (1500-1900)

Immediately adjacent to the site are several listed buildings, including 48 and 50 Edward Street (HER 6256, 52 and 54 Edward Street (HER 6257).

3.7 Modern (1900-present)

The second edition large scale Ordnance Survey map published in 1901 shows the evaluation area as open land, surrounded by terraced houses. The buildings presently occupying the site were constructed during the latter part of the twentieth century.

4 Results

4.1 The following section of this report provides a summary of results from the trial trenches. A full, illustrated description of the trenches can be found in Appendix 1 (see also Figures 2 and 3 for a trench location plan and site drawings)

4.2 Trench 1

This southwest-northeast aligned trench was machine stripped of tarmac, hardcore and traces of subsoil to a maximum depth of *c.*0.89m at the northeastern end, onto the natural chalk. At the southwestern end, the maximum depth excavated was *c.*0.45m in order to avoid a concrete drain that crossed the trench. At this depth, the natural chalk was not reached and the base consisted of a mixture of mixed mid brownish grey silty loam subsoil and chalk (102) The dimensions of the trench were 9.70m long by 1.8m wide.

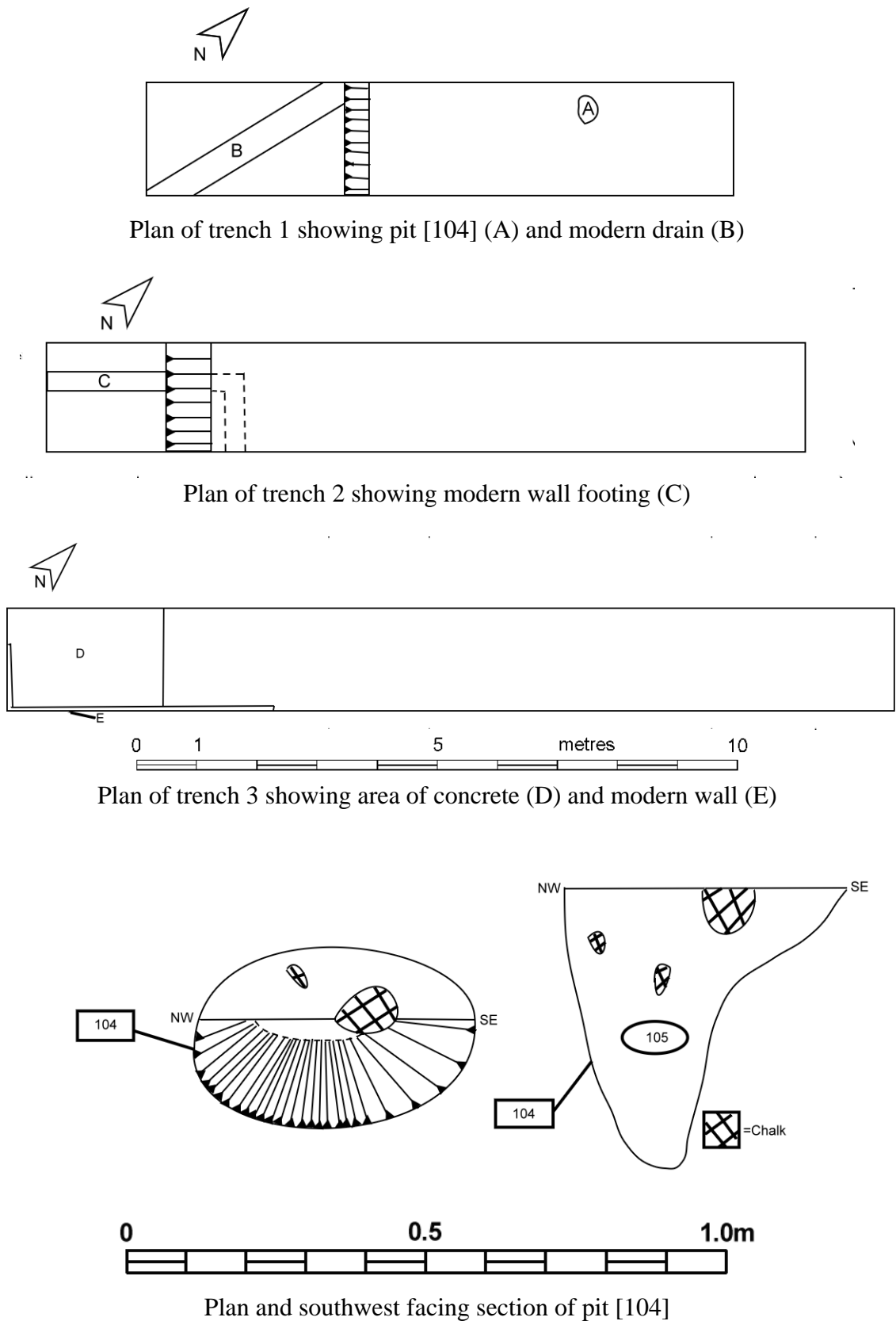
A subcircular pit [104] was observed, close to the southeast facing section of the trench at the northeastern end. The subsequent half-sectioning of this feature revealed an irregular base and a rough 'u' shaped profile, filled with a mid brownish grey silty loam that was mixed with a high proportion of chalk (105) Finds retrieved from this deposit amount to one abraded fragment of red brick that can be used to ascribe a probable nineteenth century date to the pit.

4.3 Trench 2

The trench was machine stripped of tarmac and hardcore with traces of subsoil to a depth of *c.*0.95m at its northeastern end onto natural chalk, and to a maximum depth of *c.*0.65m to the southwest onto chalk mixed with mid greyish brown silty loam subsoil (202) to avoid a wall footing that ran parallel to the sides of the trench and under the southeastern section at this end. The wall footing consisted of a narrow trench, *c.*0.28m wide filled with chalk blocks overlain by modern red bricks visible in the southwestern end of the trial trench (Plate 3). The dimensions of the trench were *c.*12.85m long by *c.*1.8m wide. No archaeological deposits were observed in this trench.

4.4 Trench 3

Concrete, brick rubble and subsoil mixed with chalk were removed by machine to a depth of *c.*1m in this trench onto chalk natural. The trench was on a northeast-southwest alignment and its dimensions were *c.*16.1m long by *c.*1.8m wide. A modern wall with concrete footings was observed at a depth of *c.*0.88m, running along the southeastern section of the trench and turning at a 90-degree angle across the southwestern end (Plate 5). No archaeological deposits were observed in this trench.



Plan of trench 1 showing pit [104] (A) and modern drain (B)

Plan of trench 2 showing modern wall footing (C)

Plan of trench 3 showing area of concrete (D) and modern wall (E)

Plan and southwest facing section of pit [104]

Figure 3: Site drawings

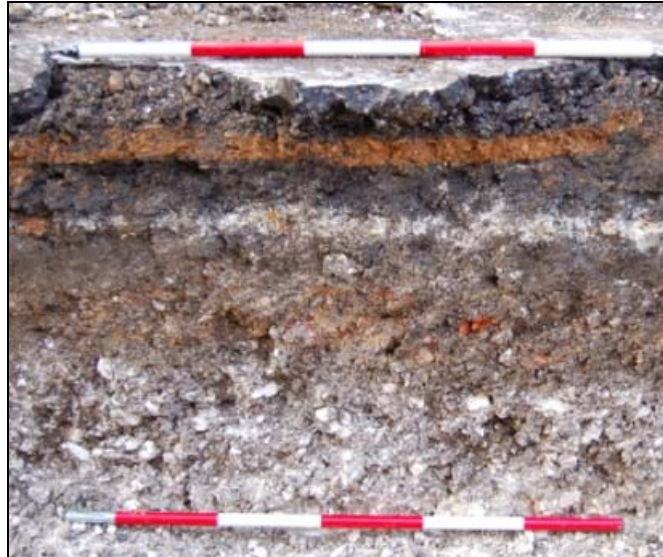


Plate 1: Southeast facing section of trench 1



Plate 2: Southwest-facing section of pit [104] in trench 1



Plate 3: Southwestern end of trench 2 showing wall footings



Plate 4: Trench 2 wall footings in detail



Plate 5: Southeast facing Section of trench 3 showing modern wall

5. Conclusions

5.1 Confidence Rating

The confidence rating for the recognition of archaeological deposits on this site was good. The weather was cold but dry and the stratigraphy was simple and well defined.

5.2 Conclusions

There were no significant archaeological remains observed during this evaluation. It is unlikely that a large amount of archaeological deposits are present on this site.

5.3 The overall results indicate that extensive late post medieval and modern ground disturbance has occurred in the area of proposed development

5.4 The probable nineteenth century pit [104] found in trench 1 underlies a mixed, mid brownish grey silty loam subsoil and chalk layer (102), a deposit that was also observed in trench 2 (202) and 3 (203), with the wall footing in trench 2 cutting it. As this deposit directly overlies the natural chalk, it can be surmised that all human activity observed during the evaluation is no earlier than nineteenth century in date.

5.5 Although no earlier archaeological remains were observed, it is possible that deposits pre-dating those found during this evaluation have survived outside the relatively small area of the trial trenches, cut into the natural chalk beneath the disturbed ground.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Stephanie Moffat for commissioning this evaluation on behalf of Aragon Housing Association.

The input of Lesley-Ann Mather, AA for Bedfordshire County Council is also gratefully acknowledged. Teresa Hawtin BA MSc and Elizabeth Gill BSc PgDip of ASC Ltd. carried out the fieldwork, the Project Design was written by Calli Rouse BA and Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA managed the project.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. List of photographs/slides
7. Colour slides
8. B/W prints & negatives
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Luton Museum

8. References

Standards & Specifications

ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper **14**.

EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).

IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.

IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.


Oake, M. 2005 *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Investigation of Land at 40-50 Edward Street, Dunstable, Bedfordshire* (Bedford County Council)


Rouse, C. 2006 *Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation On Behalf of Aragon Housing Association* (ASC 754/DES/)

Secondary Sources

Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpندن).

Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	9.70	Width	1.80	Depth	0.89
	Levels					
	Trench base northeast		147.78m OD			
	Trench top northeast		148.70m OD			
	Trench base southwest		148.29m OD			
	Trench top southwest		148.69m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NE	TL01605/21999		SW	TL01593/21992	
	Orientation			Northeast-southwest		
Reason for Trench			General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
101	Layer	Overburden made up of chalk, brick rubble and traces of mid greyish brown silty loam.	-	650	0-650	
102	Layer	Mid greyish brown silty loam mixed with chalk.	-	240	650-890	
103	Layer	Light grey chalk natural.	-	-	890	
105	Deposit	Fill of [104]-mid greyish brown silty loam mixed with frequent chalk.	433	510	-	
104	Cut	Cut of pit, 'U' shaped, irregular base, steep sides.	433	500	-	

Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	12.85	Width	1.8	Depth	0.95
	Levels					
	Trench base northeast		147.84m OD			
	Trench top northeast		148.79m OD			
	Trench base southwest		148.50m OD			
	Trench top southwest		149.15m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NE	TL01595/22015		SW	TL01585/22004	
	Orientation			Northeast-southwest		
Reason for Trench			General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation		Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
201	Layer	Overburden made up of chalk, brick rubble and traces of mid greyish brown silty loam.		-	610	0-610
202	Layer	Mid greyish brown silty loam mixed with chalk.		-	225	610-835
203	Layer	Light grey chalk natural		-	-	835-950

Trench 3	
	Max Dimensions (m)

			Max Dimensions (m)					
			Length	16.10	Width	1.80	Depth	1.00
			Trench base northeast		148.00m OD			
			Trench top northeast		148.94m OD			
			Trench base southwest		148.32m OD			
			Trench top southwest		149.20m OD			
			NGR Co-ordinates					
			NE	TL01591/22017	SW	TL01580/22003		
			Orientation		Northeast-southwest			
			Reason for Trench		General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)			
301	Layer	Overburden made up of chalk, brick rubble and traces of mid greyish brown silty loam.	-	770	0-770			
302	Layer	Mid greyish brown silty loam mixed with chalk.	-	230	770-1000			
303	Layer	Light grey chalk natural	-	-	1000			

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: 40-50 Edwards Street, Dunstable, Bedfordshire				SITE NO/CODE: 754/DES
Shot	B&W	Slide	Digital	Subject
1			✓	SE facing section of Tr1
2			✓	SW facing section of pit [104] in Tr1
3			✓	SW end of Tr2 showing wall footings
4			✓	Close up of wall footings in Tr2
5			✓	SE facing section of Tr3 showing modern wall
6			✓	Tr1
7			✓	Tr2
8			✓	Tr3
9		✓		Tr1, facing NE 2x1m scales
10		✓		TR1 FACING SW 2x1m scales
11		✓		Tr1 SE facing section 1x1m scale
12		✓		Tr1 SW facing section through pit [104]
13		✓		Tr2
14		✓		Tr3
15	✓			Tr1 facing NE 2x1m scale
16	✓			Tr1 facing SW 2x1m scale
17	✓			Tr1 SE facing section 1x1m scale
18	✓			Tr1 SW facing section through pit [104]
19	✓			Tr2
20	✓			Tr3

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS						
Project Name:	40-50 Edwards Street, Dunstable, Bedfordshire					
Short Description:	<i>In January 2006 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd. (ASC) undertook an archaeological evaluation on land at 40-50 Edward Street, Dunstable, Bedfordshire. Dunstable is an area of considerable historical and archaeological significance. The site had the potential to reveal evidence of multi-period activity. . No significant archaeological remains were found on site. Three machine cut trenches were excavated revealing a single pit. Fragments of brick found within the deposit of this strongly suggest a post medieval or perhaps even later date for the feature.</i>					
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	DBA	FW	Geophys	Survey	Bldg Rec	Post-Exc
	WB	Strip&Rec	Trenching	Test pits	Exc	Other
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	none		Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)		none	
Current land use:	Disused builders yard		Future work: (yes / no / unknown)		unknown	
Monument type:	-		Monument period:		-	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	-					
PROJECT LOCATION						
County:	Bedfordshire		OS reference: (to at least 8 figures)		TL 0159 2201	
Site address: (with postcode if known)	40-50 Edwards Street, Dunstable, Bedfordshire					
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	700 sq. m		Height OD: (metres)		150m	
PROJECT CREATORS						
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd					
Project brief originator:	South Bedfordshire District Council		Project design originator:		Callie Rouse BA	
Project Manager:	Jonathan Hunn BA PHD MIFA		Director/Supervisor:		Elizabeth Gill BSc PgDip	
Sponsor / funding body:	Aragon Housing Association					
PROJECT DATE						
Start date:	24 th January 2006		End date:		24 th January 2006	
PROJECT ARCHIVES						
	Location (Accession no.)		Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)			
Physical:	-		-			
Paper:	Luton Museum		Brief and PD, report, site records, photographs			
Digital:	Luton Museum		PD and report, photographs			
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)						

Title:	Archaeological Evaluation:40-50 Edward Street, Dunstable, Bedfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	Archaeological Services and Consultancy Report 754/DES/2		
Author(s):	Elizabeth Gill BSc PgDip		
Page nos		Date:	