

**QUAKER BURIAL GROUND SITE
BAKER STREET
AMPTHILL
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION
AND HERITAGE STATEMENT**

**Albion
archaeology**



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Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete a summary as possible within the terms of the method statement. 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.

Acknowledgements

The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Martin Oake, Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist. The fieldwork was undertaken by Kathy Pilkinton (Archaeological Supervisor). This report has been prepared by Kathy Pilkinton. The figures have been produced by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

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Key Terms

The following terms or abbreviations are used throughout this report:

BARS	Bedfordshire Archives and Records Service
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
CIfa	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
GPR	Ground penetrating radar
HER	Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record
PDA	Proposed development area
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) are preparing a planning application for the erection of a single dwelling in an area of land (currently used as a garden) to the rear of the Quaker Burial Ground in Baker Street, Ampthill, Bedfordshire.

Due to the archaeological potential of the site the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist advised that the planning application should be accompanied by a heritage statement, based on the results of an archaeological field evaluation.

The applicant commissioned a geophysical survey and instructed Albion Archaeology to carry out a trial trench evaluation to inform the heritage statement by characterising the potential for below-ground archaeological heritage assets at the site.

The trial trenching took place on 11th January 2017. It comprised the excavation of two trenches totalling 22m² in area.

Thick topsoil and subsoil was present in both trenches. A small amount of modern rubbish had been dumped within the subsoil of one trench.

No archaeological features were found within the trenches and no features were found that corresponded to an anomaly identified by the geophysical survey.

It is likely the PDA has been in use as a garden since at least the construction of the Friends Meeting House in the mid-18th century.

In summary, the PDA does not appear to contain archaeological remains with the potential to contribute to local and regional research objectives. The absence of archaeological remains in the trial trenches suggests that any groundworks undertaken as part of the proposed development would have no archaeological impact.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) are preparing a planning application for the erection of a single dwelling in an area of land (currently used as a garden) to the rear of the Quaker Burial Ground in Baker Street, Ampthill, Bedfordshire.

Due to the archaeological potential of the site the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA) advised that the planning application should be accompanied by a heritage statement, giving information on the nature, date and significance of potential buried heritage assets on the application site and the impact of the proposed development upon them. This advice is in accordance with the guidelines provided in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The applicant commissioned a geophysical survey (Geotech 2016) and instructed Albion Archaeology to carry out a trial trench evaluation to inform the heritage statement by characterising the potential for below-ground archaeological heritage assets at the site.

1.2 Site Location and Description

Ampthill is a small town that lies on the Greensand Ridge in Central Bedfordshire. Dunstable Road forms the central north-south thoroughfare through the town; Baker Street is a smaller side road c. 250m to the south of the historic town centre, in an area of 19th-century housing mixed with modern residential development.

The former Friend's Meeting House lies to the rear of the Cottage Bakery on Dunstable Road. The PDA is an elongated east-west aligned plot with the burial ground adjacent to the former Meeting House and the garden plot at its eastern end, fronting onto Baker Street (Figure 1). The burial ground is bordered to the north and south by residential terraced houses and their garden plots. The Ossory Arms public house lies to its immediate south-east. The PDA is centred on grid reference TL 0344 3776. It lies at a height of 96m OD.

The underlying solid geology consists of Woburn Sands Formation Sandstone, with no drift geology recorded (British Geological Survey 2016).

The proposed new building will be two storeys in height and have a footprint of 67.32m². A 2.5m x 5m parking bay will be constructed to its rear with a double-width access to the Quaker Burial Ground to its south.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Existing knowledge of the archaeology and history of the PDA and a surrounding 500m-radius study area has been collated from the information held in Central Bedfordshire Council's Historic Environment Record (HER), Historic England's National Heritage List for England (NHLE) and the Bedfordshire Archives and Records Service (BARS).



There are no heritage assets pre-dating the medieval period within the study area. The PDA lies at the southern edge of Ampthill medieval town as defined by the HER (HER 16994). No archaeological remains dating to the medieval period have yet been found in the vicinity of the PDA but few archaeological investigations have actually taken place in this part of Ampthill. A trial trench evaluation (EBD1167) at Russell House, 14 Dunstable Street, c. 195m to the south-west of the PDA revealed no archaeological remains.

Built heritage assets in the vicinity of the PDA are the Ossory Arms (HER 2614), an early to mid-19th-century public house; and an 18th- and 19th-century house in Arthur Street (HER 2615 and 2616). The PDA lies within the Ampthill Conservation Area.

The Friends Meeting House was built in c. 1752 as a single-storeyed brick meeting house and extended after 13 years. Meetings had ceased by the 1880s and the building was sold in the 1930s and used as a public meeting space thereafter. In 2002, it was leased to the Cottage Bakery (Dackombe and Underwood 2002).

The burial ground to the rear of the meeting house and the small garden at its eastern end are still under the care of the Society of Friends. The burial ground contains 26 headstones, but there are at least 134 burials recorded with the first burial taking place in 1755 (*ibid*). There are no historical records of the burials extending into the garden plot, which is the subject of the proposed development.

A geophysical survey (GPR) undertaken on the development area as part of the site's evaluation identified one anomaly indicative of unconsolidated ground at a depth of 2.1m. Other anomalies closer to the surface were indicative of root disturbance (Geotech Surveys Ltd 2016).

1.4 Project Objectives

The principal purpose of the evaluation was to gather information on possible sub-surface archaeological heritage assets within the PDA. Details of the national and regional research frameworks are set out in the WSI (Albion 2016).

The archaeological trial trenching endeavoured to determine:

1. the date, nature and extent of any activity or occupation within the PDA;
2. the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
3. the local environmental conditions (through the recovery of palaeo-environmental remains).

The PDA's location beyond the historic core of medieval Ampthill suggested that it had particular potential to contain archaeological deposits relating to the post-medieval development of the town (Medlycott 2011, 70). The PDA was not expected to contain human remains relating to the Quaker Burial Ground.



2. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach to the project is summarised below. A full methodology is provided in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2016).

2.1 Methodological Standards

The standards and requirements set out in the following documents were adhered to throughout the project:

Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork, 2nd edition (2001)</i>
Bedford Museum	<i>Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedfordshire (2010)</i>
CIIfA	<i>Charter and By-law; Code of Conduct (2014)</i>
	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation (2014)</i>
	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (2014)</i>
EAA	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (2003)</i>
Historic England	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Project Managers' Guide (2009)</i>
	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation, 2nd edition (2011)</i>

The project archive will be deposited at The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford (accession number BEDFM 2016.86). Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-268888) in accordance with the guidelines issued by English Heritage and the Archaeology Data Service.

2.2 Trial Trenching

The trial trenching took place on 11th January 2017. It comprised the excavation of two trenches, totalling 22m² in area (Figure 2). Trench 1 was located at the site of the new access drive and also at the location of the geophysical survey anomaly described in Section 1.3 above; Trench 2 was located within the footprint of the proposed building.

The trenches were opened by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket, operated by an experienced driver under close archaeological supervision. All excavation and recording were carried out by experienced Albion staff with external specialists consulted as necessary. Any potential archaeological features were investigated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's pro forma sheets. The trenches were subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate.



3. RESULTS

3.1 *Introduction*

All deposits revealed within the trial trenches are summarised below and shown on Figure 2. Context numbers in square brackets refer to the cuts [***] and round brackets to fills or layers (***) . Detailed information is provided within Appendix 1.

3.2 *Overburden and Geological Deposits*

Topsoil (100), (200) comprised grey-black silty sand and was present in both trenches; it was 0.4–0.45m thick.

Subsoil (101), (201) comprised orange-brown silty sand and was present in both trenches; it was 0.3–0.35m thick. Subsoil (101) within the south-west corner of Trench 1 contained a small amount of modern rubbish (not retained).

The undisturbed geological deposits (102), (202) in both trenches comprised loose brown-yellow sand.

No archaeological remains were revealed in either of the trenches.



4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Summary of Results

Thick top and subsoil was present in both trenches. A small amount of modern rubbish had been dumped within the subsoil of Trench 1.

No archaeological features were found within the trenches and no features were found in Trench 1 that corresponded to the anomaly identified by the geophysical survey (Section 1.3).

It is likely the PDA has been in use as a garden since at least the construction of the Friends Meeting House in the mid-18th century.

4.2 Heritage Statement

No archaeological remains were revealed within the PDA by either the geophysical survey or trial trenching.

In summary, the PDA does not appear to contain archaeological remains with the potential to contribute to local and regional research objectives. The absence of archaeological remains in the trial trenches suggests that any groundworks undertaken as part of the proposed development would have no archaeological impact.



5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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6. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES

Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 4.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.7 m. Max: 0.75 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 34435; Northing: 77553)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 34452; Northing: 77604)

Reason: Test Archaeological Potential

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Topsoil	Friable, dark grey black, silty sand Thickness: 0.4m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Subsoil	Friable, mid orange brown, silty sand Thickness: 0.3-0.35m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Natural	Friable, mid brown yellow, sand Occasional small to medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 7.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.7 m. Max: 0.7 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 34452; Northing: 77536)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 34452; Northing: 77604)

Reason: Test Archaeological Potential

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
200	Topsoil	Friable, dark grey black, silty sand Thickness: 0.4m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
201	Subsoil	Friable, mid orange brown, silty sand Thickness: 0.3m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
202	Natural	Friable, mid brown yellow, sand Occasional small to medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

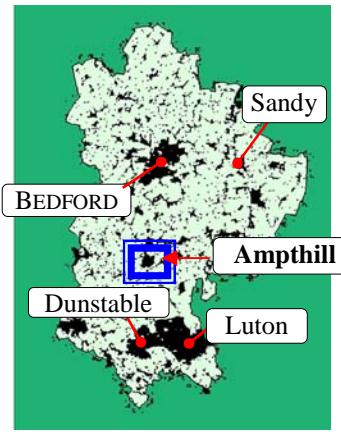
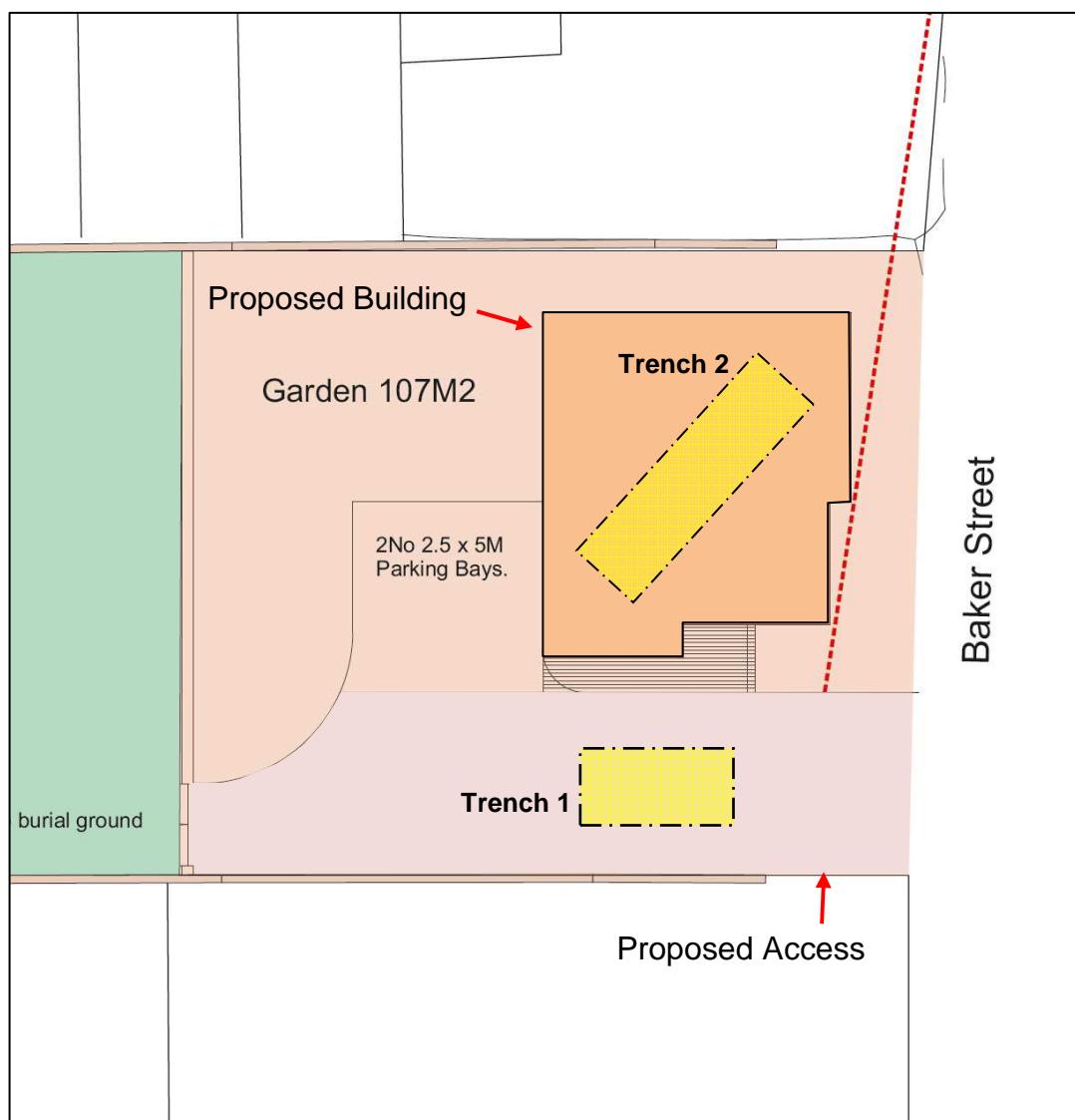


Figure 1: Site location

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Trench 2 from north-east (1m scale)

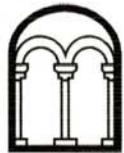


Trench 1 from east (1m scale)

Figure 2: Plan and photographs



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