

**ST PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, BEDFORD,
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**A PROGRAMME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL
OBSERVATION, INVESTIGATION, RECORDING,
ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION**

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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.

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Structure of the Report

After the introductory Section 1, there is a summary of the results of the programme of archaeological observation and recording in Section 2, followed by a brief conclusion (Section 3). Section 4 is a bibliography and Section 5 is an appendix, containing an archaeological context summary.

Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

<i>Albion</i>	Albion Archaeology
<i>Client</i>	Bedford Design Group/Bedford Borough Council
<i>IFA</i>	Institute of Field Archaeologists
<i>CAO</i>	Bedfordshire County Council's County Archaeological Officer
<i>Procedures Manual</i>	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork, 2nd Edition 2001.</i> Bedfordshire County Council



Non-Technical Summary

Bedford Design Group, working on behalf of Bedford Borough Council, proposed to construct a new access route into St Paul's Churchyard, St Paul's Square, Bedford. This involved works within, and adjacent to, the churchyard. Due to the archaeologically sensitive character of this land, a brief was issued by Bedfordshire County Council's Archaeological Officer (CAO) for a scheme of archaeological evaluation (BCC 2004a).

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Bedford Design Group to undertake the evaluation, which took place on 16th and 17th August 2004. A report on the results was issued on 8th September 2004.

Based on the evaluation results, the CAO recognised that further work was needed during the construction period. A brief was issued for a scheme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication (BCC 2004b). In response, a project design was produced to address the further work required (Albion Archaeology 2004b).

The re-development of the church comprised work in five areas including demolition of public toilets, removal of a large earth mound, overburden removal within the footprint of a new driveway and repairs to the north wall of the churchyard.

The programme of observation confirmed that significant archaeological remains did not exist at the levels reached during groundworks for this development, although they may lie undisturbed at a greater depth.

Four 19th century brick-lined tombs were revealed during the works. These were backfilled with inert material and preserved in situ. All disarticulated human bone revealed during the development was re-buried within the churchyard.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Bedford Design Group, working on behalf of Bedford Borough Council, proposed to construct a new access route into St Paul's Churchyard, St Paul's Square, Bedford. This involved works within, and adjacent to, the churchyard. Due to the archaeologically sensitive character of this land, a brief was issued by Bedfordshire County Council's, Archaeological Officer (CAO) for a scheme of archaeological evaluation (BCC 2004a).

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1.2 Site Location and Description

St Paul's Churchyard dominates St Paul's Square in the centre of Bedford. It lies c.100m north of the river Great Ouse. The development area is c.350m² in extent and is centred at National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 0498 4970. It lies at approximately c.27m OD within the floodplain of the river Great Ouse. The soils of the area are derived from the underlying geology of alluvial deposits, and fluvial gravels and sands.

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

The evaluation was successful in increasing our knowledge of the nature and likely date of construction of the mound located within the development area. It also provided useful information on the OD heights of at least five inhumations which lay beneath the proposed new access route into the churchyard.

The presence of a large limestone slab was noted beneath the mound. It was considered likely that this was the remains of a table tomb. However, its complete proportions and character could not be observed within the confines of the trial trench, making interpretation difficult.

Most archaeological investigations within the vicinity of the churchyard have revealed partially truncated archaeological remains. The evaluation revealed graves that had not been subject to the same level of modern truncation, due to their depth. This indicated that the development area has a high archaeological potential.

Previous investigations within St Paul's churchyard had revealed little of archaeological significance. The most significant remains have been recorded outside the existing churchyard boundaries. These have been revealed during various stages of town centre redevelopment and keyhole development during the latter part of the 20th century (Albion 2001).



2. RESULTS OF OBSERVATION AND RECORDING

2.1 Introduction

The programme of archaeological observation was undertaken between 4th July 2005 and 28th September 2005. During this period all construction/demolition works which required monitoring were completed.

Detailed technical information on all the deposits and archaeological features discussed below can be found in the appendix.

2.2 Methodology

The programme of archaeological observation adhered to the field methods set out in section 5 of the brief (Bedfordshire County Council 2004b):

- 1 All excavation of footings or service trenches and stripping of overburden were monitored to try to identify *in situ* archaeological deposits.
- 2 All disturbed soil was scanned for artefacts.
- 3 Archaeological deposits were investigated to determine stratigraphic relationships and to recover artefactual material.
- 4 Archaeological deposits were assessed for environmental evidence, taking into account quality of preservation, dating evidence, risk of contamination and the potential of the material. The guidelines set out in English Heritage's *Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation* (EH 2002) were adhered to.
- 5 All excavated features and deposits were fully recorded in accordance with Albion's *Procedures Manual* (Albion 2001) and the detailed requirements in section 3 of the *Brief*.
- 6 All archaeological observations were recorded at a suitable scale on base plans that were tied in to the OS national grid.
- 7 Significant features were recorded using a digital camera.

Throughout the project the standards set out in the Institute of Field Archaeologists Codes of Conduct and Standards and Guidance documents (specifically *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, September 1999), in English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991) and Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual* were adhered to.

2.3 Extent and Nature of Development

The re-development of the church comprised work in five areas;

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Area 1: | Demolition of public toilets and associated groundworks. |
| Area 2: | Removal of mound. |
| Area 3: | Construction of driveway. |
| Area 4: | Excavation of soak away and gate pier footings. |
| Area 5: | Excavation of ground adjacent to the churchyard wall. |

2.4 Area 1: Demolition of the public toilets and associated groundworks

Demolition of the 20th century public toilets located immediately north of the churchyard (Figure 1) revealed wall [307]. The wall was aligned N to S; it was



approximately 2.25m high and 0.55m thick and constructed of unfrosted bricks bonded in a light grey lime mortar (306). It was 18th/19th century in date and formed part of a building cleared in order to create St Paul's Square.

2.5 Area 2: Removal of the mound

The removal of the churchyard mound (c.72m²) revealed four layers of dumped deposits, in ascending order these were (302) (303) (304) and (305). Deposits (303) and (304) contained substantial amounts of disarticulated human bone.

The limestone slab encountered during the earlier evaluation of the mound (Albion Archaeology 2004a) was not revealed at the level to which the mound was lowered (Plates 1 and 2).

The quantity of human bone recovered from the mound is consistent with it having been derived from within the churchyard. Burials were probably disturbed during the construction of the north aisle of St Paul's Church (19th century). During this work disarticulated human bone would have become mixed with the topsoil and subsoil which made up the spoil heap/mound.

2.6 Area 3: Construction of the driveway

The new driveway covered an area of c.130m². It affected land immediately north and west of the north door of the church (Figures 1 and 2, Plates 3 and 4).

During groundworks, four E to W aligned brick lined tombs were revealed ([315], [321], [325] and [328]). They ranged in size from 2.35m to 1.45m long and 0.75m to 0.45m wide and were c.0.50m below the existing ground surface. Each truncated subsoil layer (329), but was sealed by the modern topsoil (300). The style of brickwork in these tombs suggests a mid 19th to early 20th century date. The tombs were backfilled with inert material (fine gravel) and preserved *in situ* beneath the new driveway.

2.7 Area 4: Excavation of a soak away and gate piers

A soak away c.2m² in diameter and 1.5m deep was excavated adjacent to the north churchyard wall (Figures 1 and 2, Plate 5). The vertical section revealed by these works demonstrated the presence of a dark brown topsoil (331) 0.30m deep. This overlay a 0.60m deep subsoil (332) which contained abundant disarticulated human remains. These layers sealed the undisturbed river gravel terrace (330) which lay 0.90m below the current ground surface.

Two gate piers c.1.2m² in extent and 1.0m deep were excavated adjacent to the north churchyard wall (Figures 1 and 2). The vertical sections revealed in the holes required for the piers were identical to that described for the soak away.

No archaeological remains were observed in Area 4.

2.8 Area 5: Excavation adjacent to the northern churchyard wall

Repairs to the perimeter wall of the churchyard required the reduction of the ground surface adjacent to the northern, north-western and north-eastern parts of the wall. A trench c.42m long, 0.40m wide and 0.50m deep (Figure 1, Plates 6 and 7) was excavated.



The footings for this part of the churchyard wall (309), its foundation trench [311] and backfill (310) were revealed in the course of the work. No other archaeological remains were observed.



3. SYNTHESIS OF RESULTS

3.1 Summary

The remains of an 18th/19th century wall were revealed during demolition of the toilets and removal of the earth mound (Areas 1 and 2). A 19th century date has been assigned to the creation of this mound, on the basis of artefactual remains recovered during the earlier evaluation of it (Albion Archaeology 2004a). It probably represents a spoil heap created during building works on the north aisle of the church.

Four 19th/early 20th century brick-lined tombs were revealed within the footprint of the new driveway (Area 3). Careful infilling with inert material ensured these tombs were protected, and the inhumations within them were preserved *in situ*, while allowing the development works to continue.

With the exception of the gate piers and soak away (Area 4) groundworks did not reach the optimum depth for revealing significant archaeological remains. This ensured the protection of any surviving archaeological remains within the development area.

Areas 1 and 5 contained no significant archaeological remains.

3.2 Significance

The programme of observation confirmed that significant archaeological remains did not exist at the levels reached during groundworks for this development, although they may lie undisturbed at a greater depth.

Four 19th century brick-lined tombs were revealed and preserved *in situ* by the development. All disarticulated human bone revealed during the development was re-buried within the churchyard.



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5. APPENDIX

5.1 Context Summary



Area: 1

Extent (ha): 0.0112

OS Co-ordinates: TL4991149705

Description: Demolition of public toilets

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
307	Wall	Wall at eastern end of mound. Constructed with bricks (306). Part of 18th/19th century building.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
306	Wall	Compact mid red brown . Regular coursed red bricks bonded in light-grey lime mortar.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Area: 2

Extent (ha): 0.0072

OS Co-ordinates: TL4985949705

Description: Removal of mound.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
300	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt occasional small stones.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
301	Layer	Friable dark brown sandy silt occasional small stones. Topsoil formation over mound.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
302	Dump material	Loose dark brown silt frequent small stones.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
303	Dump material	Loose dark brown silty clay occasional small stones. Human bone present.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
304	Dump material	Firm mid brown silty clay occasional small stones. Human bone present	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
305	Dump material	Loose light yellow brown sandy rubble frequent small-large ceramic building material, frequent small-large stones. Demolition rubble and gravestones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Area: 3

Extent (ha): 0.013

OS Co-ordinates: TL4969849696

Description: Construction of driveway.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
315	Grave	Sub-oval E-W profile: near vertical dimensions: max breadth 0.75m, max length 2.35m. Left in situ.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
312	Brickwork	Mid red brown . Regular coursed red bricks bonded in light-grey lime mortar.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
313	Limestone slab	Light yellow white limestone . Limestone slabs overlying tomb (315).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
314	Brickwork	Mid red brown . Brick filling gap in (313).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
316	Human skeleton	Inhumation in situ within tomb (315). Aligned with head to west, facing south, in a supine position. It had been placed in a coffin (317), part of which still survived. Preservation of inhumation was very good. Still displayed evidence of hair.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
317	Coffin	Dark brown . Rectangular shaped coffin, aligned east to west for inhumation (316). Preservation was very poor. Coffin was left in situ.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
321	Grave	Sub-oval E-W profile: near vertical dimensions: max breadth 0.45m, max length 1.45m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
318	Grave	Mid red brown . Regular coursed red bricks bonded in light-grey lime mortar.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
319	Human skeleton	Inhumation in situ within tomb (321).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
320	Coffin	Dark brown . Rectangular shaped coffin, aligned east to west for inhumation (319). Preservation was very poor. Coffin was left in situ.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
325	Grave	Sub-oval E-W profile: near vertical . Rectangular shaped coffin, aligned east to west.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
322	Grave	Mid red brown . Regular coursed red bricks bonded in light-grey lime mortar.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
323	Human skeleton	Inhumation in situ within grave	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
324	Coffin	Rectangular shaped coffin aligned east to west.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
328	Grave	Disturbed brick built grave	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
326	Grave	Mid red brown . Regular coursed red bricks bonded in light-grey lime mortar.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
327	Backfill	Loose mid brown silty clay frequent small-large ceramic building material. Backfill of material in grave (328)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
329	Subsoil	Firm light brown silty clay occasional small ceramic building material, occasional small stones.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Area: 4

Extent (ha): 0.00064

OS Co-ordinates: TL4973249704

Description: Excavation of a soakaway and gate pier footings.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
330	Natural	Firm mid orange brown gravel frequent small-medium stones.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
331	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty clay .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
332	Subsoil	Firm mid orange brown silty clay moderate small-medium stones.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Area: 5

Extent (ha): 0.00168

OS Co-ordinates: TL4962449704

Description: Reduction of ground adjacent to the church wall.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
311	Foundation trench	Linear E-W dimensions: max breadth 0.7m. Cut of foundation trench for wall (309).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
308	Wall	Mid red brown . Regular coursed red bricks bonded in light-grey lime mortar.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
309	Wall	Wall made of bricks (308). Outer perimeter wall of St Paul's Church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
310	Fill	Firm mid brown clay silt frequent small-large ceramic building material. Unexcavated fill of foundation trench [311] for wall (309).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

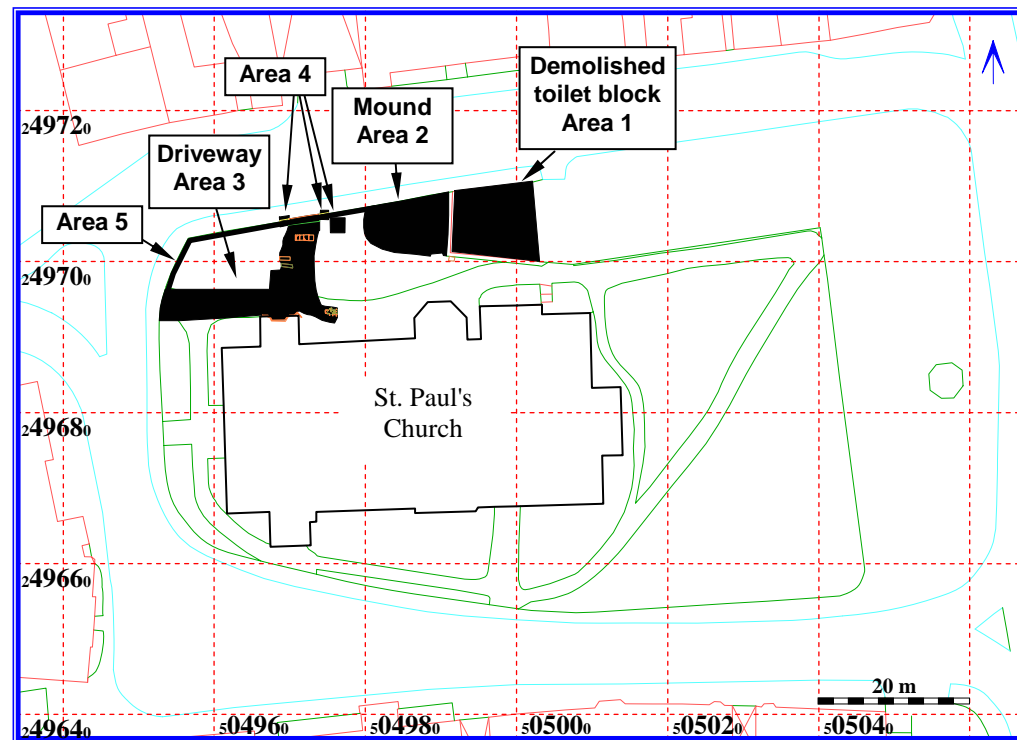
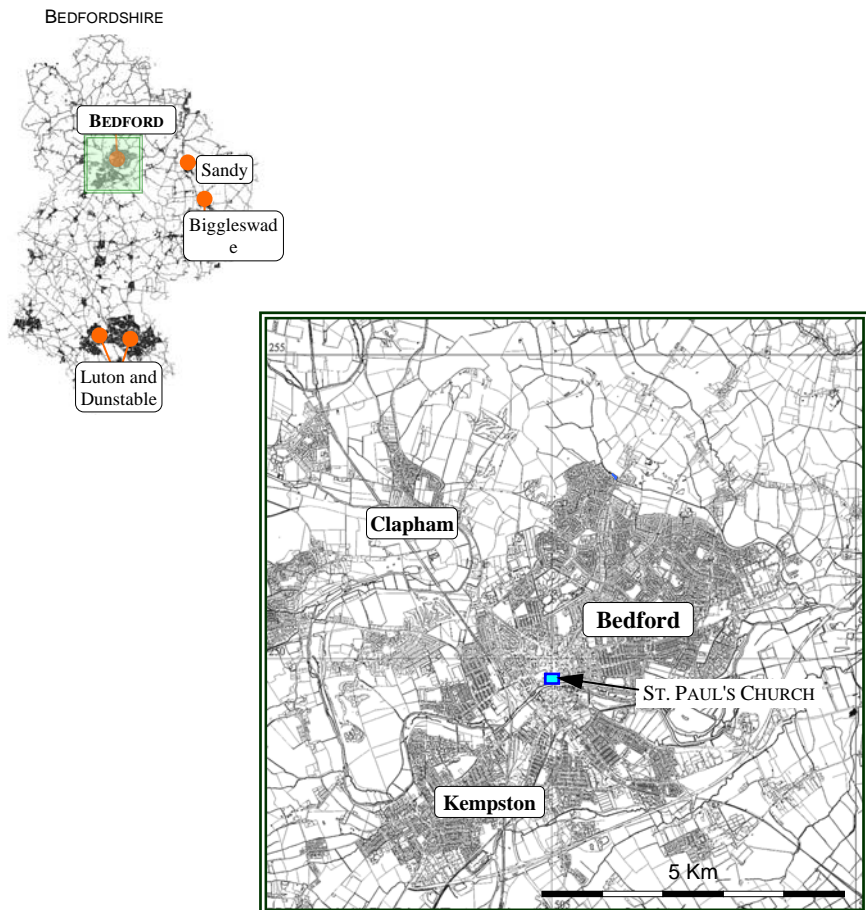


Figure 1: Site location plan.

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Grave [315]



Graves [321] and [325]



Grave [328]



Mound cross section

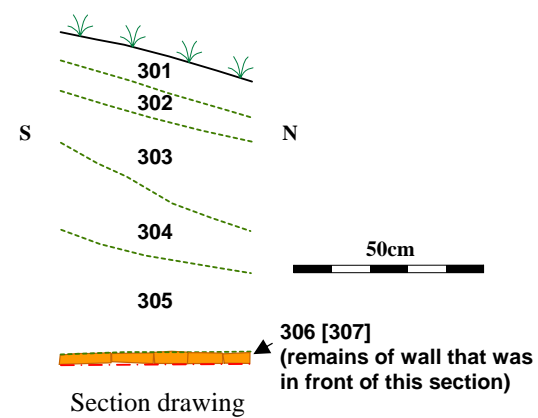
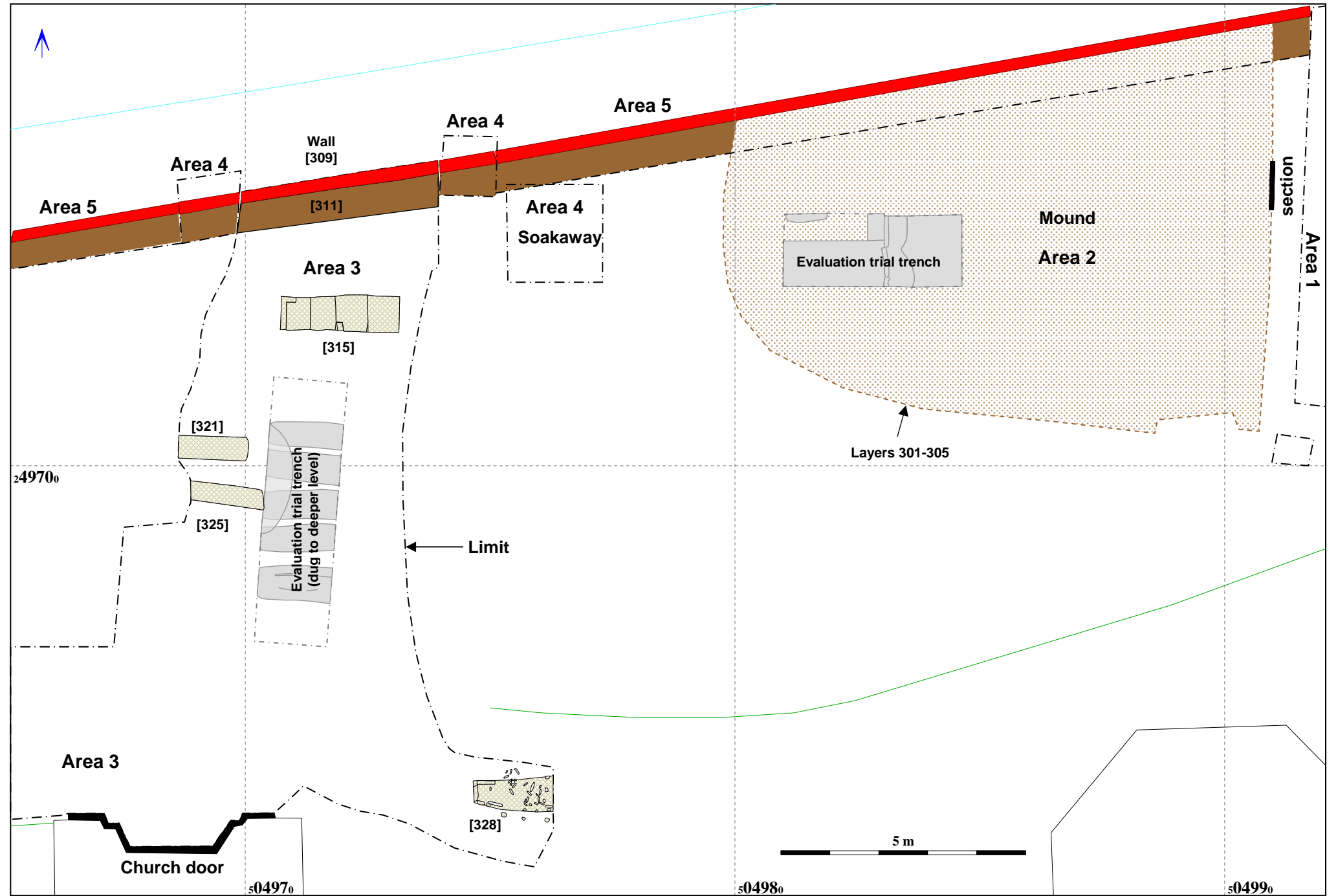


Figure 2: All features

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Plate 1: Area 2, during the removal of the earth mound and associated late 19th century wall



Plate 2: Area 2, during the removal of the earth mound



Plate 3: Area 3, removal of overburden prior to the construction of new driveway



Plate 4: Area 3, brick-lined graves [321] and [325]



Plate 5: Area 4, excavations for gate pier foundation



Plate 6: Area 5, excavation within the churchyard, against the north churchyard wall.



Plate 7: Area 5, excavation of pier against the north churchyard wall