

**BRANDON GRANGE FARM
BRANDON
RUGBY
WARWICKSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION
AND
HERITAGE ASSET ASSESSMENT**

Albion
archaeology



**BRANDON GRANGE FARM
BRANDON
RUGBY
WARWICKSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION
AND
HERITAGE ASSET ASSESSMENT**

Project: BGF2244
OASIS ref: albionar1-159550

Document: 2013/160
Version 1.0

Compiled by	Checked by	Approved by
Richard Gregson	Wesley Keir	Drew Shotliff

Issue date: 3rd October 2013

Produced for:
ABDS Ltd

On behalf of:
J C Channing & Son



Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Project Background	4
1.2 Site Location, Topography and Geology	4
1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background	4
1.4 Project Objectives	6
2. METHODOLOGY	7
2.1 Standards	7
2.2 Trial Trenching	7
2.3 Archive	7
3. RESULTS	8
3.1 Introduction	8
3.2 Overburden and Geological Deposits	8
3.3 Archaeological Features	9
3.4 Natural Features	9
4. CONCLUSIONS	10
4.1 Summary of the Evaluation Results	10
4.2 Impact Assessment	10
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY	11
6. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES	12

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Site location plan

Figure 2: Evaluation results

The figures are bound at the back of the report.



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 commissioned by ABDS Ltd on behalf of J C Channing & Son and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by the Warwickshire County Council Planning Archaeologist. The fieldwork was undertaken by Richard Gregson (Archaeological Supervisor) and Allan King (Archaeological Technician). This report has been prepared by Richard Gregson with contributions from Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

Albion Archaeology
 St Mary's Church
 St Mary's Street
 Bedford, MK42 0AS
 ☎: 0300 300 8141
 Fax: 0300 300 8209
 E-mail: office@albion-arch.com
 Website: www.albion-arch.com

Version History

Version	Issue date	Reason for re-issue
1.0	03/10/2013	n/a

Key Terms

The following terms or abbreviations are used throughout this report:

WCC	Warwickshire County Council
PA	Warwickshire County Council Planning Archaeologist
HER	Warwickshire Historic Environment Record
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

ABDS Ltd are preparing to submit a planning application for an anaerobic digestion facility at Brandon Grange Farm in Brandon, Rugby, Warwickshire.

Because the site lies in an area of archaeological sensitivity the Warwickshire County Council Planning Archaeologist recommended that an archaeological field evaluation should be undertaken on the site in order to obtain information required to compile a heritage asset assessment which will accompany the planning application.

The field evaluation, comprising the excavation of four trial trenches measuring 1.8m wide and 50m long, was undertaken between the 23rd and 25th September 2013.

The only archaeological features revealed were a N-S aligned gully [204] located in the south-west corner of the site and a pit [403] located in the NE corner of the site. No artefacts were recovered from either feature. However, based on their respective relationships to the subsoil, it is likely that the gully is post-medieval or earlier in date and conversely, that the pit is post-medieval or later in date.

Previous investigation in the immediate vicinity (Northamptonshire Archaeology 2005) revealed a similar lack of archaeological features or artefacts, indicating that the proposed development area is unlikely to be close to any former settlement focus.

Though development of the site is likely to have a negative impact upon the two revealed features within the trenches, they are considered to be of negligible heritage significance; they are of limited archaeological interest and have no potential to address published research frameworks for the area.

The details of the development are not known at this stage, though it is likely to affect the setting to some degree of both the known sub-surface archaeological heritage assets within the fields surrounding the site and Brandon Grange Farm (HWA 216) itself. However, the nature of their setting is not a major factor in their perceived significance as heritage assets; any perceived negative impact upon their significance could be negated by landscaping measures and design sympathetic to the surroundings.

Brandon Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset and largely encompasses the historic core of the village. However, being located c. 1km away from the proposed development site, any significance connected to its setting is unlikely to be adversely affected by the proposed development.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Background*

ABDS Ltd are preparing to submit a planning application for an anaerobic digestion facility at Brandon Grange Farm in Brandon, Rugby, Warwickshire.

Because the site lies in an area of archaeological sensitivity (see Section 1.3), the Warwickshire County Council Planning Archaeologist (PA) recommended that an archaeological field evaluation comprising trial trenching should be undertaken in order to obtain information required to compile a heritage asset assessment to accompany the planning application.

This is in accordance with the national planning guidelines in the form of the *National Planning Policy Framework – Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*, which was published on 27 March 2012¹.

This report represents the findings of the evaluation which was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Albion Archaeology 2013) approved by the PA.

1.2 *Site Location, Topography and Geology*

Brandon Grange Farm lies on the A428 approximately halfway between the villages of Brandon and Bretford to the west of Rugby and south-east of Coventry. The site is located on the western side of a field at a height of *c.* 80m OD that slopes down gently towards the west within the valley of the River Avon which flows *c.* 500m to the south. It is within the parish of Brandon and Bretford and is centred on grid reference SP418766. The proposed <1.0ha development area comprises parts of a number of land parcels on the eastern margins of the existing farm.

The underlying geology consists of sand and gravel River Terrace 1 deposits along the River Avon with localised outcrops of Bagington sand and gravel and Thrussington Member Diamicton. Bedrock consists of the Mercia Mudstone Group².

1.3 *Archaeological and Historical Background*

A number of archaeological assets are recorded within the Warwickshire HER within the vicinity of the site. These are summarised below (MWA, EWA and HWA are abbreviations, denoting ‘monuments’, ‘events’ and historic landscape features in the HER).

A number of undated cropmark complexes and enclosures (MWA 4258 and 5617) were identified from aerial photographs in the loop of the river Avon to the south of Brandon Grange Farm. On the basis of its shape and size, one of

¹ National Planning Policy Framework, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Available at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf>.

² Contains British Geological Survey materials © NERC [2012]



the cropmarks may be a ring ditch of Neolithic or Bronze Age date (MWA 4945). A watching brief to the south-west of the ring ditch revealed no archaeological features but recovered three flint tools of Neolithic date (EWA 9472).

A collection of flints dating from the Mesolithic to Iron Age periods was also recorded during a large-scale fieldwalking project to the north and south of Brandon Grange Farm (MWA12454, EWA9322). These appeared to be in a loose scatter, rather than representing specific settlement sites.

The Fosse Way, a major Roman routeway from Roman Exeter to Lincoln, lies *c.* 1km to the east of Brandon Grange Farm. Roman roads attract roadside settlement sites and activity but none have so far been recorded within a 500m radius of the farm. It is possible that some of the undated cropmarks by the banks of the River Avon date to the Roman period but this has not yet been verified.

There are no Anglo-Saxon manorial centres recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 in the vicinity of the site. The nearest are at Wolston *c.* 2km to the south-west of Brandon Grange Farm, and at Church Lawford, *c.* 3km to the east³. An Anglo-Saxon cruciform brooch (MWA10065) dating from the early 6th century AD was found in the field adjacent to Brandon Grange Farm. However, this is most likely a chance loss, rather than an indicator of a settlement site.

The site of a Benedictine Nunnery (MWA 4260) is marked in the field to the north of Brandon Grange Farm. Documentary evidence suggests that a small nunnery for three nuns was founded after 1154 and dissolved before 1167. The exact location of the nunnery is unknown.

Bretford, *c.* 1km to the east of Brandon Grange Farm, is a medieval settlement with a market first recorded in 1227⁴. A medieval chapel (MWA 4261), unconnected with the nunnery, is documented at Bretford but its exact site is unknown.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation project has mapped a number of medieval open strip fields in the area within the loop of the River Avon (HWA 446). Other historic land boundaries are remainders of the larger fields created through enclosure and in the modern period (HWA 218, 219, 236).

Brandon Grange Farm itself (HWA 216) most likely dates to the mid to late 19th century; it is first marked on the first edition OS map of 1880. It is a regular courtyard plan farm with a detached house.

An archaeological evaluation at Brandon Grange Farm, undertaken in 2004 and consisting of a geophysical survey with subsequent trial trenching, revealed no archaeological remains with the exception of a shallow gully. This was undated

³ <http://domesdaymap.co.uk>. Date accessed: 09 September 2013.

⁴ 'Warwickshire', *Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to 1516* (2005). URL:

[http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=40438&strquery=Bretford warwickshire](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=40438&strquery=Bretford%20warwickshire) Date accessed: 09 September 2013.



but judged to be of relatively recent date (Northamptonshire Archaeology 2005).

1.4 Project Objectives

The general purpose of the evaluation was to recover information on the:

- location, extent, nature, and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present within the application site;
- integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present within the application site.
- nature of palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.



2. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach to the project is summarised below. A full methodology is provided in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2013) which was approved by the PA prior to commencement of fieldwork.

2.1 Standards

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

• IfA	<i>By-Laws and Code of Conduct</i>
	<i>Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation (2008) and finds (2008)</i>
• English Heritage	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment PPN3: Archaeological Excavation (2009)</i>
	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation. 2nd ed. (2011)</i>
• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork (2nd edn, 2001).</i>

2.2 Trial Trenching

Trial trenching took place between 23rd and 25th September 2013. The layout of four trenches measuring 1.8m wide and 50m long was agreed with the PA. The trenches were opened by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under close archaeological supervision.

Overburden was removed down to the top of the archaeological deposits or undisturbed geological deposits, whichever was encountered first. The spoil heaps were also scanned for artefact recovery.

Any potential archaeological features were investigated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's pro forma sheets. Each trench was subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate. All deposits were recorded using a unique number sequence, commencing at 100 for Trench 1, 200 for Trench 2 *etc.* Context numbers in square brackets refer to the cuts [***] and round brackets to fills or layers (***)

2.3 Archive

The project archive will be deposited with Warwickshire Museum. Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (ref: albionar1-159550) in accordance with the guidelines issued by English Heritage and the Archaeology Data Service.



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

The evaluation revealed a pit likely to be of post-medieval or later date and an undated gully. The features and deposits revealed are summarised below and illustrated in Figure 2. Details of all the observed features and deposits are provided in Appendix 1.

3.2 Overburden and Geological Deposits

The overburden revealed within the trial trenches varied considerably, due to a combination of the sloping field and recent agricultural practices.

In Trenches 2, 3 and 4, the ploughsoil comprised a layer of dark brown grey sandy silt (200 / 301 /400) that was up to 0.35m thick. The underlying subsoil in these trenches was quite varied, dependant on whether they were at the top or the bottom of the E-W sloping field.

In Trench 4, at the top of the slope, the subsoil (401) comprised a 0.3m thick mid brown orange sandy gravel.

In Trench 2, the alignment of which followed the E-W slope of the field, the subsoil (201) was a mid grey brown sandy silt that was thickest (up to 0.5m) at the bottom of the slope. Here, it overlay a 0.5m thick layer of colluvium (202), comprising light yellow grey sandy silt.

In Trench 3, the subsoil (302) comprised 0.25m thick, mid grey brown silty sand. Beneath this were up to five distinct colluvial deposits (303), (304), (305), (306) and (307) that varied in thickness and composition along the length of the trench. They ranged from light yellow brown sandy gravels to brown black silty sands which varied in thickness from 0.06–0.34m.

The overburden in Trench 1, situated on the uncultivated south-western edge of the field, was different in character to that of the other trenches. The topsoil (100) comprised 0.5m thick loose, mid grey brown sandy silt that contained occasional potatoes and appears to have been the leftover deposits from potato riddling. Underneath were three distinct layers of spoil that had been dumped when an area had been mechanically excavated to the west of the trench to create a level extension to the farm complex. The layers comprised 0.5m thick re-deposited dark brown orange clay (101) that overlay 0.35m thick re-deposited dark grey brown topsoil (102) and 0.5m thick re-deposited dark brown orange clay (103).

The undisturbed geological deposit in Trenches 1 and 2 comprised dark brown orange clay (104 / 203). In Trench 3 it comprised light brown grey sandy gravel (308) and in Trench 4 it comprised light yellow orange sandy gravel (402).



3.3 Archaeological Features

3.3.1 Undated gully

A small N-S aligned gully [204] was revealed in Trench 2. It was 0.7m wide and 0.24m deep with a V-shaped profile; it was filled with mid grey brown sandy silt (205). Although it contained no datable artefacts, it was overlain by subsoil (201) and is therefore likely to be of post-medieval or earlier date.

3.3.2 Post-medieval / modern pit

A probable pit [403] was partially revealed within the eastern side of Trench 4. It measured 0.66m across and 0.4m deep with near vertical sides and a concave base; its fill (404) comprised a dark grey brown silty sand that was similar in composition to ploughsoil (400) and contained no artefacts. In contrast to gully [204], it clearly truncated the subsoil (401) and is, therefore, likely to be of post-medieval or later date.

3.4 Natural Features

Three tree-throws [206], [309] and [311] were recorded in Trenches 2 and 3. They varied from 0.6–1.80m in diameter and were up to 0.17m deep. The deposits within them varied from light grey to brown-black in colour and from sandy silt to silty sand in composition. No datable artefacts were recovered from them.



4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 *Summary of the Evaluation Results*

The only archaeological features revealed were a N-S aligned gully [204] located in the south-west corner of the site and a pit [403] located in the NE corner of the site.

No artefacts were recovered from either feature. However, based on their respective relationships to the subsoil, it is likely that the gully is post-medieval or earlier in date and conversely, that the pit is post-medieval or later in date.

Previous investigation in the immediate vicinity (Northamptonshire Archaeology 2005) revealed a similar lack of archaeological features or artefacts, indicating that the proposed development area is unlikely to be close to any former settlement focus.

4.2 *Impact Assessment*

Though development of the site is likely to have a negative impact upon the two revealed features within the trenches, they are considered to be of negligible heritage significance; they are of limited archaeological interest and have no potential to address published research frameworks for the area.

The details of the development are not known at this stage, though it is likely to affect the setting to some degree of both the known sub-surface archaeological heritage assets within the fields surrounding the site and Brandon Grange Farm (HWA 216) itself. However, the nature of their setting is not a major factor in their perceived significance as heritage assets; any perceived negative impact upon their significance could be negated by landscaping measures and design sympathetic to the surroundings.

Brandon Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset and largely encompasses the historic core of the village. However, being located *c.* 1km away from the proposed development site, any significance connected to its setting is unlikely to be adversely affected by the proposed development.



5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albion Archaeology 2001. *Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork*, 2nd ed.

Albion Archaeology 2013. *Brandon Grange Farm, Brandon, Rugby, Warwickshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Field Evaluation*. Document 2013/144

English Heritage 2009. *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE).

English Heritage 2011. *Environmental Archaeology. A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation*. (Second edition). Product code 51644.

Northamptonshire Archaeology 2005. *Archaeological investigations at Brandon Grange Farm, Bretford, Warwickshire*.



6. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES



Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 50.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 42143: Northing: 76851)

OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 42147: Northing: 76801)

Reason: To evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Topsoil	Loose mid grey brown sandy silt moderate small-large stones 0.5m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Dump material	Firm dark brown orange clay occasional small-medium stones 0.5m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Dump material	Firm dark grey brown sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small stones 0.35m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Dump material	Firm dark brown orange clay occasional small-medium stones 0.5m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Natural	Firm dark brown orange clay occasional small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 50.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.55 m. Max: 0.8 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 42084; Northing: 76913)

OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 42132; Northing: 76899)

Reason: To evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
200	Ploughsoil	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.3m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
201	Subsoil	Firm mid grey brown sandy silt occasional small stones 0.5m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
202	Colluvium	Compact light yellow grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.5m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
203	Natural	Firm dark brown orange clay occasional small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
204	Gulley	Linear N-S sides: V-Shaped base: v-shaped dimensions: max breadth 0.7m, max depth 0.24m, min length 1.85m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
205	Fill	Firm mid grey brown sandy silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
206	Treethrow	Irregular sides: Assymetrical base: uneven dimensions: max breadth 0.31m, max depth 0.13m, min length 0.8m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
207	Fill	Compact light grey sandy silt frequent flecks charcoal, occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 3

Max Dimensions: Length: 50.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 42089; Northing: 76927)

OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 42118; Northing: 76967)

Reason: To evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
301	Ploughsoil	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt 0.29m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
302	Subsoil	Friable mid grey brown silty sand 0.25m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
303	Colluvium	Compact brown black silty sand 0.06m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
304	Colluvium	Compact mid red brown sandy gravel 0.24m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
305	Colluvium	Compact light yellow brown sandy gravel 0.17m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
306	Colluvium	Friable mid brown grey silty sand 0.34m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
307	Colluvium	Friable brown black silty sand 0.08m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
308	Natural	Loose light brown grey sandy gravel 0.06m thick.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
309	Treethrow	Sub-oval sides: irregular dimensions: max breadth 0.31m, min depth 0.17m, max length 0.6m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
310	Fill	Friable mid brown grey silty sand moderate small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
311	Treethrow	Irregular sides: irregular base: flat dimensions: max breadth 1.6m, min depth 0.12m, min length 1.8m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
312	Fill	Friable brown black sandy silt frequent small-medium stones, occasional large stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 4

Max Dimensions: Length: 50.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.5 m. Max: 0.6 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 42141: Northing: 76935)

OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 42137: Northing: 76985)

Reason: To evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
400	Ploughsoil	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.35m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
401	Subsoil	Loose mid brown orange sandy gravel 0.3m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
402	Natural	Loose light yellow orange sandy gravel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
403	Pit	sides: near vertical base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.11m, max depth 0.4m, max length 0.66m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
404	Fill	Friable dark grey brown silty sand occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

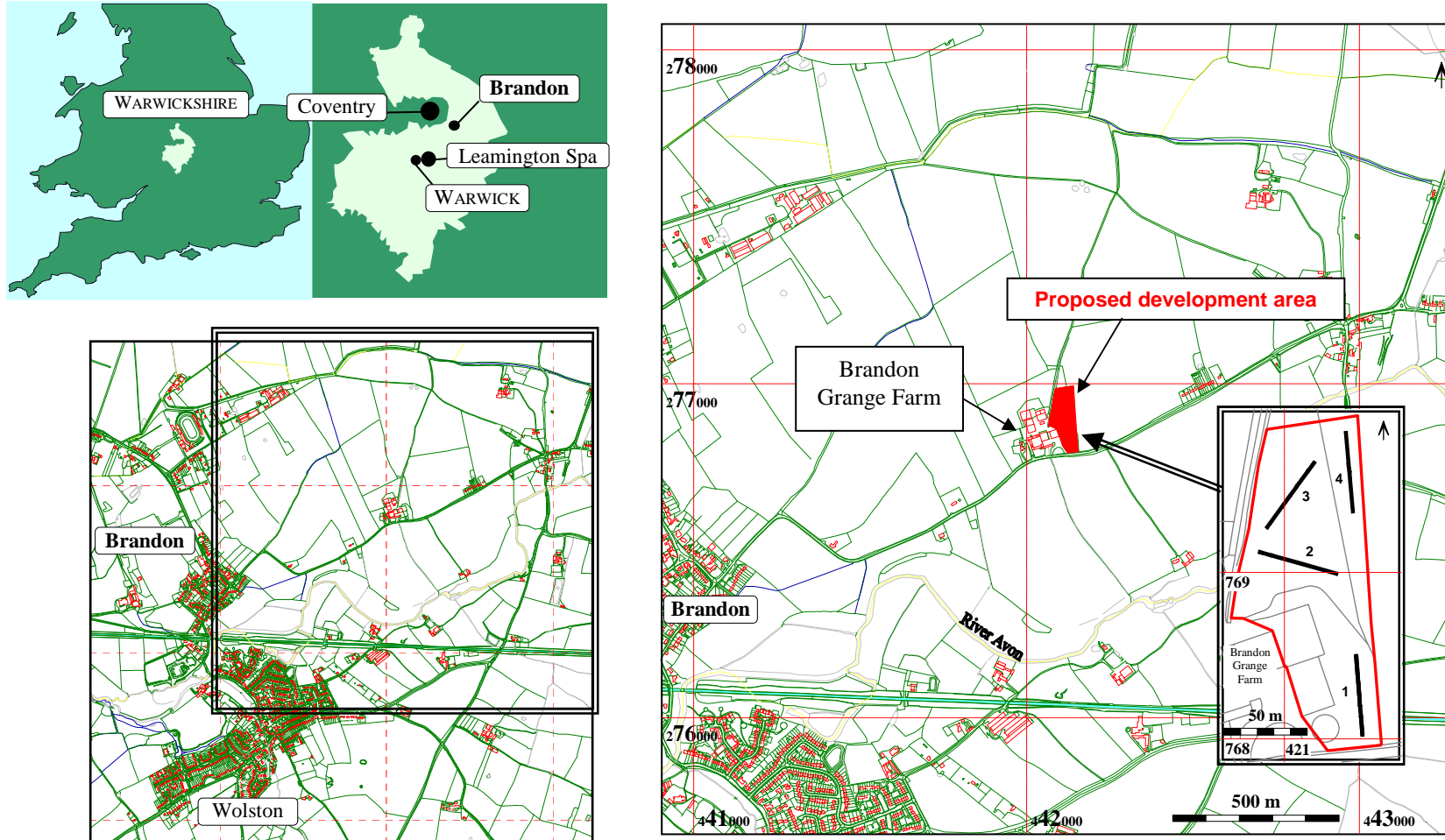
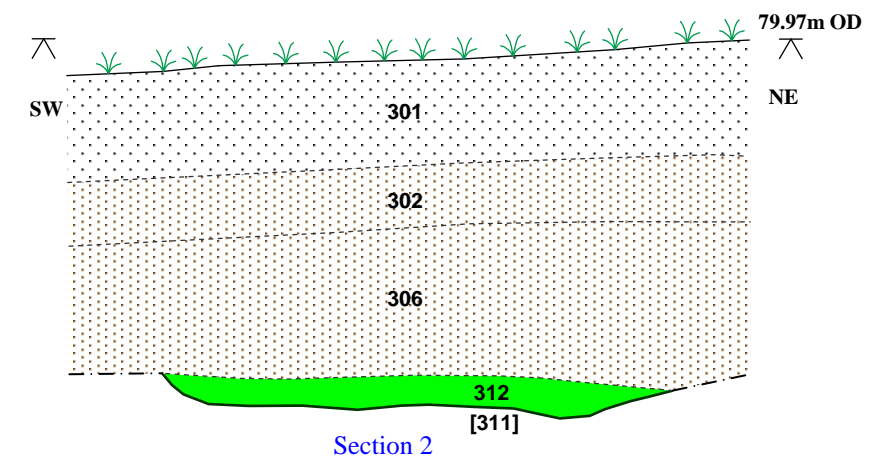
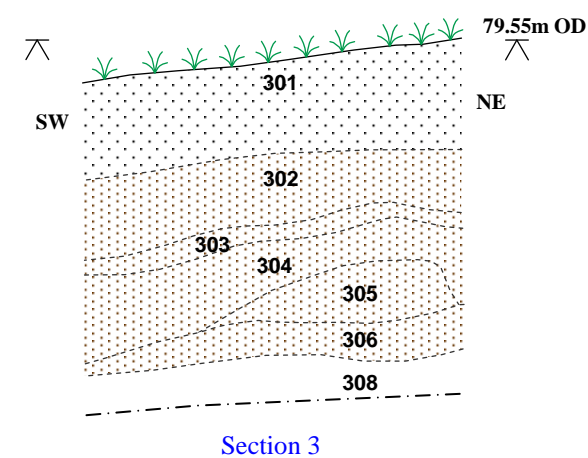
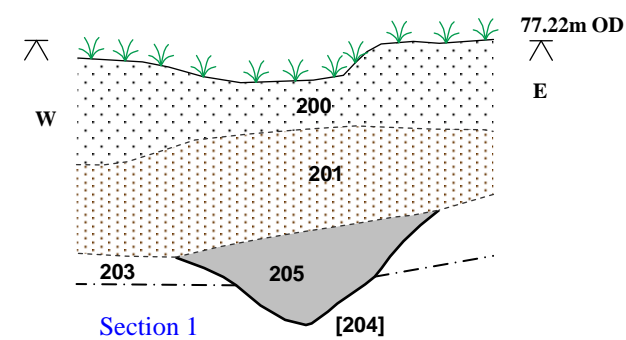
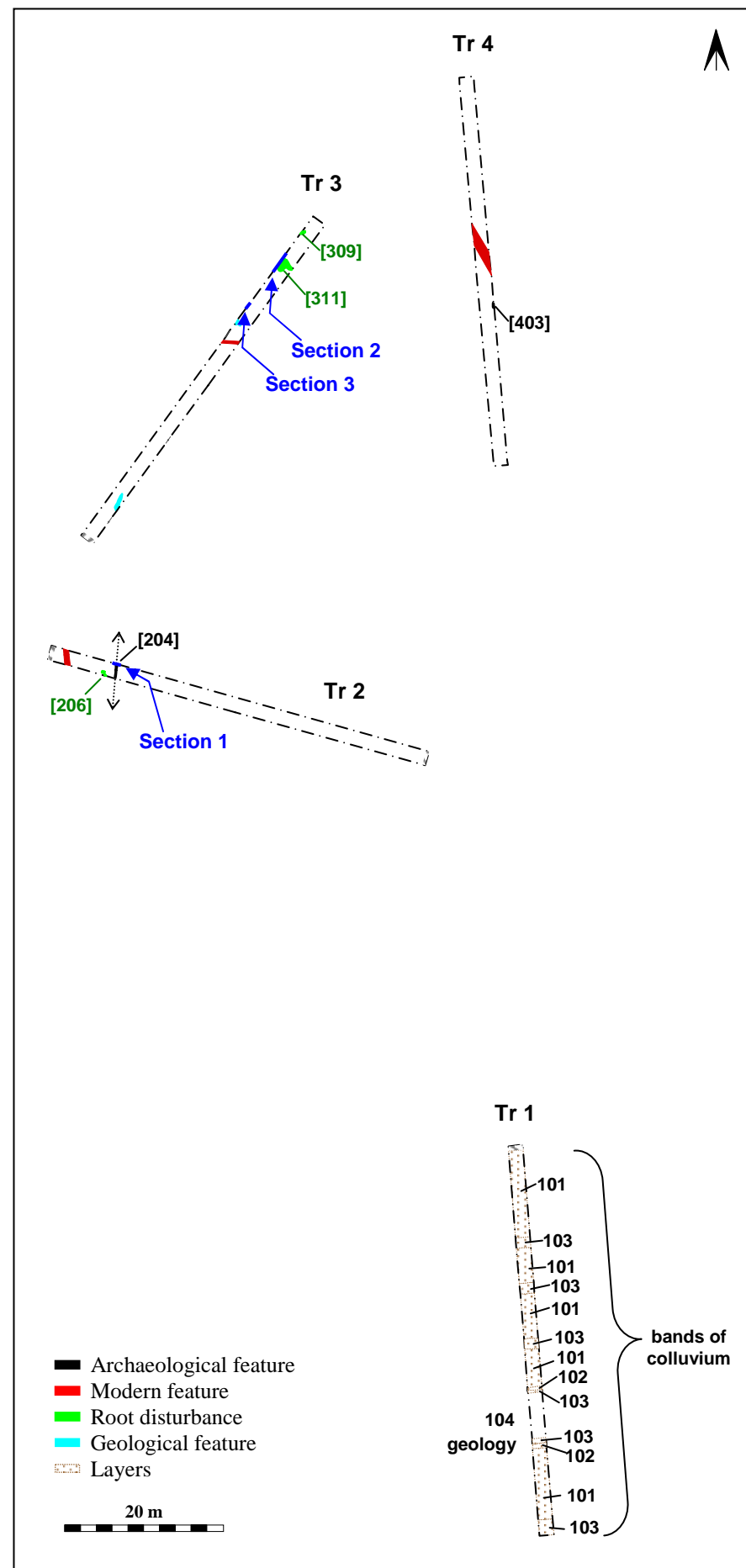


Figure 1: Site location

This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Central Bedfordshire Council. Licence No. 100049029 (2011)



Gully [204] (facing north)
(1m scale)



Pit [403] (facing east)
(1m scale)

Figure 2: Evaluation results

Central
Bedfordshire

Albion
archaeology



Albion Archaeology
St Mary's Church
St Mary's Street
Bedford
MK42 0AS

Telephone 01234 294000
Email office@albion-arch.com
www.albion-arch.com

