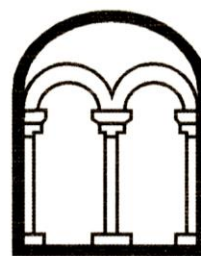


HALL GROVE  
WELWYN GARDEN CITY  
HERTFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION, RECORDING  
ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION

**Albion**  
archaeology



**HALL GROVE  
WELWYN GARDEN CITY  
HERTFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION, RECORDING  
ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION**

Project: HG3426  
OASIS ref: albionar1-357479

Document: 2019/97  
Version 1.0

Compiled by	Edited by	Approved by
Kathy Pilkinton	Wesley Keir	Drew Shotliff

2nd October 2019

Produced for:  
Rockwell London Ltd



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## Preface

*All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and was prepared solely for the benefit of the client. The material contained in this report does not necessarily stand on its own and should not be relied upon by any third party. This document should not be used for any other purpose without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and the prior written authority of Albion Archaeology (a trading unit of Central Bedfordshire Council). Any person/party relying on the document for such other purposes agrees and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Albion Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Albion Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the persons/party by whom it was commissioned. This document is limited by the state of knowledge at the time it was written.*

## Acknowledgements

*The project was commissioned by Rockwell London Ltd and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Alison Tinniswood, Historic Environment Advisor for Hertfordshire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Ian Turner and Kathy Pilkinton (Supervisors), and Krzysztof Ryniec (Archaeological Technician). This report was prepared by Kathy Pilkinton with contributions from Joan Lightning (CAD Technician) and Jackie Wells (Finds Officer).*

Albion Archaeology  
 St Mary's Church  
 St Mary's Street  
 Bedford, MK42 0AS  
 ☎: 0300 300 8141  
 e-mail: [office@albion-arch.com](mailto:office@albion-arch.com)

## Version History

Version	Issue date	Reason for re-issue
1.0	02/10/2019	n/a

## Key Terms

The following abbreviations are used throughout this report:

CifA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
EAA	East Anglian Archaeology
EHT	Event Hertfordshire (HER Events record)
HCC	Hertfordshire County Council
HEA	Historic Environment Advisor for Hertfordshire County Council
HER	Historic Environment Record
LPA	Local Planning Authority
NHLE	National Heritage List for England
OS	Ordnance Survey
PDA	Permitted development area



## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council granted planning consent (6/2018/1029/FULL) for the erection of nine houses (6 x 2-bedroom and 3 x 3-bedroom) and a community hall with associated parking and landscaping, following the demolition of existing church and dwelling at Hall Grove, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 4PJ.*

*As the permitted development area (PDA) lies close to Areas of Archaeological Significance nos 30 and 31, a condition (no. 14) was attached to the consent on the advice of the Historic Environment Advisor for Hertfordshire County Council (HEA).*

*Field evaluation, comprising the excavation of six trenches, was completed in March 2019. A number of archaeological features were revealed within two of the trenches. As a result, the HEA advised that the area around these two trenches should be subject to an open-area excavation. Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Rockwell London Ltd to carry out the open-area excavation in accordance with a WSI approved by the HEA.*

*The open-area excavation revealed three adjacent, irregular ditches containing a small number of tile and brick fragments dating to the late medieval/post-medieval and modern periods. The NNE–SSW alignment of the ditches corresponds with the alignment of previous field boundaries in the area, specifically a possible tree-lined trackway or avenue marked on the 1884 OS map. The heavy rooting within the ditches is suggestive of a former hedge line. The limited ceramics recovered from the ditches indicate the presence of contemporary buildings in the wider area. However, no evidence of structures was revealed during the excavation.*

*Two areas of pitting were also revealed that are likely to be associated with tree-planting or removal during the late medieval/post-medieval period (c.14th–16th century).*

*The revealed ditches and tree-pits/tree-throws add to our understanding of the developing rural landscape in the late medieval and post-medieval periods, but have no potential to address identified research themes for the period.*

*Given the limited nature of the recovered data, there is no potential for further analysis of the results of the investigation. This report will be uploaded onto the OASIS website (albionar1-357479) and the project archive deposited with Mill Green Museum, Hatfield.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 **Project Background**

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council granted planning consent (6/2018/1029/FULL) for the erection of nine houses (6 x 2-bedroom and 3 x 3-bedroom) and a community hall with associated parking and landscaping, following the demolition of the existing church and dwelling at Hall Grove, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 4PJ.

As the permitted development area (PDA) lies close to Areas of Archaeological Significance nos 30 and 31, a condition (no. 14) was attached to the consent on the advice of the Historic Environment Advisor for Hertfordshire County Council (HEA):

*No development shall take place/commence until an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of archaeological significance and research questions; and:*

- 1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording;*
- 2. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording as required by the evaluation;*
- 3. The programme for post investigation assessment;*
- 4. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording;*
- 5. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation;*
- 6. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation;*
- 7. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.*

*REASON: To enable the inspection of the site by qualified persons for the investigation of archaeological remains in accordance with a written scheme of investigation in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy R29 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.*

Field evaluation, comprising the excavation of six trenches, was completed in March 2019. A number of archaeological features were revealed within two of the trenches (Albion Archaeology 2019a). As a result, the HEA advised that the area around these two trenches (Figure 1) should be subject to an open-area excavation.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Rockwell London Ltd to carry out the open-area excavation in accordance with a WSI approved in advance by the HEA (Albion Archaeology 2019b). This report details the results of the excavation.



## 1.2 **Site Location and Description**

Welwyn Garden City was founded in 1920; it is centrally located within the county of Hertfordshire. It lies *c.*11km south of Stevenage and 16km south-east of Luton. The A1 (M) and River Lea define the western extent of the town. The PDA is situated on the south-east side of Welwyn, off Howlands Road.

The PDA is centred on NGR TL 25584 11692 and comprises a broadly trapezoidal area (2400m<sup>2</sup> in extent) (Figure 1) on the north side of Hall Grove and to the south of Cole Green Lane. At the time of the fieldwork it contained buildings relating to a former Diocesan Education Centre and a dwelling house.

The underlying geology comprises Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation (undifferentiated) chalk. Overlying this is Lowestoft Formation Diamicton<sup>1</sup>.

## 1.3 **Archaeological and Historical Background**

Welwyn Garden City lies on high ground between the rivers Lea to the south and Mimram to the north. It was the world's second Garden City founded in 1920 by a private company under the guidance of Ebenezer Howard, the man responsible for the first at Letchworth.

To the north-west lies the old town of Welwyn, which was an important Iron Age and Roman settlement located on the Roman road from St Albans to Braughing and Colchester.

### 1.3.1 **Archaeological field evaluation**

Field evaluation, comprising the excavation of six trenches (Figures 1 and 2), was undertaken on 4th and 5th March 2019 (Albion Archaeology 2019a).

Archaeological features were identified in two of the six trenches; these comprised two gullies, two pits, a ditch and two postholes all located within Trenches 2 and 3. The nature of a very small sherd of pottery recovered from one of the gullies within Trench 2 suggested the gullies and posthole within this trench could possibly date to either the Roman or medieval period. The proximity of Ludwick Hall (see below) suggested the latter of the two dates was more likely, though this was uncertain due to the very small size and abraded nature of the potsherd. A fragment of a flint core, also recovered from the gully within Trench 2, could be derived from late Neolithic/early Bronze Age activity within the wider surroundings of the PDA.

### 1.3.2 **The wider archaeological and historical context**

Early prehistoric stone tools have been found in the Welwyn area but more evidence is available from the Bronze Age onwards, indicating that it was in this period that settlement became well established. Evidence of Neolithic and Bronze Age activity has been identified *c.*700m to the south-east of the PDA around Holwell Hyde Farm, on The Commons Nature Reserve and in a test-pit

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<sup>1</sup> <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain>.



on Blackfan Fen (EHT 7073), comprising Neolithic flint tools (HER 17671 and HER 31083) and a possible Bronze Age burnt mound (HER 17724).

Significant finds of late Iron Age and Roman date are located along the River Mimram, downstream towards Digswell, to the north of Welwyn Garden City, and along the route of the Roman road. Late Iron Age and Roman finds in Hertfordshire are particularly abundant. In the Welwyn area, late Iron Age occupation begins in the 1st century BC with a number of scattered settlements, many of them known on the higher ground now occupied by the Garden City (Thompson 2002).

Evidence of possible Iron Age occupation has been identified *c.*600m to the north-west of the PDA at Swallow Dell Primary School — a boundary ditch containing late Iron Age pottery (HER 858). This area of activity has been recorded as Alert Area no. 30 by the Hertfordshire HER (not a formal designation, but a means to alert the local planning authority to the importance of a particular site or area).

Several late Iron Age and Roman find-spots have also been discovered in this general area (HER 2808, HER 1576 and HER 2821), including a Roman coin (HER 2821) found *c.*590m to the north-west of the PDA.

During the first half of the 15th century the Grade II listed Ludwick Hall (NHLE 1101114/HER 10867) was built *c.*100m to the south-west of the PDA. It was established as the manorial residence of the medieval manor of Ludwick, documented in 1176 as 'Ludewich'. Ludwick was held successively as a manor of Hatfield by the Bishops of Ely, The King and Earls of Salisbury (Page 1912).

It was altered in the 17th and 18th centuries and in the 19th century was used as a stud farm and training stables for the Hertfordshire Yeomanry. Pumping gear (HER 10932) associated with a former water tower used by the stables has been found in the rear garden of no. 6 The Limes, formerly part of the grounds of Ludwick Hall.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The dating of the archaeological features revealed within the evaluation was uncertain, though the very small sherd of pottery recovered from one of the gullies within Trench 2 suggested a Roman or medieval date was most likely. As such, research themes regarding the Roman and medieval rural landscape and settlement (Medlycott 2011, 47, 70) were thought to be of potential relevance.

The principal objectives for the investigation included:

- Characterisation of the archaeological remains in terms of their date, form and function;
- Retrieval of artefactual and ecofactual material to assist in characterising the archaeological activity within the PDA and to determine local environmental conditions;





- Establishing whether any features relating to Ludwick Hall were present on the site and characterise their nature;
- Determining the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscape.

The aims of the investigation included:

- Establishing the date, nature and extent of any activity or occupation within the PDA;
- Establishing the relationship between any remains found and the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- Recovering palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.



## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Open-area Excavation

The open-area excavation took place between 10th and 18th July 2019. It focussed on the area where Trenches 2 and 3 were located (Figure 2). The area (c.235m<sup>2</sup>) was machined to a depth of c.0.4m below ground level in order to reach undisturbed geological deposits.

The area was opened by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket, operated by an experienced driver under close archaeological supervision. Overburden was removed down to the top of the archaeological deposits or undisturbed geological deposits, whichever were encountered first.

Any potential archaeological features were cleaned, excavated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's pro forma sheets. All features and deposits were assigned a unique context number commencing at 100 and subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate.

### 2.2 Methodological Standards

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

• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (3rd ed., 2017).
• CIfA	<i>Charter and by-law; Code of conduct</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> (2014)
• EAA	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> (Gurney 2003)
• Historic England	Archaeology Guidelines and Standards <sup>2</sup> ;
	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Project Managers' Guide</i> (2015)
	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation, 2nd edition</i> (2011)

The archive of finds and records generated during the project will be deposited with Mill Green Museum, Hatfield.

Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the Archaeology Data Service's OASIS database (reference no. albionar1-357479).

<sup>2</sup> Historic England guidelines on a number of specialist fields and materials, including environmental archaeology, are available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/advice-and-guidance/>.



### 3. FIELDWORK RESULTS

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#### 3.1 Introduction

All features and deposits found during all phases of the investigations are discussed below and shown in Figure 2. The artefacts recovered from the site are referred to within the narrative text below and discussed within Section 3.4. Figure 4 presents a selection of photographs of the investigations.

#### 3.2 Overburden and Geological Deposits

The overburden comprised topsoil over subsoil. The topsoil comprised 0.14–0.35m of friable dark brown-black clay-silt (700). No topsoil was present beneath an area of concrete hardstanding within the south-west corner of the PDA. The subsoil comprised 0.05–0.16m of compact mid-brown silty clay (701).

The undisturbed geological deposits comprised mid-brown-orange silty clays with manganese staining and occasional chalk and stone inclusions (702).

#### 3.3 Archaeological Features

Three small ditches, one of which appeared to contain a posthole, and four tree-pits/tree-throws were identified.

##### 3.3.1 Boundary ditches

Three shallow, irregular ditches [203], [705] and [703/707] were revealed; they were up to 0.9m wide and 0.2m deep, and aligned NNE–SSW. They were filled with firm orange-brown silty clay and showed evidence of root disturbance along their bases and sides. The ditches contained a small number of tile and brick fragments, dating to the late medieval/post-medieval and modern periods.

Posthole [205] appeared to have been cut in to gully [203]; no post-pipe was visible and no artefacts were recovered. However, its similar fill to that of the gully suggests they are broadly contemporary.

##### 3.3.2 Tree-pits/tree-throws

Two areas of irregularly shaped pits were identified. Upon excavation, they were found to have irregular, and sometimes undercutting, sides; their interface with the natural stratum was generally diffuse.

Intercutting pits [307] and [305/709] and pit [303/717] measured *c.*0.3m deep. Pit [713] was intercutting with [307] but was much deeper — 0.75m deep and with a heavily root-disturbed base. Their fills comprised firm, mottled mid-blue-grey silty clay. The shape and nature of these features suggests they are most likely to be either tree planting pits or to have been created by the removal of trees in the past. Finds from these features consist of roof tile and brick fragments dating to the late medieval/post-medieval period.



### 3.4 Artefacts

Ditch [203] excavated during the evaluation produced an undiagnostic, sand-tempered pottery sherd (2g). In itself, it is too small to be datable, but the dating of the neighbouring ditches suggests that it is most likely to also date to the late medieval/post-medieval period. A residual late Neolithic/early Bronze Age multi-platform flint core (42g) was also recovered from this ditch.

Sand-tempered building material comprises 25 plain roof tile fragments (976g) and two pieces of brick (90g) (Table 1). The former retain no diagnostic features and are too fragmented to determine the original method of fixing, although they are likely to derive from peg tiles, broadly datable to the late medieval and post-medieval periods (c.14th–16th century). One abraded brick fragment from pit [713] may be of similar date, while the machine-pressed example from ditch [707] is of mid-19th-century or later origin.

Feature	Fill	Date Range	Finds Summary
203 Ditch	204	Late medieval/post-medieval	Sand-tempered potsherd (2g); multi-platform flint core (42g)
703 Ditch	704	Late medieval/post-medieval	Ceramic roof tile (49g)
705 Ditch	706	Late medieval/post-medieval	Ceramic roof tile (15g)
707 Ditch	708	Modern	Ceramic roof tile (20g); machine-made frogged brick (34g)
709 Tree-pit/ tree- throw	711	Late medieval/post-medieval	Ceramic roof tile (79g)
713 Tree-pit/ tree- throw	715	Late medieval/post-medieval	Ceramic roof tile (692g)
713 Tree-pit/ tree- throw	716	Late medieval/post-medieval	Ceramic roof tile (98g); brick fragment (56g)
717 Tree-pit/ tree- throw	718	Late medieval/post-medieval	Ceramic roof tile (23g)

**Table 1:** Finds summary by feature



## 4. CONCLUSIONS

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### 4.1 *Synthesis of Results*

The open-area excavation revealed three adjacent, irregular ditches containing a small number of tile and brick fragments dating to the late-medieval/post-medieval and modern periods. The NNE–SSW alignment of the ditches corresponds with the alignment of previous field boundaries in the area, specifically a possible tree-lined trackway or avenue marked on the 1884 OS map (Figure 3). The heavy rooting within the ditches is suggestive of a former hedge line. The limited ceramics recovered from the ditches indicate the presence of contemporary buildings in the wider area. However, no evidence of structures was revealed during the excavation.

Two areas of pitting were also revealed that are likely to be associated with tree planting or removal during the late medieval/post-medieval period (c.14th–16th century).

### 4.2 *Significance of Results*

The revealed ditches and tree-pits/tree-throws add to our understanding of the developing rural landscape in the late medieval and post-medieval periods, but have no potential to address identified research themes for the period.

Given the limited nature of the recovered data, there is no potential for further analysis of the results of the investigation.



## 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Albion Archaeology, 2019a *Hall Grove, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire: Archaeological Field Evaluation*. Document 2019/29 ver.1.1

Albion Archaeology, 2019b, *Hall Grove, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication*. Report no: 2019/77

Medlycott, M., 2011, *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24

Thompson, I, 2002, *Welwyn Extensive Urban Survey Project Assessment Report*



## 6. APPENDIX 1: OASIS SUMMARY FORM

**OASIS ID: albionar1-357479**

### Project details

Project name	Hall Grove, Welwyn Garden City - Open Area
Short description	<p>Open-area excavation of c.235m<sup>2</sup> was undertaken in July 2019. The investigation revealed three adjacent, irregular ditches containing a small number of tile and brick fragments dating to the late-medieval/post-medieval and modern periods. The NNE–SSW alignment of the ditches corresponds with the alignment of previous field boundaries in the area, specifically a possible tree-lined trackway or avenue marked on the 1884 OS map. The heavy rooting within the ditches is suggestive of a former hedge line.</p> <p>Two areas of pitting were also revealed that are likely to be associated with tree-planting or removal during the late medieval/post-medieval period (c.14th–16th century).</p> <p>The revealed ditches and tree-pits/tree-throws add to our understanding of the developing rural landscape in the late medieval and post-medieval periods, but have no potential to address identified research themes for the period.</p>
Project dates	Start: 10-07-2019 End: 18-07-2019
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HG3426 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Monument type	DITCHES Post Medieval
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Open-area excavation"
Prompt	Planning condition

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE WELWYN HATFIELD WELWYN GARDEN CITY Hall Grove, Welwyn Garden City - Open Area
Study area	2400 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 25584 11692 51.789305783624 -0.178965335421 51 47 21 N 000 10 44 W Point

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Albion Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Albion Archaeology
Project director/manager	Wes Keir
Project supervisor	Kathleen Pilkinton

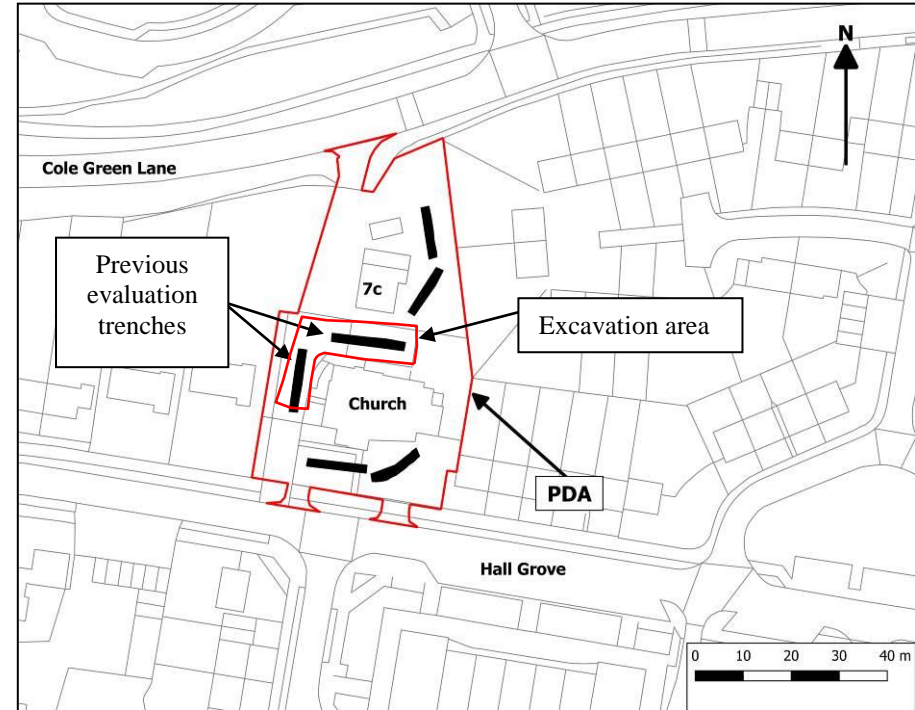






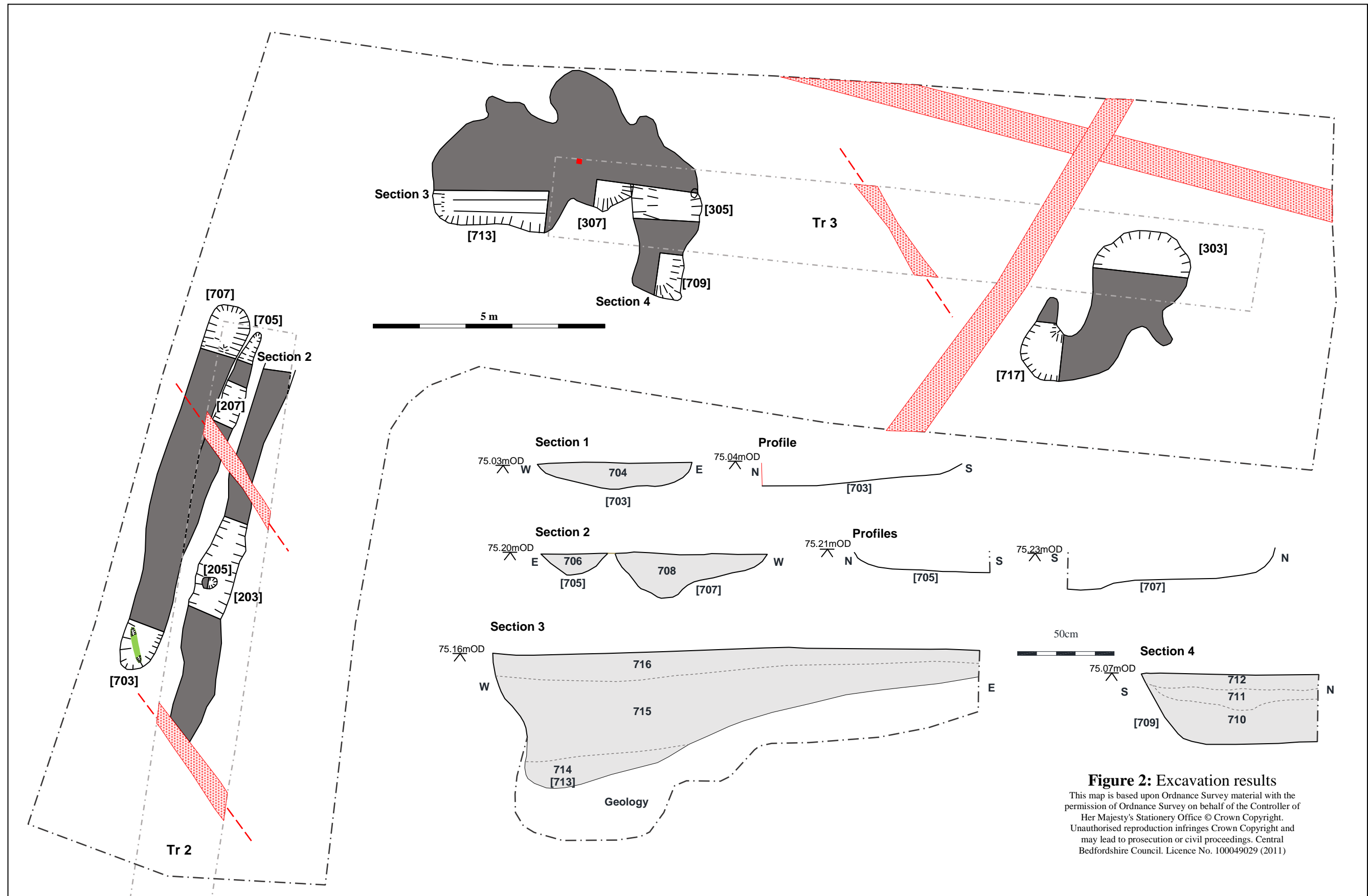
## 7. APPENDIX 2: HER SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address: Hall Grove, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire		
County: Hertfordshire	District: Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council	
Village/Town: Welwyn Garden City	Parish: Ludwick	
Planning application reference: 6/2018/1029/FULL		
HER Enquiry reference: 195/18		
Client name, address, and tel. no.: Rockwell London Ltd		
Nature of application: Demolition of 1960s' church and one dwelling and construction of nine houses and a community centre with parking		
Present land use: Residential		
Size of application area: c.0.24ha	Size of area investigated: c.235m <sup>2</sup>	
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 25584 11692		
Site code (if applicable): HG3426		
Site director/Organization: Wesley Keir/Albion Archaeology		
Type of work: Archaeological open-area excavation		
Date of work:	Start: 10/07/2019	Finish: 18/07/2019
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum: Mill Green Museum, Hatfield.		
Related HER Nos:	Periods represented: Undated, late medieval/post-medieval medieval and modern	
<p>Relevant previous summaries/reports:</p> <p>Albion Archaeology, 2019, <i>Hall Grove, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire: Archaeological Field Evaluation</i>. Document 2019/29 ver.1.1</p> <p>Albion Archaeology, 2019, <i>Hall Grove, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication</i>. Report no: 2019/77</p>		
<p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p>Open-area excavation, focussing on the area around two previous evaluation trenches, was undertaken between 10th and 18th July 2019.</p> <p>The open-area excavation revealed three adjacent, irregular ditches containing a small number of tile and brick fragments dating to the late-medieval/post-medieval and modern periods. The NNE–SSW alignment of the ditches corresponds with the alignment of previous field boundaries in the area, specifically a possible tree-lined trackway or avenue marked on the 1884 OS map. The heavy rooting within the ditches is suggestive of a former hedge line. The limited ceramics recovered from the ditches indicate the presence of contemporary buildings in the wider area. However, no evidence of structures was revealed during excavation.</p> <p>Two areas of pitting were also revealed that are likely to be associated with tree-planting or removal during the late medieval/post-medieval period (c.14th–16th century).</p> <p>The revealed ditches and tree-pits/tree-throws add to our understanding of the developing rural landscape in the late medieval and post-medieval periods, but have no potential to address identified research themes for the period.</p>		
Author of summary: Kathy Pilkinton		Date of summary: 02/10/2019



**Figure 1: Site location plan**

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**Figure 2: Excavation results**  
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**Figure 3:** 1884 Hertfordshire XXVIII OS 6-inch map, with approximate site location

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Open-area excavation viewed from the west (1m scale)



Open-area excavation viewed from the north (1m scale)



Ditch terminus [703] viewed from the south (40cm scale)



Tree-pit [713] viewed from the south-east (1m scale)



Tree-pit [717] viewed from the west (1m scale)

**Figure 4:** Selected photographs



**Albion**  
archaeology



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

**Telephone** 01234 294000  
**Email** [office@albion-arch.com](mailto:office@albion-arch.com)  
[www.albion-arch.com](http://www.albion-arch.com)

