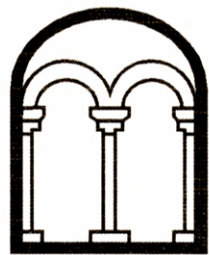


TRINITY
SPRING HILL
LITTLE STAUGHTON
BEDFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

Albion
archaeology



**TRINITY
SPRING HILL
LITTLE STAUGHTON
BEDFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

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Prepared for:
Trinity Little Staughton Ltd



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Preface

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Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Matt Kavanagh on behalf of Trinity Little Staughton Ltd.

This report has been prepared by Adam Williams, who also undertook the fieldwork. The project was managed by Iain Leslie. All Albion Archaeology projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff.

Fieldwork was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Geoff Saunders (Bedford Borough Council's Archaeological Officer).

Version History

Version	Issue date	Reason for re-issue
1.0	10/02/2021	N/A

Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

AO	Bedford Borough Council Archaeological Officer
BBHER	Bedford Borough Historic Environment Record
CBM	Ceramic building material
CI/A	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
LPA	Local Planning Authority
PDA	Permitted development area
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

Bedford Borough Council granted planning permission (18/00968/FUL) for the partial demolition and extension of an existing dwelling, erection of one new dwelling and reconfiguration of existing access, drive and parking at Trinity, Spring Hill, Little Staughton, Bedfordshire. Given the permitted development area's (PDA) potential to preserve archaeological remains from the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods, a condition was attached to the permission which required an archaeological strategy for evaluation and, if necessary, further mitigation.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to produce a Written Scheme of Investigation and to carry out the archaeological evaluation, the results of which are presented in this report. Fieldwork took place on 13th and 14th January 2021 when four trenches were excavated.

The evaluation revealed no archaeological remains. Whilst there was evidence of modern landscaping in the form of made ground directly above the natural geology in Trench 1, which might suggest some level of truncation, in general there was little evidence to suggest that archaeological features, should they have been present, would not have survived.

This suggests that, whilst the PDA is within the projected extents of the medieval settlement, it was not utilised for building or other domestic activity in this period.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Project Background**

Bedford Borough Council granted planning permission (18/00968/FUL) for the partial demolition and extension of an existing dwelling, erection of one new dwelling and reconfiguration of existing access, drive and parking at Trinity, Spring Hill, Little Staughton, Bedfordshire.

The following condition (no. 8) was attached to the permission:

No development shall take place until an archaeological strategy for evaluation and if necessary, a further mitigation strategy based on the outcome of the evaluation, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The archaeological mitigation strategy shall include a timetable and the following components (the completion of each to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority will result in a separate confirmation of compliance for each component):-

- (i) fieldwork and/ or preservation "in situ" of archaeological remains;*
- (ii) a post-excavation assessment report (to be submitted within six months of the completion of fieldwork);*
- (iii) a post-excavation analysis report, preparation of site archive ready for deposition at a store approved by the Local Planning Authority, completion of an archive report, and submission of a publication report (to be completed within two years of the completion of fieldwork).*

The archaeological mitigation strategy shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timings.

REASON: To safeguard archaeological assets within the approved development boundary from impacts relating to any groundworks associated with the development scheme and to ensure the proper and timely preservation and/or investigation, recording, reporting and presentation of archaeological assets affected by this development, in accordance with Saved Policies BE24 & BE25 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002, Policy CP23 of the Bedford Borough Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan (2008) and according to national policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, March 2012). The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the timing of compliance is fundamental to the development permitted and that the permission ought to be refused unless the condition is imposed in this form.

Given the permitted development area's (PDA) potential to preserve archaeological remains from the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods, Bedford Borough Council's Archaeological Officer (AO) advised that an archaeological strategy for evaluation would be required.



Albion Archaeology was commissioned to produce a Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2020) and to carry out the archaeological evaluation, the results of which are presented in this report.

1.3 Site Location, Topography and Geology

The PDA is located on the west side of Spring Hill, Little Staughton. The village lies in the north of Bedfordshire, 5 miles north-west of St Neots and 4.5 miles south east of Kimbolton (Cambridgeshire) (Figure 1).

The PDA currently comprises a 17th/18th-century cottage located on a spacious plot with maturely planted front and rear gardens and a driveway. Surrounding development comprises residential properties, primarily of mid-20th-century date, but with a few older *c.*19th-century cottages to the north of the site. To the rear is an agricultural building set well back beyond the built envelope of the village. Both this and the cottage are served by a shared vehicular access from the north-east corner of the site.

The PDA covers an area of *c.*0.27ha and is centred on OS grid reference TL 10349 62955. It lies at a height of *c.*60m OD, sloping slightly downwards to the north.

The superficial geological deposits consist of Oadby Member Diamicton. This formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period, under ice-age conditions (glacial till). The underlying bedrock is Oxford Clay Formation, Mudstone. This is a sedimentary deposit which formed approximately 157 to 166 million years ago in the Jurassic Period in a shallow marine environment.

1.2 Archaeological Background

The PDA is located within the medieval settlement at Green End, Little Staughton (BBHER 17093). A series of earthworks (BBHER 1808), identified via aerial photographs and visible on recent LiDAR imagery, lie *c.*150m to the west. They include rectilinear close boundaries and possible building platforms. The presence of the earthworks suggests that the medieval settlement was either larger than the modern settlement, or that it has shifted over time.

The PDA lies close to the core of the medieval settlement, and fronts on to the main road, which likely follows the same course as its medieval precursor. With the exception of watching brief EBB1430 (*c.*170m to the north) and evaluation EBB1103 (*c.*300m to the south), which did not reveal significant archaeological remains, there has been little archaeological work in this part of Little Staughton.

There is no direct reference to Little Staughton in Domesday Book, although 'Staughton' was named in the Stodden Hundred. The record shows that no taxes were received for Staughton, there was no manor and there were no heads of household. This might suggest that settlement of Little Staughton was not established until after 1086, when the Domesday Survey took place or



that at the time of the survey the land was assessed as part of another manor. The earliest document referring to Little Staughton bears the date 1206¹.

The existing house within the PDA is classed as an un-designated heritage asset (BBHER 12071) and is thought to be of 18th-century origin, with 20th-century additions.

There is some evidence for prehistoric and Roman activity in the wider area. This includes cropmarks identified c.200m to the south-west, which comprise a rectilinear enclosure of possible Iron Age to Roman date (BBHER 16739). A possible Bronze Age or Iron Age ring-ditch has also been identified c.330m to the south-west (BBHER 16738).

1.3 **Project Objectives**

The principal purpose of the archaeological field evaluation was to recover information on the:

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

This information will be used by the AO and the LPA to evaluate the significance of the potential impact of the proposed development on any archaeological remains that might survive within the site.

The archaeological remains uncovered during the evaluation, have had their significance assessed against the published research frameworks for the region. The relevant documents for the region are provided by *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties* (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Hertfordshire and Essex) (Brown and Glazebrook 2000) and *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011).

In addition to these regionally focussed documents, work has also specifically been done on the county of Bedfordshire: *Bedfordshire Archaeology. Research and Archaeology: Resource Assessment, Research Agenda and Strategy* (Oake et al 2007).

¹ <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/beds/vol3/pp165-168#anchorn8>



2. METHOD STATEMENTS

The methodological approach to the project was detailed in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2020), which was approved by the AO prior to commencement of the work.

2.1 Methodological Standards

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

Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (3rd edn, 2017).
Bedford Borough Council	<i>Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedford</i> (ver. 2.8, 2010)
CIfA	<i>Charter and by-law</i> (2014); <i>Code of conduct</i> (2019)
	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i> (2020)
	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> (2020)
EAA	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> (2003)
Historic England	<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</i> , (2nd edn, 2011)

2.1 Implementation

The archaeological investigation was undertaken on 13th and 14th January 2021. A total of four trenches were excavated (Figures 1 and 2). Due to on-site constraints Trenches 1 and 4 had to be reduced in length from that outlined in the WSI. This was agreed with the AO.

The trenches were between 7.5m and 28m long and were 1.8m wide. They were opened by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged ditching bucket, operated by an experienced driver, under constant archaeological supervision. The overburden was removed down to the top of undisturbed geological or archaeological deposits, whichever was encountered first. The spoil heaps from the excavated trenches were scanned for artefacts by eye. All deposits were recorded in a unique number sequence, using Albion Archaeology's pro forma sheets. The trenches were subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate.

A monitoring visit was conducted with the AO on 13th January 2021.

2.2 Archiving

A full archive of finds and records generated during the project, including a digital security copy, will be compiled in accordance with Historic England



(MoRPHE) standards. It will be kept secure at all stages of the operation prior to its deposition, subject to the landowner's consent, at The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford (accession no.: BEDFM 2020.67). Born digital data will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS).

Albion Archaeology adheres to strict archiving standards and ensures that all archive materials are stored appropriately. All storage material is of archival-quality and includes archival-quality photographic storage sleeves. As part of the archiving process all records are microfiched.

Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database in accordance with the guidelines issued by Historic England and the Archaeology Data Service (reference no.: albionar1-406425).

The archive will comprise the following:

- Physical
 - 1 file of paper records and A3/4 graphics
- Digital
 - Photographs (.JPEG, .TIFF)
 - Spatial data (.SHP, .DWG)
 - Reports (.PDF/A)
 - Correspondence (e-mail)



3. RESULTS

3.1 *Introduction*

The results are presented below, integrating the limited artefactual evidence. Where site recording numbers have been used they are distinguished by different bracket styles, as follows: feature number = [***] and fill number = (***). Context numbers reflect the trench number e.g. [104] is a feature within Trench 1 and, therefore, the trench number is only given where necessary.

Detailed descriptions of each individual context are provided in Appendix 1. Trench locations are illustrated in Figure 2. Selected photographs can be found in Figure 3.

All the trenches were devoid of any archaeological features. Trench 1 showed significant modern landscaping at the surface levels. Trenches 2 and 4 showed some intrusion by modern features and services.

3.2 *Overburden and Geology*

The total depth of overburden was between 0.43m and 0.7m; the greater depths were within Trenches 1 and 3. In Trenches 2 and 3 the overburden comprised topsoil and subsoil. The topsoil was 0.2–0.34m thick and consisted of dark grey-brown silty loam deposits. The subsoil comprised mid yellow-brown silty clay; it was 0.16–0.45m thick.

Trench 1 contained a 0.2m-thick modern gravel path (100), overlying the subsoil; no topsoil was present in this trench. A 0.2m-thick modern levelling layer (101) was present in the eastern part of the trench. Trench 4 contained a 0.1m-thick make-up layer, containing modern ceramic building material (CBM) (402), overlain by subsoil (401) and topsoil (400).

Undisturbed geological strata comprised a mid-grey-yellow clay with blue-grey clay patches.

3.3 *Modern Intrusions*

Trench 3 contained a pit lined with modern brick (not retained). Two modern service trenches were present within Trench 4.



4. DISCUSSION

The evaluation revealed no archaeological remains and no artefacts were recovered from topsoil or subsoil. Whilst there was evidence of modern landscaping in the form of made ground directly above the natural geology in Trench 1, which might suggest some level of truncation, in general there was little evidence to suggest that archaeological features, should they have been present, would not have survived.

This suggests that, whilst the PDA is within the projected extents of the medieval settlement, it was not utilised for building or other domestic activity in this period.



5. REFERENCES

Albion Archaeology, 2017 *Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork*, 3rd ed.

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6. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARY

Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 28.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.43 m. Max: 0.54 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 10303: Northing: 62941)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 10328: Northing: 62954)

Reason: Assess archaeological potential.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Pathway	Compact mid yellow grey sandy gravel frequent small-medium CBM Modern path/drive. Maximum thickness 0.2m. Minimum thickness 0.18m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Levelling layer	Firm mid grey brown silty loam occasional small stones Levelling deposit. Thickness 0.2m. Only present at East end of trench.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Subsoil	Firm mid brown yellow silty clay occasional small stones Subsoil. Maximum thickness 0.25m. Minimum thickness 0.14m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Natural	Firm mid grey yellow clay Natural geology. Unexcavated.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 10.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.47 m. Max: 0.5 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 10355: Northing: 62948)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 10361: Northing: 62955)

Reason: Assess archaeological potential.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
200	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty loam Topsoil. Maximum thickness. 0.23m. Minimum thickness 0.2m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
201	Subsoil	Firm mid yellow brown silty clay Subsoil. Maximum thickness 0.3m. Minimum thickness 0.24m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
202	Natural	Firm mid grey yellow clay Natural geology. Unexcavated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Trench: 3

Max Dimensions: Length: 11.75 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.58 m. Max: 0.7 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 10381: Northing: 62966)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 10377: Northing: 62955)

Reason: Assess archaeological potential.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
300	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty loam occasional small stones Topsoil. Maximum thickness 0.34m. Minimum thickness 0.25m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
301	Subsoil	Firm mid yellow brown silty clay Subsoil. Maximum thickness 0.45m. Minimum thickness 0.24m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
302	Natural	Firm mid grey yellow clay Natural geology. Unexcavated.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 4

Max Dimensions: Length: 7.50 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.48 m. Max: 0.48 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 10376: Northing: 62974)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 10377: Northing: 62982)

Reason: Assess archaeological potential.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
400	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty loam occasional small stones Topsoil. Maximum thickness 0.2m. Minimum thickness 0.18m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
401	Subsoil	Firm mid yellow brown silty clay Subsoil. Maximum thickness 0.2m. Minimum thickness 0.16m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
402	Make up layer	Compact mid grey brown silty clay frequent small-medium CBM, frequent small-medium stones Make up layer. Maximum thickness 0.14m. Minimum thickness 0.08m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
403	Natural	Firm mid grey yellow clay Natural geology. Unexcavated.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

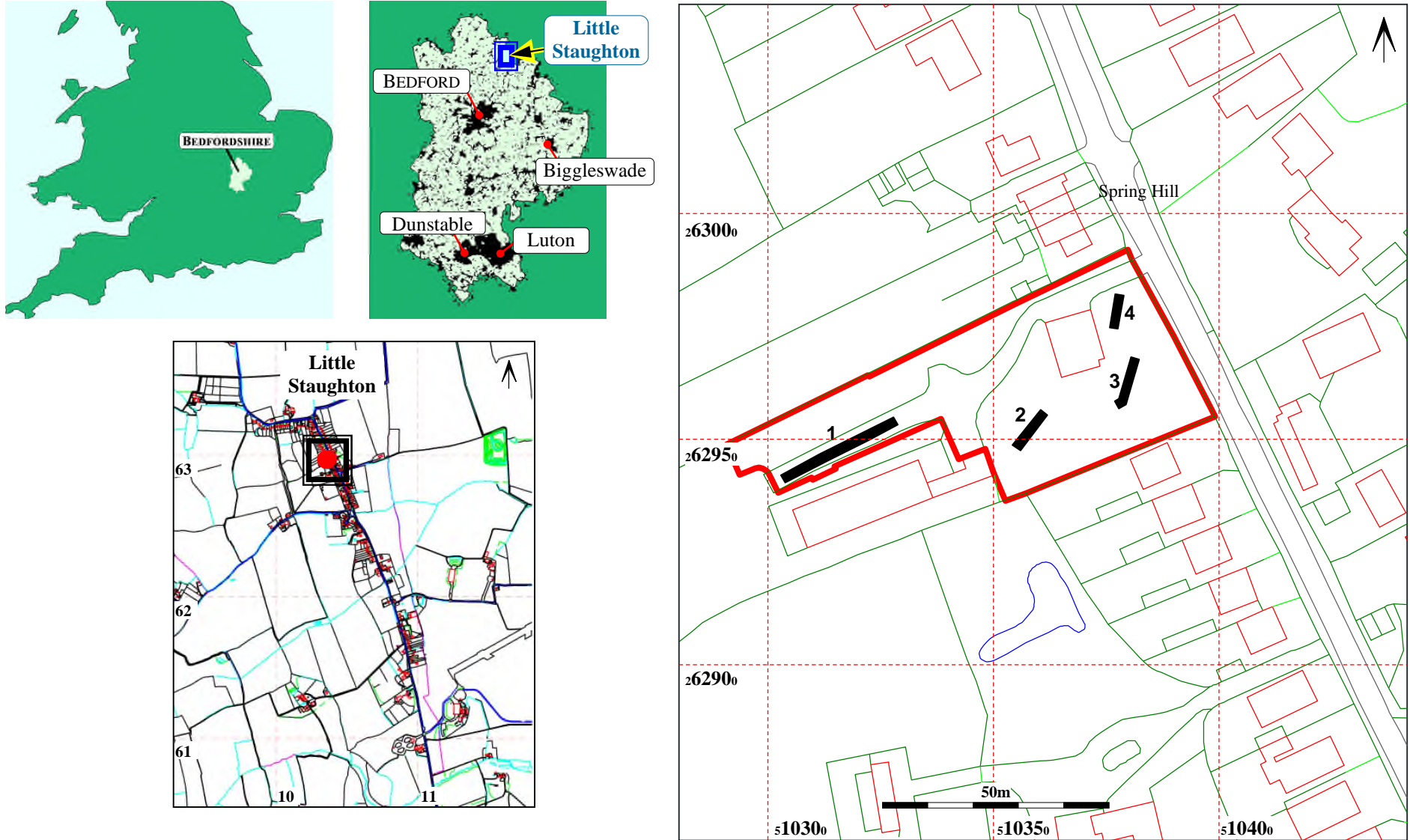


Figure 1: Site location plan

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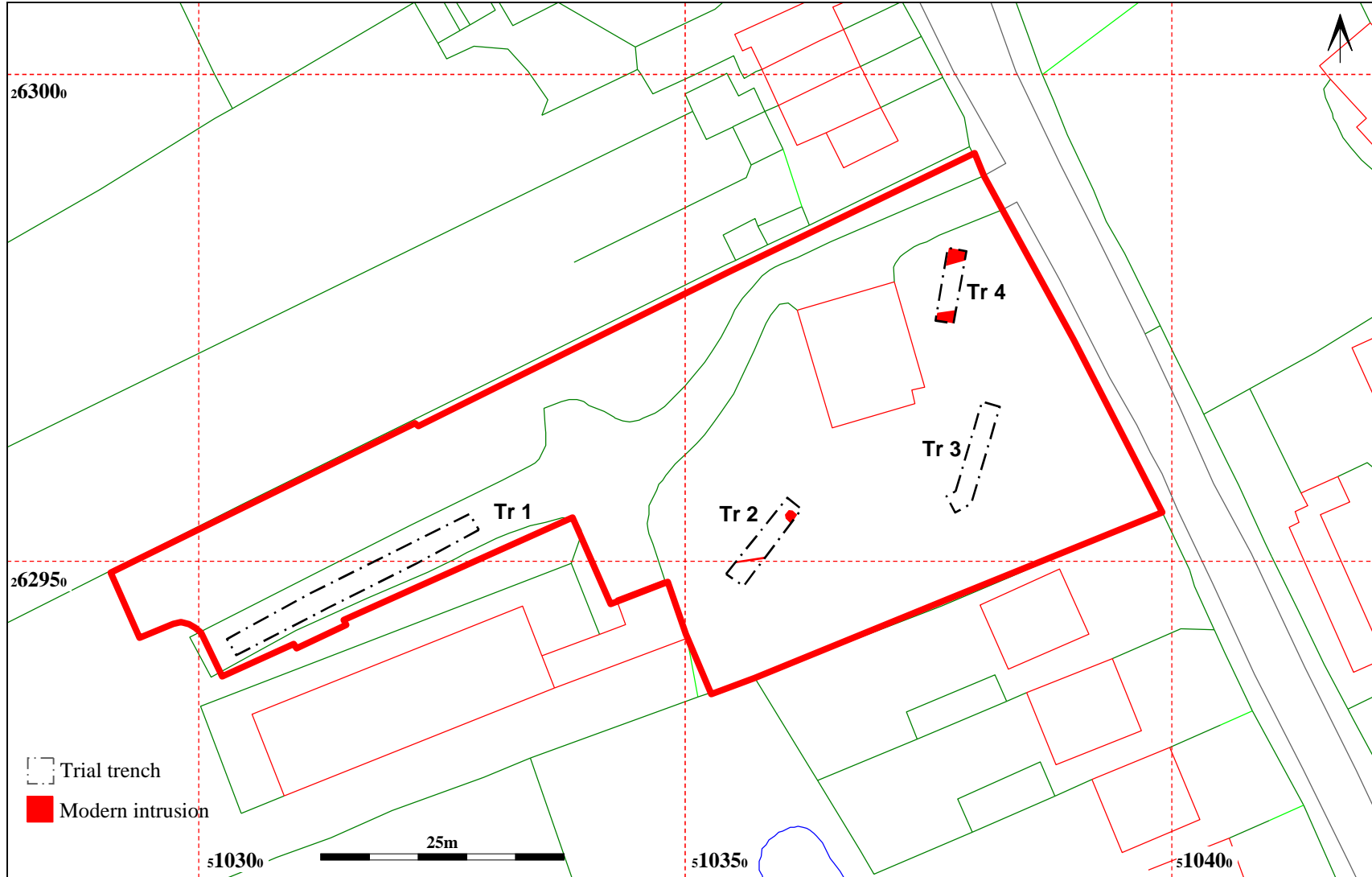


Figure 2: All-features plan

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Trench 1 (facing WSW) 1m scale



Trench 2 (facing SW) 1m scale



Trench 3 (facing NW) 1m scale



Trench 4 (facing SW) 1m scale

Figure 3: Selected photographs



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