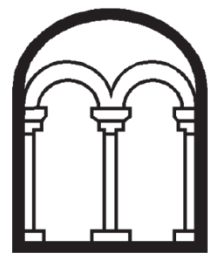


**LAND AT DADFORD ROAD
SILVERSTONE
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION,
RECORDING, ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION**

Albion
archaeology



**LAND AT DADFORD ROAD
SILVERSTONE
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION,
RECORDING, ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION**

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Compiled by	Checked by	Approved by
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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 fieldwork was undertaken by Matteo Palombelli (Archaeological Supervisor). All finds were processed by Jackie Wells (Finds Officer). The project was managed by Wesley Keir (Archaeological Manager) with the support of Ian Turner (Assistant Archaeological Manager).

This report has been prepared by Matteo Palombelli and Ian Turner with contributions from Jackie Wells (artefacts) and Irene Sala (charred plant remains). Digitisation of site drawings and illustration were undertaken by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff.

The project was commissioned by Lanpro on behalf of Racing Point and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Liz Mordue (Northamptonshire County Council Assistant Archaeological Advisor).

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Key Terms

The following abbreviations are used throughout this report:

AAA	NCC's Assistant Archaeological Advisor
ARC	Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre
CI/A	Chartered Institute <i>for</i> Archaeologists
Client	Lanpro on behalf of Racing Point
HER	Historic Environment Record
MOLA	Museum of London Archaeology (Northampton)
PDA	Permitted development area
<i>Procedures Manual</i>	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> , 3rd edition, 2017, Albion Archaeology
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

South Northamptonshire Council granted planning consent S/2019/1490/MAF for the Racing Point F1 Team to construct a new building to house their headquarters with workshops and a design office with associated access, parking and landscaping at Land off Dadford Road, Silverstone, NN12 8TJ.

A condition (8) was attached to the consent requiring a programme of archaeological works in advance of development. The Assistant Archaeological Advisor (AAA) of Northamptonshire County Council advised that the work should comprise trial-trench evaluation followed by further mitigation if required; the AAA issued a brief for the necessary work (NCC 2020).

Trial-trench evaluation of the east half of the site revealed a ditch containing a substantial amount of Roman pottery (MOLA 2020). The AAA subsequently advised that an open-area excavation focussed on the trenches containing the Roman ditch was required.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the open-area excavation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) approved in advance by the AAA (Albion Archaeology 2020). This report presents the results of the excavation.

The only archaeological features revealed were two Roman ditches G1 and G2. Ditch G2 corresponds with the ditch excavated within Trench 17 of the evaluation. It forms the corner of a boundary which is presumably defining at least a partially enclosed area to the north, with the section excavated within the trench being a part of its WNW–ESE aligned arm. It produced thirty-three sherds of Roman pottery, almost all of which were recovered from near the surface of a c.4m-long darker, charcoal-rich deposit visible within the top of the ditch. This darker deposit also coincides with the section excavated within the trench from which the substantial amount of pottery was recovered

Ditch G1 was located 16m to the south of, and parallel with, the WNW–ESE aligned arm of ditch G2. It was of a similar size and profile to G2 and was also filled with a brown sandy silt. It produced no finds, though its appearance and alignment suggest it is contemporary with ditch G2.

The Roman ditches are most likely to represent field/enclosure boundaries on the very periphery of settlement activity, with the concentration of pottery representing a distinct, singular event of rubbish disposal perhaps from short-lived, localised activity. The only other probable Roman feature recorded within the wider vicinity of the PDA is a ditch previously identified c.500m to the south-east along with numerous other undated ditches (MBC2591; MOLA 2020).

A summary of the excavation results will be uploaded onto the OASIS website (ref. no.: albionar1-408595). With the landowners' permission, the archive will be deposited with Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre (ARC) (Event no.: ENN110067).



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Background*

South Northamptonshire Council granted planning consent S/2019/1490/MAF for the Racing Point F1 Team to construct a new building to house their headquarters with workshops and a design office with associated access, parking and landscaping at Land off Dadford Road, Silverstone, NN12 8TJ.

A condition (8) was attached to the consent requiring a programme of archaeological works in advance of development. The Assistant Archaeological Advisor (AAA) of Northamptonshire County Council advised that the work should comprise trial-trench evaluation followed by further mitigation if required; the AAA issued a brief for the work (NCC 2020).

Trial-trench evaluation of the east half of the permitted development area (PDA) revealed a ditch containing a substantial amount of Roman pottery (MOLA 2020). The AAA subsequently advised that an open-area excavation focussed on the trial trenches containing the Roman ditch was required.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the open-area excavation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) approved in advance by the AAA (Albion Archaeology 2020). This report presents the results of the excavation.

1.2 *Site Location*

The PDA lies to the south of Silverstone village and west of Dadford Road and the Silverstone Racing Circuit (Figure 1). The open-area excavation comprised a 35 x 25m area centred on SP 6668 4236 and located within the easternmost of the two fields that largely make up the c.11.77ha PDA.

The underlying geology comprises Blisworth Clay Formation – Mudstone overlain by superficial deposits of Oadby Member – Diamicton¹.

1.3 *Archaeological Background*

1.3.1 *Archaeological evaluation*

Geophysical survey of the PDA carried out in 2019 revealed no anomalies of archaeological interest, though possible evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation was recorded (SUMO 2019).

Trial trenching of the east half of the PDA was completed in 2020 (MOLA 2020). The only feature of archaeological significance was a ditch containing a substantial amount of Roman pottery; it was identified in two of the trenches.

The assemblage comprised 101 sherds of Roman pottery, weighing 2.426kg and recovered from a single ditch fill; it appeared to date to the 3rd century AD.

¹ <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>. Accessed: 23/11/2020



1.3.2 Wider archaeological background

A desk-based assessment of a 1km study area around the PDA was produced prior to the evaluation (Lanpro 2019). The only heritage asset recorded by the HER within the PDA was the previous extent of Silverstone Airfield, which was operational during World War II (MNN17558).

The recorded information suggested that there was only low potential for archaeological remains to be present within the PDA. However, the assessment did stress that the wider area was extensively exploited during the Iron Age and Roman periods and that the potential for evidence of small-scale farmsteads and/or associated field systems from these periods could not be entirely ruled out. Of most relevance to the findings of the evaluation was a probable Roman ditch (MBC2591) recorded c.500m to the south-east of the PDA along with numerous other undated ditches.

1.4 Project/Research Objectives

The principal objective of the investigation was to determine and understand the date, nature, function and character of the archaeological remains in the PDA in their cultural and environmental setting. The evidence revealed by the evaluation suggested that the site might have the potential to address identified regional research themes for the Roman period.

The excavation area was expected to contain a Roman ditch. The substantial amount of pottery recovered from the ditch during the evaluation suggested the possibility for settlement-related remains to also be present. Various themes outlined within the East Midlands Historic Environment Research Framework² regarding Roman rural settlement and field systems were therefore identified as potentially being applicable.

² Available online <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/researchframeworks/eastmidlands/wiki>



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Methodologies and Standards

The open-area excavation took place between 7th and 9th December 2020. It focussed on the area where Trenches 17 and 19 were located (Figure 2). The intended excavation area had to be reduced slightly (to 31 x 25m) in order to maintain a stand-off from the hedge near the west edge. A farm access track also located near the west edge of the excavation area was left in-situ with the agreement of the AAA. A small part of the north-east corner of the intended area of excavation was not stripped due to the presence of a live service.

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

• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (3rd edn, 2017).
• Cifa	<i>Charter and by-law</i> (2014); <i>Code of conduct</i> (2019)
	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation</i> (2020)
	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> (2020)
• Historic England	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> (2015)
	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation</i> (2015)
• NCC	<i>Northamptonshire Archaeological Archives Standard</i> (2020)

The detailed methodology for the archaeological investigation is provided within the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2020). In summary:

- Ground reduction was carried out using a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket down to the top of undisturbed geological deposits or archaeological remains, whichever was encountered first.
- All ground reduction was undertaken under the supervision of an archaeologist.
- Any revealed archaeological features or deposits were fully investigated and recorded in accordance with the methods detailed within the WSI.

2.2 Project Archive

In line with Historic England guidelines, Albion will seek to obtain ‘in principle’ agreement from the landowner to donate the recovered artefacts to the Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre (ARC).



The CIfA and ALGAO's *Selection Toolkit for Archaeological Archives* will be used to help create a project-specific selection strategy to ensure that the project archive (both artefacts/ecofacts and project documentation) is fit for purpose, prior to its deposition on completion of the project. The archive will adhere to the requirements set out in the *Northamptonshire ARC: Archaeological Archives Standard* (Donnelly-Symes 2020).

Albion Archaeology employs a full time Archives Officer to ensure that all archives are completed to the correct standards and deposited according to the relevant guidelines.

Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (albionar1-408595) in accordance with the guidelines issued by Historic England and the Archaeology Data Service.



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

The results of the excavation are presented below. The recovered artefacts and ecofacts are referenced within the text and detailed within Appendix 1. A plan and sections of all the excavated features can be found on Figure 2. A selection of photographs is shown on Figure 3.

For ease of reference, the features recorded on site were combined into Groups (indicated by a 'G' prefix). Where site recording numbers have been referred to they are distinguished by different bracket styles to indicate feature number = [***] and fill number = (***)).

3.2 Archaeological Features

The only archaeological features revealed were two ditches, G1 and G2.

Ditch G2 corresponds with the ditch excavated within Trench 17. It forms the corner of a boundary, with the section excavated within the trench being a part of its 26m-long WNW–ESE aligned arm. It terminated within the north-west corner of the excavation area and turned northwards at its eastern extent, extending beyond the limit of excavation.

The ditch was generally U-shaped in profile and ranged from 0.4–0.67m wide and 0.07–0.19m deep; it was at its shallowest where it terminated at its west end. It was filled with a grey-brown sandy silt and yielded thirty-three sherds of Roman pottery, almost all of which were recovered from near the surface of a c.4m-long darker, charcoal-rich deposit (16) visible within the top of the ditch. This darker deposit also coincides with the section excavated within the trench, from which the substantial amount of pottery was recovered.

A soil sample taken from this deposit contained c.20 cereal grains and two glume bases. The better-preserved grains and the glume bases were identified as spelt wheat.

Ditch G1 was located 16m to the south of, and parallel with, the WNW–ESE aligned arm of ditch G2. It was of a similar size and profile to G2 and was also filled with a brown sandy silt. It produced no finds, though its appearance and alignment suggest it is contemporary with ditch G2.

3.3 Conclusions

Roman ditch G2 revealed within the trial trench and excavation area is somewhat enigmatic. It appears to form the corner of a boundary, which is presumably defining at least a partially enclosed area to the north. The substantial amount of recovered pottery would tend to suggest the presence of nearby settlement activity. The recovered cereal grains and particularly the glume base would also hint that crop-processing was taking place in the vicinity. However, parallel ditch G1 is the only other Roman feature revealed within the excavation area or from within any of the trial trenches excavated



within the PDA. It is also notable that almost all the finds were recovered from the same small area of the ditch and that the assemblage did not include any animal bone, something which would usually be expected to be found in at least small numbers within a settlement setting.

Perhaps the Roman ditches are most likely to represent field/enclosure boundaries on the very periphery of settlement activity, with the concentration of pottery representing a distinct, singular event of rubbish disposal, perhaps from some short-lived localised activity. The only other probable Roman feature recorded within the wider vicinity of the PDA is a ditch previously identified *c.*500m to the south-east along with numerous other undated ditches (MBC2591; MOLA 2020).



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5. APPENDIX 1: ARTEFACTS AND ECOFACTS

5.1 Ceramics

Thirty-three Roman pottery sherds (224g) representing eight vessels were collected from enclosure boundary ditch G2. The material is well-fragmented with a mean sherd weight (MSW) of 7g and generally abraded. Fabrics are locally manufactured sand-, grog- or shell-tempered coarsewares typical of the region: a degraded Central Gaulish samian sherd is the sole import (Table 1). The only diagnostic form is a jar with an everted rim (diameter 280mm). Datable elements are of later 2nd-century+ date, and are broadly comparable with the larger (2.4kg) and less-fragmented Roman assemblage (MSW 24g) collected from the same ditch during trial-trench investigations (MOLA 2020, 12).

An abraded sand-tempered Roman roof tile (*tegula*) fragment (300g) with a cutaway and D-shaped flange derived from the same feature.

Common name (fabric class)	Description	Qty.	Wt. (g)	Feature	Fill
Grog and sandy ware (A)	Everted rim jar	1	62	9	10
Grog and sandy ware (A)	Body sherd	1	5	15	17
Pink grog-tempered ware (A2)	Body sherds (1 vessel)	6	67	15	16
Nene Valley grey ware (C)	Jar/beaker base (1 vessel)	10	39	15	16
Shelly ware (B)	Body sherds (1 vessel)	11	36	15	16
Unsources oxidised ware (D)	Body sherd	1	3	15	16
Unsources oxidised ware (D)	Body sherds (1 vessel)	2	11	15	16
Samian ware (D)	Body sherd	1	1	6	7
Total		33	224		

Table 1: Ditch G2 pottery quantification

5.2 Ecofacts

5.2.1 Introduction and methodology

During the excavation a soil sample <1> was taken from a finds-rich deposit (16) within Roman ditch (G2).

The sample had a volume of 15 litres and was processed and analysed in its entirety using a flotation tank, with the flot captured on a 300 micron sieve and the residue on a 1mm mesh. The material was then air-dried before being examined; any artefacts present were noted and added to the hand-excavated finds. The dried flots were then sorted with the naked eye and under digital microscope.

A list of all the items identified is presented in Table 2. For the purposes of this assessment, only the carpological remains have been precisely counted, while the other finds have been recorded according to the following criteria: + = 1–10; ++ = 11–50; +++ = 51–100; ++++ = 101–250; +++++ = >250.

5.2.2 Results and conclusions

The flot contained frequent intrusive modern plant remains (small roots/straw). The charred items consisted largely of charcoal, ranging in size from lumps of



about 2cm to very small flecks. The flot also contained a small number of cereal remains, consisting of around twenty cereal grains and a couple of glume bases. Most of the grains were fragmented or very distorted and therefore unidentifiable; the better-preserved ones and the glume bases were identified as spelt (*Triticum spelta*). Two smaller round seeds were also found, both fragmented but tentatively identified as mustard/turnip/cabbage seeds (cf. *Brassica* spp.).

The presence of spelt is consistent with the data collected from other contemporary sites; this cereal was the main crop attested to in the Midlands during the Roman period, due to it having a broad sowing season and a good storage life.

Although the number of cereal grains identified is not particularly high, their relative frequency seems to be noteworthy considering that only the lower part of the boundary ditch survives. Given also the presence of cereal chaff, it seems probable that some kind of crop-processing was taking place in the vicinity of the site; while being dried prior to the de-husking process, some grains could accidentally have been burnt and, therefore, thrown away.

Some plants of the mustard/turnip/cabbage family, such as black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), are attested as crops in some Romano-British sites. However, due to their low number and to the association with charred cereal grains, the seeds identified in the flot are more likely to indicate the accidental collection of weeds growing within the crops.

	Feature type	Ditch
	Cut number	15
	Context number	16
	Sample number	1
	Vol. sample (l)	15
	Vol. flot (ml)	100
	% sorted and scanned	100%
Latin name	English name	
Cereal grains		
<i>Triticum spelta</i>	spelt	4
<i>Triticum</i> spp.	wheat indet.	4
<i>Triticum/Hordeum</i>	wheat/barley	14
Cereal chaff		
<i>Triticum spelta</i>	spelt – glume base	2
Other plant/weed seeds		
cf. <i>Brassica</i> spp.	mustard/turnip/cabbage	+
indeterminate	wood charcoal (>/<2cm)	+ /+++++

Table 2: Charred plant remains

item frequency: + = 1–10; ++ = 11–50; +++ = 51–100; ++++ = 101–250; +++++ = > 250 items;
 indet=indeterminate; spp.=species; cf.=compare.



6. FIGURES

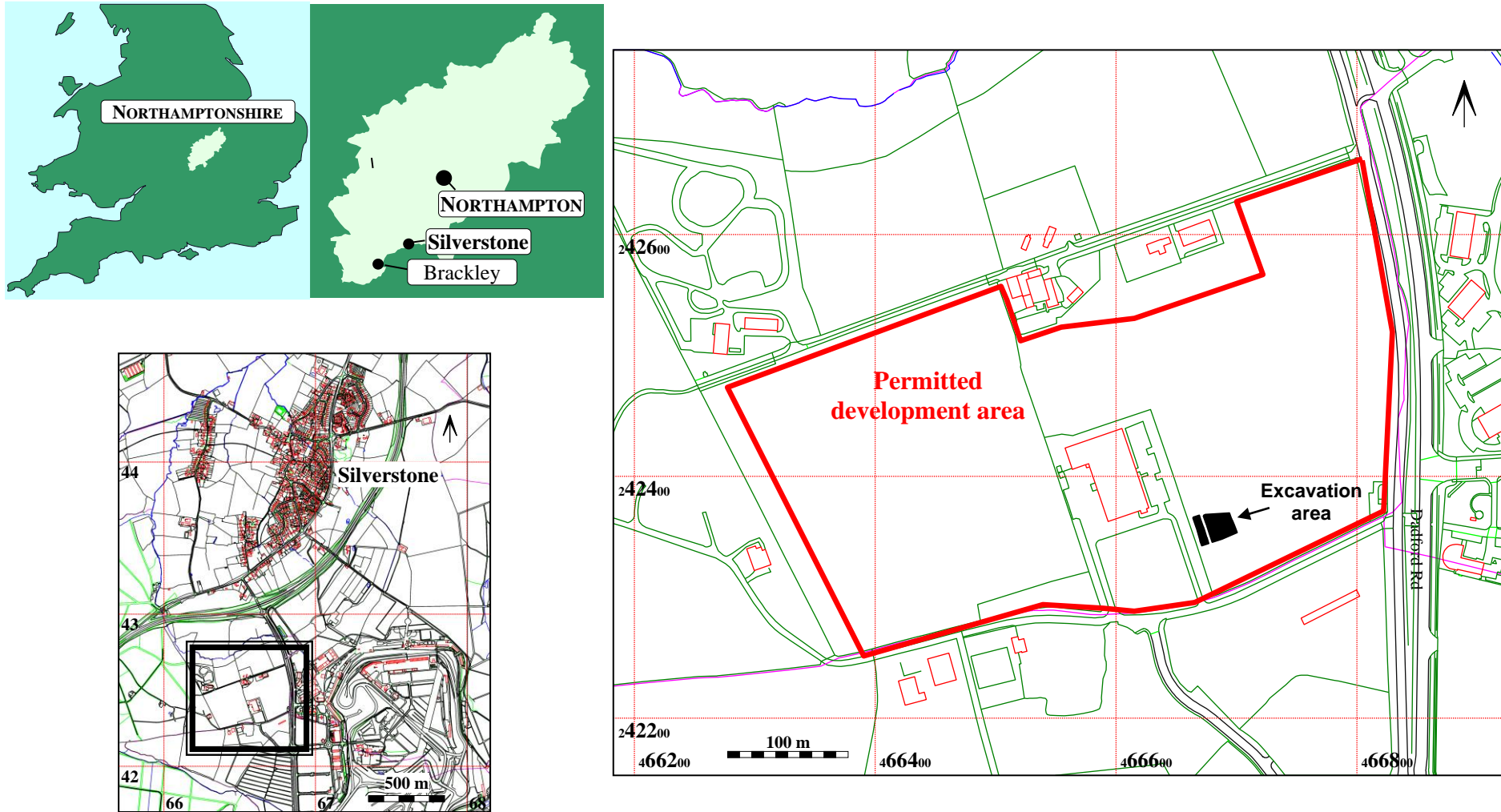


Figure 1: Site location plan

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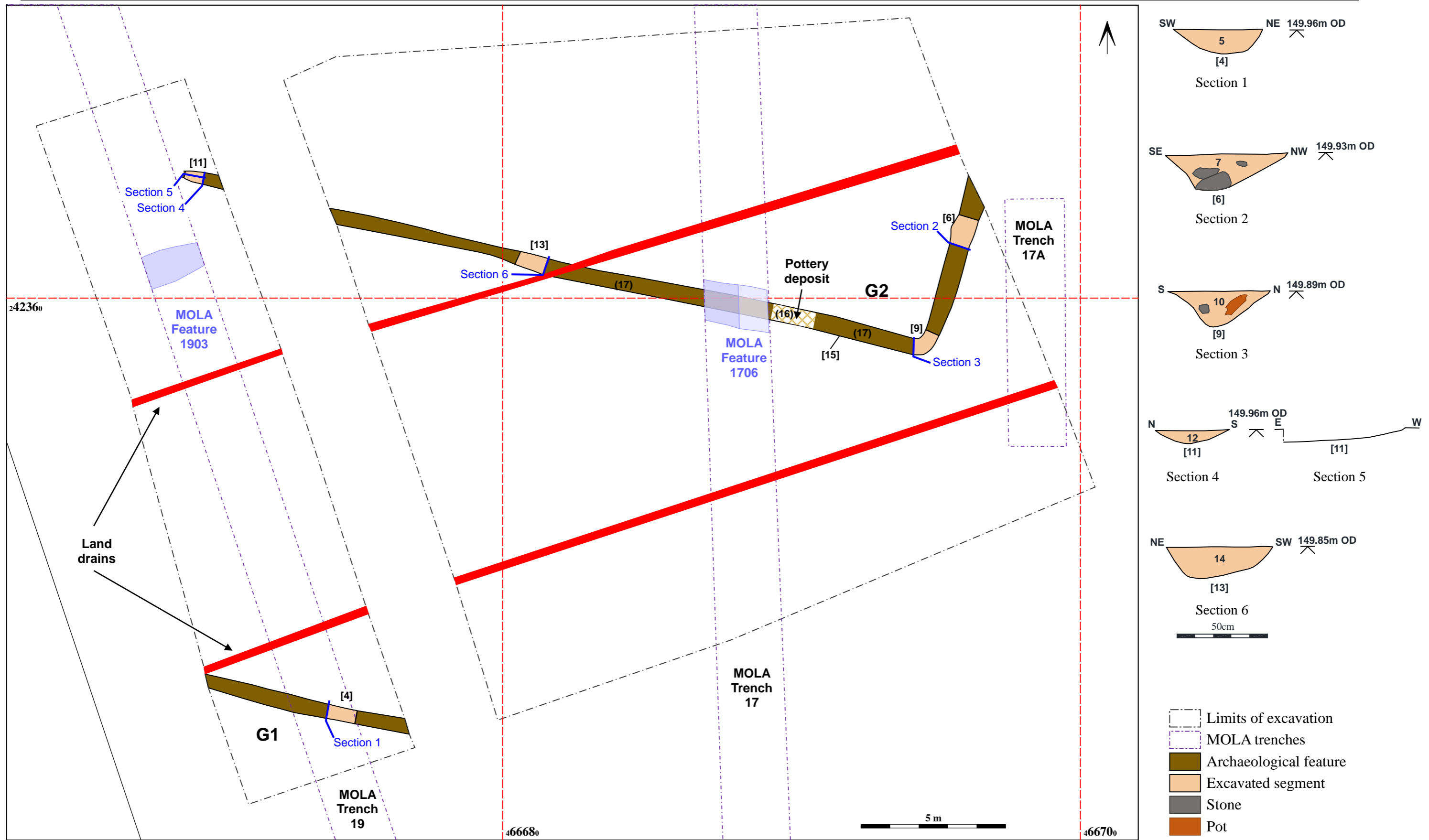


Figure 2: All-features plan and sections

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General shot of stripped area with ditch G2 visible in the background. Scale 1m. Looking north-west.



General shot of stripped area with ditch G2 visible in the foreground. Looking west.



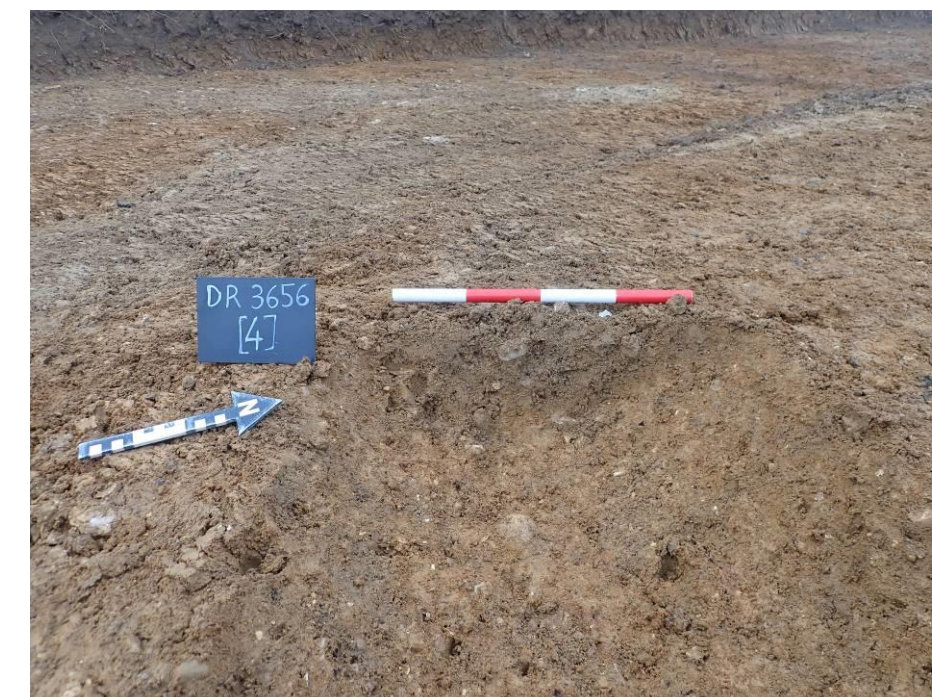
General shot of stripped area. Ditch G1, section [4] visible in foreground. Retained access track to right of photo. Scale 40cm. Looking north.



Ditch G2 at corner turn section [9]. Scale 40cm. Looking north-west.



Ditch G2, section [6]. Scale 40cm. Looking south-west.

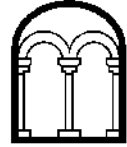


Ditch G1, section [4]. Scale 40cm. Looking north-west.

Figure 3: Selected photographs.

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