#### LAND OFF BRANDON ROAD, SWAFFHAM, NORFOLK

#### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION**

Document: 2006/35 Project: BRS 949 Site Code: 41938 SWF

20<sup>th</sup> March 2006

Produced for: City & County Developments Ltd

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## **Contents**

1	Intr	oduction7				
	1.1	Introduction7				
	1.2	Reason for investigation7				
	1.3 Method statement					
2	Resi	ılts9				
	2.1	Introduction				
	2.2	Trenches 35 and 36				
	2.2.1	- 1 -				
	2.2.2					
	2.2.3	Undisturbed geological deposits9				
	2.3	Area 379				
	2.3.1	- · P · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·				
	2.3.2					
	2.3.3					
	2.3.4	8				
	2.3.5	Undisturbed geological deposits11				
	2.4	Artefacts11				
	2.4.1					
	2.4.2	5				
	2.4.3					
3		sed interpretation of the nature and dating of the archaeological				
fe						
	3.1	Introduction				
	3.2	The archaeological features				
	3.2.1					
	3.2.2	E				
	3.2.3	E . ]				
	3.2.4					
	3.3	Overall summary				
4	Bibl	iography15				
5	Арр	endix 1: Detailed contextual information17				

## List of figures

Figure 1: Location of the evaluation Study Area and the investigation areas

Figure 2: All-features plan of Area 37

Figure 3: Selected sections from Area 37

2



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## Acknowledgments

This report has been prepared by Mike Luke (Project Manager), Ben Barker (Project Officer), Alison Bell (Archaeological Supervisor) and Jackie Wells (Finds Officer). Joan Lightning (CAD Technician) digitised the site drawings and produced the figures. Trial trenching, hand excavation and recording were undertaken by Ben Barker (Project Officer), Alison Bell (Archaeological Supervisor) and Laura Hill (Archaeological Technicians). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

Albion Archaeology would like to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of David Fake (SDC) and David Gurney (NLA) which is very much appreciated.

## Structure of the Report

This report presents the results of an archaeological investigation undertaken in 2006. It is designed to give sufficient information on the results, but does not repeat information presented in the evaluation report. Appendix 1 contains detailed descriptions of the archaeological features and deposits recorded within the trenches.

## Key Terms

Client	City & County Developments Ltd
Client's Representative	SDC Ltd
NLA	Norfolk Landscape Archaeology
NHER	Norfolk Historic Environment Record

# **1** INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

This report presents the results of an archaeological investigation undertaken in response to a brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA 2005). The site had previously been subject to archaeological field evaluation in 2005 (Albion 2005a). The report on the latter was submitted to Norfolk Landscape Archaeology on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2005 and approved on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2005. It details the project background, site location and description, archaeological background and aims/objectives so these are not repeated here.

## 1.2 Reason for investigation

The field evaluation demonstrated that the majority of the Study Area appeared not to contain any archaeological features. However, two areas of archaeological features were identified within the eastern half of the Study Area (see Evaluation Report Figure 2). These were

- In the eastern most 60m of the Study Area, in the vicinity of trenches 21, 31, 32 and 33, where a Romano-British field/enclosure system was identified. Along with ditches and a posthole there was also evidence for agricultural processing in the form of a possible drying oven (Evaluation Report Figure 7) and quarrying in the form of a large pit (Evaluation Report Figure 6).
- 2. Approximately 125m to the west of the possible drying oven, within trench 18, two ditches were identified (Evaluation Report Figure 4). It was suggested that one of these might be modern, but the other contained a single sherd of early-middle Iron Age pottery suggesting it might be of some antiquity.

At a meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2006 a discussion took place regarding the nature and significance of the features in trench 18. The Principal Archaeologist (Norfolk Landscape Archaeology), Albion Archaeology and the Client's representative were in attendance. As a result of this meeting it was agreed that the investigation reported here could be undertaken to clarify the nature of archaeological survival in the vicinity of easting 824.

## 1.3 Method statement

It was proposed that the investigation would comprise a larger area around trench 18 and two additional trenches to the south. A plan showing the layout was submitted to NLA on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2006 and accepted on the same day. The extent and location of the hand excavated segments across the revealed archaeological features were agreed with NLA once the areas had been stripped of overburden.

Context numbers correspond to the trench numbers, e.g. 3600s for trench 36, 3700s for trench 37 etc. Detailed technical information on all deposits and archaeological features discussed below can be found in Appendix 1.



## 2.1 Introduction

This section summarises the results of the investigation undertaken between 20<sup>th</sup> February and 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2006. Two trenches and one area were opened (Figure 1).

These comprised:

- Two 20m by 4m trenches (numbers 35 and 36)
- An open area approximately 20m by 50 (number 37)

These were inspected by NLA on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2006.

The investigations were located in Plot 5 (as described in the evaluation report) which had previously been used as a paddock, although the north-western corner had been fenced off. It was heavily overgrown with brambles, scrub and mature trees, along with substantial mounds of dumped soil especially to the north (see evaluation report Figure 2). A c. 10m wide corridor of disturbance ran E-W across the area which corresponded with the line of a foul sewer. Area 37 was located in-between the sewer disturbance and the substantial mounds.

## 2.2 Trenches 35 and 36

## 2.2.1 Topsoil

Topsoil layers (3500) and (3600) were friable dark grey brown sandy silt, and ranged from 0.25m to 0.35m deep. No artefacts were observed within these layers.

## 2.2.2 Dump material

Below the topsoil was a layer of mixed material (3501) and (3601). This varied from a compact mid brown grey to mid brown orange silty sand, and ranged from 0.35m to 1.0m thick. This was probably the result of ground reduction and dumping/mixing of subsoil and topsoil. Similar deposits were observed in adjacent evaluation trenches 22 and 25.

## 2.2.3 Undisturbed geological deposits

The undisturbed geological deposits (3502) and (3602) were variable; they included clay, silty clay and sandy silt.

## 2.3 Area 37

## 2.3.1 Topsoil and overburden

Topsoil layer (3700) was friable dark orange brown silty clay, 0.10m deep.

To the east of the area the topsoil directly overlay a firm mid grey brown silty clay subsoil (3701). In the western half of the area the subsoil and topsoil were separated by two layers. The layer directly above the subsoil was friable dark orange brown silty clay which represented buried topsoil (3744), above this was

a dump of modern material (3743) related to the tile manufacturing on the adjacent plots. Similar deposits were observed in evaluation trenches 27, 28 and 29.

## 2.3.2 Ditches

Two ditches [3709] and [3741] were located within Area 37, the former corresponds with ditch [1805] located within evaluation trench 18.

**Ditch [3709]** was aligned N-S and was visible for *c*. 48m, but continued beyond the limit of the excavation. It was examined in four 1m wide hand excavated segments: [3703], [3730], [3736] and evaluation [1805]. It had steep sides and concave base. It varied from 1.5m wide and 0.78m deep to the south (in segment [3703] see Figure 2 Section 1), to 1m wide and 0.32m deep to the north (in segment [3736]).

The primary and lower fills of the ditch were light in colour and contained more stones than the upper fills. Their composition was similar to the geological deposits through which it was dug and they were sterile of finds and charcoal. They probably resulted from a period of rapid deposition/slumping of the sides of the ditch.

The upper fills tended to be slightly darker with fewer stones. These contained small quantities of highly fragmented and abraded Roman pottery, roof tile and quernstone. A similarly small and abraded quantity of animal bone was recovered. In addition, a single sherd of Roman pottery and fragment of Roman roof tile was recovered from the unexcavated upper fills.

**Ditch [3741]** was aligned NW-SE and was visible for 23m but continued beyond the limit of excavation to the NW. To the SE it did not continue beyond ditch [3709] which appeared to truncate it (Figure 3: Section 3), although this was in an area of tree root disturbance. Away from the latter it was examined in three 1m wide hand excavated segments: [3733], [3711] and [3719]. It had a similar profile to ditch [3709] with steep sides and a flattish base. It was fairly consistent in width at *c*. 1.7m and depth at *c*. 0.8m (Figure 3: Section 2).

Again the main distinction between the primary/ lower fills and the upper ones were that they tended to be lighter, more stony in composition and lacked finds. The upper fills contained one sherd of Iron Age pottery, a small quantity of animal bone and a tiny fragment of fired clay.

## 2.3.3 Tree Root Disturbance

Ditch [3709] was truncated by two areas of modern root disturbance [3728] and [3739]. These were sub-oval and sub-rectangular in shape and were clearly related to trees and scrub removed during machining of this area prior to hand investigation.

## 2.3.4 Periglacial Feature

Feature [3715] was identified within the eastern half of Area 37; part of this feature was investigated as [1808] within evaluation trench 18 where it had been interpreted as a probable ditch. However, because its western edge was aligned

NNW-SSE and its eastern edge was aligned N-S it was considered to possibly represent two different features at least one of which was likely to be modern.

The full extent of the feature was exposed. It was aligned N-S, with a rounded end to the north and narrowing to a point at the south. It was *c*. 15.3m long with a maximum width of 6m. In addition, to the hand excavated segment within evaluation trench 18, a 2.10m wide slot was excavated by machine to a depth of 1.20m through the widest part of the feature. This revealed that the feature had nearly vertical sides and contained three fills. The lower two fills (3717) and (3718) were very similar and occupied areas towards the sides of the feature, and were the result of slumping of the geological deposits into the feature. The upper fill (3716) was similar in colour and texture to the fills found within [1808]. All three fills were sterile of artefacts.

The shape of this feature and the fills within it suggest that it is natural and probably periglacial in origin.

#### 2.3.5 Undisturbed geological deposits

The undisturbed geological deposit (3702) was a mottled light yellow brown to orange brown silty clay with chalk.

## 2.4 Artefacts

#### 2.4.1 Introduction

The investigation produced a finds assemblage comprising pottery, roof tile, worked flint, quern fragments, animal bone and snail shell (Table 1), all deriving from Area 37. The material was scanned to ascertain its nature, condition and, where possible, date range.

Feature	Туре	Context	Spot date*	Find type	
3703	N-S ditch	3704	-	Animal bone (32g), snail shell (4g)	
		3705	-	Animal bone (39g), snail shell (1g)	
3709	N-S ditch	3710	Roman	Pottery (4g); Roof tile (29g)	
3711	NW-SE ditch	3712	-	Animal bone (90g)	
3724	NW-SE ditch	3726	Iron age	Pottery (17g), fired clay (3g)	
3730	N-S ditch	3731	Roman	Pottery (12g), roof tile (113g), worked flint (28g),	
				quern frags (79g)	
3736	N-S ditch	3737	Roman	Pottery (3g), animal bone (53g)	
* - spot date based on date of latest artefact in context					

Table 1: Artefact Summary

## 2.4.2 Pottery

Eight pottery sherds weighing 36g were recovered. The sherds are small (average weight 4g) and most are highly abraded. Six fabric types were identified and are listed below (Table 2) in chronological order.

Fabric type	Common name	Context/Sherd No.
Iron Age		
Fabric 1	Flint and quartz	(3726):1
Roman		
Fabric 2	Samian ware	(3731):2
Fabric 3	Coarse greyware	(3731):1
Fabric 4	Fine buff sand	(3731):1
Unidentified		
Fabric 5	Reduced sand (?Late Iron Age/Roman)	(3737):1
Fabric 6	Shell (?Late Iron age/Roman)	(3710):2

Table 2: Pottery type series

The only pottery recovered from the NW-SE ditch [3741] was a single flint and quartz tempered rim sherd (fabric 1), broadly datable to the Iron Age period.

Pottery was recovered from two segments through the N-S ditch [3709] and from its unexcavated fill. Although small and abraded they are in fabrics characteristic of the Roman period. Segment [3730] produced two undiagnostic sherds and two samian sherds imported from the continent, weighing a total of 12g, (fabrics 2-4). Segment [3736] contained an unidentifiable sand tempered sherd weighing 6g (fabric 5). Two leached and abraded shell tempered sherds (4g; fabric 6) were recovered from the unexcavated fills. The latter may be of late Iron Age / early Roman date, although their fragmentary nature precludes positive classification.

#### 2.4.3 Other finds

Two abraded pieces of sand tempered curved roof tile (*imbrex*) and a possible brick or flat roof tile (*tegula*) fragment (total weight 142g) were recovered from unexcavated ditch fill and segment [3767] of N-S ditch [3709]. Their general appearance suggests they are Roman in date, although their poor and fragmentary condition means this cannot be conclusively demonstrated.

Three pieces of worked flint weighing 28g were collected from segment [3730] of N-S ditch [3709] which also produced Roman pottery. The flakes, one of which has been retouched, are hard-hammer struck, suggesting a late Neolithic/early Bronze Age date. The feature also contained twenty abraded fragments (79g) of a probable rotary quern. The latter is made from imported lava, originating from the continent, and is likely to be Roman in date.

The faunal assemblage comprises 64 fragments weighing 214g, and derives from segments [3703] and [3736] of the N-S ditch [3709], and segments [3711] of the N-S ditch. Bone preservation is poor and all fragments are highly abraded. Diagnostic elements are long bone, vertebrae and mandible fragments, the latter probably deriving from sheep / goat.

## 3 REVISED INTERPRETATION OF THE NATURE AND DATING OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES

## 3.1 Introduction

The investigation has provided additional information. Therefore, it is now possible to offer an enhanced and revised interpretation of the archaeological features in the vicinity of evaluation trench 18. For a more detailed discussion of the nature of the archaeological remains see section 3 of the evaluation report.

## 3.2 The archaeological features

## 3.2.1 Feature [1808/3715]

When seen within the confines of evaluation trench 18 feature [1808] was interpreted as a ditch or pair of ditches. The evaluation report suggested that location of this feature corresponded with a field boundary shown on a 1945-1946 MOD aerial photograph of the site. However, after exposing the full extent of the feature it is now clear that it does not represent a ditch. The steep profile, geological nature of the infilling and absence of finds suggests that this feature is not of human origin. A geological or periglacial origin is now considered to be most likely.

## 3.2.2 Ditch [3709/1805]

The investigation of feature [1805] within evaluation trench 18 suggested that it was a N-S ditch. It produced a single sherd of early/middle Iron Age pottery, a flint flake and animal bone. The investigation of a 38m length of this feature [3709] has demonstrated that it is a ditch and based on the Roman pottery recovered is likely to date to the Roman period. However, the abraded nature of all the material recovered from the ditch suggests it is probably located a considerable distance from settlement. This is supported by the general nature of the fills which were not very dark and did not contain any charcoal.

## 3.2.3 Ditch [3741]

NW-SE ditch [3741] was not located within the evaluation trenches. It had a similar profile and fills to ditch [3709]. However, it was not perpendicular to it and appeared to be truncated by it suggesting that it was earlier in date. On the basis of a single sherd of pottery (found in the main fill of one of the segments) this feature may be Iron Age in date. The only other finds of note from this ditch was animal bone. Again, the abraded nature of the finds and the nature of the fills suggest that this feature was located a considerable distance from settlement.

## 3.2.4 Other features

Apart from the two ditches in Area 37, no other features of human origin were located in this area or trenches 35 and 36.

## 3.3 Overall summary

The investigation has provided information on two ditches. Although dated by small and abraded quantities of pottery, it is likely that one of these ditches was Iron Age and the other Roman. The nature of the finds, deposits within the ditches and absence of isolated features such as postholes and pits in their vicinity strongly suggest that they are located some considerable distance from settlement. The evaluation suggested that Roman peripheral settlement remains were present in the eastern most 60m of the Study Area. The area in-between has now been evaluated by ten trenches and no archaeological features or finds were located.

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- Albion Archaeology, 2005a, Land off Brandon Road, Swaffham, Norfolk: Archaeological Field Evaluation (Report 05/62)
- Albion Archaeology, 2005b, *Land off Brandon Road, Swaffham, Norfolk: Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching* (Report 05/23)
- NLA 2005, Brief for Archaeological Excavation of land off Brandon Road, Swaffham, Norfolk

# 5 DETAILED CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

	-ordinates:	Length: 20.90 m. Width: 4.90 m.	Depth to Archaeology TF8245672500 lity of features adjacen		Max: m.
Context:	Type:	Description:		Excavate	d: Finds Present:
3500	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey silty sand occas	ional small stones		
3500 3501	Topsoil Dump materi	0 V V		[	

Trench: Max Dimensions: OS Co-ordinates: Reason:		Length: 21.50 m. Width: 5.30 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: n		a: m. ditches in
Context:	Туре:		xcavated: Fin	nds Present:
3600	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small stones		
3601	Dump mater	ial Compact mid brown grey silty sand occasional flecks charcoal, frequent small- medium stones		
3602	Natural	Firm light orange brown sandy clay frequent small-large chalk, frequent small-		

silty clay

3728	Treethrow	Sub-oval profile: irregular base: uneven dimensions: min length 7.m, max breadth 4.7m, max depth 0.2m	$\checkmark$		
3745	Lower fill	Compact mid orange brown silt occasional small stones			
3727	Primary fill	Firm light yellow brown clay frequent small-large chalk			
3726	Main fill	Friable mid red brown clay silt frequent small-large stones		$\checkmark$	
3725	Upper fill	Friable mid orange brown clay silt occasional small-large stones			
3724	Ditch	Linear NW-SE profile: stepped base: flat dimensions: min length 23.m, max breadth 1.67m, max depth 0.95m Segment of NW-SE ditch [3741]			
3723	Primary fill	Firm mid red brown clay frequent small-medium chalk	$\checkmark$		
3722	Lower fill	Plastic mid red brown clay occasional small stones	$\checkmark$		
3721	Lower fill	Compact mid red brown clay silt occasional small stones	$\checkmark$		
3720	Main fill	Friable mid orange brown clay silt moderate small-medium stones			
3719	Ditch	Linear NW-SE profile: stepped base: concave dimensions: min length 23.m, max breadth 1.3m, max depth 0.79m Segment of NW-SE ditch [3740]			
3718	Natural Interface	Firm light brown yellow sandy clay frequent small-medium chalk, frequent medium-larg stones			
3717	Natural Interface	Firm light brown yellow sandy clay frequent small-medium chalk, frequent medium-larg stones	$\checkmark$		
3716	Natural Interface	Friable mid brown orange clay silt occasional medium-large stones	$\checkmark$		
3715	Natural Interface	Sub-oval N-S profile: near vertical dimensions: max length 15.3m, max breadth 6.m, min depth 1.2m			
3714	Primary fill	Friable light brown yellow sandy clay frequent small chalk, frequent medium-large stones			
3713	Lower fill	Firm dark red brown silty clay occasional medium stones	$\checkmark$		
3712	Main fill	Firm mid brown orange clay silt occasional flecks charcoal, frequent medium stones	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	
3711	Ditch	Linear NW-SE profile: stepped base: concave dimensions: min length 23.m, max breadth 1.7m, max depth 0.82m Segment of NW-SE ditch [3741]			
3710	General Number	Firm mid brown orange clay silt occasional medium chalk, occasional large stones		$\checkmark$	
3709	General Number	Linear N-S profile: 45 degrees base: concave dimensions: min length 50.m, max breadth 1.5m, max depth 0.78m			
3708	Primary fill	Firm dark brown grey clay silt occasional medium stones	$\checkmark$		
3707	Lower fill	Firm light brown yellow silty clay frequent small-medium chalk, occasional large stones	$\checkmark$		
3706	Lower fill	Firm dark brown grey silty clay occasional small stones	$\checkmark$		
3705	Main fill	Firm mid brown grey clay silt frequent small-medium chalk, occasional large chalk, occasional medium stones		$\checkmark$	
3704	Upper fill	Firm mid brown orange clay silt occasional small stones	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	
3703	Ditch	Linear N-S profile: 45 degrees base: concave dimensions: min length 50.m, max breadth 1.5m, max depth 0.78m Segment of N-S ditch [3709]			
3702	Natural	Firm light yellow brown silty clay frequent small-medium chalk Mottled light yellow brown and orange brown.			
3701	Subsoil	Firm mid grey brown silty clay occasional small stones			
3700	Topsoil	Friable dark orange brown silty clay occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small- medium stones			
Context:	Туре:	Description: Excava	ted: Finds Present:		
3700 3701	Topsoil Subsoil	Friable dark orange brown silty clay occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones   Firm mid grey brown silty clay occasional small stones   Firm light yellow brown silty clay frequent small-medium chalk Mottled light	ated: Finds	Prese	

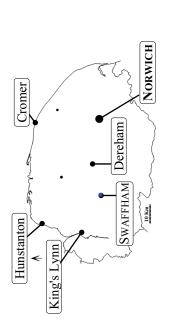
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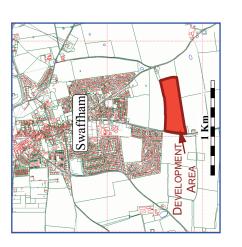
Trench: Max Dimensions: OS Co-ordinates: Reason:		37 Length: 50.00 m. Width: 30.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.6 m. Ref. 1: TL8241473900 Ref. 2: TF8242173410 Additional area to investigate in more detail the ditches found in evaluation identify any other associated features		Max: 0.75 m. a trench 18 and	
Context:	Type:	Description: Excav	ated: Find	ls Present:	
3729	Fill	Firm dark brown grey clay silt frequent small-large stones	$\checkmark$		
3730	Ditch	Linear N-S profile: stepped dimensions: min length 50.m, max breadth 0.9m, min depth 0.35m Segment of N-S ditch [3709]	$\checkmark$		
3731	Upper fill	Firm mid brown grey clay silt occasional small-large stones	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	
3732	Main fill	Compact mid brown grey silty sand frequent small-large stones	$\checkmark$		
3733	Ditch	Linear NW-SE profile: stepped dimensions: min length 23.m, min depth 0.65m Segment of NW-SE ditch [3741]	$\checkmark$		
3734	Main fill	Firm mid red brown clay silt frequent small-large stones	$\checkmark$		
3735	Lower fill	Firm light yellow brown clay frequent small-large chalk	$\checkmark$		
3736	Ditch	Linear N-S profile: 45 degrees base: flat dimensions: min length 50.m, max breadth 1.04m, max depth 0.32m Segment of N-S ditch [3709]	$\checkmark$		
3737	Main fill	Compact mid brown orange clay silt occasional medium ceramic building material, occasional medium chalk, frequent medium stones, occasional large stones	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	
3738	Lower fill	Firm mid yellow brown silty clay frequent small-medium chalk, frequent small-medium stones	$\checkmark$		
3739	Treethrow	Sub-square profile: irregular base: concave dimensions: min length 4.2m, min breadth 2.5m, max depth 0.3m			
3740	Fill	Friable mid orange brown sandy silt occasional medium-large stones			
3741	General Num	ber Linear NW-SE profile: stepped base: concave dimensions: min length 23.m, max breadth 1.7m, max depth 0.95m			
3742	General Numb	Friable mid orange brown clay silt moderate small-large stones			
3743	Dump materi	al Friable light yellow brown silty clay frequent medium ceramic building material, frequent small-medium chalk			
3744	Buried topsoi	I Friable dark orange brown silty clay frequent small-medium stones			

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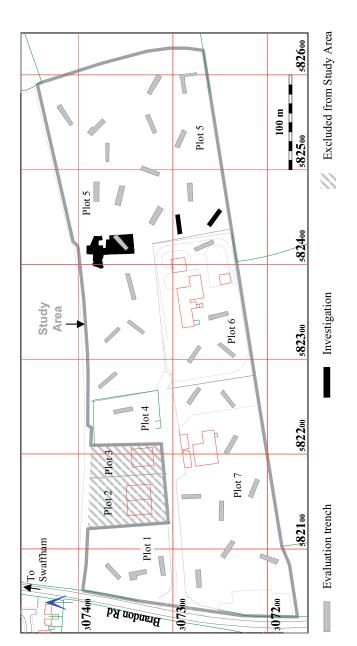
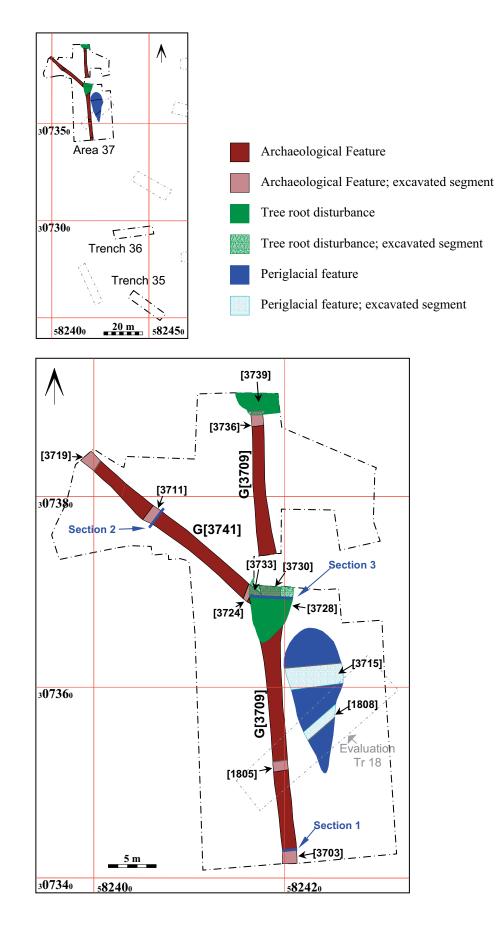


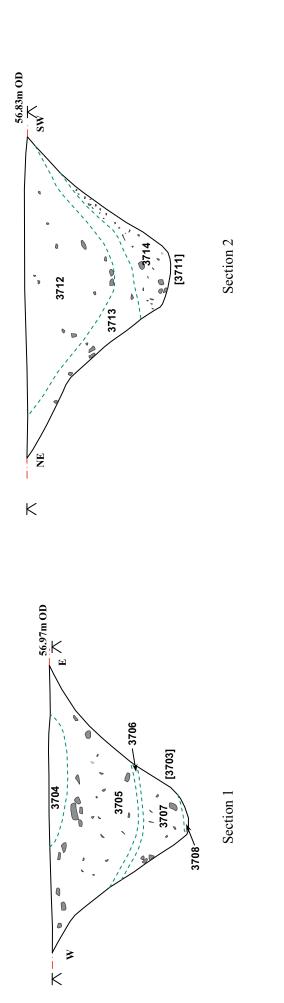
Figure 1: Location of the evaluation study area and the investigation areas Base map reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, by Bedfordshire County Council, County Hall, Bedford. OS Licence No. 076465(LA). © Crown Copyright.







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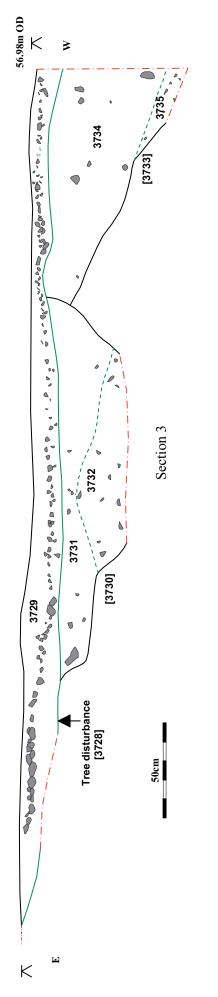


Figure 3: Selected sections from Area 37

Land off Brandon Road, Swaffham, Norfolk. Archaeological Investigation