

**LAND ADJACENT TO DRAKEWELL ROAD
BOW BRICKHILL
MILTON KEYNES**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

Project: DR1800
Document: 2011/101
Version 1.1

13th October 2011

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Town / Parish	Bow Brickhill
Address	Land adjacent to Drakewell Road
National Grid Reference	SP (4)91000 (2)34350
Planning application no.	Pre-application
Event no.	Event 1291
Museum accession no.	AYBCM 2011.170
OASIS ref. no.	albionar1-107661
Client	Mr S Fraser
Project no.	DR1800
Date fieldwork commenced	15 th August 2011
Date fieldwork completed	16 th August 2011

Produced for:
Mr S. Fraser



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Preface

All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

This document has been prepared by Gary Edmondson (Project Manager) and Marcin Koziminski (Project Supervisor) and approved by Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

Albion would like to acknowledge the assistance of Simon Fraser, Dermot Leahy who operated the mechanical excavator and the staff of the Conservation and Archaeology Section of Milton Keynes Council, particularly Nick Crank the Senior Archaeological Officer who monitored the project and Simon Peart, the Conservation and Archaeology Manager.

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Version History

Version	Issue date	Reason for re-issue
1.0	4th October 2011	n/a
1.1	13th October 2011	Comments from client

Structure of this Report

Section 1 serves as an introduction to the site, describing its location, archaeological background and the aims of the project. Section 2 describes the trial trenching methodology and Section 3 summarises the results of evaluation and the historical setting of the site. Section 4 is a bibliography.

Appendix 1 contains trench summary information and detailed contextual data.

Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

HER	Milton Keynes Council's Historic Environment Record
SAO	Senior Archaeological Officer for Milton Keynes Council
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

In advance of the submission of a planning application for the construction of a sunken house and detached garage on land off Drakewell Road, Bow Brickhill, the Senior Archaeological Officer for Milton Keynes Council (SAO) requested a pre-determination evaluation. This was to characterise any heritage assets on the site and to determine the impact of the proposed development on them, so that any future application could be determined.

Bow Brickhill is located a short distance to the south-east of Milton Keynes. The village has a generally linear form in plan, extending down the northern edge of the Greensand Ridge. The application site is roughly triangular in plan and extends c. 170m NW-SE by 166m, occupying the crest and upper slope of the ridge. It is centred on SP (4)91000 (2)343500. The northern part of the area is wooded, with deciduous trees extending along the other boundaries. The parish church, a grade II Listed Building, is located at the top of the ridge at the eastern end of the village, a short distance to the north-east of the site. Immediately beyond the northern limit of the site is an extensive hollow-way, some 2m deep, shallowing in the vicinity of the church and continuing around the north-eastern side of the site. The continuation of this routeway along the eastern side of the site is a modern construction associated with the golf course created in the 1970s.*

The investigation strategy for the dwelling and garage sites, the key elements of the proposed development, was devised in consultation with the SAO. As well as investigating these two areas, the SAO requested an assessment of impact of the proposed development on the historic setting of the church.

The investigation of the proposed dwelling and garage site was undertaken between 15th and 16th August 2011. The evaluation revealed a marked contrast between the two trenches. In the north, Trench 1, located at the top of a dry valley, revealed an old soil profile including a thin turf line. This had an undulating profile, which would appear to be the result of down-slope soil movement rather than medieval arable cultivation. It was sealed by unstable sandy material, which had eroded down the slope. Above this a thin pasture soil developed. In contrast, Trench 2 was on the upper slope of another dry valley. This revealed a much thicker soil profile, which was more mixed, probably again due to the down-slope movement of material. The trenches revealed no evidence of sub-surface archaeological deposits. No artefacts were recovered to indicate activity in the medieval or earlier periods.

The site is adjacent to the parish church, a grade II Listed Building; however, it is both spatially and functionally separate from the church. A key aspect of the church listing was the setting of the hilltop churchyard with extensive views. However, mature trees mask most of the views westward and northwards towards the application site and the lower ground beyond. The proposed development has been designed to minimise its impact on the church's setting, by utilising the contours of the dry valleys to reduce the profiles of the sunken buildings, which will have grassed roofs. There are no public rights of way which would give views of the proposed development against the backdrop of the church. Generally the site is screened from the church by mature deciduous trees, with views into the site restricted to the vicinity of the lower church gate, in the area where the hollow-way is at its shallowest. The site can also be glimpsed from the raised*



path to the south of the church. Landscaping associated with the proposed development will close these gaps. The visual impact from the church will be minimal in summer, whilst in the winter although the views will be opened up across the area as the trees are deciduous, these trees will still break the sightline into the site. The dense crowns of the trees will also restrict views from the tower into this area. The site access will be located down-slope, with the design of the driveway minimising visual impact. Movement to and from the site will be screened from the church by the rising ground.

In conclusion, the evaluation has demonstrated that the proposed development will have no significant impacts on either buried archaeological remains or the setting of the parish church.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Planning Background*

In advance of the submission of a planning application for the construction of a sunken house and detached sunken garage on land adjacent to Drakewell Road, Bow Brickhill, the Senior Archaeological Officer for Milton Keynes Council (SAO), requested a pre-determination evaluation. This was to characterise any heritage assets on the site and to determine the impact of the proposed development on them, so that any future application could be determined. This document also includes an assessment of the visual impact of the proposed development on the setting of the adjacent parish church, which is a significant heritage asset. The work has been carried out in line with *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment*.

The investigation strategy was devised in consultation with the SAO, targeting those elements of the development proposal which had the potential to impact on burial archaeological deposits. The strategy was encapsulated in a written scheme of investigation (Albion 2011), approved in advance by the SAO.

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

Bow Brickhill is located a short distance to the south-east of Milton Keynes. The village has a generally linear form in plan, extending down the northern edge of the Greensand Ridge. The parish church is located at the top of the ridge at the eastern end of the village; the application site lies a short distance to the west, centred on SP (4)91000 (2)343500 (Figure 1). The site is roughly triangular in plan, extending *c.* 170m NW-SE by 166m, occupying the crest and upper slope of the ridge. The northern part of the area is wooded, with trees extending along the other boundaries. Two dry valleys are visible as linear depressions extending roughly north-westwards across the site (Figure 2). Trench 1, in the area of the dwelling is located in the upper reaches of the northern dry valley, whilst Trench 2 (garage) is located along the northern side of the second dry valley.

Both the proposed house and garage will be sunk into the ground, minimising their visual impact, but requiring a deep cavity to be excavated, impacting on any buried archaeological deposits.

The site is located near the northern limit of the Woburn Sands Formation, which consists of fine to coarse sand with local seams of fuller's earth. Most of the village to the north-west lies on mixed deposits comprising Quaternary Head deposits with exposures of the underlying Oxford Clay (British Geological Survey 1992).

At the time of the evaluation the eastern part of the site was under closely mown grass, with open deciduous woodland extending down-slope to the north-west. Apart from the two dry valleys, visible as elongated depressions, no earthworks were discernable in the surface of the field.



1.3 **Archaeological Background**

The site lies at the eastern end of the present village, with approximately 30 sites being recorded by the Milton Keynes Historic Environment Record (HER) in the vicinity. These range in date from prehistoric to post-medieval. The results of the search provided by the SAO will be discussed chronologically from earliest to latest.

Two clusters of prehistoric flintwork have been identified in the vicinity of the site — one from the area near the parish church (HER 679-681), east of the site and the other revealed further to the east during construction of the golf course (HER 3995-4000). The flints recovered from both findspots include flakes, cores and scrapers characteristic of both Mesolithic and Neolithic industries; the working techniques contrast markedly, allowing them to be defined. The flints from the golf course were recovered during construction work, apparently from stratified deposits. Any such deposits from these periods are of considerable significance, as they relate to the change from a more mobile hunter-gatherer existence to a more settled existence as agriculture was adopted.

The next evidence for utilisation of the area dates to the medieval period. Both the early medieval settlement (HER 1096) and the medieval village (HER 6006) were located at the base of the ridge. All Saints' Parish Church (HER 4213, 4216-7), a grade II* Listed Building, is located at the top of the ridge. Whilst most of the church fabric dates to the 15th century, it has been argued that other features such as the hollow chamfered arches are earlier (Salter 2010, 28). Documents indicate that a chapel was built around 1384. The church underwent considerable alteration and restoration in the 18th and 19th centuries. The church tower was used as a telegraph station during the Napoleonic War. A deep hollow-way extends along the northern boundary of the site, linking the church with the village down-slope. This continues around the church as a less pronounced hollow-way. The routeway along the majority of the eastern side of the site is a modern construction associated with the golf course, built in the 1970s.

Traces of ridge and furrow earthworks, characteristic of medieval arable cultivation are recorded in the vicinity, defining the village fields. The area to the north-east of the site (HER 6350) was a park for hunting in the medieval period.

The remaining HER sites recorded in the search are post-medieval or later in date; they comprise buildings and other structures such as an ornamental pond.

1.4 **Project Objectives**

The general objectives of the investigation were to determine:

- the nature of any archaeological remains present at the site;
- the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits present at the site.

In addition, the specific research objectives of the investigation were to determine:

- if there was evidence for Mesolithic or Neolithic utilisation of the site;
- if any evidence for the medieval landscape was present.



The project had the potential to add to knowledge and understanding of the landscape and development of a potentially significant part of Bow Brickhill, now situated towards the margin of the village.



2. METHOD STATEMENT

The methodological approach to the project is summarised below and detailed in the written scheme of investigation (Albion Archaeology 2011).

2.1 Standards

Throughout the project the standards and requirements set out in the following documents were adhered to:

• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (2 nd edn, 2001).
• EAA	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> (2003)
• English Heritage	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Project Managers' Guide</i> (2006)
	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation</i> (2002)
• IfA	<i>By-Laws and Code of Conduct</i>
	<i>Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation</i> (updated 2008) and <i>finds</i> (updated 2008)

Two trial trenches were located within the footprint of the proposed dwelling and detached garage (Figures 1 and 2). It is these aspects of the proposed development which could potentially have an impact on sub-surface archaeological deposits. It is currently envisaged that other aspects of the proposed development (the access road or route for construction traffic) will not have an impact on such deposits. The location and potential impact of other possible elements of the development proposal, such as the reed bed and associated connections) are still to be determined.

The locations of the dwelling site and garage footprint were accurately marked out in advance of the investigation by the client's surveyor, using a GPS theodolite. This ensured that the trenches were accurately targeted. The trenches were opened by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged ditching bucket and operated by an experienced driver under the supervision of an archaeologist.

The deposits and any potential archaeological remains were noted, cleaned, excavated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's *pro forma* sheets. The trenches were subsequently photographed as appropriate. All archaeological excavation and recording was carried out by experienced Albion Archaeology staff.

On completion of the project, the archive will be deposited at Buckinghamshire Museum under accession number AYBCM: 2011.170.



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

The investigation of the dwelling house and garage sites was undertaken between 15th and 16th August 2011. The SAO visited the site on 16th August to monitor the investigation.

All deposits were recorded using a unique recording number sequence commencing at 100 for Trench 1, and 200 for Trench 2. The results of the investigation are summarised below. More detailed information on the deposits revealed by the trial trenching can be found in Appendix 1.

There was a marked contrast between the two trenches, probably due to their topographic locations.

3.2 Trench 1: Dwelling

Straddling the top of a dry valley (Figure 2), two contrasting geological strata were revealed, with (105), in the centre of the trench, being associated with the dry valley. The trench revealed an old soil profile, which was best preserved at the limits of the trench, away from the disturbance associated with soil movement down the valley (Figure 3: Image 1; Figure 4: Image 3). The old soil profile comprised a thin band of dark turf and soil (102), above red grey sandy silt subsoil (103) (Figure 4: Image 3).

The turf had a shallow undulating profile in section and was sealed below a yellow silty sand colluvium (101). The colluvium had been lost to erosion in the centre of the trench. Small fragments of modern brick were present in this deposit. Towards the base of the colluvium, a series of parallel bands aligned roughly NNW-SSE were defined, where it filled the undulations in the buried turf (Figure 3: Image 2; Figure 4: Image 3). These followed the slope of the ground down to the NNW and would appear to be the results of down-slope soil movement, rather than the preserved remnants of ridge and furrow cultivation.

A dark grey brown pasture soil (100) developed over this material. It was generally less than 0.1m thick though increasing to 0.31m in the central part of the trench, within the dry valley (Figure 2: Section 1; Figure 3: Image 1). Whilst small fragments of modern brick were noted in the colluvium and buried subsoil, no artefacts were recovered to indicate activity in the medieval or earlier periods.

3.3 Trench 2: Garage

Situated on the upper, northern slope of another dry valley (Figure 2), the trench revealed a much thicker soil profile (Figure 2: Section 2; Figure 4: Image 4) *c.* 0.75–1.0m thick. This consisted of dark topsoil, above mid red grey silt subsoil. These deposits were more mixed than in Trench 1, probably due to the down-slope movement of material. Small fragments of modern brick were present in these deposits, although no artefacts were recovered to indicate activity in the medieval or earlier periods.



3.4 Historical Setting of All Saints' Parish Church

The site is adjacent to the grade II* listed All Saints' Parish Church. The listing refers to the church's hilltop setting with extensive views. The church is a key element of the village landscape and a significant heritage asset, nestling in the trees at the top of the ridge.

The proposed development has been deliberately designed to minimise its visual impact on the area, particularly the church. Both buildings will be sunk into the ground, utilising the contours of the two dry valleys (Figure 5). The proposed design will see the roofs covered by soil and turf, so that the buildings will blend into the landscape if seen from the north-east or east. The associated driveway, set down-slope, will use a stabilising matrix, which will allow grass to grow through. This will again minimise visual impact on the area. From the church, the rising ground will mask movements to and from the site.

There is no publicly accessible path which would give viewpoints that superimpose the proposed development onto the backdrop of the church. Generally the site is screened from the church by mature deciduous trees (Figure 2 and Figure 6: Images 1 and 2), with only two noticeable gaps in this screen. In the vicinity of the lower church gate in the area where the hollow-way is at its shallowest, it is possible to view the site (Figure 7: Image 3). The site can also be glimpsed, through a second gap further south, which from the raised path to the south of the church provides limited views of the site (Figure 7: Image 4). The porch step of the church is *c.* 1m below the level of the path and provides a very restricted view towards the site (Figure 8: Image 5). These gaps through the trees would provide views towards the rear of the buried dwelling; the garage being masked by rising ground between the two dry valleys (Figure 2 and Figure 8: Image 6). Landscaping associated with the proposed development includes limited tree planting which would close these gaps.

As the design of the dwelling envisages a sunken building with grass covering to the roof structure, the visual impact will be minimal. The roof forms have been designed so as to be an extension of the existing topography. The eastern part of the land parcel, where the buildings are situated is in deep shadow in the morning, cast from the adjacent mature deciduous trees, whilst as the sun rises it will minimise any shadow which could emphasise the location of the dwelling in particular. Even after leaf fall the dense crowns of the trees will hinder views across the site; the lower winter sun will cast dappled shadows across the site. The dense crowns of the trees will also restrict views from the tower into this area.

3.5 Summary

The trial trenches revealed no archaeological deposits or finds to indicate activity in the medieval or earlier periods. It would appear that the dry valleys influenced the soil formation processes observed in the two trenches, particularly through the gradual down-slope movement of materials. Despite the proximity of the church and adjacent hollow-way, which are key features of the settlement, there is no evidence for utilisation of the site in the medieval period or earlier. The site is physically and functionally separate from the church.



The development proposal has sought to minimise the impact on the adjacent landscape, particularly on the setting of the church – a key heritage asset in the area. This has been achieved through careful design of the sunken buildings and the associated driveway, which utilise the contours of dry valleys. Views into the site from the direction of the church will be restricted by the screening provided by deciduous trees at the boundary of the site. The screening provided by the existing trees will be supplemented by the planting of additional trees to fill the existing gaps. This combination of design elements will minimise disruption to the setting of the church.

In conclusion, the evaluation has demonstrated that the proposed development will have no significant impacts on either buried archaeological remains or the setting of the parish church.



4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

Albion Archaeology 2011, *Land adjacent to Drakewell Road, Bow Brickhill, Milton Keynes: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Field Evaluation*, Document 2011/63.

British Geological Survey 1992, *Leighton Buzzard, England and Wales, Sheet 220 Solid and Drift 1:50,000*.

Salter M 2010, *The Old Parish Churches of Buckinghamshire*.



5. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES



Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 19.00 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 91065: Northing: 34350)

OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 91048: Northing: 34342)

Reason: To investigate the area of proposed dwelling.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty loam occasional small-large CBM, occasional small-large stones Very thin deposit in most of trench - c. 0.1m thick - with more substantial depth up to 0.31m only in the centre of trench due to the presence of a dry valley. CBM not retained.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Colluvium	Friable light yellow silty sand occasional small-large CBM, moderate small-medium stones 0.19m thick. CBM not retained.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Turf line	Friable dark brown grey silty loam occasional small-medium stones 0.07m thick turf deposit buried under colluvium (101).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Buried subsoil	Compact mid red grey sandy silt occasional small-medium CBM, moderate small-medium stones 0.39m thick. CBM not retained.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Natural	Friable mid brown red sand occasional small-large stones At either end of trench. Underlies another natural (105).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Natural	Friable mid red brown silty sand occasional small-medium stones Overlies the other natural (104). Associated with dry valley in the centre of the trench.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 10.00 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 91027: Northing: 34308)

OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 91029: Northing: 34298)

Reason: To investigate the area of proposed garage.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
200	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty loam occasional small-medium CBM, occasional small-large stones 0.34m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
201	Subsoil	Friable mid red grey sandy silt occasional small-medium CBM, occasional small-medium stones 0.66m thick. CBM not retained.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
202	Natural	Friable mid brown red sand occasional small stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

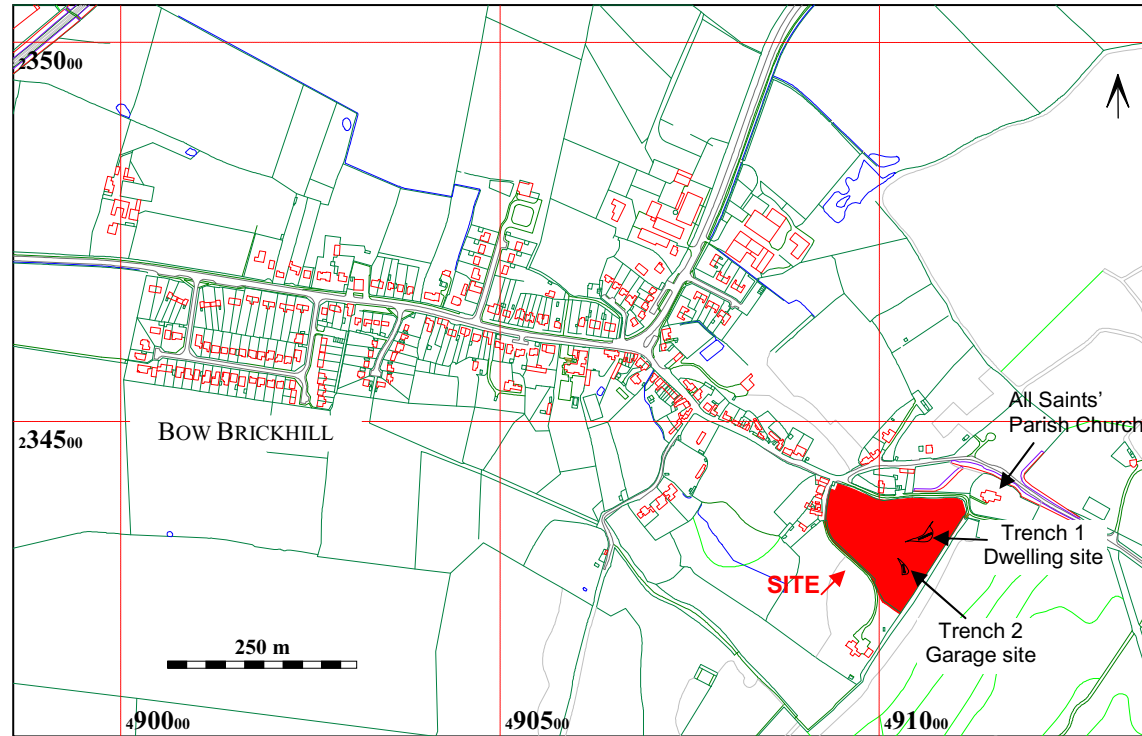
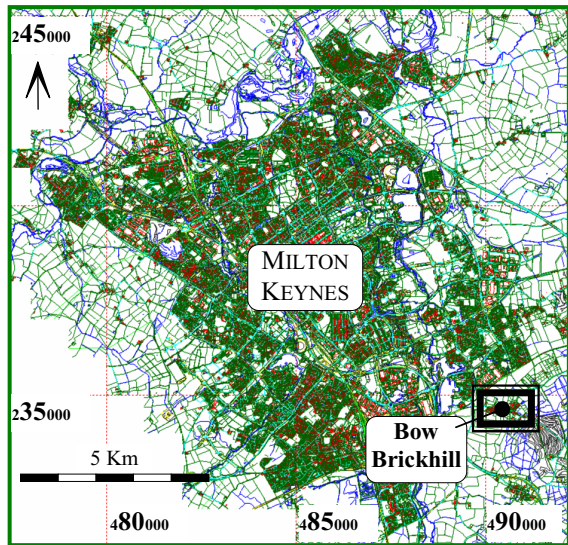
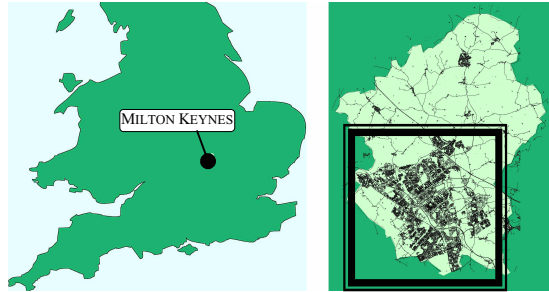


Figure 1: Site and trench locations

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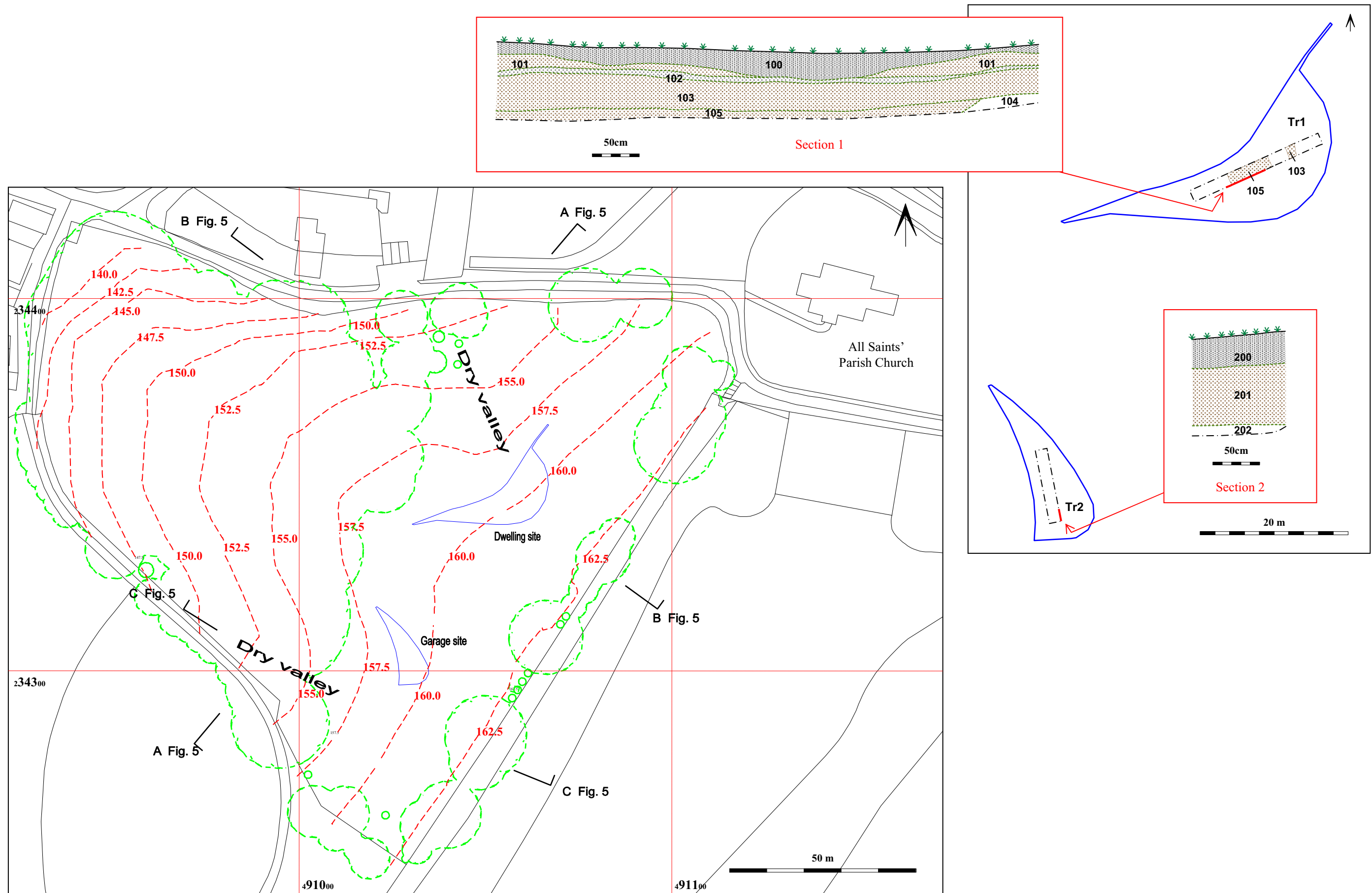


Figure 2: All features plan and sections



Image 1: Southern section of Trench 1, showing yellow colluvium (101) and buried turf (102) to the margins of image. The depression in the centre of the section is created by the movement of soil down the dry valley. Scale 1m in 0.5m divisions.



Image 2: Trench 1 during machining revealing thicker linear bands of yellow colluvium (101). Darker bands to either of this are the buried turf and topsoil (102). The trench is 1.6m wide.

Figure 3: Trench 1 – Images 1 and 2



Image 3: Detail of deposition sequence in Trench 1 revealing undulating nature of buried turf – the thin black band between the yellow sand (101) above and the reddish grey subsoil (103) below.



Image 4: Northern section of Trench 2, showing deposition sequence within the dry valley, comprising topsoil (200) above an extensive lighter coloured subsoil (201). Scale 1m in 0.5m divisions.

Figure 4: Trenches 1 and 2 – Images 3 and 4



Front Elevation AA



Section BB



Section CC

Figure 5: Proposed development – elevation and sections
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Image 1: View of Trench 1 (dwelling) looking north-east towards the church. (White canes mark the ends of the trench.)



Image 2: View of north end of Trench 1 looking north-east towards the church, which is just visible through the trees.

Figure 6: Setting of site – Images 1 and 2



Image 3: View of site from churchyard near lower gate, looking to the south-west. The yellow mechanical excavator is just visible opening Trench 1.

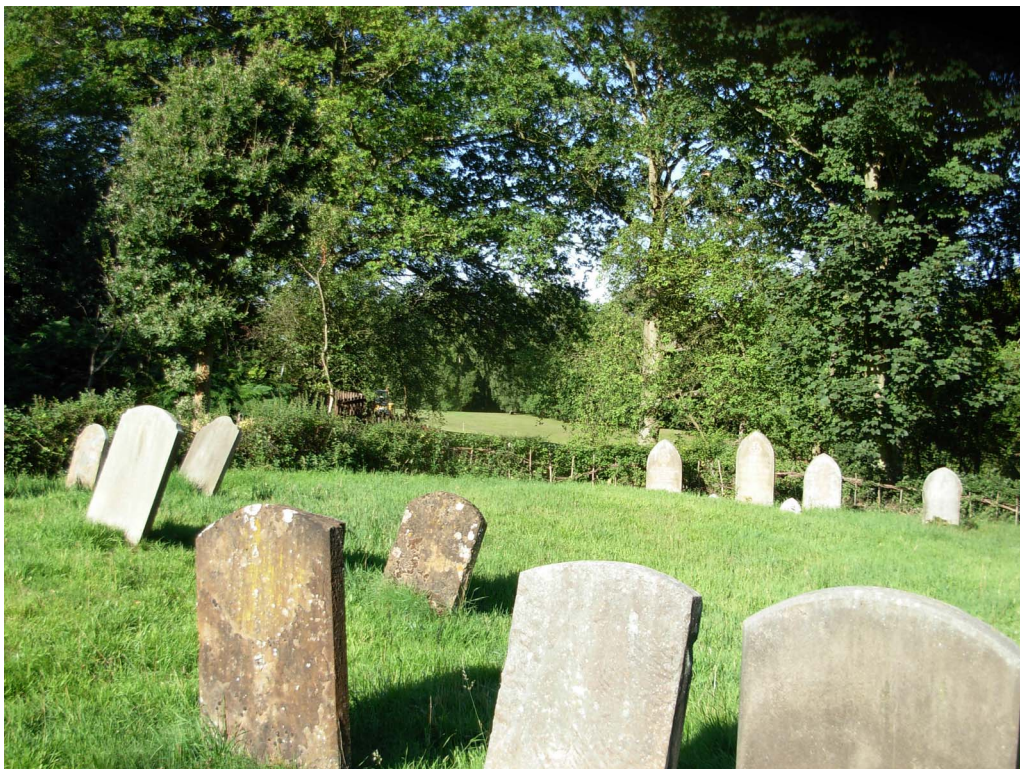


Image 4: View of site from raised pathway to the south of the porch doorway.

Figure 7: Setting of site – Images 3 and 4

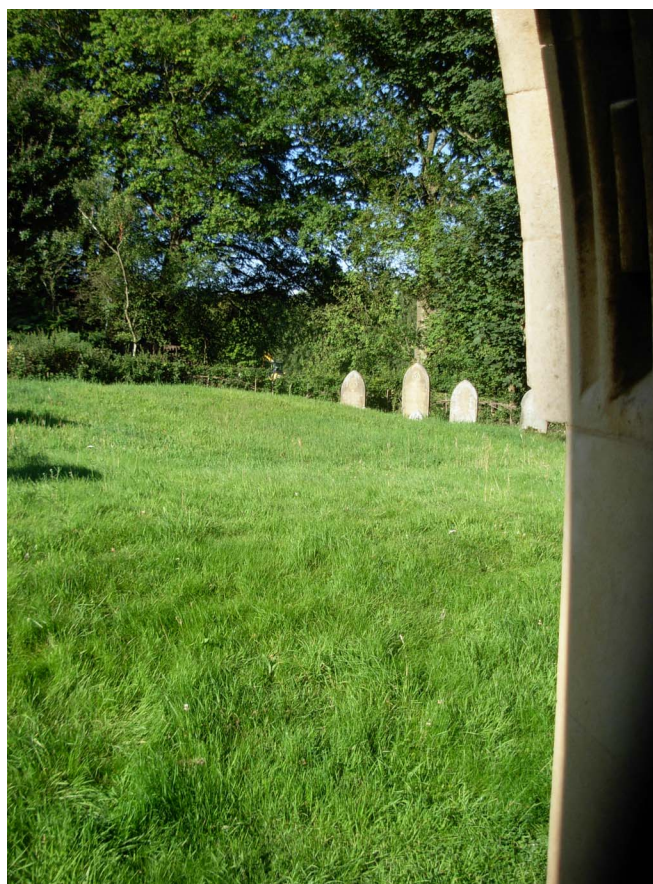


Image 5: View from doorway of church porch looking south-west, towards the site.



Image 6: View of garage site below crest of ridge with dwelling site beyond and church to top right of the image. (White canes mark the ends of the trenches.)

Figure 8: Setting of site – Images 5 and 6