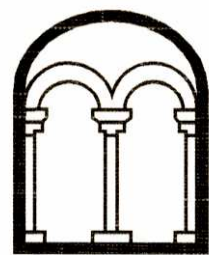


**21 CHAPEL LANE
WILLINGTON
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

Albion
archaeology



**21 CHAPEL LANE
WILLINGTON
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

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Produced for:

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Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete a summary as possible within the terms of the method statement. 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.

Acknowledgements

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the archaeological works by Mr M E Endersby of 21 Chapel Lane, Willington, MK44 3QG. The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Geoff Saunders, Historic Environment Team Officer.

Fieldwork was carried out by Iain Leslie (Archaeological Supervisor) who also prepared this report with contributions from Joan Lightning (CAD Technician) and Jackie Wells (Finds Officer).

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Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

HER	Bedford Borough Council's Historic Environment Record
HET	Bedford Borough Council's Historic Environment Team
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
DA	Development area
NHLE	National Heritage List for England
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-technical Summary

Planning permission (11/0199/FUL) was granted by Bedford Borough Council for the construction of two single-storey detached dwellings with garages and a new access drive. As the proposed development site lay within an area of archaeological sensitivity within the valley of the River Great Ouse and adjacent to a scheduled monument, a condition was attached to the planning permission requiring a programme of archaeological works.

The development area lies within the Great Ouse valley, a landscape rich in archaeological remains. Neolithic and Bronze Age ritual and ceremonial ring ditch monuments as well as prehistoric, Roman and early medieval settlement remains have been recorded and excavated at the Willington gravel quarries to the west of the village (HER 337, 1409, 1480). To the east are a number of cropmark sites indicating the existence of a series of ditches and a pit alignment (HER 985).

The village of Willington (HER 17076) is medieval in date and immediately to the west of the development area is a scheduled monument in the form of a medieval moated site (HER 769), known locally as the “Danish Dock”.

The groundworks revealed two undated features of archaeological significance: a field boundary and a pit. Also observed were numerous modern intrusions likely to be associated with the disposal of domestic refuse from the houses to the south of the development area.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Background*

Planning permission (11/0199/FUL) was granted by Bedford Borough Council for the construction of two single-storey detached dwellings with garages and a new access drive at 21 Chapel Lane, Willington. The works included considerable ground reduction across the footprint of the buildings and their surroundings.

As the proposed development site lay within an area of archaeological sensitivity within the valley of the River Great Ouse and adjacent to a scheduled monument, a condition (4) was attached to the planning permission stating that:

“No development shall take place until the applicant, or developer, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.”

This recommendation was in accordance with national planning guidelines in the form of Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment and Policy BE24 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared in response to a brief for the archaeological work issued by the Historic Environment Team (HET 2011), detailing the requirement for a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording during the groundworks for the proposed buildings.

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The development area (DA) lies in the north-east part of Willington on the north side of Chapel Lane. It lies south of the River Great Ouse and adjacent to the “Danish Docks” scheduled monument (NHLE 1012097) with which it shares a boundary in the north-west part of the property (Figure 1).

The development site is a residential property with a long back garden, bordered on both sides by similar properties with an area of trees and storage sheds to the north. It is centred on grid reference TL 11405017.

The geology of the area comprises gleyed brown earths and river gravels with the land surface lying at a height of around 23m OD.

1.3 *Archaeological Background*

The development area lies within the Great Ouse valley which is a landscape rich in archaeological remains. Neolithic and Bronze Age ritual and ceremonial ring ditch monuments as well as prehistoric, Roman and early medieval settlement remains have been recorded and excavated at the



Willington gravel quarries to the west of the village (HER 337, 1409, 1480). To the east are a number of cropmarks indicating the existence of a series of ditches and a pit alignment (HER 985).

The village of Willington (HER 17076) is medieval in date and immediately to the west of the DA is a scheduled monument in the form of a medieval moated site (HER 769) known locally as the “Danish Dock”. The moat is connected to the River Great Ouse by inlet and outlet channels and incorporates a riverside dock. Part of it survives as a rectangular water-filled pond.

Construction of the Cambridge to Bedford Railway (now converted to a cycle path) disturbed this area. In the 1970s, the site was identified as a possible base for Danish raiders during their 10th-century incursions into the Ouse Valley (Dyer 1972). Due to the risk of further damage to the site, investigations were undertaken in 1973. These indicated that the site was a medieval moated homestead (Hassall 1975). Further investigation occurred in 2000 when the visitor centre was constructed (Edmondson and Mudd 2004). This revealed a series of structures (of timber and stone construction), dating to the 12th-13th centuries, possibly defining an early manor site.

A trial trench evaluation was undertaken on the DA in 1997 (BCAS 1998). Three trenches were opened. They were 10–20m long and 0.30–0.40m deep. These revealed no archaeological remains, apart from a possible post-medieval quarry pit.

A watching brief carried out during construction works at 35 Chapel Lane, a short distance to the east of the DA, also revealed a potential quarry pit plus a number of pits and ditches which were thought to be modern in date (Albion 2008). Another watching brief at 2 Church Road to the west of the DA produced a number of undated pits (Albion 2011).

A watching brief during the excavations of the footings of a bungalow at the Moat House, to the south-west of the DA revealed no archaeological remains (BCAS 1992)

1.4 Project Objectives

The immediate objective of the archaeological fieldwork was to monitor and supervise all groundworks associated with the construction of the new dwellings that had the potential to reveal archaeological remains, and to investigate, characterise and record any archaeological deposits encountered within them.



2 METHODOLOGY

Archaeological observation of the groundworks took place between 10th January and 24th September 2012. Groundworks monitored included excavation of the footings of the dwellings down to undisturbed geological deposits or archaeological features, whichever was encountered first. Also monitored was excavation for the construction of an inspection cover, soak-away and service trench. The works were carried out using a flat-edged bucket.

Deposits encountered were investigated and recorded in accordance with Albion's *Procedures Manual*. Spoil heaps were checked on a regular basis for archaeological artefacts recovery.

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

• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (2nd edn, 2001).
• Bedford Borough Council	<i>Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedford</i> (1998)
• 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)
• HET	<i>Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication, 21 Chapel Lane, Willington, Bedfordshire</i> (December 2011)
• IfA	<i>By-Laws and Code of Conduct</i>
	<i>Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs</i> (updated 2008) and <i>finds</i> (updated 2008)

A detailed methodology is provided in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2011).



3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

The groundworks revealed a large Romano-British or medieval ditch and an undated pit in addition to numerous modern intrusions (Figure 2).

3.2 Overburden and Undisturbed Geological Deposits

Overburden over the majority of the DA consisted of a dark grey-brown silty garden soil (101), which varied in thickness from 0.3–0.6m. Underlying this in the north-west corner of the DA was a 0.5m thick mid grey-brown silty deposit of buried topsoil (102).

The underlying geology was a mid brown orange silty gravel (103).

3.3 Archaeological Features

A linear feature [106], aligned E-W, was observed near the north-west corner of the DA. It was at least 7.6m long, 0.78m deep and 2m wide and contained two abraded sherds of shell-tempered pottery (22g). The undiagnostic sherds derive from a hard-fired vessel of indeterminate form, and may be either of Romano-British or medieval date.

Adjacent to the linear feature was a discrete oval feature [104] which was 2.3m long, at least 0.8m wide and 0.25m deep. This feature represents a pit of unknown use and contained no dating evidence.

In addition to these features, 13 modern intrusions were identified. These were predominantly rubbish pits filled with modern glass bottles, ceramics and metalwork with the remaining features representing modern intrusions of unknown use.



4 CONCLUSIONS

The groundworks revealed two features of archaeological significance: a ditch running E-W dating either to the Roman or medieval period, and an adjacent undated pit.

The ditch was fairly substantial and is likely to represent a field boundary. It has a similar alignment to the major E-W ditches within the adjacent medieval moated site (HER 769). However, no direct relationship can be inferred from the currently available evidence alone.

Numerous modern intrusions were observed concentrated in the south of the DA. These were predominantly rubbish pits and are likely to be associated with refuse disposal from dwellings to the south of the DA.



5 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Albion Archaeology 2011. *2 Church Road, Willington, Bedfordshire. Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording and Analysis. Report 2011-50.*
- BCAS¹ (now Albion Archaeology) 1992. Note in: *Gazetteer of archaeological investigations in England*, 332-3.
- BCAS (now Albion Archaeology) 1998. Note in: *CBA Group 9: South Midlands Archaeology Newsletter 28*, 15.
- Edmondson G and Mudd A 2004 'Medieval occupation at Danish Camp Willington', *Bedfordshire Archaeology* 25.
- Hassall J 1975 'Excavations at Willington 1973', *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal* 10, 25-40.
- HET 2010. *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication. 21 Chapel Lane, Willington, Bedfordshire. December 2011.*

¹ Bedfordshire County Council Archaeology Service



6 APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT SUMMARY

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
101	Topsoil	Loose dark brown grey silt moderate small-medium stones. Thickness 0.4m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Buried topsoil	Loose mid grey brown silt moderate small-medium stones. Thickness 0.54m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Natural	Firm mid brown orange silty gravel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Pit	Oval sides: convex base: flat dimensions: min breadth 0.8m, max depth 0.25m, max length 2.3m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Fill	Firm mid brown grey silt occasional large burnt stones, occasional small charcoal, frequent small-medium stones. Thickness 0.25m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
106	Ditch	Linear E-W sides: concave dimensions: max breadth 2m, min depth 0.78m, min length 9.8m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
107	Fill	Firm light brown grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones. Thickness 0.78	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

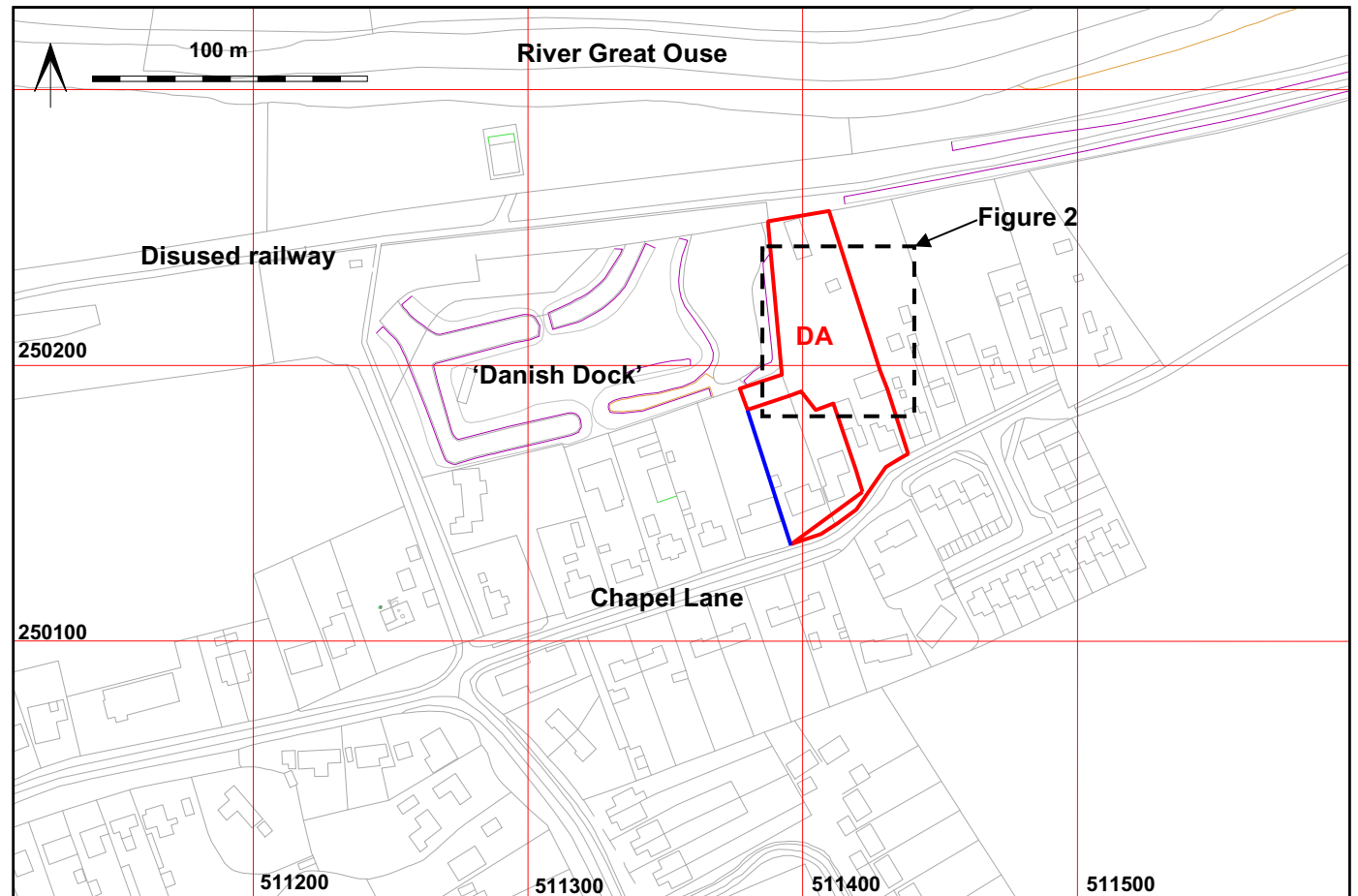
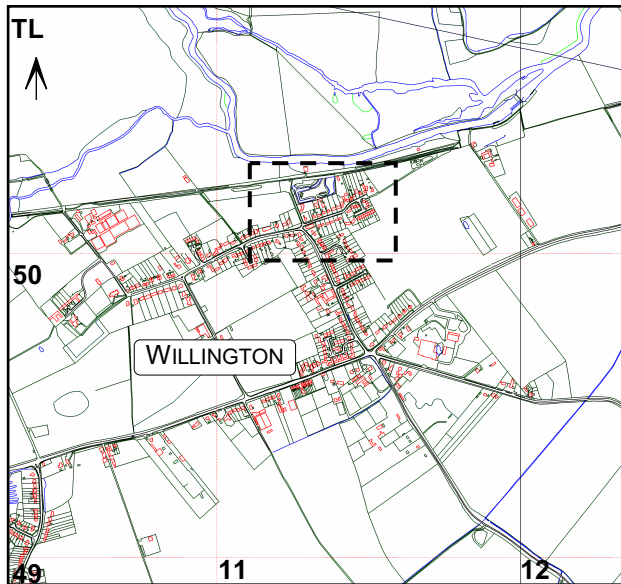
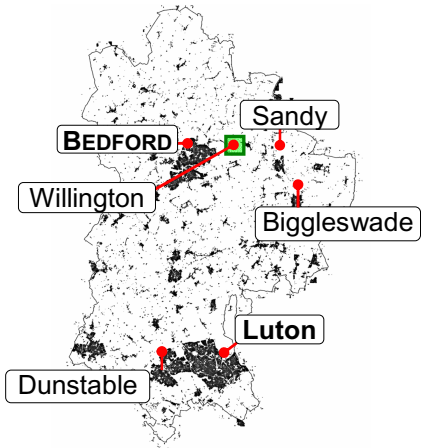


Figure 1: Site location plan

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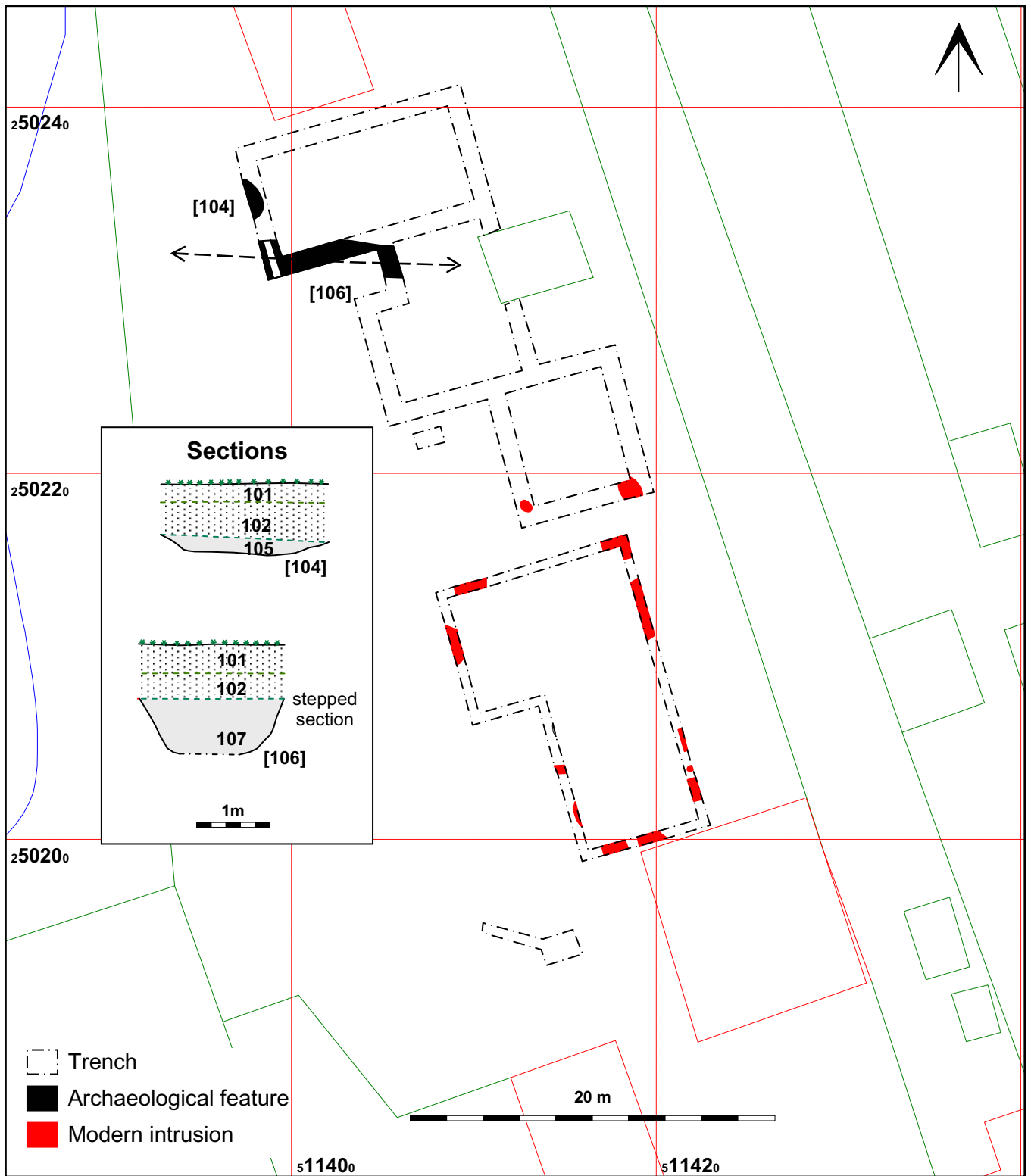
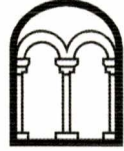


Figure 2: All features plan

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