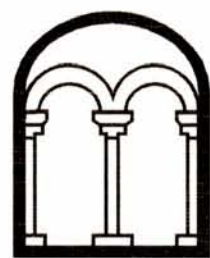


**MUSHROOM FARMHOUSE
REAR OF 62-72 CHURCH STREET
LANGFORD
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH
EVALUATION**

Albion
archaeology



**MUSHROOM FARMHOUSE
REAR OF 62-72 CHURCH STREET
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BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH
EVALUATION**

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Compiled by	Checked by	Authorised by
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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.

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Albion Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the evaluation by Amber Developments (St Ives) Ltd. Fieldwork was monitored by Martin Oake, the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist.

The fieldwork was undertaken by David Ingham, Wiebke Starke and Ian Turner. This document has been prepared by David Ingham and Wiebke Starke with contributions from Jackie Wells (Finds Officer).

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Key Terms

The following terms or abbreviations are used throughout this report:

CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
Client	Amber Developments (St Ives) Ltd
EAA	East Anglian Archaeology
EBD	HER event reference
HER	Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2011)



Non-Technical Summary

Central Bedfordshire Council has granted planning permission for the construction of three detached houses with associated garages and an access drive on land at Mushroom Farmhouse, to the rear of 62–72 Church Street, Langford. As the development lies within an area of archaeological sensitivity the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist advised that a condition should be attached to planning consent requiring the implementation of a three-stage programme of archaeological work. This report describes the results of the Stage I trial-trench evaluation.

The development area lies at the northern end of the village of Langford. Currently under grass, the land covers an area of c. 0.27ha and is centred on grid reference TL 1863 4169. The underlying geology comprises river-terrace sands and gravels, overlying Lower Greensand and Gault Clay.

Langford is part of a landscape that contains evidence of human activity dating back as far as the Palaeolithic period, although little evidence is currently known for pre-Saxon activity within the immediate vicinity of the development area. ‘British mounds’ were recorded in the 1890s south-west of the development area but no trace of these can now be found. Extensive areas of crop-marks lie to the north-east and the west, with evidence of ring ditches, trackways, pit alignments, blocks of rectilinear enclosures and separate small enclosures. Similar crop-marks along the rest of the Ivel Valley have been shown to date be Iron Age or Roman in date.

The earliest written mention of Langford comes from AD 944–6. The village of Church End may originally have been a separate settlement, possibly with Danish origins. A church is recorded in the parish from at least 1142, presumably on the same site as the 13th-century St Andrew’s Church. A medieval deer park existed to the north of the village. A mushroom farm was present on the site in the 1980s.

The evaluation revealed a concentration of medieval remains at the eastern end of the site, comprising ditches and a pit. An undated gully that may have had a structural function was revealed further to the west.

The pottery recovered dates mostly to the medieval period, but the few Saxo-Norman sherds suggest a certain amount of earlier activity nearby. The volume of pottery and animal bone recovered is fairly modest but does suggest that settlement-related activity took place in the vicinity. The medieval remains were all recorded at the eastern end of the site closest to Church Street. The features may therefore relate to activities that took place to the rear of properties fronting onto Church Street.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Background*

Central Bedfordshire Council has granted planning permission for the residential development of land at Mushroom Farmhouse, to the rear of 62–72 Church Street, Langford (application no. CB/11/02340/FULL). Three new detached houses with associated garages are planned, along with an access drive.

The site is located on the fringes of the medieval core of Langford, in a topographical position known also to have been favoured for settlement in the Roman period. Accordingly, a condition was attached to planning consent requiring the implementation of a three-staged programme of archaeological work. This was done on the advice of the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA), in accordance with *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (DCLG 2010).

The specified programme of archaeological work comprises:

- Stage I – archaeological field evaluation.
- Stage II – appraisal of the results of the archaeological field evaluation.
- Stage III – implementation of an agreed programme of archaeological investigation and recording (if required, following completion of Stage II).

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the Stage I field evaluation in line with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) agreed beforehand with the CBCA (Albion Archaeology 2011).

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The development area lies at the northern end of the village of Langford (Fig. 1). It occupies level ground at a height of *c.* 32m OD, with the exception of a hollow at the western end of the site marking the former location of a modern pond. The site is bordered by arable land to the south and west, with residential development to the north and east. Currently under grass, it covers an area of *c.* 0.27ha and is centred on grid reference TL 1863 4169. The underlying geology comprises river-terrace sands and gravels, overlying Lower Greensand and Gault Clay.

1.3 *Archaeological Background*

The site lies in a landscape that contains evidence of human activity dating back as far as the Palaeolithic period (Coleman, unpublished). Archaeological remains from the prehistoric and Roman periods are plentiful along the Ivel Valley, although little evidence is currently known for them within the immediate vicinity of the development site.

‘British mounds’ (HER 1420) were recorded in the 1890s south-west of the site, but no trace of these could be observed by at least the 1970s. Aerial photographs have revealed an extensive area of crop-marks to the north-east (HER 1486) with evidence of ring ditches, trackways, blocks of rectilinear enclosures and separate small enclosures. A geophysical survey to the east (HER EBD 772) was inconclusive in



some areas, but did reveal evidence of enclosures, ring ditches and areas of pitting. Metal-detecting within the area of these crop-marks has produced late Iron Age and Roman finds and similar crop-marks along the rest of the Ivel Valley have been shown to date to those periods.

Further extensive crop-marks to the west (HER 631) show a comparable landscape to that of HER 1486 and an aerial photographic assessment of river-edge settlements to the west (EBD 622) also revealed evidence of pit alignments, enclosures, ring ditches and trackways.

The earliest written mention of Langford comes from AD 944–6 (Coleman, unpublished). The village of Church End (HER 17135) may originally have been a separate settlement; it has been suggested that it was Danish in origin, due to the presence of Danish names amongst its earliest inhabitants.

A church is recorded in the parish from at least 1142, presumably on the same site as the 13th-century St Andrew's Church (HER 1087). A medieval deer park (HER 13937) existed to the north of the village.

Post-medieval remains in the vicinity of the site include several buildings that have now been demolished, and the parish churchyard of St Andrew's Church (HER 8919). Most of the buildings (HER 5738–5742) were Grade II or Grade III listed, while a windmill (HER 3171) also existed to the south of the site before being demolished by 1840. Historical maps show the site to have been open agricultural land since at least 1807, although a mushroom farm was briefly present in the 1980s, traces of which were found during the field evaluation.

1.4 Project Objectives

The aim of the evaluation was to establish the nature, extent, location and date of any archaeological features within the development area, as well as their integrity and state of preservation. This information will be considered during Stage II in relation to the published research frameworks for the area (Brown and Glazebrook 2000; Oake *et al.* 2007; Medlycott 2011), to determine whether any Stage III mitigation works are required.



2. METHODOLOGY

Trial trenching took place between 3rd–5th January 2012. A layout of six trenches covering an area of *c.* 200m² was agreed with the CBCA before fieldwork began. The trenches were 9.5–19m long and mostly 2.1–2.25m wide (Fig. 1). A few alterations were made to the layout during machining: the north-east end of Trench 4 was moved 2m north-west to avoid a tree; a gap of 4.5m was left in Trench 5 to avoid modern services; and Trench 3 was machined only 1.6m wide where it crossed a large modern rubbish pit.

The trenches were opened by a mechanical digger fitted with a toothless bucket under close archaeological supervision. The overburden was removed down to the top of archaeological deposits or undisturbed geological deposits, whichever were encountered first. The spoil heaps were scanned for artefacts.

The bases and sides of all trenches were cleaned as necessary by hand. Any potential archaeological features were investigated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's *pro forma* sheets. Each trench was subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate. All deposits were recorded using a unique number sequence, commencing at 100 for Trench 1, 200 for Trench 2 *etc.*

A full methodology is provided in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2011).

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

• IfA	<i>By-Laws and Code of Conduct</i>
	<i>Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (2009)</i>
• English Heritage	<i>MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide (2006)</i>
• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork (2nd edn, 2001).</i>
• EAA	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (2003)</i>
• Bedford Borough Council	<i>Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedford (2010)</i>

The trenches were inspected by the CBCA prior to their backfilling.



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

All the deposits and features of archaeological interest are summarised below in chronological order. Their location and extent are shown on Figures 2 and 3. Detailed technical information on all archaeological features and deposits can be found in Appendix 1.

3.2 Overburden, Modern Disturbance and Undisturbed Geological Deposits

Overburden across the site had a fairly uniform combined depth of 0.7–0.8m. This seems to have been due in part to ground-levelling activities associated with either the construction or demolition of the 1980s mushroom farm, as indicated by the presence of a buried topsoil in Trench 3. Demolition debris was widespread within the topsoil across Trenches 2–4, while it extended almost to the depth of the undisturbed geological deposits in the western half of Trench 5. Parts of the site also contained large demolition pits that had been dug to dispose of the mushroom sheds' concrete foundations. Two of these were found in Trenches 2 and 3 (Fig. 2); the owner of Mushroom Farmhouse has indicated they were *c.* 3m deep. The overburden only appeared relatively undisturbed at the very eastern and western ends of the site where the topsoil and subsoil were equal in depth. Trench 5 contained two separate subsoils, the lower of which (502) predated the medieval archaeological features recorded therein.

Further modern disturbance was evident in Trench 1, the northern half of which contained a shallow pond or natural hollow that had been backfilled with modern debris. The uppermost geological layer in Trench 1 comprised silty gravel, whereas sandy gravel was present in the base of the other trenches.

3.3 Medieval

Most of the archaeological remains identified in Trenches 5 and 6 are likely to date to the medieval period (Fig. 3), including three ditches and a pit that contained medieval pottery (Appendix 2). Two further ditches contained single sherds of Roman and Saxo-Norman pottery; stratigraphic evidence shows the latter to be residual, although the presence of further Saxo-Norman sherds in the other ditches is suggestive of activity nearby that dates to this period. The abraded Roman sherd is also likely to be residual, as the character and alignment of the ditch are similar to those of the ditches in Trench 5 that contained medieval pottery.

The ditches were all similar in size and profile, measuring 1.2–1.5m wide and mostly *c.* 0.45m deep. Pit [512] was the deepest feature dating to this period (Fig. 2: Section 3). A piece of glass recovered from the base of the feature is difficult to date but may be late medieval or early post-medieval.

3.4 Modern

As well as the demolition pits mentioned above that were associated with the 1980s mushroom farm, modern features were also identified in Trenches 1 and 6. No finds were recovered from the ditches in Trench 1, one of which had been re-cut. The owner of Mushroom Farmhouse has suggested that they were drainage ditches associated



with the mushroom farm. The organic, almost peaty character of their infill supports this suggestion. The character and function of feature [610] are unclear, but its vertical sides, banded infill and stratigraphic relationship with the subsoil all suggest a relatively modern date, making the medieval sherd of pottery recovered from it residual.

3.5 Undated

Two features revealed by the evaluation remain undated: ditch [510] in Trench 5; and L-shaped gully [305] in Trench 3, which was fully truncated to the north by one of the demolition pits. The former is likely to be medieval in date due to its spatial relationship with the demonstrably medieval ditches in Trench 5, all of which were on a similar alignment. The angularity of gully [305] suggests that it may have had a structural function, or perhaps that it enclosed a structure. Its relationship with the subsoil indicates that it was of some antiquity.



4. SUMMARY

The archaeological evaluation has revealed a concentration of archaeological remains at the eastern end of the development site. These include five north–south ditches and a pit, all of which appear to date to the medieval period, while a sixth ditch may be contemporary with them. A truncated possible structural gully was recorded further to the west, but the date of this is unknown. The remaining features found during the trenching are all modern in date and are likely to be associated with the mushroom farm that occupied the site in the 1980s.

The pottery recovered from the site dates mostly to the medieval period, but the few Saxo-Norman sherds suggest a certain amount of earlier activity nearby — Langford is known to have had late Saxon origins. The volume of pottery and animal bone recovered is fairly modest but does suggest that settlement-related activity took place in the vicinity. The medieval remains were all recorded at the eastern end of the site closest to Church Street, with which the ditches in Trench 5 were parallel. The features may therefore relate to activities that took place to the rear of properties fronting onto Church Street.



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6. APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT SUMMARY

Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 18.9m Width: 2.15m

Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.5m Max: 0.7m

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref. TL 18575 41701

OS Grid Ref. TL 18583 41683

Reason: Non-targeted coverage of evaluation area

Context	Type	Description	Excavated	Finds Present
100	Topsoil	Friable dark grey silty clay, 0.4m thick. High content of modern rubbish	✓	
101	Buried topsoil	Firm mid grey brown silty clay, 0.25m thick	✓	
102	Natural	Firm mid orange silty gravel		
103	Ditch	Linear E-W, sides: stepped, base: concave, dimensions: min breadth 0.55m, max depth 0.3m	✓	
104	Lower fill	Firm dark yellow grey silty clay	✓	
105	Upper fill	Firm mid orange brown silty clay	✓	
106	Ditch	Linear E-W, sides: stepped, base: concave, dimensions: max breadth 1.0m, max depth 0.43m	✓	
107	Lower fill	Firm mid yellow grey silty clay	✓	
108	Main fill	Firm dark grey silty clay	✓	
109	Upper fill	Firm mid orange brown sandy clay	✓	
110	Ditch	Linear E-W, sides: stepped, base: flat, dimensions: max breadth 1.15m, max depth 0.65m	✓	
111	Lower fill	Loose mid orange brown silty gravel	✓	
112	Secondary fill	Firm mid grey silty clay	✓	
113	Main fill	Firm dark grey silty clay	✓	
114	Tree-throw	Irregular, sides: concave, base: uneven, dimensions: max breadth 1.1m, max depth 0.17m, max length 1.15m	✓	
115	Fill	Firm mid brown sandy silt	✓	

Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 14.5m Width: 2.2m

Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.7m Max: 0.7m

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref. TL 18608 41700

OS Grid Ref. TL 18594 41701

Reason: Non-targeted coverage of evaluation area

Context	Type	Description	Excavated	Finds Present
200	Topsoil	Firm dark brown grey sandy silt, 0.4m thick	✓	
201	Subsoil	Firm mid orange brown sandy silt, 0.3m thick	✓	
202	Natural	Firm mid yellow orange sandy gravel		

**Trench: 3****Max Dimensions: Length: 18.80m Width: 2.1m****Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.7m Max: 0.8m****Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref. TL 18607 41685****OS Grid Ref. TL 18618 41701****Reason: Non-targeted coverage of evaluation area**

Context	Type	Description	Excavated	Finds Present
300	Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt, 0.1m thick	✓	
301	Rubble layer	Friable mid brown orange silty gravel, 0.2m thick	✓	
302	Buried topsoil	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt, 0.25m thick	✓	
303	Subsoil	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt, 0.2m thick	✓	
304	Natural	Firm mid orange brown sandy gravel		
305	Ditch	Curving linear, sides: concave, base: concave, dimensions: max breadth 0.8m, max depth 0.24m	✓	
306	Fill	Friable light grey brown sandy silt	✓	

Trench: 4**Max Dimensions: Length: 14.4m Width: 2.2m****Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.7m Max: 0.75m****Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref. TL 18643 41702****OS Grid Ref. TL 18631 41692****Reason: Non-targeted coverage of evaluation area**

Context	Type	Description	Excavated	Finds Present
400	Topsoil	Friable dark grey sandy silt, 0.4m thick	✓	
401	Subsoil	Firm dark orange grey sandy silt, 0.35m thick	✓	
402	Natural	Firm mid brown orange silty gravel		

**Trench: 5****Max Dimensions: Length: 19.0m Width: 2.2m****Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.6m Max: 0.8m****Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref. TL 18642 41684****OS Grid Ref. TL 18662 41678****Reason: Non-targeted coverage of evaluation area**

Context	Type	Description	Excavated	Finds Present
500	Topsoil	Friable dark grey sandy silt, 0.37m thick	✓	
501	Subsoil	Firm mid brown grey sandy silt, 0.25m thick	✓	
502	Subsoil	Firm mid orange brown sandy silt, 0.15m thick	✓	
503	Natural	Firm mid yellow orange sandy gravel		
504	Ditch	Linear N-S, sides: convex, base: concave, dimensions: max breadth 1.5m, max depth 0.42m	✓	
505	Lower fill	Firm light yellow grey sandy silt	✓	
506	Secondary fill	Firm mid orange brown sandy silt	✓	✓
507	Upper fill	Firm mid grey brown sandy silt	✓	
508	Ditch	Linear N-S, sides: concave, base: flat, dimensions: max breadth 1.2m, max depth 0.47m	✓	
509	Fill	Firm mid grey brown sandy silt	✓	✓
510	Ditch	Linear N-S, sides: concave, base: flat, dimensions: max breadth 0.85m, max depth 0.16m	✓	
511	Fill	Firm mid orange brown sandy silt	✓	
512	Pit	Oval, sides: steep, base: flat, dimensions: min breadth 1.35m, max depth 0.8m, min length 1.4m	✓	
513	Primary fill	Firm light orange brown sandy silt	✓	
514	Lower fill	Firm dark brown sandy silt	✓	✓
515	Main fill	Firm mid brown sandy silt	✓	✓
516	Ditch	Linear N-S, sides: concave, base: flat, dimensions: max breadth 1.2m, max depth 0.28m	✓	
517	Fill	Firm mid grey brown sandy silt	✓	✓

Trench: 6**Max Dimensions: Length: 9.5m Width: 2.25m****Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.75m Max: 0.8m****Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref. TL 18662 41703****OS Grid Ref. TL 18661 41693****Reason: Non-targeted coverage of evaluation area**

Context	Type	Description	Excavated	Finds Present
600	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt, 0.4m thick	✓	
601	Subsoil	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt, 0.4m thick	✓	
602	Natural	Firm mid orange brown sandy gravel		
603	Ditch	Irregular, sides: concave, base: concave, dimensions: min breadth 0.9m, max depth 0.42m	✓	
604	Fill	Friable mid orange brown sandy gravel	✓	
605	Fill	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt	✓	✓
606	Ditch	Linear NE-SW, sides: concave, base: concave, dimensions: max breadth 1.2m, max depth 0.44m	✓	
607	Fill	Friable mid orange brown sandy gravel	✓	
608	Fill	Friable mid orange brown sandy silt	✓	
609	Fill	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt	✓	✓
610	Modern intrusion	Sub-rectangular N-S, sides: vertical, dimensions: min breadth 0.45m, max depth 1.1m	✓	
611	Fill	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt	✓	✓



7. APPENDIX 2: ARTEFACT SUMMARY

7.1 Introduction

A finds assemblage comprising mainly pottery and animal bone was recovered from seven features in Trenches 5 and 6. The material was examined to ascertain its nature, condition and, where possible, date range (Table 1).

Tr.	Feature	Description	Context	Spot-date *	Finds Summary
5	504	Ditch	506	Early Roman	Pottery (14g)
	508	Ditch	509	Early medieval	Pottery (16g)
	512	Pit	514	Early medieval	Pottery (70g); vessel glass (10g); animal bone (23g)
	512	Pit	515	Early medieval	Pottery (4g)
	516	Ditch	517	Saxo-Norman	Pottery (8g)
6	603	Ditch	605	Early medieval	Pottery (77g); animal bone (67g)
	606	Ditch	609	Early medieval	Pottery (27g); animal bone (14g)
	610	Modern intrusion	611	Early medieval	Pottery (9g)

* spot-date based on date of latest artefact in context

Table 1: Artefact summary by trench and feature

7.2 Pottery

Twenty-four pottery sherds were recovered, weighing 225g. These were examined by context and quantified using minimum sherd count and weight. The pottery is moderately fragmented, with an average sherd weight of 9g, and survives in fair condition. Eleven fabric types were identified, using common names and type codes in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series, currently maintained by Albion Archaeology (Table 2).

Fabric type	Common name	No. sherds	Context:No. sherds
<i>Roman</i>			
R06C	Fine grey ware	1	(506):1
<i>Saxo-Norman</i>			
B01	St Neots-type ware	1	(609):1
B01A	St Neots-type ware (orange)	2	(605):2
B01C	St Neots-type ware (mixed)	1	(517):1
<i>Early medieval</i>			
B07	Shell	1	(514):1
C59A	Coarse sand	1	(609):1
C59B	Harsh sand	1	(605):1
C60	Hertfordshire-type grey ware	7	(514):5, (605):2
C61	Sand (calcareous inclusions)	2	(515):2
C71	Sand (buff-grey cored)	6	(509):4, (605):2
C75	Sand (micaceous)	1	(611):1

Table 2: Pottery type series

The earliest pottery comprises an abraded body sherd of grey ware (14g) datable to the early Roman period, recovered from ditch [504]. Three sherds (47g) of 9th–11th century St Neots-type ware (fabric B01 and variants) occurred as residual finds in medieval ditches [603] and [605], and a further residual sherd (8g) was recovered from ditch [516]. A ‘top-hat’ jar with a diameter of 180mm is the sole diagnostic vessel form.



Nineteen sherds (156g) are datable to the early medieval period, and mainly comprise locally manufactured sand-tempered wares (C59A/B, C61, C71, C75) and Hertfordshire-type grey wares (C60), the latter of late 12th to early 13th-century date. A single shelly example (B07) also occurs. Most are handmade. No feature sherds are present, although several pieces have sooted exterior surfaces, indicating their use as cooking pots.

7.3 Vessel Glass

Early medieval pit [512] yielded a sherd of translucent light green vessel glass, possibly a piece of rim and upper body (thickness 2.9mm). The fragment has an irregular and undulating exterior surface with one fire-rounded edge, and is distorted due to heat exposure. It may be an intrusive piece of soda-rich glass from the 16th century or later, although damage makes this impossible to ascertain with any degree of confidence.

7.4 Animal Bone

Sixteen fragments of animal bone, weighing 104g, were collected from medieval ditches [603] and [606], and pit [512]. Individual pieces are small and moderately abraded, with an average weight of 6g. Diagnostic elements are a cow molar, small mammal rib, and miscellaneous limb-bone fragments of indeterminate species.

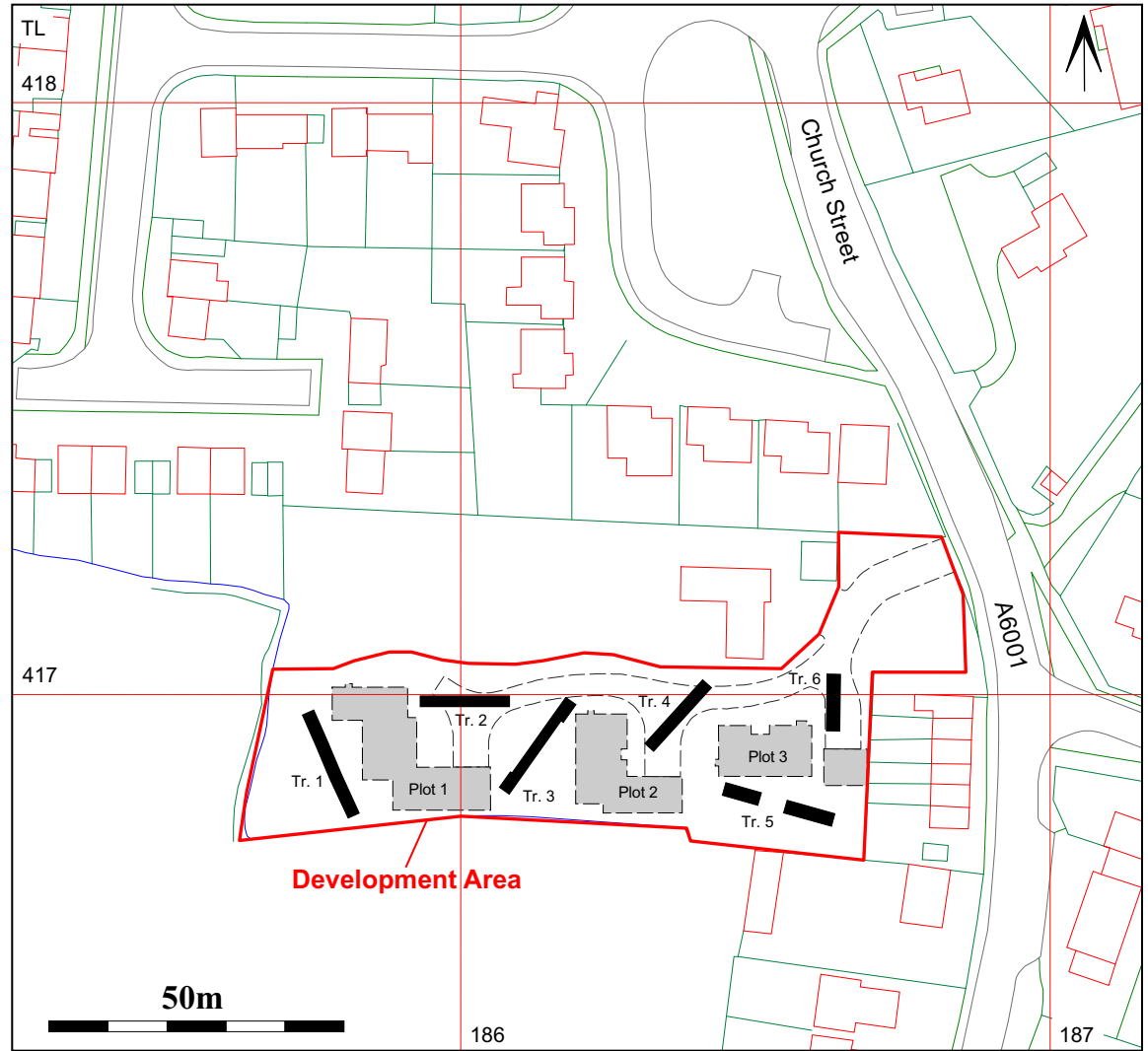
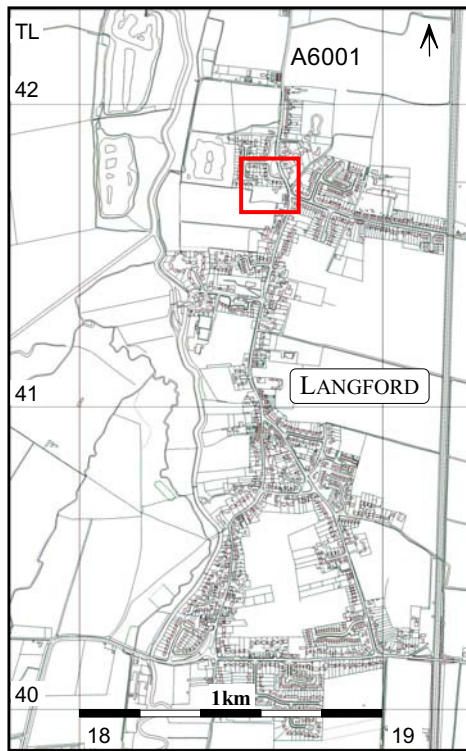
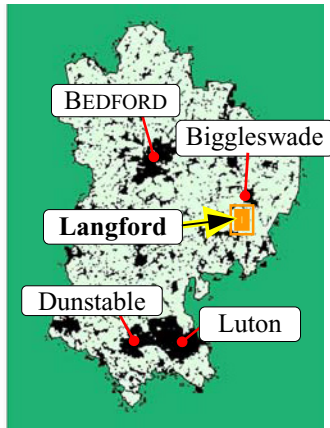


Figure 1: Site location

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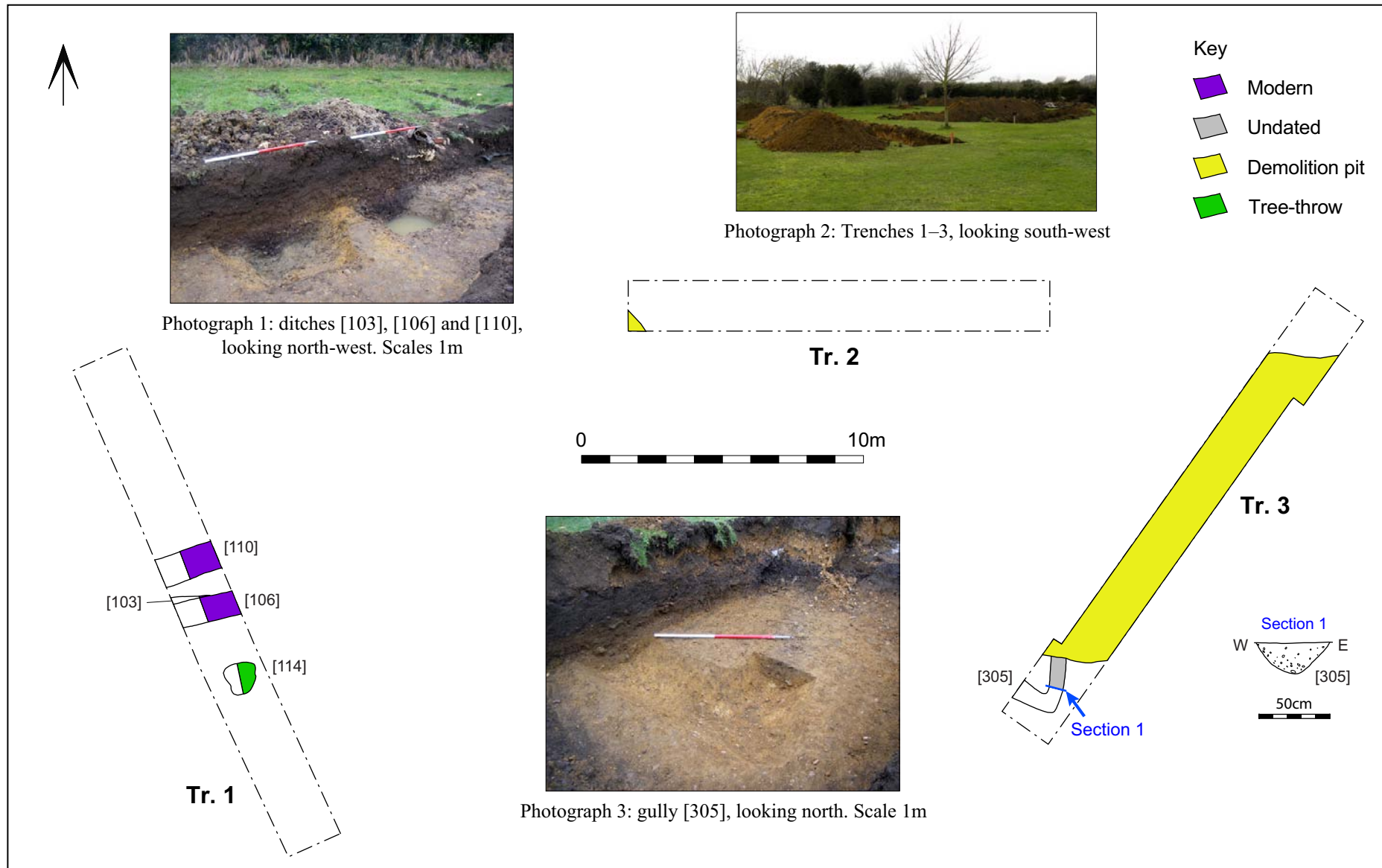


Figure 2: Trenches 1-3



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