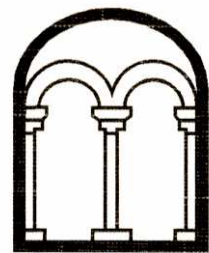


**MUSHROOM FARMHOUSE  
REAR OF 62-72 CHURCH STREET  
LANGFORD  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

**Albion**  
archaeology



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Prepared for

Amber Developments (St Ives) Ltd



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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 Amber Developments (St Ives) Ltd. The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Martin Oake, Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist.*

*Fieldwork was carried out by Iain Leslie (Archaeological Supervisor) who also prepared this report.*

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## **Version History**

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## **Key Terms**

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
HER	Heritage Environment Record
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
LPA	Local Planning Authority (Central Bedfordshire Council)
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



## **Non-technical Summary**

*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. Due to the potential impact of the development upon medieval remains identified during trial trenching of the site, the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist advised the Local Planning Authority that a scheme of archaeological work should be implemented during groundworks associated with the development.*

*The only archaeological feature revealed during the groundworks was a ditch observed towards the western end of the trench for the water main. Although it contained no artefacts, its alignment and character suggest it is the continuation of a medieval ditch observed during the trial trench evaluation. The ditch is parallel to Church Street, suggesting it is a boundary associated with properties that fronted onto the road.*

*Thick subsoils and a make-up layer were observed within the foul sewer and water main service trenches, concurring with evidence of disturbance and levelling of the site associated with the demolition of the mushroom farm observed during the trial trenching.*

*The project archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum (accession no. 2011.77). This report will be uploaded onto the Archaeology Data Service's OASIS website (albionar1-120817).*



## 1 INTRODUCTION

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### 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) (Fig. 1). 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 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 Archaeologists (CBCA), in accordance with the guidelines provided in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (DCLG 2010) and its recent replacement, the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

The programme of archaeological work was to comprise:

- 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 mitigation, if required following the Stage II appraisal.

The Stage I trial trenching was completed in January 2012 (Albion Archaeology 2012a) and revealed a concentration of medieval remains at the eastern end of the site. During the Stage II review, the CBCA identified a *c.*900m<sup>2</sup> Area of Archaeological Significance (AAS) at the eastern end of the development area (Fig. 2). This largely coincided with the position of Plot 3 of the proposed development. Based on the impacts of the proposed development, the CBCA advised that a programme of archaeological observation and recording would be required, with the focus on the excavation of the major service trenches within this area. This was to be followed by an appropriate programme of analysis and reporting.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the programme of archaeological work in accordance with methodologies described in a Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2012b). This report describes the results of the archaeological work.

### 1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The site lies at the northern end of the village of Langford (Fig. 1) at a height of *c.* 32m OD, on ground that slopes gently down to the west towards the River Ivel. It is bordered by arable land to the south and west, with residential development to the north and east. Currently under grass, the site covers an area *c.* 0.27ha in size 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 site.

The earliest written mention of Langford dates to AD944–6 (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.

The trial trench evaluation of the site (Albion Archaeology 2012b) 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 volume of pottery and animal bone recovered was modest but did hint at settlement-related activity in the vicinity. The medieval remains were all at the eastern end of the site, possibly relating to activities that took place to the rear of properties fronting onto Church Street. The archaeological remains were relatively deeply buried at 600–800mm below ground level.

Historical maps show the site to have been open agricultural land since at least 1807, although a mushroom farm was briefly present on the site in the 1980s.

### **1.4 Project Objectives**

Based on the results of the trial trench evaluation, the purpose of the Stage III mitigation works was to record and investigate any medieval settlement remains that might be impacted by the development. Such remains could potentially contribute to important research topics identified in published Research Frameworks for Bedfordshire and the East of England (Brown and Glazebrook 2000; Oake *et al.* 2007; Medlycott 2011) concerning the character and diversity of medieval settlement.



## 2 METHODOLOGY

Archaeological observation of the groundworks took place on the 19th and 22nd March 2012. The monitored groundworks comprised the excavation of services trenches for a water main and foul sewer (Figure 2). These measured c. 0.6m wide and 1–1.5m deep.

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> (2 <sup>nd</sup> edn, 2001).
• Bedford Borough Council	<i>Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedford</i> (2010)
• East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14	Gurney, D. <i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> (2003)
• English Heritage	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i> (2009)
• IfA	<i>By-Laws and Code of Conduct</i> (2010)
	<i>Standard and Guidance for Excavation</i> (2008)
	<i>Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief</i> (2008)

The project archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum (accession no. 2011.77). This report will be uploaded onto the Archaeology Data Service's OASIS website (albionar1-120817).

A detailed methodology is provided in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2012b).





## 3 RESULTS

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### 3.1 Introduction

The monitored groundworks revealed a single archaeological feature. All archaeological deposits and features are summarised below and shown on Figure 2.

### 3.2 Overburden

The overburden observed within the foul sewer trench consisted of a topsoil (701) of dark brown grey silty sand 0.1–0.2m thick, overlying two layers of subsoil. The upper subsoil (703) was a 0.45m thick mid grey brown silty sand whilst the lower subsoil (704) was a 0.15m thick mid/dark brown grey silty sand.

The overburden within the trench for the water main was similar to that observed within the foul sewer, with the addition of a make-up layer (702) sandwiched between the uppermost subsoil and topsoil in the westernmost part of the trench. The 0.3m thick make-up layer consisted of mixed gravel, concrete, brick fragments and dark grey silty sand. The upper subsoil (703) was only 0.2m thick where it lay beneath the make-up layer (compared to 0.45m in the foul sewer to the north), suggesting that the ground had been disturbed prior to the deposition of the make-up layer, probably in association with the construction and demolition of the mushroom farm.

### 3.3 Ditch

A N-S aligned ditch [702], measuring 2.4m wide, was observed beneath the subsoil layers towards the western end of the water main trench (Fig. 2). Due to the confines of the trench it could not be fully excavated, but was at least 0.3m deep. Its fill comprised a mid grey clay silt (707) that produced no artefacts.

The alignment and character of the ditch suggest it is a continuation of a medieval ditch [504] recorded in Trench 5, *c.* 14m to the south (Fig. 2).

The ditch was not observed within the foul sewer trench *c.* 2.5m to the north, suggesting that it either turns or terminates shortly after its location in the water main service trench.

### 3.4 Undisturbed Geological Deposits

Undisturbed geological strata were revealed *c.* 0.8m below the present ground surface and consisted of light brown yellow sandy gravels.



## 4 CONCLUSIONS

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The only archaeological feature revealed during the groundworks was a ditch observed towards the western end of the trench for the water main. Although it contained no artefacts, its alignment and character suggest it is the continuation of a medieval ditch observed during the trial trench evaluation. The ditch is parallel to Church Street, suggesting it is a boundary associated with properties that fronted onto the road.

Thick subsoils and a make-up layer were observed within the foul sewer and water main service trenches, corroborating evidence observed during the trial trenching for the disturbance and levelling of the site during the demolition of the 1980s mushroom farm.



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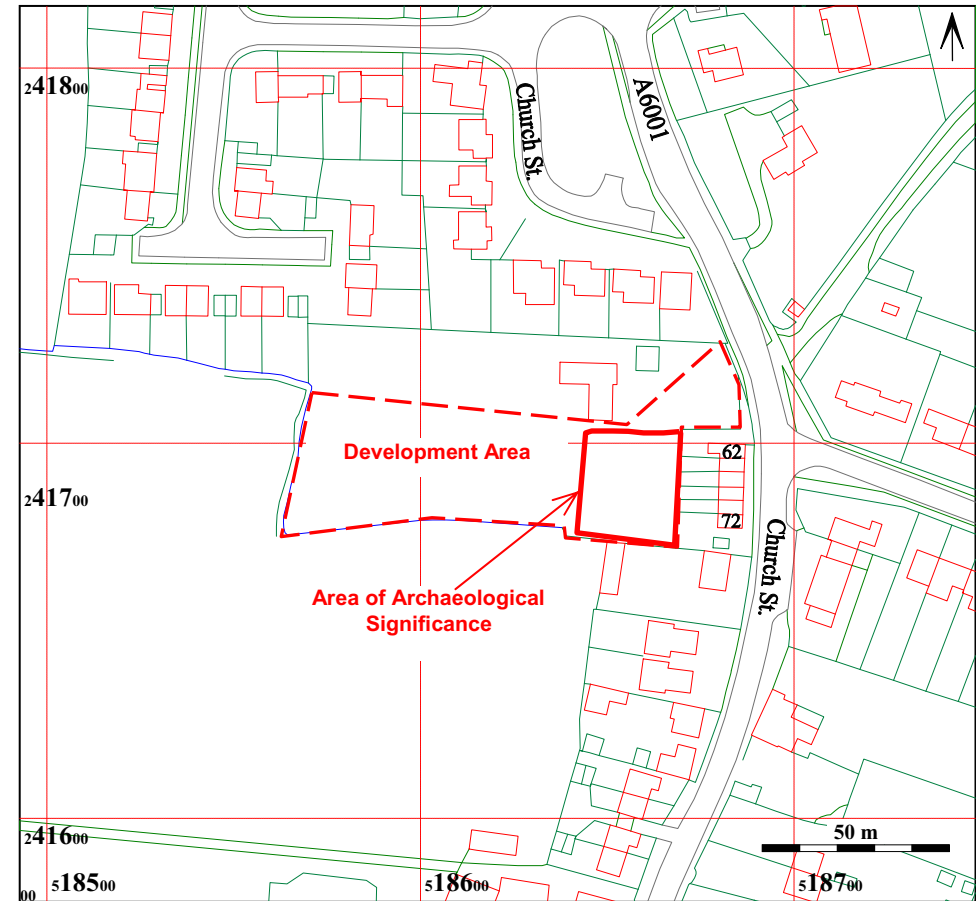
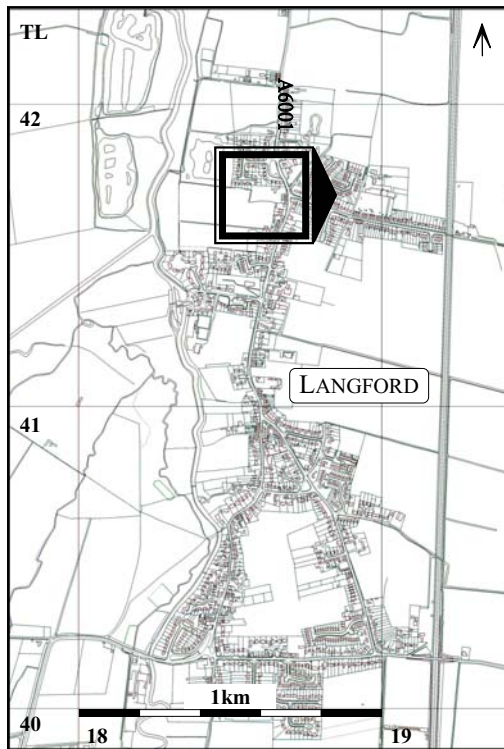
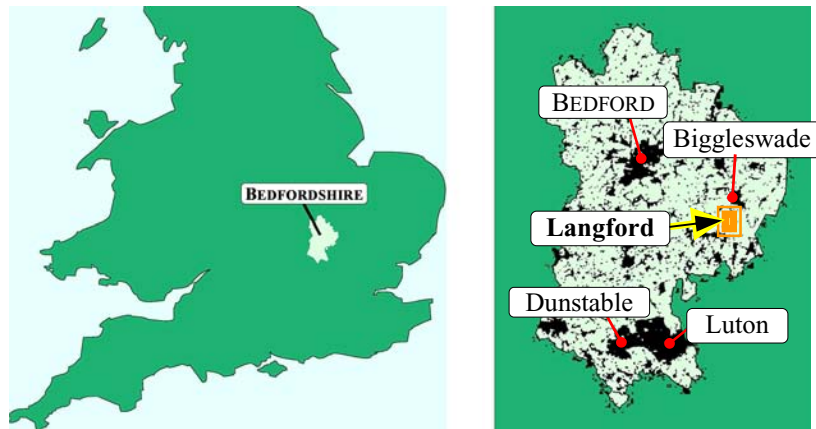
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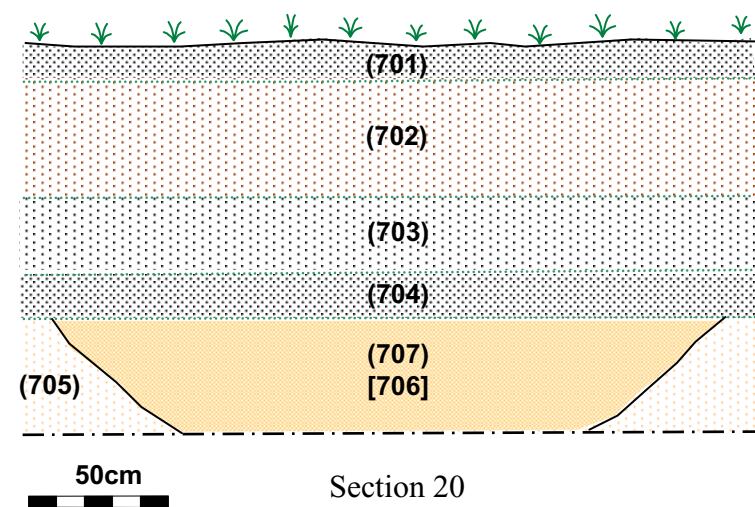
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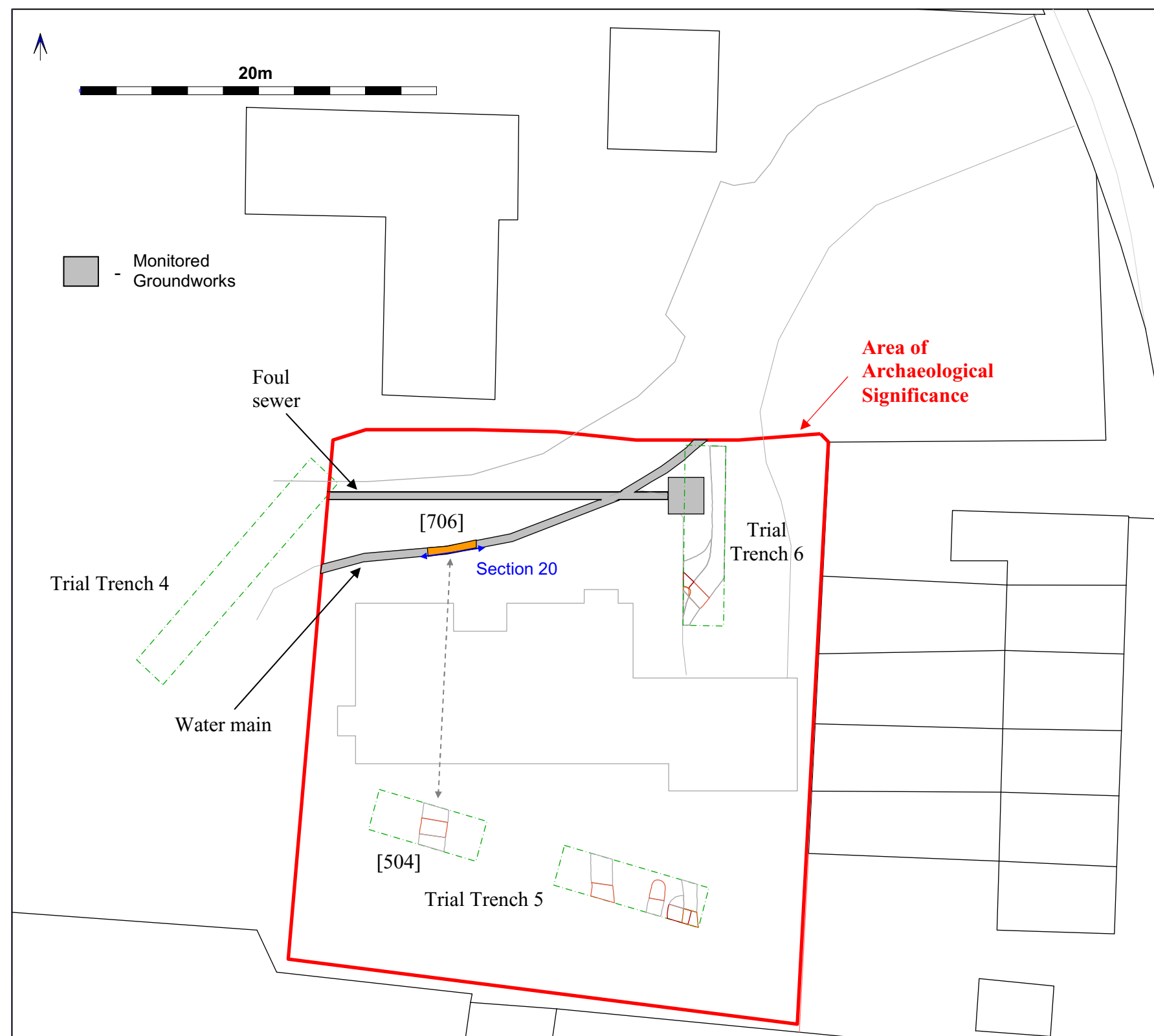


**Figure 1: Site location**

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Ditch [706] – Looking SW. Scale 1m.

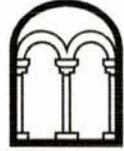


**Figure 2: All features plan**

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