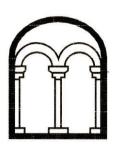
SHERWOOD COTTAGE, KIMBOLTON ROAD, BOLNHURST, BEDFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION, INVESTIGATION, RECORDING ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION

Albion archaeology





SHERWOOD COTTAGE, KIMBOLTON ROAD, BOLNHURST, BEDFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION INVESTIGATION, RECORDING, ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION

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Produced for: Mr John Bellew



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Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation and submission of this document and all statements 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.

The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Geoff Saunders of the Historic Environment Team of Bedford Borough Council.

This document has been prepared by Richard Gregson (Project Supervisor), Jackie Wells (Finds Officer) and Gary Edmondson (Project Manager). It was approved by Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

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	1.0	22nd November 2012	n/a

Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

Client Mr John Bellew
HER Bedford Borough Council Historic Environment Record
HET Historic Environment Team of Bedford Borough Council
IfA Institute for Archaeologists
LPA Local Planning Authority
WSI Written Scheme of Investigation

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 methodology and Section 3 summarises the results. Section 4 is a bibliography. A finds summary is contained in Appendix 1.



Non-Technical Summary

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Mr Bellew to undertake a programme of archaeological works to fulfil a condition (number 3) attached to planning permission for the erection of an extension to the existing building and a detached garage at Sherwood Cottage, Bolnhurst.

The condition was attached as the site had the potential to contain heritage assets of archaeological significance. This was in line with the requirements of PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment (DCLG 2010) and policies within its replacement, the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012).

Sherwood Cottage is located to the north of the centre of Bolnhurst. The building dates from the 18th century and is recorded on the Bedford Borough Historic Environment Record (HER 12031). It occupies a plot of land c. 0.4ha in extent, located on the eastern side of the B660 Kimbolton Road (NGR TL (5)08843 (2)60159). Synehurst, a grade II listed 18th-century cottage, occupies the adjacent plot to the north; the two cottages are surrounded by arable farmland.

The development comprised extending the cottage on the southern side and to the rear, the construction of a detached garage to the south of the dwelling and erection of a boundary fence.

The work was undertaken in two phases, with excavation of the footing trenches for the extension to the existing building being undertaken on 19th November 2010. The second component of the project requiring monitoring consisted of excavation of the footing trenches for the detached garage, which were opened on 8th August 2012. The posts for the boundary fence had minimal impact on the buried archaeological remains.

Both areas of ground disturbance associated with the excavation of footing trenches revealed modern deposits associated with the current cottage. Below these deposits, two large linear features were revealed extending roughly NE-SW, being identified in both areas. It is possible that the deep early feature in the south was a quarry / pond, rather than a ditch, similar to ones depicted in the vicinity on the 1884 Ordnance Survey map; this line being subsequently used as a boundary to define a narrow land parcel close to the road. This would appear to correlate to the sinuous boundary defining the eastern boundary of the plot associated with Sherwood Cottage, as depicted on the 1884 Ordnance Survey map; the finds indicate a similar date. A spread of material extending into the upper part of the later ditch contained fragments of construction material incorporating large quantities of straw, subsequently rendered in concrete. This is probably derived from the demolition of an outbuilding in the vicinity.

No remains of archaeological significance were revealed within the footings trenches. There is no potential for further analysis or publication.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Planning permission has been granted both for an extension to Sherwood Cottage, Bolnhurst and for construction of a detached double garage in the garden of the property. As the proposed development was within an area of archaeological sensitivity, an archaeological condition (number 3) was attached by the LPA. This was in line with the requirements of PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment (DCLG 2010) and policies within its replacement, the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012). Full details on the planning history of the site are set out in the brief issued by the Historic Environment Team (HET) for the archaeological work required to address the condition (HET 2010).

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Mr Bellew to formulate a Written Scheme of Investigation (2010), which set out the procedures and methods to be employed during the project and to undertake the archaeological works.

1.2 Site Location and Description

Sherwood Cottage is located to the north of the centre of Bolnhurst. It occupies a plot of land *c*. 0.4ha in extent on the eastern side of the B660 Kimbolton Road (NGR TL (5)08843 (2)60159 (Figure 1). The cottage has its origins in the 18th century. Synehurst, a grade II listed 18th-century cottage, occupies the adjacent plot to the north; the two cottages are surrounded by arable farmland. The development involved extending the cottage on the southern side and to the rear, together with the construction of a detached garage to the south of the dwelling, and erection of a boundary fence.

Sherwood Cottage is situated on fairly level ground at *c*. 73m OD. The drift geology of the area comprises yellow brown Boulder Clay over a solid geology of Oxford Clay.

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

Little previous archaeological work has been undertaken in Bolnhurst. However, the development site had good potential to preserve archaeological remains related to medieval settlement in the area.

The settlement is mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086, suggesting that it dates to at least the late Saxon period. The church is located some distance from the modern settlement, indicating a shift in habitation.

The area was affected by the creation of the turnpike in 1795, linking Kimbolton to Bedford, the route of which is now followed by the B660 road.

The development is located at the centre of a series of cropmarks (HER14033) that may represent the ploughed-out remains of linear medieval and early post-medieval settlement to the north of the Turnpike Farm and Manor Farm crossroads, which lay at the centre of Bury End, one of the foci of the village.



The cropmarks form a series of small rectangular enclosures with associated possible ponds; they abut both the east and west sides of the Kimbolton Road in the immediate vicinity of Sherwood Cottage.

Within the surrounding agricultural land the underlying archaeological remains have been subject to modern plough damage. Sherwood Cottage (HER12031) dates to the 18th century and, as a result, the plot of land on which it is located has not been subject to modern ploughing.

Further archaeological remains are recorded within the vicinity of the site. The moated site at Turnpike Farm (HER3889) (also a Scheduled Monument) lies 175m to the south. A medieval penny of Henry III (HER14967) was discovered 220m to the south-east on farmland owned by Wood End Farm.

1.4 Historical Maps

The 1777 Draft Enclosure Map (BS 905), held at the Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service, shows the enclosed landscape before creation of the turnpike (Figure 2: Map 1). This indicates an extensive network of tracks linking the fields. The site is located at an intersection, with the rectangular plot (number 30) occupied by a building located away from the road, towards the northern margin of the plot.

The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1884 shows the impact of the creation of the turnpike, almost 100 years earlier, with the main road turning sharply to the west, whilst the road to the north is relegated to a footpath (Figure 2: Map 2). The elongated building corresponding to Sherwood Cottage occupies a small irregular plot of land having an elongated tapering form, widest in the north and tapering to a point against the road in the south. The eastern boundary of the plot is sinuous and very close to the cottage. The main building is composed of four defined elements with smaller outbuildings. A series of elongated, irregular ponds occupy the area further to the east.

1.5 Project Objectives

The general objectives of the investigation were to determine:

- the nature of any archaeological remains that may be present;
- the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological remains.

The specific objectives of the investigation were to determine:

• if there was any evidence for the survival of medieval or early postmedieval linear settlement on the site.

The project had the potential to add to the knowledge and understanding of the origins and development of this part of Bolnhurst. Tightly nucleated medieval settlements are rare on the north Bedfordshire claylands. Most villages took the form of long rows of houses with gaps and Bolnhurst is a typical example. Its main north-south axis stretched for almost 2km along the road to Bedford from Bury End to South End, with shorter rows along the road to Cambridge and the now vanished West End (Brown and Taylor 1991, 28, fig. 10). Elsewhere in Bedfordshire linear villages of this type have been dated to the



12th century on the basis of pottery found during fieldwalking (Brown and Taylor 1989).

Medieval Bedfordshire was characterised by a varied settlement pattern. It is recognised in regional research frameworks that a detailed understanding of that pattern, the chronology of its elements and how the various parts articulated has yet to be established (Oake 2007, 14).



2. METHODOLOGY

All groundworks associated with the construction of the extension and detached garage that had the potential to reveal archaeological remains were archaeologically monitored.

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

- If A's Code of Conduct (2010);
- If A's Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs and Field Excavations (updated 2008) and finds (updated 2008);
- Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual for Archaeological Fieldwork and the Analysis of Fieldwork Records* (2001);
- English Heritage's Management of Archaeological Projects (1991);
- English Heritage's Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation (Second Edition) (2011).



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

The work was undertaken in two phases, with excavation of the footing trenches for the extension to the existing building being undertaken on 19th November 2010. On 8th August 2012, the second element comprising excavation of the footing trenches for the detached garage was undertaken. The excavation of the posts for the associated boundary fence did not have a significant archaeological impact.

The results are discussed by area (after discussion of modern disturbance); the archaeological features are, where possible, discussed chronologically from earliest to latest. The numbers in brackets refer to the contexts assigned on site with square brackets [] identifying cuts, whilst associated fills or layers are in curved brackets (). Finds data has been integrated into the text, with a table summarising the finds information in Appendix 1. Figure 3 shows the all-features plan, with associated sections; with Figures 4-6 contain selected images.

3.2 Footings for Building Extension

The groundworks comprised breaking out of concrete (9) associated with a former path adjacent to the existing house and 0.1–0.2m of ground reduction within the new building footprint. The extension measured approximately 8.5m NE-SW by up to 4m, defining the NE, SW and SE sides of the extension (Figure 3). The footings trench were 0.6m wide by up to 1m deep, extending into the yellow brown clay of the undisturbed geological strata. The base of the trench quickly filled with water — preventing access — with recording being undertaken from outside the trench.

3.2.1 Former cultivation soil

The mid brown silty clay topsoil (1) was up to 0.4m thick, indicating a former cultivation soil, possibly a vegetable patch associated with the cottage or possibly a ploughsoil, though such deposits tend to be *c*. 0.3m thick. This deposit was above a mid orange-brown silty clay subsoil (7) at least 0.15m thick, with occasional small stones. These deposits were mainly confined to the eastern side of the area, beyond later activity.

3.2.2 Earlier linear feature

Aligned NE-SW, feature [3] was recorded in the NE and SW parts of the footings trench. It was at least 2.1m across, with a concave profile up to 0.6m deep (Figure 3 – dark green feature, Figure 4: images 1 and 2). The upper part of the profile was truncated by a later linear feature on a similar alignment (see Section 3.2.3 below). The lower fill (4) was a dark grey to black highly organic deposit up to 0.25m thick, filling the base of the cut, with a roughly horizontal upper profile. Above this was mid grey silty clay (8) up to 0.4m thick, with occasional small stones. This deposit would appear to have accumulated naturally. A piece of modern ceramic saucer (22g), was recovered from the upper part of this deposit, near the interface with the later



linear feature; it is not clear if this provides reliable dating for this feature, or if the pottery is intrusive, being associated with the later feature. The close proximity to the standing cottage suggests that this feature was earlier (Figure 3 and Figure 4: image 2). A number of rectilinear ponds can be seen in the adjacent field to the east on the 1884 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (Figure 2: Map 2).

3.2.3 Later linear feature

An extensive linear feature [5] had a similar NE-SW alignment. It was at least 3.65m wide and 0.45m deep with concave sides and a flat base (Figure 3 – light green feature, Figure 4: images 1 and 2), extending across the majority of the footprint of the extension. The fill (6) was very mixed containing topsoil and redeposited clay, derived from the underlying geological strata. A variety of objects were seen in this deposit, including various building materials comprising bricks, tiles and distorted pieces of metal including an aluminium washer, as well as fragments of glass jars (not retained).

3.3 Footings for Detached Garage

Situated some 8m SW of the cottage, the garage extended 6m by 6m with the main door on the SW side, resulting in an interrupted footing in this area (Figure 3). The footing trenches were 0.6m wide and up to 1.05m deep, extending into the yellow brown clay of the undisturbed geological strata. The base of the trench quickly filled with water, though this drained away, allowing access.

3.3.1 Modern disturbance

The area consisted of loose aggregate / crushed brick (21), up to 0.25m thick, which had been laid onto the lower part of topsoil (20) (Figure 3: section 1). Two linear drains (Figure 3 – dark grey features) and a soakaway [24] (Figure 3 – orange feature) were associated with the cottage. One drain was of a ceramic-type, whilst the second was of a bituminous-type material; this may have been an earlier outflow pipe from the cottage.

The soakaway [24] was located towards the SE corner of the footings trench, truncating linear feature [15]. It would appear to have been circular in plan, continuing to the NW beyond the footing trench. It was at least 2m wide and 0.6m deep with a concave profile (Figure 3: section 2). It contained two backfilled deposits. The lower fill (25) comprised a 0.27m thick mid reddish brown gravely sand. The upper deposit (26) consisted of loosely consolidated brick and tiles with lumps of re-deposited clay.

3.3.2 Former cultivation soil

The mid to dark brown topsoil (20), which was up to 0.2m thick, continued intermittently across the whole footprint of the garage, though it had been very disturbed by modern activity. The thickness of this deposit indicates a cultivation soil, similar to the deposit observed adjacent to the cottage. Below this was mid brown grey subsoil (23) up to 0.3m thick in the east.



3.3.3 Possible robber trench

Linear feature [10] was aligned NE-SW, roughly parallel to the adjacent road (Figure 3 – dark blue feature and section 1). It was at least 0.6m wide and 0.68m deep with near vertical sides. The mixed fill (11) consisted of dark grey silty clay and light grey clay with frequent chalk flecks; it appears to represent backfill. Seven pieces of discoloured animal bone (103g) were recovered from the basal fill in the northern part of the feature. All are indeterminate long bone fragments, which survive in poor condition, with much surface erosion. The alignment of this feature, which is parallel to the existing cottage, together with the profile of the cut may suggest that it was a robbed out wall footing for a building, rather than a disused service trench.

3.3.4 Earlier linear feature

Aligned roughly NE-SW, linear feature [12] was 3.48m wide and at least 0.68m deep with very steep or near vertical sides (Figure 3 – light purple feature, sections 1 and 2 and Figure 5: image 3). Two naturally accumulated deposits were recorded. The lower mid grey silty clay deposit (13) was 0.36m thick with a roughly horizontal upper boundary, suggesting that it was deposited in water. The mid orange-grey silty clay upper deposit was 0.28m thick. No artefacts were recovered from either deposit. The size of the feature suggests that it was more than a ditch, possibly initially used for clay extraction, then the cavity filled with water, becoming a pond. This would appear to correlate with linear feature [3], adjacent to the cottage in the NE.

3.3.5 Later linear feature

Aligned NE-SW and up to 2.1m wide and 0.7m deep, linear feature [15] was significantly less substantial. It had a markedly asymmetrical profile, being deeper to the SE (Figure 3 – yellow feature: sections 1 and 2, Figure 5: images 3 and 4). The feature contained two deposits (16) and (17) which ranged from mid to dark grey clay silt with a combined thickness of 0.55m (Figure 3: section 2). The asymmetric form of the lower fill (16), suggests that it was derived from unstable material from the east, accumulating in dry conditions. This would appear to be unstable ploughsoil from the arable land to the east. The upper fill (17) extended across the full width of the cut, including the shallow shelf in the west (Figure 3: section 1). Two pieces of a rectangular Belfast-type ceramic sink (total weight 539g) were recovered from these deposits. This is interpreted as a ditch, which continued as [5] to the north, separating the plot containing Sherwood Cottage from the farmland to the east. This partition originated between 1777 and 1884.

3.3.6 Later deposits

Deposits (18) and (19) would appear to have accumulated in the depression created by the settling of the earlier fills. Mid brown orange silty sand (18) was up to 0.25m thick, extending beyond the limits of linear feature [15] (Figure 3 – brown feature: sections 1 and 2 and Figure 5: image 4) indicating that this deposit was a layer rather than a fill of the ditch. The deposit contained frequent slabs of building material up to 0.3m across (627g). On examination the slabs were found to consist of mortar *c*. 10mm thick, with a plaster skim, with several fragments having incised decoration (Figure 6: image 5). The opposite face was composed of densely packed fragments of



chopped straw (Figure 6: image 6). This would appear to be the remains of a clay building (possibly clay lump rather than clay cobb), with straw temper that had subsequently been rendered with concrete, possibly to prevent further weathering / deterioration of the external face of the structure. This is assumed to have been material derived from the demolition of an outbuilding associated with the cottage, rather than material imported on to the site to level the ground.

Above this was dark brown-grey clay (19) up to 0.2m thick. As this was confined within the limits of later linear feature [15] (Figure 3: section 1 – yellow / brown hatched deposit), initially it was mistaken for an associated fill. It appears to be a deposit similar to the topsoil, though it is not clear if this accumulated naturally or was deliberate infilling of the depression created by the settling of the underlying fills.

3.4 Summary

A similar pattern of activity was revealed across the investigation area. The remains of a ploughsoil, truncated by intercutting linear features, dates to the modern period. The earlier linear feature would appear to have been very substantial, suggesting a possible clay quarry, which was left open, becoming a pond. Circumstantial evidence would suggest that this predated the cottage. Subsequently the line of this feature was redefined by a less substantial ditch, which probably relates to the boundary shown on the 1884 Ordnance Survey map, defining the tapering plot adjacent to the road from farmland to the east. It is not clear if this activity was associated with the creation of the turnpike.

Whilst the findings have local significance relating to the subdivision of land in the vicinity, the restricted nature of the investigation limits the potential for understanding the features revealed. There is no potential for further analysis or publication.



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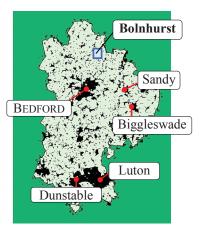
5. APPENDIX 1: FINDS SUMMARY

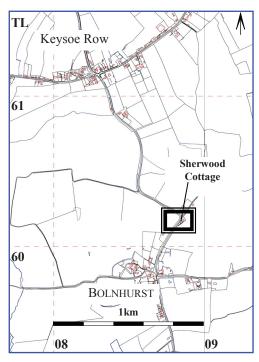
Feature	Description	Context	Spot Date	Finds Summary
3	Ditch	8	Modern	Ceramic saucer (22g)
5	Linear feature	6	Modern	Aluminium washer (1g)
10	Robber trench	11	Undated	Animal bone (103g)
15	Ditch	16	Modern	Belfast sink fragment (52g)
15	Ditch	17	Modern	Belfast sink fragment (487g)
18	Layer	18	Modern	Building material (627g)

 Table 1: Artefact Summary by Feature









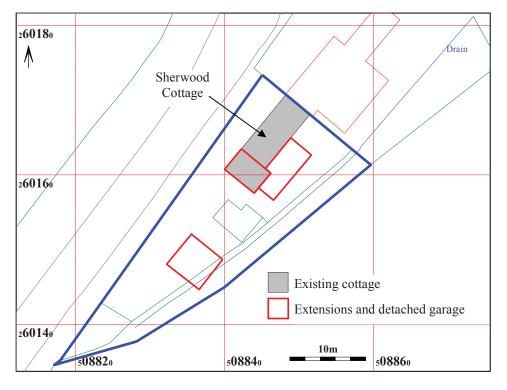
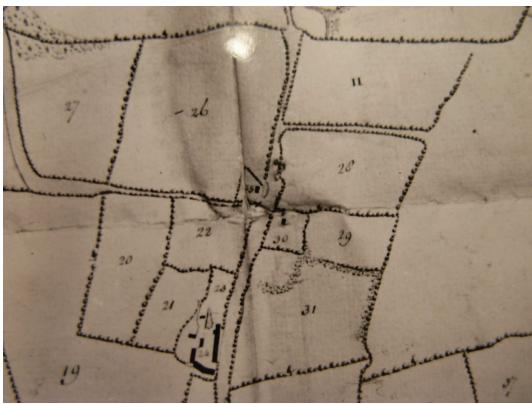


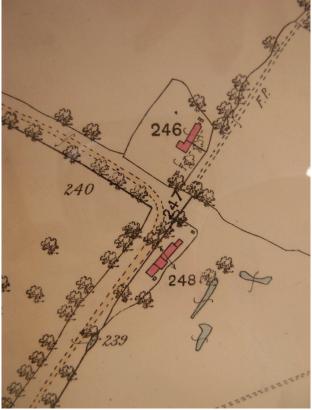
Figure 1: Site location plan

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Map 1: Detail of 1777 Draft Enclosure Map, showing area prior to creation of turnpike. Plot 30 on the map includes the location of the current cottage.



Map 2: Detail of 1884 first edition Ordnance Survey map centred on the site.

Figure 2: Historical maps



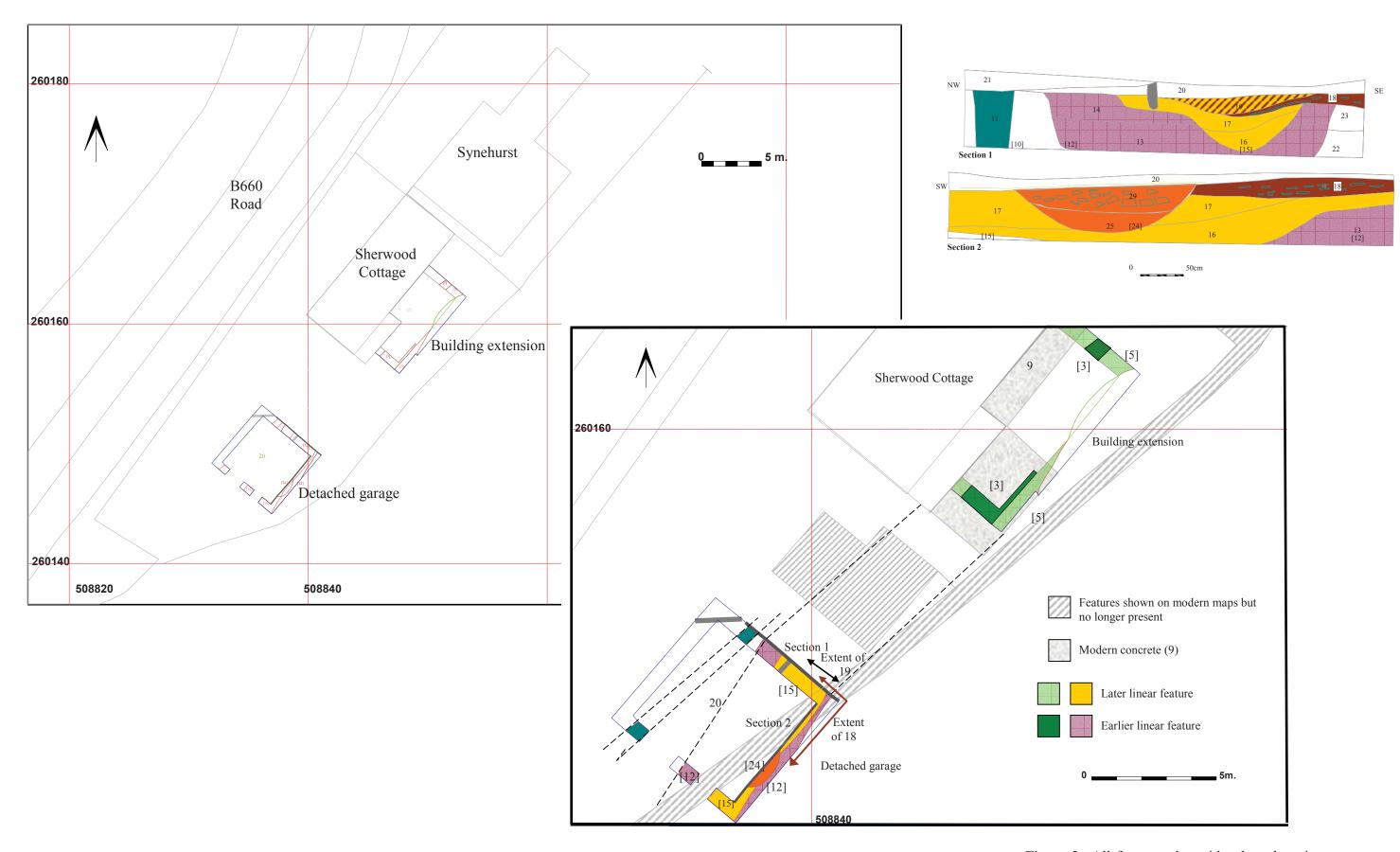


Figure 3: All-features plan with selected sections





Image 1: The north-east corner of the footing trench, showing linear features [3] and [5]. The dark fill (4) of the earlier feature [3] is clearly visible towards the centre of the image. Scale 1m in 50cm divisions.



Image 2: .South-east corner of footing trench, showing linear features [3] and [5]. The dark lower fill (4) of the earlier cut [3] is clearly visible towards the standing cottage at the top left of the image.

Figure 4: Selected images 1 and 2 – building extension





Image 3: Central part of northern section of footing trench, showing black drainage pipe immediately to the left of the ranging rod. The western edge of earlier linear feature [12] is visible against the cleaner geological strata to the left of the image, with the darker fills of [15] to the right. Scale 1m in 50cm divisions.



Image 4: Root disturbed area of soakaway [24] with associated deposits truncating the more extensive fills of later linear feature [15]. The band of material (18), which contained fragments of building material, is visible to the top right of the image.

Figure 5: Selected images 3 and 4 – detached garage





Image 5: Fragment of building material, with decorated concrete render external face. Scale 5cm in 1 cm divisions.



Image 6: Detail of reverse face of building material showing dense fragments of chopped straw

Figure 6: Selected images 5 and 6 – building material from later ditch



Albion archaeology



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