

**THE OUTDOOR CENTRE
HILLGROUNDS ROAD
KEMPSTON
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

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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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Structure of the Report

After the introductory Section 1, there is a summary of the results of the programme of archaeological observation and recording in Section 2, followed by a brief conclusion (Section 3). Section 4 is a bibliography and Appendix 1 contains an archaeological context summary.

Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

<i>Albion</i>	Albion Archaeology
<i>Client</i>	Bedfordshire County Council
<i>IFA</i>	Institute of Field Archaeologists
<i>Procedures Manual</i>	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork, 2nd Edition 2001.</i> Bedfordshire County Council



Non-Technical Summary

In March 2005 Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Bedfordshire County Council to undertake a programme of archaeological observation. This was to occur during the erection of posts for climbing apparatus, including a rope course, at The Outdoor Centre, Hillgrounds Road, Kempston, Bedfordshire.

The study area is located within the northern edge of the village of Kempston and c.15m east of the river Great Ouse. It is c.650m² in extent and is centred at National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 0273 4794. It lies at approximately c.35.9m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) within the floodplain of the river Great Ouse. The soils of the area are derived from the underlying geology of alluvial deposits and fluvial gravel and sands.

The study area is located within a rich archaeological landscape with evidence existing from the Mesolithic to the post-medieval periods.

Although no archaeological remains or artefacts were uncovered during the investigations, useful information on the depth of overburden within this area was recorded. The postholes that were excavated have established that any archaeological features cut into the river terrace will be sealed by c.1.50m of overburden (topsoil and subsoil/alluvium).

This is likely to have protected any surviving archaeological remains from moderate modern disturbance. This is illustrated by the presence of brick rubble in postholes 2, 4 and 5, at a height well above the river terrace.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Planning Background*

Bedfordshire County Council was granted planning permission to construct climbing apparatus including a rope course and 3 metre high security fencing at Kempston Outdoor Centre, Hillgrounds Road, Kempston, Bedfordshire. This involved groundworks in order to construct the settings and anchors required for the apparatus.

Bedfordshire County Council's Archaeological Officer (BCC's AO) advised that the area of the development is archaeologically sensitive and within an area of high archaeological potential. Finds dating from the Mesolithic to the post-medieval periods have been found in the immediate vicinity.

A brief was issued by BCC's AO (BCC 2004). Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Bedfordshire County Council to prepare a project design to undertake a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication of the site (Albion Archaeology 2004a).

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The study area is located within the northern edge of the village of Kempston and c.15m east of the river Great Ouse. It is c.650m² in extent and is centred at National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 0273 4794.

The study area lies at approximately c.35.9m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) within the floodplain of the river Great Ouse. The soils of the area are derived from the underlying geology of alluvial deposits and fluvial gravel and sands.

1.3 *Archaeological Background*

The study area is located within a rich archaeological landscape with evidence existing from the Mesolithic to the post-medieval periods.

Excavations in 1994 at Kempston Manor (c.250m south-west of the study area) uncovered structures and boundary ditches dating from the Saxo-Norman period. These deposits were identified preserved under 1.20m of modern make up layers (BCAS 1995, BCAS 1994 and Crick and Dawson 1994). This layer was also encountered during recent work immediately to the south-east (Albion 2004b)

Excavations in 1986 at the present Sainsbury's Superstore site (c.460m to the south-east of the study area) produced extensive remains dating from the prehistoric, Roman and Saxon periods (Kennett 1986). A large Saxon cemetery was discovered here in the 19th century (Page 1904, 176-84). This cemetery contained some of the earliest Saxon artefacts known in England, dating from the first half of the 5th century, leading some to believe that the first burials on site actually date from the late Roman period.

A hoard of Roman silver coins deposited c.AD395 was discovered during house building on the Hillgrounds estate in 1976 (Simco 1984 p107-108).



Various watching briefs in the locality have also produced evidence of archaeological features at much shallower depths than those encountered at Kempston Manor. These have indicated the variable depth at which archaeological deposits are encountered within the area (Albion Archaeology 2002 and BCAS 1996)



2. RESULTS OF OBSERVATION AND RECORDING

2.1 Introduction

The programme of archaeological observation was undertaken on the 30th March 2005. During this period all groundworks requiring archaeological monitoring were completed.

Detailed technical information on all deposits and archaeological features discussed below can be found in Appendix 1.

2.2 Methodology

The programme of archaeological observation adhered to the field methods set out in the Project Design (Albion Archaeology 2004a) specifically;

- 1 All excavation was monitored to try to identify *in situ* archaeological deposits.
- 2 All disturbed soil was scanned for artefacts.
- 3 Potential archaeological deposits were investigated to determine stratigraphic relationships and to recover artefactual material.
- 4 All deposits were fully recorded in accordance with Albion's *Procedures Manual* and the Project Design.
- 5 All archaeological observations were recorded at a suitable scale on base plans that were tied in to the OS national grid.
- 6 Significant features were recorded using a digital camera.

Throughout the project the standards set out in the Institute of Field Archaeologists Codes of Conduct and Standards and Guidance documents (specifically *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, September 1999), in English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991) and Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual* were adhered to.

2.3 Extent and Nature of Groundworks

The groundworks consisted of the excavation of six postholes within an area of c.100m² to the south-west of The Outdoor Centre (See Figure 1). The post settings were excavated by a wheeled excavator (JCB) with a 0.5m wide toothed bucket. They were approximately 2.5m in length, 0.6m in width and 2m in depth to accommodate 16m high posts.

2.4 Observations

2.4.1 Topsoil

The current ground surface consisted of topsoil (100), (200), (300), (400), (500) and (600). This was encountered in all of the postholes to a depth of 0.3m.

2.4.2 Modern Disturbance

Modern disturbance, underlying the topsoil and partially disturbing the subsoil, was encountered to the west of the study area in postholes 2, 4 and 5. It consisted of a very compacted layer of rubble (204) (404) (504) approximately



0.1m in depth and 0.3m below the current ground surface. This layer probably derives from the original construction of the centre.

2.4.3 Subsoil/Alluvium

Underlying topsoil, a subsoil of likely alluvial origin was encountered approximately 0.4m thick (101), (202), (301), (401), (501) and (601). This has been subject to modern disturbance around postholes 2, 4 and 5 (Section 2.4.2). A further underlying subsoil/alluvial deposit was approximately 0.8m thick (102), (202), (302), (402), (502) and (602). This was observed overlying geological deposits.

2.4.4 Geological Deposits

The underlying geological deposits (103), (203), (303), (404), (505) and (606) consisted of river gravels and were encountered at approximately 1.6m below the current ground surface.



3. CONCLUSION

Although no archaeological remains or artefacts were uncovered during the investigations, useful information on the depth of overburden within this area was recorded. The postholes that were excavated have established that any archaeological features cut into the river terrace will be sealed by c.1.50m of overburden (topsoil and subsoil/alluvium).

This is likely to have protected any surviving archaeological remains from moderate modern disturbance. This is illustrated by the presence of brick rubble in postholes 2, 4 and 5, at a height well above the river terrace.



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5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1, Context Summary



Posthole: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 2.50 m. Width: 0.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.7 m. Max: 1.6 m.

OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: TL0273447944 Ref. 2: TL0273647944

Reason: Post setting

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Topsoil	Plastic dark grey brown silty clay occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Subsoil	Friable mid red brown sandy silt moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Alluvium	Friable mid red brown sandy silt moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Natural	Loose light yellow brown sandy gravel . Fine natural river deposit posthole construction extended c. 0.4m into this material.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Posthole: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 2.50 m. Width: 0.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.7 m. Max: 1.6 m.

OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: TL0273147928 Ref. 2: TL0273347927

Reason: Post setting.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
200	Topsoil	Plastic dark grey brown silty clay moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
201	Subsoil	Friable mid red brown sandy silt moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
202	Alluvium	Friable mid red brown sandy silt moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
203	Natural	Loose light yellow brown sandy gravel . Fine natural river deposit posthole construction extended c. 0.4m into this material.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
204	Dump material	Cemented mid red grey sandy brick . Modern dump of building rubble.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Posthole: 3

Max Dimensions: Length: 2.50 m. Width: 0.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.7 m. Max: 1.6 m.

OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: TL0274147928 Ref. 2: TL0274047925

Reason: Post setting

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
300	Topsoil	Plastic dark grey brown silty clay occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
301	Subsoil	Friable mid red brown sandy silt moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
302	Alluvium	Friable mid red brown sandy silt moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
303	Natural	Loose light yellow brown sandy gravel . Fine natural river deposit posthole construction extended c. 0.4m into this material.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Posthole: 4

Max Dimensions: Length: 2.50 m. Width: 0.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.7 m. Max: 1.6 m.

OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: TL0273247935 Ref. 2: TL2734647934

Reason: Post setting

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
400	Topsoil	Plastic dark grey brown silty clay moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
401	Subsoil	Friable mid red brown sandy silt moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
402	Alluvium	Friable mid red brown sandy silt moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
403	Natural	Loose light yellow brown sandy gravel . Fine natural river deposit posthole construction extended c. 0.4m into this material.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
404	Dump material	Cemented mid red grey sandy brick . Modern dump of building rubble.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Posthole: 5

Max Dimensions: Length: 2.50 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.7 m. Max: 1.6 m.

OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: TL0273347940 Ref. 2: TL0273647939

Reason: Post setting

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
500	Tarmac	Plastic dark grey brown silty clay moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
501	Subsoil	Friable mid red brown sandy silt moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
502	Alluvium	Loose mid red brown sandy silt moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
503	Natural	Loose light yellow grey sandy gravel . Fine natural river deposit posthole construction extended c. 0.4m into this material.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
504	Dump material	Cemented mid red grey sandy brick . Modern dump of building rubble.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Posthole: 6
Max Dimensions: Length: 2.50 m. Width: 0.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.7 m. Max: 1.6 m.
OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: TL0273747929 Ref. 2: TL2736647926
Reason: Post setting

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
600	Topsoil	Plastic dark grey brown silty clay moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
601	Subsoil	Friable mid red brown sandy silt moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
602	Alluvium	Friable mid red brown sandy silt moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
603	Natural	Loose light yellow brown sandy gravel . Fine natural river deposit posthole construction extended c. 0.4m into this material.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

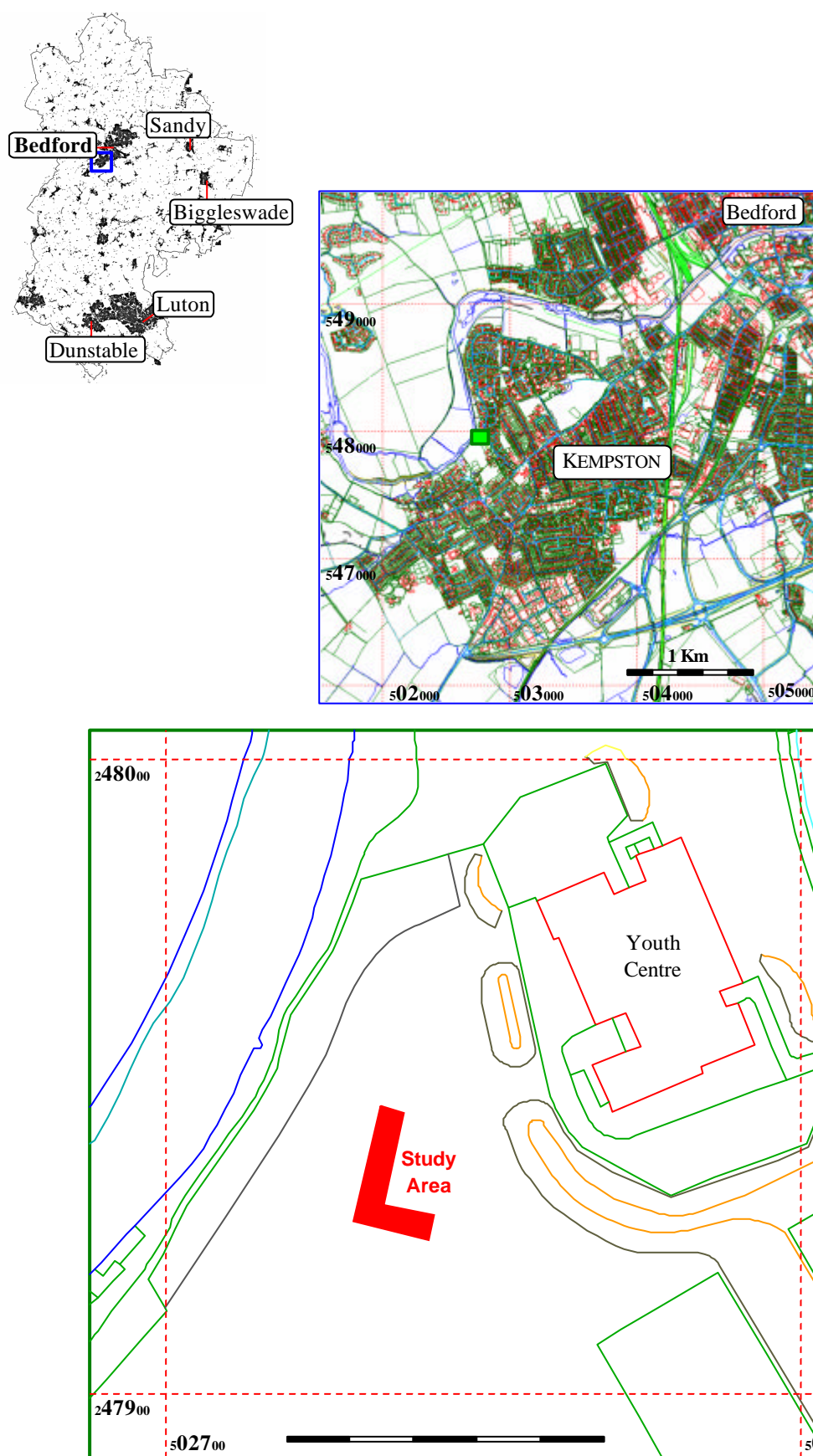


Figure 1: Site location map

Base map reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, by Bedfordshire County Council, County Hall, Bedford. OS Licence No. 076465(LA). © Crown Copyright.

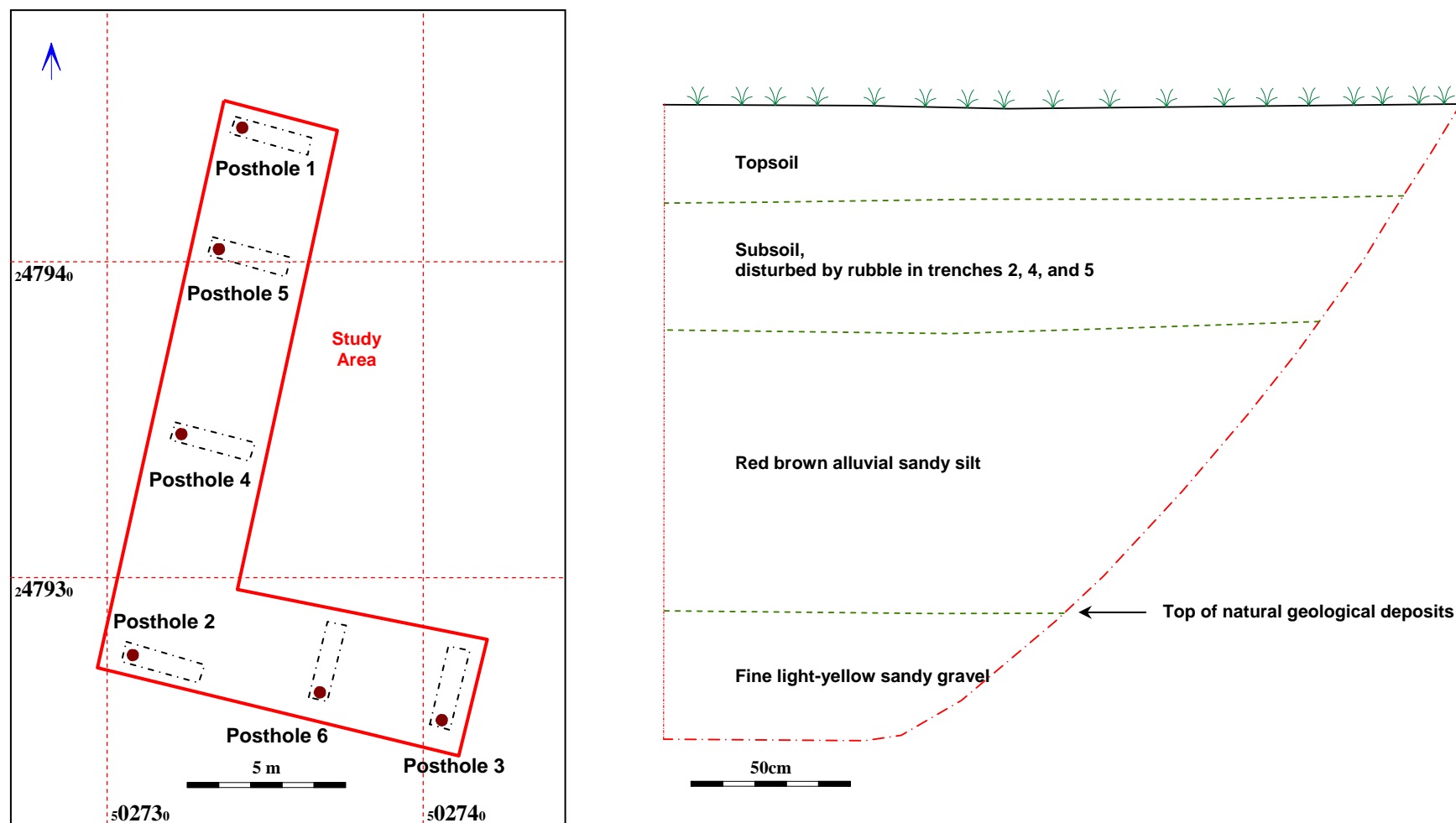


Figure 2: Plan of postholes and representative section



Plate 1:
General shot during excavation



Plate 2:
Representative posthole



Plate 3:
General shot during post erection