LAND AT VICTORIA ALLOTMENTS, WEST STREET, DUNSTABLE, BEDFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

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Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete an assessment as possible, within the terms of the specification. 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.

This report has been prepared by Dan Hounsell (Archaeological Supervisor) and Joe Abrams (Project Manager). The trial trenching was undertaken by Dan Hounsell. The figures were prepared by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). The artefact summary was prepared by Jackie Wells (Finds Officer). The project was under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

Albion Archaeology is grateful to Richard Walden of Dunstable Town Council for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Dave Smith of West Street Cemetery for his assistance during the evaluation and to Nick Stamp of Babtie Group for supplying copies of the utilities plans. We would also like to acknowledge the comments of Martin Oake, County Archaeological Officer who monitored the site on behalf of Bedfordshire County Council.

Albion Archaeology
St Mary's Church
St Mary's Street
Bedford, MK42 0AS
☎: 01234 294001
Fax: 01234 294008
e-mail: office@albion-arch.com
Website: www.albion-arch.com

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Structure of this Report

Section 1 serves as an introduction to the site, describing its location, archaeological background and the aims of the project. The methodology and results of the trial trenching are discussed in section 2, while section 3 provides a synthesis of the results, and states their significance within the surrounding landscape. Section 4 is a bibliography and Appendix 1 contains summary information for all the trenches.

Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

BCC's CAO	Bedfordshire County Council's County Archaeological Officer
Client	Dunstable Town Council
HER	Historic Environment Record [Bedfordshire's sites and monuments record]
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists
Procedures Manual	*Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork*, 2nd edn, 2001 Albion Archaeology

Non-Technical Summary

In July 2004 Albion Archaeology undertook an archaeological field evaluation on Land at Victoria Allotments, West Street, Dunstable, Bedfordshire on behalf of Dunstable Town Council. The aim was to establish the extant and condition of any archaeological remains located within the study area in advance of a planning application to extend the boundaries of the current cemetery. The evaluation would also allow an appropriate mitigation strategy to be developed.

The site lay close to the historic core of Dunstable. A small Roman town, known as Durocobrivis, *existed at this location and developed at the crossroads of a Roman road known as Watling Street and a prehistoric routeway known as the Icknield Way. The intersection of these two routes undoubtedly made Dunstable a strategically important location for settlement and trade during all periods.*

Three trenches were opened comprising a total area 72.10m^2. Trench 1 was located within a grass verge located immediately adjacent to West Street (Figures 1 and 2) a short distance north-east of the existing cemetery. Trenches 2 and 3 were placed in grassed area in the north-eastern part of the cemetery (Figures 1 and 2).

Within Trench 1 a series of wheel ruts were recorded, indicating the presence of a well rutted track or road which had formerly existed at this location. It is suggested that these are likely to be the remains of part of the Icknield Way which is believed to have been located along the same line as modern-day West Street. Therefore, the existence of wheel ruts on this site has added significance.

Trench 2 contained a ditch from which an unabraded sherd of early Roman pottery was recovered. On this basis it is suggested that this ditch may have lined the Icknield way during the Roman period. Trench 3 contained no significant archaeological features.

This evaluation has been extremely valuable in identifying a likely section of the Icknield Way, one of the oldest communication routes in Britain. By so doing it has augmented our overall knowledge of this route and its relationship with the town of Dunstable.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning Background

A planning application (03/1226) was submitted to South Bedfordshire District Council for the change of use of the allotments to a cemetery extension on land at Victoria allotments, West Street, Dunstable, Bedfordshire. The application was subsequently withdrawn.

However, as the local planning authority's archaeological adviser, Bedfordshire County Council's, Assistant County Archaeological Officer (BCC's CAO) has advised that the area still being considered for development is within an archaeologically sensitive location. BCC's CAO issued a brief (BCC 2004a), outlining a three-staged approach to the programme of archaeological work required at the site:

- 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).

The CAO also issued a brief for the Stage I archaeological field evaluation (BCC 2004b). This confirmed that trial trenching was required on the northern part of the site adjacent to West Road. The remainder of the application area will require further evaluation when access can be arranged (BCC 2004a, section 2.6).

Albion Archaeology has been commissioned by Dunstable Town Council to undertake the evaluation of the site, and to prepare a report (this document) on the results.

1.2 Site Location and Description

The development area lies within the historic core of Dunstable, approximately 0.75km south-west of the High Street-Church Street-West Street crossroads. The proposed cemetery extension comprises an area *c.*0.83ha in size. It is centred on grid reference TL 0127 2157.

The proposed extension is an irregular shape in plan. It lies at *c.*155m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) on land currently in mixed use as allotments, Highways Agency land and a grassed area within the existing cemetery. The site is bordered by West Street to the north-west, residential buildings to the north-east and the existing cemetery to the south-east and south-west.

Within this proposed extension the study site is split into two unequal halves. The eastern half comprises 0.03ha. located on the very northern edge of the area, on an area of grassed roadside verge, fronting west street (on the southern side of the street). The Western half of the evaluation area comprises 0.10ha. of well kept grasses, unused, cemetery land located on the northern edge of the cemetery site, just south of the main cemetery building.

The natural soils of the area are derived from the underlying middle chalk and clay geology (British Geological Survey 2001).

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site lies close to the historic core of Dunstable. This town has its origins in the Roman period during which a small town, known as *Durocobrivis*, developed at the crossroads of a Roman road known as Watling Street (now approximated by the line of High Street North and High Street South) and a prehistoric routeway known as the Icknield Way (now defined by the line of Church Street and West Street).

Watling Street connected London (*Londinium*) with north-west England and the Icknield Way is believed to have stretched from Ivinghoe Beacon in Buckinghamshire to Knettishall Heath in Norfolk. The intersection of these two routes doubtless made Dunstable a strategically important location for settlement and trade during all periods. As a result, the town is situated within a landscape rich in archaeological remains particularly of the prehistoric and Roman periods.

A thorough and detailed archaeological background to Dunstable is presented in Albion Archaeology's *Extensive Urban Survey for Bedfordshire: Dunstable Archaeological Assessment* (Albion Archaeology, 2003). A summary of the relevant sections of this is presented below.

1.3.1 Prehistoric (before AD43)

Evidence for human occupation of this area, possibly associated with the Icknield Way, comes from a large number of stone tools dating to the Palaeolithic and Neolithic periods. Many of these came from the Puddlehill quarry site in nearby Caddington (*c.*2.5km to the south-east of the study site), and Blows Downs (*c.*1.5km to the south-east) on the southern edge of Dunstable (Smith 1894 and 1904, Hudspith 1991).

The arrival of agriculture in Britain during the 4th millennium BC was accompanied by the gradual establishment of permanent settlements and an upsurge in religious activity manifested by elaborate ritual burial and impressive communal field monuments. The Neolithic (*c.*3000BC - *c.*2000BC) causewayed camp at Maiden Bower (Caddington) is one example of this phenomenon (Hudspith 1991).

A number of Bronze age Barrows are known to have existed in and around modern Dunstable, including the Five Knolls barrows (HER 138), to the south-west of the town. In addition to this, a mound, investigated by the Manshead Archaeological Society in 1992 at Priory Road (*c.*0.5km to the south-east of the study area), has been interpreted as a Bronze age barrow (Warren 1993).

Extensive and varied settlement evidence dating to the Iron Age (*c.*700BC - 1st century AD) was recovered during excavation work at Puddlehill Quarry. At that time the area around Dunstable lay within the territory of the hillfort at Maiden

Bower (Hudspith 1991). Excavations at Bull Pond Lane (*c.*0.3m south-east of the study area) revealed sherds of Iron Age pottery (Hudspith 1991).

An archaeological evaluation undertaken by AOC Archaeology (BCC 2004b) in the frontage of Court Drive, *c.*1km to the east of the current study site, identified areas of archaeological interest. However, the features identified contained no datable artefacts. It is thought that they may relate to more extensive settlement identified under the Asda car park located immediately west of Court Drive (BCC 2004b).

A small trench opened by the Manshead Society in 2002 (BCC 2004b) in the parkland associated with Dunstable leisure centre, *c.*0.9km to the east of the study site, identified a number of postholes, which may represent the remains of Iron Age activity.

1.3.2 Romano-British (AD 43-410)

The Roman colonisation of the region had considerable administrative and economic impact, including the establishment of *Durocobrivis* (Dunstable).

Finds from this period include building foundations and pottery found at the foot of Blow's Downs. Also, corn-drying kilns, some traces of buildings and a variety of artefacts were uncovered during excavations at Puddlehill Quarry.

An archaeological excavation by Northamptonshire Archaeology on the site of the former Queensway Hall identified a number of ditches and pits dating to the later part of the first century AD (Northamptonshire Archaeology 2001). The quantity of pottery recovered indicated that the site may be associated with settlement although no structural elements were identified within the excavation area.

The Manshead Archaeological Society have undertaken a number of excavations at sites in the south-western quadrant of Dunstable (within 0.7km of the study site) which have uncovered numerous Roman ditches, a possible Roman well and a number of cross-shaped features. It is thought these may represent the remains of a large Roman building. In addition to this a number of graves dating to the Roman period were investigated in Friary Fields, just off West Street, by the society in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Mathews 1979, 1981). This area was again investigated by Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service in 1988-90 (BCAS project 320).

Excavations at Friary Fields, *c.*0.2km south-east of the study site, by the Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust in 2003 (Murray 2003) revealed further evidence for this substantial Roman cemetery which appears to contain over 100 individuals and spans the 3rd – 5th centuries AD. The burials range from simple 'ditch dumped' inhumations and cut graves through to burials in wooden and in one case, lead, coffins with grave markers. Decapitated burials were also present.

1.3.3 Anglo-Saxon/Danish (AD 410-1066)

A pagan Anglo-Saxon Cemetery is known at Marina Drive, *c.*1km west of the study site. This cemetery was discovered in 1957 during the construction of the

new housing estate. The burials were grouped in a rough quarter circle around a Bronze Age barrow, there were 49 graves in total (Morris 1962, Wingfield 1995). A sunken featured building was also found, along with 6th century pottery, at Puddlehill. Associated with this were a number of burials. Nearly 100 inhumations, of early Saxon date were also found inserted into the side of one of the Bronze Age barrows at Five Knolls.

1.3.4 Medieval (AD 1066-1520)

Population pressure from the 11th century AD onwards led to woodland clearance as the need for arable farmland grew. The lynchets on Blow's Down may be the result of attempts to extend the cultivable area onto the steeper slopes of the chalk uplands. In general, however, this land was more suitable for sheep pasture.

By the end of the 13th century AD Dunstable had become an important centre for the wool trade. A scheduled ancient monument, comprising a holloway and medieval earthworks, lies at Zouches Farm on Blow's Down (1.5km south-east of the study site).

By 1109 Henry I had built himself a residence at 'Kingsbury' (HER 148) on the north side of Church street (*c.*1km north-east of the current study site), although the exact location of the buildings which made up 'Kingsbury' is uncertain.

Dunstable Priory (*c.*500m to the south-east of the study site) was the building in which the divorce of Henry VIII from his first wife Catherine of Aragon was finalised, which led to the establishment of the Church of England, separated from papal rule. The same priory suffered partial demolition during the dissolution of the monasteries which followed (Smith 1904).

In 1259 Henry III invited the Dominican Friars to the town and a Friary was established on the eastern side of what is now High Street South, south of what is now West Street (*c.*0.5km east of the study site). The monastery was dissolved in 1538 and all the buildings were demolished, no trace of the friary buildings or church now exists above ground.

1.3.5 Post-Medieval (AD 1520-1900)

From the late 16th century much of the wealth generated in Dunstable was as a result of the coaching industry. However, toward the end of the century stagecoaches were getting faster, and roads were better kept, as a result fewer overnight stops were being made which signalled the start of a decline in this trade.

The arrival of the railways in the 19th century destroyed the coaching industry, but generated new opportunities and Dunstable began to change from a small market town to an industrial community. The main industry in the town was the manufacture of straw products such as hats, boxes and toys. In addition, whiting, lace and tile were also manufactured. Heavy industries were also introduced, including gasworks and waterworks. Nowadays little of these industries remains, and extensive redevelopment of Dunstable during the 20th century has stripped it of many of its historic buildings.

1.3.6 The Icknield Way.

There has been much debate over the exact nature and route of the Icknield way (Mathews; 1963, 1979; Simco 1984; Harrison 2003) and many questions about its exact route and origins still remain. However, it is generally believed that the route has its origins in prehistory, possibly as early as the Neolithic.

The route is not, generally, believed to have been anything more substantial than a wide track, rather than a true metalled/surfaced road (such as Watling street). Although excavations in Dunstable by the Manshead Archaeological Society in 1979 (Matthews 1979) did discover an early metalled road in the general area that the route was believed to have taken through the town. Thus it is possible that some parts of the Way were more substantial than others.

The exact route the Icknield Way may have taken is also unclear. Various locations and have been suggested as likely routes. Some stretches of the route are thought to have been up to 1km wide. Clearly any modern notions of a delineated road must be abandoned when visualising this kind of routeway. Harrison (2003) has argued that the Way should not be seen as one cohesive route running SE-NW across the south of the country, but rather as a series of discontinuous, local roads and tracks which were linked together by the traveller to achieve travel at a regional or national scale. The exact local position and route of the Way would have changed over time, and probably sometimes with the individual traveller.

However, there is little doubt that a section of the Icknield Way did pass through Dunstable, following the chalk scarp through the Chilterns. The line of modern West Street roughly follows the route the Way may have taken through the town.

An extremely important element of the current evaluation was to identify any possible remains of this routeway. Either elements of the Way itself (such as a rutted trackway) or surviving roadside elements such as ditches.

2. TRIAL TRENCH EXCAVATION

2.1 Introduction

The trial trenching tool place between the 23rd and 29th July 2004. Three trenches were opened, comprising a total area of 72.10m^2. Trench 1 was located within a grass verge located immediately adjacent to West Street (Figure 1 and 2) a short distance north-east of the existing cemetery. Trenches 2 and 3 were placed in grassed area in the north-eastern part of the cemetery (Figures 1 and 2).

2.2 Aims and Method Statement

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

- IFA's *Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation*;
- Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual for Archaeological Fieldwork and the Analysis of Fieldwork Records* (1996);
- IFA's *Code of Conduct*;
- English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991).

Changes to the original trench plan were made on-site due to the presence of services and trees in the evaluation area. These changes were discussed with, and approved by BCC's CAO. Appendix 1 defines the main objectives of the individual trenches. In summary, these were designed to gain information on:

- the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that might be present;
- the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that might be present.

Topsoil and modern overburden were mechanically removed by a wheeled machine (mini-excavator) fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. This was conducted under close archaeological supervision. These deposits were removed down to the top of the archaeological deposits, or undisturbed geological deposits, whichever was encountered first. The spoil heaps were scanned for artefacts.

The bases and sections of all trenches were cleaned by hand. The deposits and any potential archaeological features were noted, cleaned, excavated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's *pro forma* sheets. The trenches were subsequently drawn, and photographed as appropriate. All deposits were recorded using a unique recording number sequence commencing at 100 for Trench 1, 200 for Trench 2 and so on.

The trenches were inspected by BCC's ACAO prior to being backfilled.

2.3 Results

All three trenches are discussed below; detailed technical information on each trench can be found in Appendix 1. Only Trenches 1 and 2 contained significant archaeological features.

2.3.1 Trench 1

This trench was located towards the north-eastern end of the evaluation area (Figure 1).

Within this trench a *c.*0.14m thick topsoil (100) overlay a 0.37m thick layer of a silty/chalky subsoil (101). Subsoil (101) extended the entire length of the trench, overlying the solid chalk geology (104), and sealing the various archaeological features present within the trench.

Restricted to the first 8m of the eastern edge of Trench 1 were subsoils (102) and (103). Subsoil (102) was a light clayey silt which was stratigraphically sealed by (101). Sealed by (102) was subsoil (103) a layer containing frequent pieces of degraded chalk in a silt matrix.

A large, amorphous pit [105] was recorded in the trench sections. This pit truncated subsoil (101) and clearly extended well beyond the confines of Trench 1. It was sealed by the topsoil and although no dateable artefacts were recovered from it; it is suspected that it is modern in origin as it was located stratigraphically high in the trench section.

Several significant archaeological features were recorded cut into the base of the trench. In all cases these are thought to be wheel ruts made by the repeated passing of cart wheels over this piece of land. Although these remains may at first glance appear rather transient (Figure 3), one has to remember that only the base of the rut survived. For such a rut to form in the solid chalk geology, the groove must originally have cut through a road/track surface composed of topsoil and subsoil at the very least. Therefore, the features observed in Trench 1, and briefly described below, collectively form the base of some impressive ruts.

All followed a broadly ENE – WSW alignment (Figure 3). A total of six ruts were recorded running the length of the trench. Twenty-six segments were excavated along their length in order to fully understand their character and identify changes in profile. Generally the ruts were relatively narrow, typically measuring between 0.10m and 0.30m wide, with steep, straight to concave sides and concave bases. Such a profile is typical of that caused by repeated wheel traction.

For ease of understanding these segments have been grouped according to which rut they belonged to. Group 1 (Figure 3) defines one rut which ran approximately half the length of the trench. Observed as a discrete feature in the south-western part of the trench it eventually merged with rut group 2 (below).

Rut group 2 defines two discrete ruts, [157] and [155], which are considered together because they appear to be contemporary. Rut [155] was located in the centre of the trench and ran its entire length making it the most complete example. Rut [157] ran parallel to it and *c.*1.50m to the north of [155]. It is suggested that these ruts may have been made by the same vehicles on the basis that they are parallel, aligned on the same route and an appropriate distance apart for typical opposing cart wheels.

Most unusually for a feature of this type, it was possible to discern a stratigraphic relationship with rut Group 2. Namely, rut segment [115] appeared to cut through rut [117] and must therefore have been later. The segments excavated through these ruts varied from 0.04m – 0.19m in depth.

Rut groups 3 and 4 each define a single rut through which several segments were excavated (Figure 3). Group 3 (16m long) merged with rut [155] of group 2 at its western end.

Group 4 (4.20m long) ran into the eastern end of the trench and merged with rut [157] of group 2 at its western end. In both cases the general similarity in the fills meant that no stratigraphic relationship between the various ruts could be ascertained.

At the eastern end of the trench, cuts [142] and [153] (Figure 3) may be interpreted (based on alignment and similarities in nature) as representing the surviving portions of a very ephemeral and poorly preserved rut. These features were both very narrow (*c.*0.09m) and shallow (*c.*0.04m), with similar profile and containing similar deposits to the other ruts discussed above.

The only piece of artefactual material recovered from these ruts was a section of 17th century clay pipe stem (Appendix 2) located in fill (112) of cut [111] (Group 2).

2.3.2 Trench 2

This trench was located in the south-western part of the evaluation area (Figure 1).

Within this trench a *c.*0.24m topsoil (200) overlay a single *c.*0.30m subsoil (201). The undisturbed solid chalk geology (212) and the archaeological remains described below were sealed by subsoil (201).

A single substantial ditch [211] was present within this trench. This feature was cut into the chalk base of the trench and ran the length of the trench (*c.*10.50m) on a broadly ENE – WSW alignment (Figure 4). Three slots were excavated within this ditch, collectively demonstrating a relatively homogenous character and consistently v-shaped profile.

The full width of the ditch could not be ascertained due to the confines imposed by Trench 2 (expansion of this trench to the south was not appropriate due to the proximity of recent graves). However, slot [204] (Figure 4) demonstrated that the ditch was over 1.5m wide and possessed steep, slightly irregular sides which came to a steeply sloped, relatively narrow, v-shaped base.

Two fills were present within each slot. A thinner (*c.* 0.15m thick) upper fill (202)/(205)/(208), which appeared to represent an interface between the subsoil and the fill of the ditch which it overlay. This ditch deposit, (203)/(206)/(209) was a *c.*0.55m deep chalky silt.

Artefacts recovered from the lower fill of this feature included pieces of animal bone, a piece of samian pottery, dated to the early Roman period (Appendix 2) and three fragments of post-medieval roof tile. The Roman pottery was sharp and unabraded and would appear to represent genuinely *in situ* material. The more abraded, later, post-medieval material is likely to be intrusive in this feature.

2.3.3 Trench 3

This trench was located immediately east of Trench 2 in the south-western part of the evaluation area.

The character and type of topsoil, subsoil and undisturbed geological deposits were identical to those observed in Trench 2 (Section 2.3.2).

Trench 3 did not contain any significant archaeological remains. However, at its north-western end, two courses of damaged modern (frogged) red bricks were recorded forming a roughly 4m long L-shape. These bricks were set into subsoil (301) and sealed by topsoil 300 (Figure 4).

These bricks appeared to represent the partial remains of foundations for the walls of the, now demolished Cemetery Lodge building. The damaged and disturbed character of these remains was the result of its demolition, probably exacerbated by the excavation of the trial trench. The disturbed nature of the ground in this area precluded the identification of a foundation cut for this brickwork.

Two small features [304] and [306] were noted in the centre of the trench (Figure 4). These shallow and highly irregular oval pit or linear features were both cut into the chalk and sealed by subsoil (302). It is suggested that these may be the result of tree root disturbance rather than genuine archaeological features.

3. SYNTHESIS

3.1 Significance of Results

The evaluation successfully demonstrated the presence of significant archaeological features within the study area.

Within Trench 1 a series of wheel ruts were recorded; indicating the presence of a well rutted track or road which formerly existed at this location. As already stated in section 1.3.6, West Street lies on the suspected line of the ancient Icknield Way. Therefore, the existence of wheel ruts on this site has added significance.

Indeed, it is considered probable that these ruts represent a small section of the Icknield Way itself. Clearly, the Icknield Way would have wandered slightly over the course of time, expanding and contracting with the demands of passing traffic. Also, there is no specific evidence tying these ruts to a specific historical period.

A single piece of 17th century clay pipe was recovered. It is unclear whether this represents genuine 17th century use of the trackway, or later intrusion of material into disused ruts. Despite these questions the presence of cart ruts in the vicinity of the Icknield Way must be seen as a significant archaeological discovery.

Often, once such ruts had become established, they acted like modern tramlines. Therefore, once the wheels of carts were lodged within them, the cart would be restricted to the line cut by the ruts. The repeated use of a stretch of road meant that ruts would be kept open for some time and would eventually become substantial features.

The following quotation offers an engaging insight into one traveller's observations on the wheel ruts encountered in Dunstable:

'Because we have learnt that the high roads, which stretch through the middle of your vill…are so broken up and deep by the frequent passing of carts, that dangerous injuries continuously threaten those passing by those roads: we wishing to be guarded against such injuries…command each one of you…according to his estate and capabilities, shall cause those roads to be filled in and mended.'

Quotation from the annals of Dunstable Priory, taken from a letter written by Edward I in AD1285 (Hindle 1998).

Trench 2 contained a ditch from which an unabraded sherd of early Roman pottery was recovered. On this basis it is suggested that this ditch may have lined the Icknield Way during the Roman period. It is striking that the ditch in Trench 2 and the ruts in Trench 1 are both on the same alignment (Figures 1 and 2). However, it is not suggested that the ruts recorded in Trench 1 are necessarily contemporary with this ditch, just that both sets of features are probably associated with the same routeway.

As already stated, the suggested routeway in Trench 1 may well be indicative of the presence of the Icknield way in this area, the possible Roman ditch in Trench 2 may have been associated with the use of that routeway in the Roman period.

A large amount of information has been gleaned from the relatively small trial trenches. Even so, several questions remain unanswered due to the physical constraints of the investigation. For example, it is unclear whether the series of ruts recorded was located in the centre of or on the edge of the putative road. Similarly, nothing is known of the density of traffic, or over what duration the ruts formed.

3.2 Summary

The study area is located in a landscape rich in archaeological remains and this evaluation has demonstrated the presence of a rutted routeway and substantial ditch. Both are in the vicinity of the putative route of the ancient Icknield Way.

This evaluation has been extremely valuable in identifying a likely section of one of the oldest communication routes in Britain. By so doing it has augmented existing knowledge of this route and its relationship with the town of Dunstable.

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5. APPENDIX 1 - TRENCH AND CONTEXT SUMMARIES

Trench: 1
Max Dimensions: Length: 30.00 m. Width: 3.20 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.48 m. Max: 0.52 m.
OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: Ref. 2:
Reason: Assess archaeological potential of land adjacent to West Street

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Topsoil	Friable dark brown clay silt occasional small-medium ceramic building material	☑	☐
101	Subsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay silt occasional small chalk	☑	☐
102	Subsoil	Friable light grey brown clay silt frequent small-medium chalk	☑	☐
103	Subsoil	Friable light yellow chalky silt frequent small-medium chalk A degraded chalk in a silt matrix. Appears to be a, limited, interface soil between the 'true' subsoils and the natural geology.	☑	☐
104	Natural	Hard white chalk	☑	☐
105	**Pit**	**Sub-oval profile: convex base: flat dimensions: min breadth 1.6m, max depth 0.46m, min length 16.m Appeared to be a large, later, pit cut through the subsoil (101) and sealed by the topsoil. The feature appeared to have been deliberately backfilled with a broken and mixed re-deposited type chalk (106). The true nature and extent of the feature was unknown as its boundaries extended beyond the baulks of the trench, with only glimpses of its extent and form being visible in various sections.**	☑	☐
106	Backfill	Hard white silty chalk A degraded and broken chalk mixed with a loose, dark brown silt, at a c.80% chalk to 20% silt ratio	☑	☐
108	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.07m, max depth 0.02m, min length 0.6m**	☑	☐
107	Fill	Friable light brown yellow chalky silt This fill ran across three features with no discernable difference in its nature across them, these were - [108], [109] and [110] - for the purpose of allocating feature numbers this fill has been given three numbers, (107), (160) and (161).	☑	☐
109	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.1m, max depth 0.06m, min length 0.6m**	☑	☐
160	Fill	Friable light brown yellow chalky silt same as (107) and (161)	☑	☐
110	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.23m, max depth 0.11m, min length 0.6m**	☑	☐
161	Fill	Friable light brown yellow chalky silt same as (160) and (107)	☑	☐
111	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: near vertical base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.2m, max depth 0.19m, min length 0.75m**	☑	☐
112	Fill	Friable light yellow chalky silt occasional small chalk	☑	☑
113	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.16m, max depth 0.06m, min length 0.75m**	☑	☐
114	Fill	Friable light brown yellow chalky silt occasional small chalk	☑	☐
115	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: near vertical base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.12m, max depth 0.08m, min length 1.m Truncates (118)**	☑	☐
116	Fill	Friable light yellow chalky silt occasional small chalk	☑	☐
117	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.14m, max depth 0.06m, min length 1.m**	☑	☐
118	Fill	Friable light brown yellow chalky silt occasional small chalk Truncated by [115]	☑	☐
119	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.12m, max depth 0.04m, min length 0.85m**	☑	☐
120	Fill	Friable light grey yellow chalky silt	☑	☐

Trench: 1
Max Dimensions: Length: 30.00 m. Width: 3.20 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.48 m. Max: 0.52 m.
OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: Ref. 2:
Reason: Assess archaeological potential of land adjacent to West Street

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
121	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: near vertical base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.15m, max depth 0.09m, min length 0.85m Truncates (124)**	☑	☐
122	Fill	Friable light yellow chalky silt	☑	☐
123	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.22m, max depth 0.09m, min length 0.85m**	☑	☐
124	Fill	Friable light brown yellow chalky silt occasional small chalk Truncated by [121]	☑	☐
125	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.3m, max depth 0.07m, min length 1.m Unclear relationship with (128)**	☑	☐
126	Fill	Friable light brown yellow chalky silt occasional small chalk Unclear relationship with [127]	☑	☐
127	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.47m, max depth 0.15m, min length 1.m Unclear relationship with (126). This cut may be representative of two wheel rut features.**	☑	☐
128	Fill	Friable light brown yellow chalky silt occasional small chalk Unclear relationship with [125]	☑	☐
129	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: 45 degrees base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.2m, max depth 0.1m, min length 1.m**	☑	☐
130	Fill	Friable mid yellow brown chalky silt occasional small chalk	☑	☐
131	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear profile: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.15m, max depth 0.07m, min length 1.m unclear relationship with [132]**	☑	☐
133	Fill	Friable light brown yellow chalky silt occasional small chalk This fill ran across two features with no discernable difference in its nature across them, these were - [131] and [132] - for purpose of allocating feature numbers this fill has been given two numbers, (133) and (162).	☑	☐
132	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: flat dimensions: min breadth 0.08m, max depth 0.05m, min length 1.m Unclear relationship with [131]**	☑	☐
162	Fill	Friable light brown yellow chalky sand occasional small chalk same as (133)	☑	☐
134	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.17m, max depth 0.04m, min length 1.m**	☑	☐
135	Fill	Friable light yellow chalky silt	☑	☐
136	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: 45 degrees base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.3m, max depth 0.13m, min length 1.m Partially obscured by southern baulk of trench**	☑	☐
137	Fill	Friable light brown yellow chalky silt moderate small chalk	☑	☐
138	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: near vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.22m, max depth 0.13m, min length 1.m**	☑	☐
139	Fill	Friable mid brown yellow chalky silt	☑	☐
140	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.17m, max depth 0.06m, min length 1.m**	☑	☐
141	Fill	Friable mid yellow chalky silt occasional small chalk	☑	☐
142	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: v-shaped dimensions: max breadth 0.1m, max depth 0.04m, min length 0.5m Very ephemeral - possibly the same feature as [153]**	☑	☐

Trench: 1
Max Dimensions: Length: 30.00 m. Width: 3.20 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.48 m. Max: 0.52 m.
OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: Ref. 2:
Reason: Assess archaeological potential of land adjacent to West Street

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
143	Fill	Friable light brown chalky silt	☑	☐
144	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.08m, max depth 0.03m, min length 1.m Unclear relationship with [145]**	☑	☐
146	Fill	Friable mid brown yellow chalky silt This fill ran across two features with no discernable difference in its nature across them, these were - [144] and [145] - for purpose of allocating feature numbers this fill has been given two numbers, (146) and (163).	☑	☐
145	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: 45 degrees base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.16m, max depth 0.09m, min length 1.m Unclear relationship with [144]**	☑	☐
163	Fill	Friable mid yellow brown chalky silt same as (146)	☑	☐
147	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.16m, max depth 0.08m, min length 1.m**	☑	☐
148	**Fill**	**Dimensions: max breadth 0.16m, max depth 0.08m, min length 1.m**	☑	☐
149	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: near vertical base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.13m, max depth 0.09m, min length 1.m**	☑	☐
150	Fill	Friable mid brown yellow chalky silt occasional small chalk	☑	☐
151	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: 45 degrees base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.23m, max diameter 0.12m, min length 1.m**	☑	☐
152	Fill	Friable mid brown yellow chalky silt occasional small chalk	☑	☐
153	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.09m, max depth 0.04m, min length 0.5m Very ephemeral - possibly the same feature as [142]**	☑	☐
154	Fill	Friable light brown yellow chalky silt	☑	☐
155	**General Number**	**Dimensions: min length 30.m general number which links cute [109], [111], [115], [121], [131], [134], [140], [147] and [164] as the same wheel rut feature - excavated in 9 segments. Appeared to truncate [159] and may be the opposing wheel rut to [157]**	☑	☐
156	**General Number**	**Dimensions: min length 16.m General number which links cuts [119], [125], [129] and [136] as the same wheel rut feature - excavated in 4 segments. Appeared to interact with [155] but relationship unclear.**	☑	☐
157	**General Number**	**Dimensions: min length 8.5m General number which links cuts [138], [145] and [151] as the same wheel rut feature - excavated in 3 segments. Appeared to interact with [158] but relationship was unclear. May have been the opposing wheel rut to [155]**	☑	☐
158	**General Number**	**Dimensions: min length 4.2m General number which links cuts [144] and [149] as the same wheel rut feature - excavated in two segments. Appeared to interact with [157] but relationship was unclear**	☑	☐
159	**General Number**	**Dimensions: min length 17.3m General number which links cute [110], [113], [117[, [123] and [132] as the same wheel rut feature - excavated in 5 segments. Appeared to be truncated by [155]**	☑	☐
164	**Wheel ruts**	**Straight linear ESE-WNW profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.47m, max depth 0.15m, min length 1.m same as [127]**	☑	☐
165	Fill	Friable light brown yellow chalky silt	☑	☐

Trench: 2
Max Dimensions: Length: 10.50 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.6 m. Max: 0.63 m.
OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: Ref. 2:
Reason: Assess archaeological potential of land adjacent to West Street

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
200	Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay silt occasional small chalk, occasional small stones	☑	☐
201	Subsoil	Friable mid orange brown clay silt occasional small chalk, occasional small stones	☑	☐
204	**Ditch**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: 45 degrees base: v-shaped dimensions: min breadth 1.5m, max depth 0.7m, min length 1.m**	☑	☐
202	Fill	Friable mid yellow brown clay silt moderate small-medium chalk Upper fill of feature. Appeared to represent an interface layer between the 'true' subsoils and the main fill (203) of the ditch feature	☑	☐
203	Fill	Friable light brown clay silt frequent small-large chalk	☑	☐
207	**Ditch**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: 45 degrees base: v-shaped dimensions: min breadth 0.8m, max depth 0.53m, min length 1.m**	☑	☐
205	Fill	Friable mid yellow brown clay silt moderate small-medium chalk Upper fill of feature. Appeared to represent an interface layer between the 'true' subsoils and the main fill (206) of the ditch feature	☑	☐
206	Fill	Friable light brown clay silt frequent small-large chalk	☑	☑
210	**Ditch**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: 45 degrees dimensions: min breadth 0.65m, min diameter 0.32m, min length 1.m Feature obscured by baulk of trial trench in this area, thus full profile, including full depth and nature of base not seen**	☑	☐
208	Fill	Friable mid yellow brown clay silt moderate small-medium chalk Upper fill of feature. Appeared to represent an interface layer between the 'true' subsoils and the main fill (209) of the ditch feature	☑	☐
209	Fill	Friable light brown clay silt frequent small-large chalk	☑	☑
211	**General Number**	**Straight linear ENE-WSW profile: 45 degrees base: v-shaped dimensions: min breadth 1.5m, max depth 0.7m, min length 10.5m General number linking cuts [204], [207], and [210] as the same large, linear, ditch feature. Containing the same fills. Including (202), which was the same as (205) and (208), and fill (203) which was the same as (206) and (209).**	☑	☐
212	Natural	Hard white chalk	☑	☐

Trench: 3
Max Dimensions: Length: 8.50 m. Width: 3.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.6 m. Max: 0.6 m.
OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: Ref. 2:
Reason: Assess archaeological potential of land adjacent to West Street

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
300	Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown silt occasional small stones	☑	☐
301	Subsoil	Friable mid orange brown clay silt occasional small chalk, occasional small stones	☑	☐
302	Natural	Hard white chalk	☑	☐
303	Foundation	The remains of the (red fired clay) brick footings of a modern building - likely the old 'Cemetery Lodge'. The wall consisted of a double thickness of brick which had survived (visibly) to only two courses in height. The bricks were each 0.20m long x 0.12m wide x 0.10m deep and were frogged. The wall, as visible, formed a rough 'open square' at the eastern end of trench and was very badly damaged, both as a result of the original demolition of the building and machine truncation during the excavation of the trial trench. The wall appeared to be set into the subsoil (301), although no cut was visible, and to be sealed by the topsoil, (300).	☑	☐
304	**Gulley**	**Linear ENE-WSW profile: 45 degrees base: v-shaped dimensions: max breadth 0.1m, max depth 0.04m, max length 1.m**	☑	☐
305	Fill	Friable mid grey brown clay silt	☑	☐
306	**Treethrow**	**Irregular ENE-WSW profile: concave base: uneven dimensions: max breadth 0.3m, max depth 0.07m, max length 1.9m**	☑	☐
307	Fill	Friable mid grey brown clay silt	☑	☐

5.1 Appendix 2 – Artefact Summary

The evaluation produced a small artefact assemblage comprising pottery, roof tile, animal bone and clay tobacco pipe fragments. The material was scanned to ascertain the nature, condition and, where possible date range of the artefact types present. No finds were recovered from Trench 3.

Trench	Feature	Type	Context	Spotdate*	Pottery	Roof tile	Animal Bone	Other finds
1	111	Wheel ruts	112	Post-medieval				Clay pipe stem (2g)
2	207	Ditch	206	Early Roman	1:4		4:34	
	210	Ditch	209	Post-medieval		3:62		
				Total	**1:4**	**3:62**	**4:34**	

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

Table 1: Artefact summary by trench and context

Trench 1

A single piece of clay pipe stem, datable to the 17th century, derived from the fill of wheel ruts [111].

Trench 2

A sherd of early Roman samian ware (fabric type R01[1]) was recovered from the fill of ditch [207]. Although only small (4g) the unabraded state of the sherd suggests it derives from an undisturbed ditch deposit. The feature also contained four well preserved fragments of animal bone. The lower fill of ditch [210] yielded three sand tempered fragments of post-medieval flat roof tile.

[1] identified in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series, held by Albion Archaeology.

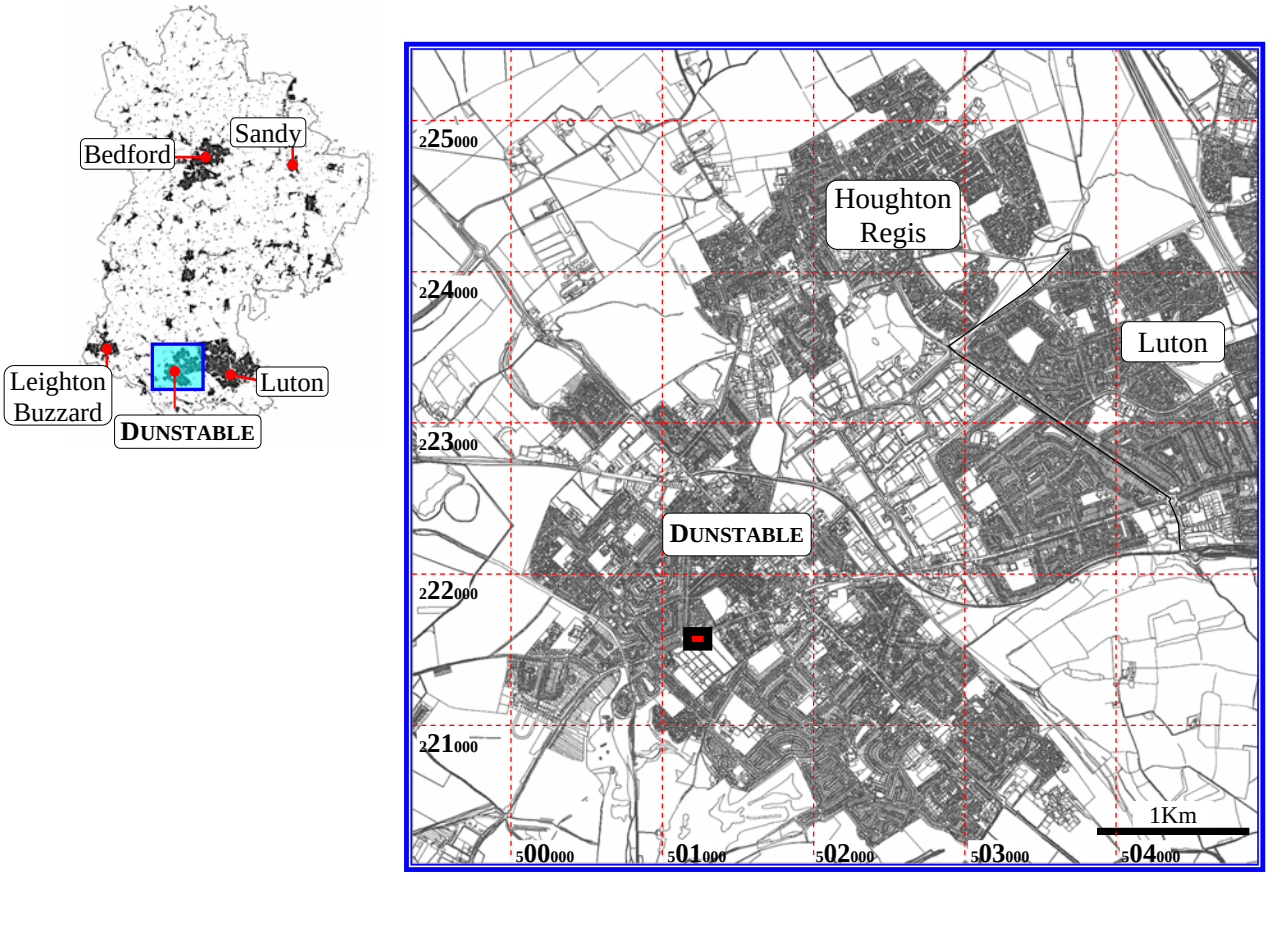


Figure 1: Location map

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.

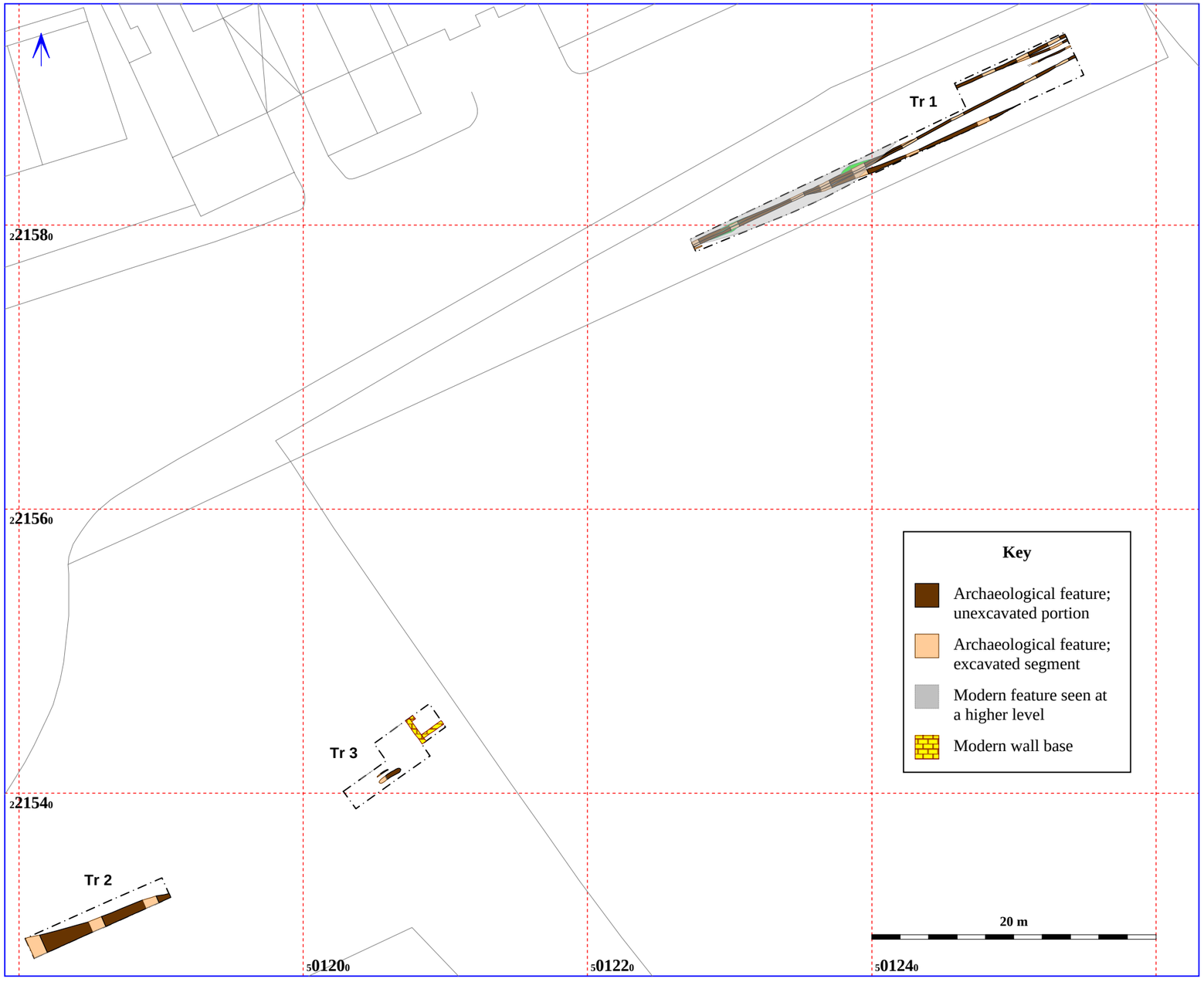
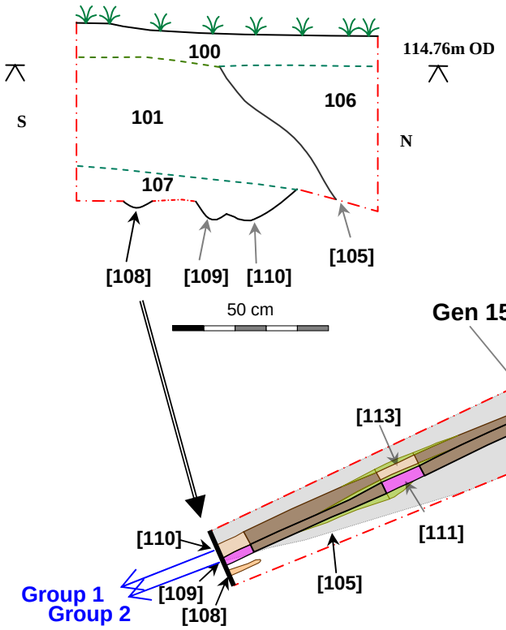
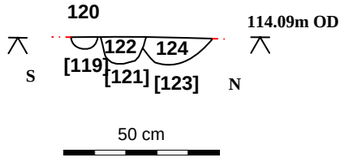


Figure 2: All features plan

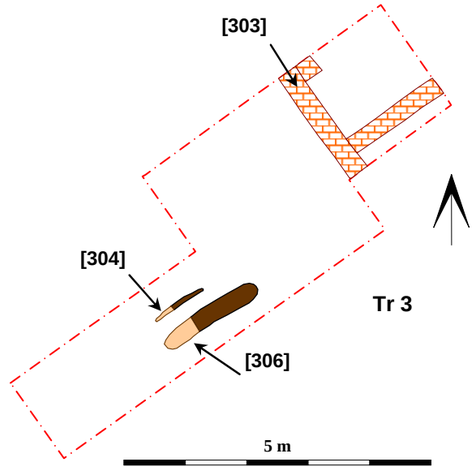


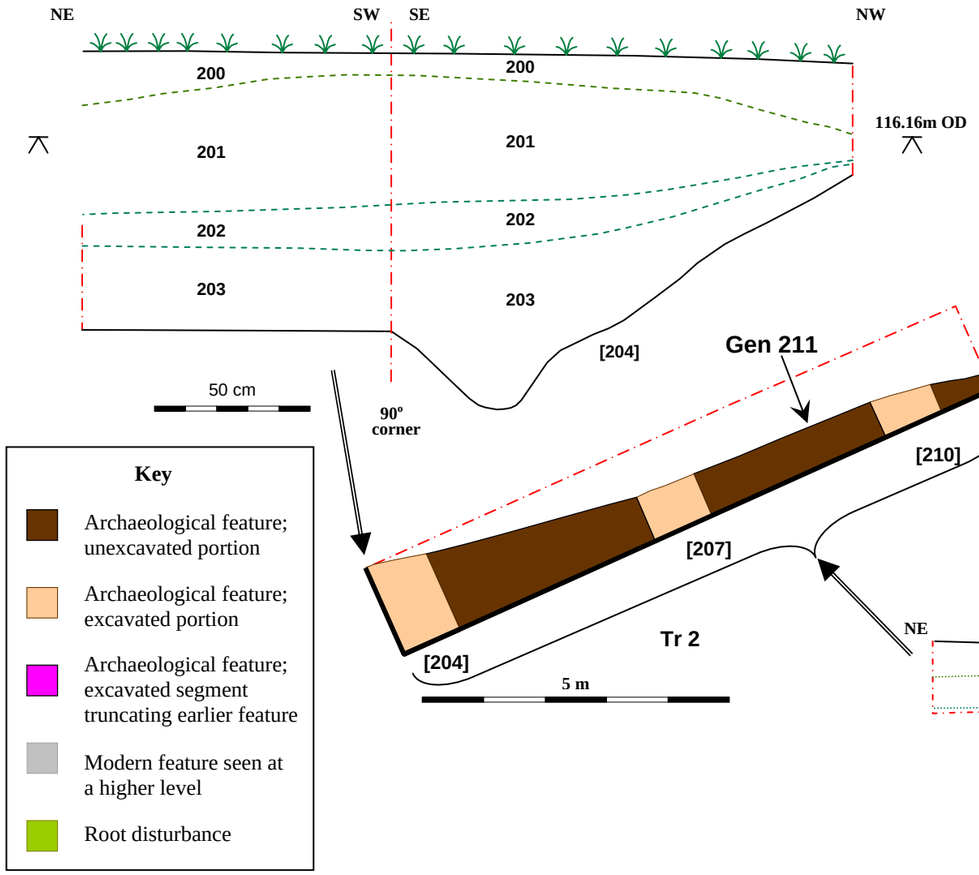


Key

- Archaeological feature; unexcavated portion
- Archaeological feature; excavated portion
- Archaeological feature; excavated segment truncating earlier feature
- Modern feature seen at a higher level
- Root disturbance

Figure 3: Trench 1





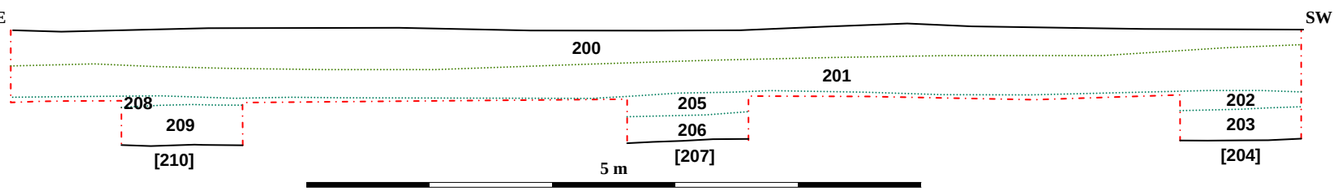


Figure 4: Trenches 2 and 3