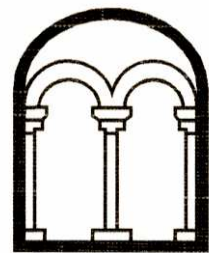


**THE THREE TUNS PUBLIC HOUSE
MAIN ROAD
BIDDENHAM
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

Albion
archaeology



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Richard Gregson	Ben Barker	Drew Shotliff

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Greene King Pub Partners

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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 Melling Ridgeway and Partners Limited. The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Vanessa Clarke, the Bedford Borough Council's Senior Archaeological Officer.

Fieldwork was carried out by Ben Barker (Project Officer), Ian Turner, Wiebke Starke and Richard Gregson (Archaeological Supervisors). Richard Gregson prepared this report with contributions from Joan Lightning (CAD Technician) and Jackie Wells (Finds Officer).

All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

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<i>1.1</i>	<i>2nd August 2013</i>	<i>Incorporating comments from BBC SAO</i>

Key Terms

Throughout this project design the following terms or abbreviations are used:

BBC	Bedford Borough Council
BBC SAO	Bedford Borough Council's Senior Archaeological Officer
HER	Historic Environment Record
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
LPA	Local Planning Authority
PDA	Proposed development area
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

Planning permission (12/02467/FUL) for the construction of a single storey rear extension and new paving at The Three Tuns PH, Main Road, Biddenham was granted by Bedford Borough Council.

As the proposed development lies within an area of archaeological sensitivity, the Historic Environment Team (HET) of Bedford Borough Council recommended that a condition was attached to any planning consent (no. 4) requiring the implementation of an archaeological mitigation strategy.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the archaeological works in accordance with the methodologies described in a Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2013), produced in response to the recommendations of the Bedford Borough Council's Senior Archaeological Officer.

Three early/high medieval ditches and a medieval pit were identified within the footings and drainage trenches for the extension to the Three Tuns Public House, in addition to a modern pit, several drains and modern layers. The ditches are likely to have defined property boundaries and plot subdivisions to the south of Main Road. The investigation also identified evidence for levelling activity to the west of the three current buildings that is likely to have enhanced archaeological preservation in this area.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Background*

Planning permission (12/02467/FUL) for the construction of a single storey rear extension and new paving at The Three Tuns PH, Main Road, Biddenham was granted by Bedford Borough Council.

As the proposed development lies within an area of archaeological sensitivity, the Historic Environment Team (HET) of Bedford Borough Council recommended that a condition was attached to any planning consent (no. 4) requiring the implementation of an archaeological mitigation strategy. This advice was in accordance with *National Planning Policy Framework – Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*¹.

The HET recommended that the scheme of archaeological mitigation should comprise observation of construction groundworks and the investigation, recording, analysis and publication of any revealed archaeological remains.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the archaeological works in accordance with the methodologies described in a Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2013), produced in response to the recommendations of the Bedford Borough Council's Senior Archaeological Officer.

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

Biddenham lies adjacent to the north-western suburbs of Bedford, with the development site itself centred on grid reference TL 02177 49931. The Three Tuns public house is no. 57 on the south side of Main Road (Figure 1).

The new extension and paving were located to the rear of the current building. The extent of the groundworks was approximately 105m² in size.

The ground is generally level at approximately 35m OD. The geology of the area comprises river terrace sands and gravels of the Ouse Valley Formation, with underlying Oxford Clay.

1.3 *Archaeological and Historical Background*

The development site is located within the historic core of Biddenham, in an area of high archaeological potential. Major archaeological investigations undertaken within the Biddenham Loop have demonstrated that the area to the south contains significant sub-surface archaeological remains from the early Neolithic through to the medieval period. Industrial quarrying has shown that the deeper gravel deposits also contain in situ Palaeolithic finds, as at Deep Spinney (HER 327/328) on the northern fringes of Biddenham village.

¹ National Planning Policy Framework, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) (<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf>.)



Field-walking within the Biddenham Loop has located a large number of flint concentrations suggestive of occupation sites, and the Loop is known to contain a Neolithic and early Bronze Age monument complex. The landscape changed in the middle Bronze Age to comprise an extensive system of fields, concentrated to the south and east of the Loop, while eight middle Iron Age farmsteads were identified during archaeological fieldwork (Albion Archaeology 2008; Luke 2008). Their spacing at intervals of 250–650m raises the possibility that similar remains may be present within the vicinity of the current development.

The Ouse Valley appears to have been densely settled in the late Iron Age/Romano-British period, with four Romano-British farmsteads known within the Biddenham Loop. A fifth has been proposed north of St James' Church (Luke 2008, 267–8), *c.* 750m to the north-west, which was identified when a branch of the Southern Orbital Sewer was constructed to Biddenham village. Its extent is uncertain, but Roman pottery, coins and other metalwork have been found to the north of the church (HER 323). Roman, Saxo-Norman and Medieval remains were also identified during evaluation works in St James' churchyard (Albion Archaeology 2005), comprising intercutting pits, ditches, a trackway, a pair of post-built fence lines, and the possible remains of the former churchyard wall.

The first mention of Biddenham itself comes in the Domesday Survey of 1086, indicating its existence prior to the Norman Conquest. The development site is situated at the eastern edge of the medieval settlement (HER17017), which is likely to have centred on the 12th–16th-century church of St James (HER1021), located 750m to the west.

The development site lies within the northern limit of a large oval enclosure (HER15271) formed in places by an extant ditch and bank. Archaeological investigations (BCAS 1999) *c.* 60m to the south-east of the development site revealed well preserved remains of occupation from the Saxo-Norman period onwards (HER17732).

Rectilinear earthworks were once visible to the west of Biddenham (HER 1770), which are thought to represent the ends of closes running west from Church End.

1.4 Project Objectives

The principal objective of the archaeological fieldwork was to monitor and supervise all groundworks associated with the proposed development that had the potential to reveal archaeological remains, and to investigate, characterise and record any archaeological deposits encountered within them.

The opportunities to address research themes identified in the local and regional research frameworks (Medlycott 2011, Oake *et al* 2007) during the project were limited due to the nature of the development groundworks. However, it was recognised that the results of the works could contribute to the following areas:



- Identification of the nature of Saxon/medieval and later occupation of the area
- Clarification of the chronology of Saxon/medieval and later occupation of the area



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Implementation

Archaeological observation of the groundworks was undertaken periodically between 1st May and 20th June 2013. All groundworks that had the potential to impact upon archaeological remains were archaeologically monitored (Figure 2). These comprised the excavation of foundation trenches for the extension to rear of the Three Tuns Public House, ground reduction (by c. 150mm) to the east of the extension for the construction of a new paved area, trenches for new drains to the south and south-west of the extension and an associated soakaway.

The excavations were carried out using a mechanical excavator operated under close archaeological supervision. Deposits encountered were investigated and recorded in accordance with Albion's *Procedures Manual*. Spoil heaps were checked on a regular basis for the recovery of artefacts.

2.2 Standards

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

• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (2 nd edn, 2001).
• Bedford Borough Council	<i>Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedford</i> (2010)
• EAA	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> (2003)
• English Heritage	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Project Managers' Guide</i> (2006)
	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation, 2nd edition</i> (2011)
• IfA	<i>By-Laws and Code of Conduct</i>
	<i>Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs and Field Excavations</i> (updated 2008) and <i>finds</i> (updated 2008)

A detailed methodology is provided in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2013).

2.3 Archiving

Details of the project and its findings have been entered on the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS ref. albionar1-153651) database in accordance with the guidelines issued by English Heritage and the Archaeology Data Service.

The finds and records generated by this project will be prepared for archiving and submitted to The Higgins Museum Bedford under accession number BEDFM: 2013.15.



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

The ground reduction within the footprint of the new building and for the new patio area did not exceed the depth of modern made ground. Within the building this largely comprised demolition rubble, whilst the limited ground reduction below the patio only exposed imported sands and gravels. Excavation of the foundation trenches, sunken path and drainage revealed archaeological features dating from the medieval period onwards (Figure 2).

3.2 Topsoil, Overburden and Geology

Because of the succession of alterations within the footprint of the new extension, very little original topsoil or subsoil survived. Significantly, no original topsoil or subsoil survived in the east of the footings trenches where the depth of overburden was often as little as 0.4m. This is in marked contrast to the soakaway trench excavated only *c.* 10m to the south-west, where overburden was 1.3m thick and comprised layers of buried subsoil (132) and topsoil (131) overlain by building demolition layers (130, 129) and modern, imported topsoil (128). This suggests that the original topography in this area was considerably more variable than the relatively level ground seen today.

The upper part of the overburden varied considerably, particularly within the footings of the extension. In this area, there were levelling layers (101), (116) and (120); demolition layers (119) and (122); and surfaces of cobble (102), brick (136), tarmac (118) and concrete paving slabs (100). In places these layers were overlain by imported topsoil (117). These deposits are the result of successive alterations to the area at the back of the Public House including the construction and later demolition of at least one outbuilding.

The undisturbed geological deposit (104) and (133) varied from light brown orange silty clay to mid brown orange sandy gravel.

3.3 Medieval

3.3.1 Ditches

Three medieval ditches were revealed within the footings of the extension. They were observed in multiple locations and are referred to as Ditch A, B and C. Ditch A comprised segments [106], [110], [124], and [126]; Ditch B comprised segments [108] and [112]; Ditch C was only represented by segment [114] (Figure 2).

Ditches A and B were inter-cutting and on similar NNW-SSE alignments. They were probably the result of the establishment and re-establishment of the same boundary. They both had concave profiles that had been truncated by later activity. They were 0.65–1.8m wide and up to 0.5m deep. Ditch A was the earlier of the two ditches. It is likely that they defined a property boundary extending southwards from Main Road.



The deposits (107), (111), (115), (125) and (127) within the earlier Ditch A varied from mid orange brown to mid grey brown in colour and from sandy silt to silt in composition. Five pottery sherds recovered from fill (111) were identified as early medieval (AD 1150-1250) in date. Deposits (109) and (113) within the later Ditch B comprised mid orange brown sandy silt. One sherd of pottery recovered from (113) was identified as high medieval (AD 1250-1400) in date. Both ditches are likely to have silted up as a result of gradual weathering of the sides.

Ditch C was aligned perpendicular to the other two and extended westwards. It had asymmetrical, concave or convex sides and a concave base. It was 0.95m wide and 0.35m deep. Its sole fill (115) comprised mid orange brown sandy silt which produced two sherds of pottery dated to the early medieval period (AD 1150-1250).

The intersection between Ditch A/B and Ditch C was not revealed within the foundation trenches. The pottery sherds recovered from Ditch C suggest that it was broadly contemporary with Ditch A; however, its fill was more consistent with that of Ditch B. The absence of Ditch B in the northernmost foundation trench may suggest that the pottery is residual and that Ditch C represents a later phase of enclosure or subdivision.

Ditches A and B were found at a depth of *c.* 0.4m below ground level. Ditch C, at a distance of *c.* 3.5m to the west of the NNE-SSW aligned ditches, was found at a depth of 0.8m. This suggests that the original land surface dipped to the west.

3.3.2 Pit

A shallow, sub-oval pit [105] was recorded within the western section of the eastern footing trench. It was at least 1.55m long, 0.95m wide and 0.12m deep. Its sole fill (103) comprised a mid orange grey sandy silt that contained two sherds of high medieval pottery, contemporary with the material recovered from the later boundary ditch. The presence of pits would suggest that the area is likely to have been close to a focus of habitation. The associated ditches, therefore, are more likely to have defined property boundaries than served as agricultural drainage ditches.

3.4 Modern

3.4.1 Modern pit

Pit [134] was recorded within the southern section of the footings trench. It truncated medieval Ditch A. It was at least 1m in diameter and 0.7m deep with vertical sides and a flat base. Its sole fill (135) comprised a dark brown grey sandy silt that contained modern brick and tile fragments.

3.4.2 Modern drains and footings

Several N-S and E-W aligned drains were recorded in the footings trench. These are shown in sections 1 and 3 (Figure 2). Most contained modern ceramic pipe and others were associated with metal grating. They were all defunct and likely to have served the previously demolished southern extension of the Three



Tuns Public House. Although the property has been in existence from at least the 17th century onwards (BBC 2013), the former southern extension is likely to have been a later 19th-century addition as it adjoined the more recent brick-built western part of the current building.

The demolished remains of a smaller 20th-century outbuilding were revealed within a soakaway trench located to the south-west of the extension. They comprised a levelling layer (130) overlain by a demolition layer (129). These were in turn overlain by imported topsoil (128).



4. ARTEFACTS

4.1 Introduction

A small finds assemblage, comprising mainly pottery and ceramic roof tile, was recovered from six features. The material was examined to ascertain its nature, condition and, where possible, date range (Table 1).

Feature	Description	Context	Date range	Finds Summary
102	Cobble surface	102	Modern (1750 +)	Pottery (4g); ceramic roof tile (7g); bone needle case
105	Pit	103	High medieval (1250-1400)	Pottery (30g)
110	Ditch A	111	Early medieval (1150-1250)	Pottery (10g)
112	Ditch B	113	High medieval (1250-1400)	Pottery (10g)
114	Ditch C	115	Early medieval (1150-1250)	Pottery (58g)
121	Buried topsoil	121	Post-medieval (1500-1750)	Pottery (54g); ceramic roof tile (124g)

Table 1: Artefact Summary by feature

4.2 Pottery

Twelve pottery sherds (166g) of medieval and later date were recovered. The material is generally fragmented, with an average sherd weight of 13g, although survives in fair condition. Seven fabric types were identified in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series, currently maintained by Albion Archaeology (Table 2).

Fabric type	Common name	Sherd No.	Context/Sherd No.
<i>Medieval</i>			
B07	Shell	2	(115):2
C03	Fine sand	5	(111):5
C04	Coarse sand	1	(103):1
C09	Brill-Boarstall ware	1	(113):1
C17	Hedingham ware	1	(103):1
<i>Post-medieval</i>			
P03	Black-glazed earthenware	1	(121):1
<i>Modern</i>			
P55	White earthenware	1	(102):1

Table 2: Pottery Type Series

Eight early medieval sherds (72g) derived from Ditches A, C, and pit [105]. They comprise two wheel-thrown, shell-tempered sherds of 12th–13th-century date (fabric B07), known to derive from production centres on the Beds./Bucks./Northants. borders. Six locally manufactured contemporary sand-tempered sherds (C03; C04) also occur. A bowl with a sooted external surface is the sole diagnostic vessel form. High medieval traded wares are single glazed jug sherds of Brill-Boarstall ware (C09) and Hedingham ware (C17), respectively regional imports from Bucks. and Essex.

Buried topsoil (121) yielded one sherd from a 17th-century glazed earthenware bowl (P03). A piece of modern decorated earthenware (P55) derived from cobble surface (102).



4.3 Other Finds

Three pieces of post-medieval sand-tempered flat roof tile (131g), ranging in thickness between 13-15mm, were collected from buried topsoil (121) and cobble surface (102). The latter also contained a lathe-turned bone lid from a needle case. The flat top is decorated with a central dot and double incised motif, and retains internal screw threads. Comparable examples are known from 18th–20th-century deposits in Winchester (Biddle and Elmhurst 1990, fig. 238 nos. 2532 and 2535).



5. CONCLUSIONS

The archaeological observation, investigation and recording of the groundworks at the Three Tuns Public House in Biddenham has demonstrated that remains from the medieval period onwards survive in the area to the rear of the current building. The most significant of these were three medieval ditches and a medieval pit. Two of the ditches were on the same NNW-SSE alignment and were probably the result of the establishment and re-establishment of a property boundary. The third was perpendicular to the other two and is likely to represent a subdivision of the land to the west of the NNW-SSE boundary. The presence of the pit and recovery of a reasonable quantity of pottery suggest that this part of Biddenham was close to where people were living during the early/high medieval period despite its distance from the parish church and the presumed settlement core.

Although the ditches located within the footprint of the new build were truncated by later activity, the features identified were reasonably well preserved. It is unlikely, however, that shallower features such as postholes would have survived.

The monitoring of the groundworks also indicated that, in contrast to the area of the extension, there has been a considerable amount of modern levelling activity to the west of the Three Tuns. This suggests that the truncation associated with alterations to the building has only had localised impact on the archaeological remains. The presence of up to 1.3m of overburden in the vicinity of the soakaway means that if any further medieval, or earlier remains, exist in this area, they are likely to be well preserved and may yield further information on the morphology and development of Biddenham village.



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7. APPENDIX: DETAILED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Concrete	Paving slabs. 0.05m thick.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Levelling layer	Loose light grey yellow sand frequent small stones. 0.05m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	External surface	Loose mid orange brown sandy silt occasional small-medium CBM. Frequent large cobblestones. 0.2m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
104	Natural	Firm light brown orange silty clay frequent small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Pit	Sub-oval N-S sides: concave base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.95m, max depth 0.12m, min length 1.57m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Fill	Friable mid orange grey sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
106	Ditch	Linear NNW-SSE sides: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.8m, min depth 0.4m. Same ditch as [110] & [126].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
107	Fill	Friable mid orange brown silt occasional flecks charcoal, moderate small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
108	Ditch	Linear NNW-SSE sides: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.8m, max depth 0.5m. Same ditch as [112].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
109	Fill	Friable mid orange brown sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, moderate small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
110	Ditch	Linear NNW-SSE sides: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.8m, max depth 0.4m. Same ditch as [106] & [126].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
111	Fill	Friable mid orange brown silt occasional flecks charcoal, moderate small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
112	Ditch	Linear NNW-SSE sides: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 1.15m, max depth 0.45m. Same ditch as [108].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
113	Fill	Friable mid orange brown sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, moderate small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
114	Ditch	Linear ENE-WSW sides: Assymetrical base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.95m, max depth 0.35m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
115	Fill	Friable mid orange brown sandy silt occasional small-large stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
116	Make up layer	Loose mid orange brown sandy silt frequent small stones. 0.15m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
117	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones. 0.24m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
118	Tarmac	0.16m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
119	Demolition layer	Friable dark grey silty sand occasional small-large CBM, frequent small-large stones. 0.24m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
120	Levelling layer	Loose mid brown orange silty sand frequent small stones. 0.15m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
121	Buried topsoil	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones. 0.26m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
122	Demolition layer	Friable dark grey grey silt frequent small-large CBM. 0.1m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



123	Layer	Friable mid orange grey sandy silt frequent small stones. 0.17m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
124	Ditch	Linear NNW-SSE sides: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.7m, max depth 0.35m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
125	Fill	Friable mid orange brown sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, moderate small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
126	Ditch	Linear NNW-SSE dimensions: max breadth 0.65m, min length 0.2m	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
127	Fill	Firm mid grey brown sandy silt occasional small stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
128	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-large stones. 0.4m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
129	Demolition layer	Compact light yellow sand moderate medium-large CBM, frequent flecks mortar. 0.1m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
130	Levelling layer	Loose mid yellow brown silty sand . 0.2m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
131	Buried topsoil	Firm mid brown grey sandy silt . 0.4m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
132	Buried subsoil	Firm mid orange brown sandy silt . 0.2m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
133	Natural	Loose mid brown orange sandy gravel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
134	Pit	Sides: vertical base: flat dimensions: max depth 0.7m, min diameter 1.m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
135	Backfill	Loose dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-large CBM, frequent medium-large stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
136	External surface	Mortared brickwork. 0.07m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

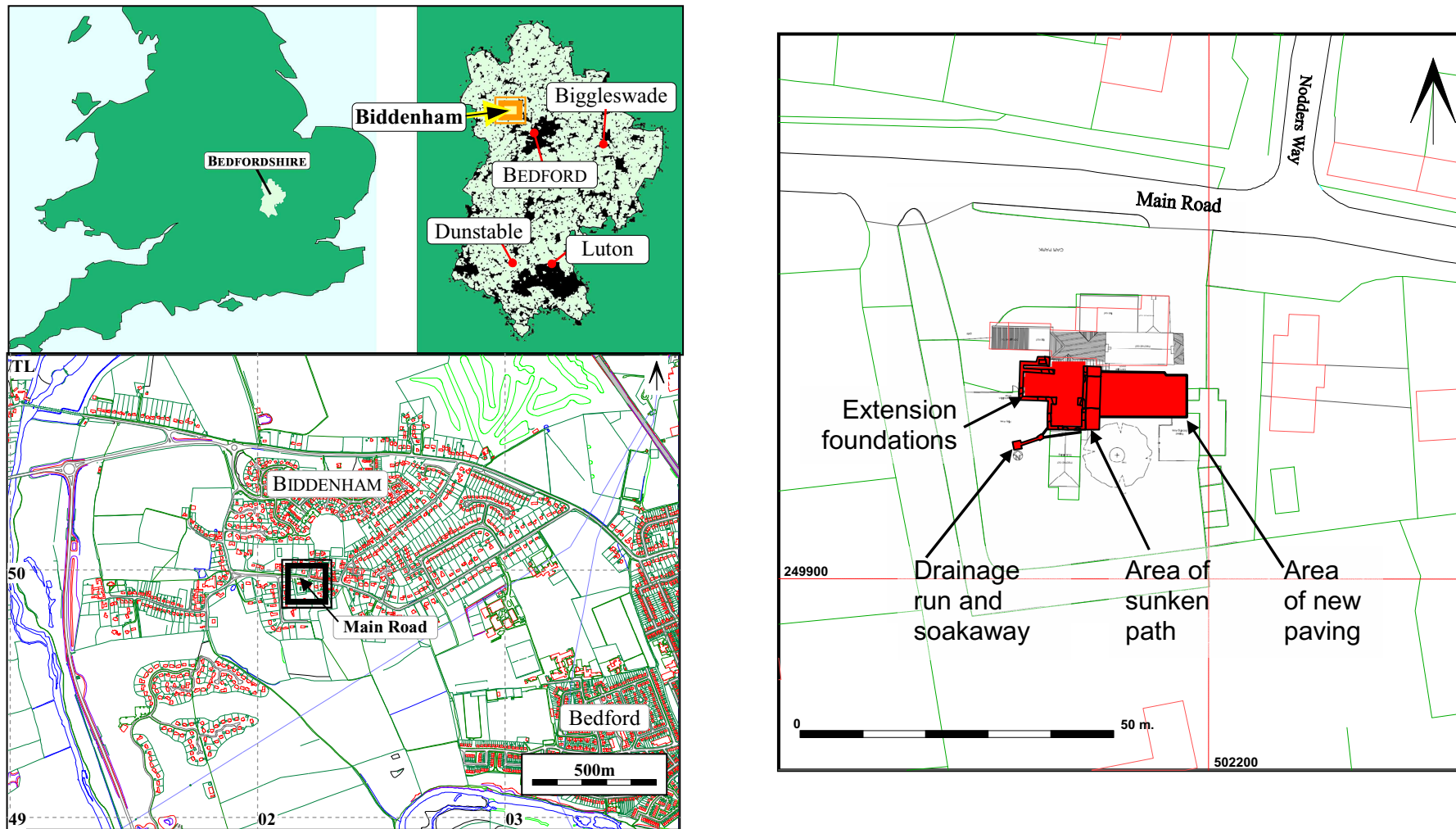


Figure 1: Site location plan

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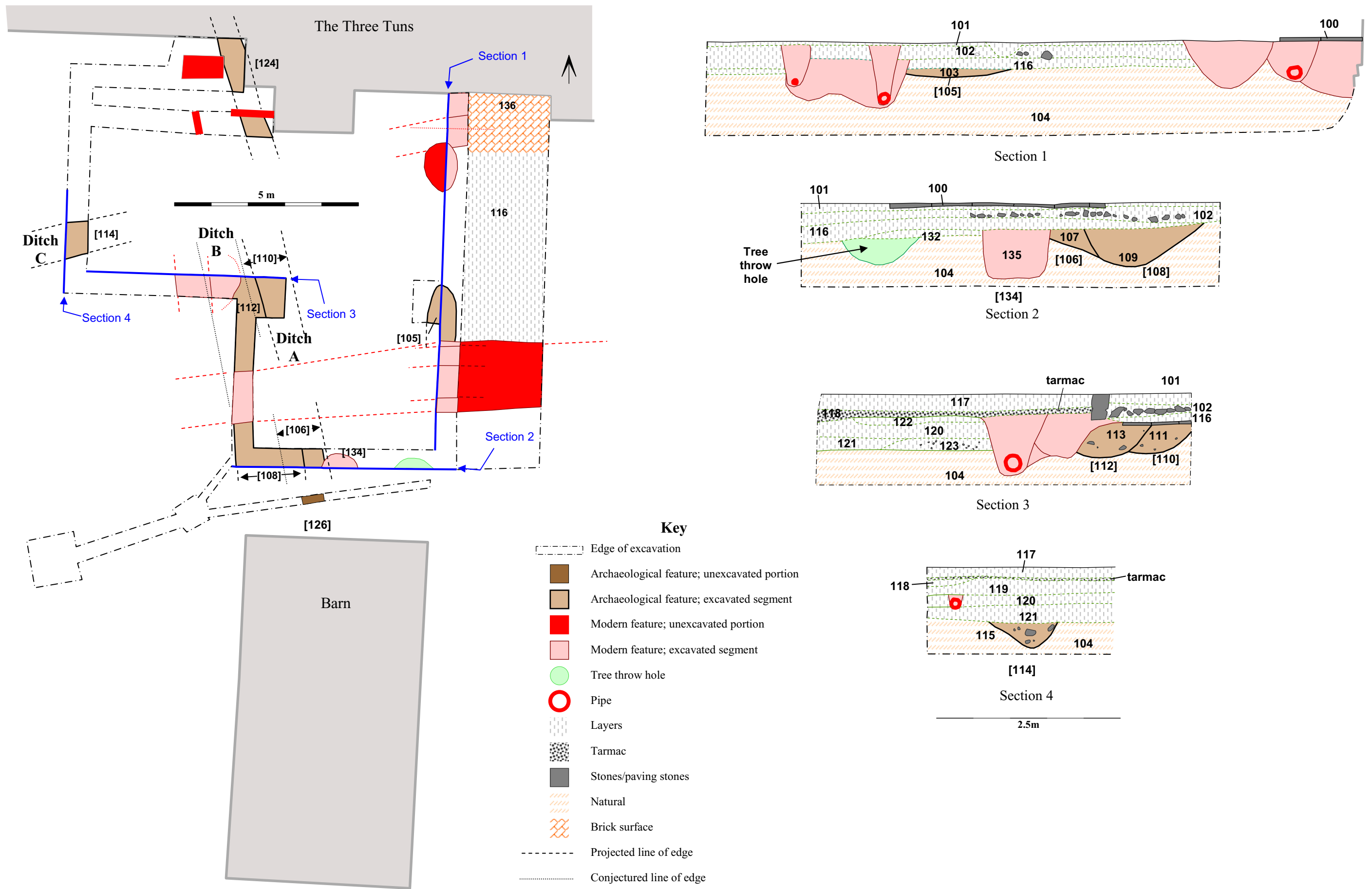
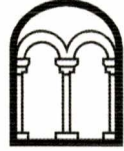


Figure 2: All features

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