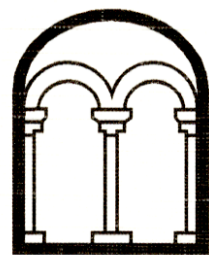


**6a HIGH STREET
EYEWORTH
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

Albion
archaeology



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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION,
INVESTIGATION, RECORDING, ANALYSIS
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On behalf of:
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Contents

List of Figures	2
Preface.....	3
Key Terms.....	3
1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Planning Background	4
1.2 Site Location and Description.....	4
1.3 Summary of Construction Works.....	4
1.4 Archaeological Background	4
1.5 Project Objectives	5
1.6 Methodology	6
2. RESULTS.....	7
2.1 Modern Deposits (20th Century)	7
2.2 Undated Archaeological Features.....	7
2.3 Geological Deposits	8
2.4 Artefacts.....	8
3. INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS	9
3.1 Introduction.....	9
3.2 Archaeological Features	9
3.3 General Conclusions	9
4. BIBLIOGRAPHY	10



List of Figures

- Figure 1: Site location plan
- Figure 2: All features plan
- Figure 3: Sections
- Figure 4: Modern map and archaeological features overlaid on 1901 OS map
- Figure 5: Pit [4]
- Figure 6: Pit [6]
- Figure 7: Ditch [8]
- Figure 8: Ditch [10]
- Figure 9: General view of the site from the south

Figures are bound at the back of the report



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.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Kathy Pilkinton (Supervisor), Jo Barker (Supervisor) and Mark Phillips (Project Officer). This report has been prepared by Mark Phillips with figures by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). The project was managed by Robert Wardill (Project Manager) and all Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

The assistance and co-operation of Allen Smith (Allen Smith Associates, architects), Mr C. Partington (owner) are gratefully acknowledged. Thanks are also due to Martin Oake (CBC Archaeologist) for monitoring the archaeological work on behalf of the local planning authority.

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Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
Client	Mr C Partington
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation
Procedures Manual	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> , 2nd ed, 2001 Albion Archaeology



Non Technical Summary

A programme of archaeological works was undertaken by Albion Archaeology at 6a High Street, Eyeworth in Bedfordshire between 5th August and 14th November 2013 during the construction of side, front and rear extensions to the property. A condition requiring archaeological works was attached to the planning consent due to the potential archaeological sensitivity of the site which is located within the settlement envelope of medieval Eyeworth. The development was located to the north of the High Street at grid reference TL 2489 4573.

The site lies in the northern part of the presumed extent of the medieval settlement. Historic maps show a series of irregular enclosures along the north side of the High Street representing possible closes. South of the High Street the medieval evidence comprises earthworks marking closes and hollow ways (HER 719), a surface scatter of late medieval pottery and tile (HER 34790) and the parish church of All Saints (HER 1054).

Archaeological features observed during the monitoring works comprise pits containing 20th-century debris associated with the modern development of the site and two undated ditches. Ditch [8] was identified towards the rear of the garden, approximately 70m back from the road frontage. Ditch [10] formed the north-east corner of an enclosure. It was up to 1.8m wide and continues to the south-west as a shallow earthwork depression in the garden of the adjacent property. Its location falls close to that of a boundary shown on the 1882 Ordnance Survey map. This boundary formed the north side of a row of enclosures along this side of the High Street.

The features identified represent historic or modern boundaries and disturbance associated with the modern development of the site. A single abraded sherd of pottery dateable to the late Saxon/ Saxo-Norman period was recovered from excavated spoil. The results of observations in the development area show no clear evidence for medieval occupation, although evidence for former land divisions has been recorded.

The project archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum (accession no. BEDFM: 2013.35).



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Planning Background*

Planning permission (CB/12/002752/FULL) was granted by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) for the construction of side, front and rear extensions following demolition of an existing garden room at 6a High Street, Eyeworth in Bedfordshire.

Because the development is situated within an archaeologically sensitive area, a condition (Condition 4) requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation was attached to the planning consent. This is in line with national planning guidelines in the form of Policy 141 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF)¹ and local Policy 45 of the *Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire* (Pre-submission version January 2013).

A Brief detailing the requirements and providing a basis for archaeological contractors to produce a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was issued by the CBC Archaeologist (CBC 2013).

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by the client to produce a WSI (Albion 2013) and to undertake the programme of archaeological works. Monitoring of the construction works took place between 5th August and 14th November 2013. The results are presented in this report.

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

6a High Street lies on the northern side of the High Street in the centre of the hamlet of Eyeworth (Figure 1). It is centred at grid reference TL 2489 4573.

Eyeworth is a linear settlement which lies along the crest of a slight NE-SW aligned ridge. The site is at a height of c. 48m OD. The underlying bedrock consists of clays of the Gault formation which are overlain by a band of glacial till along the ridge.

1.3 *Summary of Construction Works*

The works subject to archaeological monitoring comprised the excavation of wall foundations for a building extension, a pool and a swim spa as well as a soakaway trench at the rear of the garden for surface water from the new building. The extension abuts the western side of the existing house, extending to the front and rear of the building. The extension contains a swimming pool and swim spa, both requiring ground reduction to a depth of approximately 1.2m below ground level.

1.4 *Archaeological Background*

The archaeological and historical background to the development site is set out in the desk-based assessment that accompanied the planning application (Collins 2012).

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



In summary, the development site lies within the medieval village of Eyeworth (HER 719). Eyeworth is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086, suggesting its origins probably extend back at least to the late Saxon period. At the time of the Domesday Survey, the recorded population of the settlement was 22, which on a conservative estimate is thought to represent an actual population of at least 88 (Lock 1976).

In 1086 the manor was held by William Spec from the Crown (Page 1908). By the 14th century the manor had passed to the ownership of Warden Abbey, though it had reverted to the Crown by the early 16th century. A second manor originated in the 13th century as an offshoot of the main manor when Maud de Bussy granted lands and rents to the Priory of St Helen in London (Page 1908).

The medieval settlement was linear in form, developing along either side of the road that leads north-east from the village of Dunton to the south-west. Dunton itself is another medieval settlement (HER 17168).

Remains of the medieval settlement (HER 719) have been recorded as earthworks on land to the south of the High Street. The earthworks include close boundaries, hollow ways and building platforms. Works carried out in 1994 during pipe laying along the south side of the High Street did not identify any archaeological features but field artefact collection in the adjacent fields recovered late medieval pottery, tile and stone within the area of the medieval village (HER 3479).

The parish church of All Saints' (HER 1054) lies to the south of the development site.

There are a number of cropmark sites in the surrounding area (HER 5119, 16837, 16841, 16842 and 16845). Most are undated, although comparison with other sites in the region suggests that they are likely to be of later prehistoric or Roman date. A small-scale archaeological investigation at Dunton Water Treatment Works (HER 16837) produced evidence of middle Bronze Age to middle Iron Age occupation, associated with cropmark features (Fairbairn 2012).

To the north-east of Eyeworth village, finds of Roman coins, pottery, tesserae and wall plaster have been taken to indicate the location of a Roman villa (HER 517), although the precise nature of the site has not been confirmed. A Bronze Age bronze palstave axe and a Neolithic flint axe or chisel has also been found at this location.

1.5 Project Objectives

As identified within the brief (CBC 2013), the development site has the potential to contain remains of the Saxon, medieval and post-medieval settlement of Eyeworth. The importance of investigating Saxon and medieval rural settlements in order to examine settlement diversity and characterise rural settlement forms is described by Wade (2000, 24-25) and Oake (2007, 14). The origins, development and dynamics of medieval rural settlement are emphasised by Medlycott (2011,



57-59 and 70). Post-medieval rural settlement is discussed by Edgeworth (2007, 121-123).

The general objectives of the investigation were to:

- determine the date, nature and extent of any activity or occupation within the development area;
- determine the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

1.6 Methodology

Archaeological monitoring of the groundworks was carried out between 5th August and 14th November 2013. Groundworks comprised strip footings for walls and ground reduction for the swimming pool and swim spa, as well as a 10m long soakaway trench at the rear of the plot. All excavation was carried out with a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. Monitoring visits were coordinated with the contractors and ground reduction was monitored down to the level of undisturbed geological strata. Excavated spoil was temporarily stockpiled at the front of the plot prior to its removal where it was periodically scanned for artefacts.



2. RESULTS

The results are illustrated in plan (Figure 2) and selected sections (Figure 3) which are indicated on Figure 2 as Section A and B.

2.1 *Modern Deposits (20th Century)*

The uppermost deposit consisted of a thin layer of topsoil (1) between 0.1m and 0.15m thick. This was dark brownish grey, clay silt with small stones and occasional fragments of modern building debris.

Over most of the garden the topsoil lay directly over a layer of mid greyish grey, clay silt subsoil (2) up to 0.2m thick.

Within the foundation cuts at the northern end of the extension two discrete pits [4] and [6], up to 0.7m deep, were identified (Figs 5 and 6). They lay beneath a thin layer of topsoil (1) and were cut into the underlying subsoil (2). The fills of the pits consisted of loose soil mixed with modern debris including ash, iron fittings, tarmac, concrete, brick and plastic bags. Further dark soil with modern debris was noted during subsequent machining for the swimming pool.

Adjacent to the existing house insertion of services (heating pipes and cable conduits) had also caused some modern disturbance.

2.2 *Undated Archaeological Features*

Two undated ditches were identified.

2.2.1 **Ditch [8]**

Ditch [8] was found at the north end of the soakaway trench located in the northern end of the garden (Fig. 3: A and Fig.7). This NW-SE aligned feature was 1.6m wide and 0.45m deep with a shallow, concave profile. The ditch was cut into the natural strata (3) and covered by subsoil (2). Ditch [8] contained a single undifferentiated fill (9) of mid red brown clayey sand with no obvious inclusions.

2.2.2 **Ditch [10]**

Ditch [10] was found during ground reduction for the foundations of the swim spa close to the existing house (Fig. 3: B and Fig. 8). The ditch was not observed during the earlier excavation of the adjacent wall footings; however the upper part of the ditch was obscured by a layer of dark soil containing modern debris (see section 2.1).

Sections of ditch [10] aligned SW-NE and NW-SE formed a right-angled corner. The ditch was 1.5–1.8m wide with steep sides and a concave base. At its top it appeared to have been partially truncated and was covered by dark soil containing modern debris. The base of the ditch was at a depth of 0.9m below the present ground surface. To the west the line of the ditch appears to be continued as a linear depression which crosses the lawn of the adjacent property.



2.3 Geological Deposits

Undisturbed geological strata consisted of light yellowish brown, sandy clay with medium- to large-sized flint nodules and fragments of chalk. It appeared quite variable in places with patches of more sandy material or higher concentrations of stones. The geological strata lay at a depth of 0.3–0.4m in all areas.

The geological deposit consists of a layer of till above the Gault Clay bedrock. The till was formed up to 2 million years ago during ice age conditions. It was deposited by glacial action with localised sands and gravels deposited by meltwater outwash. At Eyeworth the till forms part of a NE-SW aligned band of material, a low ridge on which the settlement stands.

2.4 Artefacts

No artefacts were collected from the modern deposits (see section 2.1). The two undated ditches [8] and [10] produced no artefacts.

A sherd of pottery was recovered from the spoil excavated from the soakaway trench at the north end of the site. It is an abraded body sherd weighing 2g and identified as fabric type B01A (orange) in the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series. It is dateable to *c.* 1000–1200 AD, placing it within the late Saxon/Saxo-Norman period.



3. INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Introduction

Archaeological monitoring of the construction works identified areas of disturbance and pits, associated with the modern use of the site, and two undated ditches. Artefacts consist of a single sherd of medieval pottery recovered from spoil excavated from a trench near the north end of the garden.

3.2 Archaeological Features

Ditch [8] located at the north of the plot lies *c.* 70m from the road frontage and appeared to run approximately parallel to the road. Its fill (9) was a clean, well-sorted deposit with a higher proportion of sand compared to both the underlying geological deposit and the overlying subsoil. The ditch is located close to the northern edge of the garden and may be a precursor to the present boundary (Fig. 4).

Ditch [10] was found *c.* 35m from the road frontage and consisted of a right-angled corner with its northern arm aligned parallel to the High Street. It contained a dark fill (11) that produced no finds. A continuation of the north arm of the ditch extends into the garden of no. 6 High Street in the form of a shallow earthwork which is visible in the lawn. Local information relayed by the groundworks contractors indicated that the garden of 6a also contained a depression in this location which had been infilled. The northern arm of the ditch is located close to the line of a historic boundary which defined the rear edge of plots along this side of the High Street (Fig. 4). This boundary is shown on Ordnance Survey maps dating from 1882, 1901 and 1926. The ditch is likely to represent the northern extent of the plot prior to its northwards extension later in the 20th century.

3.3 General Conclusions

Historic maps show enclosures ranged along the north side of the High Street. On the first edition 25" OS map of 1882 these are largely unoccupied and would appear to be former closes that were abandoned due to settlement contraction. The oldest houses along this part of the road today are a series of paired cottages (Nos. 5/6, 7/8, 9/10 and 11/12). These are first shown on the second edition map of 1901 and must have been built at the end of the 19th century, presumably as housing for agricultural workers.

Features located during archaeological monitoring represent historic or modern boundaries or disturbance associated with the modern development of the site. A single abraded sherd of pottery dateable to the late Saxon/ Saxo-Norman period was recovered from excavated spoil. The results of observations in the development area show no evidence for intensive medieval occupation.

The site records do not merit any further analysis or reporting. The project archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum (accession no. BEDFM: 2013.35). This report will be uploaded onto the Archaeology Data Service's OASIS website (ref. albionar1-154094).



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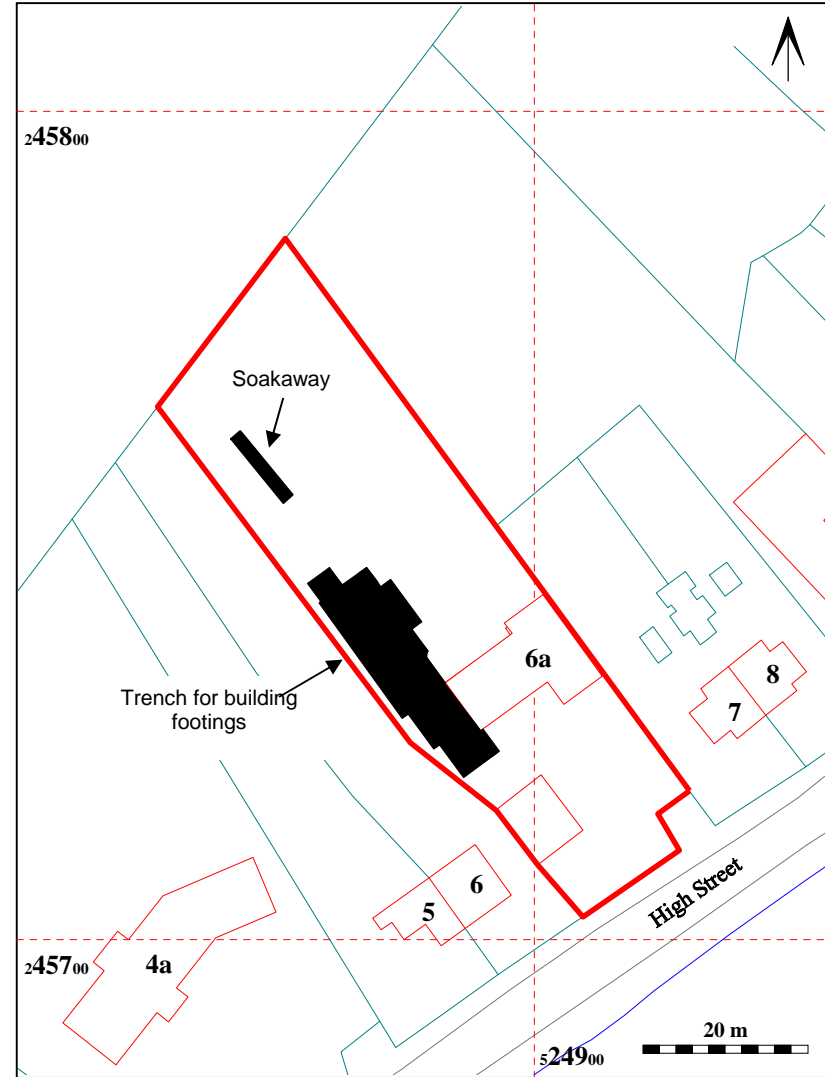
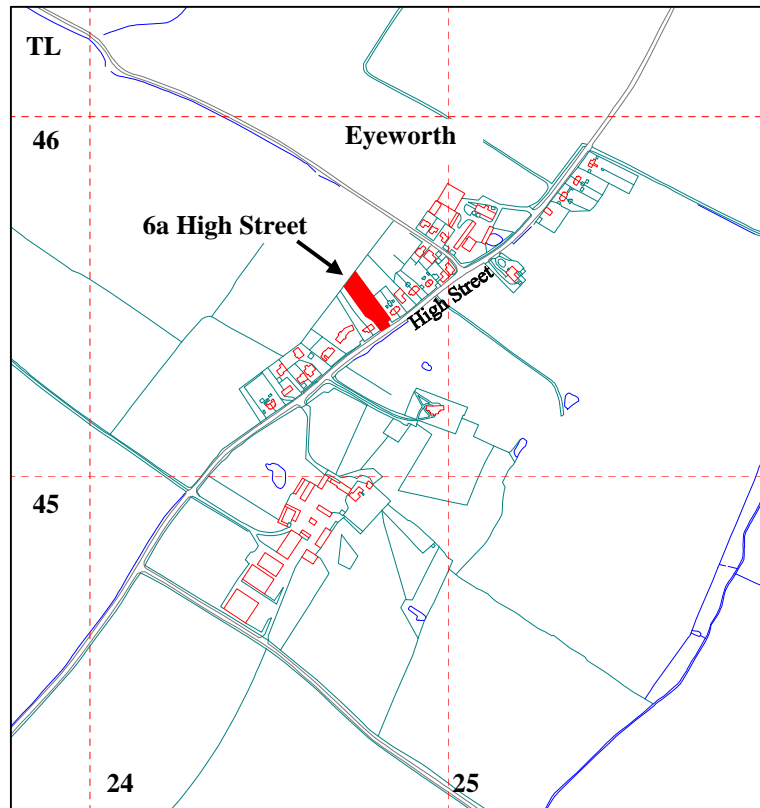
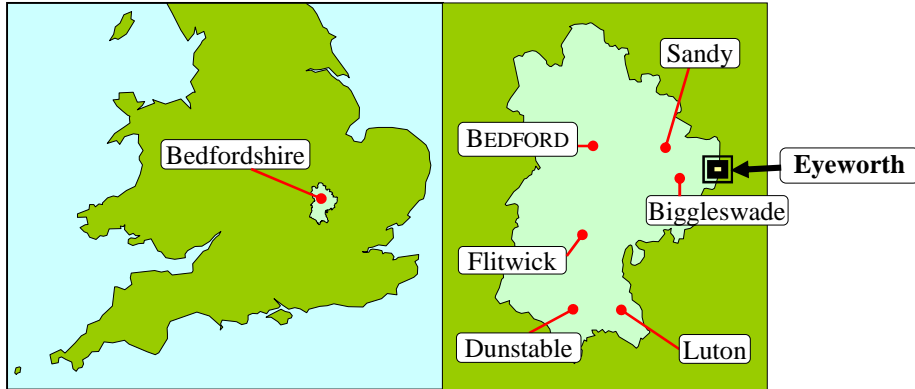


Figure 1: Site location plan

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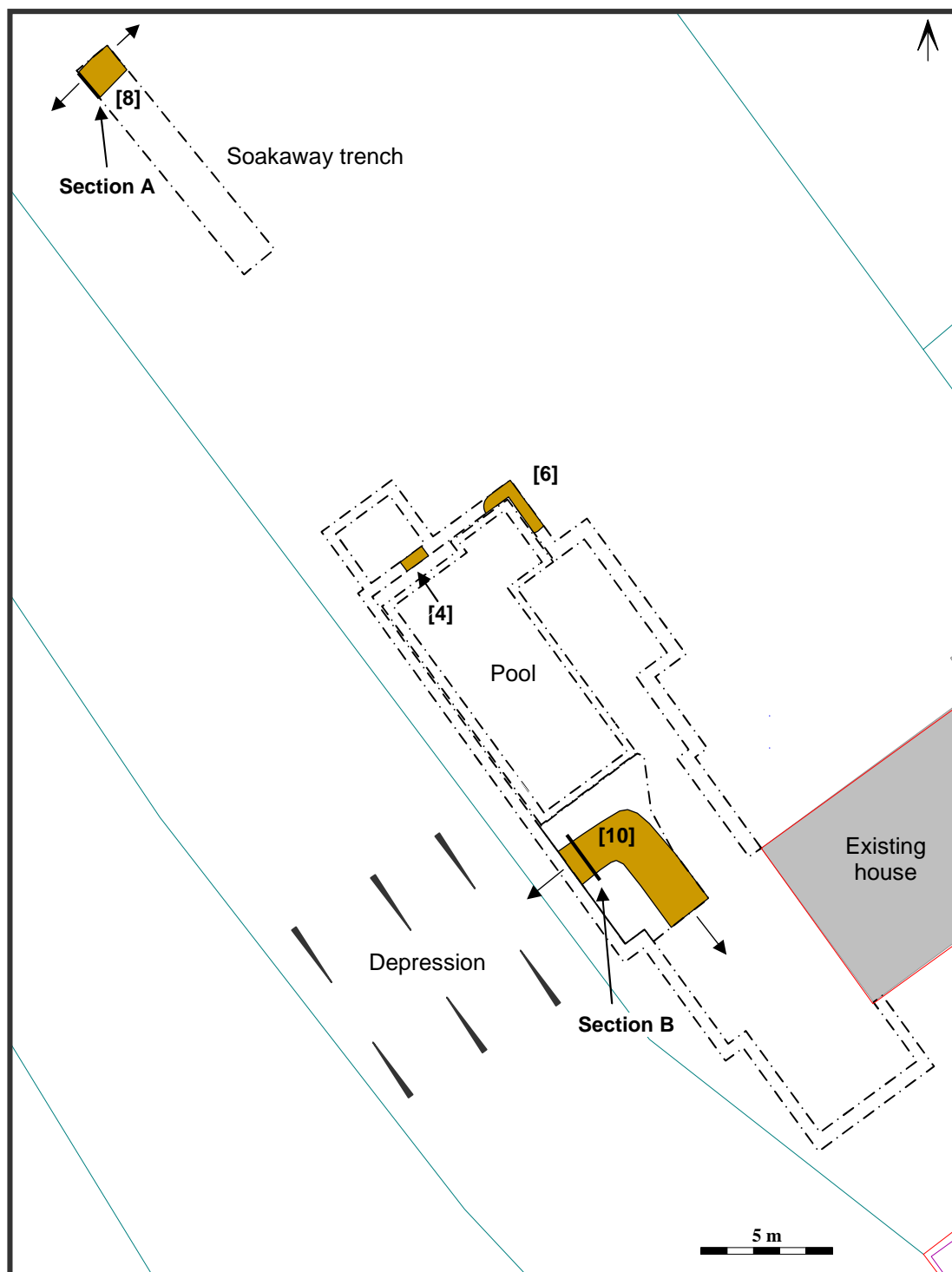
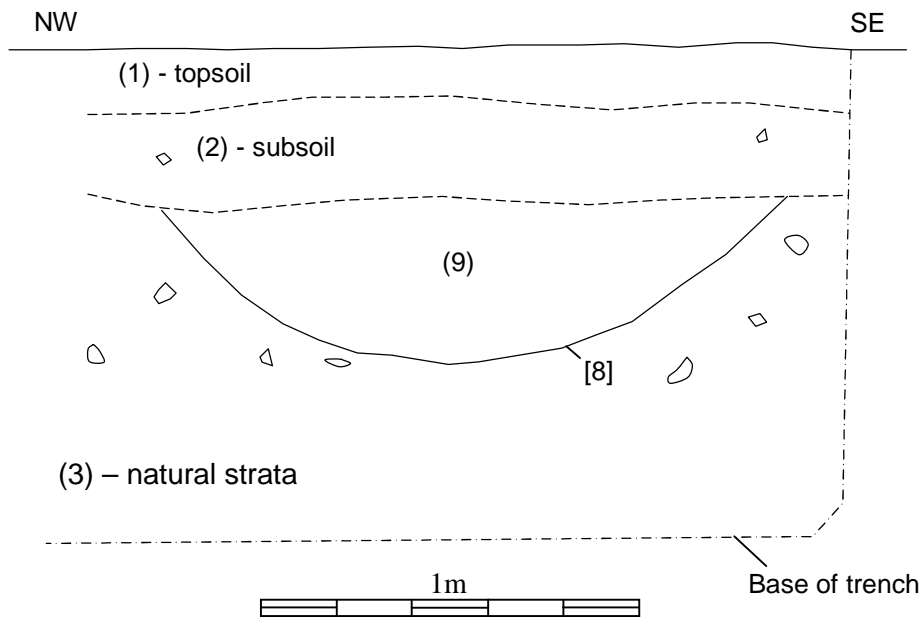


Figure 2: All features plan

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Section A: NE-facing section of ditch [8]



Section B: NE-facing section of ditch [8]

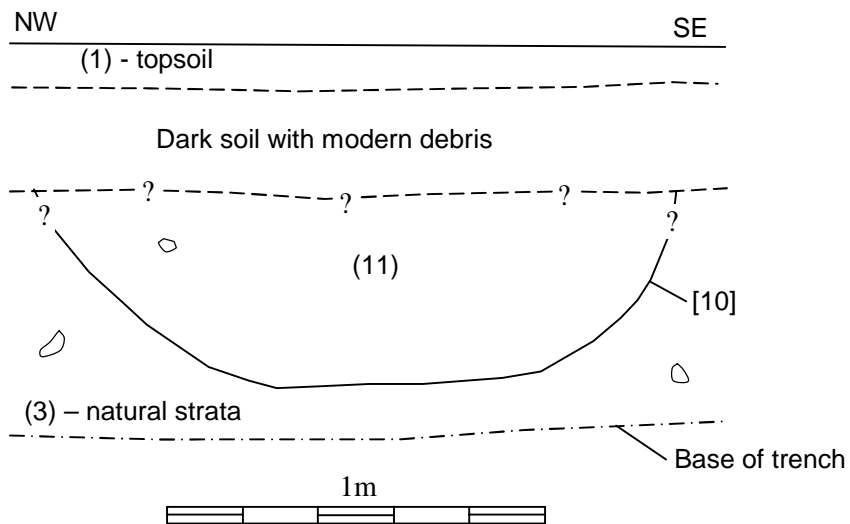


Figure 3: Sections



Figure 4: Modern map and archaeological features overlaid on 1901 OS map

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Figure 5: Pit [4]
Pit containing modern debris cut through subsoil (looking NW, scale 1m)



Figure 6: Pit [6]
Pit containing modern debris cut through subsoil (looking south, scale 1m)



Figure 7: Ditch [8]
Ditch with clean sandy fill sealed beneath subsoil (looking SW, scale 1m)



Figure 8: Ditch [10]
Ditch with dark fill found beneath layer of modern disturbance/infill (removed)
(looking SW, scale 1m)



Figure 9: General view of the site from the south
The lawn visible at the right hand side of the image contains a depression that appears to correlate with the westward continuation of ditch [10]

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