

**LAND AT MEADWAY  
HARROLD  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

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Redrow Homes Ltd



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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 James Pixley (Project Officer) and Peter Sprenger (Assistant Archaeological Supervisor). It was edited by Joe Abrams (Project Manager). The observations and investigations were carried out by Pete Sprenger, Richard Gregson (Archaeological Supervisor) and Chris Mallows (Archaeological Technician). The figures were prepared by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).*

*Albion Archaeology is grateful to David Owens of Redrow Homes for commissioning the project. We would also like to acknowledge the comments of Lesley-Ann Mather, County Archaeological Officer who monitored the site on behalf of Bedfordshire County Council.*

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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:

<i>CAO</i>	Bedfordshire County Council's Archaeological Officer
<i>Client</i>	Redrow Homes Ltd
<i>HER</i>	Historic Environment Record
<i>IFA</i>	Institute of Field Archaeologists
<i>Procedures Manual</i>	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> edn, 2001 Albion Archaeology



### **Non-Technical Summary**

*Between April 19<sup>th</sup> and July 14<sup>th</sup> 2005 Albion Archaeology undertook an archaeological investigation on land off Meadway, Harrold, Bedfordshire. During this period ten groups of footing trenches were excavated to provide foundations for houses and garages.*

*An archaeological evaluation was conducted on the Meadway development area in 1997 (BCAS 1997b and Figure 2, HM 478). This identified that much of the eastern part of the site had been quarried away. However, archaeological structures and deposits survived further to the west.*

*Full excavation of the north central part of the site followed (BCAS 1999 and Figure 2, HM 519). This revealed a high concentration of archaeological evidence including Neolithic burials and a funerary monument, an Iron Age cremation cemetery and evidence of early-mid Saxon occupation.*

*Despite being located between two rich archaeological sites, only one potential archaeological feature ([808]) was observed. This remains undated. This feature was similar in character and morphology to pits recorded during earlier works (Figures 2 and 3). These features were either undated, or of post-medieval or modern date.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 *Planning Background*

Planning permission was granted by Bedford Borough Council (98/1261), for the construction of a residential development at land off Meadway, Harrold. A condition, attached to this permission, required the implementation of a scheme of archaeological investigation prior to development taking place.

A brief was produced for this work by Bedfordshire County Council's Archaeological Officer (BCC's AO) (BCC 1997). In response, Albion Archaeology (formally BCAS) produced a project design (BCAS 1997a) and conducted an archaeological evaluation (BCAS 1997b). This evaluation identified the presence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area and a mitigation strategy was designed and partially implemented that same year. An updated project design has been produced for this work (BCAS 1999).

Based on the results of previous work (BCAS 1997, 1999) the CAO required a programme of observation and investigation during groundworks in the southern part of the Meadway development area. This document represents a report on these works.

### 1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The development area is located within the valley of the river Great Ouse, in the village of Harrold. It is centred on NGR SP 95234 56935 and encompasses an area of c.0.3ha.

The development area is bordered by tributary streams to the south and west. It lies at a height of around 44m AOD. The underlying geology consists of alluvial valley gravels overlying solid Oolitic limestone.

### 1.3 *Archaeological Background*

An archaeological evaluation was conducted on the Meadway development area in 1997 (BCAS 1997b and Figure 2, HM 478). This identified that much of the eastern part of the site had been quarried away. However, archaeological structures and deposits survived further to the west.

Full excavation of the north central part of the site followed (BCAS 1999 and Figure 2, HM 519). This revealed a high concentration of archaeological evidence including Neolithic burials and a funerary monument, an Iron Age cremation cemetery and evidence of early-mid Saxon occupation.

More recent investigation of land immediately west of the site (Figure 2, BJH 850, BJH 906 and HSH913) revealed well preserved archaeological deposits continuing beyond the stream which defines the western edge of the Meadway development. These remains spanned the late Bronze Age through to the post-medieval periods (Albion Archaeology 2005).



## 2. RESULTS OF OBSERVATION AND RECORDING

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### 2.1 Introduction

The programme of archaeological observation was undertaken on several different dates between April 19<sup>th</sup> and July 14<sup>th</sup> 2005. During this period all excavations which required monitoring were completed. A mechanical excavator was used to open the footing trenches.

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

### 2.2 Methodology

The watching brief adhered to the standards and field methods set out in Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual* (Albion Archaeology 2000). In summary:

- 1 Any stripping of overburden and excavation of footing/service trenches was monitored to try to and identify *in situ* archaeological deposits.
- 2 All disturbed soil was scanned for artefacts.
- 3 Any excavated features and deposits were fully recorded in accordance with the Albion's *Procedures Manual*.
- 4 All archaeological observations were recorded at a suitable scale on base plans that were tied in to the Ordnance Survey national grid.
- 5 Significant features were photographed using a digital camera.

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

### 2.3 Extent and Nature of Groundworks

Ten groups of footing trenches were excavated to provide foundations for houses and garages (Figure 3). They were 0.6m wide and 0.6 to 0.7m deep, and were excavated into undisturbed geological deposits (river gravel terrace).

### 2.4 Results

#### 2.4.1 Overburden

A layer of modern construction debris was evident in the eastern part of the development area (108), (203), (304), (400), (500), (600) and (700). It overlay topsoil deposits, ranging in depth from c.0.1m to the south and 0.30m to the north.

Topsoil consisted of dark grey/brown silty clay 0.25 to 0.30m in depth (100) (200) (300) (401) (501) (601) (701) 800) (900) (1000). It overlaid subsoil deposits except in the areas of trenches 4 and 10, where a significantly shallower topsoil (c.0.05m) directly overlaid undisturbed geological deposits.



Subsoil deposits consisted of orange/brown silty sand 0.3m in depth (101), (201), (302), (801) and (901). No subsoil existed in the area of trench 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10.

Undisturbed geological deposits consisted of light yellow brown sandy gravels (102), (202), (303), (402), (502), (602), (702), (802), (902) and (1002).

#### **2.4.2 Modern features**

Modern features were observed throughout the area. They ranged from postholes [106] [810] and pits [205] [305] [307] [503] [603] [605] [804] [806] some of which contained modern brick, tile debris and 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century potsherds ((604) (606), Appendix 1).

#### **2.4.3 Undated features**

A single pit [808] was observed in the southern part of the study area. It was 2.85m long, 0.75m wide and 0.27m deep. This contained no dateable artefactual material.





### **3. SYNTHESIS**

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#### **3.1 Interpretation**

Despite being located between two rich archaeological sites, only one potential archaeological feature ([808]) was observed. This remains undated. This feature was similar in character and morphology to pits recorded during earlier works (Figures 2 and 3). These features were either undated, or of post-medieval or modern date.

No remains at all were observed in footing trenches 4, 7, 9 and 10. In three cases (4, 7 and 10) the land had already been subject to archaeological excavation (BCAS 1997, Figures 2 and 3). It is thought that these excavations had cleared all traces of archaeological remains. It may also explain the presence of a relatively thin topsoil and the absence of a subsoil in these areas.

The general lack of archaeological features in this area supports the distribution pattern of archaeological features recorded in the earlier excavation. This indicated that the southern part of the site contained very few significant remains.



## 4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Albion Archaeology 2000 *Procedures Manual, Volume 1: Fieldwork. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*

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Doc 2003/23

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BCAS 1997a *Land off Meadway, Harrold: Project Design for Archaeological Field Evaluation.*

BCAS 1997b *Land off Meadway, Harrold: Archaeological Field Evaluation.* Rep. 97/30

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BCC 1997 *A Specification for the Archaeological Field Evaluation of Land off the Meadway, Harrold, Bedfordshire*

BCC 2003 *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Excavation, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Land at The Meadway, Harrold Bedfordshire*



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## **5. APPENDIX 1 - TRENCH AND CONTEXT SUMMARIES**

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**Trench: 1**

**Max Dimensions: Length: 11.50 m. Width: 8.90 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.4 m. Max: 0.48 m.**

**OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: SP9526656964 Ref. 2: SP9525656960**

**Reason: Footings trench for house**

<b>Context:</b>	<b>Type:</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Excavated:</b>	<b>Finds Present:</b>
100	Topsoil	Firm dark grey brown sandy silt occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Subsoil	Mid brown silty sand frequent small sand, frequent small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Natural	Loose light yellow brown sandy gravel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Layer	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt frequent small-large stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Layer	Loose mid brown orange silty sand moderate small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>106</b>	<b>Posthole</b>	<b>Profile: near vertical dimensions: max breadth 0.85m, max depth 0.5m</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
107	Backfill	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt occasional small-large stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
108	Dump material	Hard dark brown grey sandy clay moderate flecks charcoal, frequent small stones Modern construction debris	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench: 2**

**Max Dimensions: Length: 5.95 m. Width: 3.30 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.28 m. Max: 0.28 m.**

**OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: SP9525356959 Ref. 2: SP9525656954**

**Reason: Footings trench for garage**

<b>Context:</b>	<b>Type:</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Excavated:</b>	<b>Finds Present:</b>
200	Topsoil	Firm dark grey brown sandy silt occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
201	Subsoil	Friable mid brown orange silty silt occasional flecks sand, frequent small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
202	Natural	Loose light grey yellow sandy gravel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
203	Make up layer	Loose light grey grey sandy gravel moderate small-large ceramic building material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
204	Buried topsoil	Friable mid brown sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
205	<b>Modern Intrusion</b>	<b>Linear E-W profile: near vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.6m, max depth 0.24m, min length 1.m Cuts (203)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
206	Backfill	Loose mid brown orange silty silt frequent small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench: 3**

**Max Dimensions: Length: 14.95 m. Width: 9.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.45 m. Max: 0.45 m.**

**OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: SP9524056958 Ref. 2: SP9524556944**

**Reason: Footing trench for 2 houses**

<b>Context:</b>	<b>Type:</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Excavated:</b>	<b>Finds Present:</b>
300	Topsoil	Firm dark grey brown sandy silt frequent small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
301	Buried topsoil	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
302	Subsoil	Loose mid brown orange silty sand moderate small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
303	Natural	Loose light brown yellow sandy gravel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
304	Make up layer	Loose light grey sandy gravel frequent small-large ceramic building material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
305	<b>Modern Intrusion</b>	<b>Profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.5m, max depth 0.85m Modern rubbish pit</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
306	Refuse deposit	Friable dark brown sandy silt occasional small stones Modern rubbish deposit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
307	<b>Modern Intrusion</b>	<b>Profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.85m, max depth 0.25m Modern rubbish pit</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
308	Refuse deposit	Friable dark brown sandy silt occasional small-medium ceramic building material, moderate flecks charcoal, occasional small stones Modern rubbish deposit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench: 4**

**Max Dimensions: Length: 5.50 m. Width: 5.50 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0. m. Max: 0. m.**

**OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: SP9526556945 Ref. 2: SP9526856940**

**Reason: Footing trench for garage**

<b>Context:</b>	<b>Type:</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Excavated:</b>	<b>Finds Present:</b>
400	Dump material	Loose mid grey rubble frequent small-medium ceramic building material, occasional small-medium stones Modern construction debris	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
401	Topsoil	Firm dark grey brown silty clay moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
402	Natural	Loose light yellow brown sandy gravel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench: 5**

**Max Dimensions: Length: 9.50 m. Width: 5.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.4 m. Max: 0.4 m.**

**OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: SP9525656933 Ref. 2: SP9524756929**

**Reason: footing trench for garages**

<b>Context:</b>	<b>Type:</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Excavated:</b>	<b>Finds Present:</b>
500	Dump material	Loose mid grey rubble frequent small-medium ceramic building material, occasional small-medium stones Modern construction debris	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
501	Buried Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty clay moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
502	Natural	Loose light yellow brown sandy gravel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
503	Modern Intrusion	Sub-circular profile: vertical base: concave dimensions: min breadth 1.3m, max depth 1.3m, max length 1.7m Modern rubbish pit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
504	Refuse deposit	Firm dark grey brown silty clay moderate small stones Modern rubbish deposit in pit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





**Trench: 6**

**Max Dimensions: Length: 9.50 m. Width: 5.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.4 m. Max: 0.4 m.**

**OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: SP9525356941 Ref. 2: SP9524456938**

**Reason: Footing trench for garages**

<b>Context:</b>	<b>Type:</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Excavated:</b>	<b>Finds Present:</b>
600	Dump material	Loose mid grey rubble frequent small-medium ceramic building material, occasional small-medium stones Modern construction debris	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
601	Buried Topsoil	Firm dark grey brown silty clay moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
602	Natural	Loose light yellow brown sandy gravel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
603	<b>Modern Intrusion</b>	<b>Sub-circular profile: near vertical base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.4m, max depth 0.9m, max length 1.6m Modern rubbish pit</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
604	Refuse deposit	Firm dark grey brown silty clay moderate small stones Modern pottery sherds were recorded but not retained.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
605	<b>Modern Intrusion</b>	<b>Sub-circular profile: near vertical base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.4m, max depth 0.7m, max length 1.3m Modern rubbish pit</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
606	Refuse deposit	Firm dark grey brown silty clay moderate small-medium ceramic building material Modern rubbish dump in pit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



**Trench:** 7

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 11.20 m. Width: 8.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0. m. Max: 0. m.

**OS Co-ordinates:** Ref. 1: SP9521356929 Ref. 2: SP9520356923

**Reason:** Footing trench for house

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
700	Brick Rubble	Loose mid grey sandy concrete Layer of builders rubble across site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
701	Topsoil	Firm dark grey brown silty clay occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
702	Natural	Compact yellow sandy gravel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench: 8**

**Max Dimensions: Length: 15.50 m. Width: 12.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.2 m. Max: 0.2 m.**

**OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: SP9522856938 Ref. 2: SP9523356924**

**Reason: Footings for house.**

<b>Context:</b>	<b>Type:</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Excavated:</b>	<b>Finds Present:</b>
800	Topsoil	Loose dark brown clay silt occasional small stones Topsoil	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
801	Subsoil	Firm mid orange brown silty clay Subsoil	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
802	Natural	Firm light yellow brown gravel frequent small-medium stones Natural Stratum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>804</b>	<b>Modern Intrusion</b>	<b>Sub-oval E-W profile: vertical base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.4m, max depth 1.6m, max length 1.9m Modern rubbish pit.</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
803	Pit	Loose dark brown clay silt occasional small stones Fill of C20th rubbish pit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>806</b>	<b>Modern Intrusion</b>	<b>Sub-oval N-S profile: concave base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.4m, max depth 1.2m, max length 1.2m Modern rubbish pit.</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
805	Pit	Loose dark brown clay silt occasional small-medium stones Fill of C20th rubbish pit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>808</b>	<b>Pit</b>	<b>Oval N-S profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.75m, max depth 0.27m, max length 2.85m Possible archaeological feature</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
807	Pit	Loose mid red brown silty clay occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small stones Fill of pit of unknown function.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>810</b>	<b>Posthole</b>	<b>Rectangular N-S profile: vertical base: flat dimensions: max diameter 0.45m Contained concrete pillar.</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
809	Modern Intrusion	Loose dark brown clay silt frequent small-medium stones Fill of modern intrusion, base of which contained concrete pillar. Not excavated. Only recorded as [810] truncated [808] and therefore, showed in section.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench: 9**

**Max Dimensions: Length: 15.50 m. Width: 14.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0. m. Max: 0. m.**

**OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: SP9522256953 Ref. 2: SP9522656941**

**Reason: Footings for house.**

<b>Context:</b>	<b>Type:</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Excavated:</b>	<b>Finds Present:</b>
900	Topsoil	Loose dark brown clay silt occasional small-medium stones Topsoil	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
901	Subsoil	Firm mid orange brown silty clay occasional small stones Subsoil.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
902	Natural	Firm light yellow brown gravel frequent small-medium stones Natural Stratum.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench: 10**

**Max Dimensions: Length: 5.40 m. Width: 5.20 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0. m. Max: 0. m.**

**OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: SP9520356919 Ref. 2: SP9520456913**

**Reason: Footings for garage.**

<b>Context:</b>	<b>Type:</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Excavated:</b>	<b>Finds Present:</b>
1000	Topsoil	Loose dark brown clay silt frequent small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1001	Natural	Firm light yellow brown gravel frequent small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

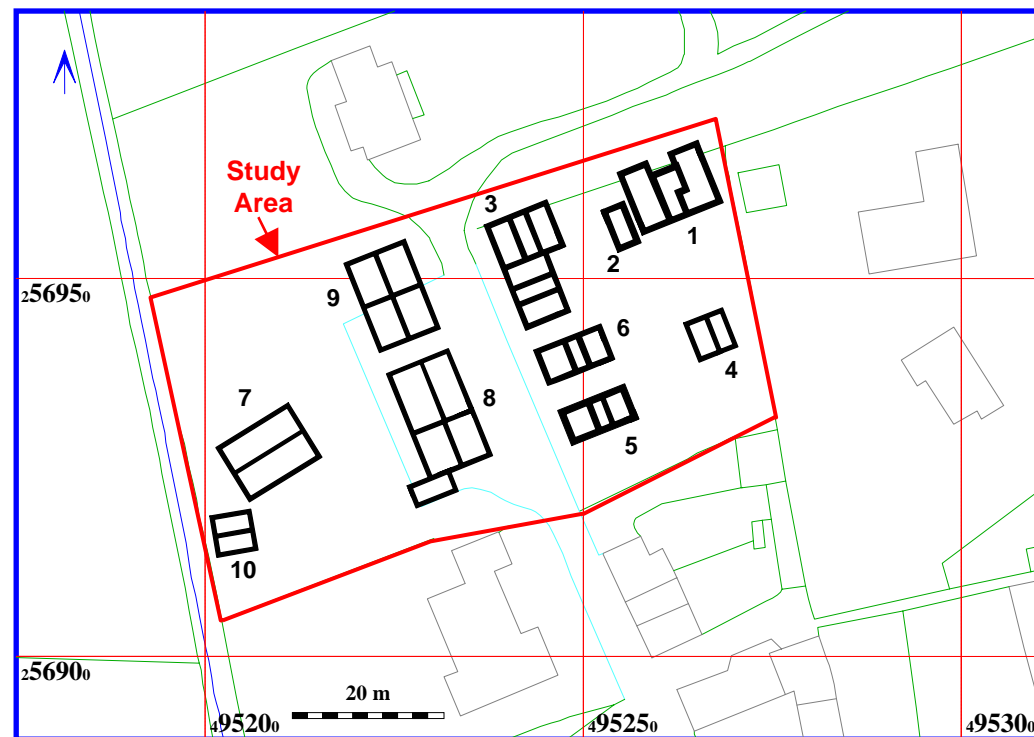
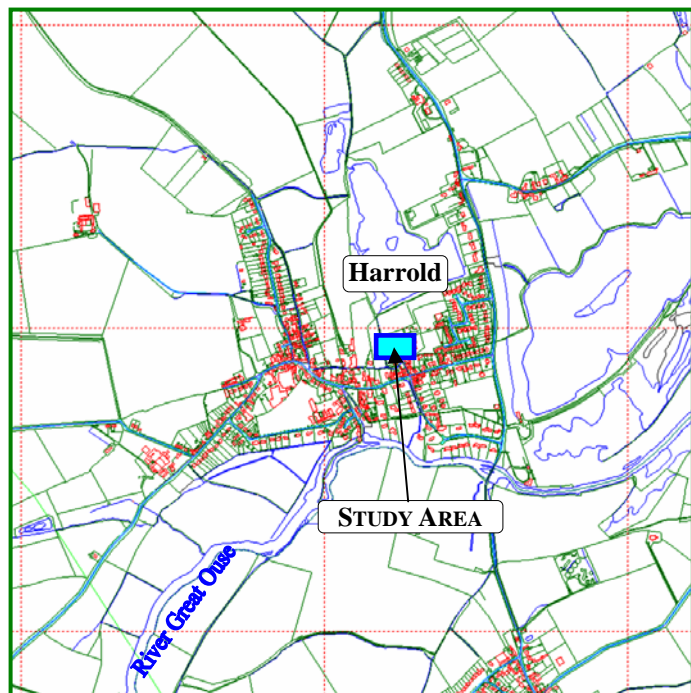
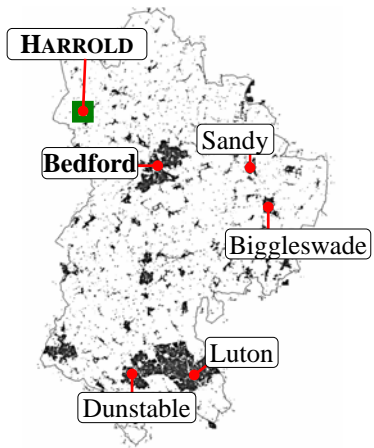
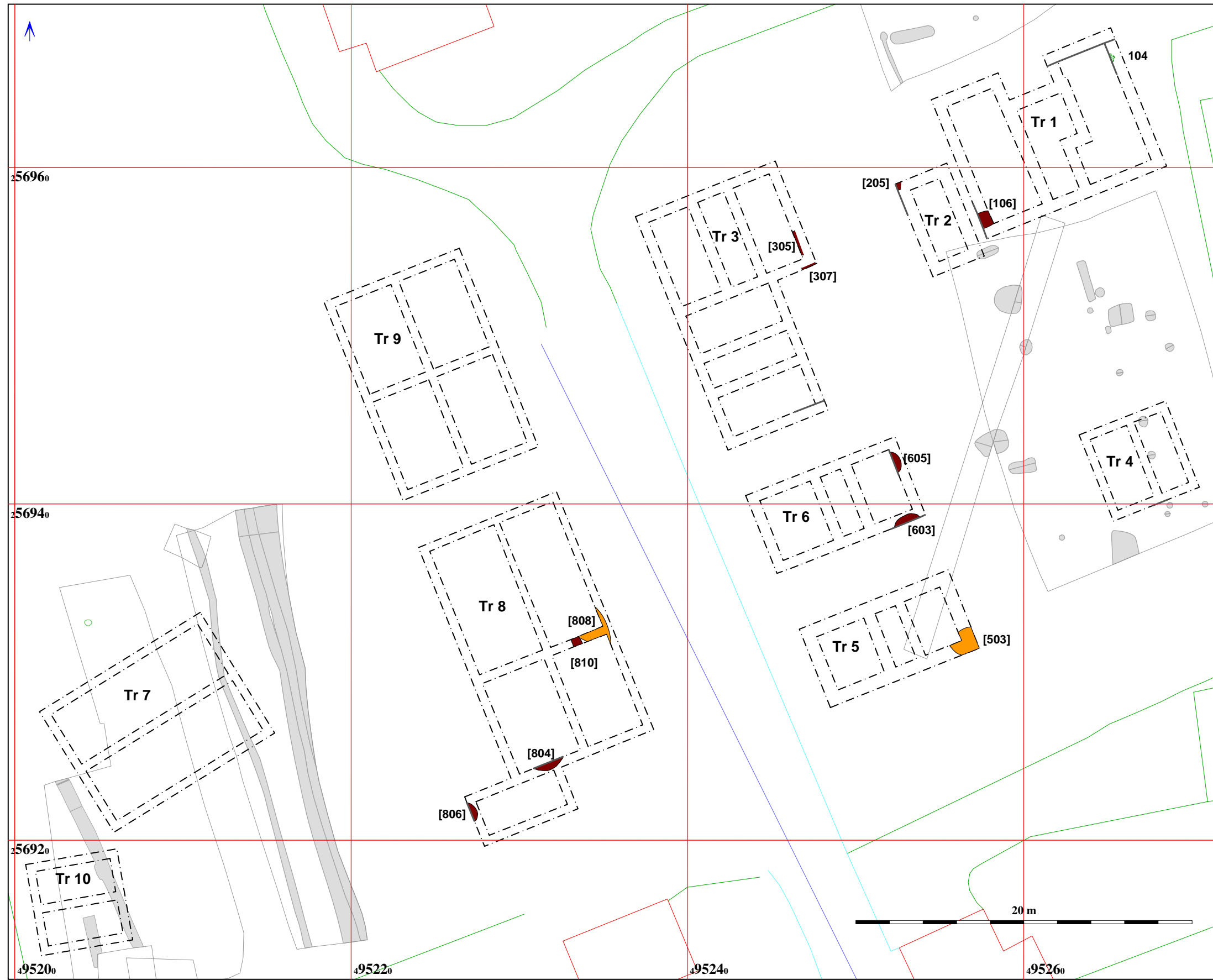






Figure 1: Site location map

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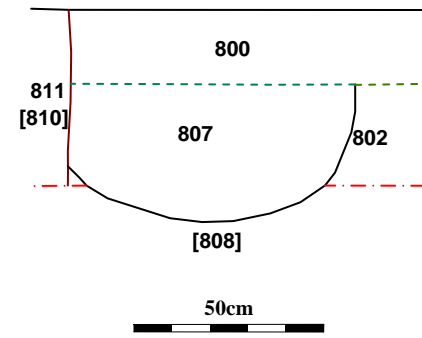
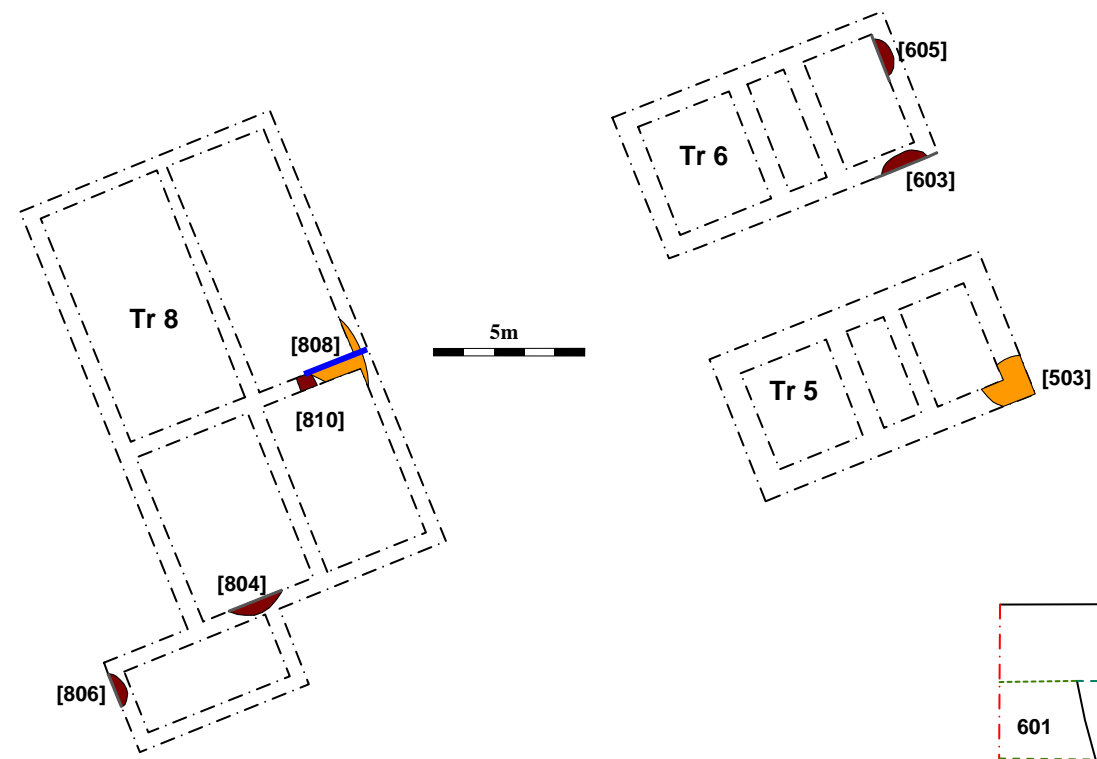
**Figure 2: Previous excavations in the vicinity of the study area**  
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-  Modern feature
-  Undated feature
-  Geological feature
-  Previous excavations

**Figure 3: All features**  
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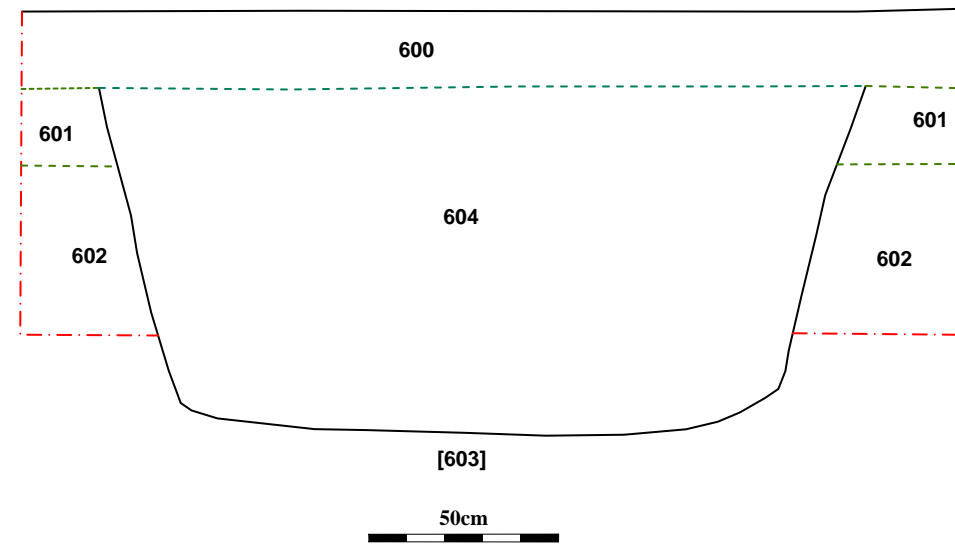




Section 1



Photograph of pit [808]



Section 2



Photograph of pit [603]



Photograph of pit [605]



Photograph of pit [503]



Photograph of pit [806]

Figure 4: Selected sections and photographs