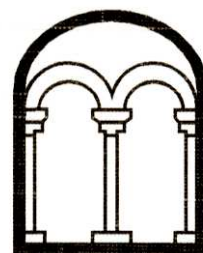


**LAND OFF HIGH STREET
AND LODGE ROAD
CRANFIELD
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION, RECORDING,
ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION**

Albion
archaeology



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Prepared for:
Water End Properties Ltd



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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 by Water End Properties Ltd. The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Martin Oake, Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist.

Fieldwork was carried out by Ian Leslie (Archaeological Supervisor), Gareth Shane and Alan King (Archaeological Assistant Supervisors). This report was prepared by Richard Gregson and Jackie Wells (Finds Officer). Figures were created by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician).

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Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
HER	Central Bedfordshire Council Historic Environment Record
OS	Ordnance Survey
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-technical Summary

Planning permission (CB/13/04201/FULL) was granted for housing development on land off High Street and Lodge Road, Cranfield, Bedfordshire.

A condition attached to the planning consent (Condition 14) required the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation as a consequence of the development. Archaeological field evaluation, completed in March 2014, had indicated that the development site contained archaeological remains of local and regional significance that would require further archaeological investigation to be undertaken in advance of development.

The archaeological excavation was carried out between 14th and 20th August 2015 in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA).

The earliest archaeological features revealed during the investigations were a cluster of middle to late Iron Age features (G1) and a quarry pit (G2). The quarry pit was truncated by one of two NW-SE aligned ditches that appear to define a late Iron Age / early Roman trackway (G3). This trackway is likely to be a continuation of a trackway previously identified c. 140m to the south-east (Albion Archaeology 2011). Three medieval / post-medieval cultivation furrows (G4) truncated one of the trackway ditches. Truncating several of the earlier features were modern features including drains that were probably associated with the two nearby dwellings built in the first half of the 20th century and a line of postholes that followed one of the dwelling's property boundaries.

The few middle to late Iron Age features demonstrate that there was some, probably low-level, settlement-related activity in the area during the period. Evidence of late Iron Age / Roman activity was confined to the ditches demarcating the trackway, suggesting the area is peripheral to any settlement activity of the period, though it could well have linked any such settlements in the wider vicinity. It is interesting to note that the possible trackway had a similar orientation to the nearby Lodge Road, which may be coincidental or may denote some degree of continuity in the landscape that survives to the present day.

The results of the investigations contribute to the growing understanding of Iron Age and Roman settlement on the higher ground around Cranfield. However, they have no potential for further analysis beyond that presented in this report.

Following approval of this report by the CBCA, the archive of materials (subject to the landowner's permission) and accompanying records will be deposited with Bedford Museum (accession no. 2013.21). The report will be uploaded onto the ADS Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS ref: albionar1-176658).



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Background*

Planning permission (CB/13/04201/FULL) was granted for housing development on land off High Street and Lodge Road, Cranfield, Bedfordshire.

A condition attached to the planning consent (Condition 14) required the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation as a consequence of the development. Archaeological field evaluation, completed in March 2014, had indicated that the development site contained archaeological remains of local and regional significance that would require further archaeological investigation in advance of development (Albion Archaeology 2014a).

The further archaeological investigation was carried out between 14th and 20th August 2015 in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2014b) approved by the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA).

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

Cranfield lies *c.* 10km to the south-west of Bedford on the southern edge of a plateau that overlooks the Marston Vale in the east and south-east. The site lies on the south-west edge of Cranfield on land adjacent to the junction of High Street and Lodge Road (Figure 1). It is situated on fairly level ground at an average height of *c.* 110m OD and is bounded to the north-west by High Street and to the south by Lodge Road and an existing row of houses. To the north-east lie open fields. Land to the east is currently under development. The underlying geology is Quaternary glacial till over Jurassic Oxford Clay.

The area of excavation measured 20m x 30m and was centred on grid reference SP 94926 41558. It targeted the middle to late Iron Age features revealed within Trench 2 of the evaluation (Figure 1).

1.3 *Status and Purpose of this Document*

Given the nature of the recovered data sets, it was agreed with the CBCA that this report would present the results of all stages of the archaeological investigations including any required analysis of the results.

1.4 *Archaeological and Historical Background*

1.4.1 *Archaeological evaluation of the site*

Archaeological evaluation, comprising the excavation of six trial trenches, was undertaken between 3rd and 6th March 2014 (Figure 1). Archaeological features were identified in five of the six trenches. Most of them were associated with the agricultural use of the site from the medieval period onwards. The exception was some middle to late Iron Age settlement features, comprising pits, postholes and a ditch, revealed within Trench 2.



1.4.2 The wider historic and archaeological background

Two extensive archaeological investigations have previously taken place close to the site.

A geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation (HER 11866) was conducted by Museum of London Archaeological Service in an area within Cranfield Airfield, to the north and west of the site.

A desk-based assessment (Albion Archaeology 2004), geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation (Albion Archaeology 2005), and mitigation works (Albion 2011) were carried out at Home Farm Cranfield (HER 13418) in fields to the south-east and east of the site.

The results of both investigations combined with HER data from a 500m radius study area, centred on the site, are summarised in chronological order below.

Prehistoric (before AD 43)

Archaeological investigations within Cranfield Airfield found limited evidence for earlier prehistoric activity in the form of a few flint artefacts and a single sherd of Neolithic / Bronze Age pottery as well as evidence for Iron Age settlement and field systems.

Archaeological investigations at Home Farm found evidence for dispersed, late pre-Belgic Iron Age settlements and agricultural activity. These were generally located towards the edge of the plateau on which the site and most of the village of Cranfield is situated. Later Iron Age enclosed settlements were also found in two areas to the east of the site that were either on or near the edge of the plateau. As well as evidence for settlement and agricultural activity, there was also evidence for funerary activity in the form of two inhumations and two cremation burials.

There is, therefore, evidence for dispersed Iron Age settlements in the wider landscape around the site.

Roman (AD 43–c. 450)

Evidence for Roman activity was found within both the Cranfield Airfield and the Home Farm investigations. The remains at Home Farm included an enclosed farmstead and evidence for agricultural activity in the form of a series of cultivation trenches located in an area to the east of the site.

The Roman settlement was concentrated on the edge of the plateau area, overlooking the scarp slope of Marston Vale.

Saxo-Norman (850–1150)

A small cluster of ponds or intercutting pits dating to the Saxo-Norman period were recorded in an evaluation trial trench c. 650m to the east of the site. Further scattered evidence of Saxo-Norman activity was found during the archaeological mitigation in the same general area.



Medieval (1150–1500)

The site falls within the potential limits of the medieval settlement as defined in the HER (HER 16931) which shows the main village core as a linear settlement extending south along the High Street to the junction with Lodge Road.

A composite map of the pre-enclosure landscape around Cranfield shows that many of the fields, including the one the site is in, had been subject to ridge and furrow cultivation that probably dated to the medieval period (Coleman 1986). Archaeological investigations confirmed the presence of furrows in some of the fields around the site, but not in the field located immediately to the north-east of the site. However, a series of post-medieval land drains found here corresponded to the alignment of the cultivation strips shown on the pre-enclosure map.

A small number of medieval pits were found towards the south-east edge of the site at Home Farm, some 300–500m to the east of the site.

Post-medieval (1500–1900)

The HER contains a small number of entries dating to the post-medieval period within the general vicinity of the site. They include seven standing buildings, a former 19th-century gravel extraction pit and the sites of several now demolished buildings.

The closest standing buildings are Goodman Almshouses at 14–22 High Street (HER 6364), located *c.* 100m north-east of the site. The next closest, located *c.* 100m south-east of the SITE on Lodge Road, is the Gate Lodge (HER 14362, DBD 2861) built in the 19th century for the now demolished Cranfield Court. All the other standing buildings are all located further along the High Street towards the centre of Cranfield. They include another almshouse (HER 6367, DBD 2864), a much modernised Methodist chapel (HER 10074) and three more dwellings (HER 14365, DBD 2735 & DBD 2875).

The most notable of the demolished structures is the site of a former windmill (HER 3186) located *c.* 250m south-west of the site. The 19th-century gravel pit (HER 10044) was located *c.* 50m south of the site on the opposite side of Lodge Road.

The 1883 1st Edition OS Map shows no buildings, property plots or other points of interest within the field in which the site is situated.

Modern (1900–present)

The most archaeologically significant site of this period is Cranfield Airfield which dominates the area to the north and west. This now forms part of Cranfield Institute of Technology (University). However, it started life as RAF Cranfield in 1940 and subsequently played an important role in the Second World War (Dyer 1995). Seven pillboxes were built to defend the Airfield, only three of which now survive. The details of these have been



recorded as part of the *Defence of Britain Project*¹. Significantly none of these defences were located within the current site which is not thought to contain any physical remains relating to the airfield and its defences.

1.5 Project Objectives

The overall purpose of the archaeological works was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the site in its cultural and environmental setting, and to prepare and disseminate a report that fully described the findings (this document).

The primary aims included:

1. determining the date, nature and extent of any activity or occupation within the site.
2. determining the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes.
3. determining the local environmental conditions by the recovery of palaeo-environmental remains.

In addition to the primary aims of the fieldwork, wider research objectives were formulated based upon what archaeological remains were expected in the site and existing regional and national research strategies. Based on the results of the evaluation (Albion Archaeology 2014a), it was originally anticipated that specific themes concerning late Iron Age settlement could be relevant (see Oake 2007, 11; Bryant 2000, 14 and 16; Medlycott 2011, 29 and 31).

¹ <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/dob/>



2 METHODOLOGY

The area of excavation measured 20m x 30m, targeting the middle to late Iron Age settlement remains revealed within evaluation Trench 2 (Figure 2).

All topsoil and overburden were removed by a mechanical excavator using a toothless bucket, except where a toothed bucket was required to remove substantial slabs of concrete or tarmac.

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 archaeological artefacts.

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

Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (2nd edn, 2001)
Bedford Museum	<i>Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition with Registered Museums in Bedfordshire</i> (2010)
CIfA	<i>Charter and By-law; Code of conduct</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation</i> (2014)
English Heritage	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> (2009)
East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14	Gurney, D., 2003, <i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i>

A detailed methodology is provided in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2014b).



3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

All archaeological features and deposits revealed during the archaeological works are discussed chronologically below and shown on Figures 2 and 3. Full details of the artefacts recovered are contained in Appendix 1.

3.2 Overburden and Undisturbed Geological Deposits

The overburden was fairly uniform across the site and comprised 0.19–0.38m of topsoil above 0.09–0.40m of mid orange-brown silty clay subsoil. This overlay undisturbed geological deposits of light grey-yellow silty clay containing frequent chalk flecks.

3.3 Middle to Late Iron Age Settlement-related Features

3.3.1 Cluster of pits, postholes and short gully (G1)

A small cluster of pits, postholes and a short, irregular gully were located in the south of the investigation area. The two pits [205] and [1020] were sub-oval in shape. They were 1–1.33m long, 0.74–0.9m wide and up to 0.18m deep. The deposits within them varied from mid yellow-grey to dark grey-brown silty clay.

All three postholes [208], [212] and [1016] were within 1m of each other. The largest of them [208], which was 0.7m in diameter and 0.2m deep, truncated one of the two pits. The other two postholes, which were *c.* 0.5m apart, were 0.36–0.47m in diameter and up to 0.14m deep. The deposits within the postholes varied from mid yellow-grey to mid grey-brown silty clay from which seven sherds of pottery were recovered.

Approximately 5m to the west of the postholes was a short, curvilinear gully [1048]. It was 3.4m long, 0.8m wide and 0.13m deep. The deposit within it comprised mid to dark grey-brown silty clay which contained a few abraded sherds of middle to late Iron Age pottery and some animal bone.

3.3.2 Quarry pit (G2)

Approximately 14m to the north-east of feature cluster G1 was a possible quarry pit [216/1022]. It was irregular in plan, 4.84m long, at least 1.54m wide and 0.38m deep with asymmetrical sides and an uneven base. The deposits within it varied from mid orange-brown to dark brown-grey silty clay. A total of 45 pottery sherds and some fragments of animal bone were recovered from these deposits. The pottery was identified as middle to late Iron Age in date.

3.4 Late Iron Age / Early Roman Trackway

3.4.1 Trackway (G3)

Two parallel ditches located *c.* 6m apart appear to define a NW-SE aligned trackway. The ditches were 1.03–1.44m wide and up to 0.4m deep with U-shaped profiles. The more northerly of the two ditches truncated quarry pit



(G2). Deposits within the ditches varied from mid brown-grey to mid grey-brown silty clay. A small amount of abraded pottery recovered from one of the ditches was dated to the late Iron Age / early Roman period.

It is likely the trackway is a continuation of a trackway identified within the earlier excavation (Albion Archaeology 2011) carried out 140m to the south-east (see Figure 4).

3.5 Medieval / Post-medieval Agriculture

3.5.1 Cultivation furrows (G4)

Three NW-SE aligned cultivation furrows, *c.* 5m apart, were located within the excavation area. They were 2.8–3.7m wide and up to 0.4m deep. The deposits within them comprised mid brown-grey silty clay.

3.6 Modern Features

3.6.1 Modern features including those associated with the adjacent dwellings constructed in the first half of the 20th century (G5)

At the time of the excavation, one of the nearby dwellings constructed in the first half of the 20th century was already demolished and the other was unoccupied. Three drains within the excavation area were arranged such that they probably serviced one or both of the former dwellings. In addition to the drains there was also a line of postholes, some of which still contained remains of wooden posts, which followed a property boundary associated with the demolished dwelling.

Two modern gullies and two modern pits that were probably not associated with the nearby former dwellings were also revealed within the excavation area.

3.7 Undated Features

3.7.1 Undated pits and postholes (G6)

Two undated pits and three undated postholes were revealed within the excavation area. One of the two pits [223] was truncated by one of the trackway ditches (G3). The pits were 0.72–0.9m long, 0.56–0.68m wide and up to 0.22m deep. They contained deposits that varied from mid yellow-grey to mid grey-brown silty clay, from which a few fragments of abraded animal bone were recovered. One [1010] of the three undated postholes truncated another [1008] nearby, suggesting it might have been a replacement for it. The third posthole was located very close to the possible Iron Age quarry pit (G2). Overall the postholes were either sub-circular or sub-oval in shape. They were 0.36–0.53m in diameter and up to 0.17m deep. The deposits within them varied from mid brown-grey to dark grey-brown silty clay.



4 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Summary

The earliest archaeological features revealed during the investigations were a cluster of middle to late Iron Age features (G1) — postholes, pits and a short gully — and a quarry pit (G2). The quarry pit was truncated by one of two NW-SE aligned ditches that appear to define a late Iron Age / early Roman trackway (G3). This trackway is likely to be a continuation of a trackway previously identified c. 140m to the south-east (Albion Archaeology 2011). Three medieval / post-medieval cultivation furrows (G4) truncated one of the trackway ditches. Truncating several of the earlier features were modern features including drains that were probably associated with the two nearby dwellings built in the first half of the 20th century and a line of postholes that followed one of the dwelling's property boundaries.

4.2 Significance

The few middle to late Iron Age features demonstrate that there was some, probably low-level, settlement-related activity in the area during the period. Evidence of late Iron Age / Roman activity was confined to the ditches demarcating the trackway, suggesting the area was peripheral to any contemporary settlement activity, although it could well have linked any such settlements in the wider vicinity. It is interesting to note that the possible trackway had a similar orientation to the nearby Lodge Road, which may be coincidental or may denote some degree of continuity in the landscape that survives to the present day.

The results of the investigations contribute to the growing understanding of Iron Age and Roman settlement on the higher ground around Cranfield. However, they have no potential for further analysis beyond that presented in this report.

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6 APPENDIX 1: FINDS SUMMARY

The majority of the assemblage is associated with Iron Age features G1 and G2, and comprises small quantities of pottery, animal bone, a metal object and a worked flint (Table 1).

Group	Finds Summary
G1 Iron Age pits, postholes and gully	Pottery (261g); animal bone (48g)
G2 Iron Age quarry pit	Pottery (331g); animal bone (251g)
G3 Late Iron Age / early Roman trackway	Pottery (8g); worked flint (86g)
G4 Medieval / post-medieval cultivation furrows	Lead alloy vessel repair (RA10)
G5 Modern features	Pottery (80g); ceramic roof tile (1g)
G6 Undated features	Pottery (1g); animal bone (289g)

Table 1: Artefact summary by Group

6.1 Ceramics

Eighty-five pottery sherds (681g) representing 38 vessels were recovered. The assemblage displays variable fragmentation, with the smallest sherd weighing 1g, and the largest 74g (mean sherd weight 8g). With the exception of two sherds recovered from G5, all are of middle to late Iron Age date. Sixteen fabric types were identified in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series (Table 2).

Fabric code	Common name	Sherd No.	Wt (g)
<i>Iron Age</i>			
F03	Grog and sand	18	131
F07	Shell	12	82
F09	Sand and grog	3	3
F14	Fine mixed	10	94
F16	Coarse shell	3	33
F16B	Fine shell	10	22
F17	Grog	1	10
F18	Sand and shell	8	86
F20	Calcareous	2	13
F28	Fine sand	1	15
F29	Coarse sand	6	62
F30	Sand and calcareous	3	21
F33	Grog and calcareous	4	10
F35	Micaceous	2	19
<i>Post-medieval & modern</i>			
P01	Fine glazed red earthenware	1	74
P100	Horticultural earthenware	1	6

Table 2: Pottery type series

Hand-made pottery of middle to late Iron Age date occurs in a range of fabrics tempered with grog, sand, shell and calcareous inclusions. Wares represented compare well with those collected from nearby excavations at Home Farm (Albion Archaeology 2011). The assemblage is abraded and highly fragmented; no diagnostic forms occur, and the largest single vessel weighs only 82g. Feature sherds are upright flattened rims — one with an internal ledge; a handle fragment; and a double perforated lug. The orientation of the latter is unclear, and it may represent either a vertical handle or a horizontal



suspension loop. The majority of the pottery derived from putative quarry pit G2.

Modern ditch G5 yielded a body sherd from a 17th-century glazed red earthenware bowl (74g) and a fragment of modern plant pot (6g). The feature also contained a tiny piece of ceramic roof tile (1g).

6.2 Other finds

A patinated late Neolithic-late Bronze Age flint core (86g) occurred as a residual find in trackway G3. The object comprises a partial nodule, with cortex remaining over half the surface, and two possible flake removal scars from the edge.

Cultivation furrows G4 yielded a lead alloy waisted vessel repair plug of uncertain date (Registered Artefact 10). The object has one smooth concave face of pentagonal plan, and an irregular opposing face (dimensions 23.2mm x 19.8mm; thickness 11.7mm).

6.3 Animal bone

Sixty-six animal bone fragments (588g) were collected from G1 (48g), G2 (251g) and undated G6 features (289g). Pieces are highly abraded, with a mean fragment weight of 8g, and are largely unidentifiable to species. Diagnostic bone elements are a cattle molar and miscellaneous pieces of limb and foot bones, scapula, and vertebra.

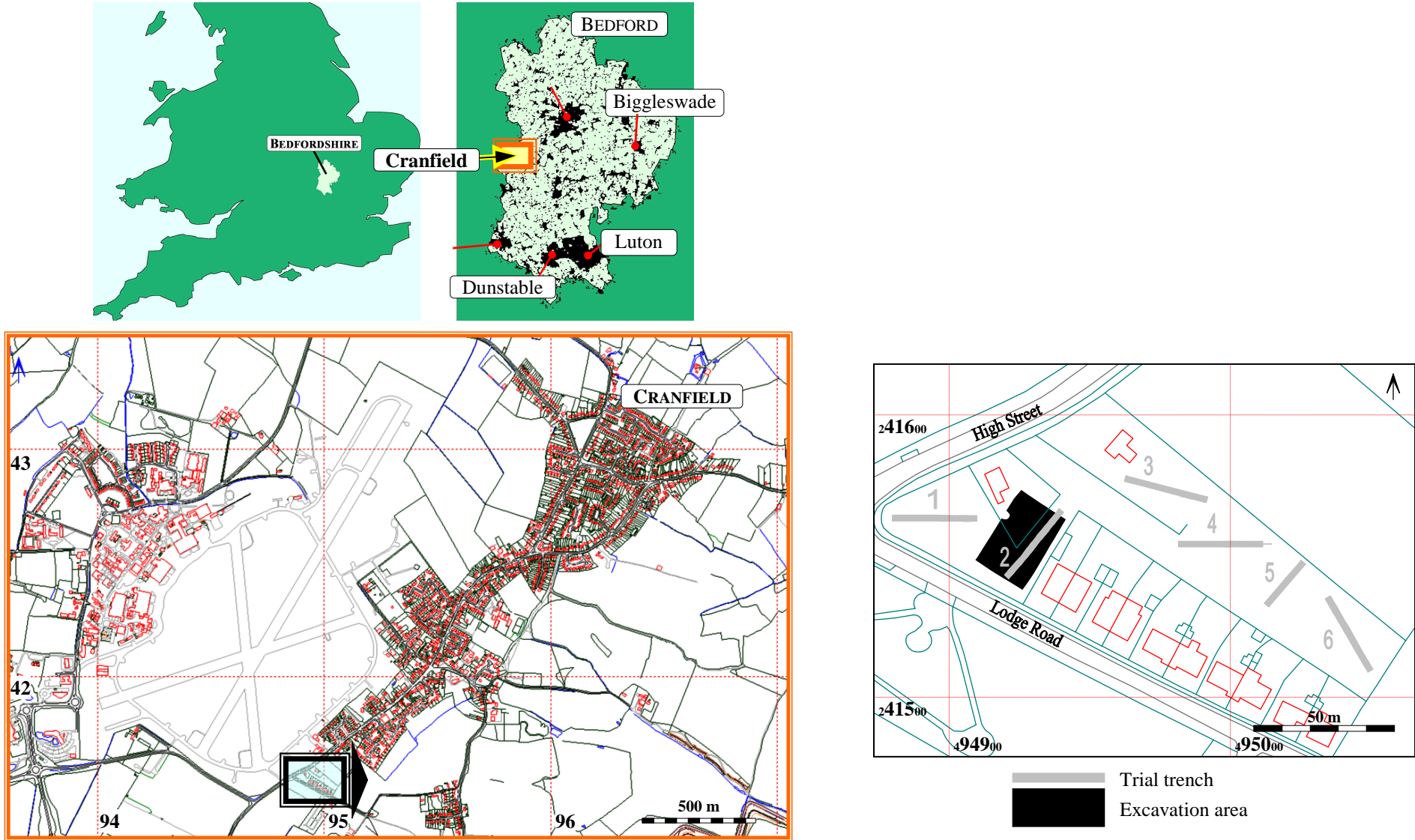
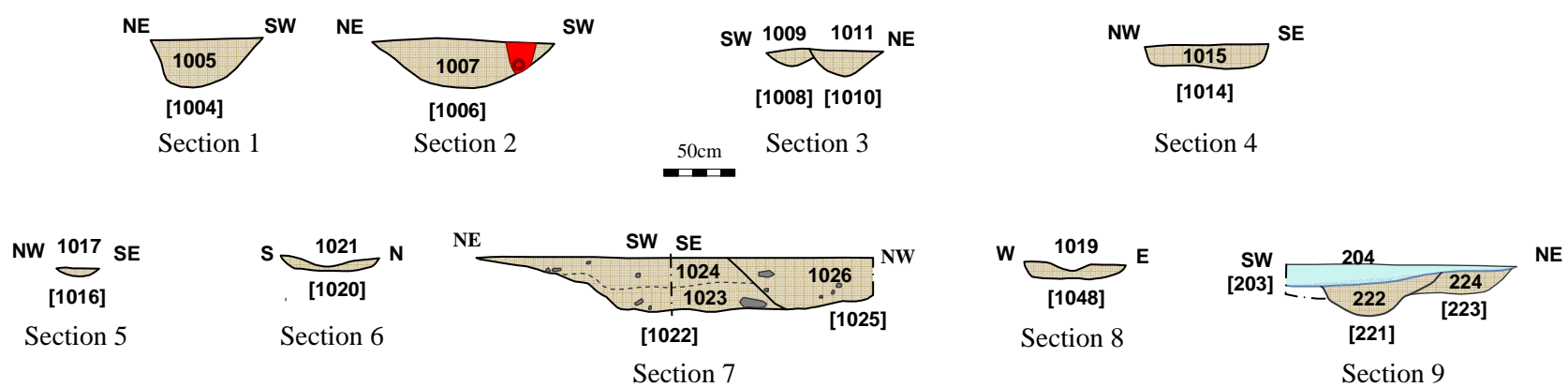
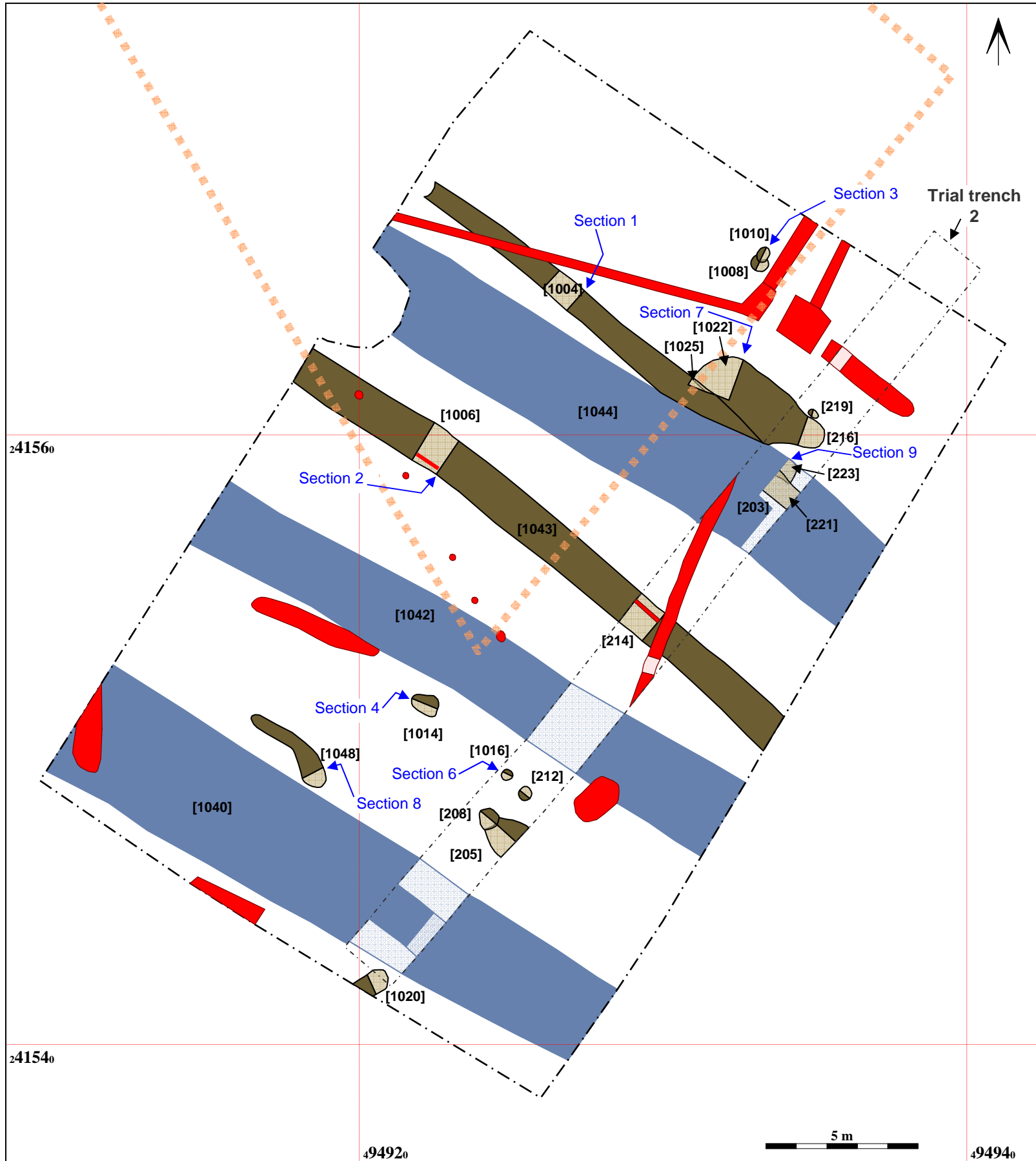


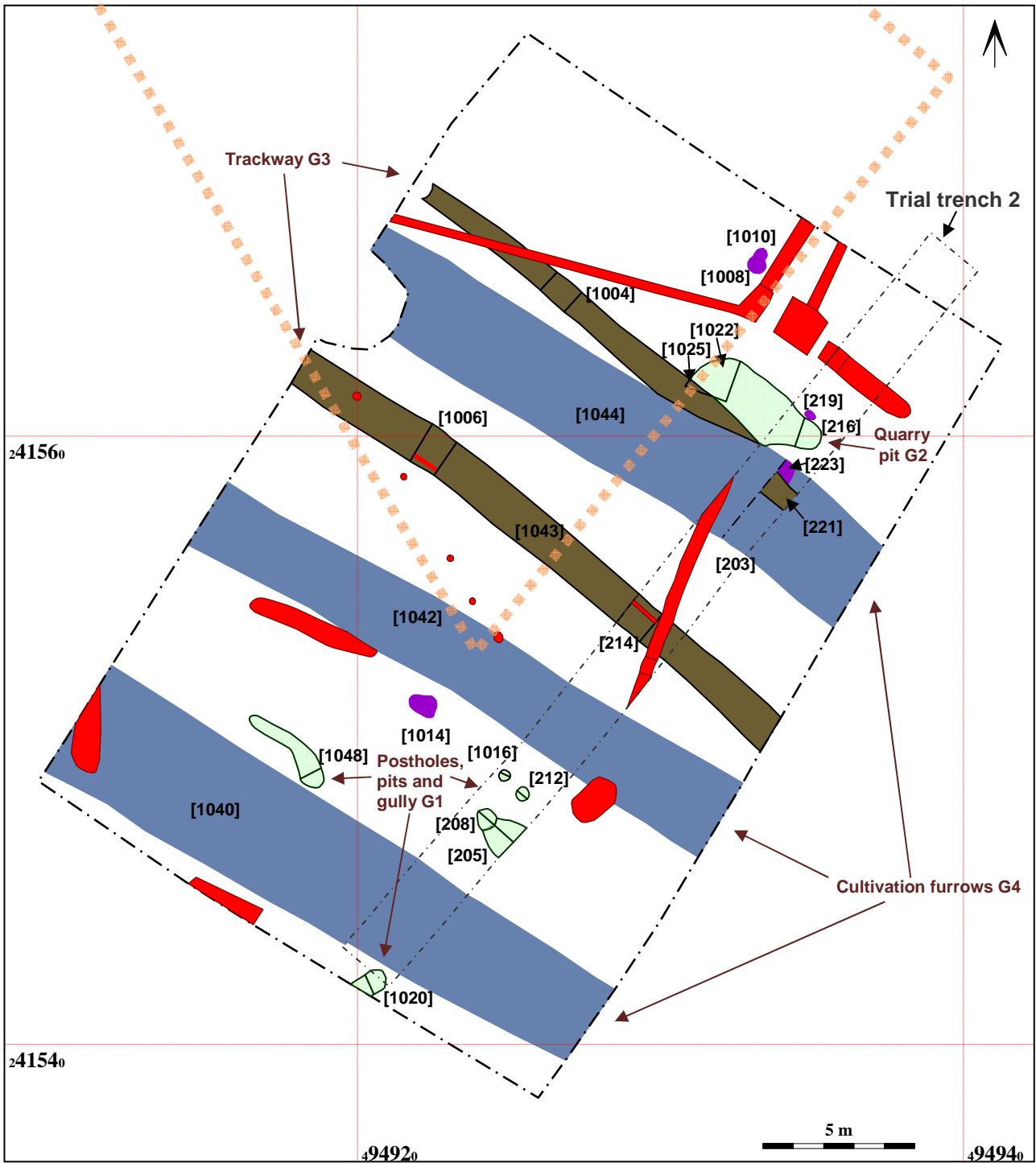
Figure 1: Site location

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- Archaeological feature; unexcavated
- Archaeological feature; excavated segment
- Furrow; unexcavated section
- Furrow; excavated/machined segment
- Modern feature
- Modern feature; excavated segment
- Modern property boundary, as shown on Ordnance Survey 2012 landline map

Figure 2: All features plan and sections



- Middle to late Iron Age
- Late Iron Age / early Roman
- Medieval / post-medieval
- Undated
- Modern feature
- Modern property boundary,
as shown on Ordnance Survey 2012 landline map

Figure 3: Phased all features plan

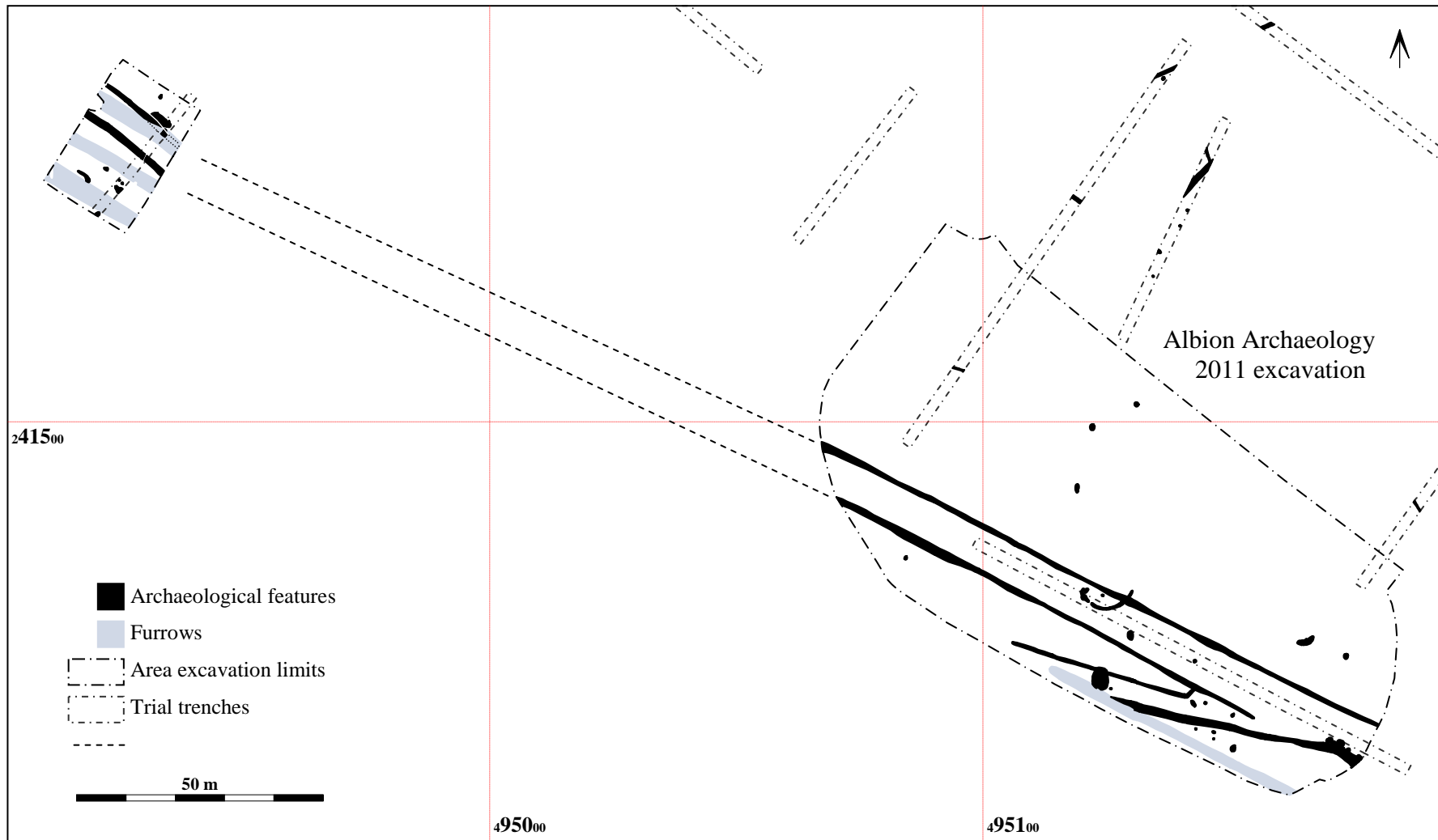


Figure 4: Site shown in relation to 2011 excavation

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