

**LAND AT ST JOHN'S CHURCH,  
ST JOHN'S STREET, BEDFORD**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION**

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## ***Contents***

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List of Tables .....	4
List of Figures .....	4
Preface .....	5
Structure of this report.....	5
Non-Technical Summary .....	6
<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 Planning Background.....	7
1.2 Site Location and Description .....	7
1.3 Archaeological Background.....	7
<b>2. TRIAL EXCAVATION.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	9
2.2 Method Statement .....	9
2.3 Results of the Trial Excavation .....	10
<b>3. SYNTHESIS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 Discussion .....	13
3.2 Summary .....	14
<b>4. APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1 Appendix 1, Artefact Summary .....	16
4.2 Appendix 2, Trench Summary .....	19



### **List of Tables**

Table 1: Artefact summary by trench and feature .....	16
Table 2: Pottery type series .....	17

### **List of Figures**

Figure 1: Site location map	
Figure 2: Trenches 1–5, all features	
Figure 3: Sections 1–4	
Figure 4: Sections 5–6	
Figure 5: The ponds south-east of St John’s Church, depicted on the Dewhurst & Nichol map of 1836	
Figure 6: Trench plans overlaid on Reynolds 1841 map	
Figure 7: Trench plans overlaid on the 1884 1 <sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map	
Figure 8: Foundation of wall in trench 5 in context with upstanding wall	
Figure 9: Foundation of wall in trench 5 detail.	

*All 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.*

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*Extracts from historical maps are used in this report with the permission of Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service.*

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## Structure of this report

After the introductory Section 1, the results of the trial excavation are presented in chronological order in Section 2. A synthesis of the results and their significance is presented in Section 3. Summary tables listing the findings for the individual trenches are presented in Section 4.



## **Non-Technical Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation was conducted in advance of a proposed development within land at St John's Church, St John's Street, Bedford. The study area is located close to the medieval hospital of St John, and within the late Saxon burh of southern Bedford, which is defined by the King's Ditch.*

*Four trenches were sited within the footprint of the proposed building and associated car parking spaces. Two of the trenches contained archaeological features of Saxo-Norman to late medieval date. The features generally survived in the area of higher ground in the northern and central part of the site in the vicinity of an old mulberry tree, around which the proposed church hall is centred.*

*Trench 1 was excavated to a depth of 1.40m and contained a substantial layer of post-medieval made-up ground. Natural geological deposits were only reached in the centre of the trench, at a depth of 1.40m. The southern end of the trench cut the edge of a large pond feature that had been filled with modern demolition rubbish in the last 30 years. Trench 2 was situated within the same pond feature and contained layers of modern debris and brick rubble. It was excavated to a depth of 1.40m.*

*Trench 3 contained archaeological features in its northern and central area. The southern end of the trench revealed the edge of the same pond feature recorded in Trenches 1 and 2. The archaeological features consisted of shallow irregular pits and gullies that contained pottery of Saxo-Norman and late medieval date. The features may either represent medieval or post-medieval garden or landscape features or are remains of peripheral medieval activity in this area.*

*Trench 4 was situated to investigate the surviving earthworks to the east of the proposed building site. The trench uncovered the remains of a large, pond-like feature, 8.5m in width, demonstrating that the earthworks represent the in-filled remains of medieval ponds in this area. The northern end of the trench contained several archaeological features containing pottery of Saxo-Norman date. The features comprised the remains of pits and ditches and are part of the same activity represented in Trench 3.*

*Trench 5 was excavated by hand in order to investigate the nature and date of the north-south aligned wall within the car park. The trench exposed several courses of the wall below ground level. The nature of the stones and coursing suggests that they represent the foundation for the wall still standing and a piece of 17<sup>th</sup>-century pottery retrieved from the deposit below the wall indicates a post-medieval date for its foundation.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 Planning Background

A planning application is being considered by Charter Architects on behalf of the PCC Church of St John and St Leonard to build a church hall and associated car parking in the area south of St John's church. The proposed building is to be centred around an old Mulberry tree in the centre of the site. The tree is traditionally linked to John Bunyan, the 17<sup>th</sup>-century, non-conformist preacher. The associated car parking is arranged around the building in a semi-circular pattern.

The Archaeological Officer (AO) of Bedfordshire County Council advised that the land is in an archaeologically sensitive location and issued a Brief for a programme of archaeological investigation<sup>1</sup>. This Brief stated that further information regarding the archaeological potential of the area was required. An Evaluation Brief<sup>2</sup> was also issued by the AO specifying the requirements of an archaeological field evaluation to be completed in advance of determination of the planning application. Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the evaluation.

### 1.2 Site Location and Description

The site is located on the south side of the River Great Ouse within the historic core of Bedford in the grounds of St John's Church (Figure 1). Its boundaries are formed by St John's Street to the west, the landscaped verge of Rope Walk to the south and the building and church yard of St John's Church in the north. It comprises an area of c. 0.8 hectares and is centred on grid reference TL 0527 4919.

The site consists of fairly level ground and is situated at an average height of 26m OD, but the land to the east falls away quite sharply into a low-lying hollow, which is thought to be the earthwork remains of a large pond (see below, section 1.3). At the time of the fieldwork, the site comprised a gravel car park and an area of open grass, with mature trees and shrubs mainly concentrated on the southern and eastern boundaries of the application area. The underlying geology is formed by river-borne alluvium and gravels overlying Oxford Clay and cornbrash limestone.

### 1.3 Archaeological Background

The archaeological and historical background of the area has been summarised in detail as part of the Extensive Urban Survey<sup>3</sup> undertaken for English Heritage and Bedfordshire County Council. The site lies within the bounds of the southern *burh* of Saxon Bedford, first described in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle entry for AD915. St John's Street is known to have been the main

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<sup>1</sup> Bedfordshire County Council, 2005, *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Investigation of Land at St. John's church, St. John's Street, Bedford, Bedfordshire*, version 1, 07/01/05.

<sup>2</sup> Bedfordshire County Council, 2005, *Brief for an Archaeological Field Evaluation of Land at St. John's church, St. John's Street, Bedford, Bedfordshire*, version 1, 07/01/05

<sup>3</sup> Albion Archaeology, 2002, *Extensive Urban Survey for Bedfordshire: Bedford Archaeological Assessment*. Report 2001/42



north–south road within this area of the *burh*. As a result, land close to the road has a relatively high potential for the discovery of medieval remains.

The limit of the *burh* is thought to have been defined by an earthwork known as the King’s Ditch, constructed by King Edward the Elder in AD915. Remnants of this earthwork survive to the south and east of the site, although these have been considerably altered over the centuries.

Investigations at 39–34 St John’s Street, to the west of the site, have recorded a sequence of occupation ranging from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, located close to the street frontage. The archaeological evidence included timber buildings respecting the line of the modern street, an assemblage of Anglo-Saxon pottery and a medieval, stone well-house. A recent evaluation to the north of 39–34 St John’s Street<sup>4</sup> revealed a sequence of industrial refuse pits, wells and gravel extraction pits. The remains also suggest a sequence of occupation from the 10<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> centuries onwards.

An evaluation at Ray’s Close to the north of the site<sup>5</sup> revealed a series of ditches and other features, mostly of Saxo-Norman and early medieval date, and the edge of a large water feature with an associated metallised surface, most likely of late medieval origin.

St John’s Church itself was founded in the 13<sup>th</sup> century as a private chapel for St John’s Hospital and was later converted into a parish church. The timber frame of part of the medieval Hospital survives virtually intact, and it is likely that the hospital buildings were once much more extensive.

Surviving earthworks on land between the church and the King’s Ditch are thought to be the remnants of a series of large ponds that were first recorded on Dewhurst & Nichol’s map of Bedford in 1836 (Figure 5). The evidence indicates that they were definitely in existence during the post-medieval period, but it has been suggested that they could be the remains of medieval fish ponds contemporary with the working life of St. John’s Hospital<sup>6</sup>. On the eastern side of the site the earthworks appear to be relatively well preserved, indicating that there has been little disturbance of the land subsequently. However, the ponds depicted on the southern boundary of the site on the 1884 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map (Figure 7) are no longer visible and are reported to have been deliberately backfilled in the 1970s.

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<sup>4</sup> Albion Archaeology, 2005, *Land at St. John’s Street, Bedford: Archaeological Field Evaluation*, AA Report no. 2005/55

<sup>5</sup> Albion Archaeology, 2002, *Land off Ray’s Close, Bedford: Archaeological Field Evaluation*, AA Report no. 2002/45

<sup>6</sup> Albion Archaeology 2001 *Extensive Urban Survey for Bedfordshire: Bedford Archaeological Assessment*. Report 2001/42





## 2. TRIAL EXCAVATION

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### 2.1 Introduction

The evaluation was carried out in February 2006. Trenches 1, 2 and 3 were situated to locate any archaeological remains in the footprint of the proposed building and car parking spaces. Trench 4 was placed to investigate the earthworks in the eastern part of the site, which would be affected by levelling for car parking spaces. Trench 5 was excavated by hand in order to ascertain the nature and date of the north-south aligned wall that crosses the present car park in the western part the site. The trenches and the features encountered are illustrated in Figures 2–4 and 8–9. Details of artefacts recovered are provided in Appendix 1 and a summary description of deposits in each trench is presented in Appendix 2.

### 2.2 Method Statement

Throughout the project the standards set in the IFA *Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation* have been adhered to. Also those standards outlined in Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual for Archaeological Fieldwork and the Analysis of Fieldwork Records* (1996), the IFA Code of Conduct and English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991) were adhered to.

The main elements of the trial excavation methodology were as follows:

- All machine excavation was supervised by an archaeologist and was undertaken using a JCB fitted with a toothless bucket.
- Topsoil and modern overburden were removed by machine down to the top of archaeological deposits, or clean natural deposits, whichever was encountered first.
- The spoil tips and any archaeological features were scanned for artefacts. Artefacts recovered from spoil tips, were assigned to the relevant context number for the trench.
- Recording took place on *pro forma* sheets.
- The trenches were inspected by the AO of Bedfordshire County Council, prior to being backfilled.

A depth of over 1.2m of made ground was encountered in Trenches 1, 2 and 3. For reasons of health and safety, and with the agreement of BCC's AO, these make-up deposits were not completely excavated to natural (see below).

All archaeological and geological deposits and features (known as 'contexts') were assigned an individual number. Within this report, numbers in brackets within the text refer to the context number issued to each deposit or feature on site. Context numbers referring to cut features (i.e. pits, ditches etc.) are expressed [\*\*\*], layers and deposits within cut features are expressed (\*\*\*)



## **2.3 Results of the Trial Excavation**

### **2.3.1 Trench 1**

Only post-medieval features were encountered within Trench 1.

Natural geology was only exposed in the centre of the trench (at a minimum depth of 1.3m). For safety reasons, excavation was halted at 1.4m below the surface.

The trench contained post-medieval dumped material that was at least 0.70m thick, consisting of mixed clayey gravel with fragments of brick and charcoal (contexts (3), (4), (6) and (51)). It is conceivable that these were deposits filling a very large feature, whether a natural hollow or a man-made feature such as a quarry, but this could not be determined. With no further evidence available, these are interpreted as levelling dumps. Similar dumps were also encountered in Trench 3.

At the southern end of Trench 1, the post-medieval dumping appeared to have been dug away by a large feature [50]. It is probable that this feature was the northern edge of the pond that was reportedly backfilled during levelling operations in this area in the early 1970s. It is likely that the 1970s backfilling also involved a degree of excavation into the banks. Figures 6 and 7 show that pond [50] extended some distance to the north of the edge of the ponds as depicted on both the 1841 and 1884 maps. The pond was filled with a dark-brown soil containing very modern refuse (53). Further evidence of the extent of the pond was found in Trenches 2 and 3.

The latest deposits in the trench consisted of humic subsoil (2) covered by a thin layer of car park gravel (1).

### **2.3.2 Trench 2**

Trench 2 was excavated on a line perpendicular to Trench 1 and encountered further modern deposits (contexts (16) and (17)), backfilling the same large pond encountered in Trench 1. The deposits were excavated by machine to a depth of 1.40m, but the base of the pond was not located and no natural geological deposits were exposed. Excavation was halted for safety reasons.

The modern backfill was covered by a thin layer of gravel (14), 0.15m in depth, which comprised the surface of the car parking area.

### **2.3.3 Trench 3**

Trench 3 was parallel to Trench 1 and extended from the higher ground in the north into the lower ground near the southern boundary of the site, where it joined Trench 2.

Natural deposits in Trench 3 consisted of orange silty gravel, encountered at a depth of between 0.7m and 0.9m below the surface. Several archaeological features were cut into the natural in the northern and central part of the trench. The northernmost feature was the end of a small gully [34] on an east-west alignment. Its fill (35) contained a small amount of St. Neots-type ware and



animal bone. It is possible that the gully was actually a long tree-root hole, but its steep-sided profile suggests that it is more probably an archaeological feature.

Two shallow pits [36] and [40] were situated to the south of gully [34]. Both pits contained fragments of early medieval and Saxo-Norman pottery. Their function is unclear, but they may have been structural features associated with gully [34].

A group of three stratigraphically linked features [30], [32] and [28] were encountered near the centre of the trench. The earliest was the remnant of a pit [30]. This had been cut away on its north and south sides by the later features, but an edge survived at its western end. The pit extended beyond the limit of excavation in the east. Its fill (31) was darker and richer in charcoal than either of the later features, which suggests it was a rubbish pit. It also contained a large amount of mixed early to late medieval pottery and animal bone. Feature [32], to the north of [30], was very irregular with undercut sides; it was most probably a tree-root hole. It contained no finds. Pit [28], to the south of [30], had a more regular profile. It contained early to late medieval pottery and animal bone in comparable quantities to those of pit [30].

A further pit [42] was c. 2m wide. It was not excavated but its fills contained frequent charcoal flecks, while a fragment of late medieval pottery and fired clay were recovered from its surface.

These features were sealed by layers of mid orange-brown silty gravel (24) and (27), equivalent to the post-medieval gravel dumps (3) and (4) recorded in Trench 1.

At the southern end of the trench, these layers were cut away by feature [21], the northern bank of the pond encountered in Trenches 1 and 2. The sloping layers comprised the northern bank of the pond. Again, it is likely that the original bank of the pond had been destroyed during the 1970s backfilling. The pond was excavated to a depth of 1.50m and not bottomed. It contained the same thick, brick rubble fill overlying a dark soil backfill that was recorded in Trench 2.

#### **2.3.4 Trench 4**

Trench 4 was situated on a north-west to south-east alignment and cut across a change in ground level running on a north-south alignment in the eastern part of the site.

Natural geological deposits were encountered at a depth of 0.60m throughout the trench. They consisted of a thin layer of a compact, light-yellow, silty material overlying loose orange gravel. The north-western part of the trench contained several archaeological features cut into the natural, including: pit [46], ditch [38] and the end of a gully [12]. The ditch was fairly straight, running on a north-south alignment, and contained several fragments of early medieval pottery and animal bone. The gully terminus, situated to the east of the ditch, was very shallow and appeared to curve from a north-south



alignment to an east–west alignment just at the limit of excavation. The gully contained fragments of Saxo-Norman pottery.

The features were sealed by a layer of orange sandy gravel (8), 0.50m deep. It is most likely that this represents the same formation of post-medieval, made ground encountered in Trenches 1 and 3.

A large pond [10], 8.0m wide, was situated in the eastern end of the trench. It appeared to have been cut through gravel layer (8), but the ‘cut’ is probably just the naturally steep bank of the pond. The feature was excavated to a depth of 0.7m, but was not bottomed as it extended below the water-table. It contained a friable dark brown silt (11), very similar in nature to the dark backfill of the pond feature encountered in Trenches 1, 2 and 3, but with less modern debris, which suggests that this arm of the pond was not filled in at the same time. The feature filled with groundwater almost immediately after its excavation.

### 2.3.5 Trench 5

A small test-pit, Trench 5, was excavated at the foot of the eastern elevation of the upstanding sandstone wall on a north-south alignment in the western part of the existing car park. The trench was opened to ascertain the nature of the wall below ground level and to obtain a possible date for its construction. The modern gravel surface was mechanically removed over an area measuring 3m by 1.8m. Within this, a hand-dug trench, 1.8m long by 0.5m wide, was excavated to a depth of 0.8m.

The wall was set on top of a layer of mixed, mid orange brown, silty gravel (49). This was similar in nature to the post medieval build-up layers (3), (24) and (27) recorded in Trenches 1 and 3 and contained a fragment of 17<sup>th</sup> - century red glazed earthenware.

The wall was exposed to a depth of 0.5m (Figures 3, 8 and 9). It consisted of two possible phases [47] and [54]. The lower part of the wall [47] consisted of three courses of sandstone blocks. The stones of the lower two courses measured an average of 200 x 50mm in width and formed two distinct but irregularly built courses. The majority of the sandstone blocks of the lower courses were pitched on their edges, a method commonly used for foundations. The top course of wall [47] was made up of two very large, rectangular, horizontal slabs of sandstone, each of which measured 1000mm wide by 50mm thick. The upper part of the wall [54] consisted of smaller and exclusively horizontally laid blocks of sandstone measuring 200 x 50mm and 150 x 30mm. A modern rebuild in red brick [55] was built on top of [54].

A thick layer of dark brown sandy gravel (48) with moderate brick fragments and charcoal flecks had been dumped against the wall. This is probably another level of post-medieval, made-up ground possibly contemporary with the building of the wall.



### 3. SYNTHESIS

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#### 3.1 Discussion

This evaluation has demonstrated the presence of Saxo-Norman, medieval and post-medieval remains within the development area. The date and nature of the features are very similar to those encountered in the excavations at Ray's Close<sup>7</sup> to the north of the site and also at St. John's Street<sup>8</sup> to the west of the site.

##### 3.1.1 Saxo-Norman/early medieval

Trench 3 and Trench 4 both revealed features that can be dated to the Saxo-Norman/early medieval period on the basis of the artefacts they contained. Trench 3 contained a small gully [34] and two adjacent small shallow pits [36] and [40]. Trench 4 contained a small ditch [38] and a curvilinear gully [12] that could be dated to the same period. All features were situated in the northern part of the site on slightly higher ground.

In themselves, these features are not diagnostic of function, but such features and the artefacts they contain are typical of domestic sites of the early medieval period. Similar remains have been recorded during excavations at Ray's Close to the north of the site, where features provided evidence of domestic activity.

The present evaluation indicates that Saxo-Norman settlement extends to the east of the area of more concentrated domestic and industrial activity previously found on the west side of St John's Street.

##### 3.1.2 Late medieval

Three pits in Trench 3 contained pottery of late medieval date. Pits [28] and [30] were excavated and contained gravelly fills with charcoal flecks. Pit [42] remained unexcavated but was similar in size and nature to pit [28]. All pits contained a mixed assemblage of pottery and small amounts of animal bone, suggesting a possible use, or re-use, as refuse pits. The evaluation did not shed light on the date of construction of the ponds (see below).

##### 3.1.3 Post-medieval

Trenches 1, 3, 4 and 5 produced evidence for contemporary, site-wide deposits of homogenous silty gravel, which measured between 0.50m and 0.70m in thickness. These deposits sealed the Saxo-Norman and medieval features and contained post-medieval roof tile, fragments of clay tobacco pipe and vessel glass. The pipe and vessel glass suggest a late 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century date for the formation of these layers.

The extent and bulk of the deposits suggest that they were laid down to raise the level of the ground, although the reason for such concerted levelling is

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<sup>7</sup> Albion Archaeology, 2002, *Land off Ray's Close, Bedford: Archaeological Field Evaluation*, AA Report no. 2002/45

<sup>8</sup> Albion Archaeology, 2005, *Land at St. John's Street, Bedford: Archaeological Field Evaluation*, AA Report no. 2005/55



unknown. None of the early maps examined gives any indication of a large building on the site, but it is possible that levelling was undertaken as part of a landscaping scheme. The Reynolds map of 1841 depicts what appears to be a formal layout of shrubs or trees within the large ponds (Figure 6). The detail is obscured by the 'J' of the caption, but the concentric layout of the planting may have been an attempt to depict a knot garden or maze. The material used for the levelling may have been obtained by enlargement of the surrounding ponds, as discussed below.

Trenches 1, 2, 3 and 4 located the remains of two of the large ponds which were probably those depicted on the Dewhurst & Nichol map of 1836 (see Figure 5). These ponds appeared to post-date the site-wide levelling discussed above, but the 'cuts' may alternatively be the naturally steep banks of the ponds. As the basal fills of the ponds were not investigated there is no corroborative dating evidence from them. Also, the edges observed during the evaluation may not be the original edge of the ponds, as constructed, and may have been created by later remodelling, natural erosion or collapse of the sides (especially in Trench 1, where the edge of the pond extends further north than is shown on the historical maps). More precise evidence for the date of construction may possibly have been obtained by examining the basal fills of the ponds, but it was not possible to do this as part of the recent evaluation.

The evidence from Trench 5 suggests that the wall to the rear of the existing church hall is post-medieval in origin. It appears to post-date the site-wide levelling. The wall is also first recorded on the Bedford map of 1836 and could, therefore, be contemporary with the construction of the ponds. A suggested medieval date and association of the wall with the medieval hospital of St John's is unlikely<sup>9</sup>.

Evidence for activity of 17<sup>th</sup>-century date was also recorded in the evaluation of Land at St. John's Street where wells and a large refuse pit containing horn cores suggestive of industrial tanning activity were found.

### 3.2 Summary

The evaluation has suggested that archaeological features might be anticipated throughout the proposed development area, particularly in the area of higher ground in the centre of the site near the Mulberry tree, around which the proposed new church hall is focussed. It has also successfully demonstrated the nature and state of preservation of the deposits within these features.

Multiple periods of activity were represented from the Saxo-Norman period to the post-medieval period. The features represent pits and ditches and a possible gully and most likely represent peripheral 'backyard' or garden activity in this area. The date range and nature of some of the features are similar to the features recorded at Ray's Close to the north and Land off St John's Street to the west.

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<sup>9</sup> Albion Archaeology, 2001, *Extensive Urban Survey for Bedfordshire: Bedford Archaeological Assessment*. Report 2001/42. p41



Archaeological features of this type have the potential to address regional and national research priorities, specifically the development and nature of Saxo-Norman, medieval and post-medieval urban centres<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Brown and Glazebrook, 2000, *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties 2*. Research Agenda and Strategy. East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Paper No.8  
*Land at St John's Church, St John's Street, Bedford*  
*Archaeological Field Evaluation*



## 4. APPENDICES

### 4.1 Appendix 1, Artefact Summary

#### 4.1.1 Introduction

The evaluation produced a finds assemblage comprising mainly pottery, the majority deriving from features in Trench 3. Small quantities of ceramic building material, clay pipe, vessel glass, and animal bone were also recovered (Table 1). The material was scanned to ascertain its nature, condition and, where possible, date range. No artefacts were recovered from Trench 2.

Tr.	Feature	Type	Context	Spot date*	Pottery	Other finds
1	4	External dump	4	Post-medieval	1:5	Roof tile (157g), clay pipe (10g), vessel glass (21g)
3	27	External dump	27	Late med / early post-med	3:41	Roof tile (106g)
	28	Pit	29	Late medieval	54:575	Animal bone (120g)
	30	Pit	31	Late medieval	18:185	Animal bone (76g)
	34	Tree-throw	35	Early medieval	3:12	Animal bone (81g)
	36	Pit	37	Saxo-Norman	1:1	Animal bone (7g)
	40	Pit	41	Early medieval	1:6	
	42	Pit	43	Late medieval	1:4	
	42	Pit	44	Late medieval		Fired clay (10g)
4	12	Ditch	13	Saxo-Norman	3:245	Animal bone (38g)
	38	Ditch	39	Early medieval	12:79	Animal bone (9g)
5	49	External dump	49	Post-medieval	1:10	Roof tile (78g)
<b>Total</b>					<b>98:1163</b>	

\* - spot date based on date of latest artefact in context

(sherd count : weight in grammes)

**Table 1: Artefact summary by trench and feature**

#### 4.1.2 Pottery

Ninety-eight pottery sherds weighing 1.2kg were recovered. These were examined by context and quantified using minimum sherd count and weight. Sherds are fairly small (average weight 11g) and exhibit variable degrees of abrasion. Few vessels are represented by more than single sherds. Nineteen fabric types were identified using common names and type codes in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series, held by Albion Archaeology. Fabrics are listed below (Table 2) in chronological order.

The pottery ranges in date from the Saxo-Norman period to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with the bulk of the assemblage being of early medieval origin. The pottery is comparable with that recovered from recent evaluations undertaken at Ray's Close and to the north of 39-34 St John's Street.

##### Saxo-Norman

Saxo-Norman pottery constitutes 22% of the assemblage (by sherd count) and comprises 22 predominantly wheel-thrown shell tempered sherds (333g) in the St Neots-type tradition, datable to the 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries. Diagnostic forms comprise a bowl with an inturned rim. The exterior surfaces of several sherds are sooted, indicating their use as cooking pots. Pottery of Saxo-Norman date was recovered from Trenches 3 and 4, the majority occurring as residual finds





in medieval features. Four sherds deriving from pit [36] Trench 3 and ditch [12] Trench 4, may date these features to the Saxo-Norman period.

Fabric type	Common name	Sherd No.	Context/Sherd No.
<i>Saxo-Norman</i>			
Type B01	St Neots-type ware	7	(29):3, (31):1, (39):3
Type B01A	St Neots-type (orange)	11	(27):1, (29):5, (37):1, (39):4
Type B01B	St Neots-type (fine)	1	(35):1
Type B04	St Neots-type (coarse)	3	(13):1, (31):2
<i>Medieval</i>			
Type B07	Shell	29	(13):2, (27):1, (29):17, (31):8, (39):1
Type B09	Lyveden/Stanion type	7	(29):7
Type C01	Sand	3	(27):1, (35):1, (41):1
Type C03	Fine sand	2	(29):1, (31):1
Type C04	Coarse sand	3	(29):2, (31):1
Type C05	Sand (red margins)	2	(35):1, (39):1
Type C09	Brill/Boarstall type (fine)	1	(29):1
Type C53	Sand (pasty)	10	(29):7, (31):3
Type C60	Hertfordshire-type greyware	3	(29):3
Type C71	Sand (buff-grey cored)	4	(29):3, (39):1
Type C75	Micaceous	1	(39):1
<i>Late medieval</i>			
Type E01	Reduced sand	4	(29):2, (39):1, (43):1
Type E01D	Reduced sand (red margins)	5	(29):3, (31):2
<i>Post-medieval</i>			
Type P02	Glazed red earthenware (coarse)	1	(49):1
Type P33	Tin-glazed ware	1	(4):1

**Table 2: Pottery type series**

### Medieval

Seventy-six percent of the pottery assemblage is datable to the medieval period and comprises 65 sherds, weighing 815g. The material comprises predominantly shell and sand tempered sherds of probable local manufacture, datable to the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Seven sherds of late 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century Lyveden/Stanion ware, an import from Northamptonshire were recorded. Pottery of 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century date is represented by a wheel-thrown sherd of Brill-Boarstall ware, imported from Buckinghamshire. The late medieval period is represented by nine wheel-thrown reduced sand tempered sherds of 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century date. Diagnostic forms are rare and comprise everted rim vessels, some decorated with applied thumbed strips. As with the Saxo-Norman assemblage, pottery of medieval date was recovered only from Trenches 3 and 4.

### Post-medieval

Single sherds of Tin-glazed ware and glazed red earthenware, both of 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century date, were recovered respectively from external dumps (4) Trench 1, and (49) Trench 5

#### 4.1.3 Other artefacts

Ceramic building material comprises four sand tempered pieces of late medieval/post-medieval flat roof tile (341g), deriving from external dumps (4) Trench 1, (27) Trench 3, and (49) Trench 5. Roof tiles range in thickness between 13-15mm.

Two clay tobacco pipe stem fragments were recovered from external dump (4) Trench 1. Stem bore diameters range between 2.4-3mm, suggesting a late 17<sup>th</sup>



century date for the fragments. The feature also contained a poorly preserved fragment of 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century vessel glass.

#### **4.1.4 Animal bone**

The faunal assemblage comprises 34 fragments weighing 331g, and occurs in features of Saxo-Norman and medieval date in Trenches 3 and 4. Bone preservation is variable, with some fragments displaying greater surface erosion than others, although the material generally survives in good condition. Diagnostic elements are ribs, sheep/goat mandible fragments and long bones. Some of the latter bear cut marks.



## **4.2 Appendix 2, Trench Summary**

**Trench: 1**

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 16.50 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.5 m. Max: 1.4 m.

**OS Co-ordinates:** Ref. 1: TL5219049195 Ref. 2: TL5224049180

**Reason:** Trench across footprint of proposed building.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1	External surface	Compact light yellow grey sandy gravel Car park gravel surface	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Subsoil	Compact dark brown sandy silt occasional medium ceramic building material, occasional small ceramic building material, moderate medium stones, moderate small stones Subsoil	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Dump material	Compact mid yellow brown sandy gravel occasional medium ceramic building material, frequent small stones Fairly homogenous and clean layer. Had quite a clayey feel to it. Deliberate dumping of material. Post-medieval made up ground.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Dump material	Compact dark yellow brown clay gravel occasional medium ceramic building material, occasional small ceramic building material, moderate small charcoal Post-medieval layer. Dirtier and more charcoal-rich than (3) above. Either more gradual accumulation or just dump mixed with more rubbish.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5	Natural	Friable mid orange gravel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Dump material	Loose mid grey brown sandy silt moderate small ceramic building material, occasional small charcoal, moderate small stones Deposit contains frequent oyster shell and also some recent looking small shiny coal fragments, rather than charcoal. Dump of rubbish material within post-medieval make up layer (3). Stratigraphically represents a lens.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
50	Pond	Irregular profile: concave Pond cut in Trench 1. Sides concave at c. 40 - 45 degrees. Base and overall shape not discernible as cut only clipped by trench.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
53	Backfill	Friable dark yellow brown sandy silt Modern pond infill. Same as (16) in Trench 2.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
51	Dump material	Oyster shell midden, very similar to (6) and situated only c. 0.50m to the W of it. Lens/small dump within thick make up layer (3).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench: 2**

**Max Dimensions: Length: 12.50 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.**

**OS Co-ordinates: Ref. 1: TL5228249175 Ref. 2: TL5241649178**

**Reason: Trench across footprint of proposed building.**

<b>Context:</b>	<b>Type:</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Excavated:</b>	<b>Finds Present:</b>
14	External surface	Sandy gravel Car park gravel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Pond	Trench 2 was situated within a pond, so it was not possible to ascertain precise feature edges and dimensions. More than 1.40m deep.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	Backfill	Friable dark yellow brown sandy silt occasional medium ceramic building material Deposit also contains moderate roots, one whole tree trunk, plastic and a pair of scissors (not kept).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Backfill	Loose light grey red sandy rubble frequent large burnt stones, frequent medium ceramic building material Brick rubble. Post dates the modern dark pond infills.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	Subsoil	Friable dark yellow brown sandy silt Dark humic subsoil	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Trench: 3****Max Dimensions:** Length: 20.00 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.83 m. Max: 1. m.**OS Co-ordinates:** Ref. 1: TL5228549199 Ref. 2: TL5236649178**Reason:** Trench across footprint of proposed building.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
19	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty sand moderate medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	External surface	Compact light yellow grey sandy gravel Car par gravel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	Pond	Large feature, not bottomed for health and safety reasons.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22	Backfill	Friable dark yellow brown sandy silt Pond infill. Same as (18) in Trench 2.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	Backfill	Loose light grey red sandy rubble Brick rubble, same as (17) in Trench 2.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24	Dump material	Compact mid orange brown silty gravel Post-medieval make up layer.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27	Dump material	Friable mid orange brown sandy clay moderate medium stones, moderate small stones Lower make up layer.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
28	Pit	Circular profile: near vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 2.m, max depth 0.35m, max length 1.25m Circular with steep sloping edges. 'U' shaped profile. Pit for rubbish disposal, although this was probably not primary function.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29	Fill	Friable mid orange brown sandy silt frequent small charcoal Contains frequent pot and bone. Deliberately deposited fill, originating from a domestic context.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
30	Pit	Irregular profile: irregular base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.43m, max depth 0.27m Truncated on both sides so exact shape unknown. Base is flat and profile 'u' shaped. Probably a pit, cut by [28] and disturbed by [32].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31	Fill	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt frequent small charcoal Contains frequent bone and pot. Similar fill to (29).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
32	Treethrow	Irregular profile: irregular base: uneven dimensions: max breadth 1.9m, max depth 0.44m Irregular in plan with a steeply sloping edge on northern side. Irregular base and profile. Possible tree disturbance. Much of the natural has been undercut by roots.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33	Fill	Friable light yellow brown sandy silt occasional small charcoal, occasional medium stones Mixed fill naturally deposited, very disturbed by roots.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34	Treethrow	Linear profile: near vertical base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.55m, max depth 0.27m, max length 1.3m Probably a tree root, undercutting is visible. Could also be a gully.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35	Fill	Friable dark grey black silty clay occasional small stones Contains pot and bone. Deliberately deposited, derived from domestic context.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
36	Pit	Oval profile: near vertical base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.m, max depth 0.11m, max length 0.66m Ovoid in plan with a steep edge on the E side and a shallow edge on the W side. Concave base, u-shaped profile. Small pit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37	Fill	Friable mid yellow brown sandy silt occasional large stones Naturally deposited fill.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
40	Pit	Oval profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.3m, max diameter 0.14m, max length 1.3m Gently sloping sides. Ovoid in plan.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41	Fill	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt occasional small stones Occasional small subrounded stones.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
42	Pit	Circular dimensions: max breadth 1.8m, max length 2.5m Unexcavated possible pit or tree throw hole. Similar to other pits in north of Trench 3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43	Fill	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt frequent small charcoal Unexcavated fill of pit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
44	Fill	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt frequent medium charcoal Small charcoal lens in fill (43). Unexcavated. Had one small piece of burnt clay in it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
56	Natural	Friable light yellow orange silty gravel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench: 4**

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 18.50 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 1.1 m. Max: m.

**OS Co-ordinates:** Ref. 1: TL5246749198 Ref. 2: TL5264249193

**Reason:** Trench excavated to explore earthworks in this area which are remains of medieval or post-medieval ponds. Evidence for large pond found in south-eastern part of trench. Archaeological features only visible in north-western part of trench.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
7	Subsoil	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt moderate small charcoal, moderate small stones Deposit also contains moderate roots and grit around the roots. Very humic deposit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Dump material	Compact mid yellow brown sandy clay occasional small charcoal, moderate small stones Fairly clean and homogenous. Similar to made up ground (3) in Trench 1 and (24) and (27) Trench 3.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Natural	Friable light yellow brown silty silt Very light yellow silt with frequent streaks of white. Silty natural only in northern part of Trench 4. Overlies loose orange gravel natural that is visible in rest of Trench 4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Pond	Profile: 45 degrees dimensions: max breadth 1.6m, max length 8.m Large pond feature. Machine excavated a strip through the pond so shape in plan and section and overall dimensions not visible in this trench. Sides slope at 40 to 45 degrees.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Backfill	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt moderate medium ceramic building material, moderate medium stones, moderate small stones Modern infill of pond. Disuse, deliberate dumping of rubbish.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Gulley	Curving linear N-S profile: concave base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.6m, max depth 0.15m, min depth 0.05m, max length 1.25m Rounded terminus of a small gully. N-S orientation that curves to an E-W orientation. Very shallow, hardly perceptible in loose gravel natural.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	Fill	Friable light yellow brown sandy silt occasional small charcoal, moderate small stones Occasional grit concentrated in dark brown patches around roots. Fill of gully, natural silting, very similar to fill (39) of ditch in N.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
38	Ditch	Linear profile: concave base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.95m, max depth 0.1m, max length 1.6m Very gradual sides and gradual breaks from top/slope and slope/base. Ditch.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39	Fill	Compact light yellow brown silty sand occasional small charcoal, moderate small stones Compact, similar but a bit lighter and greyer than fill (45) in feature [46] to the N. Gradual silting. Fill of ditch [38].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
46	Pit	Oval profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.2m, max depth 0.28m, max length 1.6m Gradually sloping sides, concave to flattish base. Large pit. Function unclear. Fill contains a surprising amount of pot but pit not initially a rubbish pit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45	Fill	Compact light yellow brown sandy silt occasional small charcoal, moderate small stones Frequent very small roots, occasional larger roots. Fill of pit [46]. Natural silting.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench: 5**

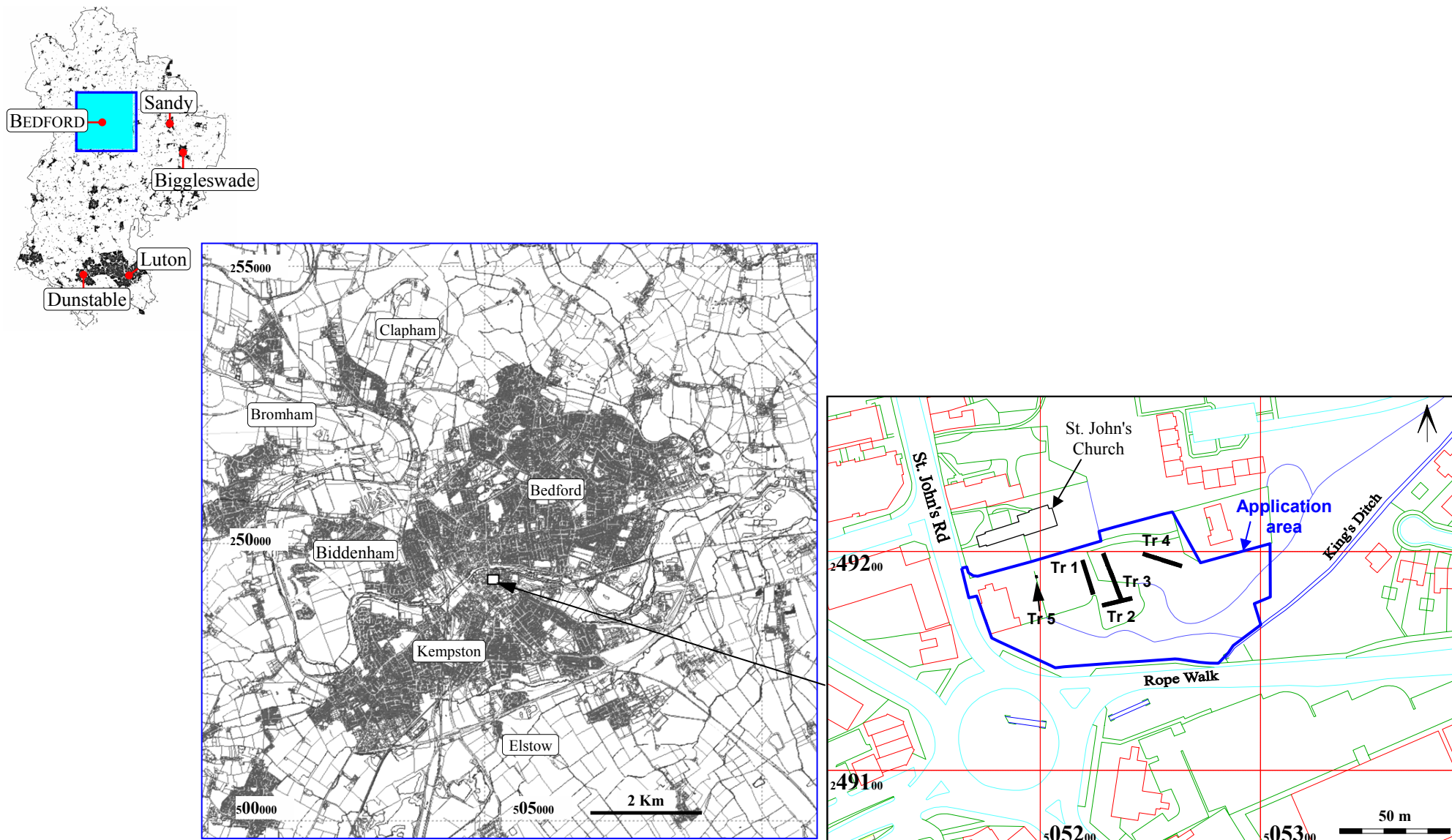
**Max Dimensions:** Length: 1.60 m. Width: 0.50 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0. m. Max: 0.15 m.

**OS Co-ordinates:** Ref. 1: TL5198149187 Ref. 2: TL5197849188

**Reason:** To explore nature and date of wall.

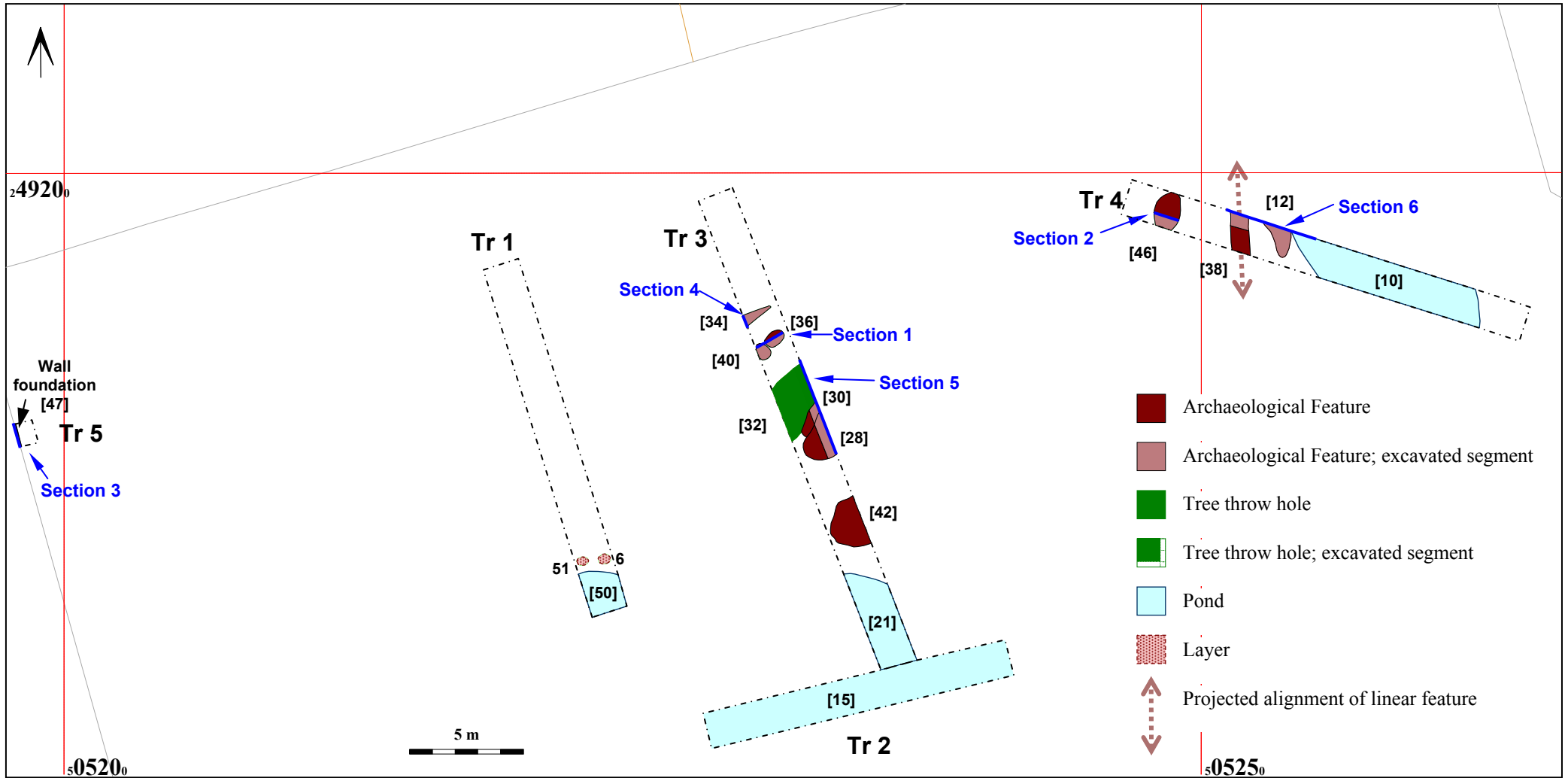
Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
47	Wall	Masonry made up of sandstone blocks measuring 200 x 50mm, 300 x 50mm, 150 x 100mm. Uppermost course made up of very large slabs measuring 1000 x 150mm. Large slabs roughly worked, smaller pieces natural flat sandstone slabs. Three courses visible but within courses stones are arranged irregularly and stacked vertically. Bonded with light greyish yellow crumbly mortar. Masonry aligned N-S and eastern face excavated. Exposed to length of 1.50m and height of 0.70m. Most likely foundation for wall [54] visible above ground.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48	Dump material	Friable dark grey brown silty sand moderate small-medium ceramic building material, moderate small-medium charcoal, frequent small stones Post medieval build-up against wall [47]. Dirtier and more mixed than make up layer (49) below wall.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
49	Dump material	Friable mid yellow brown sandy silt occasional small ceramic building material, moderate small stones Post-medieval (?) make up layer below wall [47]. Very similar to make up layer (3) in Trench 1 and (27) in Trench 3. Small piece of brown glazed pot found in it just below wall.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
52	External surface	Compact light yellow grey sandy gravel Car park gravel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
54	Wall	Made up of medium sized natural flat sandstone slabs, measuring 200 x 50mm and 150 x 20mm in regular horizontal courses. Wall is on a N-S alignment and E-facing face was exposed. Only a 0.45m long and 0.10m high section was excavated in Trench 5, rest of the wall above ground level had been truncated by modern brick structure [55] in this area. It survives to a height of c. 0.50m above ground level further to the S.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
55	Wall	Modern brick wall, forms a buttress on northern end of sandstone wall [54] in this area in order to allow access route for cars.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





**Figure 1: Site location map**

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**Figure 2:** Trenches 1–5, all features

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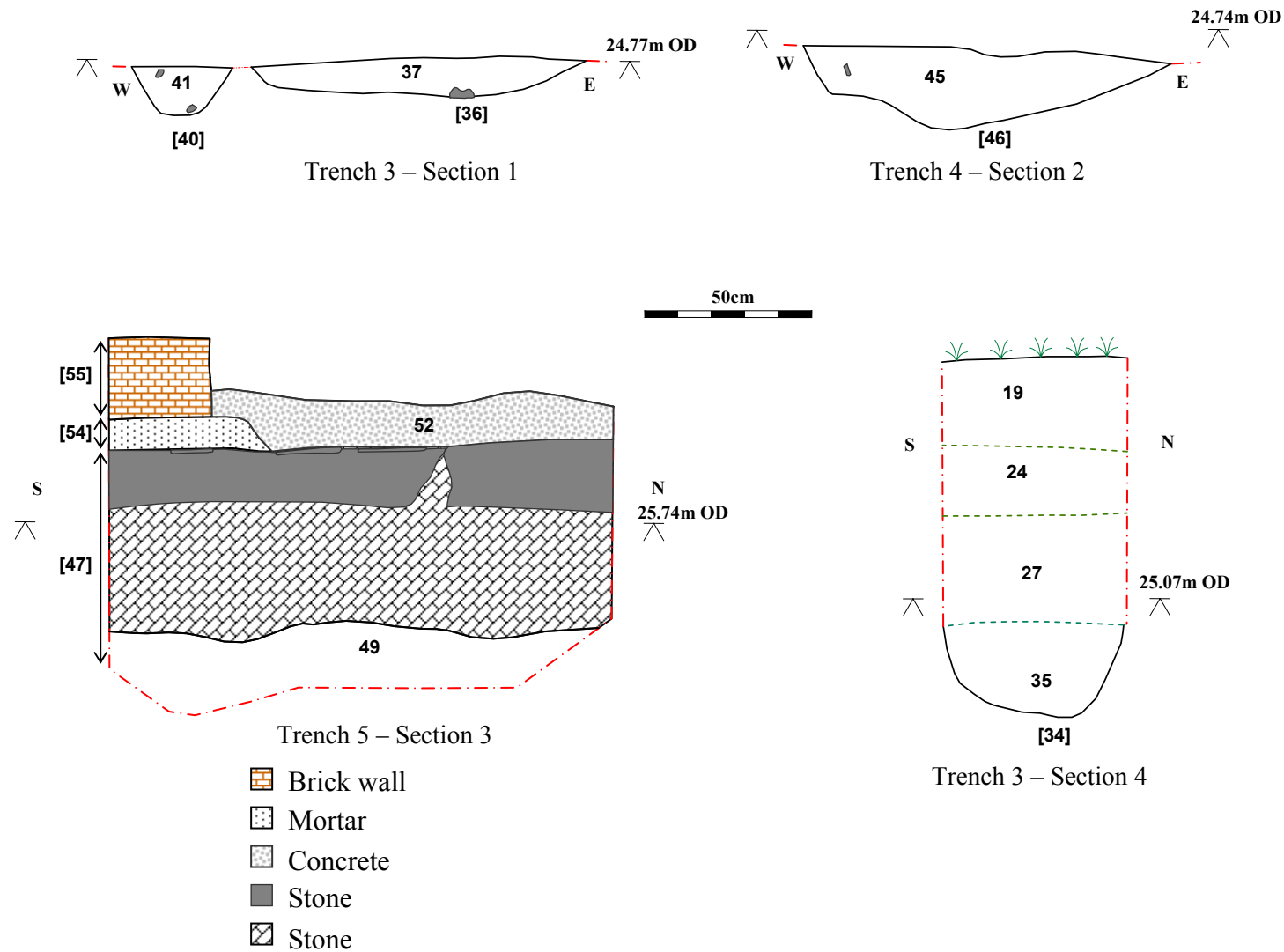
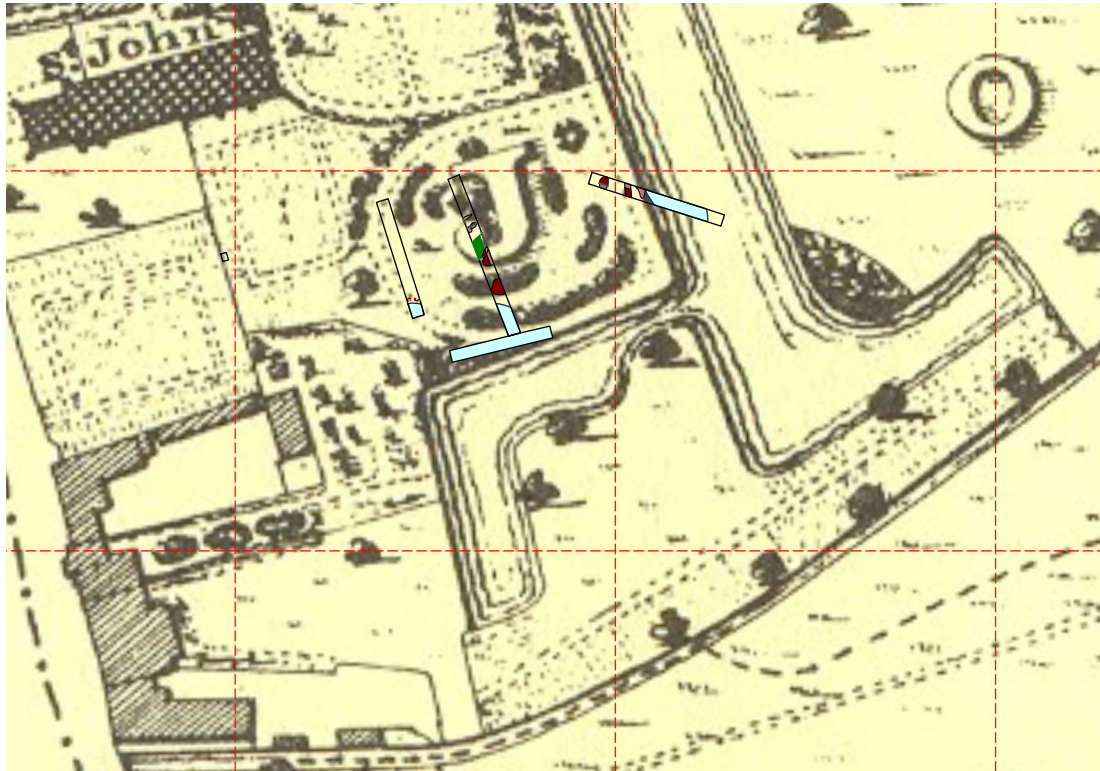


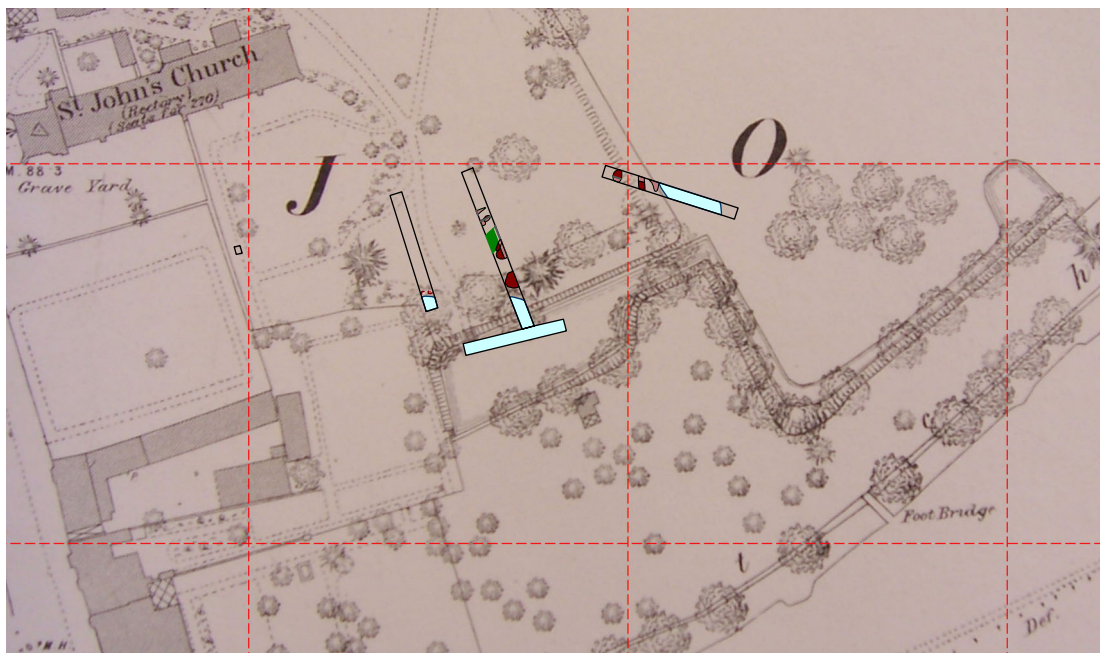
Figure 3: Sections 1–4



**Figure 5:** The ponds south-east of St John's Church, depicted on the Dewhurst & Nichol map of 1836



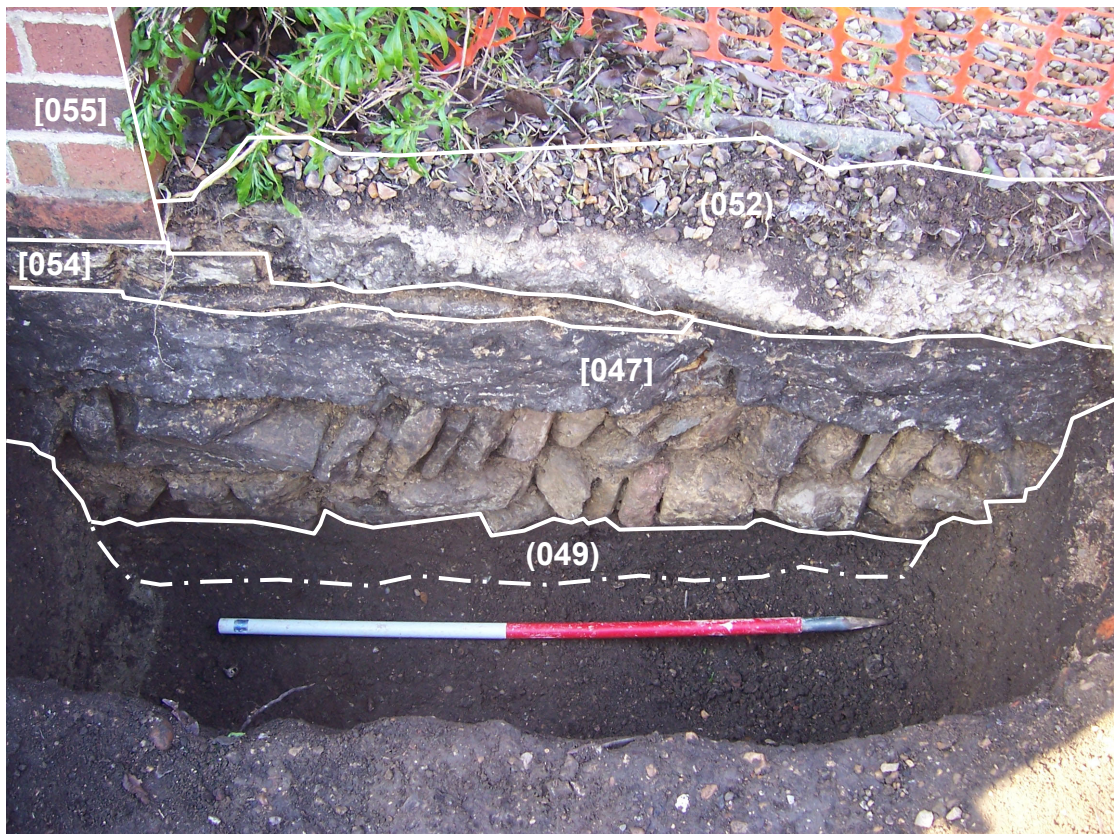
**Figure 6:** Trench plans overlaid on Reynolds 1841 map.



**Figure 7:** Trench plans overlaid on the 1884 1st edition Ordnance Survey map



**Figure 8:** Foundation of wall in Trench 5 in context with upstanding wall



**Figure 9:** Foundation of wall in Trench 5 detail