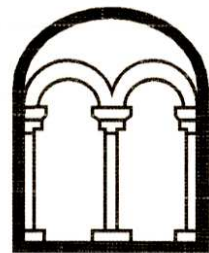


**PLOT 8 WALNUT GROVE
DUNSTABLE
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

Albion
archaeology



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Contents

List of Figures.....	2
List of Images.....	2
Preface.....	3
Key Terms.....	3
1. INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 Planning Background.....	5
1.2 Site Location, Topography and Geology	5
1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background	5
1.4 Project Objectives.....	8
1.5 Methodology.....	9
2. RESULTS	10
2.1 Topsoil	10
2.2 Geological Deposit	10
2.3 Undated Ditch.....	10
2.4 Early Medieval Features (c. 1150–1250).....	10
2.5 Modern (20th-century) Disturbance	11
2.6 Artefacts	11
3. SYNTHESIS AND INTERPRETATION.....	14
3.1 Comparison with Previous Investigations	14
3.2 Interpretation.....	14
4. BIBLIOGRAPHY	16
5. APPENDIX 1: DETAILED CONTEXT SUMMARY	18
6. APPENDIX 2: OASIS SUMMARY	19
7. FIGURES AND IMAGES	21



List of Figures

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: All features plan and sections

Figure 3: Results of current and previous investigations

List of Images

Image 1: View of site looking north-west

Image 2: Ditches [3] and [7]

Image 3: Worked clunch found in lower two fills of ditch [3]

Image 4: Worked clunch found in lower two fills of ditch [3]

Image 5: Worked clunch found in lower two fills of ditch [3]



Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete an assessment as possible, within the terms of the specification. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

The project was commissioned by Mr. Alan Barber and was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Hannah Firth (Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist).

The fieldwork was undertaken by Mark Phillips (Project Officer), who also prepared this report. The illustrations are by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

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Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

DA	Development Area
HER	Historic Environment Record
CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

Planning consent (CB/14/04598/FULL) was granted by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) for the erection of a two-bedroom detached dwelling with associated parking at Plot 8 Walnut Grove, Dunstable, Bedfordshire. The development lies in an area of archaeological interest, with potential for below-ground archaeological remains. A condition requiring a programme of archaeological investigation was attached to the planning permission. Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Mr Alan Barber to carry out the necessary archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, approved by the CBC Archaeologist.

The archaeological investigation was carried out between 19th and 21st September 2015. It comprised a strip, map and sample excavation within the footprint of the new dwelling and its associated parking, an area of 12m by 5.3m. The chalk bedrock was overlain by 300mm of garden soil. Archaeological features cut into the chalk consisted of three NW-SE aligned ditches and a pit.

Large V-shaped ditch [7] is a continuation of a ditch previously identified to the north-west of the present site where it produced a small amount of Roman and early medieval pottery. Ditch [7] contained a naturally formed, chalky fill and is likely to be a boundary or enclosure ditch. The relative lack of finds suggests that it was not located near to settlement or industrial activity

Ditch [7] was partially truncated by a 2.5m-wide, flat-based ditch [3] which appears to terminate just beyond the north-west limit of the investigation area. The primary and main fills of this ditch contained small amounts of animal bone, early medieval pottery, fragments of lava quern/millstone, ferrous slag and a medieval rotary key as well as a quantity of clunch rubble. The latter included fragments of squared and dressed building stone, which may represent construction waste.

Pit [9] contained a few sherds of early medieval pottery, fragments of lava quern/millstone and a residual late Roman coin. Ditch [13] was a shallow feature that contained a few sherds of medieval pottery.

The results indicate activity in this part of Dunstable during the early medieval period, possibly associated with the construction of a stone building. A number of previous archaeological investigations have recovered medieval material in this part of the town, e.g. 158 High Street South (HER17735) and Half Moon Lane (HER11282). The site also lies near to the probable location of the St Mary Magdalen Hospital (HER154) which was founded in the late 12th century.

The project archive will be deposited with Luton Museum. The museum store is being reorganised and new archives are not being accepted until 2017. An accession number has been applied for and an interim entry number has been obtained from the museum (LTNMG 1144). This report will be uploaded onto the Archaeology Data Service's OASIS website (OASIS ID no. albionar1-208209).



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Planning Background*

Planning consent (CB/14/04598/FULL) was granted by Central Bedfordshire Council for the erection of a two-bedroom detached dwelling with associated parking at Plot 8 Walnut Grove, Dunstable, Bedfordshire (Figure 1).

As the development lies in an area of archaeological interest, with potential for below-ground archaeological remains, a condition was placed on the planning consent following advice received from the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA). This is in accordance with national planning guidelines in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework – Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

The CBCA advised that a programme of archaeological strip, map and sample investigation, recording, analysis and publication was required to address the planning condition. Albion Archaeology was commissioned by the developer (Alan Barber) to carry out the archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (Albion Archaeology 2015a), approved by the CBCA. This report presents the results of the archaeological investigation.

1.2 *Site Location, Topography and Geology*

The development site is situated to the south of the centre of Dunstable, *c.* 780m south-east of the intersection of the town's two principal roads, the High Street (A5) and West Street/Church Street (A505) (Figure 1). It lies to the rear of no. 9 Park Road, which runs parallel to, and *c.* 105m north-east of, High Street South.

Plot 8 Walnut Grove has been formed by subdividing the garden of no. 9 Park Road. The north-east end of the development is defined by a new fence. Two mature trees (a walnut and a beech) lie on its south-west border.

Dunstable lies on the northern edge of the chalk escarpment of the Chiltern Hills with an underlying solid geology of Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation and New Pit Chalk Formation¹. The topography of the area is undulating with a number of ridges and valleys. Dunstable town centre lies on relatively level, higher ground and the development area lies at an approximate height of 151m OD. It is centred on grid reference TL 02485 21350.

1.3 *Archaeological and Historical Background*

The archaeological and historical background to the site was examined in a Heritage Statement prepared to accompany the planning application (Albion 2015b). Information on previous archaeological investigations and the history of Dunstable is presented below.

1.3.1 *Archaeological investigations to the rear of 4 Great Northern Road*

In 2014 an archaeological investigation was carried out on land immediately to the north of plot 8 Walnut Grove (Figure 3) (Albion Archaeology 2014).

¹ Contains British Geological Survey materials © NERC 2014



The investigation revealed a low level of Roman and early medieval activity, although the limited and mixed nature of the finds assemblage made secure dating of the features particularly uncertain.

The most prominent features on site were a number of NW-SE aligned ditches, which appeared to be of varying dates. The limited nature of the artefactual assemblage suggested that the earliest ditches might date to the early medieval period. However, it is also possible that they could date back to the Roman construction of Watling Street and were re-established, or still partly open in the case of the larger ditches, during the early medieval period.

Within the site the chalk bedrock sloped down fairly steeply towards High Street South, suggesting that the ditches might have played a part in limiting surface run-off onto the road. They might also represent agricultural boundaries, although no corresponding boundaries or ditches are marked on the 1822 tithe map, indicating that they were no longer in use by this time. The ditches that could be more firmly dated to the post-medieval period and an undated ditch were smaller in size but may have performed similar functions.

Two small pits presented similarly ambiguous dating evidence, containing a very small amount of both Roman and early medieval pottery. Given their location within an area that appears to have been under cultivation until the mid-19th century, both are most likely to be associated with agricultural activities.

A number of postholes were revealed on the site; the majority contained modern material or the surviving remnants of wooden posts. These features were associated with recently demolished outbuildings or recent property boundaries. A scattering of post-medieval and undated postholes formed no coherent structures.

1.3.2 Archaeological and historical background of Dunstable

The archaeology and history of Dunstable are discussed extensively in the Dunstable Extensive Urban Survey (Albion Archaeology 2003). A summary of the information relevant to the present study is presented below.

Dunstable lies at the crossroads of the Roman Watling Street (HER 5508) and the prehistoric Icknield Way. It is named as *Durocobravis* (HER 135) in the Antonine Itinerary (Simco 1984, 30). *Durocobravis* is the name given by the Romans to the settlement at the crossroads of Watling Street and the Icknield Way which is today called Dunstable. Since the large-scale re-development and expansion of Dunstable from the mid-20th century onwards a considerable quantity of Roman remains have been excavated and recorded within the centre of the town, particularly near the crossroads, proving the existence of a sizable regional centre. The core of the Roman town seems to have radiated out for a distance of around 400m from the Icknield Way/Watling Street crossroads.

The development is located *c.* 780m to the south-east of the crossroads, beyond the known core of the Roman town. However, it lies close to Watling Street (HER 5508) which means that the presence of Roman remains cannot be discounted in this area. In the Roman period burials tend to be sited along the major routes in



and out of towns. One such cemetery has been recorded at Friary Fields (HER 11284, Matthews 1981, Gardner 2004). Investigations along West Street between 2004 and 2009 recovered a single burial dating to this period (HER 18261 and Albion Archaeology 2004, 2007 and 2009).

In the 1860s, a possible Bronze Age crouched burial was discovered to the rear of the Wagon and Horses Inn around 100m to the north-west of the development area (DA) (HER 157). Little information about the burial survives; however, it could have been incorrectly dated and may have been Roman in date.

A number of Roman remains have been recorded from the area around the development. In some cases these comprise the recovery of single objects, such as coins (for example HER 146), but they also include a probable farmstead (HER 1341).

The decline of *Durocbrivis* is likely to have taken place during the late 4th or 5th century when Roman urban life essentially came to an end. Saxon activity in Dunstable is largely restricted to the north-west part of the modern town (e.g. the Marina Drive cemetery, HER 152). At present, there is little evidence for continuity between the Roman and Saxon settlements.

In approximately 1119 Henry I founded the medieval town (HER 16986), which, like the Roman settlement, was focussed on the Icknield Way / Watling Street crossroads. The town was laid out in burgage plots, some of which may be preserved in present-day property boundaries (particularly along High Street South). Medieval features including kilns, pits and ditches have been recorded at a number of locations. Henry I also had a royal residence within the town (HER 148) and founded the Augustinian Priory of St Peter (HER 131, SM 3). The remains of the latter are a scheduled ancient monument, located within Priory Gardens, between High Street South and Church Street.

The development at Walnut Grove lies outside of the known core of the medieval town. However, it is situated within the historic boundary of Dunstable (as represented by Half Moon Lane, approximately 200m to the south-east) and within this area a number of archaeological interventions have produced evidence for medieval activity.

In 1998, during construction works at 158 High Street South, two archaeological features were excavated by the Manshead Archaeological Society (HER 17735). The earliest, a small circular oven or kiln, was cut by the second feature, which was also of a probable medieval date and may represent the stokehole for another oven or kiln.

Medieval finds and possible ditches were also recorded around the Half Moon Lane crossroads in the early to mid-20th century (HER 11282). Similar objects, such as a jetton (trading token), a brooch and a coin (HERs 1374, 19060 and 136), have also been found in the vicinity of the development area.

It is also worth noting that the development area lies close to the probable location of St Mary Magdalene Hospital (HER 154). This was founded in the late 12th



century and intended for lepers and other sick people. It stood on Watling Street, about half a mile south-east of Dunstable town centre, close to the point where the historic parishes of Caddington, Kensworth and Dunstable met, but just inside Dunstable (e.g. within the Half Moon Lane boundary). Medieval finds have been recovered from the vicinity (HER 11282). The Hospital is referred to in various documents up to 1338. Its presence led to the ‘spittle’ element in the names of several closes nearby; most of these names fell out of use or were changed during the later post-medieval period (Coleman 1985).

Dunstable’s position on the A5 (Watling Street) meant that from the medieval period it prospered as a stopping point for coaches on the way from London to the north-west.

From the 17th century onwards many coaching inns were constructed along High Street North and High Street South. One of the earliest plans of the town dates to 1762 and shows that it was relatively small at that time. By the beginning of the 19th century it had a population of only 1,296 people. The arrival of the railway in 1848 led to huge expansion, particularly around the London and North-Western Station, but it also resulted in the rapid decline of the coaching industry. Towards the end of the 19th century the straw hat industry became one of the town’s principal businesses. In many cases the factories took over redundant coaching inns and a number are known along High Street South, e.g. the Waggon & Horses (HER 6264), a public house with 19th-century origins at 183 High Street South.

The 1888 1st edition OS 6-inch map of Dunstable shows Park Road as laid out but not yet developed (or named). More recent historical maps suggest that buildings began to be erected around the development area from the very end of the 19th century onwards. This coincided with a period of expansion of the town with both residential and industrial-type developments taking place in the area around Park Road. By the time of the 1937 3rd edition OS map, the area had been fully developed.

1.4 Project Objectives

Dunstable was a small town in the Roman period. Some parts of it are relatively well studied but work has been undertaken piecemeal, determined by the location of urban development rather than by targeted research questions. More information is still needed on the character of the Roman town, any potential zoning of activities within it and the relationship of the town with its hinterland (Oake 2007, 11).

The research agenda also highlight the need for more information on Roman small towns in general, to further characterise this settlement type and its hinterland and to set it within a broader regional economic and social context (*ibid*). The transition from late Roman to Saxon to medieval settlement and any accompanying settlement shift and / or re-location is also a topic about which little is known.

For the medieval period the research framework for Bedfordshire states that, in general, few medieval settlements have been investigated in the county. Dunstable is specifically mentioned as, in contrast to other small towns within



Bedfordshire, it is a royal foundation created on the site of a Roman small town. While remains of the medieval Dunstable Priory are still prominent within the town, details of its layout, development and overall medieval urban character away from the priory are not well understood and this is given as a research priority (Oake 2007, 14).

The growth and development of small towns in the post-medieval period and their impact on the landscape is a research topic that is highlighted in the regional research framework (Medlycott 2011, 79).

The general objectives of the archaeological investigation are to:

- establish the date, nature and extent of any activity or occupation within the DA;
- establish the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits present at the DA;
- establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- to recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

The specific objectives of the archaeological investigation are to determine:

- if there is any evidence for burials of prehistoric and/or Roman date on the DA;
- if there is any evidence for Roman and/or medieval occupation alongside Watling Street on the DA;
- if there is any below-ground evidence relating to the post-medieval use of the DA.

1.5 Methodology

The methodology employed for the investigation is detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion 2015a). The site recording procedures are set out in the *Albion Procedures Manual* (2001).

The investigation consisted of a strip, map and sample excavation carried out in the area covered by the new building and its associated car parking space. Overburden was removed with a mechanical excavator operated under archaeological supervision to uncover the underlying chalk geology and archaeological features. The investigation area was 12m long by 5.3m wide (63m²) and was up to 0.3m deep.

The archaeological fieldwork was carried out between 19th and 21st September 2015.



2. RESULTS

The results of the fieldwork are summarised below and are illustrated in Figure 2. A detailed context summary forms Appendix 1.

2.1 *Topsoil*

The topsoil (1) was approximately 300mm thick and lay directly above the chalk bedrock. This dark grey chalky silt was formed as a cultivated garden soil. It contained occasional items of modern debris (not collected) but no earlier material was identified.

2.2 *Geological Deposit*

The undisturbed geological deposit consisted of solid chalk bedrock (2). It was exposed across the whole investigation area and sloped gently down towards the south-west with the upper surface at a height of c. 154–152m OD.

2.3 *Undated Ditch*

Ditch [7] was a large NW-SE aligned ditch. It had a steep-sided, V-shaped profile and was 1.25m deep (Figure 2, Section 1, and Image 2). The north-east side had been truncated by a later ditch. The lower fill (15) consisted of small sub-angular chalk fragments with lesser amounts of chalky silt. The upper fill (8) consisted of chalky silt with frequent sub-angular chalk fragments. The upper fill contained a very small amount of animal bone.

It is likely that the fills were formed by natural infilling with initial erosion of the clean ditch sides forming the chalk-rich lower fill and more gradual silting filling the upper part. The ditch fills contained no dateable material but it was cut by and, therefore, predates ditch [3], which contained material dating from the early medieval period (see below).

2.4 *Early Medieval Features (c. 1150–1250)*

2.4.1 *Ditch [3]*

Ditch [3] was a large NW-SE aligned ditch. It was steep-sided with a flat base. In the north-west of the excavated segment the base was stepped down into a deeper section (Figure 2, Section 1 and Image 2). Overall the ditch was 2.5m wide and 1.2m deep. A grey fill (4) in the upper part of the ditch contained frequent chalk fragments and a small amount of animal bone and pottery. Yellow-brown, chalky silt fills were found in the main part of the ditch (5) and in the base (6), with the latter being slightly yellower in colour.

Fill (5) contained small amounts of animal bone and pottery as well as ferrous slag, fragments of lava quern or millstone (RAs 2 and 3) and a key (RA 1). Fill (6) contained a small amount of pottery and ferrous slag. In addition, both of these fills contained moderate amounts of Totternhoe clunch, mostly as angular fragments but including some squared stones with dressed surfaces. The pottery is dated to the early medieval period (Section 2.6.1).

The fragments of clunch rubble, some of it squared and faced, were found throughout fills (5) and (6) which suggests that the feature was deliberately filled



over a relatively short period of time. No evidence of gradual or natural silting was found in the base of the ditch and it, therefore, appears to have been cleaned out or recently dug shortly before fills (5) and (6) were deposited.

2.4.2 Pit [9]

Feature [9], interpreted as a pit, was an elongated feature, approximately 2m long, 1m wide and 0.28m deep. At its south end it appeared to be cut by NE-SE aligned ditch [3] (excavated in this segment as ditch [11]) (Figure 2, Section 2, and Image 1). The single fill (10) of grey-brown chalky silt contained a small amount of animal bone, early medieval pottery, lava quern (RA 4) and a late Roman coin (RA 5).

2.4.3 Ditch segment [11]

This is a small partial segment through ditch [3], dug to investigate its relationship with pit [9], (Figure 2, Section 2). The fill (14) is equivalent to fill (4) in ditch [3]. It contained a single sherd of early medieval pottery and a small fragment of abraded roof tile.

2.4.4 Ditch [13]

Feature [13] was partially exposed in the south-west end of the investigation area. Only the north-east side was exposed but it appeared in plan to be a linear feature aligned NW-SE. In profile it was shallow with a flat base (Figure 2, Section 3). A single fill (14) of mid yellow-grey chalky silt contained a small amount of early medieval pottery and a fragment of flat roof tile.

2.5 Modern (20th-century) Disturbance

Two modern intrusions and a possible area of modern disturbance were identified in plan (Figure 2). These comprised a posthole, a test pit and possible disturbance above ditch [3].

The square posthole contained remnants of a decayed post and probably represents the remains of a recent boundary or garden building. The small rectangular test pit is an engineering test pit that was excavated as part of the preparatory works for the present development.

An area interpreted as possible modern disturbance was identified as a slightly lighter coloured deposit above the fill of ditch [3] (Figure 2, Section 1).

2.6 Artefacts

Five deposits yielded an assemblage comprising pottery, ceramic building material, ferrous slag, worked stone; metal objects and animal bone (Table 1).

Feature	Fill	Date range	Finds summary
[3] Ditch	4	12th–13th century	Pottery (80g); animal bone (38g)
[3] Ditch	5	12th–13th century	Pottery (78g); ferrous slag (1.6kg); animal bone (85g); iron key (RA 1); millstones (RAs 2 and 3); architectural stonework (RA 6)
[3] Ditch	6	12th–13th century	Pottery (5g); ferrous slag (233g)
[7] Ditch	8	Undated	Animal bone (46g)
[9] Pit	10	12th–13th century	Pottery (32g); animal bone (24g); quern/millstone (RA 4); copper alloy coin (RA 5)



Feature	Fill	Date range	Finds summary
[11] Ditch	12	12th–13th century	Pottery (39g); ceramic roof tile (14g)
[13] Ditch	14	12th–13th century	Pottery (12g); ceramic roof tile (29g); animal bone (17g)

Table 1: Artefact Summary by Feature

2.6.1 Pottery

Twenty-eight pottery sherds (246g), representing 23 vessels were collected, the majority from the fills of ditch [3]. Sherds are fairly fragmented, with a mean weight of 9g, although are relatively unabraded. Six fabric types were identified using common names and type codes in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series (Table 2).

Fabric type	Common name	Sherd No.	Wt. (g)	Fill/Sherd No.
<i>Late Saxon</i>				
B01C	St Neots-type (mixed)	1	3	(5):1
<i>Early medieval</i>				
B07	Shell	1	7	(4):1
C01	Sand	3	22	(4):2, (14):1
C04	Coarse sand	3	50	(10):1, (12):1, (14):1
C59A	Coarse sand (pasty)	14	123	(4):6, (5):6; (6):1, (10):1
C60	Hertfordshire-type grey ware	6	41	(4):1, (5):1, (10):4

Table 2: Pottery Type Series

The majority of the pottery dates to the 12th–13th centuries, and is of local manufacture. A single shell-tempered sherd of late Saxon St Neots-type ware (3g) occurs as a residual find in the secondary fill (5) of ditch [3]. Medieval pottery comprises a range of sand-tempered coarse wares and a single shell-tempered sherd, the latter likely to derive from further afield, although still probably within the county. Both hand-made and wheel-thrown examples are present. Vessel forms are poorly represented by a single square rim jar (diameter 120mm). All sherds are undecorated, and several have sooted exterior surfaces, suggesting use as cooking pots.

2.6.2 Ceramic building material

Ditches [11] and [13] each contained single pieces of sand-tempered flat roof tile (total weight 43g). Both are abraded, and are broadly datable to the medieval period.

2.6.3 Other finds

The secondary fill (5) of early medieval ditch [3] contained an incomplete medieval iron rotary key (RA 1) of Goodall's type B (1980). The object has a hollow stem rolled in one with bit and ring bow of single piece forging with the stem. A late Roman copper alloy coin (RA 5), possibly a barbarous radiate of Tetricus (AD 270–273), occurred as a residual find in pit [9]. Ferrous slag (1.8kg), including smelting residues, derived from the primary (6) and secondary (5) fills of ditch [3].

Ditch [3] also yielded seven medieval lava millstone(?) fragments (RAs 2 and 3: some joining), one possibly representing a lower stone, and one a possible upper or runner stone. The fill of pit [9] contained a possible lower stone from a lava



rotary quern or millstone (RA 4). The fragment retains a grinding surface, but no other original edges/surfaces.

2.6.4 Architectural stonework

The lower two fills of early medieval ditch [3] contained fragments of Totternhoe clunch, some of which was worked. One of the worked fragments (RA 6) was retained for more detailed examination (see description below) whilst the remaining fragments were photographed and reburied on site (Images 3, 4 and 5).

The primary fill (6) of ditch [3] yielded a piece of worked Totternhoe clunch (RA 6: length 163mm; width 163mm; thickness 114mm). The possible ashlar retains two dressed surfaces with diagonal chisel marks, with a blade width of *c.* 10mm. The third face appears to bear the remains of approximately three adze marks along with rough chiselling. The remaining faces are broken. The upper face, of which only a small portion of the dressed surface survives, appears to be slightly chamfered.

2.6.5 Animal bone

Twenty animal bone fragments (210g) were collected from four features, the majority (123g) from the fills of early medieval ditch [3]. Pieces are fragmented, with a mean weight of 11g, although survive in fair condition. Diagnostic elements are limb bones, vertebra, pelvis, scapula, phalanx, and skull fragments, some deriving from sheep/goat.



3. SYNTHESIS AND INTERPRETATION

3.1 *Comparison with Previous Investigations*

The site at Walnut Grove lies adjacent to a previous archaeological investigation undertaken on land off Great Northern Road (Figure 3, GNR2263). The earlier investigation identified a number of linear features which were mostly aligned NW-SE and a small number of pits and postholes. The features found on the earlier investigation produced few dateable artefacts and were characterised as being pre post-medieval, post-medieval, modern or undated.

Comparison of the results from both sites shows that ditch [7] is a continuation of a ditch found in the previous excavation where excavated segments [41] and [86] had V-shaped profiles matching that of ditch [7]. The fills of segment [41] produced a small amount of animal bone and small amounts of residual Roman material. The fills of segment [86] produced a small amount of animal bone, ferrous slag, three sherds of early medieval pottery and a single sherd of Roman pottery. The excavated segment in the Walnut Grove investigation produced a small amount of animal bone.

The shallow linear feature [13] which was seen in the southern part of the Walnut Grove investigation did not appear to continue into the previous excavation area.

The large flat-bottomed ditch [13] also appears not to have continued into the previous excavation area. Examination of the plan suggests that a deposit interpreted as an area of modern disturbance may in fact correspond to the terminal of ditch [13], approximately on the boundary between the two investigation areas.

3.2 *Interpretation*

The V-shaped ditch [7] / [41] / [86] is likely to be part of an enclosure or land boundary, the fills of which probably accumulated gradually as a result of natural erosion and silting processes. Given the low concentration of artefacts, it is likely that the ditch was located away from any significant areas of settlement or industrial activity. The section examined in the present excavation had silted up prior to being truncated by ditch [3] which contained material dating from the early medieval period (c. 1150–1250).

The large flat-bottomed ditch [3], found during the present investigation, may represent a partial recut of boundary [7] / [41] / [86]. The ditch contained no evidence of natural silting in the base and appears to have been deliberately infilled over a relatively short period of time. The basal fill and the fill of the main part of the ditch both contained clunch rubble, including fragments of squared and faced ashlar blocks. The clean appearance of the stones — with no traces of mortar adhering or evidence of use — suggests that they may be construction waste rather than demolition debris. The use of dressed ashlar blocks in the early medieval period is associated with high-status buildings. The same deposits include a small amount of ferrous slag, pottery, lava quern and animal bone which suggests the presence of some industrial and domestic activity in the vicinity.



Dateable artefacts from these fills show that the in-filling of the ditch occurred in the early medieval period (*c.* 1150–1250).

The evidence from Walnut Grove indicates the presence of early medieval activity beyond Dunstable's medieval settlement core, which was focussed on the cross-roads. However, the site does fall within the historic town boundary, which on this side of town is located approximately 200m to the south, at Half Moon Lane. A number of previous archaeological investigations have recovered medieval material in this part of the town, e.g. 158 High Street South (HER17735) and Half Moon Lane (HER11282). The site also lies near to the probable location of the St Mary Magdalen Hospital (HER154) which was founded in the late 12th century.

The project archive will be deposited with Luton Museum. The museum store is being reorganised and new archives are not being accepted until 2017. An accession number has been applied for and an interim entry number has been obtained from the museum (LTNMG 1144). This report will be uploaded onto the Archaeology Data Service's OASIS website (OASIS ID no. albionar1-208209).



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5. APPENDIX 1: DETAILED CONTEXT SUMMARY

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1	Topsoil	Friable dark grey chalky silt occasional small stones Average depth- 300mm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Natural	Hard white chalk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: steep base: flat dimensions: max breadth 2.5m, max depth 1.2m Cuts the fill of an earlier ditch [7]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Upper fill	Friable mid grey chalky silt frequent small chalk Uppermost fill of ditch [3]. Average depth 250mm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5	Fill	Friable mid yellow brown chalky silt moderate small chalk, occasional medium stones Main fill of ditch [3]. Contained moderate amount of Tottemhoe Clunch. Average depth 0.65m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6	Primary fill	Friable mid yellow brown chalky silt occasional small chalk, moderate small stones Primary fill of ditch [3]. Contained fragments of Tottemhoe Clunch. Average depth 220mm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: steep base: v-shaped dimensions: max breadth 1.4m, max depth 1.25m Partially truncated by cut of ditch [3]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Upper fill	Friable light yellow brown chalky silt frequent small chalk Upper fill of ditch [7]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
15	Lower fill	Friable white silty chalk occasional small stones Lower fill of ditch, consisting predominantly of small sub-angular chalk fragments. Average depth 450mm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Pit	Sub-rectangular NNE-SSW sides: 45 degrees base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.m, max depth 0.28m, max length 2.m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Fill	Friable mid grey brown chalky silt moderate small chalk, occasional small stones Max depth 270mm. Sole fill.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
11	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: 45 degrees Small segment through much larger boundary ditch [3] - excavated to examine relationship with feature [9]. Not fully excavated.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Fill	Friable dark grey brown chalky silt moderate small chalk, occasional small stones Uppermost fill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
13	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: concave base: flat dimensions: max breadth 2.5m, max depth 0.23m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Fill	Friable mid yellow grey chalky silt frequent small chalk, occasional small stones Sole fill. Average depth 220mm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



6. APPENDIX 2: OASIS SUMMARY

OASIS ID: albionar1-208209

Project details

Project name	Plot 8 Walnut Grove, Dunstable
Short description of the project	Planning consent was granted for the erection of a two-bedroom detached dwelling with associated parking at Plot 8 Walnut Grove, Dunstable, Bedfordshire. A condition requiring a programme of archaeological investigation was attached to the planning permission. A strip, map and sample excavation measuring 12m by 5.3m was carried out in September 2015. Three NW-SE aligned ditches and a pit were found cut into chalk bedrock beneath 0.3m of garden soil. A large V-shaped ditch is a continuation of one seen during earlier work on an adjacent site to the north where it contained a small amount of Roman and early medieval (c. 1150–1250) pottery. The V-shaped ditch was partially truncated by a 2.5m-wide, flat-based ditch, the deliberate in-filling of which contained early medieval domestic and industrial debris. This included lava quern/millstone fragments, ferrous slag, a medieval rotary key and a quantity of clunch rubble which included fragments of squared and dressed building stone. Pit [9] contained a few sherds of early medieval pottery, fragments of lava quern/millstone and a residual late Roman coin. Ditch [13] was a shallow feature that contained a few sherds of medieval pottery. The results indicate activity in this area during the early medieval period and include possible construction debris from a stone building. A number of previous archaeological investigations have recovered medieval material in this part of the town, e.g. 158 High Street South (HER17735) and Half Moon Lane (HER11282). The site also lies near to the probable location of the St Mary Magdalen Hospital (HER154) which was founded in the late 12th century.
Project dates	Start: 19-09-2015 End: 21-09-2015
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	PR2542 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Monument type	DITCH Uncertain DITCH Early Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Early Medieval LAVA QUERN Early Medieval COIN Roman CBM Medieval ARCHITECTURAL STONWORK Medieval
Investigation type	"Recorded Observation"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	BEDFORDSHIRE SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE DUNSTABLE Plot 8 Walnut Grove, Dunstable
Study area	64 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 0247 2134 Point



Project creators

Name of Organisation	Albion Archaeology
Project brief originator	none
Project design originator	Albion Archaeology
Project director/manager	Mark Phillips

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Luton Museum
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones" ,"Ceramics" ,"Industrial", "Metal" "other"
Paper Archive recipient	Luton Museum
Paper Contents	"Animal Bones", "Ceramics", "Industrial", "Metal", "other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Correspondence", 'Drawing', "Miscellaneous Material", "Photograph" ,"Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Plot 8 Walnut Grove, Dunstable: Archaeological Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication
Author(s)/Editor(s)	'Phillips, M'
Other bibliographic details	2015/133
Date	2015
Issuer or publisher	Albion Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Bedford
Entered by	Helen Parslow (hl.parslow@albion-arch.com)
Entered on	6 October 2015



7. FIGURES AND IMAGES

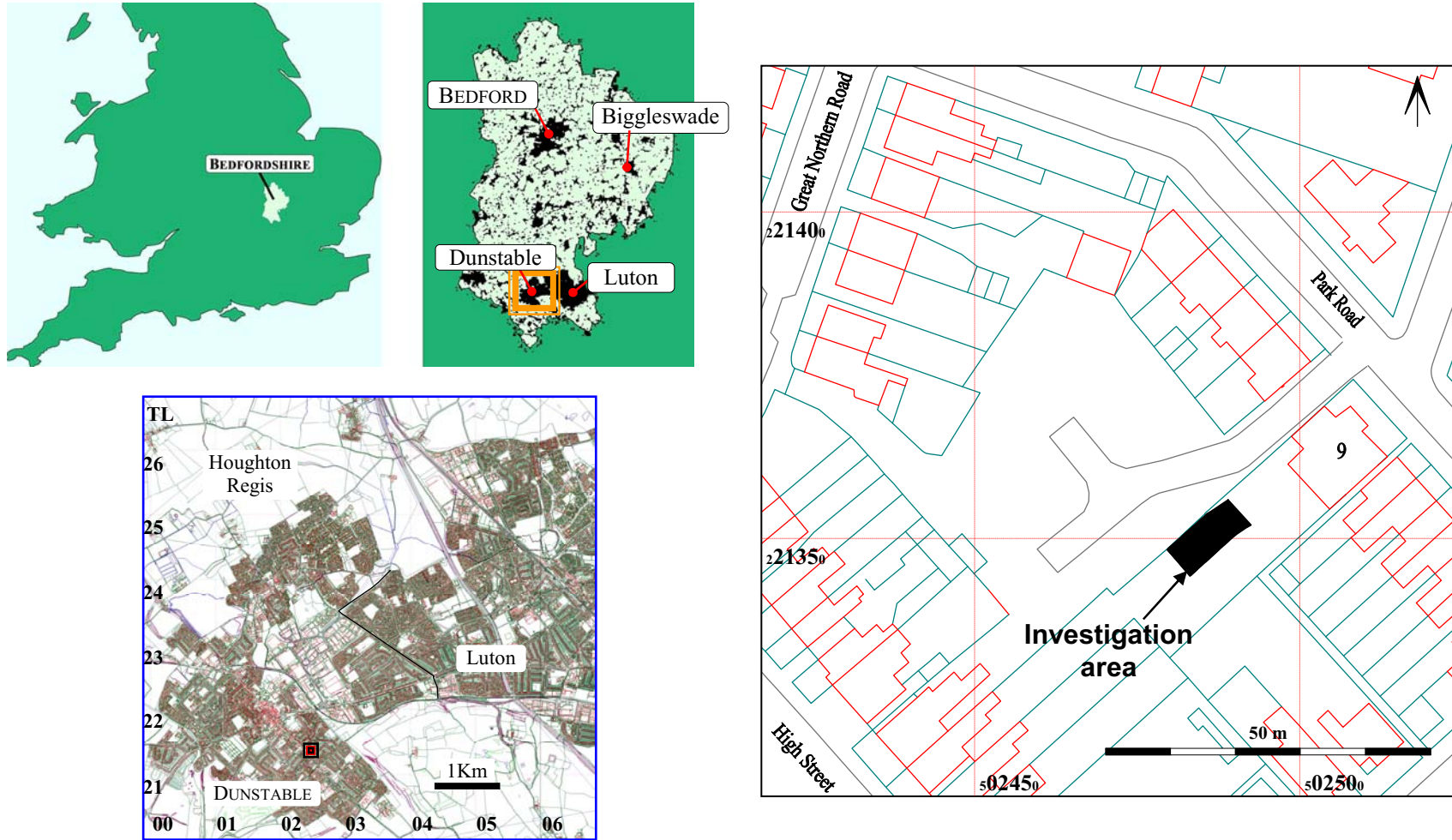
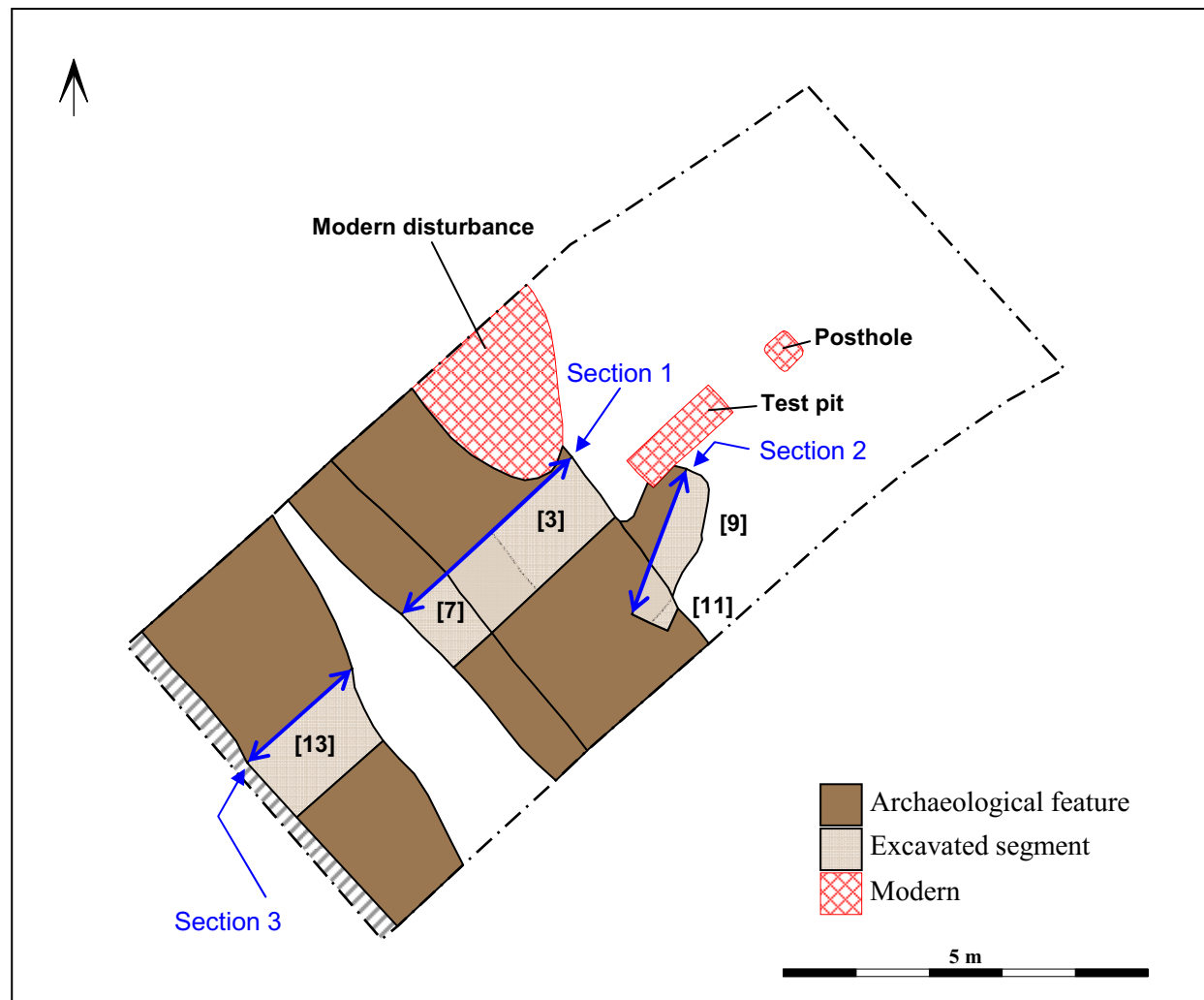


Figure 1: Site location

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View of site looking towards the west. Shows pit [9] at right foreground, ditches [3] and [7] behind and ditch [13] to the left. (Scale 1m)

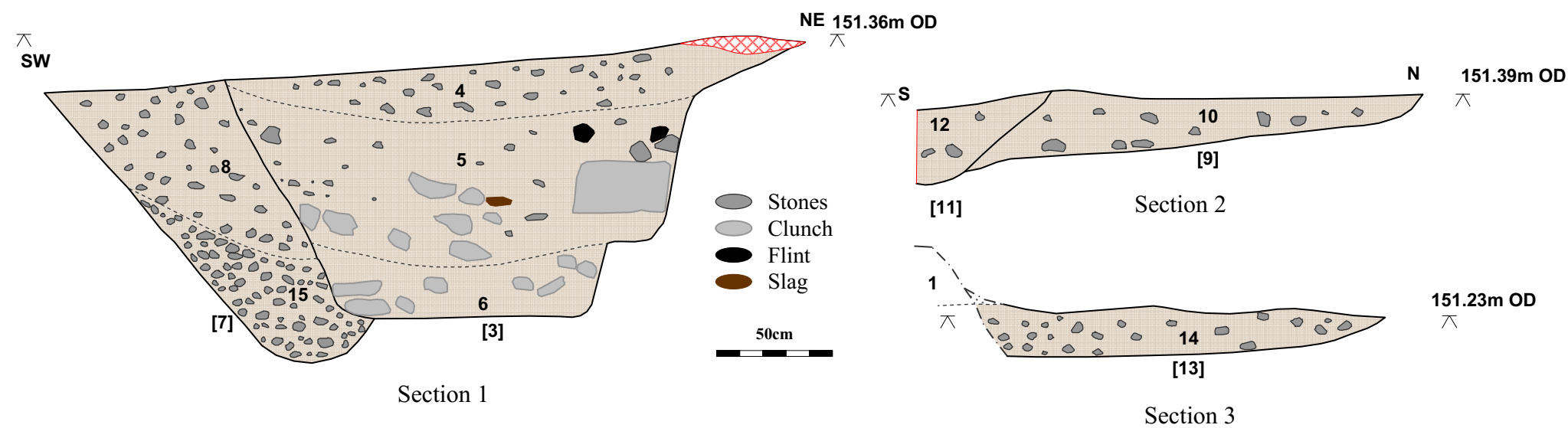


Figure 2: All features plan and sections

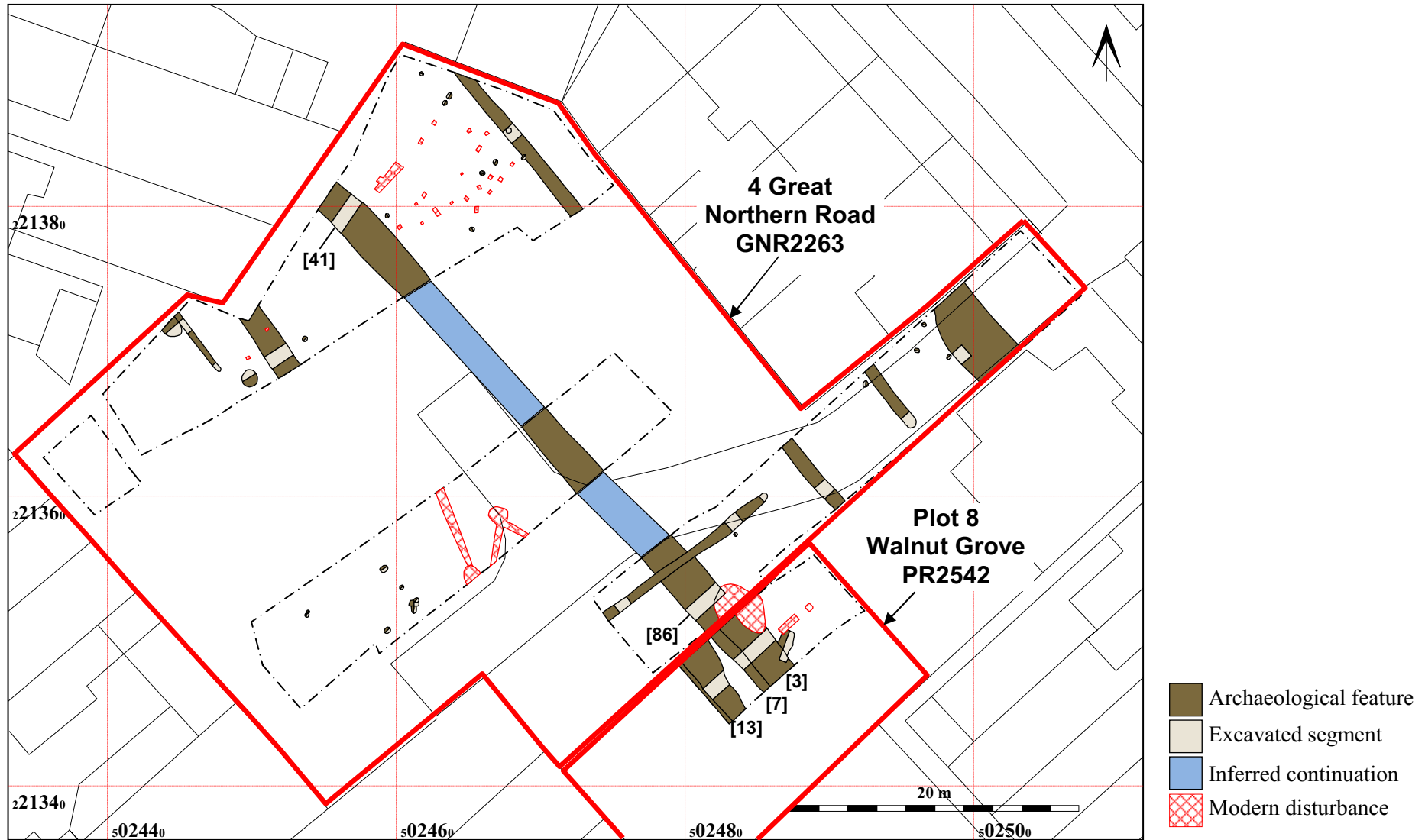


Figure 3: Results of current and previous investigations

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Image 1: View of site looking north-west

Shows pit [9] in foreground with ditches [3] and [7] beyond. The new development in the background was the location of the archaeological investigation undertaken in 2014 (GNR2263). (Scale 1m)



Image 2: Ditches [3] and [7]

View looking north-west. Ditch [7] at the left is truncated by ditch [3] which contains a darker fill and fragments of clunch (Scale 1m)



Image 3: Worked clunch found in lower two fills of ditch [3]

(Scale 40cm)



Image 4: Worked clunch found in fill lower two fills of ditch [3]

The stone on the left was retained as registered artefact 6; the other stones were reburied on site. (Scale 40cm)



Image 5: Worked clunch found in lower two fills of ditch [3]

(Scale 40cm)



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