LAND OFF CAMBRIDGE ROAD
FENSTANTON
CAMBRIDGESHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
FIELD EVALUATION

ADDENDUM

Albion
archaeology

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Preface

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

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Kier Living (Eastern) Ltd and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Kasia Gdaniec of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Marcin Koziminski (Archaeological Supervisor), who also prepared this report with contributions from Joan Lightning (CAD Technician), Gary Edmondson (environmental sampling) and Jackie Wells (Finds Officer). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager)

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Key Terms

The following abbreviations are used throughout this report:

CI*f*A	Chartered Institute *for* Archaeologists
Client	Kier Living (Eastern) Ltd
HER	Historic Environment Record
HET	Historic Environment Team (Cambridgeshire County Council)
PDA	Proposed development area

Non-Technical Summary

In February 2016 an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out to provide information on the potential impact of a proposed residential development on archaeological remains at land off Cambridge Road, Fenstanton, Cambridgeshire.

This addendum to the report on the trial trench evaluation details the finding of a series of test pits that were excavated on land to the west of the main site; the area is proposed as the site of a community building and car park

The test pitting revealed the presence of archaeological features (dating to the late Iron Age/early Roman transitional period) within the footprint of the proposed community building and car park.

NE-SW aligned linear remains were revealed in two test pits. These may have formed part of the same ditch, although their differing profiles may suggest otherwise. Both ditches were sealed by soil layers; the gradual profile of one ditch segment may suggest that the layer in fact formed the uppermost fill of the ditch.

The ditch may constitute a boundary that pre-dates the largely 2nd- to 3rd-century Roman activity within the main site to the east. The presence of pottery suggests the features may form part of domestic activity but, given the paucity of any late Iron Age/Early Roman features within the previously investigated area, it is possible that the activity focus within the overall site shifted eastwards in the Roman period.

An inhumation burial was revealed in one test pit. The skeleton was probably aligned NE-SW with the head towards the north-east. Deposits within the grave produced no dating evidence; however, it seems plausible to suggest that the inhumation may be broadly contemporary or later than the late Iron Age/early Roman remains to the east.

The late Iron Age/early Roman remains are of regional significance and have the potential to address research themes relating to a character of transition of settlements and landscapes (their continuity or discontinuity), identified in the regional research frameworks.

1. INTRODUCTION

In February 2016 an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out to provide information on the potential impact of a proposed residential development on archaeological remains at land off Cambridge Road, Fenstanton, Cambridgeshire (Albion 2016).

This addendum to the report on the trial trench evaluation details the finding of a series of test pits that were excavated on land to the west of the main site. The land is proposed as the site of a community building and car park (Figure 1).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Test Pitting

The work was undertaken between 12th and 13th September 2016 and comprised the excavation of six test pits measuring 2.5m by 1.8m each (Figures 1 and 2). They are designated Trenches 11–16, continuing the trench numbering used in the report on the main site.

The layout of the test pits was designed to assess the archaeological potential in the site of the community building (Trenches 11–14) and car park (Trenches 15 and 16). The positions of Trenches 3 and 5 were slightly altered due to the proximity of fruit trees that are to be retained within the proposed development.

The test pits were opened by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged ditching bucket. The machine was operated by an experienced driver under the supervision of an archaeologist. All archaeological excavation and recording was carried out by experienced Albion Archaeology staff. An appropriate level of environmental and other sampling was undertaken in accordance with standard guidelines (Albion 2016, Appendix 1).

2.2 Metal Detecting Survey

A metal detector survey of the spoil heaps and the excavated test pits was carried out. The detector was not set to discriminate against iron.

No artefacts were recovered either from features within the test pits or from the spoil removed from them.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Overview

Trenches 12, 13 and 15 contained features of archaeological interest. Trench 11 revealed a modern pit. Trench 16 contained a tree throw. Trench 14 was blank.

All deposits found during the investigations are described below from earliest to latest in date, integrating artefact data as appropriate. More detailed information on the deposits revealed in the test pits can be found in the appendix and on Figures 2–4. Detailed descriptions of the artefacts and ecofacts are set out in Section 4.

Contexts in brackets refer to deposits recorded on site. Cut features are in square brackets; deposits or layers are in curved brackets.

3.2 Overburden and Geological Deposits

The overburden comprised a 0.21–0.23m thick topsoil of dark brown-grey silty sand and a 0.25–0.40m thick subsoil of mid grey-brown silty sand. In addition, possible buried soil layers were encountered in Trenches 13 and 15; they were 0.24–0.52m thick.

The underlying geological stratum consisted of mid grey-orange silty sand, with outcrops of sandy gravel revealed in Trenches 11 and 16.

3.3 Late Iron Age / Early Roman Remains

Probable ditch features [2305] and [2504] were identified in Trenches 13 and 15 respectively. They appeared to form part of the same feature on a NE-SW alignment (Figure 2), although their differing profiles may suggest otherwise.

Ditch [2305] had a V-shaped and gradually sloping profile with a concave base; it was at least 1.25m wide by 0.75m deep (Figure 2: Section 4; Figure 4: Images 5 and 6). Ditch [2504] had a near vertical western side and was at least 1.15m wide; the excavation of it ceased at a depth of 0.43m due to restricted space within the test pit (Figure 2: Section 7; Figure 4: Images 7 and 8).

Ditch [2305] contained an initial deposit (2306) that derived from the weathering of its eastern site; whereas primary fill (2505) of the ditch [2504] had accumulated from its western side. Both ditch segments were later infilled by fairly similar main deposits of mid brown-grey sandy silt (2307 and 2506). Both ditch segments are dated from sherds of late Iron Age/Early Roman pottery found in the primary and secondary fills.

Both ditch segments were sealed by layers (2303) and (2503). These may represent a buried soil, although the gradual profile of ditch [2305] in Trench 13 may suggest that the layer in fact formed the uppermost fill of the ditch. Both layers (2303) and (2503) contained sherds of late Iron Age/early Roman pottery.

3.4 Undated Grave

Part of an inhumation burial [2204] was revealed in the southern corner of Trench 12. The feature was likely sub-oval in plan and was 0.7m+ long by 0.45m+ wide; it had a steep-sided profile that was in excess of 0.23m deep (Figure 2: Section 2; Figure 3: Images 3 and 4).

The skeleton (2205) was likely NE-SW orientated with the head towards the NE. Only the remains disturbed by the excavation machine were removed and this included skull, long bone and rib fragments. The remainder of the skeleton was securely covered and left *in-situ*. The grave was filled by mid orange-grey deposit (2206) followed by a thin layer of possible capping (2207). Neither of deposits produced dating evidence.

3.5 Modern Pit

Sub-circular pit [2105] was recorded in the southern corner of Trench 11. It had a vertical-sided profile and was in excess of 0.4m long by at least 0.44m deep and was cut through the subsoil (Figure 2: Section 1; Figure 3: Image 1). Its mixed backfill produced a piece of ceramic building material (16g).

3.6 Tree Throw

Tree throw [2604] was identified in Trench 6 (Figure 2: Section 8) and produced no dating evidence.

4. ARTEFACTS AND ECOFACTS

Seven deposits across four test pits yielded an assemblage comprising pottery, animal bone, human remains and a piece of ceramic roof tile (Table 1). No finds were present in Trenches 14 and 16.

Tr.	Feature	Description	Fill	Date range	Finds summary
11	2105	Pit	2106	Modern	Ceramic roof tile (16g)
12	2204	Burial	2205	Undated	Human bone (310g)
13	2302	Subsoil	-	LIA / ERB	Pottery (15g)
	2303	Layer	-	LIA / ERB	Pottery (24g)
	2305	Ditch	2307	LIA / ERB	Pottery (127g); animal bone (33g)
15	2503	Layer	-	LIA / ERB	Pottery (9g)
	2504	Ditch	2505	Iron Age	Pottery (22g)
	2504	Ditch	2506	LIA / ERB	Pottery (59g); animal bone (26g)

LIA / ERB = late Iron Age / Early Roman

Table 1: Finds summary by test pit and feature

4.1 Ceramics

Nineteen pottery sherds (256g) representing eleven vessels were collected from five deposits. Sherds have a mean weight of 13g and are moderately abraded. The pottery is broadly datable from *c.* 100 BC–AD 100, with the exception of one abraded hand-made Iron Age sherd from ditch [2504], which may be earlier in date. Fabrics contain either grog and/or sand (Table 2), and are generally hard-fired. The only diagnostic form is a wheel-thrown everted rim jar with a neck cordon and light burnishing. A second sherd has a possible shoulder cordon, and a sizeable body sherd, possibly from a storage jar, has vertical combing.

Fabric	Sherd No.	Wt. (g)	Fill / Sherd No.
Coarse sand	1	22	(2505):1
Fine sand	5	85	(2303):4, (2307):1
Coarse grog	2	15	(2506):2
Grog and sand	11	134	(2302):1, (2307):5, (2503):1, (2506):4

Table 2: Pottery type series and quantification

The fill of modern pit [2105] contained an abraded piece of sand-tempered flat roof tile (16g).

4.2 Human Remains

Human remains (310g) collected from grave [2204] comprise miscellaneous rib and limb bone fragments, part of a left scapula, a mandible fragment and part of the cranium, represented by the occipital, parietals, temporals and possibly part of the frontal. The lamboidal suture is not fully fused, suggesting the individual had not reached maturity. There is evidence of bone inflammation at the junction of the occipital/parietals.

4.3 Animal Bone

Eight pieces of animal bone (59g) derived from ditches [2305] and [2504]. They comprise a small molar, a scapula fragment and limb bones, the latter including a dog ulna.

4.4 Environmental Sampling

A total of three control samples < 60> to <62> were taken, with two from the fills of ditch segments [2305] and [2504] and one from layer (2303) which overlay the ditch. The three flots contained abundant roots up to 2mm across.

All of the samples contained sparse charred cereal grains, with occasional very small lumps and flecks of charcoal from the ditch fills. The layer contained slightly more abundant charcoal, again comprising very small lumps and flecks.

Small mammal bones were present in all three residues, indicating a degree of disturbance due to burrowing.

All of the residues contained small quantities of pottery and animal bone, along with a variety of other material including burnt stone, burnt clay and burnt bone.

Given the low quantities of the charred remains present, together with the evidence for disturbance, this material has no potential for further analysis.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summary of Results and Significance of the Remains

The test pitting revealed the presence of the late Iron Age/early Roman transitional period remains within the footprint of the proposed community building and car park.

NE-SW aligned linear remains were revealed in Trenches 13 and 15. These may have formed part of the same ditch; however, the fact they had differing profiles may suggest otherwise. Both ditches were sealed by layers of soil beneath the subsoil. The gradual profile of ditch [2305] in Trench 13 may suggest that the layer in fact formed the uppermost fill of the ditch.

The ditch may constitute a boundary that pre-dates the largely 2nd- to 3rd-century Roman activity within the main site to the east. The presence of pottery suggests the features may form part of domestic activity but, given the paucity of any late Iron Age/early Roman features within the previously investigated area, it is possible that the activity focus within the overall site shifted eastwards in the Roman period.

An inhumation burial was revealed in Trench 12 and continued beyond the southern confines of the test pit. The skeleton was probably aligned NE-SW with the head towards the north-east. Deposits within the grave cut produced no dating evidence; however, it seems plausible to suggest the inhumation may be broadly contemporary with, or later than, the late Iron Age/early Roman remains to the east.

The late Iron Age/early Roman remains are of regional significance and have the potential to address research themes relating to a character of transition of settlements and landscapes (their continuity or discontinuity), identified in the regional research frameworks (Medlycott 2011, 31).

A modern pit, cut from the level of the subsoil, Trench 11 is of negligible archaeological significance.

5.2 Impact Assessment

Construction of the community building in the west of site will potentially have a significant impact on the sub-surface archaeological remains depending on the depth of the foundations and services. In the area of the car park preservation *in-situ* of the remains may be achievable, subject to the formation level of the surface of the car park.

Any development impacts on the sub-surface remains can be mitigated by a programme of archaeological investigation, the scope of which would be agreed with the HET, or by designing the building foundations and services or raising the ground level so that remains can be preserved *in-situ*.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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7. APPENDIX: CONTEXT SUMMARIES

Trench: 11

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 2.50 m. **Width:** 1.80 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** 0.57 m. **Max:** 0.6 m.

Co-ordinates: **OS Grid Ref.: TL** *(Easting: 31710: Northing: 68169)*

OS Grid Ref.: TL *(Easting: 31708: Northing: 68167)*

Reason: To assess archaeological potential prior to construction of community building.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
2101	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey silty sand moderate small-medium stones Frequent rooting. Up to 0.22m thick deposit.	☑	☐
2102	Subsoil	Compact mid grey brown silty sand occasional small-medium stones Moderate rooting. Up to 0.4m thick deposit.	☑	☐
2103	Natural	Compact mid orange grey sandy gravel	☐	☐
2104	Natural	Compact mid grey orange silty sand occasional small-medium stones With yellow stains.	☐	☐
2105	Pit	Sub-circular sides: near vertical dimensions: min breadth 0.18m, min depth 0.44m, min length 0.4m Modern feature cut into the subsoil.	☑	☐
2106	Backfill	Compact mid orange grey silty sand occasional small-large stones And clay inclusions.	☑	☑

Trench: 12

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 2.50 m. **Width:** 1.80 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** 0.47 m. **Max:** 0.49 m.

Co-ordinates: **OS Grid Ref.: TL** *(Easting: 31709: Northing: 68158)*

OS Grid Ref.: TL *(Easting: 31707: Northing: 68157)*

Reason: To assess archaeological potential prior to construction of community building.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
2201	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey silty sand moderate small-medium stones And frequent rooting. Up to 0.21m thick deposit.	☑	☐
2202	Subsoil	Compact mid grey brown silty sand occasional small-medium stones And moderate rooting. Up to 0.33m thick deposit.	☑	☐
2203	Natural	Compact mid grey orange silty sand occasional small-medium stones With yellow stains.	☐	☐
2204	Grave	Sub-oval NE-SW sides: steep dimensions: min breadth 0.45m, min depth 0.23m, min length 0.7m Located in the southern corner of Test Pit.	☐	☐
2205	Human skeleton	Likely NE-SW orientated skeleton. Only the skull and some long bone and rib fragments lifted as disturbed during machining. The remainder of the skeleton left in-situ.	☐	☑
2206	Backfill	Compact mid orange grey clay sand occasional small-medium stones And moderately rooted. At least 0.2m thick deposit.	☐	☐
2207	Backfill	Firm mid grey yellow silty clay Up to 0.03m thick deposit of upper backfill / capping.	☐	☐

Trench: 13

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 2.50 m. **Width:** 1.80 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** 0.93 m. **Max:** 0.99 m.

Co-ordinates: **OS Grid Ref.: TL** *(Easting: 31717: Northing: 68155)*

OS Grid Ref.: TL *(Easting: 31715: Northing: 68153)*

Reason: To assess archaeological potential prior to construction of community building.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
2301	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey silty sand moderate small-medium stones And frequent rooting. Up to 0.23m thick deposit.	☑	☐
2302	Subsoil	Compact mid grey brown silty sand occasional small-medium stones And moderate rooting. Up to 0.28m thick deposit.	☑	☑
2303	Layer	Compact dark brown grey sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-large stones And moderate rooting. Up to 0.52m thick deposit.	☑	☑
2304	Natural	Compact mid grey orange silty sand occasional small-medium stones With yellow stains.	☐	☐
2305	Ditch	Linear NE-SW sides: V-shaped base: concave dimensions: min breadth 1.25m, max depth 0.75m, min length 1.3m It was sealed by layer (2303).	☑	☐
2306	Primary fill	Friable mid yellow grey sandy silt moderate small-medium stones And moderate rooting. Up to 0.15m thick deposit of weathering from the east.	☑	☐
2307	Upper fill	Compact mid brown grey sandy silt occasional small-large stones Up to 0.73m thick deposit.	☑	☑

Trench: 14

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 2.50 m. **Width:** 1.80 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** 0.53 m. **Max:** 0.55 m.

Co-ordinates: **OS Grid Ref.: TL** *(Easting: 31718: Northing: 68146)*

OS Grid Ref.: TL *(Easting: 31716: Northing: 68144)*

Reason: To assess archaeological potential prior to construction of community building.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
2401	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey silty sand moderate small-medium stones And frequent rooting. Up to 0.22m thick deposit.	☑	☐
2402	Subsoil	Compact mid grey brown silty sand occasional small-medium stones And moderate rooting. Up to 0.33m thick deposit.	☑	☐
2403	Natural	Compact mid grey orange silty sand occasional small-medium stones With yellow stains.	☐	☐

Trench: 15

Max Dimensions: **Length:** 2.50 m. **Width:** 1.80 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** 0.63 m. **Max:** 0.7 m.

Co-ordinates: **OS Grid Ref.: TL** *(Easting: 31724: Northing: 68165)*

OS Grid Ref.: TL *(Easting: 31722: Northing: 68163)*

Reason: To assess archaeological potential prior to construction of car park.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
2501	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey silty sand moderate small-medium stones And frequent rooting. Up to 0.23m thick deposit.	☑	☐
2502	Subsoil	Compact mid grey brown silty sand occasional small-medium stones And moderate rooting. Up to 0.25m thick deposit.	☑	☐
2503	Layer	Compact mid grey brown silty sand occasional small-medium stones Up to 0.24m thick deposit that sealed ditch [2504].	☑	☑
2504	Ditch	Linear NE-SW sides: near vertical dimensions: min breadth 1.15m, min depth 0.43m, min length 1.8m Feature not bottomed.	☑	☐
2505	Primary fill	Compact mid orange grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones With yellow sand lenses, rooted. At least 0.43m thick deposit of slumping / weathering from the west.	☑	☑
2506	Upper fill	Compact mid brown grey sandy silt occasional small-large stones At least 0.43m thick deposit.	☑	☑
2507	Natural	Compact mid grey orange silty sand occasional small-medium stones	☐	☐

Trench: 16

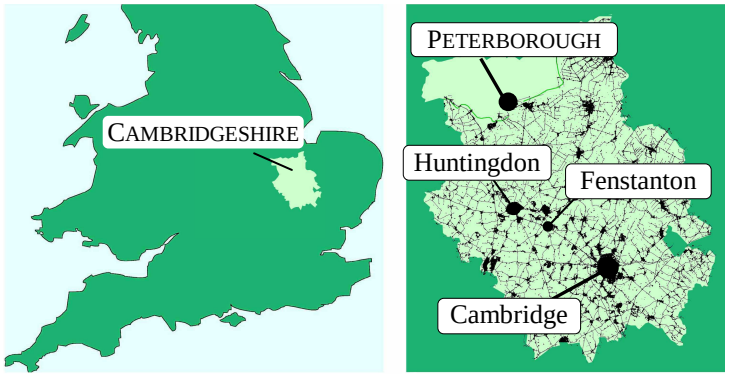
Max Dimensions: **Length:** 2.50 m. **Width:** 1.80 m. **Depth to Archaeology Min:** 0.45 m. **Max:** 0.51 m.

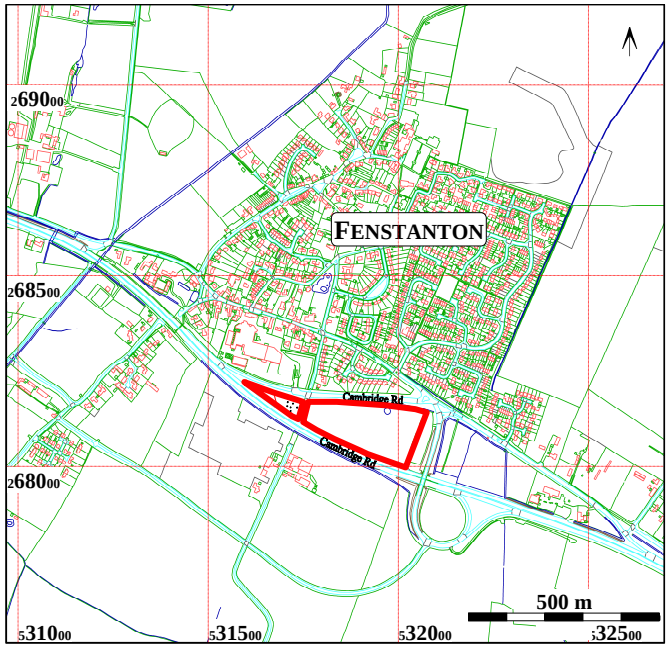
Co-ordinates: **OS Grid Ref.: TL** *(Easting: 31735: Northing: 68154)*

OS Grid Ref.: TL *(Easting: 31733: Northing: 68153)*

Reason: To assess archaeological potential prior to construction of car park.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
2601	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey silty sand moderate small-medium stones And frequent rooting. Up to 0.21m thick deposit.	☑	☐
2602	Subsoil	Compact mid grey brown silty sand occasional small-medium stones And moderate rooting. Up to 0.3m thick deposit.	☑	☐
2603	Natural	Compact mid grey orange silty sand With outcrops of sandy gravel.	☐	☐
2604	Treethrow	Irregular dimensions: max breadth 0.75m, min depth 0.11m, min length 0.8m	☐	☐
2605	Fill	Compact mid orange grey sandy silt	☐	☐





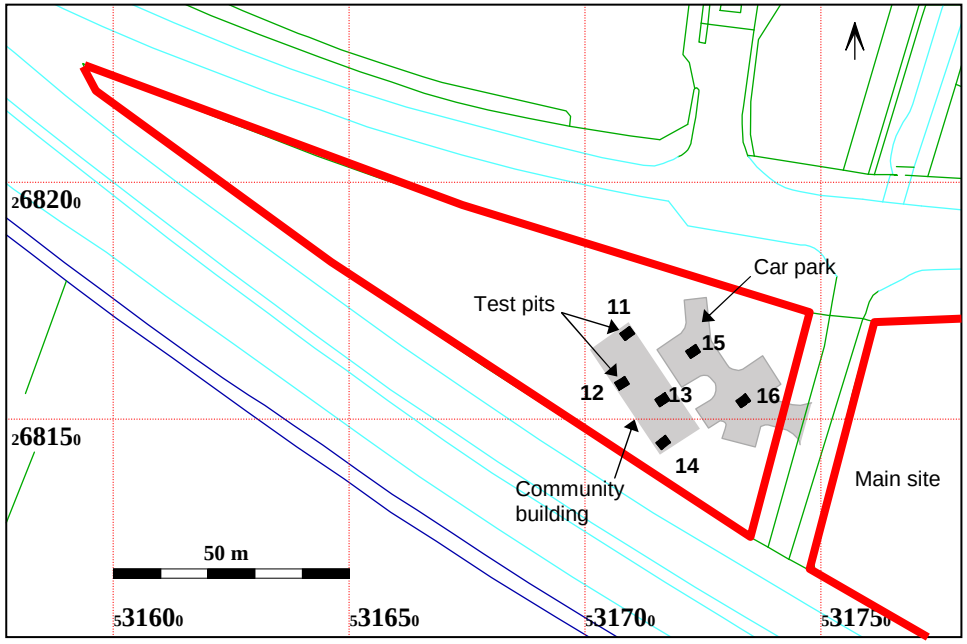


Figure 1: Site location

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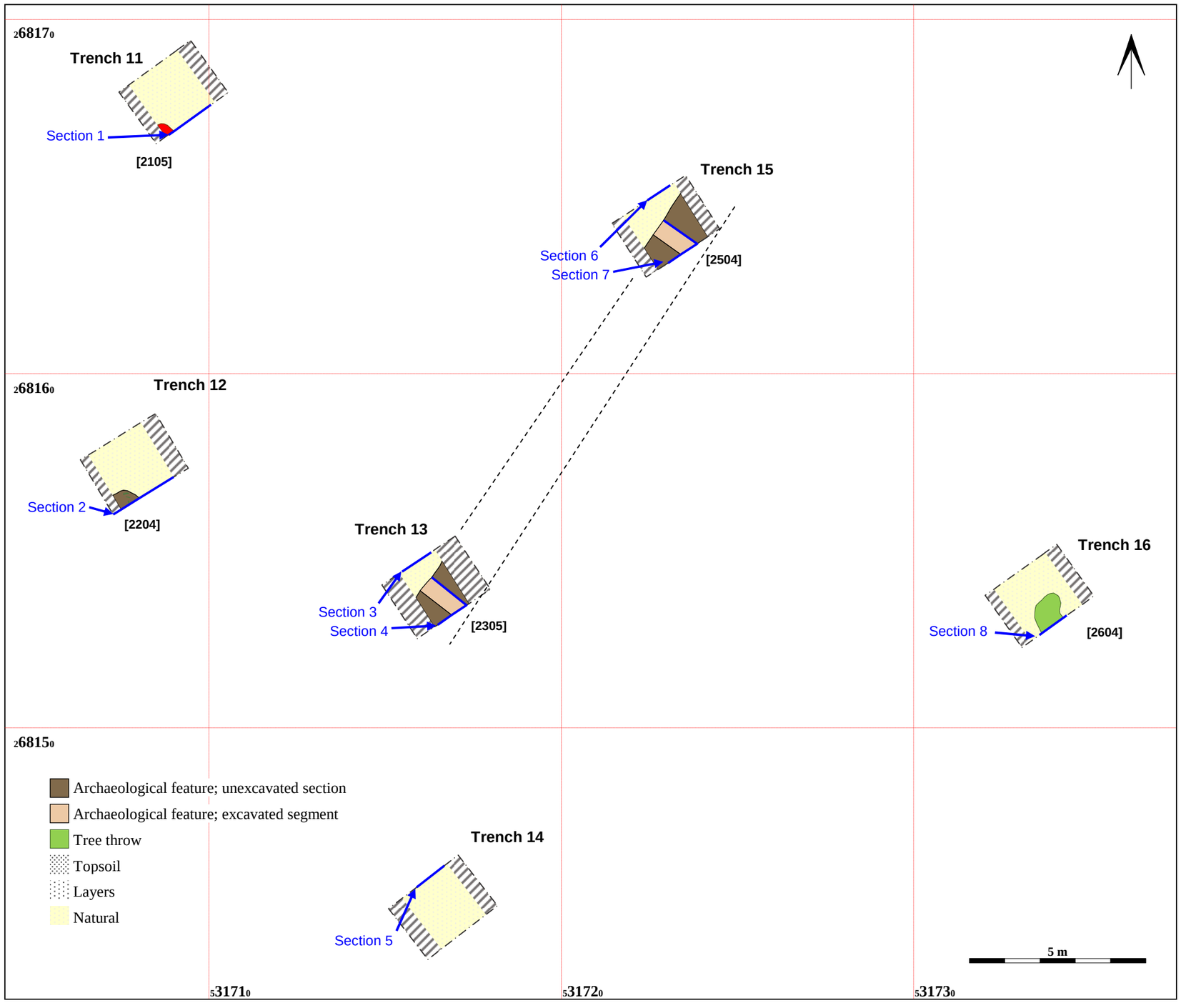

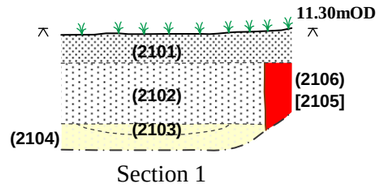

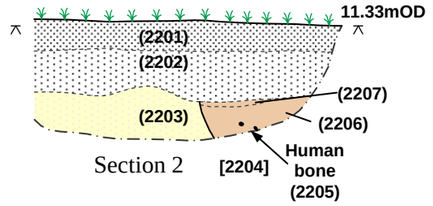

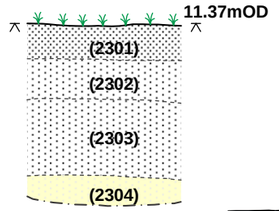

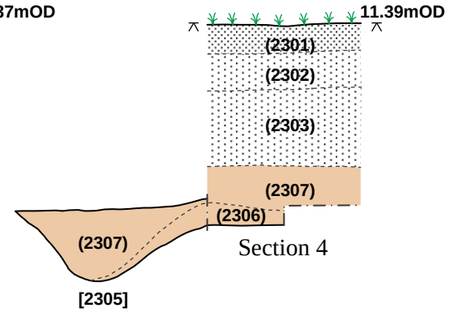

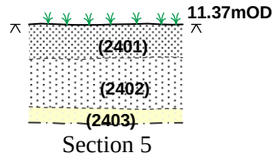

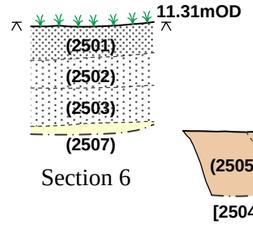

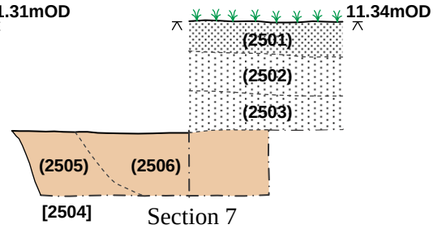

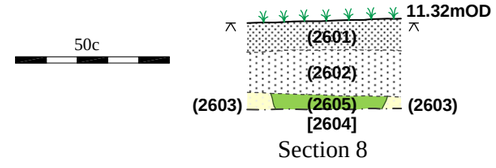

Figure 2: All-features plan

Image 1: Modern pit [2105], looking SE.
Scale 1m

Image 2: Pre-excavation view of Trench 13, looking NW.
Scale 1m

Image 3: Grave [2204], looking SE.
Scale 1m

Image 4: Close-up view of grave [2204], looking SE.
Scale 1m

Figure 3: Selected images

Image 5: Ditch [2305], looking SE.
Scale 1m

Image 6: Ditch [2305], looking NE.
Scale 1m

Image 7: Ditch [2504], looking SE.
Scale 1m

Image 8: Ditch [2504], looking NE.
Scale 1m

Figure 4: Selected images

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