

**LAND BETWEEN 33 & 43 HIGH STREET  
LONDON COLNEY  
HERTFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH  
EVALUATION**

**Albion**  
archaeology



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LONDON COLNEY  
HERTFORDSHIRE**

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EVALUATION**

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Compiled by	Edited by	Approved by
Marcin Koziminski	Robert Wardill	Drew Shotliff

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Ricketts Property Management



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Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: Trial trenching results

*The figures are bound at the rear 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.*

## **Acknowledgements**

*The project was commissioned by Ricketts Property Management and was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Simon West, Acting District Archaeologist (ADA) of St Albans District Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Marcin Koziminski (Archaeological Supervisor) assisted by Allan King and Marcin Synus (Assistant Supervisors). This report has been prepared by Marcin Koziminski and Jackie Wells (Artefacts Officer) with illustrations by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). All Albion Archaeology projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).*

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## **Version History**

<i>Version</i>	<i>Issue date</i>	<i>Reason for re-issue</i>
<i>1.0</i>	<i>04/03/2016</i>	<i>n/a</i>
<i>1.1</i>	<i>09/03/2016</i>	<i>Addition of OASIS summary (Appendix 3)</i>

## **Key Terms**

Throughout this project design the following terms or abbreviations are used:

ADA	Acting District Archaeologist for St Albans District Council
CIfA	Chartered Institute <i>for</i> Archaeologists
EAA	East Anglian Archaeology
HER	Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record
LPA	Local Planning Authority
NHLE	National Heritage List of England
PDA	Proposed development area
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



### **Non-Technical Summary**

*Planning permission was granted on appeal (APP/B1930/A/14/2220877) for the construction of two two-bedroom, semi-detached cottages at land between 33 & 43 High Street, London Colney, Hertfordshire.*

*As the development site lies in the historic core of London Colney, a condition (no. 14) was placed on the planning permission requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. The first stage of this work comprised trial trench evaluation.*

*The evaluation was undertaken on 22nd February 2016 and took the form of a 12.5m-long by 1.6m-wide trench that was excavated across the footprint of the proposed dwellings.*

*The trial trenching revealed part of a ditch and four postholes along with some modern disturbance.*

*The ditch and the postholes found within the trench are likely to be associated with yard activities, possibly relating to dwellings fronting the High Street. The ditch may date to the late medieval to post-medieval period; the postholes are likely to be more modern.*

*The features are unlikely to represent structures or activities of significance. They are of limited, local archaeological interest and have no potential to address regional research frameworks.*



## 1 INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 *Planning Background*

Planning permission was granted on appeal (APP/B1930/A/14/2220877) for the construction of two two-bedroom, semi-detached cottages at land between 33 & 43 High Street, London Colney, Hertfordshire.

As the development site lies in the historic core of London Colney, a condition (no. 14) was placed on the planning permission requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. This was in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012).

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the work required to address the archaeological condition. A written scheme of investigation (Albion Archaeology 2016) detailed the methods and procedures employed to complete the first stage of the work, an archaeological field evaluation. It was approved by the Acting District Archaeologist for St Albans District Council (ADA) prior to commencement of fieldwork.

### 1.2 *Site Location, Topography and Geology*

London Colney lies to the south of St Albans and immediately north of the M25 motorway. The historic core of the village and the Conservation Area straddle the River Colne which flows along the southern edge of the modern settlement.

The proposed development area (PDA) lies a short distance to the north of the river at the southern end of the High Street (Figure 1). At the time of the evaluation it comprised a plot of land which was not built upon with the exception of a garage at the rear. The PDA lies between a Grade II listed pair of cottages (Nos 31 and 33) and a row of Victorian cottages, of which No. 43 forms the end building.

The land rises from the River Colne in the south. The High Street lies on a gentle north-south slope with the PDA located at *c.* 69–70m OD. The underlying geology is sand and gravel river terrace deposits over ‘Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation And Seaford Chalk Formation (undifferentiated) – Chalk’ bedrock (British Geological Survey 2016).

### 1.3 *Archaeological and Historical Background*

The site lies within the historic core of London Colney at the northern edge of the Conservation Area. The settlement of London Colney developed at the point where the main London to St Albans road crosses a ford in the River Colne. This is an area of archaeological interest but, mainly due to a lack of archaeological investigations within the area, there are no known sites or findspots pre-dating the medieval period.

The first historical references to a settlement at London Colney date from charters from the 8th century AD and “Colneye” is again mentioned in a charter of 1335 (St Albans City & District Council 2010).



London Colney was a convenient stop for coaches on the main road to and from London and many inns were located along the High Street and in Barnet Road. In 1774 a bridge was built across the river and the population grew steadily from 1800 to 1900. Most of the cottages along the High Street date to this period; a small number of earlier buildings, all statutorily listed, date to the late 17th and 18th centuries (ibid.). It is possible that prior to those houses parts of the southern High Street were lined with earlier, medieval buildings.

Cottages Nos 31 and 33, adjacent to the development area, are Grade II listed (NHLE 1174691) and have a timber frame dating to the 17th–18th century with later 19th-century brick casing. The first edition OS map from the 1880s shows a series of structures along the street frontage of the PDA. It is possible that those buildings were of a similar date to Nos 31 and 33, or earlier, but they were demolished between the 1940s and 1960s.

The site seems to have been an empty plot since the demolition of the buildings and therefore there was good potential for surviving archaeological remains.

#### **1.4 Project Objectives**

The principal objective of the archaeological evaluation was to determine whether archaeological remains were present within the PDA and, if so, to establish their extent, condition, nature and significance.

The relevant archaeological research frameworks and agenda for the region are provided by *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties* (Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Hertfordshire and Essex) (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000) and *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011).

The revised regional objectives highlight the origins and development of the varied pattern of medieval rural settlement as a subject of research. In particular the ‘high street’ should be a priority for building research and archaeological investigations (Medlycott 2011, 70).

The broader objective of the project was to add to the knowledge and understanding of the origins and nature of settlement in the area and to produce an archive report that fully described the archaeological works.



## 2. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach to the project is summarised below. A full methodology is provided in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2016).

### 2.1 Methodological Standards

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

• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (2nd edn, 2001).
• CIfA	<i>Charter and By-law; Code of conduct</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> (2014)
• EAA	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> (Gurney 2003)
• Historic England	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Project Managers' Guide</i> (2015)
	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation, 2nd edition</i> (2015)

The project archive will be deposited at Verulamium Museum (accession no.: HLC16). Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-241385) in accordance with the guidelines issued by Historic England and the Archaeology Data Service. A copy of the final report will also be lodged with the Hertfordshire HER (enquiry no.: 260/15).

### 2.2 Archaeological Investigation

The evaluation was undertaken on 22nd February 2016 and took the form of a 12.5m-long by 1.6m-wide trench that was excavated across the footprint of the proposed dwellings.

The trench was opened by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged 'ditching' bucket and operated by an experienced driver under the supervision of an archaeologist. Any potential archaeological features were investigated by hand and recorded by experienced staff, using Albion Archaeology's *pro forma* sheets. The trench was subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate. The site was inspected by the ADA on 22nd February 2016.





## 3. RESULTS

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### 3.1 Introduction

All deposits and features revealed within the trench are described chronologically below and shown on Figure 2. Context numbers in square brackets refer to the cuts [\*\*\*] and round brackets to fills or layers (\*\*\*). All features were cut into the subsoil. The artefacts recovered from the features are described within this section.

Detailed technical information on all deposits and features is provided in the Appendix 1.

### 3.2 Overburden and Undisturbed Geology

Deposits of overburden are described in stratigraphical order from top to bottom:

- Topsoil (100) comprised garden soil, mixed with landscaping material;
- External surface (101) of loose silty gravelly rubble;
- Subsoil (102) comprised firm silty clay.

The undisturbed geological stratum was homogenous across the trench and consisted of firm yellow-brown silty clay.

### 3.3 Late Medieval / Post-medieval (1400-1750) Feature

Part of a NW-SE aligned linear ditch [112] was encountered across the SW end of the trench. It was filled with grey-brown silty clay (113) that was derived from natural weathering and produced three abraded fragments of flat ceramic roof tile (351g), broadly datable to the late medieval to post-medieval period. The ditch was truncated by two postholes [110] and [114] and was the earliest feature revealed within the trench.

### 3.4 Modern Remains

Three modern features were revealed during the evaluation works.

An E-W aligned service trench [104], backfilled with deposit (105), contained a metal pipe. The service trench was truncated in plan by two medium-sized pits [106] and [108] that were not excavated due to their very recent date.

Undiagnostic artefacts in the form a brick fragment (79g) and a worn ceramic floor tile (167g) were collected from the surface of pit [108].

### 3.5 Undated Features

Four postholes [110], [114], [116] and [118] produced no artefactual evidence, although postholes [110] and [114] are stratigraphically later than ditch [112] (see Section 3.3 above). They were all filled with a similar mid to dark brown-grey clay silt deposit, suggesting that they are contemporary in date. Their layout within the trench appears random, i.e. they do not appear to be part of a building, fence line etc.



## 4. CONCLUSIONS

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### 4.1 *Summary*

The trial trenching revealed a small quantity of archaeological features, the earliest of which may date to the late-medieval to post-medieval period.

The NW-SE aligned ditch was the stratigraphically earliest feature revealed during the evaluation works. The ditch appears to match the alignment of the High Street which suggests it may have formed part of a property boundary or sub-division. It produced roof tile fragments broadly datable to the late medieval to post-medieval period (1400–1750).

Four undated postholes are all likely to be later in date than the ditch. They possibly represent a reorganisation of the plot in the post-medieval or later period.

No evidence was found for the foundations of the buildings that previously occupied the site and were presumed to have been demolished in the mid-20th century (see Section 1.3). This suggests that the foundations were superficial in nature or that the buildings were located closer to the street frontage.

### 4.2 *Significance*

The ditch and the postholes found within the trench are likely to be associated with yard activities, possibly relating to dwellings fronting the High Street. The ditch may date to the late medieval to post-medieval period; the postholes are likely to be more modern.

The features are unlikely to represent structures or activities of significance. They are of limited, local archaeological interest and have no potential to address regional research frameworks.



## 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Albion Archaeology, 2016, *Land between 33 & 43 High Street, London Colney, Hertfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation*. Document 2016/29, version. 1.1
- Brown, N. and Glazebrook J. (eds), 2000, *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 8
- DCLG, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*
- Glazebrook, J. (ed.), 1997, *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 1. resource assessment*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 3
- Medlycott, M. (ed.), 2011, *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a Revised Framework for the Eastern Counties*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24
- St Albans City & District Council, 2010, *Conservation Area Character Statement for London Colney*



## 6. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARY

Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 12.50 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.19 m. Max: 0.24 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 18092; Northing: 3754)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 18086; Northing: 3743)

Reason: To assess archaeological potential prior to construction of two semi-detached cottages.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Topsoil	Friable grey black clay silt moderate small-large CBM, occasional small-medium stones Up to 0.24m thick and at least 4.5m long deposit - primarily in the SW of trench. A combination of garden soil and landscaping material.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	External surface	Loose dark grey brown silty gravel frequent small-large CBM Up to 0.19m thick and at least 9.25m long deposit - primarily in the NE part of trench. Overlain by (100).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Subsoil	Firm mid yellow brown silty clay occasional small-large CBM, occasional small-medium stones Up to 0.15m thick deposit. All features were cut into it.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Natural	Firm mid yellow brown silty clay occasional small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Service Trench	Linear E-W sides: steep base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.34m, max depth 0.12m, min length 2.m Truncated in plan by [106] and [108].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Backfill	Friable mid brown grey clay silt occasional small-medium CBM, occasional small-medium stones It contained a metal pipe (gas?).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
106	Pit	Oval N-S dimensions: max breadth 0.45m, min length 0.75m Truncated in plan by [108] and truncates [104]. Modern in date.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
107	Backfill	Friable mid grey brown clay silt moderate small-medium CBM, moderate small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
108	Pit	Sub-circular dimensions: min breadth 1.05m, min length 1.36m It truncates [104] and [106] in plan. Modern in date.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
109	Backfill	Friable dark grey brown clay silt frequent small-large CBM, frequent small-large stones CBM recovered but not retained.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
110	Posthole	Circular sides: concave base: concave dimensions: max depth 0.05m, max diameter 0.3m It truncates ditch [112].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
111	Fill	Friable mid brown grey clay silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
112	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.7m, max depth 0.36m, min length 1.6m Truncated by [110] and [114].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
113	Fill	Friable mid grey brown silty clay occasional small-medium CBM, occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
114	Posthole	Circular sides: steep base: concave dimensions: max depth 0.35m, max diameter 0.48m It truncates ditch [112].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
115	Fill	Friable mid brown grey clay silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
116	Posthole	Circular sides: concave base: concave dimensions: max depth 0.11m, max diameter 0.37m Cut into heavily rooted area.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
117	Fill	Friable mid brown grey clay silt occasional small-large stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
118	Posthole	Sub-circular sides: steep base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.35m, max depth 0.33m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
119	Fill	Friable dark brown grey clay silt occasional small stones Mottled with mid orange grey patches	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## 7. APPENDIX 2: HER SUMMARY

Site name and address: Land between 33 & 43 High Street, London Colney, Hertfordshire		
County: Hertfordshire		District: St Albans
Village/Town: London Colney		Parish: London Colney
Planning application reference: 5/2014/0349 and APP/B1930/A/14/2220877		
HER Enquiry reference: 260/15		
Client name, address, and tel. no.: Ricketts Property Management, Riverside House, 1-5 High Street, London Colney, Hertfordshire, AL2 1RE, tel. no. 01727 821367/8		
Nature of application: planning permission for the construction of two two-bedroom, semi-detached cottages.		
Present land use: plot of land not built upon with the exception of a garage at the rear		
Size of application area: c. 329m <sup>2</sup>		Size of area investigated: 20m <sup>2</sup>
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 1809 0375		
Site code (if applicable): LC2838		
Site director/Organization: Robert Wardill / Albion Archaeology		
Type of work: Archaeological trial trench evaluation		
Date of work:	Start: 22/02/2016	Finish: 22/02/2016
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum: Verulamium Museum, St Albans		
Related HER Nos: N/A		Periods represented: Late medieval to post-medieval and modern.
Relevant previous summaries/reports: N/A		
Summary of fieldwork results: Trial trenching revealed a ditch broadly dated to the late medieval to post-medieval period; four postholes – undated but stratigraphically later than the ditch; a modern service trench and two modern pits.		
Author of summary: M. Koziminski		Date of summary: 29/02/2016



## 8. APPENDIX 3: OASIS SUMMARY

### OASIS ID: albionar1-241385

#### Project details

Project name	Land between 33 and 34 High Street, London Colney, Hertfordshire
Short description of the project	Planning permission was granted on appeal for the construction of two two-bedroom, semi-detached cottages at land between 33 and 43 High Street, London Colney, Hertfordshire. As the development site lies in the historic core of London Colney, a condition was placed on the planning permission requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. The first stage of this work comprised trial trench evaluation. The evaluation took the form of a trench that was excavated across the footprint of the proposed dwellings. The trial trenching revealed part of a ditch and four postholes along with some modern disturbance. The ditch and the postholes found within the trench are likely to be associated with yard activities, possibly relating to dwellings fronting the High Street. The ditch may date to the late medieval to post-medieval period; the postholes are likely to be more modern. The features are unlikely to represent structures or activities of significance.
Project dates	Start: 22-02-2016 End: 22-02-2016
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	LC2838 - Contracting Unit No. HLC16 - Museum accession ID APP/B1930/A/14/2220877 - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval POSTHOLES Modern
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE ST ALBANS LONDON COLNEY Land between 33 and 34 High Street, London Colney
Postcode	AL2 1RF
Study area	329 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 1808 0375 Point

#### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Albion Archaeology
Project design originator	Albion Archaeology



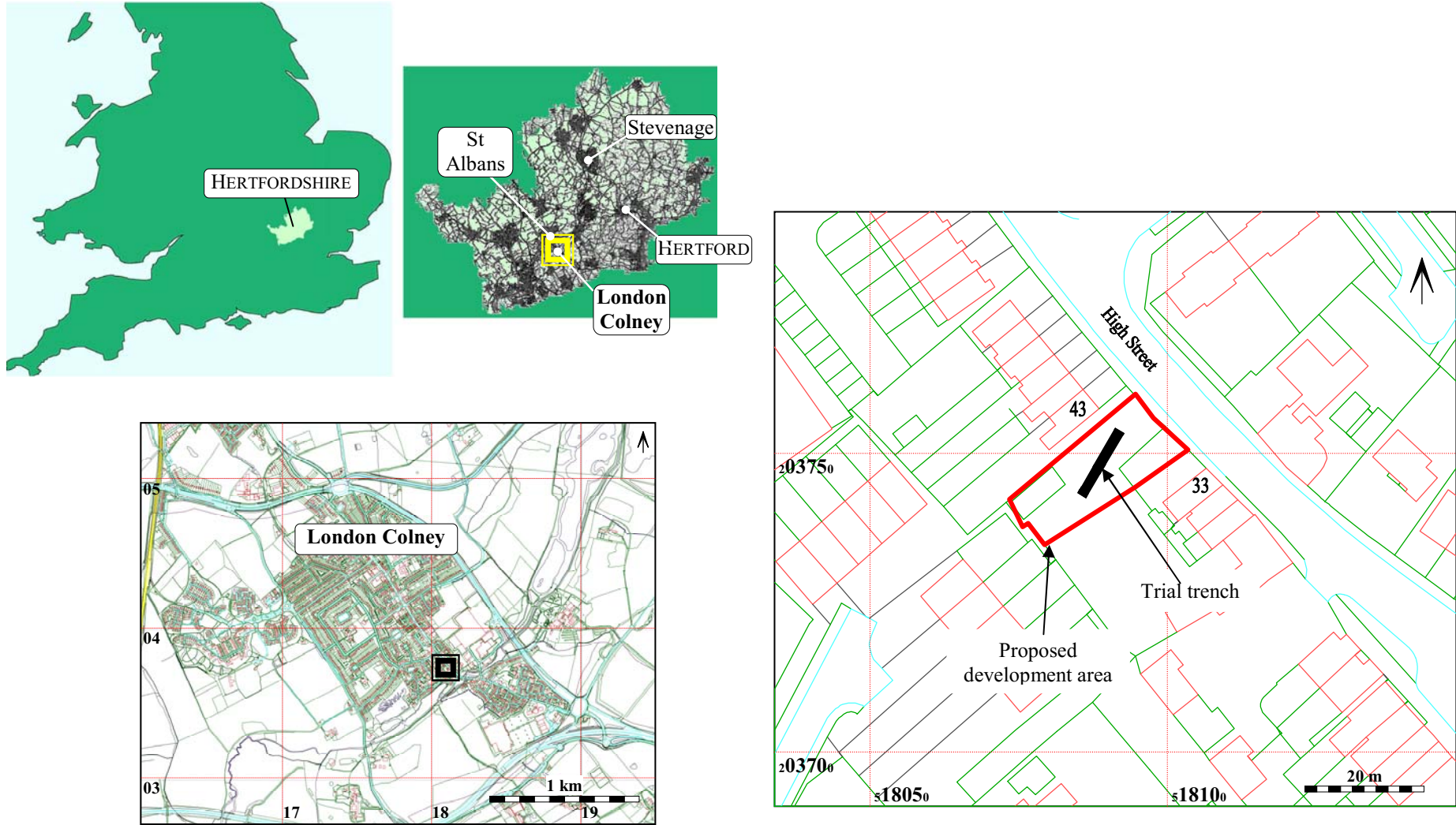
Project director/manager Robert Wardill  
 Project supervisor Marcin Koziminski

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Verulamium Museum  
 Physical Archive ID HLC16  
 Physical Contents "Ceramics"  
 Physical Archive notes Museum and landowner to be consulted on retention  
 Digital Archive recipient Albion Archaeology  
 Digital Contents "Ceramics", "other"  
 Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Text", "Database"  
 Paper Archive recipient Verulamium Museum  
 Paper Archive ID HLC16  
 Paper Contents "other"  
 Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Correspondence", "Drawing", "Microfilm", "Miscellaneous Material", "Photograph", "Report"

### Project bibliography 1

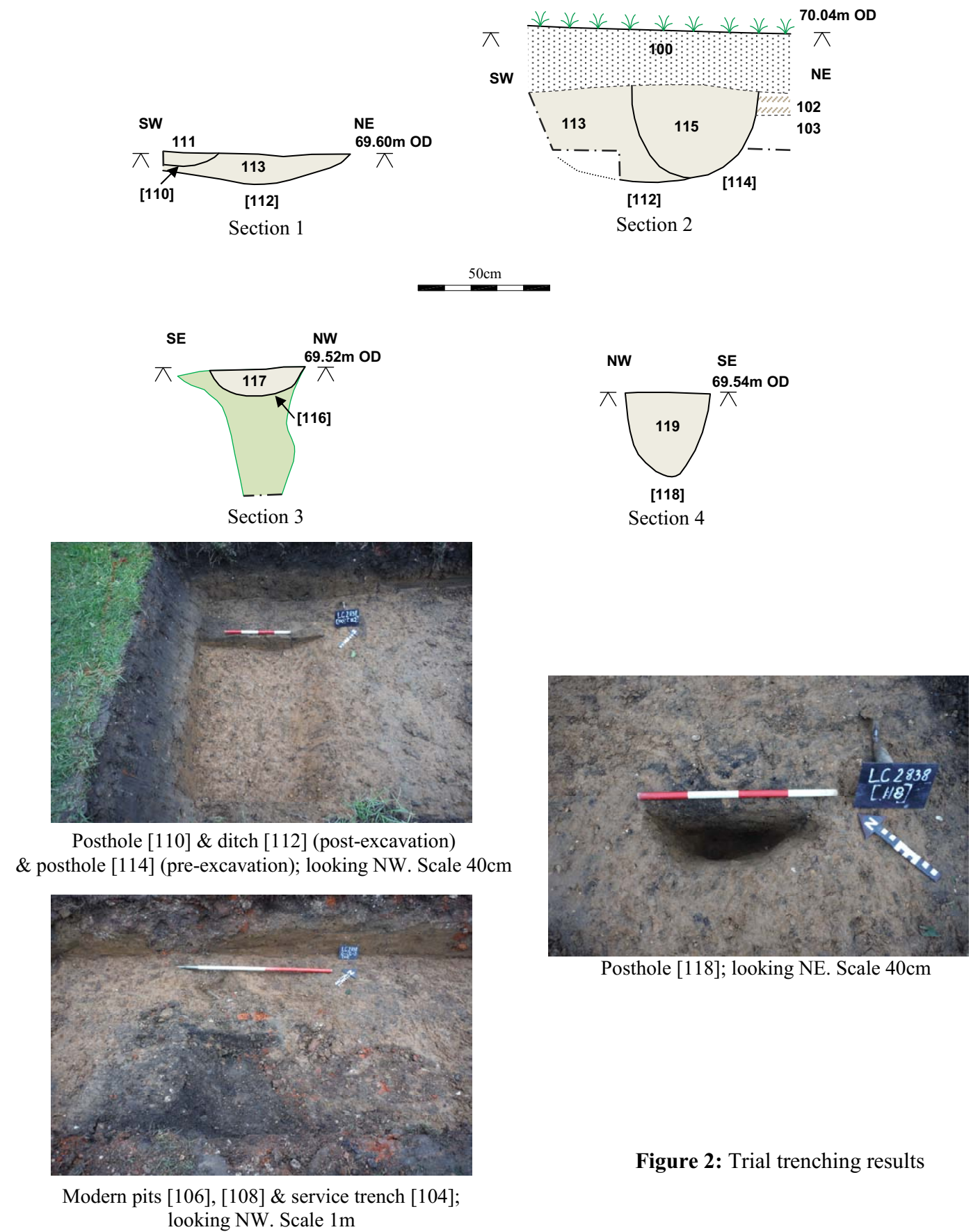
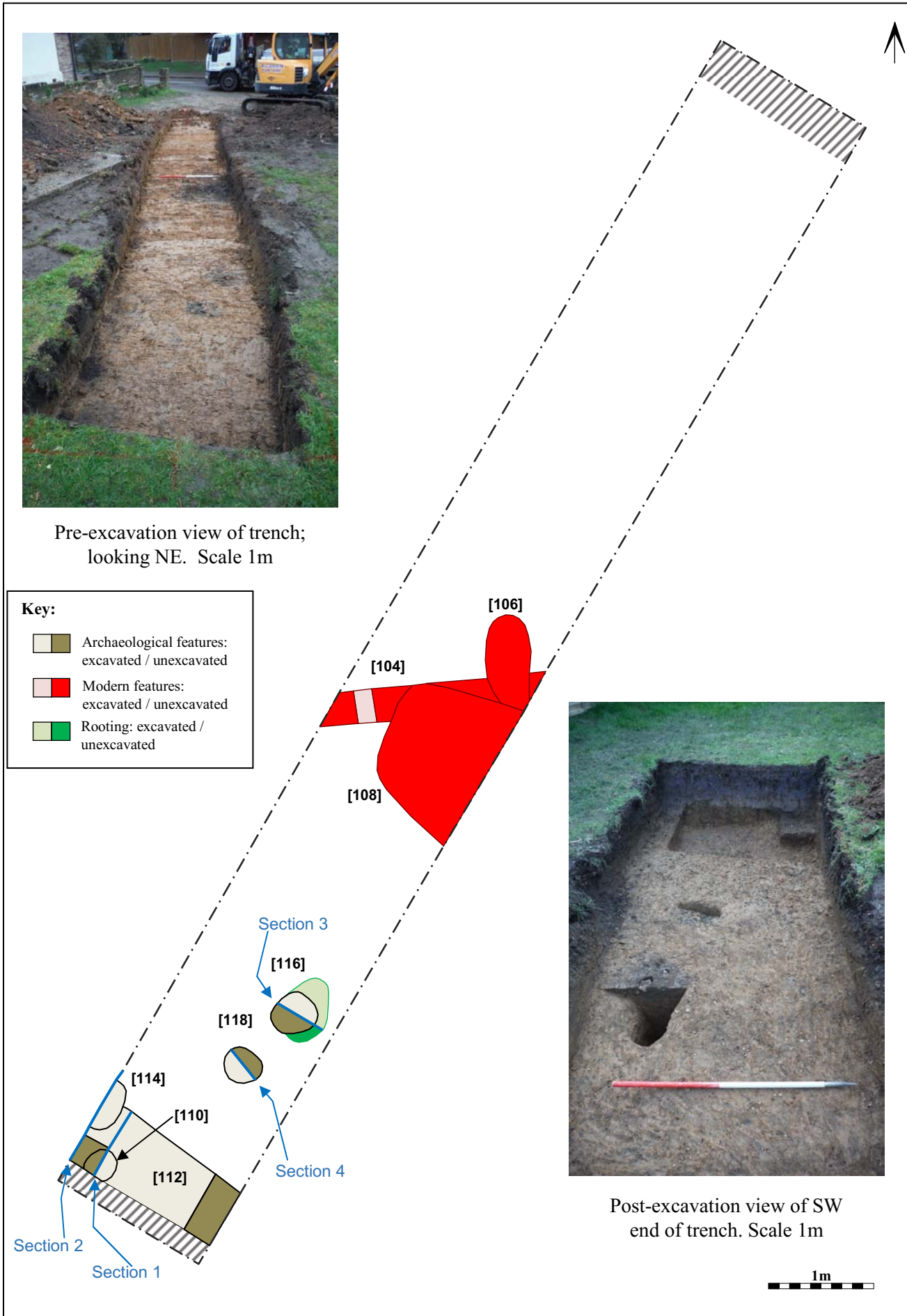
Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)  
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**Figure 1: Site location.**

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**Figure 2:** Trial trenching results

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Bedfordshire

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