

**THE PADDOCK
BELL LANE
COTTON END
EASTCOTTS
BEDFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

Albion
archaeology



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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 brief. 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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Key Terms

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

Albion	Albion Archaeology
BLARS	Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Record Service
CifA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
DA	Development Area
HE	Historic England
HER	Historic Environment Record
HET	Historic Environment Team
LPA	Local Planning Authority
NHLE	National Heritage List for England
OS	Ordnance Survey
<i>Procedures Manual</i>	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork, 2nd edn, 2001</i> Albion Archaeology



Non-Technical Summary

Bedford Borough Council granted planning permission (10/01571/FUL) for the erection of two one-and-a-half storey dwellings on land at The Paddock, Bell Lane, Cotton End. The development includes the construction of a revised access route into the site from Bell Lane in the north-east. The planning permission contains a condition requiring a staged programme of archaeological investigation.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by CHQ Architects Ltd to carry out the first stage of the investigation which comprised an archaeological field evaluation.

The trial trenching took place on 31st May 2016. Three trenches were excavated, measuring 12m by 1.8m which equates to a 4% sample of the 1,340m² site. The trenches were positioned to target the footprint of the new buildings.

Archaeological features and layers of 19th/20th-century date were present in all three trenches. They comprised four ditches, a concrete and a brick foundation, a pit, a post hole, and a layer, all of which contained modern artefacts.

The ditches are interpreted as modern boundary/drainage ditches associated with Cotton End village.

The foundations are interpreted as the remains of the 20th-century glass houses known to have been present on the site from aerial photographs (BBC 2016). The pit, post hole and layer are contemporary with the glass houses and probably associated.

No features, deposits or artefacts of earlier date were present within the trenches.

The 19th/20th-century remains are of limited archaeological interest and have no potential to address regional research frameworks. As a result, the proposed development is very unlikely to have any impact on archaeological heritage assets.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Project Background**

Bedford Borough Council granted planning permission (10/01571/FUL) for the erection of two one-and-a-half storey dwellings on land at The Paddock, Bell Lane, Cotton End. The development includes the construction of a revised access route into the site from Bell Lane in the north-east.

Condition 6 on the planning permission states that: *No development shall take place until an archaeological strategy for evaluation and if necessary a further mitigation strategy based on the outcome of the evaluation, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

The cited reason for the condition is: *To safeguard archaeological assets within the approved development boundary from impacts relating to any groundworks associated with the development scheme and to ensure the proper and timely preservation and/or investigation, recording, reporting and presentation of archaeological assets affected by this development.*

A brief was issued by the Historic Environment Team (HET) for the first stage of the archaeological fieldwork which was to comprise a trial trench evaluation (BBC 2016).

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to prepare a written scheme of investigation (WSI) (Albion 2016), in accordance with the Brief, and to undertake the evaluation.

This report details and discusses the results of the trial trench evaluation.

1.2 **Site Location Topography and Geology**

Cotton End lies in the parish of Eastcotts, *c.* 3 miles from the historic centre of Bedford and the River Great Ouse. The hamlet of Cotton End lies on the eastern side of the A600 and Bell Lane leads eastwards from The Bell public house by the side of road.

The development area (DA) lies at the end of the lane and comprises a piece of pasture bordering residential properties to the north and north-east and further pasture to the south. Its boundaries are lined with mature trees. The 1960s Wood Lane and Manor Way housing development lies to its south-west (Figure 1).

Cotton End lies in the floodplain of the River Great Ouse and its underlying geology is Stewartby member and Weymouth Member (undifferentiated) Mudstone (Oxford Clay) with no superficial deposits recorded (British Geological Survey 2016). The site lies on level ground at *c.* 31m OD.



1.3 Archaeological Background

The history of Cotton End is described in the online ‘Community Archives’¹ by the Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service and a short summary is given here. A search of the Bedford Borough HER was also undertaken in preparation of the WSI.

The hamlet of Cotton End is medieval in origin but there are a number of prehistoric and Roman findspots within the area. A Palaeolithic hand axe (HER 683) was found at an unspecified date between Shortstown and Cotton End. To the north-west of Rookery Farm cropmarks show three clusters of curvilinear and rectangular enclosures, including a so-called ‘banjo enclosure’, which suggests settlement dating to the Iron Age and Roman periods (HER 16659). Further cropmarks lie to the west of the village (HER 1181, 14750) and to the east (HER 15268) (BBC 2016).

Late Iron Age pottery was recovered from Hammer Hill south of Cotton End at an unspecified date (HER 16286) and a silver coin of Cunobelin dating from AD 15–35 was found at Cotton End (HER 281).

A possible Roman road (HER 10480) may have run from Bedford to Ickleford in Hertfordshire closely aligned with the present-day A600. However, the road was identified by the *Viatores* project and many of their roads have since been discredited as they were based on unreliable evidence (Simco 1984). A Roman coin was found at Cotton End Nurseries c. 100m north of the DA (HER 16020).

In 1086 Nigel de Albini held land in Harrowden, which is listed in Domesday Book as having three manors; Albini’s land lay chiefly in Cotes, represented by the modern hamlet of Cotton End (Page 1912), suggesting that the hamlet is medieval or earlier in origin. Cotton End may be a shrunken medieval settlement as plots at Cotton End appear to have been deserted after the medieval period and re-occupied in the later post-medieval period (HER 17031). Manor Farm to the north of Bell Lane includes a Grade II* listed farmhouse (NHLE 1114166) and has origins in the late 16th century.

The parish of Cardington was enclosed in 1808 and the enclosure map of the same date shows a number of cottages and farm buildings along the street frontage of what is now the A600. It is likely that the medieval settlement had a similar extent to that shown on this map. Bell Lane and Wood Lane were already in existence in 1808 and it is possible that settlement, or some sort of settlement or ‘backyard’ activity, may have extended along those roads.

Following enclosure of the parish in 1808, Cardington was divided into two civil parishes, Cardington and Eastcotts, with Cotton End falling into Eastcotts.

1

<http://www.bedfordshire.gov.uk/CommunityAndLiving/ArchivesAndRecordOffice/CommunityArchives/CottonEnd/CottonEndIndexOfPages.aspx> [Accessed 4 May 2016]



The extent of the hamlet by the date of the first Ordnance Survey map in 1882 is not much greater than on the 1808 enclosure map but Cotton End had acquired a Baptist church, school and public house. The Grade II listed The Bell public house (NHLE 1114167) dates from the 17th century. The map shows the DA as part of the land of cottages at 8 and 10 Bell Lane (NHLE 1136714), which date from the 18th century and are Grade II listed. In 1882 the OS map shows The Paddock as open ground scattered with a number of small trees.

Much of the current extent of Cotton End is modern. The housing along West Lane dates from the *c.* 1960s while the Hermitage Gardens to the north of Bell Lane was built in the last couple of decades. Aerial photographs show that for much of the latter half of the 20th century, The Paddock was covered by what appear to be glasshouses or poly-tunnels (BBC 2016).

1.4 Project Objectives

Given that development could have a significant impact on any archaeological remains within the DA, and in order to assess that impact and to devise an appropriate mitigation strategy, information on the following was required:

- the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that might be present;
- the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that might be present.



2. METHODOLOGY

A full methodology was provided in the WSI (Albion 2016).

Trial trenching took place on 31st May 2016. Three trenches were excavated, measuring 12m by 1.8m, equating to a 4% sample of the 1,340m² site (Figure 2). The trenches were positioned to target the footprint of the new buildings and were accurately surveyed using real-time kinematic global positioning system (RTK GPS).

The trenches were opened by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under close archaeological supervision. Overburden was removed down to the top of the archaeological deposits or undisturbed geological deposits, whichever was encountered first. The spoil heaps were also scanned for artefact recovery.

Any potential archaeological features were investigated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's pro forma sheets. Each trench was subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate. All deposits were recorded using a unique number sequence, commencing at 100 for Trench 1, 200 for Trench 2 *etc.* Context numbers in square brackets refer to the cuts [***] and round brackets to fills or layers (***)

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

• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (2nd edn, 2001).
• ALGAO (East)	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> (2003)
• Bedford Museum	<i>Procedure for Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedfordshire</i> (Bedford Museum 2010).
• BBC HET	<i>Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Field Evaluation at The Paddock, Bell Lane, Cotton End, Bedfordshire</i> (March 2016)
• CfA	<i>Charter and By-law; Code of conduct</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i> (2014)
• Historic England/ English Heritage	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Project Managers' Guide</i> (updated 2015)
	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation (Second Edition)</i> (2011)



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

Features and deposits found within the trial trenches are described chronologically below and shown in Figures 2 and 3. Any artefacts recovered from features are discussed within the text.

Detailed contextual information on all deposits and features can be found in Appendix 1.

3.2 Overburden and Geological Deposits

The overburden is described from top to bottom. It comprised:

- 0.07–0.14m of dark brown-black clay silt topsoil (100), (200), (300).
- 0.1–0.35m of dark grey-brown clay silt subsoil (101), (201), (301).

The undisturbed geology was light grey-brown clay (103), (203), (303).

3.3 Modern Features and Deposits

Features present in the three trenches comprised four ditches, two building foundations, a pit, a post hole, and a layer. All of the features and the layer contained 19th/20th-century artefacts.

3.3.1 Ditches

Ditches [104], [106] and [304] varied in alignment from NNE-SSW to NW-SE. Ditch [204] turned through 90 degrees within Trench 2.

The ditches were 0.25–0.60m wide. The three ditches that were excavated varied in profile and were only *c.* 0.08m deep. All contained 19th/20th-century artefacts:

- Ditch [104] — several large metal objects and coal fragments;
- Ditch [106] — willow pattern china fragments;
- Ditch [204] — brick fragments and a ceramic type marmalade jar;
- Ditch [304] — willow pattern china and a clay pipe stem fragment.

The ditches are interpreted as modern boundary/drainage ditches associated with Cotton End village.

3.3.2 Foundations

Two shallow foundations, one of concrete, the other of loose brick, were identified in Trenches 2 and 3.

Foundation [306] comprised a vertical-sided, flat-based trench that had been filled with concrete. It was at least 10m long, 0.5m wide and 0.1m thick. Foundation [208] comprised a vertical-sided, flat-based trench that was filled with a single course of un-mortared modern frogged brick. The foundation was *c.* 0.35m wide and 0.07m thick.



Both foundations are interpreted as the remains of the 20th-century glass houses known to have been present on the site from aerial photographs (BBC 2016).

3.3.3 Pit

A small circular pit [308] was present towards the south-east end of Trench 3. It was 0.6m in diameter and contained frequent fragments of modern brick, bottle and window glass. It was not excavated and is interpreted as being contemporary with the glass house foundations.

3.3.4 Post hole

A small circular post hole [206] was present at the NE end of Trench 2. It was 0.40m in diameter and contained fragments of brick and modern window glass. It was not excavated and is interpreted as contemporary with the glass house foundations.

3.3.5 Layer

A dark-coloured layer was present in all three trenches; it was recorded as (102), (202), (302).

The dark brown-black clay-silt layer contained occasional fragments of willow pattern china, brick, roof tile, window glass and coal. The upper part of the layer, particularly in Trenches 2 and 3, contained frequent window glass fragments.

The layer is interpreted as a former backyard deposit contemporary with the glass houses represented by foundations [308] and [206], with the upper part of the layer, which contained frequent window glass fragments, being associated with their demolition. This indicates that the overburden layers (see 3.4 above) represent recent landscaping.

3.4 Modern Pipes and Services

Land drains were present in two of the trenches on a NW-SE alignment.

A modern electrical service was detected by CAT scan within Trench 2 on a NW-SE alignment. The relevant part of the trench was not machine-excavated in order to avoid the live service, with the trench being lengthened to the north-east in order to compensate for the deficit in trenched area.



4. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological features and layers of 19th/20th-century date were present in all three trenches.

The features comprised four ditches, a concrete and a brick foundation, a pit, a post hole, and a layer, all of which contained modern artefacts.

The ditches are interpreted as modern boundary/drainage ditches associated with Cotton End village.

The foundations are interpreted as the remains of the 20th-century glass houses known to have been present on the site from aerial photographs (BBC 2016). The pit, post hole and layer are contemporary with the glass houses and probably associated.

No features, deposits or artefacts of earlier date were present within the trenches.

The 19th/20th-century remains are of limited archaeological interest and have no potential to address regional research frameworks. As a result, the proposed development is very unlikely to have any impact on archaeological heritage assets.



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6. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES

Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 12.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.4 m. Max: 0.42 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 8605; Northing: 45371)

OS Grid Ref.: T1. (Easting: 8613; Northing: 45362)

Reason: Assess archaeological potential

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Topsoil	Firm dark brown black clay silt moderate small stones C. 0.25m thick.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Subsoil	Firm dark brown clay silt moderate small stones C. 0.14m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Layer	Firm dark brown black clay clay C. 0.06-0.09m thick layer containing brick, tile, window glass, bottle glass, coal and willow pattern china fragments.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Natural	Firm light grey brown clay occasional small-medium stones With occasional patches of light brown clay.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Ditch	Linear NNE-SSW sides: near vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.25m, min depth 0.08m Ditch containing large metal artefacts and coal fragments.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Fill	Friable dark orange grey clay silt moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
106	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.6m, min depth 0.08m Ditch containing occasional coal and willow pattern china fragments.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
107	Fill	Firm dark brown grey silty clay moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 11.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.42 m. Max: 0.42 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 8602; Northing: 45361)

OS Grid Ref.: T1. (Easting: 8593; Northing: 45352)

Reason: Assess archaeological potential

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
200	Topsoil	Firm dark brown black clay silt moderate small stones C. 0.16m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
201	Subsoil	Firm dark brown silty clay frequent small stones C. 0.07m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
202	Layer	Firm dark brown black clay C. 0.11m thick layer containing brick, tile, window glass, bottle glass, coal and willow pattern china fragments.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
203	Natural	Firm light grey brown clay occasional small-medium stones With occasional patches of light brown clay.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
204	Ditch	Curving linear dimensions: min breadth 0.6m Unexcavated modern feature containing fragments of brick roof tile, willow pattern china and a complete ceramic type marmalade jar. The ditch turns through 90 degrees within Trench 2 from NW-SE to NE-SW.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
205	Fill	Firm dark brown grey clay silt moderate small stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
206	Posthole	Circular dimensions: min diameter 0.4m Unexcavated modern post hole containing fragments of window glass.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
207	Fill	Friable dark grey clay silt occasional small stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
208	Foundation	Linear NW-SE sides: near vertical base: flat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
209	Brickwork	A single brick course construction of un-mortared modern frogged bricks, forming a foundation 'pad' for construction of an outbuilding. The bricks measured c. 220mm x 100mm x 75mm. The foundation was 0.35m wide and 0.75m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 3

Max Dimensions: Length: 12.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.35 m. Max: 0.5 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 8602; Northing: 45349)

OS Grid Ref.: T1 (Easting: 8611; Northing: 45341)

Reason: Assess archaeological potential

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
300	Topsoil	Firm dark brown black silty clay moderate small stones 0.07m to 0.19m thick.	✓	┘
301	Subsoil	Firm dark brown clay silt moderate small stones C. 0.13m thick.	✓	┘
302	Layer	Firm dark brown black clay silt occasional small stones 0.10cm thick layer containing brick, tile, window glass, bottle glass, coal and willow pattern china fragments.	✓	┘
303	Natural	Firm light grey brown clay occasional small-medium stones With occasional patches of light brown clay.	┘	┘
304	Ditch	Linear E-W sides: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.55m, min depth 0.07m. Shallow modern ditch that only slightly penetrated the geology. It contained occasional fragments of willow pattern china and clay pipe stem.	✓	┘
305	Fill	Firm dark brown grey clay silt moderate small stones	✓	┘
306	Foundation	Linear NW-SE sides: vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.5m, min depth 0.1m 0.10cm thick.	✓	┘
307	Concrete	Cemented dark yellow sandy concrete 0.10cm thick concrete foundation for an outbuilding.	✓	┘
308	Pit	Circular dimensions: min breadth 0.6m Unexcavated modern pit containing brick, bottle glass and window glass fragments.	┘	┘
309	Fill	Firm dark brown grey clay silt	┘	┘

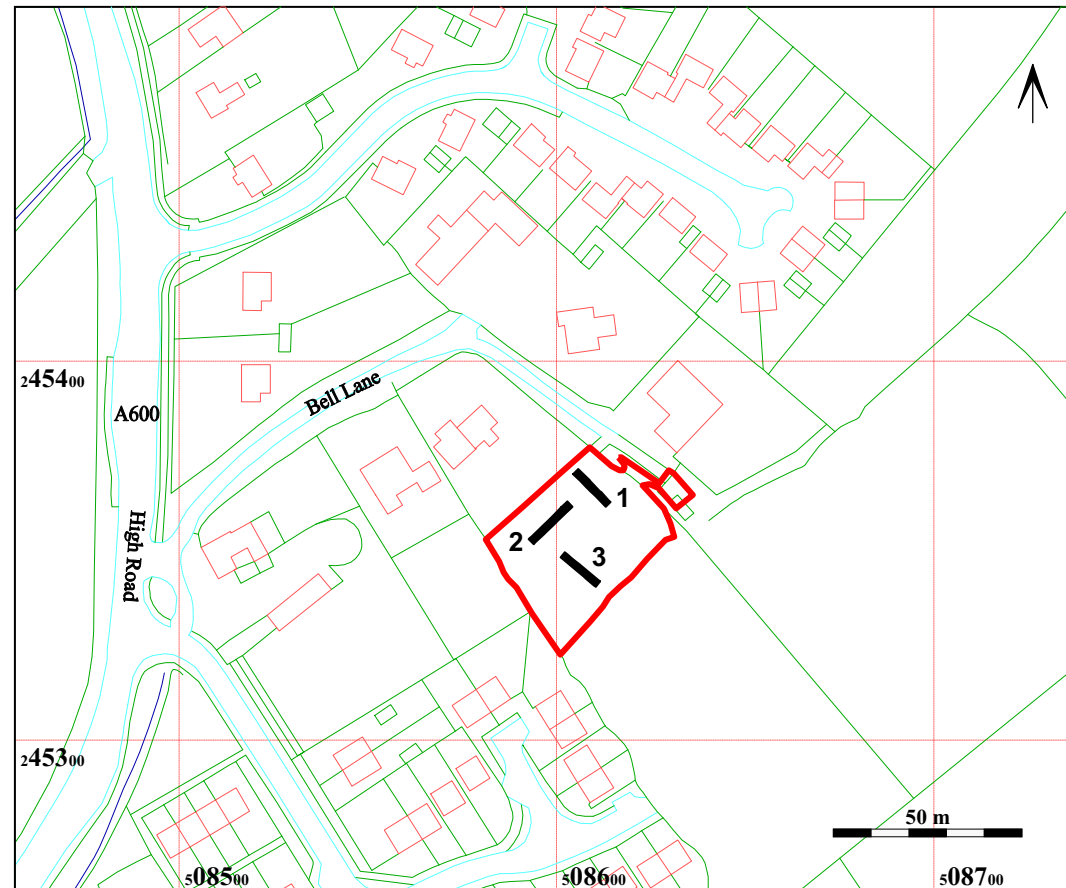
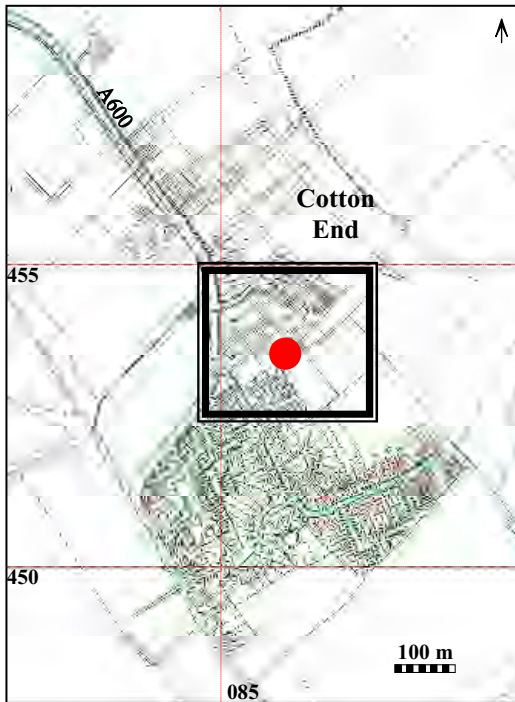
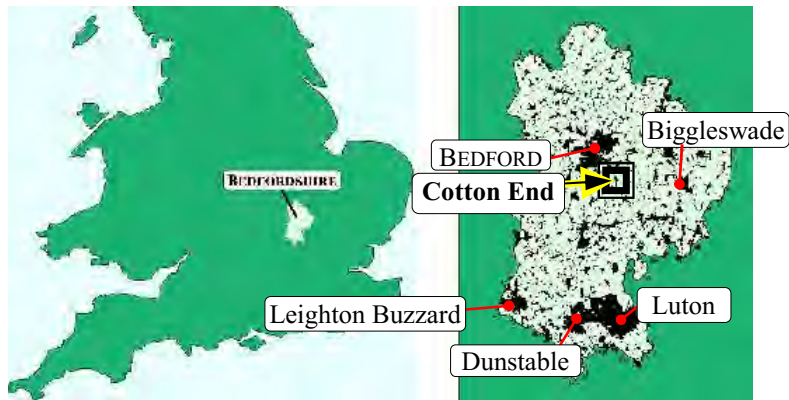


Figure 1: Site location plan

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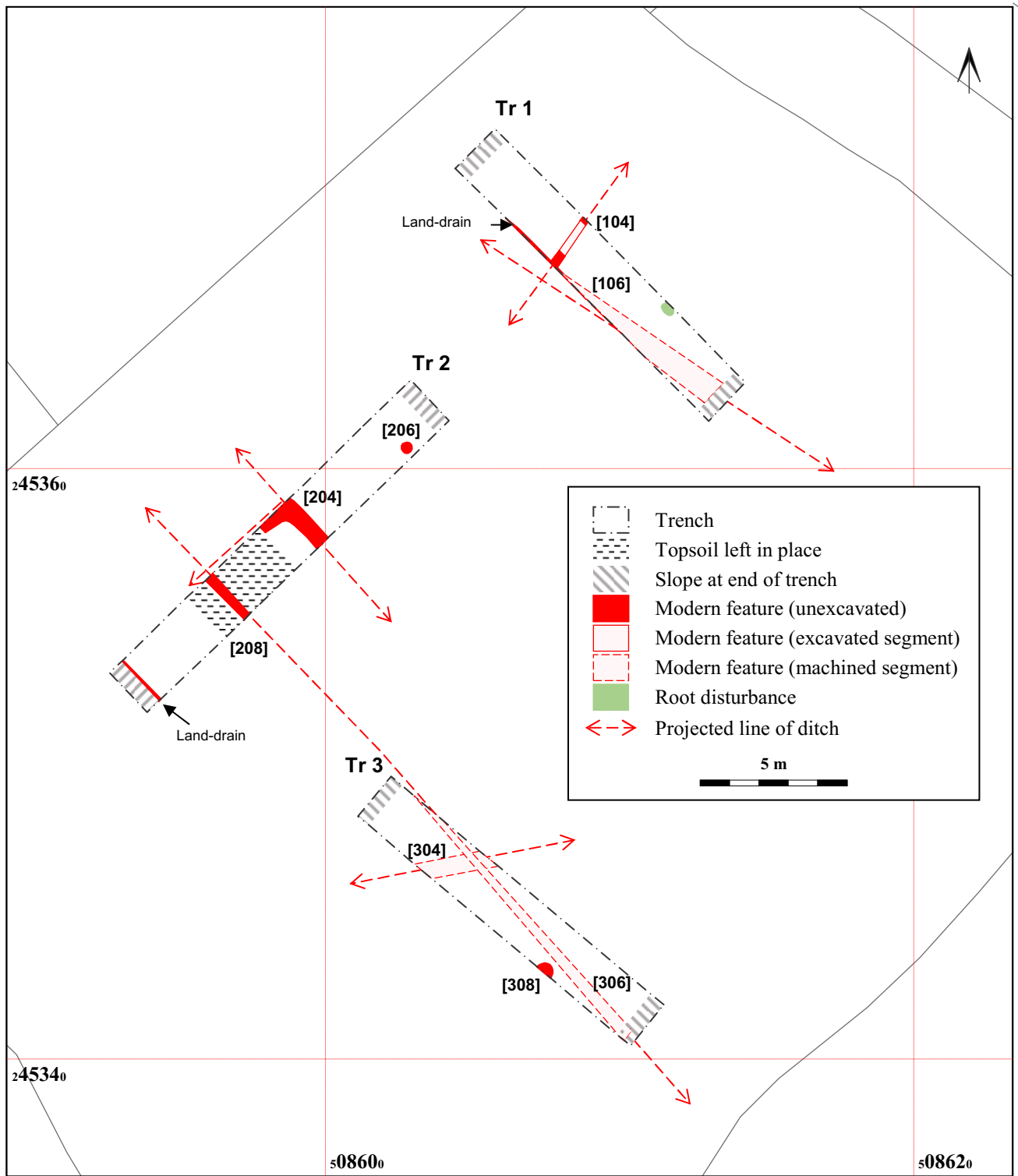


Figure 2: All-features plan

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Tr 1. Ditch [104]. Scale 40cm. Looking south.



Tr 1. Ditch [106]. Scale 40cm. Looking NW.



Tr 3. Ditch [304]. Scale 1m. Looking east.



Tr 2. Ditch [204]. Scale 40cm. Looking NW.



Tr3. Foundation [304]/(305). Scale 40cm. Looking NW



Tr 2. Foundation [208]/(209). Scale 40cm. Looking NW.



Tr 3. Pit [308]. Scale 40cm. Looking South.



Tr 2. Post hole [206]. Scale 40cm. Looking SSE.



Tr 2. Dark layer (202) above geology (203) and post hole [206]. Scale 40cm. Looking SE.

Figure 3: Trenches 1–3 selected photographs

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