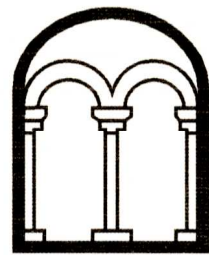


**BLACK MOOR FARM  
NEW ROAD  
MAULDEN  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION, RECORDING,  
ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION**

**Albion**  
archaeology



**BLACK MOOR FARM  
NEW ROAD  
MAULDEN  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

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Mr Mike Heverin



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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 Mr Mike Heverin and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Hannah Firth, Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist. Fieldwork was led by Ian Turner. The field team comprised Hanno Conring, Catie Watts and Heather White (Archaeological Technicians). This report was prepared by Ian Turner with contributions from Joan Lightning (CAD Technician), Jackie Wells (Finds Officer) and Gary Edmondson (Project Manager).

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## Key Terms

The following abbreviations are used throughout this report:

Albion	Albion Archaeology
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
CifA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
DA	Development area
HER	Central Bedfordshire's Historic Environment Record
LPA	Local Planning Authority
NHLE	National Heritage List for England
Procedures Manual	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> , 2nd edn, 2001 Albion Archaeology



## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Planning permission was granted by Central Bedfordshire Council for the erection of a new agricultural storage building at Black Moor Farm, New Road, Maulden, Bedfordshire, MK45 2BG (CB/15/02815/FULL). A heritage statement submitted as part of the planning application concluded that the development area (DA) had the potential to contain Roman archaeological remains, associated with the high-status Roman villa and settlement site at Ruxox Farm, c. 800m to the south-west.*

*As the development could potentially have an impact on below-ground archaeological remains, a condition (no. 2) was attached to the planning consent, requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation, including provision for post-excavation analysis and publication. The Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA) advised that the work should comprise strip, map and record of the building footprint and observation of any services.*

*Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the programme of archaeological works and prepared a written scheme of investigation (WSI) that was approved by the LPA.*

*Black Moor Farm lies 1.3km to the south of Maulden, centred on TL 053976 366881. The surrounding land slopes down to the River Flit, 640m to the south-east and rises to the north towards Maulden. The new agricultural storage building was situated immediately to the north-west of the farmhouse.*

*The strip, map and record investigation took place between 5th and 12th July 2016. The investigation area was c. 600m<sup>2</sup> in extent, targeted on the footprint of the new building. It was machined to a depth below ground level of 0.3–0.4m by a mechanical excavator, after which hand-investigation of the exposed archaeological remains was undertaken.*

*The investigations revealed two groups of ditches on NE-SW and NW-SE alignments. They are interpreted as boundary features, demarcating enclosures of Roman date. They comprised multiple, re-cut, parallel ditches, suggesting that the boundaries were maintained over a considerable period of time. The relatively large quantities of pottery and other artefacts within the ditches suggest that the enclosures were associated with domestic occupation, although no building remains were found within the small investigation area.*

*The remains are of local and regional significance, providing further insight into the extensive area of settlement evidence associated with the high-status Roman site at Ruxox Farm. The site, therefore, makes a useful contribution to regional research objectives relating to the understanding and characterisation of Roman settlement patterns.*

*The data-sets recovered during the investigations have been fully analysed and discussed within this report. The project archive will be deposited with The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford (BEDFM: 2016.38) and this report will be uploaded onto the OASIS website (albionar1-253448).*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 *Project Background*

Planning permission was granted by Central Bedfordshire Council for the erection of a new agricultural storage building at Black Moor Farm, New Road, Maulden, Bedford, MK45 2BG (CB/15/02815/FULL).

A heritage statement submitted as part of the planning application concluded that the development area (DA) lies in an area of moderate to high prehistoric and Roman potential, due to the number of sites and find spots recorded in the Historic Environment Record (HER) in the vicinity of the DA (Albion 2015).

As the development could potentially have an impact on below-ground archaeological remains, a condition (no. 2) was attached to the planning consent, requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation, including provision for post-excavation analysis and publication. The Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA) advised that the work should comprise strip, map and record of the footprint of the new building and observation of any service runs.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the programme of archaeological works and prepared a written scheme of investigation (WSI) in advance of the fieldwork, which was approved by the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

This report details the results of the investigation on the agricultural storage building.

### 1.2 *Site Location and Description*

Maulden is located in the centre of Bedfordshire, 2.7km north-east of Flitwick and 12km south of the county town of Bedford. Black Moor Farm lies 1.3km to the south of Maulden.

Black Moor Farm is on the north side of New Road, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 053976 366881. The surrounding land slopes down to the River Flit, 640m to the south-east and rises to the north towards Maulden. The proposed new agricultural storage building was situated immediately to the north-west of the farmhouse.

At the time of the fieldwork, the DA was a mix of pasture and agricultural land, partly bounded by mature hedges and trees. The underlying geology comprises Woburn Sand Formation Sandstone, overlain by a mixture of superficial deposits comprising clay, silt, sand and gravel (British Geological Survey 2016).

### 1.3 *Archaeological and Historical Background*

The archaeological and historical background of the DA is described in detail in the heritage statement that accompanied the planning application (Albion 2015). A summary of the relevant details is given below. Numbers in



brackets refer to the entry numbers of sites in the Historic Environment Record (HER) on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE).

The DA lies *c.* 800m to the north-east of the high-status Roman villa and settlement site at Ruxox Farm and the scheduled monument of a medieval moated site (NHLE 100780). An extensive area of Roman occupation (HER 918) known from stray finds was investigated during the 1950s and 1960s by the Ruxox Research Group. The results of the investigations were interpreted as an extensive area of Roman occupation, comprising buildings, a possible temple, a villa and a cemetery containing both inhumations and cremations burials.

Between 1990 and 1991, archaeological investigations on the north and south side of New Road, in advance of the Ampthill to Sundon pipeline, uncovered further late Iron Age and Roman settlement and part of a Roman cemetery (Dawson 2004, 17–34).

A large number of Roman artefacts, including coins, knives, brooches, pottery and quern stones, has been recorded through the Portable Antiquities Scheme in fields to the west of the DA (within part of the area defined by HER 918). A single Roman coin (HER 18637) and two late Iron Age coins were also discovered in fields to the north and south-west.

Cropmarks of a series of rectilinear enclosures (HER 578) are located immediately to the east of Black Moor Farm. The cropmarks have not been tested by excavation but their morphology suggests that they are part of a prehistoric or Roman site.

The cropmark of an irregular-shaped mound known as ‘Town Knoll’ (HER 10125) was recorded *c.* 250m to the south-east of the DA. It is marked on the enclosure map but is recorded as medieval in the HER. The word ‘knoll’ refers to a round natural hill or mound and during a walkover survey carried out during preparation of the heritage statement a slight rise in the ground surface corresponding to its location was noted.

Two medieval find spots have been recorded by the PAS in fields to the west of the DA. These comprise a strap fitting (HER 18650) and a possible horse harness decoration (HER18652). These artefacts were probably lost and spread during agricultural works in the surrounding fields.

Post-medieval heritage assets in the vicinity of the DA comprise two onion drying sheds, an old clay extraction pit and a number of 17th-century coins and tokens recorded by the PAS scheme to the south-west of the DA.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The primary aims of the archaeological investigation were to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any archaeological remains within their cultural and environmental setting and to produce a report that fully described the archaeological works and findings, in order to define the value of the archaeological remains.



To achieve the above, the data collected during the fieldwork aimed to determine the following:

1. the date, nature and extent of any activity or occupation within the development site;
2. the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
3. local environmental conditions (through the recovery of palaeo-environmental remains).

#### **1.4.1 Project Research Objectives**

The proposed development had the potential to reveal archaeological remains of prehistoric and Roman date. The Roman villa and temple site at Ruxox Farm lies 500–800m to the south-west and the large number of Roman artefacts found through metal detecting in the fields to the south-west of the DA suggested that some settlement associated with Ruxox (HER 918) extended as far as Black Moor Farm.

Understanding and characterising prehistoric and Roman settlement (including patterns of settlement nucleation and dispersal) are research objectives highlighted in the local research framework for Bedfordshire (Going and Plouviez 2000, 19 and Oake 2007, 11). Understanding landscape development and settlement patterns, the relationship between settlement and enclosure and the ritual codes underlying the later prehistoric and Roman periods (Oake 2007, 12 and Medlycott 2011, 48) are also local and regional archaeological research objectives.

The general objectives of the archaeological investigation were 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;
- recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

The specific objectives of the archaeological investigation were to:

- determine if there was evidence for Roman occupation or further artefacts dating to the Roman period present on the DA;
- establish how far any occupation on the site related to the Roman settlement at Ruxox and/or to other sites within the area in terms of settlement pattern and characterisation.



## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Strip, Map and Record Investigation

The strip, map and record investigation took place between 5th and 12th July 2016. The work comprised the excavation of the rectangular footprint of the new storage building (Figure 1). The area was c. 600m<sup>2</sup> in extent, measuring 31.7m long (maximum) and 19.21m wide. It was machined to a depth below ground level of 0.3–0.4m by a mechanical excavator, fitted with a flat-edged bucket and operated by an experienced driver under close archaeological supervision. The overburden was removed to the formation level for the new building, which corresponded with the top of the archaeological deposits.

Any potential archaeological features were cleaned, sample-excavated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's pro forma sheets. All features and deposits were assigned a unique context number commencing at 100 and subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate.

### 2.2 Methodological Standards

Throughout the project the standards set out in the following documents were adhered to.

• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (2nd ed., 2001).
• Bedford Borough Council	<i>Procedure for Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition with Registered Museums in Bedfordshire. Version 2.8</i> (2010).
• CIfA	<i>Charter and by-law; Code of conduct</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> (2014)
• EAA	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment PPN3: Archaeological Excavation</i> (2015)
• Historic England	Archaeology Guidelines and Standards <sup>1</sup> ;
	<i>The 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 ed.</i> (2011)

<sup>1</sup> Historic England guidelines on a number of specialist fields and materials, including environmental archaeology, are available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/>.



### 3. FIELDWORK RESULTS

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#### 3.1 Introduction

All features and deposits found during the investigation are discussed chronologically below and shown in Figure 2. The assigned contexts are numbered from 100; detailed descriptions are provided in Section 6. The artefacts recovered from the site are referenced within the narrative text and discussed in detail in Section 3.5 below.

#### 3.2 Overburden and Geological Deposits

The overburden comprised topsoil and subsoil:

- Topsoil: *c.* 0.28m-thick layer of dark brown-grey sandy silt (100).
- Subsoil: *c.* 0.14m-thick layer of light grey-orange sandy silt (101).

The undisturbed geological deposit varied from light grey-orange silty sand with manganese staining (102) (to the south-west of the investigation area) to light brown-red silty sand and gravel (103) (to the north-east).

#### 3.3 Roman Ditches and Pit

Two groups of inter-cutting Roman ditches were revealed by the removal of the overburden (Figure 2). They continued beyond the limit of the investigation area.

A group of three parallel inter-cutting ditches<sup>2</sup> lay on a NE-SW alignment. In profile, the ditches had concave sides with flat bases. They were 1.7–1.8m wide and 0.4–0.44m deep. They contained deposits of mid grey silty sand that produced moderate amounts of Roman pottery. A piece of Roman glass and a pipe-clay figurine fragment were also recovered from one of the ditches.

The NE-SW aligned ditches were truncated by a later group of at least seven parallel inter-cutting ditches<sup>3</sup> on a NW-SE alignment. In profile the later ditches ranged from convex sides with a concave base to concave sides with a flat base. They were 0.84–2.3m wide and 0.12–0.55m deep. They contained deposits that varied from mid grey-red silty sand to dark brown-grey sandy silt. They produced moderate to large amounts of Roman pottery and occasional large fragments of roof tile. A copper alloy coin (AD 164–82), a late Roman copper alloy and glass hairpin, and a fragment of pipe-clay figurine were recovered from three of the ditches in this group.

Oval pit [120] truncated ditch [118] on the south-west side of the later group of ditches. It had concave sides with a flat base; it was 2.4m long, 1.9m wide and 0.47m deep. It contained a main deposit of dark orange-grey sandy silt that yielded moderate amounts of Roman pottery. The purpose of the feature

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<sup>2</sup> On Figure 2 the NE-SW aligned ditches are shown in Section 7 as cuts [129], [131], [133] and Section 5 as cut [157].

<sup>3</sup> On Figure 2 the NW-SE aligned ditches are shown in Section 1 as cuts [104], [106], [108], [111], [114], [118]; in Section 3 as cuts [135], [137], [139], [142], [144], [146], [165], [167]; in Section 5 as cuts [159], [161]; and in Section 6 as cuts [148], [150], [152], [154].



is unknown, although it may ultimately have been used for the disposal of domestic rubbish.

### 3.4 Natural Feature

At the base of an excavated section through the NW-SE aligned ditch group a shallow concave feature [123] was investigated (Figure 2, Section 2). It was irregular in plan with an uneven base and is interpreted as a small tree-throw. It produced sherds of Roman pottery, suggesting that it was broadly contemporary with the ditches.

### 3.5 Artefacts

Twenty-five features yielded an assemblage comprising mainly Roman pottery and ceramic building material (Table 1). The date range of most features consistently spans the 1st to 3rd centuries AD.

Feature	Description	Fill	Finds Summary
104	Ditch	105	Pottery (23g)
106	Ditch	107	Pottery (6g)
108	Ditch	109	Pottery (155g); animal bone (20g)
108	Ditch	110	Pottery (60g)
111	Ditch	112	Pottery (160g); hammerscale (0.1g); animal bone (13g)
111	Ditch	113	Pottery (36g)
114	Ditch	115	Pottery (101g); iron object (RA2)
114	Ditch	116	Pottery (284g); hammerscale (0.1g); fuel ash (1g); animal bone (3g)
114	Ditch	117	Pottery (43g); ceramic roof tile (29g)
118	Ditch	119	Pottery (210g); copper alloy hairpin (RA1)
120	Pit	121	Pottery (333g); hammerscale (0.1g)
120	Pit	122	Pottery (12g)
123	Tree-throw	124	Pottery (21g); animal bone (3g)
125	Surface finds	126	Pottery (208g)
127	Surface finds	128	Pottery (1kg); ceramic roof tile (849g); animal bone (5g)
129	Ditch	130	Pottery (45g); vessel glass (1g)
131	Ditch	132	Pottery (64g); pipe-clay figurine (RA6); hammerscale (0.1g); fuel ash (3g)
133	Ditch	134	Pottery (12g)
135	Ditch	136	Pottery (130g); iron object (RA4); animal bone (16g)
137	Ditch	138	Pottery (129g); animal bone (53g)
139	Ditch	140	Pottery (72g)
139	Ditch	141	Pottery (235g); ceramic roof tile & brick (2.4kg); stone object (RA5); pipe-clay figurine (RA7); animal bone (6g)
142	Ditch	143	Pottery (5g); iron nail x1; animal bone (1g)
144	Ditch	145	Pottery (118g)
152	Ditch	153	Pottery (1g); vitrified clay (30g)
154	Ditch	155	Pottery (7g)
157	Ditch	158	Pottery (46g); animal bone (8g)
159	Ditch	160	Pottery (169g)
161	Ditch	162	Pottery (413g)
161	Ditch	163	Pottery (393g); animal bone (62g)
165	Ditch	166	Pottery (247g); copper alloy coin (RA3); iron nail x1; animal bone (16g)
167	Ditch	168	Pottery (20g); animal bone (35g)

**Table 1:** Finds summary by feature

#### 3.5.1 Pottery

A total of 242 sherds (4.8kg), representing approximately 182 vessels was collected. All excavated features contained pottery. The assemblage displays variable fragmentation, with single sherds ranging in weight from 1–133g





(mean sherd weight 20g). Most are abraded, and the surfaces of some sherds are obscured by concretion. Fabric types are identified in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series (Table 2). The range of wares compares well with that recovered from Ruxox Farm (Parminter 2004, 494, table 9.18).

Fabric code	Common name	No. Sherd	Wt (g)	Fill/No. Sherd
<i>Late Iron Age</i>				
F09	Sand and grog	4	381	(119):1, (128):3
<i>Roman</i>				
R01	Samian ware	19	181	(105):1, (109):6, (112):1, (116):1, (119):1 (126):3, (138):2, (141):1, (143):1, (145):2
R05A	Oxidised sandy ware	4	55	(105):1, (112):2, (117):1
R05D	Oxidised sandy ware (white-slipped)	3	50	(136):3
R06A	Nene Valley grey ware	2	19	(132):1, (163):1
R06B	Coarse grey ware	50	675	(107):1, (109):4, (112):6, (113):2, (115):1, (116):1, (119):2, (121):7, (122):2, (126):3, (134):1, (136):2, (138):1, (140):1, (145):2, (155):1, (158):2, (160):2, (163):6, (166):3
R06C	Fine grey ware	39	399	(105):2, (109):1, (112):2, (115):2, (116):2, (119):1, (121):1, (122):1, (124):1, (126):2 (128):1, (136):1, (138):3, (141):1, (153):1 (158):1, (163):6, (166):10
R06F	Grog and sand grey ware	1	13	(128):1
R06I	Black-slipped grey ware	6	140	(112):1, (116):1, (119):1, (121):1, (132):1, (160):1
R07A	Black-burnished ware	3	70	(115):1, (116):2
R07B	Sandy black ware	7	74	(115):1, (124):1, (132):1, (138):1, (141):2 (163):1
R07C	Gritty black ware	1	12	(160):1
R09A	Pink-grogged ware	2	52	(110):2
R10A	Gritty buff ware	3	22	(110):2, (163):1
R10B	Fine buff ware	3	41	(116):1, (126):1, (136):1
R11F	Oxford colour-coat mortaria	1	46	(141):1
R12B	Nene Valley colour coat	14	113	(105):2, (112):3, (115):1, (128):1, (134):1 (141):1, (145):2, (158):1, (163):1, (168):1
R13	Shelly ware	59	1,889	(109):1, (112):1, (115):1, (116):7, (119):3 (121):1, (124):2, (126):1, (128):15, (136):2 (138):3, (141):2, (145):4, (158):1, (162):6 (163):7, (168):2
R14	Red-brown harsh sandy ware	6	218	(112):1, (128):2, (130):1, (166):2
R21	White ware mortaria	4	192	(109):1, (112):1, (121):2
R31	Lumpy white ware	10	154	(121):10
R33	Verulamium region ware mortaria	1	6	(105):1

**Table 2:** Pottery type series

### *Late Iron Age*

Four grog-and-sand-tempered sherds (381g), including the rim from a large storage jar, were collected from ditch [118] and surface finds [127] in association with Roman pottery. (Surface finds [127] represents artefacts from the surface of ditch [139].)

### *Roman*

The majority of the Roman assemblage comprises locally manufactured sandy and shelly coarse wares, the latter including products from Harrold, N. Beds. Wares from further afield derive from the Nene Valley (grey ware; colour-coated ware), Northamptonshire (grog-tempered wares), Oxfordshire (colour-coated ware), Hertfordshire (Verulamium region white ware), and Essex



(Colchester black-burnished ware). Continental imports comprise 19 sherds of predominantly central Gaulish samian ware, the latter surviving in worn condition.

Despite its small size, the assemblage contains a high proportion of diagnostic forms. These comprise a standard range of utilitarian vessels: jars with everted or lid-seated rims (diameter 140–240mm); storage vessels; bowls with plain, rectangular or flanged rims (diameter 190–340mm); straight-sided dishes; mortaria; and fine ware beakers, the latter with rouletted, applied scale or barbotine scroll decoration. Single examples of a platter and shallow lid also occur. Samian forms are largely undiagnostic, although include bowls (mainly represented by worn footring bases) and a possible cup. The range of forms compares well with that recovered from Ruxox Farm (Parminter 2004, 494, table 9.19), where the pottery was considered to derive from a domestic settlement of unexceptional status and wealth (Parminter 2004, 495).

### 3.5.2 Ceramic building material

Eighteen abraded pieces of shell-tempered *tegula* (1.7kg), representing four roof tiles, and a sizeable sand-tempered brick fragment (1.6kg) were collected from ditches [114] and [139], and surface finds [127] (equivalent to ditch [139]). *Tegulae* are approximately 20mm thick; one retains a shallow square flange and faint concentric circle signature. The brick fragment, which is 46mm thick, is over-fired and survives in poor condition.

### 3.5.3 ‘Other artefacts’

A disparate group of ‘other artefacts’ was collected, the most significant of which are fragments from two early Roman pipe-clay deity figurines (RA6; RA7) (Plate 1), deriving respectively from ditches [131] and [139]. Manufactured in central Gaul during the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, the objects are associated with religious beliefs and ritual practices (Fittock 2015, 111). Although fragments have been recovered from numerous archaeological sites across Roman London, they remain relatively rare finds outside the capital.

RA6 comprises a body fragment (rear and upper thighs) and a portion of drapery (surviving height 53mm; width 44mm). RA7 comprises a left hand with a garment held by the fingertips (surviving height 35mm; width 23mm). Both probably represent the goddess Venus, although their fragmentary nature precludes positive classification. These finds add to the mainly unstratified collection of over 90 pipe-clay figurine fragments recovered during excavations at Ruxox Farm undertaken by the Ruxox Research Group (1950s–1960s) and later by Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service (Wells, McSloy and Duncan 2004, 433).

While the Black Moor Farm examples could simply have derived from a household shrine, the collective quantities of figurine fragments recovered from the Ruxox environs may suggest association with a more organised religious activity, perhaps centred on a temple, sacred spring or water-cult, the latter more likely, given the proximity of the site to the River Flit (c.f. Dawson 2004, 27).



Ditches [165] and [129] respectively yielded a large copper alloy coin (RA3) (Lucilla AE Sestertius) datable to AD 164–82 (Plate 2), and a tiny translucent blue-green glass body sherd (1g), probably deriving from a prismatic bottle of 1st–3rd-century date.

A late Roman (late 3rd–4th-century) copper alloy hairpin (RA1) of Cool's group 14.c (1991, 164) (Plate 3) derived from the fill of ditch [118]. The object has a circular sectioned block head with a glass inset at the apex and two squared flanges below. The tip of the circular sectioned shank is missing.

The main fill of ditch [139] contained a sandstone saddle quern fragment (RA5) with evidence for reuse. One face is dished and worn smooth, while the opposing flattish face has an oval depression pecked out, suggesting secondary use as, perhaps, a working surface or mortar.

Undatable iron objects are a rectangular sectioned portion of a strap encased in sheet (RA2), and two heavily corroded timber nail shanks.

A possible pruning hook blade fragment (RA4) recovered in association with Roman pottery from ditch [135] is likely to be of the same date.

A small quantity of flake and spheroidal hammerscale (<1g) indicative of iron-smithing, was found within sieved sample residues from ditches [111], [114], [120] and [131]. A piece of vitrified clay/hearth lining (30g) derived from ditch [152] and fuel ash fragments (4g) from ditches [114] and [131].

### **3.6 Ecofacts**

#### **3.6.1 Animal bone**

Sixty-nine animal bone fragments (241g) were collected from 13 features, the largest deposit (62g) from ditch [163]. Individual pieces have a mean weight of only 3g and survive in very poor condition — a result of the unfavourable soil conditions in which they were deposited. Diagnostic elements are ribs and limb bones, a piece of horn core, a possible scapula fragment and a few teeth, the latter deriving mainly from sheep/goat. A few of the most degraded tooth fragments may derive from cattle, although their poor condition precludes positive identification.

#### **3.6.2 Environmental samples**

A total of five samples was taken from the ditches revealed on the site. The volumes processed ranged from 10–20 litres.

All of the samples contained very small quantities of charcoal, mostly flecks and tiny fragments. Samples <3> and <4> from ditches [111] and [114] respectively also contained small lumps together with smaller fragments. These larger pieces were abraded, indicating that there had been significant redeposition of the material. The lumps generally had a mineralised exposed surface. Due to the small quantity and abraded nature of the material, it cannot provide meaningful data on species identification.



Charred cereal grains — mostly fragmentary — were present in very small quantities in all of the samples. The material from sample <1> also included possible weed seeds and was less fragmented than the examples from the other samples. However, even here, the very small quantities present mean that the material has no analytical potential.

Most of the samples contained small quantities of pottery, burnt stone and animal bone. Very small quantities of hammer-scale were also present. This material is included in the artefacts report (see above, Section 3.5).



## 4. CONCLUSIONS

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### 4.1 *Synthesis of Results*

The investigations revealed two groups of ditches on NE-SW and NW-SE alignments. They are interpreted as boundary features that would have been accompanied by substantial earth banks, demarcating enclosures of Roman date. The two ditch groups comprised multiple, re-cut, parallel ditches, suggesting that the boundaries were maintained over a considerable period of time. The ‘cleaning-out’ and re-cutting of the ditches led to the boundaries shifting slightly over time.

The NE-SW aligned ditch group did not extend beyond the NW-SE aligned ditch group. This suggests that the two boundaries represented by the ditches may have originally been broadly contemporary. The NW-SE aligned boundary may have remained in use for a longer period of time — its final recut truncated the NE-SW aligned ditch group. The plan and sections of Figure 2 illustrate how the NW-SE aligned group of ditches was both wider and deeper, perhaps marking a major settlement boundary. Conversely, the less substantial NE-SW aligned ditch group may represent a subsidiary division within that settlement enclosure.

The relatively large quantities of pottery and other artefacts contained within all the ditches suggest that the enclosures were associated with domestic occupation. The presence of a possible rubbish pit, truncating the south-west side of the NW-SE aligned ditch group supports this interpretation. The assemblages of animal bone and charred plant remains were much less noteworthy; this is likely to be due to differential preservation, with the soil conditions not favouring the preservation of organic remains.

The pottery dates the occupation of the site to the 1st–3rd centuries AD. This time span is corroborated by the few other datable artefacts — early Roman pipe-clay figurines, a 2nd-century coin and a prismatic bottle of 1st–3rd-century date. A small number of Iron Age potsherds and a hairpin of late 3rd- to 4th-century date hint at slightly earlier and later activity.

Despite the presence of ceramic building material within the ditches, no structural remains were present within the investigation area. However, the quantity of artefacts recovered suggests that there is a focus of domestic activity in the vicinity. This is corroborated by the large number of comparable Roman artefacts (coins, knives, brooches, pottery and quern stones) found in the fields to the west of Black Moor Farm, within part of the large zone of settlement evidence associated with the known high-status site at Ruxox Farm (HER 918), *c.* 800m to the south-west.

### 4.2 *Significance of Results*

The investigation area was relatively small and only contained a limited range of archaeological features. However, a significant assemblage of artefacts was recovered — in particular the pipe-clay figurine fragment, which are rarely seen in Bedfordshire outside the Ruxox area. By contrast, the ecofactual evidence was relatively low-key. The remains are of local and regional



significance, providing further insight into the extensive area of settlement evidence associated with the high-status Roman site at Ruxox Farm. The site, therefore, makes a useful contribution to regional research objectives relating to the understanding and characterisation of Roman settlement patterns (Going and Plouviez 2000, 19; Oake 2007, 11–2; Medlycott 2011, 48)

The data-sets recovered during the investigations have been fully analysed and discussed within this report. The project archive will be deposited with The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford (BEDFM: 2016.38) and this report will be uploaded onto the OASIS website (albionar1-253448).



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## 6. APPENDIX 1: DETAILED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

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Area: 1  
 Extent (ha): 0.06  
 OS Co-ordinates: TL5397666881  
 Description: Rectangular footprint of agricultural storage building.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-large stones. C. 0.28m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Subsoil	Friable light grey orange sandy silt occasional small-medium stones. 0.07m to 0.14m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Natural	Friable light grey orange silty sand occasional small-medium stones. With manganese staining.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Natural	Firm light brown red silty sand frequent small stones. With manganese staining	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Ditch	Linear NW-SE dimensions: min depth 0.3m. This ditch was greatly truncated by parallel ditches [111] and [114].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Fill	Friable mid red grey sandy silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
106	Ditch	Linear NW-SE base: flat dimensions: min breadth 1.45m, min depth 0.37m. This ditch was truncated by parallel ditches [108] and [118].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
107	Fill	Friable mid orange grey sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
108	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: concave base: uneven dimensions: min breadth 2.m, min depth 0.33m. This ditch truncated parallel ditch [106] and was truncated itself by parallel ditch [111].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
109	Main fill	Friable dark orange grey sandy silt moderate flecks charcoal, occasional small-large stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
110	Upper fill	Friable mid orange grey sandy silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
111	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: 45 degrees base: flat dimensions: min breadth 1.75m, min depth 0.33m. This ditch truncated parallel ditches [104] and [108]. It was truncated itself by parallel ditch [114].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
112	Main fill	Friable mid brown grey sandy silt moderate flecks charcoal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
113	Upper fill	Friable mid orange grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
114	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: 45 degrees base: concave dimensions: min breadth 1.5m, min depth 0.4m. This ditch truncated parallel ditches [104] and [111].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
115	Primary fill	Friable mid grey red silty sand frequent small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
116	Secondary fill	Friable mid red grey sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
117	Upper fill	Friable mid orange grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
118	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: concave base: flat dimensions: min breadth 1.1m, min depth 0.4m. This ditch truncated parallel ditch [106]. It was truncated itself by pit [120].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
119	Fill	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
120	Pit	Oval sides: concave base: flat dimensions: min breadth 1.9m, min depth 0.47m, min length 2.4m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
121	Main fill	Friable dark orange grey sandy silt moderate flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
122	Upper fill	Friable mid orange grey sandy silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



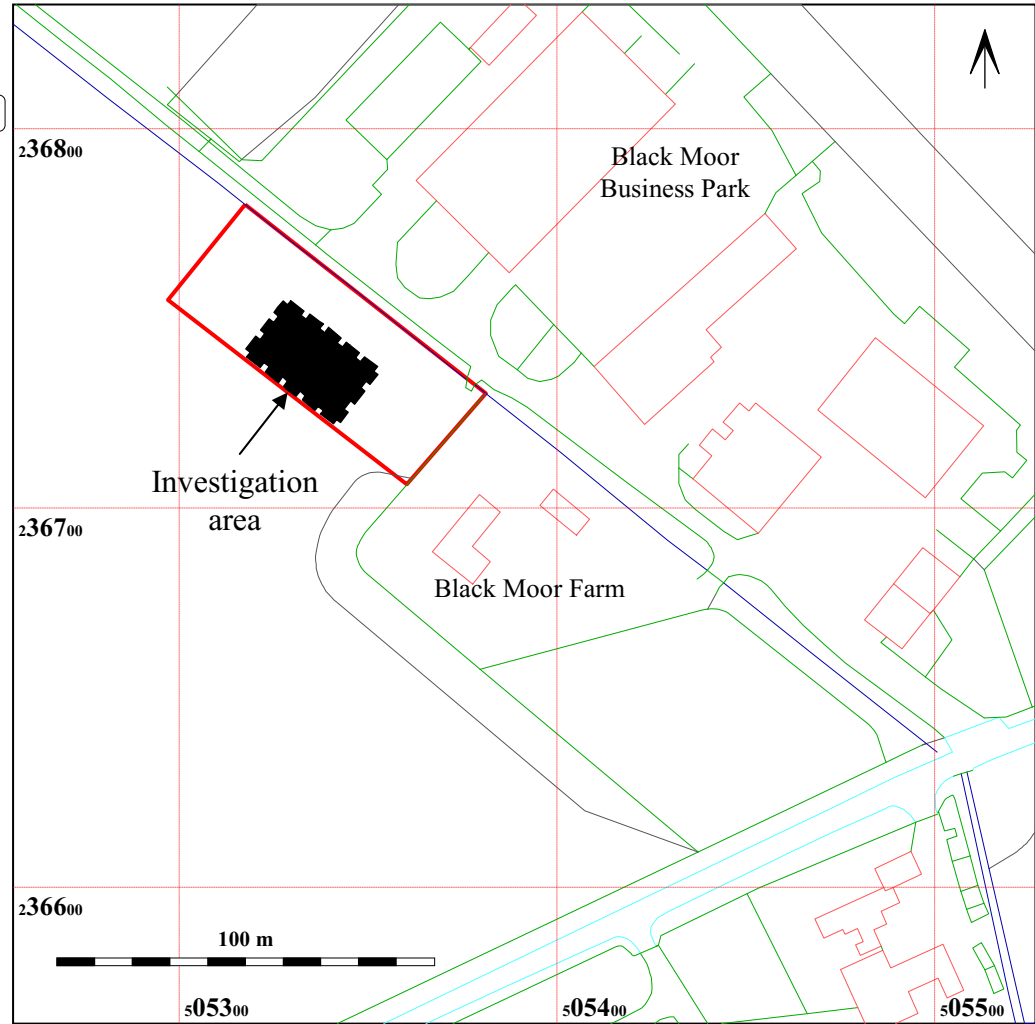
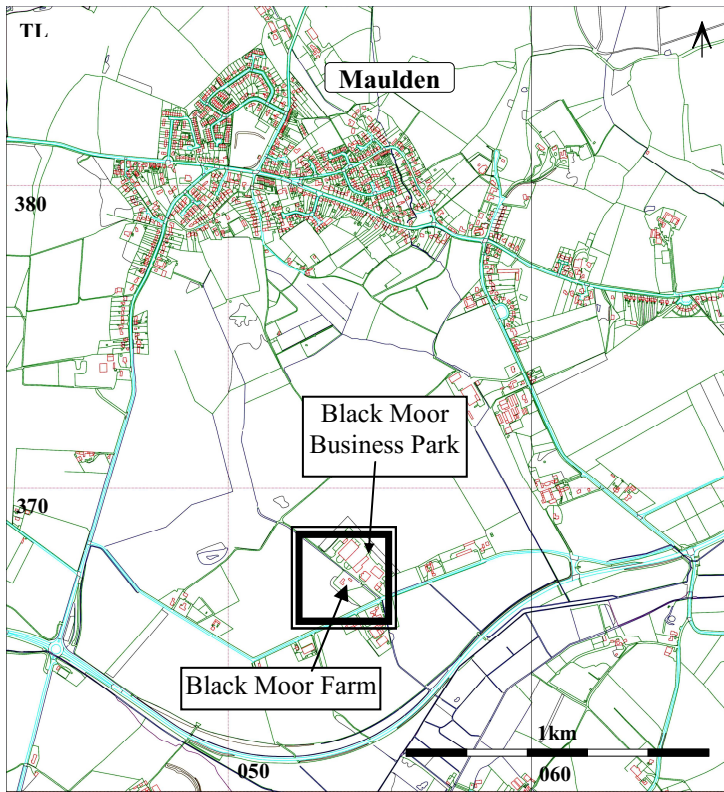
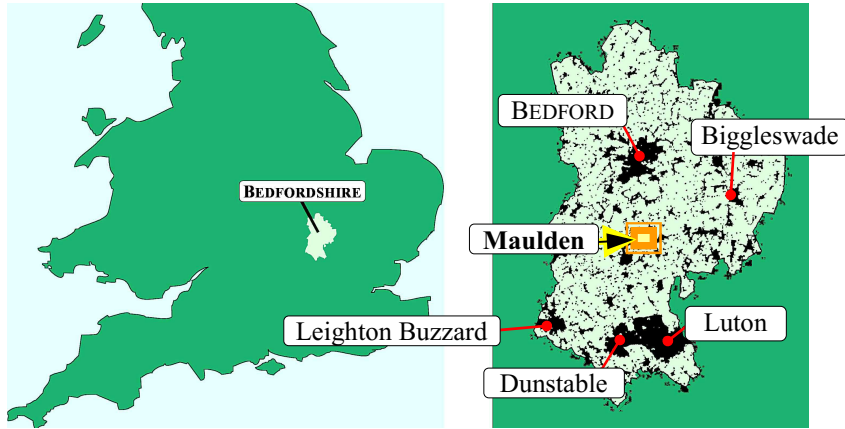
**Area:** 1  
**Extent (ha):** 0.06  
**OS Co-ordinates:** TL5397666881  
**Description:** Rectangular footprint of agricultural storage building.

123	Treethrow	Irregular sides: concave base: uneven dimensions: min breadth 0.55m, min depth 0.13m, min length 0.6m. A small rooting bole at the base of ditch [106].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
124	Treethrow	Friable light grey sandy silt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
125	General number	Linear NW-SE . For finds collected from surface of NW to SE aligned features (multiple parallel ditches).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
126	General number	For finds collected from surface of upper deposit of NW to SE aligned features (multiple parallel ditches).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
127	General number	For finds collected from surface of feature equivalent to ditch [139].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
128		For finds collected from deposit equivalent to (141).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
129	Ditch	Linear NE-SW base: flat dimensions: min breadth 1.4m, min depth 0.36m. This ditch was truncated by parallel ditches [131] and [133].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
130	Fill	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
131	Ditch	Linear NE-SW sides: concave base: flat dimensions: min breadth 1.7m, min depth 0.44m. This ditch truncated parallel ditch [129].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
132	Fill	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
133	Ditch	Linear NE-SW sides: concave base: flat dimensions: min breadth 1.8m, min depth 0.4m. This ditch truncated parallel ditch [129].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
134	Fill	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
135	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: concave base: flat dimensions: min breadth 0.7m, min depth 0.27m. This ditch was truncated by parallel ditch [137].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
136	Fill	Friable mid brown sandy silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
137	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: asymmetrical base: concave dimensions: min breadth 1.67m, min depth 0.42m. This ditch truncated parallel ditches [135] and [167].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
138	Main fill	Friable mid yellow brown sandy silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
169	Primary fill	Friable mid yellow grey sandy silt moderate small stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
139	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: convex base: concave dimensions: min breadth 2.3m, min depth 0.55m. This ditch truncated parallel ditch [167].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
140	Primary fill	Friable mid red brown silty sand occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
141	Main fill	Friable mid orange brown sandy silt occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
142	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.97m, min depth 0.19m. This ditch truncated parallel ditch [144].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
143	Fill	Friable mid red brown sandy silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
144	Ditch	Linear NW-SE base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.63m, min depth 0.17m. This ditch was truncated by parallel ditches [142] and [146].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
145			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
146	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: concave base: flat dimensions: min breadth 0.84m, min depth 0.12m. This ditch truncated parallel ditch [144].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
147	Fill	Friable mid brown sandy silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
148	Ditch	Linear NW-SE base: flat dimensions: min breadth 0.75m, min depth 0.19m. This ditch was truncated by parallel ditches [152] and [154].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
149	Fill	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt occasional large stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Area:** 1  
**Extent (ha):** 0.06  
**OS Co-ordinates:** TL5397666881  
**Description:** Rectangular footprint of agricultural storage building.

150	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.77m, min depth 0.28m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
151	Fill	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional large stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
152	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: concave base: uneven dimensions: min breadth 1.06m, min depth 0.32m. This ditch truncated parallel ditch [148].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
153	Fill	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt occasional large stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
154	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 1.12m, min depth 0.21m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
155	Fill	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt occasional large stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
156	Subsoil	Friable mid yellow brown sandy silt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
157	Ditch	Linear NE-SW sides: concave base: flat dimensions: min depth 0.46m. This ditch was truncated by ditch [159]. Relationship section only, so full dimensions not known.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
158	Fill	Friable mid orange brown sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
159	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: 45 degrees base: concave dimensions: min depth 0.48m. This ditch truncated ditch [157] and was itself truncated by parallel ditch [161]. Relationship section only, so full dimensions not known.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
160	Fill	Friable mid orange grey sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
161	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: convex dimensions: min depth 0.55m. This ditch truncated ditch [159]. Relationship section only, so full dimensions not known.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
162	Primary fill	Friable dark red grey sandy silt moderate flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
163	Secondary fill	Friable mid orange brown sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
164	Upper fill	Friable mid grey orange sandy silt occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
165	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.7m, min depth 0.13m. Terminus of an early ditch cut / maintenance re-cut. Truncated by later re-cut [139].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
166	Primary fill	Friable dark grey red silty sand moderate flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
167	Ditch	Linear NW-SE base: flat dimensions: min breadth 1.05m, min depth 0.23m. This ditch was truncated by ditches [137] and [139].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
168	Fill	Friable mid brown grey sandy silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



**Figure 1: Site location plan**

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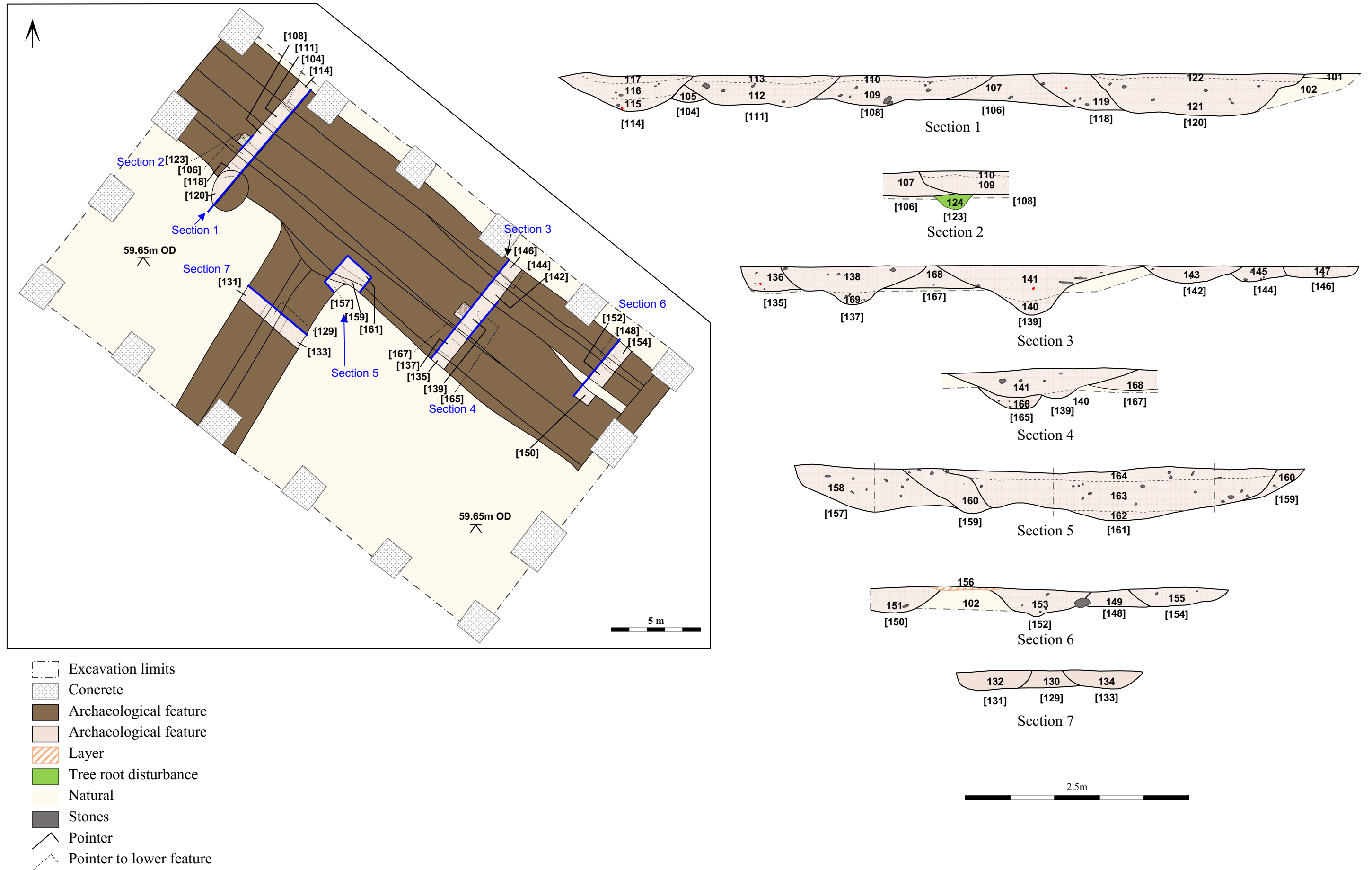


Figure 2: All-features plan and sections (top of all sections at 59.65m OD)





NE-SW aligned ditches [131], [129], [133]  
Section 7 (Scale 1m, looking north)



NW-SE aligned ditches [114], [104], [111], [108], [106], [118] and pit [120]  
Section 1 (Scale 1m, looking south)



NW-SE aligned ditches [135], [137], [167], [139], [142], [144], [146], [167]  
Section 3 (Scale 1m, looking north)



NW-SE aligned ditches, close-up of ditch [139]  
Section 3 (Scale 1m, looking north-west)



NW-SE aligned ditches [150], [152], [148], [154]  
Section 6 (Scale 1m, looking north-west)



Ditches [157], [159], [161]  
Section 5 (Scale 1m, looking north)



Pit [120]  
Section 1 (Scale 1m, looking south-east)

**Figure 3:** Ditches and pit — selected photographs (section numbers cross-refer to Figure 2)





**Plate 1:** Pipe clay deity figurine fragments (RA6 and RA7)



**Plate 2:** Copper alloy coin (RA3) Lucilla AE Sestertius, datable to AD 164–82

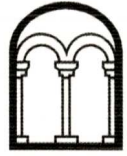




**Plate 3:** Late Roman (late 3rd–4th-century) copper alloy hairpin (RA1)



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