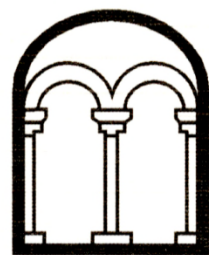


**BEDFORD COLLEGE
TECHNOLOGY BUILDING
BEDFORD**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING
AND RECORDING**

Albion
archaeology



**BEDFORD COLLEGE
TECHNOLOGY BUILDING
BEDFORD**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING
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Preface

All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and was prepared solely for the benefit of the client. The material contained in this report does not necessarily stand on its own and should not be relied upon by any third party. This document should not be used for any other purpose without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and the prior written authority of Albion Archaeology (a trading unit of Central Bedfordshire Council). Any person/party relying on the document for such other purposes agrees and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Albion Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Albion Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the persons/party by whom it was commissioned. This document is limited by the state of knowledge at the time it was written.

Acknowledgements

The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Geoff Saunders (Bedford Borough Council Archaeological Officer). Fieldwork was undertaken by Marcin Koziminski and Adam Williams (Supervisors) and Mark Phillips (Project Officer). This report has been prepared by Adam Williams, Mark Phillips and Jackie Wells (Finds Officer) with figures produced by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

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Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

BBC	Bedford Borough Council
CI/A	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
Client	Bedford College
HER	Historic Environment Record
HET	Historic Environment Team of BBC
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-technical Summary

Bedford College were granted planning permission (13/00955/MAF) for the demolition of a smoking shelter and the erection of a two- and three-storey technology building, incorporating electrical and engineering workshops with associated works. The development lies within an area of archaeological sensitivity and a condition (no. 4) for a programme of archaeological works was attached to the planning permission in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Albion Archaeology was commissioned to undertake an evaluation and subsequent mitigation works; the results of the latter are described in this report.

Archaeological observation and investigation during groundworks took place between 14th June and 25th October 2017. The groundworks comprised the excavation a service trench, ground reduction of the main building footprint for the installation of a piling mat and the excavation of a soakaway pit.

The uppermost layers consisted of demolition or construction make-up layers, associated with the mid-20th-century construction of the college and later works on the site. The area directly adjacent to the Tower building showed a high level of disturbance associated with the construction of the college buildings and associated service ducts. A layer of buried topsoil (1003) immediately below demolition and construction layers represents the latest phase of use of this area as garden or open space.

Two layers (1005 and 1006) below the buried topsoil layer are interpreted as cultivation soils. These could have originated during the Holocene as alluvium, which has subsequently been reworked through cultivation. The upper layer contained post-medieval/modern brick and tile and both contained small amounts of pottery ranging in date from the late Saxon to late medieval period.

The geological deposit observed at the base of the soakaway trench consisted of clay alluvium (1008) formed during the Quaternary Period. A dark band of silt above this alluvium may have formed under marshy or river-side conditions. The clay alluvium in the soakaway trench differs from the gravel geology found a short distance to the south during the evaluation. The difference marks the change from clay alluvium in a central river channel to sand and gravel terrace deposits.

The results confirmed the findings of the evaluation and show modern demolition and construction layers above mixed cultivation soils in the upper part of the soil profile.

The project archive will be deposited with The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum under accession no. BEDFM 2013.35. This report will be uploaded onto the OASIS website under reference number albionar1-257743.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

Bedford College obtained planning permission (13/00955/MAF) from Bedford Borough Council for the demolition of a smoking shelter and the erection of a two- and three-storey technology building (class D1), incorporating electrical and engineering workshops with associated works.

The local planning authority (LPA) is advised on heritage matters by Bedford Borough Council's Historic Environment Team (HET). The development site lies within an area of archaeological sensitivity. Accordingly, the HET recommended that a negative condition be attached to any planning consent. This recommendation follows the guidelines provided in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF, DCLG 2012). The LPA attached the following condition (no. 4) to the permission:

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 archaeological mitigation strategy shall include a timetable and the following components (the completion of each to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority will result in a separate confirmation of compliance for each component):

- (i) fieldwork and/ or preservation 'in situ' of archaeological remains;*
- (ii) a post-excavation assessment report (to be submitted within six months of the completion of fieldwork);*
- (iii) a post-excavation analysis report, preparation of site archive ready for deposition at a store approved by the Local Planning Authority, completion of an archive report, and submission of a publication report (to be completed within two years of the completion of fieldwork).*

The archaeological mitigation strategy shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timings.

REASON: 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, in accordance with Saved Policies BE24 & BE25 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002, Policy CP23 of the Bedford Borough Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan (2008) and according to national policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, March 2012).

An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was undertaken in 2016, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) (Albion Archaeology 2016a, 2016b) prepared in response to a brief issued by the HET (HET 2013). In an email dated 13th July, the HET Archaeological Officer confirmed that the evaluation had been completed to his satisfaction and he advised that:

The work has demonstrated that deposits of likely medieval date survive to a considerable depth on the site. Given that the medieval deposits are sealed by a



considerable depth of overburden (c. 1.1–1.2m) and that they appear to primarily comprise layers possibly resulting from flooding or dredging of the river I consider that an appropriate form of mitigation here would be the archaeological monitoring and recording of all development groundworks. If [the developer] is proposing to preserve the majority of the archaeological deposits in situ by using a foundation design intended to avoid deep ground disturbance, then details of the proposed foundation design should form part of the mitigation WSI. The mitigation WSI will need to be submitted in order to commence the discharge process of the archaeological condition attached to the planning consent.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Bedford College, to prepare the WSI for archaeological mitigation (Albion 2016c) and to undertake the archaeological monitoring and recording works. This report presents the results of the mitigation works.

1.2 Site Location and Development Description

Bedford College is situated in the historic core of the town and is bounded to the south by Cauldwell Street and to the east by St Mary's Street (Figure 1). The site of the new building is located to the west of the Tower building and is centred at National Grid Reference TL 04900 49400.

The college site lies at a height of 26.5m OD on level ground to the south of the river Great Ouse. The underlying geology consists of alluvium with sands and gravels of the Felmersham Member (First Terrace) of the Ouse Valley Formation.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Knowledge of the archaeology and history of this part of Bedford has been enhanced by a number of recent archaeological investigations and desk-based studies, notably in connection with development of a new centre for Learners with Learning Disabilities and Difficulties (LLDD) on land at the St Mary's Street frontage of the Bedford College campus. This comprised trial trenching (Albion Archaeology 2014a) and a desk-based heritage assessment (Albion Archaeology 2014b), followed by a programme of archaeological mitigation during construction (Albion Archaeology in prep.). There has also been a programme of archaeological monitoring of public realm improvement works along the south bank of the Great Ouse, in St Mary's Gardens (Albion Archaeology 2014d).

This new evidence has helped to confirm our understanding of the archaeology of this part of Bedford, as synthesised in the Bedford Extensive Urban Survey (Albion Archaeology 2005a), funded by English Heritage, and the desk-based assessment undertaken to inform the college's proposals for development of the campus (Albion Archaeology 2007). The relevant points are briefly summarised here.

The site lies within the southern *burh* of Saxon Bedford (HER 10530). The boundary of the southern *burh* was defined by an earthwork, known as the King's Ditch (HER 1198). The line of the King's Ditch runs close to the western side of the development site where it runs in a modern concrete culvert (Figure 1). The exact line of the original boundary through the college grounds is uncertain. In the medieval period, the river frontage (HER15264), which currently lies to the



north of the development site, is likely to have been located further south than its modern counterpart with the river itself being wider than at present. The area enclosed by the King's Ditch may have been used for settlement and/or industrial activities during the Saxon period and, if such remains were to survive, they would be of major, regional interest.

During the medieval period the area within the southern *burh* remained in use — evidence for this has been encountered during previous archaeological investigations within land currently occupied by Bedford College. An evaluation in 1996 recorded the presence of probable domestic and/or industrial remains dated to between the 13th and 15th centuries (BCAS 1996). Investigations on other land, immediately west of St Mary's Street and south of the College (Baker *et al* 1979; Albion Archaeology 2005) also recorded the presence of similar remains. If such remains were present within the development site, they would be considered of significant local and/or regional interest.

The post-medieval period saw a growth in the population of Bedford and the development of local land for industrial purposes. This included land within the development area which was located not only in the centre of town, but also on the banks of the river, a route used for the transportation of goods to and from the town. A number of post-medieval industries are recorded on the HER in the area immediately to the north of the development site. These include a boat builder (HER17560), a timber yard (HER17555), a post-medieval wharf (HER17559) and a malthouse (HER17556). Archaeologists monitoring excavation of tree-pits in St Mary's Gardens found evidence that the river embankment was consolidated with substantial timber revetments during the 19th century (Albion Archaeology 2014d).

Previous archaeological works on the college site include a test-pit evaluation (Albion 2009) in advance of earlier development proposals and monitoring work during construction of the Southbank Building (Border Archaeology 2004 and Albion Archaeology 2006) and the installation of the Energy Centre cooling system (Albion Archaeology 2013). The test-pit evaluation consisted of seven test pits spread across the college site (Albion 2009). Test Pits 5 and 6 were located closest to the current development (*ibid.*, fig. 4). Both trenches showed undisturbed geological deposits at a depth of approximately 1.2m. In Test Pit 6 the geological deposit was cut by a ditch that was sealed by a buried soil layer and later make-up layers. The monitoring works associated with the Southbank Building recorded evidence of a post-medieval barge loading basin and a former back-channel of the river enclosed within a brick culvert. Monitoring of the Energy Centre cooling system recorded the remains of post-medieval and 20th-century buildings, as well as post-medieval or modern dump deposits within St Mary's Gardens (Albion 2012). No evidence was found for the King's Ditch in its original form, predating the modern canalised and culverted structure. Although located more than 100m east of the development site, the investigations at the site of the LLDD building also found a fairly consistent sequence of deposits — up to c. 1m of extremely mixed deposits (largely of post-medieval and later date) overlying an undifferentiated 'dark earth' horizon < c. 0.3m thick. The latter, in turn, sealed archaeological features cut into the terrace gravels. The



‘dark earth’ and underlying features are provisionally identified as late Saxon and early medieval in date (Albion Archaeology, in prep.).

1.1 Results of Field Evaluation

The evaluation of the development site was undertaken in accordance with the Brief (HET 2013) and Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2016a). The following is a summary of the results, which are presented in full in the evaluation report (Albion Archaeology 2016b).

Two trial trenches were excavated: one was 7m by 4m and the other 3m square. The trenches were opened with a mechanical excavator using a toothless bucket. Both trenches were machined down to a depth of 1.2m below the ground surface, through layers of modern (19th- and 20th-century) build-up. The area investigated in Trench 1 was limited by the presence of a modern surface water drain. A hand-excavated section was dug in the base of Trench 2 to examine the underlying deposits. The deposits lying below 1.2m were tested by machine excavation.

Natural deposits comprised typical river terrace deposits of the Great Ouse flood plain environment. The depths at which the deposits occurred were slightly different in each trench (between 1.25m and 1.75m below the surface in Trenches 1 and 2, respectively).

In each trench, the earliest deposits, observed below a depth of between c. 1m to 1.2m were of distinct character. In Trench 1 they comprised a darker clay silt layer overlying an alluvial deposit that was possibly derived from material dredged from the River Great Ouse. Though this layer produced no finds, it is likely that it is evidence of medieval land use. In Trench 2 there was more distinct evidence that the earliest deposits were of medieval date, with deposits below 1.1m from the surface producing medieval pottery.

Post-medieval remains were identified in both trenches. They comprised make-up layers of rubble/brick and clay silt. The latter were probably garden soil-derived deposits. This suggests that there was a period of levelling/ground-raising, which is most likely to have been associated with post-medieval occupation near the river’s edge. In Trench 2, a rectangular pit was identified, its base c. 1.5m below the surface. In Trench 1, the post-medieval make-up layers predated an edged gravel path that coincided with the line of a path depicted on the OS map of 1884 and still shown on the OS map of 1926.

Both trenches contained layers associated with modern garden cultivation, probably dating from the time when the area was given over to smallholdings or allotments.



2. METHODOLOGY

Archaeological observation and investigation during the groundworks took place between 14th June and 25th October 2017. Groundworks monitored comprised the excavation a service trench, ground reduction of the main building footprint for the installation of a piling mat and the excavation of a soakaway pit.

Deposits encountered were investigated and recorded in accordance with Albion's *Procedures Manual*. Spoil heaps were checked on a regular basis for artefact recovery.

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

• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (2nd edn, 2003).
• Bedford Borough Council	<i>Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedford</i> (ver. 2.8, 2010)
• CIfA	<i>Charter and by-law; Code of conduct</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief</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> (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</i> , (2nd edn, 2011)

A detailed methodology is provided in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2016c).



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

Groundworks comprised the excavation of a NW-SE aligned service trench, ground reduction within the footprint of the new building for the installation of a piling mat and the excavation of a soakaway pit to the north-west of the building footprint. The results of the archaeological work are summarised below. A plan of the monitoring areas observed is shown in Figure 2 and sections are presented in Figures 2 and 3. Details of all the deposits and features encountered are contained within Appendix 1.

3.2 Overburden

Overburden generally comprised *c.* 0.24m of tarmac (1000) and (1001), overlying a layered deposit of brick rubble and coarse sand and gravel (1002), representing demolition material and modern construction make-up, 0.32–0.84m thick. These deposits were identified in the building footprint, soakaway pit and service trench (Images 4, 5, 7 and 8).

The service trench along the north-east edge of the development area identified two distinct disturbed deposits: (1009) a dark, brown, silt-clay with frequent modern ceramic building material (CBM); and (1010) a mid, grey-brown, clay with modern mortar and CBM. These deposits are probably associated with the construction of the Tower building to the east.

In addition to the made-up ground there were also several other instances of modern disturbance. At least five modern services cut across the footprint of the building. Although numerous, these were generally narrow (less than 0.4m wide) and had, therefore, caused only moderate disturbance.

3.3 Recent Deposits

The demolition and make-up deposit (1002) overlay a series of buried soil deposits, consisting of a buried topsoil (1003) identified in the building footprint and soakaway excavations and a buried clay make-up layer (1004) identified in the soakaway pit (Images 4, 5, 7 and 8). These deposits may possibly be associated with more recent garden activity to the north of the development site and may represent landscaping/levelling of the area.

3.4 Cultivation Soils

Beneath the “garden” deposits a homogenous soil (1005) representing an extensive cultivation deposit was identified (Section 3 and Images 7 and 8). It consisted of brown-grey clay, up to 0.54m thick; it was identified in the building footprint, soakaway and service trench excavations. It contained post-medieval and modern CBM, including brick fragments (not collected). Three sand-tempered late medieval pottery body sherds (35g: fabric E02¹) were hand-collected from the deposit. Two abraded 12th–13th-century pottery sherds (13g: fabric C59B), a piece of late medieval roof tile (8g) and five animal bone fragments (34g: limb bones; vertebra, astragalus) derived from the sieved residue

¹ Fabric types defined in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series



of an environmental sample. Given the presence of post-medieval/modern CBM, the medieval material is residual in this context.

Directly below (1005) an earlier soil (1006) was identified. It comprised a mid-grey-brown silt clay up to 0.48m thick that was observed during the excavation of the soakaway pit. It contained two residual late Saxon shell-tempered St Neots-type ware pottery sherds (5g: B01C).

3.5 Geological Deposits

Underlying geological deposits comprised yellow-green clay (1008), generally encountered *c.* 1.65m below ground level and only identified in the soakaway pit excavation (Images 6–8). This is a superficial geological deposit — alluvial clays and silts formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period.

Immediately above (1008) a layer of dark silty clay (1007), approximately 0.14m thick, was seen towards the south-west end of the soakaway pit. This could have formed under marshy conditions on the margins of the river.



4. CONCLUSIONS

The uppermost layers recorded across the development site consisted of demolition or construction make-up layers, associated with the mid-20th-century construction of the college and later works. The area directly adjacent to the Tower building showed a high level of disturbance associated with the construction of the college buildings and associated service ducts. A layer of buried topsoil (1003) immediately below demolition and construction layers represents the latest phase of use of this area as garden or open space.

Two soil layers (1005 and 1006) below the buried topsoil layer are interpreted as cultivation soils. These could have originated during the Holocene as alluvium, which has subsequently been reworked through cultivation. The upper layer contained post-medieval/modern brick and tile and both contained small amounts of pottery ranging in date from the late Saxon to late medieval period.

The geological deposit observed at the base of the soakaway trench consisted of clay alluvium (1008) formed during the Quaternary Period. A dark band of silt above this alluvium may have formed under marshy or river-side conditions. The clay alluvium in the soakaway trench differs from the gravel geology found a short distance to the south during the trial trench evaluation (Albion 2016b). The difference marks the change from clay alluvium in a central river channel to sand and gravel terrace deposits.

The results of the fieldwork confirmed the findings of the evaluation, showing modern demolition and construction overlying cultivation soils in the upper part of the soil profile.

The project archive will be deposited with The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum under accession no. BEDFM 2013.35. This report will be uploaded onto the OASIS website under reference number albionar1-257743.



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6. APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DATA



Area: 1
Extent (ha): 0.1
OS Co-ordinates: TL0490049400
Description: Overall construction area examined in mitigation works, including soakaway.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1000	Tarmac	Tarmac car park surface	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1001	Tarmac	Layer of tarmac below latest car park surface	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1002	Levelling layer	Layers of modern brick rubble with layers of mid-red and light yellow sand, forming a construction levelling layer. Associated with mid-20th-century demolition and construction of Bedford College.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1003	Buried topsoil	Firm dark blue grey clay . Garden soils buried by mid-20th century construction debris.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1004	Layer	Firm mid red brown clay . Clean deposit, representing probable made-ground.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1005	Layer	Firm mid brown grey silty clay occasional flecks charcoal. Contained fragments of post-medieval/modern brick and tile (not recovered) and a small amount of residual medieval pottery dating from early medieval to late medieval period (AD1150-1500).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1006	Layer	Firm mid grey brown silty clay . A single abraded sherd of late Saxon/Saxo-Norman (AD 850-1150) pottery was recovered.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1007	Alluvium	Firm dark grey silty clay . Dark humic clay representing possible former marshy, river-side conditions.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1008	Natural	Compact mid yellow green clay . Superficial geology, consisting of alluvial clay.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1009	Layer	Loose dark brown grey silty clay moderate small-medium CBM, frequent flecks mortar. Upper part of disturbed ground observed in service trench adjacent to Tower building.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1010	Layer	Firm mid grey brown silty clay . Lower part of disturbed ground observed in service trench adjacent to Tower building.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

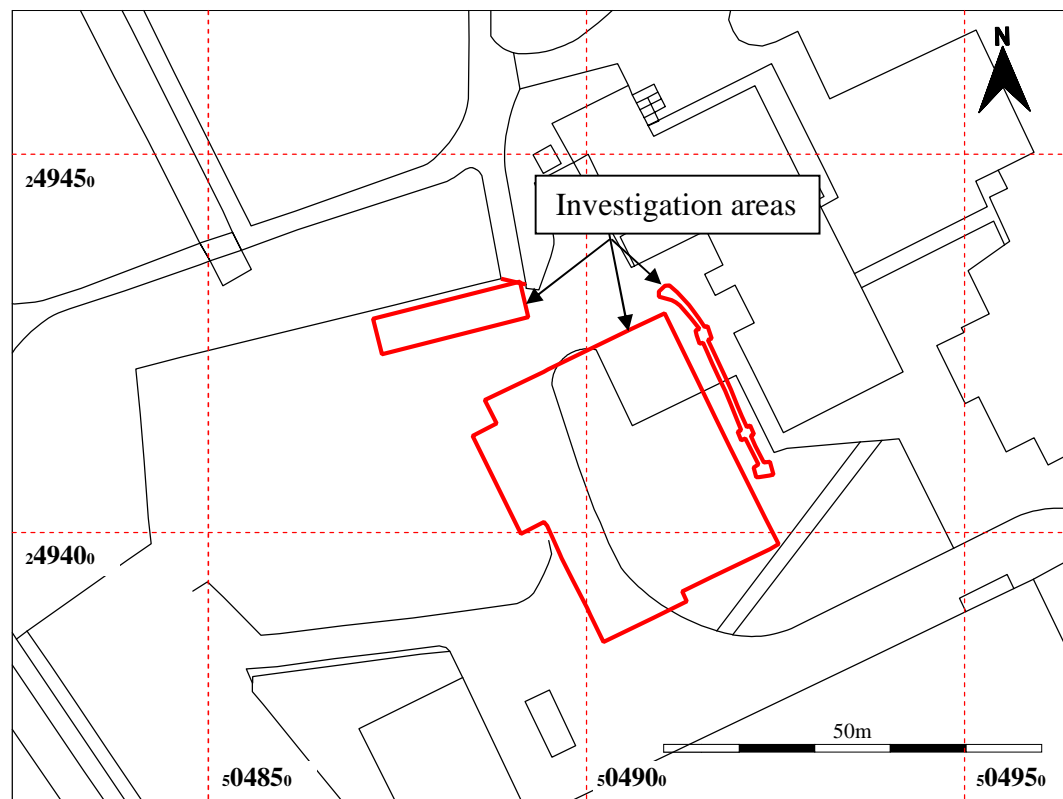
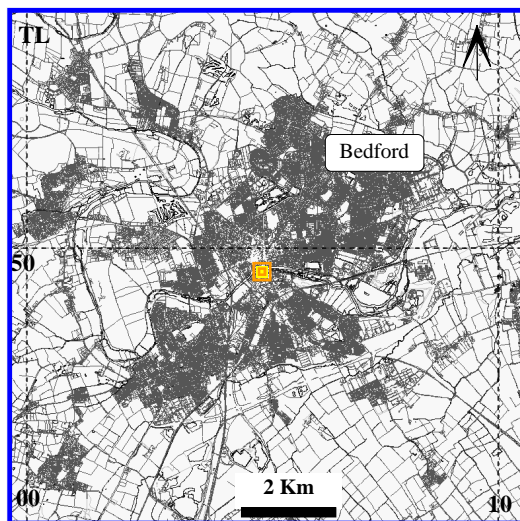
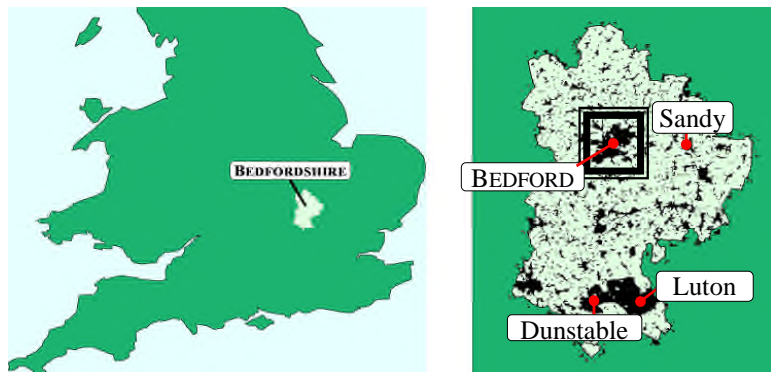


Figure 1: Site location plan

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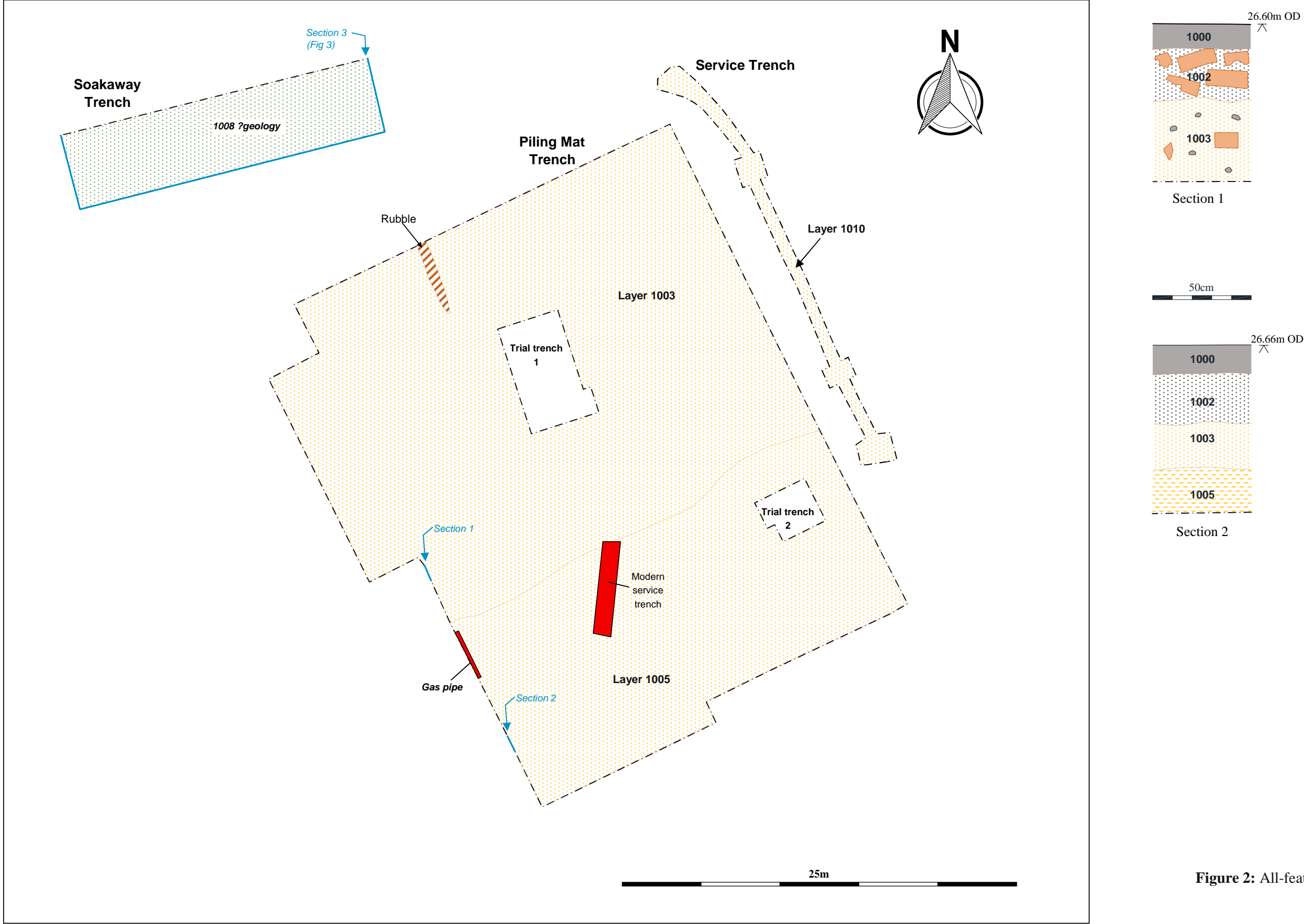


Figure 2: All-features plan

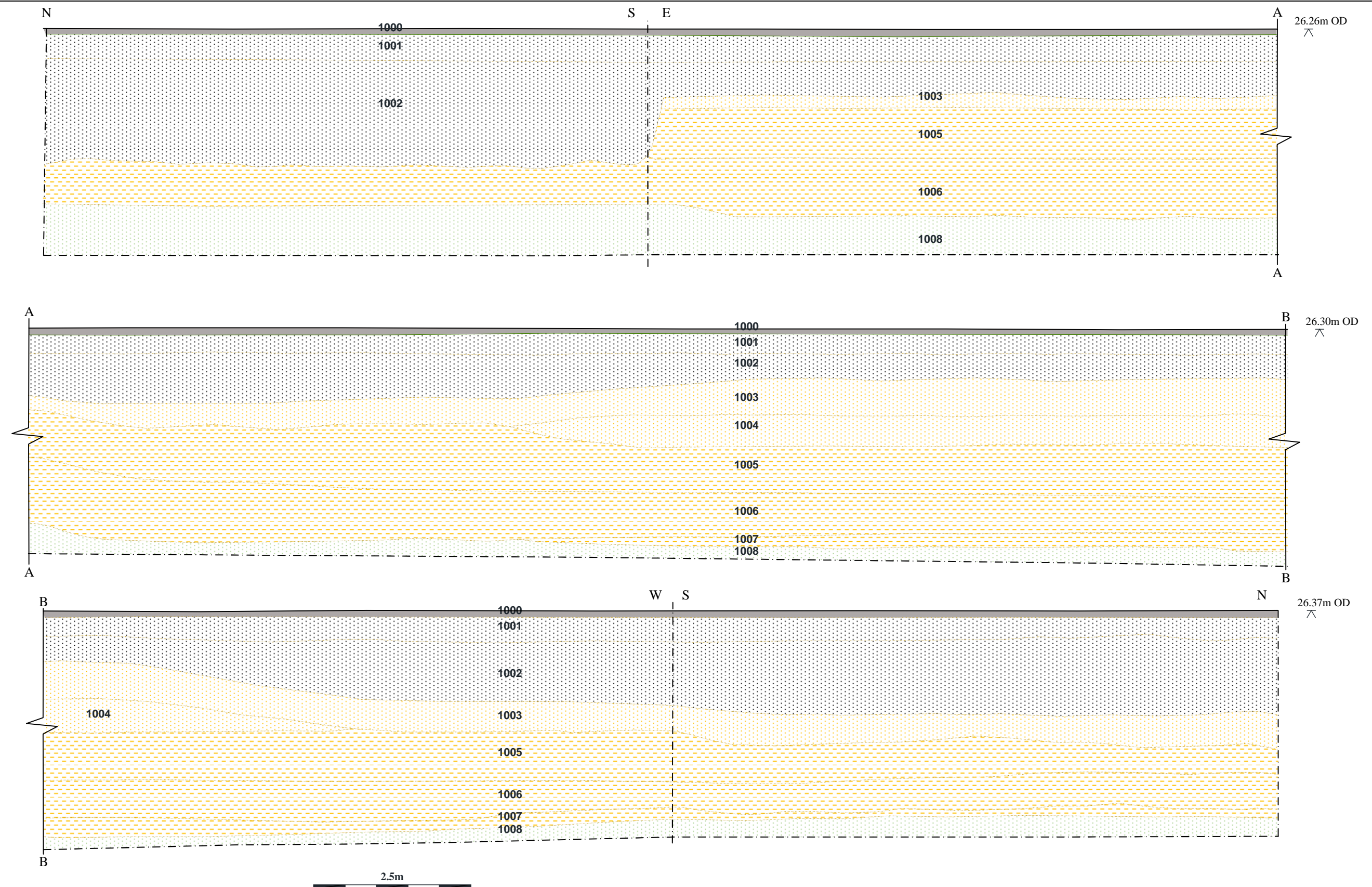


Figure 3: Soakaway trench, Section 3

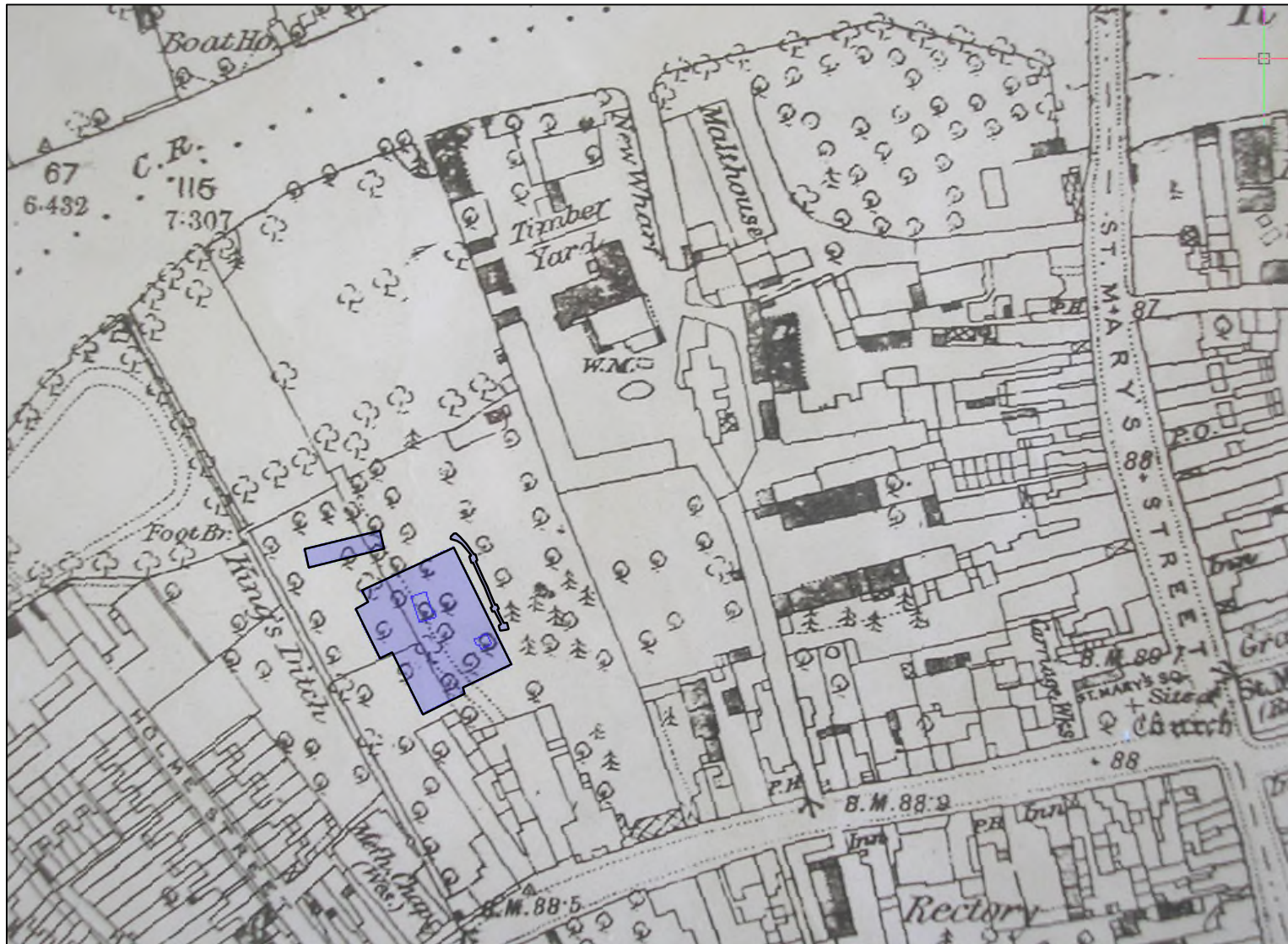


Figure 4: Investigation areas overlaid onto 1884 Ordnance Survey map (highlighted in blue)



Image 1: General view of development area, looking south-west

Shows south-east corner of site at formation level for piling mat (scale 2m)



Image 2: General view of development area, looking west

Shows north-west corner of site at formation level for piling mat (scale 1m)



Image 3: General view of development area, looking east

Shows north-west corner of site at formation level for piling mat with Tower building in background



Image 4: Section 1

Looking south-west (scale 1m)



Image 5: Section 2
Looking south-west (scale 1m)



Image 6: Soakaway drainage under construction
Looking west-south-west



Image 7: Soakaway trench, north side

Looking north (scale 1m)



Image 8: Soakaway trench, south side

Looking south (scale 1m)

**Central
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