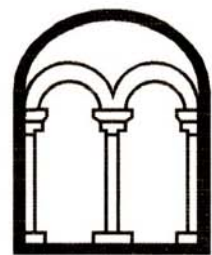


**JOHN GIBBARD LOWER SCHOOL  
SHARNBROOK  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

**Albion**  
archaeology



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INVESTIGATION, RECORDING, ANALYSIS AND  
PUBLICATION**

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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 monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Geoff Saunders (Bedford Borough Council Archaeologist). The fieldwork was undertaken by Kathy Pilkinton (Archaeological Supervisor) and Adrian Woolmer (Assistant Archaeological Supervisor). This report has been prepared by Kathy Pilkinton. All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shottliff (Operations Manager).*

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## Key Terms

The following terms or abbreviations are used throughout this report:

BARS	Bedfordshire Archives and Records Service
BBC	Bedford Borough Council
BBC AT	Bedford Borough Council Archaeology Team
CIfA	Chartered Institute <i>for</i> Archaeologists
HER	Bedford Borough Council Historic Environment Record
PDA	Permitted development area
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Planning permission (16/00901/DC3) for the erection of single-storey, four-classroom block (including the demolition of an existing temporary classroom) to the rear of John Gibbard Lower School, Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire was granted by Bedford Borough Council.*

*Due to the high archaeological potential of the proposed development area a condition was attached to the planning consent requiring the implementation of an archaeological mitigation strategy. The Historic Environment Team of Bedford Borough Council specified that the mitigation strategy should consist of detailed archaeological monitoring and recording of all groundworks associated with the development.*

*Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the monitoring which took place between 26th January and 7th April 2017. It comprised the excavation of 41 foundation pads by mechanical auger and the excavation of a swale c. 183m<sup>2</sup> in area.*

*Observation of the construction works revealed limited archaeological evidence. A post-medieval / modern ditch and a possible Iron Age ditch on the same NE-SW alignment as the current field system may represent earlier phases of field division. A deep topsoil and subsoil combined with the absence of evidence for any other activity suggest the land was in use as pasture before its incorporation into the school grounds.*

*While the limited remains revealed have little potential to address specific research aims for the region, the presence of a small amount of Iron Age material is of note. No prehistoric remains have previously been recorded in the area, although Roman pottery has been identified during field walking to the south of the site. The recovery of Iron Age material from the site may suggest earlier occupation in the area.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 *Project Background*

Planning permission (16/00901/DC3) for the erection of single-storey, four-classroom block (including the demolition of an existing temporary classroom) to the rear of John Gibbard Lower School, Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire was granted by Bedford Borough Council (BBC).

Due to the high archaeological potential of the permitted development area (PDA) a condition (no. 4) was attached to the planning consent requiring the implementation of an archaeological mitigation strategy. This was done on the advice of the Borough Council's Historic Environment Team (HET), in accordance with the guidelines provided in the National Planning Policy Framework, and 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).

The HET specified that the mitigation strategy should consist of detailed archaeological monitoring and recording of all groundworks associated with the development (BBC 2016).

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) in accordance with the requirements of the planning condition, and to carry out the subsequent programme of archaeological works (Albion 2016).

### 1.2 *Site Location and Description*

Sharnbrook lies in north-west Bedfordshire, less than 800m north of the River Great Ouse. John Gibbard Lower School lies on the northern side of the High Street near the centre of Sharnbrook (Figure 1). It is bordered by residential properties either side of the school entrance along the High Street and by tree-lined paddocks at the back of the school. The Sharn Brook runs *c.* 70m to the east of the school and southwards into the River Great Ouse.

The main school building dates to the late 19th century but there are modern classrooms to its rear. The school is centred on grid reference SP 9968 5961.

The underlying geology is Blisworth Limestone Formation Limestone, with no superficial deposits recorded. The Sharnbrook parish survey reports a clay soil with a subsoil of clay and gravel.

The development comprises the demolition of an existing temporary classroom at the rear of the school and the construction of a new classroom using a modular construction with pad foundations. In addition, there will be hard and soft landscaping around the new classroom and the construction of a new access ramp.

### 1.3 *Archaeological Background*

Data from the Bedford Borough Historic Environment Record (HER) and the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) within a 500m-radius study area



around the PDA was reviewed for this section. The HER contains numerous extant buildings of local interest, which are not included here, unless nationally designated and earlier than post-medieval in origin.

### **1.3.1 Previous archaeological investigations**

Only a small number of archaeological investigations have taken place in the vicinity of the PDA. Multiple test pits have been excavated over a number of years as part of a community archaeology project (EBC752). The results have demonstrated occupation in parts of the village dating back to the Anglo-Saxon period together with evidence of earlier activity in places.

A programme of observation and evaluation at The Church of St Peter (EBD53) in 2005 demonstrated that the graveyard had been subject to significant disturbance due to excavation and construction of several post-medieval crypts and graves, although probable medieval graves survived in 'islands' between the later deeper burials. Building recording gathered evidence that supported the interpretation that the original 13th- and 14th-century building has survived in places, although it had been altered several times.

In 2004, a watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks for an extension to 2 Church Lane, Sharnbrook (EBD289). The only deposits identified were relatively modern disturbance layers; however, natural subsoil was not encountered during the watching brief.

### **1.3.2 Prehistoric (before AD 43)**

No prehistoric remains within the study area are recorded within the HER.

### **1.3.3 Roman (AD 43- AD410)**

The line of a Roman road from Sandy to Sharnbrook, and possibly on to Irchester (HER728), is purported to run less than 375m to the south of the PDA.

A scatter of early Roman pottery (HER2684), including Samian ware, was found during fieldwalking *c.* 275m to the south-west of the PDA. It is recorded that the site was probably initially disturbed by gravel pits and is now under a housing development.

### **1.3.4 Anglo-Saxon (c. AD 410–1066) to medieval (1066–1550)**

Sharnbrook village (HER16946) is likely to be of medieval origin. It includes several sites that date to the medieval period. The most significant of these is the moated manor at Castle Close which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (HER 994 and SAM 20404), although this is located just outside the study area, 550m to the WSW of the PDA.

The parish Church of St Peter (EBD53) contains structural elements dating to the 13th century, as well as from later in the medieval and post-medieval periods.

The site of a medieval fish pond (HER14461) was recorded in Domesday Book (1086); it is located *c.* 200m to the south-east of the PDA, within the grounds of the Moat House of Kennel Hill. Further to the south-east, a complex of earthworks (HER10697) is recorded in a field to the north-east of Ouse Manor.



A large quantity of medieval pottery (HER15642) was recovered during gardening at 58 High Street, Sharnbrook.

Extensive areas of ridge and furrow (HER1642) have been recorded from aerial photographs and fieldwork to the north-west and south-east of the PDA, on the outskirts of the village. Further afield, Temple Spinney and Temple Wood, 2km north-east of the village core, once formed part of that lands given to the Knights Templar in 1199.

### **1.3.5 Post-medieval (1550–1900)**

Post-medieval monuments recorded in the HER within the wider study area include a demolished 18th-century stone bridge (HER2982); a probable 18th-century L-shaped pond or moat (HER3235); the landscaped gardens of Sharnbrook Grange (HER9438) and Sharnbrook House (HER16131); and the probable site of a demolished well (HER10758) and dovecote (HER10761).

Industrial monuments include the site of a Victorian lime kiln (HER3037); a backfilled quarry (HER3038); and a gravel pit (HER3039). There is also place-name evidence for the site of a 19th-century saw mill (HER10756) immediately to the north of the school playing field.

The site of a spring and trough (HER15641) is located on Park Lane in Sharnbrook; it is recorded as post-medieval but may have earlier origins.

### **1.3.6 Modern (1900-present day)**

Modern heritage assets within the study area include a cast-iron milestone (HER10439) and bridge sign (HER10440), now located in the garden of Peartree Cottage, High Street; three 20th-century water standpipes (HER10694, HER10695, and HER10696), on Park Lane, the High Street and at St Peter's Church. A Strict Baptist churchyard (HER9025), with probably 19th-century origins is also recorded *c.* 75m to the south-east of the PDA, opposite the junction of Norman Road and the High Street.

## **1.4 Project Objectives**

The purpose of the archaeological investigation was to make a full record of any archaeological remains impacted by the development, and to place them within their cultural and environmental setting. The general aims of the archaeological fieldwork were, therefore, to:

- monitor all groundworks that had the potential to reveal archaeological remains; and
- investigate the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of archaeological deposits encountered within them;
- record any human remains that might be encountered within the groundworks.





## 2. METHODOLOGY

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

### 2.1 Methodological Standards

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 edition (2001)
Bedford Museum	<i>Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedfordshire</i> (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 edition (2011)

The project archive will be deposited at The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford (accession number BEDFM: 2016.56). Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-259131) in accordance with the guidelines issued by Historic England and the Archaeology Data Service.

### 2.2 Observation, Investigation and Recording

Monitoring took place between 26th January and 7th April 2017. The excavation of 41 pad foundations, *c.* 1m in diameter, was carried out with a mechanical auger (Figure 2). They were excavated to a level at which any archaeological remains present would have been visible — typically *c.* 0.8m, at which point they were checked by the on-site archaeologist before they were excavated to formation level. The excavation of a swale to the north of the new classroom, covering an area of *c.* 183m<sup>2</sup>, was also observed.

All mechanical excavation, other than the foundation pads, was carried out by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket operated by an experienced driver under close archaeological supervision. All hand excavation and recording were carried out by experienced Albion staff with external specialists consulted as necessary. Any potential archaeological features were investigated by hand, photographed and recorded using Albion Archaeology's pro forma sheets.



### 3. RESULTS

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#### 3.1 Introduction

All deposits revealed during the monitoring are summarised below and shown on Figure 2. Context numbers in round brackets refer to fills or layers (\*\*\*). Detailed context information is provided in Appendix 1.

#### 3.2 Overburden and Geological Deposits

Topsoil (100) comprised dark grey-brown clayey silt, *c.* 0.5m thick.

Subsoil (101) comprised mid-brown-orange sandy clay, *c.* 0.3m thick.

Undisturbed geological deposits (102) comprised mid-orange sandy clay with patches of gravel and blue grey clay at the north-west end of the new classroom.

#### 3.3 Archaeological Features

A single ditch [103] was identified at the south-east end of the new classroom. It was aligned NE-SW, was at least 0.55m deep and contained modern ceramics. The ditch was not present in the foundation pad directly to the north-east, suggesting it either turns or terminates within the area of the new classroom.

Single sherds of modern terracotta plant pot and white stoneware (25g: not retained) were recovered from the upper fill (105). The ditch is in line with the current field system, suggesting it may be a former field boundary.

To the north within the area of the swale a shallow ditch [106] was identified and excavated. It was 0.75m wide by 0.28m deep and contained a single abraded sherd of Iron Age pottery (fabric F03<sup>1</sup>: 4g) and six animal bone fragments (109g). The latter include pieces of sheep/goat mandible and a limb bone (metapodial). The ditch was orientated NE-SW, heading towards the Sharn Brook which borders the north-east edge of the school site.

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<sup>1</sup> Fabric identified in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series.



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## 4. CONCLUSIONS

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Observation of the construction works revealed limited archaeological evidence within the PDA.

A post-medieval/modern ditch and a possible Iron Age ditch on the same NE-SW alignment as the current field system may represent earlier phases of field division. A substantial topsoil and subsoil along with the absence of evidence for any other activity suggest the land was in use as pasture before its incorporation into the school grounds.

While the limited remains revealed have little potential to address specific research aims for the region (e.g. Brown, N. and Glazebrook, J., 2000) the presence of a small amount of Iron Age material is of note. No prehistoric remains have previously been recorded in the area, although Roman pottery has been identified during field walking to the south of the PDA (HER2684). The recovery of Iron Age material from the PDA may suggest occupation of this earlier date in the area.



## 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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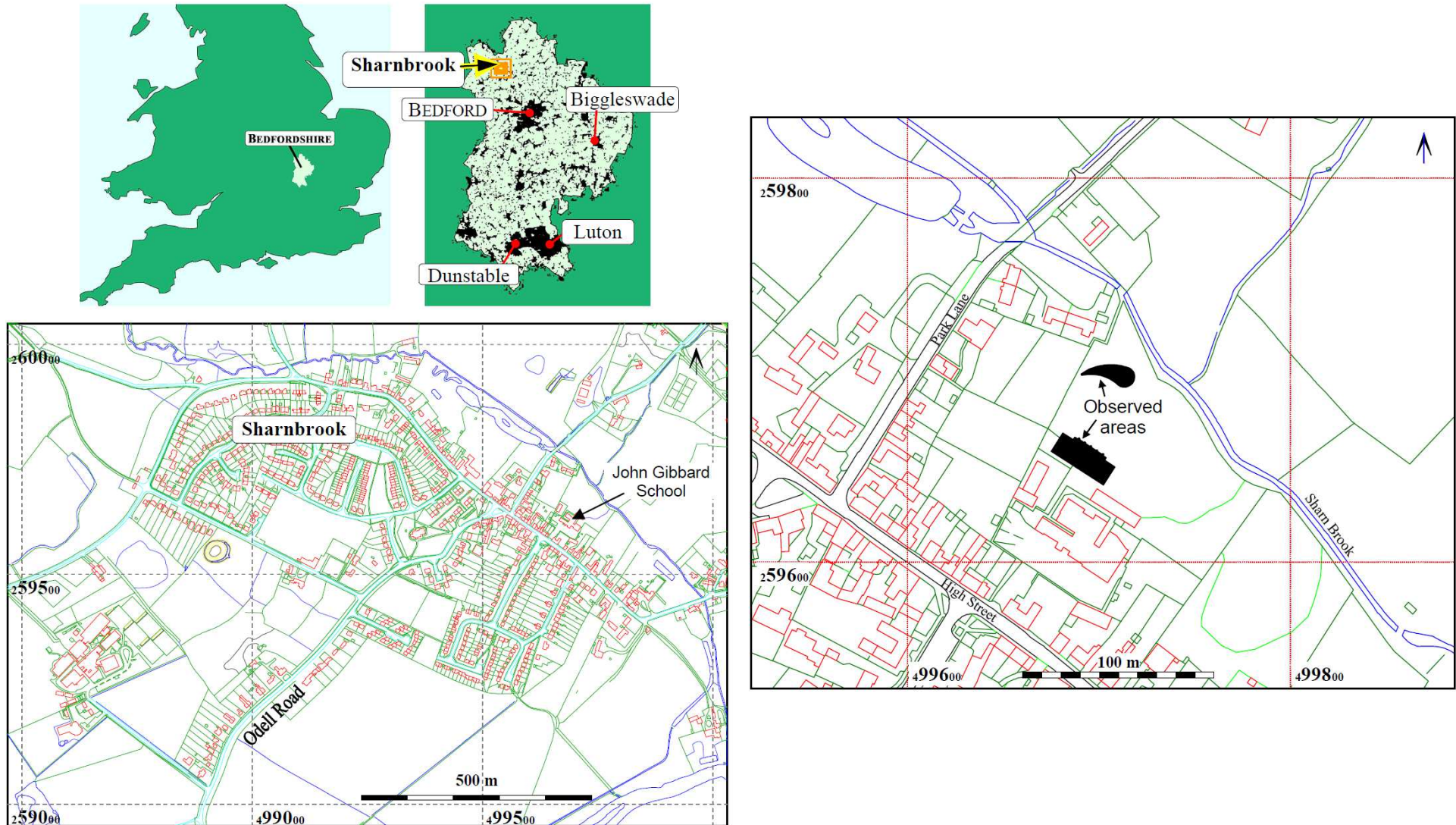
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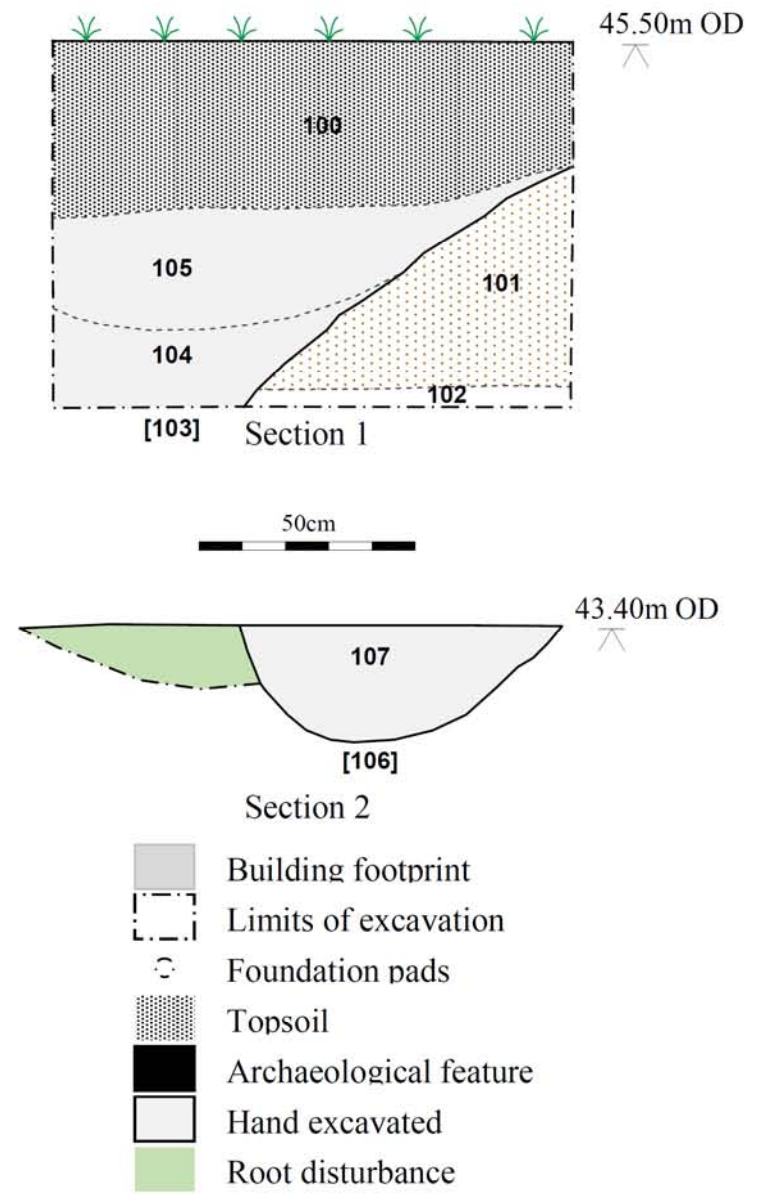
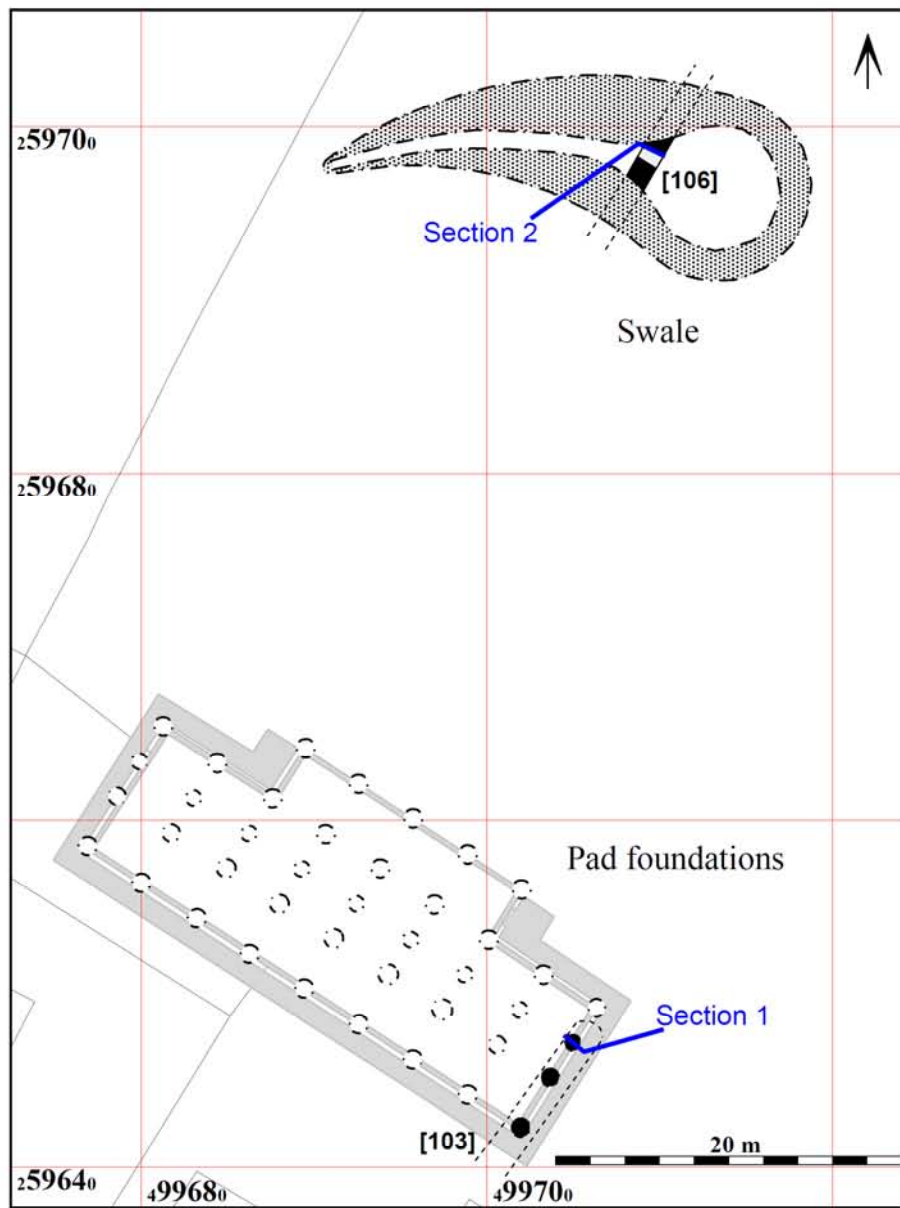
## 6. APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT SUMMARY

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown clay silt . Thickness: 0.5m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Subsoil	Firm mid brown orange sandy clay occasional small stones. Thickness: 0.3m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Natural	Firm mid orange sandy clay occasional small-medium stones. Gravel and blue grey clay patches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Ditch	Linear NE-SW sides: 45 degrees dimensions: min breadth 1.2m, min depth 0.55m, min length 1.2m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Fill	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt occasional medium stones. Thickness: 0.2m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Fill	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt . Thickness: 0.28m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
106	Ditch	Linear NE-SW sides: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.75m, max depth 0.28m, min length 3.5m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
107	Fill	Friable mid brown grey clay silt moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



**Figure 1: Site location**

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Foundation pad excavated by mechanical auger (1m scale)



Modern ditch [103] within foundation pad (from south-east, 40cm scale)



Ditch [106] (from south-west, 1m scale)

**Figure 2: All-features plan and selected images**

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