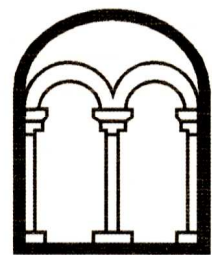


**LAND AT GREENSAND RIDGE
LIDLINGTON
BEDFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

Albion
archaeology



**LAND AT GREENSAND RIDGE
LIDLINGTON
BEDFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

Project: GR2964
Museum accession no.: BEDFM 2016.60
HER search reference: 201617/78
Oasis reference no.: albionar1-259430

Document: 2016/172
Version 1.0

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20th September 2016

Produced for:
Denison Investments Limited



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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 Martin Oake, Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist. The fieldwork was undertaken by Kathy Pilkinton (Archaeological Supervisor) and Anna Orłowska-Synus (Assistant Archaeological Supervisor). This report has been prepared by Kathy Pilkinton with contributions from Jackie Wells (Finds Officer). The figures have been produced by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

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Version History

Version	Issue date	Reason for re-issue
1.0	20/09/16	n/a

Key Terms

The following terms or abbreviations are used throughout this report:

BLARS	Bedford and Luton Archives and Records Service
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
HER	Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record
PDA	Proposed development area
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

Denison Investments Ltd are gathering baseline information in support of a planning application (pre-application reference no. CB/15/04058/PAPC) for residential development on land at Greensand Ridge, Lidlington, Bedfordshire.

The proposed development area lies within the medieval core of Lidlington. For this reason Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist advised the planning officer that a heritage statement comprising the results of a trial trench evaluation should accompany any planning application for development.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the trial trenching which comprised the excavation of four 20m x 2m trenches. The trenches were positioned to target the three proposed new dwellings and access road.

Archaeological features were identified in two of the four trenches. These comprised two shallow ditches both of which contained material dating to the post-medieval and modern periods. They are likely to be associated with the most recent phase of development in the area and are of negligible archaeological interest.

The features found within the trenches have no potential to contribute to local and regional research objectives. The absence of significant archaeological remains suggests that Saxon, medieval and post-medieval settlement of Lidlington did not extend into the proposed development area.

The scarcity of archaeological remains and the low significance of what was found during the trial trenching suggest that any groundworks undertaken as part of the planned development would have little or no archaeological impact.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Background*

Denison Investments Ltd are gathering information in support of a planning application (pre-application reference no. CB/15/04058/PAPC) for residential development on land at Greensand Ridge, Lidlington, Bedfordshire.

The proposed development area (PDA) lies within the medieval core of Lidlington. For this reason Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA) has advised the planning officer that a heritage statement is to accompany any planning application for development of the site. The heritage statement is to comprise the results of a trial trench evaluation together with technical details of the construction methods to be employed to demonstrate the level of impact the proposed development will have on any surviving archaeological remains at the site (pre app, advice ref. HER/16898/MKO). This advice is in accordance with Paragraph 128 of the *National Planning Policy Framework*.

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

Lidlington village lies on the western edge of the Millbrook Proving Ground, which is located *c.* 7 miles to the south-west of Bedford, between the villages of Marston Moretaine, by the A421, and Ampthill, on the northern slopes of the Greensand Ridge in the east. In the south the Millbrook Proving Ground is bordered by the forested Greensand Ridge, including Heydon Hill, Jackdaw Hill and the Millbrook Golf Course. Arable land to the north-east and north-west includes some landscaped, former clay extraction pits. It is also framed by two railway lines, the Bedford to Bletchley line in the west and the Bedford to London line in the east.

The PDA lies on the south-west edge of the village, centred on SP 9895 3876. It is situated on the west side of Greensand Ridge (road), accessed from the High Street. At the time of the fieldwork it comprised a *c.* 0.5ha area that contained grass and scrub. It is bordered by houses and gardens to the north and south and fields to the west. Greensand Ridge (road) defines the eastern extent and beyond this is The Green Man public house.

The PDA is situated on an undulating area of land that slopes down to the north-west and south-west. The underlying geology comprises Stewartby Member and Weymouth Member mudstone (part of the Oxford Clay Formation)¹.

1.3 *Archaeological Background*

A search of the HER was carried out (ref.: 201617/122). The most salient information from this is reproduced below.

The Marston Vale is a landscape which was extensively settled and cultivated from the prehistoric period onwards. No archaeological investigations have been undertaken within Lidlington to date, but investigations along the Willington to Steppingley Pipeline to the east found evidence for settlements and sites dating

¹ Contains British Geological Survey Materials NERC (2014)



from the early Mesolithic to the post-medieval period. Sites at Marston Park and the Rookery Pit are two further archaeological investigations in the Marston Vale that have revealed multi-period settlement evidence ranging from prehistoric to early medieval in date

1.3.1 Prehistoric to Roman (prior to c. AD 410)

No prehistoric or Roman heritage assets have yet been recorded within Lidlington. However, an Iron Age coin (HER18802) was found by metal detector in a field on the south-west side of the village.

The Marston Vale is a landscape which was extensively settled in the prehistoric and Roman period. Investigations along the Willington to Steppingley Pipeline found evidence for several settlements and sites dating to these periods. Extensive Iron Age (HER17715), Roman and Saxon (HER20239) remains have also recently been uncovered at Marston Park, c. 2.5km to the north-east of the PDA (Albion 2012).

Prehistoric to Roman heritage assets are known to the north-east of the Millbrook Proving Ground c. 2.9km from the PDA. These comprise the findings of recent investigations carried out to the south of Rookery Pit clay extraction site (HER19806) which comprised ‘burnt mounds’ possibly dating to the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman settlement remains and system of Roman irrigation ditches (Albion in prep.).

1.3.2 Anglo-Saxon (410–1066)

Anglo-Saxon evidence within Lidlington is restricted to historical and place-name evidence. The name of Lidlington probably originated in the 5th to 7th century, suggesting a Saxon origin for the village (HER 785). Lidlington is also mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086. However, no Anglo-Saxon archaeological remains have yet been found.

1.3.3 Medieval (1066–1550)

The present-day village of Lidlington (HER 16898) has at least medieval origins. To the south-east of the PDA lies the site of the former medieval All Saints’ Church (HER 32). The church was probably built in the 15th century or earlier, and extended and repaired in the late 19th century. However, by the middle of the 20th century it had become ruinous and was demolished in the early 1960s. Its parish churchyard dates from the 18th century (HER 9024).

The extent of the medieval village (HER 16898), as defined in the HER, includes land on either side of the High Street and Marston Road and to the east of Church Street. Part of the PDA lies within the medieval village envelope.

The scheduled monument of Thrupp End medieval village and moated sites (HER31, NHLE1010364) to the north of Lidlington represents another medieval settlement focus. The site is known from low earthworks and aerial photographs that clearly show a range of building plots extending for some 30–50m to the south-east of the lane leading to Thrupp End Farm. Long narrow fields, typical of medieval farming, extend for a further 100m beyond the house plots and there is a distinct boundary or headland (about 1m high) visible on the south-east edge.



At the northern end of the Thrupp End site are the remains of two moated sites. One is attached to the north-east corner of the settlement. It is almost square and measures 110–120m across. The moat arms are 10–20m wide and up to 3m deep and are crossed by a causeway in the middle of the south-eastern arm. The interior is largely taken up by three oval ponds.

The second moat lies to the north-west of Thrupp End Farm and comprises two islands. The larger island has a bank along its south-west side and its surface retains lines of earlier ridge-and-furrow. The interior of the smaller island is slightly raised (by about 1.5m) and is thought to hold the remains of a building. At the western corner of the moat the ditches are enlarged to form two parallel fishponds.

The moats are considered to have been part of the medieval manor known as ‘Goldington’s Manor’. The name is applied to Thrupp End Farm on a map dated 1775 and it is possible that the manor house stood on the site of the present farm house. Historical documents record that the manor belonged to the Abbess of Barking and that it was held by the Goldington family from at least the 15th century. Medieval pottery, dating from the 12th–14th century, along with fragments of building materials, have been found on the surface of the deserted settlement. The map of 1775 also shows that houses stood on the site as late as the 18th century.

An archaeological watching brief on building extension carried out at Thrupp End Farm in 2013 (ASC Ltd 2013) found no finds or features.

Exploitation of the higher lying, hilly landscape are indicated by Combes or Lidlington Park (HER 9595), a deer park originating in the medieval period. Lidlington Wood (HER 13073) and Heydon Hill are two areas of ancient woodland. Coney Hill, in the same area, is the location of a medieval rabbit warren.

1.3.4 Post-medieval (1550–1900)

A large number of heritage assets in the vicinity of the PDA date to the post-medieval period and consist of standing buildings, part of the growing village of Lidlington. The buildings consist of designated and undesignated 17th–19th-century cottages, farm buildings, a school house, the railway station and a former crossing keeper’s house. HER 3170 represents the site of a windmill.

The new parish church of St Margaret (HER 1147) was built in 1885/6 to replace the earlier All Saints’ Church.

Use of the Lidlington deer park, wood and Heydon Hill woods continued into the post-medieval period. At one point in the post-medieval period the woods included a set of fishponds (HER 13336).

Due to the underlying Oxford clay geology the Marston Vale was an area of intensive clay extraction and brick production, evidenced by the high number of clay and sand and gravel pits in the area (such as HER 2949 to the south of the



PDA). Many of these are shown on the first edition OS map of 1880 but continued to be used until the early 20th century. The Marston Valley Brickworks and clay pit (HER 6671) were in use from 1929–77.

The Bedford to Bletchley railway (HER 11594) is a further heritage asset that was built in c. 1846 and is still in use.

1.3.5 Modern (1900-present day)

The Millbrook Proving Ground is the only modern heritage asset within the vicinity of the PDA (HER 16459). It was built as a testing ground for motor vehicles in 1968/9.

1.4 Project Objectives

The principal purpose of the evaluation was to gather information on possible sub-surface archaeological heritage assets within the PDA.

The archaeological trial trenching endeavoured to determine:

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

The investigations were considered to have the potential to inform the following specific research aims (Oake 2007; Edgeworth 2007), the details of which are set out in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2016):

- if there is any evidence for Saxon occupation on the PDA;
- if there is any evidence for the layout, development and origins of the medieval village (Oake 2007, 14);
- if there is any evidence for the layout and development of the post-medieval village (Edgeworth 2007, 121–3);
- If there is any below-ground evidence relating to the post-medieval use of the PDA (Edgeworth 2007, 119–23).



2. METHODOLOGY

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

2.1 Methodological Standards

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 archaeological field evaluation</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> (2014)
EAA	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> (2003)
Historic England	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Project Managers' Guide</i> (2009)
	<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 2016.39). Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-253643) in accordance with the guidelines issued by English Heritage and the Archaeology Data Service.

2.2 Trial Trenching

The trial trenching took place between 31st August and 1st September 2016. It comprised the excavation of four 20m x 2m trenches (160m²). The trenches were positioned to target the three new dwellings and access road where it was envisaged that the greatest ground reduction would occur.

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



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

All deposits revealed within the trial trenches are summarised below and shown on Figures 2 and 3. Context numbers in square brackets refer to the cuts [***] and round brackets to fills or layers (***). Detailed information is provided within Appendix 1.

3.2 Overburden and Geological Deposits

Topsoil comprising black-brown clayey silt was present in all trenches and was 0.3–0.5m thick. No true subsoil was present but heavy rooting in the topsoil formed an interface with the underlying geological deposits.

Undisturbed geological deposits comprised very firm brown-grey clay. Both the topsoil and underlying clay were very dry and cracked, presumably due to their position on top of the ridge.

3.3 Archaeological Remains

Trench 1 contained a shallow ditch [103] aligned NE-SW. It was *c.* 0.45m wide and 0.15m deep; it contained fragments of brick and tile building material.

Trench 2 contained a similarly shallow ditch [203] aligned NW-SE, but wider at *c.* 1m. Finds collected from the fill comprise an abraded sherd of late 17th- to 18th-century glazed earthenware pottery (fabric type P01²: 2g), sand-tempered brick and roof tile fragments (74g), single pieces of modern wine glass and window glass, and a piece of indeterminate animal limb bone (28g).

Trenches 3 and 4 contained no archaeological features.

² Fabric type defined in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series



4. CONCLUSIONS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

4.1 *Summary of Results*

Archaeological features were identified in two of the four trenches. These comprised two shallow ditches both of which contained material dating to the post-medieval and modern periods. They are likely to be associated with the most recent phase of development in the area and are of negligible archaeological significance.

4.2 *Heritage Statement*

The features found within the trenches have no potential to contribute to local and regional research objectives. The absence of significant archaeological remains suggests that Saxon, medieval and post-medieval settlement of Lidlington did not extend into the proposed development area.

The scarcity of archaeological remains and the low significance of what was found during the trial trenching suggest that any groundworks undertaken as part of the planned development would have little or no archaeological impact.



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6. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES

Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 20.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.35 m. Max: 0.45 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 98908: Northing: 38777)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 98916: Northing: 38758)

Reason: Assess archaeological potential

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Topsoil	Firm dark brown black clay silt occasional flecks charcoal Thickness: 0.35m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Subsoil	Firm mid brown grey silty clay Thickness: 0.1m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Natural	Firm light brown grey clay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Ditch	Linear NE-SW sides: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.35m, max depth 0.11m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Fill	Friable dark grey black silty clay Thickness: 0.11m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 20.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.35 m. Max: 0.4 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 98936: Northing: 38786)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 98916: Northing: 38784)

Reason: Assess archaeological potential

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
200	Topsoil	Firm dark brown black clay silt occasional flecks charcoal Thickness: 0.35m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
201	Subsoil	Firm mid brown black silty clay Thickness: 0.05m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
202	Natural	Firm light brown grey clay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
203	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: stepped base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.05m, max depth 0.12m, min length 0.7m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
204	Fill	Firm dark brown black silty clay moderate flecks charcoal, moderate flecks fired clay Occasional pottery (also modern), glass, animal bone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Trench: 3

Max Dimensions: Length: 20.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.4 m. Max: 0.45 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 98943: Northing: 38783)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 98950: Northing: 38765)

Reason: Assess archaeological potential

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
300	Topsoil	Firm dark brown black clay silt occasional flecks charcoal Thickness: 0.35m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
301	Subsoil	Firm mid brown grey silty clay Thickness: 0.05m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
302	Natural	Firm light brown grey clay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Trench: 4

Max Dimensions: Length: 20.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.4 m. Max: 0.5 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 98983: Northing: 38767)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 98965: Northing: 38759)

Reason: Assess archaeological potential

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
400	Topsoil	Firm dark brown black clay silt occasional flecks charcoal Thickness: 0.45	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
401	Subsoil	Firm dark brown black silty clay Thickness: 0.05	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
402	Natural	Firm light brown grey clay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

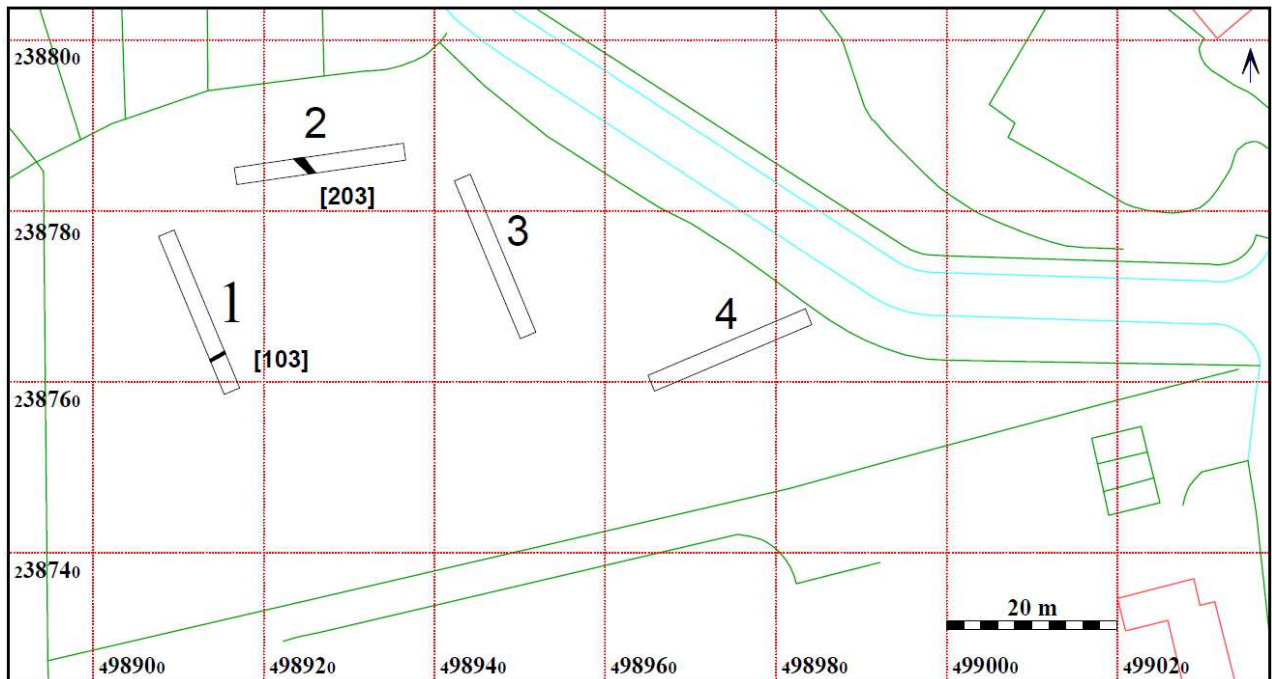
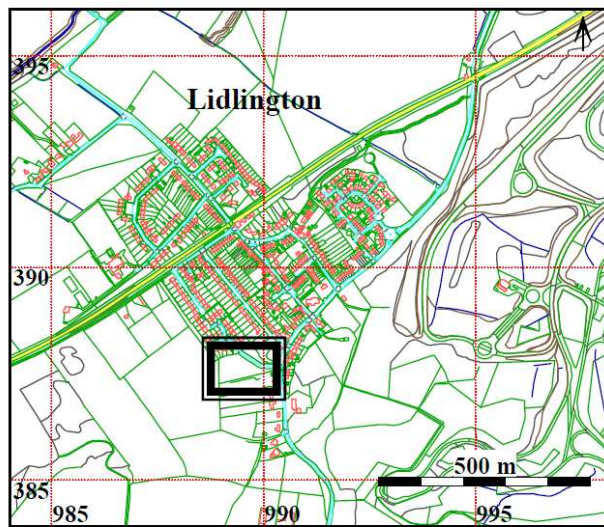
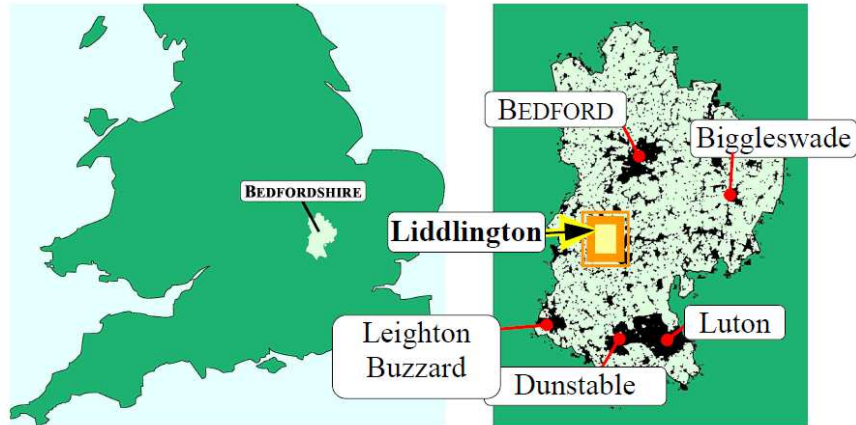
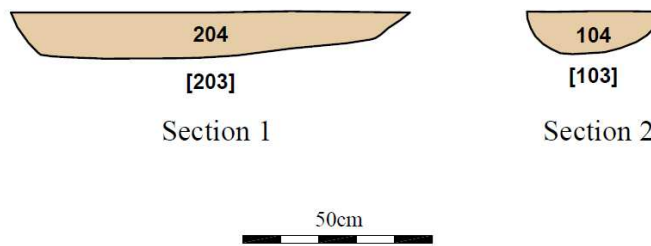
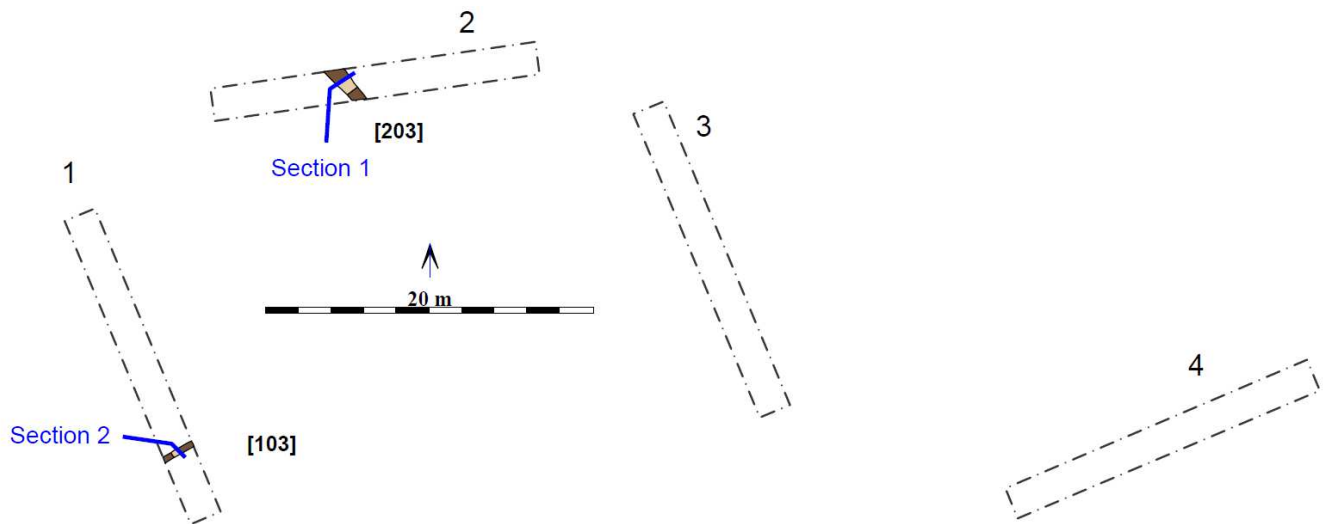


Figure 1: Site and trench location



SW facing photograph section 1
1m scale



SW facing photograph section 2
40cm scale

Figure 2: All-features plan, sections and photographs

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