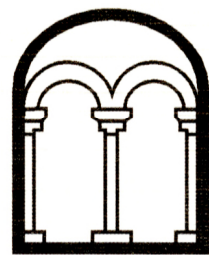


**1A HIGH STREET
CLOPHILL
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**STAGE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL
TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION**

Albion
archaeology



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CLOPHILL
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TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION**

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Compiled by	Checked by	Approved by
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Produced for:
Mr and Mrs J Edwards

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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 Hannah Firth, Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA). The fieldwork was undertaken by Marcin Koziminski (Archaeological Supervisor), who also prepared this report with contributions from Joan Lightning (CAD Illustrator). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

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Key terms

The following terms or abbreviations are used throughout this report:

Albion	Albion Archaeology
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
CIfA	Chartered Institute <i>for</i> Archaeologists
HER	Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record
PDA	Proposed development area



Non-Technical Summary

Planning permission (CB/16/00422/FULL) was granted by Central Bedfordshire Council for the demolition of business premises and garage and the erection of a two-storey, one-bedroom dwelling at 1A High Street, Clophill, Bedfordshire.

As the site is located in an area that has the potential to contain heritage assets of archaeological interest, the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA) recommended a condition be attached to the permission requiring a staged programme of archaeological investigation.

One trench, measuring 3.2m by 3.2m, was investigated on 15th November 2016. The evaluation works revealed a small number of archaeological remains, predominantly of modern date.

Two pits were cut through the layers of overburden and contained modern refuse material; hence, they are thought to represent recent backyard activity within the existing property, which dates to the 19th century.

A NW-SE aligned, shallow, undated gully was sealed beneath the subsoil, which indicates its earlier date. Its alignment appears to parallel the High Street, which may have originated in the 18th century. The gully may, therefore, represent activity (perhaps a small boundary or plot partition) of post-medieval or earlier date. No associated evidence for occupation, industrial or agricultural activity was identified and there was no evidence for truncation that might have had an impact on feature survival. The lack of associated activity is probably due to either the small area of investigation or the distance of the site from the High Street frontage, which makes it peripheral to the likely main areas of domestic activity.

The modern archaeological remains have no potential to address regional research objectives; the undated, though probably earlier, linear feature is of no more than local significance and has very limited potential to address regional research objectives. The findings of the evaluation suggest that the proposed development of the site will have little archaeological impact.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Project Background**

Planning permission (CB/16/00422/FULL) was granted by Central Bedfordshire Council for the demolition of business premises and garage and the erection of a two-storey, one-bedroom dwelling at 1A High Street, Clophill, Bedfordshire.

As the site is located in an area that has the potential to contain heritage assets with archaeological interest, the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA) recommended a condition be attached to the permission requiring a staged programme of archaeological investigation be carried out. This is in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework – Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment* (March 2012).

The stages comprise:

1. Trial trench evaluation;
2. Appraisal of results of the evaluation and their significance with regard to the development site and the wider context;
3. The implementation of a programme of further archaeological works, if required.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Albion 2016a) was produced to describe the scope of the first stage of the archaeological investigation, *i.e.* a trial trench evaluation.

This document details the results of the first stage of works and appraises the significance of the heritage assets with archaeological interest found within the proposed development area (PDA).

1.2 **Site Location, Topography and Geology**

Clophill is a small village on the southern slopes of the Greensand Ridge and the northern bank of the River Flit. It lies at the junction of the A6 and A507, with Shefford 6.3km to the east and Ampthill 4.5km to the west.

1A High Street is located in the western part of the village on the northern side of the High Street and close to the village green. The PDA lies within the curtilage of 1 High Street and currently comprises a shop and parking area to the front, with a timber shed and garage used for storage, and a parking area to the rear.

The site is centred on NGR TL 082392 377315 and lies at 53m OD, although the ground level gently slopes to the south-east towards the River Flit. The underlying geology of the area is superficial deposits of “Head” (gravel, sand, silt and clay) over Woburn Sands Formation Sandstone bedrock¹.

¹ Contains British Geological Survey materials ©NERC [2015]



1.3 Archaeological Background

The bulk of the background information provided below has been taken from a heritage statement (Albion 2015) and an HER search within a 500m-radius study area around the PDA (ref. no.: 201617/129).

No prehistoric heritage assets have been recorded within the study area, other than stray finds. A scatter of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age worked flints were recovered from a former sand quarry (HER 15610), situated *c.* 540m to the south-west of the PDA. Mesolithic flints were also found in archaeological investigations in the eastern part of the High Street (Archaeological Solutions 2012).

A 4th-century Roman coin (HER 3650) was found in the garden of a property along the High Street to the east of The Green. There are suggestions that the modern A507 follows the line of a Roman road (HER 5342, Viatores no. 176); however, many of the roads identified by the Viatores project in Bedfordshire have been disproved as they were based on unreliable evidence (Simco 1984).

Clophill is first mentioned in Domesday Book, where it is recorded as “Clopelle”. In 1066, it was a small settlement of *c.* 50 people and was held by two of Earl Tosti’s thanes. By 1086 the lord was Nigel of Aubigny¹. No heritage assets dating to this period have been recorded within the study area.

The majority of heritage assets within the study area and in the vicinity of the PDA date from the medieval to post-medieval periods. Two previous archaeological investigations have taken place close to the PDA — an evaluation on land at no. 3a and adjacent to no. 3 High Street (EBD1331). This recorded three post-medieval pits. An evaluation to the rear of the Green Man PH revealed a former boundary ditch containing medieval pottery (Albion 2016b).

An extensive archaeological and historical background to these periods was provided to the planning officer by the CBCA and detailed in the Planning Officer Delegated Report (archaeology reference HER/16998/HF)², extracts of which are reproduced below.

It is likely that a settlement existed at Clophill in the late Saxon period; however, the location of that original village is uncertain. The historic village recorded in the HER is linear in morphology, following the lower slopes of the Greensand Ridge. However, it has been suggested that the name, “Clophill”, is associated with a hilltop settlement. One place name interpretation is “Tree-Stump Hill”; whilst another is “Cleft in the Hill” — neither of which particularly fits with the established settlement pattern (Allden 1978).

The uncertainty as to the location of the late Saxon settlement is compounded by the fact that the parish church of St Mary (HER 2476, NHLE 1113735) is located *c.* 700m north-east of the core of the village. Cartographic and aerial photographic evidence suggests the presence of a small number of buildings (probably

¹ <http://opendomesday.org/>

² Planning Officer Delegated Report CB/16/00422/FULL, date registered 01 February 2016.



dwellings) around the church. The present church may have been built by the de Grey family who acquired the Cainhoe and Clophill manor in 1415; it was completed by 1498 when there is a record of a request for a burial there. However, it has been postulated that some of the church's surviving structural elements are in fact considerably earlier than this date.

It was fairly common for the focus of medieval settlements to shift over time and many of Bedfordshire's villages show evidence of having contracted and expanded. The reasons for this are numerous; there were episodes of both population growth and decline during this period, with a number of episodes of decline in the 14th century. Equally, it may have been a more gradual process as there are still records of buildings around the church in the 17th and 18th centuries (Allden 1978). If the original late Saxon settlement was located to the north-east and the shift of focus related to the social and economic pressures of the 14th century, then it is probable that the earliest archaeological remains within Clophill itself date to the mid- to late medieval period.

1.4 Project Objectives

The relevant research frameworks for the area are:

- *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties – 1 Resource Assessment* (Glazebrook 1997);
- *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties – 2 Research Agenda and Strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000);
- *Bedfordshire Archaeology. Research and Archaeology: Resource Assessment, Research Agenda and Strategy* (Oake et al. 2007);
- *A Revised Framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011).

The regional research framework states that few medieval rural settlements have been investigated in Bedfordshire. Research into rural settlement needs to be undertaken at the micro-scale of investigating the chronology, structure and function of individual settlements or classes of settlement and at the macro-scale of broad patterns of settlement (Oake 2007, 14). As stated in the background information provided to the planning officer by the CBCA, the origins of the settlement at Clophill are far from certain and the PDA had the potential to yield evidence about the development of the village.

The investigations at the PDA had potential to inform the following research aims (Wade 2000, 24–25; Oake 2007, 14; Medlycott 2011, 70):

- examination of diversity and distribution of rural Saxon and medieval settlements;
- characterisation of settlement forms to understand how they appear, grow, shift and disappear;

In addition, remains of Mesolithic date have been found in the vicinity. Any such remains on the PDA would have been of regional significance (Oake 2007, 9; Austin 2000, 6–7; Medlycott 2011, 6–8).

The principal purpose of the archaeological trial trenching was to recover information on the:



- location, extent, nature, and date of any archaeological features or deposits that might be present within the PDA;
- integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that might be present within the PDA;
- nature of palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.



2. METHODOLOGY

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

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 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 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 (formerly English Heritage)	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment PPN3: Archaeological Excavation</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 no.: BEDFM 2016.65). Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-260456) in accordance with the guidelines issued by Historic England and the Archaeology Data Service.

2.2 Archaeological Investigation

The investigation took place on 15th November 2016. It comprised the excavation of a single 10m² trench (3.2m by 3.2m) that was targeted on the centre of the footprint of the new dwelling (Figure 1).

The trench was opened by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket, operated by an experienced driver under close archaeological supervision. All excavation and recording was carried out by experienced Albion staff. Any potential archaeological features were investigated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's *pro forma* sheets. The trench was subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate. It was inspected by the CBCA prior to its backfilling.



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

All significant deposits and features revealed within are described below and shown on Figure 2. Context numbers in square brackets refer to the cuts [***] and round brackets to fills or layers (***)).

Detailed technical information on all deposits and archaeological remains is provided in the Appendix.

3.2 Overburden and Geological Stratum

Overburden had a combined thickness of 0.68–0.71m and comprised the following deposits (from top to bottom) (Figure 2, Sections 1 and 2):

- yard surface (100) — a 0.05m-thick, compacted, sandy gravel;
- levelling layer (101) — up to 0.12m of grey-black silty sand;
- topsoil (102) — 0.24m of dark silty sand;
- subsoil (103) — up to 0.2m of brown-grey clay sand;
- buried subsoil (104) — up to 0.14m of grey-orange clay sand.

The undisturbed geological stratum (105) consisted of mid grey-orange silty sand with moderate amounts of stone inclusions.

3.3 Modern Features

Pit [106] was observed in the southern baulk section of the trench (Figure 2: Section 1 and Image 1). It was 0.5m in diameter, had a steep-sided profile up to 0.16m deep and was cut from the top of topsoil (102); its only fill comprised deliberately deposited limestone debris (107).

Circular pit [108] was revealed at the top of subsoil (103). It was *c.* 0.4m in diameter and was not excavated because of its recent origins (Figure 2: Images 1 and 2). It was backfilled with grey silty sand (109) that contained an abundance of modern glass bottles.

3.4 Undated Remains

A NW-SE aligned gully [110] was revealed in the eastern part of the trench; it was sealed beneath the subsoil. It was in excess of 0.35m wide and had a concave profile that was 0.12m deep (Figure 2, Section 3, Images 1 and 2). Its sole fill (111) derived from natural erosional processes and produced no artefactual evidence.



4. CONCLUSIONS

The trial trenching revealed a small number of archaeological features, predominantly of modern date.

Two pits were cut through the overburden and contained modern refuse material. They are evidence for fairly recent backyard activity within the existing property, which dates to the 19th century (Albion 2015).

The shallow, undated gully was sealed beneath the subsoil, which indicates its earlier date. Its alignment appears to be parallel to the High Street, which may have originated in the 18th century. The gully may, therefore, represent activity (perhaps a small boundary or plot partition) of post-medieval or earlier date. No associated evidence for occupation, industrial or agricultural activity was identified and there was no evidence for truncation that might have had an impact on feature survival. The lack of associated activity is probably due to either the small area of investigation or the distance of the site from the High Street frontage, which makes it peripheral to the likely main areas of domestic activity.

In summary, the modern archaeological remains have no potential to address regional research objectives; the undated, though probably earlier, linear feature is of no more than local significance and has very limited potential to address regional research objectives. The findings of the evaluation suggest that the proposed development of the site will have little archaeological impact.



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- Simco, A., 1984, *Survey of Bedfordshire: The Roman period*.
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6. APPENDIX: TRENCH SUMMARY

Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 3.20 m. Width: 3.20 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.68 m. Max: 0.71 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 8238: Northing: 37739)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 8236: Northing: 37735)

Reason: To evaluate archaeological potential prior to construction of house.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	External surface	Hard mid grey sandy gravel Up to 0.05m thick deposit of existing yard surface.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Levelling layer	Firm dark grey black silty sand moderate small-large CBM, moderate small-medium stones Moderate amount of glass, metal and plastic debris (not retained). Up to 0.12m thick deposit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey silty sand occasional small-medium stones Moderate amount of modern debris and CBM (not retained), occasional rooting. Up to 0.24m thick deposit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Subsoil	Friable mid brown grey clay sand occasional small-medium stones Moderate rooting and moderate amount of CBM (not retained). Up to 0.2m thick deposit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Buried subsoil	Friable mid grey orange clay sand occasional small-medium stones Up to 0.14m thick deposit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Natural	Firm mid grey orange silty sand moderate small-medium stones, occasional large stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
106	Pit	Sub-circular sides: steep base: concave dimensions: max depth 0.16m, max diameter 0.5m It was cut into topsoil (102) - only observed in baulk section.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
107	Backfill	Compact light grey white sand With frequent limestone rubble, occasional plastic fragments and scrap metal (not retained).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
108	Pit	Circular dimensions: max breadth 0.4m It was cut from the level of subsoil (103).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
109	Backfill	Friable mid grey silty sand occasional small-medium stones And frequent modern glass bottles (not retained).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
110	Gulley	Linear NW-SE sides: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.35m, max depth 0.12m, min length 1.5m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
111	Fill	Friable mid grey orange clay sand occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

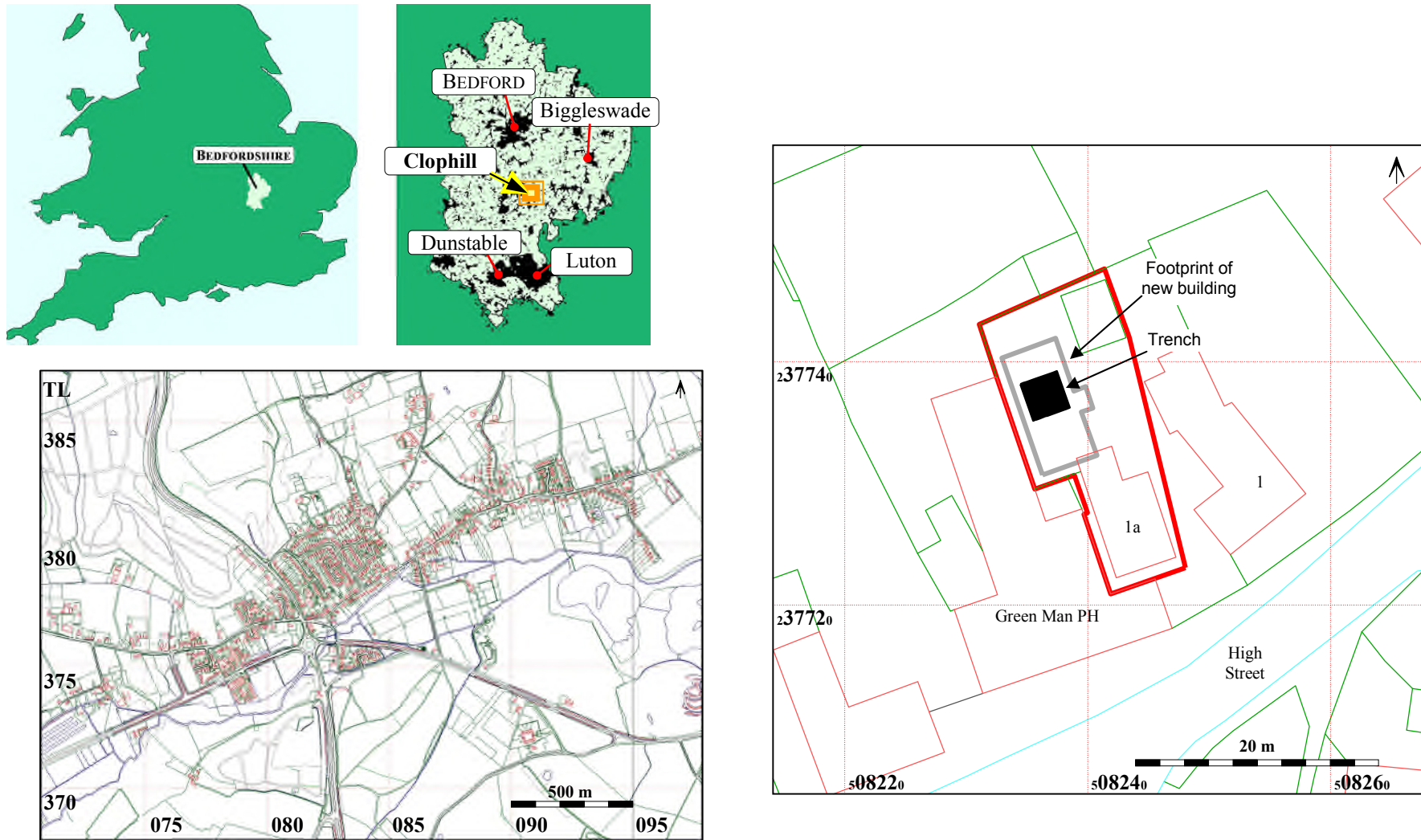
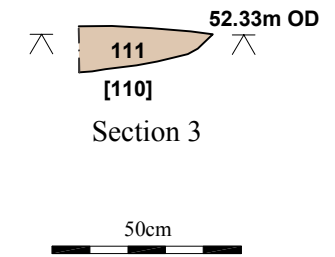
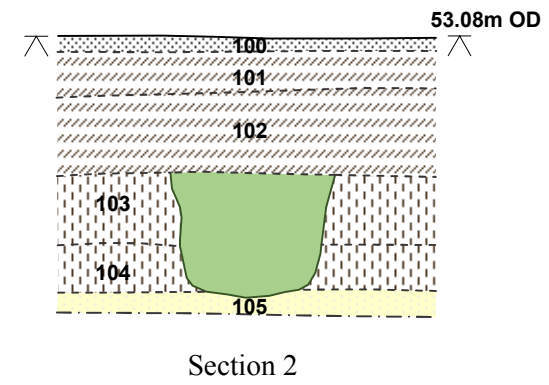
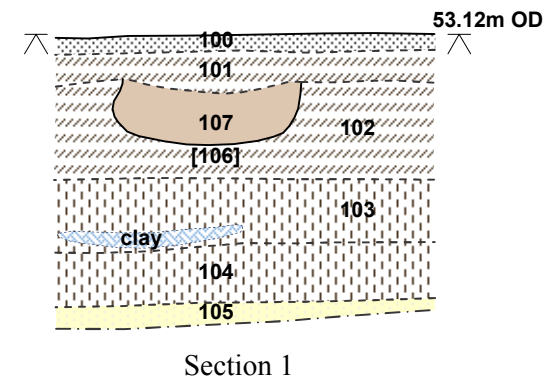
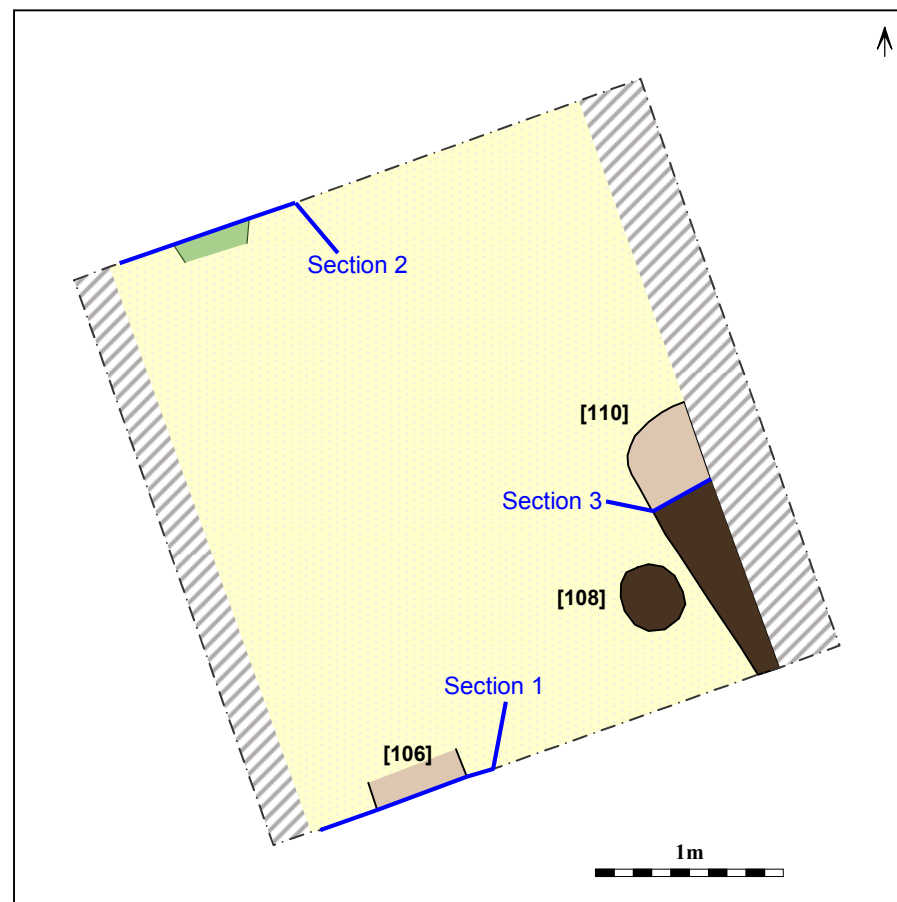


Figure 1: Site location

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- Archaeological feature; unexcavated section
- Archaeological feature; excavated/machined segment
- Tree throw
- Surface
- Layers
- Layers
- Natural



Image 1: Pits [106] & [108] and gully [110]; looking south-east.
Scale 1m

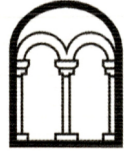


Image 2: Pit [108] and gully [110]; looking south-east.

Figure 2: Trenching results

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