

**LAND OFF LUTON ROAD
TODDINGTON
BEDFORDSHIRE**

STAGE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Albion
archaeology



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Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete an assessment as possible, within the terms of the brief. 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.

This document has been prepared by Ian Turner (Archaeological Supervisor) with contributions from Jackie Wells (Finds Officer). The figures were prepared by Joan Lightning. Fieldwork was undertaken by Ben Barker (Project Officer) and Ian Turner.

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Key Terms

Throughout this project design the following terms or abbreviations are used:

CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
CIfA	Chartered Institute <i>for</i> Archaeologists
Client	Site Supervision UK Ltd
HER	Historic Environment Record
OD	Ordnance Datum
PDA	Proposed development area
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

Planning permission (CB/16/03989/FULL) was granted for the erection of a new farmhouse and agricultural barn on land off Luton Road, Toddington, Bedfordshire, LU5 6DE. The planning permission contained a condition requiring a staged programme of archaeological investigation.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the first stage of the investigation, which comprised archaeological field evaluation in the form of trial trenching.

The trial trenching took place between 10th and 13th March 2017. Four 2.2m-wide trenches, totalling 85m in length, were excavated within the footprints of the proposed buildings and the access drive.

Trenches 1 and 2 did not contain any archaeological features and Trench 3 contained only a modern service trench and a land drain. Three ditches, of probable 19th/20th-century date, were present in Trench 4. The two parallel ditches may represent a trackway. Overall, the features may be associated with the use of the site for allotments between 1927 and 1950

The trial trenching did not reveal any medieval or post-medieval features. Nor was any prehistoric flintwork identified within the ploughsoil and subsoil. The 19th/20th-century features in Trench 4 are of negligible archaeological significance and have no potential to address any of the topics identified in the regional research frameworks.

The results of the evaluation suggest that no significant archaeological heritage assets will be impacted by the development.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Project Background**

Planning permission (CB/16/03989/FULL) was granted for the erection of a new farmhouse and agricultural barn on land off Luton Road, Toddington, Bedfordshire, LU5 6DE.

Due to the high archaeological potential of the site a condition (no. 12) was attached to the planning consent requiring a programme of archaeological investigation in accordance with the guidelines provided in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF). The condition reads as follows:

No development shall take place until a written scheme of archaeological investigation/ resource management; that includes post excavation analysis and publication has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development hereby shall only be implemented in full accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To record and advance understanding of the heritage assets with archaeological interest which will be unavoidably affected as a consequence of the development (and to secure that protection and management of archaeological remains preserved in situ within the development).

The reason for this pre-commencement condition is to ensure that heritage assets that may be harmed by the development are protected.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Site Supervision UK Ltd, on behalf of the client, to carry out the first stage of the archaeological investigation required by the condition. It comprised archaeological field evaluation in the form of trial trenching. The results of the Stage 1 investigation (this report) will inform any further works that might be required for the mitigation of construction impacts on archaeological heritage assets.

Prior to commencement of the site works, a written scheme of investigation was prepared (Albion Archaeology 2017) and approved by the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA).

1.2 **Site and Development Description**

Toddington is a large village in the south-western part of Central Bedfordshire. Luton lies 9.2km to the south-east, Leighton Buzzard is situated 9km to the south-west and the M1 motorway is 1.9km to the east of the village.

The PDA is situated on the west side of the village, c. 500m south of the centre. At the time of the fieldwork is comprised an agricultural field, with Luton Road to the west, fields to the south and east and houses and the Toddington Medical Centre to the north.



The underlying geology comprises Gault Formation Mudstone, sedimentary bedrock. Overlying this are Glaciofluvial deposits, mid Pleistocene Sands and Gravels¹. The PDA is centred on grid reference TL 01279 28334. The land within the PDA slopes down from 143m OD, on Luton Road, to 125m OD in the south-east corner of the site.

The proposed development comprises a new farmhouse and agricultural barn, situated close to the southern boundary of the PDA. A new access route will be constructed along the southern boundary and will be accessed directly from Luton Road.

1.3 **Archaeological Background**

The PDA has existed as a field since at least as early as the 1st edition OS map of 1887. Between 1927 and 1950 it was used for allotments. It reverted back to farmland in around 1978.

In preparation of this WSI a search of the Historic Environmental Record (HER) was made to identify known archaeological or historic assets, find-spots and archaeological events within a 500m-radius study area around the PDA (search ref. 201617/266). This information is summarised below.

The earliest archaeological evidence within the study area comprises Mesolithic to Bronze Age flints (HER15845), recovered from an area *c.* 300m to the north-east of the PDA. Mesolithic flints have also been found in the Station Road area of Toddington (HER 15860 and 15846), *c.* 740m to the north of the PDA.

Roman activity is represented by pottery and spearheads found *c.* 370m to the south-west of the PDA (HER 10983). Outside the study area, *c.* 750m to the north of the PDA, the current line of the High Street was thought by the Viatores (1964) to have been part of a Roman road that linked Dunstable to Ampthill, although the HER states that “this route is very unlikely to have ever existed” (HER 11986).

Toddington’s origins are likely to lie in the late Saxon period and antiquarian discoveries of Saxon cremation burials were made at Church Glebe (HER11255) and on the estate of William Harbett (HER11954), *c.* 850m north of the PDA. The exact locations of these find-spots are uncertain. The find-spot of a coin dated to AD 822–3 or 824 (HER 98) is the only evidence of possible Anglo-Saxon activity within the study area, situated *c.* 410m south-west of the PDA.

The settlement is referenced in Domesday Book of 1086 and the impact of the Norman Conquest is evidenced by the remains of Conger Hill motte and bailey castle (HER 89), *c.* 600m to the north of the PDA. The site is a Scheduled Monument (NHLE1010059). The castle is likely to have been sited to control movement along the five historic roads that converged at Toddington. The site of the castle was later used as a rabbit warren in the 16th century.

¹ <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>



The growth of the medieval town of Toddington (HER 16981) would have been encouraged by the grant of the right to an annual market and fair in 1218, reconfirmed in 1315. The PDA is situated *c.* 370m south-east of Toddington's historic medieval core, as defined by the HER. Evidence of medieval agriculture has been identified as extant ridge and furrow in fields surrounding the village (HER 3355), in particular two fields situated immediately to the north-east and south-east of the PDA. It is very likely that the PDA also formed part of the medieval open field system of Toddington.

The earliest cartographic source available for Toddington (the Radulph Agas survey of 1581) shows that by the early post-medieval period the town was once again thriving. Its subsequent decline began in the latter part of the 18th century as result of competition from other local market centres, and was hastened when the railway system bypassed the town altogether in the 19th century (CBC 2010).

The PDA lies outside Toddington's Conservation Area (HER 3397), which is centred on the village green and covers *c.* 17.5 ha. The HER also lists thirteen buildings (or sites thereof) of local historical or architectural interest within 500m of the PDA; ranging in date from the 17th to 19th century.



2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The relevant research frameworks for the area are: *Bedfordshire Archaeology. Research and Archaeology: Resource Assessment, Research Agenda and Strategy* (Oake *et al.* 2007) and *A Revised Framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011).

Potential heritage assets on the PDA would most likely date to the medieval period and post-medieval periods and comprise evidence of medieval agriculture and the use of the field as allotments in the later post-medieval period. There was also the potential for finding prehistoric flints on the PDA, as indicated by a number of find-spots recorded in the HER.

The research framework for Bedfordshire has highlighted that many finds of prehistoric flints lack context and provenance (Medlycott 2011, 7). There is a need for controlled excavation of these finds in order to establish ‘...artefact context, presence, density and intra-site distribution...’ (ibid).

The research framework also states that in general few medieval rural settlements have been investigated in the county. It stresses the potential for acquiring information about the origins, diversity and development of villages from within or around the edges of existing settlements (Oake 2007, 14). The study of field systems has huge potential, in particular does the shape of fields relate to particular agricultural regimes? (Medlycott 2011, 70).

Dependent on the nature of any remains that were revealed, specific research aims would be derived from regional research frameworks (e.g. Brown and Glazebrook 2007; Oake *et al.* 2007; Medlycott 2011).

In summary, the specific research objectives of the evaluation were:

- To determine if evidence for prehistoric activity was present within the PDA.
- To determine if evidence for the medieval and post-medieval periods was present within the PDA.
- To assess if any heritage assets relating to earlier periods were present within the PDA.

The general purpose of the evaluation was to recover information on the:

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



3. METHODOLOGY

A full methodology was provided in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2017).

The trial trenching took place between 10th and 13th March 2017. Four 2m-wide trenches were excavated within the footprints of the proposed buildings and the access drive (Figure 1), totalling 85m in length. The trench which targeted the agricultural barn was 25m long; the other trenches were 20m long.

The trenches were opened using a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket, operated by an experienced driver under close archaeological supervision. Overburden was removed down to the top of the archaeological deposits or undisturbed geological deposits, whichever was encountered first. The spoil heaps were also scanned for artefact recovery.

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. Each trench was subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate. All deposits were recorded using a unique number sequence, commencing at 100 for Trench 1, 200 for Trench 2 *etc.* Context numbers in square brackets refer to the cuts [***] and round brackets to fills or layers (***). The trenches were inspected by the CBCA prior to their backfilling.

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 edn, 2001)
• ALGAO (East)	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> (Gurney 2003)
• Archaeological Archives Forum	<i>Archaeological Archives: A Guide to Best Practice in Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Curation</i> (Brown 2007)
• CfA	<i>Charter and by-law and Code of conduct</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</i> (2014)
• Historic England/ English Heritage	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Project Managers' Guide</i> (updated 2015)
	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation</i> (Campbell <i>et al.</i> 2011)
• Luton Culture	<i>Procedure for preparing archaeological archives for deposition with Luton Culture</i> (2013)



4. RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

Features and deposits found within the trial trenches are described chronologically below and shown in Figure 2. Artefacts recovered in the course of the trenching are discussed within the text.

Detailed contextual information on all deposits and features can be found in the appendix.

4.2 Overburden and Geological Deposits

Across the site the overburden comprised:

- 0.25–0.3m of dark brown-grey sandy silt topsoil (101)-(401).
- 0.1–0.25m of mid orange-brown sandy silt or clay silt subsoil (102)-(402).

The undisturbed geology varied from mid yellow-brown clay sand with frequent stones (103), (203), (303) within Trenches 1, 2 and 3 to light brown-grey silty clay (403) within Trench 4.

4.3 Archaeological Features

The archaeological features comprised three ditches, located in close proximity to one another within Trench 4. Trenches 1 and 2 contained no archaeological features. Trench 3 contained only a modern service trench and a land drain.

4.3.1 Linear ditches

Two parallel, NE-SW aligned ditches [404]/[407] and [409] were located in Trench 4, c. 4.5m apart. They had concave sides with flat bases and were 0.6–0.65m wide; both were 0.16m deep. They contained deposits varying from light orange-grey clay silt to mid orange-brown clay silt.

The northern ditch [404] contained a curved iron object (weighing 19g) of 19th/20th-century date, possibly a large washer fragment (not retained), and an undateable amorphous fired clay fragment (weighing 9g) (not retained). Ditch [409] did not contain any artefacts.

The similarity of size, profile and alignment between the two ditches strongly suggests that they were contemporary. Although the paucity of artefacts makes dating the ditches problematic, they are tentatively dated to the modern period, based on the date of the metal artefact recovered from ditch [404].

The purpose of the ditches is uncertain; their parallel layout is suggestive of a trackway, with the ditches defining the route and providing trackside drainage. They may be associated with the use of the site for allotments between 1927 and 1950.



4.3.2 Curvilinear ditch

A slightly curving ditch [411]/[413], on a WNW-ESE alignment, truncated ditch [409]. It had a concave profile, and was 0.5–0.8m wide and less than 0.2m deep. It contained mid orange-brown clay silt but produced no artefacts.

The curvilinear ditch is judged to be modern in date because it is stratigraphically later than ditch [409], which itself is dated to the modern period on the basis of its spatial association with ditch [404]/[409].

The function of ditch [411] is unclear; its position may indicate that it was created to provide additional drainage from the earlier ditch [409].

4.3.3 Variations in the natural geology

Two areas of silt (415), (416) at the north and south ends of Trench 4 were investigated because they were at variance with the natural deposit within the base of trench. Small sondages were dug into both deposits, revealing them to be pale, uniform and sterile in character; neither produced any artefacts. Both deposits are likely to be natural variations in the drift geology.

An additional change in the natural geology was encountered during the excavation of ditch [404] within Trench 4, which revealed a seam of dark grey clay (417) of unknown depth, slightly below the highest natural layer (403). This deposit is likely to be of glaciofluvial origin.

4.4 Modern Service Trench and Land Drains

A vertical-sided service trench [306] on a NW-SE alignment and a vertical-sided land drain trench [304] on a NNW-SSE alignment were present within Trench 3. Two parallel NW-SE aligned mole drain cuts [418] were present within Trench 4.

These features are 19th/20th-century date.



5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 *Summary of Results*

Trenches 1 and 2 did not contain any archaeological features and Trench 3 contained only a modern service trench and a land drain. Three ditches, of probable 19th/20th-century date, were present in Trench 4.

Two of the ditches within Trench 4 were parallel and were relatively shallow, located *c.* 4.5m apart. Similarities in form strongly suggest that they are contemporary; a metal artefact recovered from one of them suggests they are modern in date. A third, slightly curving, ditch truncated one of the parallel ditches and is, therefore, also likely to be modern in date.

The two parallel ditches may represent a trackway. Overall, the features may be associated with the use of the site for allotments between 1927 and 1950.

5.2 *Significance of Results*

The trial trenching did not reveal any medieval or post-medieval features. Nor was any prehistoric flintwork identified within the ploughsoil and subsoil. The 19th/20th-century features in Trench 4 are of negligible archaeological significance and have no potential to address any of the topics identified in the regional research frameworks.

The results of the evaluation suggest that no significant archaeological heritage assets will be impacted by the development.



6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albion Archaeology, 2017 *Land off Luton Road, Toddington, Bedfordshire: Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation for Stage 1 Archaeological Evaluation* (Rep. 2017/14)

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Medlycott, M., 2011 *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the east of England*, EAA Occasional Paper 24

Oake, M., Luke, M., Dawson, M., Edgeworth, M. and Murphy, P., 2007 *Bedfordshire Archaeology. Research and Archaeology: Resource Assessment, Research Agenda and Strategy*, Bedfordshire Archaeology Monograph 9



7. APPENDIX: TRENCH SUMMARIES



Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 20.00 m. Width: 2.20 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.47 m. Max: 0.57 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1298: Northing: 28253)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1279: Northing: 28245)

Reason: Assess archaeological potential within access route

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
101	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.30m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Subsoil	Friable mid orange brown silty sand frequent small-medium stones 0.25m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Natural	Friable mid yellow brown clay sand frequent small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 20.00 m. Width: 2.20 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.4 m. Max: 0.42 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1361: Northing: 28280)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1342: Northing: 28275)

Reason: Assess archaeological potential within access route

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
201	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.30m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
202	Subsoil	Friable mid orange brown silty sand frequent small-medium stones 0.10m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
203	Natural	Friable mid yellow brown clay sand frequent small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 3

Max Dimensions: Length: 20.00 m. Width: 2.20 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.4 m. Max: 0.5 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1365: Northing: 28308)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1351: Northing: 28293)

Reason: Assess archaeological potential within house plot

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
301	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.30m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
302	Subsoil	Friable mid orange brown silty sand frequent small-medium stones 0.10m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
303	Natural	Friable mid yellow brown clay sand frequent small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
304	Land drain	Linear NNW-SSE sides: vertical dimensions: min breadth 0.25m, min depth 0.2m Base not excavated.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
305	Fill	Friable mid yellow grey silty sand frequent medium CBM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
306	Service Trench	Linear NW-SE sides: vertical dimensions: min breadth 0.55m, min breadth 0.45m Base not excavated.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
307	Fill	Friable mid grey brown silty clay With frequent chalk flecks and patches of clay.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 4

Max Dimensions: Length: 25.00 m. Width: 2.20 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.42 m. Max: 0.42 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1374: Northing: 28344)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1383: Northing: 28321)

Reason: Assess archaeological potential within barn plot

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
401	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones 0.25m to 0.30m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
402	Subsoil	Friable mid orange brown clay silt moderate small stones 0.12m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
403	Natural	Firm light brown grey silty clay moderate small chalk, moderate small stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
404	Ditch	Linear NE-SW sides: concave base: flat dimensions: min breadth 0.6m, min depth 0.16m This ditch was also recorded as general number [407].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
405	Primary fill	Plastic mid brown grey silty clay occasional small chalk, occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
406	Secondary fill	Friable mid orange brown clay silt occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
407	Ditch	Same ditch as [404]. General ditch cut number for finds.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
408	Fill	Same ditch fill as (406). General ditch fill number for finds.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
409	Ditch	Linear NE-SW sides: concave base: flat dimensions: min breadth 0.65m, min depth 0.16m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
410	Fill	Plastic light orange grey clay silt occasional small chalk, occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
411	Ditch	ESE-WNW sides: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.8m, min depth 0.17m A slightly curving linear ditch. Same ditch as excavated segment [413].	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
412	Fill	Friable mid orange brown clay silt occasional small chalk, occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
413	Ditch	ESE-WNW sides: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.52m, min depth 0.17m Additional section excavated across same feature as ditch [411], a slightly curving linear ditch.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
414	Fill	Friable mid orange brown clay silt occasional small chalk, occasional small-medium stones Same deposit as (412).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
415	Natural	Friable light orange silty clay occasional medium stones A natural variation in the geology.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
416	Natural	Friable light grey orange clay silt occasional small-medium stones A natural variation similar to the subsoil.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
417	Natural	Firm dark brown grey clay occasional small chalk, occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
418	Modern intrusion	Linear NW-SE sides: vertical base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.08m, min depth 0.1m A mole drain cut.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
419	Fill	Friable mid brown orange clay silt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

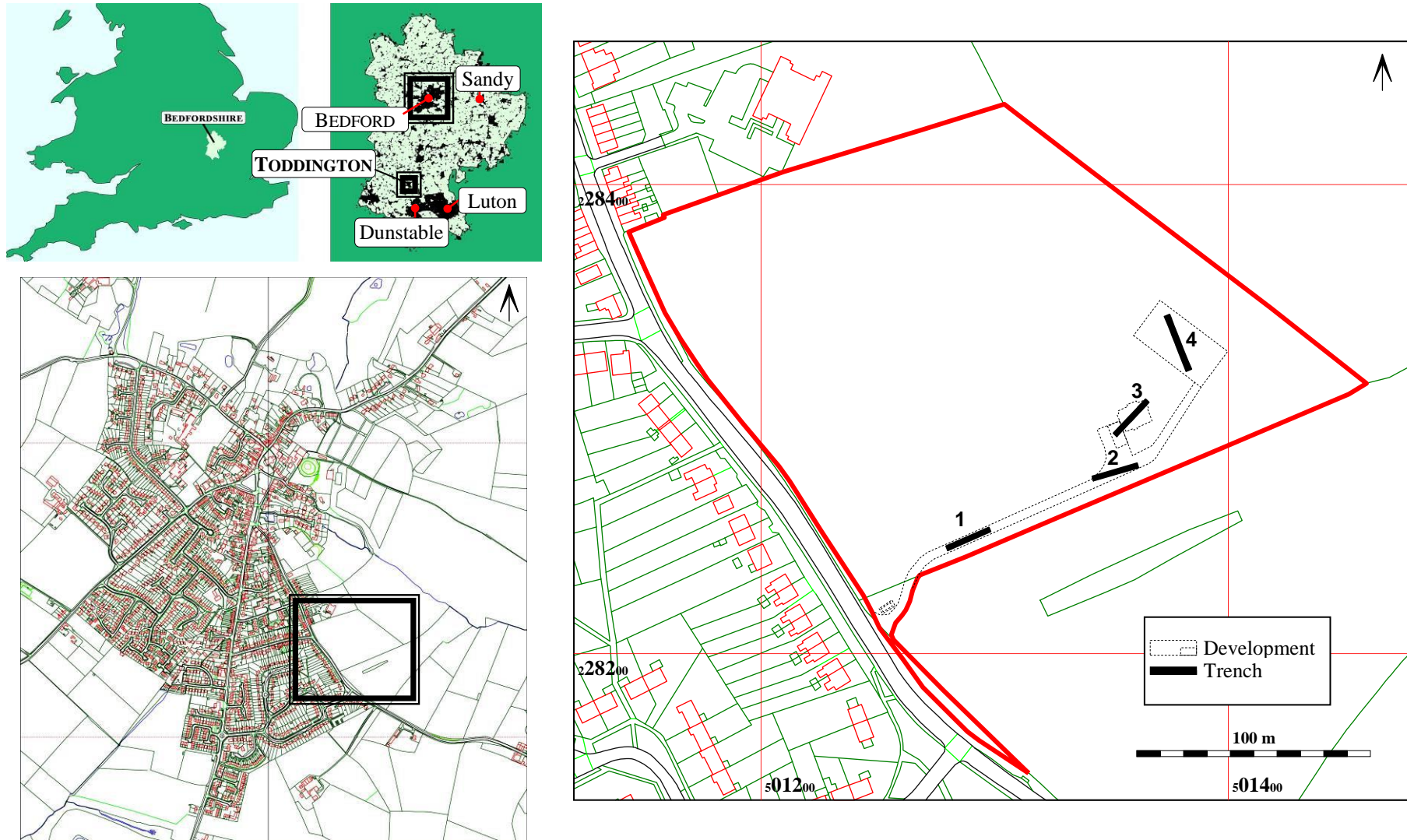
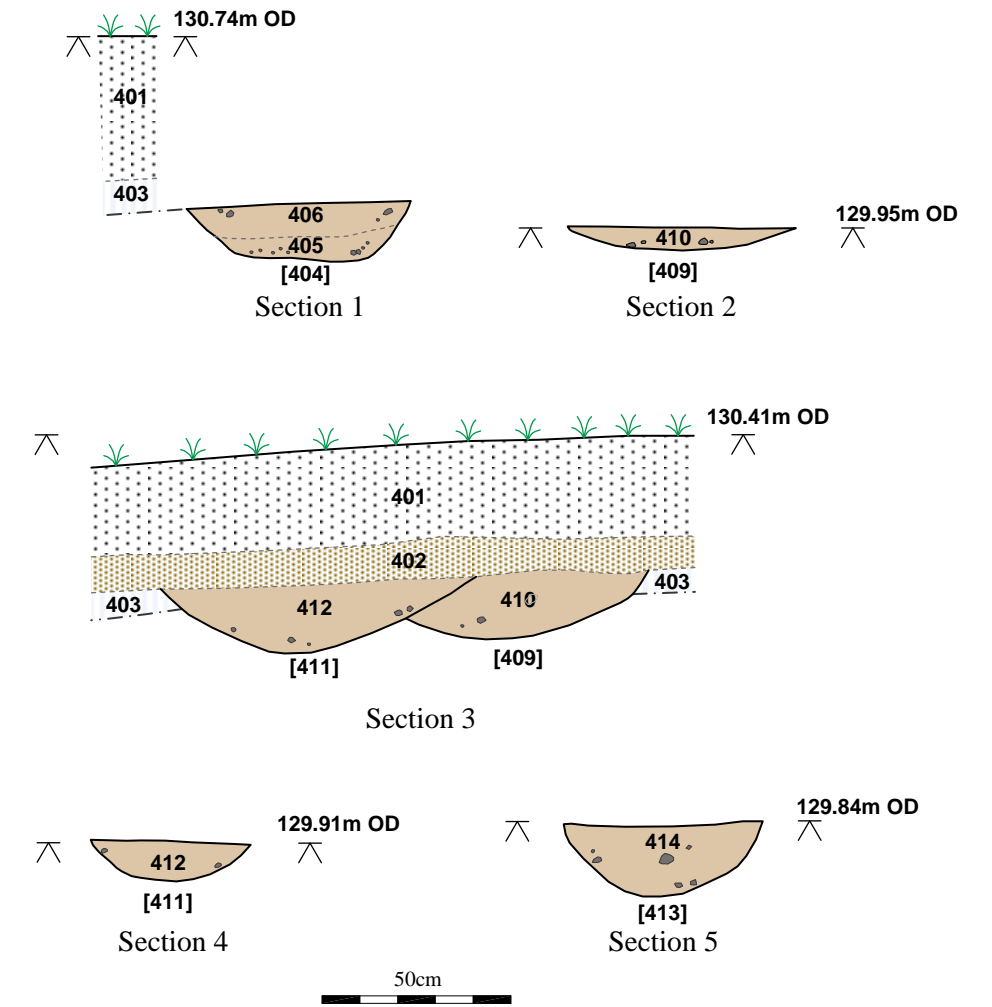
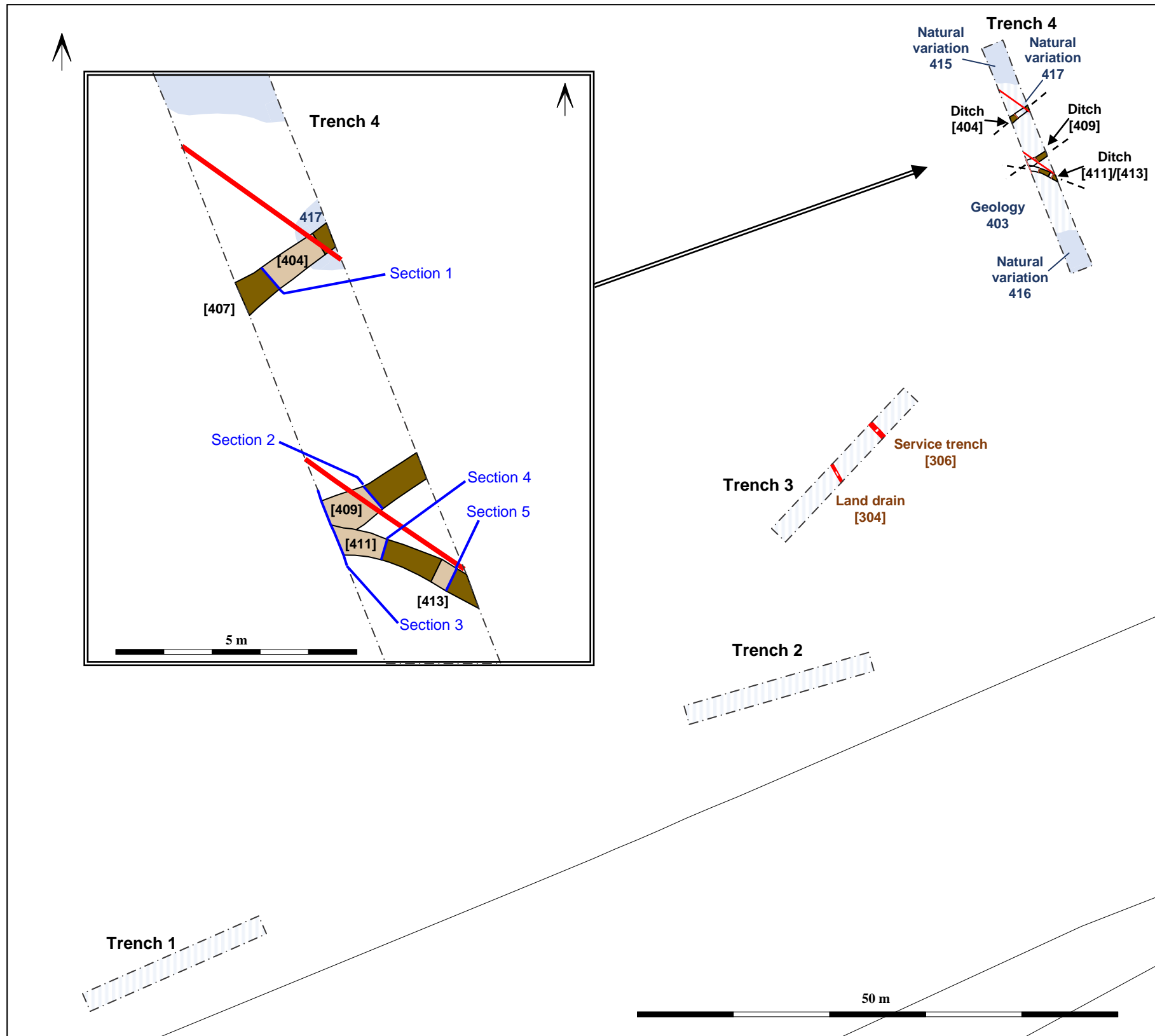


Figure 1: Site location plan

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- Archaeological feature; unexcavated section
- Archaeological feature; excavated/machined segment
- Modern land-drain or service
- Topsoil
- Subsoil
- Geology
- Natural variation

Figure 2: All-features plan and sections

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Trench 4: Ditch [404] (scale 40cm, looking SW)



Trench 4: Ditch [411] (with 40cm scale) and ditch [409] in foreground (looking SE)



Trench 4: Ditches [411] and [409] (scale 1m, looking west)

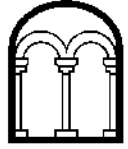


Trench 3: Land drain [304] (scale 1m, looking NW)

Figure 3: Selected photographs

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