

**LAND AT WEDLOCKS,
10 CHURCH WALK, HARROLD
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**A PROGRAMME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL
OBSERVATION, RECORDING, ANALYSIS
AND PUBLICATION**

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Produced for:
Mr Geoffrey Millman

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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.

This report has been prepared by Chris Thatcher (Project Supervisor) and Joe Abrams (Project Manager). The fieldwork was undertaken by Chris Thatcher, Martin Campbell (Archaeological Supervisor) and Adam Lee (Assistant Supervisor). The project was under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager). Joan Lightning (CAD Technician) produced the figures.

Albion Archaeology is grateful to Geoffrey Millman for commissioning the project. We would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Mr Mark Gardener, the groundworks contractor and Lesley-Ann Mather (Bedfordshire County Council's Assistant County Archaeological Officer) who monitored the site on behalf of Bedfordshire County Council.

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Structure of the Report

After the introductory Section 1, there is a summary of the results of the programme of archaeological observation and recording in Section 2, followed by a brief conclusion (Section 3). Section 4 is a bibliography and Appendix 1 contains an archaeological context summary.

Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

<i>Albion</i>	Albion Archaeology
<i>Client</i>	Geoffrey Millman
<i>IFA</i>	Institute of Field Archaeologists
<i>BCC's ACAO</i>	Bedfordshire County Council's Assistant County Archaeological Officer
<i>Procedures Manual</i>	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork, 2nd Edition 2001.</i> Bedfordshire County Council



Non-Technical Summary

In May 2004 Albion Archaeology was commissioned by the client Geoffrey Millman to undertake a programme of archaeological observation during the excavation of the foundation trenches for a series of alterations and extensions to the existing dwelling at 10 Church Walk, Harrold, Bedfordshire.

Because the proposed work had the potential to disturb archaeological deposits, the local planning authority imposed a condition requiring the archaeological monitoring of groundworks for the foundation trenches. The parameters of the work were set out in a brief issued by Bedfordshire County Council's County Archaeological Officer (BCC 2004).

The site was centred on SP 9529 5672 c.110m north-west of the parish church of St Peter and c.100m south of the village High Street. It lay at a height of around 46m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum). The underlying geology consisted of argyllic brown earths over fine loams with a substrate of alluvial valley gravels, which in turn overlay solid geology of oolitic limestone.

The archaeological monitoring was undertaken between 25th May and 3rd June 2004. During this period all excavations which required monitoring were completed. A mechanical excavator was used to open four separate foundation trenches, one on each side of the existing property.

The development area is located within a landscape rich in archaeological remains. Despite modern disturbance to the north and south of the original property a ditch was observed to the east of the house running west- south-west to east-north-east. The ditch was tentatively dated to the Roman period by a single sherd of coarse Roman greyware recovered from within it.

The programme of observation and recording successfully demonstrated the presence of archaeological remains, within areas not disturbed by modern building works. This has enhanced our understanding of the distribution of Roman remains within Harrold.

The accession number for the site archive is 2004.113. The archive will be kept in secure storage at the offices of Albion Archaeology at St Mary's Church, Bedford until deposition with Bedford Museum.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Bedford Borough Council has granted planning permission (04/0506/FUL) for a series of alterations and extensions to the existing dwelling at 10 Church Walk, Harrold. These included a side extension to the north, a conservatory to the west, an external chimney to the south and a porch to the east.

Because the proposed work had the potential to disturb archaeological deposits, the local planning authority imposed a condition requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation. This was in accordance with Policy 13 of the Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011 and Policy BE24 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002. The parameters of the work were set out in a brief issued by Bedfordshire County Council's County Archaeological Officer (BCC 2004).

In response to the brief Albion Archaeology prepared a project design for a scheme of works that fulfilled these requirements and was commissioned by the client to undertake a programme of archaeological observation, recording, analysis and publication.

1.2 Site Location and Description

The site is centred on SP 9529 5672, *c.* 110m north-west of the parish church of St Peter and *c.* 100m south of the village High Street. It lay at a height of around 46m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The river Great Ouse lies *c.* 100m to the south, with a north-south running, small tributary forming the eastern boundary of the site. The underlying geology consisted of argyllic brown earths over fine loams with a substrate of alluvial valley gravels, which in turn overlay solid geology of oolitic limestone.

The proposed work was adjacent to the current dwelling on ground where some disturbance was certain to have occurred in the past. However, the conservatory to the west extended into the back garden of the property, where recent disturbance was less extensive.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The historical and archaeological background to Harrold has been summarised in the extensive urban survey, undertaken by English Heritage and Bedfordshire County Council (Albion Archaeology 2003).

At present the site has no recorded archaeological remains. The current house on the plot was built in the second half of the 20th century. Church Walk itself is first mentioned in a survey and terrier dating to 1594 (CRO: GA 1004). However, it is almost certainly a much older thoroughfare, forming an important route through the historic village core (HER 16942).

In recent years, building work within the vicinity of Church Walk has produced a variety of evidence for medieval settlement. Approximately 100m north-east of



the site, medieval features (ditches and pits containing 13th century pottery) were recorded in 1991 and 1992 (HER 16113). Some post-medieval debris was also present. Medieval pottery and pits, together with human bone have also been found on the opposite side of the road, to the rear of nos. 15 and 17 Church Walk (HER 16114).

Further afield, within and close to the village (*e.g.* HER 64, HER 543) physical remains dating to all periods since the earliest prehistoric period have been recorded during both quarrying and housing development. During excavations across the High Street, at the former Bridgeman Joinery, evidence of extensive late Iron Age Romano-British field systems and a Roman Kiln were found (Albion Archaeology *forthcoming a*), whilst high concentrations of medieval pottery were found at the Priory Middle School to the west (Albion Archaeology *forthcoming b*). Such a rich assemblage attests to the enduring attractiveness of the area as a place for settlement.



2. RESULTS OF OBSERVATION AND RECORDING

2.1 Introduction

The programme of archaeological observation was undertaken between 25th May and 3rd June 2004. During this period all excavations which required monitoring were completed. The groundworks consisted of four separate foundation trenches, one on each side of the existing property.

Detailed technical information on all the deposits and archaeological features discussed below can be found in Appendix 1.

2.2 Methodology

The programme of archaeological observation adhered to the field methods set out in section 5 of the brief (Bedfordshire County Council 2004) specifically;

- 1 All excavation of footings or service trenches and stripping of overburden was monitored to try to identify *in situ* archaeological deposits.
- 2 All disturbed soil was scanned for artefacts.
- 3 Archaeological deposits were investigated to determine stratigraphic relationships and to recover artefactual material.
- 4 Archaeological deposits were assessed for environmental evidence, taking into account quality of preservation, dating evidence, risk of contamination and the potential of the material. The guidelines set out in English Heritage's *Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation* (2002) were adhered to.
- 5 All excavated features and deposits were fully recorded in accordance with Albion's *Procedures Manual* and the detailed requirements in section 3 of the *Brief*.
- 6 All archaeological observations were recorded at a suitable scale on base plans that were tied in to the OS national grid.
- 7 Significant features were recorded using a digital camera.

Throughout the project the standards set out in the Institute of Field Archaeologists Codes of Conduct and Standards and Guidance documents (specifically *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, September 1999), in English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991) and Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual* were adhered to.

2.3 Extent and Nature of Groundworks

A total of four foundation trenches, 0.50m in width, were excavated using a small, tracked, mechanical excavator.

A foundation trench with a total length of c.19.00m was excavated in advance of the construction of a garage on the north facing wall of the existing house. A concrete drive existed on this location, therefore some modern disturbance immediately below ground level was expected. The trench was 1.00m deep and penetrated the undisturbed geological deposit (100), a mixture of blue grey clay and yellow orange sand. Modern disturbance, in the form of a make up layer



containing modern brick and concrete (102), was observed in the sides of the trench up to a depth of 0.66m below ground level. In the south western corner of the trench a water mains was observed approximately 0.50m below ground level. No archaeology was observed within the trench.

The second trench was for a porch on the east facing wall of the house. It was *c.* 7.00m long and excavated into part of the front garden to a depth of 1.00m. There was no made up ground or modern disturbance on this side of the house and a thick topsoil layer (103) up to 0.80m deep was observed overlying yellow silty gravel (105).

On the west facing wall of the property a trench 0.50m deep and *c.* 1.5m in length was excavated for a conservatory. This was dug into undisturbed ground on the back lawn. The trench did not penetrate the geological deposits and no archaeology was observed.

The final trench was for a chimney on the south facing wall of the property. It was 1.00m deep and *c.* 5m in length. There was modern disturbance in the form of water and gas mains evident in this trench upto a depth of 0.80m below ground level and no archaeology was observed.

2.4 Topsoil, Subsoil and Undisturbed Geological Deposits

The underlying, undisturbed geological deposits of the area under investigation were a mixture of blue grey clay and orange yellow sand (100). Overlying this was a layer of orange silty gravel ballast approximately 0.35m thick (101) and (105).

Subsoil (108) was observed to the south of the property but not in the other foundation trenches elsewhere around the building. This subsoil was a dark black brown sandy silt approximately 0.75m thick.

Topsoil (103) was a dark grey black, silty sand varying in thickness from 0.20m on the south side of the house to up to 0.80m to the east of the property.

The varying soil profiles around the property suggest that the local soils have been disturbed, possibly as a result of agricultural or, more recently, construction work.

2.5 Ditch [106]

A ditch [106] (Figure 2, Plate 1) running west-south-west to east-north-east was observed in the foundation trench dug on the east facing wall. Upon excavation of the feature a sherd of Roman coarse grey ware was recovered. This pottery type would have been used for general domestic purposes.

The ditch was well defined and did not appear to have been truncated by modern activity, its shape and size were suggestive of a boundary or enclosure ditch. It had straight almost vertical sides and was 0.90m in width. The total excavated depth was 0.80m.

An environmental sample was taken from deposit (107) within [106]. This contained high concentrations of wood charcoal (probably derived from fuel)



and small quantities of animal bone and snail shells. The presence of wood charcoal and animal bone in an archaeological deposit can indicate the presence of nearby settlement activity, and is therefore of significant archaeological interest.

Deposit (107) was homogenous in character. This is what might be expected in a feature that had gradually been backfilled by natural processes rather than by deliberate human action. The presence of Roman pottery within the fill indicates that this may have happened during the Roman period and therefore that the ditch was likely to have been in use during this period. There was no post-Roman artefactual material within (107) to suggest that the backfilling of the ditch took place any later than this period.



3. SYNTHESIS

3.1 Interpretation

The vertical sections observed in the foundation trenches to the north and south of the property indicate that the development area had been subject to significant disturbance; much of which took place during the construction of the house and tarmaced areas to its north. This may well have truncated and destroyed any archaeological remains in these areas.

However, the presence of a ditch containing Roman pottery on the undisturbed ground to the east of the house confirmed that archaeological remains survived more or less intact in this part of the site.

The ditch ran on a similar alignment to Roman features uncovered at Bridgeman Joinery across the High Street. Therefore, the ditch recorded during this project, may have been part of the same Roman landscape as the features observed at Bridgeman Joinery to the north (*Albion Archaeology forthcoming a*).

Unfortunately, the portion of the ditch uncovered in the foundation trench was so small that it would be impossible to confidently draw such a conclusion. It is equally likely that it was part of an entirely separate settlement system located further to the south.

3.2 Summary

The development area is located within a landscape of high archaeological potential. It would appear that despite the various groundworks involved in the construction of 10 Church Walk, there are archaeological remains surviving within the area which have the potential to enhance our understanding of the settlement history of Harrold.



4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Albion Archaeology (forthcoming a) *Excavations at Priory Middle School, Harrold.*

Albion Archaeology (forthcoming b) *Excavations at the Former Bridgeman Joinery, Harrold.*

Bedfordshire County Council. 2004. *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Land at Wedlocks, 10 Church Walk, Harrold, Bedfordshire.*



5. APPENDICES

5.1 Appendix 1, Context Summary

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions L x W x D (m)
100	Natural Geology	Firm, blue grey clay	
101	Gravel ballast	Loose, mid orange yellow silty gravel	0.35m thick
102	Make up layer for construction of building	Loose dark brown orange silty sand with occasional modern brick/concrete inclusions	0.20m thick
103	Topsoil	Dark grey black silty sand with occasional small stones/modern brick	0.35m thick
104	Make up layer	Dark grey brown clay sand (60%) light grey yellow sandy silt	0.50m thick
105	Gravel	Loose, mid orange yellow silty gravel	0.35m thick
[106]	Ditch cut	East-west orientated ditch cut with steep straight sides	>0.50 x 0.80 x >0.80
107	Ditch fill	Loose dark greyish brown clayey silt with frequent stone and occasional charcoal inclusions Contained an unabraded jar rim sherd (15g) in a reduced sand tempered fabric (type R06C*)	>0.50 x 0.80 x >0.80
108	Subsoil	Dark black brown sandy silt with moderate small-medium stones	0.75m thick

* type defined in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series, held by Albion archaeology.

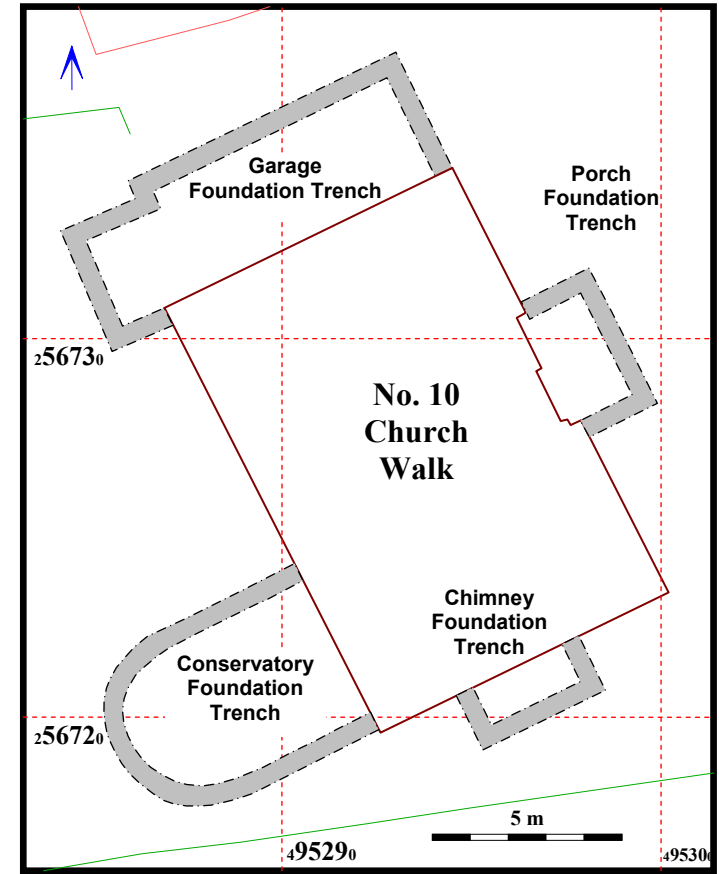
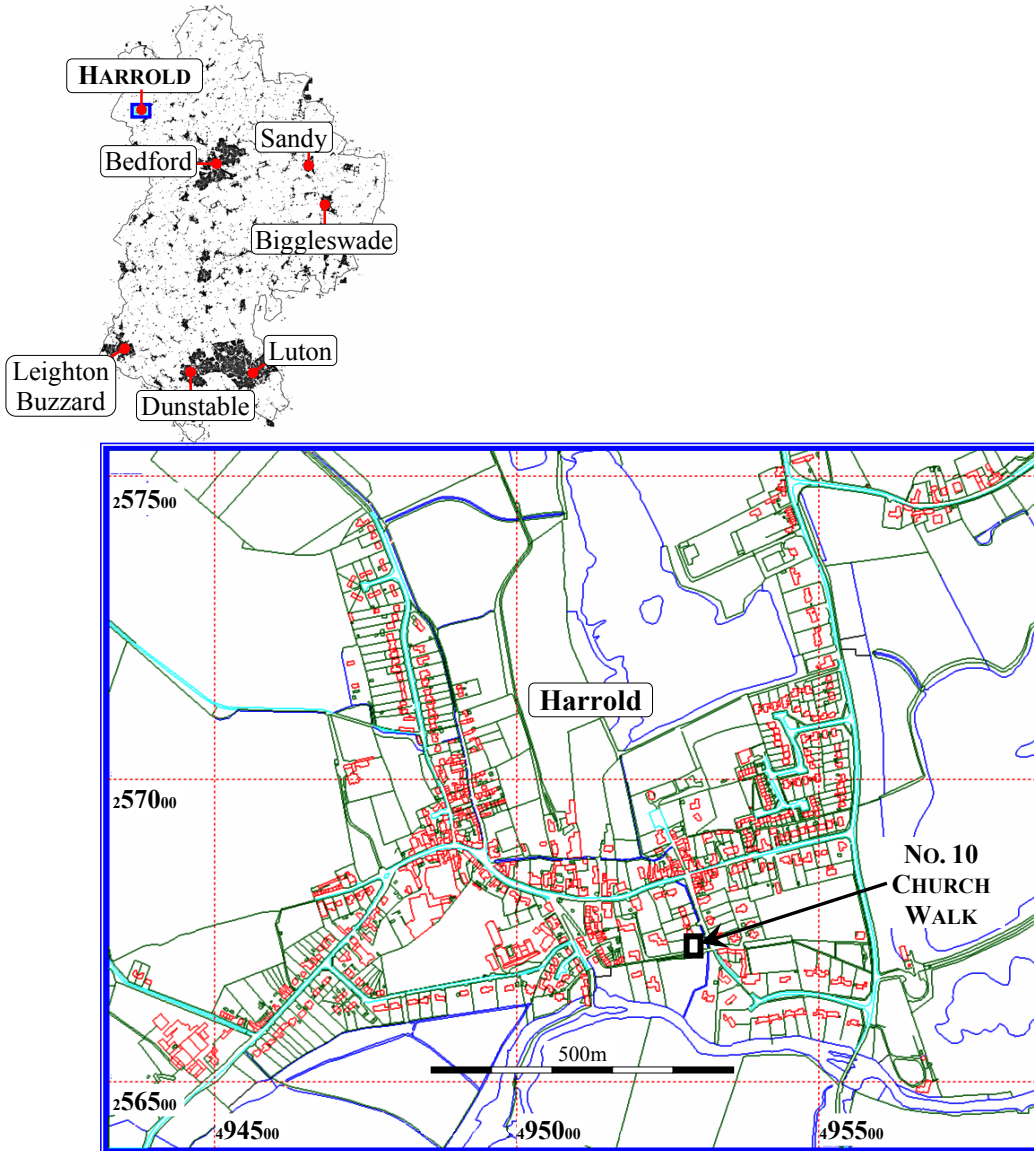


Figure 1: Site location

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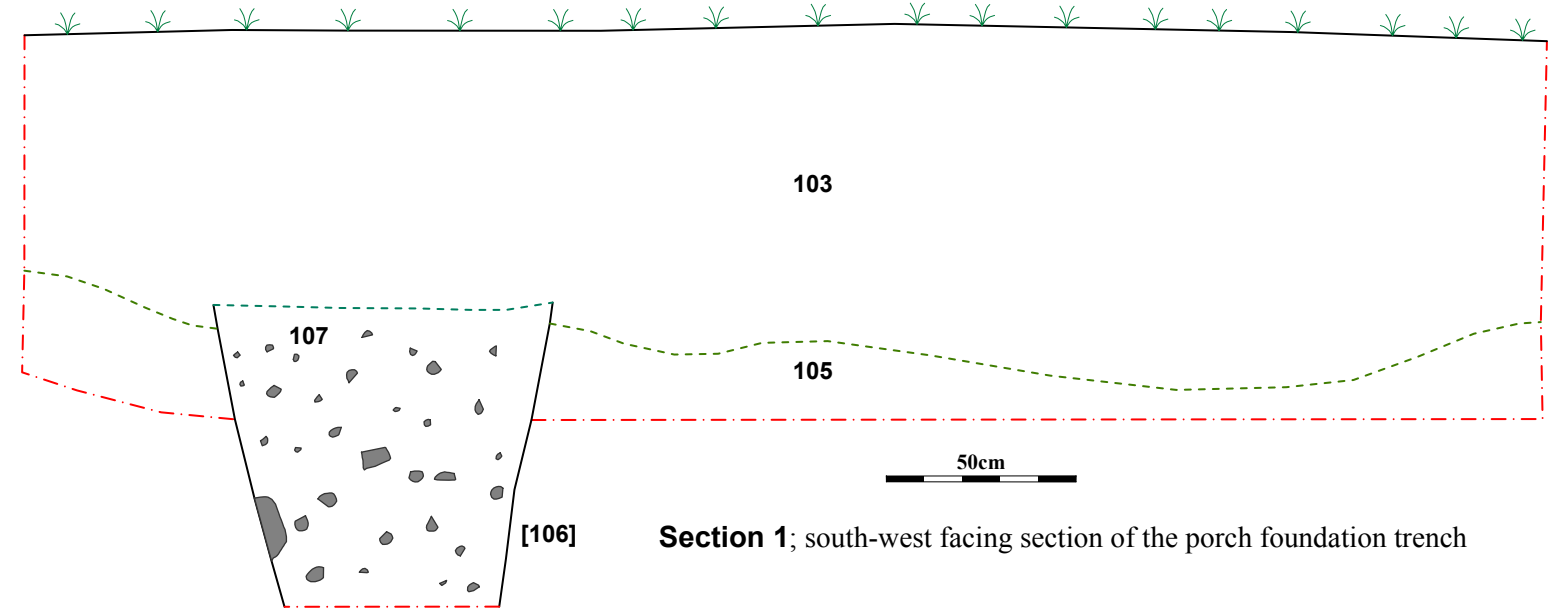
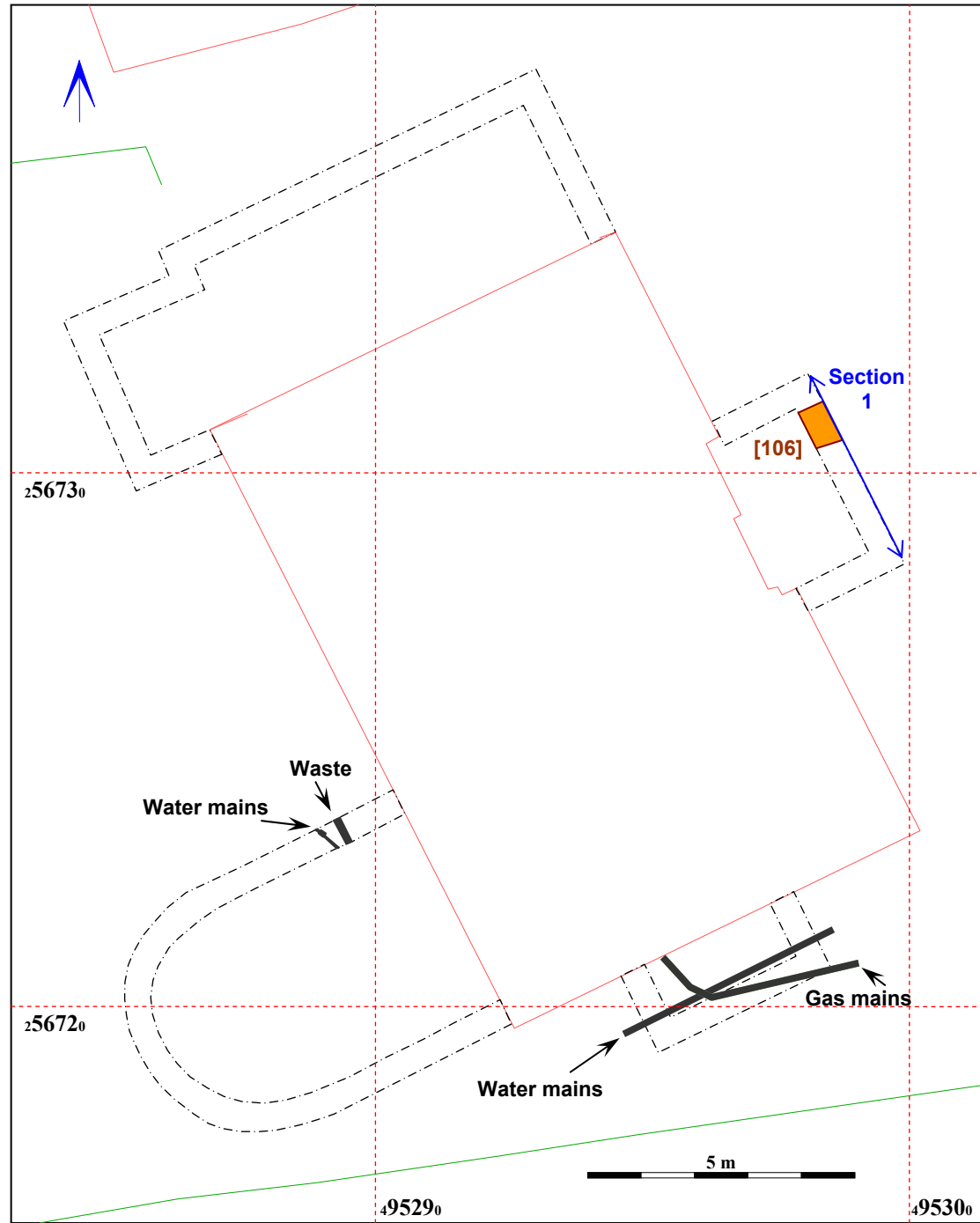


Plate 1: Ditch [106]

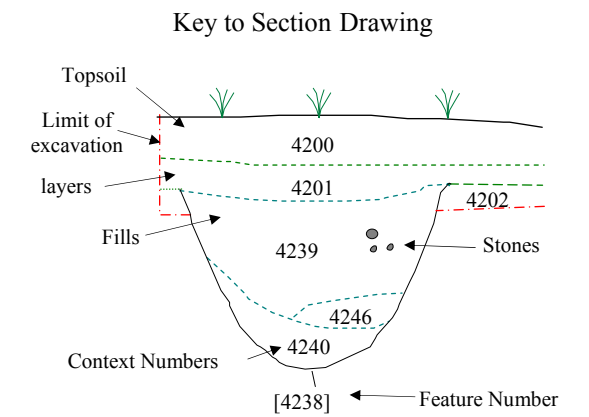


Figure 2: All features

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