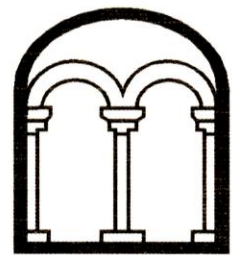


**LAND OFF CHURCH STREET
LANGFORD
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

Albion
archaeology



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Project: CSL1597
Bedford Museum accession no.: BEDFM: 2009.84
OASIS ref.: albionar1-278655

Document: 2016/05
Version: 1.0

Compiled by	Authorised by
Ben Barker	Drew Shotliff

8th January 2016

Prepared on behalf of:
Mr Heaps



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Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document and all statements 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 compiled by Ben Barker (Project Officer) and Jackie Wells (Artefacts Officer). Mark Phillips (Project Officer) and Kathy Pilkinton (Archaeological Supervisor) undertook the fieldwork, while Hester Cooper Reade (Business Manager) and Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager) managed the project.

Albion Archaeology is grateful to Mr Heaps for commissioning the project. We would also like to acknowledge the assistance of the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologists who monitored the project on behalf of the Local Planning Authority.

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Version History

Version	Issue date	Reason for re-issue
1.0	08/01/2016	N/A

Key Terms

The following terms or abbreviations are used throughout this report:

CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
HER	Historic Environment Record
<i>Procedures Manual</i>	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> , 2nd edn, 2001 Albion Archaeology
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

A planning application (MB/07/00689) was approved by Mid Bedfordshire District Council for the demolition of part of a disused barn and the erection of a single dwelling on land off Church Lane, Langford, Bedfordshire. Although the condition was granted by Mid Bedfordshire District Council, the planning application was subsequently dealt with by its successor authority, Central Bedfordshire Council. A condition attached to the permission required the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) in accordance with the requirements of the brief issued by the LPA and to carry out the subsequent programme of building recording and archaeological work. The building recording was completed in 2009/10 and a separate report has been issued (Albion 2010). This report describes the results of the archaeological monitoring which took place in August 2010 and March 2015.

The development site is situated on level ground near the centre of the village of Langford at TL 1861 4159, at a height of c. 32m OD. The River Ivel flows c. 360m to the west. The soils are gleyed brown earth above the river gravels.

Archaeological observation of the groundworks associated with the development took place over two periods during August 2010 and March 2015 in accordance with the approved WSI. Initially on 12th August 2010, the groundworks for the construction of a new garage were observed. From 3rd to 4th March 2015, following the demolition of the barn, the excavation of the footings for the new house was monitored. Two east-west ditches and a large pit were identified within the foundation trenches. The ditches contained a small quantity of late Saxon to early medieval pottery and some animal bone. It is likely that the ditches represent tenement plot boundaries relating to the early medieval settlement along the Ivel valley.

The remains recorded during the groundworks have provided limited data on the development of Langford in the late Saxon and early medieval periods. However, the small size of the investigation area and the limited extent of the groundworks preclude any further analysis beyond that presented in this report, which will be uploaded onto the Archaeology Data Service's OASIS website (OASIS ID no. albionar1-278655). The project archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum (accession no. BEDFM: 2009.84).



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Background**

A planning application (MB/07/00689) was approved by Mid Bedfordshire District Council (MBDC) for the demolition of part of a disused barn and the erection of a single dwelling on land off Church Lane, Langford, Bedfordshire. Although the condition was granted by MBDC, the planning application was subsequently dealt with by its successor authority, Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC). A condition attached to the permission required the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework*.

The site is in the centre of the historic core of the village of Langford. As a consequence, MBDC requested that a programme of historic building recording was undertaken on the barn and that groundworks associated with the development should be archaeologically monitored to ensure that any remains uncovered were adequately investigated and recorded.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to undertake a programme of archaeological works, as set out in an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Albion Archaeology 2009) and in accordance with the brief issued by CBC's Conservation and Design Team (CBC 2009). The building recording report on the barn was issued on 1st February 2010 (Albion report 2010/5).

This document outlines the circumstances of the project, outlines the methods and procedures employed and the results of the archaeological monitoring of the groundworks which were completed in March 2015.

1.2 **Site Location and Description**

The village of Langford is situated in the east of Bedfordshire, to the south of Biggleswade, with the site located in the centre of the village at TL 1861 4159 (Figure 1).

Situated c. 360m east of the River Ivel navigation, the development site is on flat ground behind the frontage of Church Street, the main north-south route through the village.

The geology of Langford is mixed. Although mostly chalky boulder clay, the geology also includes alluvium along the River Ivel, a strip of gravel under the village, gault clay with gravely drift in the south-east, lower grey chalk in the west and glacial gravels in other parts of the village. The soils are gleyed brown earth above the river gravels, with calcareous gley soils elsewhere.

1.3 **Archaeological Background**

At the time of the fieldwork the site was an open field containing a barn which first appears on the 1901 OS map of the area. The barn was undesignated and was not recorded on the Historic Environment Record (HER). However, agricultural buildings, in particular those that may have been associated with



market gardening, have been identified as an area requiring more research (Oake et al. 2007). Cartographic evidence suggested that the barn was probably constructed sometime in the last 10–15 years of the 19th century. The barn was recorded as part of an earlier stage of these works (Albion Archaeology 2010).

The HER records several significant sites in the vicinity. In particular, the site is located within the historic core of the village (HER 17135), close by the medieval church (HER 1087). The parish survey within the HER states that documentary evidence exists from the 10th to 13th centuries, along with a number of Danish personal names. However, Domesday Book (1086) does not record evidence of a manor. Despite this, the field name Bury Field to the north-west of the church might suggest the presence of a manor house. The church, some 250m to the south of the development site, dates from the 13th century, although it is thought to be on the location of the church that documentary evidence indicates was in existence in 1142.

A number of the historic buildings recorded in the vicinity of the site (HER 5739, 5740) date to the 17th to 18th centuries, whilst 19th-century development is also represented by HER 2059 (Tithe Farm), HER 16432 (The Plough Inn). An onion-drying shed of unknown date, now converted to a house, is recorded immediately to the south of the current site (HER 13386).

More generally, Langford is close by several areas of extensive cropmarks (HER 465, 643, 1486, 16810), mostly enclosures and field systems probably dating to the Iron Age and Roman periods. This along with the finds of Belgic material (HER 1486) and the rather vague reference to ‘British Mounds’ in Kelly’s Directory of 1890 (HER 1420) suggest Iron Age and Roman settlement in the general area. However, this is mostly to the east of the Ivel (e.g. in the area of Broom Quarry where extensive multi-period archaeological remains have been excavated) and on the slightly higher ground to the north-east of Langford village.



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

Archaeological observation of the groundworks associated with the development took place over two short periods during August 2010 and March 2015.

Initially, on 12th August 2010, the groundworks for the construction of a new garage (Area 1) were observed. Following the demolition of the barn, the excavation of the footings for the new house (Area 2) was monitored on 3rd and 4th March 2015.

Area 1 was situated immediately to the north-east of the existing barn; it measured *c.* 8.5m x 11m. The footing for the house that replaced the barn within Area 2 covered a maximum area of *c.* 16.5m x 11m.

All ground reduction was carried out by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. The extent of the areas of investigation is shown on Figure 1.

2.2 Methodology

The project adhered throughout to the standards set out in the CIfA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (2014), Historic England's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Project Managers Guide* (2015) and in Albion's *Procedures Manual*.

A full methodology is provided in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2009).

2.3 Project Archive

The project archive can be found at Bedford Museum under accession code BEDFM: 2009.84. An OASIS online record of the project has been submitted under the reference albionar1-278655



3. RESULTS

3.1 Contextual Summary

3.1.1 Introduction

The results of the observation works are presented below. Detailed context descriptions are presented in Appendix 1; their locations are shown on Figure 2 and sections are reproduced on Figures 3 and 4. Selected photographs taken during the groundworks are presented in Figures 5 and 6.

Areas 1 and 2 each revealed a similar sequence of deposits beneath the modern ground surface. The undisturbed geological deposits comprised light orange-yellow sandy gravels.

3.1.2 Area 1

Topsoil was removed from an area measuring 11m by 8.5m. Inside this a trench approximately 0.7m wide and up to 0.9m deep was excavated for the wall footings.

The topsoil (1) within this area was generally black or very dark grey sandy silt up to 0.45m thick.

Subsoil (2) consisted of dark grey sandy silt which contained a moderate concentration of small stones. This layer was up to 0.2m deep, although it varied slightly across the trench. It formed an interface between the topsoil and sealed the underlying archaeological deposits.

At the southern end of the excavated area features [4] and [6] appeared to form parts of a single east-west aligned ditch. In profile this ditch had slightly concave sides, sloping at an angle of approximately 45 degrees to a flat or slightly concave base. The western segment through ditch [4] was 1.2m wide and c. 0.35m deep. Its dimensions increased towards the east where segment [6] was 1.55m wide and c. 0.5m deep. The western segment contained a single fill (5) of dark grey-brown sandy silt with charcoal fragments. The fill of the eastern segment (7) was mid brown sandy silt. A large cattle vertebra was observed in the section through ditch [6]. The bone was left *in-situ*, as excavation could have collapsed the sandy trench edge.

In the north-east corner of the excavated area a single large feature [8] was exposed in the eastern side of the trench. This extended beyond the limits of excavation and was more than 2.7m long, more than 1m wide and 0.5m deep. The visible portion formed an elongated feature, aligned N-S with concave sides and a flat base. It is interpreted as a pit but it is possible that it was a ditch aligned perpendicular to the ditch investigated at the south of the trench.

3.1.3 Area 2

The foundation trenches within area 2 were excavated to a depth of c. 1m from the existing ground level. The topsoil (1) in this area was up to 0.6m thick and



contained evidence of recent disturbance, consistent with the recent demolition of the barn.

A continuation of ditch [4]/[6] was recorded in the northernmost trenches as ditch [14] and [16]. Within Area 2 it averaged 1.8m wide, but had a shallower, concave profile that was no more than 0.4m deep. There was no significant variation in the ditch fills from those observed in Area 1.

A second ditch, recorded as segments [10] and [12], was located c. 4m further south. It was c. 1m wide and c. 0.4m deep and had a steep-sided profile with a concave base. Its fill consisted of dark brown-grey sandy silt, consistent with the gradual accumulation of weathered soils.

3.2 Finds Summary

Four deposits yielded seven abraded pottery sherds (19g) ranging in date from the 10th-13th centuries (Table 1). No diagnostic vessel forms occur.

Area	Feature	Description	Fill	Date range	Finds Summary
1	2	Subsoil	-	Early medieval	Pottery (9g)
	4	Ditch	5	Late Saxon	Pottery (6g)
2	10	Ditch	11	Early medieval	Pottery (3g)
	14	Ditch	13	Late Saxon	Pottery (1g)

Table 1: Finds Summary by Area and Feature

Area 1

An unstratified sand-tempered pottery base sherd (fabric C59B¹: 9g) of late 11th- to 13th-century date derived from subsoil (2). The western segment of ditch [4] contained two shell-tempered body sherds (6g) of 10th–11th-century St Neots-type ware (B01).

Area 2

The fill (15) of ditch [14] yielded a late Saxon St Neots-type crumb (1g). Pottery collected from ditch segment [10] comprised two St Neots-type ware sherds (2g), and a tiny crumb (1g) of 12th–13th-century shelly ware (B07). All are leached and highly abraded.

¹ Fabric types defined in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series



4. CONCLUSIONS

Artefactual evidence indicates activity on the site during the late Saxon and early medieval periods. The northernmost east-west aligned ditch contained a dark fill with charcoal flecks and pottery in segment [4] and animal bone in segment [6]. This material could be derived from occupation in the vicinity of the ditch. The parallel ditch, to the south, is likely to be broadly contemporary, although the absence of animal bone, lack of visible charcoal flecks and slightly later pottery may suggest that it dates to a later episode of activity following a shift in domestic activity.

It is possible that the ditches formed the northern or southern boundary of a tenement which extended westwards from the road frontage towards the River Ivel. The site is located 200m north of the medieval parish church placing it close to the historic centre of the village. It is likely that the settlement at Langford developed as a series tenements scattered along the road.

The remains have the potential to provide limited information on the development of the village of Langford during the late Saxon and subsequent early medieval period. The significance of such remains is highlighted in the regional and county research agenda for the medieval period (Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Oake et al 2007, Medlycott 2011), which recommend further research into settlement form and pattern, the origins and development of villages, and settlement continuity.

However, the small size of the investigation area and the limited extent of the groundworks preclude any further analysis beyond that presented in this report, which will be uploaded onto the Archaeology Data Service's OASIS website (OASIS ID no. albionar1-278655. The project archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum (accession no. BEDFM: 2009.84).



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6. DETAILED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Area: 1

Extent (ha): 0.009

OS Co-ordinates: TL1863241600

Description: Foundation trenches for garage construction.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1	Topsoil	Black sandy silt occasional small stones. 0.45m - 0.55m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Subsoil	Dark grey sandy silt moderate small stones. 0.2m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3	Natural	Light yellow sand moderate small stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Ditch	Linear E-W sides: concave base: flat dimensions: max breadth 1.2m, max depth 0.34m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Fill	Dark grey brown sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small stones. 0.34m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6	Ditch	Linear E-W sides: concave base: flat dimensions: max breadth 1.55m, max depth 0.48m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Fill	Mid brown sandy silt occasional small-medium stones. 0.48m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Pit	Sides: concave base: flat dimensions: min breadth 1.m, max depth 0.5m, min length 2.7m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Fill	Mid brown sandy silt moderate small stones. 0.5m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Area: 2

Extent (ha): 0.014

OS Co-ordinates: TL1861741595

Description: Foundation trenches for house construction.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
10	Ditch	Linear E-W sides: 45 degrees base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.m, max depth 0.42m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Fill	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones. 0.42m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
12	Ditch	Linear E-W sides: 45 degrees base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.m, max depth 0.4m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	Fill	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones. 0.4m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Ditch	Linear E-W sides: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.8m, max depth 0.4m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Fill	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones. 0.4m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
16	Ditch	Linear E-W sides: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.8m, min depth 0.4m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Fill	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones. 0.4m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

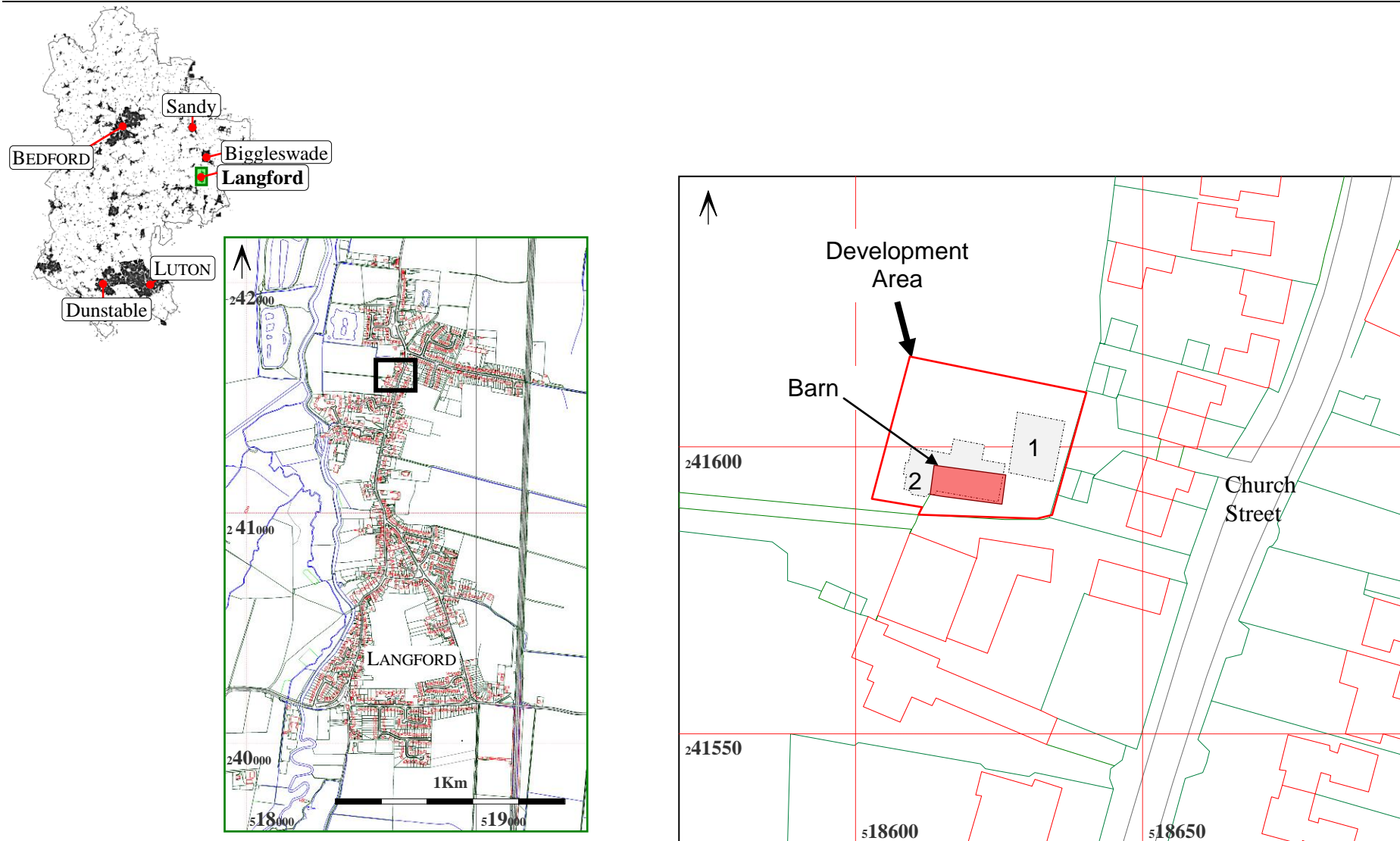


Figure 1: Site location plan

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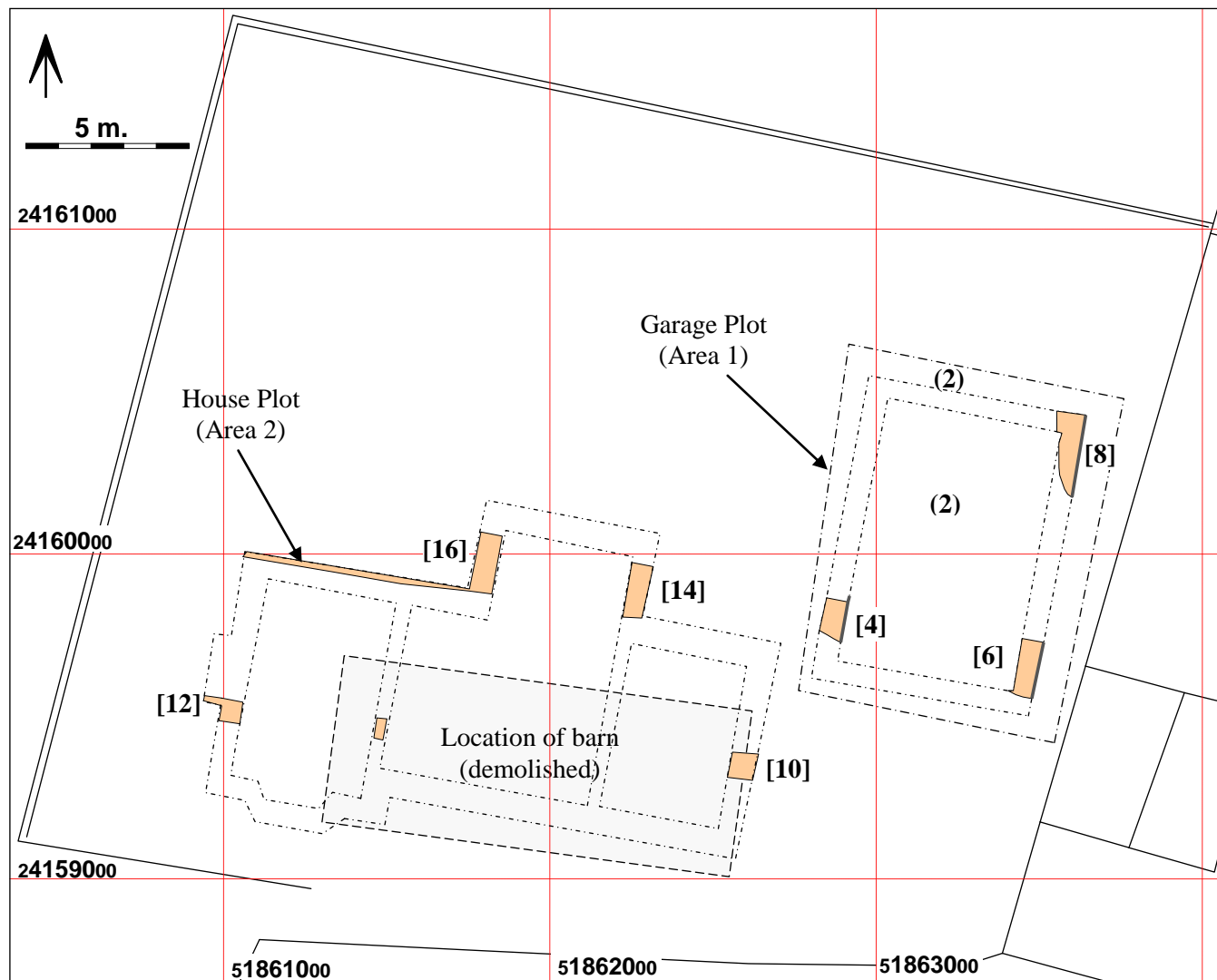


Figure 2: All-features plan

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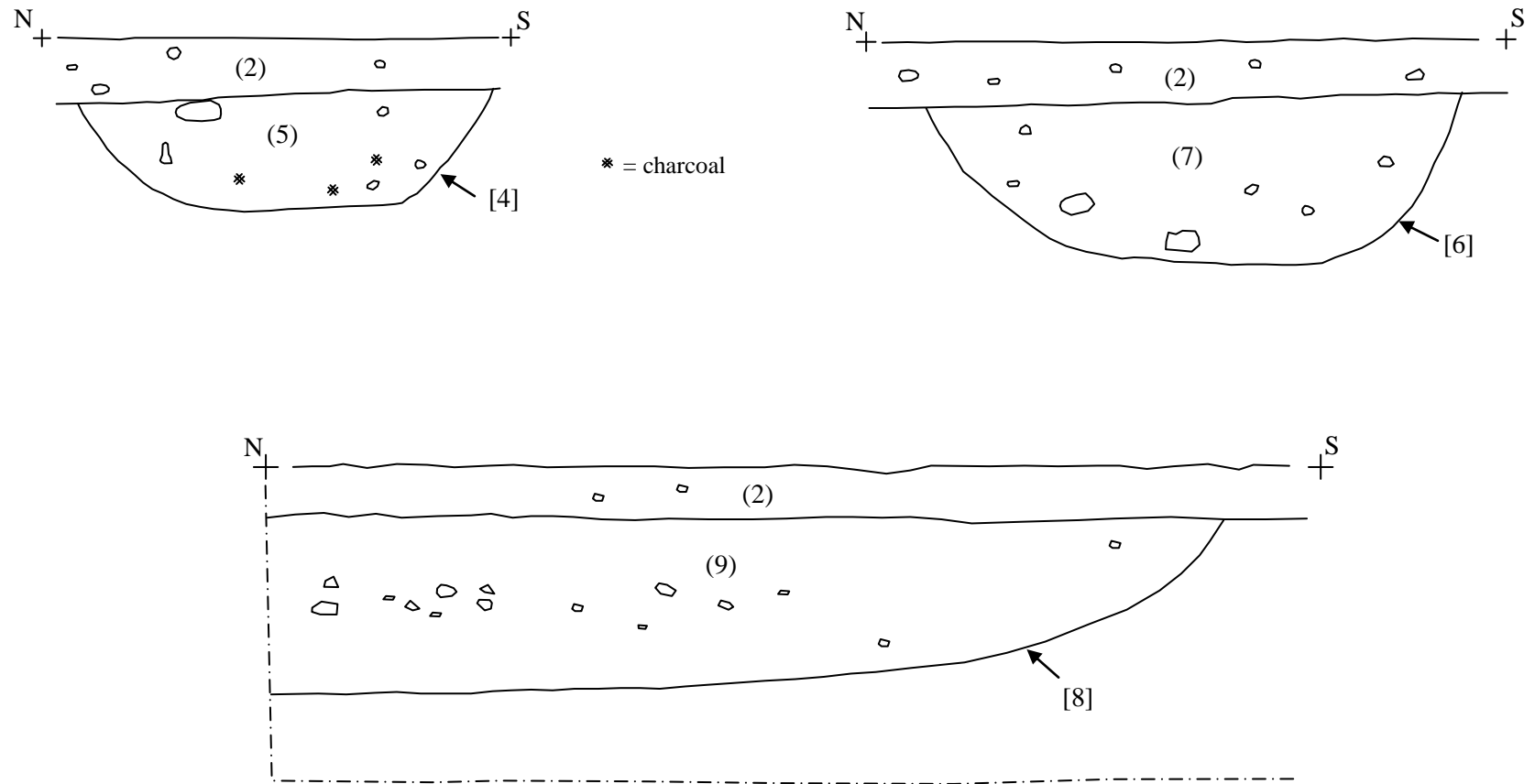


Figure 3: Sections – Area 1 (scale 1:20)

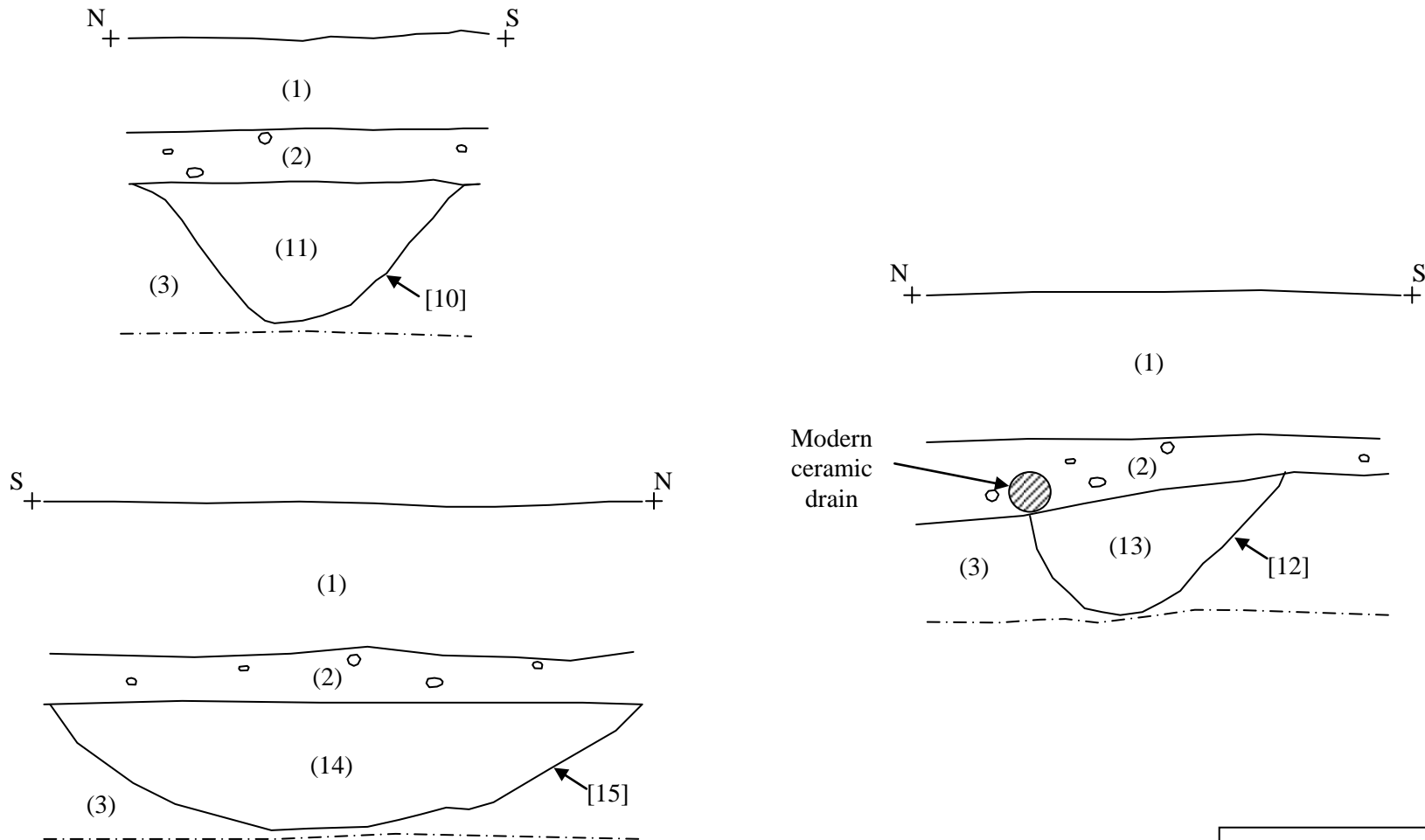


Figure 4: Sections – Area 2 (scale 1:20)



Plate 1: General view, looking south-west



Plate 3: Ditch [6], west-facing section



Plate 2: Ditch [4], west-facing section



Plate 4: Ditch [8], west-facing section

Figure 5: Selected photographs from Area 1



Plate 5: General view, looking south



Plate 6: Ditch [16], east-facing section



Plate 7: Ditch [12], west-facing section



Plate 8: Ditch [10], east-facing section

Figure 6: Selected photographs from Area 2



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