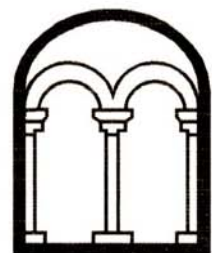


**LAND ADJACENT TO CHURCH FARM  
41 HIGH STREET  
ROXTON  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

**Albion**  
archaeology



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## Preface

*All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and was prepared solely for the benefit of the client. The material contained in this document does not necessarily stand on its own and should not be relied upon by any third party. This document should not be used for any other purpose without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and the prior written authority of Albion Archaeology (a trading unit of Central Bedfordshire Council). Any person/party relying on the document for such other purposes agrees and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Albion Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Albion Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the persons/party by whom it was commissioned. This document is limited by the state of knowledge at the time it was written.*

## Acknowledgements

*The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Vanessa Clarke, Bedford Borough Council Senior Archaeological Officer. The fieldwork was undertaken by Gareth Shane (Assistant Archaeological Supervisor) and Anna Rebisz-Niziolek (Assistant Archaeological Supervisor). This report has been prepared by Gareth Shane. All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).*

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## Version History

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1.0	19/12/2017	n/a

## Key Terms

The following terms or abbreviations are used throughout this report:

BBC	Bedford Borough Council
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
HER	Bedford Borough Council Historic Environment Record
PDA	Permitted development area
SAO	Senior Archaeological Officer of BBC



## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Planning permission (14/01736/FUL) was granted by Bedford Borough Council for the redevelopment and conversion of barns to form five dwelling houses with associated access, parking and amenity spaces on land adjacent to Church Farm, 41 High Street, Roxton, Bedfordshire. The planning permission contained a condition requiring the implementation of an archaeological mitigation strategy.*

*The first stage of this mitigation strategy was the evaluation of the site by the excavation of a series of trial trenches which was carried out in August 2017. These works revealed that the proposed development had the potential to impact upon archaeological remain, including late Saxon and medieval features, and as a result the Bedford Borough Council Senior Archaeological Officer determined that a further stage of archaeological works was required, comprising archaeological observation, investigation and recording of any archaeological remains revealed during construction groundworks.*

*The monitoring of the foundation trenches for four development plots, carried out in October 2017, identified limited archaeological remains. These included continuations of some undated ditches found during the earlier phase of trenching evaluation and four additional features. None of the features produced finds and so cannot be dated. No further late Saxon or medieval activity was definitively identified and the continuation of a late Saxon ditch found during the evaluation was not located. This may indicate that the feature was in fact an elongated pit.*

*Overall, the findings of the archaeological observations confirmed the results of the evaluation of the site in that it had been considerably disturbed by post-medieval and later activity and contained sparse remains of archaeological significance.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

---

### 1.1 *Project Background*

Planning permission (14/01736/FUL) was granted by Bedford Borough Council for the redevelopment and conversion of barns to form five dwelling houses with associated access, parking and amenity spaces on land adjacent to Church Farm, 41 High Street, Roxton, Bedfordshire (Figures 1 and 2). The planning permission contained a condition (18) requiring the implementation of an archaeological mitigation strategy.

The first stage of this mitigation strategy was the evaluation of the site by the excavation of a series of trial trenches, carried out in August 2017 (Albion 2017a). These works revealed that the proposed development had the potential to impact upon archaeological remains and as a result the Bedford Borough Council Senior Archaeological Officer (SAO) determined that a further stage of archaeological works was required, comprising archaeological observation, investigation and recording of any archaeological remains revealed during construction groundworks.

These works were carried out in October 2017 in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion 2017b) that was approved by the SAO prior to commencement of fieldwork.

### 1.2 *Site Location, Topography and Geology*

Roxton lies to the west of the River Great Ouse close to its confluence with the River Ivel at Tempsford. The ground is approximately level at a height of 23m OD.

The permitted development area (PDA) measured *c.* 0.4ha in area and is centred at grid reference TL 1528, 5446. It is located in the centre of Roxton and is bordered to the west by the High Street, to the north by Church Farmhouse, to the east by open ground and to the south by residential housing.

The underlying bedrock consists of Peterborough Member, a mudstone forming part of the Oxford Clay Formation that was formed in the Jurassic period. Superficial deposits consist of river terrace deposits — sand and gravel laid down in the Quaternary period.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.3 *Historical and Archaeological Background*

The archaeological and historical background of the PDA was examined in a desk-based heritage assessment that was prepared to accompany the original planning application (Albion 2014). Building recording was undertaken in May 2017 (Albion 2017c) and trial trenching evaluation took place in August 2017 (Albion 2017a). The results of these studies are summarised below.

---

<sup>1</sup> Contains British Geological Survey materials © NERC [2014].



### 1.3.1 Desk-based heritage assessment

#### *Prehistoric (before AD 43)*

A small number of sites and find-spots dated to the prehistoric period were identified in the vicinity of the PDA by the desk-based heritage assessment (Albion 2014).

Archaeological investigations to the south-east of the village recovered a scatter of worked flint (HER 14844) dated to the Bronze Age (2350–700 BC). A short distance beyond the study area to the north-east is a well preserved bowl-barrow, Round Hill (HER1494), representing a probable burial monument from the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age.

Prehistoric evidence dating from the Neolithic to the later Iron Age was found along the on the route of the Great Barford bypass (EBD 688) (Timby *et al*, 2007). Evidence from Site 2, located a short distance to the south-east of the study area, included a Neolithic pit, an early Bronze Age pit and late Bronze Age/early Iron Age activity.

Investigations at Roxton Quarry, a short distance to the south-west of the study area, produced evidence of Bronze/Iron Age activity and a field system which included a large palisade ditch.

A number of cropmark sites that lie within or extend into the study area are likely to date from the prehistoric period (HERs1653, 1833, 15047 and 16785). Comparison with excavated examples suggests that irregular enclosure cropmarks are likely to date from the later prehistoric period.

#### *Roman (AD 43–410)*

A small number of find spots and sites dated to this period are recorded in the HER. Three are metal-detected finds which are recorded a short distance to the north-west of the 500m-radius study area:

An early Roman settlement (Site 1) was excavated on the route of the Great Barford bypass (EBB 688) on the north-west edge of the study area. It consisted of sub-rectangular ditched enclosures and other features dated to the 1st–2nd centuries (Timby *et al* 2007, 67–78).

#### *Anglo-Saxon to medieval (410–1066)*

The 1086 Domesday entry for Roxton lists two manors and 12 villagers, 3 smaller holders, 2 slaves, a mill and woodland for 20 pigs, indicating a modest-sized settlement. In 1066, it had been held by 12 freemen. The HER records the find-spot of an Anglo-Saxon strap end within the study area (HER 16029). Settlement evidence for this period was found on the Great Barford bypass excavation (EBB 688) but was located close to the Bedford end of the route and is not, therefore, directly relevant to the PDA.

#### *Medieval (1066–1550)*

The HER entries dated to this period include finds-spots (HERs 16029 and 19387). The PDA is located 70m to the south-west of the medieval parish church (HER 1105) and situated within the inferred extent of the medieval settlement



(HER 17154), which corresponds to the surviving historic village core. Roxton Park contains earthworks which include ridge and furrow cultivation and a park boundary (HER 5136). Beyond the south-west limit of the study area an archaeological evaluation in Roxton Quarry found Saxo-Norman occupation evidence. Medieval settlement evidence found in the Great Barford bypass excavation (EBB 688) was located in the south-western part of the road corridor and is not directly relevant to the PDA.

#### *Post-medieval (1550–1900)*

The majority of heritage assets within the study area date to the post-medieval period. They consist mainly of domestic buildings dating from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries and some communal and commercial properties. Other HER records include the sites of former buildings and landscaped parkland and the parish churchyard.

The domestic buildings include four farmhouses: College Farm (HER 1107), Poplar Farm (HER 2397), Church Farm (HER 2409) and the former farmhouse of Park Farm (HER 2398). These are all 17th century in date with construction dates of c. 1600 for Park Farmhouse and Church Farmhouse. The majority of the 17th- and 18th-century domestic buildings are described as cottages and generally are timber-framed with colour-washed plastered walls and thatch roofs. Roxton House is a small country house from the 18th century (HER 1108). Two later 19th-century public houses are included on the HER: the Chequers Inn (HER 12461) and the Royal Oak (HER 16395). These are in brick with slate roofs.

The post-medieval heritage assets closest to the PDA are Church Farmhouse (HER 2409) next to the PDA and a number of buildings on the opposite side of the High Street: the Congregational Chapel (HER 1106), 46 & 48 High Street (HER 2402), 50 & 56 High Street (2401), 38 High Street, Hope Cottage (2404) and 28, 30, 32 & 34 High Street (HER 2403). All are Grade II listed buildings.

### **1.3.2 Building recording**

The buildings that previously occupied the PDA consisted of: a U-shaped range of single-storey buildings on the north, west and south sides of the farmyard; a T-shaped single-storey building, which was largely enclosed by the U-shaped range; and a two-storey building and open shed on the eastern side of the farmyard. The buildings had various agricultural functions and mainly dated from the final years of the 19th century. Whilst the northern and western range of buildings has been retained for conversion, the other structures have been demolished in preparation for the new development. Prior to demolition, they were subject to building recording (Albion 2017c) as a condition (19) of the planning consent.

### **1.3.3 Trial trenching**

The archaeological evaluation of the site comprised the excavation of six trenches, each measuring 15m long and 1.8m wide, positioned to test the areas affected by the planned construction works within the PDA. The evaluation identified archaeological features in three of the six trenches (Trenches 1, 2 and 3), the majority of which comprised undated features including four shallow post holes, a pair of parallel ditches and two pits (Figure 3). Two features were datable by limited artefactual evidence. The most notable was a section of N-S aligned ditch





dated to the late Saxon period in Trench 2. The other was a probable ditch dating to the medieval period in Trench 3.

All the archaeological features were found in trenches located near to the south and east boundaries of the PDA. Along with the absence of topsoil and subsoil in the northernmost four trenches this suggested that the PDA had been considerably disturbed by post-medieval and later activity. Overall, the findings of the evaluation suggested that the PDA contained sparse remains of archaeological interest. The probable late Saxon and medieval features were of interest but on their own were deemed to have only limited potential to address regional research objectives.



## 2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

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The purpose of the archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication was to make a full record of any archaeological remains impacted by the development, and to place them within their cultural and environmental setting. The specific aims of the archaeological fieldwork were, therefore, to:

- monitor all groundworks that had the potential to reveal archaeological remains; and
- investigate the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of archaeological deposits encountered within the groundworks.

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).

The main potential research interest of the PDA lies in the Saxon, medieval and post-medieval periods. It is located close to the medieval parish church (HER1105) and occupies a street frontage in a central location within the probable extent of the medieval village (HER 17154). The research framework states that generally few medieval rural settlements have been investigated in Bedfordshire, in particular settlements at the lower end of the medieval settlement hierarchy (Oake 2007, 14). The need for investigation into the origins, development and dynamics of medieval rural settlement are also emphasised by Medlycott (2011) in the East of England Research Framework.



### 3. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach to the project is summarised below. A full methodology is provided in the WSI (Albion 2017b).

#### 3.1 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 an archaeological watching brief</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> (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 number BEDFM: 2017.54). Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-284912) in accordance with the guidelines issued by Historic England and the Archaeology Data Service.

#### 3.2 Observation, Investigation and Recording

The archaeological trenching evaluation (Albion 2017a) revealed that the central and north part of the site covered by Trenches 4, 5 and 6 had been previously disturbed by post-medieval and later activities and there was little potential for the survival of archaeological remains in this part of the site. The archaeological observation works were, therefore, focussed on groundworks associated with the construction of dwellings in Plots 1, 2, 3 and 4 (Figure 2).

The excavation of foundation trenches for the four barn-style dwellings was monitored between 17th and 23rd October 2017. Their depths varied from 1.2m up to 1.8m and their widths from 0.45–0.6m according to the architect's design.

The trenches were dug with a mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision. Any potential archaeological features were investigated by hand, photographed and recorded using Albion Archaeology's pro forma sheets.



## 4. RESULTS

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### 4.1 Introduction

All deposits revealed during the monitoring are summarised below and shown on Figure 3. Context numbers in round brackets refer to fills or layers (\*\*\*).

Detailed context information is provided in Appendix 1.

### 4.2 Overburden and Geological Deposits

A 0.2m-thick tarmac surface (01) covered large areas of the site. Beneath this and across the site, the greatest depth of overburden consisted of a thick layer of made ground (06) that varied in composition but broadly consisted of building sand rubble, demolition debris and other disturbance associated with recent use of the site.

Remnants of topsoil (02) with a maximum thickness of 0.4m survived in less disturbed areas of the site, particularly in the vicinity of Plot 1. Subsoil (10) was also present in Plot 1 only with a maximum thickness of 0.2m.

Undisturbed geological deposits varied across the site, comprising clay silt (07) in the vicinity of Plot 4, changing to sand (05) around Plot 3 and then grey clay (11) in the vicinity of Plot 1.

### 4.3 Archaeological Features

#### 4.3.1 Plot 1

Most of the archaeological features were found during the excavation of the foundations for Plot 1. These features comprised three ditches and one pit.

Ditch [20] was located in the north-west corner of the plot; it was aligned approximately N-S and was 1.1m wide and 0.4m deep. Ditch [18] was located in the easternmost footing; it was aligned E-W and was 1m wide and 0.34m deep. Neither of these features had been identified in the trial trenching.

Ditches [14] (0.8m wide and 0.4m deep) and [16] (0.45m wide and 0.40m deep) were located in the southern part of the plot. They appeared to correlate with ditches [22] and [24] (1.2m wide, 0.7m deep and 0.4m wide 0.5m, deep respectively) on the eastern side of the plot and with ditches [106] and [108] that had been identified in the trial trenching.

Pit [12] on the western side of the plot was 1m wide and 0.45m deep.

All these features contained single fills, which were generally dark grey friable clay-silts. None of the features produced finds.

#### 4.3.2 Plot 2

These foundation trenches showed a fairly uniform level of disturbance of the overburden, probably associated with previous construction and modern-day farmyard activity. No archaeological features were observed and no finds were recovered.



#### **4.3.3 Plot 3**

The sole feature in Plot 3 was pit [03], located in the in the south-west corner. The incomplete profile measured 1.6m wide and 0.6m deep; the sole fill consisted of friable dark grey silt (04) beneath topsoil (02). No finds were recovered.

#### **4.3.4 Plot 4**

The sole feature in Plot 4 was linear [08], located in a narrow N-S footing. It was 2m wide and at least 1.2m deep. This feature was located during the evaluation in Trench 3 where it was recorded as a modern intrusion; no evidence was found here to change that conclusion. No finds were recovered from this feature.



## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

---

The monitoring of the foundation trenches for the four development plots identified limited archaeological remains. This included continuations of undated ditches found during the earlier trial-trench evaluation of the site, and four additional features. None of the features produced finds and so cannot be dated. No additional late Saxon or medieval activity was definitively identified and the continuation of a late Saxon ditch found during the evaluation in Trench was not located. This may indicate that the feature was an elongated pit.

Overall, the findings of the archaeological observation works confirmed the results of the evaluation of the site in that it had been considerably disturbed by post-medieval and later activities and contained sparse remains of archaeological significance.



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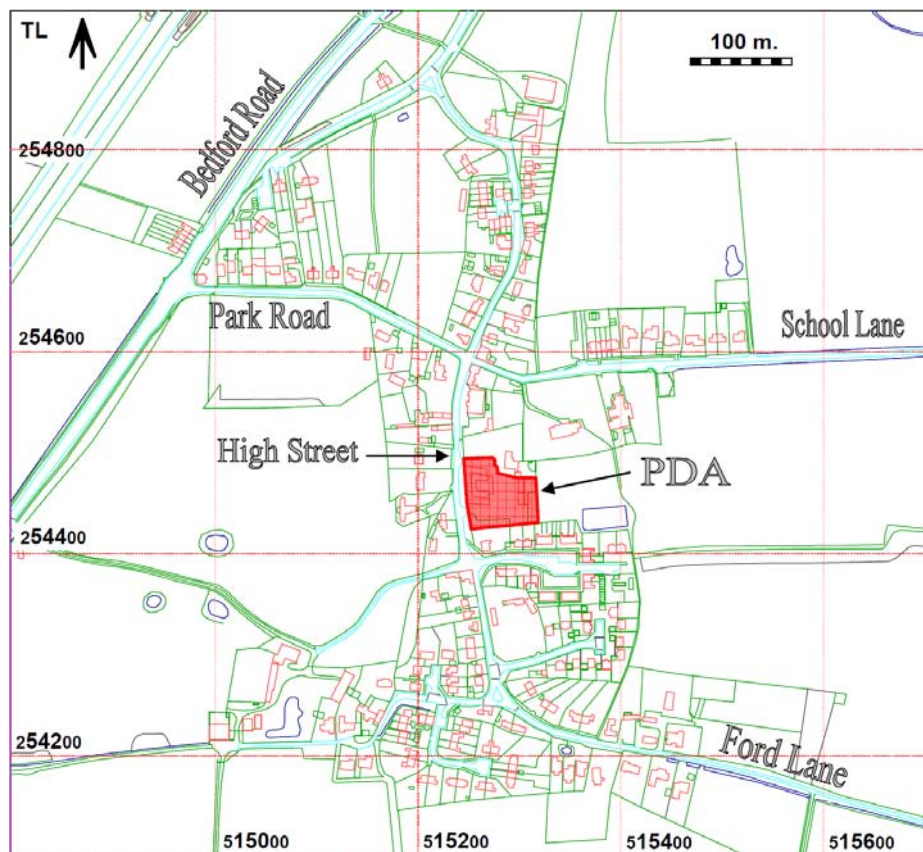
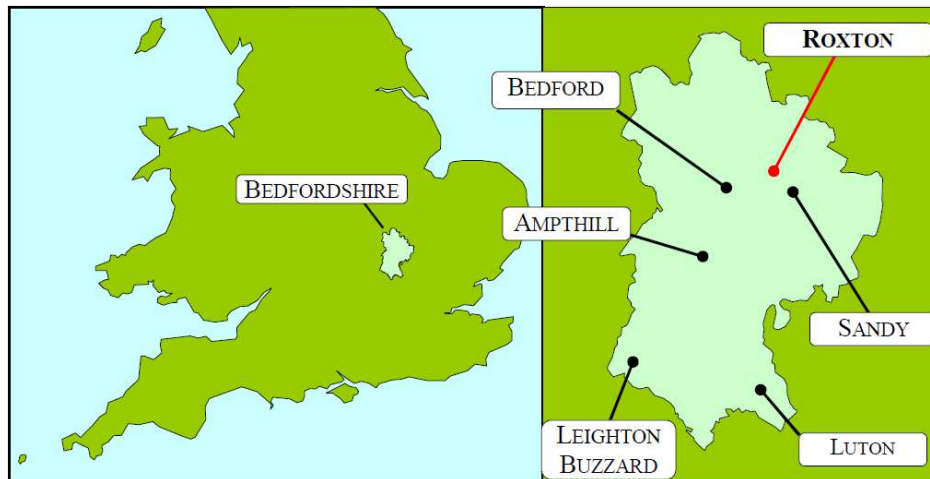


## 7. APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT SUMMARY

Area: 1-4  
 Extent (ha): 0.4  
 OS Co-ordinates: TL1528054460  
 Description: House foundations, plots 1-4

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1	External surface	Compact dark black tarmac	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Topsoil	Friable mid brown sandy silt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Modern intrusion	Asymmetrical sides: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 1.6m, max depth 0.6m, min length 0.6m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Fill	Friable dark grey silt occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Natural	Loose mid orange yellow sand frequent small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Make up layer	Loose mid grey sandy rubble frequent small-large CBM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Natural	Friable mid brown orange clay silt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Modern intrusion	Irregular sides: steep dimensions: min breadth 2m, min depth 0.5m, max length 0.6m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Fill	Friable dark black clay silt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Subsoil	Friable mid red brown gravel frequent small stones. Subsoil/ might be same as (05)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Natural	Firm mid grey clay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Pit	Sub-oval sides: U-shaped base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1m, max depth 0.45m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	Fill	Friable mid grey brown sandy gravel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Ditch	Linear N-S sides: U-shaped base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.8m, max depth 0.4m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Fill	Friable dark grey clay silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	Ditch	Linear N-S sides: U-shaped base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.45m, max depth 0.4m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Fill	Friable dark grey clay silt occasional small stones. Sole fill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	Ditch	Linear E-W sides: U-shaped base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1m, max depth 0.34m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	Fill	Friable dark brown clay silt occasional small CBM, occasional small charcoal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	Ditch	Linear N-S sides: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.1m, max depth 0.34m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	Fill	Friable mid grey silty clay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22	Ditch	Linear E-W sides: U-shaped base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.2m, max depth 0.7m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	Fill	Friable dark grey clay sand	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24	Ditch	Linear E-W sides: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.4m, max depth 0.5m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25	Fill	Friable dark grey clay sand occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





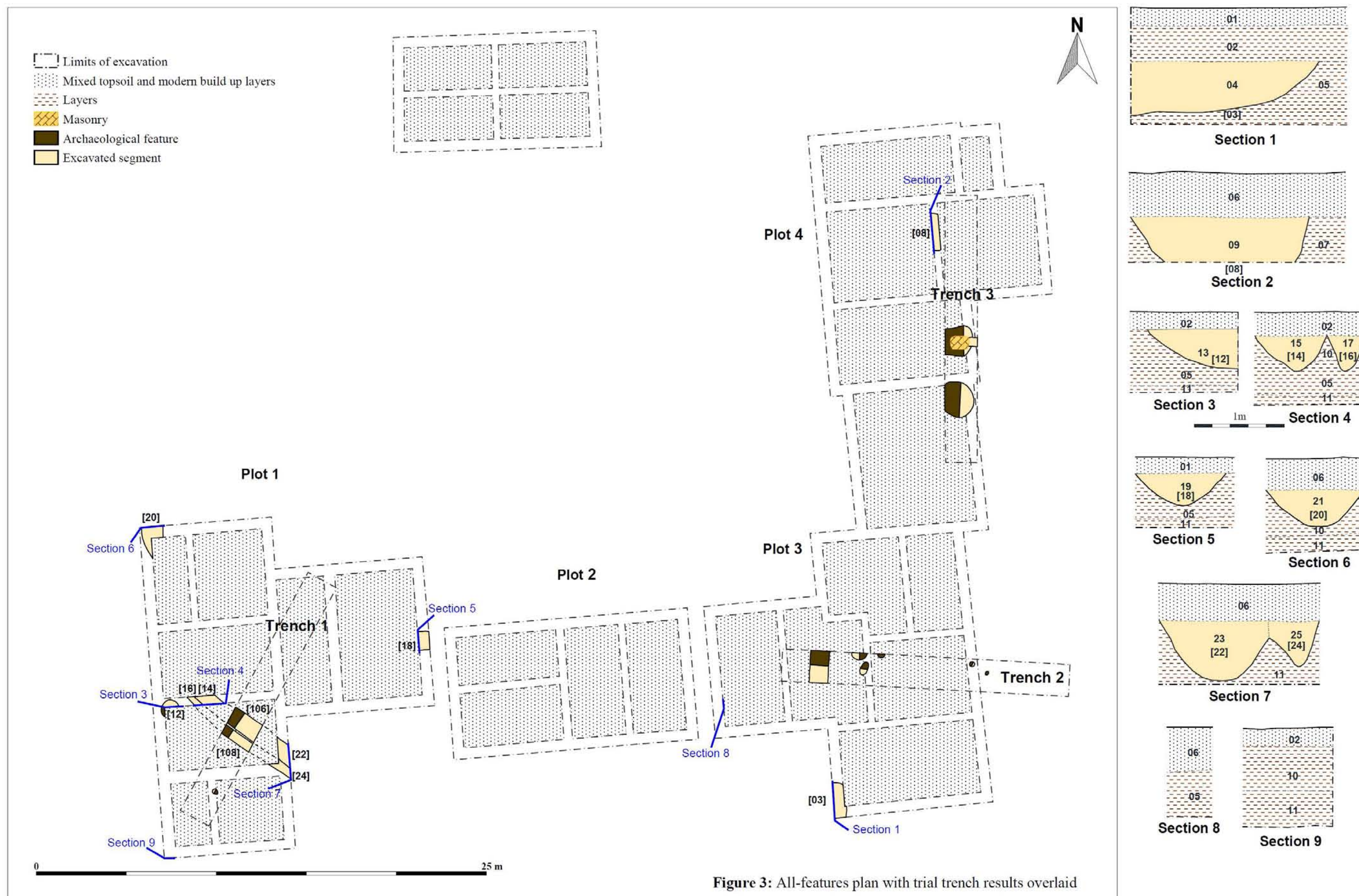
**Figure 1: Site location**

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**Figure 2:** Development plan









Ditches [14] and [16]  
North-facing section  
1m scale



Pit [03]  
East-facing section  
1m scale

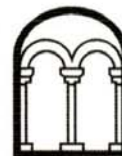


Ditch [18]  
West-facing section  
1m scale

**Figure 4: Photographs**

**Central  
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**Albion**  
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