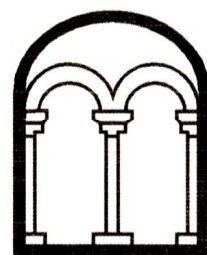


**CHRISTOPHER REEVES VA PRIMARY SCHOOL
PODINGTON
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**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.

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The project was commissioned by the school and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Geoff Saunders, Archaeological Officer for Bedford Borough Council. All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

This report has been prepared by Ben Barker (Project Officer) and Gareth Shane (Project Supervisor). Fieldwork was carried out by Ben Barker, Marcin Koziminski and Gareth Shane, with illustrations prepared by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician).

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Key Terms

The following terms or abbreviations are used throughout this report:

BBC	Bedford Borough Council
CI/A	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
HER	Historic Environment Record
HET	Historic Environment Team of BBC
NHLE	National Heritage List for England
PDA	Permitted development area
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

Planning permission (17/01801/FUL) was granted by Bedford Borough Council for the erection of a one- and two-storey rear extension, new covered area to rear/side and external alterations at Christopher Reeves VA Primary School, Podington.

Due to the high archaeological potential of the permitted development area (PDA) a condition (no. 3) was attached to the planning consent, requiring the implementation of an archaeological mitigation strategy. This was done on the advice of the Borough Council's Archaeological Officer (AO), in accordance with the guidelines provided in the National Planning Policy Framework, and in accordance with Saved Policies of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002 and Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan (2008).

The AO outlined options for the mitigation strategy, with the applicant choosing a programme of monitoring and recording during the groundworks for the development. Albion Archaeology was commissioned to prepare the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) in accordance with the requirements of the planning condition, and to carry out the subsequent programme of archaeological works.

The village of Podington lies approximately 10 miles north-west of Bedford, close to the Northamptonshire border, with the PDA located on the south side of Hinwick Road on the southern outskirts of the village, centred on NGR SP 9411 6237, at a height of c. 81m OD.

The archaeological works were undertaken intermittently between 23rd January and 2nd February 2018, in coordination with the groundworks contractor. The various components of ground disturbance with potential to impact buried archaeological remains were monitored. Initial works comprised the excavation of a series of wall footing trenches for the new buildings through the existing tarmacked play area. Subsequently, monitoring of the ground reduction within these footings was undertaken.

The only features revealed relate to the farming landscape of the area. A single probable arable cultivation furrow was identified — characteristic of medieval and later farming. Two adjacent ditches are likely to represent the redefinition of a post-medieval or later field boundary; a ceramic land drain was later inserted into one of the infilled ditches.

Creation of the play area had removed the upper soil profile to the top of the undisturbed geological strata — the level at which archaeological features should have been visible. Feature-definition was good, so it is considered likely that any features, if present, would have been identified. No prehistoric finds or features, which could have provided context for the prehistoric worked flints previously recovered from the site, were found.

The recorded remains are of no more than local significance and have no potential to address regional research objectives. No further analysis or publication of the site record is required. This document will be uploaded onto the OASIS database (ref. albionar1-304238) and the archive deposited with The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford, under accession number BEDFM 2017.114



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Background*

Planning permission (17/01801/FUL) was granted by Bedford Borough Council for the erection of a one- and two-storey rear extension, new covered area to rear/side and external alterations at Christopher Reeves VA Primary School, Podington.

Due to the high archaeological potential of the permitted development area (PDA) a condition (no. 3) was attached to the planning consent requiring the implementation of an archaeological mitigation strategy. This was done on the advice of the Borough Council's Archaeological Officer (AO), in accordance with the guidelines provided in the *National Planning Policy Framework*, and in accordance with Saved Policies BE24 and BE25 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002, Policy CP23 of the Bedford Borough Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan (2008).

The AO outlined options for the mitigation strategy, with the applicant choosing a programme of monitoring and recording during the groundworks for the development. Albion Archaeology was commissioned to prepare the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) in accordance with the requirements of the planning condition, and to carry out the programme of archaeological works.

1.2 *Site Location, Topography and Geology*

Situated approximately 10 miles north-west of Bedford, close to the Northamptonshire border, is the village of Podington. The PDA is located on the southern outskirts of the village, on the south side of Hinwick Road, centred on NGR SP 9411 6237 (Figure 1), at a height of *c.* 81m OD.

The superficial geology is Oadby Member – Diamicton (boulder clay, above the Blisworth Limestone Formation¹).

In terms of archaeological impact, the most significant element of the proposed development was the 'L'-shaped rear extension, which was largely located on existing tarmac surfaces to the south-east of the school buildings (Figure 2).

1.3 *Archaeological Background*

The Bedford Borough Historic Environment Record (HER) and the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) record several entries for the area around the PDA. These were detailed in the WSI, with key elements summarised below.

The PDA lies *c.* 60m south of the southern edge of the designated Podington Conservation Area and *c.* 150m south of Podington medieval village core as described in the HER (HER16953).

¹ Contains British Geological Survey materials ©NERC [2014]



Several areas of potentially prehistoric cropmarks are recorded in the vicinity of Podington. An area of extensive cropmarks (HER11764) is located *c.* 120m to the south of the PDA. Although the cropmarks remain undated, metal-detector finds from the area suggest mainly prehistoric to Roman activity, with continued medieval and post-medieval land-use.

Two find-spots are recorded within the school site itself. These comprise prehistoric flint artefacts (HER16222 and HER15938).

Podington was recorded as a relatively large settlement in the 1086 Domesday Survey, suggesting at least a late Saxon origin of the settlement². The medieval village core is focussed along High Street, Gold Street and extending to the north including part of Wymington Road, where a motte and bailey castle (HER81) is located north of the road at Manor Farm. Evidence for medieval ridge and furrow cultivation is recorded from areas to the south, west, north and east of Podington (HER699).

A post-medieval to modern brickworks (HER3007) is recorded for the area west of Hinwick Road opposite the PDA.

1.4 Project Objectives

The purpose of the archaeological investigation 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 to:

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

The PDA had potential to contain prehistoric remains related to the artefacts recovered on site (HER15938, HER16222). There was also potential for prehistoric to Romano-British remains, given the cropmark evidence identified in the vicinity. There was less potential for Saxon or medieval remains, given the PDA's location between the settlement foci at Podington and Hinwick.

The project objectives would be reviewed to address any discoveries in terms of specific research aims which will be derived from regional research frameworks (e.g. Brown and Glazebrook 2000; Oake et al. 2007; Medlycott 2011).

² <http://opendomesday.org/place/SP9462/podington/> [Accessed 18/12/2017]



2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Standards

The standards and requirements set out in the following documents were adhered to throughout the project:

• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume I Fieldwork</i> (3rd edn, 2017).
• Bedford Borough Council	<i>Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedford</i> (ver. 2.8, 2010)
• CfA	<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 edn, 2011)

2.2 Archaeological Investigation and Recording

Archaeological works took place intermittently between 23rd January and 2nd February 2018, initially to monitor the excavation of the wall footing trenches, and then subsequently during ground reduction of the area between the footings. All of the machine excavation works were undertaken by an experienced operator, using an excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

All soil deposits were recorded using Albion Archaeology's *pro formae* sheets; they were also drawn and photographed as appropriate. All deposits revealed were photographed and recorded using a unique number sequence, commencing at 1. Context numbers in square brackets refer to the cuts [**] and round brackets to fills or layers (**). A full methodology is provided in the approved WSI (Albion 2017).



3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

All deposits within the PDA are fully described below, with associated plan and images shown in Figures 2–4. The initial component of the works comprised the excavation of a series of footing trenches, which were cut through the level of the existing tarmac play area. After the concrete footings had cured, the ground between the footings was reduced to the formation level of the new building.

3.2 The Footing Trenches

The trenches were *c.* 0.5m wide and varied in depth from 1m to over 2.2m, depending on their location within the building; they extended well into the undisturbed geological strata. Observations were made from the edge of the trenches, with the sections being very clear in profile.

3.2.1 Soil profile

The typical trench profile comprised:

- tarmac (1), up to 0.1m thick;
- a sub-stratum (2) up to 0.20m;
- firm mid-orange grey-clay (3), the undisturbed geological strata (Figure 3: Images 1 and 2).

However, at the southern edge of the play area, a footing extended into the grassed area beyond, revealing friable mid-grey-brown silt clay topsoil (8) up to 0.3m thick above mid-yellow-brown clay subsoil (11) up to 0.2m thick (Figure 4: Image 3). This would appear to be a former cultivation soil. For the creation of the play area the upper soil profile comprising topsoil and subsoil, had been removed to the top of the geological horizon.

3.2.2 Disturbance

The footing trenches revealed a number of areas of amorphous, darker patches of material, often mixed with the tarmac sub-stratum (Figure 3: Image 2). These represent localised areas of modern disturbance (wheel rutting etc.) associated with the removal of the upper soil horizon and the laying of the sub-stratum for the play area.

3.2.3 Modern ditches

Two parallel, wide but shallow linear features [4] and [6] were identified at the western margin of the site, roughly centrally along the N-S component of the extension (Figure 2). They were aligned roughly NE-SW, around 1.4m wide with relatively shallow asymmetrical profiles, extending to 0.24–0.35m below the base of the tarmac sub-stratum, into the geological horizon (Figure 2: Section 1).

Both were filled with blue-grey clay, with single fragments of clay tobacco pipe stem (2g) and ceramic land drain (16g) recovered respectively from the fills of [4] and [6], indicating an 18th-century or later date for the ditches. The northern



ditch [6] had a ceramic land drain in the base, of which the hand-collected fragment was a part.

These features do not correlate with boundaries shown on historical maps. The only ditches shown in the vicinity on the first edition OS map of 1883 are aligned roughly NNW-SSE, perpendicular to Hinwick Road.

3.3 Ground Reduction within the Building Footprint

Monitoring of the removal of the existing tarmac surface and most of the underlying sub-stratum was monitored. This exposed the top of the geological stratum (03), which in places was heavily disturbed by rooting. It also exhibited variations in consistency, from light yellow-brown clay to stony brown-orange sandy clay. Some of the disturbance is probably associated with the creation of the play area.

3.3.1 Ceramic land drain

The continuation of a NE-SW aligned ceramic land drain was visible on the stripped surface; it is likely to have been related to ditch [6] that was recorded in the adjacent footing section.

3.3.2 Cultivation furrow

Reduction to formation level of the northern part of the southern extension revealed a poorly defined NE-SW aligned linear feature, parallel to the land drain recorded *c.* 10m to the NW (Figure 2). This linear feature [9] was *c.* 1.4m wide with a shallow concave profile, *c.* 0.2m deep. It was filled with mid-brown silty clay (Figure 4: Image 4).

Traces of a modern mole-plough scar were visible centrally within the feature. Two rim sherds (30g) from a 19th-century white earthenware plate, with a dark blue floral motif were recovered from its vicinity during ground reduction. The feature is interpreted a probable arable cultivation furrow, based on its form and the nature of its fill.



4 SUMMARY OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Although the PDA is located in an archaeologically sensitive area that contains cropmarks of prehistoric to Roman date, with prehistoric worked flints being recovered from the area of the school, no similar finds were recovered during the monitoring. The archaeological works did not identify any prehistoric features, from which the flints could have been derived.

The only features revealed related to the farming landscape of the area, with a single probable arable cultivation furrow being identified. These features are characteristic of medieval and later farming. Two adjacent ditches are likely to redefine a post-medieval or later field ditch, possibly following the line of a furrow. The line of one of the infilled ditches was subsequently used to improve the drainage of the area by means of the insertion of a ceramic land drain.

Creation of the play area for the school had removed the upper soil profile to the top of the undisturbed geological strata — the level at which archaeological features should have been visible. Feature-definition was good, so it is considered likely that any features, if present, would have been identified.

The recorded remains are of no more than local significance and have no potential to address regional research objectives. No further analysis or publication of the site record is required. This document will be uploaded onto the OASIS database (ref. albionar1-304238) and the archive deposited with The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford, under accession number BEDFM 2017.114.



5 BIBLIOGRAPHY

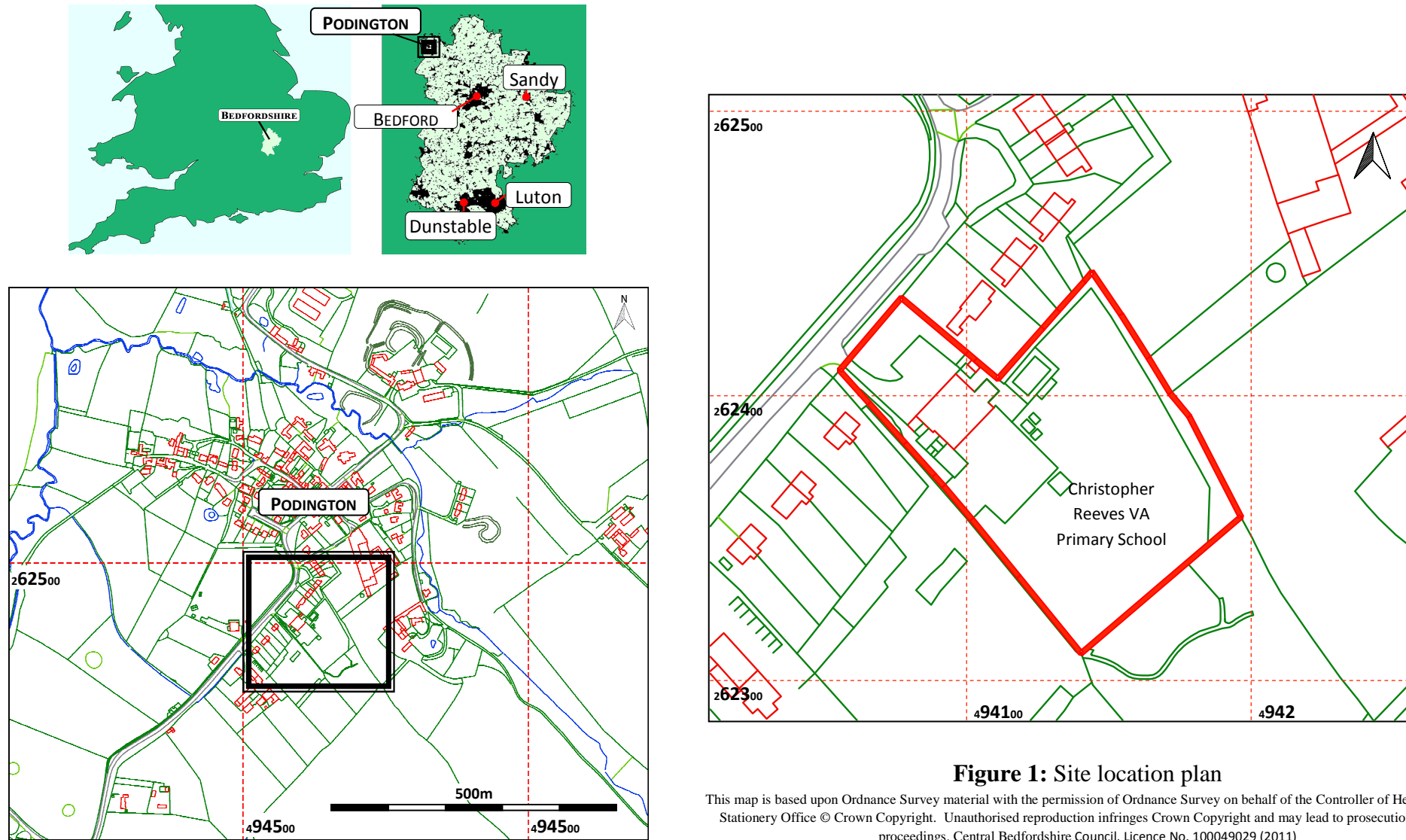
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6 APPENDIX 1: FINDS SUMMARY

Feature	Fill	Date Range	Finds Summary
4 Ditch	5	Modern	Clay tobacco pipe (2g). Stem bore diameter <i>c.</i> 2mm.
6 Ditch	7	Modern	Ceramic land drain (16g). Not retained.
9 Furrow	10	Modern	Pottery (2 sherds: 30g)

Table 1: Finds summary by feature



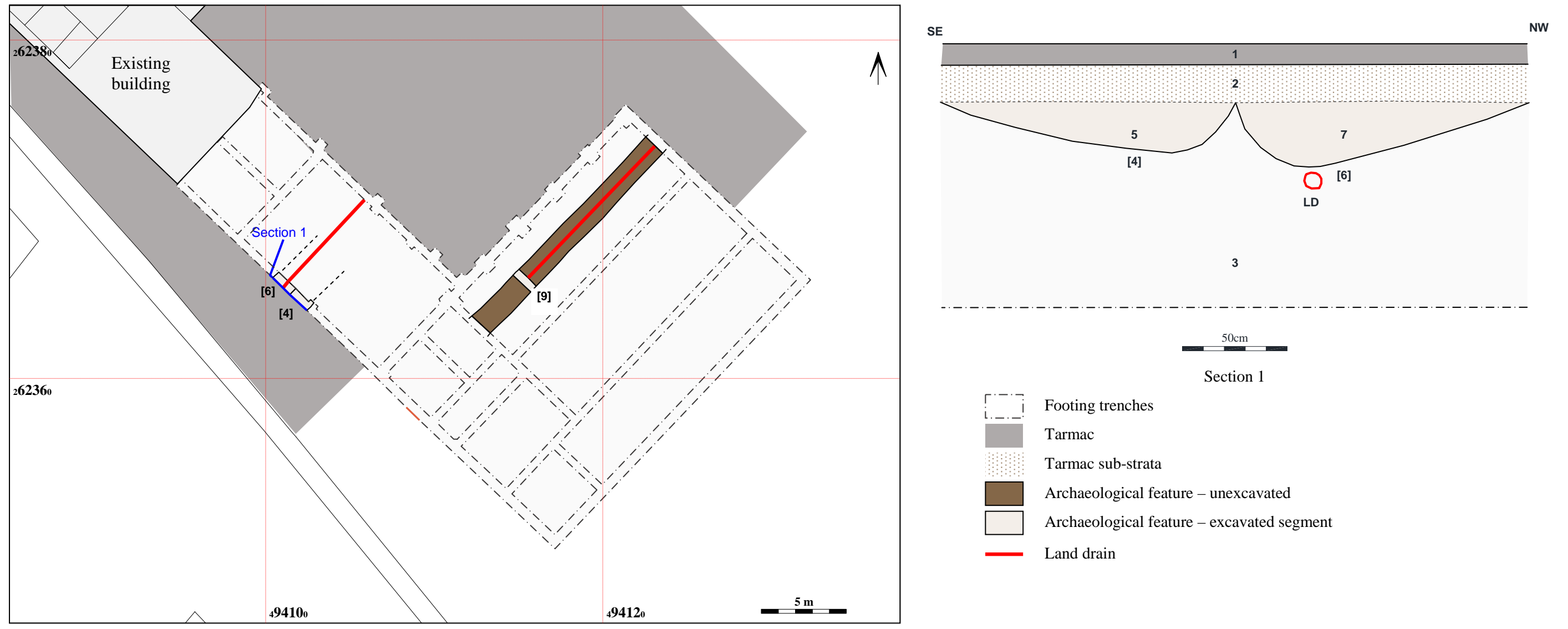


Figure 2: All-features plan

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Image 1: General view of footing trenches, looking westwards



Image 2: Typical soil profile revealed by excavation of the footing trenches, showing areas of darker material incorporating tarmac sub-strata. Scale 30cm in 10cm divisions.

Figure 3: Selected images 1 and 2



Image 3: General view of showing soil profile revealed at the edge of the tarmac play area



Image 4: General view along furrow [9], looking westwards, during the general ground reduction between the footings

Figure 4: Selected images 3 and 4

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