

**LAND AT 134 HIGH STREET
KEMPSTON
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

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Produced for:
Kempston Hammers Sports and Social Club

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Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

<i>Albion</i>	Albion Archaeology
<i>BCC's CAO</i>	Bedfordshire County Council's County Archaeological Officer
<i>Client</i>	Kempston Hammers Sports and Social Club
<i>HER</i>	Historic Environment Record (Bedfordshire's sites and monuments record)
<i>IFA</i>	Institute of Field Archaeologists
<i>Procedures Manual</i>	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork, 2nd Edition 2001.</i> Albion Archaeology

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Introduction

Planning permission (02/3078/FUL) was granted by Bedford Borough Council for the '*erection of a side and rear extension to the clubhouse, and the erection of a replacement bowls pavilion at 134 High Street, Kempston, Bedfordshire*' (BCC 2004). This was on condition that a programme of archaeological monitoring and reporting was undertaken, as recommended by Bedfordshire County Council's, County Archaeological Officer. Kempston Hammers Sports and Social Club commissioned Albion Archaeology to prepare a Project Design (Albion 2004) and undertake the work.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Wesley Keir, Dan Hounsell, Richard Gregson (Supervisors) Marcin Koziminski and Adam Lee (Assistant Supervisors). This report was prepared by Richard Gregson and Marcin Koziminski. A copy of this report and the project archive can be found at Bedford Museum (Accession Number 2004:12).

Site Description and Location (Figure 1)

The site of the development was centred at TL 0220 4738, only c.120m north of Kempston High Street. It lay at an average height of 30m OD.

The development area was located within the grounds of the existing Kempston Hammers Sports and Social Club. The soils here are derived from the underlying gravel and alluvial clay geology.

Archaeological Background

Kempston Hammers Sports and Social Club lies within a landscape rich in archaeological remains. This is demonstrated by the distribution of chance finds listed on the Bedfordshire HER and by the results of recent archaeological fieldwork carried out in the area.

An extensive Roman settlement is known to the north-west, possibly centred on Kempston Church End (HER 162). During the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD this extended over an area of 10ha to the west of the River Great Ouse. Two possible Roman fords are recorded on the river (HER 184) and a back channel (HER10303). The former is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The settlement comprised a system of rectangular enclosures defined by ditches and gravel tracks.

To the west, The Bury, is believed to be the site of one of the medieval manors of Kempston. Roman and medieval artefacts have been found in the vicinity of the present building (HER 163 and 7030). Fieldwork undertaken in 1998 (BCAS 1999) located settlement remains of this date to the north-west of The Bury.

During building work at Brook Drive, c.250m to the south, a number of inhumations were uncovered suggesting the location of a cemetery (HER 16110). This may have been medieval in date. Remains dating to the Roman and early medieval periods were made during fieldwork in King Williams Close (HER 14853) only 200m east of the site.

Perhaps the most significant information, in terms of the development area, was gathered during archaeological investigation in the sports field located immediately west of the proposed works. This recorded the presence of Bronze Age ring ditches, and settlement remains dating to the Iron Age and Roman periods (BCAS 1999).



The activity recorded in the sports field is thought to be part of a larger pattern of settlement and other contemporary activity extending from Kempston Church End (HER 162), c.750m to the west. The activity recorded in Kempston Church End indicates that a settlement dating to the Iron Age and Roman periods existed. During the Roman period this may have constituted a small town (BCAS 1999).

Also of great significance is the proximity of the development area to the historic core of Kempston, which lies to the immediate south and east. Even before the above fieldwork was undertaken it had been suggested that this area was likely to have been settled continuously since at least the Iron Age (Wood 1984). Evidence for this proposition comes in several forms, including the origin of the town's name which is thought to derive from the Celtic word *Cembes*, meaning crooked, and *tun* a Saxon word meaning farm. When combined these suggest a farm, or settlement, on a bend in the river.

Further sites of archaeological interest are located to the north on the opposite side of the River Great Ouse, within the Biddenham Loop, where Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman activity has been recorded (Albion Archaeology 2004).

Project Methodology

Methods employed during the project complied with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct and Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (1999), English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991), and Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual* (2001).

Description and Results of Groundworks (Figures 2 and 3)

Groundworks comprised the footings for extensions to the north and the east of the existing clubhouse building and an electric cable trench.

The footprint for the north extension to the clubhouse was a rectangular area measuring 170m². Footings, which followed the outside edge of the area, measured 0.6m wide and 1m deep. Since overburden in this area varied from 0.4 to 0.65m, the footings penetrated the undisturbed geological deposit throughout. Pit [104] was recorded towards the north-west corner of the area. It was 0.85m long and 0.4m deep, with near vertical sides and a flat base. It contained mid brown, silty clay, probably the result of natural infilling. A small fragment of post-medieval tile was recovered.

The footprint for the east extension to the clubhouse was also a rectangular area measuring 42m². Footings followed the outside edge of the area and measured 0.5m wide and 1.24–1.45m deep. Since overburden in the southern part of the trench was 0.82m deep, footings penetrated the undisturbed geological deposit throughout (Figure 3, Section 4). Overburden was deeper to the north (Figure 3, Sections 1-2). A series of modern levelling layers and internal surfaces were revealed in the northern footing trench (Figure 3, Section 4).

The electric cable trench was excavated from the mains supply adjacent to Kempston High Street in the south, along the grass verge on the western side of the access road and into the clubhouse building (Figure 2). It was 186m long, 0.5m wide and 0.6m deep. Overburden, comprising topsoil (200, 209) and subsoil (201, 203) was removed. Generally, the depth of the excavation was sufficient to penetrate the



undisturbed geological deposit. However, for a 30m stretch (Figure 2) in the southern half of the trench it was only sufficient to penetrate subsoil (201). A second, less stony subsoil deposit was also identified (208). A tree-throw [205] was recorded to the south. It was irregular in shape, 1.45m long and 0.43m deep. No datable artefacts were recovered from it.

Conclusion

The only archaeological remains identified during groundworks was pit [104]. Since it was identified as post-medieval or modern and of local interest, it has relatively little archaeological significance.

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Appendix 1, Context Summary



Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 37.00 m. Width: 0.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: 0.4 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 2162: Northing: 47399)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 2187: Northing: 47400)

Reason: Footing trench for extension to the north of the clubhouse.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	External surface	Cemented grey Concrete hardstanding. 0.2m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Make up layer	Friable Mixture of sand, rubble and modern CBM. Make-up associated with concrete hardstanding. 0.3m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Topsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay frequent small stones 0.55m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Natural	Compact orange yellow gravel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Pit	profile: near vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.85m Only partially revealed in footing trench. Only visible in south facing section.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Fill	Firm mid brown silty clay frequent small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 186.00 m. Width: 0.50 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.42 m. Max: 0.7 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 2156: Northing: 47381)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 2169: Northing: 47235)

Reason: Service trench for electricity cable

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
200	Topsoil	Friable dark brown clay silt occasional small stones 0.19m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
201	Subsoil	Friable mid orange brown sandy silt moderate small stones 0.34m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
202	Natural	Hard mid yellow orange sandy gravel occasional small chalk, moderate small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
203	Subsoil	Spongy dark orange brown clay silt A dirtier, heavier, more clayey version of subsoil (201) likely generated as a result of root action. 0.35m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
204	Natural	Hard dark orange brown silty gravel A dirtier and more disturbed version of natural geology (202), likely the result of substantial root action.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
205	Treethrow	Irregular ENE-WSW profile: stepped base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.45m, max depth 0.34m, min length 0.48m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
206	Fill	Loose mid orange brown silty sand frequent small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
208	Subsoil	Firm mid grey brown clay silt Not as stoney as (201)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
209	Topsoil	Friable dark brown black sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal 0.08m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 3

Max Dimensions: Length: 12.00 m. Width: 0.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 2197: Northing: 47399)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 2194: Northing: 47378)

Reason: Footing trench for extension to the east of the clubhouse.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
300	Natural	Plastic mid grey orange silty clay occasional small-medium stones Thickness: 0.66m excavated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
301	Buried subsoil	Plastic mid grey blue clay silt occasional small-medium stones Thickness: 0.27m excavated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
302	Dump material	Friable dark grey brown clay sand moderate small-large ceramic building material, moderate flecks charcoal, moderate small-large stones Thickness: 0.94m excavated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
303	Concrete	Hard mid grey concrete 0.19m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
304	Internal surface	Hard mid grey red Brick surface by the entrance to clubhouse - followed by construction of disabled access platform. Formed from two regular courses of bricks. Dimensions of masonry: 1.55m long, 0.17m thick, width - N/A. Dimensions of bricks: 230x100x70mm. NE face of masonry recorded.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
305	Make up layer	Friable dark grey brown silty sand frequent small-medium ceramic building material, occasional flecks charcoal, moderate small-medium stones 0.15m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
306	Internal surface	Hard mid orange grey silty sand occasional small-large concrete, moderate small stones 0.05m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
307	Make up layer	Friable mid grey yellow silty sand occasional small-large ceramic building material, frequent small-large stones 0.23m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
308	Internal surface	Hard mid grey sand moderate small-large concrete, moderate small-large stones 0.14m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
309	Make up layer	Friable mid yellow grey sand frequent small stones 0.09m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
310	External surface	Friable mid brown grey sandy gravel occasional small concrete, frequent small stones 0.07m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
311	Levelling layer	Friable mid yellow grey sandy gravel frequent small stones 0.15m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
312	External surface	Hard mid grey concrete moderate small-medium stones 0.20m thick - disabled access platform.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

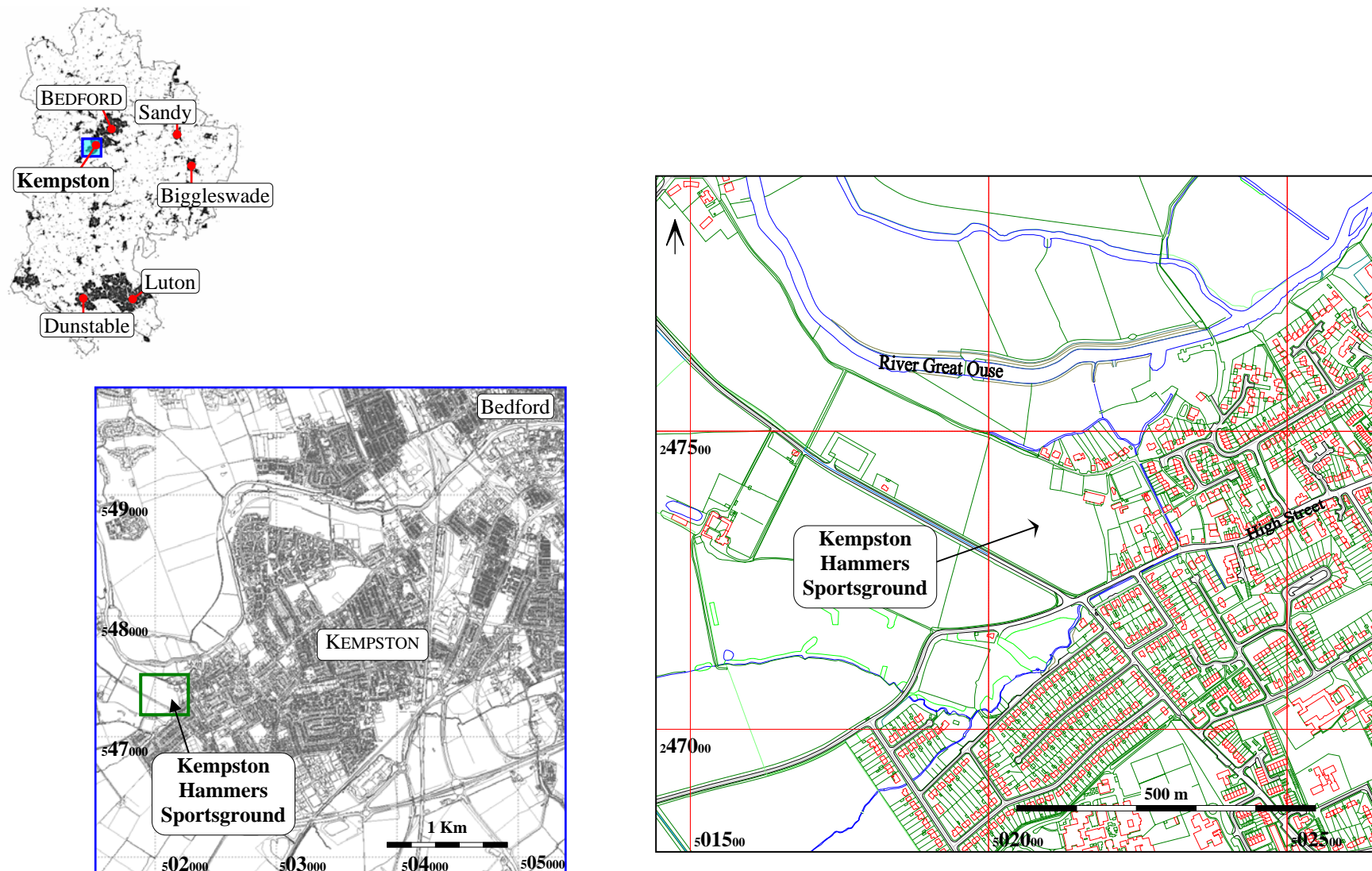
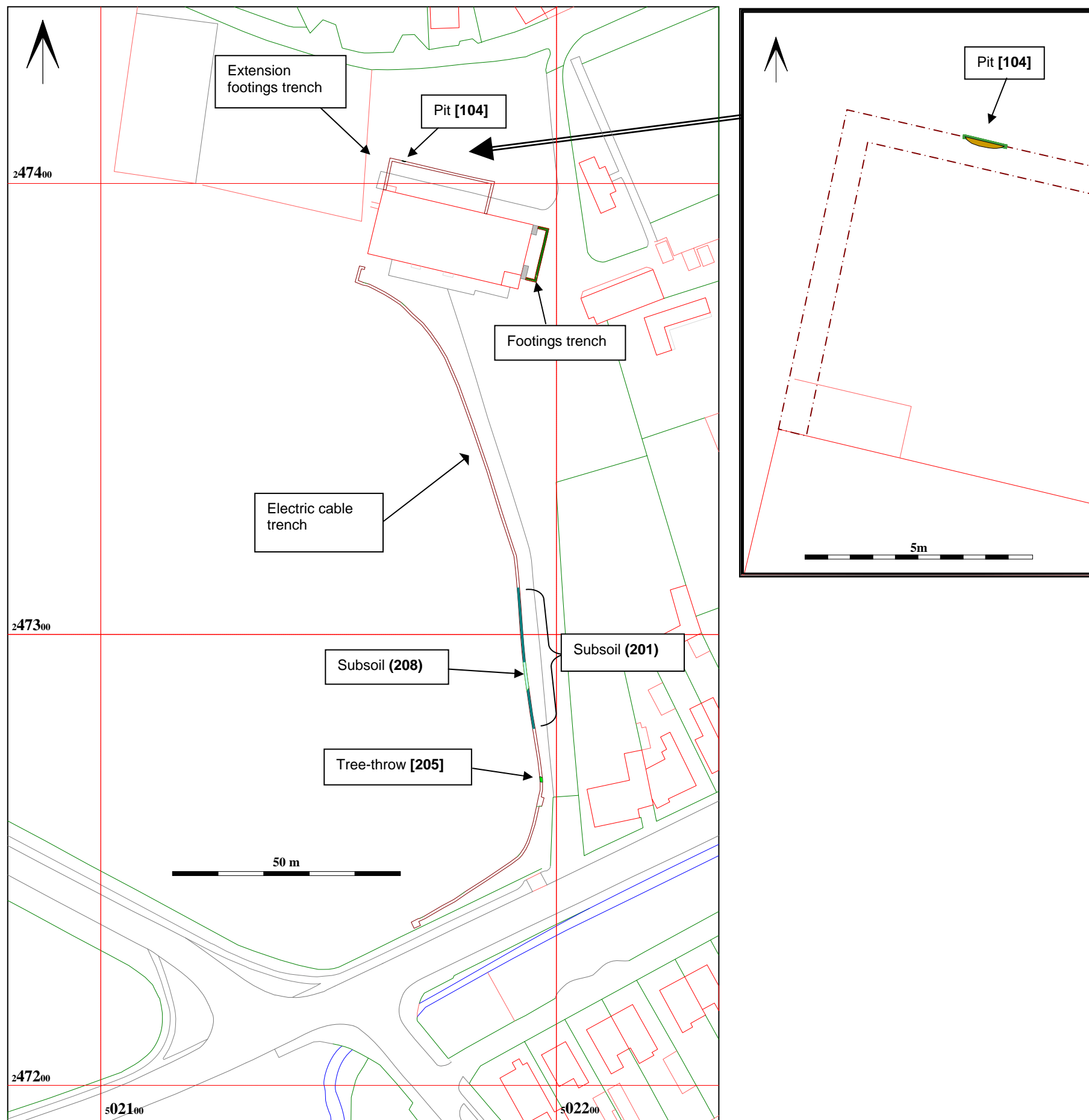


Figure 1: Site location plan

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Pit [104]. Looking NNE, Scale 1m



Tree-throw [205]. Scale 50cm

Figure 2: All features plan

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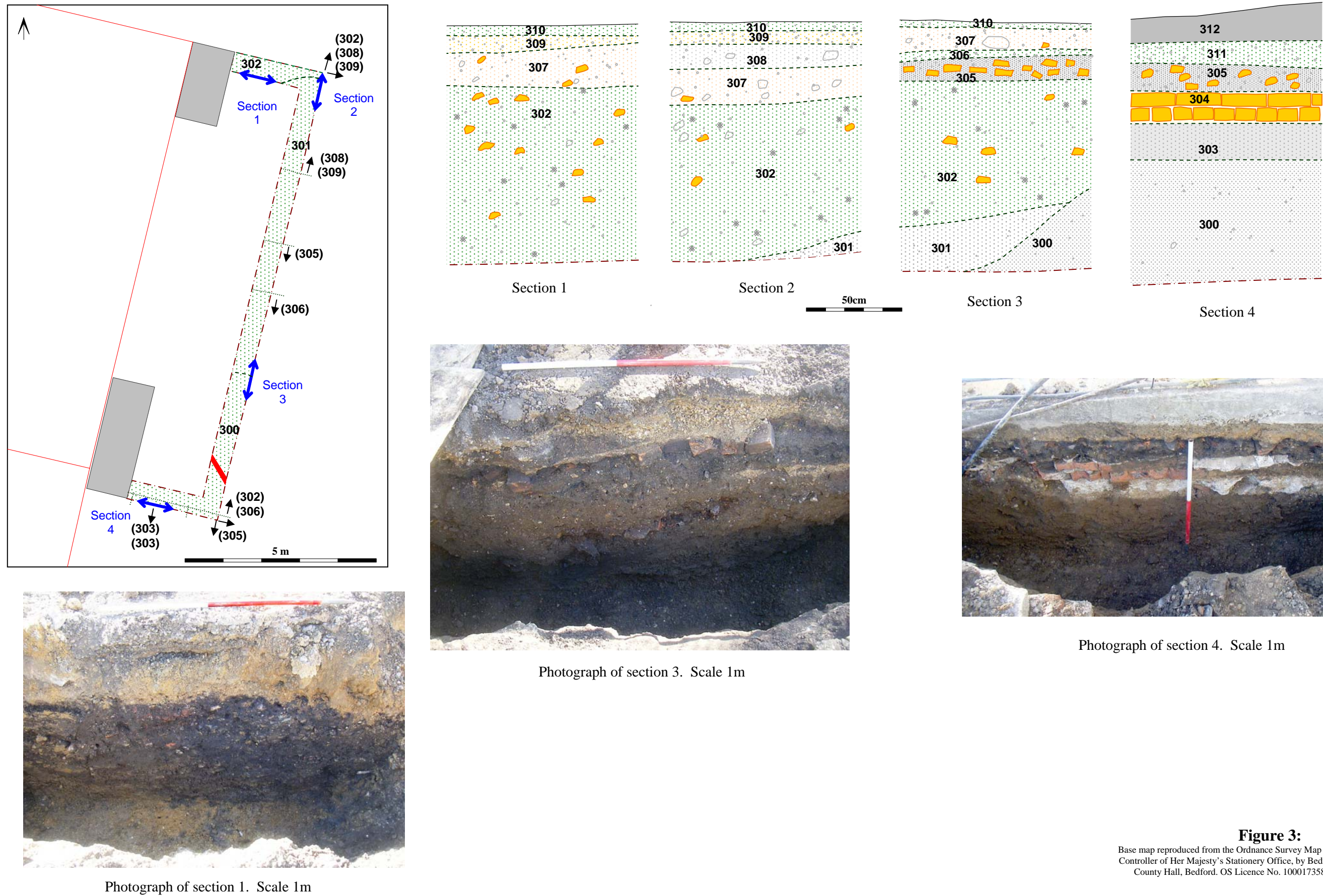


Figure 3:

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