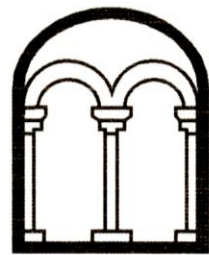


56 STREATLEY ROAD  
SUNDON  
BEDFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION  
AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

**Albion**  
archaeology



**56 STREATLEY ROAD  
SUNDON  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION  
AND HERITAGE STATEMENT**

Project: SR3467  
HER search no: 201819/243  
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| Written by   | Edited by   | Approved by    |
| Gareth Shane | Iain Leslie | Drew Shottliff |

Produced for:  
Central Bedfordshire Council – Housing Service



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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. This document should not be relied upon or used for any other project 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).*

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## Acknowledgements

*The project was commissioned by Central Bedfordshire Council – Housing Service.*

*This report has been prepared by Gareth Shane. The fieldwork was undertaken by Gareth Shane. Digitisation of site drawings and illustration were undertaken by Joan Lightning. The project was managed by Iain Leslie. All Albion Archaeology projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff.*

*Fieldwork was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Slawek Utrata (Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeological Officer).*

## Version History

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| <i>1.1</i>     | <i>25/03/2019</i> | <i>Comments from CBCAO</i> |

## Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| CBCAO | Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeological Officer        |
| CBM   | Ceramic building material                                  |
| CI/A  | Chartered Institute for Archaeologists                     |
| HER   | Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record |
| LPA   | Local planning authority                                   |
| PDA   | Proposed development area                                  |
| WSI   | Written scheme of investigation                            |



## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Central Bedfordshire Council – Housing Service is gathering information in support of a planning application for the construction of two residential properties and associated access at 56 Streatley Road, Sundon, Bedfordshire.*

*As the proposed development area (PDA) is situated in an area of archaeological potential, the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeological Officer (CBCAO) advised that any planning application should be accompanied by a Heritage Statement, based on the results of an archaeological field evaluation. This report presents the results of the evaluation.*

*Archaeological trial trenching took place on 12th and 13th February 2019. Three trenches were excavated, targeting the footprint of the proposed development. A pit and ditch of post-medieval/modern date as well as a modern pit were identified.*

*The significance of the remains is considered negligible; they have no potential to address local or regional research objectives.*

*The development will involve ground disturbance that is likely to adversely affect the sub-surface archaeological remains within the PDA. This will probably impact on the post-medieval/modern remains in the south-west part of the PDA. However, the remains are of negligible significance and, therefore, any developmental impact on them will also be of negligible significance.*

*A full archive of finds and records generated during the project will be compiled in accordance with Historic England (MoRPHE) standards. It will be kept secure at all stages of the operation prior to its deposition, subject to the landowner's consent, at Luton Culture (Acc no.: LUTNM:2019/12).*

*Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database in accordance with the guidelines issued by Historic England and the Archaeology Data Service (reference no.: albionar1-339013).*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

---

### 1.1 *Planning Background*

Central Bedfordshire Council – Housing Service is gathering information in support of a planning application for the construction of two residential properties and associated access at 56 Streatley Road, Sundon, Bedfordshire.

As the proposed development area (PDA) is situated in an area of archaeological potential, the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeological Officer (CBCAO) advised that any planning application should be accompanied by a Heritage Statement based on the results of an archaeological field evaluation.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the evaluation (trial trenching) and produced a Written Scheme of investigation (WSI) outlining the methodology. The WSI was agreed by the CBCAO. This report presents the results of the trial-trench evaluation.

In the event that the application is consented, the results of this investigation will inform any further works that might be required by the CBCAO to mitigate any constructional impacts on archaeological remains.

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

Upper Sundon is a small village situated in Central Bedfordshire, c.10.6km north-west of Luton.

The PDA lies in the south-east part of the village, off Streatley Road and immediately to the west of the former White Hart public house (Figure 1). It is c.0.1ha in size and is fairly level at c.150m OD. The PDA is centred on TL 04868 27669 and at the time of the fieldwork comprised a grass lawn and area of gravel hardstanding associated with the former public house.

The underlying geology is Zig Zag Chalk Formation, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 94 to 101 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period. There are no superficial deposits recorded.

### 1.3 *Archaeological Background*

Prior to the works, data was obtained from the Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record (HER search no: 201819/243). The data recorded within a 500m-radius of the PDA, referred to as the ‘study area’, is summarised below.

#### 1.3.1 *Prehistoric*

The only evidence of prehistoric activity in the study area is Mesolithic, Bronze Age and Neolithic flints (HER16282) recovered during fieldwalking around Sundon (EBD1521, EBD1524, EBD1536 and EBD 760).

#### 1.3.2 *Roman (AD 43–c. AD 410)*

Cropmarks, forming a compact block of rectilinear enclosures are recorded c.320m to the south-west of the PDA, in an area where fieldwalking produced Roman



pottery and tile (HER9309). It has been suggested that a Roman road (Viatores no.177) (HER691) runs NE-SW immediately north of the PDA; however, there is little evidence to support this and the suggestion is now thought to be erroneous.

### 1.3.3 Medieval (1066–1550)

Medieval Sundon is thought to have been polyfocal, with two separate but interlinked hamlets: Lower Sundon (which is where the parish church and manor were located) and Upper Sundon (where the PDA is situated).

In Domesday Book there is only one reference to a manor at Sundon; it was assessed at 10 hides and was held by William d'Eu. This suggests a late Saxon or earlier origin for the manor and the hamlet of Lower Sundon. It is uncertain at what date Upper Sundon, which lies c.560m to the north-west, developed, although it is almost certainly at least medieval in origin.

The PDA lies within the postulated medieval core of Upper Sundon, as recorded in the HER (HER16970) (Figure 1). Immediately to the west of the PDA is an area of extensive earthworks (HER5469) (Figure 1), which demonstrate that the village was once much larger. This type of shrunken settlement was common in the medieval period with social and economic pressures in the 14th century causing many settlements to shrink or in some cases be abandoned entirely.

Medieval pottery has been recovered during fieldwalking (EBD1524, EBD1536 and EBD 760) in fields surrounding Upper Sundon, including scatters c.90m to the west of the PDA (HER16282).

### 1.3.4 Post-medieval (1550–1900)

Several post-medieval heritage assets are recorded in the HER within the study area, predominantly comprising undesignated buildings of 19th-century origin. Also recorded are two listed buildings: a farmhouse probably built in the 16th century (HER5970), located c.320m to the north-west; and a 19th-century post-office and general stores (HER6965) also c.320m to the north-west.

Located c.380m to the south-west are the earthworks of a post-medieval chalk extraction pit (HER9345). Within the PDA, a 19th- to 20th-century well has been recorded, directly to the rear of the White Hart public house (HER15276).

## 1.4 Project Objectives

The principal purpose of the archaeological field evaluation was to recover information on the:

- location, extent, nature, and date of any archaeological features or deposits that might be present within the PDA;
- integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that might be present within the PDA;
- nature of palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

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).*





## 2. METHOD STATEMENTS

### 2.1 Methodological Standards

The methodological approach to the project was detailed in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2019), which was approved by the CBCAO prior to commencement of the work.

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

|  |   |
|--|---|
| • Albion Archaeology                           | <i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (3rd edn, 2017).   |
| • CfA  | <i>Charter and by-law; Code of conduct</i> (2014)   |
|  | <i>Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation</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)  |
| • Luton Culture                                | <i>Procedures for preparing archaeological archives for deposition with Luton Culture</i> (2013)  |
| • Historic England (formerly English Heritage) | <i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment PPN3: Archaeological Excavation</i> (2015)                                       |
|  | <i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation</i> . 2nd ed. (2011) |

### 2.2 Implementation

The archaeological investigation was undertaken on 13th and 14th February 2019, in a period of dry weather conditions. A total of three trenches were excavated (Figures 1 and 2). The trenches were all 10m long and 1.8m wide.

The trenches were opened by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, operated by an experienced driver, under constant archaeological supervision. The overburden was removed down to the top of undisturbed geological or archaeological deposits, whichever was encountered first. The soil heaps from the excavated trenches was scanned for artefacts. All deposits were recorded in a unique number sequence, using Albion Archaeology's *pro forma* sheets. The trenches were subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate.

A monitoring visit was conducted with the CBCAO on 13th February 2019.

### 2.3 Archiving

A full archive of finds and records generated during the project will be compiled in accordance with Historic England (MoRPHE) standards. It will be kept



secure at all stages of the operation prior to its deposition, subject to the landowner's consent, at Luton Culture (Acc no.: LUTNM:2019/12).

Albion Archaeology adheres to strict archiving standards and ensures that all archive materials are stored appropriately. All storage material is of archival-quality and includes archival-quality photographic storage sleeves. As part of the archiving process all records are microfiched.

Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database in accordance with the guidelines issued by Historic England and the Archaeology Data Service (reference no.: albionar1-339013).



### 3. RESULTS

---

#### 3.1 Introduction

The results are presented below in chronological order. Where site recording numbers have been used they are distinguished by different bracket styles to indicate feature number = [\*\*\*] and fill number = (\*\*\*). Context numbers reflect the trench number e.g. [305] is a feature within Trench 3 and, therefore, the trench number is only given where necessary.

Detailed descriptions of each individual context are provided in Appendix 1. An all-features plan is illustrated in Figure 2.

#### 3.2 Overburden and Geology

The combined depth of overburden was 1–1.35m; the greatest depths were within Trench 1, although thick layers of modern made ground were found in all trenches.

All of the trenches had a thin covering of turf/topsoil. The topsoil (100), (200) and (300), was 0.05–0.25m thick and consisted of friable, dark grey-brown silt.

Mixed, dark, silty deposits were present within all trenches (101), (203), (302); they were 0.35–0.8m thick. They contained modern artefacts, such as brick, bottles and plastics. The mixed nature of the soils as well as the frequent modern artefacts suggest that these deposits were imported, most likely to make-up the ground to the rear of the public house. This area has clearly been landscaped to create a level surface for the public house garden. A sudden break of slope could be seen in the current ground surface where the garden met the car park, attesting to the landscaping.

Trench 2 showed the remains of a modern concrete surface (202), overlain by a sandy make-up layer (201). The south-east part of Trench 3 was within the car park and, therefore, included a mixed rubble/gravel layer (301), constitutes the car park surface.

The undisturbed geological strata comprised grey-yellow clay with chalk fragments; it was consistent throughout the trenches.

#### 3.3 Post-medieval/Modern Ditch and Pit

Trench 3 contained evidence for post-medieval/modern activity in the south-west part of the PDA. The remains comprised a small ditch [307] and a shallow pit [305]. Pottery collected from [307] comprised an abraded post-medieval glazed red earthenware sherd (fabric type P01<sup>1</sup>: 56g) and a piece of modern mass-produced white earthenware (P100: 8g: not retained). Pit [305] yielded six abraded pieces of post-medieval flat roof tile (219g) and six indeterminate animal rib fragments (97g).

---

<sup>1</sup> Fabric defined in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series



Ditch [307] was located at the western end of the trench on a NE-SW alignment, with pit [305] immediately to the west. The ditch was c.0.8m wide by 0.2m deep; whilst the pit, which was oval in shape, was at least 1.2m in diameter by 0.25m deep (Figure 2, Sections 3 and 4).

A slight difference in the colour of their fills may suggest that pit [305] was the later feature; however, the broad similarity in their fills suggests that they are likely to be contemporary. Both features contained a firm mid-yellow clay fill, whilst an upper fill of mid-yellow brown clay was present within pit [305].

### **3.4 Modern Pit**

Unexcavated pit [103] was identified close to the north-east end of Trench 1. Although not fully exposed, the visible part of the feature measured 0.75m in length and 0.35m wide. The single fill (104) consisted of friable dark grey silt and contained, amongst other modern artefacts, glass bottles and brick (not retained).



## 4. CONCLUSIONS

---

### 4.1 *Summary of Results*

The archaeological field evaluation revealed evidence of activity on the PDA dating from the post-medieval to the modern period.

The post-medieval/modern remains found within Trench 3 comprised pit [305] and ditch [307]. These probably represent a minor post-medieval/modern boundary or drainage ditch with an associated pit.

The modern pit [103] in Trench 1 is typical of backyard activity, which is probably associated with the public house that has been in operation since the 19th century.

Evidence of modern landscaping was also present across the PDA but particularly in the grassed area to the rear of the public house, which had apparently been made-up to create a level surface for the garden. The presence of mixed make-up deposits containing modern artefacts, directly overlying natural soil, suggests previous disturbance to the level of the archaeological horizon, although there is no evidence to suggest the former presence of any truncated remains.

### 4.2 *Heritage Statement*

The significance of the remains identified by the field evaluation is assessed as negligible. They have no potential to address local or regional research objectives.

The development will involve ground disturbance that is likely to adversely affect the sub-surface archaeological remains within the PDA. This will probably impact the post-medieval/modern remains in the south-west part of the PDA. However, the remains are of negligible significance and, therefore, any developmental impact on them will also be of negligible significance.



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## 6. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARY

### Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 10.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 1. m. Max: 1. m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 4864: Northing: 27668)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 4872: Northing: 27661)

Reason: To evaluate archaeological potential.

| Context: | Type:         | Description:  | Excavated:                          | Finds Present:           |
|----------|---------------|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 100      | Topsoil       | Friable dark grey brown silt Up to 0.25m thick deposit.                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 101      | Make up layer | Friable black sandy silt occasional small-large CBM Up to 0.8m thick deposit. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 102      | Natural       | Firm mid orange yellow clay occasional small chalk                            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 103      | Pit           | Sub-circular dimensions: min breadth 0.35m, min length 0.75m Modern feature.  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 104      | Fill          | Friable dark grey black silt occasional flecks charcoal                       | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 10.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.96 m. Max: 1.05 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 4855: Northing: 27668)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 4852: Northing: 27659)

Reason: To evaluate archaeological potential.

| Context: | Type:         | Description:   | Excavated:                          | Finds Present:           |
|----------|---------------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 200      | Topsoil       | Friable dark grey brown silt Up to 0.1m thick deposit.             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 201      | Make up layer | Loose mid orange sand Up to 0.35m thick deposit of imported sand.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 202      | Concrete      | Hard light grey concrete Up to 0.1m thick slab - old hardstanding. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 203      | Make up layer | Friable dark black sandy silt Up to 0.8m thick deposit.            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 204      | Natural       | Firm light grey yellow clay occasional small chalk                 | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Trench: 3

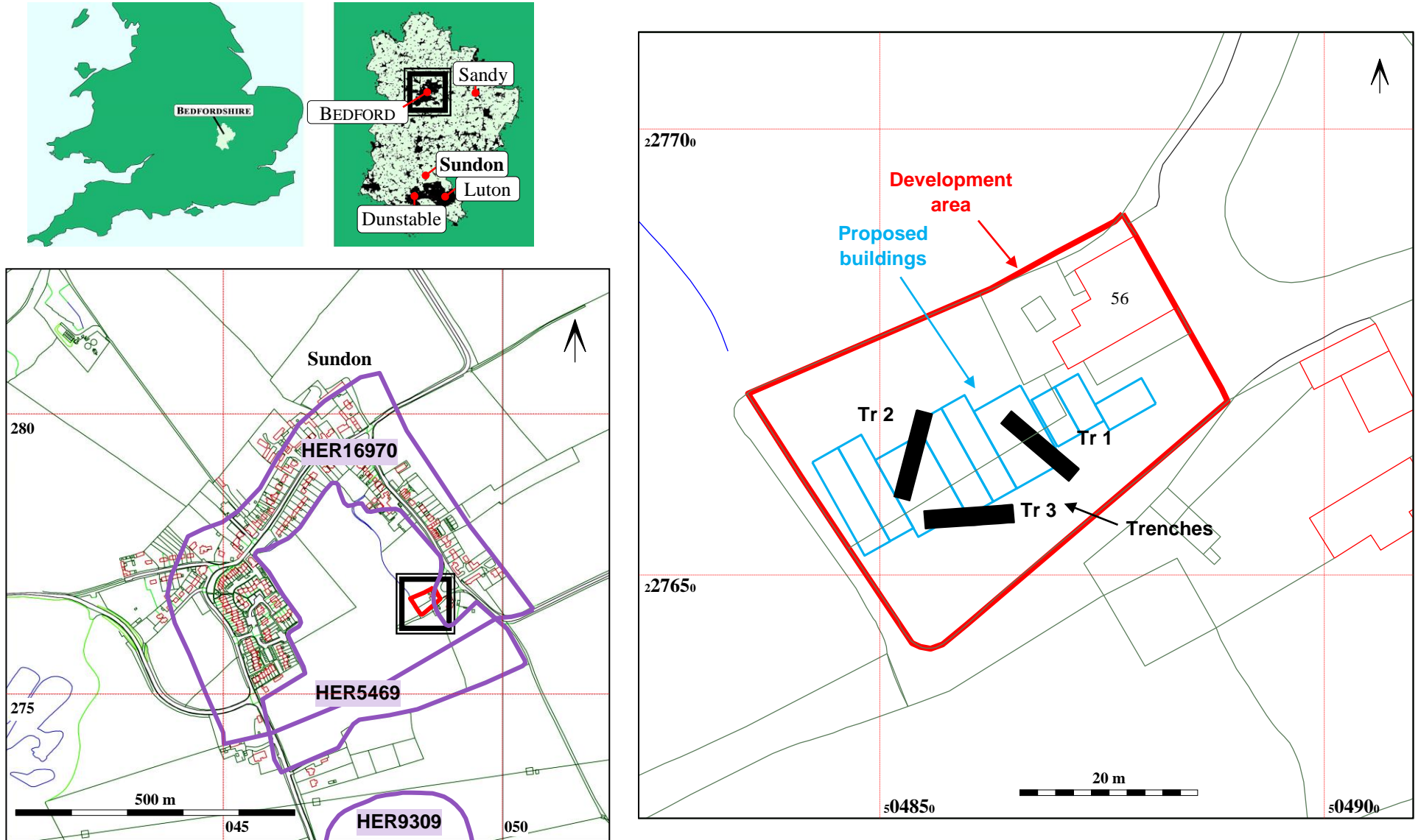
Max Dimensions: Length: 10.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.8 m. Max: 1.05 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 4865: Northing: 27657)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 4855: Northing: 27656)

Reason: To evaluate archaeological potential.

| Context: | Type:            | Description:   | Excavated:                          | Finds Present:                      |
|----------|------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 300      | Turf line        | Friable dark brown grey sandy silt Up to 0.05m thick deposit.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 301      | External surface | Hard rubble moderate medium-large CBM, moderate small-large stones Up to 0.25m thick deposit - an old carpark surface. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 302      | Make up layer    | Friable dark black silt moderate small-large CBM Up to 0.35m thick deposit.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 304      | Natural          | Firm light grey yellow chalky clay   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 305      | Pit              | Sub-circular sides: irregular base: uneven dimensions: max breadth 0.6m, max depth 0.6m, max length 2.5m               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 303      | Upper fill       | Firm mid yellow brown clay moderate small CBM, moderate small chalk Up to 0.22m thick deposit.                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 306      | Main fill        | Firm mid yellow clay occasional small chalk Up to 0.44m thick deposit.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 307      | Ditch            | Linear NE-SW sides: U-shaped base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.8m, max depth 0.23m, min length 1.9m              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 308      | Fill             | Firm mid yellow clay   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |



**Figure 1: Site location plan**

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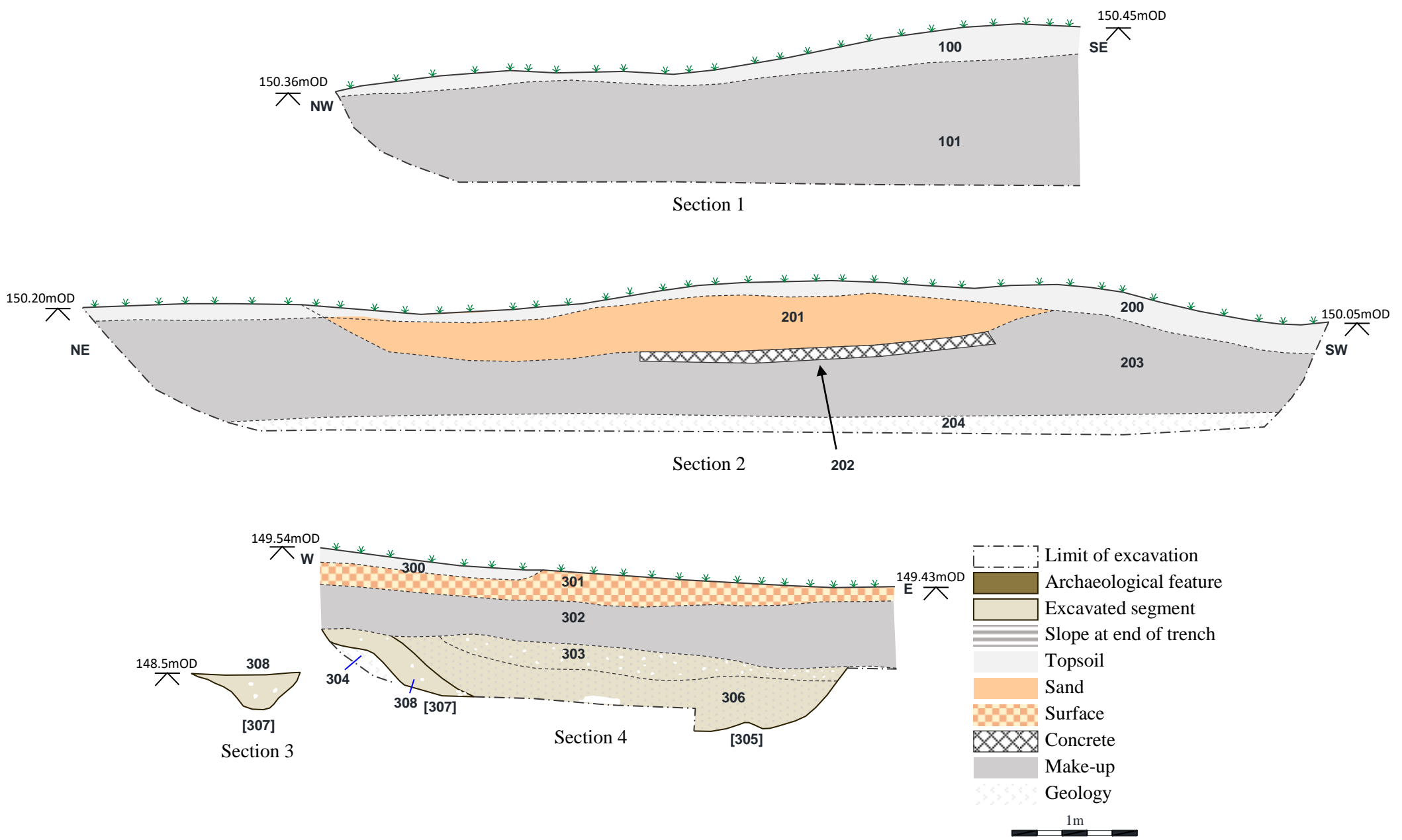
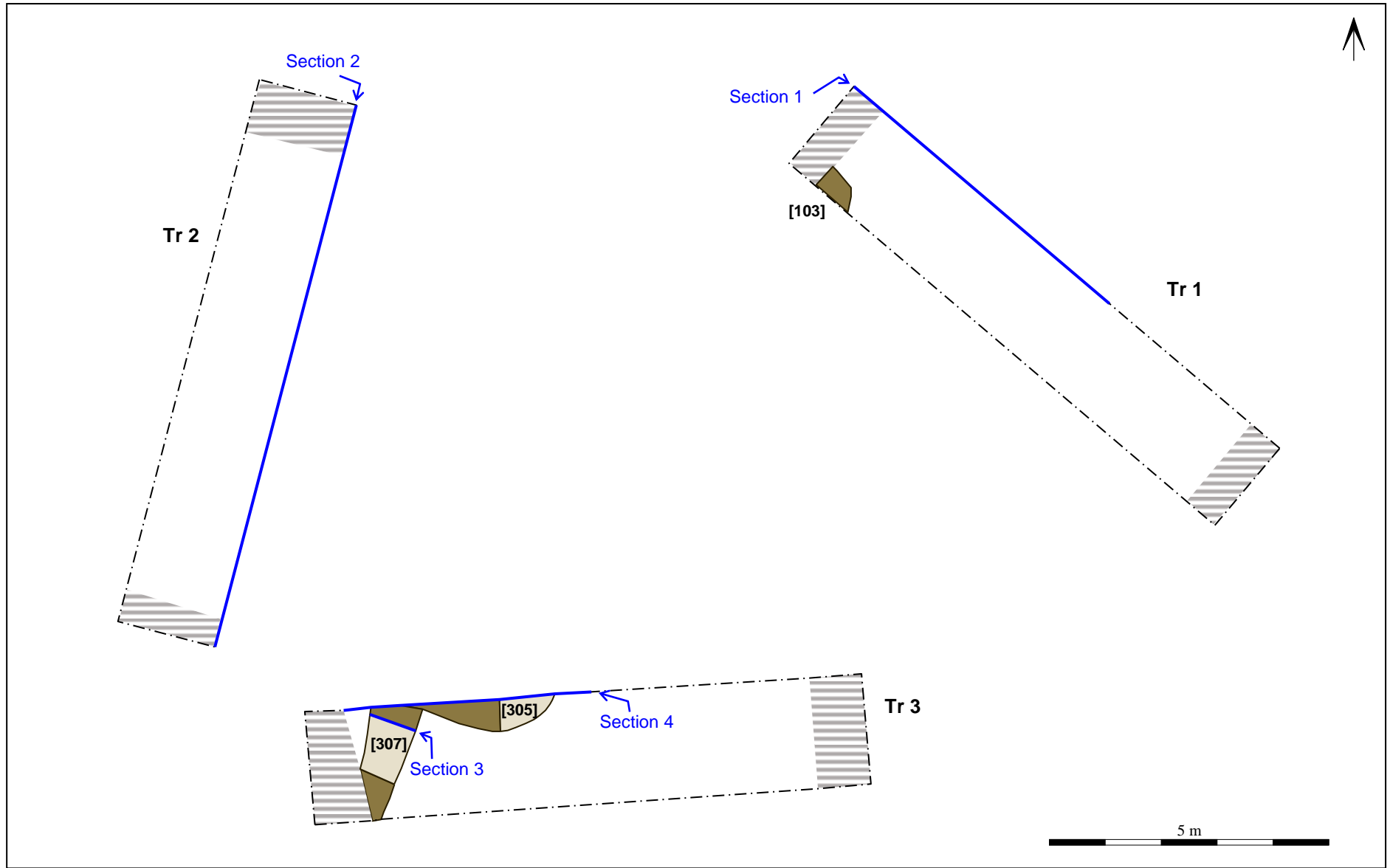


Figure 2: All-features plan and sections



Ditch [307] looking NE



Pit [305] looking N

**Figure 3:** Selected photographs





Modern pit [103] looking SW



NW-facing section of Trench 2

**Figure 4:** Selected photographs





Trench 1 looking W



Trench 2 looking NNE

**Figure 5:** Selected photographs

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