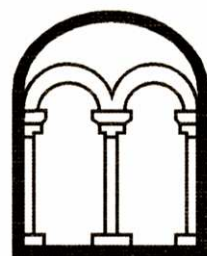


**LAND TO THE REAR OF
267-277 LONDON ROAD
BEDFORD**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

Albion
archaeology



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BEDFORD**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

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Prepared for:
CgMs Heritage (part of RPS Group)

On behalf of:
Keepmoat Homes Ltd



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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 Matthew Smith of CgMs Heritage on behalf of Keepmoat Homes Ltd.

This report has been prepared by Benjamin Carroll, with contributions from Jackie Wells (artefacts). The fieldwork was undertaken by Benjamin Carroll (Archaeological Supervisor). The project was managed by Jeremy Oetgen. All Albion Archaeology projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff.

Fieldwork was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Vanessa Clarke (Bedford Borough Council's Senior Archaeological Officer).

Version History

Version	Issue date	Reason for re-issue
1.0	20/02/2019	N/A
1.1	19/03/2019	Address comments from consultant
1.2	17/04/2019	Address comments from the BB CAO

Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

BBHER	Bedford Borough Historic Environment Record
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
BB CAO	Bedford Borough Council Archaeological Officer
LPA	Local Planning Authority
NGR	National Grid Reference
OD	Ordnance Datum
PDA	Proposed development area
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

CgMs Heritage, on behalf of Keepmoat Homes Ltd, commissioned Albion Archaeology to carry out an archaeological evaluation in support of a planning application (18/01746/FUL) for the erection of nine residential dwellings with associated landscaping and parking at Land to the Rear of 267-277 London Road, Bedford.

Archaeological trial trenching took place on 14th February 2019 when three trenches were excavated. Trenches 2 and 3 were devoid of archaeological features, but Trench 1 revealed features dating from the Romano-British and modern periods.

Romano-British remains were identified in the north-west part of the proposed development area (PDA), within Trench 1. They comprised two parallel gullies, dated by pottery. They were c.1m apart and on a broadly north-east to south-west alignment, defining part of a field system to the periphery of Roman kilns that have been discovered c.100m to the east at Kingsbrook School. As evidence of land division in the area in the Roman period these ditches are of at least local significance. However, as isolated finds they have limited potential to address regional research objectives.

The modern remains in Trench 1 comprised a refuse pit linked to activity within former allotments in the area. These remains might be of local historical interest but have no archaeological significance.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Project Background**

Keepmoat Homes submitted a planning application (18/01746/FUL) for the erection of nine residential dwellings with associated landscaping and parking at Land to the Rear of 267-277 London Road, Bedford.

The proposed development area (PDA) lies close to a number of known pottery (kiln) production sites. As a result and in line with the NPPF (2018), the Bedford Borough Council Senior Archaeological Officer (SAO) advised that the following condition should be attached to any consent gained:

No development shall take place until an archaeological strategy for evaluation and if necessary, a further mitigation strategy based on the outcome of the evaluation, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The results of this investigation will inform any further works that might be required by the Bedford Borough Council's Senior Archaeological Officer for the mitigation of construction impacts on archaeological remains.

1.2 **Site Location and Development Description**

The PDA is located at the south-east end of Willow Road, c.1 mile south of Bedford town centre. It is 0.23ha in extent and is generally flat. It is bordered by mature trees and hedges and is bounded to the north-east by the gardens of properties fronting London Road and to the south-west by industrial units.

The PDA is centred on NGR TL 05951 48062 and lies at a height of c.26m OD. The solid geology comprises Peterborough Member Mudstone formed during the Jurassic period (c. 164 million years ago). The superficial geology comprises Stoke Goldington Member and Felmersham Member (sand and gravel terraces), associated with the River Great Ouse, which today lies c.1.3km north of the PDA.¹

The detailed scheme proposes nine residential dwellings with a total of nineteen car-parking spaces. A mixture of 1-bedroom maisonettes and 2- to 3-bedroom bedroom houses are proposed. The development will make use of the existing vehicle access from Willow Road.

1.3 **Archaeological Background**

The archaeological background to the PDA is set out in a desk-based assessment, prepared for an earlier, related development that encompassed the PDA (CgMs Consulting 2017). The results of that are not repeated here in detail but, overall, it concluded that the PDA had:

- a moderate, theoretical, archaeological potential for medieval evidence
- a low to moderate theoretical archaeological potential for later prehistoric and Roman evidence and

¹ Contains British Geological Survey materials ©NERC [2017]



- a low theoretical archaeological potential for early prehistoric and post-medieval evidence

An updated search of the Bedford Borough Historic Environment Record (BBHER) was also undertaken in preparation of the WSI. The SAO also commented that the BBHER shows that a probable 14th-century pottery kiln has been recorded less than 26m south-east of the boundary of the PDA (BBHER 16285) and that further Roman kilns have been discovered c.100m to the east at Kingsbrook School (just to the east of the postulated line of a Roman road) (MBD16238; BBHER 16284; MBD10480).

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.

This information will be used by the SAO to evaluate the significance of the potential impact of the proposed development on any archaeological remains that might survive within the site.

The archaeological remains uncovered during the evaluation, have had their significance assessed against the published research frameworks for the region. The relevant documents for the region are provided by *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties* (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Hertfordshire and Essex) (Brown and Glazebrook 2000) and *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011).

In addition to these regionally focussed documents, work has also specifically been done on the county of Bedfordshire: *Bedfordshire Archaeology. Research and Archaeology: Resource Assessment, Research Agenda and Strategy* (Oake et al 2007).



2. METHOD STATEMENTS

The methodological approach to the project was detailed in the WSI (CgMs Heritage 2019), which was approved by the Bedford Borough Council Archaeological Officer (BBCAO) prior to commencement of the work.

2.1 Methodological Standards

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).
Bedford Borough Council	<i>Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedford</i> (ver. 2.8, 2010)
CIfA	<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)
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)

2.1 Implementation

The archaeological investigation was undertaken on 14th February 2019, in a period of dry weather conditions. A total of three trenches were excavated (Figures 1 and 2). Due to on-site constraints the trenches had to be reduced in length and their locations slightly changed from those originally shown in the WSI. This was discussed with the BBCAO on site and agreed to be satisfactory.

The trenches were between 10m and 15m long by 2m wide, opened by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged 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 spoil heaps from the excavated trenches were scanned for artefacts by eye. 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 BBCAO on 14th February 2019.



2.2 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 The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford (accession no.: BEDFM 2019.03).

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.: albionar1-340217).



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

The results are presented below, integrating the limited artefactual evidence. Where site recording numbers have been used they are distinguished by different bracket styles, as follows: feature number = [***] and fill number = (***). Context numbers reflect the trench number e.g. [104] is a feature within Trench 1 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 and selected section drawings are illustrated in Figure 2. Further images can be found in Figure 3.

Trenches 2 and 3 were devoid of any archaeological features.

3.2 Overburden and Geology

The total depth of overburden was between 0.6m and 0.92m; the greater depths were within Trenches 1 and 2, where there were significant modern make-up layers (100) and (200), associated with the construction of a site compound, overlying the topsoil (Figure 2, Section 2).

Only in Trench 3 did the overburden comprise topsoil and subsoil, without any overlying make-up layers above them. The topsoil was generally 0.25–0.3m thick and consisted of mid grey-brown clay-silt deposits. The subsoil comprised light yellow-brown sandy silt, predominantly 0.12–0.3m thick.

Undisturbed geological strata comprised orange-yellow sands and gravels.

3.3 Romano-British Features

Trench 1 contained evidence for Romano-British activity in the north-west part of the PDA. The remains comprised two parallel gullies [104] and [106] (Figures 2 and 3). They were c.1m apart, on a broadly north-east to south-west alignment, and contained three small body sherds (45g) of generic Roman grey ware pottery (fabric type R06C²). This fabric type could have been produced in the kilns located in the vicinity.

The gap between the two ditches could conceivably have contained a hedge-line and the shallow depth of the features makes it more likely that they are associated with part of a field system. No contemporary archaeological features were present to the east either in this trench or in Trenches 2 and 3. This may suggest that the gullies are representative of only peripheral Roman activity within the PDA.

3.4 Modern Features

Trench 1 also contained a modern refuse pit, measuring at least 0.8m long by 0.6m wide and extending beyond the trench limits to the south-east. The pit could possibly be linked to allotment activity in the area; it contained glass,

² Fabric type defined in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series.



wire with plastic coatings, ceramic building material, and a piece of cast-iron guttering all dated to the modern period and was, therefore, not excavated.



4. DISCUSSION

The evaluation revealed evidence of activity on the site dating from the Romano-British and modern periods.

The Romano-British remains within Trench 1 represented a boundary possibly defining part of a field system to the periphery of Roman kilns that have been discovered c.100m to the east at Kingsbrook School, just to the east of the postulated line of a Roman road (MBD16238; BBHER 16284; MBD10480). As evidence of land division in the area in the Roman period these ditches are of at least local significance. However, as isolated finds they have limited potential to address regional research objectives.

The modern remains in Trench 1 comprised a refuse pit linked to activity within former allotments in the area. These remains might be of local historical interest but have no archaeological significance.



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6. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARY



Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 10.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.65 m. Max: 0.92 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL 05959/48060

OS Grid Ref.: TL 05967/48054

Reason: To Investigate the Archaeological Potential of Site

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Make up layer	Compact mid grey brown silty hardcore frequent small-medium CBM, frequent small-medium concrete, frequent small-medium stones Up to 0.6m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay silt occasional small stones Up to 0.25m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Subsoil	Friable light yellow brown sandy silt moderate small-medium stones Up to 0.12m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Natural	Compact light orange yellow sandy gravel frequent small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Gulley	Linear NE-SW sides: U-shaped base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.5m, max depth 0.12m, min length 2.m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Fill	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
106	Gulley	Linear NE-SW sides: U-shaped base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.65m, max depth 0.14m, min length 1.5m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
107	Fill	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt moderate small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 12.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL 05978/48053

OS Grid Ref.: TL 05980/48041

Reason: To Investigate the Archaeological Potential of Site

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
200	Make up layer	Compact mid grey brown silty hardcore frequent small-medium CBM, frequent small-medium concrete, frequent small-medium stones Up to 0.26m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
201	Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay silt occasional small stones Up to 0.2m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
202	Subsoil	Friable light yellow brown sandy silt moderate small-medium stones Up to 0.2m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
203	Natural	Compact light orange yellow sandy gravel frequent small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 3

Max Dimensions: Length: 15.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL 05989/48030

OS Grid Ref.: TL 05978/48021

Reason: To Investigate the Archaeological Potential of Site

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
300	Topsoil	Friable dark grey black clay silt occasional small stones Up to 0.3m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
301	Subsoil	Friable mid yellow brown sandy silt moderate small-medium stones Up to 0.3m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
302	Natural	Compact light orange yellow sandy gravel frequent small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

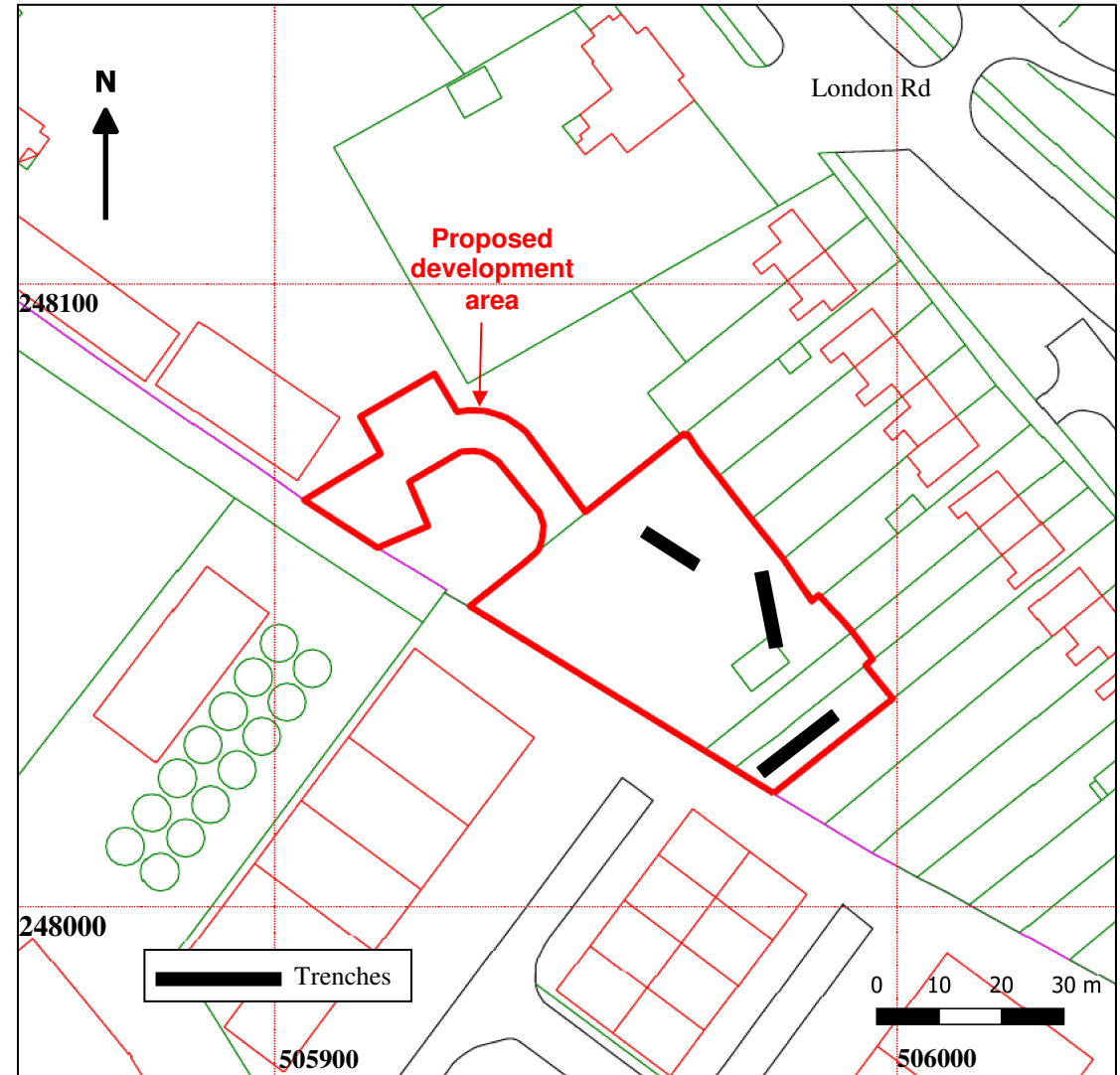
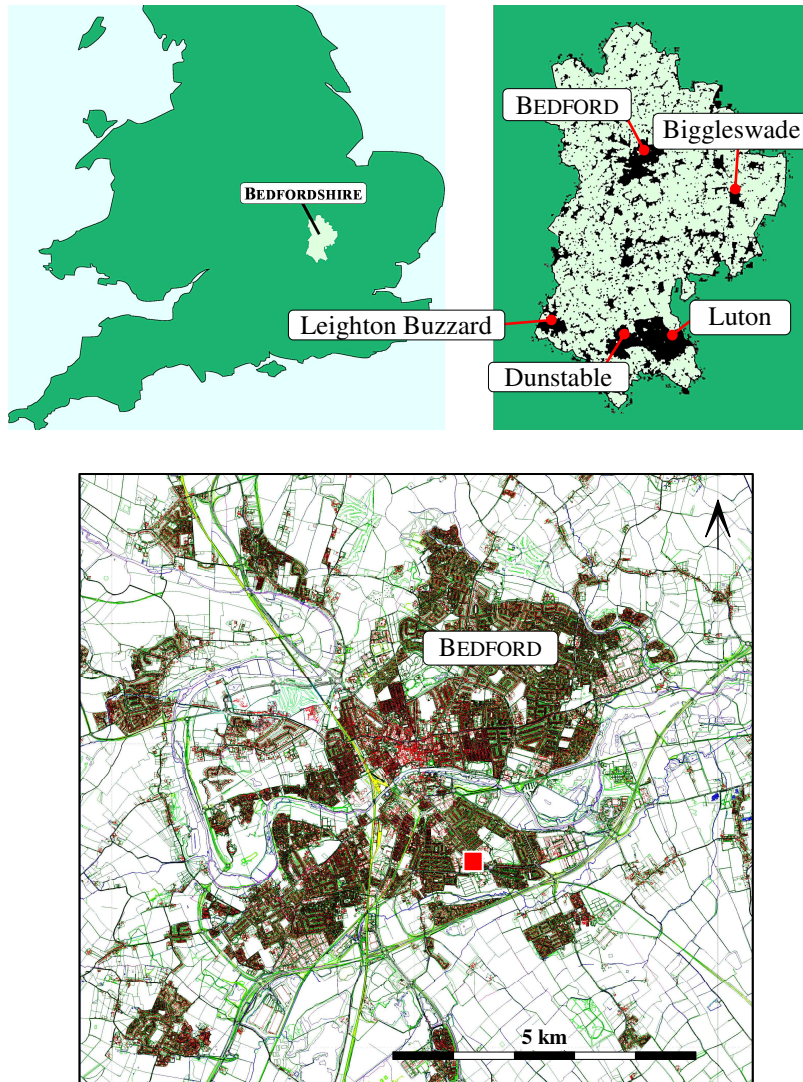


Figure 1: Site location and trench layout

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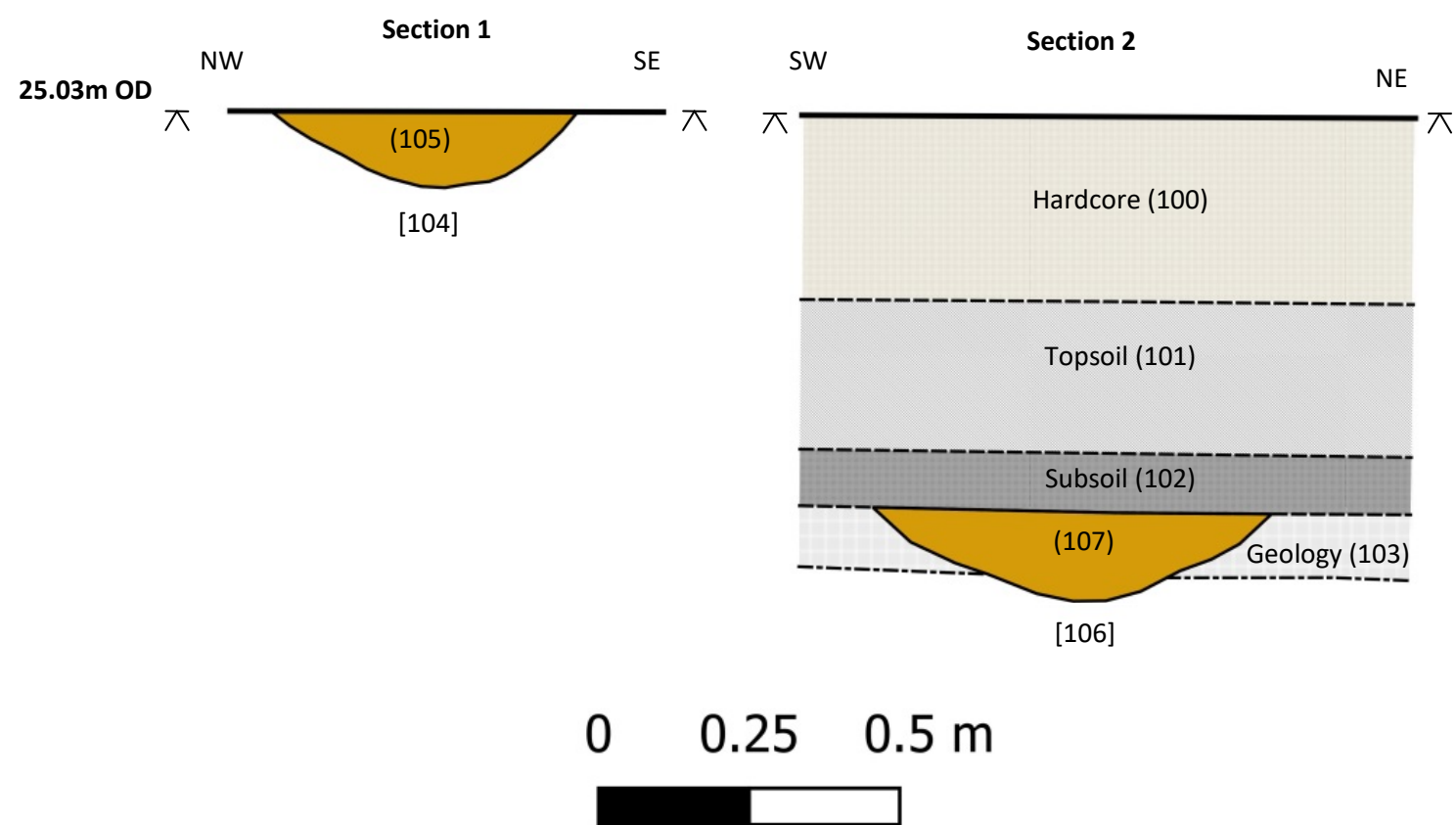
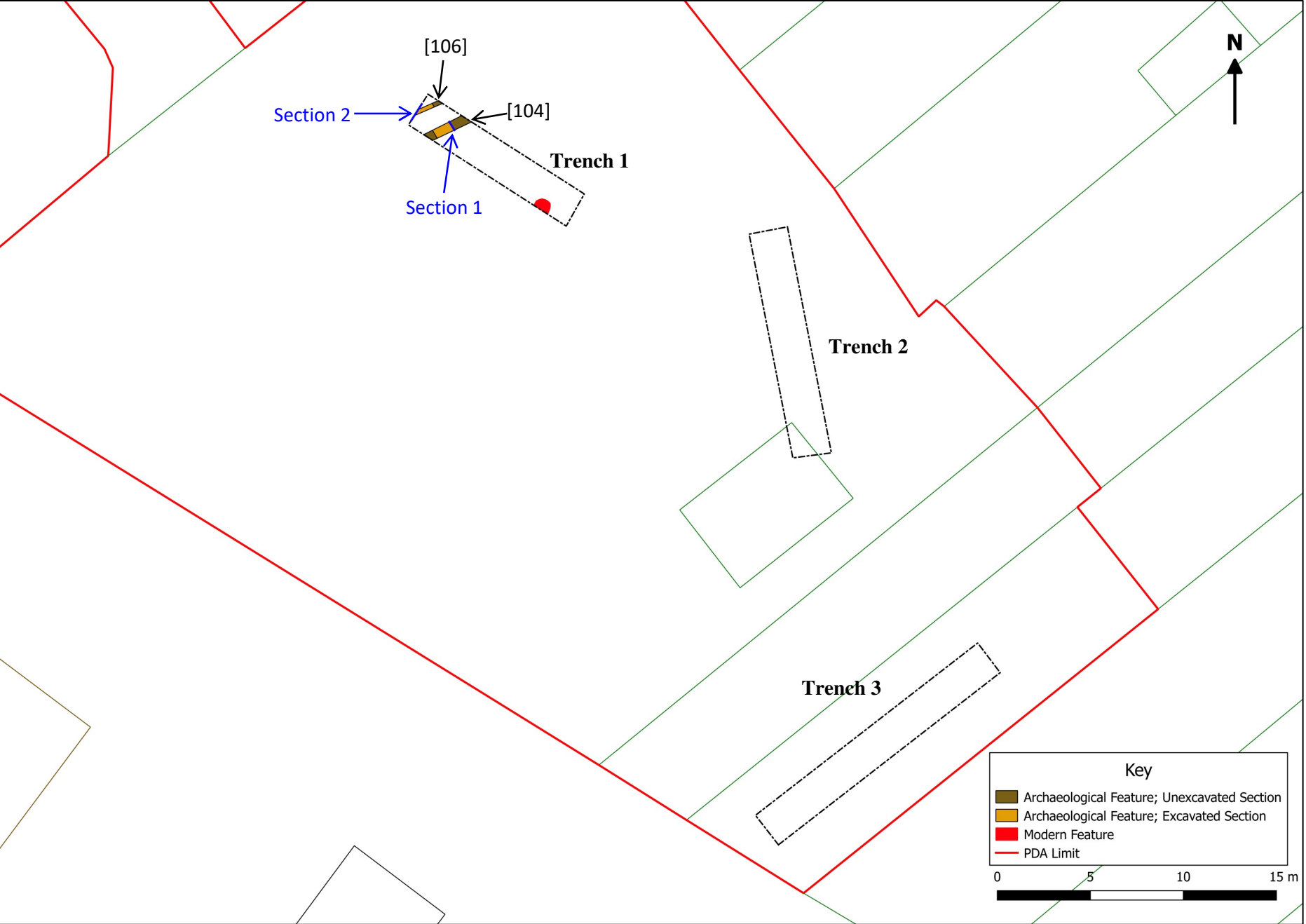


Figure 2: All-features plan and sections, Trenches 1–3

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Trench 1: modern pit, looking SW, 1m scale



Trench 1: ditches [104]/[106], looking SW, 1m scale



Trench 3: looking SW, 1m scale



Trench 1: ditch section [104], looking NE, 1m scale



Trench 2: looking SSE, 1m scale

Figure 3: Selected photographs of Trenches 1–3

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