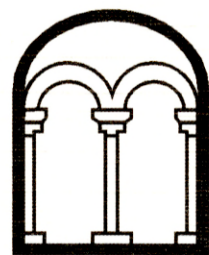


**4 HIGH STREET
THURLEIGH
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

Albion
archaeology



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Adam Williams	Tori Guy	Drew Shotliff

Produced for
Mr Mark Johnson



Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	6
1.1 Project Background	6
1.2 Site Location and Description	7
1.3 Historical and Archaeological Background	7
1.4 Project Objectives	8
2. METHODOLOGY	9
2.1 Methodological Standards	9
2.2 Observation, Investigation and Recording	9
3. RESULTS	10
3.1 Introduction	10
3.1 Modern Overburden	10
3.2 Geological Deposit	10
3.3 Modern	10
4. CONCLUSIONS	11
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY	12

List of Figures

Figure 1: Site and trench location plan

Figure 2: All-features plan and sections

Figure 3: Selected photographs

The figures are bound at the back of the report.



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 report 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).

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Acknowledgements

The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Geoff Saunders (Bedford Borough Council Archaeological Officer). The fieldwork was undertaken by Adam Williams (Archaeological Supervisor). This report has been prepared by Adam Williams, with figures created by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

Albion Archaeology
 St Mary's Church
 St Mary's Street
 Bedford, MK42 0AS
 ☎: 0300 300 8141
 E-mail: office@albion-arch.com
 Website: www.albion-arch.com

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Key Terms

The following terms or abbreviations are used throughout this report:

BBC	Bedford Borough Council
BBC AO	Bedford Borough Council Archaeological Officer
BBHER	Bedford Borough Historic Environment Record
CifA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
HET	Historic Environment Team
LPA	Local Planning Authority
PDA	Permitted development area
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

Planning consent (19/00309/FUL) was granted by Bedford Borough Council for the demolition of an existing single-storey, rear extension and erection of a replacement single-storey, rear extension at 4 High Street, Thurleigh, Bedfordshire, MK44 2DB.

The site is in an archaeologically sensitive location, falling within the bounds of the Thurleigh Conservation Area. The conservation area encompasses buildings and earthworks to the north and south of the High Street, focussing on the historic core of the village. There are six Listed Buildings within 100m of the permitted development area (PDA), five of which are located along High Street, all within the conservation area. Also included within the conservation area are the Grade I listed St Peter's Church and the scheduled monument of Bury Hill, a motte and bailey castle, both to the south of the PDA.

Given the PDA's location in an area of archaeological interest, the Borough's Historic Environment Team (HET) advised that a condition (no. 3) should be attached to the consent to secure a programme of archaeological mitigation. Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, agreed in advance with the HET.

Archaeological observation, investigation and recording were undertaken between 22nd and 23rd August 2019 during the initial stages of construction. The excavation of two foundation trenches, c.0.6m wide, 4.3m long and 1.1m deep, was monitored but no archaeological features or deposits were observed.

Given the significant difference in ground level to either side of the churchyard retaining wall (to the south of the PDA), it would seem most likely that any archaeological features or deposits that might have once existed on the PDA were truncated when the ground level was reduced/terraced prior to, or during, the construction of the existing Victorian house. The absence of any former topsoil or subsoil across the PDA is also indicative of significant ground reduction in the past.

The project archive will be deposited with The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford (accession number BEDFM: 2019.53). Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-350059) in accordance with the guidelines issued by English Heritage and the Archaeology Data Service



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

Planning consent (19/00309/FUL) was granted by Bedford Borough Council for the demolition of an existing rear extension and erection of a replacement single-storey, rear extension at 4 High Street, Thurleigh, Bedfordshire, MK44 2DB.

The permitted development area (PDA) is located in an area of archaeological interest. For this reason, the Borough's Historic Environment Team (HET) advised that the following condition (no. 3) should be attached to the permission:

No development shall take place until an archaeological mitigation strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The archaeological mitigation strategy shall include a timetable and the following components (the completion of each to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority will result in a separate confirmation of compliance for each component):-

- (i) fieldwork and/ or preservation "in situ" of archaeological remains;*
- (ii) a post-excavation assessment report (to be submitted within six months of the completion of fieldwork);*
- (iii) a post-excavation analysis report, preparation of site archive ready for deposition at a store approved by the Local Planning Authority, completion of an archive report, and submission of a publication report (to be completed within two years of the completion of fieldwork).*

The archaeological mitigation strategy shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timings.

REASON: To safeguard archaeological assets within the approved development boundary from impacts relating to any groundwork associated with the development scheme and to ensure the proper and timely investigation, recording, reporting and presentation of archaeological assets affected by this development, in accordance with Saved Policies BE24 & BE25 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002, Policy CP23 of the Bedford Borough Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan (2008) and according to national policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2019). The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the timing of compliance is fundamental to the development permitted and that the permission ought to be refused unless the condition is imposed in this form.

The HET advised that the archaeological mitigation strategy should comprise a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out this programme of investigation in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI), agreed in advance with the HET (Albion 2019).



1.2 Site Location and Description

Thurleigh is a village and civil parish in the north of the Borough of Bedford. It lies *c.*8.5km to the north of the centre of Bedford. The property at 4 High Street lies at the western end of the village, *c.*95m east of the intersection with Mill Hill (Figure 1). It is situated on the south side of the road, immediately to the north of St Peter's Church at NGR TL 05127 58507.

The PDA lies at *c.*72m OD on high ground *c.*3.5km to the east of The Great Ouse. The geology recorded for the PDA itself comprises superficial deposits of Diamicton till, whilst the underlying bedrock comprises Kellaways Formation and Oxford Clay Formation (undifferentiated) - Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone.

1.3 Historical and Archaeological Background

No. 4 High Street itself is an unlisted, detached, 19th-century Victorian brick and slate cottage (BBHER900), but is part of the Thurleigh Conservation Area. The conservation area encompasses buildings and earthworks to the north and south of the High Street, focussing on the historic core of the village. There are six Listed Buildings within 100m of the PDA, five of which are located along High Street, all within the conservation area.

Located *c.*300m to the south-east are cropmarks (BBHER16634), comprising two postulated Iron Age enclosures with associated features; occupation of the site may have continued into the Roman period. Whilst there have been no archaeological investigations of the cropmarks, artefacts of this date have been recovered from the neighbouring Bury Hill. Find-spots of a flint axe (BBHER314) and a Roman brooch (BBHER19533) are recorded to the immediate east.

Included within Thurleigh Conservation Area are the Grade I listed St Peter's Church (BBHER1140) and the scheduled monument of Bury Hill (BBHER313), a motte and bailey castle. These are thought to have been constructed at much the same time in the first half of the 12th century. Bury Hill lies *c.*100m to the south-east of the PDA and comprises a motte and bailey with three ponds, on the village's high ground; it was possibly built by King Stephen (1135–54). The motte lies at the north of the bailey and at its highest point is 7m above the base of the surrounding ditch. The bailey measures *c.*200m by *c.*270m and is enclosed by a ditch which is best-preserved at the northern end, while other parts have been damaged by modern development, or incorporated into modern drainage ditches. The fishponds are thought to be contemporary with the castle. Excavations including those prior to development in the 1970s, revealed features of Iron Age, Roman and Saxon in date, together with inhumations within the motte itself.

St Peter's Church lies to the immediate south of the PDA and was originally constructed in the 12th century; it has 14th-, 15th- and 20th-century modifications. There is a scheduled 15th-century churchyard cross base (BBHER 312) by the south door. Significantly, there is the potential that St Peter's Churchyard (BBHER8980) may have once extended north of its current boundary into the PDA. There are burials recorded within the churchyard from the mid-16th to the early 19th century.



The PDA is located within the postulated extent of the medieval settlement of Church End (BBHER17062). Church End was one of five “ends” or hamlets within medieval Thurleigh, the others being Cross End, Scald End, Backnoe End and Park End. The PDA lies within Church End, the most centrally located of the ends, representing the linear core of both the medieval and modern village. Again, this is reflected in the present-day Conservation Area which extends along High Street.

A single record of medieval ridge and furrow (BBHER16634) to the south-east of the PDA highlights the fact that the Church End hamlet was a separate area of settlement from the other four ‘Ends’.

Given the PDA’s proximity to St Peter’s Church and Churchyard, and its location within the postulated extent of medieval Church End, it is possible that it might contain important archaeological remains of a similar date. There is also potential of Iron Age and Roman remains associated with those identified as cropmarks and during the Bury Hill excavations.

1.4 Project Objectives

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).

Potential heritage assets on the PDA could have related to previous Iron Age, Roman or medieval settlement of the area

In summary, the specific research objectives of the archaeological works were:

- To determine if any archaeological heritage assets relating to Iron Age or Roman settlement were present within the PDA.
- To determine if any archaeological heritage assets relating to the medieval settlement were present within the PDA.
- To determine if any burials related to earlier use of the churchyard were present within the PDA.

The general purpose of the archaeological observation 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.



2. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach to the project is summarised below. A full methodology is provided in the WSI (Albion 2019).

2.1 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> (3rd edn, 2017).
• Bedford Museum	<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 an archaeological watching brief</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> (2014)
• Gurney (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)

The project archive will be deposited at The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford (accession number BEDFM: 2019.53). Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-350059) in accordance with the guidelines issued by English Heritage and the Archaeology Data Service.

2.2 Observation, Investigation and Recording

The programme of archaeological observation was undertaken between 22nd and 23rd August 2019. During this period, all groundworks that required monitoring were completed.

The groundworks consisted of the excavation of three foundation trenches, approximately 0.3m from the existing extension base. The trenches were 0.6m wide and 4.3m long; they were excavated to a depth of 1.1m below existing ground level (Figures 2 and 3). A mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket was used to undertake the excavation of the trenches.

The southern and northern trenches were excavated first, revealing no significant archaeological features or deposits. Given the negative results, the HET agreed that archaeological monitoring of the third (eastern) trench was unnecessary.



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

All deposits revealed within the foundation trenches are summarised below and shown on Figures 2 and 3. No context numbers were assigned due to the absence of archaeological features, deposits or finds.

3.1 Modern Overburden

The overburden consisted of two distinct deposits, both of which were modern:

- A thin lens of mixed grey sand and shingle, *c.*50mm thick, was present across the extent of the excavated areas. It formed a yard surface around the existing extension and had been partially truncated in preparation for the excavation of the foundation trenches.
- A thick deposit of fine, reddish brown, sandy gravel had been used as a make-up/levelling deposit. This layer was approximately 0.25m thick and was present across the full extent of the excavated areas.

3.2 Geological Deposit

The geological deposit comprised mid-greyish blue clay, exposed to a depth of *c.*0.8m (Figure 3). The top level of the geological deposit was consistent across the excavated trenches.

In addition, it was noted that there was a significant difference in the height of the ground level to either side of the *c.*1.9m-high churchyard retaining wall, which lay immediately to the south of the southern foundation trench (Figure 3). This suggests that the ground level within the PDA was significantly reduced/terraced prior to, or during, the construction of the Victorian house currently occupying the site. This would almost certainly have truncated any archaeological features that might have been present on the site at that time.

3.3 Modern

Modern features were identified in the foundation trenches and consisted of:

- A north–south aligned plastic drainage pipe and associated cut, backfilled with shingle, was located along the east wall of the house. It was identified in both the northern and southern foundation trenches.
- A modern plastic water pipe and associated cut, backfilled with shingle, was identified in the northern foundation trench. It was aligned NW–SE and crossed the corner of the existing extension base.
- A modern concrete wall footing, *c.*1.05m deep, with a single course of brick was identified in the southern foundation trench. This feature was aligned north–south and extended *c.*0.8m south of the new foundation trench, before turning 90° to the west and joining up with the east gable wall of the house.



4. CONCLUSIONS

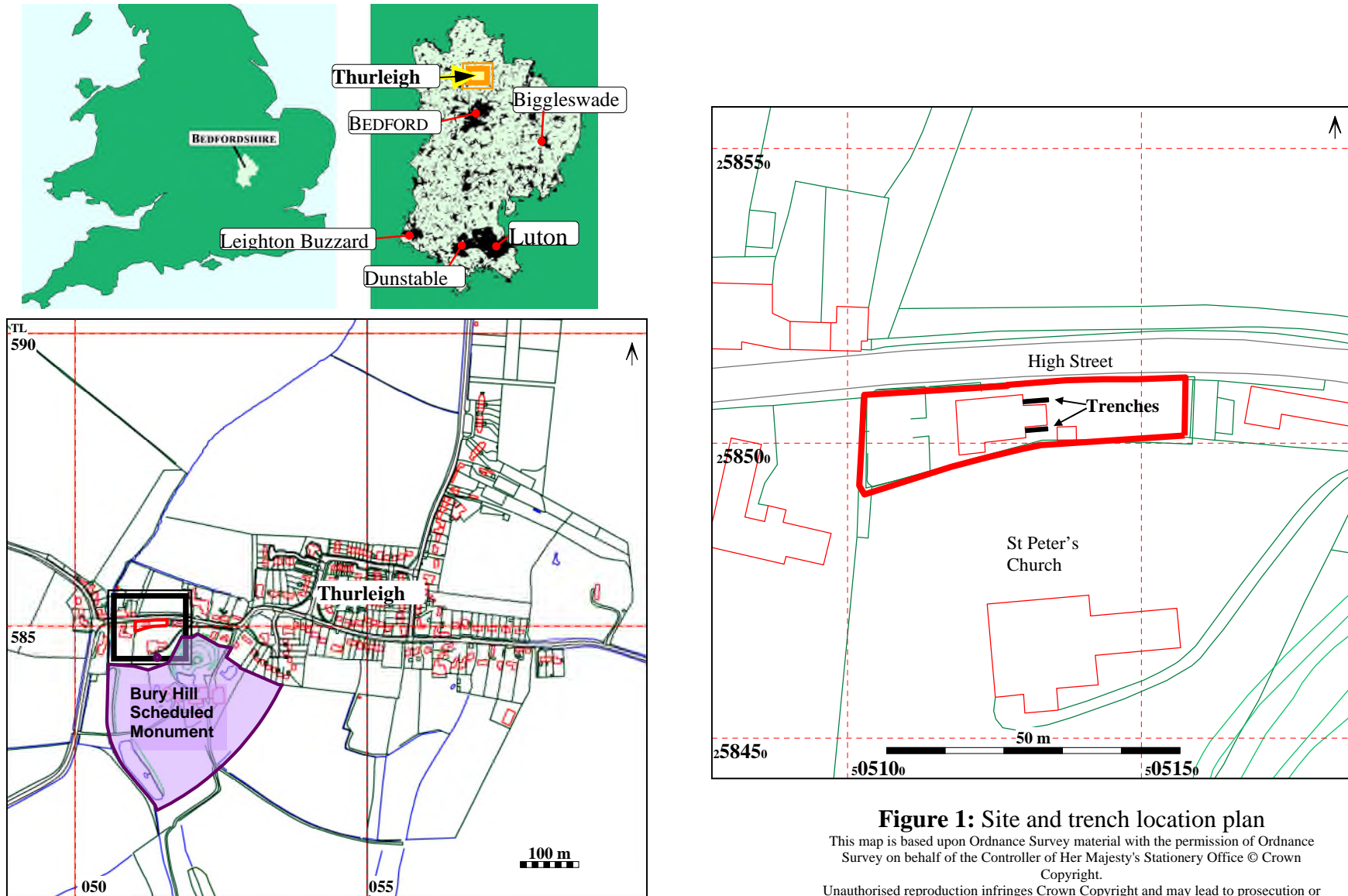
No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the excavation of the northern and southern foundation trenches.

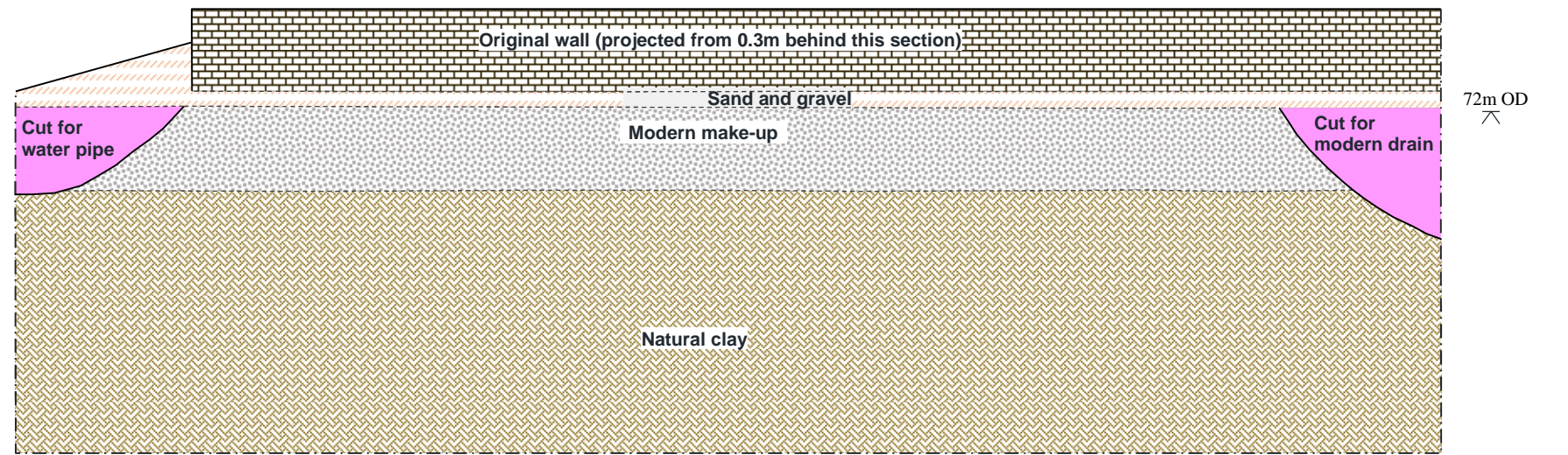
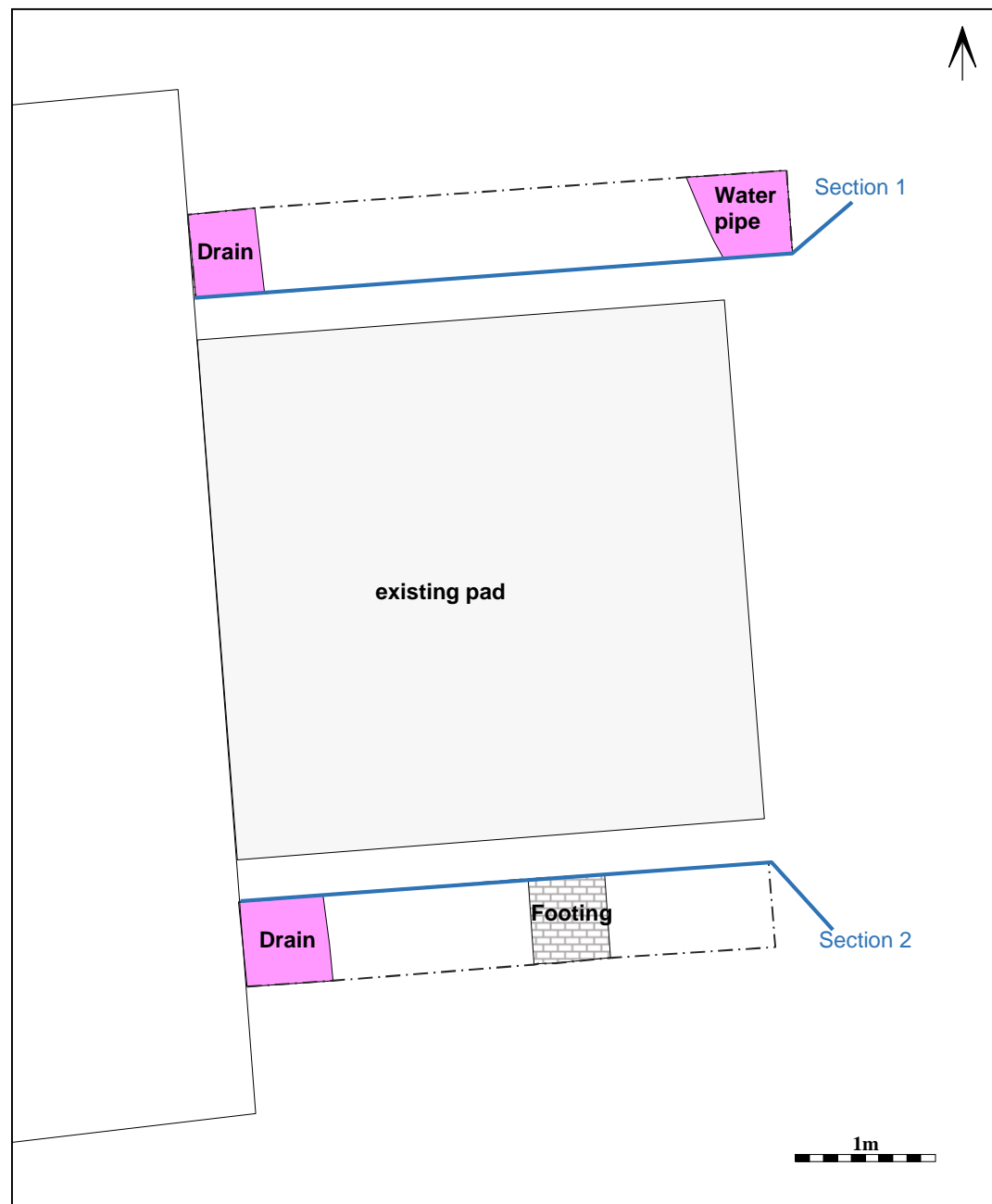
Given the significant difference in ground level to either side of the churchyard retaining wall, it would seem most likely that any archaeological features or deposits that might have once existed on the PDA were truncated when the ground level was reduced/terraced prior to or during the construction of the Victorian house. The absence of any former topsoil or subsoil across the PDA is also indicative of significant ground reduction in the past.



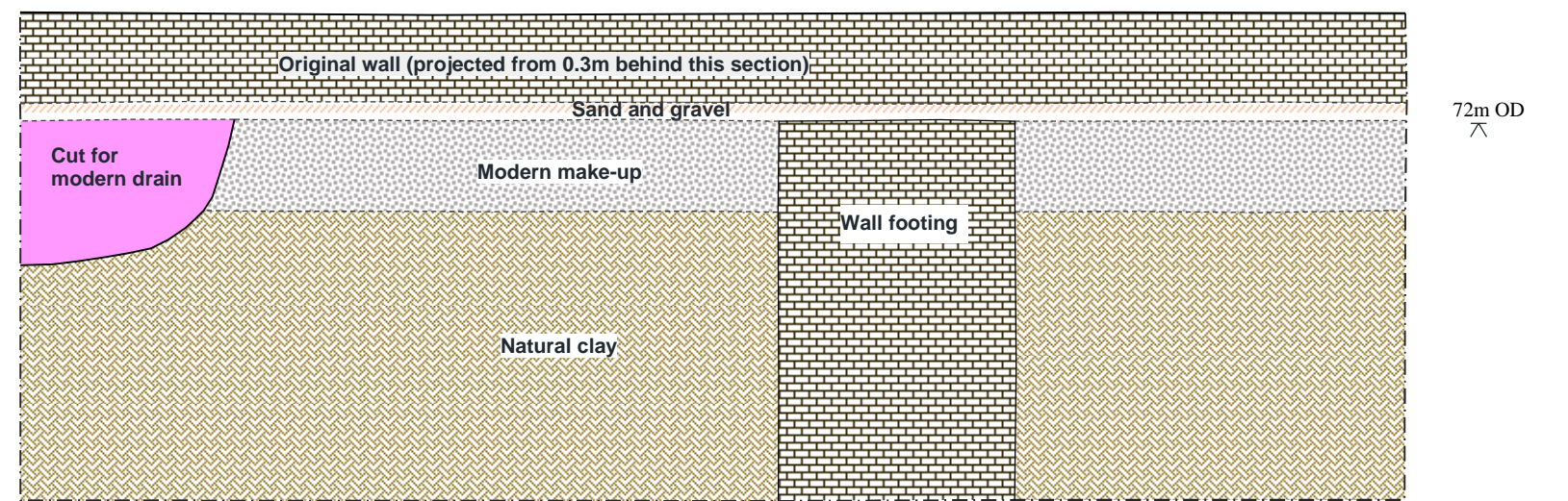
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Section 1



Section 2



Figure 2: All-features plan and sections



South-facing section of southern trench, 1m scale



In-situ wall footing in southern trench, 0.4m scale



North-facing section of northern trench, 1m scale

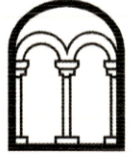


North side of churchyard retaining wall showing ground level difference, 1m scale

Figure 3: Selected photographs

Central
Bedfordshire

Albion
archaeology



Albion Archaeology
St Mary's Church
St Mary's Street
Bedford
MK42 0AS

Telephone 01234 294000
Email office@albion-arch.com
www.albion-arch.com

