

**LAND AT CHURCH END LOWER SCHOOL
CHURCH WALK
MARSTON MORETAINE
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

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Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete a summary as possible within the terms of the method statement. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

This report has been prepared by Adam Lodoen (Assistant Supervisor) and Ian Turner (Archaeological Supervisor). It was edited by Joe Abrams (Project Manager). The fieldwork was undertaken by Adam Lodoen. Joan Lightning (CAD Technician) produced the figures. All Albion Archaeology projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

Version History

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Structure of the Report

After the introductory Section 1, there is a summary of the results of the fieldwork in Section 2, followed by a brief conclusion (Section 3). Section 4 is a bibliography, and Appendix 1 contains an archaeological context summary.

Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

<i>Albion</i>	Albion Archaeology
<i>CAO</i>	County Archaeological Officer
<i>Client</i>	Mouchel Parkman UK Ltd
<i>IFA</i>	Institute of Field Archaeologists
<i>Procedures Manual</i>	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork, 2nd Edition 2001.</i> Bedfordshire County Council



Non-Technical Summary

A planning application was submitted to Bedfordshire County Council for a single storey extension to form a classroom and covered area at Church End Lower School, Church Walk, Marston Moretaine, Bedfordshire.

Recent fieldwork immediately to the south-west of the school revealed the remains of a Saxo-Norman hall and associated buildings. These remains were located c.50m south of the development area and it was considered a strong possibility that related remains might be encountered during the proposed works.

Because the work had the potential to disturb archaeological deposits, the County Archaeological Officer (CAO) issued a brief (BCC 2007) specifying the programme of archaeological works needed in advance of planning permission being granted. Subsequently, Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Mouchel Parkman to prepare a project design (Albion Archaeology 2007) and undertake a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication of the site.

The proposed extension is centred at National Grid Reference SP 9960 4130 and lies at a height of c.40m OD. The extension will cover an area of 66 sq m and is adjacent to the north-eastern corner of the school. It lies to the south of the swimming pool and picnic area.

The programme of archaeological observation was undertaken between 13th April and 17th April 2007. During this period, all excavations which required monitoring were completed. A mechanical excavator was used for all excavations.

Three foundation trenches were excavated to a depth of 1200mm and the rest of the area was machined to a depth of 300mm.

Two post-medieval/modern ditches, one modern pit, one modern ditch and the foundation layers of a modern paved area were revealed during the groundworks.

The accession number for the site archive is 2007:305 The archive will be kept in secure storage at the offices of Albion Archaeology at St Mary's Church, Bedford until deposition with Bedford Museum is completed.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

A planning application was submitted to Bedfordshire County Council for a single storey extension to form a classroom and covered area at Church End Lower School, Church Walk, Marston Moretaine, Bedfordshire.

Because the work had the potential to disturb archaeological deposits, the County Archaeological Officer (CAO) issued a brief (BCC 2007) specifying the programme of archaeological works needed in advance of planning permission being granted. Subsequently, Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Mouchel Parkman to prepare a project design (Albion Archaeology 2007) and undertake a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication of the site.

1.2 Site Location and Description

The proposed extension is centred at National Grid Reference SP 9960 4130 and lies at a height of *c.*40m OD. The extension has an area of 66 sq m and is adjacent to the north-eastern corner of the school. It lies to the south of the swimming pool and picnic area.

The geology of the area is generally Oxford clay with localised areas of sandy gravel.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Church End Lower School lies on the southern side of the historic medieval core of Marston Moretaine, immediately to the north-west of the 14th-century church of St Mary's. The settlement of Marston Moretaine is recorded in the Domesday Book and is, therefore, likely to have at least Saxon origins. The original core of the settlement may have been located in the vicinity of the church. Recent fieldwork immediately to the west of the school seems to confirm this idea as the remains of a Saxo-Norman hall and associated buildings (Edmondson and Steadman 2001, 47 and BCAS 1998) were revealed. These remains were *c.*50m south of the development area, and it was considered possible that further, related remains might be found within the proposed development area.

The earlier investigations also recorded the presence of a single (probably post-medieval) ditch *c.*50m to the east of the development area.



2. RESULTS OF OBSERVATION AND RECORDING

2.1 Introduction

The program of archaeological observation was undertaken between 13th and 17th April 2007. During this period, all groundworks which required monitoring were completed. The groundworks consisted of three foundation trenches and a foundation slab (for the internal part of the proposed extension).

2.2 Methodology

The archaeological works adhered to the standards and field methods set out in the project design (Albion Archaeology 2007) and Section 5 of the brief (BCC 2007), specifically:

- 1 Any stripping of overburden or excavation of service trenches was monitored to try to identify *in situ* archaeological deposits.
- 2 All disturbed soil was scanned for artefacts.
- 3 Any excavated deposits were fully recorded in accordance with Albion's *Procedures Manual* and the detailed requirements in Section 5 of the brief.
- 4 All archaeological observations were recorded at a suitable scale on base plans that were tied in to the OS national grid.
- 5 A photographic record was kept.

Throughout the project, the standards set out in the Institute of Field Archaeologists Codes of Conduct and Standards and Guidance documents (specifically *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, September 1999), in English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991) and in Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual* were adhered to.

2.3 Extent and Nature of Groundworks

Three adjoining foundation trenches were excavated to a depth of 1200mm and a width of 700mm. Land within these three trenches will form the foundation slab for the new extension. This area was reduced by a depth of 300mm (Figures 1 and 2, Appendix 1).

2.4 Results

The groundworks revealed modern foundation material used as a base for the school playground, three post-medieval/modern ditches and one modern pit. All of these cut features were observed in the north-western foundation trench and in that part of the foundation slab immediately adjacent to this foundation trench (Figures 1 and 2).

The other foundation trenches contained no cut features and none of the groundworks revealed significant archaeological remains.

2.4.1 Geological deposit

Undisturbed orange clay (113) was revealed in all three foundation trenches.



2.4.2 Post-medieval/modern ditches

Ditches [103] and [105] were only visible in section (Figure 2) in the north-western foundation trench. They were sealed by modern playground foundation material [112] (Section 2.4.4). These ditches were aligned NW-SE and shared a concave profile. They also had a similar depth (300mm – 500mm) and had been infilled with identical deposits. No dateable artefactual material was recovered from these deposits.

The specific function of [103] and [105] could not be determined with any certainty. However, their shared characteristics point to a similarity in function, date of creation and date of infilling. In addition to this, both deposits (104, 106) smelled distinctly sulphurous, which is often an indication of the presence of rotting organic material. Such material often collects in boundary/drainage ditches and it is probable that these ditches were part of a network in use in this part of Marston Moretaine in the post-medieval/modern period.

2.4.3 Modern ditch and pit

Pit [107] and ditch [109] were also visible in the north-western foundation trench and within the internal foundation slab (Figure 2).

Pit [107] was 900mm wide and 800mm long; it had steep sides and a flat base. It contained a single deposit (108) of dark brown grey clay silt, which produced a modern nail.

Ditch [109] was 300mm deep, 300mm wide and at least 1000mm long, with near-vertical sides and a concave base. It contained a single deposit (110) of dark grey clay silt, which produced a piece of plastic.

2.4.4 Modern foundation material for playground

Sealing all of the above remains was foundation material [112]. This was up to 0.50m deep and comprised three deposits: a black silty layer (102) at the base, brick rubble (101) in the middle and concrete (100) at the top.

[112] had been used to level this area and provide a firm, flat base upon which to lay a modern paved area. This paved area had covered most of the development area until the current groundworks began (Figure 2).

In the north-eastern part of the development area, layer (111) was present. This was different in character to deposits within [112] and is thought to have been associated with a grassed area which existed prior to the construction of the playground.



3. SYNTHESIS

3.1 Interpretation

Two post-medieval/modern ditches, one modern pit, one modern ditch and the foundation layers of a modern paved area were revealed during the groundworks.

Ditches [103] and [105] did not contain any dateable artefacts. However, the presence of humic deposits within the ditches strongly suggested they were infilled relatively recently. It is likely that these features are modern or, at most, post-medieval in date. They are likely to have functioned as boundary/drainage ditches, which are still widely used in this area.

Pit [107] and ditch [109] are both likely to be associated with modern construction work.

3.2 Significance

The remains recorded within the area of the proposed new extension are of low archaeological significance.

Modern layers associated with the construction of a paved area have truncated sub-surface deposits. Doubtless, this activity has reduced the archaeological potential of the land. However, in spite of this damage, two post-medieval/modern ditches were present. Their existence demonstrates that similar, earlier features would also have been preserved, if they had been present.

Therefore, it appears that the significant archaeological remains recorded just 50m to the south (Edmondson and Steadman, 2001, 47 and BCAS 1998) did not extend as far as the proposed development area.



4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Albion Archaeology 2007, *Land at Church End Lower School, Church Walk, Marston Moretaine. Project Design for Programme of Archaeological Observation, Recording, Analysis and Publication*. Report 2007:37
- Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service 1998, *Land Adjacent to Church End Lower School, Marston Moretaine Bedfordshire*. Archaeological Field Evaluation. Report 1998/09
- Bedfordshire County Council 2007, *Brief for a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication at Land Adjacent to Church End Lower School, Marston Moretaine Bedfordshire*. (V2 10th April 2007)
- Edmondson G and Steadman S, 2001, "Archaeological Investigations at Church End Lower School, Marston Moretaine". *Bedfordshire Archaeology*, 24, 47-56



5. APPENDIX 1 – CONTEXT SUMMARY



Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 13.25 m. Width: 9.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.3 m. Max: 0.5 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 99601: Northing: 41300)

Reason: Trench 1 comprises the north-western, north-eastern and south-western foundation trenches. It also covers the internal foundation slab for the proposed school extension.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
103	Ditch	Linear NW-SE profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max depth 0.3m, max breadth 2.6m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Backfill	Firm dark brown grey clay silt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Ditch	Linear NW-SE profile: concave base: flat dimensions: max breadth 3.8m, max depth 0.5m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
106	Backfill	Firm dark grey brown clay silt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
107	Modern Intrusion	Sub-oval profile: near vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 2.35m, min length 1.5m, max depth 0.88m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
108	Backfill	Firm dark brown grey clay silt Modern nail found in this deposit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
109	Modern Intrusion	Linear NW-SE profile: near vertical base: concave dimensions: max depth 0.3m, max breadth 0.3m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
110	Backfill	Firm dark grey clay silt Plastic found in this deposit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
111	Make up layer	Firm mid brown grey clay silt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
112	Foundation	Rectangular profile: vertical base: flat dimensions: max depth 0.5m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
100	Concrete	Hard light grey white Modern concrete	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Brick Rubble	Modern hardcore - brick and rubble	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Modern Intrusion	Firm dark grey black silt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
113	Natural	Firm orange brown clay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

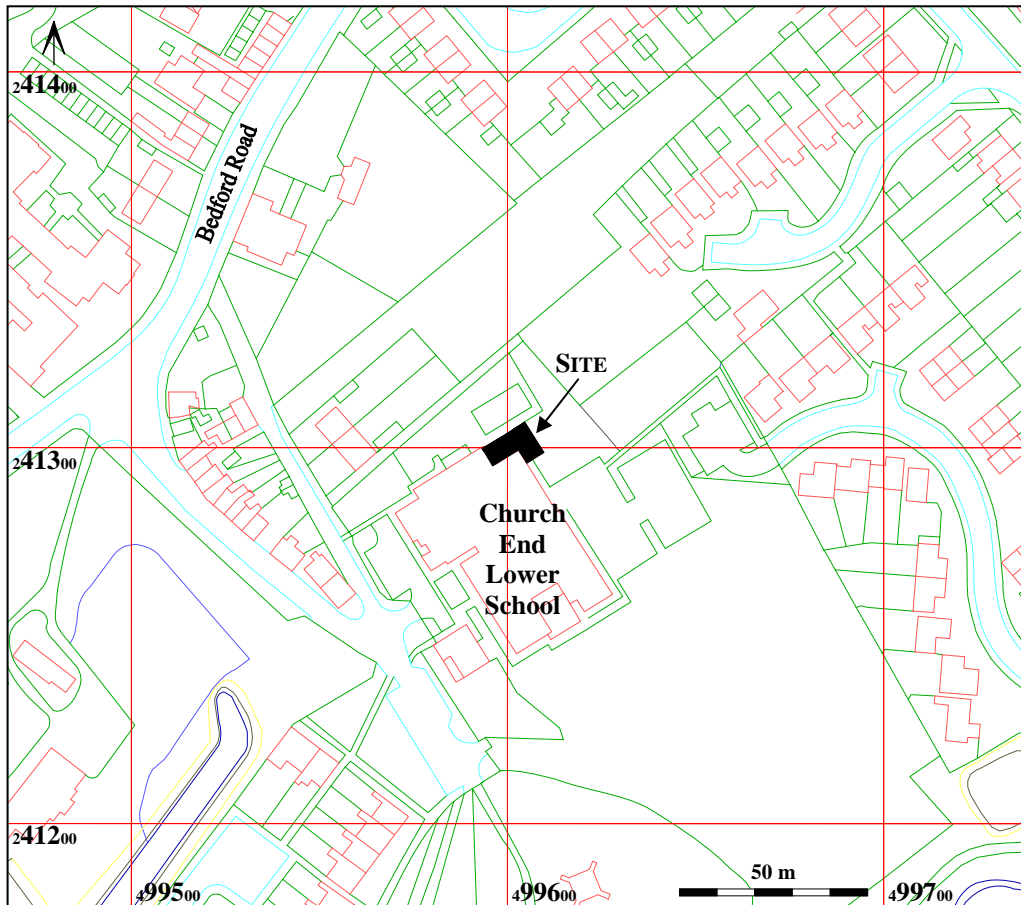
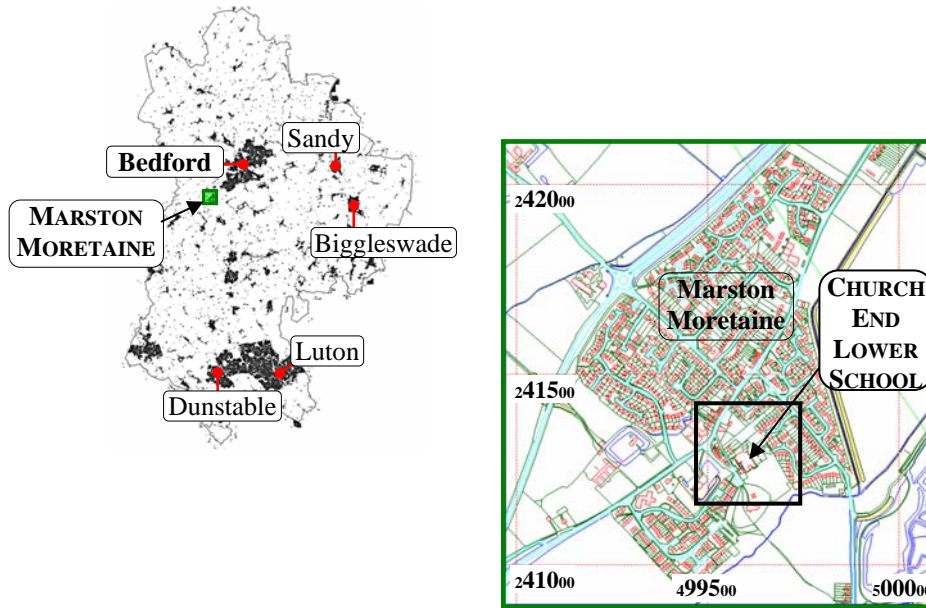


Figure 1: Site location map

Base map reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, by Bedfordshire County Council, County Hall, Bedford. OS Licence No. 100017358(LA). © Crown Copyright.

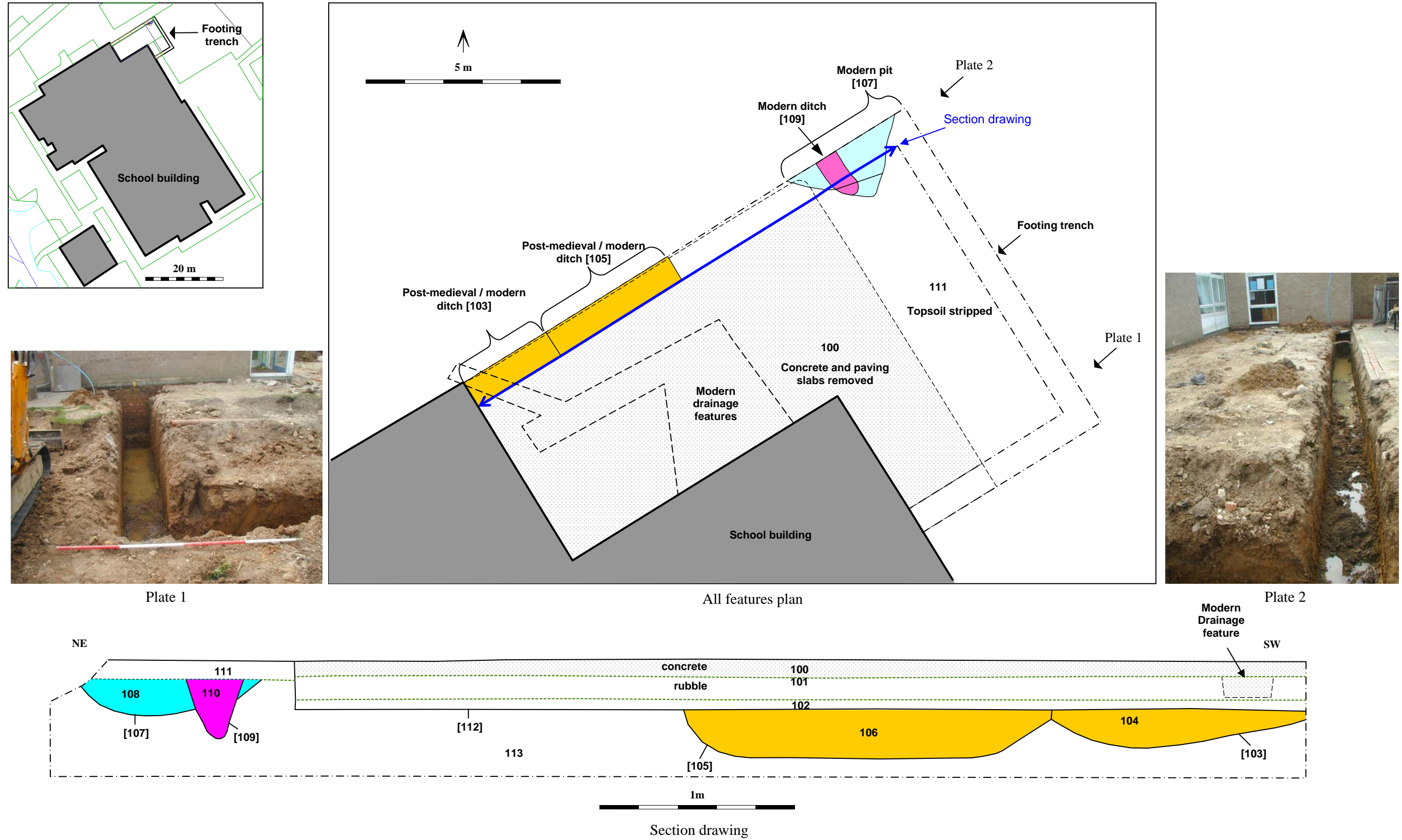


Figure 2: All features plan