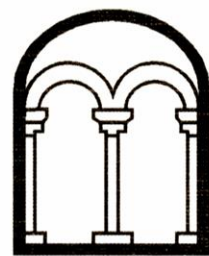


**46 KINGSWAY  
DUNSTABLE  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

**Albion**  
archaeology



**46 KINGSWAY  
DUNSTABLE  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION,  
INVESTIGATION, RECORDING, ANALYSIS AND  
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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. 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). Any person/party relying on the document for such other purposes agrees and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Albion Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Albion Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the persons/party by whom it was commissioned. This document is limited by the state of knowledge at the time it was written.*

## **Acknowledgements**

*Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Ian and Kara Clayton. The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Slawek Utrata, Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeological Officer. Fieldwork was undertaken by Lewis Busby (Archaeological Supervisor).*

*This report was prepared by Lewis Busby with contributions from Joan Lightning (CAD Technician).*

*All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).*

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## **Version History**

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1.0	29/11/2019	N/A
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## **Key Terms**

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

CBC AO	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeology Officer
CBM	Ceramic building material
CIfA	Chartered Institute <i>for</i> Archaeologists
HER	Historic Environment Record
LPA	Local Planning Authority
PDA	Permitted development area
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Planning permission CB/17/03858/FULL was granted by Central Bedfordshire Council for the erection of a single-storey rear and side extension following the demolition of an existing garage at 46 Kingsway, Dunstable, LU5 4HD.*

*Due to the high archaeological potential of the site, a condition was attached to the planning consent requiring the development to be implemented in accordance with a written scheme of archaeological investigation that had been approved by the LPA. The CBC Archaeology Team confirmed that a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication would be required to address the planning condition.*

*Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, approved by the LPA, and to produce a report detailing the results.*

*Archaeological monitoring of the groundworks was undertaken between 29th September and 2nd October 2019. Only one feature that pre-dated activity associated with the standing building on the site was revealed: a NNW–SSE aligned ditch, which could date back to the post-medieval or, more likely, the early modern period. A footpath is marked in a similar location and alignment on maps dating to the 19th and early 20th centuries.*

*The foundation trenches were excavated to depths of between 1m and 1.5m, exposing undisturbed geological deposits and overlying topsoil and subsoil. Though no evidence of the Roman or medieval settlement of Dunstable was revealed, it should be noted that the later features located within much of the area observed would probably have destroyed any earlier remains.*

*This report will be uploaded onto the OASIS website (reference no albionar1-359072) and the project archive will be deposited with Luton Culture (accession no. LUTNM: 2019/64).*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 **Background**

Planning permission CB/17/03858/FULL was granted by Central Bedfordshire Council for the erection of a single-storey rear and side extension following the demolition of an existing garage at 46 Kingsway, Dunstable, LU5 4HD.

A heritage statement, submitted as part of the planning application, highlighted that the site lies on the north-eastern edge of the historic cores of Roman and medieval Dunstable (Albion Archaeology 2017). Therefore, there was potential for the permitted development area (PDA) to contain sub-surface archaeological remains. Accordingly, the following pre-commencement condition (no. 2) was attached to the planning permission:

*No development shall commence until a written scheme of archaeological investigation; that includes provision for post excavation analysis and publication, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development hereby approved shall only be implemented in full accordance with the approved archaeological scheme.*

*Reason: This condition is pre-commencement as a failure to secure appropriate archaeological investigation in advance of development would be contrary to paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that requires the recording and advance of understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) as a consequence of the development. (Section 12, NPPF)*

The CBC Archaeology Team confirmed that a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication would be required to address the planning condition.

This recommendation was in accordance with national planning guidelines in the form of paragraph 199 (Section 16) of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF), which requires that developers record and advance understanding of heritage assets that will be lost (wholly or in part) as a consequence of development (MHCLG 2019).

Albion Archaeology prepared a written scheme of investigation (WSI) (Albion Archaeology 2019) for the required archaeological work in accordance with a Brief prepared by the CBC Archaeology Team (CBC 2019); it was approved by the LPA prior to commencement of the development. This report presents the results of the fieldwork.

### 1.2 **Site Location and Description**

Dunstable is situated in southern Bedfordshire, with Luton 7km to the east and Leighton Buzzard 9.7km to the north-west (Figure 1). The north-eastern edge of the town merges with Houghton Regis. Kingsway lies to the north-east of



central Dunstable, c.375m east-north-east of the intersection of the town's two principal roads — the High Street (A5) and West Street/Church Street (A505). Kingsway leads north from Church Street (A505) to College/Court Drive.

Dunstable lies on the northern edge of the chalk escarpment of the Chiltern Hills, with an underlying solid geology of Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation and New Pit Chalk Formation<sup>1</sup>. The topography of the area is undulating with a number of ridges and valleys. Dunstable town centre lies on relatively level, higher ground and the PDA lies at 143m OD. It is centred on grid reference TL 02178 22138.

46 Kingsway lies midway along the eastern side of the street, across from the T-junction of Kingsway and Kingscroft Avenue. At the time of the fieldwork it comprised a semi-detached 1930s domestic dwelling with block paving at the front and a garden to the rear. The rear garden comprised an area of block paving directly behind the house and beyond this grass. A garage was situated on the southern boundary, set back from the house. The PDA was bounded by wooden fences and mature trees screened the view to the east.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

#### **1.3.1 Introduction**

The heritage statement that accompanied the application was based on Historic Environment Record data from a 500m-radius study area around the PDA (Albion Archaeology 2017). The information is summarised below.

#### **1.3.2 Prehistoric (before AD 43)**

Prehistoric activity within Dunstable is best represented by the route of Icknield Way, which follows the line of Church Street, c.190m to the south of the PDA. Other records of prehistoric activity comprise various find-spots c.200m west of the PDA (HER1444, EBD471 and EBD744). However the evidence remains scarce and archaeological investigations in the vicinity of the PDA have not produced any material dating to this period.

#### **1.3.3 Roman (AD 43–410)**

Dunstable is a known Roman town recorded as *Durocobriva*e or *Durocobrivi*s (HER135). The PDA lies c.375m north-east of the crossroads of Watling Street (HER5508) and the Icknield Way (HER353, Viatores route 168) that defines the Roman core.

During the redevelopment of Dunstable, archaeological investigations have identified evidence of Roman occupation in the area around the junction of High Street and Church Street (HER135, HER11270, HER11272 and HER14965), some 150m–300m from the PDA.

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<sup>1</sup> Contains information from <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html?location=dunstable&gobBtn=go> [Accessed: 21/11/2019].





Archaeological investigation (EBD1697) *c.*175m south of the PDA has provided evidence of 1st–2nd-century Roman activity in the form of pits, ditches and potential buildings, suggesting that this area was still within the Roman town limits.

Approximately 400m north-west of the PDA an archaeological investigation (EBD479) recorded a 1st–2nd-century cemetery but it is unlikely that this extended as far south as the PDA. Further archaeological investigations (EBD370 and EBD446) have occurred in close proximity to the PDA, but no evidence for Roman occupation was recovered from these areas.

#### **1.3.4 Anglo-Saxon to Medieval (410–1150)**

So far no evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement in Dunstable has been identified within the study area and the first documentary reference to Dunstable dates to the 12th century.

#### **1.3.5 Medieval (1150–1550)**

The PDA lies *c.*100m north-east of medieval Dunstable (HER 16986), as defined in the HER.

No extant medieval heritage assets exist in the study area other than the Augustinian Priory remains of St Peter's Church (HER132, NHLE114581, Grade I), part of the Gatehouse (HER6329, NHLE114581, Grade I), along with the undercroft at Priory House (HER6311, NHLE114593, Grade II\*) which were founded by Henry I. These are located *c.*250–350m south of the PDA.

Archaeological investigations have identified below-ground remains associated with occupational activity in areas off both sides of Church Street *c.* 180m–250m to the south of the PDA. There has been some evidence of medieval activity from the small-scale archaeological investigation at Old Palace Lodge/Kingsbury Court (EBD 55 and EBD 1376), *c.*130m to the south-west of the PDA, and a number of burials was recovered from a similar investigation at 21 Kingsway (EBD446), *c.*30m to the west of the PDA. Even though the human remains remained undated, their orientation and tentative evidence for coffins suggests that they were Christian burials.

Cartographic evidence suggests that no development took place in the vicinity of the PDA during the post-medieval period and it is likely that the PDA has lain within open fields since at least the medieval period. Burials found during the extension of 21 Kingsway represent burials outside of the town's core and could be isolated finds.

#### **1.3.6 Post-medieval – modern (1550–present)**

Dunstable developed rapidly in the post-medieval period due to its location on the main route between London and the north-west. The majority of heritage assets of this period are buildings or sites of former buildings fronting onto the town's main roads.



Small-scale archaeological investigations at 36 Kingsway (EBD370) produced some tentative evidence for a holloway that was in use during the post-medieval period. There was also limited post-medieval activity recorded *c.*175m to the south of the PDA (EBD1697). The PDA lay in open fields up until the 1930s when the current housing development was built.

#### **1.4 Project Objectives**

The general objectives of the archaeological investigation were to:

- establish the date, nature and extent of any activity or occupation within the PDA;
- establish the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits present at the PDA;
- establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- to recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

The development groundworks had the potential to reveal archaeological remains associated with Roman, medieval and post-medieval Dunstable. Accordingly, the following specific objectives were identified with reference to regional and county based research aims:

- determining whether there is any evidence for Roman and/or medieval occupation within the PDA (Oake 2007, 11) ;
- establishing the layout, development and urban character of medieval Dunstable in areas away from the priory (Oake 2007, 14);
- determining whether there is any below-ground evidence relating to the post-medieval use of the PDA (Medlycott 2011, 79).



## 2. METHOD STATEMENTS

### 2.1 Implementation

Archaeological monitoring of the groundworks was undertaken between 29th September and 2nd October 2019.

All groundworks with the potential to impact sub-surface archaeological remains were monitored. These comprised the machining, under archaeological supervision, of the foundation trenches and a soak-away associated with the rear extension (Figure 2). The foundation trenches were 0.6m wide and between 1m and 1.5m deep.

The ground reduction was undertaken using a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket. Deposits encountered were investigated and recorded in accordance with the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2019) and Albion's *Procedures Manual*. Spoil heaps were checked on a regular basis for the recovery of artefacts.

### 2.2 Standards

The following standards were adhered to throughout the project.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Albion Archaeology</li> </ul>	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (3rd ed., 2017).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CIfA</li> </ul>	<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)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EAA</li> </ul>	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> (2003)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic England</li> </ul>	<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)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Luton Culture</li> </ul>	<i>Procedures for preparing archaeological archives for deposition with Luton Culture</i> (2013)

Following approval of this report by the CBC AO, the archive of materials (subject to the landowner's permission) and accompanying records will be deposited with Luton Culture (accession no. LUTNM: 2019/64). The report will be uploaded onto the ADS Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS ref: albionar1-359072).



### 3. RESULTS

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#### 3.1 Introduction

The foundation trenches were excavated to 1m in depth or to the level of the undisturbed geological deposits, and to a width of 0.6m. The soak-away to the east of the extension was excavated to a depth of 1.5m, exposing the underlying geological deposits; a drain excavated between the extension and the soak-away failed to penetrate the subsoil.

#### 3.2 Overburden and Geology

The overburden comprised a c.0.21m-thick topsoil of dark greyish brown silt (101), above a 0.19m-thick subsoil of dark brown, clayey silt (102). Both of these deposits were overlain by a 0.25m-thick layer (100) comprising the brickwork and underlying sand and hard-core base of a patio area to the rear of the building.

Undisturbed geological deposits (103) comprised chalk with flint inclusions. The observed depth of these deposits varied from 0.22m below the current ground surface at the south-west end of the site to 1.5m deep, at the north-east end of the site where they were observed within the excavation for the soak-away.

#### 3.3 Levelling Layer

Underlying the subsoil was a layer of compacted light brown, chalky silt (111). This layer was visible in the north-west corner of the foundation trench, where it was 0.52m thick, as well as in the soak-away to the north, where it was 0.68m thick. Though it appears to be cut by ditch [114] (referred to below), no finds were recovered with which to date the layer. Its location and extent suggest it is most likely to represent an episode of relatively recent remodelling in order to raise and level the area where the ground level drops away to the east.

#### 3.4 Post-medieval/Early Modern Ditch

Ditch [114] was revealed in the eastern- and southern-most foundation trenches; it appeared to be aligned NNW–SSE (see Figures 2 and 7). It measured 2.15m wide and 0.9m deep at the limit of excavation in the southern trench and 0.4m in depth in the northern trench, before being truncated by modern soak-away [108] (see below and Figure 7). The ditch contained a sole fill of mid-brown silt with frequent chalk inclusions (115). Finds recovered from the ditch comprised three fragments of sheep/goat skull, a sheep/goat tooth, a medium-sized mammal long bone fragment and four pieces of ceramic building material (CBM).

The CBM recovered from the ditch indicates that it is post-medieval/modern in date. However the ditch is aligned differently to that of the current building and underlies the remnants of a modern soak-away [108] revealed within the foundation trench (see below and Figure 7). This indicates it pre-dates the 1930s' construction of the current building and represents an earlier boundary.



### 3.5 **Modern Remains**

Due to the proximity of the foundation trenches to the current building, modern intrusions were frequently seen within the foundation trenches of the extension.

The northernmost foundation trench revealed a linear feature [106] running parallel to the current building (Figure 2). It measured 1.78m in length and 0.63m in depth and is likely to be a cut associated with terracing of the ground level in advance of the construction of the current building; it was backfilled with a chalky gravel hardcore layer (107) to the level of the footings of the current building, followed by episodes of backfill comprising brown silty clay (112, 113).

The remnants of a modern soak-away [108] were observed to the east of feature [106] (Figures 2 and 7). It measured 0.86m in depth and at least 1m across; its south-west extent was truncated by a modern concrete post [104] associated with the position of a fence line. The soak-away was filled with a 0.46m-thick dark grey silt (109) with frequent CBM (not retained), followed by a 0.39m-thick layer of a mid-brownish grey, clayey silt backfill.



## 4. CONCLUSIONS

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The archaeological monitoring of the groundworks only revealed one feature pre-dating activity associated with the current building on the site: a NNW–SSE aligned ditch, which could date back to the post-medieval or, more likely, the early modern period. A footpath is marked in a similar location and alignment on maps dating to the 19th and early 20th centuries (Figures 3 and 4).

The foundation trenches were excavated to depths of between 1m and 1.5m, exposing undisturbed geological deposits and overlying topsoil and subsoil. Though no evidence of the Roman or medieval settlement of Dunstable was revealed, it should be noted that the later features located within much of the area observed would probably have destroyed any earlier remains.

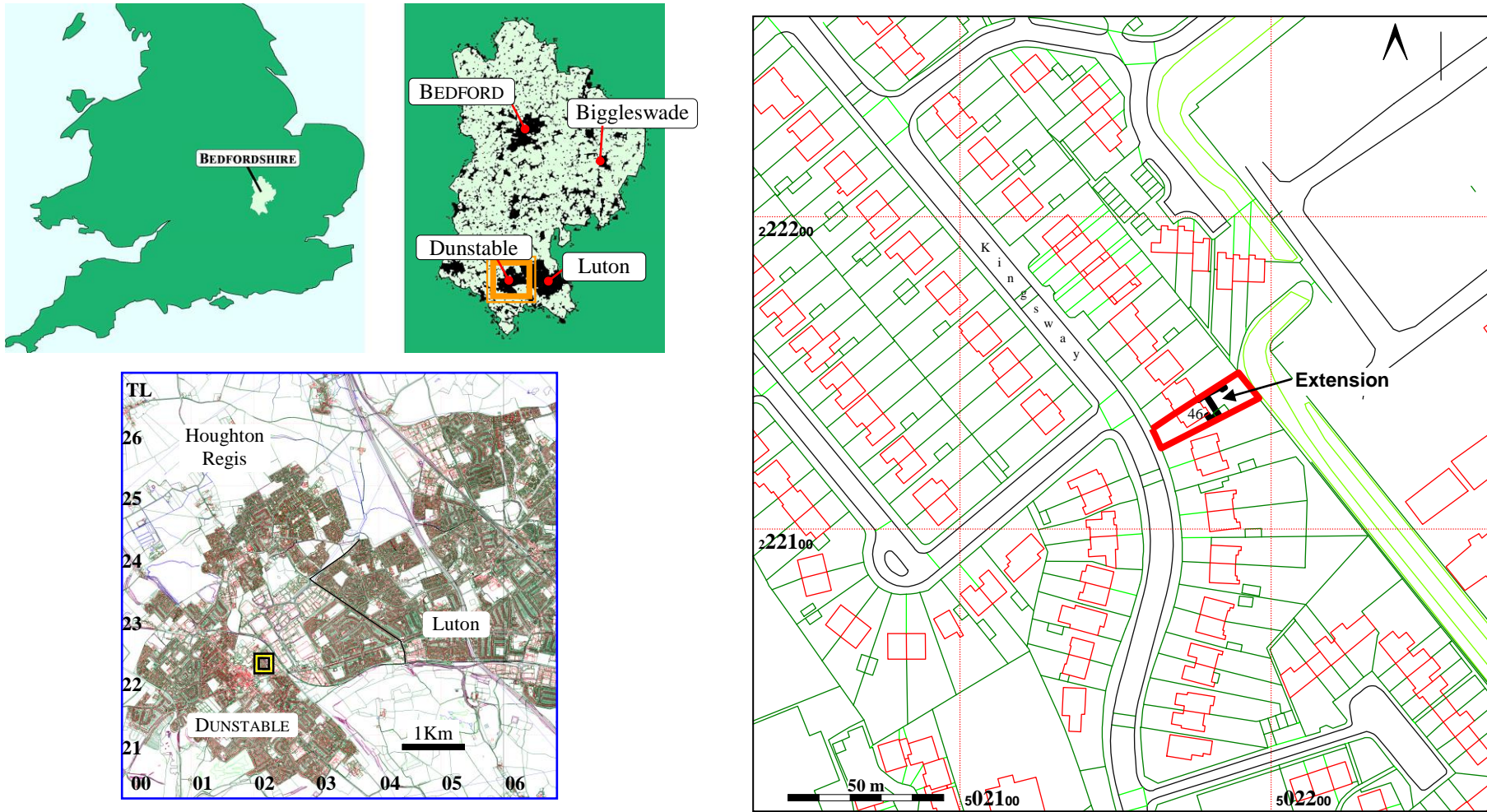
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## 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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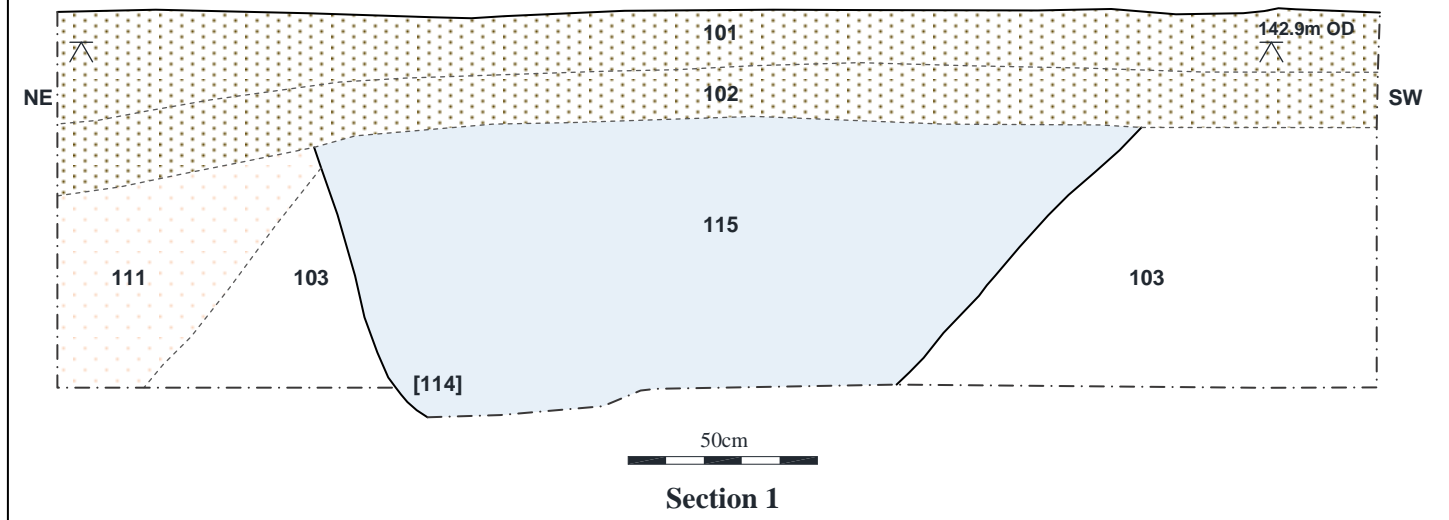
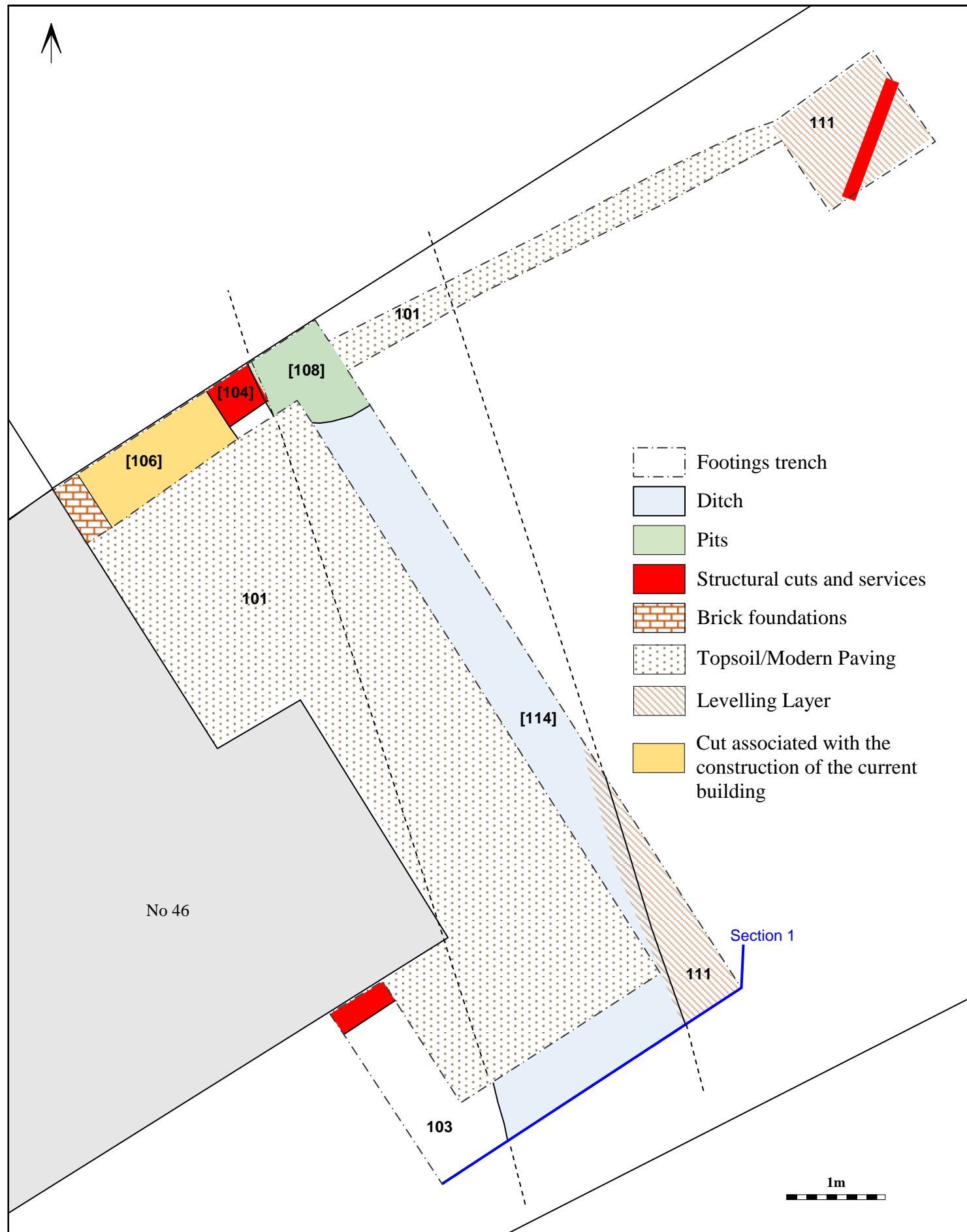
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**Figure 1: Site location**

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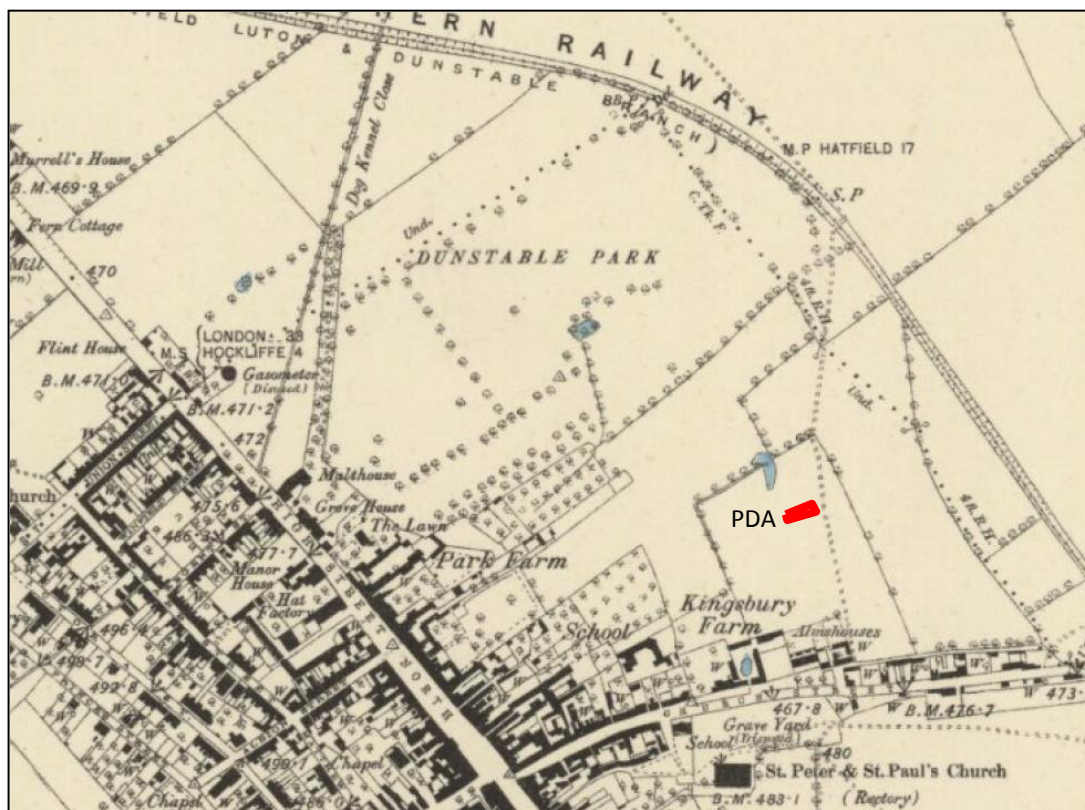


Ditch [114] NW-facing section  
(1m scale)

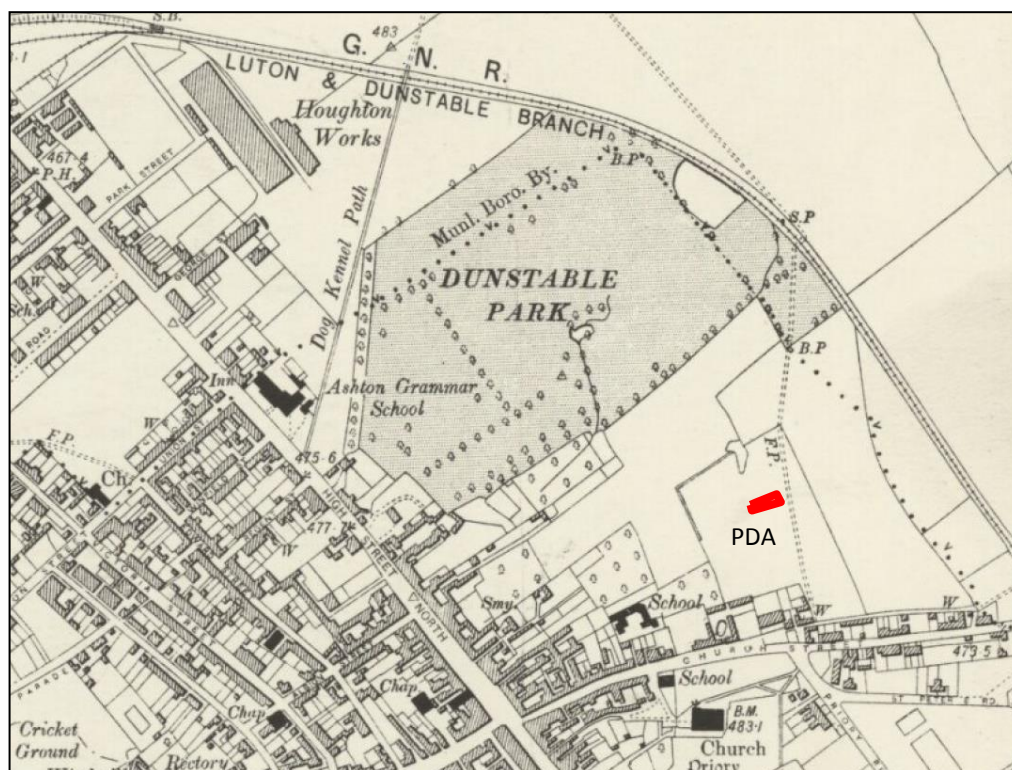
**Figure 2: Groundworks monitored and features revealed**

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**Figure 3:** Six-inch OS map 1884  
(Scale and location of the PDA are approximate.)



**Figure 4:** Six-inch OS map 1902  
(Scale and location of the PDA are approximate.)





SE-facing section of northern-most foundation trench  
(1m scale)



Drain excavated at the end of the soak-away  
(1m scale)

**Figure 5:** Selected photographs of the works





The eastern-most foundation trench  
(1m scale)



Foundation trenches at the southern end of the extension

**Figure 6:** Selected photographs of the works





SE-facing section of foundation trench, showing ditch [114] underlying the rubble remains of the modern soak-away [108] (40cm scale)

**Figure 7:** Selected photographs of the works



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