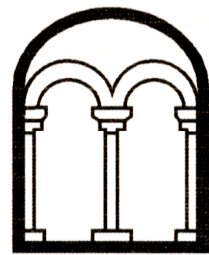


**BROOK FARM  
HULCOTE  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION, RECORDING  
ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION**

**Albion**  
archaeology



**BROOK FARM  
HULCOTE  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION, RECORDING  
ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION**

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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

*The project was commissioned by the Countryside Access Team, Bedfordshire County Council and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Martin Oake, Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist. Fieldwork was undertaken by Christiane Meckseper (Project Officer), Richard Gregson and Ian Turner (Archaeological Supervisors). This report was prepared by Ian Turner with contributions from Joan Lightning (CAD Technician).*

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## Key Terms

The following abbreviations are used throughout this report:

CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
Client	Brook Farm Bund Ltd
HER	Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record
PDA	Permitted development area
Procedures Manual	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> , 2nd edn, 2001 Albion Archaeology



## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Central Bedfordshire Council granted planning permission for the construction of a noise attenuation bund with an acoustic fence (CB/11/02613/MW) and an associated flood compensation area (CB/12/01592/MW) on land at Brook Farm, Hulcote, Bedfordshire.*

*As the permitted development area (PDA) was located within an area of archaeological sensitivity, the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA) advised that a programme of archaeological investigation was required. Therefore, conditions no. 25 and 16 attached to the respective planning permissions required the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation as a consequence of the development.*

*Albion archaeology was commissioned to produce two written schemes of investigation (WSI) in accordance with the brief issued by the CBCA, and to undertake the fieldwork.*

*Much of the development works at Brook Farm were too shallow in depth to expose any potential archaeological remains. Where the groundworks were deeper, a relatively low number of features were revealed; they comprised a ditch, a gully, a pond and three furrows. None of these features produced any artefacts. They are, with the exception of the ditch, judged to be relatively modern features, based on their deposit characteristics and/or their similar alignments to extant field boundaries.*

*The WNW–ESE aligned ditch [10] is interpreted as a field system ditch of some antiquity as its alignment was notably different to that of the modern field boundaries. However, due to the lack of any artefacts from the feature, its date is unknown.*

*The modern features are of negligible significance. The undated field system ditch, although probably older in date, is also of only low/local significance.*

*Given the limitations of the recovered data, there is no potential for further analysis of the results of the investigation, which have negligible potential to address regional research objectives. This report will be uploaded onto the OASIS website (albionar1-365074) and the archive deposited with The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford (accession no. BEDFM 2013.44).*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 *Project Background*

Central Bedfordshire Council granted planning permission for the construction of a noise attenuation bund with an acoustic fence (CB/11/02613/MW) and an associated flood compensation area (CB/12/01592/MW) on land at Brook Farm, Hulcote, Bedfordshire.

As the permitted development area (PDA) was located within an area of archaeological sensitivity, the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA) advised that a programme of archaeological investigation was required. Therefore, conditions no. 25 and 16 attached to the respective planning permissions required the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation as a consequence of the development.

This was in line with the requirements of paragraph 141 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) which stated that Local Planning Authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of heritage assets before they are lost, by imposing planning conditions or obligations as appropriate (CLG 2012). The two conditions stated that:

*No development shall take place until the applicant or developer has secured the implementation of a Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The said development shall only be implemented in accordance with the scheme thereby approved.*

*(Reason: To record and advance understanding of the significance of the heritage assets with archaeological interest before they are lost and to conserve, enhance, protect and promote the enjoyment of the historic environment. MWKP Policy GE14.)*

Albion archaeology was commissioned to produce two WSI's (Albion Archaeology 2013a and 2013b), in accordance with a brief issued by the CBCA (CBC 2013), and to undertake the fieldwork.

### 1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The PDA is c.11.3ha in size and is centred on NGR SP 9550 3770. It incorporates land to the west and south of Brook Farm, which is situated c.2 miles to the south-east of the village of Salford and 800m north-east of Junction 13 of the M1 motorway (Figure 1).

The site is bordered by the line of the M1 in the south and Salford Road in the north. To the east and west are arable fields with low hedges and wire mesh fences serving as field boundaries. The site is partly rough grassland and partly arable fields. The topography of the site is slightly undulating; it falls gently from the Salford Road in the north towards an existing stream along the southern edge of the site and then rises again on the other side towards the embankment of the M1 motorway.



### **1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background**

The archaeological background is given in detail in a desk-based heritage assessment (Albion Archaeology 2012). It is also summarised in the brief (CBC 2013) as follows.

There are no known archaeological remains within the PDA. However, it is located within a documented archaeological landscape with elements dating from the prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval periods.

There is substantial evidence for the medieval landscape in the surrounding area, including the deserted medieval village of Hulcote to the north (HER 774) and the shrunken medieval settlement at Salford to the north-west (HER 1655). Both these settlements are recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086, suggesting that their origins lie in at least the late Anglo-Saxon period.

Other elements of the medieval landscape include a possible moated site at Brook Farm (HER 4420) and earthwork remains of ridge furrow, part of the medieval open field systems of Hulcote (HER 5087) and Salford (HER 5215). There are also medieval fishponds at Hulcote (HER 3423).

The complexity of human use of the stream valley is shown by the results of archaeological investigations at Salford Quarry and Whitsundoles Farm Quarry, both to the west of the development site.

At Salford Quarry (HER 15146; Dawson 2005) a sequence of occupation dating from the Neolithic to the Anglo-Saxon periods was investigated. It includes a Bronze Age round barrow cemetery, an early to middle Iron Age settlement, late Iron Age cremation burials and evidence of Roman settlement within and adjacent to the earlier elements of the site.

The investigations at Whitsundoles Farm (HER 7721) produced a sequence of occupation from the early Bronze Age to the post-medieval period, including settlement and other activity as well remains of the former agricultural landscape.

Excavations associated with the A421 road improvements scheme also found extensive evidence for late Iron Age/Roman occupation on Brogborough Hill (Simmonds and Welsh 2013).

There are a number of undated cropmark sites in the surrounding area (HERs 8384, 8386 and 14837).

### **1.4 Research Strategies**

A number of research frameworks have been devised for the region. The earliest comprises *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties 1. resource assessment* (Glazebrook 1997). This was complemented by *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties 2.*





*research agenda and strategy* (eds Brown and Glazebrook 2000), which set out research priorities.

These documents were reviewed and revised in *Revision of the Regional Research Framework for the Eastern Region* (ed. Medlycott and Brown 2008). Finally, the regional research framework was again reviewed and augmented in *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England* (ed. 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).

English Heritage has produced an extensive library of national guides covering a wide range of topics, which can be downloaded from the HELM website<sup>1</sup>.

### **1.5 Fieldwork Data Collection Aims**

The primary function of the archaeological investigation was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the site in its cultural and environmental setting. Together with the production of an assessment report/publication that fully described the archaeological works and findings defining the value of the site and its potential heritage assets.

To achieve the above, the data collected during the fieldwork would aim to determine the following:

1. the date, nature and extent of any activity or occupation on the site.
2. the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes.
3. the local environmental conditions by the recovery of any palaeo-environmental remains present.

### **1.6 Research Objectives**

In addition to the fieldwork data collection aims the following wider research themes were established for the investigation:

- Distribution and character of prehistoric and Roman settlement in areas of Bedfordshire other than the main river valleys and Chiltern chalk ridge (Oake 2007, 9 and 11);
- The investigation of rural medieval settlements to examine diversity, characterise settlement forms and understand how they appear, grow, shift and disappear (Wade 2000, 24–5, Oake 2007, 14 and Medlycott 2011, 57–9 and 70);
- The origins and development of medieval field systems and the position of the county between the midland system and different systems in the rest of the region (Oake 2007, 14).

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<sup>1</sup> Historic Environment Local Management (HELM) <http://www.helm.org.uk>.



## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 *Methodological Standards*

Throughout the project the standards set out in the following documents were adhered to. (While English Heritage was renamed Historic England in March 2015 not all guidelines have been updated yet and are therefore still referenced as English Heritage where appropriate.)

Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (2nd ed, 2001)
Bedford Borough Council	<i>Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition with Registered Museums in Bedfordshire.</i>
CIfA	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> (2014)
East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14	Gurney, D. <i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> (2003)
English Heritage	<i>The MoRPHE Project Managers Guide</i> (2006)
English Heritage, now Historic England	<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 *Fieldwork Methodologies*

The development programme comprised a Flood Compensation Area, a Noise Attenuation Bund and general levelling and landscaping works across much of the ground to the west of the Brook Farm buildings (Figure 1).

Two WSIs were issued (Albion Archaeology 2013a; 2013b), stating the procedures and methodologies to be employed during the archaeological investigation. The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken between 12th November 2013 and 14th June 2019.

Two archaeological assessment transects (effectively 100m-long trenches) (Figure 2) were machined within the Flood Compensation Area, located at the western end of the development. The depth of the transects was limited to the maximum development depth.

An area of surviving ridge and furrow earthworks, located immediately NE of the Noise Attenuation Bund, was fenced off in order to ensure its protection during the course of the development (Figure 1).

The topsoil strip associated with the Noise Attenuation Bund was archaeologically monitored.



Across the Flood Compensation Area, a change in the development design required deeper machining to the top of the undisturbed geological level. This was done by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket, operated by an experienced driver under close archaeological supervision. Overburden was removed down to the top of the archaeological deposits or undisturbed geological deposits, whichever were encountered first. Any potential archaeological features were cleaned, excavated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's pro forma sheets. All features and deposits were assigned a unique context number commencing at (01) and subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate.

The archive of finds and records generated during the project will be deposited with The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford (accession no. BEDFM 2013.44).

Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the Archaeology Data Service's OASIS database (reference no. albionar1-365074).



### 3. FIELDWORK RESULTS

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#### 3.1 Introduction

All features and deposits found during the investigation are discussed by area below and shown in Figure 2.

#### 3.2 Overburden and Geological Deposits

The overburden was homogenous across the PDA; it comprised topsoil over subsoil. The layers are described from top to bottom:

- Topsoil, *c.*0.35m of dark grey-brown clay silt (01).
- Subsoil, 0.05–0.16m of mid-grey-brown silty clay (02).
- Undisturbed geology, light yellow-grey clay with patches of light brown-orange clay (03).

#### 3.3 Archaeological Transects within Flood Compensation Area

The depth of the two transects was set at the design depth of the development—0.30m below the extant surface level. At this level the undisturbed geological deposit was not exposed and no archaeological remains were exposed.

#### 3.4 Topsoil Removal Associated with Noise Attenuation Bund

The topsoil was removed across a large area to the west of Brook Farm, to a depth of *c.*0.15m, as part of the landscaping operations associated with the construction of the Noise Attenuation Bund (Figure 1). The strip revealed the top of the subsoil but rarely exposed any of the undisturbed geological deposit. At this level no archaeological remains were exposed.

#### 3.5 Archaeological-level Strip within Flood Compensation Area (East)

The design depth was increased for the ground reduction within the Flood Compensation Area, requiring a strip to the archaeological level. Five archaeological features were recorded in its eastern part (Figure 2).

Curvilinear gully [04] had a shallow concave profile. It was 4.6m long, 0.33m wide and 0.05m deep; it contained mid-brown-grey silty clay that produced no artefacts. The feature is interpreted as a minor gully of unknown date. It was orientated towards the ‘pond’ described below and may have been contemporary with it.

Located *c.*11m east of the gully, a large oval feature [06] continued beyond the edge of the stripped area to the south. It was at least 10m long and 10.5m wide. It contained an outer deposit of mid-orange-brown clay-silt and an inner oval-shaped deposit of relatively loose, dark grey-brown clay-silt, similar to the removed topsoil. The feature is interpreted as a former ‘pond’ of probable post-medieval to modern date, based on the similarity of the upper deposit to the topsoil. It was not excavated because of its relatively recent date and the fact that the maximum development depth had been reached.



Three parallel linear features on a NNE–SSW alignment were recorded—two located immediately west of the gulley and one east of the pond. They contained mid-orange-brown silt-clay that produced no artefacts. The features are interpreted as furrows based on their uniformity, parallel spacing and their alignment, which matched that of the extant field boundaries.

### **3.6 *Archaeological-level Strip within Flood Compensation Area (West)***

Towards the north-west end of the Flood Compensation Area was a WNW–ESE aligned, slightly meandering, ditch [10]. It had steep concave sides with a flattish base. It was 0.58m wide and 0.28m deep. It contained mid-orange-grey clay with occasional charcoal flecks and medium stones. It did not produce any artefacts.

The feature is interpreted as a field system ditch, of some antiquity, as its alignment was notably different from the modern extant field boundaries. However, due to the lack of artefacts, its date is unknown.



## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

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### **4.1 Synthesis of Results**

Much of the development works at Brook Farm, Hulcote were too shallow in depth to expose any potential archaeological remains. Where the archaeological level was reached, a small number of features were revealed: a ditch, a gulley, a pond and three furrows. None of these features produced any artefacts. They are, with the exception of the ditch, judged to be relatively modern features, based on their deposit characteristics and/or their similar alignments to extant field boundaries.

The WNW–ESE aligned ditch [10] is likely to be earlier in date, as it was on a different alignment to the modern extant field boundaries. However, it remains undated.

### **4.2 Significance of Results**

Hulcote Farm lies within an archaeological landscape with elements dating from the prehistoric, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods

Most of the features revealed during the investigation are judged to be relatively modern and are of negligible significance.

The undated field system ditch is of low/local significance.

Given the limitations of the recovered data, there is no potential for further analysis of the results of the investigation, which have negligible potential to address regional research objectives.



## 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

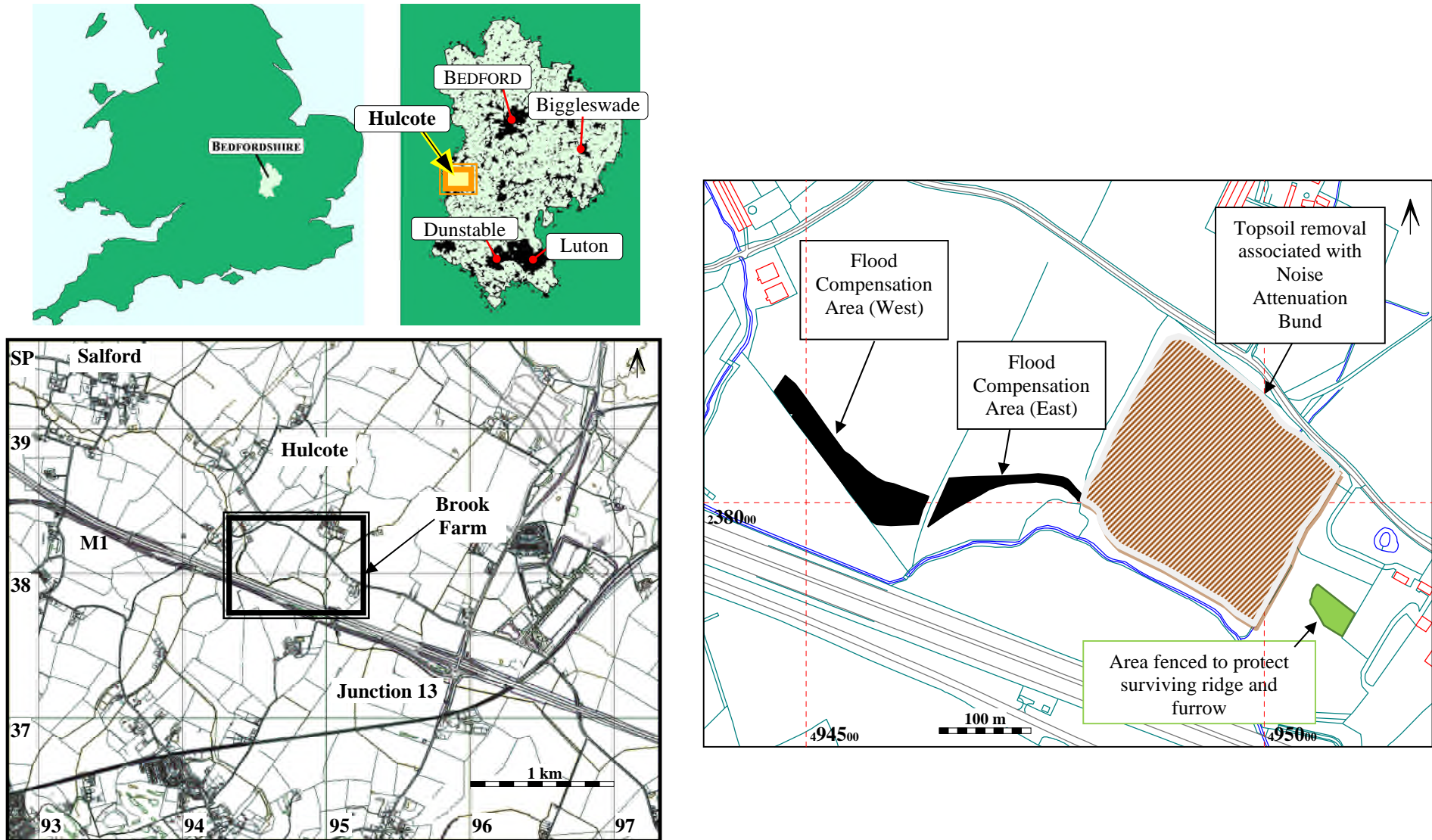
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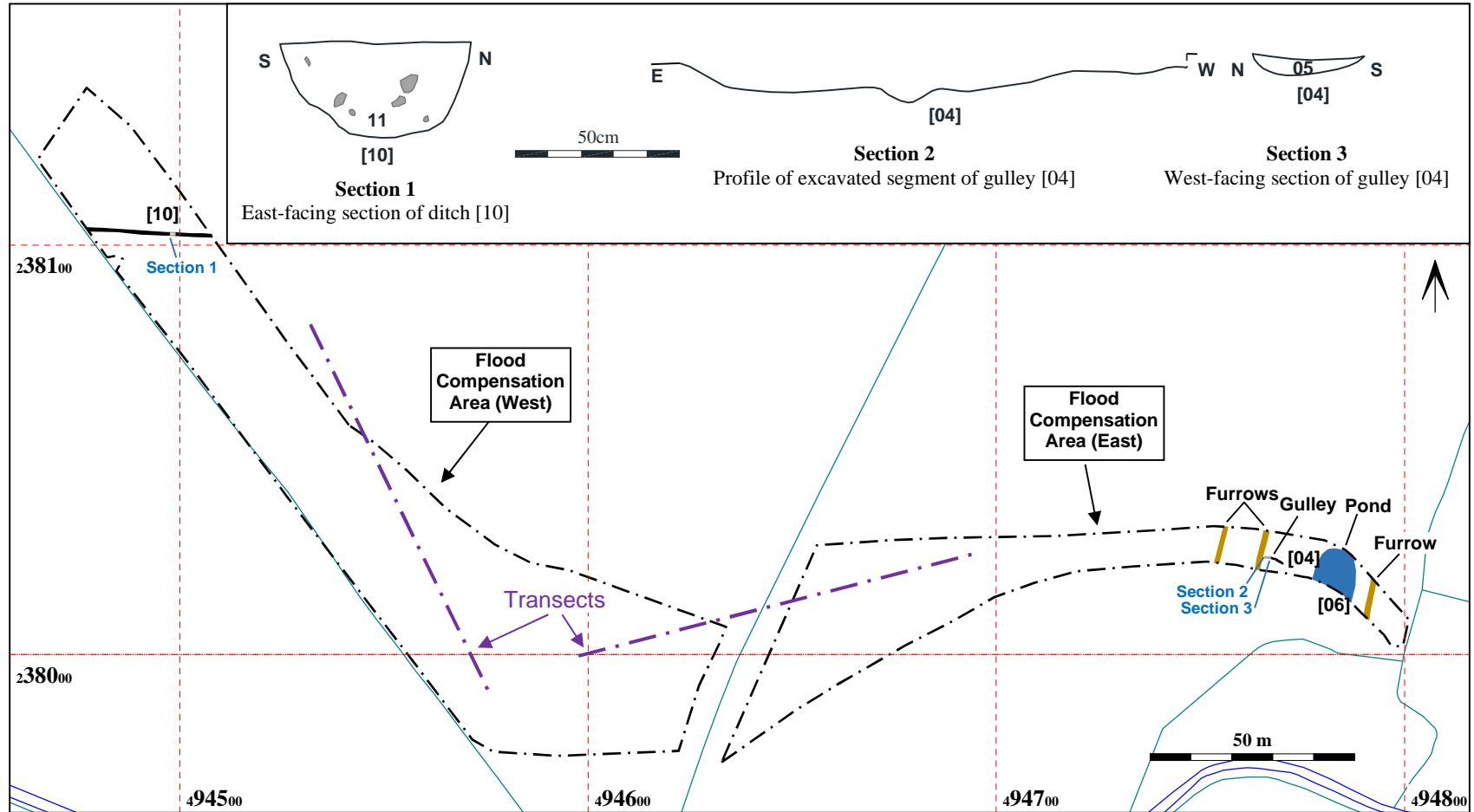
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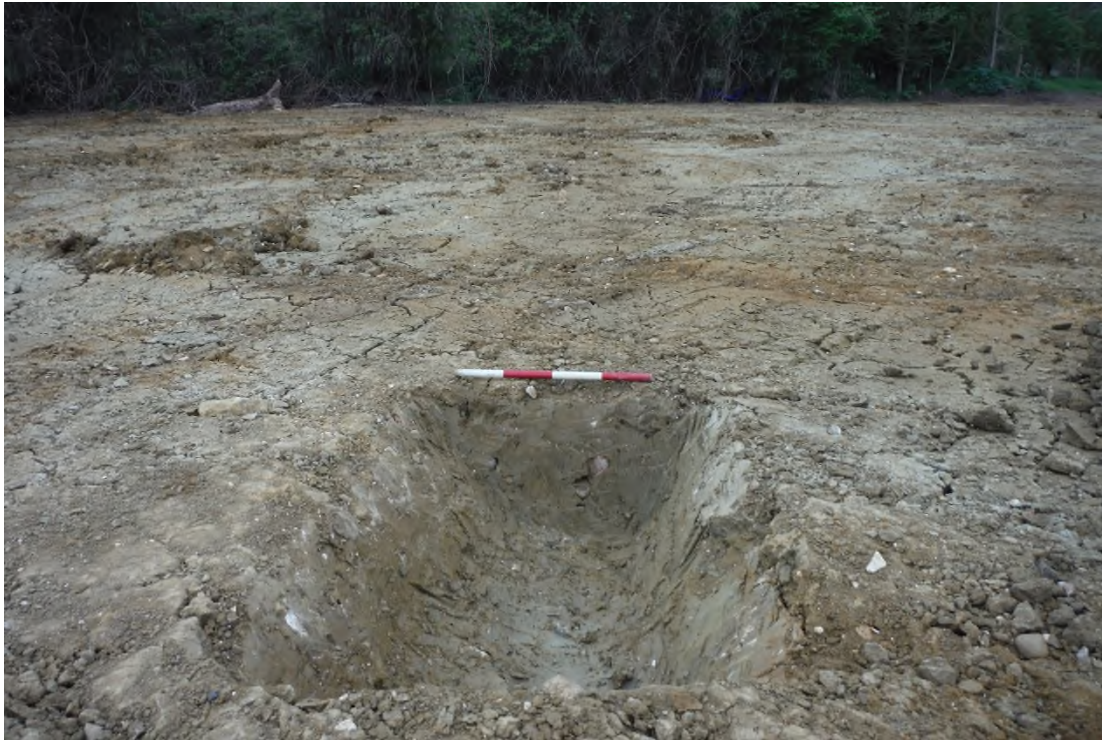
**Figure 1: Site location and areas observed**

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**Figure 2: Observed features within Flood Compensation Area**

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**Plate 1:** Ditch [10], looking west (scale 0.4m)



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