

**THE OLD VICARAGE, 65 CHURCH END
RENHOLD, BEDFORDSHIRE**

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

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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.

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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 discussion of the results in Section 3. Section 4 is a bibliography, and Sections 5 and 6 (Appendices) contain context and finds data.

Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

BCC	Bedfordshire County Council
CAO	County Archaeological Officer
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists
<i>Procedures Manual</i>	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork, 2nd Edition 2001.</i> Bedfordshire County Council

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Phil Bateman of the Garage Conversion Company and the fieldwork was undertaken by Ian Turner.

This report was prepared by Ian Turner with contributions by Joan Lightning (illustrations) and Jackie Wells (finds). All Albion Archaeology projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).



Non-Technical Summary

A planning application was submitted to Bedfordshire County Council for the extension of an existing dwelling at The Old Vicarage, 65 Church End, Renhold, Bedfordshire.

The development site lay within an area of archaeological sensitivity, within the medieval village of Church End and opposite the 14th-15th century All Saints' Church.

As a consequence, a condition was attached to the planning permission requiring a programme of archaeological works comprising observation, investigation and recording be carried out as part of the development.

The archaeological works identified a number of archaeological features within the area of the development. Most represented post-medieval or later features probably associated with the extant building.

Surviving amongst these features were two probable post pits that dated to the late medieval period. These suggest the presence of a possible structure which would have been contemporary with All Saints' Church.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Background*

Planning permission was granted by Bedford Borough Council for an extension at The Old Vicarage, 65 Church End, Renhold, Bedfordshire.

Because of the archaeological potential of the site, a condition was attached to the permission requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work comprising the observation of groundworks and the investigation and recording of any archaeological remains uncovered. This was in accordance with advice received from the planning authority's archaeological advisor, the Bedfordshire County Archaeological Officer (CAO), who also prepared a brief for the work (BCC 2008).

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Phil Bateman of the Garage Conversion Company to carry out the archaeological works. Prior to commencement of fieldwork, a project design (Albion Archaeology 2008) was prepared and approved by the CAO.

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

Renhold lies to the north-east of Bedford, overlooking the valley of the River Great Ouse. The Old Vicarage lies within the centre of the village, opposite All Saints' Church, and is located at grid reference TL0894 5280 (Figure 1).

The proposed development comprised building renovations and the construction of a *c.*41.5m² extension located on the southern side of the existing dwelling.

The geology of the area comprises mainly chalky boulder clay and calcareous gley, with the land surface lying at a height of around 51m OD.

1.3 *Archaeological Background*

Very little archaeological investigation has taken place in the vicinity of The Old Vicarage which is a Listed Building. However, it lies within an area of archaeological sensitivity being situated within Church End medieval village amongst a cluster of other listed properties, and opposite All Saints' Church which has 14th-15th century origins.

The site therefore had the potential to contain archaeological remains possibly related to the early settlement of Renhold and/or associated with the church.



2. RESULTS OF OBSERVATION AND RECORDING

2.1 Introduction

The program of archaeological observation was undertaken between 3rd and 7th April 2008. During this period, all groundworks which required monitoring were completed. The groundworks consisted of the excavation of a series of foundation trenches and the reduction of the ground within the internal area of the proposed extension by 200mm. A mechanical excavator was used to reduce the ground level and excavate the foundation trenches. Identified archaeological features were excavated by hand where possible.

2.2 Methodology

The archaeological works adhered to the standards and methods set out in the project design (Albion Archaeology 2008) and brief (BCC 2008), 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 to be 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

Six adjoining foundation trenches were excavated to a depth of between 1400mm and 1700mm and a width of 650mm. The area bounded by the trenches that forms the base of the new extension was reduced by 200mm in depth (Figure 2).

2.4 Results

Detailed descriptions of all contexts and finds are contained in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

2.4.1 Geological/Natural Deposits

A topsoil layer of dark grey black clay silt with occasional small and medium stones, 0.20 - 0.28m thick, overlay natural clays (Figure 4).

These clays comprised firm light white orange clay (119) with moderate small fragments and flecks of chalk and occasional small, medium and large stones to the west of the study area. To the centre and east of the area, layer (119)



was overlain by a natural layer of firm mid brown orange clay (133) with no inclusions.

2.4.2 Archaeological Deposits

2.4.2.1 *Late Medieval*

Three features dating to the late medieval period or possibly earlier were identified during the groundworks (Figures 2 and 3).

Post-pit [112] was at least 1m long, 0.3m wide and 1.05m deep with concave sides and a base that changed from flat to a near vertical drop to a lower narrow concave base in the centre of the feature, which is suggestive of a post-hole. The post-pit contained three deposits that varied from mid orange grey clay with charcoal flecks to mid brown grey clay with charcoal fragments. The upper deposit contained a sherd of late medieval reduced ware pottery of 14th to 15th century date.

A circular post-hole [102], 0.33m in diameter and 0.14m deep, that was visible after the initial removal of topsoil produced late medieval reduced ware pottery of 14th to 15th century date.

During the excavation of the foundation trenches, a pit [121] was identified beneath post-hole [102]. Although no dating evidence was recovered from the feature, this stratigraphic relationship suggests it is older or at least contemporary with the post-hole.

2.4.2.2 *Post-medieval/modern*

A number of features dating to the 18th century and later were revealed by the groundworks. They included structural and drainage features along with several pits (Figures 2-4).

The foundations of the adjacent extant building [116] were exposed at the northern edge of the site during the levelling excavations. Incorporated within these was a stone slab (117) that was probably part of a step for a doorway.

A small rectangular brick and mortar platform [120], 0.5m long and 0.4m wide, was identified on the surface after removal of the topsoil. This was probably the base of a modern garden feature such as a sun dial or bird bath.

Two modern drains containing ceramic pipes [108] and [110] were also revealed during the initial removal of topsoil.

The modern drains cut another earlier drainage ditch [100] which was observed at the western edge of the site orientated NNW-SSE. It had a stepped profile with a line of post-medieval roof tiles laid along the flat base. The ditch had become silted up with dark orange grey silty clay.

The corner of a probable soak-away [134] constructed of brick, roof-tile and stone was identified in the south-western corner of the foundation trenches.



Pit [106] was irregular in plan, concave in profile, at least 5.5m long, 4m wide and 0.75m deep. It contained four deposits that varied from mid brown grey clay to dark black grey sandy silt with frequent charcoal. The primary fill (107) contained 16th-17th century pottery and brick and tile fragments.

Pit [104] was sub-rectangular in plan with vertical sides and a flat base, 0.9m long, 0.53m wide and 0.43m deep. It contained a lower deposit of dark brown grey silty clay (132) and an upper deposit (105) of dark grey brown silty clay containing two layers of roof tiles.

Pit [128] was irregular in plan, concave in profile, at least 2.10m long, 2.0m wide and 0.40m deep. It contained three deposits that varied from dark brown grey silty clay to light white orange re-deposited natural clay. Undiagnostic fragments of brick/tile were contained in the lower (129) and upper (131) deposits.

2.4.2.3 Undated

Pit [123] was identified at the southern edge of the study area and continued beyond the edge of the site. The pit was at least 0.35m long and 0.25m deep and contained a large stone and no artefacts. The fill of the pit was relatively loose which suggests a post-medieval or later date for the feature.



3. SYNTHESIS

3.1 Summary

The building groundworks uncovered a number of archaeological features within the area of the development. Most represented post-medieval or later features and these dominated the site, potentially obscuring or truncating earlier remains.

Surviving amongst these features were two probable post-pits that date to the late medieval period.

3.2 Interpretation and Significance

The post-medieval and later remains are probably associated with the existing structure and use of the site during the past couple of centuries. These remains include structural, drainage, garden, and rubbish disposal features. All of these are of limited archaeological significance.

The two medieval post-pits are of local archaeological significance. They suggest the presence of a possible structure which would have been contemporary with the 14th – 15th century All Saints' Church. It is probable that further remains of this date survive in the vicinity.



4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albion Archaeology, 2008. *The Old Vicarage, 65 Church End, Renhold, Bedfordshire. Project Design for Archaeological Observation, recording, analysis and publication.* Report 2008/11.

BCC, 2008. *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Observation, Recording, Analysis and Publication at The Old Vicarage, 65 Church End, Renhold, Bedfordshire.*



5. APPENDIX 1 – CONTEXT SUMMARY



Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 22.00 m. Width: 0.65 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.2 m. Max: 1.05 m.

Co-ordinates: Easting: 508926: Northing: 252800

Reason: Foundation trench for building extension.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Ditch	Linear NNW-SSE profile: stepped base: flat dimensions: min breadth 0.4m, min depth 0.12m, min length 4.m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Fill	Firm dark orange grey silty clay Base of ditch laid with post-med roof tiles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
102	Posthole	Circular profile: concave base: concave dimensions: min depth 0.14m, min diameter 0.33m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Fill	Firm mid brown grey silty clay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
104	Pit	Sub-rectangular profile: vertical base: flat dimensions: min breadth 0.53m, min depth 0.43m, min length 0.9m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Upper fill	Friable dark grey brown silty clay frequent large ceramic building material Layers of post-medieval roof-tiles within this deposit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
132	Lower fill	Friable dark brown grey silty clay Deposit contains post-med brick and pottery fragments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
106	Pit	Irregular profile: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 4.m, min depth 0.75m, min length 5.5m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
107	Primary fill	Firm mid grey brown clay occasional small-medium stones Deposit contains post-med roof-tile and glass fragments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
125	Upper fill	Friable dark grey black sandy silt frequent flecks charcoal A burnt deposit containing post-med glass, brick and tile fragments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
126	Brick rubble	Frequent medium ceramic building material A layer of dumped post-med brick and mortar fragments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
127	Secondary fill	Friable dark grey black sandy silt frequent flecks charcoal A burnt deposit containing post-med glass, brick and tile fragments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
108	Modern intrusion	Linear profile: concave base: flat dimensions: min breadth 0.38m, min diameter 0.22m, min length 9.m Cut of field drain type pipe trench	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
109	Fill	Friable dark brown grey clay silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
110	Modern intrusion	Linear N-S profile: concave base: flat dimensions: min breadth 0.36m, min depth 0.05m, min length 4.5m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
111	Fill	Friable dark brown black sandy silt Deposit contains post-med brick and tile fragments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
112	Posthole	profile: stepped base: concave dimensions: min depth 1.05m, min diameter 1.m Cut of post-pit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
113	Primary fill	Firm mid orange grey clay occasional flecks charcoal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
114	Secondary fill	Firm light yellow grey clay occasional flecks charcoal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
115	Upper fill	Firm mid brown grey clay frequent small charcoal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
116	Foundation trench	Rectangular profile: stepped base: flat dimensions: max length 7.m Cut for base of platform for extant cottage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
117	Stone setting	Mid grey limestone Probable former step to blocked off doorway	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
118	Wall	South facing brick retaining wall of box platform for extant cottage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
119	Natural	Firm light orange clay moderate small chalk, occasional small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
120	Wall	Brick platform - probably modern - possibly for sundial? or birdbath?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 22.00 m. Width: 0.65 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.2 m. Max: 1.05 m.

Co-ordinates: Easting: 508926: Northing: 252800

Reason: Foundation trench for building extension.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
121	Pit	profile: vertical base: concave dimensions: min breadth 0.45m, min depth 0.6m, min length 1.2m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
122	Fill	Firm light orange grey clay occasional small chalk, occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
123	Pit	profile: concave dimensions: min depth 0.25m, min length 0.35m Feature identified at edge of study area - mostly obscured by edge of site baulk.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
124	Fill	Firm mid orange grey clay occasional flecks charcoal, occasional large stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
128	Pit	Irregular profile: concave base: concave dimensions: min breadth 2.m, min depth 0.4m, min length 2.1m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
129	Primary fill	Friable dark brown grey silty clay Deposit contains post-med brick and tile fragments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
130	Secondary fill	Firm light orange clay moderate small chalk Re-deposited natural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
131	Upper fill	Friable dark brown grey silty clay Deposit contains post-med brick and tile fragments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
133	Natural	Firm mid brown orange clay A change in the natural visible in the trench group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
134	Soak-away	Sub-square profile: vertical dimensions: min depth 107.m Cuit of a post-medieval soak-away pit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
135	Fill	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt frequent large ceramic building material, frequent large stones Soak-away fill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
136	Topsoil	Friable light brown grey clay silt Layer of lower topsoil obscuring natural across some of the development area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
137	Topsoil	Friable mid grey black clay silt occasional small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



6. APPENDIX 2 – FINDS SUMMARY

6.1 Introduction

The watching brief produced a small finds assemblage comprising mainly pottery and ceramic roof tile fragments (Table 3). The material was scanned to ascertain its nature, condition and, where possible, date range.

Feature	Type	Context	Spot date*	Finds Summary
100	Ditch	101	Post-medieval	Roof tile (19g); vessel glass (6g)
102	Post-hole	103	Late medieval	Pottery (42g); oyster shell (18g)
104	Pit	105	Post-medieval	Roof tile (254g); oyster shell (15g)
106	Pit	107	Post-medieval	Pottery (48g); clay pipe (5g)
106	Pit	125	Post-medieval	Pottery (131g); roof tile (13g), clay pipe (5g); roof slate (2g)
112	Post-pit	113	-	Burnt flint (74g)
112	Post-pit	115	Late medieval	Pottery (4g); burnt flint (1g)
129	Pit	128	-	Brick/tile
131	Pit	128	-	Brick/tile

* - spot date based on date of latest artefact in context

Table 3: Artefact summary by trench and context

6.2 Pottery

Nine pottery sherds weighing 225g were recovered. They were examined by context and quantified using minimum sherd count and weight. Sherds are sizeable, with an average weight of 25g, and generally survive in good condition. Seven fabric types were identified using common names and type codes in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series, currently maintained by Albion Archaeology on behalf of Bedfordshire County Council. Fabrics are listed below (Table 4) in chronological order.

Fabric type	Common name	Sherd No.	Context/Sherd No.
<i>Late medieval</i>			
Type E01	Reduced sandy	1	(115):1
Type E01D	Reduced sandy (buff-red margins)	3	(103):3
<i>Post-medieval</i>			
Type P01	Glazed fine red earthenware	1	(107):1
Type P03	Black-glazed earthenware	1	(125):1
Type P06	Fine slip-decorated earthenware	1	(125):1
Type P50	Brown stoneware	1	(125):1
<i>Modern</i>			
Type P38	Creamware	1	(125):1

Table 4: Pottery type series

The earliest pottery derives from the fills of post-pit [112] and post-hole [102] and comprises four wheel-thrown body sherds of late medieval reduced ware, datable to the 14-15th centuries. One sherd is decorated with horizontal grooves and a second has the remains of a poorly applied strip. All have sooted exterior surfaces, indicating use.

The primary fill (107) of pit [106] yielded single sherds of glazed earthenware and brown stoneware datable to the 16th-17th centuries. The upper fill (125) contained single sherds of post-medieval, black-glazed and slip-decorated earthenware bowls, and an undiagnostic sherd of 18th-19th century creamware.



6.3 Other Finds

A piece of green vessel glass and a fragment of sand-tempered flat roof tile, both of post-medieval date were recovered from the fill of ditch [100]. Three other pieces of flat roof tile derived from pits [104] and [106], two in an oxidised sand tempered fabric and one in a gault clay fabric. Pit [106] also contained two pieces of post-medieval clay tobacco pipe stem, a partial pipe bowl, and a piece of modern roof slate. Three pieces of natural burnt flint (75g) were recovered from the fill of post-pit [112].

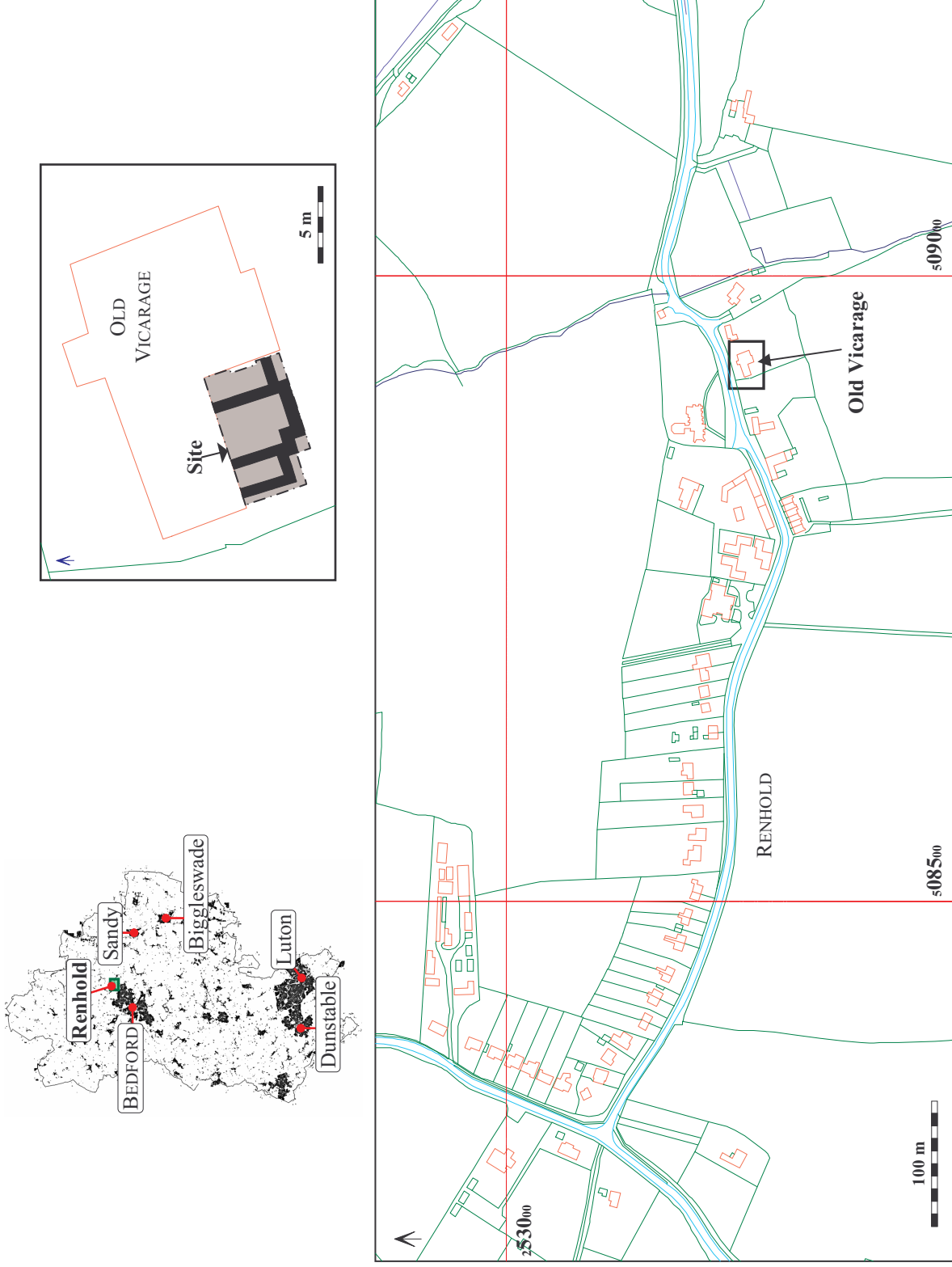


Figure 1: Site location plan

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. © Crown Copyright

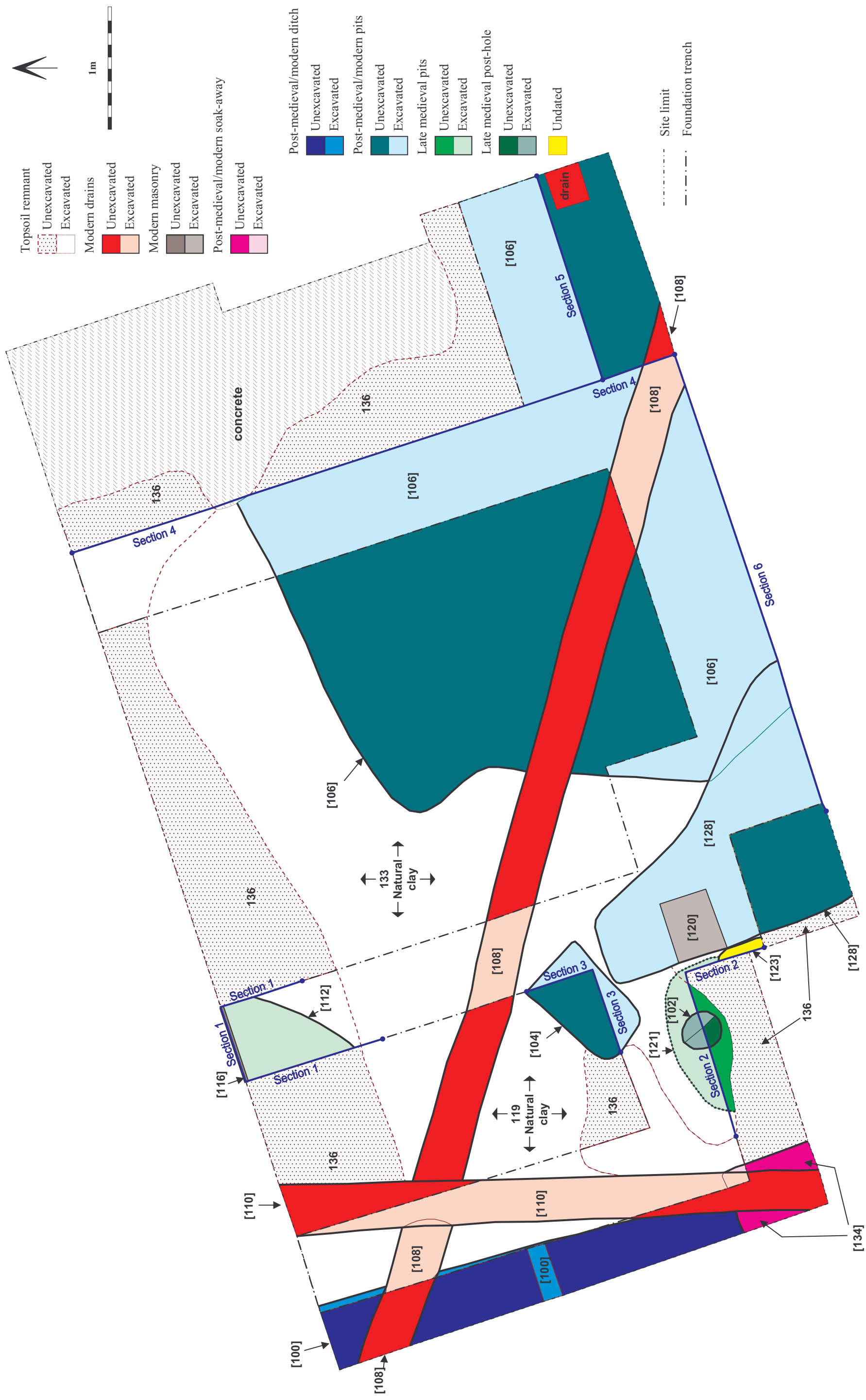
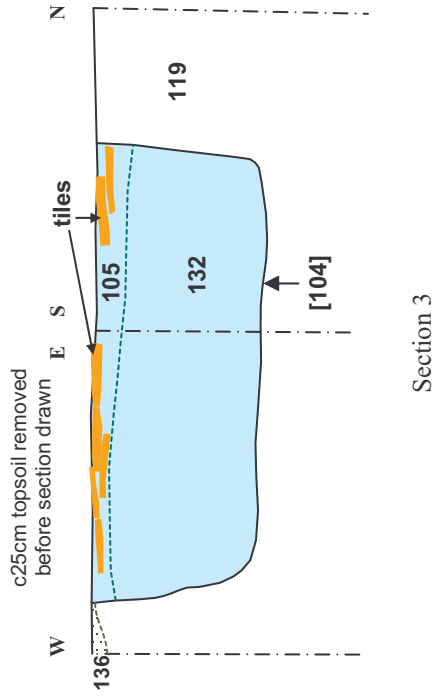
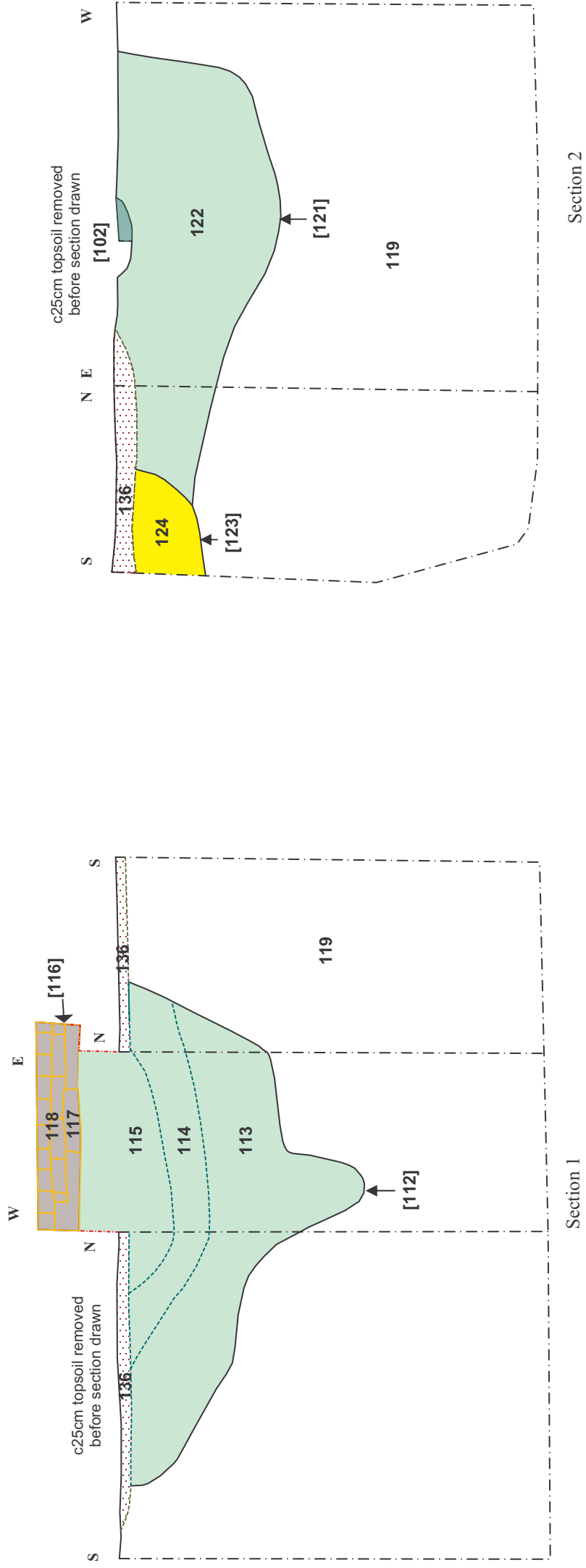


Figure 2: All features plan



- Topsoil remnant
- Modern masonry
- Post-medieval/modern pit
- Late medieval pits
- Late medieval post-hole
- Undated



Figure 3: Selected sections

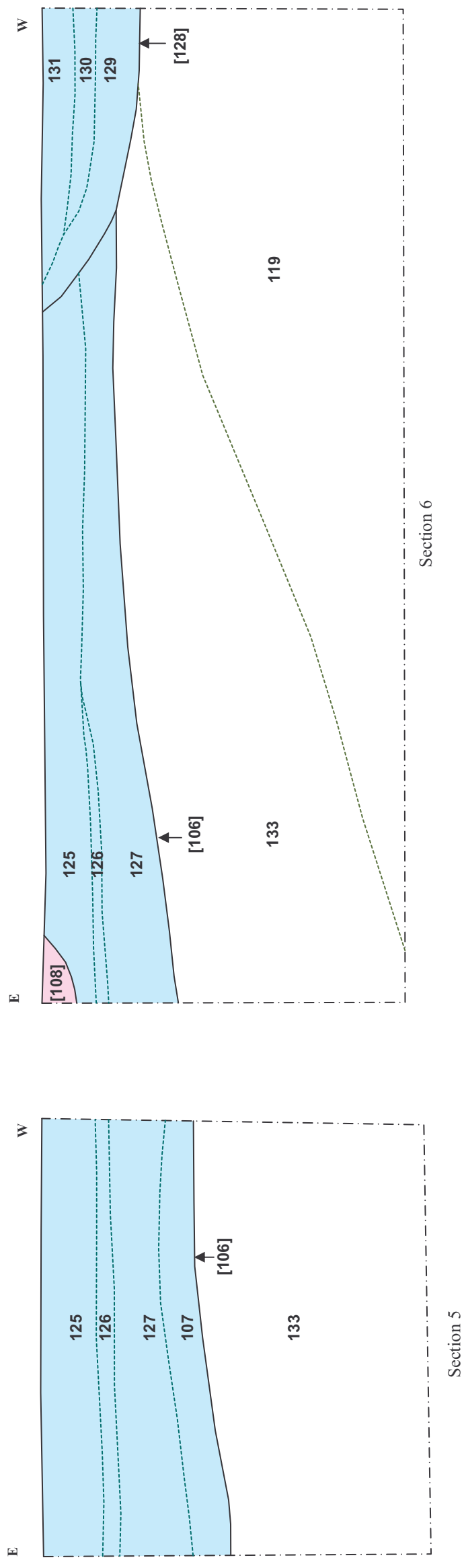
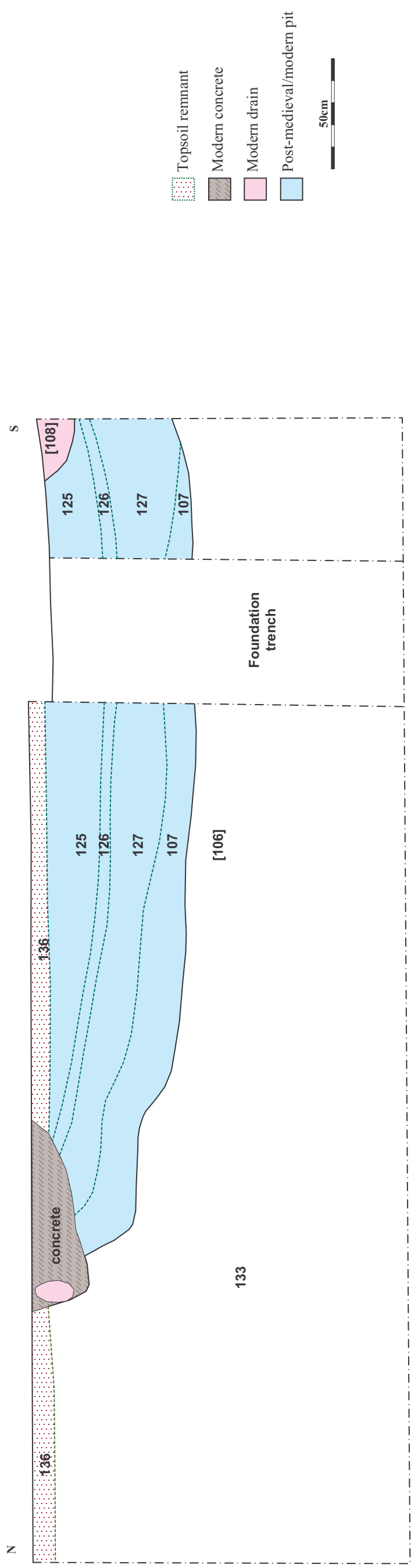


Figure 4: Selected sections



Photograph 1: Post pit [112].



Photograph 2: Post-hole [102]. 0.4m scale.



Photograph 3: Pit [121]. Half metre scale.