LAND ADJACENT TO TWINWOODS BUSINESS PARK THURLEIGH ROAD MILTON ERNEST BEDFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

Project: TW 1351

Document: 2008/45
Version 1.0

Compiled by	Checked by	Approved by
Adam Lodoen	David Ingham	Drew Shotliff

23rd May 2008

Produced for:
Robinson & Hall LLP

© Copyright Albion Archaeology 2008, *all rights reserved*

Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

The figures are bound at the back of the report.

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.

Fieldwork for this project was undertaken by Adam Lodoen (Archaeological Supervisor), Adam Williams (Assistant Archaeological Supervisor), Gary Manning and Gareth Shane (Archaeological Technicians). This report has been prepared by Adam Lodoen with contributions from Joan Lighting (CAD Technician) and Jackie Wells (Finds Officer). It was edited by David Ingham (Project Officer). 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 OAS
☎*: 01234 294000*
Fax: 01234 294008
e-mail: office@albion-arch.com

Version History

Version	*Issue date*	*Reason for re-issue*
1.0	*23/05/08*	*n/a*

Structure of the Report

Section 1 is an introduction to the project. The methodology and results of the fieldwork are presented in Sections 2 and 3. Section 4 comprises a synthesis of the results of the fieldwork. Section 5 is a bibliography.

Appendix 1 contains detailed descriptions of the archaeological deposits recorded on the site. Appendix 2 contains detailed descriptions of the artefacts recovered from the site.

Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

BCC	Bedfordshire County Council
CAO	BCC's Archaeological Officer
EMIA	Early to middle Iron Age
HER	Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists
LPA	Local Planning Authority
Procedures Manual	Albion Archaeology 2001. *Procedures Manual. Volume 1: Fieldwork*, 2nd edn

Non-Technical Summary

A condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a bio-fertiliser storage tank and bunding at land adjacent to Twinwoods Business Park, Thurleigh Road, Milton Ernest, Bedfordshire required the implementation of a scheme of archaeological investigation. Bedfordshire County Council's Archaeological Officer (CAO) issued a brief outlining a three-staged approach to the programme of archaeological work (BCC 2008a), beginning with an archaeological field evaluation (BCC 2008b). Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Robinson & Hall LLP to undertake the evaluation, the results of which are presented in this report.

The development area lies at TL 0313 5705, covering an area of 1.32ha. The tank and bund occupy an area of 3,025m^2. The site is situated at a height of 89m OD on a clay plateau overlooking the valley of the River Great Ouse to the south. The underlying geology is Oxford Clay overlain by Boulder Clay.

The development area sits in a landscape of rich archaeological potential. A series of potentially Iron Age or Roman rectangular enclosures are visible as crop-marks to the north-east of the site (HER 16583), while Iron Age pottery has been found to the north and north-west (HER 910 and HER 904 respectively). Late Saxo-Norman activity has been identified to the south of the development area, along with a series of undated field systems (Albion Archaeology 2004). Scatters of iron slag and burnt stone to the north and west of the development area are mostly thought to be late Saxon or early medieval in date, although some are associated with the late Iron Age.

The evaluation revealed the remains of early to middle Iron Age (EMIA) trackside ditches and a gully, a post-medieval boundary ditch and pit, and a number of undated but possibly Iron Age features (Fig. 2).

The evidence for EMIA activity within the development area is considered to be of regional significance. The post-medieval ditch is considered to be of local significance, providing physical evidence of a boundary previously known only from historical evidence.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning Background

Bedfordshire County Council granted planning permission (08/3) for the construction of a bio-fertiliser storage tank and bunding at land adjacent to Twinwoods Business Park, Thurleigh Road, Milton Ernest, Bedfordshire. A condition attached to the planning permission required the implementation of a scheme of archaeological investigation as a consequence of the development.

As a result, Bedfordshire County Council's Archaeological Officer (CAO) issued a brief (BCC 2008a), outlining a three-staged approach to the programme of archaeological work:

- Stage I – archaeological field evaluation.
- Stage II – appraisal of the results of the archaeological field evaluation.
- Stage III – implementation of an agreed programme of archaeological investigation and recording (if required, following completion of Stage II).

The CAO also issued a brief (BCC 2008b) detailing the requirements of the Stage I archaeological field evaluation.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Robinson & Hall LLP to undertake the evaluation, the results of which are presented in this report.

1.2 Site Location

The development area lies directly north of Twinwoods Business Park, east of Milton Ernest (Fig. 1). It is centred on TL 0313 5705 and covers an area of 1.32ha. The tank and bund occupy an area of 3,025m^2.

The site is situated at a height of 89m OD on a clay plateau overlooking the valley of the River Great Ouse to the south. The underlying geology of the area is Oxford Clay overlain by Boulder Clay. The development area was cropped set-aside land at the time of fieldwork.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The development area sits in a landscape of rich archaeological potential, in a part of Bedfordshire that was intensively occupied during the Iron Age and the Roman period. A series of potentially Iron Age or Roman rectangular enclosures are visible as crop-marks to the north-east of the site (HER 16583), while Iron Age pottery has been found to the north and north-west (HER 910 and HER 904 respectively).

Late Saxo-Norman activity has been identified to the south of the development area, along with a series of undated field systems (Albion Archaeology 2004). Scatters of iron slag and burnt stone recorded to the north and west of the development area are mostly thought to be late Saxon or early medieval in date, although some are associated with the late Iron Age.

The HER's pre-Enclosure map shows a possible medieval boundary and track crossing the development area (Fig. 1).

1.4 Project Objectives

The objective of the evaluation was to determine whether archaeological remains were present within the development area, and, if so, to establish their extent, condition, date, nature and significance.

2. METHODOLOGY

Trial trenching took place between 12th and 19th May 2008. Two trenches were opened, covering a total area of 85m^2 (Fig. 1). The trench plan was agreed by the CAO before the trenching began.

The trenches were opened by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket, under close archaeological supervision. Overburden was removed down to the top of the archaeological deposits or undisturbed geological deposits, whichever were encountered first. The spoil heaps were scanned for artefacts.

The bases and sides of all trenches were cleaned by hand. Any potential archaeological features were noted, cleaned, excavated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's *pro forma* sheets. Each trench was subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate. All deposits were recorded using a unique number sequence, commencing at 100 for Trench 1 and 200 for Trench 2.

A full methodology is provided in the Project Design (Albion Archaeology 2008).

The project adhered throughout to the standards set out in the following documents:

- IFA — *Code of Conduct*
  Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation
- Albion Archaeology — *Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork* (2nd edn, 2001)
- English Heritage — *The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition*

The trenches were inspected by the CAO prior to their backfilling.

3. RESULTS

All the deposits and features of archaeological interest are summarised below in chronological order. Their location and extent are shown on Figure 2. Detailed technical information on all archaeological features / deposits and artefacts can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

3.1 Overburden and Undisturbed Geological Deposits

The overburden was homogenous in character across the site. The topsoil comprised a 0.3–0.35m thick deposit, while the underlying subsoil was 0.15–0.2m thick. The underlying geological deposits comprised undisturbed Boulder Clay.

3.2 Early to Middle Iron Age (EMIA)

The EMIA remains consisted of two parallel, probable trackside ditches [103]/[210] and [105]/[216], and a small gully [206].

Ditch [103]/[210] had an ENE–WSW alignment and varied in width between 0.8m in Trench 1 and 1.5m in Trench 2. It was 0.44m deep and had a 'U'-shaped profile (Fig 2). Ditch [105]/[216] also had an ENE–WSW alignment and was similar in size and profile. The distance between the ditches varied from 4.75m in Trench 1 to 6m in Trench 2.

Gully [206] had a north–south alignment and was 0.5m wide and 0.39m deep, with a 'U'-shaped profile.

3.3 Post-Medieval and Modern

A post-medieval ditch [107]/[214] was present parallel to, and truncating, the EMIA ditch [105]/[216]. It was asymmetrically 'V'-shaped in profile, measuring 2m wide and 0.98m deep. It contained a fragment of post-medieval roof tile.

Trench 2 contained pit [203], which had been backfilled with post-medieval/modern roof tile. This material may represent demolition debris from a nearby building.

Also present in both trenches were modern field drains aligned ENE–WSW.

3.4 Undated

In Trench 1, probable wheel ruts [113] were revealed in the area between the presumed EMIA trackside ditches [105]/[216] and [103]/[210]. They are undated, but it is likely that they were contemporary with the trackside ditches.

In Trench 2, a small pit [208] was truncated by the EMIA gully [206]. The pit yielded no artefactual dating evidence, but its stratigraphic relationship with gully [206] shows it to be Iron Age or earlier.

A NNW–SSE gully [205] was also present in Trench 2, perpendicular to EMIA ditch [105]/[216] and truncated by post-medieval ditch [107]/[214]. It was 0.66m wide and 0.15m deep and had an irregular profile. The gully contained no artefactual dating evidence, but its spatial relationship with the EMIA ditch may indicate contemporaneity.

4. SYNTHESIS

4.1 Summary of Archaeological Remains

The development area contains the remains of early to middle Iron Age activity, a post-medieval boundary ditch and pit, and further undated features (Fig. 2).

The EMIA remains comprise two parallel ditches, thought to be the flanking ditches of a trackway, and a small gully. Another gully, a pit and a number of wheel ruts may also be EMIA in date, although a lack of artefactual evidence means that they are essentially undated.

The post-medieval ditch corresponds with a boundary shown on the HER's pre-enclosure map, defining the southern limit of an area of land referred to as Mock Beggar Close. The close correlation in alignment between the EMIA and post-medieval ditches may indicate considerable longevity for this trackway / boundary, established in the Iron Age and continuing into the post-medieval period.

4.2 Significance of Archaeological Remains

The EMIA remains within the development area are considered to be of regional significance. The undated features will also be of regional significance, if further investigation can prove them to be Iron Age in origin. The post-medieval ditch is considered to be of local significance, providing physical evidence of a boundary previously known only from historical evidence.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albion Archaeology 2001. *Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork*, 2nd edition

Albion Archaeology 2004. *Bedford Medium Secure Unit, Thurleigh Road, Milton Ernest, Bedfordshire* (unpublished report 2004/61)

BCC 2008a. *Brief for a programme of archaeological investigation at land adjacent to Twinwoods Business Park, Thurleigh Road, Milton Ernest, Bedfordshire*

BCC 2008b. *Brief for an archaeological field evaluation of land adjacent to Twinwoods Business Park, Thurleigh Road, Milton Ernest, Bedfordshire*

English Heritage 1991. *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition

IFA 1999a. *Code of Conduct*

IFA 1999b. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations*

6. APPENDIX 1

6.1 Context Summary

Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 25.00 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.45 m. Max: 0.5 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL *(Easting: 3089: Northing: 56935)*

OS Grid Ref.: TL *(Easting: 3080: Northing: 56912)*

Reason: Evaluate possible medieval boundary and track way

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	**Topsoil**	**Friable dark brown silty loam 0.3m thick**	☑	☐
101	**Subsoil**	**Firm mid grey yellow silty clay 0.2m thick**	☑	☐
102	**Natural**	**Light yellow grey frequent small chalk**	☐	☐
103	**Ditch**	**Linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.8m, max depth 0.44m**	☑	☐
104	Upper fill	Firm light brown grey clay occasional flecks chalk, occasional small stones	☑	☑
112	Lower fill	Light orange grey clay moderate flecks chalk, occasional small stones	☑	☐
105	**Ditch**	**Linear ENE-WSW profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.1m, max depth 0.37m**	☑	☐
106	Fill	Firm light brown grey clay moderate small-medium chalk	☑	☑
107	**Ditch**	**Linear ENE-WSW profile: irregular base: concave dimensions: max breadth 2.2m, max depth 0.98m**	☑	☐
108	Upper fill	Dark grey clay moderate small-medium chalk Orange mottling.	☑	☑
109	Lower fill	Light brown grey clay moderate small-medium chalk, occasional medium stones Occassional manganese staining.	☑	☐
110	**Treethrow**	**Sub-circular profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.7m, max depth 0.11m, max length 1.5m**	☑	☐
111	Fill	Mid grey yellow silty clay	☑	☐
113	**Wheel ruts**	**Linear E-W dimensions: max breadth 0.4m**	☐	☐
114	Fill	Firm mid brown silty clay	☐	☐

Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 25.00 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.4 m. Max: 0.55 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL *(Easting: 3080: Northing: 56910)*

OS Grid Ref.: TL *(Easting: 3063: Northing: 56929)*

Reason: Evaluate possible medieval boundary and track way

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
200	**Topsoil**	**Friable mid brown silty loam 0.35m thick**	☑	☐
201	**Subsoil**	**Firm mid orange yellow clay silt 0.2m thick**	☑	☐
203	**Pit**	**Sub-oval profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.5m, max depth 0.27m**	☑	☐
202	Brick rubble	Red tile, brick and concrete rubble	☑	☐
205	**Ditch**	**Linear NNW-SSE profile: stepped base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.66m, max depth 0.15m**	☑	☐
204	Fill	Mid yellow brown silty clay	☑	☐
206	**Ditch**	**Linear N-S profile: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.9m, max depth 0.39m**	☑	☐
207	Fill	Firm mid brown grey clay	☑	☑
208	**Pit**	**Sub-oval profile: irregular base: flat dimensions: max depth 0.05m, max length 0.9m, max breadth 0.7m**	☑	☐
209	Fill	Firm light brown grey clay	☑	☐
210	**Ditch**	**Linear ENE-WSW dimensions: max breadth 1.5m**	☐	☐
211	Fill	Light grey brown silt Moderate manganese staining.	☐	☐
212	**Land drain**	**Linear ENE-WSW dimensions: max breadth 1.m**	☑	☐
213	Backfill	Light brown grey clay	☑	☐
214	**Ditch**		☐	☐
215	Fill	Brown grey clay	☐	☐
216	**Ditch**	**Linear ENE-WSW dimensions: max breadth 0.7m**	☐	☐
217	Fill	Brown grey clay	☐	☐
218	**Natural**	**Light yellow grey clay**	☐	☐

7. APPENDIX 2 – ARTEFACT SUMMARY

7.1 Introduction

The evaluation produced a small finds assemblage comprising pottery, ceramic building material, animal bone and a single worked flint (Table 1). The material was scanned to ascertain its nature, condition and, where possible, date range.

Trench	Feature	Type	Context	Spot date	Finds Summary
1	103	Ditch	104	Early to middle Iron Age	Pottery (2g)
	105	Ditch	106	Early to middle Iron Age	Pottery (16g); worked flint (1g)
	107	Ditch	108	Post-medieval	Roof tile (31g); animal bone (62g)
2	206	Ditch	207	Early to middle Iron Age	Pottery (5g)

Table 1: Finds summary by trench and feature

7.2 Pottery

Four pottery sherds weighing 23g were recovered. They were examined by context and quantified using minimum sherd count and weight. The sherds are small (average weight 6g) and moderately abraded. Four fabric types were identified using common names and type codes are in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series, currently maintained by Albion Archaeology on behalf of Bedfordshire County Council. The fabrics are listed below in chronological order (Table 2).

Fabric type	Common name	Sherd No.	Context : Sherd No.
Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age			
Type F01C	Quartz and flint	1	(106):1
Early-middle Iron Age			
Type F17	Grog	1	(207):1
Type F19	Sand and organic	1	(104):1
Type F28	Fine sand	1	(106):1

Table 2: Pottery type series

The earliest pottery comprises a quartz- and flint-tempered body sherd (7g) characteristic of the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age period, recovered from ditch [106]. The feature also contained an undiagnostic sand-tempered sherd (9g) of early to middle Iron Age date. Ditches [103] and [206] respectively yielded single undiagnostic sherds in sand/organic- and grog-tempered fabric types, also datable to the early to middle Iron Age.

7.3 Other artefacts

A small worked flint flake (1g) was recovered from early to middle Iron Age ditch [105]. Post-medieval ditch [107] yielded an abraded fragment of sand-tempered flat roof tile (31g) and eleven moderately abraded fragments of animal long-bone (62g) of indeterminate species.

Pit [203] contained a large quantity of post-medieval/modern roof tile, which was not retained.

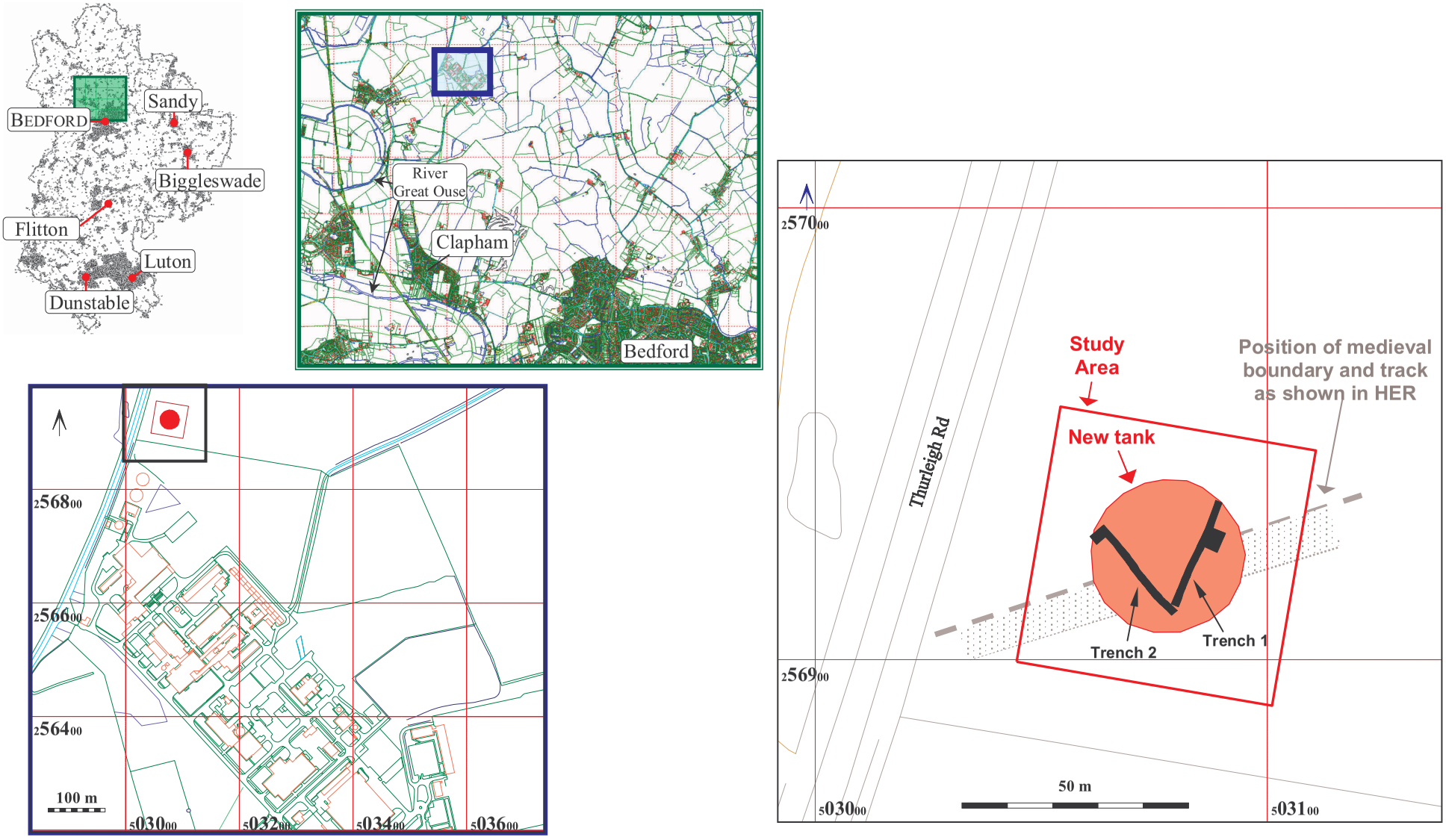
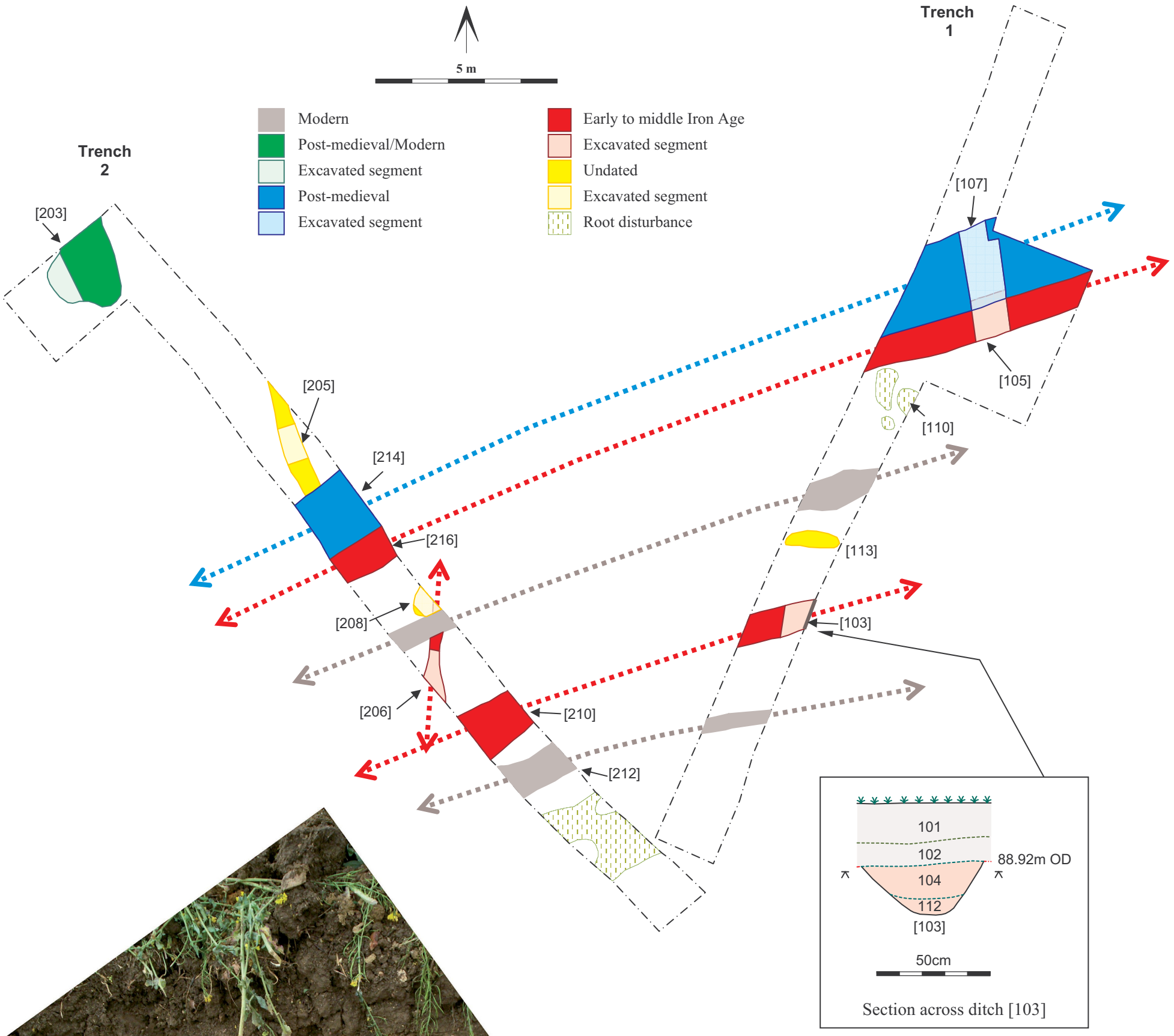


Figure 1: Site location plan

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



Photograph of ditch [206]], looking south, scale 1m

Photograph of ditches [105] and [107], looking south-west, scale 1m

Figure 2: Phased all features plan