

**LAND AT SANFOIN FARM, PAVENHAM,
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**A PROGRAMME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL
INVESTIGATION**

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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 Christiane Meckseper (Project Officer) and Alison Bell (Archaeological Supervisor). Joan Lightning (CAD Technician) digitised the plans and produced the figures. The finds were analysed by Jackie Wells (Artefacts Officer). The observation and recording was undertaken by Alison Bell (Archaeological Supervisor). The project was managed by Jeremy Oetgen (Project Manager). Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager) was responsible for quality control. Albion Archaeology is grateful to Mrs. Kathy Willmott for commissioning the project and to Lesley-Ann Mather (Bedfordshire County Council Archaeological Officer) for her advice.

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Structure of the Report

After the introductory Section 1, there is a summary of the results of the archaeological investigation in Section 2, followed by a brief conclusion (Section 3). Section 4 is a bibliography. The subsequent appendices contain details of the archaeological contexts that were encountered and a report on the finds.



Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

Albion	Albion Archaeology
BCAS	Bedfordshire County Archaeological Service
BBC	Bedford Borough Council
BLARS	Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service
CAO	County Archaeological Officer
Client	Mrs. Kathy Willmott
HER	Historic Environment Record
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists
<i>Procedures Manual</i>	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork, 2nd Edition 2001.</i> Bedfordshire County Council



Non-Technical Summary

Bedford Borough Council has granted planning permission (06/0205/FUL) for the construction of a riding arena on land at Sanfoin Farm, Pavenham, Bedfordshire. Because the development lies in an archaeological sensitive area, a condition was attached to the planning permission that required a programme of archaeological investigation to be carried out during soil stripping in advance of the construction of the riding arena (Bedfordshire County Council 2006).

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Mrs. Kathy Willmott to prepare a project design (Albion Archaeology 2006) and undertake a programme of archaeological observation, recording, analysis and publication of the site, in accordance with the Brief issued by Bedfordshire County Council's Archaeological Officer.

The site of the development is centred at SP 9811 5520, to the south of High Street, at the western edge of the village of Pavenham, Bedfordshire. The development area is within grazing land to the rear of Sanfoin Farm. It lies at a height of 60m OD on a south facing slope that overlooks the valley of the River Great Ouse.

Aerial photographs of the area to the south of Sanfoin Farm, including the development site, show an extensive area of cropmarks (HER 11763).

During the watching brief buried remains of two furrows were recorded, which were interpreted as the ploughed out remnants of a medieval ridge and furrow field system. The alignment of the furrows corresponds with several of the cropmarks to the south and west of the development area. Such remains of ridge and furrow are considered to be of local significance. 17th- or 18th-century pottery recovered from the furrows may indicate that the strip fields were still cultivated in the post-medieval period, although it is also possible that the artefacts were derived from material filling the furrows after they went out of use.

As the depth of the development impact at the southern end of the site was limited to the removal of the topsoil only, any archaeological remains existing within the southern part of the site are considered to have been unaffected by the development and were therefore preserved in situ.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Bedford Borough Council (BBC) has granted planning permission (06/0205/FUL) for the construction of a riding arena on land at Sanfoin Farm, Pavenham, Bedfordshire.

Given the archaeological sensitivity of the development area, a condition was attached to the planning permission that required implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation to be carried out during soil stripping in advance of the construction of the riding arena (Bedfordshire County Council 2006). Bedfordshire County Council's Archaeological Officer therefore issued a Brief (Bedfordshire County Council 2006) for a programme of archaeological observation, recording, analysis and publication.

In December 2006 Mrs. Kathy Willmott of Sanfoin Farm commissioned Albion Archaeology to undertake the archaeological works and to prepare a report on the results. A project design (Albion Archaeology 2006) was approved by the CAO and the watching brief was carried out between 10th and 16th January 2007.

1.2 Site Location and Description

Sanfoin Farm is located to the south of High Street, at the western edge of the village of Pavenham, Bedfordshire (Figure 1). The development site is within grazing land to the rear of Sanfoin Farm and centred on grid reference SP 9811/5520.

Topographically the development area is situated at 60m OD on a south facing slope that overlooks the valley of the River Great Ouse. The river itself lies c 375m to the south-east. The underlying geology is boulder clay overlying Oxford clay.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The village of Pavenham is of medieval origin. It grew up around three manorial estates, the earliest of which, Pavenham Manor, is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086. Evidence for earlier patterns of settlement has also been recorded in the form of cropmarks of a double rectilinear enclosure bounded by a broad ditch (HER11958), located to the north of the medieval village. Roman pottery found on that site of the enclosure in 1974 indicates that it may be a Roman settlement or possibly a villa.

The development site at Sanfoin Farm lies some distance to the west of the village core. The HER records that no archaeological investigation has been taken place in this area, but the 1765 Jefferys map of Bedfordshire (BLARS ref. MC2/139) shows a medium sized hamlet of six separate buildings running south of the High Street, equidistant between Mill Lane and West End Farm. West End Farm itself incorporates a farmhouse of late 16th or 17th century origin and several 18th century barns (HER 2841, 10602, 10603). Three of its buildings are also indicated on the Jefferys map of 1765.



Aerial photographs (HER refs: CJU49, 2502/22, 2502/28) of the area to the south of Sanfoin Farm, including the development site, show an extensive area of cropmarks (HER 11763). These have been plotted in relation to the OS base map (Figure 3) and include linear features and a square enclosure. The date of these cropmarks is unclear but their morphology indicates that they are likely to be of prehistoric or Roman origin. Several of the linear cropmarks have also been interpreted as the remains of medieval and modern ploughing. Other cropmarks probably reflect variations in the natural subsoil, possibly caused by the accumulation of sediment in former river channels ('palaeochannels'). Such sediments sometimes mask features of archaeological origin that would otherwise appear as cropmarks.



2 RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

2.1 Introduction

The programme of archaeological monitoring and observation was undertaken between 10th and 16th January 2007. During this period, all groundworks which required monitoring were completed. A mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket was used for all excavations.

Detailed technical information on all the deposits and archaeological features referred to below can be found in Appendix 1.

2.2 Methodology

The detailed methodology was as follows:

- All machine excavation was supervised by an archaeologist and was undertaken using a tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.
- All visible archaeological features were cleaned by hand and a 1.0m wide section was excavated through them to establish and confirm their nature.
- Subsequently, each feature was recorded by 1:10 scale sections and 1:50 scale plans and photographed. All archaeological features encountered were recorded using a unique number sequence.
- The spoil heaps and any archaeological features were scanned for artefacts by eye.
- Recording took place on pro-forma sheets in accordance with the Albion Archaeology *Procedures Manual* (2001).

Throughout the project the following standards were adhered to:

- IFA's Codes of Conduct and Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief and draft Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Finds Work (2000);
- English Heritage's Management of Archaeological Projects (1991);
- Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork*, (2nd edn, 2001);
- Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition with Registered Museums in Bedfordshire (1998), and the Society of Museum Archaeologists' Preparation of Archaeological Archives: Selection Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections (1993).

2.3 Extent and Nature of Groundworks

Topsoil was stripped from the entire footprint of the arena, an area of 900m². In order to create a level surface for the arena this area had to be terraced by the removal of material from the northern end, which was then used to build up the southern part of the site. A maximum thickness of 0.40m of material was removed at the most northerly edge of the site.

The quantity of soil available from the northern end of the site was not sufficient to build up the southern part of the area to the required level, so additional material was obtained by digging a trench to the south of the arena. This trench measuring 20.75m long by 2.06m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.76m.



Once the site had been levelled drainage gullies were excavated across the site to a depth of approximately 0.25m.

2.4 Topsoil, Subsoil and Undisturbed Geological Deposits

Undisturbed geological deposits consisted of light yellow-brown clay mixed with light blue clay (102). This was sealed by a mid yellow-brown silty clay subsoil (101), which varied in thickness across the site, from 0.16m at the northern corner to 0.76 at the south-western end. This may have been evidence of a previous levelling event on the site or the infilling of a palaeochannel (Figure 3).

The topsoil layer (100) was dark grey-brown silty clay.

2.5 Medieval Furrows

Two furrows [103], [107] on a north-east to south-westerly alignment were the earliest features on the site (Figure 2). These features ran parallel to each other, spaced 6m apart, which suggests that they were contemporary.

Furrow [103] predated a modern land drain [105] (see section 2.6 below).

The definition of the furrows was clear at the northern end of the site. However, the definition became less clear to the south-west, partly because the deposits within the furrows were similar in colour and texture to the undisturbed geological and subsoil deposits. Also, the southern part of the site was not stripped as deeply as the northern part, so archaeological features were not revealed as clearly.

Artefacts recovered from these furrows (Appendix 2) consisted of abraded and fragmented roof tile and pottery, which were late medieval to post-medieval in date. The presence of post-medieval (17th- or 18th-century) finds may indicate that cultivation of the strip fields carried on until quite late. Alternatively, the finds may have been derived from soil used to fill in the furrows after the strip system was abandoned.

2.6 Modern Drains

Two land drains and a sewage pipe were identified (Figure 2). The land drains were aligned on a north-east to south-west axis. Drain [105] cut across furrow [103] at an angle, suggesting that the furrows were no longer visible as earthworks by the time the land drains were inserted.

The sewage pipe ran north to south and cut across the most northerly land drain identified, indicating that the land drains had ceased to be maintained.



3 CONCLUSIONS

3.1 *Interpretation of the Evidence*

The two furrows that were recorded represent the ploughed out remnants of a medieval ridge and furrow field system. The alignment of the furrows matched that of the cropmarks observed to the east of the development site, suggesting that they belonged to the same furlongs and confirming the interpretation of the cropmarks.

Ridge and furrow field systems were created by repeated ploughing of a furlong of land. A field was made up of several furlongs, each ploughed in the same direction. Each furlong was often owned by one part (family) of a farming community. The field would have been rested intermittently, and the village-based farmers would have ploughed a nearby field as part of what is sometimes described as the 'three field system', as it involved ploughing one of three fields in a rotating use/rest cycle. This system was used throughout the medieval period, and was often retained and extended in the post-medieval period. At Sanfoin farm, post-medieval pottery from the furrows suggests that the cultivation of the strip fields may have continued until relatively recently, although it is also possible that the pottery was derived from material filling the furrows after they went out of use.

The only other remains comprised modern land drains and a sewage pipe on different alignments. One of the land drains cut across one of the furrows, indicating that the furrows were no longer visible as earthworks when the land drain was put in place. It is possible that the furrows were deliberately levelled and the drains installed as part of a concerted phase of agricultural land improvement in the nineteenth century.

The furrows identified match the alignment of the cropmarks seen to the east of the development site.

3.2 *Significance*

The development area lies within the hinterland of the known medieval settlement core of Pavenham. Therefore, it is to be expected that this land would have formed part of the land exploited for agricultural purposes during that period. The alignment of the furrows corresponds with several of the cropmarks to the south and west of the development area and confirms their interpretation as evidence of medieval field systems. Such field systems are commonplace archaeological features in rural Bedfordshire. Had these survived as well-preserved ridge and furrow earthworks they may have been of regional importance, but, as they not visible at the surface, they are only of local significance.

As the depth of the development impact at the southern end of the site was limited to the removal of the topsoil only, any archaeological remains existing within the southern part of the site are considered to have been unaffected by the development and were therefore preserved *in situ*.



A small collection of artefacts and animal bone was retrieved, but these probably represent material originating from domestic and agricultural refuse present in manure scattered on the landsurface in the past. Such material is of negligible value for further study as it does not comprise a securely stratified assemblage.



4 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Oake, M in prep. Research Framework for Bedfordshire.



5 APPENDIX 1 – CONTEXT SUMMARY

Area: 1
Extent (ha): 0.04
OS Co-ordinates: SP9811055200
Description: Watching Brief area to the South of Sanfoin Farm

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty clay occasional small ceramic building material, moderate flecks charcoal, moderate small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
101	Subsoil	Plastic mid yellow brown silty clay occasional small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
102	Natural	Plastic light yellow brown clay frequent small-large stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Furrow	Linear NE-SW profile: concave base: flat dimensions: max breadth 1.75m, max depth 0.17m, min length 10.m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Fill	Plastic mid yellow brown silty clay moderate small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
105	Land drain	Linear ENE-WSW profile: near vertical dimensions: max breadth 0.25m, min depth 0.18m, min length 6.m	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
106	Backfill	Plastic mid yellow brown silty clay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
107	Furrow	Linear NE-SW profile: concave base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.98m, max depth 0.1 m, min length 9.5m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
108	Fill	Plastic mid yellow brown silty clay moderate small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



6 APPENDIX 2 – ARTEFACT SUMMARY

6.1 Artefact Assemblage

6.1.1 Introduction

The watching brief produced a small finds assemblage comprising pottery, roof tile and animal bone (Table 1). The material was scanned to ascertain its nature, condition and, where possible, date range.

Feature	Feature type	Context	Spot date*	Finds summary
100	Ploughsoil	100	Modern	Roof tile (45g)
101	Subsoil	101	Modern	Pottery (27g), roof tile (23g), animal bone (39g), clinker (1g)
103	Furrow	104	Post-medieval	Pottery (31g)
105	Land drain	106	Post-medieval	Pottery (86g)
107	Furrow	108	Post-medieval	Pottery (4g), roof tile (115g)

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

Table 1: Artefact Summary

6.1.2 Pottery

Eleven pottery sherds weighing 148g were recovered. Fabric types were identified in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series, currently maintained by Albion Archaeology on behalf of Bedfordshire County Council.

Four undiagnostic sherds (29g) recovered from furrow [103] are of 17th-18th century date and comprise glazed red earthenware (type P01), Staffordshire slipware (type P30) and Brill-Boarstall ware (type P52), the latter a regional import from Buckinghamshire. One sherd (2g) of late medieval oxidised ware (type E02) was residual within the feature. Furrow [107] yielded two sherds (4g) of late medieval reduced ware (type E01).

An abraded bowl rim in red-slipped black-glazed earthenware (type P03A) and a sherd of mottle/speckle-glazed ware (type P19) were recovered from land drain [105]. Both are datable to the 17th-18th centuries.

Two sherds of modern flower pot (27g) derived from subsoil (101).

6.1.3 Other finds

Two sand tempered pieces of post-medieval flat roof tile (115g) were recovered from furrow [107], and three unstratified fragments (68g) from topsoil (100) and subsoil (101).

An unstratified rib fragment (39g) from an animal of unknown species was recovered from subsoil (101).



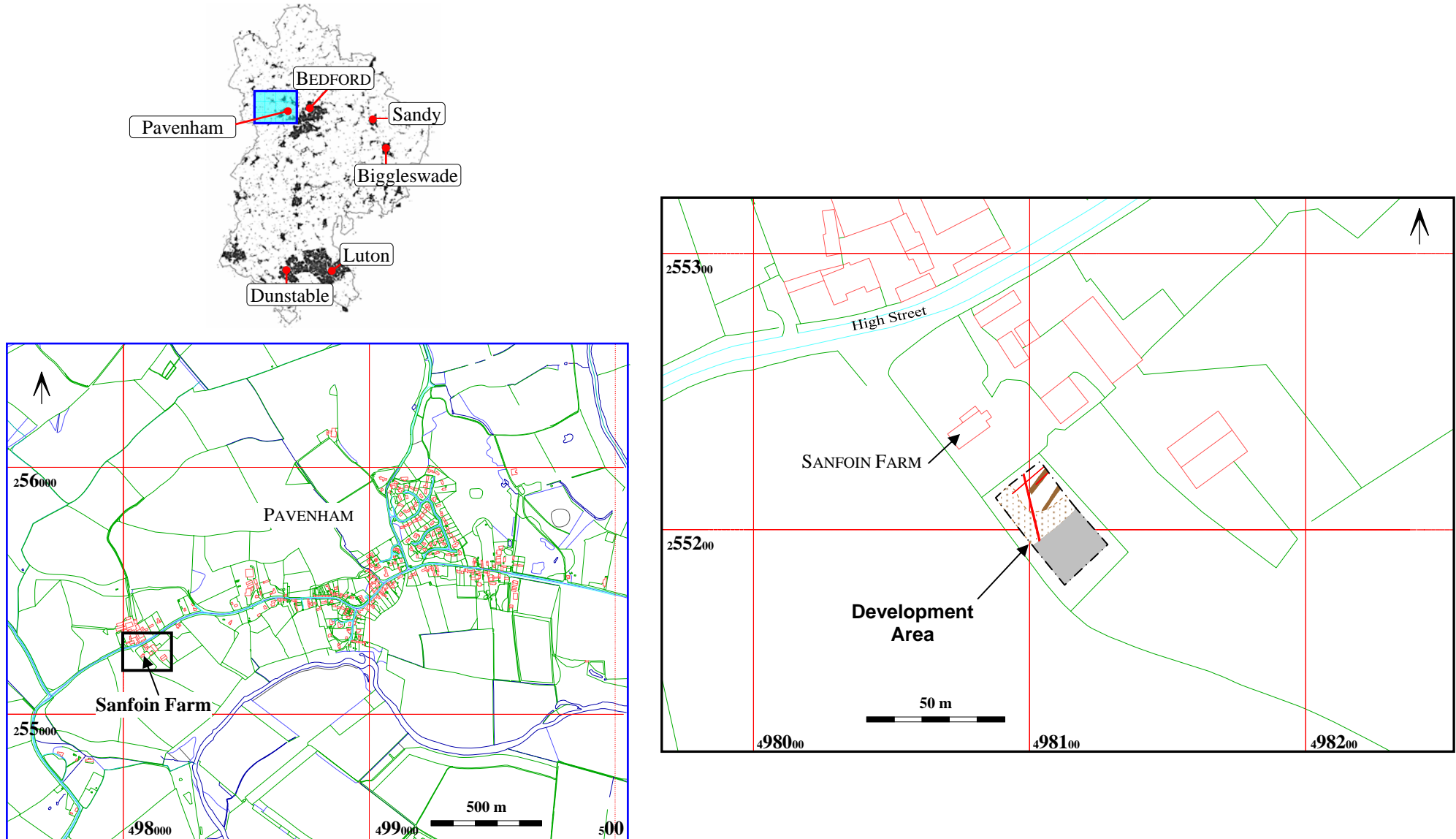


Figure 1: Site location map

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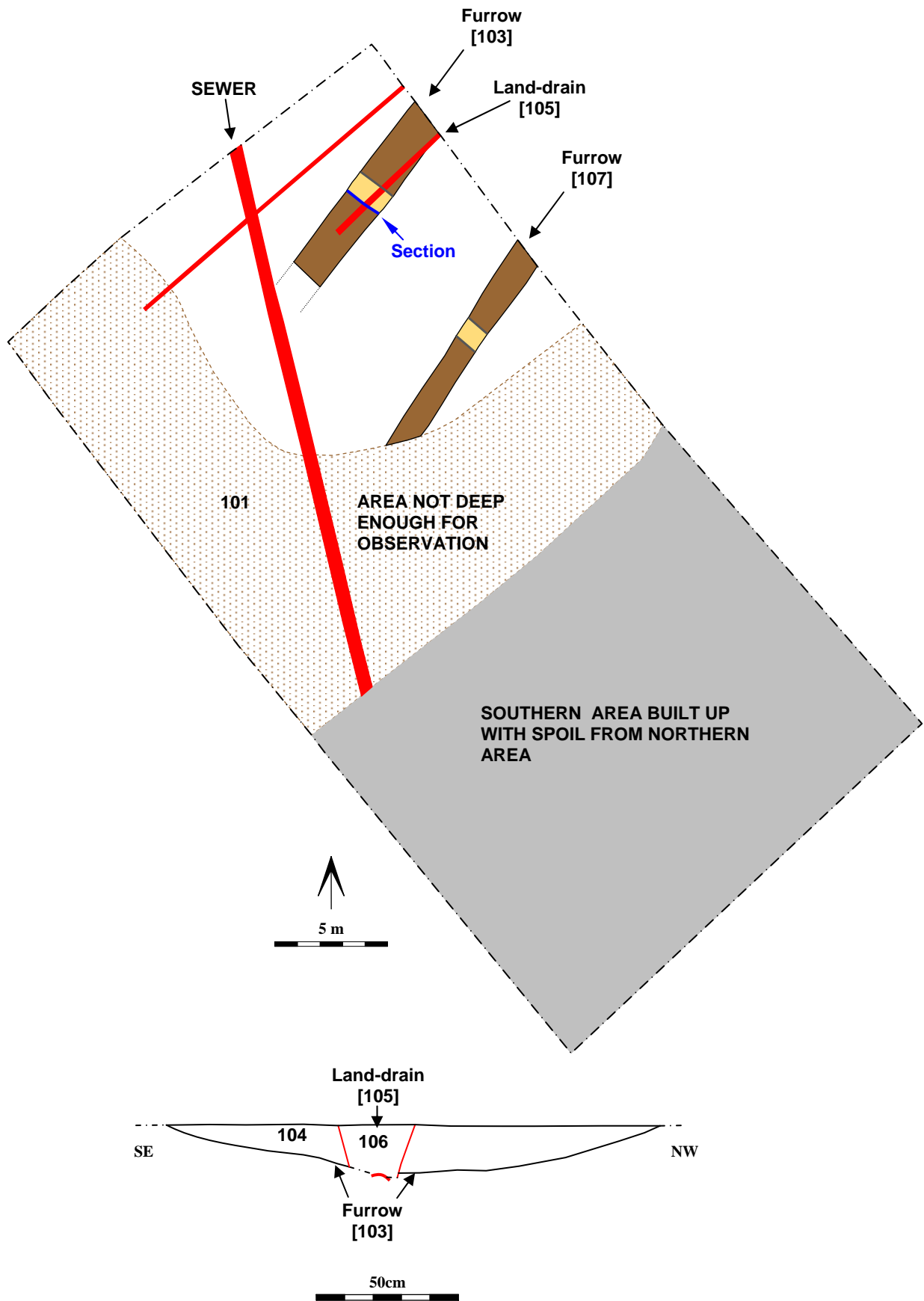


Figure 2: All features plan and cross section of furrow [103]

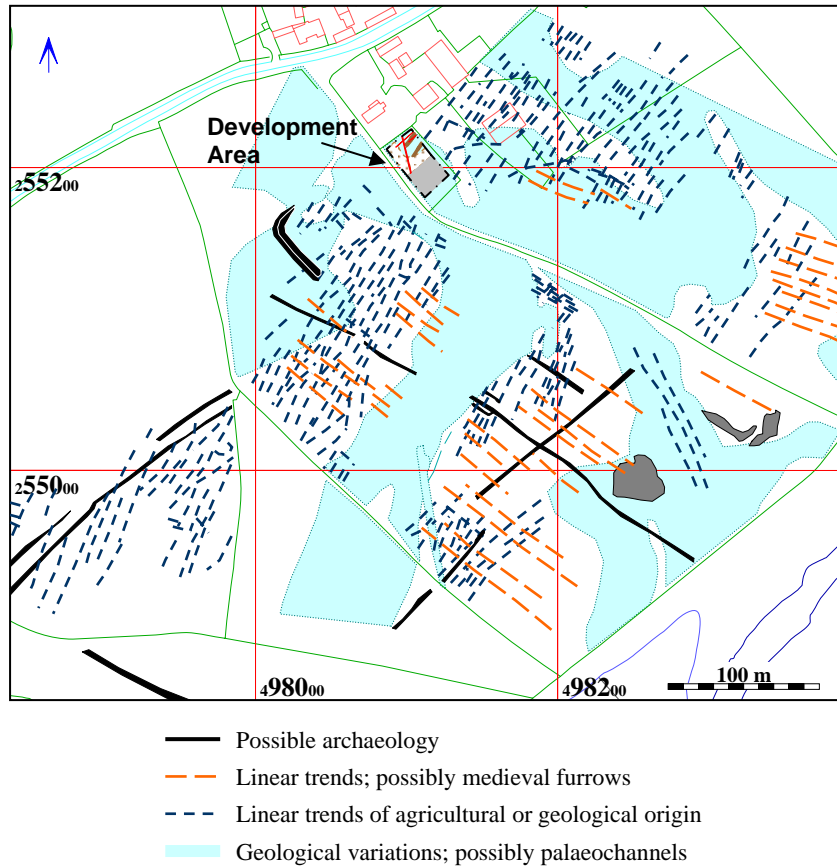


Figure 3: Excavation plan overlaid onto cropmark interpretation plot

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