

**ST PAUL'S SQUARE MARKET STALLS
BEDFORD**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION AND
INVESTIGATION**

Project: SPS 1469

Document: 2009/59
Version 1.0

Compiled by	Checked by	Approved by
Ian Turner	Robert Wardill	Drew Shotliff

8th May 2009

Produced for:
The Cast Iron Co. Ltd
Home Farm, Shere Road
Albury, Guildford
Surrey GU5 9BL



Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	6
1.1 Project Background	6
1.2 Site Location and Description	6
1.3 Archaeological Background	6
1.4 Project Objectives	7
2. METHODOLOGY	8
2.1 Standards	8
2.2 Description of Building Works	8
2.3 Archive	8
3. RESULTS	9
3.1 Introduction.....	9
3.2 Overburden and Undisturbed Geological Deposits	9
3.3 Archaeological Deposits.....	9
3.4 Modern Intrusions	10
4. CONCLUSION	11
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY	12
6. APPENDIX 1: ARTEFACT SUMMARY	13
6.1 Introduction.....	13
6.2 Pottery	13
6.3 Non-ceramic artefacts.....	13
6.4 Animal bone.....	14
7. APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT DETAILS	15



List of Figures

Figure 1: Site location plan

Figure 2: Excavation plans and sections

All figures are bound at the back of this report.



Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete an assessment as possible, within the terms of the specification. 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.

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Gary Young of The Cast Iron Co. Ltd on behalf of Bedford Borough Council and was monitored on behalf of the Council by Martin Oake of Bedfordshire County Council.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Ian Turner (Archaeological Supervisor). This report has been prepared by Ian Turner with contributions from Jackie Wells (Finds Officer) and Joan Lightning (CAD Technician).

*Albion Archaeology
St Mary's Church
St Mary's Street
Bedford, MK42 0AS
☎: 01234 294001
Fax: 01234 294008
e-mail: office@albion-arch.com
Website: www.albion-arch.com*

Version History

<i>Version</i>	<i>Issue date</i>	<i>Reason for re-issue</i>
1.0	08/05/2009	n/a

Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

BCC	Bedfordshire County Council
CAO	County Archaeological Officer
HER	Historic Environment Record
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists



Non-Technical Summary

Bedford Borough Council commissioned the construction of a series of permanent market stalls on the northern side of St Paul's Square in Bedford.

St Paul's Square lies at the heart of the historic core of Bedford. Documentary evidence records settlement at Bedford from the 9th century onwards. However, archaeological evidence puts the origins of the town in the 6th-7th centuries.

Because the site lay within an area of archaeological sensitivity, the Council's archaeological advisors recommended that a programme of archaeological observation and investigation be carried out in conjunction with construction works.

A total of 41 separate small excavations were dug for the installation of the market stalls. Archaeological deposits were found in seven of these excavations

In most instances these deposits comprised layers containing finds evidence dating them to the early medieval period. In one excavation a pit was found and dating evidence suggests a Saxo-Norman date for this feature. A possible human burial was also found and this may be associated with nearby St Paul's Church, indicating that the boundaries of the churchyard may have moved.

Overall, interpretation of the results is limited due to the nature of the works but it is clear that archaeological deposits, possibly representing early medieval occupation layers, are present beneath modern overburden throughout the area of the development.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Background*

Bedford Borough Council commissioned the Cast Iron Co. Ltd to construct a series of permanent market stalls on the northern side of St Paul's Square in Bedford.

Prior to construction, the Council sought advice on the archaeological impact of the proposed works from Bedfordshire County Council's Archaeological Officer (CAO). Because the site lay within an area of archaeological sensitivity, the CAO recommended that a programme of archaeological observation and investigation be carried out in conjunction with construction works. A brief for this work was subsequently prepared by the CAO (BCC 2009) to support the recommendation.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by the Cast Iron Co. Ltd on behalf of Bedford Borough Council to undertake the archaeological works. A project design was prepared (Albion Archaeology 2009) in accordance with the brief and this document was approved by the CAO prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

St Paul's Square lies in the centre of Bedford, approximately 100m to the north of the River Great Ouse and the Town Bridge (Figure 1).

The site of the new market stalls is located on the north side of the Square at a ground height of 27m OD, and is centred on grid reference TL 05023 49708.

1.3 *Archaeological Background*

St Paul's Square lies at the heart of the historic core of Bedford. Documentary evidence records settlement at Bedford from the 9th century onwards. However, archaeological evidence puts the origins of the town in the 6th-7th centuries. Burials of this date have been recorded from St Paul's Square immediately to the north of the proposed development site.

The origins of St Paul's Church (HER861) may go back as far as the 8th century and there was certainly an important church on the site by the 10th century.

Excavations in 1980's in the vicinity of the new market stalls revealed substantial and well preserved archaeological remains (HER 14448). These included two rows of late medieval buildings separated by a cobbled street which has been identified as Butcher's Lane.

There were also a number of medieval burials and evidence of industrial activity pre-dating Butcher's Lane. Because of the nature of the development the excavations in this area did not remove all the archaeological deposits and remains still survive in the area.



1.4 Project Objectives

The general objective of the project was to add to the knowledge and understanding of the archaeology of Bedford and produce a report for deposition in the appropriate archive that fully describes the archaeological works.

The specific aims of the fieldwork were to:

- Monitor all significant groundworks that had the potential to reveal archaeological remains.
- Investigate and record those works and any archaeological deposits encountered within them.



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Standards

Throughout the project the standards set out in the following documents were followed:

- Albion Archaeology. *Procedures Manual for Archaeological Fieldwork* (2001)
- English Heritage. *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991)
- IfA. *Code of Conduct* (1999)
- IfA. *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (1999) and *the Analysis of Fieldwork Records* (2001)
- BCC. *Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedford* (1998)

2.2 Description of Building Works

The groundworks requiring archaeological monitoring took place between 14th January and 4th February 2009 (Figure 2). The works comprised:

- The excavation of 34 post pits measuring 0.60m square, 0.70-0.95m deep (excavations 1 to 34).
- The excavation of four cable trenches measuring 2.5m, 7m, 28.5m and 30m long, 0.5m wide and 0.45m deep (excavations 35, 36, 37 and 38).
- The excavation of a 3.5m diameter, 0.45m deep octagon shaped pit for the base of a planned statue (excavation 40).
- The excavation of two lamp post pits measuring 0.7m long, 0.55m wide and 0.95m deep (excavations 39 and 41).

The excavations were hand dug by the site building contractor with an archaeologist in attendance to monitor the works. Spoil heaps were scanned for artefacts. Identified archaeological features and deposits were investigated where possible and recorded using Albion Archaeology's pro forma sheets. The excavations were subsequently drawn, and photographed as appropriate. All deposits and features were recorded using a context number sequence commencing at 100. Information on contexts is summarised in the discussions below with full details provided in Appendix 2.

2.3 Archive

The archive for the site comprising original records, photographs, plans, finds and supporting documentation will be deposited with Bedford Museum under the accession number 2009.8. A copy of this report will also be submitted to the Archaeology Data Service's online OASIS database.



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

Many of the excavations associated with the installation of the market stalls were not deep enough to penetrate modern overburden deposits. These included the excavation for the statue base, all the cable trench excavations, and many of the post pit excavations. Only those excavations that did reveal archaeological deposits are described in detail below.

3.2 Overburden and Undisturbed Geological Deposits

A consistent sequence of overburden deposits measuring between 0.45m and 0.71m thick was observed in all excavations (Figure 2). This comprised the extant surface of paving slabs, 0.08m thick (100) or stone blocks, 0.13m thick (104). Beneath this lay a sand levelling layer, c.0.10m thick (101), over a former tarmac surface, 0.10m thick (102), over a levelling deposit of crushed stone, 0.25m to 0.35m thick (103).

In some areas an additional levelling layer of orange sand, 0.20m thick (107) and a demolition spread of modern roof tile and brick fragments, 0.05m thick (108) was present.

Undisturbed geological deposits comprising bands of loose orange sand and gravel (115) was encountered only in excavation 39.

3.3 Archaeological Deposits

3.3.1 Layers

A layer of dark grey brown sandy silt with occasional large limestone fragments and moderate small and medium stones was identified across the site in excavations 3, 9, 11, 14 and 34, variously recorded in Figure 2 as layers (105), (109), (110) and (114). The full thickness of the layer was only apparent in excavation 34 where it measured 0.2m thick. Artefacts were recovered only from deposit (114) in excavation 3. These included animal bone and pottery, the latter dating to the early medieval period (see Appendix 1).

Beneath layer (110) in excavation 14 was layer (111) which comprised mid orange brown sandy silt and contained the remains of a probable human skull. The north-east to south-west orientation of the skull may indicate that it represents part of an *in-situ* burial. However, no grave cut could be discerned or associated bones identified.

A layer of mid orange grey sandy clay with frequent medium and large stones (106) that contained a piece of metal slag was identified beneath layer (105) in excavation 34. The size and density of stones in this deposit suggest it may have once formed a cobbled surface.

A layer of dark grey brown clay silt with moderate charcoal flecks and small to medium stones (122) was identified beneath levelling layer (107) in excavation 41.



The layer contained animal bone, pottery of early medieval date, and a fragment of rotary lava quern dating to the Saxo-Norman or early medieval periods. Below layer (122) was a layer of mid grey brown clay silt with frequent small and medium stones (121). This layer did not contain any artefacts.

3.3.2 Pit

A vertical sided pit [116] was partially exposed in excavation 39. The pit contained dark grey black silt (117) from which animal bone and pottery fragments of Saxo-Norman date were recovered. The pit truncated undisturbed geological deposits of mid yellow orange sand and gravel (115).

3.4 Modern Intrusions

Cutting into geological deposits in excavation 39 was a pit [118] containing concrete. This pit lay beneath levelling layer (103).



4. CONCLUSION

Archaeological deposits were found in seven of the 41 excavations associated with the installation of the new market stalls. These seven excavations were located across the development area and the archaeological deposits were found at varying depths ranging from 0.45-0.70m below ground level.

In most instances these deposits comprised layers containing finds evidence dating them to the early medieval (AD1150-1250) period. In one excavation a pit was found and dating evidence suggests a Saxo-Norman date (AD850-1150) for this feature. A possible human burial was also found and this may be associated with the nearby St Paul's Church, indicating that the churchyard boundaries may have moved.

Artefacts within the revealed archaeological deposits appeared relatively well preserved with pottery and bone of possible medieval date surviving well. Modern intrusions appear limited and were only noted in one of the excavations.

Overall, interpretation of the results is limited due to the nature of the works but it is clear that archaeological deposits, possible representing early medieval occupation layers, are present beneath modern overburden throughout the area of the development.



5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

BCC 2008, *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication at St Paul's Square, Bedford, Bedfordshire.*



6. APPENDIX 1: ARTEFACT SUMMARY

6.1 Introduction

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

Feature	Type	Context	Spot date*	Finds summary
105	Layer	105	Undated	Ferrous slag (21g)
111	Layer	111	Undated	Ferrous slag (92g)
114	Layer	114	Early medieval	Pottery (7g); animal bone (70g)
116	Pit	117	Saxo-Norman	Pottery (4g); animal bone (65g); ferrous slag (663g)
122	Layer	122	Early medieval	Pottery (53g); animal bone (162g); ferrous slag (211g); quern fragment (189g)

* spot date based on date of latest artefact in context

Table 1: Artefact summary by trench and feature

6.2 Pottery

Seven pottery sherds (64g), ranging in date from the Saxo-Norman to early medieval periods were recovered. Sherds are small, with an average weight of 9g, and are moderately abraded. Six fabric types were identified using common names and type codes in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series, currently held by Albion Archaeology (Table 2).

Saxo-Norman pottery comprises four wheel-thrown shell tempered sherds (49g) in the St Neots-type tradition, datable to the 10th-12th centuries (types B01, and variants B01A, B01B). A jar rim of 'top hat' form is the only diagnostic element. Contemporary glazed tablewares are represented by a single sherd of Stamford ware (C12: 4g). Medieval pottery comprises two undiagnostic, hand-made sand tempered sherds (C02, C59B:total weight 11g) of probable local manufacture, datable to the 12th-13th centuries.

Fabric type	Common name	Sherd No.	Context/Sherd No.
<i>Saxo-Norman</i>			
Type B01	St Neots-type ware	1	(117):1
Type B01A	St Neots-type ware (orange)	2	(122):2
Type B01B	St Neots-type ware (fine)	1	(122):1
Type C12	Stamford ware	1	(122):1
<i>Early medieval</i>			
Type C02	Red quartz	1	(122):1
Type C59B	Sand	1	(114):1

Table 2: Pottery type series

6.3 Non-ceramic artefacts

Layer (122) yielded a straight sided skirt fragment from an imported lava rotary quern (189g) of probable Saxo-Norman or early medieval date. The object has a slightly convex upper surface and flat worn grinding surface, although insufficient survives for diameter to be estimated.



Ferrous smelting slag weighing 987g was recovered, the majority deriving from the fill of Saxo-Norman pit [116].

6.4 Animal bone

The faunal assemblage comprises thirty-six fragments, weighing 297g. Pieces survive in fair condition, although are small, with an average weight of only 8g. The majority of the assemblage derived from layer (122). Diagnostic elements are long bone, rib, vertebrae and tooth fragments. Species represented are large mammals, including cow and dog.



7. APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT DETAILS



Area: 1
 Extent (ha): 0.04
 OS Co-ordinates: TL0502349708
 Description: Construction of permanent market stalls to the north of St Pauls Square, Bedford.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	External surface	Extant paving stone surface	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Levelling layer	Loose mid orange sand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	External surface	Tarmac surface - recently covered with extant paving stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Make up layer	Type 1 pink gravel make up layer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	External surface	Extant stone block decorative surface set in patterns between paving stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Layer	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt moderate flecks charcoal, moderate small-medium stones. Located in excavation 34	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
106	Layer	Firm mid orange grey sandy clay frequent medium-large stones. Located in excavation 34	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
107	Make up layer	Loose light yellow orange sand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
108	Demolition layer	Loose red hardcore . Modern brick and tile fragments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
109	Layer	Friable dark brown grey silty sand occasional small charcoal. Located in excavations 9 and 11	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
110	Layer	Friable dark grey black sandy silt moderate flecks charcoal, moderate small stones. Located in excavation 14	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
111	Layer	Friable mid orange brown sandy silt moderate small-medium stones, occasional large stones. Contained probable human skull. Located in excavation 14	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
114	Layer	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, moderate large stones, occasional small-medium stones. Located in excavation 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
115	Natural	Loose mid yellow orange gravel frequent small sand. An undisturbed geological deposit of laid down in bands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
116	Pit	Profile: vertical . Located in excavation 39	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
117	Fill	Friable dark grey black silt moderate flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
118	Modern intrusion	Profile: near vertical base: flat . Cut of modern concrete filled foundation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
119	Concrete		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
121	Layer	Friable mid grey brown clay silt occasional flecks charcoal, frequent small-medium stones. Located in excavation 41	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
122	Layer	Friable dark grey brown clay silt moderate flecks charcoal, moderate small-medium stones. Located in excavation 41	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

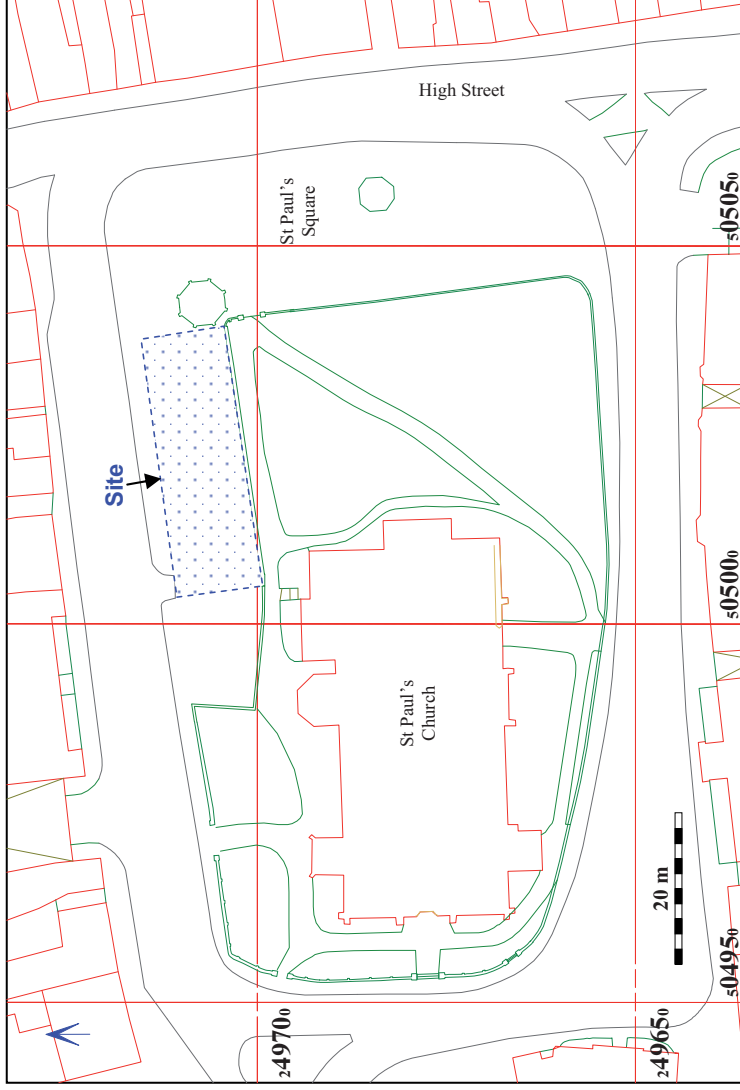
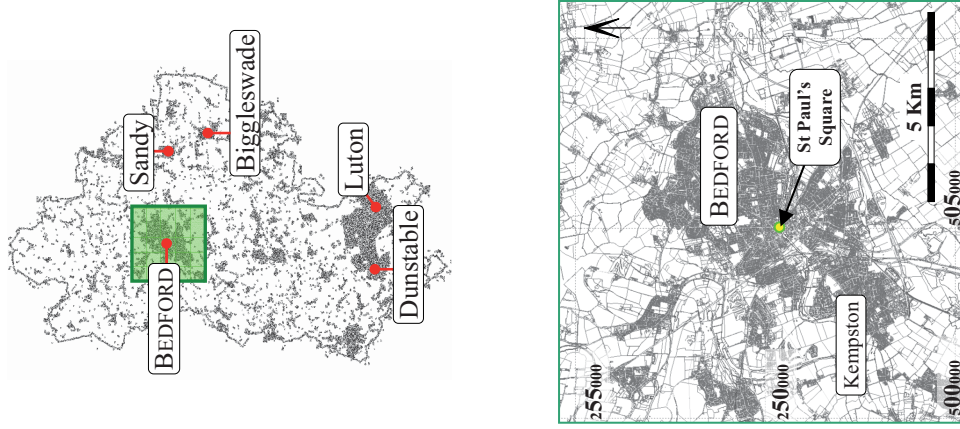


Figure 1: Site location plan

Base map reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, by Albion Archaeology, Central Bedfordshire Council., OS Licence No. 100017358(LA). © Crown Copyright.

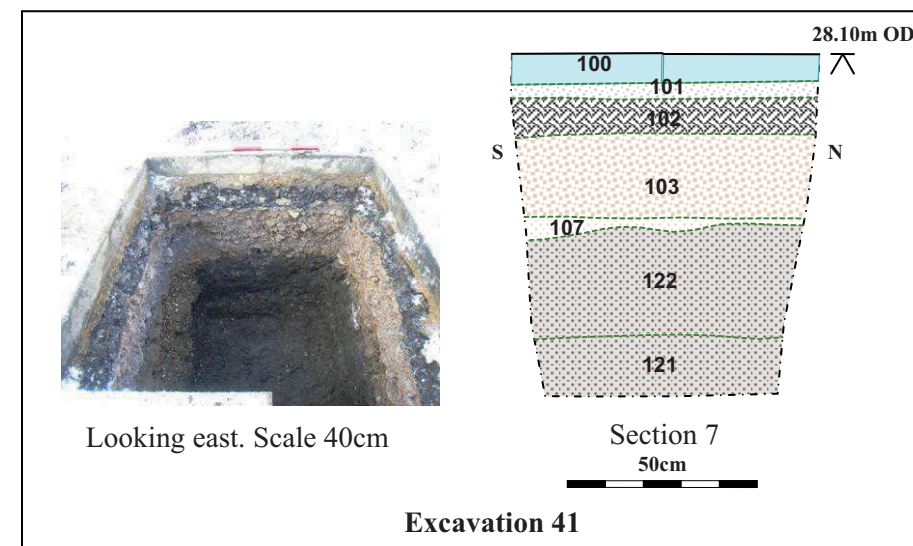
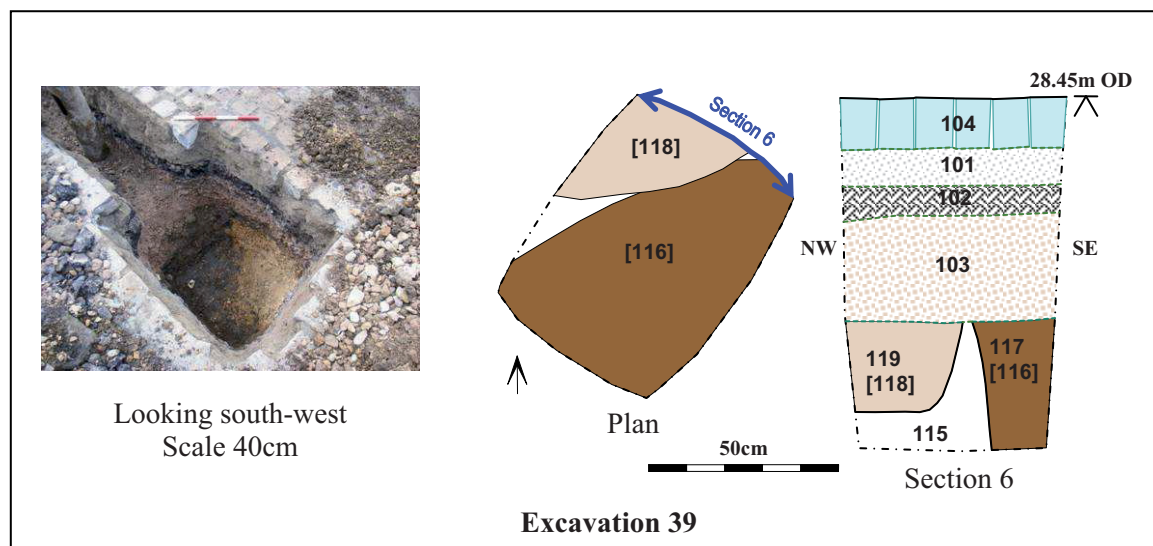
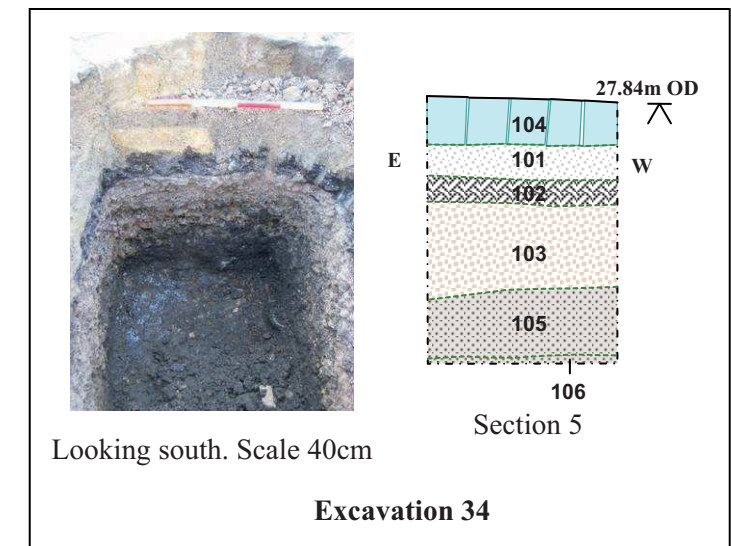
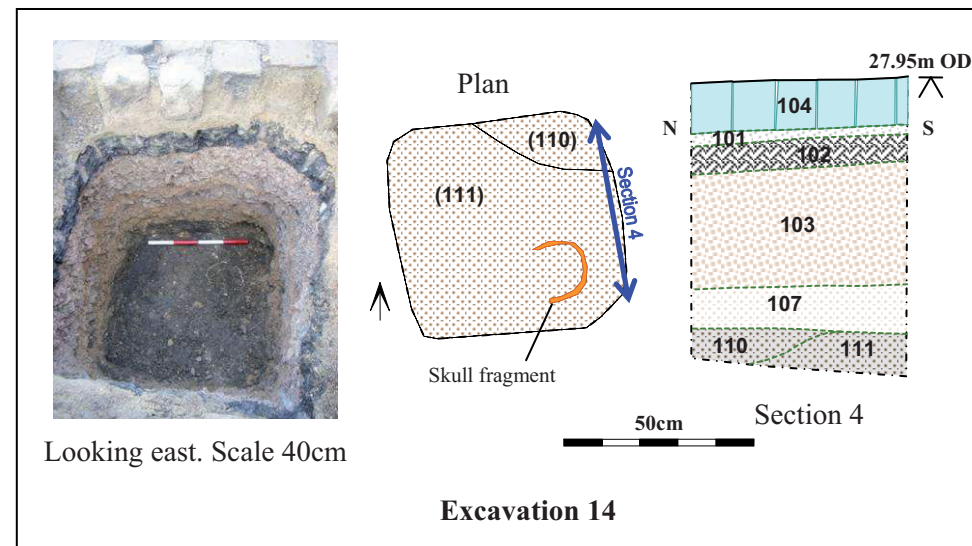
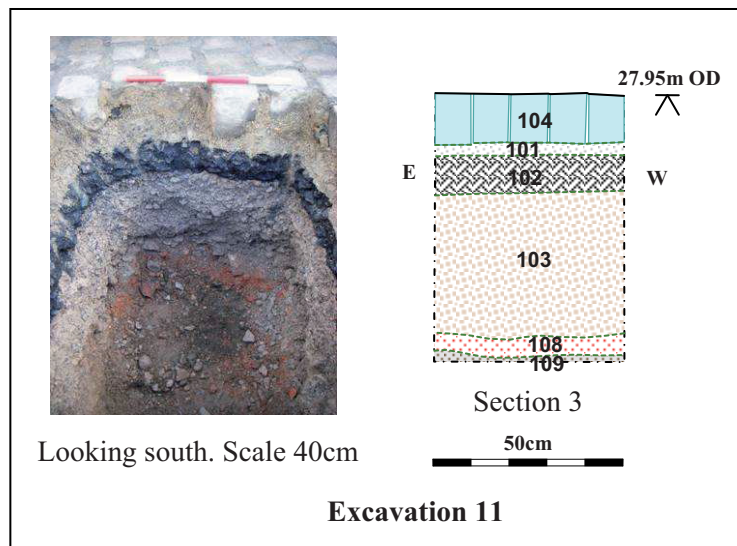
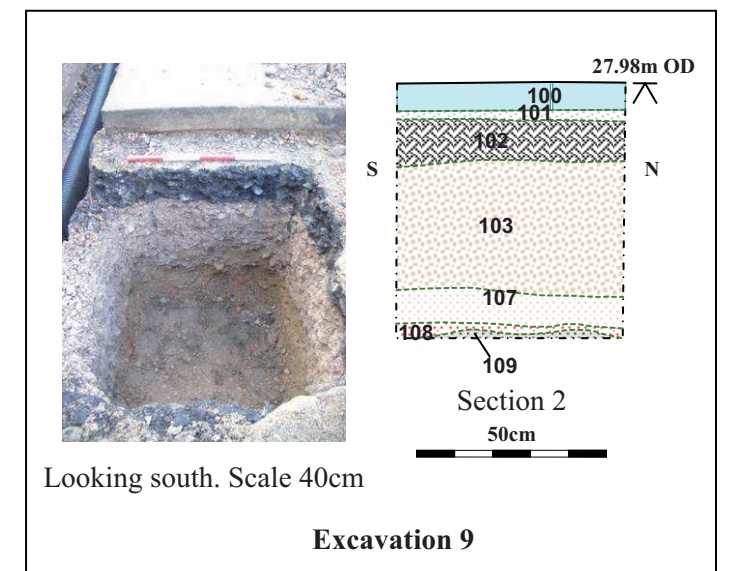
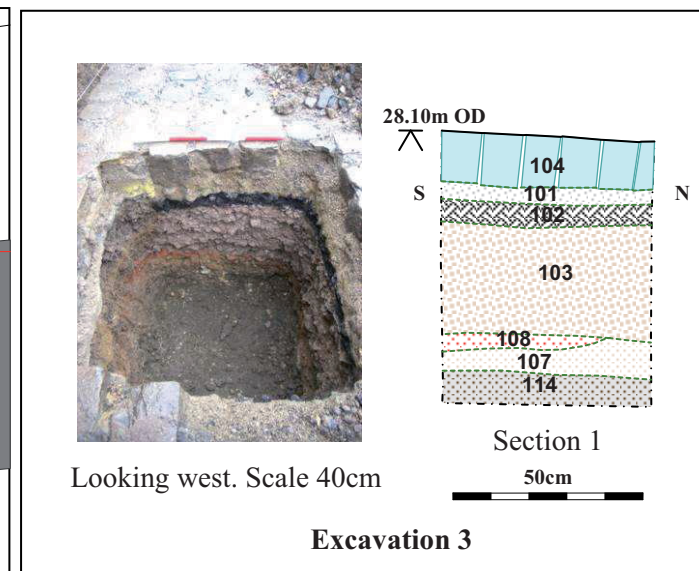
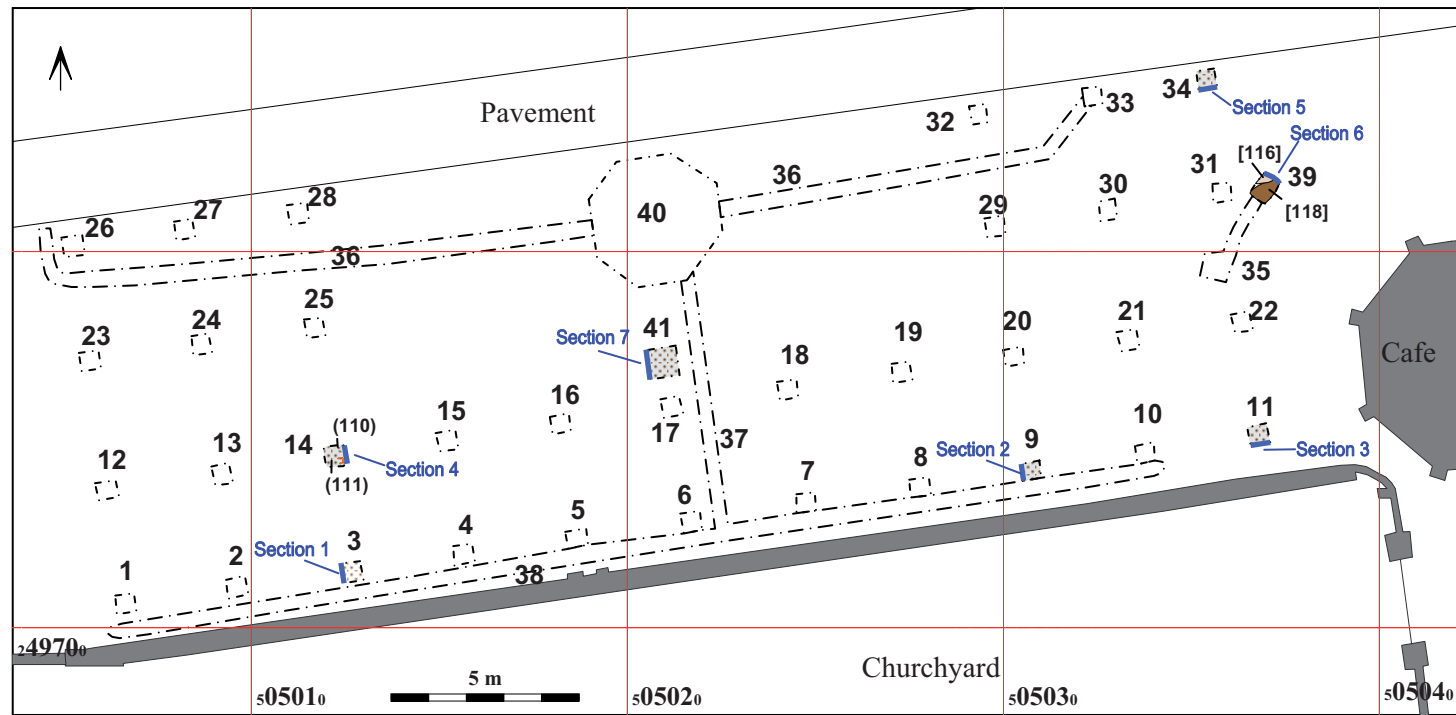


Figure 2: Excavation plans and sections