

**OAKLANDS COLLEGE  
SMALLFORD CAMPUS  
HATFIELD ROAD  
ST ALBANS**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION**

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## 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.*

*The project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting (CgMs) on behalf of Oaklands College. It was monitored by Simon West (St Albans Museums) on behalf of the Local Planning Authority and Richard Meager, CgMs.*

*The fieldwork was undertaken by Wesley Keir (Project Officer) and Kathy Pilkinton (Assistant Supervisor). This report has been prepared by Wesley Keir and edited by Joe Abrams (Project Manager). The figures were created by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).*

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## Version History

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1.0	29/04/2009	n/a

## Structure of this Report

Section 1 serves as an introduction to the project, describing the location of the site, archaeological background and the aims of the project. Section 2 describes the project methodology and Section 3 summarises the results. Section 4 provides a synthesis of the results and assesses their significance. Section 5 is a bibliography.

Appendix 1 contains trench summary information and detailed contextual data.



## **Key Terms**

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

BCAS	Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service
Client	CgMs Consulting on behalf of Oaklands College
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
LPA	Local Planning Authority
TVAS	Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Albion Archaeology were commissioned through CgMs Consulting by Oaklands College to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of the redevelopment of the Smallford Campus with a new educational facility.*

*Following consultation between CgMs Consulting on behalf of the College, and Simon West (St Albans Museums), who advises the Local Planning Authority regarding archaeological matters, a written scheme of investigation (WSI) for an archaeological trial trench evaluation was produced (CgMs 2009).*

*Two previous evaluations have been undertaken within the Smallford Campus. The first, (BCAS 1998) identified two areas of late Bronze Age / early Iron Age activity and two areas of Romano-British activity. Three of these areas lay either close to or within the area of the current investigations. The second (TVAS 2007) identified a small number of features, consisting of either undated or modern ditches.*

*The current investigations revealed only one feature that was not proven to be modern. This was a ditch that appears to be a continuation of one recorded in the earlier BCAS trenches. It produced no finds but contained similar fills to previously recorded ditches and post-holes located nearby. The latter have been designated as an area of activity (Area 3,) dating to the late Bronze Age / early Iron Age based on six small sherds of pottery recovered from three of the post-holes. However, given the general lack of dating evidence from the current and earlier evaluation, the date and therefore significance of the ditch is far from certain. The current investigations revealed no further evidence of the activity revealed by the BCAS or TVAS evaluations.*

*The trial trenching demonstrated that the areas investigated have not been significantly truncated by modern activity. Therefore, the absence of archaeological evidence in all but Trench 15, does suggest a genuine lack of significant archaeological remains in the particular areas evaluated during this project.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 *Project Background*

Albion Archaeology were commissioned through CgMs Consulting by Oaklands College to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of the redevelopment of the Smallford Campus with a new educational facility.

Following consultation between CgMs Consulting on behalf of the College, and Simon West (St Albans Museums), who advises the Local Planning Authority regarding archaeological matters, a written scheme of investigation (WSI) for an archaeological trial trench evaluation was produced (CgMs 2009).

### 1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The Smallford Campus is located 2.5km to the east of St. Albans and to the north of Hatfield Road (Fig.1). The site of the current evaluation lies to the east and south-east of the campus buildings centred at TL 1850 0769 and comprises arable and pasture fields and a small golf course.

The ground surface slopes down very gently from 88m OD in the west to 75m OD in the east towards a small tributary of the Colne. The solid geology consists of upper chalk, overlain by drift deposits of boulder clay which are in turn sealed by glacial sands, gravels and clays.

### 1.3 *Archaeological Background*

Two archaeological evaluations have previously been undertaken within the Smallford Campus. The first comprised thirty-five trenches located to the south and east of the campus buildings and eighty-seven test pits mainly located to the north (BCAS 1998 and Fig. 2). Two areas of late Bronze Age / early Iron Age activity (Areas 1 and 3) and two areas of Romano-British activity (Areas 2 and 4) were identified (Fig. 2).

Area 1, containing late Bronze Age / early Iron Age pits and ditches, was located c. 400m to the north of the current investigations. However, Areas 2, 3 and 4 lay either within or close by and included a Romano-British rectangular enclosure first identified as a cropmark in Area 2; late Bronze Age / early Iron Age pits and ditches in Area 3; and Romano-British deposits containing *tegulae* (roof tile) fragments in Area 4. The evidence in Area 4 was thought to indicate the presence of occupation, possibly at the level of a small farmstead, with its focus located beneath the playing field and golf course to the north.

The second evaluation (TVAS 2007) consisted of sixty-four trenches, the majority of which were located to the north of Area 3 (Fig. 2). A small number of features were revealed comprising either undated or modern ditches. Ten struck flints likely to date from the later Neolithic or Bronze Age were recovered. Nine of the ten were from topsoil or subsoil deposits, one residual flint was recovered from a ditch.



## **1.4 Project Objectives**

The aims and objectives of the project, as stated within the CgMs WSI were:

- to test for the presence of archaeological remains within areas of the development that had not previously been evaluated;
- to define the date, nature, condition and depth of any archaeological remains revealed;
- to assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits;
- to integrate the results with the previous work undertaken at the site.





## 2. METHODOLOGY

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Trial trenching was undertaken between 6th and 16th April 2009. The locations of Trenches 1, 9, 13 and 14 were altered slightly from their marked locations on the WSI in order to avoid either fence lines, the golf course greens or the current barley crop. These changes were agreed *via* CgMs with St Albans Museums (on behalf of the LPA).

Throughout the project the standards set out in the following documents were adhered to:

- IfA's *Code of Conduct (2008)*;
- IfA's *Standards and Guidance for Field Evaluation (1994a; revised 2001 and 2008)*
- IfA's *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (1994b; revised 2001 and 2008)*
- Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual for Archaeological Fieldwork and the Analysis of Fieldwork Records (2001)*
- English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects (1991)*

Trial trenching was carried out in accordance with the methodology set out by Albion Archaeology (2009). In summary:-

- The locations of the trenches were marked out on the ground in advance of machine excavation.
- All trenches measured 40m x 1.8m.
- Topsoil and modern overburden was removed using a mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and operating under close archaeological supervision. These deposits were removed down to either the top of archaeological deposits or undisturbed geological deposits, whichever was encountered first.
- The deposits and any potential archaeological features were noted, cleaned, excavated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's *pro forma* sheets. The trenches were subsequently drawn, and photographed as appropriate.
- The trenches were backfilled with the prior agreement of the client and LPA archaeological advisor.



### 3. RESULTS

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#### 3.1 Introduction

Deposits and archaeological features are summarised below. Allocated context numbers are prefixed with the trench number they were recorded from, *i.e.* contexts (100) and (101) are from Trench 1.

Detailed technical information on all deposits and archaeological features revealed within the trial trenches can be found in Appendix 1 (Section 6.1).

#### 3.2 Overburden and Undisturbed Geological Deposits

A uniform, silty clay topsoil, 0.25–0.35m thick, was revealed throughout the trenches. This directly overlay undisturbed geological deposits that predominantly comprised clay with patches of sandy gravel.

#### 3.3 Undated Ditch

A shallow ditch [1502] was revealed at the south-east end of Trench 15. It was aligned NW-SE and was 1.6m wide and 0.32m deep. It contained no artefactual material. The orientation of this ditch differed to that of nearby land drains and plough scars (both modern) suggesting it may be earlier in date.

The ditch may be a continuation of one recorded by BCAS (1998, Ditch [405]) to the south-east (Fig. 3). Both ditches were of a similar size and shape and contained similar mid grey-brown to orange-brown silty clays and clay silts. However, their recorded alignments did differ slightly.

Deposits within [405] also contained no artefacts but shared similarities with deposits in post-hole [403] recorded in the same trench and two post-holes [411], [449] in nearby trenches (Fig. 3). Two of these contained pottery sherds dating to the early Iron Age.

#### 3.4 Modern Features

As well as land drains, which were observed in the majority of the trenches, a modern ditch was revealed in Trench 5 at the northern end of the site. It was aligned NE-SW and was up to 1.6m wide and at least 0.70m deep, with a contemporary ceramic land drain at its base.



## 4. SYNTHESIS OF RESULTS

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### 4.1 *Summary and Integration with Previous Evaluations*

Only one pre-modern ditch was revealed during the current evaluation. This appears to be a continuation of ditch [405] recorded previously (BCAS 1998). It contained no artefactual material but contained similar deposits to those previously recorded in ditches and post-holes nearby. These remains are located within and immediately west of Area 3, which was characterised as containing late Bronze Age / early Iron Age activity. This interpretation was based on six small sherds of pottery recovered from three of the postholes. However, no further evidence of this activity was revealed in Trenches 9 or 12 located towards the southern edge of this area.

Trench 8 was located to the east of several undated ditches (TVAS 2007); it contained no evidence of this activity.

Trenches 13 and 14 contained no archaeological remains, despite being located to the immediate north of Area 4 (Fig. 2). This suggests the previously defined limits of that area are correct.

### 4.2 *Significance of Results*

The earlier BCAS evaluation revealed remains of archaeological interest. These findings were used to determine four Areas of activity, dating to the late Bronze Age / early Iron Age and Romano-British periods. Seven of the current trial trenches were placed either close to, or within, two of these Areas. However, only with ditch [1502] was it possible to make any connection with previous evaluation results. [1502] may be associated with the nearby previously recorded late Bronze Age / early Iron Age activity in Area 3. However, given the paucity of dating evidence from the current and earlier evaluation, its date and therefore significance is far from certain.

The trial trenching demonstrated that the areas investigated have not been significantly truncated by modern activity. Therefore, the absence of archaeological evidence in all but Trench 15, confirms a genuine lack of significant archaeological remains in the areas evaluated during this project.



## 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- IfA, 1994b (revised 2001 and 2008), Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards & Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*
- TVAS, 2007, *Smallford Campus, Oaklands College, St Albans, Hertfordshire: An Archaeological Evaluation*



## 6. APPENDIX 1

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### 6.1 Trench Summaries



**Trench:** 1

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 40.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

**Co-ordinates:** OS Grid Ref.: TL 18475 07783

OS Grid Ref.: TL 18507 07758

**Reason:** Evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Ploughsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay 0.35m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Natural	Firm mid brown-orange clay with patches of sandy gravel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench:** 2

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 40.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

**Co-ordinates:** OS Grid Ref.: TL 18497 07837

OS Grid Ref.: TL 18466 07813

**Reason:** Evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
200	Ploughsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay 0.3m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
201	Natural	Firm mid brown-orange clay with patches of sandy gravel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench:** 3

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 40.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

**Co-ordinates:** OS Grid Ref.: TL 18479 07863

OS Grid Ref.: TL 18447 07888

**Reason:** Evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
300	Ploughsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay 0.35m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
301	Natural	Firm mid brown-orange clay with patches of sandy gravel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





**Trench:** 4

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 40.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

**Co-ordinates:** OS Grid Ref.: TL 18423 07889

OS Grid Ref.: TL 18447 07921

**Reason:** Evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
400	Ploughsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay 0.35m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
401	Natural	Firm mid brown-orange clay with patches of sandy gravel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench:** 5

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 40.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

**Co-ordinates:** OS Grid Ref.: TL 18424 07943

OS Grid Ref.: TL 18387 07959

**Reason:** Evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
500	Ploughsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay Up to 0.35m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
501	Natural	Firm mid brown-orange clay with patches of sandy gravel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench:** 6

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 40.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

**Co-ordinates:** OS Grid Ref.: TL 18520 07881

OS Grid Ref.: TL 18536 07844

**Reason:** Evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
600	Ploughsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay 0.3m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
601	Natural	Firm mid brown-orange clay with patches of sandy gravel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench:** 7

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 40.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

**Co-ordinates:** OS Grid Ref.: TL 18568 07828

OS Grid Ref.: TL 18599 07803

**Reason:** Evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
700	Ploughsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay 0.3m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
701	Natural	Firm mid brown-orange clay with patches of sandy gravel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench:** 8

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 40.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

**Co-ordinates:** OS Grid Ref.: TL 18930 07537

OS Grid Ref.: TL 18945 07574

**Reason:** Evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
800	Ploughsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay 0.3m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
801	Natural	Firm mid brown orange sandy clay occasional small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench:** 9

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 40.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

**Co-ordinates:** OS Grid Ref.: TL 18805 07329

OS Grid Ref.: TL 18842 07343

**Reason:** Evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
900	Ploughsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay 0.3m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
901	Natural	Firm mid brown orange sandy clay occasional small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench:** 10

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 40.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

**Co-ordinates:** OS Grid Ref.: TL 18934 07387

OS Grid Ref.: TL 18972 07401

**Reason:** Evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1000	Ploughsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay 0.3m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1001	Natural	Firm mid brown orange sandy clay occasional small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench:** 11

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 40.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

**Co-ordinates:** OS Grid Ref.: TL 19089 07458

OS Grid Ref.: TL 19125 07475

**Reason:** Evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1100	Ploughsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay Up to 0.3m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1101	Natural	Firm mid brown-orange clay with patches of sandy gravel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





**Trench:** 12

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 40.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

**Co-ordinates:** OS Grid Ref.: TL 18640 07296

OS Grid Ref.: TL 18601 07292

**Reason:** Evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1200	Ploughsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay 0.3m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1201	Natural	Firm mid yellow orange sandy clay occasional small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench:** 13

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 40.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

**Co-ordinates:** OS Grid Ref.: TL 18539 07586

OS Grid Ref.: TL 18501 07599

**Reason:** Evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1300	Topsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay 0.3m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1301	Natural	Firm mid brown-orange clay with patches of sandy gravel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench:** 14

**Max Dimensions:** Length: 40.00 m. Width: 1.80 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

**Co-ordinates:** OS Grid Ref.: TL 18448 07556

OS Grid Ref.: TL 18477 07527

**Reason:** Evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1400	Topsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay Up to 0.27m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1401	Natural	Firm mid brown orange sandy clay moderate small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Trench:** 15

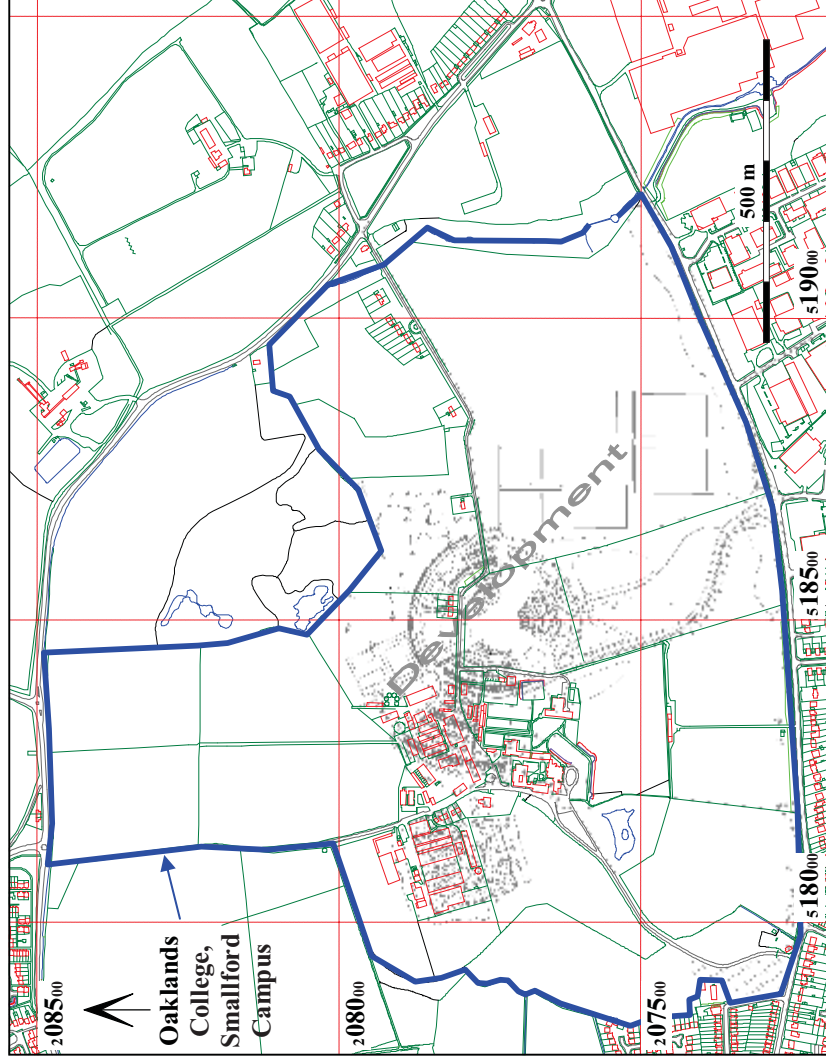
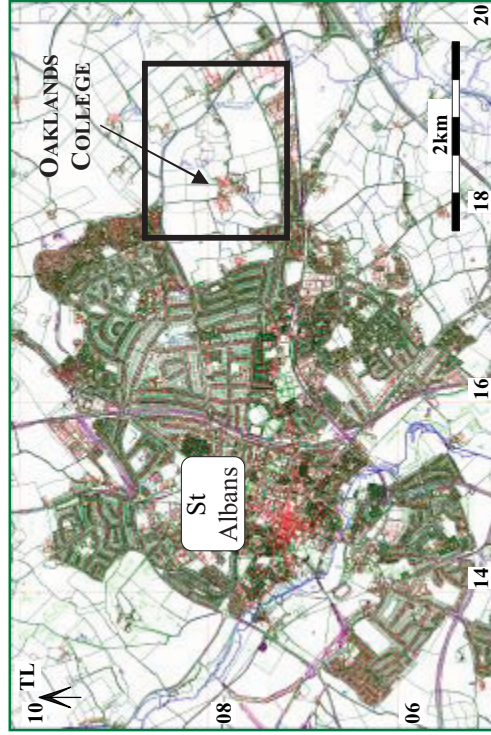
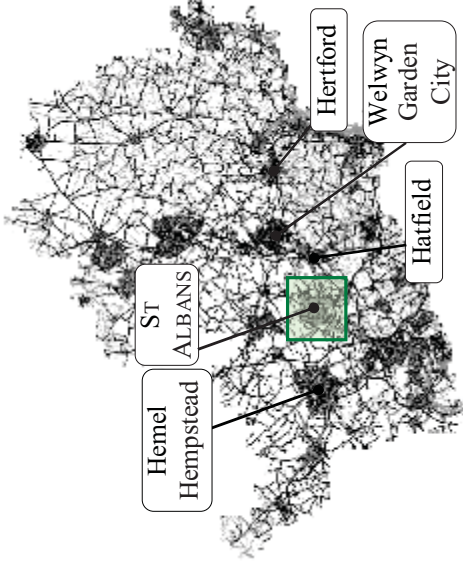
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**Co-ordinates:** OS Grid Ref.: TL 18528 07383

OS Grid Ref.: TL 18516 07421

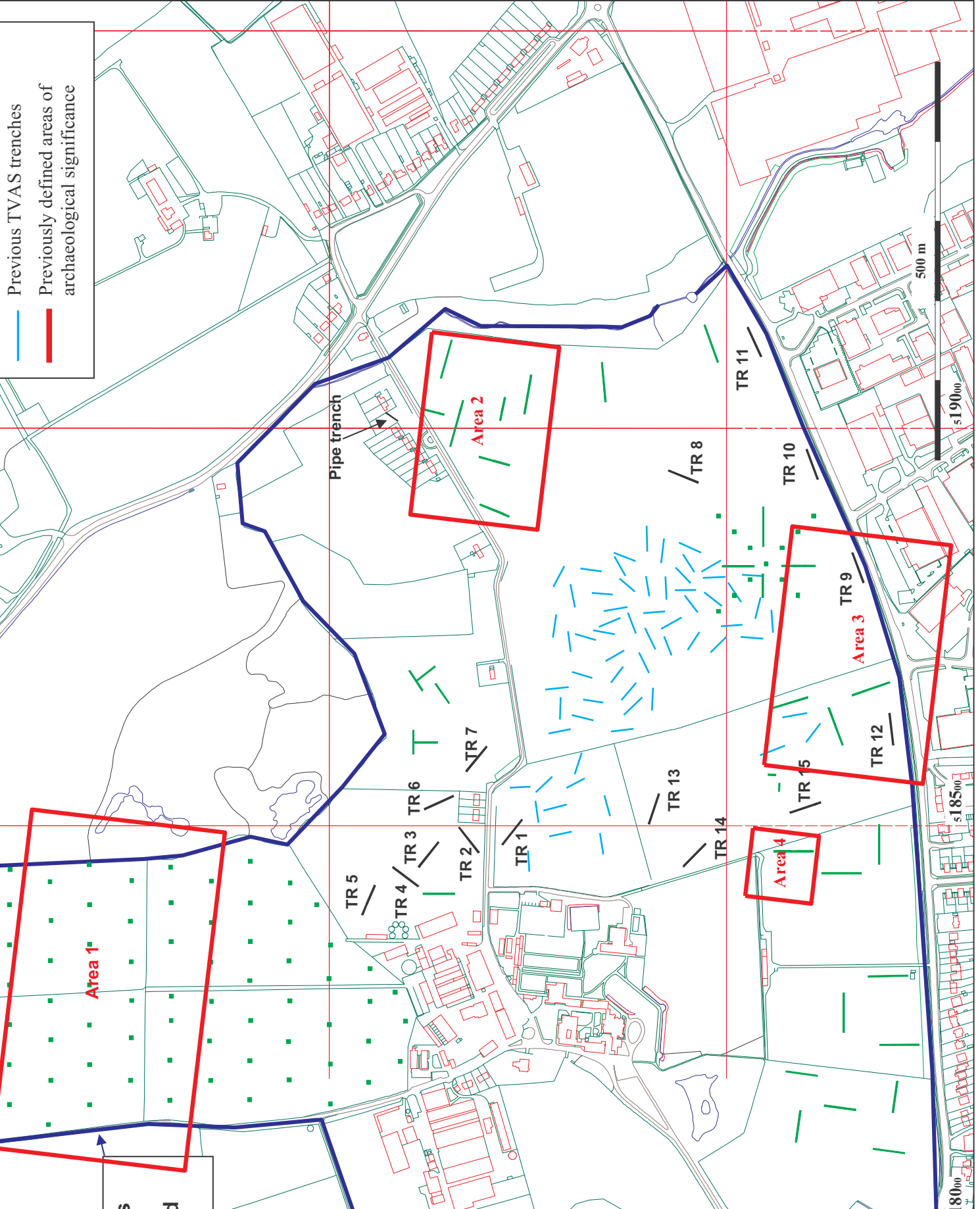
**Reason:** Evaluate area.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1500	Ploughsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay Up to 0.35m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1501	Natural	Firm mid brown-orange clay with patches of sandy gravel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1502	Ditch	Straight linear NW-SE profile: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.6m, min depth 0.32m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1503	Fill	Friable mid orange brown clay silt moderate small-medium stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1504	Fill	Friable dark grey brown clay silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

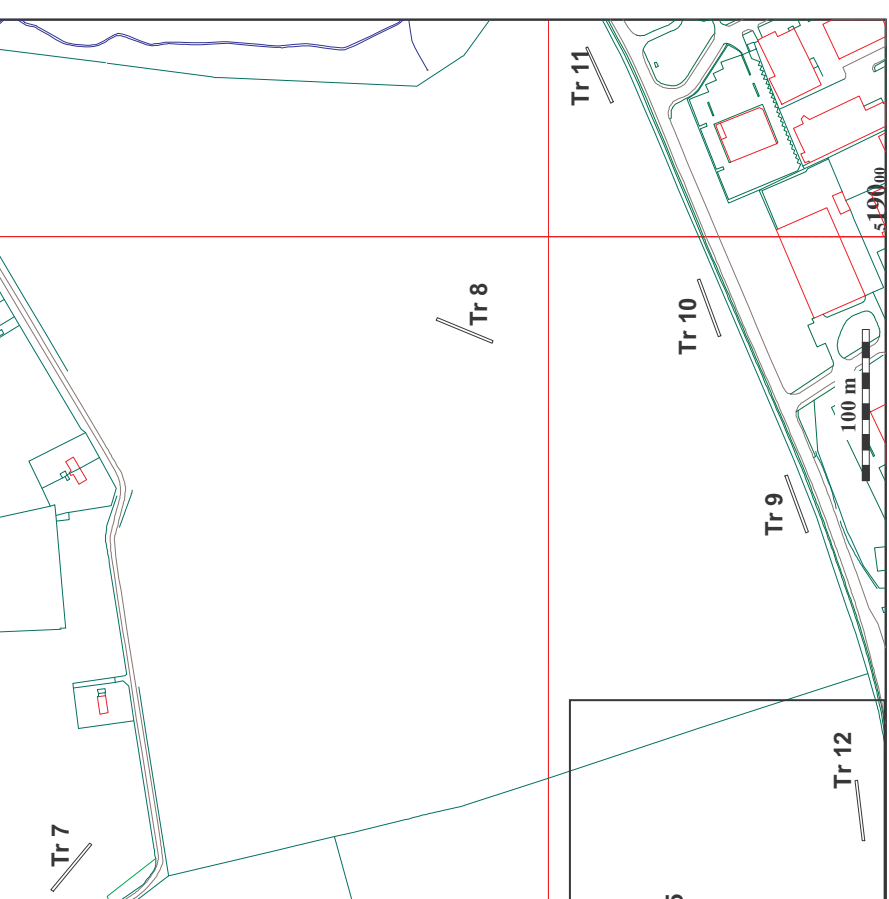
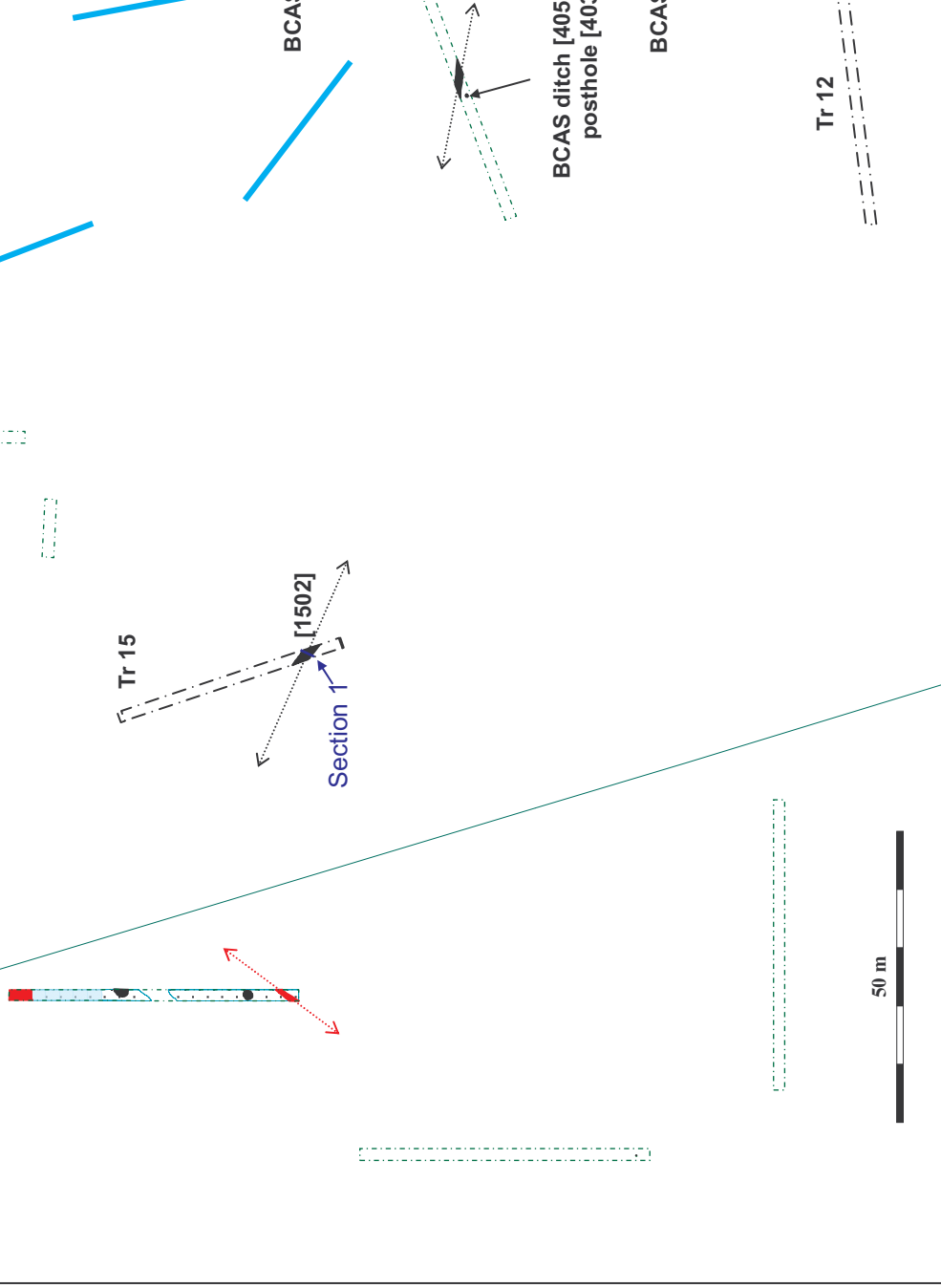


**Figure 1: Site location plan**

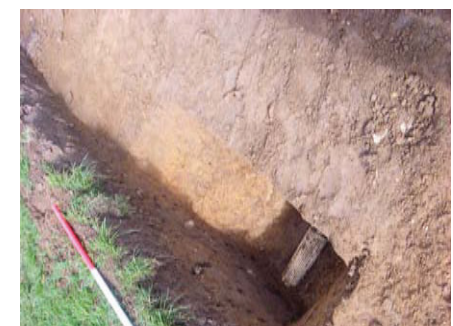
Base map reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, by Albion Archaeology, Central Bedfordshire Council, OS Licence No. 100017358(LA), © Crown Copyright.



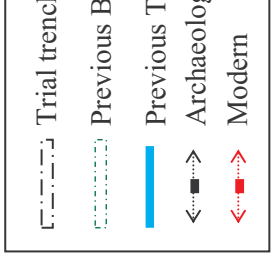
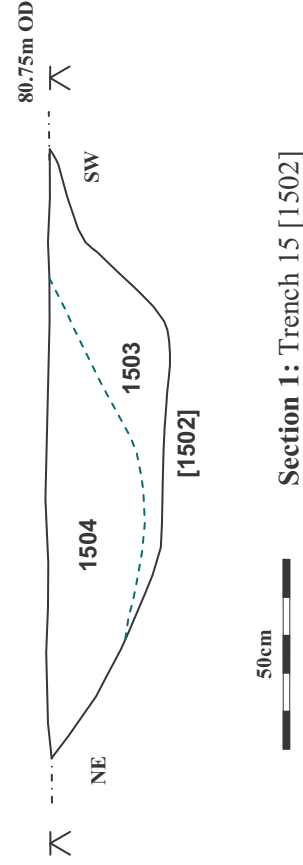




Tr 15, ditch [1502]. Looking south.  
Scale 1m



Trench looking west.  
Scale 1m



**Figure 3: All features plan focus**  
Base map reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with permission of Her Majesty's Stationary Office, by Alibon Archaeology. OS Licence No. 100017358(LA). © C



**Trench 12, facing west**



**Trench 11, facing south-west**



**Trench 3, facing north-west**



**Trench 14, facing south-east**

**Figure 4: Selected trench photographs**