

**4-6 LONDON ROAD
SANDY
BEDFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

Project: LRS1577

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Version 1.0

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Crestel Partnerships

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Contents

Structure of the Report	3
Key Terms	4
1. INTRODUCTION	6
1.1 Project Background	6
1.2 Site Location	6
1.3 Topography, Geology, Soils and Land Use	6
1.4 Archaeological Background	6
1.5 Project Objectives	7
2. METHODOLOGY	8
2.1 Standards	8
2.2 Trial trenching	8
2.3 Archiving	8
3. RESULTS	9
3.1 Introduction	9
3.2 Overburden and Undisturbed Geological Deposits	9
3.3 19th- and 20th-century Remains	9
4. CONCLUSION	11
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY	12
6. APPENDIX 1 – CONTEXT SUMMARY	13

List of Figures

Figure 1: Site location plan

Figure 2: All features

All 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.

The project was commissioned by Crestel Partnerships. It was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Hannah Firth, Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeological Officer (CBCA).

Fieldwork for this project was supervised by Wesley Keir (Project Officer), with investigation and recording undertaken by Adam Williams (Assistant Supervisor). This report has been prepared by Wesley Keir, with contributions from Joan Lighting (CAD Technician). It was edited by Joe Abrams (Project Manager). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

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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. Conclusions of the project are presented in Section 4 and Section 5 is a bibliography. An appendix contains detailed descriptions of archaeological features and deposits recorded on the site.



Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CBCA	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist
Client	Crestel Partnerships
HER	Historic Environment Record
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
LPA	Local Planning Authority
Procedures Manual	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> , 2nd edn, 2001 Albion Archaeology



Non-Technical Summary

Central Bedfordshire Council have given planning permission (MB/TP/2008/02335) for the construction of houses and flats, together with associated access and parking areas, at 4-6 London Road, Sandy. For the purposes of this document, this location is referred to as the Development Area (DA).

The DA lies within an archaeologically sensitive area. As a result, the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist (CBCA) advised the Local Planning Authority (LPA) that a condition should be attached to the planning permission requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation. On 24th September 2009, the CBCA issued a brief (CBC 2009a), outlining a three-staged approach to a 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 CBCA also issued a brief (CBC 2009b) detailing the requirements of the Stage I archaeological field evaluation. Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Crestel Partnerships to undertake the evaluation, the results of which are presented in this report.

Six trial trenches were excavated within the DA. Those located in the western part of the DA revealed features and deposits associated with properties dating from the 19th and 20th centuries that fronted onto London Road. These remains are considered to be of local interest. No evidence was recovered to suggest the presence of earlier features within the DA. Therefore, trial trenching has indicated that the development will have no significant impact on archaeological remains.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Background*

Central Bedfordshire Council have given planning permission (MB/TP/2008/02335) for the construction of houses and flats, together with associated access and parking areas at 4-6 London Road, Sandy. For the purposes of this document, this location is referred to as the Development Area (DA).

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1.2 *Site Location*

The DA comprises an area of *c.* 0.25ha located on the eastern side of London Road, centred on TL 1655 4915 and adjacent to the A1 on the western edge of the town of Sandy in eastern Bedfordshire (Figure 1).

1.3 *Topography, Geology, Soils and Land Use*

The DA lies within the valley of the River Ivel, *c.* 250m to the east of the river. The underlying geology comprises River Terrace deposits overlying Oxford Clay.

The northern half of the DA currently comprises open ground and scrub vegetation, whilst the southern half contains areas of hard standing and a derelict building. The ground level within the DA is generally flat, lying at *c.* 22.3m OD, apart from an area of raised hardstanding in the south-west corner of the site (*c.* 23m OD).

1.4 *Archaeological Background*

The DA lies within the historic core of the medieval settlement of Girtford (HER17130), a hamlet of Sandy. The settlement is first mentioned in the early 13th century when land was granted to Cauldwell Priory (Page 1908). However, it is likely that it originated in the late Saxon or early medieval



period. The present town of Sandy dates back to the Saxon period, though a Roman small town (HER444) was located to the south-east of the current extent of the town (Albion Archaeology 2005), *c.* 1.5km from the DA.

The Bedfordshire HER records several sites within close proximity to the DA, most of which are buildings dating to between the 17th and 19th centuries, located on London Road and Bedford Road to the north and south-east of the DA. The 1889 1st Edition OS map also shows several buildings within the DA fronting onto London Road that have since been demolished. London Road follows the historic route of the Great North Road which passes immediately to the west of the site.

Earlier remains are largely restricted to chance finds that include a gold Iron Age coin (HER439) and a Roman coin (HER14815) found to the west of the DA near Girtford Bridge. However, prehistoric features have recently been identified *c.* 50m north of the DA, to the rear of the Rose and Crown Public House (Hannah Firth (CBCA), *pers. comm.*). A conjectural Roman road (HER738) emanating from Bedford is located *c.* 250m south of the DA. Cropmarks appear to show the course of the road between Willington and Bedford and a small stretch of metalling is visible to the west of Sandy. It has been suggested that this road was either incomplete or was part of a local trackway rather than a formal road (Simco 1984).

1.5 Project Objectives

The research objectives for the archaeological work were described in the briefs (CBC 2009a, 2009b) and expanded upon in the Project Design (Albion Archaeology 2009).

Pre-existing data suggested the most likely archaeological remains to be encountered within the DA were those associated with the medieval or post-medieval development of Girtford. Still-inhabited settlements have been identified as a potentially fruitful source of information on the development of medieval settlement (Oake et al 2007, 14; MSRG 1996).

Given that development of the site was likely to have a significant impact on any archaeological remains present, and in order to assess that impact and devise an appropriate mitigation strategy, the aims of the investigation included:

- establishing the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;
- recovering artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- establishing the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present.



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Standards

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

- Albion Archaeology. *Procedures Manual for Archaeological Fieldwork* (2001)
- English Heritage. *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991)
- IfA. *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*
- Bedfordshire County Council. *Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedford* (1998)

2.2 Trial trenching

Trial trenching was undertaken between the 17th to 23rd November. Six trenches were opened, covering a total area of c. 190sq m (Figure 1). Their layout was primarily designed to investigate the areas that will be subject to significant impact from the development, whilst considering the constraints posed by the presence of the existing building, boundaries and live services. The trench plan was agreed by the CBCA before the work began.

Trenches were opened using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket, operated by an experienced driver under archaeological supervision. Overburden was removed down to the top of either archaeological deposits or undisturbed geological deposits. The spoil heaps were scanned for artefacts.

Any potential archaeological features were noted, cleaned, excavated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's *pro forma* sheets. However, Trench 5 was not entered due to health and safety risks posed by the presence of significant levels of oil contamination. Each trench was drawn and photographed as appropriate. All deposits were recorded using a unique number sequence, commencing at 100 for Trench 1, 200 for Trench 2 *etc.*

The trenches were backfilled with the agreement of the CBCA.

A full methodology is provided in the Project Design (Albion Archaeology 2009).

2.3 Archiving

The archive for the site comprising original records, photographs, plans and other supporting documentation will be deposited with Bedford Museum under the accession number 2009.70. A copy of this report will also be submitted to the Archaeology Data Service's online OASIS database.



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

Archaeological remains are summarised below and their locations are shown on Figure 2. Detailed technical information on all archaeological features and deposits can be found in Appendix 1.

3.2 Overburden and Undisturbed Geological Deposits

Trenches 1, 2, 3 and 6 were located in the open ground within the northern half of the site. The uppermost deposit of Trenches 1 and 2 consisted of up to 0.3m of garden soil, whilst the uppermost deposit of Trenches 3 and 6 consisted of a much thinner deposit of vegetative matter that overlay demolition and make-up layers up to 0.7m deep. These deposits overlay a sandy subsoil that in turn overlay undisturbed geological deposits consisting of clayey sand with gravel.

The undisturbed geological deposits and subsoil within Trenches 4 and 5, located in the area of hardstanding in the southern half of the site, were overlain by up to 0.5m of demolition and make-up layers. These were overlain by a yard surface (Trench 5, 501) and floor surface (Trench 4, 402) associated with 19th- and 20th-century development of the site, revealed at *c.* 22m OD. Yard surface (501) was revealed directly beneath the existing tarmac surface, whilst floor surface (402) was overlain by a 0.85m thick deposit of brick rubble (401), creating a raised area of hardstanding in this part of the DA.

The undisturbed geological deposits sloped down towards the west of the DA (towards the River Ivel). They were revealed at depths of *c.* 21.8m OD at the eastern end of the DA in Trench 1 and *c.* 21.3m OD in the trenches nearest the western edge of the DA.

3.3 19th- and 20th-century Remains

All the archaeological features and deposits revealed within the trenches were associated with 19th- and 20th-century activity.

Silty clay and sand make-up layers were revealed overlying the subsoil within Trenches 3-6. These deposits were overlain by brick rubble in Trenches 3, 5 and 6 that are likely to be associated with the demolition of buildings shown on the 1889 1st Edition OS map fronting onto London Road. A concrete and ceramic tile floor surface (402) associated with one of these buildings was revealed in Trench 4. It lay at *c.* 1m (*c.* 22m OD) beneath the existing ground surface together with a water pipe and stopcock that presumably serviced the property. A foundation trench (607) and brick footings (305) associated with another of these properties were revealed in Trenches 3 and 6.

A brick surface (501) was revealed directly beneath the existing tarmac in Trench 5 which, together with two circular drains (507/510), is likely to be associated with the back yards of the properties that fronted onto London Road.



A thick layer of brick rubble (401) sandwiched between the existing tarmac surface and floor surface (402) in Trench 4 is the result of 20th-century landscaping to raise the ground level in this location. An insubstantial brick wall (103) revealed within the topsoil in Trench 1 is associated with a now demolished 20th-century garden nursery.



4. CONCLUSION

Six trial trenches were excavated within the DA. Those located in the western part of the DA revealed features and deposits associated with properties dating from the 19th and 20th centuries that fronted onto London Road. These remains are considered to be of local interest. No evidence was recovered to suggest the presence of earlier features within the DA. Therefore, trial trenching has indicated that the development will have no significant impact on archaeological remains.



5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Page, W., 1908, 'Parishes: Sandy with Girtford', *A History of the County of Bedford: Volume 2* pp. 242-246. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=62640&strquery=girtford> Date accessed: 02 November 2009
- Simco, A., 1984, *Survey of Bedfordshire: The Roman period*. BCC

BCC = Bedfordshire County Council
 CBC = Central Bedfordshire Council
 MSRG = Medieval Settlement Research Group



6. APPENDIX 1 – CONTEXT SUMMARY



Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 35.00 m. Width: 2.20 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL 16542 49157

OS Grid Ref.: TL 16575 49166

Reason: Assessment of archaeological potential

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Topsoil	Friable dark brown silty sand 0.25m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Colluvium	Friable mid orange brown silty sand moderate small stones 0.2m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Natural	Loose mid orange clay sand frequent small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Wall	Insubstantial brick wall (stretcher bonded, one brick wide) aligned ENE-WSW, embedded in topsoil and associated with garden nursery shown on late 20th century maps.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 10.00 m. Width: 2.20 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL 16538 49160

OS Grid Ref.: TL 16540 49150

Reason: Assessment of archaeological potential

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
200	Tarmac	Friable dark brown silty sand Up to 0.3m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
201	Colluvium	Friable mid orange brown silty sand Up to 0.35m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
202	Natural	Loose mid orange clay sand frequent small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 3

Max Dimensions: Length: 10.00 m. Width: 2.20 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL 16521 49155

OS Grid Ref.: TL 16523 49145

Reason: Assessment of archaeological potential

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
300	Topsoil	Friable Layer formed by scrub vegetation 0.05m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
301	Brick rubble	0.25m thick brick rubble associated with demolition of building shown on 1st Edition OS map	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
302	Make up layer	Firm mid brown silty clay 0.35m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
303	Buried subsoil	Friable mid brown orange silty sand 0.35m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
304	Natural	Loose orange clay sand frequent small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
306	Foundation trench	Linear ENE-WSW profile: vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.3m, max depth 0.4m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
305	Wall	Brick footing aligned ENE-WSW probably associated with building shown on 1st Edition OS map	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 4

Max Dimensions: Length: 10.00 m. Width: 2.20 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL 16522 49131

OS Grid Ref.: TL 16526 49122

Reason: Assessment of archaeological potential

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
400	Tarmac	0.15m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
401	Brick rubble	Brick rubble make-up layer - 0.85m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
402	Internal surface	0.05m thick concrete and ceramic tile surface, contemporary with an adjacent buried water pipe and stopcock, probably associated with buildings shown on 1st Edition OS map	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
403	Make up layer	Loose mid orange sand 0.25m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
404	Buried subsoil	Friable mid brown orange silty sand 0.3m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
405	Natural	Loose mid orange clay sand frequent small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 5

Max Dimensions: Length: 15.00 m. Width: 2.20 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL 16528 49144

OS Grid Ref.: TL 16539 49133

Reason: Assessment of archaeological potential

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
500	Tarmac	0.10m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
501	External surface	Brick yard surface - 0.18m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
502	Make up layer	Hardcore make-up layer - 0.35m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
503	Demolition layer	Dark grey silty sand and brick rubble probably associated with demolition of buildings shown on 1st edition OS map - 0.2m thick. Deposit is oil contaminated, hence its colour.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
504	Buried subsoil	Friable mid grey silty sand 0.4m thick. Deposit is oil contaminated, hence its colour.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
505	Natural	Loose dark grey clay sand frequent small-medium stones Deposit is oil contaminated, hence its colour.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
507	Drain	Circular brick drain 1.2m diameter.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
506	Fill	Dark grey silty clay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
509	Drain	Circular brick drain 1.2m diameter.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
508	Fill	Dark grey silty clay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 6

Max Dimensions: Length: 3.85 m. Width: 3.10 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL 16515 49149

OS Grid Ref.: TL 16515 49146

Reason: Assessment of archaeological potential

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
600	Topsoil	Layer formed by scrub vegetation 0.05m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
601	Brick rubble	Brick rubble probably associated with demolition of buildings shown on 1st Edition OS map - 0.15m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
602	Make up layer	Loose mid brown orange sand 0.25m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
603	Make up layer	Firm mid brown silty clay occasional small-medium ceramic building material 0.3m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
604	Buried subsoil	Friable mid brown orange silty sand 0.35m thick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
605	Natural	Loose mid orange clay sand frequent small-medium stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
607	Foundation trench	Foundation trench - robbed out - measuring 0.4m wide x 1m deep.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
606	Fill	Sandy silt and brick rubble	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

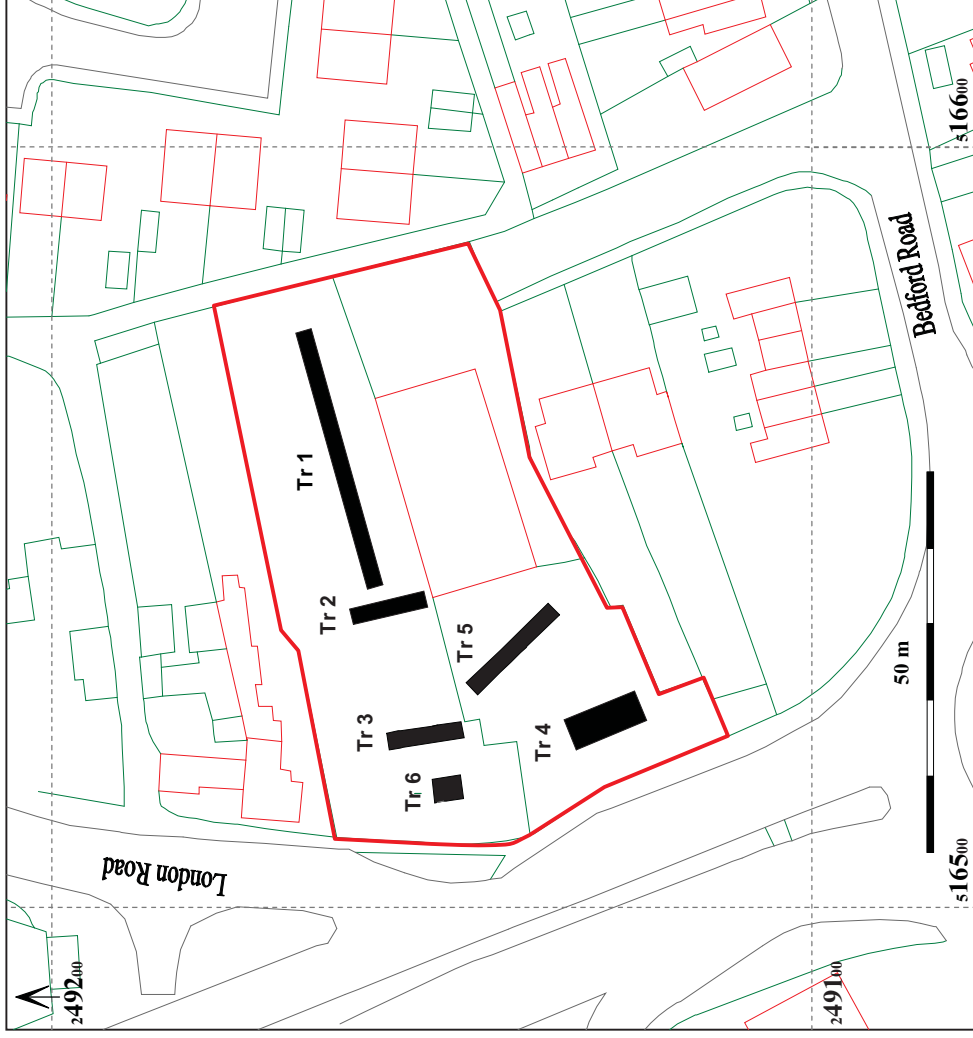
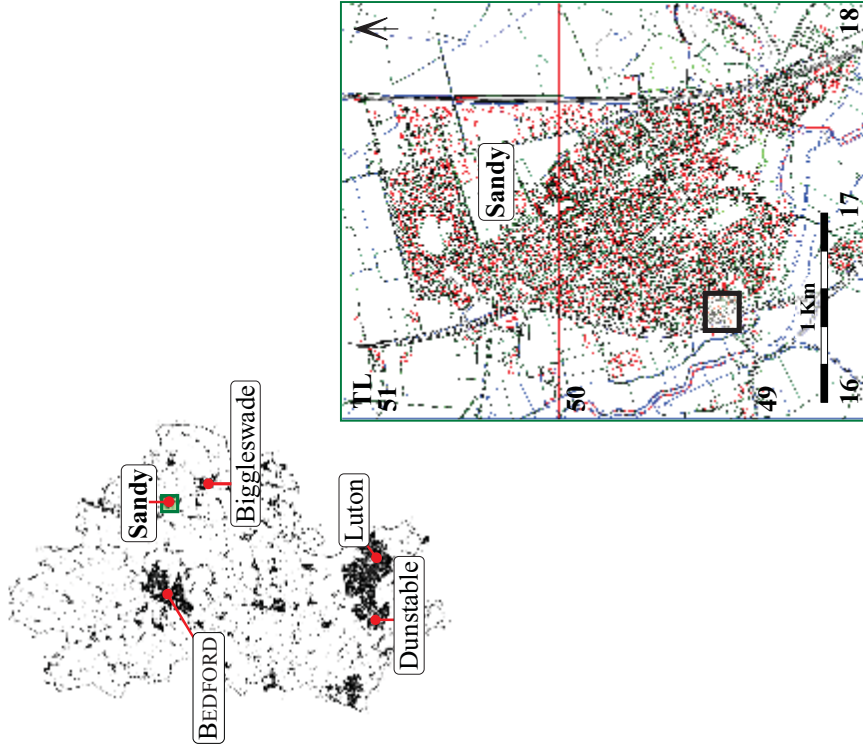
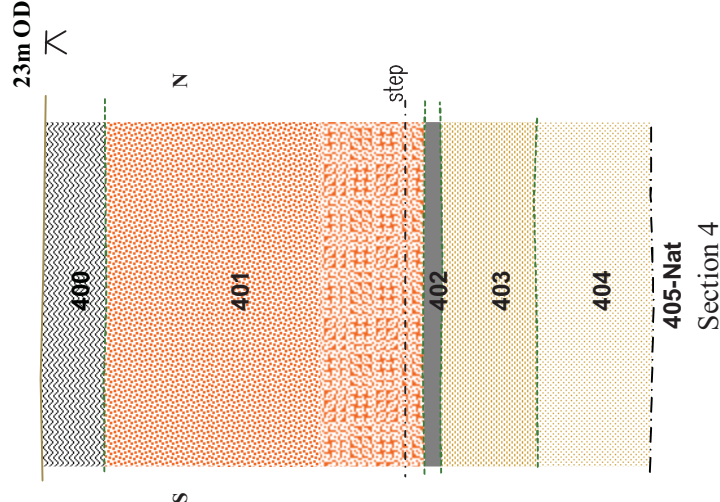
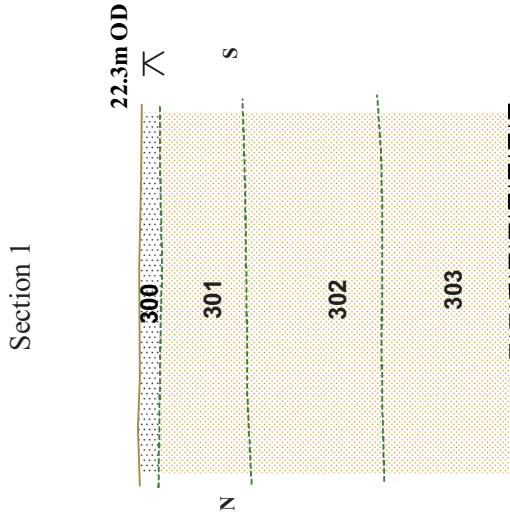
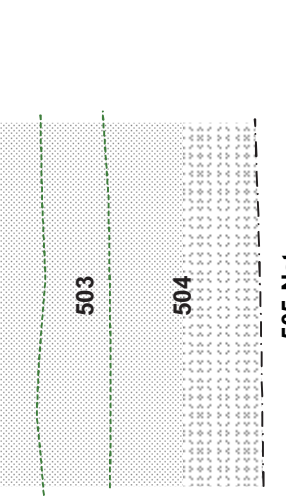
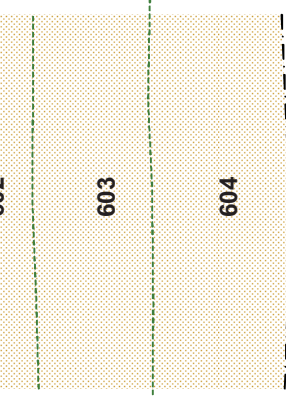
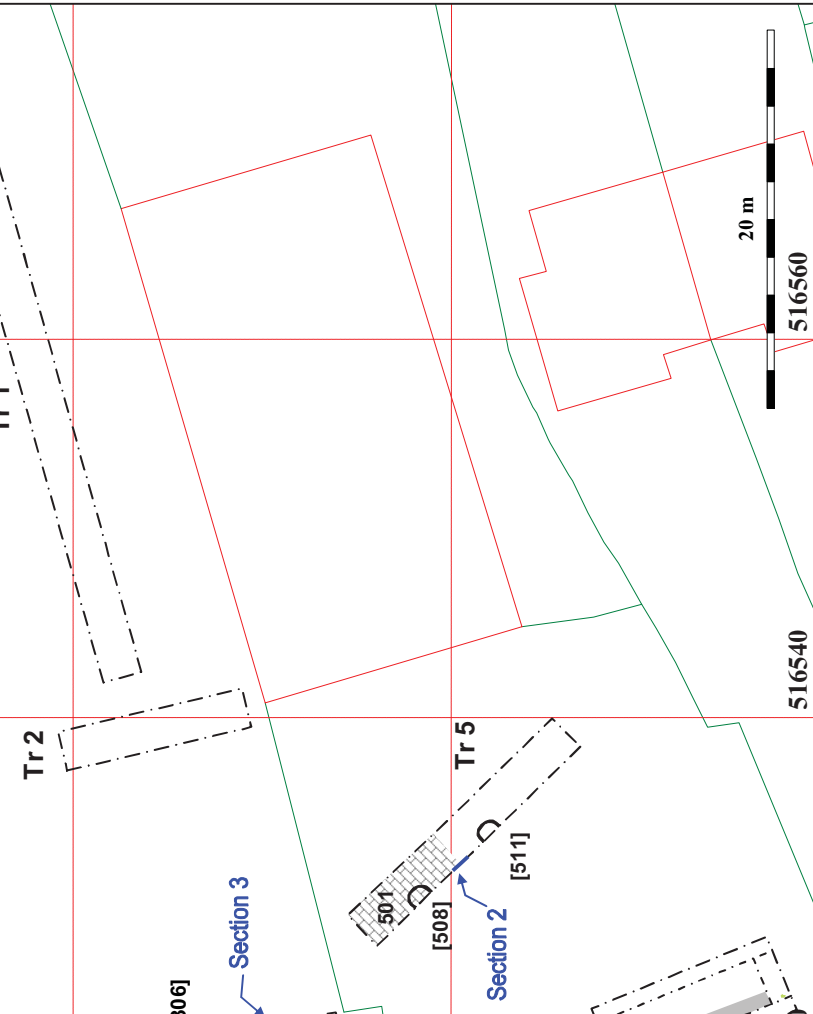


Figure 1: Site location plan

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Colours intended to reflect the general appearance of the context only.



Trench 5. Buried drains [507] and [509] (foreground) Looking WNW. Scale 1m



501). 1m



Trench 4. Concrete and tile floor (402)



Trench 4. Looking SW.