

LUTON DUNSTABLE BUSWAY DOG KENNEL DOWN BEDFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL 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.

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by BAM Nuttall Ltd and monitored on behalf of the local planning authority by Martin Oake, Archaeological Officer (AO), Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeology Team.

This report has been prepared by Marcin Koziminski (Archaeological Supervisor) and checked by James Newboult (Project Officer). Fieldwork was carried out by Marcin Koziminski with Ben Carroll and Claire Lockwood (Archaeological Technicians). Artefacts were reported on by Jackie Wells (Finds Officer). Joan Lightning (CAD Technician) digitised the plans and produced the report figures.

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1.0	25/02/11	n/a

Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

AO Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeological Officer

Client BAM Nuttall Ltd

HER Central Bedfordshire Council Historic Environment Record

IfA Institute for Archaeologists

RTK GPS Real Time Kinematic Global Positioning System

Technical Manager ARUP PB Joint Venture



Non-Technical Summary

Luton Borough Council and the then Bedfordshire County Council applied for an order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 to construct and operate a guided busway between Luton and Dunstable. The cultural heritage mitigation strategy outlined in the Environmental Impact Assessment (Faber Maunsell 2003) included pre-construction works in line with the requirements of the local authority archaeological advisor.

Part of the proposed busway runs through land at Dog Kennel Down which is located in the vicinity of the cropmark of a possible ring ditch (HER12285). Due to the archaeological sensitivity of this land, Central Bedfordshire Council's AO recommended that a predetermination archaeological evaluation of this part of the proposed route be carried out. Land at Dog Kennel Down is henceforth referred to as the Development Area (DA).

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by BAM Nuttall Ltd to undertake a programme of trial trenching and produce a report on the results (this document). A total of 13 trial trenches were investigated between 1st February and 11th February 2011. The results of the work will be used to inform any subsequent mitigation strategy.

Investigations revealed the remains of a NW-SE aligned ditch datable to the Roman period in Trench 13, within the south-eastern part of the DA. It probably served as a field boundary/drainage ditch associated with agricultural activity. However, the amount of pottery recovered from the excavated segment may indicate evidence for settlement activity in the vicinity.

Other remains comprised a truncated furrow and an undated pit. Modern make-up layers and pitting, identified in Trench 8, are likely to be associated with the construction of the early 20th-century railway link which forms the western border of the DA. All remains were overlain by subsoil and topsoil with a combined thickness of 0.25–0.4m.

No remains with clear relationships to cropmark HER12285 were identified.

The presence of Roman period remains within the DA is of significance due to the rarity of archaeological remains in the locality, particularly those predating the post-medieval period. However, these remains have limited potential to contribute to the understanding of landscape development and settlement patterns in the region during the Roman period.

The results of the evaluation suggest only low potential for finding further archaeological remains within the DA. However, evidence for plough truncation suggests that the paucity of remains within parts of the DA may be attributable to past arable land-use. It is possible that preservation potential in the south-eastern part of the DA (Trench 13) is better due to the presence of woodland since the construction of the Hatfield-Dunstable railway in 1855–1858.

Despite the lack of remains in the remainder of the DA, it is possible that pockets of better preservation potential exist beneath areas of buried soils and modern make-up layers, particularly within Trenches 7, 8 and 9.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

Luton Borough council and the then Bedfordshire County Council applied for an order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 to construct and operate a guided busway between Luton and Dunstable. (Note: in 2009 the new unitary authority of Central Bedfordshire Council replaced Bedfordshire County Council and the Mid and South Bedfordshire District Councils). The cultural heritage mitigation strategy outlined in the Environmental Impact Assessment (Faber Maunsell 2003) included pre-construction works in line with the requirements of the local authority archaeological advisor. Final scheme approval and funding was given in May 2010 and the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeological Officer (AO) produced a brief outlining the requirements for the archaeological works (CBC 2010). Construction work is being undertaken by BAM Nuttall Ltd.

As the proposed busway lies within an area of potential archaeological sensitivity, a recommendation was made by the local planning authority that the development was accompanied by a programme of archaeological works. This recommendation is in accordance with *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment*. The programme of works was outlined in the brief prepared by the AO (CBC 2010) and the scheme's Technical Manager's Written Scheme of Investigation (ARUP PB Joint Venture 2010).

Part of the proposed busway runs through land at Dog Kennel Down in the vicinity of the cropmark of a possible ring ditch (HER12285). Due to the archaeological sensitivity of this land, Central Bedfordshire Council's AO recommended that a predetermination archaeological evaluation of this part of the proposed route be carried out. Land at Dog Kennel Down is henceforth referred to as the Development Area (DA).

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by BAM Nuttall Ltd to undertake the trial trenching and produce a report on the results (this document). The results will be used to inform any subsequent mitigation strategy.

1.2 Site Location and Description

The DA comprises c.1.93ha of uneven land to the south-west of Dog Kennel Down, Dunstable, in the westernmost part of the proposed busway (Figure 1). It is centred on NGR TL01598/22831 and its height varies from c.135-150m OD. The land generally slopes down towards the former Hatfield-Dunstable branch railway which forms the southern border of the DA. The western and south-western borders are formed by an early 20th-century railway link to Houghton Regis.

The majority of the DA lies within the parish of Houghton Regis; the current landuse is grassland. The south-eastern part lies within Dunstable parish and is currently woodland (Figure 1). The underlying geology is chalk.



1.3 Archaeological Background

Little is known about the archaeology of the DA and its immediate environs due to the relative lack of previous investigations or observations.

The closest recorded remains are the cropmark of a possible ring ditch (HER12285) located at the top of the hill of Dog Kennel Down, c. 175m to the east of the DA.

1.4 Project Objectives

The principal objective of the trial trenching was to determine whether archaeological remains were present within the DA and, if so, to record their extent, condition, nature and significance.

The broader objective of the project was to add to the knowledge and understanding of the origins and nature of settlement in the area and to produce an archive report that fully describes the archaeological works.



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

Trial trenching was undertaken between 1st and 11th February 2011. It comprised eleven 30m- and two 15m-long trenches (Figures 1 and 2). Trench 13 was located within Dunstable parish; Trenches 1–12 were located within Houghton Regis parish.

Throughout the project the standards and guidance in the following documents were adhered to:

Albion Archaeology	Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork (2nd edn, 2001).		
English Heritage	Management of Research Projects in the Historic		
	Environment (MoRPHE) Project Managers' Guide (2006)		
	Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and		
	practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-		
	excavation (2002/01)		
IfA	By-Laws and Code of Conduct		
	Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field		
	Evaluation (updated 2008) and finds (updated 2008)		
Luton Museum	Procedure for preparing archaeological archives for		
	deposition with registered museums in Bedfordshire		
	(version 2.7)		

2.2 Trial Trenching Methodology

The trial trenching was carried out in accordance with the Method Statement (Albion Archaeology 2010), the AO Brief (CBC 2010) and the scheme's Technical Manager's Written Scheme of Investigation (ARUP PB Joint Venture 2010). In summary:

- The trial trenches were set out using a Network RTK GPS to ensure accurate location;
- All machine excavation was supervised by an archaeologist and was undertaken using a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged ditching bucket;
- Cultivation soil and modern overburden were removed by machine down to the top of archaeological deposits, or undisturbed geological deposits, whichever was encountered first;
- Recording took place on pro-forma sheets in accordance with the Albion Archaeology *Procedures Manual* (2nd edition, 2001);
- Trenches were inspected by the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeological Officer (AO) prior to backfilling.

All archaeological deposits and features (known as 'contexts') were assigned an individual number. Within this report, numbers in brackets refer to these context numbers. Cut features (*i.e.* pits, ditches *etc.*) are expressed as [***]; layers and deposits within cut features are expressed as (***). Detailed descriptions of all the contexts are contained within Appendix 1.



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

Results are summarised below and shown in Figures 2–5. Detailed technical information on all deposits and archaeological features can be found in Appendix 1.

3.2 Overburden and Geological Deposits

Overburden was generally consistent in colour and composition throughout the DA. It comprised silty-loam topsoil overlying firmer clay-silt subsoil. The thickness of the overburden varied from 0.25–0.90m and was generally thicker towards the western and south-western edges of the DA, probably as a result of historic ploughing and natural, down-slope soil movement.

Undisturbed geological deposits were encountered at 135.99–146.51m OD. They comprised chalk, with patches of chalky silt.

3.3 Roman Ditch

The remains of a NW-SE aligned ditch [1304] were encountered in Trench 13 in the south-eastern part of the DA (Table 1, Figure 5). It was filled by a single, sandy-silt deposit containing ten abraded sherds of calcareous greyware pottery (fabric R06E) datable to the 2nd century AD.

3.4 Undated Features

A small, sub-oval pit [104] was revealed in Trench 1 at the northern end of the DA (Figure 3). Its clay-silt fill produced no datable artefactual material.

The remains of a shallow, undated, linear feature [504] were identified in Trench 5 (Figure 2). Its depth and morphology suggest it is a medieval or post-medieval furrow. The absence of similar remains within the DA indicates truncation in the post-medieval and modern era.

The remains of two areas of buried soil were identified within the DA (Figure 2). In Trench 3 the remains of a buried subsoil (303) were encountered directly beneath the current subsoil. A buried subsoil (703 and 804) extended north-south for c. 60m in Trenches 7 and 8. It was overlain in Trench 8 (Figures 2 and 4) by a former topsoil (803). This, in turn, was overlain by make-up layers (802 and 904) which were truncated by a pit [806] containing modern ceramic building material. It is likely that the make-up layer and pit represent modern activity associated with the construction of the 20th-century railway link, c. 25m to the west.



4. SYNTHESIS

4.1 Summary and Significance of Archaeological Remains

Investigations revealed the remains of a NW-SE aligned ditch, datable to the Roman period in the south-eastern part of the DA. It probably served as a field boundary/drainage ditch associated with agricultural activity. However, the amount of pottery recovered from the excavated segment may indicate evidence for settlement activity in vicinity.

Other remains comprised a truncated furrow and an undated pit. Modern make-up layers and pitting identified in Trench 8 are likely to be associated with the construction of the early 20th-century railway link which forms the western border of the DA. All remains were overlain by subsoil and topsoil with a combined thickness of 0.25–0.4m.

No remains with clear relationships to cropmark HER12285 were identified.

The presence of Roman period remains within the DA is of significance due to the rarity of archaeological remains in the locality, particularly those predating the post-medieval period. However, these remains have limited potential to contribute to the understanding of landscape development and settlement patterns in the region during the Roman period.

4.2 Potential and Preservation

The evaluation suggests that the potential for finding further archaeological remains within the DA is low. However, the paucity of remains may be attributable to pastland use within the DA.

The part of the DA within Houghton Regis parish (Trenches 1-12) is currently under grassland. However, plough scars identified in Trench 4 and the partial survival of the furrow in Trench 5 suggest this land was historically ploughed. This is likely to have resulted in some truncation of pre-medieval archaeological remains within the DA.

Conversely, the only significant archaeological remains were identified in Trench 13, located in Dunstable parish. Trench 13 was located within a triangular parcel of woodland defined by the railway, the parish boundary and a N-S aligned footpath. This land parcel is first recorded on the 1st edition 25-inch OS map of 1880, indicating that the woodland was created by default following the construction of the Hatfield-Dunstable railway in 1855–1858.

Despite root damage recorded within Trench 13, the cessation of ploughing and creation of woodland may have created more benign conditions for the survival of archaeological remains in this part of the DA. Despite the lack of remains in the remainder of the DA, it is possible that pockets of better preservation potential exist beneath areas of buried soils and modern make-up layers, particularly within Trenches 7, 8 and 9.



5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- CBC, 2010, Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication of the Luton Dunstable Busway, Bedfordshire.

Faber Maunsell, 2003, Environmental Impact Assessment.

6. APPENDIX 1: CONTEXTUAL DATA



Max Dimensions: Length: 30.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.31 m. Max: 0.42 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1686: Northing: 23010)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1666: Northing: 22987)

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
101	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty loam occasional flecks chalk, occasional small-medium stones 0.34m thick.	_	
102	Subsoil	Firm mid orange brown clay silt moderate flecks chalk, moderate small stones 0.10m thick.	✓	
103	Natural	Compact light grey white chalk		
104	Pit	Sub-oval NE-SW sides: U-shaped base: concave dimensions: max breadth 1.08m, max depth 0.26m, min length 0.44m	✓	
105	Sole fill	Firm mid orange brown clay silt occasional flecks chalk, moderate small-medium stones	v	



Max Dimensions: Length: 30.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.69 m. Max: 0.71 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1639: Northing: 22972)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1664: Northing: 22955)

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated: Finds Prese	ent:
201	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty loam $$ occasional small-medium stones $$ 0.33m thick.	V	
202	Subsoil	Firm mid orange brown clay silt occasional flecks chalk, moderate small-medium stones 0.40m thick.	V	
203	Natural	Compact light brown white chalky silt occasional small stones		



Max Dimensions: Length: 30.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.41 m. Max: 0.86 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1638: Northing: 22952)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1629: Northing: 22923)

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated: Finds Present:	:
301	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty loam occasional small-medium stones 0.33m thick.	V	
302	Subsoil	Firm mid orange brown clay silt frequent flecks chalk, moderate small-medium stones 0.34m thick.	V]
303	Buried subsoil	Friable dark grey brown clay silt occasional flecks chalk, occasional small stones 0.23m thick.	V]
304	Natural	Compact light grey white silty chalk occasional small stones]



Max Dimensions: Length: 30.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.35 m. Max: 0.41 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1615: Northing: 22921)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1629: Northing: 22894)

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated: Finds P	Present:
401	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey silty loam occasional small-large CBM, occasional flecks chalk, occasional small-medium stones 0.28m thick.	V	
402	Subsoil	Firm mid brown grey clay silt moderate flecks chalk, occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones 0.13m thick.	✓	
403	Natural	Compact light grey white chalk		



Max Dimensions: Length: 30.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.3 m. Max: 0.34 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1619: Northing: 22864)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1589: Northing: 22860)

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated: Finds Present	
501	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty loam $$ moderate small-medium stones $$ 0.13m thick.		
502	Subsoil	Firm mid orange brown clay silt moderate flecks chalk, occasional flecks charcoal, frequent small stones, moderate medium stones 0.24m thick.	V	
503	Natural	Compact light grey white chalk occasional small stones		
504	Furrow	Linear N-S sides: U-shaped base: flat dimensions: max breadth 1.44m, max depth 0.17m, min length 3.m		
505	Sole fill	Friable mid orange brown clay silt frequent flecks chalk, moderate small stones		



Max Dimensions: Length: 30.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.42 m. Max: 0.48 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1597: Northing: 22855)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1598: Northing: 22825)

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated: Finds P	resent:
601	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey silty loam occasional flecks chalk, occasional small medium stones 0.28m thick.	. 🗸	
602	Subsoil	Firm mid grey brown clay silt moderate flecks chalk, moderate small-medium stones 0.20m thick.	✓	
603	Natural	Compact light grey white chalk		



Max Dimensions: Length: 30.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.34 m. Max: 0.45 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1608: Northing: 22814)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1592: Northing: 22789)

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated: Finds Presents	
701	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty loam occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones $0.20m$ thick.	V	
702	Subsoil	Firm mid orange brown clay silt moderate flecks chalk, occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones 0.19m thick.	V	
703	Buried Subsoil	Firm dark grey brown clay silt moderate flecks chalk, occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones 0.27m thick.	V	
704	Natural	Compact light grey white chalk moderate small stones		



Max Dimensions: Length: 15.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.87 m. Max: 1.12 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1600: Northing: 22768)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1609: Northing: 22756)

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
801	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty loam occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones 0.32m thick.	✓	
802	Make up layer	Firm mid grey brown clay silt frequent small-large CBM, frequent flecks chalk, occasional flecks charcoal, moderate small-medium stones 0.36m thick	✓ k.	
803	Buried topsoil	Firm dark grey brown silty loam occasional flecks chalk, occasional small stones 0.29m thick.	✓	
804	Buried subsoil	Firm mid orange brown clay silt frequent flecks chalk, frequent small stones 0.37m thick.	V	
805	Natural	Compact light grey white chalk		
806	Modern pit	NE-SW sides: U-shaped base: flat dimensions: max breadth 6.5m, max dept 0.56m, min length 2.m Cut into (802).	h 🗸	
807	Sole fill	Compact light grey white chalky silt frequent small-large CBM, occasional fleck charcoal, occasional small-large concrete, frequent small-medium stones	s 🗸	
808	Natural	Firm light brown white chalky silt occasional small stones Overlies natural (805) and occurs only in the centre of the trench.		



Max Dimensions: Length: 30.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.54 m. Max: 0.68 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1614: Northing: 22739)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1620: Northing: 22709)

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated: Finds Pro	esent:
901	Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown silty loam occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones 0.29m thick.	V	
902	Subsoil	Firm light grey brown clay silt moderate flecks chalk, occasional small-medium stones 0.25m thick.	✓	
903	Natural	Compact light grey white chalk		
904	Make up layer	Firm mid grey white chalky silt moderate small-large CBM, moderate flecks charcoal, moderate small-medium concrete, moderate small-medium stones 0.42m thick.	s 🗸	



Max Dimensions: Length: 30.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.3 m. Max: 0.43 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1630: Northing: 22683)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1637: Northing: 22712)

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated: Finds Present:	
1001	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty loam occasional flecks chalk, occasional small medium stones 0.29m thick.	_ 🗸	
1002	Subsoil	Firm mid grey brown clay silt moderate flecks chalk, moderate small-medium stones 0.14m thick.	✓	
1003	Natural	Compact light grey white chalk		



Max Dimensions: Length: 30.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.3 m. Max: 0.31 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1648: Northing: 22678)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1677: Northing: 22670)

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated: Finds Present:	
1101	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty loam occasional flecks chalk, occasional small stones 0.12m thick.	V	
1102	Subsoil	Firm mid grey brown clay silt moderate flecks chalk, moderate small-medium stones 0.19m thick.	~	
1103	Natural	Compact light grey white chalk		



Max Dimensions: Length: 30.00 m. Width: 2.00 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.26 m. Max: 0.37 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1717: Northing: 22663)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1687: Northing: 22658)

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated: Finds Present:	
1201	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty loam occasional flecks chalk, occasional small medium stones 0.10m thick.	_ 🗸	
1202	Subsoil	Firm mid grey brown clay silt moderate flecks chalk, occasional small-medium stones 0.27m thick.	✓	
1203	Natural	Compact light grey white chalk		



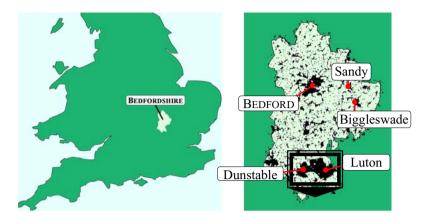
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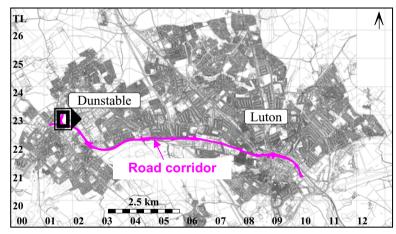
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OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 1732: Northing: 22645)

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1301	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty loam occasional flecks chalk, occasional small-medium stones 0.16m thick.	_	
1302	Subsoil	Firm mid grey brown clay silt frequent flecks chalk, occasional small-medium stones 0.13m thick.	✓	
1303	Natural	Compact light grey white chalk		
1304	Ditch	Linear NW-SE sides: 45 degrees base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.6m, max depth 0.38m, min length 3.25m	✓	
1305	Sole fill	Friable mid yellow brown sandy silt frequent small-medium chalk, occasional small-medium stones	✓	✓







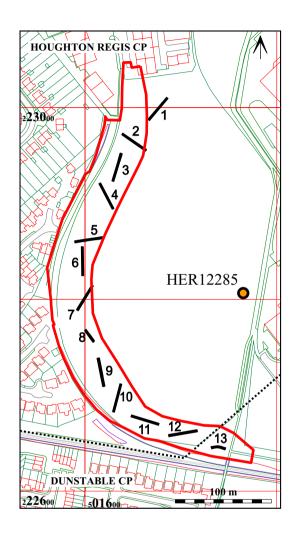


Figure 1: Site location and trench layout

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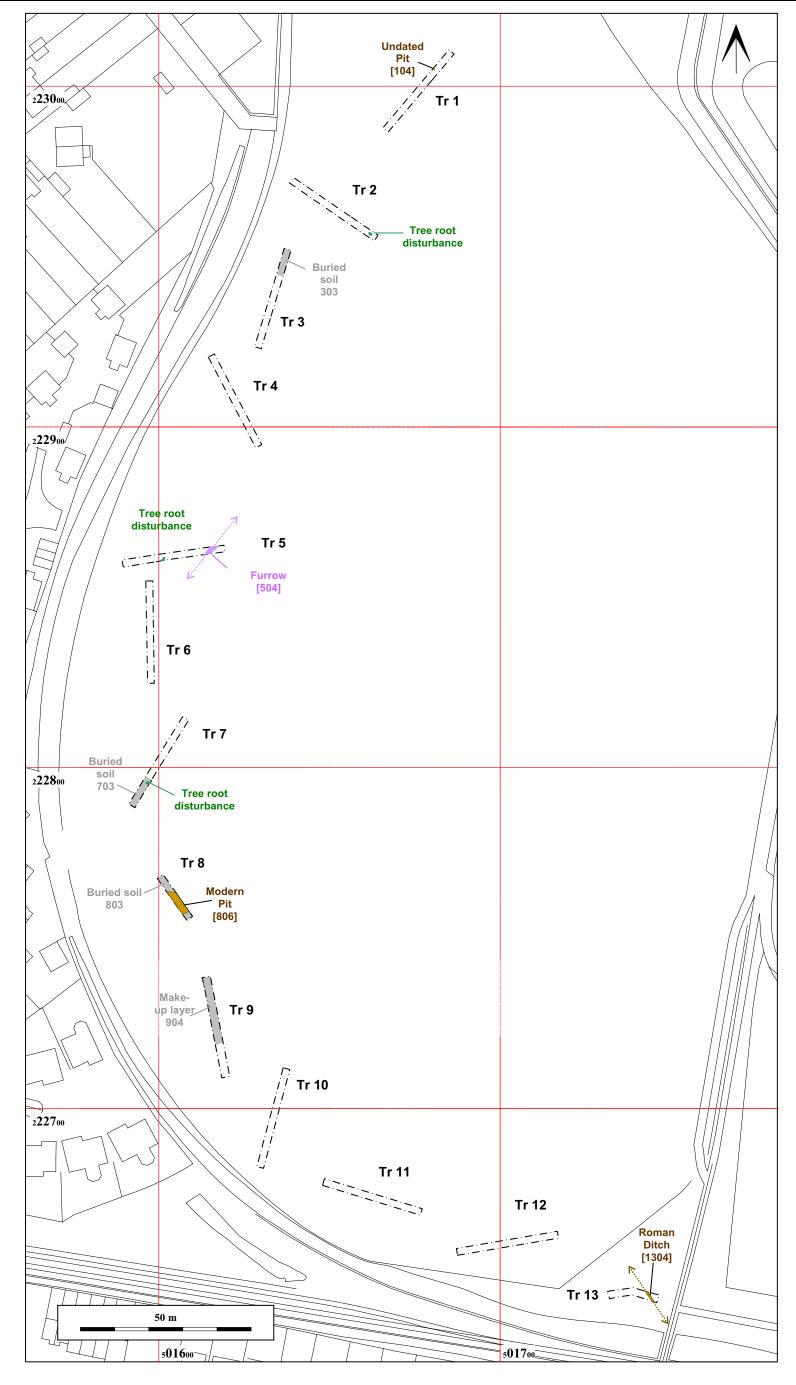
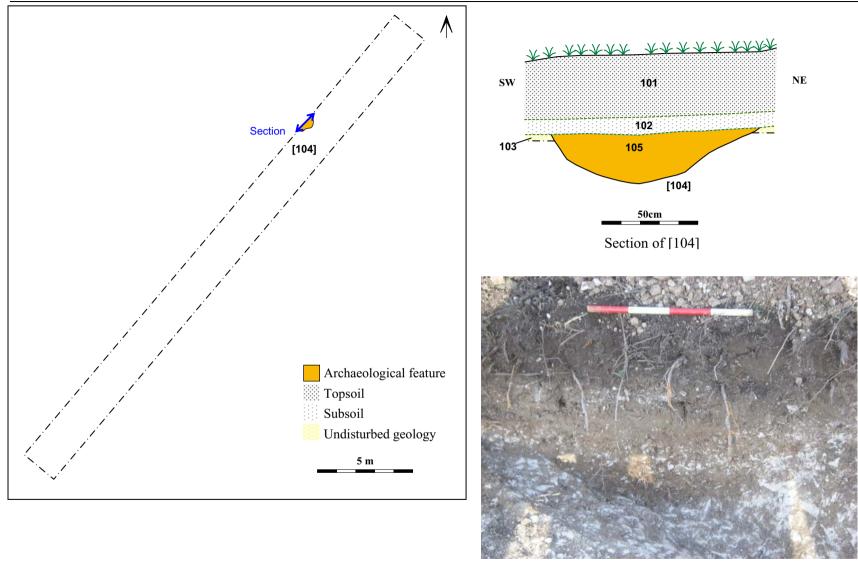


Figure 2: All features

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Photograph of pit [104]. Scale 40cm

Figure 3: Trench 1



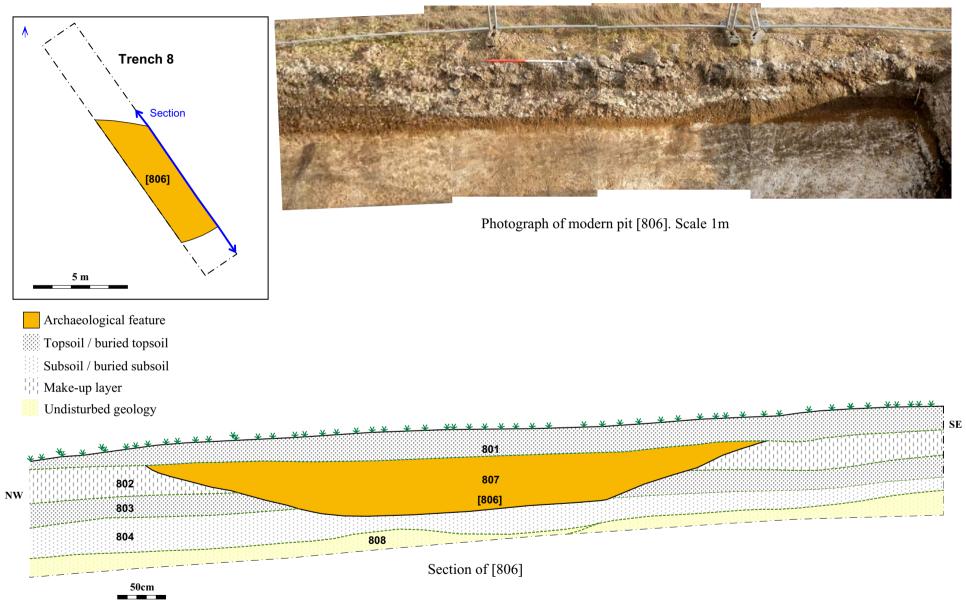
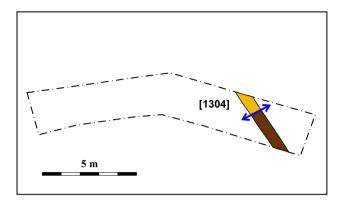
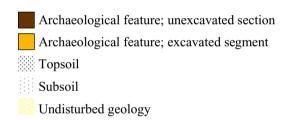
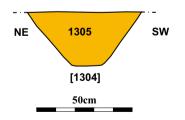


Figure 4: Trench 8











Photograph of ditch [1304]. Scale 40cm



Photograph of Trench 13 looking west. Scale 1m

Figure 5: Trench 13