

**LAND AT 15 VILLAGE ROAD
COCKAYNE HATLEY
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION,
INVESTIGATION, RECORDING, ANALYSIS AND
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Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation and submission of this document and all statements are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

This document has been prepared by Richard Gregson (Archaeological Supervisor) and Gary Edmondson (Project Manager). The figures were produced by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). Albion Archaeology would like to acknowledge the assistance of Mr Ganesch and the building contractor.

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Structure of the report

Section 1 serves as an introduction to the site, describing its location and archaeological background, together with the objectives of the project. Section 2 describes the results of the investigation. A short bibliography comprises Section 3. Appendix 1 provided a summary of the artefacts and ecofacts.

Version History

Version	Issue date	Reason for re-issue
1.0	6th October 2010	n/a

Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CDT	Conservation and Design Team
HER	Historic Environment Record (maintained by CBC)
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
<i>Procedures Manual</i>	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> , 2 nd edn, 2001 Albion Archaeology
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Background**

Planning permission (CB/09/1106/FULL) was granted for the erection of a new garage at 15 Village Road, Cockayne Hatley. An archaeological condition (no. 2) was attached to the planning permission, as the site lies within the village's historic core. The Conservation and Design Team (CDT) of Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) required all groundworks associated with the development to be archaeologically monitored to ensure that any remains uncovered were adequately investigated and recorded. Albion Archaeology was commissioned by the owner to carry out the necessary programme of archaeological works in accordance with the CDT's brief (CBC 2010) and an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Albion 2010).

This document provides an integrated summary of the results of the investigation undertaken during ground disturbance associated with construction of the new garage.

1.2 **Site Location and Description**

Cockayne Hatley is situated in north-east Bedfordshire, approximately 3.5km east of Potton (Figure 1). The site is situated roughly centrally within the linear settlement at TL (5)2603 (2)4962.

The settlement is located on the upper slope of a low east-west ridge which rises to 75m OD. The ridge is cut by a series of streams occupying small valleys, with a stream located towards the western limit of the settlement. The site is located at approximately 60m OD on ground sloping down to the south-west. The settlement is roughly central within an extensive band of glacial Till of the Lowerstoft Formation, aligned north-east to south-west. This overlies mudstone of the Gault Formation.

1.3 **Archaeological Background**

The archaeological background to the site is presented in Section 3 of the brief (CBC 2010). Documents indicate the presence of a settlement in the 10th century, with two manors being mentioned in Domesday Book; this indicates that the settlement has its origins in the Saxon period.

There are a variety of heritage assets — places or structures of heritage interest — within the vicinity. CBC's Historic Environment Record (HER) records 22 sites within 500m. These mostly comprise post-medieval buildings and associated structures including four listed examples; however, seven sites are earlier in date. Two undated cropmark sites are situated to the east of the settlement. Both define isolated enclosures of contrasting form. HER16850 is an isolated curvilinear enclosure; whilst HER16853 is of sub-rectangular form. No dating evidence has been recovered from the vicinity of the cropmarks, although they are both thought to be of prehistoric date. The line of a possible Roman road (HER 738) extends from Bedford, through Sandy, Cockayne Hatley and on to Wimpole. The other four records date to the medieval



period. Most lie in the western part of the village. Parts of the listed church of St John the Baptist (HER 1038) date to the 13th-15th centuries; one of the grave memorials, dating to 1903, is also listed (HER15533). To the north is the site of a possible moat (HER3891) enclosing Home Farm; its infilled outline can be discerned as undulations in the ground. To the east of the church is HER 16851 — a series of closes and associated ponds.

HER17166 designates the medieval village itself. Its main focus is to the west of the present settlement, comprising the church and possible moat with closes to the east, extending into the present settlement. This evidence indicated that the site had the potential to contain deposits of medieval or later late.

1.4 Project Objectives

Being situated in the historic core of the settlement, the site provided an opportunity to examine any surviving deposits associated with possible medieval and earlier occupation of the site. The specific aims of the fieldwork were to:

- Investigate and record the construction works and any archaeological deposits encountered within them in order to understand the site in relation to its cultural and environmental setting;
- Determine if any deposits or structures associated with the medieval settlement survived;
- Determine if there was any evidence for earlier activity particularly the postulated Saxon origins of the settlement;
- Recover artefacts and ecofacts from medieval and earlier deposits in particular to assist in the understanding of the cultural and environmental landscape.



2. RESULTS

2.1 Introduction

The site is located adjacent to the street frontage (Figure 1). Monitoring of all ground disturbance associated with the construction of the garage was undertaken between 15th and 21st September 2010. The extended period of monitoring was due to several problems relating to the layout and excavation of the footings and associated soil removal. The ground disturbance comprised preliminary ground reduction, excavation of wall footings and a service trench from the house to the garage for water and electricity.

All archaeological deposits or features were investigated and recorded in accordance with the methodology detailed in Appendix 1 of the WSI (Albion 2010). Soil heaps were checked on a regular basis for archaeological artefacts. In the following discussion all archaeological contexts recorded on site are shown in brackets: [] in the case of a cut; () for associated fills or layers. The archaeological results of the fieldwork are discussed chronologically with finds data integrated, as appropriate. An overall summary of the artefacts and ecofacts can be found in Appendix 1.

The area of ground reduction was roughly rectangular, extending 10m east-west by 7.5m (Figure 2). Located obliquely in the eastern part of the ground reduction area, the footprint of the garage measured 7.5m by 6.75m. Initially, only ploughsoil and subsoil were disturbed during the ground reduction and no archaeological remains were encountered. In the north-east corner, an area of undisturbed geological strata was exposed, comprising glacially derived clay. During the course of the subsequent excavation of the wall footings some additional ground reduction occurred, revealing four pits. An east-west aligned boundary ditch, which had been redefined on at least one occasion, was also identified to the south of pits.

The excavation of the relatively narrow and shallow service trench revealed a single pit (Figure 2).

2.2 Overburden

Overburden was up to 0.65m thick on the north and east sides of the foundation trenches where it comprised ploughsoil (1) and subsoil (2) (Figure 2: section 2). On the other two sides, the overburden was thinner as only ploughsoil was present (Figure 2: section 3). The ploughsoil (1) was dark grey brown clay silt, up to 0.28m thick. Where present the subsoil (2) was mid grey brown silty clay, up to 0.25m thick. A layer of material (8) mainly derived from the underlying geological deposit was found sandwiched between ploughsoil and subsoil towards the north-eastern corner of the site (Figure 2: section 2 and Figure 3). The origin and date of this deposit is uncertain. Subsoil and ploughsoil were probably formed by more than one episode of arable cultivation, given the presence of intermediate deposit (8). The ploughsoil may have been reworked during its period as garden soil. All archaeological deposits were sealed or truncated by the overburden.



2.3 Geological Strata

This consisted of light yellow brown silty clay, with occasional flints ranging in size from small to large.

2.4 Archaeological Results

The earliest evidence for activity at the site comprises residual pottery, recovered from later deposits.

2.4.1 Iron Age

A single, small, abraded, hand-made sherd of mid-late Iron Age pottery (4g) occurred as a residual find in post-medieval layer (9). Whilst this may indicate contemporary activity in the vicinity, it may have been brought to the site from the adjacent area.

2.4.2 Saxo-Norman

The fill of pit [21] yielded an inturned bowl rim from a wheel-thrown, shell-tempered vessel in the St Neots-type tradition (29g), datable to the Saxo-Norman period. This pottery sherd would appear to be residual, as the pit is intermediate in a sequence of pits, the earliest of which contains late medieval pottery (see 2.4.4 below).

2.4.3 Early medieval

This phase is characterised by the establishment of a ditched boundary, with residual pottery, recovered from later deposits, suggesting associated activity in the vicinity.

An east-west aligned boundary ditch was recorded along the southern side of the wall footings trench (Figures 2 and 3). It had been re-cut on at least one occasion by a ditch on the same alignment but slightly to the north; the re-cut removed much of the original ditch (Figure 2: section 1). What remained of the original ditch [10] was 1m wide and up to 0.46m deep. The later ditch [12] was up to 2.25m wide and 0.49m deep. Both ditches terminated before they reached the south-east corner of the footings trench, suggesting that there may have been an entranceway there. Deposits within the ditches varied from mid green grey to dark brown grey silty clay. The earlier ditch contained a number of large stones along its length, mostly in the base. The significance of these is uncertain; their form indicated that they were not post-packing for a timber palisade. It is possible that they may have been derived from erosion of the edge of the ditch, which exposed the geological strata. No artefacts were recovered from the surviving fill of the earlier ditch. Fill (13) of the later ditch [12] contained 18g of early medieval pottery (Table 1).

The majority of the pottery assemblage from the site (28 sherds: 241g) is also of early medieval date; it is residual in post-medieval layer (9). The material comprises predominantly hand-made, sand-tempered sherds of probable local manufacture, datable to the 12th-13th centuries. Two wheel-thrown, shell-tempered sherds of similar date were also recovered. Vessel forms are a flat rim jar and part of a bowl base. This would suggest early medieval activity in the vicinity.



2.4.4 *Late medieval*

A series of pits, mostly intercutting, can be dated to this period on the basis of stratigraphic and spatial evidence and artefactual dating. The activity appears to be focused on the area immediately to the north of the early medieval re-cut boundary ditch.

A cluster of four pits [14], [16], [19] and [21] was identified. They were generally sub-oval and *c.* 4m in diameter, although intermediate pit [21] was considerably smaller at *c.* 1.2m in diameter (Figure 2). Three of the pits were marginally intercutting, suggesting that they were dug when the previous example was still visible. They were relatively shallow, up to 0.34m deep (Figure 2: sections 1-3). However, it is likely that they had been heavily truncated by ploughing. Approximately 12m to the south-east of the pit cluster another pit [6], 2.5m in diameter, was revealed in the service trench (Figure 2).

The deposits within the pits varied from mid orange brown to dark brown grey in colour and from silty clay to clay silt in composition. The darker deposits generally contained more artefacts than the lighter deposits and were probably the result of rubbish deposition rather than natural infilling. Datable artefacts were recovered from pits [6], [16] and [19] and [21], comprising five sand-tempered sherds (51g) in the East Midlands late medieval reduced ware tradition. A single, residual, early medieval sherd of pottery was recovered from intermediate small pit [21] (Figure 2). Small quantities of animal bone were recovered from pits [6], [14], [19] and [21] (Table 1). Fragments were small, with an average weight of 4g and moderately abraded. Diagnostic elements are long bone, rib and tooth fragments of indeterminate species.

The function of the pits is uncertain, although all of them appear to define a linear band, possibly adjacent to a boundary established in the early medieval period.

2.4.5 *Post-medieval*

Deposit [9], which partly obscured the pit cluster, contained a significant artefact assemblage. This mostly comprised residual material including the Iron Age pottery sherd, the majority of the residual early medieval pottery assemblage and a few late medieval sherds (Table 2). This deposit also contained an abraded, sand-tempered piece of post-medieval flat roof tile (41g).

2.5 *Discussion*

Although the area of ground disturbance was relatively small, it has provided a valuable insight into activity associated with the medieval settlement, as well as providing hints of earlier use of the site. The earliest recorded features, a re-cut boundary ditch, date to the early medieval period. This corresponds to the earliest fabric in the church of St John the Baptist, located at the west end of the village. Residual early medieval pottery derived from later deposits suggests that other features and activity may have been located in the vicinity. During the late medieval period, the area became a focus for pitting. The clustering of the pits suggests that the earlier land division remained intact.



Residual sherds of Iron Age and Saxo-Norman pottery hint at other, earlier phases of activity. Two undated cropmark sites are situated to the east of the settlement. Both define isolated enclosures of contrasting form. HER16850 is an isolated curvilinear enclosure; whilst HER16853 is of sub-rectangular form. On the basis of their form, these cropmark enclosures could be of Iron Age date. Similarly, documentary evidence indicates that the settlement has Saxon origins; the single sherd of Saxo-Norman pottery may suggest that part of that settlement was in this area.



3. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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4. APPENDIX 1 – ARTEFACT AND ECOFACT SUMMARY

4.1 Introduction

The finds assemblage comprises mainly pottery and animal bone (Table 1). The material was scanned to ascertain its nature, condition and, where possible, date range.

Feature	Description	Context	Spot date*	Finds Summary
6	Pit	7	Late medieval	Pottery (8g); animal bone (4g)
9	Layer	9	Post-medieval	Pottery (227g); roof tile (41g); animal bone (16g)
12	Ditch	13	Early medieval	Pottery (18g)
14	Pit	15	Undated	Animal bone (12g)
16	Pit	17	Late medieval	Pottery (34g)
19	Pit	20	Late medieval	Pottery (12g); animal bone (5g)
21	Pit	22	Saxo-Norman	Pottery (29g); animal bone (1g)

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

Table 1: Artefact summary by feature

4.2 Ceramics

Thirty-seven pottery sherds, weighing 328g were recovered. These were examined by context and quantified using minimum sherd count and weight. The pottery is highly fragmented, with an average sherd weight of 9g, although it survives in fair to good condition. Ten fabric types were identified using common names and type codes in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series, currently held by Albion Archaeology. Fabrics are listed below (Table 2) in chronological order.

Fabric type	Common name	Sherd No.	Context/Sherd No.
<i>Mid-late Iron Age</i>			
F15	Coarse mixed inclusions	1	(9):1
<i>Saxo-Norman</i>			
B01	St Neots-type ware	1	(22):1
<i>Early medieval</i>			
B07	Shell	2	(9):2
C59B	Sand	2	(9):1
C61	Calcareous inclusions	1	(9):1
C67	Mixed inclusions	17	(9):17
C71	Sand (buff-grey cored)	6	(9):4, (17):2
C75	Sand (micaceous)	1	(13):1
<i>Late medieval</i>			
E01	Reduced sand	5	(7):1, (9):1, (17):2, (20):1
E01D	Reduced sand (red margins)	2	(9):2

Table 2: Pottery type series

4.3 Ecofacts

Nine pieces of animal bone, weighing 38g, were recovered from features of medieval and post-medieval date. Fragments are small, with an average weight of 4g and moderately abraded. Diagnostic elements are long bone, rib and tooth fragments of indeterminate species.

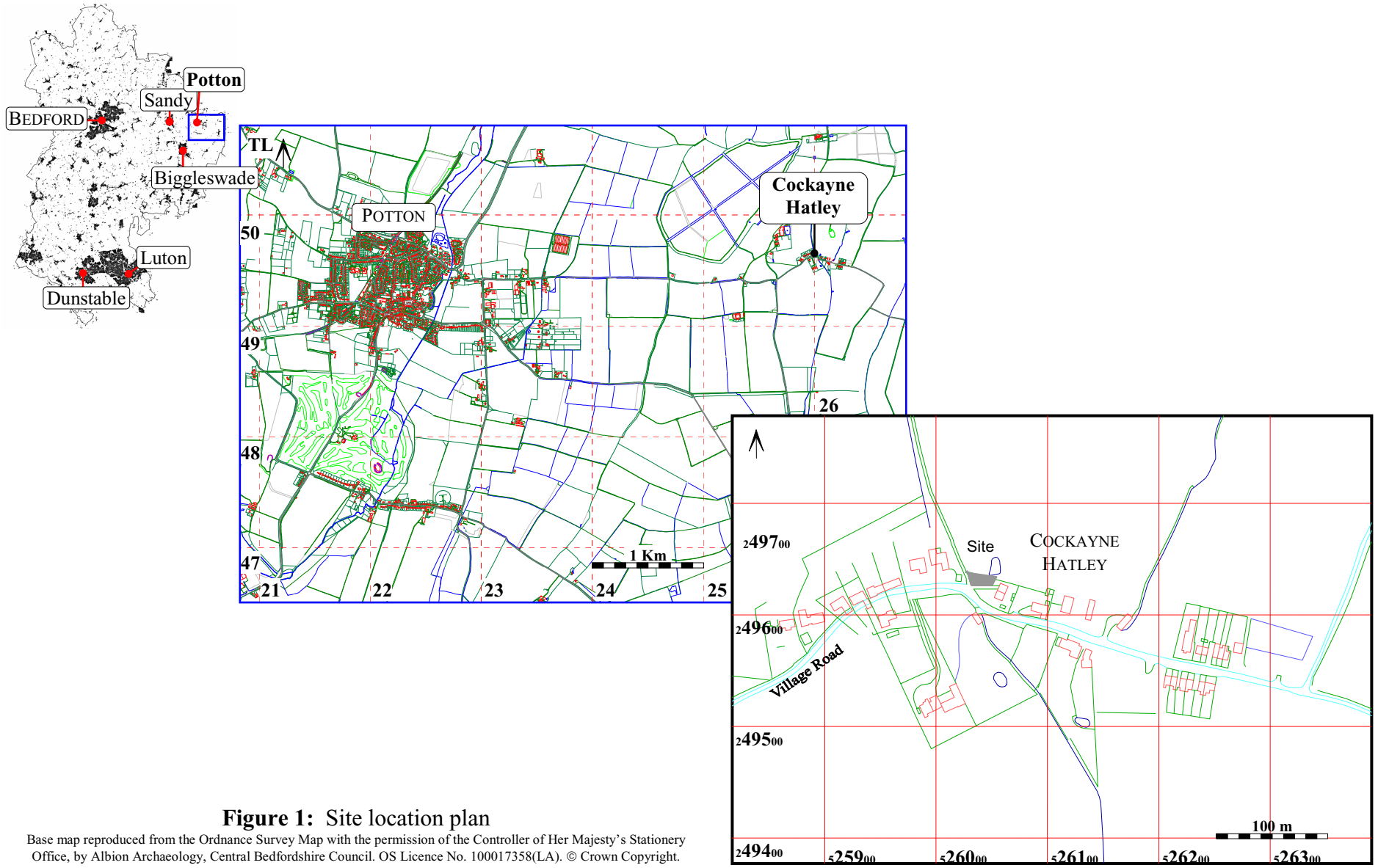
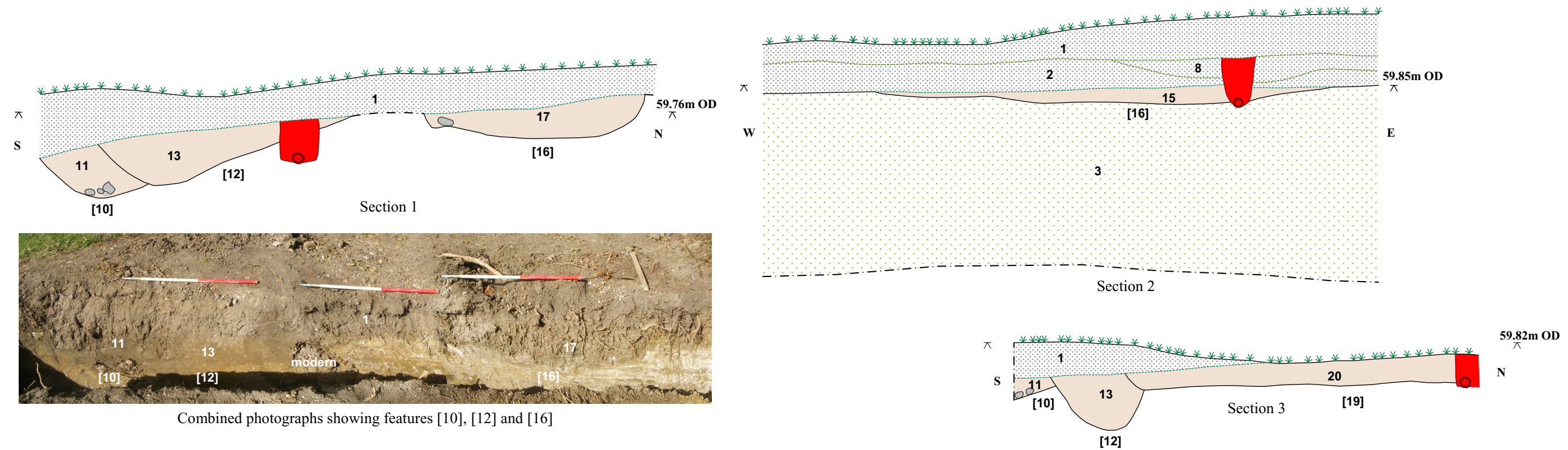


Figure 1: Site location plan

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Combined photographs showing features [10], [12] and [16]

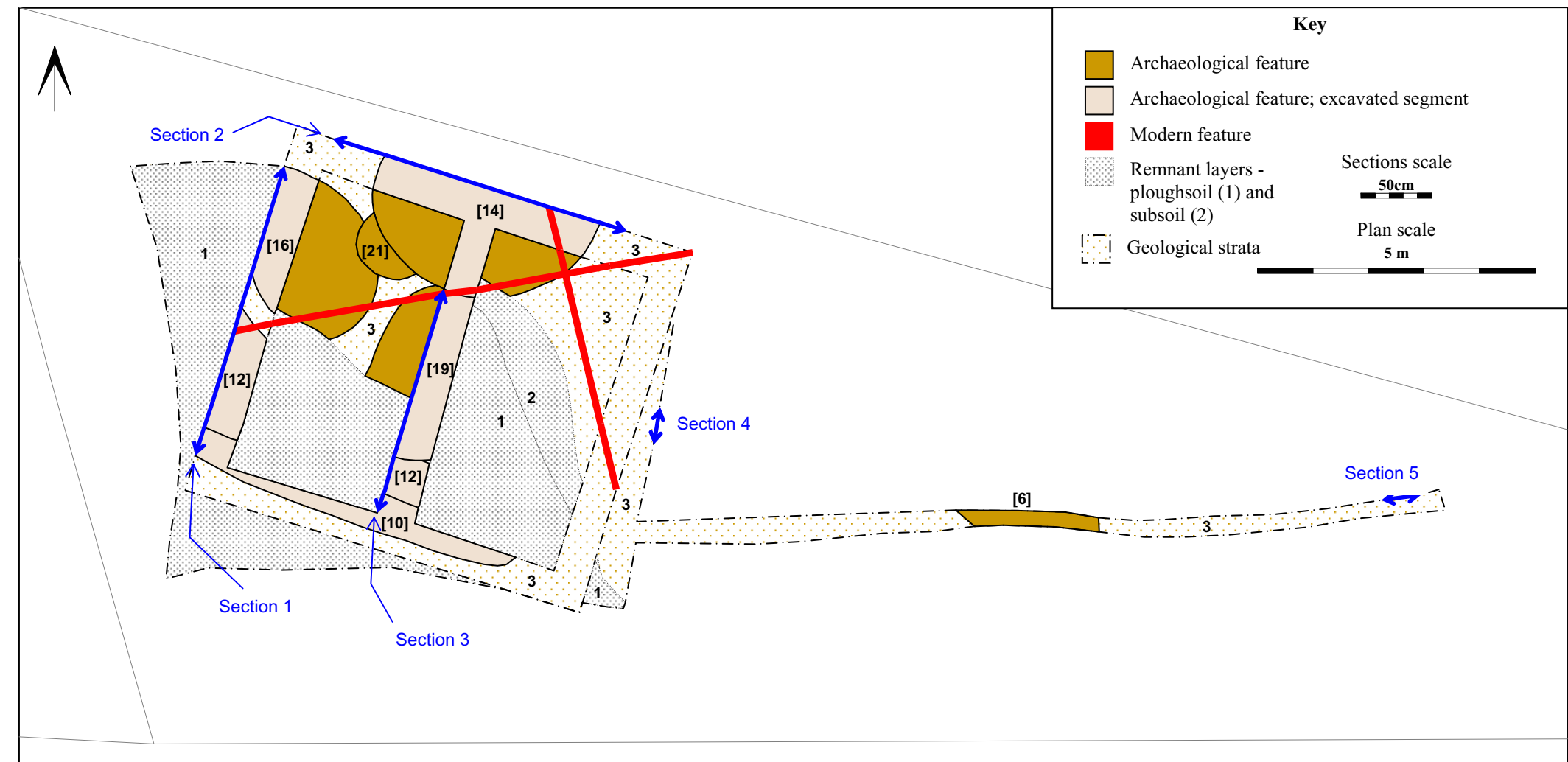


Figure 2: All features plan with sections

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Figure 3: Combined photographs, showing the garage area with features delimited. Looking NNE, scale 1 metre