12 GREEN STREET WILLINGHAM CAMBRIDGESHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING

Albion archaeology





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ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING

Project: GS1777 CHER event no.: ECB3554 Planning application: S/2285/10

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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.

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Relmfield Builders Ltd and monitored on behalf of the LPA by Dan McConnell of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice office.

This report has been prepared by Richard Gregson (Archaeological Supervisor), who also undertook the fieldwork. The finds were analysed by Jackie Wells (Artefacts Officer). Illustrations were prepared by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician).

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Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

CAPCA	Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice office
CCC	Cambridgeshire County Council
HER	Historic Environment Record
I <i>f</i> A	Institute for Archaeologists
LPA	Local Planning Authority



Non-Technical Summary

Planning permission for the construction of nine dwellings at 12 Green Street, Willingham, has been granted by South Cambridgeshire District Council. Due to the potential impact of the development upon a significant heritage asset, the Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice office advised the LPA that a condition for a scheme of archaeological work should be placed on the planning consent. The initial phase of work comprised trial trenching.

The development site is located fairly close to the medieval core of Willingham. The surrounding area is rich in archaeological and historical heritage assets. Belsar's Hill, a medieval ringwork, located on the site of an Iron Age fort lies c.1.5km to the east of Willingham. Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Saxon features have all been found during excavations at various locations around the village. Restoration of the nearby Saint Mary's and All Saints' Church, which largely dates from the 12th–14th century, revealed earlier Anglo-Saxon stonework further underlining the potential importance of the Saxon presence at Willingham.

The trial trenching was carried out in April 2011 and comprised the excavation of two trial trenches located within the proposed development area.

The trial trenching uncovered two possible sand/gravel quarry pits, five post holes and two service trenches. The quarry pitting is likely to be post-medieval in date and the post holes, modern. The service trenches were related to the house and its outbuildings which were built around the turn of the 20th century.

Both trenches also contained several layers of redeposited material which collectively would have significantly raised the ground surface in the area. This may have been necessary to level the natural topography or more likely to infill previous disturbance caused by quarrying.

None of the archaeological features found during the evaluation are considered to be significant or of particular interest. The recovery of redeposited medieval pottery is of note as it indicates activity of this date in the area, although not necessarily within the boundaries of the site.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Planning permission for the construction of nine dwellings at 12 Green Street, Willingham, has been granted by South Cambridgeshire District Council (S/2285/10). Due to the potential impact of the development upon a significant heritage asset, the Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice office (CAPCA) advised the LPA that a condition for a scheme of archaeological work should be placed on the planning consent.

Paragraph 21 of the Planning Permission states that:

"No development shall take place on the application site until the implementation of a programme of archaeological work has been secured in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority."

This is in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the Adopted Local Development Framework 2007 and the government's Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) for the historic environment.

CAPCA issued a brief (CAPCA 2011) outlining the requirements for an archaeological evaluation as the first stage of the work required to address the condition. The evaluation was to comprise trial trenching, the results of which would be used to characterise the archaeological potential of the site and determine whether there was any need for further investigation.

1.2 Site Description

Willingham lies at the edge of the Cambridgeshire Fens just under 3km south of the River Great Ouse and 10km to the north of Cambridge (Figure 1).

The proposed development area lies in the centre of the village of Willingham and is centred on grid reference TL 4074 7031. It measures approximately 0.2ha in size and is currently occupied by a large detached dwelling fronting Green Street with a yard and garden to the rear bordered by sheds and farm buildings.

The site lies at a height of c. 7–9m OD with the drift geology of the area comprising Level 2 River Terrace Deposits of sand and gravel

The proposed development will comprise demolition of the existing structures at the site and the construction of nine new dwellings with associated gardens.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The fen edge was densely settled in the prehistoric and Roman periods and remains dating from the Bronze Age onwards have been found at Willingham.

A 1km-radius search of the Cambridgeshire HER around the site showed that Willingham is a settlement rich in archaeological and historical heritage assets.



Belsar's Hill ringwork, a Scheduled Monument (SM20418, HER01770), c.1.5km to the east of Willingham, is a medieval ringwork located on the site of an earlier Iron Age fort. It is thought that the ringwork was built by William the Conqueror on his way to attack the Isle of Ely. The fort lies on the route of Aldreth Causeway, which may have origins as early as the Bronze Age period.

Bronze Age features were revealed in Willingham itself near the core of the village during excavations at Saxon Way (HER11973). Evidence for Iron Age and Roman (HER17936) occupation was found during excavations in advance of modern development between the High Street, Long Lane and Church Street. The excavations also revealed that a sizable settlement existed at Willingham from the early to late Saxon period, less than 200m to the west of the proposed development site. The evidence comprised post-built hall structures, pits and ditches (HER17885 and HER18148).

During restoration of Saint Mary's and All Saints' Church (HER05794), which largely dates from the 12th–14th century, earlier Anglo-Saxon stonework was found in the chancel walls (HER05794a), further underlining the potential importance of the Saxon presence at Willingham.

Willingham continued to grow during the medieval and post-medieval periods. The compactness and regularity of its plan suggest that the village grew in several, planned stages after the Conquest (Wright and Lewis 1989). The focus of the village now lay between Saint Mary's Church and the village green at the corner of Rockmill Lane (now Green Street), linked by Church Street. By 1575, the High Street and Rockmill Lane, the two main thoroughfares through the village, were lined on both sides with houses (ibid 1989).

Excavations opposite the site, at 23 Green Street (HER16302), revealed buildings along the street frontage dating to the 14th century. Occupation seems to have ceased until the 17th/18th century when activity started again in the form of ditches, post holes and pits.

A further evaluation opposite the site at the northern corner of Short Lane and Green Street showed that the area had been severely truncated and no archaeological remains were found (HER ECB438).

A map of 1842 shows the properties fronting onto Green Street as a line of tofts, with small, street-frontage buildings and long, thin garden plots to the rear (Wright and Lewis 1989). The houses that presently line the street frontage most likely date from around the turn of the 20th century. The neighbouring property at 14 Green Street is a mid 19th-century villa; it is Grade II listed (LB50897).

1.4 Project Objectives

The principal objective of the evaluation was to determine whether archaeological remains were present at the proposed development site and, if so, to determine their extent, condition, nature and significance. This information was to be used in the formulation of an appropriate mitigation strategy for the archaeological remains, if present.



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 Fieldwork

The trial trenching was carried out during 11th and 12th April 2011. It comprised the excavation of two trenches located in the yard and garden of the property (Figures 1 and 2).

The trenches were opened by a mechanical excavator, fitted with a flat-edged ditching bucket operated by an experienced driver under the supervision of an appropriately experienced archaeologist.

Overburden was removed down to the top of undisturbed geological deposits. The spoil heaps were scanned for artefacts. The base of the trench was cleaned by hand to help reveal any potential archaeological features. All deposits were recorded in a unique number sequence, using Albion Archaeology's *pro forma* sheets. The trench was subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate.

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

Albion Archaeology	Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork (2nd edn, 2001).
ALGAO (east)	Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England
• CCC	Deposition of Archaeological Archives in the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store (HER 2004/1).
English Heritage	Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) (2009)
• IfA	By-Laws and Code of Conduct Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation

2.2 Archive

The archive of finds and records generated during the project will be deposited with the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store under the event number ECB3554.

Details of the project and its findings have been submitted to the Archaeology Data Service's OASIS database under reference number albionar1-99726.



3. RESULTS

Summary descriptions of the deposits encountered and finds recovered are provided below. Full details are set out in Appendices 1 and 2. The findings are illustrated in Figure 2.

3.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was 8.5m x 1.6m and excavated to a depth of 1.1m. It was intended to be 10m long but had to be shortened by 1m at its northern end due to the presence of a possibly live water pipe and 0.5m at its southern end due to the presence of buried asbestos roofing material.

Overburden consisted of five layers: topsoil (100); an ashy layer (105); an upper make-up layer (104); an intermediate make-up layer (103) and a lower make-up layer (102.) Topsoil comprised dark brown grey sandy silt. The ashy layer comprised mid grey ashy sand. The upper make-up layer comprised light orange yellow sandy gravel. The intermediate make-up layer comprised mid orange brown silty sand. The lower make-up layer comprised dark brown grey sandy silt with occasional brick fragments and white porcelain (not retained.)

Below topsoil and truncating the other layers were three modern features. At the northern end of the trench was a small-bore, iron water pipe, presumably to supply one of the outbuildings. In the middle of the trench was a ceramic drain pipe within a trench and to the north of this was a pit or possible service trench [106] containing a loosely consolidated backfill deposit (107) comprising mid grey brown sandy silt.

3.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was 25m x 1.6m and excavated to a depth of around 0.55m. A 1.75m section in the middle of the trench was not excavated, again due to the presence of buried asbestos roofing material.

Overburden consisted of six layers: topsoil (200); an upper make-up layer (201); an ashy layer (202); a hard standing layer (203); a lower make-up / levelling layer (204) and a buried topsoil (205). Topsoil comprised mid brown grey sandy silt. The upper make-up layer comprised light orange yellow sandy gravel. The ashy layer comprised light reddish grey ashy sand. The hard standing comprised broken brick and yellow sandy mortar. The lower make-up layer comprised compact dark green grey sandy silt. Buried topsoil comprised dark grey brown sandy silt.

Below buried topsoil were two large, irregular pits that extended beyond the limits of the trench. Both were identified as possible sand/gravel quarry pits. The eastern pit [216] was 2.5m by 2m and 1m deep. Due to its size, it was excavated partially by machine in order to determine its full depth. It contained dark brown grey sandy silt (217), with occasional brick fragments. A single, large sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from this deposit. It is likely that the sherd was residual, since the other artefacts in the pit, namely the brick fragments, suggest a post-medieval or later date for the backfilling of the quarry.



Possible quarry pit [216] in the western half of the trench was larger and more regular. It was 7m long by at least 1.6m wide and 1m deep. Its western end was machine-excavated to determine its depth. It contained two distinct, very well compacted deposits (218) and (219). Deposit (218) comprised dark brown grey sandy silt and contained occasional brick fragments. Deposit (219) comprised mid blue grey clay with occasional brick fragments; it, was restricted to the western end of the quarry pit.

The bases of five post holes [206], [208], [210], [212] and [214] were located at the eastern end of the trench. They were broadly in an E-W alignment, although the largest [208] was offset to the north by c. 0.5m. They were mostly square or rectangular in shape. They varied from 0.2–0.7m in length, 0.17–0.5m in breadth and were up to 0.15m deep. They contained dark grey brown sandy silt, which was probably derived from topsoil. An abraded post-medieval or modern brick fragment was recovered from post hole [212] and an extant wooden post fragment was found protruding out of post hole [208.] It is likely that all five were part of a fairly modern fence line, possibly forming an internal division within the property's yard.



4. CONCLUSIONS

The trial trenching uncovered two possible sand/gravel quarry pits, five post holes and two service trenches. The quarry pitting is likely to be post-medieval in date and the post holes, modern. The service trenches were related to the house and its outbuildings which were built around the turn of the 20th century.

Both trenches also contained several layers of redeposited material which collectively would have significantly raised the ground surface in the area. This may have been necessary to level the natural topography or more likely to infill previous disturbance caused by quarrying.

The probable quarrying disturbance and truncation identified in the trial trenches reflects the findings of an evaluation opposite the site, at the northern corner of Short Lane and Green Street, where the land was also found to be severely truncated (see section 1.3).

None of the archaeological features found during the evaluation are considered to be significant or of particular interest. The recovery of redeposited medieval pottery is of note as it indicates activity of this date in the area, although not necessarily within the boundaries of the site.



5. REFERENCES

Albion Archaeology 2011. 12 Green Street, Willingham, Cambridgeshire: Project Design for Archaeological Trial Trenching. Ref 2011/10.

CAPCA 2011. Brief for Archaeological Evaluation: 12 Green Street, Willingham. March 1st 2011.

Wright and Lewis 1989. 'Willingham: Introduction'. *A History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely: Volume 9: Chesterton, Northstowe, and Papworth Hundreds*, pp. 398-402. [Online]. URL: http://www.britishhistory.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=15509&strquery=willingham Cambridgeshire. [Date accessed: 21st March 2011].



6. APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DETAILS



Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 9.50 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL40763/70317

OS Grid Ref.: TL40761/70308

Reason: To evaluate area

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, moderate small stones 0.35m thick.	✓	
102	Lower make up layer	Firm dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-large CBM, moderate flecks charcoal 0.15m thick.	✓	
103	Intermediate make up	Firm mid orange brown silty sand moderate small stones 0.38m thick.	✓	
104	Upper make up layer	Compact light orange yellow sandy gravel 0.19m thick.	✓	
105	External dump	Loose mid grey ashy sand. 0.12m thick.	✓	
106	Modern intrusion	Linear E-W sides: near vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.7m, max depth 0.52m	✓	
107	Backfill	Loose mid grey brown sandy silt occasional small stones	✓	
108	Natural	Compact mid brown orange sandy gravel		



Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 25.00 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.35 m. Max: 0.55 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL40722/70319

OS Grid Ref.: TL40746/70314

Reason: To evaluate area

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
200	Topsoil	Friable mid brown grey sandy silt moderate small stones 0.07m thick.	✓	
201	Upper make up layer	Loose light orange yellow sandy gravel 0.2m thick.	✓	
202	External dump	Loose, light reddish grey ashy sand. 0.1m thick.	✓	
203	External surface	Broken brick and yellow sandy mortar hardstanding. 0.15m thick.	✓	
204	Lower make up layer	Compact dark green grey sandy silt occasional large CBM, moderate small-medium stones	✓	
205	Buried topsoil	Firm dark grey brown sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small stones 0.08m thick.	l 🗸	
206	Post hole	Sub-square sides: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.25m, max depth 0.06m, max length 0.3m	✓	
207	Fill	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt occasional small stones	✓	
208	Post hole	Sub-rectangular N-S dimensions: max breadth 0.5m, max length 0.7m		
209	Fill	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt occasional small stones		
210	Post hole	Sub-square sides: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.25m, max depth 0.05m, max length 0.33m	✓	
211	Fill	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt occasional small stones	✓	
212	Post hole	Sub-square sides: 45 degrees base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.25m max depth 0.15m, max length 0.35m	, ✓	
213	Fill	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt occasional small stones	✓	✓
214	Post hole	Sub-oval sides: concave base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.17m, max depth 0.06m, max length 0.2m	✓	
215	Fill	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt occasional small stones	✓	
216	Quarry pit	Irregular sides: irregular base: uneven dimensions: min breadth 2.m, max depth 1.m, max length 2.5m	✓	
217	Backfill	Firm dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small-large CBM, occasional small stones	✓	\checkmark
218	Quarry pit	Irregular sides: irregular base: uneven dimensions: max breadth 1.6m, max depth 1.m, max length 7.m	✓	
219	Backfill	Compact dark green grey sandy silt occasional small-large CBM, occasional small stones	11	
220	Backfill	Firm mid blue grey clay occasional large CBM	✓	
221	Natural	Compact mid brown orange sandy gravel		



7. APPENDIX 2: FINDS REPORT

An abraded, sand-tempered ceramic building material fragment (1g), of probable post-medieval or later date, was recovered from the fill of post hole [212].

Quarry pit [216] produced a large pottery sherd (179g) from a Hedingham-type jug, decorated with applied plain strips and pellets, datable to 1250-1400.



8. APPENDIX 3: OASIS DATA FORM

OASIS ID: albionar1-99726

Project details

Project name

12 Green Street, Willingham

Short description of the project

Planning permission for the construction of nine dwellings at 12 Green Street, Willingham, has been granted by South Cambridgeshire District Council. The initial phase of work comprised trial trenching. The trial trenching was carried out in April 2011 and comprised the excavation of two trial trenchs located within the proposed development area. The trial trenching uncovered two possible sand/gravel quarry pits, five post holes and two service trenches. The quarry pitting is likely to be post-medieval in date and the post holes, modern. The service trenches were related to the house and its outbuildings which were built around the turn of the 20th century. Both trenches also contained several layers of redeposited material which collectively would have significantly raised the ground surface in the area. This may have been necessary to level the natural topography or more likely to infill previous episodes of quarrying activity. None of the archaeological features found during the evaluation are considered to be significant or of particular interest although the recovery of redeposited pottery sherds dating to High Medieval period is of note as it indicates activity of this date

in the area, although not necessarily within the boundaries of the site.

Project dates

Start: 11-04-2011 End: 12-04-2011

Previous/future .

No / Not known

work

Any associated project reference

GS1777 - Contracting Unit No.

codes

00000

ECB3554 - HER event no.

Any associated project reference

codes

Type of project Field evaluation

Monument type

POST HOLES Modern

Monument type

QUARRY PITS Post Medieval

Significant Finds

NONE None

Methods & techniques

'Sample Trenches'

Development

type

Construction of nine dwellings

Prompt

Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Position in the

planning process

After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location



Country England

Site location CAMBRIDGESHIRE SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE WILLINGHAM 12 Green

Street, Willingham

Study area 0.20 Hectares

Site coordinates TL 4074 7031 52.3124239453 0.06480870234530 52 18 44 N 000 03 53 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Albion Archaeology

Project brief originator

Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body

Project design

originator

Albion Archaeology

Project

director/manager

Robert Wardill

Project supervisor Richard Gregson

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient

Cambs County Archaeological Stores

Physical Contents 'Ceramics'

Digital Archive

recipient

Cambs County Archaeological Stores

Digital Contents

'Ceramics', 'other'

Digital Media available

'Database', 'Images raster / digital photography', 'Spreadsheets', 'Text'

Paper Archive

recipient

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Paper Contents

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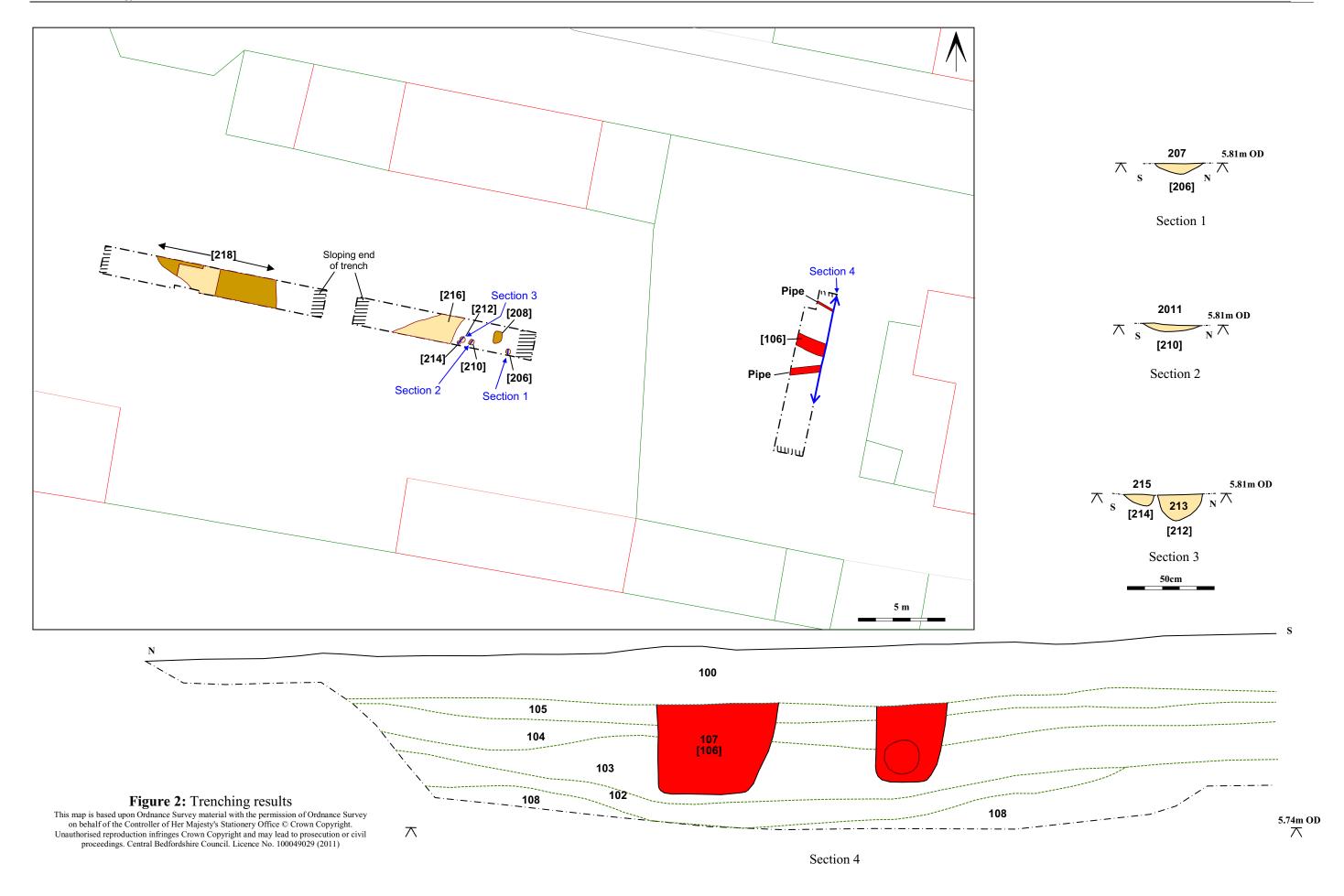


Figure 1: Site location plan

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