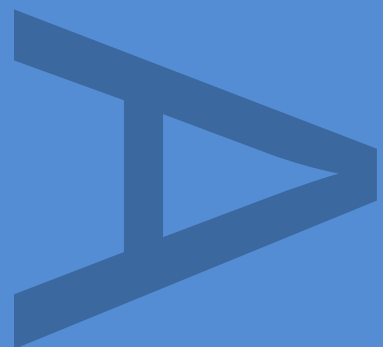


**MAY FARM, MILDENHALL  
ROAD, LITTLEPORT,  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION**

**JUNE 2011**

**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY**



## DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

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May Farm, Littleport  
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Text Prepared by:	P. Boyer		13.6.11
Graphics Prepared by:	J Simonson		16/06/11
Graphics Checked by:	M Hinman		17/06/11
Project Manager Sign-off:	M Hinman		17/06/11

Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd  
Unit 54  
Brockley Cross Business  
Centre  
96 Endwell Road  
London  
SE4 2PD

**Archaeological Evaluation at May Farm,  
Mildenhall Road, Littleport, Cambridgeshire  
Site Code: CMFL11**

**HER Planning Reference: ECB3598**

**Central National Grid Reference: TL 5992 8735**

**Written and Researched by Peter Boyer**

**Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, June 2011**

**Project Manager: Mark Hinman**

**Commissioning Client: CgMs Consulting**

**Contractor:**

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited  
7 Granta Terrace  
Stapleford  
Cambs.  
CB22 4PF  
**Tel: 01223 845522**

**Email:** [mhinman@pre-construct.com](mailto:mhinman@pre-construct.com)

**Website:** [www.pre-construct.com](http://www.pre-construct.com)

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**June 2011**

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## **Abstract**

*This report details the results of a programme of archaeological evaluation undertaken during June 2011 on land adjacent to May Farm, Mildenhall Road, Littleport, Cambridgeshire (hereafter referred to as the Site). The project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Bidwells for G's Marketing in order to inform an application for proposed development of the site.*

*Conditions for trial trenching were good throughout the programme. Artefact densities were extremely low across the study area and consisted of recent detritus observable in the modern ploughsoil and recovered through metal-detecting of the same deposit.*

*The evaluation revealed an extensive area of raised ground running from north-west to south-east across the centre of the site. A smaller area of raised ground was also evident to the south. Both raised areas corresponded with natural roddon features and had been largely covered to the north and south by deposits of sand and clay as a result of alluvial inundation.*

*Cut into the surface of the roddons and alluvial deposits were numerous features associated with land management. Linear features, mostly on north-west to south-east alignments represented former field boundaries and/or drainage ditches, whilst series of discrete sub-square to irregular features, mostly on parallel and perpendicular alignments, appear to have been pits associated with field marling. None of the features contained any finds but all are believed to have been of post-medieval date and associated with land reclamation and management during the 18<sup>th</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.*

*All features and deposits were sealed by a layer of dark, organic-rich ploughsoil, derived from the modification of natural peat deposits, though the latter were not extant in any of the areas studied.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report details the working methods and results of an archaeological trial trenching programme on land adjacent to May Farm, Littleport, Cambridgeshire, undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) in order to inform an application for development of the site. The programme was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by PCA (Hinman 2011) in response to a Design Brief prepared by Kasia Gdaniec of the Historic Environment Team (HET) of Cambridgeshire County Council. The fieldwork, undertaken during June 2011 was managed for PCA by Mark Hinman and supervised by Peter Boyer.
- 1.2 The evaluation exercise has sought to contribute to an understanding of the character date and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed development area.
- 1.3 The study area lies in Burnt Fen to the east of the former fen island of Littleport. This part of the fen basin is demarcated to the south by a large roddon of the Old Croft river system and by myriad smaller tributary roddons. To the north and north-east are shell marl deposits, characteristic of former freshwater lakes, as well as sand and gravel banks – relict bars of late glacial terrace deposits. The ground surface currently lies at elevations below sea-level between -1.40m and -2.0m OD.
- 1.4 The current planning application site, centred on NGR TL 5992 8735 (Fig 1), covers approximately 39.25 hectares, of which, c. 10 hectares is proposed for development. The evaluation was carried within an area measuring c. 12.5 hectares at the north-western end of the site. The area evaluated is currently in agricultural use and although it has been ploughed at regular intervals, no crop had been planted at the time of the evaluation. The evaluated area is bordered on its south-western side by a metalled farm track and on all other sides by agricultural land. The site as a whole is bordered by the farm track to the south-west, by White House Road to the north-east and by agricultural land to the north-east

and north-west. The buildings of May Farm lie at the south-western edge of the site, a short distance to the south-east of the area evaluated.

- 1.5 The proposed development is for the erection of an anaerobic digester and the creation of a mushroom farm with associated services and ancillary structures.
- 1.6 The solid geology of the study area is recorded by the British Geological Society (BGS) as Mudstone of the Kimmeridge Clay Formation, overlain by superficial deposits of peat. A geoarchaeological investigation, carried out as part of the current evaluation process showed sands overlain by peat, the surface of which, likely to be dated at approximately 4000BP, lay in excess of 2.5m below the current ground surface across the site and was sealed by layers of Holocene alluvium and flood warp deposits. However, the post-glacial sedimentological history of the area is far more complicated than this and is discussed in the geoarchaeological report (Smith and Lillie 2011). More detailed environmental histories of fenland environmental development, including the Littleport area, are included in earlier reports (Hall 1996; Waller 1994).

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Burnt Fen is part of the South Level of the Fens and is an area of low-lying land dependent on pumped drainage to prevent it from flooding. It is surrounded on three sides by rivers and consists of prime agricultural land, with sparse settlement.
- 2.2 The archaeological and historical background for the area has been documented previously in a desk-based assessment (DBA), also carried out as part of the current archaeological programme (Flitcroft 2011).
- 2.3 The prehistoric environmental development of the study area saw peat development during the Mesolithic and early Neolithic (basal peat), followed by extensive marine inundation and the deposition of fen clay during much of the Neolithic, and further peat formation from the later Neolithic to the Iron Age (upper peat). However, the geoarchaeological

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investigations on the site (Smith and Lillie 2011) and subsequent palynological analysis (Farrell and Lillie 2011) suggested the cessation of peat formation perhaps as early as c. 4000 BP. There was then alluvial inundation through much of the later prehistoric and earlier historic period, with peat formation during the Saxon and medieval periods. The site would have remained very damp until the drainage of the wider Burnt Fen area in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

- 2.4 Mesolithic finds have been recorded from a low sand ridge at Peacock's Farm some 3.5km south of the study site but such finds are likely to occur at some depth on the site, below fen clays and possibly the underlying basal peat. A series of roddons are mapped as soilmarks within the study site; these are likely to have been open watercourses during the Neolithic period. However, the topographical position of the site and the chronology of fen development indicate that significant evidence of Neolithic activity here is unlikely.
- 2.5 The potential for the presence of deposits or artefacts of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman date on the study site was uncertain. Any such archaeological remains would be associated with local areas of slightly higher, drier ground - either on localised high-points in the underlying land surface, such as the sand islands identified in the Peacock's Farm area, or on the silted former watercourse roddons. The DBA identified no evidence for raised sand islands in the area around the site; no evidence for activity on the roddons in this area was identified during the Fenland Survey fieldwalking of the site and its surrounding environs.
- 2.6 Burnt Fen was drained as a result of the work of the Dutch drainage engineer Cornelius Vermuyden and his adventurers in 1652. Between 1759 and 1962 the area was managed by the Commissioners of the Burnt Fen First Drainage District, who were then replaced by the Burnt Fen Internal Drainage Board.
- 2.7 From 1832 local drainage was assured by the Brandon Engine which was installed where the Whitehouse Drain (adjacent to the eastern limit of the proposed development area) met the Brandon creek or River Little



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Ouse over 2.5km to the north. The Brandon site was finally abandoned in the 1950s. The White House drain, which supplied it, had become steadily deeper as the land surface had sunk, leaving the pumping station effectively on top of a hill, rather than being at the lowest part of the Fen (Becket, 1983).

- 2.8 The steady shrinkage of the land surface was a direct consequence of drainage and had been underway from the time of Vermuyden. As the water was removed the peat soils would shrink and the ground level would be further reduced as these light soils dried out and were blown away.
- 2.9 One method commonly employed to reduce peat loss and simultaneously improve soil fertility was 'claying'. This type of soil improvement was practised since the 1830's and involved the digging up of marine clays from below the surface peat (or imported) to spread upon the fields (Astbury, 1958, p14) and is certainly the purpose of the marling pits revealed during the May Farm evaluation.
- 2.10 The DBA considered that there was little potential for significant archaeological deposits or features of Saxon, Medieval or Post-Medieval date due to its location within the un-drained fen marshes throughout these periods. The presence of significant archaeological deposits or features on the site post-dating the drainage of the Burnt Fen from the 18th century onwards was thought to be unlikely. Historic maps from 1839 onwards show that Burnt Fen was series of rectangular land parcels separated by drains and aligned on the Littleport - Mildenhall road. The area of the study site was formerly divided into more land parcels than are currently present, boundaries being removed as field sizes increased during the 20th century. The historic maps also indicate that May Farm was established at the turn of the 20th century.

### **3 METHOD STATEMENT**

#### **General**

- 3.1 It was agreed with HET that the requirement for trial trenching would only relate to that part of the site where the geoarchaeological borehole survey identified buried landforms which crowned at a depth of 0.55m below the present ground surface, and where major ground/construction impacts are proposed. All archaeological works were therefore undertaken within the principal impact areas identified by CgMs Consulting and HET, i.e. the north-westernmost field within the overall development area.
- 3.2 All archaeological works sought to minimise, as far as was reasonably practicable, the environmental impact of trial trenching within the study area.
- 3.3 All aspects of the programme were conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (2008), and Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003). Field techniques and recording are detailed within the PCA fieldwork induction manual, (Taylor and Brown 2009). Additionally, reference was also made, where appropriate, to published research frameworks for the East of England (Glazebrook 1997; Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Medlycott & Brown 2008).
- 3.4 All features were investigated and recorded to provide an accurate evaluation of archaeological potential.

#### **Trial Trenching**

- 3.5 Trial Trenching was carried out under archaeological supervision using a 21 tonne, 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket. Trenches were excavated in spits through the peaty ploughsoil to the interface with surficial roddon and/or alluvial deposits. This was also the level at which archaeological features became visible.

3.6 It had originally been intended that eight trenches, each of nominal 30m length would be excavated, to investigate the crown and flanks for the roddon or buried land form. However, excavation of the first trench (Trench 1) revealed that the raised area was more extensive than expected. Consequently three long trenches (Trenches 1, 3 and 5) were excavated across the raised area into the dips on either side. Trench 5 was also excavated across a smaller raised area to the south of the main roddon. A number of slots were also excavated within the trenches in order to examine deeper features and alluvial deposits north and south of the raised areas. The three trenches had a combined length of 414.3m. Additionally, two smaller square trenches (Trenches 2 and 4), each measuring approximately 4m x 4m (16m<sup>2</sup>) were excavated on the higher ground between Trenches 1 and 3, and between Trenches 3 and 5, in order to maximise the coverage of the field evaluation. In total, trenching covering an area of approximately 905m<sup>2</sup> was opened within the proposed development area (Fig 3). The breakdown was as follows:

- Trench 1, aligned north-east to south-west, length 141.5m, average depth 0.49m (Plate 1)
- Trench 2, 3.95m x 4m, average depth 0.43m (Plate 2)
- Trench 3, aligned east to west, length 147m, average depth 0.41m (Plates 3 & 4)
- Trench 4, 4.2m x 3.75m, average depth 0.42m (Plate 5)
- Trench 5, aligned north-east to south-west, length 125.8m, average depth 0.35m (Plates 6 & 7)

3.7 Exposed surfaces were cleaned by trowel as necessary in order to clarify located features and deposits. Trench spoil was scanned visually and with a metal detector to aid recovery of artefacts but was found to be devoid of finds apart from modern materials (mostly metal parts from agricultural machinery).

3.8 All trenches were located using a Leica 1200 GPS rover unit.

## 4 RESULTS

### General

4.1 A total of five trenches of varying dimensions totalling c. 905m<sup>2</sup> in area were opened within the proposed development area.

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- 4.2 Natural geological horizons consisting of roddon silts and alluvial clays and sands were encountered at depths of between 0.30m and 0.65m.
  - 4.3 Ploughsoil (context 214) depths were relatively constant across the site generally varying from between 0.35m to 0.50m, though the upper and basal surfaces were frequently very uneven.
  - 4.4 Although the ploughsoil had been derived from natural peat, none of the parent material was observed *in situ*, instead the ploughsoil lay directly over natural roddon silt and alluvial sand and clay deposits, indeed plough marks were noted in places, cutting into the surfaces of these deposits.
  - 4.5 Numerous archaeological features were recorded cut into natural deposits across all five trenches. These could be divided into two broad groups; linear features and small, discrete squarish or sub-circular pits, and are believed to have been associated with land and soil management (see below).
  - 4.6 Artefact densities were extremely low across the study area with none of the cut archaeological features yielding any finds. With the exception of one very small fragment of post medieval glazed earthenware from context 217, (Ditch 218, Trench 5) the only finds recovered visually and by metal-detecting came from the ploughsoil and were all of recent date.

### **Natural Deposits**

- 4.7 The natural deposits present were of two broad types; roddon silts located on the more elevated areas in all trenches and alluvial clays and sands located north and south of the raised areas. The roddon silts, context 217, typically comprised a firm, mid yellowish brown sandy silt with moderate reddish brown mottling. These silts would originally have been channel infill deposits of mid-Holocene date, which effectively became raised as a result of shrinkage of the surrounding peat.
- 4.8 The clays and sands in lower-lying areas would have been deposited as a result of frequent alluvial inundation from the prehistoric period until probably the Saxon or medieval periods. These deposits buried underlying peats and slowly covered the upstanding roddons before

being covered in turn by further peat deposits which are currently almost entirely denuded in the immediate area. The alluvial layers were studied in some detail in an exposure towards the north-eastern end of Trench 1 (Fig. 4). Cleaning of the section revealed numerous alternating layers of sand and clay of varying thicknesses, sloping down from south-west to north-east (context 216). It appears that each pair of sand and clay units represented an individual flooding episode; the coarser sand being initially deposited and the finer clay gradually being deposited from suspension in standing floodwater. The dip in the deposits would have reflected the slope of the underlying roddon. The uppermost clay deposit (context 215) was more massive, being at least 0.22m thick, with no evidence of laminar subdivision, and may have represented extensive and prolonged flooding of the area prior to drainage and reclamation in the 18<sup>th</sup> century which in turn led to the loss of the upper peat.

### **Landscape Management**

- 4.9 The linear features recorded across the evaluated area appear to have been associated with land division and drainage. Most were aligned parallel with the road and major drainage ditch to the south of the site, on a north-west to south-east orientation, though a few exceptions (mostly modern land drains and mole drains) were aligned differently. The linear features varied greatly in width and length, though a number could be seen to traverse the area evaluated and were present in more than one evaluation trench (Fig. 5). Many of the features were a little more or a little less than 1m wide and less than 0.5m deep and are likely to have been boundary and/or drainage features relating to earlier activity on the site when the land was divided up into a number of smaller units than it is today. A small number of the features were however, larger, being up to 1.5m wide and 1.5m deep, a deep ditch (context 171) in Trench 5 being an example of this (Plate 8). These are likely to have been major drainage channels between fields, One such example is shown on Ordnance Survey maps from 1886 to 1958, crossing the centre of the site. This followed the line of a ditch recorded in the evaluation trenches (Fig. 6), though had been filled in by 1973,

when it is no longer visible on Ordnance Survey maps. Some of the smaller ditches may have been open performing a similar function to more recent land drains.

4.10 The smaller discrete features generally measured 1m or more across and were up to 0.5m deep. They were also mostly aligned in linear groups and appeared to belong to two separate phases of activity. North-east to south-west aligned groups appeared to belong to an earlier phase as some of the individual features were truncated by perpendicular linear features, a phenomenon most clearly observed in Trench 5 (Fig. 7). North-west to south-east alignments of features appeared to date to a later phase as these respected and mirrored the alignments of most of the linear features, a phenomenon seen most clearly at a couple of locations within Trench 3 (Fig. 7). The discrete features are mostly thought to have been marling pits (Kasia Gdaniec, pers. Comm.); small features excavated for fine grained sediments to be spread on the acidic, peaty ploughsoil for soil stabilisation and management purposes, and found extensively across reclaimed fenland areas.

4.11 No conclusive dating evidence was recovered from any of the linear or discrete land management features but they all appear to have post-dated the widespread drainage of the surrounding fen area in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. With the exception of the one large drainage ditch visible on Ordnance Survey maps from 1886 to 1958, none of the other features are visible in the cartographic record. It is therefore likely that the majority of features are of 18<sup>th</sup>-and 19<sup>th</sup>-century date.

## **5 THE FINDS**

5.1 A very small fragment of post medieval glazed earthenware from context 217, (Ditch 218, Trench 5) was the only dateable material recovered from any of the excavated features. This fragment of pottery was recovered from the upper portion of the fill and due to its small (>15mm)

size could easily have been introduced from the topsoil through plough action.

- 5.2 The only other finds recovered were all from the ploughsoil, context 214. The most common finds were fragments of modern ceramic field drain, though occasional sherds of recent transfer-printed pottery were also present, particularly in the areas closest to the May Farm buildings. Metal-detecting recovered a number of iron fragments from modern agricultural machinery as well as a spent bullet, a small fragment of lead, part of a copper alloy buckle and an aluminium bottle top all of which were also modern.

## **6 INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The trial trenching sought to contribute to an understanding of the character of the condition, date and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed development area, and it has been successful in doing this.
- 6.2 The earliest deposits identified during the evaluation were roddon silts on the more elevated areas of the site. These had been largely covered by alluvial deposits in the lower-lying areas, and the work confirmed the upper natural sequence outlined in the earlier DBA and geoarchaeological programmes, though the lateral extent of roddon deposits was perhaps greater than previously postulated.
- 6.3 The archaeological evaluation bore out the findings of the earlier DBA – that the likelihood of archaeological remains of the prehistoric to medieval periods was low. No finds or features from these periods were recorded.
- 6.4 The evaluation also confirmed the findings of the DBA that significant post-medieval remains were unlikely to be present although numerous common agricultural features of this date were present.
- 6.5 The trial trenching revealed numerous features cut into underlying natural sediments. Most of these comprised series of linear ditches

associated with land division and drainage, and alignments of marling pits associated with soil management. Together these features were evidence of land management for agricultural purposes, in an otherwise marginal environment.

- 6.6 The features recorded were indicative ongoing attempts to maintain drainage and mitigate the effects of peat loss through localised marling at this location. The hand dug nature of the features supports a primarily pre 20<sup>th</sup> century date for this activity despite the paucity of artefactual material. This range and type of features accord well with historical accounts of agricultural practice and drainage in Burnt Fen as detailed notably by A. K. Astbury (1958) amongst others.
- 6.7 Such evidence is widespread throughout the fens and has been studied in more detail at sites such as Lyons Farm, Wimblington (Kasia Gdaniec, pers. comm.). The exact dating of the features exposed was unclear as no finds were recovered, but they appear to have been of 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century date.

## **7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 7.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Myk Flitcroft of CgMs Consulting for commissioning the archaeological evaluation on behalf of Bidwells for G's marketing. Thanks are also due to Kasia Gdaniec of the Historic Environment Team, Cambridgeshire County Council for monitoring the fieldwork and providing advice prior to and during fieldwork phase.
- 7.2 The author would like to thank Mark Hinman for managing the project, working on site and surveying the trenches, Chris Montague for excavation work on the site and metal-detecting, Nathalie Barratt for advice on GPS survey and Jennifer Simonson for her work on the illustrations.



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### Cartographic Reference

Ordnance Survey Map; Cambridgeshire and Ely (1886, 1:10,560)

## **9 APPENDIX 1 CONTEXT INDEX**

Trench. No.	Context	Cut	Category	Type	Description
1	1	1	Cut	Trench	Evaluation trench, aligned SW,NE, 141.5m long
2	2	2	Cut	Trench	Evaluation trench, 4mx4m square
3	3	3	Cut	Trench	Evaluation trench, aligned WSW,ENE, 147m long
4	4	4	Cut	Trench	Evaluation trench, 4mx4m square
5	5	5	Cut	Trench	Evaluation trench, aligned SW,NE, 125m long
1	6	7	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	7	7	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
1	8	9	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	9	9	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
1	10	11	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	11	11	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
1	12	13	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	13	13	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
1	14	15	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	15	15	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
1	16	17	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	17	17	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
1	18	19	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	19	19	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
1	20	21	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	21	21	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
1	22	23	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	23	23	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
1	24	25	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	25	25	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, 0.20m deep
1	26	27	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	27	27	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
1	28	29	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	29	29	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
1	30	31	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	31	31	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
1	32	33	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	33	33	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
1	34	35	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	35	35	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, 0.15m deep
1	36	37	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	37	37	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, 0.15m deep
1	38	39	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	39	39	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
1	40	41	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	41	41	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, 0.15m deep
1	42	43	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	43	43	Cut	Ditch	Linear ditch, steeply sloping sides and concave base, 1.08m deep
1	44	45	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	45	45	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
1	46	47	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	47	47	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
1	48	49	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	49	49	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
1	50	51	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	51	51	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
1	52	53	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
1	53	53	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch, vertical sides, flat base, 0.45m deep
2	54	55	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.

Trench. No.	Context	Cut	Category	Type	Description
2	55	55	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
2	56	57	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
2	57	57	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
2	58	59	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
2	59	59	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	60	61	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	61	61	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch, steeply sloping sides concave base 0.20m deep
3	62	63	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	63	63	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	64	65	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	65	65	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	66	67	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	67	67	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
3	68	69	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	69	69	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	70	71	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	71	71	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	72	73	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	73	73	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	74	75	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	75	75	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	76	77	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	77	77	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	78	79	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	79	79	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	80	81	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	81	81	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	82	83	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	83	83	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
3	84	85	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	85	85	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch, vertical sides, flat base, 0.15m deep
3	86	87	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	87	87	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	88	89	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	89	89	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	90	91	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	91	91	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	92	93	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	93	93	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
3	94	95	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	95	95	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
3	96	97	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	97	97	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	98	99	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	99	99	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
3	100	101	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	101	101	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	102	103	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	103	103	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	104	105	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	105	105	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	106	107	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	107	107	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	108	109	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.

Trench. No.	Context	Cut	Category	Type	Description
3	109	109	Cut	Pit	Linear Drainage Ditch
3	110	111	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	111	111	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	112	113	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	113	113	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	114	115	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	115	115	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
3	116	117	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	117	117	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	118	119	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	119	119	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
3	120	121	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	121	121	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
3	122	123	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	123	123	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
3	124	125	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	125	125	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
3	126	127	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
3	127	127	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
4	128	129	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
4	129	129	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
4	130	131	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
4	131	131	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
4	132	133	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
4	133	133	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
4	134	135	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
4	135	135	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
5	136	137	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	137	137	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
5	138	139	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	139	139	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
5	140	141	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	141	141	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
5	142	143	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	143	143	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
5	144	145	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	145	145	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
5	146	147	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	147	147	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
5	148	149	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	149	149	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, vertical sides 0.33m deep.
5	150	151	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	151	151	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
5	152	153	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	153	153	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
5	154	155	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	155	155	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
5	156	157	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	157	157	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
5	158	159	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	159	159	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, irregular shape in plan, unexc.
5	160	161	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	161	161	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub rectangular, unexc.
5	162	163	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.

Trench. No.	Context	Cut	Category	Type	Description
5	163	163	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub circular, unexc.
5	164	165	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	165	165	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub circular, unexc.
5	166	167	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	167	167	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub circular, unexc.
5	168	169	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	169	169	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
5	170	171	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with small (thumbnail sized) fragment of glazed post med pottery at interface with topsoil.
5	171	171	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch, steeply sloping sides concave base 1.50m deep
5	172	173	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	173	173	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
5	174	175	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	175	175	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
5	176	177	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	177	177	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
5	178	179	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	179	179	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub circular, unexc.
5	180	181	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	181	181	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
5	182	183	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	183	183	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub circular, unexc.
5	184	185	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	185	185	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub circular, unexc.
5	186	187	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	187	187	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub circular, unexc.
5	188	189	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	189	189	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub circular, unexc.
5	190	191	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	191	191	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub circular, unexc.
5	192	193	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	193	193	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub circular, unexc.
5	194	195	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	195	195	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, irregular in plan, unexc.
5	196	197	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	197	197	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub circular, unexc.
5	198	199	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	199	199	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub circular, unexc.
5	200	201	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	201	201	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
5	202	203	Fill	Ditch	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	203	203	Cut	Ditch	Linear Drainage Ditch
5	204	205	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	205	205	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub circular, unexc.
5	206	207	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	207	207	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub circular, unexc.
5	208	209	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	209	209	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub circular, unexc.
5	210	211	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	211	211	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub circular, unexc.
5	212	213	Fill	Pit	Friable, dessicated, very dark brown peat with no inclusions.
5	213	213	Cut	Pit	Marling pit, sub circular, unexc.
all	214		Layer		Topsoil, Mid-dark grey Brown silty clay and peat mixture
1	215		Layer		Light grey brown Clay (section , Trench 1)
1	216		Layer		Light Grey / light grey brown sand / clay silt deposits (section , Trench 1)

Trench. No.	Context	Cut	Category	Type	Description
all	217		Layer		Roddon silt Mid yellowish brown

## OASIS ID: preconst1-103053

### Project details

Project name	May Farm, Littleport
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken during June 2011 on land adjacent to May Farm, Mildenhall Road, Littleport, Cambridgeshire. The evaluation revealed an extensive area of raised ground running from north-west to south-east across the centre of the site. A smaller area of raised ground was also evident to the south. Both raised areas corresponded with natural roddon features and had been largely covered to the north and south by deposits of sand and clay as a result of alluvial inundation. Cut into the surface of the roddons and alluvial deposits were numerous features associated with land management. Linear features, mostly on north-west to south-east alignments appear to have represented former field boundaries and/or drainage ditches, whilst series of discrete sub-square to irregular features, mostly on parallel and perpendicular alignments, appear to have been pits associated with field marling. None of the features produced any finds but all are believed to have been of post-medieval date and associated with land reclamation and management during the 18th and 19th centuries. All features and deposits were sealed by a thick layer of dark, organic-rich ploughsoil, derived from the modification of natural peat deposits, though the latter were not extant in any of the areas studied.
Project dates	Start: 07-06-2011 End: 08-06-2011
Previous/future work	Yes / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	CMFL11 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	ECB3598 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	cgmsslimi-100625 - OASIS form ID
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 4 - Character Undetermined
Monument type	PIT Post Medieval
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Rural commercial



Prompt	General structure plan/local plan/minerals plan guidance
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Position in the planning process	Pre-application
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### Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE LITTLEPORT May Farm
Study area	12.50 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 5992 8735 52.4602374707 0.354092375579 52 27 36 N 000 21 14 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: -2.66m Max: -1.18m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.
Project brief originator	CCC Historic Environment Team
Project design originator	Mark Hinman
Project director/manager	Mark Hinman
Project supervisor	Peter Boyer
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	G's Marketing

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive recipient	None
Digital Archive recipient	CCC County Archaeology Store
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Survey','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	CCC County Archaeology Store

Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Plan','Section'

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**Project  
bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Evaluation at May Farm, Mildenhall Road, Littleport, Cambridgeshire
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Boyer, P.
Date	2011
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.
Place of issue or publication	Stapleford
Description	MAP2 Report

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Entered by	Peter Boyer (pboyer@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	5 September 2011



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking north-east



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking east





Plate 3: Trench 3, looking west



Plate 4: Trench 3, looking east



Plate 5: Trench 4, looking south-east



Plate 6: Trench 5, looking north-east

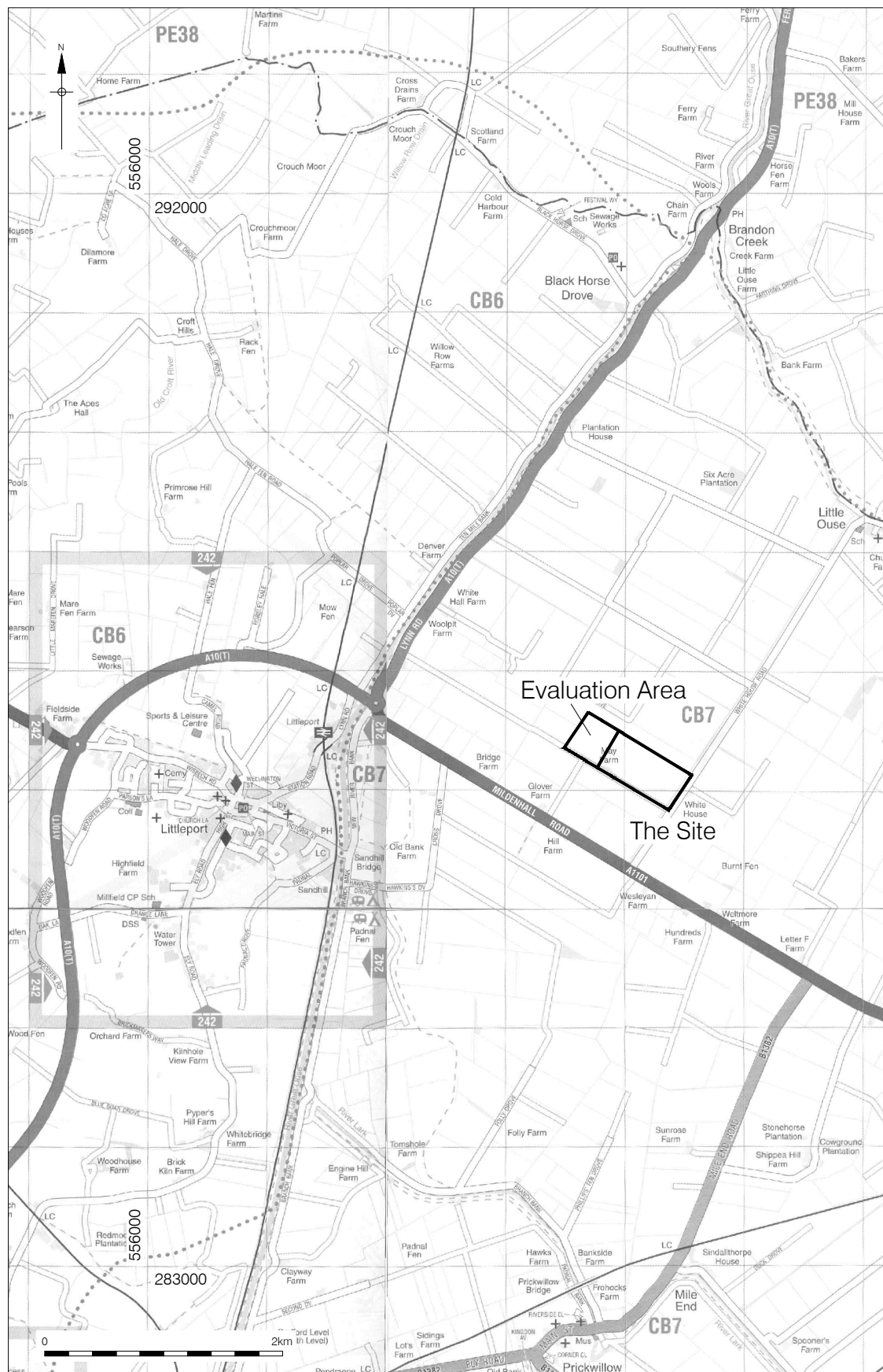




Plate 7: Trench 5, looking south-west



Plate 8: Ditch 171, looking north-west



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Figure 1  
Site Location  
1:50,000 at A4

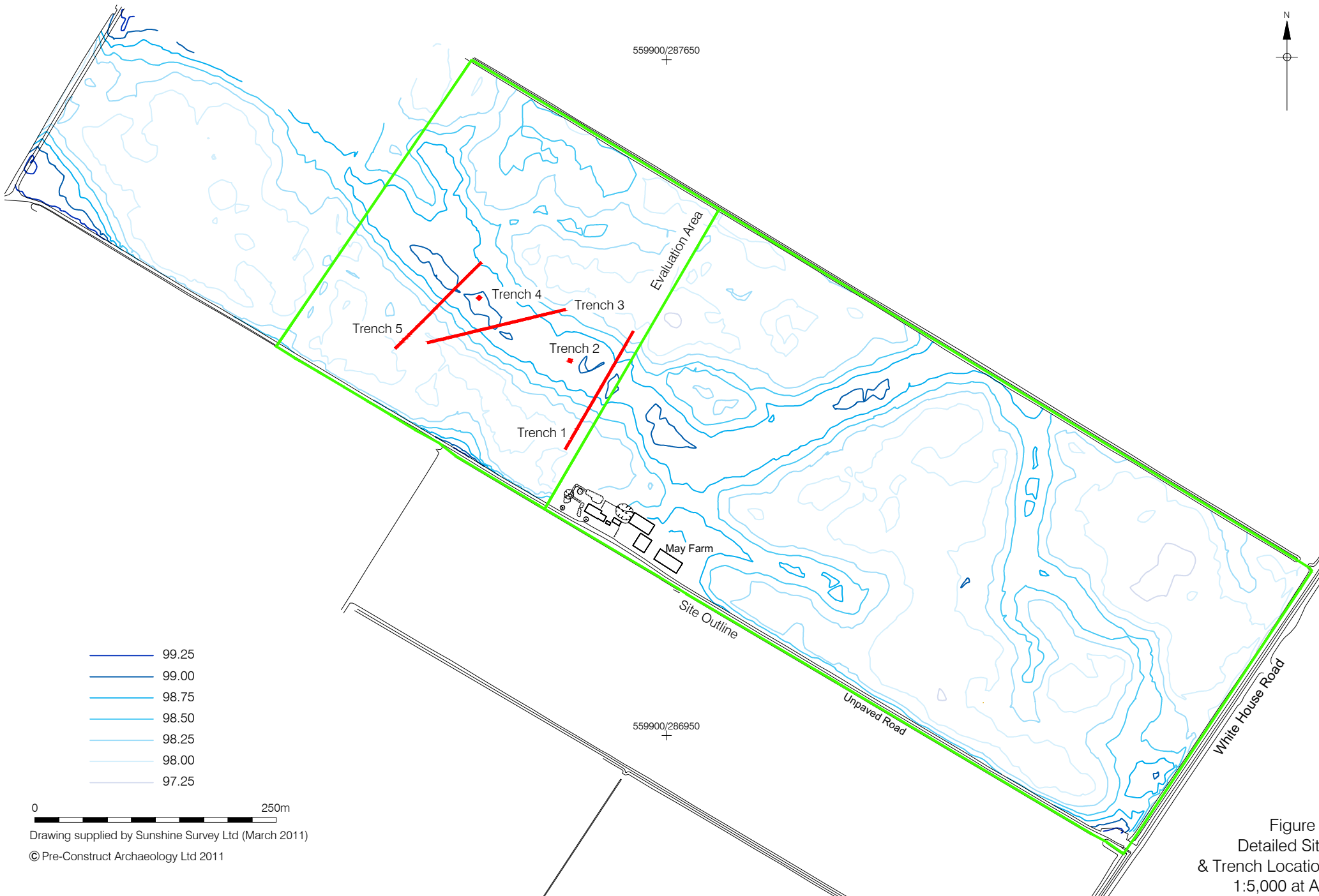


Figure 2  
Detailed Site  
& Trench Location  
1:5,000 at A4



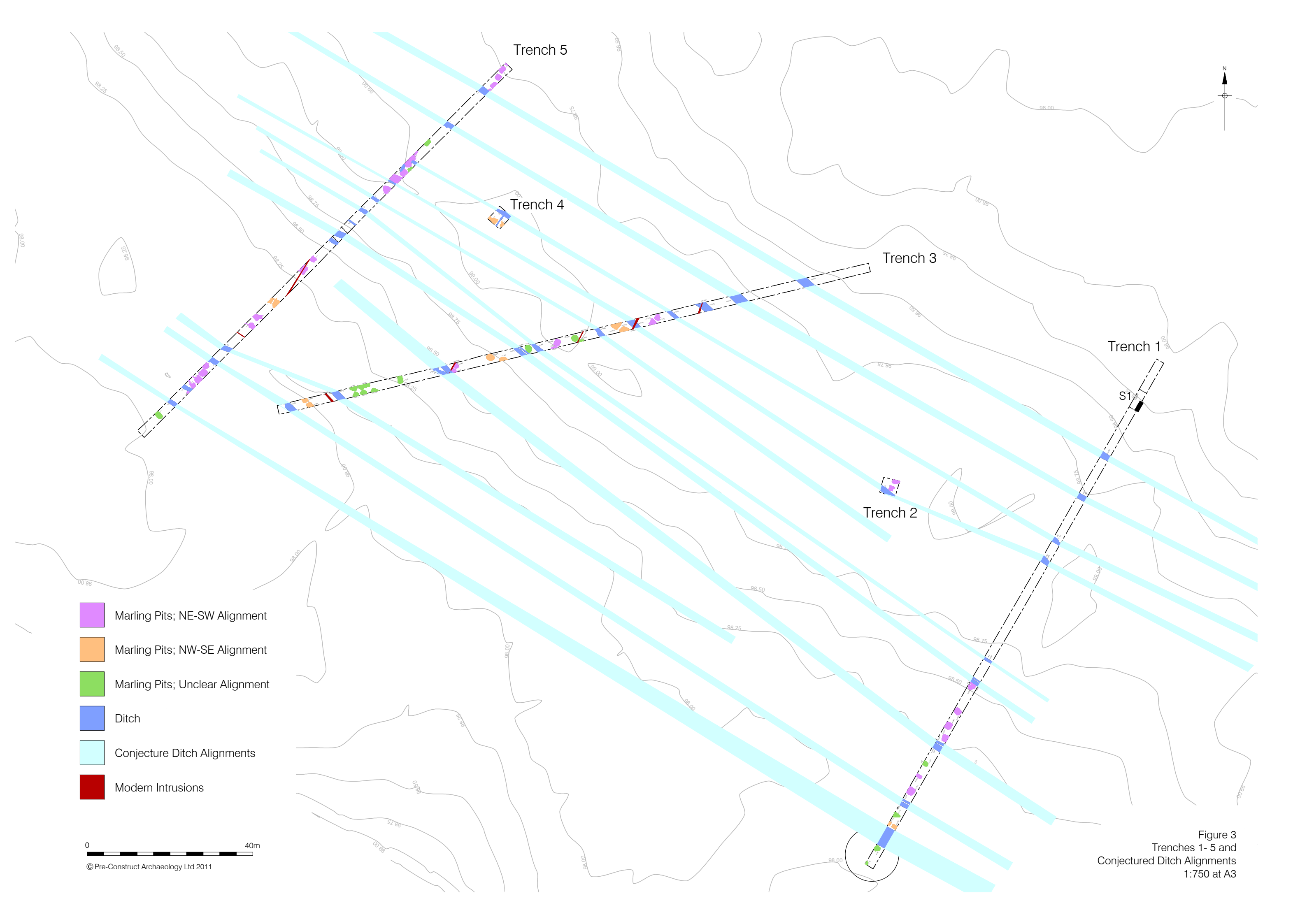


Figure 3  
Trenches 1- 5 and  
Conjectured Ditch Alignments  
1:750 at A3

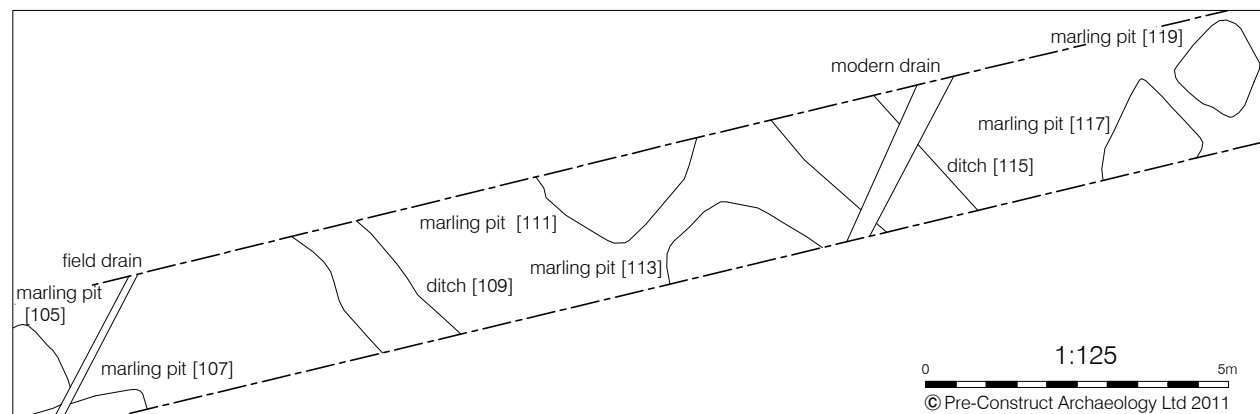
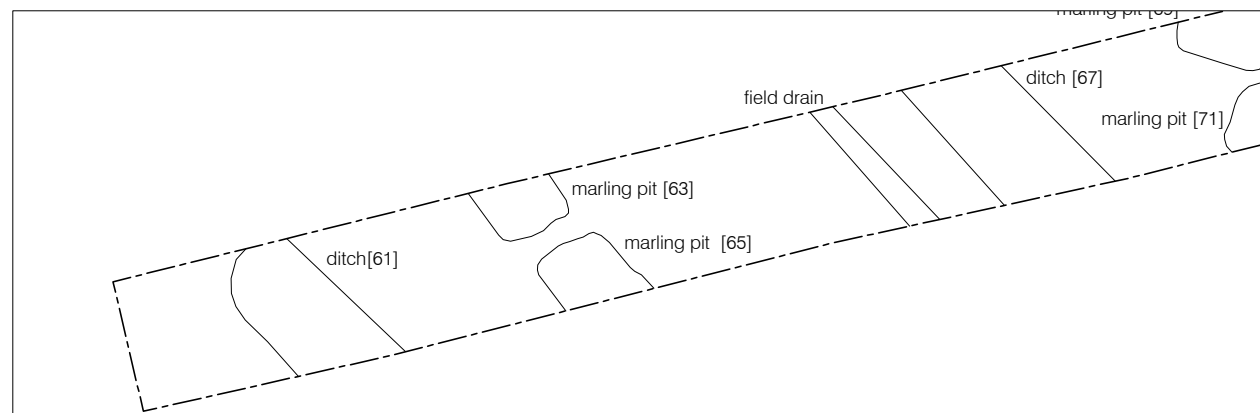
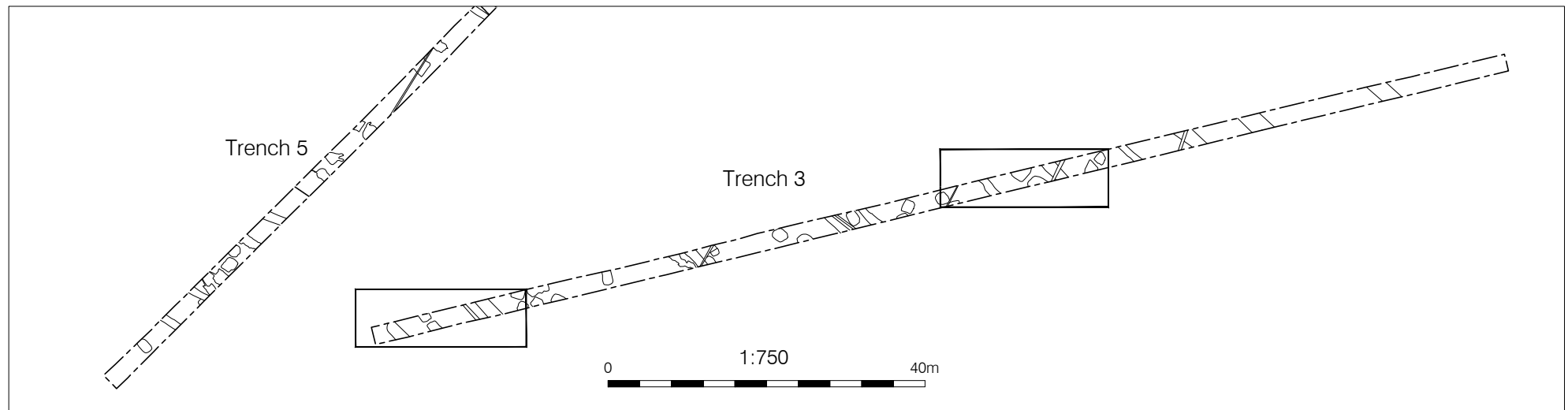


Figure 4  
Example of NW-SE Pit Alignment  
1:750 and 1:125 at A4

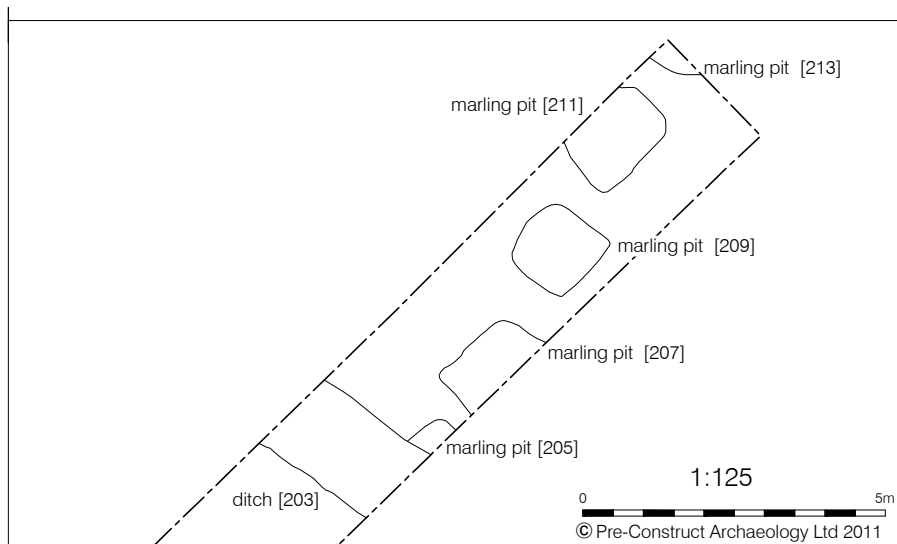
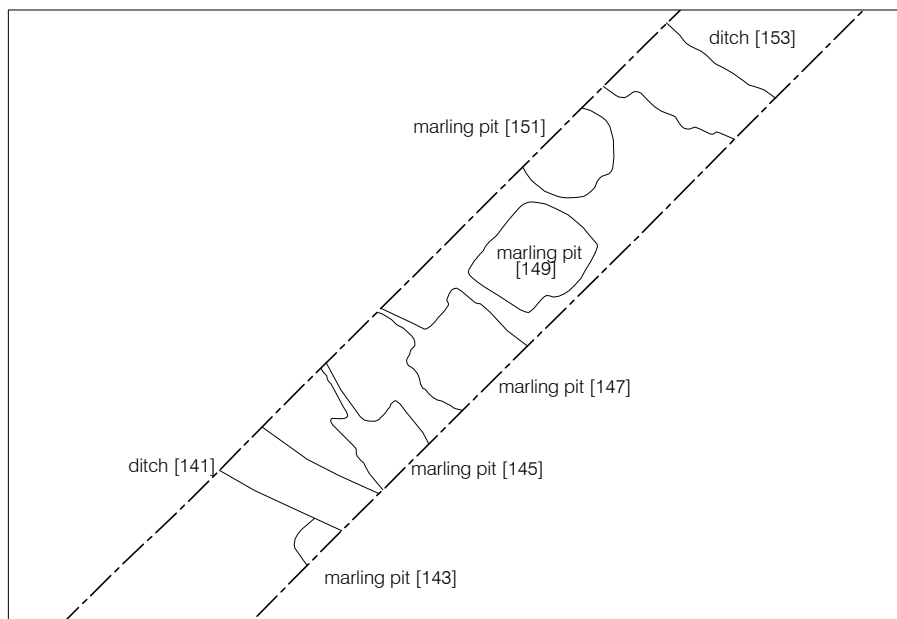
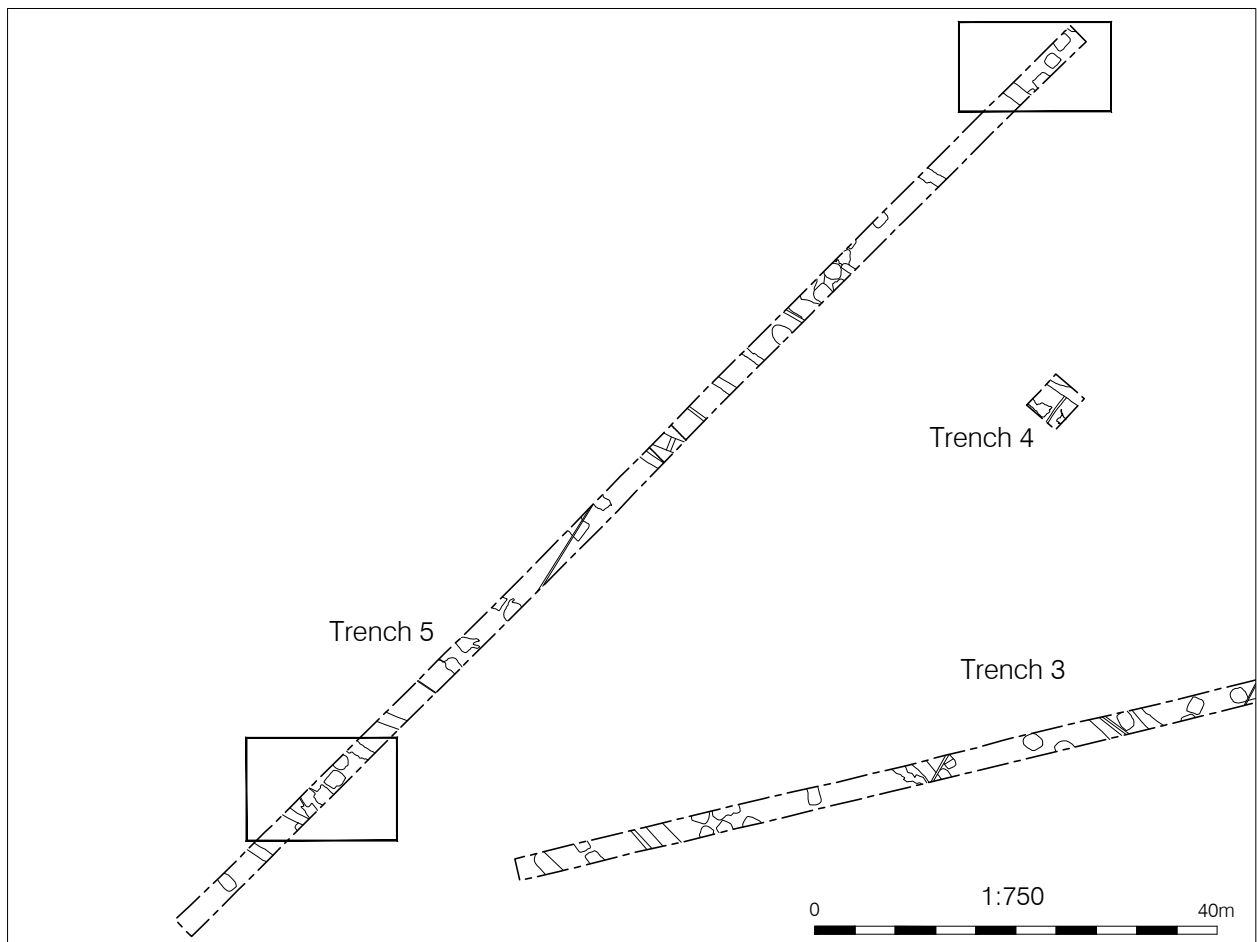


Figure 5  
Example of SE-SW  
Pit Alignment  
1:750 and 1:125 at A4

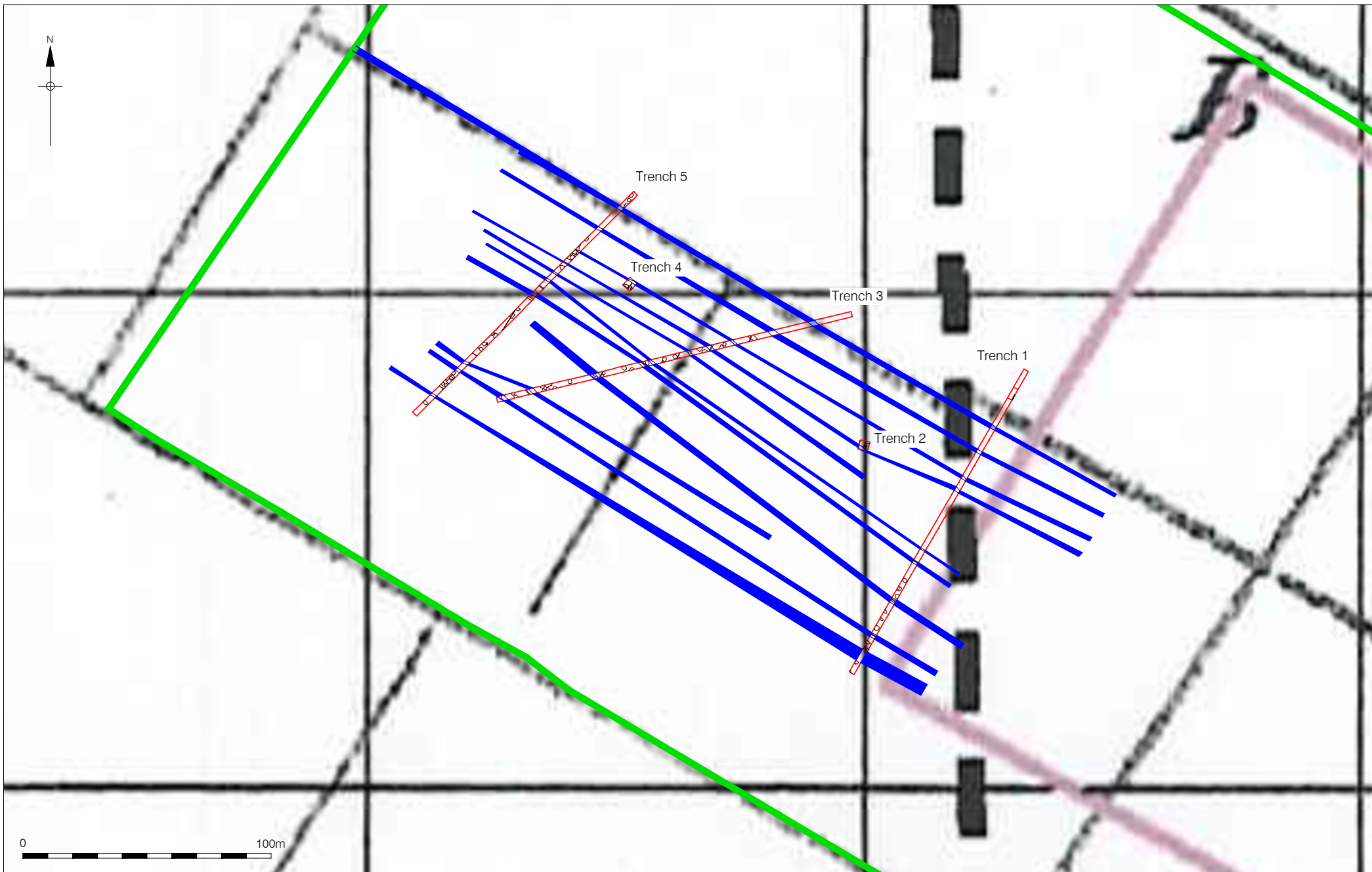
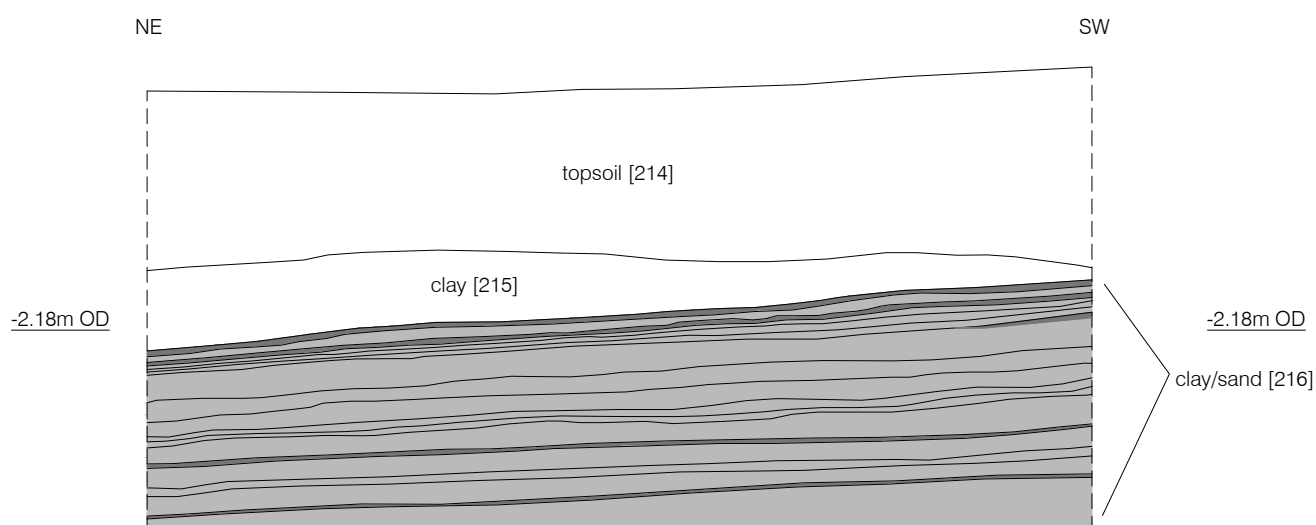


Figure 6  
Trenches 1 - 5 Showing Conjectured Ditch Alignments; Overlaid onto 1886 Map  
1:2,000 at A3



Section 1  
Trench 1  
Northwest Facing

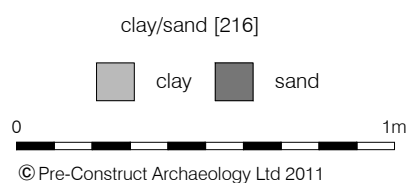


Figure 7  
Section 1  
1:20 at A4

# PCA

PCA SOUTHERN

UNIT 54

BROCKLEY CROSS BUSINESS CENTRE

96 ENDWELL ROAD

BROCKLEY

LONDON SE4 2PD

TEL: 020 7732 3925 / 020 7639 9091

FAX: 020 7639 9588

EMAIL: [info@pre-construct.com](mailto:info@pre-construct.com)

PCA NORTHERN

UNIT 19A

TURSDALE BUSINESS PARK

DURHAM DH6 5PG

TEL: 0191 377 1111

FAX: 0191 377 0101

EMAIL: [info.north@pre-construct.com](mailto:info.north@pre-construct.com)

PCA CENTRAL

7 GRANTA TERRACE

STAPLEFORD

CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB22 5DL

TEL: 01223 845 522

FAX: 01223 845 522

EMAIL: [mhinman@pre-construct.com](mailto:mhinman@pre-construct.com)

