

**LAND AT THE FORMER FOREST
LABORATORIES, WEIR ROAD,
BEXLEY, DA5 1LW**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION**

SITE CODE: FRS11

**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:
LONDON BOROUGH OF BEXLEY**

PLANNING REFERENCE: 11/00406/FULM

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PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

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	Name & Title	Signature	Date
Text Prepared by:	Sarah Barrowman		December 2011
Graphics Prepared by:	Jennifer Simonson		December 2011
Graphics Checked by:	Josephine Brown		December 2011
Project Manager Sign-off:	Chris Mayo		December 2011

Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved

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

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Site Code: FRS11

Central NGR: TQ49407396

Local Planning Authority: London Borough of Bexley

Planning Reference: 11/00406/FULM

Written / Researched by: Sarah Barrowman
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

Project Manager: Chris Mayo (MifA)

Commissioning Client: CgMs Consulting

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

Tel: 020 7732 3925
Fax: 020 7732 7896
E-mail: cmayo@pre-construct.com
Web: www.pre-construct.com

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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited between the 21st and 25th of November 2011 at the Former Forest Laboratories, Weir Road, Bexley.
- 1.2 Five evaluation trenches were excavated at the site. The evaluation aimed to assess the archaeological potential of the site, and to determine the presence or absence of archaeology finds and features.
- 1.3 A Mesolithic or early Neolithic northeast-southwest aligned ditch was the only datable feature encountered which preceded the post-medieval period. All other archaeological features encountered during the evaluation work dated to the post-medieval to modern periods, and included a drainage ditch. Archaeological horizons were underlain by in-situ Taplow Gravel deposits, and sealed by modern made ground associated with the existent car park.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited between 21st and 25th of November 2011 at the Former Forest Laboratories, Weir Road, Bexley (Figure 1). The project was managed by Chris Mayo of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, appointed to undertake the work by Suzanne Gailey of CgMs Consulting. The site was supervised by Sarah Barrowman.
- 2.2 Prior to the archaeological fieldwork, CgMs Consulting had prepared an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for the site (Gailey 2011a) and had also prepared a Specification document (Gailey 2011b) , both of which were approved by the Archaeology Advisor to the Local Planning Authority, Mark Stevenson of English Heritage.
- 2.3 The evaluation was conducted in advance of residential redevelopment at the site, and was necessitated by a planning condition (number 12) attached to full planning permission, which was granted under application number 11/00406/FULM.
- 2.4 The study site was irregular in shape, and comprised a narrow thoroughfare known as Weir Road running eastwards from Bourne Road, opening out into a parcel of land bound to the southeast by the railway line and to the east by the River Cray. The southwestern boundary was formed by properties fronting High Street, whilst the northwest boundary was formed by properties fronting Bourne Parade. The site was approximately 1ha in area and was centred at TQ49407396 within the London Borough of Bexley.

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 National Guidance: Planning Policy Statement 5

3.1.1 In March 2010 the Department of the Environment issued Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) "Planning for the Historic Environment", providing guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of heritage assets. In short, government policies provide a framework which:

- Protect Scheduled Ancient Monuments;
- Protect the settings of these sites;
- Protect nationally important un-scheduled ancient monuments;
- Has a presumption in favour of in situ preservation;
- In appropriate circumstances, requires adequate information (from field evaluation) to enable informed decisions; and
- Provides for the excavation and investigation of sites not important enough to merit in situ preservation

3.1.2 In considering any proposal for development, the local planning authority will be mindful of the policy framework set by government guidance, in this instance PPS5, of existing development plan policy and of other material considerations.

3.2 Regional Policy: The London Plan

3.2.1 The relevant Strategic Development Plan framework is provided by „The London Plan, Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London Consolidated with Alterations since 2004“ (Feb 2008). It includes the following policy relating to archaeology within central London:

Policy 4b.15 Archaeology

The Mayor, in partnership with English Heritage, the Museum of London and Boroughs, will support the identification, protection, interpretation and presentation of London's archaeological resources. Boroughs in consultation with English Heritage and other relevant statutory organisations should include appropriate policies in their DPDs for protecting Scheduled Ancient Monuments and archaeological assets within their area.

3.3 Local Policy: Bexley UDP

3.3.1 The relevant Development Plan framework is provided by the Bexley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted by the Council in April 2004. The Plan contains the following 'saved' policies which provide a framework for the consideration of development proposals affecting archaeological and heritage features:

Policy ENV56

In Areas of Archaeological Search and other areas where finds are likely to occur and in certain historic standing buildings where development proposals may affect archaeological remains or historical evidence, the Council will expect applicants to have properly assessed and planned for the archaeological implications. The Council may

require a preliminary archaeological site evaluation before proposals are considered.

Policy ENV57

Where sites of archaeological significance or potential are discovered the Council will seek to ensure that:

1. the most important archaeological remains and their settings are preserved in situ (if appropriate for public access and display) and that where appropriate they are given statutory protection; and
2. sites not requiring preservation in situ shall be made available for an appropriate level of archaeological investigation and excavation by a recognised archaeological organisation before development begins.

Policy ENV58

There will be a presumption against any development, which would adversely affect any scheduled Ancient Monument or other nationally important archaeological sites and monuments and their settings.

- 3.3.2 The access road to the site (Weir Road) lies within the Bexley Conservation Area, and a Locally Listed Building lies within the east of the site. Furthermore, the site is located within an Archaeological Priority Area as defined in the Borough's Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map.

3.4 Planning Permission

- 3.4.1 Planning permission has been granted (11/00406/FULM) for the residential redevelopment of the site subject to the following planning condition relating to archaeology:

Condition 12: No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme pursuant to this condition. The archaeological works shall be carried out by a suitably qualified investigating body acceptable to the Local Planning Authority.

Informative - the development of the site is likely to damage archaeological remains. The applicant should therefore submit detailed proposals in the form of an archaeological project design. The design should be in accordance with appropriate English Heritage guidelines.

- 3.4.2 The advice from Mr Mark Stevenson, English Heritage, Archaeology Advisor to the London Borough of Bexley, was that a programme of archaeological evaluation in the form of archaeological trial trenching was required.

4 GEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The geological and topographical background of the site is discussed in full in the Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (Gailey 2011a). The following is taken from that document.
- 4.2 The British Geological Survey Sheet 271 (Dartford: 1998) shows the study site to lie across the interface of two geological horizons. The western part of the site lies in an area of Taplow Gravels, defined as 'Post-diversionary Thames River Terrace Deposits: gravel, sandy and clayey in part', while the eastern part of the site lies in the alluvial floodplain of the River Cray.
- 4.3 Geotechnical Investigations undertaken in 2009 confirmed the site sequence as Made Ground overlying alluvium sealing the Taplow Gravels or Made Ground overlying the Taplow Gravels. Made Ground was recorded across the site up to depths of between 0.60m below ground level (bgl) to 1.60m bgl. Alluvium and peat deposits were recorded in four boreholes (BH201, BH206, BH204, BH104) up to depths of 1.20m bgl to 2.20m bgl. Taplow Gravel was recorded across the site underlying the Made Ground or the Alluvium.
- 4.4 The east of the site lies within the floodplain of the River Cray, the current banks of which bound the site to the east. The remainder of the site lies on the natural river terrace which forms the edge of the floodplain.
- 4.5 The site gently slopes down towards the river from approximately 13.19m OD in the northwest of the site to 11.38m OD in the east of the site.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site is discussed in full in the Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (Gailey 2011a). The following is a summary from that document.
- 5.2 The Greater London Historic Environment Record (HER) records a number of examples of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic flintwork as having identified in within a 750m radius of the site, which in general have been interpreted as indicating sporadic exploitation by mobile hunter gathering communities probably engaged in seasonal migration patterns.
- 5.3 In the later Prehistoric periods the wetland environment that occupied the site and its vicinity could have been utilised for summer pasture, wildfowling and fishing. Any communities exploiting this area may have constructed timber trackways across the peat marshes and built timber platforms to facilitate hunting on the peat marsh. Prior work in the area has uncovered flints at several locations from the Neolithic to early Bronze Age and also an example of Iron Age pottery.
- 5.4 Little evidence from the Roman period has been recorded in the study area, with only a single site yielding Roman pottery.
- 5.5 The earliest mention of Bexley occurs in a Charter of AD814, when it was referred to as Byxlea, or 'the place associated with box trees', and the Domesday Book entry refers to Bix, which was one of the Manors of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Documentary sources suggest the village was surrounded by areas of woodland, pasture and meadow in this period. The sole find of Anglo-Saxon date within a 750m radius of the study site comprises a spearhead found in peat at Bexley High Street, with the study site is thought to have lain to the north of the extent of any settlement.
- 5.6 Bexley Church, approximately 500m south east of the site, was originally constructed in the 13th century, and monitoring works in the churchyard in 1999 revealed human remains and Medieval pottery and finds from this period from within the church itself have included coins and pottery. Evidence of Medieval occupation has been identified along Bexley High Street, and medieval cultivation soil was recorded at Thanet Road. The available information suggests that it is likely that the study site lay to the north of the medieval settlement at Bexley, with the centre of the village having been concentrated along the High Street and the church to the south and south east of the study site.
- 5.7 Cartographic evidence (illustrated in the Desk Based Assessment, Gailey 2011a) shows the late post-medieval development of the site. Early maps show that the study site continued to occupy land to the north of Bexley village, in open land between the road to the west and the River Cray to the east. Between 1870 and 1897 a house and substantial grounds were constructed to the north west of the study site, and by 1897 the western part of the site lay within the grounds of the house, whilst the remainder of the site continued to occupy fields. Between 1897 and 1909 the Bexley Generating Station was constructed in the east of the site. The 1909 Ordnance Survey shows a pathway or driveway running from the south west towards the generating station whilst an embankment ran along the southern border of the

- site. Weir Road was established by this date and a cluster of buildings fronting Weir Road occupied the south west of the site.
- 5.8 Between 1909 and 1933 the Generating Station was redeveloped as a works building. The building extended to the south west towards the centre of the site and was used for cellophane production known as St Bernard Works. The former pathway had been altered by this date to contain the new building whilst the embankment was retained. An orchard with associated glass house occupied the north west of the site. Between 1933 and 1961 the former orchard had been cleared and redeveloped with two small works buildings and associated access road whilst a small extension was added to the south western elevation of the main site building. The remainder of the site had been developed with six satellite works buildings and associated driveway and landscaping. The 1961 Ordnance Survey shows a possible pond in the centre of the site by this date. One of the former buildings along Weir Road had been demolished and subsequently redeveloped by this date.
- 5.9 Between 1961 and 1971 two of the satellite works buildings and the pond had been demolished to allow for the main site building to be extended significantly to the south west to form a warehouse and toy factory. An electricity sub station was located to the north east and south west of this building. Between 1971 and 2009 (Fig. 10) two of the works buildings in the west of the site was demolished to allow for the main building to extend further westward whilst all but one of the remaining satellite works buildings had been demolished to allow for the creation of a car park. The building fronting Weir Road had been demolished and redeveloped as a bungalow.
- 5.10 The Assessment concluded that the site had a moderate archaeological potential for the prehistoric periods and a low potential for all other archaeological periods of human activity.

6 METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The evaluation was conducted according to an approved Specification prepared by Suzanne Gailey of CgMs Consulting (2011b). The evaluation was designed to clarify the presence/absence, date, condition and character of any archaeological remains in order that the need for and scope of any further mitigation measures could be established.
- 6.2 A mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide flat ditching bucket was used under archaeological supervision to remove non-archaeological soils down to the highest archaeological horizon or natural level. Five trenches were opened across the study site (Figure 2), as follows:

Trench	Dimensions (m)	Max depth (m)
1	12.0 x 1.9	1.1
2	10.5 x 1.9	1.1
3	8.35 x 1.8	1.1
4	9.65 x 1.9	0.6
5	12.5 x 3.73 at GL	1.15

- 6.3 Trenches 1-4 were located as designed in the Specification. Trench 5, however, has to be moved slightly to the west to take account of possible service signals picked up by the cable avoidance tool.
- 6.4 Following the opening of the trenches they were cleaned and all features identified were investigated by hand. Investigation was intended to identifying the extent and nature of the deposits and to recover dating evidence. The deposits, fills, and features were assigned individual context numbers.
- 6.5 Heights above Ordnance Datum were established on site by GPS. Three TBMs were established in this method, being 12.58m OD, 12.00m OD, and 11.69m OD.
- 6.6 Upon the completion of the archaeological work the trenches were backfilled under archaeological supervision.

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE (BY TRENCH)

7.1 Trench 1

7.1.1 Phase 1: Natural (Figures 3 and 5)

- The earliest deposit encountered in Trench 1 was recorded between 11.40m OD and 11.94m OD, and was the natural horizon of moderately compacted mid yellowish-brown sandy-gravels [25], with variants of light brown and yellow also seen.

7.1.2 Phase 3: Mesolithic or Neolithic (Figures 3 and 5)

- The northern side of an northeast-southwest aligned linear feature [24] was observed to be cut through the gravels [25]. Where observable the sides were gradually sloped and broke gradually into a flat base. It continued in length beyond the limits of the trench, with a width of 2.02m observed up to a modern truncation. It was 0.86m deep and the cut was observed from 11.28m OD to 11.03m OD. Its' primary fill was observed from 11.39m OD and was a moderately compacted mid reddish-brown gritty-organic rich deposit, with occasional medium sized sub-angular gravels. It also contained two large broken flint distal blade fragments. One was in good condition, the other a bit more chipped but this one may have also been utilized to some extent. Datedwise they are Mesolithic or Early Neolithic, probably earlier rather than later within this range (pers comm. B. Bishop). The secondary fill [22] was also a gritty organic rich deposit, being moderately compacted, dark reddish-brown, with lenses of small to large sub-angular gravels. This was observed from 11.90m OD.

7.1.3 Phase 4: Post-Medieval (Figures 3 and 5)

- An east to west aligned linear feature [21] was observed to be cutting [24], with steeply to gradually sloped sides and a concave base. This cut was observed between 11.93m OD to 11.27m OD, with a width of 1.80m, a depth of 0.67m, and it continued in length beyond the limits of excavation for the trench. Two fills were present. The primary [20] was moderately compacted mid brownish-grey sandy-silt-gravels, which was 0.48m thick and seen from 11.93m OD. The secondary [19] was friable mid greyish-brown sandy-silt that contained medium sized sub-angular gravels and was 0.49m thick and seen from 11.95m OD.
- A soil horizon [18] sealed the archaeological features within Trench 1. This was composed of a moderately compacted dark greyish-brown gravelly-silt, which was 0.18m thick and observed from 12.08m OD. The trench was sealed by modern deposits of made ground and the tarmac that formed the existing car park.

7.2 Trench 2

7.2.1 Phase 1: Natural (Figures 3 and 5)

- The earliest of the deposits encountered in Trench 2 was natural horizon [35], which was composed of moderate to firmly compacted mid greyish-brown sandy-gravels, seen from 11.40m OD.

7.2.2 Phase 2: Uncertain Date (Figures 3 and 5)

- A northeast-southwest aligned ditch [34] was seen cut through the natural [35] in the very northern end of Trench 2, having moderately sloped sides and a concave base which broke imperceptibly from the sides. This ditch was observed from 11.75m OD, with dimensions of 1.94m in length and 1.05m in width were recorded, with both continuing beyond the limits of excavation, and the observed depth was 0.53m. A single fill [33] was contained, being a moderately compacted mid yellowish-brown sandy-silt with small to medium sub-rounded gravels. No datable material was found within the fill.

7.2.3 Phase 3: Mesolithic or Neolithic (Figures 3 and 5)

- A second northeast-southwest linear [32] was observed to be cutting the gravels [35] in Trench 2. This was 3.37m in width to the limit of excavation with only the northern edge visible, a length that continued beyond the limits, had a depth of 0.38m, and it was observed from 11.15m OD. This cut had moderately sloped sides, and the base was unseen for it lay beyond the limits of excavation. Two fills were contained within. The primary [31] was a soft dark greyish-brown gritty organic rich deposit with small to large sub-rounded to sub-angular gravels, which was 0.25m thick from 11.15m OD to 10.88m OD. The secondary [30] was a soft dark reddish-brown silty-clayey-organic rich deposit with occasional inclusions of small sub-rounded pebbles, which was 0.13m thick and seen between 11.04m OD to 10.88m OD.

7.2.4 Phase 4: Post-Medieval (Figures 3 and 5)

- The linear [32] was observed to be cut by a later northeast-southwest aligned linear [29]. This had gradually sloped sides that broke gradually into a flat base, with an observable width of 2.25m to the limit of excavation, and a depth of 0.46m, with the length also going beyond both limits of excavation. The feature was encountered between 11.46m OD and 11.00m OD. Two fills were contained within the feature. The primary [28] was a soft mid reddish-brown organic rich-clayey-silt with occasional small to medium sub-rounded to sub-angular gravels, which was 0.33m thick and observed from 11.46m OD to 11.10m OD. The secondary [27] was composed of soft mid greyish-brown sandy-clayey-silt, with a moderate amount of sub-angular small to medium gravels contained within, along with occasional inclusions of pottery dated to 1550-1700, 19th century glass and clay tobacco pipe (pers comm. C. Jarrett) assorted fragments of ceramic building materials (spot

dated to AD 1664-1850, though residual medieval fragments were present, pers comm. K. Hayward). This was observed between 11.40m OD and 11.33m OD, and was up to 0.20m thick.

- Both the ditches within Trench 2 were sealed by a soil horizon [26] of soft dark brownish-grey sandy-silt with moderate inclusions of medium sub-angular gravels, which was 0.28m thick and seen between 11.91m OD and 11.40m OD. This was sealed by modern deposits of made ground and the tarmac that formed the existing car park.

7.3 Trench 3

7.3.1 Phase 1: Natural (Figures 4 and 5)

- The earliest deposit recorded in Trench 3 was the natural, comprised of moderately compacted mid reddish-brown sandy-clayey-gravels [11], which was observed between 11.69m OD and 11.15m OD.

7.3.2 Phase 2: Uncertain Date (Figure 4)

- An oval cut [6], a likely post-hole base, was observed to be cutting the natural [11]. This had moderately sloped sides that broke moderately into a concave base. It measured 0.40m by 0.24m, with a depth of 0.15m and it was encountered from 11.69m OD. A single fill [5], a friable mid-dark brownish-bluish-grey sandy-silty-clay, was contained within, but yielded no datable material.

7.3.3 Phase 4: Post-Medieval (Figures 4 and 5)

- Two features were observed cut through the natural [11] that can be attributed to this phase. The first was a tree throw [8] which possessed an irregular shape and sides and a concave base. This measured 0.75m by 0.54m, being 0.34m deep and encountered from 11.51m OD. It contained a single fill [7] of soft mid brownish-grey clayey-silt, with inclusions of occasional 19th century glass (pers comm. C. Jarrett), peg tile and daub (dated to AD 1480-1900, pers comm. K. Hayward) and moderate amounts of medium rounded pebbles.
- The second feature attribute to this phase was a sub-rectangular pit [10], with steep sides and a flat base that sloped gradually downwards to the west. This pit was encountered from 11.31m OD, measured 0.54m by 0.46m, was 0.19m deep, and contained a single fill [9] that was composed of soft dark brownish-bluish-grey gravelly-clayey-silt and contained fragments of peg tile (dated to AD 1480-1900).
- The features in this trench were overlain by a soil horizon [1], composed of soft dark greyish-brown sandy-silt with occasional sub-rounded gravels, which was 0.56m thick and observed between 11.90m OD and 11.80m OD. The trench was sealed by modern deposits of made ground and the tarmac that formed the existing car park.

7.4 Trench 4

7.4.1 Phase 1: Natural (Figures 4 and 5)

- The earliest horizon observed in Trench 4 was the natural [17] which was composed of firmly compacted mid yellowish-brown sandy-gravels, which were mixed with clay in the eastern half of the trench. This was encountered between 11.99m OD and 11.97m OD.

7.4.2 Phase 2: Uncertain Date (Figure 4)

- Two post-holes were observed to be cut through the natural [17] within Trench 4. One [14] was sub-rounded in shape with gradually sloped sides and a concave base, and it measured 0.40m by 0.36m, with a depth of 0.06m. A single fill [13] was contained, being a soft mid greyish-brown sandy-clayey-silt with frequent sub-rounded gravels. This post-hole was encountered from 11.88m OD.
- The second post-hole [16] was oval in shape, with gradually sloped sides and a concave base. It was observed from 11.92m OD, with dimensions of 0.44m by 0.33m, and 0.07m in depth. This also contained a singular fill [15], a friable mid greyish-brown clayey-sandy-silt.

7.4.3 Phase 4: Post-Medieval (Figure 5)

- A 0.30m thick soil horizon [12] that was composed of friable light to mid greyish-brown sandy-silt sealed the post-holes, from a height of 12.23m OD. This was then sealed by a deposit of modern made ground followed by the tarmac of the existing car park.

7.5 Trench 5

7.5.1 Phase 1: Natural (Figures 4 and 5)

- A natural horizon [44] and [46] was the earliest deposit observed in the sections of Trench 5. This was composed of loose dark blackish-brown coarse sandy-gravels and was recorded between 11.52m OD and 11.41m OD.

7.5.2 Phase 5: 20th Century (Figures 4 and 5)

- A levelling layer [41], [42], [43], [45], and [49] was observed to overlie the natural horizon. This was composed of soft dark brown sandy-gravelly-clayey-silt with occasional small fragments of ceramic building material and concrete, and was 0.28m to 0.33m thick and encountered from 11.84m OD to 11.56m OD.
- A series of walls [37], [40], and [48] were observed to post-date the levelling layer. These relate to the same structure, being composed of yellow stock bricks measuring 230mm by 60mm by 110mm with a mid grey cement mortar. Wall [37] was 7.90m north to south

with a 3.00m east to west return, and was recorded from 12.07m OD. Wall [40] was aligned north to south and measured 0.32m north to south by 0.72m east to west, and was 0.57m high and recorded from 12.54m OD. Wall [48] measured 1.25m north-south by 0.75m east-west and 0.80m in height and was recorded from 12.29m OD.

- A further section of brick wall [36], of the same construction, was observed to be abutting [37] with dimensions of 2.36m north-south by 2.20m east-west by 0.41m high, and it was observed from 12.12m OD. A further later, though still contemporary, addition to [37] was the concrete and masonry support for a timber and metal post [47], also constructed of yellow stock brick though with a light grey hard cement as bonding. This measured 0.75m by 0.80m with an observed height of 0.24m, and was encountered from 12.10m OD.
- A loose levelling layer [50] was observed to be overlying the masonry [37] and [48]. This was composed of mid brownish-grey gravelly-silt and rubble, and was 0.25m thick with a length of 2.20m N-S having been visible in section, and encountered from 12.11m OD. This formed the levelling layer for a 0.11m thick concrete slab [38], which was seen from 12.22m OD, which in turn formed the footings for a brick surface [39]. This surface was constructed of dark brown bricks that measured 230mm by 70mm by 120mm which were bonded by light grey cement, and was seen from 12.29m OD, with 2.20m in length able to be observed within the trench.
- In the eastern side of the trench, continuing beyond the section, a brick soak away [51] was observed. The construction cut [52] for this truncated the layer [43] from a height of 11.78m OD, being sub-circular in shape and visibly measuring 1.16m by 0.35m up to the trench limits. The soak away itself was constructed of red bricks in a stretcher pattern, bonded by mid grey hard cement, and measured 1.00m by 0.30m and was seen from 11.83m OD. Following the construction of the soak away the construction cut was backfilled by loose to friable mid grey silty-deno rubble [53] from 11.78m OD.
- The features in this trench were overlain by a deposit of modern made ground, and then sealed by the existing tarmac car park.

8 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE (BY PHASE)

8.1 Phase 1: Natural

8.1.1 The evaluation trenches revealed the Taplow Gravels, as were expected upon the site, with heights varying between 11.99m in Trench 4 and 11.15m OD in Trench 3

8.1.2 No evidence of the deposits associated with the alluvial floodplain of the River Cray were revealed, which the British Geological Survey suggested would be present in the eastern area of the site.

8.2 Phase 2: Uncertain Date

8.2.1 Four features of an uncertain date were revealed. In all cases this was due to a lack of dating evidence within the feature and a lack of stratigraphic relationships which could establish a datable sequence.

8.2.2 The smaller east-west ditch observed in Trench 2 is likely to have served a boundary or drainage purpose, for it runs in the direction of the River Cray. It also, as far as is seen, follows a similar alignment to the larger post-medieval ditch observed in Trenches 1 and 2, which suggests it may have either replaced or been replaced by this large ditch.

8.2.3 Little can conclusively be said regarding the three posthole bases observed in Trenches 3 and 4. It is possible that they are associated or contemporary, but there is not enough evidence to say this with certainty. It is likely that they had been truncated by later agricultural activity hence the shallow nature of their form.

8.3 Phase 3: Mesolithic or Early Neolithic

8.3.1 The only feature attributable to this period was a northeast to southwest aligned ditch which was observed in both Trenches 1 and 2. Alignment projections between the two trenches (Figure 3) suggest that they are one and the same feature. Two flint pieces recovered from one of the fills within this feature in Trench 1 were dated to the Mesolithic to early Neolithic period (pers comm. B. Bishop).

8.4 Phase 4: Post-Medieval

8.4.1 The most notable feature from this period was the large northeast-southwest aligned linear exposed in Trenches 1 and 2. This may have been a drainage ditch, suggested by the fact that it runs towards the River Cray, which would also account for the organic nature of some of the fills and the need for it to have been re-cut.

8.4.2 There were two other features attributed to this phase. A pit of uncertain function in Trench 3, with recovered peg tile fragments dated to 1480-1900, provided little information aside from showing a minor form of activity. A tree throw formed the second feature, which also contained a glass sherd dated to 19th century and also peg tile and daub dated to 1480-1900.

8.4.3 The soil horizon observed in Trenches 1 to 4 can also be attributed to this period. This is a likely remnant of the former agricultural soil that predated the development of the site,

though it may have been subject to truncation of the upper horizons during levelling activity associated with the deposition of the later made ground and construction of the existent car park.

8.5 Phase 5: 20th Century

- 8.5.1 The main feature of this phase of the sites' history is the structural remains encountered in Trench 5 and the associated levelling layers. These foundations and the surface relate to the buildings first depicted cartographically on the 1909 Ordnance Survey, and seen to have been present until at least 1971. The function of this structure is not specified on the maps. It is likely that the soak away was also contemporary to this structure.

9 INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 As expected, natural Taplow Gravels were seen in all trenches.
- 9.2 A northeast-southwest aligned ditch was observed within Trenches 1 and 2. Two flints were recovered from within one of the fills of this ditch (in Trench 1), and these were dated to Mesolithic to early Neolithic period. The good condition of these flints may suggest that they originate from nearby. The ditch may have served a boundary function, or perhaps, especially due to the close location of the River Cray and the belief that the site lay in a wetland environment, a drainage function.
- 9.3 The same interpretation is also applied to the later post-medieval ditch also seen in Trenches 1 and 2, which had been cut in to the edge of the earlier prehistoric feature. Another undated linear was also seen in Trench 2.
- 9.4 The shallow nature of the observed post-holes upon the site does suggest that some impact may have occurred to the archaeological horizons due to past agricultural activity such as ploughing. It is evident that some truncation of the post-medieval soil horizon occurred during the construction of the 20th century buildings and it also possibly occurred during the deposition of made ground associated with the construction of the existing tarmac surfaces.

10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 10.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Suzanne Gailey of CgMs Consulting for commissioning the work. We would also like to thank Mark Stevenson of English Heritage for monitoring the project.
- 10.2 The author would like to thank Ireneo Grosso, Paul McGarrity, Jim Heathcote, and Patrick Kavanagh for their help in the field, Chris Cooper for organising the logistics, Chris Jarrett, Kevin Hayward, and Barry Bishop for dating the finds, Jennifer Simonson for the illustrations and Chris Mayo for his project management and editing.

11 BIBLIOGRAPHY

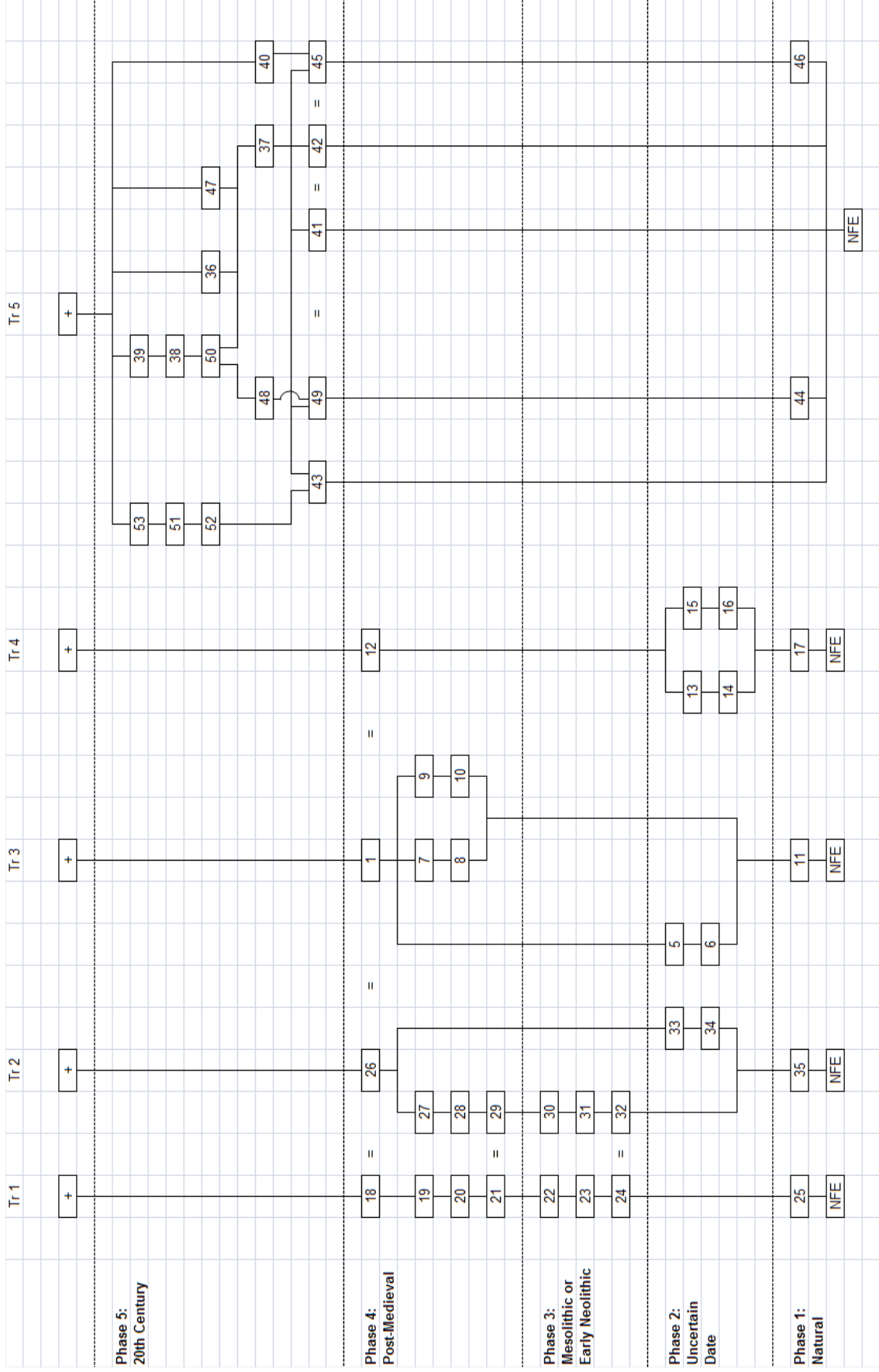
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- Gailey, S. 2011b. Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation - Land at Former Forest Laboratories, Weir Road, Bexley. Unpublished Report: CgMs Consulting Ltd.

12 APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Context No.	Trench	Type	Description	Date
1	3	Layer	Soil Horizon	Post-Med
2			Void	
3			Void	
4			Void	
5	3	Fill	Fill of [6]	Unknown
6	3	Cut	Post Hole	Unknown
7	3	Fill	Fill of [8]	Post-Med
8	3	Cut	Tree Throw	Post-Med
9	3	Fill	Fill of [10]	Post-Med
10	3	Cut	Pit	Post-Med
11	3	Layer	Natural Clayey-Gravels	Natural
12	4	Layer	Soil Horizon	Post-Med
13	4	Fill	Fill of [14]	Unknown
14	4	Cut	Post Hole	Unknown
15	4	Fill	Fill of [16]	Unknown
16	4	Cut	Post Hole	Unknown
17	4	Layer	Natural Sandy-Gravels	Natural
18	1	Layer	Soil Horizon	Post-Med
19	1	Fill	Secondary Fill of [21]	Uncertain
20	1	Fill	Primary Fill of [21]	Uncertain
21	1	Cut	Ditch	Uncertain
22	1	Fill	Secondary Fill of [24]	Mesolithic or Early Neolithic
23	1	Fill	Primary Fill of [24]	Mesolithic or Early Neolithic
24	1	Cut	E-W Aligned Ditch	Mesolithic or Early Neolithic
25	1	Layer	Natural Sandy-Gravels	Natural
26	2	Layer	Soil Horizon	Post-Med
27	2	Fill	Secondary Fill of [29]	Post-Med
28	2	Fill	Primary Fill of [29]	Post-Med
29	2	Cut	Ditch	Post-Med
30	2	Fill	Secondary Fill of [32]	Mesolithic or Early Neolithic
31	2	Fill	Primary Fill of [32]	Mesolithic or Early Neolithic
32	2	Cut	E-W Aligned Ditch	Mesolithic or Early Neolithic
33	2	Fill	Fill of [34]	Uncertain
34	2	Cut	E-W Aligned Ditch	Uncertain
35	2	Layer	Natural Gravels	Natural
36	5	Masonry	Brick Wall	20th Century
37	5	Masonry	Brick Wall	20th Century

Context No.	Trench	Type	Description	Date
38	5	Masonry	Concrete Footing for [48]	20th Century
39	5	Masonry	Brick Floor	20th Century
40	5	Masonry	Brick Wall	20th Century
41	5	Layer	Levelling Layer	20th Century
42	5	Layer	Levelling Layer	20th Century
43	5	Layer	Levelling Layer	20th Century
44	5	Layer	Natural Gravels	Natural
45	5	Layer	Levelling Layer	20th Century
46	5	Layer	Natural Gravels	Natural
47	5	Masonry	Addition to [37]	20th Century
48	5	Masonry	Brick Wall	20th Century
49	5	Layer	Levelling Layer	20th Century
50	5	Layer	Levelling Layer	20th Century
51	5	Masonry	Soak Away	19th-20th Century
52	5	Cut	Construction Cut for [51]	19th-20th Century
53	5	Fill	Fill of [52]	19th-20th Century

13 APPENDIX 2: SITE MATRIX



14 APPENDIX 3: PLATES



Plate 1: Trench 1



Plate 2: Trench 2



Plate 3: Trench 3



Plate 4: Trench 4



Plate 5: Trench 5

15 APPENDIX 4: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-115318

Project details	
Project name	LAND AT THE FORMER FOREST LABORATORIES, WEIR ROAD, BEXLEY, DA5 1LW: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited between the 21st and 25th of November 2011 at the Former Forest Laboratories, Weir Road, Bexley. Five evaluation trenches were excavated at the site. A Mesolithic or early Neolithic east-west aligned ditch was the only datable feature encountered which preceded the post-medieval period. All other archaeological features encountered during the evaluation work dated to the post-medieval to modern periods. Archaeological horizons were underlain by in-situ Taplow Gravel deposits, and sealed by modern made ground associated with the existent car park.
Project dates	Start: 21-11-2011 End: 25-11-2011
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	FRS11 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Conservation Area
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Monument type	DITCH Mesolithic
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Monument type	PIT Post Medieval
Monument type	POST HOLES Uncertain
Monument type	DITCH Uncertain
Monument type	BUILDING FOUNDATIONS Modern
Significant Finds	FLINT BLADES Mesolithic
Significant Finds	POT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Significant Finds	GLASS Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON BEXLEY BEXLEY LAND AT THE FORMER FOREST LABORATORIES
Postcode	DA5 1LW
Study area	1.00 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 4940 7396 51.4443822039 0.150047558402 51 26 39 N 000 09 00 E Point

Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 11.15m Max: 11.99m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	City/Nat. Park/District/Borough archaeologist
Project design originator	CgMs Consulting
Project director/manager	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	Sarah Barrowman
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Linden Homes
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Archive ID	FRS11
Physical Contents	'Ceramics', 'Worked stone/lithics'
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	FRS11
Digital Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography', 'Images vector', 'Spreadsheets', 'Survey', 'Text'
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	FRS11
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Paper Media available	'Section', 'Context sheet', 'Diary', 'Photograph', 'Plan'
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	LAND AT THE FORMER FOREST LABORATORIES, WEIR ROAD, BEXLEY, DA5 1LW - AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Barrowman, S.
Date	2011
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	A4 Bound Document
Entered by	
Entered by	Chris Mayo (cmayo@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	6 December 2011



Figure 1
Site Location
1:20,000 at A4

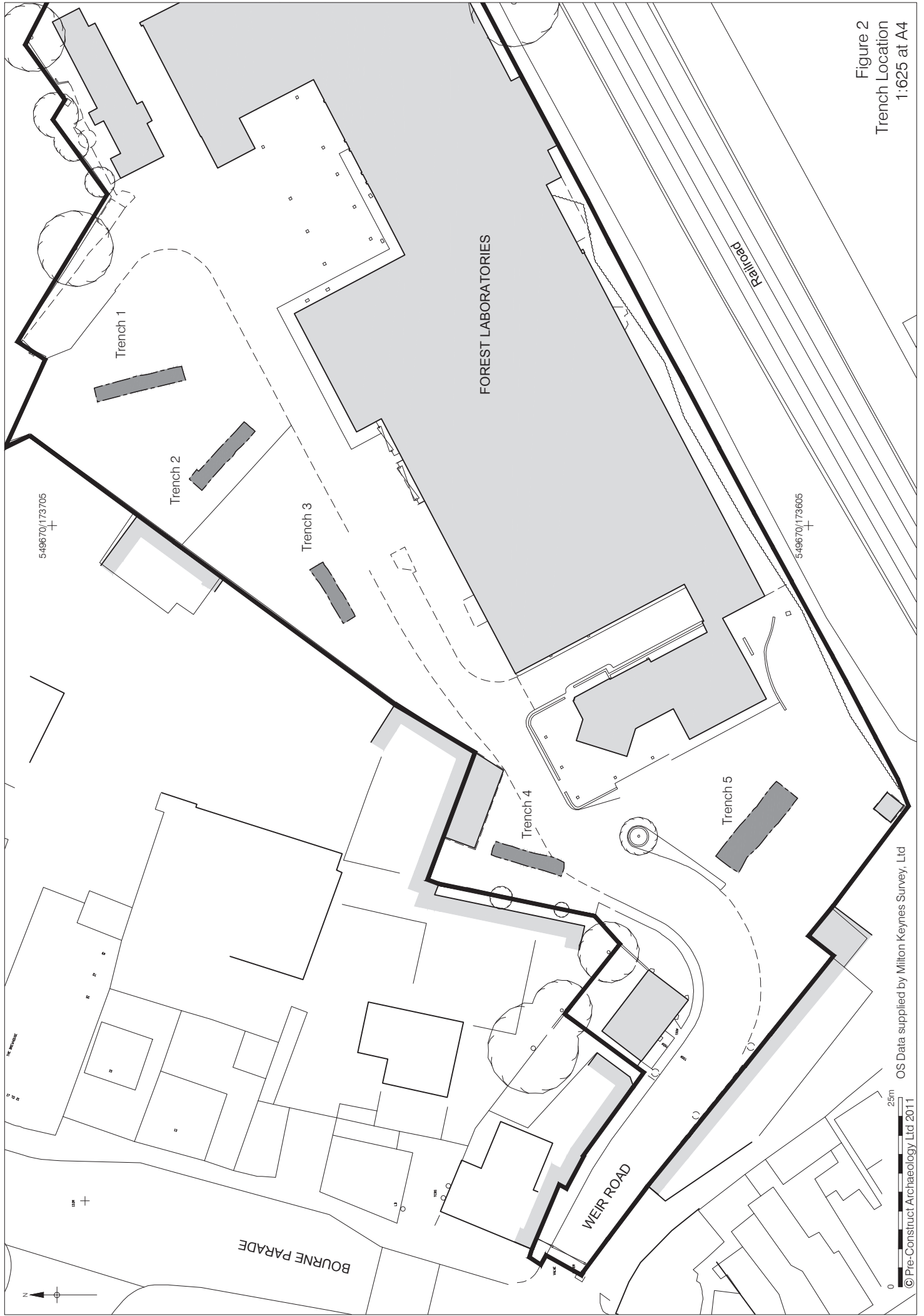
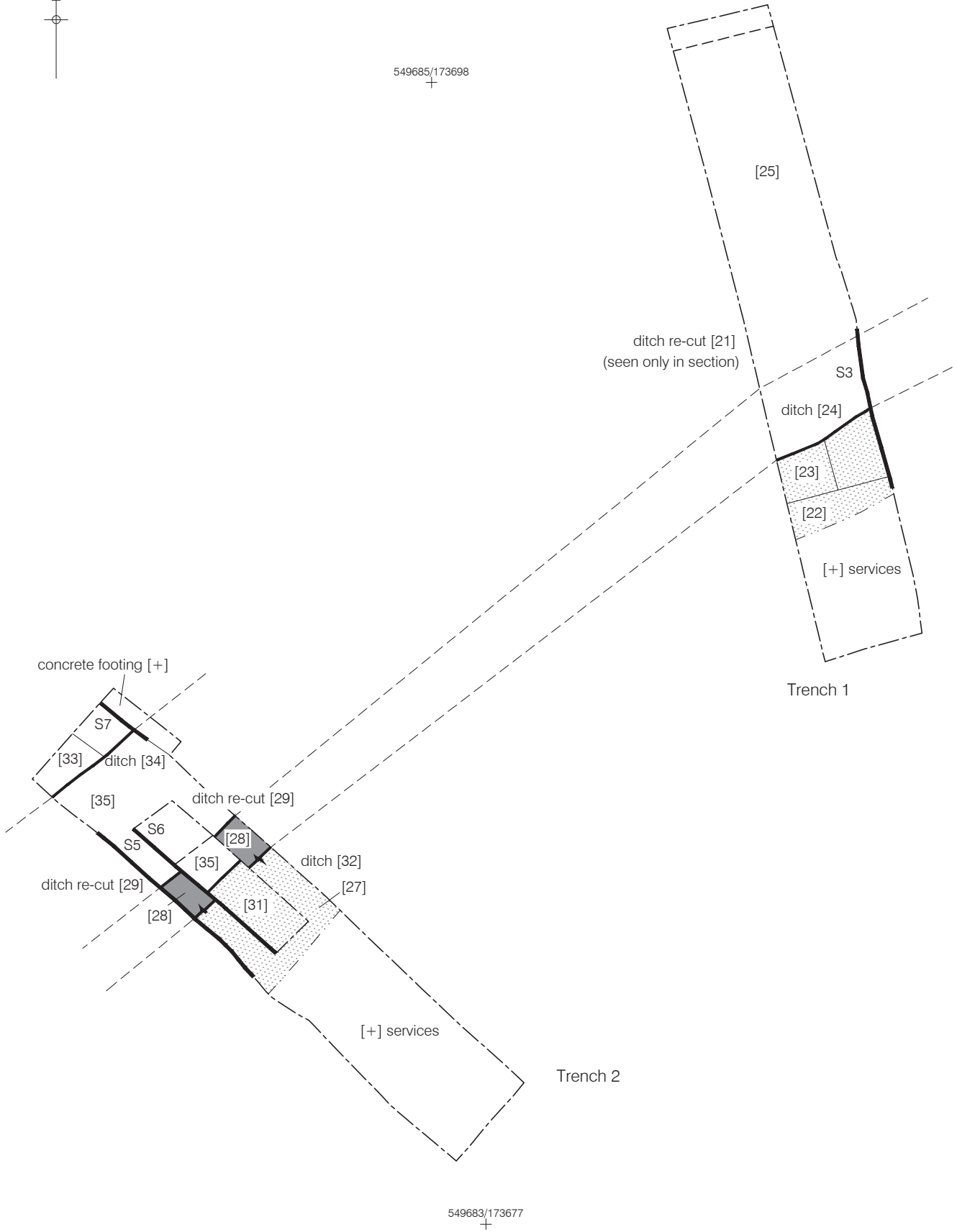


Figure 2
Trench Location
1:625 at A4



549685/173698
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Figure 3
Trenches 1 & 2
1:100 at A4

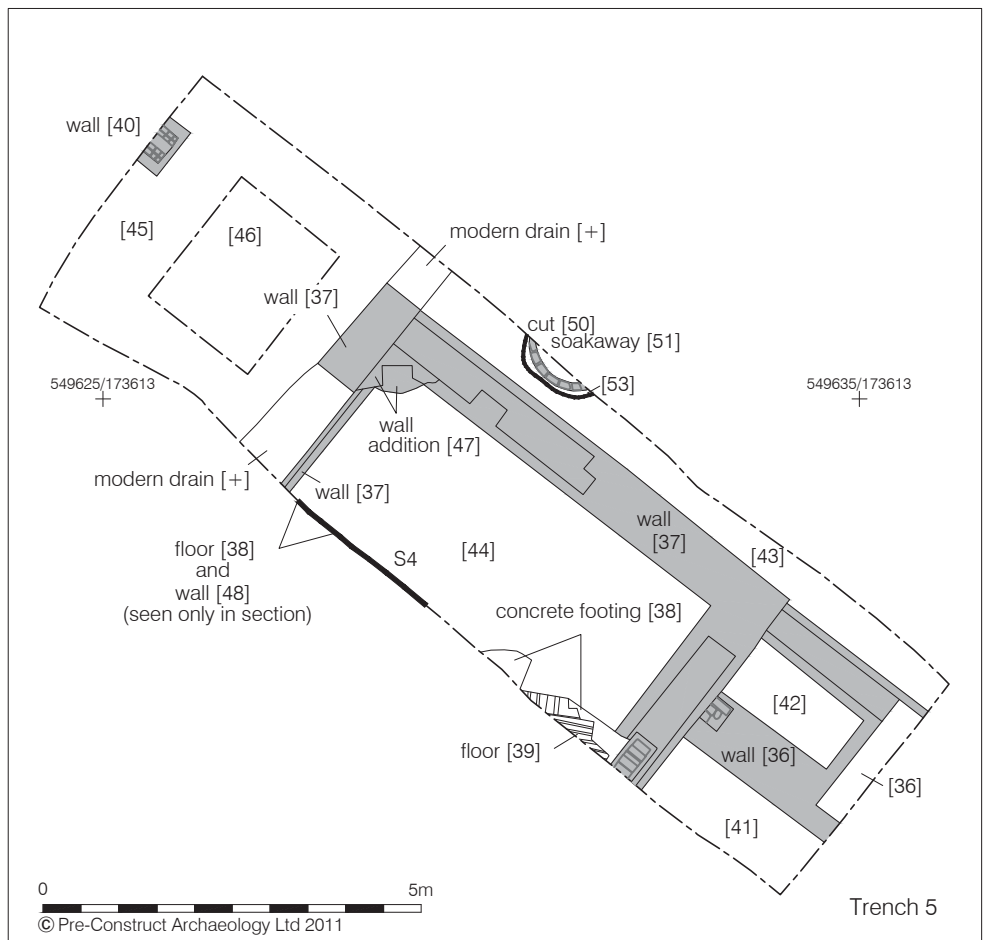
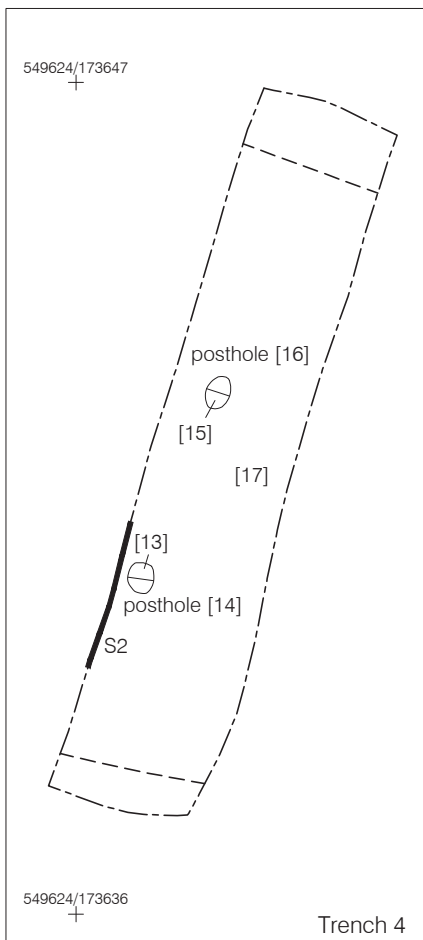
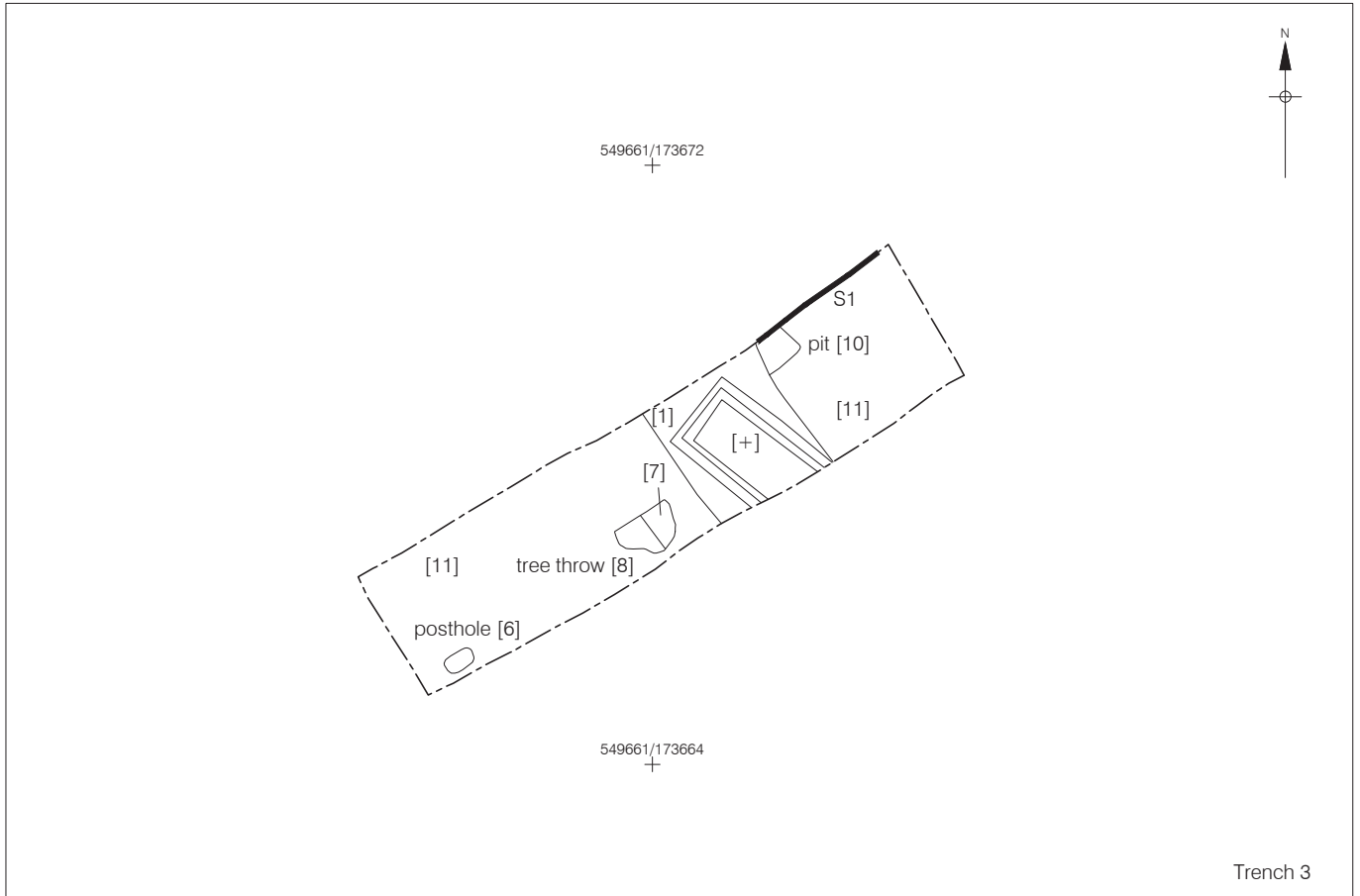


Figure 4
Trenches 3, 4 & 5
1:100 at A4

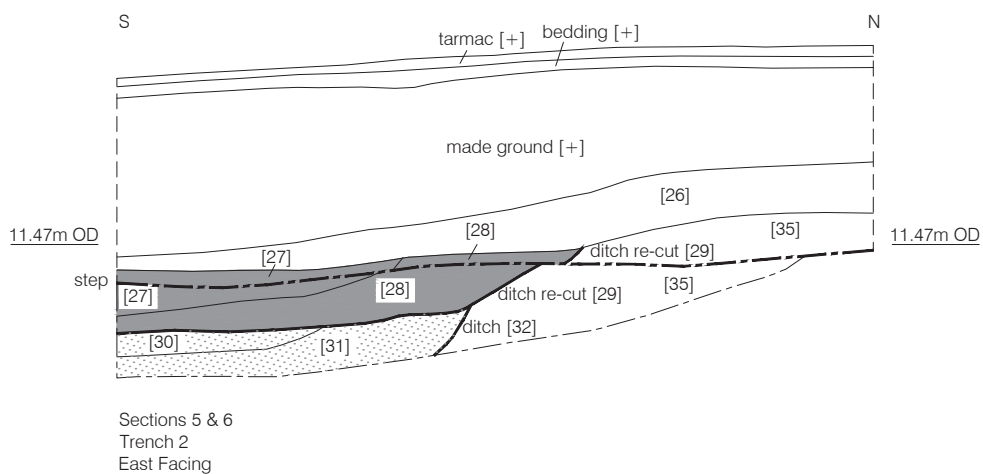
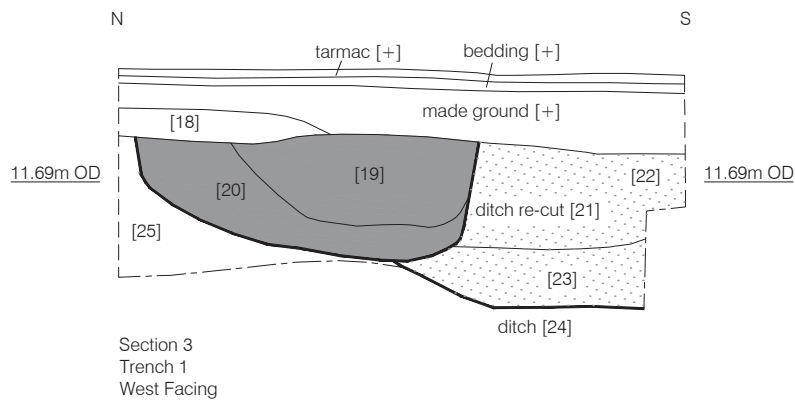
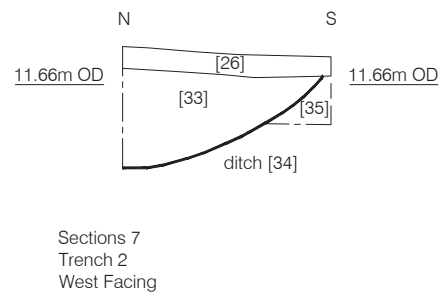
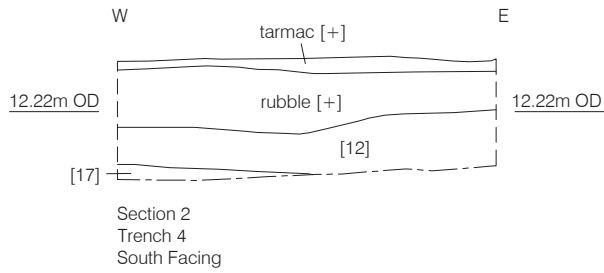
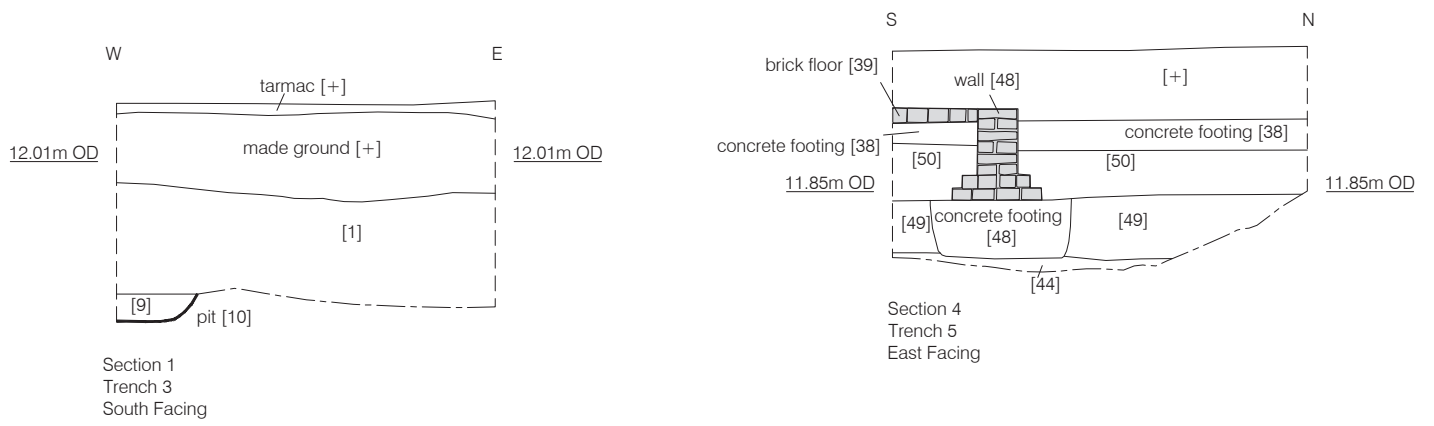


Figure 5
Sections
1:40 at A4

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

PCA NORTHERN

UNIT 19A
TURSDALE BUSINESS PARK
DURHAM DH6 5PG
TEL: 0191 377 1111
FAX: 0191 377 0101
EMAIL: info.north@pre-construct.com

PCA CENTRAL

7 GRANTA TERRACE
STAPLEFORD
CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB22 5DL
TEL: 01223 845 522
FAX: 01223 845 522
EMAIL: info.central@pre-construct.com

PCA WESTERN

6 KING ALFRED PLACE
WINCHESTER
HAMPSHIRE SO23 7DF
TEL: 07714 134099
EMAIL: info.west@pre-construct.com

