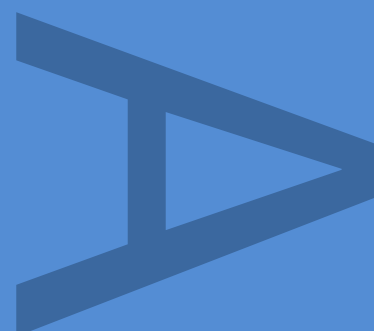


FAIRLANDS SCHOOL,
STEVENAGE, HERTFORDSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION

JANUARY 2012



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY
R11160

Archaeological Evaluation at Fairlands School, Stevenage, Hertfordshire

Site Code: HFSS12

Report Number: 11160

HER Planning Reference: 263/11

Central National Grid Reference: NGR TL 5239 2249

Written and Researched by Alexander Pullen

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, January 2012

Project Manager: Mark Hinman

Commissioning Client:

Contractor:

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

7 Granta Terrace

Stapleford

Cambs.

CB22 4PF

Tel: 01223 845522

Email: mhinman@pre-construct.com

Website: www.pre-construct.com

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January 2012**

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ABSTRACT

Pre-Construct Archaeology undertook an Archaeological Evaluation for Architype Limited on behalf of Morgan Sindall PLC on land at Fairlands Primary School, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 3JA. The field work was carried out between the 16th and 18th January 2012. 160m of trial trenching was excavated, comprising seven trenches 1.60m wide. A ditch of unknown date was identified in Trench 2. A small number of late 19th / early 20th century glass bottles were recovered from a layer of dumped material during the excavation of Trench 6. This material was recovered from an area known to have been at the rear of some cottages formerly fronting Primrose Hill Road. No other archaeological finds or features were identified during this archaeological evaluation.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology was commissioned by Architype Limited on behalf of Morgan Sindall PLC to carry out a program of archaeological evaluation at Fairlands School, Stevenage. The work comprised the excavation and recording of seven evaluation trenches totalling 160m (4 x 25m, 2 x 12.5m, and 1 x 35m). The evaluation was carried out between the 16th and 18th January 2012 (Figs 1 & 2).
- 1.2 The site comprises a Primary School and nursery with associated landscaped grounds and playing fields. The site at Fairlands School falls within the Borough of Stevenage and the county of Hertfordshire. The study area, centred on NGR TL 5239 2249, covers approximately 2.3 hectares. The site slopes gradually from 94m OD at the western end of the site uphill to approximately 99.30m OD at its eastern boundary.
- 1.3 The site is located to the North of the town centre and is bounded to the south by residential properties fronting onto Trinity Road. The northern boundary of the site is demarcated by Primrose Hill Road, the west and eastern boundaries are defined by residential properties fronting onto Hammond Close and Greydells Road respectively.
- 1.4 The site lies on glaciofluvial deposits, mid Pleistocene - sand and gravel overlying above a deep solid geology of Holywell nodular chalk formation and new pit chalk formation (undifferentiated) (British Geological Survey 1979; Soil Survey of England & Wales (SSEW) 1983).

- 1.5 The archaeological background to this site has been detailed in the WSI prepared by Mark Hinman (2012).
- 1.6 A ditch of unknown date was identified in trench 2 [11]. A ditch-like linear feature [14] was excavated in Trench 5 is of natural origin (e.g. glacial). A small number of late 19th /early 20th century glass bottles were recovered from a layer of dumped material [[15] during the excavation of Trench 6. This material was recovered from an area known to have been at the rear of some cottages formerly fronting Primrose Hill Road. No other archaeological finds or features were identified during this archaeological evaluation.

2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The methodology followed during this evaluation is detailed in the WSI prepared by Mark Hinman (2012). All aspects of the evaluation were conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologist's Code of Conduct, the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (2008), and Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (EAA Occasional Paper 14).
- 2.2 Alan Horner (School Site Manager) and Frank Conway (Project Manager, Morgan Sindall) organised safe access to the evaluation trenches for the JCB machine.
- 2.3 Seven archaeological evaluation trenches were excavated with a JCB mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. Prior to excavation the ground was CAT scanned for live services. The ground was reduced under supervision until natural deposits were reached. The exposed surface in each trench was examined for archaeological features. Where identified archaeological features were excavated, planned and photographed. The trenches and archaeological features were located using a Leica 1200 rover unit.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

- 3.1 In all the trenches except Trench 7 the sand and gravel natural [18] was overlain by approximately 0.45 m thick gravelly sandy-silt subsoil [17] which in turn was overlain by 0.40m thick layer of dark sandy-silt topsoil [16].
- 3.2 Ground reduction during the construction of the primary school has truncated the ground occupied by Trench 7 (proposed MUGA). The topsoil here was 0.15m thick and directly overlay the natural [18].
- 3.3 In Trench 2 a 0.70m wide and 0.34m deep ditch [11] was orientated east-west. No artefacts were recovered from the fill [12] of this feature. The ditch was overlain by sub-soil [17]. Ground level at Trench 2 was 94.03m OD. The top and bottom of ditch [11] were 93.58m OD and 93.25m OD respectively.
- 3.4 In Trench 5 a linear feature [14] was excavated. This feature was 0.60m wide and 0.20m deep. No artefacts were recovered from this feature and it very probably represents a natural (e.g. geological) feature. Ground level at Trench 5 was 99.33m OD. The base of feature [14] was 92.33m OD.
- 3.5 In Trench 6 a layer of dumped refuse material [15] overlay the subsoil [17]. This layer contained several late 19th / early 20th century glass bottles some of which still retain their glass stoppers. Ground level at Trench 6 was 98.73m OD.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- 4.1 A small number of late 19th /early 20th century glass bottles were recovered from a layer of dumped material during the excavation of Trench 6. This material was recovered from an area known to have been at the rear of some cottages formerly fronting Primrose Hill Road.
- 4.2 A ditch of unknown date was identified in Trench 2 [11]. The ditch was not visible cutting the subsoil, which might suggest that it is at least older than the post-medieval period and probably represents a boundary ditch of some sort.
- 4.3 A ditch-like linear feature [14] excavated in Trench 5 is thought to be of natural origin (e.g. glacial).
- 4.4 The results of this evaluation indicate that the proposed development at this site will have a limited archaeological impact.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 5.1 The author would like to thank the staff and students of Fairlands Primary School for their co-operation, especially School Site Manager Alan Horner. Thanks also to Frank Conway, Site Manager, Morgan Sindall. Josephine Brown, PCA prepared the illustrations.

6 APPENDIX 1: DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Trench 1 – view east



Trench 2 –view southeast with damaged pipe Foreground was flooded.



Trench 2 ditch [11] – detail view southeast



Trench 2 ditch [11]



Trench 3 view north



Trench 4 view north



Trench 5 view east



Probable natural linear feature [14]



Trench 6 view east



Trench 6 layer [15] containing 19th century midden material



Trench 6 Selection of late 19th century bottles



Bottles after cleaning



Trench 6 being excavated



Trench 7 view west



7 APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-117848

Project details

Project name	Evaluation at Fairlands School Stevenage
Short description of the project	Pre-Construct Archaeology undertook an Archaeological Evaluation on behalf of Morgan Sindall PLC on land at Fairlands Primary School, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 3JA. The work was carried out between the 16th and 18th January 2012. 160m of trial trenching was excavated, comprising seven trenches 1.60m wide. A ditch of unknown date was identified in trench 2. A small number of late 19th /early 20th century glass bottles were recovered from a layer of dumped material during the excavation of trench 6. This material was recovered from an area known to have been at the rear of some cottages formerly fronting Primrose Hill Road. No other archaeological finds or features were identified during this archaeological evaluation.
Project dates	Start: 16-01-2012 End: 18-01-2013
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	HFSS12 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None

Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Monument type	DITCH None
Significant Finds	GLASS Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches','Visual Inspection'
Development type	Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)
Prompt	Planning approved subject to conditions
Position in the planning process	Planning approved subject to conditions

Project location

Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE STEVENAGE STEVENAGE Fairlands School
Postcode	SG1 3JA
Study area	2.50 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 5239 2249 51.8796533619 0.2142069362 51 52 46 N 000 12 51 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 93.20m Max: 98.30m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	of	PCA
Project originator	brief	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project originator	design	Mark Hinman
Project director/manager		Mark Hinman
Project supervisor		Alexander Pullen
Type of sponsor/funding body		Developer

Project archives

Physical recipient	Archive	Stevenage Museum
Physical Contents		'Glass'
Digital recipient	Archive	Stevenage Museum
Digital available	Media	'Survey'
Paper recipient	Archive	Stevenage Museum
Paper available	Media	'Unspecified Archive'

**Project
bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Evaluation at Fairlands School Stevenage
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Pullen, A G
Date	2012
Issuer or publisher	PCA
Place of issue or publication	Brockley

Entered by	Alexander Pullen (apullen@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	19 January 2012

8 APPENDIX 3: CONTEXT REGISTER

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Trench</i>	<i>Category</i>
1	Trench	–	1	–
2	Trench	–	2	–
3	Trench	–	3	–
4	Trench	–	4	–
5	Trench	–	5	–
6	Trench	–	6	–
7	Trench	–	7	–
8	–	–	–	–
9	–	–	–	–
10	–	–	–	–
11	Cut	11	2	Ditch (undated)
12	Fill	11	2	Ditch (undated)
13	Fill	14	5	Natural feature
14	Cut	14	5	Natural feature
15	Layer	–	6	19 th /20 th midden
16	Layer	–	1-7	Topsoil
17	Layer	–	1-7	Subsoil
18	Layer	–	1-7	Natural

9 APPENDIX 4: HER SUMMARY

Site name and address: Land at Fairlands School, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 3JA		
County: Hertfordshire	District: Stevenage	
Village/Town: Stevenage	Borough: Stevenage	
Planning application reference:		
HER Enquiry reference: 263/11		
Client name, address, and tel. no.: Architype Ltd The Morocco Store 1B Leathermarket Street London SE1 3JA		
Nature of application: Improvements to School Facilities		
Present land use: School Grounds		
Size of application area:2.3ha	Size of area investigated:2.3ha	
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 5239 2249		
Site code (if applicable):HFSS12		
Site director/Organisation: Mark Hinman Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd		
Type of work Evaluation		
Date of work:	Start:16/01/12	Finish:18/01/12
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum: Stevenage		
Related HER Nos:	Periods represented: Modern	
Relevant previous summaries/reports		
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: <i>An archaeological evaluation undertaken between the 16th and 18th January 2012. 160m of trial trenching was excavated, comprising seven trenches 1.60m wide. A ditch of unknown date was identified in Trench 2. A small number of late 19th /early 20th century glass bottles were recovered from a layer of dumped material during the excavation of Trench 6. This material was recovered from an area known to have been at the rear of some cottages formerly fronting Primrose Hill Road. No other archaeological finds or features were identified during this archaeological evaluation.</i></p>		
Author of summary: M Hinman	Date of summary:31/01/12	

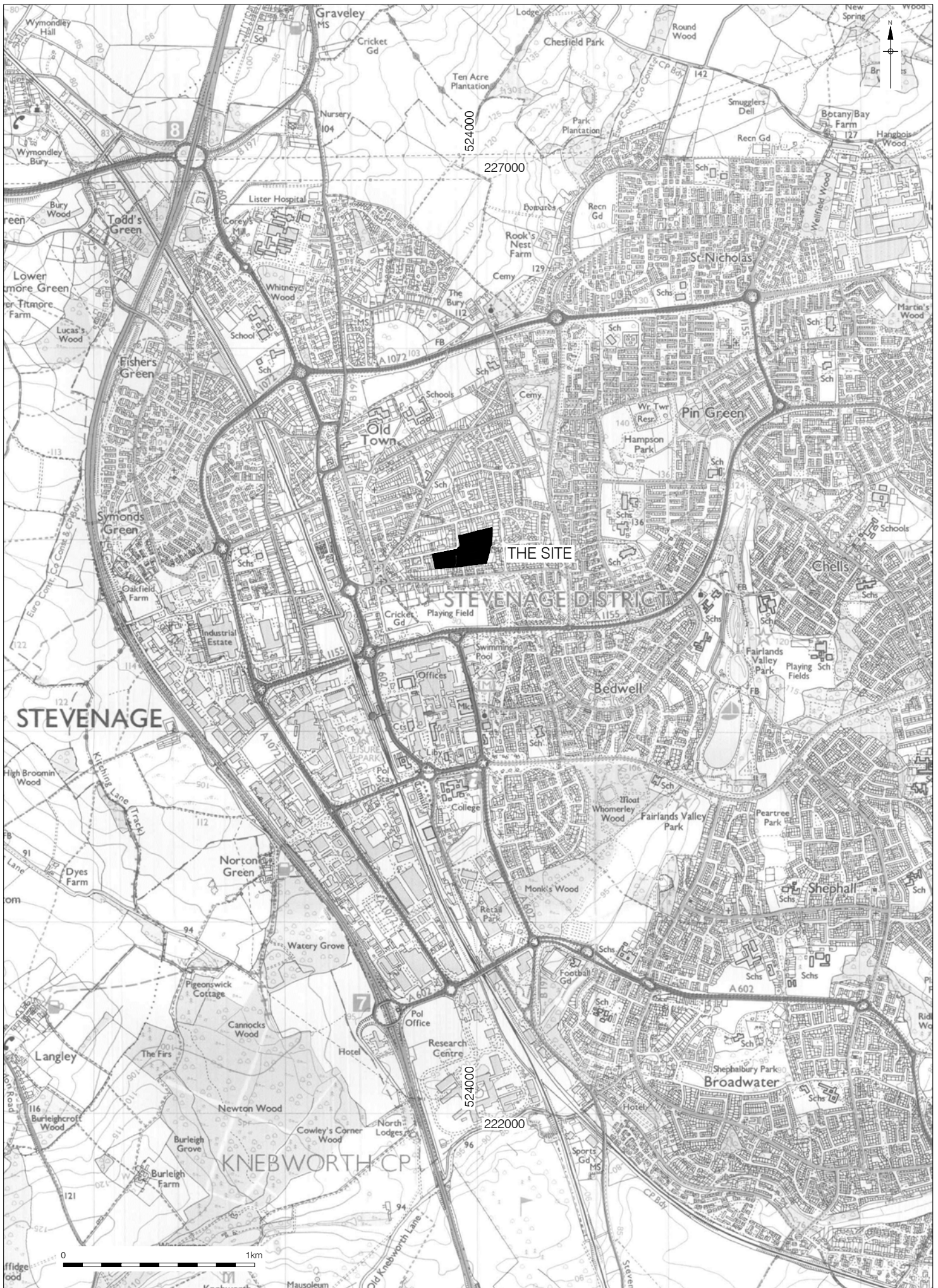




Figure 2
Trench Location
1:1,250 at A4

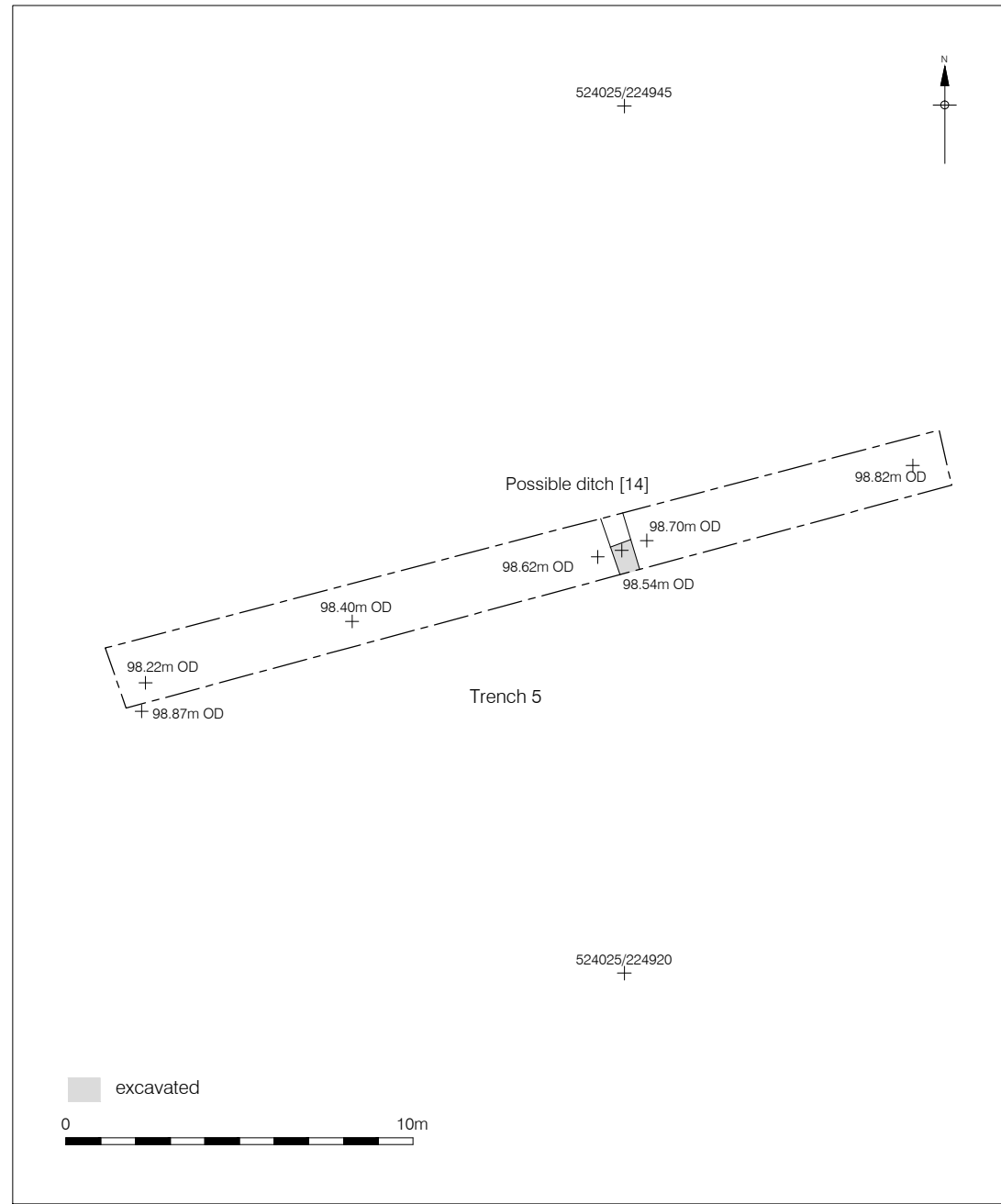
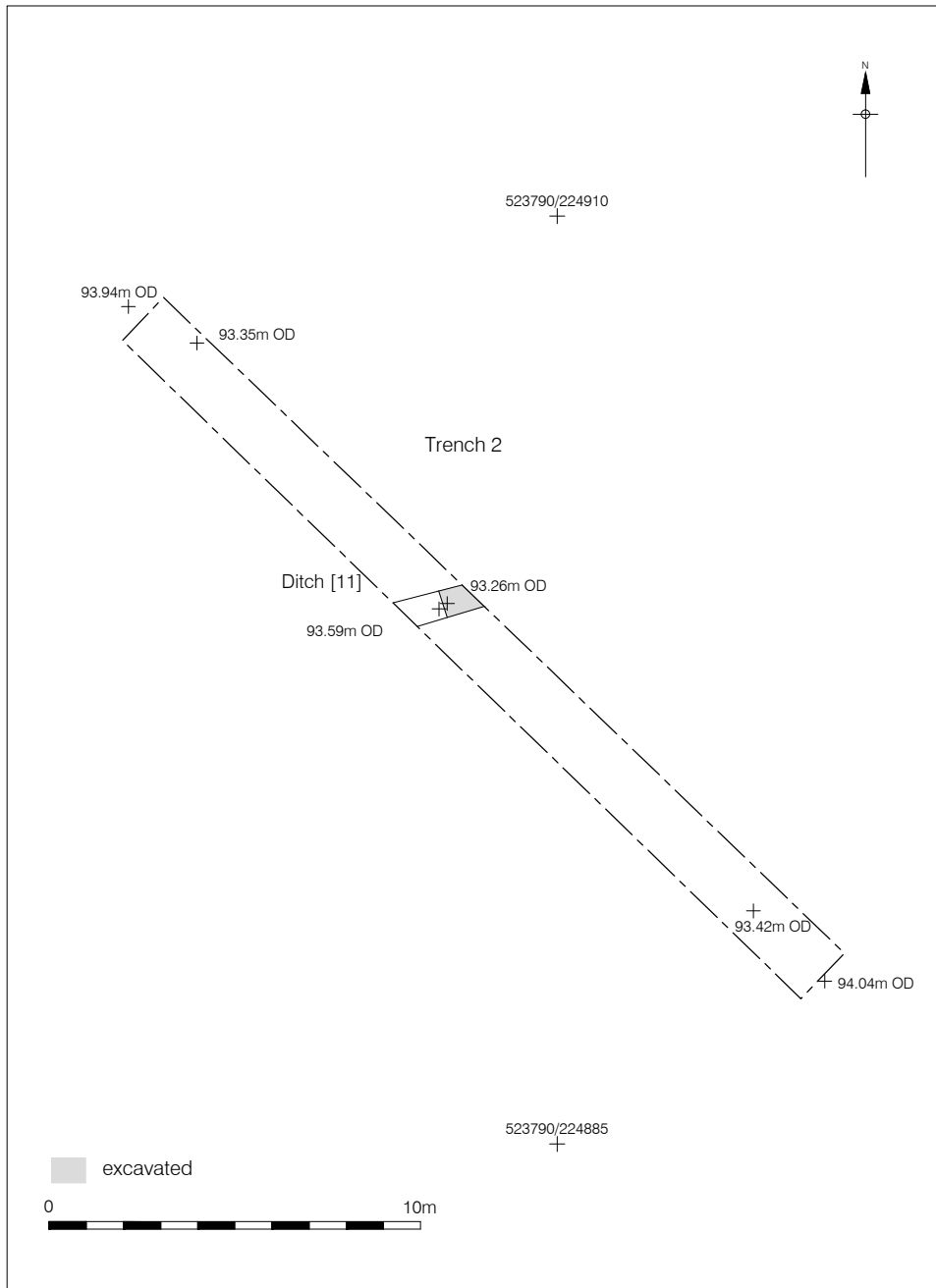


Figure 3
Plans of Trenches 2 and 5
1:200 at A4

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: mhinman@pre-construct.com

