

**POETS' CORNER YARD,  
WESTMINSTER ABBEY**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION**

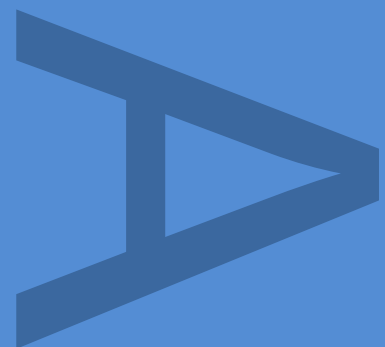
**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:  
CITY OF WESTMINSTER**

**PLANNING REFERENCE:  
PRE-DETERMINATION**

**SITE CODE: PSY12**

**PCA REPORT NO: R11323**

**NOVEMBER 2012**





**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY**

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

POETS' CORNER YARD, WESTMINSTER ABBEY  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd	
Project Number	K2915
Report Number	R11323

	Name & Title	Signature	Date
Text Prepared by:	Paw Jorgensen		November 2012
Graphics Prepared by:	Jennifer Simonson		November 2012
Graphics Checked by:	Josephine Brown		November 2012
Project Manager Sign-off:	Chris Mayo		November 2012

Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved

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

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**Site Code:** PSY12

**Central NGR:** TQ30107946

**Local Planning Authority:** City of Westminster

**Planning Reference:** *Pre-Determination*

**Client:** Westminster Abbey

**Written/Researched by:** Paw Jorgensen  
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, November 2012

**Project Manager:** Chris Mayo (MifA)

**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](mailto:cmayo@pre-construct.com)

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

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**November 2012**

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## **1 ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 This report details the working methods of an investigation designed to evaluate the archaeological potential of Poets' Corner Yard, Westminster Abbey, City of Westminster, SW1P 3PA (Figure 1). Malcolm Reading Consultants commissioned the archaeological evaluation on behalf of the Dean and Chapter and the work was overseen by Professor Warwick Rodwell, consultant archaeologist to Westminster Abbey.
- 1.2 The excavation of a total of three trenches was planned in order to determine the nature and extent of the footings of the south transept to the west and to determine the nature and extent of modern disturbances and the level of survival and nature of the 'soft' archaeological deposits (Figure 2).
- 1.3 The footing for the south transept was recorded in Trench 1 and was seen to consist of a stepped retaining wall of Reigate stone blocks. This was consistent with the footing for the north transept as seen during an excavation in the north green in 2009. The 'basin' formed by this Reigate stone wall had been filled with lime concrete in order to form a solid raft to support the church and buttresses.
- 1.4 To the north the polygonal chapel was seen to stand on a similar lime concrete raft, although the retaining wall for this was not exposed during the current phase of work. The top of this raft was roughly at the same level as that of the raft for the south transept.
- 1.5 The evaluation demonstrated that although the yard had been dissected by 19th and 20th century drainage culverts and pipes, post-medieval and earlier deposits and features survive as 'islands' between these drain truncations. These included construction layers associated with medieval work carried out on the south transept and/or the chapter house as well as earlier cist graves presumably forming part of the monastic cemetery prior to the construction of Henry III's abbey.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Between September 24 and October 10, 2012 Pre-Construct Archaeology, Ltd carried out an archaeological evaluation of Poets' Corner Yard, Westminster Abbey (Figure 1). The work was commissioned by Malcolm Reading Consultants acting on behalf of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey in order to determine the extent and nature of the footings for the south transept and a polygonal chapel to the north of the yard. In addition to this it was hoped that by excavating the three planned trenches the archaeological potential of the yard could be determined. The work was carried out in order to provide information that could assist in determining the optimal position of a proposed new building housing a lift and stairs to provide public access to the triforium of the church.
- 2.2 The archaeological work was carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology under the project management of Chris Mayo with Paw Jorgensen supervising the fieldwork. Warwick Rodwell monitored the work on behalf of the Dean and Chapter.
- 2.3 The field evaluation entailed the excavation of three trenches (Figure 2). Two of these (Trenches 1 and 2) were designed to target the footings of the south transept and St. Edmund's Chapel to the north of the yard respectively, while the third trench (Trench 3) had been positioned outside the estimated extent of the footings, near the centre of the yard, in order to determine the level of survival of archaeological deposits and features not directly associated with the foundations.
- 2.4 All site records were compiled using the Museum of London site code PSY12. Upon completion of the project the finds and completed archive will be deposited with Westminster Abbey Museum.

### **3 BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT**

#### **3.1 Site Location**

- 3.1.1 The site is located within Poets' Corner Yard, Westminster Abbey (NGR TQ30107946). To the north the yard is bounded by the chapels of St. Benedict and St. Edmund while the west and south boundaries are defined by the south transept of the church and the chapter house respectively. The present site boundary is roughly formed by the line of the easternmost flying buttress on the north side of the chapter house, though Poets' Corner Yard extends further east than this. Historically the site would have been near the highest point of the former Thorney Island and in relatively close proximity to the river Thames, which flows approximately 230m to the east.
- 3.1.2 At present the northern part of the yard is occupied by two buildings: the public toilets and the shed where the audio guides are stored. The building housing the public toilets was constructed in 1955 and the shed currently used to store and recharge the audio guides was constructed some time after that.

#### **3.2 Geology and Topography**

- 3.2.1 The study site is located on what used to be Thorney Island, the largest and probably the highest of the islands within the Tyburn delta. The island was located at the confluence of the Tyburn and the Thames rivers. Geologically Thorney Island consisted primarily of sand and gravel overlying London Clay (Thomas et al 2006).
- 3.2.2 It is likely that the church occupied the highest point of the former island. This is somewhat corroborated by the levels of the natural sand deposits observed in recent years through archaeological work carried out within the abbey precincts.
- 3.2.3 The current evaluation recorded the level of the natural sand at 3.86m OD while in the Cellarium to the south and west the natural sand was seen at 1.35m OD (Jorgensen, in prep) and further to west still, in the northwest corner of Dean's Yard the natural sand was encountered at a maximum height of 0.92m OD (Jorgensen 2010).
- 3.2.4 The site is located on generally level ground at an elevation of approximately 4.98m OD.

#### **3.3 Archaeological and Historical Background**

- 3.3.1 The site of Westminster Abbey is located on the former Thorney Island, which was separated from the surrounding area by the River Tyburn. Investigations of the area around the site in advance of the Jubilee Line Extension Project in the 1990s revealed that evidence of activity from the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Early Bronze Age was present (Thomas et al 2006). The Roman and Saxon periods were represented by both features and finds. Those investigations also revealed substantial medieval and post-medieval remains.
- 3.3.2 One of the earliest references to a church derives from Offa's Charter, c. AD 785, which refers to 'St. Peter and the people of the Lord dwelling in Thornea at the awesome place called Westminster' (Barton 1992). The authenticity of this charter has been brought into question by various 20th century scholars and it seems likely that it is a later forgery.



- 3.3.3 It is more likely that the foundation of the abbey dates to the reign of King Edgar (959-75) who granted a foundation charter to St Dunstan. The church founded by St. Dunstan was described as a monasterium, or little monastery, and was inhabited by twelve monks and an abbot (Thomas et al. 2006).
- 3.3.4 Recent investigations by PCA during the Cellarium project to the west of the site may have revealed structural remains of St Dunstan's Church (Jorgensen, in prep).
- 3.3.5 Under Edward the Confessor the abbey was refounded and a new church built in stone to replace the earlier building. The anonymous 11th-century biographer of the Confessor stated in *Vita Ædwardi* that Edward's motives for founding a great Abbey church at Westminster were not only in his piety and devotion to St. Peter, the favourable location of the place, on the river and close to London, but principally because he wished for himself to be buried there (Field 1996).
- 3.3.6 In common with many churches of the medieval period, successive monarchs made alterations to the building. At the Dissolution in 1540 the Abbey church survived, largely due to its royal connections, and became the cathedral of the new diocese of Westminster. Thenceforth alterations to the building were limited to restoration and repair by, for example, Sir Christopher Wren in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, and Sir George Gilbert Scott in the 19th century. The Abbey has been used as the coronation site for all English monarchs since William I in 1066 (Weinreb and Hibbert 1995).
- 3.3.7 Poets' Corner yard was formed in the 13th century during the construction of the chapter house and the south transept and chevet of the church which included the chapel of St. Benedict and the polygonal chapel of St. Edmund enclosing the yard on three sides.
- 3.3.8 To date no archaeological work has been carried out within the yard and little documentary evidence for its history is readily available. As demonstrated by the current work it seems that the area was in use as a monastic cemetery before Henry III's rebuilding of the abbey. During the construction work it seems that the yard served as a mason's yard/workshop where the Reigate stone blocks were worked before being used in the construction of the church or chapter house. After this time it was at least partially laid with gravel and according to Francis Bond (1909) served as a private passage from Westminster palace to the abbey church via the 13th century doorway in the east wall of the south transept. Bond further suggests that this doorway was added as an afterthought as it interferes with the arcading inside the church.
- 3.3.9 The southern edge of the yard had been disturbed by the 19th century rebuilding work of Sir George Gilbert Scott, when the retaining wall which circuits the Chapter House was constructed.

### 3.4 Original Research Objectives

- 3.4.1 The project brief prepared by Warwick Rodwell (2012) outlined three research objectives for the project:
- a) To determine the nature and size of the footings for the south transept of the church
  - b) To identify the nature of the footings for the polygonal chapel of St Edmund and one of the supporting buttresses.
  - c) To evaluate the archaeological potential of Poets' Corner yard and to gauge the level of disturbance caused to the 'soft' archaeology by the installation of services.

### 3.5 Archaeological Methodology

- 3.5.1 A total of three trenches were excavated (Figure 2). Trenches 1 and 3 were within the open yard and Trench 2 was within a shed on the north side of the yard. Prior to excavation commencing the Works Department of the abbey set out the trenches and removed the overlying slabs and stone setts. In Trenches 1 and 2 the bedding concrete for the current surface had been removed by the works department prior to the evaluation commencing, while in Trench 3 the concrete was removed by the works department during the course of the archaeological investigation.
- 3.5.2 The proposed trench sizes had been outlined in a document to the Westminster Abbey Fabrics Commission (Rodwell 2012) detailing the proposed work and were as follows:

**Table 1: Trench Details**

Trench No	Proposed Dimensions at GL	Alignment	Achieved Dimensions at GL
Trench 1	3.5m x 1.2m	approx E-W	2.8m x 1.3m
Trench 2	3.5m x 0.5m	approx N-S	1.3m x 0.6m
Trench 3	4.5m x 1.5m	approx N-S	4.4m x 1.3m

- 3.5.3 It was discovered that the southern part of Trench 2 was occupied by a series of drains running from the public toilets west of the trench. These pipes, it seemed, had been contained within a single poured concrete slab. As such only the northern portion of the trench was excavated. Trench 1 was curtailed slightly owing to the end to maintain public access to the toilets.
- 3.5.4 Prior to excavation each trench was scanned for live services using a CAT (Cable Avoidance Tool) scanner. Following this, the trenches were hand excavated stratigraphically.
- 3.5.5 Archaeologically significant deposits were documented on proforma context sheets. These were also planned on permatrace at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20. Trench sections were also drawn on permatrace at a scale of 1:10.
- 3.5.6 During the excavation a large quantity of disarticulated human bones was recovered. These were, on the advice of Warwick Rodwell, reburied on site during the backfilling of the

trenches. The lower portion of a single in situ human skeleton was also uncovered. This was not fully excavated or lifted but rather was protected and left in situ.

- 3.5.7 On-site photography was carried out using a high resolution digital camera with each frame recorded on a pro forma photographic register. Photography using a medium format camera was also carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology's photographer, Strepthon Duckering.
- 3.5.8 Upon completion the trenches were backfilled by hand.

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE**

### **4.1 Phase 1: Natural (Figure 6)**

4.1.1 The earliest deposit reached was a layer of naturally deposited moderately fine grained yellowish brown sand recorded as [80] in Trench 1 and [67] in Trench 3. While localised truncations had occurred to the deposit in both trenches, portions of the layer survived untruncated. The maximum height at which the natural sand was recorded was at 4.03m OD in Trench 1 and slightly lower at 3.86m OD in Trench 3 to the east. While the base of the deposit was not reached, a sondage excavated in Trench 3 revealed it to be at least 0.40m thick.

### **4.2 Phase 2: Pre-11th Century (Figure 3 and 6)**

4.2.1 The earliest evidence for occupation was seen in the form of a roughly square posthole [79], cut into the natural sand in the northwest part of Trench 3. It measured 0.30m north-south by at least 0.26m east-west by 0.15m deep. The feature extended beyond the western edge of the trench, but the exposed side could be seen to be almost vertical breaking sharply at the top and base. It was filled by [78], which comprised dark brown silty sand with occasional small sub-rounded pebbles. Unfortunately the excavation of the posthole yielded no finds.

4.2.2 In both Trench 1 and 3 the natural sand (and in Trench 3 also posthole [79]) was overlain by a deposit of subsoil (recorded as [82] and [63] respectively) comprising mottled yellowish brown sand and dark brown slightly silty sand. Like the natural sand below, the subsoil was recorded at a slightly higher level in Trench 1 where the top of the deposit was recorded at 4.20m OD. It appeared then to slope down towards Trench 3 to the east where it was recorded at a maximum height of 4.13m OD.

### **4.3 Phase 3: Monastic Cemetery (11th-12th Century) (Figure 3 and 6)**

4.3.1 Towards the southern end of Trench 3 the subsoil was cut by an east-west aligned rectangular grave cut [58], which had been heavily truncated by the installation of a ceramic drainpipe in the late 19th or early 20th century. The cut was first seen at a height of 4.19m OD and the base was recorded at 3.95m OD. Only the northernmost portion of the grave cut survived, and this measured 0.26m north-south by 1.30m east-west by 0.24m deep; the cut extended west beyond the limits of the trench. The cut contained the north wall of a cist tomb [57], which had been constructed of a single course of chalk blocks dressed on one (internal) side. These measured approximately 300mm x 150mm x 100mm and were set in hard pale yellow sandy lime mortar with moderate white flecks. As already stated, the tomb had been heavily truncated and only the north wall of the cist remained intact. The backfill of the drain cut truncating it contained a very large quantity of disarticulated human remains, which were thought to have been derived from not only grave [58], but also others within the impact area of the drain cut. Another mostly intact cist with undisturbed human remains was recorded slightly higher in the archaeological sequence (see discussion of grave cut [62])

below). Filling the grave cut was a deposit of loosely compacted light brown mottled sandy silt and lime mortar, [56], with occasional chalk flecks and burnt clay inclusions as well as very occasional sub-angular pebbles.

4.3.2 Sealing the chalk blocks of the cist tomb, and extending across the entire trench, was a circa 0.29m thick layer of cemetery soil comprising very dark brown, organic sandy silt [55], first observed at 4.35m OD. In addition to a relatively high quantity of Roman ceramic building material and opus signinum (AD 50-250) excavation of the layer also yielded a few sherds of pottery dated to the 11th to early-mid 12th century as well as a high amount of disarticulated human bone.

4.3.3 The cemetery soil horizon was cut in Trench 3 by an additional two rectangular east-west aligned grave cuts [62] and [77]. Of these, the northernmost grave [77], had been heavily truncated by the installation of a drainpipe either during the 19th or 20th century. Only the eastern part of the grave was exposed with the cut extending both north and west beyond the limits of the trench. While the southern side of the grave had been truncated by the later drain cut, a single upright chalk block [76] remained in-situ at what would presumably be the grave's foot end in the east. This block had clearly been dressed on the west side, facing the interior of the grave, while the remaining sides remained uncut. The overall dimensions of the grave, as exposed, were 0.42m north-south by 0.80m east-west by 0.33m deep. It survived to a maximum height of 4.23m OD with the base at 3.92m OD. Excavation of the fill [74] of grave cut [77] yielded only reused Roman ceramic building material. Filling the grave cut on the interior side was a deposit [75], comprising loosely compact very dark greyish brown slightly silty sand with frequent chalk flecks. The deposit did not yield any diagnostic finds. Only a small portion of this deposit was within the confines of the trench.

4.3.4 To the south of this was the second grave [62] which, while the northern edge had been disturbed by the construction of a brick culvert, survived to a greater extent than grave [76]. The exposed portion of the grave cut measured 0.50m north-south by 1.04m east-west by 0.45m in depth and extended west beyond the limits of the trench. Partially dressed chalk blocks [61] lined the interior of the grave with the dressed side facing the interior. These blocks measured on average 200mm x 150mm x 250mm and had only been dressed on one side. Only one course of blocks survived and these were set in hard pale yellow sandy lime mortar with occasional white flecks. Contained within the cist formed by the chalk blocks was the lower portion (tibia, fibula and feet) of an articulated supine skeleton [64] (see plate 1), the remains of which were protected and left in situ. Filling the grave cut on the exterior side of the tomb was deposit [60], comprising loosely compacted dark yellowish brown slightly silty sand and crushed lime mortar with very occasional sub-rounded pebbles. Covering the skeleton and filling the interior of the tomb was a loosely compacted deposit [59] of dark brown slightly silty sand containing frequent chalk and lime mortar flecks. Excavation of the fill inside the cist tomb also yielded fragments of Roman bricks, though these were residual.

#### 4.4 Phase 4: 12th-Early 13th Century (Figure 3 and 6)

- 4.4.1 Cutting the subsoil in Trench 1 was a large rectangular pit, [22], with near vertical sides (where these could be seen) gradually transitioning into a slightly concave base. The visible portion of the pit measured 0.86m north-south by 0.30m east-west by 0.45m deep. It contained two fills [21] and [28]. The lower of these, [21] comprised loosely compacted brownish yellow sand with moderately frequent patches of brown to dark brown organic silt. Excavation of the fill yielded a single fragment of Saxon pottery as well as a moderately large quantity of disarticulated human bone. Also recovered from the lower fill were fragments of Roman brick or tile and opus signinum dated to between AD 50 and 250. Sealing the lower fill was a second fill deposit, [28], which comprised dark brown silty sand. At the highest point it was measured at 4.19m OD.
- 4.4.2 The upper fill of pit [22] had been truncated by a sub-circular stake/posthole [27] surviving to a maximum height of 4.04m OD. Only the basal portion of the cut survived due to later truncation caused by posthole [25]. The lower portion of the sides of [27] tapered before sharply transitioning into a flat base. Filling it was a deposit of loosely compacted dark brown to light yellowish brown silty sand and lime mortar [26] to a thickness of 0.18m. The cut and fill extended east beyond the confines of the trench and only the westernmost 0.10m were within the trench – north to south the feature measured 0.20m. Excavation of the fill of the posthole yielded residual Roman brick fragments dated (AD 100-120).
- 4.4.3 Posthole [27] was truncated to the north by another posthole [25]. At its highest point it was recorded at 4.14m OD, it extended 0.36m north-south and was at least 0.16m east-west. It had steep, near vertical sides gradually transitioning into a slightly concave base. The lower fill [24] consisted of loosely compacted light yellowish brown silty sand containing occasional small rounded pebbles. A relatively large quantity of glazed roof tile fragments dated AD 1135-1220 was also recovered from the deposit. In the southern part of the feature a post pipe [23] was visible. This comprised dark brown organic silt and measured 0.10m in diameter and 0.10m in depth.
- 4.4.4 Also sealing the upper fill of pit [22], but with no visible interaction with the postholes, was a 0.12m thick mortar surface, [20], first observed at a height of 4.30m OD. It comprised compacted light reddish brown coarse sandy lime mortar with very occasional charcoal flecks. To the north and east it extended beyond the limits of the trench and to the west and south it had been truncated by drain [10] and pit [19] respectively. The visible portion of the surface covered an area measuring 0.16m north-south by 0.12m east-west. This deposit did not yield any dating evidence.
- 4.4.5 Truncating both the mortar layer [20] and posthole [25] was pit [19]. To the south it had been truncated by the later construction cut for a 19th century light-well and to the east and north it extended beyond the confines of the trench. The portion of the pit visible within the trench measured 0.60m north-south by 0.15m east-west by 0.26m deep. It was filled by loosely compacted yellowish brown coarse sand [18] with moderate lime mortar flecks and small Reigate stone chips. At the highest point the pit/fill was recorded at 4.38m OD. Excavation

of the pit fill did not yield any temporally diagnostic material.

#### **4.5 Phase 5: Henry III's Rebuilding of the Church and Chapter House (1245-1272)** (Figure 4 and 6)

- 4.5.1 In Trench 1 the stepped footing (see Plate 3) for the south transept, [8] was uncovered. The footing consisted of four Reigate stone steps sat on a raft of lime concrete. Each step had been constructed using ashlar style blocks of Reigate. While the blocks varied in size from 290mm to 1015mm the height of the blocks remained in each course remained the same in order to assure level steps. However, the steps varied in height from 230mm to 290mm. The width of the steps was also similar varying only slightly from 260mm to 280mm. At the base of the lowest step the footing was sat on a solid lime concrete raft extending 1.32m east from the edge of the step. At its highest point the footing reached a height of 4.56m OD and the base of the lowest step was at 3.41m OD. The raft upon which the footing sat extended to 2.30m east of the western edge of Trench 1.
- 4.5.2 In Trench 2 the footings and raft for the polygonal chapel of St. Edmund were also exposed. The footing [37] had been constructed of roughly hewn Reigate stone, chalk and Kentish ragstone blocks. Only one course of stonework was exposed as above this the footing stepped back towards the wall of the chapel and away from the northern limits of the trench. The mortar used to bond the stones consisted of a sandy pale yellow lime mortar with frequent white flecks. Below the footing was the top of a hard lime concrete raft [38] measuring at its highest point 4.37m OD. It extended across the entire trench, though it appeared to have been partially truncated by the construction of two later drains or walls, [33] and [34] to the west and south.
- 4.5.3 At southeast corner of Trench 3 was a mixed demolition layer of loose pinkish brown crushed lime mortar and dark brown sandy silt [66]. It contained frequent inclusions of opus signinum floor fragments and Roman ceramic building material fragments. This layer had been heavily truncated to the north and west by a 19th or 20th century drain cut [43], and to the south by the construction cut for the mid-19th century light well of the chapter house; to the east the layer extended beyond the limits of the trench. As such, only a small 'island' of the overall deposit was seen in the southeast corner of the trench, measuring 0.50m by 0.96m. It was first observed at 4.03m OD.
- 4.5.4 Sealing this was a 0.17m thick layer of compacted yellowish brown lime mortar [65] with occasional small chalk fragments. This layer was first seen at a maximum height of 4.18m OD and, like [66] below, it had been truncated by the construction of the light well to the south and the drain cut, [43], to the north and west; to the east it continued beyond the limits of the trench. Excavation of the layer yielded no finds.
- 4.5.5 To the north of the drain cut [43] and identical to [65], was a layer [54] which sealed the two cist tombs and extended across the remainder of the trench. Just north of the drain cut the top of the layer was recorded at 4.31m OD and it rose slightly to 4.37m OD at the northern extreme of the trench where it had been truncated by another 19th or 20th century drain cut [69]. Excavation of [54] yielded fragments of reused Roman ceramic building material and

- opus signinum (AD 50-250) as well as a relatively high quantity of disarticulated human bone.
- 4.5.6 At the eastern end of Trench 1 a similar mortar layer [17] was recorded at a height of 4.40m OD. The layer had been truncated leaving only a 0.60m (north-south) by 0.15m (east-west) strip at the eastern extreme of the trench. It is likely that this layer is part of a larger mortar surface formed by [17], [54] and [65]. Excavation of [17] yielded only fragments of reused Roman ceramic building material dated AD 50-250.
- 4.5.7 In the northern part of Trench 3 the mortar layer was cut by two postholes, [71] to the west and [73] to the east. These were only partially excavated as they were obstructed by an 18th century brick culvert [47] to the south, which was not disturbed. The exposed portions of [71] and [73] measured 0.24m north-south by 0.58m east-west by 0.24m deep and 0.34m north-south by 0.44m east-west by 0.15m deep respectively. Both postholes had a flat base and near vertical sides with a sharp break of slope at both the top and base. They were filled with similar loosely compacted dark greyish brown silty sand with frequent lime mortar flecks and occasional small chalk fragments and flecks and small sub-rounded pebbles. While the fill [70] of posthole [71] yielded a small sherd of prehistoric pottery this is clearly residual as the layers below are dated to the 11th or 12th century. More consistent with this date was the sherd of pottery recovered from the fill [72] of posthole [73], which dated from the mid-12th to early 13th century.
- 4.5.8 Sealing the postholes in northern part of Trench 3, the mortar surface in the southern part and the mortar surface in Trench 1 was a 0.20m thick compact layer of crushed Reigate stone and Reigate stone chips variably recorded as [45], [49] and [16]. The top of this mason's floor varied in height from a maximum of 4.58m OD to 4.39m OD. Excavation of this layer yielded only ceramic building material broadly dating to the medieval period.
- 4.5.9 Towards the northern end of Trench 3 the crushed Reigate stone layer was cut by rectangular posthole [51]. This extended west beyond the limits of the trench and had been truncated to the north by the construction cut for culvert [47]. The surviving/exposed portion of the posthole measured 0.32m north-south by 0.80m east-west by 0.17m deep and the feature was first seen at a height of 4.56m OD. It was filled by [50], which comprised dark brown moderately compact silt with moderately frequent small sub-rounded pebbles and ceramic building material flecks. A single tiny fragment of post-medieval tile was recovered from within the edge of the feature, which had been truncated by a 19th century drain. It is thus likely that the recovered fragment is intrusive and in reality should be considered with the datable material from the drain truncating the posthole.
- 4.5.10 Posthole [51] had been partially truncated by another posthole, [53], which was sub-circular in shape with vertical sides and a flat base. This measured 0.22m in diameter and was 0.17m deep. It was filled by [52], which comprised very dark greyish brown loosely-compacted silty sand with moderately frequent angular Reigate stone chips and small sub-angular flint pebbles. During excavation the feature was interpreted as cutting posthole [51] though it is also possible that it represents a post pipe within the rectangular posthole. The



only finds obtained from the excavation of the fill was a small fragment of decorated 13th century floor tile.

- 4.5.11 Sealing these, and extending across the majority of the trench was a compacted mid-brown to greenish grey gravel surface [44], mixed with frequent small to medium angular Reigate stone chips. It measured 3.30m north-south by 1.30m east-west by 50mm in thickness and extended beyond the limits of the trench to the east, west and north and had been truncated to the south by drain cut [43]. The layer occurred at a slightly higher level (4.68m OD) to the south and sloped down towards the north where the top was measured at 4.59m OD. Excavation of the layer yielded sherds of pottery dated between 1480 and 1900 as well as 13th century ceramic building material and fragments of Roman bricks and tiles. This layer was absent in Trench 1 – probably a result of 19th century activity.

#### **4.6 Phase 6: Mid- to Late 17th Century** (Figure 5 and 6)

- 4.6.1 In Trench 2, resting on the lime concrete raft, was the footing [36] for one of the buttresses of the chapel. This had been constructed of reused ashlar blocks of Kentish ragstone and Portland stone suggesting a date of no earlier than 1630. These had been laid in regular courses. At the north end the footing had been truncated by a pit [32], some time during the 17th century. Alternatively this cut could represent the construction phase for [36], perhaps indicating a phase of repair work carried out to the earlier buttress. The top of the footing was recorded at 4.81m OD.
- 4.6.2 The foundation for the chapel was sealed by a layer of very dark grey organic garden like soil [35]. Only a small part of this survived in the northwest corner of the trench as the deposit had been heavily truncated by a later pit or gully; the top of it was seen at a maximum height of 4.65m OD. Pottery sherds and clay tobacco pipe fragments dated the deposit to the 1660-81.
- 4.6.3 It was sealed by a black charcoal and clinker rich deposit of loosely compacted sand [31]. Like deposit [35] below, this deposit had also been heavily truncated and so only a small portion of it survived in the northwest corner of the trench. Excavation yielded a relatively large (for the size of the deposit) quantity of clay tobacco pipe stem and bowl fragments, providing a secure date of 1660-81. The highest point of the context was at 4.82m OD.
- 4.6.4 In the southern part of the trench the buttress footing was overlain by an east-west aligned brick wall [34]. Only a small portion of the brickwork could be seen, but this showed that the structure had been constructed using unfrogged red bricks laid in a header bonded pattern. These were bonded using soft moderately coarse light brownish grey lime mortar. At the highest point the brickwork was seen at 4.81m OD.
- 4.6.5 Truncating deposit [31] in the northwest part of the trench, but seemingly respecting the brick feature to the south was pit [32]. It measured 1.00m north-south by 0.40m east-west by 0.35m deep and had steep, almost vertical sides; its' base was effectively formed by the top of the raft of the chapel to the north. It contained a single fill [30] which comprised moderately compact light brownish grey lime mortar and silty sand. The fill yielded pottery sherds, glass shards, ceramic building material fragments and clay tobacco pipe fragments

dating from 1630-80, refined to 1660-1680 based on the date of [31] below.

#### **4.7 Phase 7: 19th century (Figure 5 and 6)**

- 4.7.1 In Trench 1 the mason's floor had been truncated to the west by the construction cut [11] for a north-south aligned brick drain [10] (see Plate 2). Only the eastern side of the cut was seen as the west side had been removed by the excavation of a later pit. The east side of the cut was near vertical with a sharp break of slope at both the top and base and the base was relatively flat, though sloping slightly downward towards the north. At the top the east side had been truncated by a later pit.
- 4.7.2 The drain itself [10] had been constructed with pinkish purple fabric bricks laid in two parallel stretcher bonded lines two courses high and spaced 0.15m apart. Both the base and cap comprised broken York stone slabs measuring on average 320mm x 230mm x 50mm while the bricks used measured 220mm x 100mm x 65mm and were set in a moderately soft light grey sandy lime mortar. The drain had been truncated to the south and to the north the drain extended beyond the limits of the trench; as exposed it measured 0.48m north-south by 0.40m east-west by 0.28m high. On the top of the stone cap the highest point was at 4.44m OD. The bricks date between the 18th century and the early- to mid-19th century. Filling the construction cut for the drain was a relatively compact deposit of greyish brown clayey silt [9] with occasional ceramic building material flecks and small angular Reigate stone chips. Pottery and glass recovered during the excavation of the fill dated the feature to the 19th century.
- 4.7.3 Filling the interior of the drain was a deposit of very loose dark greyish brown silty sand, [12]. Excavation of this deposit yielded no datable material.
- 4.7.4 A large amount of pitting activity had occurred in the area of Trench 1 during the mid-19th century, which had caused severe truncation to earlier features. Occupying the western 2.30m of the trench was a large pit [81]. At the western end the side of the pit respected the medieval stepped footing of the south transept and this side of the pit thus stepped accordingly. The east side of the pit was near vertical and lined up with the extent of the 13th century lime concrete raft which the stepped footing sat. To the south the pit had been truncated by the construction cut [4] for a mid-19th century light-well and it extended north beyond the limits of the trench.
- 4.7.5 The pit had been backfilled with loose demolition rubble and lime mortar [7]. Amongst the rubble were many fragments of Reigate stone ashlar blocks as well as moulded plaster fragments. Also recovered from the fill were sherds of pottery, glass shards, ferrous metal fragments (mostly nails), ceramic building material fragments, lead scraps and clay tobacco pipe fragments. The temporally diagnostic finds suggested a depositional date of between 1840 and 1900 although some earlier material such as fragmented reused Roman bricks and early post-medieval brick fragments were also present. At its highest point the deposit appeared at 4.74m OD, directly below the bedding for the present yard surface.
- 4.7.6 Truncating pit [81] to the southeast was the construction cut [15] for the light-well [14], seen in both Trench 1 and 3. In Trench 1 it occupied only the southeast corner of the trench

whereas in Trench 3 it extended across the entire width at the southern end of the trench. The cut was noticeably wider in Trench 1 where it measured up to 0.82m north-south at the top and only 0.50m at the base of the excavation as opposed a width of to 60mm beyond the edge of the brickwork of the light-well. Within the trench the light-well was first seen at 4.78m OD, though beyond the trench it rose above this level; the base of the brickwork was not seen as it was below the safe level of excavation and therefore not exposed. The reason for difference in width of the cut in Trench 1 and 3 was that in Trench 1 the brickwork had been constructed around a large stone block acting as a "toe" placed to counteract the lateral thrust against the brick wall. Thus the construction cut had not only to accommodate the brickwork, but also the large stone block which extended north into the trench approximately 0.50m beyond the edge of the brickwork. Initially the wider part of the construction cut was interpreted as a separate feature and recorded as cut [4] filled by [3]. However, as the excavation progressed it became clear that this was not the case and this part of the cut combined with the construction cut [15] for the brick light-well [14]. Although there seemed to be no discernible pattern to the brickwork the bricks had been laid in regular courses. The bricks used were of a deeply frogged yellow stock brick type measuring 240mm x 110mm x 66mm. These had been set in a very hard grayish brown cement type mortar. In both trenches the cut was filled by a loosely compacted deposit of dark brown very slightly silty sand [13], the excavation of which yielded reused Roman tile as well as transitional and post-medieval roof tiles suggesting a depositional date between 1666 and 1900. It is, however, more likely that the light-well was added during Sir George Gilbert Scott's restoration of the chapter house in the mid to late 19th century, and that the earlier material within the backfill is residual.

- 4.7.7 Pit [6] in Trench 1 appeared linear in form although this may have been due to only a small portion of the feature being exposed. Within the trench the pit measured 0.46m north-south by 0.88m east-west by 0.40m deep and it extended south beyond the confines of the trench; to the east it partially truncated the construction cut for light-well [14]. The exposed side of the pit sloped steeply towards the chapter house to the south. The pit was backfilled with deposit [5], which comprised relatively loosely compacted light brownish grey silty sand with frequent stone chippings and mortar flecks as well as occasional small sub-rounded pebbles. Excavation of the fill yielded glass shards, ferrous metal fragments, ceramic building material fragments, plaster fragments and slag. The glass shards recovered comprised post-medieval window pane fragments and the ceramic building material recovered was relatively undiagnostic. As the feature truncated pit [7], which was securely dated to the mid-late 19th century it must date to the mid-late 19th century at the earliest.
- 4.7.8 In Trench 1 was seen a shallow rectangular pit [2] measuring 0.81m north-south by 0.63m east-west by 0.18m deep. It was filled with moderately loose mid-brown slightly silty sand [1] with frequent Reigate stone chips and mortar flecks. It is clear from the fact that the pit cut the 19th century light-well that it must have been backfilled during the mid-late 19th century at the earliest.

- 4.7.9 Gravel surface [44] in Trench 3 was sealed by a 0.10m thick layer [39] of heavily compacted dark brown silty sand containing frequent flecks of charcoal and ceramic building material in addition to occasional small rounded pebbles. It sealed the entire trench and the top of the layer sloped slightly from 4.76m OD in the south to 4.70m OD in the north. Sherds of pottery, shards of glass, fragments of ceramic building material and clay tobacco pipe fragments recovered from the deposit provide a relatively secure date of 1805-1900. However, some pre-17th century brick and tile fragments were also present.
- 4.7.10 This layer had been truncated by the east-west aligned construction cut [48] for a brick culvert [47] running roughly through the middle of the trench. The construction trench for the culvert had been cut from directly below the present yard surface and as such was first seen at a height of 4.71m OD. Its sides were almost vertical with a sharp break of slope at both the top and base, although the base of the feature was not seen as the culvert was not removed.
- 4.7.11 The culvert itself was of relatively crude construction and had been made using a variety of brick types including both red and purple fabric bricks measuring 230mm in length by 65mm in height – the width of the bricks could not be established as the culvert was left untouched. These were set in a hard mid-grey lime mortar with frequent white flecks. Overall the culvert measured 0.64m north-south by 1.30m east-west by 0.41m high.
- 4.7.12 Backfilling the construction cut was moderately loosely compacted dark brown silty sand [46], containing a moderate amount of small sub-rounded pebbles and chalk flecks as well as occasional small angular Reigate stone chips. The backfill yielded ceramic building material fragments as well as clay tobacco pipe fragments suggesting a construction date between 1630 and 1910. It is likely that the drain cut is a result of 19th century work carried out in Poets' Corner Yard.
- 4.7.13 Two east-west aligned drain cuts were seen in Trench 2; one [43] at the south end and one [69] at the north end of the trench. Both cuts had near vertical sides and extended to a depth of roughly 1.50m (3.48m OD) below the current ground surface. The northernmost cut continued straight through the trench on an east-west alignment while the southernmost cut seemed to turn south and head towards the light-well.
- 4.7.14 Drain cut [43] contained three discernible fills. The lower of these fills [42] sealed a light brown salt-glazed ceramic drain pipe, and comprised loosely compacted light to mid grey sandy silt with frequent concave lenses of sand and charcoal. This was sealed by [41] which consisted of friable mid grey sandy silt with frequent concave lenses of crushed Reigate stone and occasional sub-rounded pebbles. The top fill [40] of the drain cut comprised friable dark greyish brown sandy silt with occasional concave lenses of crushed Reigate stone as well as occasional sub-angular pebbles and flecks of ceramic building material and mortar. All three fills contained a high quantity of disarticulated human remains. Based on the number of femurs it is estimated that the partial and disarticulated remains of at least five individuals were present within the fills of the drain cut. In addition to the human remains all fills yielded fragments of Roman, medieval and post-medieval ceramic building material

and the upper two fills [40] and [41] also yielded post-medieval pottery sherds and glass shards. The artefactual evidence suggests a depositional date sometime between 1760 and 1830. However, as the drain was likely to have been installed to drain water from the base of the mid- to late 19th century light-well [14] to the south, it is probable that it was installed at the same time.

- 4.7.15 East-west aligned drain cut [69] in the northern part of Trench 3 was first seen at 4.73m OD. It measured 0.48m in depth and had been cut with near vertical sides breaking sharply at both the top and base of the feature. At the base of the cut was a light brown salt glazed ceramic drain pipe. Sealing the pipe was a deposit of moderately loose dark greyish brown to mid brown silty sand [68]. Like the fills of drain cut [43] to the south, fill [68] contained a large quantity of disarticulated human bone from at least two individuals (based on the number of femurs). Also contained within the fill were several ex situ chalk blocks which, like the ones used in the construction of the earlier cist tombs, had been faced on one side only. Excavation of the deposit did not yield any datable finds; however the drain cut cannot predate layer [39], dating to the first half of the 19th century, which it truncates.

#### **4.8 Phase 8: 20th Century** (Figure 5 and 6)

- 4.8.1 In Trench 2, truncating wall [34] at its western end was a north-south aligned concrete and brick lined drain [33]. This also truncated the western end of pit [32]. The drain was sealed by a layer of crushed and compacted lime mortar [29], covering the entire trench at a maximum height of 4.91m OD and serving as bedding for the current paving slabs. Excavation of the mortar layer yielded medieval, transitional and post-medieval roof tile fragments which suggested a broad depositional date of 1480-1900. However, as the layer sealed a concrete and brick lined drain [33], and served as the bedding for the paving slabs inside the audio guide shed, it is likely that both drain and mortar layer are associated with the 1955 construction of the public toilets and adjoining shed (now the audio guide shed).

## **5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION**

### **5.1 Phase 1: Natural**

- 5.1.1 The earliest deposit reached was a layer of naturally deposited moderately fine grained yellowish brown sand recorded at maximum heights of 4.03m OD in Trench 1 and 3.86m OD in Trench 3 to the east.
- 5.1.2 The natural drift deposits are consistent with the known geology of the area. The high elevations of the sand (compared to PCAs recent work around Dean's Yard, to the west of the abbey) confirms the fact that the site is located on an elevated level of Thorney Island.

### **5.2 Phase 2: Pre-11th Century**

- 5.2.1 The earliest evidence for human activity was a posthole [79]. Unfortunately no datable material was recovered from the fill of the feature. However, it was sealed by a layer of subsoil, which was in turn sealed by a layer of cemetery soil dating to the 11th to mid-12th century. As no other associated postholes were uncovered the exact purpose of the structure to which [79] belonged remains unknown. It is possible that the post was part of the scaffolding erected for the construction or repair of the buildings associated with Dunstan's or Edward the Confessor's monastery.

### **5.3 Phase 3: Monastic Cemetery (11th to mid-12th Century)**

- 5.3.1 The three grave cuts uncovered may suggest that the site lies within the monastic cemetery of Edward the Confessor's abbey. Alternatively, the cist tombs uncovered may have been burials within the earlier chapter house. The exact location of the chapter house of Edward the Confessor's abbey is unknown, although it is certain that it would have occupied a position along the east cloister walk near the south transept of the church. It is unlikely that the south transept of the Confessor's church would have extended as far south as that of the present church. It has been suggested that the south transept of the 11th century church was a bay shorter than that of the 13th century church. As such it may suggest that the chapter house also occupied a position further to the north than the present chapter house. If the graves uncovered were inside the chapter house they would have been substantially closer to the surface than external burials and perhaps this could explain why the top of the burials were so closely overlain by the construction layers for the present church and chapter house (assuming that the ground level was not reduced prior to the construction of the new church and chapter house). Evidence for this is, however, tenuous at best and it would be impossible to confirm this without uncovering the physical remains of the earlier chapter house.

### **5.4 Phase 4: 12th to Early 13th Century**

- 5.4.1 This phase of activity was represented by a series of pits and postholes uncovered in Trench 1 at the western end of the site. Because of the deep truncations caused by 19th century activity only a small strip of earlier archaeological deposits and features survived

against the eastern edge of the trench. It is therefore difficult to determine the exact nature of the earlier activity in this portion of the site. It is possible that the features represent a phase of building or repair work associated with Edward the Confessor's abbey. Alternatively, they could be reflective of the early work carried out by Henry III, i.e. during the construction of his Lady Chapel which was commenced in 1220 prior to the rebuilding of the church. Henry III's Lady Chapel was situated in the location of the later, and larger, Lady Chapel built by Henry VII, so it is unlikely that the postholes would have been for scaffolding for the erection of that edifice. However, the construction of the chapel would undoubtedly have sparked the construction of a number of temporary support structures such as masons' workshops, etc. near the construction site. It is possible that the features of this phase are associated with just such activity, although at this stage it is impossible to say this with certainty.

## **5.5 Phase 5: Henry III's Rebuilding of the Church and Chapter House (1245-1272)**

- 5.5.1 An archaeological excavation outside the north transept in 2009 demonstrated that Henry III's church had been built on a massive lime-concrete raft (WA 2009). The edge of that raft was seen to have been lined with squared Reigate stone blocks stepping away from the church. During excavations inside the south transept in 1938 it was established that this part of the church sat on a solid raft (Rodwell 2009). The stepped footing seen at the west end of Trench 1 is consistent with the stepped, Reigate stone lined lime concrete raft exposed outside the north transept in 2009.
- 5.5.2 In Trench 2 was observed the footings and raft of the chapel of St. Edmund. This was only partially exposed due to a number of concrete encased drains preventing the excavation of the southern part of the trench. However, the top of the raft was seen at 4.45m OD, approximately 100mm lower than the top step of the footing for the south transept. It is possible that the raft that supports the south transept also extends east to include the chevet and side chapels.
- 5.5.3 A demolition layer [66], observed at the southern extreme of Trench 3, was sealed by what presumably represent the construction layers for Henry III's abbey church and chapter house. The layer yielded only reused Roman period material such as tegulae, imbrex and a single cut tile tessera. This deposit may represent the demolition of the chapter house of Edward the Confessor's church prior to the construction of the new chapter house by Henry III.
- 5.5.4 The crushed Reigate stone surface seen in both Trench 1 and 3 likely represents the accumulated and compacted dust resultant from working the Reigate stone blocks used in the construction of the chapter house and Henry III's church. Similar 'mason's floors' or construction surfaces were seen during the excavation inside the Cellarium and adjacent spaces throughout 2010-12. Here they were thought to represent work carried out during the construction of the misericorde undercroft and the cellarer's range, both buildings of Reigate stone construction (Jorgensen, in prep).
- 5.5.5 The mortar surface which was found beneath the mason's floor may represent a crude

construction surface for the 13th century building work.

- 5.5.6 In addition to the 'mason's floor' a number of postholes were also recorded during this phase of activity. It is probable that these represent either scaffolding or temporary working buildings constructed to facilitate the construction of the new church.

## **5.6 Phase 6: Mid-Late 17th Century**

- 5.6.1 Activity during this phase included what seemed to be repair work to the base of one of the buttresses of the chapel of St. Edmund. In the northeast part of Trench 2 several courses of stonework ran parallel to the buttress east of the trench. These had been laid using reused ashlar blocks of Reigate stone, Kentish ragstone and Portland stone – the latter which was not commonly used until AD 1630. Although it cannot be said for certain, it seems likely, based on the proximity to the buttress, that the masonry observed represents either repairs carried out on the base of the buttress or an attempt to strengthen the buttress by widening it at the base. This 'repair work' had been laid directly on top of the raft foundation for the chapel of St. Edmund.
- 5.6.2 After this a brick wall had been constructed perpendicular to the buttress. Only a small part of the brickwork was seen within the trench, so it is difficult to interpret its function. It is possible that a brick structure was constructed in the recess between the two westernmost buttresses of the chapel.

## **5.7 Phase 7: 19th Century**

- 5.7.1 The purpose of the east-west aligned culverted brick drain exposed in Trench 3 was likely to channel the accumulated runoff from the roof of the church and chapter house away from the yard. It is possible, although unproven, that the north-south aligned brick drain in Trench 1 joins up with the brick culvert outside the northern edge of the trench and that the function of the drain is to take the runoff from the chapter house roof. During the late 1820s and 1830s concerns were frequently being raised in the annual reports of the surveyor of the fabric regarding the rainwater runoff from the roof and how inadequate drainage was causing damage to the stonework of the buttresses (Reynolds 2011).
- 5.7.2 This was the busiest phase of post-medieval activity within the yard. All of the features and deposits can likely be attributed to Sir George Gilbert Scott's restoration work on the chapter house in the mid-19th century. The large pit occupying most of the western end of Trench 1 perfectly lines up with the edge of the 13th century lime concrete raft, so it seems possible that it was excavated in the 19th century in order to explore the footings of the church although no documentary evidence of this was immediately available. It is also likely that the light-well, [14], constructed to channel light into the undercroft below the chapter house, owes its existence to the work of Sir George Gilbert Scott.



## **5.8 Phase 8: 20th Century**

- 5.8.1 This phase of activity largely revolved around the mid-20th century construction of the public toilets and the adjacent shed. In Trench 2 a number of concrete encased drains were seen long the west and south edge of the trench. These are likely the drains serving the public toilets to the west.

## 6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Malcolm Reading Consultants for commissioning the project on behalf of the dean and chapter of Westminster Abbey, who kindly funded it. We also thank Warwick Rodwell for monitoring the project on behalf of Westminster Abbey, and providing continued advice and assistance.
- 6.2 PCA also thanks the Works Department at the abbey for facilitating the fieldwork.
- 6.3 The author would like to thank Joe Brooks and Clare Jackson for their hard work on site, Chris Mayo for his project management, Jennifer Simonson for the preparation of illustrative material and Chris Jarrett and Berni Seddon for identifying and dating the artefactual material.

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*Plate 1: Cist Tomb [62] with Skeleton [64], View to North*



*Plate 2: Brick Drain [10] in Trench 1, View to Northeast*



Plate 3: Stepped Footing [8] for South Transept, View to West

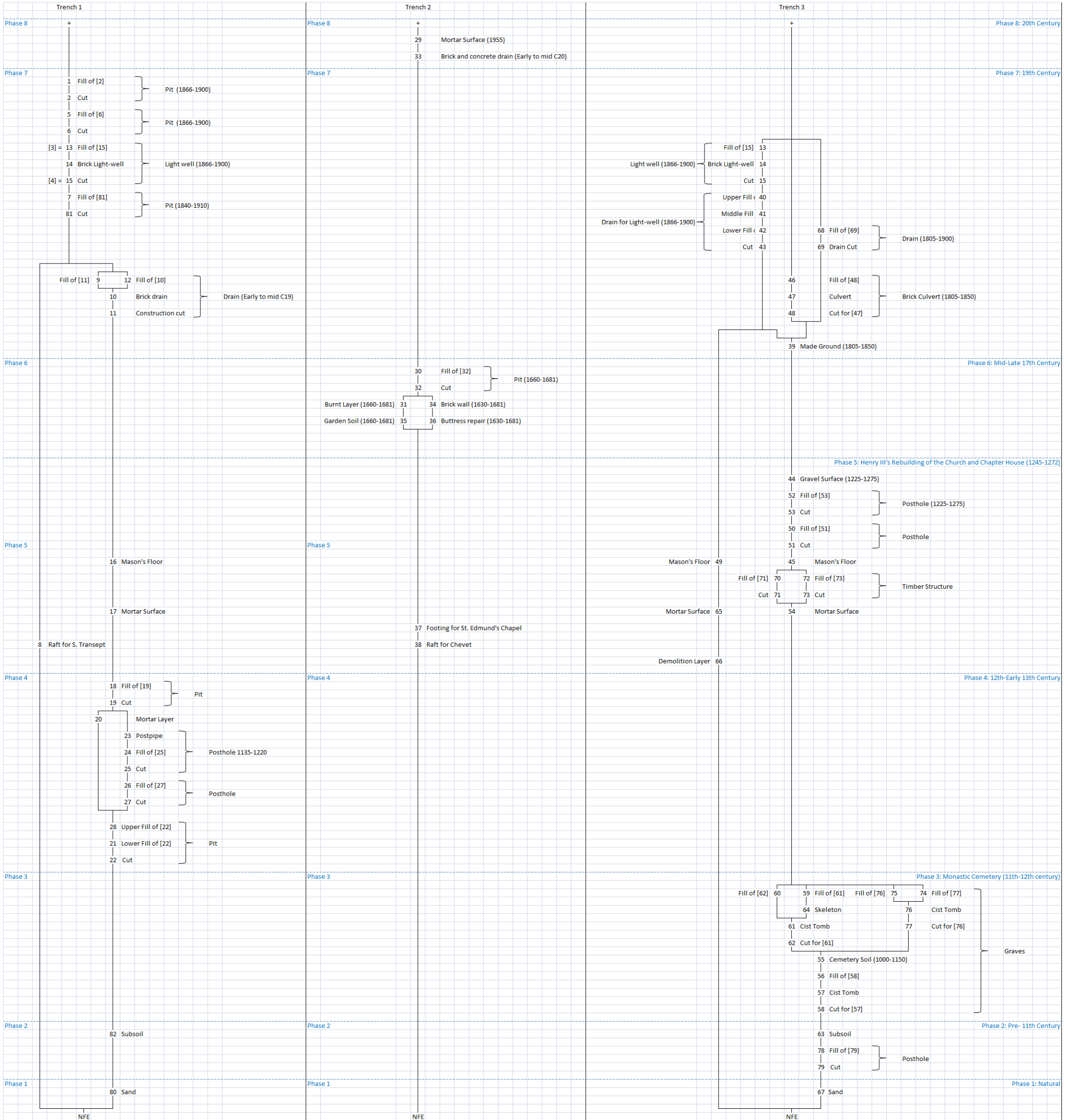


## 8 APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Trench	Type	Description	High	Low	Prov Date
1	TR1	Deposit	Fill of [2]	4.70	4.67	1480-1600
2	TR1	Cut	Pit	4.70	4.55	1480-1600
3	TR1	Deposit	Fill of [4]	4.70	4.70	PM
4	TR1	Cut	Construction cut for (14)	4.70	4.31	PM
5	TR1	Deposit	Fill of [6]	4.74	4.74	PM
6	TR1	Cut	Pit	4.74	4.42	PM
7	TR1	Deposit	Fill of [81]	4.74	4.74	1840-1910
8	TR1	Masonry	Footing for south transept	4.56	3.41	13th Cent
9	TR1	Deposit	Fill of [11]	4.68	4.66	PM
10	TR1	Masonry	Brick drain	4.44	4.16	PM
11	TR1	Cut	Construction cut for (10)	4.62	4.13	PM
12	TR1	Deposit	Fill of (10)	4.30	4.30	PM
13	TR1	Deposit	Fill of [15]	4.74	4.74	PM
14	TR1	Masonry	Light well	4.78	4.78	PM
15	TR1	Cut	Construction cut for (14)	4.74	3.54	PM
16	TR1	Layer	Crushed Reigate stone surface	4.66	4.66	Med
17	TR1	Layer	Mortar surface	4.40	4.40	Med
18	TR1	Deposit	Fill of [19]	4.38	4.26	Med
19	TR1	Cut	Pit	4.38	3.84	Med
20	TR1	Layer	Pinkish grey mortar layer	4.30	4.21	Med
21	TR1	Deposit	Lower fill of [22]	4.19	4.14	Saxon
22	TR1	Cut	Disturbed grave cut?	4.19	3.63	Saxon
23	TR1	Deposit	Post pipe within (24)	4.14	4.14	Med
24	TR1	Deposit	Fill of [25]	4.14	3.93	Med
25	TR1	Cut	Posthole	4.14	3.85	Med
26	TR1	Deposit	Fill of [27]	4.04	3.97	Med
27	TR1	Cut	Posthole	4.04	3.85	Med
28	TR1	Deposit	Upper fill of [22]	4.19	4.16	Med
29	TR2	Layer	Mortar layer	4.91	4.86	1580-1910
30	TR2	Deposit	Fill of [32]	4.82	4.82	1660-1680
31	TR2	Layer	Burnt layer	4.82	4.82	1660-1681
32	TR2	Cut	Pit	4.82	4.46	1660-1680
33	TR2	Masonry	North-south aligned wall	4.82	4.82	PM
34	TR2	Masonry	East-west aligned wall	4.81	4.81	PM
35	TR2	Layer	Garden soil	4.65	4.63	1660-1681
36	TR2	Masonry	Buttress foundation	4.81	4.81	Med
37	TR2	Masonry	Chapel footing	4.42	4.42	Med
38	TR2	Masonry	Chapel raft	4.37	4.37	Med
39	TR3	Layer	Made ground	4.76	4.71	PM
40	TR3	Deposit	Fill of [43]	4.87	4.87	1760-1830
41	TR3	Deposit	Fill of [43]	4.37	4.37	1760-1910
42	TR3	Deposit	Fill of [43]	4.05	4.05	1760-1830
43	TR3	Cut	Drain cut	4.87	3.63	1760-1830
44	TR3	Layer	Gravel surface	4.68	4.59	1480-1900
45	TR3	Layer	Crushed Reigate stone surface	4.58	4.39	Med
46	TR3	Deposit	Fill of [48]	4.71	4.68	1580-1910
47	TR3	Masonry	Brick culvert	4.45	4.43	PM
48	TR3	Cut	Construction cut for (47)	4.71	4.03	PM
49	TR3	Layer	Crushed Reigate stone surface	4.18	4.17	Med

Context	Trench	Type	Description	High	Low	Prov Date
50	TR3	Deposit	Fill of [51]	4.56	4.56	Med
51	TR3	Cut	Posthole	4.56	4.46	Med
52	TR3	Deposit	Fill of [52]	4.56	4.56	Med
53	TR3	Cut	Posthole	4.56	4.39	Med
54	TR3	Layer	Sand and mortar layer	4.37	4.31	Med
55	TR3	Layer	Buried topsoil	4.35	4.19	1000-1150
56	TR3	Deposit	Fill of [58]	4.08	4.03	Med
57	TR3	Masonry	Chalk cist	4.19	4.11	Med
58	TR3	Cut	Grave cut	4.19	4.03	Med
59	TR3	Deposit	Fill inside (61)	4.35	4.34	Med
60	TR3	Deposit	Fill of [62]	4.34	4.34	Med
61	TR3	Masonry	Chalk cist	4.13	4.08	Med
62	TR3	Cut	Grave cut	4.35	3.90	Med
63	TR3	Layer	Subsoil	4.13	4.05	Med
64	TR3	Skeleton	Human skeleton	3.92	3.90	Med
65	TR3	Layer	Sand and mortar layer	4.18	4.14	Med
66	TR3	Layer	Demolition layer	4.03	4.01	Med
67	TR3	Layer	Natural sand	3.86	3.86	Natural
68	TR3	Deposit	Fill of [69]	4.73	4.73	PM
69	TR3	Cut	Drain cut	4.73	3.94	PM
70	TR3	Deposit	Fill of [71]	4.37	4.37	12th-13th
71	TR3	Cut	Posthole	4.37	4.13	12th-13th
72	TR3	Deposit	Fill of [73]	4.34	4.34	1140-1220
73	TR3	Cut	Posthole	4.34	4.19	Med
74	TR3	Deposit	Fill of [77]	4.23	4.23	Med
75	TR3	Deposit	Fill inside (76)	4.23	4.23	Med
76	TR3	Masonry	Chalk cist	4.19	3.93	Med
77	TR3	Cut	Grave cut	4.23	3.93	Med
78	TR3	Deposit	Fill of [79]	3.86	3.86	Med
79	TR3	Cut	Posthole	3.86	3.74	Med
80	TR1	Layer	Natural sand	4.03	4.01	Natural
81	TR1	Cut	Large pit	4.74	3.41	1840-1910

9 APPENDIX 2: SITE MATRIX



## 10 APPENDIX 3: POTTERY, CTP AND GLASS SPOT-DATES

By Chris Jarrett, Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

**Table 2: Pottery Spot-Dates**

Site code	Material	Context	Spot date	Comments
PSY12	POT	1	1480-1600	PMRE
PSY12	POT	7	1805-1900	REFW, CHPO KRAAK, PMR, BORDY
PSY12	POT	9	1805-1900	REFW, PMR
PSY12	POT	21	pre-historic	
PSY12	POT	30	1630-1680	TGW D, FREC
PSY12	POT	35	1550-1600	BORDY, FREC LATE 17TH C
PSY12	POT	39	1805-1900	REFW, FMR: FLP
PSY12	POT	40	1760-1830	CREA DEV, ?KING
PSY12	POT	41	1590-1900	PMR
PSY12	POT	44	1480-1900	GERST
PSY12	POT	55	1000-1150	EMSS AND UNSOURCED ?WHITEWARE (POSSIBLY Roman), ?PREHISTORIC/SAXON
PSY12	POT	70	Pre-historic	
PSY12	POT	72	1140-1220	SSW - VERY SMALL BODY SHERD

**Table 3: Clay Tobacco Pipe Spot-Dates**

Site code	Material	Context	Spot date	Comments
PSY12	CTP	7	1840-1910+	AO30
PSY12	CTP	29	1580-1910	STEM
PSY12	CTP	30	1660-1680	AO13/AO15/AO18
PSY12	CTP	31	1660-1681	AO13/AO15
PSY12	CTP	35	1660-1681	AO13/AO15
PSY12	CTP	41	1580-1910	STEM
PSY12	CTP	46	1580-1910	STEM

**Table 4: Glass Spot-Dates**

Site code	Material	Context	Spot date	Comments
PSY12	GLASS	7	1830+	MOULDED BOTTLE, EARLIER MATERIAL
PSY12	GLASS	5	PMED	WINDOW
PSY12	GLASS	30	PMED	WINE BOTTLE FRAG
PSY12	GLASS	39	PMED	WINDOW
PSY12	GLASS	40	PMED	WINDOW
PSY12	GLASS	41	PMED	WINDOW
PSY12	GLASS	68	MED/PMED	VESSEL, NATURAL GLASS



## 11 APPENDIX 4: CBM SPOT-DATES

By Berni Seddon, Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

**Table 5: Ceramic Building Material Spot-Dates**

Context	Comments	Spot Date
1	Post-medieval roof tile – 2276, 2586; post-medieval brick fragment ?3033	1480 – 1900; probably 17 <sup>th</sup> century or later.
3	Reused Roman tile – 2815; Unfrogged 3033's (some reused); ?Unfrogged 3032 (reused); Transitional and post-medieval roof tile.	1666 - 1900
5	Fragment of brick – 3033; post-medieval roof tile – 2276; 2586; North Wales Slate 3115M	1480 - 1900
7	Reused Roman brick; post-medieval roof tile – 2276 (some reused). Bricks; early unfrogged 3033 (110x55mm); ragment – 3032; unfrogged 3035 (reused); modern cement/ concrete tile	19 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> century+
10	Unfrogged brick – 3032 (330x95x66)	18 <sup>th</sup> – E/M 19 <sup>th</sup> century
17	Reused Roman brick – 2815	50 - 250
18	Fired clay; small fragment (reused).	50 - 1800
21	Roman brick/tile fragment-2815?; opus signinum	50 – 250
24	Glazed medieval roof tile - 2273	1135 – 1220
26	Reused Roman brick – silty	100 – 120
29	Medieval/ transitional and post-medieval roof tile – 2587; 2276.	1480 - 1900
30	Unfrogged bricks 3033; 3032 (some of both types reused); post-medieval roof tile – 2276; 3090; Burnt kimmeridge shale	1666 - 1900
36	Stone sample; Portland Whit Bed - 3110	1630 - 1900
39	Unfrogged bricks – 3033; post-medieval tile – 2276.	1450 – 1900; pre-1700 bricks but tile likely to be 17 <sup>th</sup> century+
40	Reused Roman brick; medieval and post-medieval roof tile 2276; Unfrogged brick – 3034.	1666 - 1900
41	Medieval/ transitional and post-medieval roof tile – 2586; 2276.	1480 – 1900; probably 17 <sup>th</sup> century or later
42	Reused Roman brick and tile – 2815; post-medieval roof; brick fragment - 3032	1666 – 1900
44	Reused Roman brick and reused Medieval plain and decorated floor tile; Purbeck marble micro architecture – 3112M	1225 – 1275+
45	Reused Roman tile; two small abraded fragments of medieval tile (including glazed frag) – 2271	1180 – 1500
46	Brick frag ?3033; medieval/transitional tile and post-medieval pantile – 2271; 2279	1630 – 1850
50	Small fragment of post-medieval roof tile – 3090	1480 – 1900
52	Decorated floor tile – small frag	1225 – 1275+
54	Reused Roman brick fragments and opus signinum (highly fragmented) – 2815	50 – 250
55	Reused early Roman brick and tile. Fairly large fragments – 2454; 3060; 2815; opus signinum; Kentish rag - 3105	50 – 250
59	Roman brick – 2815	50 – 250
66	Roman brick, tegulae; imbrex and one cut-tile tessera. Some of the brick and tile is reused. Fabrics 2815; 3060 (reused).	50 – 250
68	Roman, medieval and post-medieval tile – 2271; silty floor tile; 2276; silty	1480 – 1900; probably 17 <sup>th</sup> or later.
74	Roman brick – 2815; small fragment of reused Roman brick/tile.	50 – 250

## 12 APPENDIX 5: OASIS FORM

**OASIS ID: preconst1-136031**

### Project details

Project name	Poets' Corner Yard, Westminster Abbey
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation was carried out in September and October 2012 by Pre-Construct Archaeology, Ltd in Poets' Corner Yard at Westminster Abbey. The work entailed the hand excavation of three trenches to evaluate the archaeological potential of the yard. Footings for the east wall of the south transept and the polygonal chapel of St. Edmund were uncovered as were three graves (two of which had been heavily truncated) dating to the 11th century.
Project dates	Start: 24-09-2012 End: 10-10-2012
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	PSY12 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	World Heritage Site
Current Land use	Other 4 - Churchyard
Monument type	FOOTINGS Medieval
Monument type	CIST TOMBS Early Medieval
Monument type	DRAINS Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Early Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Roman
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Significant Finds	GLASS Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CTP Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)
Prompt	Research
Position in the planning process	Pre-application

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER WESTMINSTER Poets' Corner Yard, Westminster Abbey
Postcode	SW1P 3PA
Study area	150.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3011 7946 51 0 51 29 54 N 000 07 31 W Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 3.86m Max: 4.03m

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### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Project brief originator	Consultant
Project design originator	Warwick Rodwell
Project director/manager	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	Paw Jorgensen
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Name of sponsor/funding body	Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Westminster Abbey Museum
Physical Contents	"Ceramics", "Glass", "Industrial", "Metal", "Worked stone/lithics"
Digital Archive recipient	Westminster Abbey Museum
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Images vector", "Spreadsheets", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Westminster Abbey Museum
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Drawing", "Matrices", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Poets' Corner Yard, Westminster Abbey: An Archaeological Evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Jorgensen, P.
Other bibliographic details	R11323
Date	2012
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Place of issue or publication	Brockley, London
Description	A4 bound client report

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Entered by	Chris Mayo (cmayo@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	8 November 2012

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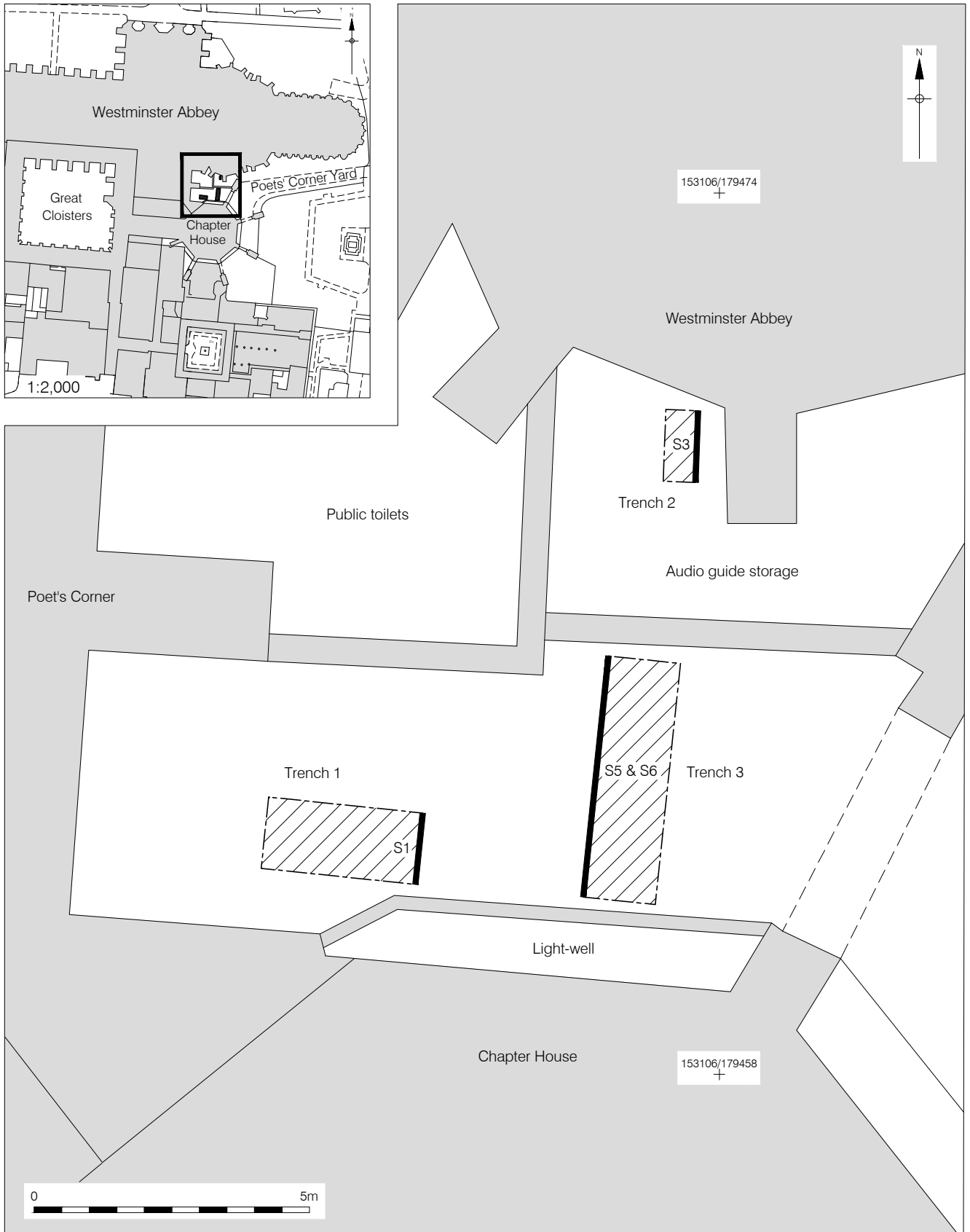


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08/11/12 JS

Figure 1  
Site Location  
1:20,000 at A4



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Figure 2  
 Trench Location  
 1:100 at A4

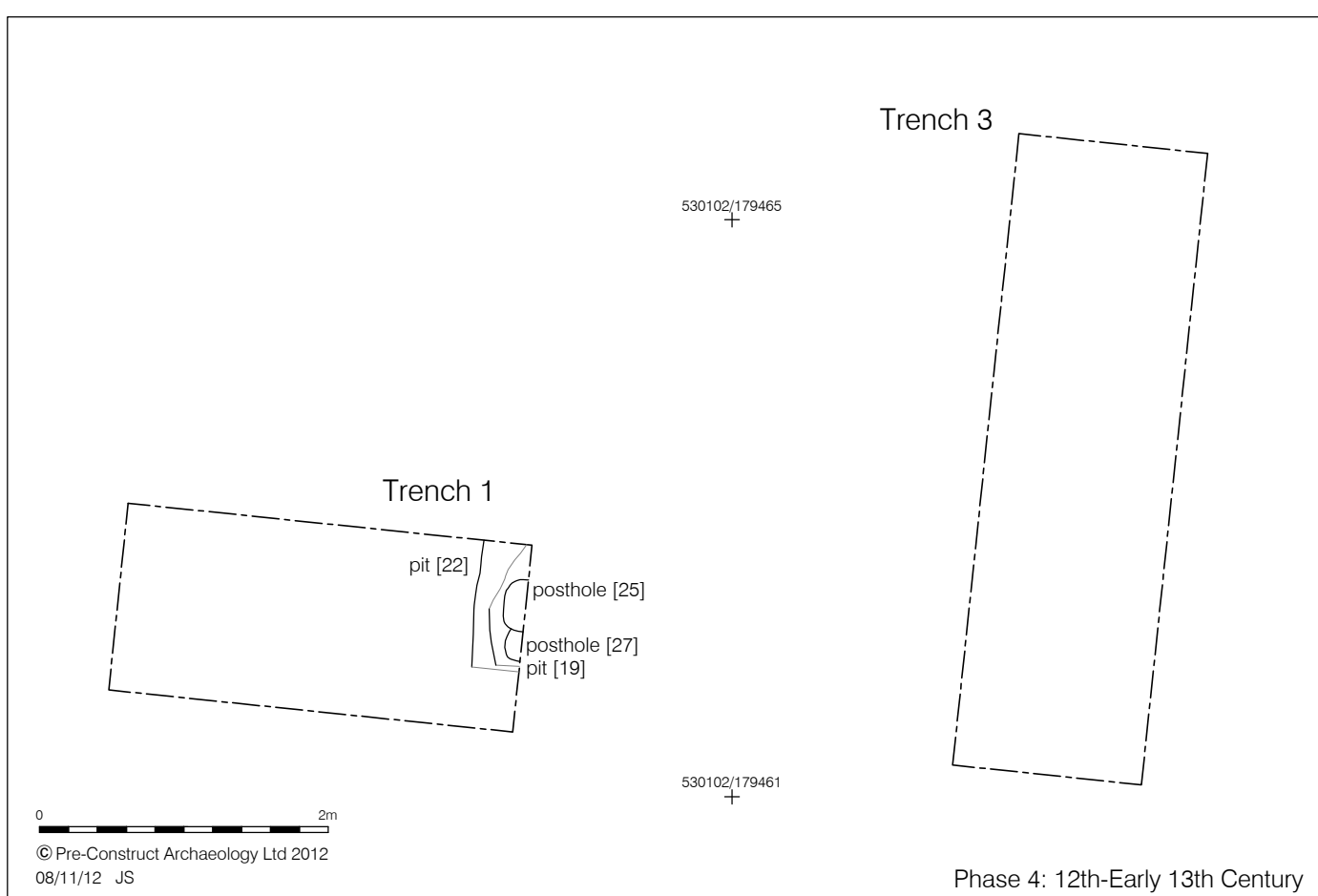
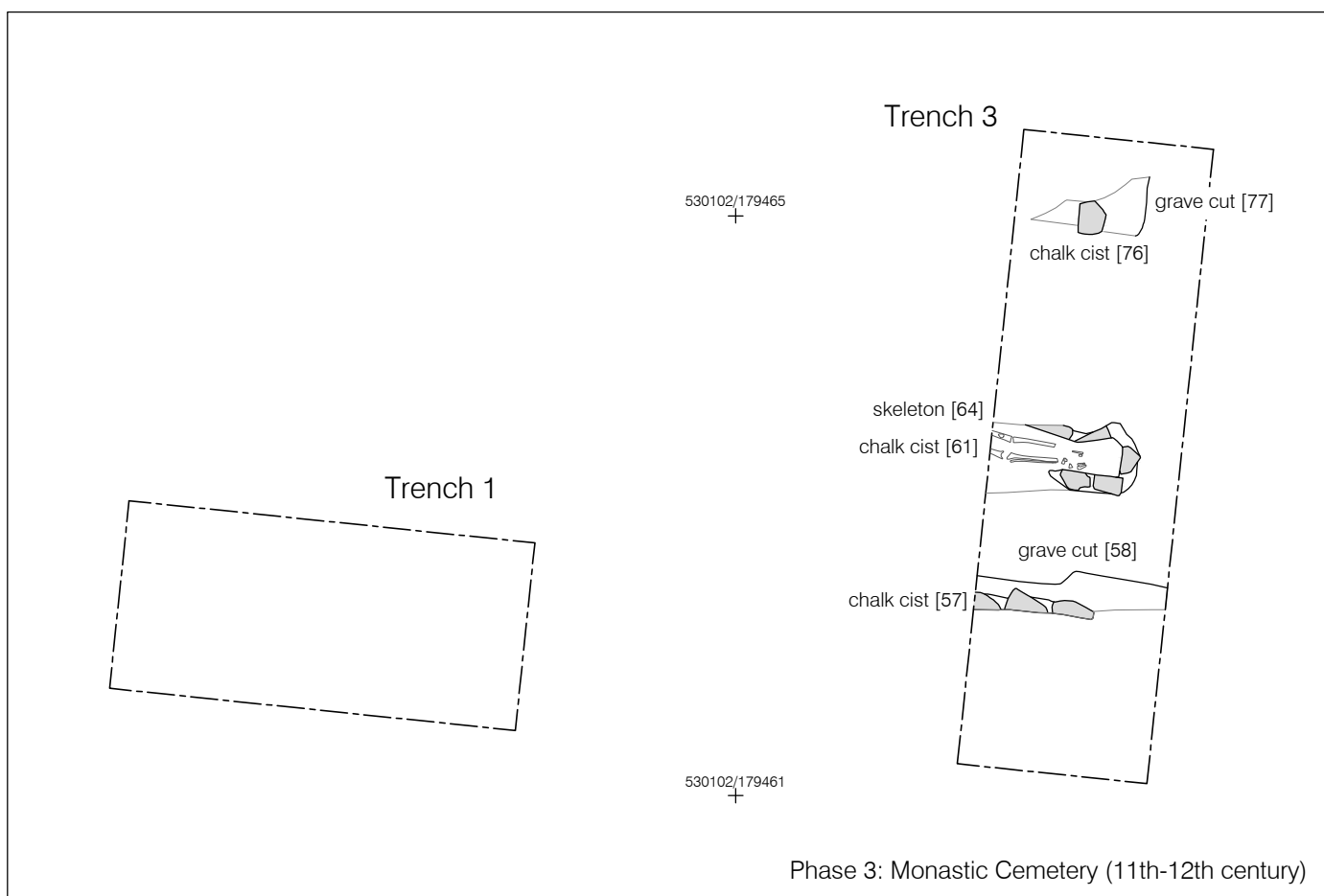
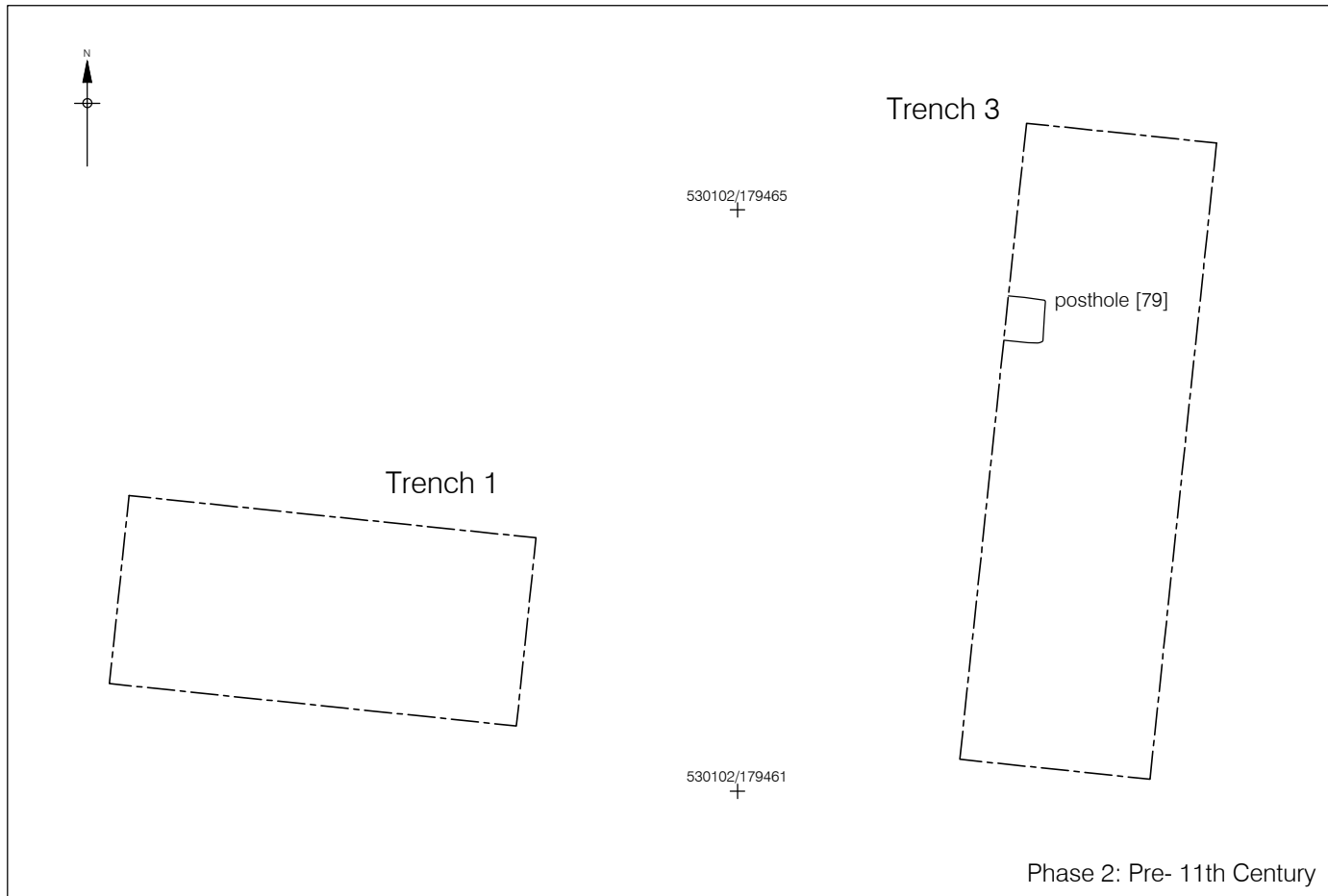


Figure 3  
Phases 2, 3 & 4  
1:50 at A3

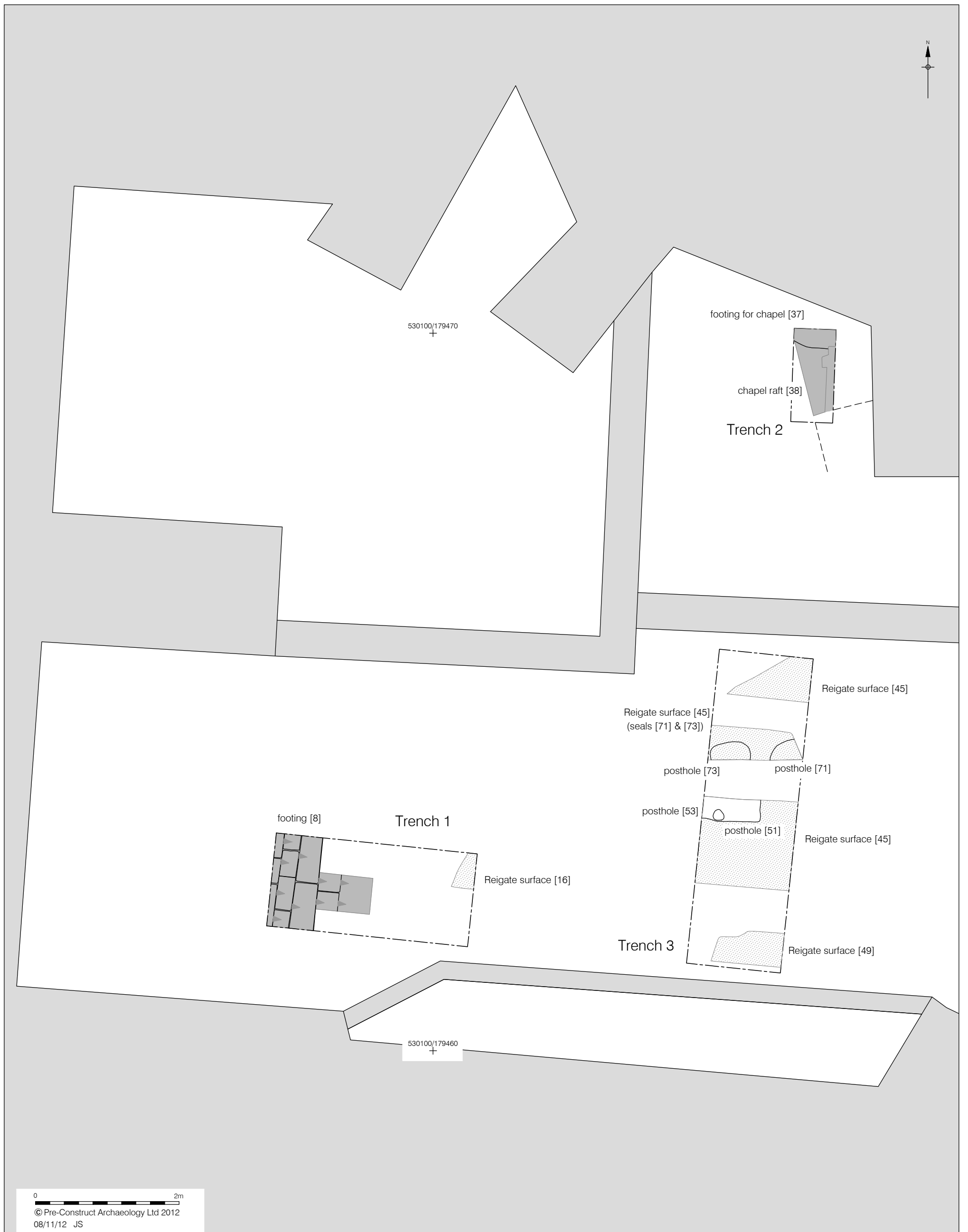


Figure 4  
Phase 5: Henry III's Rebuilding of the Church and Chapter House (1245-1272)  
1:50 at A3

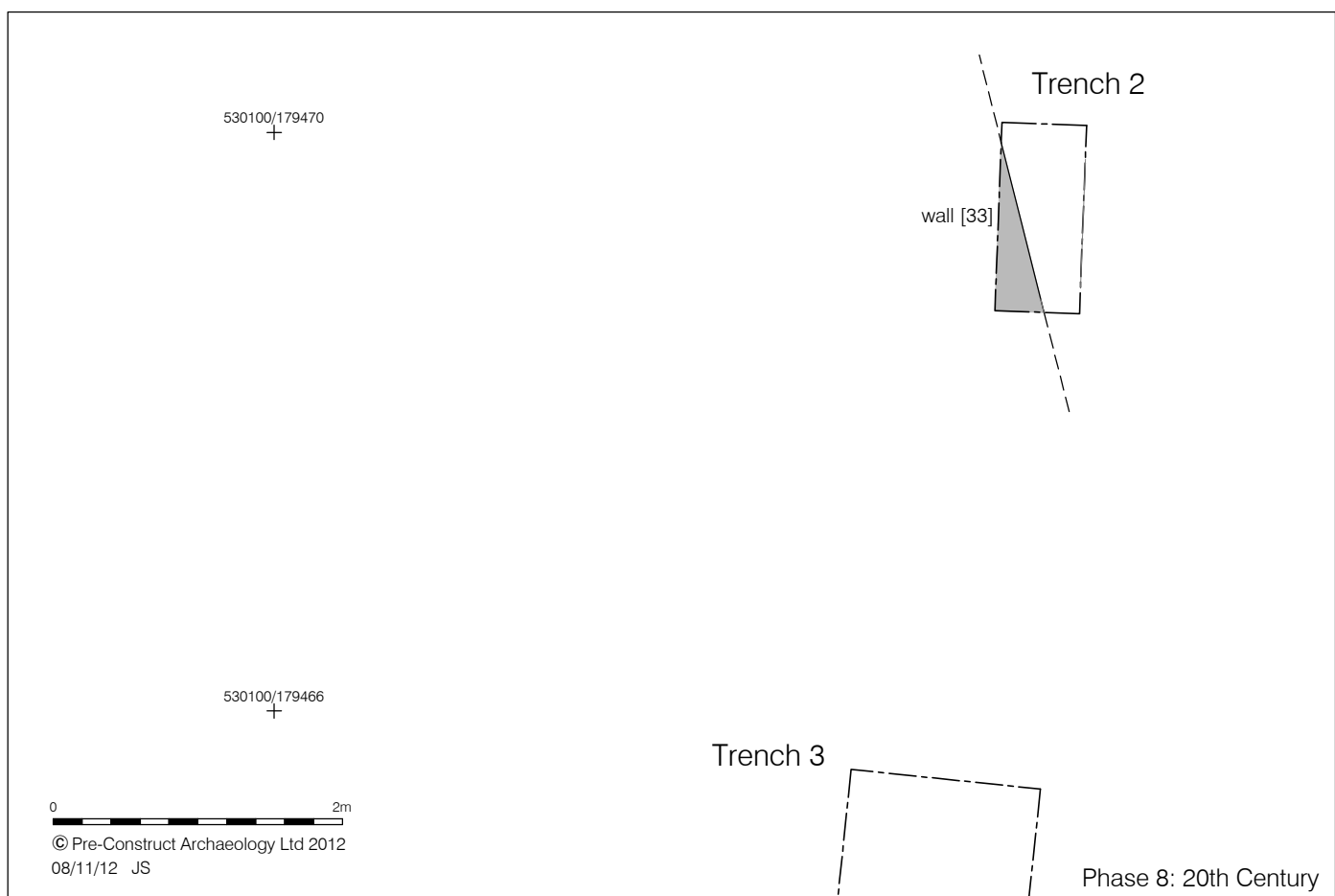
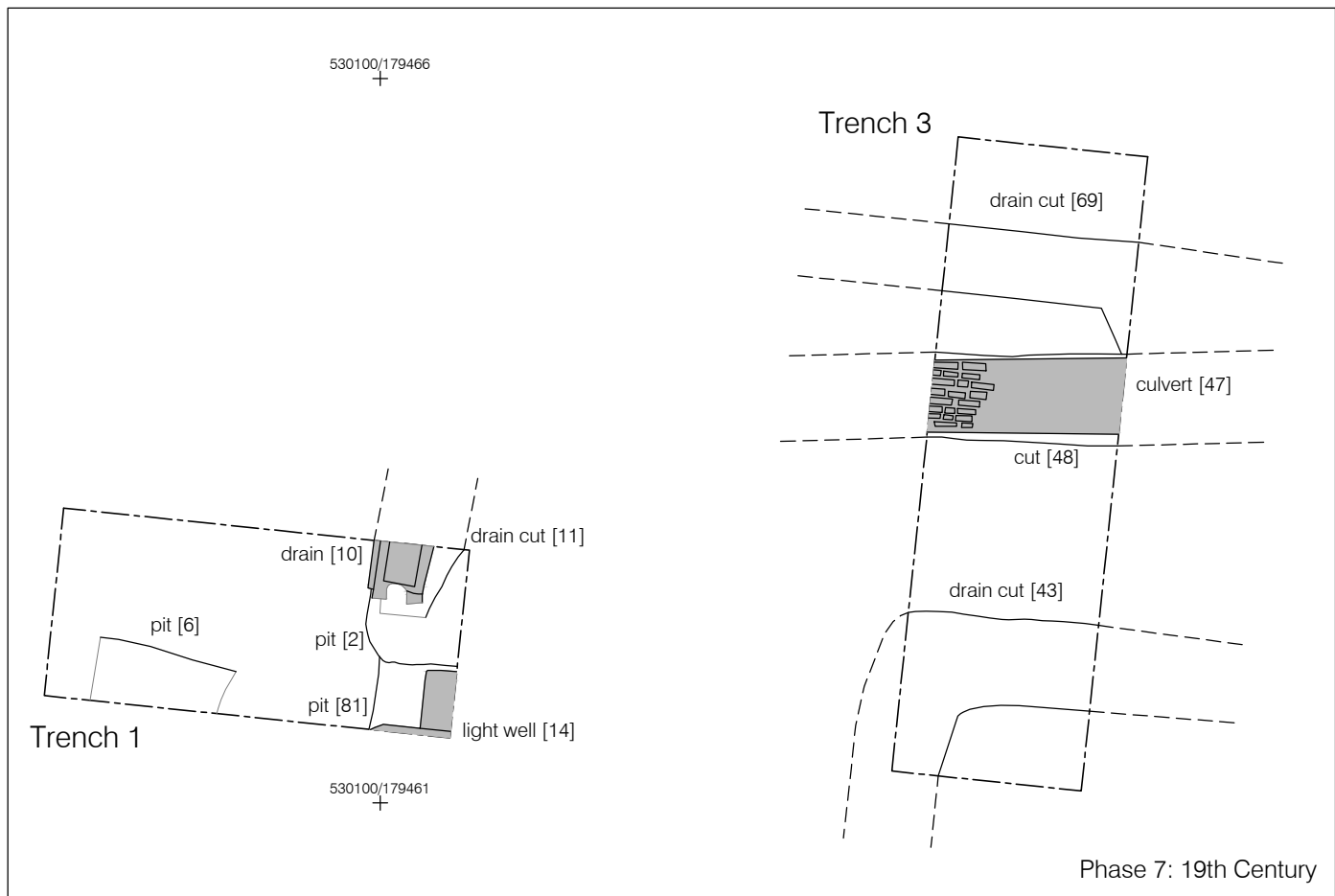
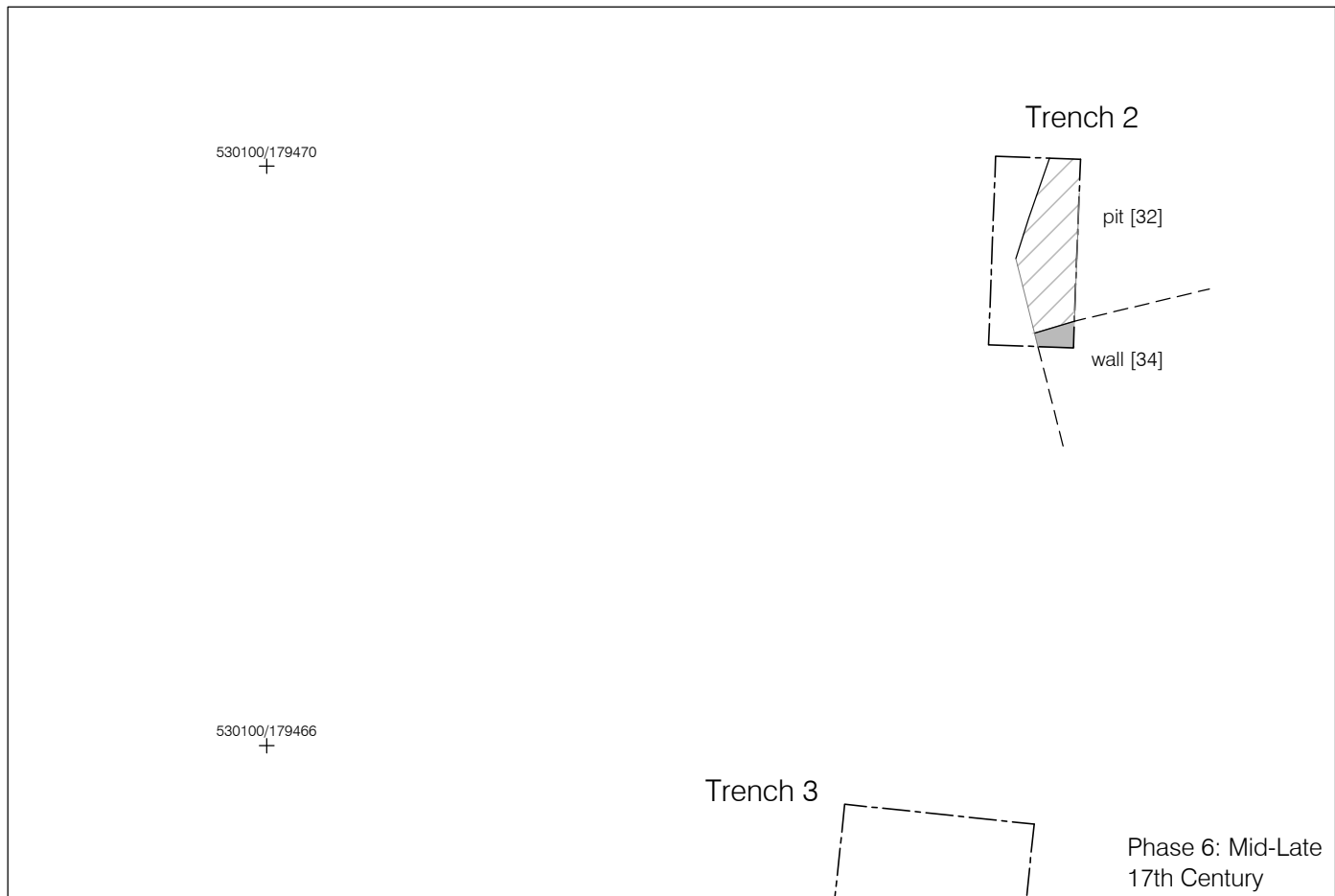
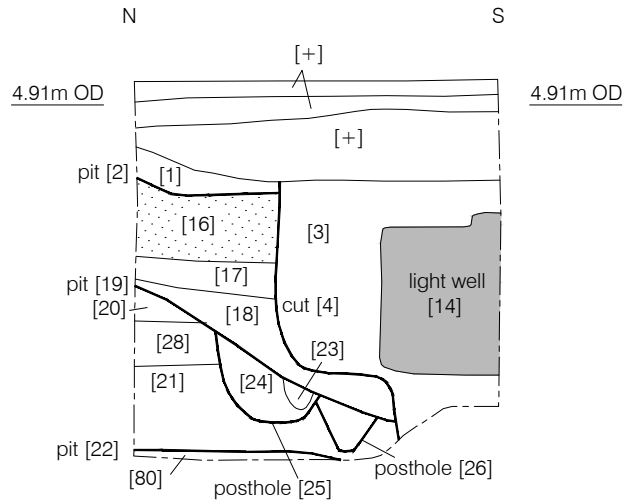
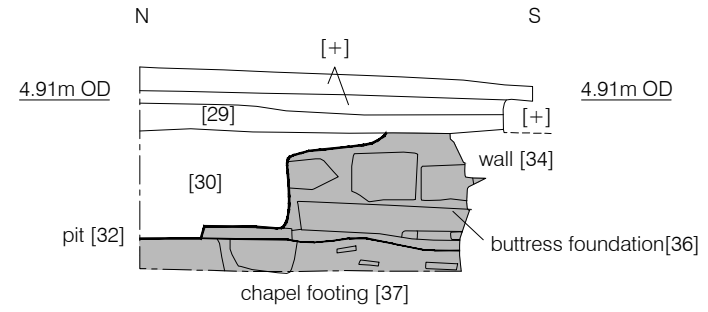


Figure 5  
Phases 6, 7 & 8  
1:50 at A4





Section 1  
Trench 1  
West Facing



Section 3  
Trench 2  
West Facing



Section 5 & 6  
Trench 3  
East Facing

# PCA

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## PCA SOUTH

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)

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## PCA NORTH

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)

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## PCA CENTRAL

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

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## PCA WEST

BLOCK 4  
CHILCOMB HOUSE  
CHILCOMB LANE  
WINCHESTER  
HAMPSHIRE SO23 8RB  
TEL: 01962 849 549  
EMAIL: [info.west@pre-construct.com](mailto:info.west@pre-construct.com)

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## PCA MIDLANDS

17-19 KETTERING RD  
LITTLE BOWDEN  
MARKET HARBOROUGH  
LEICESTERSHIRE LE16 8AN  
TEL: 01858 468 333  
EMAIL: [info.midlands@pre-construct.com](mailto:info.midlands@pre-construct.com)

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