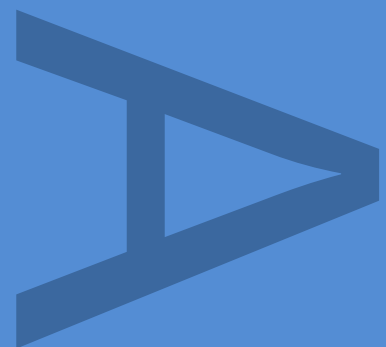


**THE BLUE LION, 2  
HORNINGSEA ROAD, FEN  
DITTON, CB5 8SZ**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL  
TRENCH EVALUATION**

**OCTOBER 2012**



**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY  
R11270**

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT THE BLUE LION, 2  
HORNINGSEA ROAD, FEN DITTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**Site Code: CHFD12**

**Central NGR: TL 4859 6023**

**HER Event Number : ECB 3897**

**Local Planning Authority: South Cambridgeshire District Council**

**Planning Reference: S/2194/11**

**Written and Researched by Tom Woolhouse**

**Project Manager: Mark Hinman**

**Commissioning Client: CgMs Consulting Limited**

**Contractor:**

**Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited**

**7 Granta Terrace**

**Stapleford**

**Cambridgeshire**

**CB22 4PF**

**Tel: 01223 845522**

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

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

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**October 2012**

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## ABSTRACT

*This document details the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation at The Blue Lion pub, Fen Ditton, Cambridgeshire. The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Limited to assess the archaeological implications of residential redevelopment of the site.*

*The course of the Fleam Dyke was projected to run through the site. Six trial trenches were excavated between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of October 2012. Trenches in the north (1 and 2) and south of the site (6) contained no archaeological features. Two small pits and a shallow ditch, all undated, were revealed in Trench 5, on the west of the site, while Trench 3, in the east, revealed a ditch containing post-medieval pottery. The most significant feature was a large ditch aligned north-west to south-east in Trench 4, on the east of the site. The ditch was 3m wide and nearly 2m deep and corresponded with the projected course and alignment of the Fleam Dyke. The feature had been scoured-out and entirely backfilled with redeposited natural chalk and building rubble, probably during the construction of the pub buildings in the 1950s/60s, or during subsequent landscaping of the car park and pub garden. No trace of a bank or any earlier ditch fills survived and it remains unclear whether the modern feature represents evidence for the removal of the earlier Fleam Dyke or was specifically associated with the construction of the Blue Lion pub.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This document details the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation at The Blue Lion pub, 2 Horningsea Road, Fen Ditton, Cambridgeshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to assess the archaeological implications of residential redevelopment of land at the site.
- 1.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological trial trenching within the proposed development area was prepared by Mark Hinman (PCA) in response to a Design Brief for archaeological trial trenching prepared by Dan McConnell of Cambridgeshire County Council's Historic Environment Team (HET).
- 1.3 Archaeological sites and finds in the surrounding area and the archaeological potential of the site have previously been described and discussed in a desk-based assessment prepared by CgMs (Collings 2012). In brief, findspot evidence recorded in the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (HER) database indicated potential for archaeological remains from a broad range of periods. To the north of the site, prehistoric flint tools (HER No. MCB13174), and Roman pottery sherds (HER No. MCB13175) have been discovered during fieldwalking (HER No. ECB1255). High Ditch Road, immediately south of the site, follows the course of the Fleam Dyke (D McConnell pers comm.. HER No. MCB12150), a major territorial boundary usually assumed to be of Anglo-Saxon date. Although this part of the Dyke is not scheduled, other sections are protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- 1.4 The site comprises an area of c. 0.39ha. It is currently occupied by the former pub buildings, asphalt car parking areas and a pub garden. The underlying geology of the site is Lower Chalk (British Geological Survey 1981).

1.5 Six trial trenches were excavated and recorded on 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> October 2012.

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

- 2.1 Six trial trenches were laid out following the trench location plan in the Written Scheme of Investigation produced by PCA (Hinman 2012). Some modifications to the proposed layout were necessitated by the large number of services identified on existing utilities plans and by CAT-scanning of the site (see Fig. 2). Several of the trenches (1, 3, 5 and 6) had to be shortened or repositioned slightly due to the presence of live/ potentially live services cutting across their proposed courses; Trenches 2 and 5 were lengthened in order to compensate for this reduction in sampling.
- 2.2 The ground reduction was carried out under archaeological supervision using an 8 ton 360 tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Topsoil and subsoil deposits were removed in spits down to the level of the clean natural geology where potential archaeological features could be observed and recorded.
- 2.3 OD heights and trench locations were recorded using a Leica 1200 GPS rover unit.

### 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

- 3.1 The earliest deposit, recorded in all trenches, was natural white clayey chalk with localised orangey-brown clay patches (10). Towards the north of the site in Trenches 1 and 2, the surface of the chalk was recorded at elevations between 12.26m OD and 12.49m OD and in Trench 5 to the west the chalk surface was at 12.32m OD. The surface of the natural deposit dipped slightly to the east and south, being recorded at 12.15m OD and 12.00m OD in Trenches 3 and 6 respectively.
- 3.2 Overlying the chalk in all trenches was a 0.20m to 0.30m thick deposit, described as brownish-grey chalky clay subsoil, derived through natural degradation of the chalk bedrock. In parts of Trenches 4 and 5 this deposit had been removed by post-medieval truncation, so that some archaeological deposits directly overlay the natural chalk.
- 3.3 Probably the earliest feature recorded cutting through the subsoil, though the exact level from which it was cut had been masked by extensive recent disturbance, was a large (3.10m wide), linear feature [21] crossing Trench 4 on a north-west to south-east alignment, the positioning and course of which matched a projected line of the Fleam Dyke. Due to the large size of the feature, its considerable depth (cut c. 1.8m into the natural chalk), very steep sides, and the nature of its fills (see below), it was excavated by machine under close archaeological supervision. This ditch had been deliberately backfilled with deep deposits of building rubble, including brick, concrete, gravel and at least eight concrete kerb stones from the breaking-up of a road or car-park, (25) and (26), followed by capping layers of compacted redeposited natural chalk, (27) and (28), apparently dumped in a single event. It seems likely that the ditch of the Fleam Dyke did originally run through the site but was deliberately scoured-out and backfilled with hardcore during the construction of the pub in the 1950s/60s or during



subsequent landscaping of the car park and garden area, in order to stabilise an area of soft ground.

- 3.4 Although the unsafe depth of the ditch ruled out manual excavation of its lower fills, the mechanical excavator was able to remove the fill in gradual spits under supervision and there was no sign of any earlier deposits (relating to the original ditch lining or silting) surviving in this location. Deposit (28), which infilled the top of the ditch on its southern side, had an unusual profile and was initially thought to be the remains of a bank. However, it contained lenses of asphalt and was therefore shown to be another modern capping deposit, its unusual profile probably relating to being pushed in this direction by machine when the ditch was being filled-in. It is unclear whether the ditch continued further north-west across the site as Trench 5, which was also positioned to attempt to pick up the line of the Dyke, had to be shifted southwards from its proposed position to avoid a live service.
- 3.5 A narrow, shallow, irregular gully [22] was cut through the subsoil at the west end of Trench 3. Its fill (23) contained degraded brick fragments and two pieces of glazed post-medieval pottery and may have been either a drainage ditch or, given its irregular base, part of a tree hollow. Trench 5, located in the narrow space between the standing pub buildings and the western site boundary, contained two small shallow pits, [13] and [15], and a ditch, [11], all of which had similar dark brown-grey silty clay fills devoid of finds. Ditch [11] was cut through the subsoil but elsewhere in the trench this deposit had been completely removed so that the two pits could only be seen cutting the natural geology. The composition of these features' fills, and the stratigraphic position of [11], might suggest a similar date to post-medieval ditch [22] in Trench 3.
- 3.6 Ditch [22] and the subsoil across the remainder of Trench 3 were overlain by 0.40-0.47m of dark garden/ cultivation soil (24), which was very similar to a 0.40-0.50m thick garden/ cultivation soil (20) that

directly overlay the subsoil in Trench 1, whilst the features in Trench 5 were sealed by a made ground rubble layer [33], 0.40-0.60m deep. The deposits overlying the subsoil were particularly deep towards the north-east end of Trench 1 and north-west end of Trench 2, where 0.30m of made ground (8), comprising mixed redeposited natural chalk and brick/ concrete rubble, underlay the topsoil. This deposit appeared to relate to the breaking-up of an earlier car park or area of hard-standing.

- 3.7 The sequence of overlying deposits above the infilled ditch in Trench 4 included several chalk levelling layers; (32) and (29), suggesting that the ground in this area remained prone to slumping even after the ditch was filled in. In Trench 6 the subsoil was overlain by 0.70m of made ground and rubble levelling deposits (35) and (34).
- 3.8 Cutting into the garden/cultivation soil (20) in Trench 1 was a rubbish pit or backfilled test pit [17], which contained modern rubbish including Coca Cola cans. Despite the deep overburden, which would have afforded some protection to any underlying archaeology, no earlier archaeological features were present in this area.
- 3.9 The stratigraphic sequence In Trenches 1, 2, 3 and 4 was completed by a thin layer of modern topsoil (7). The subsurface deposits in Trenches 5 and 6 had been heavily-disturbed during the construction of the pub and car park and were largely of recent date, though the stratigraphic sequence in Trench 5 was completed by a surface layer of paving slabs.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Areas in the south and west of the site appear to have been heavily-disturbed during the construction of the public house and car parking areas. Two shallow pits and a ditch were present below modern made ground in Trench 5, to the west of the pub building, none of which contained any finds.
- 4.2 The north and east of the site contain fairly deep garden/ cultivation soil deposits, as well as (in the north of the site) a demolition/ levelling layer which appears to be from the breaking-up of a former car park or another area of hard-standing. The cultivation soil may either have been imported to the site during landscaping of the pub garden area, or represented a gradual build-up of soil through agricultural land-use prior to the construction of the pub in the 1950s/60s. Despite the depth of overburden, no archaeological features were present in this part of the site.
- 4.3 The assumed ditch of the Fleam Dyke was encountered in Trench 4, in the east of the site. It is unclear whether it continued north-westward across the site as Trench 5, which was originally positioned to locate its course, had to be moved further to the south in order to avoid a live service. The ditch is a substantial feature, measuring over 3m across and nearly 2m deep from the surface of the natural chalk. It appears to have been deliberately scoured-out and backfilled with building rubble and compacted chalk during either the construction of the pub or subsequent landscaping of the beer garden/ car park area. No evidence of earlier fills/ deposits was encountered in the excavated section of the ditch and because the feature had been so heavily disturbed the exact level from which it had been cut, and therefore its exact date of original excavation, was difficult to ascertain.

## **5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

PCA would like to thank CgMs Consulting for commissioning the project and Dan McConnell for monitoring the project on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team. Thanks to Josephine Brown of the PCA CAD Department for preparing the figures.

## **6 REFERENCES**

Collings, M. 2012 *The Blue Lion, 2 Horningsea Road, Fen Ditton, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB5 8SZ: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. CgMs Consulting Draft Report Ref. MC/13829

Hinman, M. 2012 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation at 2 Horningsea Road, Fen Ditton, Cambridgeshire*. Pre-Construct Archaeology

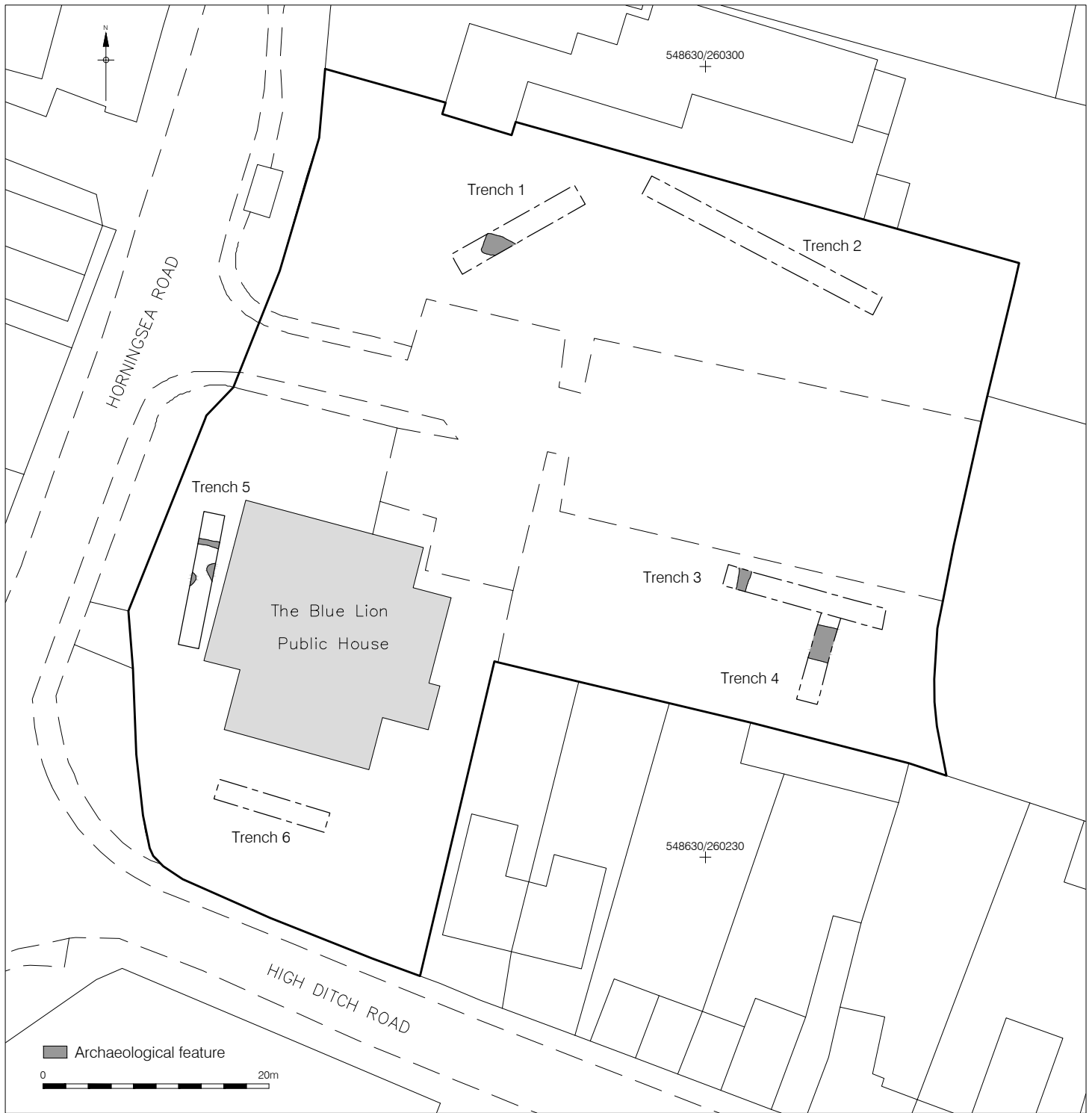


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17/10/12 JB

Figure 1  
Site location  
1:25,000 at A4

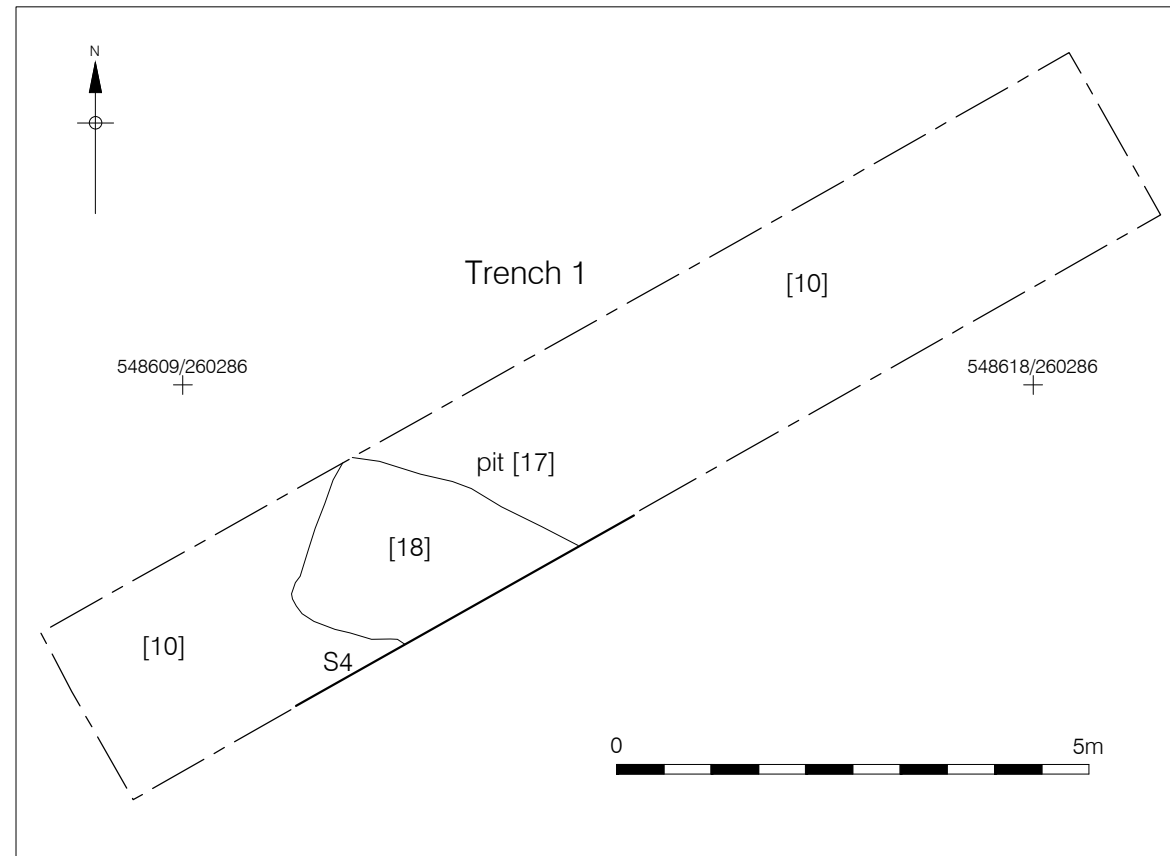
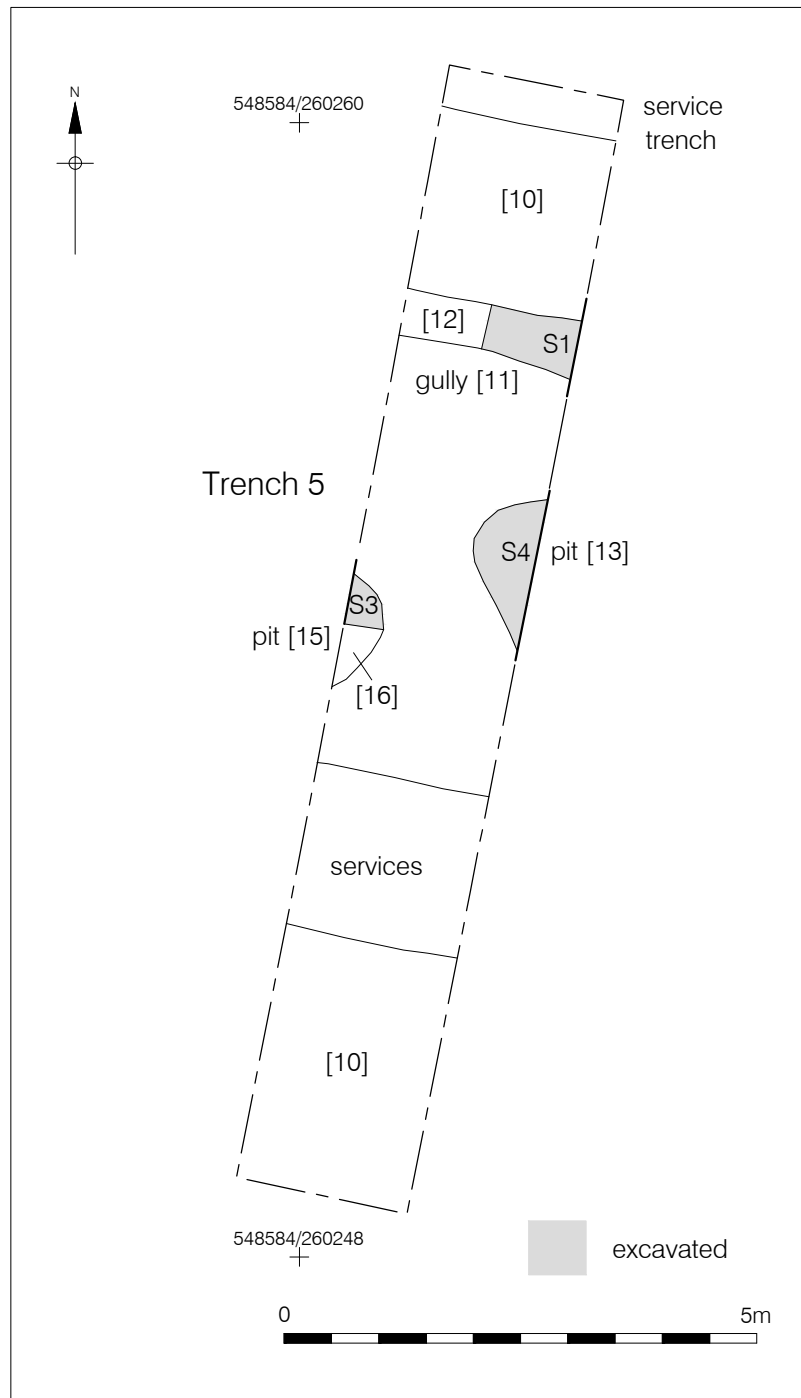


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17/10/12 JB

Figure 2  
Trench location  
1:500 at A4



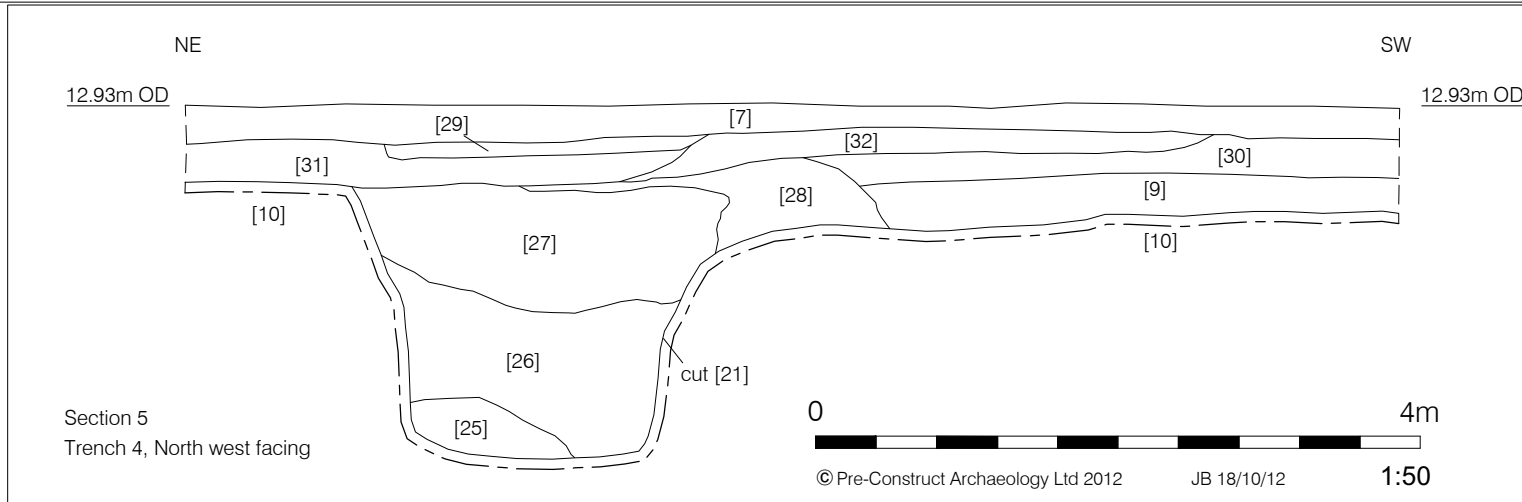
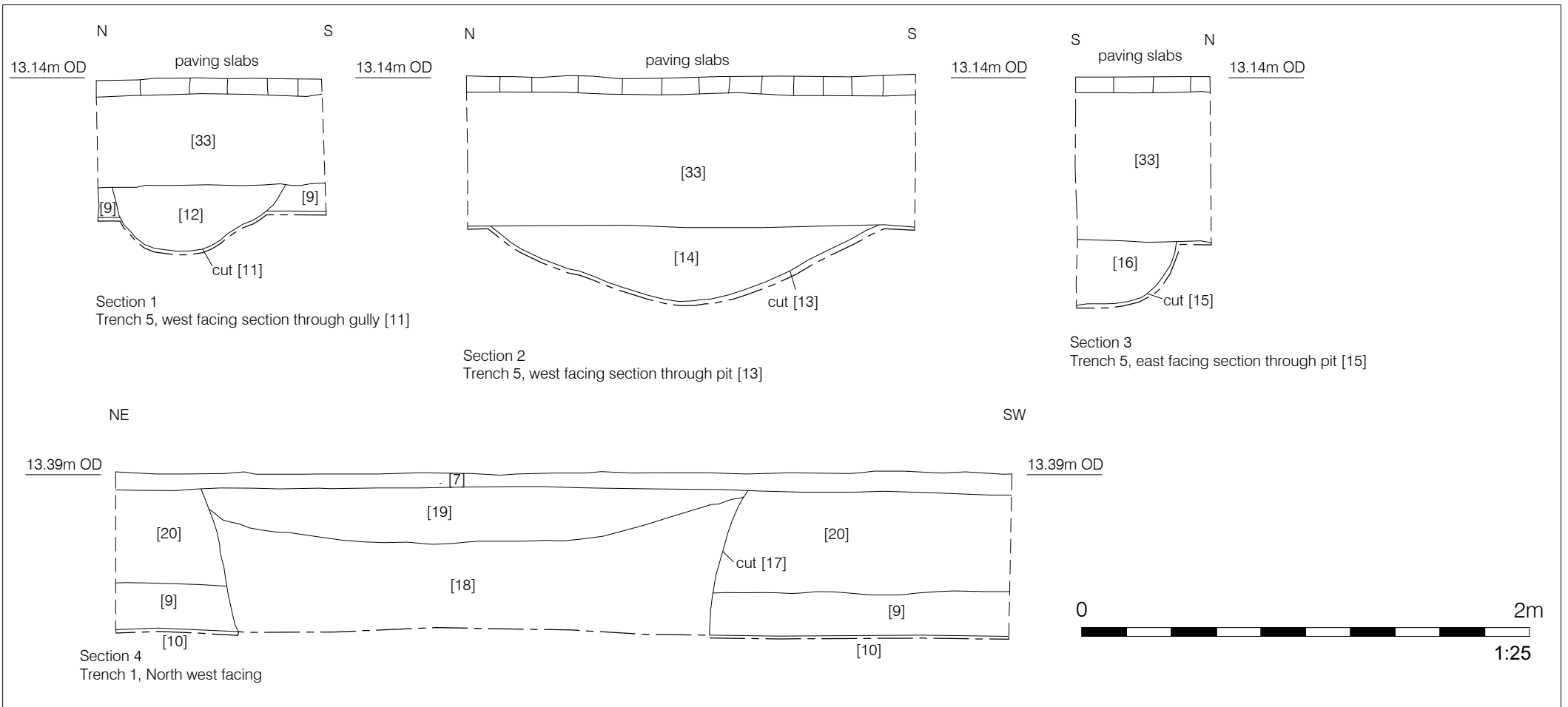


Figure 4  
Sections 1-5  
1:25 (Sections 1-4) and 1:50 (Section 5) at A4



## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT REGISTER

Context	Cut	Type	Trench	Comments
1	-	Trench	1	Trench 1
2	-	Trench	2	Trench 2
3	-	Trench	3	Trench 3
4	-	Trench	4	Trench 4
5	-	Trench	5	Trench 5
6	-	Trench	6	Trench 6
7	-	Layer	1, 2, 3, 4	Topsoil
8	-	Layer	2	Made ground
9	-	Layer	All	Subsoil
10	-	Layer	All	Natural clayey chalk geology
11	-	Ditch	5	Undated ditch
12	11	Ditch Fill	5	Fill of undated ditch [11]
13	-	Pit	5	Undated pit
14	13	Pit Fill	5	Fill of undated pit [13]
15	-	Pit	5	Undated pit
16	15	Pit Fill	5	Fill of undated pit [15]
17	-	Pit	1	Modern rubbish pit/ test pit
18	17	Pit Fill	1	Lower fill of modern rubbish pit/ test pit [17]
19	17	Pit Fill	1	Upper fill of modern rubbish pit/ test pit [17]
20	-	Subsoil	1	Garden/ cultivation soil
21	-	Ditch	4	Large ditch, possibly the Fleam Dyke
22	-	Ditch	3	Post-medieval ditch
23	22	Ditch Fill	3	Fill of post-medieval ditch [22]
24	-	Layer	3	Garden/ cultivation soil
25	21	Ditch Fill	4	Lower fill of Ditch [21]
26	21	Ditch Fill	4	Fill of ditch [21]
27	21	Ditch Fill	4	Fill of ditch [21]
28	21	Ditch Fill	4	Fill of ditch [21]
29	-	Layer	4	Levelling Layer
30	-	Layer	4	Made ground
31	-	Layer	4	Made ground
32	-	Layer	4	Levelling Layer
33	-	Layer	5	Made ground/ rubble layer

---

34	-	Layer	6	Rubble levelling layer
35	-	Layer	6	Made ground

## APPENDIX 2: PLATES

PLATE1: Trench 1, view north-east towards modern Pit [17]



PLATE 2: Trench 2, view north-west



PLATE 3: Trench 3, view south-east with post-medieval ditch [22] in foreground



PLATE 4: Trench 4, view north-east towards ditch [21], mid-excavation





PLATE 5: Trench 4, ditch [21], north-west-facing section (2m scale)



PLATE 6: Trench 5, view south showing (from front to rear) undated ditch [11], pit [13] and pit [15]



PLATE 7: Trench 6, view south-east towards collapsed modern brick soakaway/ drain



## APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-136050	
Project details	
Project name	Evaluation at The Blue Lion, 2 Horningsea Road, Fen Ditton, Cambridgeshire
Short description of the project	Six evaluation trenches excavated ahead of proposed residential redevelopment of site. A large ditch deliberately filled-in with modern hardcore and compacted chalk is likely to be part of the Fleam Dyke, levelled when the public house was built in the 1950s/60s or during later landscaping of the beer garden and car park.
Project dates	Start: 10-10-2012 End: 12-10-2012
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	CHFD12 - Sitecode , ECB3897
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Monument type	DITCH Uncertain
Significant Finds	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
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	CAMBRIDGESHIRE SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE FEN DITTON The Blue Lion, 2 Horningsea Road, Fen Ditton, Cambridgeshire
Postcode	CB5 8SZ
Study area	0.39 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 4859 6023 52 0 52 13 11 N 000 10 31 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 12.00m Max: 12.60m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Project brief originator	CgMs Consulting
Project design originator	Mark Hinman
Project director/manager	Mark Hinman
Project supervisor	Tom Woolhouse
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Council
Digital Contents	"Survey"
Digital Media available	"Database"
Paper Archive	Cambridgeshire County Council



recipient	
Paper Contents	"Survey"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Evaluation at The Blue Lion, 2 Horningsea Road, Fen Ditton, Cambridgeshire.
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Woolhouse, T.
Date	2012
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Place of issue or publication	Stapleford, Cambridgeshire
Description	A4 Grey Literature Report. 21 pages. Spiral bound.
Entered by	Tom Woolhouse (TWoolhouse@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	22 October 2012

# PCA

## **PCA SOUTHERN**

UNIT 54  
BROCKLEY CROSS BUSINESS CENTRE  
96 ENDWELL ROAD  
BROCKLEY  
LONDON SE4 2PD  
TEL: 020 7732 3925 / 020 7639 9091  
FAX: 020 7639 9588  
EMAIL: [info@pre-construct.com](mailto:info@pre-construct.com)

## **PCA NORTHERN**

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

## **PCA CENTRAL**

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

## **PCA WESTERN**

6 KING ALFRED'S PLACE  
WINCHESTER  
HAMPSHIRE SO23 7DF  
TEL: 07714 134099  
EMAIL: [info.west@pre-construct.com](mailto:info.west@pre-construct.com)

