LAND AT STANESFIELD ROAD, CAMBRIDGE, CB5 8NL

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:
CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

PCA REPORT NO: R11593

SITE CODES: CSRC13

DECEMBER 2013

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Local Planning Authority:	**Cambridge City Council**
Central National Grid Reference:	**TL 4767 5904**
Site Code:	**CSRC13**
Planning Reference:	**13/0649/FUL**
Report No.	**R.11593**
Written and researched by:	**Mary-Anne Slater and Jonathan House**
	December 2013
Project Manager:	**Mark Hinman**
Commissioning Client:	**Keepmoat**

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December 2013

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Contents

Abstract

This report documents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology, on land at Stanesfield Road, Cambridge, NGR TL 4767 5904. Two 30m linear trial trenches were machine excavated, revealing widespread quarry activity, most likely relating to coprolite mining or Marl pits, dating to the 19th century.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document reports the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken at Stanesfield Road, Cambridge (Figure 1). This work was carried out on the 27/12/13.

1.2 The work was commissioned by Keepmoat in advance of proposed redevelopment of the area following the demolition of existing buildings on the land. The site is located within a residential area of modern/post-war housing and comprises an area of predominantly unbuilt land enclosed on four sides by the back gardens of properties fronting Stanesfield Road, Rawlyn Road, Thornleye Road and Gerard Road. The site was occupied by a single hut type building (Scout hut).

1.3 The site is centred on OS National Grid Reference TL 4766 5903 and lies to the west of Cambridge City Airport and the south of Newmarket Road.

1.4 A written scheme of investigation (WSI) for an archaeological evaluation within the proposed development area was prepared by Mark Hinman of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. (October 2013) in response to a brief issued by Dan McConnell of Cambridgeshire County Council's Historic Environment Team (September 2013, Planning Application 13/0649/FUL).

1.5 The brief highlighted that archaeological investigation directly north of the site revealed human burials possibly dating from the Roman/Saxon periods (HER MCB16936) and it is thought that these burials may extend into the current development area.

1.6 The desk-based assessment has established that the site of Stanesfield Road was open agricultural land since the medieval period and until it was developed as part of the Ditton Fields Housing Estate during the 1930s onwards.

1.7 The work reported upon here was designed to contribute to an understanding of the character, condition, date and extent of any archaeological remains within the development area, and to provide a comprehensive appraisal of the significance of any remains within a local, regional and national context as appropriate.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 The underlying bedrock of the proposed site comprises a grey chalk bedrock. In the south-east parishes of the district the chalk is overlain, in parts, by glacial boulder clay, deposited by the retreating glaciers at the end of the last ice age.

2.2 The soils of the general area are of the Milton association (SSEW 1983). This consists of deep permeable calcareous fine loamy soils, often affected by groundwater. The area of the PDA has, since the 1950s, been part of a large housing development; accordingly little other information on the soil types is available.

2.3 The site lies on lower and intermediate river terrace gravels along the lower southern slopes of the Cam river valley and its tributary Coldham Brook to the east of Cambridge. The topography is generally flat, gradually sloping to the west with Ordnance Survey spot heights of 16m OD in the general area of the PDA.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Cambridgeshire County Council (henceforth CCC) maintains a database of known sites of archaeological or historical significance known as an Historic Environment Record (HER). Numerous HER records exist for the area surrounding the current site and the most significant are summarised below. The full set of results from the HER search are detailed in the desk-based assessment (Garwood 2013).

3.2 Evidence for prehistoric activity includes Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic occupation within the immediate area of the PDA, particularly to the north and west, Bronze Age cremation burials to the west of the site and extensive Iron Age settlement to the north and east of the site.

3.3 Roman occupation of the general area was on a considerable scale. The town of Dvroliponte (later known as Cambridge) lies only 2.5km to the west of the site and other smaller Roman settlements lie nearby. The majority of the entries in the Cambridge HER within the study area relate to chance finds, and only a single site has been uncovered during archaeological investigation (CB 14647, site 22).

3.4 The Anglo-Saxon period is well represented, with metalwork, pottery, inhumations and ditches found in the immediate area of the PDA, particularly along Peverel and Barnwell Road.

3.5 During the medieval period the general character of the area was agricultural. This is supported by the lack of medieval finds or events close to the site. Most medieval events are focused within or around the village of Fen Ditton, which lies some distance to the north of the PDA.

3.6 Taken together, this previous work suggested that the current site had low to moderate potential to contain archaeological remains.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

4.1 The archaeological specification for this site stated that two 35m linear trial trenches were to be excavated within unbuilt areas outside the footprint of the former building on the site.

4.2 The trenching was carried out under archaeological supervision using a JCB type mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket. Topsoil and subsoil deposits were removed in spits down to the level of the undisturbed natural geological deposits where potential archaeological features could be observed and recorded. Stripped topsoil and subsoil were stored separately for later reinstatement.

4.3 Heights above ordnance datum (m OD), and the locations of archaeological features and interventions were recorded using a Leica 1200 GPS rover unit.

4.4 Deposits or the removal of deposits judged by the excavating archaeologist to constitute individual events were each assigned a context numbers and recorded on individual pre-printed forms. Archaeological events recognised by the deposition of material are signified in this report by round brackets (thus), whilst events constituting the removal of deposits are referred to here as 'cuts' and signified by square brackets [thus]. The record numbers assigned to cuts and deposits are entirely arbitrary and in no way reflect the chronological order in which events took place. Artefacts recovered during excavation were assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved.

4.5 Metal detecting was carried out during the stripping operation and archaeological features and spoil were scanned.

4.6 High resolution digital photographs were taken throughout the fieldwork (see Plates 1-4), and were used to keep a record of the evaluation.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Two linear trial trenches were excavated within the development area, a Tree Protection Order at the southern end of the site necessitated adjustments to the trench locations. The trenches were joined forming an 'L' shape, Trench 1 ran on a north-east, south-west alignment, and Trench 2 extended from the southern end of Trench 1 on a south-east, north-west alignment. Both trenches were dominated by widespread quarry activity.

5.2 The quarry activity was tested using machine excavated slots, a machine sondage was excavated at the northern end of Trench 1 [110]. The test hole revealed three layers of backfill within the quarry, with a topsoil (100) sealing the deposits, measuring 0.2m in thickness. The uppermost quarry deposit (102) was a light yellowish grey, silty clay, and measured 0.18m in thickness. The next deposit in the sequence (103), was a mid brownish grey, silty clay, which measured 0.38m in depth. Burnt materials and charcoal were present within the fill, this appeared to be in the form of a deposit, rather than burning in-situ. The final deposit (104) was a mid greyish yellow, silty clay, the deposit was excavated to a depth of 0.12m, although the full depth of the deposit was not achieved. Occasional bands of intact natural deposits within the trench suggested some of the quarry activity occurred in north-south running wide strips.

5.3 A further sondage was located at the northern end of Trench 2 and was excavated to the base of the quarry deposits. The quarry activity at this location [109] was sealed by topsoil (100) measuring 0.16m, and a thin subsoil measuring 0.09m. A total of four fills were encountered, the uppermost fill (105) was a mid brownish grey, silty clay. Below fill (105), was a light bluish grey, clay deposit (106). The clay deposit sealed fill (107) a dark bluish grey, silty clay; the basal deposit was a mid yellowish grey, silty clay (108).

5.4 The southern half of Trench 2 appeared to contain a single large pit [111], two fills were encountered, surviving below a topsoil measuring 0.15m, and a subsoil of 0.13m. The uppermost of the two fills was a light bluish grey, silty clay, measuring 0.22m in depth. The basal deposit measured 0.32m and was a dark greyish brown, clayey silt.

5.5 Small quantities of finds were recovered from the machine slots, as well as limited hand excavation. The finds recovered from the quarry backfills included small fragments of pot and clay pipe, as well as brick and tile, the finds were consistent with a late post medieval date.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The trenches displayed widespread mining activity, consisting of large, wide, shallow pits, a narrow length of relatively undisturbed band of natural deposits tentatively suggests some of the mining may have occurred in wide strips running on a north-south alignment. Coprolite mining and Marl pits are a known common practice within the Cambridge area and its environs, a close example recorded at Coldhams Common (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (HER 05067a). The practice of this type of quarry activity was widespread during the 19th Century, which is consistent with the finds material seen within the quarrying backfills.

6.2 No evidence was seen for earlier activity on the site, taking into account the widespread truncation, no earlier residual finds were present in the disturbed soils or in the limited areas relatively undisturbed by the quarry activity.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PCA would like to thank Keepmoat for funding and commissioning the works. The site was staffed by Mary-Anne Slater and Jonathan House, the project was managed by Mark Hinman. Dan McConnell of Cambridgeshire County Council's Historic Environment Team monitored the site.

8 REFERENCES

8.1 Garwood, A. 2013. Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment Stanesfield Road, Cambridge PCA Report: 11424

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Figure 1
Site Location
1:20,000 at A4

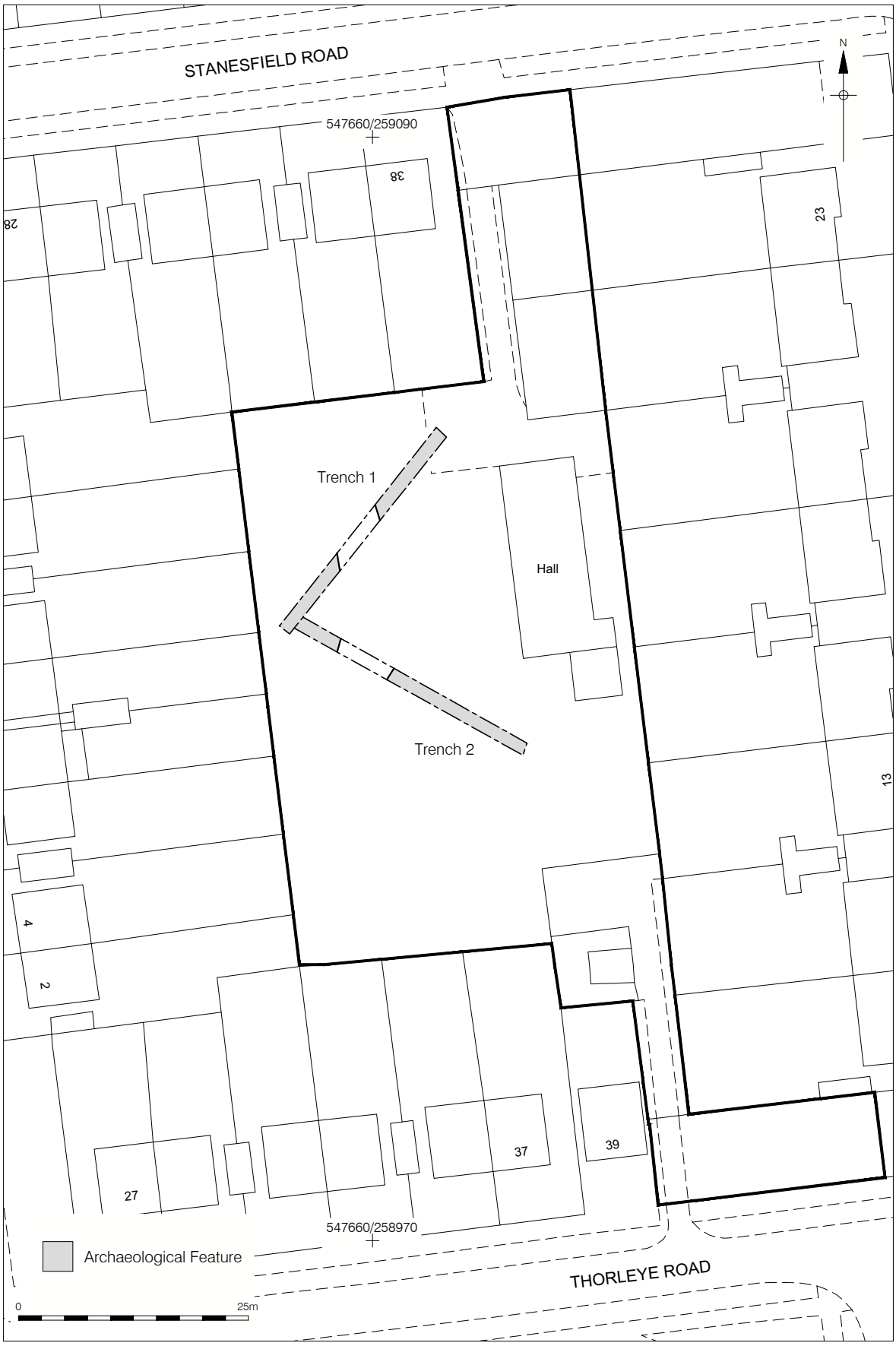

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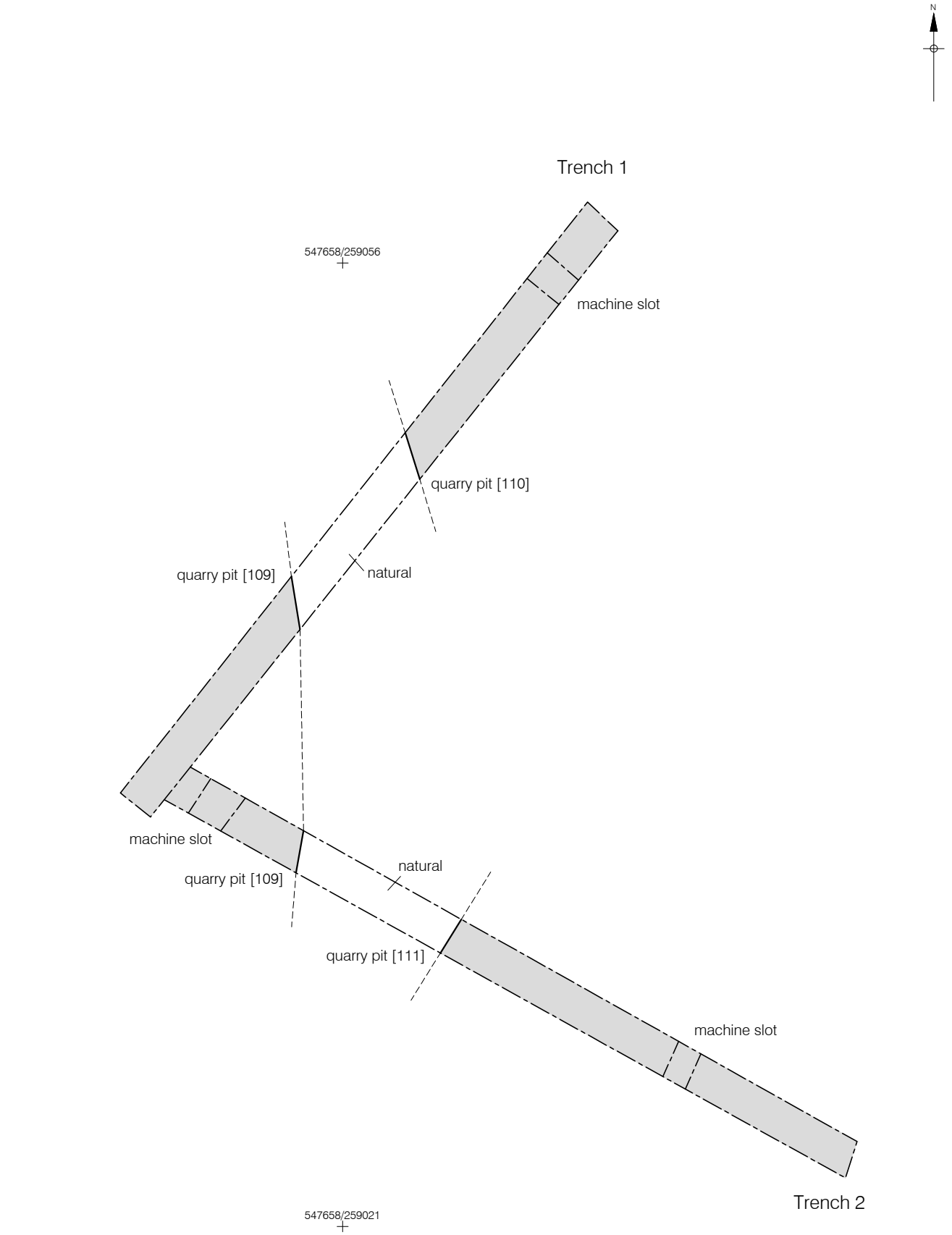
Figure 2
Trench Locations
1:625 at A4



0 10m

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

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Context No.	Cut	Type	Description	Finds?
100	-	Layer	Topsoil	-
101	-	Layer	Subsoil	-
102	110	Pit	Fill of Quarry	-
103	110	Pit	Fill of Quarry	Pot (5g), Clay Pipe (4g)
104	110	Pit	Fill of Quarry	-
105	109	Pit	Fill of Quarry	Pot (49g), Fe Nails (18g), C.B.M.(22g)
106	109	Pit	Fill of Quarry	-
107	109	Pit	Fill of Quarry	-
108	109	Pit	Fill of Quarry	-
109	-	Pit	Cut of Quarry Pit	-
110	-	Pit	Cut of Quarry Pit	-
111	-	Pit	Cut of Quarry Pit	-
112	111	Pit	Fill of Quarry	-
113	111	Pit	Fill of Quarry	C.B.M.(1kg)

APPENDIX 2: PLATES

Plate 1. Shot of Trench 1, taken from the north-east.

Plate 2. Sondage at north-eastern end of Trench 1, showing deposits.

Plate 3. Sondage at north-west end of Trench 2, showing deposits.

Plate 4. Shot of Trench 2, showing quarry backfills, taken from north-west.

APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

9 OASIS ID: preconst1-167317

Project details

Project name	LAND AT STANESFIELD ROAD, CAMBRIDGE, CB5 8NL
Short description of the project	This report documents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology, on land at Stanesfield Road, Cambridge, NGR TL 4767 5904. Two 30m linear trial trenches were machine excavated, revealing widespread quarry activity, most likely relating to coprolite mining or Marl pits, dating to the 19th century.
Project dates	Start: 27-12-2013 End: 27-12-2013
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	CSRC13 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 14 - Recreational usage
Monument type	QUARRY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POT Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	Pre-application

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE CAMBRIDGE CAMBRIDGE LAND AT STANESFIELD ROAD, CAMBRIDGE, CB5 8NL
Postcode	CB5 8NL
Study area	2425.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 4767 5904 52 0 52 12 33 N 000 09 41 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown

Height OD / Depth	Min: 16.00m Max: 17.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Dan McConnell
Project design originator	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project director/manager	Mark Hinman
Project supervisor	Jonathan House
Type of sponsor/funding body	Building contractor
Name of sponsor/funding body	Keepmoat

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store
Physical Archive ID	CSRC13
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store
Digital Archive ID	CSRC13
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store
Paper Archive ID	CSRC13
Paper Contents	"Survey"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Plan","Report","Section"

Entered by	Jonathan House (JHouse@pre-construct.com)
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