

**LAND AT NO. 5 WOOD STREET,
HUNTINGDON PE29 3QF
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION**

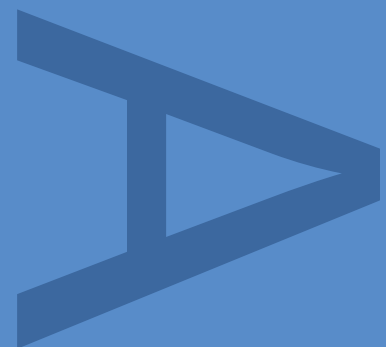
EVALUATION REPORT

**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:
CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

PCA REPORT NO: R11605

SITE CODE, CWSH13

JANUARY 2014



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

LAND AT NO. 5 WOOD STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3QF

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Local Planning Authority: Huntingdonshire District Council

Central National Grid Reference: TL 2415 7167

Site Code: CWSH13

Planning Reference: 13/00413/FUL

Report No. R11605

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Report Date: January 2014

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Abstract

This report documents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land adjacent to No. 5 Wood Street, Huntingdon, NGR TL 2415 7167. A single 20m linear trial trench was machine-excavated within the footprint of a proposed new building. The topsoil was removed, revealing a small number of late post-medieval features including a refuse pit. A subsoil deposit was then also removed by machine excavation; this sealed three early medieval rubbish pits dating to the late 11th to mid 12th century. Residual late Saxon pottery was also present in the pits. These features represent 'backyard' activity to the rear of medieval buildings located along the street frontages.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document reports the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken on land at No. 5 Wood Street, Huntingdon (Figure 1). This work was carried out on the 7/12/13.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Cooper Construction Services Ltd. in advance of proposed redevelopment of the area following the site clearance. The site is located within the town of Huntingdon on a plot of predominantly undeveloped land enclosed by properties on three sides, with access to the road on the north-western side, and the church of St Mary forming the remainder of the western boundary. The plot forms part of the former church warden's property, with an associated church warden's house located at the southern corner of the development area. The site is centred on OS National Grid Reference TL 2415 7167.
- 1.3 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. (November 2013) in response to a brief issued by Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council's Historic Environment Team (October 2013, Planning Application 13/00413/FUL).
- 1.4 The brief highlighted the high archaeological potential of the site, observing the location of the site within the medieval core of the town, and its proximity to the medieval parish church of St Mary.
- 1.5 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 site comprises grey chalk. In the south-eastern parishes of the district the chalk is overlain, in parts, by glacial boulder clay, deposited by retreating glaciers.
- 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. Soils in the built-up area of the town are likely to have been considerably altered by past human activity.
- 2.3 The site is located on relatively low-lying ground close to the north side of the river Great Ouse.

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 the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (HER). Numerous HER records exist for the area surrounding the current site and the most significant are summarised below.
- 3.2 The site is situated in the medieval core of Huntingdon, adjacent to the medieval parish church of St Mary (HER 04248). Archaeological investigations on adjacent sites have found extensive evidence for the medieval development of the town. Prior to evaluation, consideration of the site's location close to the northern banks of the river Great Ouse also suggested significant potential for multi-period occupation, industrial activity and the survival of waterlogged archaeological and environmental deposits.
- 3.3 The proposed development lies within the curtilage of No. 5 Wood Street, a Grade II Listed, brick-fronted building believed to date from the mid 17th century. The site is situated along Wood Street and lies within the historic core of the town and the Conservation Area. Thought to have been in the land ownership of the Diocese, the cottage is sited adjacent to St Mary's Church, a Grade I Listed building which dates from the 12th century, with significant additions in the 13th, 14th and 17th centuries. The stone piers, gates and graveyard wall are also designated heritage assets.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The archaeological specification for the site stated that a single 20m linear trial trench was to be excavated within the footprint of the proposed new building.
- 4.2 The trenching was carried out under archaeological supervision using a JCB-type mechanical excavator fitted with a 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), trench locations, and the locations of archaeological features and interventions were recorded using a Leica 1200 GPS Smartrover. The trench and archaeological features were also manually planned at a scale of 1:50.
- 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 1-2), and were used to keep a record of the evaluation.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 A single 20m linear trial trench was excavated; the trench was aligned approximately north to south (Figure 2; Plate 1). The trench contained topsoil measuring 0.25m deep (100) and a subsoil layer 0.44m deep (101).
- 5.2 Three pits were sealed below the subsoil (Figure 3; Plate 2). The pits: [105], [107] and [109] were located centrally within the trench. Pit [107] and Pit [109] were intercutting, with [109] seen to be the earlier of the two pits. Pit [109] had near-vertical sides and appeared circular in plan, although the full extent of the feature was not within the trench. The feature was not bottomed due to safety considerations but was at least 0.54m deep (excavation ceased at a total depth of 1.57m below the current ground surface). Based on its steep sides and apparent shape in plan, the pit may have been a well, although no evidence for a lining was seen. The feature contained a single homogenous backfill (110), consisting of dark greyish-brown sandy silt, which contained early medieval (late 11th – mid 12th century) pottery (see Sudds, Section 6.1). Pit [109] was truncated by Pit [107], which had near-vertical sides and a wide, flat base. The pit extended outside of the trench but appeared to be circular in plan, with a diameter of 2.65m and a depth of 0.25m. The pit contained a single homogenous backfill (108), which was similar in composition, and contained a comparable finds assemblage to Pit [109] fill (110), though it was firmer and more compact in consistency.
- 5.3 The third pit [105] was separated from the previously-described pits, although again contained similar finds and a single homogenous fill (106). The pit also appeared to be circular in plan, but extended westwards beyond the trench edge. The pit measured at least 1.05m in width and extended to a depth of 0.28m from the surface of the natural geology. The cut had a well-defined, flat base, with steep sides.
- 5.4 A number of late post-medieval features were seen, all of which were cut through the subsoil deposit (101). An elongated pit was excavated [111]. A second pit in the north of the trench was partially excavated during machining; the feature did not survive below the subsoil but contained a large assemblage of finds. The finds date to the late 19th to early 20th century and comprise large quantities of glass and domestic pottery, including a Marmalade jar printed with a date of 1878. These post-medieval finds have not been retained.
- 5.5 In addition to probable post-Norman-Conquest pottery such as Huntingdon Early Medieval Ware, the pits contained residual late Saxon jar, jug and bowl sherds in a range of fabrics including Thetford Ware, St Neots Ware, and a few sherds of Stamford Ware (see Sudds, Section 6.1). These finds indicate pre-Conquest domestic occupation in the vicinity, with the Stamford Ware sherds suggesting an element of high-status activity.

6 FINDS

6.1 Late Saxon to Early Medieval Pottery

By Berni Sudds

Introduction

- 6.1.1 A small assemblage of pottery was recovered from the evaluation at Wood Street, Huntingdon, totalling 25 sherds weighing 159g. The fabric types identified range in date from the late Saxon to early medieval period (Table 1) but the presence of Huntingdonshire Early Medieval Ware in all deposits would indicate the assemblage is likely to date from the later 11th to 12th century.
- 6.1.2 The condition of the pottery is poor to moderate, with an average sherd weight of just over 6g and notable abrasion.

Methodology

- 6.1.3 The pottery from site has been provisionally identified and catalogued following the Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics (MPRG 2001). The fabrics were examined under x20 magnification and recorded using a system of mnemonic codes based on common name (Table 1). These comply with those used previously in the town, based loosely on the pottery codes used by Museum of London Archaeology but incorporating locally-produced wares (Fletcher 2008). The forms were identified in accordance with the Medieval Pottery Research Group's guide to the classification of forms (MPRG 1998). A table of the contexts containing pottery, cataloguing fabric type, sherd count, weight, form and suggested spot date appears below (Table 2).

The pottery types

- 6.1.4 The pottery types identified on site are listed chronologically, below, in Table 1. The assemblage is comprised of local and regionally-produced coarsewares and finewares commonly identified in the town and broader region.
- 6.1.5 Ten sherds of St Neots-type ware were identified, a distinctive shelly-ware synonymous with the Jurassic geology of the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire region (Hunter 1979). The widespread and ubiquitous occurrence of the ware would indicate a number of dispersed production sites across the region. Although dating from the late 9th to 12th century, the tradition was most prevalent during the 10th and 11th centuries. A handful of sherds of the two other widely-distributed regional Saxo-Norman industries were also identified, namely Grimston-Thetford ware and Stamford ware.

Fabric code	Common name	Date range	Total sherd count	Total weight (g)
NEOT	St Neots-type ware	Mid 9 th – Mid 12 th century	10	56
GTHET	Grimston-Thetford ware	Mid 9 th – Mid 12 th century	1	6
STAM	Stamford-type ware	Late 9 th – 12 th century	3	16
HUNEMW (+CALC)	Early medieval sandy ware	Late 11 th – 12 th century	11	81

Table 1: The pottery types

6.1.6 The remaining fabric, relatively well-represented in the assemblage, is a handmade sandy coarseware, a few examples also including sparse calcareous inclusions. These may represent examples of Huntingdonshire Early Medieval Ware (HUNEMW), the local medieval coarseware tradition, potentially produced in the town itself (Fletcher 2008, 9). HUNEMW is thought to be post-Conquest in date.

Forms

6.1.7 A limited range of forms were identified, typical of the period, comprising coarseware jars and bowls and fineware jugs. The wheel-made St Neots-type ware is present as jars, with one possible bowl rim identified. The local HUNEMW is similarly comprised of jars, one with a simple rounded rim, and a spouted bowl. Evidence of residue and sooting on the coarsewares confirms that some of the vessels are likely to have been used for cooking.

6.1.8 The Stamford ware forms include the typical glazed jugs but also one unglazed coarseware form.

Distribution

6.1.9 The pottery was recovered from the fills of three separate features but the presence of HUNEMW in each would indicate that deposition occurred post-Conquest, and would suggest the features are broadly contemporary.

Context	Fabric code	sherd count	Weight	Forms	Context spot date
106	NEOT	1	6	Sooted	Late 11 th – Mid 12 th century
	STAM	1	6	Jug (incised horizontal line decoration, pale yellow glaze)	
	HUNEMW	4	43	Jar and spouted bowl, some sooting	

108	NEOT	5	29	Jar, everted rim but no rim edge, 1x burnt.	Late 11 th – Mid 12 th century
	STAM	2	10	1x glazed	
	HUNEMW	1	8		
	HUNEMW+ CALC	4	14	Some residue and sooting	
110	NEOT	4	21	Jars, possible bowl	Late 11 th – Mid 12 th century
	GTHET	1	6		
	HUNEMW	1	11		
	HUNEMW+ CALC	1	5		

Table 2: The pottery by context and fabric type

Potential and recommendations

- 6.1.10 The assemblage recovered is well paralleled in the town but is of some interest in further confirming and characterising the date and nature of medieval activity in Huntingdon. Unfortunately, given the small quantity the material provides little more than dating evidence for the site and consequently merits no further analysis. Should any be undertaken, however, this should include confirmation of the provisional fabric identification of the local coarsewares and comparison with other local assemblages.

7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Despite the central location of the site within the core of medieval Huntingdon, the archaeological remains in the trial trench were fairly limited.
- 7.2 The date and character of the remains is typical in the wider context of the town. Both the nature of the pitting activity and the dating material from the fills of the pits is consistent with other sites excavated in the central historic core of the town, and are representative of Huntingdon's flourishing economic and urban development during the early medieval period (late 11th – 12th centuries). Medieval Huntingdon is known to have declined after this period. However, the absence of features and finds from later than the 13th century may be a result of additional factors, particularly given the location of the site within the town's historic core which is likely to have continued to have seen occupation.
- 7.3 The proximity of the site to St Mary's Church and the known later association of the plot with the church may have been contributing factors to the limited use of the site, with access to the plot being restricted by the church. This could account for the lack of late medieval activity and the reduced level of post-medieval activity seen within the site, in comparison to other sites within the town. However, the limited number and date range of the features may simply be a reflection of the small size of the excavated area.
- 7.4 The trenches contained no evidence for tenement boundaries. However, it is possible that the development area was located at the furthest end of tenements extending back from the street frontage, from properties originally fronting onto Hartford Road, or possible later properties fronting Ingram Street. Structural evidence of any date was not seen on the site; it is therefore likely that the site has historically been mainly used for backyard activity and small-scale cultivation, causing archaeological remains to be slight.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PCA would like to thank Cooper Construction Services Ltd. for funding and commissioning the works. The evaluation was conducted by Jonathan House and the project was managed by Mark Hinman. Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council's Historic Environment Team monitored the site.

9 REFERENCES

Fletcher, C. 2008 'Appendix 1: the pottery' in J. House *Land at Stukeley Road, Huntingdon; Archaeological Evaluation Report*. Oxford Archaeology East Report No.1038

Hunter, R. 1979 'St Neots Type Ware' in J.H. Williams *St Peters Street, Northampton: Excavations 1973-1976*. Northampton Development Corporation, 230-240

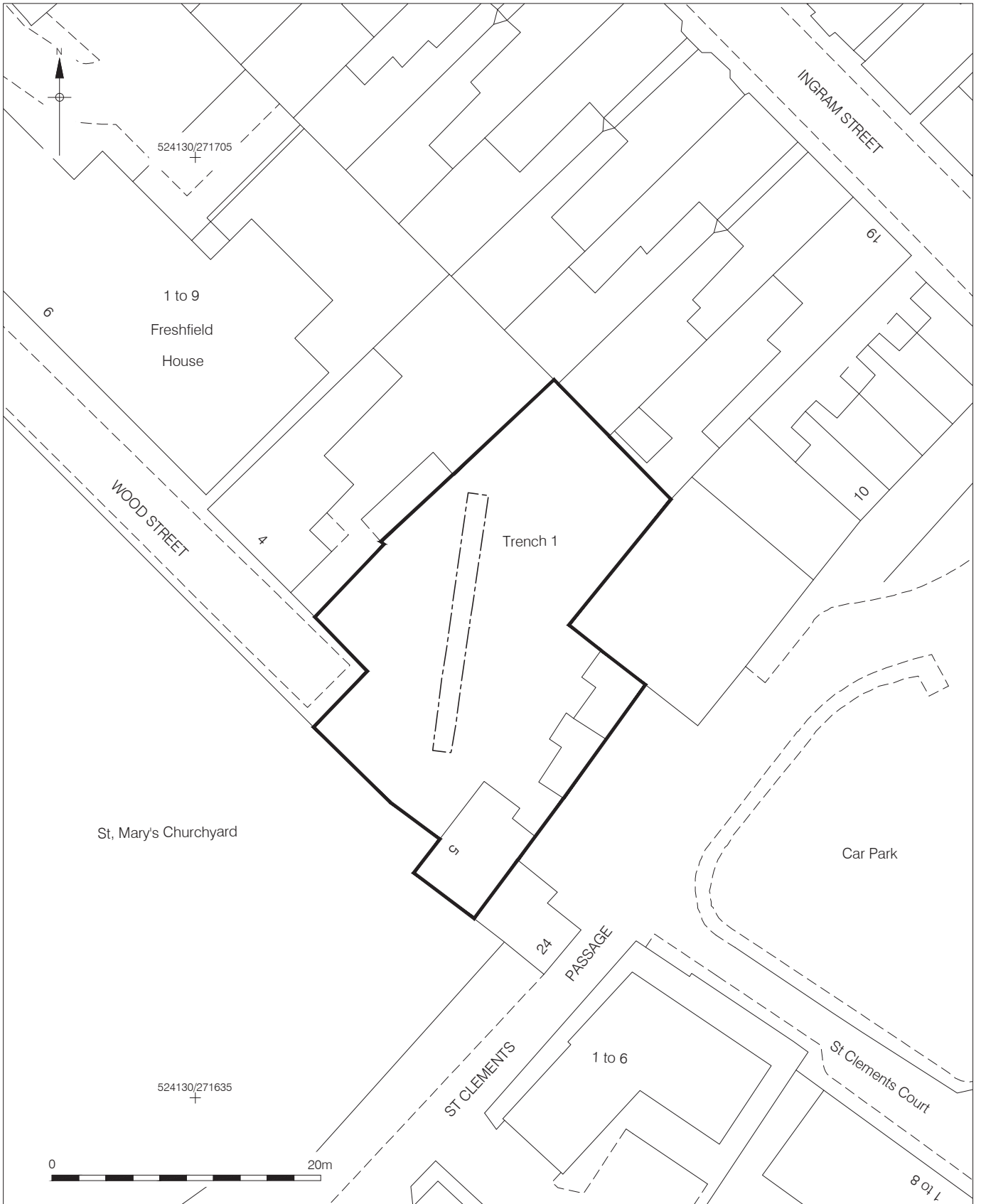
MPRG 1998 *A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms*. Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper No.1

MPRG 2001 *Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics*. Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper No.2



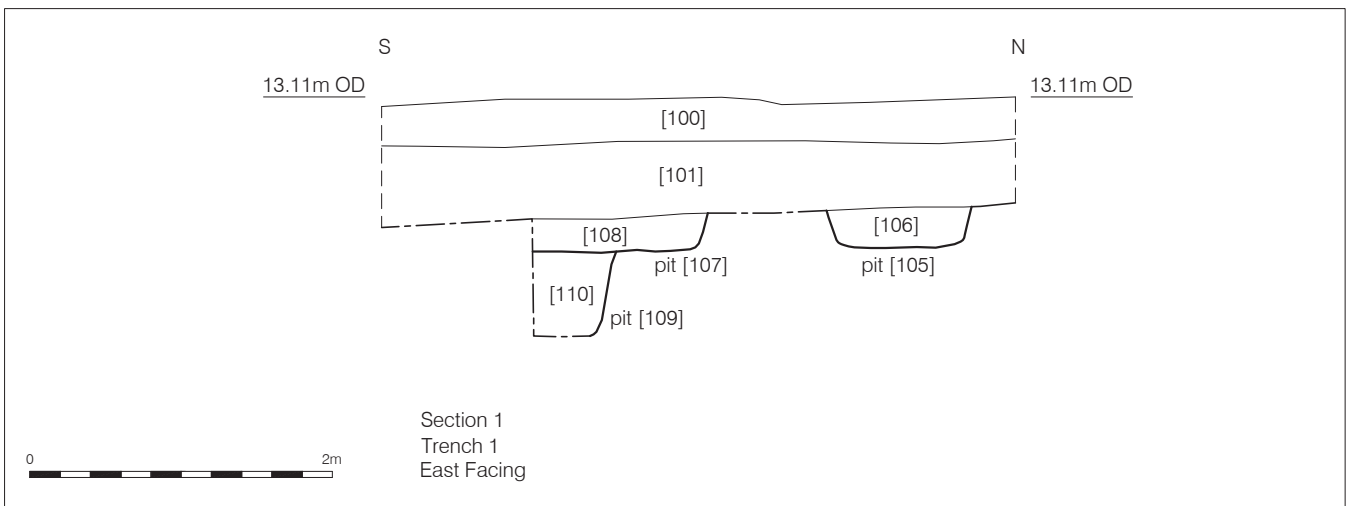
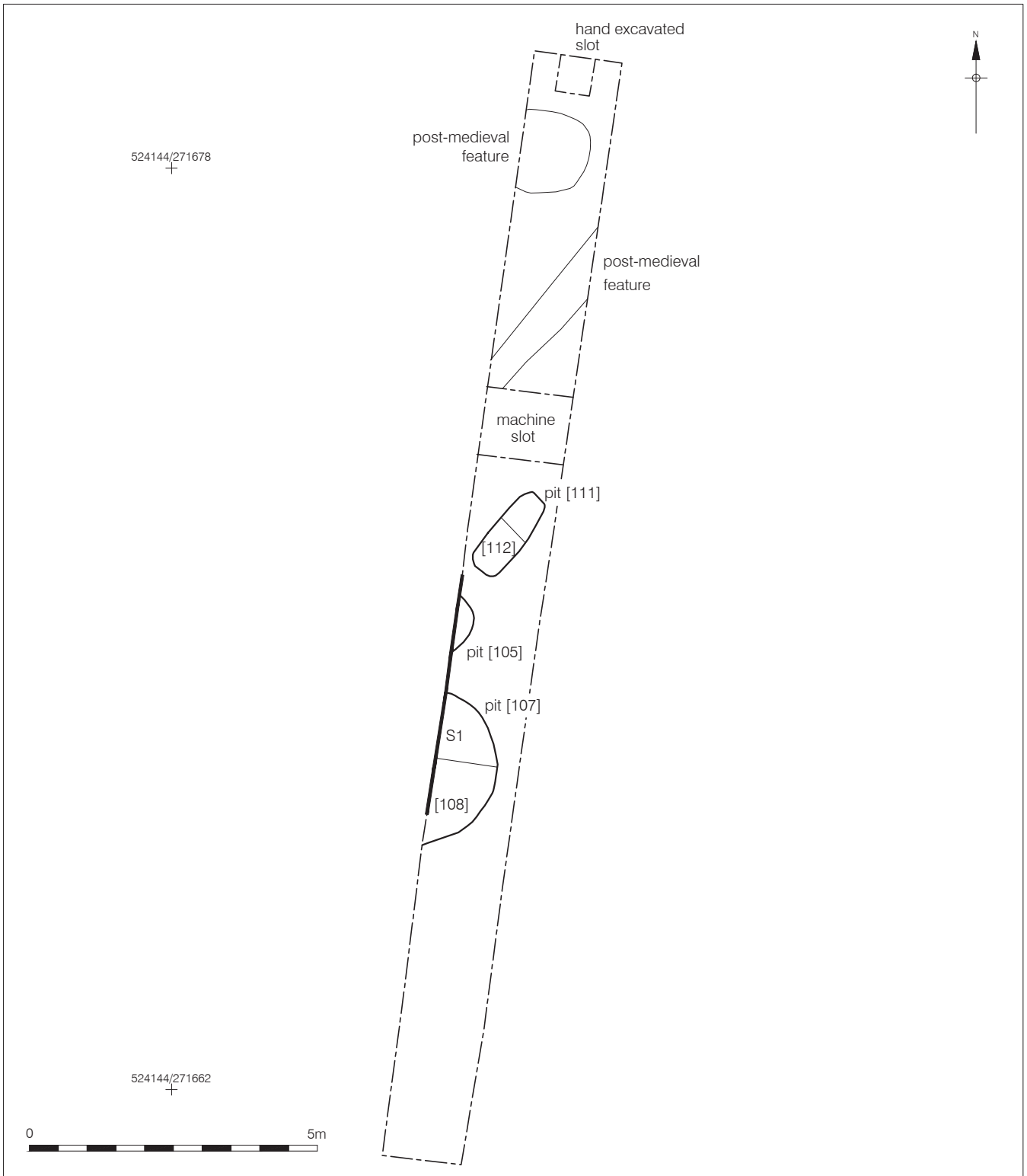
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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:25,000 at A4



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Figure 2
 Trench Location
 1:400 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), CBM(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	CBM(1kg)

APPENDIX 2: PLATES



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



Plate 2. Shot of Pits [105], [107], and [109], taken from north-east.

APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-168783

Project details

Project name LAND AT NO. 5 WOOD STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3QF

Short description of the project This report documents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology, on land at 5 Wood Street, Huntingdon, NGR TL 2415 7167. A single 20m linear trial trench was machine excavated. The topsoil was removed revealing a small number of late post medieval features, including a small refuse pit. A subsoil deposit was also removed by machine excavation, the subsoil deposit sealed a small number of medieval pits, a total of three pits were identified dating late 11th to mid 12th century.

Project dates Start: 07-12-2013 End: 07-12-2013

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project codes reference CWSH13 - Sitecode

Any associated project codes reference 13/004/13/FUL - Planning Application No.

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Conservation Area

Current Land use Residential 1 - General Residential

Monument type PIT Medieval

Significant Finds CERAMIC Medieval

Methods & "Sample Trenches"
techniques

Development type Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)

Prompt National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Position in the planning process Pre-application

Project location

Country England

Site location CAMBRIDGESHIRE HUNTINGDONSHIRE HUNTINGDON LAND AT NO. 5 WOOD STREET, HUNTINGDON

Postcode PE29 3QF
Study area 416.00 Square metres
Site coordinates TL 2415 7167 52 0 52 19 43 N 000 10 40 W Point
Lat/Long Datum Unknown
Height OD / Depth Min: 13.11m Max: 13.43m

Project creators

Name of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
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Project brief Cambridgeshire County Council
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sponsor/funding
body

Name of Cooper Construction Services Ltd.
sponsor/funding
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Project archives

Physical Archive Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store
recipient

Physical Archive ID CWSH13

Physical Contents "Animal Bones","Ceramics"

Digital Archive Cambridgeshire County Council
recipient

Digital Archive ID CWSH13

Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media "Images raster / digital photography","Text"
available

Paper Archive Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store
recipient

Paper Archive ID CWSH13

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media "Report","Section","Survey ","Plan","Context sheet","Map"
available

Project bibliography

1

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