

**NO. 21 KNIGHT STREET,
SAWBRIDGECORTH,
HERTFORDSHIRE, CM21 9AT**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL
TRENCH EVALUATION**

SEPTEMBER 2014




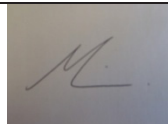
**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY
R.11657**

NO. 21 KNIGHT STREET, SAWBRIDGEWORTH,
HERTFORDSHIRE, CM21 9AT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL
TRENCH EVALUATION

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd	
Project Number	
Report Number	R11657

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Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved

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No. 21 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth:

An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation and Monitoring

Local Planning Authority: East Hertfordshire District Council

Planning Reference: 3/13/1111/FP and 3/13/2249/FP (revised)

Central National Grid Reference: TL 4842 1494

Site Code: HKS14

Report No. R.11657

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September 2014

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of a three-trench archaeological evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land at No. 21 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 4842 1494) on the 13th-14th March 2014 and subsequent one-trench archaeological evaluation and monitoring of the site on 15th May, 17th June and 7th July 2014. The archaeological work was in response to a planning condition attached to residential development. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the site.

The evaluation identified two undated pits, two ditches running east-west in Trench 3 and one large ditch in Trench 1. Both of these ditches appear to be Saxo-Norman in date. The ditches are perpendicular to Knight Street and head towards the River Stort and may represent part of Sawbridgeworths manorial boundary. The additional Trench 4 located the continuation of the two ditches in Trench 3, with the northern ditch continuing to run perpendicular to Knight Street while the southern ditch changed direction to a northwest-southeast alignment. No archaeological features were seen in Trench 2 or the monitoring of the footings for the house, garage and services of 21A Knight Street. The results of the fieldwork enhance our understanding of the medieval development of this part of Sawbridgeworth and can be characterised as being of local significance.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) on land at No. 21 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, CM21 9AT (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 4842 1494) on 13th and 14th March 2014 (Figure 1, Plates 1-2). This was followed by a further evaluation trench and archaeological monitoring of the foundation footings, service trench, soakaway and ground levelling on the 17th June and 7th July 2014 after additional instruction from Alison Tinniswood of Hertfordshire County Council's Natural, Historic & Built Environment Advisory Team.
- 1.1.2 The site lies within an area designated as Area of Archaeological Significance No. 166 in the Local Plan. This designation includes the medieval and later settlement of Sawbridgeworth and the parish church of St. Mary, which is known to have Saxon origins.
- 1.1.3 The archaeological work was commissioned by BRD Tech for Mr A. Passfield in response to an archaeological planning condition attached to the construction of two new houses together with a new garage, associated access, parking and landscaping (Planning Reference 3/13/1111/FP and 3/13/2249/FP revised).
- 1.1.4 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Adam Garwood of PCA (Garwood 2014) in response to a Brief for archaeological evaluation from Alison Tinniswood of Hertfordshire County Council's Natural, Historic & Built Environment Advisory Team (Tinniswood 2013).
- 1.1.5 The archaeological monitoring was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Mark Hinman of PCA (Hinman 2014) in response to an additional directive from Alison Tinniswood of Hertfordshire County Council.
- 1.1.6 The aim of the evaluation was to determine the location, date, extent, character, condition and quality of any archaeological remains on the site, to

assess the significance of any such remains in a local, regional, or national context, as appropriate, and to assess the potential impact of the development proposals on the site's archaeology.

- 1.1.7 Three trial trenches totalling 30m were excavated and recorded on 13th and 14th March 2014. One large ditch was revealed in Trench 1 and two undated pits and two medieval ditches were found in Trench 3. No archaeological features were present in Trench 2.
- 1.1.8 One trial trench totalling 8.5m was excavated and recorded on 17th June 2014. Two Saxon- early medieval ditches were found in Trench 4.
- 1.1.9 Archaeological monitoring of the footings for the garage, house and services for 21A Knight Street was undertaken on 15th May, 17th June and 7th July 2014, but no archaeological features were present.
- 1.1.10 This report describes the results of the evaluation and monitoring and aims to inform the design of an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy. The site archive will be deposited at Bishops Stortford Museum.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1.1 The geology of the site is Thanet Sand Formation and Lambeth Group Clay Silt and Sand, overlain by Lowestoft Formation - Diamicton (British Geological Survey 2014; Website 1). In the trial trenches, the natural geology (3) was a mid-brownish orange clay with frequent flints and moderate gravel inclusions, present at a depth of 0.50-0.81m below modern ground level.

2.1.2 Sawbridgeworth mainly occupies an area of high ground to the north, sloping down towards the Rib Valley in the south and the River Stort in the east. The site is at an elevation of between 66m and 67m above Ordnance Datum (OD), sloping down slightly to the north-east. The level of the site was presumably once more sloping to the north-east than it is now, with levels of topsoil and subsoil seen at greater depths in the east of the site. This may be due to the former use of this area for small scale garden cultivation throughout the 20th century, which saw the addition of extra topsoil in these areas.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1 The site lies in an area of known archaeological significance, designated as Area of Archaeological Significance No. 166 in the Local Plan.
- 3.1.2 The settlement at Sawbridgeworth dates from the medieval period, its historic core, in the area of Bell, Church and Knight Street, is thought to be the product of deliberate planning during the early 13th century. Accordingly the area had a high potential for archaeological activities of a medieval and post-medieval date and, based on nearby discoveries, a potential for prehistoric activity along the Stort River Valley.
- 3.1.3 Whilst no archaeological remains are known from within the site, the Sawbridgeworth Parish Tithe Map and Award of 1839 shows a large house (of unknown date) occupying the street frontage of the plots now occupied by No.'s 21 and 23 Knight Street. This building had been demolished by the later 19th century and superseded by a long narrow building built along the street frontage. This in turn was replaced in 1921 by a new house which was demolished prior to the re-development of the site.
- 3.1.4 The Sawbridgeworth Parish Tithe Map and Award of 1839 also indicates that the site formed part of a field recorded as 'Sayes Garden Field'. In 1700 this field was recorded as the site of the medieval manor of Sawbridgeworth. In addition, archaeological investigations immediately to the south of the site at the Fawbert and Barnard School identified a large ditch of probable medieval date which may be part of the medieval manorial boundary.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Evaluation

- 4.1.1 The archaeological evaluation comprised three trial trenches between 9-12m long and 1.8m wide, followed by one trial trench measuring 8.5m long and 1.8m wide (Figure 2).
- 4.1.2 Ground reduction was carried out under archaeological supervision using a 5-ton tracked 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. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by trowel as appropriate and all further excavation was undertaken manually using hand tools.
- 4.1.3 Deposits or the removal of deposits judged by the excavating archaeologist to constitute individual events were each assigned a unique record number (often referred to within British archaeology as 'context numbers') and recorded on individual pre-printed forms (Taylor and Brown 2009). Archaeological processes recognised by the deposition of material are signified in this report by round brackets (thus), while 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. All features and deposits recorded during the evaluation are listed in Appendix 2. Artefacts recovered during excavation were assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved.
- 4.1.4 High-resolution digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits, and were used to keep a record of the excavation process.

4.2 Monitoring

- 4.2.1 The areas monitored included the foundation footings for the main house and garage/studio, the service trench for the utilities, a soakaway and any

ground levelling that removed more than 0.2m of topsoil.

- 4.2.2 Ground reduction was carried out under archaeological supervision using a 5-ton tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.6m or 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.
- 4.2.3 High-resolution digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits, and were used to keep a record of the excavation process.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

5.1 Overview

Trench 1 contained a large medieval ditch (Figure 3; Plates 3 and 6) while Trench 2 was blank (Plate 4). Trench 3 contained two undated pits and two east-west orientated ditches, with the northern ditch [12] continuing through Trench 4 and Trench 1 and the southern ditch [14] continuing on a south-west orientation through Trench 4 (Figures 1, 3-5; Plates 5, 7-13).

5.2 Medieval ditch [6] (Plate 7)

A large east-west ditch [6] with moderately sloping to vertical sides and a flattish base (1.7m+ long x 3.5m+ wide x 0.9m deep) was located towards the south end of Trench 1. It contained two fills (4) and (5). Upper fill (4) consisted of moderately compacted mid-greyish brown clayey silt with occasional flints which contained one fragment of post-medieval tile. Lower fill (5) was a firm mid-greyish brown clayey silt with frequent flint and gravels which contained one sherd of mid-9th – mid-12th century pottery and 23 fragments of animal bone, weighing 93g in total.

5.3 Undated pit [8] (Plate 8)

A pit [8] with near vertical sides and a flattish base (0.91m long x 0.62m+ wide x 0.29m deep) occupied the northern part of Trench 3. It contained one fill (7), a moderately compacted mid-orangish brown silty sand with very frequent flints. There were no finds from this feature.

5.4 Undated pit [10] (Plate 9)

A pit [10] with moderately to steeply sloping sides and a flattish base (1.32m long x 1.00m+ wide x 0.40m deep) occupied the northern part of Trench 3. It contained one fill (9), a moderately compacted mottled mid-orangish greyish brown silty sand with frequent flints and gravels. There were no finds from this feature.

5.5 Ditch [12] (Plate 10)

A small east-west ditch [12] with moderately sloping sides and a flattish base (1.7m+ long x 1.34m wide x 0.37m deep) occupied the middle of Trench 3. It contained one fill (11), a moderately compacted mid-greyish brown sandy

clayey silt with frequent flints and gravels which contained one corroded iron object, most likely a horseshoe, and two fragments of animal bone weighing 14g in total.

5.6 Ditch [14] (Plate 11)

A small east-west ditch [14] with moderately to steeply sloping sides and a concave base (1.7m+ long x 0.73m wide x 0.26m deep) occupied the southern end of Trench 3. It contained one fill (13), a moderately compacted mottled mid-orangish greyish brown silty sand with frequent flints. There were no finds from this feature.

5.7 Ditch [17] (Plate 12)

A medium northwest-southeast ditch [17] with moderately sloping sides and a concave base (2.2m+ long x 1.15m wide x 0.52m deep) occupied the southern end of Trench 4. It contained one fill (16), a firmly compacted mid-greyish brown silty sand with very frequent flints, which contained one sherd of 11th-12th century pottery and a fragment of daub.

5.8 Ditch [19] (Plate 13)

A medium east-west ditch [19] with moderately to steeply sloping sides and a concave base (1.9m+ long x 1.2m wide x 0.47m deep) occupied the southern end of Trench 4. It contained one fill (18), a moderately compacted mottled mid-greyish brown sandy clayey silt with frequent flints, which contained one sherd of 5th – 9th century pottery and four fragments of animal bone, weighing 25g in total.

6 THE FINDS

The Pottery - Berni Sudds

Three sherds of pottery were recovered from site dating from the 5th to 12th century (Table 1).

Context	Description	No.	Wg	Spot date
5	St Neots-type ware	1	7	Mid 9 th – mid 12 th century
16	Early medieval sandy ware	1	10	11 th – 12 th century
18	Saxon chaff-tempered body sherd	1	13	5 th – 9 th century

Table 1: The pottery. No = Sherd count. Wg = Weight in grams.

The Saxo-Norman and early medieval pottery recovered from fills [5] and [16] represent commonly identified coarsewares in the region and can be well-paralleled. The small but fresh sherd from fill [18] is more unusual and consequently of considerable interest. The sherd is handmade and low-fired with a dark-greyish black core, a dark grey internal surface and an oxidised orange brown smoothed outer surface. The fabric is dominated by abundant coarse organic inclusions, likely grass or chaff, which although paralleled on occasion in ceramics of Iron-Age date is a distinctive feature of pottery of Early to Mid Saxon date, and most specifically of assemblages of 6th to 7th century date (Sudds, 2005 and forthcoming). Pottery of this date has rarely been identified in the county, possibly due to historic mis-identification given the similarity in firing and fabric to pre-historic material, but of the small number of spot finds to date, one has previously been made in Sawbridgeworth (Myres 1969, 104 and 110; Partridge 1989, 177).

7 DISCUSSION

- 7.1.1 The evaluation identified two undated pits [8] and [10] located in the north-west corner of the site, close to the Knight Street frontage. The pits contained no finds and may be associated with an agricultural use of the land before buildings were constructed on the site.
- 7.1.2 Two east-west ditches [12] and [14] were revealed in Trench 3 which continued east into Trench 4. Ditch [14] followed a northwest-southeast alignment in ditch slot [17] Trench 4. A fragment of 11th – 12th century early medieval sandy ware was found in fill (16) of this ditch. Ditch [12] continued east through Trench 4, ditch slot [19], and into Trench 1 in ditch slot [6]. One sherd of 5th – 9th Saxon chaff-tempered pottery was found in the fill (18) of ditch [19], while a fragment of tile from the upper fill of [6] dates to the post-medieval period and one small fragment of 9th – 12th century St. Neots-type ware pottery was found in the lower fill of [6].
- 7.1.3 The size of ditch [6] indicates that it may be associated with the large ditch found in the 1999 excavations at the Fawbert and Barnard School, immediately to the south of the site, which may have formed part of the boundary of Sawbridgeworth's manorial complex (Hunn 1999). The fragments of 5th-9th century Saxon and 9th-12th century early medieval pottery found in the length of this ditch may indicate an earlier date for the founding of Sawbridgeworth's manorial complex than previously known. Ditch [17] may also have been associated with this complex as a later boundary ditch.
- 7.1.4 However, the scarcity of finds from the site indicates that this area was not immediately close to any occupation and thus was likely to be on the periphery of the settlement.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1.1 The trial trenches revealed small-scale evidence for activity through Mid-Saxon to post-medieval periods. The scarcity of finds and the east-west boundary ditch running towards the river suggest that the main use of the site was probably agricultural throughout the medieval period.
- 8.1.2 Ditch [6] may be associated with Sawbridgeworth's manorial complex, and indicates a Saxo-Norman date, but the low density of finds suggests that the site was not immediately close to any centres of occupation until a house was built on the site by 1839.
- 8.1.3 The fieldwork has thus enhanced our understanding of the medieval and post-medieval development of this part of Sawbridgeworth. The results are of local significance.
- 8.1.4 Based on the results of the evaluation, the potential of the site to contain further significant archaeological remains is considered to be low.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

9.1.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank BRD Tech for Mr A. Passfield for commissioning the work. PCA are also grateful to Alison Tinniswood of the Natural, Historic & Built Environment Advisory Team of Hertfordshire County Council for monitoring the work. Figures accompanying this report were prepared by Jennifer Simonson of PCA's CAD Department. The pottery was analysed by Berni Sudds.

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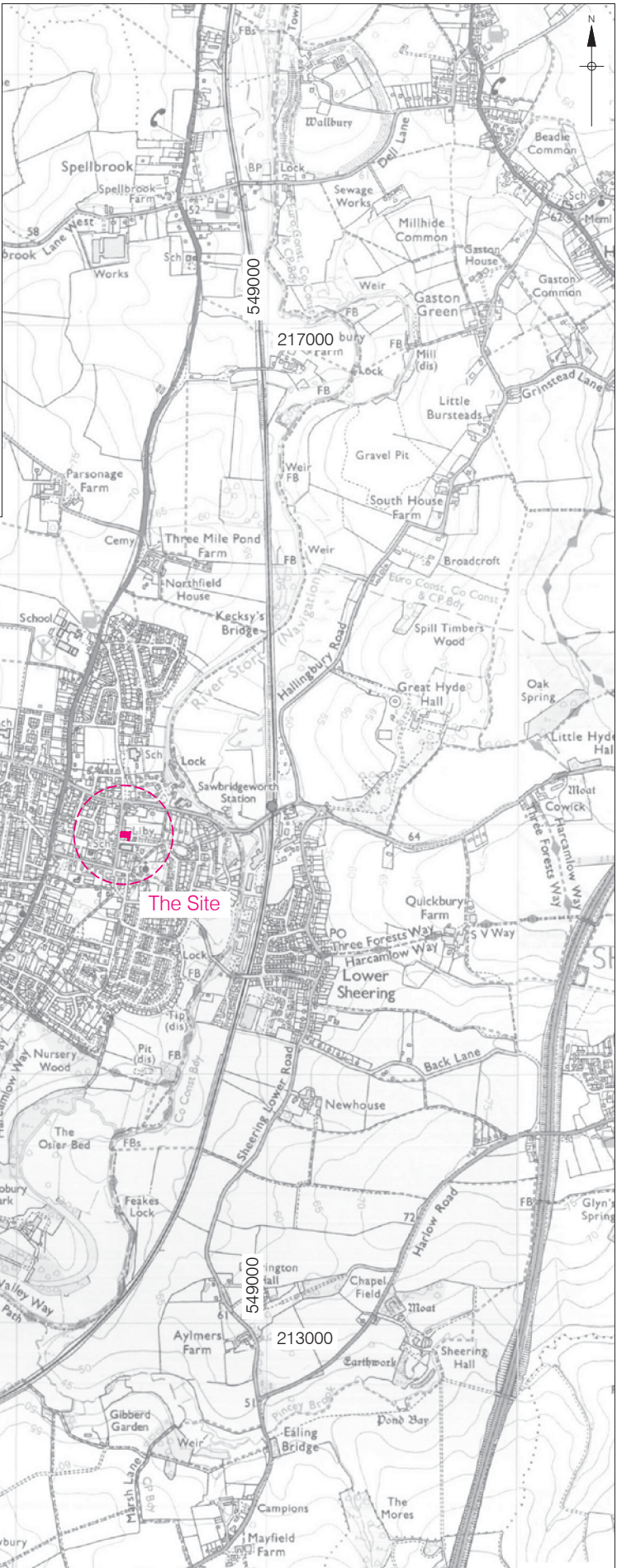
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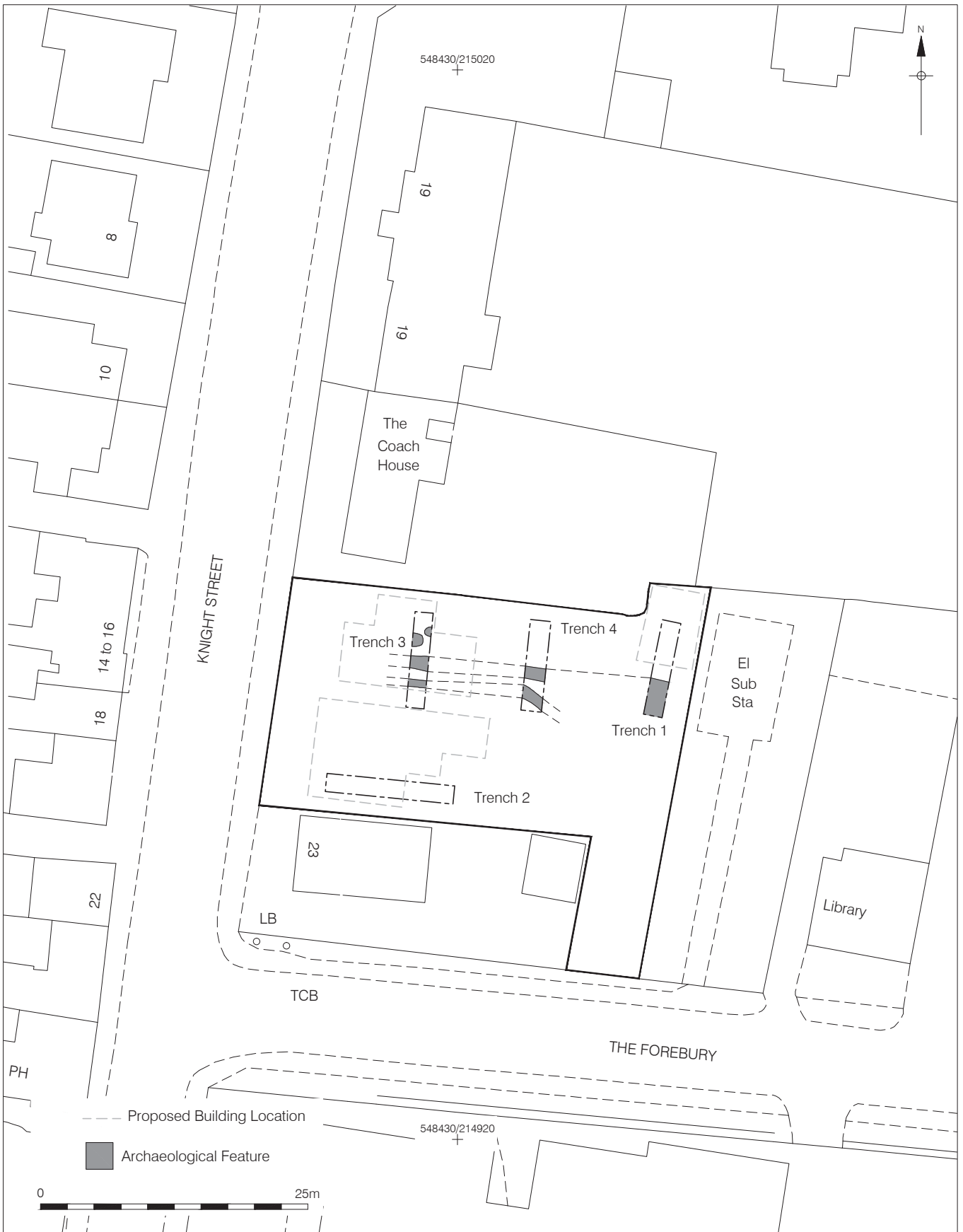
10.2 Websites

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<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html?location=IP9%203DG>.
Date accessed 11th March 2014



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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:2,000,000 & 1:25,000 at A4

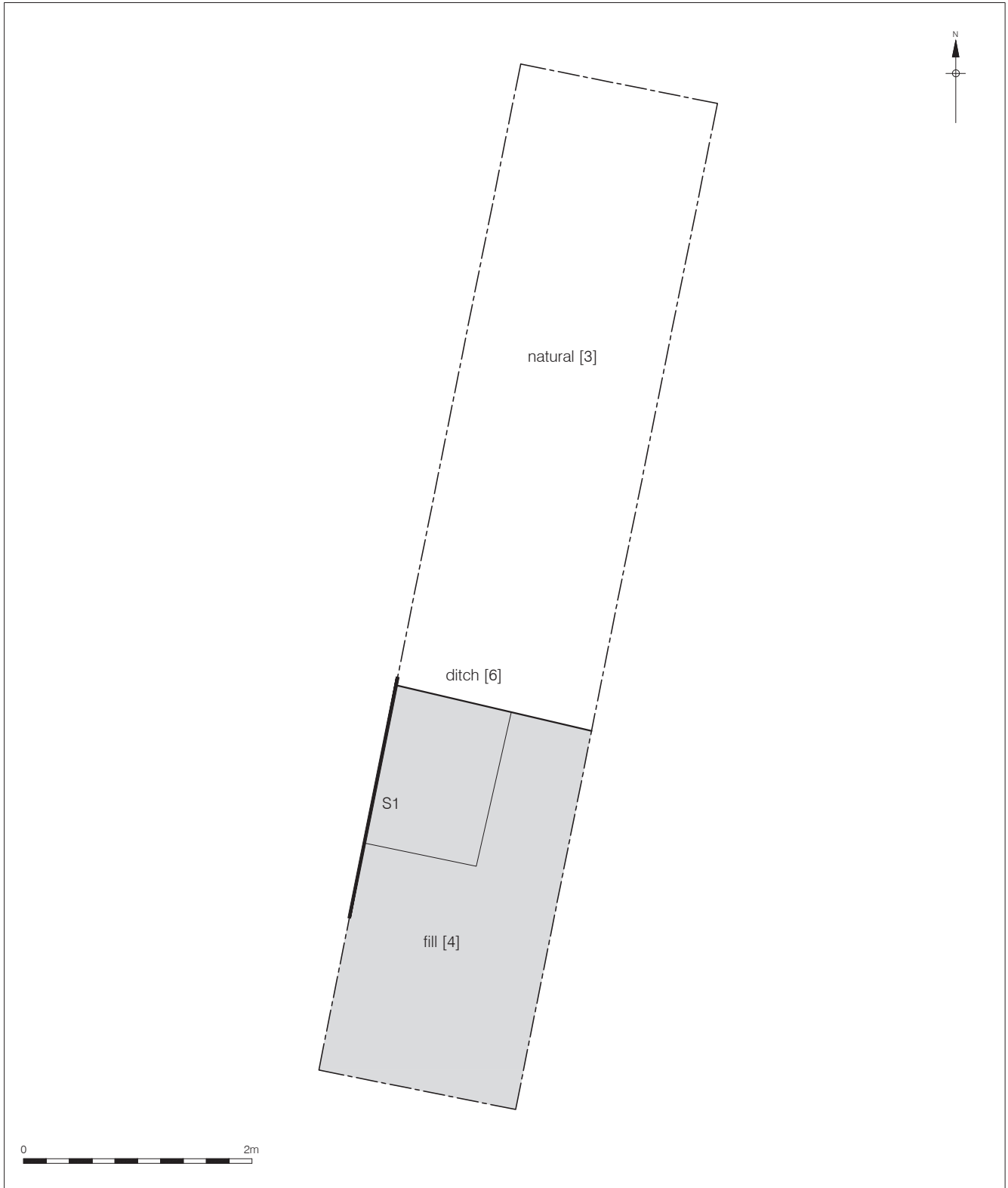


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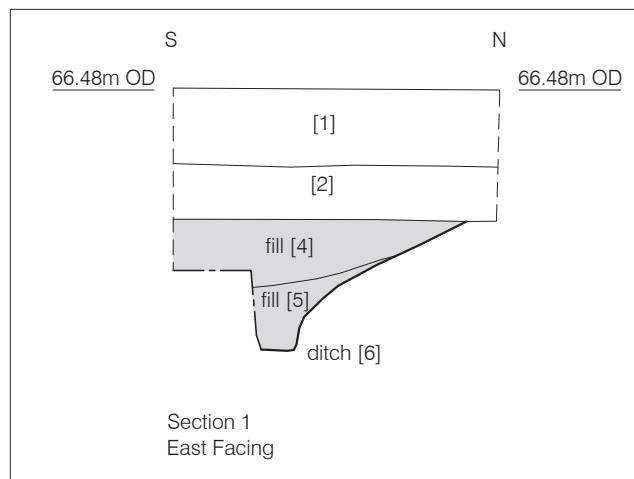
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Figure 2
Trench Location
1:500 at A4



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Section 1
East Facing

Figure 3
Trench 1 Plan & Section
1:50 at A4

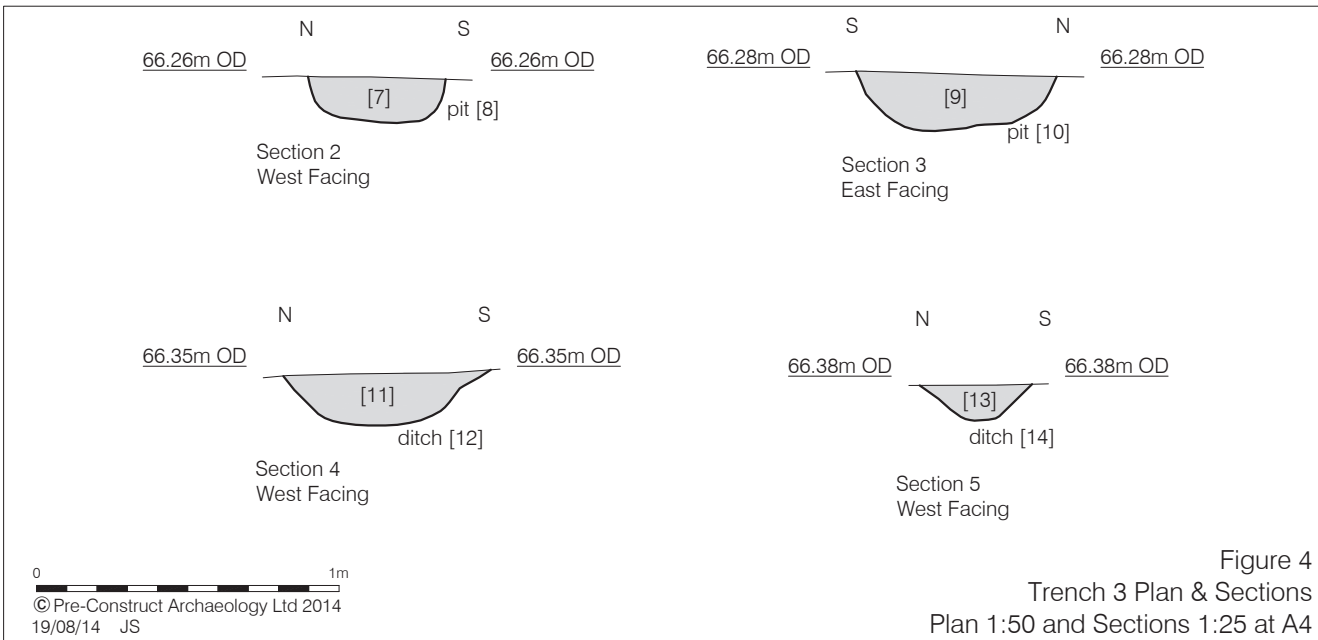


Figure 4
Trench 3 Plan & Sections
Plan 1:50 and Sections 1:25 at A4

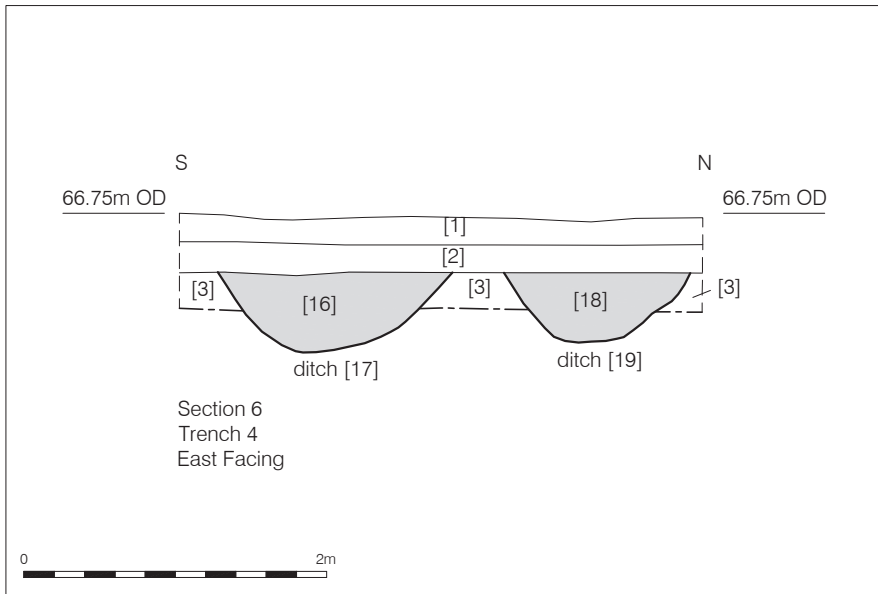
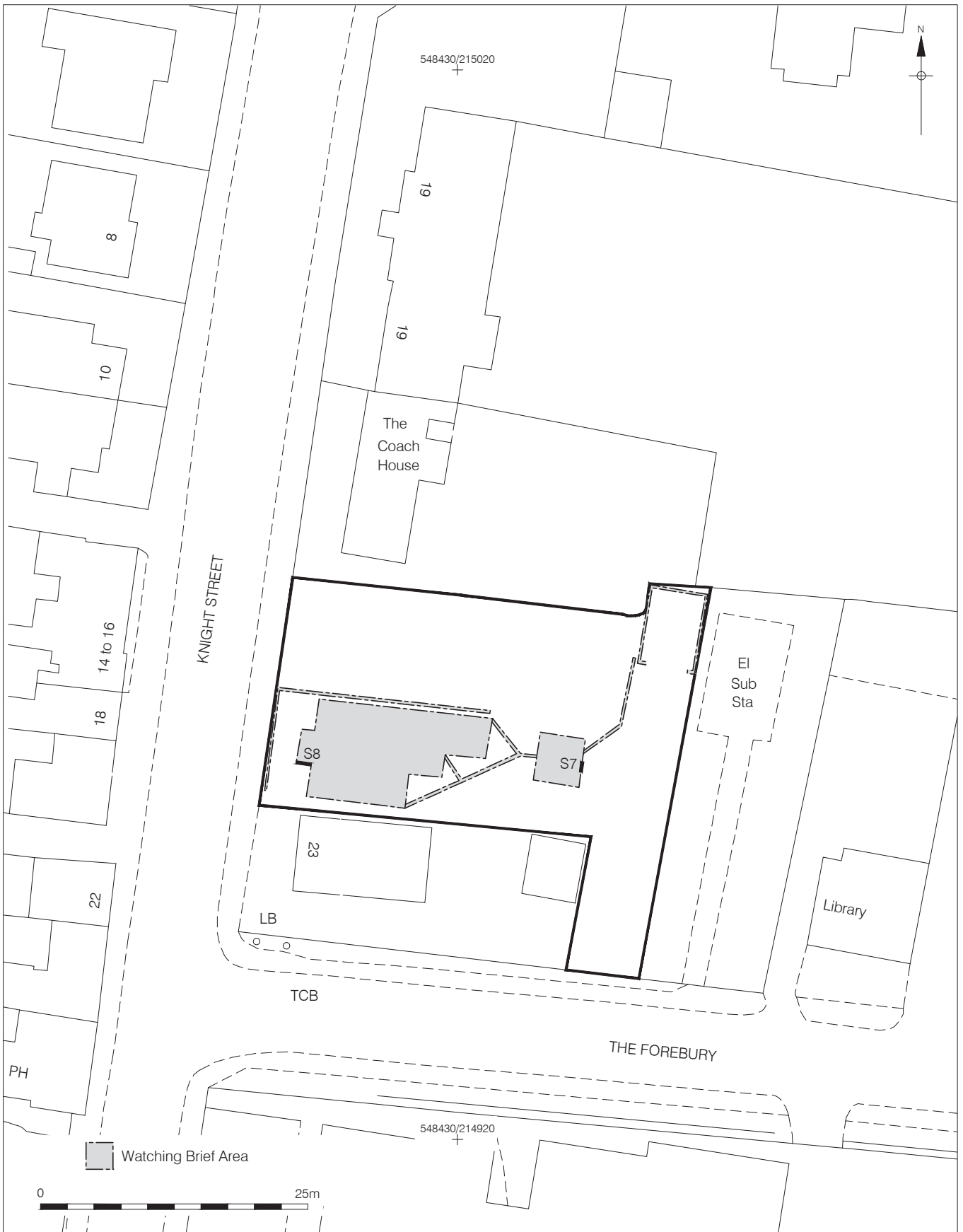


Figure 5
Trench 4 Plan and Section
1:50 at A4

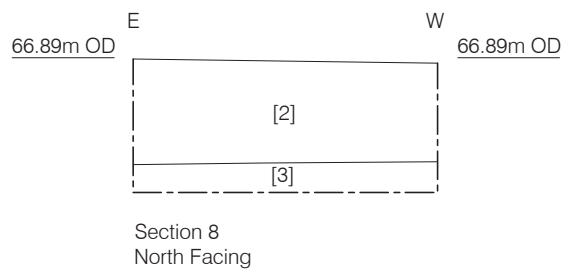
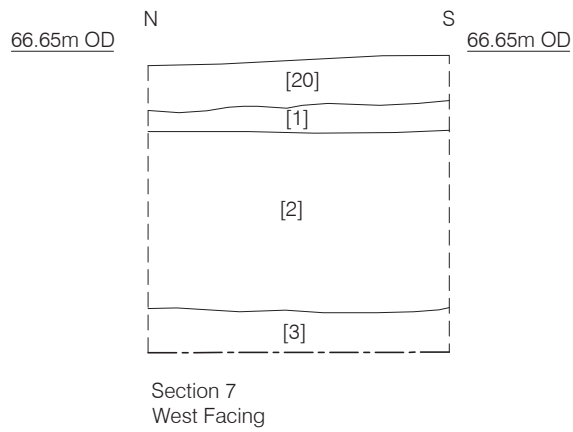


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Figure 6
Areas Monitored
1:500 at A4



0 1m

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Figure 7
Sections in Areas Monitored
1:25 at A4

11 APPENDIX 1: PLATES



Plate 1: The site, view north



Plate 2: The site, view north-east



Plate 3: Trench 1, view south



Plate 4: Trench 2, view east



Plate 5: Trench 3, view north



Plate 6: Trench 4, view north



Plate 7: Ditch [6], view west



Plate 8: Pit [8], view east



Plate 9: Pit [10], view west



Plate 10: Ditch [12], view east



Plate 11: Ditch [14], view east



Plate 12: Ditch [17], view west



Plate 13: Ditch [19], view west



Plate 14: The footings for 21A, view west



Plate 15: The footings for the garage, view north



Plate 16: Excavation of the soakaway pit, view east



Plate 17: Service trench, view north-east

12 APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Cut	Type	Category	Period	Interpretation	Trench Number
1	N/A	Layer	Topsoil			
2	N/A	Layer	Subsoil			
3	N/A	Layer	Natural			
4	6	Fill	Ditch	Medieval	Field boundary	1
5	6	Fill	Ditch	Medieval	Field boundary	1
6	6	Cut	Ditch	Medieval	Field boundary	1
7	8	Fill	Pit	Undated	Agricultural use	3
8	8	Cut	Pit	Undated	Agricultural use	3
9	10	Fill	Pit	Undated	Agricultural use	3
10	10	Cut	Pit	Undated	Agricultural use	3
11	12	Fill	Ditch	Medieval/Post-medieval	Field boundary	3
12	12	Cut	Ditch	Medieval/Post-medieval	Field boundary	3
13	14	Fill	Ditch	Medieval/Post-medieval	Field boundary	3
14	14	Cut	Ditch	Medieval/Post-medieval	Field boundary	3
15	N/A	Layer	Made ground	Modern	Modern driveway	3
16	17	Fill	Ditch	Medieval	Field boundary	4
17	17	Cut	Ditch	Medieval	Field boundary	4
18	19	Fill	Ditch	Medieval	Field boundary	4
19	19	Cut	Ditch	Medieval	Field boundary	4
20	N/A	Layer	Made ground	Modern	Modern surface	

13 APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-174835

Project details

Project name	No.21 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth: An Archaeological Evaluation and Monitoring
Short description of the project	This report describes the results of a three-trench archaeological evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land at No. 21 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 4842 1494) on the 13th-14th March 2014 and subsequent one-trench archaeological evaluation and monitoring of the site on 15th May, 17th June and 7th July 2014. The archaeological work was in response to a planning condition attached to residential development. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the site. The evaluation identified two undated pits, two ditches running east-west in Trench 3 and one large ditch in Trench 1. Both of these ditches appear to be Saxo-Norman in date. The ditches are perpendicular to Knight Street and head towards the River Stort and may represent part of Sawbridgeworths manorial boundary. The additional Trench 4 located the continuation of the two ditches in Trench 3, with the northern ditch continuing to run perpendicular to Knight Street while the southern ditch changed direction to a northwest-southeast alignment. No archaeological features were seen in Trench 2 or the monitoring of the footings for the house, garage and services of 21A Knight Street. The results of the fieldwork enhance our understanding of the medieval development of this part of Sawbridgeworth and can be characterised as being of local significance.
Project dates	Start: 13-03-2014 End: 07-07-2014
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HKS14 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation

Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	DITCH Medieval
Monument type	DITCH Medieval
Monument type	DITCH Early Medieval
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Methods & techniques	""Targeted Trenches""
Development type	Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE EAST HERTFORDSHIRE SAWBRIDGEWORTH 21 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth
Postcode	CM21 9AU
Study area	950.00 Square metres

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Alison Tinniswood
Project design originator	BRD Tech for Mr A. Passfield

Project director/manager Mark Hinman

Project supervisor Mary-Anne Slater

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Bishop's Stortford Museum

Physical Archive ID HKS14

Physical Contents "Animal Bones","Ceramics"

Digital Archive recipient Bishop's Stortford Museum

Digital Archive ID HKS14

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography"

Paper Archive recipient Bishop's Stortford

Paper Archive ID HKS14

Paper Media available "Context sheet","Drawing","Plan","Section"

Project

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Place of issue or Cambridge
publication

**14 APPENDIX 4: HERTFORDSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD
 SUMMARY SHEET**

Site name and address: 21 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, CM21 9AT		
County: Hertfordshire		District: East Hertfordshire
Village/Town: Sawbridgeworth		Parish: Sawbridgeworth
Planning application reference: 3/13/1111/FP and 3/13/2249/FP (revised)		
HER Enquiry reference:		
Funding source: Private		
Nature of application: Residential		
Present land use: Residential		
Size of application area:		Size of area investigated:
NGR (to 8 figures minimum): TL 48421494		
Site code (if applicable): HKS14		
Site director/Organization: Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd		
Type of work: Trial Trench Evaluation and Monitoring		
Date of work:	Start: 13/03/2014	Finish: 07/07/2014
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum: Bishop's Stortford Museum		
Related HER Nos:		Periods represented: Saxo-Norman, Post-Medieval
Relevant previous summaries/reports N/A		
Summary of fieldwork results: The evaluation identified two undated pits, two ditches running east-west in Trench 3 and one large ditch in Trench 1. Both of these ditches appear to be Saxo-Norman in date. The ditches are perpendicular to Knight Street and head towards the River Stort and may represent part of Sawbridgeworths manorial boundary. The additional Trench 4 located the continuation of the two ditches in Trench 3, with the northern ditch continuing to run perpendicular to Knight Street while the southern ditch changed direction to a northwest-southeast alignment. No archaeological features were seen in Trench 2 or the monitoring of the footings for the house, garage and services of 21A Knight Street. The results of the fieldwork enhance our understanding of the medieval development of this part of Sawbridgeworth and can be characterised as being of local significance.		
Author of summary: Mary-Anne Slater		Date of summary: 18/08/2014

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