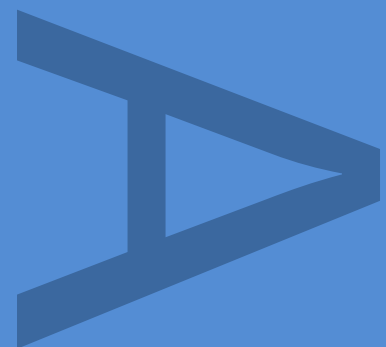


**LAND AT 29 HIGH STREET,  
MELBOURN, CAMBRIDGESHIRE:**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL  
TRENCH EVALUATION**

**May 2014**



**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY  
R11712**

## **Land at 29 High Street, Melbourn, Cambridgeshire:**

### **An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation**

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

**Planning Reference:** S/1796/12/FL

**Central National Grid Reference:** TL 3847 4492

**Site Code:** CHSM14

**Report No.** R11712

**ECB:** 4196

**Written and researched by:** Stephen Porter and Matthew Lees  
Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

**Project Manager:** Mark Hinman

**Commissioning Client:** Cambridge and County Developments

**Contractor:** Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (Central Office)  
The Granary  
Rectory Farm  
Brewery Road  
Pampisford  
Cambridgeshire  
CB22 3EN

**Tel:** 01223 845522

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

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

**©Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd**

**May 2014**

*The material contained herein is and remains the sole property of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd and is not for publication to third parties without prior consent. Whilst every effort has been made to provide detailed and accurate information, Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd cannot be held responsible for errors or inaccuracies herein contained.*

## CONTENTS

CONTENTS .....	2
ABSTRACT .....	3
1 INTRODUCTION .....	4
2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY .....	5
3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND .....	6
4 METHODOLOGY .....	7
5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS .....	9
6 CONCLUSIONS .....	11
7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	12
8 BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	13
9 APPENDIX 1: PLATES .....	18
10 APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX .....	22
11 APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM .....	23
FIGURE 1 SITE LOCATION .....	14
FIGURE 2 TRENCH LOCATION .....	15
FIGURE 3 TRENCH PLANS .....	16
FIGURE 4 SECTIONS .....	16

## ABSTRACT

*This report describes the results of a three-trench archaeological evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land at No. 29 High Street, Melbourn, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 3847 4492) on 1st May 2014. The archaeological work was commissioned in response to a planning condition attached to residential development of the site. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the site.*

*The evaluation identified four post-medieval to modern ditches and three further modern features including a pit, drain and an area of refuse deposition. While no significant archaeological remains were discovered, the evaluation has provided some limited evidence for post-medieval activity in Melbourn.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) on land at No. 29 High Street, Melbourn, Cambridgeshire, SG8 6ED (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 3847 4492) on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2014 (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by Cambridge Development in response to an archaeological planning condition attached to the construction of five domestic dwellings and the redevelopment of the existing car park (Planning Reference S/1796/12/FL).
- 1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Mark Hinman of PCA (Hinman 2014) in response to a Brief for archaeological evaluation issued by Dan McConnell of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (McConnell 2014).
- 1.4 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 proposed development on any surviving archaeological remains.
- 1.5 Three trial trenches measuring a total of c. 55m were excavated and recorded on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2014. Four post-medieval to modern linear ditches, a modern pit and refuse and groundworks associated with modern activity were discovered.
- 1.6 This report describes the results of the evaluation and aims to inform the design of an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy. The site archive will be deposited at Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store.

## **2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

### **2.1 Geology**

2.1.1 The solid bedrock geology of the area comprises chalks of the Zig Zag Formation, formed approximately 94 to 100 million years ago during the Cretaceous Period. The superficial deposits overlying this are marly chalks.

### **2.2 Topography**

2.2.1 The site was located in the centre of the historic village of Melbourn to the south-west of Cambridge and east of the A10. The site had formerly been used as a pub garden with an outside play area and waste ground (Plate 1).

2.2.2 The site was flat, situated at an approximate height of 22m Over Datum (OD).

### **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

The site lies in an area of known archaeological significance, as recorded in the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (HER). The background detailed below has been taken from the Brief (McConnell 2014)

- 3.1 The area of Melbourn village has seen a long history of occupation likely owing to the presence of natural springs at Melbourn Bury. The route of the Ickniel Way crosses the south of the parish and several other prehistoric trackways appear to have been maintained and re-developed during the Roman period as with Ashwell Street and the Cambridge-Royston Roman road.
- 3.2 There is a wealth of Bronze Age activity in the surrounding area including a number of barrows and ring ditches known across the higher topographical regions of the parish.
- 3.3 Roman burials and pottery have been found throughout the village and a settlement has been identified at the north-eastern edge of the village.
- 3.4 The development area is located in the historic core of Melbourn village, close to All Saints Church which originally dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> Century (HER 03115). Medieval domestic and settlement remains have been found during archaeological investigations at 28-32 High Street (HER CB15383; ECB1027) and a moated site is recorded to the north-east of the site.

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

4.1 The evaluation comprised three 1.6m wide linear trial trenches. Trench 1 was 25.2m long, Trench 2 was 19m long and Trench 3 was 10.6m long (Figure 2).

### **4.2 Machining and Site Planning**

4.2.1 Each trench was excavated using a 4 tonne wheeled 'JCB' mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket. The overlying topsoil (100) and subsoil (101) deposits were excavated down to the natural geological horizon (102) where the archaeological features could be seen.

4.2.2 Exposed archaeological features and deposits were cleaned as necessary to define them using hand tools.

4.2.3 Metal-detecting was carried out on all stripped deposits throughout the evaluation process and all archaeological features and spoil heaps were surveyed by metal-detector as they were encountered.

4.2.4 Limits of all excavation areas, pre-excavation and post-excavation plans of archaeological features and heights above Ordnance Datum (m OD) will be recorded using a Leica 1200 Global positioning System (GPS) rover unit with RTK differential correction, giving three-dimensional accuracy of 20mm or better.

### **4.3 Recording and Sampling**

4.3.1 Field excavation techniques and recording methods are detailed in the PCA Fieldwork Induction Manual (Operations Manual I) by Joanna Taylor and Gary Brown (2009).

4.3.2 All features were investigated and recorded in order to properly understand the date and nature of the archaeological remains on the site and to recover sufficient finds assemblages to assess the chronological development and socio-economic character of the site over time.

4.3.3 Drawn records are in the form of survey plans, drawn plans and section drawings of all archaeological features at an appropriate scale (1:10, 1:20,



1:50) while all individual deposits and cuts were recorded as written records on PCA Pro-forma context sheets.

- 4.3.4 Linear features were investigated by means of slots excavated across their width and measuring at least 1m in length, positioned to avoid areas of intercutting/disturbance in order to provide uncontaminated finds assemblages. If stratigraphic relationships between features were not visible in plan, slots were positioned to determine inter-feature relationships.
- 4.3.5 Discrete features such as pits and postholes were at least 50% excavated and when considered appropriate 100% excavated.
- 4.3.6 High-resolution digital photographs were taken at all stages of the evaluation process. Digital Photographs were taken of all archaeological features and deposits and black and white film photographs were taken when considered appropriate by the excavator and supervisor.
- 4.3.7 A metal detector was used during excavation in order to enhance finds recovery.

## **5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS**

### **5.1 Trench 1**

5.1.1 Trench 1 was aligned northwest-southeast and measured 25.3m long (Figure 2). The trench contained a single ditch, also aligned northwest-southeast, along the western edge of the trench and an area of modern refuse deposition.

5.1.2 Ditch [104] was linear with sharp and irregular sides and an irregularly concave base measuring 0.26m deep and more than 0.84m wide (Figure 3). This ditch extended south beyond Trench 1 and terminated towards the northern end of the trench, whilst the western edge of the ditch was not exposed within the trench. The ditch contained a single fill comprising a mid grey clayey silt (103) and yielded fragments of modern brick.

5.1.3 A second ditch was recorded in this trench, [112]. The alignment of this second ditch was slightly skewed from ditch [104] and subsequently, the ditch was only exposed in the southern half of the trench. The ditch was found to continue into Trench 2 where a slot across the full profile was achievable (see below).

5.1.4 An area of modern truncation and refuse was identified at the southern end of the trench, cutting both ditches. Among the debris were paint cans and asbestos-containing materials. No further work was completed owing to the hazardous nature of these materials.

### **5.2 Trench 2**

5.2.1 Trench 2 was located to the south of Trench 1, aligned southwest-northeast and measured 19m long (Figure 2). Two ditches were exposed at the western end of this trench whilst a third ditch and modern pit were revealed at the eastern end (Figure 3).

5.2.2 Previously encountered in Trench 1, ditch [112] extended into Trench 2 where it was subsequently excavated. The full profile of the ditch in Trench 2 was 0.56m wide and 0.08m deep. The ditch extended to the south beyond the limit of Trench 2.

5.2.3 A parallel ditch [110] was excavated immediately west of ditch [112]. The ditch measured 0.76m wide and 0.12m deep and was directly comparable to the adjacent ditch [112]. Fragments of post-medieval to modern building materials were recovered from both ditches, and suggest a date of no earlier than the late post-medieval period.

5.2.4 A partially exposed sub-rectangular pit [106] was excavated at the opposing end from the parallel ditches and measured 1.46m wide and 0.14m deep. No finds were recovered from this feature although the nature of the pit fill, which comprised re-deposited natural material, suggested it may have been deliberately backfilled. The pit was considered likely to be modern in date.

5.2.5 Ditch [108] was located at the eastern end of Trench 2 and was seen to continue northwards into Trench 3, at which point it was excavated.

### **5.3 Trench 3**

5.3.1 Trench 3 was aligned west-northwest to east-southeast and measured 10.6m (Figure 2). The continuation of ditch [108], exposed in Trench 2, was revealed within this trench at the western end (Figure 3).

5.3.2 Where excavated, ditch [108] was 0.88m wide and 0.26m deep and contained a single fill of mid-grey clayey silt (107). A probable post-medieval nail was found in this ditch, suggesting it was broadly contemporary with ditch [104] in Trench 1.

## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The evaluation identified four post-medieval to modern linear ditches, a small probable modern pit and a modern drain and refuse dump.
- 6.2 With the exception of the modern refuse, the remaining features could not be accurately dated. The post-medieval to modern building material fragments found in two of the ditches suggest that at the earliest these features date to the late post-medieval period. Ditches [110] and [112] are probably contemporary, as indicated by their comparable dimensions and parallel alignment. However the slight shift in alignment between the parallel ditches and the remaining two ditches suggest that whilst these feature are all likely to be broadly contemporary, they may relate to at least two separate phases of activity. The four ditches could plausibly relate to former land divisions and perhaps agricultural plots.
- 6.3 The modern activity identified during the evaluation does raise the possibility that some or all of the linear features are extremely recent, however without solid dating evidence, this cannot be confirmed.
- 6.4 The evaluation has provided limited evidence of post-medieval to modern remains likely relating to peripheral settlement activity.

## **7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 7.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Cambridge and County Developments for commissioning the work and Tim of Rogers Services Ltd for operating the machine. PCA are also grateful to Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCCHET) for monitoring the evaluation. The authors would like to thank Mark Hinman for managing the project, Matthew Lees of PCA for supervising the evaluation, Steve Porter for all his hard work and Jennifer Simonson of PCA's CAD Department for preparing the figures.

## **8 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **8.1 Printed Sources**

Brown, N. and Glazebrook, J. (eds.) 2000. *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties*, 2. *Research Agenda and Strategy*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper No. 8.

Glazebrook, J. (ed.) 1997. *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties*, 1. *Resource Assessment*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper No. 3.

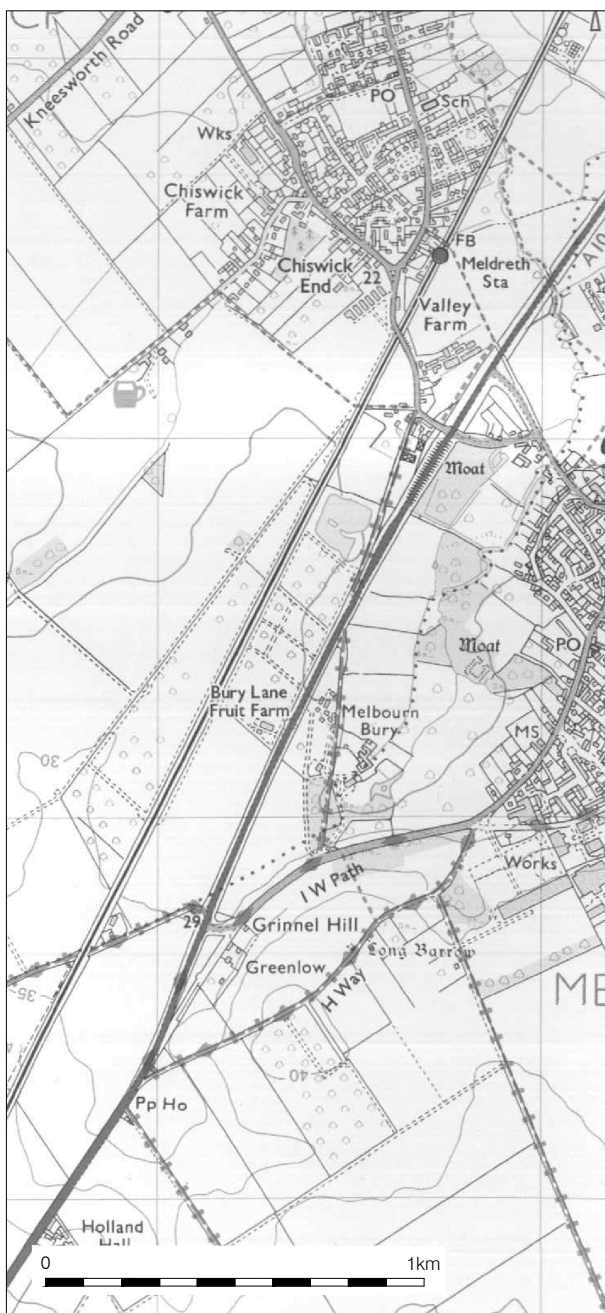
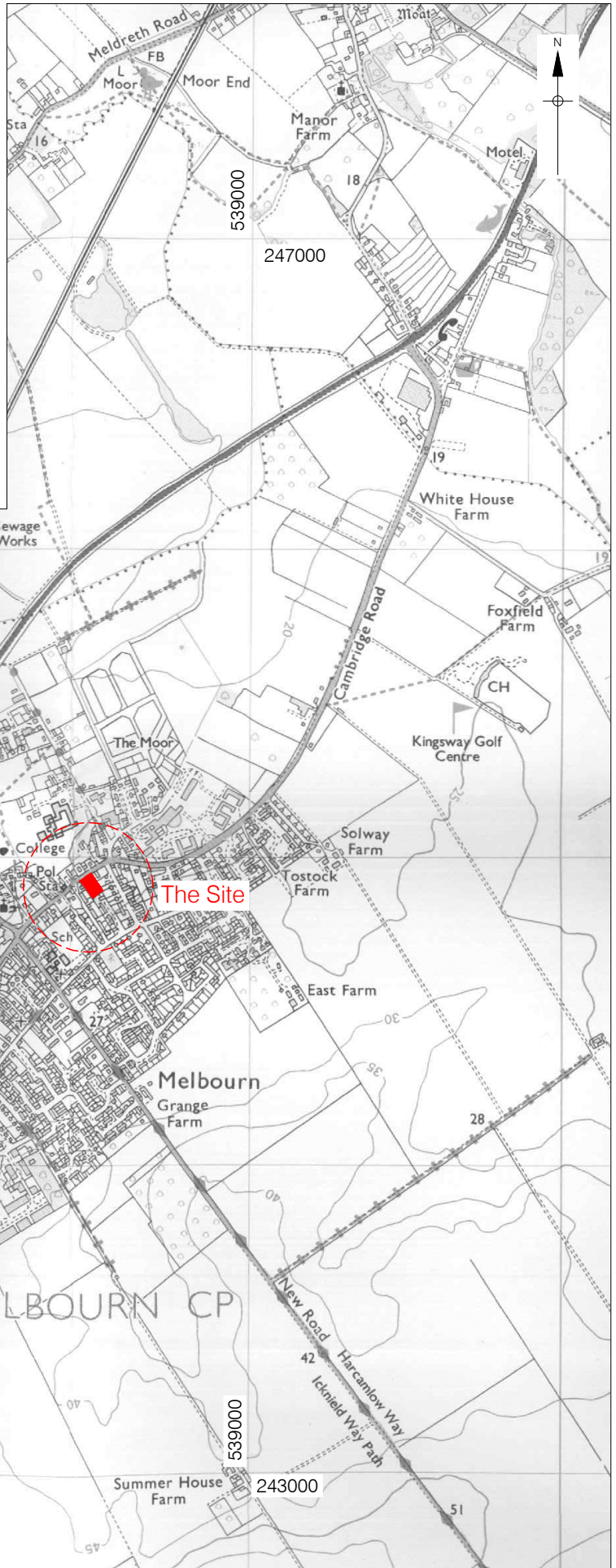
Hinman, M. 2014. *Written Scheme of Investigation for a Trenched Archaeological Evaluation at Thomas Gainsborough School, Head Lane, Great Cornard, Suffolk* (unpublished, Pre-Construct Archaeology).

McConnell, D. 2014. *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation: Land at 29 High Street, Melbourn* (unpublished, Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team).

Medlycott, M. 2011. (ed.) *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A revised framework for the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24.

### **8.2 Websites**

British Geological Survey 2014 *Geology of Britain Viewer* <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>. Date accessed 07/05/2014



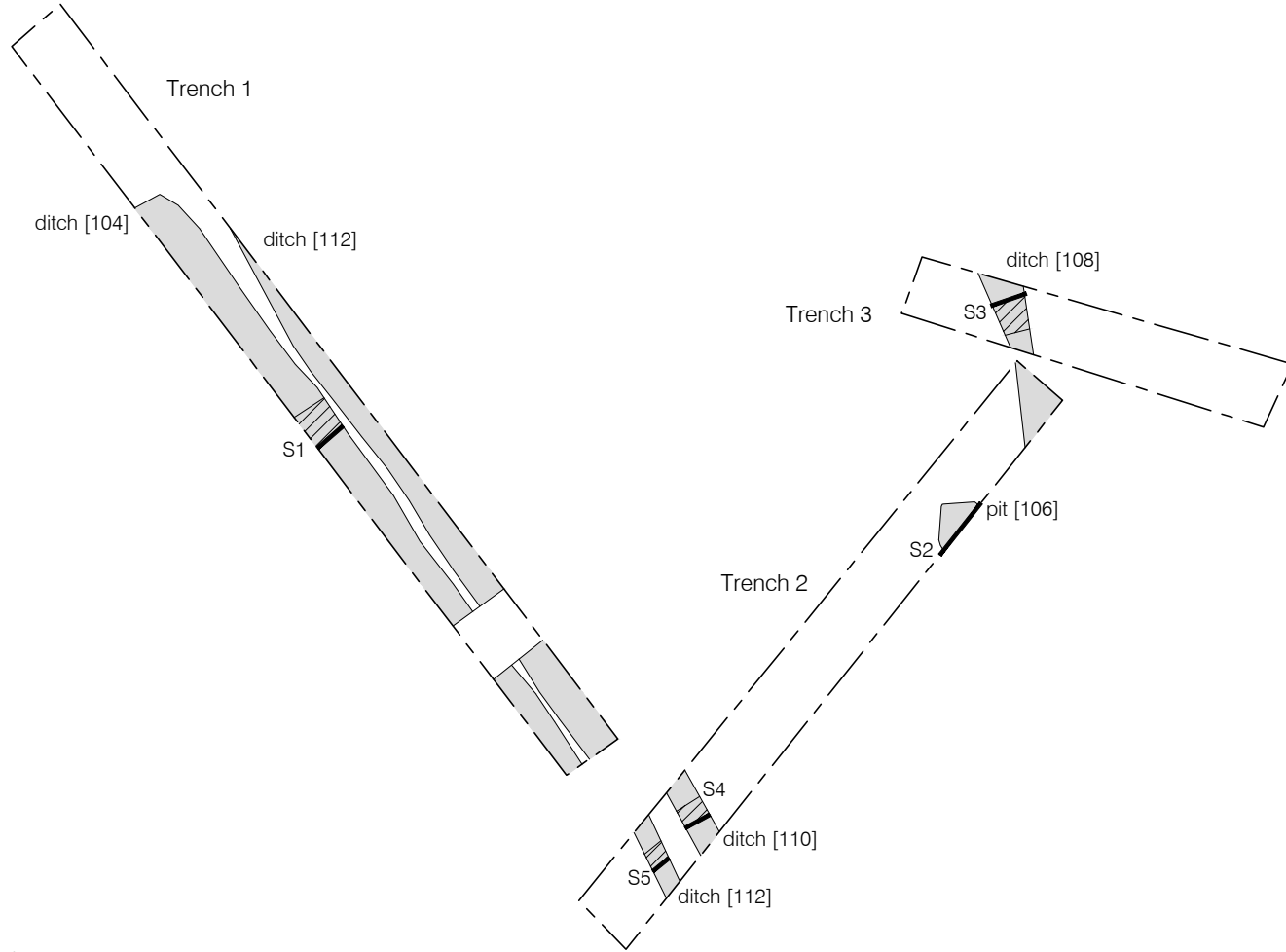
© Crown copyright 2007. All rights reserved. License number 36110309  
 © Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd 2014  
 09/05/14 JS

Figure 1  
 Site Location  
 1:2,000,000 & 1:20,000 at A4



Figure 2  
 Trench Location  
 1:400 at A4



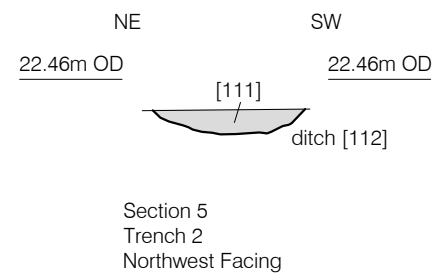
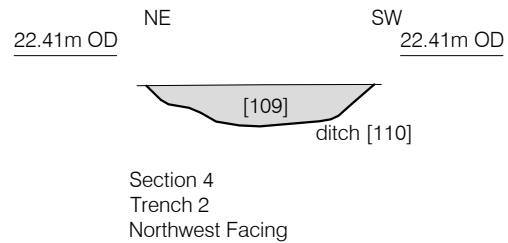
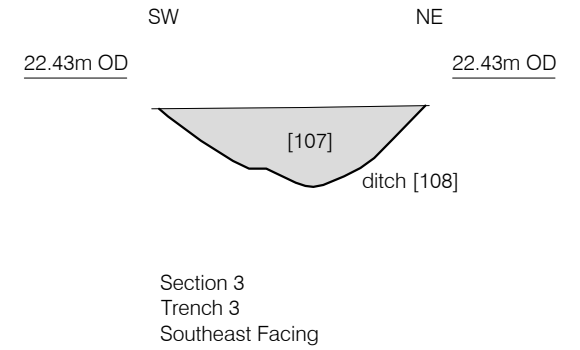
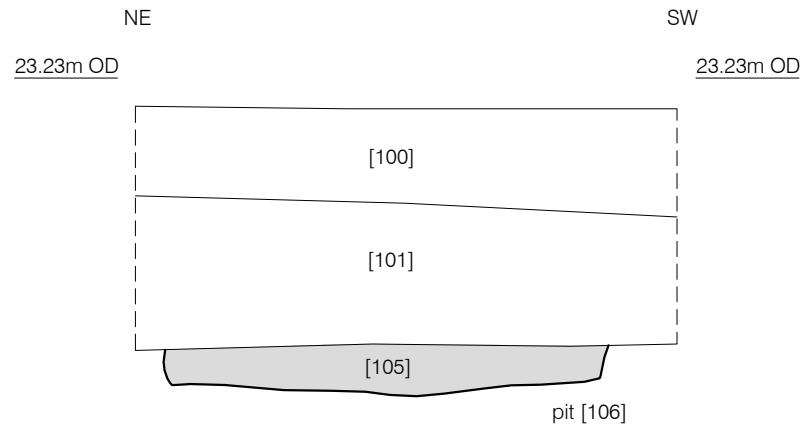
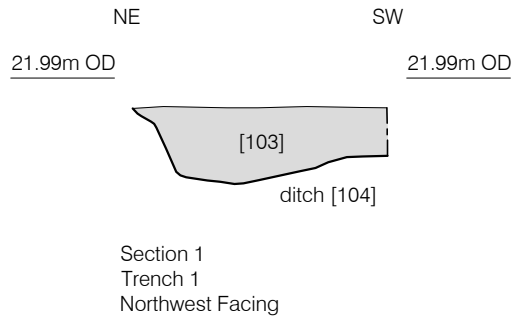


 excavated slot within a feature



© Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd 2014  
09/05/14 JS

Figure 3  
Trench Plans  
1:200 at A4



© Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd 2014  
09/05/14 JS

Figure 4  
Sections  
1:25 at A4

**9 APPENDIX 1: PLATES**



Plate 1: Northwest facing view of the site, pre-excitation of Trenches 1 and 2



Plate 2: Machine excavation of Trench 1



Plate 3: North facing view of Trench 1



Plate 4: West facing view of Trench 4 with pit [106] in the foreground and ditches [110] and [112] in the background



Plate 5: Pit [106] showing overlying deposits in Trench 2



Plate 6: Southeast facing view of Trench 3 with ditch [108] in the foreground



Plate 7: South-west facing section of ditch [108] in Trench 3

## 10 APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Cut	Type	Interpretation	Description	Trench Number
(100)	-	Layer	Topsoil	Mid/dark Greyish Brown Silt with Flint and Gravel Inclusions	1,2 & 3
(101)	-	Layer	Subsoil	Light Brownish Grey Silt with Chalk Rubble and Flint Inclusions	1, 2 & 3
(102)	-	Layer	Natural Geological Horizon	White Chalk Bedrock	1, 2 & 3
(103)	[104]	Fill	Fill of Ditch	Mid Grey Clayey Silt with Modern Brick and Chalk Inclusions	1
[104]	[104]	Cut	Cut of ditch	Linear Ditch on N-S Alignment.	1
(105)	[106]	Fill	Fill of Pit	Light Brownish Yellow Silty Sand with Chalk and Stone Inclusions	2
[106]	[106]	Cut	Cut of Pit	Square and Shallow Pit	2
(107)	[108]	Fill	Fill of Ditch	Mid Grey Clayey Silt with Occasional Chalk and Flint Inclusions	2 & 3
[108]	[108]	Cut	Cut of Ditch	Linear Ditch on NE-SW Alignment.	2 & 3
(109)	[110]	Fill	Fill of Ditch	Light Brownish Grey Clayey Silt with Frequent Flint Inclusions	2
[110]	[110]	Cut	Cut of Ditch	Shallow Linear Ditch on N-S alignment	2
(111)	[112]	Fill	Fill of Ditch	Light Greyish Brown Clayey Silt with Frequent Flint Inclusions	1 & 2
[112]	[112]	Cut	Cut of Ditch	Linear Shallow Ditch on N-S Alignment	1 & 2

## 11 APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

### OASIS ID: preconst1-178424

#### Project details

Project name	Land at 29 High Street, Melbourn, Cambridgeshire
Short description of the project	Three trench Trial Trench Evaluation in Melbourn. 5 post-medieval ditches, modern pits and drains discovered. No finds or features of significance.
Project dates	Start: 01-05-2014 End: 01-05-2014
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	CHSM14 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Monument type	DITCH Modern
Monument type	PIT Modern
Monument type	DRAIN Modern
Significant Finds	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches", "Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE MELBOURN Land at 29 High Street, Melbourn, Cambridgeshire
Postcode	SG8 6ED
Study area	1590.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 3847 4492 52.0848534125 0.0211481794953 52 05 05 N 000 01 16 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 21.00m Max: 23.00m

#### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	CCC Historic Environment Team
Project design originator	Mark Hinman



Project director/manager	Mark Hinman
Project supervisor	Matthew Lees
Type of sponsor/funding body	Property Developers
Name of sponsor/funding body	Cambridgeshire and County Developments

---

#### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store
Digital Archive ID	CHSM14
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store
Paper Archive ID	CHSM14
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Drawing", "Notebook - Excavation", ' Research', ' General Notes', "Photograph", "Section", "Survey "

---

#### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land at 29 High Street, Melbourn, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Matthew Lees
Other bibliographic details	R11712
Date	2014
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Pampisford
Description	Pre-Construct Archaeology Evaluation Report. Digital and Paper Copies

---

Entered by	Matthew Lees (MLees@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	7 May 2014

# PCA

---

## 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)

---

## 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)

---

## PCA CENTRAL

THE GRANARY, RECTORY FARM  
BREWERY ROAD, PAMPISFORD  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB22 3EN  
TEL: 01223 845 522  
FAX: 01223 845 522  
EMAIL: [info.central@pre-construct.com](mailto:info.central@pre-construct.com)

---

## 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)

---

## 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)

---

