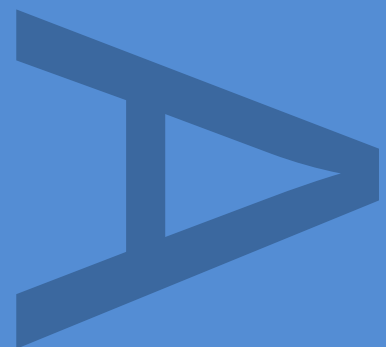


**Archaeological Excavation on  
Land at Aylesborough Close,  
Cambridge**

**June 2015**



**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY  
R12057**

# LAND AT AYLESBOROUGH CLOSE, CAMBRIDGE

## AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

### Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd	
Project Number	K3921
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	Name & Title	Signature	Date
Text Prepared by:	Stephen Porter & Mary-Anne Slater		June 2015
Graphics Prepared by:	Jennifer Simonson		June 2015
Graphics Checked by:	Josephine Brown	<i>Josephine Brown</i>	June 2015
Project Manager Sign-off:	Taleyna Fletcher	<i>Taleyna Fletcher</i>	June 2015

Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited  
 The Granary  
 Rectory Farm  
 Brewery Road  
 Pampisford  
 Cambridgeshire  
 CB22 3EN

## Land at Aylesborough Close, Cambridge: An Archaeological Excavation

**Local Planning Authority:** Cambridge County Council

**Central National Grid Reference:** TL 4482 6100

**Site Code:** CACC15

**Planning Reference:** 13/1405/FUL

**Report No.** R12057

**Written and researched by:** Stephen Porter and Mary-Anne Slater  
Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

**Project Manager:** Taleyna Fletcher

**Commissioning Client:** Keepmoat

**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)

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This report describes the results of an archaeological excavation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land at Aylesborough Close, Cambridge, CB4 2HH (NGR TL 4486 6101) on the 30th March 2015 to the 8th April 2015. The archaeological work was commissioned by Keepmoat in response to a planning condition attached to the demolition of 24 flats and the erection of 35 private and affordable residential accommodations, with associated car parking, amenity space and ancillary works. The aim of the work was to preserve by record any archaeological remains which would be damaged or destroyed by the new development.*

*The excavation identified an early Roman trackway formed of two parallel linear ditches on a north-west to south-east alignment. The pottery assemblage indicates that the trackway was close to the periphery of an early Roman settlement, which is supported by the known Roman sites within this part of Cambridge.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 An archaeological excavation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) on land at Aylesborough Close, Cambridge, CB4 2HH (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 4482 6100) from the 30th March 2015 to the 8th of April 2015 (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by Keepmoat in response to an archaeological planning condition attached to the demolition of 24 flats and construction of 35 new residential dwellings, with associated car-parking, shared amenity space and ancillary works (Planning Reference 13/1405/FUL).
- 1.3 A trial trench evaluation undertaken in January 2015 (Jones, Jackson and Woolhouse 2015) uncovered a concentration of archaeological remains in the south western corner of the development area. These remains consisted of five ditches; one in Trench 3, two in Trench 4, and three in Trench 5. The trial trench evaluation identified tentative evidence for part of an agricultural field system of late Iron Age or early Romano British origin with possible settlement activity in the local area.
- 1.4 The main aims of the excavation were to 'preserve by record' any archaeological remains present in those areas of the site which would be affected by groundworks associated with the new development, to assess the significance of those remains in a local, regional or national research context, as appropriate, to realise the site's research potential through a programme of post-excavation analysis and research, and to disseminate the results of the project through publication.
- 1.5 The excavation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the archaeological excavation of land at Aylesborough Close, Cambridge, prepared by Taleyna Fletcher of PCA (Fletcher 2015) in response to a brief issued by Kasia Gdaniec of Cambridgeshire County Council's Historic Environment Team (CCCHET).

- 1.6 This report describes the results of the excavation and their significance and it is proposed that the project results are published in Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society (PCAS). Following completion of the project, the site archive will be deposited at Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store.



## **2 RESEARCH AIMS**

2.1 Relevant research themes contained in the following documents are important considerations:

- Research and archaeology: A framework for the Eastern Counties: 1 Resource Assessment (Glazebrook 1997)
- Research and archaeology: A framework for the Eastern Counties: 2 Research Agenda and Strategy (Brown and Glazebrook 2000)
- Regional research framework for the Eastern Region (Medlycott and Brown 2008)
- Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England (Medlycott, M, 2011)

2.2 The excavation achieved the following aims;

- To characterise and record the archaeological remains on site in order to inform mitigation on the impact of development
- To examine the nature, date and function of any features on site
- To retrieve information to reconstruct past landscapes and environment
- To determine what was the human impact on the landscape
- To disseminate the results to the wider archaeological community and other interested parties
- To allow as far as possible within the constraints of the project a programme of outreach in order to disseminate the results of the project to the local community

2.3 In light of the evaluation results, the specific excavation aims were to:

- Understand the nature and date of occupation in the area and how it relates to known contemporary settlement.

- To provide absolute dates for closed ceramic groups and evidence of craft or industrial activity that may be present on the site.

### **3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

- 3.1 The underlying bedrock is comprised of the Gault Formation - Mudstone. Overlying this are superficial River Terrace Deposits; the site is located approximately 1.5km north of the River Cam.
- 3.2 Topsoil deposits (001) comprised a mid-greyish brown clayey silt and seen at a depth of 0.22-0.34m. The subsoil (002) was defined as mid-orangish brown clayey silt 0.41-0.58m below ground level. The natural geology of the site was identified as a mid-brownish orange sandy clay with patches of chalk 0.41-0.58m+ below ground level.
- 3.3 The site comprises an area of approximately 0.88ha and is located along the upper north-western slopes of the Cam river valley and to the north of Cambridge City Centre.
- 3.4 The centre of the site is located at c.13m AOD, the topography being generally flat.

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **4.1 Prehistoric**

4.1.1 The close proximity of Arbury Camp, an Iron Age ringwork (CHER 8479) located at a short distance to the north of the site, Iron Age activity at the Arbury Road (CHER 5413-19) and King Hedges School sites (CHER 5421b & MCB 16897) and settlement activity unearthed between Huntingdon and Histon Roads (MCB 17820) supports the suggestion of widespread later prehistoric settlement in the area. In the wider area prehistoric activity in the form of an Iron Age burial ground lies to the north-east of Chesterton Village while a Bronze Age hoard (CHER 5452) was discovered along Milton Road.

4.1.2 There is some evidence of later Bronze Age activity in the form of a ditch discovered 450m to the south of the site at Harris Road (MCB 19296 Site 1).

### **4.2 Roman**

4.2.1 The route of the former Roman Road (CHER 5352) of Akeman Street, which runs north from Cambridge to Ely, crosses the area at a short distance (c. 260m) to the east of the site while a number of Roman buildings (CHER 5411, 5421 & 5424) were unearthed during excavations at the former Manor Farm, Arbury Road, c.700m to the north-east of the site. Excavation revealed a substantial settlement, with several phases of occupation from the 1st to 4th century.

4.2.2 Evidence of associated Roman inhumation cemeteries have been uncovered nearby at the Arbury Road (CHER 5425), the Arbury Road allotment site (CHER 5288) and on the King Hedges Estate (CHER 5213). It is clear that the cemetery area was considerable as the burials extend further to the south and along the eastern side of the Roman Road with burials occurring at sites at Humphreys Road (CHER 5430), c.340m SE of the site, Fortesque Road (CHER 5427) c.250m east of the site and Brimley Road (CHER 5429) c.430m to the SE.

4.2.3 A Roman oven or hearth was found in Alex Wood Road (CHER 5212) c. 350m to the east of the site, whilst a Roman pit (CHER 5428) was unearthed to the north of Alex Wood Road. Roman finds have been recovered from the

Arbury Camp site (CHER 8479a) and Roman features discovered at Brownlow Road 500m to the east (CHER 9533a).

- 4.2.4 Cropmark evidence from aerial photography taken prior to the construction of the present estates shows evidence of considerable Roman field systems on land north of Arbury Road (CHER 5435) and in the area of Neptune Close (CHER 5432). Both broadly correlate with the Manor Farm sites and associated evidence, such as the field system, enclosures and gravel workings unearthed at Apollo Way (MCB 15936).

### **4.3 Early Medieval**

- 4.3.1 In comparison to the evidence of Roman and Iron Age activity in the area, the case for Anglo-Saxon activity close to the site is less convincing. There are only two sites of Saxon date; both located north and east of the site. A series of features of probable Saxon date were uncovered at King Hedges School (CHER 5421), whilst a single pit containing late Saxon pottery was uncovered at the Arbury Road Roman Settlement (CHER 5424a).

### **4.4 Medieval**

- 4.4.1 During the medieval period the general area of the site came under the influence of the Barnwell Priory and the Augustinian monks. Although the priory site lies outside the study area Barnwell Priory would have had a considerable influence on the political, social and agricultural landscape at the time.
- 4.4.2 It is thought that this area was primarily in agricultural use during the medieval period up until its enclosure in the 19th century. The archaeological evidence correlates with this as the majority of medieval activity in the area is in the form of agriculture; with extant earthworks and evidence of the use of ridge and furrow agriculture. Evidence of ridge and furrow has been identified to the north-east at the Neptune Close site (CHER 5435a), from post-war aerial photographs either side of Arbury Road (CHER 5465), at Arbury Road sites (CHER 5413b) and (CHER 5415b) and seen on later aerial photographs directly south of the site along Roseford Road (CHER 5527a). Further evidence has been recorded at Arbury Camp (8479b), to the

west of site along Histon Road (CHER 10104) and during the Girton to Stow cum Quy field walking project (CHER 11212).

- 4.4.3 Other remains include a medieval pit or well recorded prior to building works at Humphreys Road (5430a) and a pair of medieval ditches excavated at New Milton and Lady Adrian Schools (CB15631).

#### **4.5 Post-Medieval**

- 4.5.1 After this areas enclosure in 1838 the predominately agricultural landscape of the medieval period was steadily developed. The southern two thirds of the parish became part of the suburban expansion of Cambridge, whilst the northern part of the parish towards the A14 was largely occupied by the sewage works and industrial estates.

- 4.5.2 Whilst there was evidence of post medieval development in the area, the site itself remained undisturbed until it was developed as part of the Arbury estate in the late 1950's.

#### **4.6 Cartographic Sources**

- 4.6.1 The earliest available mapping showing the proposed site, at a reasonable scale, was the Tithe map of the parish of Chesterton dated 1840. This shows that the area of the site was unbuilt and comprised open farmland, primarily enclosed agricultural land bounded by Arbury Road to the north and a public drain to the west. The course of former turnpike road to Ely, later Milton Road is depicted to the east of site and that of King Hedges Road to the north.

- 4.6.2 The first map to show the construction of Aylesborough Close is OS map 1:2500 1970-72. This records the widespread residential development of the area which took place following the Second World War. The site has changed little in form since its inception, with little evidence of subsequent build or infilling.

## **5 METHODOLOGY**

### **5.1 General**

5.1.1 The Brief for this phase of works required investigation in the area of the site previously investigated in the Evaluation around Trenches 3, 4 and 5. A meeting held on site with Andy Thomas from CCCHET discussed the excavation of the area in a staged approach as follows:

- Stage 1: Monitoring and recording of foundation removal work following demolition of the existing houses. A single trench (Trench 6) to be investigated in the southern corner of the site. This will establish if any significant surviving archaeological remains are present in this part of the site and will allow CCCHET to determine the potential for extension of the excavation area.

- Stage 2: Starting from the position of the location of evaluation Trench 4, the site will be stripped towards the northern and southern boundaries. The full extent of the area of excavation within the southern part of the site will be determined through regular site meetings with the CCCHET. If the areas of archaeological deposits become significantly “quieter”, the extent of the excavation area to the south may be reduced. This will only happen in negotiations with a representative from CCCHET.

- Stage 3: If significant archaeology continues northwards from the excavation area, additional trenches (Trenches 7 and 8) will be investigated to establish the extent of survival/continuation in this northern part of the site.

5.1.2 The monitoring of the foundation removal work was not undertaken as this work had been done before PCA arrived on site.

5.1.3 After an on-site meeting with Andy Thomas on the completion of Stages 1 and 2 it was decided that Stage 3 was not necessary due to the lack of archaeological activity in the northern part of the site. It was also agreed that the southern limit of the excavation area would not extend to Trench 6 given the lack of features in the south of the site.

## **5.2 Excavation Methodology**

- 5.2.1 Ground reduction during the excavation was carried out under archaeological supervision using a 14-ton 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 2m-wide toothless ditching bucket. All modern deposits were removed in spits down to the level of the undisturbed natural geological deposits where potential archaeological features could be observed and recorded.
- 5.2.2 Exposed surfaces were cleaned by trowel and sand-hoe as appropriate and all further excavation was undertaken manually using hand tools.

## **5.3 Recording and Finds Recovery**

- 5.3.1 The limits of excavations, heights above Ordnance Datum (m OD) and the locations of archaeological features and interventions were recorded using a Leica 1200 GPS rover unit with RTK differential correction, giving three-dimensional accuracy of 20mm or better.
- 5.3.2 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 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]. Where more than one slot was excavated through an individual feature, each intervention was assigned additional numbers for the cutting event and for the deposits it contained (these deposits within cut features being referred to here as 'fills'). Multiple sections excavated across a single feature were later grouped together by unique 'group numbers', signified here by capitals: e.g. DITCH 1. The record numbers assigned to cuts, deposits and groups are entirely arbitrary and in no way reflect the chronological order in which events took place. All features and deposits excavated during the excavation are listed in Appendix 2. Artefacts recovered during excavation were assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved.



5.3.3 Metal-detecting was carried out during the topsoil stripping and throughout the excavation process. Archaeological features and spoil heaps were scanned by metal-detector periodically. Only objects of modern date were found and were not retained for accession.

5.3.4 High-resolution digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits, and were used to keep a record of the excavation process. In addition, monochrome photographs were taken of significant features.

#### **5.4 Sampling Strategy**

5.4.1 Discrete features were 100% excavated, having first been half-sectioned, photographed and recorded by a cross-section scaled drawing at an appropriate scale (either 1:10 or 1:20). Some features found to be modern or of natural origin (e.g. the result of tree rooting or frost-cracking) were only half-sectioned.

#### **5.5 Environmental Sampling**

5.5.1 A total of two bulk samples (normally 40 litres in volume unless insufficient material was available due to the size of the feature) were taken to extract and identify micro- and macro-botanical remains. The aim of this sampling was to investigate the past environment and economy of the site, and particularly to identify any evidence relating to the nature of the agricultural regime(s) in which the field system(s) operated. An additional aim of the sampling was to recover small objects that are not readily recovered by hand-collection, such as hammer-scale and other metalworking debris. These samples were taken from sealed deposits

## **6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE**

### **6.1 Introduction**

6.1.1 The excavation identified two linear ditches extending across the site on a north-west to south-east alignment, here labelled as the south-west ditch and the north-east ditch. These measured 18m and 25m in length respectively, were 8.5m apart and both extended beyond the limits of the excavation. A third linear feature [034] was identified on the same alignment in the north-east of the site and was interpreted as a hedgerow. No other features were identified in the excavation. A small ditch on a north-south alignment was seen in Trench 4 during the evaluation, but was undated (Jones, Jackson and Woolhouse 2015).

### **6.2 South-west ditch**

6.2.1 Ditch [012] (Figure 3) was 0.7m wide and 0.25m deep, with a gently-sloping rounded profile and a single fill of mid greyish-brown silty clay (013). No dating evidence was recovered from the ditch. This slot was excavated in the evaluation.

6.2.2 Ditch [017] (Figure 3) was truncated by ditch [018] which is on the same alignment. It was 0.56m wide and 0.16m deep, with sides sloping gradually to a concave base. Its excavated fill (019) was a pale grey brown silt clay, with no finds recovered from the feature. This slot was excavated in the evaluation.

6.2.3 Ditch [018] (Figure 3) was aligned northwest-southeast, continuing beyond the trench limit in both directions. It was 0.68m wide and 0.29m deep, with sides sloping steeply to a flat base. The ditch contained a single fill (020) of mid grey-brown silt clay. This ditch truncates an earlier ditch [017] which is on the same alignment. No finds were present. This slot was excavated in the evaluation.

6.2.4 Ditch slot [027] had straight moderately sloping sides and a narrow, flat base. It measured 1.4m wide and 0.42m deep. It contained a single naturally-accumulated fill (026) of light brownish grey clayey silt. Two sherds of Roman pottery were found.

6.2.5 Ditch slot [036] had gradually sloping sides and a wide, flat base and measured 0.6+m wide and 0.18m deep. It contained a naturally accumulated fill (035) of light brownish grey clayey silt. A later re-cut [025] of [036] had moderately sloping slightly rounded sides and a narrow, rounded base. It measured 0.7m wide and 0.28m deep. It contained a single naturally-accumulated fill (24) of light browning grey clayey silt and contained single oyster shell, a single abraded sherd of late 12th-14th century pottery and a thin flake made from a translucent black flint.

### **6.3 North-east ditch**

6.3.1 Ditch [014] (Figure 3) measured 0.85m wide and was 0.35m in depth. It was aligned northwest-southeast, with sides sloping steeply to a concave base, and extended beyond the limit of excavation in both directions. It contained two distinct fills (016) consisting of mid grey-brown clay silt, and (015) a mid orange-brown clay silt. The lower deposit (016) contained 16 sherds of Roman pottery. This slot was excavated in the evaluation.

6.4 Ditch slot [029] had moderately sloping sides and a narrow, slightly rounded base. It measured 0.85m wide and 0.23m deep. It contained a single naturally-accumulated fill (028) of mid brownish grey clayey silt without finds.

6.5 Ditch slot [032] had straight moderately sloping sides and a narrow, flat base. It measured 0.9m wide and 0.32m deep. It contained two naturally-accumulated fills: (030) a mid-brownish grey clayey silt and (031) a light greyish brown clayey silt. (030) contained one sherd of Roman pottery and (031) also contained one sherd of Roman pottery.

### **6.6 Hedgerow**

6.6.1 Hedgerow [34] had irregular shallow sides and an irregular base. It measured 1.25m wide and 0.08m deep and contained a single fill (33), a mid-greyish brown silty clay. No finds were retrieved from this feature.

## **7 THE FINDS**

### **7.1 The Roman Pottery**

Katie Anderson

#### Introduction

7.1.1 A small assemblage of early Roman pottery was recovered from the evaluation and excavation, totalling 17 sherds weighing 444g. All of the pottery was examined and recorded in accordance with the guidelines laid out by the Study Group for Roman Pottery (Perrin 2011) and using the standard terminology and codes advocated by the Museum of London Archaeology Service (Symonds 2002).

#### Assemblage Composition and Dating

7.1.2 The assemblage was mixed in condition, comprising small to large sherds, with a relatively high mean weight of 26.1g, although this figure is influenced by the presence of several large storage jar body sherds. Despite the presence of some larger sherds, the assemblage can be described as being abraded and 'mixed' in nature with few refitting sherds, suggesting that material had either been left on the surface for a period of time before being deposited, or else had been redeposited from elsewhere.

7.1.3 The pottery all dates to the earlier Roman period, with a suggested date range of AD50-100. There were no diagnostic sherds within the assemblage; therefore the dating of the assemblage was based on the fabrics identified.

7.1.4 The range of fabrics was limited (Table 1), comprising coarse sandy wares, most of which were likely to have been made. Included in this group were four Horningsea sherds (211g), made at the kilns approximately 5km northeast of the site. The fabrics were sandwich fired, suggesting they belong to the earlier phases of production, while the remainder of the assemblage is also consistent with a first century AD date.

7.1.5 All of the body sherds are likely to have derived from jars. One sherd of interest from Ditch [14], had three circular gauges on the interior of the

vessel, measuring c.18mm in diameter. It is suggested that this vessel may have been a honeypot (Sudds pers comm.).

Fabric	No.	Wt(g)
Coarse sandy greyware	7	32
Coarse sandy oxidised ware	6	201
Horningsea greyware	4	211

Table 1: Roman pottery by fabric

7.1.6 Roman pottery was recovered from four contexts from three ditches (Table 2). Ditch [14] contained the largest quantity of material, totalling 13 sherds weighing 405g, which included the possible honeypot as well as several other jar body sherds.

Context	Cut	No	Wt(g)	Spotdate
16	14	13	405	AD50-100
26	27	2	2	AD50-100
30	32	1	31	AD50-200
31	32	1	6	AD80-200

## Discussion

7.1.7 The Roman pottery is indicative of early Roman domestic activity in the earlier Roman period, although the quantity and condition of the material suggests the site lay on the periphery of a settlement.

## Recommendations

7.1.8 All of the pottery has been analysed and recorded and therefore requires no further work. Comparisons to local contemporary assemblages may be

worthwhile to put this assemblage in its local context.

## References

Symonds, R. 2002 Recording Roman pottery: a description of the methodology used at Museum of London Specialist Services (MoLSS) and Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) (Unpublished document available from MoLSS)

Perrin, R. 2011. A Research Strategy and Updated Agenda for the Study of Roman Pottery in Britain. Study Group for Roman Pottery. Occasional Paper No.1

## 7.2 The Medieval Pottery

Berni Sudds

- 7.2.1 A single small sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from fill [24] weighing 2g. The sherd is from a Grimston ware green-glazed jug (GRIM) and dates from the late 12th to 14th century but is quite abraded and possibly re-deposited. Grimston-type ware represents a well-paralleled regional import to Cambridge (Edwards and Hall 1997).

## References

Edwards, D. and Hall, D., 1997 'Medieval Pottery from Cambridge: Sites in the Bene't Street – Market area' in Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, LXXXVII, 153-168.

## 7.3 The Flint

Barry Bishop

- 7.3.1 A single flint flake was recovered from context (24), fill of ditch [25], a re-cut of the southwest ditch.
- 7.3.2 It is a thin flake made from a translucent black flint. It has a slightly curved profile and parallel dorsal scars, but is missing its proximal and distal ends. It is in a chipped condition and is heavily recorticated and mineral (?Fe) stained. It is not typologically diagnostic but its thinness and the parallel

dorsal scars suggest a Mesolithic or possibly even earlier date; it is reminiscent of a number of similarly heavily recorticated flakes and blades of late Upper Palaeolithic date that have recently been recovered around the Addenbrookes developments to the south of Cambridge.

## **7.4 The Plant Macrofossils and Other Remains**

Val Fryer

Introduction and method statement

- 7.4.1 Evaluation and subsequent excavations at Aylesborough Close, Cambridge, undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology, recorded a limited number of ditches and other discrete features of probable Roman date. Samples for the evaluation of the content and preservation of the plant macrofossil assemblages were taken from fills within four ditches.
- 7.4.2 The samples (or sub-samples thereof) were processed by manual water flotation/washover and the flots were collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed in Table 1. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace (2010). All plant remains were charred. Modern roots, seeds and arthropod remains were also recorded.
- 7.4.3 The non-floating residues were collected in a 1mm mesh sieve and will be sorted when dry. Any artefacts/ecofacts will be retained for further specialist analysis.

Results

- 7.4.4 All four assemblages are extremely small (i.e. <0.1 litres in volume) and very limited in composition. Plant macrofossils are particularly scarce, with only one possible barley (*Hordeum* sp.) grain being noted along with occasional fragments of charcoal/charred wood. Fragments of black porous and tarry material and small pieces of coal are present throughout, but it is considered most likely that all are intrusive within the feature fills.
- 7.4.5 Although specific sieving for molluscan remains was not undertaken, shells

of terrestrial and marsh/freshwater slum snails are present at a low to moderate density within all four samples. However, most are moderately well preserved and it is currently unclear whether any are contemporary with the features from which the samples were taken. Notwithstanding this, it would appear that at some stage the ditches (which were almost certainly damp or seasonally water filled) were surrounded by a short-turfed grassland habitat.

#### Conclusions and recommendations for further work

- 7.4.6 In summary, the limited nature of the recovered assemblages almost certainly indicates that the ditches were entirely peripheral to any focus of either domestic or agricultural activity during the Roman period. The few remains which are recorded are probably derived from scattered or wind-dispersed detritus, some of which may be intrusive within the feature fills.
- 7.4.7 On the basis of these assemblages it is difficult to make recommendations for a future sampling strategy should further interventions be undertaken. However, if dated and/or well-sealed features are recorded in the future, it is suggested that samples of approximately 20 – 40 litres in volume are taken in order to ascertain whether the above findings are consistent across the entire area.

Sample No.	1	2	3	4
Context No.	15	20	24	30
Feature No.	14	18	25	32
Plant macrofossils				
Hordeum sp. (grain)		xcf		
Charcoal <2mm	x	x	x	
Charcoal >2mm	x	x		
Charcoal >5mm		x		
Other remains				
Black porous and tarry material	x	x	x	x
Small coal frags.	x	x		x
Mollusc shells				
Open country species				
Vallonia sp.	x	x		
V. costata	x	x	x	x
Catholic species				



Cochlicopa sp.	x			x
Nesovitrea hammonis	x			x
Trichia hispida group	x	x		x
Marsh/freshwater slum species				
Anisus leucostoma	x			xx
Aplexa hypnorum				x
Lymnaea sp.	x	xx	x	x
L. truncatula		x		
Pisidium sp.				x
Succinea sp.	x			
Sample volume (litres)	10ss	10ss	10ss	10ss
Volume of flot (litres)	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
% flot sorted	100%	100%	100%	100%

Key to table

x = 1 – 10 specimens    xx = 11 – 50 specimens    cf = compare    ss = sub-sample

Reference

Stace, C. 2010 New Flora of the British Isles. 3rd edition. (Cambridge University Press)

## **8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

8.1.1 The excavation identified two parallel linear ditches aligned north-west to south-east extending across the site and beyond the limit of excavation. The lack of archaeological features elsewhere on the site other than a small hedgerow, suggests that the two ditches extending across site may have formed a trackway, 25m long and 9m wide.

8.1.2 A total of 17 sherds of early Roman pottery were recovered from the evaluation and excavation. The pottery all falls within the date range of AD 50-100 and was abraded, suggesting that it had been left on the surface before being deposited, or had been redeposited from elsewhere.

8.1.3 This trackway is likely to be linked to the considerable Roman field systems on land north of Arbury Road and in the area of Neptune Close, indicated by cropmark evidence from aerial photographs. It is also broadly perpendicular to the route of the former Roman road known as Akeman Street which lay east of the subject site. The quantity of pottery recovered from the evaluation as well as the environmental evidence indicates that the trackway was likely to have been on the periphery of an early Roman settlement, which may have been the substantial settlement at the former Manor Farm, Arbury Road, c.700m to the north-east of the site. Excavations there revealed several phases of occupation from the 1st to 4th centuries.

8.1.4 The 12th-14th century material recovered from a re-cut section of the southwestern ditch suggests the ditch forming this section of the trackway may have been re-used during the medieval period, possibly as a field boundary. As only this small section of one ditch from the trackway was re-cut there is little evidence to suggest the trackway was maintained or still in use by the 12th-14th century.

## **8.2 Conclusions**

8.2.1 The excavation at Aylesborough Close has revealed clear evidence for early Roman activity in the form of a trackway extending north-west to south-east across the site. The assemblage of pottery suggests that the trackway was close to the periphery of an early Roman settlement.

### **8.3 Publication Proposal**

- 8.3.1 It is recommended that this site is published in the annual fieldwork report in the next Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society (PCAS). The discovery of an early Roman trackway near the edge of a settlement is of local significance.

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Keepmoat for commissioning the work. PCA are also grateful to Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Historic Environment Team for his advice and for monitoring the work. The project was managed for PCA by Taleyna Fletcher. The author would like to thank Tom Learmonth for his hard work. Figures accompanying this report were prepared by Jennifer Simonson of PCA's CAD Department.

## **10 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **10.1 Printed Sources**

Fletcher, T. 2015 Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Excavation at Aylesborough Close, Cambridge. Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (unpublished).

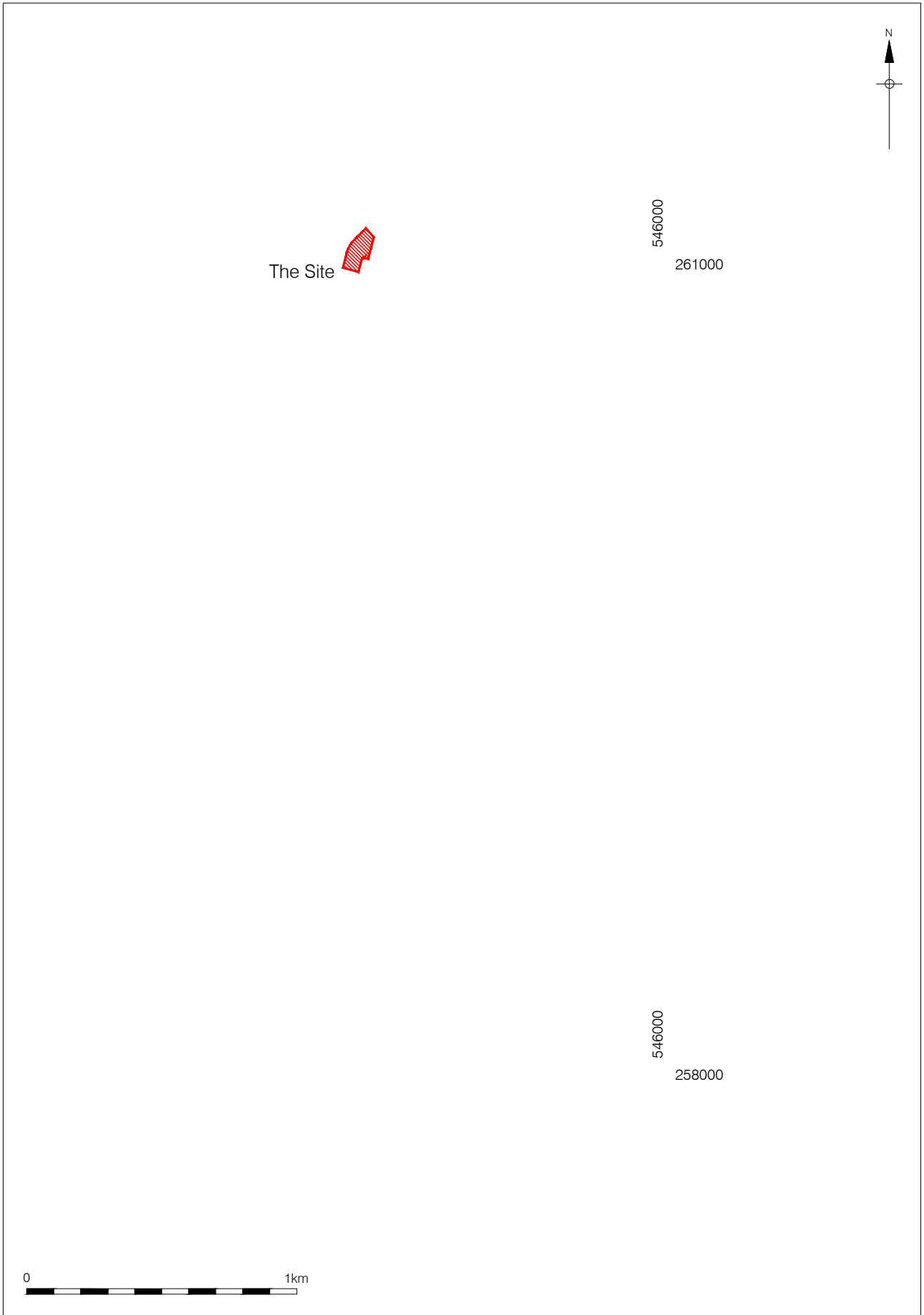
Garwood, A. 2013. Land at Aylesborough Close, Cambridge, CB4 2HH: An Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment. Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. (unpublished).

Gdaniec, K. 2015 Brief for Archaeological Investigation: Land at Aylesborough Close, Cambridge. Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (unpublished).

Jones, M., Jackson, C. and Woolhouse, T. 2015 Aylesborough Close, Cambridge: An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation. Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd Report No. 11942 (unpublished).

### **10.2 Online Sources**

British Geological Survey 2015 Geology of Britain Viewer  
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed 08/06/2015



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10/04/15 JS

Figure 1  
Site Location  
1:20,000 at A4

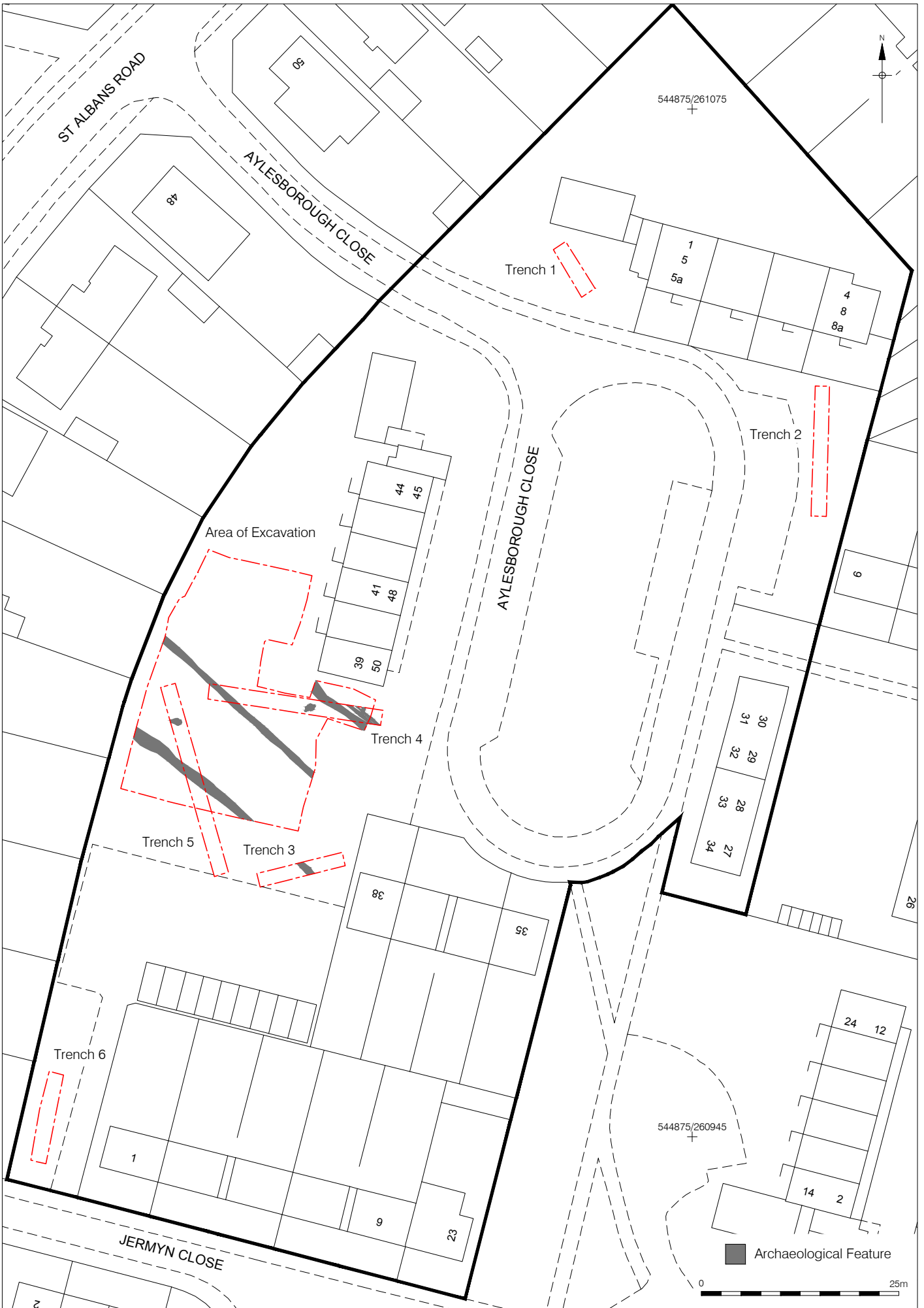
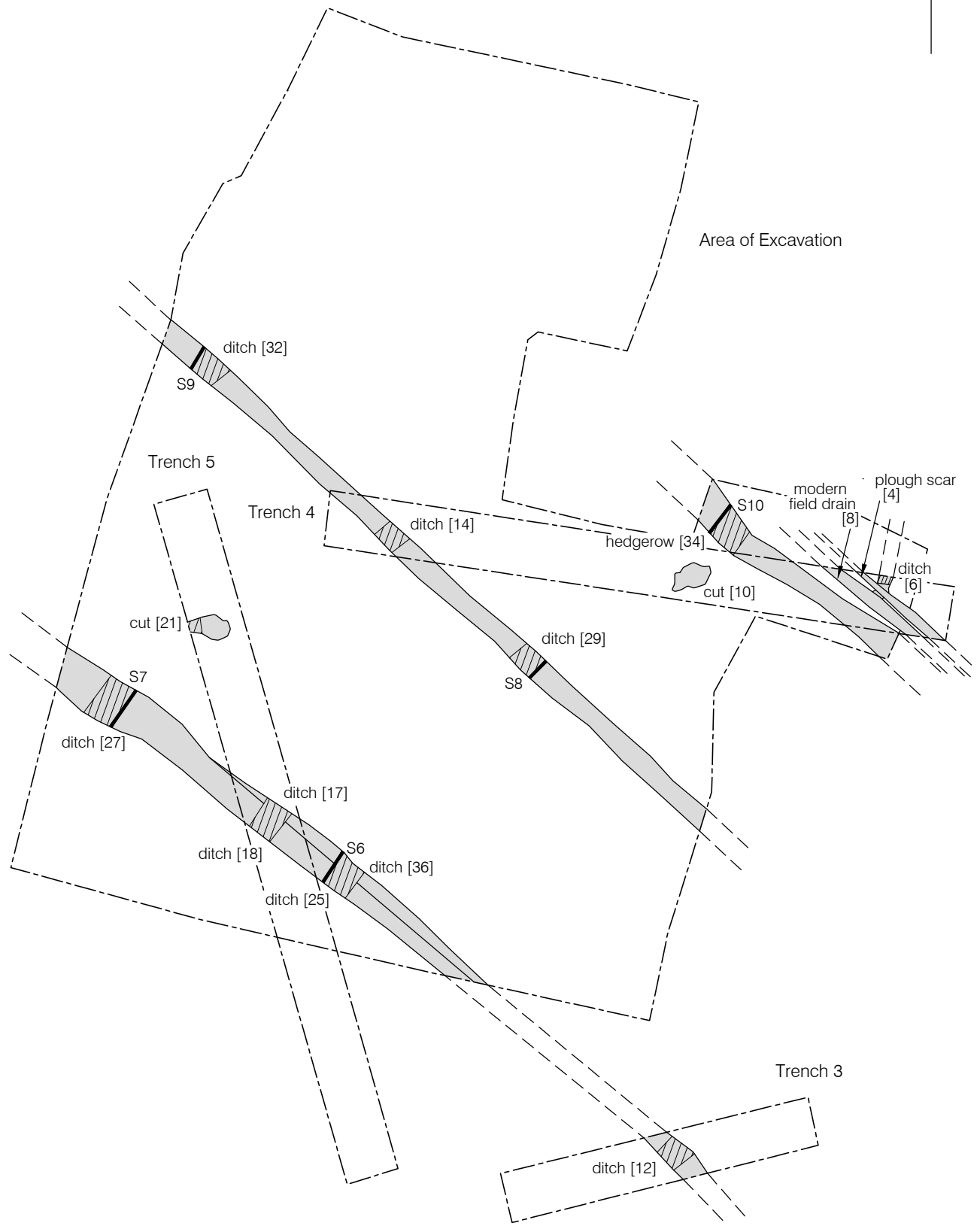


Figure 2  
 Plan showing excavation area and evaluation trenches  
 1:625 at A4



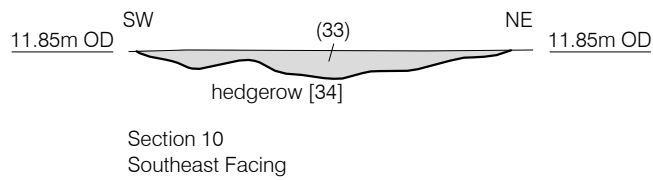
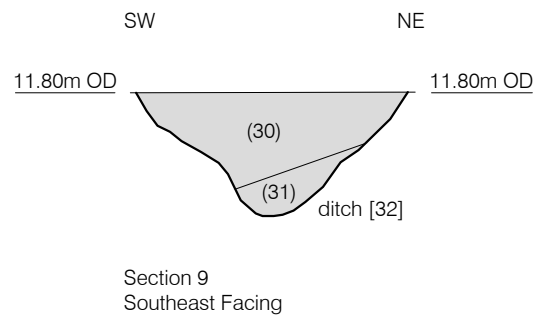
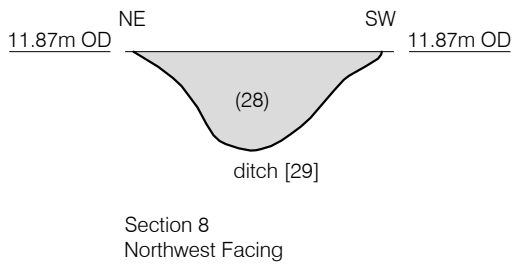
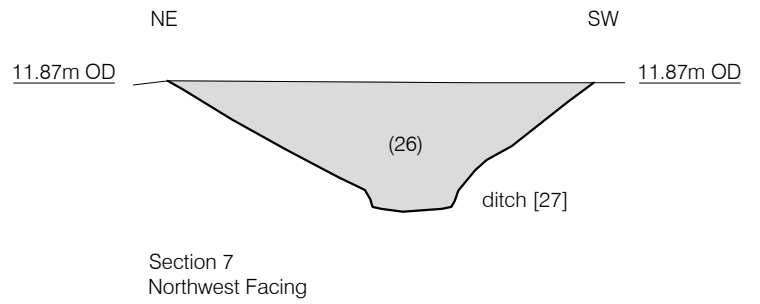
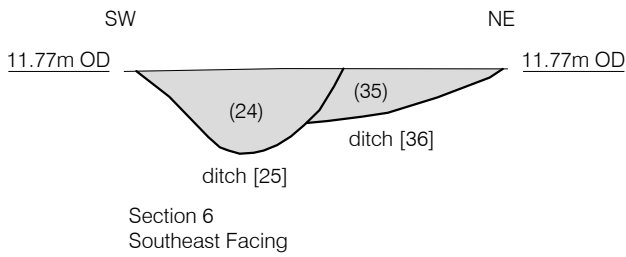
 Excavated slot



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Figure 3  
Trench Plans  
1:200 at A4





**11 APPENDIX 1: PLATES**



Plate 1: Trench 6, view north-east



Plate 2: Ditches [036] and [025], view north-west



Plate 3: Ditch [032], view north-west



Plate 4: Excavation area, view north-west



Plate 5: South-west ditch, view south-east



Plate 6: North-east ditch, view south-east

## 12 APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Cut	Type	Category	Interpretation
001	-	Layer	Topsoil	Overburden
002	-	Layer	Subsoil	Overburden
003	-	Layer	Natural	Geology
004	004	Cut	Modern	Plough Scar
005	004	Fill	Modern	Fill of [004]
006	006	Cut	Ditch	Boundary Ditch
006	006	Fill	Ditch	Fill of [006]
008	008	Cut	Modern	Field Drain
009	008	Fill	Modern	Fill of [008]
010	010	Cut	Natural	Tree throw
011	010	Fill	Natural	Fill of [010]
012	012	Cut	Ditch	Boundary Ditch
013	012	Fill	Ditch	Fill of [012]
014	014	Cut	Ditch	Boundary Ditch
015	014	Fill	Ditch	Fill of [014]
016	014	Fill	Ditch	Fill of [014]
017	017	Cut	Ditch	Boundary Ditch
018	018	Cut	Ditch	Boundary Ditch
019	017	Fill	Ditch	Fill of [017]
020	018	Fill	Ditch	Fill of [018]
021	021	Cut	Ditch	Ditch terminus
022	021	Fill	Ditch	Fill of [021]
023	-	Layer	Made ground	Fill of [146]
024	025	Fill	Ditch	Fill of [025]
025	025	Cut	Ditch	Boundary Ditch
026	027	Fill	Ditch	Fill of [027]
027	027	Cut	Ditch	Boundary Ditch
028	029	Fill	Ditch	Fill of [029]
029	029	Cut	Ditch	Boundary Ditch
030	032	Fill	Ditch	Fill of [032]
031	032	Fill	Ditch	Fill of [032]
032	032	Cut	Ditch	Boundary Ditch
033	034	Fill	Hedgerow	Fill of [034]
034	034	Cut	Hedgerow	Hedgerow
035	036	Fill	Ditch	Fill of [036]
036	036	Cut	Ditch	Boundary Ditch

## 13 APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

### OASIS ID: preconst1-208401

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#### Project details

Project name	Excavation at land at Aylesborough Close, Cambridge CB4 2HH
Short description of the project	This report describes the results of an archaeological excavation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land at Aylesborough Close, Cambridge, CB4 2HH (NGR TL 4486 6101) on the 30th March 2015 to the 8th April 2015. The archaeological work was commissioned by Keepmoat in response to a planning condition attached to the demolition of 24 flats and the erection of 35 private and affordable residential accommodations, with associated car parking, amenity space and ancillary works. The aim of the work was to preserve by record any archaeological remains which would be damaged or destroyed by the new development. The excavation identified an early Roman trackway formed of two parallel linear ditches on a north-west to south-east alignment. The pottery assemblage indicates that the trackway was close to the periphery of an early Roman settlement, which is supported by the known Roman sites within this part of Cambridge.
Project dates	Start: 30-03-2015 End: 08-04-2015
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	CACC15 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	preconst1-199551 - OASIS form ID
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	DITCH Roman

Significant Finds POTTERY Roman

Investigation type "Full excavation"

Prompt National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

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#### Project location

Country England

Site location CAMBRIDGESHIRE CAMBRIDGE CAMBRIDGE Aylesborough Close,  
Cambridge

Postcode CB4 2HH

Study area 0 Square metres

Site coordinates TL 4482 6100 52.2277086257 0.12062570197 52 13 39 N 000 07 14 E Point

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#### Project creators

Name of Organisation Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

Project brief originator Cambridge HET

Project design originator Mark Hinman

Project director/manager Taleyna Fletcher

Project supervisor Stephen Porter

Type of sponsor/funding body Keepmoat

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#### Project archives

Physical Archive Cambridgeshire County Council

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recipient

Physical Archive CACC15

ID

Physical "Ceramics","Environmental"

Contents

Digital Archive Cambridgeshire County Council

recipient

Digital Archive CACC15

ID

Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media "Database","Images raster / digital photography"

available

Paper Archive Cambridgeshire County Council

recipient

Paper Archive CACC15

ID

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media "Context

available sheet","Correspondence","Drawing","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Survey "

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Project

bibliography 1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type

Title Land at Aylesborough Close, Cambridge: An Archaeological Excavation

Author(s)/Editor Porter, S. and Slater, M.

Date 2015

Issuer or Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd  
publisher

Place of issue    Cambridge  
or publication

# 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)

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