

**An Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Station Rd,  
Greenhithe, Kent**

**Site Code: KSGH 06**

**Central National Grid Reference: TQ 582 751**

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**Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, January 2007**

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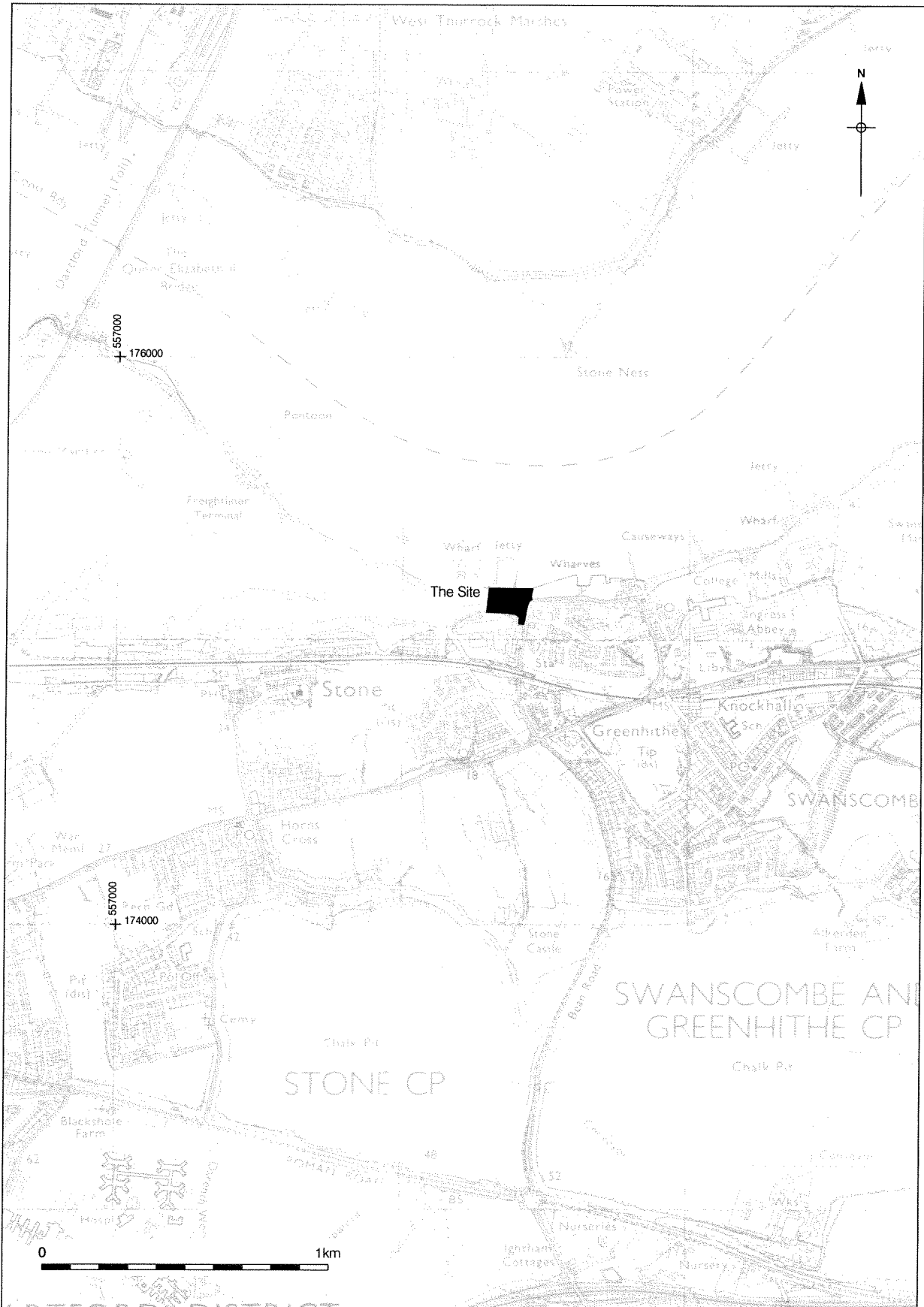
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## **1 ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 An archaeological evaluation of land at Station Rd, Greenhithe, Kent was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd between the 15th and 21st of December 2006. The project was commissioned by Duncan Hawkins of CgMs Consulting on behalf of Fairview New Homes Ltd.
- 1.2 The site is centred on National Grid Reference TQ 582 751. It is bordered by the River Thames to the north, Station Rd and Sara Crescent to the east, retail developments to the west and properties under construction to the south. The trench was located in the south-east corner of the site.
- 1.3 A single evaluation trench was undertaken, designed to confirm the presence or absence of a possible palaeochannel, and determine whether any associated archaeological or geoarchaeological deposits survive. A sequence of made ground overlying 'hillwash' deposits and chalk bedrock was observed in the trench. A large, clay lined water channel and cesspits dated to the 19<sup>th</sup> century were recorded.

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd between the 15th and 21st of December 2006 on land on Station Rd, Greenhithe, Kent. The Project was commissioned by Duncan Hawkins of CgMs Consulting on behalf of Fairview New Homes Ltd, and followed a methodology prepared by CgMs Consulting (Hawkins 2006). The project was managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd by Chris Mayo, and supervised by Guy Seddon.
- 2.2 The site is centred on National Grid Reference TQ 582 751, and consisted of former industrial land. An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment had previously been undertaken, which concluded that the site had a low potential for the prehistoric to early post-medieval periods, before being utilised for small scale residential purposes and then industrial development (Hawkins 2003).
- 2.3 The aim of the evaluation was to investigate the presence or absence of a possible palaeochannel on the site. To achieve this, a single trench measuring 16.0m by 10.2m was designed to allow for the safe excavation to a maximum depth of 4.8m. The trench was targeted at the southeastern corner of the site. It revealed a sequence of made ground overlying 'hillwash' deposits and chalk bedrock. The made ground had been truncated by a large clay lined water channel, identifiable on maps of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Contemporary cesspits were also recorded.



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Figure 1  
 Site Location  
 1:20,000 at A4

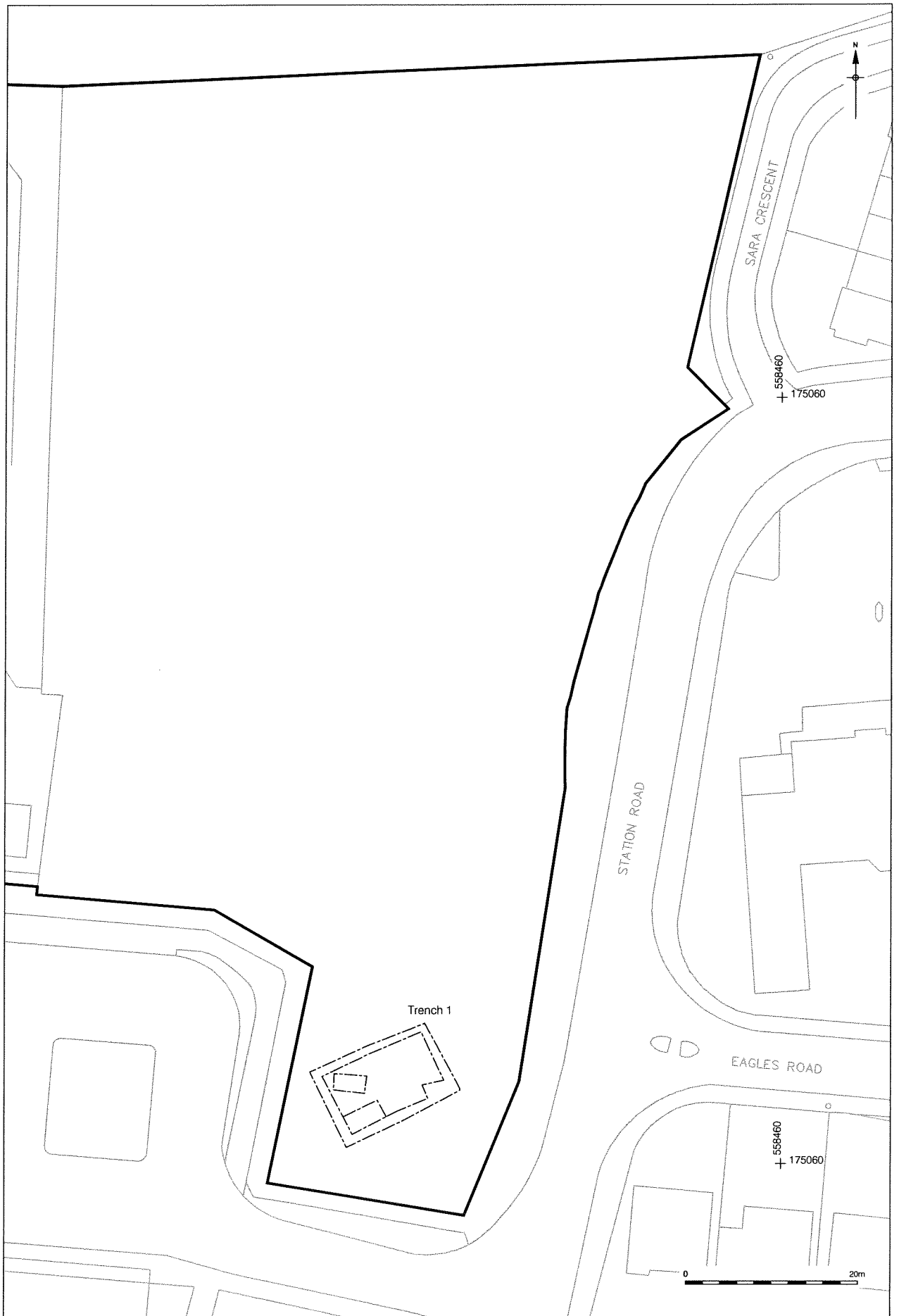


Figure 2  
Trench Location  
1:625 at A4

### **3 PLANNING BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In November 1990 the Department of the Environment issued Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) "Archaeology and Planning", providing guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains.
- 3.2 In considering any planning application for development, the local planning authority is guided by the policy framework set by government guidance, in this instance PPG16, by current Structure and Local Plan policy and by other material considerations.
- 3.3 The relevant Development Plan framework is provided by the Kent Structure Plan and the Dartford Borough Council Local Plan, adopted in 1995, details of which can be seen in the Desk-Based Assessment (Hawkins 2003).

## **4 GEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The underlying geology of the site comprises alluvium over floodplain gravel over chalk bedrock. This sequence is capped by modern reclamation deposits which have artificially raised the ground height (Hawkins 2003, 5).
- 4.2 The Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for the site found a limited potential for remains dating from the prehistoric period, with local evidence limited to isolated findspots or Iron Age activity at Stone Castle to the south (Hawkins 2003, 7).
- 4.3 The Desk-Based Assessment concluded that from the late Prehistoric to early post-medieval periods the site lay within marginal marshland, prone to flooding and therefore unlikely to have been occupied. This scenario continued cartographically until the time of the Ordnance Survey map of 1869, which shows partial development but still signalled the risk of flooding. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial development had begun at the site (Hawkins 2003, 8-10).



## **5 METHODOLOGY**

- 5.1 The project design (Hawkins 2006) required the excavation of a single trench (Trench 1) in the south-east corner of the site, measuring 16.0m by 10.2m at ground level to allow a maximum depth of 4.8m to be achieved safely by steps. Upon completion however, a maximum depth of just 2.4m was necessary due to the depth of natural strata. At base, therefore, the trench measured 12.5m by 7.5m.
- 5.2 The location of the trench, capped with concrete, was broken by a JCB fitted with a breaker under archaeological supervision. A 360° HYMAC excavator was then used to excavate through the underlying strata using a flat-bladed ditching bucket in spits up to a maximum thickness of 100mm. All machining was monitored by a supervising archaeologist. Machining continued until either natural ground or archaeologically sensitive deposits were encountered.
- 5.3 Upon completion, the trench base and its faces were cleaned by archaeologists using hand tools. Any features exposed in plan were investigated. The trench was planned at 1:20 and a long section was drawn at 1:10. The recording of the trench followed Pre-Construct Archaeology's standard procedures, based upon those found in the Museum of London's handbook (Museum of London 1994). The trench was also recorded photographically, using SLR film (black and white film and colour slide).
- 5.4 The levels in this report were taken in relation to a temporary benchmark (value 6.29m OD) was on the site, transferred from an Ordnance Survey Benchmark, located near the southeastern corner of the railway bridge crossing Station Rd (value 7.30m OD).
- 5.5 A unique site code was created for the site: KSGH 06.

## **6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE**

### **6.1 Phase 1: Natural Deposits**

- 6.1.1 Revealed in the base of the trench, at a height of 3.02m OD, was a layer of clean light yellowish white chalk bedrock [18], representing the underlying natural strata.

### **6.2 Phase 2: Roman**

- 6.2.1 Overlying the chalk was layer [11], a compact, mid-dark grey silt-clay, with a thickness of 0.30m. This was recorded at a height of 3.32m OD, and contained occasional flecks of charcoal, daub and small, heavily abraded sherds of Patchgrove pot dating to between 42-200AD. It is probable that this layer represents an ancient episode of solifluction, with soil moving from the higher ground situated to the south of the site.

### **6.3 Phase 3: Late 18th – Early 19th Century**

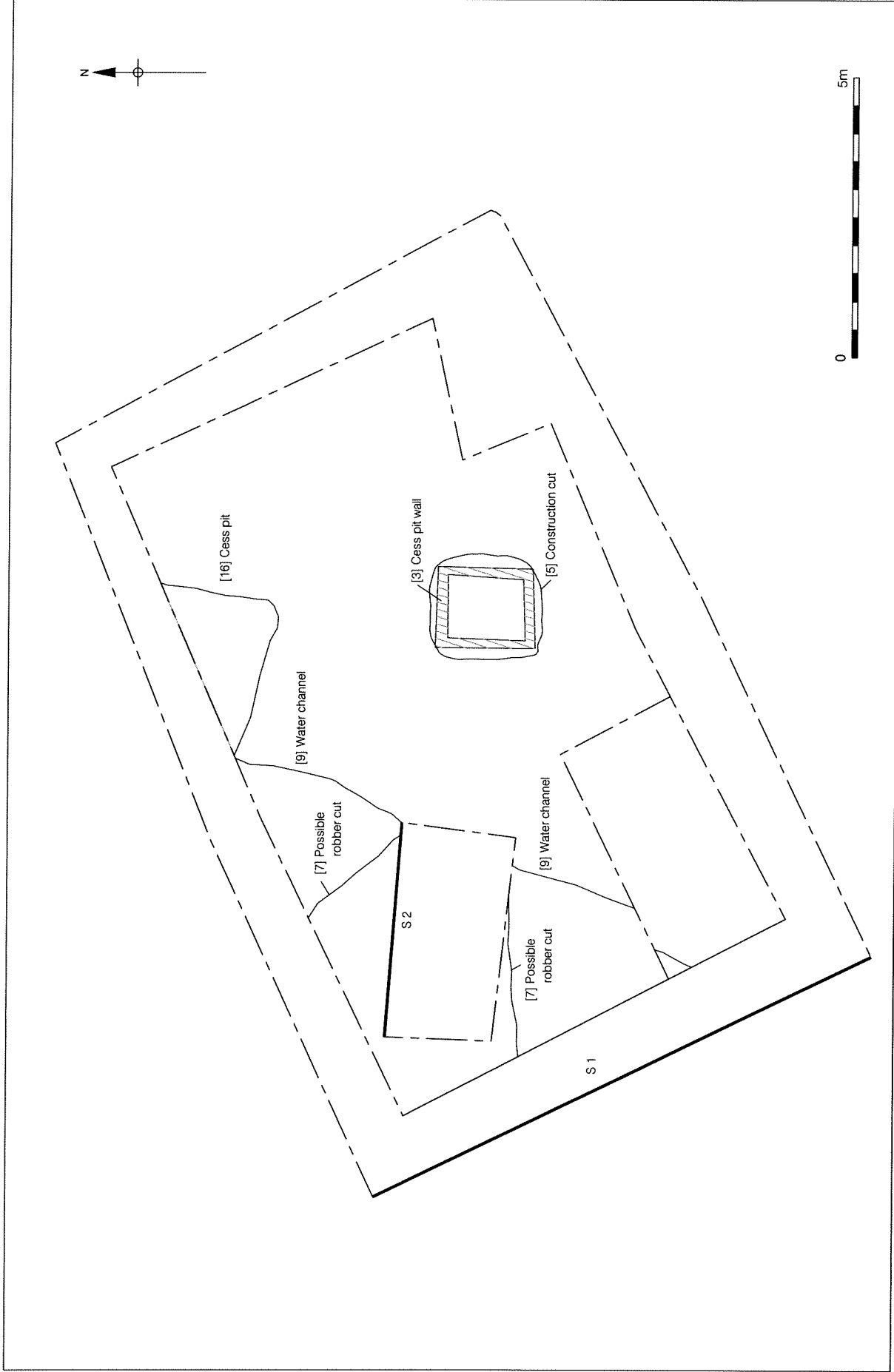
- 6.3.1 Sealing layer [11] was a bed of gravels [10]. It was 1.30m thick, and was recorded at a height of 4.60m OD. It was firmly compacted and comprised moderately sized, rounded and sub-rounded stones in a sandy silt matrix. Small flecks of CBM throughout the layer suggest that it was intentionally deposited in order to raise the ground level.
- 6.3.2 Cutting into the gravel layer [10] were two rectangular cesspits, [5] and [16]. Cesspit [5] had a brick lining, [3], and measured 2.0m N-S by 1.85m E-W. The construction cut was backfilled with [4], a compact, mid greyish green, sandy silt, with frequent rounded and sub-rounded stones. The pit itself was backfilled with [2], a firmly compacted, mid grey sandy, clayey silt. Cesspit [16], measuring 1.65m N-S by 3.35m E-W, had no lining, but contained two fills, [14] and [15]. Fill [14] was a loosely compacted, mid grey, gravelly, sandy silt, which contained pottery and fragments of clay tobacco pipes. Fill [15] was a loose-firmly compacted, mid greenish brown, sandy, gravelly silt. Fragments of pottery dating to between 1825-1850 were recovered from the fills of both cesspits.
- 6.3.3 Also cutting into the gravel layer [10] was a channel [9], which was excavated as far as could safely be undertaken. It was aligned north-south across the western corner of the trench and was excavated to a depth of 1.88mOD. The total width of the feature was not ascertained as it continued under the north-western and south-

western limits of excavation. Its dimensions as recorded were at least 9.50m N-S by 4.75m E-W, with a depth of over 2.24m. It contained four fills, [8], [12], [13] and [17]. The primary fill, [8], was a 2.25m thick, mid yellowish brown clay lining. Sealing this was fill [17], a firm-compact dark bluish grey silty clay, probably representing the sedimentation of the channel. Above this was fill [13], a re-deposited chalk with a thickness of 1.40m thick. It was capped by the tertiary fill [12], a firmly compacted, mid yellowish brown clay, 1m thick. The last two fills are likely to represent the deliberate backfilling and capping of the channel in the late 19th century.

- 6.3.4 Cut into the top of the channel was pit [7]. It was sub-rectangular in plan, measuring at least 3.30m N-S by 4.50m E-W, and had a depth of 1.20m. The sides were steep, almost vertical and it had a flat base. It contained a single fill [6], a loosely compacted mid brownish white, silty chalk and contained frequent brick rubble and occasional pottery fragments dating to 1770-1840. It is thought that the pit was a robber cut, dug to retrieve revetment timbers from the channel.
- 6.3.5 Sealing all the archaeological features was a layer of made ground [1]. It was a dark blackish-grey gravel-silt, measuring 1.15m thick from a highest level of 5.50m OD. The layer contained occasional animal bone and fragments of pottery, CBM and clay tobacco pipes dating to between 1835-1870.

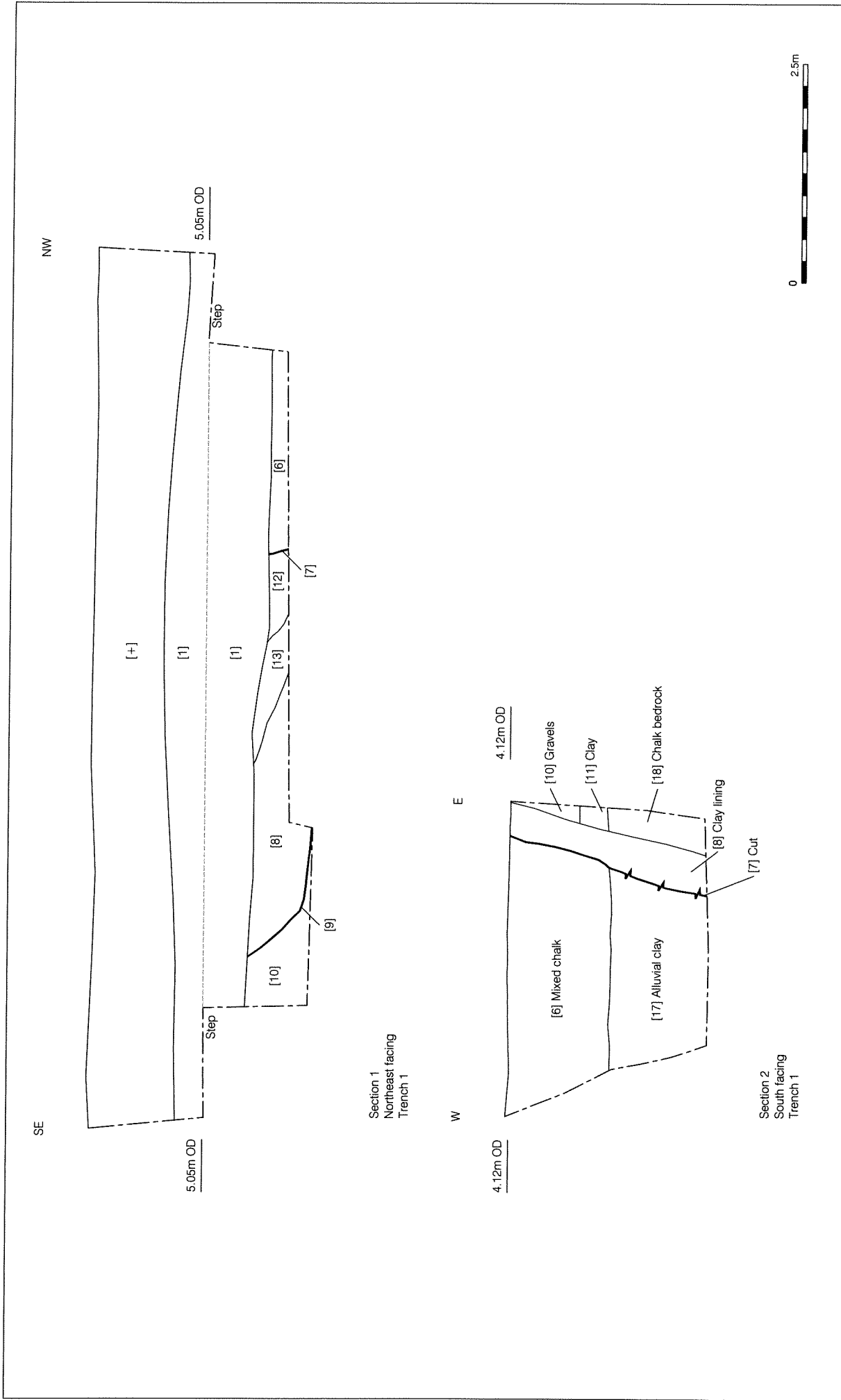
## **7 CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 The archaeological evaluation revealed a man-made watercourse aligned north-south on the south-east of the study site. The channel was of substantial size, with a clay lining, and had been deliberately backfilled. It can be identified with a watercourse depicted on the 1869 OS map leading directly into the River Thames, and artefacts recovered from the feature and a probable robber cut at its upper edge corroborate this date. Two cess pits cut into the underlying gravel, at the same height as the channel, are contemporary and relate to the gradual residential use of the site in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 7.2 Deposit [11] represents a process of hill-wash and can be compared to other evidence in the area. Excavations by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd at Stone Castle to the south revealed a similar topographic process (Haslam 2005). The hill-wash was sealed by a layer of gravel that had been laid as reclamation material to countenance the problems of flooding. Capping all features and deposits was a further layer of made ground, representing ground consolidation for the sites industrial development.
- 7.3 No evidence was found during the evaluation for a palaeochannel or similar deposits.



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Figure 3  
Trench 1  
1:100 at A4



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Figure 4  
Section 1 & 2  
1:60 at A4

## **8 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Haslam, A., 2005 'An Assessment of an Archaeological Excavation on Land at Residential Phase II, Waterstone Park, Stone Castle, Kent' unpub rep for Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Hawkins, D., 2003 'Archaeological Desk Based Assessment: Land at Station Rd, Greenhithe', in Hawkins 2006

Hawkins, D., 2006 'A Specification for an Archaeological Field Evaluation of Land at Station Road, Greenhithe, Kent', unpub doc for CgMs Consulting

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

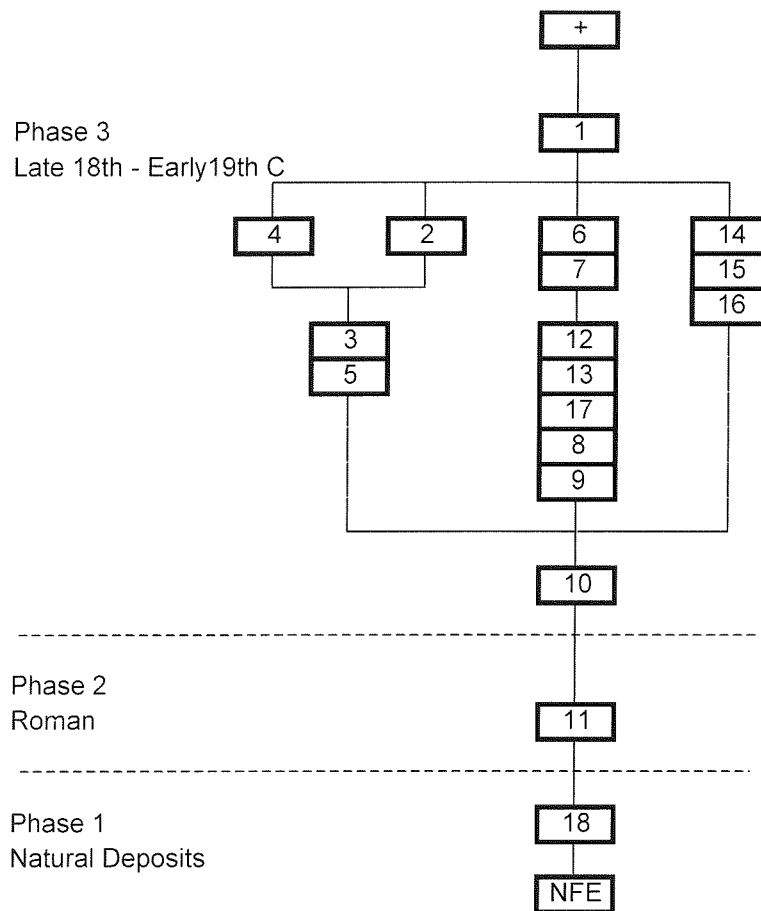
- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Duncan Hawkins of CgMs Consulting for commissioning the work on behalf of Fairview New Homes Ltd. We would also like to thank Wendy Rogers of Kent County Council for monitoring the work.
- 9.2 The author would like to thank Anthony Baxter for his help in the field, Dave Harris for the illustrations, Chris Jarrett for dating the artefacts, Lisa Lonsdale for logistical support and Chris Mayo for project management and editing.



## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Context No	Plan No	Section No	Photo	Type	Fill of	Filled by
1	TR 1	1	Y	Layer	*	*
2	TR 1	*	Y	Fill	5	*
3	TR 1	*	Y	Masonry	5	*
4	TR 1	*	Y	Fill	5	*
5	TR 1	1 & 2	Y	Cut	*	2, 3, 4
6	TR 1	1 & 2	Y	Fill	7	*
7	TR 1	1 & 2	Y	Cut	*	6
8	TR 1	1 & 2	Y	Fill	9	*
9	TR 1	1 & 2	Y	Cut	*	8
10	TR 1	1 & 2	Y	Layer	*	*
11	TR 1	2	Y	Layer	*	*
12	TR 1	1	Y	Fill	9	*
13	TR 1	1	Y	Fill	9	*
14	TR 1	*	Y	Fill	16	*
15	TR 1	*	Y	Fill	16	*
16	TR 1	*	Y	Cut	*	14, 15
17	*	2	Y	Fill	9	*
18	*	2	Y	Layer	*	*

## APPENDIX 2: SITE MATRIX



## APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

**OASIS ID: preconst1-22150**

### Project details

Project name	Land at Station Rd, Greenhithe, Kent
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd between the 15th and 21st of December 2006 on land on Station Rd, Greenhithe, Kent. The Project was commissioned by Duncan Hawkins of CgMs Consulting on behalf of Fairview New Homes Ltd. The aim of the evaluation was to ascertain the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the study area and to observe and record the archaeological sequence. A sequence of made ground overlying 'hillwash' deposits and chalk bedrock was observed in the trench. A large, clay lined water channel and cesspits dated to 1800's were observed and recorded.
Project dates	Start: 15-12-2006 End: 21-12-2006
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	KSGH06 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Monument type	CESSPIT Post Medieval
Monument type	CESSPIT Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Targeted Trenches'
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	General structure plan/local plan/minerals plan guidance
Position in the planning process	Not known / Not recorded

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT DARTFORD SWANSCOMBE AND GREENHITHE Land at Station Rd, Greenhithe, Kent
Postcode	DA9 9XX
Study area	163.20 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 582 751 51.4522291516 0.277095596702 51 27 08 N 000 16 37 E Point
Height OD	Min: 3.32m Max: 3.34m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	CgMs Consulting

Project design originator	CgMs Consulting
Project director/manager	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	Guy Seddon
Type of sponsor/funding body	Development Corporation
Name of sponsor/funding body	Fairveiw New Homes Ltd
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Local museum
Physical Contents	'Animal Bones', 'Ceramics'
Digital Archive recipient	Local museum
Digital Media available	'Spreadsheets', 'Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Media available	'Context sheet', 'Map', 'Matrices', 'Photograph', 'Plan', 'Report', 'Section', 'Unpublished Text'
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Evaluation of land at Station Rd, Greenhithe, Kent
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Seddon, G
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