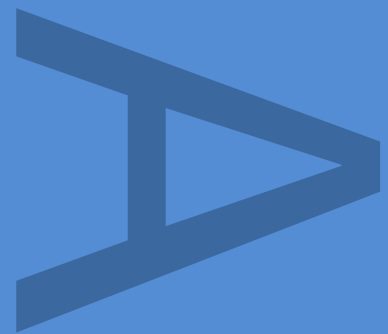


LAND AT SMOCK MILL HOUSE,  
WHITEWAYS, ICKLETON ROAD,  
GREAT CHESTERFORD, ESSEX:  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL  
TRENCH EVALUATION

JUNE 2016



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY  
R12522

LAND AT SMOCK MILL HOUSE, WHITEWAYS,  
ICKLETON ROAD, GREAT CHESTERFORD, ESSEX

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH  
EVALUATION

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd	
Project Number	K4584
Report Number	R12522

	Name & Title	Signature	Date
Text Prepared by:	Mary-Anne Slater		June 2016
Graphics Prepared by:	Jennifer Simonson		June 2016
Graphics Checked by:	Josephine Brown	<i>Josephine Brown</i>	June 2016
Project Manager Sign-off:	Taleyna Fletcher	<i>Taleyna Fletcher</i>	June 2016

Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved

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

**Land at Smock Mill House, Whiteways, Ickleton Road, Great Chesterford,  
Essex:**

**Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation**

**Local Planning Authority:** Uttlesford District Council

**Planning Reference:** UTT/15/1789/FUL

**Central National Grid Reference:** TL 502 425

**Site Code/Event Number:** GC61

**Report No.** R12522

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

**Project Manager:** Taleyna Fletcher

**Commissioning Client:** Mr Adam Green

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

**Tel:** 01223 845522

**E-mail:** tfletcher@pre-construct.com

**Website:** www.pre-construct.com

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**June 2016**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This report describes the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land at Smock Mill House, Whiteways, Ickleton Road, Great Chesterford, Essex (NGR TL 502 425) on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016. The archaeological work was commissioned by Mr Adam Green in response to a planning condition attached to the construction of two residential dwellings with associated garages, access and landscaping. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area.*

*No archaeological features were present in either trench.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) on land at Smock Mill House, Whiteways, Ickleton Road, Great Chesterford, Essex (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 502 425) on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016 (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by Mr Green in response to an archaeological planning condition attached to the construction of two new residential dwellings, with associated garages, access and landscaping (Planning Reference UTT/15/1789/FUL).
- 1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Mary-Anne Slater of PCA (Slater 2016) in response to a letter for archaeological evaluation issued by Richard Havis (Havis 2015) of Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS).
- 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 development proposals on the site's archaeology.
- 1.5 A total of two trial trenches, measuring 30m and 35m, were excavated and recorded.
- 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 Saffron Walden Museum.

## **2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

### **2.1 Geology**

2.1.1 The underlying bedrock is comprised of White Chalk (BGS; Website 1). This sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 66 to 100 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period when the local environment was dominated by warm chalk seas.

2.1.2 The area has superficial deposits of Alluvium - Clay, Silt and Sand (BGS; Website 1). These deposits formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period when the local environment was dominated by rivers.

### **2.2 Topography**

2.2.1 Great Chesterford is situated in the valley of the River Cam. The site lies on the western slope of this valley.

2.2.2 The centre of the site is located at c.42m above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

### **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.1.1 The archaeological background detailed below has been taken from a search of the Essex HER.
- 3.1.2 The site lies approximately 500m south of the Scheduled Monument of Great Chesterford Roman fort and town (SM 1013484). The earliest Roman feature at the site is the fort (HER 4942). The majority of this lies beneath the northern part of the walled Roman town protected in the northern part of the southern area. The fort covered a rectangular area approximately 350m ENE-WSW by 310m with an additional annexe on the north part of the east side which measured c.150m by 75m. Both fort and north eastern annexe are enclosed by a single ditch c.4m wide and c.1.8m deep which survives as a buried feature. An earthen rampart was originally constructed on the inside of the ditch. The fort is believed to have been constructed following the Boudican revolt of AD60. In the second half of the first century AD, during the reign of Nero, the ramparts were pushed back into the ditch, deliberately back-filling it. The deposits and features within the fort enclosures include more ephemeral remains of the short-lived military camp which is believed to have been occupied for only 20 or 30 years from its initial construction.
- 3.1.3 The fort was followed on the site by the Roman town (HER 4915). A masonry wall, which was still visible in the mid-18th century, enclosed a polygonal area of approximately 14.5ha lying approximately north west-south east, its northern half overlapping the site of the earlier fort. Within the walls is a dense concentration of buried features and deposits which includes wall foundations and floors of both public and private buildings, roads, open spaces, rubbish disposal areas and industrial areas. Small scale partial excavation was first undertaken in 1847 by Neville who recovered large quantities of pottery and coins. In 1948-9 further partial excavation noted the remains of timber framed structures dating to the second century. These buildings were superseded by masonry structures in the fourth century, at which date the town wall was also constructed. Also within the enclosed area are three roads, visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs and as surface scatters of construction material, which meet in the centre of the town. The



entrance gates through which these roads ran are to the east, west and north. Also evident as a cropmark on aerial photography is a large circular feature approximately 30m in diameter on the western side of the interior of the enclosed area. It is believed that this indicates the location of an amphitheatre.

- 3.1.4 Since the desertion of the Roman town, probably sometime during the fifth century, the walls have subsequently been robbed for building material and hard core. During the 18th and 19th centuries the walls were quarried particularly for road mending. No remains of the wall survive above ground although parts have been found in several excavations along the eastern edge of the town, as buried foundations and lower courses. Elsewhere the line of the wall is indicated by a robbed-out foundation trench. At the northern end of the town the line of the wall can be traced as a surface scatter of flint within the ploughsoil.
- 3.1.5 A cemetery dating to the fourth century was partly excavated in 1856 between the western town wall and the River Cam; its remains are protected in the southern area (HER 4934). Twenty adult inhumations were recovered, along with 83 Roman coins. A second cemetery was partially excavated by Neville in 1859 (HER 13931). These burials were located approximately 200 yards to the north of the enclosed town. A total of over 100 burials were recovered at this time including both inhumations and cremations. On the western edge of this area, which had been identified by Neville as a Roman cemetery, a mix of Roman and Anglo-Saxon burials were excavated in the 1950's (HER 4939). A total of 160 inhumation and 33 cremation burials were located on the eastern edge of the quarry which lies to the north west of the walled town. This northern burial area is believed to extend to the east at least as far as Newmarket Road, as further burials were recovered from the areas of 19th century quarrying adjacent to the road.
- 3.1.6 The 13th century parish church of All Saints, which sits within the second walled enclosure of the Roman town, lies approximately 380m north-east of the site (HER 13890). It lies on the southern side of Church Street, which

together with Carmen Street and the High Street, is thought to have created a triangular marketplace and green during the medieval period. Many of the villages 16th and 17th century buildings incorporate earlier structures to the rear, suggesting that the original buildings were set back about 4m from the road verge.

- 3.1.7 Immediately to the south-west of the site is the location of the Great Chesterford Smock Mill, which was demolished c.1918 (HER 4989). The mill stopped working in 1903. The tower seems to have been built mostly of wood with the brick base only being about 0.3m above the ground.

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Excavation and Sampling**

4.1.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation proposed the excavation of two trial trenches, positioned across the footprint of the houses (Figure 2).

4.1.2 Ground reduction was carried out under archaeological supervision using a 7-ton tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m-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 and hoe as appropriate and all further excavation was undertaken manually using hand tools. Overburden deposits were set aside beside each trench and examined visually and with a metal-detector for finds retrieval.

4.1.3 Metal-detecting was carried out during the topsoil and subsoil stripping and throughout the excavation process.

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

### **4.2 Recording Methodology**

4.2.1 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.

4.2.2 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 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.

4.2.3 High-resolution digital photographs were taken at all stages of the evaluation process.

## 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

### 5.1 Trench 1

5.1.1 No archaeological features were present.

TRENCH 1	Figure 2	Plate 1	
Trench Alignment: NE-SW	Length: 35m	Level of Natural (m OD): 41.3	
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)	
		NE End	SW End
Topsoil	(100)	0.2	0.25
Subsoil	(101)	0.2-0.76	0.25-0.7
Natural (max machined depth)	(102)	0.76+	0.7+
<b>Summary</b>			
No archaeological features were present in this trench.			

### 5.2 Trench 2

5.2.1 No archaeological features were present.

TRENCH 2	Figure 2	Plate 2	
Trench Alignment: NW-SE	Length: 30m	Level of Natural (m OD): 41.3-41.7	
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)	
		NW End	SE End
Topsoil	(100)	0.31	0.28
Subsoil	(101)	N/A	0.2-0.71
Natural (max machined depth)	(102)	0.31+	0.71+
<b>Summary</b>			
No archaeological features were present in this trench.			

## **6 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS**

6.1.1 Two trenches were excavated within the footprint of the proposed development.

6.1.2 Despite the proximity of archaeological activity in the area no features or deposits were seen during the evaluation of this site. The topsoil and subsoil lay directly above the natural superficial deposits, which remained undisturbed by human activity.

## **7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

7.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Mr Adam Green for commissioning the work. PCA are also grateful to Richard Havis of Essex County Council Place Services for his advice and for monitoring the work. The author would like to thank Taleyna Fletcher for managing the project and PCA's CAD department for preparing the figures.

## **8 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **8.1 Printed Sources**

Havis, R. 2015 Specialist Archaeological Advice – Land at Smock Mill House, Whiteways, Ickleton Road, Great Chesterford, Essex. Essex County Council Place Services (letter)

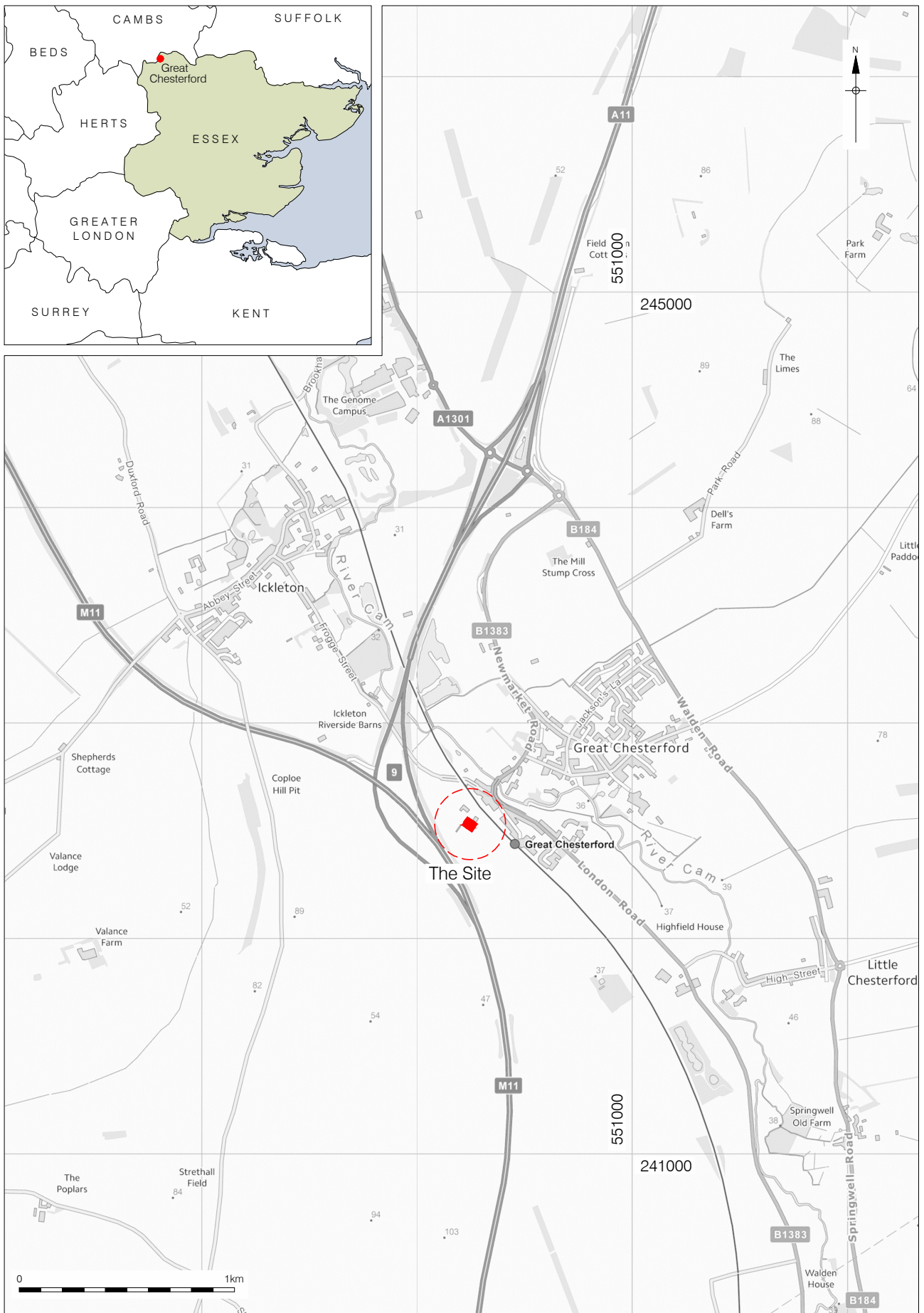
Slater, M. 2016 Written Scheme of Investigation for a Trenched Archaeological Evaluation on Land at Smock Mill House, Whiteways, Ickleton Road, Great Chesterford, Essex. Pre-Construct Archaeology (unpublished)

### **8.2 Websites**

1) Geology of Britain Viewer Date accessed 13/06/2016

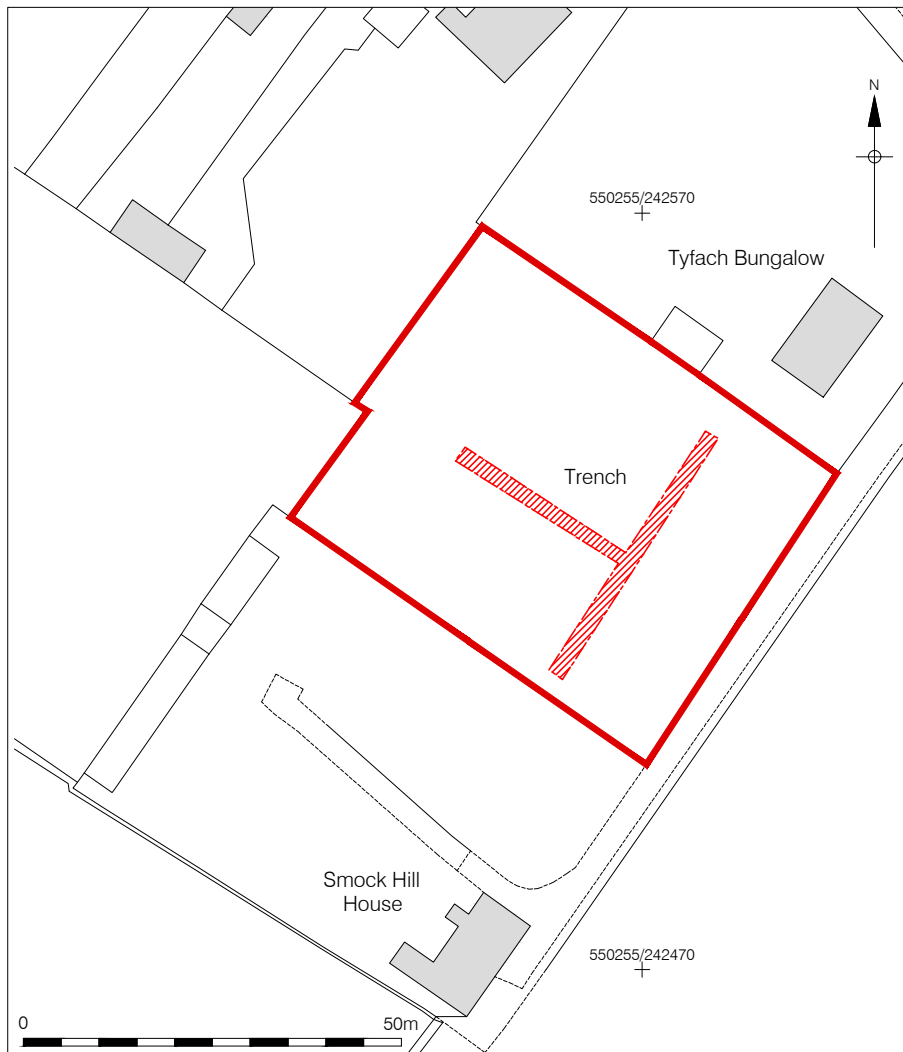
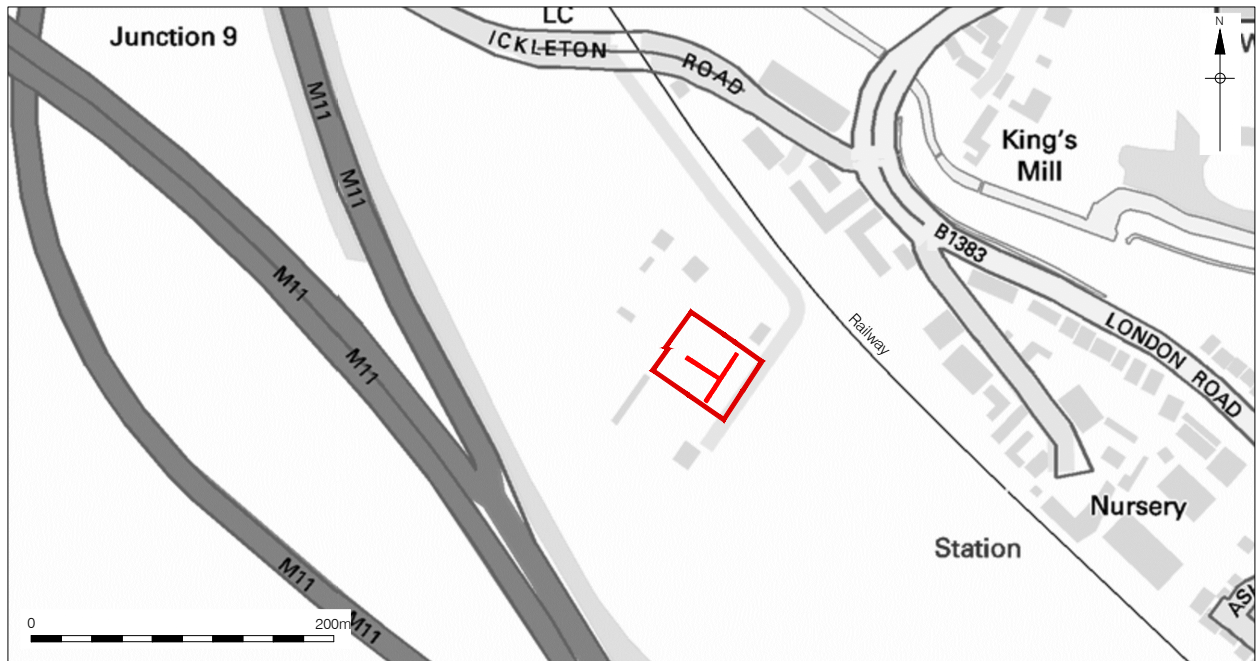
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>





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 15/06/16 JS\_revision 1

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



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 15/06/16 JS\_revision 1

Figure 2  
 Detailed Site Location and Trench Location  
 1:5,000 and 1:1,000

**9 APPENDIX 1: PLATES**



Plate 1: Trench 1, view north-east



Plate 2: Trench 2, view south-east

## 10 APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM

### OASIS ID: preconst1-254631

#### Project details

Project name	Land at Smock Mill House, Whiteways, Ickleton Road, Great Chesterford, Essex: Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation
Short description of the project	This report describes the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land at Smock Mill House, Whiteways, Ickleton Road, Great Chesterford, Essex (NGR TL 502 425) on the 13th June 2016. The archaeological work was commissioned by Mr A. Green in response to a planning condition attached to the construction of two residential dwellings with associated garages, access and landscaping. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area. No archaeological features were present in either trench.
Project dates	Start: 13-06-2016 End: 13-06-2016
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	GC61 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 2 - Undisturbed Grassland
Monument type	N/A None
Significant Finds	N/A None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Planning condition



### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land at Smock Mill House, Whiteways, Ickleton Road, Great Chesterford, Essex: Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Slater, M.
Date	2016
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Place of issue or publication	Cambridge

## 11 APPENDIX 3: ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Site name/Address:</b> Land at Smock Mill House, Whiteways, Ickleton Road, Great Chesterford, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Great Chesterford	<b>District:</b> Uttlesford
<b>NGR:</b> TL 502 425	<b>Site Code:</b> GC61
<b>Type of Work:</b> Evaluation	<b>Site Director/Group:</b> Mary-Anne Slater
<b>Date of Work:</b> 13/06/2016	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b>
<b>Location of Finds/Curating Museum:</b>	<b>Funding source:</b> Developer
<b>Further Seasons Anticipated?:</b> No	<b>Related HER Nos</b>
<b>Final Report:</b> Land at Smock Mill House, Whiteways, Ickleton Road, Great Chesterford, Essex: An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation	
<b>Periods Represented:</b> N/A	
<b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b>	
<p>This report describes the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land at Smock Mill House, Whiteways, Ickleton Road, Great Chesterford, Essex (NGR TL 502 425) on the 13th June 2016. The archaeological work was commissioned by Mr Adam Green in response to a planning condition attached to the construction of two residential dwellings with associated garages, access and landscaping. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area.</p> <p>No archaeological features were present in either trench.</p>	
<b>Previous Summaries/Reports:</b>	
N/A	
<b>Author of Summary:</b> Mary-Anne Slater	<b>Date of Summary:</b> 16/06/2016

# 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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