LAND OFF STENSON ROAD, STENSON, DERBYSHIRE

## AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL STRIP, MAP AND RECORD AND WATCHING BRIEF



July 2016

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY LTD R12539

#### Land off Stenson Road, Stenson, Derbyshire, DE73 7HL:

#### An Archaeological Strip, Map and Record and Watching Brief

Local Planning Authority:	South Derbyshire District Council
Planning Reference:	9/2014/0998
Central NGR:	SK 326 300
Site Code:	SRSD15
Written and researched by:	Donald Sutherland
Project Manager:	Kevin Trott
Commissioning Client:	Bryan Wolsey (Planning) Ltd on behalf of Shone Building Ltd
Contractor:	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
	Midlands Office
	17-19 Kettering Road
	Little Bowden
	Market Harborough
	Leicestershire
	LE16 8AN
Tel:	01858 46833
E-mail:	
	Ktrott@pre-construct.com
Website:	Ktrott@pre-construct.com www.pre-construct.com

#### July 2016

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#### ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of an archaeological strip, map and record and watching brief carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology at Land off Stenson Road, Stenson, Derbyshire, DE73 7HL (NGR SK 326 300). The strip, map and record element was undertaken between the 9th and the 13th of November 2015 whilst the watching brief occurred on the 18<sup>th</sup> of November and the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2015. The archaeological work was commissioned by Bryan Wolsey (Planning) Ltd on behalf of Shone Building Ltd prior construction. The proposed development will comprise the construction of a swimming pool and cycle hire centre. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area.

The earliest undated activity on the site was present to the northwest of the site area, and consisted of a shallow, oval shaped pit feature. The only other archaeological feature of note was an undated linear ditch, situated to the west of the pit. Two layers of modern levelling were also identified as well as two layers of colluvium. A single mid/late 13<sup>th</sup> to early/mid-14<sup>th</sup> century Burley Hill, near Derby jug handle was recovered from the topsoil along with a prehistoric flake.

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological strip, map and sample and watching brief were undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) at land off Stenson Road, Stenson, Derbyshire, DE 73 7HL (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) SK 326 300) from the 9th to the 13<sup>th</sup> and on the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 2015. The site was revisited between December 2015 and April 2016 during the excavation of three test pits and service trenches (**Figure 3**).
- 1.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by Bryan Wolsey (Planning) Ltd on behalf of Shone Building Ltd. The proposed development will comprise the construction of a swimming pool and cycle hire centre with associated water and fuel tanks; trenches were also dug to connect the site to mains water and electricity (Planning Reference 9/2014/0998). In addition, a 2m x 2m trench was excavated to the southeast of the site to hold a water tank and three 0.7m x 2.2m x 2m test pits were excavated at points around the building footprint (see Figure 3).
- 1.3 The archaeological works were carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Donald Sutherland of Pre Construct Archaeology Ltd (Sutherland 2015) following consultation with the Derbyshire County Archaeologist Steve Baker.
- 1.4 The aim of the strip, map and record element of work was to expose the construction footprint and to identify whether or not any archaeology was likely to be impacted by the development. The watching brief element was conducted to cover areas of construction not covered during the initial strip, map and record. Both elements of the archaeological works sought 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 The area of the building's footprint was stripped to natural ground or the maximum level of development and features were excavated and recorded. Natural ground was not reached in the western portion of the site at a depth of over 1.5m. Following a meeting with the County Archaeologist, Steve Baker, it was decided that an archaeologist would return to observe the excavation of the building's footings in this area. Archaeological observation also occurred during the excavation of associated services for the installation of a water and an oil tank.
- 1.6 This report describes the results of the archaeological works. The site archive will be deposited when facilities are made available by Derbyshire County Council.

#### 2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

#### 2.1 Geology

- 2.1.1 The British Geological Survey indicates that the underlying bedrock geology of the site is comprised of 'Gunthorpe Member Mudstone', a red-brown mudstone with subordinate dolomitic siltstone and fine-grained sandstone, greenish grey, common gypsum veins and nodules (BGS 2015). The study area appears to lie on a ridge of superficial deposits made up of Egginton Common Sand and Gravel (BGS 2015).
- 2.1.2 The superficial geology (03) was present across the site as a mixed mid red/orange sandy gravel. The topsoil (01) and subsoil (02) deposits were present throughout the site as a mid, grey-brown sandy silt and a light brown-orange silty sand, respectively. However, in some areas of the site these deposits had been buried by modern levelling layers and a new, mid grey-brown sandy silt, topsoil (05) was evident atop a modern gravel levelling layer (04).

#### 2.2 Topography

- 2.2.1 The site comprises an area of approximately 1ha. It is located on the eastern edge of Stenson, Derby, off Stenson Road. The site is bounded on the west by Stenson Road, to the south by the Trent and Mersey Canal and to the north by Canal site Farm; the land to the east is agricultural land. The site is centered at NGR SK 326 300.
- 2.2.2 The area of the site being developed lies at an elevation of approximately 51-52m aOD (above Ordnance Datum).

#### 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

#### 3.1 General

- 3.1.1 The site lies in an area of known archaeological significance, as recorded in the Derbyshire Historic Environment Record (HER). This archaeological and historical background has been drawn from the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) compiled by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (Sutherland 2015).
- 3.1.2 There are no designated heritage assets within the site area.

#### 3.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.2.1 The site lies within the hamlet of Stenson which has been settled since at least the early medieval period and is mentioned twice in the Domesday Book (1086) where it is paired with neighbouring Twyford. The first entry states that 'Wulfstan held 0.50 carucates in Twyford and Stenson, Derbyshire TRE. This property was held by Henry de Ferrers TRW. It was worth [value data not specified] TRE, and [value data not specified] TRW.' The second entry refers to Leofric as holding landed in Twyford and Stenson in 1066 to a value of £8 which held 9 households. The land was held in 1086 by Henry of Ferrers (Phillimore 6, 86).
- 3.2.2 The location of the early settlement of Stenson itself is not currently clear and there is no direct evidence of such activity in the development site itself. However, there is a possible medieval settlement site *c*.400m to the southwest of the study site which may represent this phase of occupation in the area.
- 3.2.3 Of greatest concern with regard to the development of this site was the presence of a significant amount of known prehistoric activity in the vicinity. The gravel terraces of the Trent Valley are associated with significant concentrations of prehistoric archaeology and the area surrounding this development site certainly appears to fit this model. The Derbyshire Historic Environment Record (DHER) records sherds of Beaker pottery found during quarrying *c*.125m northeast of the site and a dense area of cropmarks which are likely to represent a multiphase prehistoric occupation site have been identified *c*.125m to the southwest. Additionally, a Palaeolithic hand axe was discovered *c*.500m to the northwest and there are two possible late prehistoric/early Roman enclosure sites *c*.700m south and *c*.900m southeast of the study area.
- 3.2.4 Cartographic evidence indicates the study site has been clear and has most likely been used as agricultural land since at least the OS County Series map of 1882.

#### 4 METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 Excavation and Sampling

- 4.1.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation proposed that the building footprint would undergo a supervised strip, map and sample whilst the proposals outside the building's direct footprint would be subject to an archaeological watching brief; the watching brief element of the works was subject to change depending on what was found during the strip, map and sample (Figures 2 and 3). Following the stripping of the site to natural, a meeting with the Derbyshire County Archaeologist occurred at the site on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November. At this stage it was determined that an archaeologist would return to monitor the installation of the building footings at the northwest edge of the site as natural ground had not yet been reached (at a depth of over 1.5m). The installation of the water tank was also decided to be subject to a watching brief.
- 4.1.2 Ground reduction was originally carried out carried out under archaeological supervision using a 14-ton tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 2m-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 (Plate 2). Exposed surfaces were cleaned by trowel and hoe as appropriate and all further excavation was undertaken manually using hand tools.
- 4.1.3 Metal-detecting was carried out during the topsoil and subsoil stripping and throughout the excavation process. Archaeological features and spoil heaps were scanned by metal-detector as they were encountered/ created.
- 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).
- 4.1.5 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. Following on site consultation with the Derbyshire County Archaeologist, Steve Baker, the decision was made to observe the excavations for the footings at the western edge of the site, where natural ground had not been reached.
- 4.1.6 Discrete features such as pits and postholes were at least 50% excavated.

#### 4.2 Recording Methodology

4.2.1 The limits of excavations, heights above Ordnance Datum (m aOD) and the locations of archaeological features and interventions were recorded using a combination of hand-planning and a Leica 1200 GPS rover unit with RTK differential correction, giving three-dimensional accuracy of 20mm or better.

- 4.2.2 Manual plans and section drawings of archaeological features and deposits were drawn at an appropriate scale (1:10, 1:20, 1:50 or 1:200).
- 4.2.3 Deposits or the removal of deposits judged by the excavating archaeologist to constitute individual events were each assigned a unique record number (often referred to within British archaeology as 'context numbers') and recorded utilising PCA's printed pro-forma. 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]. All features and deposits recorded during the archaeological works are listed in Appendix 2. Artefacts recovered during excavation were assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved.
- 4.2.4 High-resolution digital photographs were taken at all stages of the archaeological works. 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.
- 4.2.5 Artefacts and ecofacts were collected by hand and assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved, receiving appropriate care prior to removal from the site (IfA 2014).

#### 5 THE RESULTS

#### 5.1 The Archaeological Sequence

- 5.1.1 The archaeological works uncovered a limited sequence of archaeology with only two features being identified as well as two layers of modern levelling.
- 5.1.2 The most significant results of archaeological works were the two undated features identified at the site's western end. The oldest of these was an oval-shaped, shallow pit feature [08] which underlay a layer of colluvium (07). The pit contained a fill of firm mid orangey grey sandy silt that contained occasional charcoal moderate sub-angular small stones and a moderate amount of gravel flint (09). The fill was sampled and analysed to provide further information on the feature however the samples were found to be sterile (apart from a few flecks of charcoal), with no archaeological or palaeoenvironmental finds.
- 5.1.3 The second feature identified was a narrow linear ditch, running on a north-south alignment c.0.75m west of the pit. The ditch was c.0.62m wide and c.0.19m deep, it ran across the whole stripped area [10]. The ditch contained a single fill of dark greyish brown soft/friable clayey silt with a moderate/occasional amount of small sounded pebbles and very occasional charcoal (11). No finds were recorded during its excavations however the fill was sampled in an attempt to obtain more information and dating material. Again, the samples were found to be sterile for this feature.
- 5.1.4 Other than these two features, two modern layers were identified above which a new topsoil had formed (05). These consisted of material that had been deposited during landscaping to create the level terrace that exists today. The upper layer was a layer of mid-orange firm/compacted gravel and sand that was a fairly regular depth of *c*.0.30m and created a level surface (04). To the north of the site, on the upper slope this layer overlay an old topsoil (01) and subsoil (02) and further to the west it overlay an additional layer of modern landscaping. It is presumed that the old topsoil and subsoil were removed during landscaping as they are not evident in the western area. This second layer of modern build up consisted of a firm dark grey brown sandy silt with orange inclusions (06). The layer of material contained occasional brick, glass and modern material and the tracked in coal was observed at points during the machining of the area. This material was likely deposited as a means of landscaping and was built up on the side of the slope to create a larger, level area. This layer was also observed in Test Pit 2 during the observation on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2015 and at this time was allocated context (301).

#### 5.2 Additional Deposits

5.2.1 As mentioned previously, a topsoil (**01**) consisting of loose mid-grey brown sandy silt was identified in the east of the site. The handle fragment from a locally produced medieval jug was recovered from this layer along with a prehistoric flake. This topsoil overlies a light, brownish orange subsoil consisting of silty sand (**02**). These layers are buried by the modern,

built up layer (**06**) in the west of the site which is in turn overlain by the gravel levelling layer (**04**) and a new topsoil consisting of loose, mid-grey brown sandy silt (**05**).

- 5.2.2 In addition, two layers of colluvium were identified in the west of the development area. Beneath the modern levelling layer (06) a layer of mid-grey sandy silt with orange inclusions was identified that contained occasional small sub-rounded stones (07). Beneath this layer was an additional layer of colluvium consisting of firm mid grey sandy silt with occasional small sub-rounded stones and degraded stone (12). During the observation between December 2015 and April 2016, another possible layer of colluvium was identified. This consisted of friable mid-orange brown sandy silt with frequent pebbles (302).
- 5.2.3 In addition to these observed deposits, natural ground was observed across the site. This natural ground generally consisted of a moderately firm/loose mix of mid-red/orange sand and gravel that contained frequent/moderate small sub-rounded stones and a moderate amount of flint (**03**).

#### 6 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

#### 6.1 Archaeological Activity

- 6.1.1 The earliest feature identified in the programme of works was an oval shaped pit of unknown date which lay towards the northwest of the building footprint. Unfortunately, despite the fact that the feature was 100% excavated, no datable material was recovered. An environmental sample of the feature's fill also proved sterile.
- 6.1.2 To the west of this feature ran a narrow linear ditch/gully which post-dates the pit. However, like the pit, no dating evidence was recovered the fill and samples taken proved sterile.
- 6.1.3 Two artefacts were recovered from the buried topsoil (**01**), A medieval jug handle and a prehistoric flake.
- 6.1.4 All other activity identified on the site consisted of modern landscaping.

#### 6.2 Conclusions

- 6.2.1 The archaeological programme has identified two features of unknown date despite excavation and sampling (an oval pit and a linear ditch/gully). Due to the lack of finds and dating evidence, it is unclear as to the overall purpose of these features other than use as a possible pit and ditch/gully. The fact that the environmental samples taken from these features were both sterile suggests that they were unlikely to be in close proximity to any settlements.
- 6.2.2 In addition, modern levelling/build up layers were identified. Beyond these, no further archaeological evidence was identified during the programme of works.

#### 7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

7.1.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Bryan Wolsey (Planning) Ltd on behalf of Shone Building Ltd for commissioning the work and C.W. Plant Hire for operating the excavator. PCA are also grateful to Steve Baker, the Derbyshire County Archaeologist, for his advice and for monitoring the work. The author would like to thank Kevin Trott of PCA for managing the project. The author would also like to thank the Steve Jones for his work on site, and finally PCA's CAD department for preparing the figures.

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1) http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html. Date accessed 10-12-15



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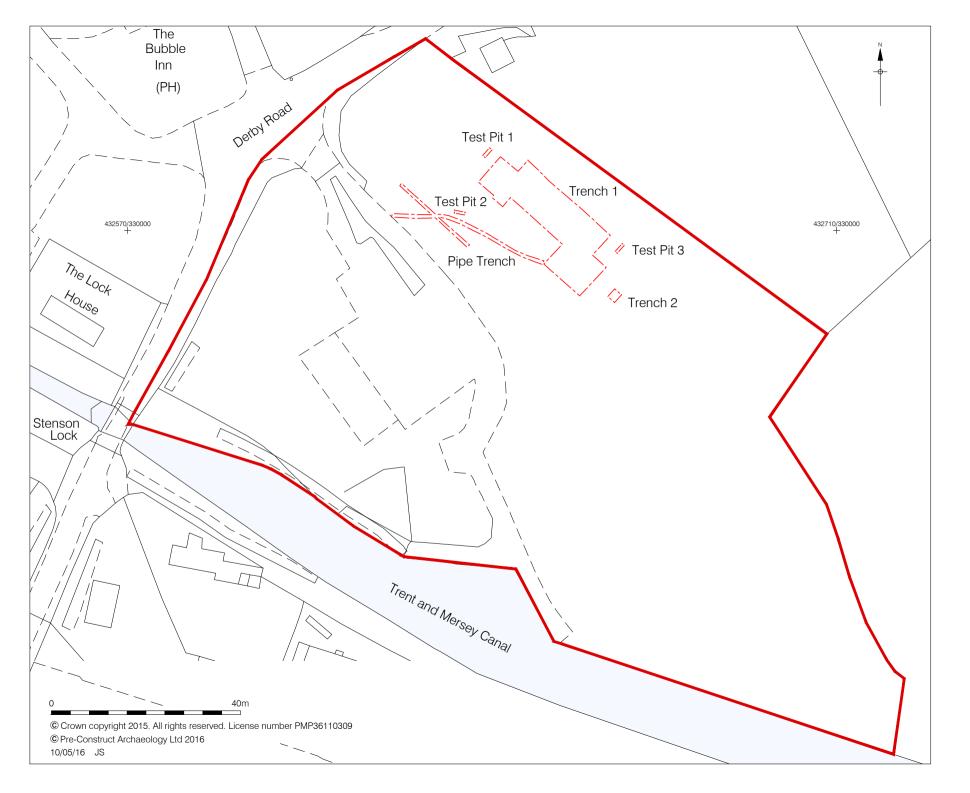
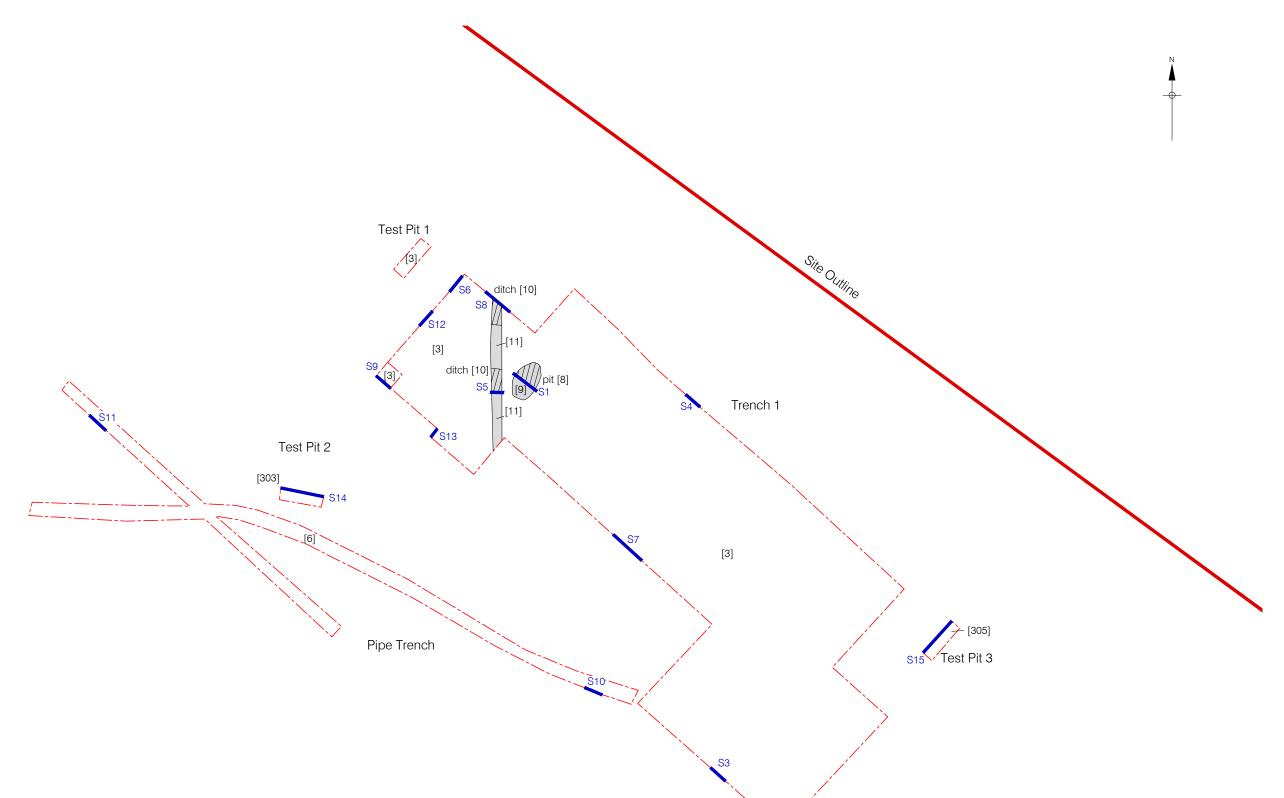


Figure 2 Trench Location 1:800 at A4



Excavated slot in features [8] & [10]

0 10m © Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd 2016 10/05/16 JS

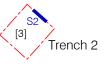
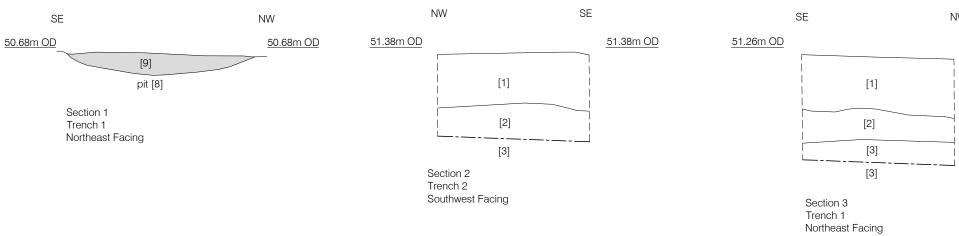
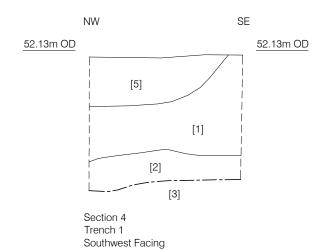
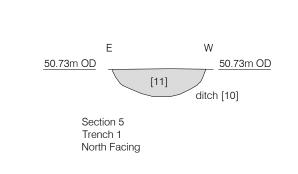
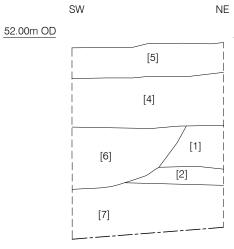


Figure 3 Plan of Features 1:200 at A3

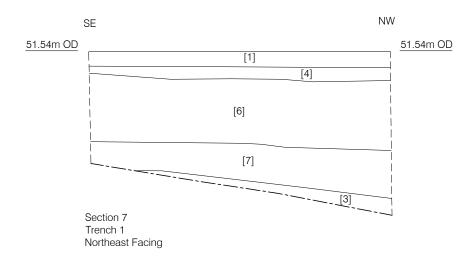


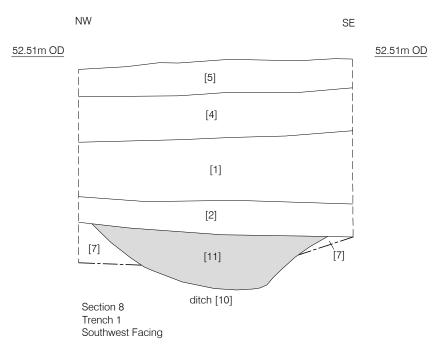






Section 6 Trench 1 Southeast Facing





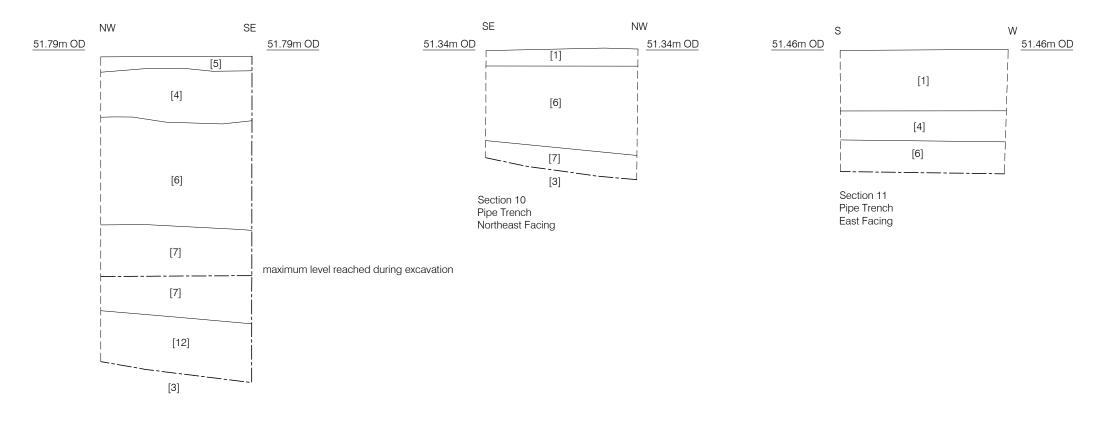
© Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd 2016 10/05/16 JS

NW

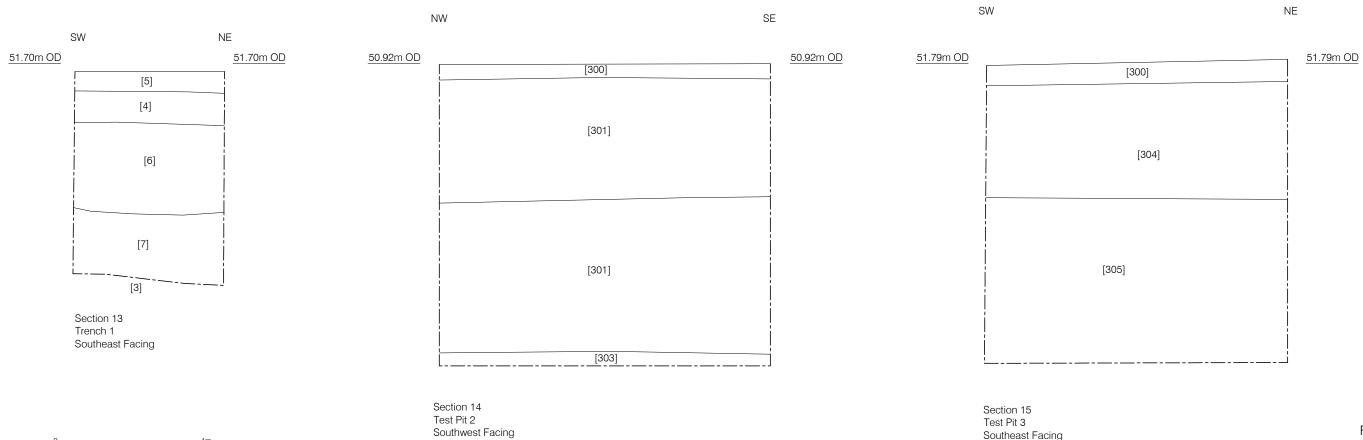
51.26m OD

52.00m OD

Figure 4 Sections 1 - 8 1:25 at A3





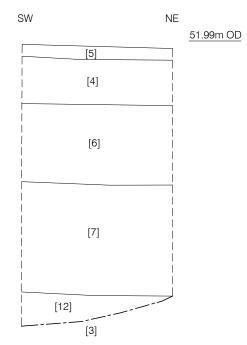


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Southeast Facing

Figure 5 Sections 9 -15 1:25 at A3





51.99m OD

### **APPENDIX 1: PLATES**



Plate 1: East facing shot of building footprint showing features [08] and [10].



Plate 2: North-northwest facing shot of building footprint and excavated trench for water tank.

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Plate 3: Northwest facing shot of trench cut for services.



Plate 4: North facing shot of Test Pit 2 and Section 14.



Plate 5: Northeast facing shot of Section 8.



Plate 6: Northeast facing shot of Section 4.



Plate 7: Southwest facing shot of Section 1.



Plate 8: Northwest facing shot of Section 6.



Plate 9: Southwest facing shot of Section 9.



Plate 10: Southwest facing shot of Section 11.

#### **APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX**

Con	Cate	Description		late un attation	Above	Below	Finds	
Context	Category	Colour	Texture	Inclusions	Interpretation	Above	Below	rinus
01	Layer	Mid grey brown	Loose sandy silt	Frequent small sub-rounded stones; occasional flint and brick fragments.	Topsoil (buried in some areas)	02		
02	Layer	Light brownish orange	Loose silty sand	Moderate/frequent small sub- rounded stones; occasional flint and a single possible brick fragment.	Subsoil	03	01	
03	Layer	Mid red/orange	Moderately firm/loose mix of sand and gravel	Mix of sand and gravel varying across site	Natural		02	
04	Layer	Mid orange	Firm/cemented sand and gravel	Compact sand and gravel	Modern gravel levelling layer	01	05	
05	Layer	Mid grey brown	Loose sandy silt	Frequent small sub-rounded stones; occasional flint and brick fragments; occasional metal.	New topsoil	04		
06	Layer	Dark grey brown	Firm sandy silt	Occasional brick, glass and	Modern made up ground	07	04	

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		with orange		other modern material				
		inclusions						
07	Layer	Mid grey with	Firm sandy silt	Occasional small sub-rounded	Layer of colluvium	03; 12	02; 06	
	Luyer	orange inclusions	i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i	stones		03, 12	02,00	
				Circular/oval shaped cut with				
08	Cut	+		gradual/moderate sides and a	Cut of undated pit	03	09	
00	Cut			slightly concave base. 2.20m x		05	05	
				1.23m; 0.14m deep.				
				Occasional charcoal;				
09	Fill	Mid orangey grey	Firm sandy silt	moderate small sub-angular	Fill of [08]	08		
				stones; moderate flint.				
				Linear cut with steep sides and				
10	Cut			a concave base. 0.62m wide;	Cut of undated ditch/gully	03	11	
				0.19m deep.				
		Dark greyish	Soft/friable	Moderate/occasional small				
11	Fill	brown	clayey silt	rounded pebbles; very	Fill of [10]	10	02	
		51000		occasional charcoal.				
				Occasional small sub-rounded				
12	Layer	Mid grey	Firm sandy silt	stones and occasional	Layer of colluvium	03	07	
				fragments of degraded stone.				
	Layer	Dark greyish	Friable silty clay	Occasional pebbles and roots	Topsoil – observed during	301		
300	Layer	brown	Thas sity day		December observation	501		
	Layer	Dark grey	Friable silty sand	Frequent pebbles, occasional	Made up ground/levelling –	302	300	
301	Layer	Durkgrey		brick fragments, occasional	observed during December	502	500	

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				charcoal	observation (same as 06)			
302	Layer	Mid orange brown	Friable sandy silt	Frequent pebbles	Colluvium layer – observed during December observation	303	301	
303	Deposit	Greyish orange	Firm gravel/sand	Common pebbles	Natural sandy gravel – observed during December observation (same as <b>03</b> )		302	
304	Deposit	Mid greyish brown	Friable silty clay	Common stones/pebbles	Subsoil – observed during December observation	305	300	
305	Deposit	Mid orange brown	Firm sandy clay		Natural – observed during December observation		304	

#### APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

#### OASIS ID: preconst1-256625

#### **Project details**

Project name Land off Stenson Road, Stenson, Derbyshire

Short description This report describes the results of an archaeological strip, map and record of the project and watching brief carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology at Land off Stenson Road, Stenson, Derbyshire, DE73 7HL (NGR SK 326 300). The strip, map and record element was undertaken between the 9th and the 13th of November 2015 whilst the watching brief occurred on the 18th of November and the 21st December 2015. The earliest undated activity on the site was present to the northwest of the site area, and consisted of a shallow, oval shaped pit feature. The only other archaeological feature of note was an undated linear ditch, situated to the west of the pit. Two layers of modern levelling were also identified as well as two layers of colluvium. A single mid/late 13th to early/mid-14th century Burley Hill, near Derby jug handle was recovered from the topsoil along with a prehistoric flake.

Project dates Start: 13-11-2015 End: 05-07-2016

Previous/future No / No work

Any associated SRSD15 - Sitecode project reference codes

Type of project Recording project

Site status None

Current Land use Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed

Monument type	NONE None
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Significant Finds NONE None

- Investigation type "Part Excavation","Watching Brief"
- Prompt Planning condition

Project location	
Country	England
Site location	DERBYSHIRE SOUTH DERBYSHIRE STANTON BY BRIDGE Land off Stenson Road, Stenson, Derbyshire
Postcode	DE73 7HL
Study area	0 Square metres
Site coordinates	SK 326 300 52.866168374747 -1.51568097537 52 51 58 N 001 30 56 W Point

#### **Project creators**

Name of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd Organisation

Project brief Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body originator

Project design Kathryn Brook originator

Project Kevin Trott director/manager

Project supervisor Steve Jones

Type of Developer sponsor/funding body

#### **Project archives**

Physical Archive Derby Museum and Art Gallery recipient

Physical Contents "Ceramics","Worked stone/lithics"

Digital Archive Derby Museum and Art Gallery recipient

Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media "Images raster / digital photography","Text" available

Paper Archive Derby Museum and Art Gallery recipient

Paper Contents "none"

 Paper
 Media
 "Context

 available
 sheet","Diary","Drawing","Photograph","Plan","Section","Unpublished

 Text"

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Entered by Kathryn Brook (kbrook@pre-construct.com)

Entered on 5 July 2016

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# 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

#### PCA NORTH

UNIT 19A TURSDALE BUSINESS PARK DURHAM DH6 5PG TEL: 0191 377 1111 FAX: 0191 377 0101 EMAIL: info.north@pre-construct.com

#### PCA CENTRAL

THE GRANARY RECTORY FARM BREWERY ROAD PAMPISFORD CAMBRIDGESHIRE, CB22 3EN TEL: 01223 845 522 EMAIL: 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

#### PCA MIDLANDS

17-19 KETTERING RD LITTLE BOWDEN MARKET HARBOROUGH LEICESTERSHIRE LE16 8AN TEL: 01858 468 333 EMAIL: info.midlands@pre-construct.com

