

**LAND AT HIGH STREET AND
PAMPISFORD ROAD, GREAT
ABINGTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE:**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION**

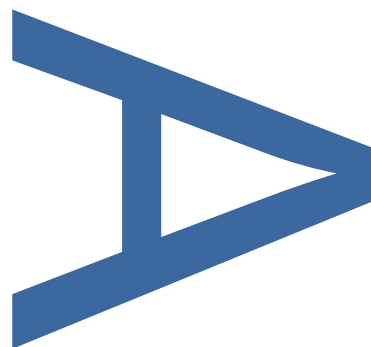
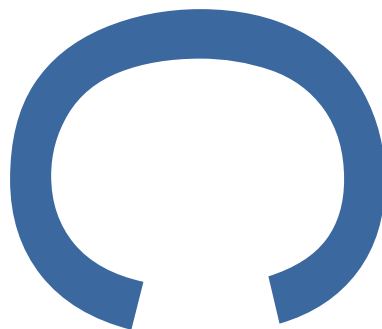
LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

**PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBERS:
S/3181/15/FL**

PCA REPORT NO: R. 12790

SITE CODE: ECB4951



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

Land at High Street and Pampisford Road, Great Abington, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation

Local Planning Authority: South Cambridgeshire District Council

Planning Reference: S/3181/15/FL

Central National Grid Reference: TL 5307 4819

Site Code/Event Number: ECB 4951

Report No. R 12790

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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 High Street and Pampisford Road, Great Abington, Cambridgeshire (TL 5307 4849) between the 6th and the 8th February 2017. The archaeological work was commissioned by Bidwells on behalf of Hill Residential, in response to an archaeological brief composed by Andy Thomas of the Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET). The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area.

The evaluation identified an undated ditch in Trench 4 and a possible pit in Trench 2. Three further natural features were present within the evaluation trenches, none of which provided dating evidence. There was significant plough damage in all the trenches which may provide a reason for the dearth of archaeological features.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) on land at High Street and Pampisford Road, Great Abington, Cambridgeshire (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 5307 4819) from the 6th to the 8th February 2017 (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by Bidwells on behalf of Hill Residential to evaluate the site's archaeological potential in advance of proposed development. The proposed development is for residential development up to 20 residential properties (Planning Reference: S/3181/15/FL).
- 1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Matt Jones of PCA (Jones 2017) in response to a Brief for archaeological evaluation issued by Andy Thomas (Thomas 2017) of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET).
- 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 four 50m trial trenches 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 Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 Geology

2.1.1 The underlying bedrock is comprised of Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation - Chalk (British Geological Survey; Website 1). A Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 89 to 100 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period when the local environment was previously dominated by warm chalk seas (Website 1).

2.1.2 The overlying soils in Bottisham are sandy loams belonging to the Soham association (Hodge and Seale 1966).

2.2 Topography

2.2.1 Great Abington is located approximately 2.5km to the south east of Babraham, midway between Babraham and Linton.

2.2.2 The site lies just off the lower and intermediate river terraces of the Granta river valley to the south-east of Cambridge. The site is located at c.40m Over Datum (OD) as is generally flat with a gradual slope to the north-east and towards the River Granta.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1.1 The following has been taken from the desk-based assessment (Garwood 2015) and the archaeological brief (Thomas 2017).

3.1.2 The area has long been recognised as an area of great potential for prehistoric settlement due to its situation on the free draining chalk soils and river gravel river terrace deposits of the Granta and Cam river valleys. The archaeological investigations and chance finds in the general area of the site have revealed considerable and significant remains from the prehistoric period. Many early prehistoric flint and lithic scatters along with Palaeolithic and Neolithic hand axes have been identified along the river valleys throughout the region. Mesolithic flint objects have been discovered at c. 900m to the south-east and close to Hildersham, while Mesolithic to Neolithic flint artefact scatters and evidence of more sustained Neolithic activity was also discovered to the west of the site during excavation works at the Bourn Bridge. Increased amount of sporadic settlement with evidence for pastoral and arable landscapes, clustered along rivers and on lighter soils, is a feature of the later Bronze Age. Excavations at Bourn Bridge identified features synonymous with settlement in the form of pitting, a 'pondiform' monument and burial activity, while a number of cropmark sites, typically of ring ditches or enclosures have been identified along the river valley. The Later Iron Age is typically characterised by coaxial field boundaries which demonstrate an extensive, well-organised agricultural landscape of linear boundaries and dykes. Evidence of a substantial and relatively long lived Iron Age settlement in the form of over sixty Middle Iron Age grain storage pits, later reused as midden pits, was identified at the Welding Institute, Abington Park, c. 1km to the north-west of the site and close to the river. The wealth of evidence that has been recovered from archaeological investigations, chance finds and cropmark evidence suggests a continued pattern of settlement along the river valley from the early prehistoric periods through to the later Iron Age.

3.1.3 Although Roman settlement of the general area was on a considerable scale with the substantial Roman town of Dvroliponte (later known as Cambridge)

to the north-west, the walled garrison town of Great Chesterford to the south-west and Worstead Street or Via Devana (Roman Road) a Roman Military Way (Camulodunum - Camboritum) just 2km north of the village, significant and secure evidence for Roman settlement close to the proposed development is scarce. Investigations at Bourn Bridge, sited at a distance of over 1km to the north-west provide the principal excavated evidence for Roman activity, in the form of a riverside driveway, field system but sparse evidence of domestic features. Small quantities of Roman pottery and finds have been found in Great and Little Abington, while cropmark evidence of a possible building and a number of barrow like features have been identified in the general area. Whilst these features were consistent with settlement the location or focus of Roman activities is as yet unknown and is unlikely, given the general lack of supporting evidence, to be present in the area of the village.

3.1.4 The Chilford hundred occupies the south-east corner of Cambridgeshire, stretching 12 miles along the valley of the Bourne, between the Suffolk border and the River Cam or Granta. Evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity in the vicinity of the site takes the form of the Brent Ditch, a significant (scheduled) linear monument first recorded as Brundych in 1380, that passes 1.7km to the south of the site, and Saxon-Norman features that survive within the fabric of St. Mary's Church in Little Abington. A late Saxon hall, Upper Hall, is thought to have occupied the site in Hildersham, c. 1.5km to the north-east, while more conclusive evidence of Saxon settlement dating to the 5th-7th century, comprising six Grubenhauser, numerous pits and a structure on the floodplain and many metal detectorist finds, lies at a distance to the north-west of the site and by an ancient river crossing at Bourn Bridge. It appears from the evidence that Saxon settlement is more likely to be focused within the historic cores of the present villages or at strategic points such as the river crossing close to Bourne Bridge.

3.1.5 Great Abington village developed along a street that runs south from the main Cambridge – Linton Road, to the north of the river. The church, constructed by 1217, stands at a short distance to the west of the street and

the former manor house, established by the Earls of Oxford by at least c.1350, comprising a hall and possibly a chapel, is thought to have been located close to the present Abington Hall, west of the village core. The evidence of medieval activity within the study area characteristically takes the form of settlement and agriculture. Old farm, a later medieval (15th century) farm lies directly to the north of the site, while a complex of medieval field systems and ridge and furrow cultivation, showing the extent of medieval agriculture across the area, was revealed to the west, at Granta Park. Ridge and furrow is still depicted within the proposed site area on a map of 1687, suggesting that the site had probably been in ridge and furrow cultivation since the medieval period. Chance finds of small assemblages of pottery has been made within the village and possible medieval earthworks identified from cropmark evidence close to Little Abington and Hildersham and a possible moated site, field boundaries and trackway revealed to the south of St. Mary's Church.

- 3.1.6 The parish of Abington remained predominantly arable with from the middle Ages until its inclosure during the early 19th century. Accordingly evidence from the post-medieval period is dominated by landscape features associated with post-medieval farming and land division, plus the proximity of Abington and Hildersham Halls and their associated parkland and pleasure grounds. Until modern times most of the dwellings in the two villages of Great and Little Abington lay along a street that runs south from the main Cambridge–Linton road. In Great Abington many listed post-medieval timber-framed and thatched cottages survive concentrated around the High Street and Linton Road junction although several post medieval houses (including Old Farm) are shown on a map of 1687 immediately to the north of the site boundary and outside the village envelope. Newhouse Farm and a 17th century former dovecote lie to the west of the site, which appears from cartographic evidence to have remained undeveloped, either as part of the Abington Hall parkland or as farmland since the 18th century. The majority of the development to the south of the village and toward Pampisford Road is post war development.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Excavation and Sampling

- 4.1.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation proposed the excavation of four trial trenches, distributed across the site (Figure 1) positioned in order to obtain a representative sample of the site.
- 4.1.2 Trenches were excavated using a 14-tonne mechanical 360° excavator fitted with a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket. Excavation was carried out under archaeological supervision. 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. Bucket samples of ploughsoil were set aside from the ends and centre of each trench, and sorted through by hand to assess ploughsoil artefact content.
- 4.1.3 Metal-detecting was carried out during the topsoil and subsoil stripping and throughout the excavation process. Archaeological features and spoilheaps 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.
- 4.1.6 Discrete features such as pits and tree throws were at least 50% excavated and, where considered appropriate, 100% excavated. Linear features were excavated by a slot across the feature width, the slot measuring at least 1m in length. Environmental samples were taken of appropriate deposits, ideally from securely dated, undisturbed contexts.

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 Section drawings of archaeological features and deposits were drawn at an appropriate scale (1:10, 1:20). 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. All features and deposits recorded during the evaluation are listed in Appendix 2. Artefacts recovered during excavation were assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved.
- 4.2.3 High-resolution digital photographs were taken at all stages of the evaluation process. Digital Photographs were taken of all archaeological features.
- 4.2.4 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 (ClfA 2001; Walker 1990; Watkinson 1981).

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The trenches are described below in numerical order, with technical data tabulated. Features are described from west to east or north to south dependent on the alignment of the trench.

5.2 Trench 1 (Figure 2)

5.2.1 The trench contained a single undated pit.

5.2.2 Natural Feature [114] (Figure 2) was located in the centre of the trench. It was sub-circular in plan, measuring 0.34m in diameter and 0.21m in depth. It had steep sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a single fill (115) of mid grey-brown sandy silt, which contained no finds.

| TRENCH 1 | Figures 1-2 | Plate 2 | |
|--|-------------|--------------------------------------|--------|
| Trench Alignment: NE-SW | Length: 50m | Level of Natural (m OD): 39.21-38.04 | |
| Deposit | Context No. | Average Depth (m) | |
| | | NE End | SW End |
| Topsoil | (100) | 0.36m | 0.28m |
| Subsoil | (101) | 0.06m | 0.11m |
| Natural | (102) | 0.43m | 0.42m |
| Summary Trench 1 was located close to the western boundary of the site. The trench contained one natural feature. | | | |

5.3 Trench 2 (Figure 2)

5.3.1 The trench contained a single possible pit, which was undated.

5.3.2 Pit [104] (Figure 2) was located at the western end of the trench extending beyond the northern limit of excavation. It was sub-circular in plan, measuring 1.24m in diameter and 0.24m in depth. It had gently sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a single fill (105) of mid grey-brown sandy silt, which contained no finds.

| TRENCH 2 | Figures 1-2 | | Plate 3 | |
|---|-------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Trench Alignment: NW-SE | Length: 50m | | Level of Natural (m OD): 38.6-37-78 | |
| Deposit | Context No. | Average Depth (m) | | |
| | | NW End | SE End | |
| Topsoil | (100) | 0.32m | 0.39m | |
| Subsoil | (101) | 0.1m | 0.14m | |
| Natural | (102) | 0.39m | 0.54m | |
| Summary | | | | |
| Trench 2 was located in the western side of the site. | | | | |
| The trench contained one Pit. | | | | |

5.4 Trench 3 (Figure 2)

5.4.1 The trench contained an undated pit and a tree throw.

5.4.2 Tree Throw [108] (Figure 2) was located towards the centre of the trench extending beyond the southern limit of excavation. It was irregular in plan, measuring 2.35m in length, 1.1m in width and 0.33m in depth. It had steeply sloping sides and an irregular to concave base. It contained a single fill (109) of mid orange-brown sandy silt, which contained no finds.

5.4.3 Natural Feature [110] (Figure 2) located towards the centre of the trench. It was sub-circular in plan, measuring 0.34m in diameter and 0.14m in depth. It had steeply sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a single fill (111) of mid orange-brown sandy silt, which contained no finds.

| TRENCH 3 | Figures 1-2 | | Plate 4 | |
|--|-------------|--------------------------------------|---------|--|
| Trench Alignment: E-W | Length: 50m | Level of Natural (m OD): 39.54-39.48 | | |
| Deposit | Context No. | Average Depth (m) | | |
| | | E End | W End | |
| Topsoil | (100) | 0.31m | 0.33m | |
| Subsoil | (101) | 0.04m | 0.09m | |
| Natural | (102) | 0.34m | 0.41m | |
| Summary | | | | |
| Trench 3 was located in the south of the site. | | | | |

The trench contained a tree throw and a natural feature.

5.5 Trench 4 (Figure 4)

- 5.5.1 The trench contained an undated pit and an east-west aligned ditch.
- 5.5.2 Tree Throw [106] (Figure 3) located towards the northern end of the trench. It was sub-circular in plan, measuring 0.9m in diameter and 0.3m in depth. It had steeply sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a single fill (107) of mid orange-brown sandy silt, which contained no finds.
- 5.5.3 Ditch [112] (Figure 3; Plate 6) located towards the centre of the trench. It was linear in plan aligned east to west, measuring 0.9m in width and 0.3m in depth. It had steeply sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a single fill (113) of mid grey-brown sandy silt, which contained no finds.
- 5.5.4 The ditch identified in this Trench may be a post-medieval paddock located in the north-east part of the field. However it is not present on any historic maps and in particular the 1886 OS Map (Website 2).

| TRENCH 4 | Figures 1-3 | Plate 5 | |
|---|-------------|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Trench Alignment: N-S | Length: 50m | Level of Natural (m OD): 39.15-37.50 | |
| Deposit | Context No. | Average Depth (m) | |
| | | N End | S End |
| Topsoil | (100) | 0.33m | 0.42m |
| Subsoil | (101) | 0.08m | 0.1m |
| Natural | (102) | 0.42m | 0.52m |
| Summary Trench 4 was located in the northern part of the site. The trench contained an east-west aligned ditch and a tree throw. | | | |

6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1.1 The only archaeological feature revealed in the evaluation was an undated ditch located in Trench 4. Aside from the ditch only natural features in the form of tree throws and patches of bioturbation were present.
- 6.1.2 There was evidence for ploughing throughout the field, with each trench containing numerous plough scars. This ploughing may provide an explanation for the lack of archaeological features in the trenches, however it is clear that no archaeological activity was present within the site. Given the absence of finds in general, even within the topsoil, it is likely that the site in recent times was set aside for agriculture/pasture.
- 6.1.3 The undated Ditch [112] is not present on any of the historic maps of the area which implies that it precedes 1886, the earliest of the available historic maps of the area. However it is more plausible that the ditch merely defined a small paddock in the corner of the field and as such would not have warranted inclusion on any of these maps. The ditch also shares alignments with the current set out of the road systems and as such is likely to be post-medieval in date.
- 6.1.4 The distinct lack of finds is of interest as the site is located within the grounds of Abington Hall (HER 06056/06056A). This complete absence of finds likely indicates that the site was favoured for pastoral farming practices.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 7.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Bidwells on behalf of Hill Residential for commissioning the work. PCA are also grateful to Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team for his advice and for monitoring the work. The author would like to thank Mark Hinman for managing the project. The author would also like to thank the project team: David Curry, Britney Martlin, and Cordelia Laycock for their hard work, and finally Charlotte Faiers of PCA's CAD department for preparing the figures.

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8.2 Websites

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www.bgs.ac.uk

2) Old Maps Online (Date Accessed 08/02/2017)

www.oldmapsonline.org



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09/02/17 CF

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

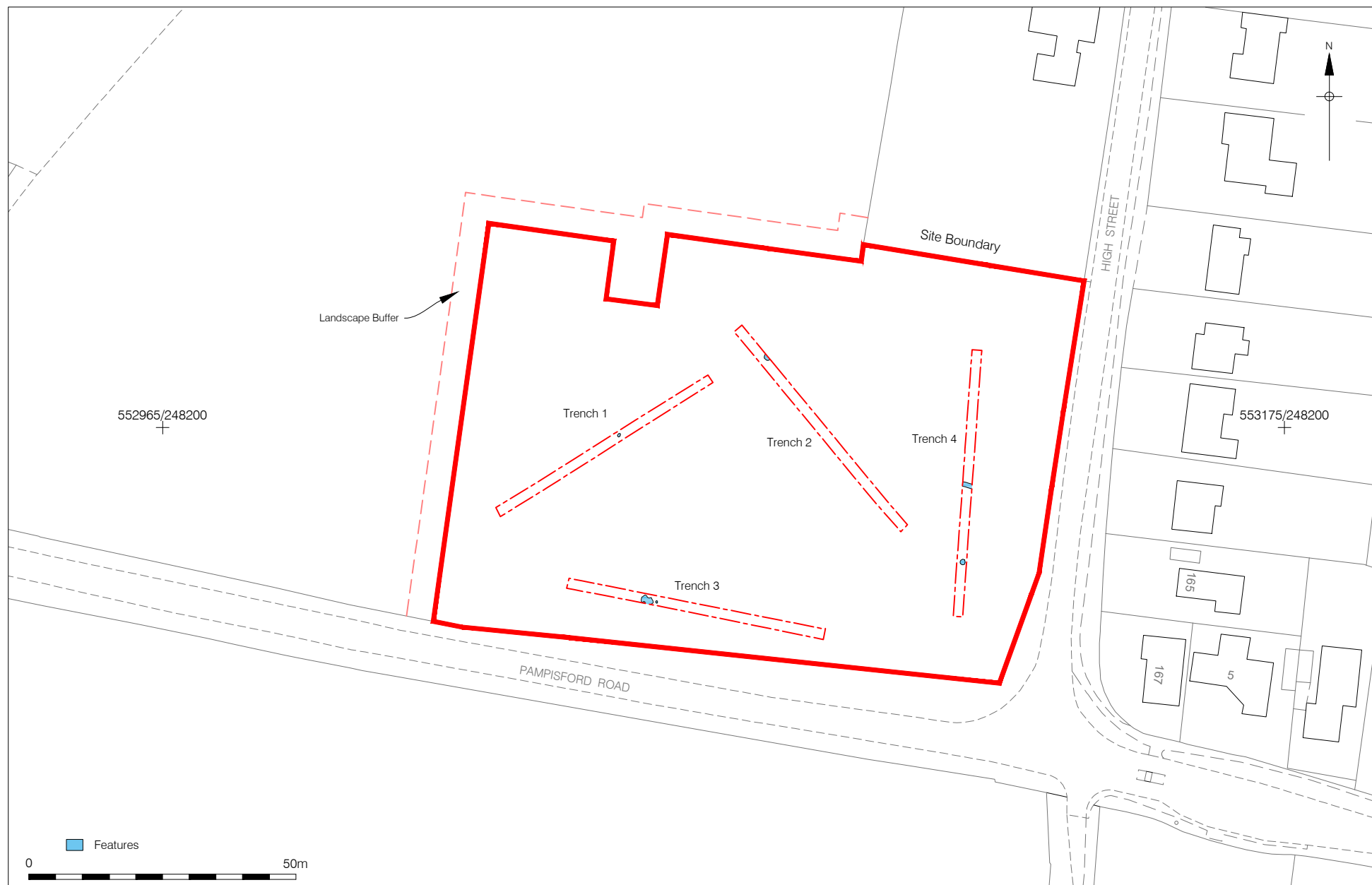
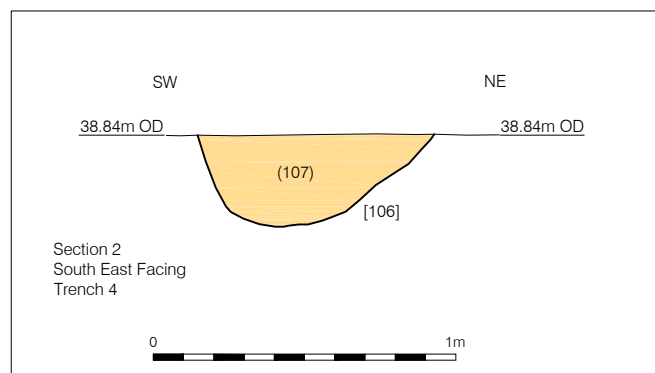
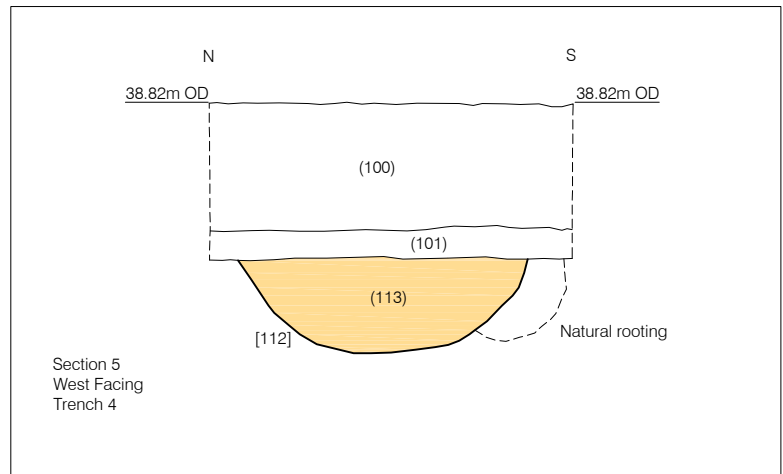
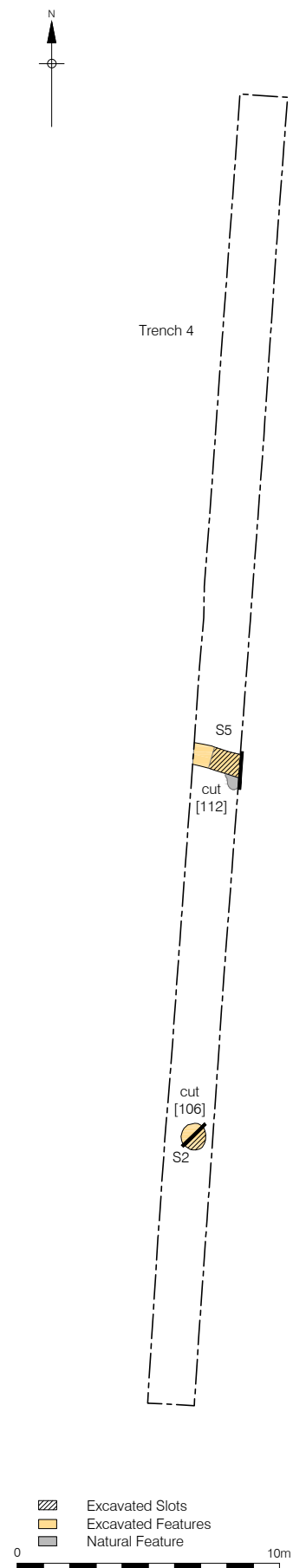





Figure 2
 Trench Location with archaeological features
 1:1,000 at A4



 Excavated Slots
 Excavated Features
 Natural Feature

0 10m

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10/02/17 CF

Figure 3
Plan of Trench 4 and Sections 2 and 5
1:25 and 1:250 at A4

9 APPENDIX 1: PLATES



Plate 1: Site overview, view west



Plate 2: Trench 1, view north-east



Plate 3: Trench 2, view west



Plate 4: Trench 3, view west



Plate 5: Trench 4, view north



Plate 6: Trench 4, view east showing Ditch [112]

10 APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

| Context | Cut | Trench | Type | Category |
|---------|-----|--------|-------|-----------------|
| 100 | 0 | 1-4 | Layer | Topsoil |
| 101 | 0 | 1-4 | Layer | Subsoil |
| 102 | 0 | 1-4 | Layer | Natural |
| 103 | 0 | 4 | Layer | Subsoil |
| 104 | 104 | 2 | Cut | Pit |
| 105 | 104 | 2 | Fill | Pit |
| 106 | 106 | 4 | Cut | Tree Throw |
| 107 | 106 | 4 | Fill | Tree Throw |
| 108 | 108 | 3 | Cut | Tree Throw |
| 109 | 108 | 3 | Fill | Tree Throw |
| 110 | 110 | 3 | Cut | Natural Feature |
| 111 | 110 | 3 | Fill | Natural Feature |
| 112 | 112 | 4 | Cut | Ditch |
| 113 | 112 | 4 | Fill | Ditch |
| 114 | 114 | 1 | Cut | Natural Feature |
| 115 | 114 | 1 | Fill | Natural Feature |

11 APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

| | |
|--|---|
| OASIS ID: preconst1-275777 | |
| Project details | |
| Project name | Land at High Street and Pampisford Road, Great Abington, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological 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 High Street and Pampisford Road, Great Abington, Cambridgeshire (TL 5307 4849) between the 6th and the 8th February 2017. The archaeological work was commissioned by Bidwells on behalf of Hill Residential, in response to an archaeological brief composed by Andy Thomas of the Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET). The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area. The evaluation identified an undated ditch in Trench 4, as well as an undated pit in Trench 2. Three further natural features were present within the evaluation trenches. There was evidence for substantial plough damage in all the trenches which may suggest that further evidence has been lost, however this is unlikely. |
| Project dates | Start: 06-02-2017 End: 08-02-2017 |
| Previous/future work | No / Not known |
| Any associated project reference codes | ECB4951 - Sitecode |
| Type of project | Field evaluation |
| Site status | None |
| Current Land use | Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed |
| Monument type | DITCH Uncertain |
| Monument type | PIT Uncertain |
| Methods & techniques | "Sample Trenches" |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Development type | Rural residential |
| Prompt | Planning condition |
| Position in the planning process | Not known / Not recorded |
| Project location | |
| Country | England |
| Site location | CAMBRIDGESHIRE SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE GREAT ABINGTON Land at High Street and Pampisford Road, Great Abington, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation |
| Postcode | CB21 6AQ |
| Study area | 0.6 Hectares |
| Site coordinates | TL 5307 4819 52.110378619821 0.235556079964 52 06 37 N 000 14 08 E Line |
| Project creators | |
| Name of Organisation | Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. |
| Project brief originator | Cambridgeshire County Council |
| Project design originator | Mark Hinman |
| Project director/manager | Mark Hinman |
| Project supervisor | Matthew Jones |
| Type of sponsor/funding body | Developer |
| Project archives | |
| Physical Archive Exists? | No |
| Digital Archive recipient | Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Archive Facility |

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Digital Archive ID | ECB4951 |
| Digital Contents | "none" |
| Digital Media available | "Database","Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets","Survey","Text" |
| Paper Archive recipient | Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Archive Facility |
| Paper Archive ID | ECB4951 |
| Paper Contents | "none" |
| Paper Media available | "Context sheet","Drawing","Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Survey ","Unpublished Text" |
| Project bibliography 1 | |
| Publication type | Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript) |
| Title | Land at High Street and Pampisford Road, Great Abington, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation |
| Author(s)/Editor(s) | Jones, M. |
| Other bibliographic details | R.12790 |
| Date | 2017 |
| Issuer or publisher | Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. |
| Place of issue or publication | Pampisford |
| Description | A4 bound report including figures, plates and appendices. |
| URL | www.oasis.ac.uk |
| Entered by | Matt Jones (MJones@pre-construct.com) |
| Entered on | 9 February 2017 |

PCA

PCA SOUTH

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