

HOO ST WERBURGH, KENT



**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF**

INTERIM REPORT



NOVEMBER 2009



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

**An Archaeological Watching Brief of Sewer Pipeline Excavations, Hoo St
Werburgh, Kent; Interim Report**

**Site Code: KSWP 09
Central National Grid Reference: TQ 789723**

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Commissioning Client: CgMs Consulting

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CONTENTS

1	ABSTRACT	3
2	INTRODUCTION	3
3	METODOLOGY	6
4	GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY	7
5	ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	8
6	ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE.....	9
7	CONCLUSIONS	10
8	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	11
9	BIBLIOGRAPHY	12

ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION.....	4
FIGURE 2: TRENCH LOCATIONS	5

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX	13
APPENDIX 2: SITE MATRIX.....	14
APPENDIX :OASIS FORM.....	15

1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This interim report details the results and working methods of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd during the first phase of sewer pipe excavations between Stoke Rd and Abbots Court Rd, Hoo St Werburgh, Kent (Fig 1). The central National Grid Reference for this site is TQ 789723. The fieldwork was undertaken between 26th and 29th October 2009. The commissioning client was CgMs Consulting.
- 1.2 This interim report summarises the results if the monitoring and recording of ground reduction prior to the laying of a grey water pipeline and the construction of a temporary haul road and construction compound.
- 1.3 The earliest deposit encountered during the excavation was brickearth deposits consistent with the underlying geology of the area. A field ditch and the remains of a grubbed-out house dating to the late 19th-early 20th century were recorded.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd between 26th and 29th October 2009 to the east of Hoo St Werburgh, Kent, to monitor the topsoil strip associated with the section of pipeline excavation for a grey water sewer pipe leading from a housing development on Stoke Rd to the construction compound for the work (Fig 1).
- 2.2 The archaeological investigation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, under the supervision of Guy Seddon and the project management of Tim Bradley. The archaeological consultant for the work was Richard Meager, CgMs Consulting.
- 2.3 The stripping of the northern portion of the pipeline and compound area forms the first phase of work, with the remainder of the pipeline being stripped as a separate exercise.
- 2.4 The site was allocated the site code KSWP 09.

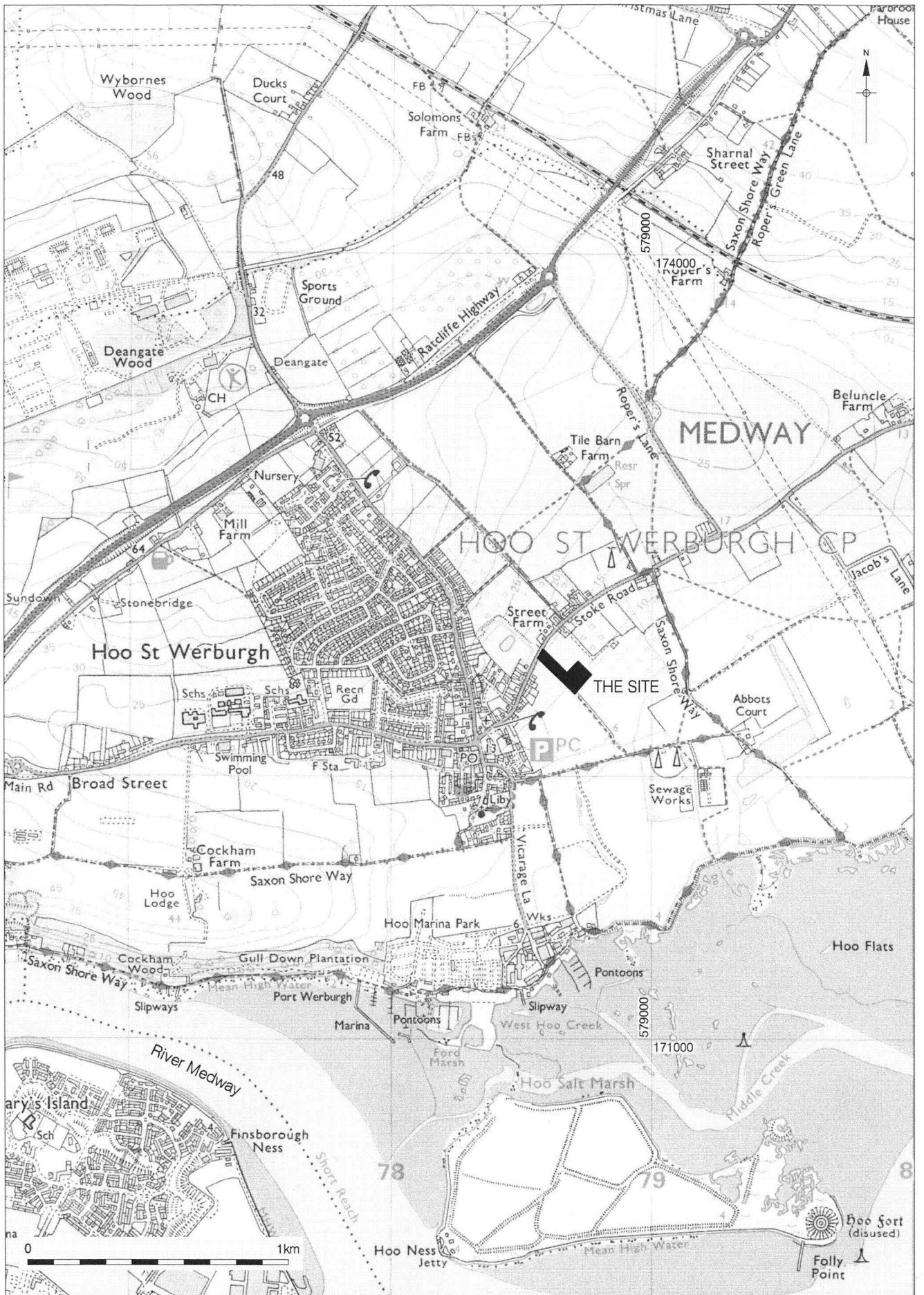
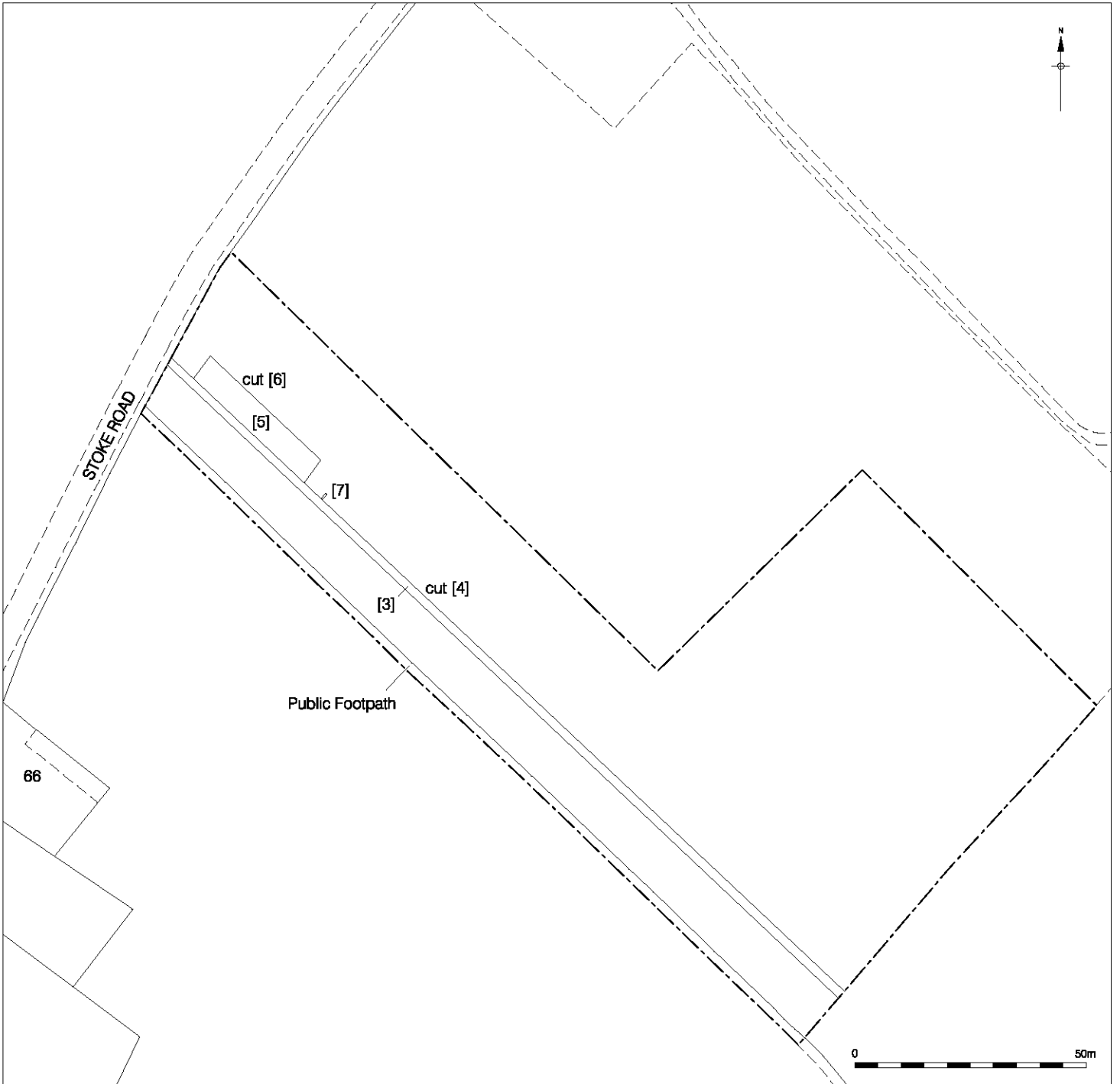


Figure 1
Site Location
1:20,000 at A4



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Figure 2
Trench Location
1:1,250 at A4

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 All fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with the Method Statement¹ prepared in advance of the fieldwork, and followed English Heritage² and IFA guidance papers³, and *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1990).
- 3.2 The excavation of the topsoil, undertaken with a 360° tracked machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, was carried out under the constant supervision of the author, with the machine removing the earth in spits of no more than 0.20m.
- 3.3 After the removal of each distinguishable soil layer the areas of excavation were examined for archaeological finds and features.
- 3.4 The faces of the trenches that required examination and recording were cleaned using appropriate hand tools. All investigation of archaeological levels was by hand.
- 3.5 Relevant plans and sections were drawn and context descriptions recorded on *pro-forma* sheets.

¹ Bradley, T. 2009 Method Statement For An Archaeological WB At Hoo St Werburgh, Kent

² English Heritage Guideline Papers (revised June 1998)

³ Institute of Field Archaeologists 1993. *Standards in Archaeological Practice*.

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 The site is situated just to the east of Hoo St Werburgh. It is bounded to the north by Stoke Road and by arable land to the east, south and west, and slopes gently downhill to the south, towards the River Medway.

- 4.2 The British Geological Survey map (British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Sheet 272 Chatham 1974), indicates that the underlying geology of the site is comprised of brickearths, with tertiary sand and gravel terrace deposits in the south sealing London Clay.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The Hoo Peninsular is rich in prehistoric archaeology with Bronze Age implements and Jutish cemeteries having been recorded in the vicinity. The Romans have been credited with the attempts at building a sea wall in the area. Roman pottery kilns have also been recorded at Cliffe and Cooling which also possessed a salt/brine works.
- 5.2 The Hoo Peninsula was once the point of departure across the ancient Saxon fording point over the River Thames to Essex.
- 5.3 A great deal of a peninsula lies inside one of the Saxon divisions of England called 'hundreds': here it is the 'Hundred of Hoo'. Properly speaking, a Hundred comprised a parishes and churches of Hoo St Werburgh, High Halstow, St Mary's Hoo, Allhallows and a share of Stoke.
- 5.4 The oldest part of the Parish is at the southern most section of the Village, in and around the Parish Church of St. Werburgh. The name Saint Werburgh is derived from a Saxon Princess who had many connections with Kent and the settlement of Hoo in particular. Saint Werburgh died allegedly either in A.D. 698 or 699.
- 5.5 Thee account for 'Hoo - Hope-Baggot' in *A Topographical Dictionary of England* published in 1848 by Samuel Lewis reads as such:

Hoo, or St. Werburgh

HOO, or St. Werburgh, a parish, and the head of a union, in the hundred of Hoo, lathe of Aylesford, W. division of Kent, 4½ miles (N. E.) from Rochester; containing 930 inhabitants. The parish is bounded on the south by the river Medway, which is here very broad, and deep enough to float first-rate ships of war. It comprises 4822 acres: the soil is various, in some parts rich, in others less fertile; a considerable portion is marsh, and the remainder arable and pasture land, with 188 acres of wood. The living is a discharged vicarage, valued in the king's books at £18. 6.; net income, £395; patrons and appropriators, the Dean and Chapter of Rochester. The church is a handsome stone structure, with a lofty spire, which is conspicuous for many miles round. The poor-law union comprises seven parishes or places, and contains a population of 2794. Abbey Court, now a farmhouse, was a monastery subordinate to Leeds Abbey, Kent.

Hoo (St. Mary)

- 5.6 The area of the site is likely to have been situated in agricultural land to the east of the main settlement throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

6.1 Phase 1: Natural

6.1.1 The earliest deposit observed on site was brickearth, [2], which was present across the entire stripped area of the site.

6.2 Phase 2: Post-medieval

6.2.1 Regular and intensive plough scarring was recorded through the natural brickearth across the area of the strip. The plough scars followed the alignment of the modern field boundary and were interpreted as representing modern plough activity.

6.2.2 A backfilled field ditch, [4], extended through the centre of the stripped area for its entire length on a north-south alignment and had a width of c. 1.90m. It was filled with a mid to dark brown sandy silt [3] containing occasional sherds of pottery dating to the late 19th-early 20th century.

6.2.3 The footprint of a demolished building [6], was observed just to the east of ditch [4], positioned directly to the south of Stoke Road. The building itself had been entirely demolished and the demolition material, including rubble and sherds of broken pottery and glass [5], had been used to backfill the demolition/robber cut. The robber cut measured 33m north-south by 6m east-west.

6.2.4 The sequence was sealed by c.0.3m of topsoil across the stripped area.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 No archaeological features pre-dating the late 19th/20th century were recorded during the stripping of the northern portion of the pipeline route and associated compound, with only natural brickearth and a late post-medieval field boundary ditch and demolished building being observed. Modern plough scars recorded across the stripped area are indicative of significant disturbance in the area, which may preclude the survival of earlier archaeological remains.
- 7.1 A structure labelled White's Farm, with a field ditch directly to the west, is clearly visible on the 1898 Ordnance Survey map of Hoo St Werburgh. This structure appears to correspond with the location of the demolished building and field boundary ditch recorded on the site. Although the land is labelled White's Farm on earlier maps, no structures are evident on the previous map of 1895. A building is still evident on the OS map of 1939, though by 1945 the structure has disappeared, perhaps providing a date range for the demolition event recorded during the watching brief.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Richard Meager of CgMs Consulting for commissioning the work. The author would like to thank Jennifer Simonson for the illustrations and Tim Bradley for project management and editing.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

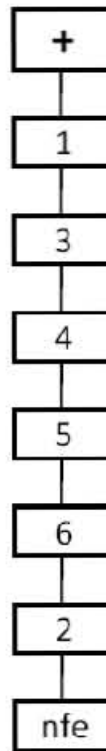
Bradley, T. 2009 *Method Statement for an Archaeological Watching Brief During Sewer Pipeline Excavations, Hoo St Werburgh, Kent*. PCA Unpublished Report

<http://british-history.ac.uk> – for the historical background to the site

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Site Code	Context No.	Trench	Plan	Section / Elevation	Type	Description	Date	Phase
KSWP 09	1	A			Layer	Topsoil	29/10/2009	2
KSWP 09	2	A			Layer	Natural Brickearth	29/10/2009	1
KSWP 09	3	A			Fill	Fill of Ditch [4]	29/10/2009	2
KSWP 09	4	A			Cut	Cut of Late 19th C Ditch	29/10/2009	2
KSWP 09	5	A			Fill	Fill of Robber Cut [6]	29/10/2009	2
KSWP 09	6	A			Cut	Early 20th C Robber Cut	29/10/2009	2

APPENDIX 2: SITE MATRIX



APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

1.3 OASIS ID: preconst1-66581

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief of Sewer Pipeline Excavations, Hoo St Werburgh, Kent
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd between 26th and 29th October 2009 to the east of Hoo St Werburgh, Kent, to monitor the topsoil strip associated with the pipeline excavation for a grey water sewer pipe leading from a housing development on Stoke Rd to a reservoir off Abbots Court Rd. A field ditch and the robbed-out remains of a farm house both dating to the late 19th Century were observed.
Project dates	Start: 26-10-2009 End: 29-10-2009
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	KS WP 09 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 3 - Operations to a depth more than 0.25m
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Monument type	HOUSE Post Medieval
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Voluntary/self-interest

Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT MEDWAY HOO ST WERBURGH Stoke Rd, Hoo St

	Werburch
Postcode	ME3 9XX
Site coordinates	TQ 789 723 51.4208931104 0.573327837748 51 25 15 N 000 34 23 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	CgMs Consultants Ltd
Project design originator	Richard Meager
Project director/manager	Tim Bradley
Project supervisor	Guy Seddon
Type of sponsor/funding body	Consultancy
Name of sponsor/funding body	CgMs Consulting Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Local museum
Physical Contents	'Ceramics','Glass','Metal'
Digital Archive recipient	Local museum
Digital Media available	'Spreadsheets','Text'
Paper Archive	Local Museum

recipient

Paper Media 'Drawing','Plan','Report'
available

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title An Archaeological Watching Brief on Sewer Pipeline Excavations,
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