

An Archaeological Evaluation of Land at former HMP Aldington Kent

Site Code: KADP 05

Central National Grid Reference: NGR TR 0600 3575

**Written and Researched by Guy Seddon
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, May 2005**

Project Manager: Peter Moore

**Commissioning Client: CgMs Consulting on behalf of Bellway Homes
(Thames Gateway)**

**Contractor:
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Unit 54
Brockley Cross Business Centre
96 Endwell Road
Brockley
London
SE4 2PD**

**Tel: 020 7732 3925
Fax: 020 7732 7896
E-mail: pmoore@pre-construct.com
info@pre-construct.com**

**© Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
May 2005**

© The material contained herein is and remains the sole property of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited and is not for publication to third parties without prior consent. Whilst every effort has been made to provide detailed and accurate information, Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited cannot be held responsible for errors or inaccuracies herein contained.

CONTENTS

1	ABSTRACT	3
2	INTRODUCTION	4
3	PLANNING BACKGROUND	7
4	GEOLOGICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	8
5	METHODOLOGY	9
6	ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE	10
7	CONCLUSIONS	12
8	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	13
9	BIBLIOGRAPHY	14

ILLUSTRATIONS

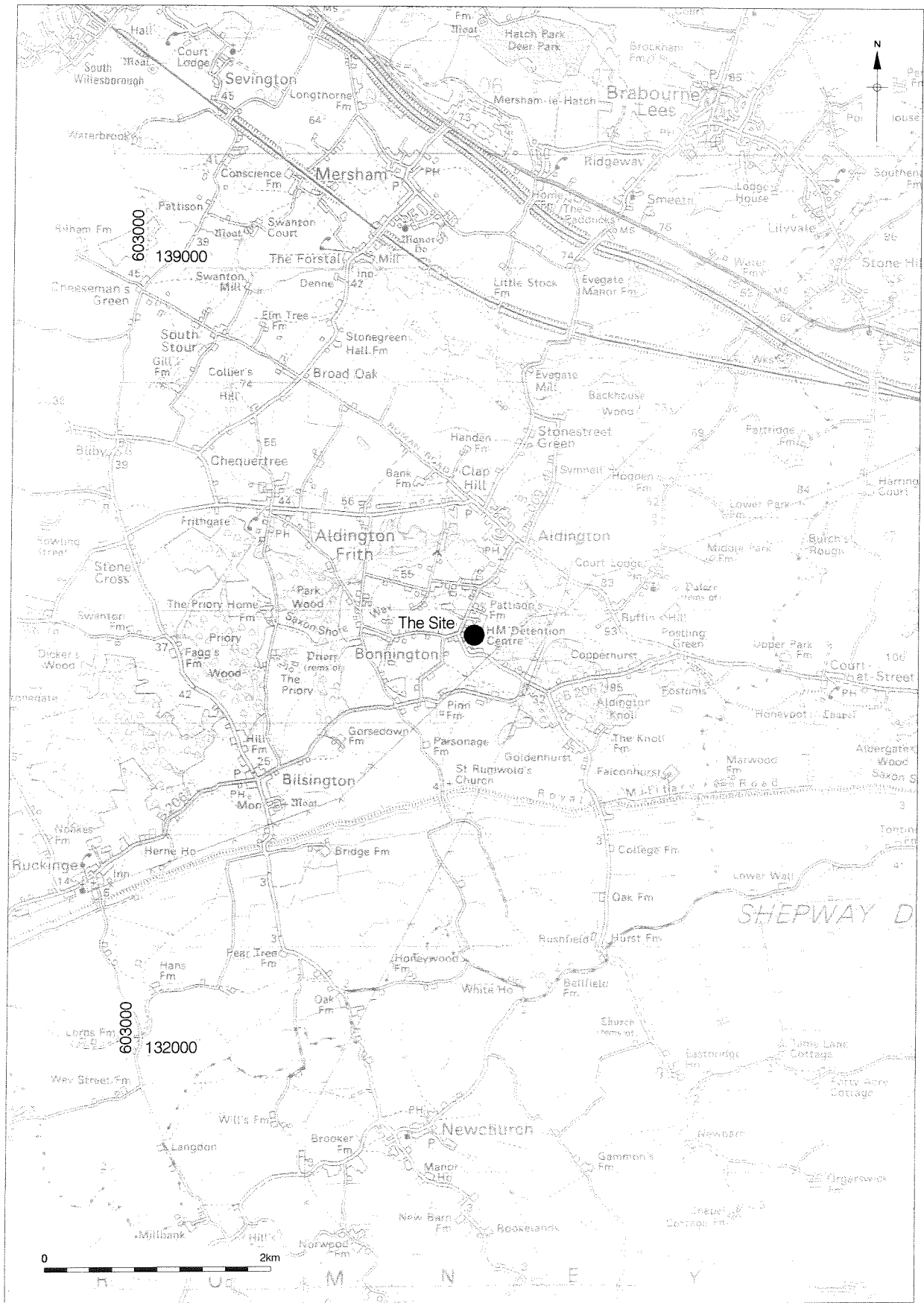
FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION	5
FIGURE 2: TRENCH LOCATION	6
FIGURE 3: PLAN OF TRENCHES 4 AND 5	11
APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS	15
APPENDIX 2: SITE MATRIX	16
APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM	17

1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited of land at former HMP Aldington, Kent.
- 1.2 The archaeological work was undertaken in advance of a proposed redevelopment of the site by Bellway Homes.
- 1.3 The archaeological remains, two small pits, unfortunately did not produce any dateable material. The pits were located towards the south of the site, with fills containing moderate concentrations of charcoal flecks.

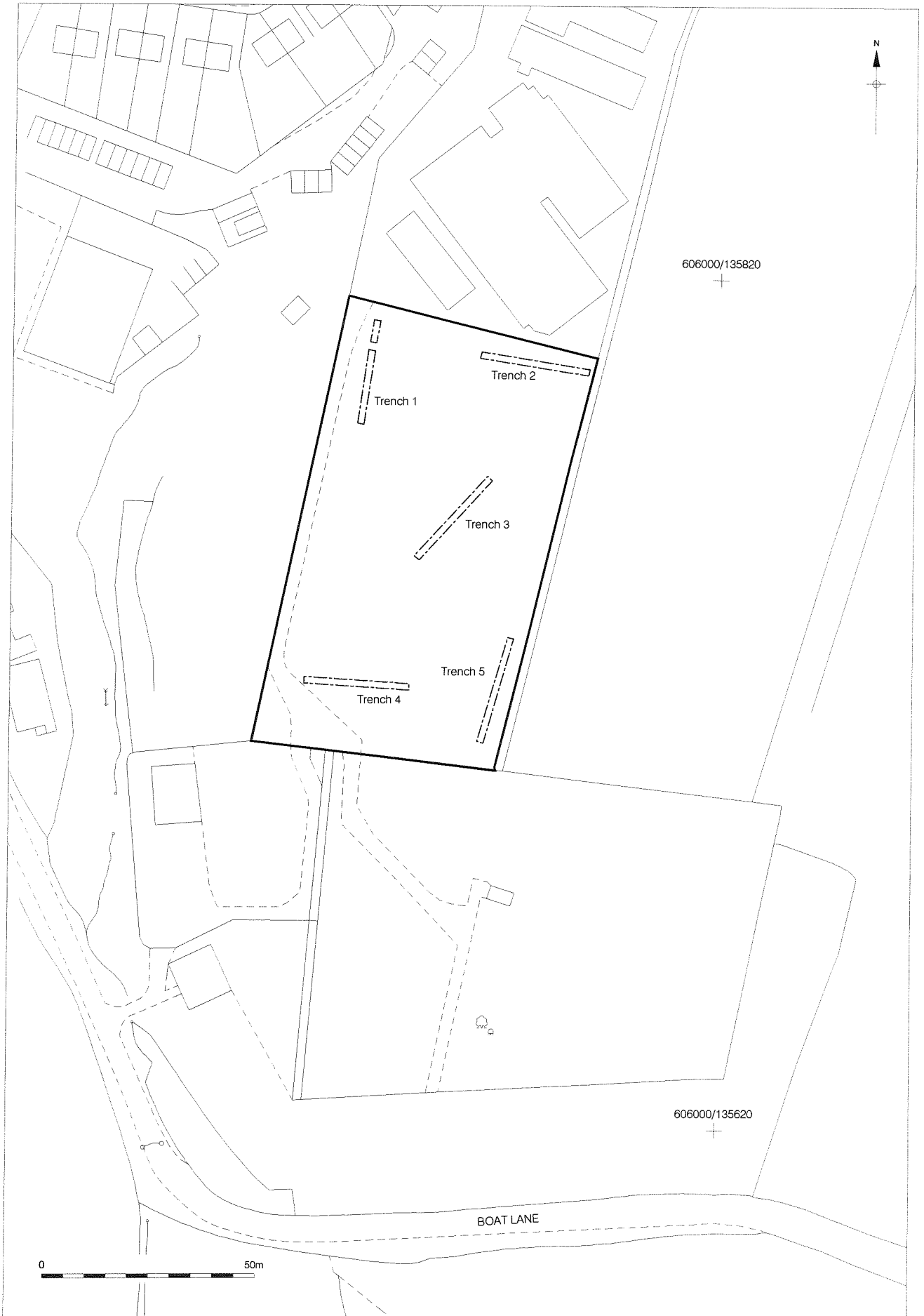
2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited of land at former HM Prison Aldington, Kent (Figure 1) in advance of redevelopment.
- 2.2 The evaluation was conducted between the 9th and 13th May 2005 and was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Bellway Homes (Thames Gateway).
- 2.3 The evaluation consisted of five trenches measuring 25m in length, positioned across the site (Figure 2).
- 2.4 The National Grid Reference of the centre of the site is TR 0600 3575
- 2.5 The site was assigned the unique code KADP 05
- 2.6 The evaluation was supervised by Guy Seddon and assisted by Richard Archer. The project was managed by Peter Moore for Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, and Duncan Hawkins on behalf of Bellway Homes Thames Gateway.



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey 1:50,000. Crown Copyright 1982.

Figure 1
Site Location
1:50,000



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. License number PMP36110309

Figure 2
Trench Location
1:1250

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 Planning background

3.1.1 The site is to be developed for residential purposes for which a planning application will shortly be submitted.

3.1.2 Due to the potential archaeological sensitivity of the area, and in line with normal local planning authority procedures, it was decided to undertake a field evaluation at the site in order to establish the presence/absence, extent and nature of any deposits of archaeological interest that may be affected by the proposed development. The implementation of the evaluation was in line with normal procedures. A specification for the work was provided by Duncan Hawkins of CgMs¹, in line with both the Kent Structure Plan and the Ashford Local Plan. The specification outlined the aims and objectives of the evaluation, and detailed techniques and methodologies to be used.

3.1.3 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Listed Buildings on site.

3.2 Research Objectives

3.2.1 The objective of the evaluation was to establish whether there were any archaeological deposits at the site which would be affected by the proposed development. The evaluation was thus to ascertain the quality, extent and condition of any archaeological remains at the site.

¹ Duncan Hawkins. Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation on Land at Former H.M. Prison Aldington, Kent. Unpublished report, CgMs Consulting, April 2005

4 GEOLOGICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The British Geological Survey 1:50000 map (sheet 305/306) indicates that the underlying geology is Weald Clay with a seam of limestone running across the site.
- 4.2 An archaeological Desk-Based Assessment was not prepared prior to the commencement of the project although the specification refers to the Archaeological Potential of the site (Hawkins, 2005). The following section reiterates this information.
- 4.2.1 The potential of this area has been gauged in relation to the proximity of known archaeological remains including sites recorded on the Site and Monuments Record for Kent and the results of recent archaeological fieldwork. Recent archaeological work around Ashford suggests the existence of a highly developed agricultural landscape in the Iron Age and Roman periods with field systems interspaced with farms, hamlets, villages and small towns. Previous archaeological work immediately north east of the site indicates the possibility of transient possibly late Prehistoric activity, possibly a shepherds or pig-herders camp.
- 4.2.2 The study site therefore has a specific archaeological potential for the Iron Age and Roman periods. Other periods of human activity may however be represented.
- 4.2.3 Further information on the above is provided in the County Sites and Monuments Record Kent, which is located at KCC Strategic Planning, County Hall, Maidstone.

5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 In accordance with the Specification prepared by CgMs Consulting five trenches were required as the basis of the Evaluation (Fig 2). All the trenches were 25m in length and approximately 1.8m wide. The trench locations were surveyed in to the Ordnance Survey grid using a Total Station
- 5.2 The trenches were excavated using a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under the supervision of staff from Pre-Construct Archaeology.
- 5.3 At each trench location the ground was reduced either to the top of the 'natural' Weald Clay or any significant archaeological deposit, whichever was the higher. Care was taken not to damage any archaeological deposits through excessive use of mechanical excavation. Revealed surfaces of the 'natural' were cleaned in an attempt to identify archaeological features cut in to it. Excavated spoil was scanned for the presence of artefacts.
- 5.4 All archaeological features (stratigraphical layers, cuts, fills, structures) were recorded in plan and where necessary in section using standard recording methods. A photographic record was also made as appropriate.
- 5.5 A temporary benchmark (value 23.07m OD) was traversed onto the site from the Ordnance Survey Benchmark, located on a pillar-box at Easton's Corner, at the bottom of New Road Hill (value 22.89m OD).
- 5.6 A full photographic record of the work was kept as appropriate and will form part of the site archive.
- 5.7 Following the completion of the works, the trenches were backfilled with the excavated material and tamped by machine.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

6.1 The basic stratigraphy in all the trenches was simple and consistent. The topsoil, (context [1]) was a grey-brown silty, clay loam, averaging 200mm in thickness. Below this was the subsoil, (context [2]) a light yellowish brown clayey silt, approximately 150mm thick. The natural in all the trenches comprised a clean orange-brown Weald Clay, (context [3])

6.2 Archaeological features were identified in two trenches, (trenches 4 and 5). These features comprised a small pit in each with fills containing high concentrations of charcoal. Unfortunately no datable evidence was recovered.

6.3 Trench 4 (Figure 4)

6.3.1 This trench was excavated in the south-western corner of the site. It contained feature [5], a sub-square pit 440mm x 400mm in plan with a depth of 170mm and was truncated to the north by a modern field drain. Its fill [4], was a firmly compacted dark brown clayey silt containing high concentrations of charcoal.

6.4 Trench 5 (Figure 4)

6.3.2 Trench 5 was excavated in the south eastern corner of the site. It contained feature [7], a rectangular pit measuring 1m 180mm x 360mm in plan with a depth of 130mm. Its fill [6] was firmly compacted dark brown clayey silt containing high concentrations of charcoal.

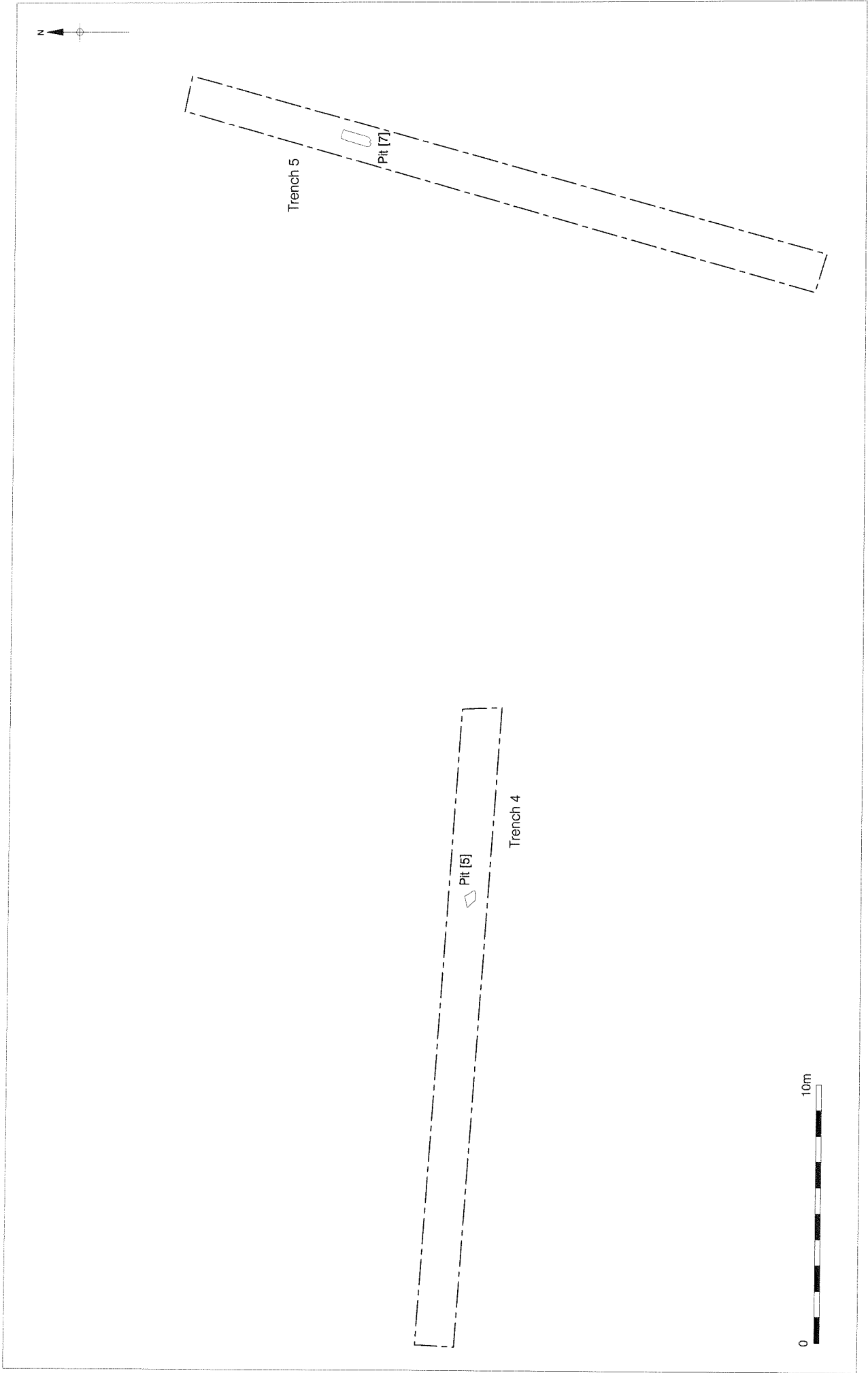


Figure 3
Trenches 4 & 5
1:200

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 Two small pits were recorded at the subject site, both of which contained high concentrations of charcoal flecking within their soil matrices. Neither feature contained artefacts and therefore these features are undated. Similar features were previously revealed at the adjacent site to the north east, and these were similarly undated. A hearth structure was also uncovered during this previous work, and was presumed to be of prehistoric date.
- 7.2 Overall the available evidence suggests low intensity, transient undated activity at the site prior to the twentieth century, possibly overnight pig herders or shepherds camps.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank CgMs Consulting for commissioning the work on behalf of Bellway Homes (Thames Gateway). The author would like to thank Ric Archer for his invaluable help in the field; the surveyor Natalie Barrett; Hailey Baxter for the illustrations, Peter Moore for project management and Gary Brown for the editing.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

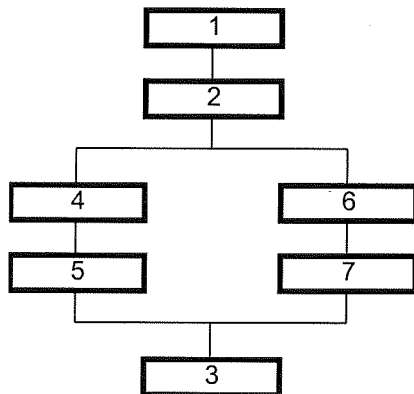
Hawkins, D. 2005 *A Specification for an Archaeological Field Evaluation Land at Former H.M. Prison Aldington, Kent*. CgMs unpublished report

James, R. 2000 *An Archaeological Evaluation at HM Prison, Aldington, Kent*, Archaeology South East Unpublished Report

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context	Type	Description	Trench
1	Layer	Topsoil	All
2	Layer	Subsoil	All
3	Layer	Natural	All
4	Fill	Fill of [5]	4
5	Cut	Cut of pit	4
6	Fill	Fill of [7]	5
7	Cut	Cut of pit	5

APPENDIX 2: SITE MATRIX



APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

8.2 OASIS ID: preconst1-8273

Project details

Project name HMP Aldington Kent

Short description of the project An archaeological evaluation comprising of five trenches was undertaken between 9th and 12th May 2005. Two small pits were discovered to the south of the site with moderate concentrations of charcoal in their fills. Unfortunately no datable evidence was present.

Project dates Start: 09-05-2005 End: 12-05-2005

Previous/future work Yes / Not known

Any associated project reference codes KADP05 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Site status (other) Crown Land

Current Land use Other 15 - Other

Project location

Country England

Site location KENT ASHFORD ALDINGTON HMP Aldington Kent

Study area 3750.00 Square metres

National grid reference TR 0600 3575 Point

Height OD Min: 20.68m Max: 22.07m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Project brief originator CgMs Consulting

Project design originator Duncan Hawkins

Project director/manager Peter Moore

Project supervisor Guy Seddon

Sponsor or funding body Bellway Homes

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Local museum

Physical Archive Yes

Exists?

Digital Archive recipient Local museum

Digital Contents 'none'

Digital Media available 'Database','Survey','Text'

Digital Archive Exists? Yes

Paper Archive Exists? Yes

Project bibliography

1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title An Archaeological Evaluation at Land at Former HMP Aldington Kent

Author(s)/Editor(s) Seddon, G

Date 2005

Issuer or publisher PCA

Place of issue or publication London

Entered by Guy Seddon (bsudds@pre-construct.com)

Entered on 17 May 2005

Please e-mail [English Heritage](#) for OASIS help and advice

9 OASIS: © ADS 1996-2005 Created by [Jo Clarke, email](#) Last modified Monday,
November 24, 2003

Cite only: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/oasis/print.cfm> for this page