RPS Planning, Transport and Environment

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County Wiltshire	
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SALISBURY EASTERN BYPASS
Archaeological evaluation

35152

Interim Report No. 35152

WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY
April 1992

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project is financed and commissioned by the Planning and Highways Department of Wiltshire County Council. Wessex Archaeology is grateful to the land owners along the proposed route for providing access to carry out the archaeological assessment. The geophysical evaluation was provided by Geophysical Surveys, Bradford. The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken by Dave Farwell, Andy Crockett, Dave Brooks and Stuart Brookes. The artefacts were assessed by Lorraine Mepham and Philip Harding, and the illustration was prepared by Liz James. The database customisation was provided by Andy Crockett, in consultation with Philip Williams and Elaine Morris, using dBase IV. The project was managed by Caron Newman, and this report was prepared by Andy Crockett and Dave Farwell.

1. INTRODUCTION

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Wiltshire County Council Planning and Highways Department in March 1992 to carry out an archaeological evaluation along the proposed course of the *c.* 3.3 kilometre proposed Salisbury Eastern Bypass. The archaeological evaluation strategy was laid down by the County Archaeological Officer and is divided into two stages. Stage 1 involves surface artefact collections (SAC), test pitting and rapid geophysical scanning. Stage 2 is dependent on the results of Stage 1, and will use detailed magnetometer survey and limited trenching to test the nature of artefact concentrations and geophysical anomalies uncovered by Stage 1.

This report covers work carried out for part of Stage 1, and involves some 1,600m of the southern half of the proposed route. Most of the northern half of the route is presently under crop and will be available for SAC in the autumn, when Stage 1 will be completed. Two areas will not be surveyed as part of Stage 1; the fields to the south of the A36 that are watermeadows, and the school playing fields at the centre of the route (fig. 1, plot 12) which have been terraced. These deviations from the stage 1 strategy have been agreed by the County Archaeological Officer.

1.1 Location and Geology

The proposed route runs approximately north to south east of Laverstock. At the northern end of the route, it begins to the east of the A30 roundabout by St Thomas's bridge. It runs south, below Cockey Down and above the valley gravels, along the edge of the Upper Chalk following the eastern edge of the Bourne valley. It then passes to the east side of Burroughs Hill, an area of plateau gravels. From there, the route descends into the Avon valley, over the chalk and down into the river gravels to join the proposed A36 Salisbury Bypass just to the west of Petersfinger Farm.

1.2 Archaeological Background

The route runs below the top of a chalk ridge, consisting of Cockey Down and Laverstock Down, passing close to the findspot of a Bronze Age pottery vessel (SMR SU13SE157). At Burroughs Hill the route passes through part of an extensive series of cropmark field systems and close to two late medieval pillow mounds (SMR SU13SE645 and SU13SESE660) (fig. 1, plot 8). The southern end of the route (fig. 1, plots 3-5) passes between the site of the Laverstock late medieval pottery kilns (SMR SU12NE454 and SAM 740), less than 200 metres to the west, and the site of the Petersfinger Anglo-Saxon cemetery (SMR SU12NE400) within 200 metres to the east.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Surface Artefact Collection (SAC)

This was carried out where the field conditions allowed an accurate scan of the ploughed surface (fig. 1, plots 2 and 4-7). The field walking grid was laid out along the hectare squares that appear on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 edition maps. Each hectare was then subdivided into 16 collection transects, 25m long and 2m wide, and at a 25m spacing, these being marked in the field using bamboo canes. Each transect

was recorded as an individual context, with a full 12 figure grid reference allocated to its south end. There was 100% collection of artefacts from each transect.

2.2 Hand Dug Test Pits

The test pits were excavated on land that was under pasture. The test pit grid was planned on the hectare squares that appear on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 edition maps, with the pits spaced every 25m along the approximate centre line of the proposed route. The exact siting of test pits was taken from 1:2500 location plans provided by the County Archaeological Officer. As a result of a change in land use since the location plans were drawn up, the test pits planned for plots 2, 4 and 5 (fig. 1) were not undertaken, and the plots were investigated by SAC. Each test pit was 1m², from which a recorded volume of topsoil was sieved through a 10mm mesh for artefact retrieval purposes. Archaeological deposits encountered below the topsoil were recorded and sampled where appropriate, but not excavated.

2.3 Geophysical Evaluation

The sections of the proposed route surveyed by SAC or test pitting were subjected to a rapid magnetometer scan, with any anomalies tested by auger to determine their nature. Magnetic susceptibility readings were taken at 50m intervals along the centre line of the proposed route, with occasional soil samples being taken.

3. RESULTS

Stage 1 of the archaeological evaluation strategy has not been completed, and some 1,280m of the northern half of the proposed route awaits SAC. The 1,600m of the route so far completed consists of 127 SAC transects from plots 2 and 4-7 and 34 test pits from plots 1, 3, 8, 9 and 13. Full analysis of the finds will be undertaken on the completion of Stage 1, and the following sections should be seen as a preliminary summary subject to revision upon completion of this stage.

3.1 Surface Artefact Collection

The 127 transects have produced 10,151g of burnt flint, 20,277g of ceramic building material, 16g of clay pipe, 4g of fired clay, 10,635g of worked flint, 576g of glass, 3g of plastic, 1,259g of pottery, 84g of shell, 81g of slag, 223g of stone, 1 copper alloy object and three fragments of iron. All finds categories have been cleaned, counted and weighed. The burnt flint has been discarded except for four pieces that were found to be worked. The majority of the ceramic building material, glass and pottery is modern and will be discarded when full analysis is undertaken upon completion of Stage 1. The transects contained, on average, 80g of burnt flint and 4 pieces of worked flint each. Both these averages are reasonably high and appear to reflect the generally high potential of this area (a high background noise). Transects 587, 593, 600, 603, 604, 608, 611 and 623 produced significantly higher than average quantities of burnt and/or worked flint. These transects occurred in plots 6 and 7 to the south of Burroughs Hill.

3.2 Hand Dug Test Pits

The 34 test pits have produced 50g of animal bone, 8,213g of burnt flint, 2,785g of ceramic building material, 5g of clay pipe, 2,348g of worked flint, 53g of glass, 1g of

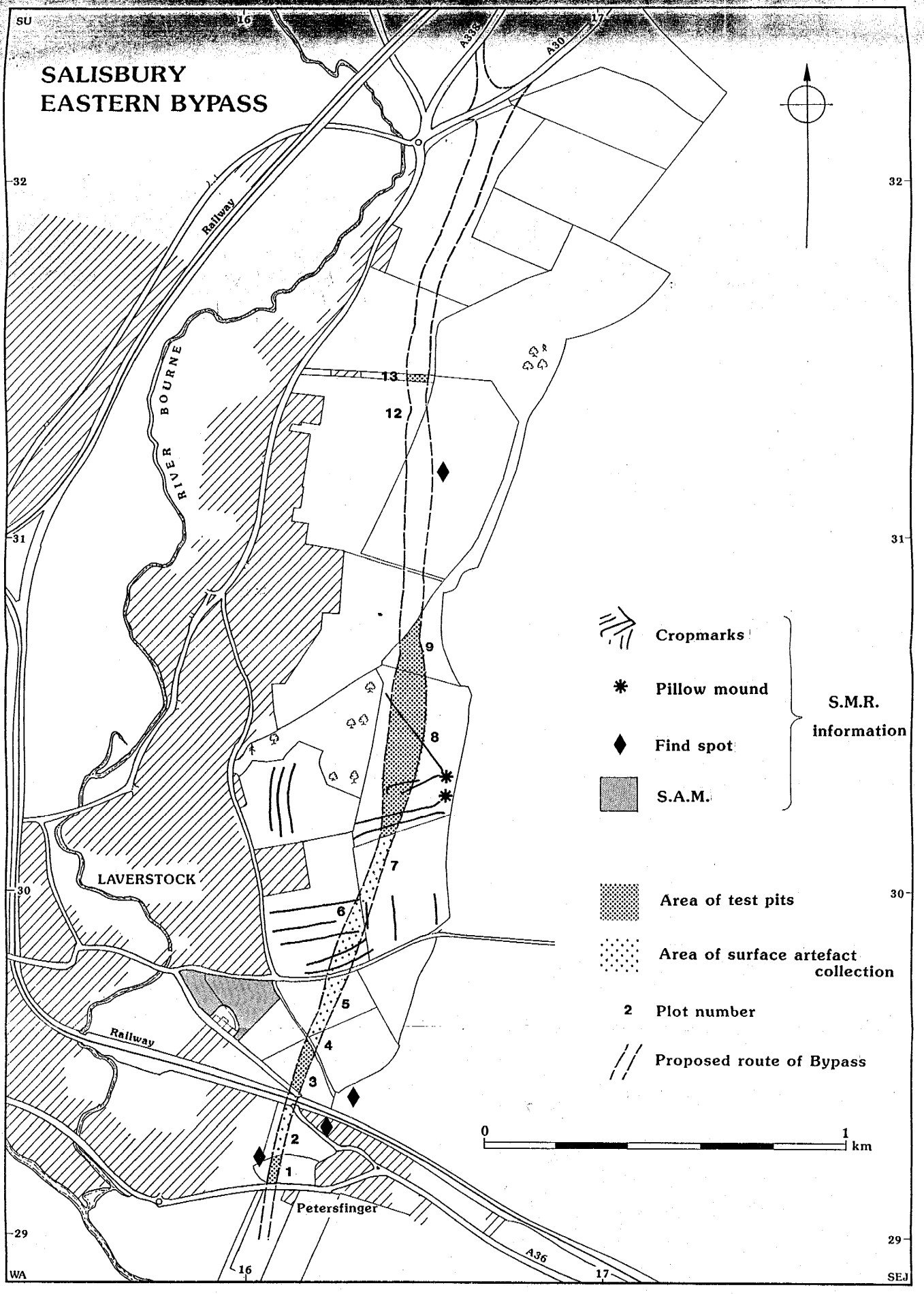
plastic, 71g of pottery, 151g of shell, 25g of slag, 224g of stone and 10 fragments of iron. All finds categories have been cleaned, counted and weighed. The burnt flint has been discarded except for two pieces that were found to be worked. The majority of the ceramic building material, glass and pottery is modern and will be discarded when full analysis is undertaken upon completion of Stage 1. On average each test pit produced 242g of burnt flint and 4 pieces of worked flint, again a high result comparable with that from the SAC transects. Test pits 18 and 20 produced significantly higher than average amounts of both burnt and worked flint. Both test pits were located in the northern half of plot 8.

3.3 Geophysical Evaluation

Magnetic scanning of the route revealed the presence of anomalies, and areas of enhanced magnetic susceptibility were also found. An interim statement is currently being prepared by Geophysical Services of Bradford, and will be forwarded to the County Archaeological Officer upon completion. Eleven geophysical anomalies were augered and three were found to be of natural origin. In the remainder, between 0.50m and 1.00m of clay and silt loam was encountered, attesting to the presence of features of possible archaeological significance. Four of these anomalies were clustered in the northern part of plot 8, centred on SU 41651305. The remainder were spread across the northern half of plots 6 and 7 in positions roughly similar to concentrations of burnt of worked flint found on the SAC transects.

4. DISCUSSION

The first stage of the evaluation is yet to be completed, but the results so far suggest the presence of apparently significant quantities of worked and burnt flint in the Burroughs Hill area (plot 8 and the northern half of plots 6 and 7). Geophysical anomalies suggest the presence of features in roughly the same areas. The pottery and ceramic building material have yet to be analysed and plotted but most of it seems to be post-medieval or modern in date, with the remainder made up of small well-rolled fragments.


SALISBURY
EASTERN BYPASS
SU
16
17
A338
A30
32
31
30
29
WA
SEJ
Railway
RIVER BOURNE
LAVERSTOCK
Petersfinger
A36
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
12
13
Cropmarks
Pillow mound
Find spot
S.A.M.
S.M.R. information
Area of test pits
Area of surface artefact collection
2 Plot number
Proposed route of Bypass
0
1
km