

**TOCKINGTON SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS,  
TOCKINGTON.**

**NGR: ST 602 860**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

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## **SUMMARY**

In the summer of 2002 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief to monitor the construction of a sewer between Upper Tockington Road and Tockington Sewage Treatment Works (hereafter STW), Tockington. The archaeological works comprised the monitoring of topsoil stripping and pipeline trench excavation.

The monitoring work revealed a substantial 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> century Roman subsoil pottery scatter and an undated linear cut. A limited amount of unstratified Medieval/Post Medieval pottery was recovered from the watched area.

In general, preservation conditions were favourable along the route of the pipeline.

## **GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

### *Archaeology*

For the purpose of this project archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

### *Medieval*

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *circa* AD 1500.

### *Natural*

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site, in this case the natural is limestone.

### *NGR*

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

### *OD*

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level.

### *OS*

Ordnance Survey

### *Roman*

The period between AD 43-410.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In the summer of 2002 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief, commissioned by Wessex Water.
- 1.2 The area designated for watching brief was centered on agricultural land between Upper Tockington Road and Tockington STW (Sewage Treatment Works) at NGR ST 602 860. The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994, revised 2001), *Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: Archaeological Watching Briefs: (guidelines)* issued by English Heritage (London Region) and the Project Design prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2002).
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological watching brief and conforms to the specification set out in Appendices 4 and 5 of *The Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991).

## **2 PROJECT BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Wessex Water proposed to lay a new sewer between Upper Tockington Road and the Tockington STW, Tockington. The proposed pipeline excavations consisted of a trench (averaging 1m wide by 1.5-3m deep) and a stripped easement of up to 10m wide for logistical purposes.
- 2.2 The proposed pipeline lies across an area of archaeological potential.

## **3 AIMS**

- 3.1 The aims of the watching brief were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains.
- 3.2 These aims were to be achieved by the pursuit of the following specific objectives as stated in the Project Design (Foundations Archaeology 2002).
  - i) to define, identify and record any archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible.
  - ii) to attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site.

iii) where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The construction of the sewer pipe required the excavation of a trench (averaging 1m wide by 1.5-3m deep) and an associated stripped easement, across agricultural land.
- 4.2 All trench excavation and topsoil stripping (occurring on agricultural land) was monitored, and where necessary recorded, by an experienced archaeologist.
- 4.3 Excavation sectors E-I (running along the route of Hardy Lane) were not monitored, as these fell within an existing highway and were specifically excluded from the scope of the project.

## 5 RESULTS

- 5.1 **SECTOR A-B** consisted of a machine cut pipe trench, 15m long by 1.10m wide and an abutting, machine cut, pipe-access-duct 4m long by 0.80m wide. Both trenches were aligned northwest-southeast and were excavated onto natural limestone bedrock to a maximum depth of 1.45m from the modern ground surface. The limestone was sealed beneath a layer of compact red clay (102) 1.25m thick. Overlying this, the topsoil (101) comprised a light brown sandy humus, 0.20m thick. No artefactual material occurred in either layer and no archaeological features were visible in plan or section throughout the trench. Topsoil stripping in this area revealed no archaeological activity.
- 5.2 **SECTOR B-C** consisted of a machine cut pipe trench, 120m long by 0.75m-1.90m wide. This trench was aligned northwest-southeast and was excavated onto natural limestone bedrock and red clays/limestone mix, to a maximum depth of 2.20m from the modern ground surface. The limestone was sealed beneath a layer of compact red clay containing limestone inclusions (204) 0.50m thick. Overlying this, a limestone layer (203), 0.40m thick, was sealed beneath an orange brown sandy silt clay subsoil (202), 1.1m thick. This horizon displayed frequent root disturbance and was overlaid by the topsoil (201). Context (201) consisted of a light brown sandy humus, 0.20m thick. No artefactual material occurred in any of the layers and no archaeological features were visible in plan or section throughout the trench. Topsoil stripping in this area revealed no archaeological activity.
- 5.3 **SECTOR C-D** consisted of a machine cut pipe trench, 90m long by 0.75m wide. This trench was aligned north-south and was excavated onto natural clays, to a maximum depth of 2.15m from the modern ground surface. The red clay (304),

- 1.75m thick, was sealed beneath a hardcore layer (303), 0.20m thick and a tarmac layer (302), 0.10m thick. Layers (303) and (302) were only encountered at the northern end of the trench, in close spatial proximity to an extant gate and associated stile. Overlying (302) and (304) the topsoil (301) consisted of a mid brown silty clay, 0.10m thick. No artefactual material occurred in any of the layers and no archaeological features were visible in plan or section throughout the trench. Topsoil stripping in this area revealed no archaeological activity.
- 5.4 **SECTOR D-E** consisted of a machine cut pipe trench, 110m long by 1.30m wide. This trench was aligned northwest-southeast, along the route of an extant trackway and was excavated onto natural clays, to a maximum depth of 1.96m from the modern ground surface. A layer consisting of mid brown silt clay (403), 1.75m thick, was sealed beneath layer (402), which consisted of a uniform gravel and ballast mix, 0.15m thick. Overlying this (401) comprised a loose rubble layer 0.06m thick. No artefactual material occurred in any of the layers and no archaeological features were visible in plan or section throughout the trench. Topsoil stripping in this area revealed no archaeological activity.
- 5.5 **SECTOR E-I:** Modern road – not monitored.
- 5.6 **SECTOR I-J** consisted of a machine cut pipe trench, 50m long by 1.10m wide. This trench was aligned north-south and was excavated onto natural clays, to a maximum depth of 1.37m from the modern ground surface. Layer (508) consisted of a yellow brown plastic clay, 0.40m to 0.05m thick which was sealed beneath a layer of light grey brown clay (507), 0.45m to 0.20m thick. (507) displayed frequent root disturbance. Neither (508) and (507) yielded any archaeological material.

Context (507) was cut by a flat-based linear feature [504], 0.20m deep by 1.3m across, which was aligned east-west. This feature occurred in both east and west facing trench sections and was located at the southern end of sector I-J (see figure 3). Context (505), a black brown plastic clay, constituted the primary fill of [504] and yielded frequent charcoal flecks. No pottery was recovered from this context. This fill extended to a depth of 0.14m. Overlying this, a light grey brown clay layer (506), 0.06m thick, formed the upper-most fill of [504].

Overlying [504], (506) and (507), was context (503), 0.20m thick, which consisted of a dark brown sandy clay containing frequent limestone slabs, charcoal flecks and occasional burnt clay. The limestone slabs displayed no visible facing or other working, were of varying sizes and shapes and displayed no overall structural form. Deposit (503) was located at the southern end of sector I-J (see figure 3).

The overlying subsoil (502), 0.42m thick, consisted of a red grey compact sandy clay. This context was sealed beneath a light brown sandy humic topsoil (501), 0.15m thick. Both (501) and (502) yielded no archaeological material. Spoil tip

scanning yielded a single sherd of unstratified Medieval/Post Medieval pottery. Topsoil stripping in this area revealed no archaeological activity.

- 5.7 **SECTOR J-K** consisted of a machine cut pipe trench, 60m long by 1.10m wide. This trench was aligned north-south and was excavated onto natural clays, to a maximum depth of 1.40m from the modern ground surface. Layer (604) consisted of a yellow brown clay, excavated to a depth of 0.40m. It was sealed by a grey brown plastic clay layer (603), 0.65m thick. This was in turn sealed by (602) which consisted of a grey brown sandy clay, 0.20m thick. Overlying context (602), the topsoil (601) consisted of a mid brown sandy humus, 0.15m thick. No archaeological features were visible in plan or section throughout the trench. Topsoil stripping in this area revealed no archaeological activity.

Context (602) yielded 79 pottery sherds dating to the later Roman period, late 3<sup>rd</sup>/early 4<sup>th</sup> century. The assemblage included *Dorset Black Burnished Ware* (BB1), *Oxfordshire Colour Coated Ware* and other miscellaneous grey sandy wares. Sherds were retrieved from both sections along the length of the trench. No visible feature was associated with this pottery scatter.

- 5.8 **SECTOR K-L** consisted of a machine cut pipe trench, 20m long by 1.80m wide. This trench was aligned northwest-southeast and was excavated onto a clay/organic peat mix, to a maximum depth of 1.99m from the modern ground surface. The trench traversed the *Tockington Mill Rhine* at approximately 11m southwest of point K. Horizon (704) consisted of a dark grey clay/black organic peat mix, excavated to a depth of 0.20m. This context was extremely waterlogged. This horizon was sealed beneath a layer of clean, dark grey clay (703), 0.80m thick. Overlying this, (702) comprised the subsoil; an orange brown clay silt, 0.80m thick. The topsoil (701) consisted of a mid brown sandy humus, 0.19m thick. No artefactual material occurred in any of the layers and no archaeological features were visible in plan or section throughout the trench. Topsoil stripping in this area revealed no archaeological activity.

- 5.9 **SECTOR L-M**: consisted of a machine cut pipe trench, 70m long by 1.80m wide. This trench was aligned northeast-southwest and was excavated onto natural clays and organic peat, to a maximum depth of 1.75m from the modern ground surface. Context (804) consisted of a dark grey clay/black organic peat mix, excavated to a depth of 0.15m. The peat constituent of this context dissipated at approximately 12m-14m south of the north end of the trench sector. Overlying this context, (803) consisted of a clean, mid grey clay, 0.61m thick. Horizon (803) was sealed beneath a light brown clay silt subsoil (802), 0.80m thick. The subsoil was overlaid by a mid brown sandy humic topsoil (801), 0.19m thick. No artefactual material occurred in any of the layers and no archaeological features were visible in plan or section throughout the trench. Topsoil stripping in this area revealed no archaeological activity.

- 5.10 **SECTOR M-N** consisted of a machine cut pipe trench, 70m long by 1.10m wide. This trench was aligned northeast-southwest and was excavated onto natural clays, to a maximum depth of 1.50m from the modern ground surface. Context (903) consisted of a mid grey clay, 0.86m thick. This context was sealed beneath an orange brown silty clay subsoil (902), 0.48m thick. Overlying this, the topsoil (901) consisted of a light brown sandy humus, 0.16m thick. No artefactual material occurred in any of the layers and no archaeological features were visible in plan or section throughout the trench. Topsoil stripping in this area revealed no archaeological activity.

## 6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 In general, preservation conditions across the site, especially beneath the ploughsoil, were good. Sectors E to I (along the route of Hardy Lane) were not monitored as these fell outside the scope of the project.
- 6.2 A buried tarmac (302) and hardcore surface (303) encountered at the northern end of sector C-D is likely to be associated with a spatially approximate extant gate and stile.
- 6.3 The rubble (401) and gravel (402) layers revealed in sector D-E were associated with the extant trackway running on the same alignment as the excavation trench.
- 6.4 The undulating nature of the interface between (508) and (507) in sector I-J was probably associated with root disturbance visible in (507).
- 6.5 An east-west aligned linear cut [504], which occurred in sector I-J, is undated. Truncation, probably by plough action, is likely to have caused the shallow vertical profile of this feature.
- 6.6 Context (503), overlying [504], contained frequent limestone slabs. These showed no visible facing or other working, were of varying sizes and shapes and displayed no overall structural form. Combined with the lack of any anthropogenic indicators from context (503), this suggests that the scatter of limestone is not an element of, or associated with, any structural remains.
- 6.7 Pottery sherds recovered from the spoil tips in sector I-J constitute limited evidence for Medieval/Post Medieval activity, in this area.
- 6.8 Numerous pottery sherds recovered from sector J-K constitute relatively significant evidence for late Roman activity in this area. The sherd assemblage occurred in subsoil layer (602). This horizon may have been subjected to plough intrusion. It is therefore likely that the pottery scatter is out of its primary context, and should therefore be treated as a ploughsoil assemblage.

## **7 CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 The archaeological watching brief has indicated that preservation conditions were, in general, good on the agricultural land between Tockington STW and the Upper Tockington Road.
- 7.2 The success of the watching brief was limited by the nature of the investigation.
- 7.3 Pipe trenches north of Hardy Lane and south of Upper Tockington road were devoid of extant archaeology.
- 7.4 Agricultural land immediately to the south of Hardy Lane (sectors I-K) yielded an undated ditch, a limited amount of unstratified Medieval/Post Medieval pottery and a considerable pottery scatter datable to late Roman period. The large quantity and varied types of vessel present within this assemblage indicate the potential for relatively significant Roman deposits, possibly settlement, to occur in this area.
- 7.5 The watching brief was the most appropriate response to development due to the archaeological potential of the site, the nature of the excavation and the size of the area traversed.
- 7.6 In relation to the land immediately south of Hardy Lane, the potential for further archaeological deposits must be considered moderately good, despite the limited number of cut features from the specific area of the watching brief.

## **8 NATURE OF THE RECORD**

8.1 The stratigraphic archive for the site consists of the following elements:

Context Sheets  
Section drawings  
Black & White photos  
Colour slides

8.2 The on-site methodologies used to recover any evidence were set out in the Foundations Archaeology Project Design (2002). In summary the following excavation methods were utilised; observation of all groundworks, including topsoil stripping, associated with the construction of the new pipeline. The groundworks were undertaken by mechanical excavator equipped with a wide toothless bucket. All site recording was undertaken in accordance with the Project Design. The records are available in the archive.

8.3 Following the completion of the watching brief an ordered, indexed, and internally consistent site archive has been compiled in accordance with Appendix 3 of The Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991).

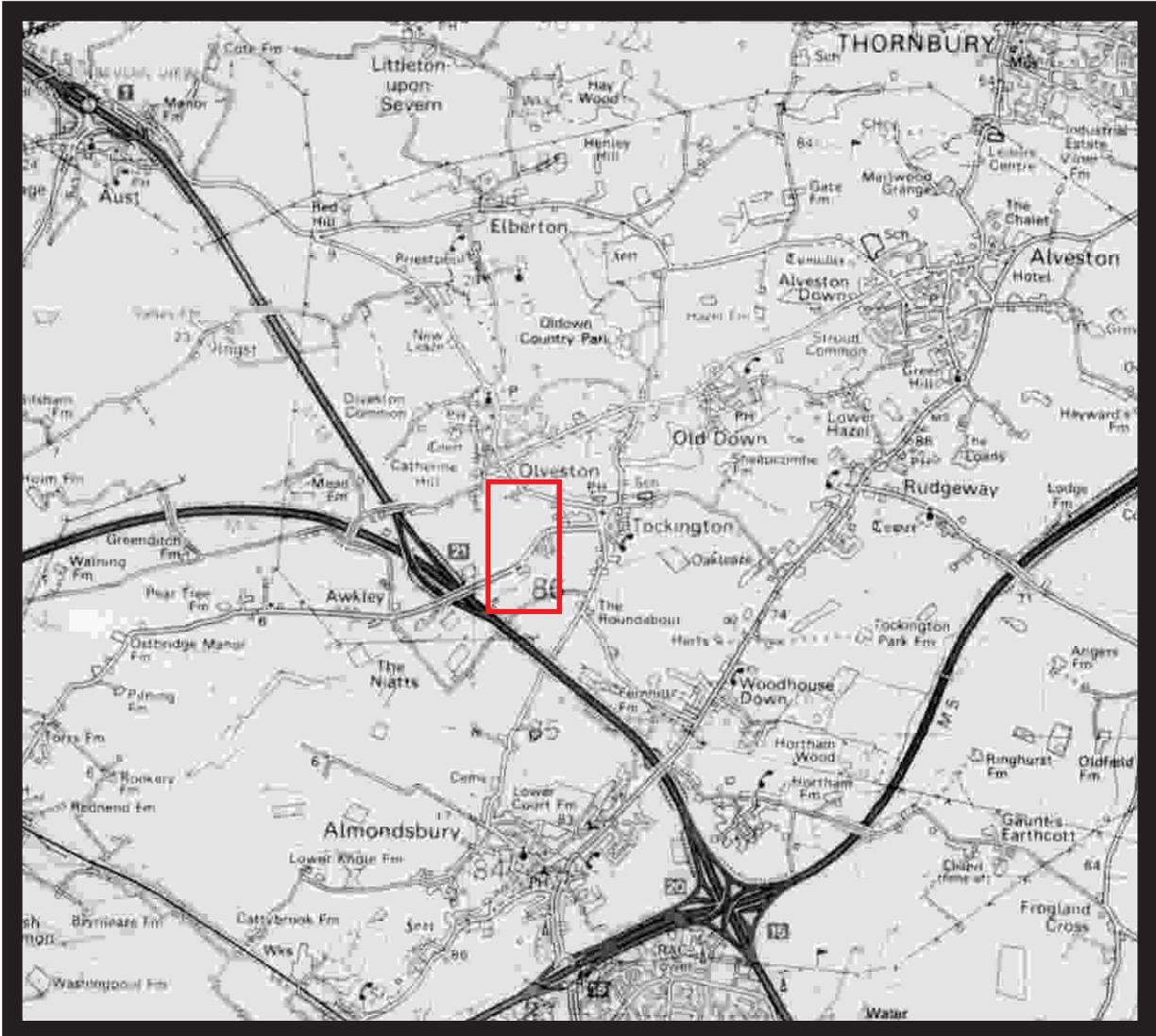
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IFA 1994 (revised 2001) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*. Institute of Field Archaeologists

## **10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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FIGURE 1: Site Location

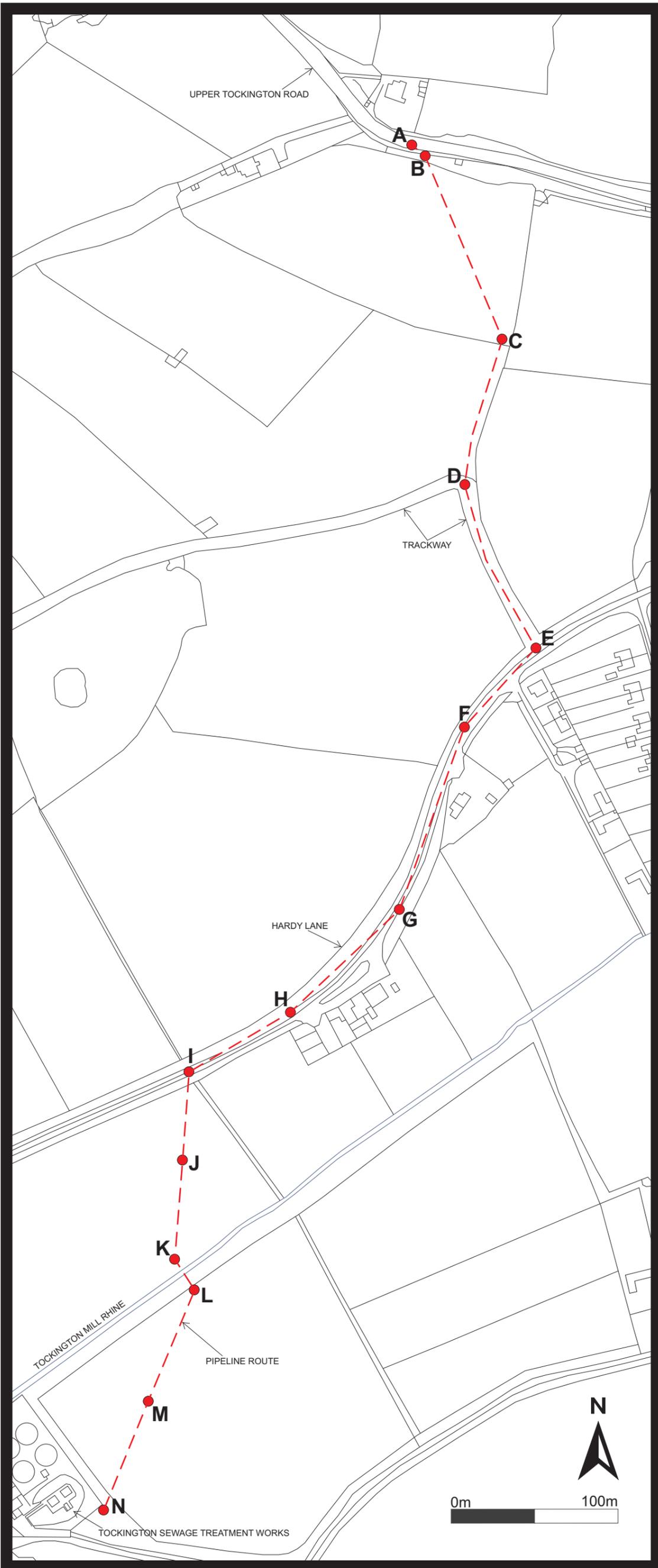
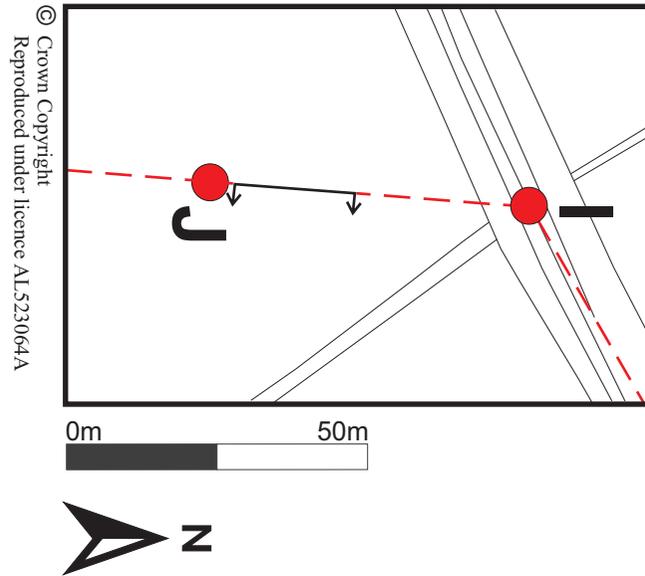


FIGURE 2: Pipe Route Plan

LOCATION OF TRENCH SECTION SHOWING [504] AND (503)



SECTOR I-J, EAST FACING TRENCH SECTION SHOWING [504] AND (503)

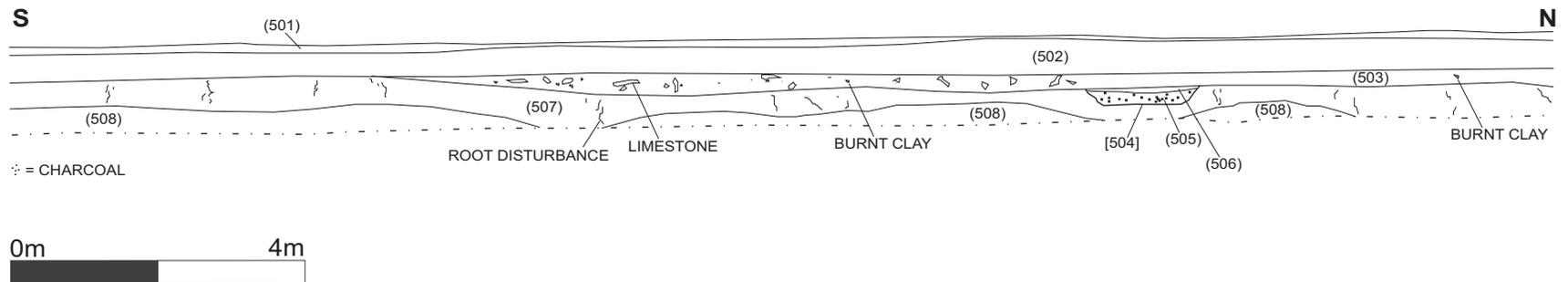


FIGURE 3: Plan and Section Showing Location of [504] and Horizon (503)