A1/A46 MAINTENANCE LAY-BYS (SITE 3A, 14, 15), NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Site code:	NMLN 07
NGR:	Site 3A – 479480 357830
	Site 14 – 467975 338360
	Site 15 – 480675 356075
PCA Job No:	07-339

Report prepared for
Scott Wilson Ltd.

by

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Revision B

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Summary

- *An archaeological watching brief took place during excavations for three new maintenance lay-bys on the A1 and A46 at various locations in Nottinghamshire.*

- *At Sites 3A and 14, the works comprised the widening of existing lay-bys, while Site 15 involved excavations for a completely new lay-by.*

- *The watching brief identified no features of archaeological significance at any of the locations; the predominant layers encountered being attributable to modern road construction or maintenance.*

1.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief took place during excavations for three maintenance lay-bys on the A1 and A46 at various locations in Nottinghamshire. This was commissioned by Scott Wilson Ltd, on behalf of AMScott, in response to a recommendation by Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC).

This report documents the results of the archaeological watching brief, undertaken on various occasions between the 18th February and 22nd March 2007. It has been prepared to meet the requirements of a written scheme of investigation prepared by Scott Wilson Ltd, in consultation with Nottinghamshire County Council. This approach complies with the recommendations of *Archaeology & Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16*, (Department of the Environment, 1991), and *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, (*IFA, 1994 as revised*).

Copies of this report will be sent to the Scott Wilson Ltd Project Archaeologist, who will forward copies to Notts. CC Archaeology Section for inclusion into the Historic Environment Record.

2.0 Location and Description (Figs. 1-3)

The development centred on the construction of new maintenance lay-bys in Nottinghamshire (Figs 1 to 3), comprising:

- Site 3A - Adjacent to the southbound carriageway of the A1, approximately 1km south of North Muskham (NGR 479480 357830);
- Site 14 - Adjacent to the northbound carriageway of the A46, c.1.5km south of the Saxondale roundabout (NGR 467975 338360); and
- Site 15 - c.500m northwest of the junction with the A1 at Newark (NGR 480675 356075).

The works at Site 3A involved the widening of a 30m long section of the existing lay-by and topsoil stripping before the adjacent roadside ditch could be piped. At Site 14, the existing layby was again widened, which involved the stripping of topsoil and underlying subsoil, while at Site 15 the works comprised the construction of a new lay-by. This lay-by was 50m long, and 5m wide (including a 10m taper at each end).

At Site 14, the drift geology is head overlying a solid geology of Upper Triassic Adwalton Formation mudstone, with exposed indurated beds ('skerries') of grey-green dolomitic siltstone and sandstone (part of the Mercia Mudstone group) (BGS sheet 126). At Sites 3A and 15, the drift geology is River Gravels overlying similar Mercia Mudstones to those at Site 14 (BGS sheet 113).

3.0 Planning Background

These works were not subject to planning permission, but an archaeological watching brief was recommended by the NCC Assistant Archaeological Officer based on a request by AMScott (the highways contractor) to approve the design. This approach is considered best practice. The watching brief was implemented in accordance with a

written scheme of investigation prepared by Scott Wilson Ltd (Scott Wilson, 2007) in consultation with the local planning authority. The written scheme of works included detailed procedures for the on-site implementation and post-fieldwork reporting.

4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

These sites all fall within areas of archaeological potential.

Site 3A
This lies within an area containing an ancient trackway, as well as soilmarks/cropmarks relating to prehistoric settlement. It lies in close proximity to the scheduled ancient monument of an Iron Age village.

Site 14
The site appears to be located in a deviation of the A46, where it skirts a mound. It is possible that this deviation is relatively modern and that the original line of the A46 (the Fosse Way) continued through the site. Therefore, any works carried out in this vicinity have the potential to disturb remains of the original Roman road.

Site 15
This is in the vicinity of soilmarks, which are interpreted as a prehistoric enclosure and trackway features. From historic map evidence the site also sits directly on one of the gun batteries that formed part of the Parliamentarian forces' line of circumvallation around Newark during its siege in the English Civil War.

5.0 Methodology

The watching brief was undertaken at night under strong arc lighting, as the lane-closure/temporary traffic lights required for safety reasons would produce the minimum disruption to normal traffic flow.

At Site 3A the watching brief took place on the night of 21st/22nd February 2007. A 30m long area at the northern end of the existing lay-by was stripped to a depth of 0.6m below kerb level, and the roadside ditch was stripped of vegetation. This was undertaken with a 22-tonne wheeled excavator employing a 2m wide smooth-bladed bucket. This work was monitored continuously to ensure that any archaeological features exposed were identified and recorded. The up-cast from the excavations was also scanned with a metal detector (Fischer 1236-X2) and raked through for finds recovery. A watching brief on the excavation of a series of pits for safety barrier posts was initially specified, but this was curtailed on 22nd/23rd February after an initial visit from the sub-contractor established that these would all fall within the carriageway itself, and would require drilling, rather than excavation.

The watching brief at Site 14 was undertaken on the night of 21st/22nd March 2007. Here, a 30m long area (the length of the existing lay-by) was stripped to a depth of 0.6m below kerb level. This was undertaken with a JCB 3CX excavator employing a 1.8m wide smooth-bladed bucket. Excavation was monitored continuously to ensure that any archaeological features exposed were identified and recorded. The up-cast

from the excavations was also scanned with a metal detector and raked through for finds recovery.

At Site 15 the area of the new lay-by was stripped to a depth of 0.6m below kerb level. This was undertaken on the night of 18th/19th February 2007 and excavated with a 22-tonne wheeled excavator employing a 2m wide smooth-bladed bucket. This work was again continuously monitored to ensure that any archaeological features exposed were identified and recorded and the up-cast from the excavations was also scanned with a metal detector and raked through for finds recovery.

These investigations resulted in the production of written descriptions on standard context recording sheets. Colour photographs and scale drawings complement these accounts.

Because of a lack of local spot heights or benchmarks in the vicinity of Sites 3A and 15, levels in these locations were established with a Leica GS50 global positioning system.

6.0 Results

Site 3A (Figs. 4, 5)
After the roadside ditch had been stripped of vegetation, the area between it and the kerb of the existing lay-by (an area 30m in length and of 2m maximum width) was stripped of topsoil and underlying deposits to a depth of c.0.6m, becoming 0.8m at the southern end.

The material exposed at the base of the sequence was a mid-brown sandy silt with occasional well-sorted gravel inclusions (context 304). This had been cut on the west side by a nearly vertical linear cut [303], which ran parallel to the kerb approximately 1m from the lay-by. This contained a mid-orange brown sandy gravel (context 302), which continued below the lay-by, and the presence of modern brick fragments within this material suggests that it forms the sub-base of the existing lay-by

The modern topsoil (context 301) sealed the area to a depth of 0.3m. This material consisted of a mid-brown sandy loam containing occasional small rounded pebbles and quantities of modern refuse.

The underlying natural substrate was occasionally exposed by the vegetation stripping in the base of the roadside ditch – this consisted of a mid-yellowish brown sandy gravel (context 305).

Metal detecting of both the stripped area and the upcast material produced only recent refuse (drinks cans, bolts and wire), which was discarded. No deposits or artefacts of archaeological interest were present within the stripped area.

Site 14 (Figs. 6, 7, 8)
An area 30m in length and of 2.5m maximum width from the kerb of the existing lay-by was stripped of topsoil and underlying deposits to a maximum depth of 0.6m. The

maximum depth of excavation was 0.6m measured from kerb height (nearest to the carriageway), but because the ground rose quite steeply from the carriageway to the roadside hedge, the depth of material removed on the northwest edge varied from 0.7m at the north end of the strip to 1m at the south.

The modern topsoil, present over the whole area, varied in thickness between 0.25 and 0.35m. This material (context 141) consisted of a dark greyish brown sandy clay containing rare small rounded pebbles and quantities of modern refuse. The topsoil sealed a layer of mid-yellowish brown/buff sandy clay subsoil (context 002), which was still present at the formation level over the majority of the length of the strip. The presence of several loose concrete kerbstones and paving slabs within this deposit demonstrates that it has been heavily disturbed by road construction or later landscaping. In the southern 11.5m of the strip, the underlying geological material (mottled pink and grey Mercia Mudstone – context 142) was patchily exposed.

Metal detecting of both the stripped area and the upcast material produced only recent refuse (crisp packets, drinks cans and a ring-pull), which was discarded. No deposits or artefacts of archaeological interest were present within the stripped area.

Site 15 (Figs. 9, 10)

An area 50m in length and of 5m maximum width was stripped of topsoil and underlying deposits to a maximum depth of 0.6m. The width of the strip tapered from 0m to 5m over the 10m, narrowing again from 5m back to 0m over the final 10m. The maximum depth of excavation was 0.6m adjacent to the carriageway, but because the ground dropped away from the carriageway more steeply than the 1 in 20 gradient of the stripping, the depth of material removed on the edge of the strip did not fully penetrate the topsoil.

The modern topsoil, present over the whole area, was between 0.3m and 0.35m thick. This material (context 150) consisted of a dark brownish grey silty loam containing occasional small rounded pebbles, and is of modern origin as it was separated from the layer below by a layer of geotextile. The underlying layer (context 151) comprised a compacted mid-reddish brown coarse sand and pebble hardcore which was identified by the contractors as the covering layer of a French drain known to run adjacent to the carriageway here.

Metal detecting again produced only recent refuse (modern drinks cans), which was discarded. No deposits or artefacts of archaeological interest were present within the stripped area.

7.0 Discussion and Conclusions

The excavation of all of the lay-by areas revealed extensive evidence for modern disturbance, probably associated with road construction or later landscaping. Excavations at sites 14 and 15 only encountered modern layers, while at Site 3a, layer 304 appears to represent a buried agricultural horizon. However, as no finds were recovered to date this material, a clear interpretation is impossible. As the A1

carriageway is considerably higher than the surrounding fields here, it is likely that such a horizon could be encountered at depth.

8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

The methodology employed has proved entirely adequate to allow the presence/absence of archaeological features to be determined. No features or artefacts of archaeological significance were exposed by the watching brief.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Scott Wilson Ltd for this commission, and for the assistance provided by AMScott (the client), particularly their lighting and traffic management crews, and the cooperation of the Balmer-Lindley safety barrier crew.

10.0 References

British Geological Survey, 1996, *Nottingham, England and Wales Sheet 126, Solid and Drift Geology, 1:50 000 Series*. Keyworth, Nottingham: British Geological Survey

British Geological Survey, 1966, *Ollerton, England and Wales Sheet 113, Solid and Drift Geology, One-Inch Series*. Keyworth, Nottingham: British Geological Survey

Scott Wilson Ltd, 2007, *A1 Maintenance Lay-bys (Sites 3A, 14 & 15): Nottinghamshire. Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief.* Unpublished.

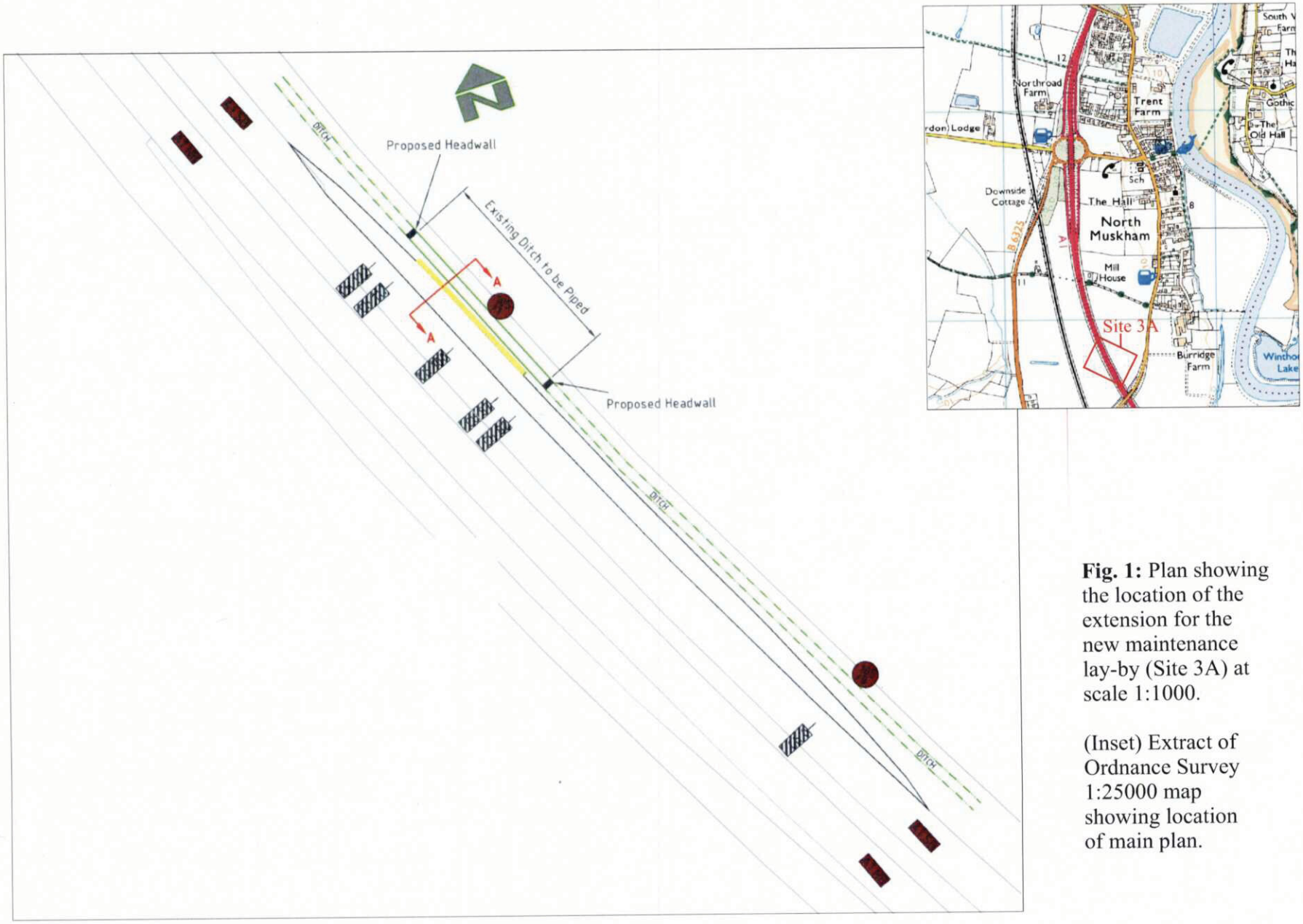

Fig. 1: Plan showing the location of the extension for the new maintenance lay-by (Site 3A) at scale 1:1000.

(Inset) Extract of Ordnance Survey 1:25000 map showing location of main plan.

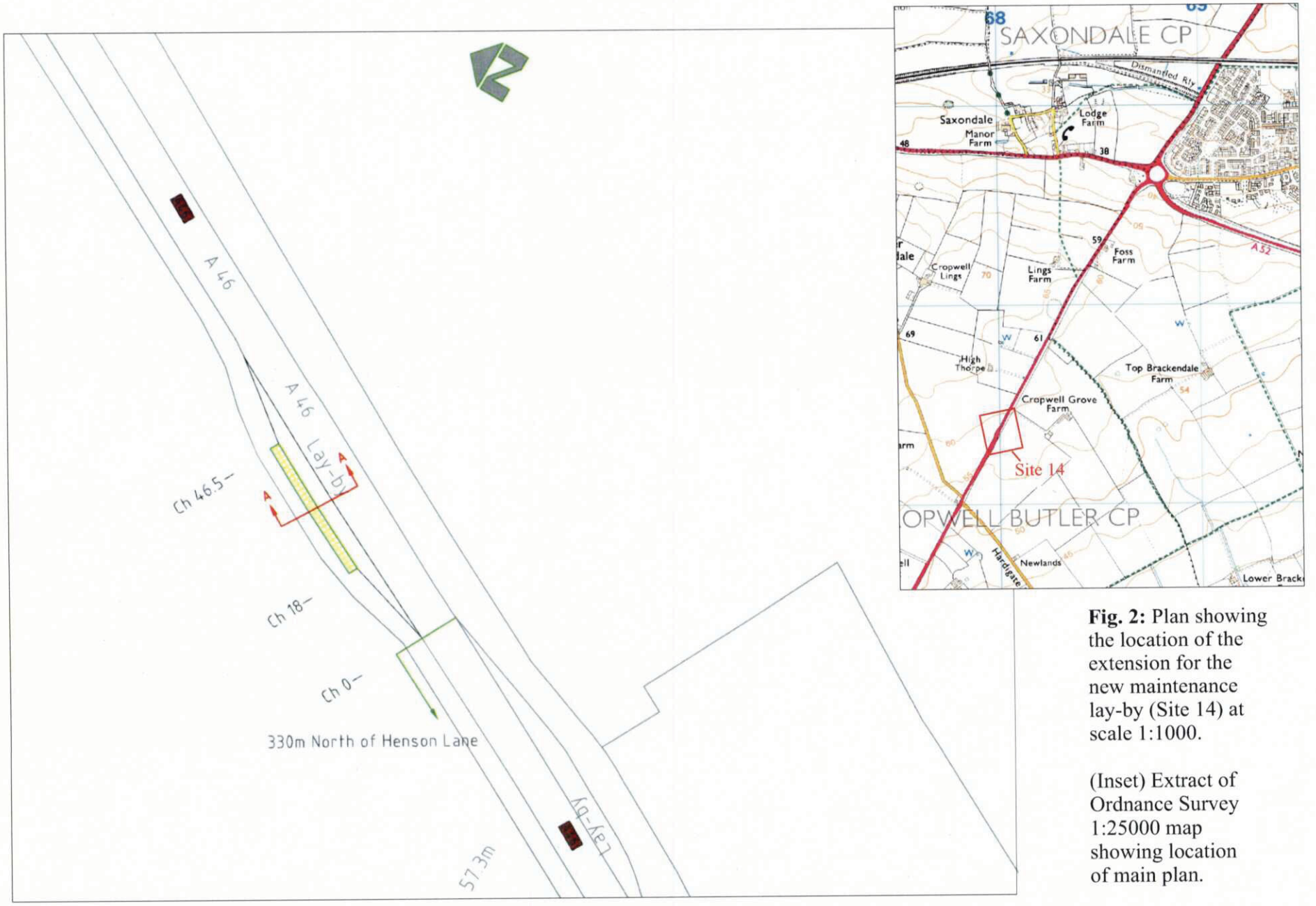

Fig. 2: Plan showing the location of the extension for the new maintenance lay-by (Site 14) at scale 1:1000.

(Inset) Extract of Ordnance Survey 1:25000 map showing location of main plan.

Fig. 3: Plan showing the location of the new maintenance lay-by (Site 15) at scale 1:1000.

(Inset) Extract of Ordnance Survey 1:25000 map showing location of main plan.

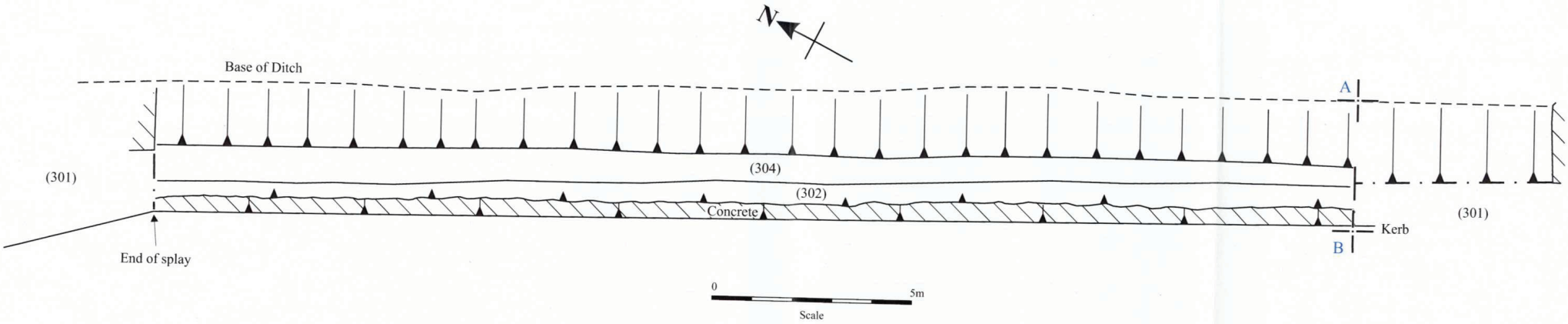

Fig. 4: Plan showing the extent of the stripped area at Site 3A and the location of the section shown in Fig. 5. Scale 1:100.

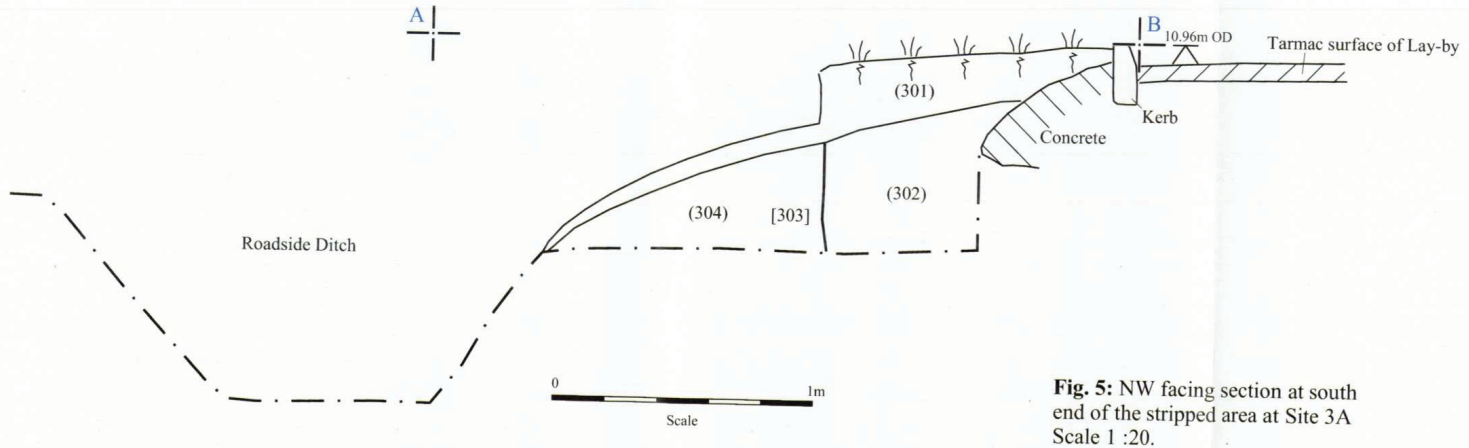

Fig. 5: NW facing section at south end of the stripped area at Site 3A Scale 1 :20.

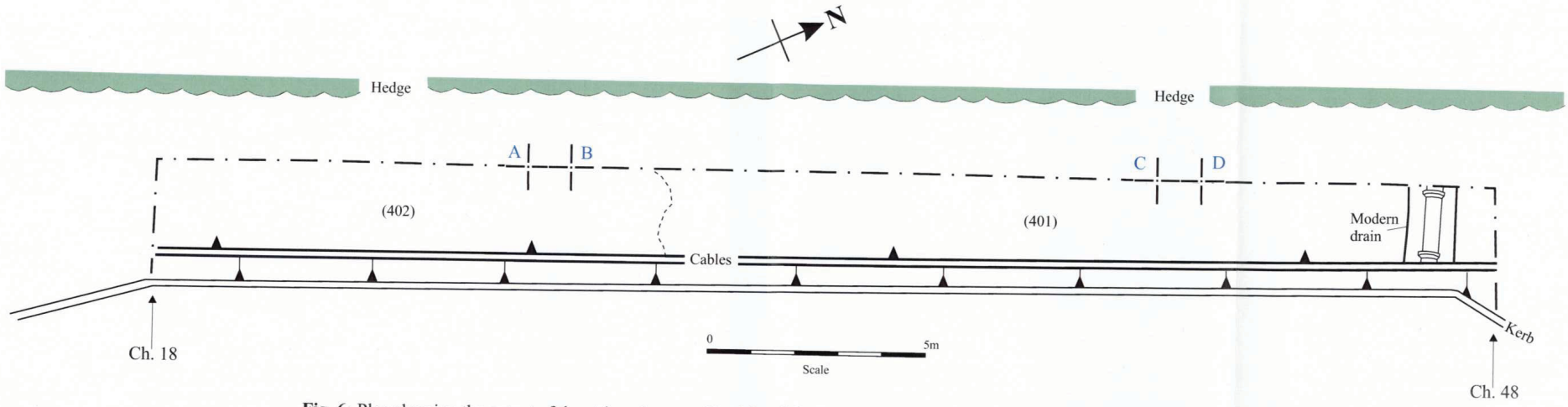

Fig. 6: Plan showing the extent of the stripped area at Site 14 and the location of the sample sections shown in Figs. 7 and 8. Scale 1:100.

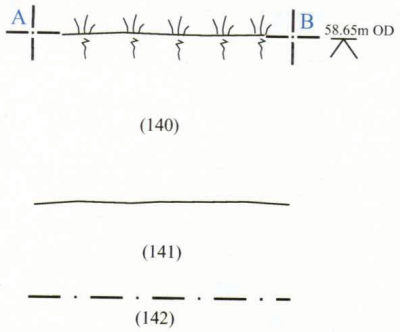

Fig. 7: SE facing sample section at ch.27 of Site 14. Scale 1 :20

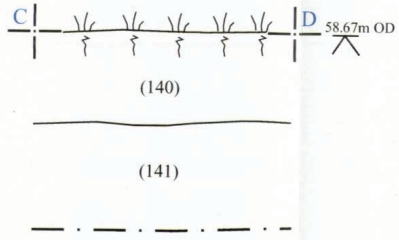

Fig. 8: SE facing sample section at ch.41of Site 14. Scale 1 :20

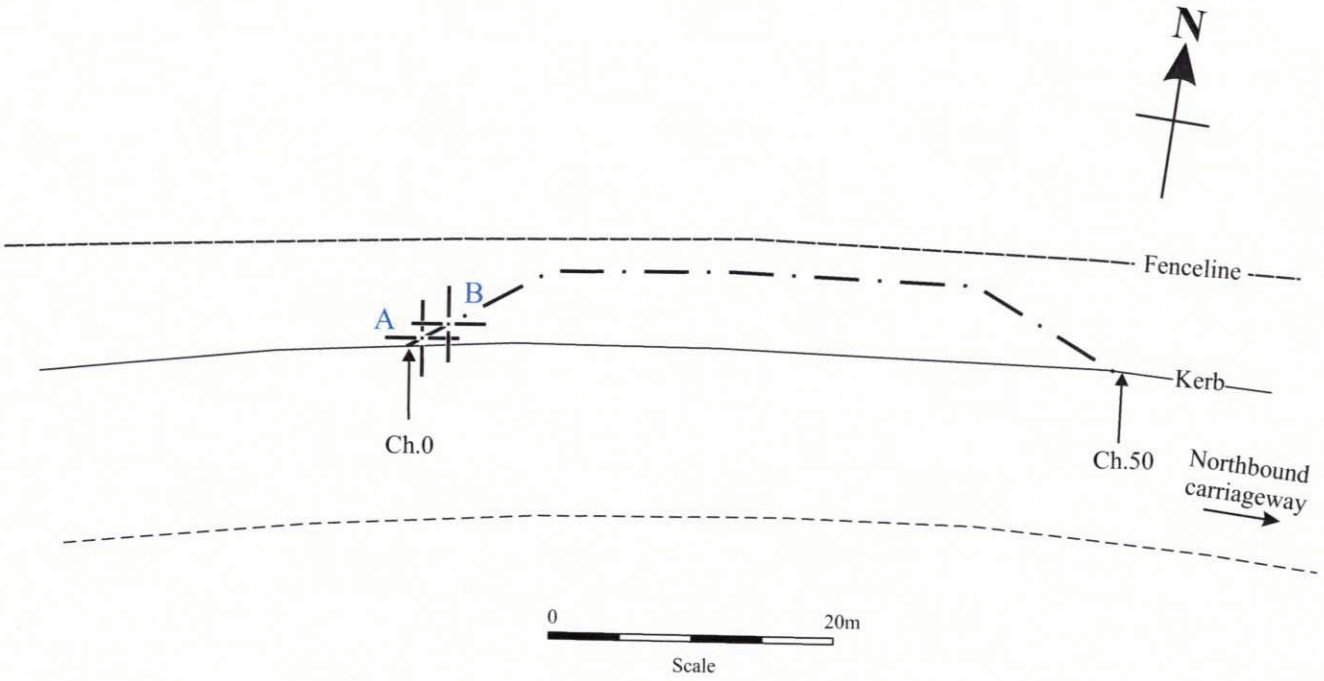

Fig. 9: Plan showing the extent of the stripped area at Site 14 and the location of the sample section shown in Fig. 10. Scale 1:500.

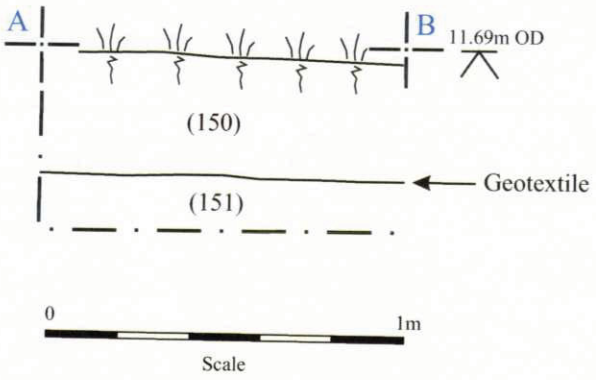

Fig. 10: SE facing sample section at ch.1 of Site 15. Scale 1 :20

Appendix 1: Colour Plates

Plate 1 (left): General view of the site of the stripped area at Site 3A, looking north.

Plate 2 (right): The exposed section at the south end of Site 3A, looking SSE.

Plate 3 (left): General view of the stripped area at Site 3A by daylight, looking NNE.

Plate 4 (above): General view of the stripped area at Site 14 from ch. 18 – 30 showing the exposed layer (141), with natural (142) patchily exposed.

Plate 5 (above): General view of the stripped area at Site 14 from ch. 30 – 48 showing the exposed layer (141).

Plate 6 (left): Exposed southeast facing section at ch. 27 of Site 14, looking northwest.

Plate 7 (right): General location shot of Site 14 by daylight, looking north.

Plate 8 (left): General working shot at Site 15, looking west from ch.50.

Plate 9 (right): Working shot, Site 15: partial topsoil stripping at north edge of site in the vicinity of ch.10, looking west.

Plate 10 (left): General view of the stripped area at Site 15 showing the exposed layer (151), taken from ch. 20, looking NW.

Plate 11 (right): General location shot of Site 15 by daylight, looking east.

Appendix 2: Context summary.

Site 3A

Context	Description
301	Modern Topsoil – mid-brown humic sandy loam containing occasional small rounded pebbles and quantities of modern refuse.
302	Mid orange brown coarse sandy gravel which contained occasional patches (up to 0.5m in size) of mid brown clay and occasional brick fragments – levelling or landscaping layer associated with road/lay-by construction.
303	Linear Cut, contains (303)
304	Mid-brown sandy silt containing occasional gravel patches (5-15mm in size) – buried agricultural horizon. Undated.
305	Mid-yellowish brown sandy gravel (10-20mm in size, rounded and well sorted) containing occasional patches of clean yellow sand – Natural substrate seen only occasionally in base of ditch (where mechanical cleaning had cut deeper).

Site 14

Context	Description
140	Topsoil – dark greyish brown humic sandy clay containing occasional small rounded pebbles and quantities of modern refuse.
141	Mid yellowish brown/buff coarse sandy clay subsoil which contained occasional chunks of concrete paving slabs and loose kerbstones.
142	Very coarse pinkish brown marl, very occasional medium rounded pebbles , showing patchily in southern 11.5m at base of strip - Natural underlying geological substrate.

Site 15

Context	Description
150	Topsoil – dark brownish grey friable silty topsoil containing occasional small and medium rounded pebbles and quantities of modern refuse.
151	Compacted layer of mid-reddish brown coarse sand and pebbles (up to 0.1m in size) separated from context (150) by a layer of geotextile. Identified by contractors as the fill of a French drain.