

A303 STONEHENGE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEYS

Written Scheme of Investigation for Field Evaluation

**Areas Q, R, S, T and U
(The 2km tunnel south of Stonehenge)**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1.1. The context, background and general approach to the proposed field evaluation are set out in a separate document (Wessex Archaeology 2001, *A303 Stonehenge – Archaeological Surveys: Field Evaluation Strategy*) which should be read in conjunction with this written scheme of investigation (WSI).
- 1.1.2. This WSI relates to those parts of Areas Q, R, S, T, and U that would be impacted on by the construction of the Illustrative Design. The document appraises the known archaeological resource and reviews the Monument Interest Value scores allocated by previous studies. Proposals for archaeological evaluation are presented for comment by the archaeological monitors (English Heritage, the National Trust and the County Archaeologist of Wiltshire County Council) and approval by the Highways Agency.

1.2. Site description

- 1.2.1. Area Q comprises an expansive area of arable land on Stonehenge Down, previously but temporarily divided into two fields (scheme field nos. 77 and 82), which lie immediately to the north of the A303 and west of Stonehenge. The Preferred Route follows the existing line of the A303 in this area (i.e. between NGR SU 110416 and SU 118418) (**Figure 1**). Area Q lies on the gentle south-facing slope of an east-west orientated ridge. Travelling from the west, the ground rises to a highest point of 111m aOD (above Ordnance Datum) before falling gently to the south of Stonehenge.
- 1.2.2. Area R comprises a single triangular field (scheme field no. 83), on the south side of the A303 at NGR SU 115416, immediately to the south of Area Q. Area R is generally on the shallow south-facing slope of Stonehenge Down but is crossed north-south by a low ridge (at c. 108m aOD) extending into Normanton Gorse.
- 1.2.3. Area S comprises a single field, the Stonehenge Triangle (scheme field no. 89), which lies immediately to the north of the A303, south of the A344 and east of By-way 12 at NGR SU 123421. The Area lies on the eastern end of a low spur at some 105m aOD (above Ordnance Datum), the land dropping

into a dry valley at Stonehenge Bottom beyond the junction of the A303 and the A344 to the east.

- 1.2.4. Area T comprises a considerable tract of arable land immediately to the south of the A303, extending from Byway 12 in the west (NGR SU 118418) to Stonehenge Road (the former route of the A303 west of Amesbury at NGR SU 140417) in the east. It is divided into a number of fields (scheme field numbers 90, 91, 95, 102), some separated by tracks. The ground undulates significantly, falling from Byway 12 (c. 98m aOD) into Stonehenge Bottom (81m aOD), before rising onto King Barrow Ridge (111m aOD) and falling again towards a dry valley east of Vespasian's Camp.
- 1.2.5. Area U comprises an area of pasture (scheme Field no. 94) to the north of the A303 and its junction with the A344. It runs from Stonehenge Bottom in the west to the summit of King Barrow Ridge in the east
- 1.2.6. Throughout these areas the underlying geology comprises Middle Chalk although the east side of Stonehenge Bottom has been shown to carry localised deposits of Holocene colluvium (hillwash).
- 1.2.7. The Stonehenge Triangle (Area S) is maintained as pasture, the grass closest to and within the Stones being managed for visitor access. Area U comprises pasture but all the other fields are subject to an arable regime, crops having been harvested during August 2001.
- 1.2.8. All these Areas lie at the core of the Stonehenge World Heritage Site on land owned by the National Trust. The Stonehenge Triangle is under the Guardianship of the Secretary of State and is managed by English Heritage. It contains a number of Scheduled Monuments (mainly round barrows) in addition to Stonehenge itself. Scheduled Monuments (a long barrow and round barrows) occur on either side of the A303 in Areas Q and R. The impressive burial mounds (the King Barrows) in Area U are also Scheduled Monuments.
- 1.2.9. The vestiges of a Listed milestone (Amesbury 5/7) occur on the south verge of the A303 in Area T (at NGR SU123419).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

2.1. Introduction

- 2.1.1. This section summarises the existing knowledge of the archaeological resource in Areas Q, R, S, T and U. This is based on a number of sources, principally the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and the Stonehenge WHS GIS database, together with the results of previous surveys. This information has been collated and summarised in the *A303 Stonehenge Archaeological Appraisal* (Wessex Archaeology 2001), which, together with the results of additional non-intrusive surveys commissioned under Stage 2 of the scheme, forms the basis of this section of the WSI.

2.2. Archaeological appraisal

2.2.1. The *A303 Stonehenge Archaeological Appraisal* (Wessex Archaeology 2001) has identified 20 known sites within the Preferred Route corridor in Areas Q-U, once multiple and erroneous entries have been taken into account:

Area Q

- Site 353: an earthwork following the parish boundary seen on APs
- Site 511: a possible barrow seen on APs
- Site 518: a buried linear ditch seen on APs
- Site 522: round barrow: part of **SM 10312**
- Site 523: round barrow: part of **SM 10312**
- Site 525: round barrow: part of **SM 10312**. (Four other small mounds depicted by Colt Hoare are not given separate entries)

Area R

- Site 518: a buried linear ditch (originally recorded with an accompanying earthwork bank) and two perpendicular ditches, seen on APs
- Site 521: a long barrow: **SM 10314**

Area S

- Site 669: one of a group of round barrows SW of Stonehenge: **SM 10370**
- Site 725: a depression seen on APs

Area T

- Site 689: find spot of an Early Bronze Age metal axe
- Site 694: a buried linear ditch seen on APs
- Site 729: curvilinear marks, probably former courses of the A303, seen on APs
- Site 731: the find spot, considered to be erroneous, of a Neolithic flint tool
- Site 802: small square enclosure located by geophysical survey
- Site 1618: find of Neolithic pottery
- Site 1620 Bronze Age pottery found in evaluation excavation
- No SMR number: a milestone: **Listed Grade 2, Amesbury 5/7**

Area U

- Site 694: see Area T
- Site 729: see Area T
- Site 811-15: a round barrow and associated finds; **SM10303**
- Site 817: a small pit (the Chalk Plaque Pit) with Late Neolithic finds

- Site 829: a round barrow, one of the New King Barrows: **SM 10465**
- 2.2.2. In addition to these recorded sites background information is available from the recent re-appraisal of aerial photography, from geophysical survey, fieldwalking, watching briefs, a study of military installations (Wessex Archaeology 1998), a Historic Landscape Survey (Wessex Archaeology 2001) and field evaluation of part of Area T (Stonehenge Visitor Centre Site 12)
 - 2.2.3. English Heritage's (2001) re-assessment of available aerial photographs has added no new features in these Areas. It has not verified the suspected barrow (Site 511) in Area Q, nor the depression (Site 725) in Area S.
 - 2.2.4. Geophysical surveys have not added new features to the list of sites. These have not verified the site of the suspected barrow (Site 511) in Area Q. However, they have plotted the course of known linear features (Sites 518/522, 694 and 728/9), located a small square enclosure (Site 802) and pits (at the east end of area T associated with Sites 1618 and 1620), and located buildings associated with the former military airfield (below). Geophysical survey by English Heritage within the Stonehenge Triangle (Area S) has confirmed the position of barrows (including Site 669), modern disturbance (Site 725), former military buildings and the site of the former custodian's cottages (at the junction of the A303 and A344).
 - 2.2.5. Fieldwalking of available areas has located only thin scatters of finds. However, a greater density of prehistoric flint artefacts has been noticed on the southern part of King Barrow Ridge (Area T: Coneybury Hill). Pottery of all periods is rare in surface collections from these Areas.
 - 2.2.6. Watching briefs have been maintained during the laying of various services adjacent to the A303 and A344. The most recent of these include a British Telecom cable (Wessex Archaeology 1992; Ref. 35131) and the Global Communications Cable (Wessex Archaeology 1999; Ref 46666). Although the latter made some observations about the potential survival of old land surfaces beneath the existing carriageway of the A303, neither recovered artefacts nor recorded features in these Areas.
 - 2.2.7. The survey of military installations on Salisbury Plain (Wessex Archaeology 1998) has highlighted the extent of buildings associated with the former Stonehenge Airfield in Areas Q, R, S and T. The positions of footings of the technical buildings have been located by geophysical survey (and the observation of geotechnic pits in 2001) and some debris is still apparent (especially in the south-east corner of Area Q). The scale of these buildings is evident from surviving photographs (Wessex Archaeology, ex Imperial War Museum). The course of a branch of the military light railway that served these buildings crossed area Q from west to east passing between round barrows 522 and 523.

Overview

- 2.2.8. These Areas lie at the core of the World Heritage Site, Stonehenge itself being the focus of public attention. The sequence of monument building here started in the early Mesolithic (8500-7650 BC) and continued until the Middle Bronze Age (1600BC). Despite the evidence from Stonehenge itself, activity throughout this long period is not evident from finds within Areas Q-T. Indeed, it has been suggested (Richards 1990) that the area around Stonehenge was reserved from domestic and industrial activity because of the ceremonial status of the focal monument. Nonetheless, the potential for the discovery of information of the greatest significance to the understanding of the Stonehenge landscape should not be ignored.
- 2.2.9. Within Areas Q-T, the long barrow (Site 521) west of Stonehenge is the earliest visible monument, probably dating to the early Neolithic. Preliminary evaluation of the monument (Wessex Archaeology 1993: 35734) suggests that it has suffered from considerable interference, although areas of ancient land surface still exist beneath it.
- 2.2.10. Throughout the Neolithic, King Barrow Ridge was the scene of activity as the discovery of pottery (Site 1618) and pits (Sites 1618, 817) attest. Some of this information derives from the field evaluation of an area south of the A303 (Visitor Centre Site 12: Wessex Archaeology 1993, 36881). The location would have served as a vantage point from which to view the creation, development and use of Stonehenge as well as offering a route between the Late Neolithic monuments at Durrington Walls and Coneybury Hill. The small square enclosure in Area T (Site 802) is undated but might be Neolithic by analogy with similar structures at Windmill Hill (Smith 1965, 31) and in Ireland.
- 2.2.11. The most numerous monuments within Areas Q-T are Early Bronze Age round barrows. Their likely contemporaneity with, and proximity to the stone circle suggest that they were important. Certain barrows (522-5, Area Q: 669, Area S) are amongst the closest to the Stones, while those on King Barrow Ridge (811,829: Area U) are members of the most conspicuous group within the WHS. Traces of settlement activity at this time are, however, elusive. A stray find (689, Area T) is unlikely to mark such activity.
- 2.2.12. Several linear earthworks (518, Areas Q and R; 694, 1620 Areas T and U) are likely to date from the later Bronze Age and witness a change in land allotment.
- 2.2.13. Traces of activity during the Iron Age, Roman and Medieval periods are surprisingly sparse in the area and only a few sherds of pottery of these periods have been found during field walking. Documentary sources (Chandler 2001) suggest that the area was pasture, divided (as in the case of Site 353 Area Q, R) by parish and tithing boundaries throughout the Middle

Ages. The boundaries may once have been marked by small mounds but these do not appear to survive.

- 2.2.14. Although the route may be ancient, the line of the A303 was established as a turnpike in 1761/2. A Listed milestone is associated with this road (Area T). The road crossed a number of by-ways which converged from the south on Stonehenge before passing to villages in the north.
- 2.2.15. The most significant alteration to this pastoral landscape was the establishment and subsequent demolition of the First World War Stonehenge airfield. The position and extent of buildings associated with this airfield (in Areas Q, R, S, T) are known from plans and contemporary photographs, confirmed by both geophysical survey and the monitoring of geotechnic pits.
- 2.2.16. The monitoring of pipe and cable trenches along the verges of the A303 (BT, Global Crossing cable etc) have revealed little probably because the verges have been disturbed or are made-up. By comparison, valuable Neolithic finds have been found elsewhere on the margins of the road (Site 817, Area U).

2.3. Initial evaluation of the cultural heritage resource

- 2.3.1. In 1995 (Blore et al 1995), a Monument Interest Value (MIV) was calculated for the sites within Areas Q –U (below). For the purposes of this evaluation the records of individual objects (689, 731, 811-4) are excluded either because they are finds from contexts (such as barrows or pits) which are themselves assessed, are without secure contexts or have derived from field evaluation (1618-20).

Site	Area	Type	Surv.	Poten.	GV (cl.)	GV (Ass.)	Diver.	SAM	Total MIV
353	Q,R	Linear	1	2	1	2	1	X	11
511	Q	Barrow	0	0	0	0	0	X	0
518	Q,R	Linear	3	3	2	1	2	Y	45
521	R	Barrow	1	2	1	3	2	Y	45
522	Q	Barrow	3	2	2	1	1	Y	45
523	Q	Barrow	3	2	2	1	1	Y	45
525	Q	Barrow	3	2	2	1	1	Y	45
669	S	Barrow	3	3	2	1	3	Y	45
694	T, U	Linear	1	2	1	3	1	X	16
729	T, U	Tracks	1	2	1	1	1	X	8
802	T	Enclos.	1	2	1	2	1	X	11
815	U	Barrow	2	1	1	3	2	Y	45
817	U	Pit	1	2	1	1	1	X	8
829	U	Barrow	2	3	2	1	1	Y	45

- 2.3.2. This exercise has highlighted the importance of the long barrow and round barrows, which contribute to the reasons for the inscription of the landscape as a World Heritage Site. The alleged site of one barrow (511) has not been confirmed by subsequent assessment of the evidence, however, and is therefore extremely doubtful.

- 2.3.3. Although linear earthwork 518 has been scored highly, only the section beyond Areas Q and R (within Normanton Gorse) comprises an extant bank and ditch, and only that section forms the Scheduled Monument. The parts within Areas Q and R are degraded and are reasonably presumed to exist only as a buried infilled ditch.
- 2.3.4. Individual pits or finds (e.g. 817) attract low scores. However, these contain finds contemporary with the Neolithic phases of Stonehenge and collectively provided a valuable ‘signature’ for human activity at the time. If the small enclosure (802) is of a similar age, then collectively these could be regarded as more important than the current scoring suggests.
- 2.3.5. The eighteenth century milestone on the verge of the A303 is Listed Grade II; this is not included in the MIV assessment above.
- 2.3.6. English Heritage has recently (Jeremy Lake 2000) completed a thematic survey of military aviation sites and structures. This draws attention to the national importance of certain airfields and structures as good surviving examples of the development of defensive architecture. Whereas Stonehenge Airfield was not without strategic military importance, it is not highlighted in this survey because the airfield no longer exists. The buried vestiges of the airfield buildings offer evidence of the nature of construction but cannot be regarded as nationally important when much better examples survive elsewhere (for example Old Sarum).
- 2.3.7. The sites of relatively modern buildings now demolished should also be noted. (For example the Custodian’s Cottages at the junction of the A344 and A303: Area S). These and other modern features (incl. Site 725) are evident on English Heritage’s Geophysical surveys of the Triangle (Cleal et al 1995, Fig 258).

3. POTENTIAL IMPACT

3.1. Design constraints

- 3.1.1. In this part of the Preferred Route the Illustrative Design has to accommodate the following design constraints:
- The proximity of Stonehenge and the need to avoid this Guardianship site;
 - The on-line upgrading of the A303 to dual carriageway with minimal landtake within the WHS, in particular to the north of the existing road;
 - Construction of a 2km tunnel (the Preferred Route announcement stated that this would be of cut and cover construction but other options are also to be assessed);
 - The location of important archaeological sites (especially Scheduled Monuments and Listed structures), particularly with relation to the position of the tunnel portals;

- Horizontal and vertical re-alignment of the A303 to enter the tunnel and accommodate construction phasing to maintain operation of the existing road;
- Topographic variation (for example, at Stonehenge Bottom); and
- The proposed closure of the A344.

3.2. Illustrative design

- 3.2.1. In Area R, the new road lies in cutting, constructed mostly to the south of the existing road with only a very small landtake to the north in Area Q required for the cut and cover tunnel portal. No additional landtake for landscaping is proposed within the WHS. The cut and cover tunnel portal is situated at ch. 7900, some 50m west of the pinch-point between the scheduled long barrow (521) to the south of the existing road and the group of three round barrows (522 etc.) to the north. Construction of a shallow bored tunnel option would require, as a minimum, additional landtake to the south of the road to allow construction of the tunnel portal alongside the existing road.
- 3.2.2. From ch. 7900, the road is in tunnel throughout Areas R and T to the eastern tunnel portal at ch. 9900. From here the road rises out of cutting to merge at grade with the existing dual carriageway at about ch. 10550. The existing Stonehenge Road on-slip is incorporated more or less at grade to provide tunnel services access. Construction of the shallow bored tunnel option would require, as a minimum, additional landtake to the south of the existing A303, with alterations to Stonehenge Road.
- 3.2.3. The illustrative design suggests that the Scheme may impact upon known archaeological sites south of the existing A303 in Areas R and T. Direct impact may occur on limited lengths of buried linear earthworks (518, 694), a square enclosure (802) and groups of prehistoric pits (1618-20). Other anomalies discovered as a result of geophysical survey may also represent archaeological activity that would suffer direct impact. However, the interpretations supplied by the surveyors (GSB Prospection) suggest that the vast majority of these are natural in origin.
- 3.2.4. Careful mitigation will need to be considered for the effects, both direct and indirect, upon the important scheduled barrow groups near the portals.
- 3.2.5. For the purposes of archaeological evaluation, landtake for cut and cover tunnel construction has been assumed to generate a surface impact over a corridor extending 25m north and south of the illustrative alignment centreline, although this will inevitably vary according to detailed design factors and the use of additional land for haul routes etc. The areas affected by the illustrative design (including this provisional landtake for construction of the cut and cover tunnel, and shallow bored tunnel portals and excavation in Stonehenge Bottom) are therefore as follows:

Area Q	0.04 ha
Area R	2 ha
Area S	0 ha
Area T	8.85 ha
<u>Area U</u>	<u>0 ha</u>
Total Area	10.89 ha

4. EVALUATION PROPOSALS

4.1. Trenching strategy

- 4.1.1. Trial trenching in this part of the route will seek to evaluate the areas affected by the construction of the cut and cover tunnel, its portals and approaches, and the additional areas required for portal construction and excavation in Stonehenge Bottom for the shallow bored tunnel option. These areas all lie to the south of the existing A303, in Areas R and T. Landtake in Area Q will be minimal and may be refined in detailed design; it is not therefore proposed to evaluate this area at this stage. There will be no landtake in Areas S and U.
- 4.1.2. Of the total 10.89 ha area of landtake identified in 3.2.5 above, some 2.9 ha has been evaluated previously in connection with the Stonehenge Visitor Centre Site 12 investigations. It is proposed that further evaluation of this latter area be confined to one geophysical anomaly and an apparently blank area that do not appear to have attracted previous investigation. The total area of landtake in Areas R and T proposed here for evaluation is therefore 7.99 ha.
- 4.1.3. It is not proposed to evaluate intensively the site of the former airfield buildings either side of Byway 12, as the position and construction of the buildings is known from maps and observation of geotechnical pits.
- 4.1.4. Archaeological evaluation of part of any scheduled monument is not proposed.
- 4.1.5. Previous surveys may indicate the presence of buried archaeological remains (*Strategy*, 3.5.1.c). However, the pattern of detected anomalies is not coherent and it is probable that many reflect natural features. Should this be the case, it is still desirable to demonstrate an absence of buried archaeological remains (*Strategy*, 3.5.1.a).
- 4.1.6. Sufficient field evaluation should be undertaken to determine the nature of the recorded anomalies, to gauge the survival of the archaeological resource across Areas R and T, and to confirm the apparent absence of archaeological remains within much of the area of the Illustrative Design.
- 4.1.7. In order to address these requirements, a total of 24 trial trenches each 50m x 1.8m, and 5 trenches each 10 x 10m, will be excavated by machine, as shown on **Figures 1-3**. This amounts to 2,660 sq. m, representing a sample of some 3.3% of the total area proposed for trial trenching (7.99 ha).

4.2. Aims and objectives

4.2.1. The general aims and objectives of the proposed evaluation are as set out in the *Field Evaluation Strategy*. Site specific objectives will be (within the limits of the specified techniques and trench disposition):

- To confirm the nature of the geophysical anomalies, where targeted;
- To confirm the nature of the cropmark features, where targeted;
- To confirm the presence or absence of archaeological remains in areas that appear blank;
- To assess the degree of preservation of remains across the whole road corridor.

4.2.2. Trench specific objectives will be:

Area R

Trenches 1-5	To investigate the level, nature and date of activity represented by the linear and pit-type anomalies.
Trench 6	To investigate the character, function and date of the cropmark features intersected by the trench.
Trench 7	To investigate the level, nature and date of activity represented by the linear cropmark (part of site 518).
Trench 8	To investigate the level, nature and date of activity represented by the linear anomaly.

Area T

Trench 9	To investigate the level, nature and date of activity represented by the linear anomalies (part of the former airfield buildings)
Trenches 10-14	To investigate the nature of any activity in the apparently blank area.
Trench 15	To investigate the level, nature and date of activity represented by the pit-type anomalies.
Trench 16	To investigate the level, nature and date of activity represented by the linear anomaly.
Trench 17	To investigate the level, nature and date of activity represented by the pit-type anomalies.
Trench 18	To investigate the nature of any activity in the apparently blank area.
Trenches 19-20	To investigate the level, nature and date of activity represented by the pit-type anomalies.
Trenches 21-22	To investigate the nature of any activity in the apparently blank area.
Trench 23	To investigate the level, nature and date of activity represented by the linear anomaly.
Trenches 24-26	To investigate the level, nature and date of activity represented by the linear and pit-type anomalies.
Trench 27	To investigate the character, function and date of the linear

anomaly intersected by the trench.
Trenches 28-29 To investigate the nature of any activity in the apparently blank area.

5. METHODS

5.1. Trial trenching

- 5.1.1. Mechanical excavation, hand excavation, recording, treatment of finds and environmental samples, post-fieldwork and preparation of archive will be undertaken in accordance with the general methodology set out in the *Field Evaluation Strategy*.
- 5.1.2. The limits of analysis and reporting will be as stated in the *Strategy*.
- 5.1.3. It is understood that the land is to be returned to arable cultivation following completion of the evaluation. Trenches will be backfilled with excavated material but not re-seeded, re-turfed or otherwise reinstated.

5.2. Timing and monitoring

- 5.2.1. Evaluation is proposed to commence in Area R from 5 December 2001. Evaluation in Area T will await agreement with the landowner regarding access. It is anticipated that fieldwork will be concluded during January 2002.
- 5.2.2. It is anticipated that a team of up to six archaeologists will be required for a period of up to three weeks in the field (excluding backfilling of trenches). A programme for the fieldwork, monitoring, recording and reporting will be agreed with the client and the monitors before fieldwork commences.

6. DISSEMINATION

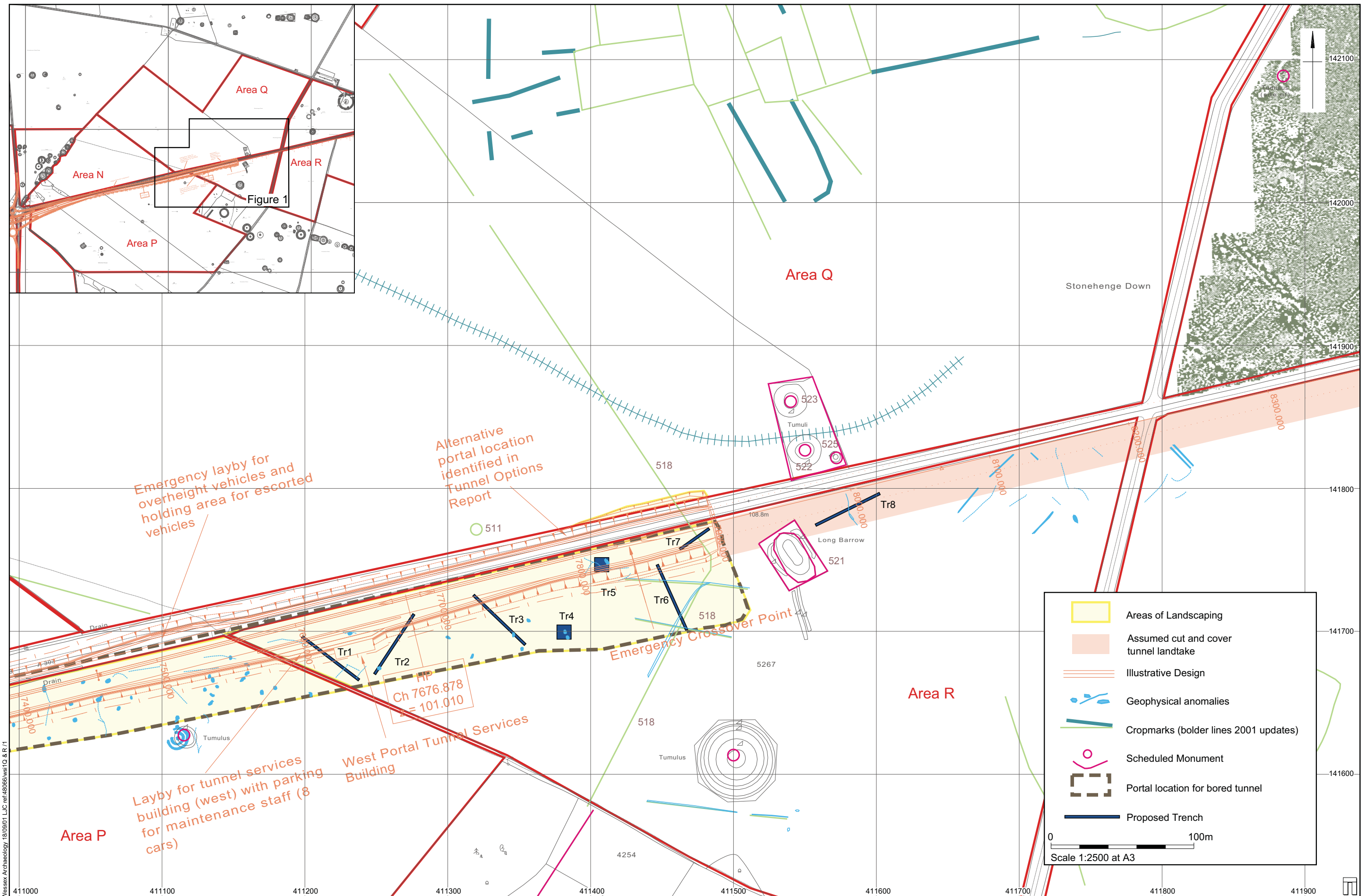
6.1. Client report

- 6.1.1. A client report will be prepared as described in the *Strategy*. The client report will be circulated to the client and monitors as a draft for approval. The draft report should be available during March 2002. The final agreed report will form a supporting document to the Environmental Statement.

7. REFERENCES

Mott MacDonald/Wessex Archaeology, February 2001, *A303 Stonehenge: Archaeological Appraisal (First Draft)*, unpublished client report.

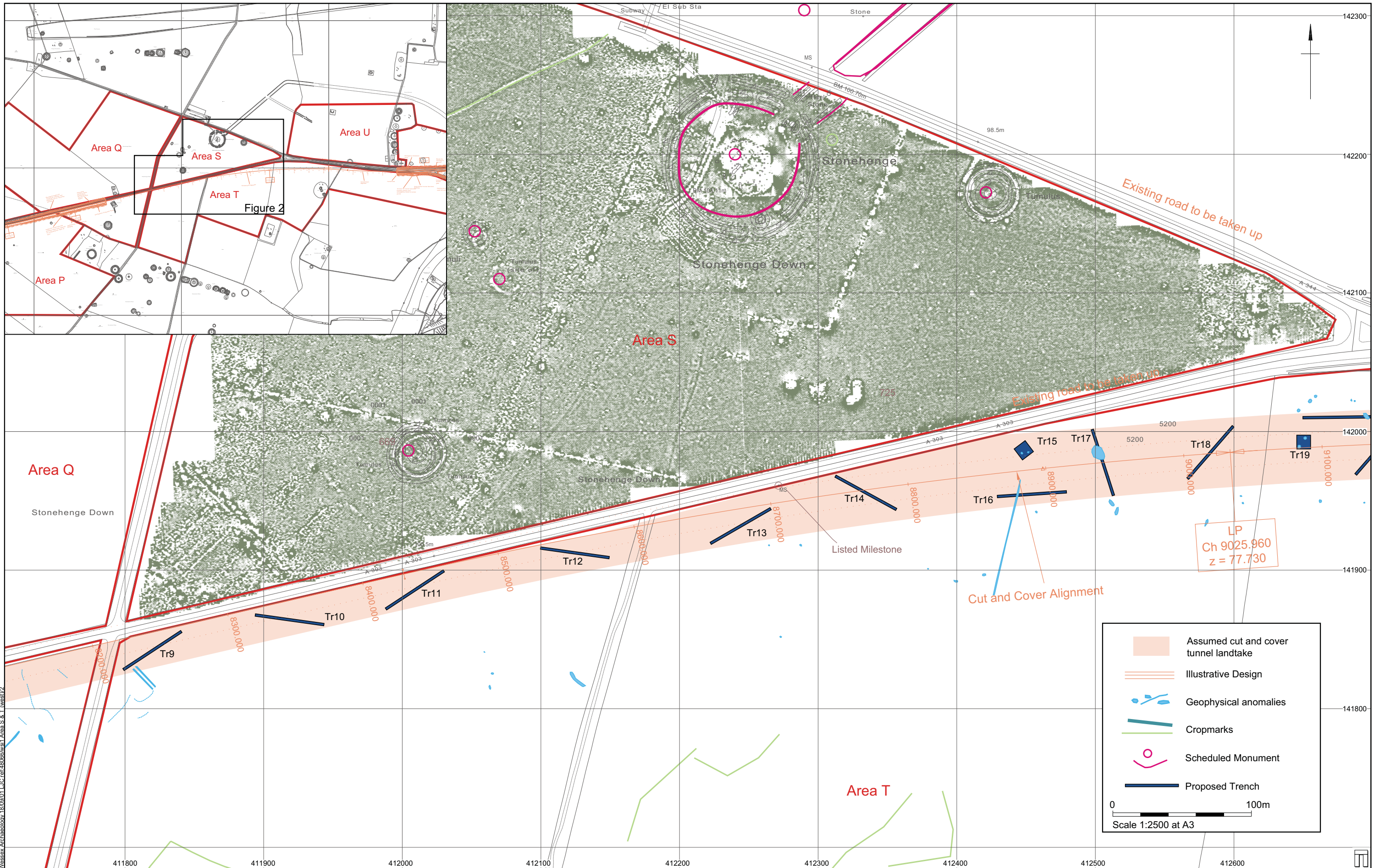
Wessex Archaeology, 2001 *A303 Stonehenge – Archaeological Surveys: Field Evaluation Strategy* Unpublished client report ref. 48066.10



Proposed trench layout Area R

Figure 1

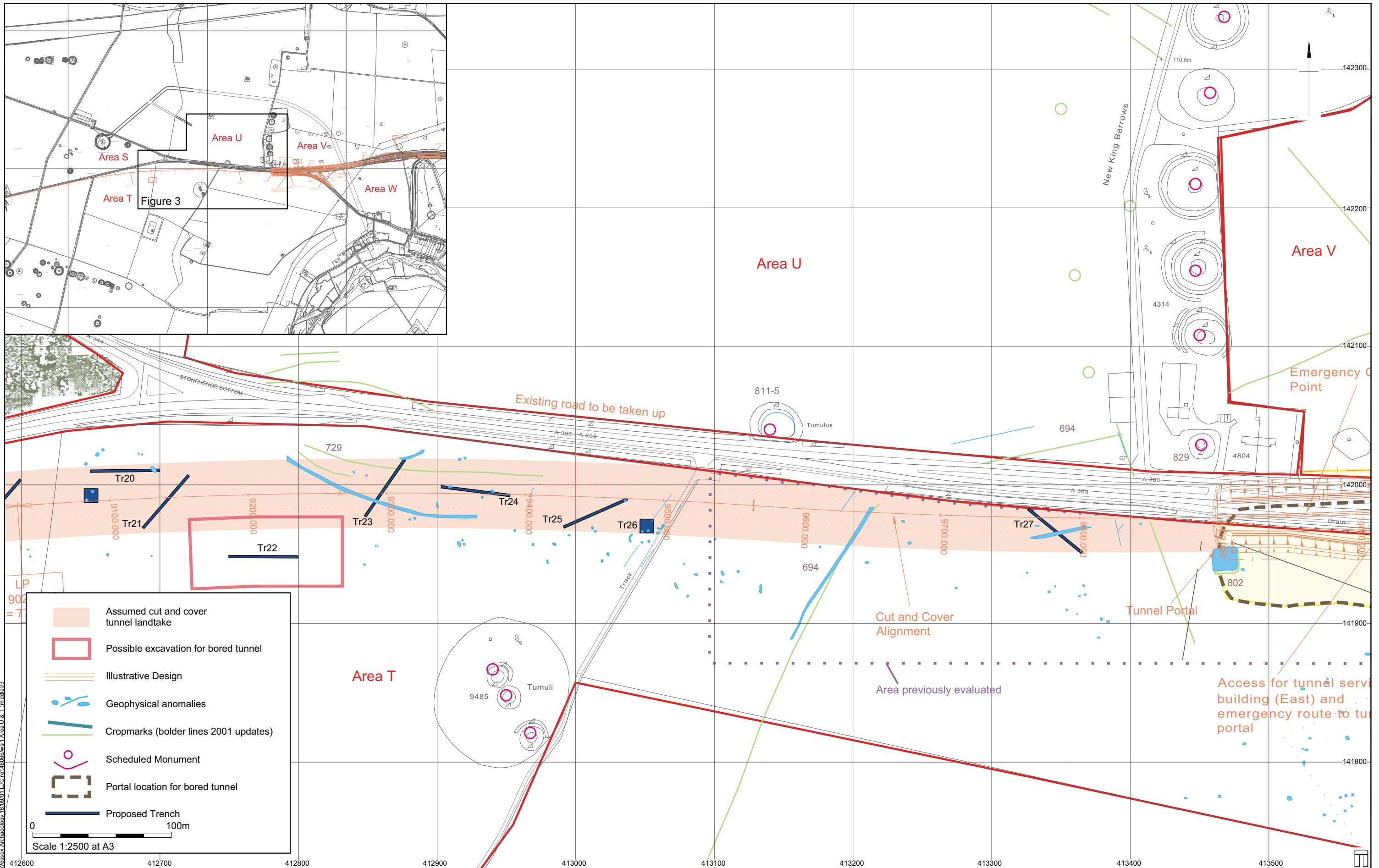
Wessex Archaeology 18/09/01 LIC ref:48066/level10 & R/1



Proposed trench layout Area T (west)

Figure 2

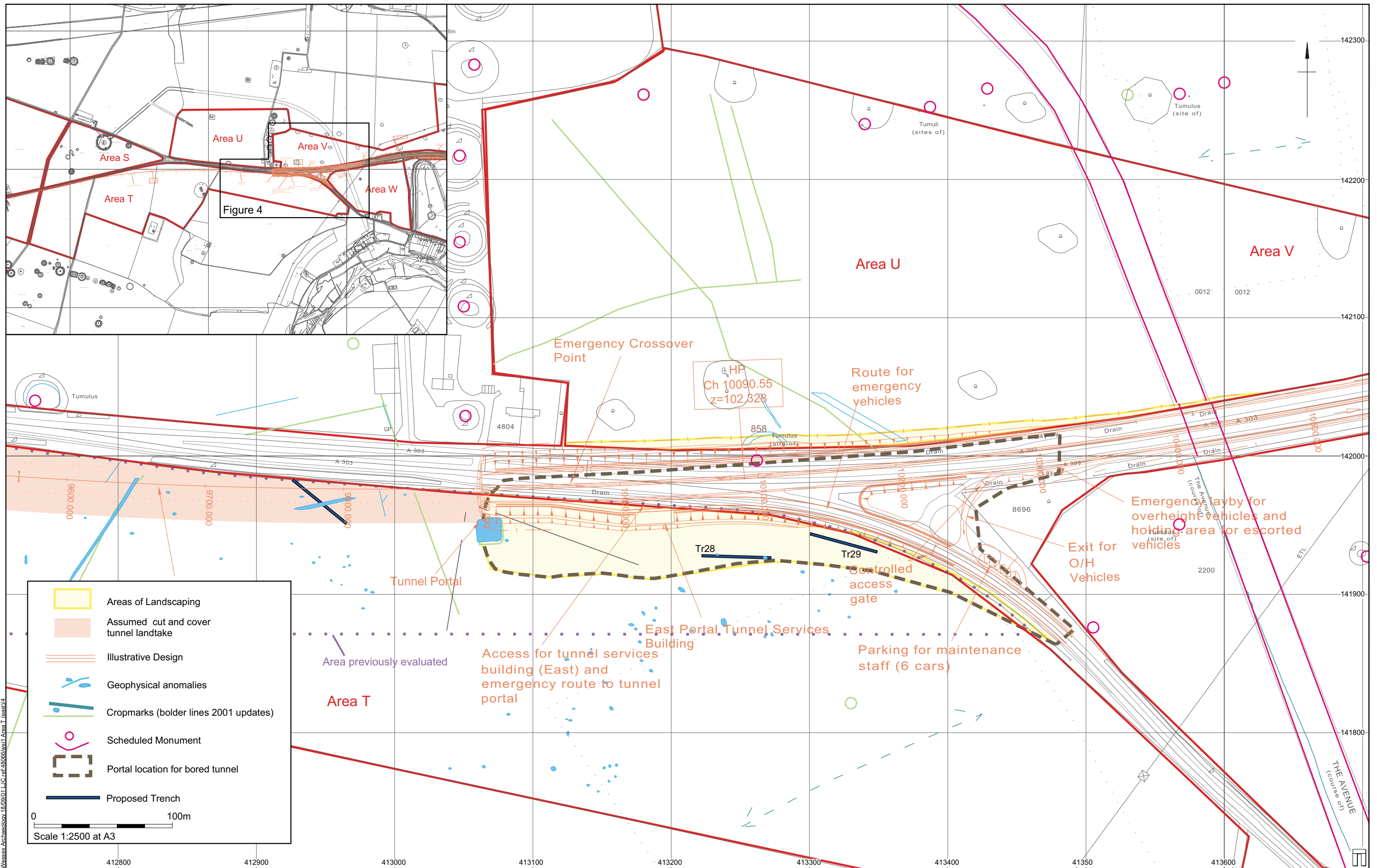
Wesssex Archaeology 18/08/01 LIC ref:48066/vst1 Area S & T (west) V2



Proposed trench layout Area T (centre)

Figure 3

Wesssex Archaeology 18/09/01 LUC ref:480664/v1 Area U & T.mxd(10/3)



Proposed trench layout Area T (east)

Figure 4