

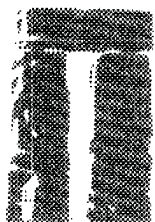


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**A34 NEWBURY BYPASS, BERKSHIRE/HAMPSHIRE**  
**SUMMARY OF EVALUATION WORK 1991-1994**

*Update of Summary of Evaluation 1991-3*

19



**Wessex**  
**Archaeology**



**A34 NEWBURY BYPASS, BERKSHIRE/HAMPSHIRE  
SUMMARY OF EVALUATION WORK 1991-1994**

*Update of Summary of Evaluation 1991-3*

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**MAY 1994**

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**PREPARED FOR:-**

**Department of Transport  
South East Construction  
Programme Division  
Federated House  
London Road  
Dorking  
Surrey  
RH4 1SZ**

**MAIN CONSULTANT:-**

**Mott MacDonald  
Capital House  
48-52 Andover Road  
Winchester  
Hampshire  
SO23 7BH**

**SUB CONSULTANT:-**

**Wessex Archaeology  
Portway House  
South Portway Estate  
Old Sarum  
Salisbury  
Wiltshire SP4 6EB**

# A34 NEWBURY BYPASS, BERKSHIRE/HAMPSHIRE

## SUMMARY OF EVALUATION WORK 1991-1994

### 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In 1991 Wessex Archaeology were commissioned by the Department of Transport, through their consultants Mott MacDonald, to prepare a report detailing the archaeological implications of the proposed route of the 13.5km long A34 Newbury bypass. This was proposed to run to the west of Newbury, from Burghclere in Hampshire to the north of Donnington in Berkshire. The specification for the archaeological work was prepared by Wessex Archaeology (Wessex Archaeology 1991a) after consultation with the Archaeology Section of the Berkshire County Council Planning Department, who acted on behalf of both Berkshire and Hampshire County Councils. The specification was subsequently approved by English Heritage. The work was not to be conducted in one block but was to be divided into four sections: the observation of geotechnic trial pits; desk-top study; hand test-pitting with limited fieldwalking and machine trenching.

The initial fieldwork involved the observation of the digging of 55 geotechnic test-pits along the proposed route during the summer of 1991 (Wessex Archaeology 1991b). The work continued during December 1991 when the desk-top study was compiled (Wessex Archaeology 1991c). Sources consulted included the Sites and Monuments Records, a study of relevant aerial photographs, a summary of previous archaeological fieldwork in the area and an examination of historical records, mostly maps, for the parishes the route was to pass through.

The hand test-pitting of land under pasture and the fieldwalking of arable areas of the route was conducted between December 1991 and January 1992 (*ibid*). The work involved the hand digging of 362 one metre square test-pits on a 50m grid along the route, the fieldwalking of three fields and the assimilation of the results from the fieldwalking of four fields along the route undertaken as part of the Kennet Valley Survey. In addition an auger survey, comprising 51 auger holes, was made of the base of the Kennet valley.

Based on the work up to and including the hand test-pitting Wessex Archaeology produced a revised project design (Wessex Archaeology 1993a) for the Department of Transport outlining what intensity of machine trenching would need to be undertaken. It was proposed that in areas of high archaeological potential a 2% sample of the route be opened where as in areas of lower potential only 1% be opened. The project design was discussed and following minor amendments approved by both the County Archaeological Officers for Berkshire and Hampshire, and English Heritage.

Work on the machine trenching commenced in August 1993 and it was planned to open a total of 482 machine trenches, each 25m long. By the end of September 1993 271 of the trenches had been completed (Wessex Archaeology 1993b). A second phase of machine trenching was conducted during November and December 1993 (Wessex Archaeology 1994a) during which a further 124 trenches were completed. A third and final phase of machine trenching was conducted in April 1994 (Wessex

Archaeology 1994c). As part of this 27 machine trenches were completed, along with 13 hand dug test-pits and 62 auger bores in areas inaccessible to machines.

A total of 59 trenches, mostly in woodland (40 trenches) or in areas where land access has been particularly difficult (6 trenches), have not been completed. In addition a further 13 trenches were found to be in areas with no archaeological potential, such as in railway cuttings or on made ground, and were consequently abandoned. A breakdown of trenches completed is given in Appendix 1, whilst machine trench locations and areas not evaluated are plotted on to copies of the Department of Transport CPO sheets which are included in Appendix 2.

The topography, geology, land-use and archaeological background of the proposed route, and the methodologies applied, are fully detailed in previous Wessex Archaeology reports (1991c and 1993a), and it is not proposed to repeat the information in this summary. Given below are summaries and mitigation strategies for those sites identified up to the conclusion of the Phase III machining and brief details of potential sites in areas not machine trenched.

## 2 RESULTS AND MITIGATION

Our understanding of the archaeology of the A34 Newbury Bypass has evolved through the different stages of the evaluation. Consequently potential sites identified in early stages of the work have not necessarily been confirmed during machine trenching, and conversely sites unidentified during the less intensive earlier methods came to light during the machine trenching. Given below are summary descriptions and mitigation for the known sites after Phase III of the machine trenching, along with potential sites known from earlier work in areas where machine trenching is yet to be conducted.

In all nine sites have been identified, with two potential sites remaining which have not been machine trenched (see Fig. 1). A third area of potential, Reddings Copse, discussed in the summary of the 1991-93 work (Wessex Archaeology 1994b) when evaluated during Phase III proved to contain no significant remains and can, therefore, be discounted. A full discussion of the results in Reddings Copse is given below (section 2.4), as is a discussion of the environmental results obtained from machine trenching on the floor of the Kennet Valley (section 2.7). In addition a number of individual features, not worthy of individual mitigation, were also discovered. The following chronological breakdown can be seen in the nine identified sites:

- Mesolithic                      Lambourn Valley
- Late Neolithic/  
  Early Bronze Age              Curridge Road
- Mid-Late Bronze Age        Swilly Copse
- Romano-British              Great Pen Wood, Enborne Road, Elmore Plantation
- Medieval                      Enborne Street, Skinners Green Lane, Hill's Pightle

Spatially there is a slight concentration of the sites in the northern two-thirds of the route but to a degree this may just reflect the areas where the evaluation has been completed, as more of the extreme southern end of the route remains unevaluated (see Appendix 2).

For the purposes of this summary the results and the mitigation have been given together. A full description of the philosophy behind the mitigation is given in the reports on the machine trenching (Wessex Archaeology 1993b and 1994a, c), this is reproduced in Appendix 3.

The following list is comprehensive at the time of writing. There is, however, no guarantee that archaeological sites may not be found in the unevaluated areas, where at present sites are not suspected.

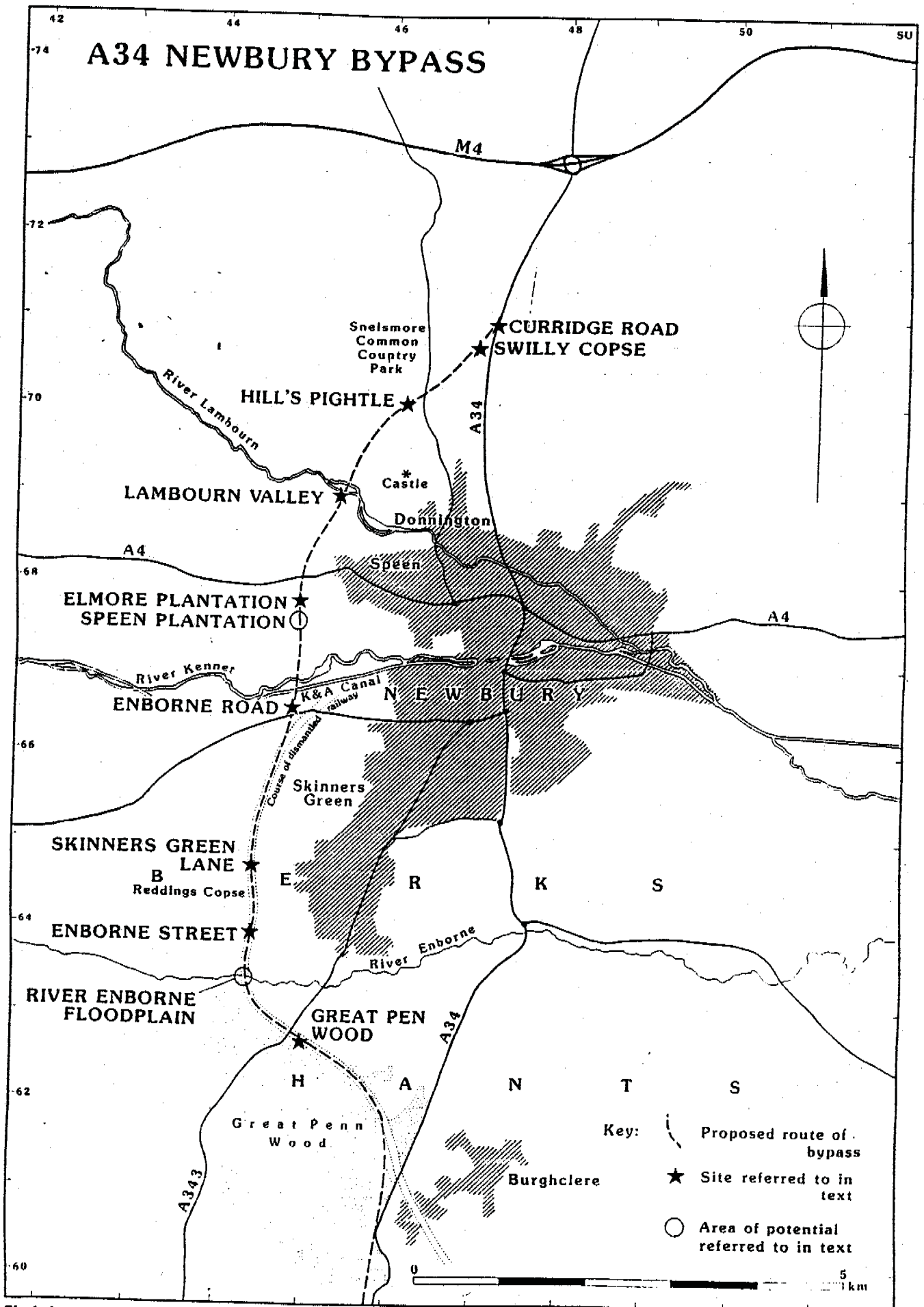


Fig.1: Location of archaeological sites

**2.1 Great Pen Wood (SU 452 626: CPO Plot 3/3: DoT Sheet 3)**  
(Wessex Archaeology 1994a, 3: 1994b, 3-4: 1994c, 4)

During the Phase II evaluation three linear features were found in a single machine trench (Trench 37) between Great Pen Wood and the dismantled railway line (see Fig. 2). A total of seven sherds (25g) of Romano-British pottery was recovered from the surface of two of the features, none of which were excavated due to the prevailing wet conditions. The features all had differing alignments, given this and their close proximity to each other it is unlikely they represent field boundaries. It is more likely that they represent evidence of small scale industrial or settlement activity.

Later as part of the Phase III evaluation three 2m<sup>2</sup> test-pits (Trenches 656-8) were hand excavated to the south of Trench 37 (see Appendix 2, DoT Sheet 3), no archaeological remains were identified. It was not possible, due to prevailing wet conditions, to excavate to the northwest of the defined remains, nor to the southeast on the opposite side of The Drove where the woodland was too dense to allow work. It is possible, therefore, that remains may extend in the two directions to date uninvestigated.

**Significance:**

**Period:** The pottery recovered from the features were all coarsewares and could not be more closely dated than the general Romano-British period.

**Rarity:** As the full extent and nature of the site has yet to be defined this cannot be fully discussed. The site to date has no unusual characteristics and is in an area rich in Roman finds, small towns are supposed to have existed at Thatcham and near Speen (*Spinis*). The site cannot, therefore, be classified as being of a particularly rare type.

**Survival/condition:** This has yet to be fully determined. To date only negative features have been found and it was not possible to excavate any to determine their state of preservation. The potential for the site to extend remains.

**Fragility/vulnerability:** The topsoil over the site was only 0.10m thick and the area generally wet, so the site would be particularly vulnerable to machine movements.

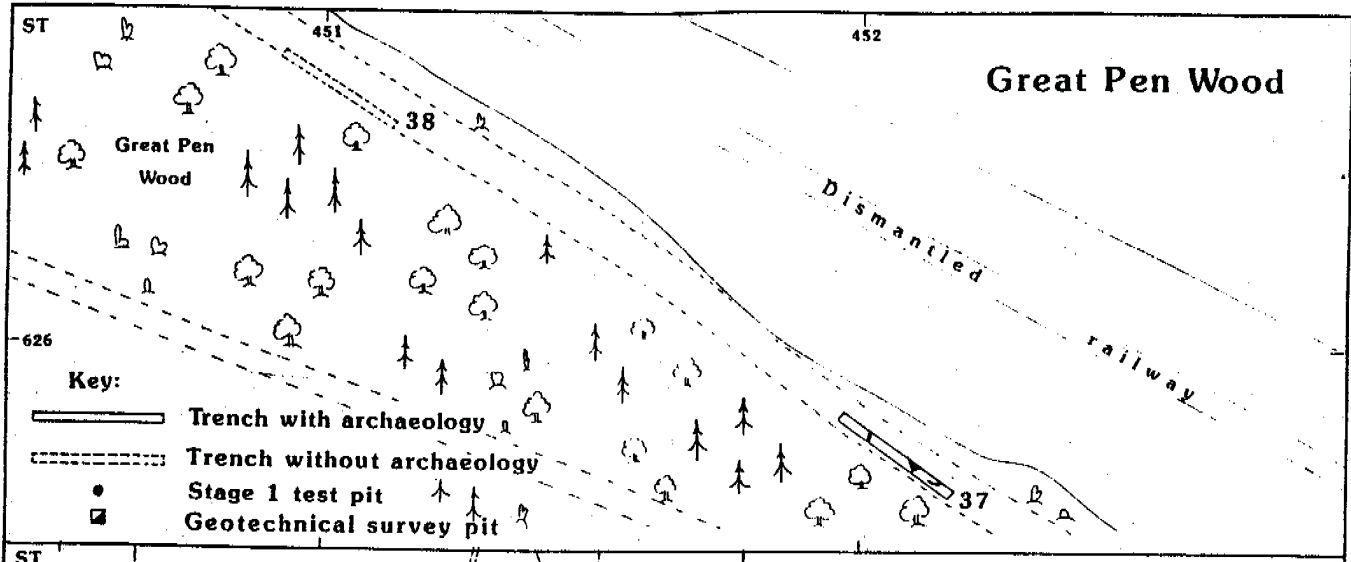
**Conclusion:** Given the incomplete nature of the evidence to date the full significance of the site cannot reliably be assessed. If, as seems likely, the site represents an area of limited industrial or settlement activity then it would be one of the first to be found on the relatively poor quality land to the south of the Enborne and could, therefore, be accorded a 'district or local importance'.

**Mitigation:** The section of the route where the site is located is to be almost entirely covered with an embankment. Of the route corridor approximately two thirds of the width is already covered with the former railway embankment which will be retained. The exception is the proposal to dig a balancing pond immediately east of The Drove.

For the area to the northwest of The Drove (CPO Plot 3/3) it is unlikely, given the shallow depth of overburden and restricted route corridor width, that remains can be preserved *in situ*. It is recommended, therefore, that a series of trenches are excavated on the line between Trenches 37 and 38 to define the extent of the site. On completion of this work a maximum area of 100m x 25m should then be machine stripped over the area of most significance and a sample of features hand excavated.



# Great Pen Wood



# Enborne Street

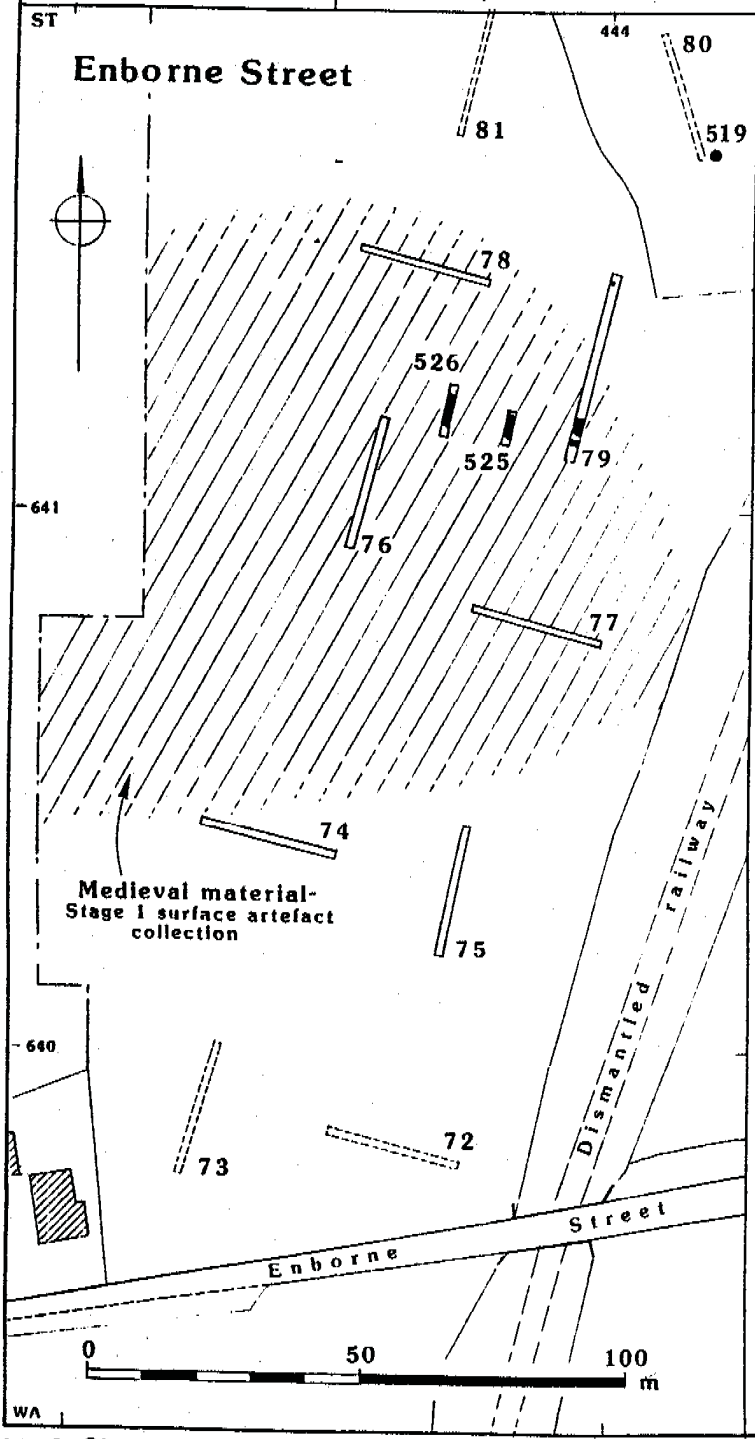


Fig.2: Site details

**Significance:**

**Period:** Newbury was a thriving wool town during the 13th/14th century AD, and other settlements such as Speen would have been flourishing. It is suspected that there was a settlement, now abandoned and lost, in the vicinity of Skinners Green in medieval times.

**Rarity:** Surviving settlements founded in medieval times, subsequently shrunken and deserted settlements and large areas of common fields are known throughout the Kennet and Lambourn valleys, attesting to a high population density in the area. The site, therefore, is not of a rare type (see Group Value).

**Group Value:** Evidence of contemporary activity was found to the north at Skinners Green Lane (CPO Plot 5/3). The distribution of these two sites would appear indicative of a dispersed settlement pattern, if this proves to be correct then this will be of considerable interest, as few such sites have been extensively investigated in southern England.

**Survival/condition:** The site constitutes the colluvial deposit which covers an area approximately 120m in diameter. The excavated field boundary is probably a later feature which has merely 'collected' earlier finds. Given that no physical evidence of settlement, which must be present in close proximity, has yet been located it is impossible to describe the survival/condition.

**Fragility/vulnerability:** Since this section of the route is to be in a cutting the remains are extremely vulnerable.

**Conclusion:** The site at Enborne Road is problematic. Artefacts collected from the site include sherds from cooking vessels and pieces of roof tile, yet no physical evidence of settlement has been located. It may be that the artefacts are derived from upslope off the route to the northwest. Given the possibility that the site may relate to the lost settlement believed to have existed at Skinners Green and its association with remains at Skinners Green Lane, it is likely that the evidence recorded relates to a settlement of a dispersed rather than nucleated nature. Few medieval dispersed settlements have been investigated in detail and their examination is a national priority in medieval settlement studies. The site can be attributed 'regional or county importance'.

**Mitigation:** The site is to be crossed by the new road in a cutting so the remains cannot be preserved *in situ*. It is important, therefore, that the site is fully recorded prior to its destruction.

The most important issue to be resolved is whether the artefact concentrations relate to settlement along the road line or to activity which lies off the route upslope. In order to achieve this it is recommended that a strip, 40m wide along the length of CPO Plots 4/14 and 4/14e between Enborne Street and Trench 82, a distance of 275m, is machine stripped under archaeological supervision.

The work should take the form of an archaeologist monitoring the controlled removal first of the topsoil down to the colluvial deposit, followed by the removal of the colluvial deposit in spits (the deposit was recorded as having a maximum depth of 0.82m during the evaluation). During the work care should be taken to ensure that machines do not run on stripped areas until clearance has been given by the supervising archaeologist.

The supervising archaeologist would be assisted by a team who would collect and record artefacts as they were discovered. During the stripping selected areas should be cleaned by hand to determine the true density of archaeological features present. A contingency should be made for the sample excavation of any features which may be uncovered during the stripping, this should take the form of a block of time set aside after the completion of the machining.

To minimise possible disruption it is recommended that this work be done well in advance of the start of the main contract.

**2.4 Reddings Copse (SU 444 645: CPO Plots 5/1, 5/1b & 5/2:  
DoT Sheet 5)  
(Wessex Archaeology 1991c, 19 - A34.46: 1994b, 6:  
1994c, 12))**

During the observation of Geotechnic Test-Pit 20, situated in Reddings Copse, 74 sherds (655g) of pottery dating to the 12th/13th century were recovered from a silt deposit, 0.40m thick, encountered directly beneath the topsoil (Wessex Archaeology 1991b, 6). Though no finds or features were found in any of the seven hand test-pits (Test-Pits 757-63, Plot 25) excavated in the Copse during the Stage 1 evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 1991c, 31-2), the results from the geotechnic pit, coupled with the discoveries made during subsequent machine trenching immediately to either side of the Copse at Enborne Street (CPO Plots 4/14 and 4/14e) and Skinners Green Lane (CPO Plot 5/3), lent the area significant potential.

As part of the Phase III machining a series of 14 machine trenches were excavated in Reddings Copse. Archaeological remains were only encountered in one of these trenches, Trench 103, situated to the north end of the copse adjacent to Skinners Green Lane. It was observed in three trenches (Trenches 93-4 and 602; see Appendix 2, DoT Sheet 5) that up to 1.50m of redeposited clay exists on top of the hill within the copse, probably as a result of railway construction works.

As a result of the Phase III evaluation work it became apparent that the remains in Reddings Copse were limited and were associated with the site at Skinners Green Lane. Both Trench 103, and the earlier Geotechnic Test-Pit were situated close to Skinners Green Lane. The only reason for doubting these conclusions is the presence of the made ground deposit obscuring the hill summit. To take this into account it is recommended that to mitigate for the slight possibility of remains being sealed beneath the made ground a watching brief be maintained during earthmoving with a contingency for excavation should remains be uncovered. The remains at the north end of the copse will be mitigated for in association with the findings at Skinners Green Lane.

**2.5 Skinners Green Lane (SU 444 647: CPO Plots 5/2 & 5/3:  
DoT Sheet 5)  
(Wessex Archaeology 1994a, 5-6: 1994b, 6-7:  
1994c, 12-13)**

During the Phase II evaluation a single trench (Trench 106) in the vicinity of Skinners Green Lane produced a subsoil layer containing a localised concentration of medieval pottery, of 12th-13th century date, and tile (see Fig. 4). The location of this layer corresponds closely to the distribution of medieval material revealed by the Stage 1 Evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 1991c, 19, A34.46) and with material found during the observation of geotechnical investigations in Reddings Copse (Geotechnic Test-Pit 20; Wessex Archaeology 1991b).

The Phase III trenching identified a concentration of artefacts to the south of Skinners Green Lane in Trench 103, immediately adjacent to the Geotechnic Test-Pit. In all 65 sherds (710g) of pottery dating to the 12th-13th century were recovered from a silty clay subsoil encountered in the trench.

The site at Skinners Green Lane can now be defined as covering approximately a 150m length of the route corridor between Trenches 103 and 106.

**Significance:**

**Period:** Newbury was a thriving wool town during the 13th/14th century AD, and other settlements such as Speen would have been flourishing. It is suspected that there was a settlement, now abandoned and lost, in the vicinity of Skinners Green in medieval times.

**Rarity:** Surviving settlements founded in medieval times, subsequently shrunken and deserted settlements and large areas of common fields are known throughout the Kennet and Lambourn valleys, attesting to a high population density in the area. The site, therefore, is not of a rare type.

**Group Value:** Evidence of contemporary activity was found to the south at Enborne Street (CPO Plots 4/14 and 4/14e). The distribution of these two sites would appear indicative of a dispersed settlement pattern, if this proves to be correct then this will be of considerable interest, as few such sites have been extensively investigated in southern England.

**Survival/condition:** The site, as defined to date, constituted a distribution of artefacts in a subsoil deposit. Given that no physical evidence of settlement, which must be present in close proximity, has yet been located it is impossible to describe the survival/condition.

**Fragility/vulnerability:** Since this section of the route is going to be in a cutting the remains are extremely vulnerable.

**Conclusion:** The fragments of cooking vessels and tile found on the site are indicative of settlement in the vicinity and it is possible that the site may relate to the lost settlement known to have existed at Skinners Green. The possible historical connection, and the association with the remains at Enborne Street, make the site of 'regional or county importance'.

**Mitigation:** The site is to be crossed by the new road in a cutting so the remains cannot be preserved *in situ*. It is recommended that the area between, and including, Trenches 103 (CPO Plot 5/2) and 106 (CPO Plot 5/3) is fully recorded prior to its destruction.

The most important issue to be resolved is whether the artefact concentrations relate to settlement along the road line or to activity which lies off the route upslope. In order to achieve this it is recommended that a strip, 40m wide along the 150m length defined is machine stripped under archaeological supervision. This should take the form of an archaeologist monitoring the controlled removal first of the topsoil down to the subsoil deposit, followed by the removal of the subsoil deposit in spits (the deposit was recorded as having a maximum depth of 0.25m during the evaluation). The trees in the northern area of Reddings Copse **should be cut to stump, and not grubbed** during clearance. During the work care should be taken to ensure that machines do not run on stripped areas until clearance has been given by the supervising archaeologist.

The supervising archaeologist would be assisted by a team who would collect and record artefacts as they were discovered. During the stripping selected areas should be cleaned by hand to determine the true density of archaeological features present. A contingency should be made for the sample excavation of any features which may be uncovered during the stripping, this should take the form of a block of time set aside after the completion of the machining.

To minimise possible disruption it is recommended that this work be done well in advance of the start of the main contract.

In addition to further investigate the area to the northwest at least two machine trenches should be opened on the proposed western access road, which due to prevailing wet conditions could not be trenched during the Phase III work. Allowance should be made for stripping and excavation of this area should remains be exposed.

## **2.6 Enborne Road (SU 449 665: CPO Plots 7/2 & 7/2e: DoT Sheet 7) (Wessex Archaeology 1993b, 3-7: 1994b, 7-9)**

Archaeological features and deposits dating to the early and late Romano-British period were found across 10 trenches (Trenches 160, 164-6 and 170-5) covering an area of approximately 6500m<sup>2</sup>, to the north of the Enborne Road (see Fig. 3). These probably relate to cropmarks known to the west of the route (Wessex Archaeology 1991c, 15, A34.13) which have been interpreted as indicating the former presence of a Romano-British villa. In all 19 features were excavated and occupation deposits encountered in four of the trenches. A total of 144 sherds (1,624g) of pottery, 410 pieces (25,426g) of ceramic building material, 250 pieces (1,518g) of animal bone and 28 pieces of ironwork, as well as various other archaeological material, were recovered from the site. A scan of the flotation residues from environmental samples taken from the occupation deposits revealed the presence of charred plant remains, mostly grain, weed seeds and charcoal. No chaff was recorded.

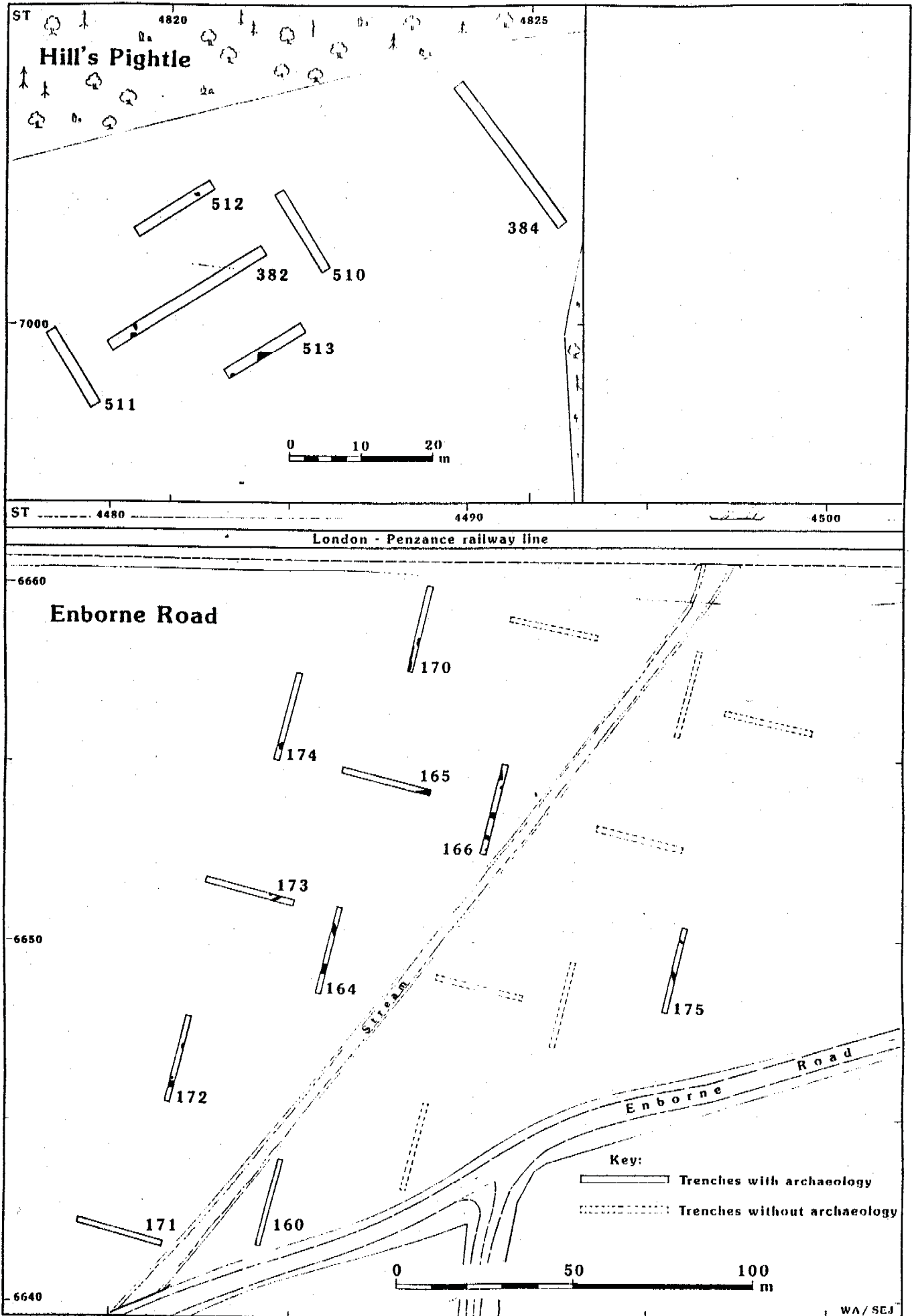


Fig.3: Site details

The discovery of large amounts of ceramic building material on the site, in addition to several dressed blocks and the identification of postholes, implies that substantial buildings once stood on the site. Ditches found during the work show that the buildings stood amongst a field system. It is likely, therefore, that the settlement represented was a Romano-British farmstead, which given the associated cropmark evidence and the substantial 'Romanised' structures which must have stood on the site, could be termed a villa.

**Significance:**

**Period:** The site has two distinct phases of activity. The majority of the dating evidence from the site suggests occupation during the late Romano-British period (3rd/4th century AD). There is though a small element of significantly early Romano-British activity dated to the pre-Flavian period (<69AD). Such an early date may have a military origin. There is no evidence of continuity between the two phases of activity.

**Rarity:** The site is located approximately 18km from the Roman town of Silchester (*Calleva Atrebatum*), the landscape around which is dense with sites and findspots dating to the 3rd/4th centuries AD. The later element of the site, therefore, is an addition to a well populated distribution and cannot generally be classified as rare. In contrast the pre-Flavian element is rare, being so early after the conquest, and can be considered to be of significance.

**Survival/condition:** The features encountered were substantial and well preserved, though, no actual surfaces or wall foundations were encountered. It is likely that the site, given the proximity of the remains to the surface, has suffered some plough damage.

**Fragility/vulnerability:** The features were located on average only 0.25m beneath the surface and would be particularly vulnerable to machinery movement during wet weather.

**Conclusion:** The most important aspect of the site is the discrete pre-Flavian element. This may represent military activity as part of the campaigns and consolidation, or be evidence of early settlement. The understanding of the immediate post-conquest period has always been of great interest and English Heritage specifically list the era as being of particular importance in 'Exploring Our Past' (English Heritage 1991a), a discussion document for directions in future archaeological research. Farmstead/villas vary much in status and complexity. The artefact assemblage recovered from the site, though extensive for an evaluation, displayed few exotic finds. The site did cover a large area and most likely extends off the road corridor to the west. Based on the pre-Flavian element a 'national importance' can be awarded to the site.

**Mitigation:**

Along the stretch of route between the Enborne Road and the railway line the new road is to run along an embankment approximately 10m high. The road will cross both existing communication routes by bridge, both built on pile foundations. The railway bridge piles will be sunk directly into the railway embankment whilst those for the Enborne Road bridge will be sunk directly adjacent to the present road. Prior to the construction of the embankment the present stream is to be diverted into a culvert south of its present course. The old channel will then be cleaned out and filled in.

Because the site is to be buried it is recommended that the site be preserved *in situ*. To enable this it is recommended that the site be sealed and protected before embankment construction commences. For purposes of mitigation the area of the site is defined as being the area of the road corridor between the road and railway and to the north of the present stream course, evidence to the south of the stream is sparse, restricted to the features in Trench 175, which are not fully convincing, and to nine sherds of pottery from Trench 160.

To protect the site the area north of the present stream should not be topsoil stripped but rather be entirely covered with a geotextile barrier. Onto this barrier 0.5-1.00m of granular material should be end-tipped or bladed, the layer then being compacted. Any specific haul routes across the site should be buried to a depth of 2.00m before use.

It is recommended that a watching brief be maintained during both the clearing out of the present stream course and during the construction of the new culvert to the south.

Over the area to the south of the present stream course a controlled topsoil strip should be undertaken over an area 50m x 50m centred on Trench 175 and a general watching brief maintained over the rest of the area.

If where preservation *in situ* is recommended this is not feasible then an excavation should be undertaken.

**2.7 Kennet Valley Peat Deposits (SU 449 670: CPO Plots 7/2b, 7/2h & 7/2i: DoT Sheet 7)**  
(Wessex Archaeology 1991c, 11)

The Kennet Valley was highlighted as one of the areas of greatest archaeological potential along the route. As part of the Phase I evaluation the peat and alluvial sequences in the base of the valley were sampled from four trenches (Trenches 187, 200, 203a, 221: see Appendix 2, DoT Sheet 7) in order to assess the preservation potential. A typical recorded sequence, with associated flot scan results, is given in Table 1:

Depth (m)	Description	Mollusca	Waterlogged plant material
0.00 - 0.13	Humic silty loam, very dark brown, roots and occasional small pieces of degraded chalk	Frequent mollusc fragments ( <i>Helicella italica</i> , <i>Trichia hispida</i> , <i>Cochlicopa</i> spp.)	
0.13 - 0.18	Silty loam with occasional degraded chalk fragments and occasional brown humic root patches		
0.18 - 0.22	Thin layer of degraded chalk (?tufa) in very pale brown silty clay (ufaceous matrix) - This layer is intermittent		
0.22 - 0.60	Dark brown humic silty clay (sticky) - contains root fragments in reddish brown patches. Large fragments of black crumbly, moist peat	present	present
0.60 - 0.69	Pale grey fine silty clay, contains molluscs	c. 75 (inc. <i>Bythinia</i> , <i>Lymnaea</i> , <i>Pupilla</i> , <i>Verugo</i> and <i>Vallonia</i> )	present
0.69 - 0.92	Pale grey fine silty clay - organic plant matter (reeds etc.)	100+ (inc. <i>Planorbis</i> , <i>Bythinia</i> , <i>Lymnaea</i> , <i>Trichia</i> , <i>Aegopinella</i> , <i>Cochlicopa</i> , <i>Pupilla</i> , <i>Cepaea</i> and <i>Acanthonula</i> )	present
0.92 +	Gravel		

Table 1: Trench 221 (CPO Plot 7/2i) deposits and environmental potential

Peat was also sampled in the three other trenches with the depth gravel was encountered at as deep as 1.80m below the present surface.



Within the waterlogged plant remains a substantial woody element was noted as well as phragmites, seeds and vegetable matter. Mollusc remains were noted in abundance in the alluvial clays. The preservation of pollen in these deposits has been noted elsewhere (Holyoak 1980) and it was not necessary to assess the potential. A column sample was taken for possible future pollen analysis.

The peat and alluvial sequences recorded in the evaluation trenches along the route were typical of the Mesolithic sequence noted elsewhere in the Kennet valley (Healy 1992 and Holyoak 1980) and as such are not unique. It is recommended, therefore, that no further sampling be undertaken prior to construction, but that a watching brief be maintained and further samples taken as necessary. Further to this it is recommended that at the post-fieldwork stage full analysis is carried out on the samples retrieved during the evaluation, and that the results be integrated into the final report.

**2.8 Speen Plantation (SU 448 674: CPO Plots 8/It & 8/Iu: DoT Sheet 8)  
(Wessex Archaeology 1991c, 15-16 - A34.17-19:  
1994b, 9)**

Trenches 231-4 in a plantation on Speen Moor were never completed due to dense woodland. The Stage 1 evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 1991c, 11) emphasised the significance of the Moor, the County Sites and Monuments Record listing at least three prehistoric discoveries in the general vicinity. Though hand test-pitting (Test-Pits 720 and 728, Plot 53) in the actual plantation during the initial evaluation, and machine trenching immediately either side, have uncovered no evidence of archaeological deposits the potential for prehistoric activity remains.

**2.9 Elmore Plantation (SU 449 677: CPO Plot 8/1: DoT Sheet 8)  
(Wessex Archaeology 1993b, 7-9: 1994b, 9-10:  
1994c, 5)**

During the Phase I evaluation archaeological features and deposits were found in three trenches (Trenches 239, 520 and 522) located to the south of the A4 trunk road (see Fig. 4). In all 10 features were identified as was a colluvial deposit which contained many artefacts. A total of 41 sherds (229g) of pottery, 12 pieces (476g) of ceramic building material and 69 pieces (645g) of slag were recovered from the three trenches, as were small amounts of fired clay and burnt flint. The pottery from the excavated features has been dated to the early Romano-British period whilst that in the colluvium is of late Romano-British date. Similar artefacts were found in the vicinity during the Stage 1 evaluation test-pitting (Wessex Archaeology 1991c, 19, A34.48). A scan of the flint residue from an environmental sample taken from a ditch fill, dated to the occupation phase, revealed the presence of charred plant remains. The remains mostly constituted charcoal, from which three species of wood were noted.

It was possible during the Phase III evaluation to machine a further four trenches (Trenches 240-1, 243 and 604) immediately to the north of the Phase I discoveries. Within three of the trenches (Trenches 240-1 and 243) a layer of hillwash, thinning towards the south, contained substantial quantities of oyster shell. The northernmost

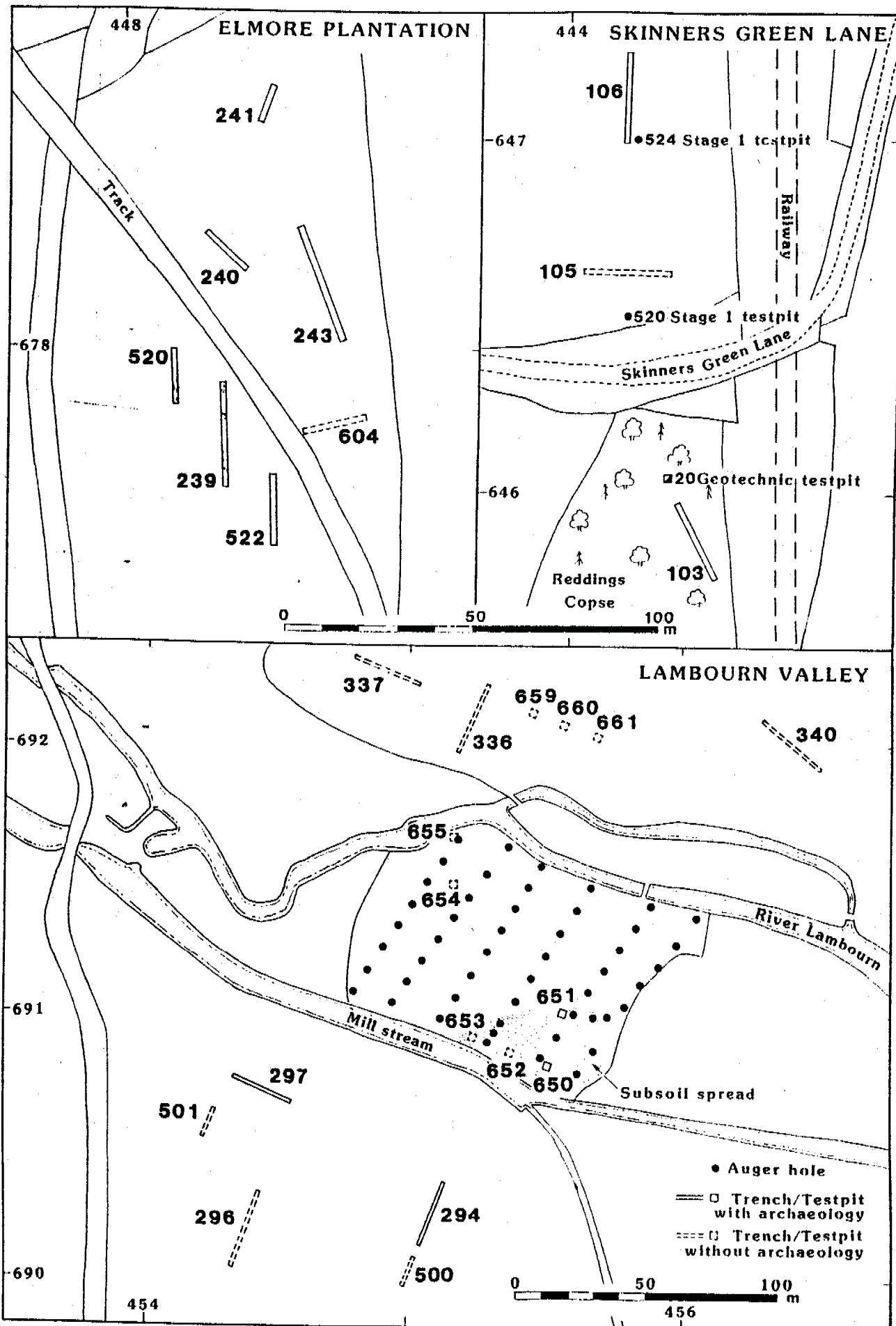


Fig.4: Site details

trench, Trench 241, also contained four possible subcircular features, between 0.4m and 0.8m in diameter, cut into the natural chalk towards the southern end of the trench. The remains were sealed by a 3m depth of made ground which made further investigation impossible. It is likely, though, that given the nature of the remains that they represent a northern extension of the Phase I discoveries. A further area of woodland remains unevaluated immediately to the north and it is highly probable that the remains also extend into that area.

The nature of the artefact assemblage recovered from the site implies industrial activity taking place during the Romano-British period.

**Significance:**

**Period:** Two distinct phases of activity can be identified, early Romano-British (1st century AD and late Romano-British (3rd/4th century AD).

**Rarity:** As the full extent and nature of the site has not been defined this cannot be fully discussed. The site to date has no unusual characteristics and is in an area rich in Roman finds, small towns are supposed to have existed at Thatcham and near Speen (*Spinis*), and the Ermin Way Roman road would have passed close to the site. The site cannot, therefore, be classified as being of a particularly rare type.

**Survival/condition:** This has yet to be fully determined. To date only negative features have been found and the site is not significantly well preserved. The potential for more significant remains surviving beneath the colluvium remains.

**Fragility/vulnerability:** Being at the interface between cutting and embankment the remains are severely threatened by groundmoving operations.

**Conclusion:** Given the incomplete nature of the evidence to date the full significance of the site cannot reliably be assessed. The study of industrial sites has been highlighted by English Heritage in 'Exploring Our Past' (English Heritage 1991a) as being of important as 'a theme with great potential value for all periods to explore further the patterns of industry and craftsmanship'. At present a 'district or local importance' can be attributed to the site.

**Mitigation:**

The site location almost exactly coincides with the line where the route moves off an embankment and enters a cutting. It was initially thought that proposals for preservation under the embankment could be made. This proposal is now considered impractical as the scale and complexity of the groundworking operations at this point will inevitably lead to erosion of the remains. In addition it is undesirable to compromise the integrity of an archaeological site by excavating the immediately threatened element whilst simultaneously preserving a truncated proportion for posterity.

The first action should be to fully define the edge of the site in the woodland to the north. Prior to machining in the woodland the trees **should be cut to stump, and not grubbed.**

At present the threatened area measures 75m x 120m, bisected by the Speen Footpath No. 2. This area is bounded to the south by Trench 522 and to the north by Trench 241. It is highly probable that this area will extend to the north. The site could extend a further 120m north giving a possible total length of 240m.

south of the river. The site on the terrace would appear to be *in situ* whilst a badly truncated remnant of a similar deposit survives at the south end of the island.

**Fragility/vulnerability:** The site is apparently contained entirely within a single silt deposit 0.2m thick buried 0.5m beneath the present surface. Engineering works to cross the river would entirely destroy the site.

**Conclusion:** The site is an addition to a group of academically renowned Mesolithic sites, such as Thatcham, known along the Kennet valley. If, as seems likely, *in situ* domestic deposits are present then the site can be attributed 'national importance'.

**Mitigation:**

The Phase III evaluation work has defined the site to be almost exclusively contained on the first terrace directly south of the River Lambourn and is on deposits which are to be removed during road construction. Threatened remains will, therefore, need to be excavated prior to the commencement of construction. The balancing pond which originally would have destroyed remains to the west of the proposed route has now been moved to the south and no longer threatens archaeological deposits. The subsoil deposit located at the southern end of the island produced only small numbers of flint artefacts and was shown by the results of the auger survey to be extremely limited in extent. Further action beyond a watching brief cannot, therefore, be justified for the island. It is recommended, therefore, that only the area of the terrace to be affected by the road construction be sample excavated prior to the commencement of construction.

The excavation should take the form of overburden stripping, followed by excavation of a sample of the flint bearing deposit, covering an area of approximately 50m east-west by 80m north-south, directly adjacent to the river and encompassing the area of Trench 294. Consideration should also be given to conducting an extensive auger survey prior to commencement of the stripping and the use of geophysical and geochemical techniques during the excavation.

The excavation project design will have to pay special attention to the relationship of the Mesolithic site to any former river channels on the floodplain, and the associated preservation and palaeo-environmental potential. Such a channel, containing substantial peat deposits, was found in a trench 130m east of the route during the archaeological evaluation ahead of the building of the Donnington Grove Golf Course (Ford 1991, Trench 15).

**2.11 Hill's Pightle (SU 462 700: CPO Plot 10/1: DoT Sheet 10)  
(Wessex Archaeology 1993b, 10-11: 1994b, 11-12:  
1994c, 6-7)**

During the Phase I machine trenching six features were found in five trenches (Trenches 510-2, 382 and 384) in the base of a dry valley (see Fig. 3). From the trenches 139 sherds (1071g) of pottery of 13th/14th century AD date were recovered along with small amounts of other materials. Similar artefacts were recovered during the Stage 1 evaluation test-pitting in the area (Wessex Archaeology 1991c, 19, A34.49). A scan of the flint residues from environmental samples taken from fills of two of the dated features revealed significant numbers of charred grain, including

bread wheat, together with weed seeds and charcoal. The site uncovered probably represents the remains of a simple farmstead.

As part of the Phase III evaluation further trenches (Trenches 381 and 385-6) were excavated in the woodland directly to the north of the Phase I discoveries. With the exception of a thin layer of charcoal in Trench 381 (see Appendix 2, DoT Sheet 10) no significant archaeological discoveries were made during the latest work. It is concluded, therefore, that the Phase I evaluation adequately defined the extent of the activity.

**Significance:**

**Period:** Newbury was a thriving wool town during the period the site was occupied, the 13th/14th century AD, and other settlements such as Speen would have been flourishing. To find a farmstead site close to Newbury is not unexpected.

**Rarity:** Surviving settlements founded in medieval times, subsequently shrunken and deserted settlements and large areas of common fields are known throughout the Kennet and Lambourn valleys, attesting to a high population density in the area. Individual farmsteads are not common discoveries, as in the past researchers have been looking for the remains of nucleated settlements, they are not rare but dispersed settlement patterns have seldom been investigated.

**Survival/condition:** Only negative features were discovered, though traces of building materials, including ceramic building material, flint and mortar, were found. The features were well sealed by 0.5m of topsoil and appeared to be well preserved.

**Fragility/vulnerability:** The material at the base of the valley is very soft and any machine movements over the ground in wet weather would result in the destruction of the remains.

**Conclusion:** The site is of a known type and in an area where such sites would be expected. Nevertheless, such sites are not common and are useful indicators of rural/urban interaction during the period, highlighting the degree of influence brought to bear by the market of Newbury. As such it can be attributed 'regional or county importance'.

**Mitigation:**

The site is located in the base of a dry valley which the road will cross on an embankment. The base of the embankment is to be composed of a granular material to allow free movement of surface water down the valley, thus stopping the embankment acting as a dam. To be able to build such an embankment all soft material is to be removed from the valley base, an action which will detrimentally affect the site. It is recommended, therefore, that the site should be excavated prior to the commencement of road construction.

It is recommended an area 60m x 60m around Trenches 382 and 512-3 should be excavated prior to construction.

**2.12 Swilly Copse (SU 468 702: CPO Plot 11/1d: DoT Sheet 11)  
(Wessex Archaeology 1993b, 12: 1994b, 12-13)**

A single complete Middle Bronze Age Globular Urn was found in a shallow scoop in Trench 410 close to the proposed new junction with the A43 (see Appendix 2, DoT Sheet 11). Further trenching (Trenches 514-7) in the vicinity of the find failed to discover any related vessels, nor any features with which to relate the pot burial. The southern edge of the Curridge Road site (Wessex Archaeology 1994a, 6-7) was located 150m to the north of the Urn discovery site, but the artefacts from Curridge Road were dated to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age and as such cannot be said to be associated.

**Significance:**

**Period:** The Middle to Late Bronze Age period is well represented throughout Berkshire.

**Rarity:** Globular Urns, in domestic and funerary contexts, are common discoveries on Middle Bronze Age sites.

**Survival/condition:** The vessel was intact prior to discovery.

**Conclusion:** The vessel is of a common type and the find has been proved not to be associated with any other discernible features in the immediate vicinity. The find is of 'district or local importance.'

**Mitigation:**

The entire pot and fill was removed during the evaluation fieldwork and no other features were found during further investigations. It is not impossible, however, that related remains are present and it is recommended that a controlled topsoil strip is undertaken over an area 40m x 40m centred on the Urn findspot.

**2.13 Curridge Road (SU 473 711: CPO Plots 11/1, d, 11/2, b, e, k, 11/3,  
a & 12/2: DoT Sheets 11 & 12)  
(Wessex Archaeology 1994a, 6-7: 1994b, 13-14)**

A combination of the results from the Stage 1 test-pitting and fieldwalking (Wessex Archaeology 1991c, 20, A34.50-2) and the Stage 2 Phase II machine trenching identified a scatter of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age worked flint, burnt flint and to a lesser extent medieval pottery and tile covering an area of approximately 12.06 hectares (see Appendix 2, DoT Sheets 11 and 12). Machine trenching only located four features (two features in Trenches 444 and one each in Trenches 458 and 465), none of which were datable and it appears that evidence of any settlement present has been badly disturbed by ploughing. The density of the finds was not great but was extensive enough to be of significance.

**Significance:**

**Period:** The site has two chronological components; a Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age element and a less significant medieval element.

**Rarity:** Evidence of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age activity is relatively common in west Berkshire. Several contemporary finds spots are listed in the *Kennet Valley Survey* (Lobb in prep.) and in the *Archaeology of the Berkshire Downs* (Richards 1978). Such a site cannot, therefore, be classified as rare. Likewise neither can medieval findspots around Newbury, an important medieval town.

**Survival/condition:** It would appear that the site is almost entirely contained within the ploughsoil, which was on average only 0.27m thick. Of the four features identified three were less than 0.20m deep and none were securely dated. The site, therefore, is in a very poor state of preservation.

**Fragility/vulnerability:** Given that the site would appear to be almost entirely contained within the ploughsoil it can be labelled as being extremely fragile. Topsoil stripping would completely destroy the site.

**Conclusion:** The medieval artefact scatter is probably the result of material 'imported' during manuring and is of little importance save to indicate activity in the general area. Certainly the density and nature of the material recovered from Curridge Road is not of the same significance as the material recovered from Enborne Road and Skinners Green Lane where large amounts of domestic wares and building materials were found. No mitigatory measures will, therefore, be required for the medieval finds. In contrast a considerable degree of significance can be attached to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age remains for though many such sites are known hardly any have been studied in detail. Because of the truncated nature of the remains it is not possible to attribute a 'regional or county importance', but the site is extensive and significant enough to warrant a 'district or local importance'.

**Mitigation:**

The site discovered is of the most fragile type found in archaeology, one surviving only in the ploughsoil. Given the machine trenching found only four features, three of which were extremely shallow, it is not proposed to recommend machine stripping as the first option. Instead it is recommended that the 12.06 hectares defined as being part of the site is ploughed, allowed to weather for a reasonable time, and then a surface collection fieldwalk undertaken. After the plotting of the results a sample of specific artefact concentrations should be investigated by machine stripping and excavation. A detailed watching brief will need to be maintained during all earthmoving over the area. In addition the excavation of the evaluation trench in CPO Plot 11/3b, to date unexcavated due to access difficulties, should be completed and a decision on whether to include this plot in the fieldwalking taken.

**2.14 Individual Features (Wessex Archaeology 1993b, 23: 1994a, 16  
1994b, 14-15)**

Apart from the significant sites listed above a number of individual features, which did not warrant specific mitigations, were also found during the two phases of machine trenching. Under the criteria used to grade the sites along the route these would be classified as 'sites which are so badly damaged that too little now remains to justify their inclusion in a higher grade'.

These features comprised a shallow ditch found in Trench 249 (CPO Plot 8/1), in which Bronze Age pottery was found and post-medieval field boundaries in three trenches (Trench 132, CPO Plot 6/3; Trench 450, CPO Plot 11/2e,k; and Trench 452, CPO Plot 11/2c,k).

These isolated discoveries, particularly ones such as the ephemeral feature containing prehistoric pottery found in Trench 249, highlight the potential for discrete areas of activity along the route. No evaluation strategy is going to be totally successful at

locating such features, so it can be expected that several will occur along the route. It is recommended, therefore, that to mitigate for such an eventuality resources are made available to maintain a constant limited watching brief on all earthmoving undertaken during construction. The watching brief team should have access to all works and should be allowed time in which to record deposits. A contingency should be made for the excavation of any significant sites which may be encountered.

In the case of the feature in Trench 249, where the feature can be demonstrated to predate the post-medieval period, a controlled topsoil strip should be undertaken over an area 20m x 20m centred on the feature.

### **2.15 Post-Fieldwork Analysis**

On completion of the fieldwork a strategy for analysing and publishing the results will need to be developed. This will take the form of a Post-Excavation Assessment, as defined by English Heritage in Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991b, 32). The Assessment will pull out the broad themes for discussion in the final report and will outline the necessary tasks/costs to complete the work. At present it is perceived that the most efficient and coherent method of publishing the results will be in the form of a monograph, which will cover all work conducted on the A34 Newbury Bypass.



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**A34 NEWBURY BYPASS, BERKSHIRE/HAMPSHIRE  
SUMMARY OF EVALUATION WORK 1991-1994**

**APPENDIX 1: STATUS OF THE STAGE 2 FIELDWORK AT 22/4/94**

**Table 1. Trenches abandoned or permanently inaccessible**

Trenches	CPO Plots	Reason	No.
50	3/8	Land used for extraction	1
55-6	3/8c	Land used for extraction	2
57	3/71	Land used for extraction	1
89-91	4/17	In railway cutting	3
113-6	5/4a, c	Under railway embankment	4
291-2	9/4	Recently made ground	2
<b>Total</b>			<b>13</b>

**Table 2. Trenches presently inaccessible due to woodland**

Trenches	CPO Plots	No.
3, 9, 10, 13, 15, 17, 18	1/3	7
29-36	2/2, b	8
58	4/3	1
137	6/3	1
188, 191, 194-5, 212-4, 231-4, 266	7/2b, u, v; 8/1	12
321, 335, 350, 380, 387-8	9/4g, m; 10/1, a, c, d	6
397-9	10/4, a	3
400-1	10/3, a	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>40</b>

**Table 3. Trenches not yet excavated for other reasons**

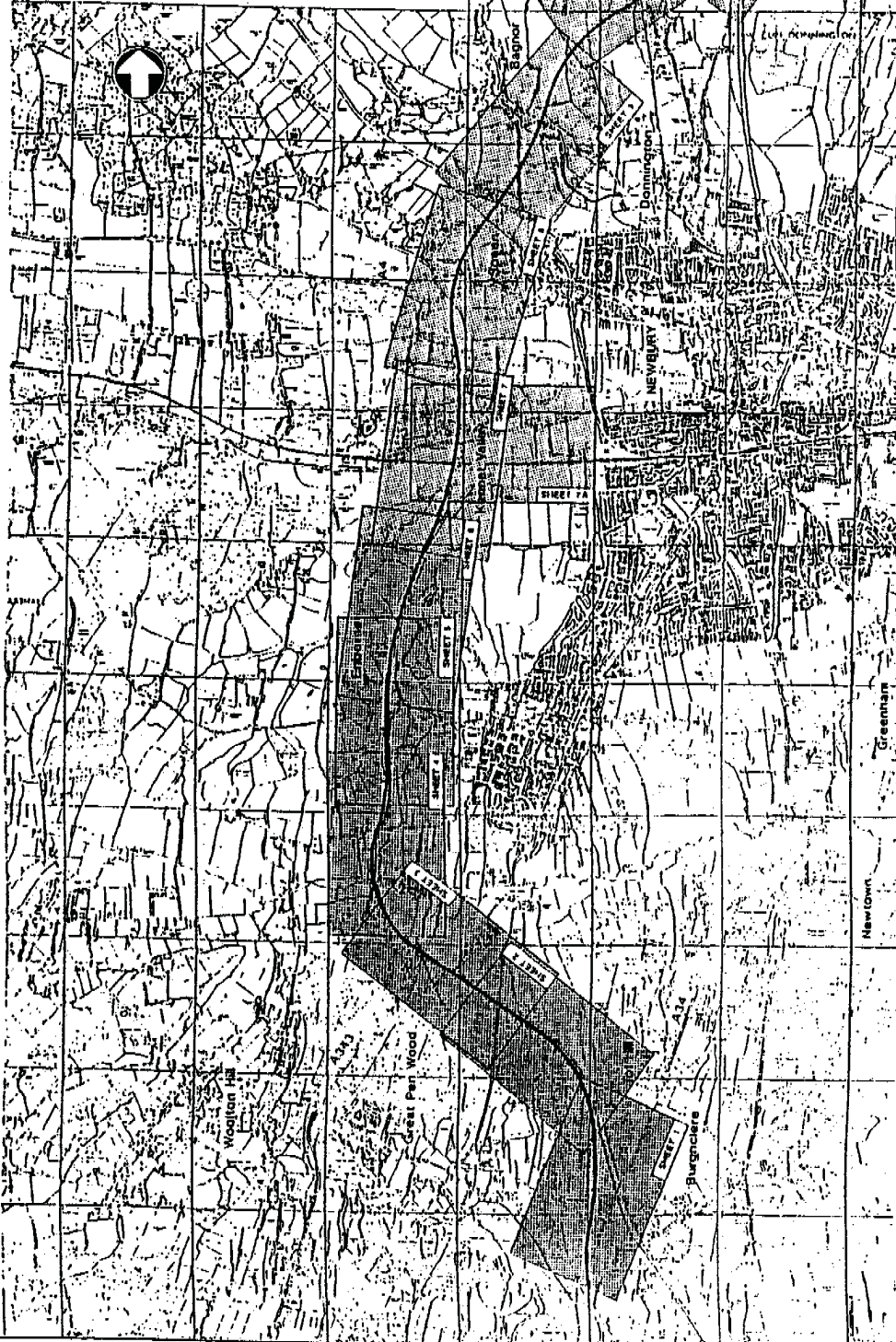
Trenches	CPO Plots	Landowner and reason	No.
59-61	4/3c	Moreton - horses in field	3
68	4/16c	Bull - access only via Perris or woodland	1
129	6/2d	Cottrell - trench omitted in error	1
475	11/3b	Fairhurst - access only across owner's land	1
<b>Total</b>			<b>6</b>

**Table 4. Alternative strategies employed in specific cases**

<b>Trenches</b>	<b>CPO Plots</b>	<b>Alternative Strategy</b>	<b>Reason</b>
96 and 99	5/1	Trenches 600-1 Test- pit 603	Woodland
298-9 and 301	9/4e, m	Auger Holes 700-53 Test-Pits 650-5, 659-61	Waterlogged ground

**A34 NEWBURY BYPASS, BERKSHIRE/HAMPSHIRE  
SUMMARY OF EVALUATION WORK 1991-1994**

**APPENDIX 2:  
LOCATION OF MACHINE TRENCHES COMPLETED AND AREAS NOT  
TRENCHED**

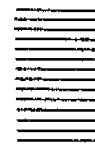


— Machine trench

■ Test pit

● Auger hole

★ Trench with significant archaeology



Woodland area still to be machine trenched



Area abandoned

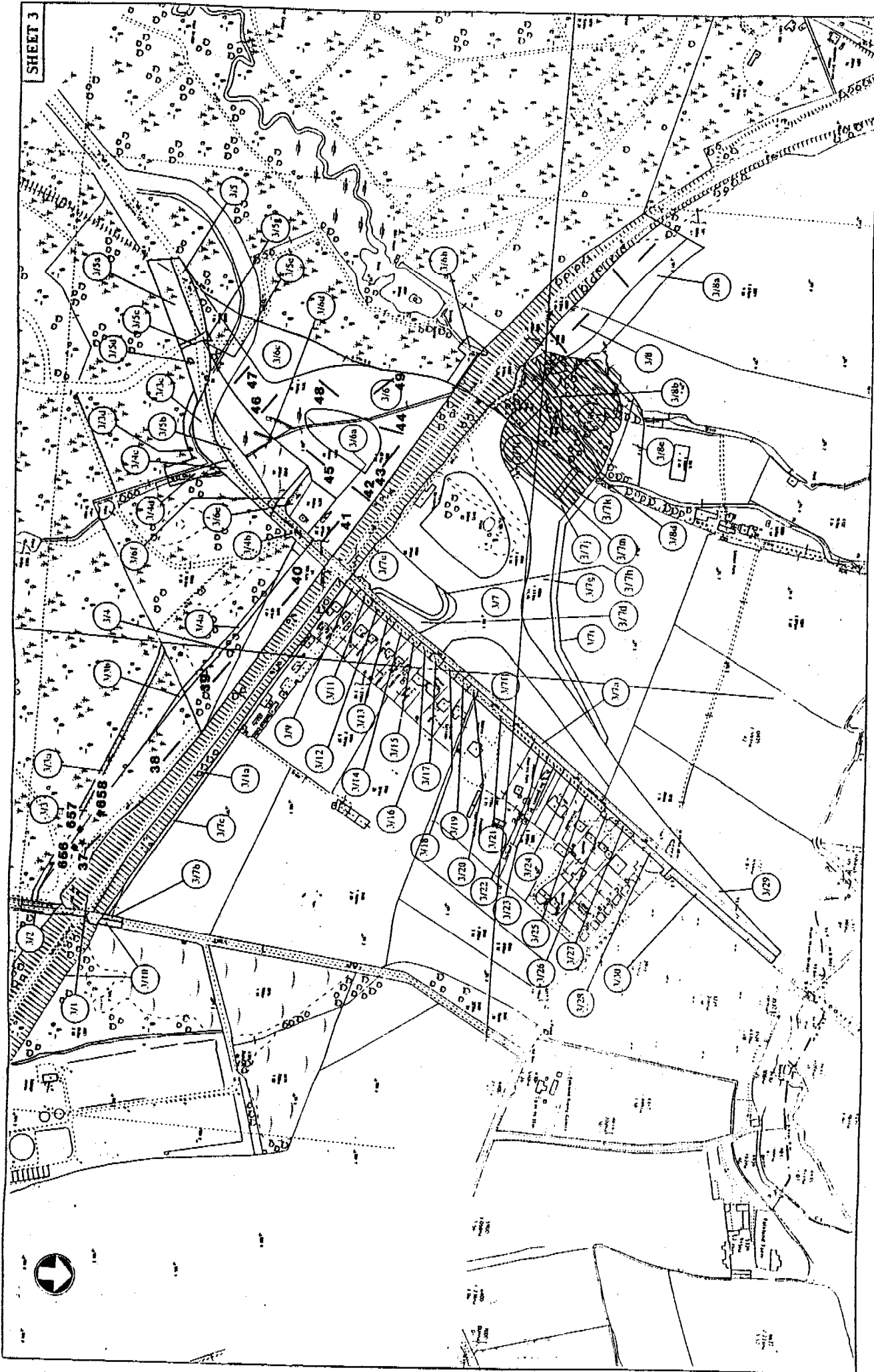


Area where access not obtained. Still to be machine trenched

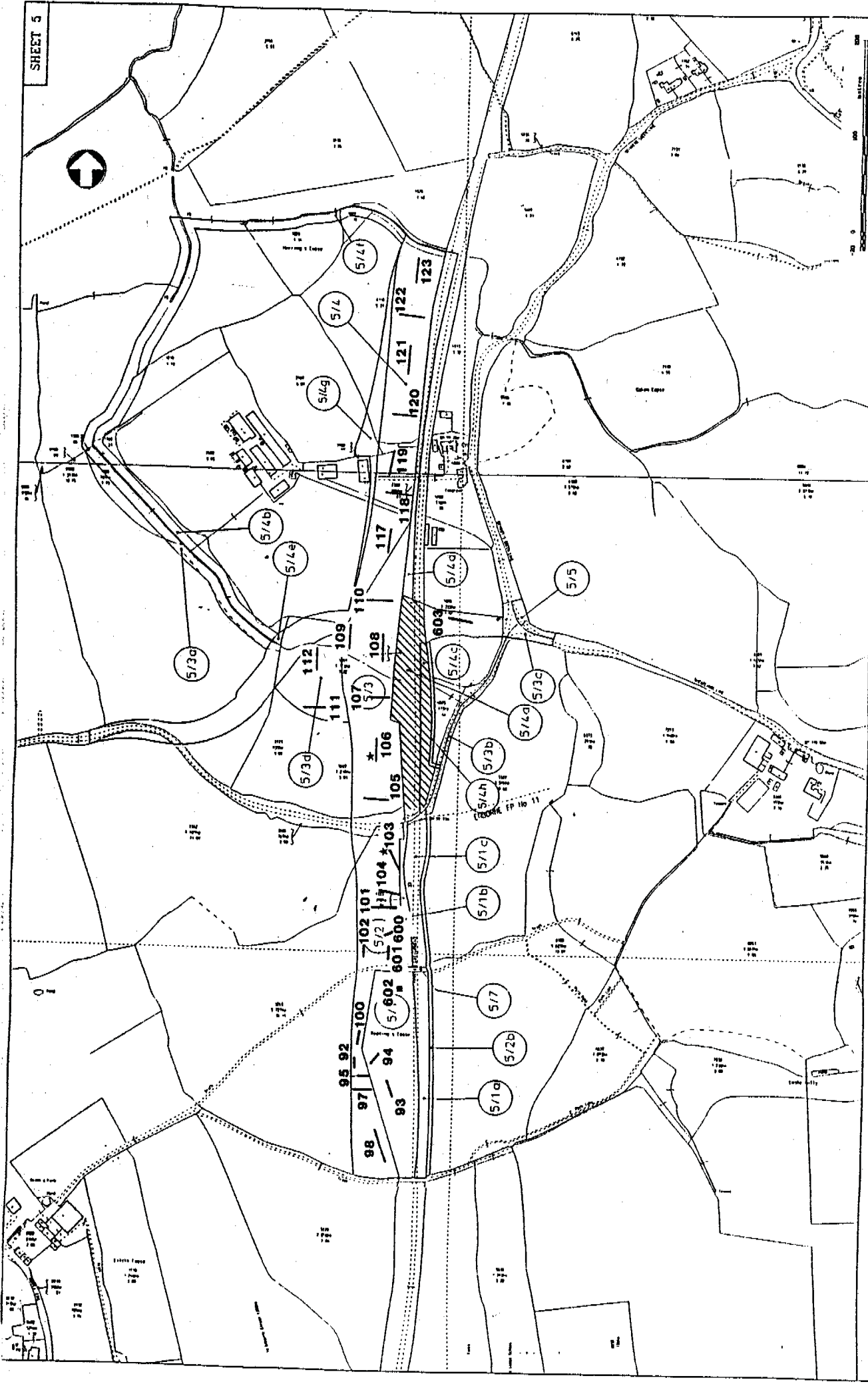
THE WINCHESTER - PRESTON TRUNK ROAD  
 ( A34 NEWBURY BYPASS )  
 COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER ( SE No. ) 199



KEY PLAN

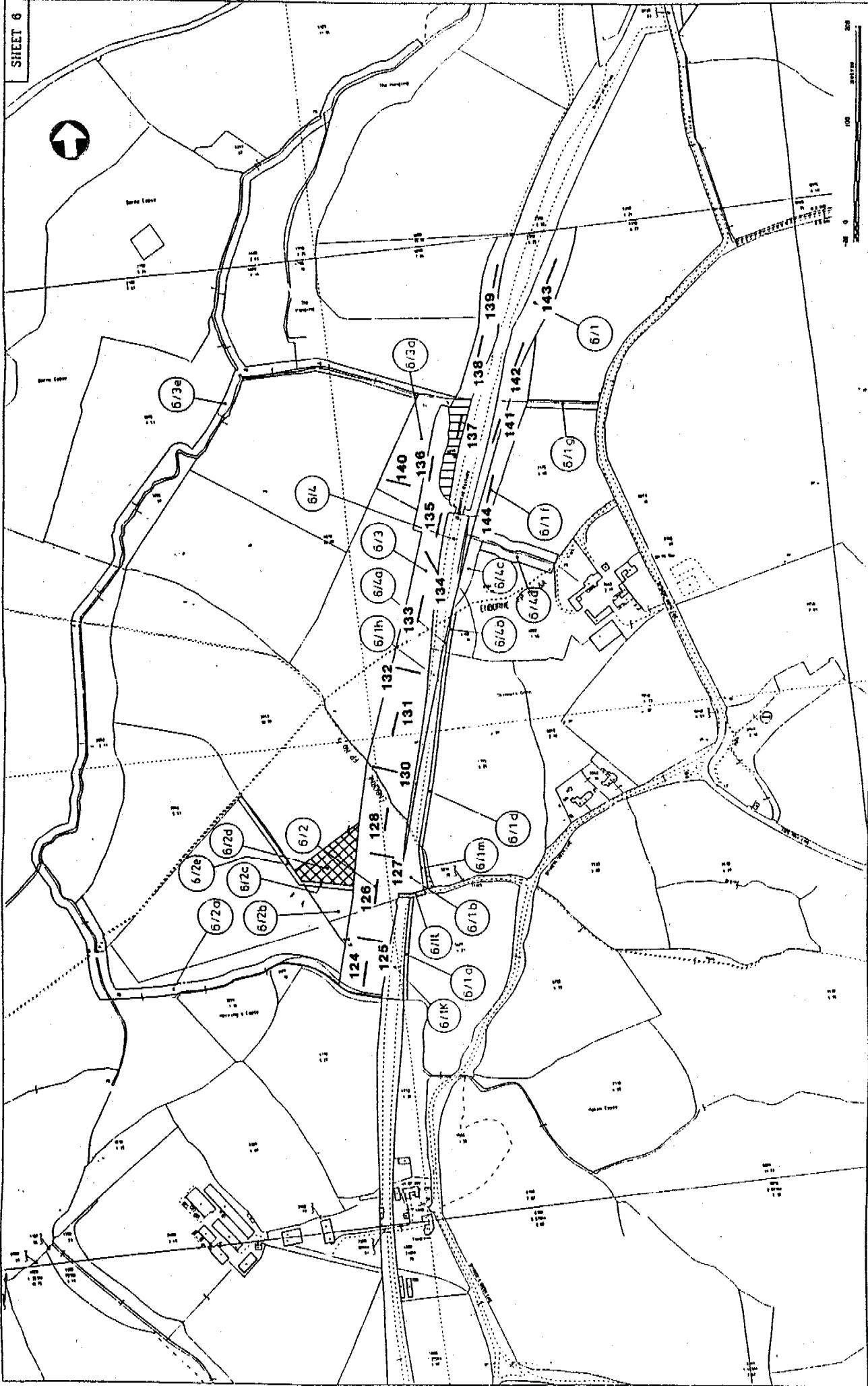


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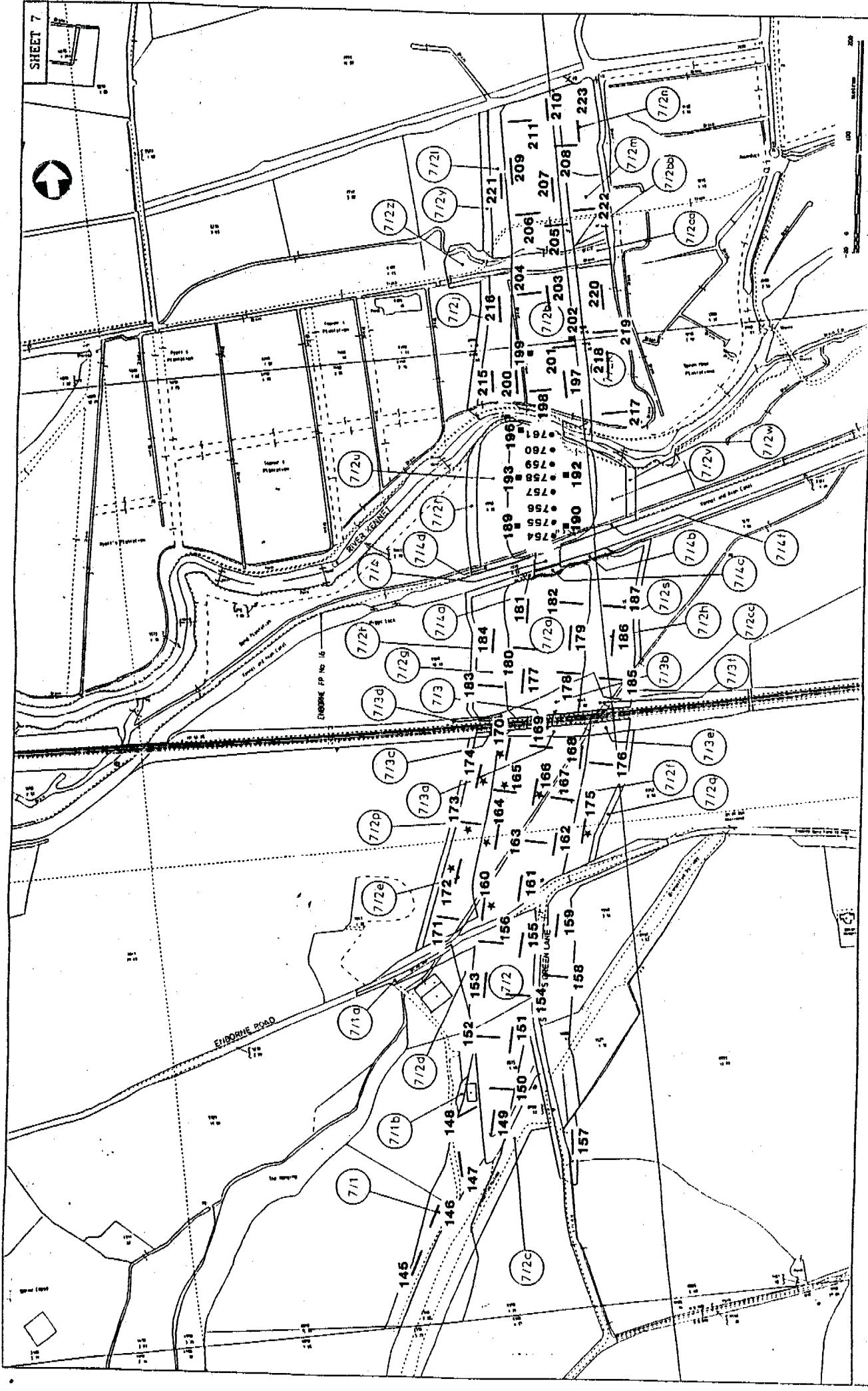


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 (A34 NEWBURY BYPASS)  
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(A34 NEWBURY BYPASS)  
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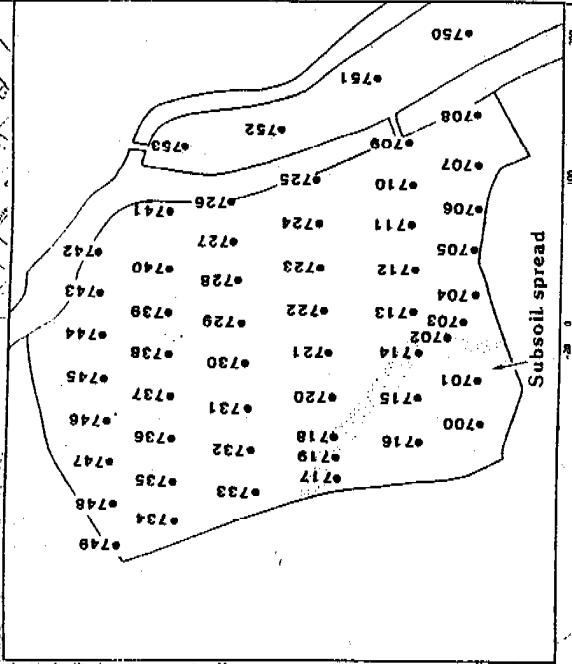
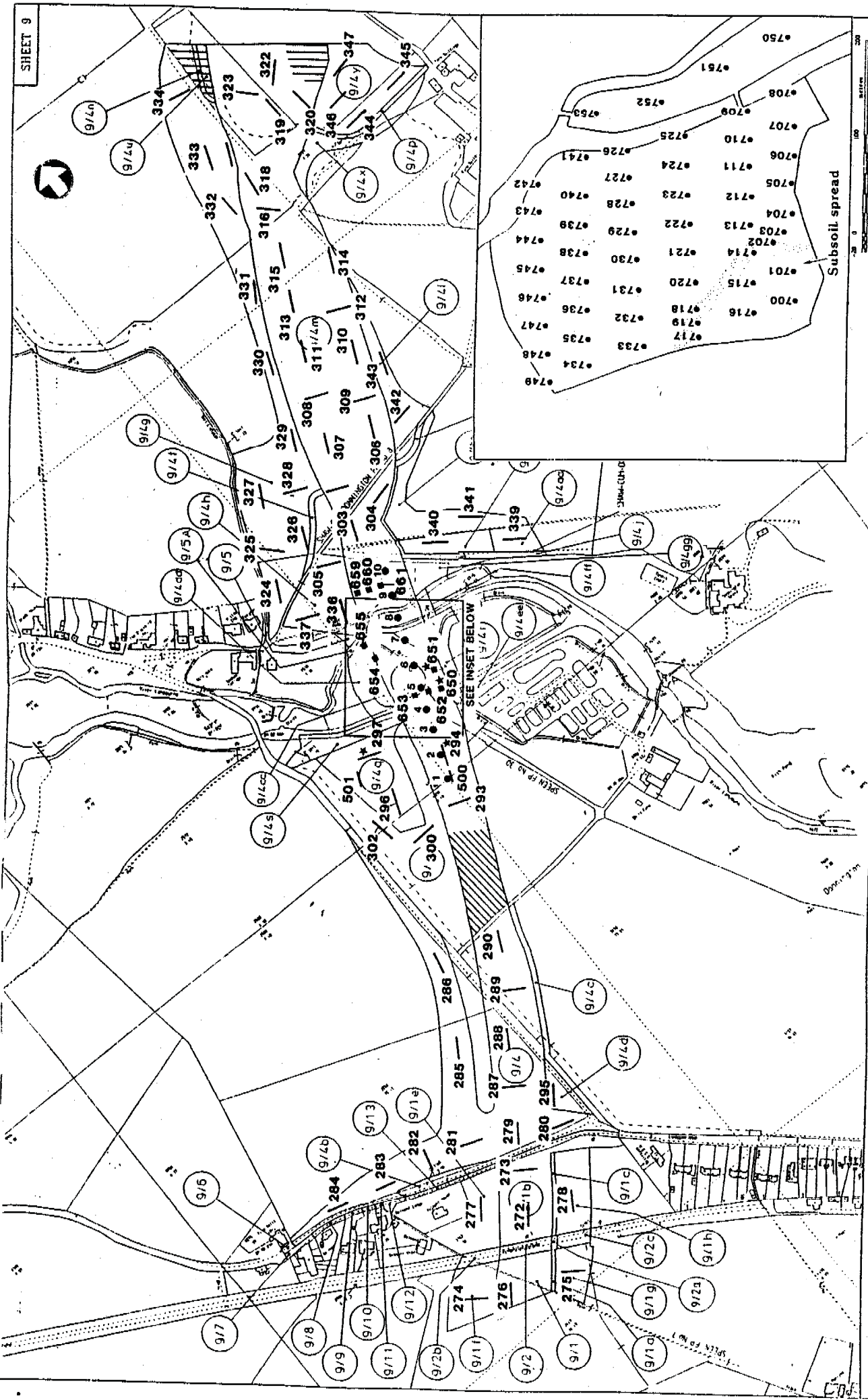


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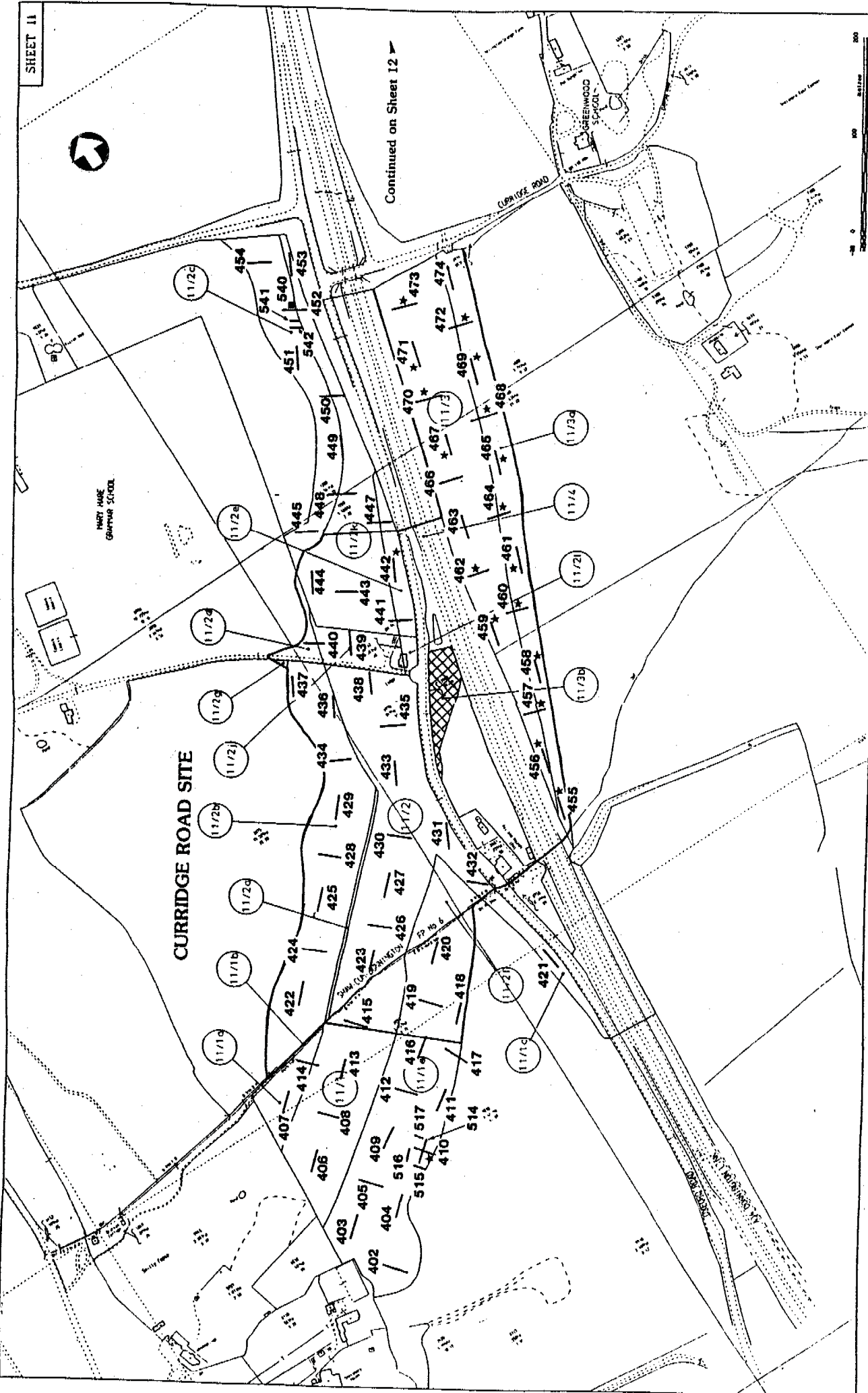
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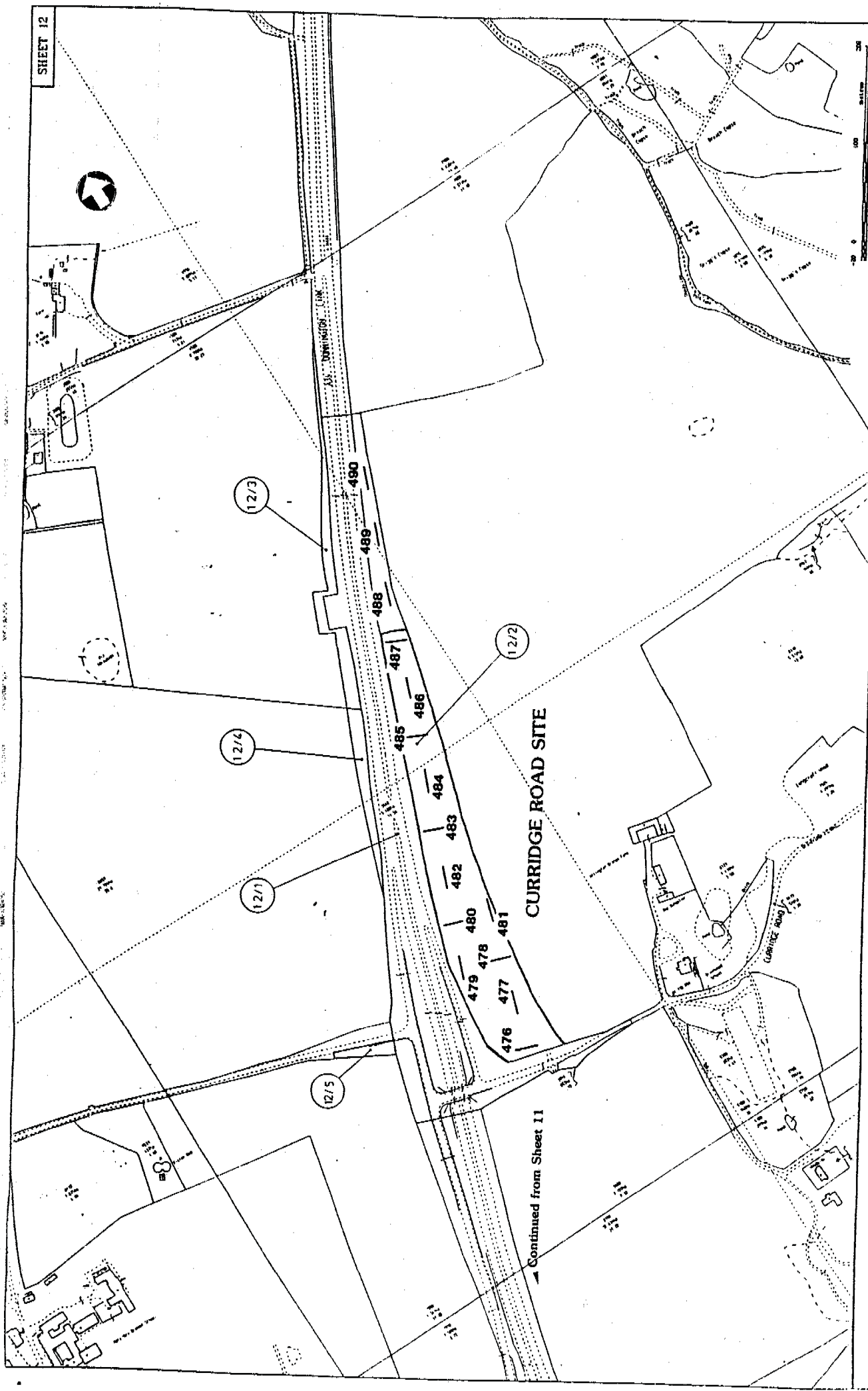


THE WINCHESTER - PRESTON TRUNK ROAD  
 (A34 NEWBURY BYPASS)  
 COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER (SE No. ) 199



CURRIDGE ROAD SITE

THE WINCHESTER - PRESTON TRUNK ROAD  
(A34 NEWBURY BYPASS)  
COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER (SE No. ) 199



THE WINCHESTER - PRESTON TRUNK ROAD  
 (A34 NEWBURY BYPASS)  
 COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER (SE No. ) 199

# A34 NEWBURY BYPASS, BERKSHIRE/HAMPSHIRE

## SUMMARY OF EVALUATION WORK 1991-1994

### APPENDIX 3: MITIGATION PHILOSOPHY

When discussing the significance of the individual sites the four categories defined in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (Volume 11, section 3, part 2, Cultural Heritage) (hereafter referred too as the Manual) will be used. These are defined in paragraph 3.4 of the Manual as follows:

The importance of the archaeological resource which could be affected should be established at an early stage in route planning. At present four categories of monument can be defined:-

- sites of national importance - usually Scheduled Ancient Monuments, or monuments in the process of being scheduled;
- sites of regional or county importance;
- sites of district or local importance;
- sites which are so badly damaged that too little now remains to justify their inclusion in a higher grade.

The accepted criteria for defining sites of national importance are the non-statutory criteria for scheduling ancient monuments as outlined in the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance 16 (1990) Annex 4, and which are further discussed in the Manual, Annex II, paragraph 4. Each site is individually assessed using the relevant criteria.

When considering mitigatory measures the advice in the Manual will again be followed. The relevant paragraph is 6.3 where PPG 16 (1990) is paraphrased:

The Government's policy towards archaeological remains and development in England and Wales is stated in DOE PPG 16, paragraphs 8 and 27:

'With the many demands of modern society, it is not always feasible to save all archaeological remains. The key question is where and how to strike the right balance. Where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled [i.e., designated] or not, and their settings, are affected by proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation. Cases involving archaeological remains of lesser importance will not always be so clear cut.'

'...As stated in paragraph 8, where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings, are affected by a proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation *in situ*, i.e., a presumption against proposals which would involve significant alteration or cause damage, or which would have a significant impact on the setting of visible remains.'

The appropriate actions for sites not graded as nationally important is discussed in paragraph 28 of PPG16:

'There will no doubt be occasions, particularly where remains of lesser importance are involved, when planning authorities may decide that the significance of the archaeological remains is not sufficient when weighed against all other material considerations, including the need for development, to justify their physical preservation *in situ*, and that the proposed development should proceed. As paragraph 25 explains, planning authorities will, in such cases, need to satisfy themselves that the developer has made appropriate and satisfactory arrangements for the excavation and recording of the archaeological remains and the publication of the results.'

Finally the views given below are solely those of Wessex Archaeology, with the exception of the technical details of mitigation measures which were discussed with Mott MacDonald.