RPS Planning, Transport and Environment

INDEX DATA	RPS INFORMATION
Scheme Title A43 Silverstone Bypass	Details Archaeological Desktop survey
Road Number A43	Date 1996
Contractor	
County Northamptonshire	
OS Reference	
Single sided ✓ Double sided A3 5 Colour 5 A3.	

1996

A43 SILVERSTONE BYPASS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK TOP SURVEY

ABSTRACT

A desk top assessment, comprising an examination of the geology and topography, the mapping of the current land use, the extraction of data from the County Sites and Monuments Record, and an assessment of the historic map and field name evidence revealed no known archaeological site within a 200m corridor along the published route of the A43 Silverstone bypass although the line of the Roman road from Towcester to Alchester passes close by. Undetected sites, may, however, be present. Recommendations are made for further work.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The present report comprises a desk top assessment of the archaeological sites along the published route of the A43 Siverstone bypass, a distance of around 7.5km. It forms a Detailed Desk Top Assessment as defined in the Highways Agencies' Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB 11.3.8.8.15) and has been carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology on behalf of the Highways Agency.

1.2 For the purpose of the assessment a corridor 200m wide (ie extending 100m either side of the centre line of the published route) was chosen. It is necessary to examine this wider corridor as many archaeological sites can extend over a larger area than that indicated by a grid reference giving their central point.

1.3 The desk top assessment was composed of:

(1) an examination of the geology and topography of the area.

(2) field inspection gathering information regarding the current land use of the area and the production of digitized maps showing the current land use for each parcel of land along the survey corridor.

(3) consultation of the Northamptonshire County Sites and Monuments Record and extraction of information regarding known sites along the route.

(4) examination of aerial photographic plots held in the County Sites and Monuments Record.

(5) examination of historic maps for evidence of constraints such as historic features and any field names which may be indicative of archaeological sites.

2. TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 From the southern end of the road corridor, at c 140m above OD, to the junction of the proposed road with the present A43 to the north of Siverstone, at c 105m above OD, a distance of c 4.5km, the superficial geology comprises Boulder Clay. There is a single exception in a narrow band to the north of Winterhills Road where a shallow valley carrying a stream cuts into Great Oolite Limestone and contains sands and gravel.

2.2 The present and proposed routes of the A43 meet to the north of Silverstone at Band Brook, where the shallow valley exposes a sequence of Upper Lias Clay, alluvium and Upper Estuarine Clays. Between Band Brook and the intersection with Silverstone Brook to the north, at c 94m above OD, a distance of c 1.7km, the road corridor crosses a complex sequence of localised surface exposures of Boulder Clay, Upper Estuarine Clays, gravels, Great Oolite Limestone, further Upper Estuarine Clays, and, at Siverstone Brook, first terrace gravels and alluvium.

2.3 To the north of Silverstone Brook, the northernmost c 1.2km of the road corridor, the geology comprises Upper Lias Clay.

2.4 A total length of c 250m of the route is covered by alluvium. This may mask archaeological sites pre-dating its deposition.

2.5 In general archaeological sites tend to be more common on the lighter well-drained soils which develop on strata such as sands and gravels and Great Oolite Limestone. Sites are less common on clayland, partly because these areas are not as conducive to the discovery of sites by aerial photography. Hence a low density of sites might be expected on the bypass route. Conversely, however, where they are found they may be of more interest because of their comparative rarity.

3. CURRENT LAND USE (Fig 1)

3.1 The current land use along the road corridor has been established by field inspection during September 1996. It is classified according to the following criteria:

(1) Arable
(2) Pasture
(3) Recreation (playing fields etc)
(4) Set-aside or allotment gardens
(5) Woodland

3.2 A total of 2.2km of arable land lies along the road corridor, comprising 29% of the total length. A further 4.2km, 56% of the total, is under pasture, including c 500m with surviving ridge and furrow from medieval

cultivation. There is no land under set aside or recreational use. The southernmost c 1.1km of the road corridor, 15% of the total, largely along the course of the present road through Hazelborough Wood is wooded. There are no other wooded areas along the route.

4. KNOWN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES (Fig 2)

4.1 No Scheduled Ancient Monuments lie along the route of the proposed bypass scheme.

4.2 No buried archaeological sites are recorded on the County Sites and Monuments Record within the 200m wide corridor.

4.3 The route of the Roman road between Towcester and Alchester does, however, pass close to the corridor at the junction of the A413 and A43.

5. HISTORIC MAPS AND FIELD NAMES (Fig 2)

5.1 A study of field names along the route has been undertaken chiefly from a 1932 survey of the field names by parish undertaken by local schools at the request of the authors of the Place Names of Northamptonshire, which was in preparation at the time. These parish field name surveys are now kept in the Northamptonshire Record Office (NRO). This has been supplemented by data taken from the earliest surviving map, also in NRO, see below.

(1) Whittlewood Forest, showing village and closes, lodges and coppices, c 1600

Probably an early eighteenth century copy of an early seventeenth century map. NRO map 4210.

5.2 No evidence of the presence of former archaeological sites was recovered although some names do give an indication of former land use.

5.3 The south-western end of the road corridor runs through Hazelborough Wood, and this area is depicted as woodland on the map of c 1600.

5.4 From Hazelborough Wood to the Dadford Road and from the Dadford Road up to, but not including, the fields adjacent to Winterhills Road, the road corridor crosses fields shown on the map of c 1600 and in the field name survey of 1932 as comprising several "Sarts", or assarts. This indicates their origin as woodland clearances. They may include some of the assarts mentioned as being in Silverstone in 1273 (RCHM 1982, 134).

5.5 Winterhills Road does not appear on the map of c 1600, the fields immediately west and east of this road all comprised part of Winterhills, shown as woodland which had

formerly been common land, "comon of late".

5.6 The fields to the immediate south of the Whittlebury Road are shown on the map of c 1600 as further woodland, "Barneyard coppice".

5.7 The earliest map evidence therefore indicates that the entire area to the south and east of Silverstone, from Hazelborough Wood to the Whittlebury Road, had been under woodland although some areas of woodland clearance had probably appeared before the later 13th century.

5.8 To the immediate north of the Whittlebury Road the map of c 1600 shows a plot of land known as "The Ridgeway". Further to the north the area up to the parish boundary is shown as common land, "Silson common".

6. ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 No known sites lie within the 200m corridor. There has, however, been little archaeological work along the proposed road route. Work elsewhere in Northamptonshire in the Raunds area of the Nene valley has indicated that a density of one Roman site per kilometre and one Saxon site per two kilometres can be expected (Parry forthcoming). A lower density of sites can be anticipated from the predominantly clayland Silverstone area but there is nevertheless potential for the discovery of unidentified sites along the route, particularly to the north-east of Silverstone where the route lies within the archaeological context of the Roman town of Towcester and close to the Roman road from Towcester to Alchester. Wooded areas may preserve earthwork sites pre-dating their growth.

6.2 Accordingly it is recommended that a preliminary walkover survey be undertaken in line with the recommendations of in the Design Manual Roads and Bridges (DMRB 11.3.8.15).

6.3 This should initially comprise non-destructive fieldwork composed of:

(1) fieldwalking of all available arable fields

(2) scanning by geophysical survey of areas where fieldwalking is not possible (ie pasture, set-aside etc).

(3) detailed geophysical survey of 'hot-spots' discovered by reconnaissance survey or fieldwalking. An allowance for detailed survey of a length of 5% of the road line should be made.

(4) Walkover of woodland areas to look for and plot earthwork sites.

(5) on completion of the preliminary walkover survey a report detailing the results of the work should be produced.

6.4 For the purpose of the preliminary walkover it is recommended that the corridor of investigation be narrowed to 100m for fieldwalking, geophysical reconnaissance and walkover of woodland areas and to 40m for detailed geophysical survey.

6.5 Depending on the results of the non-destructive work it may be necessary subsequently to carry out targeted trial trenching on some sites in order to assess their condition, importance and depth of burial.

6.6 Once completed the results of the Assessment can be used to inform a Mitigation Strategy designed where possible to preserve archaeological remains or where this is not possible to excavate those portions of any important archaeological remains within the road corridor (DMRB 10.6.5).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Parry, S, forthcoming Raunds Area Survey. An Archaeological Study of the landscape of Raunds, Northamptonshire

RCHM 1982: Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Northampton; IV: Archaeological Sites in South-West Northamptonshire

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig 1: Proposed A43 Silverstone Bypass: Current land use

Fig 2: Proposed A43 Silverstone Bypass: Known archaeological sites and field names

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Northamptonshire Archaeology
a service of the Northamptonshire County Council
Planning and Transportation Department

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Fig 1a: Current Land Use

Fig 1b: Current Land Use

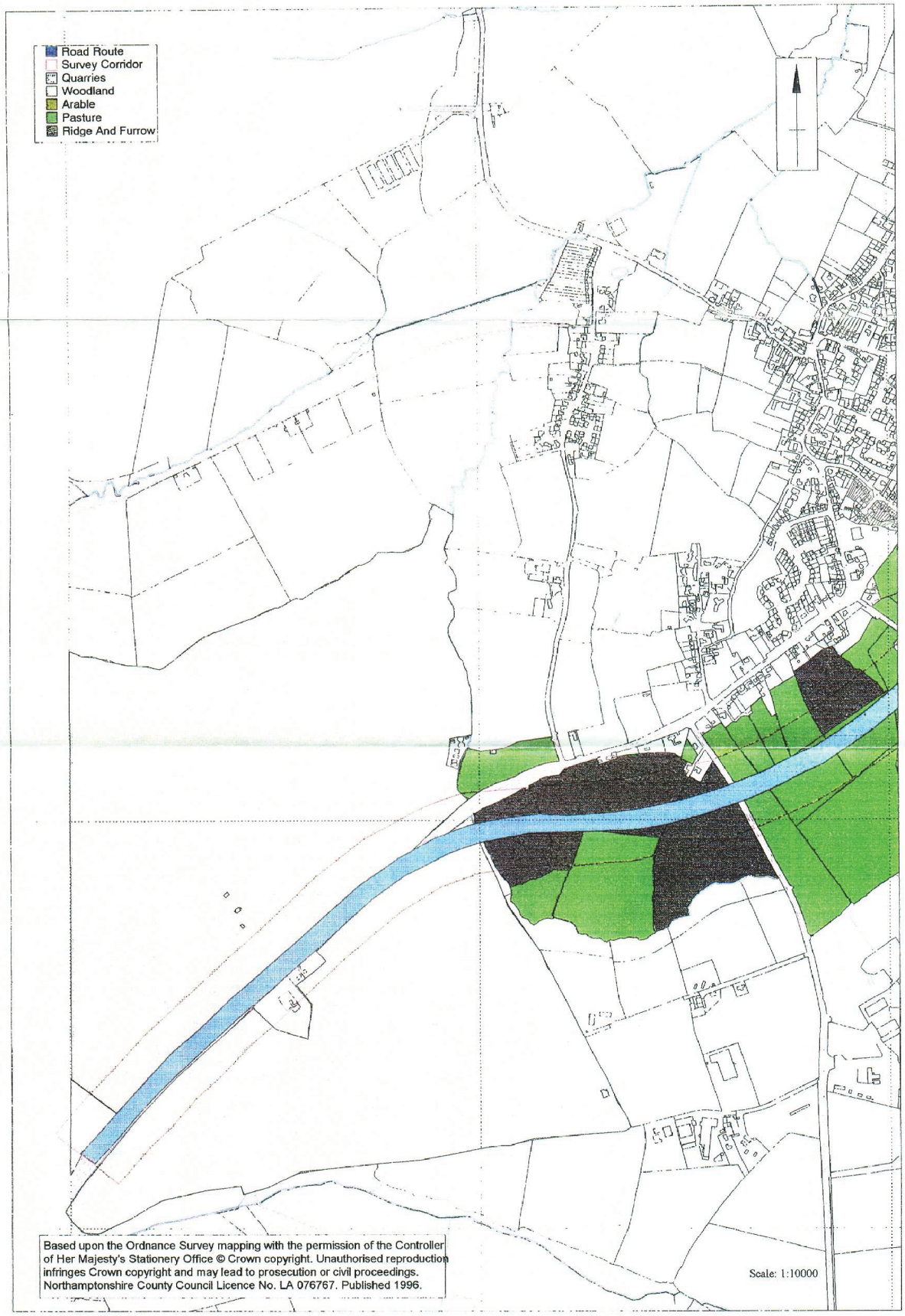


Fig 1c: Current Land Use

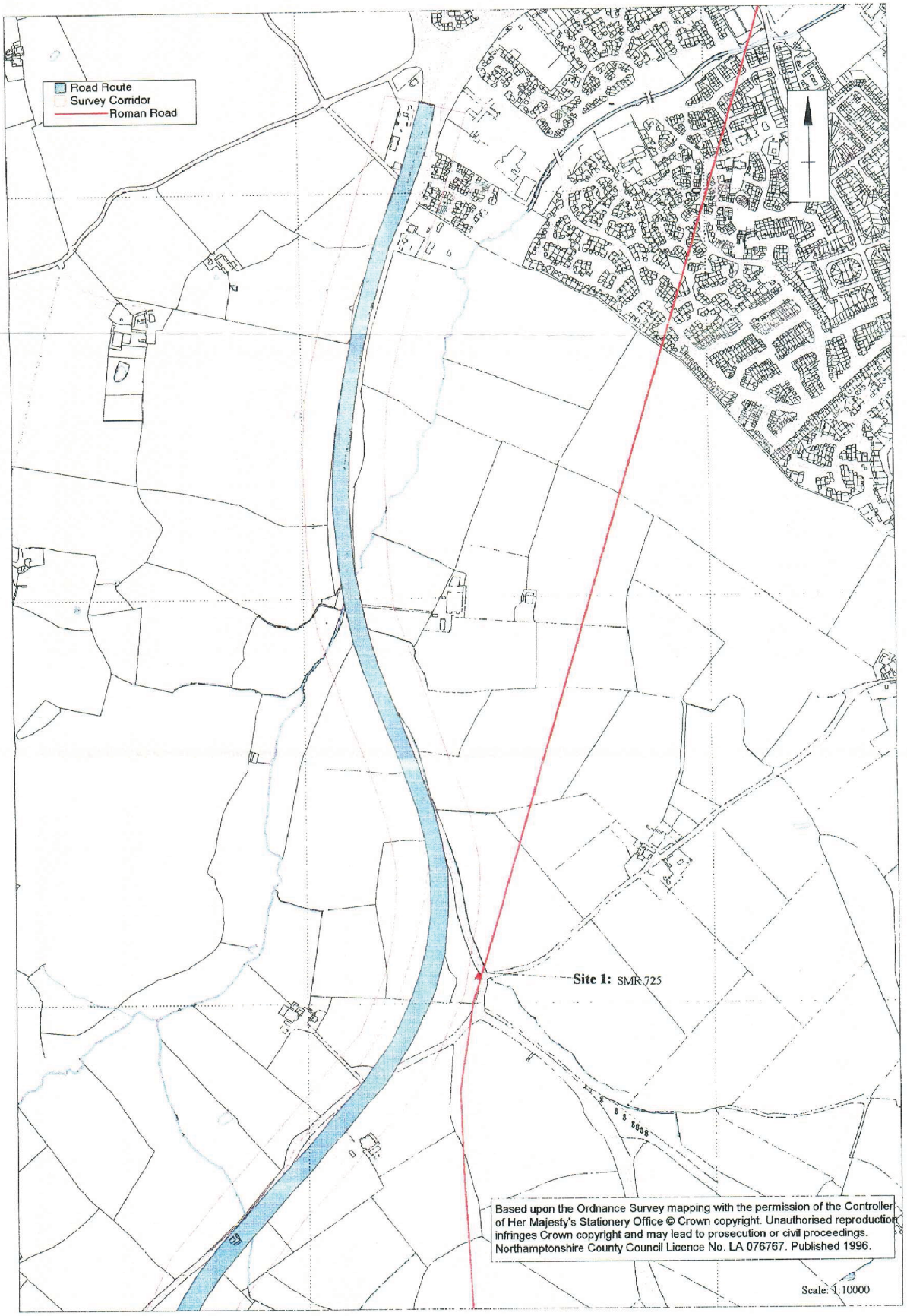


Fig 2a: Known Archaeological Sites and Field Names

Fig 2b: Known Archaeological Sites and Field Names

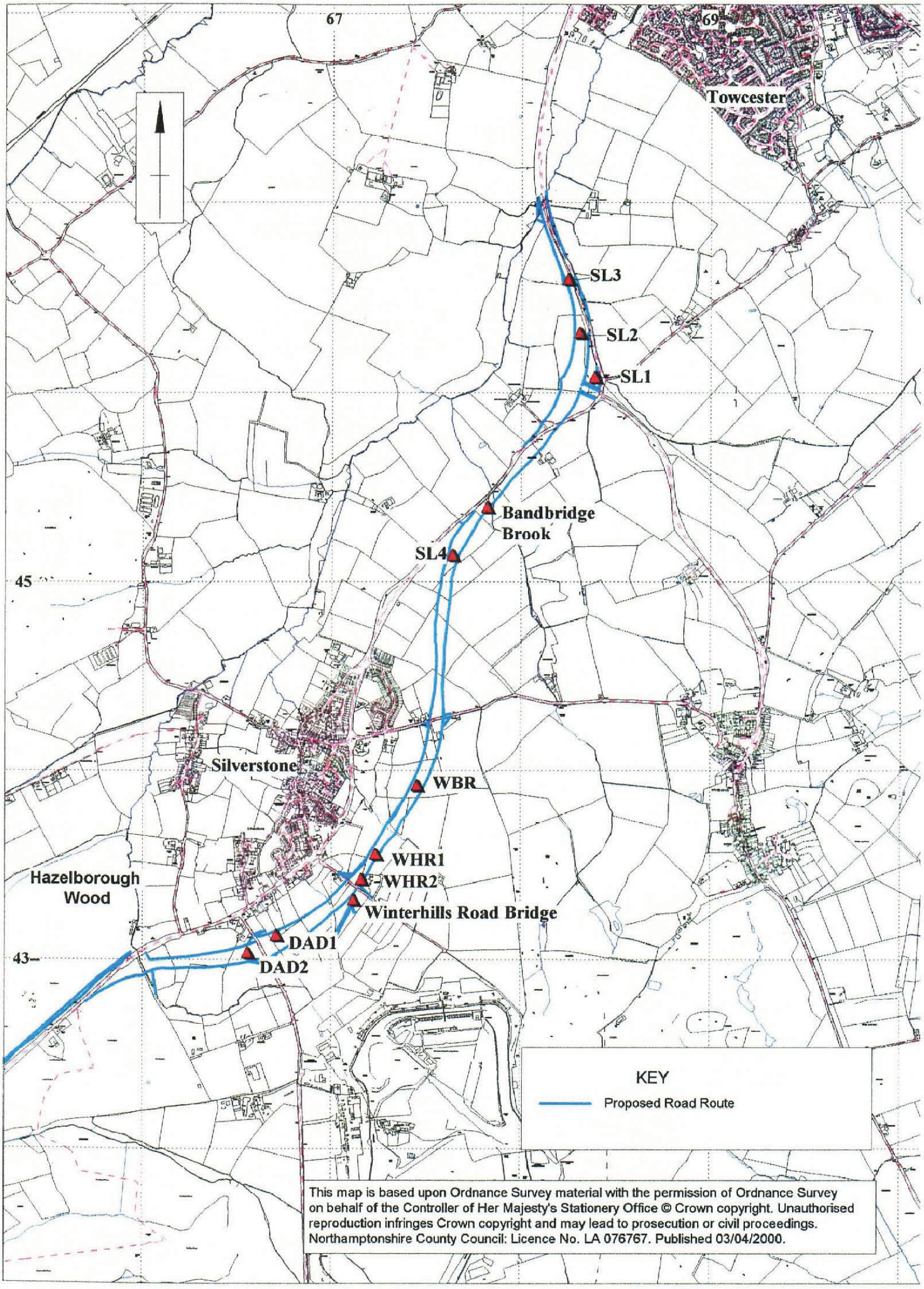
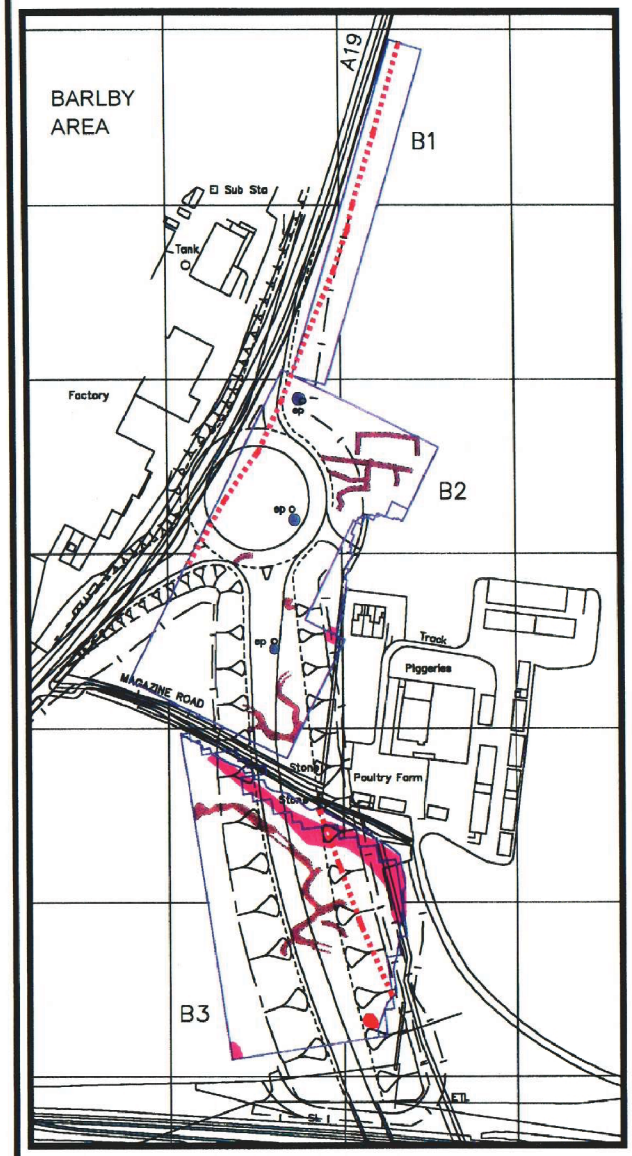
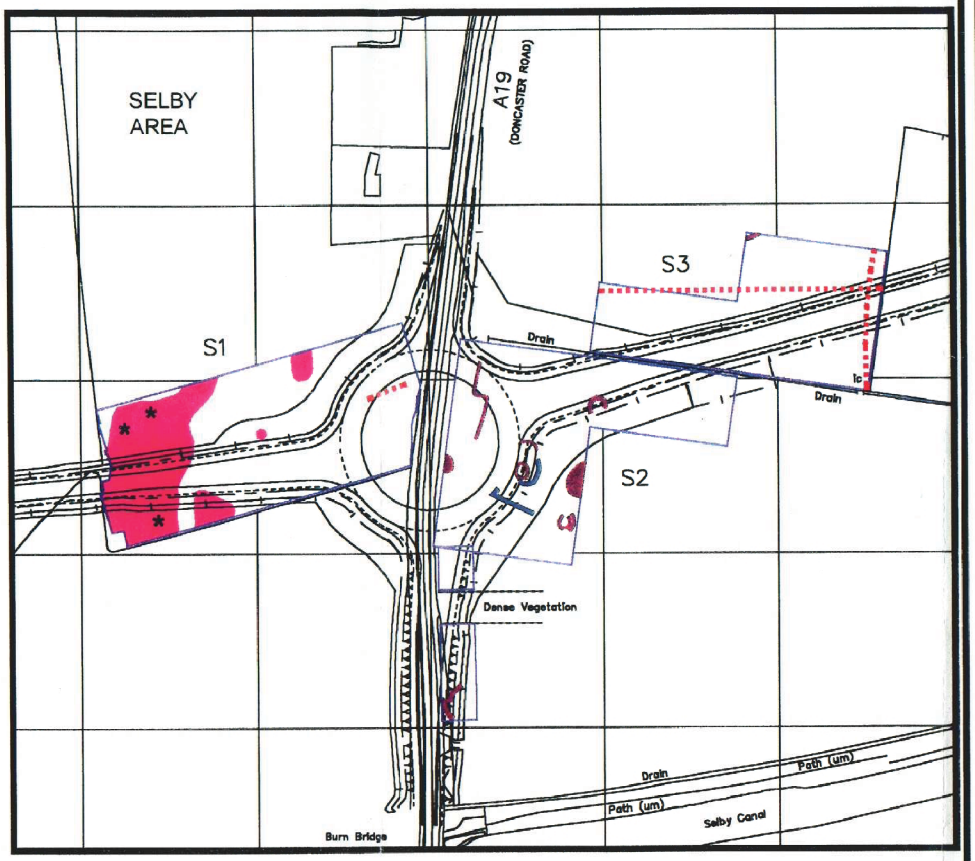


Fig. 1a





0m 100m 200m 300m

Scale

LEGEND

- Pit, Ditch or Palaeochannel
- Ferrous / Brick Debris
- Metal Pipe
- In-Situ Burning
- Stoney Area
- * Test Pit Locations

CLIENT

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PROJECT
A63 Selby Bypass

TITLE
GeoPhysical Interpretation

SCALE	DATE	FIGURE
As Shown	Feb 2000	9