AREA 7 SAFETY CAMERA SIGNING, A46 AND A52 ROAD CORRIDOORS, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Site code	CBCN 06
NGR:	SK 5684 2617, SK 6562 5749 (A46)
	SK 7000 9842, SK 7212 3935 (A52)
PCA Job No	06-294

Report prepared for
Scott Wilson Ltd

by

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Summary

- *An archaeological watching brief took place during the excavation of four signage pits at Safety Camera sites on the A46 road corridor in the vicinity of Cotgrave and on the A52 road corridor between Bingham and Upper Saxondale, Nottinghamshire.*

- *The brief identified no features of archaeological significance, the predominant layers encountered being of Victorian or later origin.*

- *A single sherd of mid-17th to 18th century pottery was recovered from one of the locations.*

1.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief took place during the excavation of four signage pits at four separate locations on the A46 road corridor in the vicinity of Cotgrave and on the A52 road corridor between Bingham and Upper Saxondale, Nottinghamshire. Scott Wilson Ltd commissioned this work to fulfil a recommendation by Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) on road improvement works.

This report documents the results of the archaeological watching brief that was undertaken between 16.10.2006 and 19.10.2006. It has been prepared to meet the requirements of current local guidelines *(Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice, 1998)* and a formal project specification prepared by Scott Wilson Ltd, approved by the Assistant Archaeology Officer for Nottinghamshire County Council. This approach complies with the recommendations of *Archaeology & Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16*, (Department of the Environment, 1991), *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991), and *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IFA, 1999).

Copies of this report will be deposited with Scott Wilson Ltd, who will forward copies to NCC Archaeology Section for inclusion in the Sites and Monuments Record.

2.0 Location and Description (Figs. 1 & 2)

Two of the signage sites are located on the current A46 in the vicinity of Cotgrave, one on the verge of the southbound carriageway in the vicinity of Wolds Farm (NGR SK 5684 2617), the other on the northbound carriageway c.340m to the south of the Skellingthorpe junction (NGR SK 6562 5749); both are located close to the location of SPECS camera sites.

Two further signage sites are located on the current A52, one on the verge of the eastbound carriageway in the vicinity of Upper Saxondale (NGR SK 7000 9842), the other on the westbound carriageway c.500m to the east of Bingham (NGR SK 7212 3935); these are also located close to SPECS camera sites.

The underlying drift geology of the area is characterised as glacial sands and gravels, overlying base deposits (solid) of Upper Triassic marls and sandstone (BGS 1996). The signage sites were located within the grass roadside verge and were bounded by a roadside ditch, hedge and neighbouring agricultural land/ forestry to one side and the modern surface of the A46/A52 on the other.

3.0 Planning Background

These works form part of a larger scheme of Safety Camera signage along the A46 and A52 for which consent has been granted with an archaeological recommendation attached. The permission was granted subject to the undertaking of a watching brief on four of the proposed road signs. The watching brief was carried out in accordance

with a specification prepared by Scott Wilson Ltd and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

Cotgrave

The modern A46 is thought to follow the alignment of the Fosse Way, a Roman road constructed in the mid to late first century AD, which has continued as an important routeway into modern times. At Colston Gate the Fosse Way is thought to lie directly on the route of the A46. Cropmarks recorded to the northeast of Cropwell Butler Underbridge have been interpreted as Romano-British settlement and field systems. To the south of Cotgrave, three Roman/Early Medieval inhumations have been recorded cut into the Fosse Way.

Other sites within the vicinity of the works have been identified from fieldwalking and geophysical surveys undertaken along either side of this stretch of the A46. A scatter of worked flints dating from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age has been discovered to the north east of the Stragglethorpe junction (NCC SMR No.984). A Bronze Age ring ditch has been identified at Mann's Gate to the northwest (NCC SMR No.803). In the field to the immediate northwest of Colston Gate a series of cropmarks thought to relate to prehistoric activity and medieval ridge and furrow have been identified from aerial photographs (NCC SMR No.804).

Two Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemeteries are located in the surrounding area, one to the west of Cotgrave and one to the north.

Cartographic evidence suggests that land use in the area has been predominantly agricultural throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods, and was enclosed in the late 18th century. A post-medieval gypsum quarry is located in a wood plantation to the east of the Colston Gate junction.

Bingham

The area around the A52 near to Bingham contains evidence for activity ranging from the late prehistoric to the medieval period.

Two Late Neolithic henge monuments have been recorded in the area, one to the north of Bingham and one on the south side.

The Fosse Way (the modern A46) crosses the A52 between Bingham and Saxondale. The Fosse Way passes through the Roman settlement of *Margidunum* a short distance to the north of Bingham. Extensive survey work by Trent and Peak Archaeological Unit has revealed a complex archaeological landscape in the vicinity of *Margidunum* (Appleton et al. 2004; Leary and Baker 2004). Urban ribbon development, of Roman date, stretches north of the town and fort along the Fosse Way beyond Burrows Moor Holt (Leary and Baker 2004). Fieldwalking has also produced artefactual evidence to suggest occupation of the area from the Mesolithic onwards (Appleton *et al.* 2004). Peripheral roadside activity may also extend to the south of the town. The area to the

east of Bingham exhibits evidence for Iron Age and Romano-British activity including an occupation site, enclosure and cremation cemetery.

The land use of the area in the post-Roman period is unknown, but the Fosse Way continued as a routeway into modern times. In the medieval period, the land along the Fosse Way was utilised for arable agriculture, the open fields being enclosed after 1605 (*ibid.*). Evidence that Bingham was occupied in the medieval period comes from the site of a medieval settlement located on the eastern outskirts of the town. To the east of Bingham lies Saxondale, an area that also demonstrates occupation during the medieval period.

5.0 Methodology

Visits were made to the sites on four consecutive days (16-19 October 2006), one signage pit being excavated per visit. All excavation was undertaken by hand because of the suspected presence of roadside utilities. The signage pits varied in size between 0.8m and 1.0m but all were a maximum of 1m deep. This work was monitored continuously to ensure that any archaeological features exposed were identified and recorded.

The archaeological fieldwork entailed the cleaning by hand of exposed surfaces, followed by a thorough inspection. All archaeological deposits identified by this method were subjected to limited excavation to assess their nature/dimensions and to attempt to recover datable materials. These investigations resulted in the production of written descriptions of each deposit on standard context recording sheets. Colour photographs and scale drawings complement these accounts.

6.0 Results (Figs. 3, 4, 5, 6)

Pit 1 (Contractor ID: Site 10 S1) (NGR SK 5684 2617)
This pit was situated some 2.5km south of Cotgrave on the southbound side of the A46 carriageway 80m SW of the SPECS camera site (itself 50m SW of the junction of the A46 and the access road to Wolds Farm); it was 1m in length, 0.8m wide and 0.8m deep. The deepest material encountered in this pit was context (103), a light greyish brown silty clay which was interpreted as a buried topsoil, this material was sealed below a stony mid grey silty sand layer (context 102) which contained occasional asphalt chunks and was interpreted as the product of recent roadbuilding activity, most likely associated with the construction of the kerb. This material was sealed below a layer of redeposited natural marl (101), which was in turn sealed by the modern topsoil, context (100), a mid/dark greyish brown humic sandy silt. The redeposited marl (101) was interpreted as a levelling layer to make up the verge after the construction of the kerb.

Pit 2 (Contractor ID: Site 10 N1) (NGR SK 6562 5749)
This pit was situated approximately 1km to the northeast of Cotgrave on the northbound side of the A46 carriageway 75m SW of the northbound SPECS camera site and 340m SW of the Stragglethorpe crossroads; it was 1m square and 0.8m deep.

The deepest material encountered in this pit was context (202), a clean pinkish brown marl which was interpreted as the natural underlying geological material, this material was sealed below a mixed pinkish brown and white marl (201), which contained occasional limestone pebbles (Type 1 structural fill) and small asphalt chunks – the product of modern road construction. Two service trenches were present within the pit, both running parallel to the road at a depth of c.0.6m below modern ground level. On the northwest side of the pit, the electricity supply for the SPECS cameras could be identified, while the service on the SE side was not identified. Layer (201) was sealed below the modern topsoil, context (200), a dark brown humic slightly silty clay.

Pit 3 (Contractor ID: Site 14 E1) (NGR SK 7000 9842)
This pit was situated some 500m to the north of Upper Saxondale on the eastbound side of the A52 carriageway; 65m west of the SPECS camera site located at the west end of the scheme, at the junction with Oatfield Lane. It was 0.9m in length, 1m wide and 1m deep. The pit encountered a concrete culvert running parallel to the road at a depth of 0.8m. This was set in a layer of loose pebbles (context 304) and backfilled with a dark greyish-brown silty sand (303). This material was sealed below a layer of tarmac scalpings (302), which was in turn sealed below a loose mid orange medium sand (301). Layer (301) was interpreted as sub-base material from the construction of the footpath, which had spread downslope. Layer (301) was sealed by the modern topsoil, context (300), a mid greyish brown humic silty sand. All of the layers in this pit are more recent than the culvert found at the base of the pit and are either associated with the culvert itself or with the construction of the modern road or adjacent footpath.

Pit 4 (Contractor ID: Site 15 W5) (NGR SK 7212 3935)
This pit was situated on the westbound side of the A52 carriageway, 56m east of the SPECS camera site on the opposite carriageway at the east end of the scheme. It was located approximately 600m east of Bingham, some 400m west of the junction with Granby Lane. This pit was 0.9m in length, 0.8m wide and 0.8m deep. The northern half of the pit was occupied by a service trench. The deepest material encountered in the southern part of the pit was a clean pinkish brown marl (context 403) which was interpreted as the natural underlying geological material. This material was sealed below a mid/dark brown silty sand containing occasional small rounded pebbles and charcoal flecks (402). Layer (402) was interpreted as a buried topsoil; it yielded a single base sherd of a large jar or bowl of Staffordshire/Ticknall ware pottery, which has been dated to the mid 17th to 18th century. A layer of orange brown sandy clay (401) which contained frequent medium asphalt lumps and a concrete kerbstone fragment sealed layer (402). It was interpreted as the product of recent road building activity. This material was sealed below the modern topsoil, context (400), a dark greyish brown humic sandy silt.

7.0 Discussion and Conclusions

All of the pits contained some degree of modern contamination: either in the form of service trenches, recent road make-up, or both. All of the layers observed in pit 3 either constituted the setting and backfill of the culvert found at the base of the pit or were associated with more recent construction activity. In pit 2, layers associated with recent road or kerb construction immediately overlay the natural substrate. In pits 1 and 4, although modern construction activity was present, a buried topsoil has survived, which in the case of pit 4, yielded a sherd of 17th/18th century date.

8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

The methodology employed has allowed the presence/absence of archaeological features to be determined. No features of archaeological significance were exposed by the watching brief. It seems to be the case that these areas of land, situated adjacent to the present road surface, have either been highly disturbed and any archaeology has been truncated, or where no natural horizons were exposed, lie above the level of any preserved features.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Scott Wilson Ltd for this commission, and for the assistance provided by AMScott (the client), their groundworkers and particularly to Eddie Hopkinson (foreman) during the course of the watching brief.

10.0 Bibliography

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Knight, D, & Kinsley, G, 1992, *Archaeology of the Fosse Way. Implication of the proposed dualling of the A46 between Newark and Widmerpool.* Trent and Peak Archaeological Trust Vol. 2.

Leary, R and Baker, S 2004, *Margidunum Roman Villa and Small Town.* Trent and Peak Archaeological Unit Report –July 2004

Appendix 1: Colour Plates

Plate 1 (above left): General view of the location of pit 1, looking northeast.
Plate 2 (above right): NNE-facing section of pit 1, looking south.

Plate 3 (left): General view of the location of pit 2, looking northeast.

Plate 4 (right): SW-facing section of pit 2, looking northeast.

Plate 5 (left): General view of the location of pit 3, looking east.

Plate 6 (right): West-facing section of pit 3, looking east.

Plate 7 (left): General view of the location of pit 4, looking northwest.

Plate 8 (right): West-facing section of pit 4, looking east.

Appendix 2

Pottery Archive CBCN06

Jane Young

context	cname	full name	sub fabric	form type	sherds	weight	part	description	date
402	BL	Black-glazed wares	Staffs /Ticknall coarseware	large jar/bowl	1	7	base	internal glaze	mid 17th to 18th

Appendix 3: Context Summary

Pit 1

Context	Description
100	Mid/dark grey-brown humic sandy silt, occasional small rounded pebbles – modern topsoil
101	Very coarse pinkish brown marl, grey flecked, rare medium rounded pebbles – Redeposited natural levelling layer.
102	Mid grey coarse silty sand with frequent medium rounded stones and asphalt chunks (up to 300mm in size), occasional small rounded pebbles – recent road or kerb construction debris.
103	Light greyish brown silty clay, occasional small rounded pebbles – buried topsoil.

Pit 2

Context	Description
200	Dark brown humic slightly silty clay – modern topsoil
201	Mixed pinkish brown/white redeposited natural marl, occasional small asphalt lumps and medium rounded pebbles and roadstone – recent roadbuilding debris.
202	Coarse pinkish brown marl, rare limestone flecks - Natural

Pit 3

Context	Description
300	Mid greyish brown humic coarse silty sand, frequent small and medium asphalt chunks and small rounded pebbles – modern topsoil
301	Loose mid orange, brown mottled medium sand, occasional medium concrete chunks – sub-base of footpath spread downslope
302	Redeposited tarmac scalpings – kerb/footpath construction debris
303	Dark greyish brown coarse slightly silty sand, occasional asphalt inclusions – culvert backfill
304	Loose rounded pebbles (30-40mm in size) – setting for culvert acts as French drain.

Pit 4

Context	Description
400	Dark greyish brown humic sandy silt – modern topsoil
401	Mid orange/brown mottled sandy clay, frequent medium asphalt chunks including a concrete kerbstone fragment – levelling layer from road construction
402	Mid/dark brown silty sand with occasional small rounded pebbles and charcoal flecks– buried topsoil.
403	Coarse pinkish brown marl, occasional medium rounded pebbles and limestone fragments - Natural

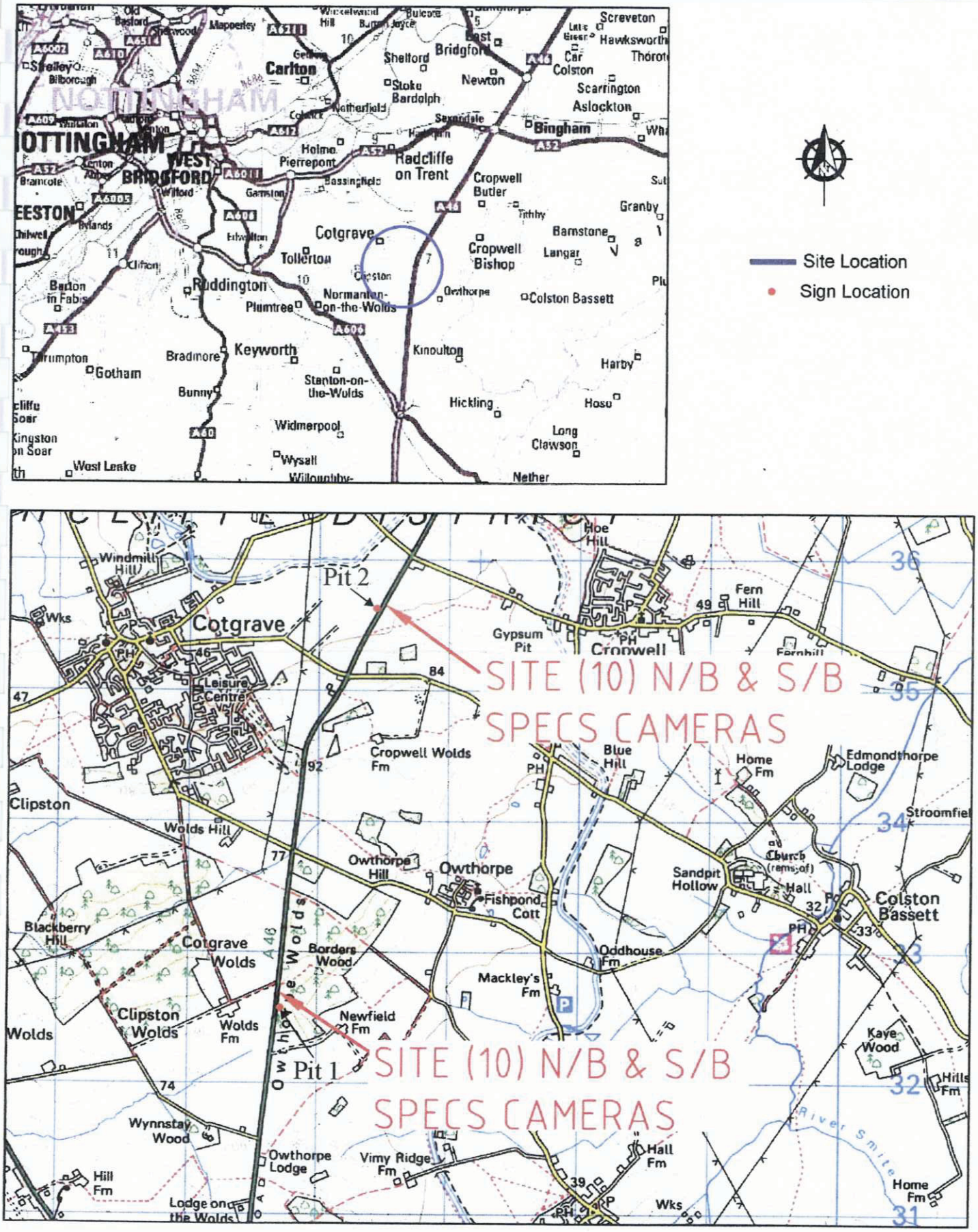


Fig. 1: Plan showing the location of Signage pits 1 and 2 (Scale 1:40 000) with general location inset (NTS) (courtesy Scott Wilson Ltd)

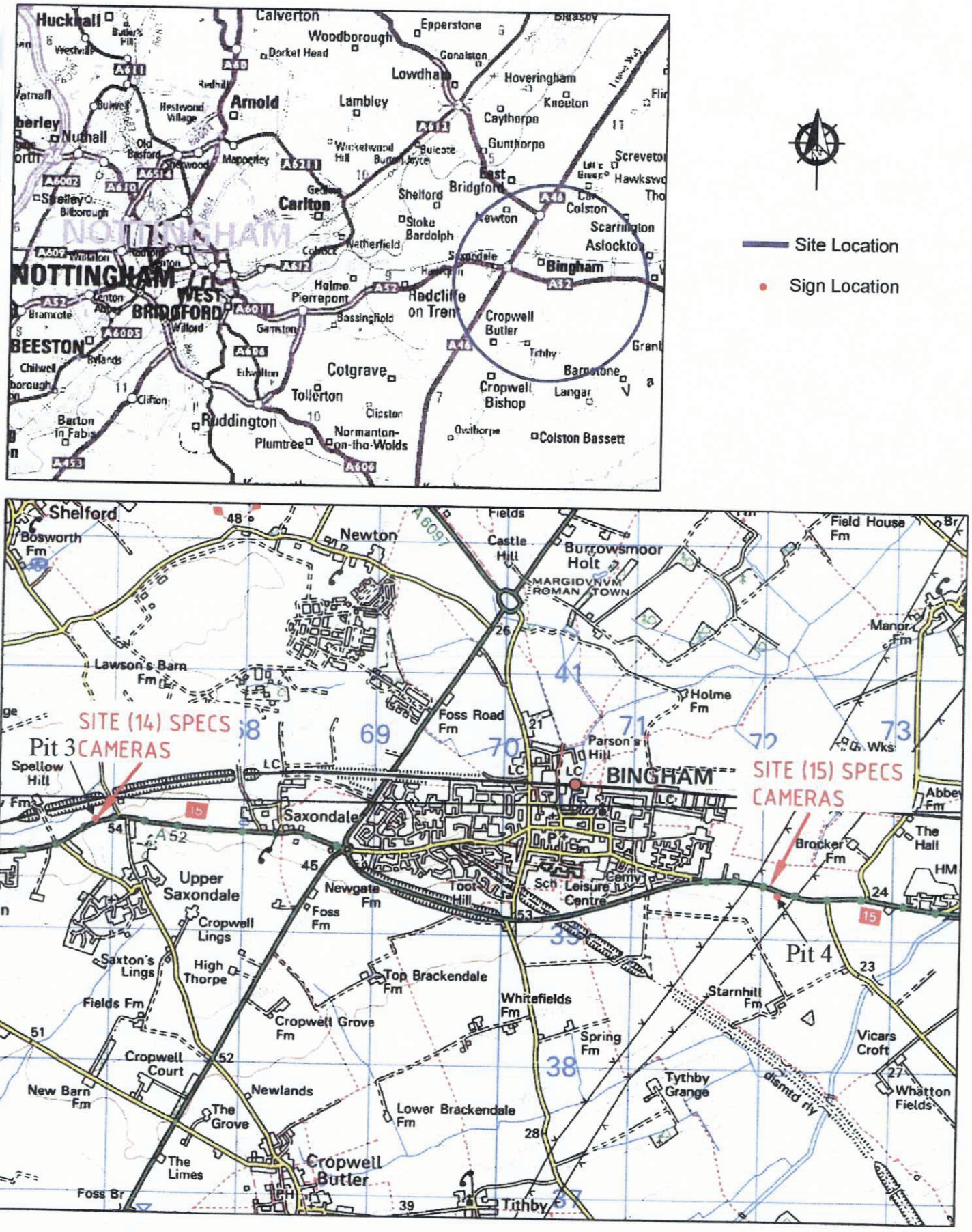


Fig. 2: Plan showing the location of Signage pits 3 and 4 (Scale 1:40 000) with general location inset (NTS) (courtesy Scott Wilson Ltd)

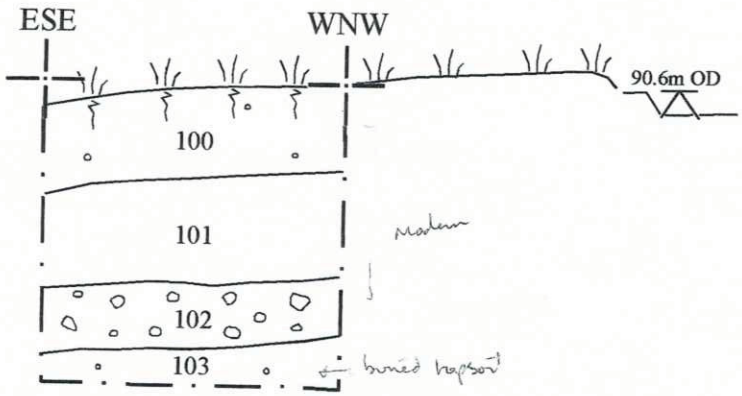


Fig. 3: NNE facing section of pit 1
Scale 1:20

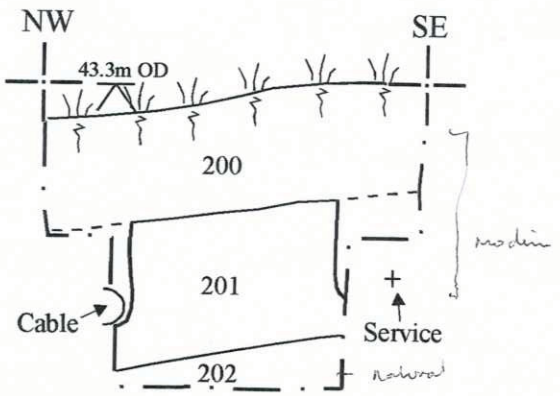
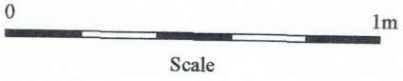


Fig. 4: NE facing section of pit 2
Scale 1:20



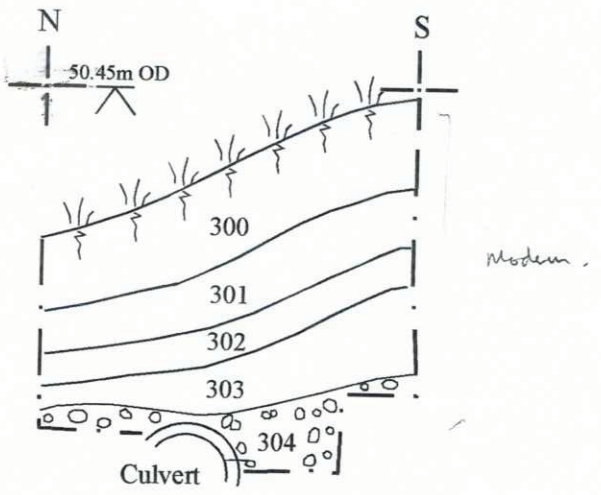


Fig. 5: West facing section of pit 3
Scale 1:20

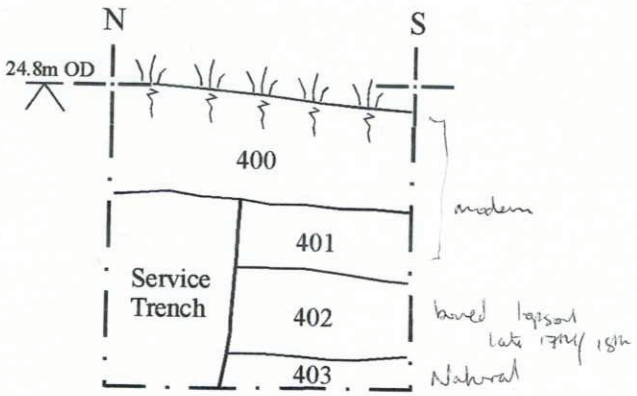


Fig. 6: West facing section of pit 4
Scale 1:20