

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
at Highcross, Claybrooke Parva,
Leicestershire (SK 5406 0104)**

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<p>Checked by Project Manager</p> <p>SignedDate.....</p> <p>Name.....</p>

For: Optima Infrastructure Management.

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Contents

Summary	1
1. Introduction	1
2. Aims	1
3. Methodology	2
4. Results	2
5. Conclusions	2
6. Acknowledgements	2

Illustrations

Figure 1. Location plan 1:50000	3
Figure 2. Location plan 1:25000	4
Figure 3 Location of topsoil stripping	5

Appendix

Design Specification for Archaeological Work at Claybrooke Parva, Leicestershire
(SK 473 886)

An Archaeological Watching Brief at A5/B4455, Highcross, Claybrooke Parva, Leicestershire (SK 5406 0104)

by Matthew Hurford

Summary

An archaeological watching brief by control and supervision was undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services to the south of the A5 and to the east of the B4455 at Highcross, Claybrooke Parva, Leicestershire during topsoil stripping and trenching.

No archaeological deposits were encountered as the ground workings were of insufficient depth to penetrate below the topsoil.

The site archive will be held by the Historic & Natural Environment Team, Leicestershire County Council under the Accession Number XA129 2005.

1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services were commissioned by Optima Infrastructure Management to undertake an archaeological watching brief adjacent to the A5 and B4455 at Highcross, Claybrooke Parva, Leicestershire, (SK 5406 0104) during topsoil stripping prior to paving being laid and trenching to facilitate the insertion of new kerbstones.

Geologically the development area lies on Oadby Till; mainly grey pebbly clay with chalk (Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain sheet 169).

The site has been identified as an area of archaeological potential as it lies within the area of a scheduled ancient monument, the Roman settlement of Venonsis, situated on the crossroads of the Roman roads Watling Street and the Fosse Way. As a result English Heritage requested a strategy of archaeological watching brief by control and supervision (01.10.2004).

All work followed the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS 1997), the Institute of Field Archaeologists' (IFA) *Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*. A specification for these works was produced by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (Clay 2004), which outlines the definition and scope of the following archaeological work (Appendix).

2. Aims

The archaeological work is to ascertain whether any significant archaeological remains are present within the area to be developed and to establish their extent, date,

quality, character, form and potential. Recording archaeological deposits would be carried out as appropriate, and an archive produced.

3. Methodology

Prior to the new footpath being laid an area *c.* 111sq.m was stripped with a mechanical excavator with a bladed bucket under full archaeological supervision. The area was hand cleaned to determine the presence of archaeology.

Trenching in the north of the stripped area to facilitate the installation of new kerbstones around its northern edge was also conducted under full archaeological supervision. The sections were hand cleaned to determine the presence of archaeology.

4. Results

The topsoil was stripped to an average depth of 220mm. It consisted of soft mid reddish brown silty clay with less than 5% stones that were angular to well rounded and up to 57mm in size. The topsoil within *c.* 6m of the A5 was a dark brown to grey silty clay containing modern material, including glass, plastic and car fragments such as hubcaps, and is probably the trench fill for the roads drains. The stripping did not penetrate the subsoil. No archaeological deposits were encountered.

The kerbstones adjacent to the roads were removed using a toothed bucket. They reached a depth of *c.* 300mm and were set on a compacted stone foundation of modern date. The foundation was left in situ. Further trenching to a depth of *c.* 300mm was carried out along the northern edge of the stripped area for the insertion of new kerbstones. The subsoil was not affected and no archaeology was encountered.

The topsoil stripping and excavation for the insertion of new kerbstones was not of sufficient depth to affect any underlying archaeological deposits.

5. Conclusions

Despite being in an area of archaeological interest the ground workings were of insufficient depth to produce evidence of archaeological activity.

6. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was undertaken by the author. The project was managed by Dr Patrick Clay (ULAS).

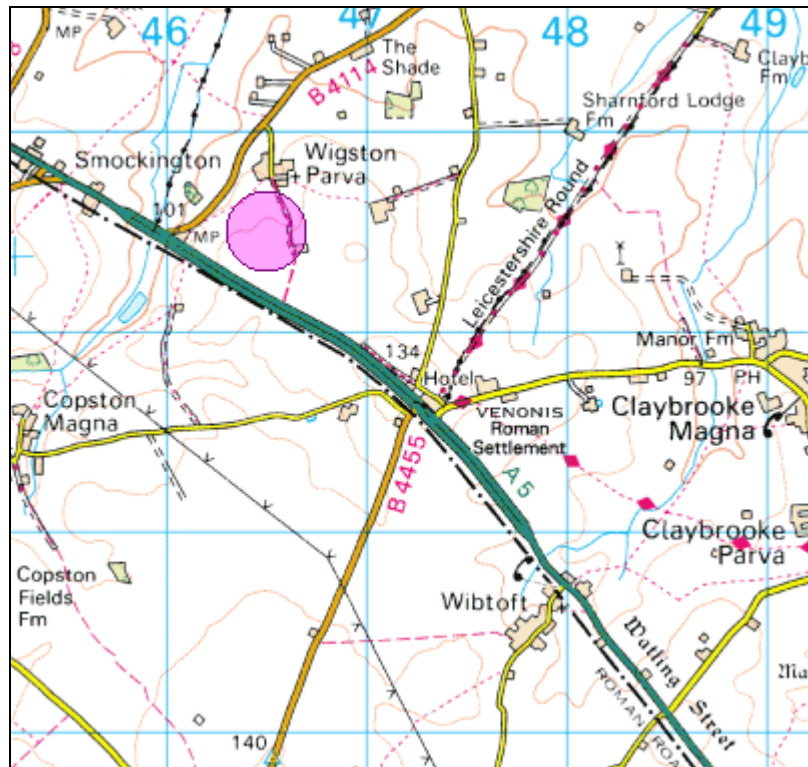


Figure 1. Site location 1:50000

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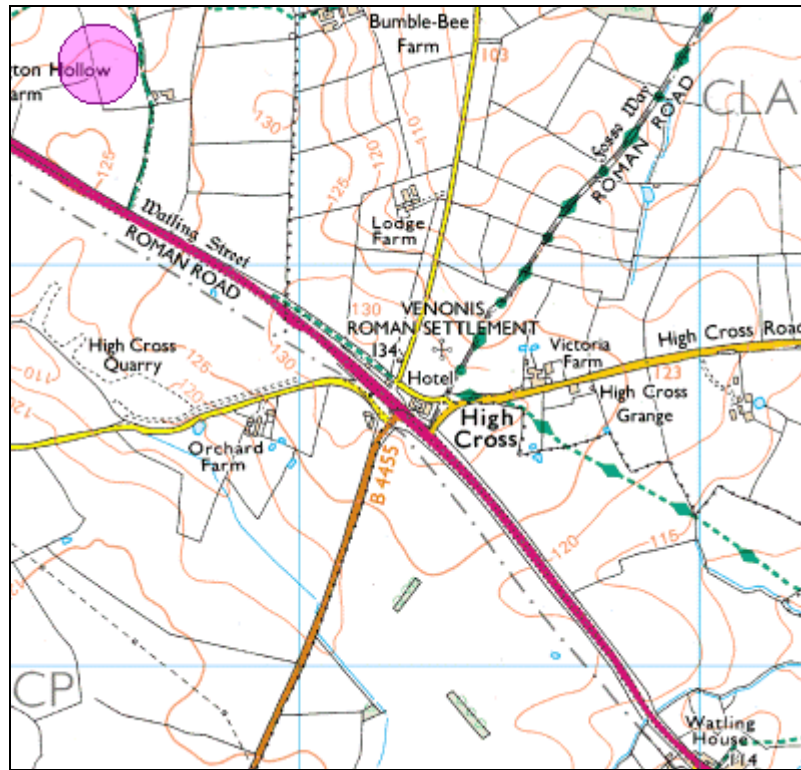


Figure 2. Site location 1:25000

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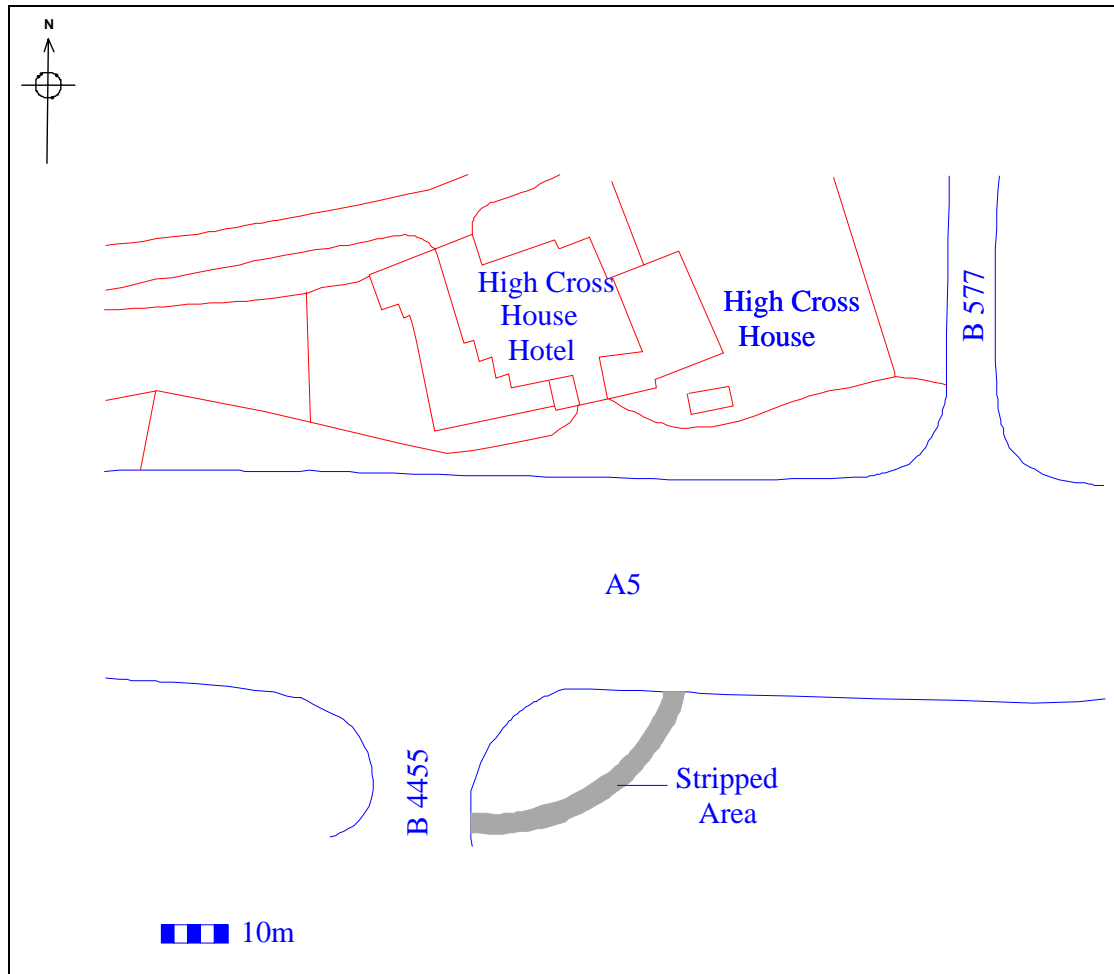


Figure 3. Location of topsoil stripped area.