



ROMAN RIDGE ROMAN ROAD  
SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT 1179  
DONCASTER  
SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Archaeological Watching Brief





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SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT 1179  
SOUTH YORKSHIRE**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

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SITE CODE	<b>86900</b>	ACCESSION CODE	<b>TBC</b>	CLIENT CODE	<b>N/A</b>
PLANNING APPLICATION REF.	-	NGR	<b>45349 40689</b>		

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**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the creation of a cycleway and footpath at Roman Ridge Roman Road, Doncaster, South Yorkshire ('the Site'). The watching brief followed on from topographical survey and evaluation undertaken by Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) in 2009 and 2010. This report presents a brief description of the methodology followed, a description of the results and an interpretation of the findings.

The Roman Ridge Roman Road is a large linear earthwork that runs for approximately 5km from Scawsby to Adwick-Le-Street. The road would have formed the main Roman route between *Danum* (Doncaster) and *Lagentium* (Castleford). For much of the route it survives as a pronounced *agger* (raised embankment). The northern and southern sections are Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM 1179a and SAM 1179b respectively).

Groundworks were designed to avoid damage to the surviving monument and involved the removal of a thin layer of topsoil from the existing path that runs along the top of the earthwork for much of its length. Little of archaeological interest was seen during the monitoring. However, a well-preserved edged cobbled surface, of probable 20<sup>th</sup> century date, was located immediately above a railway bridge and modern embankment associated with the former mineral railway of Brodsworth colliery, extending north of the designated southern section of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 1179b).

The physical Site archive from the watching brief is currently retained in Wessex Archaeology's Sheffield office. It is anticipated that this will be deposited with DMBC in due course.

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**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Acknowledgements**

This project was commissioned by Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Angela Ganss in this regard. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful to Keith Miller of English Heritage for monitoring the work.

Fieldwork was undertaken by Philip Roberts and Chris Swales. The report was compiled by Philip Roberts and the illustrations by Chris Swales. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Richard O'Neill.

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SOUTH YORKSHIRE**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Project Background**

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a cycleway and footpath at the Roman Ridge Roman Road, Doncaster, South Yorkshire (SE 5349 0689), hereafter 'the Site' (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 The Roman Ridge Roman Road is a large linear earthwork that runs between Adwick le Street and Scawsby. The northern and southern sections of the earthwork are Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM 1179a and SAM 1179b respectively).
- 1.1.3 The removal of topsoil was required along the top of the earthwork for much of its length in order to allow a new surface to be laid down. The archaeological monitoring programme was required to ensure that no damage occurred to underlying deposits and that any archaeological remains identified by the works were recorded.
- 1.1.4 The archaeological monitoring was undertaken in line with a brief supplied by DMBC (2012) and follows on from previous evaluation and topographical survey of the Site (ASWYAS 2010).

**1.2 The Site, Location and Geology**

- 1.2.1 The Site (centred on NGR 45349 40689) is a raised earthwork embankment that runs for 5.6km from Scawsby to Adwick-Le-Street.
- 1.2.2 The route of the road is marked largely by modern paths and trackways; it is better preserved at its northern and southern extents, with only fragmentary remains of the earthwork surviving in the central sections.
- 1.2.3 This watching brief was undertaken on works occurring on the southern section of the Scheduled Monument (SAM 1179b) and north of this scheduled section.
- 1.2.4 The underlying geology of the area is Upper Magnesian Limestone with overlying shallow, locally brashy, well drained calcaereous soils of the Aberford association, with some deeper calcareous soils in colluvium.

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 General**

- 2.1.1 The Roman Ridge Roman Road would have formed the main Roman route between *Danum* (Doncaster) and *Lagentium* (Castleford), part of the road network that linked the legionary fortress at Lincoln with the Roman forts at Rossington, Doncaster, Burghwallis, Castleford and York. For much of the route the road survives as a pronounced *agger* (raised embankment).
- 2.1.2 During the post-Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods, it is possible that the substantial earthwork that forms the *agger*, or embankment, of the Roman Ridge Roman Road acted as a convenient landscape boundary along which new territorial units were established.
- 2.1.3 The Roman Ridge Roman Road appears to have continued to be utilised as a road throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods, although during this time the main north-south route to the north of Doncaster shifted eastward along the line of the Great North Road.
- 2.1.4 The Roman Ridge Roman Road within the survey area continued to run through largely open farmland into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, until the establishment of the Brodsworth Colliery in 1904. The colliery site rapidly developed with associated mineral railways, structures and housing at Woodlands and Highfields, adjacent to the Roman road. The Brodsworth Colliery was closed in 1990 and the area was subsequently cleared for redevelopment.

### **2.2 Topographic Surveys**

- 2.2.1 Limited topographic and photographic survey of the monument on the eastern side of the former Brodsworth colliery site was carried out by Wessex Archaeology in 2007 (Thomson-Lawrence 2008). Detailed topographic survey was carried out along the length of the earthwork prior to the current development of the Site (ASWYAS 2009).

### **2.3 Excavations**

- 2.3.1 Excavations carried out in 1995 by West Yorkshire Archaeology Service (WYAS) centred on a trench measuring 29m by 1.5m across the earthwork about 145m to the south of the A638. This revealed that the road survived to a height of approximately 1.8m and, in some places, 15m wide. The upper surface of the road was shown to be constructed of compacted layers of crushed limestone and limestone rubble. Probable post-Roman wheel ruts were also observed (ASWYAS 2010).
- 2.3.2 In 1996 Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA) undertook excavations directly to the west of the Roman road. This identified boundary ditches representing the remains of a late Iron Age field system. A trench located on the western side of the earthwork, to the west of Elmwood Avenue, Woodlands, discovered a substantial depth of topsoil which was subsequently interpreted to be the result of a quarry, possibly related to the construction of the Roman road itself (ASWYAS 2010).



- 2.3.3 Further excavations carried out in 2000 by Northamptonshire Archaeology concentrated on an area south of Red House farm. This revealed a later raised bank of sand silt material which was believed to be for later maintenance of the road. Two furrows, along the same alignment to the road, were also identified. These measured approximately 0.6m wide and lay about 6m apart. They were interpreted as being original markers for the layout and construction of the road. A late Iron Age enclosure was identified on the eastern side of the road, which may have been occupied into the early Roman period.
- 2.3.4 Prior to the current development of the Site, seven trenches were excavated along the length of the road by ASWYAS in 2009 and 2010 between Adwick and Sunnyfields (ASWYAS 2010). The possible Roman road surface was identified most clearly at the northern and southern extents, near Adwick and Scawsby respectively, where the road lay 0.05-0.35m below the current surface. Elsewhere modern activities relating to the nearby Brodsworth colliery and residential development had caused damage.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Aims**

- 3.1.1 The principal aim of the watching brief was to ensure that any archaeological remains affected by the proposed works were recorded in line with standard national guidance.

#### **3.2 Objectives**

- 3.2.1 The principal objective was to ensure the monument was not damaged during the ground works.

#### **3.3 Groundworks**

- 3.3.1 The majority of the works involved the removal of surface topsoil along the route length to create a level base for the deposition of a hardcore base and tarmac surface.

#### **3.4 Monitoring**

- 3.4.1 All works were conducted in compliance with the brief supplied by DMBC (2012) and national guidance for archaeological watching brief (Institute for Archaeologists 2008).
- 3.4.2 Site visits were made at specified periods during the groundworks by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. All features of interest observed during the watching brief were cleaned manually and, where possible, located via GNSS and tied to the Ordnance Survey national grid.
- 3.4.3 All features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system and a 35mm and digital photographic record was maintained.
- 3.4.4 Fieldwork was undertaken between 05/09/12 and 25/09/12.

## **4 RESULTS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 The following section provides a summary of the information held in the Site archive (**Appendix 1**) with observed features and contexts tabulated in **Appendix 2**.

### **4.2 General Stratigraphy**

4.2.1 The material removed along the length of the monitoring (**Figures 2 and 3**) comprised a layer of loose silty topsoil **101**, with occasional inclusions of modern brick and metal, to a depth of 0.05m-0.40m.

### **4.3 Southern and Central Sections**

4.3.1 Underlying the topsoil in the southern and central sections of monitoring (Sections 8 and 9, ASWYAS 2009) was a compacted limestone surface forming a modern track **102** (**Figure 2; Plates 1-3**).

### **4.4 Northern Sections**

4.4.1 Underlying the topsoil **101** in the northern section of monitoring (Section 8, ASWYAS 2009) was a cobbled surface **103** (**Figure 3; Plate 4**). The surface lay just outside of the southern section of the Scheduled Monument (SAM 1179b) and appeared to run north from above the railway bridge for c.170m. The surface measured up to 2m in width and was edged with square and rectangular stones in a small section north of the railway bridge. The surface overlies a modern embankment, which loops northeast of the line of the Roman road and above the railway bridge (albeit somewhat indistinct in this area) that crosses the cutting of the former mineral railway for Brodsworth Colliery. The surface was therefore considered to be of 20<sup>th</sup> century date

## **5 CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.1 Summary**

5.1.1 The excavation methodology used by the contractors avoided any damage to the monument and as such the removal of topsoil revealed little of archaeological interest.

5.1.2 Monitoring in the area of the Scheduled Monument (SAM 1179b) revealed only compacted limestone **102** forming a modern track and, further north, above a railway bridge and modern embankment, a 20<sup>th</sup>-century cobbled surface **103**.

## **6 ARCHIVE**

### **6.1 Preparation**

6.1.1 The project archive, consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections, photographs, and electronic data, will be prepared by Wessex Archaeology staff in accordance with national guidelines (Brown 2007).

## 6.2 Deposition

- 6.2.1 The physical Site archive (**Appendix 1**) is currently retained in Wessex Archaeology's Sheffield office. It is anticipated that this will be deposited with DMBC in due course. Two paper and digital copies of this report will be submitted to DMBC.
- 6.2.2 An OASIS form will be completed at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> for inclusion in the ADS database. This will include an electronic copy of the report in PDF format.

## 7 REFERENCES

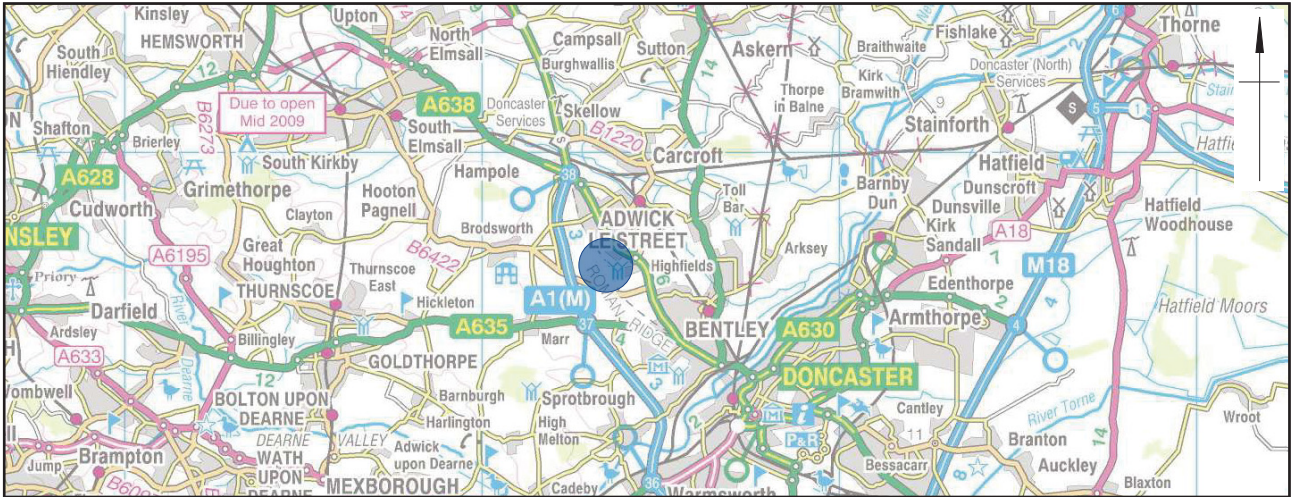
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**APPENDIX 1: ARCHIVE**

File No.	NAR Cat.	Details	Format	No. Sheets
1	-	Index to archive	A4	1
1	A	Client report	A4	
1	A	Brief	A4	5
1	B	Day Register	A4	1
1	B	Trench sheets	A4	3
1	D	Photographic Registers	A4	2
1	D	Black and White Index Prints	A4	1
		Digital data CD	-	-

**APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS**

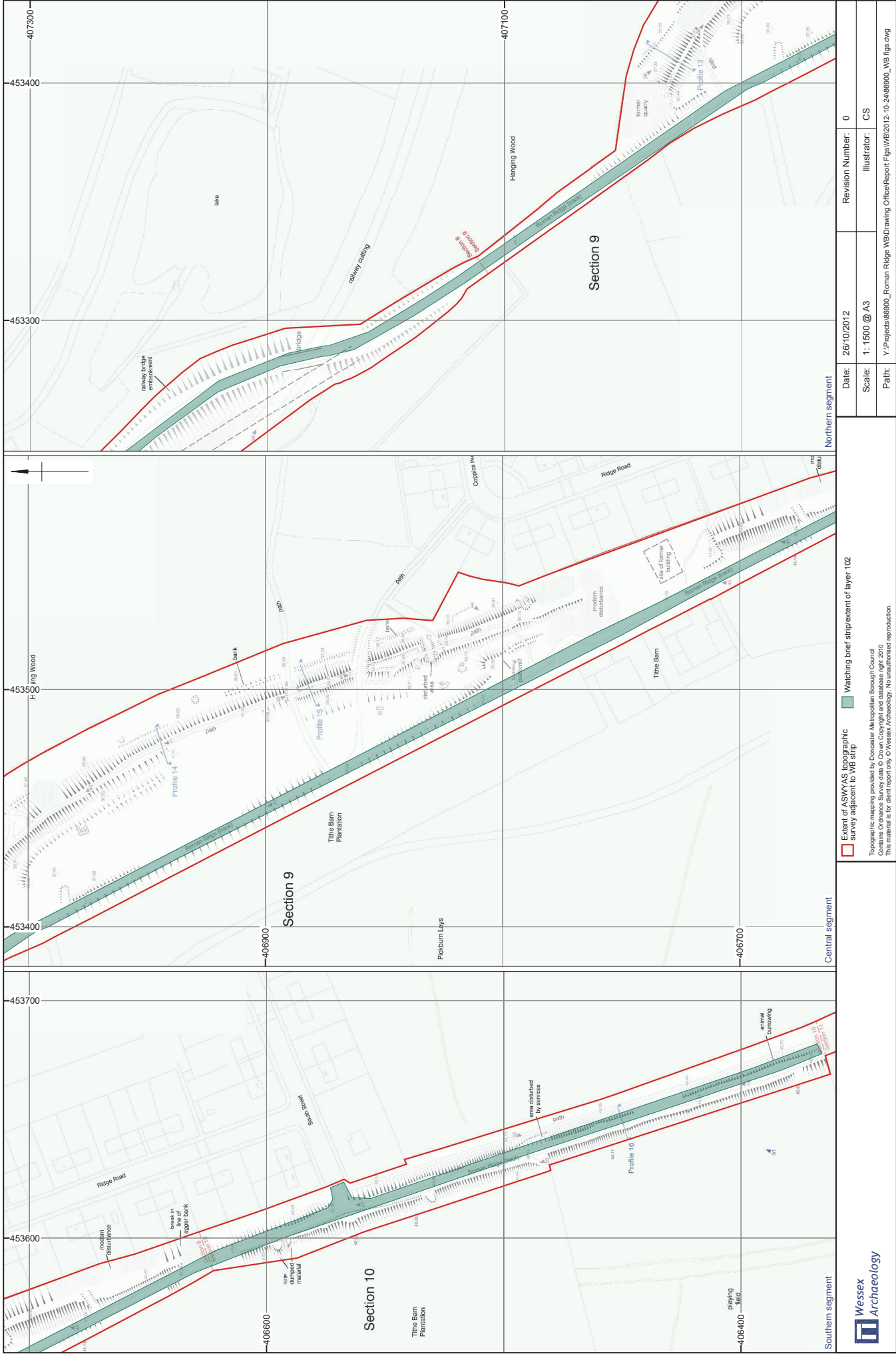
Area	Context	Category	Description
Northern/ Southern	<b>101</b>	Deposit	Loose brown silty topsoil containing modern debris
Southern	<b>102</b>	Layer	Compacted limestone surface forming modern track
Northern	<b>103</b>	Layer	A cobble stone surface of indeterminate date north of the railway bridge. Edged in places with rectangular and square stones.



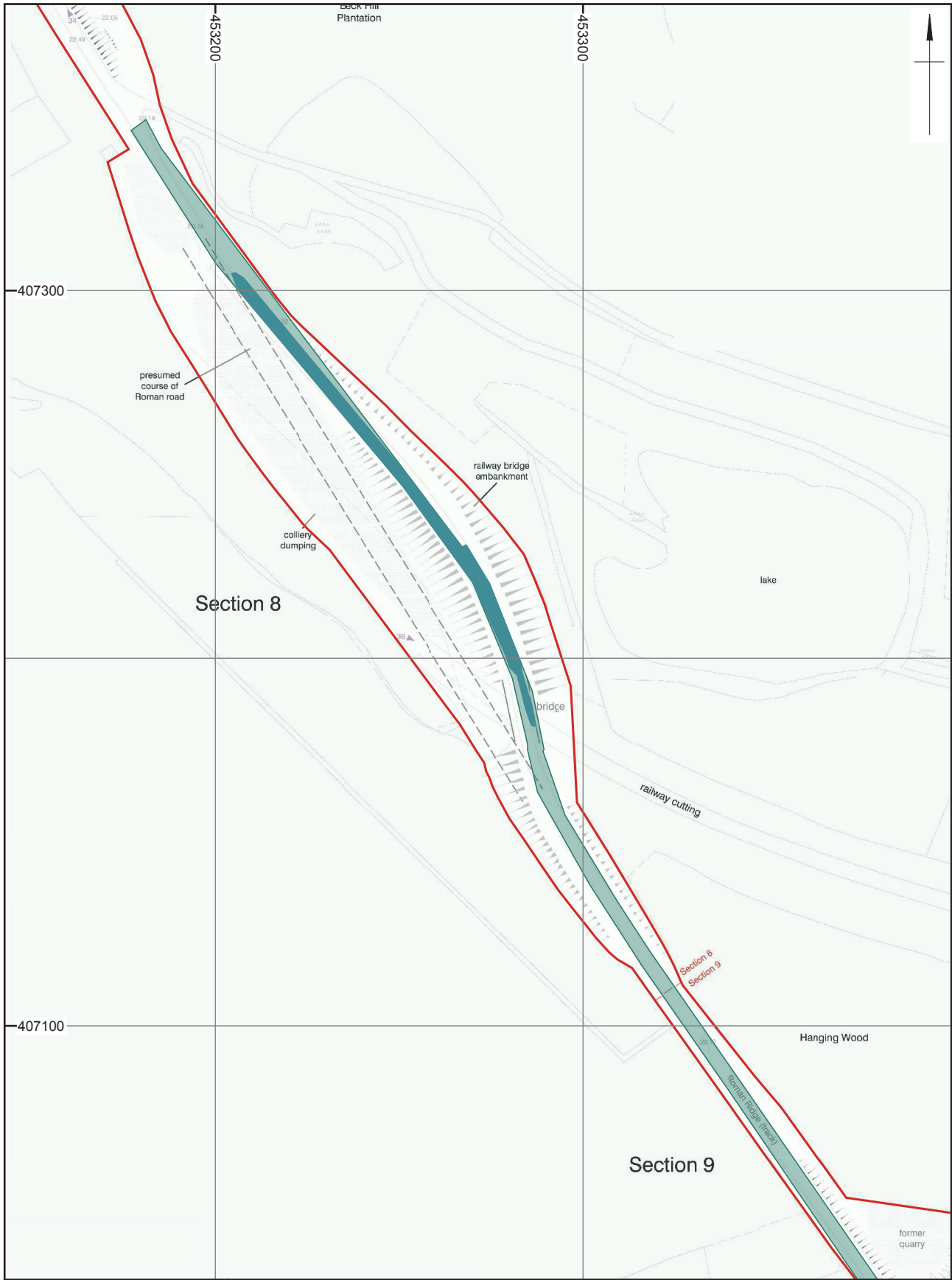
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: blue;">●</span> Site location</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid red; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Extent of ASWYAS topographic survey adjacent to WB strip</li> <li><span style="background-color: #c8e6c9; border: 1px solid #81c784; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Watching brief strip</li> </ul> 	<p>Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2010 This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.</p>	
	Date: 26/10/2012	Revision Number: 0
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Site location

Figure 1



Plan of watching brief area: Sections 9 and 10 Figure 2



<p> <span style="border: 1px solid red; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Extent of ASWYAS topographic survey adjacent to WB strip  <span style="background-color: #c8e6c9; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Watching brief strip/ extent of layer 102  <span style="background-color: #00897b; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Surface recorded during WB         </p> <p> <b>Wessex Archaeology</b> </p>	<p>Topographic mapping provided by Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council          Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2010          This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.</p>	
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Plan of watching brief area: Section 8

Figure 3



Plate 1: Average depth of strip on southern section of watching brief. Facing north.



Plate 2: Depth of bank material removed to west of entrance to South Street. Facing west.

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Plate 3: Average depth of strip on central section of watching brief. Facing north.



Plate 4: Depth of material removed along northern section of strip to expose surface **103**  
Facing north.

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