



## A40 Over to Highnam Bus Lane and Road Renewal works, Gloucestershire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





**A40 Over to Highnam  
Bus Lane and Road Renewal Works  
Gloucestershire  
Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

Prepared for  
**InterRoute Area 2**  
910 Hempton Court  
Park Avenue  
Aztec West  
Bristol BS32 4SR

by

**Wessex Archaeology**  
Portway House  
Old Sarum Park  
SALISBURY  
Wiltshire  
SP4 6EB

**Ref 62714.03**

**October 2008**

**A40 Over to Highnam  
Bus Lane and Road Renewal Works  
Gloucestershire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

**Contents**

	Summary .....	ii
	Acknowledgements .....	iii
1.	INTRODUCTION .....	1
	1.1. Project Background.....	1
	1.2. Site Description .....	1
2.	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND .....	1
3.	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES .....	3
4.	METHODOLOGY .....	3
	4.1. Introduction .....	3
	4.2. Monitoring of Groundworks .....	3
5.	RESULTS .....	4
6.	FINDS .....	5
7.	ENVIRONMENTAL .....	5
8.	CONCLUSIONS .....	5
9.	ARCHIVE .....	6
10.	REFERENCES.....	6
	APPENDIX 1 – CONTEXT SUMMARIES .....	7

**FIGURES**

- Figure 1: Site location maps  
Figure 2: Test pits from the eastern end of the watched area and retaining wall of the bus stop  
Figure 3: Detail of test pits 7 & 8 along the course of the Roman road

**PLATES**

- Plate 1: West facing section of modern road  
Plate 2: East facing section on central reservation  
Plate 3: View of bus stop from south-west  
Plate 4: Detail of bus stop brickwork  
Plate 5: East facing section of possible Roman road  
Plate 6: View from within Roman Agger looking north

# **A40 Over to Highnam Bus Lane and Road Renewal Works Gloucestershire**

## **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

### **Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by InterRoute Area 2 to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the road renewal works on the A40 between the villages of Over and Highnam between the junction with the Chepstow Lodge roundabout and the junction with the B4215 to Highnam.

The Route passes through the floodplain of the River Severn, where natural ground levels are low, on land gently sloping to the south-east. Geologically, the route lies on Lower Lias limestone (Charmouth Mudstone formation), overlain by alluvial deposits.

The watching brief was successful in demonstrating that the ground works associated with the bus lane and road widening has had minimal impact on the archaeological remains, with the exception of drainage trenches flanking the dual carriageway, and where the connecting drains crossed over the line of the Roman road. The works have confirmed that the suspected route of the Roman road, which ran from Gloucester to Weston-under-Penyard, is correct and remains of the road were revealed beneath the southern carriageway of the modern road at the western end of the route.

The postulated junction of two Roman roads at NGR 379966 219182 can neither be confirmed nor refuted due to no archaeological monitoring taking place within this area.

The presence of the earliest phase of road material beneath the southern carriageway running parallel to the known Roman agger ditch to the south, confirms that the current carriageway follows the route of the Roman road.

The area of the suspected Civil War burials within the central reservation, near the junction with the B4215, was not shown to be correctly located during the course of the watching brief however this has resulted on no impact upon these remains by the groundworks programme.

The monitoring works were carried out from the 30<sup>th</sup> of June to the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

**A40 Over to Highnam  
Bus Lane and Road Renewal Works  
Gloucestershire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

**Acknowledgements**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Emma Fisher of InterRoute Area 2, acting on behalf of the Highways Agency, to undertake the work and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank them for their co-operation in the successful completion of this project. Thanks are also due to Mervyn Bowd of Hanson and Steve Batten of InterRoute Area 2 for their assistance during the course of the fieldwork.

The fieldwork was carried out by Stephen George who also compiled this report. The illustrations were prepared by Elizabeth James. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Caroline Budd.

# **A 40 Over to Highnam Bus Lane and Road Renewal Works Gloucestershire**

## **Archaeological Watching Brief**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. Project Background**

- 1.1.1. Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by InterRoute Area 2, on behalf of the Highways Agency (hereafter the Client), to undertake an archaeological watching brief during works associated with the renewal of a section of the A40 between Over and Highnam, and the construction of an eastbound bus lane to serve commuters coming from the west of Gloucester, and into the city, via the A48 and A40 corridors (hereafter the Route). The area of the Route subject to watching brief monitoring comprised a c.800m length between National Grid Reference (NGR) 379550 219086 and NGR380157 219365 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (WA 2008) was prepared in advance of the commencement of the works. It set out in detail the methodologies and standards employed by Wessex Archaeology to undertake the archaeological watching brief.
- 1.1.3. The watching brief commenced on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008 and was concluded on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

#### **1.2. Site Description**

- 1.2.1. The Route extends for a total length of c.2.5km along the existing A40 from Alney Island, where the A40 crosses the A417 close to NGR 381849 219653, westwards to the Chepstow Lodge roundabout at the junction with the A48 (T) at NGR 379559 219111.
- 1.2.2. The Route passes through the floodplain of the River Severn, where natural ground levels are low, on land gently sloping to the south-east. Geologically, the route lies on Lower Lias limestone (Charmouth Mudstone formation), overlain by alluvial deposits (British Geological Survey, Sheet 234).

### **2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1.1. The Archaeological and Historic Background section of the WSI outlines the archaeological and historical background of the Route (WA 2008) and is outlined below.

- 2.1.2. The main archaeological features relevant to the proposed works were considered to be:
- Highnam Court – Grade I Listed Building and Grade II\* Registered Park and Garden.
  - Roman road from the settlement GLEVUM (modern Gloucester) to ARICONIUM (modern Weston-under-Penyard, 3km east of Ross-on-Wye) – visible at Linton, and its intersection with another Roman road branching off to the north-west.
  - Civil War cemetery – located within what is now the central reservation of the A40 adjacent to the B4215 junction.
  - Medieval jewellery and other finds at Linton Farm
- 2.1.3. Highnam Court Grade II\* Registered Park and Garden comprises a medieval deer park developed in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries as a landscape park covering 40ha. Within its grounds stands Highnam Court, a Grade I Listed 17<sup>th</sup> century house, built on the site of an earlier house destroyed in the Civil War in 1643. The medieval deer park lies immediately adjacent to the eastbound carriageway of the A40 at the western end of the route.
- 2.1.4. A section of the agger of the Roman road running westwards from Roman GLEVUM (modern Gloucester) to the Roman settlement at ARICONIUM (modern Weston-under-Penyard), is visible in the vicinity of Linton Farm, and is known to run directly beneath a hedge forming a field boundary for 50m, where it appears to adjoin the southern verge of the A40 and continues to run parallel with the road for the remainder of the route. Aerial photographs taken by English Heritage in 1979 and 1990 plot both the course of the road and its intersection with another road, also postulated to be of Roman date, which meets at NGR SO 379966 219182, close to the entrance at Linton Farm (**Figure 1**). The Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record (GSMR) records that a spread of Roman pottery was discovered in 1973, close to the course of the Roman road, and it is possible that other spreads of material or archaeological features of Roman date may be present within the footprint of the proposed road scheme. Iron slag and worn stone, believed to be the surface of the Roman road, were also identified in 1973, at a depth of c. 1m below the present ground surface.
- 2.1.5. Human remains were also recorded in c. 1830 to the east of Crosshands, at the junction of the A40 with the B4215, which were believed to be the remains of soldiers killed during a Civil War battle in Highnam in March 1643. These remains were discovered in what is now the central reservation of the A40.
- 2.1.6. Several items of medieval jewellery were discovered from land at Linton Farm, dating to the 14<sup>th</sup> century or earlier. Whilst these finds are not directly within the footprint of the road scheme, their proximity to the site, coupled with the known medieval settlement to the north at Highnam Court, highlights the possibility of features of medieval date surviving within the footprint of the route.

### **3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

3.1.1. The aims of the archaeological watching brief, as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology 2008) were;

- To mitigate in full the effects of the proposed development on identified archaeological remains through a programme of archaeological monitoring.
- To maintain an archaeological watching brief during groundworks on site, with an environmental sampling strategy in place to sample any palaeoenvironmental material identified during groundworks.
- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological deposits.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological deposits.
- To record any archaeological remains identified at an appropriate level and scale, and to establish these remains within their local, regional and national contexts where appropriate.
- To establish the ecofactual and environmental sequence and context of any archaeological deposits and features encountered on Site.
- To make available the results of the investigations.

3.1.2. The specific objectives of the archaeological fieldwork were:

- To determine or confirm the existence or absence of any archaeological remains, and to assess their general nature and significance, where present.
- Investigate the environmental context of the Site.
- Identify and record any previously unknown archaeological remains which are revealed by the groundworks.
- Interpret the Site within its regional context, including contributing to regional environmental and artefact studies.
- Preparation of a report fully representative of the data collected during the fieldwork.
- The preparation and deposition of a site archive.

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

4.1.1. This section sets out the general methodology that was applied to the excavation and recording of archaeological remains in the field.

#### **4.2. Monitoring of Groundworks**

4.2.1. A suitably qualified archaeologist was present during major ground disturbance operations, with the exception of the excavation of parallel drains running along the northern edge of the road.

4.2.2. Any archaeological features or deposits exposed during groundworks were examined and recorded to an appropriate level.



- 4.2.3. Due to the depth of some of the groundworks it was impossible, due to Health and Safety constraints, to gain access to facilitate the cleaning of sections by hand. Therefore all assessments and written records were compiled from the surface.
- 4.2.4. The works were carried out under archaeological supervision until such time that it was apparent that the potential for archaeological remains to be exposed had been exhausted. The excavation subsequently continued to the depth required by the supervising geotechnical engineer. All excavated material was routinely visually inspected for artefacts.
- 4.2.5. All excavated cross-sections were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system. A photographic record, including high resolution digital images, was maintained. The recorded sections were mapped in relation to the construction footprint and the Ordnance Survey by the use of a Global Positioning System (GPS).
- 4.2.6. The Watching Brief was undertaken between the 30<sup>th</sup> of June and the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

## 5. RESULTS

- 5.1.1. Within the observed areas a total of eight 1m representative sections (TPs 1-7 and TP 9; **Figure 1**) were recorded, distributed along the area of the Watching Brief on both carriageways of the A40, either along the route of the flanking drains, or where shorter drain runs were cut across the carriageway. A further section (TP 8; **Figure 1**), 3m in length, which was excavated across the southern carriageway was recorded where the line of the suspected Roman road remains was exposed. Two areas of open excavation (Areas 1 and 2; **Figure 1**) in the central reservations were also observed and recorded.
- 5.1.2. The observed ground works on the northern carriageway (Areas 1 and 2, TPs 1-4 and TP9) revealed no evidence for archaeological features or deposits pre dating the modern period (**Figures 1 and 2**). Where trenches crossed the carriageway, modern road material was observed to a depth of between 0.32 to 0.55 m, laid directly on top of the undisturbed natural clays. This was seen to be the case for the whole of the northern carriageway, with a shallower deposit of road material directly overlying the natural (**Figure 2; Plate 1**). The lack of any evidence for an original ground surface beneath the modern road layers suggests it is likely that any archaeological features which may have been present have already been truncated by previous works associated with the original construction of the A40.
- 5.1.3. Excavations for drainage within the central reservation, in the area of the potential Civil War burial near the B4215 junction, were monitored but no evidence of human burials was observed during the works (**Figure 2; Plate 2**).

- 5.1.4. To the east of the junction with the B4215 a brick lined recess for a modern bus stop (TP4), which was cut into the bank at the side of the road, was recorded. Although the ends of the wall nearest the road were disturbed by groundworks, the remainder of the structure was left intact (**Figure 2; Plates 3 and 4**). The wall was constructed of unfrogged red brick bonded with lime mortar in an English bond pattern topped with bullnose bricks and is likely to date to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 5.1.5. The make up layers beneath the current surface of the southern carriageway were observed, in cross section, to be deeper than those on the northern carriageway and comprised various phases of modern resurfacing material (**Figure 3**). The earliest phase of modern road building consisted of heavily packed graded stones and gravel approximately 0.32m thick laid directly on top of the undisturbed natural clays, with a distinct camber (**Figure 3**). This camber was noted to slope towards the Roman Agger ditch that flanked the remains of the northeast-southwest aligned Roman Road.
- 5.1.6. The agger remains partially visible within the hedgerow that runs parallel with the southern carriageway (**Figure 3; Plate 6**). Although no finds were recovered from the suspected Roman Road deposits, their location conforms to the previously predicted route of the road from Gloucester to Weston-under-Penyard and suggests that it remains preserved beneath a 0.74m deep layer of modern make up.
- 5.1.7. No section was available for archaeological monitoring within the vicinity of the predicted route of the northwest-southeast aligned Roman Road (**Figure 1**).

## **6. FINDS**

- 6.1.1. No finds were observed or recovered during the archaeological monitoring of groundwork operations.

## **7. ENVIRONMENTAL**

- 7.1.1. No material suitable for environmental analysis was demonstrated to be present within the watching brief areas.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1.1. The watching brief was successful in demonstrating that the ground works associated with the bus lane and road widening has had minimal impact on the archaeological remains, with the exception of drainage trenches flanking the dual carriageway, and where the connecting drains crossed over the line of the Roman road. The works have confirmed that the suspected route of the Roman road, which ran from Gloucester to Weston-under-Penyard, is correct and remains of the road were revealed beneath the southern carriageway of the modern road at the western end of the route.
- 8.1.2. The postulated junction of two Roman roads at NGR 379966 219182 can neither be confirmed nor refuted due to no archaeological monitoring taking place within this area.

- 8.1.3. The presence of the earliest phase of road material beneath the southern carriageway running parallel to the known Roman agger ditch to the south, confirms that the current carriageway follows the route of the Roman road.
- 8.1.4. The area of the suspected Civil War burials within the central reservation, near the junction with the B4215, was not shown to be correctly located during the course of the watching brief however this has resulted on no impact upon these remains by the groundworks programme.

## **9. ARCHIVE**

- 9.1.1. The project archive was prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990). It comprises a ring-bound file containing a watching brief attendance form, site 'day book', trench record sheets, photographic register and *Written Scheme of Investigation*. It is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's office building under the site code 62714, but will ultimately be deposited for permanent storage with Gloucester City Museum.

## **10. REFERENCES**

Wessex Archaeology 2008. *A40 Over to Highnam bus Lane and Road Renewal Works Gloucestershire. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Unpublished client report ref 62713.01

## APPENDIX 1 – CONTEXT SUMMARIES

<b>Representative Section 1</b>		m aOD
Context	Description	Depth (m)
101	Modern road. Graded gravels and crushed concrete	0.00 - 0.55
102	Natural. Dark yellowish brown clay.	0.55 - 1.05

<b>Representative Section 2</b>		m aOD
Context	Description	Depth (m)
201	Modern road. Graded gravels and crushed concrete	0.00 - 0.32
202	Natural. Dark yellowish brown clay.	0.32 - 1.29

<b>Representative Section 3</b>		m aOD
Context	Description	Depth (m)
301	Modern road. Graded gravels and crushed concrete	0.00 - 0.42
302	Natural. Dark yellowish brown clay.	0.42 - 1.20

<b>Brick-lined Recess</b>		M aOD
Context	Description	Depth (m)
401	Brick Wall. Curved brick wall lining recess into bank. English bond throughout with Bullnose brick capping.	+1.85 - 0.0
402	Modern topsoil.	0.0 - 0.27
403	Backfill. Black sandy/silty clay, with occasional flint fragments and frequent brick and tarmac inclusions.	0.27 – 0.56
404	Backfill. Layer of sandstone and tarmac fragments, forming a possible pavement surface.	0.56 – 0.70
405	Backfill. Reddish brown, sandy clay with no inclusions	0.70 +
406	Backfill. Grey sandy clay, frequent small angular flints, some fragments of brick.	0.70 +

<b>Representative Section 5</b>		m aOD
Context	Description	Depth (m)
501	Topsoil. Mid brown sandy loam.	0.00 - 0.19
502	Natural. Greyish yellow sandy clay with frequent large boulders.	0.19 - 1.50

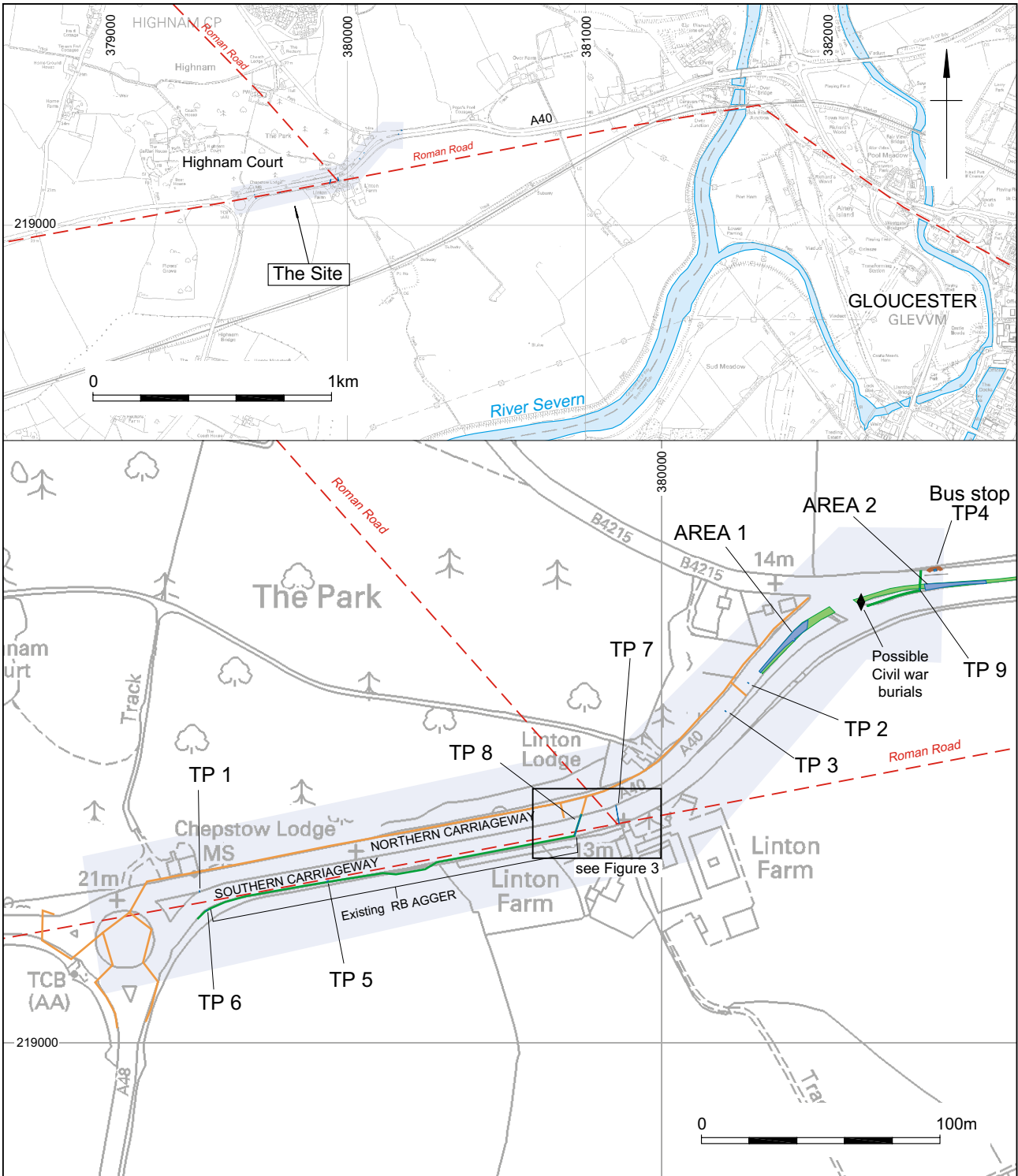
<b>Representative Section 6</b>		m aOD
Context	Description	Depth (m)
601	Topsoil. Mid brown sandy loam.	0.00 - 0.21
602	Natural. Greyish yellow sandy clay with frequent large boulders.	0.21 - 1.50

<b>Representative Section 7</b>		m aOD
Context	Description	Depth (m)
701	Modern Road. Grey gravels, very compact	0.00 - 0.26
702	Earlier modern road make-up. Light grey, compact gravels, densely packed.	0.26 – 0.74
703	Roman Road. Grey compact gravels with larger stones towards the base.	0.74 – 1.10
704	Natural. Grey clay.	1.10 – 1.14

<b>Representative Section 8</b>		m aOD
Context	Description	Depth (m)
801	Modern Road. Grey gravels, compact. Various phases of road resurfacing.	0.00 - 0.61
802	Roman Road. Grey compact gravels with larger stones towards the base. Noticeable camber sloping down to the south.	0.61 – 0.93
803	Natural. Grey clay.	0.93 – 1.69

<b>Representative Section 9</b>		m aOD
Context	Description	Depth (m)
901	Topsoil. Mid brown silty clay. Occasional small sub-circular stones, well sorted.	0.00 - 0.35
902	Subsoil. Mid brown, silty clay, very similar to (901)	0.35 – 0.69
903	Natural. Dark reddish brown silty clay, no inclusions	0.69 – 1.55





This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Highways Agency 100018928 2004

This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.

Date:	7/10/08	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	1:25000 & 1:5000	Illustrator:	SEJ
Path:	Y:\PROJECTS\62714\Drawing Office\Report Figs\WB\08_09_19\62714Site.dwg		



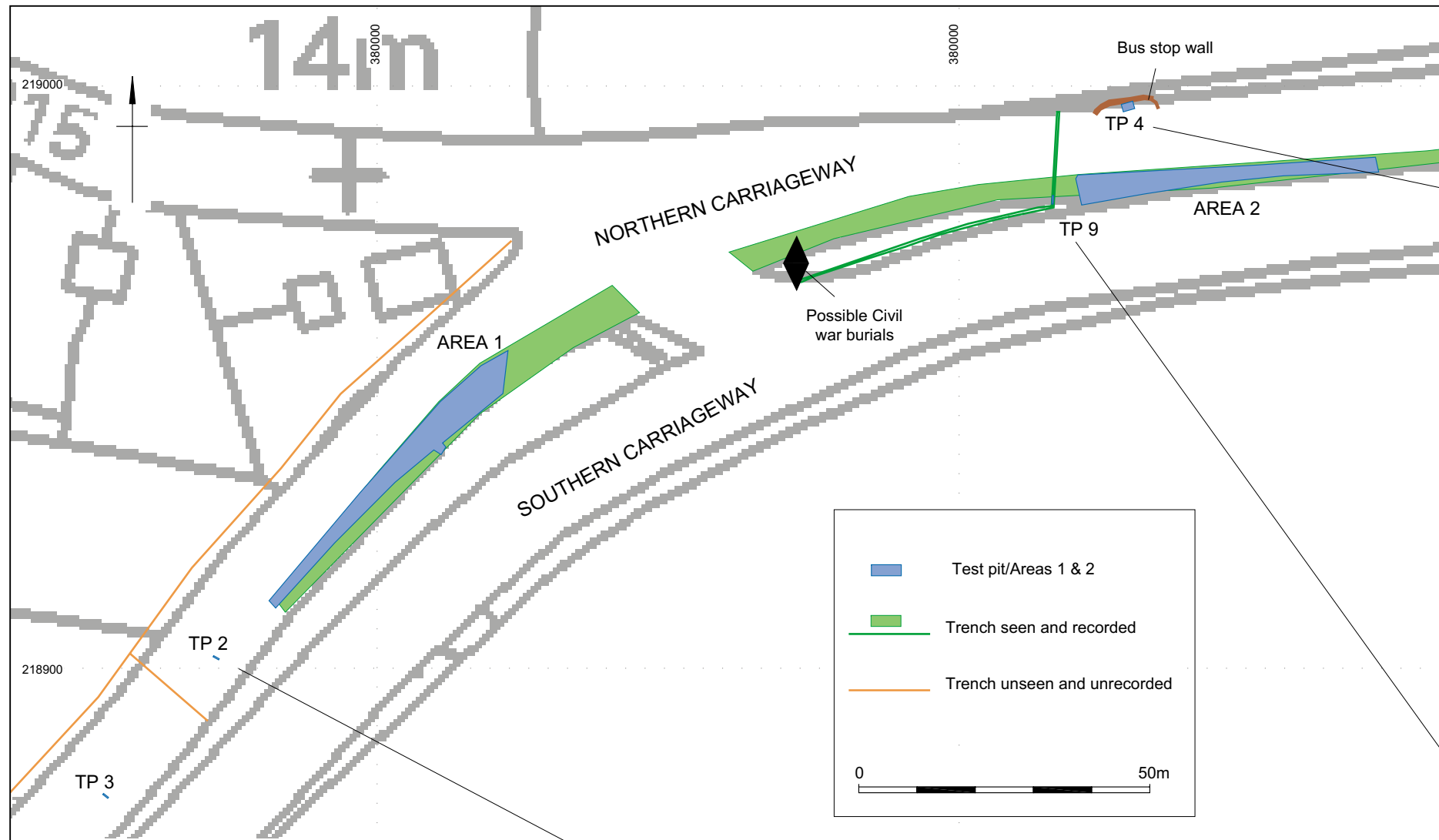


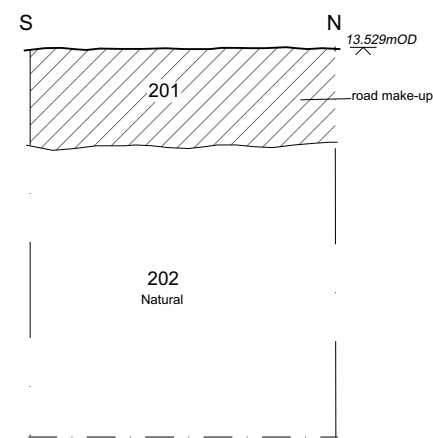
Plate 3: View of bus stop from south-west



Plate 4: Detail of bus stop brickwork



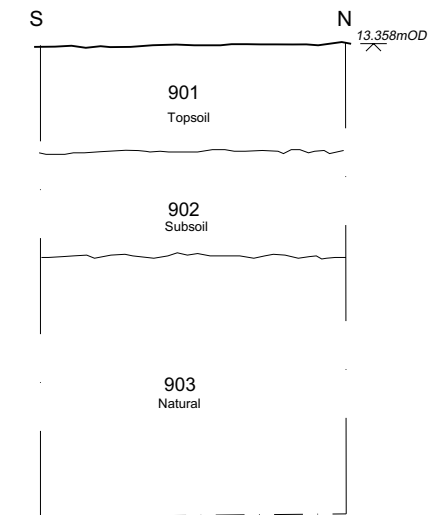
Plate 1: West facing section of modern road



Typical Section through Test Pit 2 on northern carriageway

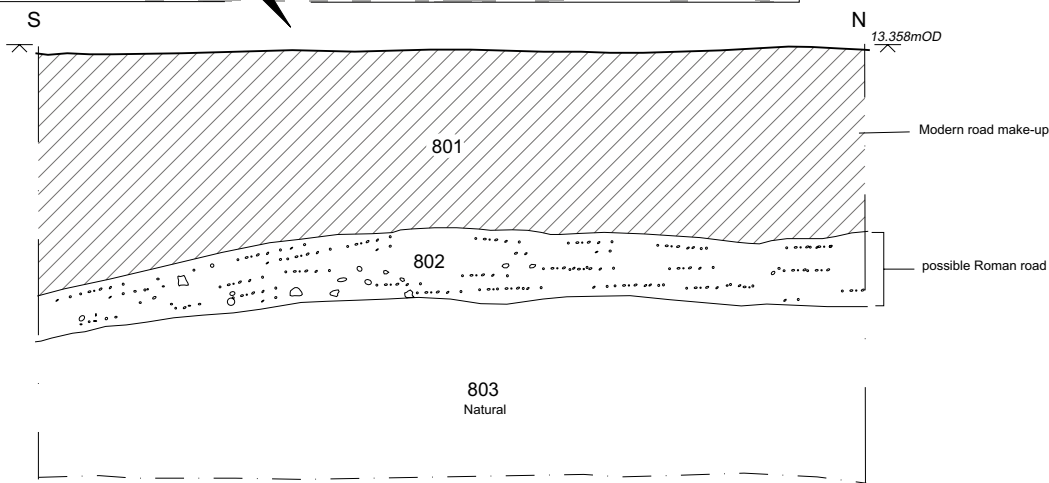


Plate 2: East facing section on central reservation



Typical Section through Test Pit 2 on central reservation





East facing section of Test pit 8 showing possible Roman road



Plate 5: East facing section of possible Roman road



Plate 6: View from within the Roman Agger looking north

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Highways Agency 100018928 2004

This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.



Date:	7/10/08	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	1:1000 & 1:25	Illustrator:	SEJ
Path:	Y:\PROJECTS\62714\Drawing Office\Report Figs\WB\08_09_19\62714Site.dwg		

# OVER GATE.

## TOLLS TO BE TAKEN AT THIS GATE.

For every Horse, Mule or other Beast drawing any Coach, Sociable, Chariot, Berline, Vis-a-Vis, Barouch, Pheaton, Curicle, Cabash, Chaise, Gig, Van, Caravan, Hearse, Litter or other such Carriage 0.00

For every Horse, Mule or other Beast drawing any Waggon, Wain, Cart or other such Carriage, having the Fellies of the Wheels thereof of the breadth of six inches at the bottom, ----- 0.05

And if such Fellies shall be of the breadth of four inches and a half and less than six inches at the bottom thereof, ----- 0.05

And if the Fellies of the Wheels of any such Waggon, Wain, Cart or other such Carriage shall be of less breadth than four inches and a half at the bottom, ----- 0.06

For every Horse, Mule or Ass laden or unladen and not drawing, ----- 0.04

For every drove of Oxen, Beast or Neat Cattle per Score, ----- 0.10  
and so in proportion for any greater or less number.

For every drove of Calves, Swine, Sheep or Lambs per Score, ----- 0.05  
and so in proportion for any greater or less number.

For every Dog drawing, ----- 0.01

And for every Carriage of whatever discription and for whatever purpose drawn or impelled, or set or kept in motion by Steam or by any other power or agency than being drawn by any Horse or Horses or other Beast or Beasts of draught, ----- 0.5.0

Tolls to be paid at this Gate but once a day except as hereinafter mentioned.

Every Horse, Mule, Ass or Beast for which Toll shall have been paid returning the same day, drawing any different Waggon, Wain, Cart or Carriage to be subject to a second Toll.

Tolls to be paid every time of passing and repassing for Horses and other Beast of draught drawing any Coach, Stage Waggon, Van, Caravan, Cart or other Carriage carrying Passengers or Goods for Hire.

Tolls for Horses and other Beast of draught travelling for Hire and drawing any Post Chaise or Carriage to be paid each time of passing and repassing with a fresh Hire of such Horses or Beasts.

A Ticket at this Gate will cleare the Maisemore Gate and Bar and the Highnam Chain.

R. WILTON,  
Clerk to the Trustees.



WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED.

Registered Head Office: Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB.

Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk

London Office: Unit 113, The Chandlery, 50 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7QY.

Tel: 020 7953 7494 Fax: 020 7953 7499 london-info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk



Registered Charity No. 287786. A company with limited liability registered in England No. 1712772.