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A350 Chippenham Bypass Improvement Scheme Bumpers Farm Roundabout to Brook Roundabout Chippenham, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



Ref: 110350.01
September 2015



**A350 Chippenham Bypass Improvement Scheme,
Bumpers Farm Roundabout to Brook Roundabout,
Chippenham, Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

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A350 Chippenham Bypass Improvement Scheme, Bumpers Farm Roundabout to Brook Roundabout, Chippenham, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Archaeological Watching Brief

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Atkins to undertake an archaeological watching brief on behalf of Wiltshire Council, to monitor groundworks associated with improvements to the A350 Chippenham Bypass, specifically road widening immediately to the south of, between and also to the north of Bumpers Farm Roundabout and Brook Roundabout, near Chippenham, Wiltshire, centred on National Grid Reference 390180 174537.

The watching brief was undertaken between 5th August and 24th September 2015 for these sections of the road scheme. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed during the improvement works.



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Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Atkins for commissioning the archaeological work and Wiltshire Council for providing the funding. We would particularly like to thank Andrew Holmes (Principal Archaeologist, Atkins) and Martin Rose (Principal Traffic Engineer, Wiltshire Council), for their assistance throughout the project. The fieldwork was supervised by Michael Fleming and Roy Krakowicz. This report was written and compiled by Michael Fleming and Cai Mason. The illustrations have been prepared by Karen Nichols. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Andy King.



A350 Chippenham Bypass Improvement Scheme, Bumpers Farm Roundabout to Brook Roundabout, Chippenham, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Atkins (the Client) on behalf of Wiltshire Council, to undertake an Archaeological Watching Brief during groundworks associated with improvements to the A350 Chippenham Bypass, specifically widening the road immediately to the south of, between and to the north of Bumpers Farm Roundabout and Brook Roundabout (hereafter 'the Site', **Figure 1**), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 390180 174537.
- 1.1.2 These works were requested by Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service (WCAS) in order to record any archaeological remains that may be impacted by the construction works.
- 1.1.3 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken between 5th August and 24th September 2015 and follows an earlier geophysical survey (Stratascan 2015).

1.2 Site Location, Topography and Geology

- 1.2.1 The Site comprises a c 20 m wide strip along the west side of the A350 Chippenham Bypass (West Cepen Way), which defines the western edge of Chippenham, Wiltshire. This section of the road improvements commenced 350 m to the south of Bumpers Farm Roundabout and terminated 310 m to the north of Brook Roundabout (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.2 Topographically, this section of the A350 is gently undulating, and ranges in height between approximately 75 m and 78 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The road scheme crosses the valley of the Hardenhuish Brook immediately to the north of Brook Roundabout. There are also two very small unnamed tributaries of the same watercourse at Bumpers Farm Roundabout and near the northern end of the scheme.
- 1.2.3 The solid geology of the Site comprises Jurassic limestone of the Cornbrash Formation to the north and south of Brook Roundabout, and Jurassic mudstone of the Forest Marble Formation within the valley of the Hardenhuish Brook; the latter geology is overlain by Quaternary alluvium (BGS 2015)

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The archaeological background to the Site is drawn from a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WA 2015) and *Wiltshire Towns, The Archaeological Potential* (Haslam 1976) and other secondary sources.

2.2 Prehistory

- 2.2.1 The development of Chippenham and its immediate surrounding area has been discussed in some detail elsewhere (e.g. Haslam 1976, 15), the following summary drawing heavily on this work. Stray finds of prehistoric date are rare, though Mesolithic flint tools and waste flakes have been recovered to the east of Lackham Park (Anon. 1990, 219), and from the new Sainsbury's store on Bath Road (Anon. 1991, 146).
- 2.2.2 Neolithic finds include a flint scraper that was found near to Deep Cutting Bridge on the Old Canal (Anon. 1990, 219) and an assemblage of lithic finds from Fowlswick Lane. The latter include part of sandstone rubber a group of worked flint comprising nine waste flakes, one core, two utilised pieces, two retouched flakes and a small circular scraper (Anon. 1990, 225). A Neolithic pit was also recorded at the Bath Road Sainsbury's store site (Anon. 1991, 143).

2.3 Romano-British

- 2.3.1 The Site is situated 100 m to the south-east of a scheduled Romano-British settlement site at Manor Farm (**Figure 1**; National Heritage List for England 1425267). A geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation on the Manor Farm site, revealed extensive Romano-British remains, including stone and timber buildings, substantial ditched enclosures, a hypocaust and a probable corn drier (Prospect Archaeology 2015, 1-2, figs. 16-17).

2.4 Saxon and Medieval

- 2.4.1 The Site is situated 1.7 km to the north-west of the historic core of Chippenham. The settlement, which is first recorded in AD 873 as *Cippanhamme*, meaning 'Cippa's hamm', was originally focussed on a narrow, easily defensible promontory on the south-east side of the River Avon. In AD 878 a Danish force wintered at Chippenham, although no evidence of their camp has been found. By the 10th century, royal charters were being signed at Chippenham and it is likely that this represents the period of greatest expansion and importance for the town during the Late Saxon period. At this time it is likely that the town possessed a church, a Royal hall and a large associated settlement, although little archaeological evidence for this has been recorded.
- 2.4.2 By Domesday (AD 1086), up to 12 mills are recorded at Chippenham, possibly indicating the economic importance of cloth manufacture to the area. In general, the documented development of medieval Chippenham is obscure, although it appears to have remained a relatively unimportant small market town until the early post-medieval period. The charter of incorporation was granted in 1554, and by 1604 there were 129 burgage plots within the town.
- 2.4.3 There are no known Saxon or medieval remains in the immediate vicinity of the Site.

2.5 Geophysical survey

- 2.5.1 A geophysical survey, undertaken by Stratascan (2015), showed very limited archaeological potential within the scheme. The survey revealed extensive magnetic disturbance across the whole area; this was probably related to the construction of the original bypass in the 1990s. Two linear anomalies were identified between Bumpers Farm Roundabout and Brook Roundabout; these were interpreted as probable former field boundaries. Two further linear anomalies to the north and south of the above roundabouts were interpreted as probable modern features.



3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1.1 With due regard to the ClfA's Standard and guidance: archaeological watching brief (ClfA 2014a), the aims and objectives of the watching brief are:

- *To determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains, and should such remains be present, to ensure their preservation by record to the highest possible standard;*
- *To confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;*
- *To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains;*
- *To determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains;*
- *To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present; and*
- *To prepare a report on the results of the watching brief.*

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were carried out in accordance with the methodology stated within the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WA 2015) and the ClfA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014b).

4.2 Watching Brief

4.2.1 The watching brief comprised monitoring ground reduction and service runs associated with the widening of the A350 Chippenham Bypass. Groundwork was undertaken using a tracked excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. Mechanical excavation proceeded to the required construction levels, as no archaeological features or deposits were uncovered.

4.3 Recording

4.3.1 All trenching was recorded using WA's *pro forma* recording system, which uses a unique numbering system for individual contexts. A representative section of each area was recorded showing the depth of deposits. The location of the sections was recorded on a site plan, referenced to the Ordnance Survey National Grid.

4.3.2 A full photographic record was maintained using digital photography. The photographic record illustrated both the detail and the general context of the groundwork. Digital images have been subject to a managed quality control and curation process which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and ensures the long term accessibility of the image set.

4.3.3 The survey was carried out with a Leica Viva series GNSS unit, using the OS National GPS Network through an RTK network with a 3D accuracy of 30mm or below. All survey data was recorded using the OSGB36 British National Grid coordinate system.



5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

- 5.1.1 The archaeological watching brief area is shown in **Figure 1**. Detailed descriptions of all exposed deposits are presented in **Appendix 1**, a summary of which is presented below. Typical deposit sequences are shown in **Plates 1- 4**.
- 5.1.2 The geology of the Site comprised clay (**403, 503 and 3003**), which was overlain by bedded limestone (**402, 502, 1003, 2002, 3002**), the upper surface of which was uncovered at depths of between 0.5 m and 1.1 m below ground level (bgl). The geology was overlain by a 0.05-1m thick layer of weathered limestone (**1002, 2001, 3001**), which was in turn sealed by a 0.1-0.25m thick layer of modern topsoil (**401, 501, 1000, 2000 and 3000**). In a number of locations, notably to the south of Bumpers Farm Roundabout and adjacent to the existing carriageway to the north of Brook Roundabout, the topsoil was overlain by modern made ground (**1000, 3004, 3005**) associated with the construction of the original bypass in the 1990s.
- 5.1.3 No archaeological finds, features or deposit were uncovered during the watching brief.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1.1 No archaeological finds features or deposits were uncovered during the watching brief and despite the proximity of known Romano-British settlement 100 m to the north-east of the Site, there is no evidence of anything other than agricultural activity on the Site prior to the construction of the Chippenham Bypass in the 1990s.

7 STORAGE AND CURATION

7.1 Museum

- 7.1.1 The complete project archive will be deposited for long-term storage with the Wiltshire Museum, Devizes. This museum is currently not accepting archives, therefore, prior to its eventual deposition, the archive will be temporarily stored at Wessex Archaeology's offices in Salisbury under unique Site Code 110350.

7.2 Archive

- 7.2.1 The complete project archive will include paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data and will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Wiltshire Museum, Devizes, and in general follow the nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

7.3 OASIS

- 7.3.1 An OASIS online record has been initiated for the work and key fields in regard of the Watching Brief have been entered under OASIS ID wessexar1-220046. All appropriate parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included with the archive).

7.4 Discard Policy

- 7.4.1 Wessex Archaeology follows the guidelines set out in *Selection, Retention and Dispersal* (SMA 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. Any discard of artefacts will be fully documented in the project archive.



7.5 Copyright

- 7.5.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the Site will be retained by Wessex Archaeology Ltd under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The Museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profit making, and conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights regulations 2003*.

7.6 Security Copy

- 7.6.1 In line with current best practice (Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

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9 APPENDICES

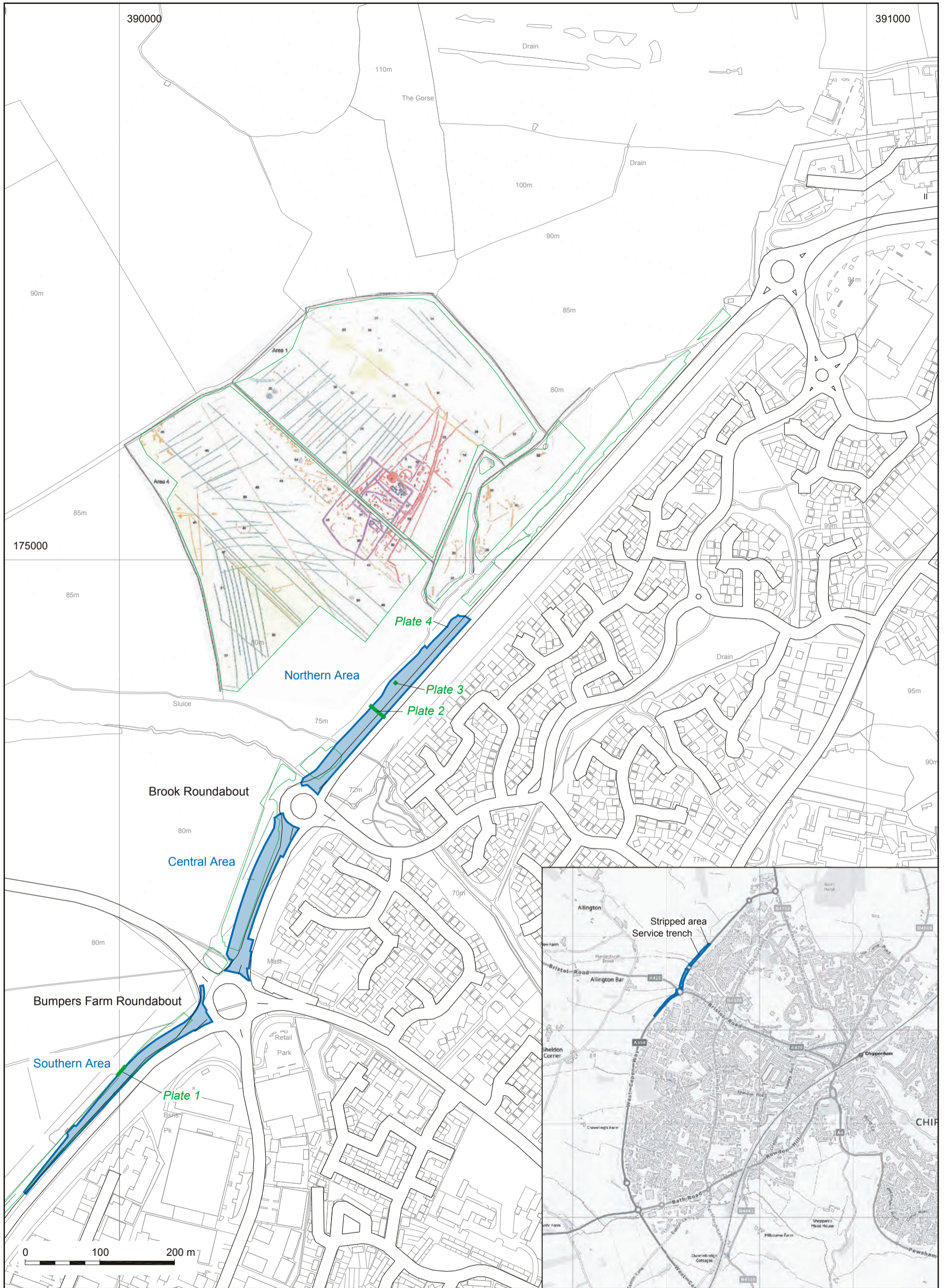
9.1 Appendix 1: Context Summary






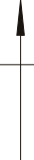
Service trench to the north of Brook Roundabout			Dimensions: 195.74 m x 2.00 m x 2 m	
Context	Description		Dimensions (m)	Depth below surface (m)
401	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sand-silt-clay.	Whole trench	0-0.28
402	Natural	Limestone bedrock.	Whole trench	0.28-1.09
403	Natural	Mid. blue-grey clay.	Whole trench	1.09+
501	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sand-silt-clay.	Whole trench	0-0.27
502	Natural	Limestone bedrock.	Whole trench	0.27-1.15
503	Natural	Mid. blue-grey clay	Whole trench	1.15+

Ground reduction to the south of Bumpers Farm Roundabout			Dimensions: 50 m x 70 m x 1 m	
Context	Description		Dimensions (m)	Depth below surface (m)
1000	Made Ground	Mid. grey-brown silty-clay and limestone bedrock.	Whole trench	0-0.30
1001	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sand-silt-clay.	Whole trench	0.30-0.55
1002	Interface	Dark red-brown silty-clay and limestone bedrock.	Whole trench	0.50-0.55
1003	Natural	Limestone bedrock.	Whole trench	0.55-0.75+

Bumpers Farm Roundabout to Brook Roundabout			Dimensions: 15 m x 70 m x 1.20 m	
Context	Description		Dimensions (m)	Depth below surface (m)
2000	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sand-silt-clay.	Whole trench	0-0.10
2001	Interface	Dark red-brown silty-clay and limestone bedrock.	Whole trench	0.10-1.10
2002	Natural	Limestone bedrock.	Whole trench	1.10+

Ground reduction to the north of Brook Roundabout			Dimensions: 153 m x 70 m x 1.20 m	
Context	Description		Dimensions (m)	Depth below surface (m)
3000	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sand-silt-clay.	Whole trench	0-0.20
3001	Interface	Dark red-brown silty-clay and limestone bedrock.	Whole trench	0.20-0.50
3002	Natural	Limestone bedrock.	Whole trench	0.50-1.00
3003	Natural	Light yellow-grey clay.	Whole trench	1.00+
3004	Introduced Topsoil	Mid. brown-grey silt.	Whole trench	0-0.10
3005	Made Ground	Mid. grey-brown silty-clay and limestone bedrock.	Whole trench	0.10-1.20+



	 Watching Brief Area  Previous Geophysical Surveys  Possible archaeology (from geophysics)  Other linear features (from geophysics)		Digital data reproduced from Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright 2015. All rights reserved. Reference Number: 100022432. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2015. This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.		
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Location of scheme and previously known archaeological works


Figure 1



Plate 1: Typical deposit sequence to the south of Bumpers Farm Roundabout, looking east



Plate 2: South facing section to the north of Brook Roundabout, showing buried topsoil 3000, beneath modern made ground 3004 and 3005, looking north

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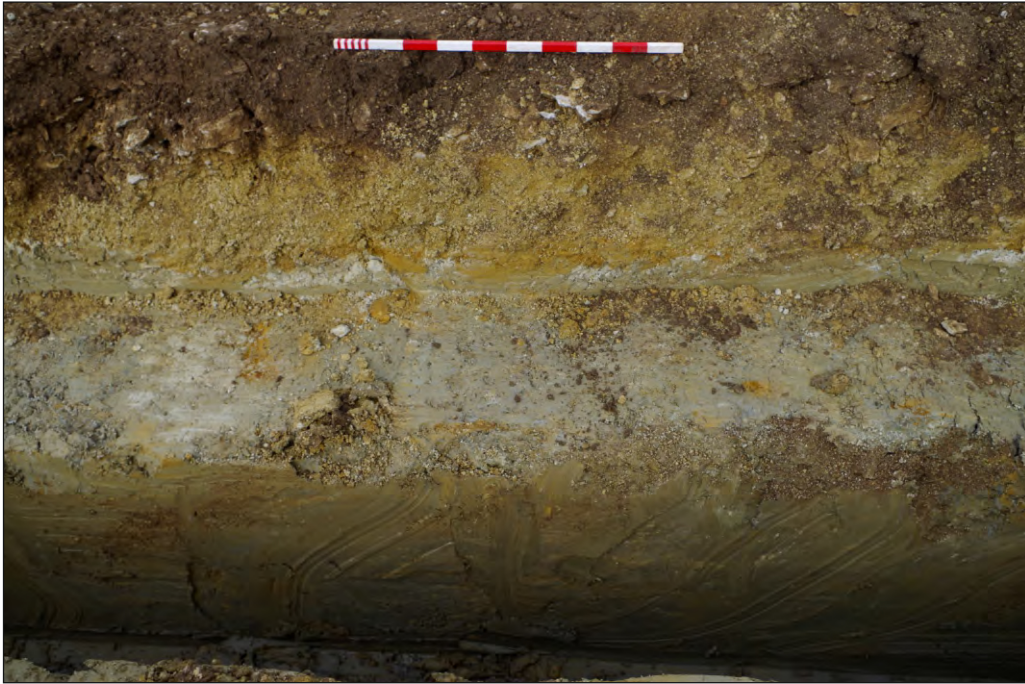



Plate 3: Typical deposit sequence to the north of Brook Roundabout, looking west



Plate 4: Ground reduction to the north of Brook Roundabout, looking south

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