

A46 Crossover Excavations Archaeological Watching Brief

Site Code: ACES 10
NGR: SK 645221 & SK 636182
PCA Ref: 10/622

Report prepared for
Scott Wilson

by

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Summary

- An archaeological watching brief took place during the excavation of phase 1 works for the extension of Crossovers within the central reservation of the A46 in Leicestershire.
- No features or in-situ deposits of archaeological significance were exposed during the monitoring works: with the exception of a possibly disturbed surface, all deposits identified within these works were of natural origin or were associated with modern road development.

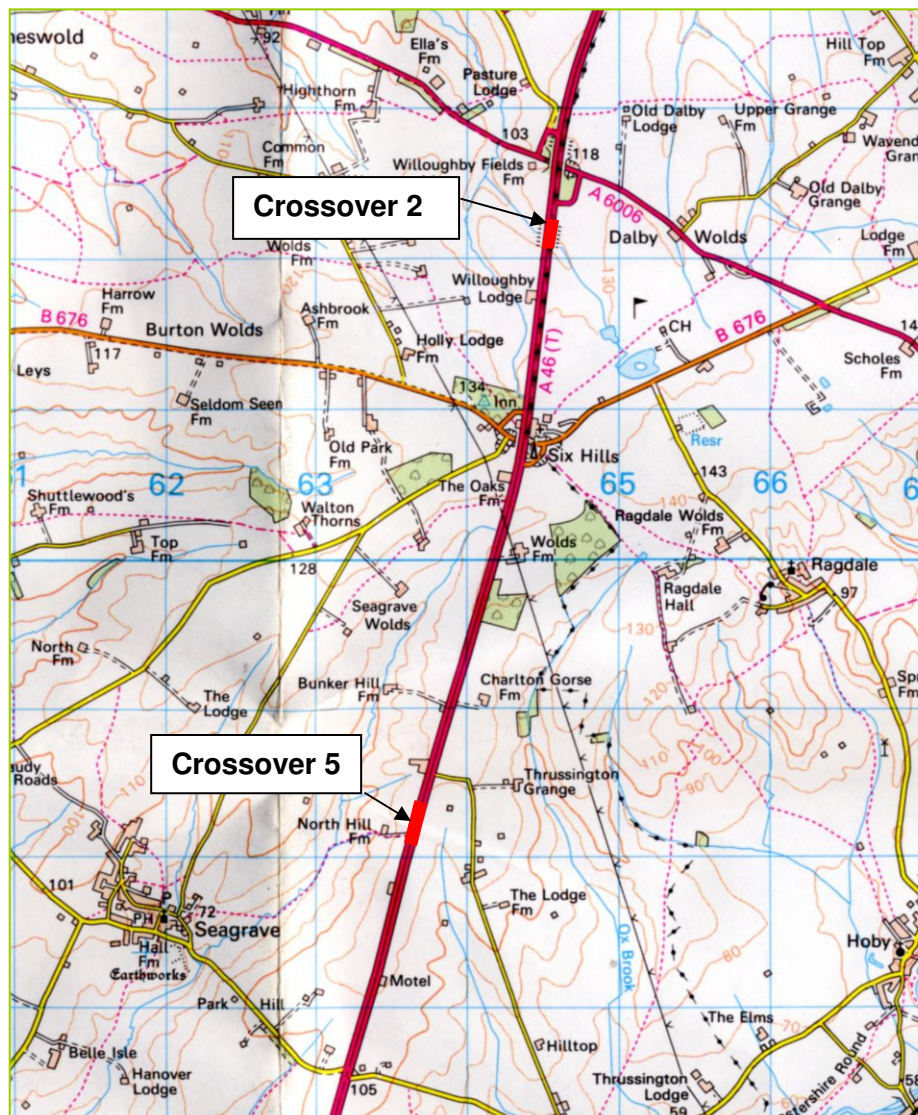


Fig 1: Site Location Plan. The two areas of excavation are highlighted in red. Scale at 1:50 000 (based on the Ordnance Survey Landranger map sheet no 129 [1991]. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCA Licence No. 100049278

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by Scott Wilson Ltd on behalf of their client Aone+ to undertake an archaeological watching brief and monitor two Crossover excavations on the A46 in Leicestershire. The recording brief was commissioned following consultation with the Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council. Site works (ACES 10, PCA Ref 10/622) commenced on 22/02/10 and were completed on 27/02/10.

The archaeological programme was undertaken to meet the objectives of a project specification prepared by Scott Wilson Ltd and in accordance with the recommendations in *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (Institute of Field Archaeologists, 2008) and the IfA *Code of Conduct* (2008).

Site Location and Description (Figs. 1 & 2)

The recording brief formed part of the Phase 1 work for the extension of crossovers within the central reservation of the A46 in Leicestershire. Phase 1 works covered a number of crossover excavations but only two, No's 2 and 5, were covered by the archaeological watching brief. The section of the A46 incorporating these two Crossovers is located c. 2.5km south of Willoughby on the Wolds and c. 4km north of Ratcliffe on the Wreake.

Crossover 2 is the more northern of the two, situated c. 450m south of Willoughby Fields Farm and the junction of the A46 and the A6006 at grid reference SK 645221.

Crossover 5 is c. 4km to the south of Crossover 2, close to the entrance of North Hill Farm at grid reference SK 636182.

The geological substrate of the monitored area is Oadby Till; grey to yellow-brown, silty clay diamiction with flint, chalk and Jurassic rock fragments overlying Scunthorpe Mudstone (BGS, 2002).

2.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The A46 lies on the Roman Fosse Way, a major road that was constructed in the mid to late first century AD, connecting Leicester (Ratae Coriltauorum) with Lincoln (Lindum Colonia) to the northeast and Cirencester (Corinum) and Exeter (Isca Dumnoniorum) to the southwest. The Fosse Way was an important transport and communications route in the Roman period and has continued to be so into modern times.

The route of the Fosse Way north of Leicester is predominantly marked by the A46; to the south it follows the A5460, and then the B4114.

Close to Lodge-on-the-Wolds, Stukeley describes the pavement of the road as 'of great blue flagstones laid edgewise very carefully' and that all the way to Willoughby-on-the-wolds the road was formed from red flints laid upon a bed of gravel. Further to this, reports at the time stated that the Fosse Way was paved like this all the way from Newark to Leicester (Stukeley, 1776, p.136 cited in Codrington 1905).

At the time of Codrington's study this flint paving still existed a mile to the North of Six Hills, which is located between the two Crossover excavations (Codrington, 1905: 250).

Although it is thought that the modern dual carriageway located at this section of the A46 has, on the surface, destroyed all the ancient character of the road, the road surface was exposed in the southwest angle of the cross-roads at Broughton Lodge some 17 feet to the west of the present road (Margary, 1973: 5f 219).

Outside these few areas the exact alignment of the Fosse Way along the majority of the A46 is unknown. Therefore there existed a potential for the crossover excavations to reveal deposits relating to the Roman road or its later phases.

3.0 Aims and Objectives

The aims of the watching brief were to identify and record the presence/absence nature, extent and date of any archaeological deposits or features exposed by the excavation of the crossover areas.

4.0 Methodology

The site was attended daily between 22/02/10 and 27/02/10. A qualified and experienced archaeologist was present to monitor all ground disturbance within the monitored areas (Crossovers 2 and 5). All excavation was carried out using a 360 excavator with a 1.8m wide flat bladed bucket.

The primary works entailed the excavation of all deposits within the central reservation between the roads of the dual carriageway to a depth of c. 0.30m within Crossover 2 and to c. 0.80m within Crossover 5.

Following excavation, each area was inspected to assess the presence/absence and nature of any features and/or deposits of archaeological interest and to recover datable artefacts. These investigations resulted in the production of written descriptions of each deposit on standard context recording sheets. Colour and digital photographs were taken, and drawings were prepared at scales 1:10 and 1:20.

5.0 Results

6.1 Crossover 2 (Figs. 1 & 2 Plates 1 & 2)

Crossover 2 was situated c. 450m to the south of Willoughby Fields Farm and the junction between the A46 and the A6006; it was 0.30m deep and 10m wide by 150m long.

At the base of the excavated area, a 0.30m deep mid-greenish-grey sandy clay with occasional small to medium bricks and modern rubbish (100) was encountered. This deposit was considered to be made ground as the area of excavation was located on a platform approximately 5m above the ground surface of the adjacent field. This was sealed in areas by a 0.05m thin spread of modern topsoil (101).

6.2 Crossover 5 (Figs. 1 & 2 Plates 3 & 4)

Crossover 5 was situated c. 4km to the south of Crossover 2, close to the entrance of North Hill Farm; it was 0.80m deep and 4m wide by 200m long.

At the base of the excavated area a mid orangey-brown sandy clay was encountered (204). This deposit, interpreted as the natural drift geology, was sealed by 0.20m of

mid-brown silty clay containing occasional medium to large angular stones and flecks of charcoal. Mixed in with these were granite cobbles, brick, tile and concrete chunks (203). This mixed deposit was possibly derived from the remains of a surface, of undetermined age, which had been disturbed and redeposited during the construction of the carriageway. It was sealed by a 0.22m deep mid-greenish-brown clay (202). This deposit was similar to deposit (100) revealed at Crossover 2 and was thought to be made ground associated with the construction of the existing carriageway. Sealing this was 0.08m of mid-grey sandy clay (201). This thin layer was a subsoil/interface between the made ground and the topsoil (200).

6.0 Discussion and Conclusion

Crossover 2 was only excavated to a depth of 0.30m below present ground surface and as such revealed only modern deposits of topsoil and made ground relating to the construction of the existing dual carriageway. These deposits sit c. 5m above the ground surface of the surrounding fields. Although this section of the A46 lies on a naturally high contour, there remains a possibility that the ground has been artificially raised sufficiently in the modern era that the original road surface survives beneath.

Crossover 5 was excavated to a greater depth (0.80m) from the present ground surface, exposing similar modern made ground deposits, along with an additional deposit seemingly derived from a disturbed surface. In this area though, due to the extra depth excavated, these made ground deposits were found to lie directly over the drift geology. A truncation event (followed by ground raising) seemingly stripped the area down to the natural and then redeposited the truncated material.

This event, most likely relating to the construction of the dual carriageway, has evidently removed an earlier surface and possibly other features as well. Presumably, if the Fosse Way ran on this exact alignment, then it has probably been destroyed in this area.

In conclusion, although no significant *in-situ* archaeological remains or finds were encountered in either of the Crossover areas, deposit (203) revealed within Crossover 5 contained the remains of a possible disturbed cobbled surface and possibly represents evidence of the Fosse Way at this location. Furthermore, Crossover 2 has the potential to contain the *in-situ* Roman road sealed beneath the modern made ground deposits.

8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

The methodology employed was entirely sufficient to allow the investigation and recording of deposits revealed during the crossover excavations.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd would like to thank Scott Wilson Ltd for this commission.

10.0 Bibliography

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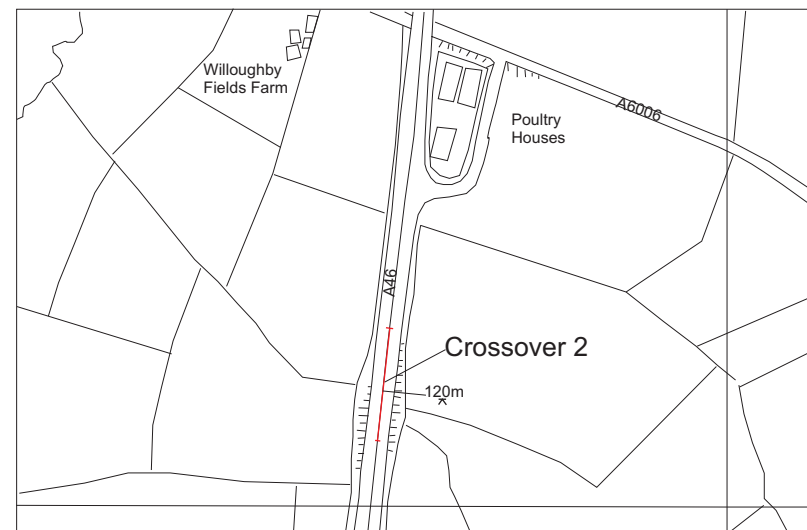
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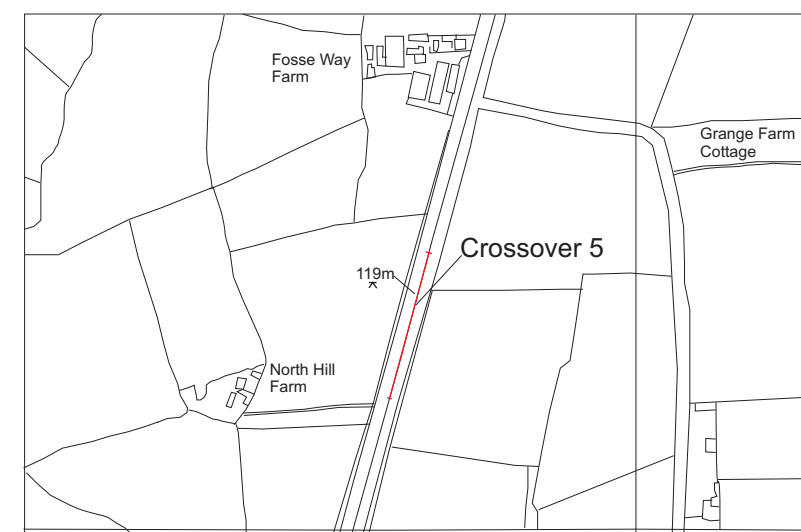
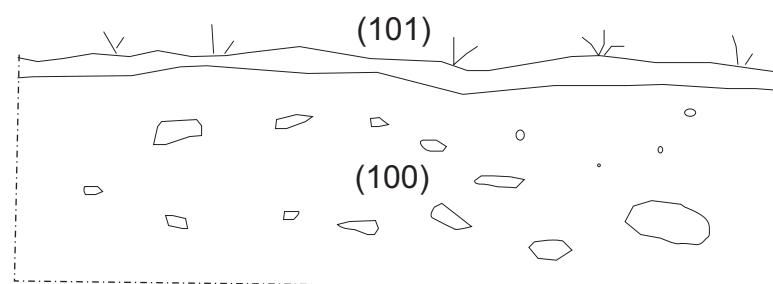
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East Facing Representative Section of Crossover 2



North Facing Representative Section of Crossover 5

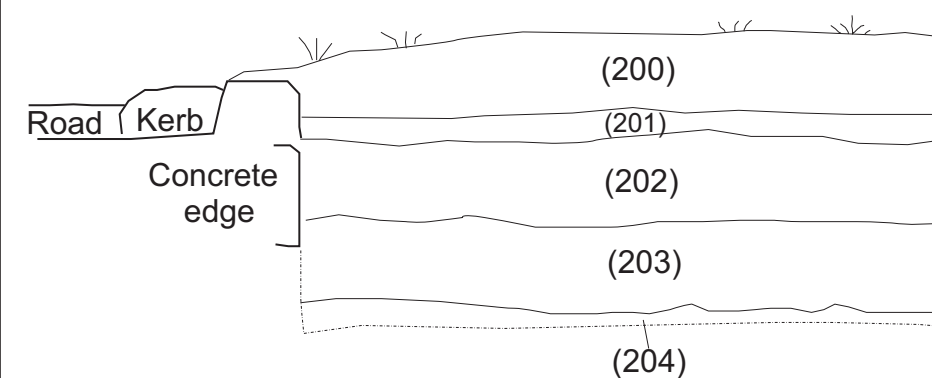


Fig.2: Location Plan of Crossovers 2 and 5 and their representative sections. Plans at 1:10,000, Sections at 1:10. Scales @ A3 ©Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. PCA Licence No. 100049278

Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Plate 1: Crossover Area 2 looking south, stripping in progress.



Plate 2: East facing representative section of Crossover Area 2.



Plate 3: General View looking over Crossover 5.



Plate 4: Crossover Area 5 showing stripping completed. The natural substrate can clearly be seen.

Appendix 2: Context Summary

Crossover 2

Context	Type	Description
100	layer	Mid greenish grey sandy-clay modern made ground
101	layer	Dark blackish brown sandy clay- modern topsoil

Crossover 5

Context	Type	Description
200	layer	Dark grey silty clay-modern topsoil
201	layer	Mid grey sandy clay interface layer
202	layer	Mid greenish brown clay-levelling layer
203	layer	Mid brown silty clay containing medium to large angular stones, cobbles, brick and tile- remnants of a surface
204	layer	Mid orangey brown sandy clay- natural

Appendix 3: Documentary Archive List

Site Name: A46 Crossover Excavations-Archaeological Watching Brief

Site Code: ACES 10

Accession Number: Pending

PCA Job No: 622

PAPER ELEMENT

- 1 **Index:**
 ACES10/1/1: This sheet plus the following 3.
- 2 **Context Sheets:**
 ACES10/2/1: x7 Contexts Sheets
- 3 **Matrix:** N/A
- 4 **Site Drawings:**
 ACES10/4/1: There are 2 sheets of A3 permatrace. Drawings 1-3 at 1:20
- 5 **Digital Images:** N/A
- 6 **Black and White Prints:** N/A
- 7 **Colour Slides/Prints:**

 ACES10/6/1: 36-25 Film 1
 ACES10/6/1/36: Film ID shot
 ACES10/6/1/35: General Shot of Area 1(crossover 2), looking S
 ACES10/6/1/34: Area 1(Crossover 2) sample section, looking W
 ACES10/6/1/33: General working shot of Area 1(crossover 2), looking S
 ACES10/6/1/32: Area 2 (Crossover 5) stripped, looking SW
 ACES10/6/1/31: Working shot of Area 2 (Crossover 5), looking SSW
 ACES10/6/1/30: Area 2 (Crossover 5) sample section, looking NNE
 ACES10/6/1/29: Area 2 (Crossover 5) stripped, looking SW
 ACES10/6/1/28: Concrete foundation within Area 2 (Crossover 5), looking SW
 ACES10/6/1/27: As above, looking SSW
 ACES10/6/1/26: Area 2 (Crossover 5) stripped, looking NE
 ACES10/6/1/25: As above

- 8 **Prehistoric Pottery Data:** N/A
- 9 **Romano-British Pottery Data:** N/A
- 10 **Saxon/Medieval Pottery Data:** N/A
- 11 **Post-Medieval Pottery Data:** N/A
- 12 **Lithics/Stone Data:** N/A
- 13 **Animal Bone Data:** N/A
- 14 **Human Bone Data:** N/A
- 15 **Environmental Records Data:** N/A
- 16 **Specialist Reports:** N/A
- 17 **Interim Reports:** N/A
- 18 **Documentary Material/Comparative Information:** N/A
- 19 **Miscellaneous:**
 - BFNN08/19/1:** x1 Context Summary Sheets
 - BFNN08/19/2:** x1 Drawing Record Sheets.
 - BFNN08/19/3:** x1 Photographic Record Sheets.
 - BFNN08/19/4:** x6 Watching Brief Diary Sheets.
- 20 **Correspondence:** N/A

OBJECT ELEMENT

- 21 **Bulk Finds:** N/A
- 22 **Registered Finds:** N/A
- 23 **Other:** N/A

Appendix 4:

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Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1

Validated sections in current version

Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
No	No	No	No	0/1

File submission and form progress

Grey literature report submitted?	No	Grey literature report filename/s
Boundary file submitted?	No	Boundary filename
HER signed off?		NMR signed off?