

**The Hills, Tanhouse Lane
Redditch
Worcestershire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

for

J. Varney Builders

CA Project: 3427

CA Report: 11107

WCC HER Reference: WSM 44964

June 2011

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date	16 June 2011
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SUMMARY

Project Name:	The Hills, Tanhouse Lane
Location:	Redditch, Worcestershire
NGR:	SP 06320 69114
Type:	Watching Brief
Date:	18 and 19 April 2011
Planning Reference:	R/09/0148
WCC HER Ref:	44964
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Worcester County Museum
Site Code:	THL 11

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the construction of a new access road linking the development site to Tanhouse Lane.

The metalling of Roman Ryknild Street was found almost directly under the modern tarmac following its line. Two probable marking-out gullies were noted. A probable roadside ditch was noted in section to the east. The only artefactual material pre-dating the modern period consisted of three small sherds of probably Roman tile, found in the metalling.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In April 2011 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for J. Varney Builders at The Hills, Tanhouse Lane, Redditch, Worcestershire (centred on NGR: SP 06320 69114; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition (no. 10) attached to a planning consent granted by Redditch Borough Council for a redevelopment of the site for 14 dwellings (Planning ref: R/09/0148). The objective of the watching brief was to record all archaeological remains exposed within excavations associated with the new access road linking the development to Tanhouse Road.

1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a *Brief* for a programme of archaeological work (WCC 2011) prepared by Mike Glyde, Historic Environment Planning Advisor to Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, the archaeological advisors to Redditch Borough Council (RBC) and with a subsequent detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2011) and approved by RBC acting on the advice of Mr Glyde. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008), the *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WHEAS 2010) and the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991), the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006).

The site

1.3 The site is bounded to the north by the B4497, to the east by Ryknild Street and to the south and west by properties on Redstone Close. The site lies at approximately 105m AOD on generally flat land. The watching brief was undertaken where the new access road linking the development to Tanhouse Lane crossed Ryknild Street.

1.4 The site encloses an area of approximately 0.5ha, which comprised a demolished house, outbuildings and garden.

1.5 The underlying solid geology of the area is mapped as Mercia Mudstone of the Triassic period (BGS 2011).



Archaeological background

- 1.6 The site lies immediately west of Ryknild Street (WSM 30441, Margary 1973, 279, Map 12, **18**), a Roman road running between Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire and Templeborough, South Yorkshire. The road is still in use as the B4497 to the north of the site, but is now little more than a bridleway or footpath for some distance to the south, although still tarmac-surfaced. The site is located adjacent to that section of the Roman road between Alcester, Warwickshire and Wall, Staffordshire (Margary 1973, 279, Map 12, **18b**). The new access road linking the development site to Tanhouse Lane crosses the Roman road. Ryknild Street was excavated in 1968 at Ipsley, 2.5km to the south of the site, and was recorded as being 'badly eroded' (Fasham 1988).
- 1.7 'The Mound', a Scheduled Monument (Scheduled Monument Worcestershire No. 277, Worcestershire Sites and Monument (WSM) 00045), lies 300m to the north-east of the site. The monument comprises an irregular earthwork ring, situated on a local high point. Although the Scheduled Monument lies close to Ryknild Street, it is not believed to be of Roman origin. It may have originated in the Iron Age, although this has been disputed. The monument is first documented in AD972, when it is recorded as a 'burghleah', or camp clearing. The WSM record notes it as a possible minor strong point during the 13th century, but it was abandoned and used as agricultural land shortly afterwards.
- 1.8 Beoley Park (WSM 28807), a 19th-century park, previously lay to the north of the site. An 1895 plan of the park indicates that it extended across the Salt Way and included land immediately to the north of the site, although it did not appear to extend into the site itself. The site is first recorded in detail on the Tithe Map of 1834, which records the site as lying within 'Little Lodge Field'. This name is potentially derived from an association with the nearby parkland, although no lodge or any other building is recorded on the map. East of the site lies a field recorded as 'Mill Close' (WSM 35561). No buildings or other mill features are recorded within the site or its vicinity.
- 1.9 An archaeological evaluation undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in July 2009 within the main part of the development site identified an undated pit containing pig bones and a group of 14 modern pits (CA 2009).

Methodology

- 1.10 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2011). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks, which consisted of the excavation of a new service trench on the line of the new access road. Machine excavation generally proceeded to the top of the Roman road. Following discussions with Mike Glyde, it was agreed that a sample of approximately one third of the exposed road surface would be excavated by hand and that the rest of the road surface could be removed mechanically, under archaeological observation (Fig. 2).
- 1.11 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.12 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. The site archive will be deposited with Worcestershire County Museum under the Worcs HER reference number (44964). A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix D, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

2. RESULTS (FIGS 1-3)

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively. Details of the relative heights of the principal deposits and features expressed as metres Above Ordnance Datum (m AOD) appear in Appendix C.
- 2.2 The natural geological substrate, 003, consisting of red-brown clay with occasional cobbles, was revealed across the entire trench at an average depth of 0.3 to 0.4m below present ground level (bpgl) (Fig. 3). Where there were no archaeological deposits the natural deposits were overlain by topsoil, 007 and 017, and the make-up and surface of modern roads, 002 and 001, respectively
- 2.3 The earliest features seen were cut into the natural clay. The largest of these was a shallow, flat-bottomed hollow, 019, orientated north/south, which appeared to have been scooped out of the top of the natural and was about 5.6m wide (Fig. 3). This

hollow had a clear lip on the eastern side, beyond which the clay sloped steeply down again to the east before levelling out. (Fig. 3).

- 2.4 Gullies 005 and 016 were cut into the natural within the hollow. Gully 016 was only seen in section on the north side of the trench after machine excavation of this part of the trench. An extensive modern disturbance followed the south side of the trench at this point so it was not possible to trace the gully in section on that side and no plan could be made of this gully (Fig. 3).
- 2.5 A narrow linear mound of green clay was identified, close to the probable centre line of the metalling on the base of the hollow 019 just west of gully 005 (Fig. 3, "clay bank"). This was thought to be a reserved strip of natural during excavation, but is now thought to have been upcast from gully 005, which was certainly dug through green clay.
- 2.6 The broad hollow 019 and the gullies 005 and 016 were covered and filled by a hard-packed layer of cobbles, pebbles and sandy grit, 004 and 009. It was a maximum of 0.28m thick (ignoring the filling of the gullies). It sloped down to the west just before being truncated by modern service trenches (Fig. 3). This sloping area was sealed by a lens of road silting, 015. The cobble layer was clearly road metalling. Its upper surface appeared to be an original surface, and was at any rate not obviously damaged by later truncation (Fig. 3).
- 2.7 The road surface was dissected by modern services and sealed by make-up 002 and tarmac 001 of the modern road (Fig. 3).
- 2.8 Immediately east of the hollow and the metalling was a small area of archaeological deposits with no direct stratigraphic relationship with the sequence just described, both areas being immediately under the modern road make-up. These were only seen in section (Fig. 3).
- 2.9 A small gully, 012, was cut into the natural clay which was filled with clay loam and pebbles, 013. On its western lip was a small lens of puddled clay (018) which may have been trampled clay spreading over the infill. Both were sealed by a sequence of thin lenses dipping down to the east (typically 40-70mm thick). The first of these was of pebbles and sandy silt, 008, the next, 014, was of gritty clay with fewer pebbles and it in turn was covered by 006, very similar to 008.

- 2.10 These deposits were cut through by another small gully, 010. In contrast to gully 012 and the lenses, this had no grit or pebbles in its fill, just clean clay (011).
- 2.11 The silt layers and gully 012 were also visible in the section on the south side of the trench, but gully 010 was not.
- 2.12 These layers and features were all sealed by a buried soil, 007 (Fig. 3). This also filled what appears to have been a cut, 023, truncating the east end of the silt sequence. The cut and the buried soil 007 were cut away on the east by modern services and sealed by the modern road materials.
- 2.13 At the far west end of the observed trench, was a similar buried soil layer, 017 over the natural clay (Fig. 3), but it had no relationship to any ancient contexts.
- 2.14 In a part of the trench that had been dug previously and partly back-filled, a V-shaped ditch, 021, was noted in the southern section, 1.9m east of gully 012. (Fig. 3). It was somewhat truncated and sealed by recent scalplings, but was 0.60m deep and 0.80m across the top, with a filling of clay loam 024. It was stratigraphically isolated from the other deposits and could not be clearly seen on the northern side of the trench, as this part of the trench edge was smeared and partly infilled. It was well to the east of the modern road ditch, still open and visible along the eastern side of Ryknild Street.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The watching brief revealed road metalling, gullies and a probable roadside ditch immediately under the modern road surfacing on the accepted line of the Alcester to Wall section of Ryknild Street (Margary 1973, 279, Map 12, **18b**). The metalling was less than 0.3m thick and consisted of graded pebbles and cobbles in coarse grit laid in a shallow hollow in the natural clay. The two narrow gullies cut into the clay under the cobbles and filled with them may have been marking-out gullies for the construction of the road. The fact that they are in the bottom of the shallow depression, 019, which must pre-date them (as they would surely have been filled in as a natural effect of cutting the depression along their line) might throw some doubt on this interpretation, but they were clearly open for only a very short period before

backfilling with the road metalling. The clay bank next to 005 may also have been part of the laying out procedure, and was certainly carefully constructed (as far as could be seen from the small sample). A similar gully in the same stratigraphic position in the sequence was noted by the author, cut into the natural clay, during the investigation of an early Roman road in Bath (Davenport 1999, 6)

- 3.2 Ryknild Street has been investigated 2.5 km to the south at Ipsley (Fasham 1988, 7-22), but it is difficult to follow the description of the excavation as presented. It seems that the road there was heavily eroded or ploughed out and there were no clear ditches. A layer of pebbles shown in section at the unplanned west end of Trench A in that excavation is apparently very similar to the cobbles found in the current investigation. However, it is not clearly mentioned in the text and would be some metres west of the line of the deposits considered to be road remains by the excavators (*ibid.* Fig. 3). The general lack of definition and poor preservation of the road features has been typical of investigations of the road until now (Fasham 1988, 12).
- 3.3 It appears that the road metalling found at Tanhouse Lane is rare locally, and if the gullies under it are marking out lines for road construction (and they clearly immediately precede it), then the observations from this excavation are locally very useful. If the clay bank next to gully 005 (Fig. 3) is upcast it is hard to imagine what else the gully could be. The road surface was rather narrow at c. 5.6m wide with a clear camber on the west. That this was a real slope and not the result of erosion or excavation was shown by the existence of undisturbed fine road silts, 015, over it. There was no sign of an agger but the natural surface on the east seems to have been lowered by about 0.3m. A drop of about 0.2m was also visible on the western side. The roadbed itself was hollowed, and this would clearly help to hold the metalling in place (Fig. 3).
- 3.4 Only one phase of metalling was evident in the road proper, but the silting pattern (006, 014, 008) and sequence of gullies (010, 012) on the west suggests silting from a now-vanished higher level of metalling and re-cutting of gullies before and after the visible sequence (Fig. 3). The profile of gully 010 clearly indicates it has been truncated, probably eroded rather than cut, and it was then sealed by loam layer 007. That there was no metalling material in the fill of 010 suggests it was filled after significant wear on the road had ceased. Its failure to appear in the southern section implies it was either discontinuous or terminated here. The larger V-section ditch to

the east again may well be a Roman road ditch, but it could not be further investigated.

- 3.5 While it seems clear that the metalling found in this watching brief belongs to the original construction phase of the road, and a Roman date is supported both by typology and by the three pieces of roof tile (Appendix B), no more close estimate of actual date can be offered.
- 3.6 The objective to preserve by record archaeological remains affected by the development has been achieved and value added by the analysis of the remains.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Peter Davenport. The report was written by Peter Davenport. The illustrations were prepared by Peter Moore. The finds report was compiled Ed McSloy. The archive has been compiled by Peter Davenport, and prepared for deposition by James Johnson. The project was managed for CA by Laurent Coleman.

5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 1989 Sheet **183** Redditch

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2009 *The Hills, Tanhouse Lane, Redditch, Worcestershire; Archaeological Evaluation* CA Report No. **09117**

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
001	Layer	Tarmac	n/k	5.7	0.08-0.1	
002	Layer	Hardcore for 001	n/k	5.7	0.12	
003	natural	Mercia Mudstone clay and pebbles	n/k	na	0.2	
004	Layer	Road metalling	n/k	3.5	0.26	Roman
005	Cut	Gully	n/k	0.39	0.14	
006	Layer	Coarse gravel and silt (road silts)	n/k	0.8	0.07	
007	Layer	Dark brown loam over road silts	n/k	1.3	0.16	
008	Layer	Coarse gravel and silt (road silts)	n/k	0.8	0.04	
009	Layer	Road metalling	n/k	1.3	0.15	
010	Cut	V-section gully cutting 006	n/k	0.38	0.30	
011	Fill	Red brown clay fill of 010	n/k	0.38	0.3	
012	Cut	Cut of V-section gully under road silts	n/k	0.47	0.24	
013	Fill	Fill of 012 (clay loam and cobbles	n/k	0.47	0.24	
014	Layer	Gritty clay (road silts)	n/k	0.85	0.04	
015	Layer	Stone-free silt on west side of 009	n/k	n/k	0.22	
016	Cut	Gully under 009	n/k	0.3	0.15	
017	Layer	Dark brown loam buried under modern make-up	n/k	n/k	0.3	
018	Layer	Puddled clay, possibly trample partly over 012	n/k	n/k	0.05	
019	Cut	Shallow, flat-bottomed hollow (road bed)	n/k	5.6	0.28	
020	Layer	Clay dump or bank	n/k	0.65	0.12	
021	Cut	V-shaped cut for ditch	n/k	0.8	0.6	
022	Cut	Trench for modern gas main	n/k	0.65	1.35	
023	Cut	Small gully, east of road, filled with 007	n/k	0.15	0.10	
024	Fill	Fill of 021	n/k	0.8	0.6	

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

A small quantity of ceramic building material was recovered from subsoil deposit 004. Three joining fragments of tile in a hard, gritty, pale orange-firing fabric are featureless, but are of thickness appropriate (c. 20mm) for flanged roof tile (*tegula*) of Roman type. The fabric is Type 2A in the Worcestershire brick and tile fabric series (Cleverley 2004, 340).

Context	Description	Count	Weight(g.)	Date
004	Roman ceramic building material	4	62	RB?

APPENDIX C: LEVELS OF PRINCIPAL DEPOSITS AND STRUCTURES

Levels are expressed as metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD)

	Trench 1
Current ground level	104.05m (crown of tarmac)
Top of Roman road metalling	103.87m
Limit of excavation	102.17m

APPENDIX D: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	The Hills, Tanhouse Lane, Redditch, Worcestershire	
Short description (250 words maximum)	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the construction of a new access road linking the development site to Tanhouse Lane. The metalling of Roman Ryknild Street was found almost directly under the modern tarmac following its line. Two probable marking-out gullies were noted. A probable roadside ditch was noted in section to the east. The only artefactual material pre-dating the modern period consisted of three small sherds of probably Roman tile, found in the metalling.	
Project dates	19th and 20th April 2011	
Project type	Watching brief. An evaluation was carried out on the west of the road in July 2009 (CA 2009) with no result.	
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)	An evaluation by Cotswold Archaeology (see above) WCC HER reference 40833	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	The Hills, Tanhouse Lane, Redditch, Worcestershire	
Study area (M ² /ha)	16.25m ²	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	SP 06320 69114	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	WHEAS	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Laurent Coleman	
Project Supervisor	Peter Davenport	
MONUMENT TYPE		
	Road	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS		
	tile	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	Worcester County Museum	Tile sherds
Paper	Worcester County Museum	Context sheets, matrices plans, sections
Digital	Worcester County Museum	Digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2011 <i>The Hills, Tanhouse Lane, Redditch, Worcestershire; Archaeological Watching Brief</i> CA Report no.11107		



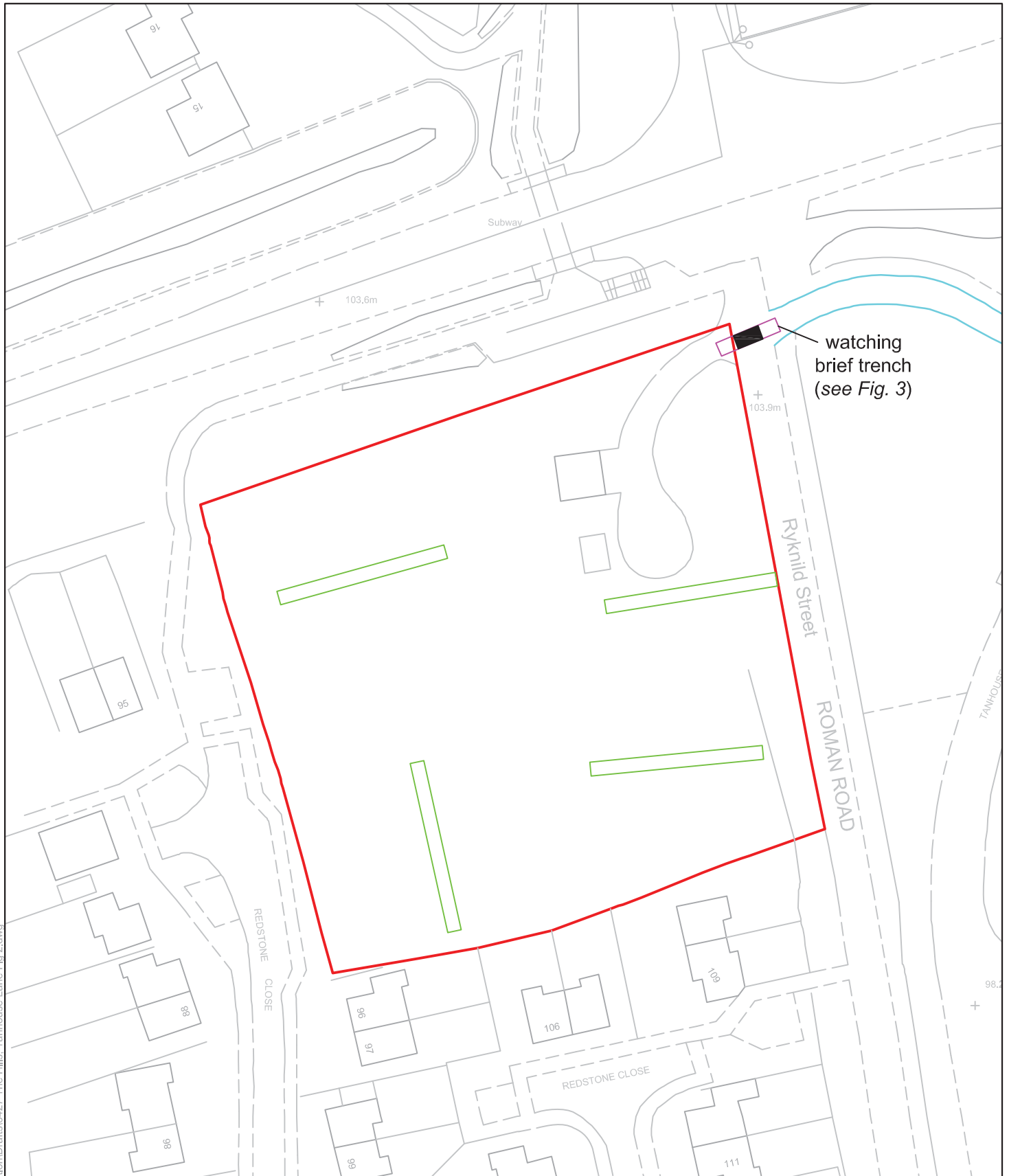
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PROJECT TITLE
 The Hills, Tanhouse Lane, Redditch
 Worcestershire





FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

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PROJECT NO.	3427	DATE	10-05-2011	FIGURE NO.
DRAWN BY	PJM	REVISION	00	1
APPROVED BY	PJM	SCALE@A4	1:25,000	



watching
brief trench
(see Fig. 3)

-  site
-  watching brief trench (with archaeological features)
-  evaluation trenches (CA 2009)
-  new access road



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PROJECT TITLE
**The Hills, Tanhouse Lane, Redditch
 Worcestershire**

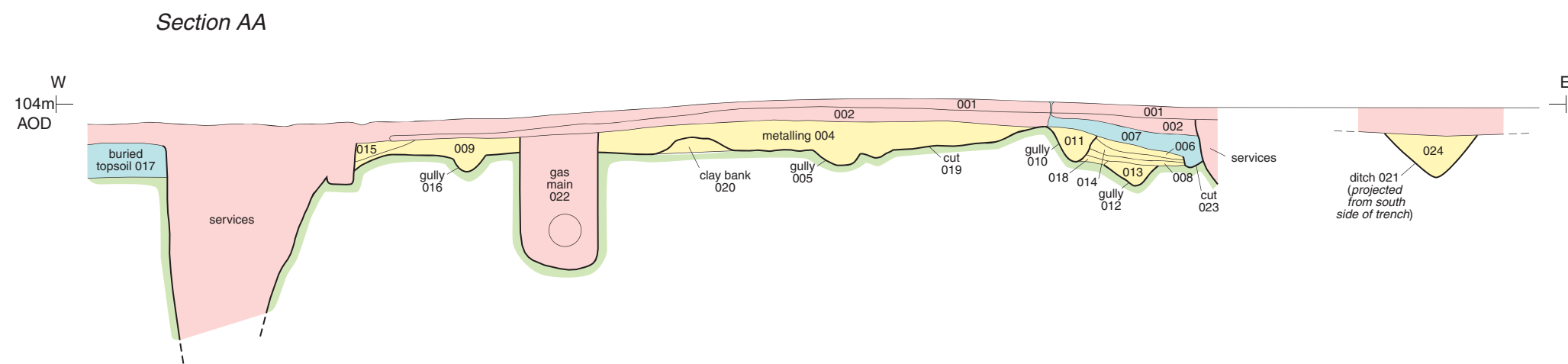
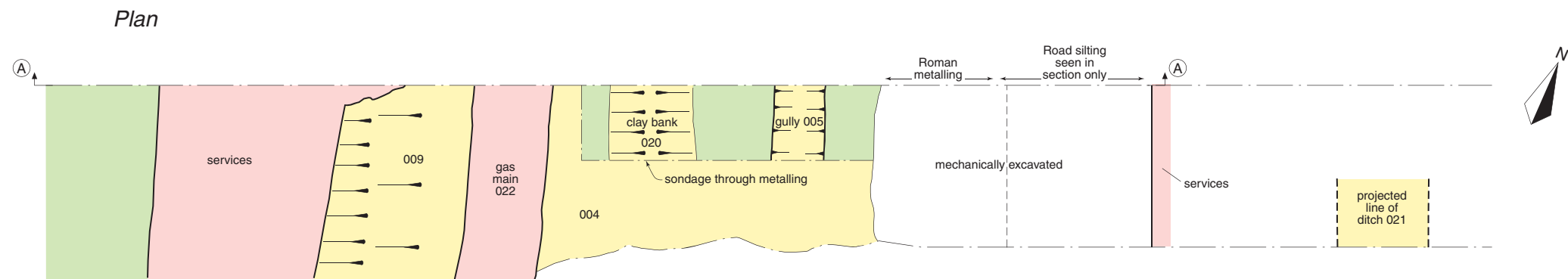
PROJECT TITLE
**The site, showing location of watching
 brief trench and archaeological
 features**

PROJECT NO. 3427 DATE 11-05-2011
 DRAWN BY PJM REVISION 00
 APPROVED BY PJM SCALE@A4 1:750

FIGURE NO.

2

0 30m



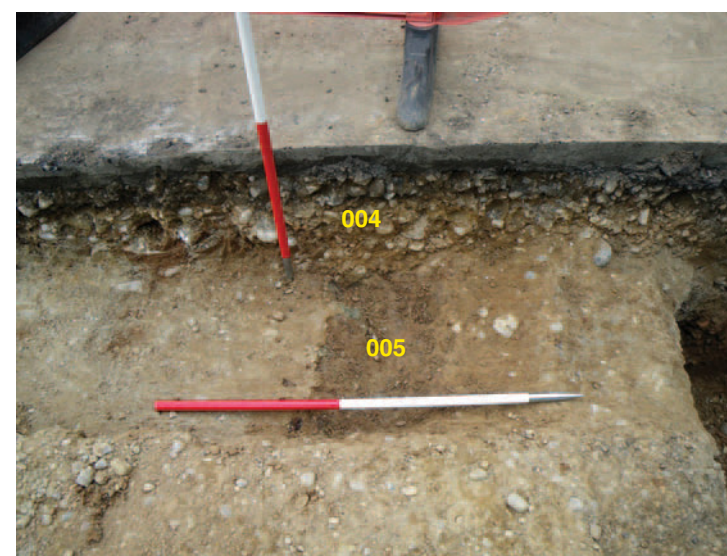
- modern features
- buried soil
- Roman Road and associated features
- natural clay



V-shaped ditch 021, east of the road metalling, looking south. Scales 1m



The exposed road metalling 004/009, looking north-east, camber evident on left, gas main 022 visible in centre under scale. Scale 2m



The marking out gully 005 under the metalling 004 at the eastern side of the road, looking north. Scales 1m



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PROJECT TITLE
 The Hills, Tanhouse Lane, Redditch
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FIGURE TITLE
 Trench plan, section across Ryknild
 Street and photographs