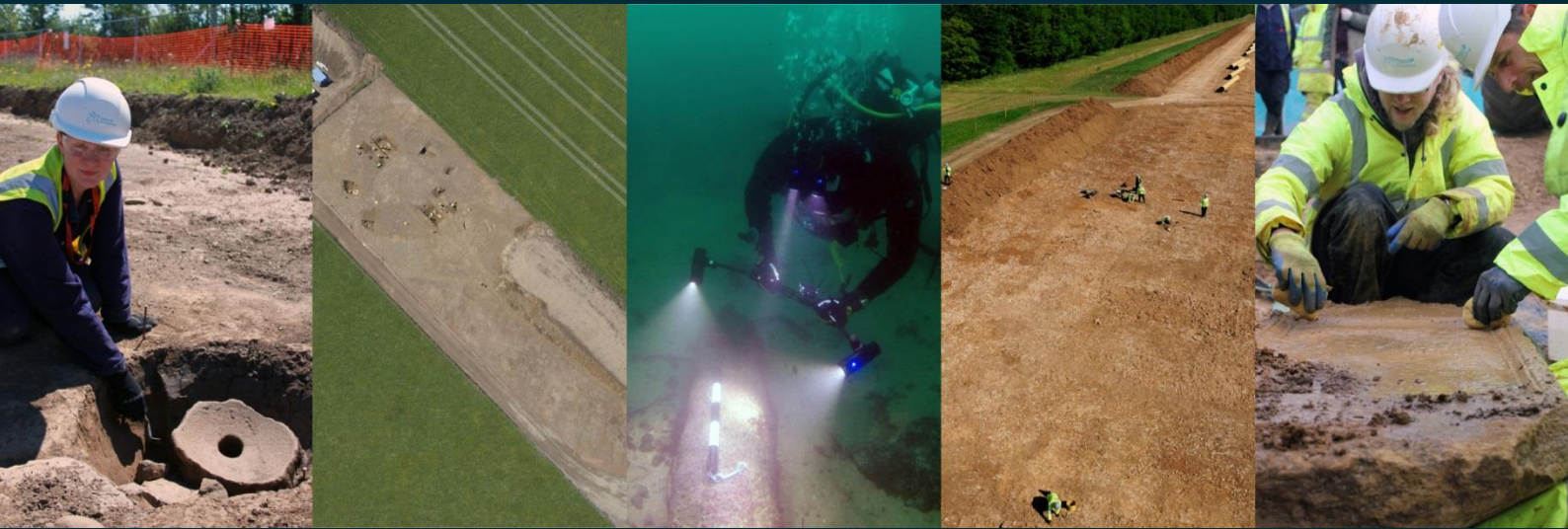


A417 Missing Link GI Works Birdlip Gloucestershire

Archaeological Watching Brief



for
Mott Macdonald Sweco
Joint Venture

on behalf of
Highways England

CA Project: CR0095
CA Report: CR0095_1

June 2019



A417 MISSING LINK GI WORKS BIRDLIP GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Document Control Grid						
Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
A	31 May 2019	Noel Boothroyd		Internal review	QA	Martin Watts

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Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)

Fig. 2 The site, showing location of observed groundworks (1:2000).



SUMMARY

Project Name: A417 Missing Link GI Works
Location: Birdlip, Gloucestershire
NGR: 392698 215521
Type: Watching Brief
Date: 28-31 May, 5 June 2019
Location of Archive: to be deposited at Corinium Museum, Cirencester
Site Code: MLWB 19

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with geotechnical investigations as part of the proposed A417 Missing Link scheme at Birdlip, Gloucestershire.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no artefactual material was recovered.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In May 2019 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Mott Macdonald Sweco Joint Venture on behalf of Highways England at Birdlip, Gloucestershire (centred at NGR: 392698 215521; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken as part of investigative and preparatory works for a proposed link road scheme along the A417.
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2019) and approved by the LPA acting on the advice of curator. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014).

The site

- 1.3 The overall development area measures approximately 26ha, and comprises multiple irregularly-shaped agricultural or pastoral fields, with established boundaries and access tracks, as well as areas of mature woodland. The groundworks subject to archaeological watching brief were, however, limited to a single field of ?? extent. The site is bounded to the north by the A417 dual carriageway, to the east, west and south by further fields of which some are in turn bounded by the continuation of the A417.
- 1.4 The site is located on a limestone outcrop escarpment known as the Cotswold Edge, running broadly north-south above the lowlands areas of the Severn Valley. As such, at its highest, the site lies at approximately 240m AOD along its eastern edge, gently sloping to the south and north-east to approximately 230m AOD before steeply sloping downwards to north-west, to approximately 156m AOD. The watching brief area slopes steeply from south to north, and drops more steeply along its north edge to a stream running alongside the A417.
- 1.5 The underlying bedrock geology of the western part of the proposed development is mapped as limestone, argillaceous rocks and subordinate sandstone of the Lias and Inferior Oolite Groups, and is mapped in the eastern part of site as limestone of the Birdlip Formation, formed during the Jurassic and Triassic Periods (BGS 2019).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site has been subject to an Environmental Assessment Report (EAR; Highways England 2018). The following is a summary of its conclusions.
- 2.2 Evidence for prehistoric occupation has been recorded throughout the area surrounding the site. The EAR notes that the Cotswolds has been influenced by human activity since the Mesolithic period. Worked flint of Mesolithic date has been recorded during excavations on the promontory of Crickley Hill Camp (Scheduled Monument no. 1003586), approximately 160m north-east of the scheme, as well as Mesolithic flint microliths near Shab Hill, approximately 650m to the east.
- 2.3 Evidence of Neolithic activity has also been recorded during the excavations at Crickley Hill, as well as at Peak Camp, approximately 500m west of the scheme, with several phases of activity comprising extensive earthworks, enclosures, internal structures indicative of settlement, and flint finds. Evidence suggests that Crickley Hill was reoccupied and refortified during the Iron Age, with early post-Roman activity also noted.
- 2.4 Bronze Age activity has been recorded throughout the area. Most significantly is the funerary site of Emma's Grove (Scheduled Monument no. 1017079), approximately 50m south of the scheme, which comprises three Bronze Age bowl barrows containing evidence for primary and secondary burials, along with grave goods. Further archaeological works identified multiple remains associated with Emma's Grove, consisting of roundhouses and barrows, as well as other isolated barrow sites. Field walking to the south of site in advance of the construction of the Birdlip Bypass identified three sites in which Bronze Age features were found along with arrowheads, scrapers, retouched flakes and cores.
- 2.5 Immediately south-east of site, the Iron Age site of Barrow Wake is recorded, where a late Iron Age cemetery producing rich grave goods was uncovered during quarrying in 1879. During the construction of the Birdlip Bypass, Iron Age rectilinear enclosures and an alignment of storage pits were also recorded.
- 2.6 During the Roman period, large settlements were established at Gloucester and Cirencester; the road connecting the two settlements, Ermin Street, ran through Birdlip, approximately 600m south of site, where it is thought to be preserved in

several places. Consequently, substantial remains dating to the Roman period, relating to roadside activity (some of elevated status) have been recorded in and around the area of Birdlip.

- 2.7 Evidence for medieval activity within the study area includes the village of Birdlip, established in the 13th century, approximately 600m south of site. The current site probably formed part of the managed landscape surrounding the village, evidenced by an area of upstanding ridge-and-furrow earthworks across site, as well as lynchets and field boundaries. Other medieval remains comprise the deserted medieval village of Stockwell (upon which the modern village is built), approximately 1.3km to the east, and a concentration of nationally important medieval remains at Brimpsfield, 1.7km south of the site.
- 2.8 From the 14th century, large open-field agricultural areas of the Cotswolds became pasture to support the expanding wool industry of the area. To some degree this enabled the preservation of ridge-and-furrow earthworks, including on the current site. It appears the current site was not subject to the creation of large regular fields during parliamentary enclosure of the 18th and 19th centuries which may have destroyed the earthworks, and more likely represents evidence of piecemeal enclosures generally made by local agreement.
- 2.9 Quarrying for Oolitic limestone has formed a major part of the archaeological landscape throughout the study area and is likely to have occurred through all periods. Over 60 quarry sites are recorded in the study area, a large proportion of which were located as part of the Crickley Hill Archaeological Survey.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:

- to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the geotechnical investigations;



- at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2019). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks comprising two test pits and four boreholes (Fig. 2).
- 4.2 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 The archive from the evaluation is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the archive will be deposited with Corinium Museum, Cirencester. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS (FIG. 2)

- 5.1 The natural geological substrate (20403, 20504, 20702, 21202), consisting of grey clay and limestone gravel to cobbles, was revealed at in all test pits and boreholes, at a depth of 1.1m to 1.2m below present ground level in the test pits at the bottom of the slope, and a depth of 0.45m to 0.65m in the boreholes at the top of the slope. This was overlain by probable colluvial deposits (20402 and 20502) of yellow brown silty clay, averaging 0.5m in thickness in the test pits at the bottom of the slope, which was in turn sealed by 0.45 to 0.5m of orange brown silty clay subsoil (20401 and 20501). On top was turf and topsoil, 20400 and 20500, a light to mid grey brown silty clay, from 0.15 to 0.2m thick. In the boreholes at the top of the slope there was no colluvium and the natural substrate was covered by a subsoil (20701, 20801, 21201, and 23001) between 0.12m to 0.4m thick, with a topsoil (20700, 20800, 21200, and 23000) above this 0.15m to 0.25m thick.

5.2 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and, despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material was recovered.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see archaeological background above), the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks. The absence of archaeological deposits may indicate that such remains either do not extend as far as or were not exposed by the geotechnical investigations.

7. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Noel Boothroyd. The report was written by Noel Boothroyd. The illustrations were prepared by Aleksandra Osinska. The archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Cliff Bateman.

8. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2015 *Geology of Britain Viewer* <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed 10 May 2019

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2019 *A417 Missing Link GI Works, Birdlip, Gloucestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

Highways England 2018 *A417 Missing Link: Environmental Assessment Report*

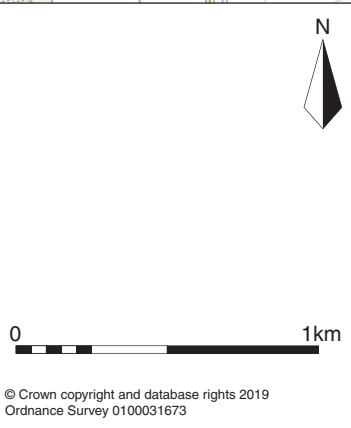
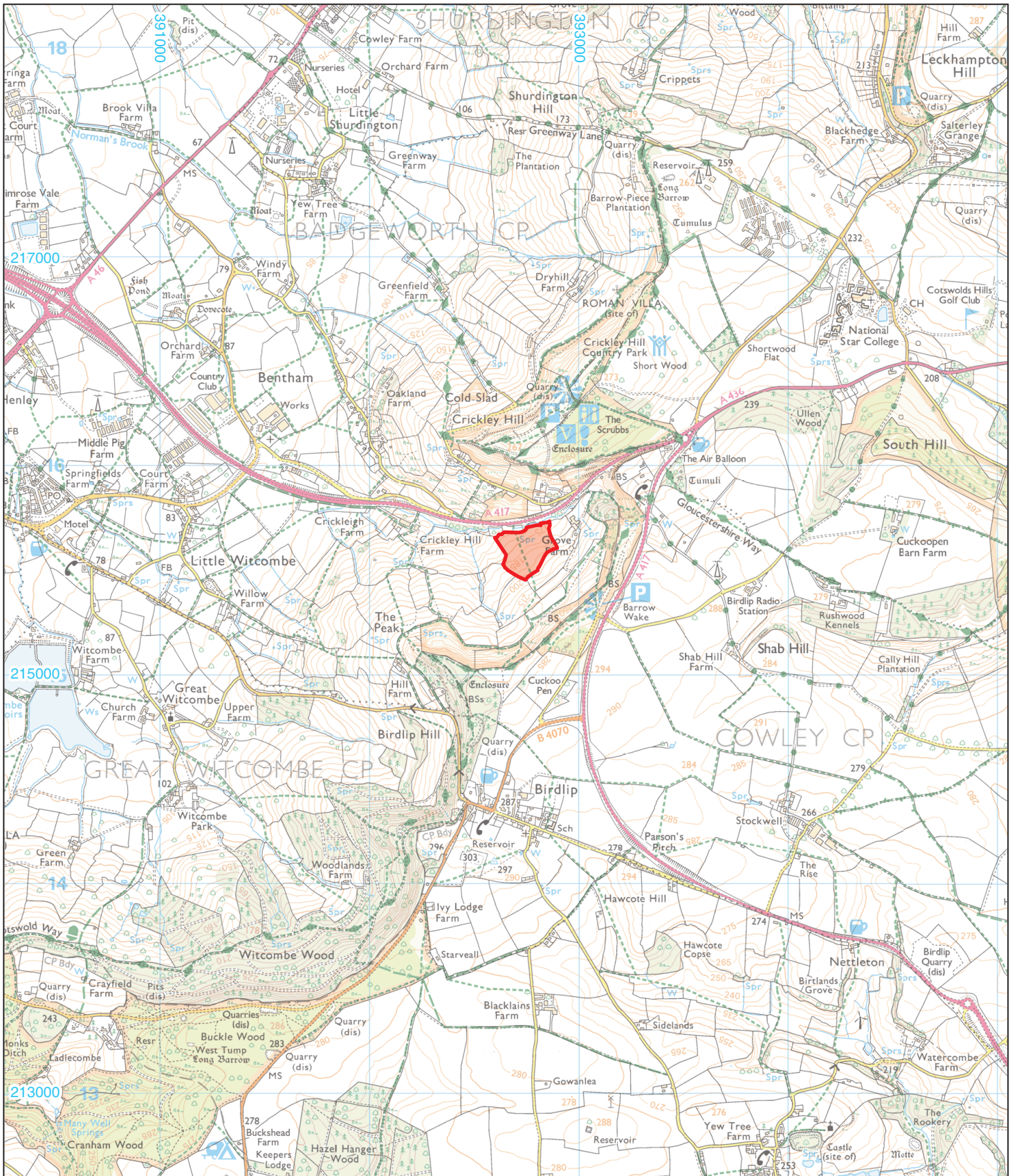


APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thickness (m)
TP204	20400	Layer		Topsoil	Lt grey-brown silty clay	>4.2	>1.8	0.15
TP204	20401	Layer		Subsoil	Lt orange-brown silty clay	>4.2	>1.8	0.45
TP204	20402	Layer		Colluvium	Lt yellow brown silty clay with limestone gravel to cobbles	>4.2	>1.8	0.5
TP204	20403	Layer		Natural substrate	Lt grey clay with limestone	>4.2	>1.8	>2.9
TP205	20500	Layer		Topsoil	Lt grey-brown silty clay	>3.5	>1.8	0.2
TP205	20501	Layer		Subsoil	Lt orange-brown silty clay	>3.5	>1.8	0.5
TP205	20502	Layer		Colluvium	Lt yellow brown silty clay	>3.5	>1.8	0.5
TP205	20503	Featur		Field drain	N/S aligned ceramic drain	>1.8		
TP205	20504	Layer		Natural substrate	Lt grey clay with limestone	>3.5	>1.8	>2.8
DS/CR207	20700	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay	>0.3	>0.3	0.25
DS/CR207	20701	Layer		Subsoil	Mid orange brown silty clay	>0.3	>0.3	0.4
DS/CR207	20702	Layer		Natural substrate	Mid yellow brown clay with limestone gravel to cobbles	>0.3	>0.3	>0.55
CP212	21200	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay	>0.3	>0.3	0.15
CP212	21201	Layer		Subsoil	Mid orange brown silty clay with limestone gravel to cobbles	>0.3	>0.3	0.3
CP212	21202	Layer		Natural substrate	Limestone gravel to cobbles in mid orange brown clay matrix	>0.3	>0.3	>0.75
CP208	20800	Layer		Topsoil	Lt grey-brown silty clay	>0.3	>0.3	0.12
CP208	20801	Layer		Subsoil	Mid orange brown silty clay	>0.3	>0.3	0.12
CP208	20802	Layer		Natural substrate	Lt/mid orange brown silty clay becoming sandy with depth, with limestone gravel to cobbles	>0.3	>0.3	>0.95
CP230	23000	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay	>0.3	>0.3	0.15
CP230	23001	Layer			Limestone pebbles and cobbles in light orange brown silty clay	>0.3	>0.3	0.25
CP230	23002	Layer		Natural substrate	Lt orange brown sandy clay, becoming sandier with depth	>0.3	>0.3	>0.8

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	A417 Missing Link GI Works	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with geotechnical investigations as part of the proposed A417 Missing Link scheme at Birdlip, Gloucestershire. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no artefactual material was recovered.	
Project dates		
Project type	Watching brief	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Birdlip, Gloucestershire	
Study area (M ² /ha)		
Site co-ordinates	392698 215521	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	N/A	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Cliff Bateman	
Project Supervisor	Noel Boothroyd	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	N/A	
Paper	Corinium Museum, Cirencester	Trench sheets, photo register
Digital	Corinium Museum, Cirencester	Database, digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2019 <i>A417 Missing Link GI Works: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> CA typescript report CR0095_1		




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PROJECT TITLE
 A417 Missing Link Gi Works, Birdlip,
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FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

DRAWN BY **AO** PROJECT NO. **CR0095** FIGURE NO. **1**
 CHECKED BY **DJB** DATE **18/06/2019**
 APPROVED BY **CMB** SCALE@A4 **1:25,000**

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Ordnance Survey 0100031673



- Site boundary
- Test pit
- Borehole



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PROJECT TITLE
 A417 Missing Link Gi Works, Birdlip,
 Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE
 The site, showing location of
 groundworks

DRAWN BY	AO	PROJECT NO.	CR0095	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	18/06/2019	2
APPROVED BY	CMB	SCALE@A3	1:2000	

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