

**STOVER ROAD
NIBLEY
SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

For

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNCIL

CA PROJECT: 2666
CA REPORT: 08189

NOVEMBER 2008




**COTSWOLD
ARCHAEOLOGY**

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CA PROJECT: 2666
CA REPORT: 08189

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date	20 November 2008
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date	24 November 2008
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signed	
date	27 November 2008
issue	01

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SUMMARY

Project Name: Stover Road
Location: Nibley, South Gloucestershire
NGR: ST 6955 8255
Type: Watching Brief
Date: 18 July – 8 October 2008
Planning Reference: PT06/2824/R30
Location of Archive: To be deposited with Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives
Site Code: SGC 08

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the erection of council offices and associated car parking, access and landscaping at Stover Road, Nibley, South Gloucestershire.

Although the site lies on the proposed alignment of the Roman road between Bitton and Berkeley no features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and no artefactual material was recovered.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Between July and October 2008 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) at Stover Road, Nibley (centred on NGR: ST 6955 8255; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to a planning consent for the erection of council offices and associated car parking, access and landscaping (Planning ref: PT06/2824/R30). The objective of the watching brief was to record any archaeological remains exposed during the development.

1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a brief (SGC 2006) prepared by David Evans, Planning Officer (Historic Environment Record and Archaeology) for SGC, and with a subsequent detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2008) and approved by David Haigh, Archaeology Officer, SGC on behalf of Mr Evans. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (2001) and the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991).

The site

1.3 The site is approximately 2.7ha in area and lies immediately north of the A432 between Bristol and Yate. To the east the site is bounded by Stover Road, to the north by the river Frome and to the west by a former landfill site. The site is relatively level at the southern end and drops away slightly down towards the Frome in the north. The site was previously occupied by council houses of which only a few remain to the north-west end of the site, the majority have been demolished (Fig. 2).

1.4 The underlying solid geology of the area is mapped as Red Measures Sandstone and marl deposits of the Carboniferous and Triassic periods (BGS 1970). This geology was encountered across the site during the watching brief.

Archaeological background

1.5 Archaeological interest in the site arises from its location on the projected line of a Roman road southwards from Gloucester. North of Berkeley the road splits from the Roman road to Seamills and continues, now surviving only intermittently, southwards towards Wickwar West End and Engine Common (Margary 1973, 141). The line of the road can be picked up on the Ordnance Survey map of the area

south of the site and near the junction of two railway lines east of Westerleigh village. It continues down into east Bristol and disappears on meeting the A431 (OS 2004).

- 1.6 The road's alignment is also known from RAF aerial photographs taken in 1946, observation and archaeological fieldwork. Investigations at Shortwood Quarry showed the road to survive 0.15m below present ground level (bpgl). It was built from sub-angular and sub-rounded stone set into a red sandy matrix and was approximately 11m wide (SGC 2004).
- 1.7 A mill leat at Nibley (SGC HER 12848) with a water course running through the northern part of the site at a north-west/south-east alignment has also been recorded (CA 2008).
- 1.8 In July 2004 Stratascan conducted a geophysical survey of the western part of the development area. This recorded a series of tenuous linear features which appeared to lie parallel or at right angles to the projected line of the Roman road. Subsequently, Cotswold Archaeology undertook a two-phase archaeological evaluation. The first phase, in the western part of the development area, revealed a possible undated ditch cut through bedrock aligned north-west/south-east and two post-medieval/early modern boundary ditches (CA 2004a). The second phase of archaeological evaluation found no features or deposits of archaeological interest in the eastern part of the development area. However, this area had previously been heavily disturbed by the construction and subsequent demolition of the former council houses (CA 2004b). No evidence was found of the Roman road (CA 2008). It was suggested that a hedgerow (Fig. 2) may have marked the line of the Roman road.

Methodology

- 1.9 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2008). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks. Non-archaeologically significant deposits were removed by the contractors under archaeological supervision. Groundworks comprised a topsoil strip of the site and in addition, the excavation of three trenches to assess site contamination (trenches 1 -3), one trench dug to locate a former lift shaft (trench 4), eight geotechnical pits dug as part of site investigation (trenches 2, 3, 5 – 12), and a trench (trench 13) dug to insert a new storm drain (Fig. 2).

- 1.10 Written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.11 The archive from the evaluation is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. The site archive will be deposited with Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives. 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.

2. RESULTS

- 2.1 A broadly similar stratigraphic sequence was observed within all trenches. The lowest deposit encountered was the natural sandstone substrate which was revealed in trench 13 at a depth of 1.38m below the present ground level. This was overlain by natural clay substrate which was recorded at an average depth of 0.45m across the site. The clay was itself overlain by natural orange brown silty clay which was encountered across the site. Sealing this was a layer of dark red brown silt containing fragments of bedrock and modern debris. The possible rock cut ditch identified in the first phase of evaluation was shown to be a series of geological features.
- 2.2 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and, despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material was recovered.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the application area, the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks. The discovery of modern debris immediately overlying the natural clay suggests that it has been truncated. Consequently, it is likely that any archaeological remains associated with the Roman road or mill leat were removed during the previous development of the site and the subsequent demolition of the council houses. The service trench cut across the former hedgerow that has been suggested could mark the position of the Roman road did not encounter any archaeological deposits. It is therefore possible that the Roman road lies to the east of the site.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Jonathan Bennett, Kelly Saunders, Philippa Mitcheson, Ray Holt and Steven Sheldon. The report was written by Philippa Mitcheson. The illustrations were prepared by Rachel Kershaw. The archive has been compiled by Philippa Mitcheson, and prepared for deposition by Kathryn Price. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 1970 *Geological Survey of England and Wales: Solid and Drift Edition, Sheet 251: Malmesbury 1:63,360*

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2004a *Proposed MMI Site, A432 Badminton Road, Nibley, South Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation*, CA typescript report **04150**

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2004b *Land to the West of Stover Road, Nibley, South Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation*, CA typescript report **04175**

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2008 *Stover Road, Nibley, South Gloucestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

Margary, I.D. 1973 *Roman Roads in Britain*. John Baker Publishing, London

OS (Ordnance Survey) 2004 *Explorer Sheet 155, Bristol and Bath, 1:25,000*

SGC (South Gloucestershire Council) 2004 *MMI site, Nibley, South Gloucestershire: Brief for Archaeological Recording*

SGC (South Gloucestershire Council) 2006 *Brief for a further programme of archaeological work to be undertaken on land proposed for office development at Stover Road, Nibley, South Gloucestershire*

Stratascan 2004 *Geophysical Survey Report: Nibley, Yate, South Gloucestershire*

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

NFE = not fully excavated

Trench 1: 5 x 5 x 0.3m

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
100	Layer	Topsoil: dark brown sandy silt with modern debris			0.3	Modern
101	Layer	Natural geology: Mid red brown sandy clay with bedrock fragments			NFE	

Trench 2: 5 x 5 x 0.35m

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
200	Layer	Topsoil: dark brown sandy silt with modern debris			0.32	Modern
201	Layer	Natural geology: Mid red brown sandy clay with bedrock fragments			NFE	

Trench 3: 5 x 5 x 0.4m

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
300	Layer	Topsoil: dark brown sandy silt with modern debris			0.37	Modern
301	Layer	Natural geology: Mid red brown sandy clay with bedrock fragments			NFE	

Trench 4: 6 x 5 x 0.7m

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
400	Layer	Dark red brown silt with occasional bedrock fragments and much modern debris			0.65	Modern
401	Layer	Natural geology: Red brown sandy clay with bedrock fragments			NFE	
402	Layer	<i>In situ</i> concrete ground beam			NFE	Modern

Trench 5: 5 x 3 x 0.35m

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
500	Layer	Dark brown silt with modern debris			0.3	Modern
501	Layer	Natural geology: Red brown sandy clay with bedrock fragments			NFE	
502	Layer	Concrete building footing			NFE	Modern

Trench 6: 5 x 3 x 0.45m

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
600	Layer	Dark red brown silt with bedrock fragments and much modern debris			0.42	Modern
601	Layer	Natural geology: Red brown sandy clay with bedrock fragments			NFE	
602	Layer	<i>In situ</i> concrete ground beam			NFE	Modern

Trench 7: 4 x 3 x 0.4m

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
700	Layer	Dark red brown silt with bedrock fragments and much modern debris			0.28	Modern
701	Layer	Natural geology: Red brown sandy clay with bedrock fragments			NFE	

Trench 8: 4 x 3 x 0.4m

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
800	Layer	Dark red brown silt with bedrock fragments and much modern debris and bone fragments			0.4	Modern
801	Layer	Natural geology: Red brown sandy clay with bedrock fragments			NFE	

Trench 9: 4 x 3 x 0.35m

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
900	Layer	Dark red brown silt with bedrock fragments and much modern debris			0.3	Modern
901	Layer	Natural geology: Red brown sandy clay with bedrock fragments			NFE	
902	Layer	Modern debris including plastic, iron nails and charred roots. Fill of 903			NFE	Modern
903	Cut	Linear cut			NFE	

Trench 10: 4 x 3 x 0.25m

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
10000	Layer	Dark red brown silt			0.25	Modern
10001	Layer	Natural geology: Red brown sandy clay with bedrock fragments			NFE	

Trench 11: 3.5 x 3.5 x 0.4m

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
11000	Layer	Dark red brown silt			0.65	Modern
11001	Layer	Natural geology: Red brown sandy clay with bedrock fragments			NFE	

Trench 12: 7 x 7 x 0.13m

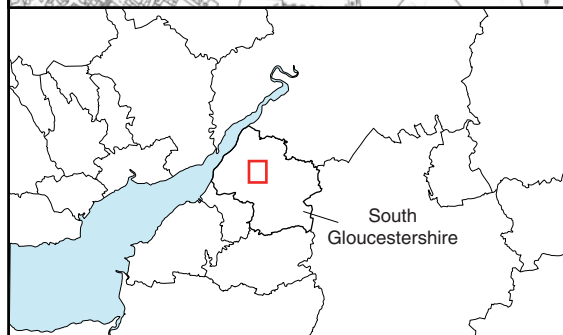
No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
12000	Layer	Dark red brown silt with bedrock fragments and much modern debris			1.3	Modern
12001	Layer	Tarmac			NFE	

Trench 13: 9.5 x 6.1 x 2.6m

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
1300	Layer	Dark red brown silt with bedrock fragments and much modern debris			0.2	Modern
13001	Layer	Compacted crushed tarmac and red brown silt			0.15	Modern
13002	Layer	Natural geology: loose dark orange brown silty clay			1.03	
13003	Layer	Natural geology: orange mottled brown silty clay			NFE	
13004	Fill	Shingle: brown-grey stones fill of 13005			NFE	Modern
13005	Cut	Construction cut for insertion of previous storm drain			NFE	Modern
13006	Fill	Concrete storm drain			NFE	Modern
13007	Layer	Natural geology: bedrock			NFE	

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Stover Road, Nibley, South Gloucestershire	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the erection of council offices and associated car parking, access and landscaping at Stover Road, Nibley, South Gloucestershire. Although the site lies on the proposed alignment of the Roman road between Bitton and Berkeley no features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and no artefactual material was recovered.	
Project dates	18 July – 8 October 2008	
Project type	Watching brief following archaeological evaluation and geophysical survey	
Previous work	Stratascan 2004: Geophysical survey Cotswold Archaeology 2004 evaluation	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Nibley, South Gloucestershire	
Study area	2.7ha	
Site co-ordinates	ST 6855 8255	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	South Gloucestershire Council	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Young	
Project Supervisor	Ray Holt, Steven Sheldon, Kelly Saunders, Philippa Mitcheson	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	N/A	None
Paper	Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives	Trench sheets, context sheets, maps, colour and black and white photographs, photographic registers
Digital	Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives	Digital photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2004a <i>Proposed MMI Site, A432 Badminton Road, Nibley, South Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> , CA typescript report 04150		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2004b <i>Land to the West of Stover Road, Nibley, South Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> , CA typescript report 04175		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2008 <i>Stover Road, Nibley, South Gloucestershire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> CA typescript Report 08189		
Stratascan 2004 <i>Geophysical Survey Report: Nibley, Yate, South Gloucestershire</i>		



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

**Stover Road, Nibley
South Gloucestershire**

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

DRAWN BY

RK

SCALE

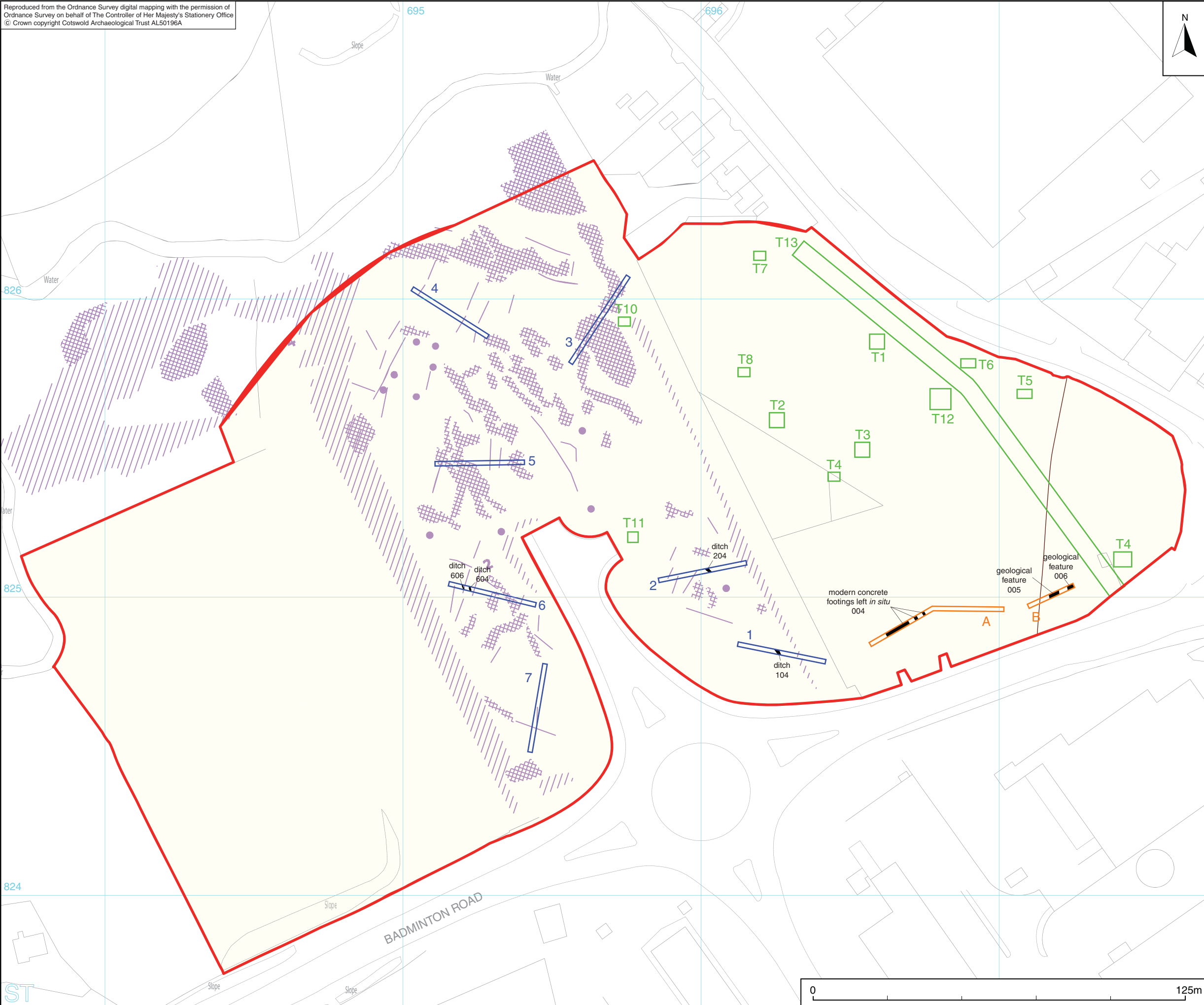
1:25,000@A4

PROJECT NO.

2666

FIGURE NO.

1



- site
- geotechnical/service trench
- line of former hedgerow
- area of observed groundworks
- phase 1 evaluation trenches with features
- phase 2 evaluation trenches with features
- geophysical anomalies