

Archaeological Watching Brief
at
**WHITCHURCH LANE/HARTCLIFFE ROUNDABOUT,
HENGROVE, BRISTOL.**
for
Planning, Transport & Sustainable Development,
Bristol City Council



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Centred on
N.G.R. ST 595 685

Client: Planning, Transport & Sustainable Development,
Bristol City Council

CONTENTS

Summary

List of Illustrations

1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	The Site.....	2
3.	Archaeological and Historical Context.....	3
4.	Aims and Methodology	4
5.	Results.....	5
6.	Conclusion.....	5
7.	Project Team.....	6
8.	Bibliography and Sources Consulted.....	6
9.	Acknowledgements.....	6

Appendix 1: Policy Statement

Appendix 2: Context Descriptions

Illustrations and Plates

Adopted Chronology

Prehistoric Before AD43	Palaeolithic 1,000,000 – 10,000 BC Mesolithic c. 10,000 – 3500 BC Neolithic c. 3500 – 2000 BC Bronze Age c. 2000 – 600 BC Iron Age c. 600 BC – AD43
Roman	AD43-410
Anglo Saxon/Early Medieval	AD410-1066
Medieval	AD1066-1540
Post-medieval	AD1540-present

NOTE

Notwithstanding that Bristol and Region Archaeological Services have taken reasonable care to produce a comprehensive summary of the known and recorded archaeological evidence, no responsibility can be accepted for any omissions of fact or opinion, however caused.

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks associated with the widening of Whitchurch Lane and construction of an access road for Hengrove Park, Phase 1.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed during the intrusive groundworks.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures

- Figure 1 Site location plan
- Figure 2 Plan showing study area in detail

Plates

- Cover Entrance to site
- Plate 1 View of topsoil stripping
- Plate 2 East-facing section of soil horizons
- Plate 3 View of Whitchurch Lane, looking west
- Plate 4 View of Whitchurch Lane, looking east
- Plate 5 View of glass bottle and ash deposit
- Plate 6 South-facing section of landfill site

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Bristol & Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by Planning, Transport & Sustainable Development, Bristol City Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the widening of the existing Whitchurch Lane at Hartcliffe Roundabout, Hengrove and a temporary corridor for utilities on neighbouring land. As a condition of the planning consent, it was required that any groundwork should be monitored for the survival of archaeological deposits.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken between September 2008 and February 2009 by Richard Coe, who also compiled this report.
- 1.3 The site archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery under Accession Number BRSMG 2008/67. A digital copy of the report will be available to the National Monuments Record (NMR) maintained by English Heritage in Swindon. The project has been entered into the Bristol City Council Historic Environment Record under reference number BHER 24777 and has also been issued with the OASIS Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations as: bristola1-56995.

2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The site (centred on NGR ST 595 685) lies some 4 miles due south of the city centre, in the modern suburb of Whitchurch at a height of about 60m aOD.
- 2.2 The site is bordered to the west by areas of earth mounds heavily planted with trees and shrub and to the south-west by Whitchurch Lane. A disused, concrete former airfield runway borders the north-east of the site and to the south east is the former Harvey's works. Before work commenced the site was grassed and used for recreational purposes.
- 2.3 The underlying geology is a blue lias clay (with bands of limestone) of the Jurassic period (British Geological Survey 1962). Field drains traverse the whole site, visible as crop marks in aerial photographs.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A desk-based assessment of Hengrove Park was carried out in 1994 by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (Burchill 1994). This indicated that the area had been pasture or arable land for most its documented history. A summary of the desk-based assessment is given below.
- 3.2 At the time of the Domesday Survey (1086) the watching brief area was part of Filton manor (alias Whitchurch). The Abbey of Keynsham (founded in *c.* 1167) held the land until the Dissolution when it was surrendered and its lands handed over to the crown in 1539. The area changed hands numerous times during the 16th century.
- 3.3 Maps by Saxton (1607) and Morden (1695) show that the land was used as an enclosed park or deer park called Filwood Park. In 1730 a survey of the Manor of Whitchurch shows that Filwood Park was then known as Filwood Farm. The area remained fields and part of Filwood Farm until the 1930s when the site was developed as Bristol Airport. During World War II the airfield was provided with a concrete runway and ancillary services.
- 3.4 The advent of larger aircraft led to the airport closure in 1957. It lay unused for many years before being developed as a public open space.
- 3.5 A number of Romano-British finds have been recorded from this area of south Bristol. An excavation by R. Williams in 1982 immediately north of the site on the opposite side of Hengrove Way produced evidence for a 2nd-4th century settlement, including stone-founded buildings, areas of cobbling and boundary ditches. It was the opinion of the excavator that this settlement continued to the south and south-east towards the site of Hengrove Park.
- 3.6 Romano-British finds are also recorded from the locality of the houses fronting Bamfield to the east of the site comprising of coins, pottery and millstones.

4. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork complied with the methodology contained within the Written Scheme of Investigation (BaRAS 2008). The fieldwork also followed the *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999). The aim of the watching brief was to record any archaeological features or deposits revealed during the course of intrusive groundworks.
- 4.2 The watching brief involved monitoring topsoil removal, excavation of an access road to the site and the widening of Whitechurch Lane. This involved the removal of overburden from the former landfill site known as 'the mounds'.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1 All groundworks were carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator using a toothless grading bucket. The average depth of the topsoil (100) during this phase of excavation was between 0.20m and 0.30m. The topsoil overlay a deposit of clean, light brown clay (101) up to 0.40m deep which in turn overlay the natural clean, dark blue clay (102).
- 5.2 The second phase of excavation for the widening of Whitchurch Lane revealed, toward the west end of the lane, a red clay capping layer. This in turn overlay a deposit of ash containing glass bottles and general household rubbish, which overlay light brownish-grey silty clay, the same as 101 (**Plate 6**).
- 5.3 No features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed and no artefacts predating the 19th century were recovered during the intrusive groundworks.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of the intrusive groundworks.
- 6.2 The lack of archaeological features or finds from the site despite its proximity to a nearby Roman settlement suggests that the park was landscaped, probably relatively recently, and may have involved the reduction of ground levels. This was probably associated with the development of the airfield. A lack of archaeological features or finds along Whitchurch Lane was probably as a result of the site being used for landfill (**Plate 5**).

7. PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1 The fieldwork was undertaken by Richard Coe who also produced this report. The illustrations were prepared and the report compiled by Ann Linge. Bruce Williams managed the project.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES CONSULTED

Published Work

Williams, R G J. Romano-British Settlement at Filwood Park, Bristol. *Bristol and Avon Archaeology 2*.

Published Work

Burchill, R. 1994 Desktop Assessment of Hengrove Park, Whitchurch, Bristol. *Bristol and Region Archaeological Services Report BA/D168*.

Insole, P 1995 Hengrove Park, Bristol. *Bristol and Region Archaeological Services Report BA/D216*.

9. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

BaRAS would like to thank Peter Randall Site Manager for Tarmac and Spencer Brindley, Senior General Foreman for Birse Civils Ltd) for their assistance and co-operation, Peter Insole of Bristol City Council for his advice and Ann Linge, BaRAS who produced this report.

APPENDIX 1: Policy Statement

This report is the result of work carried out in the light of national and local authority policies.

NATIONAL POLICIES

Statutory protection for archaeology is enshrined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), amended by the National Heritage Act, 1983. Nationally important sites are listed in the Schedule of Ancient Monuments (SAM). Scheduled Monument consent is required for any work which would affect a SAM.

ODPM PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

The Planning Policy Guidance of Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16) consolidates advice to planning authorities. The Guidance stresses the non-renewable nature of the archaeological resource, details the role of the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), encourages early consultation with county and district archaeological officers and sets out the requirement for developers to provide sufficient information on the archaeological impact of development to enable a reasonable planning decision to be made.

PPG 16 also indicates the circumstances where further work would be necessary and outlines the use of agreements and conditions to protect the archaeological resource.

DISTRICT POLICY

Bristol City Council Supplementary Planning Document (2006) states (policy SPD No.7, p4):

- (i) There will be a presumption in favour of preserving any archaeological features or sites of national importance, whether scheduled or not.
- (ii) Development which could adversely affect sites, structures, landscapes or buildings of archaeological interest and their settings will require an assessment of the archaeological resource through a desktop study, and where appropriate a field evaluation. Where there is evidence of archaeological remains, development will not be permitted except where it can be demonstrated that the archaeological features of the site will be satisfactorily preserved in situ, or a suitable strategy has been put forward to mitigate the impact of development proposals upon important archaeological remains and their settings; or, if this is not possible and the sites are not scheduled or of national importance, provision for adequately recording the site prior to destruction is made, preferably by negotiating a planning agreement to ensure that access, time and financial resources are available to allow essential recording and publication to take place.

APPENDIX 2: Context Descriptions

Context No.	Description
100	Dark brown clayey, silty topsoil, 200mm thick
101	Light brownish-grey silty clay, 400mm thick
102	Mid greyish-blue, lias clay (natural)

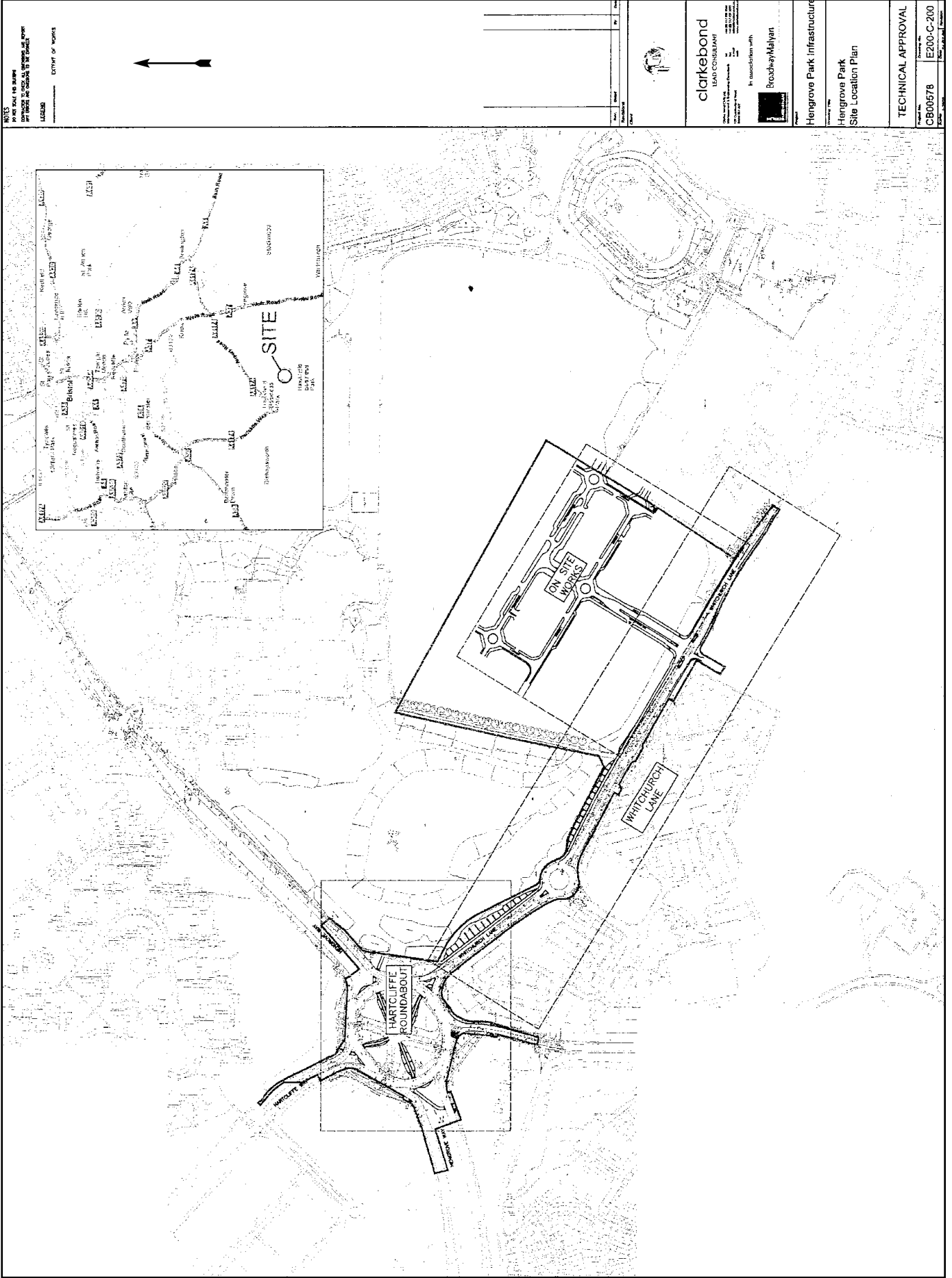


Fig.1 Site location plan

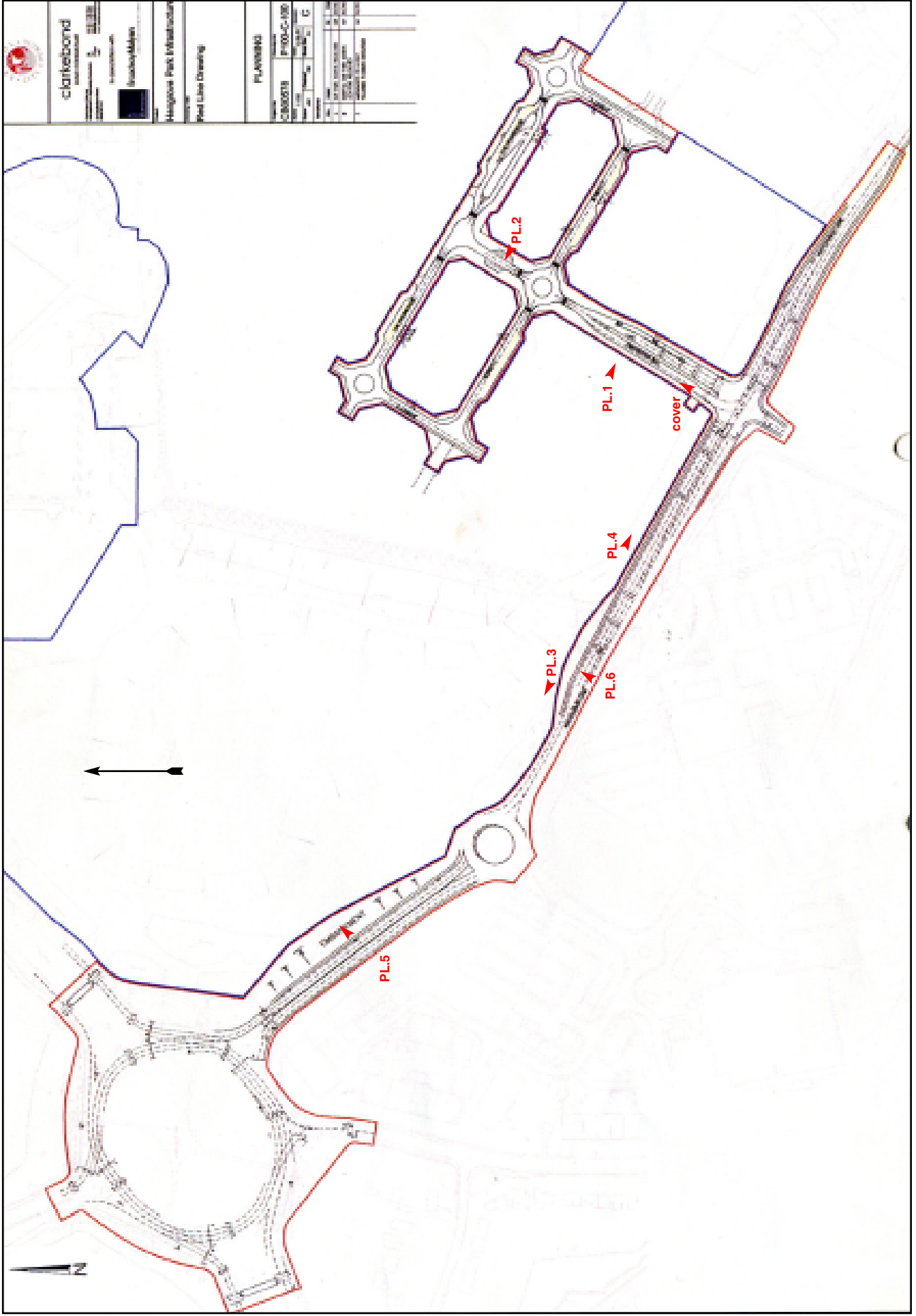


Fig.2 Plan showing study area in detail



Plate 1
View of topsoil stripping

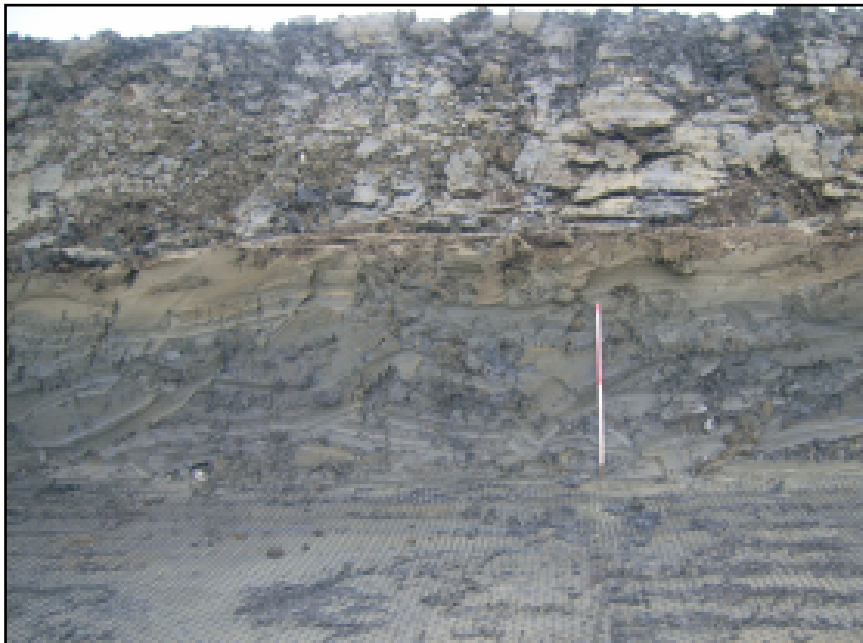


Plate 2
East-facing section of soil horizons



Plate 3
View of Whitchurch Lane,
looking west



Plate 4
View of Whitchurch
Lane, looking east



Plate 5
View of glass bottle and
ash deposit



Plate 6
South-facing section of
landfill site