

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
OF  
THE NEW GAS PIPELINE  
AT  
FIVE MILE DRIVE, BLOCKLEY,  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

**Between SP 139 353 and SP 146 342**

**On behalf of**

*CgMs Consulting Ltd*

**OCTOBER 2010**

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**FIELDWORK** 8<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> September 2010

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## **Summary**

*A watching brief was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services during the laying of a new gas pipeline at Five Mile Drive, Blockley, Gloucestershire (NGR 41400 23473) in September 2010. The pipeline ran from a connection spur at the Blockley road in the north and c. 1.1 km to a connection point in the south. The easement was between 7 and 8 m wide and was entirely dug in field-land east of Five Mile Drive (A44). A number of ditches and a pit were found. The features were all associated with drainage for the farming of the land in recent years. Only one ditch was interpreted as being older, since a tobacco clay pipe was found in its fill. In the southern part of the pipe trench a Roman silver coin of Emperor Caracalla, 198-217 AD was recovered.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)**

The site is located along Five Mile Drive (A44), Blockley, Gloucestershire. The northern extent of the site lies approximately 280m above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at National Grid Reference (NGR) SP 139 353. The ground level falls to the south with its southern extent (NGR SP 146 342) lying at c. 265m AOD. The solid geology varies along the course of the pipeline with its northern extent indicated to comprise Middle Jurassic Aston Limestone Formation (limestone, sandy, shelly) and its southern half to comprise Middle Jurassic Salperton Limestone Formation (limestone, shelly, ooidal) (British Geological Survey, Sheet 217, 2000).

### **1.2 Planning Background**

The development comprised the construction of a new c. 1.1 km long pipeline along the eastern side of Five Mile Drive (A44), Blockley, Gloucestershire. The works consisted of stripping an easement about 7-8 m wide, to accommodate the pipe trench.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The early prehistoric henge monument at Condicote (Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) GC140) lies c. 5 km to the south, surrounding which numerous funerary monuments of Neolithic and Bronze Age date are recorded, such as the Bourton Clump Long Barrow (SAM 28846), situated c. 2.9 km to the south of the site. Settlement in the later Prehistoric period is also present with defensive settlements recorded at Eubury Camp (SAM GC138), Willersey Hill Camp (SAM GC117) and Batsford Camp (SAM GC302), situated c. 5 km to the south, c. 3.5 km to the north-west and c. 5.5 km to the east of the site respectively.

The Roman road of the Foss(e) Way (SMR 6491) running from Cirencester (Corinium) to High Cross (Venonis), lies c. 5.7 km to the west of the site, along which the Roman small town of Dorn (SAM 31926) and occupation activity at Batsford Camp (SAM GC302) are recorded situated c. 5.4 km to the east of the site.



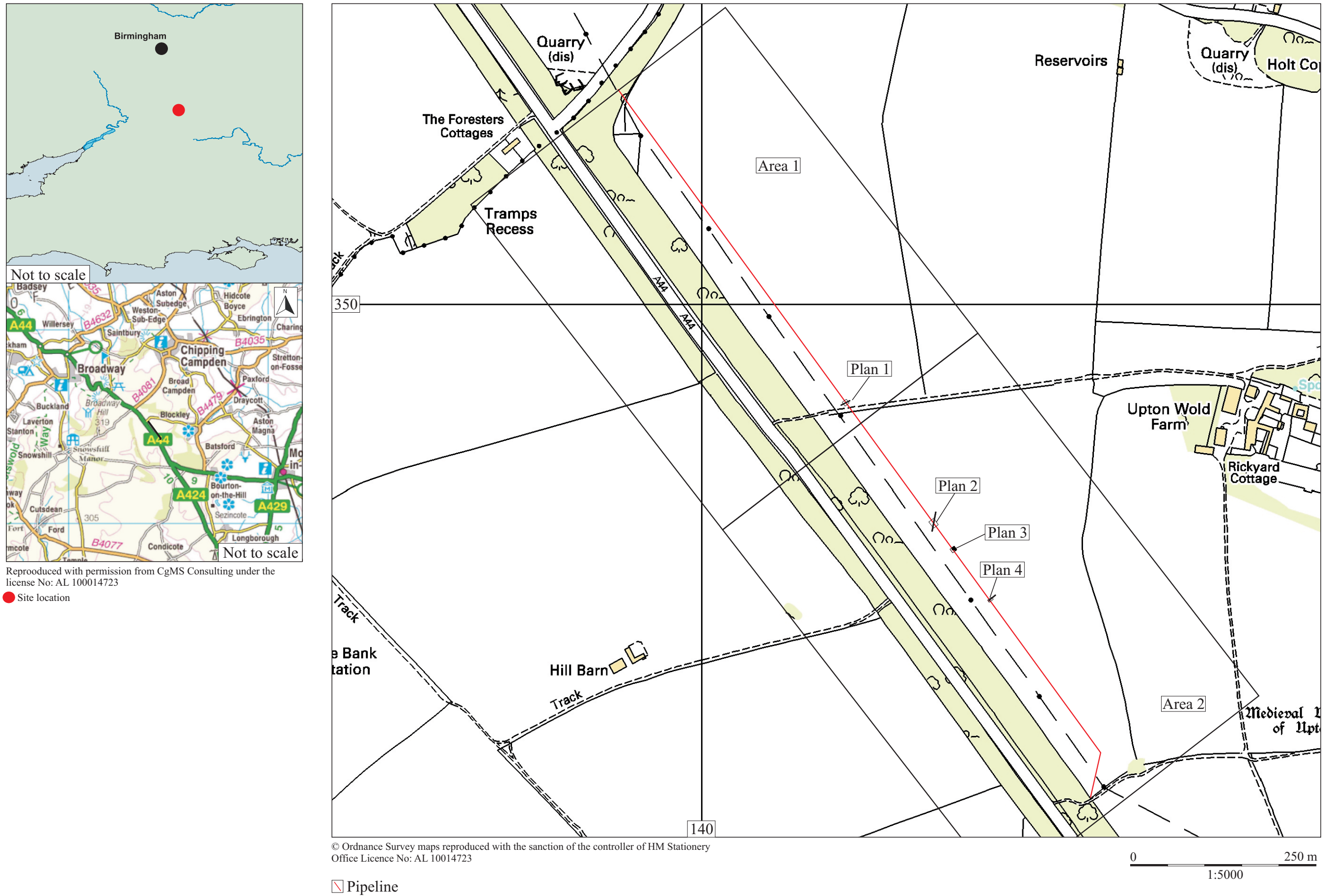


Figure 1. Site location

Finds of Roman material at four locations near Upton Village (SMR 2736), situated *c.* 475m east of the pipeline suggest probable settlement. Research excavations carried out by Birmingham University School of History in the 1960s uncovered traces of a settlement that date from at least the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. The investigated settlement provided a rich assemblage of pottery, coins and other artefacts. The earthworks in the surrounding landscape give a picture of a complex and well developed settlement. The road (SMR 9228) just west of the pipeline (A44 and A424) is referred to as “Sealt Straet” in Broadwell charter and is leading from Stow to Evesham, and may be of Roman origin.

There is evidence for continued occupation in the vicinity of Upton Village from the Romano-British period, through the Saxon and into the medieval period. The main settlement at Upton was in existence in AD 825. At the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century it supported at least 14 families, but was probably deserted by 1384.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape park of Spring Hill House, a Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden (Ref: 1893), is also noted to lie *c.* 1 km to the west of the site. A few post-medieval quarry pits are also situated 200m northeast of the pipeline (SMR 26961 and 26962).

The cropmark of three enclosures (SMR 26942) of uncertain date are situated south of Holt Coppice and visible on 1999 aerial photographs 500m to the east of the pipeline route (SP 1449 3500).

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To ensure that any archaeological features/deposits exposed during ground works are identified, recorded and interpreted to an acceptable standard.
- To establish whether any archaeological remains are present and to record them so that they may be related to other archaeological remains within the area.

## **3 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation written by CgMs Consulting and agreed with the Archaeological officer of Gloucestershire County Council.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (1999).

### **3.2 Methodology**

An archaeologist monitored the course of all invasive groundworks during the stripping of the easement that had the potential to disturb or destroy archaeological remains. This exposed the natural undisturbed ground. This was between 8<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> September 2010.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced.

## **4 RESULTS**

All features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material whilst the other reflect features 'cut' into preceding layers or structures. The easement was divided into two parts; Area 1 in the north and Area 2 in the south (Figure 2).

### **Area 1**

The lowest deposit encountered in Area 1 was the natural geology, consisting of compact, yellow-orange gravel mixed with occasional limestone and sandy silt (02). Cut into the natural was ditch 04 with the fill (03). Ditch 04 was orientated E-W and was parallel to the road leading to Upton Wold Farm. It was 0.3m wide, 0.15m deep and was visible in the trench over a total length of 7m. The ditch had sharp sides and a rounded base. The fill of Ditch 04 consisted of loose, orange-brown sandy silt with inclusions of charcoal, burnt clay and large stones (<0.01-0.05m) (03). In the fill was also found a piece of a tobacco clay pipe, indicating that the ditch could be from the 17<sup>th</sup>- 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Area 2**

#### ***Ditches***

The lowest deposit encountered in Area 2 was the natural geology, consisting of compact, yellow-orange gravel mixed with silty sand (02). Cut into the natural were two ditches 06 and 10 and a pit 08.

Ditch 06 was aligned NE-SW, it was 0.2m deep, 1.7m wide and visible in the trench over a length of 11m. The ditch had a fairly flat base and sides that were close to 45°, but slightly sharper on the southern side. It was filled by loose, red-brown silty clay (05) with inclusions of charcoal and large stones (<0.01-0.05m). This ditch is considered to be modern in date and used for drainage. It was situated at the end of a slope in the lowest part of the modern farming landscape, in a position where flooding is likely to occur.

In Area 2 there was also the ditch 10, which was running roughly E-W in the trench. Ditch 10 was 0.22m deep, 0.6m wide and was visible in the trench over a length of 6m. The ditch had a round base and rounded sides and was filled by loose, red-brown silty clay (09) with inclusions of charcoal and large stones (<0.01-0.05m). No finds

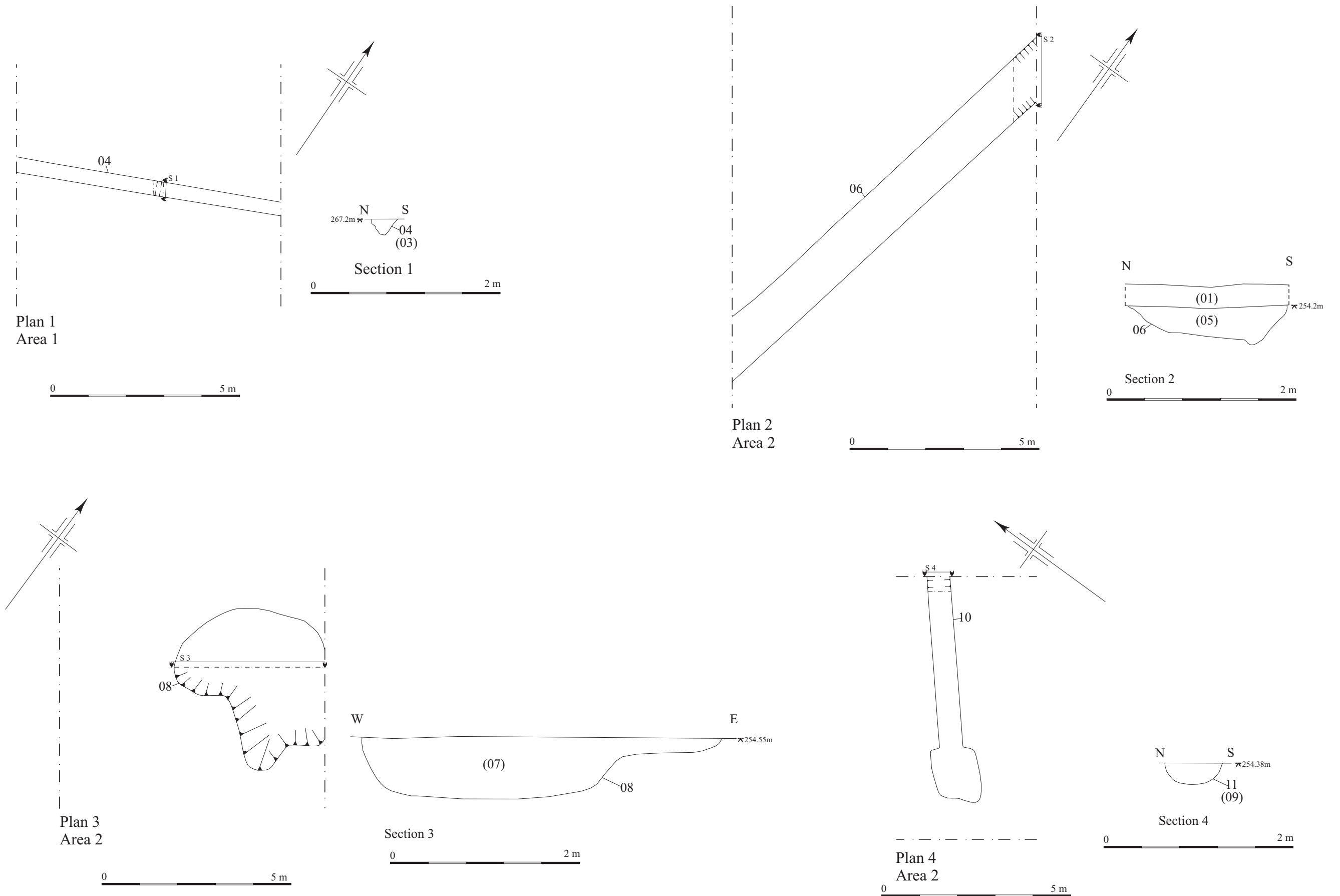


Figure 2. Plans and sections

Figure 2. Plan showing the location of the trench and the archaeological features. were collected from the ditch, but it is likely that the ditch is contemporary with the other features in Area 2 and that they can all be related to modern farming activity.

### ***Pits***

In Area 2 there was finally the slightly oval and irregular pit 08. This pit was 3.8 m wide, 4.2 m long and 0.6 m deep. It had a fairly flat base and rounded sides. The fill consisted of loose, red-brown silty clay with inclusions of charcoal and large stones (<0.01-0.05m) (07). Pit 08 was situated close to Ditch 06 and it is likely that the pit was dug in order to drain the modern farming land. No finds were however found in its fill and the pit could not be dated.

The uppermost layer in both areas was a 0.2m thick red-brown silt-clay plough-soil (01). This sealed all features.

## **4.2 Reliability of Results**

The archaeological work was mainly carried out in good conditions and the results are felt to be representative of the extant archaeology.

## **5 FINDS**

### **5.1 Pottery**

The pottery assemblage comprised three sherds from the topsoil (01) with a total weight of 20g. All three sherds fit together and are all from the same vessel. The pottery is Post-medieval red earthenware and is partly glazed.

### **5.2 Clay Tobacco Pipe**

A piece of a tobacco clay pipe stem was found in the fill (03) in ditch 04 in Area 1. The clay pipe can probably be dated from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and could indicate that the ditch, and the parallel road leading to Upton Wold Farm, are from that period. The clay pipe has two stamps in the shapes of a “C” and a “L” from the manufacturer, who is unknown.

### **5.3 Coin**

A Roman silver coin was found in the topsoil (01) at the southern end of the trench in Area 2, c. 84m north of the road leading to the deserted Romano-British, Saxon and Medieval settlement in Upton Village. The coin is much corroded, but the letters “PART” are clearly visible at the edge of the coin and the central motif of the coin is the Roman goddess Victoria. This suggests that the coin is from the reign of Emperor *Caracalla*, 198-217 A.D. This date is of interest as it corresponds well with the date of settlement near Upton Village and a number of other Roman settlements situated a few kilometres to the east and west of the site (See the Archaeological Background).

### **5.4 Environmental Remains**

No environmental samples were taken.



## 6 DISCUSSION

Few archaeological features were uncovered during the watching brief for the new gas pipeline at Five Mile Drive, Blockley, Gloucestershire. The three ditches 04, 06 and 10 and the pit 08 can all be interpreted as features which were constructed in order to drain the nearby farming land.

The ditch 04 was on the other hand situated along a road in a much higher position than the other three features. It was also found several hundred metres away from the pit and the two ditches at the end of the slope. These circumstances, together with the fact that its fill (03) contained a piece of a tobacco clay pipe from the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century, suggest that Ditch 04 is older than the other three features.

The finds from the watching brief consist of a few pieces of post-medieval pottery and a Roman silver coin from the topsoil (01). The lack of pottery and other artefacts in the topsoil suggests that there has been little human activity in the area over the centuries. It is also important to remember that most finds were found in soil that has been ploughed for centuries. Artefacts may therefore have been moved from their original positions due to modern farming.

The Roman silver coin is nevertheless an important find, considering that the Roman settlement at Upton Village was situated only a few hundred metres away from the site.

## 7 ARCHIVE

### Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

#### Paper record

The project brief  
Written scheme of investigation  
The project report  
The primary site records

#### Physical Record

The finds

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Corinium Museum.

## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage 1991. Management of Archaeological Projects.

Institute for Archaeologists, 1999 (Revised 2008) Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs.