

Junction of Broadmoor and Newton Roads Cinderford Gloucestershire

Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief



for
Parsons Brinckerhoff

on behalf of
Homes and Communities Agency

CA Project: 5931
CA Report: 16348

July 2016



Junction of Broadmoor and Newton Roads Cinderford, Gloucestershire

Archaeological Evaluation

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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Junction of Broadmoor and Newton Roads
Location:	Cinderford, Gloucestershire
NGR:	SO 64447 15435
Type:	Evaluation and watching brief
Date:	15-20 June 2016
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Dean Heritage Centre
Site Code:	NRC 16

An archaeological evaluation and watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in June 2016 at the junction of Broadmoor and Newton Roads, Cinderford, Gloucestershire. Six trenches were excavated.

Fieldwork revealed extensive deposits of 19th/20th-century mine spoil that was dumped on a relict topsoil. A ditch, most probably a former field boundary, pre-dating the dumping and a later pit were also identified, along with a venting chamber associated with the capped Victory Mine shaft.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In June 2016 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation and watching brief for Parsons Brinckerhoff, on behalf of the Homes and Communities Agency, at the junction of Broadmoor and Newton Roads, Cinderford, Gloucestershire (centred on NGR: SO 64447 15435; Fig. 1). The archaeological works were undertaken at the request of Toby Catchpole, Heritage Team Leader, Gloucestershire County Council and the archaeological advisor on major planning applications to the Forest of Dean District Council (FODDC). The works were undertaken in advance of the construction of the southern 600m of a new Spine Road from the junction of Broadmoor and Newtown Roads, west to the proposed new college site in Cinderford's Northern Development Quarter.

1.2 The archaeological works were carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) and Method Statement for archaeological evaluation and watching brief (Parsons Brinckerhoff 2014 and CA 2016 respectively) that were approved by Toby Catchpole. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014) and the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief*. It was monitored by Toby Catchpole.

The site

1.3 The proposed road corridor comprises redundant industrial land and wet meadows located to the west of Broadmoor and Newtown Roads, Cinderford. To the north, south and east of the site is bounded by light industry and to the west by spoil tips associated with former mineral extraction. The site lies at approximately 206m AOD and gently slopes towards the centre of the site.

1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Cinderford Member mudstone, siltstone and sandstone of the Carboniferous Period, that are overlain by superficial deposits consisting of alluvium- (clay, silt, sand and gravel) of the Quaternary Period (BGS 2016). The natural substrate encountered during the current works comprised gravel and clay, consistent with the mapped superficial deposits.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The site has been subject to Archaeological Desk-based Assessment (Parsons Brinckerhoff 2014) and, in part, previous archaeological evaluation (OAN 2014). The following is a summary of these investigations.

2.1 There is some limited evidence for prehistoric and Roman activity in the area. A Bronze Age axe head was recovered from Hawkswell brickworks to the north of the site and a single Roman coin has previously been recovered from the village of Steam Mills (Parsons Brinckerhoff 2014).

2.2 Medieval and later remains in the area are dominated by mineral extraction, principally coal mining, and brick-making. The assessment indicated that there is a high potential for buried archaeological remains dating to the Industrial period to be present on site, particularly those associated with coal mining activities including shafts, pits, collieries and spoil heaps. With the development of mining technologies, deep coal deposits were being exploited from the 17th century onwards. There were a number of deep mines operating in the Cinderford area including the Winning Colliery, New Bowson Colliery, Northern United Colliery. With the expansion of the coal industry came other ancillary and dependant industries such as the Broadmoor Chemical works just to the south of the site (ibid.).

2.3 The last deep mine in the area, the Northern United Colliery, closed in 1965 and although free mining continues, it is in a much diminished form. Much of the associated industry has also now closed, leaving a derelict former industrial landscape that is being redeveloped or has been laid down to forestry.

2.4 An archaeological evaluation, predominately of land adjacent to Steam Mills Road to the north of the current site but also including two trenches within the proposed road corridor (see Fig. 2), has previously been undertaken (OAN 2014). The trenching undertaken within the road corridor indicated areas of modern made-ground deposits sealed former ground surfaces (ibid.).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of the evaluation are to provide information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date,

integrity, state of preservation and quality, in accordance *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014). This information will enable FODDC to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset, consider the impact of the proposed development upon it, and to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of five evaluation trenches, each measuring 10m by 2m (Trenches 1 to 5) and the archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the establishment of a works compound (Trench 6; see Fig. 2 for locations and extent). All trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual*.
- 4.2 The trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Trenches 1, 2, 4 and 5 were up to 2.1m deep and were recorded from the sides of the trench, as soft ground and inflowing water rendered the trenches unsafe to enter. The groundworks for the compound (Trench 6) were restricted to the removal of topsoil.
- 4.3 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites* but no deposits were identified that required sampling. No artefacts pre-dating the modern era were recovered despite the visual inspection of the generated spoil.
- 4.4 The archive from the current works is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble prior to deposition with the Dean Heritage Centre. 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 (FIGS 2 AND 3)

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are to be found in Appendix A.
- 5.2 The natural geological substrate, consisting of sands, gravels and clays, was revealed in Trenches 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, between 0.7m and 2.1m below present ground level (bpgl). It was overlain by up to 0.6m of subsoil in Trenches 1, 2, 4 and 5 (within Trench 3 the natural substrate was immediately sealed by topsoil). The subsoil was overlain by a buried topsoil, up to 0.3m thick, that was in turn sealed by a series of modern made-ground deposits up to 2m thick. The dumped material in Trenches 1 and 2 predominantly comprised clean brown clay, whilst in Trenches 4 and 5 the clays contained an assortment of limestone/sandstone boulders, cinder and 19th/20th-century glass bottles and ceramics. The clay dumps observed in Trenches 4 and 5 were also noted at the limit of excavation in Trench 6. The modern made-ground was sealed by an intermittent topsoil.

Trench 2

- 5.3 Close to the eastern extent of Trench 2 a north/south orientated ditch, 206, was observed. It was parallel to, and ran along the western edge of, a modern drainage ditch located immediately beyond the trench. Ditch 206 cut through subsoil 204 and was sealed by buried topsoil 203. It was 1.3m wide and contained single, undated fill 205. The ditch was not hand-excavated due to the depth of the trench (over 1m at this point), the rapid ingress of ground water, and the soft and unstable nature of the natural substrate.

Trench 4

- 5.4 Pit 405, measuring at least 1.2m in diameter, was partially exposed extending from the southern baulk of the trench. It was not possible to determine from where the pit was cut from due to the depth of the trench (2.1m), the ingress of ground water through the section and the collapsing sides of the trench. However, its fill, 406, was very similar to the cinder rich elements in the overlying made ground (401) suggesting that it was probably cut through the relict topsoil, 402.

Trench 6

- 5.5 A manhole cover was discovered in the western portion of the area proposed for the works compound that upon investigation was found to be a venting chamber for the

capped Victory Mine Shaft (Fig. 3). The area was cordoned off and the location of the works compound moved to the east and north of it (see Fig. 2 for location and extent). The associated groundworks were restricted to the removal of the modern topsoil exposing modern made-ground deposits.

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see archaeological background above) the watching brief and evaluation trenches identified no significant archaeological remains or artefacts. The presence of subsoil overlying the natural substrate throughout much of the site suggests that the area has not been subject to modern truncation, rather that it has been utilised to dump spoil presumably from nearby mineral workings. Such findings are comparable with the previous archaeological findings in the immediate area (see section 2.4 above) trenching
- 6.2 The brown clay dumps observed in Trenches 1 and 2 may originate from the open cast pit to the west of the site. The spoil was dumped directly on the existing topsoil sometime during the 19th/20th centuries. It is probable that this dumping terminated the use of ditch 206 and resulted in the cutting of the new drainage ditch just to the east of Trench 2.
- 6.3 In the east of the site the relict topsoil was sealed by 19th/20th century clay dumps. These appear to have a different origin to those in the west of the site and may be associated with the Victory Mine Shaft. Certainly the cinder rich dumps/lenses may have come from nearby industries and/or boilers and workshops associated with the shaft. When the Victory Mine Shaft was sealed, sometime after 1960, it is probable that the waste tips in the eastern part of the site were levelled in preparation for the after use of the site.

7. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Peter Busby, assisted by Eduardo Cabrera and Jack Harrison. The report was written by Peter Busby. The illustrations were prepared by Leo Heatley. The archive has been compiled by Peter Busby, 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://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology_viewer_google/googleviewer.html Accessed 21 June 2016

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 *Cinderford Northern Quarter: Method Statement for an Archaeological Watching Brief and Evaluation*

Oxford Archaeology North, 2014, *Cinderford Northern Quarter Spine Road, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation*, unpubl rep

Parsons Brinckerhoff 2014, *Cinderford Northern Quarter Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation*

Parsons Brinckerhoff 2014, *Cinderford Northern Quarter Spine Road Archaeological Desk-based Assessment*, unpubl report

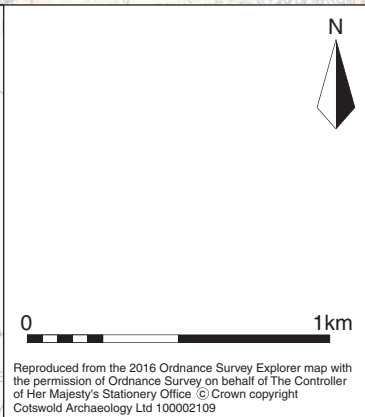
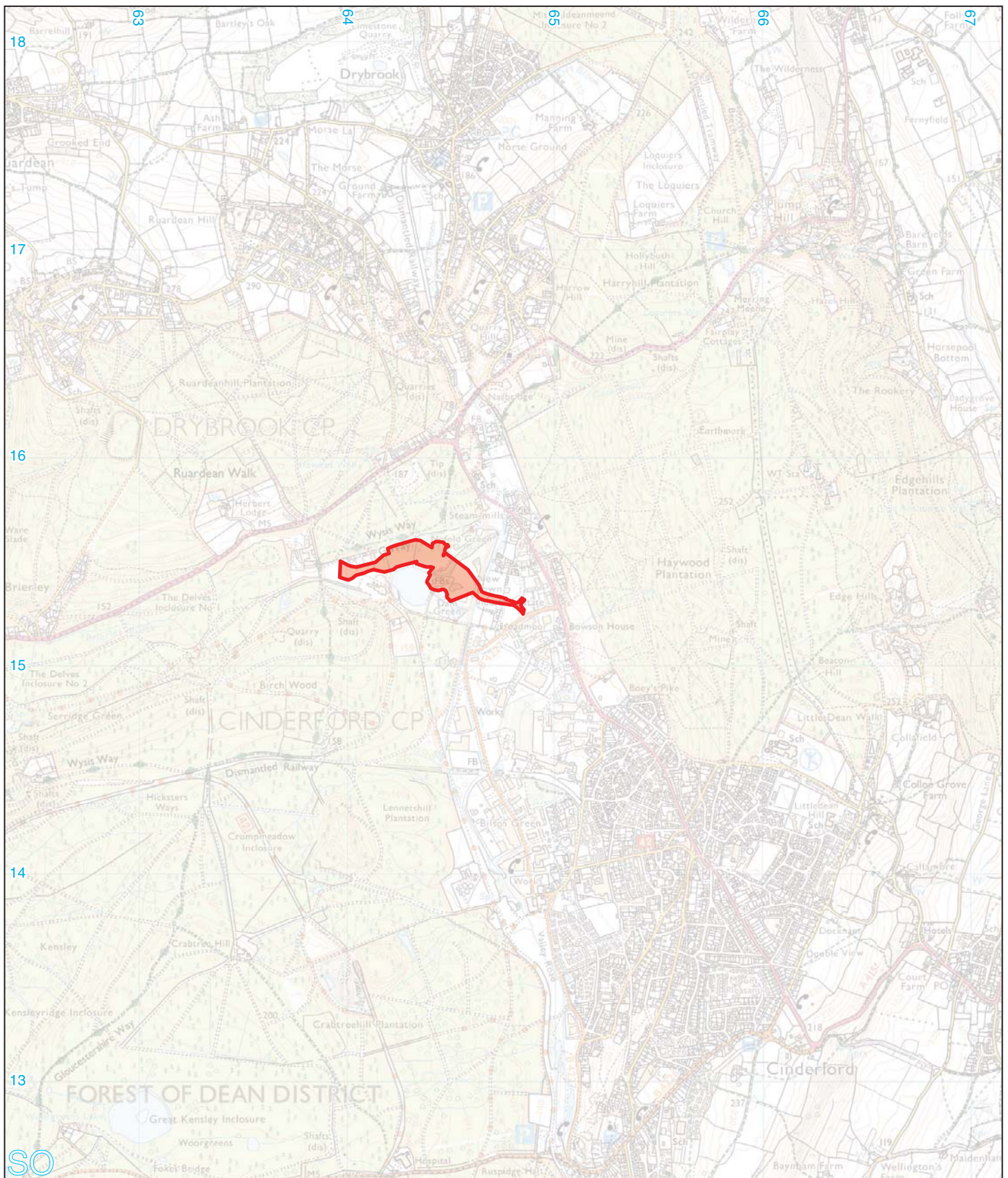



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
1	101	Layer		Modern topsoil	Grey black clay	>10	>2	0.3
1	102	Layer		Dump	Brown clay with 15% angular stones/boulders and patches of grey clay	>10	>2	0.8
1	103	Layer		Dump	Grey black clay with 5% small assorted stones	>10	>2	0.1
1	104	Layer		Dump	Red brown gravel with 5% small assorted stones	>10	>2	0.2
1	105	Layer		Relict topsoil	Grey black clay on the surface of which there is the remains of partly decayed grass	>10	>2	0.12
1	106	Layer		Subsoil	Yellow grey clay	>10	>2	0.5
1	107	Layer		Natural	Yellow sand clay	>10	>2	>0.2
2	201	Layer		Modern topsoil	Brown grey clay	>10	>2	0.3
2	202	Layer		Dump	As 102	>10	>2	1
2	203	Layer		Relict topsoil	As 105	>10	>2	0.3
2	204	Layer		Subsoil	As 106	>10	>2	0.6
2	205	Fill	206	Ditch fill	Brown clay. Not excavated	>2	1.3	>0.1
2	206	Cut		Ditch	N/S orientated, linear in plan located next to modern N/S orientated field ditch. Not excavated	>2	1.3	>0.1
2	207	Layer		Natural	Mixed lenses of blue grey clay and yellow brown clay	>10	>2	>0.2
3	301	Layer		Modern topsoil	Brown grey silt clay	>10	>2	0.55
3	302	Layer		Natural	Dark grey silt clay with 50% rounded sandstone cobbles	>10	>2	0.05
3	303	Layer		Natural	Yellow silt clay	>10	>2	>0.05
4	401	Layer		Dump	Blue grey clay with large lenses of black cinders and ash, and 25% shale and limestone/sandstone cobbles/boulders	>10	>2	2
4	402	Layer		Relict topsoil	Dark brown grey silt clay	>10	>2	0.3
4	403	Layer		Subsoil	Grey brown silt clay	>10	>2	0.1
4	404	Layer		Natural	Blue yellow silt clay	>10	>2	-
4	405	Cut		Pit	Circular in plan mostly hidden under S bulk of trench	-	>1.2	-
4	406	Fill	405	Pit fill	Dark brown silty clay and cinders	-	>1.2	-
5	501	Layer		Dump	Blue grey silt clay , and 25% shale and limestone/sandstone cobbles/boulders	>10	>2	1
5	502	Layer		Dump	Dark blue back cinders	>10	>2	0.8
5	503	Layer		Relict topsoil	Dark brown grey silt clay	>10	>2	0.25
5	504	Layer		Subsoil	Dark grey brown silt clay	>10	>2	0.05
5	505	Layer		Natural	Yellow clay with patches of grey silty clay	>10	>2	>0.05
6	601	Layer		Modern topsoil	Dark brown silt clay	>40	>33	0.06
6	601	Layer		Dump	As 401	>40	>33	>0.14

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Junction of Broadmoor and Newton Roads	
Short description	<p>An archaeological evaluation and watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in June 2016 at the Junction of Broadmoor and Newton Roads, Cinderford, Gloucestershire. A total of six trenches were excavated.</p> <p>Fieldwork revealed extensive dumps of 19th/20th century mine spoil dumped over relict topsoil. A field ditch predating the dumping and pit dating to the dumping of mine spoil were also identified, along with the venting chamber of the capped Victory Mine Shaft.</p>	
Project dates	15-20 June 2016	
Project type	Field evaluation and watching brief	
Previous work	Archaeological evaluation: Oxford Archaeology North, 2014, <i>Cinderford Northern Quarter Spine Road, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> , unpubl rep	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Cinderford, Gloucestershire	
Study area		
Site co-ordinates	SO 6444 1543	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	none	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Parsons Brinckerhoff	
Project Manager	Cliff Bateman	
Project Supervisor	Peter Busby	
MONUMENT TYPE	Coal mine	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	None	
Paper	Dean Heritage Centre	Trench sheets
Digital	Dean Heritage Centre	Digital photos and drawings
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 <i>Junction of Broadmoor and Newton Roads, Cinderford, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report 16348		



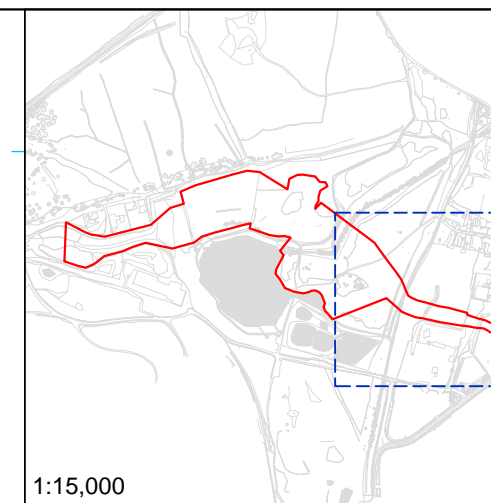
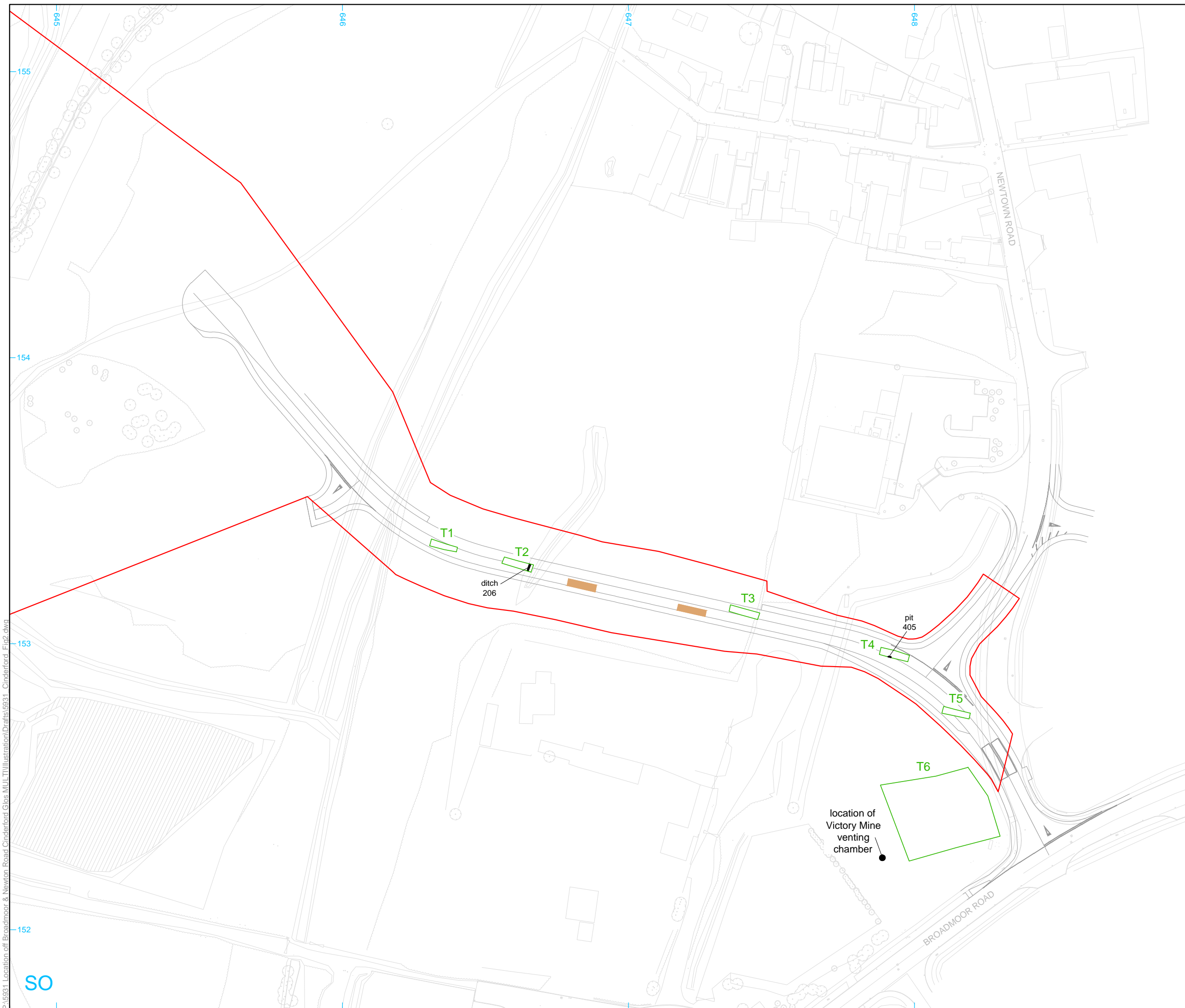

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PROJECT TITLE
 Junction of Broadmoor and Newtown Roads, Cinderford, Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

DRAWN BY	LJH	PROJECT NO.	5931	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	LM	DATE	15-07-2016	
APPROVED BY	CB	SCALE @A4	1:25,000	1

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1:15,000

- site boundary
- new road scheme
- evaluation trench
- previous evaluation trench (OAN 2014)
- archaeological feature



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PROJECT TITLE
 Junction of Broadmoor and Newtown Road, Cinderford, Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE
 Trench location plan showing archaeological features

DRAWN BY	LJH	PROJECT NO.	5931	FIGURE	
CHECKED BY	LM	DATE	15/07/2016		
APPROVED BY	CB	SCALE@A3	1:1250		2

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SO



Trench 1 looking south-west



Trench 2 looking south-west



Trench 3 looking north-west



Trench 4 looking south-west



Trench 5 looking south-west



Victory Mine venting chamber, looking west

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