



**A5 Western Transport Corridor**  
**Sollus A at the townland of Sollus, Co. Tyrone**  
Method statement for archaeological excavation, in  
support of an application for an excavation licence

**Client:** Road Service/Mouchel  
**Applicant:** Brian O'Hara  
**NGR:** 237453/407328  
**Date:** 19 March 2013



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- Appendix 1 Assessment report on Archaeological evaluation (to follow)
- Appendix 2 Profiles of Key Staff

## Summary

This document is submitted as a method statement in supporting an application for an excavation licence for the archaeological excavation of features identified at Sollus, Co. Tyrone during Phase 1 archaeological works associated with the A5WTC road scheme.

The proposed works will be carried out by suitably qualified archaeologists employed by CotswoldRubicon under licence and in accordance with the provisions of Article 41 of the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995 and in compliance with policies BH1 – BH4 of Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6).

Phase 1 Evaluation of the route was commenced on the 28 January 2013 and is ongoing. The Evaluation is being carried out under licence no AE/13/13E which has been issued to Brian O'Hara of CotswoldRubicon by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA).

Sollus A is situated in the middle section of Section 1 of the A5WTC scheme and was identified in Strip and Map area 009.

Topsoil removal within SMA 009 confirmed the presence of one archaeological feature, a burnt mound measuring 15.5 m in length by 12.8 m in width and had a depth of approximately 0.15 to 0.25 m. The burnt mound is cut by a number of modern drains.

The site has been deemed archaeologically significant and it was recommended that the remains be fully excavated in advance of construction works (see Appendix 1). Details of the site location and known archaeological sites in the vicinity are also included in Appendix 1.

This method statement outlines the proposals for Phase 2 excavation of a site comprising an area of 515 m<sup>2</sup> centred on the identified archaeological feature (see Figure 1 for location and extent).

## 1. Objectives

The objective of the excavation is to ascertain the nature, extent and significance of all archaeological features or deposits uncovered at Sollus A that will be directly impacted by the development. Archaeological features/deposits will be fully excavated and recorded with the results compiled in a report for dissemination.

## 2. Methodology

All investigations will comply in full with the provisions of Article 41 of the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995 and in compliance with policies BH1 – BH4 of Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6). All works will be carried out according to the specifications and conditions of engagement from the main contract documents published by Mouchel and in accordance with the conditions of the excavation licence.

It is proposed that an area measuring 515 m<sup>2</sup> be subject to full archaeological excavation. All archaeological features identified within this stripped area, including any additional to those identified in Phase 1 will be fully hand excavated and recorded. A minimum of a 10 m zone clear of archaeology will be maintained around the perimeter of all sites. This may require topsoil removal in excess of the stripped area (Figure 1) if new archaeological features are identified close to the edges. Any extensions to the pre-defined areas will be done only with the prior approval of the Mouchel Senior Archaeologist.

The contract specification has included details on the systems of sampling and excavation that are to be carried out. These will be adhered to in all cases except by prior written approval of the Mouchel project archaeologist. In addition the general methods outlined below will apply.

### 4.1 Recording

All archaeological features/deposits will be half-sectioned where appropriate and, once the sections have been recorded, fully excavated.

All recording will be by CotswoldRubicon standard method and will be undertaken on standardised recording sheets. Any contexts, small finds and environmental samples will be given unique numbers. Survey recording of all excavation locations will be related to the Ordnance Survey grid. Detailed site drawings will be undertaken at the appropriate archaeological recording scales (1:20 plan and 1:10 section). Digital photographs will be taken.

The archaeological features identified during Phase 1 works were recorded using a Leica 400/700 Series Total Station with Panasonic Toughbook laptop running Pen Map software and a Trimble 5700 GPS System. Any changes or additions to the excavation area as well as survey recording of all excavated features, deposits and find spots identified on the site will be carried out using the same equipment and related to the Ordnance Survey grid.

## 4.2 Samples and artefacts

Where appropriate archaeological deposits will be sampled systematically in accordance with CotswoldRubicon standard environmental sampling practice and in consultation with palaeoenvironmentalist Sarah Cobain. Bulk samples (a minimum of 10 litres but up to 30 litres if possible) will be taken for wet sieving and flotation where appropriate. These will be processed and assessed as part of the contract.

Following wet sieving the flots and retents of these samples will be assessed for macro-plant remains. These will be recovered by the archaeobotanist and recommendations for post-excavation analysis such as charcoal identification and/or macro-plant analysis will be included in the post-excavation assessment report. If appropriate the recovered environmental remains will be fully analysed and reported on during Phase 3 post-excavation works.

Any artefacts and samples retrieved during the investigation (including all finds recovered during Stage (ii)) will be catalogued, retained and stored at the offices of CotswoldRubicon. The treatment of any artefacts retrieved during the investigation will comply with the best practice regarding care, numbering and storage. The advice of archaeological conservator Susannah Kelly (University College Dublin) will be sought should any sensitive objects be uncovered. Any organic artefacts that are retrieved during the excavation will be stored in appropriate conditions and assessed by a suitably qualified specialist as part of this contract.

Appropriate period specialists will be consulted in relation to finds recovered on the site if necessary. Following excavation if appropriate all artefacts recovered will be analysed and reported on by appropriate specialists during Phase 3 works.

Any human remains identified will be excavated under the supervision of CotswoldRubicon osteoarchaeologists Johnny Geber and Carmelite Troy, who would also co-ordinate the recording treatment and subsequent analysis of any such remains.

Any faunal remains identified will be sampled in consultation with CotswoldRubicon faunal remains specialist Claudia Tommasino Suarez. A dedicated faunal remains register will be created if such samples are taken.

Any non-artefactual metallurgical material identified on site will be sampled in accordance with CotswoldRubicon's in-house guidelines and a dedicated register will be created for such samples. If required this material will be assessed and/or analysed by an appropriate specialist during Phase 3 works.

The archive will therefore include an inventory of any environmental, faunal and metallurgical samples as well as any human remains or artefacts recovered during the excavation. This will include the basic details of the feature from which it was recovered. For samples this will also record the material being sampled, the number of bags/boxes taken and the volume and the reason why the samples were taken. For finds it will describe the fabric, type, dimensions and condition of the object.

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## 5 Excavation team and specialists

CotswoldRubicon's Principle Project Director for the scheme is John Dillon. The Senior Project Manager is Patricia Long. Senior Archaeologist Cliff Bateman will co-ordinate Phase 2 works on Sections 1 and 3 of the Scheme.

An allocation of one director, one supervisor and four site assistants for 10 days, and one surveyor for two days has been given to the site by the Mouchel Project archaeologist. The excavation will be directed by Matt Nichol who is eligible to hold an excavation licence. The site supervisor will be Stephen Hourihan. CotswoldRubicon may apply for more resources if it should be found that the allocated resource is not sufficient.

Surveyor John Pick will co-ordinate the survey recording during the course of the excavation.

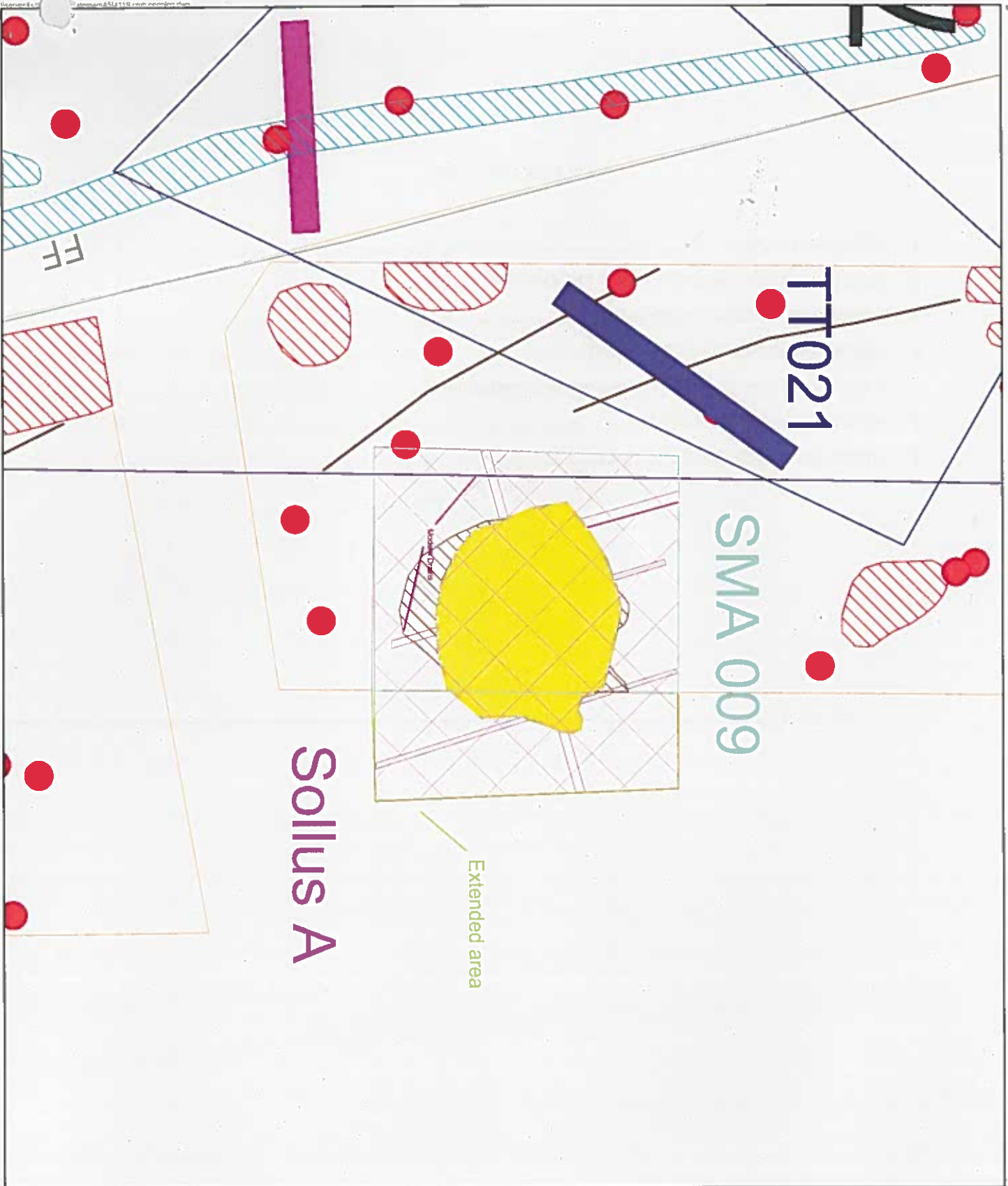
Sarah Cobain of CotswoldRubicon will assess palaeo-environmental aspects of the project. Sample processing, if appropriate, will be undertaken by experienced technicians, under the supervision of Ms. Cobain.









Appropriate period or material specialists will be consulted during the excavation if required.

## 6 Post-excavation

Following excavation the site archives will be consolidated and a post-excavation review will be carried out. Written proposals for the post-excavation work will be outlined for agreement with the Project Archaeologists and the NIES-HMU.

Phase 3 of the current project will involve the completion of the post-excavation work agreed following the post-excavation review. Phase 3 will culminate in the production of a Final Excavation report, which will be lodged with the NIEA in fulfilment of the conditions of the licence.



-  also
-  Phase 1: evaluation trench (excavated)
-  Phase 1: evaluation trench (unexcavated)
-  Phase 1: evaluation trench (additional)
-  Phase 1: strip map area
-  Phase 1: identified archaeological feature
-  area of geophysical survey
-  proposed excavation area

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**Cotswold**  
**RUBICON**

A5 WTC: Section 1 New Buildings to Strabane

Sollius A: Proposed excavation area

PROJECT NO: 4118 DATE: 18-04-2019  
 DRAWN BY: GMS PROJECT NO: 4118  
 APPROVED BY: N DATE: 24-04-2019

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

CotswoldRubicon, in association with Cotswold Archaeology, have been retained by Mouchel on behalf of The Department for Regional Development, Roads Service to carry out a program of archaeological evaluation along the route of the proposed new A5 Western Transport Corridor. The proposed development comprises the construction of offline dual carriageway extending for 37 km.

This document is an interim statement of results and relates to Section 1, New Buildings – South of Strabane in counties Londonderry and Tyrone (Figure 1).

An excavation license for the purpose of undertaking archaeological assessment of designated areas of the proposed route was issued by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, under the terms of the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and in compliance with policies BH1 – BH4 of Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6).

License AE/13/13E was issued to Brian O'Hara of CotswoldRubicon by the NIEA-HMU to conduct archaeological evaluations in pre determined locations along Section 1 of the route.

This report outlines the results of archaeological investigations at Strip and Map Areas (SMA) 009 in the townland of Sollus, Co. Tyrone undertaken within Section 1 of the road scheme, New Buildings – South of Strabane (Figure 2).

## 2 CIRCUMSTANCES AND DATES OF FIELDWORK

Fieldwork was carried out at SMA009 (Ch. 7395 - 7455) on the 08 February 2013 (Figure 1; Plate 1). Strip and Map Area layouts were designed by Mouchel and formed part of the contract documents for the Phase 1 works. These areas were numbered consecutively across the scheme and these numbers have been retained for Phase 1 work, for ease of recording and presentation.

## 3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of the evaluation was to provide information about the recorded and unrecorded archaeological resource within the road corridor, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality, in accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Archeological Field Evaluation (IfA 2008). This information will enable NIEA and Mouchel to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset, consider the impact of the proposed development upon it and design a strategy to mitigate the effect of the scheme.

The removal of topsoil during the evaluation was conducted using a 360° tracked machine fitted with a 1.9 m wide ditching (toothless) bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Assessment methodology at this time did not include investigation of identified features. As a result, minimum depths for these features are currently unknown.

Written, drawn and photographic records were made using CotswoldRubicon standard method on *pro forma* record sheets. Ordnance Datum levels and feature locations were recorded using GPS.

Any artefacts, materials and each category of data recovered during the test excavation were treated in accordance with the requirements and standards set by the following:

- *Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995*
- *Excavation Standards Manual EHS - HMU*
- *Management of Archaeological Projects (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) (MAP 2) English Heritage*
- *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations IFA*
- *Guidelines for Archaeologists IAI*
- *A5 WTC Archaeological Investigation: Specification (Works Information Folder 4 of 8)*

#### 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) undertaken for the proposed road scheme (Chapter 9; [http://www.a5wtc.com/Environmental\\_Statement.aspx](http://www.a5wtc.com/Environmental_Statement.aspx)) identified four sites in the vicinity of SMA009, a listed building (Ref. 679); vernacular buildings (Ref. 845); a field boundary (Ref. 572) and a quarry (Ref. 168) shown on Figure 2.

There are no archaeological monuments listed in the NISMR for the townland of Sollus.

The road corridor was also partially assessed by a geophysical survey (Durham University 2012). The survey identified features of archaeological potential at this location (Area 32), these were interpreted as a large sub-circular and two linear soil filled features.

#### 5 FACTUAL DATA: Results of archaeological investigation

An area measuring 515m<sup>2</sup> was stripped under archaeological supervision on the 22 February 2013 (Figure 3; Plates 1 & 2). The excavation results are outlined in tabular form below (Table 2). One archaeological feature was identified, a burnt spread (003) (Plates 2 – 3). The area was extended by agreement with and under direction from Mouchel's Senior Archaeologist, in order to define the extent of the archaeological

remains. The burnt spread had been truncated by a series of modern field drains. Its' location is shown on Figure 3.

Context no.	Context Type	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Context Description	Feature Interpretation
1	Deposit			0.51	Mid brown peaty silt	Topsoil
2	Deposit				Yellow grey clay	Natural Subsoil
3	Deposit	15.5	13.1	0.3	Compact deposit of heat shattered stone and charcoal in a matrix of clayey silt	Burnt mound

Table 1: Context Register

## 6 STATEMENT OF POTENTIAL

The results of the assessment indicate that archaeological features, comprising a spread of burnt stone and charcoal are present within SMA009 and are potentially significant.

The spreads may represent a burnt mound or *fulachta fiadh*. Such sites are one of the most frequently discovered monument types in Ireland, characterised by circular or horseshoe shaped mounds of fired debris (fire cracked stone and charcoal) and an associated trough, the latter typically used to hold water. These site types are typically discovered close to watercourses and in wet boggy areas and principally date to the Bronze Age.

## 7 PROPOSED RESOLUTION

In order to fully investigate record and characterise this feature, a programme of archaeological hand excavation should be undertaken to fully record all identified archaeological features and deposits at SMA009.

An area measuring 515m<sup>2</sup> was stripped for the Phase 1 assessment. This area has not been backfilled and is ready for Phase 2 works.

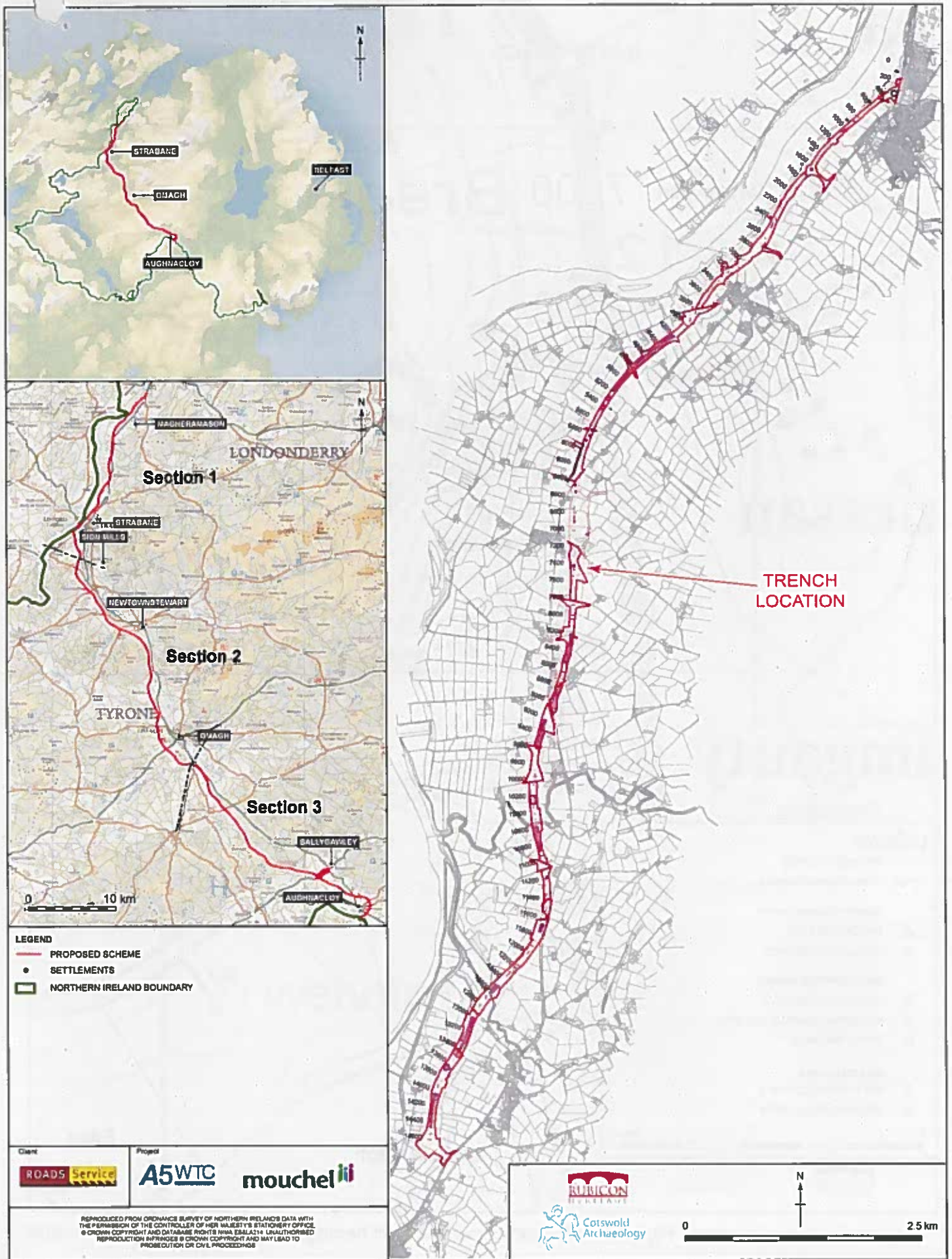


Figure 1 - Section 1 of proposed development

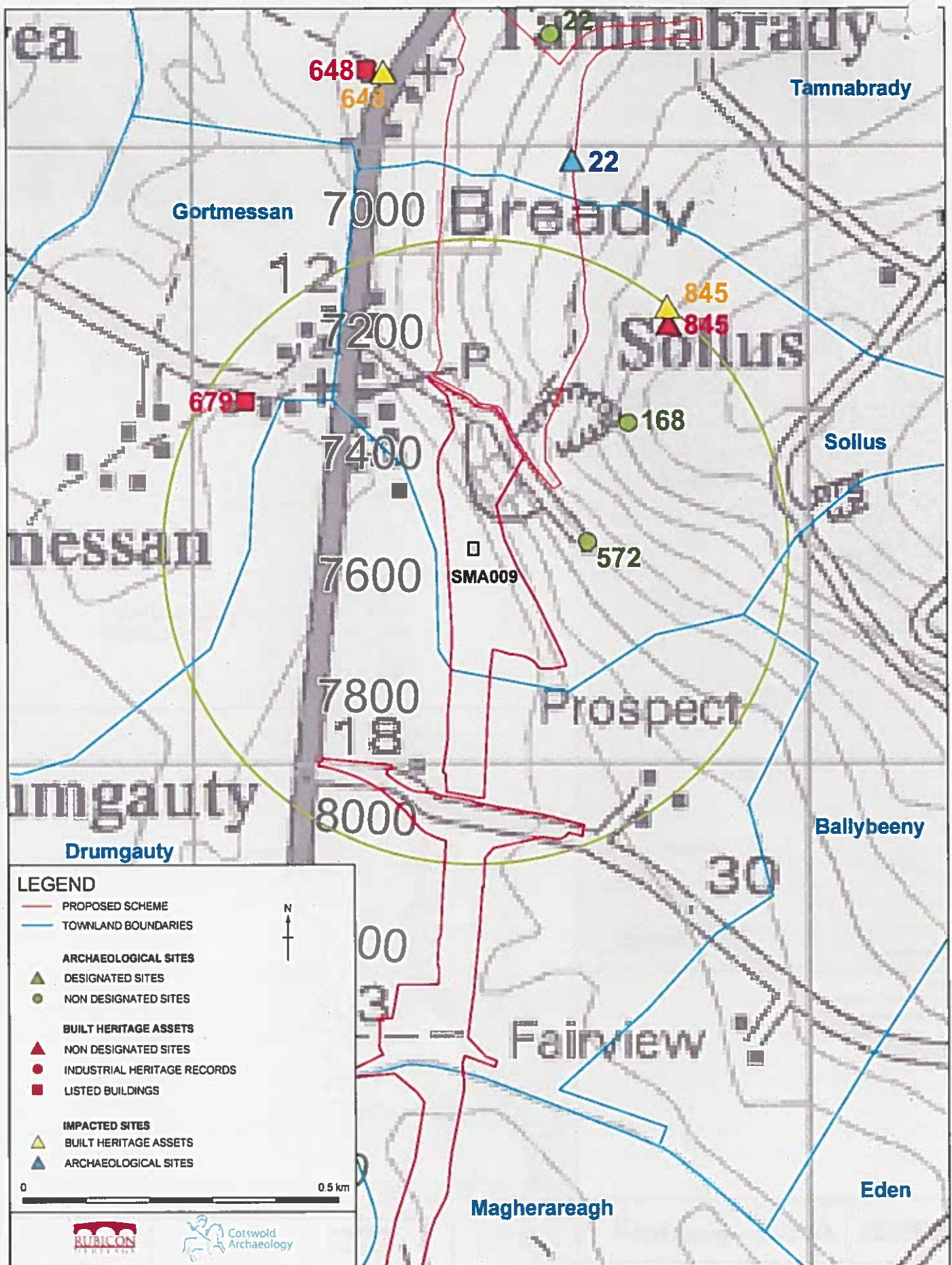


Figure 2 - Archaeological and built heritage assets within 1km of SMA009

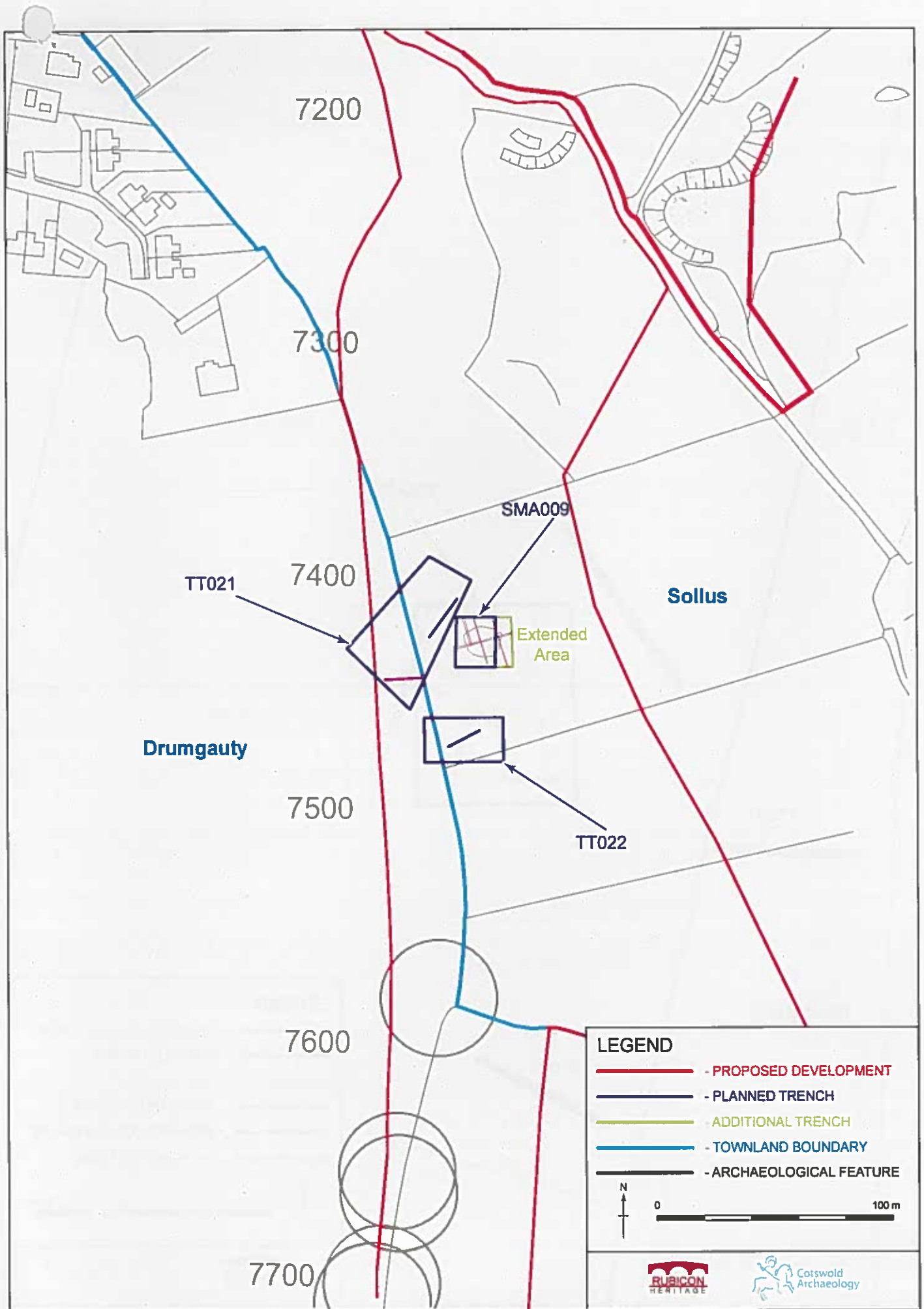


Figure 3 - SMA009; Strip & Map Area

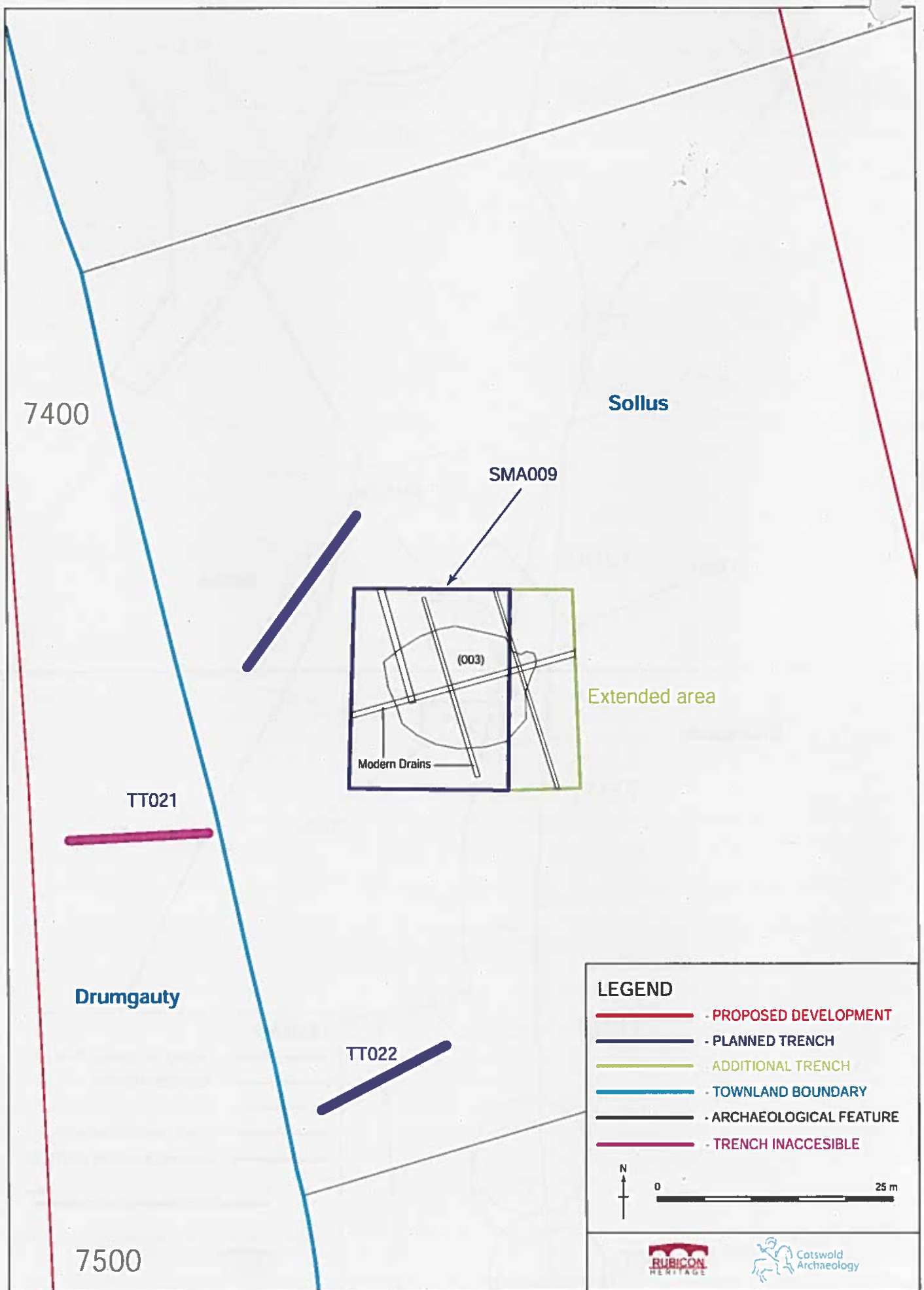


Figure 4 - Archaeological Features identified in SMA009





PLATE 1: SMA009; pre excavation



PLATE 2: Burnt mound (003)



PLATE 3: Burnt mound (003); mid excavation



**PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**  
Postgraduate Certificate in  
Forensic Investigation –(2010)

BA Hons Archaeological Practice  
Winchester (2004)

Higher National Certificate (HNC)  
in Field Archaeology (2002)

**EXPERTISE**

- Site Supervision & Direction
- National/International Projects
- Archaeological Excavation – Rural & Urban
- Archaeological Report Writing & Publication
- Forensic Archaeology & Anthropology
- Multi-Period/Artefact Specialism

**CORPORATE TRAINING**

- CSCS operative
- Red Cross First-Aider
- NPORS 4x4 Driver
- CAT & Genny Certified
- Expert Witness & Cross Examination (Bond Solon)

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

Associate member of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) since 2009

**FLAGSHIP PROJECTS**

- A477 Red Roses to St Clears Road Improvement Scheme, Carmarthenshire
- Konjuh Project, Macedonia
- Milford Haven to Aberdulais Gas Pipeline

**SITE DIRECTOR; BSc, IfA**

**PROFILE**

MATT HAS ACQUIRED A WEALTH OF MULTI-PERIOD, FIELD EXPERIENCE SINCE 1999 ENCOMPASSING ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION, EXCAVATION, SURVEY AND ASSESSMENT WORK IN BOTH URBAN AND RURAL ENVIRONMENTS.

HIS SKILLS ARE DIVERSE, FROM UNDERTAKING AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY, EXCAVATING WITHIN A GEORGIAN MANSION, TO WORKING ON AN AMERICAN RESEARCH PROGRAMME FOR THREE SEASONS. HE HAS ALSO WORKED FOR SIX SEASONS (2001-2006) AS PART OF PROF. SIR BARRY CUNLIFFE'S DANEBURY ENVIRONS PROJECT AND BEEN EMPLOYED ON NINE INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS.

**CASE STUDIES**

**2012 A477 St Clears To Red Roses Road Improvement Scheme** for Ramboll and SRB on behalf of the Welsh Government. 10km road scheme. Evaluation, excavation, building recording and watching briefs. Excavation sites included an extensive late Neolithic/Bronze Age cremation cemetery, a burnt mound, areas of prehistoric occupation and part of a Scheduled medieval moated site. Matt played a significant part in the management, supervision, excavation, recording, and recovery of artefacts from the cremation cemetery, excavation of part of Scheduled Roman fortlet reoccupied in the medieval period, as well as prehistoric and Roman period settlement and field systems. Matt acted as a Senior Archaeologist, supervising watching briefs, controlled stripping, to managing a team of up to 10 archaeologists liaising with government officials.

**2009-2011 Konjuh Project, Golemo Gradiste, Konjuh, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** – Co-directed by Gettysburg College, Pennsylvania, USA, and the Museum of Macedonia, Skopje. Three seasons of excavation, totalling 7 months - Archaeological Supervisor responsible for all aspects of management and excavation of a complex 6<sup>th</sup> century AD basilica urban site, including the recovery of a rare tool hoard and inhumation burial within utilising 20 local Macedonian labourers, ensuring highest archaeological standards and the production of end of season preliminary excavation reports 2009, 2010 & 2011.

**2006-2007 Milford Haven To Aberdulais; Felindre To Brecon Natural Gas Pipeline** for RSK Environment and NACAP Land and Marine JV on behalf of National Grid. Linear infrastructure project over 280km across South Wales, Herfordshire and Gloucestershire. Evaluation trenching, and a total of 25 substantive mitigation excavations, including excavation of complete prehistoric henge, Bronze Age cremation cemetery and burnt mounds and Roman roads; detailed investigation and environmental sampling of upland



## PUBLICATIONS

areas. Matt acted as a Senior Archaeologist, supervising watching briefs, controlled stripping, trial trenching, test-pitting to large scale open area excavation supervising a team of up to 17 archaeologists. He produced numerous interim reports and was responsible for the administration of 12 archaeologists. He also undertook the supervision of fieldwork during a large scale woodland clearance and within the Brecon Beacons National Park during the winter months within an environmentally sensitive area

Nichol, M (2008) (ebook) Lambourne's Hill Roman Villa – Field Evaluation, Historic Assimilation and Spatial Analysis on the Hampshire/Wiltshire Border  
<http://www.fieldclub.hants.org.uk/hampshire-archaeology-report-2008-districts.pdf>

Brooks, N, Nichol, M, *et al* (2006). 'Funerary sites in the "Free Zone": Report on the second and third seasons of Fieldwork of the Western Sahara Project'. *Sahara 17*

Nichol, M (2003). 'Archaeological Field Evaluation & Scheduled Monument Assessment Report, Salisbury Plain Training Area' (Internal unpublished report for Defence Estates, Tilshead, SPTA, Wiltshire, UK)