



The Alignment of the A47 Dualling Between the
Wansford Eastern Roundabout and the Old Railway
*A Submission to the Planning Inspectorate – Scheme Ref:
TRO10039*

February 2022

Wansford Parish Council

The Alignment of the A47 Dualling Between the Wansford Eastern Roundabout and the Old Railway

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APPENDIX 1

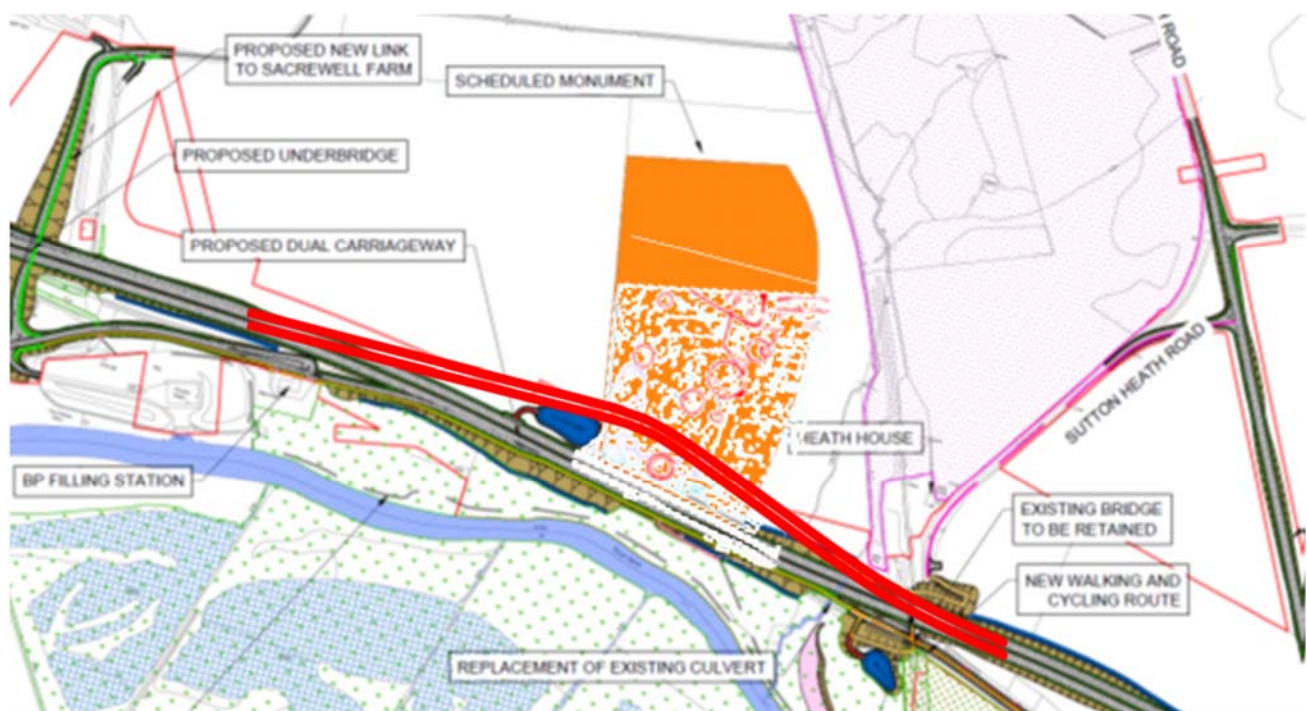
Alignment of the Upgraded A47 in the Area of the Scheduled Monument—Wansford PC

1 Executive Summary

It is clear from the project documentation that the option to align the upgraded A47 through the Scheduled Monument east of Sacrewell Farm has never been seriously considered by National Highways. They say that the reason it has never been considered is that it requires exceptional circumstances to impinge on the area of a Scheduled Monument. The applicable regulations actually say that there has to be an exceptional reason to do substantial damage to a Scheduled Monument.

Examination of the make up of the Scheduled Monument shows that there is a path through the area that does not touch any of the identified features of the Monument so no substantial damage would be done.

Using this route would take the road away from the river bank making construction much cheaper and less risky, minimize disruption and traffic management during construction, allow the existing road to be used for non-motorised traffic, reduce the spread of noise and remove the disturbance of the sensitive wildlife corridor along the river.



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2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose of this Document

This document has been produced by Wansford Parish Council (WPC) to demonstrate that there is an alternative alignment for the proposed A47 in the area of the Scheduled Monument (SM) to the east of Sacrewell Farmhouse and to the west of the disused railway line. Using this alignment has the following advantages:

- It means that almost all the new construction is off the line of the existing road, greatly reducing the amount of traffic management and disruption during the work.
- It leaves the old road alignment as an excellent route for horse riders, cyclists and pedestrians.
- It removes the road from an area of known geological instability, reducing risks during construction and in the long term.
- It allows the road to be widened in the future if needed.
- It avoids damage to the County Wildlife Site along the river Nene and the need for artificial flood compensation.
- It reduces the spread of noise from the new road.
- It will reduce the cost of the project considerably.

Despite all these factors, the alignment has never been seriously investigated by National Highways (NH).

2.2 Why This Document is Needed

In the 5 years since the project started, NH and their antecedents have always said that they are unable to encroach on the Scheduled monument. This is clearly demonstrated by their recent common response H to relevant representations “A road entirely north of the existing A47 is not feasible due to the location and extent of the Scheduled Monument”.

This situation has come about because NH have simply been unwilling to enter into dialogue about the issue. This document seeks to demonstrate exactly why the route is feasible.

2.3 The Route

The alternative route that is being proposed is similar to one of the options proposed in the Alternative Visions document that was presented to NH in 2018. When that document was presented to the then project manager, he simply put it down on the table without opening it. When asked if he was going to read it and take note of the contents, his reply was “Probably not”.

Figure 1 below shows the outline of the alternative route. The drawing is based on the current NH proposals but for ease of understanding the findings from the Headland Archeology magnetometer survey of the SM have been superimposed on it. This shows the position of the major features of the SM. The revised road alignment that is shown in red is simply a freehand sketch and it would have to be developed to get the precise alignment.

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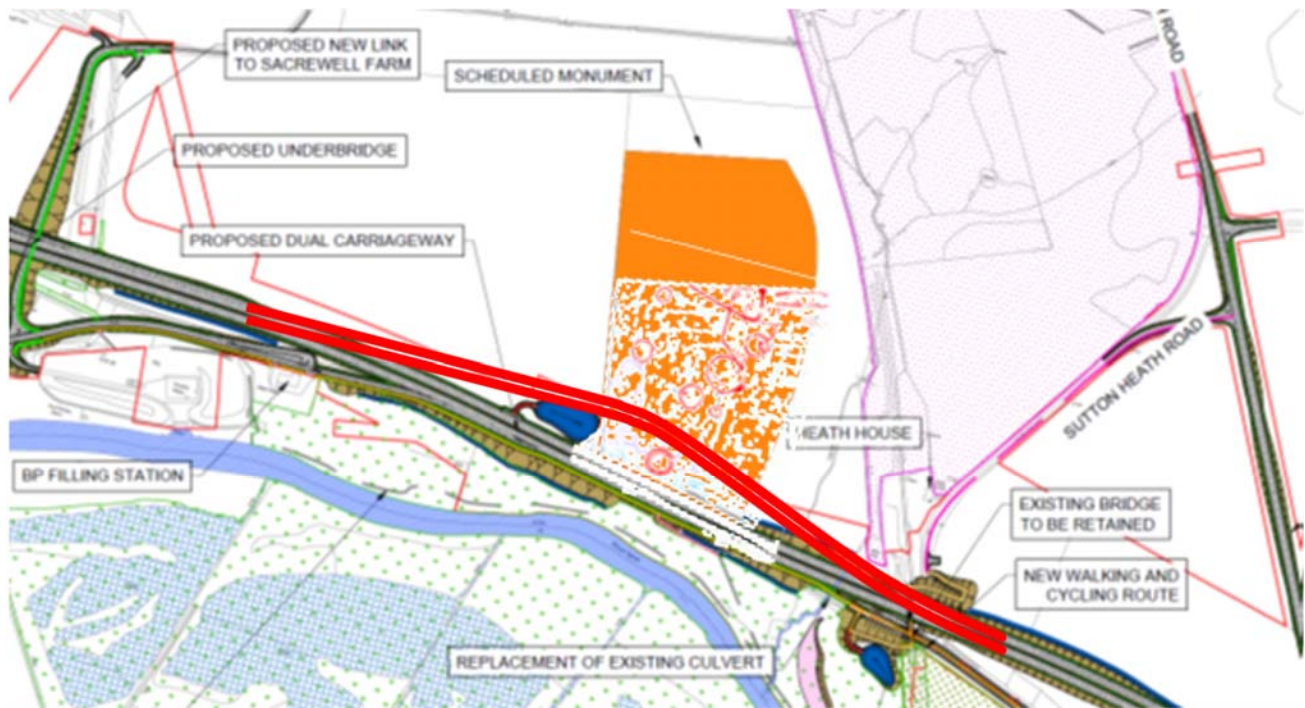


Figure 1 – Alternative Route in the area of the Scheduled Monument

3 Discussion of Routes Through the Scheduled Monument

3.1 National Highways

Even though the route shown in Figure 1 was offered by National Highways in their initial consultation, they have consistently said that they cannot impinge on the SM because there is a viable alternative and therefore there is no Exceptional Circumstance to justify touching the SM. They have also claimed that they cannot challenge Historic England on this “because it is not their role to challenge another government department”.

The reality is that NH seem to have misunderstood the criteria for impinging on a Scheduled Monument.

The position of a Scheduled Monument within the context of a Development Consent Order application for a national infrastructure project is governed by the *National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPSNN)* (Dept. of Transport, December 2014). This document states that projects doing substantial damage to a Scheduled Monument will only be approved in exceptional circumstances. This essentially sets up two tests, whether the damage is substantial and whether the circumstances are exceptional.

The route that is proposed avoids all the identified features of the Scheduled Monument except for an area of quarrying that is almost certainly related to the construction of the existing A47. It therefore does not do substantial damage to the Scheduled Monument. Before construction, the 25m wide path required for the new road should be surveyed using alternative non-invasive techniques such as ground penetrating radar and any features found can be excavated. Because the available corridor between the identified features is considerably wider than the road, there is scope to modify the alignment if something major is found.

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The features of the Scheduled Monument are discussed in some detail in a Wansford Parish Council document entitled The Alignment of the A47 Dualling Between the Wansford Eastern Roundabout and the Old Railway

The minutes of the direct meeting between NH and Historic England show that NH never seriously proposed the option of going through the SM, presenting it just as a proposal by a third party with no ownership by NH.

As the project developed there were a series of meetings between NH, Peterborough City Council (PCC) and Historic England to discuss the various environmental and archaeological aspects of the scheme. Wansford and Sutton Parish Councils repeatedly asked to attend these meetings but the request was denied by NH on the grounds that these meetings were “for professionals”. In view of the professional qualifications held by those who would have represented the Parish Councils, this was clearly just a cover for NH just not wanting the PCs at the meetings. Feedback from the PCC staff at the meetings was that they were just a presentation by NH of the project with no real discussion. The PCC staff said that they would have been very happy to have the Parish Councils there as they had done much more background work on the scheme than PCC.

At various times NH has also said that the northern route is impossible because of the Sutton Heath and Bog SSSI. This cannot be determined until the alignment has been calculated in detail but if there is a clash it is with the tail of the SSSI, not the part which contains the vegetation which forms the reason for the SSSI. The listing makes it clear that the tail is there simply to protect the drainage system that serves the main body of the SSSI. The extent of the area in question has been changed during the life of the SSSI and there seems no reason why it could not be changed again, given appropriate design of the watercourse which drains the SSSI.

More recently, Wansford Parish Council has requested NH to examine the cost difference between the current route and a route through the Scheduled Monument. NH said that they were unable to do this as they had no detailed cost data for the project. Galliford Try, their contractors simply stated that they had no interest in supplying this information. Wansford Parish Council therefore has had to rely on the estimates given by NH in 2018 that the difference was between £6 million and £11 million. Most of this difference is in much simplified earthworks and traffic management.

3.2 Historic England

After direct requests from Wansford and Sutton Parish Councils, two meetings have been held with Historic England (HE). NH were invited to attend both these meetings but they declined, stating that it was not good use of their time.

The first meeting was conducted in early 2018 was with the then the regional director. HE gave a good briefing on the status of SMs and then stated that on no account would they allow a road to be built through the SM. Further probing revealed that those at the meeting did not actually know what was in this particular SM.

In 2018, HE conducted a review of the SM and it was for this that the document in Appendix 1 was produced. As a result of the review, HE decided to extend the SM further north to include features that clearly show as crop marks but which had not been included in the original 1962 listing. This was a

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sensible change although it does not reflect well on the research done for the original listing. They also introduced a new eastern boundary which exactly followed the original curved boundary but translated 15m to the west. No explanation was given for that but, because the scale of the base maps used for the listing had changed, there is a strong suspicion that it was simply a draughting error. Certainly, the change in the eastern boundary removed an area with a considerable history of surface finds from the SSSI.

After review, Wansford and Sutton Parish Councils were able to arrange a meeting with a team from HE. This was held on the 23rd January 2020. At that meeting, the parish team asked what analysis HE had done on the extent and contents of the SM. The response was that they had done no analysis but they had relied on the work done by Wansford Parish Council. The parish representatives then asked what the objection was to putting the road through the SM over the route where there were no identified objects. HE responded that no evidence of significant objects was not a reason to suppose that there were none there and, even if there was nothing, the gaps between the identified features were important to the landscape of the monument. HE was asked to define what they meant by landscape in this context but they were unable to do so.

After this meeting, Wansford Parish Council asked for a review of the new listing by the Secretary of State. During the review, HE claimed that they had moved the eastern boundary of the SM by 15m to remove from the area a modern quarry in the south eastern corner. When asked what evidence of modern quarrying this was based on, they were unable to give any. The finding of the review was that the new listing stood as Wansford Parish Council had not provided any information that was not available during the review. The fact that HE had not analyzed the site or used the data provided did not seem to be a consideration.

4 Geotechnical Risk

Wansford Parish Council have raised the issue of geotechnical risk in the area of the escarpment down to the river Nene several times. In the first Issue Specific Hearing this was dismissed by the counsel for National Highways as being something that would be dealt with in detailed design. This unfortunately showed a lack of understanding of geotechnical risk.

In document TR010039-000447 National Highways 9.2 9.2 Ground Investigation, the author clearly identifies in Section 2.3.4 the whole river area from the A1 eastward to the old railway line as being sensitive geological areas. He quotes the issues with the pumping station, the filling station and the power poles as being clear evidence of instability. Despite this, section 2.14 describes the area where the power poles have moved as having a low potential for landslides. This is not logical.

NH have said that they are going to do further ground investigation in this area which is sensible but that does not get away from the fundamental difficulty of working on slopes with weak clay layers in them. Several of the soil types in this area have thin lenses of weak clay and silt interleaved with gravel, sands and weathered limestone. These may or may not be picked up by the ground investigation but it is very difficult to ascribe soil properties to them. This situation is made worse when the moisture content of the clay layers change as it would when the river floods.

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Designers can try to get around these issues by building a very conservative structure including piles to cut through a slip plane but this is expensive and the piling itself may trigger ground movements. Early in his engineering career, the author was fortunately work with Dr Chandler who sorted out the problems with the Anglia Water pumping station after it moved during construction. When asked what the best way was to avoid problems when building structures on weak clay slopes, his advice was to build the structure somewhere else because you can never accurately analyze the behaviour of the slope in both the short and long terms.

If an attempt was made in the future to widen the road because of increasing traffic volumes, the planned alignment would either require the road to encroach into the SM or be built further out over the Nene escarpment. The former would damage the southern feature of the SM and the latter would come at very high cost and risk.

5 Conclusions

It is clear that the option to use an alignment through the Scheduled Monument avoiding the identified features of interest has never been seriously considered by National Highways. As a result they are proposing to build a new road on an alignment that has a known history of slope failures. Conservative design may reduce the chance of problems but it cannot remove them entirely and they cost large amounts of money. It is understood that the cost of the project is not directly a planning matter but wasting public money should be a concern to all.

Because the new road will be built out over the slope to the river, the noise spread from it will be considerable and it will disrupt the valuable wildlife corridor along the river. The slope makes the provision of good facilities for horse riders, cyclists and pedestrians very difficult.

Moving the road away from the river, also removes the need for flood compensation which damages privately owned land.

There does not appear to be a downside to routing the road through the Scheduled Monument provided the route is chosen to avoid the identified features. If all roads were planned to avoid archaeological remains which have not been identified despite a state of the art non-intrusive investigation, road construction would have to stop.

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Wansford PC**

APPENDIX 1



Cropmarks of Seven Ring Ditches and a Quadrilateral
Ditched Enclosure, together with Pits and Pit
Alignment, Approximately 837m South-East of
Sacrewell Farmhouse
A Response to the Historic England Consultation Report



**Wansford
Parish Council**

September 2018

Cropmarks of Seven Ring Ditches and a Quadrilateral Ditched Enclosure,
together with Pits and Pit Alignment, Approximately 837m South-East of
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A Response to the Historic England Consultation Report

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Document

This document has been produced by Wansford Parish Council in response to a consultation report issued by Historic England on the 20th August. It sets out a logical approach to evaluating the scheduling of this site

1.2 Why This Document is Needed

The document issued by Historic England contains some interesting discussion of the area known as Toll Bar Field but it does not provide any analysis of the input data and the discussion is not related to the proposed expansion of the site. The Historic England document does not include any of the illustrations from the referenced documents even though none of these are publicly available, making it very difficult to understand what is being discussed.

The existence of a Scheduled Monument is important for the local population both now and in the future. On this positive side it may produce an insight into the history of the area although in this case, with no visual evidence on the surface and no displayed artifacts, it is extremely difficult for anyone, be they a professional archaeologist or a member of the public, to relate to the site. On the negative side, the existence of a Scheduled Monument may prevent the development of important infrastructure or cause that infrastructure to be developed in a way that does permanent damage to the environment and the quality of life of people living in the area.

In this case, the existence of the Scheduled Monument is being used as a reason to align the upgraded A47 trunk road to the south of its existing position. Everyone agrees that the A47 must be upgraded on safety and economic grounds but using an alignment south of the existing road will destroy the landscape of the Nene valley and cut off the wildlife corridor that the river bank provides. This destruction will be permanent and irreversible and will reduce the quality of life of those who live in the area and who visit it for leisure purposes.

If the Scheduled Monument is to continue in its present form, let alone be enlarged as Historic England is suggesting, there must be a solid evidence base for the value of the Scheduled Monument. To be a Scheduled Monument, the site must contain nationally important archaeological remains. The Historic England consultation document makes no attempt to establish this and indeed this requirement is not even mentioned.

2 The Evidence for Archaeological Remains at Toll Bar Field

2.1 Records from Investigations Before the Scheduled Monument

Several sources have referred to the work of Edmund Tyrell Artis in the 1820s. He carried out a systematic review of the Fitzwilliam Estate and recorded the existence of two Roman Buildings in Toll Bar Field. The location of these buildings is depicted in a map he drew dated 1828.



Figure 1 – Edmund Artis Map Dated 1828 Showing Roman Buildings in the area of Toll Bar Field

Correlating this map with other images in this report, the reader has to remember that the course of the stream on the eastern edge of Toll Bar Field was changed when the Wansford to Stamford railway was built. The larger building further west does not relate to any other reference and is probably an error.

2.2 The Original Scheduling

The Scheduled Monument was first scheduled on the 14th June 1962. From the very sparse listing information, it appears that this was simply on the basis of crop marks appearing on a set of aerial photographs. The photographs, dating from 1959 and 1960, are listed in the Selected Sources section of the Historic England Consultation Report but are not available to the Parish Council. Fortunately, the Google Earth image from May 2009 shows the crop marks clearly and this image has been used for this document.



Figure 2 – Crop Marks in Toll Bar Field. Google Earth Image May 2009

The crop marks are also evident in the oblique image included in Dr Stephen Upex’s review of the archaeology of the area.



Figure 3 – Crop Marks in an Oblique View

Although actual boundaries of the existing Scheduled Monument are not precisely defined, Figure 4 shows the approximate outline superimposed on the crop marks.



Figure 4 – The Outline of the Existing Scheduled Monument superimposed on the Crop Marks

It is very clear from Figure 4 that the Scheduled Monument only takes in the southern part of the crop marks and that it also includes a substantial area on the east side of the area where there are no crop

Cropmarks South East of Sacrewell Farmhouse– Wansford PC Response

marks. It is difficult to understand how this came about but either the boundary was drawn based on very little information or there were some other influences at play. The northern edge of the Scheduled Monument may have been set to correspond to an earlier field boundary but such a boundary did not exist by the time of the listing.

Cropmarks occur because of variations in the surface soil types and variations in the drainage conditions. The fact that a crop mark occurs, particularly in geometric patterns, generally indicates that at some time the ground has been disturbed. The marks do not tell us anything about when the disturbance occurred or why it took place.

In the early documents for this site, it was described as being a Roman Settlement but the current description by Historic England is of a prehistoric settlement re-used in the Romano-British period. The ring marks, which were originally considered part of the Roman remains, are now described as a Bronze age round barrow cemetery although no justification or evidence for this change has been offered.

2.3 The Results of Field Walks in the 1970s and 1980s

Between the Second World War and 2006, Toll Bar Field was subject to intensive cultivation growing sugar beet and other crops. This involved annual ploughing which brought relics to the surface. In the 1970s and 1980s, archaeological students undertook a series of field walks across the site, finding pottery fragments, flint artifacts, limestone rubble and some Roman coins. The location of these finds is shown in the three maps below taken from Dr Stephen Upex's work.

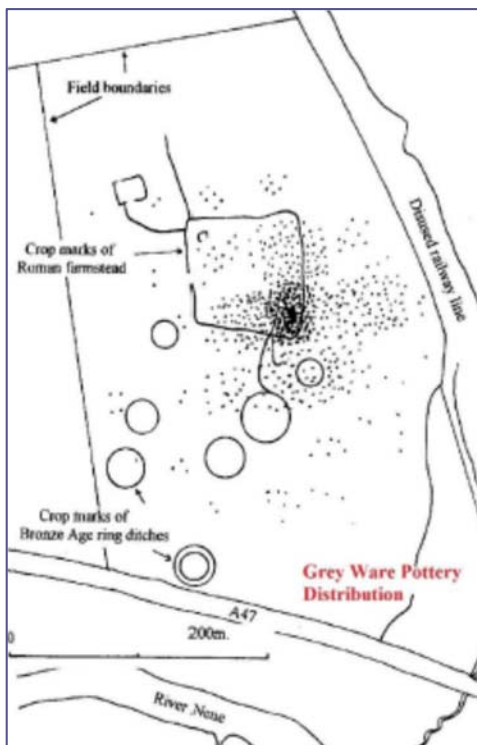


Figure 5 – Grey Ware Pottery Distribution

Cropmarks South East of Sacrewell Farmhouse– Wansford PC Response

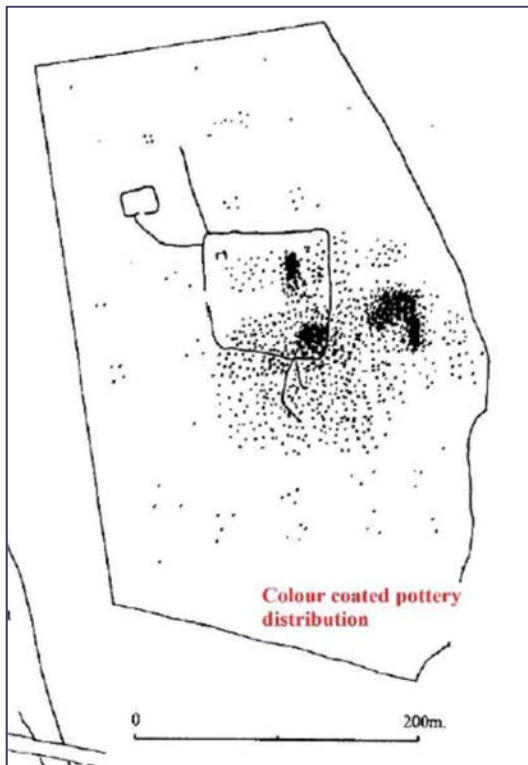


Figure 6 – Distribution of Colour Coated Pottery Fragments

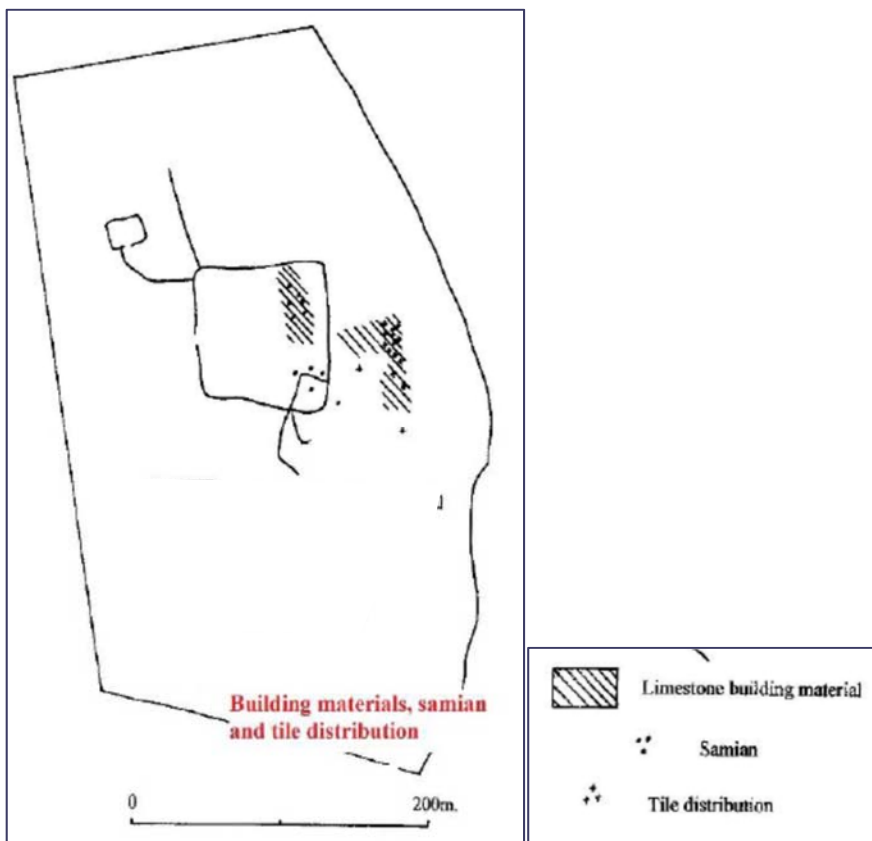


Figure 7 – Distribution of Building Materials, Samian Ware and tile fragments

Cropmarks South East of Sacrewell Farmhouse– Wansford PC Response

The mapping area of these three figures is for the whole of Toll Bar Field not just the Scheduled Monument. It is clear that all the finds are concentrated around the rectangular outline of what is probably the site of the two Roman buildings identified by Artis. The south of the site yielded no building materials or tiles and the pottery distribution was very thin. Repeated ploughing can transport pottery fragments a considerable distance from their original location, probably explaining this scatter.

2.4 Non-Intrusive Investigations

In 2017 Amey, acting as agents for Highways England, commissioned a magnetic survey of the area of the Scheduled Monument which was carried out by Headland Archaeology. The carefully worded report describes the findings of their survey. The results are shown in Figure 8 below.

This type of survey can show where there are metallic objects in the ground and also indicates where the ground has been disturbed. It does not show the reason for the disturbance or when that disturbance occurred.

This survey, which unfortunately only covers the area of the Scheduled Monument, confirms that there has been ground disturbance in the same locations as the crop marks. It also shows that large areas of the site have no traces of disturbance just the random patterns, shown in pale blue, that always occur on cultivated land.

Besides the ground disturbance shown by the crop marks, two features clearly shown are :-

1. In the southwest and Southeast of the site there are areas which have been quarried and refilled. Because these areas go close to but do not touch the southern disturbance ring, Headlands have suggested that the ring was in place at the time of quarrying. Headlands suggest that the quarrying is either related to lime burning or to road construction.
2. Quite large areas of the site show narrow linear features (shown in green in Figure 8) which Headlands believe is evidence that field drains have been installed on the site.

Because the disturbance marks in the northern part of the site are only partially covered by the survey, they are difficult to interpret.

The survey shows 7 ring marks of varying diameters. 4 of these are tightly grouped near the centre of the Scheduled Monument. 2 rings are to the west with a separation of between 30 and 50m from the central group. All of these features are single rings with isolated features which may not be anything to do with the original feature. Some 45m south of the edge of the central group there is an isolated feature which shows a double ring pattern, very different to the other rings.

Between these ring features the only things identified are some land drains and the areas that have been quarried.

The location system used in the Headland survey is very precise and it shows the southern edge of the southern ring 4m from the edge of the Scheduled Monument and 10m from the edge of the A47 road reserve.

Cropmarks South East of Sacrewell Farmhouse– Wansford PC Response

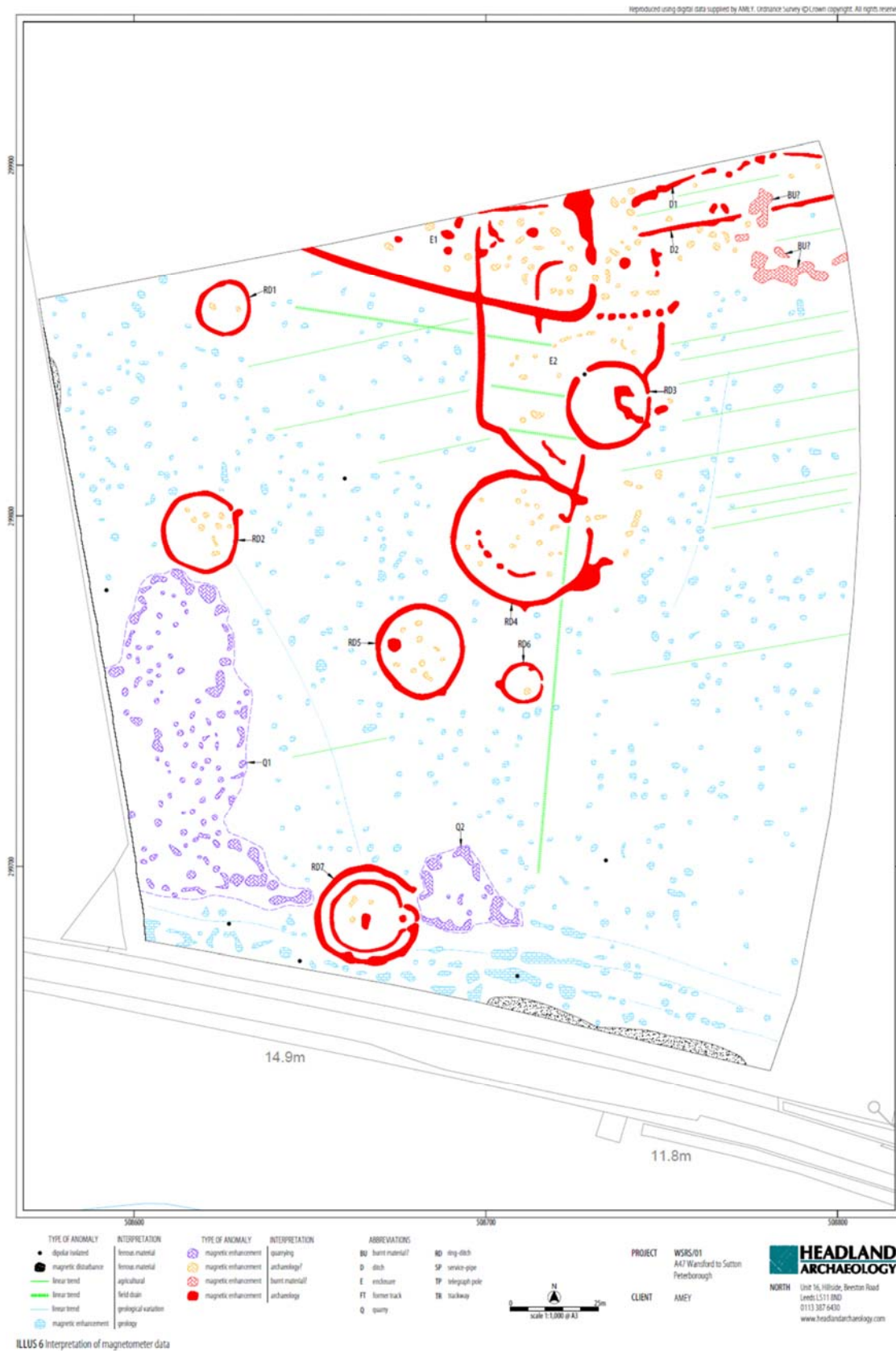


Figure 8 – Headland Archaeology Magnetic Survey of the Scheduled Monument

3 The Recent History of Toll Bar Field

3.1 The Construction of the Wansford to Stamford Railway

In the 1850s a railway line linking Wansford and Stamford was built along the eastern edge of Toll Bar Field with considerable earth works and the diversion of a brook. Figure 9 shows the location of this work but it is not clear whether the surface of Toll Bar Field was altered in any way. The railway has been disused since the 1930s.

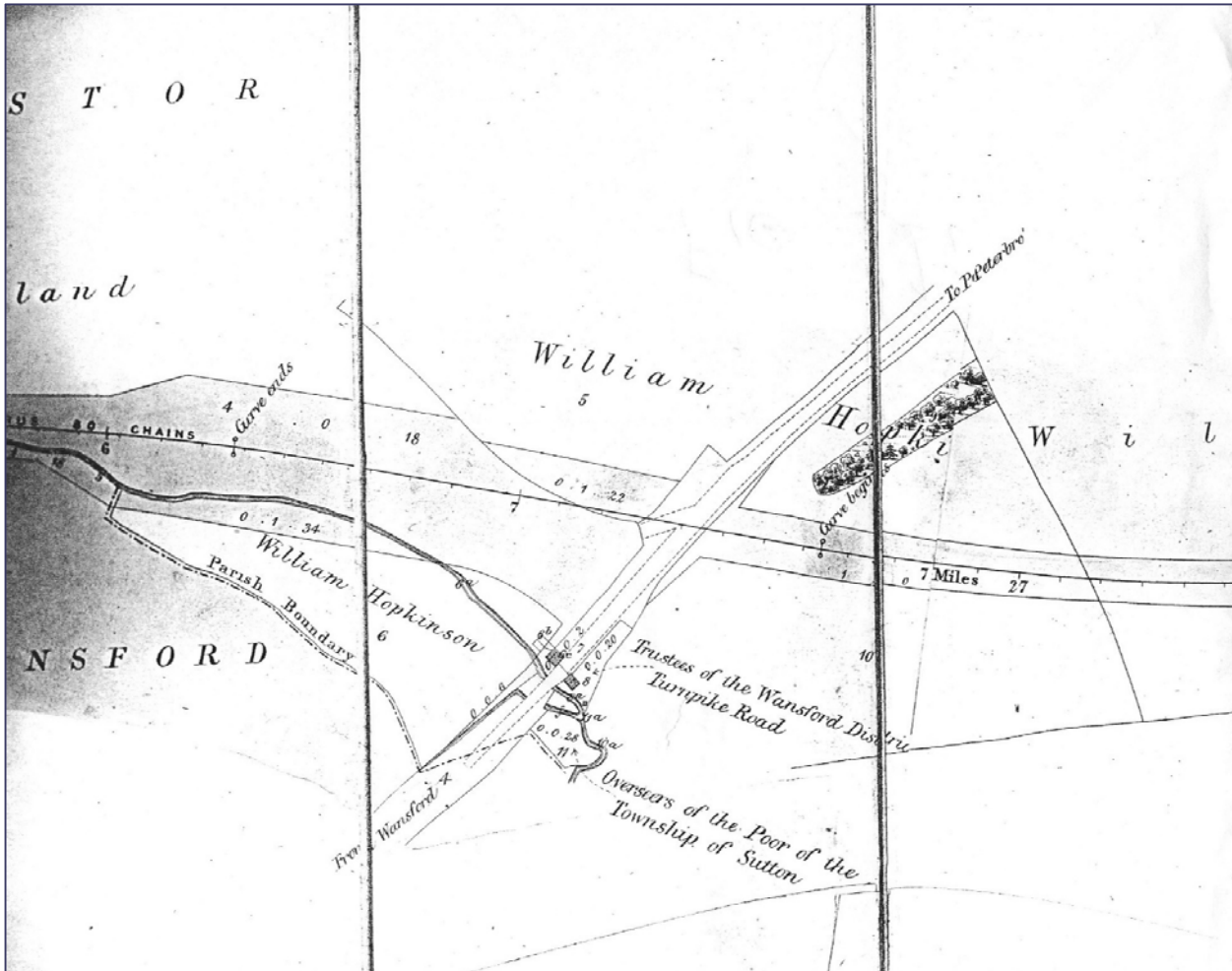


Figure 9 – The Alignment of the Wansford-Stamford Railway

3.2 Works Associated with the A47

The alignment of the main road from Peterborough towards Leicester, now designated the A47, has remained remarkably static, with the road following the southern edge of Toll Bar Field close to the edge of the river valley. When the railway was built, the road was altered to go across a bridge and the vertical alignment of the road has clearly been altered since then. The quarrying shown in the Headland survey may have been to win stone for the construction and upgrading of the road.

3.3 Modern Agriculture

It is understood that until the Second World War, Toll Bar Field was in several sections and was used for grazing. During or shortly after the war, the field was ploughed to grow crops and, as tractors got larger and more powerful field boundaries were removed to make cultivation easier.

The field was used to grow cereals and sugar beet with annual ploughing up until 2006. Modern ploughing turns over the earth down to a depth of between 400 and 500mm and breaks up anything larger than about 50mm long. Repeated ploughing can transport small items such as pottery fragments or coins a considerable distance.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the government paid grants to farmers to improve the drainage of their land and Headlands found evidence that field drains had been installed in Toll Bar Field. These field drains were usually clay pipes installed using a large tractor dragging a single tine through the ground. The drains were usually installed to a depth of 600-900mm. The powerful tractor and the cutting edge on the tine would destroy anything in the ground along the line of the drain.

In 2006 the field was put into Set-Aside, a government scheme to take certain areas out of agricultural production. Set-Aside has now stopped but the field is still laid to grass. A view across the field is on the cover of this document.

Because of the modern farming history of this field, no structure or artifacts, apart from small fragments will exist in the top 400-500mm layer and the mole draining will have cut through anything down to a depth of 600-900mm. The ploughing will have taken out any historic building foundations, tracks or pavements, something that is clearly shown by the Roman buildings recorded by Artis being recorded in the 1980s as limestone rubble. As the soil is quite porous and has been turned over regularly, no fragments of wood, cloth or other organic matter will have survived. This is a very badly damaged site.

4 Interpretation of the Remains at Toll Bar Field

At various times, Toll Bar Field has been described as a Roman settlement, an iron age settlement reused in Roman times and a series of Bronze age burial mounds.

On the factual evidence that is available in the form of pottery fragments, coins, arrow heads and the like, we know that there has been human activity on this field for a long time but this applies equally to most of the Nene valley.

The geometric patterns shown by crop marks and the magnetic survey are clear evidence of human activity but no one knows for certain what they are. In many places around the UK drovers built circular walls to contain animals during overnight stops or while waiting to take them to a market or load them onto a train. This site is near the crossing point of two well-known droving routes and the Wansford to Stamford railway was best known for carrying livestock so the presence of drovers' pens is entirely plausible. In contrast, Historic England have claimed in recent years that the circular patterns are the remains of Bronze age burial mounds but, apart from saying that the shapes indicate this, they have provided no evidence. There are quite a number of such mounds in this area but in reality, no one knows what the rings are unless further investigations are carried out.

Cropmarks South East of Sacrewell Farmhouse– Wansford PC Response

In the history section of their report, Historic England talk about an association with Durobrivae and Ermine street but this is speculation that could equally be applied to large areas of North-West Cambridgeshire and South Lincolnshire.

In the document there is a complete 17-line paragraph about barrow cemeteries but there is no attempt to demonstrate that this is one. There are certainly 7 areas of disturbance in the form of rings but we do not know what they are. The description talks about the areas between the barrows as containing “avenues, burials, pyres and feasting areas”. A few lines later there is talk about “avenues, cursusees, henges, mortuary enclosures, stone and timber circles”. In this case we are dealing with a field that has been deep ploughed over a 60-year period and where a professionally carried out non-intrusive survey has shown nothing between the ring disturbances. All of the features described would show up on a magnetic survey and they are not there. The report even talks about “numerous high magnitude anomalies within the ring ditches, which are thought to indicate the locations of burial pits, cremations and/or inhumation”. What the report actually says is that they “may locate pits, cremations and/or inhumations”. There is no explanation how “may” became translated into “are thought to”. They might equally be fire pits over which someone roasted an animal and then buried the bones.

The section on prehistoric farmsteads is completely generic and has not been related to the actual site in any way.

The sections entitled Details and Description are a little more down to earth and clearly show the level of speculation in the section entitled History.

There is no doubt that there are some remains under Toll Bar Field with the majority being in the northern part of the field. The indications are that the area of interest extends well to the north of the existing Scheduled Monument. It is also very clear that there are substantial areas within the existing Scheduled Monument that are of no possible archaeological interest.

The northern group of remains around the rectangular enclosure may well be related to it and the northern group of ring anomalies may also be part of a group. The southern ring anomaly is very different to the other rings and is well separated from them. Professional archaeological opinion is that this ring is much more likely to be related to the river frontage and related to remains under and to the south of the existing A47 road. These areas have not been investigated. There are other ring crop marks along the Nene valley and this may be a separate grouping spaced along the river.

5 The Future of the Scheduled Monument

In the Historic England document, the author jumps straight from a description of the site to recommending that the scheduled area is expanded to take in the whole of Toll Bar Field. There is not even an attempt to justify this and it clearly flies in the face of reason as it takes in large areas on the east of the site in which there is no indication of any archaeological interest. The idea of expanding a scheduled site without any basis or justification just brings the whole system into disrepute.

Part of any analysis of the site has to be to overlay the crop mark data, the magnetic survey and the artifact finds to see which areas are of interest. This has been done in Figure 10 where the grey ware pottery distribution has been used as it has the widest coverage.

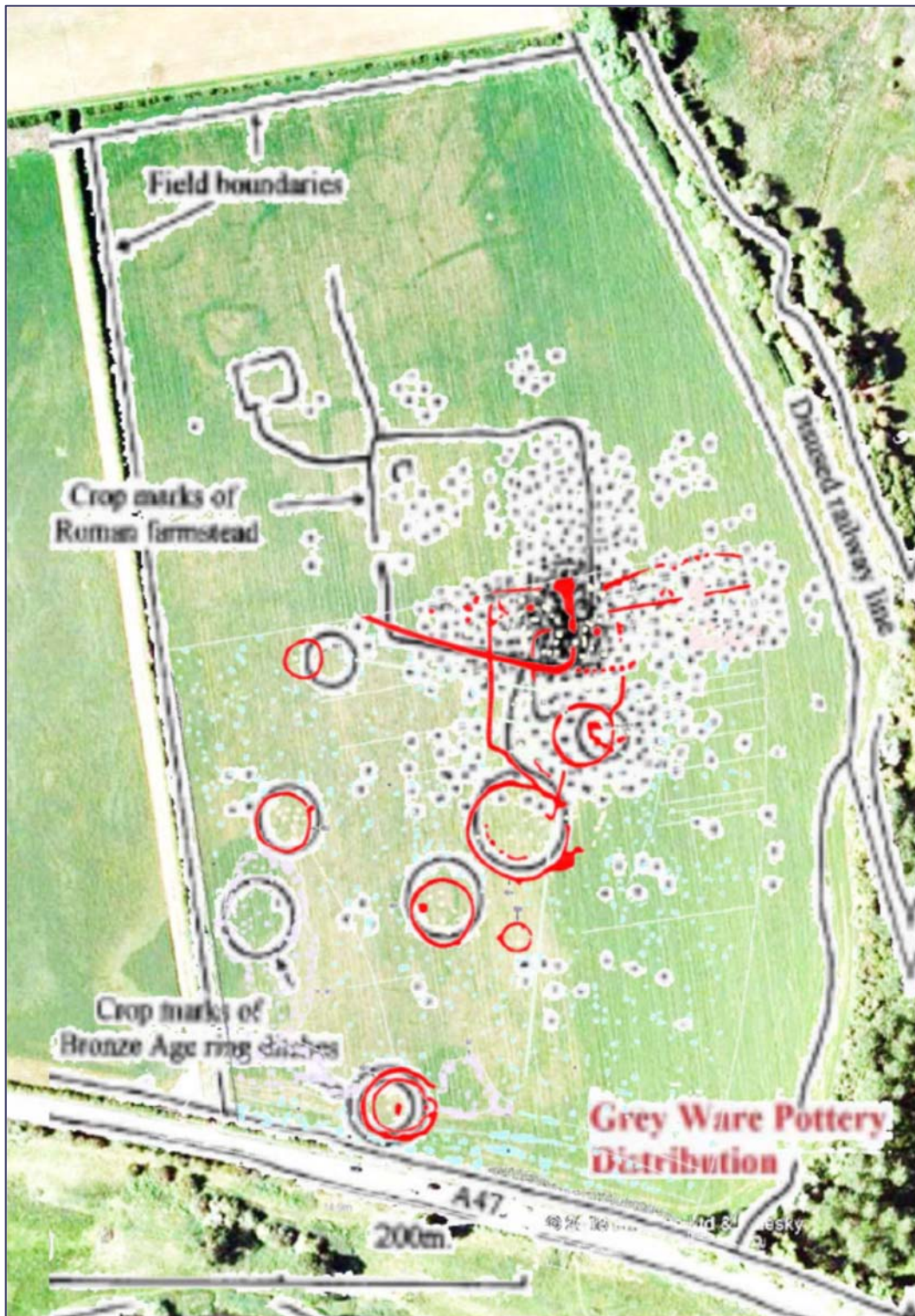


Figure 10 – Combined Information for Toll Bar Field

It is clear from Figure 10 that the mapping on which the pottery find distribution is based is not very accurate and before this information can be used seriously it should be remapped onto an accurate base. The same should be done for the other types of finds. This lack of accuracy is not surprising given the mapping techniques which were available at reasonable cost at the time.

Cropmarks South East of Sacrewell Farmhouse– Wansford PC Response

The other issue is that the mapping shows an additional ring anomaly which the Headland report clearly shows as the north end of a quarry site. This clearly demonstrates the problems of basing an assessment of the Scheduled Monument site purely on aerial photographic interpretations.

As the magnetic survey only covers half of the area of the field, the rest must be surveyed in the same way to give a correlation with the crop marks. There are several other non-intrusive survey techniques available and if Historic England is serious about the future of this site they should resurvey it using the full range of modern techniques. Technology has moved on a long way since 1962.

Using Figure 10 as the basis for the moment, Figures 11 and 12 show the outline of the main areas of archaeological interest and therefore logically for any Scheduled Monument. Outside this area there are the locations of occasional pottery finds but if this was the criteria for scheduling, a very large part of the Nene valley would have to become a Scheduled Monument. There is no reason why the boundaries of a Scheduled Monument should follow modern field boundaries.

There is no logical reason to believe that the southern ring anomaly is related to the rest of the site and hence it is shown as separate entity. If further investigations show signs of archaeological interest under the existing A47 or between it and the river Nene, the southern area ring could be expanded to include these.

The other question is whether any of Toll Bar Field should be a Scheduled Monument. It is very clear that the original Scheduling in 1962 had severe defects because it used an entirely arbitrary boundary which bisected several identified features. This is why a review is required. To continue as a Scheduled Monument at all, Historic England must establish that the site is of national significance. There are a large number of ring anomalies in the UK and there are many examples in the East Midlands. No one has demonstrated why these particular badly damaged examples are important. There have been verbal references to the number of rings but there does not seem to be any proper analysis to back these statements.

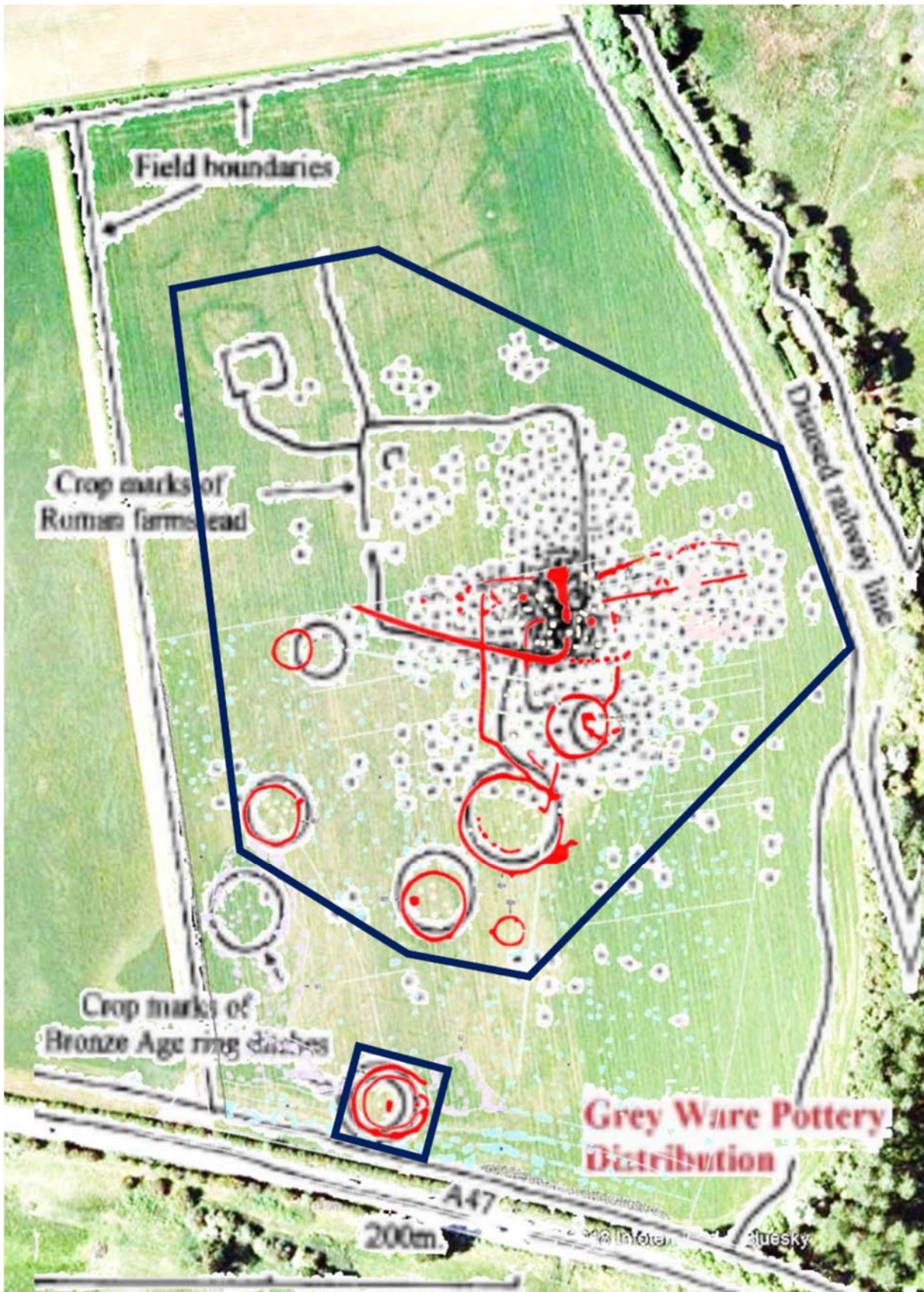


Figure 11 – Outline of Logical Area of the Scheduled Monument Shown in Blue

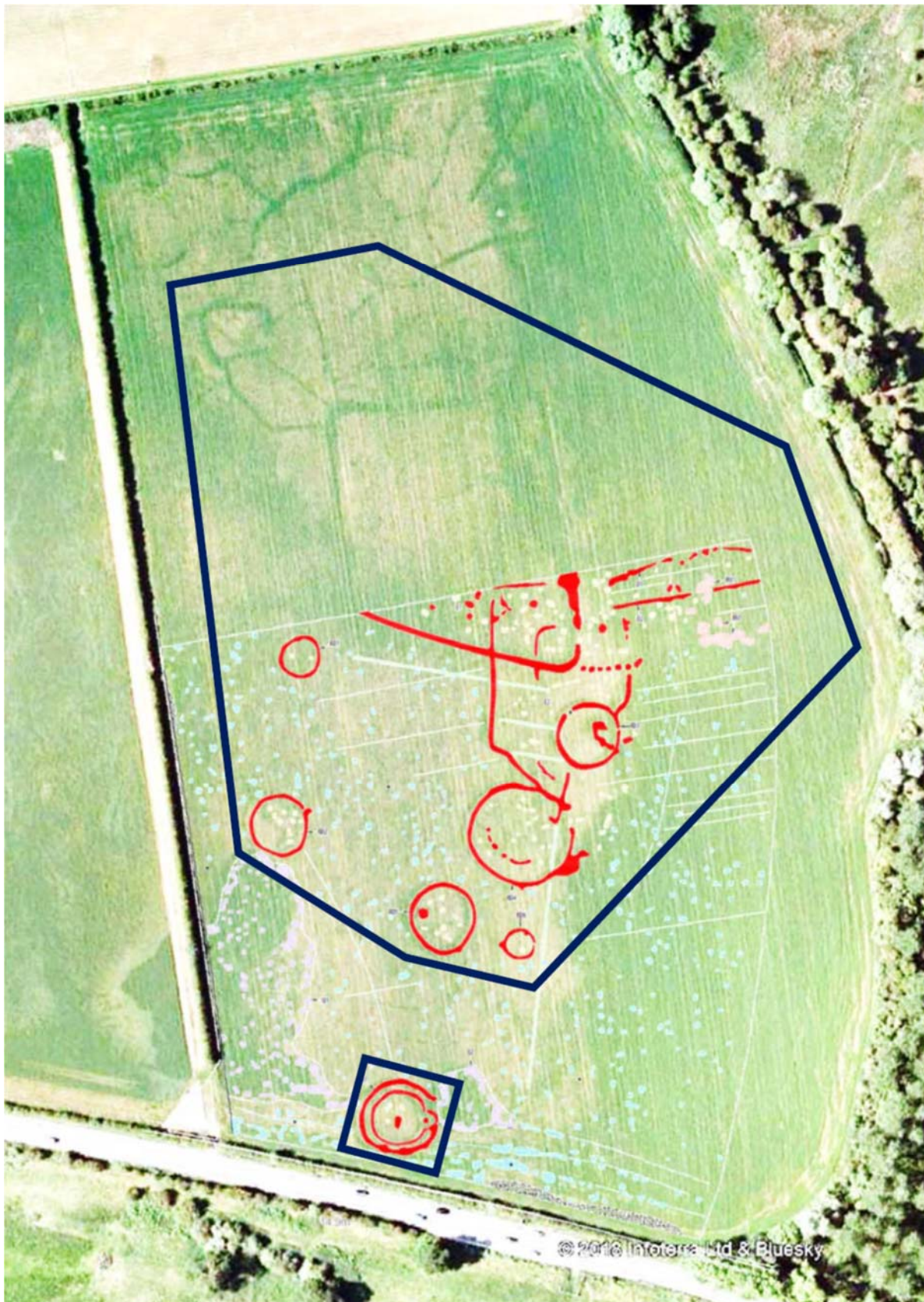


Figure 12 – Outline of Logical Area of the Scheduled Monument Shown in Blue

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

After an examination of the available information, the following conclusions and recommendations become clear.

1. The original scheduling of this area in 1962 had clear defects and does not stand up to logical examination. If there is a justification for scheduling this site, it most certainly should not have the boundaries it has at present.
2. The document published by Historic England on the 20th August 2018 contains very little relevant information and jumps to the conclusion that the area should be expanded to include the whole of Toll Bar Field with no logic, justification or reasoning.
3. The magnetic study carried out in 2017 gives useful information about the site and, before any consideration can be given to expanding the site, this and other modern non-invasive survey techniques should be applied to the whole site and adjacent areas.
4. The results of the walkover studies in the 1970s and 1980s are useful but it is clear that the mapping of the finds is inaccurate. The original information should be re-mapped into a proper Geographical Information System where it can be overlaid onto the photographic and non-intrusive survey data along with the locations of any other finds.
5. It is not clear that this site is of national significance and therefore worthy of scheduling. Historic England should produce a proper analysis of its significance and this should be subject to proper peer review.
6. Once the mapping and analysis have been done, Historic England should propose a revision to the scheduling and put this out to consultation properly.