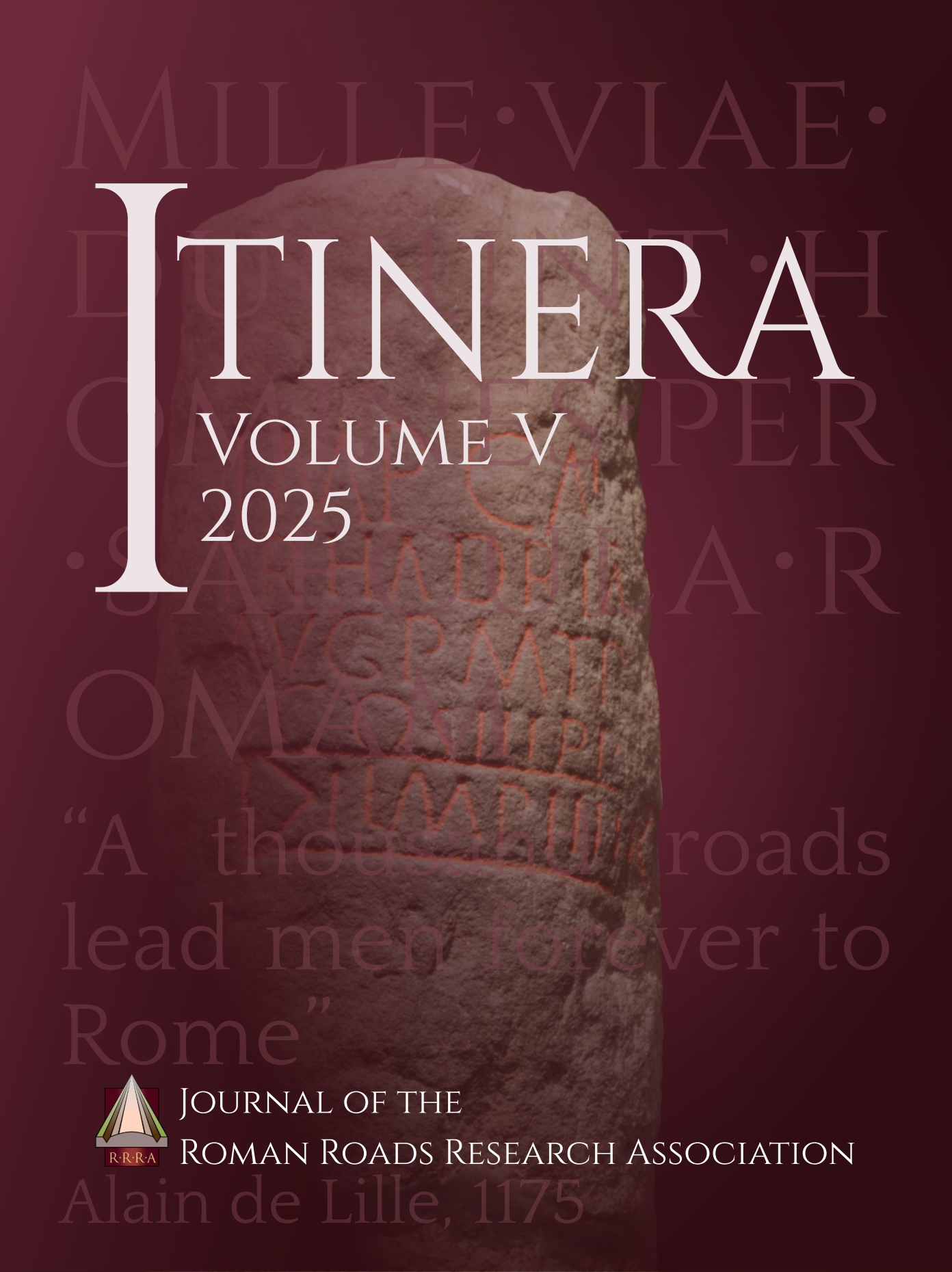


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Volume V

2025

"A thousand roads lead men forever to Rome"

Alain de Lille, 1175

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Editorial

Robert Entwistle



Welcome to the 2025 edition of *Itinera*, Volume V. *Itinera* continues to hold a unique position among academic journals of Roman studies, with roots in both the academic and grassroots communities. We focus upon the study of Roman roads, transport technology and systems of surveying. We welcome reports and contributions from all researchers able to extend knowledge in these areas to professionals and the public alike, through the format of a formal academic paper.

Volume V, if slenderer than the bumper 2024 edition, is typical in its range of papers. Thus, Wayne Kirk extends our knowledge of Roman Northamptonshire in the light of modern findings, through a wide-reaching paper appraising its road network. Mike Luke, well respected for his excavations and publications on Roman Bedfordshire, shows how a developed understanding of the 'small town' of Sandy leads to an improved appreciation of the local roads. The same theme of road networks is explored in a different way by Keith Abbott, who argues that minor roads and trackways are seriously under-represented in our present appreciation of Roman roads.

Neil Godfrey, by contrast, addresses a wholly different issue: the relationship between roads and Romano-Celtic temples, with roads providing not only transport and passing clients, but also planned landscapes within which temples stood. My own paper is different again, examining ancient surveying methods through the features of extant surveyed works, classical literary sources, and modern surveying techniques. This methodological paper ends my series of papers on Long-distance Alignments. We are also pleased to have a paper from an independent researcher, Paul Smith – one of our own members – presenting his thesis of a road formed over time, from the Iron-Age into the Roman period and beyond.

In this volume we further welcome two authoritative papers from leading academics in Romania, demonstrating the growing understanding of Roman roads in a part of the empire that has received limited attention in the UK. In understanding the growth of road networks in a territory newly brought within the empire we see the link between conquest and road construction, and reflect on the impact of recent political change upon research.

As always, I warmly celebrate the work of our academic advisors and our willing team of volunteers who carry out many critical functions: proofreading, creating the Index, reporting updates from across the country, and managing distribution of printed copy. *Itinera* would not be possible without the willing labours of these individuals, and above all without the editorial team who manage the life of our journal across the year. The process moves from gathering papers and archaeological updates, through review, selection, editing and typesetting, through to final publication. Dr Mike Bishop – writer, publisher and archaeologist – was a founder member of our editorial team, guiding us through the formative first four years of our existence. His expert advice on publishing and all matters Roman helped steer us through a period when everything was new. His international contacts extended knowledge of our journal to contributors as far away as Spain (and most recently) Romania. *Itinera* owes him a great debt as he moves on to other things this year.

With Mike leaving, we are delighted to have welcomed to our team Professor James Gerrard of the University of Newcastle. James Gerrard brings great academic distinction, strengthening us with his experience and calm judgements. Already he has inspired the initiative of an annual Prize for the best Dissertation reflecting Roman Transport studies. Details of the prize (readily available on request)

have been distributed through SALON and the RRRA Newsletter and will shortly be available on the RRRA website. We hope to see this prize awarded for the first time in 2025.

I take this opportunity of warmly welcoming submissions, projected or actual, for Volume VI of Itinera, from all corners of Britannia and the wider empire. You will find '*Notes for Contributors*' on the RRRA website.

In the meantime, I invite you to enjoy everything within Volume V.

Robert Entwistle

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Roman Roads and Rural Romano-Celtic Temples in Roman Britain - Perspectives and Case Studies

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Abstract

This article examines the relationships between rural Romano-Celtic temples and Roman roads in Britain, positioning them within their broader landscape contexts. Through a review of the literature and an analysis of key themes - including accessibility, visibility, the nature of travel to temples, and the functional and symbolic dimensions of Roman roads - research questions and methodological approaches that integrate spatial and place-based perspectives are discussed. Case studies of the Romano-Celtic temples at Lamyatt Beacon and Titsey are used to demonstrate these approaches, highlighting the potential of landscape archaeology for understanding the interactions between sacred space and the Roman road network.

Introduction

Despite the growing body of evidence on Roman roads and religious sites in Roman Britain, the interrelationship between them remains relatively under explored. This article seeks to contribute to advancing this area of research by examining the connections between Roman roads and Romano-Celtic temples. These temples were in use in Britain from the mid-1st century to the early 5th century AD, with most excavated sites found south of a line from the Wash to the Severn Estuary (Smith 2018, 133). Whilst other religious structures that share an element of concentricity are reasonably categorised as Romano-Celtic temples, and whilst there are variations on this format, they are strictly defined as having an inner *cella* surrounded on at least three sides by a walkway, or ambulatory (Smith 2018, 132–133). Additionally, at many sites, a square or rectangular *temenos* ditch or wall enclosed the temple precinct (Lewis 1966, 131–132).

Rather than those situated within nucleated settlements or close to towns, this article focuses on two broad categories of temples. Firstly, those that are found very close to roads yet may be considered atypical nucleated roadside settlements in the sense that they appear to have been '*rural religious complexes*' (Smith 2018, 157), notably the large rural sanctuaries at Frilford, Oxfordshire (RR164) and Nettleton Shrub, Wiltshire (RR5c), together with the religious complex/roadside settlement at Springhead, Kent (RR1c), and the smaller roadside religious complex at Friars Wash, Hertfordshire (RR1e). Secondly, the rural temple sites found away from, but within a few kilometres of Roman roads,

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of which the numerous examples include Lancing Down, West Sussex (RR153), Woodeaton, Oxfordshire (R160b) and Uley, Gloucestershire (RR541). Other forms of sacred space, which are more numerous and geographically dispersed than Romano-Celtic temples, are beyond the scope of this article. As such, it serves as an initial exploration of the potential connections between roads and religious sites in Roman Britain, acknowledging the need for further and more expansive research. Following an exploration of the broader landscape context of Romano-Celtic temples and some key themes relating to roads and temples, case studies of the temples at Lamyatt Beacon in Somerset, and Titsey in Surrey are discussed. Lamyatt Beacon was selected as it is a good example of a rural temple site situated fairly close to the road network. Titsey is notable for being a temple located directly beside a road, yet lacking an associated nucleated settlement or a more extensive religious complex. However, it has been the subject of limited interpretation since its most recent excavation in 1935, and, as this article will suggest, the possibility that it was part of a broader religious complex remains.

Key Themes

Romano-Celtic Temples in the Landscape

Whilst a few studies (e.g. Bird 2004; Blagg 1986; Wilson 1973) have explored the landscape context of Romano-Celtic temples in Britain, and Ghey (2003) has done so for Gallo-Roman temples, research has predominantly remained site-focused, with discussions of the wider landscape setting typically confined to tangential observations. Nonetheless, these observations are sufficient to suggest that an association with the surrounding landscape is likely to be significant for the interpretation of temple sites (Ghey 2003, 24; Smith 2018, 168). They include continuity from pre-Roman ritual sites (Smith 2018, 135), and connections with other prehistoric landscape features, such as round barrows (Williams 1998, 72–73). Links between temples and the natural landscape have also been emphasised, such as relationships with trees, and a proximity to water (Bird 2004, 84-86). It has also been noted that Romano-Celtic temples are often found in elevated positions (e.g. Bird 2004, 84; Garland 2013, 189; Smith 2000, 312), with spot height analysis of rural sacred sites in southern and central England indicating a tendency for them to be located on higher ground than sacred space located within settlements (Smith 2018, 161). Elevated sites have been linked to several factors relating to visibility, including looking 'from' or 'towards' temples, including inter-visibility with rivers (Ghey 2005, 113), and other temples (Smith 2000, 150). The prominence of temples within the wider landscape appears to have been a deliberate and significant aspect of their placement (Bird 2004, 84; Woodward 1992, 24), with some situated to maintain visibility over the areas where people lived and worked (Derks 1998, 138). Furthermore, their visual impact was further enhanced through architectural features such as painted exteriors, distinctive red tile roofs (Blagg 1986, 19-21) and the addition of towers (Bird 2002, 44). It has also been suggested that high places were selected in Roman Gaul to express the superiority of the gods worshipped there (Derks 1998, 138), and that elevated positions for sacred sites in the ancient world may have reflected a desire to secure divine protection over the landscape (Jost 1994, 20).

Connections between Romano-Celtic temples, settlements and villas are also a common theme. Despite suggestions that rural temples were isolated (Rodwell 1980, 233), the Roman Settlement of Rural Britain (RSRB) project found that 88 per cent of excavated rural temples were situated within 5 km of a contemporary settlement, with 15 lying in the near vicinity of a villa (Smith 2018, 161). Furthermore, most Romano-Celtic temples and villas were constructed contemporaneously during

the mid to late Roman period, and often shared similar construction methods, suggesting that many temples were integral components of broader villa estates (Smith 2018, 161-167). Indeed, whilst worshippers' offerings may also have played a role in financing the building and maintenance of Romano-Celtic temples (Blagg 1986, 21), their construction and management must have been closely associated with the Romanised native elite (Mattingly 2006, 485), who had access to the resources and land required. Temples may also have played a role in creating and maintaining community identity (Smith 2018, 203). In some cases, they may have been constructed and maintained by the ruling group in an area (*pagus or civitas*) (Bird 2004, 80), as reflected in the fact that some were possibly situated close to *civitas* boundaries (Blagg 1986, 21). Furthermore, the nature of Roman religion suggests that most priests were likely to have been elected or appointed officials, or otherwise important members of the local community (Martin-Kilcher and Schatzmann 2009, 210-214, cited in Kiernan 2012, 94), and it seems likely that the largest rural sanctuaries were owned at the civic level (Smith 2018, 167). These relationships suggest that the construction and maintenance of temples were linked to concerns that extended beyond exclusively religious matters. Indeed, in contrast to the modern distinction between '*sacred*' and '*secular*' these two spheres are likely to have overlapped in the period (Ghey 2005, 112). This was the case in Rome where sanctuaries had always played multiple roles, before the boundaries between sacred and secular space became increasingly blurred in the Imperial period (Scott 2017, 3–9). Similarly, rural temples in Roman Britain may have served purposes beyond ritual, functioning as venues for markets, and other gatherings. For example, it has been suggested that the large number of coins discovered at the Wanborough temple in Wiltshire is indicative of '*public activity and business*' (O'Connell and Bird 1994, 33–4).

Observations regarding the relationship between Romano-Celtic temples and Roman roads highlight where temples are situated very close to roads, as well as broader potential connections between villas, temples, and roads (e.g. Bird 2004, 86). It has been proposed that the general proximity of temples to roads suggests that accessibility was a crucial factor in the construction and maintenance of rural temples (Smith 2000, 312) and essential to the prosperity of religious complexes (Smith 2018, 161). It is also suggested that roads were sometimes deliberately laid out to point directly at and bend round pre-existing sacred sites, as Bird (2004, 85-86) suggests occurred at Ewell in Surrey (RR15) and Springhead (RR1c) in Kent. In other cases, temples may have been sited to take advantage of road routes, with the objective of giving prominence to the sacred sites, bringing them to the attention of travellers (Bird 2002, 44). Furthermore, that the often-elevated locations of rural temples provided visibility from roads might indicate a deliberate intention to signpost temples for travellers, a theme connected to broader discussions concerning the nature of journeys with temples as their destinations (Kiernan 2012). Finally, it is important to acknowledge that numerous temple sites may have been associated with more than one of the previously mentioned landscape features. Moreover, that some locations may have held significance before temples were constructed, due to factors that are not always detectable archaeologically, such as ritually significant natural features or mythical stories associated with particular places.

Spatial and Place-Based Perspectives

Before exploring how certain related ideas might apply to Roman roads and Romano-Celtic temples, it is helpful to first provide a brief overview of how landscapes have been conceptualised in Archaeology. The '*spatial*' perspective (Lock and Pouncett 2017, 2) considers the landscape as the land itself: the humanly created - along with natural - features that exist '*objectively*' across space, and their natural context (Johnson 2006, 3). However, relying exclusively on a spatial approach has been

criticised for neglecting the personal experiences and meanings that people attach to landscapes (Feinman 2015, 685). Consequently, particularly in prehistoric archaeology, there has been a shift from focusing solely on physical features to incorporating social and cultural meanings. Consequently, landscapes viewed as '*place*' (Lock and Pouncett 2017, 2) are entities that are socially produced, acquiring meaning through human perception, experience, and cultural context (Ashmore and Knapp 1990, 1). Although there is one physical land available for study, landscapes are perceived differently depending on the observer's experience. As Häussler and Chiai (2020, 1–2) note, we '*see it with our eyes but interpret it with our mind.*' Thus, through ways of thinking and seeing, humans transform land into '*landscapes*' (Johnson 2006, 4). Furthermore, this process is reciprocal, as places are also seen as socially productive, actively influencing human experiences, perceptions and identities.

This shift towards understanding space as a fluid social construct has significantly impacted classical scholarship, encompassing small spaces to entire landscapes (Scott 2017, 11). Rather than viewing sacred spaces as physical locations that acquire their sacred status inherently (e.g. Eliade 1957), scholars have emphasised that they are created through '*the outcome of actions, intentions, and recollections*' and are '*the result of past and present interactions among humans, material implements, architecture, and landscape*' (Moser and Feldman 2014, 1). Furthermore, diverse theoretical perspectives are increasingly prevalent in the broader literature on trails, paths and roads (Snead *et al.* 2011, 13-17), with Talbert (2019, 23–35) highlighting the potential for approaches that might explore the wider roles of Roman roads '*in the cultures and mindsets of the Empire's peoples.*' However, whilst theoretical engagement in Roman archaeology has increased significantly in recent decades, with notable studies focusing on Romano-Celtic temples (e.g. Garland 2013; Smith 2000) and Roman roads (e.g. Matthews 1999; Witcher 1998), there remains considerable scope for further development. This limitation is particularly evident in the relationship between Romano-Celtic temples and roads, which remains relatively under-investigated and has yet to be thoroughly examined from a place-based perspective.

Functionality, Symbolism, and Changing Perceptions

Functional interpretations that emphasise utility are closely connected to a spatial perspective on landscapes, with Roman roads typically understood primarily in terms of their practical functions. This undoubtedly accurately reflects their original purpose, as '*artefacts built to assist people to journey efficiently from one place to another*' (Davies 2002, 11), initially in response to military needs and later to trade requirements (Margary 1973, 18). However, just as purely functional interpretations of villas as agricultural sites should be tempered by the evidence of culture, art, and religion found at many locations (King 2020, 155), interpreting roads solely in functional terms risks overlooking their cultural and symbolic dimensions. As Witcher (1998, 63-4) points out, in being built through spaces occupied by people and by modifying the physical landscape, roads also influenced how people understood the spaces in which they lived and moved. Therefore, in addition to being functional, physical structures enabling movement to a destination, Roman roads had a symbolic impact, embodying issues of ideology, power and identity, and were '*intimately involved with social constructions of the world*' (Witcher 1998, 60). Thus, they transcended physical infrastructure, to represent powerful symbols of '*civilization*' and tools for '*Romanization*' (Carlà-Uhink 2021), serving as a '*foundation, symbol and instrument of Roman rule*' (Kolb 2019, 3).

In concentrating on the immediate effects of road construction and associated infrastructure on the local population, previous studies that have considered Roman roads in Britain from a place-based

perspective have reflected these ideas. The emphasis has been on how roads demonstrated in a very visible way the dominance of the new regime (Matthews 1999, 413), and helped manipulate identity and modify power relationships (Witcher 1998, 68). For example, Matthews (1999, 412-413) refers to the symbolism of roads cutting across existing field patterns, of the *agger* being raised above the surrounding landscape and connecting places over long distances in a way that was in sharp contrast to the localised sense of place experienced by people living in the pre-conquest period. However, recognising that the meanings of landscapes continually change with the socio-cultural context of observers implies that perceptions of the significance of roads would have been reinterpreted from various standpoints (Witcher 1998, 66). Moreover, even after a road's original purpose had diminished, its physical presence in the landscape would have continued to influence the organisation and perception of space (Carlà-Uhink 2021, 73). Whilst initially it was as if the Roman road network in Britain was '*superimposed on its rural setting and had no relationship to it*' (Jackson 1984, 23 cited in Blagg 1986), over time it came to acquire such a relationship, with roads originally constructed for military conquest or trade later acquiring new significance beyond their original purposes.

Character of Journeys to Temples

One way that perceptions of roads evolved over time is through their emerging importance for individuals travelling to sacred sites. For example, although the Fosse Way lost much of its administrative significance early on, it facilitated a substantial flow of traffic to Bath, which was also likely to have contributed significantly to the establishment of the religious complex at Nettleton Shrub (Smith 2000, 206). Indeed, Romano-Celtic temples have been suggested as the destination for sacred journeys or '*pilgrimages*' more generally (Kiernan 2012, 83; King 2005, 363), including those associated with healing (Smith 2018, 147). However, ancient pilgrimage is difficult to define (Elsner and Rutherford 2007, 1-38), and particularly difficult to recognise archaeologically in Roman Britain. Whilst portable votives that might be associated with sacred travel are present at some sites, there is a lack of literary sources, depictions of pilgrims and relevant inscriptions as found elsewhere in the Greco-Roman world. Furthermore, it can be challenging to distinguish between religious and secular forms of travel (Grünewald 2017, 130). However, as discussed earlier there is evidence for a blurring of sacred and secular activity at temple sites in Britain, and as Kiernan (2012, 95) points out, most travel in antiquity was likely to have been multi-purpose. For these reasons, arguing that destinations served as the most tangible material evidence of ancient pilgrimage, Kiernan (2012, 80) defines pilgrimage as '*some kind of travel involving ritual destinations, even if the travel includes other non-religious purposes as well*'.

Therefore, notwithstanding the role of local trackways, the location of temple sites and their relationship to roads and settlements is key to understanding potential pilgrimage destinations. Indeed, under this definition any visitor to a temple isolated from nearby settlements would immediately fulfil the travel requirement of a pilgrimage. In addition to nearby roads, an indicator of travel to religious sites might be non-temple buildings that might be associated with guest accommodation, such as at the larger religious complexes as at Lydney Park and Uley (Woodward 1992, 47-49) in Gloucestershire, and possibly at Nettleton Shrub, Wiltshire (Blagg 1986, 21), as well as the smaller site at Pagans Hill, Somerset (Rahtz *et al.* 1989). However, where available, accommodation would likely be for significant guests only, with Derks (1998, 194) suggesting for Romano-Gallo temples that tents were likely to accommodate most visitors. However, as Smith (2018, 165) points out, in most British cases little investigation has taken place beyond the immediate area surrounding

the temple site, and therefore it is possible that some apparently isolated rural temples may have been part of larger complexes.

The emphasis on the likely multi-purpose nature of journeys to Romano-Celtic temples somewhat undermines traditional notions of pilgrimage, and so the term should be used with caution. Furthermore, when examining the types of travel associated with both larger religious complexes and smaller rural temples, the notion that pilgrimage must involve long-distance travel is also called into question. Kiernan (2012, 88) points out that rather than focusing on distance travelled, some anthropological models emphasise movement of communities outside their normal environments to draw out and emphasise their shared social identity. Therefore, in addition to facilitating potentially relatively long-distance travel, Roman roads may have played an important role in enabling access to rural temples that were far enough from settlements to provide a distinct ritual setting, yet close enough for large groups to reach in a relatively short time. Indeed, Bird (2004, 78) argues that given the presence of household shrines, rural temples were less likely to serve everyday purposes and were more likely associated with special visits, perhaps tied to the religious calendar. Additionally, Smith (2018, 203) has suggested that religious festivals may have attracted people living within 20 km of some rural religious sites.

Research Questions

The preceding discussion, together with insights from the broader archaeological literature on sacred space and landscapes, suggests the types of questions that might be asked of the relationship between roads and temples. In studies of other periods and regions, landscape analysis is often used to interpret the potential intentions and motivations of '*builders*' in choosing specific locations for constructing sacred spaces (Häussler and Chiai 2020, 2). However, in Roman Britain, despite the probable involvement of the native elite in temple construction and likely deliberate attempts to place temples within the landscape or to manage their settings, there has been little consideration of these settings and why particular places had temples at all (Bird 2004, 77-83). Furthermore, Smith (2018, 158) has questioned why so many temples were located in rural, non-settlement contexts, why certain sites were deemed worthy of devotion, and how these sites were connected within the wider landscape. As an important feature of the landscape in the period, Roman roads are key to addressing such questions. As Bird (2004, 85) suggests, the extent to which the siting of pre-existing temples – or ritual precursors of sacred sites - may have affected the subsequent courses of roads, may be examined. Additionally, the extent to which temples were located deliberately in relation to roads can be investigated, potentially offering insights into the behaviour and perceptions of Britons under Roman rule (Blagg 1986, 24). Finally, whilst more challenging, exploring the impact of the landscape setting of temples in relation to roads may provide perspectives on the potential experiences of travellers visiting these sites. Such questions are explored in the following case studies, which examine the relationships between Roman roads and the Romano-Celtic temples at Lamyatt Beacon and Titsey, within their broader landscape contexts.

Methodological Approaches

Just as their standards of construction varied (Margary 1973, 504), roads in the Roman Empire were not a uniform phenomenon, as their uses and implications were highly diverse, both spatially and socially, and they were experienced on a very parochial level (Witcher 1998, 60). Similarly, the

settings of Romano-Celtic temples vary from area to area, and this may indicate that there were locally significant customs involved, perhaps *civitas* related (Bird 2004, 77). Furthermore, the association between a temple and its surrounding landscape is often multi-dimensional. Therefore, an appropriate approach – which is adopted in the following case studies - is to explore the relationships between roads and temples within their broader landscape contexts, analysing them on a case-by-case basis. This involves establishing an understanding of specific temples (e.g. chronologies, finds) and reconstructing the contemporary landscape as fully as possible. This includes evidence for nearby Roman roads (e.g. precise routes, chronologies) and significant prehistoric features, villas, settlements, field systems, and other elements in the surrounding landscape.

While quantitative techniques such as aerial photography (AP), Light Detection and Ranging (lidar), and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) have been criticised for offering a '*detached*' spatial perspective, they are essential for identifying Roman roads and for situating and interpreting them alongside Romano-Celtic temples and other features in the landscape. Therefore, for the case studies, in addition to a literature review, Historic Environment Record data for a 3.5 km radius was obtained to inform an understanding of the landscape evidence up to and including the Romano-British period. For Lamyatt Beacon new research, including analysis of lidar and APs was undertaken in relation to RR465(x) / RRX037, as summarised in *Itinera IV* (Godfrey 2024) and in the Appendix to this paper. The route of RR14 is well established, and the analysis in this article is based on the route included in a current project mapping all known Roman Roads in Britain, which assigns a high degree of confidence to its accuracy (Mike Haken pers. comm., 10th October 2024). In terms of complementing these techniques with a place-based perspective, whilst it might be accepted in that perceptions of roads and the wider landscape changed over time, scepticism may arise regarding how these can be recovered (Fleming 1999, 119-125). Nonetheless, theoretically informed methodologies that allow landscapes to be examined at the '*lived scale*' (Lock and Pouncett 2017, 13) are increasingly employed in Archaeology, including in the study of sacred sites in their landscape contexts (Häussler and Chiai 2020, 1–3). For the case studies this involved incorporating some of the theoretical themes discussed earlier, supplemented by the relevant literature, together with field visits to ground truth the evidence, and to approach what Hadley (2023, 67) terms the '*mentality*' of roads, and the broader landscape.

GIS-based visibility analysis - a technique unavailable to some earlier researchers who suggested connections between the case study temples and roads - is a valuable tool for modelling visual

Figure	Site	NGR	Dimensions	Height	Surface offset
1.	Lamyatt Beacon Temple	ST 6693 3619	7.5m x 7.5m	8m	1.75m
2.	Ditcheat Villa	ST 6360 3407	35m x 15m	5m	1.75m
3.	Titsey Temple	TQ 4212 5496	6.17m x 6.48m	8m	1.75m
4.	Alternative Titsey Temple	TQ 4132 5604	6.17m x 6.48 m	8m	1.75m

Table 1: Key data for GIS visibility analysis

relationships in the landscape. Therefore, reverse viewsheds were generated for the case study temples and other significant locations. Reverse viewsheds identify all areas in the landscape from which a single location, such as a temple or villa could have been visible. A series of points representing the location and an estimated height of the corners of each building (specifically the *cella*, in the case of temples) were added to an ArcGIS Pro 3.02 project containing an Ordnance Survey Terrain 5 Digital Terrain model. A reverse viewshed analysis was conducted for each point using the Visibility tool, with a surface offset of 1.75 m to simulate a human observer at each position in the landscape (Table 1). The resulting viewsheds were then merged to create a comprehensive viewshed encompassing all points for a given building. In all the viewsheds presented in this article, the locations from which the relevant building could have been visible are coloured in orange.

Given the range of environmental variables and the limited available data, GIS visibility analysis is most effective at showing which areas would definitively not be visible due to the landscape topography. Notably the effect that vegetation has on visibility is a major challenge (Eckardt *et al.* 2009, 74) as there is not detailed environmental data to reconstruct the woodland in the case study areas, and even if there were, the precise location and impact of vegetation would remain uncertain. However, considering the elevated position of the temple locations and the likelihood of clear, vegetation-free roads, the viewsheds are likely to provide an accurate representation of potential visibility, especially from the roads. It is also possible that the presence of distinctive woodland may have played a role in marking the location of some temple sites. Whilst the trees may have obscured a direct view of the temple, their intentional placement could have acted as a proxy, guiding observers to the temple's location. In this case, the visibility analysis would still be broadly accurate, as locations from where the trees were visible would also likely correspond to locations where the temple could be seen, even if obscured by the woodland.

A further challenge is associated with the struggle of GIS to overcome its positivist foundations and to correspond to subjective human experiences (Gillings 2012, 601). Affordance theory has been proposed as a means of providing a theoretical basis to '*humanise*' GIS visibility analysis, by shifting the focus from a purely objective, spatial approach to one that considers how people in the past may have experienced and interpreted visibility within a landscape (Gillings 2009). In contrast to indirect theories of perception which posit that animals exclusively create and store meaning internally, the '*direct*' theory of affordance suggests that the environment in which an animal is embedded has inherent meanings encoded within it (Gibson 1979, 129). Furthermore, whilst perception may be '*direct*', the relational nature of affordances means that their manifestation and recognition is bound up with selective attention. Therefore, '*knowledge in the head*' - an individual's knowledge, memories, cultural constraints, situational contexts and experiences - (Gillings 2012, 605-607) accompanies '*information in the world*', in the recognition of affordances in the environment (Norman 1988, 54–80). Therefore, whilst GIS viewshed analysis typically quantifies what is visible from a given point based on terrain and other features, affordance theory introduces a more interpretive dimension by asking how visibility might have mattered to people inhabiting the landscape and therefore informs interpretations of the viewsheds in the case studies. Finally, with the caveat that they can be distorted by undiscovered sites or the differing size, wealth and power of villas (Eckardt *et al.* 2009, 79), Thiessen polygons can help generate a theoretical representation of villa estates, by focusing on separate sites, with straight lines drawn between neighbouring sites and a second series of lines drawn at the midpoint along each of the first series of lines at right angles. For this project, Thiessen polygons were generated using the Create Thiessen Polygons (Analysis) tool in ArcGIS Pro 3.02, which automatically constructed the polygons based on the villa site locations.

Lamyatt Beacon, Somerset

The scheduled (1003748) Romano-Celtic temple at Lamyatt Beacon was located 1.5 km east of the village of Lamyatt, Somerset, positioned at the summit of the now wooded, narrow ridge of Creech Hill (ST 6693 3619). Excavated between 1958-1960, and 1973, the temple measured 11 m square, with a central *cella* surrounded by an ambulatory. Two square annexes were symmetrically positioned on the east side, while a small sunken room on the south side, accessible only from the ambulatory, completed the layout (Leech *et al.* 1986, 262). The temple was constructed around AD 290 and remained in use until the early 5th century (Leech *et al.* 1986, 272). The finds assemblage is very similar to that at the scheduled (1017314) Romano-Celtic temple site at Cold Kitchen Hill, Wiltshire - which also included miniature axes, horseman brooches and antlers (Leech *et al.* 1986, 271) - located approximately 17 km to the east (ST 8342 3874), and in use between the early third and late fourth centuries AD.

The roads closest to Lamyatt Beacon were RR5b (Fosse Way) and RR465(x) / RRX037, with the latter road proposed to commence at a junction with RR5b at Pylle Hill, 5.5 km to the west of the temple (Woodhouse 1964). It has been suggested that RR465(x) / RRX037 terminated at the modern village of Lamyatt (Aston and Burrows 1982, 64). Furthermore, the excavators (Leech *et al.* 1986, 272) speculated that RR465(x) / RRX037 may have been intentionally constructed to provide direct access to the temple, suggesting that the road's construction around AD 300 reflected the temple's significance. Recent research (Godfrey 2024) suggests that there was likely to have been a road from Pylle Hill to Lamyatt. However, the road appears to have continued around the base of Creech Hill, passing through a valley before crossing the River Brue at Bruton, where a significant find of a lead ingot dating to AD 164-9 (RIB 2404.19) was discovered. Furthermore, whilst the remainder of the proposed route between Bruton and Semley requires further investigation, Woodhouse (1964) suggests that an 18th-century coach road '*of singular straightness*' to the west of Bruton, may indicate the course of the road, and research published in the Appendix to this paper demonstrates the continuation of RR465(x) / RRX037, between Pen Pits and Knapp Hill. Pen Pits was quarried from the Iron Age through the Roman period (Historic England 2024), suggesting a possible rationale for the construction of RR465(x) / RRX037. If, as seems likely, the full length of RR465(x) / RRX037 connected RR5b and RR46, it would probably post-date both roads but pre-date the temple's construction, by a significant margin.

Whilst it is unlikely that RR465(x) / RRX037 was constructed specifically to serve the temple, it is plausible that the temple location was chosen, at least in part, to take advantage of its proximity to this road and RR5b. In exploring this possibility, it is important to note that some other frequently observed associations with Romano-Celtic temples are not present at Lamyatt Beacon. It is notable that access to water does not appear to have been important in the decision to locate the temple on the hilltop. Furthermore, unlike at Cold Kitchen Hill, where the temple location appears to have been selected at least in part due to its historical and potentially ritual significance, dating to the Iron Age (Godfrey 2023, 23-26), there is very limited evidence for pre-Roman activity at Lamyatt Beacon prior to its construction (Leech *et al.* 1986, 308). The most significant prehistoric feature in the surrounding landscape is Fox Covert, an unexcavated partial contour Iron Age hillfort, located 650 m to the north-northwest, which is partially overlooked by the temple site. Whilst Woodward (1992, 22) has argued that hillforts were deliberately selected for temple construction, Bird (2004, 86) suggests that even where they were used, this was most likely connected to their elevated locations. However, Kamash (2016, 691) has emphasised a frequent failure to utilise hillforts, and it is the case that elsewhere in

Somerset - at Brean Down and Henley Wood - temples were located close to, but outside, a hillfort. There may have been a symbolic reason for this at Lamyatt Beacon, as the temple's elevated location, higher than the hillfort, may have been perceived as being closer to the gods while also offering greater prominence within the surrounding landscape. An alternative interpretation might be derived from Kamash's (2016 691) claim that Romano-Celtic temples may have been positioned to avoid the controversial Iron Age past, with features from this period left deliberately unused. Another possibility mentioned by Kamash (2016 691) is that not building directly over the Iron Age past may have been a form of protest that left a physical reminder of the ancestral memory and historic identity of native inhabitants. Therefore, it may also have been symbolically significant that this 'new' sacred location at Lamyatt Beacon overlooked the presumably empty hillfort, whilst also - as we will see later - benefiting from extensive visibility from the two roads, thereby aligning the temple with this powerful symbol of Roman authority and identity. However, in contrast to the relatively

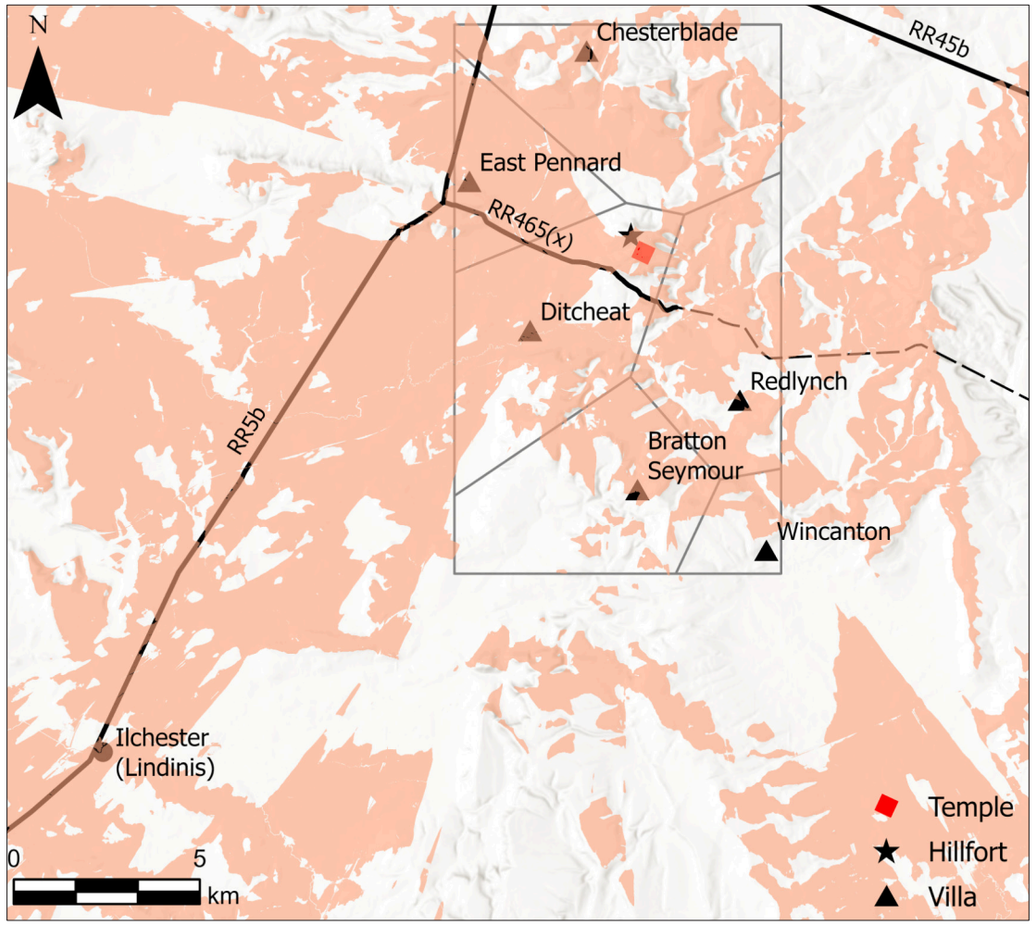


Fig. 1: Reverse viewshed of Lamyatt Beacon Romano-Celtic temple, with Thiessen Polygons (Author, 2024), Copyright for base layer: ArcGIS World Hillshade. Esri (2024)

early construction of the Titsey temple discussed later, Lamyatt Beacon was built much later in the Roman period, during the peak period of villa building and expansion in the wider region.

There is currently very limited evidence for contemporary field systems in the surrounding landscape, and of the non-villa sites, the most significant is at Evercreech (ST 6411 3630), where Broomhead (1988, 1–2) recorded a concentrated scatter of over 300 sherds of mid-2nd-4th centuries AD Romano British pottery, and which he suggests almost certainly represents an occupation site. Whilst the road is not mentioned in the report, this location is very close to where RR465(x) / RRX037 must have crossed the River Alham. More broadly, the construction and use of the Lamyatt Beacon temple coincided with a period of prosperity within the *civitas* of the Northern Durotriges, which was centred on Ilchester (Leech and Leach 1982, 78). Whilst the area to the north of Blackmoor Vale was more sparsely populated with villas than the area around Ilchester - where at least 50 villas of mainly 3rd and 4th century date were located (King 2023, 224) - there were six likely villas within 3.5-8.5 km of the temple site. Whilst only those at Bratton Seymour and Ditcheat have been excavated, Thiessen polygons provide a hypothetical estimate of the potential estate territories associated with the six villas (*Fig. 1*). Notably, whilst the East Pennard villa site is fairly close to RR5b and RR465(x) / RRX037, the hypothetical estate linked to the Ditcheat villa, located 3.5 km southwest of the temple, encompasses Lamyatt Beacon and a section of RR465(x) / RRX037 as it approaches the temple location. The limited dating evidence from Ditcheat suggests that the villa may have been contemporaneous with Lamyatt Beacon (Somerset HER 2023), and whilst the Thiessen polygon analysis should be treated with caution, the temple's position close to the boundary of four of the hypothetical villa estates might indicate that it was shared by them. This would be comparable to the temple at Wood End, Hertfordshire, which was located 3.5 km from two villas, and perhaps lying within the estate of one of them or on their common boundary and was likely to have been used by the local inhabitants of these estates (Smith 2018, 161). Furthermore, *Fig.1* demonstrates that Lamyatt Beacon was likely to have been visible from large parts of the hypothetical Ditcheat estate territory, the Ditcheat villa itself, and other nearby villa estates.

Therefore, whilst its location in relation to the nearby villas and the road network suggests that Lamyatt Beacon was not as '*isolated*' as Rodwell (1980, 233) has claimed, it does appear possible that it was, as he suggests, an '*estate temple*'. However, Leech *et al.* (1986, 272) argue that Lamyatt Beacon was a '*local cult centre*' and Smith (2001, 281) concurs in suggesting that it was a modest, yet prosperous religious centre, incorporating a Romanised cult. However, the estate temple and cult centre interpretations are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The focus of the cult was likely to have been Mars, conflated with a Cernunnos-type deity, which also appears to have been also venerated at Cold Kitchen Hill (Leech *et al.* 1986, 271–272). Furthermore, portable votive objects - which might be indicative of visitors travelling some distance - were found at the site, with some of the brooches being poor copies including one that could only have had symbolic value, which reinforces the idea that these portable brooches were made for visitors to a cult centre; intended either as votives or as souvenirs (Leech *et al.* 1986, 316-318). No other buildings were found at Lamyatt Beacon, and so unless further investigation reveals additional accommodation, if required this would have probably been via the use of tents. However, notwithstanding use of unknown local trackways, an analysis of likely travel times via RR5b and RR465(x) / RRX037 from Ilchester, other nearby population centres, as well as the junction with RR5b at Pylle Hill, suggests that the road network made Lamyatt Beacon highly accessible. For example, based on a presumed travel time of 4.3 km/hr by foot and 8 km/hr by horse, from Pylle Hill it would have taken approximately 1 hour, 15 minutes to reach the base of Creech Hill on foot, and 40 minutes by horse (Godfrey 2023, 59).

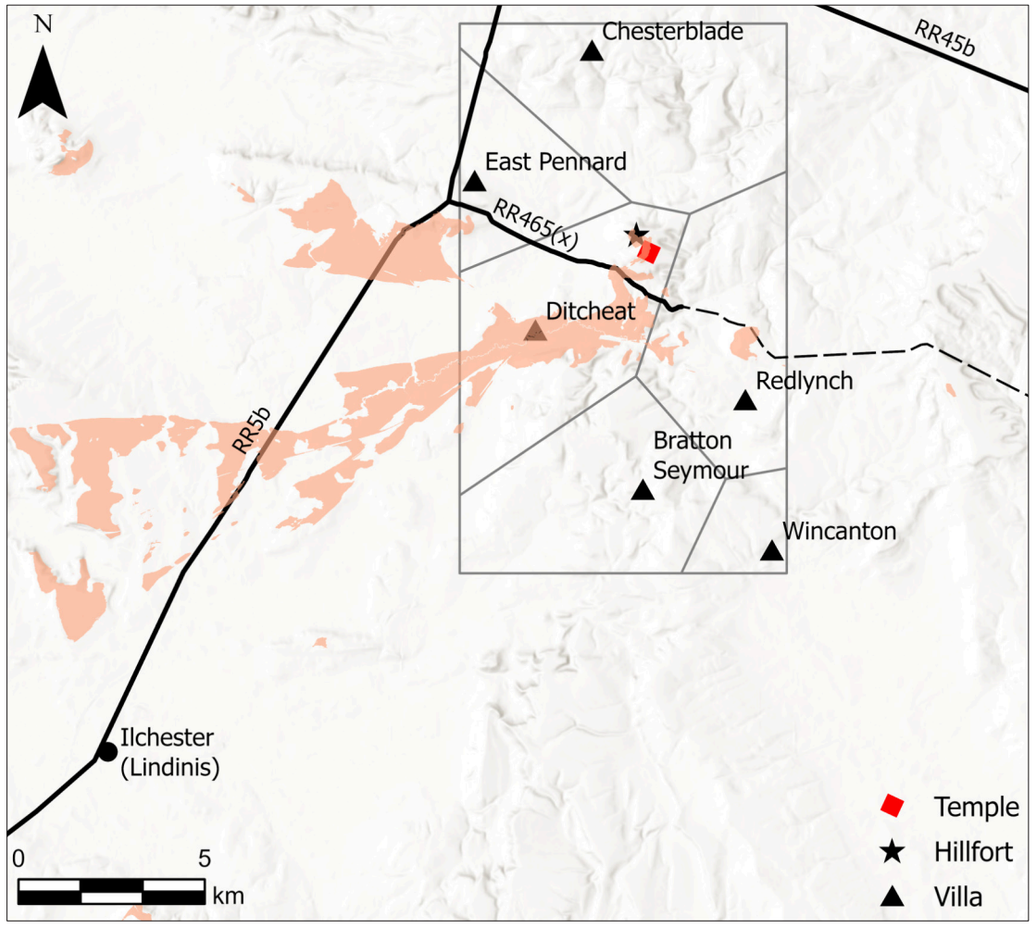


Fig. 2: Reverse viewshed of Ditcheat Roman villa with Thiessen Polygons (Author, 2024). Copyright for base layer: ArcGIS World Hillshade. Esri (2024)

If the selection of Lamyatt Beacon as a temple location was partly connected to an intention to capitalise on the pre-existing religious traffic on the Fosse Way, it may have been influenced by the success of the shrine constructed in AD 69 and subsequent temple sequences built around AD 230-250, close to the Fosse Way (RR5c) at Nettleton Shrub, which itself benefited from the significant volume of religious traffic travelling to the cult complex at Bath (Smith 2000, 312). However, the temple was set back from the road and within a steep valley meaning that it would have been scarcely visible from the road (Blagg 1986, 21). In contrast, whilst close to RR465(x) / RRX037, the steep climb to Lamyatt Beacon means that it was not a convenient roadside temple, yet it occupied a distinctive elevated position with extensive visual prominence. It is this prime visibility from the Fosse Way (RR5b) that Smith (2000, 280) suggests was likely to have contributed to the success of the Lamyatt Beacon cult. *Fig. 1* demonstrates that the temple was likely to have been visible from a significant stretch of RR5b. Furthermore, when this analysis is combined with the experience of walking sections

of the RR465(x) / RRX037 route from the junction with RR5b at Pylle Hill, it is evident that the temple is likely to have been a prominent feature along much of RR465(x) / RRX037 until reaching the present-day village of Lamyatt.

However, the motivations of the elite group that are likely to have been closely associated with the temple at Lamyatt Beacon, were not necessarily exclusively religious. Whilst the agricultural role of villas was significant, they also expressed status (Eckardt *et al.* 2009, 89). Much discussion has focused on villa architecture, mosaics, and furnishings (White 2023, 86). However, Romano-British barrows also served as displays of elite status. Whilst noting that the literature emphasises the role of barrows in elite display to transient populations via their proximity to Roman roads, a study of the Bartlow Hills in Cambridgeshire suggests that they were used to project power and wealth to a local audience (Eckardt *et al.* 2009, 76). Similarly, Romano-Celtic temples may also have served as a means of elite display to local and transient populations. Indeed, Smith (2000, 312) suggests that the visual dominance of temples such as Lamyatt Beacon over long distances, aligns well with the idea that they reflected the status of the competitive native elite. It is notable that, in contrast to the East Pennard villa, which was located near to RR5b and RR465(x) / RRX037, the Ditcheat villa was situated farther from both roads. Additionally, the Ditcheat villa was not as highly visible from either road or the surrounding landscape (*Fig. 2*). As a result, the temple may have served as a more effective means of expressing and projecting status for the group associated with this villa.

Whilst the desire to select an elevated spot to be closer to the gods may have been a factor, the visual prominence of Lamyatt Beacon from RR5b, RR465(x) / RRX037 and the surrounding landscape of villa estates, combined with the accessibility provided by the roads were likely significant factors in the selection of this location. In addition, to local visitors from nearby villa estates, these characteristics, together with the adoption of a well-established cult from Cold Kitchen Hill, would have helped attract visitors from further afield, including those travelling longer distances, such as to and from Bath. Furthermore, the siting of the temple may reflect the desire of an elite group, situated away from the densely populated villa area to the south-west, to exploit its advantages of visibility and accessibility in order to extend its influence to the region around Ilchester. The success of the Lamyatt Beacon temple's establishment is reflected in the construction of the Brean Down temple, built 40 years later and 45 km to the west. Similar in design and oriented directly toward Lamyatt Beacon, Brean Down also yielded antler finds, suggesting veneration of the same cult. Located within the same *civitas*, it is uncertain if the Lamyatt Beacon temple itself would have been visible across the Somerset Levels, but visibility analysis confirms previous suggestions (e.g. Leech *et al.* 1986, 271) that the hilltop itself was very likely visible, acting as a physical proxy for the temple that sat upon it (Godfrey 2023, 87).

Titsey, Surrey

The scheduled (1018506) Romano-Celtic temple at Titsey was situated on a clay rise which forms part of the Surrey Hills (TQ 4212 5496). Excavated in 1879 and 1935, the building had a *cella* measuring 6.17 x 6.48 m surrounded by an ambulatory, within a *temenos* of 30 x 31 m, surrounded by a substantial wall (Graham 1936, 88-89). The area within the *temenos* and around the temple itself was disturbed in the medieval period, and little meaningful assessment can be made of the quality or quantity of offerings (Bird 2004, 86). The temple was situated beside RR14, approximately 1 km south of where the road descends the North Downs escarpment. Margary (1973, 59) suggests that RR14 connected London

with the ironworking sites in the Weald or the corn-growing districts of the South Downs. However, Entwistle (2023, 90) suggests that establishing a boundary between imperial and client kingdom territories near the strategic Thames crossing may have been a concern, whilst Bird (2004, 85) proposes that the temple may have been situated near the boundary between the Atrebates and Cantiaci . The Pilgrims Way trackway - named for its later connection with Christianity - was likely in use during the Roman period (Margary 1973, 35). It ran east-west along the foot of the escarpment, crossing RR14 approximately 600 m to the north of the temple. Although Squerryes Park Camp hillfort is located 3.6 km to the southeast, there are few other recorded prehistoric monuments, Romano-British field systems, or settlements in the area. However, there is a rare combination of two winged-corridor villa buildings facing each other across a stream (TQ 4052 5462 and TQ 4058 5454) at Titsey Park (Davies 1997, 2-3), 1.6 km to the west of the temple site.

The *temenos* wall of the Titsey temple is aligned parallel to RR14, located within 4.57 m of where the road slightly shifts its alignment. There are other examples of temples situated at points where roads change alignment, such as Friars Wash, north of *Verulamium.* Although there is no significant evidence of pre-temple ritual activity at Friars Wash, two conjoined Romano-Celtic temples were constructed around the early 2nd century AD (Smith 2018, 161). Located approximately 400 m east of RR1e (Watling Street) – which was constructed in the immediate post-conquest period - the temple complex is positioned where the road alters direction. Smith (2018, 161) suggests that the elaborate design of the temple complex, and possibly its existence, can be attributed to the regular traffic along Watling Street.

The chronological relationship between the temple and road at Titsey is less straightforward. Whilst the pottery finds suggest that the temple was in use until some point in the 3rd century AD, the only indication of its construction date is provided by fragments of box-tile of the same pattern as fragments found in the temple debris. These were discovered in the road metalling, including '*right at the bottom*', which Graham (1936, 94-95) argues must have been incorporated during the road's original construction, not during a later repair. Margary's (1933, 39-42) discovery of pottery from RR14, further south at Barcombe Mills, suggests that the road was constructed no later than AD 150, and possibly closer to AD 100, or before. Based on this, Graham (1936, 95) argues that the road and temple were constructed simultaneously, with the box-tile incorporated into the road as builder's debris that was left around the site during construction. Box-tiles are typically associated with hypocaust floor heating and given the lack of evidence for such heating systems in Romano-Celtic temples, Bird (2004, 86) may be correct in suggesting the presence of a bathhouse closely associated with the temple. Nevertheless, no investigation has yet been undertaken beyond the *tememos* that might reveal additional buildings. Given the evidence, it does appear likely that the road and temple were constructed broadly simultaneously, as the box-tile recovered from the road suggests the possibility that the temple and potential associated buildings were already constructed or under-construction when the road was built. Furthermore, it would be an improbable coincidence if this long-distance road had passed by an already existing temple, requiring only a slight shift in alignment to accommodate its presence. Furthermore, it is possible that RR14 and RR150 were laid out through a coordinated surveying effort soon after the conquest, as, despite being 13 km apart, they run parallel to each other (Entwistle 2023, 83-39).

Graham (1936, 93) suggests that a slight change of alignment at the temple location was necessary for RR14 to maintain a reasonable gradient for ascending the escarpment to the north. However, he also notes that if this shift in direction had occurred slightly farther south, it would have routed the road

on higher ground, avoiding a marshy hollow associated with the stream to the north. This suggests that the specific location of the turn was chosen for a reason that outweighed the practical benefits of an alternative route. Whilst acknowledging that it may be accidental, he observes that the southern alignment of the road points directly at the east front of the *cella*, albeit at an oblique angle. With no other obvious landmarks to the north, he suggests that the road may have been aligned with something already present at the location of the *cella* - such as an earlier shrine, which would make it logical for the road to turn just before reaching that structure. However, whilst pottery from the end of the Iron Age and possibly the early years of the Roman period, which predates the temple, might suggest a settlement here, there is no evidence for an earlier sacred site (Dunning 1936, 97).

It seems more likely, particularly given the box tile evidence found at the bottom of the road, that there was some degree of coordination between the builders of RR14 and those of the temple and any associated buildings. This coordination may have influenced both the selection of this location for the temple and possibly the decision to alter the road's alignment at this specific location. Nonetheless, while the opportunity to locate the temple in a position requiring a slight change in alignment may have had symbolic significance, Bird (2004, 85) questions why this location, on a slight rise, was chosen rather than one a little further north on the top of the scarp slope of the Downs, which would have afforded more extensive visual prominence. A reverse viewshed modelling of a hypothetical temple location (*Fig. 3*) at the top of the escarpment supports Bird's (2004, 85) assertion that such a position may have provided greater visual prominence in the overall landscape than the actual temple site. However, as discussed below, this hypothetical location would have offered broadly comparable visibility to the actual temple site from RR14. Bird's (2004, 85) explanation is that the spring, located 100 m to the north and marking the source of the River Eden, may have been a significant ritual factor in the selection of the actual temple location. In addition to the known association between Romano-Celtic temples and springs, it can also be argued that there may have been a symbolic connection with the river's source. This seems to be the case at Springhead in Kent as well as at the likely Romano-British shrines at Hailey Wood Camp, Sapperton, and Wycomb in Gloucestershire (Smith 2018, 126).

Another reverse viewshed (*Fig. 4)* confirms suggestions that the actual temple is likely to have been visible from RR14 (Blagg 1986, 21). The temple may have been visible from the road as it descended the escarpment and headed south. After a brief stretch where the temple would have been obscured at points, due to a slight depression, it became potentially visible again as the road approached the temple. Additionally, it may have been visible from long sections of the southern approach, and, as Bird (2004, 85-86) suggests, the effect of the change in road alignment may have created the impression that the long straight stretch from the south was heading directly at the temple. The viewshed also suggests that the temple may have been visible from Pilgrims Way, particularly to the north-east of the temple. In this way, the temple would have served as a signpost for travellers, and as Blagg (1986, 21) suggests, offered '*a place where divine protection and sanctuary, and perhaps more worldly comforts, would be repaid by the worshippers offerings which financed the building and maintenance of the temple.*'

If the road and temple were constructed simultaneously, this suggests that the temple builders had sufficient influence to communicate and collaborate with the authorities before or during the construction of RR14. Therefore, Blagg's (1986, 24) description of the people who constructed the temple at Titsey as '*local farmers*', perhaps undervalues their status. Indeed, whilst the dating evidence is not definitive and the chronology for both sites remains limited, given the probable involvement

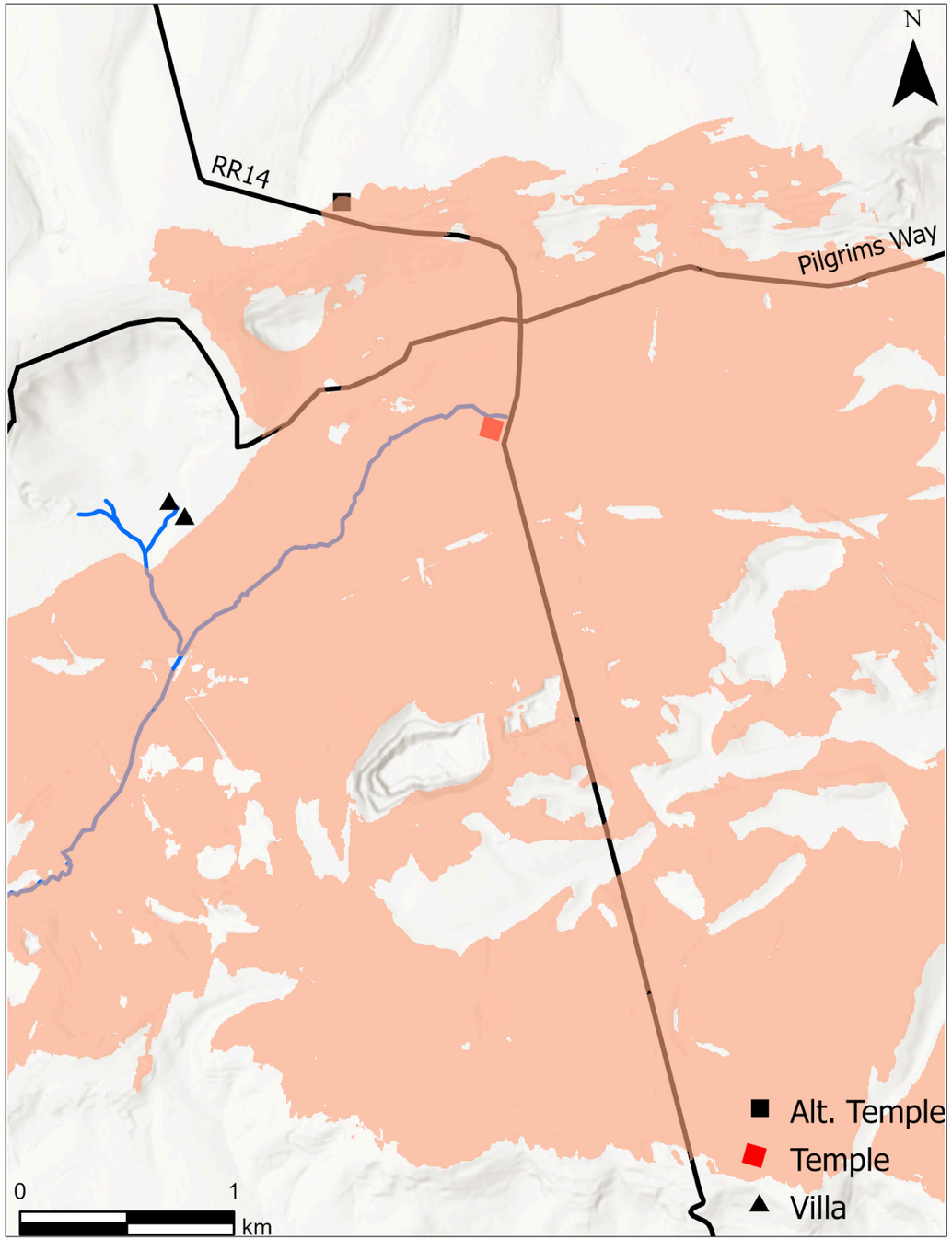


Fig 3: Reverse viewshed of hypothetical alternative Titsey temple site (Author, 2024). Copyright for base layer: ArcGIS World Hillshade. Esri (2024)

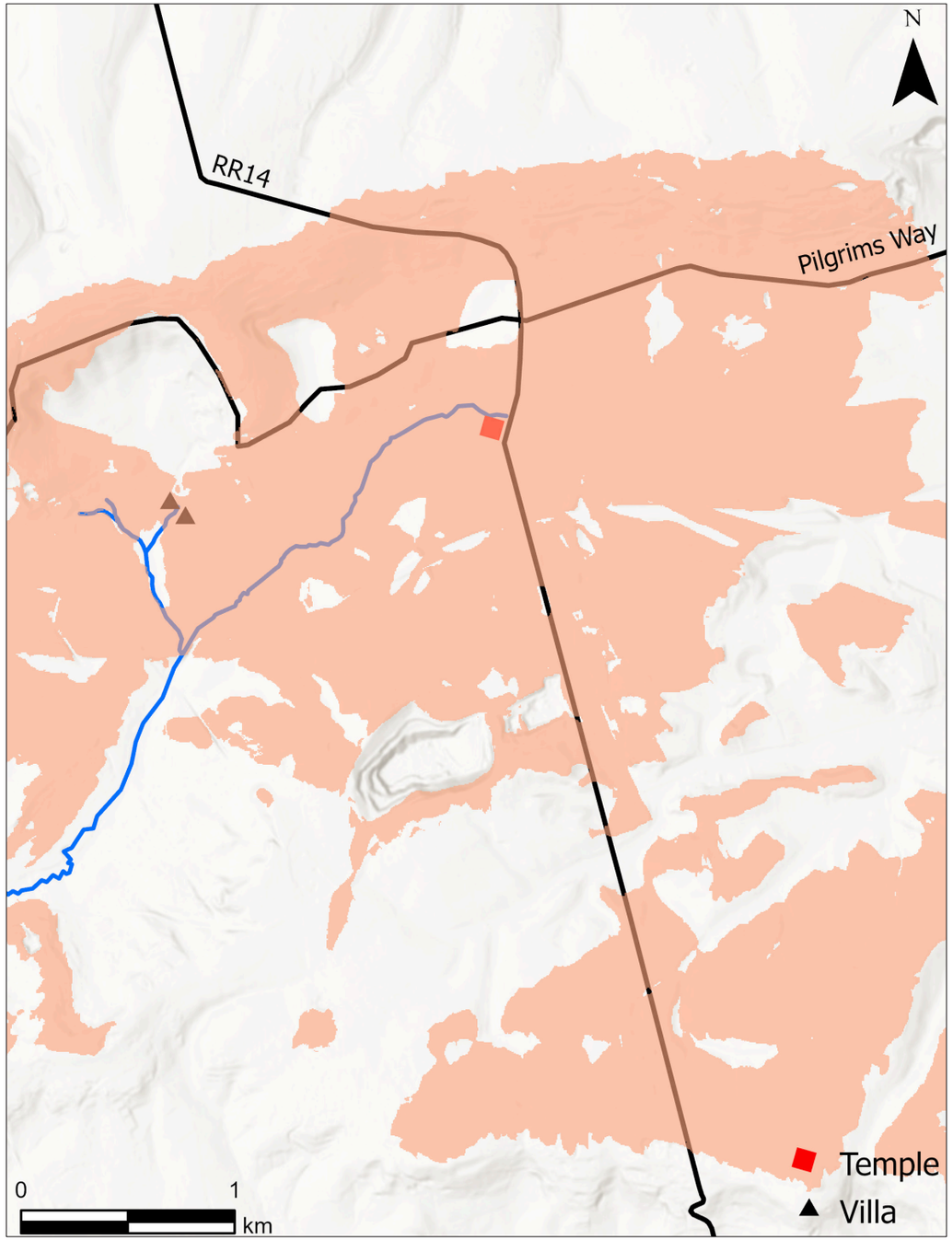


Fig. 4: Reverse viewshed of the Titsey Romano-Celtic temple (Author, 2024). Copyright for base layer: ArcGIS World Hillshade. Esri (2024)

of the native elite in constructing Romano-Celtic temples, it is noteworthy that the Titsey Park villa was built perhaps within a few decades after both RR14 and the temple, remaining in use until the 4th century AD. Furthermore, whilst a modern drain now cuts across the stream overlooked by the two winged-corridor villa buildings from the River Eden to the south, historic maps (Digimap 2024) show that, until relatively recently, this stream fed directly into the river. Therefore, the villa buildings and temple were connected by the watercourse, and this may have been symbolically significant. Further research may reveal more tangible connections between the villa and temple. Moreover, the temple may have provided an earlier opportunity for the local native elite to project their status through its patronage, with its placement deliberately chosen in a prominent, accessible location beside RR14. Although those who constructed the villa in the following decades may not have been the same individuals who patronised the temple, they may have belonged to the same enduring elite families. As Blagg (1986, 24) argues when discussing temples in Britain more generally, this may have reflected a deliberate response to the road as a new element in the landscape, where '*the political and the vernacular landscapes could meet*'. Thus, by positioning the temple at the roadside during the early Roman period, the builders signified their alignment with Roman authority.

In summary, coordination between the temple builders and the Roman authorities may have facilitated the construction of the temple near a slight adjustment in RR14's alignment - an alteration necessary for engineering reasons. This placement would have given prominence to the temple, whilst its location on a slight rise afforded it visibility to travellers approaching from either direction. Additionally, the spring, which is the source of the River Eden, may have enhanced the site's appeal, whilst a nearby boundary might have further contributed to its significance. Finally, the temple's location beside a road, but not part of a larger settlement, along with the box-tile evidence, suggests it may have been a key element of a roadside religious complex. However, further investigation beyond the *temenos* will be necessary to identify any additional associated buildings.

Conclusion

Research on Romano-Celtic temples has primarily focused on site-specific analysis, with limited discussion of their landscape settings, and often restricted to tangential observations. Similarly, whilst the relationships between Roman roads and Romano-Celtic temples have been acknowledged, they remain under explored. This article has argued that there is considerable potential for investigating these relationships. However, as demonstrated in the case studies, roads and temples cannot be meaningfully examined in isolation, and therefore a fully contextualised, landscape approach is recommended. Key questions to explore include why particular locations were chosen for temple construction, whether the location of specific temples influenced nearby road routes, and vice versa, together with broader questions around the roles of roads and temples in the landscape and society, as well as the potential impact of the landscape settings on people travelling to temples. Themes to consider may include the symbolism and meanings associated with landscapes, temples, and roads, alongside ideas related to the nature of travel to temples and the blurring of sacred and secular interests. Finally, whilst this article has concentrated on Roman roads and specific categories of Romano-Celtic temples, a broader study encompassing a wider array of temple settings and other sacred sites in Roman Britain could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix: RR465(x)/RRX037, Pen Pits to Knapp Hill

Evidence for RRX037 from a junction with RR5b at Pylle Hill to Bruton, Somerset, was discussed in Itinera IV (Godfrey 2024, 361-364) and resulted in the new Margary number RR465(x) being reserved. This article assesses the annotated aerial photographs (APs) and maps from the Ordnance Survey Archaeological Division (OSAD 2018) archive together with new evidence, for a proposed section of RR465(x) /RRX037, from Wolverton, Wiltshire, to Knapp Hill, Dorset, which is assumed to terminate at a junction with RR46 near Semley, Wiltshire (*Fig. 1*). NB: All references in this article to the Ordnance Survey Archaeological Division (OSAD) relate to the OSAD'S RRX037 files – including notes, maps and AP's - digitised by the Roman Roads Research Association in 2018, and available to members on its website. The approach to referencing this is to reference the date of digitisation i.e., 2018, and the relevant page number in this archive file e.g. OSAD (2018, 1).

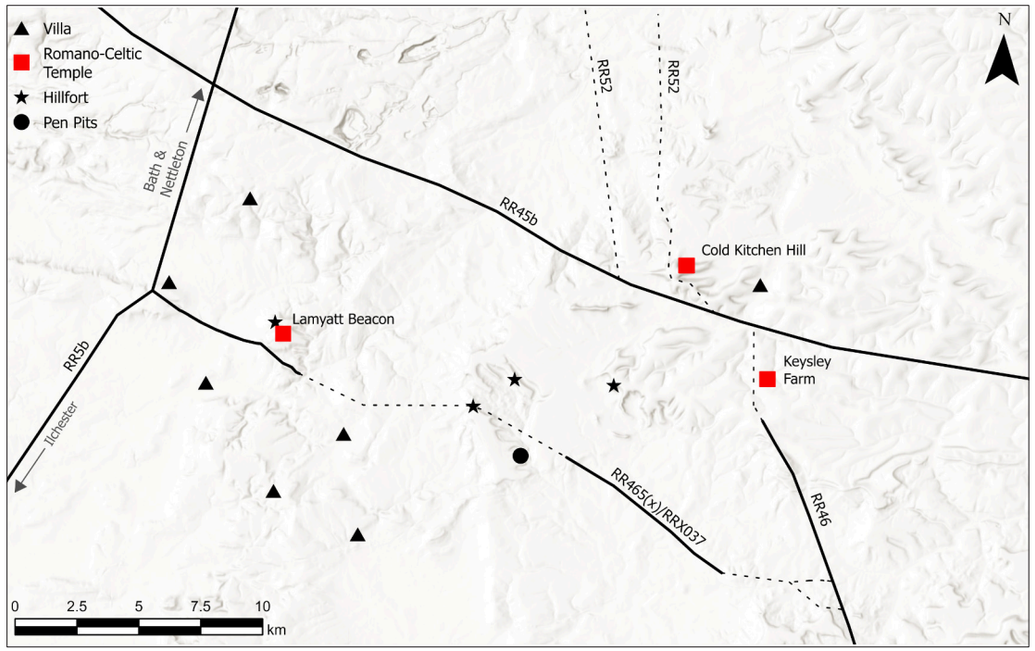


Fig 1. Overview of RR465(x) /RRX037 within the Roman road network (Author 2025). Copyright for base layer: ArcGIS World Hillshade. Esri (2025)

The first observation by the OSAD (2018, 11) for the road west of Pen Pits, relates to a '*faint trace*' and '*old field bank*' in AP's (OSAD 2018, 38, 39) of a field at ST 78568 31583, to the west of Zeals, now replaced by the A303. If RR465(x) /RRX037 continued its trajectory to the north-west for another 1.5 km from this point, it would pass Pen Pits. Greensand – used to make querns - was quarried here (Historic England 2024), and whilst the scheduled (1006139) site is located at ST 76732 31512, the quarry covered an extensive area. Crawford (1953, 100) argues that quarrying here took place because of the presence of a road, on the basis that '*querns are heavy, and there was no object in quarrying them elsewhere, when, by quarrying them beside the road, transport over rough, trackless country could be avoided'.* However, quarrying appears to have commenced in the Iron Age, continuing throughout the Roman period (Historic England, 2024), thus whilst the construction of a Roman road may have been influential in the further exploitation of this resource, it appears unlikely that quarrying commenced due to its presence.

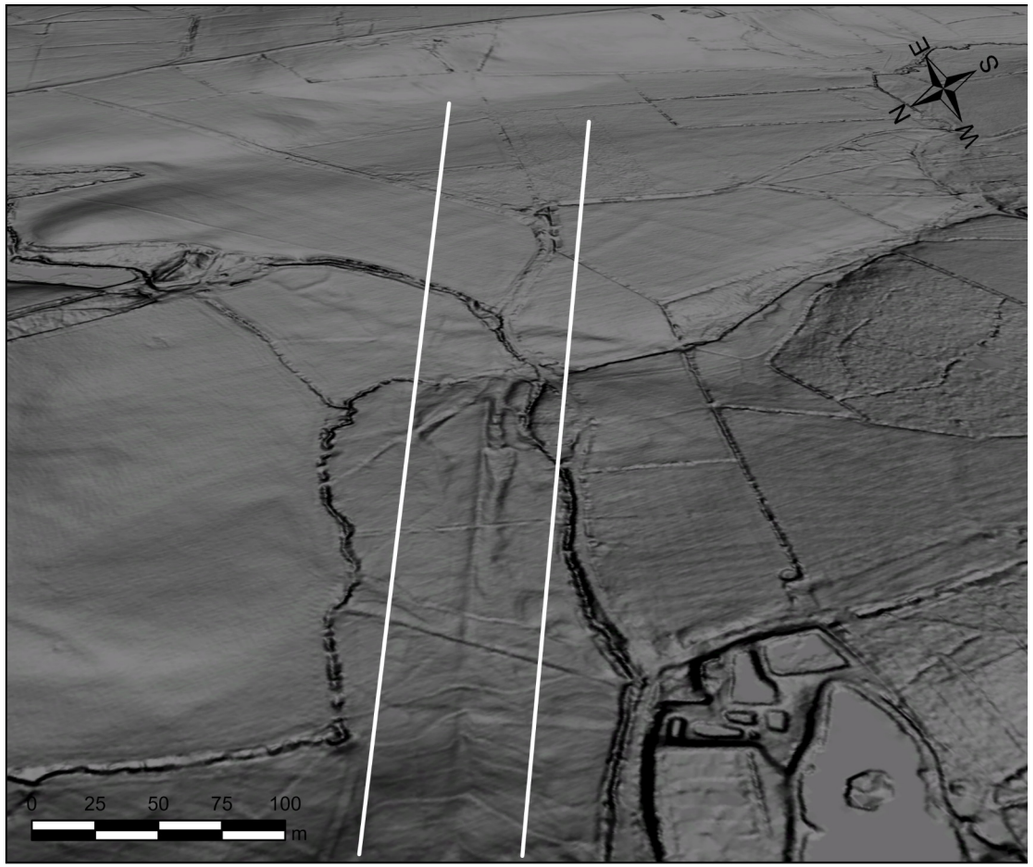


Fig. 2: 3D multi-directional hill shaded lidar image, orientated south-east from the field centred at ST 79211 31236. Lidar data © Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2020. All rights reserved

Crawford (1953, 100) suggested that the road he refers to was *'in medieval times the boundary between the forests of Gillingham and Selwood and was called Hunting Path. Further west it is still called Hardway'*. He

goes on to suggest that it '*was one of the major routes of England*', passing by Stonehenge to the east. A note in the RRX037 OSAD archive (2018, 2) suggests that it is '*probable*' that Crawford (1953) was correct in arguing that RR465(x)/RRX037 '*was earlier aligned*' to pass through the natural '*gate of Wessex*', one of the main natural arteries leading westward off the chalk downs into the west country. However, the evidence presented below, suggests that if this road existed, it was very unlikely to be RR465(x)/RRX037. Furthermore, if the road line for RR465(x) /RRX037 in the study area considered in this article is extrapolated to the north-west from the first firm evidence in the field centred at ST 79211 31236, it is notable that the route would come close to the end (ST 74581 33540) of the 18th-century coach road '*of singular straightness*' (commencing at ST 70312 33337), that may indicate the route of RR465(x) /RRX037 to the west of Bruton (OSAD 2018, 1-2). Whilst further research is required on the proposed section of RR465(x) /RRX037 between Bruton and Pen Pits, both the coach road – lidar evidence shows it terminating 320 m from the western rampart – and the projected route that passes Pen Pits as it approaches from the east, intersect at Kenwalch's Castle. This is a scheduled (1008257) large univallate hillfort situated on the north end of a ridge in the hills of the Somerset/ Wiltshire border (ST 74777 33536) (Historic England, 2025).

560 m to the south-east of the '*faint trace*' discussed above and on the same line is the first extant evidence for the road to the west of Pen Pits. The Wiltshire Historic Environment Record (2024), note '*probable medieval settlement earthworks*' in a field centred at ST 79211 31236, based on a RCHME Survey Map from 1994, which states: '*earthworks not surveyed*'. Lidar imagery (*Fig. 2*), when considered alongside the evidence that follows, suggests that this feature is the *agger* of RR465(x) /RRX037, extending 422 m in a south-easterly direction across the field, cut by several north-easterly oriented linear features. Historic mapping (Digimap 2025) – which does not record any feature in the location of the likely *agger* – confirms that at least two of these features are former field boundaries, which are also evident on lidar imagery and OSAD APs (2018 37-39). The OSAD (1983, 11) noted a ''*holloway*' in this field, and a *'parch mark on line*', whilst AP's (Google Earth (GE) 03/2016a; OSAD 2018, 37, 38, 39) reveal the likely *agger*, which was also visible during a recent drone survey (*Fig. 3*).

An AP (GE 03/2016a) shows a faint trace of the *agger* continuing on the other side of the field boundary to the south-east at ST 79536 31056. The road had to cross a watercourse immediately to the south-east of this feature, before AP's (OSAD APs 2018, 26, 37) show traces of the road at ST 79720 30929. Furthermore, lidar imagery (*Fig. 2*) reveals a faint feature continuing the *agger* line from the first field centred at ST 79211 31236 and crossing the subsequent 3 fields before eventually joining a short section of straight field boundary at ST 79913 30826. Lidar imagery also reveals that the road is likely to have cut across an unrecorded possible '*Celtic field system*' in this area.

The road line follows the field boundary for 370 m until ST 80247 30699, where it shifts alignment slightly to the south-east, and continues in a straight line of further field boundaries for 1200 m until ST 81272 29965. Lidar imagery and AP's (OSAD 2018, 28, 36, 37) show a short stretch of rough earthworks that may be related to the road, to the south of the hedge line at ST 80309 30622. Furthermore, this entire stretch of hedge line marks both the present unitary authority boundary and that between the parishes of Mere and Gillingham; it is also marked on historic maps (Digimap 2025) as the '*Union and R.D. (rural district) boundary*' and has formed part of the Wiltshire/Dorset boundary since at least 1831 (Dorset County Boundary Survey 2025). Furthermore, a public footpath also runs along the boundary for most of this section. The likelihood that this boundary is of a much earlier date is suggested by possible ridge and furrow either side of the hedge on OSAD APs (2018, 28) and lidar imagery between ST 80250 30696 and ST 80975 30181.



Fig. 3: Drone-captured AP orientated north-west towards Wolverton, across the field centred at ST 79211 31236 (Author, 23/12/24)

At ST 81272 29965, where the straight line of field boundaries ends, the road had to cross the Shreen Water River. The OSAD (2018, 11) refer to a crop mark here, and whilst it is not visible on any APs in the OSAD archive, a Google Earth AP (12/1945) possibly shows this aligned with the hedge line at ST 81293 29950. On the other side of the river, lidar imagery indicates higher ground, which might suggest that the road may have skirted the base of this, although this would require a slight shift in alignment from the crop mark discussed above. There has been much activity in this and adjacent fields, and historic maps (Digimap 2025) show that Longelm Farm previously occupied the location centred at ST 81469 29808 and may account for some features. Nonetheless, OSAD APs (2018, 30, 31, 36) show a possible faint trace of the line crossing the heading south-east across the first two fields, with Google Earth APs (12/2009, 03/2016b) also showing a feature on the line at ST 81463 29797.

From just above the modern road junction at ST 81665 29644 there is a straight field boundary accompanied by a public footpath, until Longmoor Farm. Whilst an OSAD (2018, 6) note suggests ''*hedge bank on line. No trace of agg*er', an OSAD AP (2018, 31) shows earthworks – possibly the *agger* – running above the field boundary, whilst lidar also reveals this feature running from ST 81809 29573 to ST 82027 29458, together with two possible extraction pits. Shortly before Longmoor Farm at ST 82063 29404, the OSAD (2018, 6) note a '*raised earthen strip 7m wide, 0.7 m high, enclosed within hedges*'. Lidar imagery suggests that this is in fact two linear features in parallel, at least one of which does not



Fig. 4: Multi-directional hill shaded lidar image of field at Longmoor Farm, centred at ST 82503 29115. Lidar data © Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2020. All rights reserved

appear to be the road. An OSAD note (2018, 6) refers to AP's showing crop marks of the road heading south-east after Longmoor Farm, crossing the field centred at ST 82462 29133 until it meets the field boundary. This section can be seen as faint crop marks on several APs (OSAD 2018, 32, 33, 41), which correspond to a feature spanning the same location on lidar imagery, together with possible extraction pits (*Fig. 4*). Whilst there is a public footpath crossing this field, the current course runs slightly above the road route, and veers away to the east, before reaching the field boundary.

An OSAD AP (2018, 41) also appears to show the *agger* crossing the field boundary and into the field centred at ST 82556 28885, before crossing a stream and the modern road, into the field centred at ST 82792 28685. The road is also clear in a crop mark cutting across the top the latter field for 205 m as it approaches Lawn Farm on a Google Earth AP (12/2006) (*Fig. 5*). The entire section of road to this point from Longmoor Farm is also visible on lidar imagery corresponding to the APs (*Fig. 4*). The next evidence for the road appears as it crosses the field boundary at ST 83108 28536, just past the

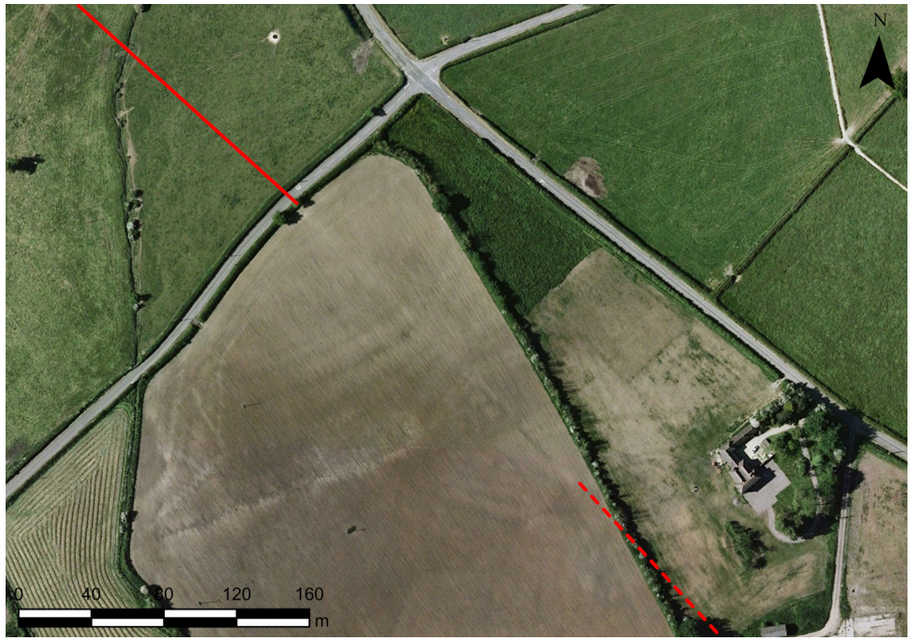


Fig. 5: Aerial Photograph of field at Lawn Farm, centred at ST 82804 28812 (Google Earth 12/2006)

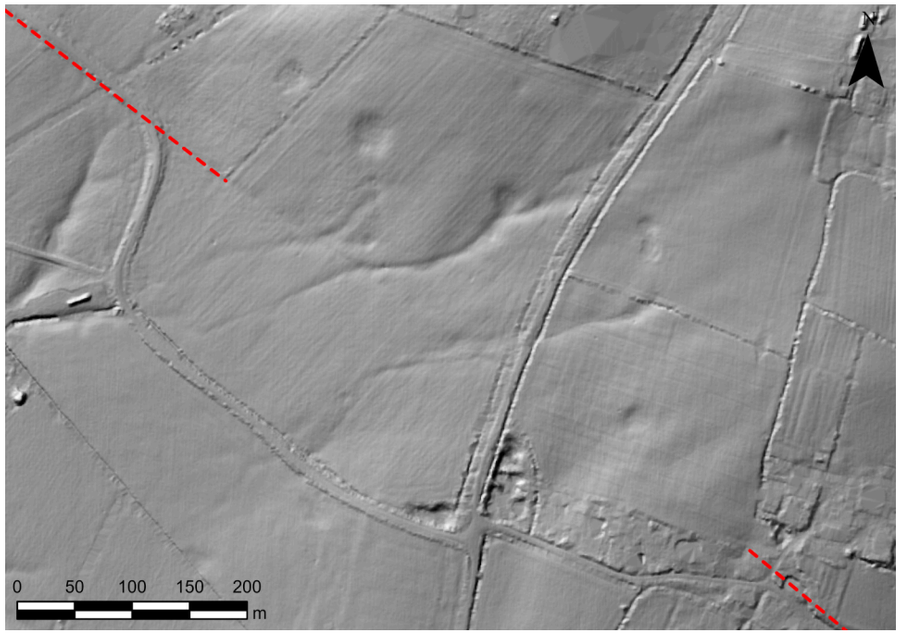


Fig. 6: Multi-directional hill shaded lidar image, centred at ST 84205 27705. Lidar data © Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2020. All rights reserved

buildings of Lawn Farm, in the form of a trace on OSAD APs (2018, 41, 42, 43). Here lidar imagery suggests that line appears to skirt the southern slope of a small hill as it approaches the River Lodden. Once across the river, faint traces on OSAD APs (2018, 14, 15) suggest that the route joins the modern road at ST 83522 28138 just before it straightens for 570m.

At the end of this straight stretch of modern road, at the point where it turns south (ST 83995 27797), a short section of field boundary continues the modern road line for 55 m. Historic mapping does not show any previous field boundaries that might account for the feature, and therefore what appears to be the road is then visible on APs (OSAD 2018, 42, 43, GE 03/2017) and lidar (*Fig. 6*) as it skirts the base of a small hill, until the next field boundary at ST 84302 27616. 3D lidar imagery (*Fig. 7*) also appears to show the road crossing this field and across the boundary into the next field, centred at ST 84422 27576. Possible extraction pits are evident in the lidar imagery in both fields (*Fig. 6 & 7*).

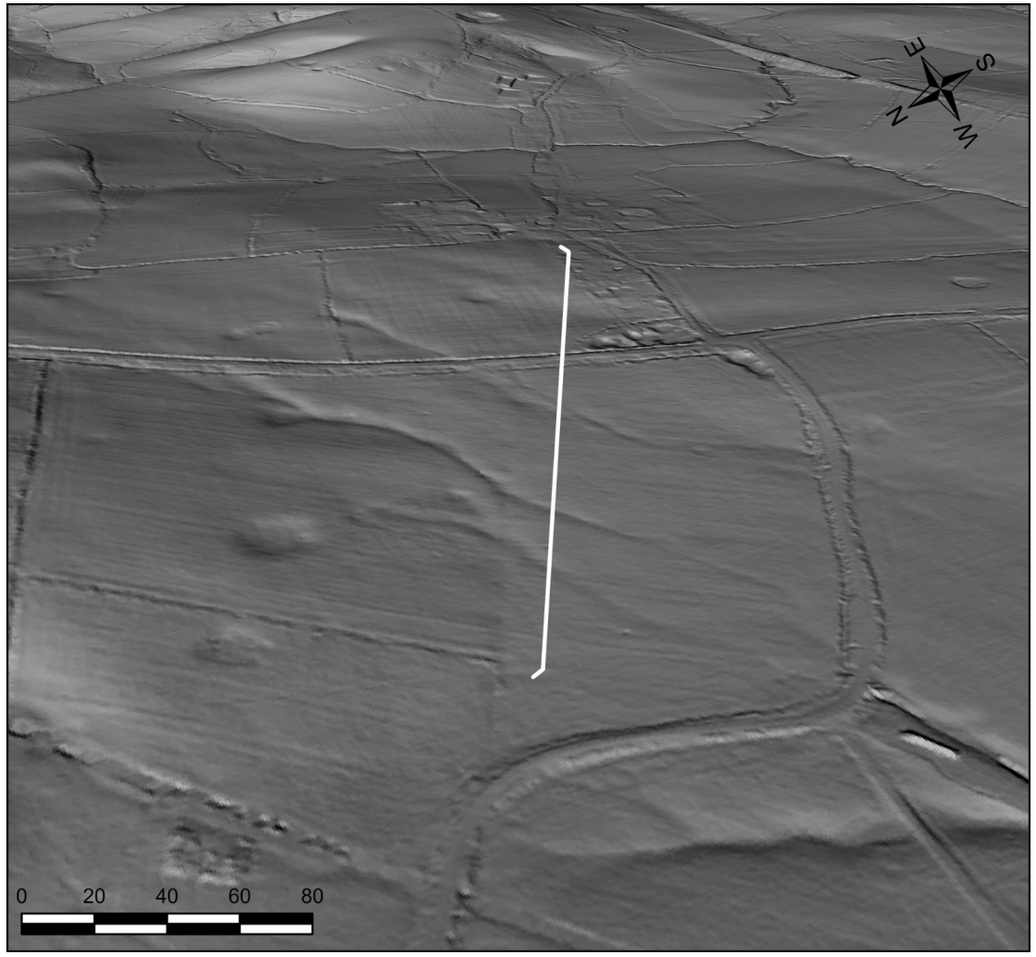


Fig. 7: 3D multi-directional hill shaded lidar image, orientated south-east from the field centred at ST 84205 27705. Lidar data © Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2020. All rights reserved

The route then continues to join a fairly straight stretch of modern road for 500 m, until it reaches Culverhouse Farm (ST 85026 27137). From here the OSAD (2018, 6) tentatively suggest that the road skirted the southern slope of Knapp Hill before rejoining the modern road at Hugglers Hole (ST 86182 27031). It is notable that from here until ST 88141 26633, the line follows the modern road, before continuing straight onto a continuous line of field boundaries that date to at least the earliest OS

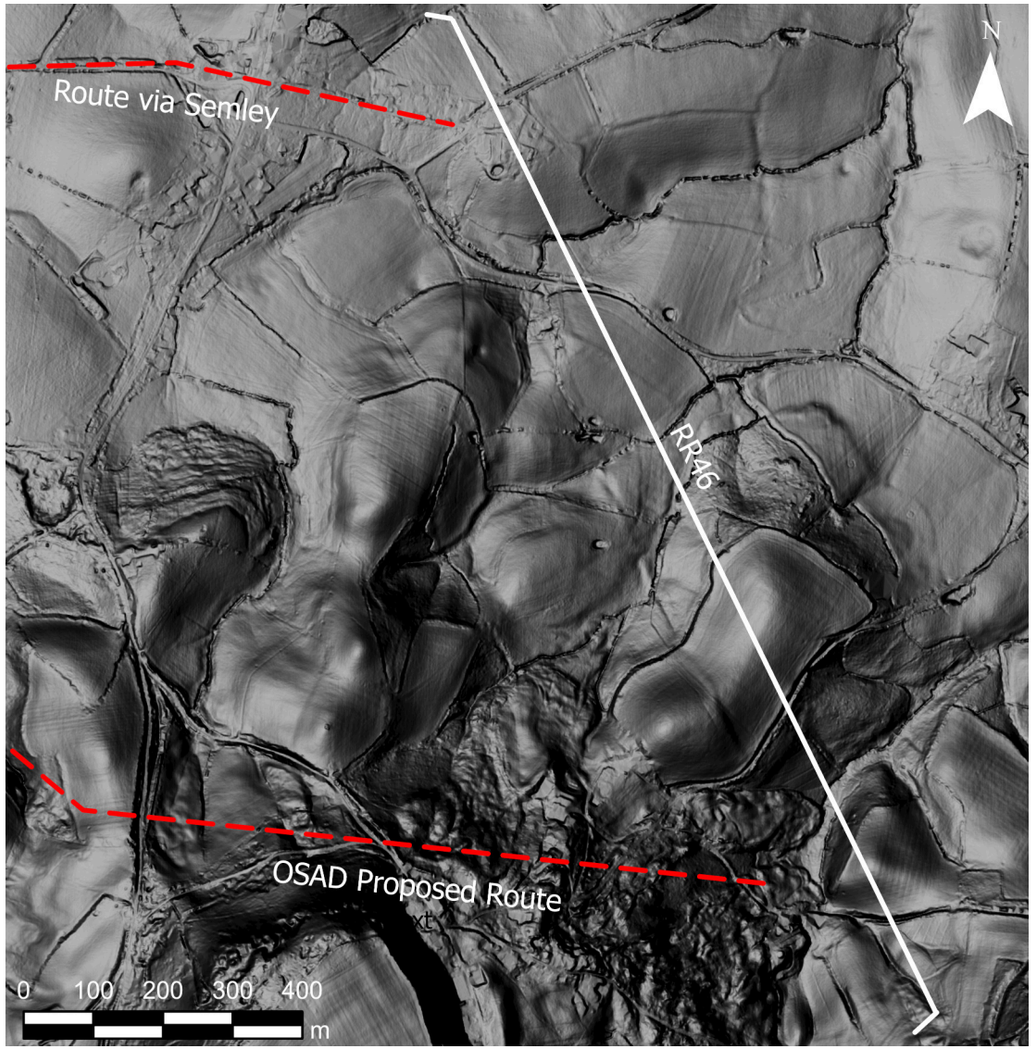


Fig. 8: Multi-directional hill shaded lidar image, centred at ST 89608 26232. Lidar data © Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2020. All rights reserved

maps (Digimap 2025), eventually bearing south-east to where the line of field boundaries end and where this projected route would have crossed the River Sem (ST 88138 26627). From here, the OSAD

(2018, 7) suggest that it is '*feasible*' that the road headed south-east for 1 km, before taking a sharp turn to the east for 1.1 km until it joined RR46 at ST 89997 25850. RR46 is visible on lidar in this area for 960 m from ST 90147 25597 to ST 89748 26340 (*Fig. 8*). An alternative route to that proposed by the OSAD would continue in a fairly straight to line to RR46 by bearing very slightly north-east from the end of the straight line of field boundaries at ST 87694 26866 until the line joins a modern road at ST 88525 26956. Following a straight section of road through Semley, a public footpath (Ordnance Survey 2025) continues the line from ST 89212 26975 to eventually meet the route of RR46 at ST 89495 26919 (*Fig. 8*).

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