

GLOSSOPDALE & LONGDENDALE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

**Chair and Secretary - Roger Hargreaves MA (Cantab) MSc (Oxon) –
5 Roundhill Close, Hadfield, Glossop, Derbyshire SK13 2BH**

**GLAS is a member of the Greater Manchester Archaeological Federation
and the Council for British Archaeology**

25/06/23

Development Control

High Peak Borough Council

Dear Sirs

Re HPK/2022/0456 Land at Dinting Vale, Glossop (Adderley Fields)

This is a comment on behalf of GLAS in respect of the revised Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) dated August 2022 and the Integrated Geophysical Survey (IGS) dated March 2023.

GLAS has a particular interest in the Roman fort at Melandra, 1.3 km NW of the application site, and since 2008 has undertaken a number of pieces of work to clarify the lines of the roads in the vicinity of the fort, and in particular to complete the work carried out by Peter Wroe and the late Peter Mellor in the early 1970s.

The account of the roads in the HIA contains some inaccuracies. Firstly, Wroe and Mellor's assumption about the final line for the road from Buxton to Melandra, as published in the Derbyshire Archaeological Journal (DAJ) in 1971, was later revisited by Peter Wroe, and his revision, which took the line from Plainsteads down the west side of Horse Clough (SK 019 928) was published in the DAJ in 1982, the 2000 edition of the Dodds' "Peakland Roads and Trackways" and on the Derbyshire HER (MDR11199). This line was confirmed by excavation in 2012 by Wessex Archaeology north of Plainsteads and by fieldwork in Horse Clough carried out by GLAS in 2008, confirmed by Lidar in 2015-17 and agreed with Peter Wroe. This road does not therefore run close to the application site.

Secondly, reference is made to a possible alternative route for the road between the forts at Brough (Navio) and Melandra. Despite its being a very unlikely route for a Roman military road the C19th Ordnance Survey, and then Ivan Margary in "The Roman Roads of Britain" 1957, assumed that it went along Shelf Brook and through Old Glossop, along the track known as "Doctor's Gate", and Margary then postulated that it followed the line of Dinting Road on the north side of Glossop Brook. However, in 1972-74 Wroe and Mellor conclusively established that it went a more direct way up Ashop Clough, over Black Moor and through Whitfield.

This route was proved by excavation as far as the edge of the built-up area at Hob Hill, Whitfield, from where the line projected forward goes across the northern part of the application site. GLAS members recently reviewed this projection in collaboration with Peter Wroe, who revisited his notes and concluded that the line projected from the last two sections cut should run slightly to the north of that shown on the HER, which would take it along Hollincross Lane/Pikes Lane and past the south end of Pikes Farm. This is an old lane which was the pre-industrial way from Whitfield to Dinting and Gamesley.

Projected forward, this line (in red on the maps below) runs directly to the east gate of the fort. This is consistent with the roads coming in on the other three sides, the final approaches of which appear to have been sighted on the gate on that side.

Although now very undulating due to erosion of the valley sides by Glossop Brook and deepening of tributary valleys, in the Roman period this direct line would probably have been viable. However, on the moors to the east, Wroe and Mellor found evidence that the original road had been rebuilt during its working life of at least 70 years. The Melandra site also evolved, with the development outside the fort of a *vicus* or civil settlement

defended by a ditch which would have modified the road system in the immediate vicinity, and there is evidence to suggest that during this period the final line of the road may have been realigned, from a point close to Pikes Farm, by about 5 degrees to the south to take a less direct but higher and more level route to the fort. This line is shown in green on the maps below.

The modern track from Simmondley Lane to Adderley Place is not shown on the 1872 OS map, which has field boundaries running across it. However, it aligns with a path on the far side of Glossop Road (A626) which when projected forward then meets the Buxton-Melandra road (shown in blue on Fig 3 below) at the point where it crossed the defensive ditch of the *vicus*. It seems likely that this path was originally an extension of Pikes Lane, connecting Whitfield to Lower Gamesley, which went out of use when the Marple Bridge-Glossop turnpike (which included Primrose Lane, A 6016) was built in 1804-5, and that the abandoned lane was then re-used when the Council tip at Adderley Fields was opened, subsequently being extended to serve the houses at Adderley Place.

As shown on Fig 2, there may therefore be two lines of Roman road running across the application site, the later of which was subsequently followed by a mediaeval way between villages. However, these can be regarded only as approximations, firstly because we do not know what diversions, if any, were necessary to negotiate the crossing of Long Clough. The present topography at that point is entirely artificial, being created by excavation in the early 1800s to lower and straighten the brook and to build the turnpike and a millpond, but the township boundaries indicate that prior to that the brook meandered on a flood plain, so a relatively direct crossing might once have been possible. Secondly, later ways which followed Roman roads tended over time, as the original roadbed disintegrated, to migrate off the original line, and can therefore be taken only as evidence of a road along that approximate line.

The GPR surveys (IGS Figure 3) went well beyond the limits of any likely deviation from the line of the present track and would therefore tend to support the contention that the line of the road followed it fairly closely, but these results need to be treated with caution. As evidenced by the sections cut by Wroe and Mellor the local Roman military roads were of fairly light construction using whatever materials could be found nearby, and they survive best on very firm ground which has never been used since for anything other than rough pasture. Adderley Fields is rather wet and is likely to have been farmed fairly intensively, possibly including ploughing, and this plus likely post-Roman use makes the survival of lengthy undegraded sections less likely.

Finally, the IGS appears to have been confined to the area of the application site on which it is intended to build houses. The more northerly (red) of the two conjectural lines lies outside this area, but it does run across the line of the intended access road to the A57. There is partial tree cover in this part of the site but it is not obvious that geophysics of some kind would be impossible. However, in view of the caveats above, trial trenching may be the only effective means of finding remains which are unlikely to be sharply differentiated from the surrounding stony subsoil.

Yours faithfully

Roger Hargreaves

Chair, GLAS

Appendix – conjectural lines of the Brough-Melandra Roman road from Hob Hill, Whitfield to Melandra



Fig 1 Projection from Hob Hill, Whitfield

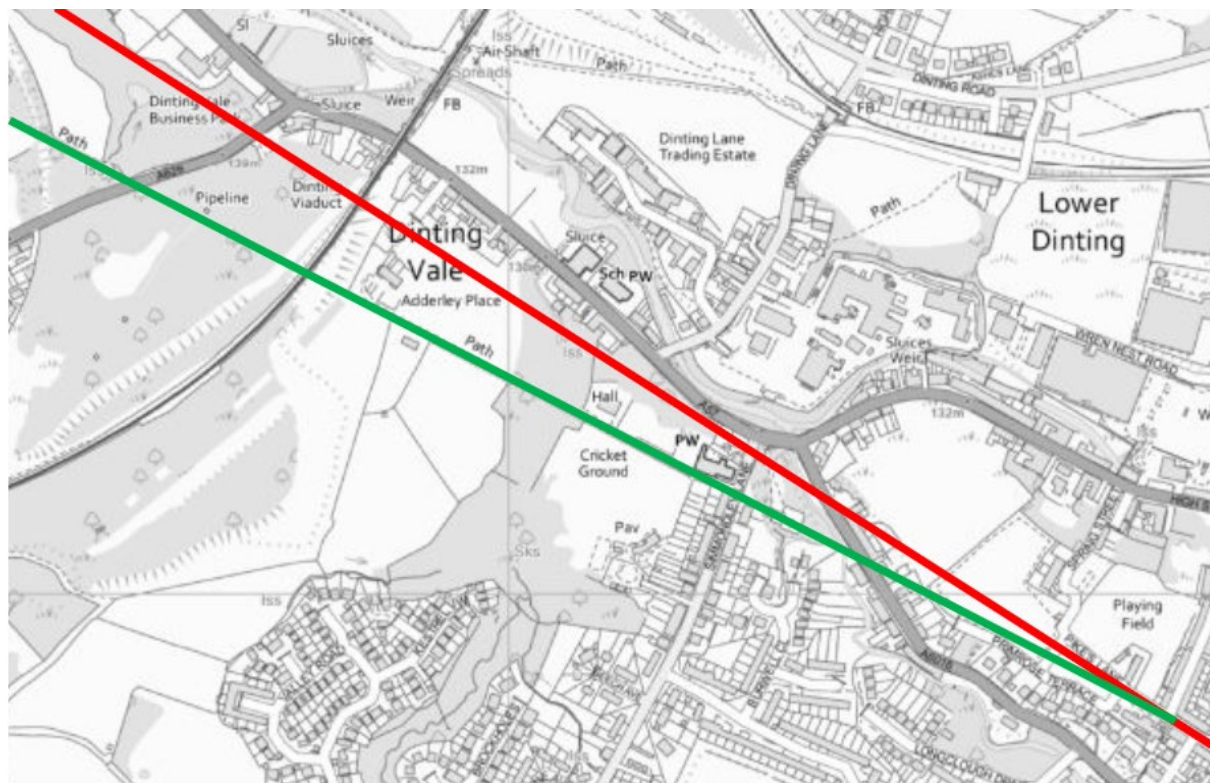


Fig 2 Conjectural lines across application site

