



LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

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## Dunston Heath, Phase 2

### Archaeological Monitoring on Metheringham Heath Lane

NGR: TF 03575 60870 - TF 04070 61030

Site Code: MHL 99

LCNCC Museum Accn. No. 24.99

Report prepared for  
Anglian Water Services Ltd

LAS Report No. 349

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Lincolnshire County Council  
Archaeology Section

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**Dunston Heath, Phase 2**  
**Archaeological Monitoring along Metheringham Heath Lane,**  
**Metheringham**

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**Summary**

*Machine excavation of small trenches for a directionally drilled new water main revealed no evidence of a multiple ditch boundary feature identified on air photographs of adjacent farmland. No other archaeological features were identified.*

**Introduction**

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned by Anglian Water Services Ltd in February 1999 to conduct a watching brief during groundworks for a replacement main along Metheringham Heath Lane, Metheringham. (Figs. 1 and 2). Archaeological monitoring had been requested by the Archaeology Section of Lincolnshire County Council.

The specific purpose of the Watching Brief was to identify and record any sign of a ditch or multiple ditch feature disturbed during groundworks west of a line of electricity pylons.

The first inspection visit by the author was made on 2nd February 1999, when the specified extent of the archaeological watching brief was spray-marked onto the road edge. A visit on 18th February found that six trenches had been dug within the specified length, and that three had already been backfilled. Further visits were made on 19th and 22nd February, after which the monitoring was concluded; a total of five visits were made.

**Archaeological Background**

A sketch plot of archaeological sites identified on air photographs indicates that two ditch features approach and are apparently overlain by Metheringham Heath Road (Fig. 2).

The suspected multiple ditch feature is not yet included on the Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record. It was recognised by RCHM(E) staff from a 1947 air photograph (ref: CPE/UK/2009, fr. 2261-2; 16.4.1947) during the Lincolnshire Mapping Project. The approximate line of the single and triple ditches has been sketch-plotted at 1:10,000 scale, with the identifier TF 06SW: LI.882.4.

The feature extends SW as a single ditch from south of Dunston Heath Lane until it reaches the vicinity of a modern electricity transmission line. From there it is a triple ditch for 250m south, and then a single ditch either side of Metheringham Heath Lane until 150m north of the Blankney parish boundary, where it turns or is



joined by a single ditch from the west. Another single ditch approaches it from the NW with a projected intersection within the specified length of Metheringham Heath Lane. The RCHM(E) notes that the dyke system appears to cut off a spur between two dry valleys.

Multiple ditch systems are known to north and south of Lincoln, forming what are thought to be extensive territorial divisions. Despite an increasing amount of archaeological investigation, their exact function is unclear. Dating evidence has been quite elusive but a late Iron Age date seems likely. Breaks or entrances in the ditch systems have been found to be associated with habitation sites.

### **The Watching Brief (Fig. 3)**

The new main was laid by directional drilling methods in order to reduce surface disturbance; only intermittent small access trenches (typically 2m x 0.9m) were available for inspection. For recording purpose, each of the trenches was assigned a number by LAS (from east to west) and their positions were plotted after monitoring had been completed. When monitoring began, three trenches within the 550m specified area had been excavated and backfilled (Trenches 1-3) and three others had been excavated but remained open.

Trenches 3, 4 and 6 revealed nothing other than limestone bedrock beneath the road foundation (Pl. 3). The northern side of Trench 5 revealed two narrow disturbances in the limestone, filled with red/brown clay loam (Pl. 4). These were almost non-existent in the southern trench side and were interpreted as naturally caused cracks or watercourses (Pl. 5).

Trench 7 contained a red/brown loam filling a feature cutting the bedrock, but it was impossible to determine whether it was a natural feature or the base of a truncated or shallow artificial ditch or pit (Pl. 6).

In Trench 8, the road sealed a mixed series of deposits, with limestone brash within a clay loam matrix (Pl. 7). This was thought to be naturally formed although it could conceivably represent backfill within a very wide feature.

Trench 9 was cut through dense limestone bedrock (Pl. 8). Trenches 10 and 11 cut through make-up deposits used to carry the road across a broad natural depression.

### **Conclusion**

No certain archaeological features were revealed in any of the monitored trenches. It was not possible to confirm the existence of the multiple ditch system, and no finds were recovered.

### **Acknowledgements**

Considerable help was received from staff at the Lincolnshire County Sites and Monuments Record.

Monitoring was conducted by Mark Williams and Geoff Tann. Illustrations were prepared by Mick McDaid; the report was produced and collated by Jane Frost.

Geoff Tann  
Lindsey Archaeological Services  
24th March 1999

### **Archive Summary**

Tracing of air photograph sketch plot

Annotated Anglian Water Services plan

Photographs: colour prints: LAS film nos. 99/14/36, 37; 99/15/0-12

Correspondence



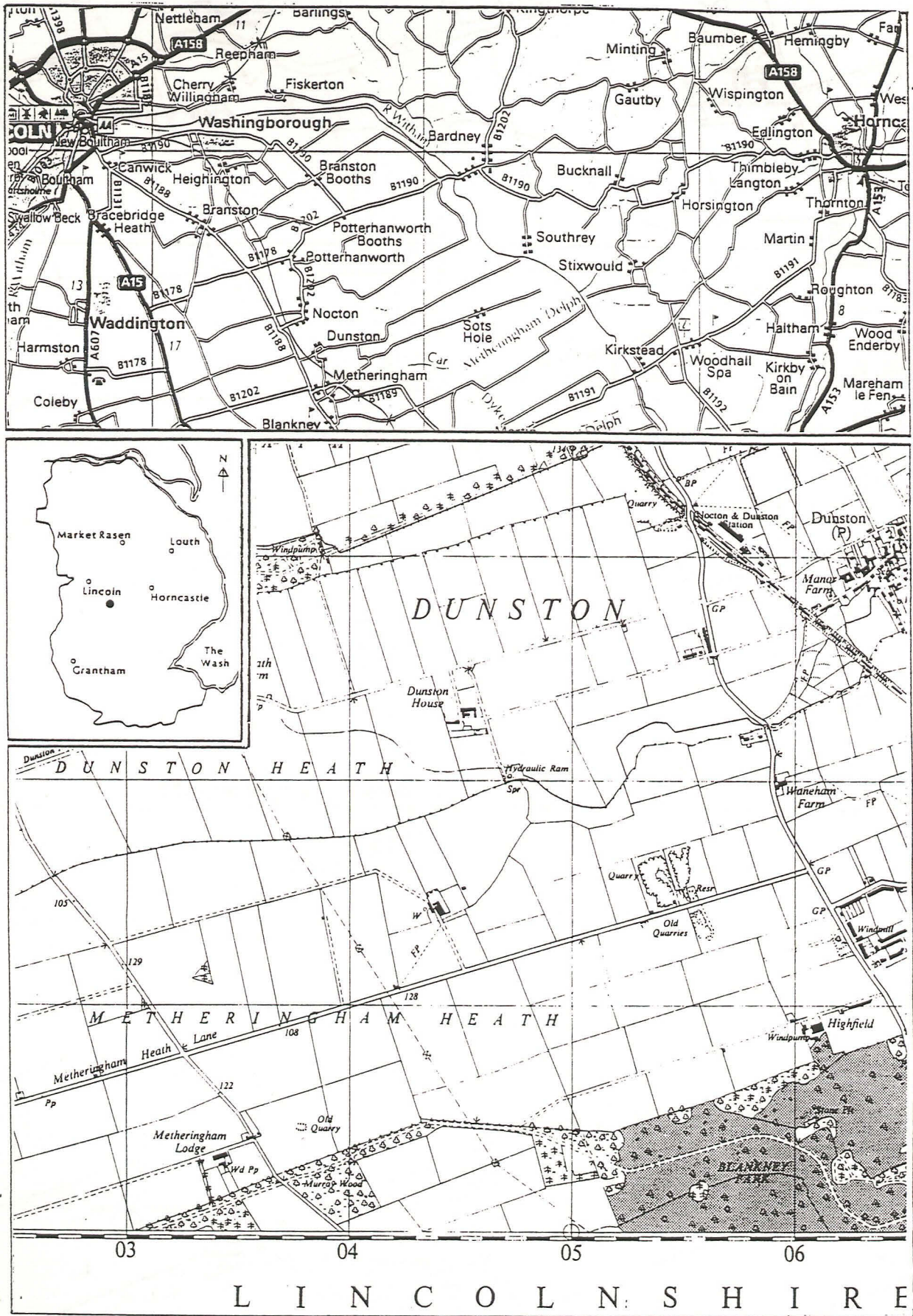


Fig. 1 Location of Metherringham Heath Lane (based on the 1953 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map Sheet TF06; Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence no. AL 50424A).



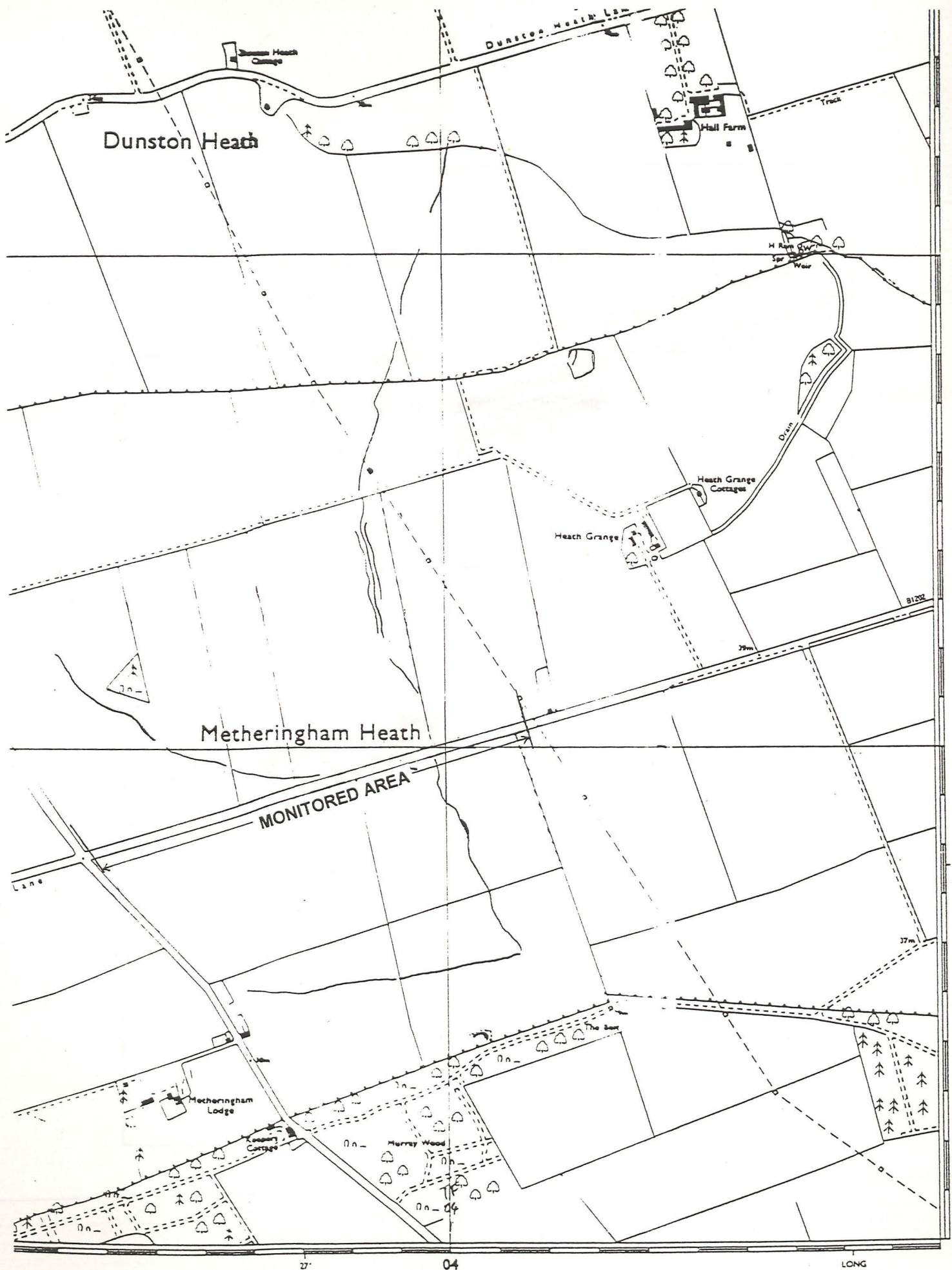


Fig. 2 Sketch-plot of the prehistoric ditch cropmarks, traced from the Lincolnshire Mapping Project and overlain onto the Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map TF06 SW. Crown Copyright; reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence no. AL 50424A)



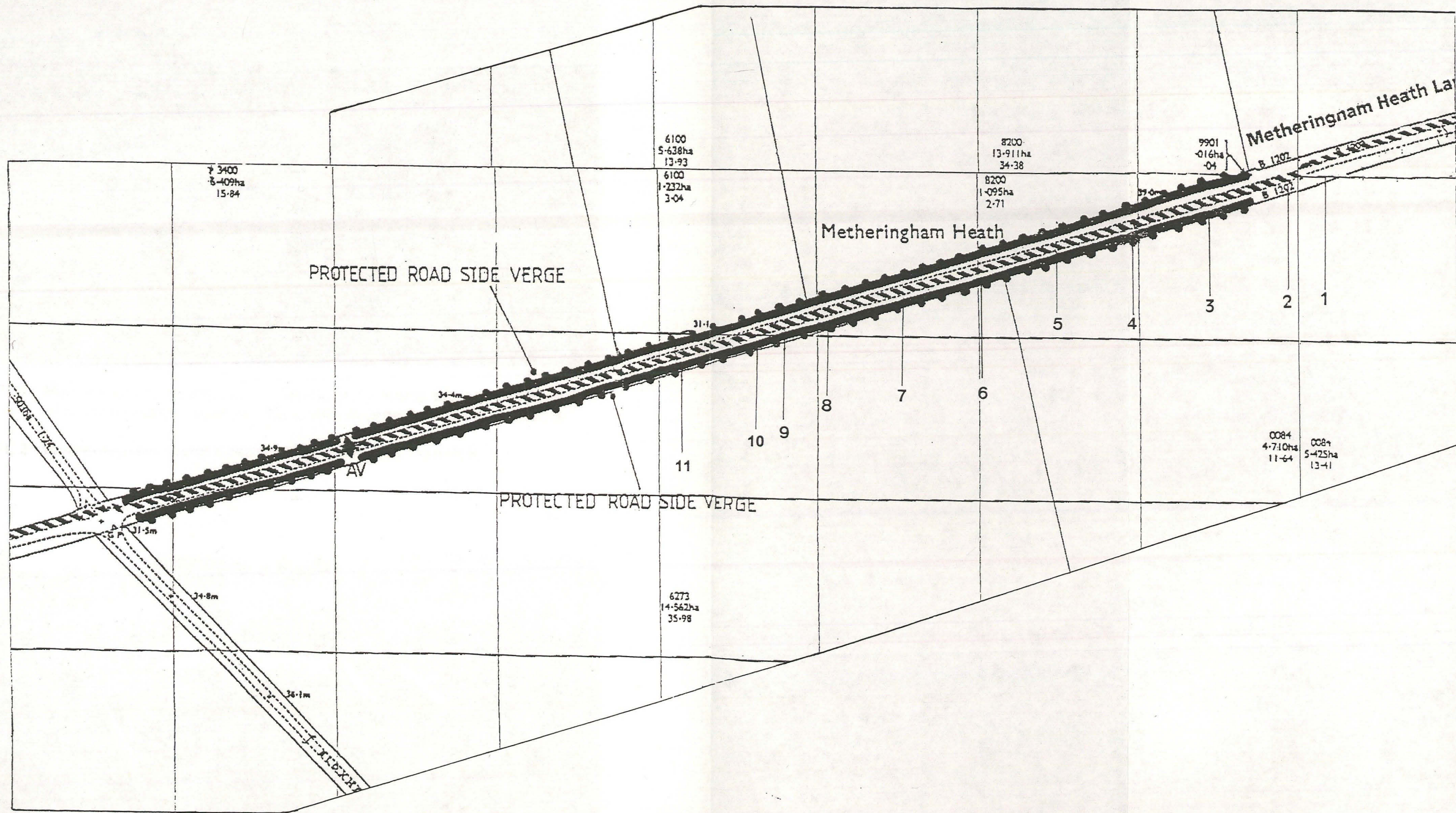


Fig. 3 The pipeline route along Metheringham Heath Lane, showing the position of the monitored trenches at the southern road edge. The 'protected verge' refers to ecological constraints. (Based on the 1:2,500 map supplied by Anglian Water Services. Crown Copyright; reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence no. AL 50424A).





**Pl. 1** Metheringham Heath Lane, looking west along the specified area of archaeological interest. The works in progress are at Trench 4.

**Pl. 2** Metheringham Heath Lane, looking east past Trench 6.







Pl. 3 Limestone bedrock in side of Trench 6, beneath foundation of modern road.

Pl. 4 Red/brown clay loam filling natural features within the limestone bedrock, northern face of Trench 5.







**Pl. 5** The southern face of Trench 5 showed that the natural features (filled with red/brown material) were not extensive.





PI. 6 Red/brown clay loam in Trench 7 was interpreted as the fill of a naturally formed feature within the limestone, but might have been fill of an undated ditch (looking north).





**Pl. 7** Mixed limestone brash and clay loam in Trench 8 was thought to be a natural deposit, although it could possibly have been fill of a large artificial feature.

**Pl. 8** Dense limestone bedrock in Trench 9.

