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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

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**Roman Bank, Ingoldmells, Lincs.
New McDonald's Restaurant, Fantasy Island Theme Park
Archaeological Watching Brief**

NGR: TF5701 6855

Site Code MFI 00

LCNCC Museum Accn. No. 2000.40

ELDC Planning Application: S/090/01786/99

**Report prepared for Universal Construction Services Ltd
(on behalf of McDonald's Restaurants Ltd)**

by Geoff Tann

LAS Report No. 404

March 2000

Lincolnshire County Council
Archaeology Section

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Summary

A watching brief identified a ditch of unknown width and depth, along the landward edge of the Roman Bank sea flood defence at Ingoldmells. It appeared to be associated with that feature but could not be dated. A fragment of clinker in its backfill indicates a coal fuel, probably medieval or later but possibly Roman. No other archaeological features or finds were observed.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned by Universal Construction Services Ltd (UCS) (on behalf of McDonald's Restaurants Ltd) in February 2000 to conduct an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for a new restaurant. The watching brief was required to satisfy a condition of the planning permission S/090/01786/99. It was arranged in accordance with the general requirements set out in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* (Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section, 1998).

Monitoring visits were made by the author on February 21st, 23rd, 24th and 25th. After excavation of the most intrusive new feature, a drain trench around the north and west sides of the development site, LAS contacted Dr. Beryl Lott (Development Control, Lincolnshire County Council Built Environment Team) and the watching brief was concluded.

Site Location and Description

The 0.4ha new restaurant site is located on the west side of the road known as Roman Bank, within the Fantasy Island complex (Pl. 1). The ground had been used as a carpark under tarmac, and prior to groundworks commencing this was removed by planing.

Archaeological Background

The Fantasy Island complex at Ingoldmells lies within the Lincolnshire Marsh, 0.5km west of the present coastline (Pls. 2 and 3). The coastline in this area is known to have changed in both directions during the past 10,000 years because of marine transgressions and regressions, and former land surfaces have been masked by successive deposits of marine silt. Within this zone, salt manufacture was conducted at the edge of creeks that provided supplies of salt water, which was evaporated to produce the valuable commodity. Salterns of Iron Age and Roman date have been recorded in this district, mainly from sightings of burnt soil and the fired clay 'briquetage', (broken salt evaporation trays and supports) recorded during cleaning or construction of modern open

drainage ditches. Archaeological remains are usually found at 1-2m below existing ground levels.

A large briquetage mound was recorded in 1991 during construction of the Skegness Leisure Park, 1.6km south of Fantasy Island on the south side of Wall's Lane. In 1993, eleven further salterns were found on a sewer pipe trench between Burgh-le-Marsh and Ingoldmells Treatment Works, Bolton Lane (Tann 1995). Evidence for Middle Iron Age saltmaking was uncovered in 1999 at the Anglian Water Services sewage treatment works in Wall's Lane.

The Watching Brief

Method

The trenches were excavated with a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.65m wide toothed bucket. Trench width was about 0.7m, with depths below the stripped car park of between 1.6m in the NE corner and 1.2m in the NE corner. Context numbers were assigned by LAS for recording purposes, and these are used on the sketch section (Fig. 4).

The Northern Drain Trench

The trench connected into an existing manhole close to the NE corner of the site, at the foot of the embankment (Pl. 4). Beneath the rubble from the car park foundation 1, and limestone chips around the manhole, very dark brown silt 2 was exposed extending below the trench base (Pl. 5). The silt appeared to contain organic remains, including visible reed inclusions and peat. A small environmental sample was taken from the excavated spoil.

The dark silt ended 5.2m west of the kerb around the foot of the embankment. Its western edge was at about 45°. The feature was interpreted as a north-south aligned ditch 3 at the base of the embankment, cut into the marine silts. Despite the close proximity of the existing manhole, there was no evidence of post-medieval or modern material within the silt. Assuming the purpose of this ditch being to drain the landward side of this sea flood bank, a Roman or medieval date is probable. No finds were seen, and there were no further opportunities to examine this feature.

To the west of ditch 1, the modern rubble overlay a layer of yellow/brown silt 4, which may have been truncated at the eastern side of the site. In the centre of the trench, this layer was 0.2m thick, thinning to 0.1m where it had been cut by ditch 1. This layer seems to represent a subsoil formed on the surface of the marine silt deposit, although it could be upcast from the ditch, or colluvium washed from the flood bank before the ditch was dug. There were slight indications that it was filling small variations of the underlying horizon. Again, no finds were seen in this layer.

Beneath 4 was a 0.55-0.65m thick layer of red/brown silt 5, with a grey hue in places (Pl. 6). This was interpreted as a marine silt deposit left by an extended period of marine transgression. An orange sandier silt deposit 6 at the trench base could possibly be an earlier ground surface, but it may reflect variations within the marine silt deposit.

The Western Drain Trench

This trench cut through ground that had been disturbed in places by post-medieval land drains, and modern services. Beneath the modern rubble was 0.3m of light brown silt, almost certainly the same layer as 4. The thickness here suggests that this could represent a former topsoil.

The 0.3m thick silt layer 5 was greyer in colour in this part of the site, and overlay 6, which here was a light brown colour (Pl. 7). The greyer coloration of deposits further from the bank may be an indication of poorer drainage.

The Central Area

A shallower drain was to be laid west-east across the site, to serve the new restaurant. The area of the restaurant was piled before this was to be excavated, and the nature of earthmoving activities reduced the chances of uncontaminated deposits surviving. This area was not monitored.

Conclusion

The only archaeological feature found on this site was the west-east aligned ditch 3. This was positioned at the foot of the sea defence bank and seems to be related to that feature. The bank is thought to be of medieval construction, despite its Roman attribution, and the ditch is probably contemporary. No evidence of salt manufacture, occupation or agriculture was found on the site.

Acknowledgements

LAS is grateful to UCS, especially Mike Sawyer (Contract Manager) and Greg Dixon (Site Agent) for the co-operation received during the project. Help was also received from the Lincolnshire County Council Built Environment Team. The environmental sample was processed by Jeremy Mordue and analysed by James Rackham. Illustrations were prepared by Mick McDaid, and the report was collated and produced by Jane Frost.

Geoff Tann
Lindsey Archaeological Services
30th March 2000

References

Tann, G. 1995 *Burgh-le-Marsh - Ingoldmells Rising Main: Archaeological Watching Brief*. LAS Report No. 128, April 1995.

Archive Summary

Developer's plans and annotated copy

Sketch section drawing

Photographs: LAS colour print film nos. 00/24/1-14 (including those used in this report).

Correspondence

Fantasy Island, Ingoldmells - MFI00
Report on Analysis of the Environmental Sample from Ditch 3

A single soil sample of three litres was taken from a ditch fill behind an undated sea bank and processed by Lindsey Archaeological Services. The flot and residue were submitted to the Environmental Archaeology Consultancy for assessment.

The silty sample washed down leaving only 15 mls of residue composed of fired silt, a few small fragments of chalk, cracked pebble and fragments of 'clinker' and a water worn shell of oyster. The 12 mill flot, which had been dried, was composed of uncharred plant remains including seeds, buds, stem and leaf fragments, and small twigs. A few insect fragments and shells of molluscs complete the assemblage.

The small mollusc assemblage include shells of *Hydrobia ulvae* and *Oxychilus* sp.. The former characteristic of estuarine and salt-marsh environments, while the latter is a terrestrial mollusc typical of shaded habitats. A freshwater aquatic environment in the ditch is suggested by the presence of the stonewort *Chara* sp. a freshwater alga and some of the stem fragments may derive from reeds.

Discussion

Unfortunately there is no evidence in the sample that might indicate the age of the ditch, although the clinker since it presumably derives from coal indicates a historic rather than prehistoric date, but marine and freshwater influence is indicated by the environmental evidence in the fills. More specific identification of the plant and insect remains might fill out this picture as would a pollen sample from the fills but in the absence of a date the information has little use. It would be possible to obtain a radiocarbon date from the organic material in the deposits but less than three grammes of organic matter were obtained from the sample and a larger sample would be preferable.

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The Environmental Archaeology Consultancy
29 March 2000

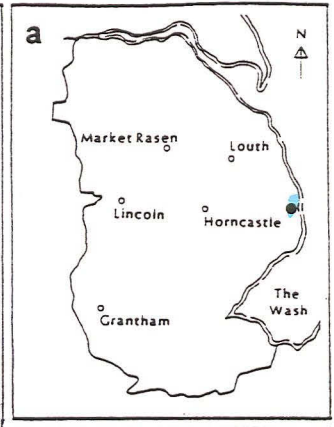
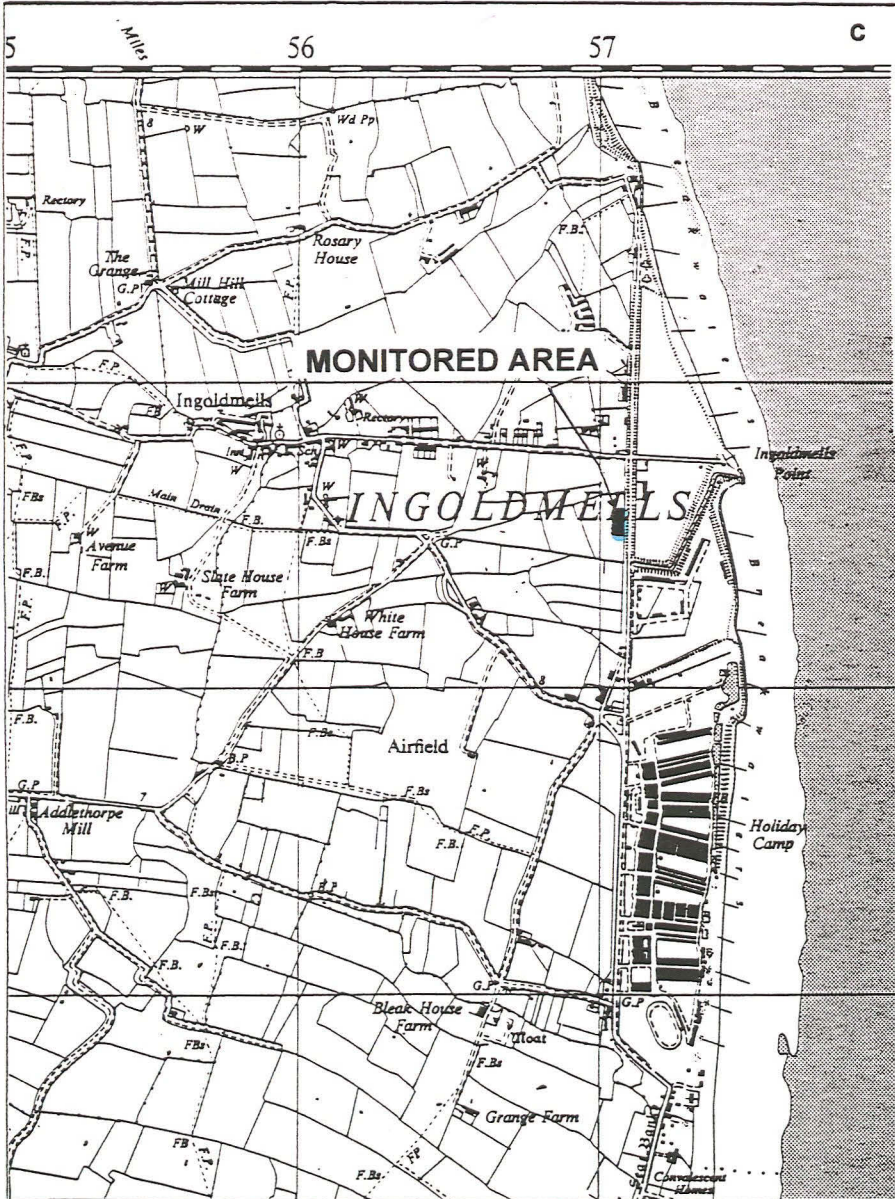
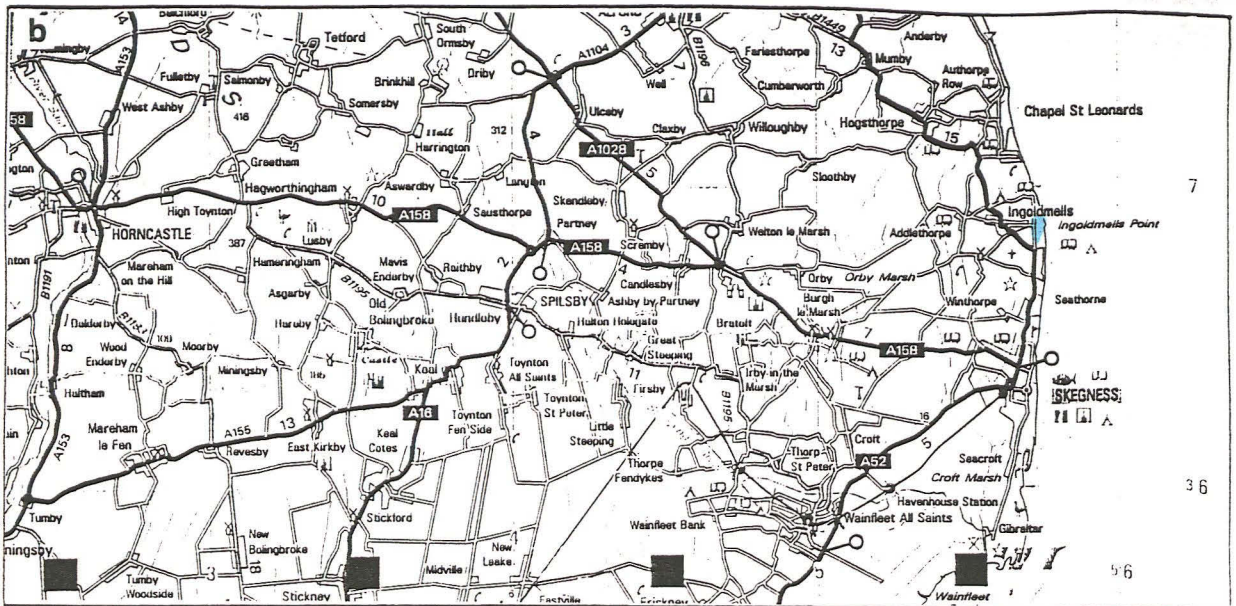


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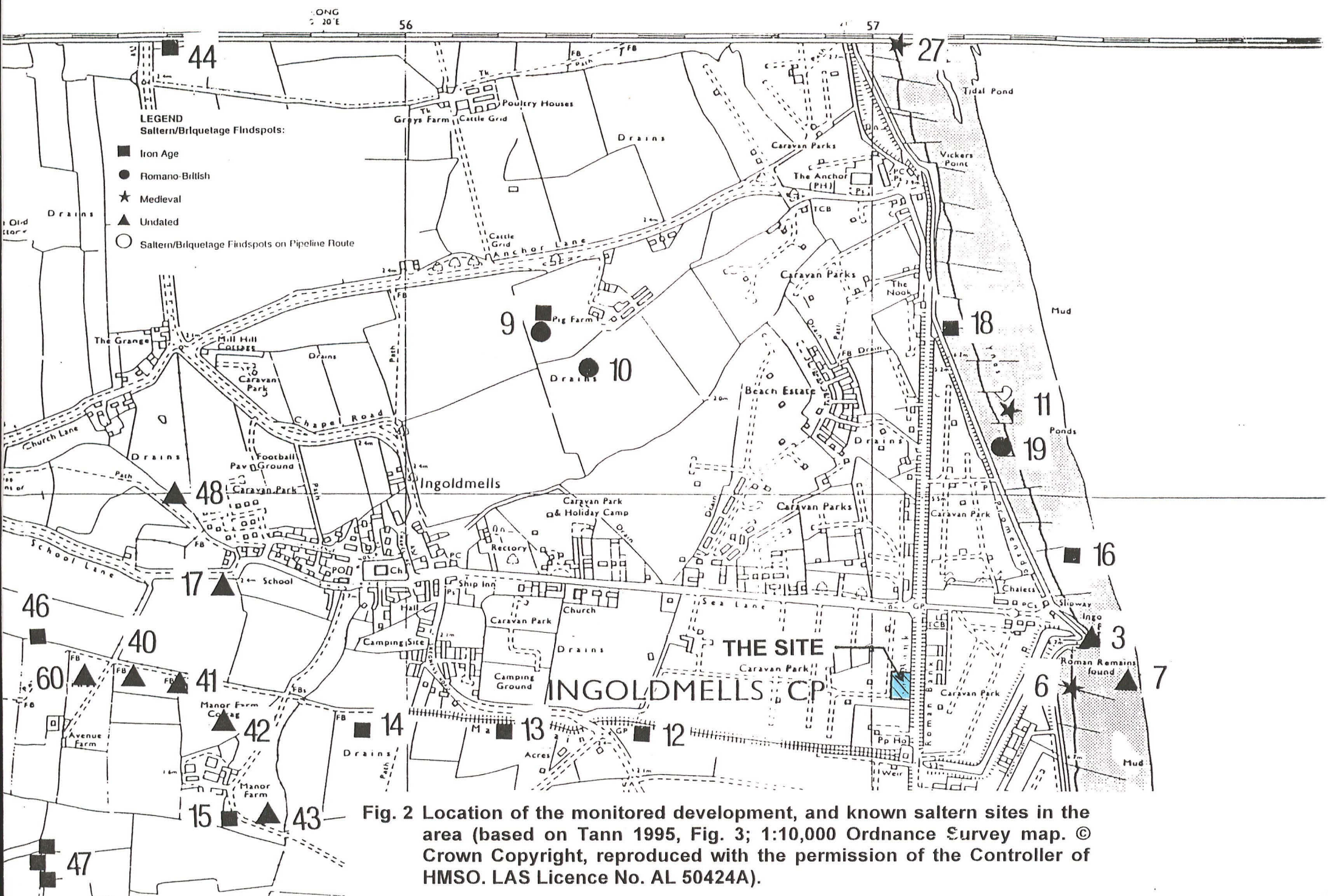
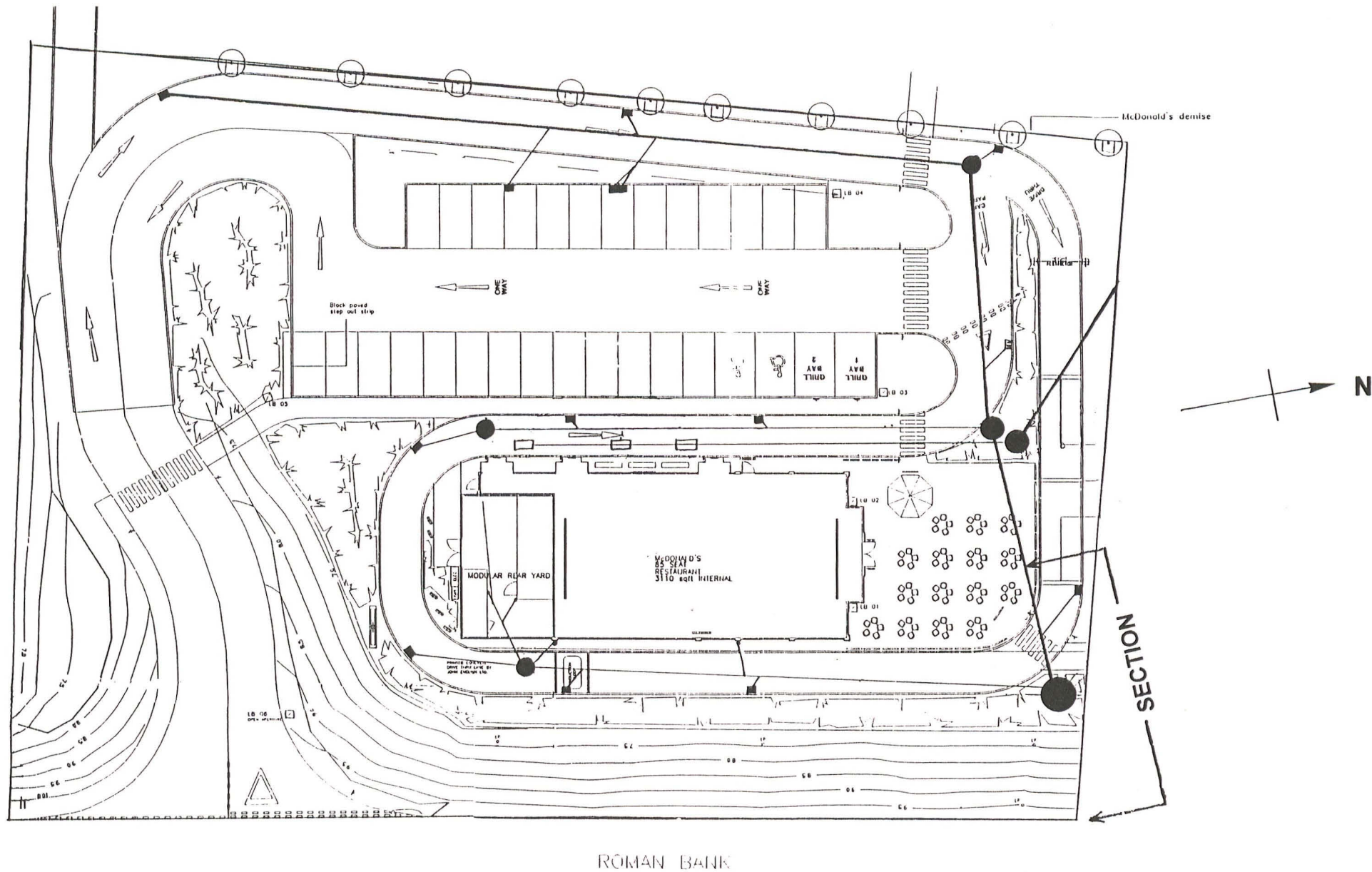


Fig. 2 Location of the monitored development, and known saltern sites in the area (based on Tann 1995, Fig. 3; 1:10,000 Ordnance Survey map. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).



ROMAN BANK

Fig. 3 Plan (scale 1:400) of the monitored development (based on a reduced scale copy of a plan supplied by the client).

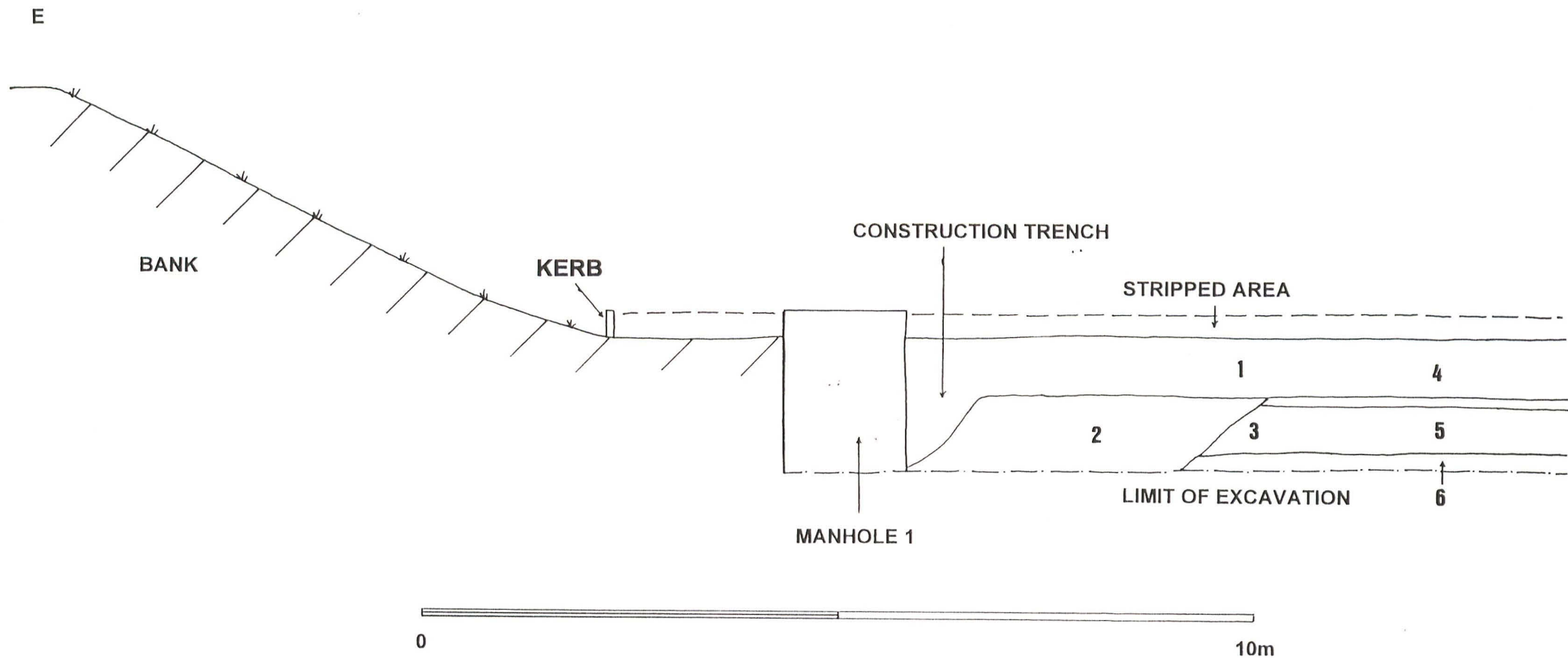


Fig. 4 Profile/section of deposits revealed in the northern drain trench, showing ditch 3 at the foot of the undated flood bank. (McDaid, after Tann).



Pl. 1 The monitored site beside Roman Bank, during development (looking north).



Pl. 2 Low-lying land west of Roman Bank (looking west from 30m south of the monitored site).

Pl. 3 Land east of Roman bank (looking SE towards the coast).





PI. 4 Drain trench along the northern side of the site (looking east).

PI. 5 Dark fill at western edge of ditch (centre), alongside the foot of the embankment in the NE corner of the site (looking south).





Pl. 6 Red/brown marine silt deposit 5 in the northern drain trench.

Pl. 7 Grey/brown marine silt deposit 5 in the western drain trench, possibly discoloured by poor drainage.

