

Report 2373



nau archaeology

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
Roman Bank, Little Dowgate, Leverington,
Cambridgeshire**

ECB 3497



Prepared for
EDF Energy Networks (EPN) plc
Barton Road
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP32 7BG



Steve Hickling MA AIFA

January 2011



www.nps.co.uk

PROJECT CHECKLIST		
Project Manager	David Whitmore	
Draft Completed	Steve Hickling	02/12/2010
Graphics Completed	David Dobson	02/12/2010
Edit Completed	Jayne Bown	07/12/2010
Signed Off	David Whitmore	20/12/2010
<i>Issue 1</i>		

NAU Archaeology

Scandic House
85 Mountergate
Norwich
NR1 1PY

T 01603 756150

F 01603 756190

E jayne.bown@nps.co.uk

<http://nau.nps.co.uk/>

BAU2373

© NAU Archaeology

Contents

<i>Summary</i>	5
1.0 Introduction	5
2.0 Geology and Topography	5
3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background.....	7
4.0 Methodology	7
5.0 Results.....	8
6.0 Conclusions	9
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	10
<i>Bibliography</i>	10

Figures

- Figure 1 Site Location
- Figure 2 Trench location

Location:	Little Dowgate, Leverington, Cambridgeshire
District:	Fenland
Grid Ref.:	TF 44996 10865
HER No.:	ECB3497
SM No.:	SAM 51
OASIS Ref.:	89209
Client:	EDF Energy Networks
Dates of Fieldwork:	23-29 November 2010

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was conducted for EDF Energy Networks during the excavation of a cable trench adjacent to Roman Bank, a possibly Anglo-Saxon sea defence and Scheduled Monument at Leverington in Cambridgeshire..

No archaeological features or artefacts were recovered from this project. The layer of yellowish pale brown silt encountered across the site may be a fenland alluvial silt natural deposit, but as its relationship with the 9th-century 'Roman Bank' sea defence was not firmly established no conclusive identification can be made. It may be that the silt layer is the same as that found in the 2005 evaluation undertaken at Sutton Road nearby (CHER ECB2405) where it was interpreted as being redeposited.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A length of cable trench adjacent to the Little Dowgate Electrical substation was excavated under archaeological supervision.

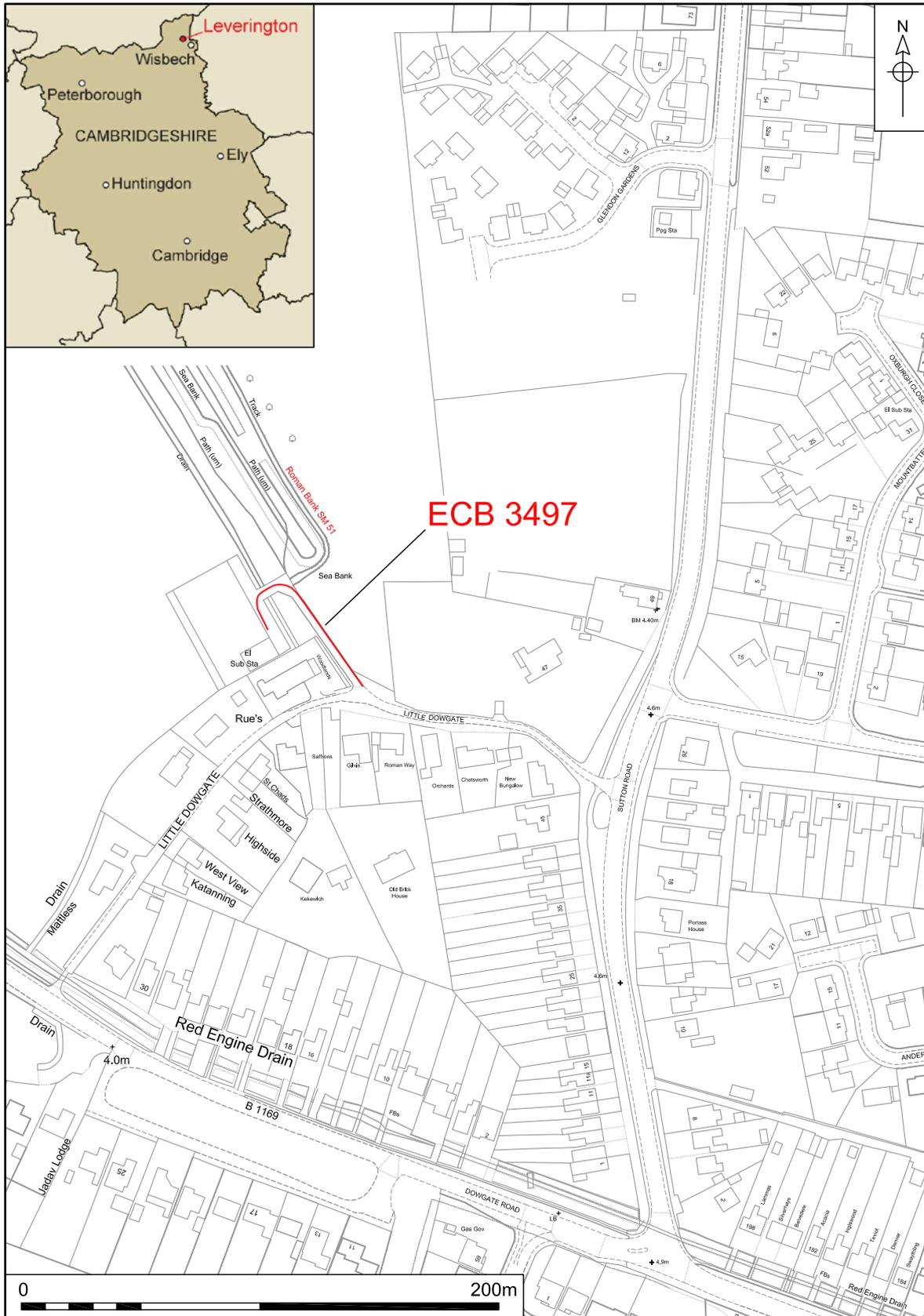
This work was undertaken at the request of EDF Energy Networks due to the close proximity of the Roman Bank Scheduled Monument (Fig. 1). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NAU Archaeology (Ref. NAU/BAU2373/DW). This work was commissioned by and funded by EDF Energy Networks.

This programme of work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010).

The site archive is currently held by NAU Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited with the Cambridgeshire Museums Service, following the relevant policies on archiving standards.

2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site lies on Flandrian Alluvium consisting of marine, estuarine and freshwater silts, clays and peats (BGS 1991), above Upper Jurassic Amthill and Kimmeridge clays (BGS 1985).



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Local Authority No. 100019340

Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:2500

The site lies between Wisbech town centre, 2km to the southeast and Leverington village, 1km to the northwest. The area is flat silt fen, at a height of 3m OD.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The information for this section comes from the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER).

Cherry Tree Hill mound (CHER 04003) is possibly a Roman round barrow located 300m north-west of the present development.

Rabbit Hill round barrow (CHER 04104, Scheduled Monument Cambridgeshire 264) is located 200m south-west of the site. It was excavated in 1878 but remains undated.

Roman Bank (CHER 04448, Scheduled Monument Cambridgeshire 51) is a possibly Anglo-Saxon sea defence enclosing the old estuary of the River Nene. It survives intermittently on both the eastern and western sides of the river, but the best section is adjacent to the development site.

A medieval abbey token (CHER 03959) was found 350m south-west of the present development in 1958.

The medieval Hospital of St John the Baptist (CHER 04001) may have been located 130m south-west of the present development.

An evaluation in 2005 at Sutton Road (CHER ECB2405), 100m north-east of the present development encountered no archaeological remains, but did find a layer of redeposited silt across the site.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this watching brief was to record any archaeological remains affected by the works within the development area at Little Dowgate, Leverington.

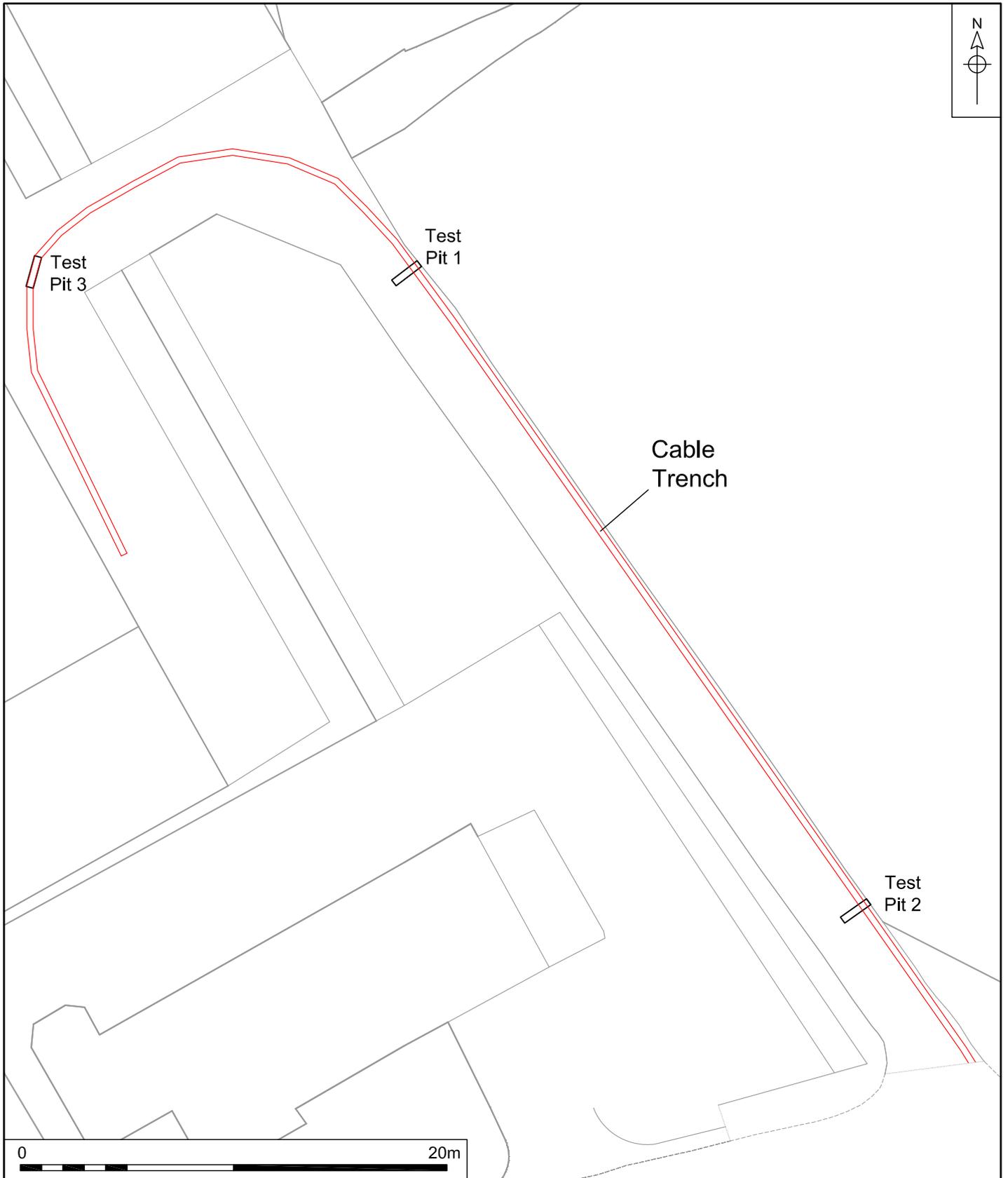
Machine excavation was carried out with a 1 ton hydraulic 360° excavator using a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal-detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds, other than those which were obviously modern, were retained for inspection.

No environmental samples were taken.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NAU Archaeology pro forma. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales. Colour, monochrome and digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits where appropriate.

Site conditions were good, with the work taking place in cold and occasionally snowy weather.



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Local Authority No. 100019340

Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:250

5.0 RESULTS

Three small investigative test pits and c.75m of trenching were monitored (Fig. 2). The trenching was excavated to take plastic ducting which will eventually have electrical cables pulled through them. The trench was 0.3-0.4m wide and 0.8m deep.

The stratigraphy encountered was the same in all the groundworks monitored and consisted of yellowish pale brown silt with no inclusions as the earliest deposit, with modern hardcore and tarmac 0.3m deep above.

No archaeological features or artefacts were present.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological features or artefacts were encountered during the archaeological monitoring. The yellowish pale brown silt encountered across the site are likely to represent Fenland alluvial silts, but the relationship with these deposits with the 9th century 'Roman Bank' sea defence cannot be firmly established. It may be that the silt layer is the same as the one identified in the evaluation undertaken in 2005 at nearby Sutton Road (CHER ECB2405).

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank EDF Energy Networks for commissioning and funding this project. The illustrations were finished by David Dobson and the report was edited by Jayne Bown.

Bibliography

- | | | |
|---|------|--|
| British Geological Survey | 1985 | <i>East Anglia Sheet 52N 00 Solid Geology</i> accessed 02.12.10 |
| British Geological Survey | 1991 | <i>East Anglia Sheet 52N 00 Quaternary</i> accessed 02.12.10 |
| Department for Communities and Local Government | 2010 | <i>Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment</i> , TSO, Norwich |