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Wessex Archaeology

Lynn & Inner Dowsing

Offshore Wind Farms, Terrestrial Cable Route
Skegness, Lincolnshire

Archaeological Watching Brief
Report

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January 2007

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LYNN & INNER DOWSING OFFSHORE WIND FARMS
TERRESTRIAL CABLE ROUTE
SKEGNESS
LINCOLNSHIRE

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

For:

AMEC Wind Energy
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On behalf of:

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Report ref. 63981.01

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by AMEC Wind Energy to undertake a watching brief on land at the North Shore Golf Course, Skegness, Lincolnshire. The work is in support of the submission of a planning application for a new electricity cable at NGR 557000 365200, and was undertaken in December 2006.

The fieldwork comprised the monitoring of topsoil removal across a *c.* 10m wide easement and the monitoring of the excavation of a cable trench between Roman Bank Rd, the A52, and sand dunes adjacent to the beach.

A sequence of, probably prehistoric, alluvial deposits was seen, but no archaeological artefacts were present to confirm this suggested date. Although the remains of possible reeds indicated a stabilisation horizon there was no associated anthropogenic material. A post-medieval ditch adjacent and parallel to the public footpath may have been backfilled when the golf course was laid out.

It is recommended that the soil monolith recovered during the watching brief is subject to archaeological assessment.

LYNN & INNER DOWSING OFFSHORE WIND FARMS
TERRESTRIAL CABLE ROUTE
SKEGNESS
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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Acknowledgements

This report was commissioned by AMEC Wind Energy and Renewable Energy Systems Ltd., on behalf of Centrica Renewable Energy Ltd. Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Dr Genevra Harker and Jay Butler of AMEC Wind Energy and Chris Jenner of RPS Group for their co-operation.

The fieldwork was carried out and the report was prepared by Jamie Wright. The illustrations were prepared by Karen Nichols. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by John Gribble.

Lynn & Inner Dowsing Offshore Wind Farms
Terrestrial Cable Route
Skegness
Lincolnshire

Report ref. 63981.01

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by AMEC Wind Energy, on behalf of Centrica Renewable Energy Limited (the Client) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during laying of cable ducting for the Lynn and Inner Dowsing offshore wind farms at Roman Bank, Skegness (hereafter 'the Site', **Figure 1**).

1.1.2 The archaeological investigation was necessary in order to monitor groundworks, including topsoil stripping and the excavation of a trench, during the laying of ducts for electricity cables at the Site.

1.1.3 The work undertaken was in accordance with a consent condition issued by East Lindsey District Council as a part of Planning Permission Application No. S/153/011956/06.

1.1.4 The watching brief was carried out from the 11th to the 15th December 2006.

1.2 Site Location, Topology and Geology

1.2.1 The Site lies between the sea shore and the eastern side of Roman Bank Road, the A 52. The Site was centred on National Grid Reference 557000 365200.

1.2.2 Most of the Site lies across fairways of the North Shore Golf Course and was level at *c.* 4m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). Between the golf course and the beach were steeply undulating sand dunes *c.* 70m wide and 5m high, vegetated with small trees, grass and dense thorny shrubs.

1.2.3 The underlying solid geology is mapped as Cretaceous Chalk (Kent 1980). This is overlain by Holocene (post glacial) clays, silts, sands and gravels sometimes with blanket peat. Above this blown sand has accumulated, possibly in the historic period since the destruction of forest cover. The blown sand probably forms a northern part of the Gibraltar Point sand spit (Goudie 1990, 262). Between Mablethorpe and Skegness the coast is presently undergoing slight erosion.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Previous work

2.1.1 The proposed locations of both offshore wind farms and the routes of the marine and terrestrial cables have been the subject of archaeological desk-based assessments (Wessex Archaeology 2002) and a walkover survey (Wessex Archaeology 2006a and 2006b). Where appropriate, the various Study Areas defined within these studies are collectively referred to as the DBA Study Areas in the text below.

2.1.2 The desk-based assessment gives a full background of the archaeological potential of the area and this is summarised below.

2.2 Summary

Palaeolithic

2.2.1 The absence of prehistoric finds from within the DBA Study Areas means that an assessment of the archaeological potential of the area has to take into account the more general records of Lower and Middle Palaeolithic human occupation of Britain, as well as local climatic and geological conditions (WA 2002b).

2.2.2 During the earliest Lower Palaeolithic human occupation of Britain in the Cromerian period (*c.* 700,000 BP) the whole of the Southern North Sea would have been a low-lying wetland landscape and would have made an attractive environment for hunter-gatherer groups. Further potential for human presence in the DBA Study Areas existed during the Hoxnian interglacial (c. 423,000 – 380,000 BP) and the earliest archaeological finds from Lincolnshire date to this period. As primary Lower Palaeolithic deposits are likely to have been subject to reworking during the subsequent Wolstonian and Devensian glaciations, most of the known artefacts have been found in secondary contexts. However, a primary context site found at Kirmington in North Lincolnshire has been dated to the Hoxnian (May 1976), demonstrating the potential for the survival of undisturbed archaeological material of this date.

2.2.3 Within Lincolnshire there are few Middle Palaeolithic finds, a Bout Coupé handaxe from Risby Warren near Scunthorpe being one notable exception. This absence continues into the Upper Palaeolithic, though the presence of open camping sites is suggested by finds, also from the Scunthorpe area (May 1976).

2.2.4 Thus the general picture for Lincolnshire throughout the Palaeolithic is one of successive small populations of hunter-gatherers, with periods of human occupation punctuated by periods of glaciation.

Mesolithic

2.2.5 Following the Palaeolithic, the Mesolithic period was marked by changes in the climate, vegetation and fauna. Evidence for human activity in Lincolnshire at this time is relatively plentiful, and includes sites on both the

uplands (Wolds) and within the lower lying marshland. This distribution pattern is indicative of a hunter-gatherer population utilising a wide range of natural resources. Apart from a single, temporary Mesolithic hunting encampment, evidenced by a scatter of flint tools, recorded in the Coastal Study Area of the Lynn and Inner Dowsing report (WA 2002b) no other Mesolithic sites or materials are known for the area.

Neolithic

2.2.6 During the Early Neolithic most of the known long barrows are situated on the higher ground of the Wolds, with a concentration around Skendleby, inland of the DBA Study Areas. However, the general spread of finds indicates a far more widespread settlement distribution pattern utilising both upland and lowland areas (May 1976). There is no evidence for Neolithic sites in the Study Area. However, isolated finds of stone axes dating to this period were noted along the coast at Skegness in the Coastal Study Area of the Lynn and Inner Dowsing report (WA 2002b) suggesting the potential for Neolithic finds within the area.

Bronze Age

2.2.7 Sea level rise continued steadily throughout the Bronze Age (2,400 – 700 BC). Population growth and an associated increase in the number of field monuments (round barrows) continue throughout this period, although the general distribution patterns remain similar to that of the Neolithic (May 1976). Human activity in the area is evidenced by three Bronze Age sites in the Coastal Study Area of the Lynn and Inner Dowsing report (WA 2002b). Among these are skeletons and a skull found at the beach in Ingoldmells.

Iron Age

2.2.8 By the Iron Age sea levels had risen to about +5m aOD. At this time most of the low lying marshes around the Wash were probably inundated, and Skegness would have been situated on a peninsula that projected out into the Wash. Although no sites or find spots are recorded within the DBA Study Areas, there is a large body of evidence for Iron Age salt production along the coast of Skegness. Salt presented an important commodity for trade at the time. 27 Iron Age salt production sites are recorded in the Coastal Study Area of the Lynn and Inner Dowsing report (WA 2002b), many of which were subsequently re-used during the Roman period.

Romano-British

2.2.9 The Roman activity in the area is evidenced by 66 Roman sites within the Lynn and Inner Dowsing Coastal Study Area (WA 2002b). A concentration of Roman sites was observed in the triangle formed by Addlethorpe, Ingoldmells and Burgh le Marsh, which was a major Roman settlement (Bennett 1993). As the Roman land surface is now buried by 2m to 3m of deposits, the existence of further sites within the DBA Study Areas is considered to be likely (M. Bennet: Lincolnshire SMR pers. comm.).

Medieval

2.2.10 The area around Skegness was relatively densely populated in the Middle Ages. 147 Medieval sites were recorded within the Lynn and Inner Dowsing Coastal Study Area (WA 2002b). Skegness and Wainfleet are listed as towns

supplying vessels to impressed fleets in the 14th century. Both places were also involved in the herring fisheries, foreign trade and salt export. Within the Coastal Study Area, there is a system of medieval sea banks, defences against flooding from the sea, evidence the human efforts to cope with the stormy 13th century weather.

Post-medieval and Modern

2.2.11 The bulk of the known sites within the Terrestrial Study Area relate to the Post-medieval and Modern periods. The remaining monuments in the Study Area are part of the coastal defences of Lincolnshire built during WWII.

2.2.12 The archaeological summary above is based on the archaeological records for all time periods as compiled for the Lynn and Inner Dowsing (WA 2002a and 2002b) and Lincs Offshore Wind Farm Archaeological Assessment (WA 2006b).

2.2.13 A breakdown of the archaeological records by date range produces the following number of sites within the Study Areas:

Period	Number of Sites
Prehistoric	5
Palaeolithic	2
Mesolithic	1
Neolithic	5
Bronze Age	3
Iron Age	32
Roman	66
Saxon	4
Medieval	111
Medieval to Post Medieval	33
Post Medieval	77
Modern	45
Unknown	54

2.2.14 Of the 439 sites listed above only one, **WA1355**, is located within 300 metres of the Watching Brief. This is the North Shore Golf Course, which is listed in the NMR records, although it has no legislative protection. The golf course was built in 1910 by James Braid (**Figure 1**).

2.2.15 A full Appendix of the sites listed above is available in WA Report (2006b), along with a discussion of the prehistoric archaeology in the area, including glaciation and sea level change.

3 AIMS OF THE FIELDWORK PROGRAMME

3.1 Archaeological Watching Brief

3.1.1 The aims of the archaeological investigation were to:

- clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the Site that may be threatened by development;
- identify, within the constraints of the agreed fieldwork strategy, the date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the Site;
- assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons; and
- document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All work undertaken was carried out in accordance with the guidance and standards outlined in the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (Revised 1999).

4.2 Health and Safety

4.2.1 All work was carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations (1992) and all other relevant Health and Safety legislation and regulations and codes of practice in force at the time.

4.2.2 A risk assessment was prepared by Wessex Archaeology before the commencement of fieldwork.

4.3 Fieldwork

Method of working

4.3.1 All excavation was undertaken by subcontractors for the Client.

4.3.2 Topsoil was initially mechanically removed and stored along the edge of the easement. Thereafter the general method of working was to mechanically excavate a 2m wide and 1.7m deep trench, usually for a distance of 6m. The cable ducts were then laid and the trench was backfilled with sand and the next 6m of trench was excavated.

4.3.3 There were slight variations to this practice at each end of the trench. To take the ducts under a stream adjacent to the A52 (Roman Bank Road) at the western end of the Site the trench had to be excavated to *c.* 2.5m depth.

4.3.4 At the eastern end of the trench the public footpath which crosses the Site east to west has eroded a 'cut' through the sand dunes. As the cable trench was excavated adjacent to the path, it was located in this cut, and a full profile of the dunes was therefore not exposed.

4.3.5 Vertical sections of the dunes were unattainable and slumping was a potential Health and Safety issue. Photographs were taken of relatively stable faces. Wherever seen, the sand forming the dunes showed strong banding, and appeared to be a wind, rather than water, deposit.

Archaeological recording

4.3.6 After topsoiling the easement was visually inspected for artefacts and changes in deposits. During excavation of the cable trench a watch was maintained for artefacts and changes in geological formation. Spoil heaps were visually inspected for artefacts.

4.3.7 After excavation of the trench a record was made of the trench section and, when appropriate, of the base of the trench.

4.3.8 Two bulk soil samples were retained from organic rich deposits and a monolith (an undisturbed soil sample) was recovered to examine the nature of the exposed deposits.

4.3.9 The only artefacts observed were post-medieval. These were recorded on the appropriate context sheet but were not retained.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The Site can be divided into two areas: the very level part across the fairways of the golf course and the *c.* 70m through the sand dunes to the edge of the beach.

5.1.2 As described above, close recording of the sand dunes was not possible and the following description of the soil profile refers to the area underlying the golf course.

5.2 Soil Profile

5.2.1 The soil profile was complex comprising a build up of alluvial sands, silts and clays cut by palaeochannels. Within the 1.7m depth of the trench there were many individual layers making up separate units. A schematic section of 40m of the trench is shown as **Figure 2**

5.2.2 The earliest deposit recorded was **114**, a grey clay. This had many fine pores and contained many fine vertical roots. The roots had decayed to a very dark bluish grey but were still organic. Above was a 10mm thick layer of fibrous material with no mineral component. No leaf material could be seen but this is assumed to be the remains of a vegetative surface developed on alluvium.

5.2.3 Layer **114** was seen in the eastern half of the cable trench, rising to the east. A similar layer, **101**, was seen at 2.5m depth at the western end of the trench, and may be the same alluvial layer. This was rapidly recorded and bulk sampled.

5.2.4 Alluvial layer **114** was sealed by layer **112**, a reddish brown silty clay. It was horizontally laminated and at 0.7m below the level of topsoil there were two distinctive bands, a 10mm thick band of accumulated iron salts overlying a 150mm thick band of iron depletion. At least some of the laminates were in couplets, with 3mm of silty clay overlain by a dusting of fine sand,

succeeded by 3mm of silty clay and another dusting of fine sand, etc. This would suggest that in part the alluvium was deposited in an intertidal zone.

5.2.5 Layer **112** was cut by probable palaeochannel, **107**, which was intersected at a right angle by the trench. This palaeochannel was 5m wide towards the top of the trench, 2m wide at its base and continued below the level of machining. The lowest fill seen, **108**, was a grey clay containing much organic material and many fragments of shell. The decaying organic material made the clay look a very dark grey and had a distinct sulphurous smell. A bulk soil sample was taken.

5.2.6 Overlying the palaeochannel was a reddish brown silty clay, **109**, and the latest fill, **110**, was a pale brown fine to medium sand, with a maximum thickness of 0.4m.

5.2.7 The palaeochannel and its three fills were sealed by a broadly horizontal band of alluvium, **111**. This reddish brown silty clay had a complex structure. It could be seen to be laminated towards its base but higher up it had a prismatic structure. The upper prismatic structure is probably post-depositional, forming as the overlying topsoil and vegetation developed. A monolith soil sample (**1003**) was taken through the topsoil and layers **111** and **112** (**Fig. 2**).

5.2.8 To the east of the palaeochannel a 40mm thick band of sand, **113**, was present between alluvium **112** and the base of the topsoil. This sand became thicker to the east and was 0.53m thick after 6m. As the sand got thicker alluvial layer **112** became thinner, until sand layer **113** was overlying the former vegetative surface of alluvium **114**.

5.2.9 Layer **113** was comprised of principally fine sand although lenses of medium or coarse sand were present. The lenses and bands in the sand were broadly horizontal.

5.2.10 Topsoil **103** was a greyish brown silty clay. Topsoil 103 and B horizon (**111**) had a total depth of 0.4m as seen over ditch **104** (below) and over sand layer **113**.

5.3 Archaeological Features

5.3.1 A ditch, **104**, was seen near the western end of the duct trench (**Figure 2**). The ditch was 2.7m wide at the top, *c.* 0.8m wide at the base of the trench and continued below the base of the trench. It ran east to west and its cut could be seen to the base of the topsoil. The earliest observed fill, **106**, was a dark grey sandy loam which filled much of the ditch. Blue and white pottery, stoneware and brick fragments were present in this fill. Asymmetrically positioned in the northern side of the ditch was the final fill, **105**. This was a very pale brown fine sand. Above this was the topsoil, **103**.

5.3.2 Cut **115** extended for *c.* 20m close to ditch **104** (**Figure 2**). It had steep to vertical sides, and a horizontal base at a depth of *c.* 1m. The feature was

filled with sand. No artefacts were recovered, and the function and date remain unknown.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Alluvial deposits

6.1.1 No well established buried horizons were present, and it is difficult to imagine people walking over the soft clay of layer **114**.

Phase 1

6.1.2 The earliest feature present is believed to be the sand dunes which are mapped as a spit surrounded by water on the conjectured Iron Age coast drawn by Barrett and Barrett (2001; reproduced in Wessex Archaeology 2002b, Fig. 4). The recent evidence of the presence of these dunes is to be found on Antony's map of 1779 (Wessex Archaeology 2002b, Fig. 4), which shows them extending for 10km from Gibraltar Point in the south to beyond Windthorpe in the north.

Phase 2

6.1.3 The area to the west of this spit started to silt up, probably as the sea level rose after the mid-Holocene and streams draining from the north and west entered the sheltered water discharging silts and clays carried in suspension.

6.1.4 Only the top of the earliest alluvium, **114**, was observed and little can be said about its formation. However, it must have stabilised and been exposed for sufficient time for vegetation to take hold. The presence of stalks and absence of leaves suggests the vegetation may have been reeds.

Phase 3

6.1.5 A second phase of alluviation took place and layer **112** was deposited. The presence of couplets shows that this took place in an intertidal zone. Possibly short periods of slowing down of the deposition are suggested by the presence of the iron rich and iron poor bands. Streams were still draining across these presumed salt flats and one of these, **107**, was seen to be 5m wide and deeper than 1.7m. A number of shells were seen at the base of this palaeochannel. It gradually silted up, mostly with silts and clays but the final fill was sand (**110**).

6.1.6 Sand fill **110**, and sand **113** to the east, may have been eroded by a combination of wind and water from the sand spit, giving support to the hypothesis that it was the earliest feature in the landscape. The change in material being deposited, from silts and clays to sand, would represent perhaps a brief time of strong winds and storms. This was succeeded by a more stable environment with the silty clay layer **111** forming.

6.1.7 A relatively shallow depth of this material formed and this appears to be the final major episode of deposition. A mature topsoil then developed which has substantially survived to the present time.

Dating

6.1.8 No dating material was recovered from the alluvial deposits. The following suggestions are hypothetical but are included as the two phases of alluviation described above can possibly be correlated with observations in other regions around the Wash.

6.1.9 It is not known exactly when the Gibraltar Point spits were formed, although it will have been during the Holocene, after the end of the last glacial maximum.

6.1.10 Hall *et al.* (1987) identity two episodes when soft clays were deposited in the fens around the Wash. One of these was local to the Thorney region of Cambridgeshire. The more wide-spread episode saw the laying down of the Fen Clay/Barrow Drove Bed over about a millennium. This ceased in the second millennium BC (1000 – 2000 BC). The phase 2 deposits noted on the Site may belong to the Barrow Drove Beds.

6.1.11 A marine flood deposited silty material from King's Lynn to Wisbeach and Boston (Hall et al. 1987, 173). This became dry in the Romano-British period (43 – 410 AD) and has remained dry. The final (phase 3) alluvial episode may correspond to this.

6.2 Post alluvial archaeology

6.2.1 The post-medieval ditch was only seen in one location but appeared to be parallel to the public footpath that crossed the golf course. All the streams and drainage ditches shown on the present OS sheet drain to the west and then south into the Wash.

6.2.2 Ditch **104** probably pre-dates this drainage pattern. It is possible that the 'cut' through the sand dunes was in fact dug to allow the ditch to drain into the sea. The 19th century date of the recovered pottery suggests that the ditch may have been backfilled or allowed to fill prior to the construction of the golf course in the early 20th century.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1.1 In order to understand the sedimentary, environmental, chronological and archaeological significance and potential of the area it is recommended that a Stage 1 recording of the soil monolith (**1003**) is undertaken.

7.2 Stage 2:Recording

7.2.1 Archaeological recording of the monolith will entail cleaning and recording of the sediments it contains and relating them the recorded sequence described above and shown in **Figure 2**.

7.2.2 A Stage 2 report will state the results of the archaeological recording and will indicate whether any Stage 3 work is warranted.

7.3 Stage 3: Sampling and Assessment

7.3.1 Sub-samples (normally for pollen, diatoms, foraminifera and ostracods) will be taken from the monolith. Assessment would comprise laboratory analysis of the samples to a level sufficient to enable the value of the palaeo-environmental material surviving within the monolith to be identified. Sub-samples will also be taken and retained at this stage in case radiocarbon dating is required during Stage 4.

7.3.2 The Stage 3 report will set out the results of each laboratory assessment together with an outline of the archaeological implications of the combined results, and will indicate whether any Stage 3 work is warranted.

7.4 Stage 4: Analysis and Dating

7.4.1 Full analysis of pollen, diatoms, foraminifera and ostracods assessed during Stage 3. Typically, Stage 4 will be supported by radiocarbon dating of suitable sub-samples. Stage 4 will result in an account of the successive environments within the area of the monolith, a model of environmental change over time, and an outline of the archaeological implications of the analysis. It will indicate whether any Stage 4 work is warranted.

7.5 Stage 5: Final Report

7.5.1 If undertaken, Stage 4 should be reported as part of a final, Stage 5 report covering all aspects of the palaeotopography and prehistory of the area affected by the development. This may also include relevant data generated by the desk-based assessment, foreshore coring and terrestrial watching brief.

8 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

8.1 Museum

8.1.1 It is proposed that the project archive is deposited with Lincoln Museum. It is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology, under the site code 63981.

8.2 Archive Storage

8.2.1 The recovered monolith and soil samples are currently stored and held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology. All material is packaged according to overall standards required for the acceptance of archaeological archives.

8.2.2 The complete site archive, which will include records, plans, photos, ecofacts and sieved residues, will be prepared to comply with guidelines set out in *Environmental Standards for the permanent storage of excavated material from archaeological sites* (UKIC 1984, Conservation Guidelines 3), and *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage* (Walker 1990).

8.3 Copyright

8.3.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the site will be retained by Wessex Archaeology Ltd. under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act* 1988 with all rights reserved. The Museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profitmaking, and conforms to the Copyright and Related Rights regulations 2003.

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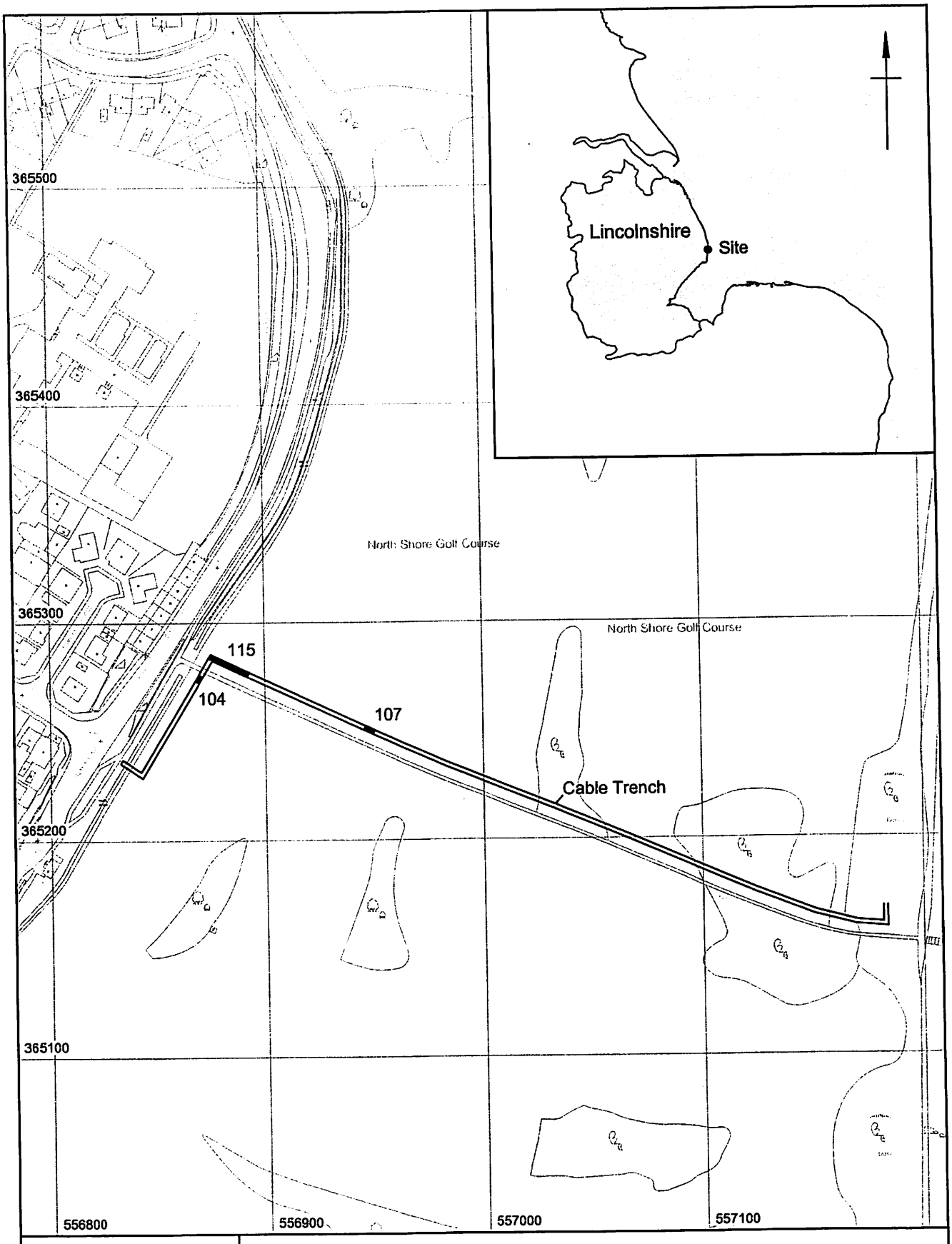

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Site location and plan

Figure 1

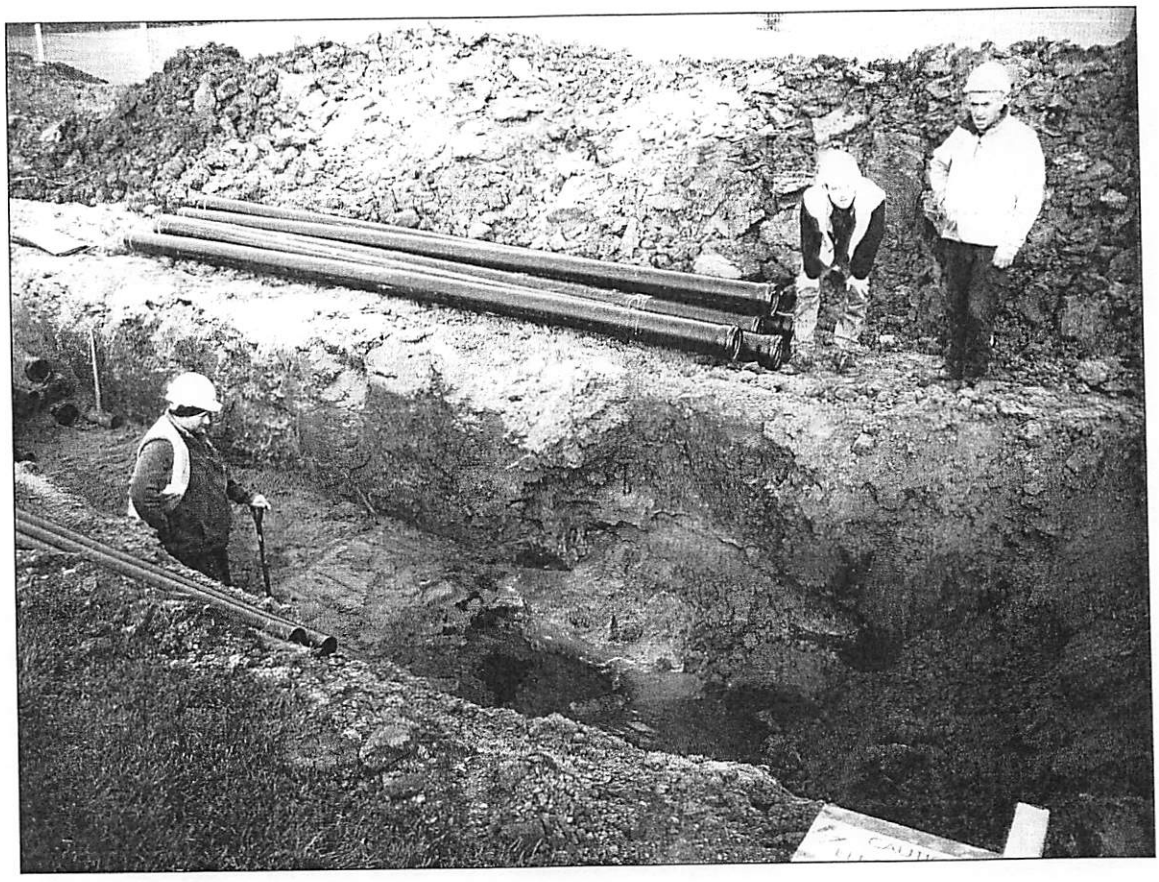

Plate 1: Palaeochannel 107

Plate 2: Layer 114 at base of cable trench

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Plates

Figure 3

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