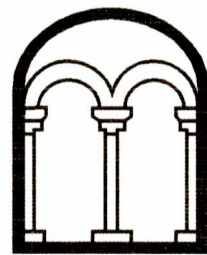


**STOWBRIDGE FARM TO DIMMOCK'S COTE ROAD  
ELECTRICITY CABLE  
STRETHAM MERE  
STRETHAM  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING**

**Albion**  
archaeology



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Compiled by	Checked by	Approved by
Richard Gregson	Wesley Keir	Drew Shotliff

7th April 2014

Produced for:  
Freedom Group



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## Preface

*Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete a summary as possible within the terms of the method statement. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.*

## Acknowledgements

*The project was commissioned by Freedom Group and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team.*

*The fieldwork was undertaken by Richard Gregson (Archaeological Supervisor), Marcin Koziminski (Archaeological Supervisor) and Wesley Keir (Project Officer) under the management of Rob Wardill (Project Manager). This report was prepared by Richard Gregson with contributions from Joan Lightning (CAD Technician).*

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## Version History

<i>Version</i>	<i>Issue date</i>	<i>Reason for re-issue</i>
<i>1.0</i>	<i>07/04/2014</i>	<i>n/a</i>

## Key Terms

The following abbreviations are used throughout this report:

CHER	Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record
HET	Historic Environment Team of Cambridgeshire County Council
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
OD	Ordnance Datum
OS	Ordnance Survey



## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken during groundworks associated with the installation of a new 33KV underground power cable at Stretham Mere, to the south of Ely.*

*Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Freedom Group to carry out the archaeological work in accordance with a brief (HET 2013) issued by Cambridgeshire County Council and a Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2013), which set out the procedures and methods that would be employed during the project.*

*Few archaeological remains were revealed during the groundworks. Only two nails and a number of other modern metal artefacts, such as aluminium drink cans, were recovered during the metal detecting of the route. The only features revealed were those associated with measures taken to drain the surrounding fields during the post-medieval / modern periods; these comprised ceramic land drains and two large drainage ditches corresponding with dykes marked on OS maps from the late 19th century onwards.*

*Though earlier archaeological remains are known from the wider vicinity of the route, the majority are located on the terrace gravels associated with the River Great Ouse to the north-west of the route. The lack of any such archaeological remains revealed during the groundworks may, at least in part, be a reflection of the fact that, though sandy gravel deposits were observed within the western half of the route, much of the route lay within an area of heavier clays, sandy silts and peat deposits — essentially marshland up until the 17th century when the process of draining the land was begun.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 *Planning Background*

UK Power Networks are installing a new 33kv underground power cable at Stretham Mere to the south of Ely. It forms part of the works for the Stow Bridge Farm solar farm development (E/12/00732/ESF) which is the subject of an archaeological condition. Because of the archaeological sensitivity of the route of the cable, the Cambridgeshire County Council's HET issued a Brief (HET 2013) requiring that a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording be carried out during the groundworks.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Freedom Group to carry out the archaeological work.

This report represents the findings of the work, carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Albion Archaeology 2013), which was approved by the HET prior to the start of works.

### 1.2 *Site Location*

The route of the cabling runs between locations close to Dimmock's Cote (TL 5362 7227) and to the south of Stow Bridge Farm (TL 5160 7216) in Stretham Mere to the south of Stretham, Cambridgeshire (Figure 1).

The land in this area lies at around 1m OD and comprises mainly open farmland. The geology of the area comprises a combination of peat deposits and sand and gravels overlying Kimmeridge Clay Formation Mudstone and Woburn Sands Formation Sandstone.

### 1.3 *Archaeological Background*

The route of the cable passes through an archeologically sensitive landscape, particularly with regard to the prehistoric and Roman periods. The HET have advised (HET 2013) that there is an abundance of prehistoric sites clustered on the spine of river terrace gravels associated with the Old West River/River Great Ouse that lies close to the cable route. Mostly dating to the earlier part of the Neolithic period, the sites include field scatters and individual objects of flint tools and stone axes (eg CHER8325, CHER8329, CHER8336, CHER8347, CHER17020-21). Their abundance indicates that they may well represent occupation sites, and given their association with the rivers, they may well be associated with ceremonial monuments (e.g. causewayed enclosures) as has been seen elsewhere in the county (e.g. in the Upper Delphs at Haddenham).

In addition, a scheduled Roman settlement site (DCB212, CB257) lies to the north-west of the route at Tiled House Farm. Further significant Neolithic and Bronze Age sites are also known in this area (eg MCB17868).

### 1.4 *Project Objectives*

The aim of the archaeological monitoring and recording was to investigate, characterise and record any archaeological deposits encountered during the groundworks.



## 2. METHODOLOGY

The archaeological monitoring of the groundworks was undertaken between 11th and 17th October 2013 and between 24th February and 11th March 2014. During these periods the groundworks monitored comprised:

- Excavation of the 3m-wide and 0.3–0.5m deep easement trenches along parts of the route of the cable.
- Excavation of the 0.3–0.7m wide and *c.* 1.5m deep cable trench.
- Excavation of five junction base pits, measuring between *c.* 4m x 4m and *c.* 8m x 12m across and up to 1.5m deep, in order to enable access for the personnel and equipment required to install the electric cable.

Mechanical removal of soils was carried out using a toothless bucket under close archaeological supervision. Spoil heaps were visually scanned and metal detected on a regular basis for the recovery of archaeological artefacts.

A full methodology is provided in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2013). The project adhered throughout to the standards prescribed in the following documents:

• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (2nd edn, 2001).
• ALGAO (east)	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England. EAA Occasional Paper No. 14</i> (2003)
• CCC	<i>Deposition of Archaeological Archives in the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store</i> (HER 2004/1).
• English Heritage	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)</i> (2009)
	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation</i> (2011)
• IfA	<i>By-Laws and Code of Conduct</i>
	<i>Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation</i> (updated 2013)

The archive of finds and records generated during the project will be deposited with the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store under event number ECB4052.

Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the Archaeology Data Service's OASIS database under reference number albionar1-160871 (see Appendix 1).



## 3. RESULTS

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### 3.1 Introduction

The deposits and archaeological features revealed during the groundworks are described below and shown in Figure 2.

### 3.2 Overburden and Undisturbed Geological Deposits

The depth of overburden varied considerably across the area traversed by the cable trench. It was at its thickest (1.3m deep), near the northernmost limits of the route immediately to the east of the railway line, and shallowest (0.3m deep) in the south-west part of the route close to the solar park.

With the exception of the south-west corner, where ploughsoil directly overlay the underlying geological deposit, the overburden comprised at least two layers. The uppermost layer typically comprised 0.3–0.8m of dark grey-brown peaty ploughsoil (1); the lower layer comprised 0.15–0.5m of dark brown-grey, or black, peat (2). In an area to the west of the railway line an additional 0.2m-thick subsoil of mid grey-brown sandy silt (4) was sealed beneath the peat (2).

Two areas were observed where make-up layers (6) and (11) were sandwiched between the ploughsoil and subsoil — one near the northernmost limits of the route immediately to the east of the railway line and another nearer the western end of the route adjacent to the track leading to the solar park. They comprised mixed deposits containing peat and light-hued silty sands — material that had probably been spread to help raise the ground level.

The underlying geological deposits varied from mid blue-green sandy clay (12) in the eastern half of the route, through to light orange or green-grey sandy silt (3) in the middle section of the route, to a more variable deposit (5) in the western half of the route comprising mid brown-orange sandy gravel with lenses of yellow-grey sandy clay and light grey-orange sandy silt.

### 3.3 Post-medieval / Modern Drainage Features

The only features revealed during the groundworks were two probable drainage dykes located near the south-west end of the route, along with the numerous ceramic land drains present throughout the route.

#### 3.3.1 Post-medieval / modern drainage dykes

Two linear features [7 and 9] were located 180m apart near the south-west end of the route. The larger of the two [7] measured 9.5m wide and was aligned NW-SE; whilst the smaller one [9] was aligned ENE-WSW and was 4.8m wide. Both features had fairly steep sloping sides and were at least 1.5m deep.

The larger feature [7] is likely to correspond with a dyke named ‘Engine Drain’ marked on the 1888 1st Edition OS Map as leading directly to the formerly steam-powered Stretham Old Engine pumping station. Later maps indicate that ‘Engine Drain’ remained open until at least 1958, by which time two further, smaller dykes had been excavated to the south. The more northerly of these smaller dykes is likely to correspond with feature [9]





identified in the cable ducting trench. All of these dykes were backfilled and replaced by a new system of field drainage/boundary ditches between 1958 and 1978.



## 4. CONCLUSIONS

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Few archaeological remains were revealed during the groundworks. Only two nails and a number of other modern metal artefacts, such as aluminium drink cans, were recovered during the metal detecting of the route. The only features revealed were those associated with measures taken to drain the surrounding fields during the post-medieval / modern periods; these comprised ceramic land drains and two large drainage ditches corresponding with dykes marked on OS maps from the late 19th century onwards.

Though earlier archaeological remains are known from the wider vicinity of the route, the majority are located on the terrace gravels associated with the River Great Ouse to the north-west of the route. The lack of any such archaeological remains within the groundworks may, at least in part, be a reflection of the fact that, though sandy gravel deposits were observed within the western half of the route, much of the route lies within an area of heavier clays, sandy silts and peat deposits — essentially marshland up until the 17th century when the process of draining the land was begun.



## 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Albion Archaeology 2013, *Stowbridge Farm to Dimmock's Cote Road – Electricity Cable, Stretham Mere, Stretham, Cambridgeshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording*. Document 2013/165

HET 2013, *Brief for Archaeological Monitoring & Recording. Stowbridge Farm to Dimmock's Cote Road Electricity Cable*. 07 October 2013

Medlycott, M., 2011, *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England*. EAA Occasional Paper 24



## 6. APPENDIX 1: OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

OASIS ID: albionar1-160871

### Project details

Project name	Solar Farm Cable Trench, Streatham Mere, Ely
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken during groundworks associated with the installation of a new 33KV underground power cable at Streatham Mere, to the south of Ely. Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Freedom Group to carry out the archaeological work in accordance with a brief (HET 2013) and Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2013) setting out the procedures and methods that would be employed during the project. Few archaeological remains were revealed during the groundworks. Only two nails and a number of other modern metal artefacts, such as aluminium drink cans, were recovered during the metal detecting of the route. The only features revealed were those associated with measures taken to drain the surrounding fields during the post-medieval / modern periods; these comprised ceramic land drains and two large drainage ditches corresponding with dykes marked on OS maps from the late 19th century onwards. Though earlier archaeological remains are known from the wider vicinity of the route, the majority are located on the terrace gravels associated with the River Great Ouse to the north-west of the route. The lack of any such archaeological remains revealed during the groundworks may, at least in part, be a reflection of the fact that, though sandy-gravel deposits were observed within the western half of the route, much of the route lies within an area of heavier clays, sandy silts and peat deposits - essentially marshland up until the 17th century when the process of draining the land was begun.
Project dates	Start: 11-10-2013 End: 11-03-2014
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	SM2269 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	ECB4052 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 3 - Operations to a depth more than 0.25m
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Monument type	DITCH Modern
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE STRETHAM Solar Farm Cable Trench, Streatham Mere, Ely
Study area	3.50 Kilometres



Site coordinates TL 5160 7216 52.3261462111 0.224845073544 52 19 34 N 000 13 29 E  
Line

Site coordinates TL 5362 7227 52.3265710793 0.254515659513 52 19 35 N 000 15 16 E  
Line

### Project creators

Name of Organisation Albion Archaeology

Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body

Project design originator Albion Archaeology

Project director/manager Robert Wardill

Project supervisor Marcin Koziminski

Project supervisor Richard Gregson

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Physical Archive recipient Cambs County Archaeological Stores

Digital Archive recipient Cambs County Archaeological Stores

Digital Contents "other"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Text"

Paper Archive recipient Cambridgeshire County Store

Paper Contents "other"

Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Correspondence", "Drawing", "Microfilm", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title Stowbridge Farm to Dimmock's Cote Road Electricity Cable, Stretham, Cambridgeshire

Author(s)/Editor(s) Gregson, R.

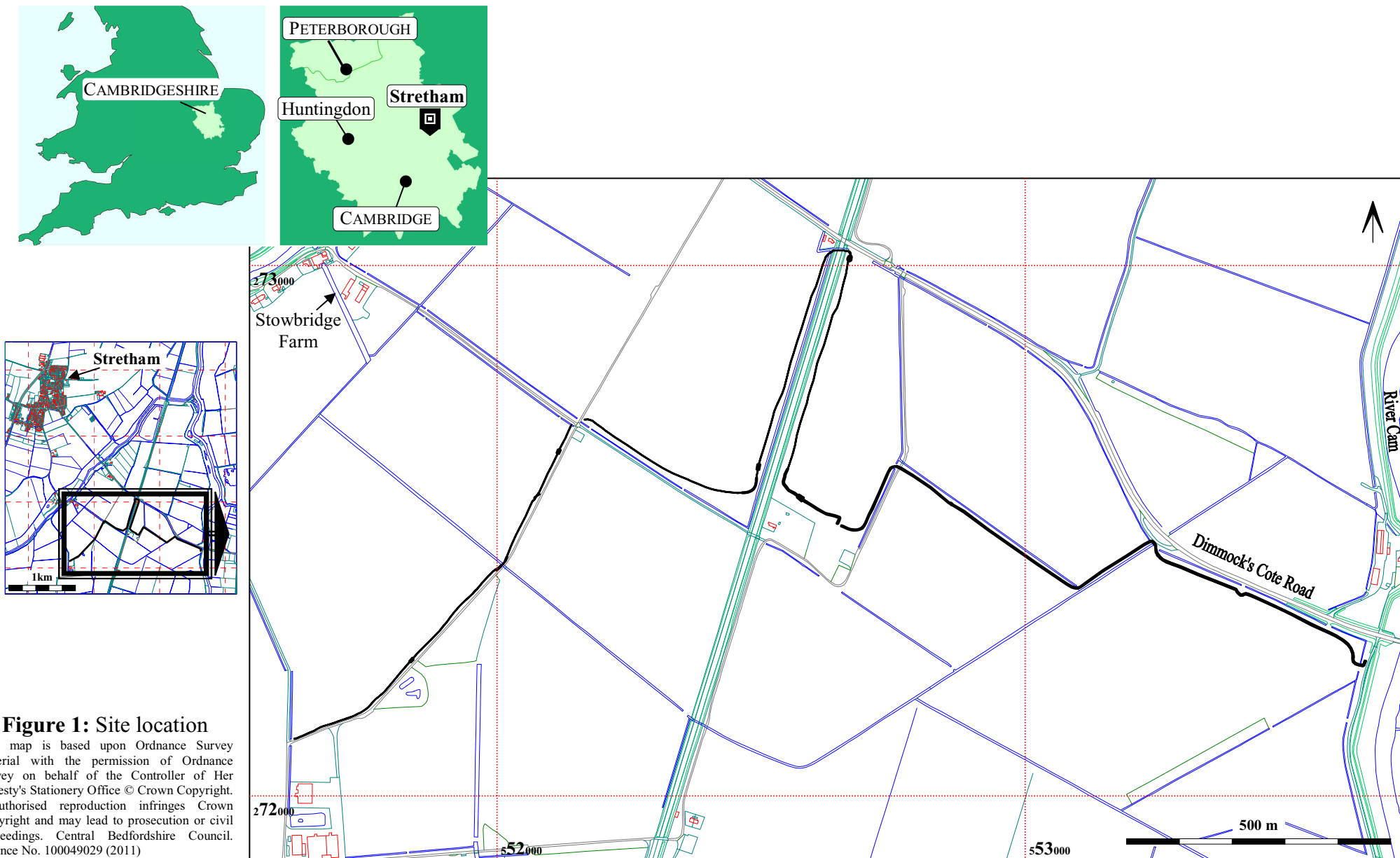
Date 2014

Issuer or publisher Albion Archaeology

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Entered by Helen Parslow (hl.parslow@albion-arch.com)

Entered on 7 April 2014



**Figure 1: Site location**

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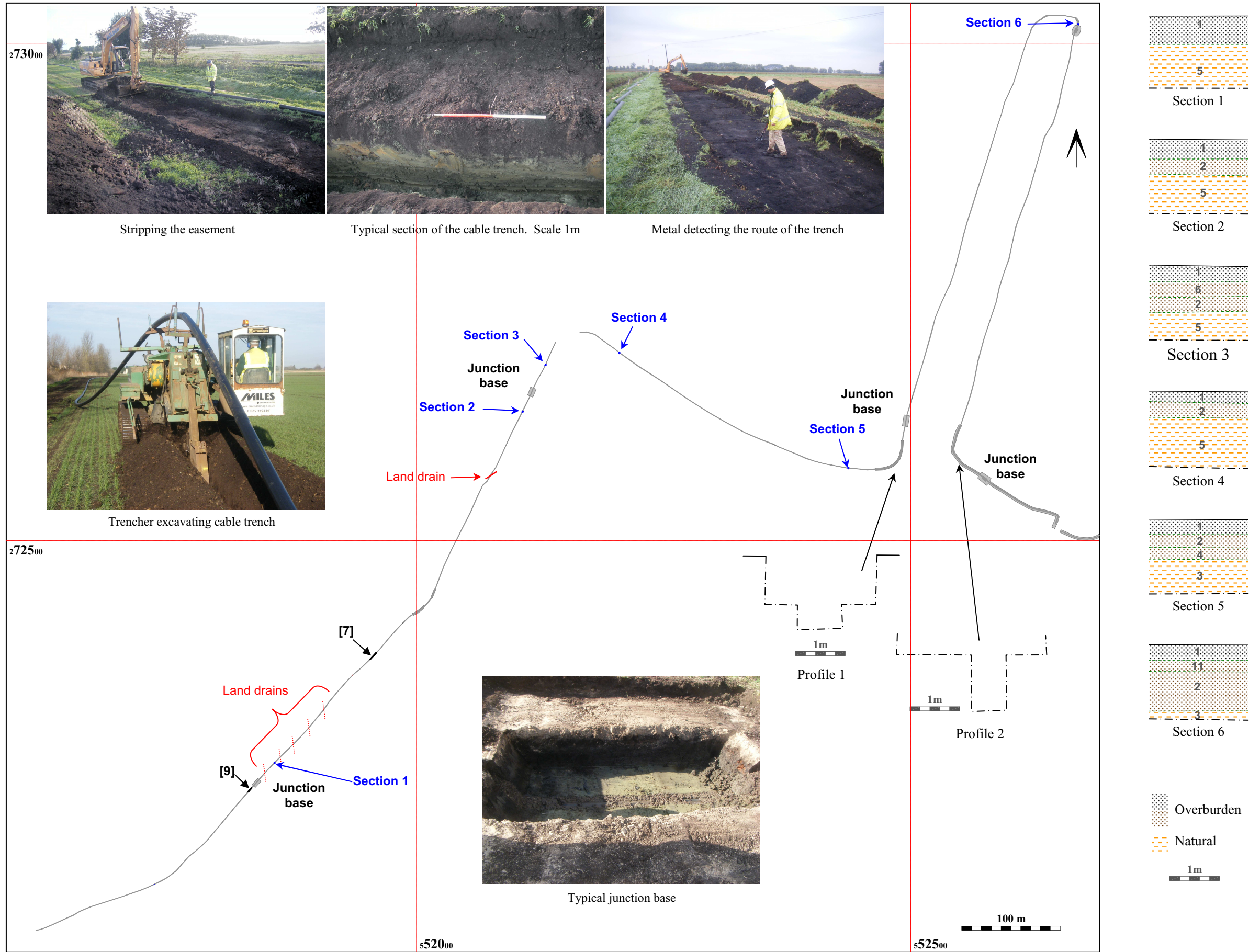


Figure 2: Features revealed



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