CABLE TRENCHING ON LAND AT STAINTON HALL, STAINTON LE VALE, WEST LINDSEY, LINCOLNSHIRE

SCHEME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

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Report prepared for

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by

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Summary

A scheme of archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out during groundworks for the installation of a new 11kV underground electricity cable on land at Stainton Hall, near Stainton le Vale in the West Lindsey district of Lincolnshire.

As the land crossed by the cable route had the potential to contain sub-surface archaeological remains associated with Stainton Hall and the adjacent Deserted Medieval Village, a scheme of archaeological intervention in the form of a programme of monitoring and recording was recommended by the Historic Environment Record Officer.

A single feature – the partially exposed cut of an undated ditch – was seen during the monitoring project. It is possible that this ditch may have been associated with the earthwork remains of the DMV, although it had been re-used to contain a modern drain.

Figure 1: Location plan of the project at scale 1:25,000. The area of works is ringed in red. OS mapping © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCAS licence no. 100049278.

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd. (PCAS) was commissioned by ADAS UK Ltd to carry out a scheme of archaeological monitoring and recording on all development groundworks associated with the installation of a new 11kV underground electricity cable on land at Stainton Hall, near Stainton le Vale in the West Lindsey district of Lincolnshire.

The land crossed by the cable route has the potential to contain sub-surface archaeological remains associated with Stainton Hall and the adjacent Deserted Medieval Village. A scheme of archaeological intervention in the form of a programme of monitoring and recording was therefore recommended by the Historic Environment Record Officer for West Lindsey.

2.0 Site Location and Description (figs. 1 & 2)

The small village of Stainton le Vale lies within the district of West Lindsey in Lincolnshire, on the crest of the Lincolnshire Wolds approximately 8km to the north-east of Market Rasen. Stainton Hall lies some 600m to the north-west of the village, accessed by a single-track road which follows the course of the Waithe Beck along the valley in which both the village and the Hall lie. The road crosses the Waithe Beck directly to the north of the east end of the works area. The Hall is currently a working farm: the Hall farmstead, whose historic core consists of a Grade II Listed stone-built 18th-century farmhouse, altered in the mid-19th century, with a pair of 19th-century cottages, also Grade II Listed, adjacent, is situated on the south side of the road, with a group of large, modern agricultural buildings of portal frame construction on the north side.

Plate 1: General shot of the farmstead buildings with the sites of Test Pits 2 and 3 (surrounded by orange fencing), looking west from the far side of the road, near the crossing over the Waithe Beck.

The pipeline route runs along the south side of the road: the majority of its length passes through the mown turf surrounding the farmstead (plate 1), but its east end extends into a grazed pasture field. It lies within the non-designated historic parkland of Stainton Hall.

3.0 Topography and Geology

The village of Stainton le Vale is situated in the valley of the Waithe Beck, which rises from a number of springs in the Wolds and flows generally from west to east through the parish. Stainton Hall is sited further up the valley, near a pond fed by several of the Waithe Beck's springs. The ground rises steeply to north and south on either side of the small area of level ground on which the Hall and its associated farm buildings and grounds stand: this is at an approximate Ordnance Datum height of 90m above sea level, while the valley sides rise to heights between 125m and 140m OD.

No drift geology is recorded in the vicinity of Stainton Hall. The exposed solid geology is Tealby Limestone Member limestone (O'Seanachain, 2016).

4.0 Planning Background

The works are being carried out within the permitted development rights of Northern Powergrid under the Electricity Act 1989, and therefore are not subject to a planning application. West Lindsey Council has approved the proposed development to be undertaken under the exemptions laid down in the Overhead Lines (Exemption) England and Wales) Regulations 2009: the Historic Environment Record Officer for West Lindsey District Council recommended that a scheme of archaeological mitigation should be undertaken, and the scope of the works was agreed in consultation with the HER Officer (WLDC planning ref. 134481).

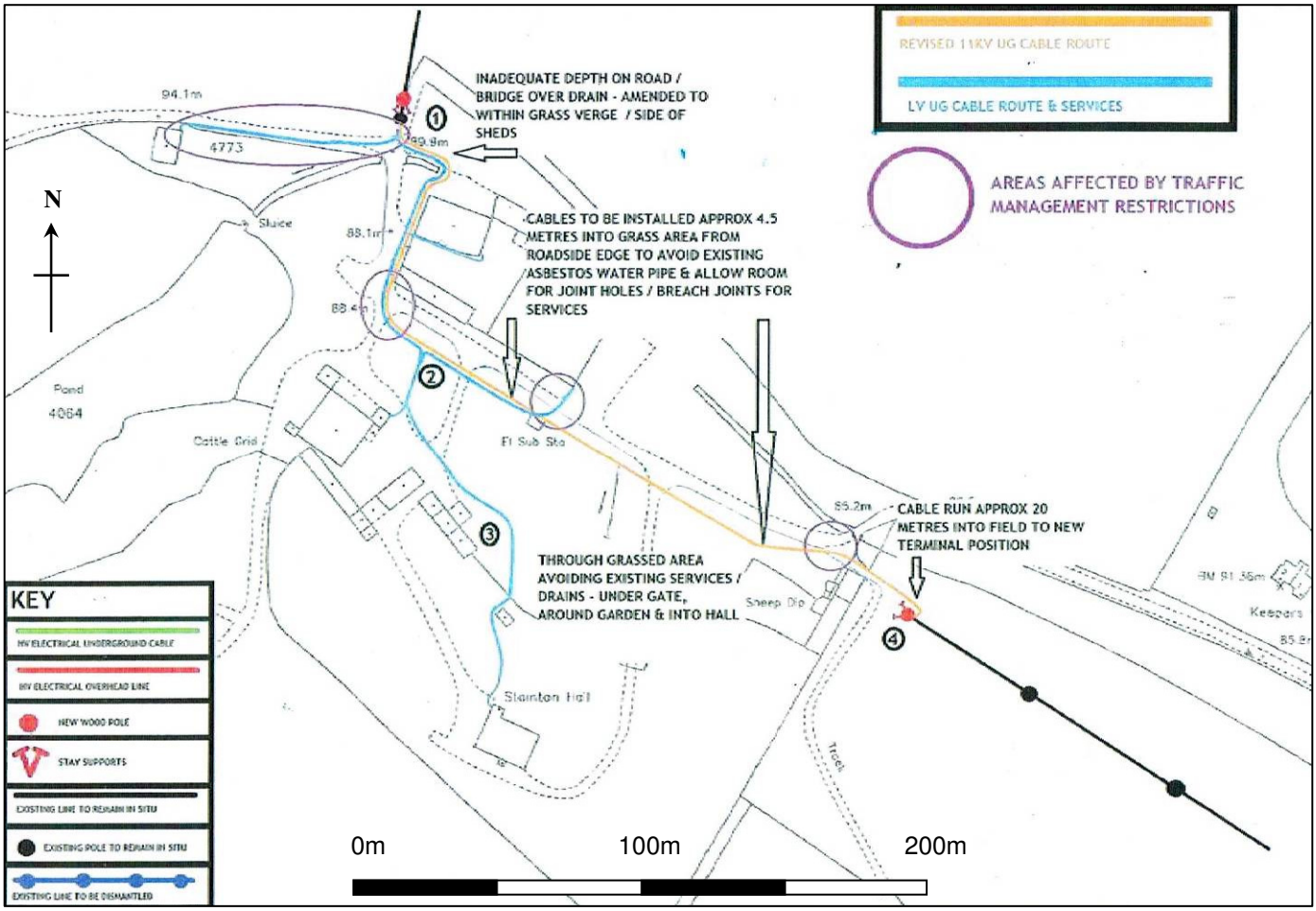

Figure 2: Plan of the area of works at scale 1:2500. The monitored cable route is marked in yellow. Plan supplied by client.

5.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The only heritage asset recorded by the Lincolnshire HER in the vicinity of Stainton Hall to pre-date the medieval period is a Neolithic long barrow, now visible only as a trapezoidal cropmark delineating its outer ditch, which lies some 500m to the south of the cable route. The barrow, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, is one of a number associated with the headwaters of the Waithe Beck, and with the route of High Street, which was originally a prehistoric trackway. However, small circular and square enclosures identified on aerial photographs of Stainton Deserted Medieval Village may represent earlier Roman and prehistoric remains underlying the medieval settlement (O'Seanachain, 2016).

The Domesday Survey of AD 1086 records Stainton as an extensive settlement extending over four manors. William de Percy's manor was occupied by six peasant households, farming arable and meadow land, and had its own mill, while Drogo de la Beuvriere also had a relatively small manor, with a population of eight households farming a relatively small amount of arable land and a larger area of meadow. Drogo's estate included 'the site of the mill', suggesting that the infrastructure for a mill, in the form of a mill-dam and leat on the Waithe Beck, still existed, but that no mill was currently in use; the same term is used for the manor of Rainer de Brimeux, which was of much the same size as Drogo's manor and had a population of 7 households. Hugh fitzBaldric's manor was considerably larger, with 18 households, again farming both arable and meadow land, but was the only one to have no recorded infrastructure (Williams and Martin, 2003, pp.919, 924, 934, 942). The deserted medieval village at Stainton le Vale is visible on aerial photographs as a cropmark site showing the regular crofts of a village aligned along a central street; more than one phase of development is visible. The main area of the cropmark complex extends across fields to the east of the Stainton Hall farmyard: a short section of the eastern end of the proposed new cable route is located in this area (fig. 2), and it is possible that buried archaeological remains associated with the DMV are also present in any undisturbed ground around the Stainton Hall farm buildings, under ground cover or sealed below layers unfavourable to the formation of cropmarks. The agricultural hinterland of the DMV is represented by an earthwork which has been interpreted as a possible medieval field boundary, a possible lynchet earthwork and cropmarks of other field boundaries that have also been identified within the historic parkland in the fields to the east of Stainton Hall farmyard (HER refs. 51804-6).

The Grade II Listed Stainton Hall Farmhouse was built in the late 18th century and altered c. 1840: it is a two-storey building of ironstone ashlar and coursed rubble, with a slate roof and brick chimney stacks. Two associated cottages, built c. 1830, are situated closer to the pipeline route: one has been converted into offices for the farm. These buildings, of coursed ironstone rubble with red brick dressings and pantile roofs, are also Grade II Listed (HER refs. 55572 and 56249). Stainton Hall Historic Parkland is recorded by the HER, but is not a designated park: it extends over the whole of the modern farmyard at Stainton le Vale as well as fields to the south and east, and was first documented on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey mapping of 1888 (HER No 55572). This mapping depicts Stainton Hall and its associated farmyard: the arrangement of access roads and lanes through the farmyard do not appear to have extensively changed between 1888 and the present day, although a number of the buildings depicted on the 1st edition map have now been demolished and replaced by larger modern agricultural buildings (O'Seanachain, 2016).

6.0 Methodology

The total length of the new cable is 280m, 160m of which was to be laid in an open-cut trench, while the remainder was to be inserted by mole-ploughing. The first phase of the groundworks, which took place on September 5th, 2016, consisted of the hand excavation of three test pits to ascertain the positions of existing buried services. The pits measured approximately 1m x 0.5m, and were excavated to depths of between 0.6m and 0.7m (plate 2). Excavation for the cable trench commenced on September 7th, using a mini-digger fitted with a flat-bladed 7-inch bucket. The trench was approximately 0.3m wide, and varied in depth between 0.6m and 0.8m; work began at the east end of the cable route, with the stretch of trench extending from the entrance into the pasture field to the position of the new pole

Plate 2: Hand excavation of Test Pit 3.

where the cable would connect to the existing overhead line (plate 3). Groundworks then continued westwards across the mown turf around the farmstead: on this stretch, a specialised deturfing machine was employed before the trench was excavated by mini-digger (plate 4). An area of concrete hard-standing directly adjacent to the field gate was cut through using a circular saw and a pneumatic drill. All groundworks took place under archaeological supervision.

All features and deposits seen were recorded on standard PCAS context recording sheets, and the progress of the groundworks noted on standard PCAS site diary sheets. Sample sections were drawn at intervals at a scale of 1:20, and plotted on a base plan derived from a scale plan provided by the contractor. A digital photographic record was maintained: selections from this are reproduced throughout the report.

Archaeological monitoring was completed on 9th September 2016. The monitoring was carried out at different times during the project by Rebecca Dickinson, Alison Lane, Rachel Savage and Simon Savage; weather conditions were fine and dry throughout.

Plate 3: Working shot during trenching into the field, looking north-east: the trees to the rear mark the course of the Waithe Beck.

Plate 4: Working shot during trench excavation along the road, looking west-north-west from the area of concrete hard-standing.

7.0 Results (figs. 3 and 4)

7.1 Test pits

None of the three test pits exposed any layers that could be interpreted as natural (figs. 3b-3d). Test Pits 1 and 3 each displayed an undated layer of silty clay containing fragments of limestone, sealed by the modern topsoil. Two silty clay layers were distinguished in Test Pit 2: fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) and an iron nail were retrieved from upper layer 2001, but were identified as modern during finds processing and discarded without further study. A pond is shown not far from the position of Test Pit 2 on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887, suggesting that this area was particularly low-lying and liable to waterlogging.

7.2 Cable trench

A layer of degraded limestone fragments in an earth matrix, exposed at the base of the cable trench towards the west end of the open cut trench and recorded as context 006, seemed likely to have been the weathered upper surface of the natural geology, although it was not exposed across the full length of the trench. Above the putative natural was layer 003, which

consisted of clayey sand with limestone gravel and was probably also a natural deposit, laid down by the Waithe Beck: this layer was exposed along the full length of the open-cut trench, but formed the trench base for much of its length, being cut into only towards the west end.

At 112m from the east end of the cable route, layer 003 was cut by feature **010**. This feature was not exposed to its full depth, but appeared to be a ditch 1.36m wide and at least 0.28m deep, cutting through 003 into underlying natural 006. No discrete ditch fill was observed: **010** appeared to be filled by layer 002, an undated silty sand deposit recorded as a subsoil (fig. 4d). Where it filled ditch **010**, layer 002 was cut by modern drain **007**, which contained an earthenware pipe bedded on large limestone block 008; modern bricks were also present in the fill. It seemed most likely that this sequence of features indicated that a modern drain had been laid along the course of an earlier, backfilled ditch or open drain.

No other cut features were seen in the cable trench. Deposit 005, a spread of limestone hardcore mid-way between Test Pits 1 and 2, overlying subsoil 002 but covered by the modern topsoil, probably represented a former area of hard-standing, while a substantial concrete hard-standing, recorded as context 004, overlay the east end of the trench at the field boundary; the cable route was otherwise sealed by modern topsoil and turf 001 (figs. 4a-4c). No finds were retrieved during the excavation of the trench.

Plate 5: The excavated cable trench, looking east from a point a short distance to the west of Test Pit 2.

8.0 Conclusion

It is possible that the undated, partially exposed ditch **010** was associated with the earthwork remains of the Deserted Medieval Village of Stainton. No ditch or boundary in this position is shown on historic Ordnance Survey mapping between the late 19th century and the middle of the 20th century, suggesting that this feature may be earlier. The presence of a modern drain running down the middle of the feature does not necessarily rule out a medieval date, as the cut for the drain can be seen to cut the ditch fill: it is common to find post-medieval field drains running along the furrows of medieval ridge-and-furrow in a similar manner, having been incorporated into the visible earthworks before the field was turned over to arable cultivation and the ridges ploughed out. The limestone block at the bottom of the modern drain cut **007** also suggests that the drain was being laid into ditch fill that was not sufficiently consolidated to support the weight of the earthenware pipe, and thus, potentially, that the ditch had still been a visible earthwork at the time, relatively recently infilled. However, as no dating evidence was found, this interpretation can only be conjectural.

9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

The methodology employed during this project achieved its primary objective, ensuring that potential archaeological remains present on the cable route have been added to the archaeological record, while causing the minimum of disruption to the construction process.

10.0 Acknowledgements

PCAS Ltd would like to thank ADAS UK Ltd. for this commission, and A. Catlow Civil Engineering Ltd. (contractors) for their co-operation during the groundworks.

11.0 Site Archive

The project archive is currently held at the offices of PCAS Ltd. in Saxilby, Lincolnshire while being prepared for deposition, and will be deposited with the Lincoln City and County Museum ('The Collection') within six months of the completion of the project, with the exception of the finds, which were discarded during processing. Following deposition, the archive will be available for public consultation under the LCNCC archive accession number 2016.132.

12.0 Bibliography

Ordnance Survey, 2012, *Lincolnshire Wolds North, Louth & Market Rasen: 1:25,000 scale Explorer series no. 282.* The Ordnance Survey, Southampton.

O'Seaneachain, D., 2016, *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording: Stainton le Vale*, Lincolnshire LN8 6HP.

Williams, A. and Martin, G. H. (eds.), 2003, *Domesday Book: A Complete Translation.* Penguin Books, London.

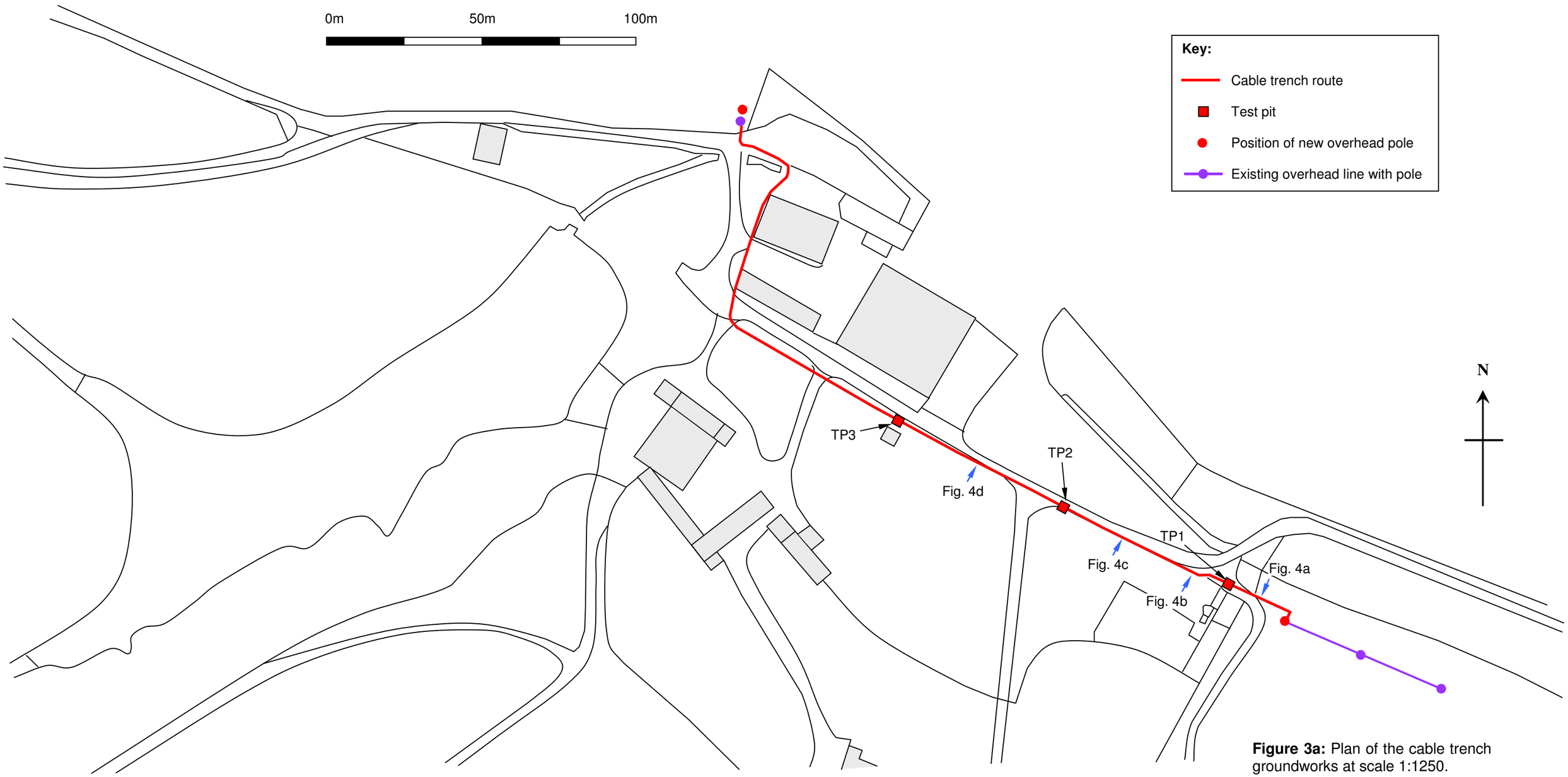

Figure 3a: Plan of the cable trench groundworks at scale 1:1250.

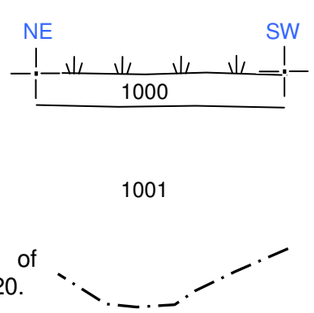

Figure 3b: Section of Test Pit 1 at scale 1:20.

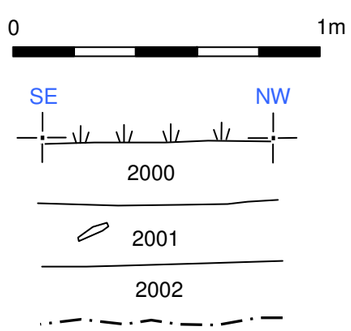

Figure 3c: Section of Test Pit 2 at scale 1:20.

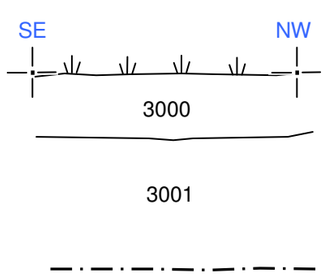

Figure 3c: Section of Test Pit 3 at scale 1:20.

Figure 3: Plan of the cable trench groundworks at scale 1:1250, showing the positions of the test pits and the drawn sections in Figure 4, with sample sections of the test pits at scale 1:20.

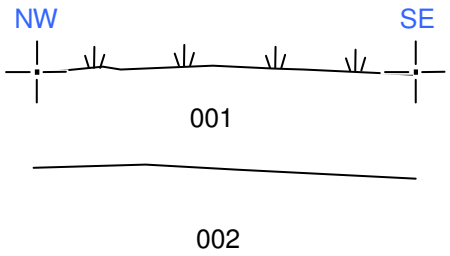

Figure 4a

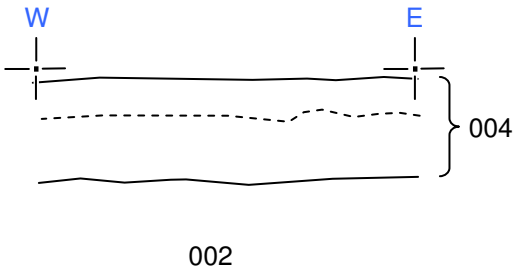

Figure 4b

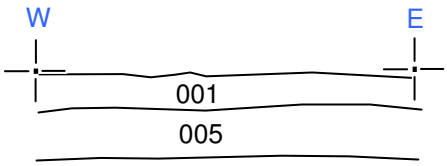

Figure 4c

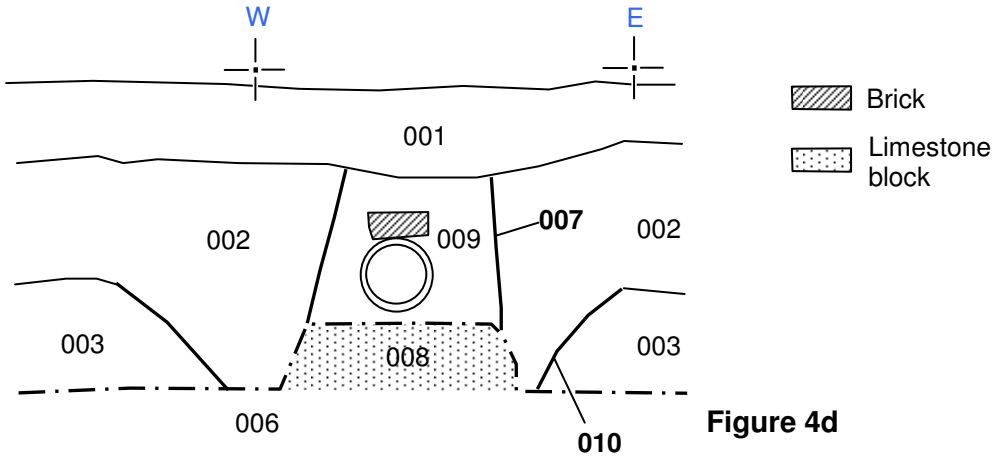

Figure 4d

Figure 4: Sample sections drawn at intervals along the cable trench, with a section showing ditch **010** and the modern drain it contained, all at scale 1:20.

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context No.	Type	Description	Finds/Dating
Test pit 1			
1000	Layer	Light- to mid-greyish-brown, friable silty clay topsoil with occasional small stone fragments, 0.10m deep.	Modern
1001	Layer	Light- to mid-greyish-brown, friable silty clay, similar to topsoil 1000 but more clayey and containing frequent limestone fragments: probably subsoil corresponding to layer 002 in the open cut. Incorporated a modern service.	
Test pit 2			
2000	Layer	Topsoil: same as 1000. 0.20m deep.	
2001	Layer	Silty clay layer similar to 1001, 0.20m deep, containing small limestone fragments and occasional CBM fragments.	CBM fragments and Fe nail – all proved to be modern and were discarded during finds processing.
2002	Layer	Light- to mid-greyish-brown, friable silty clay below layer 2002, containing occasional small limestone fragments; not penetrated.	
Test pit 3			
3000	Layer	Topsoil: same as 1000. 0.20m deep.	Modern
3001	Layer	Mid-brown friable silty clay with frequent limestone fragments, below topsoil 3000.	
Open cut trench			
001	Layer	Topsoil in field: dark greyish-brown, friable organic silty fine sand, 0.28m deep, with frequent small sub-angular limestone fragments, forming lenses in places, and occasional water-rounded pebbles.	Modern: contained modern refuse, including nylon baler-twine.
002	Layer	Mid-brown, friable silty fine sand subsoil below topsoil 001. Contained moderate flecks and small fragments of limestone, with occasional large limestone blocks at its westward extent. 0.50m deep.	
003	Layer	Mid-brown, friable clayey fine sand with abundant limestone gravel, exposed below 002 in some portions of the trench; 0.28m deep where penetrated.	
004	Layer	Area of hard-standing consisting of 0.10m depth of concrete overlying c. 0.12m depth of limestone hardcore.	Modern.
005	Layer	Compact layer of limestone hardcore in a dark, silty matrix, below topsoil 001, forming a spread *c.* 4.3m long and 0.13m deep.	
006	Layer	Possible weathered natural: degraded limestone fragments in a compact orange-brown matrix.	Geological?
007	Cut	Cut of drainage pipe trench	
008	Fill	Limestone block occupying the base of cut 007 below earthenware drainpipe.	
009	Fill	Dark brown to black silty clay with frequent stone inclusions and occasional bricks, filling drainage trench cut **007** and incorporating earthenware drainpipe.	
010	Cut	Ditch cut through layer 006, 1.36m wide and 0.28^{+}m deep, apparently filled by subsoil 002 and containing later drainage pipe trench **007**.	

Appendix 2: OASIS Summary

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Stainton Hall, Stainton le Vale - Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd

OASIS ID - preconst3-270931

Versions

View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
View 1	1	Mrs. R. D. Savage	rachel@pre-construct.co.uk	11 December 2016
View 2	2	Mrs. R. D. Savage	rachel@pre-construct.co.uk	12 December 2016

Completed sections in current version

Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1

Validated sections in current version

Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
No	No	No	No	0/1

File submission and form progress

Grey literature report submitted?	No	Grey literature report filename/s	
Boundary file submitted?	No	Boundary filename	
HER signed off?		NMR signed off?	

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