

# Spalding Energy Project Gas Pipeline Lincolnshire



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



**Oxford Archaeology**

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# Spalding Energy Project Gas Pipeline, Lincolnshire

## *ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT*

### CONTENTS

Summary.....	2
1 Introduction .....	2
1.1 Scope of work.....	2
1.2 Location, geology and topography.....	2
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	2
2 Project Aims and Methodology.....	3
2.1 Aims .....	3
2.2 Methodology.....	3
3 Results .....	3
3.1 Description of deposits.....	3
3.2 Finds .....	4
3.3 The Record .....	4
4 Discussion and Conclusions.....	4
4.1 Reliability of field investigation.....	4
4.2 Overall interpretation and significance.....	4
Appendix 1 Bibliography and References .....	5
Appendix 2 Summary of Site Details.....	5

### LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig 1 Site location  
Fig 2 Route of pipeline

## SUMMARY

*In April and May 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief along the route of a gas pipeline from Spalding to Wragg Marsh, Lincolnshire. The work was commissioned by Spalding Energy Company Ltd (SECL). No archaeological remains were encountered, although subsoil of alluvial origin was observed.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 In April 2003 Oxford Archaeology undertook a watching brief along the route of a gas pipeline. The work was commissioned by Spalding Energy Company Ltd (SECL) and followed an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (OAU 1996) and fieldwalking evaluation (OA 2003a), both carried out by Oxford Archaeology. The results of the evaluation indicated low potential for archaeological remains within the proposed development area.

1.1.2 The archaeological works conformed to a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; OA 2003b), which was approved by Lincolnshire County Council after discussions between OA, SECL and the County Council's Archaeology Section.

#### 1.2 Location, geology and topography

1.2.1 The pipeline runs north-east to south-west from Spalding (NGR TF 2592 3091) to Wragg Marsh, close to Carrington Road (NGR TF 2495 3005), a distance of *c* 7.4 km (Fig 1). The corridor had a 'working width' of 26 m and the depth of the pipe was 1.10 m. The depth was greater at road and water course crossings.

1.2.2 The site lies on Upper Jurassic Oxfordian, Oxford Clay covered by Terrington Beds Drift. This is made up of younger marine alluvium: salt marsh, tidal creek and river deposits (sandy silt, sand and clay).

#### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The route of the pipeline runs through a landscape of medieval and post-medieval land reclamation. No evidence for permanent pre-medieval settlement has been encountered within the study area, although remains of Roman and Anglo-Saxon activities are known within the Fenland and around Spalding itself. The pre-medieval coastline ran along the line of the road known variously as Hengate, Hergate and Hardgate (modern A151). Land to the east has been reclaimed during the past thousand years (OAU 1996).

1.3.2 Sections of sea banks lie within the study area. Perhaps the most well-known is the so-called 'Roman Bank'. This earthwork has been dated to the 13th century or earlier, although the fieldwalking survey could not confirm this. Overall, the area has

undergone little development, with arable cultivation remaining the principal land use.

- 1.3.3 The pipeline route was subject to an archaeological fieldwalking evaluation in March 2003 (OA 2003a). The results generally indicated low potential for archaeological remains. Brick, clay pipe, glass fragments and pottery dating from the 18th to 20th centuries were found in the survey. Earlier dated (18th/19th century) material tended to be located in the southern half of the pipeline, while more recent pieces (20th century) were found towards the northern half. This distribution appeared to correspond with post-medieval land reclamation and modern domestic buildings respectively. All the finds had been incorporated into the soil through agricultural processes, such as manuring.

## **2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Aims**

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

### **2.2 Methodology**

- 2.2.1 The width of easement along the pipeline route was 26 m. A 360° excavator with a toothless ditching bucket was used to remove a 12 m wide strip of topsoil along the length of the easement. The spoil was stored along the eastern edge of the route. Subsequently, a bulldozer blade removed topsoil and part of the spoil from an adjoining 4 m wide strip, resulting in a stripped corridor of 16 m.
- 2.2.2 All topsoil stripping was to be monitored by an archaeologist who would have provision to halt machining and make adequate records in the event of significant discoveries. In such cases, the County Archaeological Officer (COA) would be notified in order to determine the appropriate mitigation.

## **3 RESULTS**

### **3.1 Description of deposits**

- 3.1.1 A 7.4 km long corridor was stripped of topsoil and inspected for archaeological remains (Fig 2). Similar deposits were encountered throughout this area. Topsoil consisted of a friable dark brown sandy silt. This extended to a depth of 0.25 m below ground surface before a pale reddish brown sandy silt subsoil with occasional clay was exposed. A layer, probably ploughsoil, was occasionally observed at the interface between the two deposits, for example in the area between Stone Gate and Wykeham Lane. No archaeological features were revealed during the topsoil stripping, although post-medieval finds in the topsoil were noted.

3.1.2 The excavation of a shored pit east of the A16(T) at the south-western terminal of the stripped corridor to provide an entry point for a Horizontal Directable Drill (HDD) was monitored for archaeological remains (Fig 2). An area 10 m by 3.5 m, previously topsoil stripped and inspected, was excavated to a depth of 1 m. The subsoil, already exposed along the pipeline, appeared to become greyer and increase in clay content with depth. The deposit was 0.3 m thick and overlay a thin band (0.15 to 0.25 m) of red brown clay silt. This was in turn above a waterlogged deposit of grey to red brown silty clay, which was encountered at a depth of approximately 1 m. A water pump was installed allowing excavation of the deposit to continue to a total depth of 4 m below ground level. The excavation was monitored for archaeology, and in particular preserved organic remains, but none was encountered.

### 3.2 Finds

3.2.1 Ceramic building material (CBM) and blue-transfer porcelain were present within the topsoil. These fragments, which were not collected, were consistent with the 18th-20th century material found during the fieldwalking survey.

### 3.3 The Record

3.3.1 A written, drawn and photographic record was made of the fieldwork operations. Field notes were compiled to record daily site activities. These form part of the site archive, to be deposited at an appropriate institution in due course.

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 Visibility was generally good along the 12 m wide corridor stripped by toothless bucket. Stripping was occasionally uneven, though, with patches of remaining topsoil obscuring the underlying subsoil. Visibility was considerably poorer along the eastern half of the easement where an additional 4 m strip had been removed by bulldozer. However, the results obtained from the areas of optimum visibility suggested that archaeological remains were unlikely to be encountered along the eastern half.

### 4.2 Overall interpretation and significance

4.2.1 No archaeological remains were encountered below the topsoil. Artefacts seen within the topsoil, like those collected during the fieldwalking survey, probably derived from domestic activity and were incorporated into the soil through ploughing and manuring activity from the 17th century onwards (OAU 1996; OA 2003a). The topsoil overlay subsoil that varied with depth. Essentially, deposits encountered below the topsoil appeared to be broadly identical in composition, but may have become differentiated through, for example, ploughing of the upper deposits and fluctuating water levels. A waterlogged clay deposit was observed at the base of the exposed sequence during excavation of a single deep pit. All deposits seen below the topsoil are likely to be of alluvial origin.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA, 2003a *Spalding Energy Project Gas Pipeline, Lincolnshire: Archaeological evaluation report*, Oxford Archaeology

OA, 2003b *Spalding Energy Project Gas Pipeline: Written scheme of investigation*, Oxford Archaeology

OAU, 1996 *Proposed Gas Pipeline, Spalding: archaeological desktop assessment*, Oxford Archaeological Unit

### APPENDIX 2 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** Spalding Energy Project Gas Pipeline, Lincolnshire

**Site code:** SPEP03

**Grid reference:** NGR TF 2592 3091-2495 3005

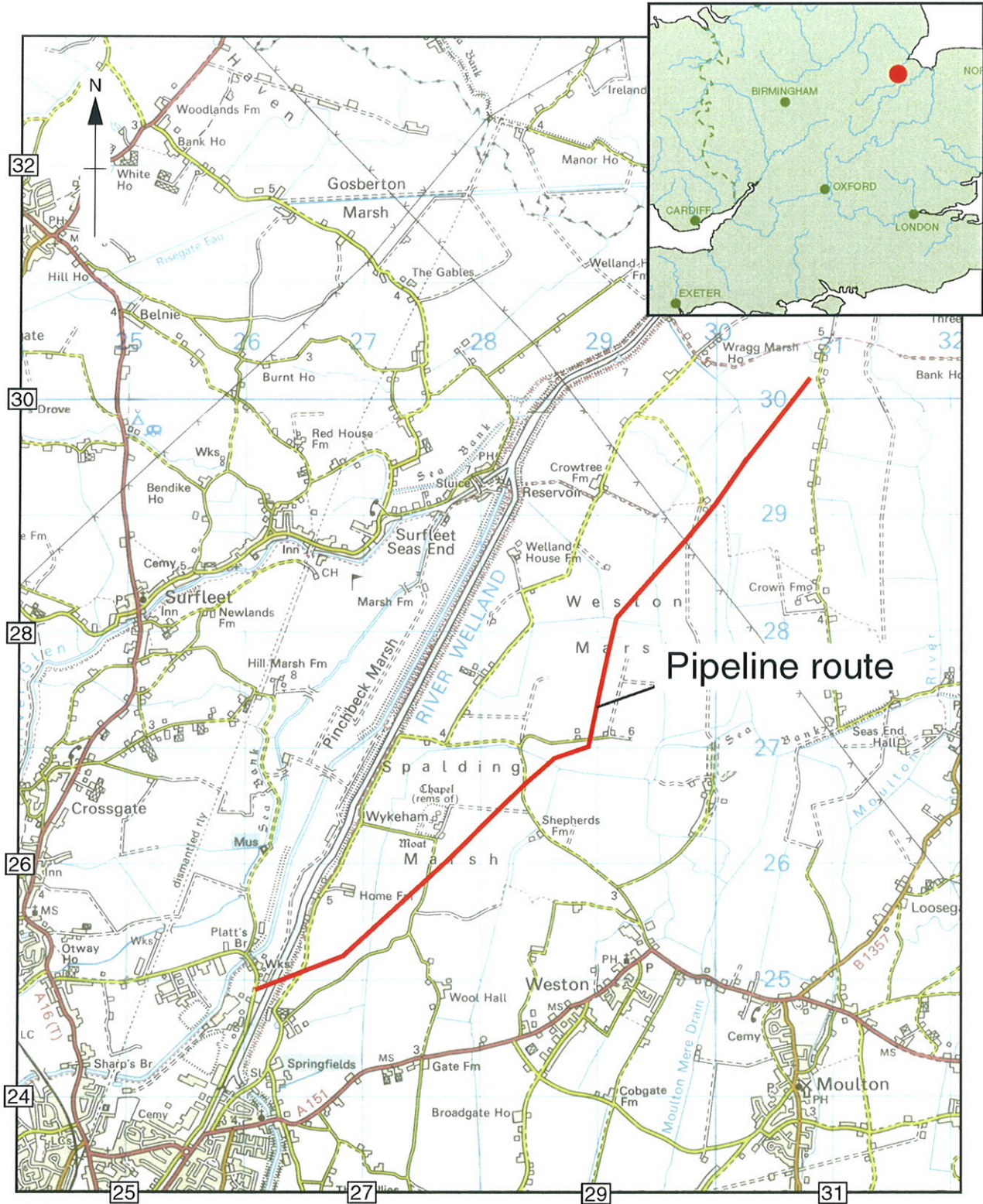
**Type of investigation:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** April/May 2003 (15 days)

**Area of site:** approximately 7.4 km length

**Summary of results:** In April and May 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief along the route of a gas pipeline from Spalding to Wragg Marsh, Lincolnshire. The work was commissioned by Spalding Energy Company Ltd (SECL). No archaeological remains were encountered, although subsoil of alluvial origin was observed.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, pending deposition in an appropriate Lincolnshire museum.



Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 1: Site location



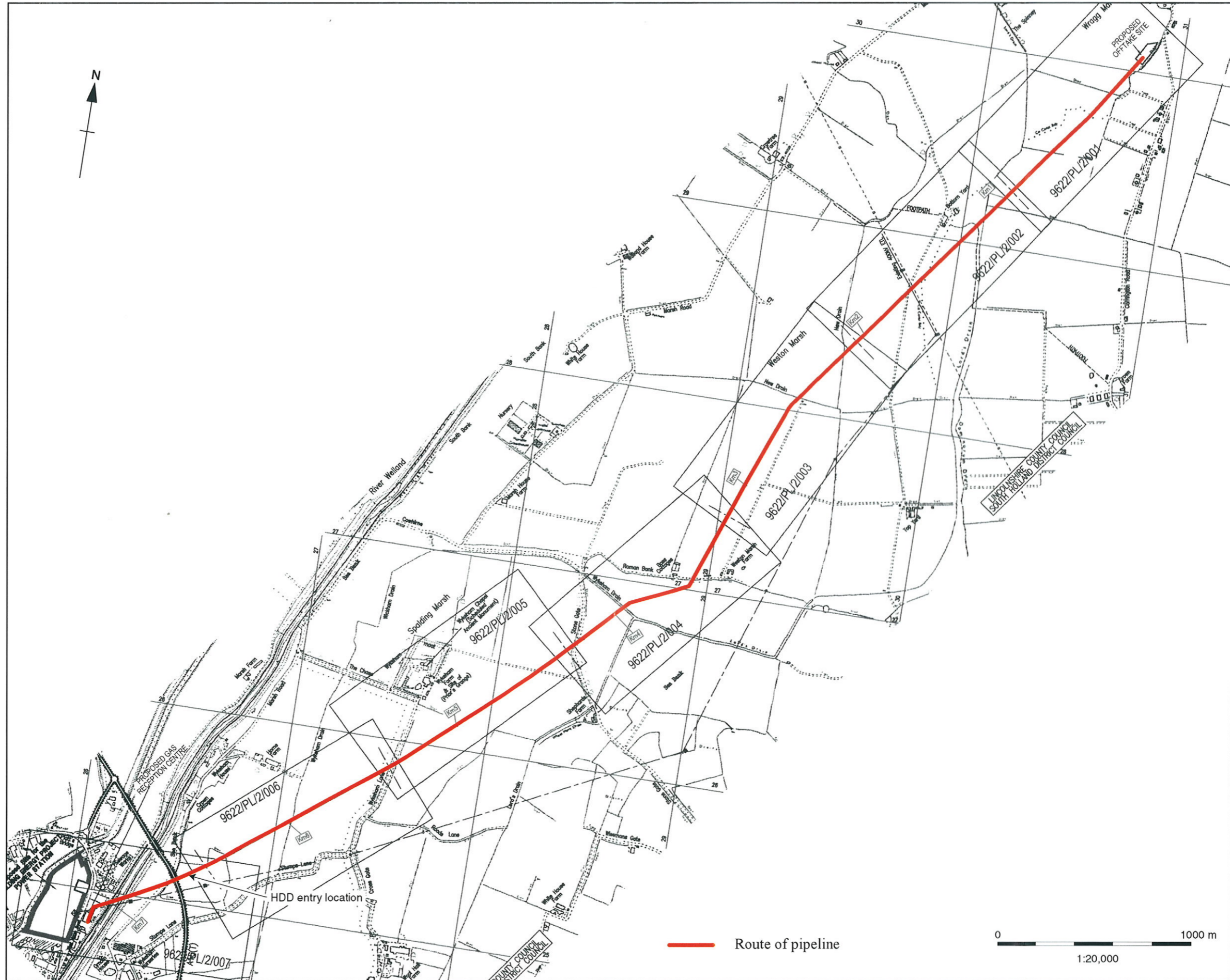


Figure 2: Route of pipeline



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