

# Frensham to Aldershot Natural Gas Pipeline



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



**Oxford Archaeology**

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RSKENS Environment Ltd

**FRENSHAM TO ALDERSHOT  
NATURAL GAS PIPELINE  
SURREY**

NGR: SU 881 501 to SU 849 422

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## SUMMARY

*In the first half of 2003, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an extended archaeological watching brief during construction work for a new 11-km long gas pipeline through Surrey and a part of Hampshire. The new pipeline extends from Millbridge near Frensham (at NGR SU 849 423) to an existing gas holder station in Aldershot (NGR SU 881 501). The work was commissioned by RSKENSR Environment Ltd on behalf of Transco.*

*The watching brief revealed a pit that was clearly associated with a ditch, which dated to the later part of the Bronze Age period. Five further pits were discovered, as was a further undated ditch feature. Of the pits, four were thought to be post-medieval in date, the other one was undated. The remaining ditch was clearly a modern feature. OA extends its thanks to the Grahams of the local society who provided extra watching brief cover during the project.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In the first half of 2003, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief during the construction of a new gas pipeline extending from Frensham in Surrey to Aldershot, Hampshire (Fig.1).
- 1.1.2 It extended from an existing above ground installation at Millbridge near Frensham (at NGR SU 849 423) to an existing gas holder station in Aldershot (NGR SU 881 501) The pipeline is approximately 11 km in length.
- 1.1.3 The work was commissioned by RSKENSR Environment Ltd on behalf of Transco. The pipeline was constructed by Morrison Construction Ltd. The pipeline was to be constructed under the provisions of the *Gas Act 1986* (amended 1995), and was not required to have permission under the *Pipelines Act* of 1962: planning consent was granted under Part 17 Class F(a), Schedule 2 of the *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order* of 1995.
- 1.1.4 The area crossed by the pipeline contained a range of archaeological features. Every effort was made to design the route so that it avoided known sites. This included further archaeological research of the route in the form of a desk-based assessment (RSKENSR Environment Ltd., 2002), a field reconnaissance survey (Surrey County Archaeological Unit, 2002) and a geophysical survey (Stratascan, 2002).
- 1.1.5 Surrey County Council's Development Control Archaeologist (Tony Howe) in discussion with Transco's archaeological consultants (RSKENSR Environment Ltd.) agreed that a Watching Brief on the excavation of the pipeline trench was an appropriate archaeological response to the construction project.



1.1.6 Hampshire's Senior Archaeologist Ian Wykes was also consulted as a short length of the pipeline extended into Hampshire.

1.1.7 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (OA 2003) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the RSKENSR Environment Ltd's *Project Brief*.

## 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The geology along the route is variable. From Frensham to Hog's Back at the south end of the pipeline the geology comprises sands, sandstone and ironstone beds of the Folkstone Formation.

1.2.2 The northern section of the pipeline from Hog's Back to Aldershot is a mixture of Gault Clay, Upper Greensand Formation, and chalk units. Up to a third of the pipeline route is covered by alluvium; elsewhere there are deposits of silt, sand, clay and gravel (Head) and River Terrace Deposits.

1.2.3 The topography along the length of the proposed route is predominantly flat, comprising a mixture of pasture and arable land, and c. 40% of the pipeline will be laid within existing highway. The pipeline crosses much of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

## 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA 2003) and is summarised below (see Fig. 1 for locations).

1.3.2 There is a considerable amount of evidence for prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the proposed pipeline. Three Palaeolithic hand axes have been found 1 km to the east of Tilford. Five sites of Mesolithic date, mainly identified from flint work finds have also been recorded. These include flint tools from Seale Lane sand pit (c 0.5 km south-east of Sandy Cross), and a possible occupation site to the north of Sheephatch Lane, Sheephatch, which also showed evidence of occupation during the Neolithic. Neolithic finds have also been recovered to the north and south (at Seale and to the south of The Reeds Road respectively).

1.3.3 Within a 2 km corridor of the route there are eight Bronze Age sites and find spots. The majority of the find spots are located between Sandy Cross and Crooksbury Common and include 22 barbed and tanged arrow heads, a possible bowl barrow, two bronze socketed axes and two spearheads. Additionally, a cist cremation is recorded to the north-east of Tilford and there is evidence of occupation north of Sheephatch Lane, perhaps suggesting a continuity of occupation from the Mesolithic (see 4.2).

1.3.4 An Iron Age settlement was located during road construction, c 1.5 km to the west of Tongham at the north end of the route. There are also two possible hill-fort sites at Soldiers Ring and Botany Hill which, if not Iron Age in origin, were certainly in use during this period.

- 1.3.5 There is limited evidence for Roman occupation within the vicinity of the pipeline route. A Roman pottery kiln has been found at Tilford. Roman coins and pottery and a Roman lamp have been found within 2 km of the proposed route, although no evidence of any settlement has been associated with these finds.
- 1.3.6 Throughout the medieval period, the land along the pipeline route is believed to have remained as uncultivated heath, with small settlements at Millbridge, Tilford and Tongham. Waverley Abbey, a little to the west of the pipeline route, was originally a Cistercian abbey founded in 1128. Aldershot Place (to the west of the northern end of the pipeline) is a medieval moated site. Pottery of a medieval date has also been found at Alice Holt Forest. Also within the vicinity of the pipeline is Tilford Mill, first described as a fulling mill in 1367.
- 1.3.7 During the post-medieval period, the land use does not seem to have changed significantly from that of the medieval period, the vast majority of the proposed route remaining as unenclosed heath. A pottery works was recorded in Aldershot and the pipeline crosses the route of a dismantled railway, which formerly passed through Tongham.
- 1.3.8 Following the First World War, part of the heathland was planted with conifers, forming part of the Alice Holt Forest. During the Second World War, a static line of defence (the GHQ line) was built, of which the River Wey formed a part. A pillbox constructed as part of the GHQ line is situated close to the pipeline route, near to Sheephatch Lane.
- 1.3.9 An archaeological desk-based assessment has been undertaken by RSKENSR Environment Ltd who consulted the County Sites and Monuments Record, historic maps and other relevant sources held at the County Record Offices (RSK 2002 Environment). A gazetteer of sites, listed buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments was compiled along the length of the pipeline route (RSKENSR Environment Ltd 2002, Figure D1 on which OA Project Design Fig. 1 was based)
- 1.3.10 Surrey County Archaeological Unit carried out a field reconnaissance survey of the route in July 2002. This comprised the walking of all cross-country sections of the pipeline and surrounding landscape that recovered some topographic and land use data.
- 1.3.11 Stratascan undertook a geophysical survey of the route in July 2002. The survey was divided in twenty separate sections or units, and their report labels these from A to T.
- 1.3.12 Archaeological activity was indicated along the length of the areas surveyed, particularly Area T, with the survey identifying potential relict field boundaries, pits, ditches and traces of earthworks from positive linear anomalies (Stratascan 2002).
- 1.3.13 Previous works along the route include archaeological investigations at Tongham Nurseries and Springfield Cottages by Surrey County Archaeological Unit in 1993-4 and a further site was investigated at Runfold Farm Pit.



1.3.14 These sites, all to the north end of the pipeline, produced evidence of dense Iron Age occupation including ditched enclosures, field systems and track ways. The pipeline route was designed to avoid most of these known sites.

#### 1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 OA extends its thanks to Helena Kelly of RSKENSR Environment Ltd for advice and background information, Transco and Tony Howe Surrey County Council. OA's Richard Brown managed the fieldwork element of the project.

1.4.2 OA's Tim Haines, Bryan Matthews and Andy Millar supervised the pipeline excavations.

## 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 watching brief observed all works that may have disturbed or destroyed below ground archaeological remains. This included surface stripping and the excavation of the pipeline trench.

2.2.2 Excavation of archaeological features was undertaken to fulfil the basic objective of retrieval of archaeological data affected by the works. All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20.

2.2.3 All excavated features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was made Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

## 3 RESULTS

3.1.1 The following is a description of stretches of the trench as observed during the course of the excavation project, related to sequential Transco Drawings where archaeological features were identified (OA Figs 3 and 5).

### ***Excavation between Aldershot gas holder and A331: Transco DRG SOP266/R/001***

3.1.2 No archaeological deposits or remains were identified during works on this section.



***Excavation between A331 and Manor Road: Transco DRG SOP266/R/002***

- 3.1.3 No archaeological deposits or remains were identified during works on this section.

***Excavation in Manor Road from north of the ambulance station through to south of the junction of Thundery Hill and Seale Lane (pilgrims' way) the A331 and A31 underpasses: Transco DRG SOP266/R/003***

- 3.1.4 No archaeological deposits or remains were observed during works on this section. Excavations in Manor Road through the A331 and A31 underpasses were not observed as the excavations were in the base of the road cutting and embankment, where any potential for archaeological deposits would have been removed during the construction of the A331.

***Excavation from Sylvan Road to Blackberry Cottage: Transco DRG SOP266/R/004***

- 3.1.5 No archaeological deposits or remains were present. The laying of a pipe in the highway through the village was not observed.

***Excavation from north of Littleworth Road to North of Crooksbury Lane: Transco DRG SOP266/R/005***

- 3.1.6 No archaeological deposits or remains were observed in this section.

***Excavation in Sheephatch Lane: Transco DRG SOP266/R/006***

- 3.1.7 The County Archaeologist requested that a section be recorded in the cut through the B3001, as this road follows the course of Sheephatch Lane, a hollow way. These sections revealed a series of undated road surfaces, composed of layers of compacted flint gravels, which were not of any archaeological significance (Fig. 2, S. 102).

***Excavation through fields to the south east of Sheephatch Lane: Transco DRG SOP266/R/007***

- 3.1.8 No archaeological deposits or remains were observed in this section of the pipeline. The surface finds were limited to material collected during metal detecting of the spoil heaps. The finds recovered composed of an iron nail and horseshoe, both are of recent date and as a result were discarded.

***Excavation from north-east of Tilford road to north of the Reeds road: Transco DRG SOP266/R/008***

- 3.1.9 No archaeological features were identified along this section of the pipe route.

***Excavation from north of Reeds Road to west of Tankersford Common: Transco DRG SOP266/R/009***

- 3.1.10 Excavation identified two groups of features, the first was located adjacent to Reeds Farm and consisted of ditch 130 and pit 134 (Figs 3 and 4). The second group near Silverdale Farm Bungalow comprised a tree-throw hole 124 and a pit 126.

- 3.1.11 Ditch 130 and pit 134 were spaced *c* 2.50 m apart. The ditch, orientated north-west/south-east, measured 2.50 m in width and 0.90 m in depth. It had a 'V'-shaped profile and contained three fills (131-133). A single sherd of later Bronze Age pottery was recovered from secondary fill 132 of ditch 130. Pit 134 measured *c* 4.50 m in width and 1.15 m in depth. It had a shallow 'V'-shaped profile and contained three fills (135-7), none of which contained any artefactual or ecofactual material. The size of this pit is of note as it also suggests that the feature was part of something larger, such as a ditch. Unfortunately as only a small area of the feature was observed the interpretation of its form and function is speculative.
- 3.1.12 Feature 124 was recorded as a tree-throw hole and 126 as a pit. The function of the pit was uncertain as no artefactual or ecofactual material was recovered from the single fill 125. A small number of struck flints (Small finds 1-2) were recovered from subsoil 109 in this area.

***Excavation from east of Silverdale Farm to Frensham PRS: Transco DRG SOP266/R/010***

- 3.1.13 The anthropological features identified comprised ditch 127, which was interpreted as a modern feature, and four square pits (115, 117, 119 and 121) (Figs 5 and 6). The pits were seen in section in the southern end of the trench, east of the village of Frensham.
- 3.1.14 They all had straight sides and bases which, along with the character of fills, suggested a recent date for these. A total of two struck flints were recovered from fill 116, of pit 115, however, it was thought that these were residual. A single sherd of bottle glass was recovered from the topsoil in the area close to the pits.

**3.2 Finds**

- 3.2.1 A total of 5 struck flints were collected, along with a single sherd of pottery and a piece of glass.
- 3.2.2 Fill 116, of pit 115, contained two worked flints (See Appendix 2). The single sherd of pottery was recovered from secondary fill 132, of ditch 130. The pottery was a single base sherd of flint tempered later Bronze Age pottery (identification by Dr Alistair Barclay, Oxford Archaeology). No other material was recovered from stratified deposits.

**3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains**

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the watching brief.

#### 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The nature of the engineering works, comprising the excavation of a narrow slot across the landscape meant that the likelihood of encountering archaeological remains was low.
- 4.1.2 The small number of undated/post-medieval features identified during the work is of limited local archaeological significance, although the presence of a single prehistoric ditch is of interest. Nonetheless, the limited area observed makes interpretation of its function in the landscape very speculative, though it may be interpreted as a boundary feature.
- 4.1.3 The occurrence of flints within the topsoil and subsoil is not uncommon in areas of known archaeological activity. The results of the watching brief have offered little information to further our understanding of the landscape.



## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>
100	Layer	0.05	*	Tarmac	
101	Layer	0.10	*	Make-up	
102	Layer	0.13	*	Make-up	
103	Layer	0.65	*	Ground surface	
104	Layer	0.80	*	Natural sand	
105	Layer	*	*	Natural sand	
106	Layer	0.14	*	Natural sand	
107	Layer	*	*	Natural sand	
108	Layer	0.30	*	Topsoil	
109	Layer	0.30	*	Subsoil	Worked flint
110	Layer	*	*	Natural	
111	Layer	0.50	*	Topsoil	Worked flint, glass
112	Layer	0.30	*	Subsoil	
113	Layer	*	*	Upper natural	
114	Layer	*	*	Natural sand	
115	Pit?	0.33	0.90	Pit	
116	Fill	0.33	0.90	Pit fill (FO 115)	Worked flint
117	Cut	0.35	0.67	Pit	
118	Fill	0.35	0.67	Pit fill (FO 117)	
119	Cut	0.40	0.70	Pit	
120	Fill	0.40	0.70	Pit fill (FO 119)	
121	Pit	0.35	0.69	Pit	
122	Fill	0.35	0.69	Pit fill (FO 121)	
123	Fill	0.82	1.60	Fill of 124	
124	Cut	0.82	1.60	Tree-throw hole	
125	Fill	0.62	1.30	Pit fill (FO 126)	
126	Cut	0.62	1.30	Pit	
127	Cut	1.12	3.00	Ditch (N-S)	
128	Fill	0.20	*	Ditch fill	

129	Fill	0.80	2.94	Ditch fill	
130	Cut	0.90	2.30	Ditch (NW-SE)	
131	Fill	0.50	2.00	Tertiary fill of 130	
132	Fill	0.20	2.70	Secondary fill of 130	Pottery
133	Fill	0.35	2.05	Primary fill of 130	
134	Cut	4.50	1.15	Pit	
135	Fill	0.48	2.80	Tertiary fill of 134	
136	Fill	0.58	3.72	Secondary fill of 134	
137	Fill	0.60	3.90	Primary fill of 134	
138	Layer	*	*	Natural sand	

## APPENDIX 2 FINDS ASSESSMENTS

### THE FLINT

By Kate Cramp

A small assemblage of five struck flints was recovered from the site (table 1). The flints are generally in a poor condition and are therefore likely to be residual. No datable types are present.

Table: Struck flint.

Category	Context			Total
	109	111	116	
Flake	1	1	2	4
Irregular waste	1			1
<b>Total:</b>	2	1	2	5

## APPENDIX 3 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D.Wilkinson, first edition, 1992)

OA 2003 *Frensham to Aldershot Natural Gas Pipeline. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief.*

RSKENS Environment Ltd 2002 *Frensham to Aldershot Natural Gas Pipeline. Brief for and archaeological evaluation*

Stratascan, 2002 *Geophysical Survey carried out at the Frensham to Aldershot Pipeline*

Surrey County Archaeological Unit, 2002 *Field Reconnaissance of the proposed route of the Frensham to Aldershot Natural Gas Pipeline*

## APPENDIX 4 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** Frensham to Aldershot Natural Gas Pipeline

**Site code:** FAPIPE 03

**Grid reference:** SU 881 501 / 849 422

**Type of watching brief:** Excavation of a 11 km long trench for a gas pipeline.

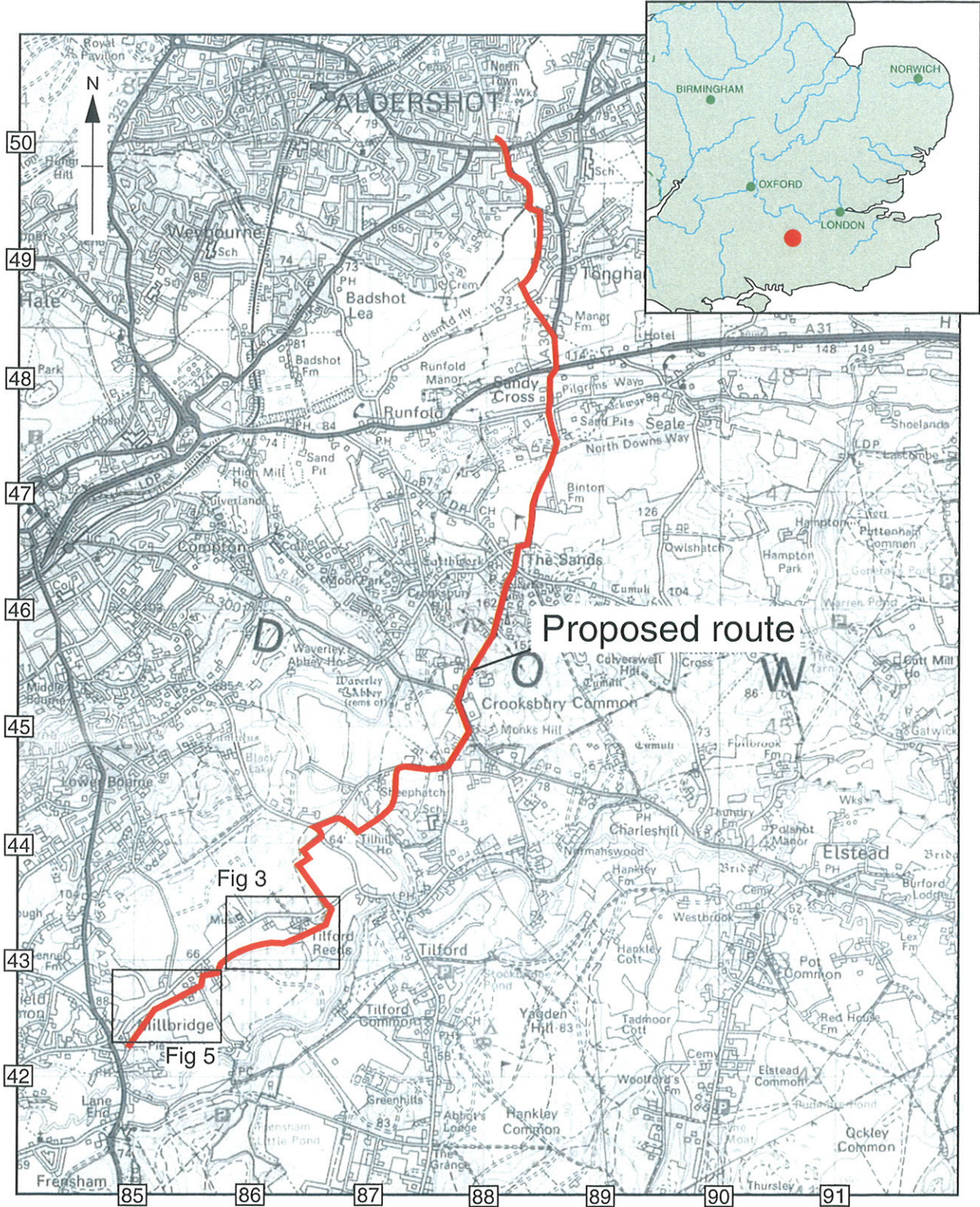
**Date and duration of project:** April - June 2003

**Area of site:** 11 km in length

**Summary of results:** Small numbers of archaeological features were identified, comprising a prehistoric ditch and pit, an undated pit and four post-medieval pits.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Farnham Museum in due course under the Accession code FAPIPE03.





Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 1: Site location

### Section 102

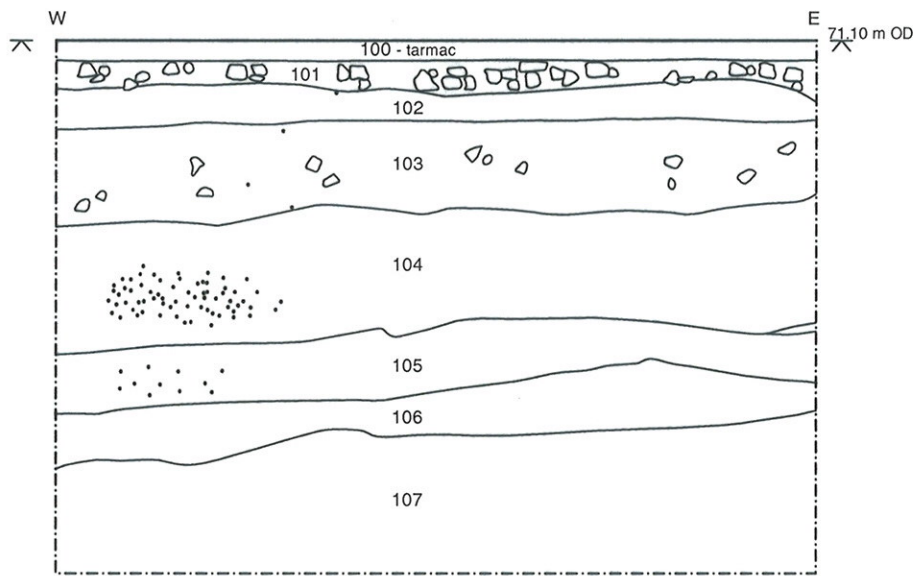
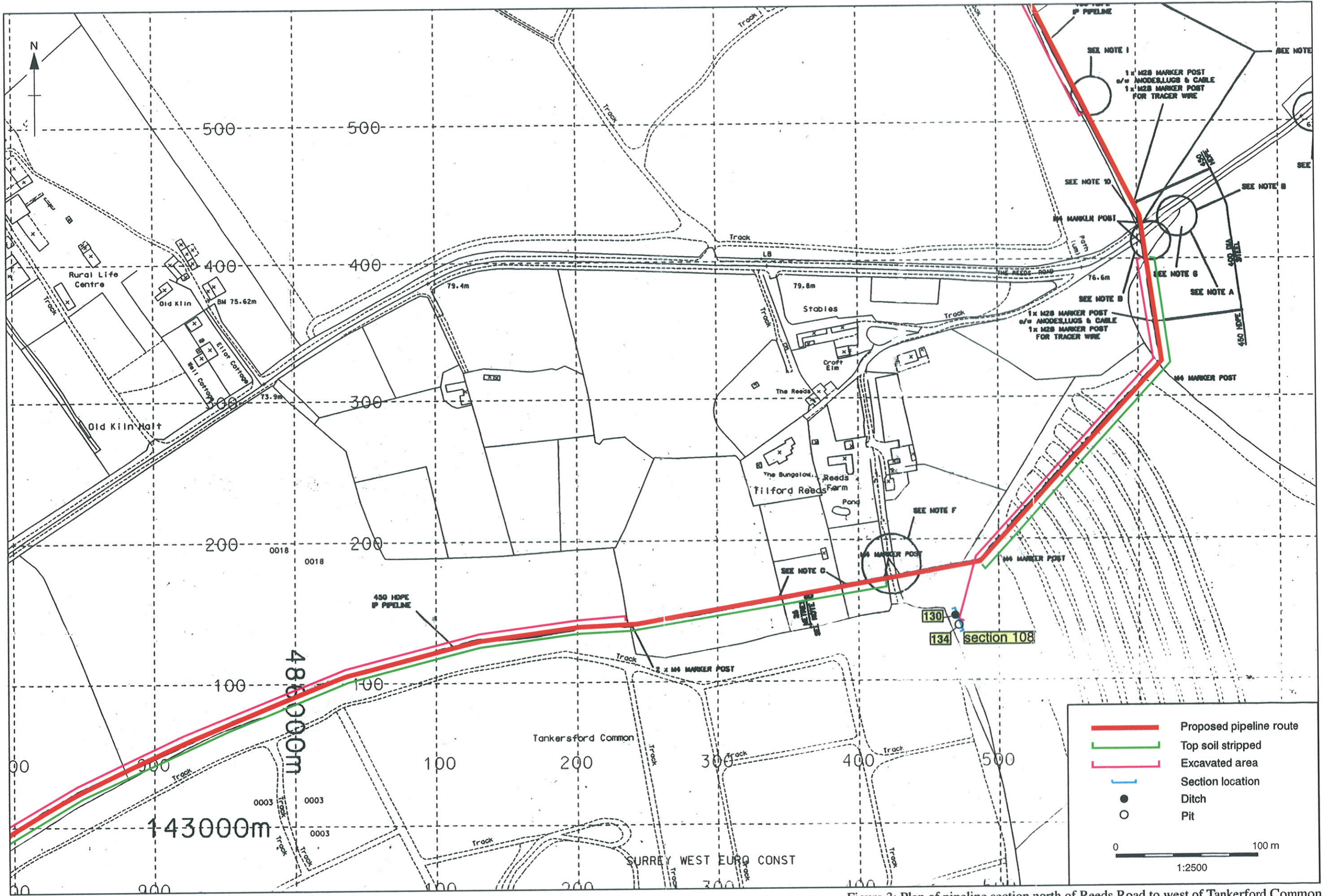


Figure 2: Section through B3001



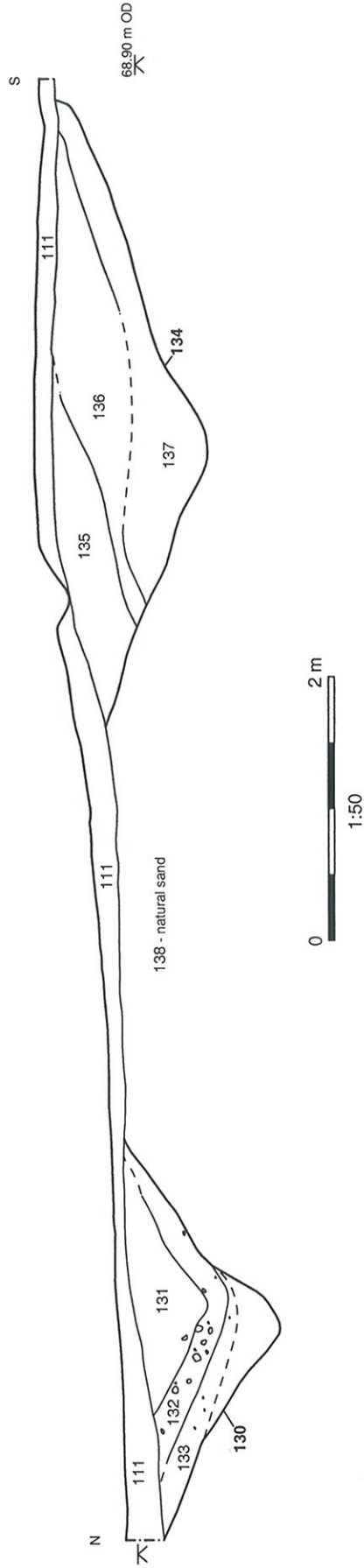


(Based on Transco drawing SOP266/R/009)

Figure 3: Plan of pipeline section north of Reeds Road to west of Tankersford Common



section 108  
showing ditch 130 and pit 134



section 107  
pit 126

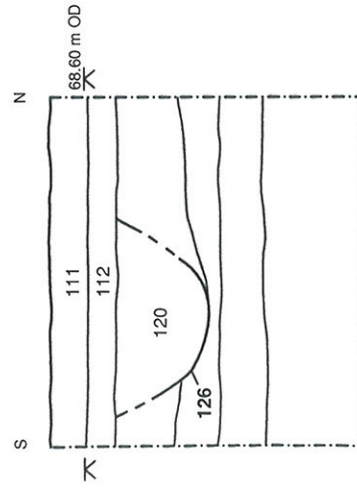
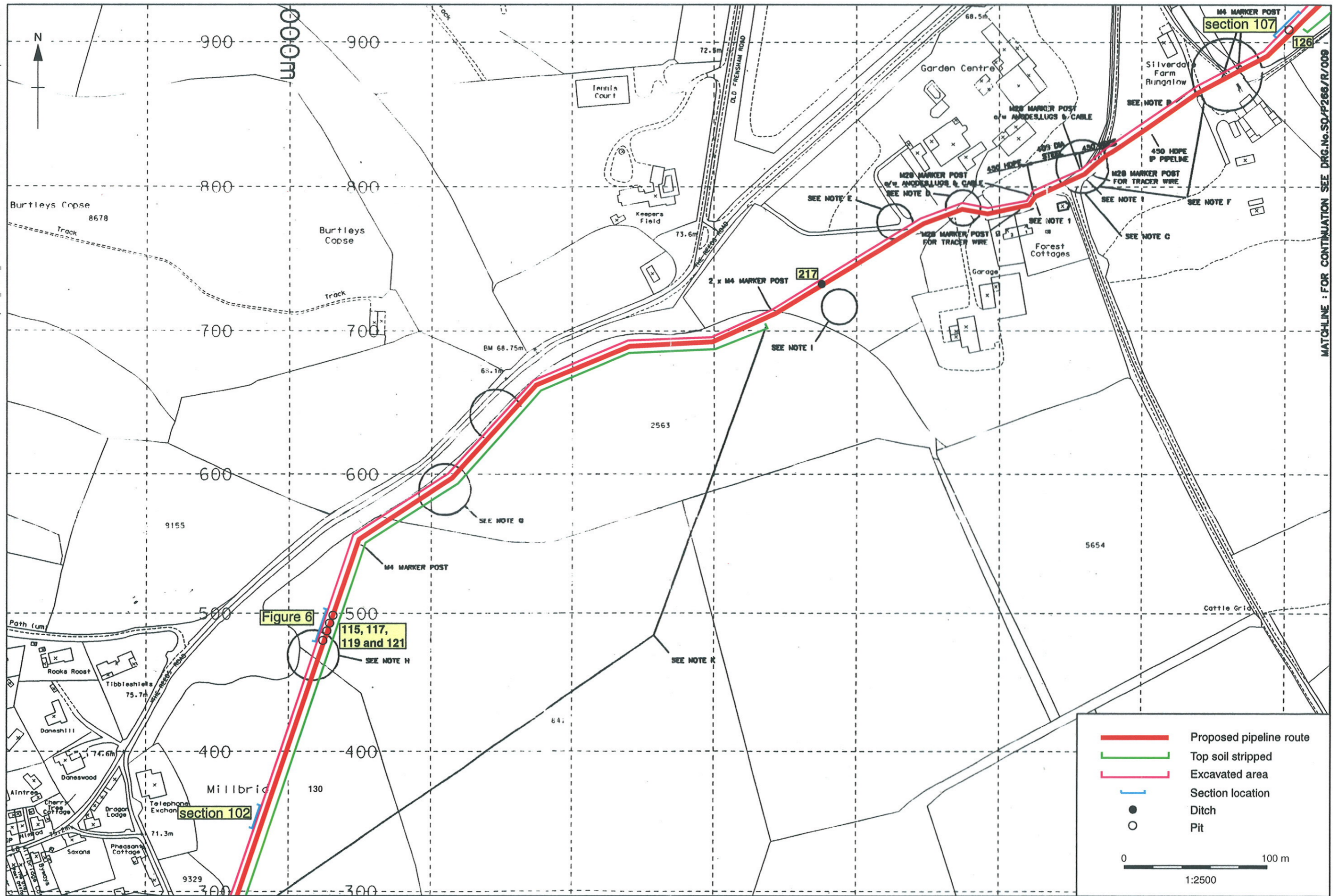


Figure 4: Sections through ditch 130, pit 134 and pit 126



(Based on Transco drawing SOP266/R/009

Figure 5: Plan of pipeline section east of Silverdale Farm Frensham

MATCHLINE : FOR CONTINUATION SEE DRG.No.SOP266/R/009



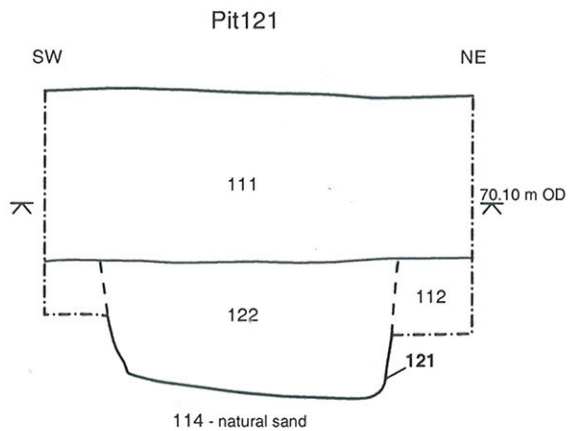
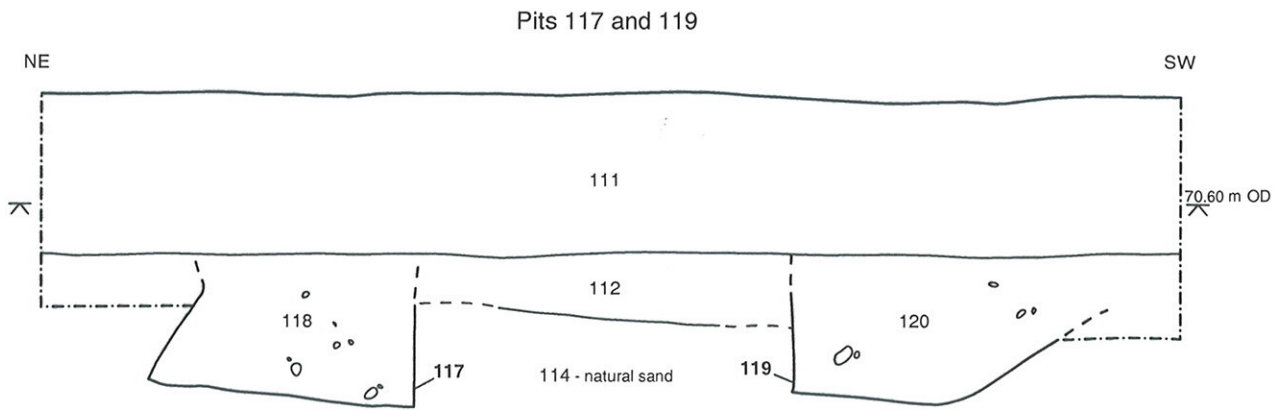
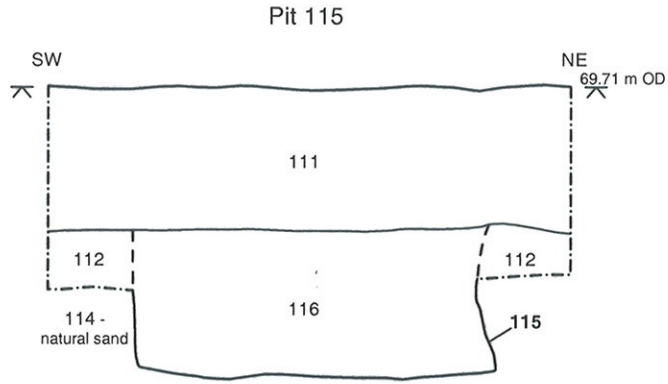


Figure 6: Sections through pits 115, 117, 119 and 121





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