



The Great Grid Upgrade

Sea Link

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Volume 9: Examination Submissions

Document 9.2.1

Supplementary Stage 1 and Stage 2 Marine Geoarchaeological Assessment - Technical Note

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Contents

Executive Summary	1
Ex1.1 Overview	1
1. Technical Note	2
1.1 Introduction and Scope of Document	2
1.2 Project Background	2
1.3 2024 Geotechnical Survey	2
1.4 Proposed next steps following the Supplementary Stage 1 and 2 Geoarchaeological Assessment	3
1.5 Implication for the Environmental Statement	3
1.6 Adherence to Proposed Mitigation	3
References	5

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Executive Summary

Ex1.1 Overview

- Ex1.1.1 This document comprises a technical note for **Application Document 9.2 Supplementary Stage 1 and Stage 2 Geoarchaeological Assessment**. It considers the results and outcomes of the assessment and how they follow on from the Marine Archaeological Technical Report that outlines the Stage 1 Marine Geoarchaeological Assessment undertaken for geotechnical data acquired by MMT in September 2021 (**Application Document 6.3.4.6.A Appendix 4.6.A Marine Archaeological Technical Report**).
- Ex1.1.2 The proposed next steps of the Supplementary Stage 1 and Stage 2 Geoarchaeological Assessment are presented and justified in terms of their requirement as ongoing project-related mitigation as detailed within the Outline Offshore Written Scheme of Investigation (**Application Document 7.5.5 Outline Offshore Written Scheme of Investigation (OWSI)**), since palaeogeographic features cannot be avoided. The results of **Application Document Number 9.2 Supplementary Stage 1 and Stage 2 Geoarchaeological Assessment** do not change the results of the impact assessment presented in the Environmental Statement, as detailed within the Marine Archaeology chapter (**Application Document 6.2.4.6 Part 4 Marine Chapter 6 Marine Archaeology**).

1. Technical Note

1.1 Introduction and Scope of Document

- 1.1.1 This document comprises a technical note for **Application Document 9.2 Supplementary Stage 1 and Stage 2 Geoarchaeological Assessment** and considers the results and outcomes of the assessment and how they follow on from the Marine Archaeological Technical Report that outlines the Stage 1 Marine Geoarchaeological Assessment undertaken for geotechnical data acquired by MMT in September 2021 (**Application Document 6.3.4.6.A Appendix 4.6.A Marine Archaeological Technical Report**).

1.2 Project Background

- 1.2.1 In September 2021, MMT acquired geotechnical data comprising 69 vibrocores. Following a Stage 1 geoarchaeological assessment, eight vibrocores (located inside the study area) were assigned a medium or high archaeological priority. The vibrocores were not retained by MMT for Stage 2 geoarchaeological recording. As a result, the locations of these vibrocores were to be retargeted during the 2024 geotechnical campaign undertaken by Next Geo.
- 1.2.2 The results of the Stage 1 geoarchaeological assessment were outlined in a Marine Archaeological Technical Report that was submitted with the application as Appendix 4.6.A (**Application Document 6.3.4.6.A Appendix 4.6.A Marine Archaeological Technical Report**) to the Marine Archaeology chapter of the Environmental Statement (**Application Document 6.2.4.6 Part 4 Marine Chapter 6 Marine Archaeology**).
- 1.2.3 Historic England, the Archaeological Curator, was aware that the vibrocores would be retargeted and a report compiled after the application for the Proposed Project was submitted.

1.3 2024 Geotechnical Survey

- 1.3.1 The intrusive offshore geotechnical investigations undertaken by Next Geo in October 2024 included:
- Nine dedicated archaeological vibrocores (eight planned plus one redrill) to replace previous medium and high priority vibrocores that were not retained for additional geoarchaeological recording; and
 - 11 vibrocores (nine planned plus two redrills) obtained from four (of five) additional isolated survey areas that had not been previously investigated.
- 1.3.2 The results of the Stage 1 geoarchaeological assessment of the 20 vibrocores and the Stage 2 geoarchaeological assessment of the nine dedicated archaeological vibrocores are presented in **Application Document 9.2 Supplementary Stage 1 and Stage 2 Geoarchaeological Assessment**.

1.4 Proposed next steps following the Supplementary Stage 1 and 2 Geoarchaeological Assessment

- 1.4.1 Following the Stage 2 geoarchaeological recording of the nine dedicated archaeological vibrocores, two deposits (non-marine sand and alluvium) were assigned medium geoarchaeological potential, and peat deposits were assigned high geoarchaeological potential. The remaining deposits (fluvial sands and gravels, shallow marine to coastal sands and seabed sediments) were assigned low geoarchaeological potential.
- 1.4.2 The following proposals arose from the Stage 2 assessment:
- To develop an absolute chronology, a single Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) date was recommended from two vibrocores, VC_021a and VC-061.
 - To understand changes in salinity and climate:
 - Foraminifera and ostracod assessment from six sub-samples taken from VC_021a; and
 - Diatom, foraminifera and ostracod assessment from sixteen sub-samples taken from VC-061.
 - To assess palaeoenvironmental change, three sub-samples from VC-S6-005 will be assessed for pollen and plant macrofossils.
 - To establish a chronology within an extensive palaeochannel, suitable samples for radiocarbon dating will be selected during plant macrofossil assessment from the top and bottom of the peat deposit from VC-S6-005 for radiocarbon dating.

1.5 Implication for the Environmental Statement

- 1.5.1 The results and proposed next steps of **Application Document 9.2 Supplementary Stage 1 and Stage 2 Geoarchaeological Assessment** do not change the results of the impact assessment presented in the Environmental Statement, as detailed within the Marine Archaeology chapter (**Application Document 6.2.4.6 Part 4 Marine Chapter 6 Marine Archaeology**) and supported by the Marine Archaeological Technical Report submitted with the application (**Application Document 6.3.4.6.A Appendix 4.6.A Marine Archaeological Technical Report**).

1.6 Adherence to Proposed Mitigation

- 1.6.1 Undertaking the two geoarchaeological assessments and the subsequent understanding gained regarding seabed sediments and the submerged landscape of the region (supporting the sub-bottom profiler geophysical survey data where applicable) is considered sufficient for the application stage of the Proposed Project. Since palaeogeographic features do not require mitigation in the form of Archaeological Exclusion Zones or avoidance, the increased knowledge that these geoarchaeological assessments provide will offset any further impact on palaeogeographic features (The Crown Estate, 2021, p. 31). This is considered within the environmental impact assessment of the Marine Archaeology chapter of the Environmental Statement (**Application Document 6.2.4.6 Part 4 Marine Chapter 6 Marine Archaeology**) and is included as Control and Management Measure MA02.

- 1.6.2 Any further geoarchaeological investigation, including those presented in section 1.4 above, are considered part of the ongoing mitigation for the Proposed Project, rather than a limitation to the routing of the design, aligning with the requirements of the Outline Offshore Written Scheme of Investigation (**Application Document 7.5.5 Outline Offshore Written Scheme of Investigation (OWSI)**) as approved by the Archaeological Curator, Historic England.

References

The Crown Estate. (2021). *Archaeological Written Schemes of Investigation for Offshore Wind Farm Projects*. Retrieved May 06, 2025, from <https://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/media/3917/guide-to-archaeological-requirements-for-offshore-wind.pdf>

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