

Archaeology Wales

Upper Holton Airfield Halesworth, Suffolk

Geophysical Survey and Field Evaluation



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Date: **March 2013**

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Non-Technical Summary

This report results from work undertaken by Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) for Natural Power, Castle Douglas, Scotland. It draws upon the results gained by a geophysical survey and archaeological field evaluation of five separate areas at Upper Holton Airfield, Suffolk. A 100x100m area was surveyed over each proposed turbine location. This was followed by a total of five trenches excavated in the vicinity of a proposed wind turbine. Trench locations were informed by the results of the geophysical surveys. Features identified by the surveys and subject to trenching were all ditches which contained no dating evidence. Evidence from historic mapping showed the ditches to be at least 19th century in date. No further archaeological finds or features were noted during the investigations.

1 Introduction

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In January 2013 Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) carried out geophysical surveys and an archaeological field evaluation on five separate areas at Upper Holton Airfield, Suffolk. Each site was the proposed location of a wind turbine. The airfield itself is centred around NGR TM 4087 7974. The development proposal has been submitted by Natural Power, Castle Douglas, Scotland (Henceforth – Natural Power) acting on behalf of wind farm developer. The local planning authority is Waveney District Council (Henceforth - WDC) and the planning application number is DC/11/0553/VOC. Suffolk County Council Archaeological Services (Henceforth – SCC-AS) act as archaeological advisors to WDC. The HER number for the evaluation phase is HLN 015.

1.1.2 After the undertaking of a geophysical survey on the locations of the five turbines, trench locations were agreed between AW and Dr Jess Tipper of SCC-AS.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The underlying solid geology of the area is comprised of undifferentiated Neogene to Quaternary rocks, including gravel, sand, silt and clay (Geological Survey Map, 2001).

1.2.2 As well as the visible surface remains of the former WWII airfield and the contingency poultry sheds, the site is currently in use as agricultural land with a prevalence of ploughed fields with crops. There are also numerous small pond areas across the entire site indicative of the clayey soils. There is a wooded area to the south known as Scalesbrook Wood. Also occupying the site to the south is the main factory of Bernard Matthews Foods Ltd. Just outside of the development area, adjoining the factory buildings to the south is the Halesworth Airfield Museum.

1.2.3 The terrain is very flat with very little variation in height across the entire site, which lies at approximately 40m A.O.D.

1.2.4 The archaeological and historical background to the assessment area and its surroundings has previously been compiled in an earlier desk based assessment phase of investigations (Jones 2009, CAP Report No. 596).

2 Aims and Objectives

2.1 Geophysical Survey

2.1.1 The geophysical survey was undertaken to:

- To assess the presence/absence of subterranean archaeological remains within the assessment area.
- To determine the extent and location of any archaeological remains present.
- To inform the approach to any possible trench locations should an evaluation phase be deemed necessary.

2.2 Field Evaluation

2.2.1 The Field Evaluation was undertaken to:

- Establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within, and immediately surrounding, the area of proposed development;
- Determine the depth, extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present;
- Establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features;
- To produce a record of the features.

3 Methodology

3.1 Geophysical Survey

3.1.1 Two Fluxgate Gradiometers were used to undertake the survey. Previous research has shown that fired, or cut and backfilled archaeological features such as kilns and hearths, ditches and pits often have an anomalously higher magnetic susceptibility than the surrounding subsoil due to burning and biological processes. Differences in magnetic susceptibility within the subsoil and archaeological features can be detected as changing magnetic flux by an instrument such as a fluxgate gradiometer. Data from this may be

mapped at closely spaced regular intervals, to produce an image that may be interpreted to locate buried archaeological features (Clarke 1990).

3.1.2 The machines used for the survey were Geoscan Research FM256 fluxgate gradiometers using the double speed dual gradiometer survey mode. Detailed surveys were carried out in grids of 50m x 50m along parallel traverses spaced at 2m intervals, recording data points spaced at 0.5m intervals to a maximum instrument sensitivity of 0.1nT in accordance with English Heritage Guidelines (EH 2008). The grids were surveyed in the 'zigzag' style (traverses walked alternately south-north/north-south). At regular intervals the data was downloaded to a laptop computer for storage and assessment.

3.1.3 The location of each survey area was then surveyed using a Topcon GTS 725 Total Station.

3.2 Data Processing and Presentation

3.2.1 Following the completion of the detailed surveys, processing and analysis took place using Geoscan Research's Geoplot v.3.00k software. The most typical method of visualising the data is as a greyscale image. In a greyscale, each data point is represented as a shade of grey, from black to white at either extreme of the data range. A number of standard operations were carried out to process the data. The gradiometer data was mathematically adjusted to account for instrument drift over time. The mean level of each traverse of data was reduced to zero and all grids matched so that there were no differences between background levels. The data was then analysed using a variety of parameters and styles and the most useful of these were saved as a *JPEG image and manipulated using Adobe Illustrator software. The results of the survey were then overlaid onto a digital map of the study area. This was then used to produce the interpretation figures.

3.2.2 All works were undertaken in accordance with both the IfA's *Standards and Guidance: for a geophysical survey* and current Health and Safety legislation.

3.3 Evaluation

3.3.1 The on-site work was undertaken by Adrian Hadley. The overall management of the project was undertaken by Mark Houlston (MifA).

3.3.2 All trenches were excavated both mechanically under close archaeological supervision and by hand by suitably qualified AW staff.

3.3.3 All areas were photographed using high resolution (14+ Mega Pixels) digital photography.

3.3.4 All on-site illustrations were undertaken on drafting film using recognised conventions and scales (1:10, 1:20, 1:50) as appropriate.

3.3.5 All works were undertaken in accordance with the IfA's *Standards and Guidance: for an archaeological evaluation* (revised 2011) and current Health and Safety legislation.

3.4 **Finds**

3.4.1 No finds were recovered during the course of the excavation.

4 **Geophysical Survey Results**

4.1 **Soils and Ground Conditions**

4.1.1 The surveys were undertaken after a period of particularly wet weather, including snow. Ground conditions were thus quite wet.

4.2 **Grids**

4.2.1 The survey was composed of 120 full and partial grids. 5 grids were un-surveyed due to conditions on the ground.

4.3 **Survey Results**

4.3.1 Turbine 1 (Fig 3). The survey of the turbine 1 area showed only one feature of archaeological interest. A ditch running north – south including a 90° return to the east is clearly identifiable on the plot. There are four small areas of possible burning or large metallic concentrations also visible as well as an area of interference from the line of the nearby road.

4.3.2 Turbine 2 (Fig 4). The survey of the turbine 2 area again showed only one features of archaeological interest. A ditch running roughly east – west is clearly identifiable on the plot. There are seven areas of possible burning, similar to those seen on the survey of turbine 1.

4.3.3 Turbine 3 (Fig 5). The survey of the turbine 3 area again showed only one feature of archaeological interest. A ditch running roughly east – west is clearly visible on the plot. Three land drains, each running north west to south east and seemingly terminating at the ditch feature, were also noted. 5 grids on the northern edge of the plot were un-surveyed due to the proximity of metal structures interfering with the machines.

4.3.4 Turbine 4 (Fig 6). The survey of the turbine 4 area showed no features, of archaeological interest or otherwise.

4.3.5 Turbine 5 (Fig 7). The survey of the turbine 5 area showed four seemingly rectilinear structures as well as large amounts of associated disturbance. A large amount of disturbance from metal structures was noted on the eastern edge of the survey. A linear ditch running north east to south west, through the area of the rectilinear structures, is clearly visible. Two land drains, running north east to south west, were also noted.

4.4 **Geophysical Survey Summary**

- 4.4.1 The geophysical surveys show very little in terms of significant archaeological features. The linear ditch features visible on the turbine 1-3 & 5 surveys all represent defunct field boundaries and are visible on the historic mapping (Fig 16).
- 4.4.2 The rectilinear structures on the turbine 5 survey appear to be associated with the sites former use an airfield. An aerial photograph from 1946 shows airfield structures in this area (Fig 17).

5 Evaluation Results

5.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 5.1.1 The soil sequences in each trench appeared composed of topsoil up to 0.45m deep overlying thick natural clay.
- 5.1.2 Trenches positions were informed by the results of the geophysical surveys. Figures 3 to 7 show the locations of the trenches in relation to the survey areas.
- 5.1.3 Ground conditions were very wet with severe flooding hampering excavation proceedings in places.
- 5.1.4 Owing to the severe flooding and its impediment to accurate archaeological observations, where linear ditches were identified in trenches 1-3, an additional length of trench was positioned immediately adjacent to the main trench so as to include the ditch. This area, rather than the severely flooded main trench, was subsequently excavated.

5.2 Trench 1 – Plates 1-4, Figs 2, 3, 8 & 9

- 5.2.1 Trench 1 measured 32m by 1.8m, and was aligned North to South. The soil sequence consisted of topsoil (101), some 18-45cm thick, overlying natural clay (102).
- 5.2.2 A layer (106) was encountered below the topsoil in the southern half of the trench - this extended some 9m north-south and circa 0.8m below surface. This deposit was recorded as a soft to firm dark brown clay with inclusions of fine chalk gravel. This layer has been interpreted as redeposited natural, resulting from the modern disturbance.
- 5.2.3 A ditch [103] was identified towards the centre of the trench. It was not possible to define and excavate this feature as adverse weather subsequently resulted in severe flooding of Trench 1. Ditch [103] was subsequently exposed within an additional 14m long excavation positioned 3m to the east of Trench 1.
- 5.2.4 Ditch 103 was recorded as 2.36m wide and 0.92m deep, aligned West-North-West to East-South-East. The ditch contained a basal fill (104) of very soft dark brown humic clay silt, with patches of dark grey clay. The upper fill (105) comprised a stiff orange brown clay, with occasional medium and coarse flint and fine chalk gravel. A one metre wide slot was hand-excavated across the lower fill (104); modern roof tile was retrieved from this deposit. This indicates that the ditch appears to have been buried in

the recent past; potentially this event is associated with the construction of the WWII airfield at Upper Holton.

- 5.2.5 Ditch 103 appears to have been re-cut [107] to lay a land-drain (200mm diameter) along the line of the former drainage channel. The ditch cut [107] measured as 0.64m wide and 0.42m deep. Ditch 107 contained an homogenous fill (108) of dark grey brown humic clay with much coarse gravel and flint cobbles. This most probably represents flint bedding material surrounding the ceramic drain, with further backfill of redeposited topsoil.
- 5.2.6 Aside from the ditch noted above, no other features were identified within Trench 1. No archaeological finds were retrieved from the topsoil (101) or the layer of redeposited natural (106).
- 5.2.7 It was subsequently determined that the natural was much more varied at surface within Trench 1 compared to the other four evaluation trenches. It should be noted that the natural deposits encountered within Trenches 2-5 contained significantly less sand.

5.3 Trench 2 – Plates 5-6, Figs 2, 4, 10 & 11

- 5.3.1 Trench 2 measured 31m by 1.8m, and was aligned North to South. The soil sequence consisted of topsoil (201), some 22-36cm thick, overlying natural clay (202).
- 5.3.2 A ditch [203] was identified towards the northern end of the trench. It was not possible to define and excavate this feature as adverse weather subsequently resulted in severe flooding of the trial trench. Ditch 203 was subsequently exposed within an additional 8m long excavation positioned 3m to the west of Trench 2.
- 5.3.3 Ditch 203 was recorded as 3.65m wide and 1.06m deep, aligned East to West. The ditch contained a basal fill (205) (206) of a *stiff orange-brown slightly silty clay*.
- 5.3.4 Ditch 203 appears to have been re-cut [208] to lay a land-drain (200mm diameter) along the line of the former drainage ditch. The ditch cut [208] measured 2.84m wide and about a metre deep. Ditch 208 contained flint cobbles and brick rubble surrounding the ceramic drain. The bricks were noted to comprise 'soft reds' dating from the late 1900's or early 20th century. The drain backfill (204) comprised a *firm dark grey-brown silty clay mixed with a stiff mottled orange-grey clay*. Tip-lines were also evident within this fill. The ditch fill (204) contained frequent inclusion of brick rubble as well as some occasional modern ferrous items. The latter deposit appears to derive from the topsoil (201) and natural clay (202). The backfill of this feature is comparable with the ditch found in Trench 1; it is probable that Ditches 107 and 208 are contemporary.
- 5.3.5 The backfill (204) of Ditch 208 was sample excavated across a one metre slot, some 25cm down. The primary ditch fill (205) (206) was sequentially hand excavated down to the same depth. The modern backfill (204) was subsequently machine excavated down to the base of the feature. The remaining basal ditch fill was hand excavated

down to the limit of excavation (and a bulk sample of 40 litres taken). No archaeological finds were retrieved from the lower ditch fill (204) (205).

5.4 Trench 3 – Plate 7, Figs 2, 5, 12 & 13

- 5.4.1 Trench 3 measured 31m by 1.8m, and was aligned North-East to South-West. The soil sequence consisted of topsoil (301), some 24-36cm thick, overlying natural clay (302).
- 5.4.2 A ditch [303] was identified towards the south-west end of the trench. It was not possible to define and excavate this feature as adverse weather subsequently resulted in severe flooding of the trial trench. Ditch 303 was subsequently exposed within an additional 7m long excavation positioned 3m to the north-west of Trench 3.
- 5.4.3 Ditch 303 was recorded as 2.96m wide and 0.93m deep, aligned West-North-West to East-South-East. The ditch contained a basal fill (305) of a soft orange-brown slightly silty clay.
- 5.4.4 Ditch 303 appears to have been re-cut [306] to lay a land-drain (200mm diameter) along the line of the former drainage ditch. The ditch cut [306] measured 2.05m wide and 0.66m deep. Ditch 306 contained flint cobbles surrounding the ceramic drain. The drain backfill (304) comprised a stiff mottled orange-grey clay, with a few modern ferrous items present. The latter deposit appears to derive from the natural clay (302). The backfill of Ditch 306 is similar to the features found in Trenches 1&2 (Ditches 107 and 208).
- 5.4.5 The fills of Ditch 303 and 306 were sample excavated across a one metre slot, and a 40 litre sample taken of the basal fill (305). No archaeological finds were retrieved from the lower ditch fill (305).
- 5.4.6 In addition to the above, a French Drain was found towards the North-East end of the trial trench. The drain was identified about 0.5m below surface, and comprised a 20cm wide cut filled by 20-60mm rounded flint pebbles. The drain was aligned South-South-East by North-North-West.

5.5 Trench 4 – Figs 2, 6 & 14

- 5.5.1 Trench 4 measured 31m by 1.8m, and was aligned North to South. The soil sequence consisted of topsoil (401), some 18-32cm thick, overlying natural clay (402).
- 5.5.2 A French Drain was found towards the centre of the trial trench. The drain was identified about 0.4m below surface, and comprised a 20cm wide cut filled by 20-60mm rounded flint pebbles. The drain was aligned North-East by South-West. No other features were identified within Trench 4. In addition, no archaeological finds were retrieved from the topsoil aside from modern ferrous items.

5.6 Trench 5 – Figs 2, 7 & 15

- 5.6.1 Trench 5 measured 31m by 1.8m, and was aligned East-South-East to West North-West. The soil sequence consisted of topsoil (501), some 21-34cm thick, overlying natural clay (502).
- 5.6.2 A ditch [503] was identified towards the western (West-North-West) end of the trench. Ditch 203 was recorded as 1.8m wide, aligned North-North-East to South-South-West. The fill (504) of Ditch 503 was sample excavated across a one metre slot, some 25cm down. The fill comprised a stiff mottled orange-grey clay. This was interpreted as redeposited natural. No archaeological finds were retrieved from the fill (504). It should be noted that this deposit was very similar to the upper ditch fills identified within Trenches 1-3. In consequence, it highly probable that this feature is contemporary with Ditches 107, 208 and 306. The excavation of this feature was abandoned as adverse weather resulted in severe flooding of the trial trench. Full excavation and recording of the ditch could not be completed owing to the feature being constantly filled with rising groundwater. Initial investigation, prior to flooding, showed ditch deposits present within the feature extremely similar in appearance and consistency to those seen elsewhere on site.

6 Interpretation & Discussion

6.1 Interpretation

- 6.1.1 The main interpretation is that the ditches noted on the geophysical surveys, and thus subsequently excavated during the field evaluation, are likely to be field boundaries of post-medieval date.
- 6.1.2 The ditches are visible on the historic mapping for the area providing a date of at least 19th century.
- 6.1.3 The lack of further features may be down to a combination of the area being used as an airfield (possible small scale landscaping of the area associated with construction may have removed features) and the relatively deep depth of ploughing evident from the topsoil, up to 0.45m in places.
- 6.1.4 The possibility remains, however, of unknown archaeological features being located within the area. It is therefore suggested that any further work associated with construction, i.e. cable routing or construction of access tracks, is done under an archaeological watching brief.

6.2 Acknowledgements

- 6.2.1 Many thanks are due to Adrian Hadley (AW) for his assistance with the on-site work and to Dr Jess Tipper (SCC-AS) for curatorial assistance.

7 Bibliography and references

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Clark, 1990. *Seeing Beneath the Soil*. BT Batsford Ltd, London

Institute for Archaeologists 2008, revised 2011, *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation*

Institute for Archaeologists 2008, revised 2011, *Standard and Guidance for a geophysical survey*

Archaeology Wales

APPENDIX I: Figures

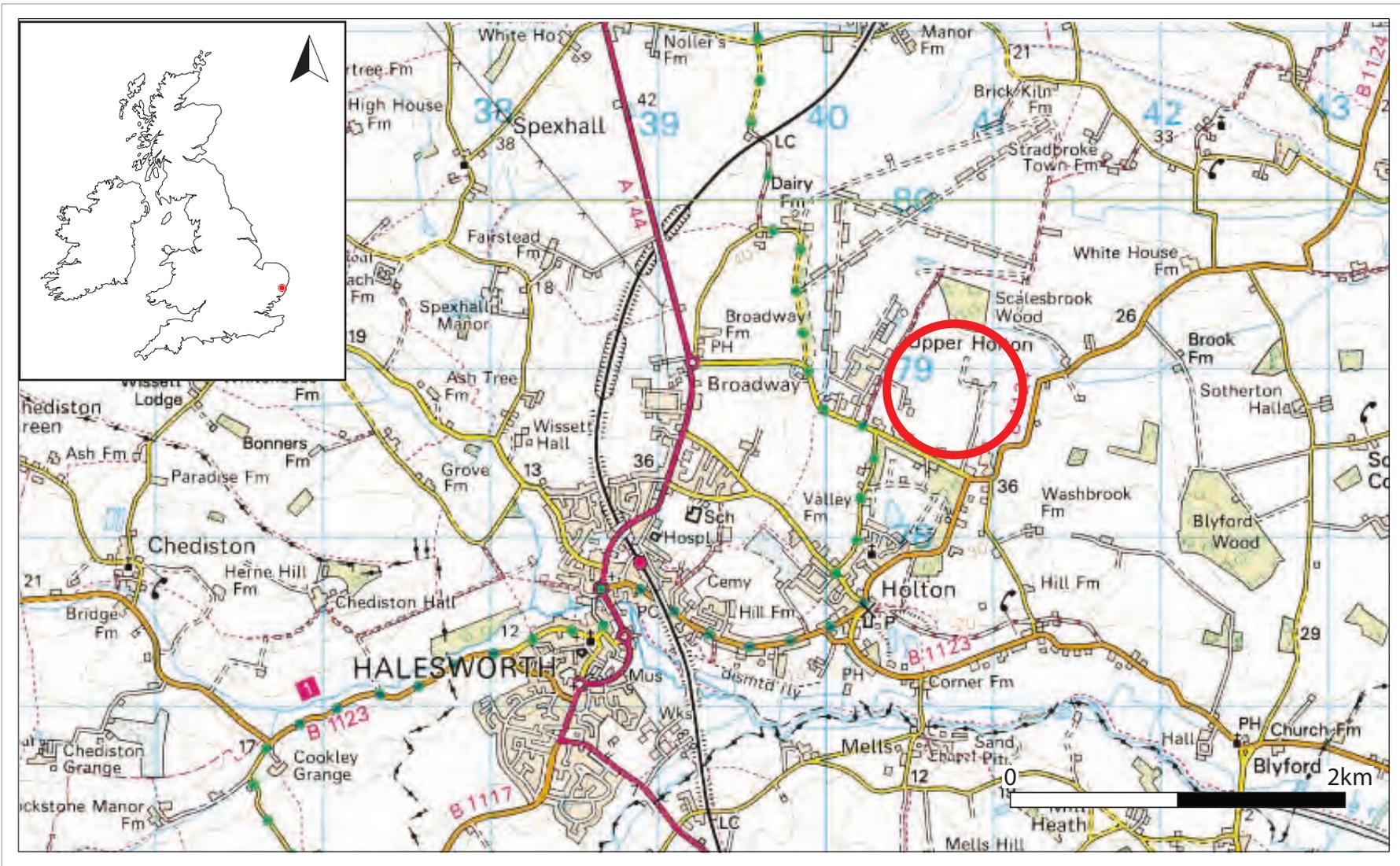


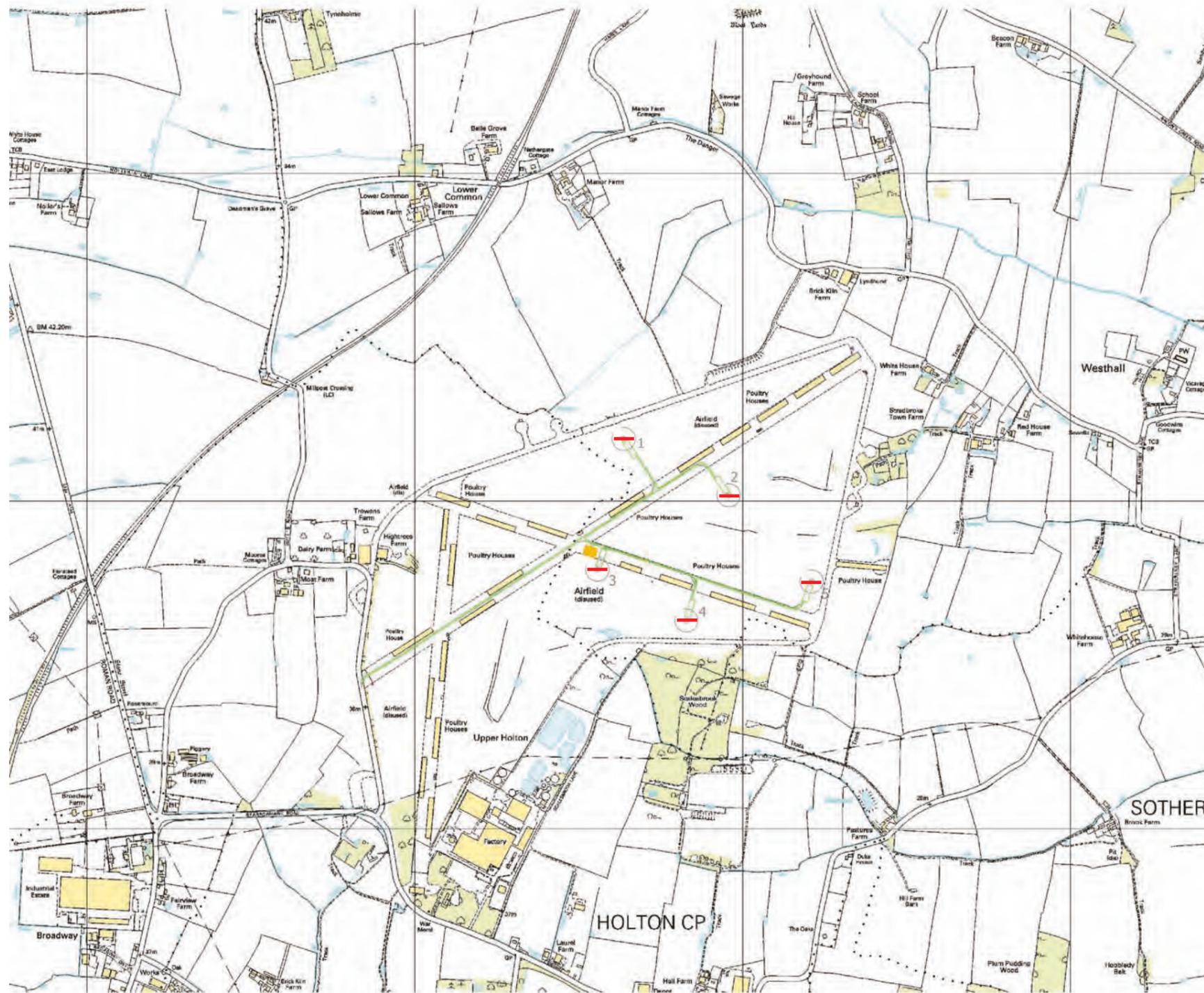
Fig 01: Figure showing location of assessment area

The Upper Holton Wind Farm

engena

prepared on behalf of

Bernard Matthews



Proposed turbine location and hardstanding



Site track (showing turning pull-ins)



Temporary construction compound



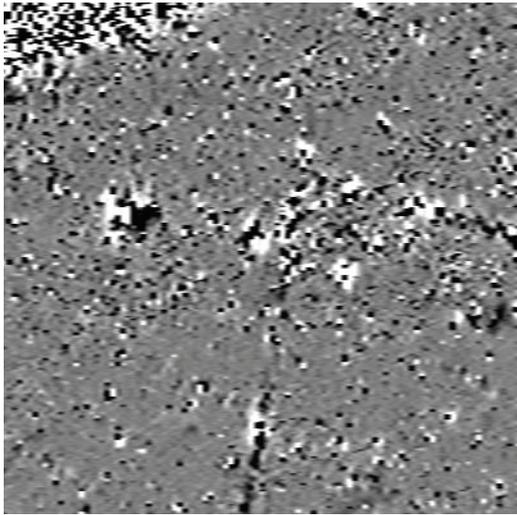
11kV substation



Permanent meteorological mast location

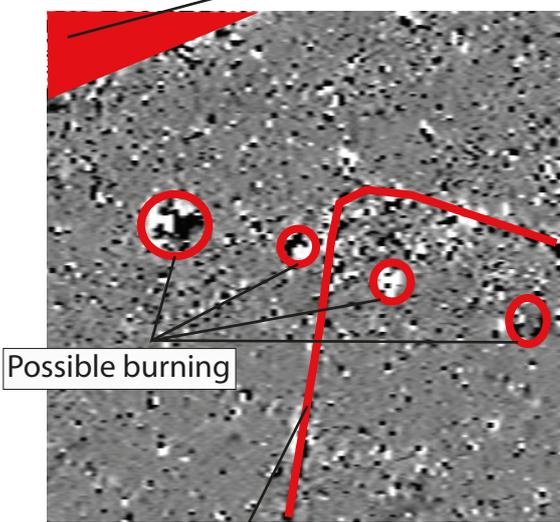
Figure 2
Trench Layout
Scale 1:15 000

Site Layout



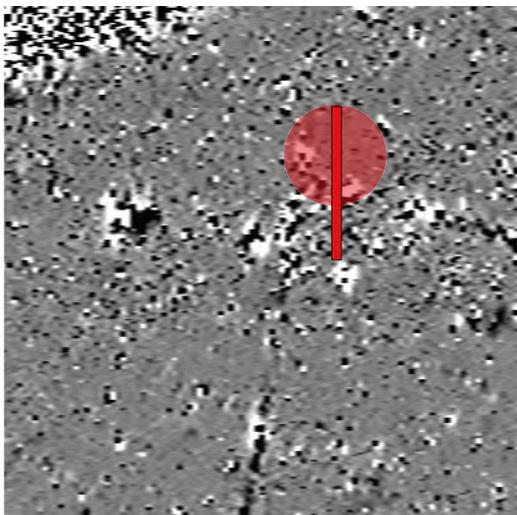
Survey of turbine 1 area

Disturbance from Road



Survey of turbine 1 area showing features

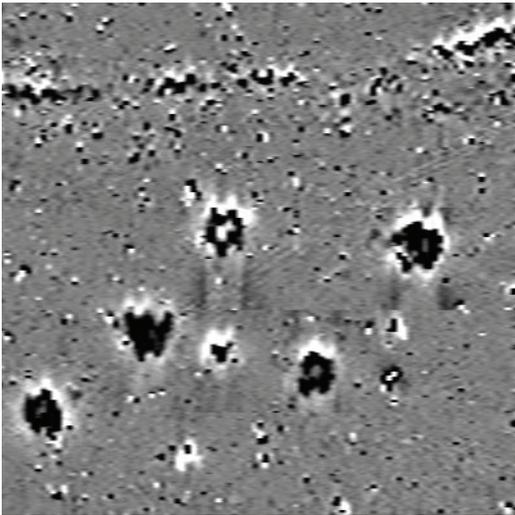
Field boundary on 1st-4th Ed OS Maps



Survey of turbine 1 area showing location of turbine base and location of 30m evaluation trench

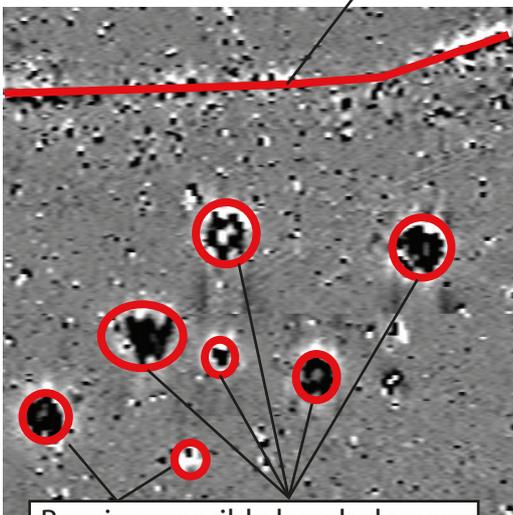
Fig 3





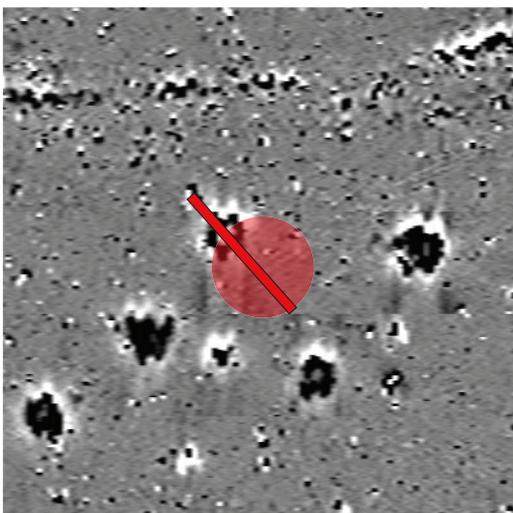
Survey of turbine 2 area

Field boundary marked on historic mapping



Burning, possible bomb damage

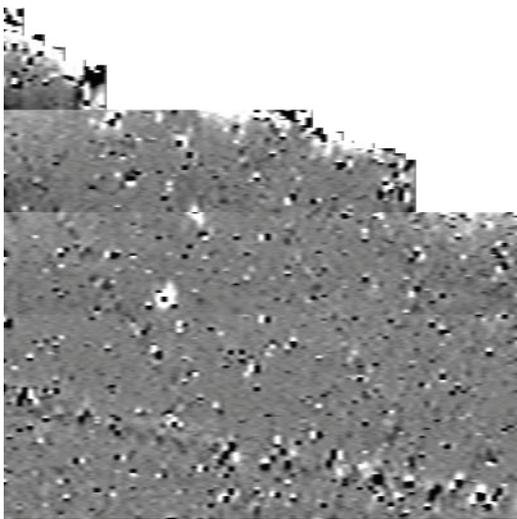
Survey of turbine 2 area showing features



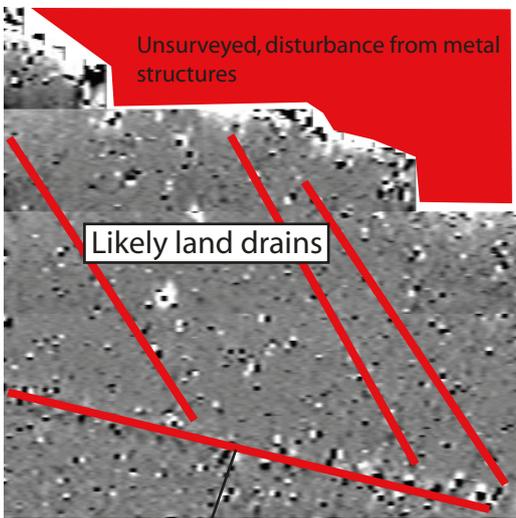
Survey of turbine 2 area showing location of turbine base and location of 30m evaluation trench

Fig 4

0 100m

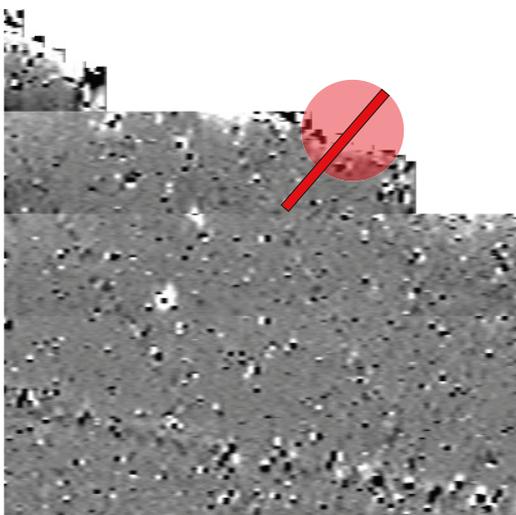


Survey of turbine 3 area

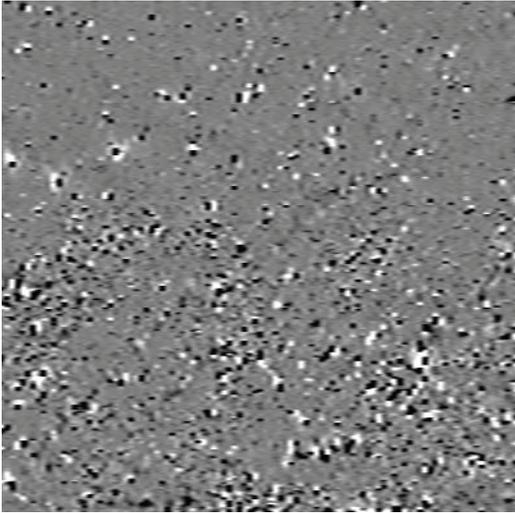


Survey of turbine 3 area showing features

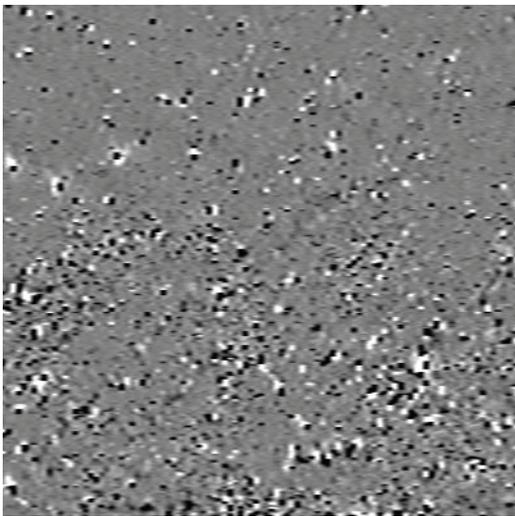
Field Boundary shown on historic mapping



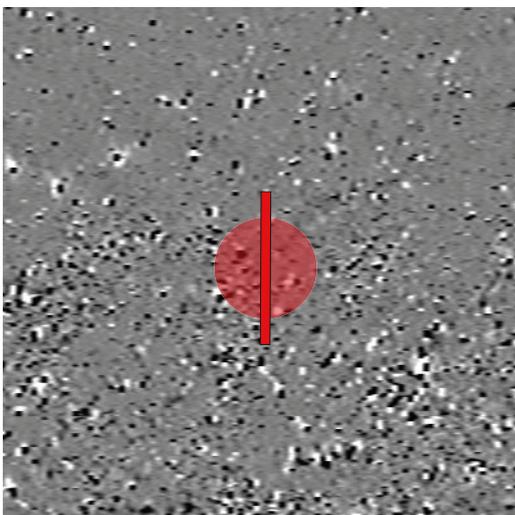
Survey of turbine 3 area showing location of turbine base and location of 30m evaluation trench



Survey of turbine 4 area



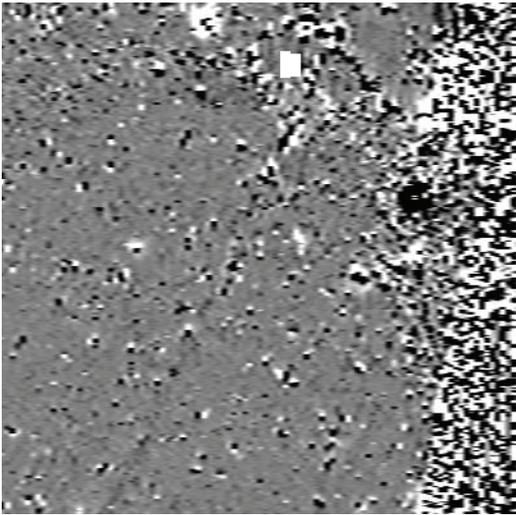
Survey of turbine 4 area showing features



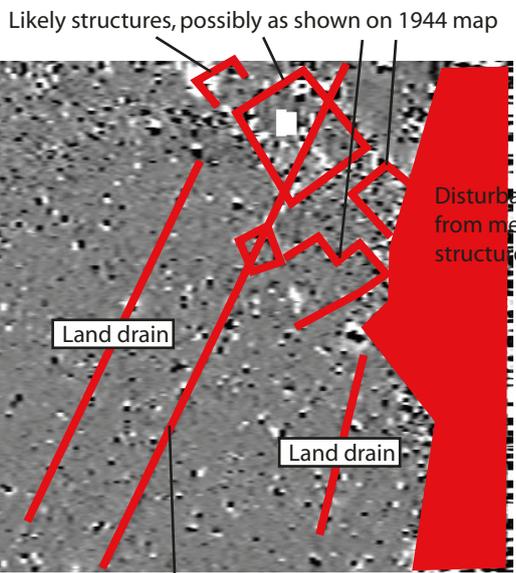
Survey of turbine 4 area showing location of turbine base and location of 30m evaluation trench

Fig 6

0  100m

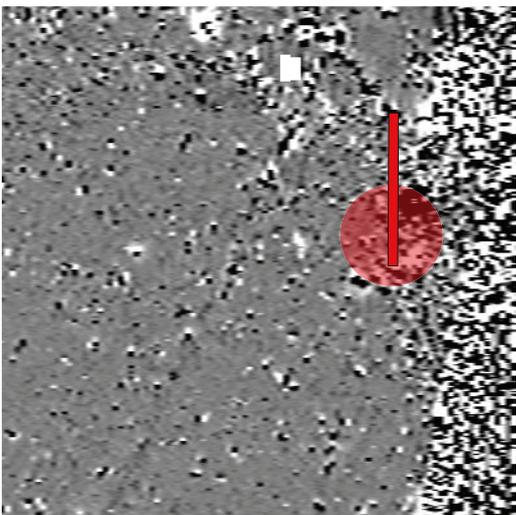


Survey of turbine 5 area



Survey of turbine 5 area showing features

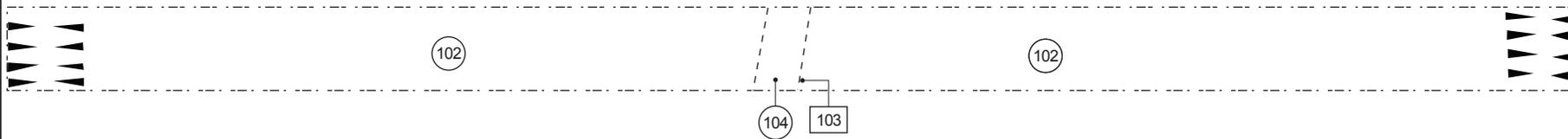
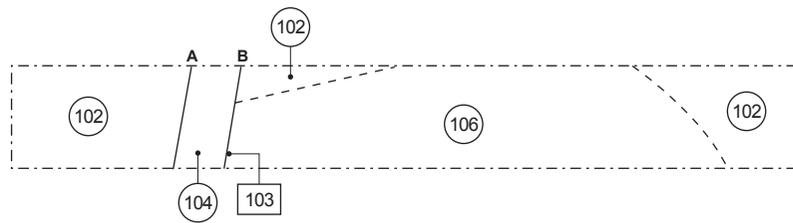
Field boundary on historic mapping



Survey of turbine 5 area showing location of turbine base and location of 30m evaluation trench

Fig 7





Job Title: Upper Holton

Drawing Title: Trench 1 plan

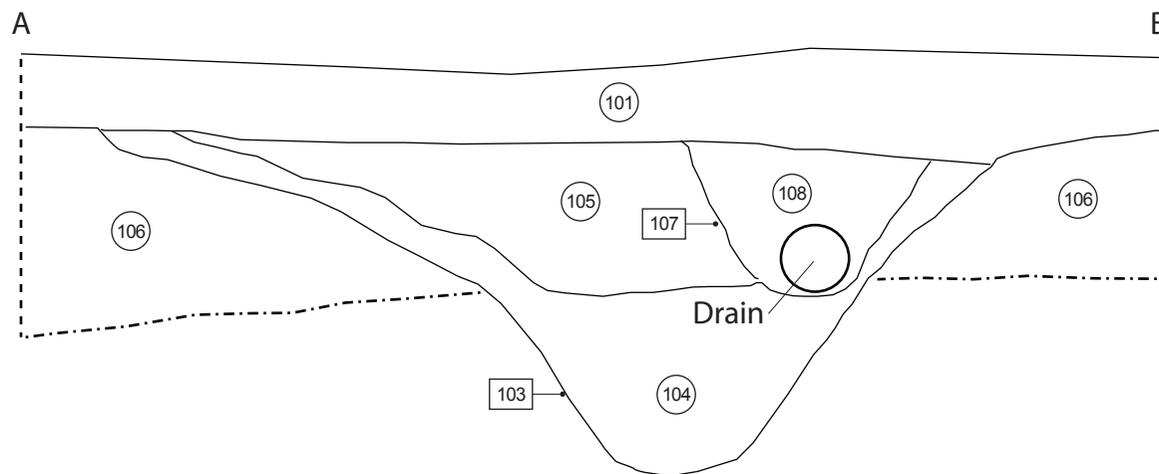
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Figure 08:





Job Title: Upper Holton

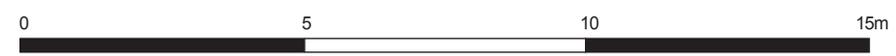
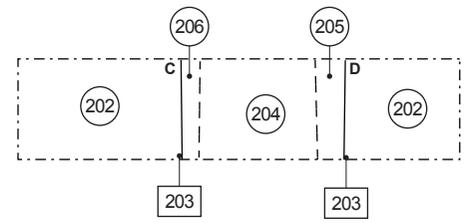
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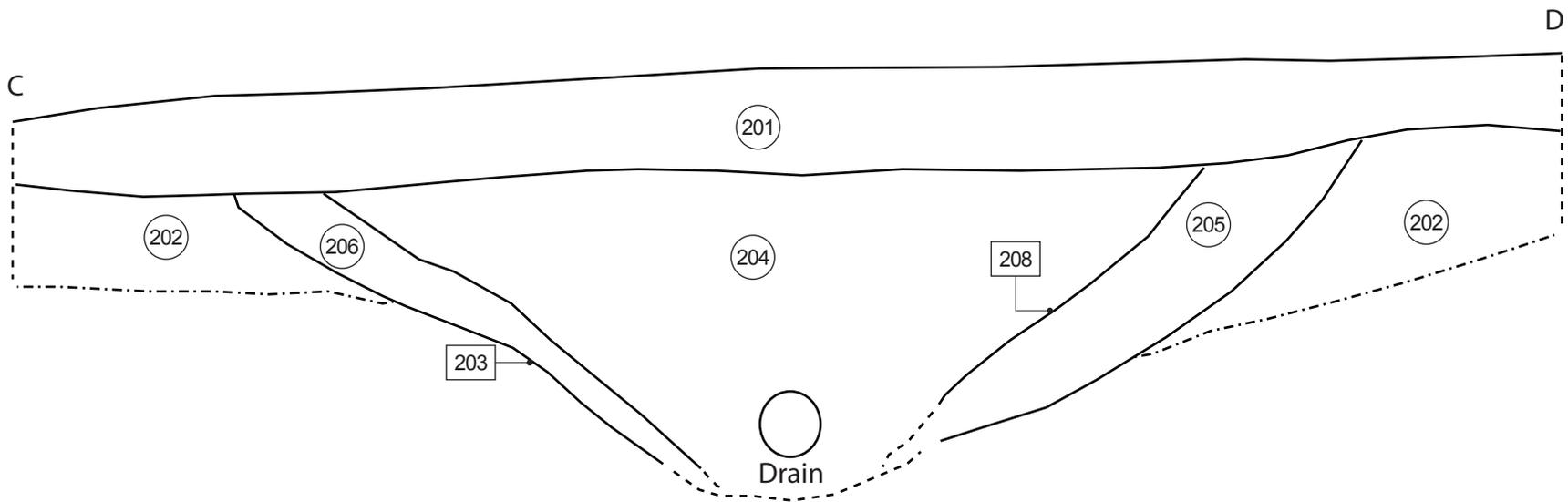
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Figure 09:

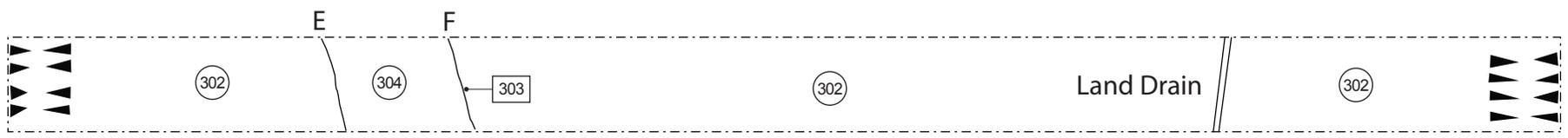
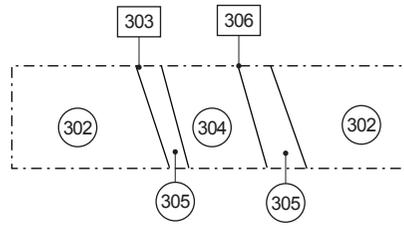


Job Title:	Upper Holton
Drawing Title:	Trench 2 Plan
Date:	14/02/2013
Drawn By:	JFH
Scale:	1:75@A4
Figure 10:	



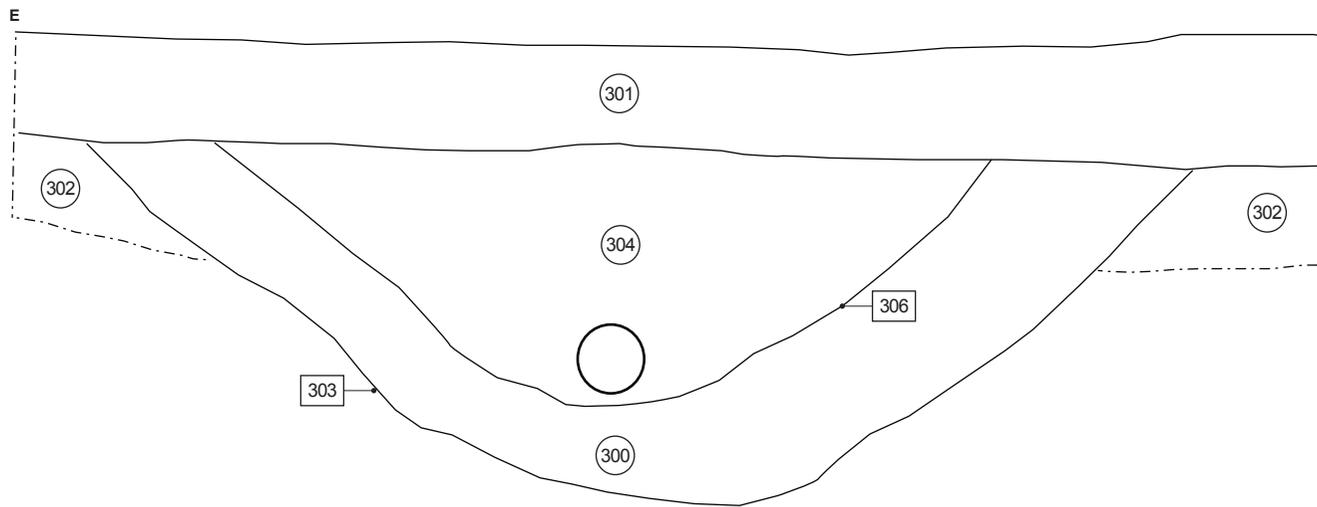


Job Title:	Upper Holton
Drawing Title:	Trench 2 Sec
Date:	14/02/2013
Drawn By:	JFH
Scale:	See Bar
Figure 11:	



Job Title:	Upper Holton
Drawing Title:	Trench 3 plan
Date:	14/02/2013
Drawn By:	JFH
Scale:	1:75@A4
Figure 12:	



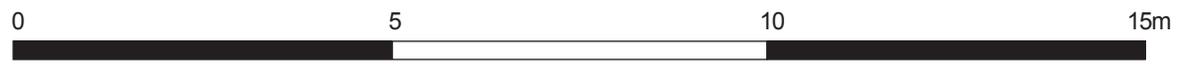


Job Title:	Upper Holton
Drawing Title:	Trench 3 sec
Date:	15/02/2013
Drawn By:	JFH
Scale:	1:20@A4
Figure 13:	



402

Land Drain



Job Title:	Upper Holton
Drawing Title:	Trench 4 plan
Date:	15/02/2013
Drawn By:	JFH
Scale:	1:100@A4
Figure 14:	





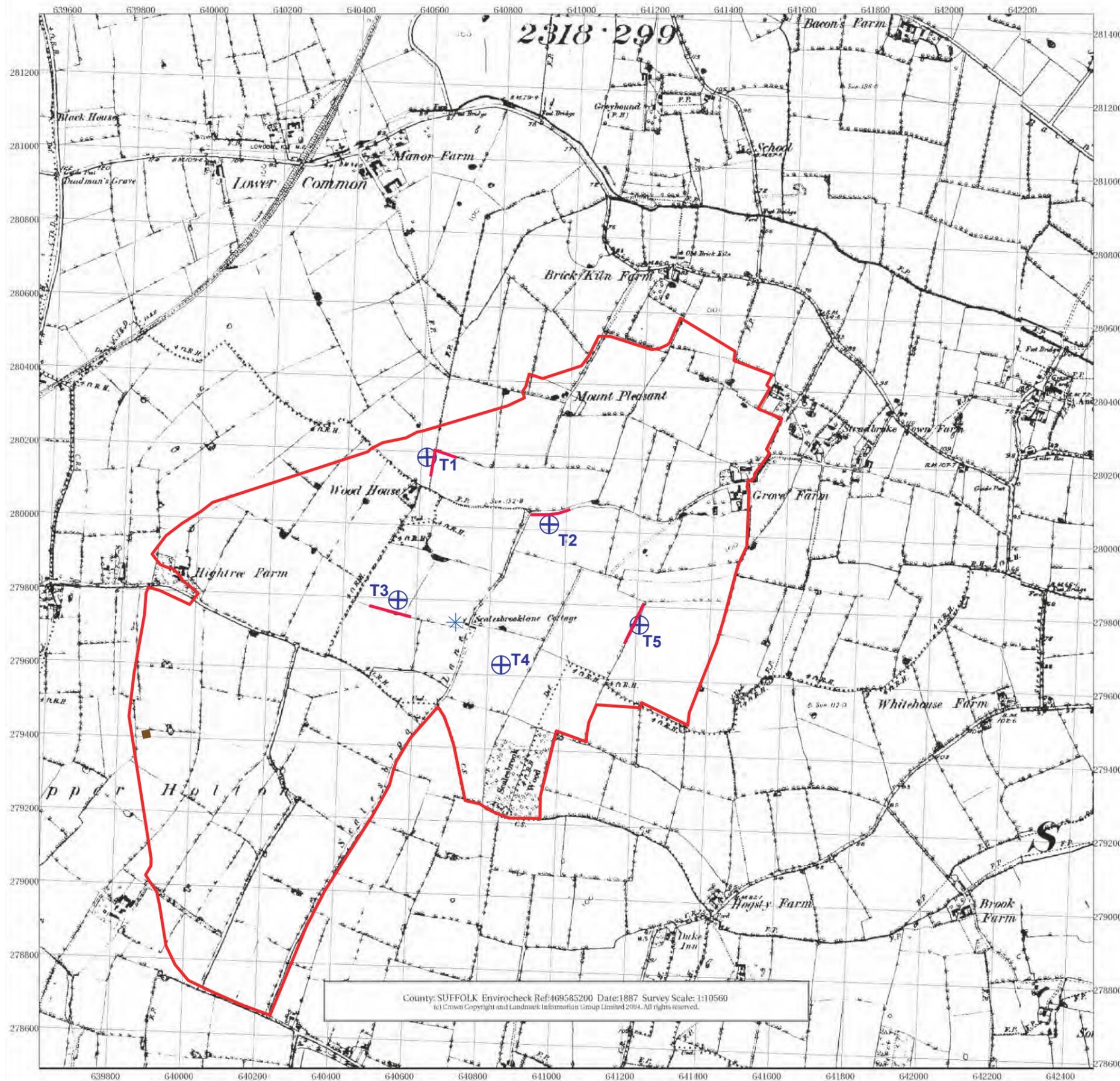
Job Title:	Upper Holton
Drawing Title:	Trench 5 plan
Date:	15/02/2013
Drawn By:	JFH
Scale:	1:100@A4
Figure 15:	



Upper Holton Wind Farm Proposal

engena
prepared on behalf of

Bernard Matthews Limited



- T2 Application site boundary
- ⊕ Proposed Turbine positions
- ✱ Anemometer Mast
- Sub Station

Field Boundaries in red show those ditches identified during geophysical surveys

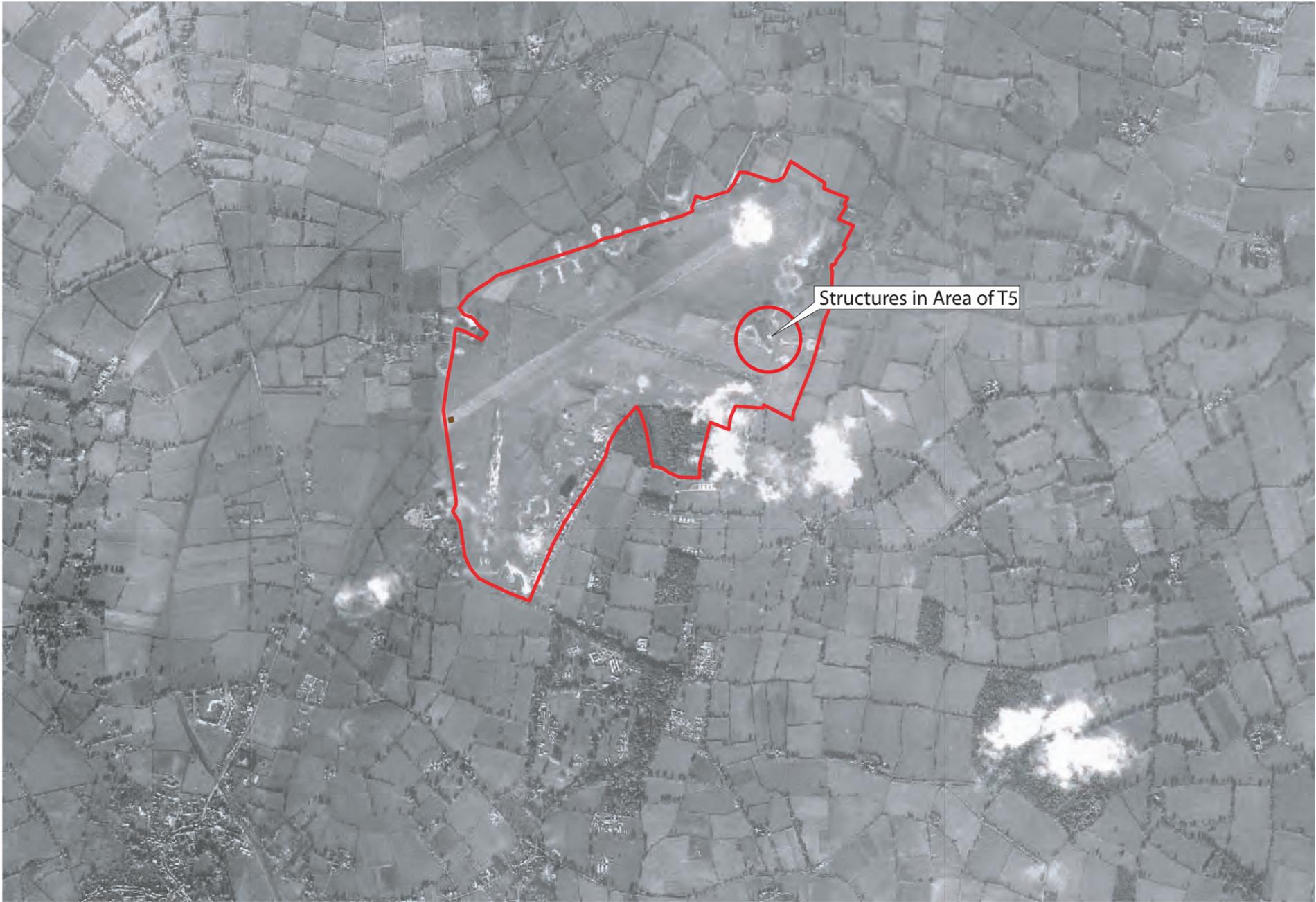
0 500 meters

Figure 16

OS First Edition Map 1886/7



Bernard Matthews Limited



- T2 Application site boundary
- ⊕ Proposed Turbine positions
- ✱ Anemometry Mast
- Sub Station
- Archaeological data points
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Listed Buildings

Figure 17

1946 RAF Aerial Photo

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APPENDIX II: Plates



Plate 1:Trench 1, Looking north west



Plate 2:Trench 1, Looking south

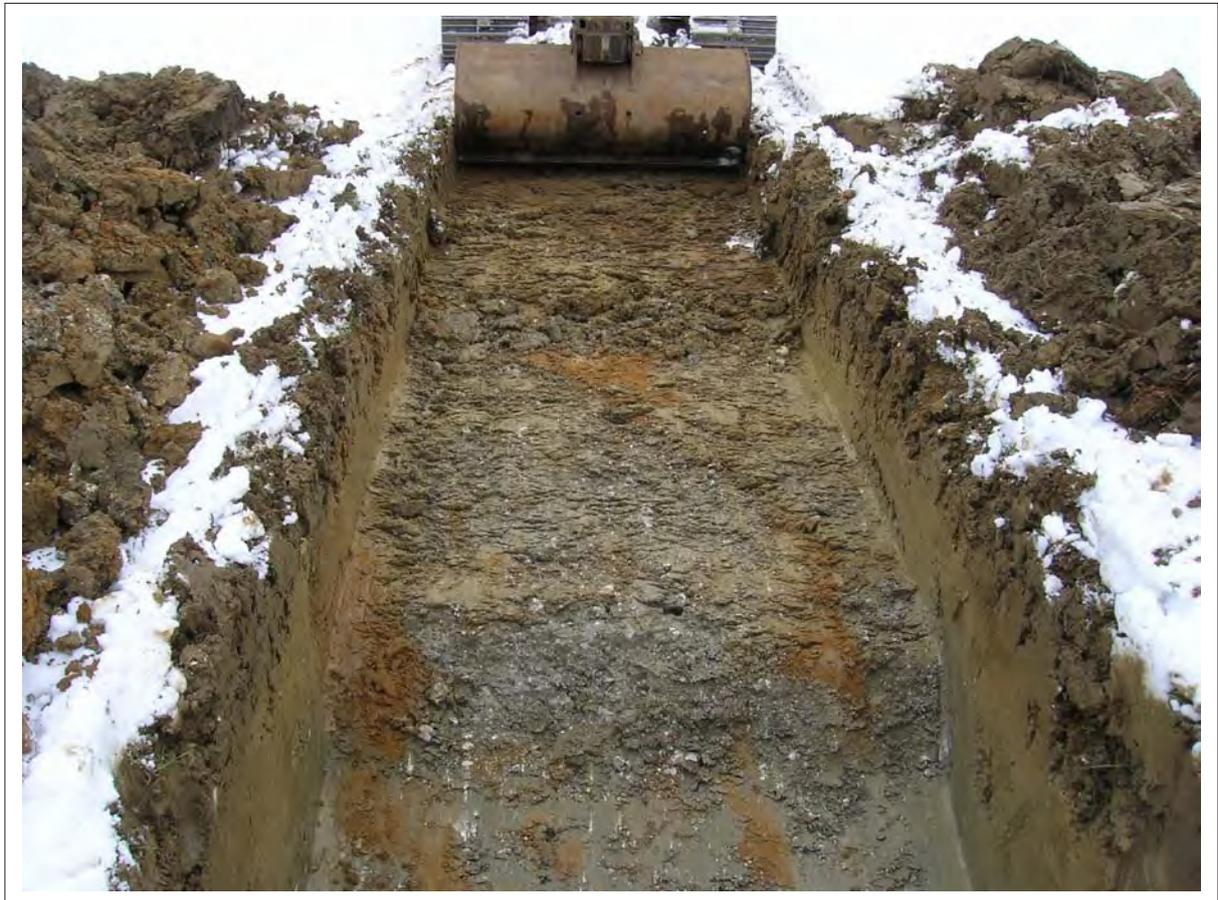


Plate 3: Northern end of trench 1, looking south



Plate 4: Ditch 103, east facing section, looking west. Scale 1x0.5m



Plate 5: Trench 2, Looking south



Plate 6: Ditch 203, east facing section, looking west



Plate 7: Ditch 303, east-south-east facing section, looking west north west

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APPENDIX III: Archive Cover Sheet

ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Upper Holton Airfield, Suffolk

Site Name:	Upper Holton
Site Code:	UHWF/13/EVA
PRN:	-
NPRN:	-
SAM:	-
HER No:	HLN 015
NGR:	NGR TM 4087 7974
Site Type:	Rural/Airfield
Project Type:	Geophysics & Evaluation
Project Manager:	Chris E Smith/Mark Houliston
Project Dates:	December 2012 – March 2013
Categories Present:	Modern
Location of Original Archive:	AW
Location of duplicate Archives:	-
Number of Finds Boxes:	-
Location of Finds:	-
Museum Reference:	-
Copyright:	AW
Restrictions to access:	None

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