

Witham Archaeology

A Report to Plandescil

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LAND OFF MARSH LANE, BRACON ASH, NORFOLK

Heritage Statement

Filipe Santos

LAND OFF MARSH LANE, BRACON ASH, NORFOLK

HERITAGE STATEMENT

PROJECT QUALITY CONTROL DETAILS:

Project Personnel:

Role	Name
Project Manager(s):	Russell Trimble
Fieldwork Supervisor(s):	Filipe Santos
Report Text:	Filipe Santos
Report Illustrations:	Filipe Santos

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LAND OFF MARSH LANE, BRACON ASH, NORFOLK

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Heritage Statement

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LAND OFF MARSH LANE, BRACON ASH, NORFOLK

HERITAGE STATEMENT

SUMMARY

This report presents the results of research carried out by Witham Archaeology in relation to the site of land off Marsh Lane, Bracon Ash, Norfolk. The report, commissioned by Plandescil Ltd., will form part of a submission for a planning application relating to the construction of a solar park.

The site comprises two agriculture fields located to the south of the village of Bracon Ash.

There is evidence of activity in the area surrounding the Site possibly dating back to the Mesolithic period. Finds dating of Late Prehistoric to post medieval date have been found during metal detecting surveys in several fields within the HER search area, especially to the south and west of the proposed area of development. Possible Bronze Age barrows, a possible Prehistoric burnt mound, possible medieval enclosures and field systems have been identified within the HER search area, through geophysical surveys and from aerial photographs. Cartographic evidence suggests that the Site was located within agricultural fields or unoccupied land from at least the late medieval period. However, it is likely that the Site was undeveloped and used for agriculture since the late Saxon period.

This investigation identified a low to medium potential for medium to high significance Prehistoric remains, a low potential for medium to high significance Roman occupation remains, a low potential for post Roman low to medium significance occupation remains, and high potential for low significance agricultural remains dating from the Saxon to the late post medieval and modern periods within the proposed area of development.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This heritage statement for a proposed solar development on land off Marsh Lane, Bracon Ash, Norfolk (hereafter referenced as the 'Site') includes a detailed account of known and potential historic environment assets in the area, and an assessment of the likely impact of the development upon both the historic built environment and sub-surface archaeological remains. The report was commissioned by Plandescil, for submission as part of a planning application for the construction of a solar park.

The information in this document is presented with the proviso that further data may yet emerge. Witham Archaeology cannot, therefore, be held responsible for any loss, delay or damage, material or otherwise, arising out of this report. The document has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

2.0 SITE LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY (see Figs. 1 and 2 & 3)

The village and parish of Bracon Ash is located in the district of South Norfolk, approximately 1km to the south-west of Mulbarton and 10km to the south south-west of Norwich. The Site is located approximately 1.2km to the south-east of the Grade I St Nicholas Church and 800m south of the southern edge of the village. The site of the proposed development comprises two agricultural fields. The northern and largest field measures 7.8 hectares and the southern field 3.7 hectares in area. The Site is centred at NGR TM 18755 99855.

The site is located upon solid geology of Cretaceous chalk Lewes Nodular, Seaford, Newhaven, Culver and Portsdown formations overlain by superficial deposits of Diamicton of the Lowestoft Formation (British Geological Survey website).

3.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

3.1 Legislation

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides the legislative framework for the regulation of development in relation to archaeology.

The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 gives statutory protection to any structure, building or work which is considered to be of particular historic or archaeological interest and regulates any activities which may affect such areas. Under the Act any work that is carried out on a Scheduled Ancient Monument must first obtain Scheduled Monument Consent.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 applies special protection to buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest. Section 66 (1) states that: *in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses.*

3.2 National Planning Policy

The Department of Communities and Local Government *National Planning Policy Framework* (hereafter referenced as NPPF), sets out current national planning policy with regard to development and the historic environment. The NPPF (as revised in February 2019) provides a framework for the development of local planning policy and must be taken into account in the preparation of local development plans. Policies relevant to the historic environment are set out in Section 16, *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*. The relevant provisions contained in NPPF, Section 16 are set out in the table below.

Policy Area	NPPF Policy Statement
Local plans and the historic environment (Para. 185)	<i>Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay, or other threats.</i>
Responsibilities of applicants for planning permission (Para 189)	<i>In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.</i>
Responsibilities of the local planning authority in assessing the implications of development (Para 190)	<i>Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.</i>
Key factors to be considered in determining planning applications (Para. 192)	<i>In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and</i> • <i>The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness</i>
Assessing the impact of development upon designated heritage assets (Para 193)	<i>When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.</i>
Assessing the impact of development upon non-designated heritage assets (Para. 197)	<i>The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.</i>
Encouraging development which makes a positive contribution to the settings of historic environment assets (Para. 200)	<i>Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.</i>

Table 1: Relevant Statements in the National Planning Policy Framework

Definitions of the terms used in describing and assessing the historic environment implications of development are set out by the NPPF in Annex 2. These definitions are set out in the table below.

Term	Definition
Heritage Asset	<i>A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).</i>
Archaeological Interest	<i>There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.</i>
Setting	<i>The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.</i>

Table 2: Definitions of Terms used in the assessment of historic environment assets

Designated assets include World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas.

3.3 Local Planning Policy

The Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk, adopted in March 2011 and amendment in January 2014, states as the 9th Spatial Planning Objective: *To protect, manage and enhance the natural, built and historic environment, including key landscapes, natural resources and areas of natural habitat or nature conservation value.*

Of the policies implemented to achieve this objective Policy 1: Addressing Climate Change and Protecting Environmental Assets, states: *The built environment, heritage assets, and the wider historic environment will be conserved and enhanced through the protection of buildings and structures which contribute to their surroundings, the protection of their settings, the encouragement of high-quality maintenance and repair and the enhancement of public spaces.*

Paragraph 5.4 also states: *The area has a wealth of environmental assets ranging from international and national status, to those of local importance. These must be safeguarded and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations. These assets include biodiversity (wildlife and habitats), built heritage and the wider historic environment, ancient monuments and archaeological assets, geodiversity (geological features), landscape and historic landscape character; as well as more general aspects such as the countryside and rural character, the setting of Norwich, towns and villages and the Broads. Assets of local importance, such as County Wildlife Sites are valuable in their own right, and in combination provide a significant resource.*

Policy 2: Promoting Good Design, states: *All development will be designed to the highest possible standards, creating a strong sense of place. In particular development proposals will respect local distinctiveness including as appropriate:*

- *the historic hierarchy of the city, towns and villages, maintaining important strategic gaps (...);*
- *the landscape character and historic environment, taking account of conservation area appraisals and including the wider countryside and the Broads area (...).*

4.0 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The principal aims and objectives of the project were to:

- *collate information from documentary sources to place the site in its historical context*
- *record prevailing site circumstances.*
- *produce an assessment of the potential impact of development*
- *collate information sufficient to allow for the design of further archaeological investigation should this be required.*
- *produce a project archive for deposition with a designated museum.*

5.0 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Sources

A search was made at the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (hereafter, referenced as HER) for information on all known heritage assets located within a radius of 1km of the proposed development.

A search at the archives was not undertaken due to mandatory confinement associated with the Covid-19 epidemic, in place at the time of compiling this report. The historic maps and plans containing representations of the area affected by the proposed development were obtained from online sources or the Witham Archaeology archives. Extracts from the relevant maps are presented as a map regression in section 6.6.

Internet sources consulted as part of the current study included:

- the National Heritage List
- The 'grey literature' library of archaeological reports held by the Archaeological Data Service
- Original drawings for the 1st Series Ordnance Survey held by the British Library On-line

5.2 Walkover Survey

A walkover survey of the Site and surrounding areas was carried out on 01/02/2021.

The walkover survey permitted assessments of:

- the nature of current and former land-use and the likely scale of disturbance to surface deposits
- features of potential archaeological significance
- any buildings or archaeologically significant earthworks extant on the site
- the likely impact of the development upon the settings of known historic environment assets located within the zone of inter-visibility around the site.

A photographic record of the Site compiled during the walkover survey includes general views of the area of the proposed development as well as specific views of potentially significant heritage assets. The record also includes views to and from historic environment assets located in the zone of intervisibility surrounding the site

6.0 RESULTS OF HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

6.1 Historical Background

The place-name Bracon Ash possibly derives from Old English and Old Norse and means Bracken and Ash trees (Key to English Place-Names website).

Several flint implements, including Palaeolithic flakes and a Neolithic scraper found in the parish of Bracon Ash, are the earliest evidence for occupation in the area. Cropmarks ring ditches, which might represent Bronze Age burial barrows, were identified on aerial photographs. A Bronze Age socketed axehead was also found in the parish.

Several Roman artefacts were found, especially to the south and south-west of Bracon Ash. These finds include coins, pottery, several brooches, a spear fragment, furniture fittings and a fragment of tile. The fragment of tile suggests that Roman buildings might have been located in this area.

The 1086 Domesday Book lists Bracon Ash divided between two manors, both held by Roger Bigot, with a population of 15.5 households (Open Domesday website). This indicates that the village dates at least from the late Saxon period, and early and middle Saxon artefacts have been found nearby. During the early medieval period the core of the village was probably centred around the 13th century St Nicholas' Church, located at the north edge of Bracon Ash, but over time the development of the village

spread south. Possible medieval enclosures and field boundaries were identified through aerial photographs and geophysical survey in the area.

Several historical farm buildings dating from the 16th to the 18th century are still standing on the southern outskirts of the village. The presence of these buildings suggests that the economy of the village was focussed on agriculture during the post medieval period.

Cartographic evidence suggests that the fields to the south of Bracon Ash were undeveloped and in use for agriculture from at least the late 18th century. Although it is likely that this type of use persisted from much earlier, probably from the late Saxon period.

6.2 Site Visit (Figs. 2 and 3)

A site visit was made on 2 of February 2021, to establish the nature of current and previous land use and to assess the potential for extant structures or other heritage assets such as earthworks.

The weather conditions were cloudy but dry throughout the visit and visibility was good.

The Site lies within agricultural fields to the south of the village of Bracon Ash, comprising two land parcels, a larger one to the north and a smaller parcel to the south. Both parcels were clear of any structures and were for the most part planted.

No services were identified apart from an overhead electrical cable crossing the northern part of the Site from north to south. Both parts of the proposed area of development are bordered by agricultural field, apart from two fields covered by trees immediately to the south of the northern part of the Site, and another tree covered field immediately to the south of the southern part of the Site. The Site boundaries are marked by hedgerows with sparse trees, apart from the northern boundary of the northern part of the Site and the western boundary of the southern part of the Site, both steep sided drainage ditches.

In the event of an intrusive archaeological investigation, such as an evaluation, access to the Site would be from the north to south track leading to the fields south of Bracon Ash. During such works, adequate fencing would be required to ensure the safety of members of the public, due to the presence of public paths near the Site.

There is no evidence of archaeological significant earthworks.



Plate 1: View of access track to Site, looking south



Plate 2: View of northern field from the north-west corner of the field, looking south-east



Plate 3: View of northern field from the northern edge, looking south-west



Plate 4: View of northern field from the northern edge, looking south-east



Plate 5: View of northern field from the north-east corner, looking south-west



Plate 6: View of northern field from the southern edge, looking north-east



Plate 7: View of northern field from the southern edge, looking north-west



Plate 8: View of southern field from the north-east corner, looking south-west



Plate 9: View of southern field from the south-east corner, looking north



Plate 10: View of southern field from the south-east corner, looking west



Plate 11: View of southern field from the south-west corner, looking east



Plate 12: View of southern field from the south-west corner, looking north-east



Plate 13: View of southern field from the north-west corner, looking south



Plate 14: View of southern field from the north-west corner, looking east

6.3 Previous Archaeological Investigations (Fig. 3)

There have been 3 episodes of formal archaeological investigation within the 1km radius HER search area, located to the north and north-east of the proposed area of development.

The closest to the Site was a 2016 building survey carried out at Home Farmhouse (ENF141635).

The two other investigations were carried out on land east of Long Lane in Mulbarton, at the north-east edge of the HER search area. A magnetometry survey (ENF131430) in 2013 was followed by an excavation (ENF131847) in the same year, resulting in the discovery of a post medieval brick clamp kiln, possible field boundaries and a small quarry pit (Muldowney 2013 and Walford 2013).

6.4 Designated Heritage Assets

Scheduled Monuments

No scheduled monuments were identified within the HER search area.

Listed Buildings (Fig.4)

There are ten Listed Buildings within the HER search area. In the following account the National Heritage List Number will be shown in brackets after the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) reference number.

The closest to Site are a group of buildings located at Mergate Hall, to the north-west of the Site. The closest is the Grade II* listed Mergate Hall (MNF9992; 1050692), a 17th century manor house, built with brick with plaintiled and pantiled roofs, with an original 'L' plan and alterations of 18th and 19th century date. The hall was possibly built on the site of an earlier manor (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1050692>). To the east of the hall is the Grade II listed Dower House (MNF9992; 1050693), a 17th century barn with a dwelling above. It was built in brick with a pantiled roof. It underwent alterations in the 20th century (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1050693>). The remaining listed building is an early 18th century Grade II listed pair of cottages called Mergate Hall Cottages (MNF50936; 1373092). Built in brick and clay lump with pantiled roof, it was originally a single farmhouse later divided into two cottages. The building was altered in the 19th and 20th centuries (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1373092>).

To the north of the proposed area of development is Grade II listed Mergate Farmhouse (MNF40992; 1050690), with 16th century origins. It was built in brick with timber frame and pantiled roofs. It underwent alterations in the 18th and 19th centuries (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1050690>).

Approximately 200m to the north-west of the access track to the Site is Grade II listed Home Farmhouse (MNF69228; 1440926). Dating approximately to 1630, the farmhouse is a timber-framed lobby entrance type, it was used as a post office in the second half of the 20th century, and refurbish and extended in the 1990s when it became a dwelling (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1440926>).

In the centre of Bracon Ash, c.450m to the north-west of the entrance to the Site is the Thatch Cottage and Bracon Ash and Hethel War Memorial, both Grade II listed. The Thatch Cottage (MNF20984; 1050691), located at Hawkes Lane, is a mid 16th century open hall house, extended in the 17th or 18th century. It is in timber framed and has a thatched roof (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1050691>). Close by is the war memorial (not shown in Fig. 4; 1442267), erected c.1920 on the village green. It was altered after the Second World War.

At the southern edge of Mulbarton, approximately 800m to the north-east of the access to the proposed area of development, is Bracon Lodge (MNF9998; 1305225). Built in the 18th century in the classical style it was refaced and refurbished c.1800 (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1305225>). Associated with the lodge, but individually listed, is the crinkle crinkle garden wall (not shown in Fig. 4; 1050697) (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1050697>).

At the eastern edge of the HER search area, is the 16th century Grade II listed Monk's Farmhouse (MNF16532; 1050705). The house, built in brick with a rendered timber frame and a pantiled and plain tiled roofs, was extended in the 19th century (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1050705>).

Approximately 650m to the south of the southern edge of the Site are three listed buildings part of Flordon Hall. The northern most is the Grade II* timber framed farmhouse (MNF18323; 1050698), built in the late 16th or early 17th century, it was later altered in the 19th and 20th centuries (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1050698>). To the south of the hall is the Grade II listed piggery (MNF19476; 1172231), which was a possible former dower house, built in the early 16th century in brick (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1172231>). Further west is a Grade II listed 17th century barn (MNF19476; 1373055) (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1373055>).

Locally Listed Buildings (Fig4)

The only locally listed building within the HER search area is a post medieval dovecote (MNF13741) associated with Flordon Hall, c.650m south of the Site. The dovecote is built in wood with a tiled roof and has two storeys.

Listed Registered Parks and Gardens

There are no Listed Registered Parks and Gardens within the search area.

6.5 HER Data (For locations see Figs. 5 and 6)

In the following account, information collated from the Norfolk Historic Environment Record is presented by period.

Prehistoric (AD43 and earlier)

There are four sites of Prehistoric find spots and a possible heritage asset identified within the HER search area.

The cropmarks of two possible ring ditches, identified in a field at the western edge of the search area through aerial photographs taken in 1996, were considered as marking the site of possible Bronze Age barrows (MNF40603).

At the south-east corner of the HER search area, a concentration of burnt flint pot boilers was identified, suggesting the presence of a Prehistoric burnt mound (MNF9987).

Prehistoric artefacts were found during metal-detecting surveys carried out in two fields in the southern part, and a field in the western part of the search area. Several Late Mesolithic to Bronze Age flint flakes and a Neolithic to Bronze Age fabricator were found on a field south of the Site (MNF67726), and a Late Bronze Age socketed axe head fragment and a Late Iron Age to Early Roman brooch were found at the south-west corner of the HER search area (MNF65036). At the western edge of the Site, an Iron Age terret was found (MNF28732).

Romano-British (43-410)

Although no heritage assets were identified, several find spots of Roman artefacts were made within the HER search area.

Immediately to the west of the access road to the proposed area of development a possible Roman copper alloy spear was found in 1994 (MNF33356), and in a field adjacent to the southern part of the Site a Roman brooch was found in 2015 (MNF67730).

The remainder of the artefacts were found in fields further away from Site, mostly during metal detecting surveys. In the fields to the south of the proposed area of development were found: a brooch (MNF63549); a bracelet (MNF66314); three roman coins (MNF63552) a brooch and a copper alloy (MNF66315); a brooch (MNF66317); a brooch and a sword belt (MNF63550); and a brooch and a coin (MNF67726). In the fields to the west and south-west of the Site were found: a Late Iron Age to Roman brooch, and a Roman Hod Hill brooch and furniture fitting (MNF64533); a copper alloy furniture fitting (MNF30203); six coins, a flue tile fragment and a brooch (MNF30393); and fifteen coins and a plate brooch (MNF28732). In the fields located to the north-west of the Site were found: three coins (MNF28735); a brooch (MNF29306); a coin and a bead (MNF64534); a coin, brooches and a mount and skirted terret (MNF67518); and six coins (MNF71171). In the east part of the HER search area was found a possible Roman or medieval finger ring (MNF40703).

Early Medieval (410-1066)

Several find spots of Saxon period items are identified within the HER search area.

Found in the fields to the south of the proposed area of development were: a bridle cheek piece (MNF63552); a bridle cheek piece, a stirrup terminal, a buckle, and a Late Saxon to post medieval spindle whorl (MNF66314); a Late Saxon to post medieval lead weight (MNF65034); an early Saxon buckle, two late Saxon to post medieval spindle whorls, a stirrup terminal fragment and a harness link (MNF63549); a coin (MNF65037); a late Saxon to post medieval spindle whorl and a late Saxon to medieval stirrup-strap mount (MNF67726); a middle to late Saxon strap-end and brooch, and a late Saxon to medieval stirrup-strap mount (MNF66315).

Finds made to the south-west and west of the Site were: an early Saxon sword pommel and a brooch (MNF65036); a late Saxon copper alloy unidentified object (MNF64533); early Saxon metal objects, a harness mount, a wrist clasp hook plate, a brooch, a buckle, and a late Saxon to post medieval spindle whorl (MNF30393).

From north-west and north of the Site were: a middle to late Saxon pseudo-coin brooch (nummular) (MNF28735); a spoon, a late Saxon to medieval bit link fragment, a brooch, and a late Saxon to post medieval spindle whorl (MNF29306); a girdle hanger, an annular brooch and a buckle (MNF64534); a buckle, a mount and a coin (MNF67518); and a copper alloy harness (MNF21579).

In the eastern part of the HER search area, were two fragments of late Saxon pottery (MNF16034).

Medieval (1066-1540)

Two medieval heritage assets, and several find spots of medieval artefacts were identified within the HER search area.

A system of ploughed out bank and ditch enclosures was identified from aerial photograms in the 1970s, in a field to the south of the proposed area of development (MNF9990). These cropmarks were considered to be medieval.

A geophysical survey, carried out at the north-eastern edge of the HER search area, identified possible medieval or post medieval field boundaries (MNF6741).

Found in the fields to the south of the Site were found: a lead pot mend (MNF65035); a buckle and mount (MNF66313); three medieval coins, medieval metal objects, a strap end and a medieval to post medieval copper alloy ring and buckle (MNF63552); a buckle, a harness pendant, a strap-end, a lead weight, a harness mount, a purse bar, and a medieval to post medieval book clasp (MNF66314); buckles, a strap end, and medieval to post medieval harness mounts, a crotal bell and a lead weight (MNF65034); a coin, several metal objects, a key, two buckle (MNF63549); a copper alloy harness mount (MNF63551); buckles, a harness pendant, an unidentified copper alloy object, and medieval to post medieval harness mount, rowel spur, and a probable lead weight or spindle whorl (MNF65037); a horse harness pendant (MNF64588); buckles, casket key, a harness hook, and a medieval to post medieval cloth seal (MNF67726); a casket key, a pendant cross, a strap end, a buckle, and a medieval to post medieval button (MNF66315); a brooch, a buckle, and medieval to post medieval lead weights, spur rowel and a copper alloy skilnet or posnet fragment (MNF66317).

In the south-western and western parts of the HER search area finds were: buckles, strap ends, harness mounts, a harness pendant, and a medieval to post medieval spoon, a thimble, copper alloy vessel fragment, a crotal bell, a badge, and a hooked dress fastener (MNF65036); a bar mount, buckles, a finger ring, a strap loop, a thimble, strap mounts, and a medieval to post medieval button and hooked tag (MNF64533); a cast copper alloy open work dagger chape, several metal objects, two buckles, a mount, a lead weight, a strap fitting, and medieval to post medieval buttons, and a buckle (MNF30393).

Found to the north-west and north of the Site were: eight coins, copper alloy ring, lead seal matrix, bronze strap end buckle, a copper alloy harness pendant, and a broken loop (MNF28735); a pottery shred, a leash swivel, two buckles, a brooch, a lead weight and a thimble (MNF29306); a pot mend, a mount, a buckle, buckles, a furniture fitting, and medieval to post medieval buckles, a cloth seal, a harness mount, a weight and a coin weight (MNF64534); a pin, and a medieval to post medieval copper alloy stud (MNF67518); two silver coins (MNF28734); two medieval coins, a thimble, a medieval to post medieval coin, buckles, and a copper alloy vessel foot, and a book fitting (MNF71171).

Post Medieval (1540-1901)

There were two post medieval heritage assets and several findspots within the HER search area.

To the north of Bracon Ash village, on the side of The Street is a 19th century milestone, erected on the turnpike road between Norwich and New Buckenham (MNF62779). The turnpike was established in 1772 and dispiked in 1870.

A possible medieval brick clamp kiln was excavated, and medieval to post medieval field boundaries were identified through geophysical survey in the north-eastern part of the HER search area, on a site south of Mulbarton (MNF6741).

Finds from the fields to the south of the Site were: unidentified lead objects, crotal bells, a buckle and a cloth seal (MNF66313); a crotal bell and a cloth seal (MNF63552); harness mounts, a crotal bell and lead weight (MNF65034); several metal objects (MNF63549); a coin (MNF63551); two harness mounts, and buckles (MNF65037); three tokens (MNF64588); a harness mount, a sword belt fitting, a buckle, a steelyard weight and a rotary key (MNF67726); a harness mount (MNF66315); harness mounts (MNF66317); and several metal objects (MNF63550).

Found to the south-west and west of the proposed area of development were: harness mounts, lead cloth seals and a lead Russian bale seal (MNF65036); a harness mount, buckles, a cloth seal and part of a spur side (MNF64533); several metal objects, a harness mount, a possible binding, and a harness fitting (MNF30393).

In the north-western part of the HER search area, finds were: a buckle, three copper alloy vessel legs, three copper alloy harness pendants, a base of a fastener, a strap end or book harness, a casket mount, a strap end buckle, a cauldron leg, and a coin (MNF28735); a convex lentoid belt or harness stud, a spike, a book clasp, a copper alloy hinged luggage fitting, a buckle, a drop handle, a cloth seal and a Jew's harp (MNF29306); two coin weight, buckles, a cloth seal, a harness mount, and a weight (MNF64534); a buckle, a harness mount, a rotary key, a lead unidentified object and crotal bells (MNF67518); and three coins (MNF71171).

Modern (1901-present)

There were no modern heritage assets or find spots identified within the HER search area.

Undated

The only undated heritage asset is a cropmark of two parallel ditches (MNF17140), marking the line of a road, running north-west to south-east from the junction of The Street with Hawkes Lane, in Bracon Ash.

6.6 Cartographic Information

1797 Faden's Map of Norfolk (not reproduced)

Despite the 1797 map being of too small a scale to show the Site in detail it shows the area to the south of Bracon Ash clear of development (http://maps.norfolk.gov.uk/highways/historic/faden_norfolk5.htm).

1826 Bryant's Map of Norfolk (not reproduced)

The 1826 map is also of too small a scale to show the Site or any field boundaries in detail, but the area remains clear of development (<http://maps.norfolk.gov.uk/highways/historic/bryant5.htm>).

1839 Tithe Map (not reproduced)

The 1839 tithe map shows the northern part of the Site occupying three fields, with two pond features, one on the central field and the other in the east field. The southern part of the site is occupying two fields, the larger one also containing a pond (<http://www.historic-maps.norfolk.gov.uk/mapexplorer/>).

1887 First Edition Ordnance Survey 6-inch County Map (Fig. 7)

Although the 1887 map shows the Site in more detail there are no significant changes from 1839, apart from the two easternmost fields occupied by the northern part of the Site having been merged.

1946 Aerial Photograph (not reproduced)

The 1946 aerial photograph shows that the fields occupied by the southern part of the Site have been merged, and the pond present in the area has been filled. In the northern part of the Site, a third pond close to the northern boundary, has been formed.

Two fields covered by woods are also visible, one lies between the northern and southern part of the Site and the second on the field immediately to the south of the southern part of the Site (<http://www.historic-maps.norfolk.gov.uk/mapexplorer/>).

1988 Aerial Photograph (not reproduced)

The merging of the fields occupied by the northern part of the Site and the filling of two ponds extant on this part of the site are the only significant changes that occurred after 1946 (<http://www.historic-maps.norfolk.gov.uk/mapexplorer/>).

7.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria for assessing the significance of heritage assets identified in the present study follow those set out in the Department for Transport document *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* (DMRB). The DfT scheme, which employs five categories to assign value ranging from Negligible to Very High, is set out in the table below.

Rating	Asset Type
Very High	Very high importance and rarity, international scale and very limited potential for substitution.
High	High importance and rarity, national scale, and limited potential for substitution.
Medium	Medium or high importance and rarity, regional scale, limited potential for substitutions.
Low	Low or medium importance and rarity, local scale.
Negligible	Very low importance and rarity, local scale.

Table 1. Schedule of DMRB criteria for assigning value to heritage assets

7.1 Designated Heritage Assets

This study identified ten listed buildings of high significance within the HER search area. Most of the listed buildings considered during this study are farm buildings, including farmhouses, dating from 16th to the 18th centuries. The closest to the Site are three listed buildings that form part of Mergate Hall.

The only locally listed building within the HER search area is a post medieval dovecote, of low to medium significance associated with Florodon Hall, c.650m south of the Site.

7.2 Non-Designated Heritage Assets

No non-designated heritage assets were found in the proposed area of development.

A pair of possible Bronze Age barrows identified through cropmarks on aerial photographs and a possible Prehistoric burnt mound located respectively c.1km to the south-west and c.1km to the south-east of the proposed area of development and finds of Early to Late Prehistoric worked flint and Iron Age metal objects were the only Prehistoric heritage assets identified within the HER search area. Although these assets are located on the fringes of the HER search area, they suggest a low to medium potential for medium to high significance Prehistoric buried remains within the proposed area of development. Any Prehistoric remains associated with or representing burial contexts would be of high significance.

Roman artefacts were found on fields adjacent to the access track leading south from Bracon Ash and the southern part of the Site, as well as other parts of the search area, especially to the north, west and south of the proposed area of development. Among the finds were coins, brooches and personal adornments, and perhaps more significantly, furniture fittings and a fragment of a flue tile. The latter finds in particular suggest that there was settlement in the area during this period, but it seems more likely that the proposed area of development was used for agriculture. There is, therefore, a medium to high potential for low to medium significance Roman agricultural remains and a low potential for medium to high significance Roman occupation remains.

The Site was probably located within agricultural fields or unoccupied lands throughout much of the early medieval, medieval, post medieval and modern periods, meaning that there is high potential for low significance agricultural activity remains on Site. Although the proposed area of development is approximately 1.25km to the south-east of the medieval Grade I listed Church of St Nicholas and seemingly located away from the main areas of settlement from at least the medieval period, the potential

for occupation related remains to be present on Site cannot be completely discarded, especially when taking into account the somewhat dispersed character of the village. Therefore, there is a low potential for low to medium occupation remains to be present on the Site.

Cartographic evidence shows that field in the northern and southern parts of Site were later merged into two land parcels, and several boundaries were discontinued. It also shows several ponds that were latter backfilled. Evidence of these field boundaries is likely to have survived but their significance is low.

8.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION

The criteria for assessing the scale of impact of the proposed development upon heritage assets identified in the present study are drawn from the Department for Transport document *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* (DMRB). The DfT scheme employs five categories to assess scale of impact, ranging from No Change to Major Adverse. The criterial are set out in the table below.

Rating	Description
Major adverse	Loss of resource and/or quality and integrity of resource; severe damage to key characteristics, features or elements
Moderate adverse	Loss of resource, but not adversely affecting the integrity; partial loss of/damage to key characteristics, features or elements
Minor adverse	Some measurable change in attributes, quality or vulnerability; minor loss of, or alteration to, one (maybe more) key characteristics, features or elements
Negligible	Very minor loss or detrimental alteration to one or more characteristics, features or elements
No Change	No loss or alteration of characteristics, features or elements; no observable impact in either direction

Table 2. DMRB criteria for assessing the magnitude of the impacts of the proposed development

This investigation did not identify any known heritage assets located within the proposed area of development. However, the Site is located in a landscape of significant archaeological potential. During metal detecting surveys, find were made in various fields within the HER search area, especially to the south and west of the Site. The finds recovered suggest that the area surrounding the Site has seen some level of activity from the Late Mesolithic through to the late post medieval and modern periods. Some of the Roman finds even suggest some level of domestic occupation in the area. Furthermore, the sites of two possible Bronze Age barrows and a Prehistoric burnt mound, were identified in the western and south-east edges, respectively, of the HER search area, as well as possible medieval field systems.

Although any buried remains would probably have been disturbed by ploughing from at least the medieval period, they are likely to survive in a truncated form, mainly as negative features cut into the sub-surface geological strata. There are no records of development within the proposed area of development and therefore no disturbance from related construction activity. The presence of any archaeological remains could only be ascertained during an intrusive archaeological investigation such as a watching brief or trial trench evaluation, but the proposed development could have a major adverse impact in any buried remains surviving on the Site.

Due to the remoteness of the Site from the listed and locally listed buildings within the HER search area, the impact asset of the proposed development on any designated heritage would be negligible or non-existent.

In the absence of further information concerning the foundations and formation levels it is not possible to provide a detailed assessment of the likely level of disturbance of the proposed development. The installation of the solar panels should have a low impact, but related activities such as general landscaping, excavation for foundations of the proposed structures, such as the substations and the inverter house, installation of services (specifically the diversion of the overhead electrical service underground) and enabling works could have a major adverse impact on buried archaeological remains in specific areas of the site.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

This investigation considers that the installation of the solar panels would have a low adverse impact on any surviving archaeological buried remains. However, the construction of the proposed structures and the diversion of an overhead electricity service underground could have an adverse impact on any archaeological buried remains present on the Site.

The proposed area of development lies in an area of significant potential for archaeological remains, especially for low significance agricultural remains dating from the Saxon to the post medieval period. However, there is some potential for medium to high significance occupation remains dating to the Roman period, and for high significance Late Prehistoric buried remains.

Cartographic evidence and written sources suggest that the Site was located within agricultural fields or undeveloped land at least from the late Saxon to the late post medieval and modern periods.

The impact of the proposed development can be mitigated by a programme of monitoring and recording.

10.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Plandescil Ltd. for their interest and support in ensuring the successful completion of this project, Russell Trimble for editing this report and the staff at Norfolk Environment Record for providing relevant information.

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12.0 PROJECT/ ARCHIVE DETAILS

12.1 Project Details

EVENT NO.: TBC

PLANNING APPLICATION NO.: Predetermination

FIELD OFFICER: Filipe Santos

NGR: TM 18755 99855

CIVIL PARISH: Bracon Ash

DATE OF INTERVENTION: 01/02/2021 to 24/02/2021

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: Heritage Statement

UNDERTAKEN FOR: Plandescil Ltd.

12.2 Archive Details

PRESENT LOCATION: Witham Archaeology, 2 High Street, Ruskington, Lincolnshire, NG34 9DT

DESIGNATED REPOSITORY: Norfolk Museum Services

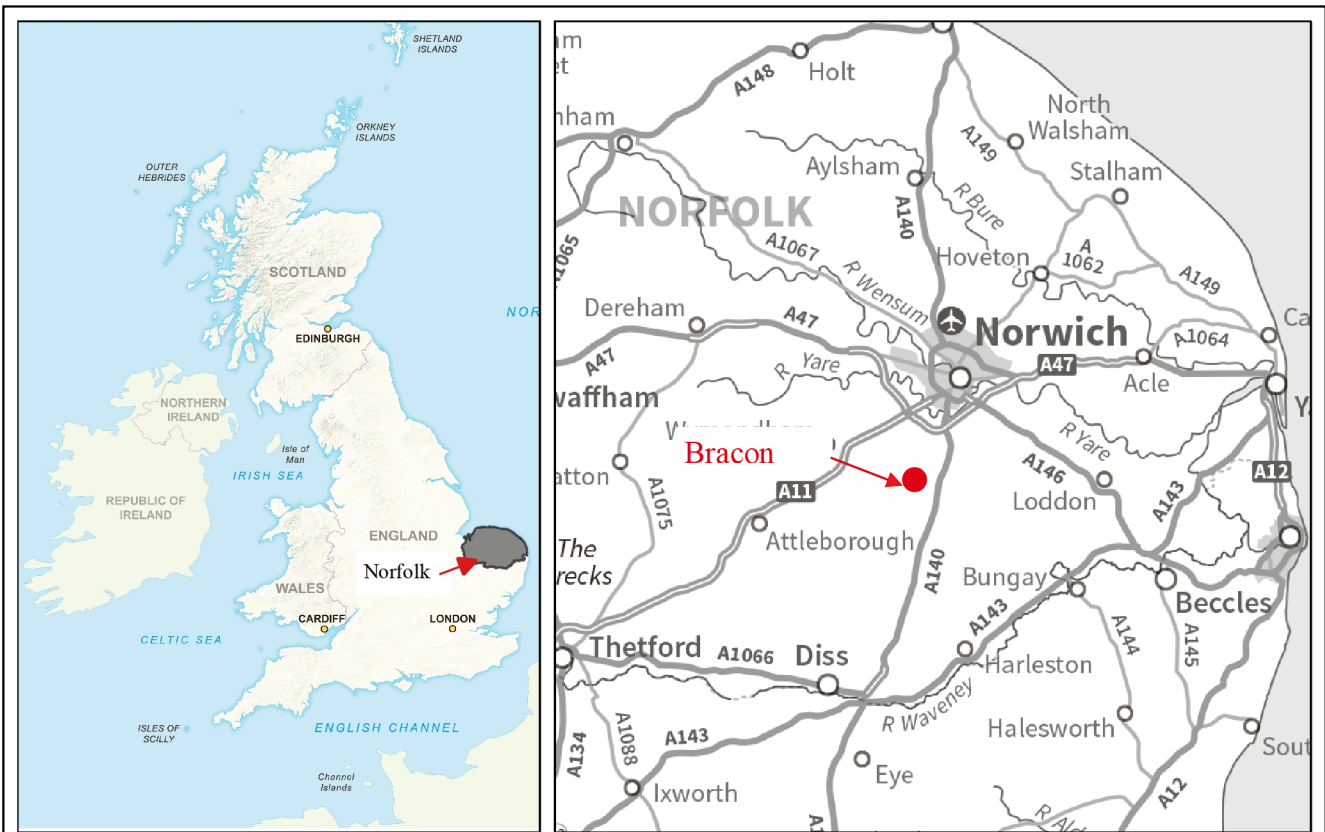
MUSEUM ACCESSION No.: TBC

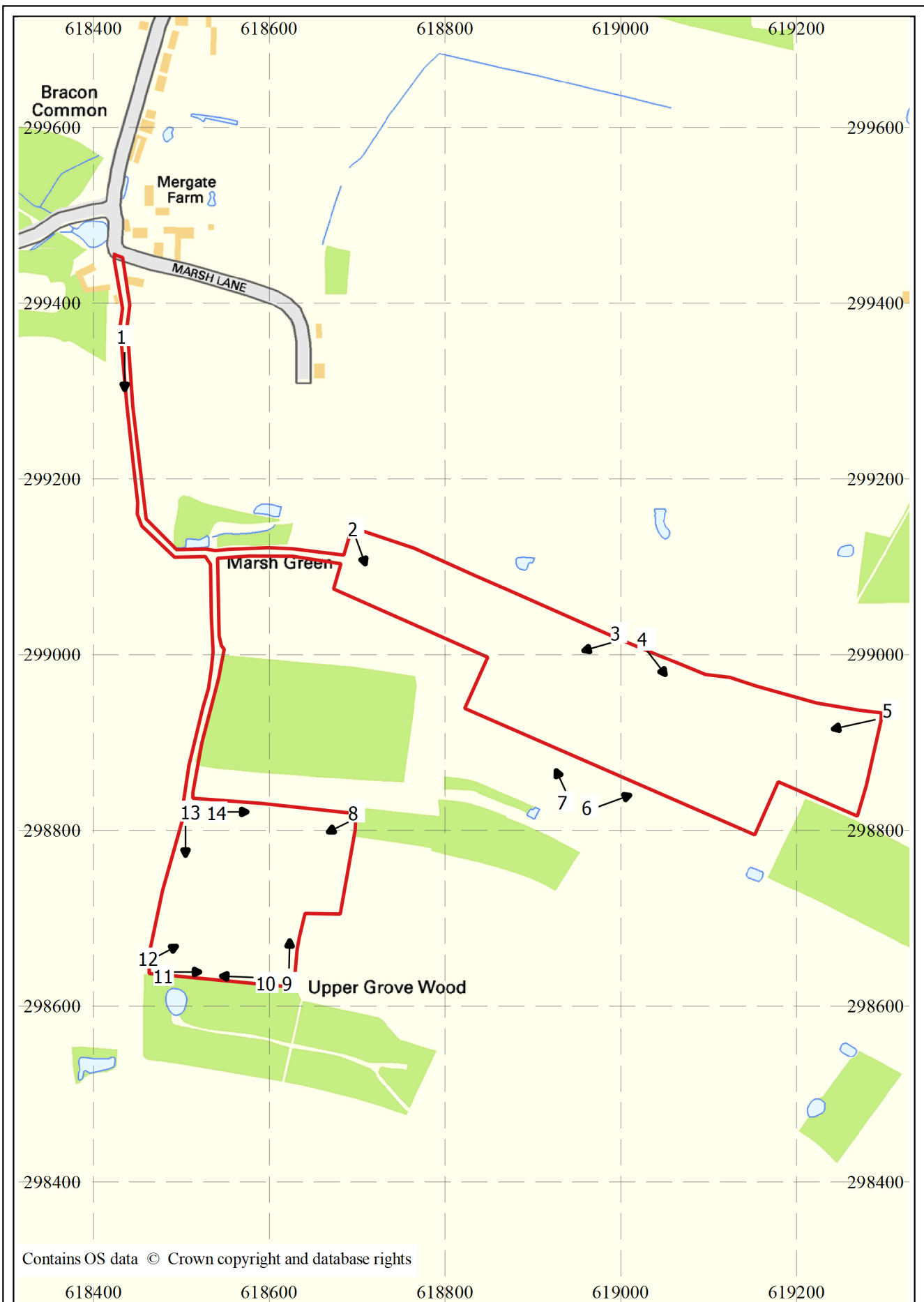
PROPOSED ACCESSION DATE: TBC

The Site Archive Comprises:

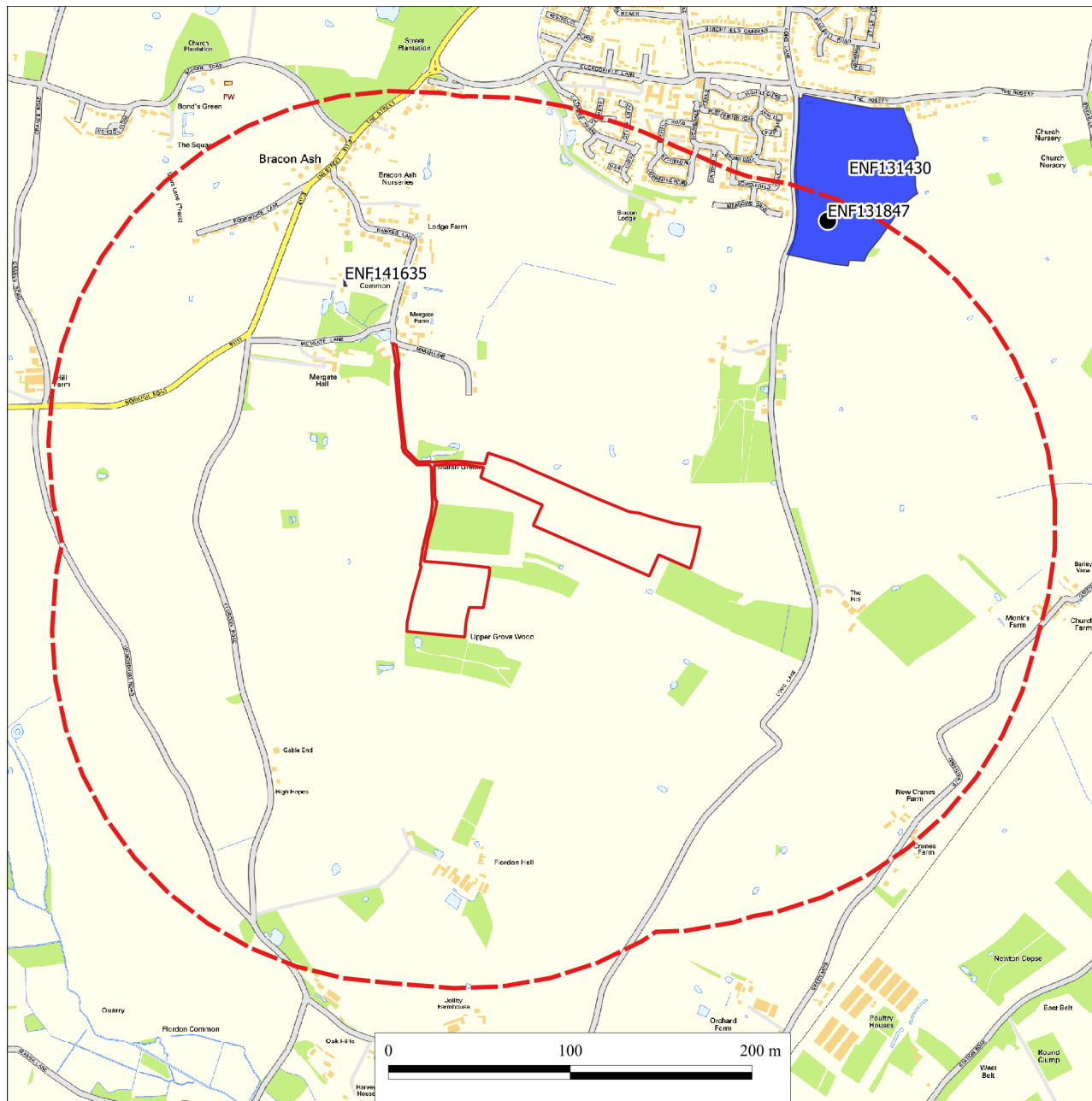
Digital Photographs	14
Site Notes	1

It is intended that transfer of the archive in accordance with current published requirements will be undertaken following completion of this project.





Witham Archaeology Site plan showing photographic direction of view Scale 1: 6 000 Fig. 2



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Point Data - Archaeological Recording Events (NHER)

HER Ref.	Description
ENF131847	Excavation by Northamptonshire Achaeology at land east of Long Lane, Mulbarton, July 2013

Region Data - Archaeological Recording Events (NHER)

HER Ref.	Description
ENF131430	Geophysical Survey (magnetometry) by Northamptonshire Achaeology at land east of Long Lane, Mulbarton, April 2013
ENF141635	Building Survey by S. Heywood (HES), Home Farmhouse, Bracon Ash, April 2016

Key

- HER Search Area
- Archaeological Recording Events (Point)
- Archaeological Recording Events (Region)



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Point Data - Historic Buildings (NHER)

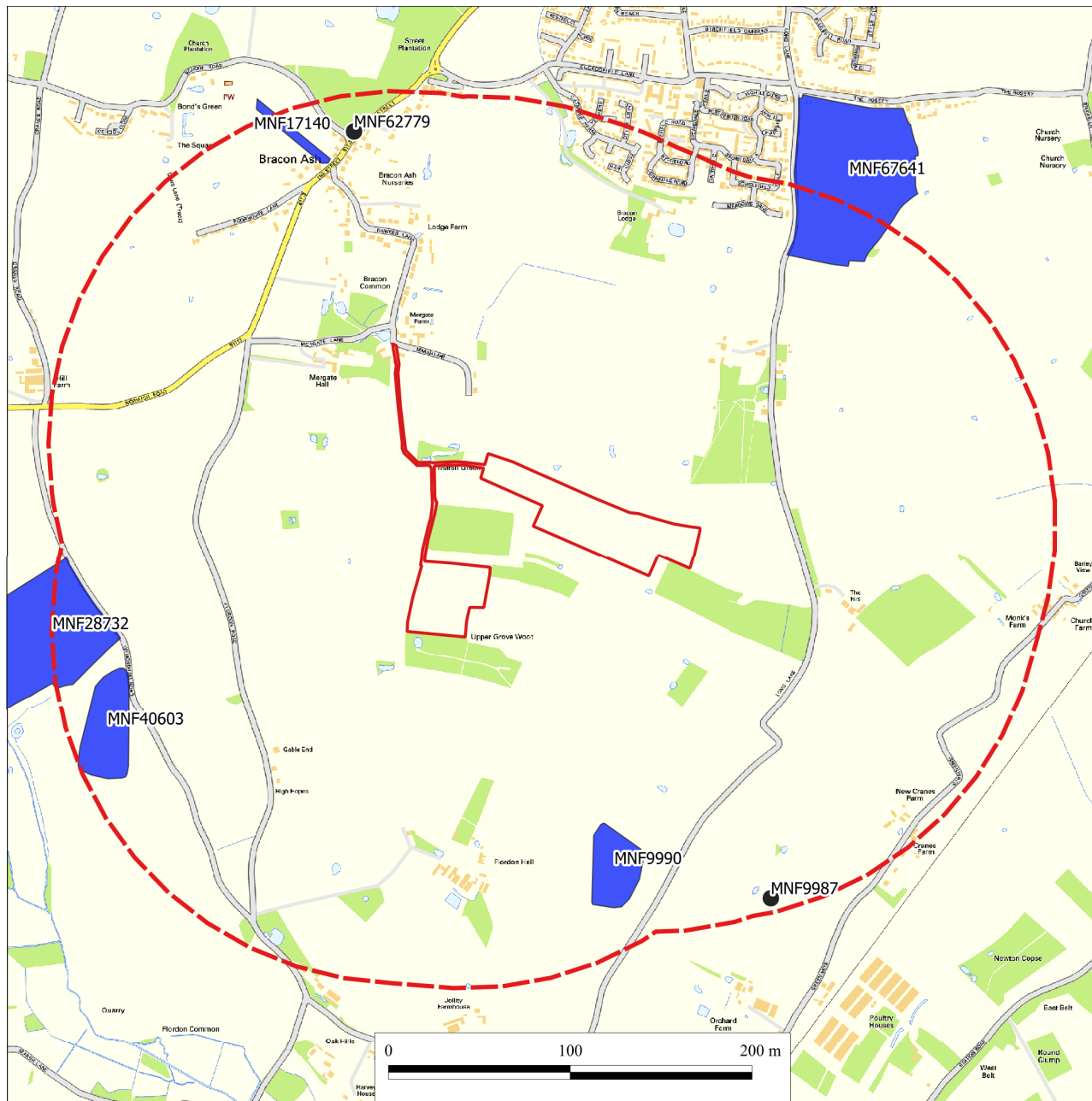
HER Ref.	Period	Description
MNF13741	Post Medieval	Post medieval dovecote
MNF50936	17th Century to 21st Century	Mergate Hall Cottages

Region Data - Historic Buildings (NHER)

HER Ref.	Period	Description
MNF16532	Post Medieval	Monk's Farm and barn
MNF18323	Post Medieval to 21st Century	Flordon Hall
MNF19476	16th Century to 21st Century	Post medieval house and barn belonging to Flordon Hall
MNF20984	Medieval to 19th Century	64 and 65 Hawkes Lane
MNF40992	Medieval to 19th Century	Mergate Farm
MNF69228	Undated	Home Farmhouse, Bracon Ash
MNF9992	Post Medieval	Mergate Hall and Dower House
MNF9998	Post Medieval	Bracon Lodge

Key

-  HER Search Area
-  Historic Buildings (Point)
-  Historic Buildings (Region)



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Point Data - Heritage Assets (NHER)

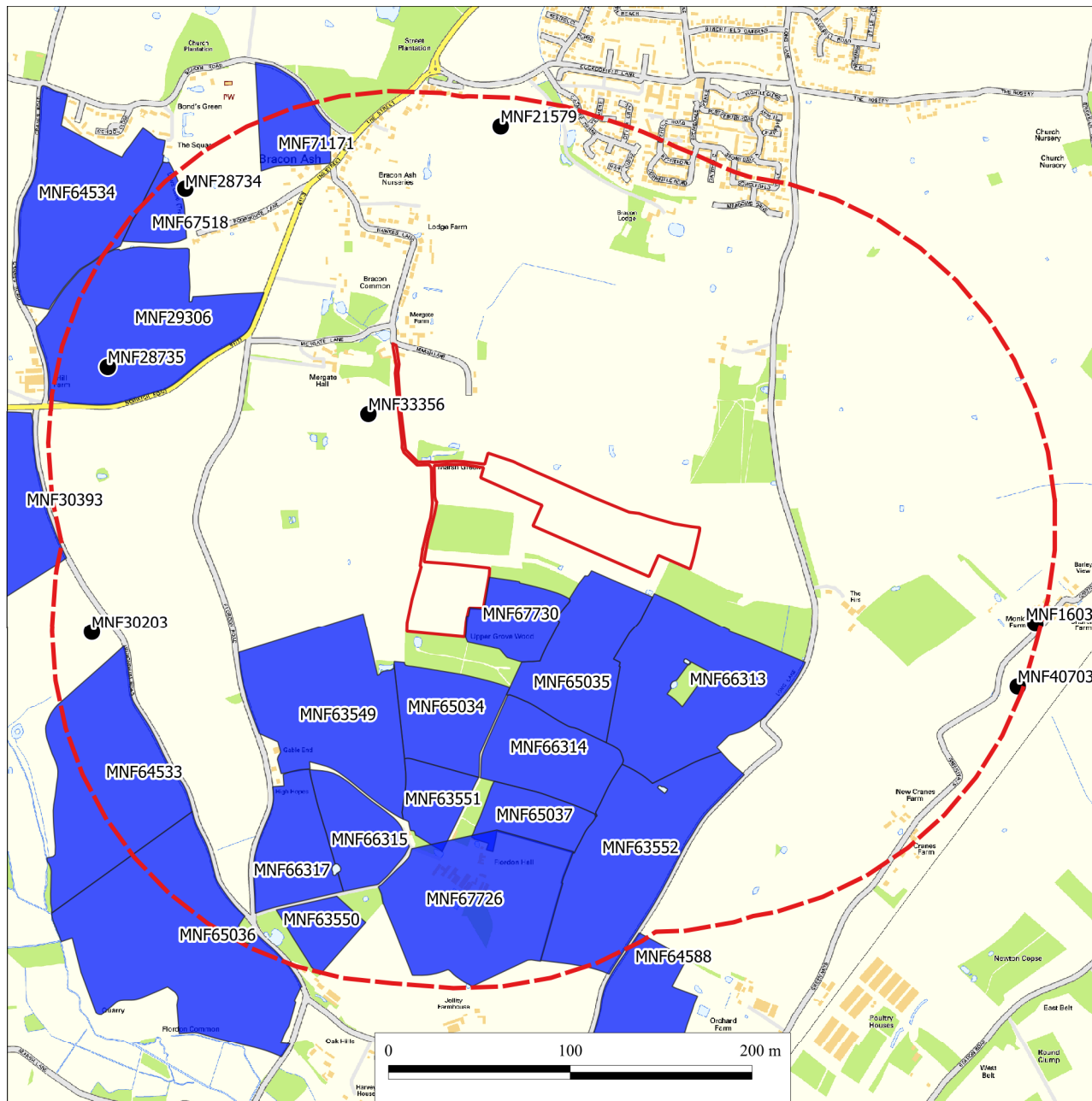
HER Ref.	Period	Description
MNF62779	18th Century to 21st Century	19th century milestone marking Norwich 6 miles, New Buckenham 9 miles and London 103 miles
MNF9987	Prehistoric	Possible prehistoric burnt mound

Region Data - Heritage Assets (NHER)

HER Ref.	Period	Description
MNF17140	Undated	Site of road
MNF28732	Early Iron Age to 19th Century	Multi-period finds and possible Early Saxon inhumation cemetery
MNF40603	Bronze Age	Cropmarks of possible Bronze Age ring ditches
MNF67641	Medieval to 19th Century	Post-medieval brick clamp kiln, possible quarry pit, and medieval to post-medieval field boundaries
MNF9990	Medieval	Cropmarks of undated enclosures, banks and ditches

Key

-  HER Search Area
-  Heritage Assets (Point)
-  Heritage Assets (Region)



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Point Data - Find Spots (NHER)

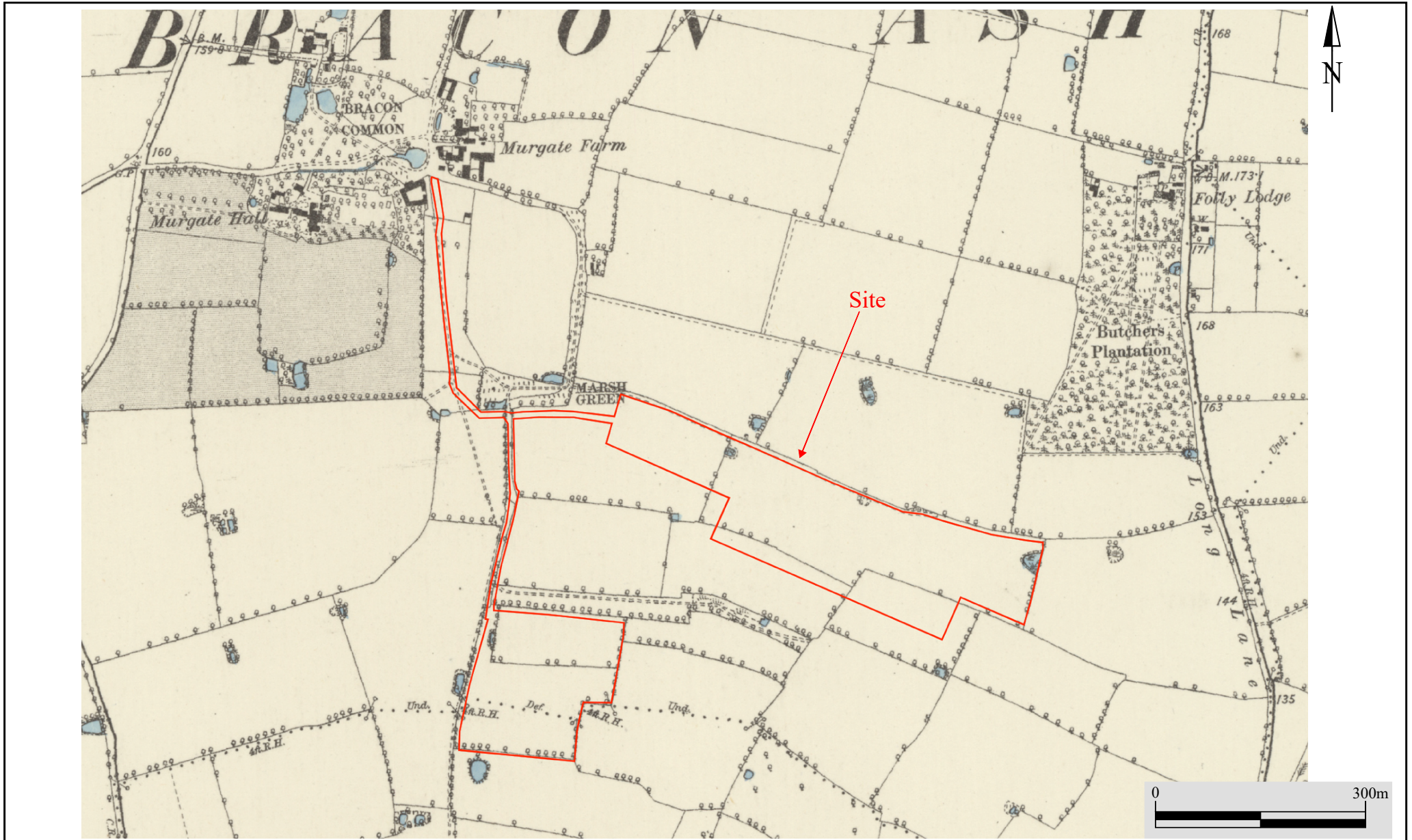
HER Ref.	Period	Description
MNF16034	Late Saxon	Late Saxon pot from vegetable patch at Monk's Farm
MNF21579	Late Saxon	Late Saxon harness
MNF28734	Medieval	Medieval coins
MNF28735	Roman to 19th Century	Multi-period finds scatter
MNF30203	Roman	Roman furniture fitting
MNF33356	Roman	Roman spear
MNF40703	Roman to Medieval	Roman or medieval finger ring

Region Data - Find Spots (NHER)

HER Ref.	Period	Description
MNF29306	Roman to 19th Century	Roman and Middle Saxon to post-medieval finds
MNF30393	Roman to 19th Century	Roman to post-medieval finds
MNF63549	Roman to 19th Century	Roman, Early Saxon and Late Saxon to post-medieval finds
MNF63550	Roman to 19th Century	Roman and post-medieval finds
MNF63551	Medieval to 19th Century	Medieval and post-medieval finds
MNF63552	Roman to 19th Century	Multi-period finds
MNF64533	Roman to 19th Century	Multi-period finds
MNF64534	Roman to 19th Century	Roman, Early Saxon and Late Saxon to post-medieval finds
MNF64588	Medieval to 19th Century	Medieval and post-medieval finds
MNF65034	Late Saxon to 19th Century	Multi-period metal objects
MNF65035	Medieval	Medieval lead pot mend and undatable copper alloy casting waste
MNF65036	Late Bronze Age to 19th Century	Multi-period metal objects
MNF65037	Middle Saxon to 19th Century	Medieval to post-medieval finds
MNF66313	Medieval to 19th Century	Medieval and post-medieval finds
MNF66314	Roman to 19th Century	Roman and Late Saxon to post-medieval finds
MNF66315	Roman to 19th Century	Roman and Middle/Late Saxon to post-medieval finds
MNF66317	Roman to 19th Century	Roman and medieval to post-medieval finds
MNF67518	Roman to 19th Century	Roman, Early Saxon, Middle Saxon and medieval to post-medieval finds
MNF67726	Late Mesolithic to 19th Century	Multi-period finds
MNF67730	Roman	Roman brooch
MNF71171	Roman to 19th Century	Medieval and post-medieval coins

Key

-  HER Search Area
-  Find Spots (Point)
-  Find Spots (Region)



APPENDIX A
OASIS SUMMARY FORM

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

[List of Projects](#) | [Manage Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

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OASIS ID: withamar1-416894

Project details

Project name	Land Off Marsh Lane, Bracon Ash, Norfolk
Short description of the project	<p>This report presents the results of research carried out by Witham Archaeology in relation to the site of land off Marsh Lane, Bracon Ash, Norfolk. The report, commissioned by Plandescil Ltd., will form part of a submission for a planning application relating to the construction of a solar park. The site comprises two agriculture fields located to the south of the village of Bracon Ash. There is evidence of activity in the area surrounding the Site possibly dating back to the Mesolithic period. Finds dating of Late Prehistoric to post medieval date have been found during metal detecting surveys in several fields within the HER search area, especially to the south and west of the proposed area of development. Possible Bronze Age barrows, a possible Prehistoric burnt mound, possible medieval enclosures and field systems have been identified within the HER search area, through geophysical surveys and from aerial photographs. Cartographic evidence suggests that the Site was located within agricultural fields or unoccupied land from at least the late medieval period. However, it is likely that the Site was undeveloped and used for agriculture since the late Saxon period. This investigation identified a low to medium potential for medium to high significance Prehistoric remains, a low potential for medium to high significance Roman occupation remains, a low potential for post Roman low to medium significance occupation remains, and high potential for low significance agricultural remains dating from the Saxon to the modern periods within the proposed area of development.</p>
Project dates	Start: 01-02-2021 End: 06-03-2021
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ENF150943 - HER event no.
Type of project	Desk based assessment
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 4 - Character Undetermined
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Documentary Search","Visual Inspection"
Development type	Solar Farm
Prompt	Voluntary/self-interest

Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORFOLK SOUTH NORFOLK BRACON ASH Land Off Marsh Lane, Bracon Ash, Norfolk

Study area 11.5 Hectares
Site coordinates TM 18755 99855 52.552007846217 1.227101739308 52 33 07 N 001 13 37 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Witham Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator Self (i.e. landowner, developer, etc.)
Project design originator Russell Trimble
Project director/manager Russell Trimble
Project supervisor Filipe Santos
Type of sponsor/funding body Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body Plandescil Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive recipient Norfolk Museums Service
Digital Archive ID TBC
Digital Contents "none"
Digital Media available "Text","Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient Norfolk Museums Service
Paper Archive ID TBC
Paper Contents "none"
Paper Media available "Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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Author(s)/Editor(s) Santos, F.
Other bibliographic details Witham Archaeology Report No. 431
Date 2021
Issuer or publisher Witham Archaeology
Place of issue or publication Ruskington
Description A4 comb binder

Entered by Filipe Santos (info@withamarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on 6 March 2021

OASIS:

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Witham Archaeology
2 High Street, Ruskington, Sleaford, Lincolnshire
NG34 9DT

Tel/Fax: (01529) 300890
Email: info@withamarchaeology.co.uk

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