

**Archaeological Watching Brief at
Statfold Farm
Clifton Lane
Tamworth
Staffordshire
NGR SK 23733 07581**

Planning Application No: 12/00169/FUL

Site Code: SFT 12

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Contents

Summary	1
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Site location and character	2
3.0 Archaeological and historical background	2
4.0 Methodology	3
5.0 Results of the watching brief	4
6.0 Conclusions	6
7.0 Acknowledgements	7
8.0 References	7
FIG. 1: Site location	9
FIG. 2: Trench location plan	10
FIG. 3: Extract from the 1889 OS map	11
FIG. 4: Extract from the 1902 OS map	11
PLATE 1: Trench 1, the turbine foundation, looking north-west	12
PLATE 2: Trench 2A, looking east towards the trench 1	12
PLATE 3: Representative view of stratigraphy within trench 2A	13
PLATE 4: Brick culvert (106) in trench 2A, looking south	13
PLATE 5: Trench 2B looking north-east across the orchard	14
PLATE 6: Trench 3 looking north towards the farm buildings and new turbine	14
PLATE 7: Excavation of trench 3 through ridge and furrow	15
PLATE 8: Representative view of stratigraphy within trench 3	15

Summary

Cramp Sutherland Archaeological Services (CSARC) undertook an archaeological watching brief at Statfold Farm, Clifton Lane, Tamworth between the 28th August and the 20th September 2012 during ground-works associated with a single wind turbine development. The site is in an area of archaeological potential, located in close proximity to a deserted medieval village with nearby areas of ridge and furrow. Mitigation involved the monitoring of excavations, but nothing of archaeological significance was revealed during these works. The natural clay was encountered at depths of between 0.35m and 1.00m with the overlying layers variously consisting of sandy-silts and silty topsoils.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** A planning application (ref: 12/00169/FUL) for the erection of a single wind turbine and the excavation of an associated cable route at Statfold Farm, Clifton Lane, Tamworth, Staffordshire was submitted to Lichfield District Council in March 2012. In light of the archaeological potential of the proposed development area, and following advice from the Staffordshire County Council Historic Environment Team, it was decided that an archaeological watching brief should be a condition of planning permission. CSARC was subsequently commissioned to undertake the project by the developer, C L Gilman & Son.
- 1.2** In association with the wind turbine development, Western Power, the electricity distribution network operators for the area, sought to replace/upgrade an existing overhead power line with an underground cable. Despite Western Power's 'Permitted Development' rights as a Statutory Undertaker, negating the need for planning permission in such circumstances, the developer's agents, CMSUK and LessCO₂, decided in conjunction with Staffordshire County Council's Principal Archaeologist that the most responsible course of action would be to extend the scope of the watching brief to include the Western Power upgrade works.

2.0 Site location and character

2.1 Statfold Farm is within the civil parish of Thorpe Constantine near to the Staffordshire/Warwickshire border. The farm is centred on Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid Reference (NGR) SK 23733 07581 and is located approximately 3 miles north-east of Tamworth on the east side of Clifton Lane (Fig. 1). The farm land supports a mixed dairy and arable enterprise and is generally flat. Natural England defines the region as *Natural Character Area 72: Mease and Sense Lowlands*, comprising largely arable land with pasture on steeper ground, a rectilinear field pattern and small and intermittent woodlands. The bedrock geology is Triassic Mercia Mudstones with productive clay soils overlying. Outcrops of sandstone to the south and west give well-drained sandy soils (Natural England).

3.0 Archaeological and historical background

3.1 The place name Statfold is from the Old English *stōd-fald*, meaning stud-fold or horse enclosure (Key to English Place-Names). The name may be indicative of an early medieval settlement, perhaps forming the nucleus of the later medieval settlement (Henshaw 2012, 16)

3.2 The earliest evidence for activity in Statfold comes from All Saints church (Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) Primary Record Number (PRN) 09690), located to the south of the farm. The fabric of the church is predominantly 14th century, but 12th century and possible Anglo-Saxon elements do suggest an earlier foundation. Certainly by the 12th century, one of the five main prebends of the Lichfield Cathedral parochia had been named for Statfold, then Stotfold (Johnson 1990, 135).

3.3 Tax records show the medieval village of Statfold to have been present by the mid 14th-century (PRN 01179). The village is represented by a series of earthworks situated to the north of All Saints church and to the south of Statfold Farm (Fig. 2), suggestive of a deserted village (PRN 01179). It was probably concentrated around a manor house (Dean 2012, 1), which may

have been located within the grounds of Statfold Hall (PRN 09692), a Grade II listed house of 17th/18th century date, adjacent to the church. A pond 250m west of the deserted medieval village raises the possibility of another, moated, manor site (Staffordshire County Council 2009, 56). Evidence for an open field system surrounding the settlement comes in the form of ridge and furrow remaining to the east of the deserted village (PRN 20259 and PRN 53578) and to the south of the church (PRN 53576).

3.4 The abandonment of the village may be associated with the establishment of Statfold Hall (PRN 09692), home of the Wolferstan family since 1565, and the subsequent emparkment of the surrounding land (PRN 20758). Piecemeal enclosure of the wider area had likely begun by the 16th century (Staffordshire County Council 2009, 62).

3.5 Statfold Farm is first evident on the OS map of 1884, initially comprising a large rectangular shed or outbuilding. The farm house, a later addition, was built at some point between 1889 and 1902 (Figs. 3 & 4). Contemporary trade directories show that, then as now, the farm was operated by the Gilman family (Kelly 1904, 355 & Kelly 1912, 387).

4.0 Methodology

4.1 A watching brief is defined by the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* as a programme of observation and investigation conducted during any work carried out for non archaeological reasons. It is intended to define, so far as is reasonably possible, the nature depth and preservation of any archaeological material encountered (IfA, revised 2008).

4.2 The project was undertaken in accordance with the Principal Archaeologist's specification (Dean 2012). It also adhered to current best archaeological practice and the relevant national codes of conduct,

standards and guidance advocated in the *By-laws of the Institute for Archaeologists* (IfA, revised 2010).

4.3 The specific aims and objectives of the project were to:

- To identify and record evidence for early medieval activity in the area of Statfold and Statfold Farm, particularly evidence for ridge and furrow.
- To understand the development of this medieval settlement and to gain evidence of the agricultural economy which supported it.

4.4 The watching brief was conducted between the 28th August and the 20th September 2012. All ground-works were monitored and the exposed sub-soils inspected for archaeological features. Written records in the form of site notes, annotated sketches and *pro-forma* context sheets were made, augmented by high resolution colour digital and 35mm monochrome print photography to record specific stages of the field work.

4.5 An ordered archive comprising data collected during the course of the project is stored by *CSARC*, pending transfer to the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Bethesda Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent (site code: **SFT 12**, museum accession number: **2012.LH.86**).

5.0 Results of the watching brief

5.1 The watching brief was undertaken in three main phases during excavation of: 1) the turbine foundations, 2) the turbine cable trenches, and 3) the Western Power upgrade trenches (Fig. 2). All excavation was carried out with 360° tracked excavators using toothless ditching buckets. For the sake of clarity and consistency the same context numbers have been used throughout all three phases of the watching brief.

5.2 Phase 1

5.2.1 The turbine foundation (trench 1) encompassed an area of 9m x 9m, within a corn field approximately 200m to the east of the farm buildings (Fig. 2, Plate 1). It was excavated to a depth of 1.90m, during which the following layers were encountered:

- (100) Dark-brown clay-silt with frequent inclusions of small, rounded pebbles, identified as topsoil. 0.30-0.35m thick.
- (101) Brownish-red clay with frequent inclusions of small, rounded pebbles, identified as natural subsoil. 0.18-0.20m thick.
- (102) Red clay with occasional blue-grey mottling and containing occasional small rounded pebbles. Identified as natural subsoil.

5.3 Phase 2

5.3.1 The turbine cable trench extended 210m across grazing land between the turbine and the connection point in the north-east corner of the orchard. This first section (trench 2A) was 0.70m wide and 1.10m deep (Fig. 2, Plates 2 & 3). The trench then forked into two, one section extending south-west across the orchard to the farm house (trench 2B) (Plate 5) and the other extending eastwards and then northwards to one of the farm outbuildings (trench 2C). These trenches were 0.60m wide and 0.60m deep, excepting the portion next to the farm house which was only 0.35m wide. The soil profile (Plate 3), which varied slightly from that seen during the turbine foundation excavations, was as follows:

- (103) Dark-brown, loose, silty-loam, identified as topsoil. 0.10m-0.25m thick.
- (104) Mid-brown, loose, slightly silty-sand with moderate inclusions of small rounded pebbles. 0.35-0.40m thick
- (101) Brownish-red clay.

5.3.2 A small culvert (**106**) constructed with brick sides and a stone cap was seen crossing trench 2A on a roughly north-south alignment (Plate 4). The culvert was 0.27m wide and 0.27m high internally, and contained a red ceramic horseshoe drain (0.10m wide and 0.09m high). The base of both culvert and drain were formed by the natural clay (**101**). A cut for the culvert [**108**], made into silty-sand (**104**), was only partially visible. A layer of pebbles (**105**) topped the whole.

5.4 Phase 3

5.4.1 The Western Power upgrade trench (trench 3) was 0.70m wide and approximately 1.20m deep. It extended roughly 350m southwards from the connection point in the north-east corner of the orchard and across two cattle grazing fields (Fig. 2, Plate 6). The soil profile seen within the trench was much the same as seen in the previous trenches despite its route through an area of obvious ridge and furrow (PRN 20259) (Plates 7 & 8). The depth at which clay (**101**) was encountered did, however, gradually increase to 1.00m below ground level as the trench moved south, with the silty-sand (**104**) above, increasing to a maximum thickness of 0.75m.

5.4.2 Extensive drainage was seen in both fields crossed by trench 3. In the northern field this took the form of red ceramic horseshoe drains on a roughly east-west alignment. These were placed at intervals of approximately 15m apart and were between 0.80m and 0.95m below ground level. The drainage in the southern field comprised yellow corrugated-plastic pipes encountered at a depth of roughly 0.90m below ground level and set at intervals of approximately 18m apart.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 The watching brief, carried out during ground-works for the single wind turbine at Statfold Farm, revealed nothing of archaeological interest beyond sections of the 19th century field drain system, despite the proximity to known medieval activity. A slight difference in soil profiles was discerned

between the turbine foundation excavations (phase 1) and the phase 2 and 3 trenches; the former being arable land at a slightly higher elevation, with the natural clay subsoil (**101**) encountered at a maximum depth of 0.35m and with a heavier topsoil (**100**) overlying. The latter was grazing land with the clay (**101**) reached at a depth of between 0.65m and 1.00m, with a layer of silty-sand (**104**) and then a lighter loamier topsoil (**103**) above.

- 6.2** The absence of archaeological finds or features suggests that the excavations fell outside the area of concentrated settlement, in surrounding agricultural land bearing fewer traces of activity. The southern half of trench 3 was routed through an area of known ridge and furrow (PRN 20259), but this feature was not evident in the soil profile and no further evidence was revealed. Given the current, if not historic, use of the area as grazing land, it is also likely that the surviving features have suffered some damage and erosion.

8.0 Acknowledgements

- 8.1** Thanks are extended to Mrs L. Gilman, Dominic Cooney of CMSUK, Sandra and Linda of LessCO₂, Staffordshire County Council Principal Archaeologist, Stephen Dean, and to Chris Geddes and the groundwork contractors for all their assistance and cooperation.

- 8.2** Map data is reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of H.M.S.O. Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. License No. 10005511532.

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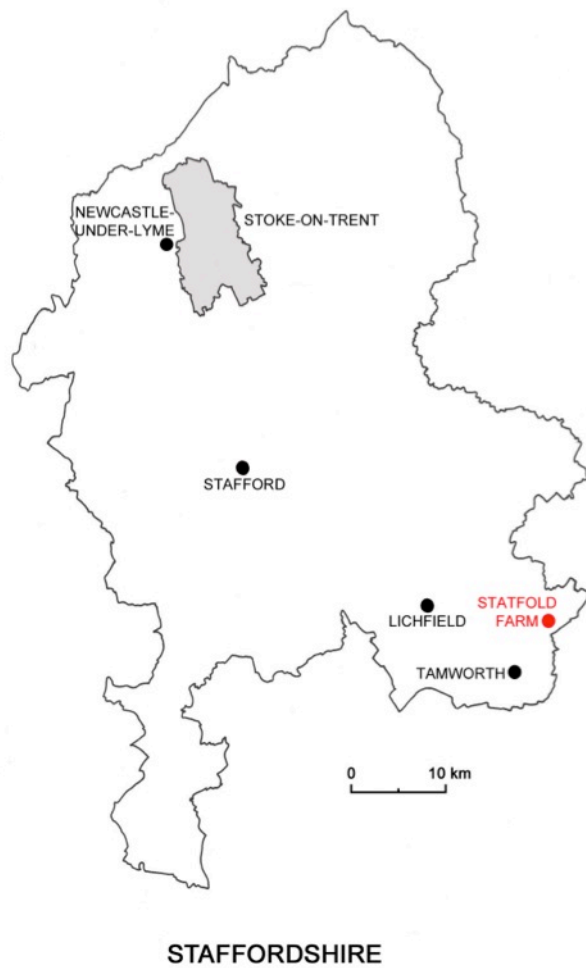


FIG. 1: Location plan.

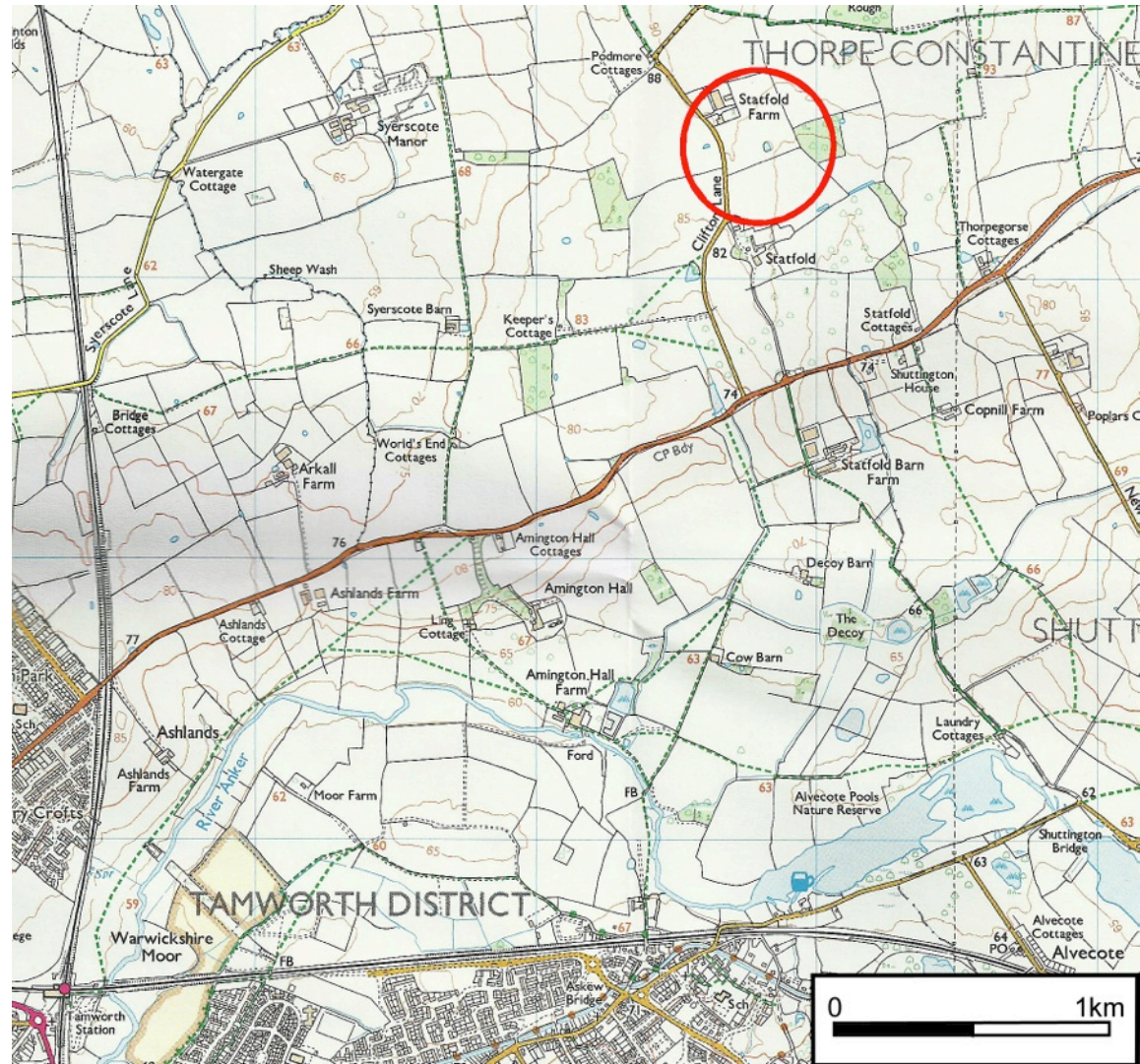




FIG. 2: Trench location plan with the turbine trenches indicated in red and the Western Power upgrade trench in blue.

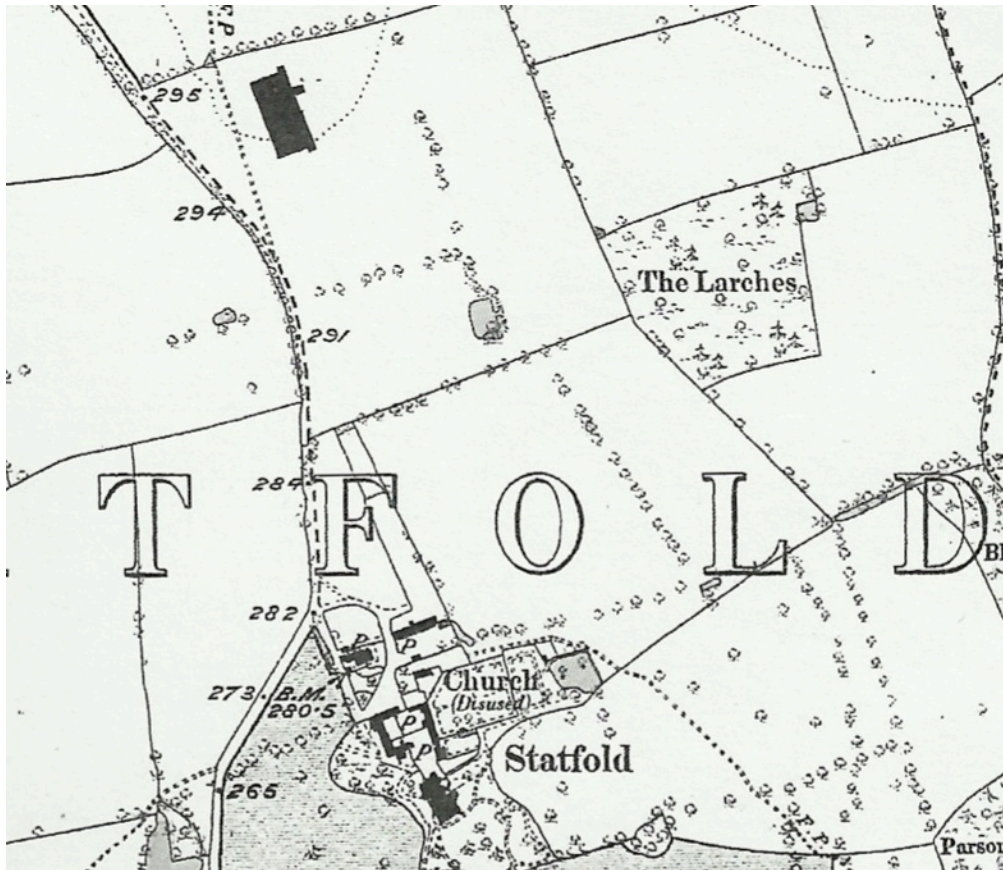


FIG. 3: Extract from the 1889 OS map (1:10,560)



FIG. 4: Extract from the 1902 OS map (1:2,500)



PLATE 1

Trench 1, the turbine foundation, looking north-west (scales: 1m).



PLATE 2

Trench 2A, looking east towards trench 1.



PLATE 3

Representative view of stratigraphy within trench 2A; showing topsoil (103), silty-sand (104) and natural clay (101) (scales: 1m).



PLATE 4

Brick culvert (106) in trench 2A, looking south (scale: 1m).



PLATE 5

Trench 2B looking north-east across the orchard.



PLATE 6

Trench 3 looking north towards the farm buildings and new turbine



PLATE 7

Excavation of Trench 3 through ridge and furrow, looking south-east.



PLATE 8

Representative view of stratigraphy within trench 3, again showing topsoil (103), silty-sand (104) and natural clay (101) (scales: 1m).