

Heckfield Place
Bramshill Road Heckfield,
Hook, Hampshire

Archaeological
Watching Brief Report:
Biomass Energy Centre

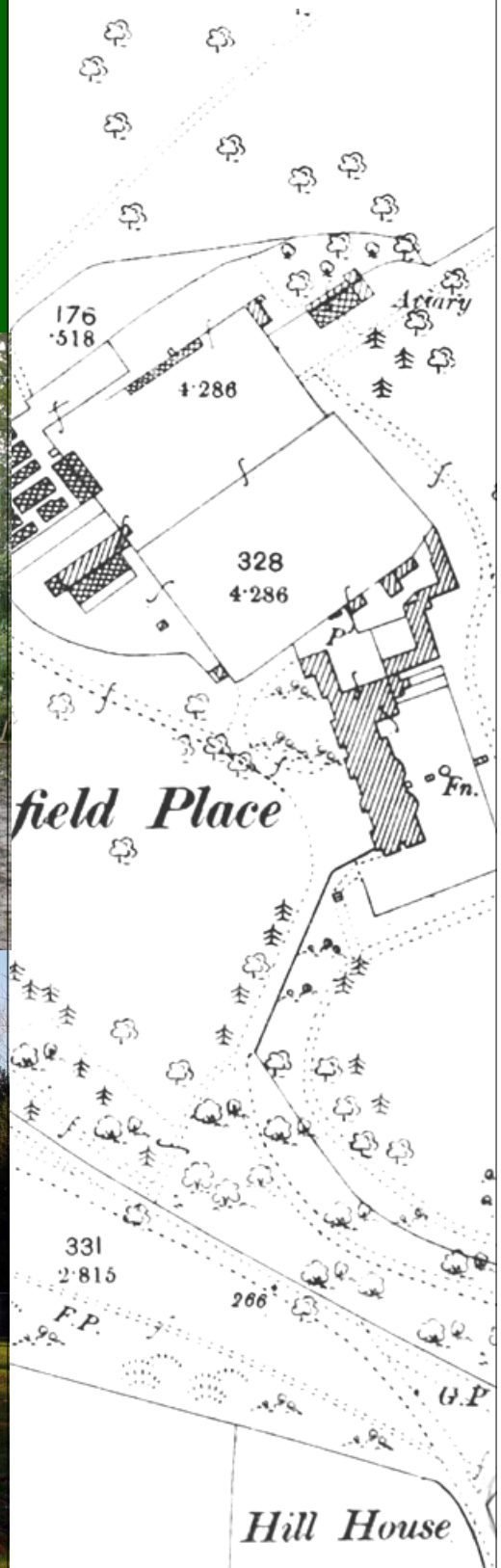
July 2011



for
Operis Construction Ltd

Souterrain

Archaeological Services Ltd



Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Biomass Energy Centre

Heckfield Place

**Bramshill Road Heckfield,
Hook, Hampshire RG27 0LD**

Planning Application Reference No. 09/02934/FUL

by

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Souterrain Project No. SOU10-144

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for

Operis Construction Ltd

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd in July 2011 during groundwork for the footprint of a new Energy Centre complex at Heckfield Place, Heckfield, Hook, Hampshire (NGR SU 730 612). The investigation was made in view of the archaeological sensitivity of the locality and because of the historic nature of the gardens at Heckfield Place.

There was no evidence of archaeological features in the area investigated. A number of early 20th century objects of interest were recovered.

1. Scope of the Report

- 1.1 This report documents the results of an Archaeological Watching Brief which was carried out by Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd (Souterrain) on the 8th of July 2011, during groundwork for a new Energy Centre complex at Heckfield Place, Heckfield, Hook, Hampshire (NGR SU 730 612) (Fig.1). The work was conducted in compliance with a condition attached to planning consent. The work was commissioned by Operis Construction Ltd, on the behalf of Pomegranate Investments Ltd, the planning applicant.

2. Planning Background

- 2.1 Planning permission (Reference 11/00597/FUL) was granted by Hart District Council (HDC) on the 16th of May 2011. The development involves the construction of a new single storey building with basement, to house biomass boilers and associated equipment, and an external compound containing additional plant.
- 2.2 The nature of the construction proposals for the Energy Centre is such that any archaeological buried remains present within the footprint of the proposed development would be directly impacted during excavation of the basement.
- 2.3 Due to the archaeological sensitivity of the locality, a condition was attached to the planning consent requiring the applicant to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written specification in order to enable information to be recovered in the event of archaeological remains being located within the area and depth of new ground works. This was in accordance with the Department of Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, paragraph 30, and Hampshire County Council (HCC) policy.
- 2.4 Hampshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist and archaeological representative for Hart District Council, advised (14th of December 2009) that a Watching Brief would be the appropriate form of archaeological mitigation works:
- 2.5 The Watching Brief was conducted accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)¹ approved by the HCC prior to the commencement of ground work.

3. Site Location

- 3.1 The development site is located on the north west side of the mansion house, in the former car parking area shown on drawing No 09.291.GA.901, Rev E, Oct 09² which accompanied the planning application. The development footprint measures approximately 800 square metres and is approximately 79.50m above mean sea level.

4. Archaeological Potential

- 4.1 The site lies within an area of some archaeological potential. Heckfield Place Park is believed to occupy a former part of Heckfield Heath and woodland³. The park comprises 25.4 hectares classed as a Grade II Registered Park and Garden (England), No. 4037. It is located on high ground, the lower slopes of the estate facing northeast over the River

¹ Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief: Biomass Energy Centre Complex, Heckfield Place, Heckfield, Hook, Hampshire, Planning Ref. 09/02934/FUL, VER. 2. 24th March 2010

² Operis Construction Ltd Drawing No. 09.291.GA.901, Rev E, Oct 09, Plan Proposed Floor Ground, Heckfield Place, Hampshire

³ *A Tour Round Reading Being A Guide to its Environs*, J G. Robertson (ed), 1843, p.150)

Whitewater valley. It situated in an area of archaeological sensitivity with respect to the prehistoric periods, in particular the Bronze Age, and Iron Age. While there are no archaeological sites known in the area of proposed development or within the surrounding areas of uncultivated parkland, this is considered to be a reflection of the absence of archaeological investigation rather than a genuine absence of archaeology. The above mentioned cropmarks reflect only what is known from cultivated land. It is therefore possible that buried archaeological remains relating to occupation and activity from the prehistoric to medieval periods exist within the grounds and parkland. It was also considered features relating to the development of the historic parkland could be disturbed by the development.

- 4.2 Information from Hampshire County Council's Archaeology & Historic Building Record (AHBR)⁴ shows the site in proximity to numerous cropmarks recorded from aerial photographs, which are understood to indicate the presence of buried archaeological remains from at least the prehistoric and medieval periods. A search of the AHBR database within a 500m radius of the proposed biomass facility revealed a number of archaeological sites or find spots (Table 1).

Table 1: Archaeological and historic sites in the vicinity of Heckfield Place (source: Archaeology & Historic Building Record, Hampshire County Council)

AHBR No.	Grid reference	Type of site
59903	SU 72959 61701 (centred at)	A multi-phase complex of cropmarks visible on aerial photos including curvilinear features of uncertain date
35203	SU 73110 61660 (centred at)	An area of linear features visible on aerial photographs forming two irregular enclosures with a smaller enclosure on the western side
51294	SU 73598 61160	Bronze Age pottery (dated as 1000 BC to 500 BC) & undated semi circle of stake holes found in excavations near The Grove.
33255	SU 72800 61400	The remains of a building of post medieval date found at The Grove.
51295	SU 72687 61101	The site of four mounds W of Welford House which are have been interpreted as either round barrows of Bronze Age date or 18 th century estate features.
59598	SU 73155 60717 (centred at)	Fragmentary remains of a rectilinear medieval/post medieval field system visible as cropmark banks and ditches on aerial photographs.
52101	SU 73266 61133 (centre at)	19 th century parks and garden features at Heckfield Place
59413	SU 73085 60611 (centred at)	A triple-ditched cropmark, 318m long, is visible on aerial photographs, understood to be an avenue of post-medieval date
37380	SU 73400 61100	Terraces and pleasure grounds laid out in the early 19 th century, forming the setting for a country house. The site was famed in the 1870s and 1880s for horticultural displays.
59427	SU 73490 61325	The site of two fishponds are marked on the 1880 OS 1st Edition 1:2500 map.

⁴ Archaeology & Historic Buildings, Landscape, Planning & Heritage, Environment Department, Hampshire County Council Accessed 26th January 2010

5. Methodology

- 5.1 The foundations were excavated by a mechanical excavator fitted with a smooth ditching bucket to improve archaeological 'visibility', under direct control of the archaeologist. Deposits and features were hand-cleaned and investigated by the archaeologist in order to gain an understanding of them.
- 5.2 The archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct and *Standard Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2001).

6. Results

- 6.1 The reduced dig was carried out to the uppermost geological stratum at a depth of generally between c.0.4 and c.0.9m below existing ground level (Figs.3 and 4). The geology consisted of compact orange brown sand with chert gravel. Twentieth century water supply trenches (now defunct) had been cut into this stratum.
- 6.2 Above the geology was a thin layer (c.0.03-0.04m) of dirty grey sandy soil, which is likely to have been an old topsoil and ground surface; there were no finds. Overlying this, at the entrance to the site (on the south west side), there was made-up ground and hard-standing comprised of brick rubble. Elsewhere, the overlying layer consisted of a mix of ashy soil, burnt deposits (bonfires) and earth strewn with mid-20th century rubbish. There were no clearly defined layers visible. Artefacts recovered largely comprise bottles (Table 2, Fig.5. top). A carved limestone (probably Bath Stone) plinth for an urn, possibly of 19th century date, was found in the northeast part of the site (Table 2, Fig.5. top). The uppermost layer in the north-eastern part of the site comprised leafmould which was up to c.0.05m.

Table 2: List of Artefacts

Context	Type	Description / notes
topsoil	Glass	Beer bottle in brown glass embossed with the name of the former Lion Brewery, S.H.Higgs and Company (Castle Street, Reading). Embossed date on base: 1937. The brewery ceased to brew in 1953 ⁵ .
"	"	Beer bottle in brown glass, with rubber stopper. Provenance unknown. c.mid-20 th century.
"	"	Beer bottle in bluish-green glass embossed with name of the former Portsmouth and Brighton United Brewery at Southsea. The company was acquired by Brickwoods Ltd in 1953 and the name was changed in 1954 ⁶ .
"	"	Ink bottle with screw neck. c.mid-20 th century.
"	"	Perfume bottle, clear glass.
"	"	Cobalt blue medicinal bottle.
"	"	Two small clear glass bottles; probably for scent.
"	"	Perfume bottle stopper: ornate metal stopper cap, underneath which is a small blue glass stopper. Probably early-.mid-20 th century.
"	"	c. 12 glass tea lights / snuffers.

⁵ See Richmond, L and Turton, A. 1990. *The Brewing Industry: a guide to historical research*, p.178 (Manchester)

⁶ Ibid. p.80.

“	Metal	Brass shell case of 37mm 'pom-pom'. WWI or South African War. Indistinct stamp: 'KARLSRUHE' and 'VII'. Probably from the DWM (Deutsche Waffen- und Munitionsfabriken) munitions plant in Karlsruhe, Baden, Germany. A souvenir.
“	Stone	Carved stone plinth for a garden urn. Probably Bath Stone. c.19 th century.

6.3 There was no evidence of prehistoric features or deposits, or 19th century garden features in the area investigated.

6.4 All records are referenced with the Site Code and Accessions Number A2010.78 allocated for this site by Hampshire County Council Museums Service.

7 Conclusions

7.1 The excavation for the Biomass Energy Centre had been used for dumping garden waste and burning rubbish in the early part of the 20th century. There were no finds of earlier date. Apart from service trenches, the geological stratum appears to have seen little previous disturbance.

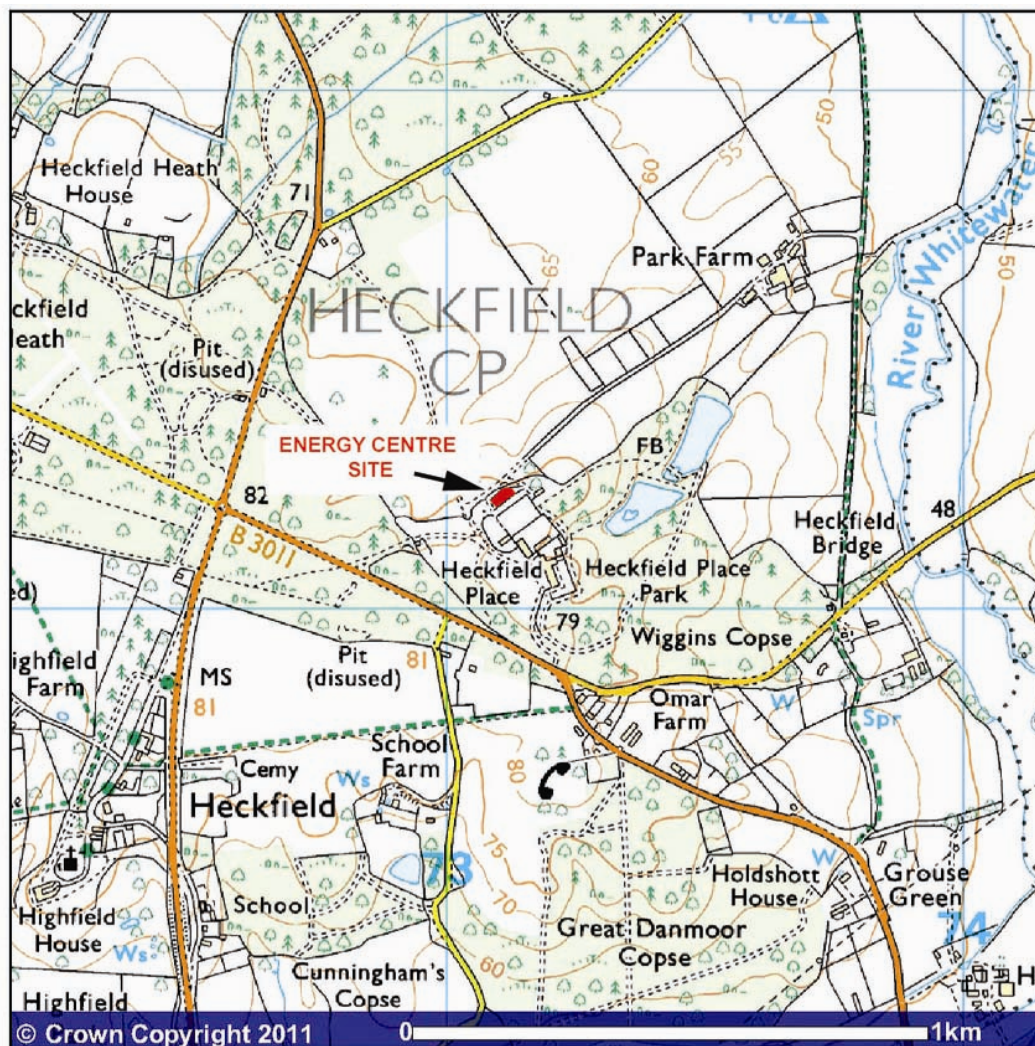
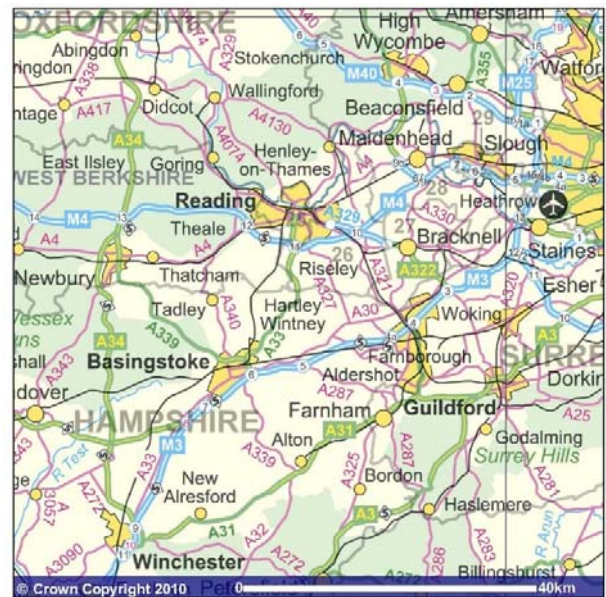
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14th July 2011

Fig. 1: Location of Heckfield Place and the new Energy Centre Site

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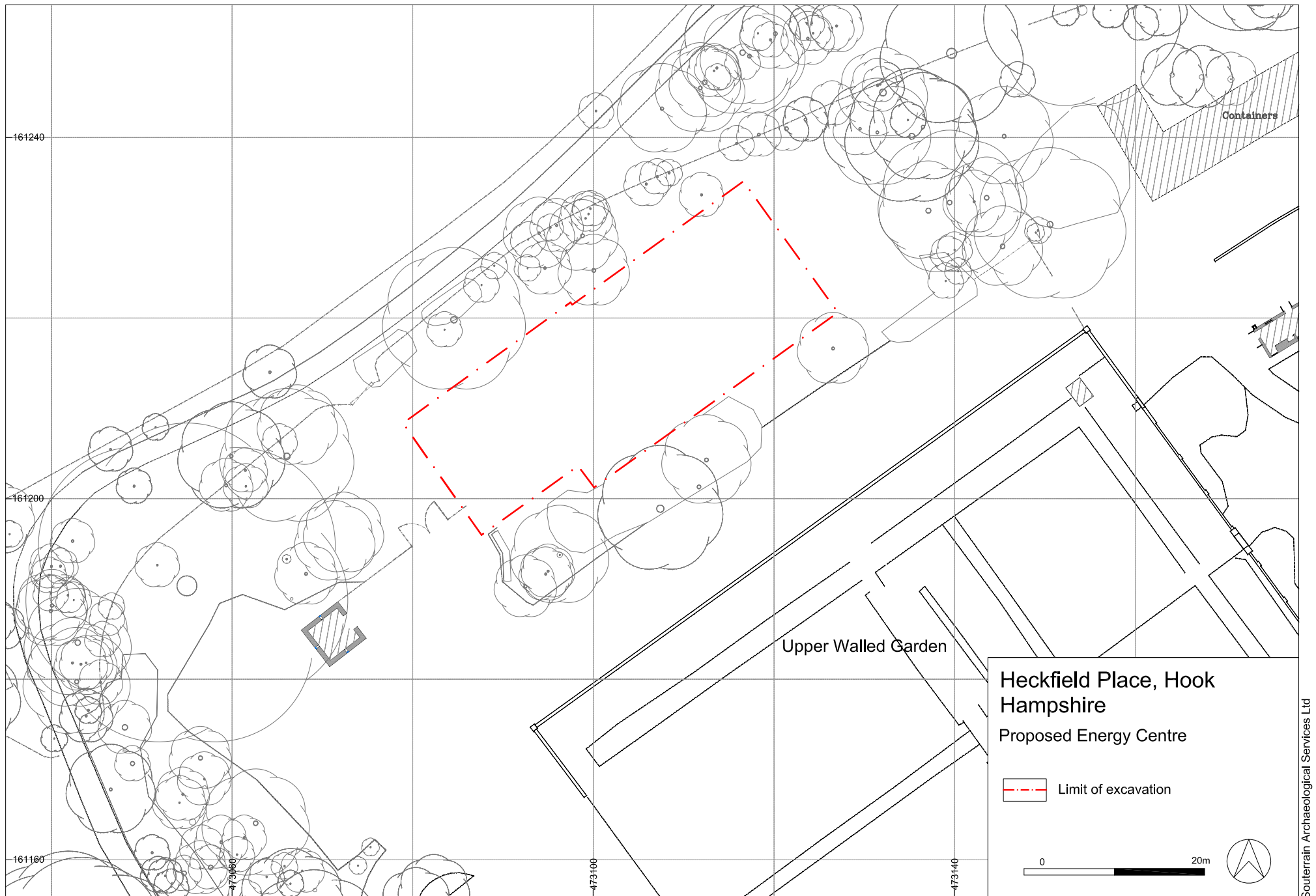


Figure 2: Location of development site



Fig.3: General views of the excavated area. Top: facing northeast. Bottom: the northeast part of the site facing north.



Fig.4: General view of the excavated area. Facing south-west



Fig.5: Artefacts recovered from the excavated area. Top: carved limestone plinth for garden urn (probably 19th century); various early to mid 20th century objects.