

# *Archaeology Wales*

## **Green Farm, Condover Shropshire**

### Archaeological Watching Brief



By  
Chris E Smith BA (Hons) MA MIfA  
Report No. 1285

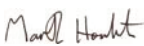
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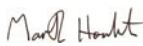
# *Archaeology Wales*

## **Green Farm, Condover Shropshire**

### Archaeological Watching Brief

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# Non-Technical Summary

*This report results from work undertaken by Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) for Stratus Environmental Ltd at Green Farm, Condover, Shropshire. It draws on the results of an archaeological Watching Brief carried out during the construction of an access track for a solar farm development, which was required as a condition of planning consent (Planning Ref: Shropshire County Council 13/03519/FUL). The site is located close to a possible cropmark identified by a previously undertaken desk based assessment.*

*The watching brief was maintained during topsoil removal and subsoil exposure along the majority of the access track. No finds or features of archaeological interest were identified.*

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In November 2014 Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land at Green Farm, Condover, Shropshire. The work was undertaken as a planning condition (Planning Ref -13/03519/FUL) during construction of the access track across the site.
- 1.1.2 The new access track measured approximately 700m in length by 4m in width. The area of the development was centred on NGR SJ 50868 06893 (Figs 1&2).
- 1.1.3 A Specification for the work was drawn up by Chris E Smith (AW) and subsequently approved by Dr Andy Wigley of Shropshire County Council – Historic Environment Team (SCC-HET). The AW Project Number for the work is 2283 and the Site Code GFC/14/WB.
- 1.1.4 A previously undertaken desk based assessment (Webb, 2013) highlighted the presence of a possible cropmark close to the area of the proposed development.
- 1.1.5 The watching brief took place during topsoil removal along the access track in order to assess the likely impact of the development on the underlying subsoil. The watching brief ceased after three days, after discussions with SCC-HET, because no finds or features of archaeological significance were noted.

## **1.2 Geology and topography**

- 1.2.1 The underlying solid geology of the area is comprised of purple and brown mudstones of the Keele beds. The solid geology is overlain by freely draining, slightly acid, loamy soils of relatively low fertility (Geological Survey Map, 2001).
- 1.2.2 The site lies within a gently undulating area of land divided into separate fields to the south of a curve in the Cound Brook. The land is currently in mixed pastoral and arable use and totals approximately 24.7ha.

## **1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background**

- 1.3.1 The desk based assessment (Webb, 2013) located a total of 29 features of archaeological and historic interest within a 1km radius of the centre of the proposed development site.
- 1.3.2 The majority of these features relate to standing historic structures, both listed and unlisted. However, a number relate to preserved archaeological features, in particular cropmarks and earthworks of prehistoric to medieval date.
- 1.3.3 Only one of the features identified by the desk based assessment was located within the boundaries of the assessment area. This was defined by crop marks representing a circular enclosure of an unknown date, which was located approximately 140m north of Boreton House near the south eastern boundary of the development site. The crop marks are recorded on Shropshire County Council SMR cards (Webb, 2013), having been identified on an oblique aerial photograph of unknown origin.

# **2 Aims and Objectives**

## **2.1 Watching Brief**

- 2.1.1 The aims and objectives of a watching brief, as defined by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008, revised 2012), were:
  - To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.
  - To provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find had been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
  - The main objective of a watching brief is to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on a site.

## **3 Methodology**

### **3.1 Watching Brief**

- 3.1.1 Removal of topsoil along the new access track, to the surface of the subsoil horizon, was undertaken by mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision.
- 3.1.2 The site work was undertaken by Ian Davies and Peter Aherne and managed by Chris Smith (MifA). All areas were photographed using high resolution digital photography
- 3.1.3 All site illustrations were made on drafting film using recognised conventions and scales (1:10, 1:20, 1:50). Photographs were digital, with resolutions of 8mp.

### **3.2 Finds**

- 3.2.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context.

### **3.3 Palaeo-Environmental Evidence**

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were encountered.

## **4 Watching Brief Results**

### **4.1 Soils**

- 4.1.1 The topsoil deposit was composed of a mixed dark brown clay silt with occasional small stone inclusions.
- 4.1.2 The subsoil deposits varied across the site and were made up alternating bands of compacted sand, clay and occasionally fine gravel.

### **4.2 Ground Conditions**

- 4.2.1 The watching brief was undertaken during a period of overcast and mild weather with good light conditions.

### **4.3 Watching Brief Areas**

- 4.3.1 The area of the watching brief consisted of the footprint of the new access track as shown on figure 2.
- 4.3.2 It was agreed with SCC-HET beforehand, that the ‘intensive’ (i.e. permanent) requirement of the watching brief would be reconsidered after two days, depending upon progress, if no finds or features of archaeological significance were located.

#### **4.4 Description (Plates 1-8, Fig 2)**

- 4.4.1 Removal of the topsoil deposit, which consisted of a heavy, dark brown, mixed clay silt, was undertaken by a 360° mechanical excavator equipped with a flat-edged bucket under close archaeological supervision.
- 4.4.2 The depth of topsoil varied along the length of the access track between 0.2m and 0.45m.
- 4.4.3 The surface of the subsoil deposit was exposed, though not cut into, along the length of the area subject to the watching brief. Subsoil deposits varied from compacted sand and clay to occasional fine gravel bands.
- 4.4.4 No evidence of any archaeological features or other disturbances, cutting into the subsoil, was observed during the watching brief, and no finds of archaeological or historic significance were found.
- 4.4.5 After three days of monitored topsoil removal, and after consultation with SCC-HET, the watching brief was ceased.
- 4.4.6 No finds or features of archaeological interest were observed in any of the excavated areas.

## **5 Discussion and Interpretation**

### **5.1 Overall interpretation**

- 5.1.1 The watching brief located no finds or features of archaeological importance within the c.500m of the access track that was subject to archaeological monitoring.
- 5.1.2 Construction activities along the access track exposed subsoil deposit, but did not remove them. It is possible, therefore, that archaeological features survive within the subsoil, with their upper surfaces buried by the uppermost subsoil deposits. Any such features located within the area subject to the watching brief remain *in situ*, having been undisturbed by the access track construction.

### **5.2 Acknowledgements**

- 5.2.1 Thanks are due to: Ian Davies and Peter Aherne (AW) for undertaking the Watching Brief and Dr Andy Wigley (SCC-HET) for his curatorial assistance.



## 6 Bibliography and references

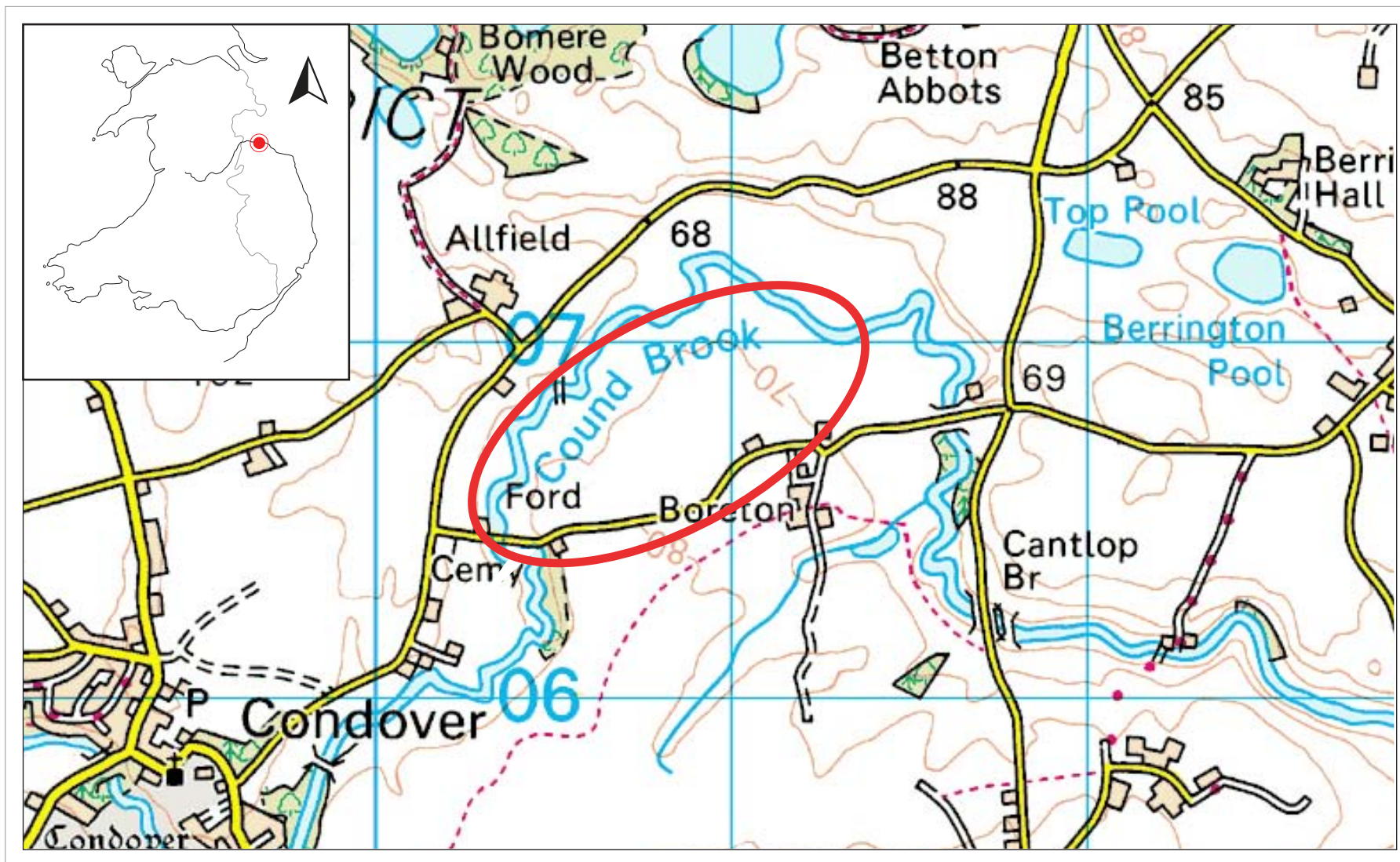
British Geological Survey. 2001, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Solid Geology Map, UK South Sheet

Institute for Archaeologists. 2008, *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

Webb, L. 2013, *Heritage Appraisal for Proposed Solar Farm, Green Farm, Conover*, Stratus Environmental Ltd

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## **APPENDIX I:** Figures



**Fig 1:** Map showing location of assessment area





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## **APPENDIX II:** Plates





Plate 1: View south from new access track towards road splay and site entrance



Plate 2: View north east along access track after 1st turn





Plate 3: Topsoil strip monitoring within turning circle close to site access



Plate 4: View north east along access track within centre of area of development





Plate 5: View of access track turn within centre of development area, note variation in subsoil horizon from previous plates



Plate 6: View of access track within centre of development area





Plate 7: View of access track heading north east through centre of development area



Plate 8: View of north easterly extent of area covered by watching brief. Note gravel subsoil horizon

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## **APPENDIX III:** AW Specification

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## **SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**AT**

**Green Farm, Condover  
Shropshire**

**Prepared for:**

Stratus Environmental Ltd

**22<sup>nd</sup> October 2014**

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## NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

*This Written Scheme of Investigation details the proposal for an archaeological Watching Brief during groundworks associated with construction of a new access track as part of a solar farm development at Green Farm, Condover, Shropshire (Planning Consent No. 13/03519/FUL).*

### **1. Introduction and archaeological background**

This Written Scheme of Investigations (WSI) has been prepared by Chris E Smith (MIfA), Project Manager, Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) at the request of Stratus Environmental Ltd. It provides information on the methodology which will be employed by AW during an archaeological watching brief during the initial stages of access track construction at the site. The planning consent number is 13/03519/FUL.

The methodology set out in this WSI has been agreed with Dr Andy Wigley, Principal Archaeologist, Historic Environment Team, Shropshire Council (HET-SC). HET-SC have recommended that a watching brief is carried out during initial groundworks associated with the construction of the new access track across the solar farm site (NGR SJ 50868 06893).

All work will be undertaken in accordance with the standards and guidelines of the Institute for Archaeologists (2011).

### **2 Site specific objectives**

The aims of the watching brief, as defined by the IfA (2011) are:

- To allow a rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features that are uncovered during initial stages of the proposed groundworks within the application site boundary.
- To provide the opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief are not sufficient to support the treatment to a satisfactory or proper standard

### **3 Watching Brief Methodology**

#### General

The archaeological watching brief will be undertaken by AW staff using current best practice.

All work will be carried out by a suitable qualified archaeologist with relevant level membership of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) and will follow the IfA Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief (2011).

#### Detailed

The Watching Brief will be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist during the

removal of topsoil, and where the sub-soil is likely to be exposed or cut into, as part of the access track formation for the solar farm development. The mechanical excavation will be undertaken by a machine using a toothless ditching bucket wherever possible.

If archaeological features, finds or deposits are uncovered, work will be stopped in the area of the exposed feature in order that the supervising archaeologist can clean and identify the extent and nature of the feature and for excavation and recording to take place.

All archaeological deposits that are identified will be mapped, cleaned, recorded and fully excavated. The developer will provide a safe working area and sufficient time to record and excavate all features to the satisfaction of AW and HET-SC. Full excavation of identified features will not be compromised by the construction programme.

The proposed development of the access track will involve removal of 200mm of topsoil. If the topsoil is found to exceed this depth, and thus result in no exposure of subsoil, then the watching brief will be reviewed after a minimum of one day on-site. After discussion with Andy Wigley (SCC-HET) the watching brief may be halted at this point dependent upon ground conditions and any finds.

#### Contingency Arrangements

In the event of significant archaeological features being discovered all activities in this area of the site can be temporarily suspended. This will allow a period of consultation with the HET-SC and if required the opinion of specialists.

Following such consultation, recommendations will be presented to the Developer and the Local Planning Authority.

The methodology and timescale of additional archaeological work to investigate such features will be presented and included in the Developers Programme; the feature will be fenced off and secured thus allowing the site programme to continue

#### Recording

Recording will be carried out using AW recording systems (pro-forma context sheets etc), using a continuous number sequence for all contexts.

Plans and sections will be drawn to a scale of 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10 as required and related to Ordnance Survey datum and published boundaries where appropriate.

All features identified will be tied in to the OS survey grid and fixed to local topographical boundaries and related to the developer's site plan. The location of all features will also be recorded using a Topcon GTS725 total station.

Photographs will be taken in digital format, using a 14MP camera with photographs stored in Tiff format. Should significant remains be identified that require excavation, photographs will also be taken in black and white and colour slide (35mm film).

The archaeologist undertaking the watching brief will have access to the AW metal detector and be trained in its use.

#### Artefacts

Archaeological artefacts recovered during the course of the excavation will be cleaned and labelled using an accession number, which will be obtained from the local museum. A single number sequence will be allocated to all finds. The artefacts will be stored appropriately until they are deposited with a suitable local museum.

All finds of gold and silver will be removed to a safe place and the Environment Agency, HET-SC and the local coroner informed, within the guidelines of the Treasure Act 1996.

Any finds which are considered to be in need of immediate conservation will be referred to a UKIC qualified conservator (Phil Parkes at Cardiff University).

#### Human remains

In the event of burials or cremations being found all work will be halted in the area of the burials and their extent and nature established. The client, HET-SC and the Ministry of Justice will be informed and a methodology of excavation agreed which will adhere to Ministry of Justice Guidelines.

#### Environmental and technological samples

Environmental samples will be taken where necessary when significant deposits are located. Technological samples will be taken where necessary when significant deposits are located.

#### Specialists

In the event of certain finds/features etc. being discovered, the site archaeologist may have to seek specialist opinion for assistance. Such specialists will be accessed either internally within AW itself or from an external source. A list of external specialists is given in the table below.

Type	Name	Tel No.
Flint	Dr Amelia Pannett	02920 899509
Animal bone	Jen Kitch	07739 093712
CBM, heat affected clay, Daub etc.	Rachael Hall	01305 259751
Clay pipe	Hilary Major	01376 329316
Glass	Andy Richmond	01234 888800
Cremated and non-cremated human bone	Malin Holst	01759 368483
Metalwork	Kevin Leahy	01652 658261
Neo/BA pottery	Dr Alex Gibson	Bradford University
IA/Roman pottery	Jane Timby	01453 882851
Post Roman pottery	Mr Stephen Clarke	
Charcoal (wood ID)	John Carrot	01388 772167
Waterlogged wood	Nigel Nayling	University of Wales (Lampeter)
Molluscs and pollen	Dr James Rackham	01992 552256
Charred and waterlogged plant remains	Wendy Carruthers	01443 233466

## 4 Post-Fieldwork Programme

### Conservation

After agreement with the landowner arrangements will be made for the long term conservation and storage of all artefacts in an appropriate local or county museum.

### Archive

The site archive will be prepared in accordance with Morphe, (English Heritage 2006). It will comprise all the data recovered during the fieldwork and shall be quantified, ordered and indexed and will be internally consistent. The archive will be deposited with the finds in a suitable local museum.

### Reporting

The results of the watching brief will be submitted in an illustrated and bound report, which will include the following material:

- Non-technical summary
- Location plan showing the area/s covered by the watching brief, all artefacts, structures and features found
- Plan and section drawings with ground level, ordnance datum and vertical and horizontal scales.
- Written description and interpretation of all deposits identified, including their character, function, potential dating and relationship to adjacent features. Specialist descriptions and illustrations of all artefacts and soil samples will be included as appropriate.
- An indication of the potential of archaeological deposits which have not been disturbed by the development
- Statement of local, regional and national context of the remains
- A detailed archive list at the rear listing all contexts recorded, all samples finds and find types, drawings and photographs taken. This will include a statement of the intent to deposit, and location of deposition, of the archive.

### Monitoring

Any changes to the specification that the contractor may wish to make after approval will be communicated to HET-SC for approval on behalf of the Planning Authority.

Representatives of HET-SC will be given access to the site so that they may monitor the progress of the watching brief. HET-SC will be kept regularly informed about developments, both during the site works and subsequently during any potential post-excavation.

### Archive Format & Deposition

The full site archive will be deposited within one month of the completion of the client report.

The paper/drawing/digital archive will be deposited at the offices of HET-SC with the finds will be deposited with the appropriate local museum. AW will agree the location and timing of the deposition of the archive before the contract commences.

The archive will include all site notes, finds, documents, drawings, photographs, digital data and a copy of the final report and any prior draft versions. All of these items will be clearly quantified in tabular form in an 'archive deposition statement' located at the rear of the clients report, and their ultimate location and proposed date of deposition stated.

## **5 Resources and timetable**

### Standards

The watching brief will be undertaken by AW staff using current best practice.

All work will be undertaken to the standards and guidelines of the IFA.

### Staff

The project will be undertaken by suitably qualified AW staff.

### Equipment

The project will use existing AW equipment.

### Timetable of archaeological works

The watching brief will be undertaken at the convenience of the client.

### Insurance

AW is an affiliated member of the CBA, and holds Insurance through the CBA insurance service.

### Health and safety

All members of staff will adhere to the requirements of the *Health & Safety at Work Act*, 1974, and the Health and Safety Policy Statement of AW.



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## **APPENDIX IV:** Archive cover sheet

# ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

## Green Farm, Condover, Shropshire

Site Name:	Condover
Site Code:	GFC/14/WB
PRN:	-
NPRN:	-
SAM:	-
Other Ref No:	Planning App 13/03519/FUL
NGR:	NGR SJ 50868 06893
Site Type:	Green Field
Project Type:	Watching Brief
Project Manager:	Chris E Smith
Project Dates:	Nov 2014
Categories Present:	-
Location of Original Archive:	AW
Location of duplicate Archives:	-
Number of Finds Boxes:	NA
Location of Finds:	NA
Museum Reference:	NA
Copyright:	AW
Restrictions to access:	None

# *Archaeology Wales*



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