



**University of  
Leicester**

**Archaeological Services**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at,  
Hall Farm, Swepstone Road,  
Heather,  
Leicestershire.  
NGR: SK 3788 1027**

Andrew Hyam



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**An Archaeological Watching Brief at  
Hall Farm, Swepstone Road, Heather,  
Leicestershire.**

**NGR: SK 3788 1027**

**Andrew Hyam**

**For: Green Generation**

Approved by:

Signed: ...



Date: 25.11.2011.

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## **An Archaeological Watching Brief at Hall Farm, Sweptstone Road, Heather, Leicestershire.**

**NGR: SK 3788 1027 (point)**

**Andrew Hyam**

### **Summary**

*An archaeological inspection and recording exercise (watching brief) was undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at Hall Farm, Sweptstone Road, Heather, Leicestershire. The work took place on the 21st and 23rd of November 2011 during the excavation of a cable trench connecting a domestic wind turbine to the farm complex. The 0.36m wide by 1m deep cable trench ran for approximately 340m from the site of the proposed turbine to the farm.*

*The pasture land through which the cable trench cuts has a number of rectangular earthworks and probable prehistoric cropmarks located in nearby fields. Topsoil and subsoil were removed to reveal a natural substratum of mid orange brown clayey sand with frequent small stones within it. No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief.*

*The fieldwork was carried out by A.R.Hyam. The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service under Accession Number X.A.170.2011*

### **Introduction**

In accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, Policy HE12.3 (DCLG 2010) this document forms the report for an archaeological watching brief at Hall Farm, Sweptstone Road, Heather, Leicestershire.

Under planning application number 11/00430/FUL it is proposed that a single 11kw wind turbine be erected in a field to the south-west of Hall Farm. From the turbine base (at NGR SK 3788 1027) a buried cable will run northwards towards the farm buildings (NGR SK 3804 1057) and will also connect up with a series of photovoltaic panels recently installed on a nearby barn roof giving a total trench length of nearly 340m.

When considering the planning application the Senior Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council, as advisor to North West Leicestershire District Council, recommended the requirement for a programme of archaeological monitoring work in the form of a watching brief due to the site's location within an area of archaeological interest. The work has been commissioned by Green Generation on behalf of the land owner.

## Background

The village of Heather lies approximately 2km to the west of Ibstock and 4km south-west of Coalville (Fig. 1). Hall Farm is located just outside the western boundary of Heather on the south side of Swebstone Road. As its name suggests Hall Farm formed part of Heather Hall which is situated immediately to the east of the main farm buildings (Fig. 2). The turbine is located on a very slight rise in a field to the south of the farm. The cable trench runs from the turbine base across a pasture field through a hedgeline and into another pasture field. It then runs along the western side of a large barn, past another smaller barn and east towards the farm building (Figs. 3 and 4).

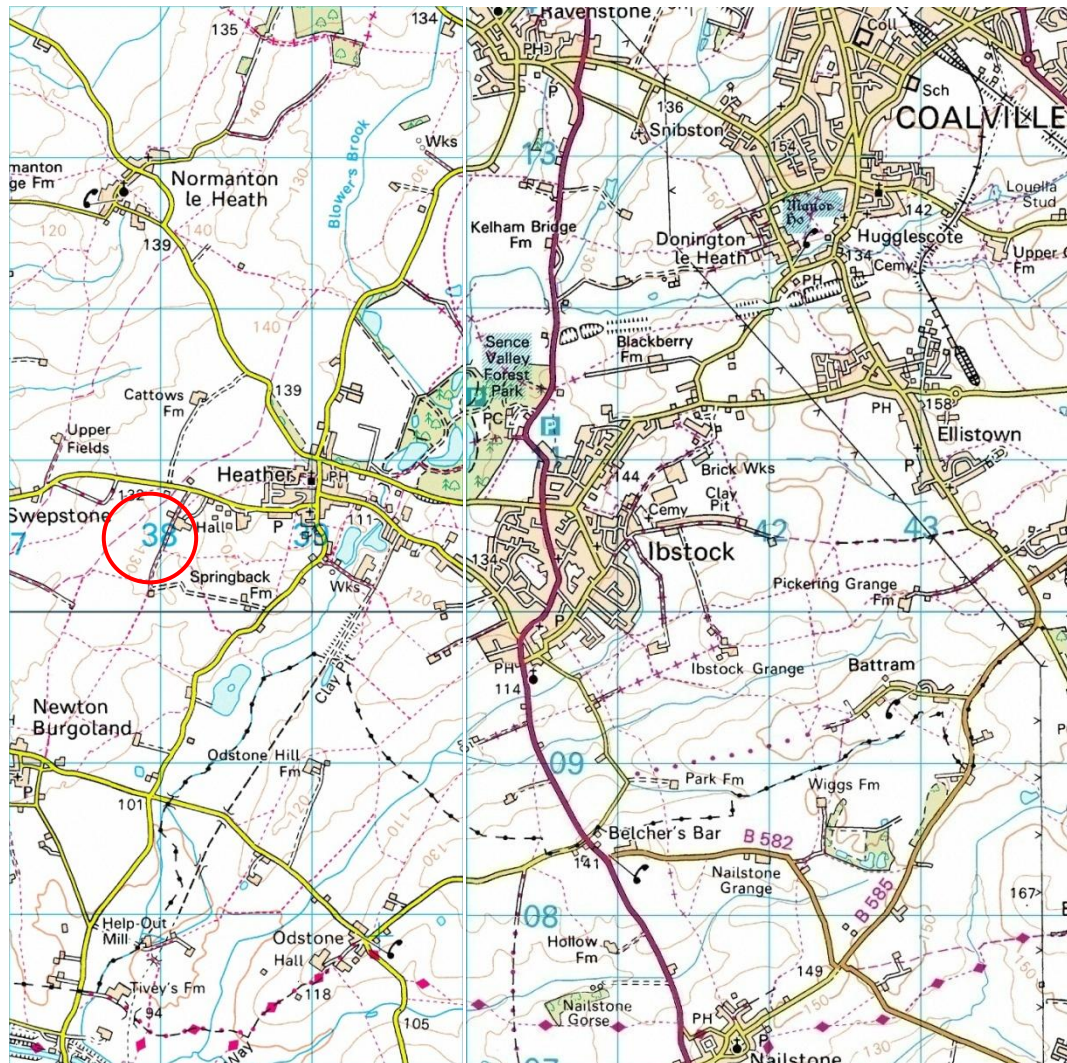


Figure 1. Location map of Heather  
Site highlighted in red. North to top of map

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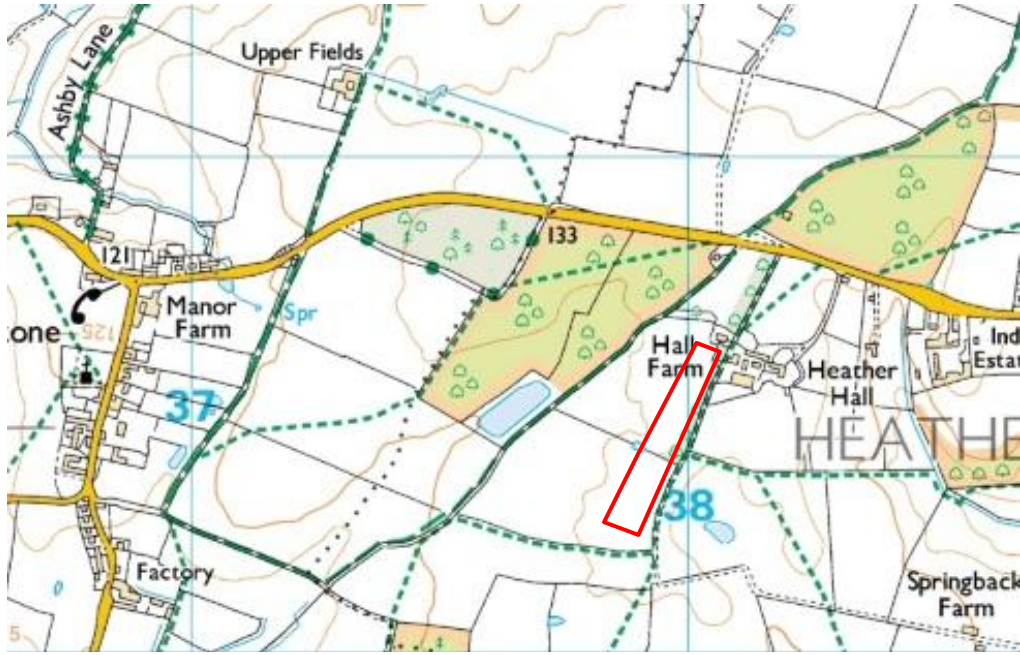


Figure 2. Site location map

Site highlighted in red. North to top of map

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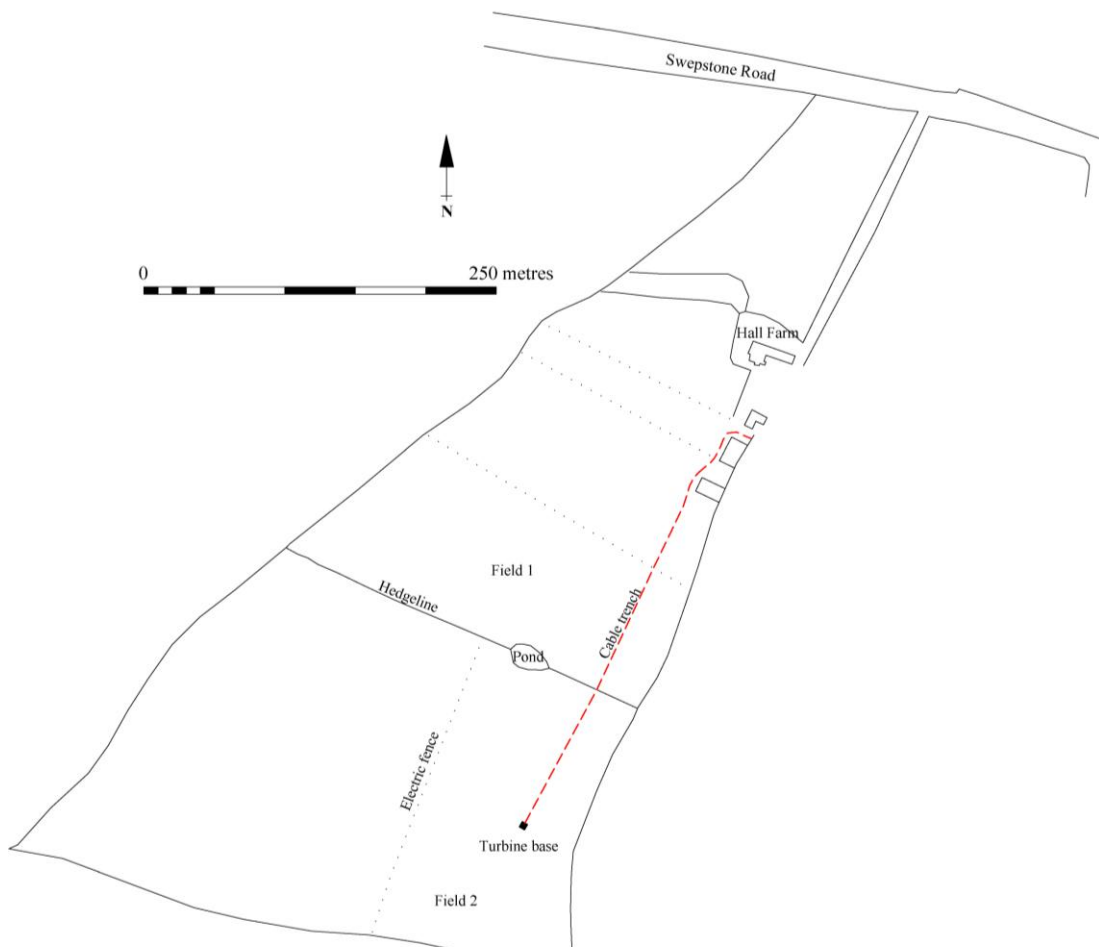


Figure 3. Turbine and cable location



Figure 4. Turbine base

Looking north. Cable trench passes through hedge towards barn in distance

The site has been identified as an area of archaeological potential from information held in the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER). Numerous cropmark features surround the development area, these are indicative of settlement, enclosures and land boundaries probably of the later prehistoric (Bronze or Iron Age) or Roman periods (HER refs.: MLE4590, MLE4598, MLE4900, MLE4904-MLE4906). The HER also notes the presence of rectangular earthwork features, interpreted as enclosures, centred around Heather Hall (MLE4585). Consequently, there was a likelihood that buried archaeological remains could be disturbed and affected by the groundworks.

The Ordnance Survey maps of the area, from the 1883 first edition up to the present, indicate that the fields wherein the turbine and cable trench are located have seen no development since this date.

## Objectives

The objectives of the work, as identified in the WSI, were through archaeological attendance and investigation with the key objectives being:

- To identify the presence/absence of any or archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To advance understanding of the heritage assets.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

## Methodology

The methodology followed that shown in the ULAS Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for *Archaeological attendance, inspection and recording (watching brief) at Hall Farm Sweptstone Road, Heather, Leicestershire*.

A tracked mini-excavator fitted with a toothed bucket was used to excavate the 0.36m wide by 1m deep trench. The cable trench was examined where appropriate by hand cleaning with the intention that any archaeological deposits that may be located would be planned at an appropriate scale and sample-excavated by hand to establish the stratigraphic and chronological sequence. All plans were tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Spot heights would be taken as appropriate.

A photographic record of the investigations was prepared illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and work. Colour digital and black and white 35mm photographs were taken throughout the work. The photographic record also included 'working shots' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

All work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2010) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2008).

## Results

At the beginning of the watching brief the 4.5m<sup>2</sup> base for the turbine had already been excavated and the turbine foundations concreted in. The spoil heap for the base was inspected for any artefacts but none were found. For ease of identification the field to the north of the hedgeline running across the line of the cable trench was labelled as Field 1 and the field to the south as Field 2 (see Fig. 3). These references were allocated for the purposes of the watching brief and bear no relation to the farm use or any historical identification. The dry nature of the top soil, sub soil and natural all helped with visibility in that the machine bucket had a minimal smearing effect on the trench walls.



### *Field 1*

A layer of mid brown sandy silt topsoil with an average depth of around 0.18m was removed in spits down to a mid brown silty sand subsoil which had an average depth of around 0.15m (Figs. 5 and 6). Beneath this was the natural substratum consisting of a mid orange brown silty sand with frequent sub-rounded stones and flint fragments. The natural was quite dry and very hard along much of the trench length. Where the trench passed to the west of the barns, in the north-east corner of the field, the distinction between the topsoil and subsoil became rather indistinct (Fig.7). This disturbance was probably due to animal and vehicle activity around the barns. Both excavated faces of the trench were closely inspected along their full length and hand cleaned where necessary but no features or deposits were observed. No artefacts were recovered from the spoil heaps.



Figure 5. Northern half of Field 1  
Looking north towards farm complex



Figure 6. Typical trench section  
Field 1. Looking west. 2m scale



Figure 7. Field 1 adjacent to barns.  
Looking south-west

### *Field 2*

The same topsoil and subsoil were noted in this field as in Field 1 although the topsoil appeared to be slightly thinner with an average depth of around 0.12m. This may be due to the fact that this field was ploughed in 2010 before being re-seeded with grass whereas Field 1 has been under grass for about 20 years. The same hard dry natural substratum was also observed. The area around the north-east to south-west hedgeline was very disturbed with hedge roots and a small water pipe but no archaeological features or deposits were observed in this southern section of trench (Fig. 8). No artefacts were recovered from the spoil heaps.



Figure 8. Field 2 looking north towards Field 1

## **Discussion**

Despite the relatively high potential, no archaeological features or deposits were observed during the cable trenching work. The fields appear to have undergone very little disturbance and the reasonably good soil conditions for identifying archaeology in the sides of the trench suggest that if any features had been present they would have been identified during the course of the work.

## **Archive**

The archive consists of:

This report,

2 pro-forma watching brief recording sheets,

1 photographic record sheet containing digital photographic record,

1 photographic record sheet containing black and white photographic record,

1 contact sheet of 24 digital photographs,

1 contact sheet of 12 35mm black and white photographs,

35mm black and white negatives,

1 cd of this report and the digital photographs.

## **Publication**

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. A record of the project will also be submitted to the OASIS project. OASIS is an online index to archaeological grey literature.

## **Bibliography**

Brown, D., 2008. *Standard and guidance for the preparation of Archaeological Archives* (Institute for Archaeologists).

ULAS 2011. Written Scheme of Investigation for *Archaeological attendance, inspection and recording (watching brief) at Hall Farm Sweystone Road, Heather, Leicestershire*. (ULAS 25.10.2011)

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## Appendix 1. Digital photographs



## Appendix 2. OASIS information

Project Name	Hall Farm, Sweptstone Road, Heather
Project Type	Watching Brief
Project Manager	P Clay
Project Supervisor	A Hyam
Previous/Future work	None
Current Land Use	Farmland
Development Type	Wind turbine & cable trench
Reason for Investigation	Archaeological potential
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	SK 3788 1027 (point)
Start/end dates of field work	21.11.2011-23.11.2011
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire Museums Service
Study Area	340m long

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