

Archaeological Evaluation at Woodhouse Fields Farm, Nabb Lane, Rocester, Staffordshire



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Compiled By:
Michelle Burpoe

Archaeological Research Services Ltd
Angel House,
Portland Square,
Bakewell,
Derbyshire,
DE45 1HB

admin@archaeologicalresearchservices.com
www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com

Checked By:
Dr Robin Holgate MCifA
Tel: 01629 814540
Fax: 01629 814657



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Archaeological Research Services Ltd
Angel House, Portland Square, Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1HB
www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Name: Archaeological Evaluation at Woodhouse Fields Farm, Nabb Lane, Rocester, Staffordshire

Site Code: WOOD'16

Planning Authority: East Staffordshire County Council

Location: Nabb Lane, Rocester, Staffordshire, ST14 5HY

Geology: Mudstone of the Mercia Mudstone Group

NGR: SK 086 391

Planning reference: P/2015/01032

Date of Fieldwork: 22nd – 26th August 2016

Date of Report: September 2016

Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd) was commissioned by Sun & Soil Renewable 20 Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Woodhouse Fields Farm, Nabb Lane, Rocester, Staffordshire between the 22nd – 26th August 2016 in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the Staffordshire County Council Principal Archaeologist. The archaeological evaluation relates to the proposed development of land at Woodhouse Fields Farm, which consists of the construction of a solar farm and associated trackway and building, and also a temporary construction laydown area.

In total, eight evaluation trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision, using a tracked excavator with a toothless ditching bucket. Removal of the topsoil and silty clay subsoil revealed the natural clay of the region. Two linear features were identified within trenches 1 and 4, potentially representing former field boundaries, and the remains of two filled-in ponds were also identified within trenches 2 and 3. Artefacts recovered from F104 and F404 were dated to the 19th-20th centuries, as were the artefacts recovered from one of the filled-in ponds (204). No other archaeological features or artefacts were recovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd) was commissioned by Sun & Soil Renewable 20 Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Woodhouse Fields Farm, Nabb Lane, Rocester, Staffordshire. The archaeological evaluation relates to the proposed development of land at Woodhouse Fields Farm, which consists of the construction of a solar farm and associated trackway and building and also a temporary construction laydown area.

1.1.2 Planning permission has been granted for the works through a successful application (Application Reference: P/2015/01032) made by Sun & Soil Renewable 20 Limited. Condition number 7 of the planning permission requires that:

'Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a written scheme of archaeological investigation ('the Scheme') shall be submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. The Scheme shall provide details of the programme of archaeological works to be carried out within the site, including post-excavation reporting and appropriate publication. The Scheme shall thereafter be implemented in full accordance with the approved details.'

1.1.3 The programme of archaeological works were undertaken in accordance with the written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) approved by the Staffordshire County Council (SCC) Principal Archaeologist Stephen Dean in order to inform the need for and scope of any subsequent archaeological mitigation.

1.2 Site Topography and Geology

1.2.1 The site of the proposed development area (hereafter 'PDA') is located to the west of Rocester, Staffordshire. Nabb Lane forms the western boundary of the site with grassland, currently used as pasture, enclosing all other sides. The site lies on a gentle east-facing slope and is centred at NGR SK 086391 (Figure 1).

1.2.2 The underlying geology is mudstone of the Mercia Mudstone Group, formed during the Triassic Period when the local environment was previously dominated by hot deserts. No drift geology is recorded for the site (BGS 2016). The overlying soils are known as Whimple 3, which are typical stagnogleyic argillic brown earths (SSEW 1983). These consist of reddish fine loamy or fine silty over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging (CU 2016).

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

1.3.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment of the area was produced by Wyvern Heritage and Landscape in 2015. The report notes that based on current evidence, there is low potential for the presence of any unrecorded significant undesignated buried heritage assets which would require preservation *in situ* (Rouse 2015, 2). However, there is some potential for field systems or other remains of Romano-British date, possibly related to the Romano-British site excavated by the Stoke-on-Trent Museum Archaeological Society

south of the Roman Road at Tollgate Farm (Field Head Cottage) to the south-east of the site, although this has been given consideration in the proposed development construction design.

1.3.2 In response to the desk-based assessment, a geophysical survey was undertaken by Stratascan, on 14th-15th October 2015 (Collins 2015). It was considered that many of the features highlighted by the survey were of modern agricultural origin. However, there was a positive anomaly in the north of the site which is of unknown origin.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 The general aims and objectives of the fieldwork project were as follows:

- To gather evidence to establish, supplement, improve and make available information about any archaeological remains/deposits within the PDA.
- To produce dating and phasing for archaeological deposits recorded on the site.
- To establish the character and delimit the extent of archaeological deposits in order to define functional areas on the site, e.g. industrial and domestic.
- To produce information on the economy and local environment.
- To provide an appropriate post-excavation assessment, analysis, reporting, archiving and dissemination.
- To inform as to the need for, scale and location of subsequent archaeological mitigation.

2.2 These aims were pursued in accordance with and in the context of relevant objectives extant in the regional research framework outlined in *The Archaeology of the West Midlands: A Framework for Research* (Esmonde Cleary 2011, 138-9), specifically those outlined below.

- There is need to conduct more in-depth studies of the processes of change to provide more scientific dating. Localised environmental evidence, such as that associated with farm practices, assists in charting change and provides a physical context for human occupation.
- Are there observable differences in the environmental evidence for economic basis (e.g. arable rather than pastoral) or for the social structures of the zone and consequently in the patterns of settlement and of artefact use and deposition?

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 The WSI outlines the methodology employed in the evaluation which followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014a) and the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Field Evaluation* (CIfA 2014b).

3.2 A risk assessment was undertaken before commencement of the work. Health and Safety regulations were adhered to at all times.

3.3 The evaluation trench locations were designed to target anomalies identified by the geophysical survey and to test apparently 'blank' areas of the PDA (Figure 2).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 In total, eight evaluation trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision using a tracked excavator. Five of the trenches measured 15m x 2m, two trenches measured 20m x 2m and one trench measured 30m x 2m (Figure 2).

4.1.2 Trench summary tables (Table 1 and Table 2) are presented below. These provide a synthesis of the presence/absence of archaeology or potential archaeology in each of the trenches as well as the depths of the topsoil and subsoil below ground level (BGL).

Trench No	Archaeological features present? Y/N	Period	Top soil thickness	Sub soil thickness
1	Y	Modern/Recent	250mm	100mm
2	Y	Modern/Recent	200 – 350mm	100 – 200mm
3	Y	Modern/Recent	250 – 350mm	100 – 200mm
4	Y	Modern/Recent	200 – 400mm	100 – 200mm
5	N	-	200mm	100mm
6	N	-	200mm	100mm
7	N	-	200mm	150 – 200mm
8	N	-	200mm	100 – 150mm

Table 1. Trench summary table demonstrating presence absence of archaeology/excavated deposits/structures and topsoil/subsoil depths.

Trench No	Excavated Feature	Dating Y/N	Depth to top BGL	Depth to top aOD
1	?Field Boundary	N	0.26m	106.86m
2	Filled in pond	Y	?0.40m	109.36m
3	Filled in pond	?Y	?0.40m	111.35m
4	?Field Boundary	Y	0.60m	113.76m

Table 2. Summary table of the excavated deposit/feature types encountered in the evaluation trenches

4.1.3 Topsoil on the site characteristically comprised a dark brown clay silt with occasional small spherical water rolled pebbles in its matrix. It typically overlay a subsoil or colluvial layer of dark yellowish/brown silty clay with sparse or occasional small water rolled pebbles in its matrix.

4.1.4 Extant modern land drains that were encountered during the evaluation were not investigated further.

4.1.5 Trenches 1 and 4 contained what have been tentatively identified as field boundaries, as they align with former field boundaries as depicted on an Ordnance Survey (OS) Map dating to 1881 (Figure 3).

4.1.6 Trenches 2 and 3 contained what have been identified as the filled-in remains of two former ponds that are depicted on OS Mapping until the mid-20th century.

4.2 Trench Summaries

Also see trench summaries in Appendix II: Context Summary Table.

4.2.1 Trench 1

(Figures 4 - 6)

Topsoil (101) and subsoil (102) deposits were removed from Trench 1 by machine under archaeological supervision to a depth of 0.35m below ground level (BGL), c.106.76m aOD. A sub-rectangular feature of irregular and variable width, possibly representing a field boundary ditch (F104), was excavated and represented the only potential archaeological feature within Trench 1. Several fragments of whiteware were collected from the subsoil (102).

4.2.2 Trench 2

(Figure 7)

Topsoil (201) and subsoil (202) was machine excavated in Trench 2 to a depth ranging from 0.30 – 0.55m BGL, c.110.13m aOD. Within the north end of the trench, the remains of a filled-in pond, as seen on the 1881 OS Map (Figure 3), were identified, which was found to contain 16 sherds of pottery, an iron horseshoe and several glass bottles, all of which date to the 19th-20th centuries (see section 5 below).

4.2.3 Trench 3

(Figure 8)

Topsoil (301) and subsoil/colluvium (302) was machine excavated in Trench 3 to a depth of 0.55m BGL, c.110.84m aOD, at which depth the underlying geological natural was revealed. The remains of a filled-in pond, as seen on the 1881 OS Map (Figure 3), were identified in the west end of the trench, which was found to contain fragments of frogged brick, slag and stone.

4.2.4 Trench 4

(Figures 9 - 12)

Excavation of topsoil (401) and subsoil (402) revealed the top of the clay natural at c.113.50m aOD. The one feature, interpreted as a potential field boundary, extended northwest-southeast across the width of the trench. The single fill (404) contained two fragments of whiteware pottery and the remains of a *Sorex araneus* (common shrew) (see section 5 below).

4.2.5 Trench 5

(Figure 13)

Topsoil (501) and subsoil/colluvium (502) were excavated in Trench 5 to a depth of 0.30m BGL, c.113.08m aOD, at which the depth of the underlying geological natural was revealed.

No archaeological deposits or structures were observed, although a land drain was encountered in the north-western end of the trench.

4.2.6 Trench 6

(Figure 14)

Topsoil (601) and subsoil/colluvium (602) were excavated in Trench 6 to a depth of 0.30m BGL, c.115.22m aOD, at which the depth of the underlying geological natural was revealed. No archaeological deposits or structures were observed.

4.2.7 Trench 7

(Figure 15)

Topsoil (701) and subsoil/colluvium (702) were excavated in Trench 7 to a depth of 0.25m BGL, c.107.25m aOD, at which the depth of the underlying geological natural was revealed. No archaeological deposits or structures were observed.

4.2.8 Trench 8

(Figure 16)

Topsoil (801) and subsoil/colluvium (802) were excavated in Trench 8 to a depth of 0.22m BGL, c.106.46m aOD, at which the depth of the underlying geological natural was revealed. No archaeological deposits or structures were observed, although a land drain was encountered in the south-eastern end of the trench.

5 FINDS ASSESSMENT

Dr Robin Holgate MCI(A), FSA and Elise McLellan

5.1 Pottery

5.1.1. Twenty fragments of pottery were recovered as summarised in Table 3. The pottery represents late 19th-20th centuries utilitarian wares (brown-glazed earthenware) and 20th century refined earthenwares (whiteware plate fragments, including two fragments of blue-and-white transfer-printed earthenware bowls or cups) used for the storage, preparation and consumption of food.

Artefact type	Date range	Artefact count by context		
		(102)	(204)	(404)
Brown-glazed earthenware	Late 19 th -20 th centuries	-	3	-
Whiteware, including blue-and-white transfer-printed ware	Late 19 th -20 th centuries	2	13	2
Total		2	16	2

Table 3: The ceramic material

5.2 Iron

5.2.1 One horseshoe of 19th-20th centuries date was recovered from context (204).

5.3 Glass

5.3.1 Three 20th century clear glass bottles were recovered from context (204): two were A1 sauce bottles and the other (with a metal screw cap) was a fizzy drink bottle.

5.4 Animal Bone

5.4.1 The remains of a common shrew (*Sporex araneus*) were recovered from context (404). The remains represent a single individual. The majority of skeletal elements were present.

5.5 Discussion

5.5.1 The artefacts are not unusual in any respect for a rural site of this nature. No further analysis is required. None of the finds require conservation and all the material could be archived or is suitable for discard.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 The presence of archaeological deposits of likely post-medieval origin are attested to in Trenches 1, 2, 3 and 4. Two of these features are probably linear field boundaries, with the remaining two features representing the remains of two former ponds, as depicted on the 1881 OS Map (Figure 3).

6.2 No remains of prehistoric, Romano-British or medieval date were identified during the archaeological evaluation, despite the presence of a Romano-British road and activity to the south. It may be that this was an area of woodland or open pasture during these periods.

6.3 The impact on potential archaeological remains at this site by the construction of a solar farm is considered to be low.

7 PUBLICITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND COPYRIGHT

7.1 Any publicity will be handled by the client.

7.2 ARS Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

8 STATEMENT OF INDEMNITY

8.1 All statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.

9 ARCHIVE

9.1 A bound copy of the report, with an attached PDF/A copy of the report on disc will be deposited with the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (HER). The artefacts recovered from the site will either be returned to the landowner or discarded.

10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

10.1 ARS Ltd would like to thank to thank Ben Alexander of Sun & Soil Renewable 20 Limited for commissioning the project and for arranging all site accesses, and also Stephen Dead, the Staffordshire County Council Principal Archaeologist, for his guidance and assistance with this project.

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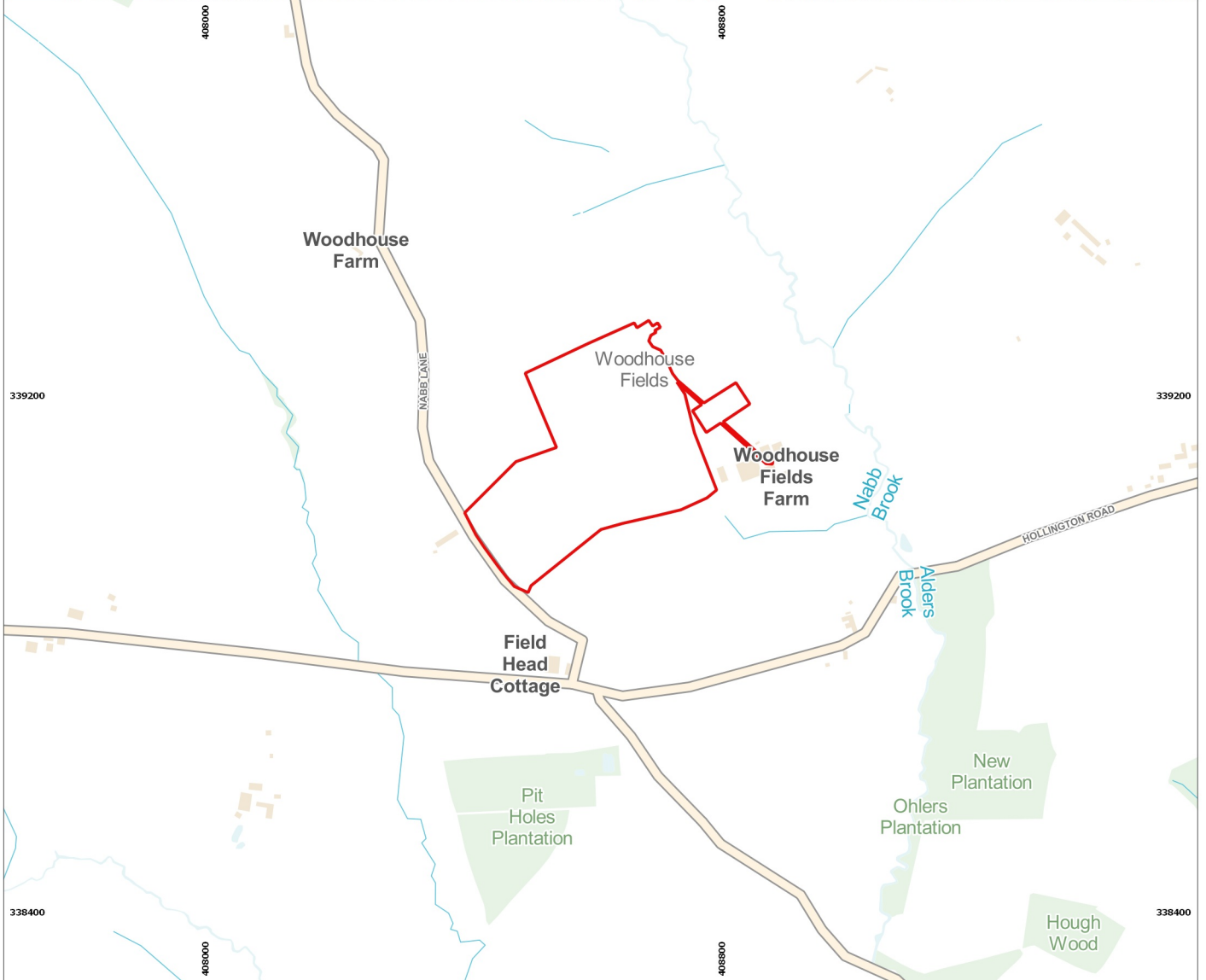
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Appendix I: Figures



Site name: Woodhouse Fields Far, Rocester
 Date: August 2016
 Drawn by: MB
 Scale: Varies

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**Figure 1:
 Site location**



Archaeological Research Services Ltd

Angel House
 Portland Square
 Bakewell
 Derbyshire
 DE45 1HB

Tel: 01629 814540
www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com



Site name: Woodhouse Fields Farm, Rocester
 Date: August 2016
 Drawn by: MB
 Scale: 1:2000 @ A4

 Site Boundary New
 15m x 2m Trench

 20m x 2m Trench
 30m x 2m Trench



Archaeological Research Services Ltd

Aizlewood's Mill
 Nursery Street
 Sheffield
 South Yorkshire
 S3 8GG



Tel: 01142 750140

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Figure 2:
Trench Locations overlaid over Solar Farm Plan

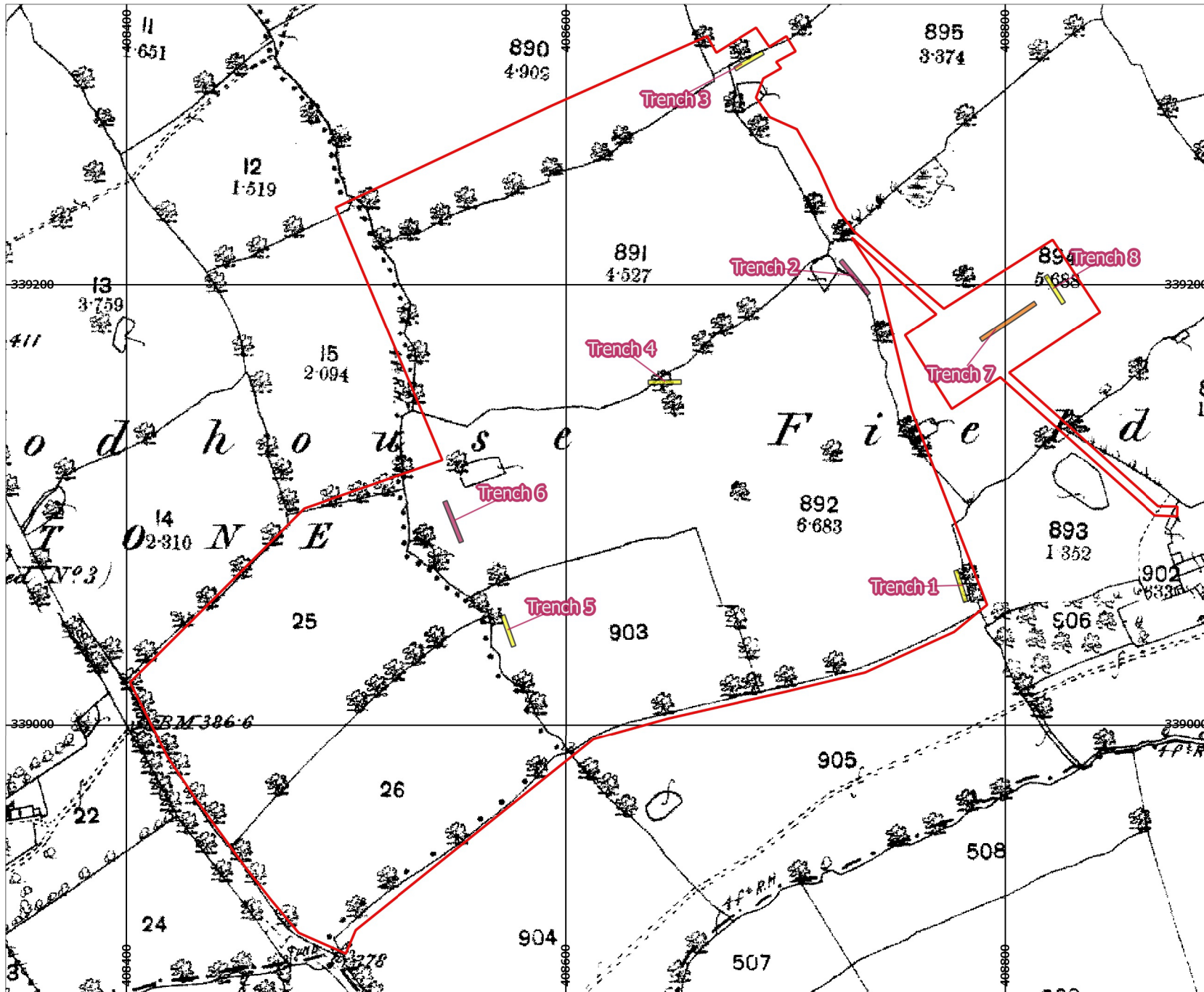
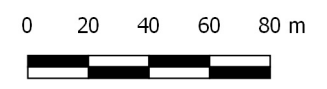


Figure 3: Trench Location Plan overlaid on 1881 Ordnance Survey Map

- Site Boundary
- 15m x 2m
- 20m x 2m
- 30m x 2m



Site name: Woodhouse Fields Farm
 Date: September 2016
 Drawn by: MB
 Scale: 1:2500 @A4

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 Portland Square
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 DE45 1HB
 Tel: 01629 814540
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Figure 4: View south of Trench 1 (scale = 2 x 1 x 0.5m graduations).



Figure 5: West facing view of Feature 104, post-excitation (scale = 1 x 0.5m graduations).


Figure 6: Trench 1 Plan and Section

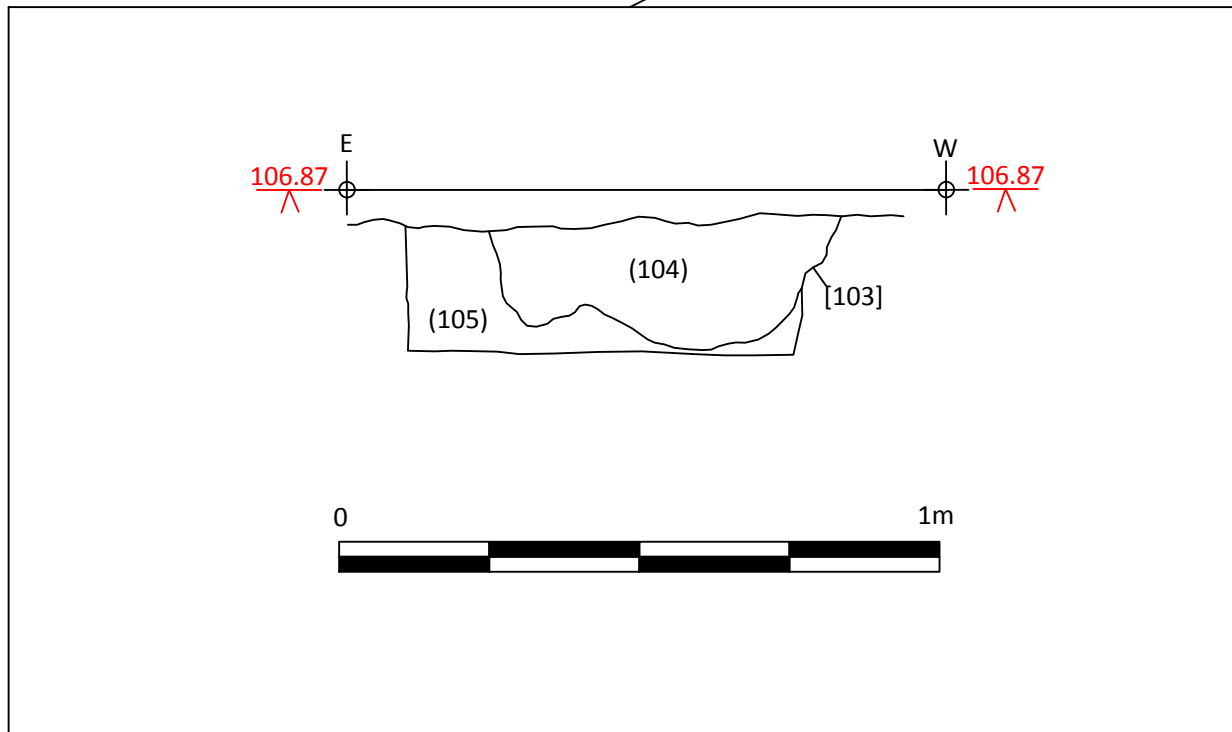
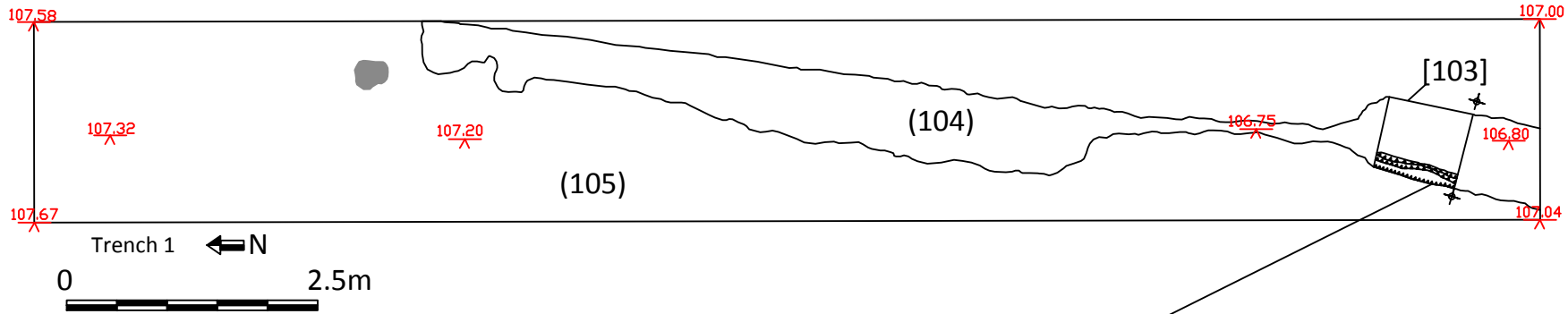
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Woodhouse Fields Farm, Rocester

WOOD'16

Key:

 Root Disturbance



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Figure 7: Southeast view of Trench 2. Remains of a filled in pond can be seen in the north-west corner of the trench (scale = 2 x 1 x 0.5m graduations).



Figure 8: East view of Trench 3. Remains of a filled in pond can be seen in the western part of the trench (scale = 2 x 1 x 0.5m graduations).



Figure 9: View east of Trench 4 (scale = 2 x 1 x 0.5m graduations).



Figure 10: North facing view of Feature 404 pre-excavations (scale = 2 x 1 x 0.5m graduations).



Figure 11: North-facing view of Feature 404 post-excitation (scale = 2 x 0.5m graduations).

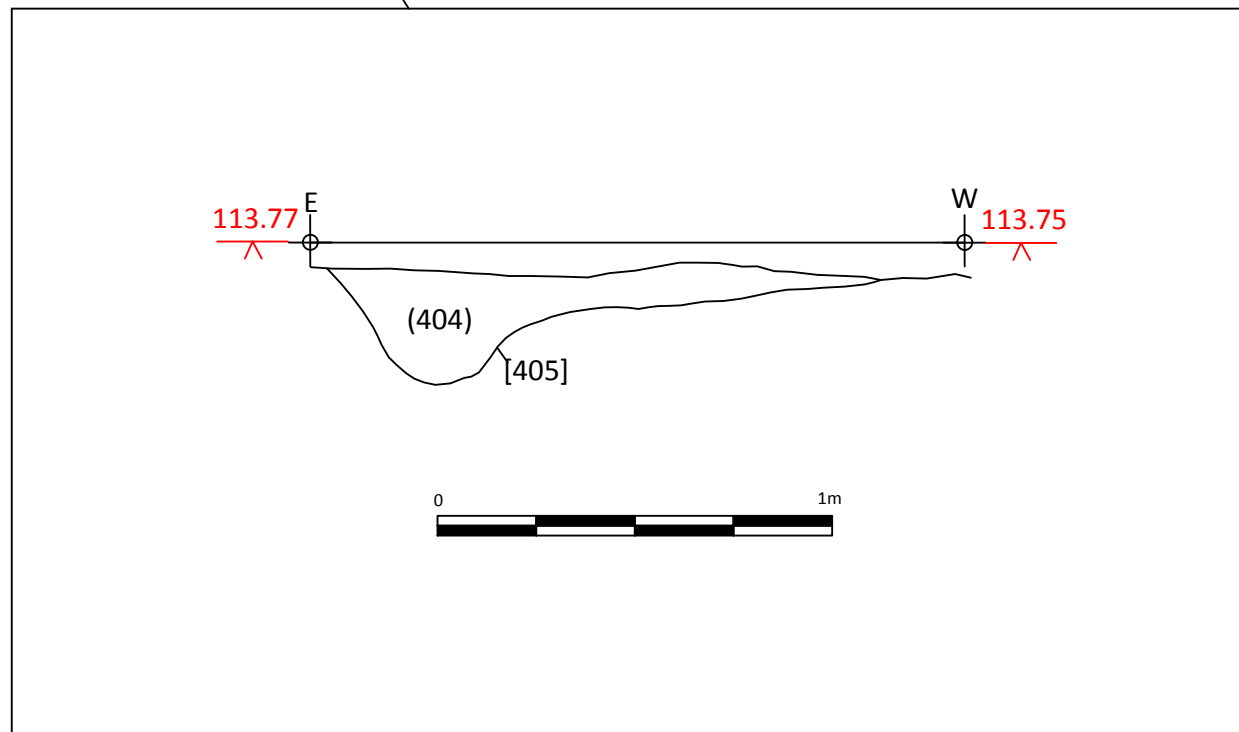
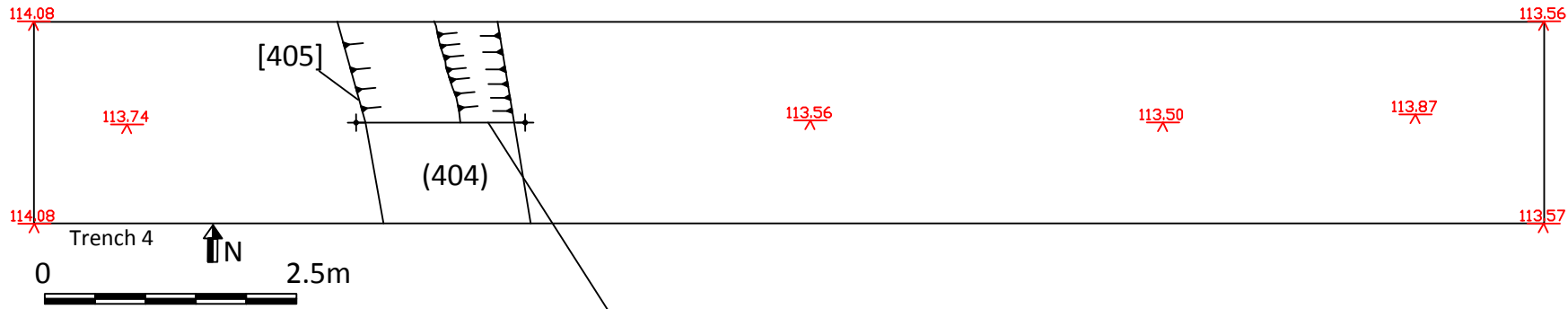
Figure 12: Trench 4 Plan and Section

Scale: 1:70 @ A4

Woodhouse Fields Farm, Rocester

WOOD'16

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Figure 13: View south of Trench 5 with land drain visible in foreground (scale = 2 x 1 x 0.5m graduations).



Figure 14: View north of Trench 6 (scale = 2 x 1 x 0.5m graduations).



Figure 15: View south-west of Trench 7 (scale = 2 x 1 x 0.5m graduations).



Figure 16: View north-west of Trench 8 with land drain in foreground (scale = 2 x 1 x 0.5m graduations).

Appendix II: Context Summary Table

Trench	Context	Type/	Description / Processual Interpretation	Thickness/extent (feature = length x width x depth)	Depth to top (BGL)
1	101	Deposit/Topsoil	Mid-black/brown loam, well sorted, no inclusions.	15m x 2m x 0.25m	0
	102	Deposit/Subsoil	Mid-orange/brown clay silt, in irregular patches of variable shapes and extent	15m x 2m x 0.01m	0.25m
	103	Cut of ditch	A sub-rectangular feature of irregular and variable width running N-S	10m x 0.8m x 0.2m	0.26m
	104	Fill of ditch [103]	Marbled Red, grey, mid-yellow/brown clay silt with small, loamy patches	10m x 0.8m x 0.2m	0.26m
	105	Deposit/Geological natural	Light orange/brown clay, very dense and compact.	15m x 2m x ∞	0.26m
2	201	Deposit/Topsoil	Dark-brown clayey silt with occasional pebbles and stones, well sorted	20m x 2m x 0.2m	0
	202	Deposit/Subsoil	Mid-yellow/brown silty clay	20m x 2m x 0.2m	0.20m
	203	Deposit/Geological natural	Reddish clay with occasional stones	20m x 2m x ∞	0.40m
	204	Filled-in pond	Small backfilled pond identified, artefacts inside date to the 19 th -20 th centuries	?m x ?m x ?m	?0.40m
3	301	Deposit/Topsoil	Dark-brown clayey silt with occasional pebbles and stones, well sorted	15m x 2m x 0.25m	0
	302	Deposit/Subsoil	Mid-yellow/brown silty clay	15m x 2m x 0.15m	0.25m
	303	Deposit/Geological natural	Reddish clay with occasional stones	15m x 2m x ∞	0.40m
	304	Filled-in pond	Small backfilled pond identified with visible brick and slag on top	?m x ?m x ?m	?0.40m
4	401	Deposit/Topsoil	Dark-brown clayey silt with occasional pebbles and stones, well sorted	15m x 2m x 0.4m	0
	402	Deposit/Subsoil	Mid-yellow/brown silty clay	15m x 2m x 0.2m	0.40m
	403	Deposit/Geological natural	Reddish clay with occasional stones	15m x 2m x ∞	0.60m
	404	Fill of ditch [405]	Mid-brown silty clay with charcoal flecking	2m x 1.4m x 0.35m	0.60m
	405	Cut of ditch	Sharp cut with steep sides with a concave base	2m x 1.4m x 0.35m	0.60m
5	501	Deposit/Topsoil	Dark-brown clayey silt with occasional pebbles and stones, well sorted	15m x 2m x 0.2m	0
	502	Deposit/Subsoil	Mid-yellow/brown silty clay	15m x 2m x 0.1m	0.20m
	503	Deposit/Geological natural	Reddish clay with occasional stones	15m x 2m x ∞	0.30m

Trench	Context	Type/	Description / Processual Interpretation	Thickness/extent (feature = length x width x depth)	Depth to top (BGL)
6	601	Deposit/Topsoil	Dark-brown clayey silt with occasional pebbles and stones, well sorted	20m x 2m x 0.2m	0
	602	Deposit/Subsoil	Mid-yellow/brown silty clay	20m x 2m x 0.1m	0.20m
	603	Deposit/Geological natural	Reddish clay with occasional stones	20m x 2m x ∞	0.30m
7	701	Deposit/Topsoil	Dark-brown clayey silt with occasional pebbles and stones, well sorted	30m x 2m x 0.2m	0
	702	Deposit/Subsoil	Mid-yellow/brown silty clay	30m x 2m x 0.05m	0.20m
	703	Deposit/Geological natural	Reddish clay with occasional stones	30m x 2m x ∞	0.25m
8	801	Deposit/Topsoil	Dark-brown clayey silt with occasional pebbles and stones, well sorted	15m x 2m x 0.2m	0
	802	Deposit/Subsoil	Mid-yellow/brown silty clay	15m x 2m x 0.02m	0.20m
	803	Deposit/Geological natural	Reddish clay with occasional stones	15m x 2m x ∞	0.22m

Table 4: Context summary table

Appendix III: Written Scheme of Investigation

Woodhouse Fields Farm, Nabb Lane, Rocester, Staffordshire

Written Scheme of Investigation For Archaeological Works

2016



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Angel House, Portland Square, Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1HB

www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com

Prepared on behalf of: Sun & Soil Renewable 20 Ltd

Date of compilation: August 2016

Planning reference: P/2015/01032

Local Authority: East Staffordshire Borough Council

Site central NGR: SK086391

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This scheme of works relates to the proposed development at Woodhouse Fields Farm, Nabb Lane, Rocester, Staffordshire, ST14 5HY (Figure 1) which consists of the construction of a solar farm with associated infrastructure (Figure 2).

1.2 Planning permission has been granted for the works through a successful application (Application Reference: P/2015/01032) made by Sun & Soil Renewable 20 Limited. Condition number 7 of the planning permission requires that:

“Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a written scheme of archaeological investigation (the Scheme’) shall be submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. The Scheme shall provide details of the programme of archaeological works to be carried out within the site, including post-excavation reporting and appropriate publication. The Scheme shall thereafter be implemented in full in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To help preserve the archaeological value of the site in relation to Local Plan Policy 2012-2031 Policy DP5 and National Planning Policy Framework para 135.”

1.3 This document comprises a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) confirming the nature of the archaeological works to be undertaken by Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd) at Woodhouse Fields Farm, initially comprising evaluation trenching followed by, depending on the results of the evaluation fieldwork, strip, map and sample excavation and/or intermittent watching brief during the ground works phase of the proposed development in accordance with guidance from Stephen Dean, Principal Archaeologist at Staffordshire County Council (SCC).

1.4 The aim of the programme of works is, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 141 (DCLG 2012), to record and enhance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost during the proposed development in a manner proportionate to their importance, and to make this evidence (and any archived generated) publically accessible.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Site Location and Geology

2.1.1 The site of the proposed solar farm is located to the west of Rocester, Staffordshire. Nabb Lane forms the western boundary of the site with agricultural land enclosing all other sides. The site is centred at NGR SK086391 Figure 1). The proposed development area (PDA) currently occupies fields currently used as pasture.

2.1.2 The underlying geology of the site is mudstone of the Mercia Mudstone Group, formed during the Triassic Period when the local environment was previously dominated by hot deserts (BGS 2016). No drift geology is recorded for the site.



2.2 Historical and Archaeological Background

2.2.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment of the area was produced by Wyvern Heritage and Landscape in 2015. The report notes that based on current evidence, there is low potential for the presence of any unrecorded significant undesignated buried heritage assets which would require preservation *in situ*. However, there is some potential for field systems or other remains of Romano-British date, possibly related to the Romano-British site excavated by the Stoke-on-Trent Museum Archaeological Society south of the Roman Road at Tollgate Farm (Field Head Cottage) to the south-east of the site. Additionally, there are areas of medieval ridge and furrow to the east of the site, although this has been given consideration in the proposed development construction design. In response to the report, a geophysical survey was undertaken by Strata Scan, on 14th-15th October 2015 (Collins 2015), and found that many of the features highlighted by the survey suggest modern agricultural origin. However, there was a positive anomaly in the north of the site which is of unknown origin.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Regional Research Aims and Objectives

3.1.1 Research topics identified in *The Archaeology of the West Midlands: A Framework for Research* (Esmonde Cleary 2011, 138-9) for Romano-British rural settlement has assisted in informing the objectives for the strip, map and sample excavation outlined in section 3.2.2 below.

- There is need to conduct more in-depth studies of the processes of change to provide more scientific dating. Localised environmental evidence, such as that associated with farming practices, assists in charting change and provides a physical context for human occupation.
- Are there observable differences in the environmental evidence for economic basis (e.g. arable rather than pastoral) or for the social structures of the zone and consequently in the patterns of settlement and of artefact use and deposition?

3.1.2 These research topics have assisted in informing the aims and objectives for the archaeological fieldwork outlined in section 3.2 below. It should be noted that other research objectives may come to the fore should any archaeological features from other periods be identified as a result of the mitigation works outlined below.

3.2 Principal Aims and Objectives

3.2.1 The aims of the programme of work is to gather sufficient evidence to establish, supplement, improve and make available information about the archaeological remains existing within the area of investigation, and to provide an appropriate post-excavation assessment, analysis, reporting, archiving and dissemination.



3.2.2 The objectives are as follows.

- To produce a photographic, drawn and descriptive record of any surviving below-ground archaeological remains related to the prehistoric, Romano-British and/or medieval periods.
- To produce dating and phasing for archaeological deposits recorded on the site.
- To establish the character and delimit the extent of archaeological deposits in order to define functional areas on the site, e.g. industrial and domestic.
- To produce information on the economy and local environment.

3.2.3 Achieving these objectives will involve a phased programme of works as follows.

- Evaluation trenching to sample the areas (including targeting anomalies identified during the geophysical survey) where ground works are due to take place, i.e. for the construction compound, DNO/inverter cabins, access roads and cable routes, in order to determine if any remains related to the following periods: the prehistoric period, in particular any remains associated with the nearby Nabb Brook; the Romano-British period, in particular any remains that could relate to the Tollgate Farm (Field Head Cottage) site; the medieval period.
- Depending on the results of the evaluation fieldwork, strip, map and sample excavation and/or intermittent watching brief of to be undertaken as part of the proposed development.
- On completion of the on-site archaeological works, post-excavation analysis, reporting, publication and archiving to be carried out.

4 FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

4.1 Evaluation trenching

Coverage

4.1.1 A total of eight trenches (one measuring c.30m by 2m, two measuring c.20m by 2m and five measuring c.15m by 2m) will be excavated (Figure 2). The trenching plan has been agreed in consultation with SCC's Principal Archaeologist, and this has been designed to target anomalies identified by the geophysical survey and to test apparently 'blank' areas of the PDA.

4.1.2 Up to 100 m² of contingency trenching may also be deployed in order to answer specific questions as part of the evaluation, and to inform the planning of any future archaeological works across the site. The implementation of any contingency trenching would only be undertaken in discussion with SCC's Principal Archaeologist.



4.1.3 Any proposed changes to the evaluation trench locations previously agreed upon will be discussed with SCC's Principal Archaeologist prior to implementation. For example, it is possible that trenches.

Methodology

4.1.4 ARS Ltd will provide suitably qualified and experienced archaeologists to undertake the evaluation trenching in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Code of Conduct* (2014a) and *Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation* (2014b). In each trench the topsoil will be removed mechanically by a machine using a wide toothless ditching bucket, under continuous archaeological supervision. The topsoil or recent overburden will be removed down to the first significant archaeological horizon in successive level spits. No machinery will track over areas that have previously been stripped until the area has been signed off by ARS Ltd.

4.1.5 The trenches will be appropriately cleaned using hand tools in order to expose the full nature and extent of archaeological features and deposits.

4.1.6 All spoil removed during ground works will be scanned visually to recover small finds. Any finds so recovered will be recorded and their location noted on a site plan at a relevant scale. The finds will be retained and recorded.

4.1.7 All archaeological features will be planned and sectioned as a minimum objective.

4.1.8 Isolated, discrete features such as pits and postholes not belonging to structure or industrial activities will be 50% sampled, although if they produce artefacts then provision is made for full excavation.

4.1.9 Sampling of linear features such as ditches or gullies will be sufficient to determine the character, stratigraphy and relationship to other features and attempts made to obtain dating evidence.

4.1.10 Any deposits relating to funerary/ritual activities, such as burials and cremation deposits will initially be left *in-situ* and, if removal is deemed necessary, this will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant Ministry of Justice regulations and in discussion with the Staffordshire CC's Principal Archaeologist. Should it be deemed necessary to Historic England 2004; Historic England and The Church of England 2005; APABE/ Historic England 2013; Brickley and McKinley 2004).

4.1.11 Domestic/industrial activity (such as walls, postholes, floors, hearths) will be sufficiently excavated to understand their form and function and to recover potential dating evidence and artefact and ecofact assemblages.

4.1.12 Area deposits, such as buried soils, or middens, will be hand excavated at a minimum 10%. Subsequent excavation by machine will be considered. Large intrusions, such as reservoirs, will be sufficiently excavated by machine, within safe limits, to provide information on their character.



4.1.13 Limited representative samples of bricks from brick-built structures will be retained for specialist analysis where appropriate.

4.1.14 For deposits that have potential for providing environmental or dating evidence, a minimum of 40 litres of sample will be taken, or 100% if the sample is smaller. This material will be floated and passed through graduated sieves, the smallest being a 500 μ mesh. Should other types of environmental deposits be encountered, appropriate specialist advice will be sought and an appropriate sampling strategy devised. Samples will be assessed by a suitable specialist with provision for further analysis as required. Advice from the Historic England Scientific Advisor will be taken as appropriate. All environmental sampling will be undertaken in line with *Environmental Archaeology a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation* (Historic England 2011).

4.1.15 Finds of "treasure" will be reported to the Coroner in accordance with the Treasure Act procedures. The Portable Antiquities Liaison Officer and SCC's Principal Archaeologist will also be notified and a site meeting arranged to determine if further investigation in the vicinity of the findspot is required.

4.1.16 All site operations will be carried out in a safe manner in accordance with ARS Ltd's Health and Safety policy. Deep sections, such as those across ditches or pits will be shored as necessary. A risk assessment will be prepared before commencement on site.

Recording

4.1.17 The site will be accurately tied into the National Grid and located on a 1:2500 or 1:1250 map of the area. The site will be recorded using a single context planning system in accordance with the ARS Ltd field recording manual.

4.1.18 A full and proper record (written, graphic and photographic as appropriate) will be made for all work, using pro-forma record sheets and text descriptions appropriate to the work. Accurate scale plans and section drawings will be drawn where required at 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10 scales, as appropriate. In addition to relevant illustrations, provision for rectified photographic recording shall be made, if deemed necessary.

4.1.19 The stratigraphy of the site will be recorded even where no archaeological deposits have been identified.

4.1.20 All archaeological deposits and features will be recorded with above ordnance datum (AOD) levels.

4.1.21 A photographic record of all contexts will be taken using a high resolution (7 megapixel or greater) digital camera, and will include a clearly visible, graduated metric scale. A register of all photographs will be kept. A selection of working shots will be taken to demonstrate how the site was investigated and what the prevailing conditions were like during excavation.

4.1.22 Where stratified deposits are encountered, a 'Harris' matrix will be compiled.



4.2 Strip, map and sample

Coverage

4.2.1 Depending on the results of the evaluation fieldwork and in consultation with the Staffordshire CC's Principal Archaeologist, strip, map and sample excavation and/or intermittent watching brief within the areas of ground works, i.e. for the construction compound, DNO/inverter cabins, access roads and cable routes, may be required in order to investigate and record any archaeological remains survive beneath the ground surface.

Strip, map and sample methodology

4.2.2 ARS Ltd will provide suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist(s) to undertake the strip, map and sample excavation in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Code of Conduct* (2014a) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (2014c). The on-site archaeologist(s) will be fully apprised of the archaeological potential of the site. The topsoil will be removed mechanically by a machine using a wide toothless ditching bucket, under continuous archaeological supervision. The topsoil or recent overburden will be removed down to the first significant archaeological horizon in successive level spits. No machinery will track over areas that have previously been stripped until the area has been signed off by ARS Ltd.

4.2.3 The areas will be appropriately cleaned using hand tools in order to expose the full nature and extent of archaeological features and deposits.

4.2.4 All archaeological features are to be mapped on a base plan using suitable equipment, e.g. a total station or GPS, supplemented with a photographic record using a digital colour camera.

4.2.5 Once the area has been stripped, cleaned and mapped as outlined in 4.2-4.4 above, consultation will take place with the SCC's Principal Archaeologist to agree the features that should be excavated.

4.2.6 Isolated, discrete features such as pits not belonging to structures or industrial activities will be 50% sampled, although if they produce artefacts then provision is made for full excavation.

4.2.7 Limited representative samples of bricks from brick-built structures, and selective products of the brick working process will be retained for specialist analysis where appropriate.

4.2.8 For deposits that have potential for providing environmental or dating evidence, a minimum of 40 litres of sample will be taken, or 100% of the sample if smaller. This material will be floated and passed through graduated sieves, the smallest being a 500 μ mesh. Should other types of environmental deposits be encountered appropriate specialist advice will be sought and an appropriate sampling strategy devised. Samples will be assessed by a suitable specialist with provision for further analysis as required and in accordance with *Environmental*



Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice Methods, from sampling and recovery to post excavation (Historic England 2011). Advice from the Historic England Regional Science Adviser will be taken as appropriate.

4.2.9 Discovery of any human remains will be reported to the coroner and excavated following receipt of the appropriate Ministry of Justice Guidelines.

4.2.10 Finds of “treasure” will be reported to the Coroner in accordance with the Treasure Act procedures. The Portable Antiquities Liaison Officer and SCC Principal Archaeologist will also be notified and a site meeting arranged to determine if further investigation in the vicinity of the findspot is required.

4.2.11 ARS Ltd will ensure that heavy plant or machinery will not be operated in the immediate vicinity of archaeological remains until the remains have been recorded. Contractors and plant operators will be notified that any observations of archaeological remains must be reported immediately to the archaeologist on site. Regular contact will be ensured between ARS Ltd. and the site project manager to ensure that ARS Ltd. is kept up to date with site works and given the chance to respond appropriately and in line with the SCC Principal Archaeologist’s requirements.

4.2.12 All site operations will be carried out in a safe manner in accordance with ARS Ltd.’s Health and Safety Policy. Deep sections such as those across ditches or pits will be shored as necessary. A risk assessment will be prepared before commencement on site.

Watching brief methodology

4.3.13 ARS Ltd will provide a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist to undertake an intermittent watching brief in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Code of Conduct* (2014a) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2014d). The on-site archaeologist will be fully apprised of the archaeological potential of the site. The watching brief involves archaeological supervision and monitoring of all relevant ground works using a suitable mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Where archaeological features and/or deposits are identified, then a sufficient quantity of the said features will be investigated by hand to allow their date, nature and degree of survival to be ascribed. The archaeologist will be given the opportunity to stop site work in order to investigate potential archaeological features and adequate time will be allowed for recording any such features.

4.3.14 Discovery of any human remains will be reported to the coroner and excavated following receipt of the appropriate Ministry of Justice Guidelines.

4.3.15 Finds of “treasure” will be reported to the Coroner in accordance with the Treasure Act procedures. The Portable Antiquities Liaison Officer and SCC’s Principal Archaeologist will also be notified and a site meeting arranged to determine if further investigation in the vicinity of the findspot is required.



4.3.16 ARS Ltd will ensure that heavy plant or machinery will not be operated in the immediate vicinity of archaeological remains until the remains have been recorded. Contractors and plant operators will be notified that any observations of archaeological remains must be reported immediately to the archaeologist on site. Regular contact will be ensured between ARS Ltd and the site project manager to ensure that ARS Ltd is kept up to date with site works and given the chance to respond appropriately and in line with the SCC Principal Archaeologist's requirements.

4.3.17 All site operations will be carried out in a safe manner in accordance with ARS Ltd's Health and Safety Policy. Deep sections such as those across ditches or pits will be shored as necessary. A risk assessment will be prepared before commencement on site.

Recording

4.3.18 The site will be accurately tied into the National Grid and located on a 1:2500 or 1:1250 map of the area. The site will be recorded using a single context planning system in accordance with the ARS Ltd field recording manual.

4.3.19 A full and proper record (written, graphic and photographic as appropriate) will be made for all work, using pro-forma record sheets and text descriptions appropriate to the work. Accurate scale plans and section drawings will be drawn where required at 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10 scales, as appropriate. In addition to relevant illustrations, provision for rectified photographic recording shall be made, if deemed necessary.

4.3.20 The stratigraphy of the site will be recorded even where no archaeological deposits have been identified.

4.3.21 All archaeological deposits and features will be recorded with above ordnance datum (AOD) levels.

4.3.22 A photographic record of all contexts will be taken using a high resolution (7 megapixel or greater) digital camera, and will include a clearly visible, graduated metric scale. A register of all photographs will be kept. A selection of working shots will be taken to demonstrate how the site was investigated and what the prevailing conditions were like during excavation.

4.3.23 Where stratified deposits are encountered, a 'Harris' matrix will be compiled.

5 FINDS PROCESSING AND STORAGE

5.1 All finds processing, conservation work and storage of finds will be carried out in accordance with the ClfA (2014e) *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* and the UKIC (1990) *Guidelines for the Preparation of Archives for Long-Term Storage*.

5.2 Artefact collection and discard policies will be appropriate for the defined purpose.



5.3 Bulk finds which are not discarded will be washed and, with the exception of animal bone, marked. Marking and labelling will be indelible and irremovable by abrasion. Bulk finds will be appropriately bagged, boxed and recorded. This process will be carried out no later than two months after the end of the excavation.

5.4 All small finds will be recorded as individual items and appropriately packaged (e.g. lithics in self-sealing plastic bags and ceramic in acid-free tissue paper). Vulnerable objects will be specially packaged and textile, painted glass and coins stored in appropriate specialist systems. This process will be carried out within two days of the small find being excavated.

5.5 During and after the excavation all objects will be stored in appropriate materials and storage conditions to ensure minimal deterioration and loss of information (including controlled storage, correct packaging, and regular monitoring, immediate selection for conservation of vulnerable material). All storage will have appropriate security provision.

5.6 The deposition and disposal of artefacts will be agreed with the legal owner and The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery prior to the work taking place. All finds except treasure trove are the property of the landowner.

5.7 All retained artefacts and ecofacts will be cleaned and packaged in accordance with the requirements of the recipient museum.

6 MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 At least one week prior notice of the commencement of each phase of ground works to be given to the SCC Principal Archaeologist:

Stephen Dean
Principal Archaeologist
Environment and Countryside
Historic Environment Team
Staffordshire County Council
Wedgwood Building Block A
Tipping Street, Stafford
ST16 2DH
Tel: 01785 277290
Email: stephen.dean@staffordshire.gov.uk

6.2 ARS Ltd will liaise with the SCC Principal Archaeologist at regular intervals throughout the course of the work.

6.3 The client will afford reasonable access to the SCC Principal Archaeologist, or his representative, for the purposes of monitoring the archaeological mitigation.



7 STAFFING

7.1 The Project Manager for the archaeological works will be Reuben Thorpe MCIfA, Projects Manager at ARS Ltd. The Fieldwork Project Officer will be Cate Halton, Assistant Projects Officer at ARS Ltd.

7.2 Specialist analyses will be carried out by appropriately qualified specialists as detailed subject to availability.

Flint and prehistoric pottery:	Dr Robin Holgate MCIfA
Romano-British pottery:	Ruth Leary or Ian Rowlandson
Samian Ware:	Dr Gwladys Monteil
Medieval and post-medieval pottery:	Dr Chris Cumberpatch or Dr Robin Holgate MCIfA
Romano-British non-ceramic artefacts:	Lindsay Allason-Jones MCIfA
Medieval and post-medieval glass, metalwork and clay pipes:	Mike Wood MCIfA
Plant macrofossils, charcoals and pollen:	Elise McLellan
Human and animal bone:	Milena Grzybowska
Radiocarbon dating:	Prof Gordon Cook (SUERC)
Finds conservation:	Vicky Garlick (Durham University)

8 REPORT

8.1 A report on the results obtained will be produced by ARS Ltd and submitted to the SCC Principal Archaeologist and personnel nominated by him within 8 weeks of the completion of the watching brief. The report will follow the guidance laid out in the relevant CfA standards and will include the following as a minimum.

- Non-technical executive summary
- Introductory statement
- Aims and purpose of the project
- Methodology
- A location plan showing all excavated areas and any archaeological features with respect to nearby fixed structures and roads
- Illustrations of all archaeological features with appropriately scaled hachured plans and sections
- An objective summary statement of results
- Conclusions



- Supporting data – tabulated or in appendices
- Index to archive and details of archive location
- References
- Statement of intent regarding publication
- Confirmation of archive transfer arrangements
- A copy of the WSI and OASIS form.

8.2 One bound copy of the final report with a digital copy of the report in PDF/A format on disk will be deposited with the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (HER). Copies will also be provided to the client, Historic England and The National Monuments Record. A copy of the report will be uploaded as part of the OASIS record (see 9.4 below) for online access via the Archaeological Data Service.

9 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

9.1 If the project produces archaeologically significant finds, then the SCC Principal Archaeologist and Museum Curator will be notified at the earliest opportunity, and an accession number will be produced for the site. In addition, a digital, paper and artefactual archive will be prepared by ARS Ltd, consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections, photographs and electronic data (in a format to be agreed by The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery). The archive will be deposited in line with the ClfA (2013f) *Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*, Society of Museum Archaeologists (1993) *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections. Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and will be deposited within two months of the completion of the report. The SCC Principal Archaeologist and Museum Curator will be notified in writing on completion of the fieldwork with projected dates for the completion of the report and deposition of the archive. The date for deposition of the archive will be confirmed in the report and the SCC Principal Archaeologist informed in writing on final deposition of the archive.

9.2 All artefacts and associated material will be cleaned, recorded, properly stored and deposited in the archive.

9.3 A full set of annotated, illustrative pictures of the site, excavation, features, layers and selected artefacts will be deposited with the archive as digital images on a CD ROM.

9.4 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms. All parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the HER. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included within the archive).



10 GENERAL ITEMS

10.1 Health and Safety

10.1.1 All work will be carried out in accordance with The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Specific health and safety policies exist for all our workplaces and all staff employed will be made aware of the policy and any relevant issues. The particular risks involved with this project will be assessed, recorded and relevant mitigation measures put in place as part of a full risk assessment, which will be compiled in advance of fieldwork and will be read and signed by all on-site operatives. ARS Ltd retains Peninsula as its expert health and safety consultants.

10.2 Insurance Cover

10.2.1 ARS Ltd has full insurance cover for employee liability public liability, professional indemnity and all-risks cover.

10.3 Changes to the Written Scheme of Investigation

10.3.1 Changes to the approved methodology or programme of works will only be made with prior written approval of the SCC Principal Archaeologist.

10.4 Publication

10.4.1 If significant archaeological remains are recorded, ARS Ltd will submit a short summary report for inclusion in the next edition of the Journal of West Midlands Archaeology within 6 months of the completion of the fieldwork. Additional popular articles will also be produced for local and/or national magazines as appropriate. The final form of the publication is to be agreed with the planning archaeologist and the client dependent on the results of the fieldwork.

11 REFERENCES

APABE/ Historic England. 2013. Science and the dead: A Guideline for the Destructive Sampling of Archaeological Human Remains for Scientific Analysis.

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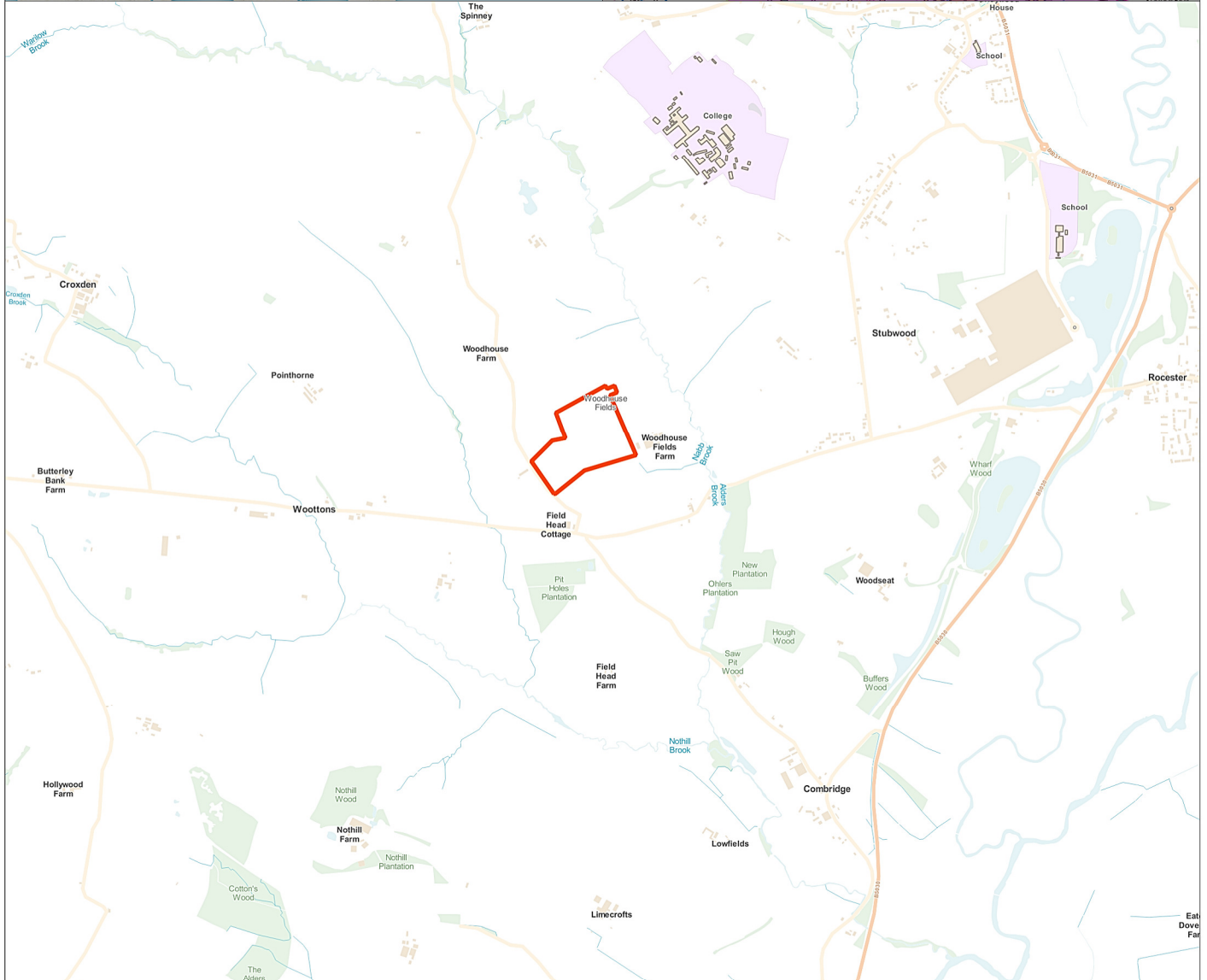


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FIGURES





Site name: Woodhouse fields farm
 Date: 11/15
 Drawn by: RL
 Scale: Varies

 red line boundary
  East Staffordshire District



Archaeological Research Services Ltd
 Angel House
 Portland Square
 Bakewell
 Derbyshire
 DE45 1HB




This drawing: © ARS Ltd
 Contains Ordnance Survey data.
 © Crown copyright and database right 2015

Figure 1: Woodhouse Field Farm proposed development area

Tel: 01629 814540
www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com



Site name: Woodhouse Fields Farm, Rocester
 Date: August 2016
 Drawn by: AB
 Scale: 1:2000 @ A4

 Proposed trench locations



Archaeological Research Services Ltd

Aizlewood's Mill
 Nursery Street
 Sheffield
 South Yorkshire
 S3 8GG



Tel: 01142 750140

www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com

This drawing: © ARS Ltd
 Ordnance Survey mapping (if applicable):
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Figure 2:
Proposed trench locations

Appendix IV: OASIS Form

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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

Printable version

OASIS ID: archaeo15-262024

Project details

Project name	Archaeological Evaluation at Woodhouse Fields Farm, Nabb Lane, Rocester, Staffordshire
Short description of the project	Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd) was commissioned by Sun and Soil Renewable 20 Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Woodhouse Fields Farm, Nabb Lane, Rocester, Staffordshire between the 22nd - 26th August 2016 in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the Staffordshire County Council Principal Archaeologist. The archaeological evaluation relates to the proposed development of land at Woodhouse Fields Farm, which consists of the construction of a solar farm and associated trackway and building, and also a temporary construction laydown area. In total, eight evaluation trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision, using a tracked excavator with a toothless ditching bucket. Removal of the topsoil and silty clay subsoil revealed the natural clay of the region. Two linear features were identified within trenches 1 and 4, potentially representing former field boundaries, and the remains of two filled-in ponds were also identified within trenches 2 and 3. Artefacts recovered from F104 and F404 were dated to the 19th-20th centuries, as were the artefacts recovered from one of the filled-in ponds (204). No other archaeological features or artefacts were recovered.
Project dates	Start: 22-08-2016 End: 26-08-2016
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	2016/129 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	WOOD'16 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Monument type	FIELD BOUNDARIES Post Medieval
Monument type	PONDS Post Medieval
Significant Finds	N/A None
Methods & techniques	""Targeted Trenches""
Development type	Solar Farm
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	STAFFORDSHIRE EAST STAFFORDSHIRE ROCESTER Woodhouse Fields Farm
Study area	0 Square metres
Site coordinates	SK 408600 339100 52.900754917966 -1.392482637216 52 54 02 N 001 23 32 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeological Research Services Ltd
Project brief originator	Staffordshire County Council
Project design originator	Archaeological Research Services Ltd
Project director/manager	Reuben Thorpe
Project supervisor	Tim Cobbold

Project archives

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Project bibliography 1

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