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**THE OLD GOSFIELD ARIFIELD,
LAND AT SOUTHEY GREEN, SIBLE HEDINGHAM, ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & EXCAVATION

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski	
NGR: TL 7733 3169	Report No: 4710
District: Braintree	Site Code: SHSG 14
Approved: Claire Halpin	Project No: 5782
Signed:	Date: 28 October 2014

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name		<i>The Old Gosfield Airfield, Land at Southey Green, Sible Hedingham, Essex</i>	
<p><i>In August and September 2014 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and excavation at The Old Gosfield Airfield, Land at Southey Green, Sible Hedingham, Essex (NGR TL 7733 3169). The monitoring was commissioned by Push Energy in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the change of use of the site from agriculture to mixed use for agriculture and generation of renewable energy (solar) to include installation of PV panels, mounting frames, inverters, switchgear, security fencing and associated infrastructure.</i></p> <p><i>In broad terms the archaeological potential of the site was mainly for medieval and post-medieval remains. There is a general dearth of prehistoric, Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon remains in the area, although this is likely to be due to the limited archaeological field work carried out, rather than a genuine absence of archaeological remains. There is more evidence to show that the site was located within a medieval landscape including moated sites, place names, and pottery kilns, with the closest HER site a medieval "Cleye Pitte" located approximately 300m to the north-east. The site also lies within a post-medieval field system. The site is also located on part of the WWII RAF Gosling Airfield which was known as USAAF Station 154.</i></p> <p><i>In the event the monitoring revealed no archaeological features or finds.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)		21/08 – 15/09/2014	
Previous work (Y/N/?)		N	Future work (Y/N/?)
P. number		5782	Site code
			SHSG 14
Type of project		Archaeological Monitoring & Excavation	
Site status		-	
Current land use		Arable agriculture with a hard standing track crossing it	
Planned development		Solar farm	
Main features (+dates)		-	
Significant finds (+dates)		-	
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish		Essex	Braintree
			Sible Hedingham
HER/ SMR for area		Essex HER	
Post code (if known)		CO9 1SA	
Area of site		20.96 ha	
NGR		TL 7733 3169	
Height AOD (min/max)		78-80m AOD	
Project creators			
Brief issued by		ECC	
Project supervisor/s (PO)		Zbigniew Pozorski	
Funded by		Push Energy	
Full title		The Old Gosfield Airfield, Land at Southey Green, Sible Hedingham, Essex: Archaeological Monitoring & Excavation	
Authors		Pozorski, Z.	
Report no.		4710	
Date (of report)		October 2014	

THE OLD GOSFIELD AIRFIELD, LAND AT SOUTHEY GREEN, SIBLE HEDINGHAM, ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & EXCAVATION

SUMMARY

In August and September 2014 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and excavation at The Old Gosfield Airfield, Land at Southey Green, Sible Hedingham, Essex (NGR TL 7733 3169). The monitoring was commissioned by Push Energy in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the change of use of the site from agriculture to mixed use for agriculture and generation of renewable energy (solar) to include installation of PV panels, mounting frames, inverters, switchgear, security fencing and associated infrastructure.

In broad terms the archaeological potential of the site was mainly for medieval and post-medieval remains. There is a general dearth of prehistoric, Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon remains in the area, although this is likely to be due to the limited archaeological field work carried out, rather than a genuine absence of archaeological remains. There is more evidence to show that the site was located within a medieval landscape including moated sites, place names, and pottery kilns, with the closest HER site a medieval "Cleye Pitte" located approximately 300m to the north-east. The site also lies within a post-medieval field system. The site is also located on part of the WWII RAF Gosling Airfield which was known as USAAF Station 154.

In the event the monitoring revealed no archaeological features or finds.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In August and September 2014 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and excavation at The Old Gosfield Airfield, Land at Southey Green, Sible Hedingham, Essex (NGR TL 7733 3169; Figs. 1 & 2). The monitoring was commissioned by Push Energy in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the change of use of the site from agriculture to mixed use for agriculture and generation of renewable energy (solar) to include installation of PV panels, mounting frames, inverters, switchgear, security fencing and associated infrastructure (Braintree District Council Planning Ref. 13/01463/FUL).

1.2 The investigation was undertaken in accordance to a brief issued by the Historic Environment Officer of Essex County Council (ECC; dated 14/05/2014), and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 19/05/2014), and approved by ECC. The project conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for An Archaeological Watching Brief* (revised 2008), and the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The project aimed to record any buried archaeological remains revealed during the groundworks phase of the development. The archaeological work aimed to record the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains. In particular, it was important to identify any evidence of medieval or post-medieval activity within the area of groundworks and to record the stratigraphic sequence of deposits affected by the development.

Planning policy context

1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The NPPF aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. The NPPF requires applications to describe the significance of any heritage asset, including its setting that may be affected in proportion to the asset's importance and the potential impact of the proposal.

1.5 The NPPF aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, with substantial harm to designated heritage assets (i.e. listed buildings, scheduled monuments) only permitted in exceptional circumstances when the public benefit of a proposal outweighs the conservation of the asset. The effect of proposals on non-designated heritage assets must be balanced against the scale of loss and significance of the asset, but non-designated heritage assets of demonstrably equivalent significance may be considered subject to the same policies as those that are designated. The NPPF states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment, to record and advance the understanding of heritage assets and to make this publicly available is a requirement of development management. This opportunity should be taken in a manner proportionate to the significance of a heritage asset and to impact of the proposal, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

2.1 The Old Airfield (referred to as Gosfield Airfield in the text) is situated approximately 8km north of Braintree and 3.4km west of the small town of Halstead (Fig. 1). It lies midway between the villages of Gosfield to the south, and Sible Hedingham to the north, with the A1017 running 750m to the east. The site comprises a portion of a WWII airfield and encloses almost 21ha. It is surrounded on three sides by a screen of trees and on the open north side is Southey Green which is linked by a minor road to the A1017. A new grid connection runs from the site south-west through section of a golf course and agricultural land for c.4km.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 Gosfield Airfield is located on a ridge of higher ground that slopes down to the River Colne to the north. Ancient woodland ran across the top of the ridge and still survives in patches as seen in Gosfield Wood (ECC 2010). The majority of the assessment site is situated on flat ground at approximately 85m AOD, although the most northerly part begins to slope down towards the Colne valley to the north.

3.2 The ridge and upper slopes of the valley are covered by Boulder Clay with sand and gravels exposed along the valley slopes (ECC 2010). The local soil is of the Hornbeam 3 association, classed as chalky till and described as deep fine loamy clayey and clayey soils with slowly permeable sub-soils and slight seasonal waterlogging. There are also some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy over clayey soils and calcareous subsoils in places (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983). The underlying geology comprises the London Clay Formation (British Geological Survey 1978).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared by AS for the site to accompany the planning application (Thompson & Summers 2013). In summary:

There is a general dearth of prehistoric, Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon remains in the area with no sites recorded within 500m of the site, although this is likely to be due to the limited archaeological field work carried out in the area, rather than a genuine absence of archaeological remains. There is more evidence to show that the site was located within a medieval landscape including moated sites, place names, and pottery kilns, with the closest HER site a medieval "Cleye Pitte" located approximately 300m to the north-east.

The site is located within a post-medieval field system indicated by cropmarks which are shown as field boundaries on the First Edition OS map. The assessment site is also located on part of the WWII RAF Gosling Airfield which was known as USAAF Station 154. A runway crossed the site and was bounded by a perimeter track. Part of an aircraft hangar and five hard standing sub-circular aircraft dispersal points were also located on the site. The WWII structures on the site, excepting the perimeter track, have since been removed for agriculture.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1. The archaeological monitoring comprised the observation of all groundworks, the inspection of the subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features and the examination of spoil heaps and the recording of soil profiles. Archaeological features and deposits were recorded using *pro-forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate.

Excavated spoil was checked for finds and the excavated area was scanned by metal detector.

5.2 The monitoring comprised the observation of groundworks within two main areas: the route of the power grid connection cable to solar farm and the extensive groundworks within the new solar farm array field itself. The power grid connection excavations consisted of one long (c.4.2km) trench linking the farm to the grid substation (Fig. 2). Within majority of the route, an initial strip (c.3m wide) of the topsoil was carried out, and this was monitored in detail. The solar farm contained numerous trenches (0.80m wide, 1.00m deep) to accommodate power cables for solar panels as well as trenches for substations/inverters foundation pads (c.2m wide), which were also monitored.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

6.1 The deposits located within the monitored area were recorded in sample sections presented below.

Power grid connection trench

<i>Sample section 1 (DP 2)</i> <i>South-west part of the trench, facing south-east</i> <i>0.00 = c.70m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.26m	L1000	Subsoil. Light brown, friable, clayey silt.
0.26 – 0.78m	L1001	Natural light to mid yellow, compact, clay.
0.78m+	L1002	? Underground watercourse. Natural mid to dark yellow, loose, gravel.

<i>Sample section 2 (DP 4)</i> <i>South/central part of the trench, facing north</i> <i>0.00 = c.65m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.42m	L1000	Subsoil. As above.
0.42m+	L1001	Natural clay. As above.

<i>Sample section 10 (DP 7)</i> <i>North part of the trench, facing south-east</i> <i>0.00 = c.88m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.26m	L1003	Topsoil. Light greyish brown, friable, sandy silt.
0.26m+	L1001	Natural clay. As above.

<i>Sample section 11 (DP 8)</i> <i>Connection cabinet trench, facing south</i> <i>0.00 = c.89m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.40m	L1006	Modern made ground. Mid brownish grey, friable, sandy silt with occasional CBM fragments.
0.40m+	L1001	Natural clay. As above.

Solar Farm

<i>Sample section 3 (DP 10)</i> <i>East part of the farm, facing east</i> <i>0.00 = c.89m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.28m	L1003	Topsoil. As above.
0.28m+	L1001	Natural clay. As above.

<i>Sample section 4 (DP 12)</i> <i>East part of the farm, facing south-east</i> <i>0.00 = c.89m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.47m	L1003	Topsoil. As above.
0.47m+	L1001	Natural clay. As above.

<i>Sample section 5 (DP 14)</i> <i>Central part of the farm, facing north-east</i> <i>0.00 = c.89m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.44m	L1004	Modern made ground of a track. Mid brownish grey, friable, sandy silt with occasional CBM fragments.
0.44m+	L1001	Natural clay. As above.

<i>Sample section 6 (DP 16)</i> <i>North/central part of the farm, facing south</i> <i>0.00 = c.89m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.28m	L1003	Topsoil. As above.
0.28m+	L1001	Natural clay. As above.

<i>Sample section 7 (DP 19)</i> <i>North/west part of the farm, facing south-east</i> <i>0.00 = c.89m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.29m	L1003	Topsoil. As above.
0.29m+	L1001	Natural clay. As above.

<i>Sample section 8 (DP 21)</i> <i>South/west part of the farm, facing north-west</i> <i>0.00 = c.89m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.27m	L1003	Topsoil. As above.
0.27m+	L1001	Natural clay. As above.

<i>Sample section 9 (DP 19)</i> <i>North/west part of the farm, facing south-east</i> <i>0.00 = c.89m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.24m	L1003	Topsoil. As above.

0.24 – 0.37m	L1005	Subsoil. Light brown, friable, sandy silt.
0.37m+	L1001	Natural clay. As above.

Description: No archaeological features or finds were identified.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds during the programme of archaeological monitoring and recording.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 The site was commonly overlain by Topsoil L1003, a light greyish brown, friable, sandy silt (0.20 – 0.30m thick). A subsoil was present only locally, for example in the south section of power grid connection trench (L1000, a light brown, friable, clayey silt, 0.20 – 0.30m thick), and on the south-west part of the solar farm (L1005, a light brown, friable, sandy silt, 0.10 – 0.15m thick).

8.2 A section of the connection trench was located within the existing golf course within its internal road where modern tarmac overlain natural subsoil and clay. Modern made ground was present directly above the natural clay within a track crossing the solar farm north-west to south-east as well as in the south part of the farm.

8.3 The natural clay, L1001, was present at 0.25 – 0.50m below existing ground level and comprised a light to mid yellow, compact, clay.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for medieval and post-medieval archaeology. It was located within a medieval landscape including moated sites, place names, and pottery kilns. The site also lies within a post-medieval field system and is also located on part of the WWII RAF Gosling Airfield.

9.2 In the event no archaeological features or finds were revealed, despite the widespread nature of the groundworks that were monitored. Little evidence of previous truncation appeared to have taken place, and no residual finds were recovered.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at Braintree Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Push Energy for funding the project (in particular Messrs Jamie Kelly and Will Hitchcock for assistance).

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Teresa O'Connor, the Historic Environment Officer of Essex County Council.

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APPENDIX 1 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD DATA (HER)

The following sites are those that lie within a 1km radius of the assessment site. The table has been compiled from data held by the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER).

HER	NGR TL	Description
Prehistoric 500,000 BC – AD 43		
Roman-British AD 43-410		
6846	782 322	Hole Farm: 1 st century pottery kiln
6883	7693 3248	Pevor's Farm: an upper lava quern stone
Anglo-Saxon 410-1066		
Medieval 1066-1539		
6847	782 322	Hole Farm: Tile kiln with three arches, believed medieval
6851	766 313	Liston Hall Farm: incomplete, nearly dry mat averaging 9m by 1.5m deep. May have originally been a double moat with two raised platforms once enclosed by water
6879	7814 3179	Southey Green – Starling Hall: "2 medieval kiln sites" sub-surface deposits
6880	7827 3178	Southey Green – Starling Hall: 12 th -13 th century pottery found near the above kiln sites to a depth of 4 feet
6882	7693 3284	Pevor's Farm: medieval moat 10m wide and 1m deep
Post-medieval 1539-1900		
6852	766 312	Liston Hall Farmhouse: late 15 th /early 16 th century Grade II listed timber framed house
6878	7681 3175	Former road extending north from Liston Hall Farm: shown on Chapman and Andre map 1777
6905	777 323	East of Southey Farm: site of Old House Farm (1797)
6906	797 778	East of Southey Green Farm: site of Kings Farm (1797)
14306	772 325	Copmarks at Perry Fields Farm: field boundaries shown on the 1 st edition OS map
14307	773 312	Gosling Airfield; field boundaries shown of 1 st edition OS map between and around disused airfield
29121	7826 3214	Hole Farm Barn range to left (s) of track and approximately 500m west of Braintree Road: Grade II listed 15 th and 17 th century timber framed barns
29199	7771 3186	Clay Hall Barn approximately 15m NW of house: 17 th /18 th century timber framed barn Grade II listed
29200	7783 3168	The Chase: 17 th century or earlier timber framed house Grade II listed
29201	7749 3206	Hill Farmhouse: 15 th century or earlier timber framed house Grade II listed
29202	7747 3211	Old Off Licence sometimes known as Warren Farm: 15 th century or earlier timber framed house Grade II listed
29203	7732 3233	South Green Farmhouse: 17 th century or earlier timber framed house Grade II listed

47507	778 325	Southey Green Farm: cropmarks of field boundaries shown on the 1 st edition OS map which may date back to the medieval period
Modern 1900+		
14308	7725 3114	Gosfield WWII aka USAAF Station 154: Three runways but the airfield is now reverted to agriculture with only the E-W runway surviving and the control tower and three Nissan huts
39364	7796 3083	War Memorial Gosta Green: memorial to WWI and WWII dead of the parish erected in 1920
48179	7632 3168	Sible Hedingham WWI Airfield: landing ground
Undated		
6908	777 317	West of Southey Green Brick, Tile and Pottery Works: "spread of sherds"
6940	7780 3210	East of Southey Green: "two whole hand? Drains"
14301	764 306	Cropmarks south-east of Bounce's Farm: ?field boundaries
14302	763 316	Cropmarks at Hawkwood Farm: 29m diameter ring ditch with central pit, linear features, possible field boundaries
Multi-period		
15357	7787 3180	Southey Green Brick, Tile and Pottery Works Site. In use between the 16 th and 20 th centuries. 'Cley Pitte' first recorded in 1534

APPENDIX 2 CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVE

Records	Number
Brief	Y
Specification	Y
Registers	3 (Context, Drawing, Digital Photo)
Context Sheets	9
Site drawings A1	0
Site drawings A3	0
Site drawings A4	3
Site photographs b/w	0
Site photographs colour slides	0
Digital Photographs	49

APPENDIX 3 HER SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: The Old Gosfield Airfield, Land at Southey Green, Sible Hedingham, Essex	
Parish: Sible Hedingham	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 7733 3169	Site Code: SHSG 14
Type of Work: Archaeological monitoring and excavation	Site Director/Group: Z. Pozorski
Date of Work: 21/08 – 15/09/2014	Size of Area Investigated: c.5000m2
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Braintree District Museum	Funding source: Push Energy
Further Seasons Anticipated?:	Related HER No.s:
Final Report: Pozorski, Z., 2014, The Old Gosfield Airfield, Land at Southey Green, Sible Hedingham, Essex: Archaeological Monitoring & Excavation. AS	
Periods Represented: -	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p>In August and September 2014 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and excavation at The Old Gosfield Airfield, Land at Southey Green, Sible Hedingham, Essex (NGR TL 7733 3169). The monitoring was commissioned by Push Energy in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the change of use of the site from agriculture to mixed use for agriculture and generation of renewable energy (solar) to include installation of PV panels, mounting frames, inverters, switchgear, security fencing and associated infrastructure.</p> <p>In general, the archaeological potential of the site was mainly for medieval and post-medieval remains. There is a general dearth of prehistoric, Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon remains in the area, although this is likely to be due to the limited archaeological field work carried out, rather than a genuine absence of archaeological remains. There is more evidence to show that the site was located within a medieval landscape including moated sites, place names, and pottery kilns, with the closest HER site a medieval "Cleye Pitte" located approximately 300m to the north-east. The site also lies within a post-medieval field system. The site is also located on part of the WWII RAF Gosling Airfield which was known as USAAF Station 154.</p> <p>In the event the monitoring revealed no archaeological features or finds.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports: Thompson, P. & Summers, J., 2013, <i>Proposed Solar Farm, The Old Airfield, Gosfield, Halstead, Essex, Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment</i> . AS unpublished report No 4436	
Author of Summary: Z. Pozorski	Date of Summary: 24/10/2014

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. South section of power grid connection trench. Initial strip of topsoil. Looking north-east.



DP 2. Power grid connection trench. Sample section 1. Looking north-west.



DP 3. South section of power grid connection trench. Looking south-west.



DP 4. Power grid connection trench. Sample section 2. Looking south.



DP 5. Central section of power grid connection trench during groundworks. Looking east-south-east.



DP 6. Central section of power grid connection trench within golf course. Looking north-east.



DP 7. North section of power grid connection trench. Sample section 10. Looking north-west.



DP 8. Trench for connection cabinet between solar farm and power grid cable. Sample section 11. Looking north.



DP 9. The cable trench within east part of solar farm. Looking north.



DP 10. Solar farm. Sample section 3. Looking west.



DP 11. Trench in east part of solar farm. Looking north-east.



DP 12. Solar farm. Sample section 4. Looking north-west.



DP 13. Trenches in central part of solar farm. Looking north-east.



DP 14. Solar farm. Sample section 5. Looking south-west.



DP 15. Trench for new inverter in central part of solar farm. Looking north-north-east.



DP 16. Solar farm. Sample section 6. Looking north.



DP 17. Trench in north part of solar farm. Looking north-east.



DP 18. Trench in north part of solar farm. Looking north-east.



DP 19. Solar farm. Sample section 7.
Looking south-east.



DP 20. Trench in west part of solar farm.
Looking south-east.



DP 21. Solar farm. Sample section 8.
Looking south-east.



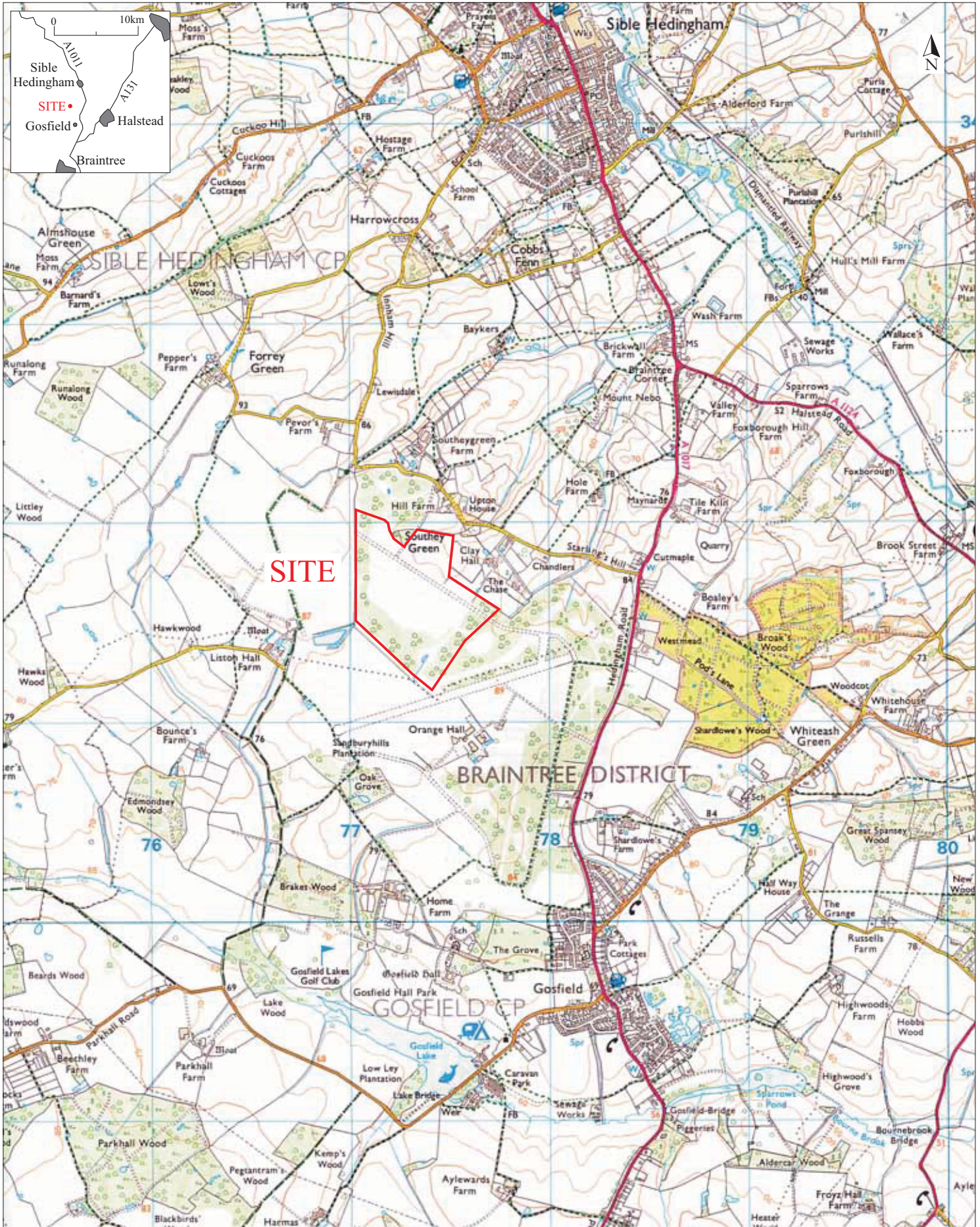
DP 22. Trench in west part of solar farm.
Looking north.



DP 23. Trench in south part of solar farm.
Looking north-north-east.

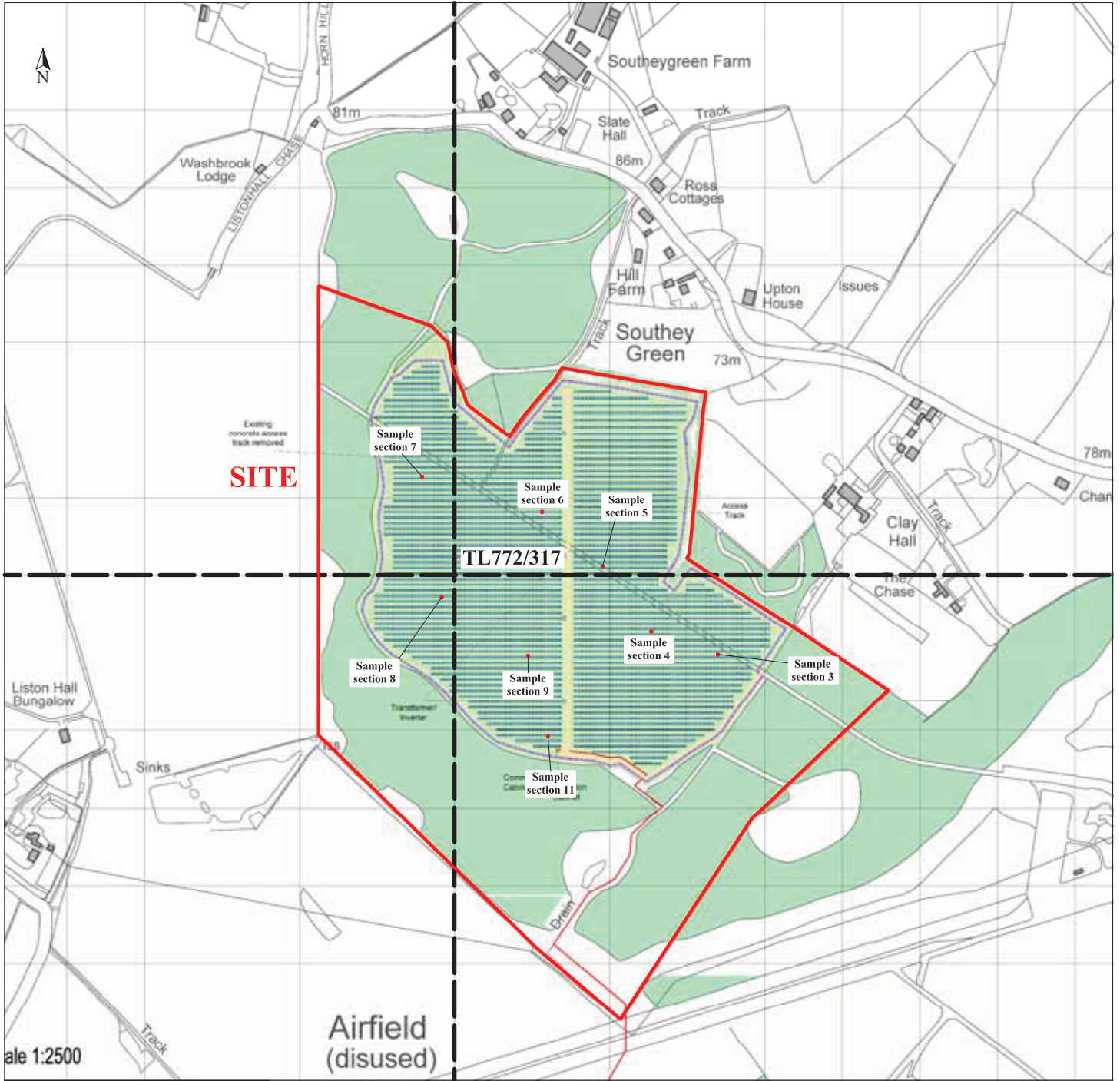


DP 24. Solar farm. Sample section 9.
Looking north.



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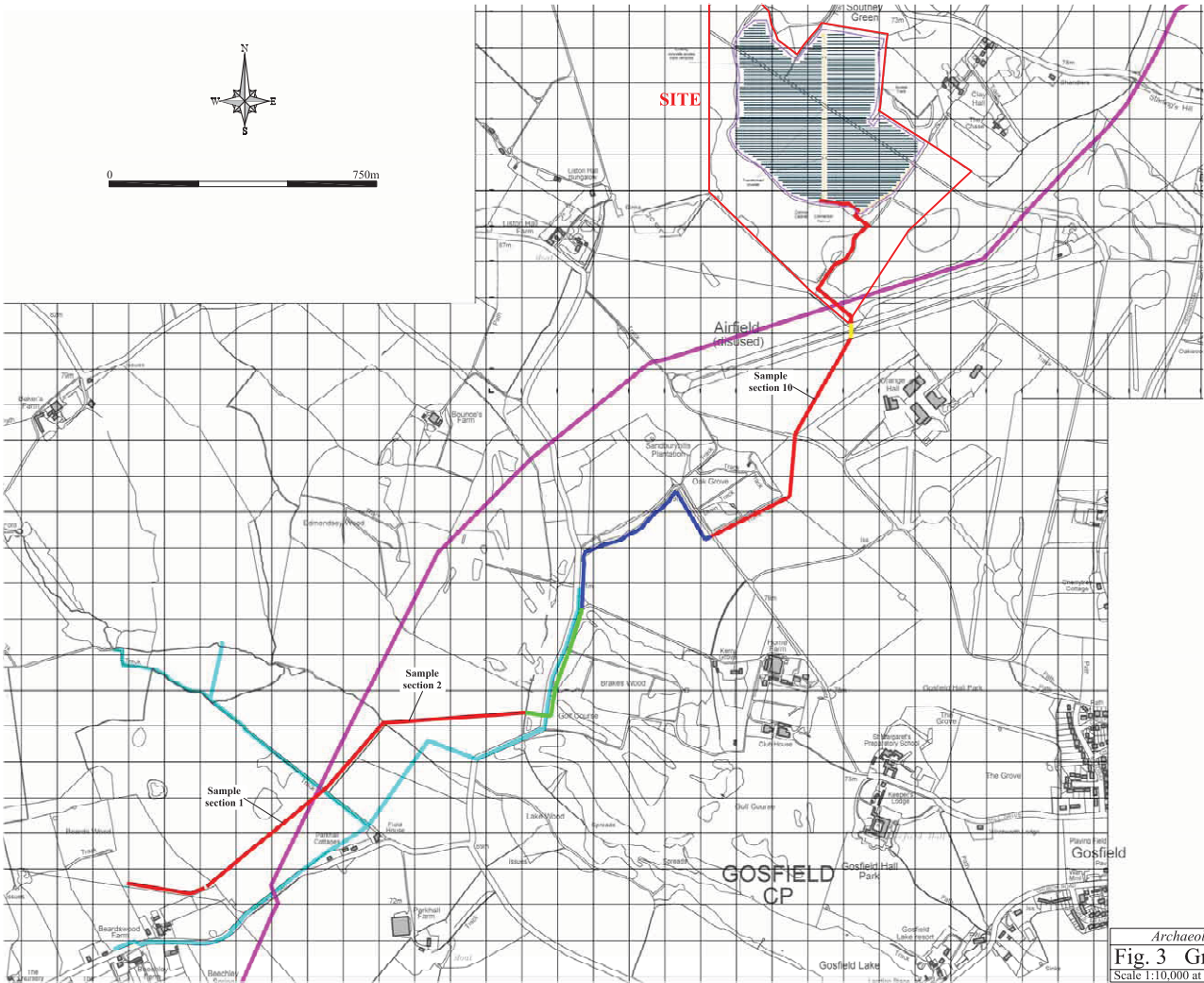
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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



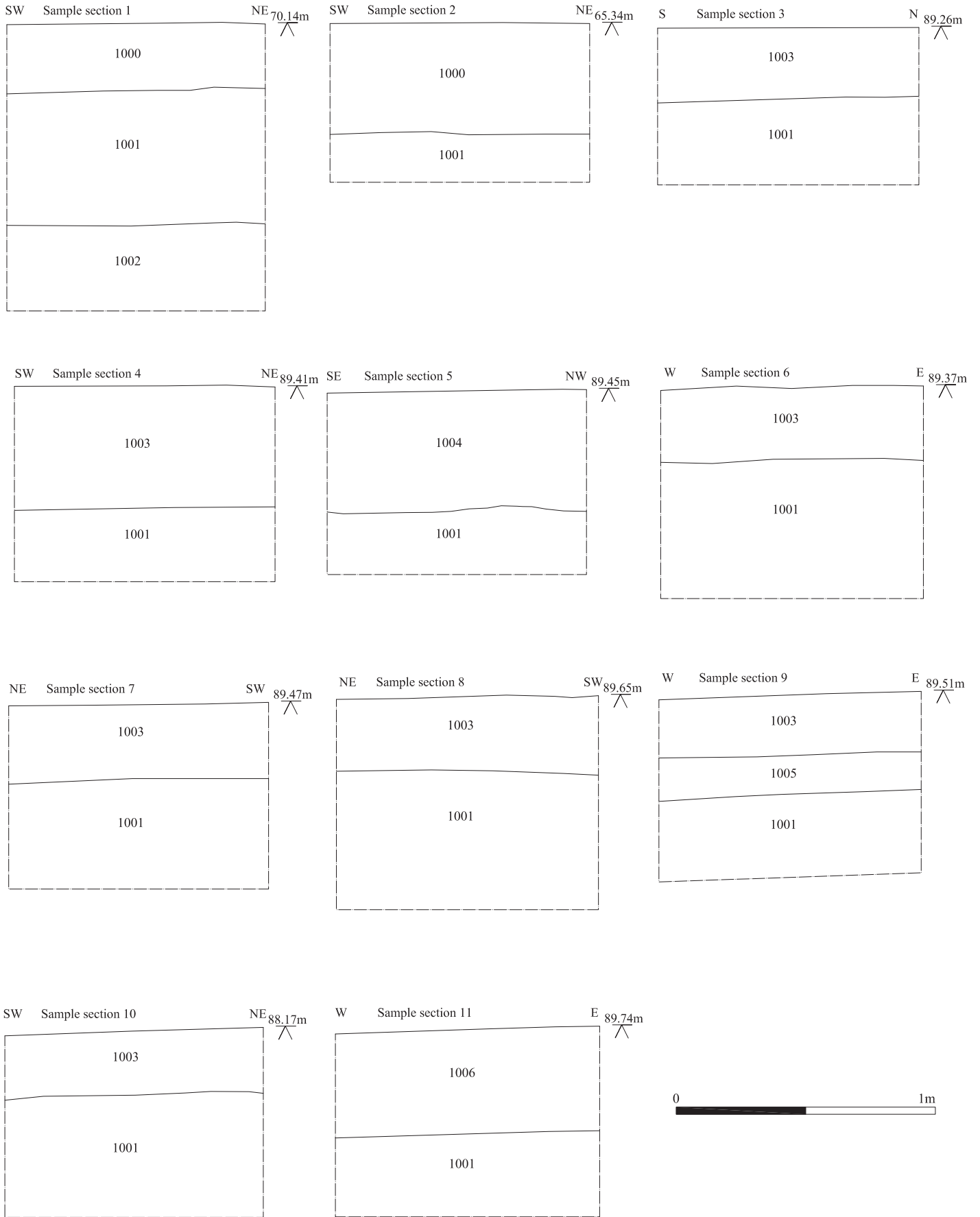
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0 750m

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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
 Scale 1:7,500 at A4



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Fig. 3 Grid connection route
 Scale 1:10,000 at A3



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Fig. 4 Sample sections
 Scale 1:20 at A4