

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Bishop's Waltham Solar Farm, Winchester Road,
Bishop's Waltham, Hampshire**

Phase 2

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Pierre-Damien Manisse

Site Code: BWW21/209

(SU 5567 1631)

**Bishop's Waltham Solar Farm, Winchester Road,
Bishop's Waltham, Hampshire**

Phase 2

An Archaeological Watching Brief

for Sunnerg UK Ltd

by Pierre-Damien Manisse

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BWW 21/209

August 2022

Summary

Site name: Bishop's Waltham Solar Farm, Winchester Road, Bishop's Waltham, Hampshire

Grid reference: SU 5567 1631

Site activity: Watching Brief Phase 2

Date and duration of project: 15th October to 16th November 2021

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: David Sanchez, Will Attard

Site code: BWW 21/209

Area of site: c. 3.5 ha

Summary of results: The watching brief took place during ground reduction made to install a sub-station base and associated service trenches for the second phase of development of the solar farm. No archaeological features were observed nor finds were recovered.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Hampshire Cultural Trust in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 31.08.22 Steve Preston✓ 30.08.22

Bishop's Waltham Solar Farm, Winchester Road, Bishop's Waltham, Hampshire An Archaeological Watching Brief, Phase 2

by Pierre-Damien Manisse

Report 21/209

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at a second phase of Bishop's Waltham Solar Farm, Winchester Road, Bishop's Waltham, Hampshire (centred on SU 5567 1631) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Omar Raslan on behalf of Sunnerg UK Ltd, 46 Nova Road, Croydon, London.

Planning permission (15/00786/FUL) had been gained from Winchester City Council for the construction of a solar farm on the site. This consent is subject to two conditions (11 and 12) that pertain to archaeology and require the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the City Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification (Bryant 2016) approved by Ms Tracy Matthews, Archaeologist for Winchester City Council. The present document details the result of the second phase of work after a previous archaeological intervention in 2016 (McManus-Fry 2017). This phase of fieldwork, taking the form of a watching brief, was undertaken by Will Attard and David Sanchez, between 15th October and 16th November 2021 and the site code is BW21/209.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Hampshire Cultural Trust in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located roughly 15km from both Winchester to the north-west and Southampton to the west-south-west. It is sited in the southern outskirts of the village of Bishop's Waltham, off Winchester Road (B2177) (Fig. 1). A small stream flows north of it and further west joins the River Hamble. The site is an aggregation of several parcels, forming a large irregular plot of land (Fig. 2). Originally it was occupied by pastures separated by hedges and tree lines. The site is relatively flat and lies at a height between 27–29m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The underlying geology as shown on maps (BGS 1998) is recorded as London Clay Formation with possibly sand and mottled clay of the Reading Formation on its north-west margins.

Archaeological background

The site's archaeological background is summarized from the project specification (Bryant 2016). The archaeological potential of the site derives from its position in the hinterland of Winchester, which was a major Roman town (*Venta Belgarum*) and Saxon centre. As a consequence numerous finds of Roman date have been recorded in the vicinity of the site, in particular a possible villa 380m to the west. The presence of tile kiln site is suspected close to the river north of the site. A geophysical survey (Pre-Construct Geophysics 2014) had revealed anomalies that could be associated with such activity. Bishop's Waltham, the locality closest to the site, attained some importance during the Middle Ages due to the presence of a palace of the Bishops of Winchester (Steane 2015, 16), built in 1165. Excavations conducted in the village during the 1960s and 1970s (Lewis 1985) revealed a wide range of occupation, from the Mesolithic to the Medieval period. Historically, the site itself was part of a deer park belonging to Bishop's Waltham manor.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to monitor groundworks and to identify, investigate and record significant buried archaeological deposits revealed during the course of the development groundworks. More specifically it aimed to investigate and record any archaeological features that may provide evidence for Romano-British pottery production within the site.

As such, any intrusive groundworks, including service trenches and ground reduction for inverter stations, were to be monitored. Archaeological deposits exposed would be hand cleaned and sufficiently sampled to answer the objectives. Spoilheaps were to be checked for finds. Any machine-digging was to be undertaken using a toothless bucket.

Archaeological work was to follow the recommendations of the CIfA (CIfA 2020). Any discoveries were to be assessed in regards to general (HE 2017) or local (Hey and Hind 2014) research priorities as necessary.

Results (Figs 3-4; Pls. 1-2)

To set up two new substations and associated structures, some ground reduction took place as well as a service trench excavation for a cable, connecting them to the existing network. A 360° tracked excavator was used with a 2m wide bladed bucket. The site conditions at the time of the visits were considered to be fair. Spoilheaps were visually inspected for finds.

Substation 1 (Fig.4; Pl.1)

The stripping covered an area 24.00m x 4.80m and went to a depth of 0.25m below ground level. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil directly overlying the natural geology, a light yellowish brown silty clay, matching with the expected London Clay Formation. Some rooted patches were observed and modern finds recovered from them (glass, ceramic building material) were not retained. After recording at this level, the stripping continued to a depth of 1m but was not monitored as only affecting natural clay.

Substation 2 (Pl. 2)

The area defined for this substation was 10.80m x 4.00m and similarly only found topsoil over natural geology at 0.28m below ground level. A test slot confirmed the interpretation of the natural clay and as a consequence subsequent ground reduction was not monitored.

Cable trenches (Fig. 4)

Two trenches for electricity cables were dug, respectively 55m and 43m long and both 0.6m wide. They were 0.65-0.80m deep. The level at which the natural geology was observed varied slightly, being up to a maximum of 0.50m deep. The natural clay was overlain by 0.30m of subsoil and 0.20m of topsoil. No archaeology was present.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

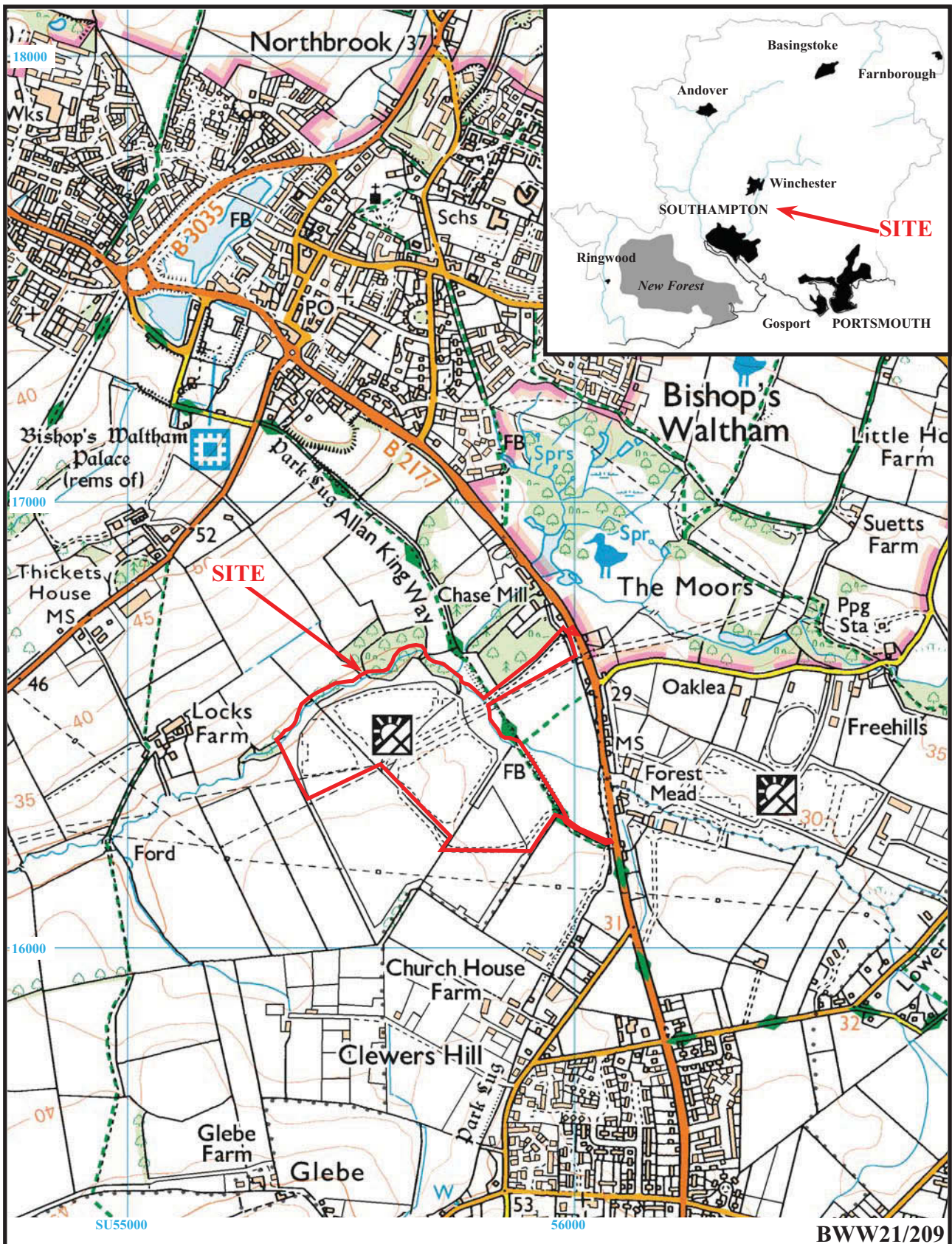
Conclusion

Groundworks associated with the new development at the solar farm were successfully monitored. However, no pre-modern finds nor archaeological features were observed.

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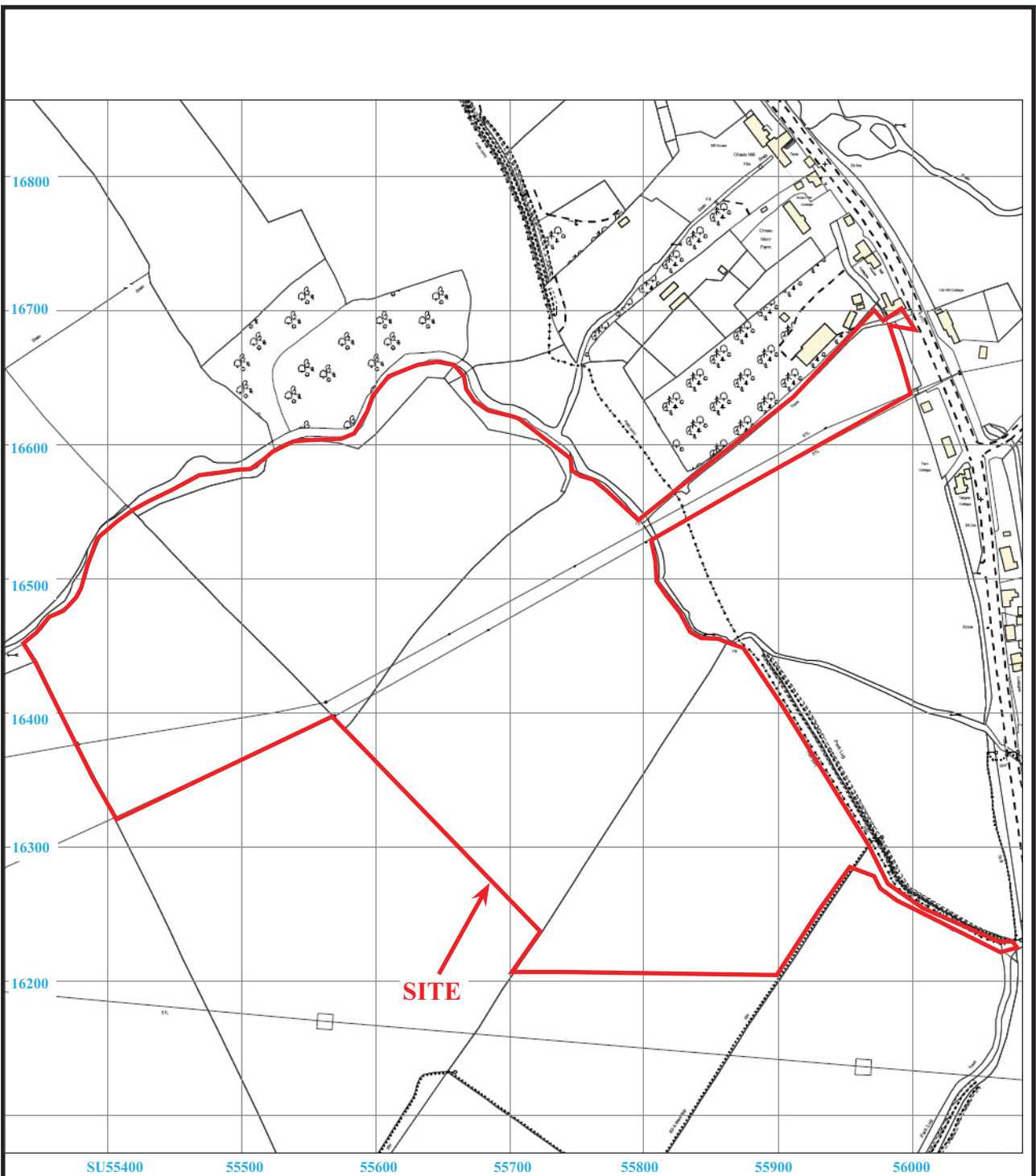


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Bishop's Waltham, Winchester, Hampshire, 2022
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Bishop's Waltham and Hampshire.

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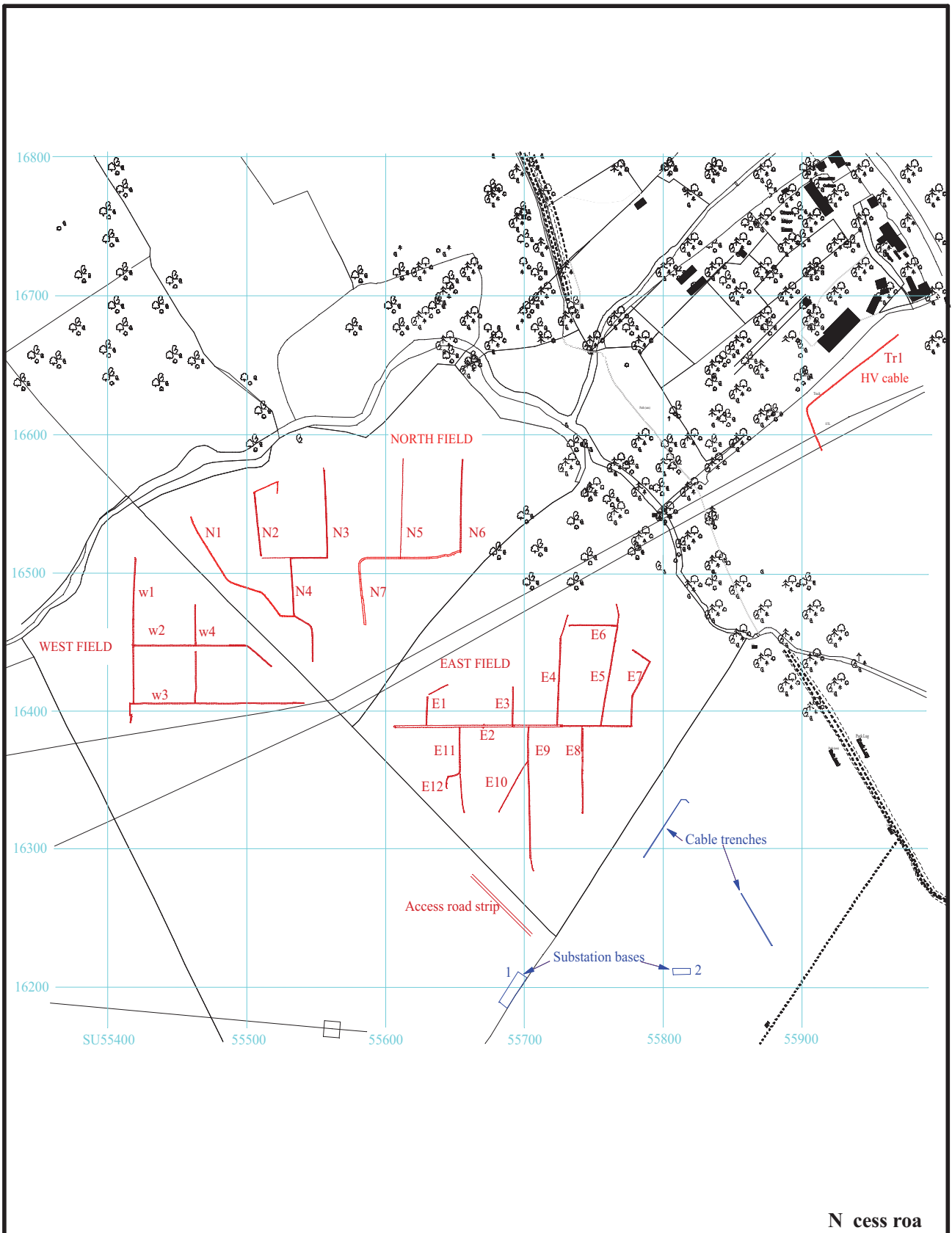
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Figure 1. Location of site within Bishop's Waltham and Hampshire.

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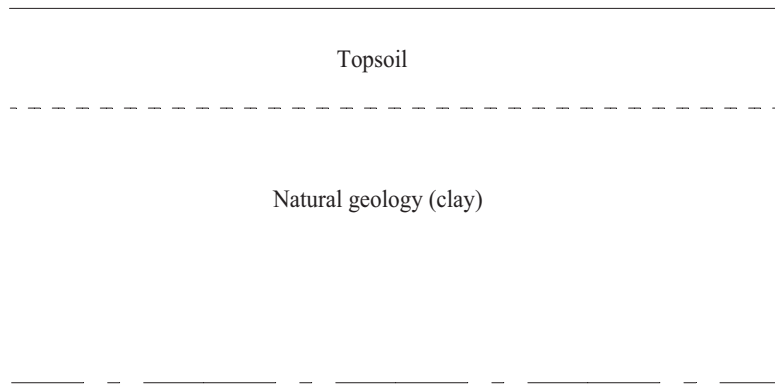
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Figure 3. Location of observed areas
(in red former watching brief, in blue newly surveyed areas).

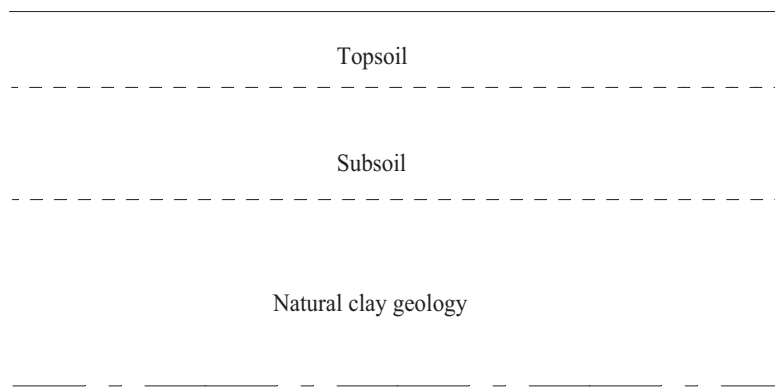


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Substation 1 representative section



Cable trench representative section



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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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Plate 1. Ground reduction for substation 1 and warehouse, looking south.



Plate 2. Ground reduction for substation 2 and warehouse, looking north, with test pit.

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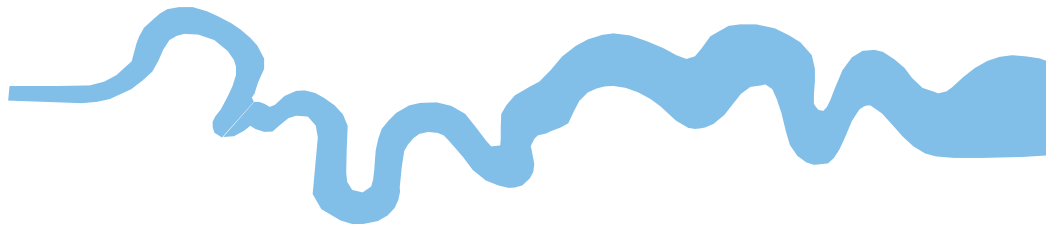
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Bishop's Waltham, Winchester, Hampshire, 2022
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Plates 1 and 2**

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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