

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Solar Farm, Beckley Farm, Hinton,
New Milton, Hampshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Taylor

Site Code: BEL12/97

(SZ 2250 9550)

Proposed Solar Farm, Beckley, Hinton, New Milton, Hampshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Beckley Partnership

by Andy Taylor

ThamesValleyArchaeologicalServices

Ltd

SiteCodeBEL12/97

June 2012

Summary

Site name: Solar Farm, Beckley, Hinton, New Milton, Hampshire

Grid reference: SZ 2250 9550

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 18th–22nd June 2012

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: BFL12/97

Summary of results: No deposits or finds of archaeological significance were observed.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 29.06.12 Steve Preston✓ 29.06.12

Proposed Solar Farm, Beckley, Hinton, New Milton, Hampshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Taylor

Report 12/97

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out for a new solar farm at Beckley, Hinton, New Milton, Hampshire (SZ 2250 9550) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Jeremy Hinton, on behalf of Beckley Partnership, New Forest Energy Ltd, Meyrick Estate Office, Hinton Admiral, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 7DU.

Planning consent (app 12/98608) has been gained from New Forest District Council to erect a solar farm on land at Beckley Farm subject to a condition relating to archaeology. This was to take the form of a watching brief during invasive groundworks.

This is in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Dr Hannah Fluck, Senior Archaeologist with Hampshire County Council, advisers to the District on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor between 18th–22nd June 2012 and the site code is BEL 12/97.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the southern outskirts of Beckley on land currently used as arable farmland, which is a relatively flat field, bounded by other arable fields (Fig. 2). The underlying geology comprises 11th River Terrace Deposits (gravels) of the former Solent river system (BGS 1991). Gravel was sporadically observed during the watching brief. The site lies at a height of 41.8m above Ordnance Datum..

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location on one of the terraces of the former Solent river, now forming the Hampshire coastal plain. These terraces which lay within the former valley of the Solent river now mostly submerged due to the post-glacial rise in sea levels, are noteworthy for the presence of Palaeolithic

finds of flint and stone tools representing some of the earliest ancestral human activity in Britain (Wymer 1999). However, apart from stray Palaeolithic finds that may present on the surface of the gravel, any in-situ deposits are only likely to be present within or beneath the gravel matrix.

Previous fieldwork has taken place at Beckley. Monitoring of the easement and trench of an oil pipeline located some prehistoric struck flints (information from Hampshire HER), but it was an extensive fieldwalking survey that has revealed extensive prehistoric occupation, particularly in a zone adjacent to Walkford Brook (Ford 2005). This occupation included a Mesolithic component as well as later activity. Roman and medieval pottery was also recovered.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. It was anticipated that the groundworks which were likely to have an archaeological impact were to comprise overburden stripping for a temporary site compound, a cable trench and footings for pad foundations for a new sub-station.

Results

Cable trench

The cable trench was aligned approximately North-South and measured c.0.70m deep along its length. As more cables entered the trench it became wider towards the north (Fig. 3). At the southern end it measured 0.45m wide widening to 0.60m and by the northern end was 0.95m wide. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil overlying 0.28m of subsoil. This in turn overlay 0.12m of pale brown clayey silt. Towards the northern end of the trench occasional patches of gravel were beginning to appear in the base of the trench (Fig. 4).

Two short lengths of cable trench were also monitored to the north east of the sub-station.

The sub-station

The areas stripped for a new sub-station were numbered 1-3 and had the same stratigraphy as the cable trench. They were dug to a depth of 0.55m with pads 1 and 3 measuring 3.5 x 3.5m with pad 2 measuring 2.60m x 2.20m.

No overburden stripping took place for the contractors compound zone.

Finds

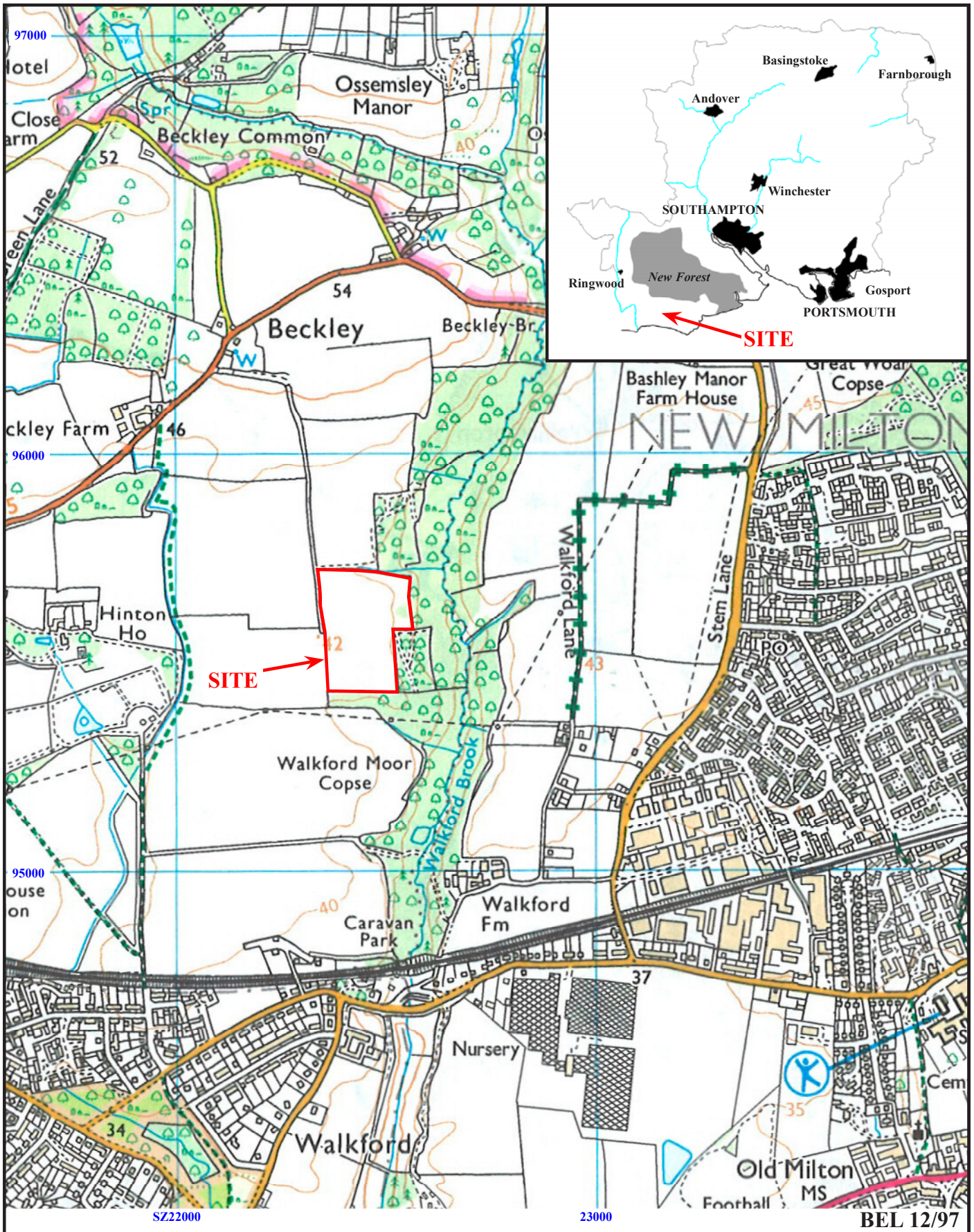
No finds of any archaeological interest were recovered during the watching brief.

Conclusion

Despite the potential for archaeological finds and deposits being encountered during the watching brief nothing of archaeological interest was observed in the cable trenches or bases dug for new sub-stations. Spoilheaps were also monitored but did not produce any ceramic or lithic material.

References

- BGS, 1991, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 329, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Ford, S, 2005, 'Walkford and Beckley Farm, New Milton, Hampshire, an archaeological fieldwalking survey', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 03/66b, Reading
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department of Communities and Local Government, London (TSO)
- Wymer, J J, 1999, *The Lower Palaeolithic occupation of Britain*, Salisbury

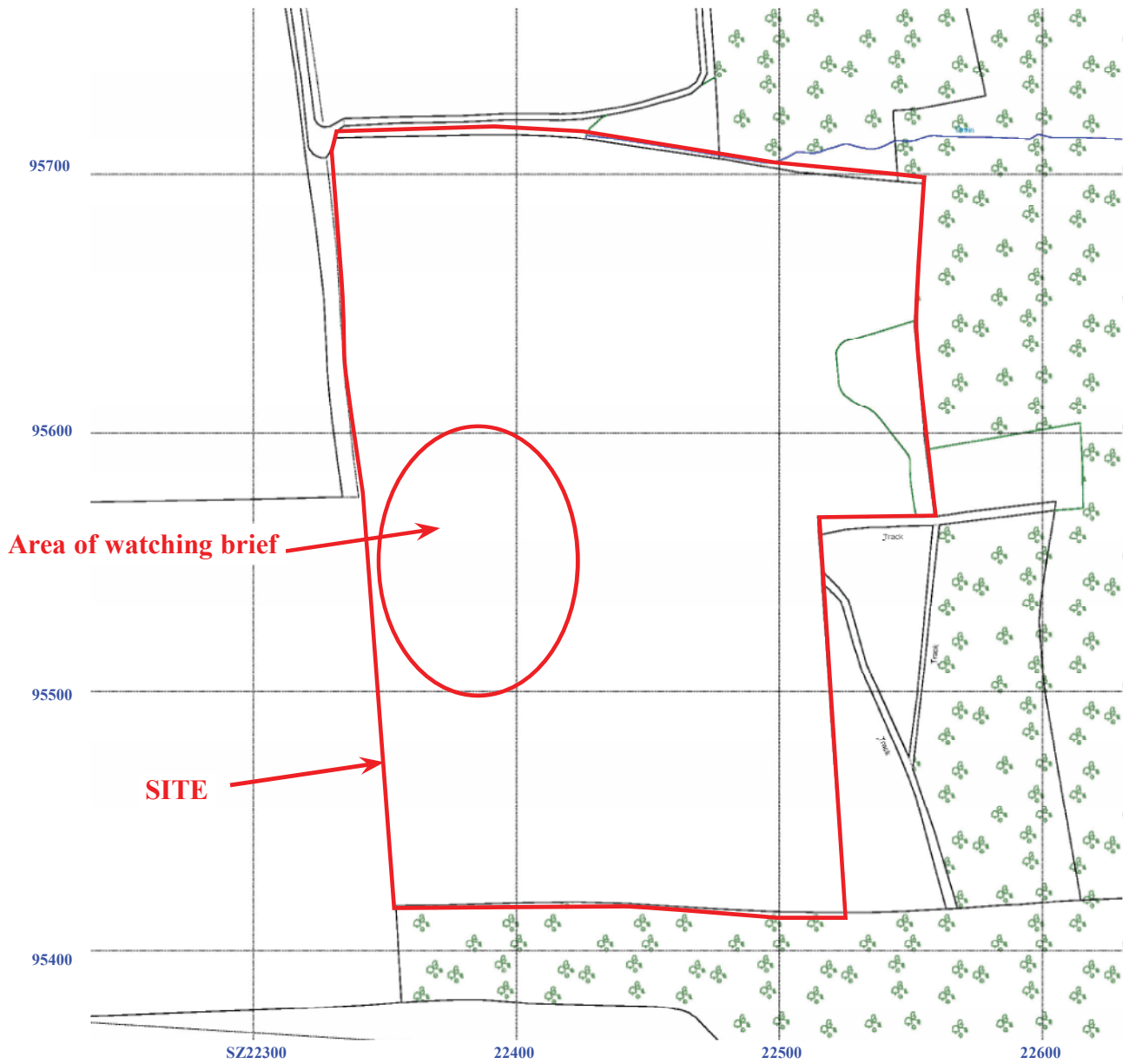


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Hampshire, 2012**

Archaeological watching brief

Figure 1. Location of site within Beckley and Hampshire.

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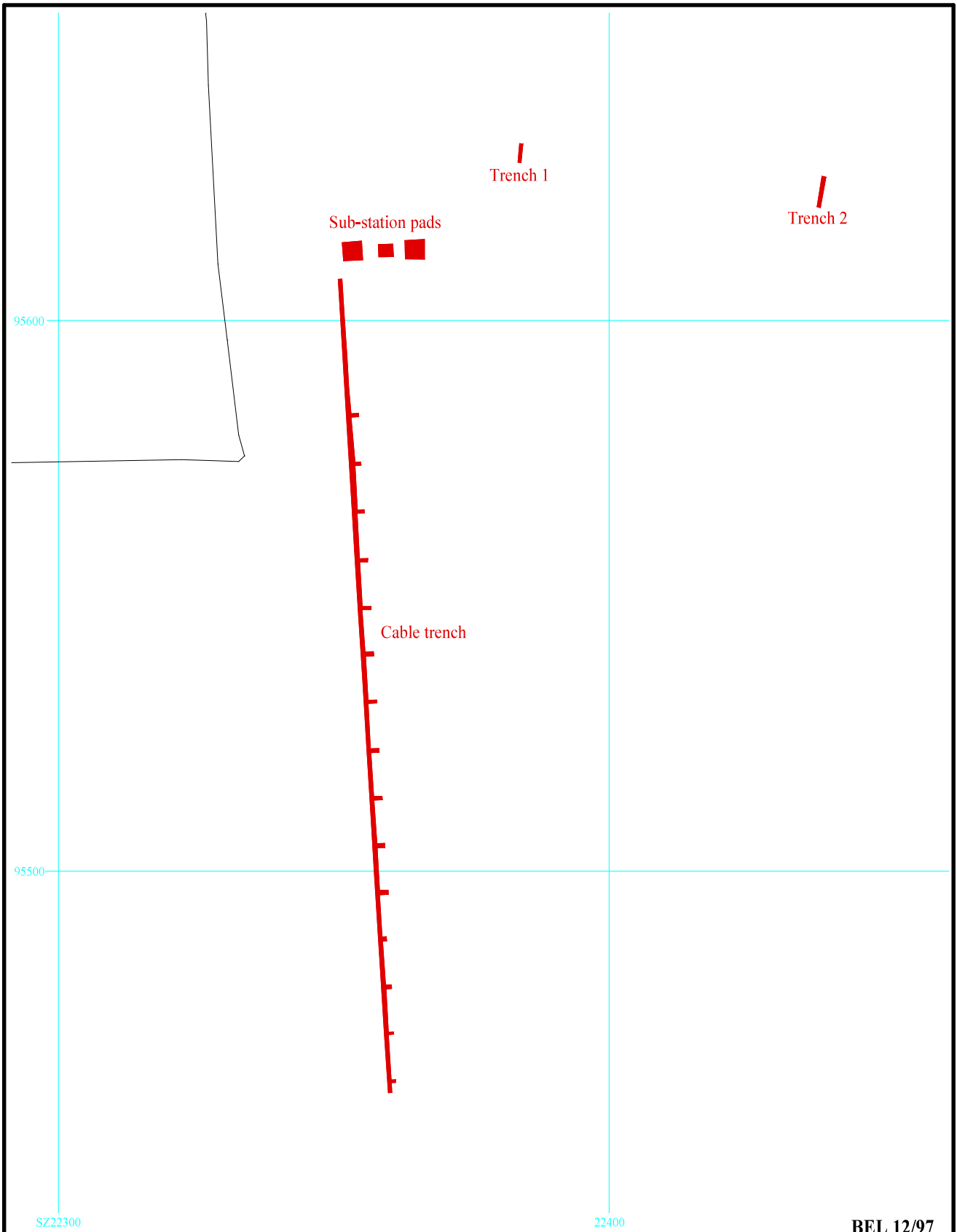
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Archaeological watching brief

Figure 2. Detailed location of site at Beckley.

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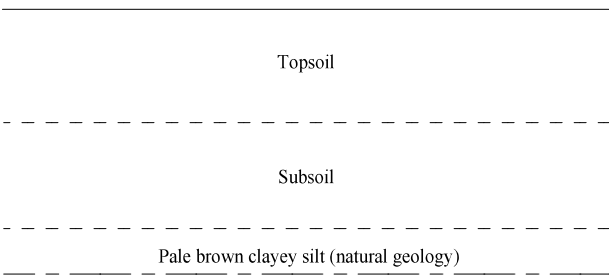
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Figure 3. Groundworks observed.





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Figure 4. Representative section.





Plate 1. Cable trench, looking north. Scales: 2m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Cable trench stratigraphy, looking east. Scales: 2m and 0.5m.

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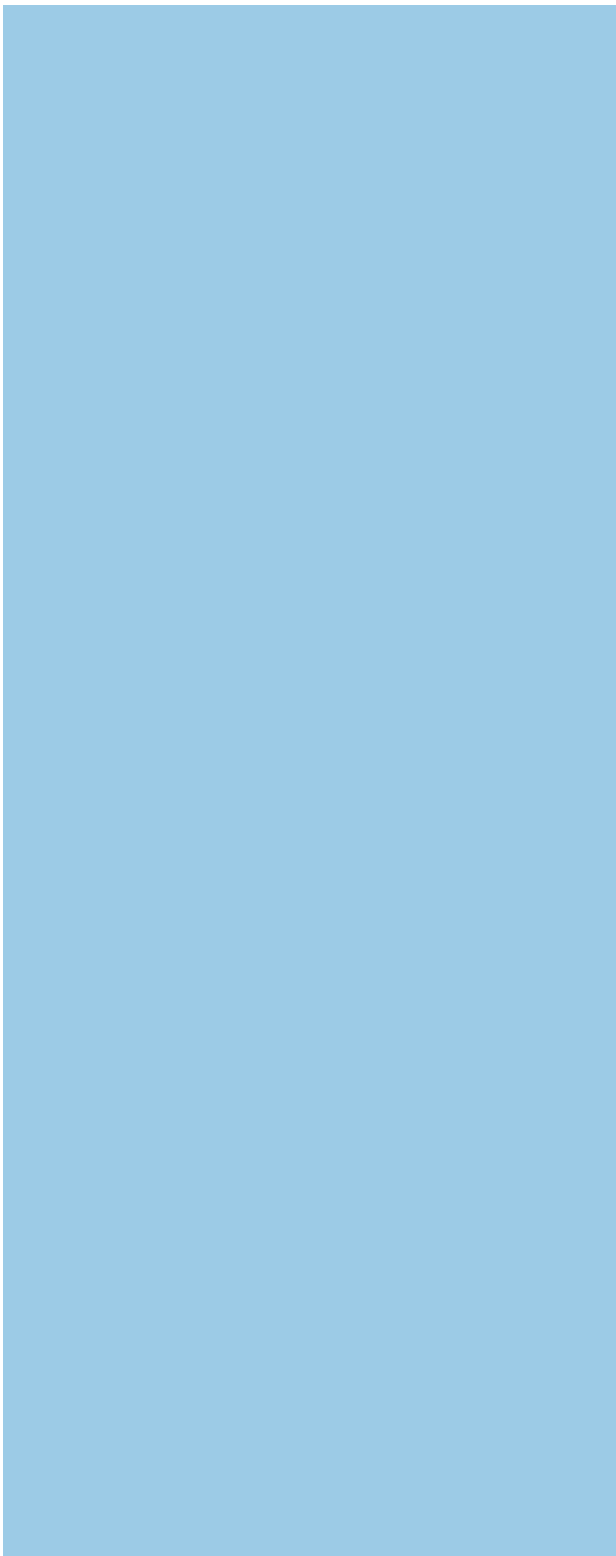
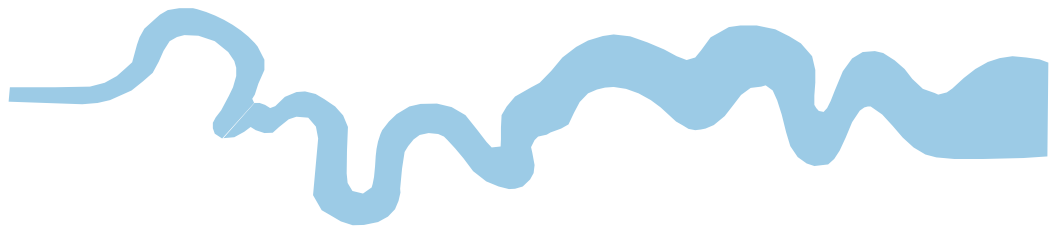
Plates 1 and 2.

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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
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 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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