

**EDF PYLON
RELOCATION WORKS
MARSTON MORETAINE
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION AND
INVESTIGATION**

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Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Project Background.....	4
1.2 Site Location and Description.....	4
1.3 Archaeological Background.....	4
1.4 Project Objectives.....	5
2. METHODOLOGY	6
2.1 Standards.....	6
2.2 Description of Construction Groundworks.....	6
2.3 Archive.....	6
3. RESULTS	7
3.1 Removal of Old Pylon Foundations.....	7
3.2 Installation of Piling Mat.....	7
4. BIBLIOGRAPHY	8

List of Figures

Figure 1: Site location plan

Figure 2: Location of pylon works

Figure 3: Pylon 110. Trench for removal of old foundation

Figure 4: Pylon 110. Re-stripped piling mat area following construction of pylon

Figure 5: Pylon 111. Trench for removal of old foundation

Figure 6: Pylon 111. Re-stripping of piling mat area following construction of pylon

All figures are bound at the back of this report.



Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete an assessment as possible, within the terms of the specification. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

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Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

BBC	Bedford Borough Council
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CDT	Conservation and Design Team
HER	Historic Environment Record
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
LPA	Local Planning Authority

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by David Wareing of Babcock Networks Ltd on behalf of EDF Energy and was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Martin Oake of the Central Bedfordshire Council Conservation and Design Team.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Marcin Koziminski and the report was prepared by Robert Wardill with illustrations by Joan Lightning.



Non-Technical Summary

The relocation of two overhead power line pylons located to the east of Marston Moretaine was carried out by EDF Energy.

Because the pylons lay within an area of archaeological interest, the Central Bedfordshire Council Conservation and Design Team (CDT) recommended that a condition be attached to the planning permission requiring the groundworks associated with the works to be archaeologically monitored

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Babcock Networks Ltd to carry out this work in accordance with the CDT's requirements.

The groundworks associated with the pylon relocation in the archaeologically sensitive areas included the removal of the old pylon foundations and the stripping of topsoil and subsoil around the location of each new pylon for the installation of a piling mat.

Machine-dug trenches excavated to remove the old foundations extended to a depth of c.2m. Deposits encountered comprised topsoil and subsoil, overlying geological deposits. No archaeological remains were found.

Two large areas were stripped of soils around each new pylon site to a depth of around 0.4m. It was not possible to observe the initial stripping of the areas prior to installation of the piling mats. Observations carried out following the removal of piling mat revealed undisturbed geological deposits. No archaeological remains were identified.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Background*

The relocation and replacement of two overhead power line pylons located either side of the new route of the A421, to the west of Marston Moretaine, was carried out by EDF Energy.

The pylons lay adjacent to areas of archaeological interest. As a consequence, the Central Bedfordshire Council Conservation and Design Team (CDT) recommended to the LPA that a condition be attached to the planning permission. This required the groundworks associated with the pylon relocation to be monitored to ensure that any archaeological remains uncovered were properly investigated and recorded.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Babcock Networks Ltd to carry out the programme of archaeological observation in accordance with the CDT's Brief for the works (CBC 2009) and corresponding written scheme of investigation prepared by Albion Archaeology (2009) and approved by the CDT.

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The existing pylons lie either side of the new route of the A421, approximately 0.5km to the west of Marston Moretaine (Figure 1). The southerly of the two pylons is numbered 110, with the works centred on NGR SP98596/41512. The northerly is numbered 111, with the works centred on NGR SP98624/41740 (Figure 2).

The route of the power line on which the pylons are situated runs a total of 27km from Sundon, which lies to the north of Dunstable in the south of Bedfordshire, to Bedford in the centre-north of the county.

The new pylons were to be located to the north of the existing ones at distances of approximately 44m from pylon 110, and 22m from pylon 111.

1.3 *Archaeological Background*

The pylons are located within an area of archaeological interest.

The village of Marston Moretaine is early medieval in origin (HER16939) and to the west of the site is the medieval settlement of Wood End (HER16937).

Archaeological remains dating to the Roman and Iron Age periods have also been discovered in the vicinity of Marston Moretaine (HER 17713, 16140).

Throughout the area linear and circular cropmarks have been identified (HER 14724, 14726) and recent archaeological investigations along the new route of the A421 have identified a number of previously unknown sites dating from the prehistoric through to medieval periods.



1.4 Project Objectives

The specific objectives of the fieldwork were to:

- Monitor all significant groundworks that had the potential to reveal archaeological remains.
- Investigate and record those works and any archaeological deposits encountered within them.

The general aim of the project was to add to the knowledge and understanding of the archaeology of Bedfordshire and produce a report for deposition in the appropriate archive that fully describes the archaeological works.



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Standards

Throughout the project the standards set out in the following documents were followed:

- Albion Archaeology. *Procedures Manual for Archaeological Fieldwork* (2001)
- English Heritage. *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991)
- IfA. *Code of Conduct* (1999)
- IfA. *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (1999) and *the Analysis of Fieldwork Records* (2001)
- BBC. *Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedford* (1998)

2.2 Description of Construction Groundworks

Each existing pylon comprised a four-legged steel lattice tower. These were to be dismantled and their foundations excavated and removed by machine.

The sites of the new pylons would initially be prepared by the installation of a piling mat to accommodate heavy construction plant. This comprised the stripping of topsoil and subsoil from an area around each pylon location and the compacting of a layer of crushed concrete over geotextile sheets.

Once the new piled foundations and tower had been installed, the piling mat and geotextile was removed and the topsoil reinstated.

Opportunities for observing archaeological remains, if present, would occur during removal of old foundations and stripping of soils for the installation of the piling mat.

2.3 Archive

The archive for the site comprising original records, photographs and supporting documentation will be deposited with Bedford Museum under accession number 2009.83. A copy of this report will also be submitted to the Archaeology Data Service's online OASIS database.



3. RESULTS

3.1 *Removal of Old Pylon Foundations*

Machine-dug trenches were excavated adjacent to the legs of each pylon (Figures 3 and 5). The excavations for each pylon were of similar dimensions measuring 2.5-3m long, 0.7m wide and 2m deep. Deposits encountered comprised *c.*0.2m of topsoil and *c.*0.2m of subsoil, overlying geological deposits of orange and grey clay. No archaeological remains were found in any of the trenches.

3.2 *Installation of Piling Mat*

The area for the piling mat around pylon 110 measured approximately 750m², and around 111, 570m². Approximately 0.40-0.45m of topsoil and subsoil were removed from each area.

It was not possible to observe the initial stripping of the areas prior to installation of the piling mats. Observations were carried out following construction of the new pylons and the removal of the piling mat and geotextile (Figures 4 and 6). During this work, the ground in each area was re-cleaned by machine fitted with a flat edged bucket, revealing geological deposits of orange silty clay. No archaeological remains were present in either area.



4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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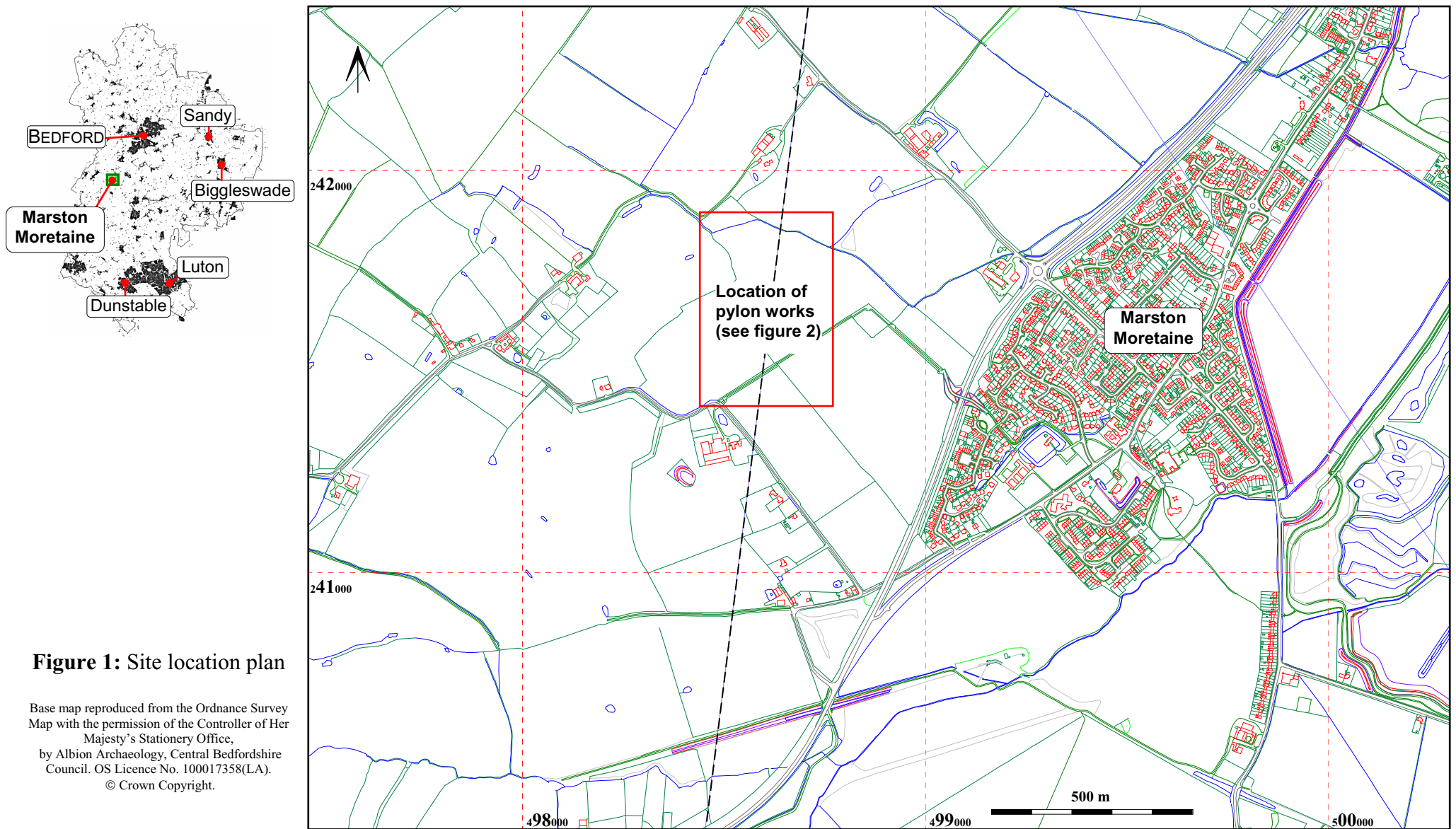


Figure 1: Site location plan

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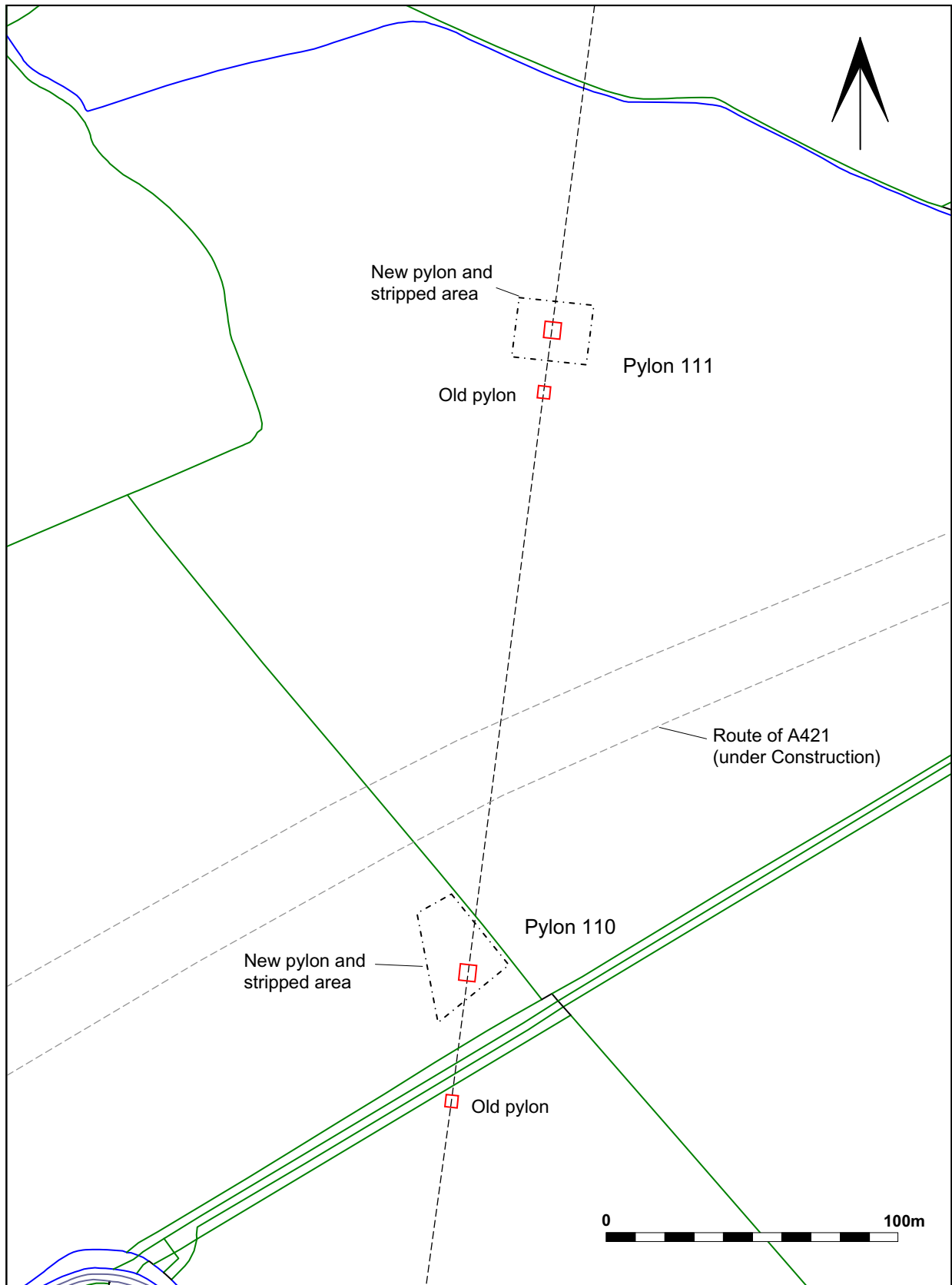


Figure 2: Location of pylon works

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Figure 3: Pylon 110. Trench for removal of old foundation



Figure 4: Pylon 110. Re-stripped piling mat area following construction of pylon



Figure 5: Pylon 111. Trench for removal of old foundation



Figure 6: Pylon 111. Re-stripping of piling mat area following construction of pylon