



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological investigation of land at
Porterswood Farm, Whittlebury, Towcester,
Northamptonshire
June 2011



Northamptonshire Archaeology

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Report 11/139

June 2011



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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
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Approved by	Andy Chapman	<i>AC</i>	1st July 2011

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	Archaeological investigation of land at Porterswood Farm, Whittlebury, Towcester, Northamptonshire, June 2011	
Short description	An archaeological investigation was carried out to inform a planning application for the construction of a single wind turbine, at Porterswood Farm, Whittlebury, Towcester, Northamptonshire. There were no archaeological features or finds present.	
Project type	Trial trench evaluation	
Previous work	None	
Current land use	Pasture	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type and period	None	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Porterswood Farm, Whittlebury, Towcester, Northamptonshire NN12 8TE	
Easting Northing	469475 245677	
Area (sq m/ha)	16m ²	
Height aOD	139m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council Assistant Archaeological Advisor (NCCAA)	
Project Design originator	NA	
Director/Supervisor	Ian Fisher	
Project Manager	Anthony Maull	
Sponsor or funding body	Bowler Energy, on behalf of Mr James Wesley	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	29/06/2011	
End date	29/06/2011	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents
Physical	NA store	
Paper		Site records (1 small archive box)
Digital		Client report PDF
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title	Archaeological investigation of land at Porterswood Farm, Whittlebury, Towcester, Northamptonshire, June 2011	
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Back cover: General site view, looking south-east

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF LAND
AT
PORTERSWOOD FARM, WHITTLEBURY, TOWCESTER
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
JUNE 2011

Abstract

An archaeological investigation was carried out to inform a planning application for the construction of a single wind turbine, at Porterswood Farm, Whittlebury, Towcester, Northamptonshire. There were no archaeological features or finds present.

1 INTRODUCTION

In June 2011, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) on land at Porterswood Farm, Whittlebury, Towcester, Northamptonshire (NGR: SP 69475 45677; Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Bowler Energy on behalf of Mr James Wesley and was undertaken to inform a planning application (S/2011/0686/FUL) for a proposed single wind turbine.

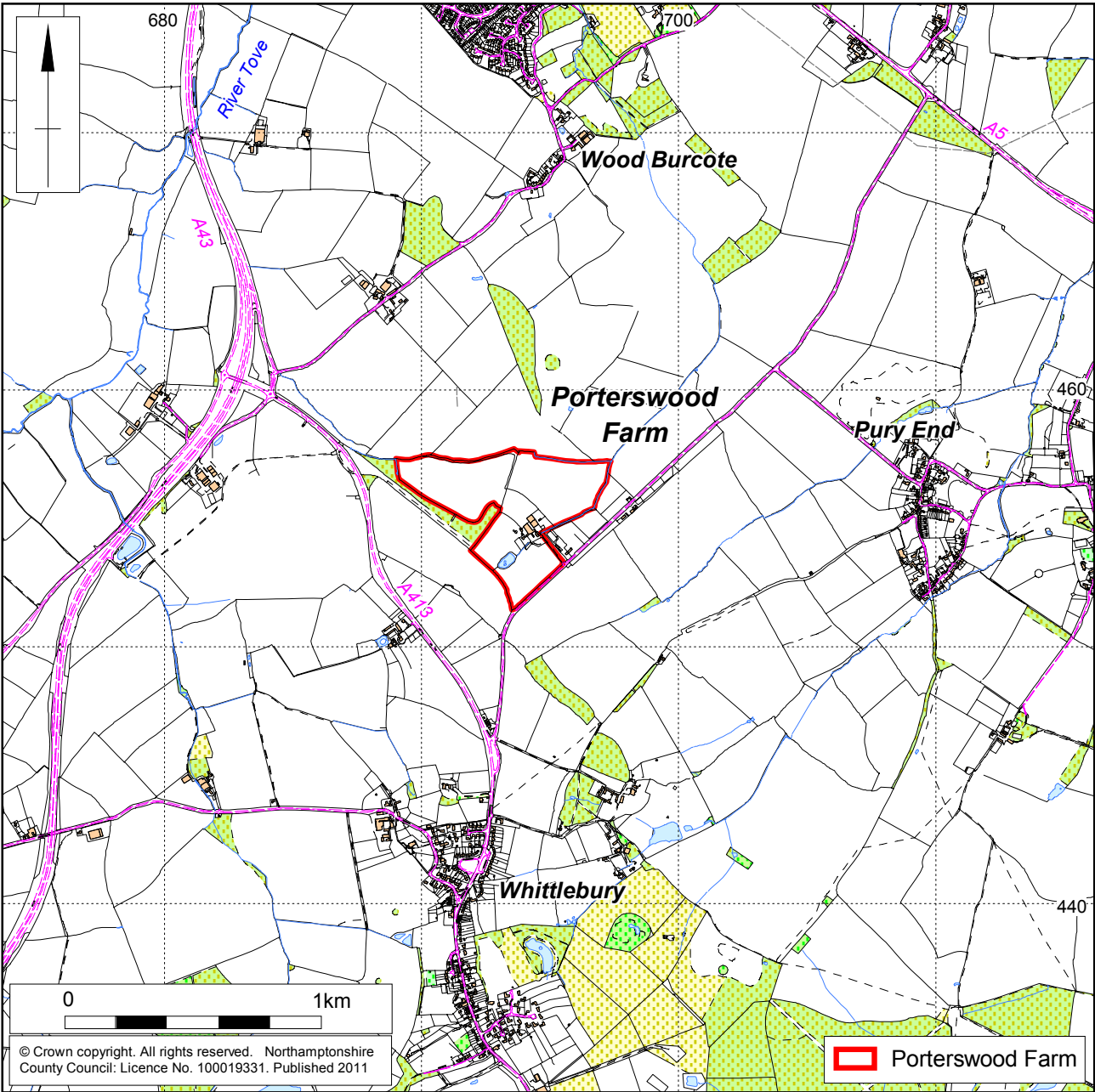
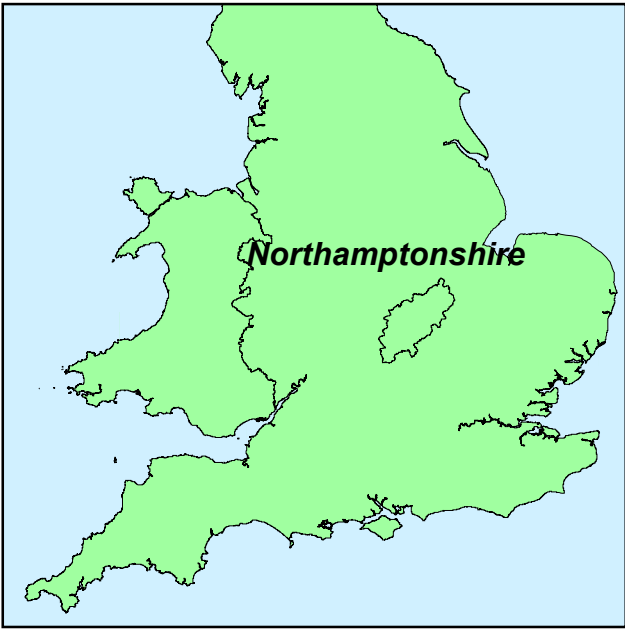
Following a brief issued by Northamptonshire County Council's Assistant Archaeological Advisor (NCCAAA) (Mordue 2011), a programme of archaeological evaluation was agreed. The objectives of the evaluation were to determine the presence of any archaeological features or deposits within the application area and to date and characterise their extent, depth of burial and state of preservation.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and geology

The base of the proposed wind turbine covers an area of 25m², and is located approximately 1.4km north of Whittlebury. The villages of Pury End and Woodburcote lie 1.4km and 1.5km to the north and east respectively. The site slopes gently to the east at an approximate height of 130m to 140m aOD. At the time of the evaluation the land was covered in pasture.

The underlying geology is of the Great Oolite group, consisting of Sandstone and Limestone overlain by Diamicton glacial tills (NA 2011).



Scale 1:25,000

Site location Fig 1

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

A 1km radius search of Northamptonshire's Historic Environment Record (HER) was conducted. No HER entries were found within the bounds of Porterswood Farm.

The proposed wind turbine lies within an area of prehistoric and Roman activity. A geophysical survey at Whittlebury Hillfort (NSMR 757), south of Porterswood Farm, recorded at least twelve roundhouses (Jones and Page, 2006, fig 19). Towcester, 2.5km to the north, is the defended Roman town of *Lactodrum* and is situated on the major Roman road of Watling Street (A5). South of Towcester, 2km north-west of Porterswood farm there is evidence of prehistoric occupation and Roman finds (Butler 2007).

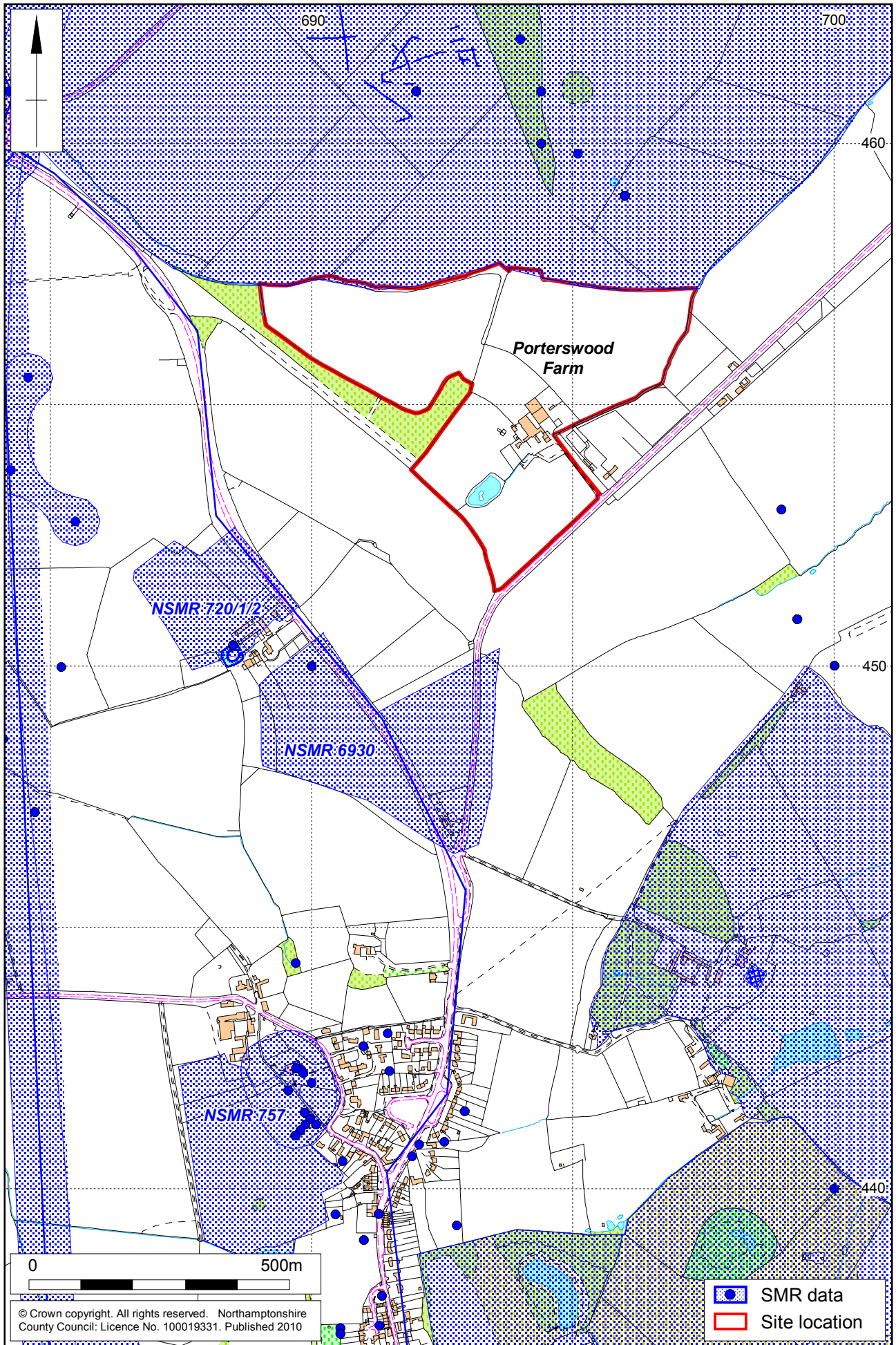
Medieval activity focuses on the village of Whittlebury and its open fields (NSMR 6930). The proposed wind turbine lies within Whittlewood Forest and was the subject of the 'Medieval settlements and Landscapes in the Whittlewood Area' project (Jones and Page 2006). To the west at Lordsfield Farm, a moated site is recorded (NSMR 720/1/2).

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the work is to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The aims of the investigation are to:

- Establish the date, nature and extent of the activity or occupation on the development site
- Recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region
- Recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.



Scale 1:10,000

Site location showing Historic Environment Record data Fig 2

Scale 1:1,750



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694

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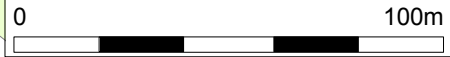
Wind turbine
base

cable trench

cable trench

Porterswood Farm

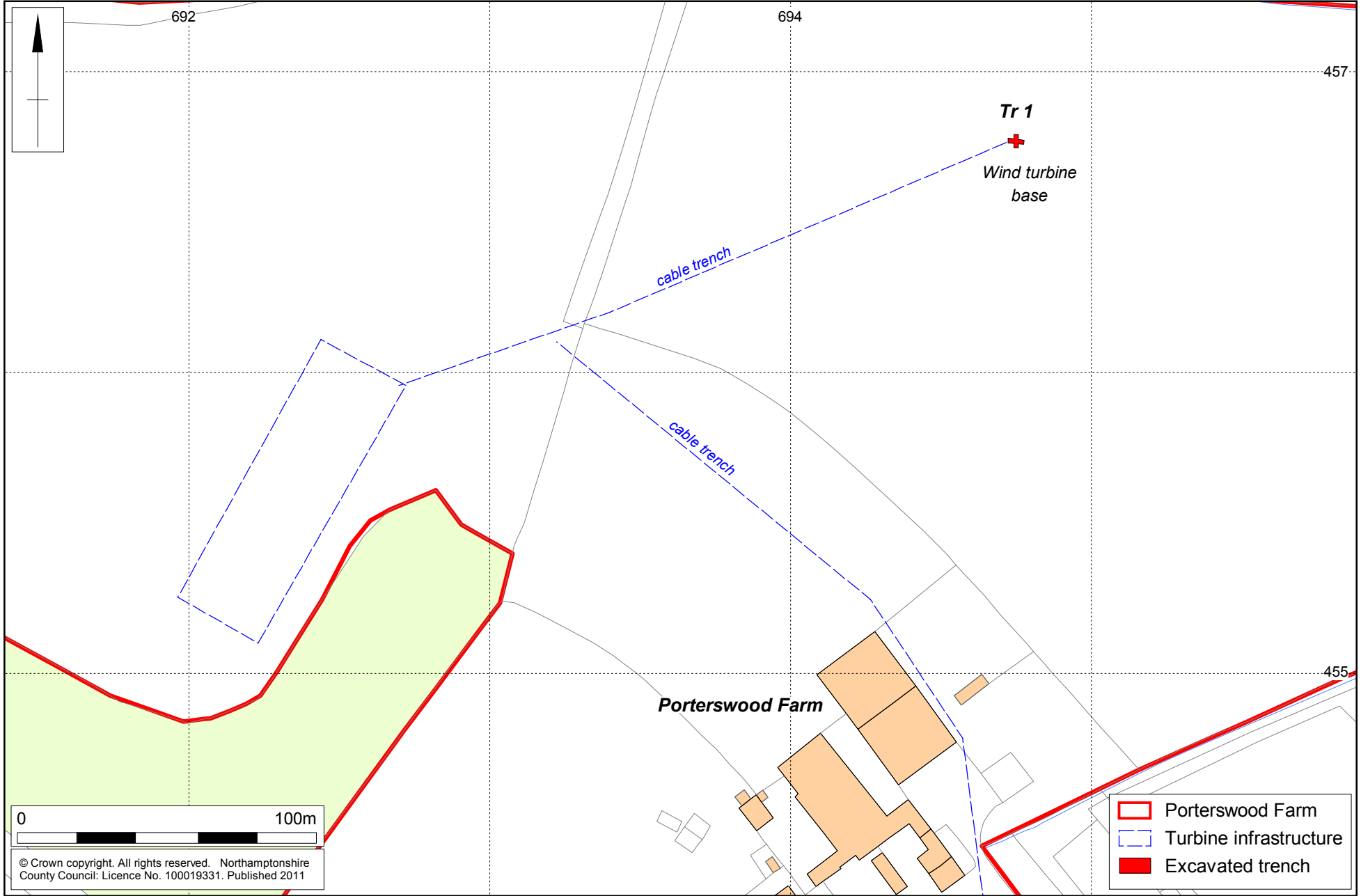
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- Porterswood Farm
- Turbine infrastructure
- Excavated trench

Trench location Fig 3



4 METHODOLOGY

One trial trench (Trench 1), in the shape of a cross, each arm measuring 5m long by 2m wide, was excavated on the site of the turbine base in accordance with the trench plan approved by NCCAAA (Fig 3). The trench was positioned using a Leica 1200 GPS surveying system.

A JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket was used to remove overburden to the natural substrate. Deposits were examined by hand excavation to determine their nature.

Recording followed standard NA procedures as described in the *Fieldwork Manual* (NA 2006). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* sheets to include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships and interpretation. A photographic record was made using 35mm black and white negative film and 35mm colour slide and digital images. Spoil heaps were scanned by eye and metal detector to maximise the recovery of any artefacts.

All works were conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 1994, revised 2008).

5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

5.1 General stratigraphy

The underlying geology was orange-brown sandy clay with frequent chalk and flint inclusions.

The subsoil was dark brown-orange sandy clay with pebble inclusions, approximately 0.15m-0.18m thick.

The shallow topsoil was friable, grey-brown, sandy-clay loam, approximately 0.12m-0.18m thick. It was a clean soil, devoid of modern debris.



Trench 1, looking west

Fig 4

5.2 The trench

Trench 1 (Figs 3, 4 and 5), was aligned north to south and east to west in the form of a cross. It was located over the position of the proposed turbine base. There were no archaeological features or artefacts present. A modern land drain was recorded aligned north-east to south-west, approximately 0.20m wide.



Trench 1 section, looking east

Fig 5

6 DISCUSSION

The site of the proposed wind turbine lies in an area of prehistoric and Roman activity. However, the archaeological investigation established that there were no archaeological features or deposits encountered within the site.

No finds were recovered from the topsoil or subsoil.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DATA

Trench no	Context	Type	Description	Thickness (m)
1	101	Layer	Topsoil, friable, grey-brown, sandy clay loam	0.12m - 0.18m thick
	102	Layer	Subsoil, dark brown-orange sand clay with pebble inclusions	0.15m – 0.18m thick
	103	Layer	Natural substrate, orange-brown clay with chalk and flint inclusions	



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