

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
LAND AT LODGE FARM
SANDY LANE
CHICKSANDS,
BEDFORDSHIRE**

NGR: TL 1194 3992

on behalf of Prescient Power Ltd



Mo Muldowney BA PIfA

November 2012

ASC: 1576/CLF/2



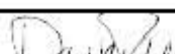
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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	CLF	<i>ASC project no:</i>	1576
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	Archaeol2-136551	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	BEDFM 2012.71
<i>County:</i>	Bedfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Chicksands		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Campton & Chicksands		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 1194 3992		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	0.15ha		
<i>Present use:</i>	Agricultural land		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Installation of a solar farm		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Central Bedfordshire Council		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	Pre-planning		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	8th and 9th November 2012		
<i>Client:</i>	Prescient Power Ltd 64 Market Street Ashby de la Zouch Leicestershire LE65 1AN		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Kate Cradden		

Internal Quality Check

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<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
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Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In November 2012 an evaluation was undertaken on land at Lodge Farm, Sandy Lane, Chicksands, Bedfordshire ahead of the proposed installation of a new solar farm. Five trenches were excavated but no archaeological features were observed. The presence of occasional, isolated archaeological features away from the trenches cannot be entirely excluded, but it is unlikely that large numbers of significant archaeological remains are present on the site. The potential impact of the development on archaeological remains is considered to be low.

1. Introduction

1.1 In November 2012 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC)* carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at Lodge Farm, Sandy Lane, Chicksands, Bedfordshire. The project was commissioned by *Prescient Power Ltd*, and was required under the terms of the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*. It was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Rouse 2012), and approved by the *Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologists*, archaeological advisors (AA) to the local planning authority (LPA), *Central Bedfordshire Council*. The proposed development is ‘pre-planning’.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of the *National Planning Policy Frameworks (NPPF)*, in order to inform proposals for the development of the site.

1.3 *Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd*

ASC is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Organisation* by the Institute for Archaeologists and is also accredited ISO 9001, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

1.4 *The Site*

1.4.1 *Location & Description*

Sandy Lane, lies in Central Bedfordshire, in the parish of Campton and Chicksands. Lodge Farm lies south of Rowney Warren Wood and north of Chicksands Priory, on the lower slopes of the south-facing River Flit valley at Ordnance Survey national grid reference TL1194 3992 (Fig. 1).

The site is accessed along a farm track leading west off Sandy Lane, lying within the farm environs just to the south and west of a range of existing buildings. The proposed development area is sub-rectangular in shape and covers an area of c 0.15ha (Fig. 2).

1.4.2 *Topography & Geology*

The site is situated on the south side of a stream draining into the river Flit and lies at an elevation of c.50m OD. The soils of the site comprise the *Bearsted 1 Association*, namely well drained coarse loamy and sandy soils over cretaceous

sand and sandstone (Soil Survey 1983, 541a). The solid geology comprises Woburn Sands, described as sands, fine to coarse (BGS, Sheet 204).

1.4.3 Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the development of a solar farm (Fig. 2).

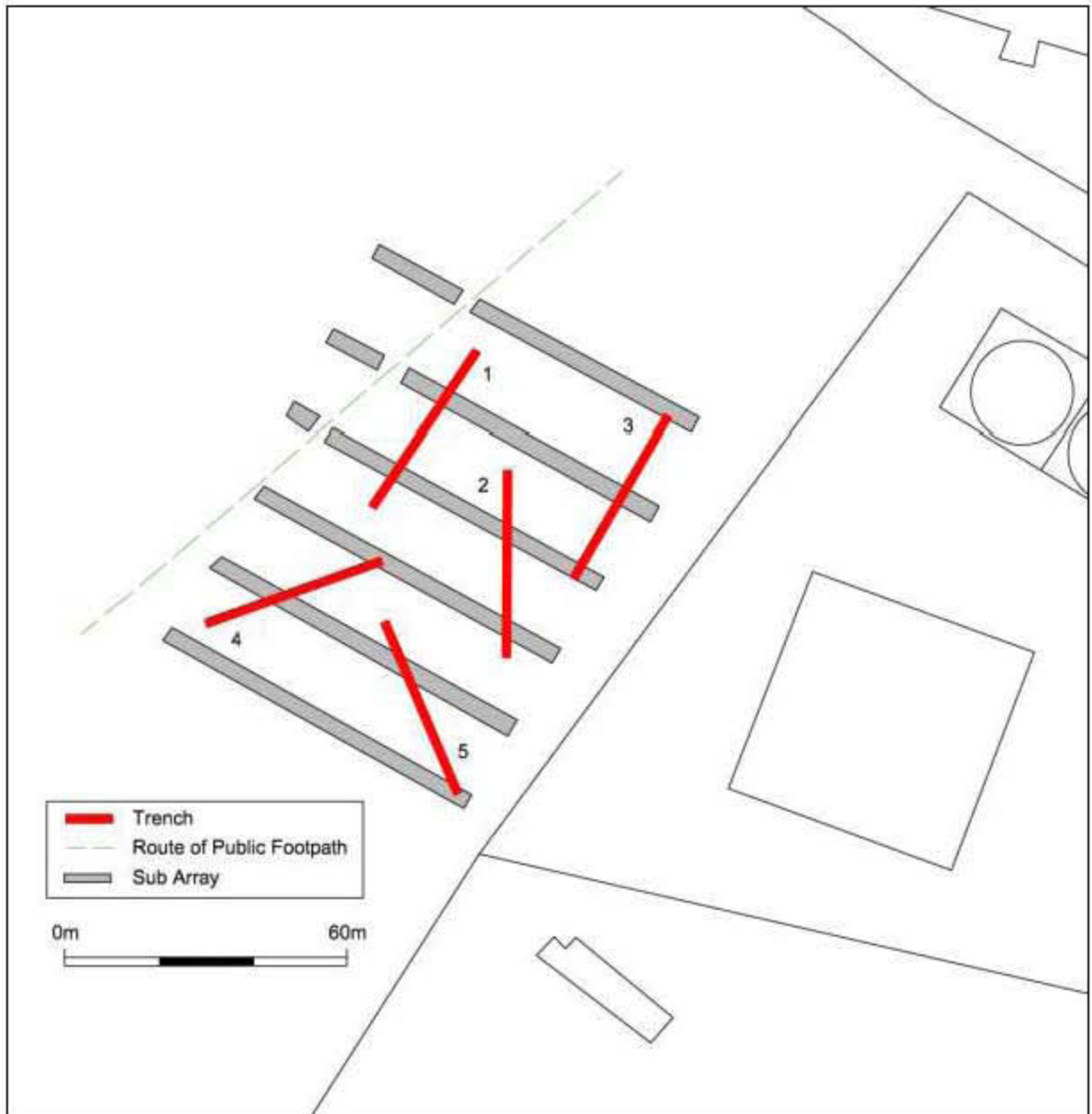


Figure 2: Trench location plan (Scale 1:1250)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the project design, the aims of the evaluation were to determine:

- The location, extent, nature, and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present at the proposed development site.
- The integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present at the proposed development site.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the requirements of the brief, to the relevant sections of the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2009) and *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2010), to the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003), to English Heritage guidelines (EH 1991, EH 2006), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the project design, and involved:

- Excavation of a maximum of 400sqm of trial trenching (5x 40m trenches), located within the area of the proposed development (Fig. 2), with a contingency for 150sqm of additional trenching, if required.

2.4 Constraints

Due to the very thick accumulation of colluvium and the unstable nature of the sandy soil it was not possible to machine-excavate all trenches to the upper surface of the natural strata. Their edges, particularly in Trench 3, suffered considerable collapse and in order to mitigate against further collapse and for health and safety considerations, excavation ceased at a depth of c. 1.2m.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 Introduction

The following section provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs. The site lies within an area of archaeological and historical interest, and has the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods.

This section has been compiled with information from Central Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and other readily available sources and comprises data within a 500m radius of the site.

3.2 General

The Central Bedfordshire HER includes a variety of archaeological sites, listed buildings and investigation events within a 500m radius of the development area. The majority of the references are located in close proximity to the site and comprise series listed buildings and areas of general historic significance. The majority of references relate to post-medieval activity.

3.3 Prehistoric - Saxon (before 600BC-1066)

Although lying just beyond the search radius, two circular cropmarks (HER13995) have been identified via aerial photographic interpretation, which are undated but likely to pertain to either Bronze Age or Iron Age activity. To the east of the site, a series of boundary and enclosure ditches, along with a small number of pits were identified during an evaluation. None of the features contained any dating evidence, but it has been suggested that they represent a prehistoric field system, with a possible settlement in the vicinity (HER19499). No references to either Roman or Saxon activity were identified.

3.4 Medieval (1066-1500)

The origin of the settlement at Lodge Farm is not known, but Chicksands was recorded in the Domesday Survey (1086) where it is referred to as *Chichesana* and *Chichesane*. It was divided into two separate holding and was held by the Bishop of Lincoln and the wife of Ralph Taillebois (Williams & Martin 2003, 565 & 586).

Little is known of the early development of the settlement and it has been suggested that it may originally have been situated to the south of Lodge Farm at the location of what later became the site of Chicksands Priory (HER 375; 4524). The priory was a house of the Gilbertine order, founded in c.1150 (Doubleday & Page 1904, 390-393) and the original settlement may have relocated northwards to the Lodge Farm site to make way for the priory buildings.

Approximately 150m northwest of the subject site an excavation carried out in the 1930's uncovered the site of a medieval cottage and kiln with associated 13th-14th century finds (HER458). It is possible that the remains may extend eastwards into the current development area.

To the north of the site lies the medieval rabbit warren of Rowney Warren (HER14565), part of Rowney Grange. The HER notes that its use continued into the post-medieval period.

3.5 *Post-Medieval* (1500-1900)

All the post-medieval HER events lie in close proximity to the development area and are related to the area's use as a farm. The entries are summarised in the table overleaf.

A sand pit (HER3059) noted on the 1901 OS map and still visible today as an earthwork lies to the north-east of the development area and may be one of number of extraction pits in the area.

The northern part of the park and garden associated with the later (18th and 19th century) use of the Priory grounds (Chicksands Park (HER6992)) lies within the search area but the main focus of the estate lies some distance to the south of the development area.

<i>HER No.</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
5637	Secondlodge Farmhouse. Grade II. LB1321804	17thC
5638	Firstlodge Farmhouse. Grade II. LB1113729	17thC
13054	Timber-frame threshing barn. Grade II. LB1113730	17thC
13033	Red brick outbuilding. Grade II. LB1113729	Early 19thC
13055 & 13067	Barns	18thC
13070	stone built outbuilding	Post-med
13068	courtyard block	19thC

Table 1: Listed buildings near the development area

3.6 *Modern* (1900-present)

The most significant modern activity relates to the large-scale military use of the former Chicksands Park and Priory as RAF Chicksands (HER9275). Again, the majority of the land bought by the Government in 1935 lies to the south of the development area.

In 2003, a desk-based assessment (CUAU 2003, EBD583) was commissioned in order to characterise an area of land to the east of the development area and in 2005 ASC (Wilson 2005) undertook an evaluation of land to the south-east of Firstlodge Farm, but revealed no archaeological deposits. The negative result implies that either no or very small-scale archaeological remains survive in this area and confirms that the 13th-14th century activity excavated in the 1930's is unlikely to have extended so far eastwards.

In March 2012, ASC undertook a watching brief within another part of Lodge Farm, c.150m to the north of the development site, ahead of the erection of a new agricultural shed. The work identified a series of large modern agricultural waste pits in addition to two late post-medieval made-ground deposits. No archaeological features were observed (Muldowney 2012).

4 Results

4.1 General

Five trenches, each 2m wide, were located within the development area (as determined by the client) so as to avoid the route of a public footpath that runs across the west edge of the development area (Fig. 2).

The trenches were opened with a mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket, operating under continuous archaeological supervision. Mechanical excavation ceased when the natural sub-strata was encountered or at 1.2m depth, whichever was encountered first (see section 2.4).

4.2 General Stratigraphic Sequence

The natural stratum (102) was light orange and yellow sand and was observed in Trenches 2 – 5 (Plate 1). It was overlain in all trenches except Trench 5 by dark orange brown colluvium (101), which was in turn was overlain by topsoil (100), which was dark grey brown, occasionally light brown grey silty sand. No archaeological features or artefacts were observed in any of these deposits.

Natural stratum (102) was encountered at a maximum elevation of 59.12m OD, a minimum of 0.40m below the ground surface. Colluvium (101) varied in depth between 0.40m and 0.90m and the topsoil (100) was up to 0.56m thick.

Detailed information regarding the trial trenches and their contents appears in Appendix 1.

4.2 The Trenches

No archaeological features were observed in any of the trenches and the stratigraphic sequence comprised entirely natural deposits.



Plate 1: Natural (102), Trench 5, facing north-west

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 No archaeological features were observed in the trenches despite the nearby presence of a putative prehistoric field system (HER19499) and the evaluation indicates that it is unlikely that the field system extended west into the development area. Although no archaeological features were identified in the development site, the background research (Section 3) indicated that both prehistoric and medieval archaeological remains are present in the surrounding area. The presence of individual isolated archaeological remains away from the trenches cannot be entirely but the potential for the presence of further remains on the development site is low.
- 5.2 The evaluation has demonstrated that a significant amount of soil movement has taken place in the development area due to the steeply sloping nature of the ground. This has been exacerbated by agricultural activity, leading to the accumulation of almost 1m of colluvium.
- 5.3 *Confidence Rating*
Despite unstable trench edges, which resulted in ceasing machine excavation at 1.2m (in places above the level of the undisturbed natural) in order to mitigate against further collapse, conditions for the work were excellent with good visibility. A high confidence rating can be applied to the results of the work.

6. Heritage Asset Assessment

6.1 *Heritage Assets and their Significance*

No heritage assets were present in the evaluation trenches and thus have no significance.

6.2 *Impact of the Proposed Development*

The proposed development will have no impact on heritage assets as none were identified.

6.3 *Archaeology in the Planning Process*

Any decisions regarding the level and nature of any further archaeological mitigation will be made by *Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologists*, archaeological advisors to the local planning authority, *Central Bedfordshire Council*.

7. Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by Kate Cradden of *Prescient Power Ltd* and the writer is grateful to the Parrish family and also the machine contractor Mr Richard Lane for their assistance. The project was monitored by Martin Oake of the *Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologists* on behalf of the local planning authority.

The project was managed for ASC by David Fell MA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Mo Muldowney BA PIFA and Calli Rouse BA PIFA. The report was prepared by Mo Muldowney and edited by David Fell.

8. Archive

8.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Client's site plans
5. Site records
6. List of photographs
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. Original specialist reports and supporting information
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

8.2 The archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum (Accession number: 2012.71).

9. References


Standards & Specifications


- ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14.
- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).
- IFA 2010 Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA (various dates) Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments 2011, Watching Briefs 2008, Evaluations 2009, Excavations 2008, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings 2008, Finds 2009)*.
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- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
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- Muldowney, M 2012 *Watching Brief at Lodge Farm, Sandy Lane, Chicksands, Bedfordshire* ASC/1472/CLF/2
- Oake, M 2012 *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Field Evaluation of land at Lodge Farm, Chicksands, Bedfordshire* Central Bedfordshire Archaeologists
- Oake M, Luke M, Dawson M, Edgeworth M & Murphy P 2007 *Research & Archaeology: Resource Assessment, Research Agenda and Strategy*. Bedfordshire Archaeology Monograph 9.
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend (Harpenden)*.
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- Wilson, N 2005 *Archaeological Evaluation: Lodge Farm, Sandy Lane, Chicksands, Bedfordshire* ASC/641/CLF/2


Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	40	Width	2m	Depth	1.2m
	Trench top NE				50.02m OD	
	Trench base NE				49.16m OD	
	Trench top SW				52.37m OD	
	Trench base SW				51.21m OD	
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NE	511949, 240007		SW	511926, 239974	
	Orientation:			NE-SW		
	Reason for Trench:			Targets NW edge of development area, avoiding public footpath		
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
100	Layer	Dark grey brown silty sand, occasionally light brown grey. Topsoil	-	300	0	
101	Layer	Dark orange brown silty sand. Colluvium	-	900	300	

Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	40	Width	2m	Depth	1.1m
	Trench top N				50.96m OD	
	Trench base N				49.85m OD	
	Trench top S				56.03m OD	
	Trench base S				55.55m OD	
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	N	511955, 239982		S	511955, 239942	
	Orientation:			N-S		
	Reason for Trench:			Targets centre-east area of development		
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
100	Layer	Dark grey brown silty sand, occasionally light brown grey. Topsoil	-	300	0	
101	Layer	Dark orange brown silty sand. Colluvium	-	600	300	
102	Layer	Light orange and yellow sand. Natural	-	-	1100	

Trench 3						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	40m	Width	2m	Depth	1.2m
	Levels					
	Trench top NE				48.87m OD	
	Trench base NE				47.97m OD	
	Trench top SW				52.62m OD	
	Trench base SW				51.02m OD	
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NE	511990, 239994		SW	511969, 239959	
	Orientation			NE-SW		
Reason for Trench			Targets east corner of development area			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
100	Layer	Dark grey brown silty sand, occasionally light brown grey. Topsoil	-	560	0	
101	Layer	Dark orange brown silty sand. Colluvium	-	640	560	
102	Layer	Light orange and yellow sand. Natural	-	-	1200	

Trench 4						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	40	Width	2m	Depth	1.2m
	Trench top ENE				53.59m OD	
	Trench base ENE				52.89m OD	
	Trench top WSW				55.12m OD	
	Trench base WSW				54.13m OD	
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	ENE	511928, 239963		WSW	511891, 239949	
	Orientation:			ENE-WSW		
	Reason for Trench:			Targets west corner of development area		
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
100	Layer	Dark grey brown silty sand, occasionally light brown grey. Topsoil	-	350	0	
101	Layer	Dark orange brown silty sand. Colluvium	-	670	350	
102	Layer	Light orange and yellow sand. Natural	-	-	1200	

Trench 5											
						Max Dimensions (m)					
						Length	40m	Width	2m	Depth	0.4m
						Levels					
						Trench top NW				54.84m OD	
						Trench base NW				54.68m OD	
						Trench top SE				59.68m OD	
						Trench base SE				59.12m OD	
						NGR Co-ordinates					
						NW	511929, 239950		SE	511945, 239913	
						Orientation			NW-SE		
Reason for Trench			Targets south corner of development area								
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)						
100	Layer	Dark grey brown silty sand, occasionally light brown grey. Topsoil	-	400	0						
102	Layer	Light orange and yellow sand. Natural	-	-	400						

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Lodge Farm, Sandy Lane, Chicksands		SITE NO/CODE: 1576 CLF	
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	✓	✓	Trench 3, general shot
2	✓	✓	Trench 5, general shot
3	✓	✓	Trench 4, general shot
4	✓	✓	Trench 2, general shot
5	✓	✓	Trench 1, general shot

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Land at Lodge Farm, Sandy Lane, Chicksands	OASIS reference:	Archaeol2-136551
Short Description:	In November 2012 an evaluation was undertaken on land at Lodge Farm, Sandy Lane, Chicksands, Bedfordshire ahead of the proposed installation of a new solar farm. Five trenches were excavated but no archaeological features were observed. The presence of occasional, isolated archaeological features away from the trenches cannot be entirely excluded, but it is unlikely that large numbers of significant archaeological remains are present on the site. The potential impact of the development on archaeological remains is considered to be low.		
Project Type:	Evaluation		
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	None	Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	None
Current land use:	Agricultural	Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	No
Monument type:	None	Monument period:	None
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Bedfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 1194 3992
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	Lodge Farm, Sandy Lane, Chicksands, Shefford SG17 5QB		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	0.15ha	Height OD: (metres)	48m – 60m
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Martin Oake	Project design originator:	Calli Rouse
Project Manager:	David Fell	Director/Supervisor:	Mo Muldowney
Sponsor / funding body:	Prescient Power Ltd		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	8th November 2012	End date:	9th November 2012
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Bedford Museum	None	
Paper:		Report, site records, photographs, clients plans	
Digital:		CD with all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Evaluation: Land at Lodge Farm, Sandy Lane, Chicksands, Bedfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1576/CLF/2		
Author(s):	Mo Muldowney		
Page nos	20	Date:	14th November 2012