

**SOLAR PARK AT BAKE FARM, SALISBURY ROAD, COMBE BISSETT,
SALISBURY, WILTSHIRE, SP5 4JT**

**SCHEME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MONITORING AND RECORDING**

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Planning Ref.:	Wiltshire Council
PCAS job no.	1537
Site code:	BFWM 15
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OASIS ID:	preconst3-244995

Prepared for British Solar Renewables Ltd.

by
James Earley
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Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd
47, Manor Road,
Saxilby
Lincoln
LN1 2HX

Tel. 01522 703800
e-mail: info@pre-construct.co.uk

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Non-Technical Summary

A scheme of archaeological monitoring and recording took place during the excavations for a new solar park on land northwest of Bake Farm, Wiltshire.

The site contains two cropmarks recorded on the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record. Both these circular features remain un-investigated, and may be evidence of Prehistoric barrows or roundhouses, or the result of more modern quarrying activity. There are a number of scheduled barrows in the surrounding area, and further cropmarks and revealed features of Bronze and Iron Age occupation and agriculture, but there are also post-medieval chalk pits shown on historic OS mapping. In addition, the field boundaries to the north, and running north-south through the site are identified as historic; the northern hedge line marks the Saxon/medieval parish boundary, and the hedge dividing the site appears on 18th century enclosure mapping of the area.

The planning layout was designed to avoid the cropmark in the northwest field, but will still impact on the geophysical anomalies in this field and a second circular cropmark in the northeast field. The initial required archaeological mitigation was therefore for monitoring of all construction groundworks in the southern-most part of the northern two fields, to ensure any remains encountered are identified and recorded. Subsequent development of the remainder of the northern fields will encounter the ring-ditch crop mark highlighted in figure 1, whereby the same methodology and approach as set out in this report will be adhered to.

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd (PCAS) was commissioned by British Solar Renewables Ltd. to undertake a scheme of archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks for a new solar park at Bake Farm, Coombe Bissett.

This document details the results of the programme of archaeological monitoring and recording. It follows current best practice and appropriate national guidance, including:

- NPPF, National Planning Policy Framework, 2012;
- CIFA Code of Conduct (2014 as revised);
- CIFA Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (2014);
- Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE ver. 1.1, 2009)

2.0 Site Location and Description (Fig. 1)

The new solar farm lies approximately 0.7km northeast of the village of Coombe Bissett and 3km southwest of Salisbury. The park will lie within the boundaries of Bake Farm, which lies on the north side of the A354 between the West Harnham suburb of Salisbury and Coombe Bissett.

The site comprises three formerly arable agricultural fields, to the northwest of the existing farm buildings at Bake Farm. It is accessed from the A354 via the track to the farm. Internal divisions are existing hedgerows which are retained by the planning layout, with the addition of a new hedgeline forming the southern boundary of the north-western field. The northern boundary is defined by Old Shaftesbury Drove, which extends westwards from West Harnham through the agricultural landscape and perhaps represents a historic route through the landscape. The northern hedge boundary of the site forms the historic parish boundary between Coombe Bissett and West Harnham.

3.0 Topography and Geology

The bedrock geology of the solar farm is recorded as Seaford Chalk Formation chalk, a sedimentary bedrock formed in the Cretaceous Period in a warm chalk sea environment. The chalk is described as being a firm white chalk with conspicuous semi-continuous nodular and tabular flint seams.

There are no overlying drift deposits recorded in the site itself. To the south there are alluvial deposits around the natural valleys of the Rivers Ebble and Nadder to the south and north of the site respectively (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

The topography of the site is gently sloping, with the lowest point in the southeast corner at around 90m OD, and the highest point in the northwest corner at around 110m OD. There are no known benchmarks within 500m of the site.

4.0 Planning Background

Planning permission for the installation of a new solar array on land to the west of Bake Farm was sought, and granted by Wiltshire County Council in March 2015 (Planning ref: 14/10548/FUL). The application was for the erection of solar photovoltaic panels and

associated works and infrastructure, including switchgear, inverter stations, access tracks, security fencing, security cameras, grid connection, together with temporary construction access, compound and unloading area.

Several supporting documents had been prepared in support of the application, including an Environmental Statement containing a Cultural Heritage chapter compiling the known archaeological monuments in the area and assessing the potential for archaeological remains to be encountered within the site. A geophysical survey was undertaken of the eastern side of the site forming part of the southern area of the northern field only, in which a number of cropmarks had been identified on aerial photographs indicating archaeological potential. The approved proposed site layout (Dwg 1020-0201-01 issue 16) of the solar panels was developed based on the Environmental Statement, with solar panels being restricted to three fields in the eastern half of the site, with the extreme north-western corner remaining unaffected by the development due to the presence of a circular cropmark.

The planning permission was granted conditionally. Condition 5 of the permission reads:

5) No development shall commence within the footprint of the approved development until:

a) A written programme of archaeological investigation, which should include on-site work and off-site work such as the analysis, publishing and archiving of the results, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and

b) The approved programme of archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To enable the recording of any matters of archaeological interest.

After discussion with the Authority Planning Archaeologist, the requirement is for archaeological monitoring of the groundworks in the southern most part of the two northern fields of the proposed solar park. Further non-intrusive surveying will take place prior to any development of the remaining site within the northern fields immediately north of the red line (Fig. 2), and subsequent archaeological works, if required, will follow the methodology and approach documented here.

There is no archaeological requirement in the southern field.

5.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The Cultural Heritage chapter of the supporting Environmental Statement compiles the known archaeological monuments from the development site and the surrounding area, with the results of a geophysical survey of the western half of the site, and assesses the potential for archaeological remains to be encountered within the site (. This document should be made available to all those undertaking the archaeological fieldwork and the post-excavation reporting process.

Lying in an agricultural landscape, there have been relatively few archaeological interventions in the area. Lying approximately 800m west of the site there is a small cluster of Bronze Age barrows recorded, two of which were excavated in the 19th century and have since been ploughed out, but with the remaining earthwork protected as a Scheduled Monument (List entry no. 1017705).

These are the only confirmed Prehistoric monuments within the area, however 20th century aerial photography has identified a number of cropmarks of potential prehistoric origin, two of which lie within the site itself. Two ring ditch cropmarks are recorded in the northern two fields of the solar park (HER ref: SU12NW637; SU12NW368). The western most of these

features lies in the extreme northwest corner, in an area which has been avoided by the development layout; conditions meant the area of the cropmark itself could not be surveyed, but the rest of this field was included in the partial geophysical survey completed ahead of the planning application. The cropmark may represent a possible ring ditch, however a recent site visit noted the feature may be a shallow depression, the backfilled remains of a quarry pit.

The geophysics (Stratascan, 2012) shows a narrow linear anomaly extending on a north-south alignment to the east of the cropmark from a second linear feature which lies on almost the same alignment as a track which lies c.200m to the south. The groundworks for the solar park in the north-western field may well encounter this anomaly. The geophysical survey did not extend into the eastern fields of the approved layout.

The second cropmark lies in the northeastern field of the solar park. The aerial photographs show two semicircles with a dark central area. This feature is undated, but may be the remains of a ploughed out prehistoric barrow or roundhouse, or a modern feature such as a quarry or search light emplacement. Without further information either interpretation is possible, as there are both known prehistoric monuments in the vicinity as well as small scale post-medieval quarrying.

There are a number of prehistoric barrow monuments in the wider area, the closest lying just over 1km to the west of the site. Cropmarks also indicate prehistoric field systems and enclosures, with Bronze and Iron Age settlement identified c1.5km north of the site boundary. Roman occupation in the immediate area is more limited, but the Ackling Dyke c1km northwest follows the route of a Roman road from the Roman town of Old Sarum to the north of modern Salisbury to Bradbury Rings and onwards to Dorchester.

Saxon occupation has been identified at Coombe Bissett, which originated as a farmstead in this period but by the time of the Domesday Book had grown into a large settlement of 85 households held directly by the king.

Salisbury developed in the early medieval period as a new town, resulting from the decision by the Bishop of Salisbury in the early 13th century to build a new cathedral in the valley below the old town of Sarum, which had grown on the hilltop overlooking the river valley with links to the Neolithic sites at Avebury and Stonehenge, both of which lie to the north. The new town, centred on the cathedral, quickly grew to become the primary settlement of the county, surrounded by satellite farms and villages.

Bake Farm dates from the early 19th century, perhaps originating as a couple of farm-workers cottages and named as Down Barn on early OS mapping. By the early 20th century the farm had been renamed Bake Farm, thought to relate to the reclaimed land of the late 18th century enclosure act. The field boundary separating the small northwest field from the remainder of the solar park appears on the enclosure map, but is thought to be a part of the reorganisation of the landscape at this time rather than an older boundary.

6.0 Methodology (Fig. 2)

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was required on all groundworks associated with the development; primarily the machine excavation of cable trenches, which varied in depth from 0.60m to 0.70m below existing ground level and foundation trenches which varied in depth from 0.80m to 1.00 below existing ground level. A mechanical digger with a toothless bucket was used to excavate the trenches, under archaeological supervision

Representative sections were drawn at suitable intervals at a scale of 1:10 and 1:20, and incorporated onto a site plan at 1:750. A written record of each significant stratigraphic

horizon was made on standard PCAS context recording forms, supplemented by a narrative account in the form of a site diary and registers. A digital, monochrome and colour slide photographic record was maintained during the course of the archaeological investigation.

7.0 Results (Figs. 3-8)

The basic stratigraphy exposed at the site was straightforward, with a layer of dark brown, clayey-silt topsoil (100), varying in depth from 0.20m to 0.30m thick overlying a mid grey-brown silty clay subsoil (101), varying in depth from 0.05m to 0.40m thick. Beneath this was a layer of mixed, light to mid grey-brown re-deposited chalk (103), varying in depth from 0.05m to 0.30m thick. The natural substrate consisted of a mix of yellow-white and grey-white chalk with occasional flint nodules which was encountered at 0.65m from the surface.

The only deposit of archaeological potential was encountered in the Western section of the foundation trench for "inverter 1". This was possibly evidence of a Tree-bole or Palaeochannel type feature. The possible Tree-bole/Palaeochannel [405] had moderately sloped sides and a slightly rounded base approximately 0.60m wide and 0.25m thick. This was filled with a mid reddish-brown clayey-silt with occasional small angular flint inclusions (404). No finds were recovered from this deposit.

8.0 Discussion and Conclusions

Apart from the possible Tree-bowl/Palaeochannel, no finds or deposits of archaeological interest were encountered during the development groundworks.

9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

The methodology was effective in demonstrating that the area that was impacted contained nothing of archaeological interest.

10.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd. would like to thank British Solar Renewables Ltd. for this commission.

11.0 Site Archive

The documentary and digital archive for this scheme is currently in the possession of Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd. This will be deposited with the Wiltshire Heritage Museum within six months of completion of this report, under an archive accession number when one becomes available. An online record of the project data was initiated with the Archaeological Data Service, and the final report will be available for viewing online on the OASIS web site at www.oasis.ac.uk under the OASIS ID preconst3-244995.

12.0 Bibliography

Anon, n.d., *Bake Farm Environmental Statement: Chapter 8 Cultural Heritage*. Planning document supplied by client.

<http://domesdaymap.co.uk/>

*Solar Park at Bake Farm, Salisbury Road, Combe Bissett, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP5 4JT
Scheme of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording*

<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/>

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/artsh heritageandlibraries/museumhistoryheritage/wiltshireandswindonhistoricenvironmentrecord/wshermmap.htm?a=a>

<http://unidoc.wiltshire.gov.uk/UniDoc/Document/Search/DSA,845400>

Appendix 1: Colour Plates



General Shot of Machining



Section of Foundation Trench for "Private Switchgear" – Looking East



Representative Section 3 – Looking East



Representative Section 1 Showing Possible Paleo-channel/Tree-bole [405] – Looking West

Appendix 2: Context Register

Context	Type	Description
100	Layer	Topsoil
101	Layer	Subsoil
102	Layer	Natural Geology
103	Layer	Re-deposited Chalk
404	Deposit	Fill of Possible Paleo-channel/Tree-bole [405]
405	Cut	Cut of Possible Paleo-channel/Tree-bole

Appendix 3: OASIS Summary

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

[List of Projects](#) | [Manage Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

Solar Park at Bake Farm - Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd

OASIS ID - preconst3-244995

Versions				
View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
View 1	1	James Earley	rachel@pre-construct.co.uk	8 March 2016
Completed sections in current version				
Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1
Validated sections in current version				
Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
No	No	No	No	0/1
File submission and form progress				
Grey literature report submitted?	No	Grey literature report filename/s		
Boundary file submitted?	No	Boundary filename		
HER signed off?		NMR signed off?		

[Grey literature](#) [Upload images](#) [Upload boundary file](#) [Update project entry](#) [Request record re-opened](#) [Printable version](#)

Email Wiltshire and Swindon HER about this OASIS record



Figure 2: Layout of Cable Trenches and location of representative sections 1:2500

Figure 3: Representative section 1 at scale 1:20

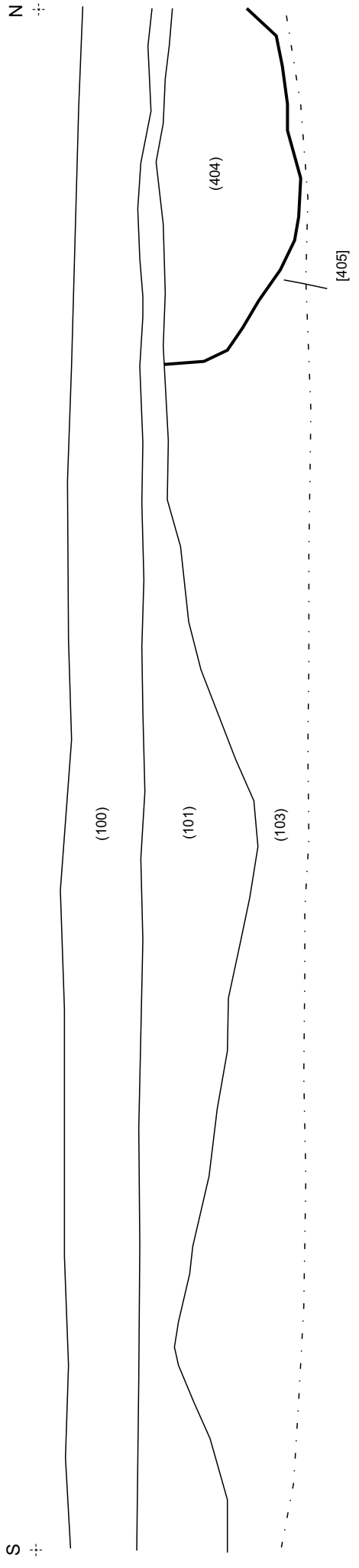


Figure 4: Representative section 2 at scale 1:20

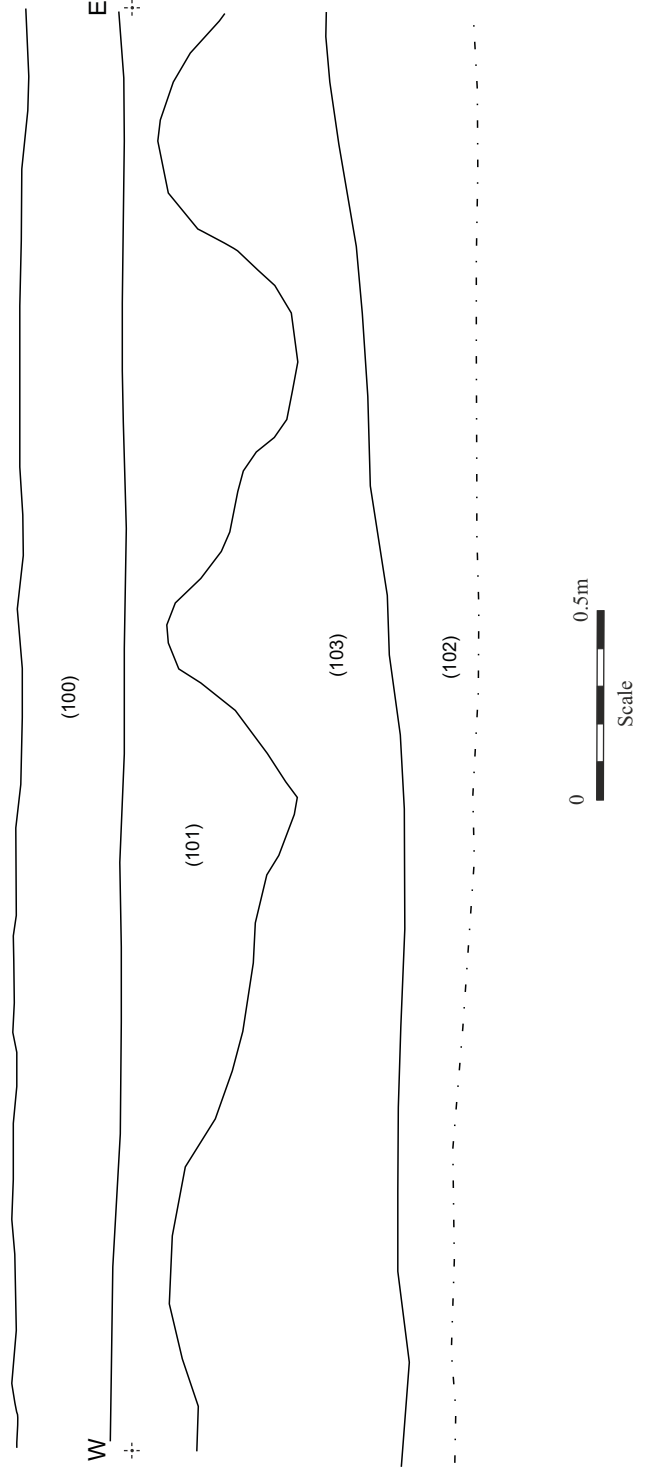


Figure 5: Representative section 3 at scale 1:20

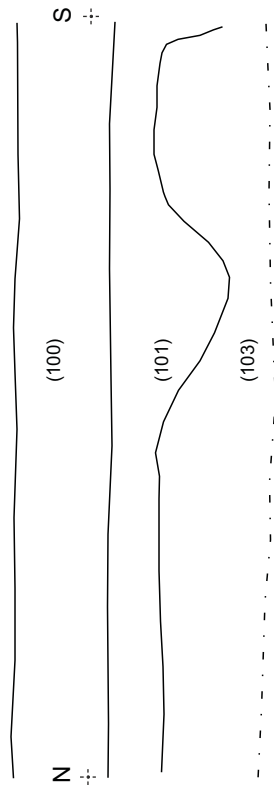


Figure 6: Representative section 4 at scale 1:20

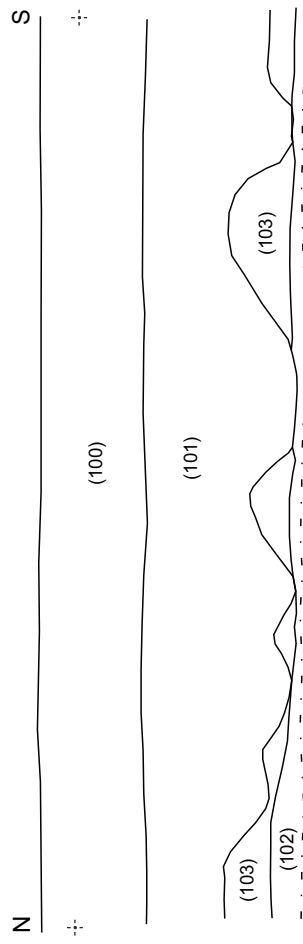


Figure 7: Representative section 5 at scale 1:20

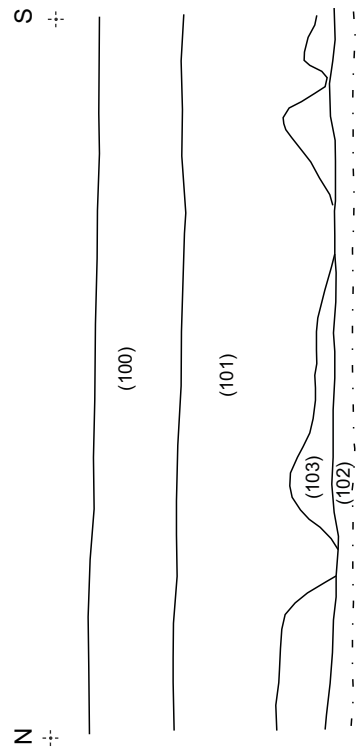


Figure 8: Representative section 6 at scale 1:20

