

**Turweston Solar Farm  
Turweston  
Buckinghamshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

DRAFT

*for*

**Belectric Solar Ltd**


CA Project: 660150  
CA Report: 14600

December 2014

**TURWESTON SOLAR FARM  
TURWESTON  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

CA Project: 660150  
CA Report: 14600

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date	17 December 2014
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signed	
date	17 December 2014
issue	01

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project Name:</b>	Turweston Solar Farm
<b>Location:</b>	Turweston, Buckinghamshire
<b>NGR:</b>	SP 6113 3822
<b>Type:</b>	Watching Brief
<b>Date:</b>	18 June to 17 October 2014
<b>Planning Reference:</b>	Aylesbury Vale District Council 13/01561/APP
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	Buckinghamshire County Museums Service
<b>Site Code:</b>	TAS 14

Between June and October 2014, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at Turweston Airfield, which lies to the east of the village of Turweston, Buckinghamshire. The work, which was commissioned by Belectric Solar Ltd., was undertaken in order to fulfil a condition that had been attached to planning consent for the construction of a solar farm at the site.

No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during groundworks associated with the construction of the solar farm and there was no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period in the excavated deposits. The construction of the airfield during World War II had impacted on the natural topography of the site, when the site was levelled to prepare the ground for the runways. In the centre of the site this had resulted in localised ground reduction and made-ground deposits were recorded at the edges, to the north and south.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between June and October 2014, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Turweston Airfield, which lies to the east of the village of Turweston, Buckinghamshire (site centred on NGR: SP 6113 3822; Fig. 1). The work, which was commissioned by Belectric Solar Ltd., was undertaken in order to fulfil a condition that had been attached to planning consent for the construction of a solar farm at the site (Aylesbury Vale District Council planning ref: 13/01561/APP, Condition 9).
- 1.2 The archaeological condition was attached to planning consent on the advice of Bill Boismier, Planning Archaeologist, Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Services (BCAS). This decision was informed by the results of a *Heritage Desk-based Assessment* (HDBA) of the site prepared by CA (2013a) and its scope was outlined in a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) issued by CA (2013b).
- 1.3 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the WSI (CA 2013b) and abided by the Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (IfA 2009) and the English Heritage (EH) procedural documents *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (EH 1991) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006).

### ***The site***

- 1.4 The site, which covers an area of c. 34ha, is located within the boundary of Turweston Airfield, which is located approximately 0.8km to the east of the village of Turweston and c. 2km to the east of Brackley town centre (Figs. 1 and 2). It comprises an area of flat, high ground at the western end of the airfield, with ground level lying at c. 133m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The remnants of one of the concrete runways pass through the northern part of the site. To the north and west the site overlooks the valley of the River Great Ouse, with the river flowing south-westwards by Whitfield and then south by Turweston before turning eastwards in the direction of Westbury. The surrounding farmland is a mix of arable and pasture, with small woods on the slopes to the north and south of the site.
- 1.5 The geology of the site comprises Jurassic limestone and mudstone (interbedded) of the Forest Marble Formation, predominantly overlain by superficial deposits of

glacial till, with localised deposits of glaciofluvial sand and gravel occurring in the south-eastern part of the site (BGS 2014).

### **Archaeological background**

- 1.6 The historical and archaeological background of the site has been presented in detail in the *Heritage Desk-based Assessment* (HDBA) prepared by CA (2013a). In brief, this concluded that apart from the World War II airfield, there were no known heritage assets within the site, although there was considered to be limited potential for prehistoric remains to occur within its boundary.
- 1.7 Prior to the development of the airfield the site had been agricultural land and woodland. Turweston Airfield, which had three concrete runways, was built in 1942 and was mainly used by Operational Training Units of Bomber Command as a satellite airfield of RAF Silverstone (Fig. 3). Military use of the airfield ceased in 1945, at the end of World War II, but part of the airfield continues in use as a civilian flying club.

### **Archaeological objectives**

- 1.8 The objectives of the watching brief, as outlined in the WSI (CA 2013b), were:
- to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks;
  - at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

### **Methodology**

- 1.9 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2013b). An archaeologist was present during all intrusive groundworks, including during the excavation of foundations for invertor and transfer stations, cable trenches and access roads (Fig. 4).
- 1.10 Where archaeological deposits and features were encountered they were planned and recorded in accordance with CA's *Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual* (CA 2007). Each context was recorded on a *pro-forma* context sheet by

written and measured description; principal deposits were recorded by drawn plans and drawn sections. The site was surveyed using GPS in accordance with *Technical Manual 4: Survey Manual* (CA 2012). Photographs (digital colour and 35mm black & white film) were taken as appropriate. All finds were bagged separately and related to the context record in accordance with *Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately After Excavation* (CA 1995). No deposits were encountered that were suitable for environmental sampling.

- 1.11 The archive from the watching brief is currently held by CA at their offices in Milton Keynes; this will eventually be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museums Service (BCMS). A summary of information from this project, as set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 2. RESULTS

- 2.1 The geological substrate, 1002, consisting of mid yellow moderately compact clay with occasional chalk flecks, was revealed at an average depth between of 0.25m and 0.40m below present ground level. This was overlain intermittently by mid grey clayey silt subsoil, 1001, with an average thickness of 0.12m (Fig. 6). The topsoil, 1000, which had been reinstated across much of the site, was c. 0.25m thick and comprised mid greyish-brown silty clay.
- 2.2 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and, despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.
- 2.3 Made-ground deposits associated with the construction of the airfield were recorded in the northern and southern parts of the site (Figs. 4 and 5). They comprised layers of loose, fine yellow sand, 1003, or grey, compact chalky silty clay, 1004, with an average thickness of c. 0.3m.



### 3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during groundworks associated with the construction of the solar farm and there was no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period in the excavated deposits.
- 3.2 Although the natural topography of the hill top would have been generally flat prior to the opening of the airfield in 1942 (a primary consideration in its choice as a suitable site), construction had necessitated localised levelling of high points in the centre of the site and the build-up of ground level at the edges, near the crests of the surrounding slopes. Evidence for this activity was noted across the site, with redeposited topsoil over scalped substrate recorded in the central area and made-ground deposits noted to the north and south. However, localised areas of the original land surface did survive in places.
- 3.3 If there had been any archaeological remains within the site, it is likely that they are buried beneath made-ground or have largely been truncated by construction of the airfield.

### 4. CA PROJECT TEAM

The fieldwork was undertaken by Caoimhín Ó Coileáin, Dan Riley and Paulo Clemente. The report was written by Caoimhín Ó Coileáin, with illustrations prepared by Rosanna Price. The archive has been compiled by Caoimhín Ó Coileáin and prepared for deposition by Emily Evans. The project was managed for CA by Simon Carlyle.

### 5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2014 Geology of Britain Viewer <http://mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html>, accessed 5 December 2014

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2013a *Turweston Solar Farm, Turweston, Buckinghamshire: Heritage Desk-based Assessment*, report **13090**





CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2013b *Turweston Solar Farm, Turweston, Buckinghamshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, unpublished document

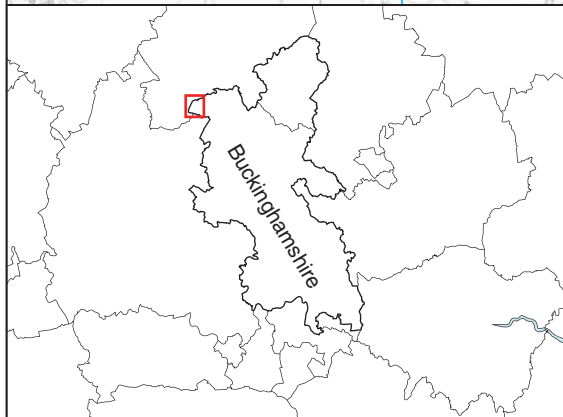
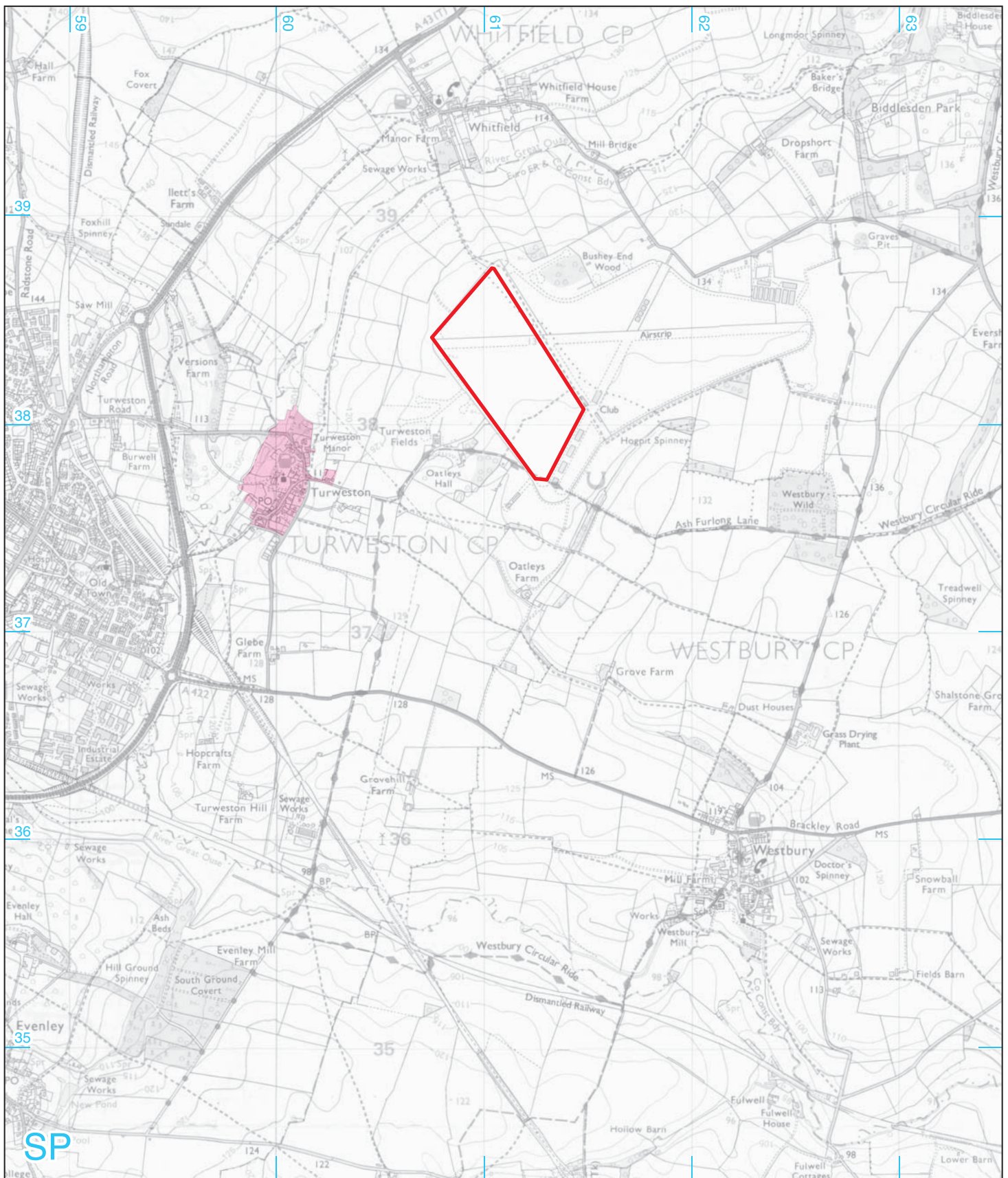


**APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS**

<b>Context no.</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Thickness (m)</b>	<b>Spot-date</b>
1000	Layer	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown moderately loose silty clay topsoil	0.25	Modern
1001	Layer	Subsoil	Mid grey loose clayey silt subsoil	0.15	Modern
1002	Layer	Geology	Mid yellow moderately compact clay with occasional chalk flecks	N/A	Geological
1003	Layer	Made ground	Loose fine yellow sand	0.25	1930s-1940s
1004	Layer	Made ground	Mid grey compact chalky silty clay	0.30	1930s-1940s

**APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	Turweston Solar Farm, Turweston, Buckinghamshire	
Short description	No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during groundworks associated with the construction of the solar farm and there was no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period in the excavated deposits. The construction of the airfield during World War II had impacted on the natural topography of the site, when the site was levelled to prepare the ground for the runways. In the centre of the site this had resulted in localised ground reduction and made-ground deposits were recorded at the edges, to the north and south.	
Project dates	28 June-17 October 2014	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	Desk Based Assessment (CA 2013a)	
Future work	None	
Monument type	WWII Airfield	
Significant finds	None	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site location	Turweston Solar Farm, Turweston, Buckinghamshire	
Study area	34ha	
Site co-ordinates	SP 6113 3822	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology (CA)	
Project Brief originator	-	
Project Design (WSI) originator	CA	
Project Manager	Simon Carlyle (CA)	
Project Supervisor	Caoimhín Ó Coileáin (CA)	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		
	Accession no: n/a	Content
Physical	Buckinghamshire County	None
Paper	Museums Service	Site records and photos
Digital	Buckinghamshire HER	Report, digital photos
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2014 <i>Turweston Solar Farm, Turweston, Buckinghamshire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> , CA typescript report <b>14600</b>		



- site
- Conservation Area



0 1km

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**PROJECT TITLE**

**Turweston Airfield, Whitfield Road,  
Biddlesden, Buckinghamshire**

**FIGURE TITLE**

**Site location plan**

PROJECT NO. 660150 DATE 27.11.14  
 DRAWN BY RP REVISION 00  
 APPROVED BY JB SCALE@A4 N/A

FIGURE NO.

**1**



2

**2 General view of the site, looking north-west**



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*PROJECT TITLE*

**Turweston Airfield, Whitfield Road,  
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*FIGURE TITLE*

**Photograph**

<i>PROJECT NO.</i>	<b>660150</b>	<i>DATE</i>	<b>27.11.14</b>	<i>FIGURE NO.</i>	<b>2</b>
<i>DRAWN BY</i>	<b>RP</b>	<i>REVISION</i>	<b>00</b>		
<i>APPROVED BY</i>	<b>JB</b>	<i>SCALE@A4</i>	<b>N/A</b>		



3

**3 Detail from aerial photograph of 1973**



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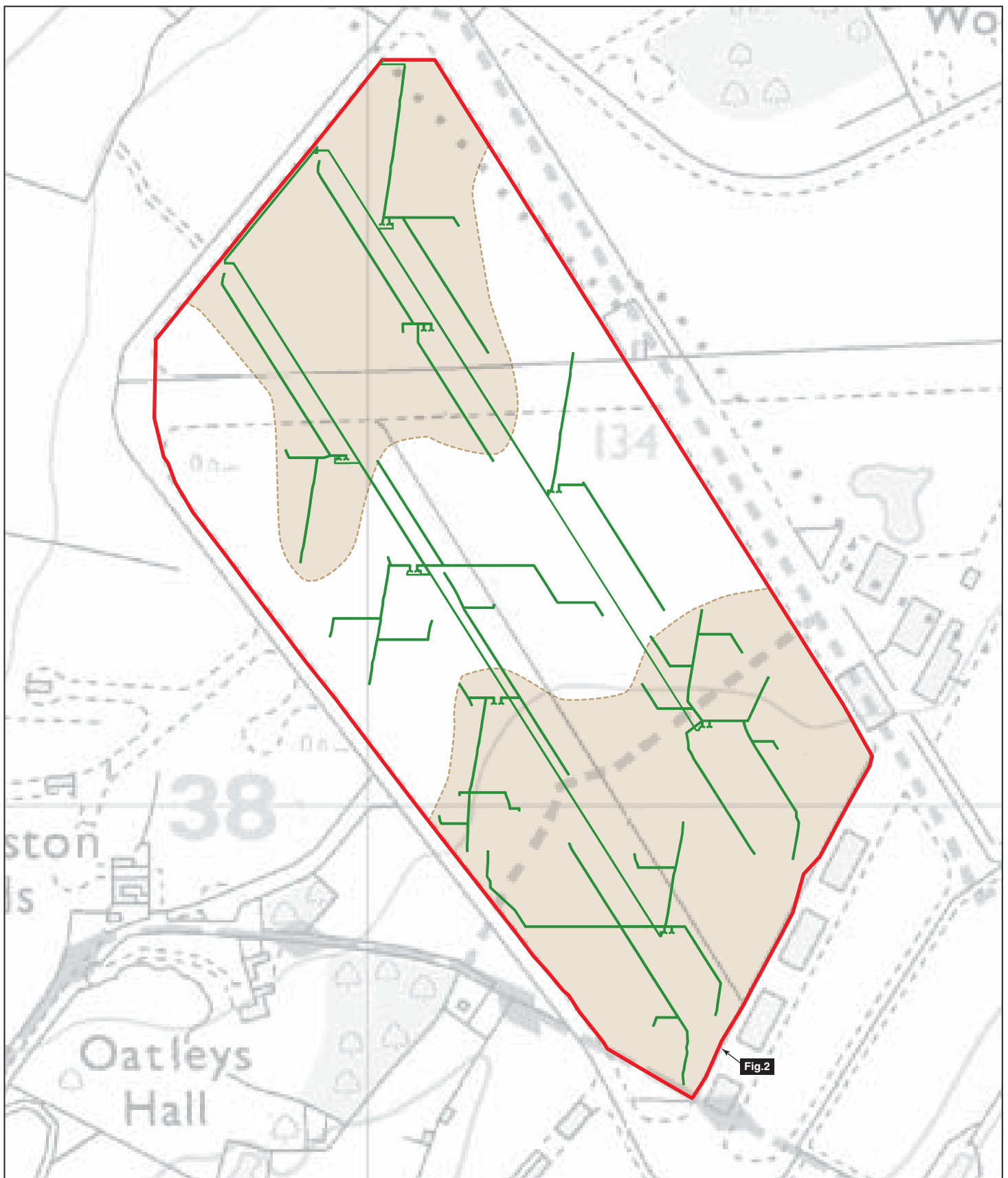
*PROJECT TITLE*




**Turweston Airfield, Whitfield Road,  
 Biddlesden, Buckinghamshire**

*FIGURE TITLE*

**Photograph**

<i>PROJECT NO.</i>	<b>660150</b>	<i>DATE</i>	<b>27.11.14</b>	<i>FIGURE NO.</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>DRAWN BY</i>	<b>RP</b>	<i>REVISION</i>	<b>00</b>		
<i>APPROVED BY</i>	<b>JB</b>	<i>SCALE@A4</i>	<b>N/A</b>		



-  site boundary
-  cable trenches
-  approximate area of made-ground



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PROJECT TITLE

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FIGURE TITLE

**Plan showing area of observed  
 groundworks**





5



6

5 **Made-ground deposit in the northern part of the site (scale 1m)**

6 **General soil profile in the cable trench (scale 1m)**



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PROJECT TITLE

Turweston Airfield, Whitfield Road,  
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FIGURE TITLE

**Photographs**

PROJECT NO. 660150 DATE 27.11.14  
 DRAWN BY RP REVISION 00  
 APPROVED BY JB SCALE@A4 N/A

FIGURE NO.

**5 & 6**