

**Mount Mill Farm
Wicken
Northamptonshire**

*Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation
and Recording*



for
OPDE UK Ltd

CA Project: 660409
CA Report: 15192

April 2015



Mount Mill Farm
Wicken
Northamptonshire

Programme of Archaeological Observation,
Investigation and Recording

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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Mount Mill Farm
Location:	Wicken, Northamptonshire
NGR:	SP 7595 3853
Type:	Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording
Date:	12 January to 11 March 2015 (intermittent)
Planning Reference:	S/2014/1374/MAF
Location of Archive:	Currently held by Cotswold Archaeology (Milton Keynes Office)
Site Code:	MMW 15

In January to March 2015, a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the construction of a solar farm at Mount Mill Farm, Wicken, Northamptonshire.

A previous archaeological evaluation and a geophysical survey of the site had recorded an Iron Age farmstead within the site's eastern field.

The programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording identified a single undated ditch. The monitored groundworks were outside of the main concentration of Iron Age features recorded by the previous archaeological investigations. The lack of features exposed during the present works confirms that the previous investigations accurately defined the limits of the archaeological remains at the site.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between January and March 2015, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording for OPDE UK Ltd at Mount Mill Farm, Wicken, Northamptonshire (centred on NGR: SP 7595 3853; Fig. 1).
- 1.2 The programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to a planning consent granted by South Northamptonshire Council (SNC; the local planning authority) for the construction of a solar farm at the site (planning ref: S/2014/1374/MAF; Condition 9).
- 1.3 The scope of the programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording was defined by Liz Mordue, Northamptonshire County Council's Assistant Archaeological Advisor (the archaeological advisor to SNC). The project was carried out in line with a subsequent detailed written scheme of investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2014a) and approved by SNC acting on the advice of Liz Mordue. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014), the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006).

The site

- 1.4 The site encloses an area of approximately 20ha. It lies around 1km south-east of the village of Wicken and some 7.5km north-east of Buckingham town centre. It comprises parts of two large, arable fields to the north-west of Mount Mill Farm, on the north-western side of Buckingham Road (the A422; Fig. 2). The site lies on the south-east-facing side of a valley at approximately 80m above Ordnance Datum (AOD), on ground sloping gently downwards from the north-west to the south-east.
- 1.5 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as interbedded siltstone and mudstone of the Lias Group. The bedrock is overlain by superficial glacial deposits (diamicton) of the Oadby Member (BGS 2014). Silty clay natural was observed across the site during the watching brief.



2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site has been the previous subject of a desk-based heritage statement (CA 2013), a geophysical survey (GSB Propection Ltd 2013) and an archaeological evaluation (CA 2014b). The following section is summarised from these sources.
- 2.2 The evaluation recorded a series of substantial and well-preserved Iron Age ditches within the site's eastern field. These ditches corresponded to a complex of enclosures and associated features detected previously by the geophysical survey. It is likely that these features represent an Iron Age farmstead. The evaluation also recorded similar possible farmsteads to the immediate north of the present site.
- 2.3 The conjectural route of a Roman road from Olney to Water Stratford passes through or close to the site, although there is no known physical evidence for such a road in the area of the site.
- 2.4 The evaluation recorded the remnants of a medieval ridge and furrow field system in both of the site's fields, indicating that the site formed part of an open field system attached to a nearby village or hamlet during the medieval period. The deserted medieval settlement of Dagnell lay approximately 100m north of the site.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the archaeological works 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 project results and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2014a). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks, which comprised the

excavation of cable trenches and transformer station footprints (Trenches 1–10 and 12–14, Fig. 2; note that “Trench 11” was not assigned).

4.2 Written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.

4.3 There is currently no depository accepting archives from archaeological sites in this region of Northamptonshire. The project archive and artefacts will be held by CA at their offices in Milton Keynes until such time as a depository becomes available. 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.

5. RESULTS

5.1 The natural geological substrate generally comprised mid orange-brown silty clay, although at the north-eastern extent of the monitored works (T14 and T15), the natural substrate comprised loose red sand. The natural substrate was exposed throughout the site at a depth of 0.22m–0.43m below the pre-development ground level (BGL), with the following exceptions:

- T4, wherein excavation was monitored to a depth of 0.52m BGL without the natural substrate being exposed;
- T12, wherein the natural substrate was exposed 0.59m BGL; and
- T15, wherein ground truncation (see below) meant that the natural substrate was exposed 1.02m BGL.

5.2 In the eastern field and T12, the natural substrate was overlain by a silty clay subsoil layer averaging 0.2m in thickness. Topsoil (0.13m–0.38m in thickness) sealed the subsoil (where present) and directly overlay the natural substrate across the remainder of the site. The exception to this sequence was T15, wherein the natural substrate had been truncated to a depth of 1.02m BGL. The natural in T15 was overlain by 0.68m of “made ground” 1501, which comprised sandy silt containing frequent modern waste (bottles, pottery, metal objects). Deposit 1501 was sealed in turn by 0.34m of topsoil 1500.

- 5.3 The only archaeological feature exposed by the present works was north-east/south-west orientated ditch 503 (Fig. 3), which was exposed in T5. This ditch was 0.9m wide and 0.65m deep, with steeply sloping sides and a concave base. No artefactual material was recovered from its single silty clay fill (504). Ditch 503 cut natural substrate 502 and was overlain by silty clay subsoil 501.

6. THE FINDS

- 6.1 No artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording identified a single, relatively minor ditch (503, T5). The provenance of this feature is uncertain. It was undated artefactually, and lay on a different alignment both to the Iron Age features recorded by the previous evaluation of the site (CA 2014b) and to the current field system. No corresponding ditch is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (1884).
- 7.2 The monitored groundworks were outside of the main concentration of Iron Age features recorded by the evaluation and the geophysical survey (GSB Prospection Ltd 2013). The lack of features exposed during the present works confirms that the previous investigations accurately defined the limits of the archaeological remains at the site.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by James Coyne and Caoimhin O Coileain. This report was written by Caoimhín Ó Coileáin. The illustrations were prepared by Dan Bashford. The archive has been compiled by Emily Evans, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Derek Evans.



9. REFERENCES

- BGS (British Geological Survey) 2014 *Geology of Britain Viewer* http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology_viewer_google/googleviewer.html Accessed 12 March 2014
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2013 *Mount Hill Farm, Stratford Road, Wicken, Northamptonshire: Heritage Statement* CA Report **13639**
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2014a *Mount Mill Farm, Wicken, Northamptonshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Observation and Recording*
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2014b *Mount Mill Farm, Wicken, Northamptonshire: Archaeological Evaluation* CA typescript report **14523b**
- GSB Prospection Ltd 2013 *Mount Mill Farm, Deanshanger: Geophysical Survey Report* GSB Report No. **G1375**



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS**Trench 1**

Context	Type	Interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
100	Layer	Topsoil	Mid brown grey silty clay	N/A	N/A	0.3
101	Layer	Geology	Mid yellowish grey brown slightly sandy clay	N/A	N/A	N/A

Trench 2

Context	Type	Interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
200	Layer	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown firm silty clay	N/A	N/A	0.25
201	Layer	Geology	Mid orange brown firm silty clay with moderate small sub-angular stones	N/A	N/A	N/A
202	Layer	Subsoil	Compact mid yellowish brown silty clay with common sub angular small stones	N/A	N/A	0.42

Trench 3

Context	Type	Interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
300	Layer	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown firm silty clay	N/A	N/A	0.23
301	Layer	Geology	Mid yellowish grey firm silty clay with moderate small sub-angular stones	N/A	N/A	N/A
302	Layer	Subsoil	Compact mid yellowish brown silty clay with common sub angular small stones	N/A	N/A	0.2

Trench 4

Context	Type	Interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
400	Layer	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown loose silty clay with common sub-angular small stones	N/A	N/A	0.18
401	Layer	Subsoil	Compact mid yellowish brown silty clay with common sub angular small stones	N/A	N/A	>0.34

Trench 5

Context	Type	Interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
500	Layer	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown loose silty clay with common sub-angular small stones	N/A	N/A	0.13
501	Layer	Subsoil	Mid yellowish grey firm silty clay with moderate small sub-angular stones	N/A	N/A	0.2
502	Layer	Geology	Compact mid yellowish brown silty clay with common sub angular small stones	N/A	N/A	N/A
503	Cut	Ditch	Concave sided and based linear running north-east/south-west	>4.5	0.9	0.65
504	Fill	Fill of 503	Mid brownish yellow compact silty clay with common chalk pebbles			0.65

Trench 6

Context	Type	Interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
600	Layer	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown firm silty clay	N/A	N/A	0.24
601	Layer	Geology	Mid orange brown firm silty clay with moderate small sub-angular stones	N/A	N/A	N/A

Trench 7

Context	Type	Interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
700	Layer	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown loose silty clay with common sub-angular small stones	N/A	N/A	0.19
701	Layer	Subsoil	Compact mid yellowish brown silty clay with common sub angular small stones	N/A	N/A	0.21
702	Layer	Geology	Mid orange brown firm silty clay with moderate small sub-angular stones	N/A	N/A	N/A

Trench 8

Context	Type	Interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
800	Layer	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown loose silty clay with common sub-angular small stones	N/A	N/A	0.16
801	Layer	Subsoil	Compact mid yellowish brown silty clay with common sub angular small stones	N/A	N/A	0.2
802	Layer	Geology	Mid orange brown firm silty clay with moderate small sub-angular stones	N/A	N/A	N/A

Trench 9

Context	Type	Interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
900	Layer	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown firm silty clay	N/A	N/A	0.28
901	Layer	Geology	Mid orange brown firm silty clay with moderate small sub-angular stones	N/A	N/A	N/A

Trench 10

Context	Type	Interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
1000	Layer	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown firm silty clay	N/A	N/A	0.22
1001	Layer	Geology	Mid orange brown firm silty clay with moderate small sub-angular stones	N/A	N/A	N/A

Trench 11*Trench number not allocated***Trench 12**

Context	Type	Interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
1200	Layer	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown firm silty clay	N/A	N/A	0.38
1201	Layer	Subsoil	Compact mid yellowish brown silty clay with common sub-angular small stones	N/A	N/A	0.21
1202	Layer	Geology	Mid orange brown firm silty clay with moderate small sub-angular stones	N/A	N/A	N/A

Trench 13

Context	Type	Interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
1300	Layer	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown firm silty clay	N/A	N/A	0.34
1301	Layer	Geology	Mid orangish brown firm silty clay with moderate small sub-angular stones and mid brownish red loose sand with occasional lenses of coarse white gravelly sand	N/A	N/A	N/A

Trench 14

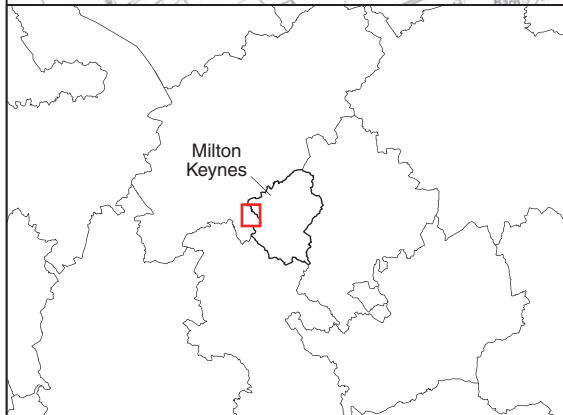
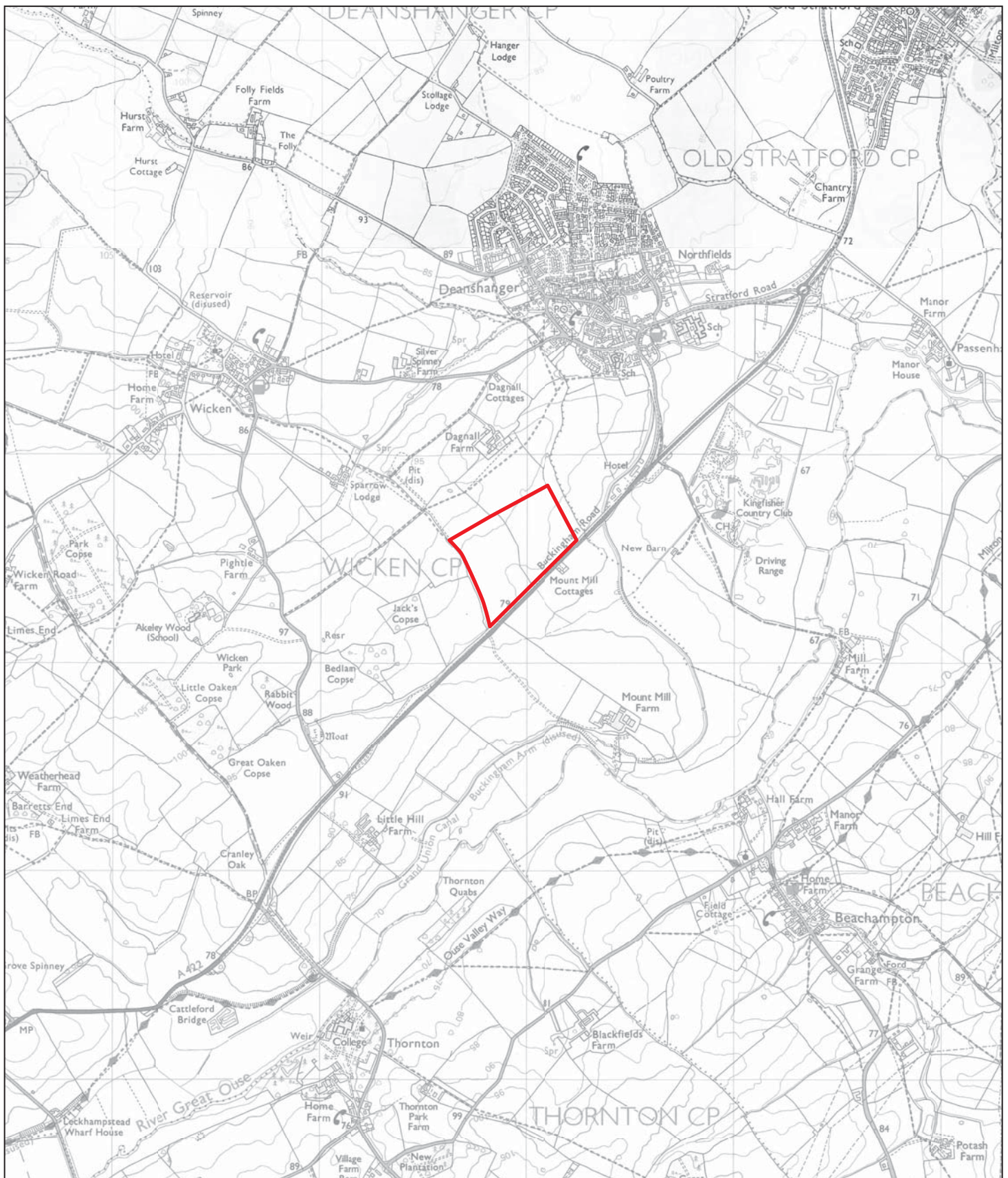
Context	Type	Interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
1400	Layer	Topsoil	Dark brownish grey loose silty sand	N/A	N/A	0.32
1402	Layer	Geology	Mid brownish red loose sand with occasional lenses of coarse white gravelly sand	N/A	N/A	N/A

Trench 15

Context	Type	Interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
1500	Layer	Topsoil	Dark brownish grey loose silty sand	N/A	N/A	0.34
1501	Layer	Made ground	Loose black sandy silt with frequent bottles, pots and metal waste	N/A	N/A	0.68
1502	Layer	Geology	Mid brownish red loose sand with occasional lenses of coarse white gravelly sand	N/A	N/A	N/A

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	
Project Name	Mount Mill Farm, Wicken, Northamptonshire
Short description	In January to March 2015, a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the construction of a solar farm at Mount Mill Farm, Wicken, Northamptonshire. A previous archaeological evaluation and a geophysical survey of the site had recorded an Iron Age farmstead within the site's eastern field. The programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording identified a single undated ditch. The monitored groundworks were outside of the main concentration of Iron Age features recorded by the previous archaeological investigations. The lack of features exposed during the present works confirms that the previous investigations accurately defined the limits of the archaeological remains at the site.
Project dates	12 January – 11 March 2015
Project type	Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording
Previous work	Geophysical survey (GSB 2013); Field Evaluation (CA 2014); Desk Based Assessment (CA 2014)
Future work	Unknown
PROJECT LOCATION	
Site Location	Mount Mill Farm, Wicken, Northamptonshire
Study area	20ha
Site co-ordinates	SP 7595 3853
PROJECT CREATORS	
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology
Project Brief originator	N/A
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology
Project Manager	Derek Evans (CA)
Project Supervisor	Caoimhín Ó Coileáin (CA) and James Coyne (CA)
MONUMENT TYPE	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Accession no: N/A
Physical	Currently held by Cotswold Archaeology (Milton Keynes Office)
Paper	None
Digital	WSI, pro-forma registers, recording forms. Digital photographs, digital survey data
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015 <i>Mount Mill Farm, Wicken, Northamptonshire: Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording</i> CA typescript report 15192	



0 1km

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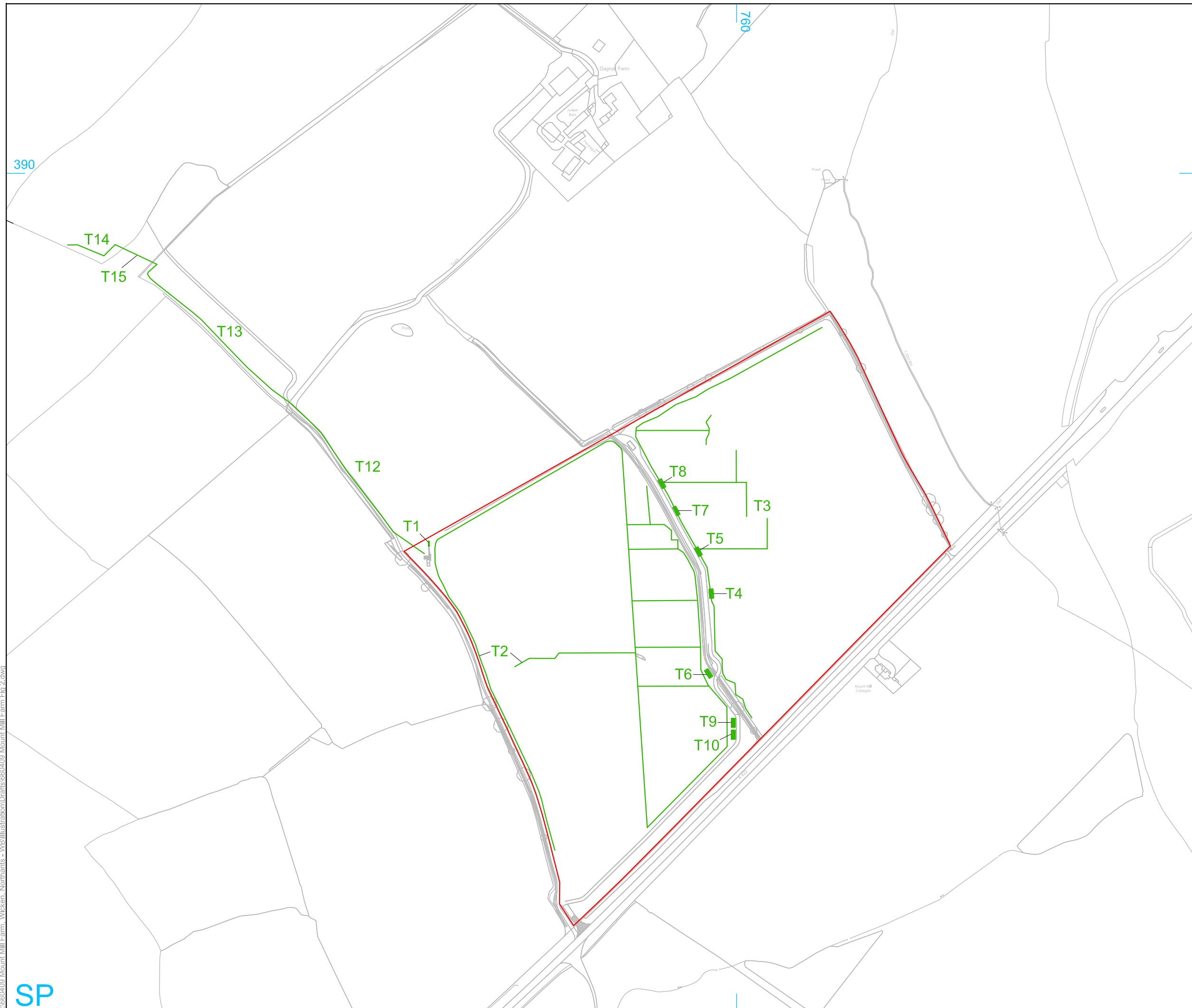
PROJECT TITLE

Mount Mill Farm, Wicken
 Northamptonshire

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

DRAWN BY	DJB	PROJECT NO.	660409	FIGURE NO.
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- site boundary
- monitored groundworks



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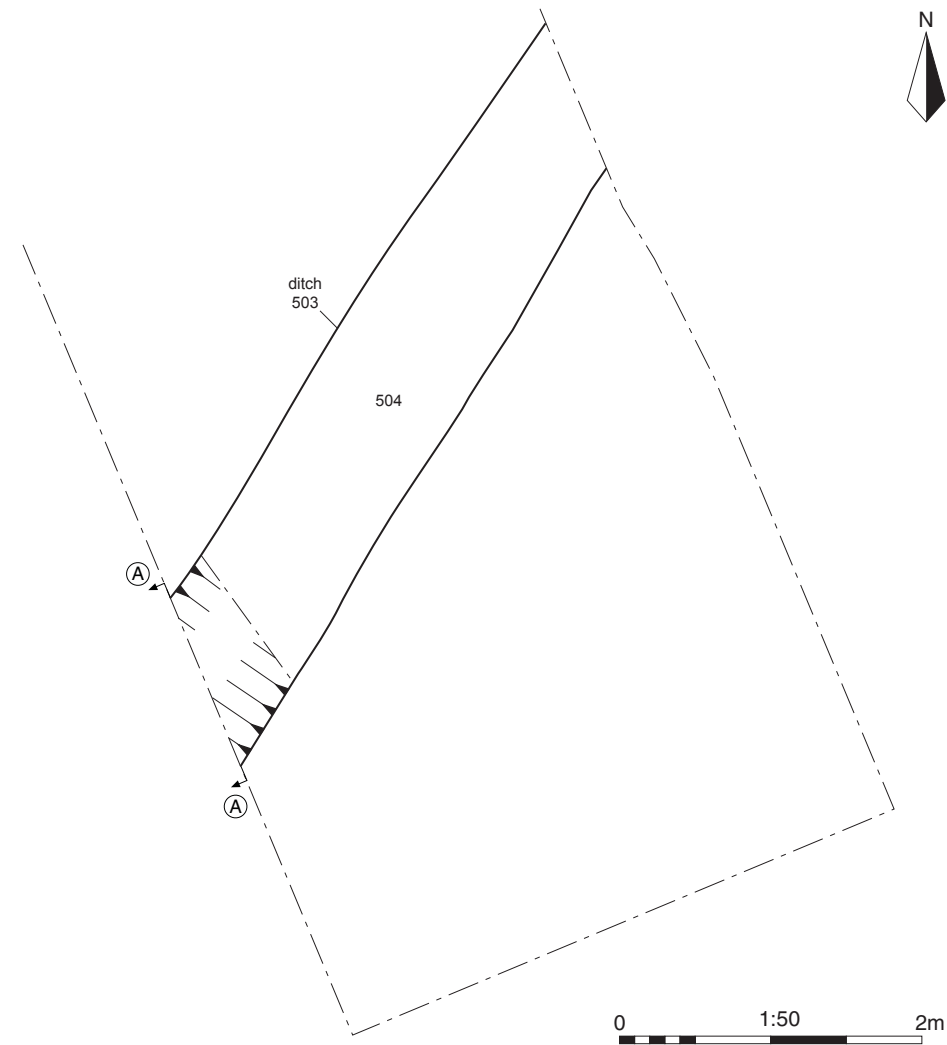

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PROJECT TITLE
 Mount Mill Farm, Wicken
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FIGURE TITLE
 The site, showing locations of
 monitored groundworks

DRAWN BY	DJB	PROJECT NO.	660409	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	JB	DATE	08-04-2015	2
APPROVED BY	DE	SCALE@A3	1:4000	

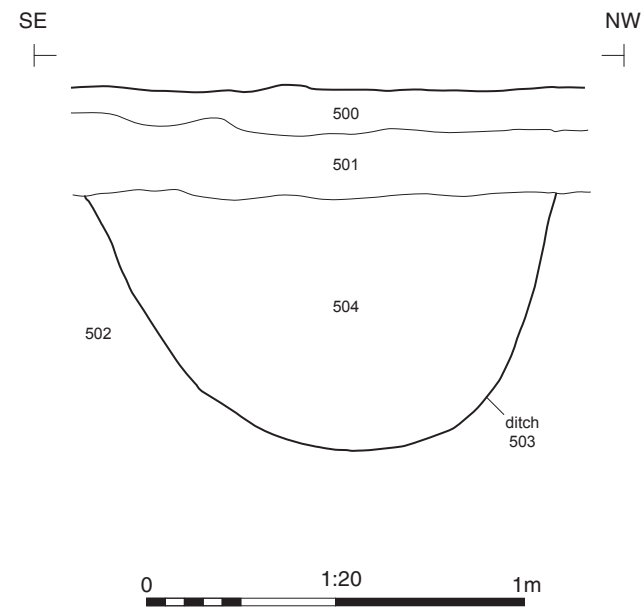
P:\660409 Mount Mill Farm, Wicken, Northants - WE\Illustration\Drafts\660409 Mount Mill Farm Fig 2.dwg





Trench 5, looking south-east

Section AA



Ditch 503, looking south-west (scale 1m)


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FIGURE TITLE
Trench 5: plan, section and photographs

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FIGURE NO.
3



4



5

4 Trench 2, looking north-west

5 Trench 2, looking east (scale 1m)



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FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

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FIGURE NO.
4 & 5



6



7

6 Trench 3, looking east

7 Trench 3, looking west



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FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

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FIGURE NO.
6 & 7



8



9

8 Trench 12, looking north-east (scale 1m)

9 Trench 13, looking north-west



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PROJECT TITLE

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FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

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FIGURE NO.
8 & 9

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