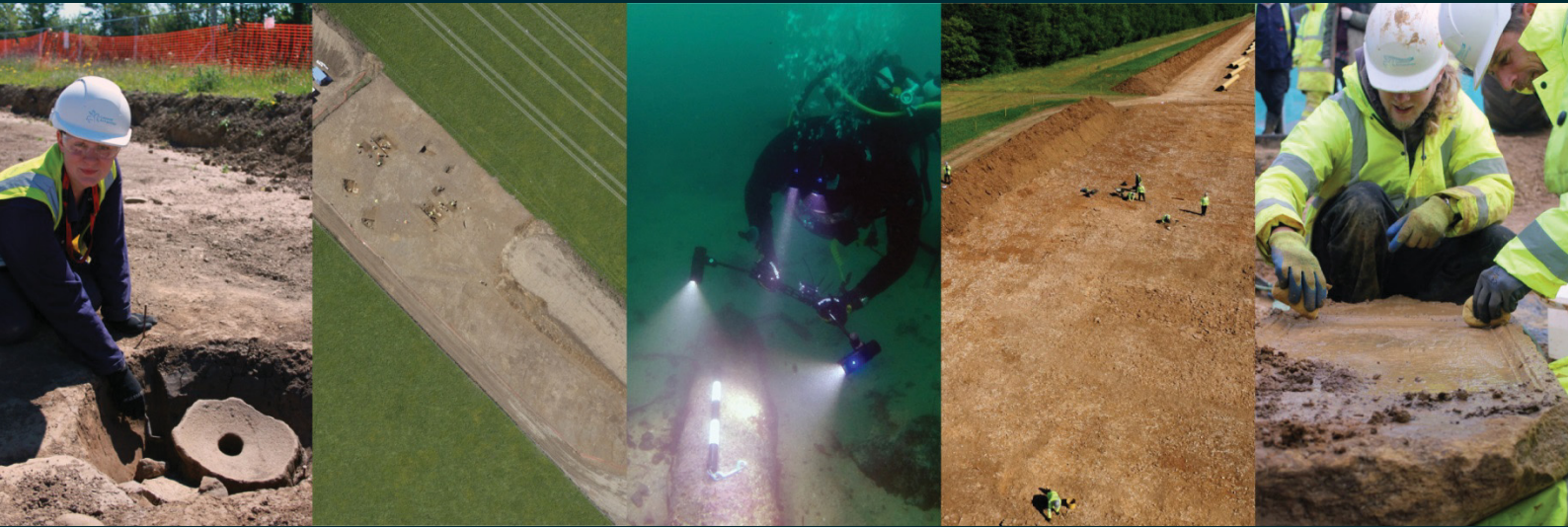


Thornton Lane Solar Farm Land South of Stanton under Bardon Leicestershire

Archaeological Evaluation



for
Thornton Lane Solar Farm Ltd

CA Project: 660494
CA Report: 15669

August 2015



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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Thornton Lane Solar Farm
Location:	Land South of Stanton under Bardon, Leicestershire
NGR:	SP 46693 09536
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	10-13 of August 2015
Location of Archive:	Leicestershire Museums Service
Accession Number:	X.A63.2015
CA Site Code:	STUB15

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in August 2015 at Thornton Lane. Fourteen 30x1.8m trenches were excavated.

The evaluation revealed evidence of post medieval ridge and furrow agricultural activity across the site. However, no archaeological features of any other period could be identified during the course of the evaluation. The results of the evaluation supported the findings of a desk based assessment and geophysical survey in demonstrating a low potential for the presence of archaeological remains within the site.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In August 2015 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Thornton Lane Solar Farm Ltd at Land at Stanton under Bardon, Leicestershire centred on National Grids Reference (NGR) SK 46693 0953 (Fig. 1).
- 1.2 The evaluation was undertaken to support a planning application to be submitted Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, the local planning authority (LPA), for the installation of a solar farm and associated infrastructure at the site. In order to inform the archaeological potential of the site a desk-based assessment (CA 2015) and geophysical survey (PCG 2015) were undertaken prior to carrying out the evaluation.
- 1.3 Following consultation with Richard Clark, the Principal Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council (PALCC) and Teresa Hawtin the Senior Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council (SPALCC), the archaeological advisors to the LPA, it was recommended that a programme of trial trench evaluation targeting the results of the geophysical survey as well as providing a random sample, should be undertaken to further inform the application in regard of archaeology.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the Leicestershire County Council Generic Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation (Trial Trenching) (LCC 2015) and a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2015) and approved by Teresa Hawtin, the SPALCC. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014), the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006). It was monitored by Teresa Hawtin.

The site

- 1.3 The proposed development site is situated approximately 340m to the south of the village of Stanton under Bardon, in west Leicestershire, and just over 1km west of the M1 motorway.

- 1.4 The site comprises a sub-rectangular parcel of land of approximately 7.4ha in size, located within the eastern half of two fields, both currently under arable cultivation. The boundaries of the site are demarcated by hedgerows, interspersed with mature trees. The site is bordered to the west by Thornton Lane, beyond which lies agricultural land and woodland. Further woodlands surround the site to the east and south, while agricultural fields lie to the north
- 1.5 The site is situated within an undulating landscape, on a generally west-facing hillside. From an elevation of around 170m above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the north-east, the land within the site falls away to the south and west, with the lowest point of 153m aOD recorded along the western boundary along Thornton Lane outside the bounds of the site. The nearest watercourse is a small unnamed stream situated approximately 20m to the east of the site.
- 1.6 The underlying geology within the site comprises mudstone of the Edwalton Member; a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 217 to 229 million years ago in the Triassic period. Across the eastern portion of the site, this is overlain by superficial Diamicton deposits of the Oadby Member, laid down in the Quaternary period. No superficial deposits are recorded in the west of the site (British Geological Survey - <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site has been the subject of a heritage desk-based assessment (CA2015), a summary of which is presented below.

Prehistoric

- 2.2 There is limited evidence for early prehistoric activity within the site's environs, with the only recorded remains comprising a Palaeolithic hand-axe found at Temple Farm, c. 1.1km to the north-west of the site, and a Mesolithic flint core recovered within a larger flintwork assemblage during fieldwalking at Cliffe Hill Quarry, c. 750m to the north-west. Across the wider Leicestershire region, remains of these periods are sparsely recorded, and are characterised predominantly by lithic artefacts recovered as un-stratified surface finds, with very little excavated material.

- 2.3 Isolated finds and flintwork scatters continue to dominate the archaeological record for Neolithic activity within Leicestershire, although occasional settlement-related remains, such as post-holes and pits, have also been identified. A greater intensity and variety of evidence is available for the Bronze Age, with the known archaeological resource including pits, hearths, lithics, metalwork and pottery, in addition to funerary monuments. Within the vicinity of the site, evidence for these periods is, again, represented by surface finds, including a small assemblage of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age flintwork from Cliffe Hill Quarry, and a Neolithic flint axe reportedly found near Cliffe Hill road, c. 350m to the north of the site. A ring ditch, potentially representing the remains of a Bronze Age round barrow, has been identified at Thornton Reservoir to the south of the site.
- 2.4 Although the Iron Age is well-represented across the Leicestershire region, reflecting an extensively settled agricultural landscape, evidence of activity within the vicinity of the site in this period is limited to a single findspot of a beehive quern, found during ploughing c. 600m to the west of the site.

Romano-British (AD 43 – AD 410)

- 2.5 The Roman period within Leicestershire is characterised by a wealth and diversity of archaeological evidence, with the county traversed by an extensive network of Roman roads, alongside which towns and other major settlements were established. While the site appears to have been situated at a considerable distance from major centres, with *Ratae Corieltavorum* (Leicester) located some 12km to the south-east, the projected course of *Via Devana* Roman road passes the site approximately 470m to the south, and is likely to have been a key influence in the development of local rural settlement patterns. A linear cropmark observed c. 940m to the south-west of the site on aerial photographs has been suggested to represent the line of the road. The postulated alignment of a second Roman road, branching from the *Via Devana*, and leading north-west towards Coalville, is recorded approximately 490m to the east of the site.
- 2.6 Further Roman activity is represented by isolated finds, comprising pottery collected during fieldwalking at Cliffe Hill Quarry, and a quern found near Cliffe Hill road in the late 19th century.

Early medieval (AD410 – AD 1066) and medieval (AD 1066 – 1539)

- 2.7 Although no archaeological remains relating to early medieval activity are recorded, the probable existence of settlement in the vicinity of the site in this period is attested by documentary sources. Stanton under Bardon, approximately 340m to the north of the site, is first referenced in the Domesday Survey of 1086, at which time it comprised a medium-sized settlement of 18 households. Its name, recorded in 1086 as *Stantone*, appears to derive from the Old English *stān* and *tūn*, meaning ‘stone-built farmstead’, or ‘farmstead on stony ground’. The *Bardon* element is a later addition, referring to settlement’s location at the foot of Bardon Hill.
- 2.8 The extent of the medieval settlement of Stanton under Bardon has been inferred through topographic surveys carried out in the 1980’s. These recorded a series of enclosures and house platforms to the south of the present day village and extending northwards along Main Street, indicating a probable contraction of settlement in later periods. Further medieval settlement has been identified at Horsepool Grange, c. 495m to the north of the site. A medieval deer park is recorded at Bagworth, c. 450m to the west of the site. The remains of a moated enclosure, surrounding the site of the former Bagworth manor house, survive as a Scheduled Monument c. 1.2km to the south-west of the site.
- 2.9 During the medieval period, the site is likely to have formed part of the rural surroundings of the medieval settlement of Stanton under Bardon. Anomalies consistent with medieval ridge and furrow cultivation were recorded within the site by the geophysical survey (PCG 2015), suggesting that the land was under arable use in this period. Further remnants of ridge and furrow earthworks have been identified on aerial photographs to the south, east and west of the medieval village.
- 2.10 The remaining archaeological evidence for medieval activity within the vicinity of the site comprises eleven sherds of medieval pottery, recovered during fieldwalking at Cliffe Hill Quarry, c. 750m to the north-west of the site.

Post-medieval (AD 1539 – 1800) and modern (AD 1801 - present)

- 2.11 The site appears to have retained an undeveloped rural character throughout the post-medieval and modern periods. The earliest detailed cartographic representation of the site is provided on the 1779 Stanton under Bardon Enclosure map, which shows the site to be situated within two regular fields, separated by an east/west-aligned boundary. To the west of the site, the settlement of Stanton under Bardon is

depicted as two dispersed groups of buildings extending westwards along Thornton Lane, and northwards along Main Street. The land immediately to the east of the site is recorded as part of Horsepool Grange Farm, and does not appear to have been subject to enclosure.

- 2.12 By the time of the 1884 First Edition Ordnance Survey map, the land within the site had been subject to further organisation, with both fields having been sub-divided to form four small enclosures. A small pond is depicted in the southern part of the site. This pattern of enclosure is repeated on the 1903 and 1929 Ordnance Survey editions, which record no significant change within the site. Later Ordnance Survey maps continue to depict the site within enclosed agricultural land. The pond within the southern part of the site is not illustrated on the 1959 edition, indicating that it had been in-filled by this time. The site appears to have been consolidated into its present form at some point in the late 20th or early 21st century, following the removal of two internal boundaries.

Geophysical Survey

- 2.13 The geophysical survey within the site identified a small number of anomalies of potential archaeological origin within the site (PCG 2015). These included a circular pit-like feature and a north-east/south-west-aligned linear anomaly, both located within the north-east of the site. A series of parallel linear anomalies across the northern portion of the site was interpreted as the remains of ridge and furrow cultivation. Further anomalies related to a recently-removed field boundary, and the former pond recorded on 19th and 20th-century mapping.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the evaluation were to provide information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality, in accordance *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014). This information will enable Leicestershire County Council to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset, consider the impact of the proposed development upon it, and to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of 14 trenches (30x1.8m), in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). The trenches were spread evenly across the site, although two were targeted on geophysical anomalies. The trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual*.
- 4.2 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with Technical Manual 3 *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.
- 4.4 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Andover. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the site archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service under Accession Number: X.A63.2015. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-5)

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are set out in Appendix A. Of the fourteen trenches excavated trench 4 contained a small modern ditch, trench 10 contained burnt tree roots, trenches 2 and 14 were blank and trenches 1, 3 to 9 and 11 to 13 contained furrows of which a small sample was excavated.

- 5.2 The natural substrate comprised of mid to light greyish brown boulder clay which contained large poorly sorted sub angular limestone throughout revealed at between 0.26m to 0.35m below the present ground level (BGL). A subsoil was identified in some parts of the site and was made up of a mid brown silty clay which was covered by a dark greyish brown silty clay loam topsoil.

Geophysical Anomalies

- 5.3 Trenches **10** and **11** were targeted on anomalies identified during the geophysical survey. In trench **10** the anomaly appears to have been caused by the burning out of roots during the removal of a tree stump and in trench **11** nothing was identified which could have caused the anomaly.

Furrows

- 5.3 Evidence of ridge and furrow was found across the site with the majority of the trenches containing furrows on a broad northwest-southeast alignment. Furrows were generally left unexcavated but several were dug as a sample. In trench **1** furrow **104** measured 2.35m in width and 0.12m in depth, in trench **11** furrow **1102** was 2.65m in width and 0.16m in depth and trench **12** furrow **1203** measured 3.02m in width and 0.22m in depth. A single sherd of post medieval pottery was recovered from **1203** and a number of post medieval CBM fragments were observed in the upper fills of several unexcavated furrows.

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The desk based assessment previously identified a low archaeological potential for the site which appeared to be confirmed by the results of the geophysical survey. The results of the archaeological evaluation have further supported these investigations in demonstrating that the site contained no significant archaeological remains.
- 6.2 The only features of possible archaeological interest revealed during the course of the evaluation were identified as post medieval agricultural activity in the form of ridge and furrow.
- 6.3 No other archaeological features or deposits of any other period were identified.

- 6.4 The results of the evaluation as a whole have not been able to address the research objectives of the East Midlands Heritage Research Agenda (Knight, Vyner and Allen 2012). The identification of post-medieval ridge and furrow agricultural activity can be seen to fall within the Post-Medieval (1485–1750): Updated Research Agenda: - 8.3 Agricultural landscapes and the food-producing economy. The results may help to enhance and add to our understanding of the post-medieval and into the modern period landscapes of enclosure and agricultural activity within this part of Leicestershire.

7. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1 Fieldwork was undertaken by Oliver Good, assisted by Steve Bush. The report was written by Oliver Good. The illustrations were prepared by Daniel Bashford and Aleksandra Osinska. The archive has been compiled by Andrew Donald, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Damian De Rosa.

8. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth/thickness (m)
1	100	Layer	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay loose	-	-	0 – 0.28
1	101	Layer	Natural	Dark reddish brown clay	-	-	0.28+
1	102	Cut	Furrow	Not excavated	-	-	-
1	103	Fill	Of 102	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
1	104	Cut	Furrow	Linear in plan concave sides flat undulating base se/nw alignment	10+	2.35	0.12
1	105	Fill	Secondary Fill of 104	Mid greyish brown sandy clay very compact moderate lime stone fragments	-	-	-
2	200	Layer	Topsoil	Dark brown silty clay friable	-	-	0 – 0.16
2	201	Layer	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay friable	-	-	0.16 – 0.32
2	202	Layer	Natural	Light brown silty clay	-	-	0.32+
3	300	Layer	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay loose	-	-	0 - 0.30
3	301	Layer	Natural	Dark reddish brown clay	-	-	0.3+
3	302	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
3	303	Fill	Secondary Fill of 302	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
3	304	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
3	305	Fill	Secondary Fill of 304	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
3	306	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
3	307	Fill	Secondary Fill of 306	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
4	400	Layer	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay loose	-	-	0 – 0.35
4	401	Layer	Natural	Dark reddish brown clay	-	-	0.35+
4	402	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
4	403	Fill	Secondary Fill of 402	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
4	404	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
4	405	Fill	Secondary Fill of 404	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
4	406	Cut	Ditch	Ne-sw alignment	-	-	-
4	407	Fill	Secondary Fill of 406	--	-	-	-
4	408	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
4	409	Fill	Secondary Fill of 404	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
5	500	Layer	Topsoil	Mid brown clayey silt	-	-	0 - 0.32
5	501	Layer	Natural	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	0.32+
5	502	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
5	503	Fill	Secondary Fill of 502	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
5	504	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
5	505	Fill	Secondary Fill of 504	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
6	600	Layer	Topsoil	Mid brown clayey silt loose	-	-	0 – 0.26
6	601	Layer	Natural	Mid/light brown silty clay	-	-	0.26+
6	602	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
6	603	Fill	Secondary Fill of 602	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
6	604	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
6	605	Fill	Secondary Fill of 604	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
7	700	Layer	Topsoil	Mid brown clayey silt loose	-	-	0 – 0.26

7	701	Layer	Natural	Mid/light brown silty clay	-	-	0.26+
7	702	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
7	703	Fill	Secondary Fill of 702	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
7	704	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
7	705	Fill	Secondary Fill of 704	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
7	706	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
7	707	Fill	Secondary Fill of 702	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
7	708	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
7	709	Fill	Secondary Fill of 702	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
7	710	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
7	711	Fill	Secondary Fill of 704	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
8	800	Layer	Topsoil	Mid brown clayey silt loose	-	-	0 – 0.32
8	801	Layer	Natural	Mid/light brown silty clay	-	-	0.32+
8	802	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
8	803	Fill	Secondary Fill of 802	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
8	804	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
8	805	Fill	Secondary Fill of 804	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
8	806	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
8	807	Fill	Secondary Fill of 806	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
9	900	Layer	Topsoil	Mid brown clayey silt loose	-	-	0 – 0.25
9	901	Layer	Natural	Mid/light brown silty clay	-	-	0.25+
9	902	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
9	903	Fill	Secondary Fill of 902	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
9	904	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
9	905	Fill	Secondary Fill of 904	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
9	906	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
9	907	Fill	Secondary Fill of 906	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
10	1000	Layer	Topsoil	Dark greyish brown sandy clay	-	-	0 – 0.30
10	1001	Layer	Natural	Dark greyish brown silty clay	-	-	0 – 0.30+
10	1002	Cut	Tree throw	Cut for burnt out tree roots	-	-	-
10	1003	Fill	Fill of 1002	Dark charcoal rich fill of burnt out tree roots	-	-	-
11	1100	Layer	Topsoil	Dark greyish brown sandy clay	-	-	0 – 0.35
11	1101	Layer	Natural	Dark greyish brown silty clay	-	-	0.35+
11	1102	Cut	Furrow	Linear moderate concave sides flat base ne-sw alignment	2.1	2.65	0.16
11	1103	Fill	Secondary Fill of 1102	Mid brown silty clay	2.1	2.65	0.16
11	1104	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
11	1105	Fill	Secondary Fill of 1104	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
11	1106	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
11	1107	Fill	Secondary Fill of 1106	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
11	1108	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
11	1109	Fill	Secondary Fill of 1108	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
12	1200	Layer	Topsoil	Dark brown silty clay friable	-	-	0 – 0.18
12	1201	Layer	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay friable	-	-	0.18 – 0.29
12	1202	Layer	Natural	Light brown silty clay	-	-	0.29+
12	1203	Cut	Furrow	Linear shallow concave sides	2.14	3.02	0.22

				flat base Nw-se alignment			
12	1204	Fill	Secondary Fill of 1203	Light brown grey clayey silt compact	2.14	3.02	0.22
13	1300	Layer	Topsoil	Mid brown clayey silt loose	-	-	0 – 0.35
13	1301	Layer	Natural	Mid/light brown silty clay	-	-	0.35
13	1302	Cut	Furrow	Linear moderate concave sides flat base ne-sw alignment	-	-	-
13	1303	Fill	Secondary Fill of 1102	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
13	1304	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
13	1305	Fill	Secondary Fill of 1104	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
13	1306	Cut	Furrow	Nw-se alignment	-	-	-
13	1307	Fill	Secondary Fill of 1106	Mid brown silty clay	-	-	-
14	1400	Layer	Topsoil	Dark greyish brown sandy clay	-	-	0 – 0.33
14	1400	Layer	Subsoil	Dark greyish brown silty clay	-	-	0.33+

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	
Project Name	Thornton Lane Solar Farm
Short description (250 words maximum)	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in August 2015 at Thornton Lane. Fourteen 30x1.8m trenches were excavated.</p> <p>The evaluation revealed evidence of the post medieval agricultural activity across the site but supported the findings of the desk based assessment and geophysical survey by not finding any significant archaeological remains.</p>
Project dates	10 th to the 14 th of August
Project type (e.g. desk-based, field evaluation etc)	Field Evaluation
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)	<p>Cotswold Archaeology 2015. <i>Thornton Lane Solar Farm. Land South of Stanton under Bardon, Leicestershire</i>. Heritage Desk-Based Assessment. CA Project 660433. CA Report 15120.</p> <p>Pre-Construct Geophysics Ltd 2015. <i>Thornton Lane. Stanton under Bardon. Leicestershire</i>.</p>
Future work	Unknown
PROJECT LOCATION	
Site Location	Land South of Stanton under Barton, Leicester
Study area (ha)	7.4 ha
Site co-ordinates:	SK 46693 09536
PROJECT CREATORS	
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology
Project Brief originator	Leicestershire County Council
Project Design (WSI) originator	CA
Project Manager	Damian De Rosa
Project Supervisor	Oliver Good
MONUMENT TYPE	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None
PROJECT ARCHIVES	
Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.) Recipient of each type of archive	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc) Indicate the contents of each archive box
Physical	For example ceramics, animal bone etc
Paper	Context sheets, matrices etc
Digital	Database, digital photos etc
BIBLIOGRAPHY	

Cotswold Archaeology 2015. *Thornton Lane Solar Farm. Land South of Stanton under Bardon, Leicestershire.*
Archaeological Evaluation. CA Project 660494. Report No. 15669

Andover Office

Stanley House
Walworth Road
Andover
Hampshire
SP10 5LH

t: 01264 347630

Cirencester Office

Building 11
Kemble Enterprise Park
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 6BQ

t: 01285 771022

Exeter Office

Unit 8
Basepoint Business Centre
Yeoford Way
Marsh Barton Trading Estate
Exeter
EX2 8LB

t: 01392 826185

Milton Keynes Office

41 Burners Lane South
Kiln Farm
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK11 3HA

t: 01908 564660

