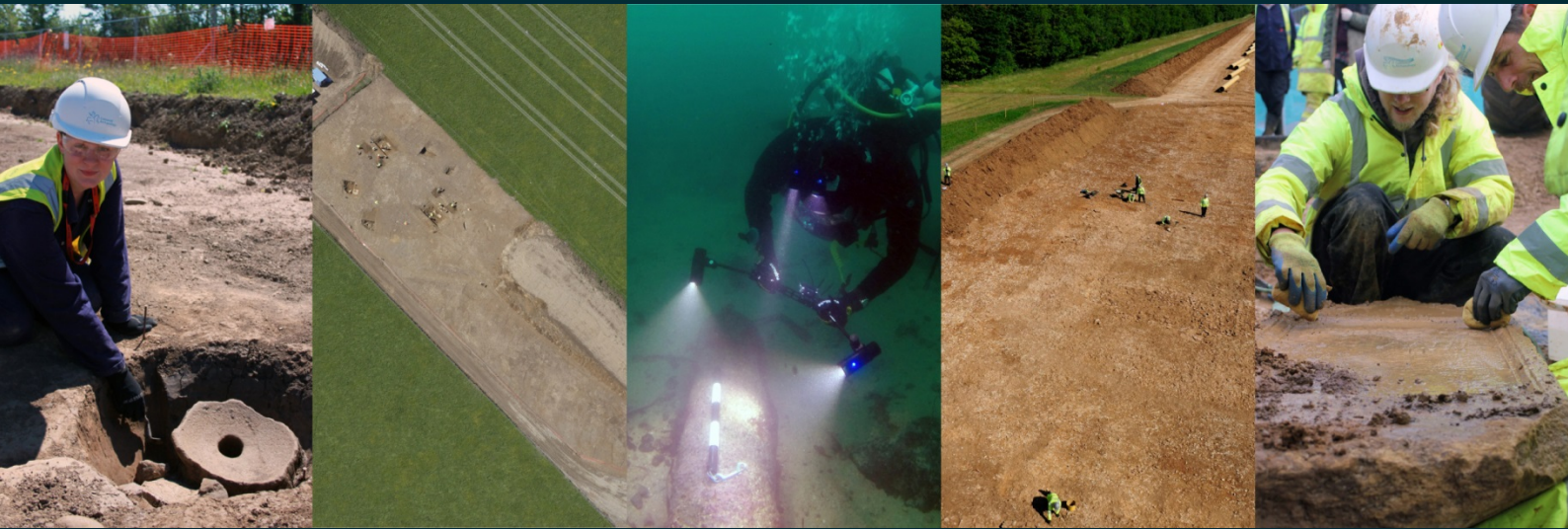


# Land at Decoy Farm House Oving, Chichester West Sussex

## *Archaeological Watching Brief*



For  
Oskomera Solar Power  
Solutions UK Ltd

CA Project: 770037  
CA Report: 14005

November 2015



# Land at Decoy Farm House Oving, Chichester West Sussex

## Archaeological Watching Brief

CA Project: 770037  
CA Report: 14005  
Accession No.: CHCDM 2015.10



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## SUMMARY

<b>Project Name:</b>	Land at Decoy Farm House
<b>Location:</b>	Oving, Chichester, West Sussex
<b>NGR:</b>	492166 104135
<b>Type:</b>	Watching Brief
<b>Date:</b>	16th – 23rd December 2013
<b>Planning Reference:</b>	0/12/01819/FUL
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	Kemble Offices; to be deposited with Chichester District Museum
<b>Accession Number:</b>	CHCDM 2015.10
<b>CA Site Code:</b>	DOC13

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundwork associated with the development of a Solar Farm at Decoy Farm House, Oving, Chichester.

The watching brief comprised archaeological observation during machine excavation of a number of cable trenches and drainage ditches. A single burnt mound was observed in Trench 1. Although no associated finds were recovered, this feature potentially represents seasonal activity associated with the exploitation of the landscape during the Bronze Age.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In December 2013 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Oskomera Solar Power Solutions UK Ltd on land at Decoy Farm House, Oving, Chichester, West Sussex, centred at NGR 492166 104135 (hereafter, 'the Site; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition (3) attached to a planning consent for a solar farm with associated cable trenching, granted by Chichester District Council (CDC), the Local Planning Authority (LPA) (ref. 0/12/01819/FUL). The objective of the watching brief was to record all archaeological remains exposed during the development
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2013) and approved by the LPA acting on the advice of James Kenny (Archaeology Officer at CDC). The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014), the *MoRPHE Project Planning Note 3: Archaeological Excavation* (English Heritage 2008) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MORPHE Project Manager's Guide* (Historic England 2015).

### **The Site**

- 1.3 The proposed development Site comprises an area of c. 11ha and it is located c. 2.2km to the south-east of Oving, West Sussex. The Site is located within an agricultural field and, besides a railway line to the north, it is surrounded by farmland. A small north/south watercourse runs slightly to the east of the Site. The land is generally flat and level, lying at 10m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as clay, silt, sand and gravel of the Thames Group, formed in the Palaeogene Period. Two superficial Quaternary deposit groups are recorded within the Site: River Terrace deposits of sand, silt and clay to the south and Raised Beach deposits of sand and gravel in the centre. To the north of the Site, no superficial deposits are recorded (British Geological Survey).

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Site is located on the edge of the coastal plain of West Sussex, a relatively rich area for sites of prehistoric, Roman and later date. Although no Palaeolithic remains are known from the Site or the surrounding area, the Site lies 4km south of the

nationally important Palaeolithic artefact scatters and human remains found at Amey's Eartham Pit, Boxgrove.

- 2.2 Evidence for Iron Age and Roman settlement and burial activity has been investigated at Copse Farm, Oving c. 3km to the north (Bedwin *et.al.* 1985) and further remains have been excavated during fieldwork associated with the Westhampnett Bypass, c. 5km to the west (Fitzpatrick 1997).

### 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; and
- 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.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2013). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks resulting from the excavation of the cable trenches (Figure 2). Non-archaeologically significant deposits were removed by the contractors under archaeological supervision.
- 4.2 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2013).
- 4.3 The archive is currently held by CA at their offices in Andover. 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.
- 4.4 The archive from the watching brief is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. No artefacts were recovered. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner, the

Site archive will be deposited with the Chichester District Museum. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix A, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain

## 5. RESULTS (FIGURE 2)

- 5.1 During the archaeological watching brief, machine excavation of nine cable trenches of various lengths was observed (Trenches 1 to 9). Trench 1, an east/west HV cable trench, was excavated across the centre of the Site. Trenches 2, 3, 5 and 6 were small shallow connection cable trenches, located between rows of solar panels. Trench 4 was a large drainage ditch excavated to control water drainage on the Site. Trenches 7, 8, and 9 were shallow CCTV cable trenches around the perimeter of the Site. The trenches were up to 2m wide and 1.3m deep.
- 5.2 The natural geological substrate, encountered at an average depth of 0.5m below ground level, consisted of mid-blueish grey silty clay (**6**), which was overlain by mid-yellowish brown sandy silt (**5**) across the majority of the Site. In Trench 4 to the north-west corner of the Site, the natural deposit associated with the river terrace gravels was observed, consisting of yellow to greyish yellow compact silty clay with very frequent gravel inclusions (**7**). In the centre and to the south of the Site (Trench 6), compact yellowish brown silty clay natural deposit was noted (**8**). The natural geology was overlain by light whitish yellow sandy silt subsoil (**4**) averaging 0.33m in thickness, which was in turn sealed by mid greyish brown silty clay topsoil (**3**), up to 0.34m thick.
- 5.3 A single archaeological deposit (**1**), comprising dark blueish grey silty clay with fire-fractured flint and charcoal inclusions, was observed at the western end of Trench 1 (Figure 2). The deposit measured approximately 1.7m x 1.2m and has been interpreted, due to the presence of burnt flint and charcoal, as a possible Bronze Age burnt mound. Due to the flooding of the trench, the archaeological excavation of the feature was not possible, however, an environmental sample was retrieved (see below). No finds were retrieved from the surface of this deposit or from the sample.

## 6. THE PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

- 6.1 One environmental sample (3 litres of soil) was retrieved from a single deposit with the intention of recovering evidence of industrial or domestic activity and material for radiocarbon dating. The sample was processed by standard flotation procedures (CA Technical Manual No. 2).
- 6.2 Sample 1 was recovered from burnt flint mound deposit (1) most likely dating to the Bronze Age. The sample contained no plant macrofossil material and a small amount of very poorly preserved charcoal. Identification of the charcoal was attempted with only a single fragment of alder/hazel (*Alnus glutinosa/Corylus avellana*) and a single fragment of hawthorn/rowan/crab apple charcoal (*Crataegus monogyna/Sorbus/Malus sylvestris*) recovered. This small assemblage means no further interpretative information is possible other than the use of these species within burnt mound activities.
- 6.3 The charcoal would be suitable for radiocarbon dating if required.

## 7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 Deposit (1) may be interpreted as the remnants of a burnt mound, although due to flooding within the trench it could not be fully excavated and recorded.
- 7.2 Burnt mounds mostly date to the Bronze Age, although earlier and later examples are also known, and are found near water sources. These features are widely spread across the British Isles, however, the activity of which the burnt mounds are remnants is still under discussion. Unquestionably, it comprised an activity requiring the use of hot water or stones, such as cooking (Ó Drisceoil 1988), saunas or sweat lodges (Barfield and Hodder 1987; Hodder 2002), wool processing (Ripper 2002-2003) or brewing beer (English Heritage 2011). Burnt mounds are thought to be good indicators of settlements (Hodder 1990, 2002) although solitary sites, associated with special or seasonal activities (exploitation of different resources/areas at various times of the year), are known in England (English Heritage 2011).
- 7.3 As the feature is most likely Bronze Age in date, it needs to be considered within a wider context of Bronze Age occupation in the area. There is evidence for Bronze



Age activity around Chichester and in its Coastal Plain environs. In the Drayton/Oving area to the east of Chichester, approximately 3km to the west of the Site, a Late Bronze Age landscape was revealed, with features associated with settlement, agricultural and funerary activity recorded prior to gravel extraction. The features included two burnt mounds, with further material associated with burnt mounds discovered to the west of Chichester Cathedral (Dunkin and Yates 2007). The burnt mound observed within the Site is likely to have been associated with activity peripheral to the settlement remains recorded to the west. Considering the low lying landscape within which the Site is located and tendency for standing water, this area is unlikely to have been favourable for permanent settlement and therefore the deposit most likely represents a burnt mound associated with seasonal activity, such as the exploitation of the plains.

7.4 No further archaeological remains were observed in the course of the investigation.

## 8. CA PROJECT TEAM

8.1 Fieldwork was undertaken by Adam Howard. The report was written by Adam Howard. The illustrations were prepared by Leo Heatley. The archive has been compiled by Hazel O'Neil, and prepared for deposition by James Johnson. The project was managed for CA by Richard Greatorex.

## 9. REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

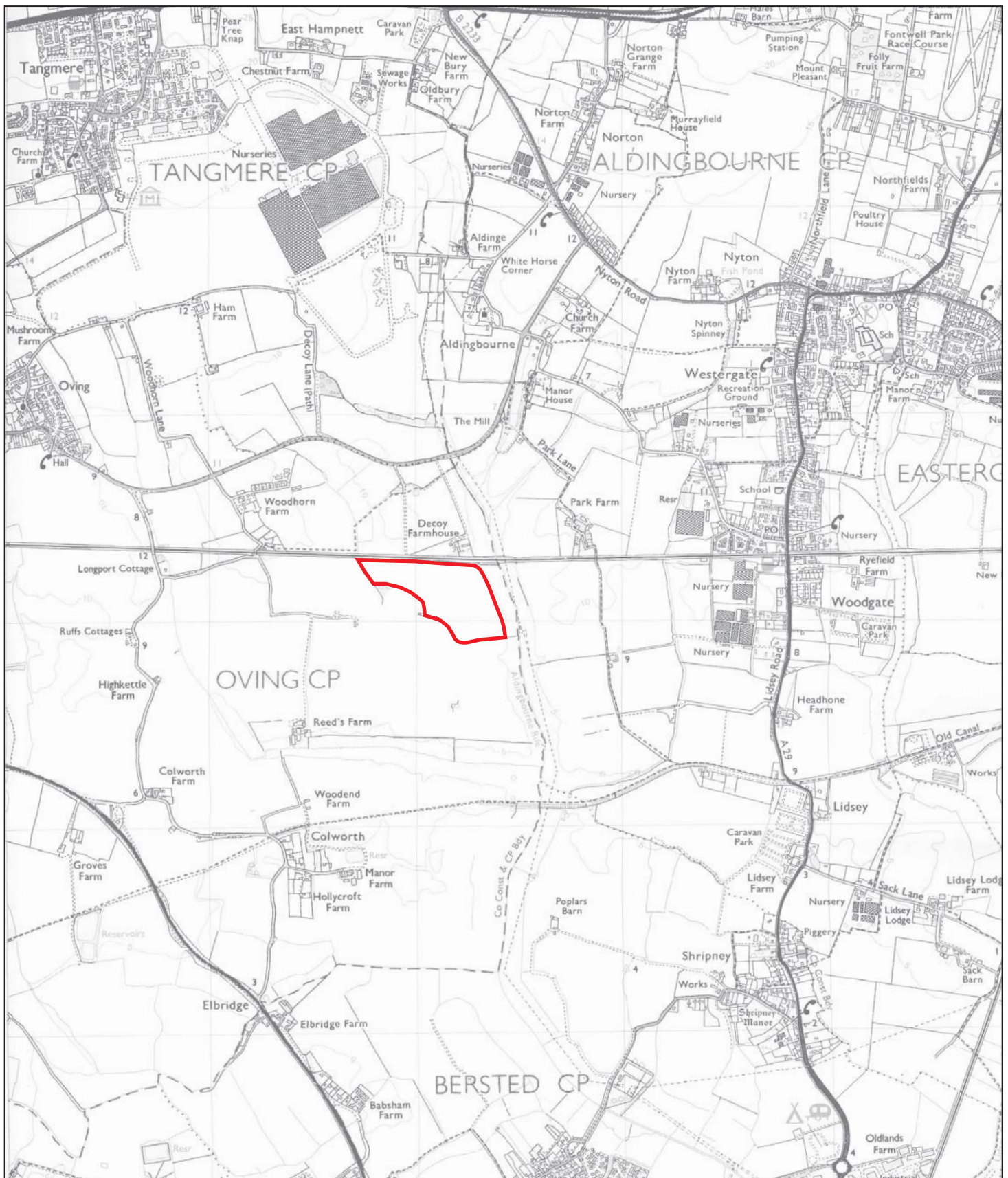
Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	1	Fill	2	Burnt flint mound	Dark blueish grey silty clay	1.7	1.2	N/A	BA?
1	2	Cut		Burnt flint mound	Sub oval in plan not excavated	1.7	1.2	N/A	BA?
1	3	Layer		Topsoil	Mid greyish brown silty clay	500	2m	0.34	Modern
1	4	Layer		Subsoil	Light whitish yellow sandy silt	500	2	0.33	-
1	5	Layer		Natural	Mid yellowy brown sandy silt	400	2	0.5+	-
1	6	Layer		Natural	Mid blueish grey silty clay	100	2	0.5+	-
4	7	Layer		Natural	Yellow and greyish yellow silty clay With gravel inclusions	400	2	0.5+	-
6	8	Layer		Natural	Yellowish brown silty clay	400m+	1.2	0.5+	-

## APPENDIX B: THE PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

Context number			1
Feature number			-
Sample number (SS)			1
Flot volume (ml)			1
Sample volume processed (l)			3
Soil remaining (l)			0
Period			BA
Charcoal quantity			++
Charcoal preservation			Poor
Family	Species	Common Name	
Betulaceae	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i> (L.) Gaertn./ <i>Corylus avellana</i> L.	Alder/Hazel	1
Rosaceae	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i> Jacq./ <i>Sorbus</i> L./ <i>Malus sylvestris</i> (L.) Mill.	Hawthorn/Rowan/Crab apple	1
		Indeterminate	8
<b>Number of Fragments:</b>			<b>10</b>

**APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project Name	Land at Decoy Farm House, Oving	
Short description (250 words maximum)	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundwork associated with the development of a Solar Farm at Decoy Farm Oving, Chichester.</p> <p>Several cable trenches and drainage ditches were machine-excavated. A single deposit containing fire-fractured flint and charcoal was observed in Trench 1 – this likely represents a burnt mound, potentially associated with the seasonal exploitation of the landscape during the Bronze Age. No artefactual material was recovered.</p>	
Project dates	16-23 December 1213	
Project type (e.g. desk-based, field evaluation etc.)	Watching Brief	
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc.)	Unknown	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site Location	Land at Decoy Farm House, Oving, West Sussex	
Study area (M <sup>2</sup> /ha)	11ha	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	NGR: SU 9216 0413	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator		
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Greatorex	
Project Supervisor	Adam Howard	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>	Burnt mound	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	None	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
Physical	Chichester District Museum; accession number: CHCDM 2015.10	Palaeoenvironmental sample: charcoal
Paper	Chichester District Museum; accession number: CHCDM 2015.10	Context sheets, matrices etc.
Digital	Chichester District Museum; accession number: CHCDM 2015.10	Database, digital photos etc.
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Cotswold Archaeology 2015. <i>Land at Decoy Farm House, Oving, Chichester, West Sussex: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> , CA typescript report 14005		



Cirencester 01285 771022  
 Milton Keynes 01908 218320  
 Andover 01264 347630  
 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk  
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

**PROJECT TITLE**

**Land at Decoy Farm House**  
**Oving, Chichester West Sussex**

**FIGURE TITLE**

**Site location plan**

Reproduced from the 2004 Ordnance Survey Explorer map with  
 the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller  
 of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright  
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PROJECT NO. 770037 DATE 14-02-2014  
 DRAWN BY JB REVISION 00  
 APPROVED BY LM SCALE@A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.

**1**



- site boundary
- observed groundworks



Symbol Key	
<span style="color: red;">— HV —</span>	ROUTE OF 33kV UNDERGROUND SUPPLY CABLES FROM DNO HV SWITCH ROOM TO SITE 33kV SWITCH ROOM AND THEN OUT TO RESPECTIVE IN-FIELD E-HOUSES
<span style="color: red;">— DNO —</span>	ROUTE OF DNO 33kV MAIN UNDERGROUND SUPPLY CABLES FROM P.O.C TO DNO HV SWITCHROOM (BY DNO)
<span style="color: blue;">— DC —</span>	ROUTE OF UNDERGROUND DC CABLES FROM PV MODULE TABLES TO COMBINER BOXES AND TO INVERTER HOUSES
<span style="color: orange;">- - -</span>	ROUTE OF LV FEEDER CABLES & INTER-TRIP MULTI-CORE CABLING
	DC COMBINER BOX COMPLETE WITH STRING CONNECTIONS / FUSES / DC SUB-MAIN CONNECTION
	CCTV CAMERA WITH 230VOLT AC SUPPLY AS INDICATED
	MONITORING BOX COMPLETE WITH DATA CABLE MARSHALLING AND 230VOLT AC SUPPLY
<span style="color: green;">- - -</span>	70mm <sup>2</sup> BARE HDC EARTH CABLE FORMING MAIN UNDERGROUND SITE EARTH MATRIX
<span style="color: green;">- - -</span>	70mm <sup>2</sup> BARE HDC EARTH CABLE FORMING UNDERGROUND COUNTERPOISE EARTH MATRIX
	DENOTES WHERE UNDERGROUND SITE EARTH MATRIX CABLE BONDS VIA 16mm <sup>2</sup> (6491X) PVC COPPER CABLE TO PV MODULE FRAME
	2 METRE DEEP ELECTRODE WITH 70mm <sup>2</sup> BARE HDC EARTH CABLE BOND TO PERIMETER CHAIN LINK FENCE POST
	35mm <sup>2</sup> FLEXIBLE BRAIDED COPPER BAND BETWEEN POST AND GATE WITH 70mm <sup>2</sup> BARE HDC EARTH CABLE BOND TO PERIMETER CHAIN LINK FENCE POST TO 2 METRE ELECTRODE

Cirencester 01285 771022  
 Milton Keynes 01908 218320  
 Andover 01264 347630  
[www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk)  
[enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk)

PROJECT TITLE  
**Land at Decoy Farm House**  
**Oving, Chichester West Sussex**

FIGURE TITLE  
**The site, showing location of**  
**groundworks**

PROJECT NO. 770037	DATE 14-02-2014	FIGURE NO.
DRAWN BY JB	REVISION 00	2
APPROVED BY LM	SCALE@A3 1:2500	

### **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  
MK1 3HA

t: 01908 564660

