

**Land at Ford Farm
Ashurst
West Sussex**

Archaeological Watching Brief



for
Conergy

CA Project: 770267
CA Report: 16586

February 2016



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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	2
1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	4
3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	5
4. METHODOLOGY	5
5. RESULTS (FIGURES 2-9)	5
6. THE FINDS AND BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE	6
7. DISCUSSION.....	6
8. CA PROJECT TEAM.....	6
9. REFERENCES.....	6
APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS	7

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)
- Fig. 2 The site, showing location of groundworks (1:5000)
- Fig. 3 General Ground Conditions
- Fig. 4 Haul Road Excavation
- Fig. 5 Substation Foundation (**Trench 1**)
- Fig. 6 Brownish red compact silty clay (1m scale)
- Fig. 7 Blueish Grey compact silty clay (1m Scale)
- Fig. 8 Greyish Yellow compact silty clay
- Fig. 9 Working Shot

SUMMARY

Project Name: Land at Ford Farm
Location: Ashurst, West Sussex
NGR: TQ 17213 17480
Type: Watching Brief
Date: 11 January to 1 February 2016
Planning Reference: DC/13/2310
Location of Archive: Horsham Museum
Site Code: FFA16

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundwork associated with the development of a Solar Farm at Land at Ford Farm, Ashurst, West Sussex.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundwork associated with the excavation of cable trenches, substation foundations and access roads, and despite visual scanning of spoil no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.

As evidenced by the site photographs, the watching brief of the groundwork for the Solar Farm was undertaken, over the winter months and conditions were not conducive for archaeological recording. However the fact that no stray artefacts were identified from the excavated material suggests that the site is unlikely to have been subject to anything other than agricultural activity in the past.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In January and February 2016 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Conergy at Land at Ford Farm, Ashurst, West Sussex, (centred on NGR: TQ 17213 17480; **Figure 1**).

1.2 Planning permission was granted (DC/13/2310) by Horsham District Council (HDC) for the construction of a Solar Farm conditional on a programme of archaeological work comprising an Archaeological Watching Brief. Archaeological advice to HDC is currently provided by Martin Brown of White Young Green (WYG). The archaeological condition (5) of the planning permission requires the following:

- *Notwithstanding the details hereby approved, the applicant shall arrange for an Archaeological Organisation or appropriately qualified archaeologist to monitor and record archaeological evidence that maybe uncovered as a result of the development, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.*
- *Reason: The site is potentially of archaeological interest and to ensure the appropriate investigation and recording of archaeological heritage assets on site, to comply with Policy DC10 of the Horsham District Policy Framework: General Development Control Policies (2007) and Paragraph 169 of the National Planning Policy Framework.*

1.3 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2015) and approved by Martin Brown (WYG). The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014), and the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991), the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006).

The site

1.4 The proposed development site is c. 28.8ha in size and is located to the north-west of Ashurst, West Sussex, to the west of Ford Farm (**Figure 1**). The site currently contains five agricultural fields (**Figure 1**). The proposed solar site is located at

between 10- 20m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), sloping from north-south and east-west. The surrounding land within the study area is predominantly rural, comprising agricultural fields with scattered farmsteads and small areas of woodland. A stream runs to the north of the site, leading eastward into the River Adur.

- 1.5 The solid geology of the proposed development site comprises mudstones of the Weald Clay Formation, overlain by Head Deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel which cover the majority of the site. Alluvial deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel are extant in the area northward of the site, and extend a small distance into the northernmost part of the site (BGS Online Viewer, consulted February 2016).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In October 2013 Cotswold Archaeology undertook a Heritage Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) on behalf of Lumicity Ltd at Ford Farm, West Sussex. Below is a summary of the results of the DBA.

- 2.2 It was considered possible there might be a limited potential for Palaeolithic remains within the site, based on its geological makeup. Likewise the topographic situation of the site may indicate some limited potential for remains of Neolithic and Bronze Age date. There is no indication of prehistoric activity of any period within the immediate environs of the site, although this may be related to an absence of previous archaeological investigation.

- 2.3 During the medieval period the landscape in which the site is located may have been characterised by woodland, subject to piecemeal clearance during the later medieval and post-medieval periods. By the end of the post-medieval period the site is known to have been exploited as agricultural land. A trackway crossing the site is shown on an early modern map, of which below ground remains may survive. The agricultural character of the site has continued throughout the modern period.



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 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 2015). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks comprising the excavation of substation foundations (**Trench 1**) cable trenches (low voltage and earthing cables, **Trenches 2 to 10**) and access roads (**Figures 2, 4 and 5**).

4.2 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.

4.3 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the site archive will be deposited with Horsham Museum. 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 (FIGURES 2-9)

5.1 The natural geological substrate which consisted of a compact silt/clay was variable in colour, red/brown (**Figure 6**), brown/yellow (**Figure 7**), and blue/grey (**Figure 8**) was revealed at an average depth of 0.3m below present ground level. This was overlain by Topsoil averaging 0.3m in thickness, with no subsoil present.

- 5.2 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.

6. THE FINDS AND BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

- 6.1 No finds or biological evidence were recovered.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see archaeological background above); the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks. The archaeological activity associated with the Medieval or Palaeolithic periods identified by the DBA (CA 2013) were not exposed by the development. The average depth of trenches was 1.2m which did not expose any Palaeolithic deposits. The width of the trenches was 0.6m which limited the potential for observing any archaeological potential present.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Adam Howard. The report was written by Adam Howard. The illustrations were prepared by Leo Heatly. The archive has been compiled by Tom Rowley, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Richard Greatorex.

9. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2016

CA 2013 Land at Ford farm, Ashurst, West Sussex – Heritage desk Based Assessment

CA 2016 Land at Ford farm, Ashurst, West Sussex Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief

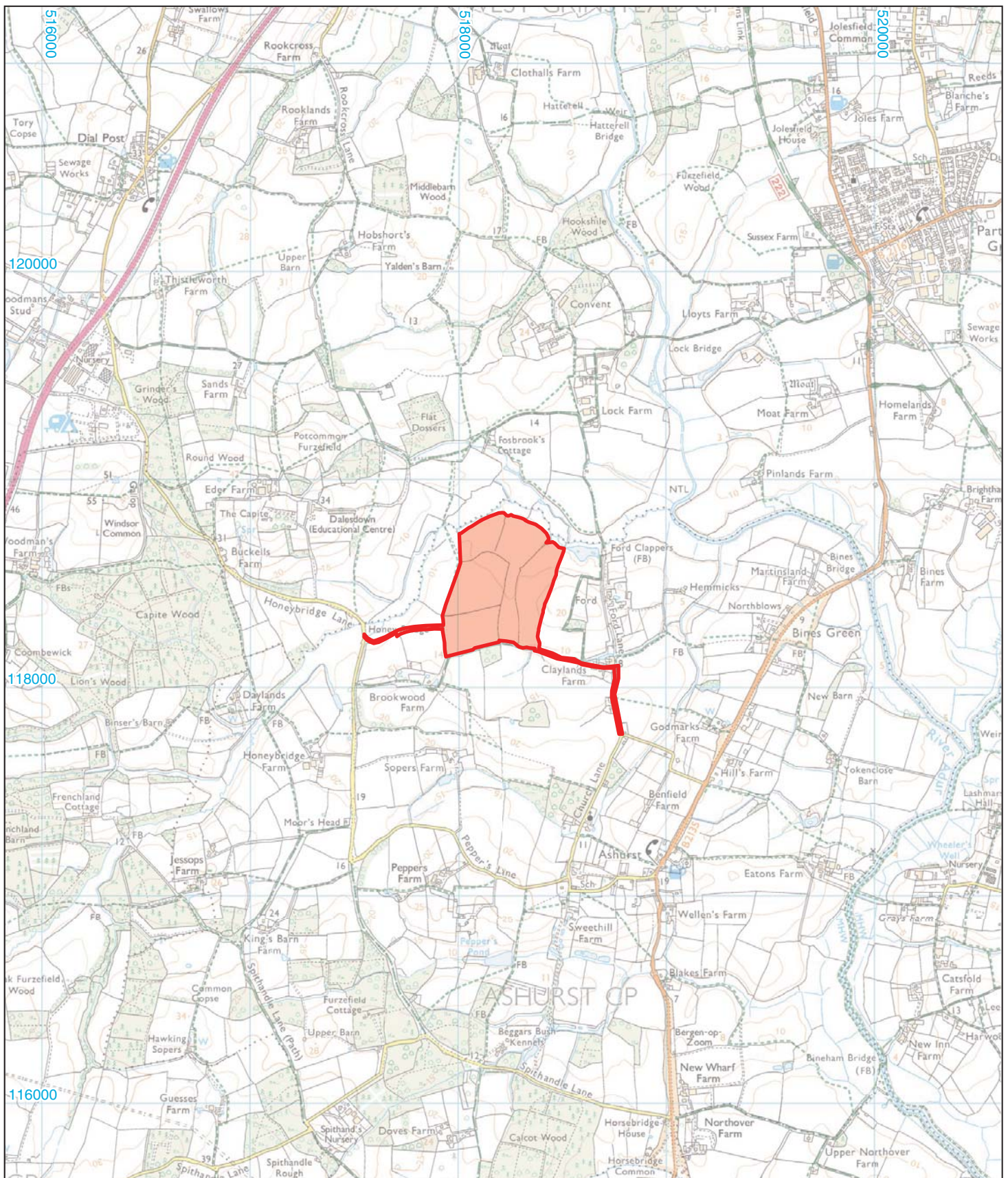


APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth/thickness (m)
1	100	Layer	Topsoil	Dark brown silty clay	-	0.6	0 – 0.35m
1	101	Layer	Natural Geology	Light yellowish grey silty clay compact	-	0.6	0.35+
2	200	Layer	Topsoil	Mid grey silty clay firm compaction	-	0.6	0.38m
2	201	Layer	Natural Geology	Mid yellow silty clay compact	-	0.6	0.38 - 1
2	202	Layer	Natural Geology	Mid brownish grey sandy clay frequent dark mottling compact	-	0.6	1+
3	300	Layer	Topsoil	Mid grey silty clay firm compaction	-	0.6	0 – 0.3
3	301	Layer	Natural Geology	Mid yellowish grey silty clay compact	-	0.6	0.3
3	302	Layer	Natural Geology	Mid yellow silty clay compact	-	0.6	0.3 – 1.2+
3	303	Layer	Natural Geology	Mid brownish red silty clay compact	-	0.6	0.3 – 1.2+
3	304	Layer	Natural Geology	Mid brownish yellow silty clay compact	-	0.6	0.3 – 1.2+
4	400	Layer	Topsoil	Mid grey silty clay compact	-	0.6	0 – 0.3
4	401	Layer	Natural Geology	Mid yellow silty clay compact	-	0.6	0.3 – 1.2+
5	500	Layer	Topsoil	Mid grey friable silty clay	-	0.6	0 - 0.2
5	501	Layer	Natural Geology	Mid brownish red silty clay compact	-	0.6	0.2 - 0.5
5	502	Layer	Natural Geology	Dark brownish red silty clay compact	-	0.6	0.5 - 1
5	503	Layer	Natural Geology	Light whitish blue silty clay	-	0.6	1+
6	600	Layer	Topsoil	Mid grey silty clay firm compaction	-	0.6	0 - 0.3
6	601	Layer	Natural Geology	Mid brownish red silty clay compact	-	0.6	0.3 – 1+
7	700	Layer	Topsoil	Mid brownish grey silty clay compact	-	0.6	0 – 0.23
7	701	Layer	Natural Geology	Mid blueish grey silty clay compact	-	0.6	0.23 - 0.75+
7	702	Layer	Natural Geology	Mid brownish red silty clay compact	-	0.6	0.23 – 0.75+
8	800	Layer	Topsoil	Mid grey silty clay compact	-	0.6	0 – 0.29
8	801	Layer	Natural Geology	Mid brown yellow silty clay	-	0.6	0.29 – 0.8
9	900	Layer	Topsoil	Mid grey silty clay compact	-	0.6	0 – 0.3
9	901	Layer	Natural Geology	Mid brown yellow silty clay	-	0.6	0.3 – 0.7+
10	1000	Layer	Topsoil	Mid grey silty clay compact	-	0.6	0 – 0.3
10	1000	Layer	Natural Geology	Mid brownish red silty clay	-	0.6	0.3 – 1.2+

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Land at Ford Farm, Ashurst, West Sussex	
Short description (250 words maximum)	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the development of a Solar Farm at Land at Ford Farm, Ashurst, West Sussex.</p> <p>No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks associated with the excavation of cable trenches, substation foundations and access roads, and despite visual scanning of spoil no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.</p>	
Project dates	11 January to 1 February 2016	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	CA 2013 Land at Ford Farm, Ashurst, West Sussex – Heritage Desk Based Assessment	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Land at Ford Farm, Ashurst, West Sussex	
Study area (M ² /ha)	28.8ha	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	TQ 17213 17480	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	none	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Greatorex	
Project Supervisor	Adam Howard	
MONUMENT TYPE		
	none	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS		
	none	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content
Physical	Horsham Museum	none
Paper	Horsham Museum	Trench Sheets, Photographic register,
Digital	Horsham Museum	Digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
<p>CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 <i>Land at Ford Farm, Ashurst, West Sussex: Archaeological Watching Brief</i>. CA typescript report 16586</p>		



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PROJECT TITLE
 Land at Ford Farm, Ashurst
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FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

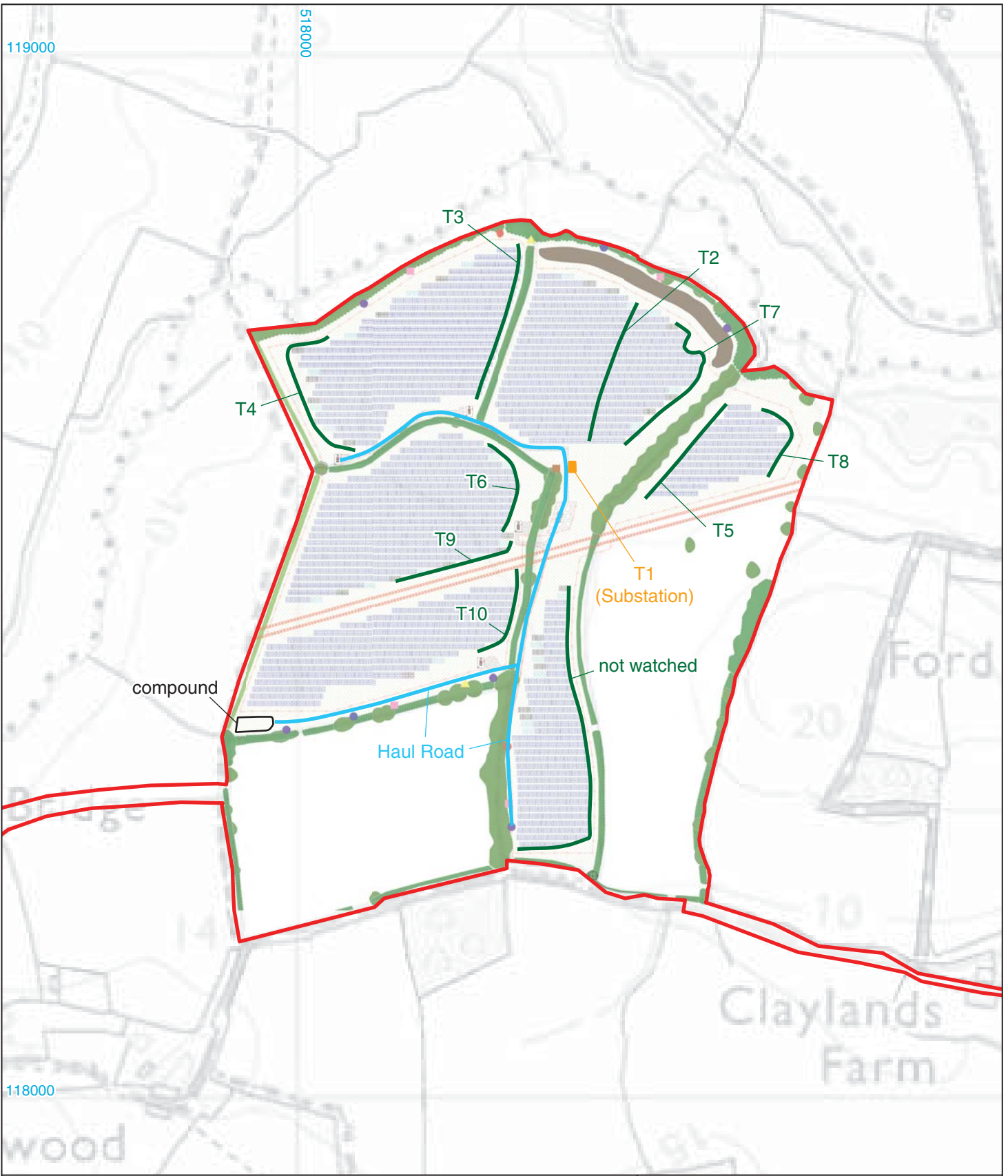
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FIGURE NO.

1



- site boundary
- observed groundworks**
- cable trench
- trench 1 (substation)
- haul road



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PROJECT TITLE
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FIGURE TITLE
 Observed trench location plan:
 trench 1 substation, cable trenches 2 - 10

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CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	23/02/16	2
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3



4



5

- 3 General ground conditions on site
- 4 Haul Road excavation and construction
- 5 Substation foundation looking north (1m scale)



6



7



8

- 6 **Brownish red, compact silty clay natural (1m scale)**
- 7 **Blueish grey compact silty clay natural (1m scale)**
- 8 **Greyish yellow compact silty clay natural (1m scale)**



9

9 Working shot



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PROJECT TITLE

**Land at Ford Farm, Ashurst
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FIGURE TITLE

Photograph

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 CHECKED BY **DJB** DATE **23/02/16**
 APPROVED BY **REG** SCALE@A4 **NA**

FIGURE NO.

9

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