



Stoneshill Solar Farm Five Bridges Cullompton Devon

Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief



for Gamma Energy

CA Project: 880164 CA Report: 17135

March 2017



Stoneshill Solar Farm, Five Bridges Collumpton Devon

Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief

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А	31 March 2017	Jonathan Orellana & Derek Evans	Derek Evans	Internal review	-	Derek Evans	

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CONTENTS

SUMM	ARY	2
1.	INTRODUCTION	3
2.	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	.4
3.	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	5
4.	METHODOLOGY	5
5.	RESULTS	7
6.	DISCUSSION	8
7.	CA PROJECT TEAM	9
8.	REFERENCES	9
APPEN	IDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS	10
APPEN	IDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM	13

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)
- Fig. 2 Trench location plan showing archaeological features, location of monitored groundworks and geophysical survey results (1:2000)
- Fig. 3 Trench 2: plan, sections and photographs (1:20)
- Fig. 4 Section and photograph (1:20)
- Fig. 5 Sections and photographs (1:20)

SUMMARY

Project Name: Stoneshill Solar Farm

Location: Five Bridges, Cullompton, Devon

NGR: ST 02683 09863

Type: Evaluation and watching brief

Date: 13 January (evaluation) and 31January–1 March 2017 (watching

brief)

Planning Reference: 14/01949/MFUL

Location of Archive: N/A

Site Code: SSFB 16

In January–March 2017, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation and an archaeological watching brief at Stoneshill Farm, Five Bridges, Cullompton, Devon.

The archaeological works recorded five undated ditches. Three of these ditches were on the same alignment as extant and former field boundaries. The remaining two were on a slightly different alignment, but may also represent former drainage or boundary features.

Although undated artefactually, two of the ditches were cut through the subsoil and sealed by the topsoil, indicating that they are post-medieval in date.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In January–March 2017, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation and an archaeological watching brief for Gamma Energy at Stoneshill Farm, Five Bridges, Cullompton, Devon (centred on NGR: ST 02683 09863; Fig. 1).
- Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) have granted planning permission (14/01949/MFUL) for the construction of a solar farm at the site. Condition 6(ii) of the planning permission requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. The scope of the required archaeological mitigation strategy was defined subsequently by Stephen Reed, Senior Historic Environment Officer, Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (DCCHET), the archaeological advisor to MDDC.
- 1.3 The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2016) and approved by Steven Reed. The fieldwork was also in line with Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief (ClfA 2014), Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation (ClfA 2014), Specification for a programme of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording (Devon County Council 2015), Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation (Historic England 2015) and Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE): Project Manager's Guide (Historic England 2015).

The site

- 1.4 The development site lies approximately 1.3km south-west of Willand. It encloses *c*. 12ha in total and, prior to the development, comprised a single agricultural field. The site is bounded to the east by the main Exeter to Bristol train line, with the M5 beyond; to the south by the B3181; and to the west and north by further fields. Spratford Stream runs through the field to the west. Gerston Farm is located to the north of the site. The site displays a gentle downward slope from east to west.
- 1.5 The underlying bedrock geology is mapped as Aylesbeare Mudstone Group of the Triassic Period. No superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2016).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The development site has been the subject of a desk-based heritage assessment (Wardell Armstrong Archaeology 2013) and a geophysical survey (GSB Prospection Ltd 2014). The following text is summarised from these sources.

Prehistoric (pre-AD 43)

- 2.2 The cropmarks of circular features and old field boundaries have been identified in the field to the immediate north of the development site. It has been suggested that these may represent prehistoric activity, although this has not been tested by excavation.
- 2.3 Scatters of worked flint dating from the Early Neolithic to Late Bronze were recorded during a fieldwalking exercise *c*. 500m south-west of the development site, on the opposite side of Spratford Stream.

Medieval (1066-1539)

2.4 Willand is mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086). It has been suggested that Gerston Farm (to the north of the development site) had a medieval precursor; it is therefore possible that the development site was within associated agricultural/pastoral land.

Post-medieval (1539–1900) and modern (post-1900)

- 2.5 The development site appears to have remained in agricultural use from the postmedieval period until the present day. The Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies the development site as being within an area of modern enclosures adapting post-medieval fields (Devon County Council 2016).
- 2.6 Late 18th-century cartographic sources document a building and gardens known as 'Stones Hill' in the south-eastern corner of the development site. This building was demolished when the railway line was constructed.

Geophysical survey

2.7 The geophysical survey recorded anomalies indicative of potential ring ditches and enclosures in the north-eastern part of the site (illustrated in purple on Fig. 2). There were fewer anomalies in the remainder of the site, although a further, more tentative

ring ditch and a possible short linear feature (illustrated in blue/grey on Fig. 2) were identified.

2.8 A number of old field boundaries were also recorded, corresponding to former boundaries visible on the Tithe Map of 1839. Rectilinear anomalies in the southeastern corner of the site are probably associated with the former 'Stones Hill' buildings.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 As defined in the WSI (CA 2016), the objectives of the archaeological works were:
 - to ensure that the most significant archaeological features at the site were preserved in situ, by exclusion from the development or by the use of nonintrusive construction methods;
 - where preservation was not possible, to record and analyse any evidence of past land use prior to destruction by the new development;
 - where preservation was not possible, to recover and analyse any artefactual evidence to date any archaeological remains that may be identified;
 - where preservation was not possible, to sample and analyse environmental remains to create a better understanding of past land use and economy; and
 - to archive, report on and publish the archaeological results at a level appropriate to their significance.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The archaeological mitigation strategy comprised three elements:
 - an archaeological exclusion zone;
 - a trial trench evaluation; and
 - an archaeological watching brief.

Exclusion zone

4.2 In consultation with Stephen Reed, a groundworks exclusion zone was defined in the north-eastern area of the site (see Fig. 2). This zone covered the area of highest archaeological potential, as indicated by the geophysical survey results (GSB

Prospection Ltd 2014). Temporary exclusion fencing (Heras-style fencing) was erected around this area, in order to clearly isolate it from plant, vehicular and personnel access. The exclusion fencing was erected prior to any construction groundworks taking place and remained in place for the duration of the construction period. The boundaries of the exclusion zone were laid out in the field by CA staff.

Archaeological trial trench evaluation

- 4.3 The trial trench evaluation comprised the excavation of two trenches (each measuring 20m by 2m in plan) in the locations shown on Fig. 2. These trenches were located to sample potential archaeological features identified by the geophysical survey (GSB Prospection Ltd 2014).
- 4.4 All trenches were excavated to the top of the natural substrate by a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision.
- 4.5 Written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.

Archaeological watching brief

4.6 An Archaeologist monitored all groundworks at the site and investigated and recorded any archaeological features thus exposed. Written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.

Archive

- 4.7 A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix B, will be entered into the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain, along with an uploaded copy of this report.
- 4.8 As no significant archaeological features were identified during the archaeological works and no artefactual material was recovered, a project archive will not be prepared. The results of the fieldwork will be held by DCCHET in the form of this report and the OASIS entry.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1 This section provides a summary of the evaluation and watching brief results.

 Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts can be found in Appendix A.
- 5.2 The natural substrate comprised red and yellow clays with occasional patches of gravel. It was encountered at a depth of 0.3m–0.8m below the present ground level. The natural substrate was typically sealed by c. 0.2m of sandy silt subsoil, which was covered in turn by modern topsoil. In the central part of the site, the natural was sealed directly by the modern topsoil. A colluvial layer measuring 0.2m in thickness was identified in the south-western part of the site, sealing the natural substrate and covered by the subsoil.

Evaluation

Trench 1

- 5.3 Natural substrate 102 was exposed at a depth of 0.8m below the present ground level (bpgl). It was sealed by 0.5m-thick sandy silt subsoil layer 101, which was covered in turn by modern topsoil 100.
- 5.4 T1 sampled a curved geophysical anomaly (GSB Prospection Ltd 2014). No corresponding archaeological features were recorded in the trench.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

- 5.5 Natural substrate 201 was exposed 0.3m bpgl and was sealed directly by modern topsoil 200.
- T2 exposed two ditches. North-east/south-west aligned ditch 203 (Fig. 3, Secs. AA and BB) was 1.08m wide and 0.26m deep with a single fill (202). East/west-aligned ditch 206 (Fig. 3, Sec. CC) was 1.6m wide and 0.67m deep, with two fills (205 and 204). The fills of both of these features were 100% excavated within the trench, but were found to contain no dating evidence.
- 5.7 Ditch 206 corresponded to a geophysical anomaly. Ditch 203 had not been identified by the geophysical survey (GSB Prospection Ltd 2014).

Watching brief

5.8 Three ditches were identified during the watching brief.

- North-east/south-west aligned ditch 303 (Fig. 4, Sec. DD) lay at the south-eastern corner of the site, where it was cut into the natural substrate and sealed by the subsoil. Ditch 303 was 1.3m wide and 0.3m deep, with a single undated fill (304). Ditch 303 was adjacent to and on the same alignment as a linear geophysical anomaly interpreted as a former field boundary (GSB Prospection Ltd 2014).
- North-west/south-east aligned ditch 1103 (Fig. 5, Sec. EE) lay towards the south-central site boundary, where it was cut into the subsoil and sealed by the topsoil. Ditch 1103 was 1.83m wide and 0.8m deep, with two undated fills (1104 and 1105). Ditch 1103 had not been detected by the geophysical survey (GSB Prospection Ltd 2014).
- 5.11 West-north-west/east-south-east aligned ditch 1106 (Fig. 5, Sec. FF) lay towards the north-central site boundary, where it was cut into the subsoil and sealed by the topsoil. Ditch 1106 was 0.88m wide and 0.26m deep, with a single undated fill (1107). Ditch 1106 had not been detected by the geophysical survey (GSB Prospection Ltd 2014).

6. DISCUSSION

- The archaeological works recorded five undated ditches at the site. There was a low correspondence to the geophysical survey results (GSB Prospection Ltd 2014). Ditch 206 (T2) had been detected by the geophysical survey, but none of the other ditches had been noted by the survey and, conversely, none of the other geophysical anomalies were found to correspond to below-ground archaeological features.
- 6.2 Ditches 203, 303 and 1103 were on the same alignment as the extant field boundaries, as well as that of linear geophysical anomalies recorded throughout the site and interpreted as former field boundaries. Ditches 206 and 1106 were on a slightly different alignment, but may also represent former drainage or boundary features.
- 6.3 Although undated artefactually, ditches 1103 and 1106 were cut through the subsoil and sealed by the topsoil, indicating that they are post-medieval or later in date.

7. CA PROJECT TEAM

7.1 Fieldwork was undertaken by Christina Tapply, George Gandham, Jerry Austin and Jonathan Orellana. This report was written by Jonathan Orellana and Derek Evans. The report illustrations were prepared by Esther Escudero and Aleksandra Osinska. The project was managed for CA by Derek Evans

8. REFERENCES

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 ers=Historic%20Environment;14&activeTab=Historic%20Environment&exte

 nt=210063;25600;338387;151675 Accessed 8 December 2016
- GSB Prospection Ltd 2014 Land at Stoneshill Farm, Willand Road, Cullompton,

 Devon: Geophysical Survey Report GSB Report No. G1481
- Wardell Armstrong Archaeology 2013 Land to the south of Gerston Farm, Willand, Devon: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench	Context	Туре	Fill of	Context	Description	L	W	D
No.	No. 100	lovor		interpretation topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay	(m)	(m)	(m) 0.35
1	100	layer layer		subsoil	mid brown sandy silt			0.35
1	101	layer		natural substrate	compact mid red clay with occasional			0.55
					stones			
2	200	layer		topsoil	mid greyish brown silty clay			0.35
2	201	layer		natural substrate	mid orangey red clay with occasional stones			
2	202	fill	203	single fill of ditch	mid reddish brown sandy silt	>1	1.1	0.25
2	203	cut		ditch	NE/SW orientated, moderate sloping sides and flat base	>1	1.1	0.25
2	204	fill	206	2nd fill of ditch	mid yellowish brown sandy silt	>1	1.6	0.3
2	205	fill	206	1st fill of ditch	mid greyish brown sandy silt	>1	1.5	0.4
2	206	cut		ditch	NE/SW orientated, steep sides and concave base	>1	1.6	0.7
_	300	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.3
-	301	layer		subsoil	mid brownish grey silty clay with occasional small stones			0.2
_	302	layer		natural substrate	mid orangey brown clay with patches of gravel			
_	303	cut		ditch	NE/SW orientated, moderate sloping sides and concave base	>0.3	1.3	0.3
_	304	fill	303	single fill of ditch	mid greyish orange silty clay	>0.3	1.3	0.3
-	400	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.3
-	401	layer		subsoil	mid brownish grey silty clay with occasional small stones			0.1
-	402	layer		natural substrate	mid orangey brown clay with patches of gravel			
_	500	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.3
_	501	layer		subsoil	mid brownish grey silty clay			0.15
_	502	layer		natural substrate	light yellowish brown silty clay			
_	600	layer		topsoil	mid reddish brown silty clay			0.32
_	601	layer		subsoil	light reddish brown clay			0.34
_	602	layer		colluvium	light yellowish silty clay			0.5
_	603	layer		natural substrate	mid reddish brown clay with gravels			
_	700	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.3
_	800	layer		topsoil	mid greyish brown silty clay			>0.2
_	900	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.35
-	901	layer		subsoil	mid reddish brown silty clay with occasional small stones			0.3
_	902	layer		natural substrate	mid yellowish brown sandy clay with blue clay lenses			
_	1000	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.3
_	1001	layer		subsoil	mid reddish brown silty clay with occasional small stones			0.3
_	1002	layer		natural substrate	mid yellowish brown sandy clay with blue clay lenses			
_	1100	layer		topsoil	mid greyish brown silty clay			0.3
_	1101	layer		subsoil	mid reddish brown sandy clay			0.3
_	1102	layer		natural substrate	mid yellowish brown clay with patches of gravel			
_	1103	cut		ditch	NW/SE orientated, steep sides and concave base	>0.7	1.83	0.8
_	1104	fill	1103	2nd fill of ditch	mid greyish brown sandy clay	>0.7	1.8	0.52
_	1105	fill	1103	1st fill of ditch	light greyish brown sandy clay	>0.7	1.83	0.35
-	1106	cut		ditch	NW/SE orientated, moderate sloping sides and concave base	0.7	0.88	0.26

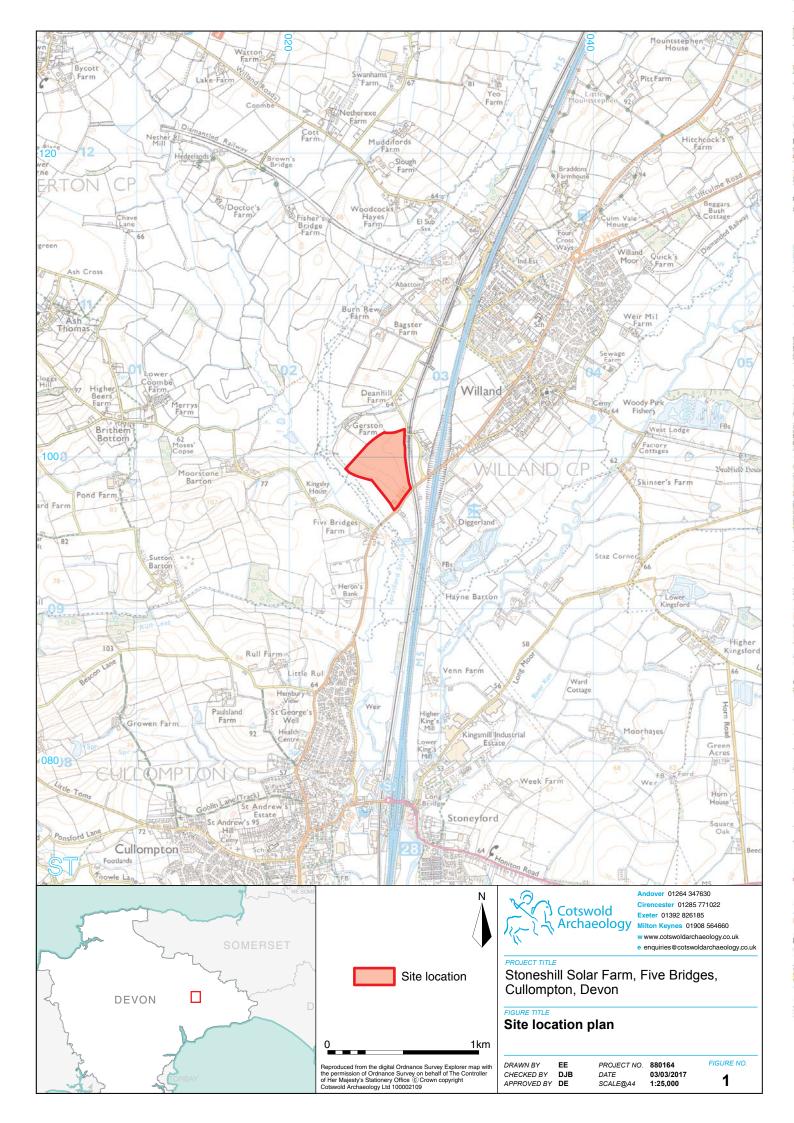
Trench	Context	Туре	Fill of	Context	Description	ΤL	W	D
No.	No.	Type	1 111 01	interpretation	Description	(m)	(m)	(m)
_	1107	fill	1106	single fill of ditch	light yellowish brown sandy clay	0.7	0.88	0.26
_	1200	layer		topsoil	mid greyish brown silty clay			0.3
_	1201	layer		subsoil	mid greyish brown silty clay			0.2
_	1202	layer		natural substrate	light yellowish brown silty clay			
_	1300	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.3
_	1301	layer		subsoil	mid reddish brown sandy clay			0.3
_	1302	layer		natural substrate	mid yellowish brown clay with patches of gravel			
_	1400	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.3
_	1401	layer		subsoil	mid reddish brown sandy clay			0.3
_	1402	layer		natural substrate	mid yellowish brown clay with patches of gravel			
_	1500	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.4
_	1501	layer		subsoil	mid reddish brown sandy clay			0.1
_	1502	layer		natural substrate	mid yellowish brown clay with patches of gravel			
_	1600	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.4
_	1601	layer		subsoil	mid reddish brown sandy clay			>0.3
_	1700	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.3
_	1701	layer		subsoil	mid reddish brown sandy clay			0.2
_	1702	layer		natural substrate	mid yellowish brown clay with patches of gravel			
_	1800	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.3
_	1801	layer		natural substrate	mid orangey brown clay with patches of gravel			
_	1900	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.4
_	1901	layer		natural substrate	mid orangey brown clay with patches of gravel			
_	2000	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.35
_	2001	layer		subsoil	mid reddish brown sandy clay			0.15
_	2002	layer		topsoil	mid orangey brown clay with patches of gravel			
_	2100	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.45
_	2101	layer		natural substrate	mid orangey brown clay with patches of gravel			
_	2200	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.3
_	2201	layer		subsoil	mid reddish brown sandy clay			0.1
_	2202	layer		natural substrate	mid yellowish brown clay with patches of gravel			
_	2300	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.4
_	2301	layer		natural substrate	mid yellowish brown silty clay with patches of gravel			
_	2400	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.4
_	2401	layer		natural substrate	mid yellowish brown silty clay with patches of gravel			
_	2500	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.3
_	2501	layer		subsoil	mid reddish brown sandy clay			0.1
_	2502	layer		natural substrate	compact orangey brown silty clay			
_	2600	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.4
_	2601	layer		natural substrate	mid greyish brown silty clay with patches of gravel			
_	2700	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.4
_	2701	layer		subsoil	mid reddish brown sandy clay			0.1
_	2702	layer		natural substrate	mid orangey brown clay with patches of gravel			
_	2800	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.4
_	2801	layer		subsoil	light grey silty clay			0.1

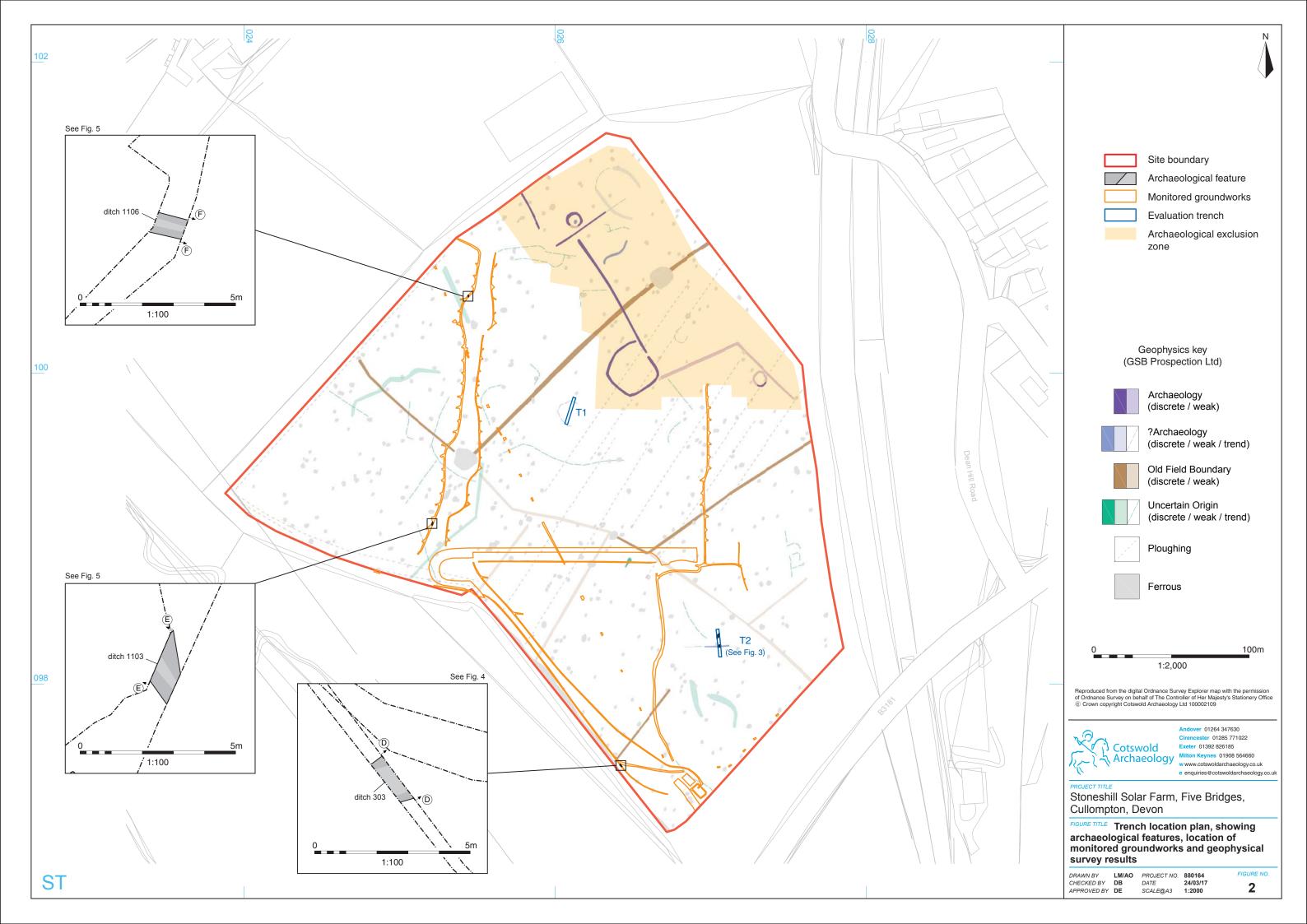
Trench	Context	Туре	Fill of	Context	Description	L	W	D
No.	No. 2802	layer		interpretation natural substrate	mid orangey brown clay with patches of	(m)	(m)	(m)
_		layei		riaturai substrate	gravel			
_	2900	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.4
_	2901	layer		subsoil	mid reddish brown sandy clay			0.1
_	2902	layer		natural substrate	mid orangey brown clay			
_	3000	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.4
_	3001	layer		subsoil	mid greyish brown clay			0.2
_	3100	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.35
_	3101	layer		subsoil	mid greyish brown silty clay			0.35
_	3102	layer		natural substrate	mid orangey brown clay			
_	3200	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.4
_	3201	layer		subsoil	light greyish brown silty clay			0.2
_	3202	layer		natural substrate	mid orangey brown clay			
_	3300	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.4
_	3301	layer		natural substrate	mid greyish brown silty clay			0.2
_	3400	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.35
_	3401	layer		natural substrate	mid orangey brown clay with occasional gravel			
_	3500	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.3
_	3501	layer		subsoil	mid greyish brown silty clay			0.25
_	3502	layer		natural substrate	mid orangey red clay			
_	3600	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.35
_	3601	layer		subsoil	mid reddish brown sandy clay			0.2
_	3602	layer		natural substrate	mid yellowish brown clay with patches of gravel			
_	3700	layer		topsoil	light brown silty clay			0.25
_	3701	layer		subsoil	light brownish yellow silty clay			0.45
_	3702	layer		natural substrate	compact mid brownish red clay			
_	3800	layer		topsoil	light brown silty clay			0.25
_	3801	layer		subsoil	light brownish yellow silty clay			0.45
_	3802	layer		natural substrate	compact mid brownish red clay			
_	3900	layer		topsoil	light greyish brown silty clay			0.35
_	3901	layer		subsoil	light yellowish grey silty clay			0.4
_	3902	layer		natural substrate	compact mid brownish red clay			
_	4000	layer		topsoil	light greyish brown silty clay			0.2
_	4001	layer		subsoil	mid brownish yellow silty clay			0.3
_	4002	layer		colluvium	Mid reddish brown silty clay			0.25
_	4003	layer		natural substrate	compact mid brownish red clay with occasional gravel			
_	4100	layer		topsoil	loose light brownish grey silty clay			0.35
_	4101	layer		subsoil	mid yellowish brown silty clay			0.4
_	4102	layer		natural substrate	compact light reddish brown clay			
_	4200	layer		topsoil	loose light brownish grey silty clay			0.3
_	4201	layer		subsoil	mid yellowish brown silty clay			>0.1
_	4300	layer		topsoil	loose light brownish grey silty clay			0.25
_	4301	layer		subsoil	mid yellowish brown silty clay			0.3
_	4302	layer		natural substrate	compact light reddish brown clay			

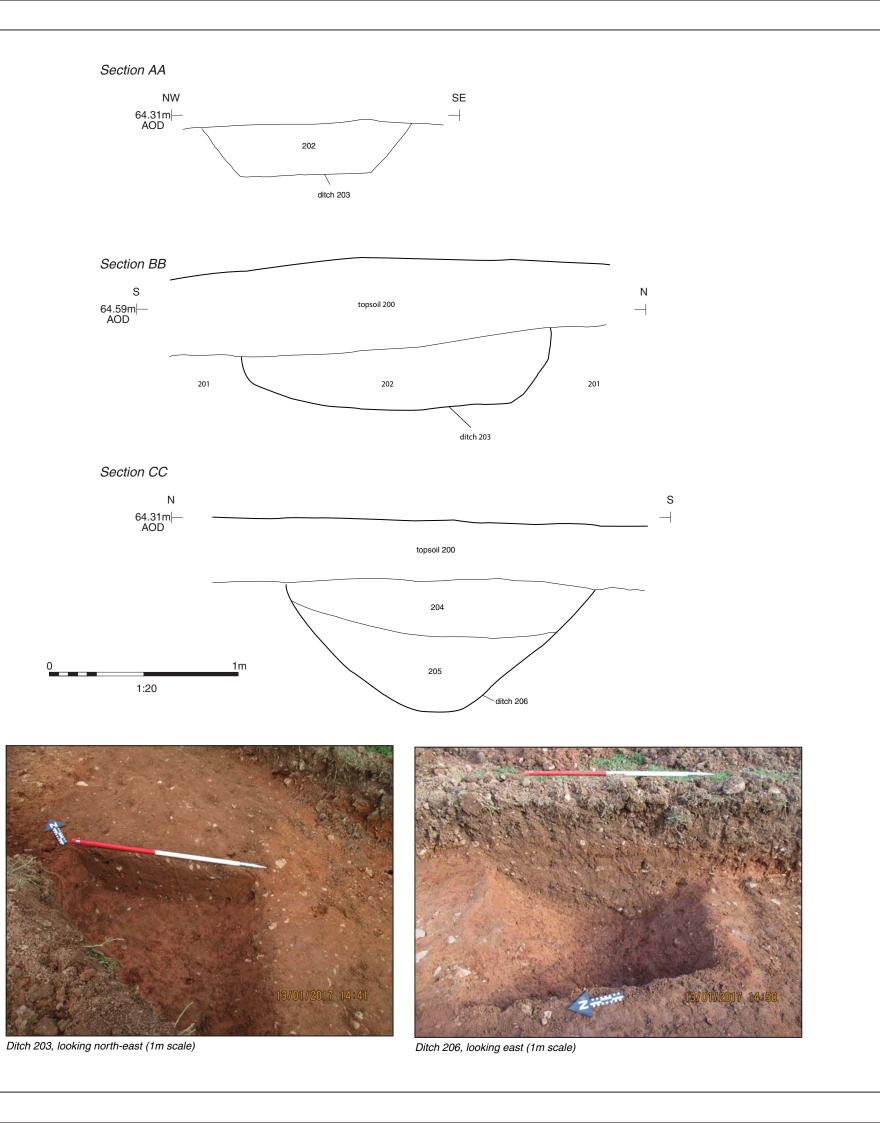
APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

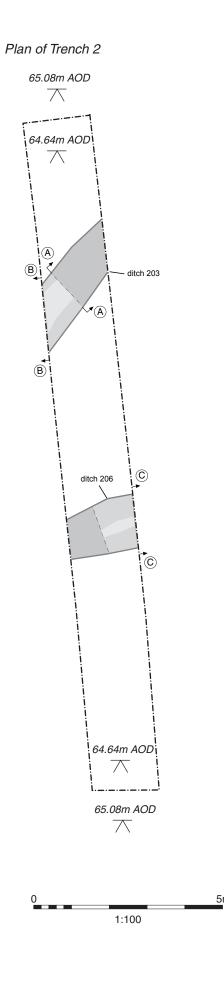
PROJECT DETAILS						
Project name Stoneshill Solar Farm, Five Bridges, Cullompton, Devon						
Short description	In January–March 2017, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation and an archaeological watching brief at Stoneshill Farm, Five Bridges, Cullompton, Devon.					
	The archaeological works recorded five undated ditches. Three of these ditches were on the same alignment as extant and former field boundaries; the remaining two were on a slightly different alignment, but may also represent former drainage or boundary features.					
	Although undated artefactually, two of the ditches were cut through the subsoil and sealed by the topsoil, indicating that they are post-medieval in date.					
Project dates	13 January, 31January–1 March 2017					
Project type	Evaluation and Watching Brief					
Previous work	Desk-Based Assessment (Wardell Armstrong 2013)					
	Geophysical Survey (GSB Prospection 2014)					
Future work	Unknown	Unknown				
PROJECT LOCATION						
Site location	Five Bridges, Cullompton, Devon					
Study area (m²/ha)	c. 12ha					
Site co-ordinates	ST 02683 09863					
PROJECT CREATORS						
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology					
Project Brief originator	N/A					
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology					
Project Manager	Derek Evans					
Project Supervisor	Christina Tapply and Jonathan Orellana					
MONUMENT TYPE	None					
	GNIFICANT FINDS None ROJECT ARCHIVES Intended final location of archive Content					
PROJECT ARCHIVES		Content				
Physical	N/A N/A					
Paper	N/A N/A					
Digital						
BIBLIOGRAPHY						
Cotswold Archaeology 2017 Stoneshill Solar Farm, Five Bridges, Cullopmton, Devon: Archaeological Evaluation						
and Watching Brief CA typescript report 171	35					

13











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3

PROJECT TITLE

Stoneshill Solar Farm, Five Bridges, Cullompton, Devon

FIGURE TITLE

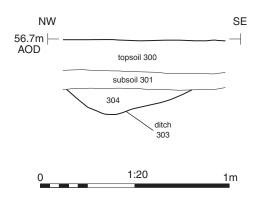
Trench 2: plan, sections and photographs

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 PROJECT NO.
 880164
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 CHECKED BY
 DB
 DATE
 30/03/17

 APPROVED BY
 DE
 SCALE@A3
 1:20 & 1:100

Section DD





Ditch 303, looking north-east (1m scale)





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Stoneshill Solar Farm, Five Bridges, Cullompton, Devon

FIGURE TITLE
Section and photograph

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CHECKED BY DJB
APPROVED BY DE

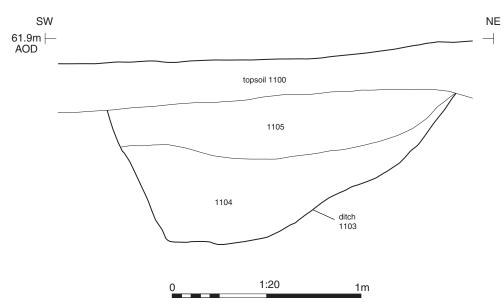
 PROJECT NO.
 880164

 DATE
 03/03/2017

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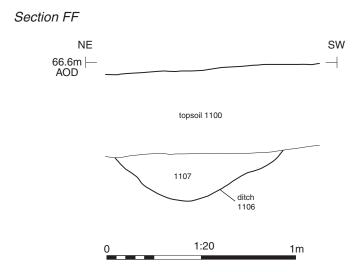
FIGURE NO.

Section EE





Ditch 1103, looking north-west (1m scale)





Ditch 1106, looking south-east (1m scale)



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Sections and photographs

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5



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