

# Cotswold Archaeology

Hyde Farm Olney Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire



for Anesco

CA Project: 660715 CA Report: 17099 Site Code HYS 16 HER Event Number EMK1293

March 2017



Andover Cirencester Exeter Milton Keynes

# Hyde Farm Olney Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire

# Archaeological Watching Brief

CA Project: 660715 CA Report: 17099 Site Code HYS 16 HER Event Number EMK1293



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#### SUMMARY

Project Name:	Hyde Farm
Location:	Olney, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire
NGR:	SP 8834 5380
Туре:	Watching Brief
Date:	3-27 January 2017
Planning Reference:	15/01791/FUL
Location of Archive:	Buckinghamshire County Museum
Accession Number:	ТВС
Site Code:	HYS 16

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks for the construction of a solar farm; to include the installation of solar panels, underground cabling, inverter/transformer stations, DNO, client substation, spare parts container, landscaping and other associated works at Hyde Farm, Olney, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified during groundworks, and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In January 2017 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Anesco at Hyde Farm, Olney, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire (centred on NGR: SP 8834 5380; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to a planning consent for the construction of a solar farm; to include the installation of solar panels, underground cabling, inverter/transformer stations, DNO, client substation, spare parts container, landscaping and other associated works (Planning ref: 15/01791/FUL).
- 1.2 The scope of the watching brief was detailed within an email dated 12th November 2015 from Nick Crank, Milton Keynes Council's Archaeological Officer (MKCAO; the archaeological advisor to MKC) to Adam Smith the Senior Planning Officer, MKC. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a subsequent detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2016) and approved by the Local Planning Authority acting on the advice of Nick Crank. The fieldwork also adhered to the Standard and guidance for an 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 (Historic England 2015). The programme was monitored by Nick Crank.

#### The site

- 1.3 The proposed development site is approximately 11.5ha in size and is located on high ground, at approximately 80m above Ordnance Datum, *c.* 1.2km north of the town of Olney in Buckinghamshire. It comprises two fields demarcated by a hedged boundary running west-south-west to east-north-east. A section of the Milton Keynes Boundary Walk (a bridleway and public footpath) follows the northern boundary of the site and a small watercourse flows west to east, 15m to the north of this right of way.
- 1.6 The solid geology of the site is variable. The northern field comprises mudstone of the Oxford Clay Formation; whilst the southern field comprises limestone of the Cornbrash Formation. This bedrock was laid down approximately 168 to 157 million years ago during the Middle and Late Jurassic Periods.

- 1.7 Overlying the mudstone bedrock is diamicton sediment, formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period.
- 1.8 The natural geological substrate observed on site was recorded as being a mid yellowish brown compact silty clay across the majority of the site, with some pockets of mid orangey brown compact sandy clay towards the south.

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 A Heritage Desk Based Assessment (HDBA) was prepared in support of the planning application for development of the site (CA 2015). No heritage assets were identified within the proposed development site. A summary of the findings of that assessment, along with the results of a subsequent geophysical survey (ArchaeoPhysica Ltd 2015) are given below.

## Prehistoric (up to AD 43)

- 2.2 Cropmarks of a circular feature measuring approximately 20m in diameter are recorded *c*. 730m south-south-west of the site. Its form is consistent with a prehistoric (or Roman period) round barrow. Further cropmarks were visible *c*. 575m to the west, comprising two lengths of a straight ditch, which may represent two sides of a rectangular or sub-rectangular enclosure.
- 2.3 A Late Iron Age settlement is recorded at Ashfurlong, which expands and evolves during the Roman period.

#### Roman (AD 43 - 410)

2.4 Located c. 1km south-east of the site a 'Roman' village or proto-urban settlement was first identified through surface finds collected in the 19th century. A bronze statuette of Mercury is recorded by Storer (1893) and the location marked on Ordnance Survey mapping dating to 1882. Ploughing in 1964 yielded further significant amounts of Roman period material; comprising 2nd to 4th century AD pottery, building materials, and coins (Zeepvat and Radford 2007, 9). The plotting of cropmarks visible on aerial photographs (Allen 1979) revealed a complex of enclosures, parallel linear ditches and ring ditches. A number of archaeological watching briefs (cf. MEF 1975; Walsh 2015) have unearthed the structural remains of roundhouses, roads/tracks, stone buildings and a hypocaust; indicative of occupation between the Late Iron Age and early Roman periods. Extending over 25ha, it was designated as a Scheduled Monument in 1976.

2.5 A notable distribution of associated surface material extends beyond the northwesterly boundary of this Scheduled Monument. On high ground to the west of Warrington Road, numerous pottery sherds (including Samian ware and mortaria rims), a bronze fragment, a knife blade and part of a shale bracelet have been found. Approximately 420m south-east of the site, a scatter of almost 100 pottery sherds and tile fragments were recovered from walking a field adjacent to where a Roman skillet/*patera* had previously been found during ditch clearance.

## Early Medieval (AD 410 – 1066)

2.6 A Roman and/or Saxon cemetery has been posited for the northern end of Olney town. Burials have been recorded here, but excavation found no trace of a church or other buildings (Green and Beckley 2010, 32, 35). A charter of AD 979 refers to Ollanege, thought to mean 'Olla's Island' (Mawer and Stenton 1925); this makes Olney one of the earliest documented towns in Buckinghamshire (Green and Beckley 2010, 5). Belonging to Burgred, descendant of the King of Mercia, a meeting of the Royal Council is said to have taken place here in 1016 (ibid). After the Norman Conquest, 'Olnei' was granted to Bishop Geoffrey of Coutances. The Domesday Book records woodland, meadows, ploughlands and a mill; and a sizeable population of 34 households.

#### Medieval (1066 - 1539)

- 2.7 These lands were transferred to the Earl of Chester shortly after the coronation of King William II in 1087. The following two centuries saw Olney expand into a large village and then a small town, delineated by the High Street (VCH 1927).
- 2.8 The Grade I Listed Church of St Peter and St Paul was constructed *c*. 1330, at the southern end of the town of Olney. The site seems to have always lain within its parish.
- 2.9 A deserted medieval settlement is known at Olney Hyde, c. 330m north-west of the site. This seems to have been entirely separate from the town of Olney. Archaeological investigation in 1967 and 1969 identified an L-shaped building, house platforms, a hollow-way, paved surfaces, workshops and kilns: representing

'a major medieval pottery production centre, supplying pottery to towns in Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Northants.' (Green and Beckley 2010, 38).

- 2.10 A total of 13 kiln sites at Olney Hyde are noted by Historic England and the Milton Keynes Historic Environment Record. Excavation of one single-flue up-draught example (MMK277) also revealed an associated potter's workshop, ancillary features, a clay pit and a roadway. Considerable quantities of tile fragments and pottery sherds (including wasters) have been collected from across the wider area, demonstrating that this industry produced unglazed jugs and cooking pots (termed Olney Hyde ware) throughout the 13th and 14th century (Mynard 1984).
- 2.11 References to Olney Hyde are found in sources dated 1261, 1353, 1374 and 1411 (VCH 1927). Occupied between the 12th and 15th century, the effects of famine and the Black Death eventually led to its abandonment.
- 2.12 Lidar data revealed of ridge and furrow south of Olney Park Farm, immediately abutting Yardley Road. A winding earthwork runs from Smith's Farm and joins the south-western edge of the site. This curving hedge-line would seem to be an historic field boundary, possibly between arable land and pasture.

#### Modern (1800 – present)

2.13 Small-scale industry is known in the northern part of Olney parish during the 19th century. Two brick-kiln sites lie *c*. 175m north-west and *c*. 500m north-east of the proposed development. These are marked on the Ordnance Survey map of 1882 and trade directories for the period 1830–47 record a number of brick-makers based in Olney.

# **Geophysical Survey**

- 2.14 The survey identified subtle changes in geology across the site and a number of features of potential archaeological interest, with the southern half of an enclosure visible in the northern field and a rectangular enclosure and the northern arc of a possible third enclosure in the southern field.
- 2.15 Overlying the potential enclosures are linear cultivation furrows, the sinuous form of which suggests they are of medieval or early post-medieval date.

#### 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 2016). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks comprising of topsoil stripping ahead of the construction of an access road (Trench 1; Fig. 2); two trenches related to the installation of transformer boxes each measuring 7m long by 4m (Trenches 4 and 5; Fig. 2 and 4) and the excavation of a further trench for a substation measuring 8m long by 5m wide (Trench 6; Fig. 2 and 5) and a series of narrow cable trenches of various lengths (Trenches 7,8,9,10 and 11; Fig. 2)
- 4.2 Written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 The site archive from the watching brief is currently held by CA at its offices in Milton Keynes and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum under an accession number yet to be confirmed. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix C will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

# 5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-5)

5.1 The natural geological substrate varied slightly across the site, with a deposit consisting of mid yellowish brown compact silty clay being revealed across the majority of the site, at an average depth of 0.27m below present ground level (bpgl). This was overlain by a dark greyish brown compact silty clay topsoil averaging

between 0.14m and 0.38m in thickness. The only variation to this sequence was observed within Trench 6, where the geological substrate was recorded as being a layer of mid yellowish grey compact silty clay measuring at least 0.26m in thickness, which was sealed by a further geological layer comprising a mid grey orange compact sandy clay which measured 0.8m thick. This in turn was sealed by the topsoil, which was recorded as being 0.34m thick at this location.

5.2 No features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed during groundworks and, despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.

#### 6. THE FINDS

6.1 Artefactual material recovered from the evaluation is listed in Appendix B and discussed below.

#### Pottery

6.2 A total of four sherds (315g) of pottery was recorded from three deposits.

#### Roman

6.3 Two sherds of pottery dating to the Roman period were recorded, both redeposited within topsoil features and highly abraded. A single sherd in a sandy greyware (GW) was recorded from topsoil 100 and a single sherd of a grog-tempered fabric (Gt) from topsoil 400. Dating to the early or mid 1st century AD is likely for the grog-tempered sherd. Only broad dating, spanning the later 1st to 4th centuries AD is possible for the greyware sherd.

#### Post-medieval

6.4 Two sherds of glazed earthenware, dateable to from the mid 16th to 18th centuries were recorded from topsoils 100 and 500.

#### Post-medieval and modern

6.5 A single item of ceramic building material was recorded from topsoil 500 and is too fragmentary to discern original form or to assign a date.

#### 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.

#### 8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken over the course of the watching brief by James Coyne, Peter Boyer, Samuel Dixon and Luis Gomes. The report was written by James Coyne and Samuel Dixon. The illustrations were prepared by Esther Escudero. The archive has been compiled by Emily Evans, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Michelle Collings.

## 9. REFERENCES

Allen, M. *et al.* 2015 The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain: an online resource. <u>http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/romangl/query.cfm</u>, last accessed 23 April 2015

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Green, D. and Beckley, R. 2010 *Olney: Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Assessment Report.* Buckinghamshire County Council. Available online: <u>http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/1567074/Olney-Final-Report.pdf</u>, accessed 28 April 2015

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#### APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Туре	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thick ness (m)	Spot- date
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish brown compact silty clay with moderate small stones and sub-angular flint.	n/a	n/a	0.38	
1	101	Layer		Natural	Mid yellowish brown compact silty clay. Only observed gradually appearing at the lower levels of the topsoil layer.	n/a	n/a	n/a	

Trench No.	Context No.	Туре	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thick ness (m)	Spot- date
2	200	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish brown compact silty clay with moderate small stones and sub-angular flint.	n/a	n/a	0.27	
2	201	Layer		Natural	Mid yellowish brown compact silty clay with moderate small, rounded and sub-rounded stones and chalk flecks. Contains pockets of mid orangey brown compact sandy clay with moderate small stones.	n/a	n/a		

Trench No.	Context No.	Туре	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thick ness (m)	Spot- date
3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish brown compact silty clay with moderate small stones and sub-angular flint.	n/a	n/a	0.29	
3	301	Layer		Natural	Mid yellowish brown compact silty clay with moderate small stones, sub-angular flint and chalk flecks.	n/a	n/a	>0.95	

Trench No.	Context No.	Туре	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thick ness (m)	Spot- date
4	400	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish brown compact silty clay with moderate small stones and sub-angular flint.	n/a	n/a	0.25	
4	401	Layer		Natural	Mid yellowish brown compact silty clay	n/a	n/a	>0.39	

Trench No.	Context No.	Туре	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thick ness (m)	Spot- date
5	500	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish brown compact silty clay with moderate small stones and sub-angular flint.	n/a	n/a	0.22	
5	501	Layer		Natural	Mid yellowish brown compact silty clay	n/a	n/a	>0.32	

Trench No.	Context No.	Туре	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thick ness (m)	Spot- date
6	600	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish brown compact silty clay with moderate small stones and sub-angular flint.	n/a	n/a	0.34	

6	601	Layer	Natural	Mid greyish orange compact silty clay with moderate small sub- rounded stones.	n/a	n/a	0.8	
6	602		Natural	Mid yellowish grey compact silty clay.	n/a	n/a	>0.26	

Trench No.	Context No.	Туре	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thick ness (m)	Spot- date
7	700	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish brown compact silty clay with moderate small stones and sub-angular flint.	n/a	n/a	0.19	
7	701	Layer		Natural	Mid yellowish brown compact silty clay with moderate small, rounded and sub-rounded stones and chalk flecks. Contains pockets of mid orangey brown compact sandy clay with moderate small stones.	n/a	n/a	>1.04	

Trench No.	Context No.	Туре	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thick ness (m)	Spot- date
8	800	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish brown compact silty clay with moderate small stones and sub-angular flint.	n/a	n/a	0.28	
8	801	Layer		Natural	Mid yellowish brown compact silty clay with moderate small, rounded and sub-rounded stones and chalk flecks. Contains pockets of mid orangey brown compact sandy clay with moderate small stones.	n/a	n/a	>1.07	

Trench No.	Context No.	Туре	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thick ness (m)	Spot- date
9	900	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish brown compact silty clay with moderate small stones and sub-angular flint.	n/a	n/a	0.14	
9	901	Layer		Natural	Mid yellowish brown compact silty clay with moderate small rounded stones and chalk flecks.	n/a	n/a	>0.36	

Trench No.	Context No.	Туре	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thick ness (m)	Spot- date
10	1000	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish brown compact silty clay with moderate small stones and sub-angular flint.	n/a	n/a	0.22	
10	1001	Layer		Natural	Mid yellowish brown compact silty clay with moderate small rounded stones and chalk flecks.	n/a	n/a	>0.22	

Trench No.	Context No.	Туре	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thick ness (m)	Spot- date
11	1100	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish brown compact silty clay with moderate small stones and sub-angular flint.	n/a	n/a	0.4	
11	1101	Layer		Natural	Mid grey brown compact silty clay with occasional chalk flecks.	n/a	n/a	>1.5	

#### **APPENDIX B : THE FINDS**

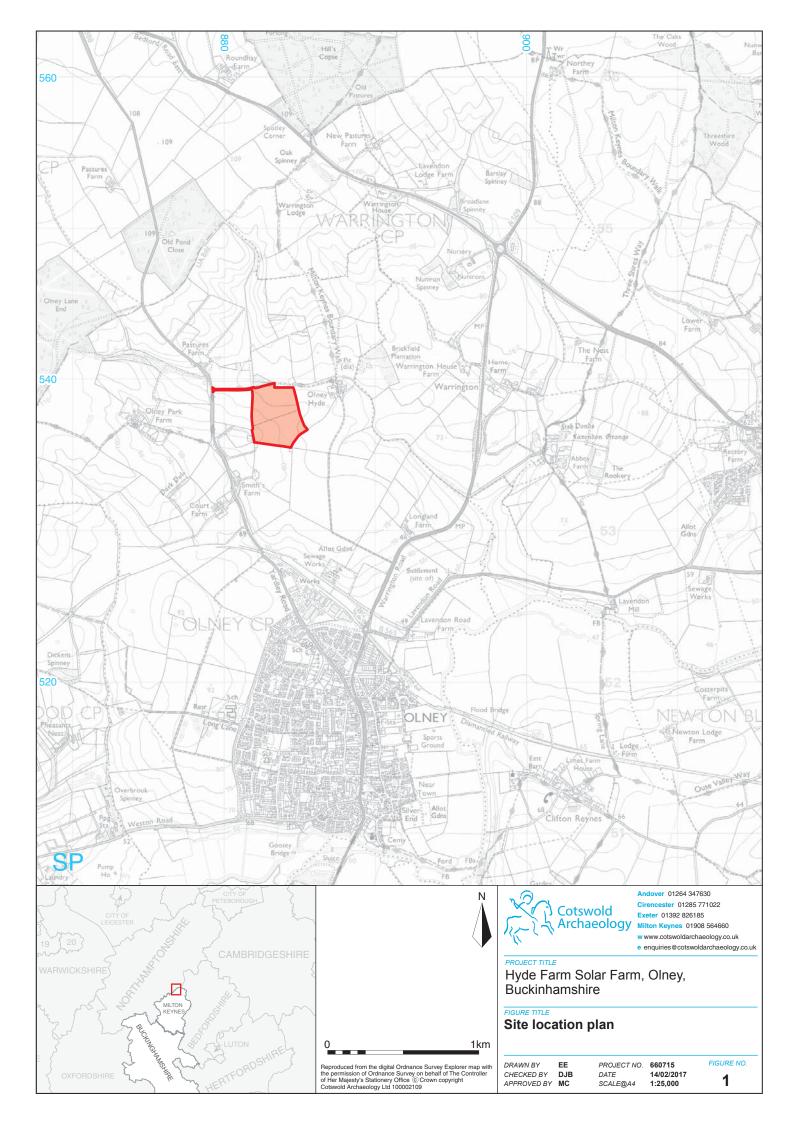
Table 1: finds concordance

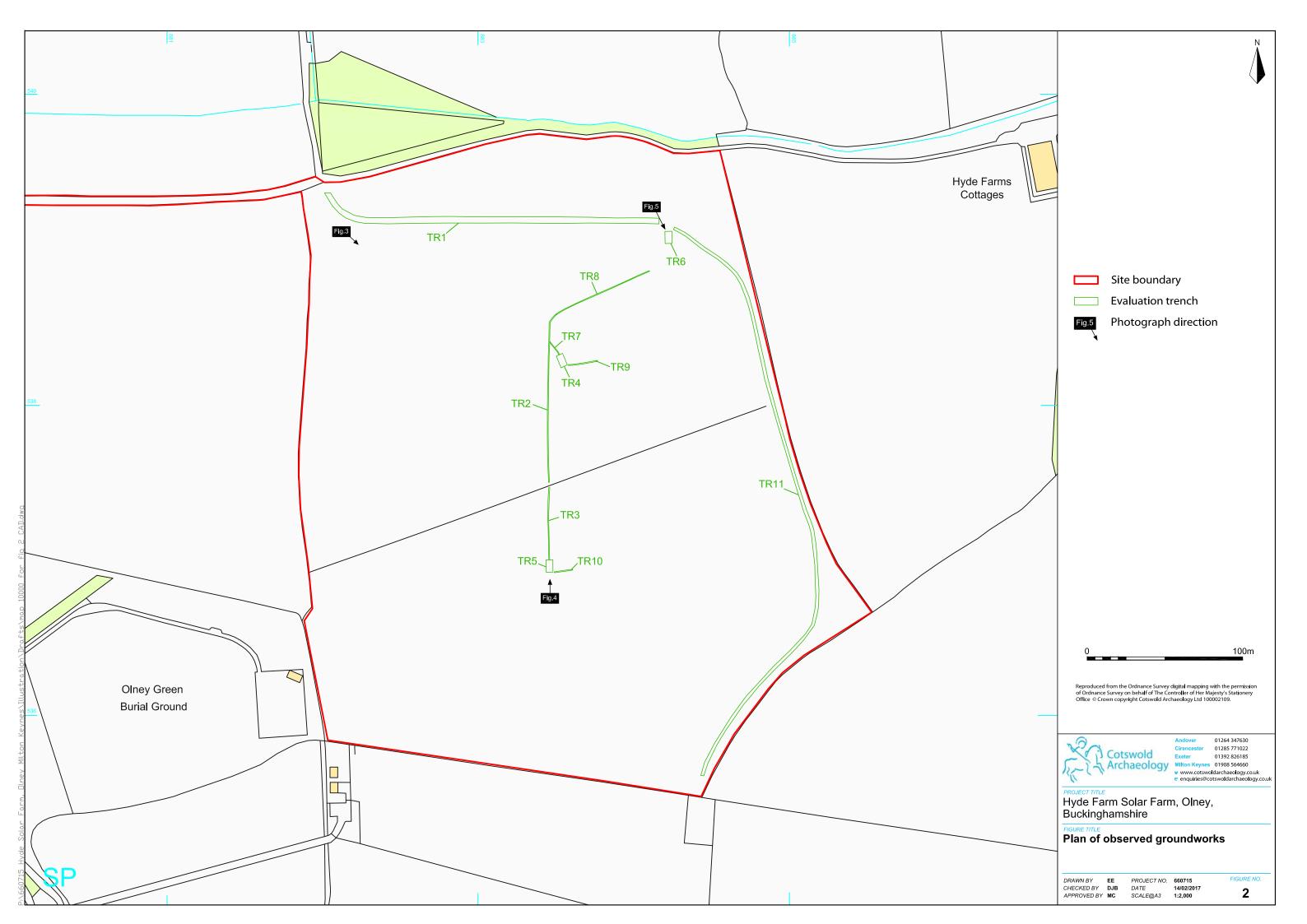
Context	Class	Description	Ct.	Wt.(g)	Spot-date
100	100 post-medieval pottery		1	89	MC16-C18
	Roman pottery	GW	1	6	
400	Roman pottery	Gt	1	14	RB
500	post-medieval pottery	GEW	1	4	MC16-C18
	СВМ	frag	1	5	

#### APPENDIX C : OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Name	Hyde Farm, Olney, Milton Keynes						
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with construction of a solar farm; to include the installation of solar panels, underground cabling, inverter/transformer stations, DNO, client substation, spare parts container, landscaping and other associated works at Hyde Farm, Olney, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire. No features or deposits of archaeological significance were						
		observed during groundworks, and no artefactual material pre					
Project dates	dating the modern period was recovered. 3-27January	•					
	Watching Brief						
Project type							
Previous work	Geophysical Survey, ArchaeoPhysica Ltd 2015 Heritage desk based assessment, Cotswold Archaeology 2016						
Future work	Unknown						
PROJECT LOCATION							
Site Location	Hyde Farm, Olney, Milton Keynes, Bucki	nghamshire					
Study area (M <sup>2</sup> /ha)	11.5ha						
Site co-ordinates	SP 8834 5380						
PROJECT CREATORS							
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology						
Project Brief originator	Milton Keynes Council						
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	Cotswold Archaeology					
Project Manager	Michelle Collings						
Project Supervisor	James Coyne/Samuel Dixon						
MONUMENT TYPE	None						
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None						
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)					
Physical	Buckinghamshire County Museum	N/A					
Paper	Buckinghamshire County Museum	Site archive					
Digital	Buckinghamshire County Museum	Photographs, survey data, Report					

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Site looking south-east



Trench 5 looking north (1m scale)



Trench 6 looking south-east (1m scale)

3



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PROJECT TITLE Hyde Farm Solar Farm, Olney, Buckinghamshire

# FIGURE TITLE Photographs

DRAWN BY EE CHECKED BY DJB APPROVED BY MC

5

 PROJECT NO.
 660715

 DATE
 14/02/2017

 SCALE@A3
 NA

FIGURE NO. 3 - 5



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