

Parchfield Farm  
Rugeley  
Staffordshire

*Archaeological Evaluation*



for  
Solstice Renewables Ltd

CA Project: 5719  
CA Report: 16362  
Site Code: PFR15  
Accession Number: 2015.LH.187

September 2016



# Parchfield Farm Rugeley Staffordshire

## Archaeological Evaluation

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project Location:</b>	Parchfield Farm, Rugeley, Staffordshire
<b>NGR:</b>	SK 05149 19423
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date:</b>	27 – 30 June 2016
<b>Planning Reference:</b>	Lichfield District Council 15/00834/FULM
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with Potteries Museum & Art Gallery
<b>Accession Number:</b>	2015.LH.187
<b>Site Code:</b>	PFR 15

In June 2016, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation for Solstice Renewables Ltd at Parchfield Farm, Rugeley, Staffordshire. The evaluation was undertaken to comply with a condition attached to planning consent for the installation of a solar farm and associated infrastructure at the site.

A geophysical survey of the site had identified anomalies of possible archaeological interest, consisting of possible pit-like features, an 'L' shaped ditch and other unclassified anomalies. The evaluation demonstrated that these anomalies were of natural or geological origin, comprising tree throws and variations in the geological substrate.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In June 2016, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Solstice Renewables Ltd at Parchfield Farm, Rugeley, Staffordshire (site centred on NGR: SK 05149 19423; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to comply with Condition 4 of the Decision Notice issued by Lichfield District Council (LDC), which granted planning permission for the installation of a 1.7 MW Solar PV farm and associated infrastructure at the site (planning ref: 15/00834/FULM).
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) prepared by CA (2015b) and approved by Stephen Dean, Staffordshire County Council's Principal Archaeologist (SCCPA).
- 1.3 The project was carried out in accordance with the WSI (*ibid.*) and abided by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (CIfA 2014) and the Historic England (formerly English Heritage) procedural documents *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (EH1991) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (HE 2015).

### ***The site***

- 1.4 The site covered approximately 7.9ha and comprised of four agricultural fields bounded to the east by a stream and the remainder of the site is surrounded by further agricultural fields (Fig. 1). The proposed solar farm will cover the northern part of the site (approximately 3ha). The boundaries are defined by a combination of tree lines, post and wire fences and hedgerows. The site is roughly flat, lying at approximately 70m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 1.5 The bedrock geology of the area comprises Triassic rocks of the Bromsgrove Sandstone Formation, overlain by superficial Quaternary deposits of River Terrace 1 sand and gravel (BGS 2016). The geological substrate was identified in all of the excavated trenches and comprised of orange red sand, silt and gravel.

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site has been presented in detail in a Heritage Desk-based Assessment (DBA) prepared by CA (2015a). In brief, this demonstrated that there are no designated heritage assets within the site, although a geophysical survey of the site, carried out by Wessex Archaeology (2015), identified anomalies of possible archaeological interest consisting of possible pit-like features, an 'L' shaped ditch and other unclassified anomalies.
- 2.2 The DBA concluded that there is no evidence to suggest that the site was a focal point of prehistoric or Romano-British activity. From the medieval period onwards the site is likely to have comprised agricultural land associated with the surrounding medieval and post-medieval manors, and latterly with Parchfield Farm. Any unknown archaeological features dating to the medieval and post-medieval periods are likely to comprise agricultural features of low archaeological significance.

## 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the evaluation, as stated in the WSI (CA 2015b), 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 with *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (ClfA 2014), the evaluation has been designed to be minimally intrusive and minimally destructive to archaeological remains. The information gathered will enable LDC, as advised by SCCPA, 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 12 trenches in the locations shown in Figure 2. All but one of the trenches measured 50m long by 2.2m wide; Trench 12 was shortened to a length of 25m due to the southern half of the trench being located within an active caravan park. Trench 9 was moved c. 3m to the west of its

intended location due to the identification of a buried service on the western edge of the trench.

- 4.2 Trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with *Technical Manual 4: Survey Manual* (CA 2014). The trenches were excavated using a 360-degree mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the geological substrate, whichever was encountered first. Features and deposits were excavated by hand and recorded in accordance with *Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual* (CA 2007).
- 4.3 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with *Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites* (CA 2003); no deposits were encountered that were suitable for sampling. There were no finds.
- 4.4 The archive from the evaluation is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble and will be deposited with Potteries Museum & Art Gallery under accession number 2015.LH.187. A summary of information from this project, as set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 5. EVALUATION RESULTS

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are to be found in Appendix A.
- 5.2 Trenches 1-7 and 9-11 contained no archaeological features or deposits (Figs 3–5). Five tree throws were identified within the northern half of Trench 8 (Fig. 6). Two unexcavated modern pits were identified within Trench 12 that both cut the subsoil and contained modern bricks.
- 5.3 The geological substrate, comprising sand and gravels, was encountered at a depth of between 0.5–0.7m below present ground level in all trenches. It was overlain by a layer of subsoil, up to 0.3m thick, which was in turn sealed by up to 0.4m of topsoil.

Both the topsoil and the subsoil contained a high proportion of rounded gravels indicating that the natural substrate had been disturbed by ploughing.

## 6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were identified during the course of the evaluation. The evaluation results broadly correlate with the conclusions of the preceding desk-based assessment (CA 2015a), which suggested that most of the site could be considered to be of limited archaeological significance.
- 6.2 Most geophysical anomalies tested during trenching have been shown to represent either geological or natural features such as tree throws. Within Trench 8 three of the geophysical anomalies were excavated and found to be tree throws, while the other two correlated to geological silt patches. No features were identified corresponding to the 'L' shaped linear anomaly.

## 7. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1 The fieldwork was undertaken by Alison Roberts, assisted by Danielle Adams, Andrew Hurst and Liam Wilson. The report was written by Alison Roberts, with illustrations prepared by Leo Heatley. The archive has been compiled by Alison Roberts and prepared for deposition by Jessica Cook. The project was managed for CA by Simon Carlyle.

## 8. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2016 *Geology of Britain Viewer* <http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed 1 July 2016

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015a *Parchfield Farm, Rugeley, Staffordshire: Heritage Desk-Based Assessment*. CA Typescript Report **15288**

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015b *Parchfield Farm, Rugeley, Staffordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*, unpublished document



DCLG (Department of Communities and Local Government) 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework*

Wessex Archaeology 2015 *Parchfield Solar Park, Rugeley, Staffordshire: Detailed Gradiometer Survey Report*



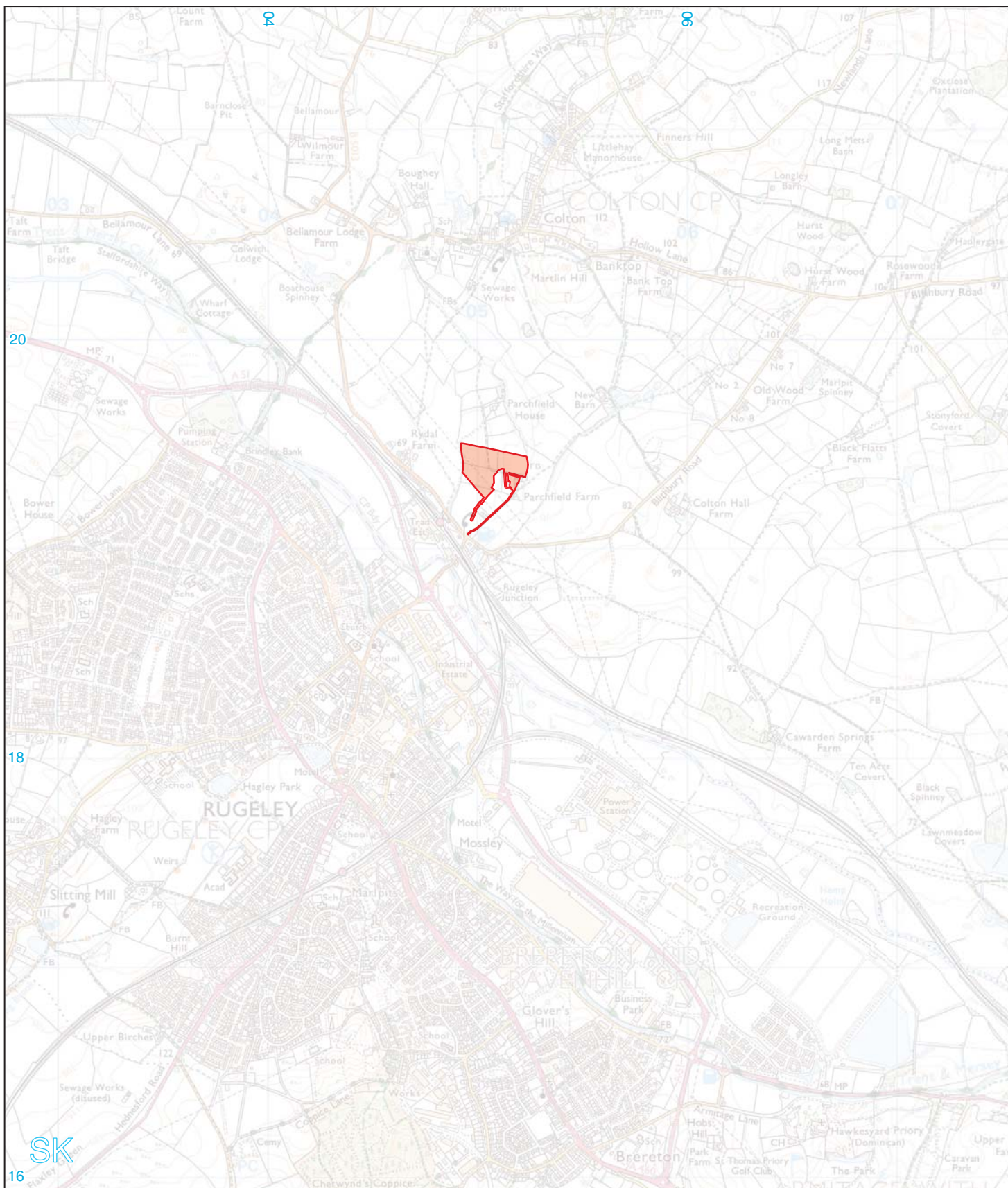
## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Dark brown sandy silt, common small stones	50	2.2	0.4
1	101	Layer		Subsoil	Light reddish brown sandy silt, frequent small stones	50	2.2	0.22
1	102	Layer		Geology	River terrace sands and gravels within an orange red silty matrix	50	2.2	-
2	200	Layer		Topsoil	Dark brown sandy silt, common small stones	50	2.2	0.38
2	201	Layer		Subsoil	Light reddish brown sandy silt, frequent small stones	50	2.2	0.08
2	202	Layer		Geology	River terrace sands and gravels within an orange red silty matrix	50	2.2	-
3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Dark brown sandy silt, common small stones	50	2.2	0.29
3	301	Layer		Subsoil	Light reddish brown sandy silt, frequent small stones	50	2.2	0.23
3	302	Layer		Geology	River terrace sands and gravels within an orange red silty matrix	50	2.2	-
4	400	Layer		Topsoil	Dark brown sandy silt, common small stones	50	2.2	0.45
4	401	Layer		Subsoil	Light reddish brown sandy silt, frequent small stones	50	2.2	0.27
4	402	Layer		Geology	River terrace sands and gravels within an orange red silty matrix	50	2.2	-
5	500	Layer		Topsoil	Dark brown sandy silt, common small stones	50	2.2	0.38
5	501	Layer		Subsoil	Light reddish brown sandy silt, frequent small stones	50	2.2	0.22
5	502	Layer		Geology	River terrace sands and gravels within an orange red silty matrix	50	2.2	-
6	600	Layer		Topsoil	Dark brown sandy silt, common small stones	50	2.2	0.3
6	601	Layer		Subsoil	Light reddish brown sandy silt, frequent small stones	50	2.2	0.22
6	602	Layer		Geology	River terrace sands and gravels within an orange red silty matrix	50	2.2	-
7	700	Layer		Topsoil	Dark brown sandy silt, common small stones	50	2.2	0.33
7	701	Layer		Subsoil	Light reddish brown sandy silt, frequent small stones	50	2.2	0.16
7	702	Layer		Geology	River terrace sands and gravels within an orange red silty matrix	50	2.2	-
8	800	Layer		Topsoil	Dark brown sandy silt, common small stones	50	2.2	0.39
8	801	Layer		Subsoil	Light reddish brown sandy silt, frequent small stones	50	2.2	0.1
8	802	Layer		Geology	River terrace sands and gravels within an orange red silty matrix	50	2.2	-
9	900	Layer		Topsoil	Dark brown sandy silt, common small stones	50	2.2	0.35
9	901	Layer		Subsoil	Light reddish brown sandy silt, frequent small stones	50	2.2	0.27
9	902	Layer		Geology	River terrace sands and gravels within an orange red silty matrix	50	2.2	-
10	1000	Layer		Topsoil	Dark brown sandy silt, common small stones	50	2.2	0.4
10	1001	Layer		Subsoil	Light reddish brown sandy silt, frequent small stones	50	2.2	0.27
10	1002	Layer		Geology	River terrace sands and gravels within an orange red silty matrix	50	2.2	-
11	1100	Layer		Topsoil	Dark brown sandy silt, common small stones	50	2.2	0.4
11	1101	Layer		Subsoil	Light reddish brown sandy silt, frequent small stones	50	2.2	0.3
11	1102	Layer		Geology	River terrace sands and gravels within an orange red silty matrix	50	2.2	-

12	1200	Layer		Topsoil	Dark brown sandy silt, common small stones	25	2.2	0.3
12	1201	Layer		Subsoil	Light reddish brown sandy silt, frequent small stones	25	2.2	0.3
12	1202	Cut		Pit	Unexcavated modern pit	3	2.2	-
12	1203	Cut		Pit	Unexcavated modern pit	1.5	2.2	-
12	1204	Fill	1202	Pit fill	Mid grey brown sandy silt with frequent bricks, tarmac and modern gravel within	3	2.2	-
12	1205	Fill	1203	Pit fill	Mid grey brown sandy silt with frequent bricks and charcoal within	1.5	2.2	-
12	1206	Layer		Geology	River terrace sands and gravels within an orange red silty matrix	25	2.2	-

## APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	Parchfield Farm, Rugeley, Staffordshire	
Short description	A geophysical survey of the site had identified anomalies of possible archaeological interest, consisting of possible pit-like features, an 'L' shaped ditch and other unclassified anomalies. The evaluation demonstrated that these anomalies were of natural or geological origin, comprising tree throws and variations in the geological substrate.	
Project dates	27 – 30 June 2016	
Project type	Evaluation	
Previous work	Geophysical survey (Wessex Archaeology 2015); Desk-Based Assessment (CA 2015a)	
Future work	None	
Monument type	None	
Significant finds	None	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site location	Parchfield Farm, Rugeley, Staffordshire	
Study area	7.9 ha	
Site co-ordinates	SK 05149 19423	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology (CA)	
Project Brief originator	-	
Project Design (WSI) originator	CA	
Project Manager	Simon Carlyle (CA)	
Project Supervisor	Alison Roberts (CA)	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		
		Content
Physical	Potteries Museum & Art Gallery	None
Paper		Site records
Digital	Staffordshire HER	Report, digital photos
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 <i>Parchfield Farm, Rugeley, Staffordshire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report <b>16362</b>		



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**PROJECT TITLE**

Parchfield Farm, Rugeley, Staffordshire

**FIGURE TITLE**

Site location plan

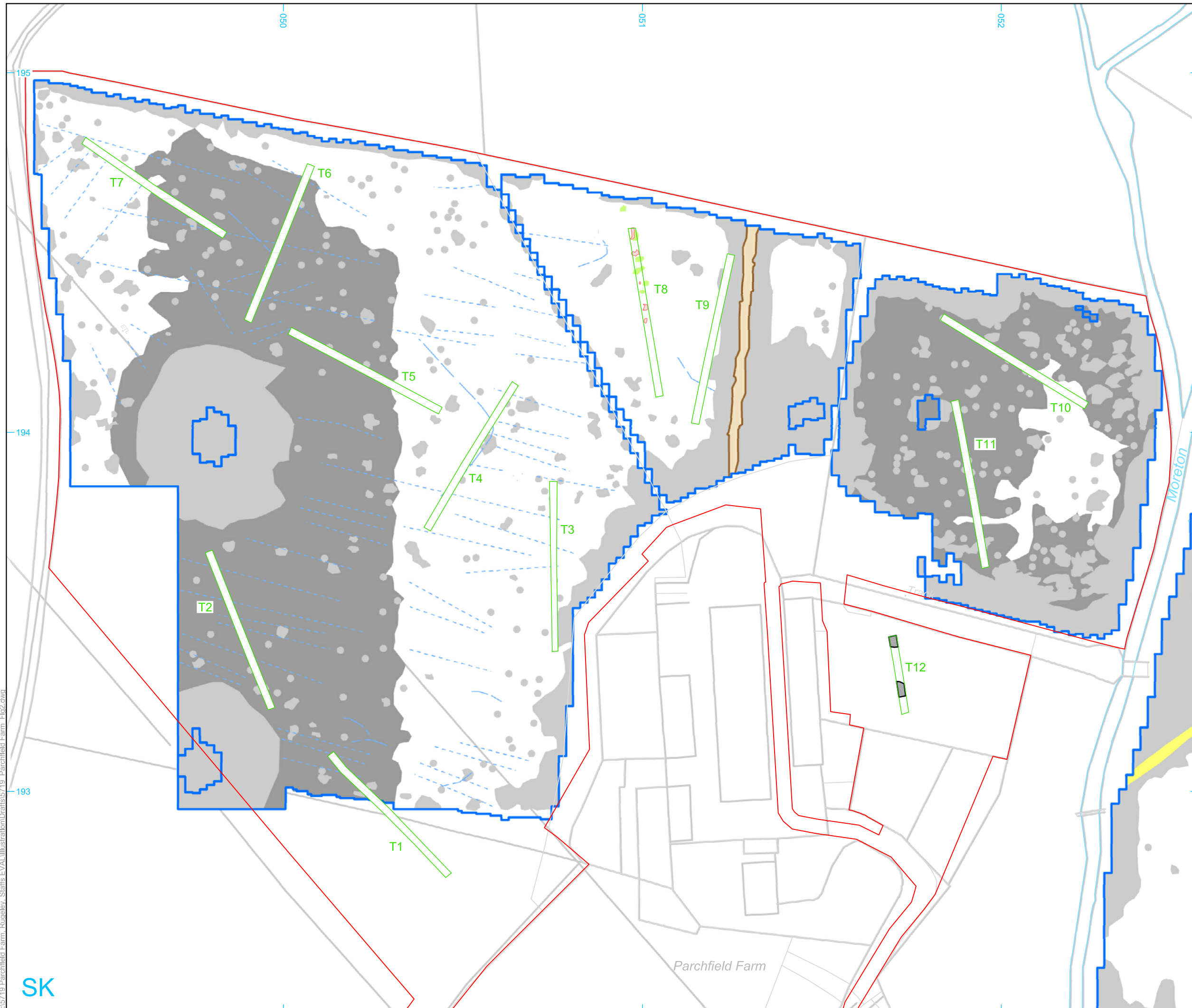
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 CHECKED BY LM  
 APPROVED BY SCC

PROJECT NO. 5719  
 DATE 04-07-2016  
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FIGURE NO.

1

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- site boundary
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- treethrow

**Geophysical Survey results  
(Wessex Archaeology 2015)**

- Detailed Survey Extents
- Ploughing
- Trend
- Possible Archaeology
- Agricultural
- Former Field Boundary
- Modern Services
- Ferrous
- Increased Magnetic Response



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
**Parchfield Farm, Rugeley**  
**Staffordshire**

**FIGURE TITLE**  
**Trench location plan showing features**  
**and geophysical survey results**

DRAWN BY	LJH	PROJECT NO.	5719	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	LM	DATE	04/07/2016	<b>2</b>
APPROVED BY	SCC	SCALE@A3	1:1250	

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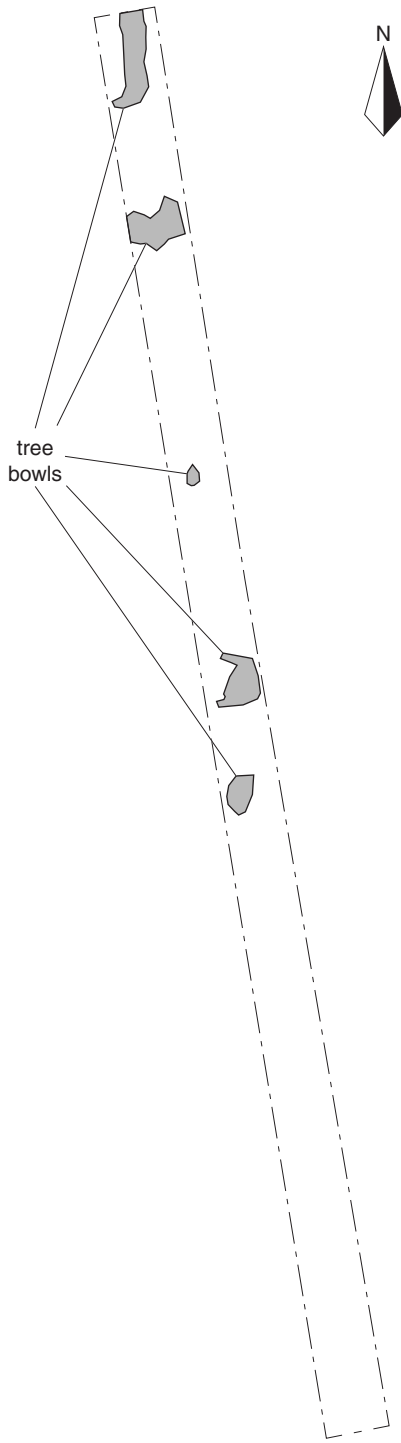
Trench 3, looking south (1m scales)



Trench 6, looking north (1m scales)



Trench 12, looking north (1m scales)

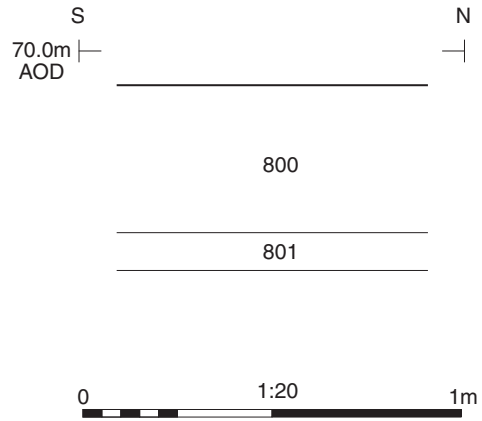


0 1:250 10m



Trench 8 looking north (scales 1m)

Section AA



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PROJECT TITLE  
 Parchfield Farm, Rugeley, Staffordshire

FIGURE TITLE  
**Trench 8: plan, section and photograph**

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CHECKED BY	LM	DATE	13/09/16	6
APPROVED BY	SCC	SCALE@A4	1:250 1:20	



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