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**Eye Airfield Industrial Estate Wind Farm  
Eye,  
Suffolk**

**Archaeological Strip and Map**

**Report No. Y099/13**

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## CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .....	3
2. WORKING METHODS.....	5
3. RESULTS.....	6
4. CONCLUSION .....	7
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	8

## APPENDICES

1. Context Register
2. Photographic Register
3. Drawing Register

## Figures

- Fig. 1 Site Location and plan  
Fig. 2 North-west facing shot of Turbine Base 2 following topsoil removal  
Fig. 3 South-east facing shot of Crane Pad 1 following topsoil removal  
Fig. 4 West-facing section of test pit along access track improvement  
Fig. 5 North-east facing shot of Turbine Base 1 following topsoil removal  
Fig. 6 East facing section of Ditch 003  
Fig. 7 West facing section of Ditch 003

## **Summary**

An archaeological strip and map survey was undertaken by CFA Archaeology on land at Eye Airfield Industrial Estate, Suffolk during groundworks for a wind farm development. Apart from a relict post-medieval field boundary no other archaeological remains were encountered.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 General**

This report presents the results of an archaeological strip and map undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) between 17 and 24 June 2013, on land adjacent to a former airfield at Eye, Suffolk.

A project design was prepared by CFA for Natural Power prior to the groundworks commencing (CFA 2012). The works were undertaken in accordance with a condition on planning consent (ref. 0385/11) following discussions with the County Archaeological Officer (CAO) Dr Jess Tipper (email dated 11/12/12, ref. EYEA/121210) and a specification produced by Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service (SCCAS 2012).

#### **1.2 Site Location and Description**

Eye Airfield Industrial estate is located on the site of Eye Airfield, c.1 mile to the north-west of the small market town of Eye, Suffolk (Fig. 1). The former airfield is surrounded by a number of enclosed fields that are bordered by Castleton Way to the south, the B1077 to the east and the A140 to the west and north. The airfield consists of three interconnecting runways and ancillary tracks that originally covered an area of 135 hectares. Much of the northern part of the airfield is currently used for light industry and agricultural storage. The surrounding land is generally flat arable farmland at around 47m AOD. Although the airfield was constructed during the Second World War much of the surrounding fields are undeveloped greenfield sites.

The wind farm development included the groundworks for two new wind turbine generators, their two crane platforms, new access tracks and upgrading of current farmers tracks. Turbine 1 was located at TM 12991 74575 and Turbine 2 was located at TM 13277 74817. Two existing wind turbines operating at the north-western part of the industrial estate were erected in 2011 (Cass 2011).

The underlying geology of the site is characterised as Crag Group – Sand Sedimentary Bedrock with superficial deposits of Lowestoft Formation, a chalky till with outwash sands, gravels, silts and clays that is known for its chalk and flint content (BGS 2013). The soils of the area are described as “medium to light, clayey loam” (NERC 2013).

#### **1.3 Previous Archaeological work**

Two recent archaeological evaluations are known to have taken place to the north of the airfield.

In 2010 five evaluation trenches were excavated on the site of a proposed industrial building, balancing ponds and an area of landscape bunding. The evaluation revealed modern activity including a modern linear feature, disturbed natural deposits that had previously been cut into and gravelled over, and elements of modern drainage that were identified as possible soakaways related to the airfield (Cass 2010).

In 2011 two trenches were excavated as part of an evaluation prior to the construction of two wind turbine generators. The investigation revealed that part of the north-west area of the site had been levelled or disturbed in the relatively recent past. This action was attributed to the construction or demolition of the airfield ground-structures in the mid-twentieth century (Cass 2011).

#### **1.4 Historical and Archaeological Background**

An extensive desk based assessment (DBA) of Eye Airfield and the surrounding area was produced in 2009 in anticipation of a previously planned wind farm development (Rolfe 2009). The DBA researched the County Historic Environment Record (HER), aerial photography, and historical maps of the surrounding area.

Eye Airfield is itself a historical cultural resource (HER no. EYE072). The airfield was constructed between 1943 and 1944 by the United States Airforce and was used by the USAF Eighth Air Force 490th Bomber Group until the end of the war. Much of the airfield's buildings still remain in various states of repair (Wrigley 2013). The northern part of the airfield is constructed over the site of a medieval green (Wrigley 2013, 23). The Ipswich to Norwich road (A140) that forms the western extent of the airfield is built upon the route of a former Roman Road (Wrigley 2013, 5).

Numerous archaeological sites and findspots have been recorded within the wider area surrounding the town of Eye. These include a Palaeolithic hand axe, Mesolithic flint tools, and medieval artefacts related to the market town (MSDC, 2011). Various coin deposits have also been identified in the surrounding area, including the 5th-century Hoxne Coin Hoard which was discovered 4km to the north east of Eye. The hoard contained over 15,000 gold and silver coins, gold jewellery and items of silver. A number of Roman bronze coins have also been identified in the town centre (AS 2011, Rolfe 2009).

#### **1.5 Objectives**

The general objective of the strip and map survey was to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains; assess their character, and produce a report on the findings.

The project objectives were to:

- determine the form and function of any archaeological features encountered;
- determine the spatial arrangement of any archaeological features encountered;
- as far as practicable, recover dating evidence from the archaeological features, and;
- establish the sequence of any archaeological remains present on the site

## **2. WORKING METHODS**

### **2.1 General**

All work was undertaken according to the Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, relevant Standards and Guidance documents (IfA 1994), the project design (CFA 2013) and specification (SCCAS 2012).

All topsoil and overburden was removed under constant archaeological supervision. Turbine bases were excavated down to the natural substrate or the archaeological horizon, whichever was revealed first. In areas where the depth of ground disturbance would only impact on non-archaeological soil horizons it was agreed with the CAO that a buffer of at least 300mm of topsoil and/or subsoil be left to ensure the safeguarding of any possible archaeological remains that may have existed beneath these levels.

A number of test pits were excavated across the development to identify the depths of topsoil and subsoil deposits. All excavation was carried out by a mechanical excavator equipped with a smooth bladed ditching bucket. All on-site recording was carried out according to standard CFA procedures, principally by drawing, photography and by completing standard CFA recording forms.

### **2.2 Standards and Guidance**

CFA Archaeology is a registered organisation (RO) with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA). All work was conducted in accordance with relevant IfA Standards and Guidance documents (IfA 1994, 2001), English Heritage guidance (EH 2005, 2006, and 2008), and CFA's standard methodology.

### **2.3 Monitoring**

The project was monitored by Dr. Jess Tipper the CAO of Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service who was informed in advance of the works taking place and maintained contact during the development.

### **2.4 Archiving**

The archive will be deposited with Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service. The project archive will be ordered, indexed and conform to the requirements of the depositing museum and to all relevant professional guidance (Brown 2011). A summary of the results of the archaeological works will be submitted for inclusion in OASIS (Ref: cfaarcha1-153907).

### 3. RESULTS

In the following text numbers in parentheses refer to archaeological contexts, a full description of which is presented in Appendix 1.

A layer of light grey sandy-silt topsoil (001), generally 0.4m thick, was identified across the site. An underlying subsoil deposit comprising firm greyish orange clayey sand was also identified (002). The subsoil was generally 0.3m thick although it was noted to be c.0.5m deep in places. The natural geological substrate consisted of a firm pale orange-grey clayey-sand with a varying concentration of rounded chalk and flint fragments throughout (000) (Fig. 2). A number of land drains were identified across the development site, with these being generally orientated north-east to south-west. The land drains were identified at the interface between the subsoil and the natural clay.

Both turbine bases were stripped of topsoil and all subsoil overburden to expose the natural clayey-sand. As both crane pads and access tracks were only excavated to a depth of 0.4m below the existing ground level a full overburden strip was not undertaken, as in these areas the subsoil deposit was deemed a suitable buffer between the level of groundworks and any potential archaeological remains. Various test pits across the extent of the development confirmed the depth of topsoil and subsoil deposits (Figs. 3 and 4).

#### 3.1 Turbine Base 1

The strip and map survey identified a relict field boundary at Turbine Base 1 (Fig. 5). The former boundary was on an east-west orientation across the full 20m width of the turbine base. The ditch was c.2m wide, 0.84m deep, with regular sloping sides that met at a rounded tapered point (003) (Figs. 6 and 7). The ditch contained primary fills of mottled purplish-grey friable clayey-silt c.0.25m deep (005,007, and 008) that were overlain by upper fills of friable light brownish-grey clayey-silt (004 and 006). It appears as though the ditch was backfilled by a homogenous ploughsoil which sealed the silted up organic primary fill. Ground water egress was noted towards the base of the feature. The feature is most likely post-medieval in date.

The linear ditch probably acted as both a field boundary and a large drainage ditch. The ditch may have been infilled to extend the size of the field by eliminating the boundary between two fields. Three sherds of modern glazed ceramic were identified in the upper fills of the ditch which date this later phase of field assimilation.

The field boundary is present on the 1886 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map up until the 1957 Edition OS. The boundary is no longer present on the 1975 OS map, by which time it appears the fields surrounding the Airfield have been redistributed to create bigger plots.

No other archaeological features were identified during the groundworks.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

CFA undertook a strip and map survey during the groundworks for the construction of two wind turbine generators at Eye Airfield Industrial Estate. The archaeological monitoring recorded the remains of a defunct post-medieval field boundary at Turbine Base 1. No other archaeological remains were encountered and no other finds were recovered.



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### Online Resources

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context no.	Area	Fill of	Type	Description
000	Site		Deposit	Natural substrate; firm pale orange-grey clayey-sand.
001	Site		Deposit	Topsoil; light grey sandy-silt.
002	Site		Deposit	Subsoil; pale greyish-orange clayey-sand.
003	Turbine Base 1		Cut	East to west orientated ditch. 1.7-2m W 0.86m D. Regular sloping sides. Rounded tapered point at base.
004	Turbine Base 1	003	Deposit	Secondary fill of Ditch 003 (east slot); light brownish-grey friable clayey-silt.
005	Turbine Base 1	003	Deposit	Primary fill of Ditch 003 (east slot); mottled purplish-grey friable clayey-silt.
006	Turbine Base 1	003	Deposit	Tertiary fill of Ditch 003 (west slot); light brownish-grey friable clayey-silt.
007	Turbine Base 1	003	Deposit	Secondary fill of Ditch 003 (west slot); purplish-grey friable silty-clay.

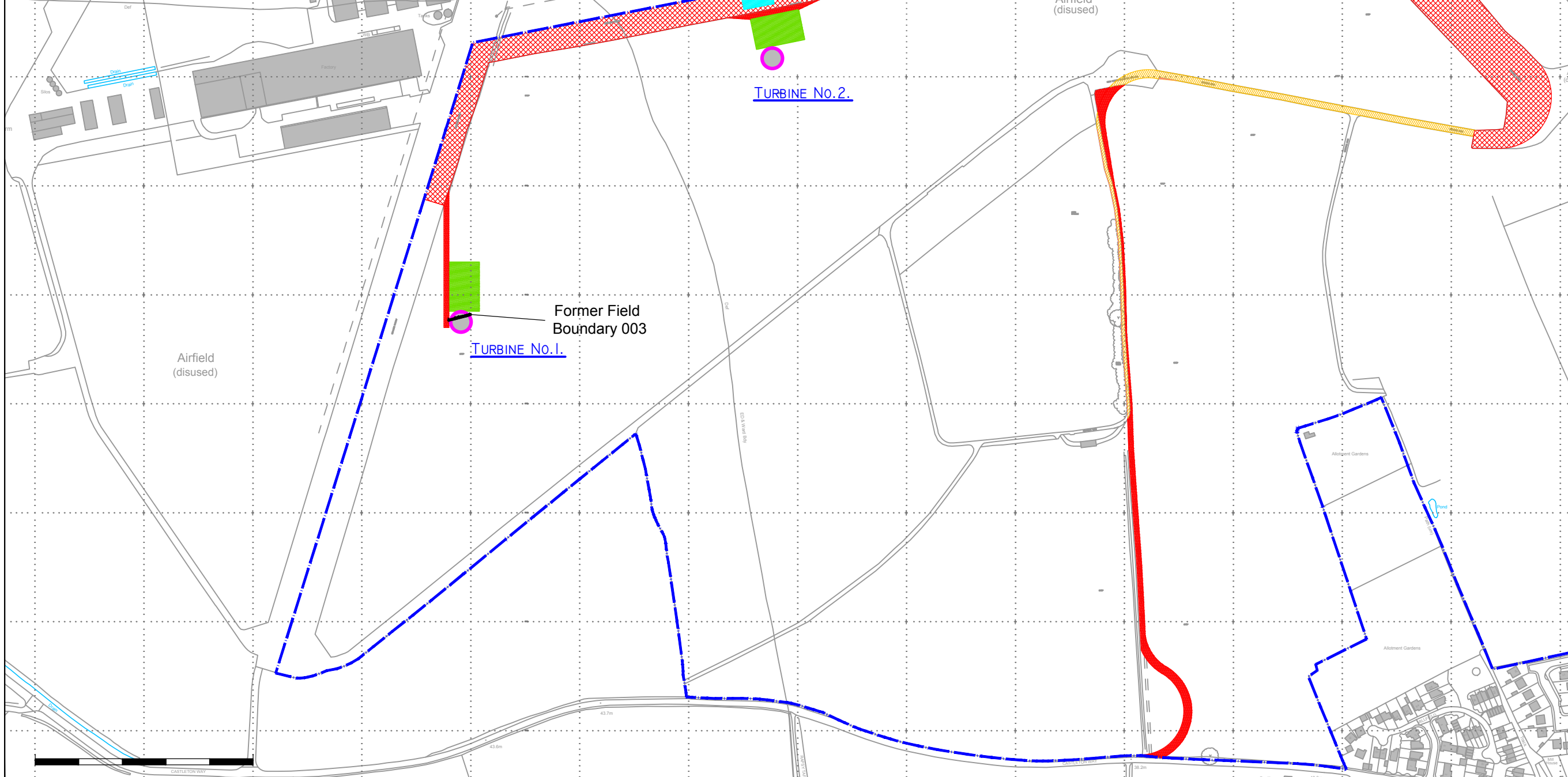
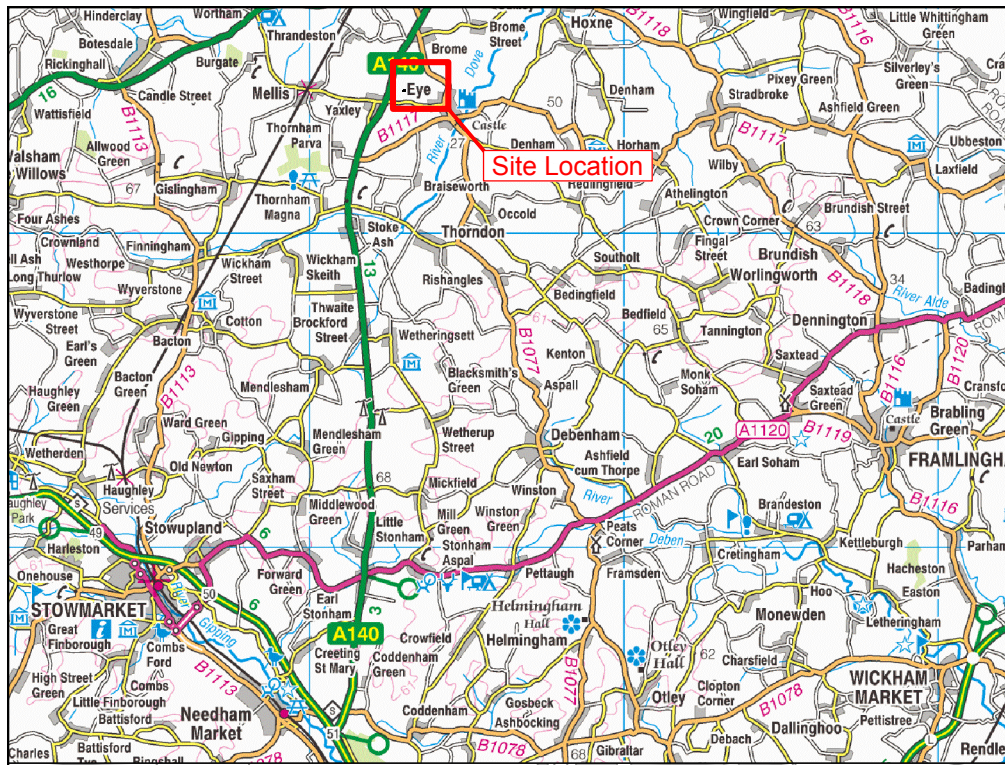
## Appendix 2: Photographic Register

No	Contexts/description	Facing	Conditions
1	Shot of Turbine Base 1 following topsoil removal	North-east	Overcast
2	Shot of Turbine Base 1 following overburden removal	North-east	Overcast
3	Pre-excavation shot of east-to-west orientated ditch (003)	East	Overcast
4	West-facing-section of Test Pit at Crane Pad 1 showing the depth of soil deposits	East	Bright
5	South-facing-section of Test Pit at Crane Pad 1 showing the depth of soil deposits	North	Bright
6	South-facing-section of Test Pit at Crane Pad 1 showing the depth of soil deposits	North	Bright
7	North-facing-section of Test Pit at Crane Pad 1 showing the depth of subsoil	South	Bright
8	South-east-facing shot of Crane Pad 1 following topsoil strip	South-east	Bright
9	East-facing-section of east slot through Ditch 003	West	Bright
10	Oblique shot of east-facing-section of east slot through Ditch 003	West	Bright
11	West-facing-section of west slot through Ditch 003	East	Bright
12	Oblique shot of west-facing-section of west slot through Ditch 003	East	Bright
13	North-east-facing post-excavation shot of Ditch 003	North-east	Overcast
14	West-facing-section of Test Pit at Crane Pad 2 showing the depth of soil deposits	East	Overcast
15	West-facing-section of Test Pit at Crane Pad 2 showing the depth of soil deposits	East	Overcast
16	East-facing-section of Test Pit at Crane Pad 2 showing the depth of soil deposits	West	Overcast
17	Working shot of Turbine Base 2 during topsoil and overburden removal	North-west	Overcast
18	South-west-facing shot of Turbine Base 2 following topsoil and overburden removal	South-west	Overcast
19	North-west-facing shot of Turbine Base 2 following topsoil and overburden removal	North-west	Overcast
20	East-facing-section of Test Pit at Crane Pad 2 showing the depth of soil deposits	West	Overcast
21	East-facing-section of Test Pit at new access track insertion	West	Overcast

### Appendix 3: Drawing Register

No	Sheet No	Scale	Plan/Section	Description
1	1,2	1:50	Plan	Plan of Ditch 003
2	1	1:20	Plan	Plan of west slot through Ditch 003
3	2	1:20	Plan	Plan of east slot through Ditch 003
4	3	1:10	Section	West facing section of Ditch 003 (west slot)
5	3	1:10	Section	East facing section of Ditch 003 (east slot)

## Figures 1-7



- Key:
- Former Runway
  - Access Tracks
  - Existing Track
  - Crane Pad Hardstanding
  - Site Compound and Sub-Station
  - Turbine Bases
  - Site Boundary

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Fig. No:	1	Revision:	A
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Title:  
Site Location and Plan

Project:  
Eye Airfield Industrial Estate  
Wind Farm

Client:  
Natural Power

Scale at A3:  
1:4,000





Fig. 2 - North-west-facing shot of Turbine Base 2 following topsoil removal



Fig. 3 - South-east-facing shot of Crane Pad 1 following topsoil strip removal



Fig. 4 - West-facing section of test pit along access track improvement



Fig. 5 - North-east-facing shot of Turbine Base 1 following topsoil removal





Fig. No: <b>2-5</b>		Revision: <b>A</b>	Project: <b>Eye Airfield Industrial Estate Wind Farm</b>		
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Fig. 6 - East-facing section of Ditch 003



Fig. 7 - West-facing section of Ditch 003

Fig. No: <b>6-7</b>		Revision: <b>A</b>	Project: <b>Eye Airfield Industrial Estate Wind Farm</b>		
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