

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION ON
LAND TO THE NORTH WEST OF MIDDLETON CHENEY,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

NGR 449137 242498

NOVEMBER 2012

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services conducted an archaeological evaluation in advance of development on land to the north west of Middleton Cheney, Northamptonshire (NGR 449137 242498). One 15m long trench was excavated to the surface of the underlying natural geology. The trench covered the general area proposed for a new wind turbine. No archaeological features, deposits or finds were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location and Geology (Figure 1)

The site of the proposed wind turbine is located to the north west of Middleton Cheney and north of Banbury Lane (NGR 449137 242498). The footprint for the turbine will be a 6m radius from this point. The site is currently agricultural land. It lies at approximately 155m OD with the site sloping down slightly from west to east. The underlying geology is Marlstone Rock Bed.

1.2 Planning Background

A scoping opinion request (S/2012/0670/SCR) for a single wind turbine on land to the north west of Middleton Cheney, Northamptonshire has been submitted. While South Northamptonshire Council determined that no EIA was required it was identified that the area had potential to contain archaeological remains. The Assistant Archaeological Advisor of Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) prepared a *Brief* for a programme of archaeological investigation (NCC 2012). This was followed by a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2012) which outlined the method by which the evaluation would be carried out in order to fulfil the requirements of the *Brief*.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The proposed single wind turbine is located in an area of archaeological potential.

The area of the site is characterised by the presence of cropmarks indicating prehistoric activity. A large complex of cropmarks is recorded on the south side of Banbury Lane, and two smaller groups to the north east of the site.

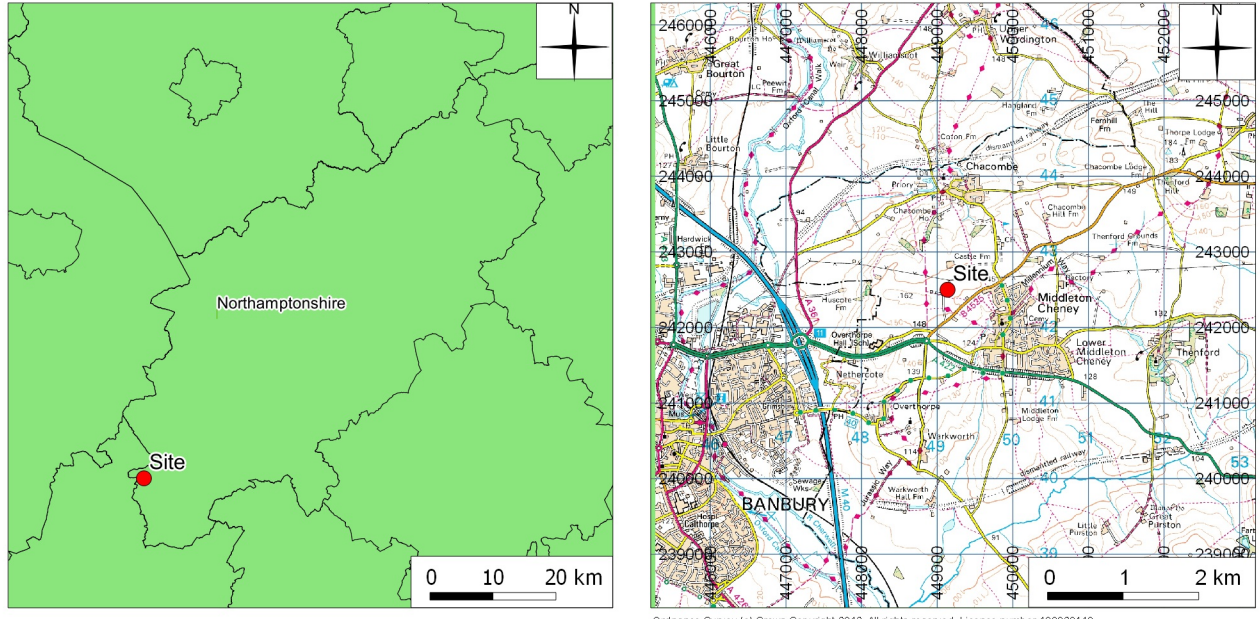
Recent archaeological work to the south of Banbury Lane has identified activity of late Neolithic and early Bronze Age date, including cremation burials.

Small areas of quarrying of unknown date are recorded in the vicinity, but the proposed turbine location does not appear to have been quarried. THE above information has been obtained from the *Brief* (NCC 2012) and *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2012).

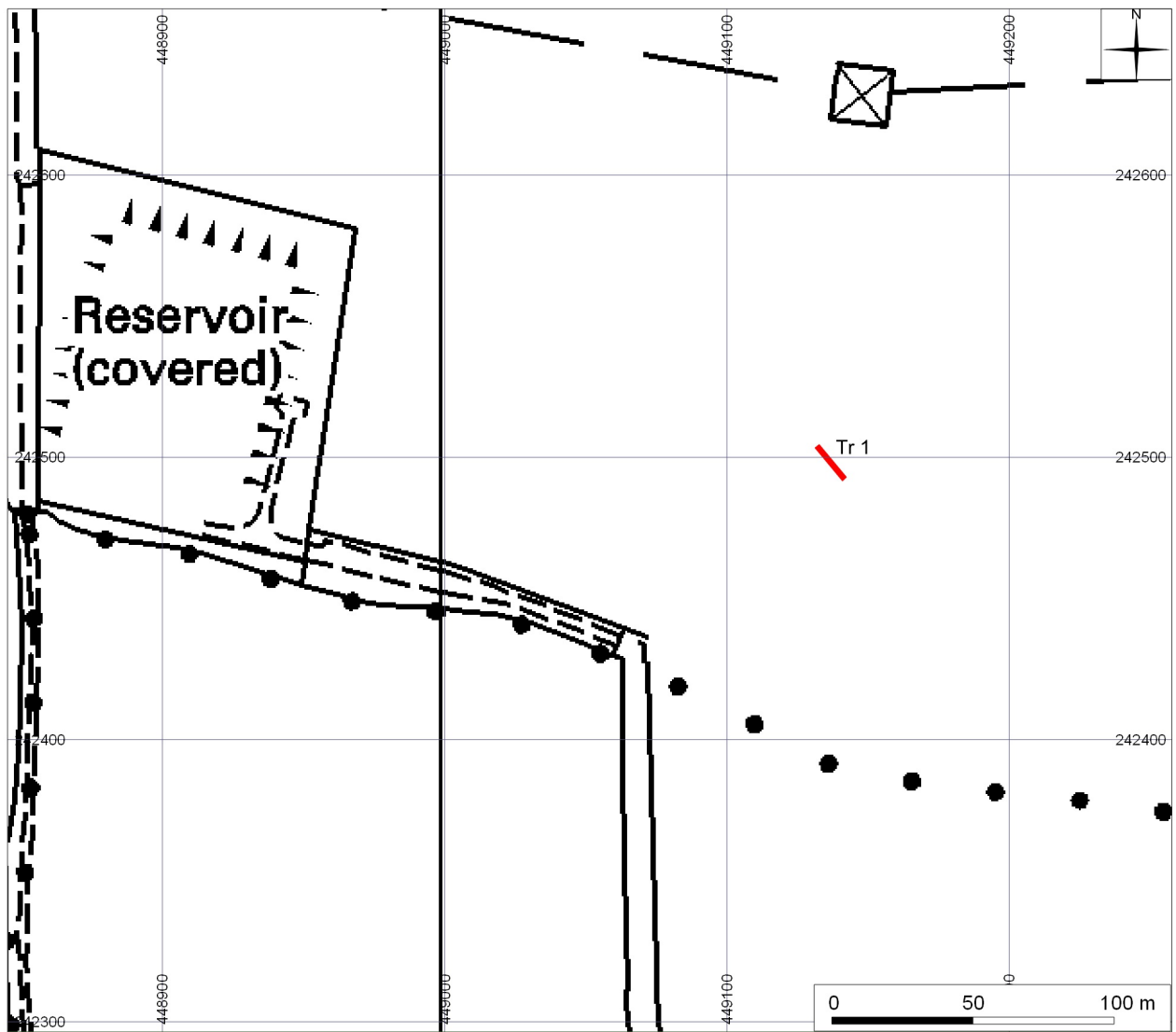
2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

2.1 Project Objectives

- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site;



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Figure 1. Site and trench location

- to determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered;
- to assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits; and
- in particular to determine the presence or absence of prehistoric activity on the site.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

The trenching was achieved through the excavation of one trench, measuring 15m long, location shown on Figure 1.

The trench was excavated by a 360° type tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was produced using colour transparency, black and white and digital cameras. The trenches were backfilled after recording.

The work was monitored by the assistant archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority.

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts or walls; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

4.1 Excavation Results

The trench was set out across the general area of the proposed new wind turbine. The lowest deposit noted within the trenches consisted of natural clays, which was reached between varying heights of 154.75m AOD to 154.54m AOD.

4.2 Trench 1 (Figure. 1 & Plate 1)

The stratigraphic sequence was simple consisting of natural ground (154.54-154.75m AOD) (1/02) overlain by 0.40m thick modern topsoil (top 155.00-154.88m AOD) (1/01). There were no archaeological features or finds in this trench.

4.3 Reliability of Results

The excavations took place in misty weather conditions with an experienced machine driver. There was adequate space to excavate the trench safely and the reliability of the results is considered to be good to excellent.

5 THE FINDS

There were no finds recovered from the evaluation.

6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological evaluation on land north-west of Middleton Cheney, Northamptonshire was successful in establishing that no archaeological remains exist at the proposed site of the new wind turbine.

A confidence rating is high that the best possible results were achieved and that no important archaeological remains will be affected by the development.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper Record

The project brief

The project report

Written Scheme of Investigation

The primary site records

The drawn records

The archive is currently maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be deposited with a suitable repository when one is available.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage, 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects 2*

Institute for Archaeologists 1994 *Standards and Guidance for an archaeological evaluation* (Revised 2008)

JMHS 2012 *Land to the North-west of Middleton Cheney; Archaeological Evaluation Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpub JMHS Doc. 2734. Author Gilbert, D.

Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) 2012 *Brief for a programme of archaeological investigation on Land to the North-west of Middleton Cheney*. Unpub NCC Doc

Appendix 1; Trench context summary

| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Length (m) | Finds | Date |
|---------|---------|-----------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-------|--------------------|
| 1/01 | Deposit | topsoil | 0.40m | Tr. | Tr. | None | Modern |
| 1/02 | Deposit | Mid orange brown stone and clay natural | n/a | Tr. | Tr. | None | Marlstone Rock bed |

Plate 1; Trench looking south east

