

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**AT**

**LAND PARCEL 9827, THE FLIT,**

**YARTON, OXFORDSHIRE**

**NGR SP 4894 1216**

*On behalf of*

*CgMs Consulting Ltd*

**APRIL 2015**

**REPORT FOR** CgMs Consulting Ltd  
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**SITE WORK** 31<sup>st</sup> January – 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015

**REPORT ISSUED** 8<sup>th</sup> April 2015

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**Site Code:** YATF 15  
**JMHS Project No:** 3226

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## Summary

*Between 31<sup>st</sup> January and 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015 John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief during the construction of a solar farm at The Flit Yarnton Oxfordshire (NGR SP 48941216). All of the trenches required monitoring due to the presence of archaeological features nearby. However no archaeological features were observed in any of the trenches.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is Land Parcel 9827, southeast of Yarnton and north of Woodstock Road, Yarnton, Oxfordshire, referred to locally as The Flit. The site consisted of two large irregular-shaped agricultural fields, totalling approximately 20ha.

The site was relatively level, at 60m AOD. The Oxford Canal formed the eastern boundary of the northern field; a watercourse formed the eastern boundary of the southern field. The River Thames lies 1.6km south.

The solid geology of the site comprised of Jurassic mudstone of the Oxford Clay Formation and West Walton Formation, overlain by the superficial deposits of Quaternary alluvial material: mixed clay, silt, sand and gravel. (British Geological Society Geology of Britain Viewer).

### 1.2 Planning Background

Cherwell District Council gave planning permission for the construction of a solar farm (14/00786/F). A condition of it required an archaeological watching brief during construction groundworks. CgMs Consulting Ltd prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which was approved by the Oxfordshire Historic and Natural Environment Team (OHaNET).

### 1.3 Archaeological Background

The archaeological potential of the site and its immediate vicinity was assessed within an archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) conducted by Thames Valley Archaeological Services (TVAS 2013). No designated archaeological assets (as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework 2012) were identified as present within the site. The DBA referred to previous investigations on the site, which consisted of aerial photograph interpretation (Jordan 2008), and field evaluation of the northern part of the site (Joyce 2009). These earlier works were undertaken as part of a previous planning application not related to the current proposed development.

The DBA concluded that the site lies within a general area of archaeological potential and is known to contain certain and probable heritage assets. Areas of geophysical anomalies were identified that may be indicative of Prehistoric settlement. These lie on the eastern boundary of the northern field. The DBA suggested that a watching brief on the small areas of invasive groundworks was an appropriate mitigation response. The DBA further recommended that the areas of geophysical anomalies

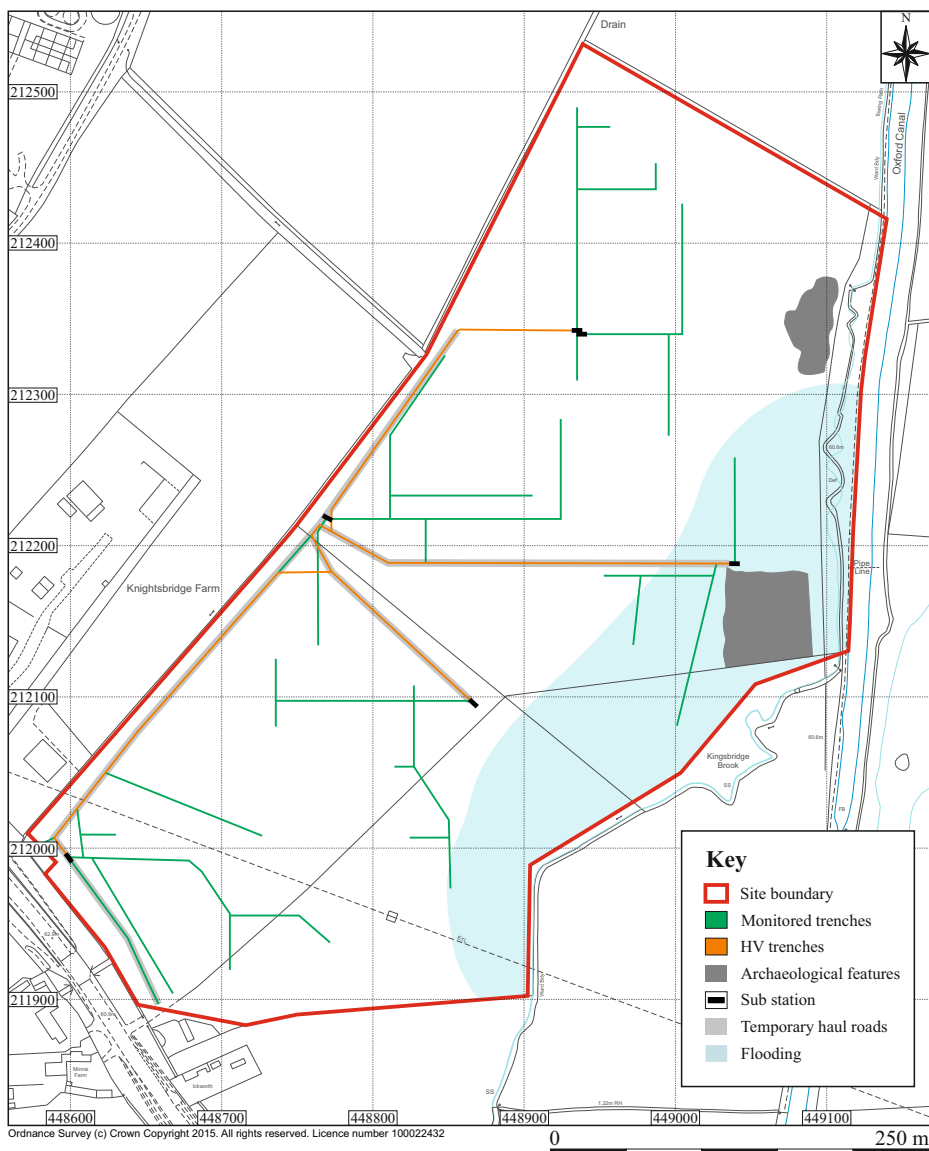
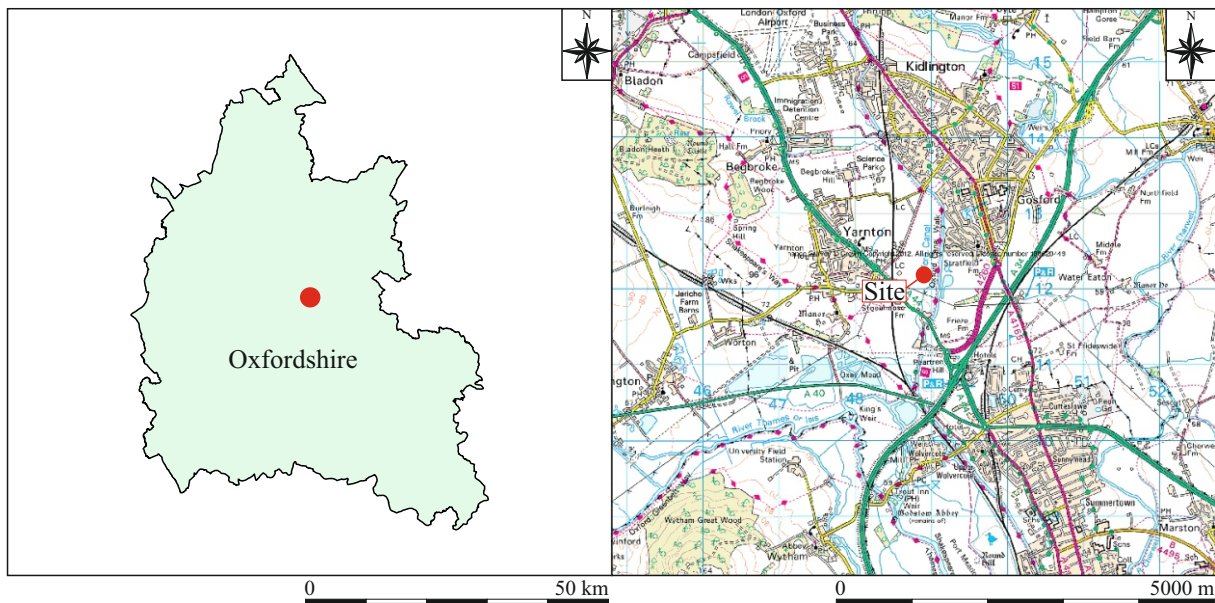


Figure 1: Site location

should be avoided as the location of any site elements requiring groundworks, in the development plan.

An evaluation by Cotswold Archaeology (Joyce 2009) of part of the area found a ditch containing Romano British pottery and number of undated ditches and pits (see Fig. 1).

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To preserve by record any archaeological remains which may be disturbed by the development works.
- To make available the results of the investigation through the provision of the appropriate archiving and public dissemination of the findings.
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- To promote community engagement, where possible, by seeking to ensure that the investigation was directed towards providing benefit to the public, through participation and engagement in the process where it is appropriate to do so.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by CgMs, the archaeological advisors to Roc Energy, and Richard Oram (OHaNET Planning Archaeologist).

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).

### **3.2 Methodology**

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced.

An archaeologist was present on site to control the groundwork that had the potential to reveal or disturb archaeological remains. Provision had been made to increase team size depending on the extent of remains located.

The area of the trenches was scanned with a metal detector prior and during excavation, the spoil was also be scanned for artefacts. Other general methodologies for the work were in accordance with the WSI. All site recording was carried out in accordance with the WSI.

An experienced archaeological Project Officer (Steve Leech) undertook the archaeological site work under the overall direction of John Moore CMIFA.

#### 4 RESULTS (Figure 2)

There were two types of trenches excavated for the cables connecting the solar panel arrays and the inverter stations. The DC cable trenches were 0.6m wide and 0.6m deep, (marked as green lines on plan) and the HV cable trenches were 0.6m wide and 1m deep (marked as orange lines on plan). The trenches for the six inverter stations were 10m in length, 5m wide and 0.6m deep.

Evident throughout all the trenches was the sequence of a 0.20m thick grey / brown silty clay topsoil, (1002), overlying a 0.2m – 0.3m thick orange / brown clay subsoil, (1001), that overlay the natural gravels (1000).

No archaeological features were observed in any of the trenches.



Plate 1: DC trench



Plate 2: DC trench



Plate 3: HV trench





Plate 4: HV trench

## 5 FINDS

No finds were recovered from any of the trenches.

## 6 DISCUSSION

No archaeological features were identified in any of the trenches, indicating no archaeology was impacted. However there was a very short time period where the sides of the trench were ‘open’ as the trenches immediately flooded, these were then partially pumped out and the cables laid, then backfilled, giving very little time for any features to ‘weather’ out. Also the trenches located to the east of the site were excavated through flooded areas.

## 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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