Elms Farm Solar Park
Bishop’s Itchington
Warwickshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

for
Luminous Energy Ltd

CA Project: 660392
CA Report: 15070

February 2015
Elms Farm Solar Park
Bishop’s Itchington
Warwickshire

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CA Project: 660392
CA Report: 15070

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Date 12 February 2015

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Signed
Date 13 February 2015

Issue 01

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SUMMARY

Project Name: Elm’s Farm Solar Park
Location: Bishop’s Itchington, Warwickshire
NGR: SP 3788 5759
Type: Watching Brief
Date: 15 December 2014–23 January 2015
Planning Reference: Stratford-upon-Avon District Council, 14/02341/FUL
Location of Archive: Warwick Museum
Site Code: EFS 14

Between December 2014 and January 2015, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief on farmland near Bishop’s Itchington, Warwickshire. The work, which was commissioned by Luminous Energy Ltd, was undertaken during groundworks associated with the construction of Elm’s Farm Solar Park.

No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during groundworks associated with the construction of the solar park and there was no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period in the excavated deposits.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Between December 2014 and January 2015, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief on farmland near Bishop’s Itchington, Warwickshire (site centred at NGR: SP 3788 5759; Fig. 1). The work, which was commissioned by Luminous Energy Ltd, was undertaken during groundworks associated with the construction of Elm’s Farm Solar Park.

1.2 The development had been granted planning permission by Stratford-upon-Avon District Council and the archaeological watching brief was attached as a condition of planning consent (planning ref. 14/02341/FUL, Condition 15). The planning application was supported by a Cultural Heritage Chapter prepared by CA (2014a) for inclusion in the Environmental Statement (Chapter 4) and a geophysical survey undertaken by GSB Prospection Ltd (GSB 2014). The scope of the watching brief was formalised following discussions between CA and Anna Stocks, Warwickshire County Council’s Planning Archaeologist (WCCPA).

1.3 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by CA (2014b) and abided by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists’ (CIfA) Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (CIfA 2009) and the English Heritage (EH) procedural documents Management of Archaeological Projects 2 (EH 1991) and Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE): Project Manager’s Guide (EH 2006).

The site

1.4 The site, an irregular block of farmland covering c. 29ha, is located at Elm’s Farm, approximately 0.3km to the west of the village of Bishop’s Itchington and c. 8km south-west of Southam town centre (Fig. 1). It comprises parts of seven large fields (Fields 1–7), set within a gently undulating agricultural landscape (Fig. 3). Within the site the ground is generally flat and lies at approximately 125m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), although in the north-western part of the site the ground slopes gently into a shallow dip, with ground level descending to c. 116m aOD.

1.5 The geology of the site comprises Jurassic mudstone of the Charmouth Mudstone Formation, overlain by superficial deposits of mid-Pleistocene glacial till (diamicton) (BGS 2014).
Archaeological and historical background

1.6 The historical and archaeological background of the site has been presented in detail in the Cultural Heritage chapter (Chapter 4) of the ES (CA 2014a). This concluded that there are currently no known heritage assets within or in close proximity to the site.

1.7 In the wider landscape, a Romano-British settlement has been recorded at Upper Spring Farm, c. 1.1 km to the south of the site and a Roman coin is reputed to have been discovered in Bishop’s Itchington.

1.8 The village of Bishop’s Itchington, which was probably established in the Early to Middle Saxon period, is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as a substantial settlement containing forty-three households. The village derives its name from the Old English for ‘farmstead by the Itchen’, referring to its proximity to the River Itchen, which meanders past the village to the east. It gained its ecclesiastical prefix from the 12th century onwards, when the manor was held by the Bishops of Coventry. The shrunken medieval settlement of Bishop’s Itchington, consisting of a complex of earthworks to the south-east of Manor Farm, are situated c. 200m east of the site. The site is likely to have been common land in the medieval period, situated to the west of the open fields surrounding the village.

1.9 The Tithe map of 1839 shows brickworks just beyond the eastern border of the site and later Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photographs show a large quarried area in this location. The brickworks buildings are no longer extant and the quarried area now lies within woodland.

1.10 The recent geophysical survey of the site (GSB 2014) shows few anomalies of potential archaeological interest. Those that are shown relate to former field boundaries, post-medieval ridge and furrow ploughing and modern services.

Archaeological objectives

1.11 The objective of the watching brief, as stated in the WSI (CA 2014b) was, with the resources available, to investigate and record any archaeological features or deposits that may be encountered during groundworks associated with the development.
**Methodology**

1.12 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2014b). An archaeologist was present during all intrusive groundworks, including during the excavation of foundations for invertor and transfer stations, cable trenches and access roads (Fig. 2).

1.13 Deposits and features were planned and recorded in accordance with CA’s *Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual* (CA 2007). Each context was recorded on a *pro-forma* context sheet by written and measured description; principal deposits were recorded by drawn plans and drawn sections. The site was surveyed using GPS in accordance with *Technical Manual 4: Survey Manual* (CA 2012). Photographs (digital colour and 35mm black & white film) were taken as appropriate. There were no finds and no suitable deposits were encountered for environmental sampling.

1.14 The archive from the project is currently held by CA at their offices in Milton Keynes; this will eventually be deposited with Warwickshire Museum. 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.

2. **RESULTS**

2.1 The site comprised seven fields, separated by ditches and hedgerows (Fields 1 to 7; Fig. 2-6). No groundworks were undertaken in Field 5 and the single cable trench in Field 7 was recorded as part of Field 6. No archaeological features were encountered in the areas impacted by groundworks associated with the construction of the solar park and there was no pre-modern artefactual material in the excavated deposits. Details of the deposits encountered during the fieldwork are presented in Appendix A.

2.2 The geological substrate (glacial till), consisting of firm mid yellowish or orangey-brown clay with bands of poorly sorted sub-angular pebbles, was revealed at a depth of approximately 0.3m below current ground level. Subsoil was largely absent and was only noted in Field 3, where it comprised mid yellowish-grey clay up to 0.18m thick. The topsoil was c. 0.3m thick and comprised mid greyish-brown silty clay.
2.3 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and, despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Despite attendance on site throughout the period when groundworks associated with the construction of the solar park were under way, no archaeological features or deposits were identified. There was no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period in the excavated deposits. The results are consistent with those of the geophysical survey (GSB 2014), which show former field boundaries, post-medieval ridge and furrow ploughing and modern services.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

The fieldwork was undertaken by Caoimhín Ó Coileáin and Dan Riley. The report was written by Caoimhín Ó Coileáin, with illustrations prepared by Dan Bashford. The archive has been compiled by Caoimhín Ó Coileáin and prepared for deposition by Emily Evans. The project was managed for CA by Simon Carlyle.

5. REFERENCES


CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2014a Elms Farm, Bishops Itchington, Warwickshire: Heritage Statement

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2014b Elms Farm, Bishops Itchington, Warwickshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief, unpublished document

DCLG (Department of Communities and Local Government) 2012 National Planning Policy Framework
GSB (GSB Prospection Ltd) 2014 *Land at Elms Farm, Bishops Itchington, Warwickshire: Geophysical Survey Report* GSB Report No. **G1463**
## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

### Field 1

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Context no.</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Thickness (m)</th>
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<tr>
<td>100</td>
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<td>101</td>
<td>Geology</td>
<td>Mid orangey-yellow clay with freq. fine to coarse rounded pebbles</td>
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### Field 2

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<td>201</td>
<td>Geology</td>
<td>Mid yellow-brown clay</td>
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### Field 3

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<td>300</td>
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<td>301</td>
<td>Geology</td>
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APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

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<td>Project name</td>
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<td>Short description</td>
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<td>Previous work</td>
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<td>Future work</td>
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<td>Monument type</td>
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<td>Study area</td>
<td>29ha</td>
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<td>Site co-ordinates</td>
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<td>Cotswold Archaeology (CA)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Project Design (WSI) originator</td>
<td>CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>Simon Carlyle (CA)</td>
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<td>Project Supervisor</td>
<td>Caoimhín Ó Coileáin (CA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content</td>
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<td>Warwickshire HER Site records and photos</td>
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<td>Digital Report, digital photos</td>
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<th>BIBLIOGRAPHY</th>
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<td>CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015 Land at Elms Farm, Bishop’s Itchington, Warwickshire: Archaeological Watching Brief, CA typescript report 15070</td>
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Elm’s Farm Solar Park
Bishop’s Itchington, Warwickshire

Site location plan

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Cotswold Archaeology Ltd 100002109

Scale: 1:25,000

PROJECT TITLE
Elm’s Farm Solar Park
Bishop’s Itchington, Warwickshire

FIGURE TITLE
Site location plan

PROJECT NO.
660392

DRAWN BY
DJBL/JH

REVISION
01

DATE
11-02-2015

APPROVED BY
JB

SCALE
1:25,000
Plan showing geophysical survey results and areas of archaeological observation

- **Field Drain**
- **Old Field Boundary**
- **Pipe / Ferrous**
- **Uncertain Origin (discrete / weak / trend)**
- **Ridge & Furrow**
- **Ploughing**

**Geophysical Survey Results (GSB 2014)**

**PROJECT NO.**

**DATESCALE**

**DRAWN BY**

**CHECKED BY**

**APPROVED BY**

**SITING**

**Field 1**

**Field 2**

**Field 3**

**Field 4**

**Field 5**

**Field 6**

**Field 7**

**Access**

**Plough Lane**

**Elm’s Farm**

**Bishop’s Itchington, Warwickshire**

Based on the Ordnance Survey Map provided by the client. Reproduced with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright (AL 100018665).
3 General view of Field 1, looking west
4 Field 1, the area stripped for the access track, looking north-west
5 Field 6, general soil profile
6 Field 2, excavated cable trench, looking south-west