

# Powerline Pole Replacement Froxfield Green Near Petersfield Hampshire



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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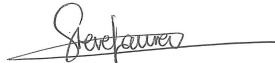
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# Powerline Pole Replacement, Froxfield Green, near Petersfield, Hampshire

## *Archaeological Watching Brief Report*

### Table of Contents

<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 Scope of work.....	2
1.2 Location, geology and topography.....	2
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	3
<b>2 Project Aims and Methodology.....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Aims.....	4
2.2 Methodology.....	4
<b>3 Results.....</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1 Description of deposits.....	5
3.2 Finds.....	5
3.3 Environmental remains.....	5
<b>4 Discussion and Conclusions.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Appendix A. Archaeological Context Inventory.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Appendix B. Bibliography and References.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Appendix C. Summary of Site Details.....</b>	<b>9</b>

### List of Figures

Front cover: Part of the Froxfield Entrenchments

Figure 1 Site location

Figure 2 Site plan

Figure 3 Sections

Plate 1 Section 2

Plate 2 Earthworks visible immediately to the south of Section 2



## Summary

*In February 2013 Oxford Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during the replacement of two overhead powerline poles within the boundary of a scheduled monument known as Froxfield Entrenchments (HA 42 and HA 1003786), located to the west and south of Froxfield Green Village, near Petersfield, Hampshire. The watching brief was completed under the conditions of a Scheduled Monument Consent (English Heritage ref: S00047531).*

*During the replacement of the southern pole the edge profile of a ditch that formed part of the monument was observed. The excavation for the pole replacement only impacted upon a modern infill within the upper part of this ditch where the existing farm track crossing had been constructed across the earthwork. No archaeological stratigraphy was observed during the replacement of the northern pole.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 As part of their responsibilities to maintaining the electricity supply, SSE undertook the refurbishment of the overhead power cables running to the west and south of the village of Froxfield Green near Petersfield, Hampshire (Figs 1 & 2). As part of the refurbishment, pole replacement was carried out along the route to carry insulated cables at a greater height than the existing bare cables.
- 1.1.2 During the project planning stage SSE identified that two of the replacements poles lay within the boundary of a scheduled monument known as the Froxfield Entrenchments (HA 42 and HA 1003786). Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) for the works to proceed here was applied for by SSE's land agent detailing the full scope and impacts of the refurbishment works. As part of the granting of SMC, English Heritage (now Historic England) applied a series of conditions including that archaeological monitoring be conducted during any intrusive works and that suitable provision and monitoring also be undertaken for the plant access and movements within the boundary of the monument (EH SMC ref: S00047531).
- 1.1.3 SSE commissioned Oxford Archaeology (OA) to undertake the archaeological works and to fulfil the conditions of the SMC. OA subsequently issued a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) to Dr. Richard Massey (Inspector of Ancient Monuments, now no longer with HE) detailing how OA would implement the requirements and conditions. This was approved prior to the start of the fieldwork which was completed on 27th and 28th February 2013.

### 1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The poles (P) relevant to this investigation are identified as P8960 and P9417 to the south of Froxfield Green and west of Staple Ash Lane (Fig. 2). These are located at approximate grid references SU 70356 25332 and SU 70122 24964 (to within 10m). The sites lie at approximately 198m and 190m above Ordnance Datum respectively.
- 1.2.2 Pole 8960 was situated on level ground immediately adjacent to the farmyard at Venthams Farm, with evidence for a ditch and bank visible approximately 40m north of its location. Pole 9417 was located on a track that crossed the existing earthworks



connecting arable fields to either side. Substantial ditches and other earthworks were visible to both the south and north sides of the track.

- 1.2.3 The underlying geology is recorded as clay with flints, Diamicton Formation, over chalk (British Geological Survey, [http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer\\_google/](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/)).

### **1.3 Archaeological and historical background**

- 1.3.1 A brief archaeological background to the site was compiled using publicly available sources for the WSI and is reproduced here.
- 1.3.2 The Froxfield Entrenchments measure approximately 2.1 km in length starting approximately 1km north of Froxfield Green and running roughly north-south across a shallow valley. It consists of three short parallel dykes and a fourth dyke 1.8 km-2.5 km miles long to the west. Another entrenchment 300m long is crossed by the Dean Road.
- 1.3.3 The entrenchments are composed of ramparts and ditches all of which appear to be defensive works. It is clearly defined at its north and south ends which are covered with trees. It has been described as a possible tribal boundary and of probable Late Romano-British or Dark Age in date (Williams-Freeman 1915).
- 1.3.4 Earthworks of a deserted medieval village are also partly enclosed by the entrenchments and Staple Ash Lane within a triangular plot of land immediately to the south of Froxfield Green.
- 1.3.5 The first mention of Froxfield itself is in the tenth century, when the alderman Ælfeah left land at Froxfield to Ælfwine his sister's son. It is not mentioned in Domesday Book by name, and it is probably included in the entry under 'Menes,' as in after times most certainly it formed part of the great episcopal manor of East Meon.
- 1.3.6 An earthwork or vallum which runs through the parish from south-east to north-west is supposed to have formed part of the boundary of the kingdoms of Wessex and Sussex, and a Roman encampment in the south of the parish (Page 1908).
- 1.3.7 A search of the Hampshire County Council database revealed 4 possible associated finds consisting a Sarsen Stone located opposite the Gateway of Bydean Farm 500m north of Froxfield Green, a large buried stone, possibly a Sarsen Stone, in a field east of Staple Ash Lane, 250m north-east of Pole P8695 and two Sarsen Stones located in garden and within a wall at Ventom's Farm both adjacent to Pole P8960.



## 2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The watching brief aims as defined in the WSI were to:

- (i) preserve by record any archaeological deposits encountered during the course of ground intrusions;
- (ii) seek to establish the extent, nature and date of any archaeological deposits encountered within the scope of the ground intrusion;
- (iii) secure the analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site.;
- (iv) disseminate results through the production of a grey literature report.

### 2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The watching brief observed all works that had the potential to disturb or destroy below ground archaeological remains at the specified locations. For the replacement of the poles this took the form of the excavation of pits for the removal of the old poles and the insertion of the new poles.

#### ***Pole replacement method***

2.2.2 The new poles were erected in a small trench excavated using a JCB, typically 2m long, 0.8m wide and up to 1.8m deep, dug adjacent to the existing pole location. Each trench was excavated under close archaeological supervision with the topsoil and subsequent horizons carefully removed to reveal the surface of the underlying geology or any potential archaeological features or deposits. Adequate provision was made by the contractors to allow the attending archaeologist to control the speed and depth of all excavations within the monument boundary and, where necessary, to examine the exposed stratigraphy.

2.2.3 All spoil generated by the machine excavations was examined for the presence of archaeological artefacts.

2.2.4 All identified deposits were issued with unique context numbers, and context recording was in accordance with established OA practices as outlined in the WSI. Black-and-white negative photographs and a digital photographic record were taken of all trenches, general settings and any recorded sections.

2.2.5 Site plans were maintained at an appropriate scale. Sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20.

#### ***Plant access within the Scheduled Monument boundary***

2.2.6 Access and movement of all plant and machinery operated by the contractors was undertaken in accordance with the conditions of the SMC and the methods as set out in the consent application. In the event, the majority of the plant and vehicle access was limited to the existing farm yard hard standing areas and established farm tracks that had firm materials below a thin covering of mud. No access or movements that impacted upon the earthworks were undertaken and it was not necessary to lay additional ground matting.





### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Description of deposits

##### ***Pole 8960 (Fig. 3, Section 1)***

- 3.1.1 The underlying natural, a bright orange-brown silty clay containing fragmented chalk and occasional flints, was encountered at a depth of 0.43m below the current ground level (3). This was overlain by a layer of a dark orange-brown silty clay mixed with small chalk fragments (2). Above this was a layer of dark brown silty clay loam (1), which formed the present day topsoil and turf.

##### ***Pole 9417 (Fig. 3, Section 2 and Plate 1)***

- 3.1.2 The underlying solid natural, a compact layer of fractured chalk (13), was observed at a depth of 0.75m below the current ground level. Above this was a layer of orange-brown silty clay (12) containing chalk flecking and occasional larger sub-angular fragments of chalk and flint. Cutting this layer and running south-west to north-east across the trench was a steep sided linear feature (15). This sloped down to the north-west at an angle of approximately 45 degrees. The full extent of this feature was not exposed within the section although it was clear from its setting that this was related to the adjacent surviving earthwork ditches.
- 3.1.3 Only an uppermost fill of the ditch was encountered and this comprised a mixed deposit of very dark grey-brown clay silt with orange-brown clay inclusions and fragments of brick and concrete (14). The full depth of this deposit was not exposed but it could be seen to be in excess of 0.6m in the section.
- 3.1.4 Sealing 14 and layer 12 elsewhere, was a 0.28m deep layer of dark brown clayey loam (11) forming the present day topsoil and turf.

#### 3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 Dating evidence and/or artefacts were only recovered from deposit 14. These finds included fragments of machine extruded brick and fragments of concrete suggesting a 20th century origin. The presence of this material was recorded but it was not retained.

#### 3.3 Environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits were encountered that were suitable for archaeological palaeoenvironmental sampling.



## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 Layer 13 is indicative of the underlying chalk geology of the area. Layers 3 and 12 are very similar and are probable continuations of the Diamicton Formation, a natural clay occurring throughout the area.
- 4.1.2 Feature 15 exposed during the replacement of pole 9417 appears to be the eastern edge of a linear feature. This runs parallel to the ridge of the hillside approximately 35m to the north-west. Visual examination of the surrounding area showed that there were substantial earthworks, including ditches, running parallel to the ridge on either side of the farm track (Plate 2). Visual tracing of the edge of 15 suggests that it forms a continuation of the eastern ditches.
- 4.1.3 It is possible that the track linking the two fields is a landbridge formed by infilling the earthworks at this point. It is unclear when it was first constructed but it is probable that context 14 only represents the most recent phase of deposition relating to the current farm access use. Alternatively it may also be possible that the trackway utilised an existing opening or causeway which has since been widened and consolidated.
- 4.1.4 Exposed within the pit for replacing pole 8960, the mixed composition of layer 2 suggests that it may represent an earlier ploughsoil horizon. Layer 1 is the present day topsoil and turf. Contrary to pole 9417, the location of this pole beyond the visible limits of the earthworks was reflected by the absence of any associated features or deposits.



## APPENDIX A. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Depth	Width	Length	Comments	Finds	Date
Pole 8960							
1	Layer	0.18m	-	-	Present day topsoil and turf	-	C20th
2	Layer	0.25m	-	-	Subsoil, possibly earlier ploughsoil horizon	-	-
3	Layer	> 1.4m	-	-	Natural clay with chalk inclusions	-	-
Pole 9417							
11	Layer	0.28m	-	-	Present day topsoil and turf	Brick	C20th
12	Layer	0.45m	-	-	Natural clay with chalk inclusions	-	-
13	Layer	> 1.2m	-	-	Natural chalk	-	-
14	Fill	> 0.5m	> 0.6m	> 0.8m	Modern infilling and levelling of feature 15	Brick, concrete	C20th
15	Cut	> 0.5m	> 0.6m	> 0.8m	Eastern edge of ditch forming part of the scheduled monument	-	-



## APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Oxford Archaeology, 2012 *Froxfield Entrenchments, Froxfield Green, near Petersfield, Hampshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Unpublished document

Page, W, (ed) 1908 *A History of the County of Hampshire: Volume 3: Parishes: Froxfield'*, Victoria County History Vol 3 76-77.

Williams-Freeman, J P, 1915 *An Introduction to Field Archaeology as Illustrated by Hampshire*

'Parishes: Froxfield', in *A History of the County of Hampshire: Volume 3*, ed. William Page (London, 1908), pp. 76-77



## APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Powerline Pole Replacement, Froxfield Green, near Petersfield, Hampshire
Site code:	A 2013.04
Grid reference:	SU 70356 25332 and SU 70122 24964
Type of watching brief:	Watching brief on the excavation of pits for two powerline pole replacements and the monitoring of plant access and movements within the Scheduled Monument boundary.
Date and duration of project:	27th and 28th February 2013

### Summary of results:

In February 2013 Oxford Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during the replacement of two overhead powerline poles within the boundary of a scheduled monument known as Froxfield Entrenchments (HA 42 and HA 1003786), located to the west and south of Froxfield Green Village, near Petersfield, Hampshire. The watching brief was completed under the conditions of a Scheduled Monument Consent (English Heritage ref: S00047531).

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### Location of archive:

The archive is currently held at OA's Oxford office at Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES and this will be deposited with the Hampshire County Museum Service under the accession number A2013.04.





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Figure 1: Site location





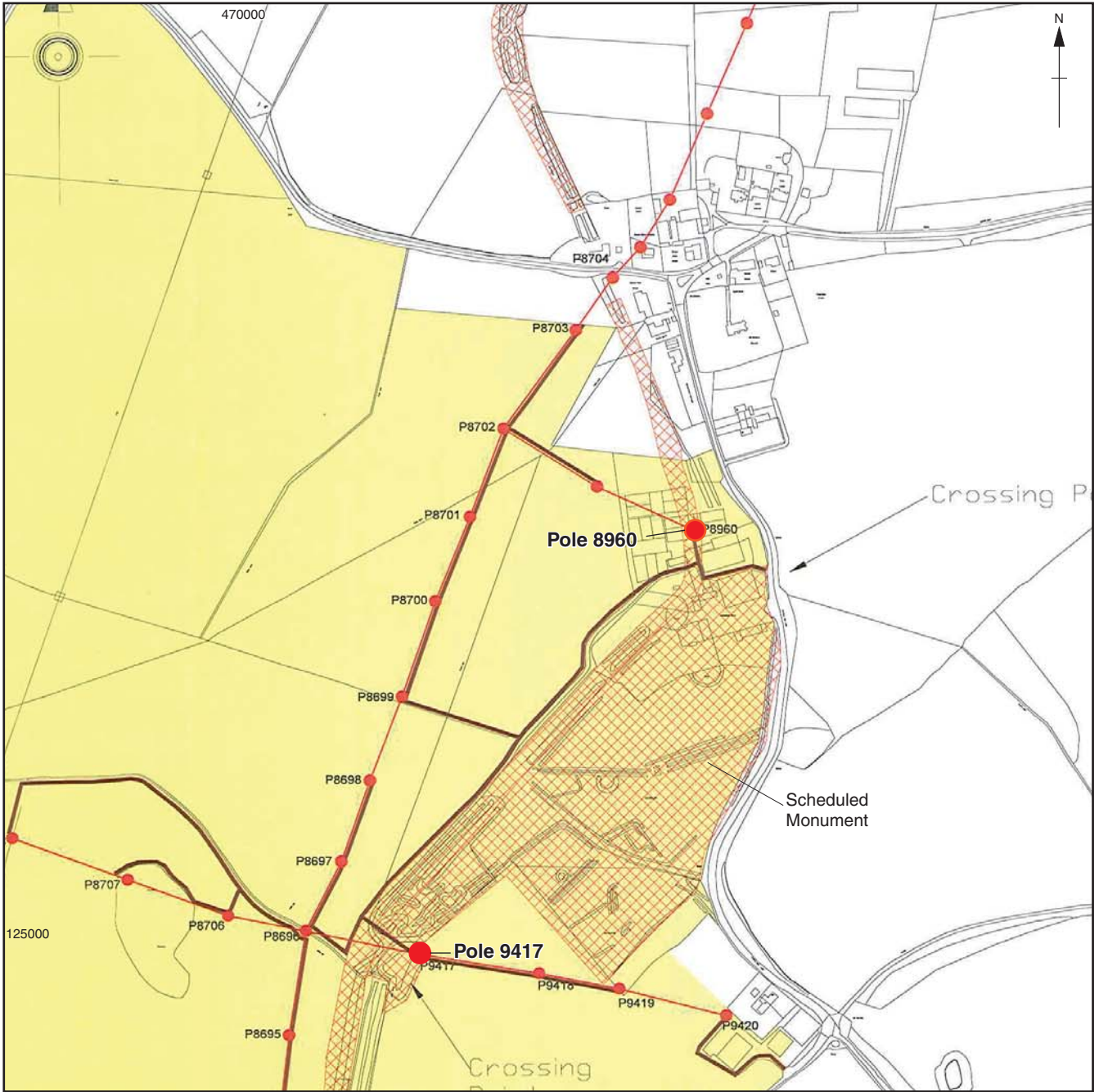
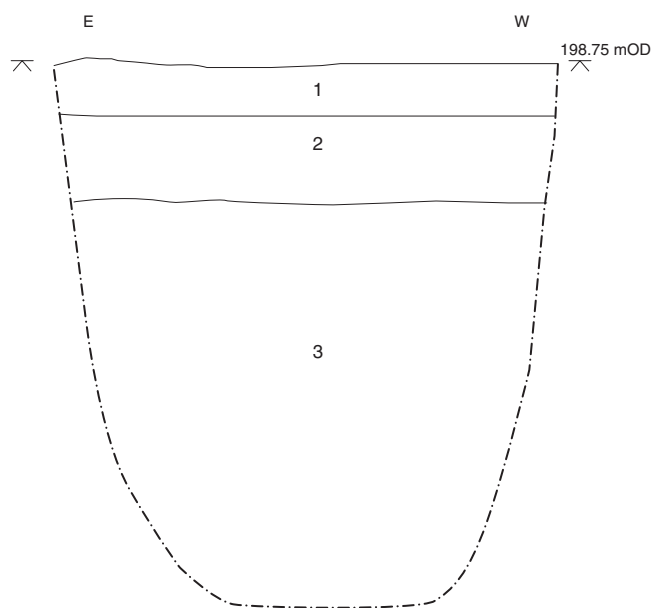


Figure 2: Site plan



Pole 8960  
Section 1



Pole 9417  
Section 2

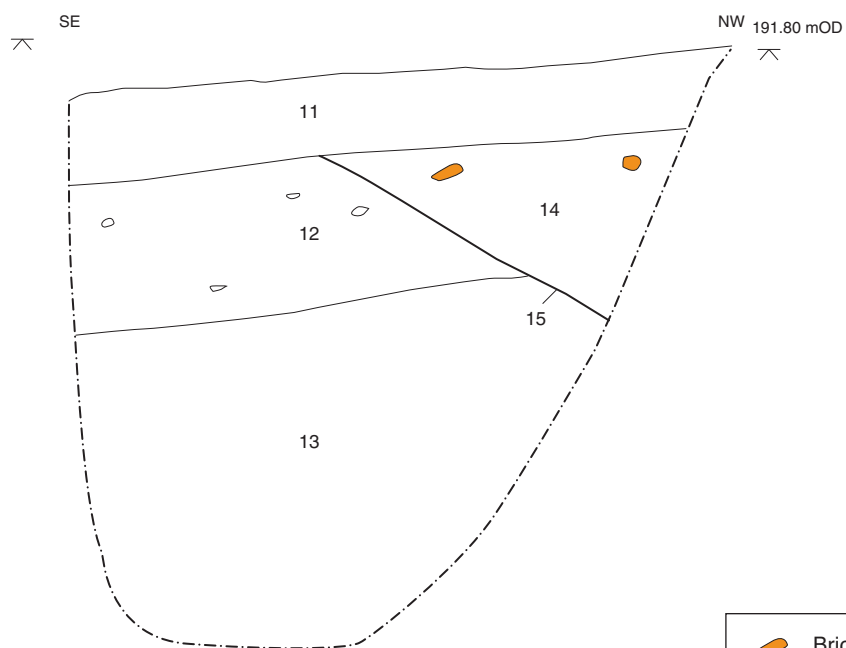


Figure 3: Sections





Plate 1: Section 2



Plate 2: Earthworks visible immediately to the south of Section 2





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