



Grafham Water Solar Farm

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

July 2020

Client: Anglian Water Services

Report No: 2432
Event No: ECB5965
NGR: TL 16361 66366

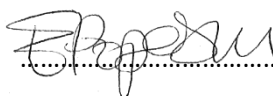


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Grafham Water Solar Farm

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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With illustrations by Dave Brown BA

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Summary

Between 30th April and 20th May 2020, Oxford Archaeology undertook archaeological monitoring in the form of a watching brief on the excavation of cable trenches associated with the construction of a solar farm at Grafham Water. Previous archaeological works on the site and in the immediate area revealed Iron Age and Roman remains, however no archaeological features or finds were identified in the 0.5m wide cable trenches.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Anglian Water Services for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to HBS Group as the Principal Contractor on site.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Louise Moan. The fieldwork was undertaken by Chris Thatcher. The illustrator and editor are also thanked for their contributions.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Anglian Water Services to undertake archaeological monitoring in the form of a watching brief on groundworks associated with the construction of a solar farm to the south of Grafham Water (TL 16361 66366).
- 1.1.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; Moan 2019) for the monitoring was prepared on behalf of the Client as requested by the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CHET). This document outlined how OA implemented the specified requirements.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 Grafham Water is situated around 9km south-west of Huntingdon and 6km north of St Neots. The site itself is located on the south-eastern side of Grafham Water, to the east of the village of Perry.
- 1.2.2 The area of proposed development consists of a single elongated field which is bounded to the north by the B661, to the west by the Anglian Water Grafham Water Treatment Works, and to the south and east by arable land.
- 1.2.3 Bedrock geology across the site consists of Oxford Clay Formation mudstone with superficial deposits of Oadby Member diamicton and sits at around a height of 48m OD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

Previous archaeological works

- 1.3.1 As part of the initial mitigation for this project, a 35 trench evaluation was undertaken across three fields to the north, east and south of Grafham Water (ECB5491, Blackburn 2019). The densest archaeological remains were identified across Field 1 (in which the current subject site lies). The trenches uncovered ditches, gullies, pits, and postholes containing assemblages of pottery, animal bone, fired clay, worked stone and metalwork, all relating to settlement activity. Two of the features on the southern side of the field were identified as dating to the Middle Iron Age period. No Late Iron Age pottery was recovered from the site but Early to Middle Roman pottery was recovered from a small number of features, with a clear concentration across the north-western corner of the field.
- 1.3.2 Further archaeological works have also been undertaken within the subject site as part of the Grafham Resilience Scheme (ECB4423, Patten 2015). During this open area excavation settlement remains spanning the Late Iron Age period were identified, comprising enclosure ditches, at least two structures and an area of pitting. Within the area of pitting were two cremations, one of which was urned.

Neolithic and Bronze Age

- 1.3.3 Very little in the way of pre-Iron Age activity is recorded in the vicinity. A findspot of worked flint (CHER 00485, not illustrated) has been recovered from land to the west of the current site.

Iron Age and Roman

- 1.3.4 A wealth of Iron Age and Roman remains are recorded on land to the south and west of the site. The evaluation (ECB4284) identified Iron Age and Roman settlement-related features (MCB24244, MCB24245 & MCB24246) including pits, enclosure ditches and roundhouse gullies containing pottery. The full extents of the settlement were not identified, and the layout would indicate that it probably continues eastward into the proposed site, where further Iron Age and Roman findspots have been recorded (CHER 00992 & 00993).
- 1.3.5 Archaeological works at HMP Littlehey (ECB3112, not illustrated), c.600m south-west of the current site have also uncovered evidence for Late Iron Age and Roman activity (MCB18586, not illustrated) comprising enclosure ditches, a waterhole, roundhouses and pits all containing pottery and animal bone assemblages.
- 1.3.6 Groundworks undertaken near Hangmans Spinney and under the car park in Plummers Park to the immediate north of the B661 revealed the remains of a north-northeast to south-southwest aligned metalled Roman road, along with an inhumation burial and a cremation. Burnt material and a number of kiln bars were also identified. Further to this a bronze brooch, pin, bracelet and two coins were recovered as well as sherds of Samian pottery (CHER 00506).
- 1.3.7 Other Roman findspots in the vicinity comprise a brooch (CHER 11337A) just 80m south of the proposed development area.

Anglo-Saxon and medieval

- 1.3.8 Anglo-Saxon remains are confined to a single findspot of a brooch (CHER 11337), around 80m south of the site.
- 1.3.9 This area is known to have been used for brick manufacture from the 15th century onward, and a number of kilns have been recorded on land to the immediate east of the proposed site (CHER 00532, 00532a and 00532b).
- 1.3.10 The land south of Grafham Water around the village of Perry also contains a large number of records pertaining to ridge and furrow (both cropmarks and earthworks), including MCB18763, MCB18764 and MCB18765.

Post-medieval and modern

- 1.3.11 The majority of the most immediate records relating to post-medieval and modern activity are confined to the land in and around Perry and include a 19th century decoy earthwork at Crow Spinney (CHER 00487, not illustrated) and extensive WWII remains at Gaynes Hall (MCB19591, not illustrated).

2 WATCHING BRIEF AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The general aim of the watching brief was to preserve by record any archaeological evidence revealed within the cable trenches (Plates 1 and 2). If archaeology was encountered, the investigation had the following aims:
- i. Establish the form, date and purpose of any archaeological deposits;
 - ii. Establish the impact of past land uses.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The watching brief was conducted during machine works by the Principal Contractor.
- 2.2.2 Ground works associated with excavation of the cable trenches for the solar panels were monitored by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist, followed by the investigation and recording of all deposits revealed, where safe to do so.
- 2.2.3 Mechanical excavation was undertaken by a 14-tonne 360° excavator using a 0.5m wide toothed bucket.
- 2.2.4 Spoil arising from the ground penetrating works was scanned visually and with a metal detector to aid recovery of artefacts. The depth, nature and potential artefact content of deposits were also investigated and recorded.

3 RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1.1 The monitoring works produced no evidence for archaeological activity within the cable trenches.
- 3.1.2 Whilst previous investigative works on the site (Patten 2015 and Blackburn 2019) have identified preserved archaeological remains in the vicinity of the cable trenches, none of these were picked up during the monitoring works. This was most probably due to the narrow size of the cable trenches themselves hindering clear identification of any potential features.

APPENDIX A BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Blackbourn, K. 2019 *Middle Iron Age and Roman Settlement Features at Grafham Water Solar Array*. OA East Report No. 2263. Unpublished
- Moan, L. 2019 *Grafham Water Solar Farm. Written Scheme of Investigation*. OA East. Unpublished
- Patten, R. 2015 *The Grafham Resilience Scheme, Perry, Cambridgeshire*. CAU Report No. 1312. Unpublished

APPENDIX B OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-396103		
Project Name	Grafham Water Solar Farm		
Start of Fieldwork	30 April 2020	End of Fieldwork	20 May 2020
Previous Work	Yes	Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	GRFSFM19	Planning App. No.	N/A
HER Number	ECB5965	Related Numbers	oxfordar3-337145

Prompt	NFFP
Development Type	Solar Farm
Place in Planning Process	Not known/Not recorded

Techniques used (tick all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography – interpretation | <input type="checkbox"/> Grab-sampling | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new | <input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-core | <input type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch | <input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning | <input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording of Fabric/Structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Augering | <input type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors | <input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search | <input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling | <input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watching Brief |

Monument	Period	Object	Period
None	Choose an item.	None	Choose an item.

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Address (including Postcode) Land south of the B661 Perry Huntingdon PE28 0BN
District	Huntingdonshire	
Parish	Perry	
HER office	Cambridgeshire	
Size of Study Area	45,900sqm	
National Grid Ref	TL 16361 66366	

Project Originators

Organisation	Oxford Archaeology
Project Brief Originator	Andy Thomas
Project Design Originator	Louise Moan
Project Manager	Louise Moan
Project Supervisor	Chris Thatcher

Project Archives

	Location	ID
Physical Archive (Finds)	N/A	N/A
Digital Archive	OA East	GRFSFM19
Paper Archive	CCC Store	ECB5965

Physical Contents	Present?	Digital files associated with Finds	Paperwork associated with Finds
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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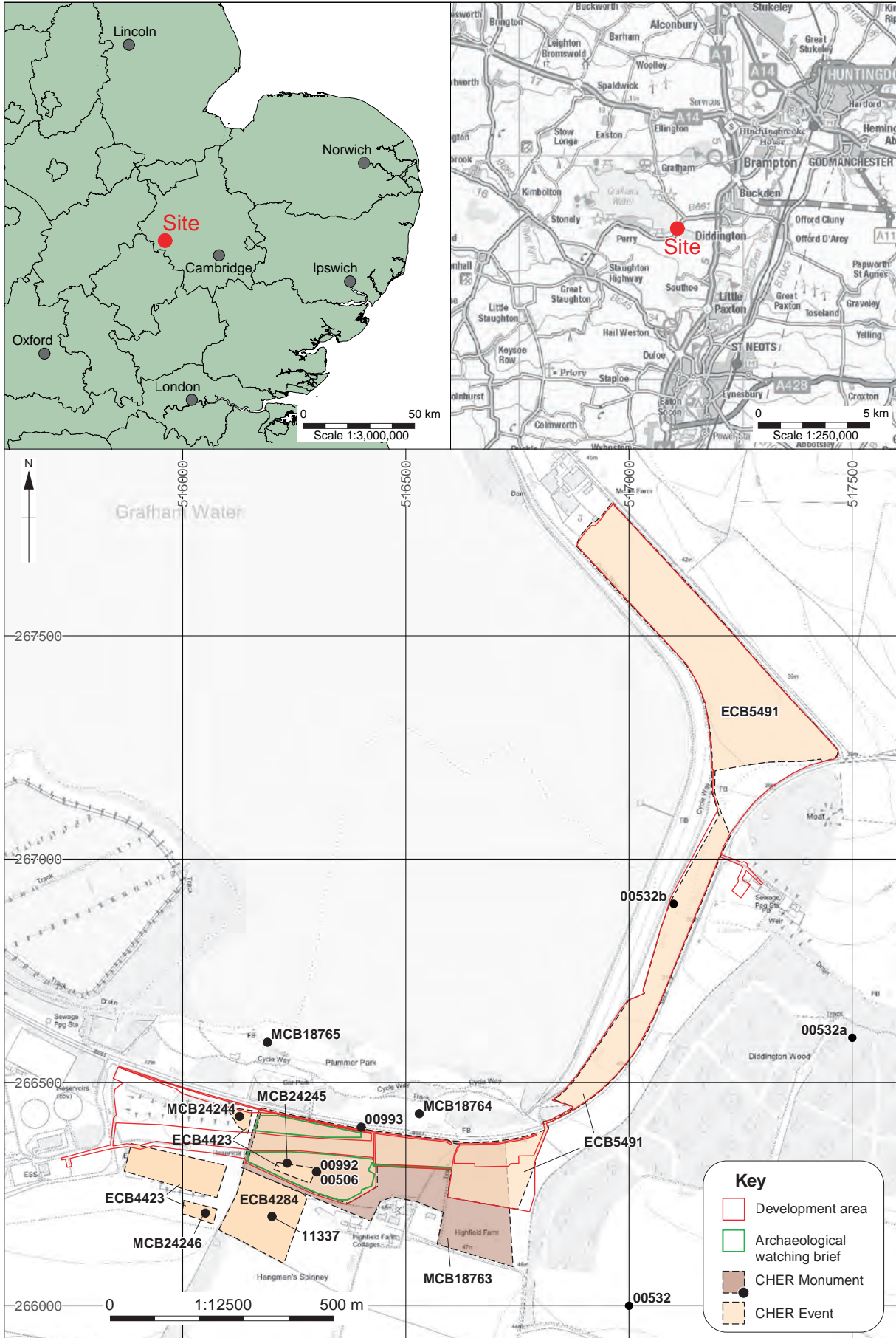
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Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>

Further Comments



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Figure 1: Site location with HER data

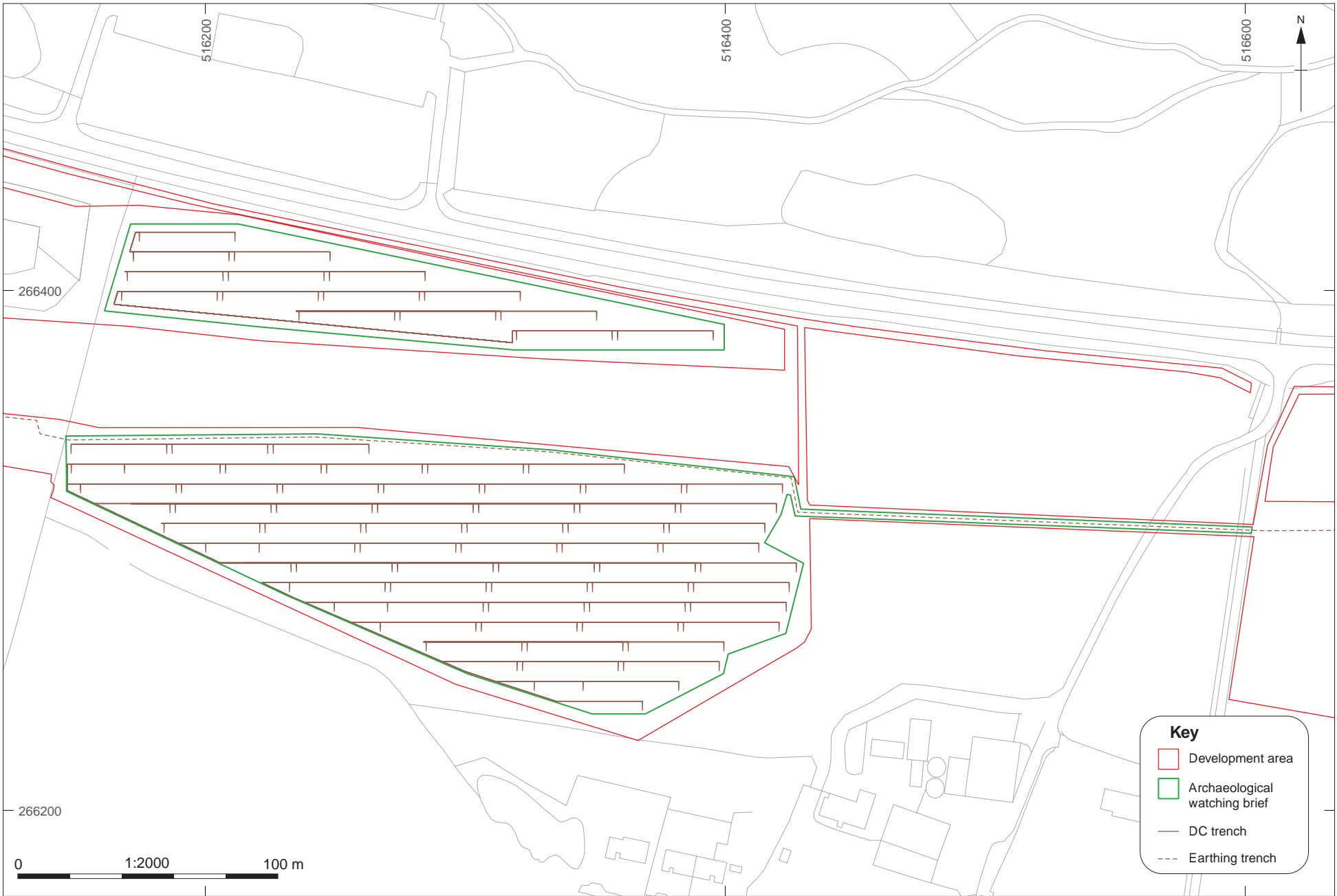


Figure 2: Plan showing monitored cable trenches

Mapping data provided by the client



Plate 1: Cable trench adjacent to B661, looking north-west



Plate 2: Cable trench on southern side of site, looking south-east



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