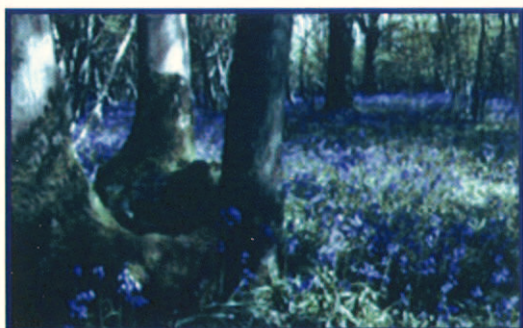


# Bramley Frith Wood Hampshire



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



February 2006

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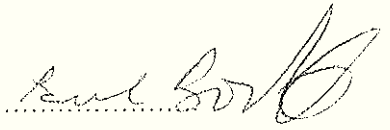
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National Grid

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## SUMMARY

*In December 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Bramley, Frith Wood, Hampshire (NGR SU 643 600). The work was commissioned by National Grid in advance of an extension to the electricity sub-station. No archaeological features were observed.*

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In December 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Bramley, Frith Wood, Hampshire (SU 643 600) (Fig. 1). Following consultation by National Grid with regard to the extension of the electricity sub-station at Bramley Frith Wood, for which Permitted Development (PD) exists.
- 1.1.2 Following the consultation period, National Grid adopted archaeological best practice to mitigate the impact of the extension. OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) in accordance with best practice (IFA 1992)

### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The current sub-station is constructed upon a raised platform of demolition rubble constructed in the 1960s, within the limits of Frith Wood. The platform is *c* 3 m thick to the east and *c* 1 m thick to the west. The site encompasses an area of approximately 7.1 ha. The area around the raised platform lies at 65 m above OD. Frith Wood comprises approximately 36 ha, but this includes a substantial cleared area occupied by the electricity sub-stations. The site is situated over an area of London Clays (British Geological Survey, 1979, Sheet 284).

### 1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 1.3.1 No background research has been carried out for this site. The information regarding previous use and archaeological potential has been produced, and summarised here, as part of a *An Archaeological Earthwork Survey in Bramley Frith Wood, Near Bramley, Hampshire* produced by Berkshire Archaeological Services (BAS 2005) for and on behalf of Hampshire County Council (HCC).
- 1.3.2 *Prehistoric*
- 1.3.3 The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) for the area surrounding Frith Wood includes numerous references to finds and crop-mark sites of the Iron Age and Romano-British periods. The later are particularly common in the area between the northern edge of the wood and the Iron Age *oppidum* and Roman town of *Calleva Atrebatum* (Silchester), just under 2 kilometres to the north. In addition the earthworks radiating from Silchester pass within 1 kilometre of the wood.

#### 1.3.4 *Roman*

1.3.5 In Frith Wood itself, finds of the Romano-British period include a rim sherd from a beaded and flanged bowl of the third or fourth century AD, a few *tegulae* and bonding tile fragments, including one with traces of *opus signinum*. No dateable finds have been found within the Frith Wood earthworks, although fragments of iron slag, a piece of lead and burnt, or fire-cracked, flint have been found in the interior. Although the site is located c 2 km to the south of the Silchester, no evidence has yet been produced to link specific settlement patterns to the immediate locale. However, the potential for locating Roman features cannot be completely discounted.

#### 1.3.6 *Medieval*

1.3.7 There is at present no evidence indicating Saxon and early Norman activity. The earliest references to a wood possibly corresponding to Bramley Frith Wood occurs in the thirteenth century when a licence to enclose his wood of Bramley was obtained by Robert de St John. During the reign of Henry III (1216-1272) the wood became the property of the Prior and convent of Monk Sherbourne.

1.3.8 Following suppression of the Priory of Monk Sherbourne the estates including Bramley Frith were given in 1461 by Edward IV to God's House, Southampton. From there the wood passed into the ownership of The Queen's College, Oxford and remained largely unchanged until the clearance of an area to facilitate the construction of the electricity sub-station in the 1960s.

## 2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality, character and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To preserve by record any archaeological remains which the groundworks would remove or damage within the development area.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The watching brief consisted of 2 days attendance on site to monitor the progress and extent of the excavations and to record any remains exposed during the works.
- 2.2.2 All sections were drawn at scales of 1:20. All sections were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Field Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

### 3 RESULTS

3.1.1 Over two days in December 2005 11 hand-dug pits were excavated to a depth of between 0.5 and 0.9 m depth, the average being 0.8 m. The pits were excavated to facilitate the drilling of bore-holes to assess the under-lying geology.

3.1.2 The eleven hand-dug pits monitored, (fig. 2) were excavated to the west (1 and 2) and east ( 6-11) of the 444 kv sub-station and to the west ( 3-5) of the 132 kv sub-station

#### 3.2 Description of deposits

3.2.1 Pits 1 and 2 revealed hardcore (100) *c* 0.1 m thick overlying made ground (101) *c* 0.24 m thick which consisted of building rubble, which overlay redeposited clay (102).

3.2.2 Pits 3-5 revealed a light reddish brown sandy clay topsoil (103) *c* 0.1 m overlying a light greyish brown clayey sand subsoil (104) *c* 0.1-0.2 m which overlay a mottled sandy clay natural (105).

3.2.3 Pits 6-8 revealed the same stratigraphy, a redeposited topsoil (106) *c* 0.12 m overlying made ground consisting of building rubble (101) in excess of *c* 0.6 m in depth.

3.2.4 Pits 9-11 revealed hardcore (100) 0.06 m thick overlying made ground (101).

#### 3.3 Finds

3.3.1 No finds were recovered and retained during the watching brief.

#### 3.4 Palaeo-environmental remains

3.4.1 No deposits suitable for paleo-environmental sampling were observed during the watching brief.

### 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 No archaeological remains were present in the hand-dug pits.

4.1.2 From discussions on-site , prior to the watching brief, it became apparent that the 444 kv current electricity sub-station had been built upon a level platform of redeposited demolition rubble *c* 3 m high to the west and *c* 1 m high to the east. The 132 kv sub-station was constructed on a level platform *c* 0.5 m high.

4.1.3 As pits 1-2 and 6-11 were dug on the platform there was little chance of these impacting upon any buried topsoils or underlying archaeological deposits or features. Pits 3-5 were excavated to the east of the 132 kv sub-station in areas unaffected by the construction of the sub-stations and provided a greater possibility of observing underlying archaeological deposits or features.

- 4.1.4 During preparation for the watching brief a methodology was proposed where pits 1.2 m x 1.2 m x 1.2 m would be excavated prior to drilling of bore-holes. Due to the size and depth of these excavations it was felt that a watching brief to monitor and record any archaeological remains that might be observed was warranted.
- 4.1.5 During the on-site works the methodology was changed and pits c 0.3 m in diameter were excavated to a depth of c 0.8 m, which gave little opportunity to observe any buried soil horizons or archaeological deposits or features.
- 4.1.6 The watching brief was terminated after 2 days due to this change in methodology, in agreement with Richard Walsh of National Grid.
- 4.1.7 Whilst no opportunity occurred to observe buried top-soils and underlying archaeology it should be assumed unless otherwise confirmed that buried soils which may overlie archaeological remains exist below the sub-station platforms.
- 4.1.8 The pits to the east of the 132 kv sub-station, whilst producing no evidence of archaeological remains did indicate that archaeology could exist in these undeveloped areas below undisturbed top and sub-soil.



## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>
100	Layer	0.1	na	Hardcore	None
101	Layer	0.24	na	Re-deposited demolition rubble	None
102	Layer	>0.5	na	Re-deposited clay	None
103	Layer	0.1	na	Topsoil	None
104	Layer	0.1-0.2	na	Sub-soil	None
105	Natural	>0.6	na	Natural	None
106	Layer	0.15	na	Topsoil	None

## APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

- BAS, 2005 An Archaeological Earthwork Survey in Bramley Frith Wood, Near Bramley, Hampshire
- IFA, 1992 Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs
- OAU, 1992 Field Manual (ed. Wilkinson D)

## APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** Bramley Frith Wood, Bramley, Hampshire

**Site code:** BRAFW05

**Grid reference:** SU643 600

**Type of watching brief:** Monitoring of groundworks during the excavation of hand dug test-pits

**Date and duration of project:** 2 days on site between 12th and 13th December 2005

**Area of site:** 7.1ha

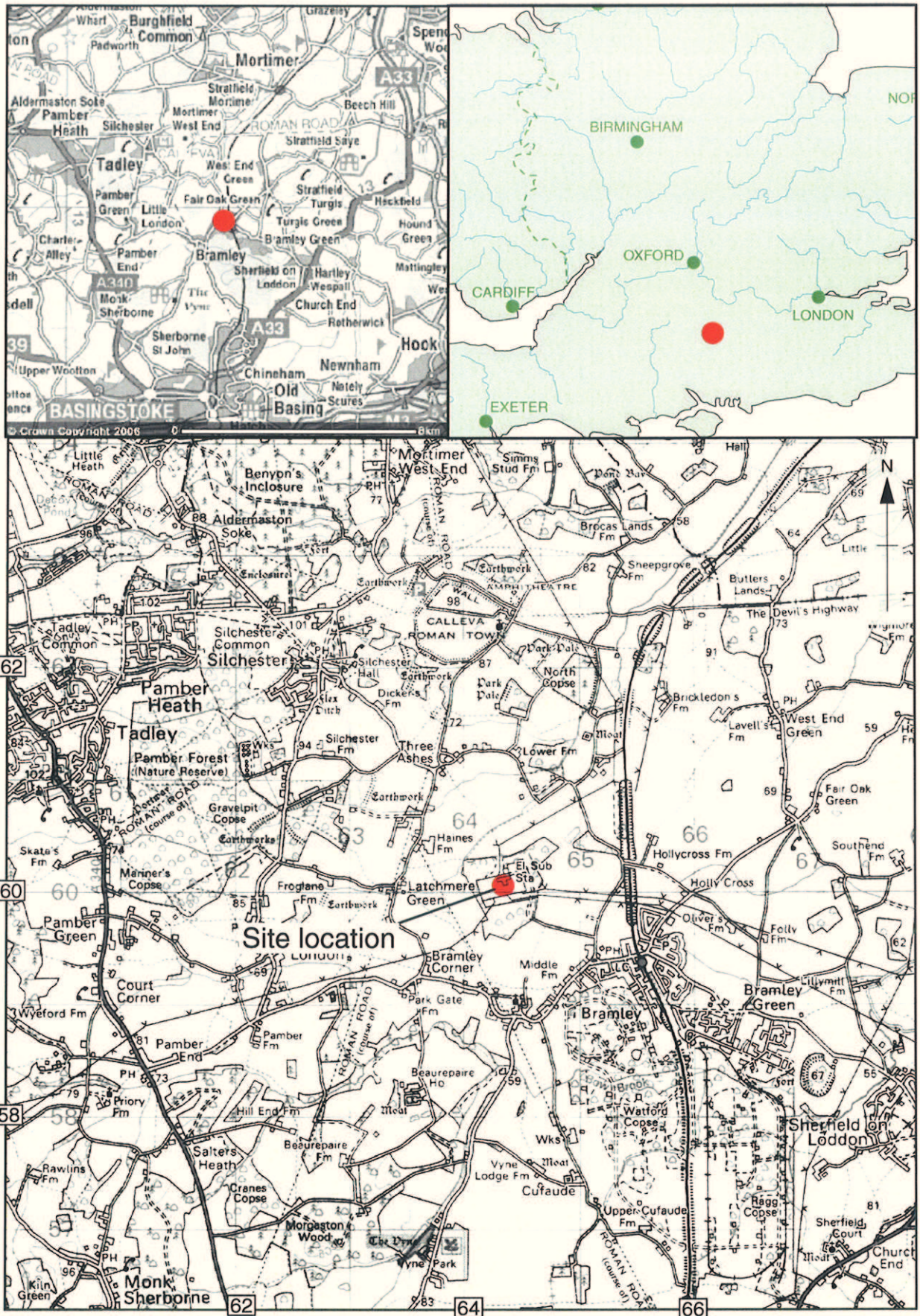
**Summary of results:** The watching brief revealed no archaeology

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Hampshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: A2005.61





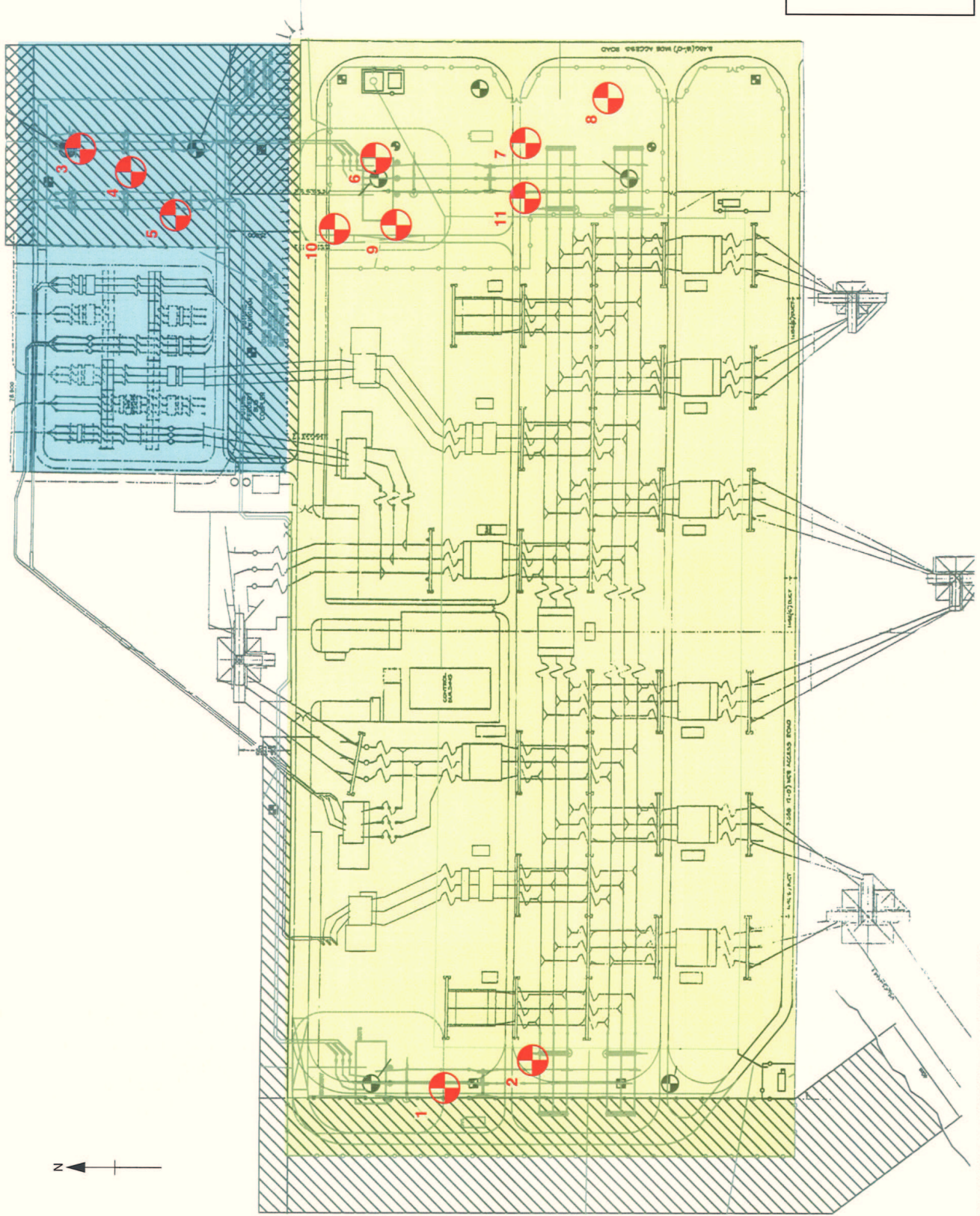




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Figure 1: Site location





Plan taken from Drawing no 10/PB/0083 copyright National Grid

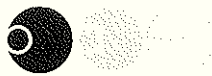
Figure 2: Location of Bore-holes



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