



PROPOSED SOLAR FARM, LAND AT ELMSETT AIRFIELD, ELMSETT, SUFFOLK

DESK BASED ASSESSMENT



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**PROPOSED SOLAR FARM, LAND AT ELMSETT AIRFIELD, ELMSETT,
SUFFOLK**

Desk Based Assessment

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CONTENTS

	ABSTRACT	
1.0	INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY	
2.0	METHODOLOGY	
3.0	PLANNING BACKGROUND	
4.0	ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SEARCH RESULTS	
5.0	DISCUSSION	
6.0	CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS	
7.0	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	
8.0	PROJECT ARCHIVE & DEPOSITION	
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	

Appendix 1 HER Data

Figure 1	Site Location Plan	1:5000
Figure 2	SHER Data – Monument Areas & Locations	1:20000
Figure 3	Cartographic Sources 1575-1973	
Figure 4	Proposed Development Plans	1:5000
Figure 5	Site Photographic Record	



Abstract

Britannia Archaeology was commissioned by Mr Adrian French of AGRenewables Ltd to prepare an archaeological desk based assessment on land adjacent to Elmsett Airfield, Elmsett, Suffolk (NGR: 605378 241041). The assessment will support a planning application for the development of new solar farm and associated works.

The site has a high potential for subsurface archaeological remains dating to the Roman period based on finds recovered from two areas either on or adjacent to the proposed development site. This is documented in the Suffolk Historic Environment Record (SHER) office and via local historical literary sources, however the precise location of these finds is unknown and the SHER is investigating further.

The potential for finds or features dating to all other periods is low.

Elmsett is typical of villages in southern, rural Suffolk, which are characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern, usually focused on or around the parish church or village greens. The assessment site lies on the periphery this model and as such has undergone little in the way of development for the last 1500 years.

Historical maps show that the site has been given over to agricultural for at least the last 200 years and the only changes have been to the internal field boundaries which have gradually been removed to make way for larger, more industrially farmed fields.

The development will use small gauge piles in the construction of the panel frames and these will reduce any potential damage to subsurface archaeological remains. The wider and deeper cable trenches and substation foundations are likely to have a more significant impact on any buried remains.

Impact on the general archaeological setting is likely to be negligible to low. The closest listed building, Poplar Hall Farmhouse, is already obscured from line of sight by modern airfield hangar buildings and large commercial outbuildings.



1.0 INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

1.1 Project Background

This report presents an archaeological desk based assessment undertaken by Britannia Archaeology Ltd, commissioned by Mr Adrian French of AGRenewables Ltd, for a proposed new solar farm on land adjacent to Elmsett Airfield, Elmsett, Suffolk (NGR: 603920 246113) (Fig.1).

This assessment will support a planning application for the proposed development of the site which will involve:

- construction of solar PV arrays arranged in rows facing south;
- construction of one electricity substation and inverter/transformer kiosk; and
- associated cable trenching to connect the arrays and inverters to the on-site substation and thereafter to the point of connection to the UK Power Networks' electrical infrastructure (Fig. 4).

The objective of this assessment is to establish the presence of, or likely potential for, buried archaeological remains and the possible impact of the development on these remains. The assessment will also consider the setting of the new development in relation to existing listed buildings and known archaeological sites within the immediate area.

The study area (Fig.1) is formed by an 18Ha, roughly rectangular parcel of land orientated north-east to south-west located south-west of Poplar Hall Farm. In addition, the land to the south-east towards Corn Hatches Lane also forms part of the study area to account for cable trenching to connect the farm to the local UK Power Networks' electrical infrastructure.

1.2 Site Description

The assessment site is located at the western extent of the parish of Elmsett in the District of Babergh, Suffolk and covers an area of 18Ha (Fig. 1). Poplar Hall lies immediately to the north-east and the grass landing strip of Elmsett Airfield bounds the site to the south-east. The land slopes relatively steeply to the south-west with an overall drop of 20m between the north-eastern end (72m AOD) and the south-western tip (52m AOD). A dry valley bisects the plot in this direction. Current land usage is arable agriculture and the site visit recorded the field as being sown to oilseed rape.

The site is accessed from Whatfield Road and a private track associated with Poplar Hall and Elmsett Airfield. Several other businesses operate from former farm buildings between Poplar Hall and the assessment site and a bank of six solar PV arrays already exist just to the east of these buildings.

The proposed development will also encompass trenching to connect the solar farm to the local UK Power Networks' electrical infrastructure at a point close to Corn Hatches Lane (Fig. 2) approximately 800m east of the assessment site.



The bedrock geology comprises Thanet Sand Formation and Lambeth Group sand and clay. This is a sedimentary bedrock laid down in the Palaeogene Period 55 to 65 million years ago when the local environment was dominated by shallow seas (BGS, 2013).

The superficial geology comprises Lowestoft Formation Diamicton which were formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period when the local environment was dominated by ice age conditions (BGS, 2013).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims & Scope

This report aims to assess all known information relating to subsurface and above ground archaeological remains within a 2km radius centred on a point between the development site and the proposed connection point at Corn Hatches Lane and to identify the potential presence of archaeological remains that will be impacted upon during the development. It will also consider the impact of the development on the setting of existing archaeological sites and listed buildings in the immediate vicinity. This report will take into consideration existing truncation from previous developments and the potential impact caused by the implementation of the proposed development plans and construction methods.

A mitigation strategy may be instigated after consultation with a Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service Conservation Team (SCCAS/CT) archaeologist.

2.2 Research and Sources

Historic Environment Record Office

The Suffolk Historic Environment Record Office (SHER) was consulted and provided details of all data held within a 2km radius of the site. The SHER database holds records of archaeological sites, scheduled monuments, listed buildings, finds spots, registered parks and gardens, protected wreck sites and battlefields.

Documentary Sources

Primary and secondary documentary sources were consulted via the SHER, the Suffolk Record Office based in Bury St. Edmunds, Hadleigh Library Local Studies Collection and the Archaeology Data Service (www.archaeologydataservice.ac.uk). All sources consulted are listed in the bibliography.

Cartographic Sources

A search of primary and secondary cartographic sources was undertaken at Suffolk Record Office in Bury St Edmunds.

Site Visit



A site visit was undertaken on the 30th April 2013 and a photographic record compiled. The visit aimed to identify any existing earthworks or visible archaeological remains, establish the condition and character of the existing site and note its setting. Proposed site plans were consulted during the visit to assess the areas where there is the greatest potential to encounter archaeological remains.

Presentation of Results

The results of the research are presented by historical/archaeological period and are a synthesis of all data gathered that are relevant to the site. Not all of the data supplied by the SHER is referred to in the report, however Appendix 1 contains a full table and brief description of the HER search results.

3.0 PLANNING BACKGROUND

The archaeological assessment was carried out in accordance with guidance laid down by the National Planning and Policy Framework (NPPF, DCLD 2012) which replaced Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5, DCLG 2010) in March 2012. The relevant local development plan is the Babergh Development Framework Core Strategy (2011-2031) Submission Draft.

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, DCLG March 2012)

The NPPF recognises that 'heritage assets' are an irreplaceable resource and planning authorities should conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance when considering development. It requires developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. The key areas for consideration are:

- The significance of the heritage asset and its setting in relation to the proposed development;
- The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance;
- Significance (of the heritage asset) can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction, or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification;
- Local planning authorities should not permit loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred; and
- Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

3.2 Babergh Development Framework Core Strategy (2011-2031) Submission Draft



The local development framework for Babergh states the following:

- Careful consideration of the character of other, unlisted, historic assets is important and that developments which may affect historic assets make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (3.35 & 3.3.6).

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH RESULTS

The following results are presented as a synthesis of all data obtained from the sources detailed above (Section 2.0) and listed in the bibliography (Figs. 2-3). Where possible the Suffolk HER preferred reference has been used.

4.1 Prehistoric (750000BC – 43AD) (Fig. 2)

Suffolk in general has a rich record of prehistoric activity and archaeological sites. Fertile land and an abundance of natural resources means that the area has always been an attractive location for settlement. Elmsett lies to the east of the Brett river valley on land that slopes down into the flood plain which is traditionally suited to prehistoric funerary and settlement activity.

The SHER returned three records of prehistoric date, none of which are located within the assessment site. All three (ADH002, ADH003 and ADH013) lie between 1 and 2km south and south-east of the assessment site in the village of Aldham. The oldest records relate to two separate Neolithic (4000-2200BC) find spots (ADH002 and AD013). The former comprised two flint flakes, found near Aldham Hall and the latter was a complete, retouched, polished flint axehead with distinct cream and irregular medium-brown blotchy colouring found near Wolves Wood. The final prehistoric entry (ADH003) dates to the Bronze Age (2200-700BC) and records the location of a fragment of bronze socketed axe (tip missing) found in around 18 inches down in extension foundations at 2 Church Lane.

Literary sources (Elmsett Local Historical Society, 2006) also suggest the location of a ploughed out Bronze Age Barrow to the south-east of Park Wood, approximately 600m south of the assessment site.

In the wider landscape, numerous probable Bronze Age ring-ditch sites have been recorded mainly on the east bank of the River Brett to the North of Hadleigh (HAD024). These tend to be found on or around the 20m contour and were noted on aerial photograph surveys which do not extend as far as the assessment site. A significant Bronze Age and early Iron Age site at Red Hill Road (HAD061) north-east of Hadleigh (and just beyond the assessment HER search radius) recorded a ditched field system, probable track way and six timber structures.

No Iron Age sites or finds have been recorded within 2km of the assessment site.



While the wider landscape contains evidence of limited prehistoric activity, there is no record of any such activity on the assessment site.

4.2 Romano-British (43AD – c. 410AD)

The Romano-British period marked a significant change in development for the wider area with *Camulodunum* (Colchester) becoming the Roman Capital of Britannia. Elmsett is located approximately 20km north of *Camulodunum* and is sandwiched between two main Roman Roads that converge at *Combetovium* (Coddensham) around 10km to the north-east. The north to south road is the main route from the Iceni capital *Venta Icenorum* (Caister St. Edmund) to *Londinium* (London) via Colchester (now the A140, A14 and A12) and the east to west road (no longer extant) runs from the Fort at *Combetovium*, through Long Melford and joins the *Via Devana* running to *Duroiliponte* (Cambridge) (Antonine *Iter V & IX*).

While much of Britain remained virtually unchanged after the Roman invasion, East Anglia experienced significant development with city/settlement, road and villa building in evidence over a wide area.

The SHER returned three entries dating to the Roman period (AD005, ETT021 and WHA014). The most significant of which comprised Roman finds (ETT021) noted in the southern-most field of Poplar Hall on, or adjacent to, the assessment site. In 2002, two separate archaeology sites in the same field recorded the remains of possible Roman timber huts, bronze coins, Samian ware pottery, a complete second century AD brooch, thimbles, buttons and more fragments of brooches (Elmsett Local History Group, 2006). Medieval finds were also recorded at this location and are discussed in the relevant section below. The precise location of these excavations is not yet clear and the SHER is investigating further (Rolfe, J. pers comms).

A single potsherd (AD005) found in plough soil was located 1.2km to the south-east of the assessment site and 11 coins and a brooch fragment (WHA014) were recovered at Street Far, 1.2km to the north-west.

The potential for the preservation of archaeological remains dating to the Roman period at the assessment site is high, despite the wider area being low. This activity seems relatively low scale and is probably confined to smallholdings rather than more substantial settlement activity, however Samian ware pottery is considered high status material and may suggest the presence of a villa or more important structure in the locality.

4.3 Anglo-Saxon (early medieval) (c.410AD – 1066AD) (Fig. 2)

The withdrawal of Roman authority in Britain in the early 5th Century AD and the dominance of the Anglo-Saxons in the south and east of England led to significant changes in settlement distribution. Many of the Roman settlements, such as Colchester, waned in significance and new settlements, for example nearby Hadleigh, were



established. Settlement patterns persisting throughout Iron Age and Roman Britain did not necessarily continue into the Anglo-Saxon period.

Elmsett can trace its origins back to this period and its name was first recorded in c.995AD as *Yelmesæton*, meaning 'the dwellers among the elm trees' (Mills, 2003). The documentary evidence relating to Elmsett in the Anglo-Saxon period is sparse. The earliest records bequeath the Elmsett estate in two wills, firstly to Æthelflæd and Ælflæd from their father Ælfgar in c.955AD and subsequently to King Æthelred in 1002AD.

SHER search returned four records dating to this period (ADH011, ADH012, ETT010 and WHA014). All records relate to find spots, the closest being a Late Saxon bronze stirrup mount of Urnes type (ADH011) located 930m south-east of Poplar Hall and close to the proposed UK Power Networks' electrical infrastructure connection at Corn Hatches Lane (Fig. 2). A cut half-penny (ETT010) of Aethelred II (978-1016) was found 1km to the north-east and a circular decorated mount/fitting (7th – 11th century AD) and an enamelled mount/fitting, sub-rectangular plate with sunken yellow and red enamelled triangles and squares (ADH012) were recovered 2km to the south near Wolves Farm Lane. The final find spot (WHA014) records the location of the upper part of a cruciform (with detached knobs) or simple small-long type brooch, found in conjunction with Roman and medieval finds 1.2km to the north-west.

There is no direct evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity on the assessment site and limited evidence for more substantial settlement activity in the wider area.

4.4 Medieval (1066 AD – 1540 AD) (Fig. 2)

The medieval period in Elmsett is better represented in both primary and secondary sources with 15 archaeological records and three listed building records within the search area.

The entry in Domesday Book (1086AD) records the village at *Elmeseta* in the Cosford Hundred and County of Suffolk. The total population was 14 households (medium sized) comprising two villagers and 12 smallholders. The total tax was assessed at 6.5 geld units which was quite large. The village had two lord's plough teams and 4.5 men's plough teams, one church with 0.12 church lands, four cattle, 20 pigs and 200 sheep. The Lord was Roger d'Auberville who had replaced the Saxon Lord Tovi after the 1066 conquest.

Elmsett seems to have suffered more than the surrounding villages after the Conquest, with a significant drop in livestock, freemen and value. The precise reasons for this loss in fortune are unclear, however some sources suggest that Roger d'Auberville was neglectful in his management of Elmsett and his other holdings as they all seemed to drop in value under his stewardship (Elmsett Local History Group, 2006).

One of the 15 SHER records identifies medieval activity on the assessment site (ETT021). Local literary sources give details of two medieval finds at Poplar Hall's south field along



with the Roman finds discussed earlier. These comprise a King John coin (1199-1216AD) and a Richard III (1483-1485AD) silver retainer's badge in the form of a boar. The exact location is still pending verification, however the SHER suggests a strip along the southern edge of the assessment site or the adjacent field to the east.

Six of the records (ADH006, ADH016, ETT001, ETT002, WHA003 and ETT003) identify moated sites with Whitehouse Farm being the closest, located 300m to the north-west. The moat at the Old Rectory (1.3km north-east of the assessment site) is the only Scheduled Monument in the search area and comprises a large, half ellipse moat, wedge-shaped with water-filled ditches and trees along the edges of the island. An entrance causeway is located in the middle of north side and the moat has a short out-turn flanking the east side of the causeway. The large 15th century house in the interior is placed off-centre in relation to the arms of the moat. Despite an obvious trend in the area for moated sites in relation to larger houses and affluent farms, Poplar Hall farmhouse shows no evidence of ever having been moated.

Two of the medieval records relate to the churches of St Peter in Elmsett (ETT008) and St. Mary in Aldham (ADH004), both of which are listed buildings. Both churches are some distance from the site, lying around 1.6km – 2km in opposite directions from Poplar Hall. Medieval settlements tended to nucleate around the church and as such the assessment site appears to be on the fringe of both parishes.

The remaining five records (ADH001, ADH007, ETT Misc, HNS004 and WHA016) identify find spots. The most significant, (WHA016) comprised a hoard of 10 silver medieval coins located 920m east of the assessment site.

Medieval activity on the site seems to relate to lost artefacts rather than any significant settlement or industrial activity. Instead, it sits on the edge of three parishes with little significant activity noted during a relatively busy time for the surrounding area.

4.5 Post-medieval and modern (1540AD – Present) (Figs. 2 & 3)

Elmsett is reasonably well-documented, especially in cartographic sources, towards the latter half of the post-medieval period. The SHER search returned four archaeological records and 18 listed buildings.

More prominent towns in the wider area began a long period of decline in the early post-medieval period with trade in wool and other cloth types upon which the local economy relied being superseded by continental styles (Jones, W. 1984). The decline continued well into the late 19th century with a series of poor harvests in the 1870s severely damaging the already struggling farming industry.

The earliest maps of the area show very little detail of the village itself, but confirm the rough location in relation to surrounding towns and villages. Saxon's Map of Suffolk dates to 1575 and shows pictorial representations of the towns and villages and scales the size to match population and importance. The larger towns of Hadleigh, Lavenham, Sudbury and Ipswich are clearly identified, with the much smaller *Elmset* located north of



Hadleigh. John Kirby's map from 1736 is a little more detailed showing some roads and the basic layout of the larger settlements, however pictorial representations are still used for the smaller settlements. *Elmset* is identified with a small church and area of woodland.

The size of the village has altered little since the medieval period, however significant redevelopment took place in the 17th century with 12 of the 18 listed buildings dating to this time. This significant development in the village coincides with the end of the prosperity of the larger wool and textile towns. The fact that so many buildings have survived is partly due to the high quality construction techniques used by the builders and demonstrates significant investment in the surrounding villages.

The most significant listed building for the assessment site is Poplar Hall Farmhouse (1037281) which lies just 200m to the north-east. This is described as a Grade II, renovated, two-storey, 16th – 17th century AD, timber-framed farm house. The house is obscured from the assessment site by existing farm buildings, a wooded area and two large hangars belonging to the Airfield. Likewise, the view of the assessment site from the building is fully obscured and the house is set in a semi industrial area to its rear, containing the aforementioned buildings and hangars.

Eley's Cottage (1037321) is located 200m south-east of the proposed connection point to the UK Power Networks' electrical infrastructure. This is a Grade II listed building described as a two-storey, probably 17th – 18th century, timber-framed house.

Twelve further post-medieval listed buildings are recorded in Elmsett, all but one of which are located along Whatfield Road and The Street towards St Peter's Church and lie at least 900m east of the assessment site. The most notable building is the 16th century rectory (1037279) which resides within the island of the medieval moat designated as a Scheduled Monument (ETT002). The rectory is described as a timber-framed, plastered building on a moated site with two storeys and attics.

Five of the listed buildings (1037441, 1037442, 1037440, 1037439 and 1037443) are located over 1km south of the assessment site in the village of Aldham and comprise buildings of a similar date and type to those in Elmsett.

The SHER search returned four archaeological records dating to the post-medieval period, three of which relate to potential sites (ADH Misc, ETT017 & ETT Misc) and one to a finds location (WHA014). A possible kiln site (ADH Misc) suggested by the field name 'clamps,' is located close to the proposed connection point site. A plot named as Friend's Burial Ground (ETT017) on the Tithe map (Fig. 3) is located 1.1km east of the assessment site in the core of Elmsett and a potential mill (ETT Misc) has been identified at Mill Farm, 1.4km to the east. The finds were recorded at Street Farm (WHA014) along with the Roman and Saxon finds described above, but the record does not confirm the type of finds discovered.

Development of the area in the late post-medieval and modern periods is well documented in 19th century cartographic sources (Fig. 3). The Ordnance Survey Office Relief Map dated 1836 offers far more detail than earlier maps and the assessment site is



clearly identifiable to the south of Poplar Hall. Another farm labelled as Searjeant's Farm is shown just beyond the south-western boundary of the assessment site, however this farm no longer exists. The relief map also clearly identifies the large dry valley that bisects the site.

The Tithe Map dated 1839 (Fig. 3) also clearly identifies the assessment site to the south of Poplar Hall and shows that the modern field boundary encompasses large parts of eight separate fields or plots in the Tithe apportionment:

TITHE NUMBER	LAND OWNER	OCCUPIER	SITE NAME	LAND USE	A	R	P
89	JOHN ANSELL	JOHN ROBERTSON	LITTLE BOXSTEADS	ARABLE	10		27
91	"	"	RIDGEWELL FIELD	"	20	1	28
92	"	"	POND	-			5
93	"	"	BARN FIELD	ARABLE	16	2	14
108	"	"	GREEN YARDS	PASTURE	6		33
110	"	"	SHORT ELMS	ARABLE	9	2	20
111	"	"	CALVES PIGHTLE	PASTURE	3	0	1
112	"	"	POND	-			19
113	"	"	GREAT BOXSTEADS	ARABLE	18		32

Table 1: Tithe Apportionments

All the plots were owned by John Ansell and farmed by the tenant, John Robertson, who presumably resided in Poplar Hall Farm. Plot 111 (CalvesPightle) appears to be an unusual shape, however it follows perfectly the base and steep sides of the dry valley noted during the site visit and was probably unsuitable as arable land until the introduction of more powerful industrial farming techniques in the 20th century.

It is also worth noting that the Tithe Map lists Poplar Hall Farmhouse and the assessment site in the parish of Aldham and not in Elmsett, however the modern parish boundaries were altered between 1958 and 1970 to specifically encompass the assessment site and Poplar Hall into Elmsett.

The First Edition Ordnance Survey Map dated 1892 (Fig. 3) more accurately plots the land and provides a higher degree of detail than the earlier maps. The only change to the area since the Tithe Map is the redefining of some of the eastern plots into larger fields. The unusual plot (111) remains unchanged. Both the Second Edition OS (1905) and Provisional Revised OS (1948) show no change the assessment site since the 1892 edition. Searjeant's Farm is also still present in 1948 and only disappears on the 1972 map, when the various fields also become one large field. The assessment site covers approximately half of this large amalgamated field, and the landing strip and airfield buildings are not present.

4.6 Undated

The SHER search produced 10 undated or negative archaeological records which relate to archaeological investigations where no archaeology was found. Seven of these relate to suggested areas of ancient woodland (ADH008, ADH009, ADH010, ADH014, ADH015,



ETT015 and ETT016), one to a possible kiln site (ETT Misc), one to a find spot (also ETT Misc) and one to a negative watching brief at Whitehouse Farm (WHA003).

Corn Hatches Grove (ADH009) is located adjacent to the proposed connection point to the national grid and is identified as ancient woodland of possible medieval date based on literary sources (Rackham, O. 1988). The remaining ancient woodlands are generally south of the site at a distance of between 400m and 2.3km.

The knife or share blade find spot (ETT Misc) was found close to the proposed UK Power Networks' electrical infrastructure connection point at Corn Hatches Lane.

4.7 Site Visit (Fig. 8)

A site visit was undertaken by the author on 30th April 2013 with the following aims:

- to determine the current state of the assessment area;
- to investigate the presence of any surface or potential subsurface archaeological remains; and
- to ascertain the current level of truncation.

The site is currently in use as an agricultural field sown to oilseed rape. The west and south boundaries are formed by a rough track, the east by the landing strip and the north by a manmade bund and wooded area. The airfield hangars and assorted out buildings used for businesses are located to the north-east of the site and beyond these is Poplar Hall Farmhouse.

The site slopes fairly steeply to the south-west and drops around 20m from its northern to southern boundaries. It is bisected by a large natural dry valley which runs from the north-east corner to the south-west and the map regression shows that this formed a separate field until the 1970s.

No obvious archaeological remains or structures were observed during the visit. A moderate amount of abraded, post-medieval ceramic building material (CBM) and blue and white transfer pattern pottery dating to the 19th and 20th century were present in the plough soil around the edge of the site, which is consistent with modern manuring practice.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Archaeological Potential

Information on the archaeology in the immediate area of the assessment site is relatively sparse, due mainly to a low level of archaeological investigation in the locality. The wider area is quite well represented showing human activity within 2km from the Neolithic to the modern periods. The evidence suggests a relatively low level of activity in the area until the 17th century when substantial building development took place in Elmsett and the surrounding villages, as indicated by the numerous listed buildings all



dating to the same century. Following this development, little really changed until the mid-20th century when residential development adjacent to the main thoroughfares has slowly increased the size of the villages.

Given the research results, there is a **low** potential for the presence of prehistoric features or finds.

The assessment site is located on or adjacent to significant Roman finds (ETT021). The SHER noted numerous finds including high status pottery, jewellery and coins. Literary sources suggest that there could be the remains of wooden structures in the same location as the finds, although this has yet to be corroborated with the SHER. The potential for Roman finds or features on the assessment site is **high**.

The Anglo-Saxon origins of Elmsett would suggest reasonable levels of activity in the wider area, however Elmsett was relatively insignificant compared to the larger towns such as Hadleigh and Ipswich. However, its entry in Domesday shows that at the time of the conquest Elmsett was fairly wealthy and well established. No finds were located on the assessment site, however a bronze stirrup mount was found close to the proposed UK Power Networks' electrical infrastructure connection point. The four SHER records give details of isolated finds that were most likely lost rather than a picture of substantial settlement activity and consequently there is a **low** potential for Anglo-Saxon finds and features on the assessment site.

Elmsett remained a small, rural settlement during the medieval period. The layout of the village and the distribution of medieval buildings, features and finds from the SHER indicate that the assessment site was on the very periphery of settlement activity. However, two medieval finds (ETT021) in the form of a coin and a retainer badge (1483-85) have been found along with the Roman material. These are single, isolated finds more indicative of loss than settlement activity therefore the potential for finding more finds or features is **moderate** at best.

Substantial residential development in the village is recorded in the 17th century with many of the listed buildings dating to this period. Poplar Hall Farmhouse is Grade 2 listed and is close to the assessment site, however no other post-medieval finds or features have been recorded on or close to the site. The map regression shows the site has remained as agricultural fields since at least 1836 and no structures have been noted. The potential for post-medieval and modern features is **low**, although some residual modern finds will be present due to manuring. It should also be noted that the in-filled field boundary ditches present on the Tithe Map and subsequent OS Maps, will also be preserved and contain post-medieval and modern material up to the 1970's .

5.2 Existing and Proposed Impact (Fig. 4)

Existing Impact

The field has been extensively ploughed with modern, industrial agricultural equipment and it is likely that any shallow subsurface archaeological features would have been



truncated. The Agricultural Report (Stock, R. 2013) shows that at either end of the site, the plough soil is around 20 – 30cm in depth with a subsoil of similar dimensions overlying clay natural. The presence of a dry valley would also suggest localised colluvium deposits along its course.

There is no evidence of any other development on the site and consequently, should there be any buried archaeological remains, these are likely to be moderately well preserved, especially in the deeper colluvium deposits.

Proposed Impact

The proposed construction plans involve the installation of approximately 45,000 solar panels mounted to aluminium and steel frame structures spaced 6m apart and facing south. The frame uprights will be constructed on small 10.30cm diameter piles to a depth of approximately 1.20m depending on ground conditions and spaced at approximately 4.0m intervals.

One electricity substations, inverter/transformer kiosks and several kilometres of internal and external cable trenching will also be required. The internal cabling will involve the excavation of trenches of varying widths to accommodate a variety of cables. The external cable trench will run from the assessment site to a connection point approximated 800m east at Corn Hatches Lane. When finished, the panels will reach a height of approximately 2.10m depending on the site topography.

The proposed panel construction techniques arguably have a lower impact on subsurface archaeological remains compared with comparable options such as machine excavation and concrete foundation pads. Where the 10.3cm diameter piles do impact on archaeology they are likely to remove it completely however damage to the overall asset in the wider context is kept to a minimum.

The cable trenching is also likely to have a destructive impact where it encounters archaeological remains. This is particularly relevant in the southern area of the site (Fig. 2) where the SHER records Roman finds (ETT021) and therefore the likely potential for encountering archaeology is higher.

In summary, the panel construction is likely to have a minimal impact on subsurface archaeology due to the limited surface area of the intrusive activity associated with construction. However, without mitigation, the cable trenching could potentially have a significant destructive impact on the buried remains where they are encountered and there is a high potential to encounter Roman archaeology on this site.

Impact on Setting

The construction of these solar panels will significantly change the immediate nature of the site and its setting. The closest listed building is Poplar Hall Farmhouse 200m to the north-east and the development of such a large area in close proximity would normally affect the visual and historic setting. However in this case the listed building does not have line of sight to the proposed development area, being already screened by 19th and



20th century outbuildings and two substantial modern hangar buildings associated with the airfield.

The development is also well screened in the landscape, being located on a slope which falls away to the south-west. It ranges in altitude from approximately 55 to 70m AOD and falls gently from northeast to southwest at between 1 in 30 and 1 in 40 (Stock, R. 2013). This limits line of sight to approximately 500m to 1km from the surrounding area and reduces the potential visual impact and setting.

There will therefore be a negligible to low impact on the setting of the surrounding historical listed buildings and archaeological sites.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

There is little evidence for prehistoric activity in Elmsett and this is broadly consistent with settlement distribution patterns in prehistoric Suffolk which suggest a tendency to prefer lighter soils, although funerary activity in the Bronze Age has been noted in the wider locality. Elmsett is typical of villages in the area which are characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern, usually focused on the parish church but also scattered around the numerous greens and along country lanes, which have evolved since the late Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods. The assessment site lies on the periphery of this model in between three parishes and as such has undergone little in the way of development for the last 1500 years. The potential to encounter any archaeological remains dating to these periods is low.

The most significant impact will be to any surviving Roman remains present in the southern part of the site as indicated by the SHER record ETT021 and local historical sources. The quantity and quality of finds already recovered from this area suggest that the potential to encounter further Roman remains is high.

The development plans will have a high impact on the archaeology where it is encountered, however the structure foundations will use highly localised, small diameter piling to significantly reduce the risk of damage to unknown sub-surface archaeological remains. The cable trenching connecting the panels to the internal substation and national grid is likely to present a greater risk to archaeological deposits.

There is a low to negligible impact on the setting of existing listed building and archaeology sites.

The assessment site is not located within a Conservation Area as defined by the Babergh Development Framework Core Strategy.



6.2 Recommendations

The high potential for Roman remains would normally warrant further archaeological mitigation. The actual location of the Roman finds has not been verified and therefore the extent, quality and quantity of these heritage assets is unknown except for a general location which includes the assessment site and potential routes for the external cable.

After consultation with Rachael Monk of Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service/Conservation Team the County will require a programme of geophysical survey to help identify the presence of any subsurface archaeology and to help form any further mitigation strategy.

7.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Britannia Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Adrian French of AGRenewables Ltd for commissioning the project and for his advice and assistance.

8.0 PROJECT ARCHIVE & DEPOSITION

A full archive will be prepared for all work undertaken in accordance with guidance from the *Selection, Retention and Dispersion of Archaeological Collections*, Archaeological Society for Museum Archaeologists, 1993. Arrangements will be made for the archive to be deposited with the relevant museum or the SHER Office.



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Archaeological Data Service (ADS) www.ads.ahds.ac.uk

English Heritage National List for England
www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england

DEFRA Magic <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/website/magic>



APPENDIX 1 – SHER DATA

Monument Records

PREFERRED REF	MONUMENT ID	DESIGNATION	NAME	SUMMARY	DATE RANGE	PERIOD	TYPE	GRIDREF
ADH 001	MSF5220	Monument	Wolves Farm Cottage	Silver penny, Edward I (1279-1307).	1066 to 1539	Medieval	FINDSPOT	TM 0455 4384
ADH 002	MSF5221	Monument		Two flint flakes, found near Aldham Hall (S1).	-4000 to 2351	Neolithic	FINDSPOT	TM 0435 4470
ADH 003	MSF5222	Monument		Part of socketed axe (tip missing) found in new foundations, extension to house (2 Church Lane), about 18 inches down (S1).	-2350 to 701	Bronze Age	FINDSPOT	TM 038 447
ADH 005	MSF5224	Monument		Rom pottery found in plough soil (S1).	43 to 409	Roman	ARTEFACT SCATTER	TM 035 446
ADH 007	MSF14036	Monument	Aldham Priory	Medieval grave slab of Purbeck marble with raised floreate cross.	1066 to 1539	Medieval	FINDSPOT	TM 0572 4498
ADH 008	MSF19336	Monument	Aldham Park Wood	Ancient woodland	-	Undated	WOOD	TM 03863 45354
ADH 009	MSF19334	Monument	Corn Hatches Grove	Ancient woodland	-	Undated	WOOD	TM 04755 45967
ADH 010	MSF19322	Monument	Wolves Wood	Ancient woodland	-	Undated	WOOD	TM 05413 44084
ADH 011	MSF16200	Monument		Bronze stirrup mount of Urnes type (LSax), top missing.	850 to 1065	Late Saxon	FINDSPOT	TM 0497 4566
ADH 012	MSF18860	Find Spot		C7-C11 Circular decorated fitting, metal detected.	410 to 1065	Saxon	FINDSPOT	TM 04109 43908
ADH 012	MSF18860	Find Spot		C7-C11 Circular decorated fitting, metal detected.	410 to 1065	Saxon	FINDSPOT	TM 04109 43908
ADH 013	MSF21721	Monument		Complete, retouched, polished flint axehead with distinct cream and irregular medium-brown blotchy colouring.	-4000 to 2351	Neolithic	FINDSPOT	TM 05385 44430
ADH 014	MSF23568	Monument	Park Wood	Possible Ancient Woodland suggested by place name, field boundaries and by two separate parts of former wood shown on tithe map	-	Undated	WOOD	TM 03364 45318



Proposed Solar Farm, Land at Elmsett Airfield, Elmsett, Suffolk
Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
Project Number 1029

ADH015	MSF23570	Monument	Wilsons Grove	Possible Ancient Woodland	-		Undated	WOOD	TM 0609 4521
ADH Misc	MSF24533	Monument	'Clamps'	Possible kiln site suggested by field named 'clamps' on Tithe map & apportionment.	1540 1900	to	Post Medieval	KILN?	TM 050 457
EET 001	MSF5266	Monument	Mill Farm Moat	Moat, site of. Levelled and built over 1969. Isolated, circa 450m from parish boundary, circa 1,100m from church	1066 1500	to	Medieval	MOAT	TM 0538 4620
ETT 002	MSF5267	Monument		Large moat, wedge-shaped, water-filled ditches, trees along the edges of the island. Entrance causeway in middle of N side	1066 1500	to	Medieval	MOAT	TM 0548 4669
ETT 010	MSF11174	Monument		Cut half-penny of Aethelred II, 978-1016, Seaby 1148, seen at IDDC meeting (S1).	410 1065	to	Saxon	FINDSPOT	TM 0513 4670
ETT 015	MSF19330	Monument	Lucy Wood	Ancient Woodland	-		Undated	WOOD	TM 05460 47928
ETT 016	MSF19331	Monument	Elmsett Park Wood	Ancient Woodland	-		Undated	WOOD	TM 0521 4658
ETT 017	MSF19330	Monument	Friends Burial Ground	Tithe map shows plot named as friends burial ground.			Pmed	CEMETARY?	TM 0521 4658
ETT 021	MSF27171	Monument		Roman artefact scatter on most southerly field on Poplar Hall's.	43 to 410		Roman	FINDSPOT	
ETT 021	MSF27171	Monument		Artefacts. King John coin (1199-1216AD) and a Richard III (1483-1485AD) silver retainer's badge in the form of a boar	1199 1216 1483 1485	to & to	Medieval	FINDSPOT	
ETT Misc	MSF12307	Find Spot		Small lead finial in shape of a man's head.	1066 1539	to	Medieval	FINDSPOT	TM 049 465
ETT Misc	MSF19990	Monument	Furnace field	Tithe map 1842 shows field named furnace field, possibly relating to kiln site.			Unknown	KILN	TM 046 472
ETT Misc	MSF19993	Monument	Mill Down (Tithe)	Tithe map shows field named Mill Down, close association with Mill Farm; probably windmill site.	1540 1900	to	Post Medieval	WINDMILL	TM 0550 4620
ETT Misc	MSF5274	Find Spot		Knife or share blade, found May 1961 (R1).			Undated	FINDSPOT	TM 0515 4571
HNS 004	MSF5216	Monument		Pottery and shells.	1066 1539	to	Medieval	ARTEFACT SCATTER	TM 062 451
WHA 010	MSF13766	Monument	Peyton Hall	Site of Peyton Hall, demolished 1950s	1066 1500	to	Medieval	HOUSE?	TM 0276 4610



Proposed Solar Farm, Land at Elmsett Airfield, Elmsett, Suffolk
 Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
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WHA 014	MSF16552	Monument	Street Farm	1995: 6 bronze C3/early C4 Rom coins found metal detecting.	43 to 409	Roman	ARTEFACT SCATTER	TM 0270 4655
WHA 014	MSF16553	Find Spot	Street Farm	1995: Metal detector find of upper part of ?cruciform (with detached knobs) or simple small-long type brooch.	410 to 1065	Saxon	FINDSPOT	TM 0270 4655
WHA 014	MSF16554	Monument	Street Farm	1995: Metal detector finds of various PMed metalwork items.	1540 to 1900	Post Medieval	ARTEFACT SCATTER	TM 0270 4655
WHA 016	MSF25553	Findspot		Hoard of 10 silver medieval coins found metal detecting	1066 to 1539	Medieval	COIN HOARD	TM 0267 4617

Event Records

PREFERRED REF	EVENT ID	REF	LOCATION	NAME	DESCR
WHA 003	ESF19671	OASIS-suffolkc1-20120	Whitehouse Farm	Sommers M, SCCAS monitoring 2006/212	Archaeological monitoring of groundworks at Whitehouse Farm, Whatfield did not identify any archaeological remains or artefacts

Scheduled Monument Records

DESIGUID	PREFREF	NATIONALRE	SUFFIX	NAME
DSF15481	33297	33297		MOATED SITE AT THE OLD RECTORY, 150M NORTH EAST OF MALTING FARM

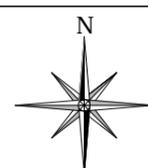
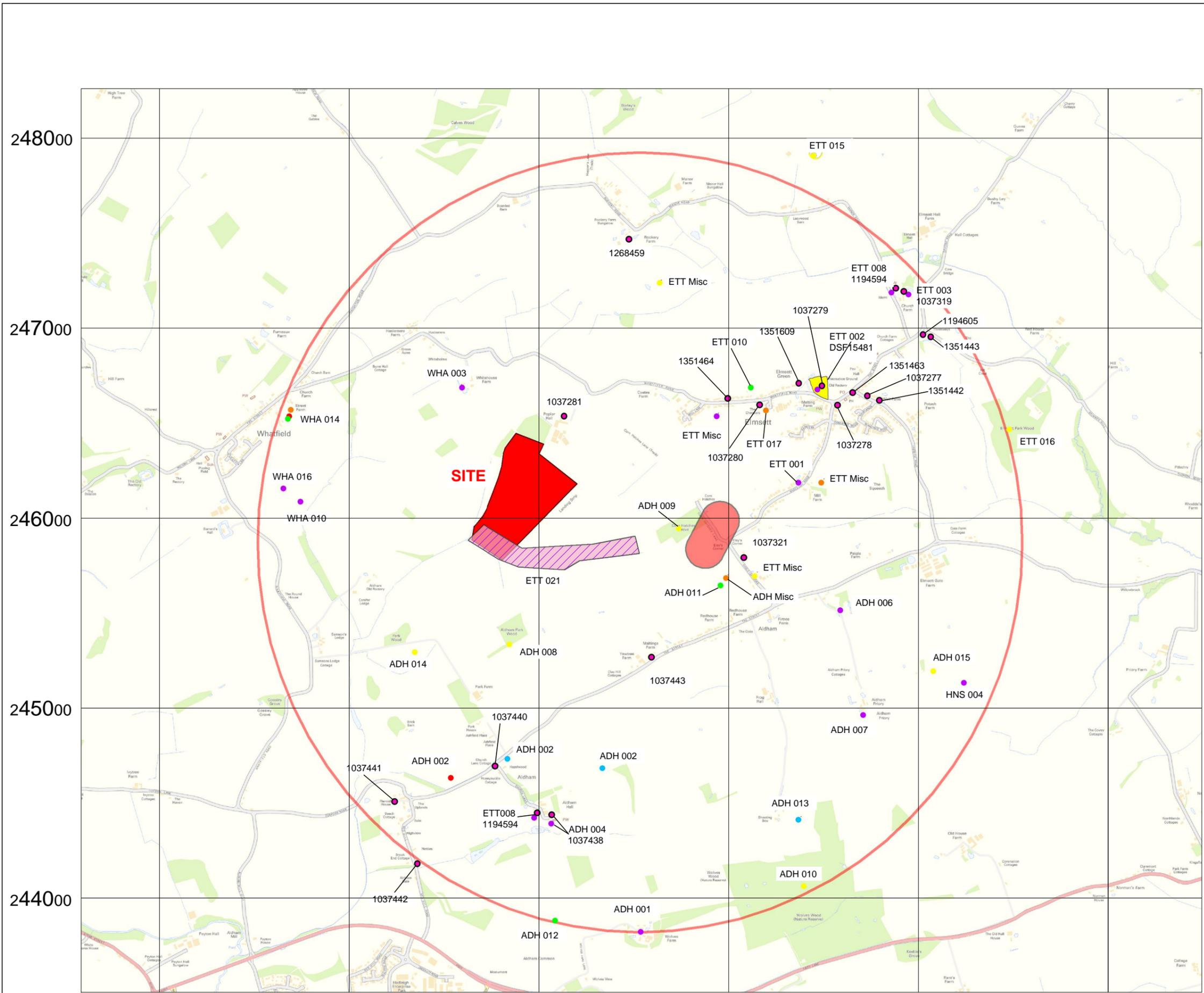
Listed Building Records

LIST ENTRY	Name	GRADE	LEGACY ID	NGR
1037277	TWIN GABLES	II	276482	TM 05734 46639
1037278	YEW TREE COTTAGES	II	276484	TM 05576 46591
1037279	RECTORY	II	276486	TM 05495 46692



Proposed Solar Farm, Land at Elmsett Airfield, Elmsett, Suffolk
Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
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1037280	THE CHEQUERS	II	276487	TM 05166 46593
1037281	POPLAR HALL FARMHOUSE	II	276489	TM 04138 46533
1037319	CHURCH FARM	II	276476	TM 05926 47189
1037321	ELEYS COTTAGE	II	276481	TM 05084 45789
1037438	CHURCH OF ST MARY	I	276148	TM 04072 44439
1037439	ALDHAM HALL	II	276149	TM 03997 44449
1037440	CHURCH LANE COTTAGE	II	276150	TM 03774 44695
1037441	FLEMISH HOUSE	II	276151	TM 03244 44508
1037442	REDHILL COTTAGE	II	276152	TM 03365 44182
1037443	YEW TREE FARMHOUSE	II	276153	TM 04598 45267
1194594	CHURCH OF ST PETER	I	276475	TM 05883 47205
1194605	LAUREL COTTAGE	II	276477	TM 06026 46961
1268459	ROOKERY FARMHOUSE	II	461808	TM 04479 47462
1351443	BARN TO EAST OF LAUREL COTTAGE	II	276478	TM 06067 46950
1351462	WALL FARMHOUSE	II	276483	TM 05796 46616
1351463	WHEELWRIGHT COTTAGES	II	276485	TM 05656 46656
1351464	ELM FARMHOUSE	II	276488	TM 04999 46626
1351609	MANNINGS COTTAGE	II	277170	TM 05374 46706



	Undated
	Scheduled Monument
	Post-medieval Monument Record
	Medieval Monument Record
	Anglo-Saxon Monument Record
	Roman & Medieval Site/Monument Record
	Roman Monument Record
	Prehistoric Monument Record
	Connection Point - National Grid
	Site Boundary

NGR: 605378 241041 REPORT NUMBER: 1023

PROJECT:
PROPOSED SOLAR FARM, LAND AT
ELMSETT AIRFIELD, ELMSETT, SUFFOLK

CLIENT:
AGRenewables

DESCRIPTION:
HER DATA

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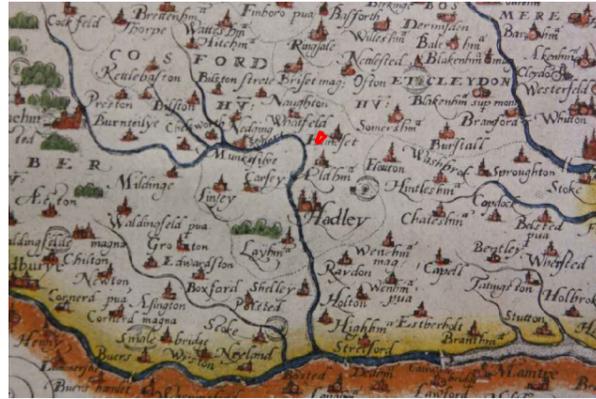
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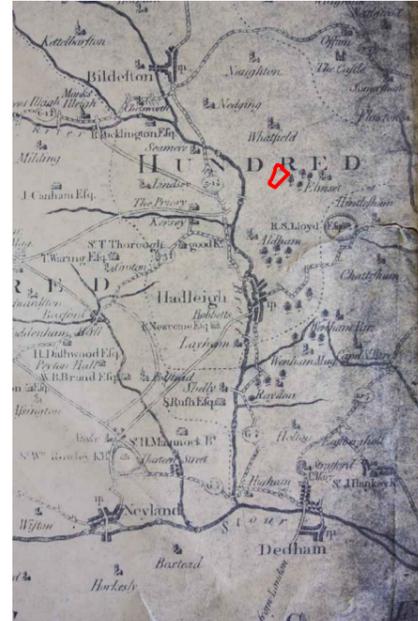
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DATE: MAY 2013	AUTHOR: MCA	FIGURE: 02

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Saxon's Map of Suffolk - 1575



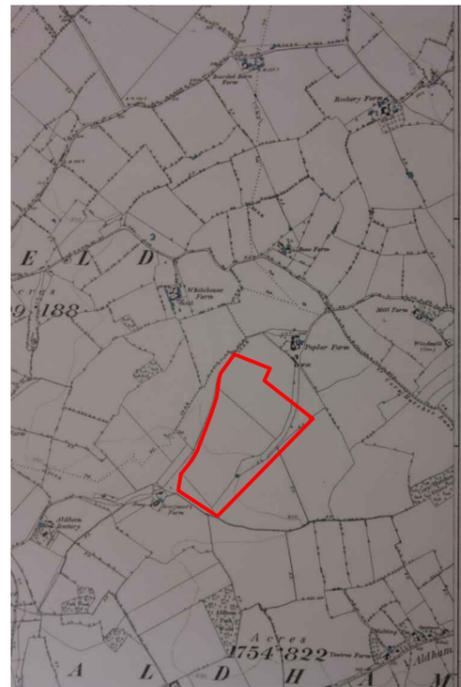
John Kirby - 1736



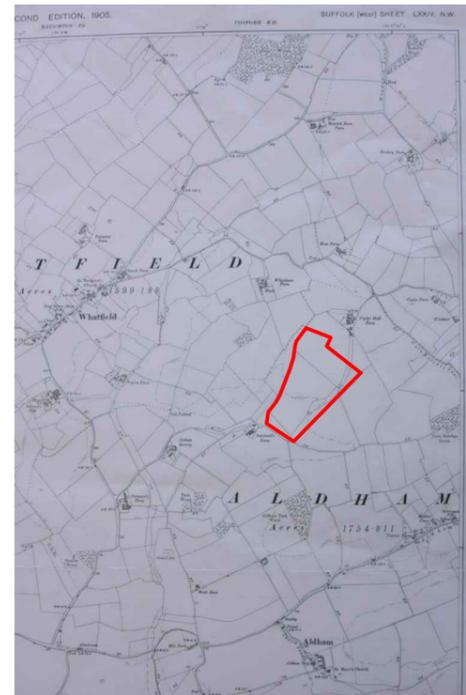
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Tithe Map - 1839



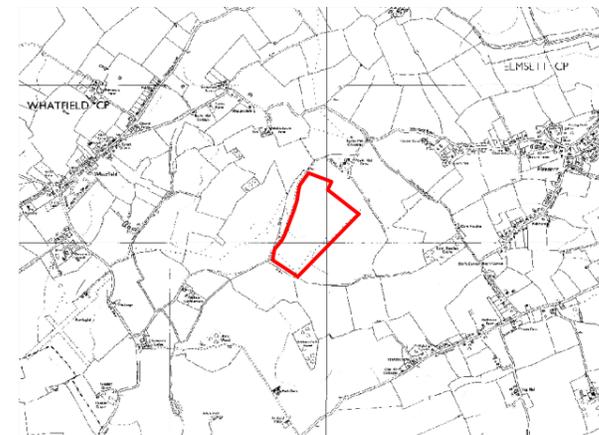
Ordnance Survey First Edition - 1892



Ordnance Survey Second Edition - 1905



Ordnance Survey Provisional Revised Edition - 1948



Ordnance Survey - 1972-1973



Site Boundary

NGR: 605378 241041 REPORT NUMBER: 1023

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DESCRIPTION: CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

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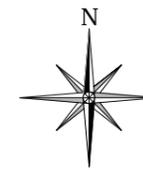
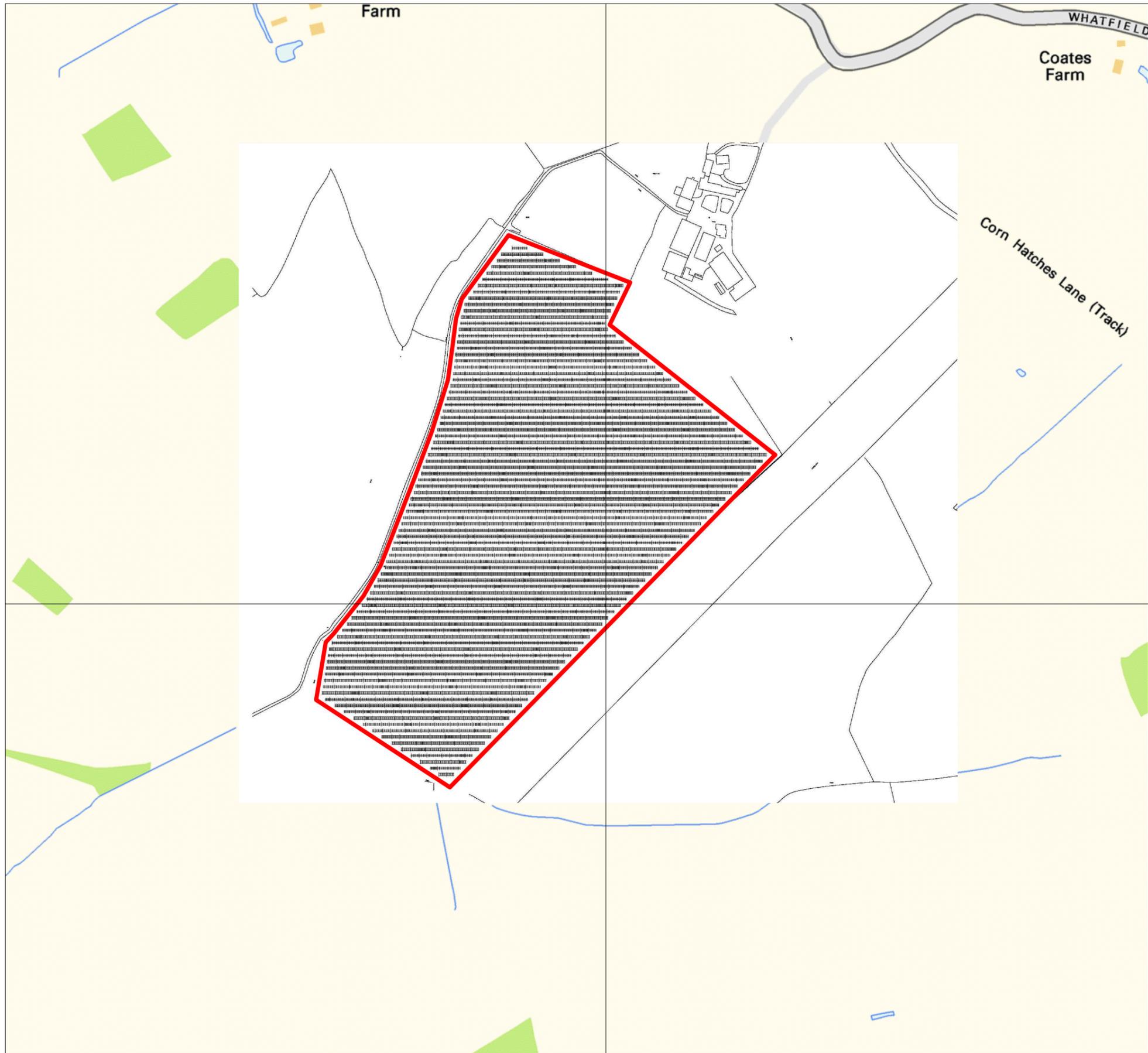
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PLOT: A3 APPROVED: TPS VERSION: 02

DATE: MAY 2013 AUTHOR: MCA FIGURE: 03

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PV Array Location	
Site Boundary	
NGR: 605378 241041	REPORT NUMBER: 1023
PROJECT: PROPOSED SOLAR FARM, LAND AT ELMSETT AIRFIELD, ELMSETT, SUFFOLK	
CLIENT: AGRenewables	
DESCRIPTION: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PLAN	
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SCALE: 1:5000	
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DATE: MAY 2013	VERSION: 01
AUTHOR: MCA	FIGURE: 04



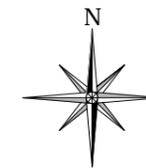
DP1 - North Side, Looking West



DP2 - West Side, Looking North East



DP3 - West Side, Looking South



DP4 - South Side, Looking North East



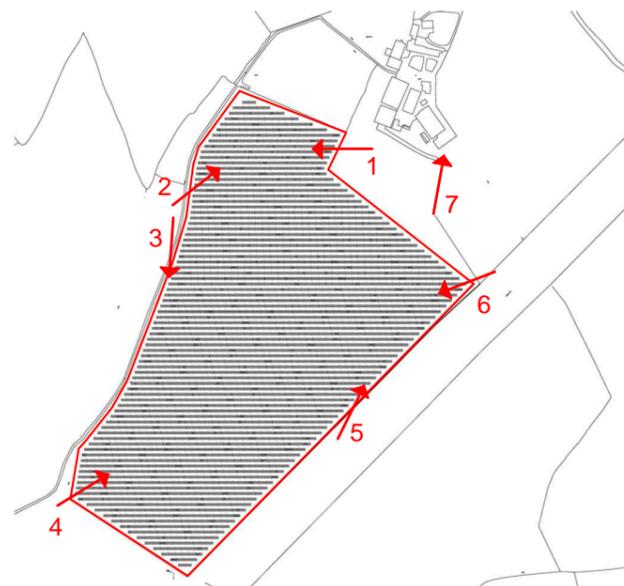
DP5 - East Side, Looking North West



DP6 - North East Side, Looking South West



DP7 - Existing Array, Looking North



Photograph Location

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	Photo Direction and Number
	Site Boundary

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PROJECT:
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CLIENT:
AGRenewables

DESCRIPTION:
SITE PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

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SCALE:
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DATE: MAY 2013	AUTHOR: MCA	FIGURE: 05
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