



11th August 2022

Our ref: NN1418

Attention: Isle of Wight County Council Development Control Officer

Dear Sir/Madam

E3s was appointed in January 2022, by Ridge Clean Energy to undertake a desk-based assessment on the proposed site of a renewable energy park on Wootton Common, Isle of Wight. Following the completion of this report a geophysical survey was undertaken in April 2022.

The Desk Based Assessment highlighted a small collection of unstratified late Neolithic-early Bronze Age flint, which was found during the archaeological monitoring of a gas pipeline that extended from Somerton Farm near Cowes to Knights Cross, situated 1km southwest of the development site. This pipeline bisects the proposed site, the exact location of the flints found along the pipeline route is unknown. Within the central southern portion of the pipeline easement route, south of Whiterails Road, late Victorian rubbish was encountered within natural hollows and a Victorian trackway. The trackway would have facilitated access to Briddlesford Lodge Farm from the surrounding fields. During the monitoring of the topsoil strip within the trackway area, several pieces of Neolithic flint were also recovered.

Two further sites were also found during the gas pipeline easement, south of the proposed site, an undated set of tree clearance pits and c.250m to the south-east was a late Iron Age-early Romano-British oven, pits and posthole.

The geophysical survey identified anomalies of possible archaeological, agricultural and undetermined origin across the surveyed area. The possible archaeological anomalies were located within the southern portion of the site, adjacent to Blackbridge Brook. These features appeared to match the surrounding agricultural anomalies, but presented a slightly different morphology and alignment, however due to the surrounding agricultural anomalies other anthropogenic origins cannot be ruled out.

The results of the Desk-Based Assessment and Geophysical Survey indicate the site was split into agricultural fields and common land during the late 18th and early 19th century. By the mid-19th century the whole site consisted of enclosed agricultural fields that was reflected in the geophysical survey. The intervention of the gas pipeline encountered some residual prehistoric flints in the topsoil, along with later Victorian activity associated with access and landscaping of the fields south of Whiterails Road. It was probably around the mid-late 19th century that the southern field possibly had drainage issues, where ceramic land drains were laid to facilitate movement of groundwater into the adjacent Blackbridge Brook. The anomalies on the geophysical survey potentially relate to this drainage program, as well as cultivation alignments (Appendix 1).

During the early summer of 2022, following the completion of the Desk Based Assessment and the Geophysical Survey, the planning application boundary for the site was substantially reduced, which materially does not affect the overall conclusions of these previous surveys. Although the footprint for the Briddlesford access does lie outside the original area that was surveyed, the Client is proposing a floating track in this location that will not affect the integrity of the soil within this area.

In May 2022 the Archaeological Officer of the Isle of Wight County Archaeology and Historic Environment Service (see Appendix 2), assessed both the desk-based assessment and geophysical survey. The conclusions suggested the fields to the north of Whiterails Road would not require any pre-determination evaluation and it was unlikely that any mitigation for these fields would be required. The fields to the south of Whiterails Road, may hold some limited potential for archaeology, based on the uncertainty of the anomalies identified in the geophysical report. The type of archaeological intervention would be dependent on the nature of the groundworks for the installation of the substation and connecting cable trenches. It was suggested any further archaeological mitigation in this area would be secured by condition.

Yours Sincerely

Kevin Trott (Archaeological Consultant E3s Ltd)

Appendix 1

Summary Interpretation of the Desk-Based Assessment and Geophysical Survey for the proposed Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park

By E3s Consultancy Ltd.

A geophysical survey was undertaken by Magnitude Survey in April 2022, following a desk-based assessment (DBA) by E3s Consultancy in 2022. The DBA highlighted the presence of unstratified prehistoric flintwork along a gas pipe easement, that bisected the Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park site. Regrettably the exact position of the flintwork found along the easement, that extended outside the proposed development's Indicative Application Boundary, was not fixed. Portable finds relating to human losses consisted of later post-medieval and modern finds were found by metal detectorists.

Following a geophysical survey anomalies of possible archaeological, agricultural and undetermined origin were interpreted in limited areas of the site. Possible archaeological anomalies were interpreted in the south of the survey area adjacent to the Palmer's Brook, the interpretation appears to broadly follow the alignments of agricultural trends (ploughing), although they presented a slightly different morphology and alignment, and have therefore been classified as possible archaeology. This area lies within the floodplain and lower slopes of the adjacent brook and following a recent site visit, it was noted within the eastern bank of the brook several land drains that broadly followed the east-west alignments identified in the geophysical survey. Also the landowner had informed the author during the site visit for the DBA that land drains had been inserted to alleviate the problem with saturated ground.

The majority of the site consisted of agricultural anomalies that are related to ploughing that are visible on the Lidar. The geophysical survey suggested there was anomalies of undetermined origin that did not form coherent plans, like ditches or wall lines etc. These anomalies also did not appear on the Lidar or historic maps (as depicted in E3s Consultancy DBA). Due to this lack of confidence as archaeological anomalies/features, they have been classified as undetermined, and are probably agricultural, natural or modern in origin.

Based on the geophysical survey and the minimal metal object finds (as identified in the DBA), the area has been intensively cultivated in the past. Evidence of the site's history of cultivation was also identified during the site visit for the DBA in the winter of 2021/2, where several fields were weathered following ploughing. A field walk was undertaken on these fields, that did not produce a single archaeological, or even early modern artefact. The unstratified prehistoric flintwork may not necessarily derive from the site, as it was associated with unstratified material that was retained from along the whole gas pipeline easement, that extended to Whippingham to the north and Knights Cross to the south.

In conclusion, the comprehensive DBA, field walk and subsequent comprehensive geophysical survey has not identified clear and obvious archaeological remains within the site, and where possible archaeology was identified, none occurred within the areas where the proposed development (or its minimal ground disturbance) is intended to be located.

Accordingly, it is not considered that further investigation is proportionate or necessary for the Proposed Development, which the Applicant kindly seeks dialogue with the County Archaeologist to confirm.

References

E3S Consulting Ltd., 2022. Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment, Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park, Wootton Common, Isle of Wight. **NN1418**.

Magnitude Surveys., 2022. Geophysical Survey at Sunny Oaks, Wootton Common, Isle of Wight. Magnitude Surveys Ref: **MSSZ1217**.

Appendix 2

From: [Lansley, Rosie](#)
To: [David Long](#)
Subject: RE: 9963 - Sunny Oaks Solar PV and BESS.
Date: 25 May 2022 16:23:56
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Dear David,

Thank you for your email and attachments. The DBA has assessed the HER records and PAS data, but Historic Landscape Characterisation and the LiDAR imagery mentioned in the Summary Interpretation document has not been presented.

In light of the geophysical survey results and the previous archaeological monitoring of the gas pipeline which passes through the site, and in view of the current proposal showing the solar array within the parcels north of Whiterails Road, we would not require further predetermination evaluation and it is unlikely that mitigation for the northern part of the proposal will be required.

The area south of Whiterails Road, however, does hold some limited potential for prehistoric and Roman archaeology to be present, as demonstrated by features recorded during archaeological monitoring of the gas pipeline within the southern area (site 1 in the DBA, IWHER4589 Flint Scatter) and south of the site (Site 5 in the DBA, IWHER 4591 features comprising a small oven, pits and post hole of Iron Age/Romano British data). There is some the uncertainty regarding the anomalies identified by the gradiometer survey in the southern part of the site Area 5 (interpreted as 'possible archaeology' but subsequently by E3s as land drainage). It is likely that we would require some mitigation for the southern area of the site, depending on the nature of groundworks for the installation of the substation and connecting cable trenches. This can be secured by condition and could comprise strip, map and sample, a watching brief or access for archaeological monitoring, depending on the details.

Kind regards,
Rosie

Rosie Lansley, BA(hons) ACIfA | Archaeological Officer |
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<https://www.iwight.com/Residents/Libraries-Cultural-and-Heritage/Heritage-Service/Archaeology/About-us>

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Details of revised charges for HER searches and introduction of charges for some planning advice are now available from our website. These changes to discretionary charges follow the proposals set out in the 2021-22 budget approved by the IW Council February 2021 and were introduced on 1st April 2021.

From: David Long <dlong@bcm.co.uk>

Sent: 23 May 2022 15:44

To: Lansley, Rosie <Rosie.Lansley@iow.gov.uk>; Loader, Rebecca <Rebecca.Loader@IOW.gov.uk>

Cc: Stacey Attrill-Butler <sattrillbutler@bcm.co.uk>; Jonny Murphy <jmurphy@theridgegroup.com>; Toby Harrison-Turner <tharrisonturner@theridgegroup.com>; Kevin Trott <kevin.trott@e3sconsulting.co.uk>; John Owen <john.owen@e3sconsulting.co.uk>

Subject: 9963 - Sunny Oaks Solar PV and BESS.

Importance: High

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Dear Rosie/Rebecca

I hope you are both well.

Further from the Council's Screening Opinion (23/03/22) where it was confirmed the proposal would not require an Environmental Statement, we are now starting to engage with all relevant statutory consultees about specific material considerations which have influence. I have attached your historic screening response for ease.

For the purpose of this pre-application consultation I have attached:

1. The draft (and still evolving) site layout
2. The archaeological DBA
3. Geophysical Survey Report
4. An interpretation response against the Geophysical Survey Report by E3S.

I am drawn to the conclusions of the interpretation response and so I would welcome your thoughts and opinion which hopefully align.

As a general note, the applicant highlights that, in due course, an application will be made for an electrical export cable (trenched) between the proposed substation and the existing substation to the west of the proposed development. This would form a planning application that is entirely separate to the application being considered within this consultation.

If you have any questions then please do let us know.

We look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Kind Regards

David

David Long (BA) (Hons) P&D MA MRTPI

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