



View North from the ridgeway towards the Winfrith Atomic Energy Establishment.

HISTORY OF THE SITE

This area of South Dorset has a rich history and pre-history. Apart from some subtle geographical changes, the site we are proposing has remained an observer while the surrounding landscape has experienced changes through history. We have included some of the points of interest from our heritage assessment below:

The wider environs of the site are a recognised Bronze Age burial landscape, bounded to the south by a line of high hills of the Abbotsbury-Ridgeway Fault and to the north and east by smaller local highpoints. Today you can see the remains of round barrows, typically attributed in Dorset to the Bronze Age, although some examples in Britain have been dated to the Late Neolithic. The closest example to the site is situated at Drove Hill to the east of the site.

There is a clear absence in the archaeological record of Prehistoric, Iron Age and Romano-British evidence from within the study area. It may well be that the site lay within low-lying land prone to waterlogging during the prehistoric and Roman periods, reducing the likelihood of activities taking place here which would leave traces within the archaeological record.

Through the medieval period, local settlements are thought to have developed in association with the Dorchester-Wool

road, currently represented by the A352. Much of the surrounding landscape was likely to have been undeveloped heathland. Pockets of this may have been cultivated or managed, and there is some example of ridge and furrow earthworks, water meadows and field boundaries locally, though the larger area likely remained undeveloped.

It is likely that the site lay within uncultivated and undeveloped heathland during the medieval period. This landscape may have been used as pasture and resource gathering, though such activity would be unlikely to leave detectable traces within the archaeological record.

The first detailed depiction of the site is provided by an 1805 plan of the landscape surrounding Dorchester drawn by Charles Budgen. The site appears to have been enclosed into several fields, with the undeveloped Winfrith Heath to the north-east.

The site is not included in the 1844 Winfrith Newburgh Parish Tithe Map, suggesting that the land was of insufficient productivity for tithing. The 1889 1st edition Ordnance Survey (Fig. 5) illustrates the site much as depicted in 1805; enclosed fields likely in agricultural use.

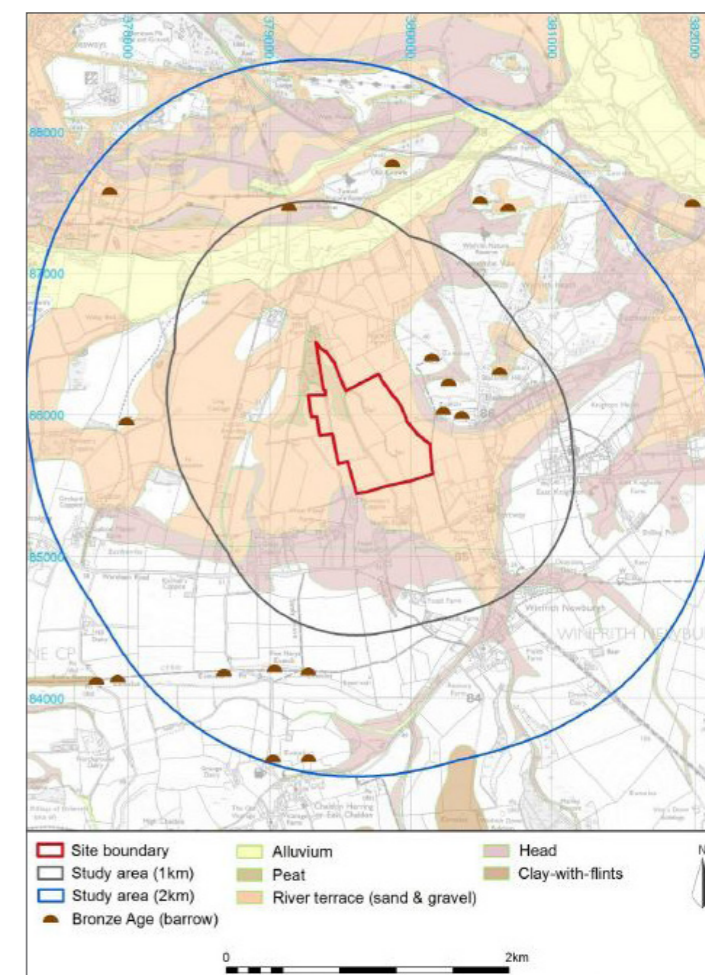
The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Establishment (AEE): Winfrith was constructed in 1957, c. 900m north-east from the site. Activities at the Winfrith site have included the



North East facing view of Whitcombe hill.

development or thermal and fast reactor systems, reactor safety and control, and nucleonic instrumentation. The site itself is not believed to have been associated with the AEE throughout its history.

We hope our project will continue the legacy of cutting-edge, clean energy production in the Purbecks. It is important to note that solar farms have a minimal impact on the land where they are installed and are entirely reversible: at the end of its 40 year operating life - during which time the soil will rest, restoring its condition and replenishing its carbon - the land can return to agriculture.



Plan showing the prehistoric assets and local geology.