

Brumfelda is the local history group for Broomfield. We are very concerned about the impact of the Preferred Route on the adjacent Late Iron Age/Romano-British site west of Broomfield, as well as on the setting of the exceptional vaulted grave at Parsonage Green. We are particularly concerned that the construction of the Route - haul road, working areas, insertion of a Faraday Cage over the adjacent gas pipeline, etc - will destroy part of the archaeology around this Romano-British site. It is believed to be a temple and is likely to be unique in the British Isles due to the presence of 4 symmetrical pits around the structure itself.

With permission of our Parish Council, we attach an extract from its response to the statutory consultation in 2024 by way of a written representation. Please see paragraphs i) and j).

Despite the site's importance, we have found it difficult to successfully engage with NG on this issue, so we wish to bring it to the Inspectors' attention. This is frustrating, as we believe there is a range of potential mitigation measures - some very simple:

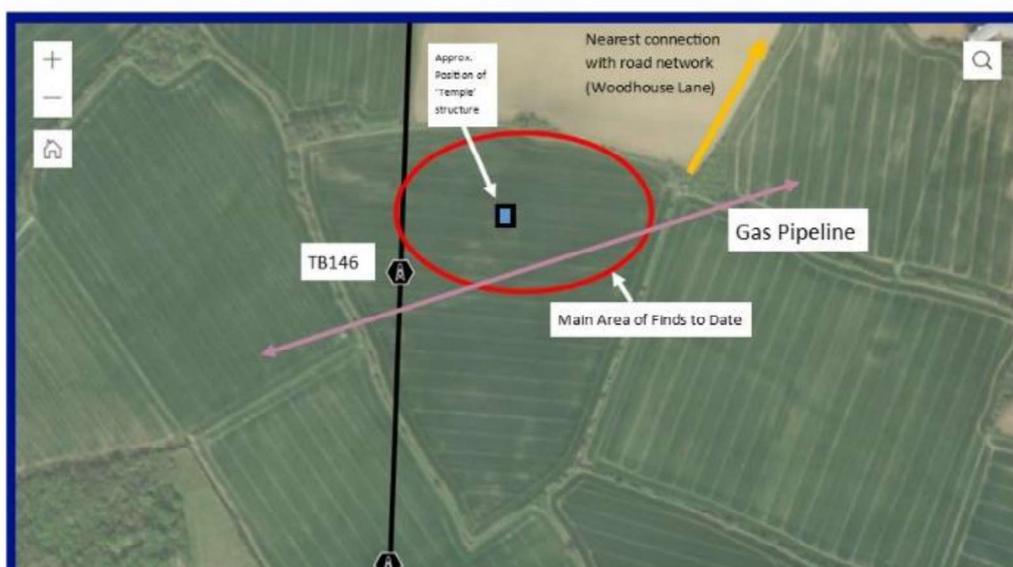
- a slight deviation of N2T to the west, as shown in this written representation
- full assessment and where necessary excavation of the endangered site areas
- more significant deviation of N2T to the east and south of Chelmsford, as proposed by the North-West and South-West Chelmsford Parishes Group
- HVDC undergrounding of the N2T from the EACN to Tilbury, as this could enable a more direct route to be followed well to the east of our site
- an offshore route from windfarms to London and the South-East.



Flock of large birds underneath proposed OHL east of Bushy Wood, Broomfield (Autumn 2022)

i) Late Iron Age/Romano-British Archaeological Site

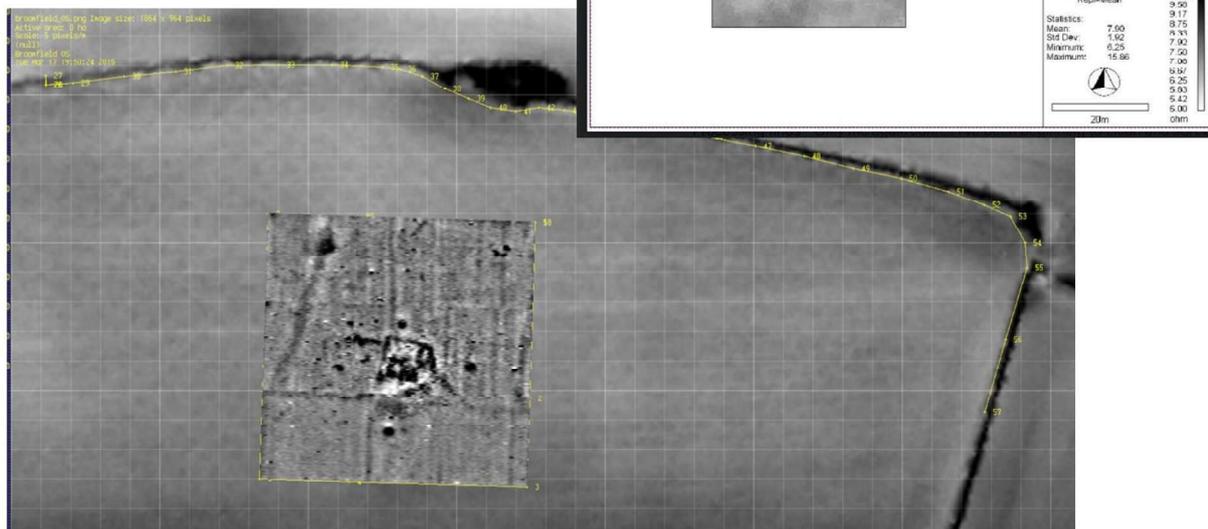
The line crosses this site near the proposed tower TB147. It has produced many Late Iron Age and Roman finds over the years. It has been methodically metal-detected, yielding 554 coins (spread across the LIA up to the end of Roman occupation) and 140 other metal finds. These are lodged with the Chelmsford and Essex Museum. The Historic Environment Records (HER) references are: HER48726 and HER1013.



Further investigations have been carried out in the last 10 years by the local history group, supported by external consultants. Geophysical surveys have shown the presence of a square-shaped structure which is likely to be a Romano-Celtic temple, of which there are fewer than 50 across the UK, indicating the site's importance. To date, fieldwalking has revealed large quantities of Roman brick and tile, hypocaust, pottery, some tesserae (see HER for more details).

Geophysics Results indicating:

- a square-shape structure amongst Romano-British building debris (right)
- Potential complex relationship of structure with surrounding landscape (pits, ditches etc)



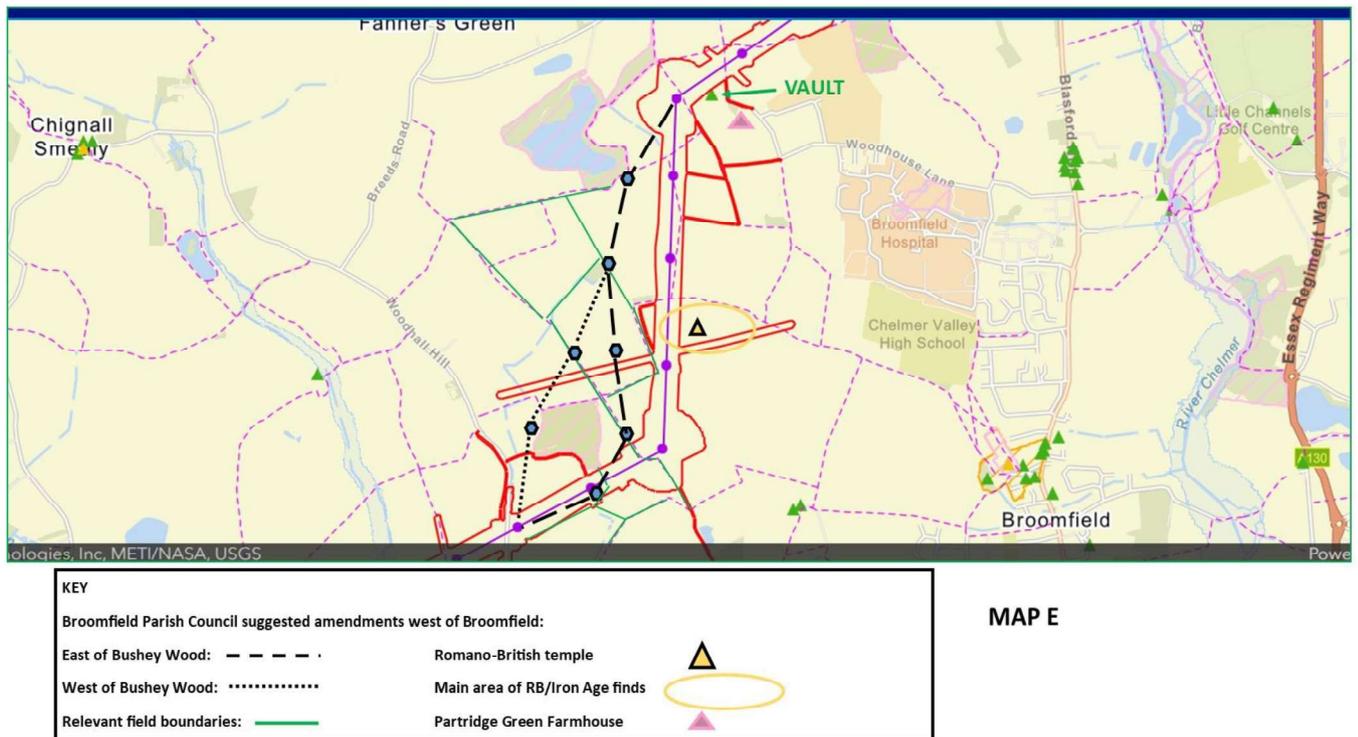
The presence of hypocaust suggests that there is also an adjacent high-status building and/or bathhouse, possibly adjoining the main study area as it has not yet shown up on geophysics.

However, geophysical surveys have revealed a complex relationship between the potential temple structure and 4 pits (possibly containing ritual deposits), which is unique for a Romano-British temple in the UK. Geophysical surveys have also shown a network of ditches, together with a trackway on the northern edge of the field. Further details can be obtained from the Group's external consultant, [REDACTED]:

[REDACTED]@yahoo.co.uk

Prior to any installation of transmission infrastructure, NG ET would need to carry out a full study of the site to establish its extent, nature and importance. Construction of a transmission tower where shown would likely lead to the destruction of a large part of the site, including the 'temple' structure itself, due to the need for access tracks and hard surfaces to be installed to enable construction. Closest road access to the proposed tower would be from Woodhouse Lane – the most direct access track would need to cross the centre of the archaeological site.

Potential mitigation: This may therefore need to include full excavation. Alternatively, mitigation could be provided by re-routing the proposed OHL to a corridor east and south of Chelmsford; or by a very slight change of alignment as shown on Map E below. This would also move the OHL slightly further away (west) from Partridge Green Farmhouse, though it would move the OHL closer to Tufnell Mere and slightly closer to Bushy Wood.



j) Listed Vault west of Partridge Green Farm

OHL pass just 50-60m from this important and unusual historic asset (shown on Map E), with the closest tower TB144 being only 125m to the west. See: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1306289?section=official-list-entry>

The uniqueness of this monument is that it's a substantial, marked grave not located in a churchyard, as the Marriage family (still living in Broomfield today) were Quakers. Ruth Marriage (died 1772) lived at the adjacent Partridge Green Farm. The rural setting of the vault is therefore very important to appreciation of the monument. With OHL and towers so close, the setting will inevitably be seriously harmed.

k) Hylands House and Park

Hylands Estate is a grade II* listed country park encompassing 574 acres of historic parkland, owned by the City Council who restored Hylands House to its former glory. It is also an extremely well-used Country Park. The Chelmsford City Council Register states:

This is one of the largest areas of parkland within the local authority area and retains species-rich grassland, ancient woodland and numerous large and veteran trees, all of high nature conservation value. Its role as a site in allowing the public to experience the diverse wildlife and varied habitats, with inherent health and education benefits should not be under-estimated.

The OHL would approach Hylands Park from the north-west, to an angle tower where it would turn away to the south-west. When seen from the Park, this would form a backdrop to a tract of ancient woodland, South Wood, with the pylons clearly visible above it. As with Langleys in Great Waltham, the pylons would introduce a dominant modernist structure to this listed country park.

The Council notes that the route of the OHL was amended slightly in 2023 to avoid running parallel to the Park boundary. However, this is not considered to be sufficient mitigation and it means the OHL would run on to higher land, closer to a number of woodland tracts and footpaths around Edney Common and Highwood (including the publicly accessible land at Millgreen Common). Overall, this area is too constrained by the presence of environmental assets. The only effective forms of mitigation would be undergrounding or entirely re-routing the OHL.