

A303 STONEHENGE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEYS

Written Scheme of Investigation for Field Evaluation

Area C1

Prepared for

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Figure 1 Location of Area C1 and proposed trench disposition

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1.1. The context, background and general approach to the proposed field evaluation is set out in a separate document (Wessex Archaeology 2001, *A303 Stonehenge – Archaeological Surveys: Field Evaluation Strategy*), which should be read in conjunction with this written scheme of investigation (WSI).
- 1.1.2. This WSI relates solely to one part of the A303 Stonehenge Preferred Route, described here as Area C1. The document appraises the known archaeological resource and reviews the Monument Interest Value scores allocated by previous studies. Proposals for archaeological evaluation are presented for comment by the archaeological monitors (English Heritage, the National Trust and the County Archaeologist of Wiltshire County Council) and approval by The Highways Agency.

1.2. Site description

- 1.2.1. Area C1 comprises part of a single field (scheme field no. 17), which lies immediately to the north of the A303, south of Parsonage Down and west of Scotland Lodge at NGR SU 065439 (**Figure 1**). The field is currently under arable cultivation and is planted with a cereal crop, which it is understood will be harvested in August 2001.
- 1.2.2. The Area lies on the eastern end of a low spur at some 125m aOD (above Ordnance Datum), the land dropping into dry valleys to the north (Parsonage Down) and south, and to the east into the valley of the River Till. The underlying geology comprises Middle Chalk.
- 1.2.3. Area C1 contains no Scheduled Monuments and lies outside the World Heritage Site (WHS).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

2.1. Introduction

2.1.1. This section summarises the existing knowledge of the archaeological resource in Area C1. This is based on a number of sources, principally the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and the Stonehenge WHS GIS database, together with the results of previous surveys. This information has been collated and summarised in the *A303 Stonehenge Archaeological Appraisal* (Wessex Archaeology 2001), which, together with the results of additional non-intrusive surveys commissioned under Stage 2 of the scheme, forms the basis of this section of the WSI.

2.2. Archaeological appraisal

2.2.1. The *A303 Stonehenge Archaeological Appraisal* (Wessex Archaeology 2001) has identified two known sites within Area C1. These are GIS Site 10, part of an undated field system that extends to the north and west across Parsonage Down and to the south of the A303, and Site 25, a multi-period complex of oval and rectilinear enclosures, pits and hollows revealed by aerial photography. In addition, Site 8, two probable Iron Age pits, one containing a flexed human burial, is of uncertain location and could relate to Area C1.

2.2.2. The undated field system (Site 10) contains strip-like elements possibly indicating a late (Medieval) date. The pits with burial (Site 8) are characteristic of the Early Iron Age and, if located within Area C1, are unlikely to be isolated.

2.2.3. The principal complex in Area C1 comprises a series of rectilinear enclosures surrounding a large oval enclosure (Site 25). Other linear features suggest boundary earthworks and trackways, while much of the area is covered by a rash of pit-like features. This appears to be a multi-period palimpsest. The finds from fieldwalking suggest that it has a late prehistoric origin. The small rectangular enclosures could be Middle Bronze Age. The morphology of the oval enclosure could be Late Bronze Age and the pit like-features (possibly including Site 8) could be activity of the Early-Middle Iron Age. The quantity of burnt flint from the fieldwalking probably derives from these periods. Some of the rectilinear enclosures could be Romano-British and this is supported by the quantity of finds of this date from fieldwalking. The rash of pit-like features adjacent to a north-south linear on the east of the complex could be a cemetery of this date. The recent geophysical survey suggests that the extent of this possible settlement activity has been defined both within and to the south of the road corridor, although further settlement may survive to the north..

2.2.4. The nature of the soil marks visible on aerial photographs (APs) suggests considerable erosion. Preservation across the area is likely to be variable,

with darker areas seen on the APs possibly representing the accumulation of soil in hollows, and hence better protection for underlying features.

2.3. Initial evaluation of cultural heritage resource

2.3.1. In 1995 (Blore et al 1995), a Monument Interest Value (MIV) was calculated for two known sites in Area C1, an extensive field system (Site 10) and a well-defined enclosure complex (Site 25), as follows:

<i>GIS Site 10: Multi-period field system</i>						
Survival	Potential	GV (cluster)	GV(Assoc.)	Diversity	SAM/MPP prop	Total
2	3	1	2	3	X	27
<i>GIS Site 25: Prehistoric and Romano-British enclosure complex</i>						
Survival	Potential	GV (cluster)	GV(Assoc.)	Diversity	SAM/MPP prop	Total
1	3	1	2	3	X	24

2.3.2. The scoring of the field system (Site 10) suggests a Moderately Important value. This was probably based upon consideration of the entirety of the extensive field systems and was influenced by the good survival of earthworks within the restricted area of Parsonage Down. A re-examination of the evidence suggests that Site 10 comprises elements of field systems of different dates, in part superimposed and it is arguably inappropriate to regard the whole area of Site 10 as a single site. Some parts of the field systems, for example the elements south of the A303, are notably different in character from those on Parsonage Down and are very poorly preserved.

2.3.3. On the basis of this appraisal, therefore, the MIV for the components of the field system potentially affected by the road in Area C can be re-scored as follows:

<i>GIS Site 10: Multi-period field system</i>						
Survival	Potential	GV (cluster)	GV(Assoc.)	Diversity	SAM/MPP prop	Total
1	1	1	2	1	X	8

2.3.4. This scoring would grade the field system in Area C1 as of Minor Importance.

2.3.5. On the basis of the A303 surveys, there is currently no need to adjust the score for the enclosure complex (Site 25), which indicates a site of Moderate Importance.

3. POTENTIAL IMPACT

3.1. Design constraints

3.1.1. In this part of the Preferred Route the Illustrative Design has to accommodate the following design constraints:

- Divergence from the existing carriageway;
- A curve radius suitable for high speed traffic;
- Minimisation of atmospheric pollution on a designated National Nature Reserve and SSSI (Parsonage Down);
- The need to avoid severance of a smallholding (Scotland Lodge); and
- The establishment of suitable gradients to meet the vertical alignment of the crossing of the River Till.

3.2. Illustrative design

- 3.2.1. The Illustrative Design presents a southern route option for the Winterbourne Stoke Bypass. This would pass centrally through the enclosure complex (Site 25). Initially the road is at grade, but, within the limits of Site 25, from about chainage 2600, it begins to descend into a shallow cutting as the topography rises.
- 3.2.2. The area of Site 25 affected by the Illustrative Design would vary in width (from fence line to fence line) from 50m to 55m, over a length of some 240m. The area affected would thus be approximately 1.25ha, representing some 25% of the approximate area of Site 25 (c. 5ha).

4. EVALUATION PROPOSALS

4.1. Trenching strategy

- 4.1.1. Previous surveys indicate the presence of buried archaeological remains in Area C1 (circumstance (c) in the *Strategy* document).
- 4.1.2. Sufficient field evaluation should be undertaken to determine if the nature and survival of the archaeological resource varies across Site 25 so that the implications of different construction options, if practicable, can be assessed. This will require trenching beyond the area of impact shown on the Illustrative Design.
- 4.1.3. In order to address these requirements, a total of six trial trenches, each 50m x 5m, will be excavated by machine at the locations shown on **Figure 1**. Trenches 3 and 6 are located within the illustrative design alignment, trenches 4 and 5 are located along the Preferred Route alignment, and trenches 1 and 2 are located to evaluate the potential benefits of a more northerly alignment. This amounts to 1,500 sq. m, representing a sample of some 3% of the approximate area of Site 25.

4.2. Aims and objectives

- 4.2.1. The general aims and objectives of the proposed evaluation are as set out in the *Field Evaluation Strategy*. Site specific objectives will be (within the limits of the specified techniques and trench disposition):

- To confirm the nature of the geophysical anomalies, where targeted;
- To confirm the presence or absence of archaeological remains in areas that appear blank;
- To identify if possible the nature of the Middle Bronze Age activity;
- To identify if possible the nature of the Late Bronze Age activity;
- To identify if possible the nature of the Iron Age activity;
- To identify if possible the nature of the Romano-British activity; and
- To assess the degree of preservation of remains across the whole road corridor.

4.2.2. Trench specific objectives will be:

Trench 1

- To investigate the character, function and date of the western rectilinear enclosure;
- To investigate the level, nature and date of activity represented by the anomalies to the east of the enclosure ditch; and
- To investigate the character, function and date of the cropmark feature (part of Site 10) intersected at the western end of the trench.

Trench 2

- To investigate the character, function and date of the northern oval enclosure ditch; and
- To investigate the level, nature and date of activity represented by the linear and pit-type features within and beyond the northern part of the enclosure.

Trench 3

- To investigate the character, function and date of the western oval enclosure ditch;
- To investigate the level, nature and date of activity represented by the anomalies to the east of the enclosure ditches; and
- To investigate the apparent absence of features around the possible entrance at the eastern end of the trench.

Trench 4

- To investigate the character, function and date of the western ditch of the southern rectilinear enclosure; and
- To investigate the level, nature and date of activity represented by the anomalies within and beyond the enclosure ditch.

Trench 5

- To investigate the character, function and date of the eastern oval enclosure ditch;

- To investigate the level, nature and date of activity represented by the anomalies within and beyond the enclosure ditch;
- To investigate the character, function and date of the rectilinear enclosure ditch to the east;
- To investigate the nature and date of activity represented by the anomalies associated with the rectilinear enclosure ditch (possible burials?); and
- To investigate the apparent absence of features in the possible entrance or driveway between the enclosure ditches.

Trench 6

- To investigate the character, function and date of the possible northern ditch of the eastern enclosure; and
- To investigate the level, nature and date of activity represented by the anomalies within and beyond the eastern rectilinear enclosure.

5. METHODS

5.1. Trial trenching

- 5.1.1. Mechanical excavation, hand excavation, recording, treatment of finds and environmental samples, post-fieldwork and preparation of archive will be undertaken in accordance with the general methodology set out in the *Field Evaluation Strategy*.
- 5.1.2. The limits of analysis and reporting will be as stated in the *Strategy*.
- 5.1.3. It is understood that the land is to be returned to arable cultivation following completion of the evaluation. Trenches will be backfilled with excavated material but not re-seeded, re-turfed or otherwise reinstated.

5.2. Timing and monitoring

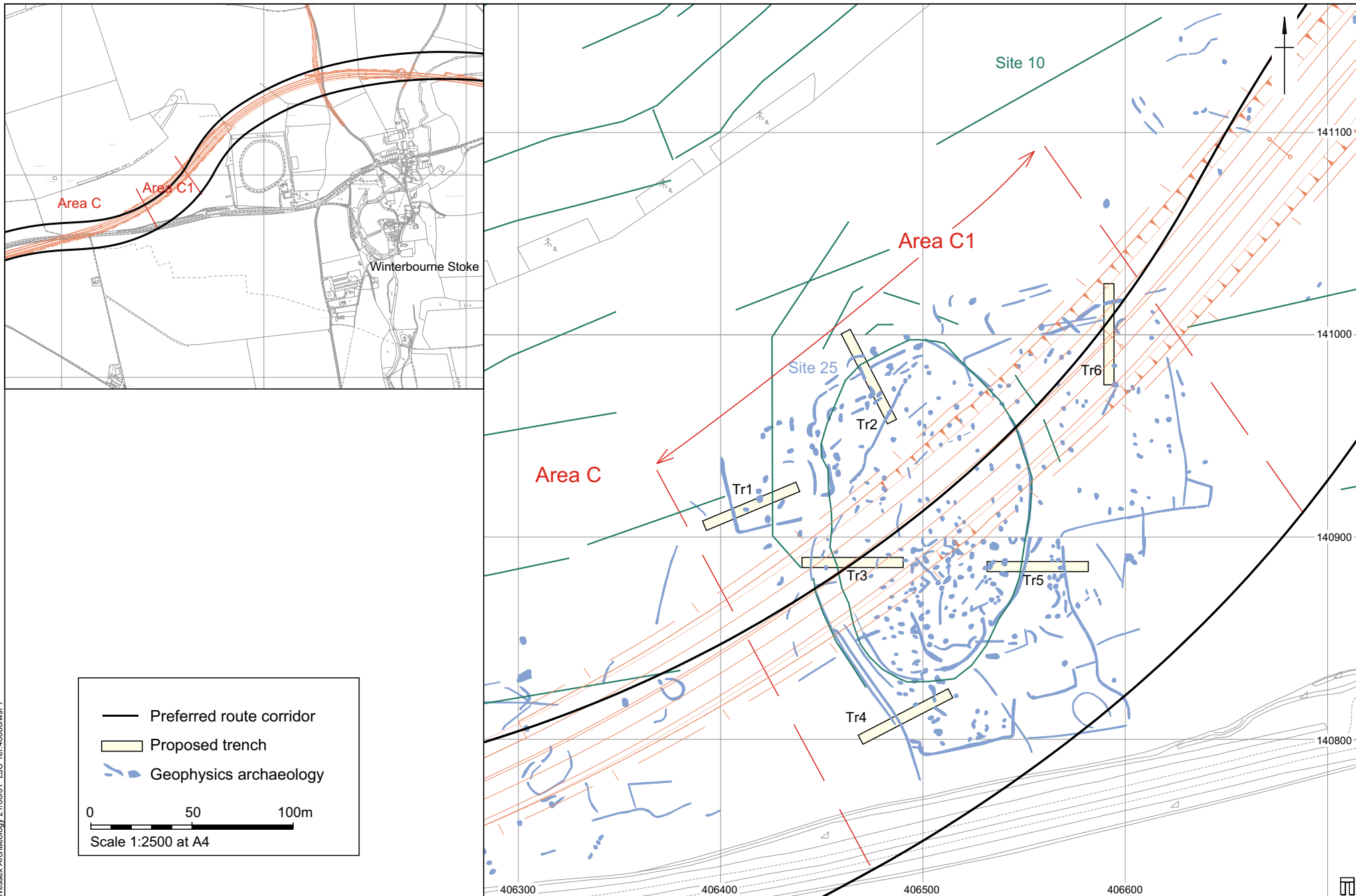
- 5.2.1. Evaluation is proposed to take place following the harvest of the present crop. It is understood that this will be during August 2001.
- 5.2.2. It is anticipated that a team of up to eight archaeologists will be required for a period of up to three weeks in the field (excluding backfilling of trenches). Two weeks notice of work commencing will be given and a programme for the fieldwork, monitoring, recording and reporting will be agreed with the client and the monitors before fieldwork commences.

6. DISSEMINATION

6.1. Client report

- 6.1.1. A client report will be prepared as described in the *Strategy*. The client report will be circulated to the client and monitors as a draft for approval. The final

agreed report will form a supporting document to the Environmental Statement.



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Location of Area C1 and proposed trench disposition

Figure 1