



SVEP Phase 3 Stonehenge Visitors Centre, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



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19/01906 and 19/09038/VAR Ref:
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BS1 4ND

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Project management by Andrew Manning
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Contributions from
Graphics by Karen Nichols

Quality Assurance

Issue number & date	Status	Author	Approved by
1 18 th November 2019	Draft watching brief report submitted to client and WCAS for comment	EL	Andrew Manning 
2 24 th Jan 2020	Final report after revision following comments from HE	EL	Andrew Manning 



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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by English Heritage to undertake an archaeological watching brief alongside the access footpath to the Stonehenge Visitors Centre, as part of the ongoing SVEP works.

The monitored works encountered made ground which is related to the initial construction of the Stonehenge Visitors Centre. Due to the presence of made ground the natural chalk geology was not reached. As such no archaeological features were identified or impacted upon during the excavation of the cable trench. During the course of the watching brief 10 litres of topsoil was sieved at 30 m intervals along the length of the cable trench for the purposes of finds retrieval. No artefacts were observed.

The watching brief took place between the 4th and 6th November 2019.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Laurence Knight and Heather Sebire of English Heritage, for commissioning the archaeological watching brief. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of Rachel Foster (Wiltshire County Archaeology Service), who monitored the project on behalf of the Wiltshire Council.

The fieldwork was directed by Lee Newton and Piotr Orczewski. This report was written by Eleanor Legg and edited by Andrew Manning. The project was managed by Andrew Manning on behalf of Wessex Archaeology.

SVEP Watching Brief Phase 3

Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by English Heritage, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a cable trench for the installation of new lighting along an access footpath at Stonehenge Visitors Centre (SVC), Winterbourne Stoke, Wiltshire, SP4 7DE. The cable trench measured approximately 150 m long, 0.23 m wide and up to 0.45 m deep. The works were carried out between NGR 410004 142864 and 410023 142739 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 A planning application (ref. 19/01906/FUL) submitted to Wiltshire Council, was granted subject to conditions in June 2019. A variation (ref. 19/09038/VAR) on this permission was then granted in November 2019.
- 1.1.3 Despite no conditions specifically relating to archaeological monitoring being added, consultation with Wiltshire County Archaeology Service (WCAS) on behalf of Wiltshire Council was undertaken and English Heritage commissioned monitoring of the works. Further consultation with WCAS was undertaken during the initial preparation of the watching brief and although a programme of topsoil sieving was not required, it was undertaken, to allow comparison with the results of sieving in the original Phase 1 works.
- 1.1.4 The watching brief was carried out as part of a programme of archaeological works during the ongoing improvements at the Stonehenge Visitors Centre, which had included investigations during the extension of the coach park at Airman's Corner, Winterbourne Stoke, Wiltshire (Wessex Archaeology 2015a and 2018).
- 1.1.5 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed (Wessex Archaeology 2019). WCAS approved the WSI prior to fieldwork commencing. The watching brief was undertaken between 4th and 6th November 2019.

1.2 Scope of the report

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the watching brief, to interpret the results within their local or regional context (or otherwise), and to assess their potential to address the aims outlined in the WSI, thereby making available information about the archaeological resource (a preservation by record).

1.3 Location, topography and geology

- 1.3.1 The watching brief was located along the western edge of the footpath providing access to the Stonehenge Visitors centre from the coach park to the north and the car park to the south (**Plates 1, 2 and cover**). The works were concentrated to the south of the main SVC access road and ran approximately north to south, following the alignment of the footpath. The access road from the A360 to the car park lies within 100 m of the area of works, with the B3086 approximately 180 m to the west. The Visitor Centre is immediately to the east



of the middle of the footpath. Trees and shrubs were present immediately adjacent to the cable trench towards its southern end.

1.3.2 Existing ground levels are recorded as 97 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

1.3.3 The underlying geology is mapped as Chalk of the Seaford Chalk Formation (British Geological Survey online viewer).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background of the area has previously been discussed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019) and as such will be briefly summarised below. Information has also been acquired from previous phase of work (Wessex Archaeology 2018) prior to which a desk-based assessment was produced by English Heritage (Leary 2008).

2.2 Previous investigations related to the development

Archaeological Evaluation [2015a]

2.2.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology (2015a) prior to the 2015 watching briefs outlined above. The evaluation comprised machine excavated trenches and hand dug test pits, neither of which produced any archaeological features or deposits. Modern post-holes and linear features were identified along with some natural features.

2.2.2 Topsoil sieving was undertaken during the test-pitting and a small number (24 worked flint finds in total from 7 test-pits) of Late-Neolithic – Bronze Age (3000-1100 BC) artefacts were found, in keeping with that found in the surrounding landscape. The results of the distribution analysis following the sieving did not identify any particular or significant concentrations of artefacts.

Watching Brief [2015b and 2018]

2.2.3 Two phases of archaeological investigation were undertaken by Wessex Archaeology (2015b and 2018) during works associated with the extension and improvement of the coach park at Airman's Corner, Winterbourne Stoke, within 100 m to the north of the cable trench. No significant archaeological features or deposits were identified, though a modern linear was observed along with modern soakaway pits and plough scars. Some natural features were also identified.

2.3 Archaeological and historical context

2.3.1 A high potential for prehistoric activity within the site is highlighted by its location on the western periphery of the World Heritage Site (WHS) and its proximity to major barrow groups present to the north-east and south-east (Leivers and Powell 2016).

2.3.2 Within a 500 m of the monitored works several probable round barrows indicate the presence of Bronze Age activity. These barrows include a group of three (SMR No. SU14SW956) which lie approximately 440 m to the north-east of the site and 300 m south of the Lesser Cursus (SMR No. SU14SW41).

2.3.3 As part of the Stonehenge Environmental Improvements Project (SEIP) works, a geophysical survey was undertaken across the area in which the present car park for the

Stonehenge Visitors Centre is located (Wessex Archaeology 2009). Located immediately to the south of the cable trench, clusters of localised pits were identified, and anthropogenic linear and curvilinear trends were highlighted. Most significantly, however, an approximate circle of post pits was identified to the east of a bowl barrow (SMR no. SU04SE633). The feature, along with the barrow, possibly represents a continuation of the linear barrow cemetery related to the Lesser Cursus (SMR No. SU14SW41).

- 2.3.4 To the west of the project area lies a large field system (SMR No. SU04SE682) believed to date to the later prehistoric. The field system covers a total area of 65 ha, and it has been suggested that a second phase of the field system may relate to some Romano-British settlements (SMR Nos. SU04SE686 and SU04SE685) within the area. A linear cropmark (SMR No. SU14SW956) is also believed to be related to the large complex. A field system is also present to the east of the site (SMR No. SU14SW982) and may have originally been part of that to the west.
- 2.3.5 Wessex Archaeology (2012a) undertook an evaluation within the earlier coach park, approximately 100 m to the north of the site. No archaeological features or deposits were uncovered within the four trenches and six test pits excavated. A single sherd of Romano-British pottery and some worked flint were recovered.
- 2.3.6 A watching brief was carried out during groundworks associated with the SEIP (Wessex Archaeology 2011 and 2012b), which included the decommissioning of the B3068. No archaeological features were identified, and no artefacts were observed.
- 2.3.7 A geophysical survey within the vicinity of the monitored works was undertaken, by the English Heritage archaeometry team, across an area of 3 ha to the south east of Airman's Corner (Linford and Martin 2009). The results of the survey confirmed the presence of 19th century agricultural buildings recorded on historic maps. Several pit-like anomalies were also identified scattered across the surveyed area, as was a large ferrous anomaly believed to be related to the aviation accident commemorated by the Airman's Cross memorial (NHLE 1242829). The Grade II listed Airman's Cross (NHLE 1242829) is itself now located approximately 10 m to the east of the line of the cable trench, having been relocated from its original location alongside the A303.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

- 3.1.1 The aims of the watching brief, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019) and as defined in the ClfA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a), were:
- To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of the development or other works;
 - To provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard; and
 - To guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

3.2 Objectives

3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the objectives of the watching brief, also defined in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019), were:

- To determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified works area;
- To record and establish, within the constraints of the works, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains (a preservation by record);
- To place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
- To make available information about the archaeological resource on the site by preparing a report on the results of the watching brief.

4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methodology set out within the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

4.2.1 The watching brief was undertaken by a single archaeologist who monitored the intrusive groundworks associated with the mechanical excavation of a single cable trench aligned north to south. The trench was excavated by a tracked, 360° mechanical excavator and measured approximately 150 m long, 0.23 m in width and had a maximum depth of 0.45 m.

4.2.2 The watching archaeologist monitored all mechanical excavations within the specified area.

4.2.3 The archaeologist also undertook a programme of topsoil sieving which comprised 10 litres of topsoil sieved through a 10 mm mesh at 30 m intervals along the length of the cable trench. This was carried out for the purposes of artefact retrieval and distribution analysis and comparison with the results of similar topsoil sieving, undertaken during the 2015 test-pitting and evaluation.

4.2.4 Spoil derived from both machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological deposits was also visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval.

Recording

4.2.5 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

4.3 Artefactual and environmental strategies

4.3.1 Appropriate strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of artefacts and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology



2009). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b) and *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011).

4.4 Monitoring

4.4.1 The Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service (WCAS) monitored the watching brief.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Despite the high level of archaeology present within the surrounding area of the project site, no archaeological features, finds or deposits were encountered during the watching brief.

5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits

5.2.1 Mid brown, silty clay topsoil **101** was excavated to a depth of 0.20 m and directly overlay a layer of made ground, **102 (Plates 3 and 4)**. The made ground appeared as a mix of topsoil and chalk and was present from a depth of 0.20 m to 0.45 m. A layer of terram was encountered, occasionally, at a depth of approximately 0.45 m below ground level at the base of the trench (**Plate 5**). This appeared to separate made ground **102** from the natural geology, **103**. The natural chalk geology, **103**, was only seen in the instance where the terram broke.

5.2.2 It was noted that for the most part, the excavations did not impact into the natural undisturbed chalk.

6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 No archaeological artefacts were recovered during the excavation of the cable trench or during the sieving of topsoil.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 No archaeological deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Discussion

8.1.1 The main finding of the monitoring of the works along the SVC footpath is that the cable trench was largely excavated through existing made ground deposits and was not deep enough to impact undisturbed deposits.

8.1.2 Accordingly, despite being located on the periphery of the Stonehenge WHS and being within an area of high archaeological potential, no archaeological features, finds or deposits were identified during the course of the watching brief.

8.1.3 Given the shallow depth of the cable trench works and the relatively small area of natural chalking being exposed, surviving archaeological features or deposits may survive

undisturbed within the watching brief area. It is notable, however, that the previous SVEP investigations, where the natural (and potential archaeological horizons) were exposed, no significant archaeological features were identified.

- 8.1.4 In the topsoil sieving of the ten 1 m by 1 m test-pits in 2015 (Wessex Archaeology 2015a) a relatively small assemblage of 24 pieces of worked flint was recovered from the topsoil in seven of the test-pits and comprised of one core, 21 worked flakes and two broken flakes, of a likely later Neolithic or Bronze Age date. In the 2015 report, this was noted to be similar to earlier 2009 works and that the results were '*representative of a typical low-level background scattering of later Neolithic-Bronze Age (3000-1100BC) material*'.
- 8.1.5 Although only a partial sample, the topsoil sieving along the cable trench route recovered no significant material. It is unclear whether the made ground deposits involved redeposited material from the same site or from imported material, but no evidence of concentrated activity was revealed, and this is in keeping with the previous investigations (Wessex Archaeology 2015a, 2015b and 2018).

9 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

9.1 Museum

- 9.1.1 The archive resulting from the watching brief is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury. Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum has agreed in principle to accept the archive on completion of the project, under the accession code **SBYWM:2019.75**. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full written agreement of the landowner to transfer title of all finds to the museum.

9.2 Preparation of the archive

- 9.2.1 The archive, which includes paper records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 9.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the **accession code SBYWM:2019.75**, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:

- 01 files/document cases of paper records;

9.3 Selection policy

- 9.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows national guidelines on selection and retention (SMA 1993; Brown 2011, section 4). In accordance with these, and any specific guidance prepared by the museum, a process of selection and retention will be followed so that only those artefacts or ecofacts that are considered to have potential for future study will be retained. The selection policy will be agreed with the museum, and is fully documented in the project archive.

9.4 Security copy

- 9.4.1 In line with current best practice (eg, Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.



9.5 OASIS

- 9.5.1 An OASIS online record (<http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main>) has been initiated, with key fields and a .pdf version of the final report submitted. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service ArchSearch catalogue.

10 COPYRIGHT

10.1 Archive and report copyright

- 10.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*. In some instances, certain regional museums may require absolute transfer of copyright, rather than a licence; this should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- 10.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

10.2 Third party data copyright

- 10.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (eg, Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.

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227600.01



APPENDICES

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: OASIS ID: WESSEXAR1-373113

OASIS ID: wessexar1-373113

Project details

Project name	SVEP Phase 3, Stonehenge Visitors Centre, Watching Brief
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by English Heritage to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a cable trench associated with the installation of lighting alongside the access footpath to the Stonehenge Visitors Centre, as part of the ongoing SVEP works. The monitored works took place between NGR 410004 142864 and 410023 142739, at the Stonehenge Visitors Centre, Winterbourne Stoke, SP4 7DE. The works encountered made ground which is indicative of previous works having taken place on the site. Due to the presence of made ground the natural chalk geology was not reached. As such no archaeological features were identified or impacted upon during the excavation of the cable trench. During the course of the watching brief 10 litres of topsoil was sieved at 30 m intervals along the length of the cable trench for the purposes of finds retrieval. No artefacts were observed.
Project dates	Start: 04-11-2019 End: 06-11-2019
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	227600 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Other 12 - Verge
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Consultation with county archaeologist/EH

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WILTSHIRE SALISBURY WINTERBOURNE STOKE Stonehenge Visitors Centre, Winterbourne Stoke, Wiltshire
Postcode	SP4 7DE
Study area	0.003 Hectares
Site coordinates	SU 10004 42864 51.184397197806 -1.8568492669 51 11 03 N 001 51 24 W Point
Site coordinates	SU 10023 42739 51.183272744204 -1.856580878688 51 10 59 N 001 51 23 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
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Project brief originator	English Heritage
Project design originator	Wessex archaeology
Project director/manager	A Manning
Project supervisor	Lee Newton
Project supervisor	Piotr Orczewski

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Diary", "Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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Location plan of current and previous Phase 1 and 2 watching brief areas

Figure 1



Plate 1: Working shot of cable trench and sieving, view from the south



Plate 2: Working shot of cable trench excavation, view from the north


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	Date:	11/11/2019	Revision Number: 0
	Scale:	Not to scale	Illustrator: KMN
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Plate 3: West facing representative section showing topsoil and made ground (1 x 1 m scale)



Plate 4: North-west facing representative section showing topsoil and made ground (1 x 1 m scale)



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Plate 5: View of terram in cable trench base
(1 x 0.20 m scale)

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