

Bulford Camp Assault Course, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





**Bulford Camp Assault Course,
Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Bulford Camp Assault Course, Wiltshire



Watching Brief Report

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QUALITY ASSURANCE

SITE CODE	79480	ACCESSION CODE		CLIENT CODE	
PLANNING APPLICATION REF.	S/2008/1454	NGR		419044 143097	

VERSION	STATUS*	PREPARED BY	APPROVED BY	APPROVER'S SIGNATURE	DATE	FILE
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I= Internal Draft E= External Draft F= Final

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Watching Brief Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Beard Construction, to carry out an archaeological watching brief during development at Bulford Camp, Bulford, Wiltshire, centred on National Grid Reference 419044 143097.

The watching brief was required as a condition of planning consent (Planning Reference number S/2008/1454) granted by Wiltshire Council for the relocation of an obstacle assault course.

The watching brief was maintained during the topsoil stripping and mechanical excavation of 9 obstacle footings to the level of the natural chalk. No archaeological features or finds were recorded during the fieldwork.

The fieldwork was carried out between the 26th and 28th September 2011.

**BULFORD CAMP ASSAULT COURSE,
WILTSHIRE****Watching Brief Report****Acknowledgements**

This project was commissioned by Beard Construction and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Tony Daniels in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Clare King of Wiltshire Council for her advice during the project.

The fieldwork was carried out by Neil Fitzpatrick. This report was compiled by Sian Reynolds and illustrations were prepared by Linda Coleman. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Sue Farr.

BULFORD CAMP ASSAULT COURSE, WILTSHIRE

Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was appointed by Beard Construction to carry out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the redevelopment of an assault course facility at Bulford Camp, Bulford, Wiltshire, hereafter 'the Site', centred on NGR 419044 143097 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 The planning proposal (S/2008/1454) comprised the relocation of an existing eighteen obstacle assault course and addition of an equipment store, warm up shelter, vehicle drop off, parking and boundary gate. As part of the development proposals nine of the obstacles were relocated within the Site and an archaeological watching brief was maintained during the excavation of each footprint.
- 1.1.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology 2011) covering the scope and methodology of the watching brief was submitted to, and approved by, Wiltshire Council prior to works commencing.
- 1.1.4 The fieldwork was undertaken between the 26th and 28th September 2011.

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The Site is located at the southern extent of Bulford Camp, immediately to the south of the Sergeants' Mess, within Picton Barracks. The Site is bounded to the north by Wyvern Road and to the south by hedgerows adjacent to scrub land and a sports ground (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.2 Bulford Camp is located on gently sloping ground, at the foot of, and overlooked by Beacon Hill. Within the Camp the ground slopes evenly from east-west, dropping from c. 130m above Ordnance Datum to c. 95m above Ordnance Datum.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology is Cretaceous Upper Chalk.

1.3 Archaeological background

- 1.3.1 Bulford Camp lies within the archaeologically rich and nationally significant Salisbury Plain Training Area, which is noted for its well preserved prehistoric landscapes.
- 1.3.2 The known archaeology within the camp itself is dominated by the Scheduled barrows to the north of the Site at Rawkinson Road. Although previously damaged, an extant bell and disc barrow are recorded. A further five bowl barrows are recorded to the south of the Site. These barrows form part of a network of prehistoric monuments on the plain, comprising some 470 barrows and funerary monuments, of which many, such as the barrows

immediately to the north of Bulford Camp at Sheepbridge Road and a further 16 on Bulford Down, are grouped together as cemeteries.

- 1.3.3 The Wiltshire and Swindon Sites and Monuments Record indicates that a number of finds and features have been recorded in close proximity to the Site. Bronze Age pottery, worked flints and a possible Bronze Age ditch are all recorded within the camp.
- 1.3.4 To the north of the Site, modern military activity in the form of military trenches has been recorded by the RCHME.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1.1 The aims of the watching brief were to;
- monitor the programme of works to locate, identify and to investigate and record the presence/absence of archaeological features or deposits, including palaeoenvironmental deposits;
 - establish, where possible, the extent, date, character, relationship, condition and significance of archaeological features and deposits within the area impacted, and;
 - inform the scope and nature of any requirements for potential future mitigation, if appropriate.

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the methodology set out in the WSI (WA 2011). All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the guidance and standards outlined in the Institute for Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IfA 2008).
- 3.1.2 Works comprised the archaeological monitoring by at least one experienced archaeologist of the mechanical excavation of topsoil/subsoil deposits and of any other ground reduction for the proposed obstacle assault course. The watching brief was maintained throughout initial stripping until it was clear that the potential for archaeological remains to be exposed had been exhausted.
- 3.1.3 The groundwork was carried out under constant archaeological supervision, using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. The excavation proceeded in spits to the top of the natural chalk geology.
- 3.1.4 All recording was undertaken using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording sheets and recording system.
- 3.1.5 A photographic record of the watching brief was maintained throughout using digital images. The photographic record illustrated both the detail and general context of the archaeological substrata revealed, and the Site as a whole.

4 FIELDWORK RESULTS

4.1 Deposit Sequence

- 4.1.1 The stratigraphic sequence varied across the Site and comprised a turf layer overlying a mid-dark greyish brown silty clay topsoil which had an average depth of 0.20m. Where present, the topsoil covered a mid grey brown silty clay subsoil measuring c. 0.16m in depth.
- 4.1.2 Evidence of ground disturbance was noted in five of the nine obstacle footprints excavated.
- 4.1.3 Undisturbed topsoil and subsoil deposits were recorded within the north-west (TP3) and south-east areas (TP 14 & TP15, **Plate 2**). The central and north-east area (TP1, TP2, TP8, and TP10 & TP12) had clear evidence of disturbance. In a number of the test pits made ground deposits were recorded below the topsoil and in several, the absence of a well-developed subsoil indicated earlier truncation (**Plate 4**).
- 4.1.4 The natural Upper Chalk geology was recorded in all but one of the test pits (TP 8) which was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.80m through made ground deposits.

4.2 Archaeological Features

- 4.2.1 No archaeological features were present within the area of the watching brief.

5 FINDS

- 5.1.1 No archaeological artefacts were recovered during the watching brief.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES

- 6.1.1 No material suitable for environmental analysis was present within the monitored areas.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1.1 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were recorded during this watching brief.
- 7.1.2 There is clear evidence of extensive ground disturbance within the Site; made ground deposits, indicating earlier ground levelling were noted in a number of the test pits and the absence of a well-developed subsoil within several, have confirmed some truncation across isolated areas within the Site.
- 7.1.3 Given the limited areas of excavation, the extent and degree of disturbance has not been fully ascertained. Nevertheless, it is clear the earlier truncation/ground levelling is isolated and undisturbed areas are evident within the Site.

8 ARCHIVE

8.1 Preparation and Deposition

- 8.1.1 The archive is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's office building under the site code **79480**. The complete archaeological project archive will be prepared in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's Guidelines for Archive Preparation and in accordance with *Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (AAF 2007).
- 8.1.2 At a later date, the archive will be deposited with the local museum under the site code **79840**. The archive will be prepared in accordance with the Museum's archive preparation standards.

8.2 The Archive

- 8.2.1 The project archive was prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990). It comprises a ring-bound file containing a watching brief attendance form, site 'day book', trench record sheets, photographic register and *Written Scheme of Investigation*.

8.3 Copyright

- 8.3.1 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. You are reminded that you remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

9 REFERENCES

Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales), 1959, *Devizes*, Sheet 282, Drift and Solid 1:63360

IfA, 2008, *Standards and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief*

Wessex Archaeology, 2011, Bulford Camp, Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief, Unpublished Client Report ref. 79840.01, September 2011.

APPENDIX 1 – OASIS RECORD FORM

OASIS ID - wessexar1-114715

Versions

View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
View 1	1	Sue Farr	s.farr@wessexarch.co.uk	28 November 2011

Completed sections in current version

Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1

Validated sections in current version

Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
No	No	No	No	0/1

File submission and form progress

Grey literature report submitted?	No	Grey literature report filename/s
Images submitted?	No	Image filename/s
Boundary file submitted?	No	Boundary filename
HER signed off?		NMR signed off?



Site location showing watching brief area

Figure 1



Plate 1: Test Pit 15, looking north-west



Plate 2: Representative section within Test Pit 15



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Plate 3: Test Pit 10, looking south-east



Plate 4: Representative section within Test Pit 10

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