



Stonehenge Environmental Improvements Project

Site Investigation Works, Airman's Corner, Wiltshire

Archaeological Mitigation Report





STONEHENGE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

**SITE INVESTIGATION WORKS,
AIRMAN'S CORNER,
WILTSHIRE**

Archaeological Mitigation Report

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QUALITY ASSURANCE

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PLANNING APPLICATION REF.		NGR		409897 141365	

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**STONEHENGE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT
SITE INVESTIGATION WORKS,
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**STONEHENGE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT
SITE INVESTIGATION WORKS,
AIRMAN'S CORNER,
WILTSHIRE**

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by IFTech Ltd, to undertake a programme of archaeological mitigation during Site Investigation works on land at Airman's Corner, Winterbourne Stoke, Wiltshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 409897, 141365.

The site forms part of the proposed new Stonehenge Visitor Centre (SVC), with associated car and coach parking. Site Investigation works were required within the proposed parking and service area to the north of the A344 at Airman's Corner and comprised a number of boreholes within a drilling compound and the construction of a temporary water storage area.

Following consultation with the Assistant County Archaeologist at Wiltshire Council, it was agreed a programme of archaeological mitigation would be undertaken and comprise a watching brief during the drilling of the boreholes and a Strip, Map and Sample investigation within the water storage area.

Although periglacial variation and plough scarring was noted during the mitigation works, no archaeological features or finds were present within the watching brief or strip, map and record area.

The fieldwork was carried out on 1st and 2nd December 2011.

STONEHENGE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT**SITE INVESTIGATION WORKS,
AIRMAN'S CORNER,
WILTSHIRE****Acknowledgements**

This project was commissioned by IFTech Ltd and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Michael Martin in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Clare King, Assistant County Archaeologist at Wiltshire Council for her advice during the project.

The fieldwork was carried out by Simon Flaherty and this report was researched and compiled by Sian Reynolds. The illustrations were prepared by Linda Coleman. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Sue Farr.

STONEHENGE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

Site Investigation Works, Airman's Corner, Wiltshire

Archaeological Mitigation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by IFTech Ltd (the Client), to undertake a programme of archaeological mitigation during Site Investigation works on land at Airman's Corner, Winterbourne Stoke, Wiltshire, ('the Site') centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 409897, 141365 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 The Site forms part of the proposed new Stonehenge Visitor Centre (SVC), with associated car and coach parking. Site Investigation works were required within the proposed parking and service area to the north of the A344 at Airman's Corner and comprised a number of boreholes within a drilling compound and the construction of a temporary water storage area.
- 1.1.3 Three trial trenches had been previously been investigated within the Site as part of the wider assessment of the SVC site (WA 2009). Despite the largely negative results within each of trenches, further archaeological work was required to mitigate the high archaeological potential of the area.
- 1.1.4 A watching brief was maintained during the drilling of the boreholes and a Strip, Map and Sample investigation was undertaken within the proposed water storage area to the east.
- 1.1.5 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI, Wessex Archaeology 2011) was submitted to and approved by Wiltshire Council and English Heritage's Stonehenge Curatorial Unit in advance of the commencement of fieldwork.
- 1.1.6 The archaeological work was undertaken on 1st and 2nd December 2011.

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The Site is located on the western edge of the Stonehenge World Heritage Site (WHS) and comprises arable land to the north of the A344 and east of the B3086 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.2 The Site slopes generally from 105m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the north-west to 98m aOD in the south-east.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology is Upper Chalk (BGS Sheet 298).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The archaeological potential of the Site has been considered in a desk-based assessment produced by English Heritage (Leary, 2008) and is detailed in Appendix A5.1 of the ES and the Historical Environment Appraisal (Wessex Archaeology, 2009a) and is not repeated here. A summary of specific elements relating to this proposal is provided below.

2.2 Designated Sites

2.2.1 The Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites was inscribed onto the World Heritage List in 1986. The nomination focused on the two megalithic monuments of Stonehenge and Avebury. However, it also included a number of associated sites with those close to Stonehenge including Robin Hood's Ball, fifteen Neolithic long barrows within a 5km radius of Stonehenge, the Cursus, Woodhenge, Durrington Walls and numerous Bronze Age round barrows surrounding Stonehenge.

2.3 Airman's Corner

2.3.1 The evidence for Bronze Age round barrows within the vicinity of Airman's Corner suggest that the potential to recover remains of this period is high. Field systems in the area indicate the potential to recover associated remains is high.

2.3.2 Archaeological trial trenching to the north and south of the A344 on the proposed New Visitor Centre site has previously been undertaken (Wessex Archaeology, 2009b). Fifty-two trenches, each 30m long, were excavated, representing a 5% sample by area. Apart from a single undated possible posthole containing fragments of burnt flint, all features recorded were either modern (plough scars) or natural tree throw holes.

2.3.3 Trench 6 was positioned within the proposed drilling compound area. Topsoil measuring 0.22m in depth overlay the chalk natural within the trench. A tree throw was identified within the base of the trench which contained a greyish white silt loam deposit with abundant sub-rounded chalk inclusions. No archaeological finds or features were identified.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1.1 The aims of the archaeological mitigation were to:

- Clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the Site that may be impacted by development.
- Identify, within the constraints of the mitigation area, the date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the Site.
- Assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits.
- Produce a report which will present the results of the mitigation in sufficient detail to allow an informed decision to be made concerning the Site's archaeological potential.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1.1 The fieldwork methodology proposed two phases of work comprising a watching brief to monitor ground investigations associated with boreholes within the drilling compound, and an archaeological strip, map and record investigation within the water storage area (**Figure 1**).

4.1.2 The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the Institute for Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (IfA 2008) and where appropriate, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IfA 2008) excepting where they are superseded by statements made below.

4.2 Watching Brief

4.2.1 The watching brief was maintained by an experienced archaeologist throughout groundworks undertaken within the drilling compound indicated in **Figure 1**.

4.2.2 The fieldwork consisted of the monitoring of groundworks made beneath the present ground surfaces and comprised borehole excavation (**Plate 3**) through percussion drilling and reversed rotary drilling. The arisings from the drilling were inspected by the monitoring archaeologist.

4.3 Strip, map and record

4.3.1 Archaeological investigation was targeted on the temporary water storage area. The excavation area was laid out using GPS in general accordance with the location given in **Figure 1**. The excavation area was tied in to the Ordnance Survey.

4.3.2 The area was excavated using a 21 ton 360° excavator fitted with a toothless bucket and under constant supervision by Wessex Archaeology. Machine excavation proceeded to the top of natural deposits.

4.3.3 No machine tracking was undertaken across the strip, map and record areas until they were cleared by the archaeologist and 'signed off' by the Assistant County Archaeologist.

4.3.4 No backfilling was undertaken. Reinstatement was undertaken by the Client following the completion of the project.

5 FIELDWORK RESULTS

5.1.1 Machine stripping removed a dark orange brown silty clay loam topsoil with moderate sub-angular chalk and angular flint inclusions, to a depth of 0.22m. This topsoil lay directly above natural chalk (**Plates 1 & 2**).

5.1.2 Periglacial variation and plough scarring was noted during the mitigation works, but no archaeological features were present within the watching brief or strip, map and record area.

6 ARTEFACTS

6.1.1 No artefactual material was recovered during the mitigation works.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL

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

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1.1 The Site does not appear to have suffered from truncation or heavy disturbance which would have destroyed or masked the presence of archaeological features or deposits. The observation of blank areas of natural chalk bedrock can therefore be viewed as indicative of the lack of archaeology within the Site, as suggested by the results of the previous evaluation (Wessex Archaeology, 2009b).

9 ARCHIVE

9.1 Preparation and Deposition

9.1.1 The complete project archive was prepared in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's Guidelines for Archive Preparation and in accordance with *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage (UKIC 1990)*. On completion of the project the archive will be deposited with the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum.

9.2 Copyright

9.2.1 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.

10 REFERENCES

- Institute for Archaeologists, 2008. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation*
- Institute for Archaeologists, 2008. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*
- Leary, J. 2008 Stonehenge Environmental Improvements Project: An Archaeological desk-based Assessment of Areas V, W, X, Y and Z. English Heritage, June 2008
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- Wessex Archaeology, 2009b *Land at Airman's Corner, Wiltshire: Archaeological Evaluation Report* WA Report no. 71651.02
- Wessex Archaeology, 2011 *Stonehenge Environmental Improvements Project Site Investigation Work, Airman's Corner, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation: Method Statement for Archaeological Mitigation* WA Report no. 76861.01

11 APPENDIX 1 - OASIS RECORD FORM
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OASIS ID - wessexar1-120324
Versions

View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
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Completed sections in current version

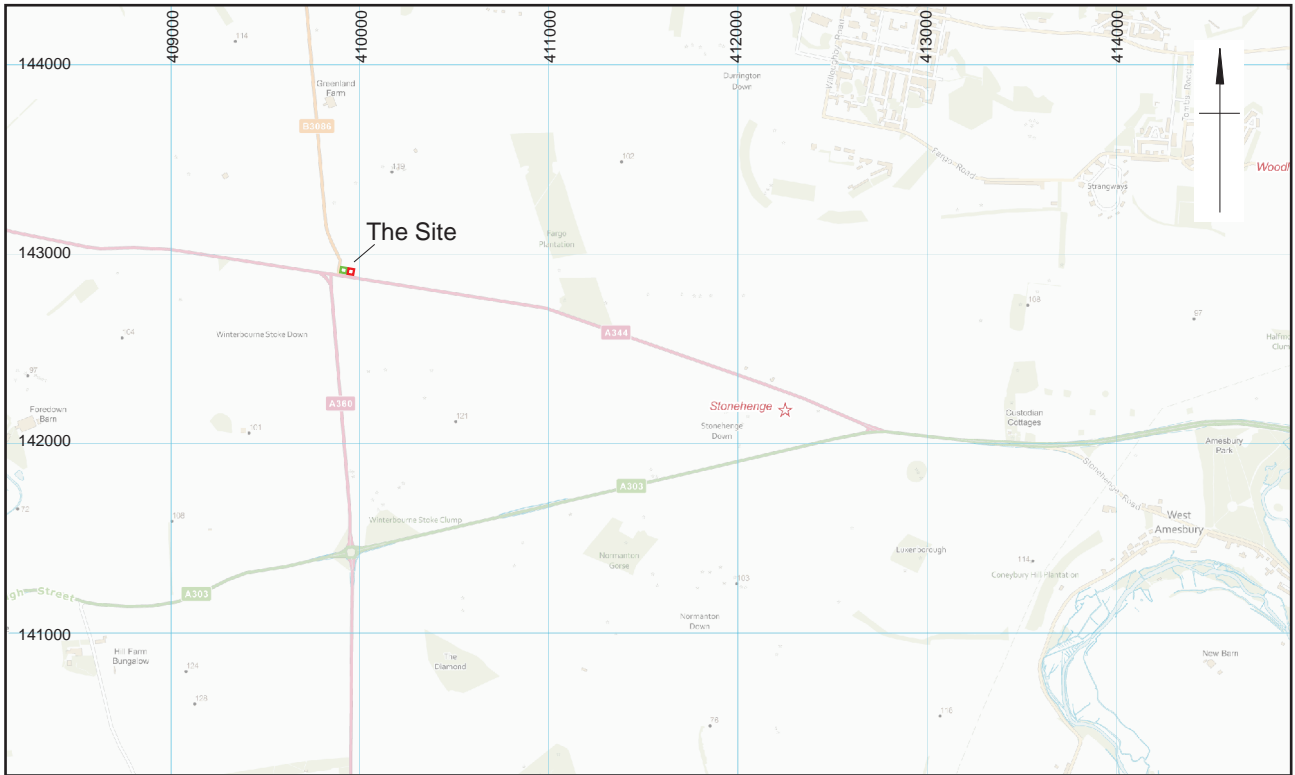
Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1

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?



 Former test-pit and trench

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Site location plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: Area of strip and map investigation showing Trench 7 in the foreground



Plate 2: Strip and map area facing west

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Plate 3: Borehole 1 within watching brief area

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