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Defence Training Estate: Salisbury Plain PG Crossing

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Ref: 86921.01
March 2013



Defence Training Estate: Salisbury Plain PG Crossing

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Front cover: Possible military fire practice trench 100 and modern ditch 101.



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Archaeological Watching Brief

Summary

Wessex Archaeology were commissioned by Landmarc Support Services Ltd to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the development of a new tank crossing on Somme Road to the east of Tidworth, Wiltshire centred on NGR 425560 149850.

The groundwork included pre-construction ancillary works comprising the construction of a shuttle road to the west of the current Somme Road, and a series of catch-pits, soakaways and associated pipe trenches. The County Archaeology Service at Wiltshire Council advised an archaeological watching brief should be undertaken during the works due to the archaeological potential of the area.

The site is located on land formerly occupied by a number of military barracks, namely Fowler Barracks to the west of Somme Road, and Busigny Barracks to the east and features associated with the former barracks were identified during the works. A former military road left *in situ*, represented by tarmacadam was noted in the centre of the proposed shuttle lane and a limited number of archaeological features were also recorded. A modern roadside ditch to the immediate west of Somme Road and a possible military fire practice trench (possibly a WWI forward firing bay) which may have been contemporary with the barracks were recorded. A possible tree-throw hole was also noted within a catch-pit.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken between 14th November 2012 and 22nd January 2013.



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Archaeological Watching Brief

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Landmarc Support Services Ltd, for commissioning the archaeological watching brief, and in particular Clive Paxman and Melanie Hill in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Site Manager Neil Goodland (Hansen) and Sgt John Donkin for their assistance during the course of the works.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Dave Murdie. This report was written and compiled by Gareth Chaffey with report illustrations prepared by Kenneth Lymer. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Paul White and Sue Farr, who also edited the final report.

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Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Landmarc Support Services Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the development of a new tank crossing on Somme Road, Tidworth, Wiltshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 425560 149850 (**Figure 1**), hereafter referred to as 'the Site'.
- 1.1.2 Given the archaeological potential of the Site, the County Archaeology Service at Wiltshire Council requested an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during any groundwork associated with the development to ensure anything of archaeological interest was recorded.
- 1.1.3 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken between 14th November 2012 and 22nd January 2013.

1.2 The Site, location and geology

- 1.2.1 The Site is located within the Defence Training Estate (DTE) Salisbury Plain midway between Tidworth in the west and Ludgershall in the east. It is positioned at the northern end of Somme Road, with the former Fowler Barracks to the west and Busigny Barracks to the east.
- 1.2.2 The British Geological Survey map for the area shows that the trackway lies on Upper Chalk (1975, Sheet 283, Andover). The surface topography of the Site is generally at 120m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The Salisbury Plain Training Area is well known for its prehistoric archaeology including round and long barrows, field systems and enclosures and contains over 2,300 archaeological sites and monuments from all ages. The area has been in military use for over 100 years and contains features associated with the development of warfare over this period.
- 2.1.2 Although there were no recorded designated heritage assets within the Site or immediate vicinity, the Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record has a number of finds and features recorded in the immediate vicinity. Archaeological remains of key historical periods are represented in close proximity to the Site, which also contains a number of undated features including linear earthworks.
- 2.1.3 To the west of the Site, a ring ditch is recorded from aerial photographs and indicative of Bronze Age funerary activity. Similarly, although undated a series of cropmarks are thought likely to represent various elements of the prehistoric landscape and include

ditches recorded from aerial photographs to the south of the Site and a series of parallel ditches, possibly representing multiple trackway recorded approximately 400m to the west. In addition Romano-British pottery sherds have been recorded to the south of the Site adjacent to the Somme Road. Several ponds are also recorded in the vicinity including one to the immediate east of the Site and are likely to be post-medieval in date. There are also several military features, including a zone of military trenching recorded from aerial photography.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1.1 The objective of the watching brief was to record, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, nature, character and relationships of any surviving archaeological remains observed during the groundwork programme.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Fieldwork methodology

- 4.1.1 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).
- 4.1.2 The works consisted of a watching brief during the development of a new tank crossing which was also maintained during pre-construction ancillary work including the construction of a shuttle road to the west of the current Somme Road, and a series of catch-pits, soak-aways and associated pipe trenches on either side of the road.
- 4.1.3 A suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist monitored the excavation of made ground/topsoil during groundworks. All excavation work was undertaken using a 21 tonne 360° tracked excavator employing a 1.8m toothed ditching bucket. The watching brief was maintained throughout initial stripping until it was clear that the potential for archaeological remains to be exposed had been exhausted. Where practicable and without causing unreasonable delay to the works programme, excavations were halted whilst investigations were carried out by Wessex Archaeology staff.
- 4.1.4 The curving shuttle road was located to the west of Somme Road, and measured 4m in width and 150m in length (**Plates 1 & 2**). A number of test pits, soak-aways and catch-pits were also excavated throughout the course of the watching brief. Two California Bearing Ratio (CBR) test pits were excavated (**Plates 3 & 4**); CBR1 was located in the centre of Somme Road at the position of the tank crossing, whilst CBR2 was located 12m to the west of CBR1. Both were excavated to a depth of approximately 0.60m down to the Upper Chalk natural geology. The soak-away pits were generally 3.5m x 3.5m.
- 4.1.1 All archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets with a unique numbering system for individual contexts. Archaeological features and deposits were hand-drawn at either 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate. Monitored works were located using data provided by the client and a Leica Viva series GNSS unit using the OS National GPS Network through an RTK network and referenced to OS mapping.
- 4.1.2 A full photographic record was compiled using digital images. The record illustrates both the detail and the general context of the principal features, finds excavated, and the Site as a whole. Digital images have been subject to a managed quality control and curation

process which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and ensures the long term accessibility of the image set.

- 4.1.3 A unique site code **86921** was allocated to the Site, and was used on all records and finds.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1.1 A possible military fire practice trench **100 (Plate 5)**, located south-east of Fowler Barracks, was recorded towards the south of the proposed shuttle lane. The feature was not fully exposed due to the limitations of the excavation area, however it comprised 0.2m of stone chippings which in turn overlay a dump of stone cobble bricks. The feature was lined with sheets of corrugated galvanised steel, which were held in place by upright steel piping spaced 1m apart. The feature was partially excavated to reveal a surviving timber superstructure. It is possible that the deposits represent rapid infill of the decommissioned practice trench, however, due to the instability of the feature, detailed recording could not be undertaken.

- 5.1.2 Modern ditch **101** was located 1.4m to the west of Somme Road, and c. 2.2m to the east of the military fire trench **100**. A former military track was identified in the centre of the shuttle lane and was left *in situ*.

- 5.1.3 No other archaeological features were recorded and no finds or deposits deemed suitable for environmental sampling were identified. Several tree-throw holes were rapidly investigated but did not contain any anthropogenic material and periglacial striping within the chalk was noted throughout the watching brief area.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.1 The watching brief did not identify any significant archaeological features or deposits. A possible military fire practice trench (possibly a forward firing bay) was recorded during the works. The feature, which may date to World War I, is likely to be related in some way to the nearby Fowler Barracks, now demolished. A modern ditch was also recorded to the south-east of the military fire trench.

7 ARCHIVE

7.1 Preparation and Deposition

- 7.1.1 The complete project archive has been 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). Details of the watching brief have also been entered into the online Oasis1 database maintained by the Archaeological Data Service (ADS). A copy of the OASIS entry is included below.

7.2 Archive

- 7.2.1 The watching brief project archive consists of:

- One A4 file containing the paper records
- Digital data (site photographs, Word and pdf files).

- 7.2.2 The archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury under the WA project code 86921. On completion of the project, the archive will be deposited with Wiltshire Heritage Museum, 41 Long Street, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 1NS.



7.3 Copyright

7.3.1 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), 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.

7.4 Security Copy

7.4.1 In line with current best practice, on completion of the project a security copy of the paper records will be prepared, in the form of microfilm. The master jackets and one diazo copy of the microfilm will be submitted to the National Monuments Record Centre (Swindon); a second diazo copy will be deposited with the paper records at Devizes Museum, and a third diazo copy will be retained by Wessex Archaeology.

8 REFERENCES

8.1 Bibliography

British Geological Survey (BGS), 1975, *Andover: Sheet 283*, 1:50, 000



APPENDIX 1: OASIS RECORD FORM

DTE:SP PG Crossing - Wessex Archaeology

OASIS ID - wessexar1-146426

Versions

View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
View 1	1	S Farr	s.farr@wessexarch.co.uk	26 March 2013

Completed sections in current version

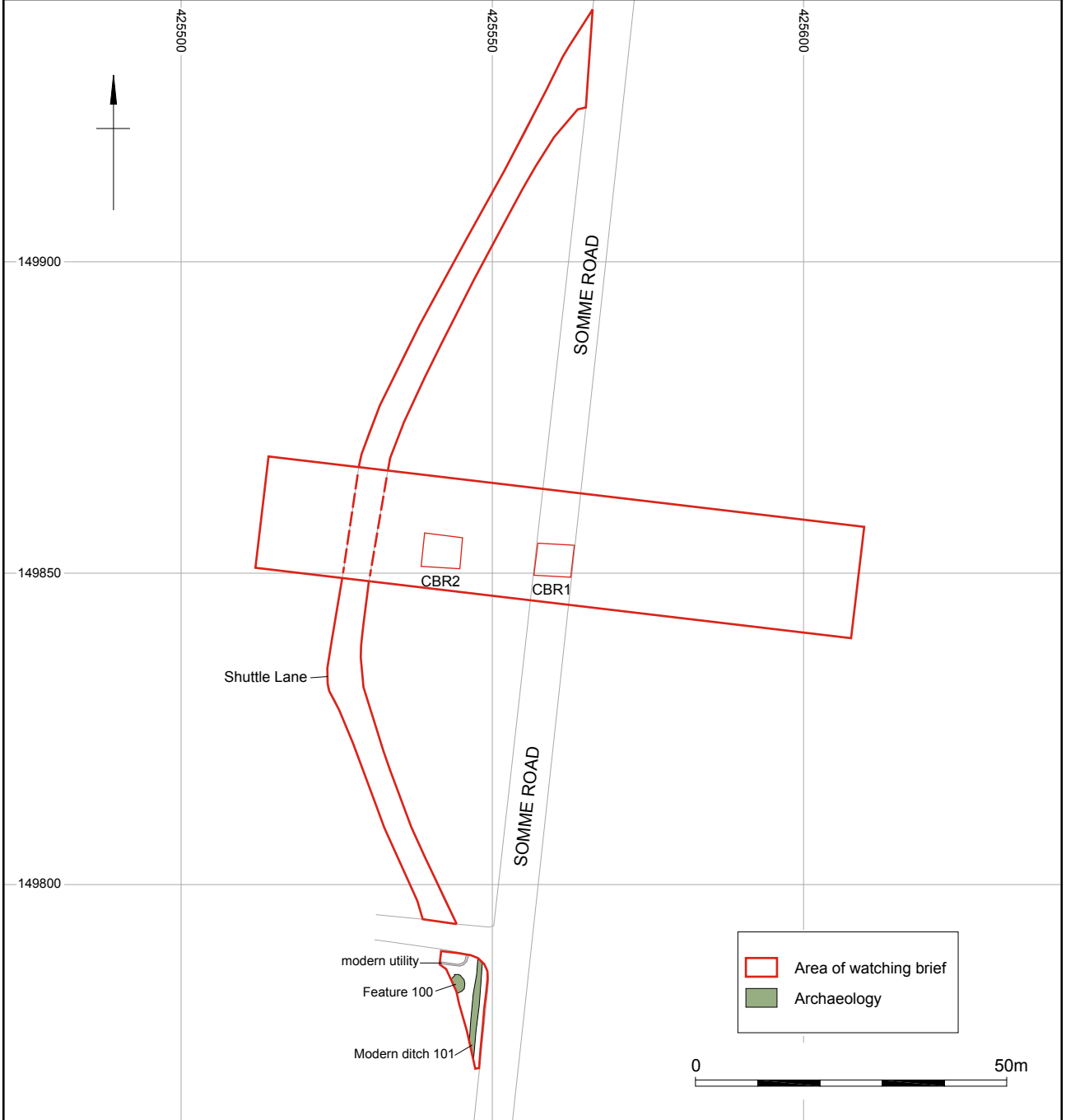
Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1


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	
Report release delay specified?	Yes	Release delay	Release into ADS library once signed off
Images submitted?	No	Image filename/s	
Boundary file submitted?	No	Boundary filename	
HER signed off?		NMR signed off?	



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	<small>Illustrator: KL</small>		
<small>Path: Y:\PROJECTS\86921\Drawing Office\Report figs\wb\13_03\86921_wb.dwg</small>			

Site location plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: Southern end of Shuttle Road, following machine excavation



Plate 2: Northern end of Shuttle Road, following machine excavation


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Plate 3: CBR 1, looking east



Plate 4: CBR 2, looking west



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Plate 5: Possible military fire practice trench 100

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