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Middle Barn Farm, Little Durnford, Wiltshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report



Ref: 100890.01
August 2013



**Middle Barn Farm, Little Durnford,
Wiltshire**

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Middle Barn Farm, Little Durnford, Wiltshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Grain Handling Engineers to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Middle Barn Farm, Little Durnford, Wiltshire, centred on NGR 413152 133477.

The site lies adjacent to a Scheduled barrow cemetery and the Assistant County Archaeologist at Wiltshire Council requested an archaeological evaluation was undertaken to assess the archaeological potential of the site, prior to the determination of a planning application for the construction of two agricultural buildings.

The evaluation consisted of the excavation of two trenches positioned within the footprint of the proposed buildings. Each trench measured 1.4m wide and approximately 10m in length. No archaeological features were recorded during the fieldwork.

The evaluation was carried out on the 6th August 2013.



Middle Barn Farm, Little Durnford, Wiltshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned by Grain Handling Engineers on behalf of Little Durnford Estate and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Bill Bird and Phillip Simmons for their co-operation and assistance during the works. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Claire King of Wiltshire County Archaeological Service for her advice during the the project.

The archaeological evaluation was directed by Matt Kendall with the assistance of Steve Winterton.

The report was compiled by Matt Kendall. The finds were assessed by Lorraine Mepham and the report graphics were prepared by Rob Goller. The project was managed by Sue Farr, who also edited this report.



Middle Barn Farm, Little Durnford, Wiltshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Grain Handling Engineers on behalf of Mr P Simmonds ('the Client'), to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation of land at Middle Barn Farm, Little Durnford, Wiltshire centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 413152, 133477 (hereafter 'the Site') (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 A planning application (13/00980/FUL) had been submitted to Wiltshire Council for the erection of a barn for housing and feeding cattle, construction of a straw barn with a concrete apron area, turning area, area for storing silage, landscaping works and access track.
- 1.1.3 The Site lies adjacent to a Scheduled barrow cemetery and the Assistant County Archaeologist recommended a trial trench evaluation should be undertaken prior to the determination of the planning application, to ascertain the archaeological potential of the Site.
- 1.1.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Wessex Archaeology and approved by the Wiltshire County Archaeological Service (WCAS) in advance of the evaluation (WA 2013). This document detailed the methods and standards to be employed throughout the work

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The Site lies on the chalk downland in South Wiltshire, on the northern edge of Salisbury and comprises a sub-rectangular plot of land at Middle Barn Farm, Little Durnford, Wiltshire. It is bounded to the west by a belt of trees, to the south by a farm track and to the north and east by arable fields.
- 1.2.2 The Site is positioned on rising ground to the north of a dry valley and is located at an elevation of approximately 62m above Ordnance Datum (aOD)
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology of the Site comprises natural chalk (British Geological Survey).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Archaeological Background

- 2.1.1 Although there are no Scheduled Monuments within the Site, there is considerable evidence for Bronze Age (2400-700BC) and later activity in the immediate area.
- 2.1.2 The nearest Scheduled Monument is a group of upstanding barrows on North Hill Down (list entry 1005667), located approximately 60m to the north-west of the Site. The barrows



consist of two groups (North Hill Down North and North Hill Down South), both of which have been subject to various antiquarian excavations.

2.1.3 The Site lies some 750m north-west of Old Sarum Scheduled Monument. The Scheduled Monument comprises a number of elements, dominated by the large Iron Age hillfort. The monument also contains the remains of a medieval motte and bailey castle, cathedral and bishop's palace. Both the castle remains and the cathedral remains are Grade I Listed. Further evidence of associated Iron Age settlement activity on the lower slopes of the hill, along the edge of the flood plain have also been recorded.

2.1.4 There is also extensive evidence for the Roman town *Sorviodunum* to the south of the Site.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

3.1.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation 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 evaluation, the date, character and condition 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; and
- Produce a report which will present the results of the evaluation in sufficient detail to allow an informed decision to be made concerning the Site's archaeological potential.

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

3.2.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the methodology set out within the WSI (WA 2013). All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the guidance and standards outlined in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2008).

3.2.2 A total of two trenches were positioned within the footprint of the proposed buildings. On the advice of the Assistant County Archaeologist, the westernmost trench was located nearest to the Scheduled barrow cemetery to the north-west of the Site.

3.2.3 The trial trench excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket (1.4m). The mechanical excavation proceeded in spits to the top of the uppermost archaeological horizon or solid geological deposits (Upper Chalk), whichever was encountered first. The machine excavated arisings were stored at a minimum of 1m from the trench edge. The spoil was scanned for artefacts at regular intervals. Upon completion of the evaluation, the trenches were backfilled with the excavated spoil, topsoil last in order to preserve the soil stratigraphy.

3.2.4 The trenches were laid out using a Leica Viva series GNSS unit using the OS National GPS Network through an RTK network with a 3D accuracy of 30mm or below in general accordance with the pattern given in **Figure 1**. All survey data was recorded using the OSGB36 British National Grid coordinate system.



3.2.5 Once trenches were completed to the satisfaction of the Client and the Assistant County Archaeologist they were backfilled using the excavated material in the approximate order in which they were excavated and left level on completion. No other reinstatement or surface treatment was undertaken.

3.3 Recording

3.3.1 All exposed archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system.

3.3.2 A complete drawn record of archaeological features and deposits was compiled. This included both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (generally 1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections), and with reference to a site grid tied to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The Ordnance Datum (OD) height of all principal features and levels was calculated and plans/sections were annotated with OD heights.

3.3.3 A photographic record was maintained during the evaluation using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images will be subject to managed quality control and curation processes which will embed appropriate metadata within the image and ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

3.4 Health and Safety

3.4.1 Health and Safety considerations were of paramount importance in conducting all fieldwork. Safe working practices will override archaeological considerations at all times.

3.4.2 All work was carried out in accordance with the *Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974* and the *Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992*, and all other relevant Health and Safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice in force at the time.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The following summary details the results of the trial trench evaluation which comprised the machine excavation of two 10m by 1.4m trenches.

4.2 Natural deposits and soil sequences

4.2.1 The stratigraphic sequence was generally consistent across the Site, comprising topsoil, measuring up to 0.25m in depth, overlying subsoil (0.13m deep), which in turn overlay the undisturbed chalk geology (**Plates 2 and 4**). The natural geology in **Trench 2** was slightly degraded and there was visible evidence of periglacial scarring ('Tiger' striping).

4.2.2 No archaeological features were recorded in **Trenches 1 and 2 (Plates 1 and 3)**. A small quantity of ceramic building material (CBM) and a single abraded Romano-British pottery sherd were recovered from the topsoil and subsoil deposits.

5 ARTEFACTUAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

5.1 Finds

5.1.1 Artefacts contained in the topsoil and subsoil of the two trenches were retained for further examination due to the lack of archaeological features in the area of investigation.



5.1.2 These finds comprised one fragment of ceramic roof tile, probably of medieval date, from subsoil **102**; a second fragment of probable medieval roof tile from topsoil **201**; and a sherd of Romano-British coarse greyware pottery from subsoil **202**.

5.1.3 Given the small quantity of finds recovered, and their provenance, retention for long-term curation is not recommended, and the finds will be discarded prior to archive deposition.

5.2 Environmental

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

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Summary

6.1.1 No archaeological features were encountered during the evaluation and only a limited number of artefacts were recovered from the topsoil and subsoil deposits. The Romano-British pottery sherd which was recovered was abraded and given the close proximity of the Roman town at Sorviodunum, (approximately 800m to the south) is unremarkable at this location.

6.1.2 The absence of archaeological features within the Site suggests the North Hill Down barrow cemetery (SMR 1005667) does not extend into the evaluation area. The topography of the wider site suggests any funerary activity related to the barrow cemetery itself would be located upslope, on the crest or near the summit of the hill, which is in an area which will not be affected by the current proposals.

6.2 Conclusions

6.2.1 The evaluation has demonstrated there are no archaeological features within the trenches.

6.2.2 The periglacial 'tiger' striping noted in the natural chalk suggests the area has not been heavily truncated or disturbed in the recent past.

7 STORAGE AND CURATION

7.1 Museum

7.1.1 The archive is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's Salisbury office under the site code **100890**. In due course it will be deposited with Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum.

7.2 Archive

7.2.1 On completion of the report a cross-referenced and internally consistent archive will be produced. The primary archive, including copies of all photographs, would normally be deposited with the local museum no later than six months after completion of the work.

7.2.2 The completed project archive will be prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in MoRPHE (English Heritage 2006) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990).

7.2.3 An OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/projects/oasis/> will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators Forms. All appropriate parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the HER. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included with the archive).



7.3 Copyright

- 7.3.1 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 Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of the company copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. The client is reminded that they 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 Archaeological Record (English Heritage), a second diazo copy will be deposited with the paper records, and a third diazo copy will be retained by Wessex Archaeology. Alternatively, the security copy may be in the form of a pdf file.

8 REFERENCES

8.1 Bibliography

Geological Survey of England and Wales 1976, Salisbury, Drift Geology. Sheet 298, 1:50,000

Institute for Archaeologists, 2008, Standards and guidance for an archaeological evaluation

Wessex Archaeology 2013, Middle Barn Farm, Little Durnford, Wiltshire, Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation, Unpublished Client Report ref. 100890.01, August 2013



APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Table of Trench Descriptions

TRENCH 1		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 9.90m x 1.40m		Max. depth: 0.48m	Ground level: 70.91 – 71.22m aOD
Co-ordinates: E 413108.77 N 133436.38 and E 413099.75 N 133431.33			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
101	Layer	Topsoil – Dark greyish brown silty clay (loose) containing occasional root disturbance and occasional to common sub-rounded to sub-angular flint inclusions (<0.06m).	0 – 0.25m
102	Layer	Subsoil – Mid brown silty clay (loose to firm) containing sparse sub-rounded to sub-angular flint inclusions and sparse chalk flecks.	0.25 – 0.38m
103	Layer	Natural – Upper Chalk bedrock with occasional flint nodules (<0.15m).	0.38m+

TRENCH 2		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 9.40m x 1.40m		Max. depth: 0.45m	Ground level: 68.57 – 69.37m aOD
Co-ordinates: E 413171.10 N 133462.82 and E 413176.50 N 133454.73			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
201	Layer	Topsoil – Dark greyish brown silty clay (loose) containing sparse ploughed in crop, occasional root disturbance, and occasional to common sub-rounded to sub-angular flint inclusions (<0.04m).	0 – 0.20m
202	Layer	Subsoil – Mid brown silty clay (loose to firm) containing sparse sub-rounded to sub-angular flint inclusions (<0.03m) and sparse chalk flecks.	0.20 – 0.33m
203	Layer	Natural – Upper Chalk bedrock which is slightly degraded by faint peri-glacial scarring.	0.33m+



Appendix 2: OASIS form

Middle Barn Farm, Little Durnford, Wiltshire - Wessex Archaeology

OASIS ID - wessexar1-157064

Versions

View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
View 1	1	Matt Kendall	m.kendall@wessexarch.co.uk	15 August 2013
View 2	2	Matt Kendall	m.kendall@wessexarch.co.uk	15 August 2013
View 3	3	S Farr	s.farr@wessexarch.co.uk	15 August 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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	Scale: 1:25 000 & 1:1250 @ A4	Illustrator: LJC/RG
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Site and trench location plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: Trench 1, viewed from the north-east.



Plate 2: Trench 1, representative section, viewed from the south-east.



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Plate 3: Trench 2, viewed from the south-east.



Plate 4: Trench 2, representative section, viewed from the south-west.

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