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Shaw Lodge to Knapp Cottage Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Ref: 100120.03
March 2014



**Shaw Lodge to Knapp Cottage,
Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Prepared for:

SSE Power Distribution
PO Box 38
Totton
Southampton
SO43 7PJ

Prepared by:

Wessex Archaeology
Portway House
Old Sarum Park
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP4 6EB

www.wessexarch.co.uk



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Shaw Lodge to Knapp Cottage, Wiltshire

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Shaw Lodge to Knapp Cottage, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by SSE Power Distribution to maintain an archaeological watching brief during the installation of an electricity cable located on the southern edge of the Marlborough Downs, Wiltshire. The cable route ran for approximately 1.5km from Shaw Lodge in the north, to Knapp Cottage in the south, and was located between National Grid Reference (NGR) 412766 165280, and NGR 411836 164132.

The cable trench was positioned partly within an existing road which bisects the Wansdyke, a Scheduled Monument (list entry 1004719) at the northern end of the route. Consultation between the County Archaeologist and Inspector of Monuments at English Heritage confirmed that Scheduled Monument was not required, but given the high archaeological potential, an archaeological watching brief was required during all open cut trenching.

The archaeological watching brief was maintained during excavation of test pits and trenches associated with the cable installation. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were encountered during the excavations. This was partly due to the substantial colluvial deposits noted within the valley, which may still overly any potential archaeology, and also the limited excavations necessary for the cable installation itself.

The watching brief was carried out intermittently between the 17th January and 10th February 2014.



Shaw Lodge to Knapp Cottage, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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This project was commissioned by SSE Power Distribution and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Greg Moore in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger of Wiltshire County Archaeological Service (WCAS) and Phil McMahon from English Heritage for their advice during the project.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken Piotr Orczewski and Angus Forshaw. The report was compiled by Matt Kendall and the graphics were prepared by S.E. James. The project was managed by Sue Farr, who also edited this report.



Shaw Lodge to Knapp Cottage, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by SSE Power Distribution ('the Client'), to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the installation of an electricity cable from Shaw Lodge to Knapp Cottage on the southern edge of the Marlborough Downs, Wiltshire (**Figure 1**), running from National Grid Reference (NGR) 412766 165280 to 411836 164132 (hereafter 'the Site').
- 1.1.2 The cable route ran for approximately 1.5km, and comprised the replacement of the existing overhead line with a 11kV underground cable. The majority of the cable route was installed by a cable mole plough with the exception of three short stretches of open cut excavation.
- 1.1.3 An existing road bisects the Wansdyke (list entry 1004719) at the northern end of the route. Consultation between the County Archaeologist and Inspector of Monuments at English Heritage confirmed that Scheduled Monument was not required, but given the high archaeological potential an archaeological watching brief should be maintained during all open cut trenching.
- 1.1.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Wessex Archaeology and approved by the Wiltshire County Archaeological Service (WCAS) in advancement of the works being undertaken (WA 2013). This document laid out the methods and standards to be employed throughout the work, and was in accordance with the *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (IfA 2008).

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The Site is located between Shaw Lodge and Knapp Cottage (**Figure 1**) on the southern edge of the Marlborough Downs, overlooking the Vale of Pewsey, Wiltshire. Although partially positioned within the existing road at the northernmost and southern extents of the route, the majority of the scheme lies within arable and pasture fields to the immediate east of the road itself.
- 1.2.2 The Site is positioned on undulating chalk downland, varying from 196m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the north of the Site to 211m aOD in the south, and lies on Upper Chalk Formation, overlain by River Terrace Deposits (British Geological Survey Online Viewer).



2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 2.1.1 The Marlborough Downs is well known for its extensive and well preserved prehistoric archaeology, including round and long barrows, stone circles, field systems and enclosures, in addition to numerous archaeological sites and monuments from all ages.
- 2.1.2 To the immediate south of the Site on Knapp Hill a Neolithic causewayed enclosure, Iron Age settlement enclosure and Romano-British enclosure are recorded. In addition, to the south-east on Walker's Hill a number of extant earthworks are visible including Adam's Grave long barrow, several round barrows and an enclosure indicative of a medieval or later sheep pen.
- 2.1.3 Similarly to the north of the Site a bell barrow is recorded at Red Shore, and the Wansdyke, an extensive linear bank and ditch earthwork, crosses the route at the northern end of the Site. Although the road itself is not within the Scheduled area, buried archaeology associated with the ditch may survive beneath the road.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

- 3.1.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief were to:
- *provide further information concerning the presence/absence, date, nature and extent of any buried archaeological remains; and*
 - *place any identified archaeological remains within their historical context, particularly with reference to the known prehistoric and post-Roman features and finds found in the immediate and wider area.*

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 an Archaeological Watching Brief* (IfA 2008).
- 3.2.2 The fieldwork consisted of the monitoring of groundwork made beneath the present ground surface. Although the majority of the cable was installed by a cable mole plough, a number of short open cut excavations were necessary along the route (**Figure 1**) and comprised:
- eleven small test pits (**Test Pits 1 – 11**) spaced at regular (approximately 50m) intervals, required to connect the cable segments located immediately to the south-west of the Wandyke;
 - a pit to facilitate the installation of the cable mole plough, which measured 2.5m x 0.75m x 1.2m deep, and was positioned approximately 380m north-east of Knapp Cottage (**Test Pit 12**);
 - a trench along the road from the Shaw Lodge pole mounted transformer to the immediate south of the Wansdyke (**Trench 13**); and



- a trench at the road crossing at the southern end of the Site to P20 Knapp Cottage (**Trench 14**).

3.2.3 The groundwork was carried out under constant archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket (1m). The mechanical excavation proceeded in spits to the top of the uppermost archaeological horizon, solid geological deposits (Upper Chalk) or the construction level, whichever was encountered first. The machine excavated arisings were scanned for artefacts at regular intervals.

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 and 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 watching brief 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 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 overrode 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 archaeological watching brief carried out intermittently on the Site between the 17th January 2014 to 10th February 2014, and comprised the archaeological monitoring of trenches and test pits associated with the cable installation (**Figure 1**).

4.2 Test Pits 1 - 11

4.2.1 **Test Pits 1 – 11** (located between NGR 412486 164781 and 412730 165211) were evenly spaced along the northern part of the route at 50m intervals. Each test pit measured approximately 2.80m in length by 0.60m wide and 0.70m deep. The stratigraphic sequence of each test pit was similar, and comprised a mid-brownish grey topsoil (**101**) measuring approximately 0.3m in depth overlying a mid-reddish brown silty clay alluvial/colluvial deposit (**102**), and was recorded down to the base of the test pits (**Plate 1**). The natural geology was not encountered in any of the eleven test pits.



4.3 Test Pit 12

4.3.1 **Test Pit 12** (located at NGR 412235 164412) was required to facilitate the installation of the cable plough mole, and measured 3.00m in length by 1.50m wide and 1.50m deep. The same stratigraphic sequence was recorded, although, degraded Upper Chalk geology (**103**) was encountered at a depth of approximately 0.80m below the current ground level (**Plate 2**). No archaeological features or artefacts were encountered.

4.4 Trench 13

4.4.1 **Trench 13** (located at NGR 412766 165280) was positioned at the northern end of the Site, and comprised an open cut cable trench running alongside the road from a pole mounted transformer at Shaw Lodge to the immediate south of the Wansdyke. The trench ran for approximately 140m and measured 0.60m wide, and ranged in depth from between 0.70m to 0.86m below the current ground level.

4.4.2 During the excavation it was noted that the trench ran on a parallel course to an existing water pipe (**104**; **Plate 3**). Given the disturbance caused by the existing pipe and road, no archaeological features or artefacts were encountered during the excavation of the trench, and chalk natural (**103**) was only encountered after the trench doglegged to the south of the Wansdyke (**Plate 4**).

4.5 Trench 14

4.5.1 **Trench 14** (located at NGR 411836 164132) was positioned at the southern end of the cable route to the east of Knapp Cottage. The trench measured approximately 80m in length, 0.60m wide and ranged in depth from between 0.80m to 0.90m below the current ground level.

4.5.2 Within the road itself, a 0.20m thick layer of tarmac (**105**) overlaid 0.32m of hard core material (**106**) which was used as bedding for the road. The hard core layer was located above a mid-reddish brown silty clay colluvium (**102**; **Plate 5**). Elsewhere, the stratigraphy returned to the sequence observed across the rest of the Site, with a 0.30m thick silty clay topsoil (**101**) covering a mid-reddish brown subsoil/colluvium (**102**). As with the other observed sections, the natural chalk (**103**) was only identified as the cable trench moved away from the bottom of the valley and up the slope (**Plate 6**).

5 ARTEFACTUAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

5.1 Artefactual Evidence

5.1.1 No archaeological finds were recovered during the course of the fieldwork.

5.2 Environmental Evidence

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

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Conclusions

6.1.1 No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were encountered during the excavations associated with the cable installation. This was partly due to the substantial colluvial deposits noted within the valley, and also the limited excavations necessary for the cable installation itself.



- 6.1.2 As a result, there remains the possibility that archaeological features and deposits may survive within areas monitored.

7 STORAGE AND CURATION

7.1 Museum

- 7.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with the Wiltshire Museum in Devizes. The museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project. The archive is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's Salisbury office under the Site code **100120**.

7.2 Preparation of Archive

- 7.2.1 The complete Site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Devizes Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; IfA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 7.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the Site code, and a fill index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises the following:

- 1 file of paper records and A3/A4 graphics.

7.3 Discard Policy

- 7.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows the guidelines set out in *Selection, Retention and Dispersal* (Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant further analysis. Any discard of artefacts will be fully documented in the project archive.
- 7.3.2 The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993; 1995; English Heritage 2002).

7.4 Security Copy

- 7.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. 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.

8 REFERENCES

8.1 Bibliography

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Context Index

Context	Description	
101	Layer	Topsoil – Mid brownish grey silty clay (loose to firm) containing sparse to occasional rooting and sparse sub-rounded to sub-angular flint inclusions (<0.04m). Visible in all areas of the Site apart from the road crossing in Trench 14.
102	Layer	Subsoil/colluvium – Mid reddish brown silty clay containing sparse to occasional rounded to sub-angular flint inclusions and sparse rooting. Visible in all areas of the Site apart from where it has been removed by the water pipe (Trench 13) and the road (Trench 14).
103	Layer	Natural – Degraded Upper Chalk bedrock. Encountered only in Test Pit 12 and parts of Trenches 13 and 14.
104	Layer	Deliberate backfill – Mid greyish brown silty clay containing occasional to frequent sub-angular to sub-rounded flint inclusions. The backfill of the water pipe trench identified in Trench 13 and which includes the actual pipe.
105	Layer	Modern tarmac surface of the road within Trench 14.
106	Layer	Made ground – Hard-core deposit used as the base for the road which was visible in Trench 14.

Appendix 2: OASIS Form

Shaw Lodge to Knapp Cottage, Wiltshire - Wessex Archaeology

OASIS ID - wessexar1-173652

Versions				
View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
View 1	1	Sue Farr	s.farr@wessexarch.co.uk	7 March 2014
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	Yes	Release delay		Release into ADS library once



specified?

signed off

Images submitted?

No

Image filename/s

Boundary file submitted?

No

Boundary filename

HER signed off?

NMR signed off?



Location of the Site and monitored areas

Figure 1



Plate 1: South-west facing section of Test Pit 4.



Plate 2: North-west facing section of Test Pit 12.


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Plate 3: South-east facing section of Trench 13 showing the water pipe.



Plate 4: South-west facing section of Trench 13.



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Plate 5: North-east facing section of Trench 14 through the road.



Plate 6: North-east facing section of Trench 14.

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salisbury rochester sheffield edinburgh



Wessex Archaeology Ltd registered office Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB
Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk



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