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New Zealand Farm Camp Littleton Down, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



Ref: 112350.01
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**New Zealand Farm Camp
Littleton Down, Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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New Zealand Farm Camp Littleton Down, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Figure 1: Site and Watching Brief location



Plates

- Cover: Stripping of Trench 1, view from the South.
Plate 1: Site shot of part of Trench 2 excavated, view from the South.
Plate 2: Representative section of Trench 3 showing made ground covering natural stratigraphy: (North Facing Section Location shown in **Figure1**)



New Zealand Farm Camp Littleton Down, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by SWH Build on behalf of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a Complex Manoeuvre Environment infantry training facility at New Zealand Farm Camp, Littleton Down, Wiltshire (centred on NGR 397313 150780).

The watching brief was undertaken between 16th of February 2016 and the 7th of April 2016. No archaeological finds, features, or deposits were uncovered during the course of the archaeological work.



New Zealand Farm Camp Littleton Down, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank SWH Build and Luke Trussler for commissioning the work and their Site Manager Glen Knox for his assistance during the course of the project.

The watching brief was undertaken by Grace Flood, Piotr Orczewski, Bruce Eaton, Alistair Byford-Bates and Jamie Mc Carthy. This report was prepared by Thomas Burt. The illustrations were produced by Elizabeth James. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Bruce Eaton.



New Zealand Farm Camp Littleton Down, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by SWH Build on behalf of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a Complex Manoeuvre Environment infantry training facility at New Zealand Farm Camp Littleton Down, Wiltshire (centred on NGR 397313 150780).
- 1.1.2 This document presents the results of the archaeological watching brief which was undertaken between the 16th of February and the 7th of April 2016.

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 New Zealand Farm Camp lies at the head of a south-east/north-west aligned dry valley on the south side of Littleton Down, within the Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA), to the south-west of Little Cheverell village.
- 1.2.2 Ground levels within the Site range between approximately 180 m and 185 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The underlying geology is Cretaceous chalk of the New Pit Chalk Formation, which is partially overlain by superficial deposits of soliflucted Quaternary head in the base of the valley (BGS 2016).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The archaeological background is drawn from an *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* (Salkeld 2014). Entries in the Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record (WSHER) are prefixed with the code MWI.

2.2 Neolithic and Bronze Age

- 2.2.1 An Archaeological evaluation on Littleton Down (WA 1997) uncovered a number of Neolithic and Bronze Age pits and ditches (MWI64117), the closest of which were found 300 m to the east of the Site.
- 2.2.2 Two faint undated circular cropmarks (MWI4297 and MWI4338), approximately 500 m to the north of the Site, may indicate the positions of ploughed-out Bronze Age barrows.

2.3 Iron Age and Romano-British

- 2.3.1 There is a known Romano-British settlement 1.3 km to the north-east of the Site (MWI4245) and there are several undated lynchets and earthworks in and around Littleton Down (MWI3488, MWI4283 and MWI4294), which may be the remains of Iron Age or Romano-British field systems. A Romano-British spearhead (MWI4255) was also found 150 m to the north of the Site.

2.4 Saxon and medieval

- 2.4.1 There is no evidence for Saxon activity within the vicinity of the Site. The evidence for medieval activity is restricted to lynchets on Littleton Down and to the south of Great Cheverell Hill (MWI4320 and MWI4283), as well as an isolated pit (MWI64117), which was uncovered during an evaluation to the east of the Site (WA 1997).

2.5 Post-Medieval and modern

- 2.5.1 A square dewpond is visible on aerial photographs of the airfield to the west of the Site (MWI45047). Many such ponds were constructed on ridge-tops in the 19th century by the Cruse family (Field 2002).
- 2.5.2 According to Hawley (2007), the name 'New Zealand Farm' was a whimsical reference to its remoteness, lying at the southern edge of the parish, far from the centre of village life. The farm buildings date from 1860 to 1886 (VCH 1975), a time when many British subjects were settling in New Zealand itself. The farm probably practised a mixed agricultural regime as an elderly villager recounted that the road from village to farm was so steep that it took a team of fifteen horses to move a threshing machine up to it (Hawley 2007).
- 2.5.3 New Zealand Farm is first depicted on the 1887 Ordnance Survey (OS) 1:2500 plan. The plan shows a large building, measuring approximately 37 m by 12 m, which appears to be the main farmhouse range, with projecting wings to the east and west and a yard to the south. Immediately to the south, there was a large feature comprising two concentric circles. The function of this feature is unknown but could be a water feature or dewpond. To the west of the circular feature, there was a further group of buildings within an enclosed yard.
- 2.5.4 The whole farm was enclosed by an annular band of trees, with four entrances on the cardinal points. The boundary between Little Cheverell and West Lavington parishes ran through the centre of the farm enclosure.
- 2.5.5 The 1900 1:2500 OS plan indicates the positions of two water pumps close to the two groups of buildings. Early 20th-century OS plans show a broadly similar layout to the earlier plans.
- 2.5.6 In 1940 the land to the west of New Zealand Farm was developed as an airfield, initially known as Lavington Relief Landing Ground (MWI4271), but soon changed to New Zealand Farm. The farmhouse was demolished to make way for the Nissen hutted camp. The landing areas comprised two grass strips with three blister aircraft hangars. During the War, New Zealand Farm was mainly used for flying training purposes by the Central Flying School units based at Upavon. There was a small timber watchtower, and tank traps and pillboxes (MWI63895, MWI63896, MWI63897) around the perimeter. Between 1945 and 1960, the airfield was used as an outstation of the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment research complex at Buncombe Down.
- 2.5.7 The Camp in its military form is first shown on the 1961 1:10560 OS map. Aerial photographs confirm that the camp has remained largely unaltered since this date. The DIO site visit in June 2014 confirmed that the buildings date to the 1940s.
- 2.5.8 New Zealand Camp featured in Series 2 of the reality television programme *Bad Lad's Army* (2004) and it would appear that some of the buildings were dressed for the series. A site visit in June 2014 confirmed that some of this dressing, including the building names and numbers, remain.



3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Salkeld 2015) set out the aims, methodologies and standards employed by WA in order to undertake the archaeological watching brief and was agreed by the Client and submitted to the County Archaeologist prior to fieldwork commencing. In format and content, the WSI conformed with current best practice and to the guidance outlined in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE, Historic England 2015) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standards and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a).

3.1.2 The WSI assessed the potential impact on archaeological remains as follows:

- *The potential for Palaeolithic and Mesolithic remains is negligible, but there is a moderate chance of Neolithic, Bronze Age, Romano-British or Medieval material on the site. However, it is likely that such remains will have been truncated by the footprints of both the 19th-century farm buildings, and subsequently, the military camp. The extent to which the layout of the demolished farm influenced that of the military camp is unknown, although it is clear that the northern and southern entrances to the site were re-used. The mapping evidence suggests that there is little to no overlap of the two footprints, but if the central 19th-century feature was a pond, then there is a possibility that it was back-filled with material from the demolished farm buildings.*
- *The proposed development largely exploits the footprint of extant buildings which are of minor military and historic significance and the sub-surface impact will generally be minor. There is potential for further sub-surface impacts between the three buildings in the north of the site, the area of hard-standing to the immediate south-east of the hangar, and the access track throughout the camp. The area of hard-standing and the access track have the potential to overlap the 19th-century features although the impact in terms of surface area is likely to be very small.*

3.1.3 Briefly, the aims of the watching brief were to:

- *To allow, within the resources available, the assessment and preservation by record any of archaeological deposits encountered during the test pit excavations.*
- *The fieldwork aims to produce a record of the location, nature and date of any archaeological remains encountered in order to add to existing knowledge of the site, and provide information to inform the design and installation of the groundwater migration barrier. to confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;*
- *To prepare a report on the results of the watching brief.*

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Watching Brief

4.1.1 The archaeological watching brief followed the methodology outlined in the WSI (*ibid.*). Continuous archaeological monitoring of the groundworks was undertaken where these activities could impact on, or expose, deposits of archaeological interest. All monitoring was undertaken by experienced and suitably qualified WA Archaeologists.



4.2 Recording

- 4.2.1 All exposed archaeological deposits were recorded using WA's *pro forma* recording system. A photographic record was maintained using digital cameras equipped with a 16-megapixel image sensor. Digital images were 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.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1.1 The underlying chalk bedrock, which was partially overlain by superficial deposits of soliflucted head towards the centre of the Site, was uncovered at depths across site from 1.3 m to 1.5 m.
- 5.1.2 The chalk bedrock was overlain by a sub-soil of mid reddish brown silty clay with frequent small sub-angular flint inclusions uncovered at varied depths across the site from 0.34 to 0.45m.
- 5.1.3 This subsoil was overlain by deposits of modern made ground material that included brick rubble, plastic and ceramic to a max depth of 0.60m. **Plate 2** illustrates this typical deposit sequence
- 5.1.4 No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified during the watching brief.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.1 Despite the Site's location within a relatively rich archaeological landscape, no archaeological finds or features were observed during the watching brief. The archaeological work also demonstrated that there are extensive deposits of made ground and widespread modern disturbance across the Site, resulting for its use as a farm and military camp in the 19th and 20th centuries.

7 STORAGE AND CURATION

7.1 Archive

- 7.1.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by the appropriate museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013). The project archive will be held at the offices of Defence Infrastructure Organisation, Westdown Camp, Salisbury, Wiltshire. In due course the archive will be deposited with a relevant and suitable museum under a project code, to be confirmed.

7.2 OASIS

- 7.2.1 An OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/projects/oasis/> has been initiated for the work and key fields in regard of the evaluation has been entered under OASIS ID wessexar1-256934. All appropriate parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included with the archive).

7.3 Discard policy

- 7.3.1 WA 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 any future 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 2011).

7.4 Copyright

- 7.4.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the Site will be retained by Wessex Archaeology Ltd under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The recipient museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profit making, and conforms with the *Copyright and Related Rights regulations 2003*.

7.5 Security Copy

- 7.5.1 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

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9 APPENDICES

9.1 OASIS record

OASIS ID: wessexar1-256934

Project details

Project name New Zealand Farm Camp

Short description of the project Watching brief

Project dates Start: 05-02-2016

Any associated project reference codes 112350 - Contracting Unit No.

Type of project Recording project

Site status None

Current Land use Grassland Heathland 5 - Character undetermined

Investigation type "Watching Brief"

Project location

Country England

Site location WILTSHIRE KENNET WEST LAVINGTON New Zealand Camp Farm

Site coordinates ST 97313 50780 51.255666528078 -2.038508630438 51 15 20 N 002 02 18 W
Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Wessex Archaeology

Project brief originator Defence Estates

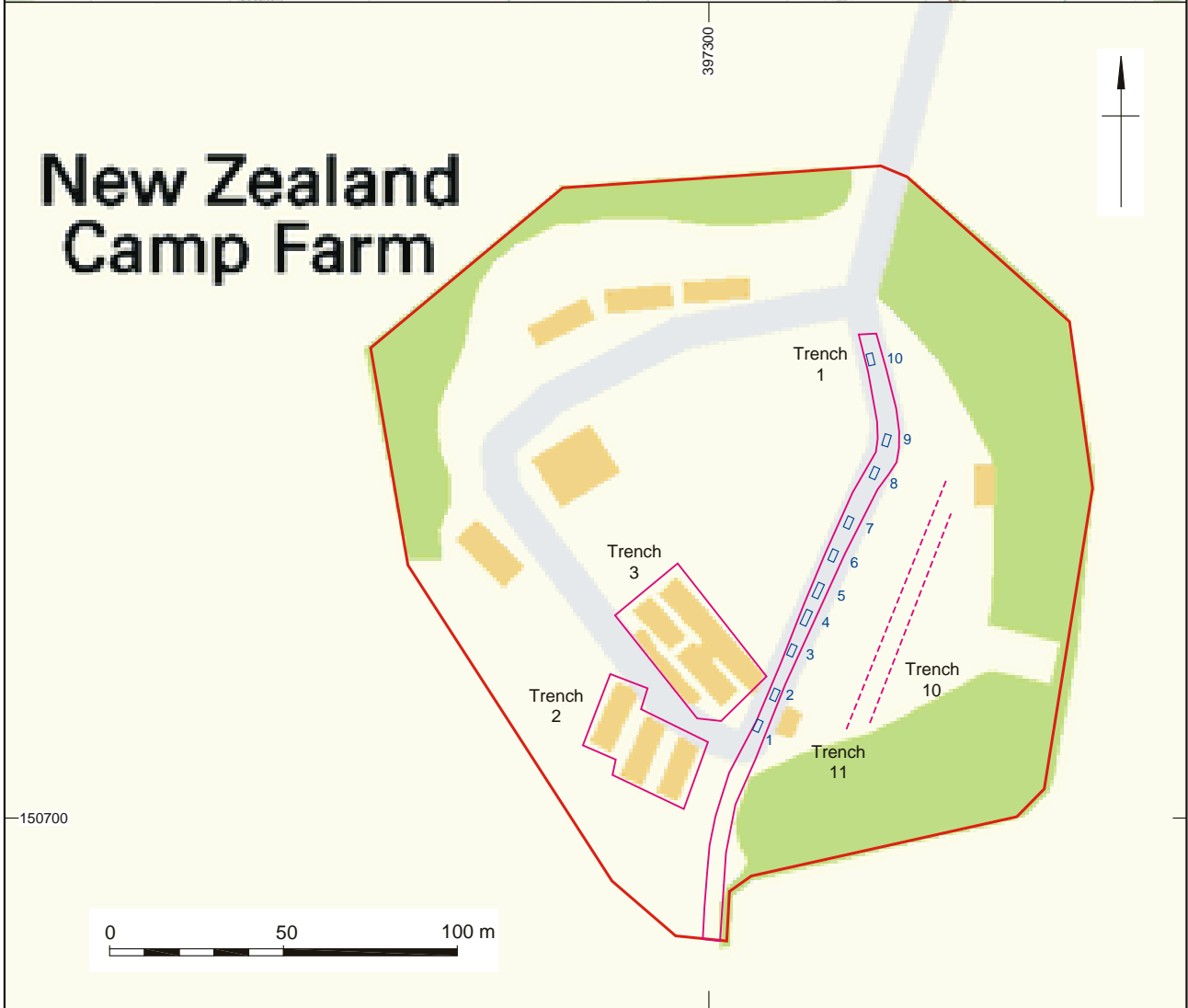
Project design originator Defence Estates


Project director/manager Bruce Eaton

Project supervisor tbc

Entered by Robert Skinner (r.skinner@wessexarch.co.uk)

Entered on 7 July 2016



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Site and Watching Brief location


Figure 1



Plate 1: Site shot of part of Trench 2 excavated



Plate 2: Representative section of Trench 3 showing made ground covering natural stratigraphy

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