

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Planning Ref: 14/02099/FUL Ref: 87322.03 May 2017



Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Front cover:

North-east facing view of the site View of site prior to excavation, view from west Plate 1: Section of excavated trench, view from north-west Plate 2: Section of excavation trench, view from west Plate 3:



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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Fowler Architecture and Planning Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief during proposed works at land at Lower Acre, Avebury Trusloe, Wiltshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 409470 169920. The watching brief was carried out on the 15th May 2017.

The archaeological watching brief was required as a condition of the planning permission (14/02099/FUL) for the demolishing of the existing bungalow and construction of replacement two-storey dwelling. At the time of archaeological monitoring there were no plans to demolish the bungalow by the present owners. A separate application will cover the redesign of planning permission. This watching brief was therefore solely concerned with the excavation of a single foundation trench on the northern extent of the existing building.

The archaeological watching brief comprised monitoring of the excavation of foundation trench at the north side of existing building. No evidence of identify any archaeological features, deposits or finds were recorded.



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Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank and assistance of Claire Welburn of Fowler Architecture and Planning Limited is also acknowledged. The watching brief was carried out by Neil Fitzpatrick. Piotr Orczewski compiled this report. The illustrations were prepared by Nancy Dixon. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Gareth Chaffey.



Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Fowler Architecture and Planning Limited (hereafter 'the Client') to undertake an archaeological watching brief during proposed works at land at Lower Acre, Avebury Trusloe, Wiltshire (hereafter 'the Site'), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 409470 169920 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 The proposed works will comprise:
 - Demolition of the existing bungalow; and,
 - The erection of a replacement two-storey dwelling.
- 1.1.3 Planning permission was granted in May 2014 under application number 14/02099/FUL subject to the following condition:

No development shall commence within the area indicated (proposed development site) until:

- a) A written programme of archaeological investigation, which should include onsite work and off-site work such as the analysis, publishing and archiving of the results, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and
- b) The approved programme of archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To enable the recording of any matters of archaeological interest

- 1.1.4 A Heritage Statement (WA 2012) for the Site established that there is an archaeological interest in the Site, including the potential for the presence of buried archaeological. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing the scope of the archaeological investigations was prepared by WA and submitted to, and approved by, Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service (WCAS) prior to the commencement of any ground works (WA 2017).
- 1.1.5 At the time of archaeological monitoring there were no plans to demolish the bungalow by the present owners. A separate application will cover the redesign of planning permission. This watching brief was therefore solely concerned with the excavation of a single foundation trench on the northern extent of the existing building.

1.2 The Site

1.2.1 The Site is located at Lower Acre, to the north of Bray Street, Avebury Trusloe, Wiltshire (**Figure 1**). It comprises a rectangular plot of land measuring approximately 0.2 ha. The



- southern part of the Site is occupied by a modern bungalow and a garage located within a garden and the northern part comprises grassed paddock / orchard.
- 1.2.2 The Site falls within the boundary of the Avebury part of the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site (hereafter, the 'Avebury WHS'), the North Wessex Downs AONB and the Avebury Conservation Area. It is bounded to the south by Bray Street, to the east by a garden associated with the Grade II Listed Banning's Farmhouse to the north by fields and to the west by a grassed paddock.
- 1.2.3 The Site lies on a small rise within a relatively level landscape at the bottom of a valley of a tributary to the River Kennet, at an elevation of approximately 154 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The bedrock geology underlying the Site is recorded by the British Geological Survey as Cretaceous Chalk of the West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1.1 A detailed archaeological background has been presented elsewhere (WA 2017), and as such a summary is provided here.

Designated Heritage Assets

- 2.1.2 The Site is situated within the core of an internationally important prehistoric ritual landscape; the Avebury part of the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites WHS, which was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1986.
- 2.1.3 The remaining Scheduled Monuments lie at least 500 m away from the Site and comprise two bowl barrows, two long barrows, Dovecote at Manor Farm, Avebury Henge, two round barrows, Avebury Long Stones and West Kennet Avenue.
- 2.1.4 The Site and the majority of the Listed Buildings within the Study Area (59) are situated within the Avebury Conservation Area, which was originally designated in 1975 (Kennet District Council 2003).

Non-designated Heritage Assets

- 2.1.5 The landscape surrounding Avebury was first used as a location for funerary and ceremonial monuments in the Neolithic period and there are numerous monuments of Neolithic date in the vicinity of the Site and in its wider environs which form the part of the Avebury WHS.
- 2.1.6 There are numerous findspots of Neolithic date recorded within the Study Area. Thousands of flint implements, including scrapers and arrowheads, have been found at Windmill Hill during fieldwalking investigations undertaken throughout the 20th century. Bronze Age funerary activity in the Avebury area is represented by numerous round barrows, typically built on hilltops and ridges, such as Windmill Hill, and several barrows, protected as Scheduled Monuments, are located in the Study Area and in the wider landscape (e.g. barrows on Windmill Hill).
- 2.1.7 Aerial photographs and LiDAR data provide evidence for large-scale land division across much of the surrounding landscape, which presumably relates to late Bronze Age-Iron Age, and/or Romano-British field systems.
- 2.1.8 The evidence for Romano-British activity is mostly represented by findspots of Roman pottery and metalwork, found in Avebury to the east of the Site, in Avebury Trusloe and to the south of Beckhampton Avenue. A child inhumation burial with Roman grave goods



- has been excavated in Avebury Trusloe and a trackway of Romano-British date is recorded some 350 m to the east of the Site.
- 2.1.9 There is evidence for settlement, funerary and religious activity in the Avebury area during the Saxon period. The earliest Saxon activity within the Study Area is recorded at the car park site approximately 520 m to the south-east of the Site.
- 2.1.10 During the Middle to Late Saxon period the settlement activity focused to the west of the henge and by the 9th century it is believed to have achieved the status of a small burh or defended settlement. The present Church of St James which is thought to have been founded in the 9th or 10th century, contains Late Saxon elements although it has been subject to numerous medieval and later alterations.
- 2.1.11 There is no indication that the settlement activity related to Avebury and Avebury Trusloe extended to the Site and it is therefore assumed that the Site during the Saxon and medieval period comprised the rural agricultural setting to the settlements.

2.2 Recent investigations in the area

- 2.2.1 The Avebury region has been a focus for archaeological research since its 'rediscovery' by John Aubrey during a hunting exercise in 1649 (Malone 1989), although our understanding of the archaeological and historical development of the monumental complex is far from complete. The Avebury henge was the subject of research by antiquarians, such as William Stukeley in the early 18th century and Sir Richard Colt Hoare and Phillip Crocker in the early 19th century (Malone 1989). During the 20th century, campaigns of excavation and reconstruction were carried out by Alexander Keiller and Harold St. George Gray (Gray 1935 and Smith 1965).
- 2.2.2 Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, numerous archaeological investigations, comprising excavations, trial trench evaluations, archaeological watching briefs, desk-based assessments, fieldwalking and geophysical surveys have been undertaken within the Study Area (McOmish et al 2005).
- 2.2.3 The WSHER contains approximately 150 'Event' records pertaining to previous archaeological excavations and observations within the Study Area. However, the Site is located in an area where very few archaeological investigations have been undertaken; the majority of the earlier investigations were carried out in Avebury or in the vicinity of South Street in Avebury Trusloe, at a distance of at least 250 m from the Site.
- 2.2.4 Two archaeological investigations have been recorded in the vicinity of the Site. The first of these was a watching brief at Banning's Farmhouse, approximately 35 m to the east. The watching brief recorded topsoil overlying natural chalk geology; no archaeological features were identified (Thames Valley Archaeological Services 2010).
- 2.2.5 The second investigation undertaken in close proximity to the Site was a watching brief carried out during an extension to the rear of Westbrook Farmhouse, approximately 75 m to the west of the Site. This revealed undisturbed chalk bedrock beneath intensively disturbed subsoils and topsoil containing large quantities of 18th and 19th century domestic detritus. No evidence of medieval or earlier occupation was identified.
- 2.2.6 The Heritage Statement produced by Wessex Archaeology established that there is a potential for the presence of buried archaeological remains within the Site, in particular relating to evidence of prehistoric activity and medieval and later agricultural practices. As the groundworks associated with the development may impact upon the archaeological



resource it was anticipated that a further archaeological investigations or mitigation may be required by the local planning authority with regard to the development of the Site.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

- 3.1.1 With due regard to the ClfA Standard and guidance for archaeological watching brief (ClfA 2014b), the principle aim of an archaeological watching brief was to record the archaeological resource during development within a specified area using appropriate methods and practices, and in compliance with the Code of conduct and other relevant by-laws of ClfA.
- 3.1.2 In furtherance of the project aim, the following objectives are defined:
 - to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works; including
 - To ensure their preservation by record to the highest possible standard;
 - To confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;
 - To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains;
 - To determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains; and
 - To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.
 - to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard; and
 - To prepare a report on the results of the watching brief.

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

3.2.1 The WSI (WA 2017) laid down full details of the way in which the watching brief would be carried out. In summary, the groundworks comprising the excavation of foundation trench at the north side of existing building were monitored, with natural deposits characterised and recorded using WA's standard *pro forma* recording system.

3.3 Recording

- 3.3.1 All exposed deposits were recorded using WA's *pro forma* recording system.
- 3.3.2 A full photographic record was made using digital photography. The photographic record illustrated both the detail and the general context of uncovered deposits as well as 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.
- 3.3.3 A unique WA project code **87322** was allocated.



4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

- 4.1.1 The archaeological watching brief comprised monitoring of the excavation of foundation trench at the north side of existing building.
- 4.1.2 After removal of concrete footpath slabs the deposits were removed systematically by machine. Dark silty clay topsoil was recorded to the depth of 0.35 m overlaying mid yellowish-brown clay silt subsoil. At 0.55 m natural geology consisting of light yellowish-white cretaceous, loose and powdery chalk was encountered. Excavation stopped at 0.8 5m.
- 4.1.3 No archaeological features or deposits were exposed during the excavation.

5 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

5.1.1 No artefacts were retained during the course of the watching brief.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

6.1.1 No material suitable for environmental analysis was present within the Site.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1.1 The watching brief did not identify any archaeological features, deposits or finds, however it needs to be noted that the excavated area was very limited and comprised in total less than 8.0 m in length and 0.70 m in width.

8 STORAGE AND CURATION

8.1 Museum

8.1.1 It is recommended that the finds and archive be deposited with Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum on completion of the project, however the museum is currently not accepting archaeological archives. Deposition of any finds with the Museum will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.

8.2 Archive

- 8.2.1 The complete site archive, which includes paper records, photographic record, graphics, and digital data, will be prepared following following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by the appropriate Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; Brown 2011; ADS 2013; ClfA 2014c).
- 8.2.2 An OASIS online record http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/projects/oasis/ will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators Forms. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included in the archive). A copy of the OASIS entry has been included in this report (Appendix 1).

8.3 Discard policy

8.3.1 WA follows the guidelines set out in *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections* (SMA 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.



8.3.2 The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993 and 1995; EH 2011).

8.4 Security Copy

8.4.1 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.

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10 **APPENDICES**

10.1 Appendix 1:OASIS form

OASIS ID: wessexar1-285739

Project details

Lower Acre, Avebury Trusloe, Wiltshire Project name

Short description of the project

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Fowler Architecture and Planning Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief during proposed works at land at Lower Acre, Avebury Trusloe, Wiltshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 409470 169920. The watching brief was carried out on the 15th of May 2017. The archaeological watching brief was required as a condition of the planning permission (14/02099/FUL) for the demolishing of the existing bungalow and construction of replacement two-storey dwelling. The archaeological watching brief comprised monitoring of the excavation of foundation trench at the north side of existing building. No evidence of identify any archaeological features, deposits or finds were recorded.

Project dates Start: 15-05-2017 End: 15-05-2017

Previous/future work Yes / Not known 87322 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference

codes

Any associated 14/02099/FUL - Planning Application No.

project reference codes

Type of project Recording project Site status World Heritage Site

Current Land use Other 2 - In use as a building

Monument type NONE None **NONE None** Significant Finds Investigation type "Watching Brief" Prompt Planning condition

Project location

Country England

Site location WILTSHIRE KENNET AVEBURY Lower Acre, Avebury Trusloe, Wiltshire

Postcode SN8 1RA Study area 0 Hectares

Site coordinates SU 409477 169917 50.950355592346 -1.417010581847 50 57 01 N 001 25 01 W Point

Lat/Long Datum Unknown

Height OD / Depth Min: 154m Max: 155m

Project creators

Name of Wessex Archaeology Organisation



Project brief originator Wessex Archaeology

Project design originator

Wessex Archaeology

Project

director/manager

Gareth Chaffey

Project supervisor

Type of

Neil Fitzpatrick

sponsor/funding

body

Owner Occupier

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?

No

Digital Archive recipient

Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum

Digital Archive ID 87322
Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media available

"Images raster / digital photography","Text"

Paper Archive recipient

Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum

Paper Archive ID 87322
Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Drawing", "Plan", "Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type

Title Lower Acre, Avebury Trusloe, Wiltshire

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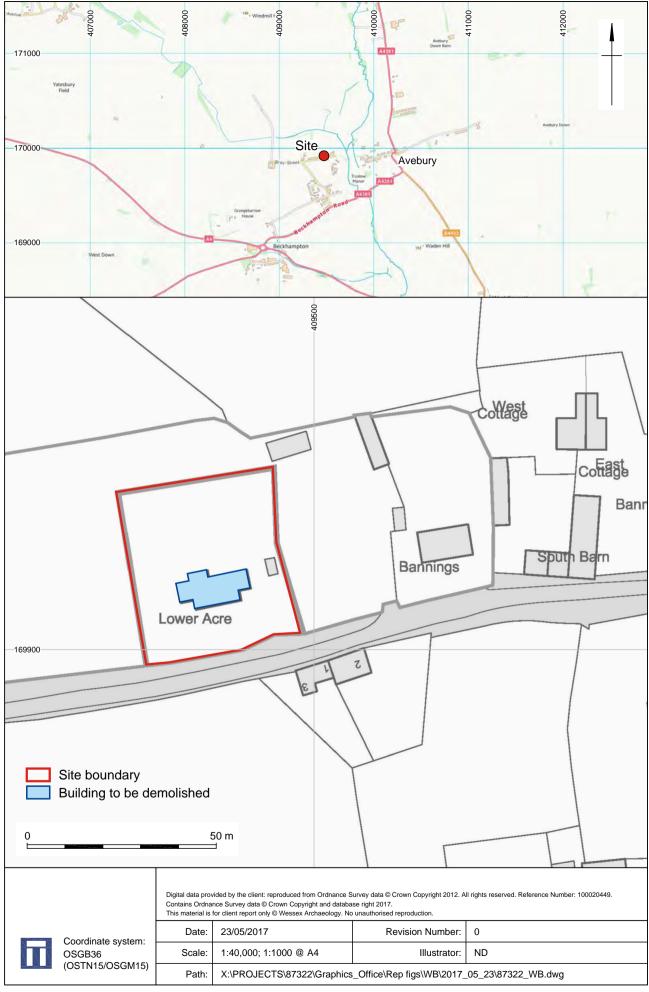
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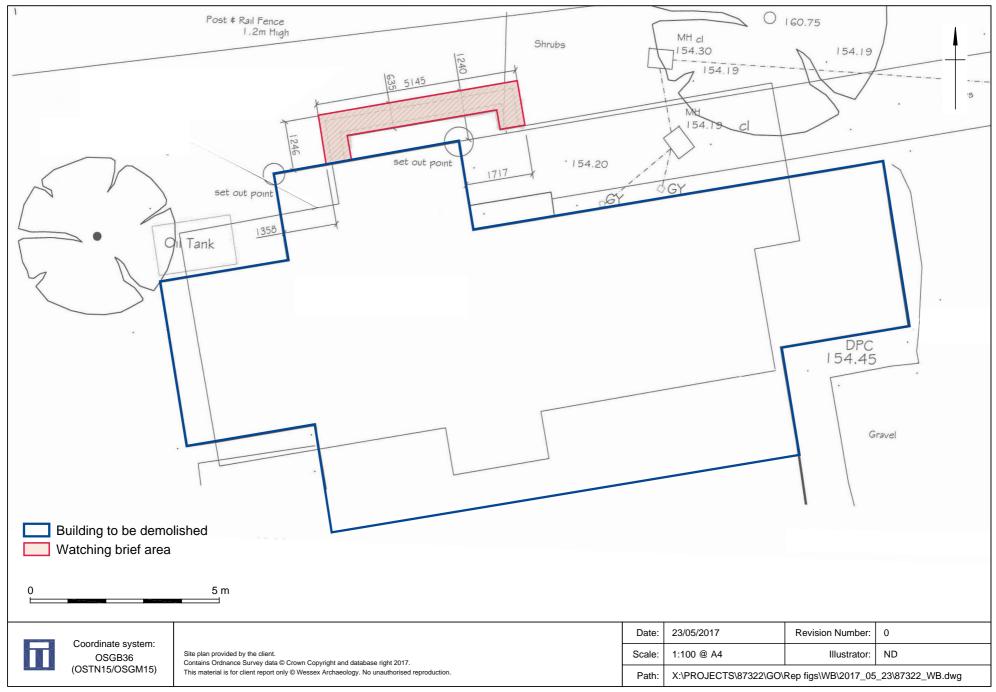
Description A4 colour client report

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Entered on 23 May 2017



Site location Figure 1



Watching brief area Figure 1



Plate 1: View of site prior to excavation, view from west



Plate 2: Section of excavated trench, view from north-west

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Plate 3: Section of excavated trench, view from west

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