



The Stonehenge School Amesbury, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



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Amesbury, Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Figure 1 Site location and locations of window samples and test pits



Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Hydrock Consultants, on behalf of Wiltshire Council, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during ground investigation works, comprising four window sample pits and two geotechnical pits. The site is located to the north-east of existing buildings at The Stonehenge School, Amesbury, centred on National Grid Reference 416060 141760. The fieldwork was undertaken on the 3rd of February 2017. No archaeological deposits or features were observed.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Hydrock Consultants for commissioning the project on behalf of Wiltshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Alistair Zochowski who also wrote this report. The graphics were prepared by Nancy Dixon. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Ruth Panes.

The Stonehenge School Amesbury, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The project

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Hydrock Consultants to undertake an archaeological watching brief during ground investigation works associated with the proposed construction of new school buildings at The Stonehenge School, Antrobus Road, Amesbury, Wiltshire, centred on NGR 416060 141760 (**Fig. 1**). The watching brief comprised the monitoring of four hand-dug window samples and two machine excavated test pits.

1.1.2 The site, encompassing an area of approximately 0.48 ha, is currently a school playing field. It lies between Antrobus Road to the south, The Drove to the west and Holders Road to the east (**Fig. 1**). The part of the site investigated, lies at 84–87 m OD, sloping from north to south. The underlying geology is mapped as Chalk of the Seaford Chalk formation (British Geological Survey online viewer).

1.2 Archaeological background

1.2.1 The site lies within a multi-period archaeological landscape which has produced evidence of remains from the Palaeolithic period through to the present. Palaeolithic and Mesolithic material, including a hand axe and a perforated mace head, have been found north-west of Amesbury Library, 600 m to the south-west of the site. Neolithic activity, in the form of pits and find spots of flints and pottery, has been recorded to the north and east of the site; two of the flint find spots were located at Solstice park, 1 km to the east of the site.

1.2.2 Substantial evidence for Bronze Age activity has been recorded close to the site. This activity is dominated by the ritual and funerary landscape associated with Stonehenge and its environs. The remains of eight Bronze Age barrows are located on the high ground to the north, south and west of the site. A Beaker period mass grave containing the remains of seven individuals and associated grave goods were found to the south of the site.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 The fieldwork methodology comprised the monitoring of the four hand-dug window samples and two machine-excavated trial pits (**Fig. 1**). During the excavation of the window samples the turf, topsoil and subsoil was removed under archaeological supervision until the natural geology was encountered. The trial pits were excavated mechanically following a similar methodology. The turf and topsoil were removed in 0.2 m spits and ceased at the natural geology. All deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's standard methods and pro forma recording system. A full photographic record was made during the fieldwork using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels.

1.3.2 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the guidance of and standards outlined in the *Chartered Institute of Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014). 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.

2 RESULTS

- 2.1.1 No archaeological deposits or features were observed, and no finds were recovered. The results are summarised in the Appendix. None of the recorded deposits were deemed suitable for environmental analysis.
- 2.1.2 The four hand dug window sample pits were located in various locations across the site (**Fig. 1**). The pits ranged in depth from 0.4 m (WS01) to 1.2 m (WS04). A deposit sequence was recorded comprising a dark brown silty clay loam topsoil, overlying a mid to dark brown silty loam subsoil that was directly above the chalk natural.
- 2.1.3 The two machine-dug trial pits were located at the north-west and south-east edges of the site. They measured 2 m long by 0.54 m wide (TP01), and 1.5 m long by 0.54 m wide (TP02).
- 2.1.4 The deposit sequence recorded in test pit 1 comprised a dark brown silty clay loam topsoil (101, average 0.2 m thick) overlying a mottled brown yellow silty clay subsoil (102, average 0.23 m thick). The chalk natural was encountered at a depth of 0.43 m below ground level.
- 2.1.5 A similar sequence was recorded in test pit 2, although a layer of dark brown silty clay (202) containing modern debris lay between the subsoil (203) and the topsoil (201). This material probably derived from the installation of a service (either electric or gas) along the eastern boundary of the site. The chalk natural was encountered at a depth of 0.8 m below ground level.

2.2 Conclusion

- 2.2.1 The fact that no archaeological features or deposits were observed in the sample and test pits, and no archaeological finds recovered, reflects the very limited nature of the groundworks monitored.

3 STORAGE AND CURATION

3.1 Museum

- 3.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the watching brief be deposited with Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum. This museum is not currently accepting archives and as a result, the archive will be stored at Wessex Archaeology offices until such time that a suitable repository become available.

3.2 Preparation of archive

- 3.2.1 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 Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; Brown 2011; ADS 2013; CifA 2014b). A full-colour paper copy of the report will also be included with the archive.
- 3.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:

- 1 file/document case of paper records

3.3 OASIS

- 3.3.1 An OASIS online record <http://ads.adhs.ac.uk/projects/oasis/> has been initiated for the archaeological evaluation works.

3.4 Security copy

- 3.4.1 In line with current best practise (eg, 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.

3.5 Copyright

- 3.5.1 Wessex Archaeology shall retain full copyright of the commissioned report, under the *Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved; excepting that it will provide an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters relating to the project as described in the Project Specification or Design.
- 3.5.2 Wessex Archaeology will assign copyright to the client upon written request but retains the right to be identified as the author of all project documentation and reports as defined in the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* (Chapter IV, s.79).
- 3.5.3 Wessex Archaeology will also grant a licence to the relevant museum for the use of the Trust's archives. In addition, Wessex Archaeology hereby gives permission for the Southampton City Council to freely copy the report for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process, without reference to Wessex Archaeology.

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APPENDIX: WINDOW SAMPLE AND TEST PIT SUMMARIES

Window sample 1		
Dimensions (m): 0.30 by 0.30		Ground level: 86.85 m OD
Context	Description	Depth below ground level (bgl) (m)
101	Topsoil: Dark grey brown silty clay loam. Occasional stones and chalk nodules	0-0.20
102	Subsoil: Mid to dark brown silty clay loam. Frequent chalk nodules and rare flint	0.20-0.40
103	Natural: Off-white, near complete chalk, compact, rare flints distinct horizon.	0.40 -

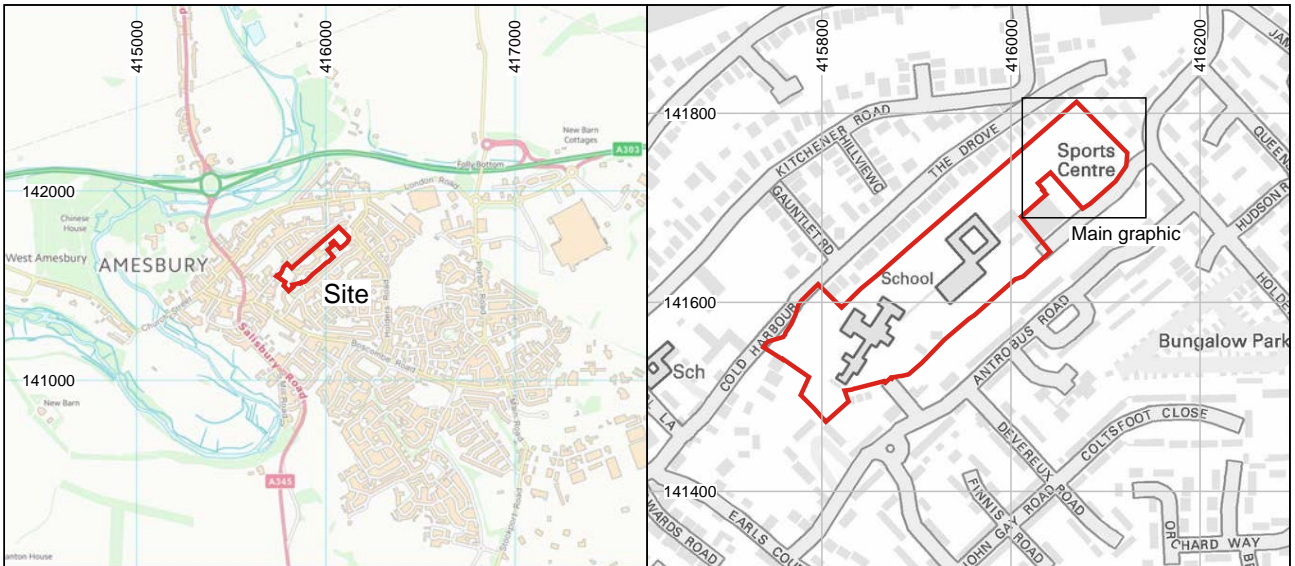
Window sample 2		
Dimensions (m): 0.30 by 0.30		Ground level: 85.30 m OD
Context	Description	Depth bgl (m)
201	Topsoil: Dark grey brown silty clay loam. Occasional stones and chalk nodules	0-0.22
202	Subsoil: Mid to dark brown silty clay loam. Frequent chalk nodules and rare flint	0.22-0.70
203	Natural: Off-white, near complete chalk, compact, rare flints distinct horizon.	0.70-


Window sample 3		
Dimensions (m): 0.25 by 0.30		Ground level: 845.60 m OD
Context	Description	Depth bgl (m)
301	Topsoil: Dark grey brown silty clay loam. Occasional stones and chalk nodules	0-0.25
302	Subsoil: Mid to dark brown silty clay loam. Frequent chalk nodules and rare flint	0.25-0.70
303	Natural: Off-white, near complete chalk, compact, rare flints distinct horizon.	0.70-

Window sample 4		
Dimensions (m): 0.26 by 0.30		Ground level: 83.80 m OD
Context	Description	Depth bgl (m)
401	Topsoil: Dark grey brown silty clay loam. Occasional stones and chalk nodules	0-0.26
402	Subsoil: Mottled yellowish brown silty clay loam. Frequent chalk nodules and rare flint	0.26-1.20
403	Natural: Off-white, near complete chalk, compact, rare flints distinct horizon.	1.20-

Test Pit 1		
Dimensions (m): 1.50 by 0.56		Ground level: 86.35 m OD
Context	Description	Depth bgl (m)
101	Topsoil: Dark grey brown silty clay loam. Occasional stones and chalk nodules	0-0.26
102	Subsoil: Mottled yellowish brown silty clay loam. Frequent chalk nodules and rare flint	0.26-0.43
103	Natural: Off-white, near complete chalk, compact, rare flints distinct horizon.	0.43-

Test Pit 2		
Dimensions (m): 1.60 by 0.56		Ground level: 84.25 m OD
Context	Description	Depth bgl (m)
201	Topsoil: Dark grey brown silty clay loam. Occasional stones and chalk nodules	0-0.26
202	Made ground: Dark greyish brown silty clay	0.26-0.43
203	Subsoil: Mottled yellowish brown silty clay loam. Frequent chalk nodules and rare flint	0.43-0.80
204	Natural: Off-white, near complete chalk, compact, rare flints distinct horizon.	0.80-



 Coordinate system: OSGB36 (OSTN15/OSGM15)	Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2017. This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.			
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Site location and locations of window samples and test pits

Figure 1



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