



## Boscombe Down: Area J Watching Brief, Land South-east of Amesbury, Wiltshire

### Archaeological Watching Brief Report



With reference to Wiltshire Council Planning Applications:  
Application number S/2009/1574/FULL



**BOSCOMBE DOWN: AREA J WATCHING BRIEF, LAND  
SOUTH-EAST OF AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

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**With reference to Wiltshire Council Planning Applications:**  
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## BOSCOMBE DOWN: AREA J WATCHING BRIEF, LAND SOUTH-EAST OF AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE

### Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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#### QUALITY ASSURANCE

SITE CODE		65533		ACCESSION CODE		CLIENT CODE	
PLANNING APPLICATION REF.		S/2009/1574/FULL		NGR		416630 140268	
VERSION	STATUS*	PREPARED BY	APPROVED BY	APPROVER'S SIGNATURE	DATE	FILE	
01	DRAFT FOR APPROVAL E	AIM	NDT		02/03/2010	x:\projects\65533\report\Area J wb report.doc	

I= INTERNAL DRAFT E= EXTERNAL DRAFT F= FINAL

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SOUTH-EAST OF AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE****Archaeological Watching Brief Report****Contents**

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## **BOSCOMBE DOWN: AREA J WATCHING BRIEF, LAND SOUTH-EAST OF AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE**

### **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

#### **Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Persimmon Homes (South Coast) Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the initial groundworks in Area J, a block of land approximately 60m by 50m in size (a total area of 0.3ha) which was part of a new residential development.

Area J lay within the eastern area of the Archers Gate development area, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 416630 140268 (**Figure 1**), within an area which is known to contain significant Late Neolithic, Early Bronze Age and Romano-British archaeological remains. Area J was located on the crest of the southern edge of a large central plateau on which the majority of the archaeological activity was found.

Previous fieldwork in 2004 investigated the area immediately to the northwest of Area J and also part of Area J, itself. Significant evidence of prehistoric activity, including two Early Bronze Age enclosed barrows and a Middle-Late Bronze Age settlement were found within 40m of the boundary of Area J.

However, stripping of part of the western edge of Area J and a haul road through the area in 2004 found only a small number of possible archaeological features, including one large Early Bronze Age pit containing Beaker pottery, a cattle skull and worked flint flakes.

Unfortunately, the initial groundworks within the remainder of Area J commenced before the watching brief was put in place. A watching brief carried out immediately afterwards was able to check excavated foundation trenches and monitor the subsequent excavation of two service trenches and a manhole. No evidence of any archaeological features or material was noted during the recent watching brief.

**BOSCOMBE DOWN: AREA J WATCHING BRIEF, LAND  
SOUTH-EAST OF AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE****Archaeological Watching Brief Report****Acknowledgements**

This project was commissioned by Persimmon Homes (South Coast) Ltd and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Stuart Benfield in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger of Wiltshire Council who monitored the work on behalf of the Local Planning Authority.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Jon Martin and Jonathon Smith with illustrations by Linda Coleman. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Andrew Manning, who also produced this report, based on the site notes and records.

## **BOSCOMBE DOWN: AREA J WATCHING BRIEF, LAND SOUTH-EAST OF AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE**

### **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

##### **1.1 Project background**

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Persimmon Homes (South Coast) Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the initial groundworks in Area J, an area proposed for a new residential development.
- 1.1.2 Area J lay within the eastern area of the Archers Gate development area, located to the south-east of Amesbury and adjacent to the A345 Salisbury to Amesbury Road, Wiltshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 416630 140268 (**Figure 1**), hereafter referred to as 'the Site'.
- 1.1.3 The Site comprised a block of land approximately 60m by 50m in size (a total area of 0.3ha) which was situated at the edge of a well-defined plateau, flanked by two dry valleys to the northwest and southeast, at a height of approximately 109m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). An outline planning application for development, including Area J, (S/2002/1075 O/L) was approved in early 2005, with a subsequent detailed planning application (S/2009/1574/FULL) being recently approved with a planning condition requiring that an archaeological watching brief be carried out during the initial ground works.
- 1.1.4 However, while a Written Scheme of Investigation was in the process of being prepared for submission to Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service, the initial excavation of the house foundations was accidentally carried out without archaeological supervision or prior approval of the WSI. Arrangements were immediately made for on-site attendance to check the excavated areas and to undertake a watching brief during the excavation of the remaining service trenches.
- 1.1.5 This report details the results of the watching brief carried out on the 23<sup>rd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

#### **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

##### **2.1 Archaeological background**

- 2.1.1 The 100ha Boscombe Down site has already been the subject of widespread archaeological investigations. Initial geophysical and cropmark surveys were undertaken within the development area between 1995 and 2001 (RCHME 1994; GSB 1994, 1995, 1999 and 2001) and evaluation of 32ha of land within the northeastern third of the development area and along the line of a new link road was undertaken in 2003 and 2004 (Wessex Archaeology 2003 and 2005).
- 2.1.2 Large scale excavations and other mitigation works started in 2002, with a large area immediately adjacent to, and including part of Area J being

undertaken in 2004 (Wessex Archaeology 2005). Although significant prehistoric activity was identified within the central plateau area to the northwest of Area J there was no evidence of significant remains extending into the Site. A full account of the background and results of the previous fieldwork has already been detailed in four post-excavation assessment reports (Wessex Archaeology 2002, 2005, 2008 and 2009).

- 2.1.3 In summary, the Site lay within an area which is known to contain significant Late Neolithic, Early Bronze Age and Romano-British archaeological remains. These remains have included two large prehistoric monuments, barrows, pit clusters, Middle-Late Bronze Age settlement and Early Bronze Age burials and at least five Romano-British cemeteries, the majority of which were located within the central plateau.
- 2.1.4 The excavation in 2004 covered the area immediately to the northwest of Area J within the main plateau area. This fieldwork found significant evidence of prehistoric activity, including two Early Bronze Age enclosed barrows with accompanying burials (Area 2) and a Middle-Late Bronze Age settlement (Area 4) within 40m of the boundary of Area J (**Figure 1**).
- 2.1.5 The fieldwork in 2004 also completely stripped and excavated the line of the access road associated with Area J and also included approximately 20% of the Site. In addition to this, the line of a haul road, running east-west across the center of the Site was also stripped and excavated at the same time (**Figure 2**).
- 2.1.6 The investigated section of Area J only contained one dated feature: a large Early Bronze Age pit, **9508**, which contained Beaker pottery, a cattle skull and worked flint flakes at the western edge of Area J (Wessex Archaeology 2005, 8), although five undated pit or posthole features (Features **9063**, **9065**, **9067**, **9069** and **9025**) and a number of natural tree throws were also found along the line of the haul road.

### **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 Project Aim and Objectives**

- 3.1.1 With due regard to the IfA *Standards and Guidance for archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008), the generic aim of the project was;;
- To enable the preservation by record of any archaeological features or deposits uncovered and to establish the extent (where possible), date, character, relationship, condition and significance of surviving archaeological features, artefacts and deposits within the area to be impacted by construction work
  - Where significant archaeological remains or deposits are identified, to inform discussions on the final extent and scope of the required archaeological mitigation
  - To place any identified archaeological remains within their historical context, particularly with reference to the known prehistoric and Romano-British remains in the immediate area.



## **4 METHOD STATEMENT**

### **4.1 Methodology**

- 4.1.1 The foundations of the excavated house platforms were visually checked for any evidence of archaeological remains. Subsequent excavation of a manhole and two service trenches was carried out by mechanical excavator under archaeological supervision. Overburden deposits were scanned for artefacts.
- 4.1.2 All features were located in plan using a Leica GNSS Viva survey system (GPS) and related to the Ordnance Survey datum.
- 4.1.3 A full photographic record of the investigations was maintained utilising digital images. The photographic record illustrated both the detail and general context of the excavated features and the Site as a whole.

## **5 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS**

### **5.1 Results**

- 5.1.1 The edges of the foundation trenches housing the brick and breeze-block foundation plinths and the stripped ground surface were visually inspected for the presence of archaeological features. No archaeological features or material were observed.
- 5.1.2 The excavation of two service trenches (between 11 - 21m in length and 1 - 1.5m in width and 0.80m in depth) and a manhole (3m by 1.6m and 1.5m in depth) was archaeologically monitored in the western and northeastern areas of the Site (**Figure 2**). No archaeological features or material were found.

## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1.1 Previous archaeological fieldwork in 2004 had investigated approximately a quarter of Area J with the identification of a small number of archaeological features. Although only one of these features was dated (to the Early Bronze Age), the remaining features are likely to have been of a similar date.
- 6.1.2 The fieldwork in 2004 had identified a significant concentration of ritual and domestic activity throughout the central plateau area. The concentration of features diminished greatly towards the edge of the plateau and the steep slope into the dry valleys. Therefore the small number of features found during the initial work in 2004 in Area J appears to lie at the fringes of the main focus of activity in the late Neolithic and Early to Late Bronze Age.
- 6.1.3 The small sample of Area J which could be covered by this watching brief did not provide any further evidence for archaeological activity and can be added to the results of the 2004 fieldwork (Wessex Archaeology 2005).
- 6.1.4 However, due to the circumstances, it is unclear whether this was due to a genuine absence of any archaeological features, which is possible, or that any existing features were impacted by the development before the watching brief could commence.

## 7 ARCHIVE

### 7.1 Preparation and Deposition

7.1.1 The complete project archive will be prepared in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's Guidelines for Archive Preparation and in accordance with *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage (UKIC 1990)*.

7.1.2 The project archive, consists of:

- One A4 file containing the paper records
- Digital data (site photographs, survey data, word and pdf files)

7.1.3 The project archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury under the site code **65533**. The archive will be deposited, in due course, with the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum.

## 8 COPYRIGHT

8.1.1 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. You are reminded that you remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

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Byway 20 Romano-British Cemetery Excavation, Salisbury,  
Unpublished Client report Ref: 56246.04  
Wessex Archaeology, Boscombe Down, 2009, Areas A-D, Amesbury,  
Wiltshire (including other minor works), Post-excavation Assessment  
Report, Unpublished Client report, Ref: 65531.02, May 2009

**APPENDIX 1: OASIS FORM**
**OASIS ID: wessexar1-79446**
**Project details**

Project name	Boscombe Down, Area J Watching brief
Short description of the project	Watching brief carried out in June 2010 during initial groundworks in parcel of land (approx. 0.30ha) adjacent to the site of major excavations in 2004
Project dates	Start: 23-06-2010 End: 25-06-2010
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	56240 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 1 - Minimal cultivation
Monument type	NONE None
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None

**Project location**

Country	England
Site location	WILTSHIRE SALISBURY AMESBURY Boscombe Down
Postcode	SP4 7XG
Study area	0.30 Hectares
Site coordinates	SU 16630 40268 51.1608971255 -1.762156347390 51 09 39 N 001 45 43 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 109.00m Max: 109.00m

**Project creators**

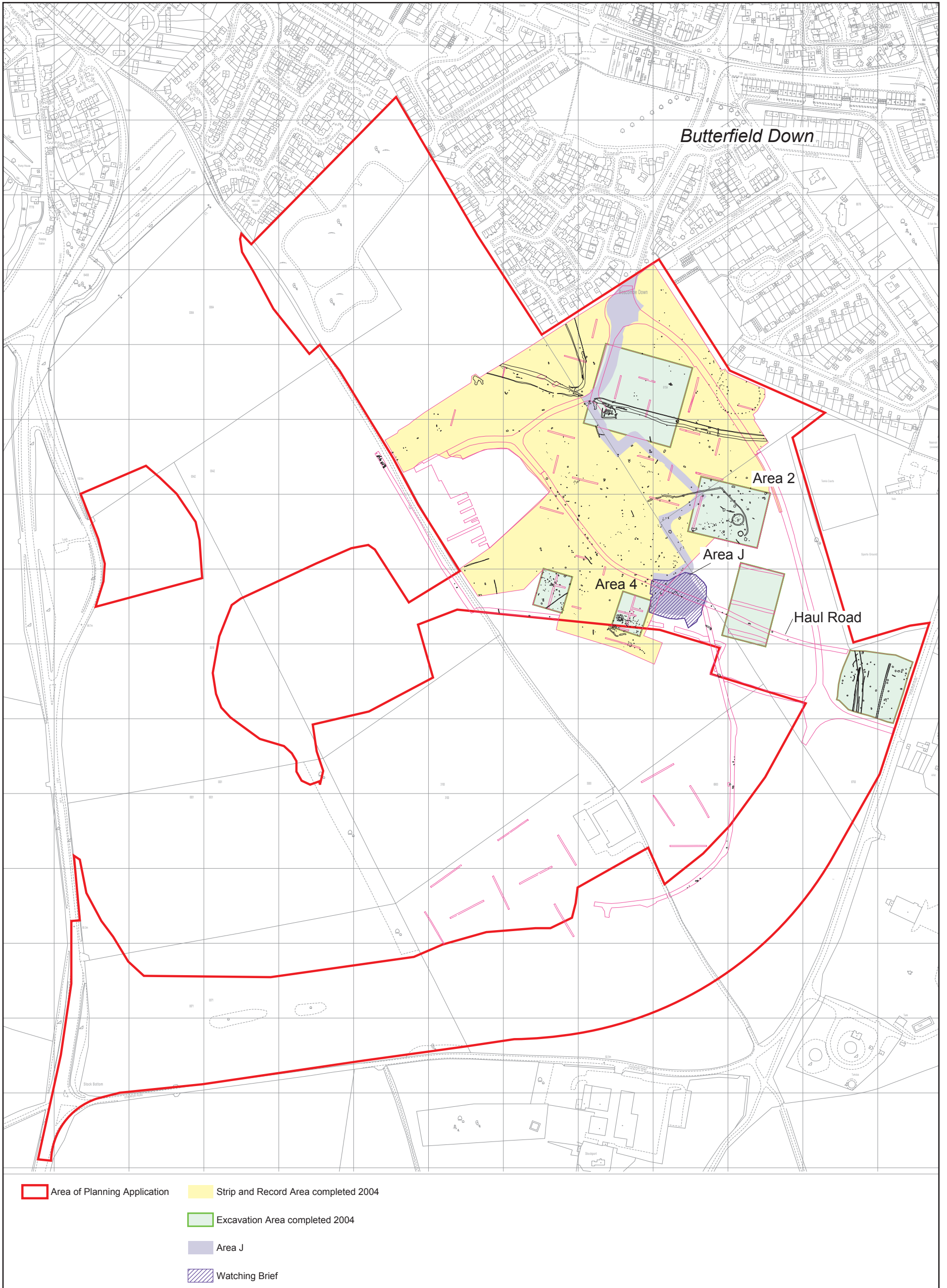
Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager	A Manning
Project supervisor	J Martin
Project supervisor	Jon Smith
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Persimmon Homes (South Coast) Ltd

### Project archives

Physical Exists?	Archive	Yes
Physical recipient	Archive	Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum
Digital Archive recipient		Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum
Digital Contents		'none'
Digital Media available		'Images raster / digital photography','Survey','Text'
Paper Archive recipient		Salisbury and South Wilts Museum
Paper Contents		'none'
Paper Media available		'Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Report'

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)	
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Entered on	12 July 2010	



- Area of Planning Application
- Strip and Record Area completed 2004
- Excavation Area completed 2004
- Area J
- Watching Brief

0 100 200m



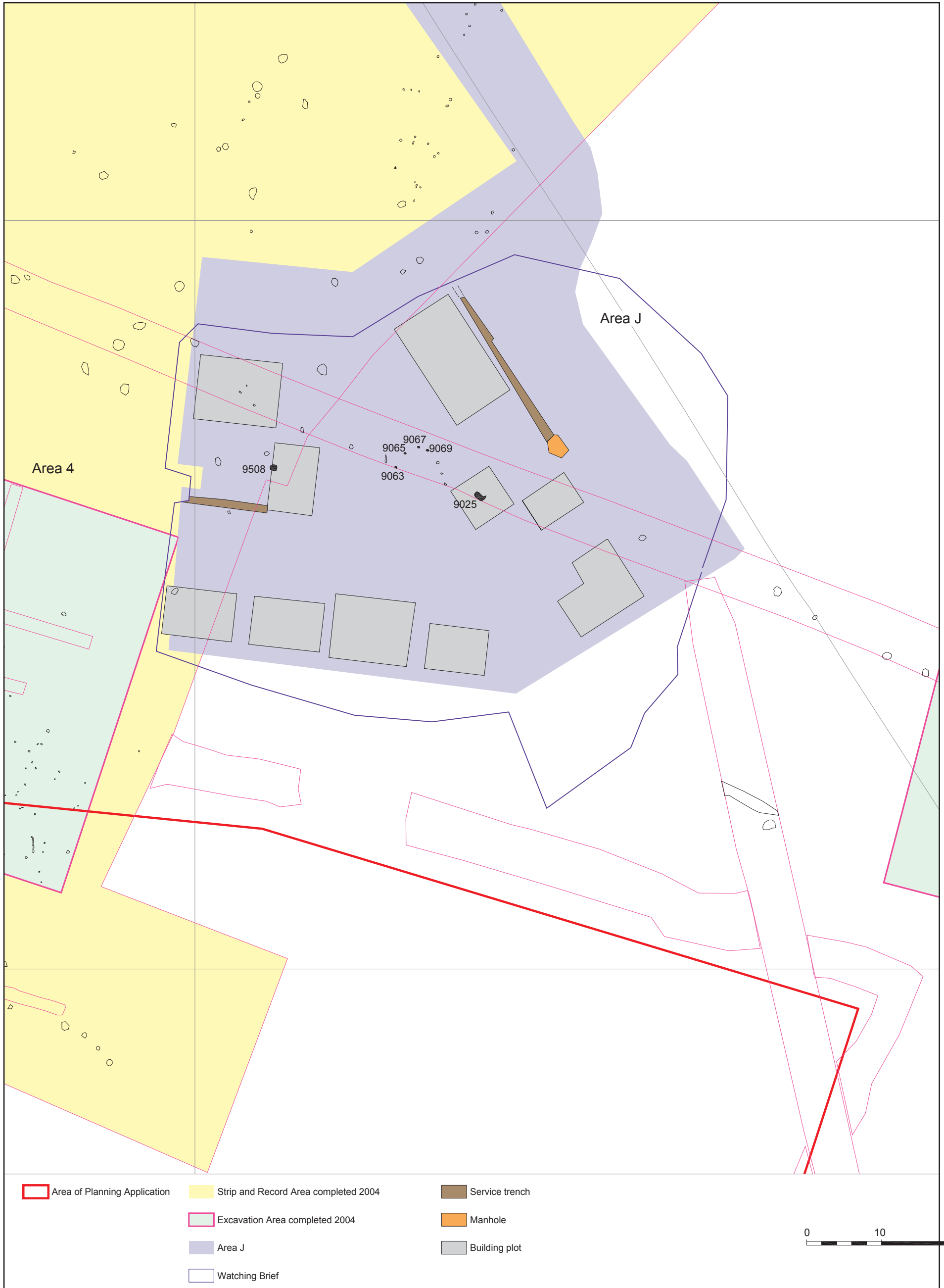
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Site location

Figure 1



- Area of Planning Application
- Strip and Record Area completed 2004
- Service trench
- Excavation Area completed 2004
- Area J
- Manhole
- Building plot
- Watching Brief



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