



Building 408, Replacement Avtur Fuel Tank, Boscombe Down Airfield, Amesbury, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





**BUILDING 408, REPLACEMENT AVTUR FUEL TANK,
BOSCOMBE DOWN AIRFIELD,
AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Report reference: Project 75451.01

April 2011

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QUALITY ASSURANCE

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|----------------|--------------------------|
| SITE CODE | 75451 | ACCESSION CODE | |
| PLANNING APPLICATION REF. | N/A | NGR | NGR 418088.09, 139495.05 |

| VERSION | STATUS* | PREPARED BY | APPROVED BY | APPROVER'S SIGNATURE | DATE | FILE |
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| 75451.01 | F | SDT | REG | REG | 18 TH APRIL 2011 | \\PROJECTSERVER\WESSEX\PROJECTS\75451 |
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* I= INTERNAL DRAFT E= EXTERNAL DRAFT F= FINAL

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AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE**

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Figure

Figure 1 Site location and area of watching brief

Plates

Plate 1 Proposed fuel tank location: Pre-excavation, looking northeast

Plate 2 Fuel tank location: During excavation, looking northwest

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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by QinetiQ (Managed Services) to undertake an archaeological watching brief to monitor ground works and record any archaeological features and deposits that might be impacted by the construction of a new replacement fuel tank, located adjacent to Building 408. This building lies immediately to the east of known archaeological features and it was deemed that there was the potential for significant archaeological remains to have survived in the proposed development area.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the initial groundworks between late February and early March 2011.

No evidence of archaeological finds or features were observed at the proposed construction level during the course of the watching brief. The results of the watching brief appeared to show that the site had been heavily impacted by the insertion of modern concrete footings potentially prior to the construction of Building 408.

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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the watching brief by Kirstie Hannah of QinetiQ (Managed Services) and Wessex Archaeology is grateful for the assistance of Qinetiq and their sub-contractors during the course of the project.

The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Andy Manning. The watching brief was undertaken by Rebecca Fitzpatrick with reporting by Steve Thompson. The illustrations were prepared by Linda Coleman.

BUILDING 408, REPLACEMENT AVTUR FUEL TANK, BOSCOMBE DOWN AIRFIELD, AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by QinetiQ (Managed Services) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for a new replacement fuel tank and associated pipe work, located immediately adjacent to Building 408 within Boscombe Down Airfield, Amesbury, Wiltshire. The works covered an area of approximately 42 square metres and were centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 418088, 139495, hereafter referred to as 'the Site' (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 The proposed construction was a permitted airfield development, for which no planning application, and therefore no Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), was necessary. Nevertheless in view of the proximity of known archaeological features, QinetiQ (Managed Services) commissioned Wessex Archaeology to undertake an archaeological watching brief to monitor all necessary ground works during the early stages of the project to ensure that any significant archaeological remains would be dealt with in an appropriate manner.

1.2 The Site, location and geology

1.2.1 The Site was located within a grassed area immediately to the southeast of Building 408 which lies to the south of the main (northeast-southwest runway at a height of 113m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

1.2.2 The ground surface is relatively flat, as a result of landscaping and the natural geology is mapped as Upper Chalk (BGS 1976, Sheet 298).

1.2.3 A number of modern drainage/service man-hole covers were visible in the grassed area indicating the likelihood of modern disturbance associated with the construction of Building 408.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

2.1 Boscombe Down Airfield

2.1.1 The airfield at Boscombe Down has a long history. Military flights from Boscombe Down commenced in 1917 with experimental operations beginning at the start of World War II in 1939-40. The airfield was expanded in the early 1950s and the existing 'Hardened Aircraft Shelters (HAS) hangers were constructed in the late 1970s.

2.1.2 The airfield has been the subject of large and small-scale archaeological investigations from the 1940s to the present day.

- 2.1.3 Just over 60 separate monuments, features or findspots are recorded on the Wiltshire Sites and Monuments Record (Wiltshire SMR) as lying within the boundaries of the airfield. These include several Bronze Age round barrows and a Late Bronze Age Wessex Linear Ditch.
- 2.1.4 A concentration of Iron Age and Romano-British pits, inhumations and a double-ditched enclosure associated with settlement were found during levelling work on the eastern boundaries of the airfield in 1949 (Richardson 1951).
- 2.1.5 The results from more recent watching briefs and a programme of trenched evaluation identified further archaeological remains, including ancient field systems and land boundaries, pits and graves (AC Archaeology 2001; Wessex Archaeology 2006, Wessex Archaeology 2007, Wessex Archaeology 2008 and Wessex Archaeology 2009). An evaluation by AC Archaeology in 2001 had identified that areas adjacent to the runway and taxiways have been significantly affected by modern 'cut and fill' groundworks with a severe impact on the archaeological resource. However, the survival of pockets of well-preserved archaeological deposits and features have been found across the airfield.

2.2 The Site

- 2.2.1 The area immediately to the west of Building 408 contains known archaeological features; a north-south aligned ditch of potential prehistoric date (Ditch 90) which was identified in recent works (Wessex Archaeology 2006) and two parallel ditches (SMR No. 699) recorded in the Wiltshire Sites and Monuments Record (**Figure 1**).

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and scope

- 3.1.1 The watching brief was intended;
- To identify the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area
 - To investigate and establish the extent, date, character, relationship, condition and significance of any archaeological features, artefacts and deposits
 - To ensure the preservation by record of any recorded archaeological features
 - To provide information which could be used to inform any subsequent archaeological mitigation, if required.

3.2 Methodology

- 3.2.1 The following methodology was utilised in order to meet the aims and objectives of the Watching Brief. All works were carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the Institute for Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2008) excepting where they are superseded by statements made below.

- 3.2.2 Initial stripping of the topsoil and overburden was undertaken using a tracked excavator fitted with a range of toothless buckets, according to the requirements of the work.
- 3.2.3 All ground works were undertaken under constant archaeological supervision. Spoil heaps were also checked as a matter of routine for archaeological material.
- 3.2.4 Areas under archaeological observation were surveyed using GPS survey equipment and tied in to the Ordnance Survey.

4 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

4.1 Results

- 4.1.1 The surviving stratigraphic sequence comprised of a thin, poorly sorted, topsoil approximately 0.15-0.20m in depth, which overlaid a succession of man-made levelling and landscaping deposits (up to 0.46m in depth) which sealed the natural chalk geology which was located at a height of 112.31m aOD.
- 4.1.2 Cutting the chalk natural were a number of modern features, including a large concrete structure 2m by 2m in size within the northeast corner of the Site. The concrete structure was associated with a decommissioned northeast-southwest aligned drainage pipe. In the northwest part of the Site further deposits of made ground were revealed.
- 4.1.3 No archaeological features of significance were revealed within the stripped area monitored during the watching brief.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING

5.1 Finds

- 5.1.1 No archaeological finds were recovered during the course of the watching brief.

5.2 Environmental sampling

- 5.2.1 No archaeological features or deposits were found during the course of the watching brief which would have been suitable for sampling.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.1 The watching brief was commissioned to record any archaeological features and deposits that might be impacted by the initial groundworks to prepare the base for the new fuel tank with associated pipework adjacent to Building 408.
- 6.1.2 It was clear that the area of the proposed works had been heavily impacted by earlier groundworks, which would have removed any archaeological features or deposits which may have been present.

7 THE ARCHIVE

- 7.1.1 The site archive will be prepared for long-term storage in accordance with the documents Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage, Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections (Museums and Galleries Commission 1992) and Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections; Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993).
- 7.1.2 The project archive (comprising one A4 folder containing all project records) is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology under the Project Code 75451. In due course the archive will be deposited with the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum.
- 7.1.3 All records will be copied to microfilm. This will comply with the requirements presented in the document *Microfilming for Archaeological Archives* (RCHM). Wessex Archaeology will contact the National Monuments Record to check their requirements. The microfilm and one diazo duplicate will be submitted to the recipient museum, and one diazo duplicate submitted to the National Monument Record, Swindon.

8 REFERENCES

- AC Archaeology, 2001, Boscombe Down FSTA: Results of Archaeological Trench Evaluation, unpublished client report 1001/2/0, April 2001
- British Geological Survey, 1976, Salisbury, Solid and Drift. Sheet 298
- Institute for Archaeologists, 2008, *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*
- Museums and Galleries Commission 1992, Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections
- Richardson, K.M., 1951, The Excavation of Iron Age Villages on Boscombe Down West, *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* 54, 123-168
- Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993, Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections; Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Wessex Archaeology, 2006, Boscombe Down Airfield Fire Hydrant Works, Amesbury, Wiltshire: Archaeological Watching Brief Report, unpublished client report 62260.03
- Wessex Archaeology, 2007, Boscombe Down Airfield New Accommodation Block (OP Tamarin) Amesbury, Wiltshire: Archaeological Watching Brief Report, unpublished client report 66980.02
- Wessex Archaeology, 2008, Boscombe Down Airfield New Accommodation Block (OP Tamarin) Amesbury, Wiltshire: Archaeological Watching Brief Report, unpublished client report 66982.02

Wessex Archaeology, 2009, Boscombe Airfield Batching Plant, Amesbury,
Wiltshire: Detailed Gradiometer Survey Report, unpublished client
report 71000.01, February 2009

APPENDIX 1: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: wessexar1-99566

Project details

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Project name | Building 408, Replacement Avtur Fuel Tank, Boscombe Down Airfield, Amesbury, Wiltshire |
| Short description of the project | Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by QinetiQ (Managed Services) to undertake an archaeological watching brief to monitor ground works and record any archaeological features and deposits that might be impacted by the construction of a new replacement fuel tank, located adjacent to Building 408. This building lies immediately to the east of known archaeological features and it was deemed that there was the potential for significant archaeological remains to have survived in the proposed development area. The archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the initial groundworks between late February and early March 2011. No evidence of archaeological finds or features were observed at the proposed construction level during the course of the watching brief. The results of the watching brief appeared to show that the site had been heavily impacted by the insertion of modern concrete footings potentially prior to the construction of Building 408. |
| Project dates | Start: 22-02-2011 End: 18-04-2011 |
| Previous/future work | No / No |
| Type of project | Recording project |
| Site status | Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI) |
| Current Land use | Transport and Utilities 2 - Other transport infrastructure |
| Monument type | CONCERTE FOOTINGS Modern |
| Significant Finds | NONE None |
| Investigation type | 'Watching Brief' |
| Prompt | Voluntary/self-interest |

Project location

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Country | England |
| Site location | WILTSHIRE SALISBURY AMESBURY Boscombe Down Airfield |
| Postcode | SP4 0BT |
| Study area | 42.00 Square metres |
| Site coordinates | SU 18088 39495 51.1539013256 -1.741343000370 51 09 14 N 001 44 28 W Point |
| Height OD / Depth | Min: 113.00m Max: 113.00m |

Project creators

| | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| Name | of Wessex Archaeology |
| Organisation | |
| Project | brief Contractor (design and execute) |

originator
 Project design Wessex Archaeology
 originator
 Project director/manager A Manning
 Project supervisor Rebecca Fitzpatrick
 Type of Developer
 sponsor/funding body
 Name of QinetiQ
 sponsor/funding body

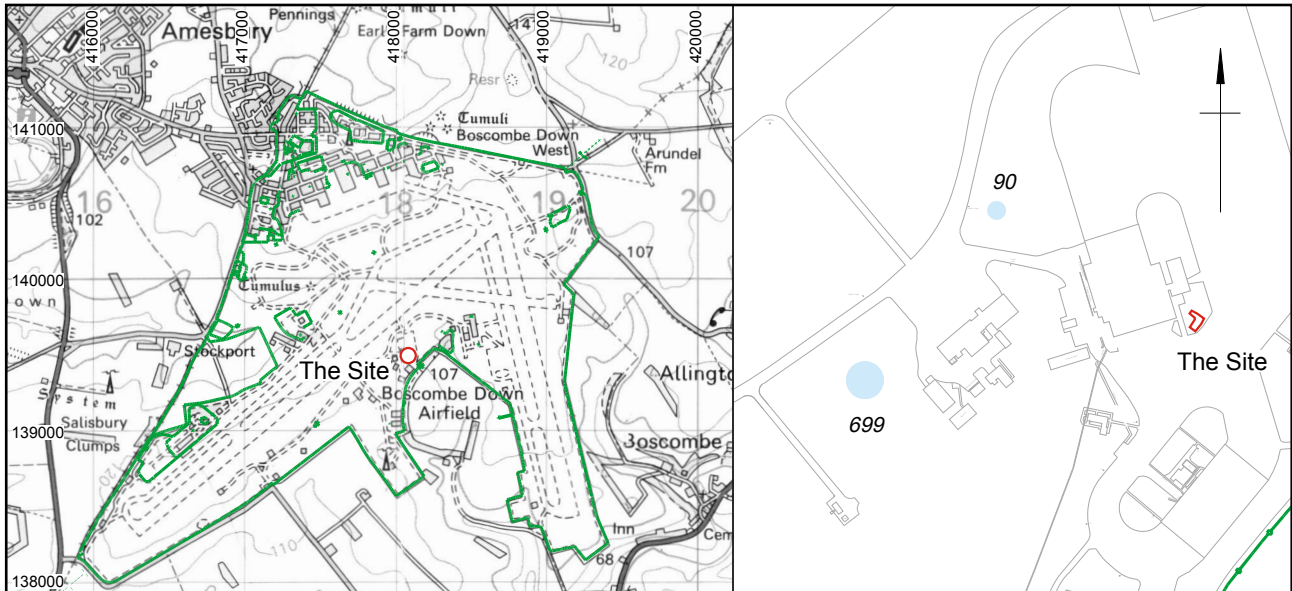
Project archives


Physical Archive No
 Exists?
 Digital Archive Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum
 recipient
 Digital Contents 'none'
 Digital Media 'Images raster / digital photography', 'Spreadsheets', 'Survey', 'Text'
 available
 Paper Archive Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum
 recipient
 Paper Contents 'none'
 Paper Media 'Context sheet', 'Notebook - Excavation', ' Research', ' General
 available Notes', 'Report', 'Survey '

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
 Title Building 408, replacement Avtur Fuel Tank, Boscombe Down
 Airfield, Amesbury, Wiltshire
 Author(s)/Editor(s) Thompson, S.
 Other bibliographic 75451.01
 details
 Date 2011
 Issuer or publisher Wessex Archaeology
 Place of issue or Salisbury
 publication
 Description Short watching brief A4 bound report

Entered by Andrew Manning (a.manning@wessexarch.co.uk)
 Entered on 18 April 2011



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Site location and area of watching brief

Figure 1



Plate 1: Proposed fuel tank location: Pre-excavation, looking northeast



Plate 2: Fuel tank location: During excavation, looking northwest

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Date: 11/04/11

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