



**LAND AT COUNTESS FARM,
STONEHENGE ESTATE,
WILTSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

June 2011

Report 737



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NGR: SU 142 421

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Quality Assurance

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Site name: Land at Countess Farm, Stonehenge Estate, Wiltshire.
Site code: CFS11
NGR: SU 142 421
Site activity: Archaeological Watching Brief
Date and duration: 18th and 19th April 2011; 2 days on site
Site area: Approximately 32m x 1m
Location of archive: Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum

SUMMARY

In April 2011 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological monitoring during the excavation of a section of cable trench on National Trust land at Countess Farm, Stonehenge Estate, Wiltshire. The work was commissioned by SSE Telecom.

The monitored groundworks comprised the excavation of a narrow 1m wide trench from pylon DD45 to the edge of National Trust land, approximately 32m away, to facilitate the laying of a new cable.

No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were present within the monitored area.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from Prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CBM

Ceramic Building Material.

Medieval

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *c.* AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site, in this case comprising *Cretaceous Chalk*, forming part of the extensive *Southern England Chalk Formation*.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level.

OS

Ordnance Survey.

Prehistoric

The period prior to the Roman invasion of AD 43. Traditionally sub divided into: *Palaeolithic* – *c.* 500,000 BC to *c.* 12,000 BC; *Mesolithic* – *c.* 12,000 BC to *c.* 4,500 BC; *Neolithic* – *c.* 4,500 BC to *c.* 2,000 BC; *Bronze Age* – *c.* 2,000 BC to *c.* 800 BC; *Iron Age* – *c.* 800 BC to AD 43.

Roman

The period traditionally dated between AD 43 and *circa* AD 410.

Saxon

The period between AD 410 and AD 1066.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In April 2011 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological monitoring on land at Countess Farm, Stonehenge Estate, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 142 421). Two days were spent on site observing the excavation of a cable trench running from pylon DD45 southeast for 32m to the National Trust land boundary. The work was commissioned by SSE Telecom.
- 1.2 The project was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) issued by Foundations Archaeology (2011). The WSI was prepared in line with the general principles of PPS5 (*Planning Policy Statement 5*) and in accordance with the Specification issued by The National Trust (2011), the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (rev. 2008) and *Standards for Field Evaluation and Assessment in Wiltshire* (CAS 1995). The works were also undertaken in accordance with the Archaeological Research Agreement issued by Dr Nicola Snashall on behalf of The National Trust (12/04/2011).
- 1.3 This document constitutes the results of the archaeological monitoring.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 SSE Power Distribution are to excavate a section of cable trench up to pylon DD45 on land belonging to The National Trust at Countess Farm, Stonehenge Estate, Wiltshire (SU 142 421).
- 2.2 The site is located within the Stonehenge World Heritage Site, but is not part of any Scheduled Monument.
- 2.3 The landscape around the site is internationally significant and contains a rare concentration of ritual, funerary and settlement features, mainly dating to the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age periods. Early Prehistoric, as well as Iron Age and Roman features, are also recorded from the vicinity.
- 2.4 The study area therefore contains the potential for archaeological finds, predominantly dating to the Prehistoric and Roman periods. This will not prejudice the watching brief against the recovery of data relating to other periods.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains, as well as to make recommendations for

management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary; this was intended to allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed works.

3.2 These aims were to be achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

i) To define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible.

iii) To attempt to characterise the nature and preservation of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning and extent of features present on the site.

iv) To recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence which will attempt to determine the complexity of the horizontal and vertical stratigraphy present, and to recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

v) To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The monitored groundworks comprised the excavation of a narrow trench down to, and through, the natural geology. The trench was excavated partly manually and partly through use of mechanical excavator equipped with a 1m wide toothless grading bucket. All excavation was carried out under constant archaeological observation. Potential archaeological deposits were manually investigated, and where appropriate, hand excavated and recorded. Spoil heaps were visually scanned for finds.

5 RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 The excavated cable trench was approximately 32m long, 1m wide and was initially excavated down onto the natural chalk. The natural was overlain by a brown, chalky clay-silt plough soil (101), the depth of which varied from 0.37m towards the south-eastern end to 0.29m towards the north-west. The central 0.3m of the trench was excavated through the natural for a further 0.8m. A single cut feature [102] was partially revealed at the extreme northwest end of the trench.

5.2 An additional area (see fig. 3) measuring 5m x 2.5m, directly southeast of pylon DD45 and immediately southwest of the cable trench was then excavated to reveal the extent of feature [102], which appeared to be sub-square in plan, with

dimensions of 4.5m by 3.7m. The feature was partially excavated by hand to obtain a section through the fills (see fig.3).

A series of clay-silt fills (103 – 106) were revealed and contained frequent chalk fragments. The uppermost fill (106) abutted the pylon footing and the feature [102] was clearly associated with the construction of pylon DD45. No archaeological features, finds or deposits were present within the excavated area.

- 5.3 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum. A short note will be submitted for publication in the relevant local archaeological journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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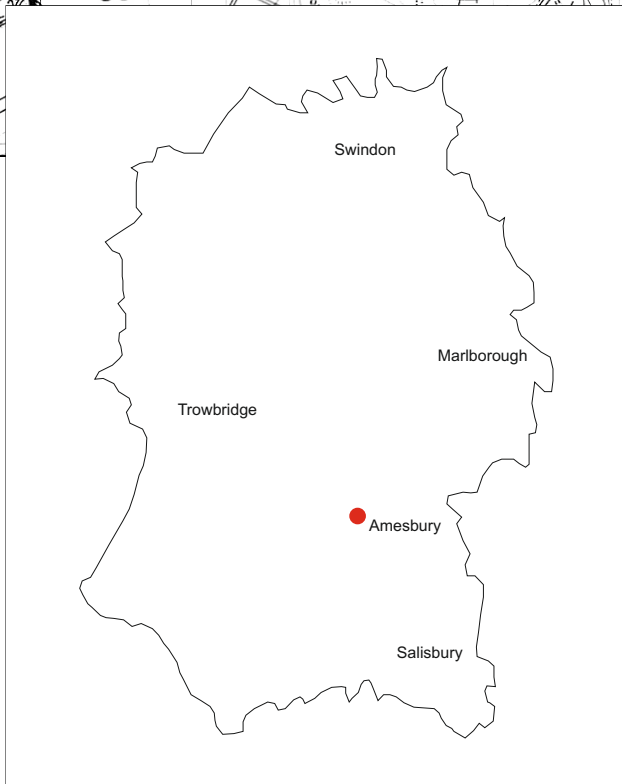
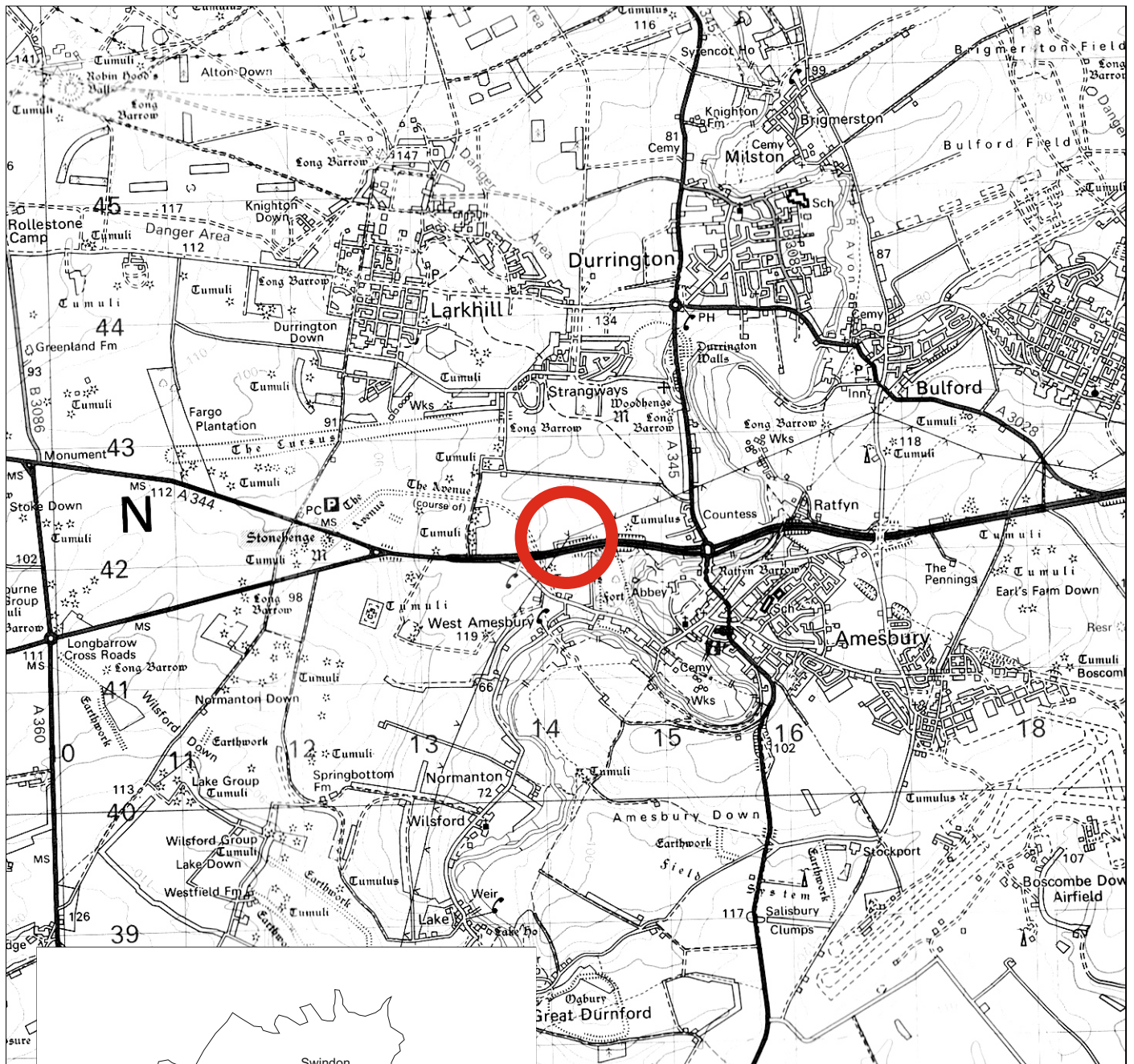
National Trust, 2011 *Archaeological Specification, Watching Brief during the excavation of cable trenches on Countess Farm, Stonehenge Estate*

National Trust, 2011 *Archaeological Research Agreement*

Wiltshire County Council, 1995 *Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation in Wiltshire*.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger and David Vaughan from Wiltshire County Council, Graeme Swift from SSE Telecom, and Nicola Snashell and Amy Jeenes from The National Trust for their help during the course of this project.



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Site Code: CFS11

Accession Code:

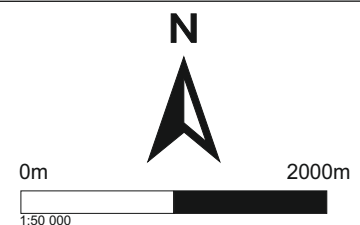


FIGURE 1: Site Location



Site Code: CFS11

Accession Code:



FIGURE 3 LOCATION



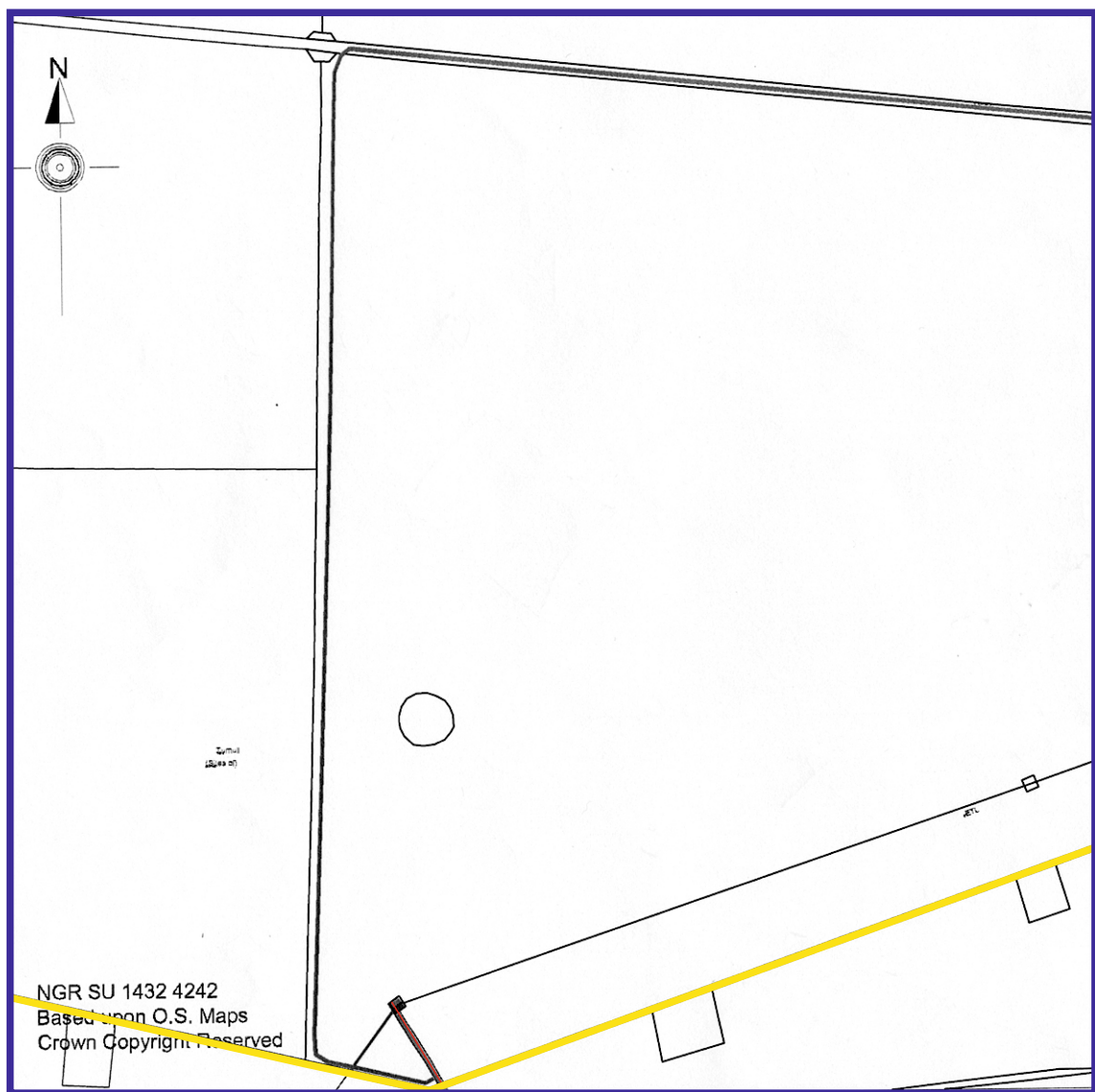
TRENCH LOCATION

0m

400m

1:10000

FIGURE 2: Trench Location



Site Code: CFS11
Accession Code:

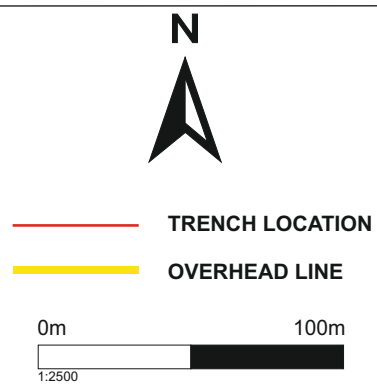
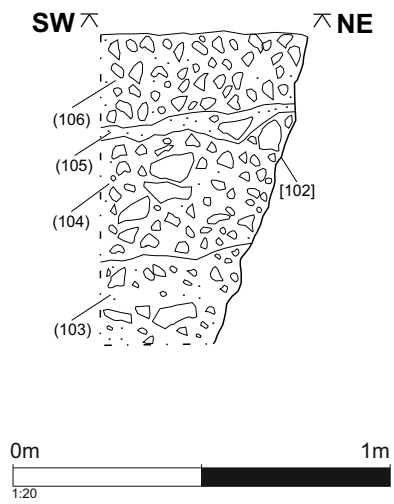


FIGURE 3: Trench Location

SEC A1: SOUTH EAST FACING SECTION [102]



NW END OF TRENCH PLAN

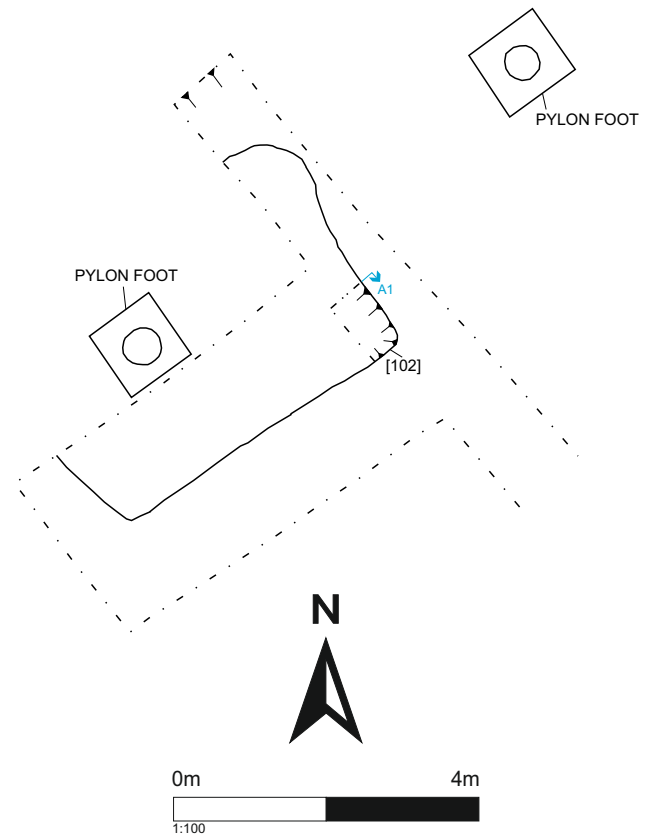


FIGURE 4: LOCATION OF FEATURE [102] AND SOUTH EAST FACING SECTION