

**LAND AT BECKHAMPTON STABLES,
MARLBOROUGH,
WILTSHIRE**

NGR: SU 0851 6891

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

November 2012

Report No. 846

Quality Assurance

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Date 9/11/12

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SUMMARY

Site Name: Land at Beckhampton Stables, Marlborough, Wiltshire.

Grid Reference: NGR SU 0851 6891

Site Activity: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date and Duration of Project: 9-12th October 2012

Project Manager: Roy King BA MifA

Site Supervisor: Andrew Hood BSc MifA

Site Code: BSM12

Summary of Results:

The archaeological works comprised the monitoring of groundworks associated with the construction of an equestrian trotting ring with associated engineering works (Planning ref: E/2012/0873/FUL). A programme of archaeological works was required in accordance with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012) and the archaeological policies of Wiltshire County Council (East).

The works were undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2012). The project was undertaken in accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008), Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: Archaeological Watching Briefs: (guidelines) issued by English Heritage (London Region).

No archaeological finds or features were identified within the monitored area, the presence of intact subsoils across part of the site suggest minimal truncation and indicate a generally low archaeological potential for the immediate 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.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

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.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between the 9th and 12th October Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording on land at Beckhampton Stables, Marlborough, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 0851 6891, Figure 1). The work was commissioned by Beckhampton Stables Ltd.
- 1.2 The project required the monitoring of groundworks associated with the change of use of agricultural land to an equestrian trotting ring with associated engineering works (Planning Ref: E/2012/0873/FUL).
- 1.3 The works were undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2012). The project was undertaken in accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008), Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: Archaeological Watching Briefs: (guidelines) issued by English Heritage (London Region).
- 1.4 This document presents the findings of the archaeological monitoring.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning permission (Ref. No. E/2012/0873/FUL) has been granted by Wiltshire County Council (East) with the change of use of agricultural land to an equestrian trotting ring with associated engineering works.
- 2.2 The permission placed by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) required monitoring and recording of the works to be undertaken. The archaeological work was required in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012) and the archaeological policies of Wiltshire Council.
- 2.3 The development is situated in an agricultural field immediately to the east of Beckhampton House, which lies on the western side of Beckhampton village. The site area is bounded by the A4 to the north and the A361 to the south.
- 2.4 The site is situated within the Avebury World Heritage Site. As such it contained a high potential for the recovery of finds and/or features relating to the Prehistoric activity around Avebury. A number of *tumuli*, including a long barrow were situated close to the proposed development site.
- 2.5 The study area therefore contained the potential for significant archaeological features and deposits, predominantly associated with the Prehistoric period. This did not prejudice the works against the recovery of finds or features associated with 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. In turn this will allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed development.

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

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

ii) 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;

iii) where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and to recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

iv) 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 40m diameter trotting ring and associated drainage, as shown in Figure 2. The excavations were undertaken using a mechanical excavator equipped with a 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 DISCUSSION

5.1 Natural deposits of loose white degraded chalk were encountered at a depth of between 0.15 and 0.31m below the Modern ground level. This was overlain by (102), an intermittent mid brown clay silt subsoil with fragments of chalk and flint. This deposit was up to 0.16m thick to the south at the base of the slope, but dissipated up slope to the north. The uppermost deposit was a dark brown friable clay silt (101), with occasional fragments of decayed chalk, this deposit was up to 0.15m thick.

- 5.2 No archaeological finds or features were present within the monitored area, the presence of intact subsoils across part of the site suggest minimal truncation, and indicate a generally low archaeological potential for the immediate area.
- 5.3 The archive has been prepared in accordance with MoRPHE (English Heritage 2006) and Guidelines for the preparation of archaeological archives for long-term storage (UKIC 1990). It will be deposited with the local Museum within 12 months.
- 5.4 The results of the work will be published in an appropriate journal and an OASIS report will be completed and submitted.

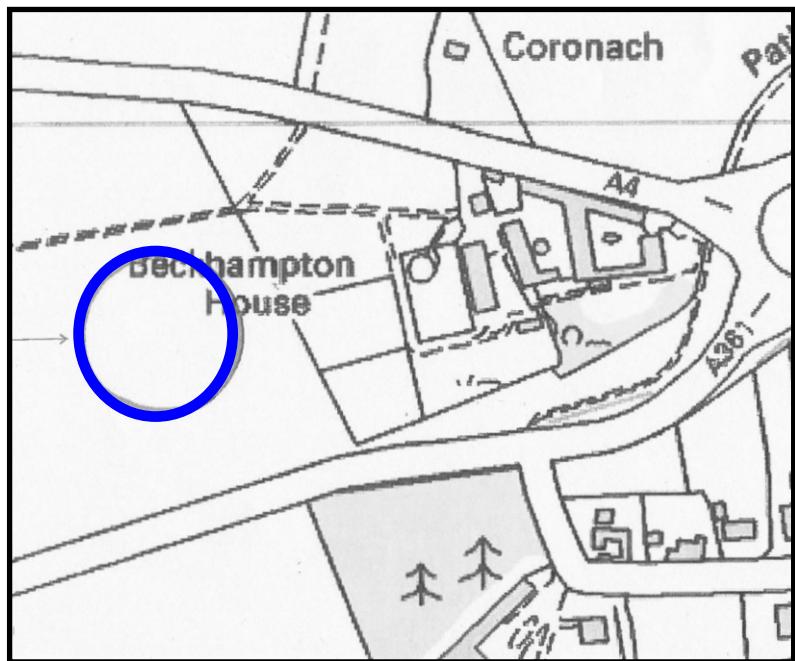
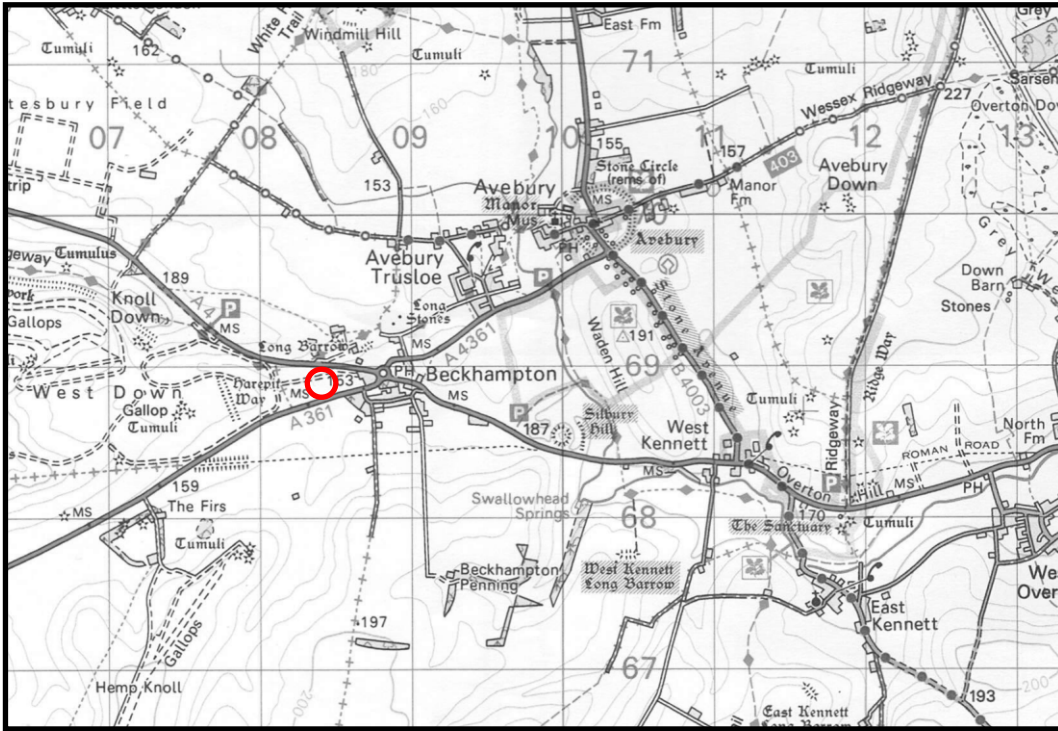
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7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Rachel Foster of Wiltshire County Council, Beckhampton Stables and the on-site groundworkers for their assistance during the course of this project.

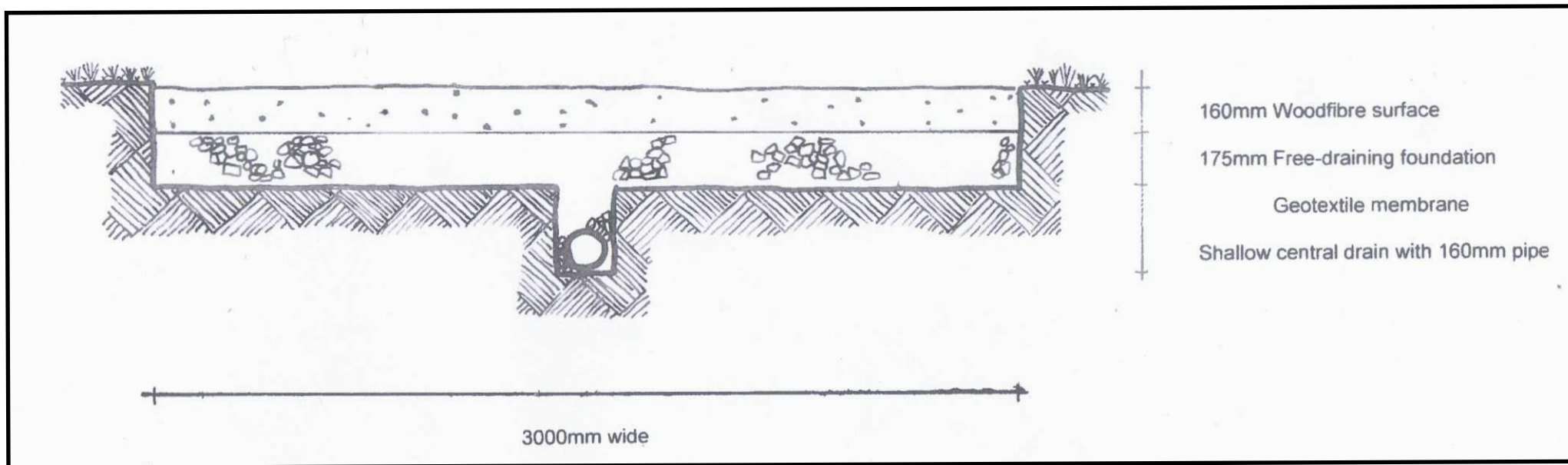


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— Position of Trotting Ring

FIGURE 1: Site Location



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FIGURE 2: Profile of Ring