



New Focus Site, 118-130 London Road,
Amesbury, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



**New Focus Site, 118-130 London Road,
Amesbury, Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Prepared on behalf of:
Cross Keys Construction Ltd
Cross Keys House
High Street South
Olney
Bucks
MK46 4AA

by
Wessex Archaeology
Portway House
Old Sarum Park
SALISBURY
SP4 6EB

Report reference: 58240.02

March, 2005

**118-130 LONDON ROAD,
AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE**
Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1	PROJECT BACKGROUND	1
1.2	SITE LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY.....	1
1.3	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	1
2	METHODOLOGY.....	2
2.1	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	2
2.2	METHODS.....	2
3	RESULTS	3
3.1	FINDS	3
3.2	CONCLUSIONS	3
4	THE ARCHIVE	3
5	BIBLIOGRAPHY	3

Figures:

Figure 1. Site Location Plan

Plates

Plates 1 and 2. Make-up Layer after slab removal

**118-130 LONDON ROAD,
AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE**
Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Cross Keys Construction Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief at 118-130 London Road, Amesbury, Wiltshire (hereafter “the Site”). A condition requiring a watching brief during the removal of existing concrete slab had been placed on the planning consent on the recommendation of Helena Cave-Penny, Archaeology Advisor for Wiltshire County Council.

The site was cleared of a number of warehouse structures and associated areas of concrete hardstanding. As expected, the construction of the existing structures had involved the levelling of the site and therefore the potential for surviving archaeological remains was significantly reduced.

No archaeological features or finds were recovered or seen during the watching brief, although very few areas within the site were accessible for archaeological observation due to the retention of the make up layer for the concrete slab. Sections seen in the foundation trenches showed no trace of archaeological features.

Following the removal of the concrete hardstanding, the ground level was raised, in effect protecting any archaeological remains that may have been present. The only intrusive work to take place was the excavation of the foundations for the new development, the inspection of which did not reveal any archaeological deposits

**118-130 LONDON ROAD,
AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE**
Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Ian Kelly and Lee Thomas (Cross Keys Construction Ltd)

The fieldwork was undertaken by Gareth Chaffey who also compiled this report. Linda Coleman and Liz James prepared the illustrations and the project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Nick Truckle.

**118-130 LONDON ROAD,
AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE
Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Cross Keys Construction Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief to monitor ground work associated with the construction of a new retail development at 118-130 London Road, Amesbury, Wiltshire (hereafter the Site).
- 1.1.2 The watching brief was carried out on the recommendation of the Wiltshire County Council (archaeological advisors to the local planning authority).
- 1.1.3 The watching brief was undertaken to ensure that any archaeological remains or horizons were fully recorded in advance of construction. The results of which would assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains so that future work in the area of the site could be considered.
- 1.1.4 Fieldwork for the watching brief was carried out on 23rd February 2005.

1.2 Site Location, Topography and Geology

- 1.2.1 The Site (National Grid Reference 416158,141930) comprised a level, sub-rectangular piece of land occupying an area of approximately 7000sq. m, bounded to the north by London Road, the east by Holders Road and to the north and west by existing residential and commercial properties (**Figure 1**)
- 1.2.2 The underlying geology is Upper Chalk of the cretaceous period (Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 298).

1.3 Archaeological Background

- 1.3.1 The Site lies on London Road, Amesbury within a multi-period archaeological landscape which has produced evidence of remains from the Bronze Age through to the medieval period, evidenced by the Scheduled Monument of Ratfyn Barrow located 200 metres to the east of the Site.
- 1.3.2 A programme of archaeological investigations by Wessex Archaeology in the early 1990s, approximately 800 metres to the south-east of the site revealed a possible Late Neolithic henge, an Early Bronze Age ring ditch with associated inhumation and pits and ditches containing beaker pottery. A

probable later Roman settlement was also recorded, as was a hoard of 5th century gold coins. (Rawlings and Fitzpatrick, 1996).

- 1.3.3 More recently, excavations at Countess Road East, approximately 500 metres to the north-west of the site, revealed evidence of a settlement of Early Saxon date and the Wiltshire Sites and Monuments Record indicates that a number of scattered burials have been recorded from the vicinity of London Road. No firm dates are known for the burials and it is possible that they may be of prehistoric date or associated with Early Saxon settlement.
- 1.3.4 In June this year, further evidence of this pattern of burials was revealed when the remains of an adult male inhumation were disturbed during the digging of footings for a house extension at 18 London Road. No grave goods were present so again the date of the burial is uncertain.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims and objectives.

- 2.1.1 The aim of the archaeological watching brief was to establish within the constraints of the sampling strategy, as far as was reasonably practical, the presence or absence, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains within the Site.

2.2 Methods

- 2.2.1 An archaeologist from Wessex Archaeology visited the Site during the programme to remove the concrete slab in order to ascertain the presence of any significant archaeological remains.
- 2.2.2 Following the demolition of the existing warehouse structures, the concrete hardstanding that covered the site had been broken up and removed to be crushed elsewhere on Site. Beneath the concrete was a layer of rubble approximately 300mm-400mm thick which appeared to lay directly over natural chalk. This layer was left *in situ* and crushed concrete was then deposited onto this rubble layer to form a level surface. Although this methodology meant that the upper surface of the chalk was not visible and therefore it was not possible to see if archaeological remains were present, any remains that were present will have been preserved beneath the existing make-up layer.
- 2.2.3 Construction of the new building was on-going during the Site visit and all available foundation trenches were inspected for archaeological deposits although none were found.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Finds

3.1.1 No finds were recovered or retained.

3.2 Conclusions

3.2.1 The method of construction meant that the existing rubble make up layer was left intact after the slab had been removed and therefore the natural chalk was not visible. It was therefore not possible to ascertain whether any archaeological features survived on the Site. However, inspection of foundation trenches appeared to show (see plate 2) that the previous warehouse development had involved the levelling of the Site prior to construction, which would have seriously truncated any remains that were present. Although the current construction method seriously hindered the effectiveness of the watching brief, it did have the benefit of leaving the truncated natural chalk largely undisturbed and therefore any remains that had survived the earlier levelling will remain preserved *in situ* beneath the Site.

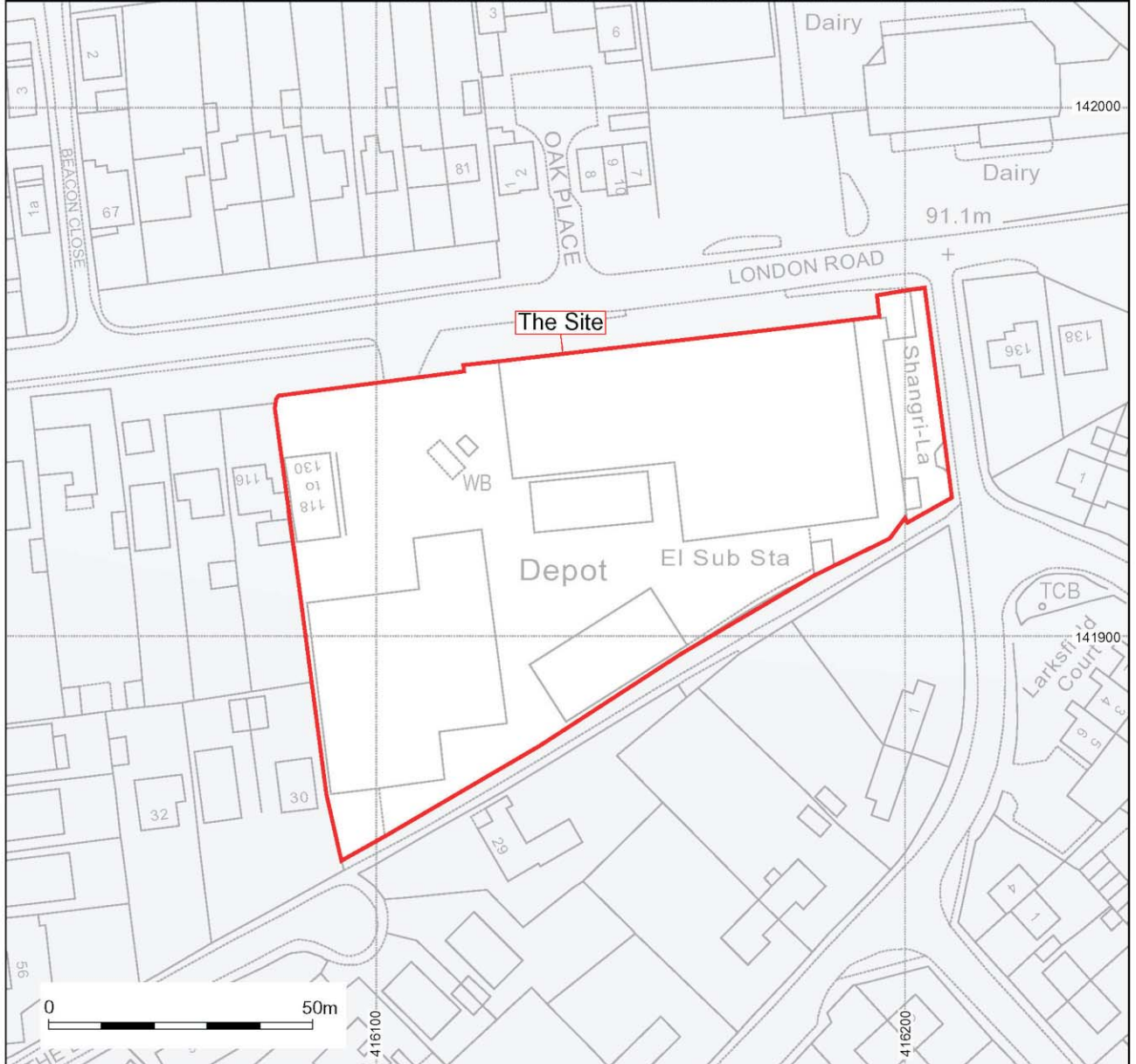
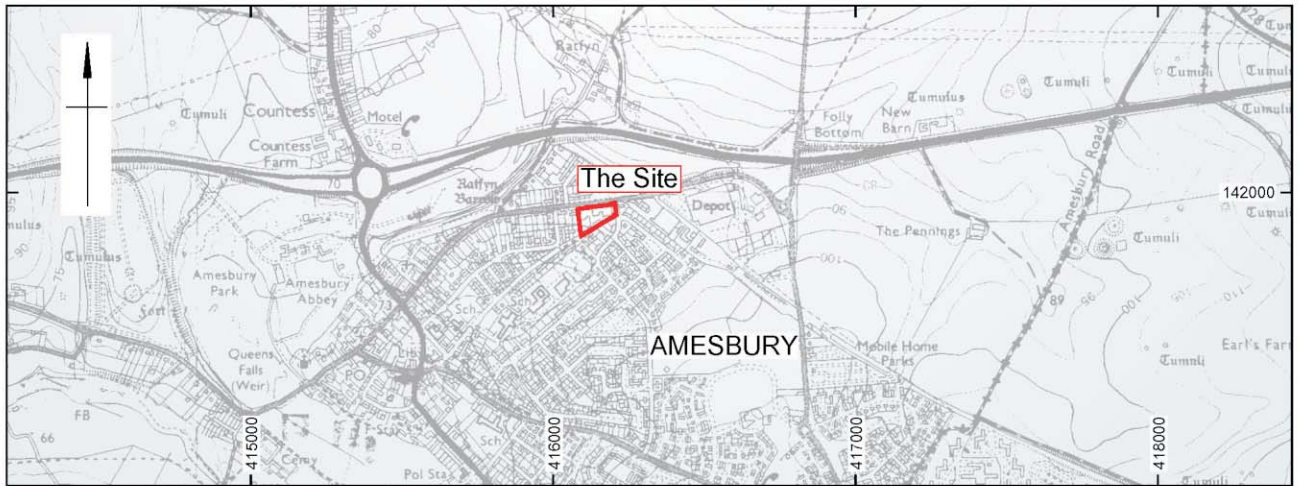
3.2.2 Natural chalk was only seen within the sections of the foundation trenches cut for the new structure. No archaeological remains were seen or recorded.

4 THE ARCHIVE

4.1.1 The project archive, consisting of a collection of digital photographs, is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology at Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire under the project code 58240.

5 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Rawlings, M and Fitzpatrick, A 1996. - *Prehistoric Sites and a Romano- British Settlement at Butterfield Down, Amesbury*. Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine, Vol. 89



Reproduced from the (1998) Ordnance survey (1:25 000 Explorer 130 ©) map with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown copyright, Wessex Archaeology, Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire. SP4 6EB. Licence Number:AL 100006861.
 Digital data reproduced from Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright (2005) All rights reserved. Reference Number: 100020449.
 This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.

Date:	8/03/05	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	1:1250	Illustrator:	LJC
Path:	Y:\projects\58240\Drawing Office\Report Figures\WB\05_03_08\Sitebase		



Site location

Figure 1



Plate 1



Plate 2



WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED.

Head Office: Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB.

Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk

London Office: Unit 701, The Chandlery, 50 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7QY.

Tel: 020 7953 7494 Fax: 020 7953 7499 london-info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk

