



101 COUNTESS ROAD AMESBURY

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





**101 COUNTESS ROAD
AMESBURY**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Prepared for and on behalf of:

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Reference: 70170

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101 COUNTESS ROAD
AMESBURY

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Mr Arnott (the Client) to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Willow House, 101 Countess Road, Amesbury (hereafter 'the Site'), during ground works in advance of development centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 415210,142805.

The watching brief was required as part of the planning permission granted to Mr Arnott by Salisbury District Council (Planning Reference S/07/1521), the local authority, for a single storey rear extension.

The watching brief was maintained during the excavation of three foundation trenches and other groundworks associated with the single storey rear extension. This exposed an underlying geology consisting of valley gravels. Except for a modern drainage pipe and building waste no archaeological features or artefacts were identified within the foundation trenches.

The watching brief was carried out from the 20th October to 23rd October 2008.

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Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. Arnott (the Client). Wessex Archaeology would like to thank them for their co-operation in the successful completion of the project.

The archaeological watching brief was carried out by Vasileios Tsamis and the report compiled by him. The illustrations were prepared by Will Foster. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Sue Farr.

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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Mr Arnott (the Client) to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Willow House, 101 Countess Road, Amesbury (hereafter 'the Site'), during ground works in advance of development.
- 1.1.2 The watching brief was required as part of the planning permission granted to Mr Arnott by Salisbury District Council (Planning Reference S/07/1521), the local authority, for a single storey rear extension.
- 1.1.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology 2008a) was prepared in advance of the watching brief. It set out in detail the methodologies and standards proposed by Wessex Archaeology to undertake the archaeological works. The watching brief and this report on the results will complete the programme of archaeological work.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The Site, centred on NGR 415210,142805 fronts onto the western side of Countess Road, one of the main roads into Amesbury. It is sub-rectangular in shape and covers c. 806 sq. m. It is bounded to the north and south by residential properties and is currently occupied by a single semi-detached dwelling.
- 1.2.2 The underlying geology of the area consists of Upper Chalk (BGS map 1:50,000 Map Sheet 298).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The Site is situated in the extensive and highly significant prehistoric funereal and monumental landscape of Salisbury Plain, featuring many important sites and find spots of a predominantly Neolithic and Bronze Age date. Together with Durrington, Amesbury is one of the only two towns situated on the plain.
- 1.3.2 The Site lies 3.2km to the east of Stonehenge and outside the UNESCO designated Stonehenge World Heritage Site. The surrounding chalk downlands contain a large number of monuments and sites from the prehistoric and Romano-British periods. Areas of archaeological importance in the immediate vicinity include:
- The Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments of Durrington Walls and Woodhenge c. 450m to the north.
 - The Neolithic Woodlands Grooved Ware pits c. 200m to the west and The Ratfyn pits and burials c. 250m to the south.
 - The Iron Age hillfort of Vespasian's Camp c. 800m to the south-west.

- The Romano-British village at Butterfield Down 2km to south-east.
- The Anglo-Saxon and medieval town of Amesbury to the south.

1.3.3 An archaeological evaluation of land for a proposed Stonehenge Visitor Centre directly adjacent to the Countess Services (to the south) was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology in 2004 and revealed an area of high archaeological potential, including a pit of probable Neolithic date, an extensive prehistoric flint assemblage, possibly indicative of *in situ* manufacture, several sunken feature buildings of an Anglo-Saxon date and a masonry building of Romano-British date (WA ref 54700.01).

2 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

2.1 General

2.1.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief, as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WA 2008a) were to establish, within the constraints of the sampling strategy, the presence or absence, location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains within the Site, and to mitigate any threat posed to them by the construction activity through preservation by record.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Ground works monitoring

3.1.1 Three foundation trenches were excavated across the Site. Both east-west trenches were 8m long and 0.50m wide. The north-south trench was 4m long and 0.50m wide. Excavation was undertaken using a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.50m toothless digging bucket.

3.1.2 The excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision until such time that it was apparent that the potential for archaeological remains to be exposed has been exhausted. The excavation subsequently continued to the depth required by the site manager. All excavated material was routinely inspected for artefacts.

3.1.3 All trenches were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system. A photographic record, which included high resolution digital images, was maintained.

4 RESULTS

4.1.1 All foundation trenches were approximately 0.70m deep and the soil sequence noted was generally consistent across the development area.

4.1.2 Topsoil was recorded to a depth of 0.30m overlying a layer of subsoil approximately 0.45m deep, beneath which, a mid yellowish brown silty clay with abundant sub-angular flint inclusions was excavated to a depth of 0.85m.

4.1.3 No features or deposits of archaeological origin were identified during the watching brief.

5 FINDS

5.1.1 No artefacts were recovered during the watching brief.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL

6.1.1 No material suitable for environmental analysis was demonstrated to be present within the foundation trenches.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1.1 Despite the high archaeological potential the archaeological watching brief undertaken during groundworks associated with the development did not identify any archaeological remains on the Site.

8 ARCHIVE

8.1.1 The project archive was prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990). It comprises a ring-bound file containing a watching brief attendance form, site 'day book', trench record sheets, photographic register and *Written Scheme of Investigation*. It is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's office building under the site code 70170, but will ultimately be deposited for permanent storage with the relevant local museum

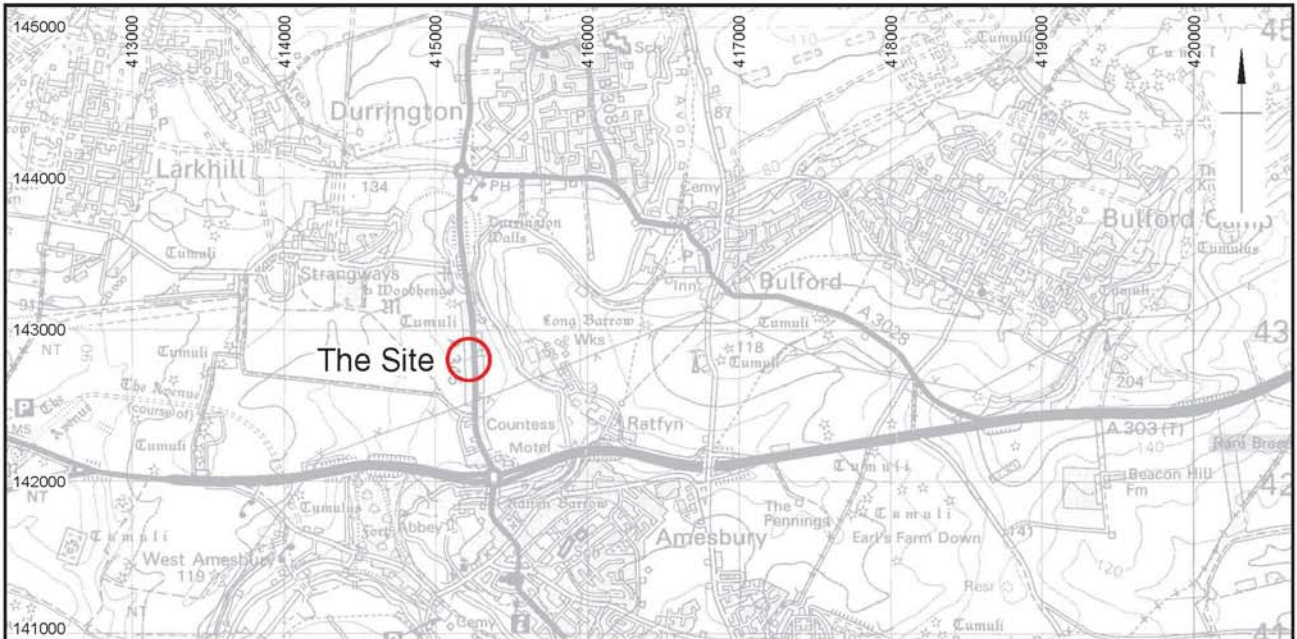
9 REFERENCES

British Geological Survey, 1:50 000 Series Sheet 298

Institute of Field Archaeologists 2001 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

Wessex Archaeology 2004 *Stonehenge Visitor Centre, Countess East, Amesbury, Archaeological Evaluation* Unpublished client report 54700.01a

Wessex Archaeology, 2008, *101 Countess Road, Amesbury Project Design for an archaeological watching brief*. Unpublished client report



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Site location plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: Foundation trenches from the south-west

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