

Wiltshire Grain Ltd., Rollestone Camp, Shrewton, Wiltshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report





**Wiltshire Grain Ltd
Rollestone Camp
Shrewton, Wiltshire**

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Wiltshire Grain Ltd Rollestone Camp Shrewton, Wiltshire

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Wiltshire Grain Ltd to carry out an archaeological evaluation of land to the north-west of their existing group of silos in advance of a proposed extension to the silo area. The silos of Wiltshire Grain Ltd are situated just to the west of Rollestone Camp. The evaluation was centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 409120 145000, approximately 100m to the north of a Bronze Age enclosure SMR 694, which had been recorded in a archaeological excavation in 1996 prior to a previous extension of the silo site.

Four machine-dug trial trenches were opened up and inspected. One probable prehistoric tree hole was noted but no further archaeological features or deposits were revealed.

The natural stratigraphy revealed within the trial trenches comprised c.0.5m of topsoil and subsoil overlying the broken chalk natural.

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Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Wiltshire Grain Ltd and in particular Rob Sanderson of Grainfarmers Plc for commissioning the evaluation. The help and assistance of Helena Cave-Penny, Assistant Archaeologist of Wiltshire County Council, is also kindly acknowledged.

The fieldwork was carried out by David Godden and Emma Nordstrom. Linda Coleman prepared the figures and David Godden compiled this report. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Damian de Rosa.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Wiltshire Grain Ltd (The Client) to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological field evaluation to be undertaken on land at Wiltshire Grain Ltd near Rollestone Camp Shrewton, Wiltshire (hereafter 'the Site') centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 409120 145000 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 The work carried out was in support of a planning application which is to be submitted for a proposed extension to the existing 60,000 tonne silo capacity.
- 1.1.3 The Site proposed for extension is a sensitive one, being prominent in the landscape (it is visible from the World Heritage Site surrounding Stonehenge), and lying within a Special Landscape Area and Area of Archeological Significance. It is also close to an area of High Ecological Significance and the Salisbury Plain Site of Special Scientific Interest. The planning history of the Site emphasises the need to carefully control new development.
- 1.1.4 An evaluation and excavation undertaken in 1996 prior to a previous extension of the silo capacity revealed a Bronze Age enclosure, which had previously been visible as a cropmark (Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) Number 694).
- 1.1.5 Wiltshire County Archaeological Service (WCAS) acting on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) advised that the Site had the potential to contain archaeological remains and therefore requested that an archaeological evaluation be undertaken prior to the determination of the planning application.
- 1.1.6 A WSI (WA 2008) detailing the methods for undertaking the evaluation was prepared by Wessex Archaeology and submitted to and approved by the Client and WCAS prior to any work being undertaken.

2 THE SITE

2.1 Site location, description and topography

- 2.1.1 The Site lies to the west of Rollestone Camp and 2.5km east-north-east of Shrewton, centred on NGR 409100 145010 (**Figure 1**).
- 2.1.2 At the time of the evaluation the Site was a roughly grassed area and comprised a sub-rectangular parcel of land measuring approximately 130m by 30m (c.0.4ha). The Site is bounded by a bridleway to the north-west, Rollestone Camp to the east, and a large earth bund to the south-east. The earth bund marks the north-western extent of the present silo compound.
- 2.1.3 The Site was generally flat lying and lay at a height of approximately 122m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 2.1.4 The underlying geology is Upper Chalk (BGS Sheet 282).

2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 2.2.1 The landscape surrounding the Site is rich in prehistoric remains of a funerary and ritual nature with numerous Bronze Age burial mounds. A group of four burial mounds lie immediately to the west of the Site. A Neolithic causewayed camp known as Robins Hoods Ball Clump (SU14NW100) is located c.1km to the north east of the Site. Stonehenge and Woodhenge lie to the south west and west of the Site respectively.
- 2.2.2 During a previous extension of the Silo capacity in 1996 an evaluation and excavation (SMR Number SU04SE694) was undertaken to investigate a Bronze Age rectangular enclosure (SMR 694) visible as a parch mark. The archaeological investigations identified an irregular enclosure, oblong in plan with a possible western entrance. The enclosure ditches were 2m wide and 1.2m deep. Two small pits or postholes were recorded. A collared urn sherd and a probable Middle Bronze Age sherd were recovered.
- 2.2.3 Further work undertaken to investigate an undated field system visible as cropmarks was unable to find any trace of it on the ground (SMR Number SU04SE681).

3 AIMS

- 3.1.1 The principle aim of the evaluation was to identify any archaeological remains which might be impacted by the proposed development and to assess their nature, form and date. In particular the evaluation was to identify archaeological features or deposits, which could be related to the previous archaeological work undertaken at the Site in 1996.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Health and Safety

- 4.1.1 All work was carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992. A Health and Safety Risk Assessment was produced by Wessex Archaeology prior to the start of the fieldwork.

4.2 Fieldwork

- 4.2.1 All works were carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the '*Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation in Wiltshire*' (WCAS, Wiltshire County Council 1995) and in the Institute of Field Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2001).
- 4.2.2 The evaluation comprised the excavation of four 30m by 2m trial trenches equating to a c.6% sample of the c.0.4 ha Site (**Figure 1 and Plate 1**). There was a large spoil heap in the north-west corner of the Site and Trench 1 was moved to avoid having to cut through it.
- 4.2.3 The trenches were opened, under constant supervision, by a 180° tyred excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.
- 4.2.4 The excavated spoil was inspected for finds.
- 4.2.5 All features or potential features were investigated by hand.
- 4.2.6 The recording was undertaken using Wessex Archaeology *pro forma* recording sheets. A series of digital photographs were taken.
- 4.2.7 Trench locations were surveyed using a GPS SmartNet Rover and tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. This recorded the outlines of the trenches, the outlines of the features and the positions of each recorded section.
- 4.2.8 Subsequent to completion of the archaeological investigations and following the approval of WCAS, the trenches were backfilled by machine.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Soils and Geology

- 5.1.1 A summary of the deposits and archaeological features encountered in each trench is given in **Appendix 1**
- 5.1.2 The stratigraphic sequence of Trenches 1 and 2 showed evidence of truncation with the topsoil lying directly on the natural chalk. This probably happened during the construction of the large earth and chalk bund that separated the Site from the existing silos to the south-east. Trenches 3 and 4 (**Plate 2**) revealed the following sequence:
- Rough grass and topsoil. 0.3m thick.

- Subsoil. Mid greyish brown silt with abundant small chalk fragments and moderate flints. 0.25m thick.
- Natural broken chalk.

5.2 Archaeological Features

- 5.2.1 No features of significant archaeological interest were revealed.
- 5.2.2 The spoil heaps were inspected and showed to be lacking in finds. It had already been noted that the original overlying material had been truncated at the western end of the Site in trenches 1 and 2.
- 5.2.3 A treehole **103** was noted at the western end of Trench 1 and the trench outline was extended at this point to confirm that it was a treehole. The feature (**103**) was oval and approximately 1.4 by 1.0m in plan. It was 0.25m deep and had irregular shallow-sloping sides and an irregular base (**Plate 3**). The fill was relatively sterile, containing just a few burnt flints. These suggest that the treehole was probably prehistoric in date.
- 5.2.4 A few modern plough scars were noted in each trench. These were aligned south-west to north-east and therefore parallel to the existing field boundary and nearby bridleway.

5.3 Finds

- 5.3.1 A few pieces of burnt unworked flint were noted in the fill of tree hole **103**. They were not retained.

5.4 Environmental Sampling

- 5.4.1 No archaeological features or deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified.

6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1.1 No archaeological features or deposits aside from a single tree hole were identified in the evaluation trenches. This appears to indicate that within the Site there is no further archaeological potential that can be associated with the previously recorded Bronze Age enclosure and field system to the south. Despite the wealth of prehistoric funerary activity in the surrounding landscape the Site appears to contain no archaeological potential.

7 THE ARCHIVE

7.1 Museum

- 7.1.1 The complete project archive will be prepared in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's Guidelines for Archive Preparation and in accordance with *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage (UKIC 1990)*. On completion of the project the archive will be deposited with the Salisbury and South Wilts Museum.

7.2 Archive

- 7.2.1 The project archive, consists of:
- 7.2.2 One A4 file containing the paper records and drawings
- 7.2.3 Digital data (site photographs, survey data, word and pdf files)
- 7.2.4
- 7.2.5 It is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology at Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire under the project code 70190.

7.3 Copyright

- 7.3.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the site will be retained by Wessex Archaeology Ltd under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved. The Museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profit making, and conforms to the Copyright and Related Rights regulations 2003.

7.4 Security Copy

- 7.4.1 In line with current best practice, on completion of the project a security copy of the paper records will be prepared, in the form of microfilm. The master jackets and one diazo copy of the microfilm will be submitted to the National Monuments Record Centre (Swindon), a second diazo copy will be deposited with the paper records at the Museum, and a third diazo copy will be retained by Wessex Archaeology.

8 REFERENCES

British Geological Survey, 1959. Drift Geology - Devizes. Sheet 282

Wessex Archaeology, 2008. *Wiltshire Grain Limited, Rollestone Camp, Shrewton, Wiltshire. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*. WA Ref 70190.01

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

Wiltshire County Council, Wiltshire and Swindon Sites and Monument Record Information.

APPENDIX 1: Trench summary tables

Trench 1 Dimensions 30.1 (base) x 1.5 x 0.5m max depth
Ground level 120.7m (W), 121.1m (E) aOD

Context	Description	Depth (m)
101	Rough grass and topsoil.	0 – 0.30
102	Natural broken chalk.	0.30+
103	Cut of prehistoric treehole. Oval. 1.4x1.0x0.25m deep. Shallow-sloping irregular sides and irregular base.	
104	Fill of 103. Mid greyish brown silty clay with common chalk fragments. Included occasional burnt flints (not retained).	

Trench 2 Dimensions 27.0 (base) x 1.5 x 0.5m max depth
Ground level 121.1m (S), 120.8m (N) aOD

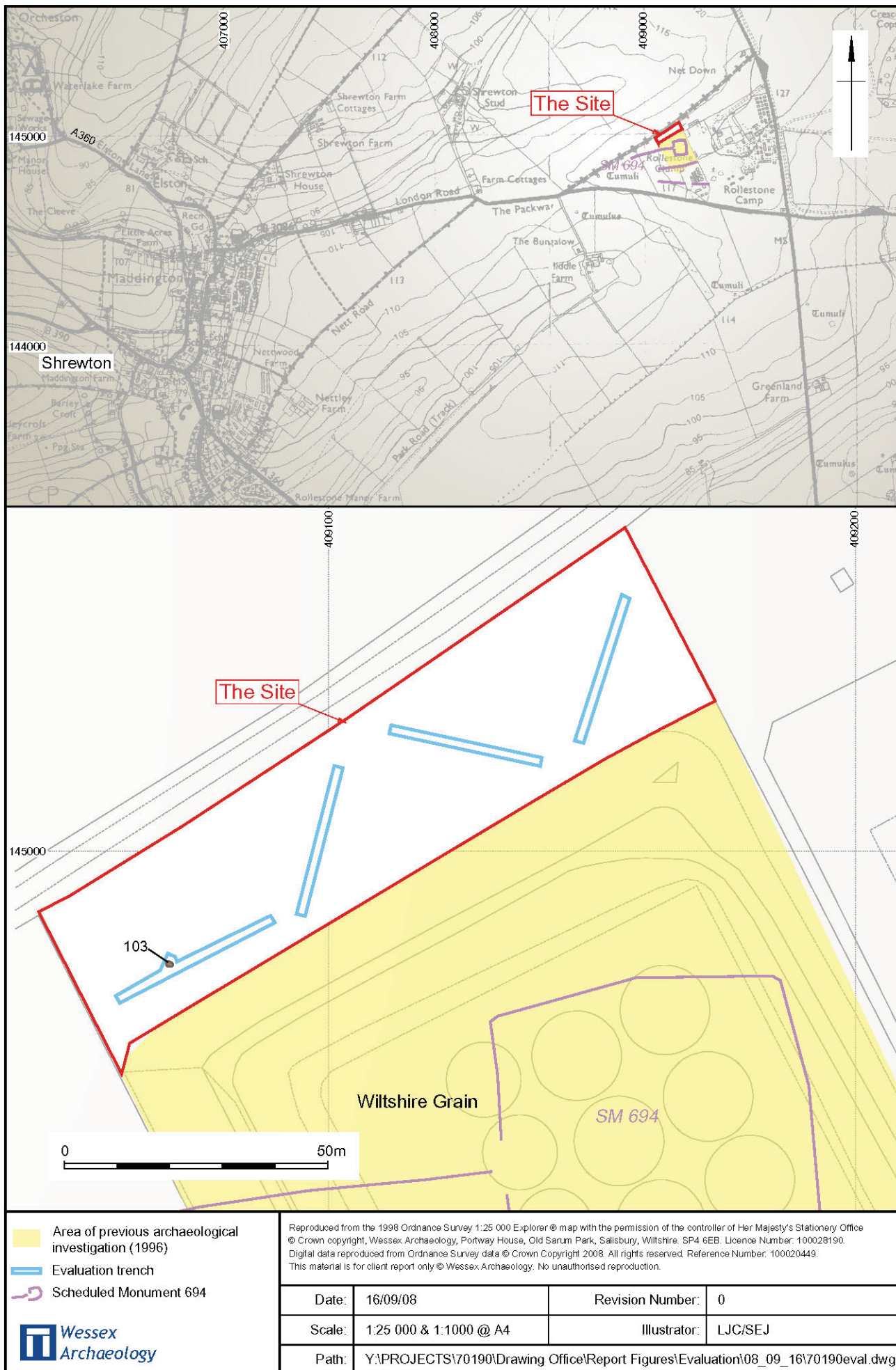
Context	Description	Depth (m)
201	Rough grass and topsoil.	0-0.35
202	Natural broken chalk.	0.35+

Trench 3 Dimensions 26.8 (base) x 1.5 x 0.6m max depth
Ground level 120.8m (W), 121.4m (E) aOD

Context	Description	Depth (m)
301	Rough grass and topsoil.	0-0.25
302	Subsoil. Mid greyish brown silt clay with common chalk fragments and moderate flints.	0.25-0.55
303	Natural broken chalk.	0.55+

Trench 4 Dimensions 26.1 (base) x 1.5 x 0.7m max depth
Ground level 121.4m (S), 120.9m (N) aOD

Context	Description	Depth (m)
401	Rough grass and topsoil.	0-0.35
402	Subsoil. Mid greyish brown silt clay with common chalk fragments and moderate flints.	0.35-0.55
403	Natural broken chalk	0.55+



Site and trench location

Figure 1



Plate 1: The Site, looking north-east



Plate 2: Representative section in Trench 4, looking south-east



Plate 3: Tree hole 103, looking north-west



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